SABICAS

Rey del Flamenco

FOREWORD

With the recording of the album *Rey del Flamenco*, at the beginning of 1966, Sabicas reached a new stage of maturity in his musical development. His work had freed itself of the influence of Ramón Montoya, and he was able to express himself without hindrance. His style became better defined, allowing his ideas to flourish within new harmonies.

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The *Zapateado en Re* was a favourite with both composer and audience. Sabicas was constantly in search of new ideas, and here he transposed a style traditionally played in C into the more open key of D. One can only admire the splendid sequences of arpeggiated chords and the easy left-hand movements.

One of the most thrilling themes is that of the *campanas*, with an impressive repeat in harmonics. Sabicas was an old hand at this technique, which we see in another masterpiece in D, the *Guajira melodica*. These tinkling bells, reminiscent of a music box, remind us also of Papageno's glockenspiel. Sabicas may well have seen a performance of The Magic Flute.

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Sentimiento gitano casts the *siguiriya* in a more modern light, and in places foreshadows today's style (see p. 73, staves 1 to 4; or p. 74, staff 3 to p. 75, staff 1). Despite his occasional deliberately spectacular display of brilliance, Sabicas never stooped to pyrotechnics for their own sake. An example can be seen in the *falseta* on p. 67 staff 1 to p. 68 staff 1, a seemingly unceasing cascade of semiquavers. The remate that follows almost comes as a relief, so that the listener, about to beg for mercy, is at last able to draw breath. While the piece is soundly constructed, it is the unstoppable flow of semiquavers that remains in the memory. The flamenco guitar is, after all, so designed that moments of profundity alternate with fireworks, light with dark.

PREFACIO

Cuando a principios del año 1966 Sabicas graba el disco *Rey del Flamenco*, ya ha alcanzado en su evolución musical una segunda madurez. Su discurso ha conseguido emanciparse de Ramón Montoya y su personalidad se expresa libremente. El estilo se decanta, las ideas continúan siendo tan abundantes como de costumbre, surgen nuevas armonías.

Para los guitarristas, lo más notable reside en el dominio absoluto de la utilización del mástil y la racionalidad de la digitación. En Sabicas, la búsqueda de la ergonomía se ha convertido, en ese estadio, en una estética, en un arte en sí. Es conocida su predilección por los acordes disminuidos de soberbios y fáciles efectos producidos al recorrer el mástil mediante desplazamientos de tres trastes. Sabicas lo usaba ampliamente desde sus inicios, lo encontramos, por ejemplo, en el trémolo de *Olé mi Cádiz* p. 58, pentagramas 3 y 4, o bien en el *Zapateado en Re*, p. 33, pentagrama 4. Pero en otros tipos de desarrollos obtiene también un resultado muy eficaz con una extrema economía de medios, sabiendo reducir al mínimo el recurso de las cejillas y utilizar juiciosamente las cuerdas al aire. Ver por ejemplo el final de *Aires de Puerto Real*, por la elegancia de encadenamientos p. 15, pentagrama 4 y 9, y p. 19, pentagrama 2. La relación entre la cantidad de trabajo desarrollado por la mano izquierda y la "cantidad" de música producida es sorprendente. Si la metáfora no fuese tan iconoclasta se podría hablar de una relación calidad-precio insuperable.

La soleá *Aires de Puerto Real*, como acabamos de observar, ilustra brillantemente la buena armonía entre la inventiva musical y la inteligencia de las digitaciones. Descubrimos una profusión de falsetas inéditas que renuevan casi totalmente el material del autor en este palo. Se notará la ausencia de variación en trémolo, bastante inhabitual, que a pesar de todo pasa desapercibida dado lo apretado y coherente del conjunto.

El *Zapateado en Re* era una de las piezas favoritas del autor y su público. Sabicas, creador incansable en busca de innovación, ha transportado a la tonalidad abierta de Re un estilo tradicionalmente tocado en Do. Las magníficas sucesiones de acordes arpegiados fuerzan la admiración por su aptitud para construir una línea lógica y por la mecánica desahogada de la mano izquierda.

Es sin embargo el tema de las campanas el que nos maravilla más, magnificado por su repetición con armónicos. Sabicas está acostumbrado a ese método, recordemos otra obra maestra en Re, la *Gualira melódica*. Aquellas campanillas con ecos de caja de música harían pensar casi en el glockenspiel de Papageno. ¿Oiría Sabicas la Flauta Mágica?

Es interesante resaltar que originalmente tocaba este fragmento mediante armónicos artificiales, con una técnica de mano derecha muy personal en la que el pulgar ejecuta la nota en lugar del anular. Al final adoptaría la forma aquí transcrita, com armónicos naturales. En lo concerniente la ejecucíon, he añadido entre paréntesis, en tres lugares, una digitación que -todo ocurre- parece ajustarse más naturalmente a los dedos que la del propio autor, tal como se observa en algunos videos.

La malagueña, como la farruca y la danza mora, ocupa un lugar privilegiado en el repertorio de Sabicas. Se nutre de una fuente de inspiración continua, razón por la cual, sin duda, su genio se expresa mejor. Podríamos afirmar que nadie le ha igualado en dichos estilos. *La Trinidad* es la más acaba de todas, prácticamente una síntesis de sus ideas más bellas. No le falta más que la copla y el trémolo de *Brisas de la Caleta* para estar completa.

Olé mi Cádiz empieza en Mim y evoluciona en MiM. Son las tonalidades respectivas de las alegrías de Córdoba y de la Rosa según una clasificación hoy abandonada. Sabicas ha dejado pocas alegrías en dichas tonalidades por preferir el LaM, más usual. Ello representaría de por sí un cierto interés por esta pieza si por otra parte no fuese sencillamente magnífica. La atmósfera del Mim, los temas hábilmente desarrollados y la facilidad técnica invitarán al lector a entrar en el estudio de la presente selección a través de esta suntuosa puerta.

Sentimiento gitano conlleva ya una visión muy moderna de la siguiriya y prefigura, en determinados momentos, el estilo actual (véase p. 73, pentagramas 1 a 4, o bien p. 74, pentagrama 3 hasta p. 75, pentagrama 1). Conviene subrayar igualmente un enfoque voluntario espectacular y demostrativo al cual Sabicas no desdeñaba recurrir para subyugar a su público. La falseta de p. 67, pentagrama 1 a p. 68, pentagrama 1, muestra el ejemplo en una cascada de semicorcheas que da la sensación de no querer pararse nunca. El remate llega casi como un alivio: el oyente, a punto de pedir la gracia, puede

por fin volver a respirar. La construcción es hermosa, sin embargo el efecto prima sobre la idea musical. ¡Que importa!, la guitarra flamenca está hecha de tal modo que gusta de alternar los momentos más profundos con el arte pirotécnico, la sombra y la luz.

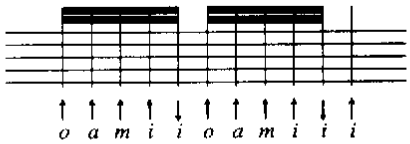
Embrujo de Huelva resume la "manera" Sabicas. Junto a los largos arpegios característicos del fandango encontramos falsetas antiguas (p. 81, pentagramas 2 y 3, o el final en alzapúa), una alusión a la danza mora (p. 64), y la cita de un extracto del *Tientos de los tres ríos* (p. 86, pentagramas 3 y 4) mutado para dicha ocasión de binario en ternario. La forma sincopada y evolucionada del estribillo nos sitúa ya en la época contemporánea.

SOBRE EL SONIDO Y LA TECNICA

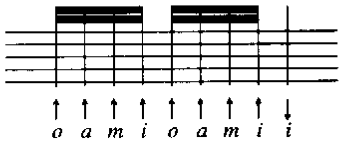
Se podría disertar a lo largo de columnas enteras sobre el sonido de Sabicas. Qué decir, sino que nadie ha hecho sonar el instrumento como él. Fuerza y percusión, pero con redondez e incluso con finura, hacen que se le reconozca entre todos y se le acepte todavía como un modelo. La guitarra de Sabicas es la más perfecta identificación del sonido flamenco.

Ciertas soluciones técnicas que no son más que suyas requieren determinadas precisiones.

Los rasgueados siguen la fórmula habitual con vuelta del índice:



pero en los desarrollos largos y continuos, dicha vuelta queda suprimida:



es el caso por ejemplo al final del *Zapateado* y de *Sentimiento gitano*, las introducciones de *Olé mi Cádiz* y *Embrujo de Huelva*. Aun así, he escrito todos los rasgueados sin tener en cuenta dicha particularidad, prefiriendo ajustarme a los automatismos de los guitarristas de hoy en día.

La técnica de oposición pulgar-índice/medio (ej. *La Trinidad*, p. 46 y 47) se ve substituida por pulgar-índice/anular cuando en los agudos no hay canto sino "pedal" (ej. *La Trinidad* de nuevo, en la conclusión del trémolo, p. 50, pentagramas 1 y 2). La razón equivale aquí a ganar fuerza e intensidad.

Las idas y vueltas del índice son de hecho ejecutadas por los dedos medio + anular juntos. Con objeto de no hacer más pesada la lectura, he pasado por alto ese detalle por considerarlo más bien anecdótico.

El golpe puede hacerse con la vuelta del pulgar, golpeando la tabla bajo los agudos (*Sentimiento gitano*, p. 67, pentagrama 4, tercer compás).

Los apagados se efectúan con el dedo pequeño de la mano izquierda, presionando las cuerdas contra el mástil. Se reconocen en las semicorcheas, alternando con silencios de éstas (*Aire de Puerto Real*, p. 18, pentagrama 3, y *Olé mi Cádiz*, p. 62, pentagrama 1).

SOBRE LA ESCRITURA

- las notas entre paréntesis no se tocan, sino que indican la posición completa de la mano izquierda (salvo en los armónicos del *Zapateado*, cf. infra).
- las alteraciones accidentales no valen más que para la altura en que se encuentran, y no a la octava.
- en las secciones no medidas (*La Trinidad*), un pentagrama equivale a un compás, en lo concerniente a alteraciones accidentales.

A.F.

SABICAS THE ETERNAL

Few performing artists become household names in their lifetime, and fewer still become the stuff of legends, with a permanent place in the pages of history. Yet Sabicas is one of those few.

The irresistible world of music created by Sabicas is both timeless and ageless. Every master of flamenco today recognises him as the unforgettable *tocaor* who inspired his own dreams.

Yet the paths of glory trodden by Agustín Castellón Campos, Niño Sabicas (1912-1990), are not without their own paradox. For a start, he was not born in Andalusia but in far-off Navarre, and fame came to him even further away from Spain, in America. Destiny is not what we always expect.

The young gypsy lad from Pamplona had barely tuned up his first guitar when it became obvious that he was a child prodigy. Since no one he knew was capable of giving him lessons, he had to teach himself with the aid of the few recordings that were available at the time. It was not long before he rose to fame and became the greatest virtuoso of his generation, a position he held unchallenged for many long years. Sabicas took flamenco technique to hitherto unscaled, unimagined heights, leaving his contemporaries far behind in the matter of speed, timbre and purity of sound, not to mention his own numerous compositions. He had a phenomenal sense of *compás* and was unequalled in accompanying, especially playing for dancers.

Sabicas began his professional life by playing with the greatest artists of his time (La Niña de los Peines and Manuel Torres, among others), and in 1937 he joined the company of Carmen Amaya in Buenos Aires, one of the reigning artists of the day, with whom he made many successful tours. He subsequently settled in Mexico for a number of years before finally moving to New York in 1955. He made some fifty records in which he played both solo guitar and accompaniment, but *aficionados* prefer to remember him as the first professional flamenco recitalist.

Sabicas' virtuosity and his impeccable sense of form have imposed high standards on all those who follow him in the art of flamenco *toque*, while his brilliant gifts as a composer have opened up new horizons. His technique, style and immense output have defined today's guitar in terms that it would never have attained without his help. Above all, however, his music has an enchanting power seldom heard elsewhere. How many *tocaores* are able to exert such power over their audience by casting a spell over them? Sabicas was little short of a magician.

Sabicas is no longer with us, but his music remains, much of which can be heard in his recordings. With the notable exception of the transcriptions made by Joseph Trotter for the album "Flamenco puro" in the 1970s, most of Sabicas' works have yet to be published. This is not for want of suitable material, but rather because of the recent dazzling developments in the flamenco guitar, and perhaps even more because of its immediate yet volatile character, closely linked with oral tradition. It goes against the grain to transcribe something so vital in performance to a series of black dots on paper. On the other hand, a written score preserves the music for posterity by publishing the best of the repertoire. Even if his work may be above considerations of current fashion, and even if time cannot harm it, we must remember that that same time does erode our memory. That is why I am particularly happy to be able to publish this collection of Sabicas' finest works, in the knowledge that it is part of the necessary task of passing music on down the generations, and that it is also in response to great demand.

Alain Faucher, Paris, 1999
translated by Mary Criswick

FOREWORD

With the recording of the album *Rey del Flamenco*, at the beginning of 1966, Sabicas reached a new stage of maturity in his musical development. His work had freed itself of the influence of Ramón Montoya, and he was able to express himself without hindrance. His style became better defined, allowing his ideas to flourish within new harmonies.

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One of the most thrilling themes is that of the *campanas*, with an impressive repeat in harmonics. Sabicas was an old hand at this technique, which we see in another masterpiece in D, the *Guajira melodica*. These tinkling bells, reminiscent of a music box, remind us also of Papageno's glockenspiel. Sabicas may well have seen a performance of The Magic Flute.

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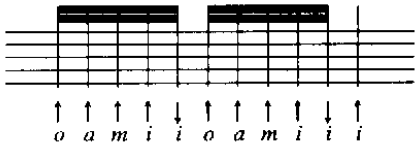
Embrujo de Huelva is a summary of the Sabicas style. Alongside the lengthy arpeggios so typical of the *fandango* we find old *falsetas* (p. 81, staves 2 and 3, or the *alzapúa* finale), an allusion to the *danza mora* (p. 64), and the quotation of an extract from the *Tientos de los tres ríos* (p. 86, staves 3 and 4), transposed for the occasion from duple to triple time. The highly developed syncopated form of the refrain already places this work in the contemporary period.

SOUND AND TECHNIQUE

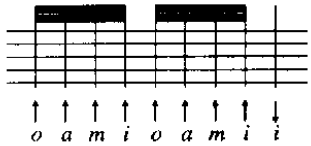
Many pages could be written on the Sabicas sound, pages which could be summed up in the words, "No one has ever made the instrument sound like Sabicas". The power and the percussive effect of his playing, allied with great warmth and finesse, distinguish his performance from that of any other player, and place him even today in the position of maestro. Sabicas' guitar is the most perfect representation of the flamenco sound.

A few techniques that only he used call for a certain amount of explanation.

The *rasgueados* follow the usual pattern, with the index returning across the strings:



but in long continuous development passages, the index does not cross back:



this is the case in, for example, the finales of the *Zapateado* and *Sentimiento gitano*, as in the introductions to *Olé mi Cádiz* and *Embrujo de Huelva*. I have, however, not taken this into account in writing out all the *rasgueados* but rather followed the habitual style of today's guitarists.

The use of the thumb-index/medial finger opposition (e.g., in *La Trinidad*, pp. 46 and 47) is substituted for the thumb-annular/medial opposition when there is no melody in the upper voice, but rather a pedal (as in the conclusion to the tremolo in *La Trinidad*, p. 50, staves 1 and 2). This solution gives greater power and intensity of sound.

The up and down movements of the index finger should be played by the medial and annular fingers together, although for the sake of clarity, this little Sabicas detail is not shown in the score.

The *golpe* may be performed as the thumb returns, striking the table below the upper strings (*Sentimiento gitano*, p. 67, staff 4, bar 3).

Damped notes should be muffled with the little finger of the left hand laid lightly across the strings over the fingerboard, in particular the semiquavers alternating with semiquaver rests (*Aires de Puerto Real*, p. 18, staff 3; and *Olé mi Cádiz*, p. 62, staff 1).

NOTATION

- the notes in brackets are not to be played, but indicate the position for all the fingers of the left hand (with the exception of the harmonics in the *Zapateado*, see above)
- accidentals apply only to the note next to them, and not to other octaves
- in the unmeasured sections (*La Trinidad*), accidentals apply to the entire staff.

A.F.

AIRES DE PUERTO REAL

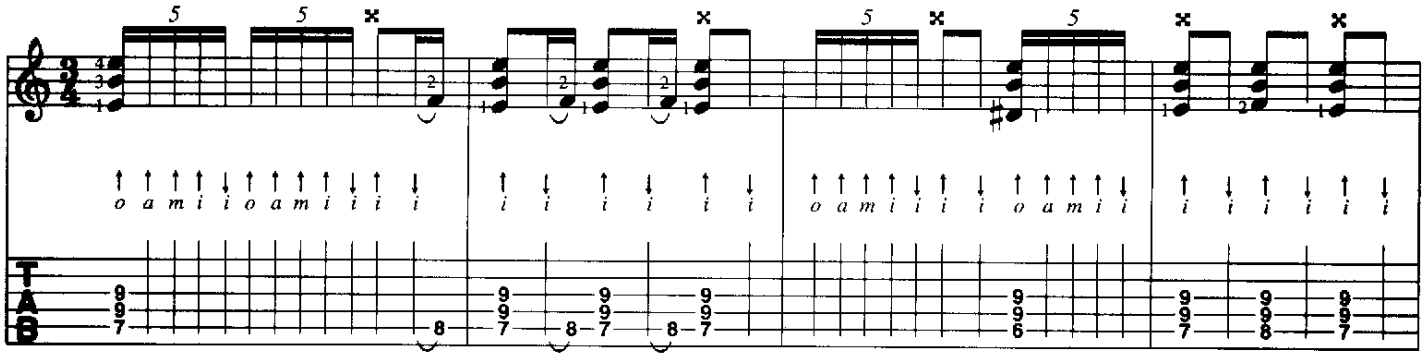
Subicas

Capo: III

Transcription: Alain Faucher

allegretto

VII



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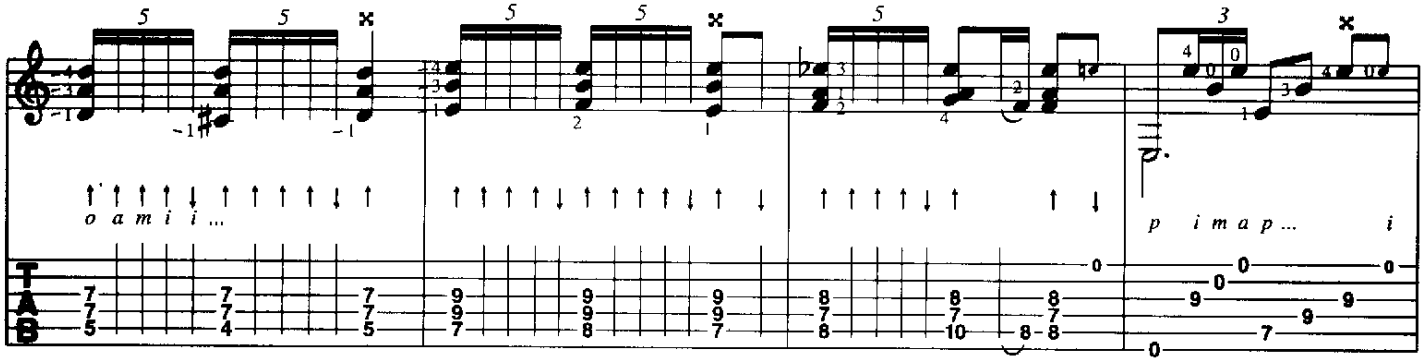

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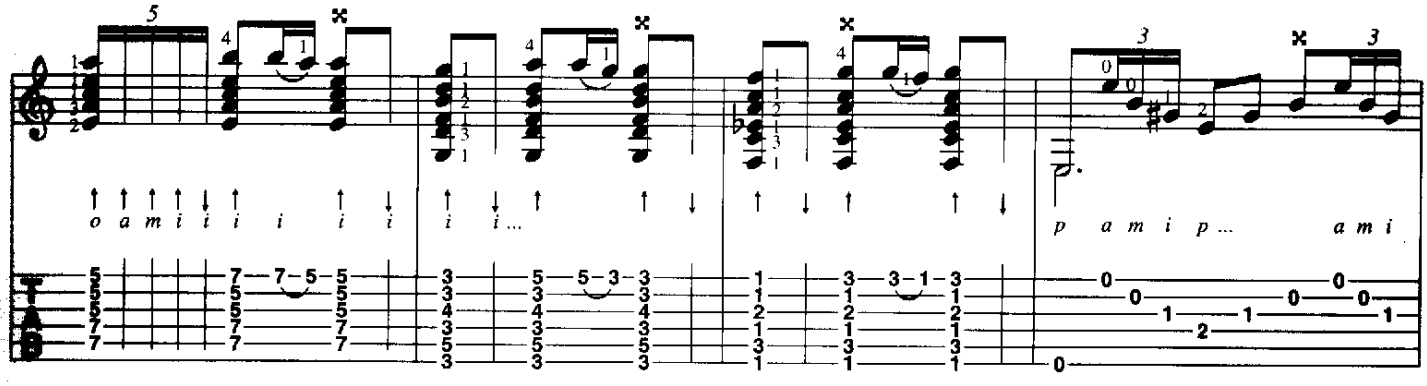

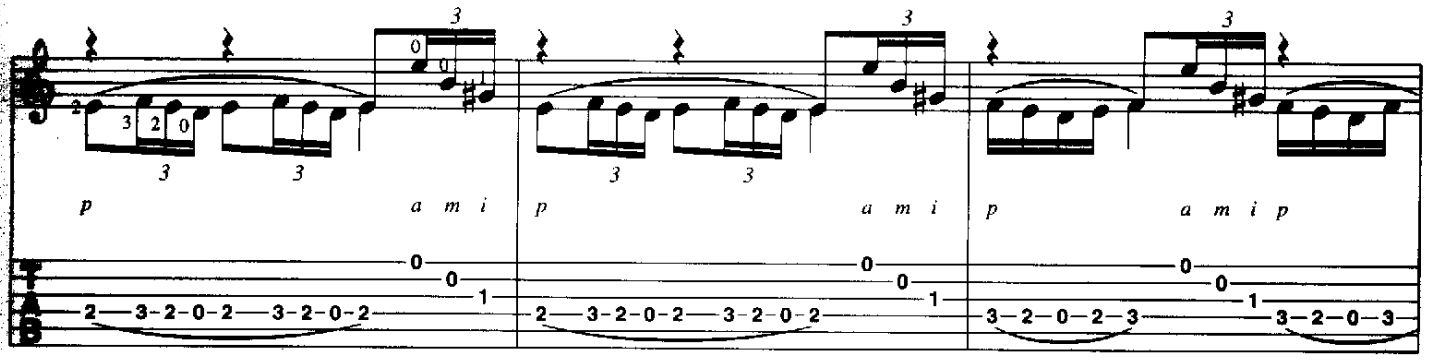

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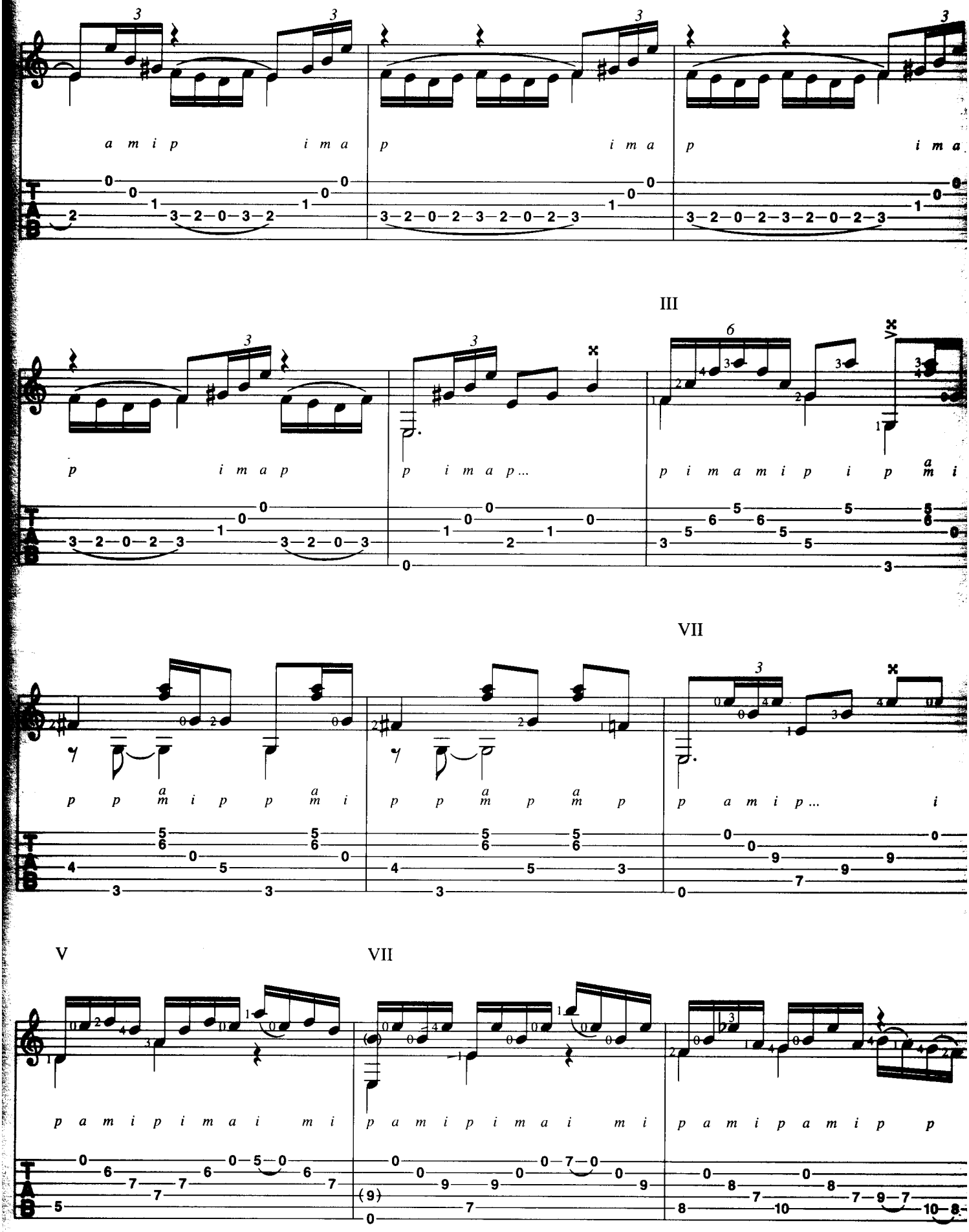
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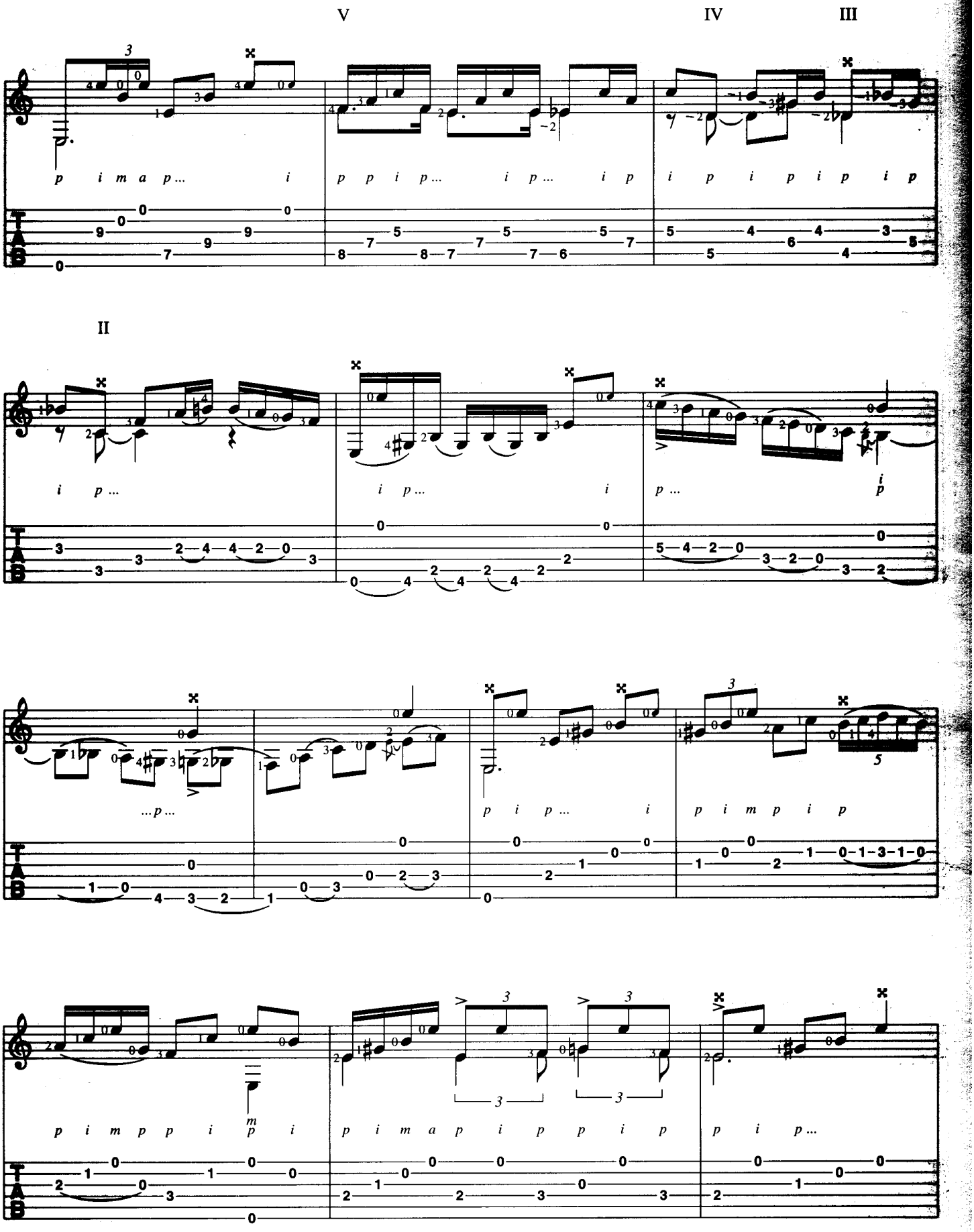
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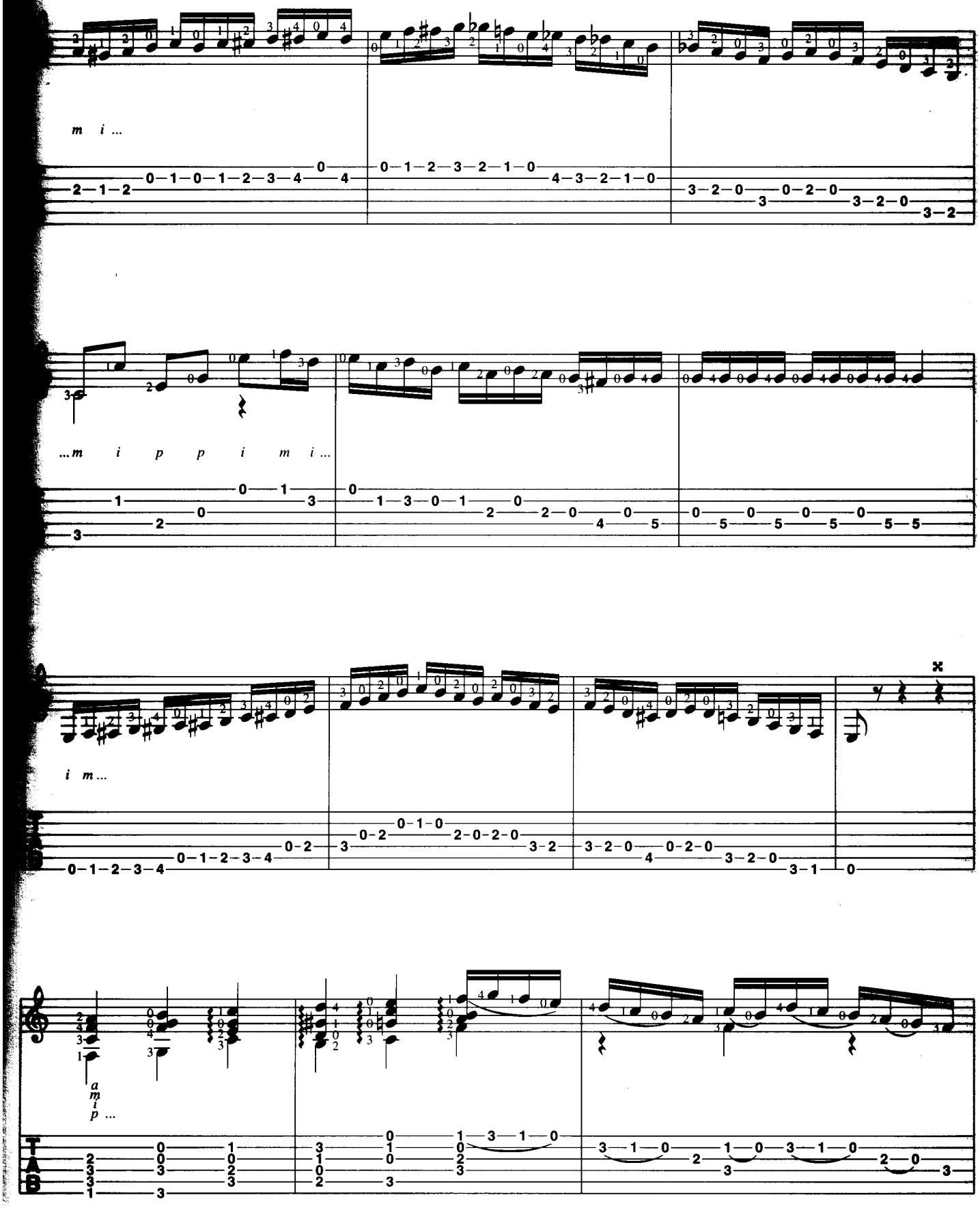
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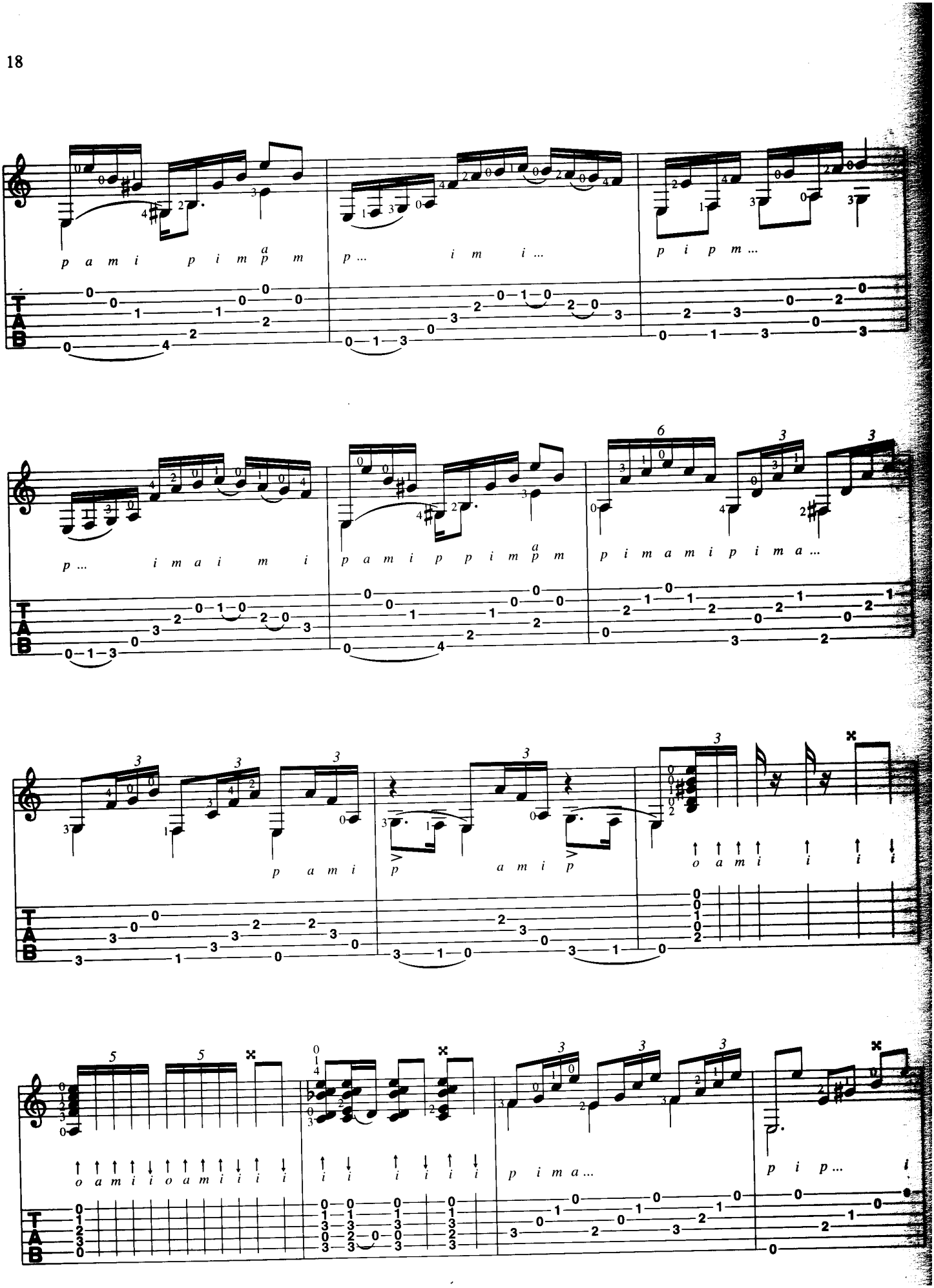
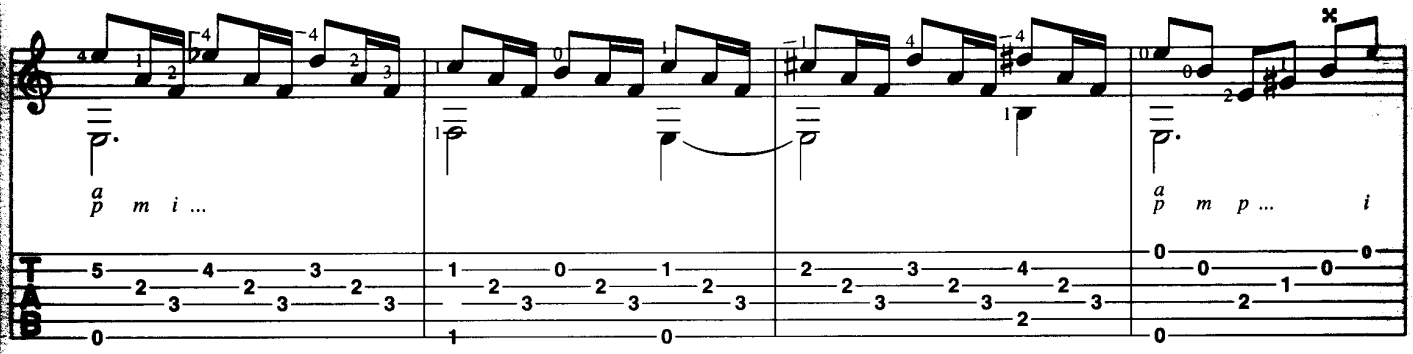
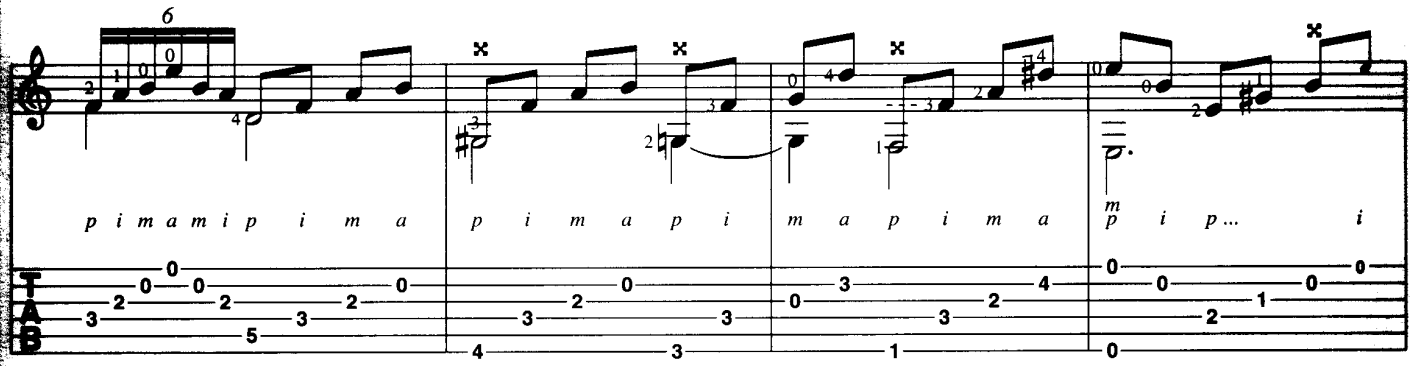

p a m i p i m a p m
p ... i m i ...
p i p m ...
p ... i m a i m i
p a m i p p i m a p m
p i m a m i p i m a ...
p a m i
p a m i p
o a m i i i i
o a m i i o a m i i i i
i i i i i i i
p i m a ...
p i p ... i

CI


a
p m i ...
a
p m p ... i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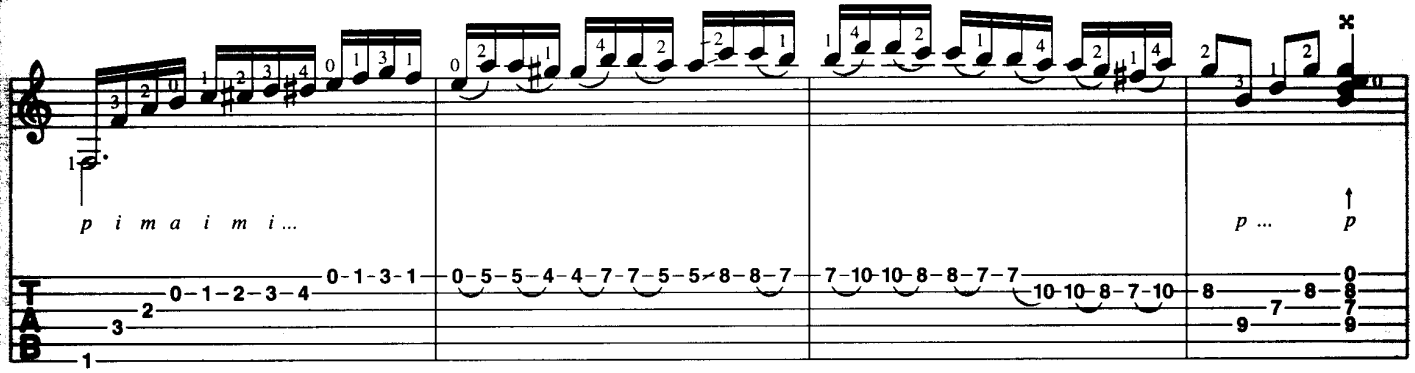
p i m a p i
m a p i m a
m
p i p ... i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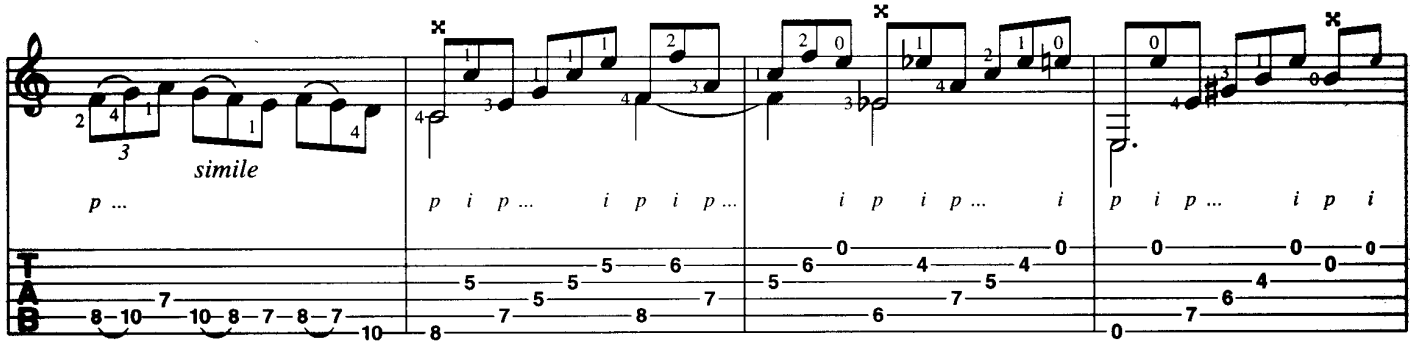
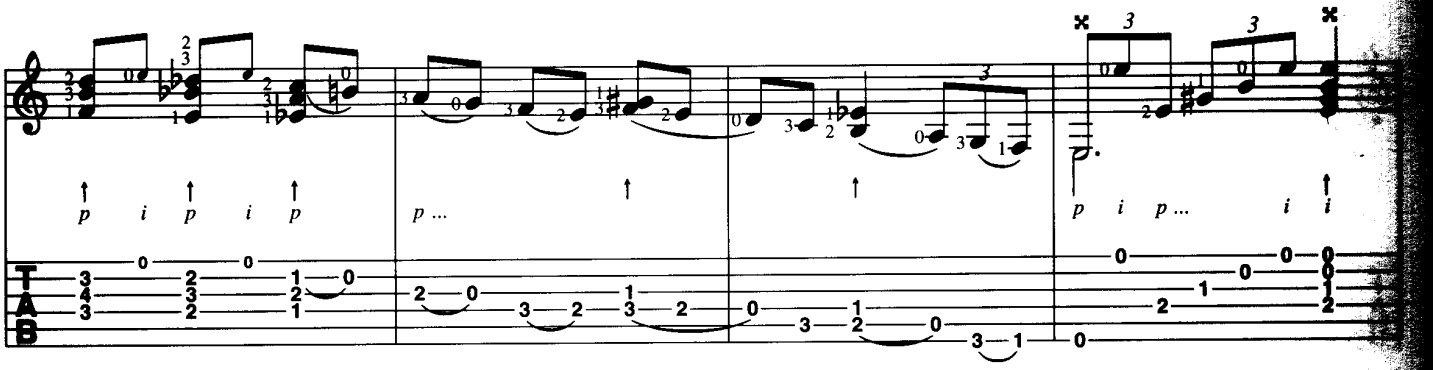
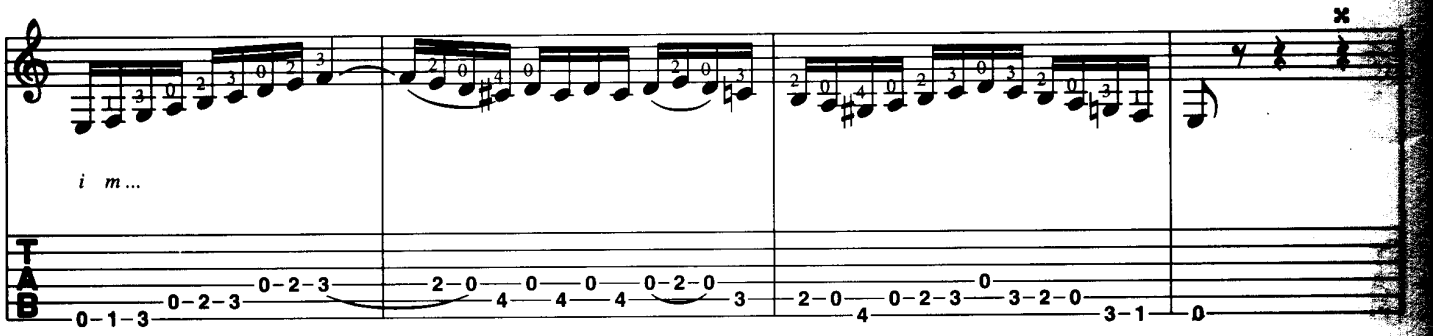
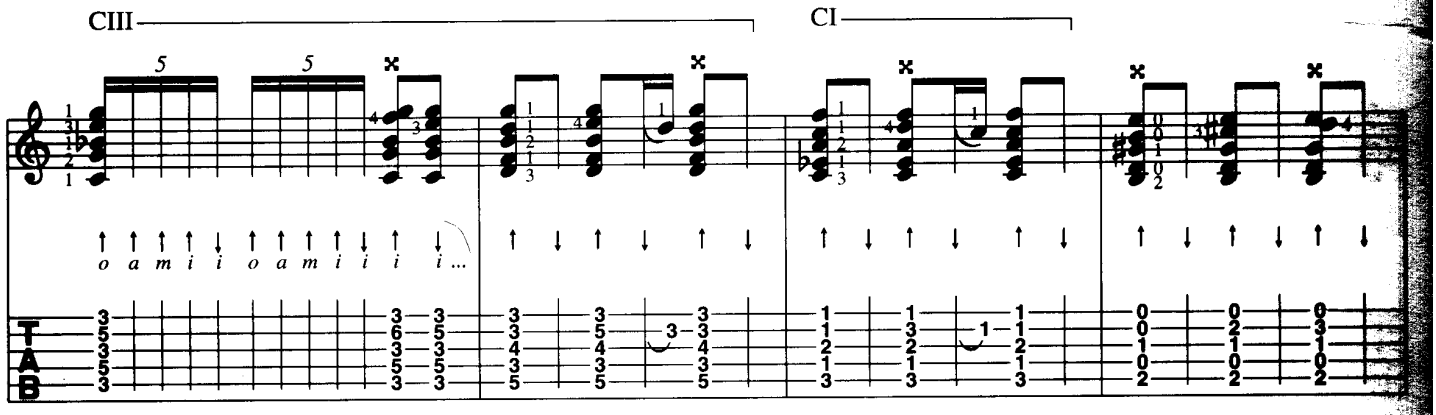
p ...
p

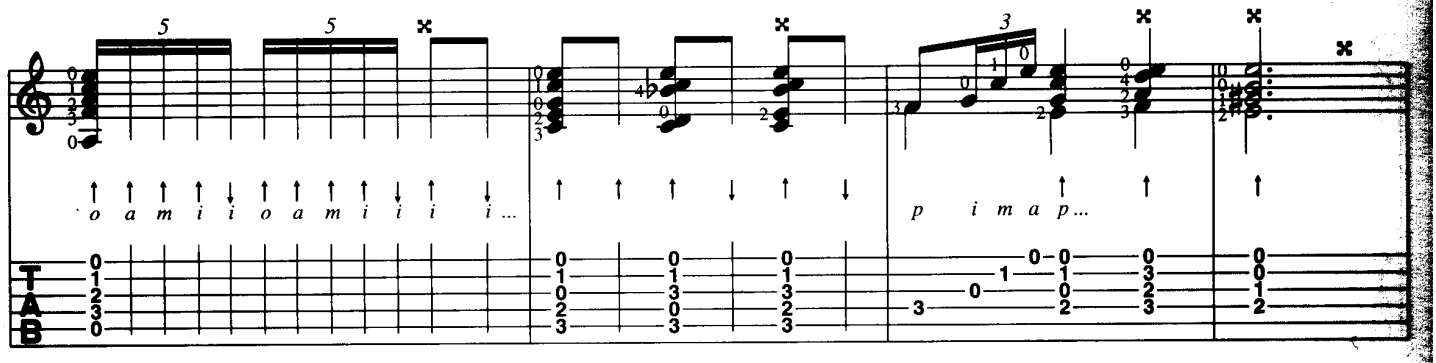
CVII CV


3
simile
p ...
p i p ... i p i p ...
i p i p ... i
p i p ... i p i


p i p i p
p ...
p i p ... i i
T
A
B


i m ...
T
A
B


CIII
CI
o a m i i o a m i i i i ...
T
A
B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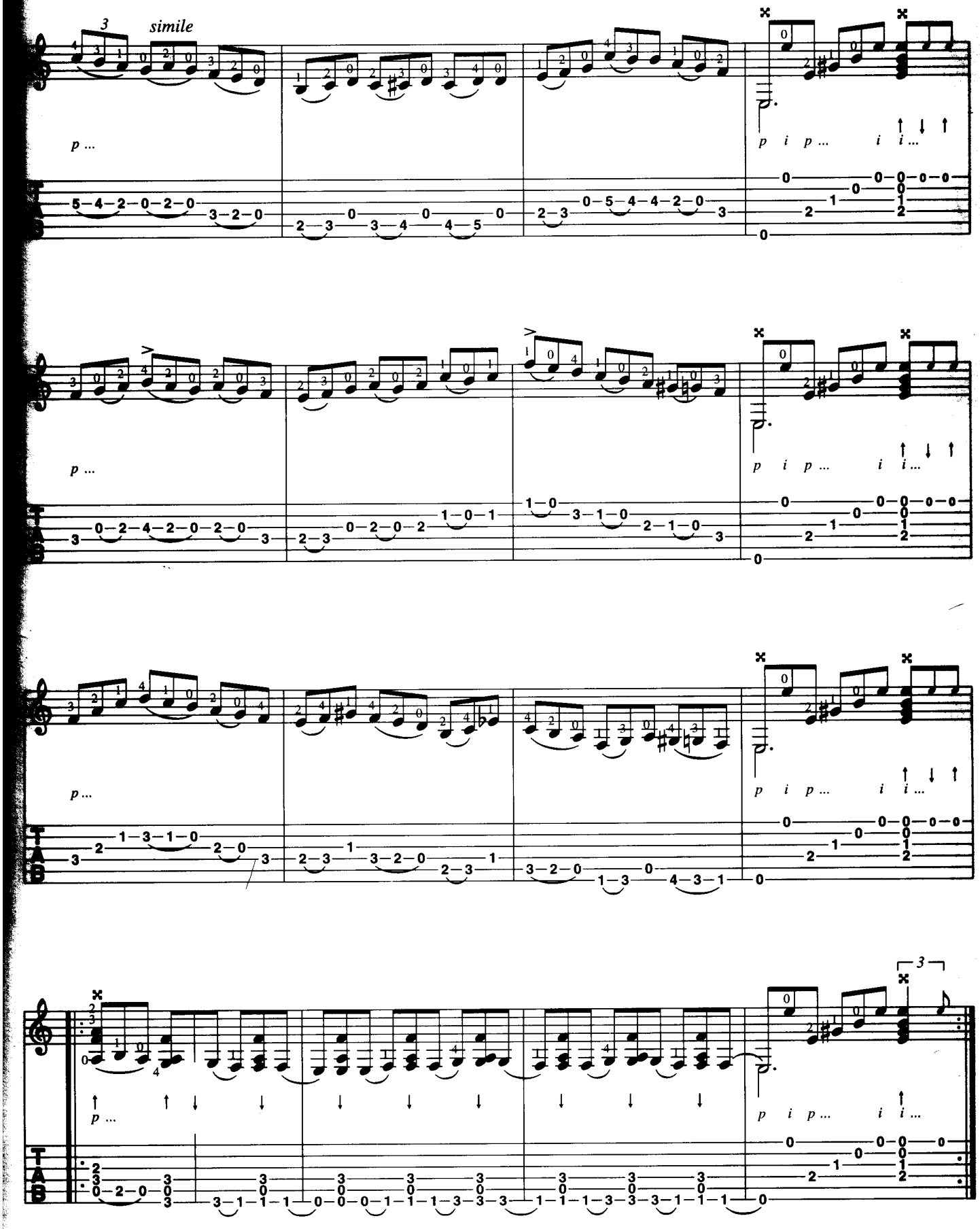
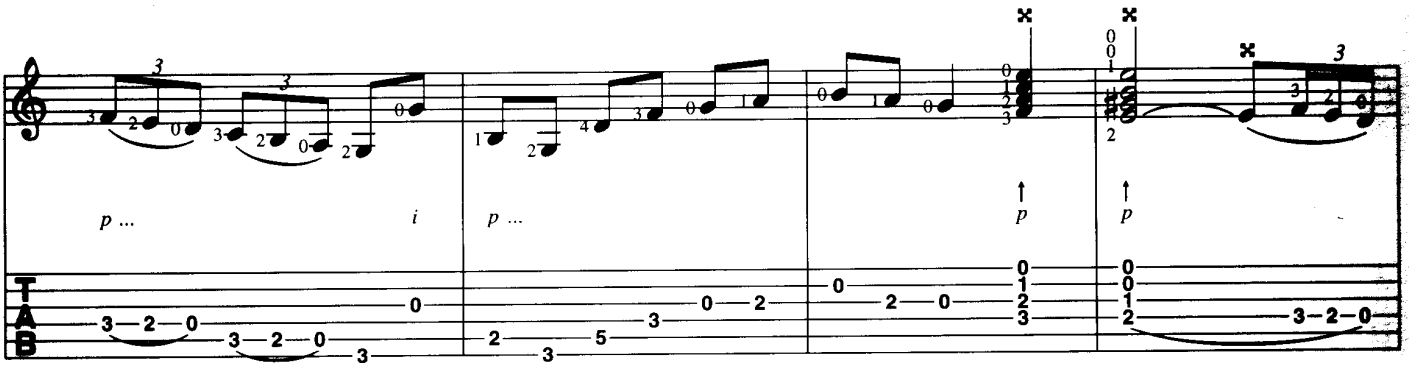
p i m a p ...
T
A
B


simile
p ...
p i p ... i i ...
T
A
B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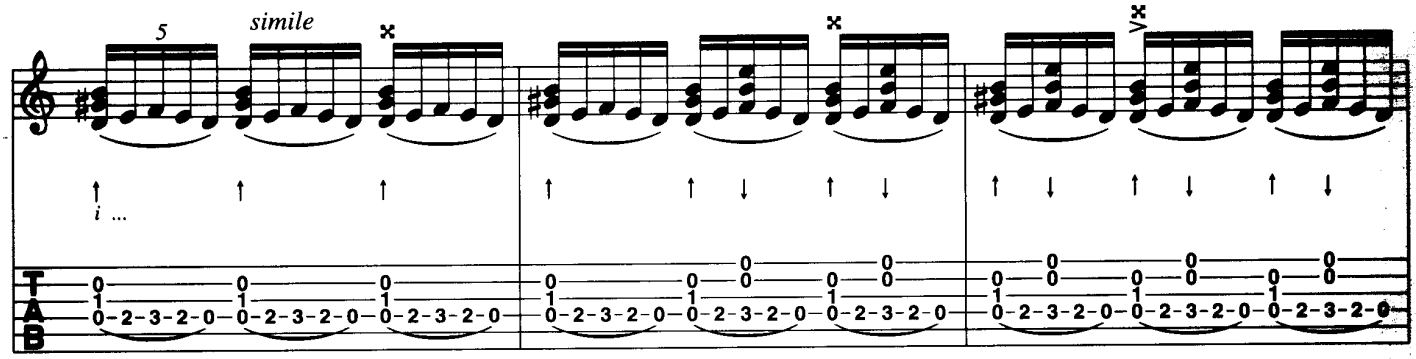
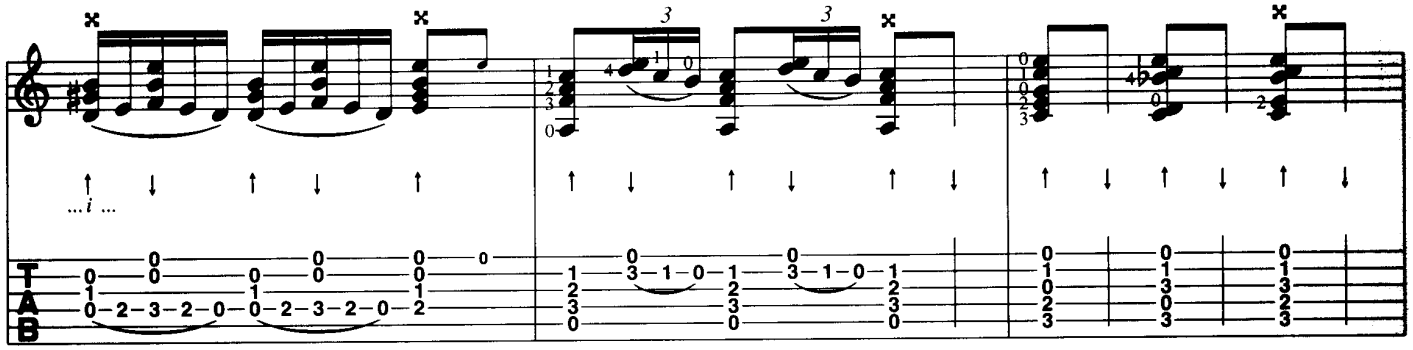
p ... p p


simile
i ...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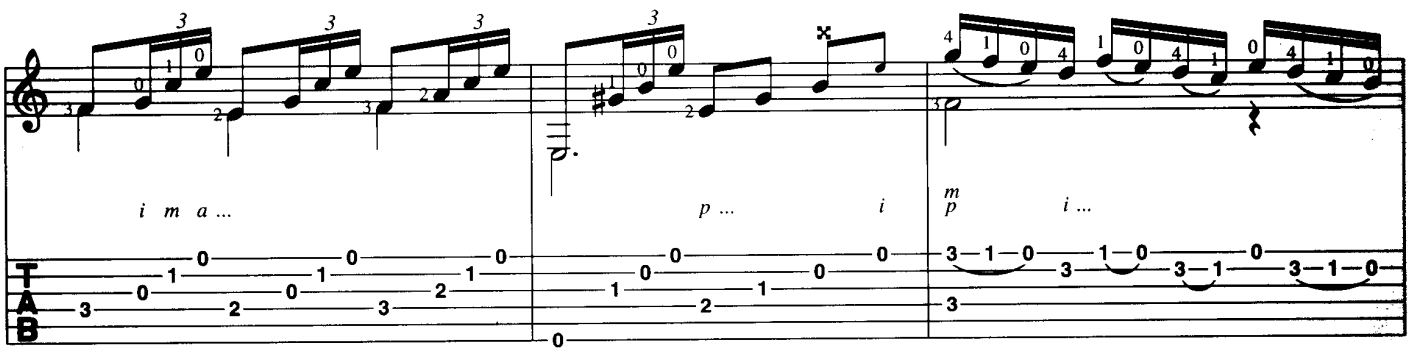
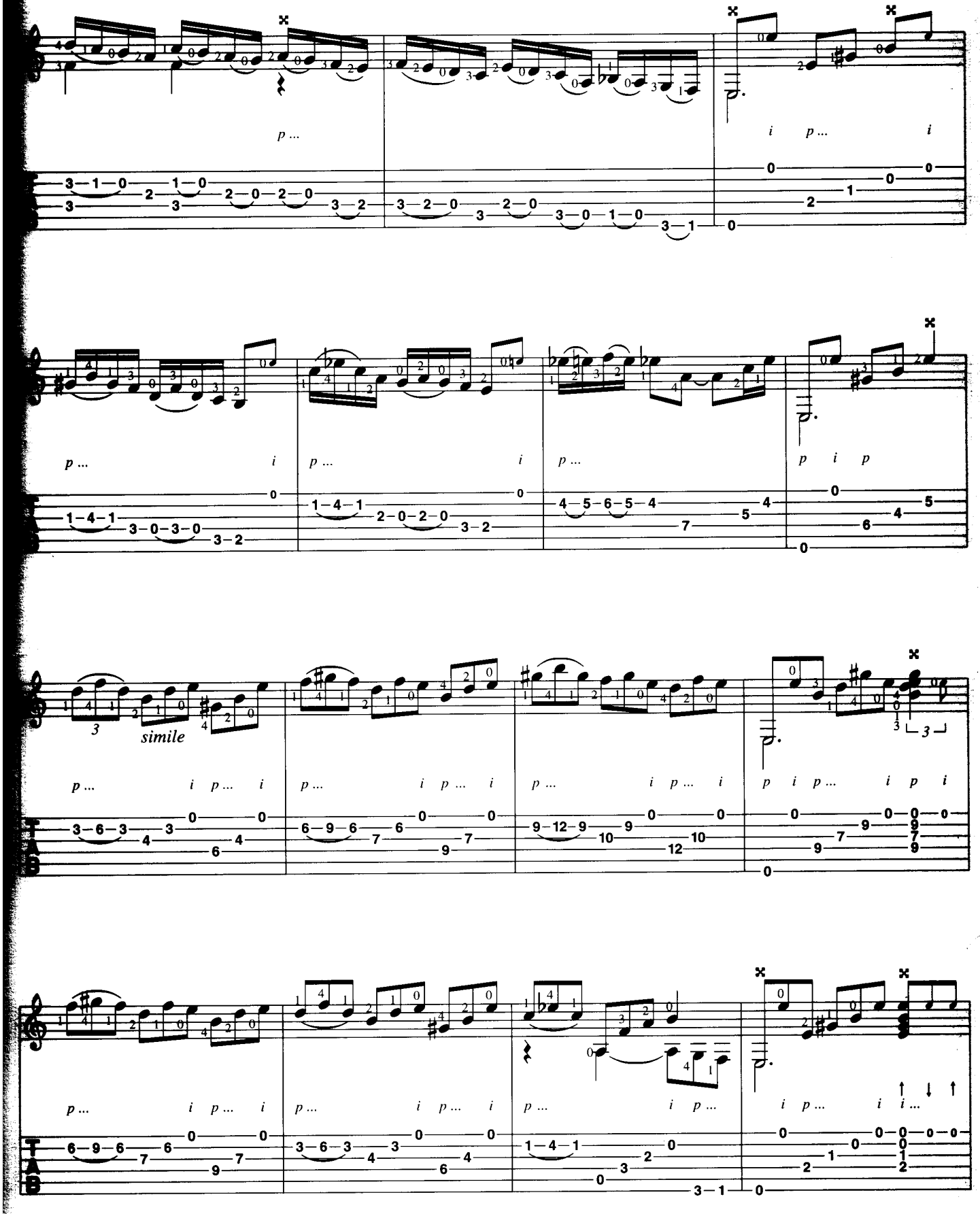
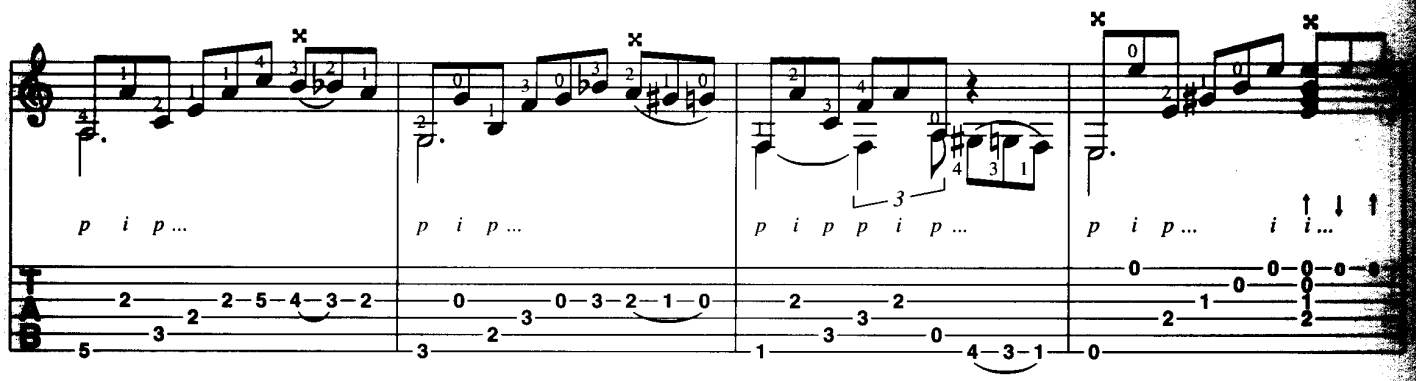
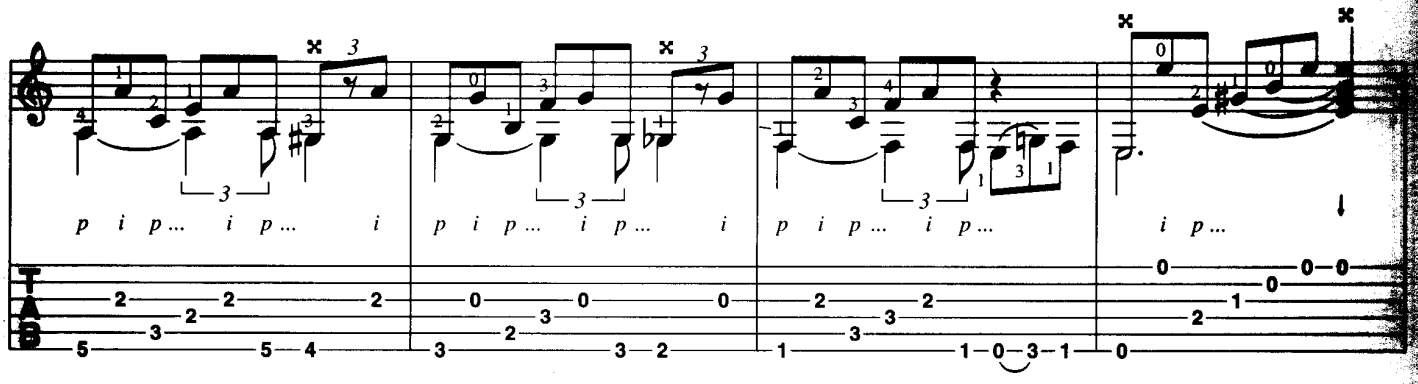

i m a ...
p ... i
m
p i ...

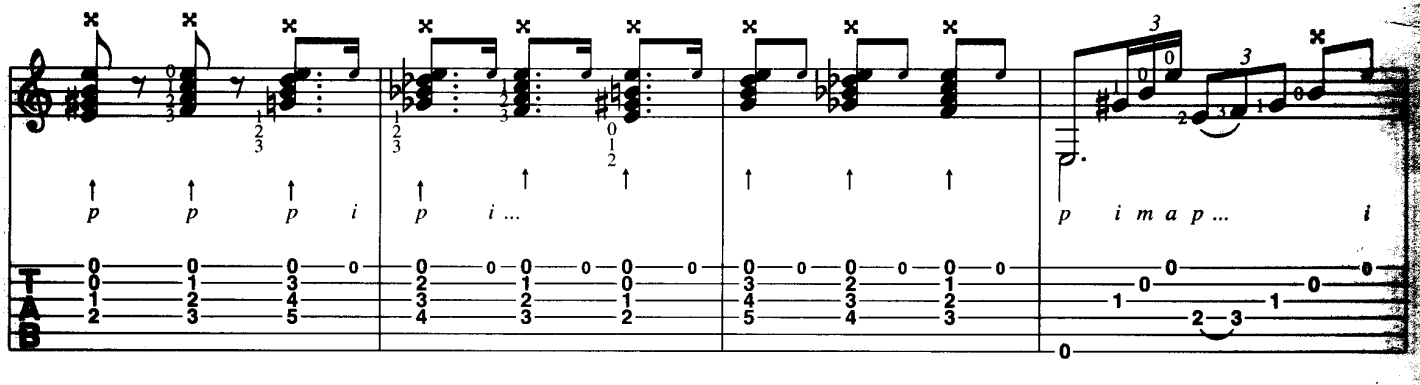

simile

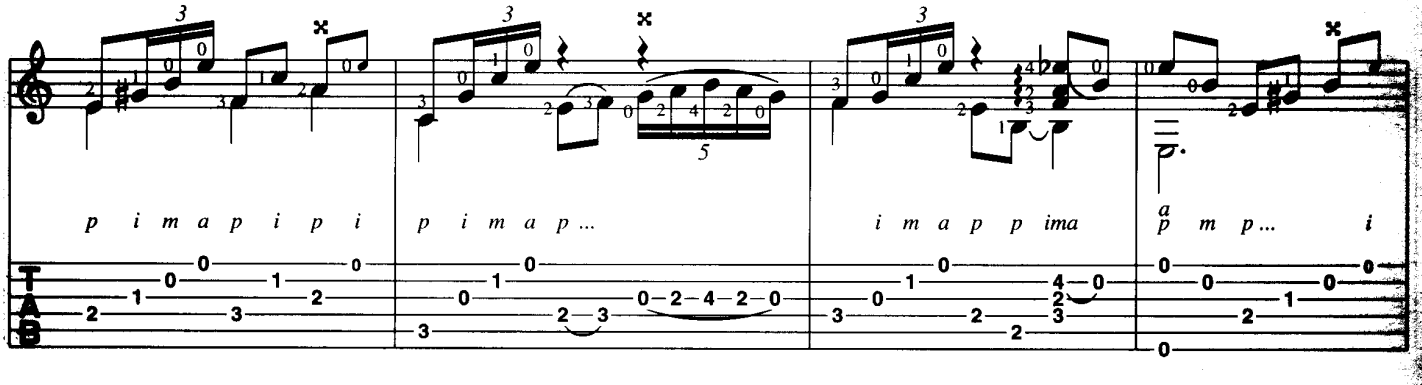
CII

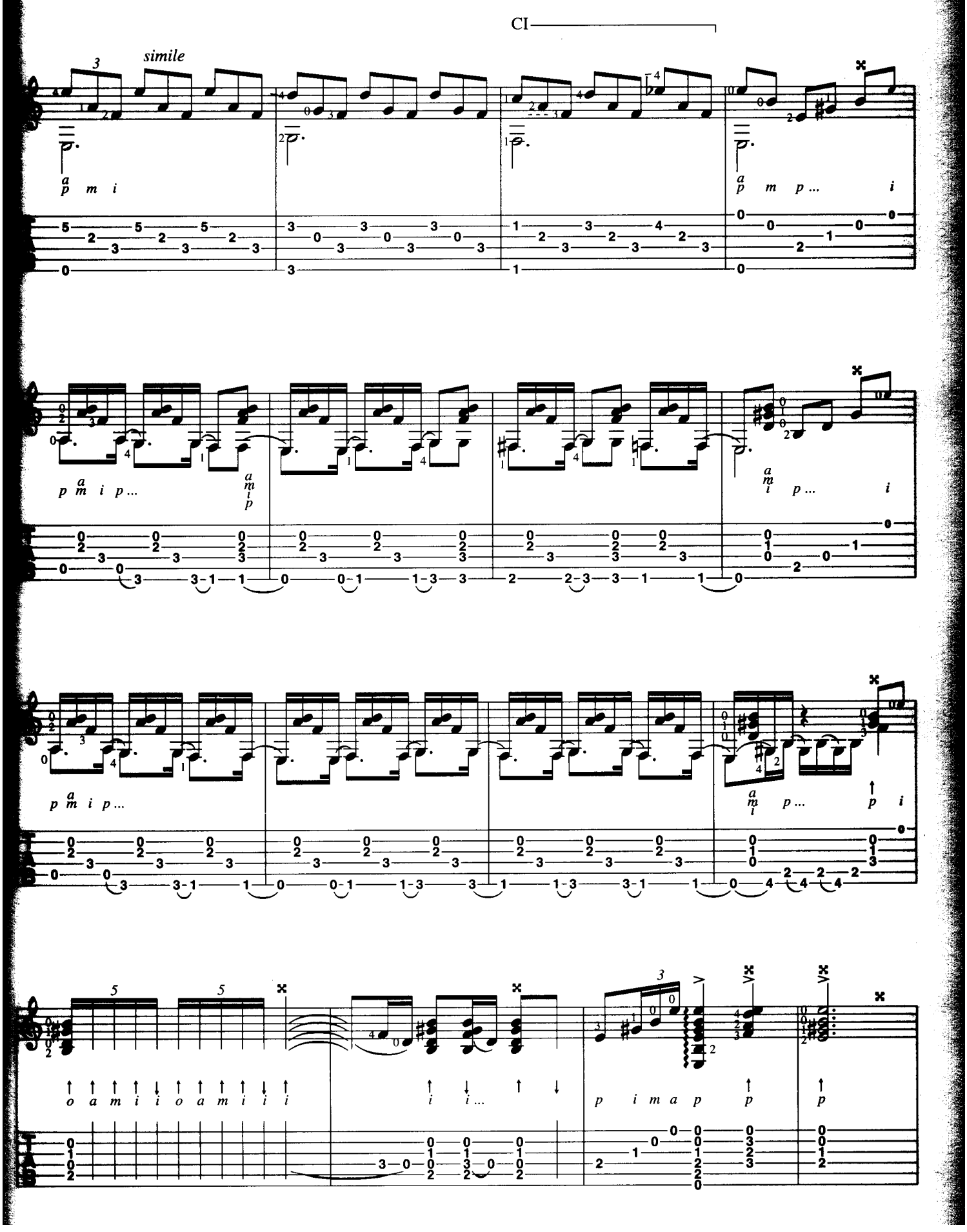


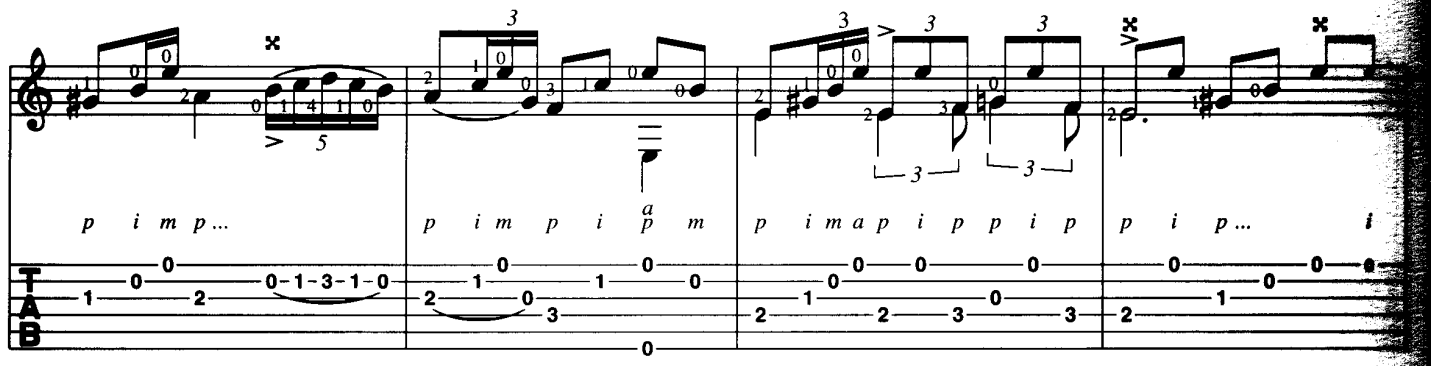
CII

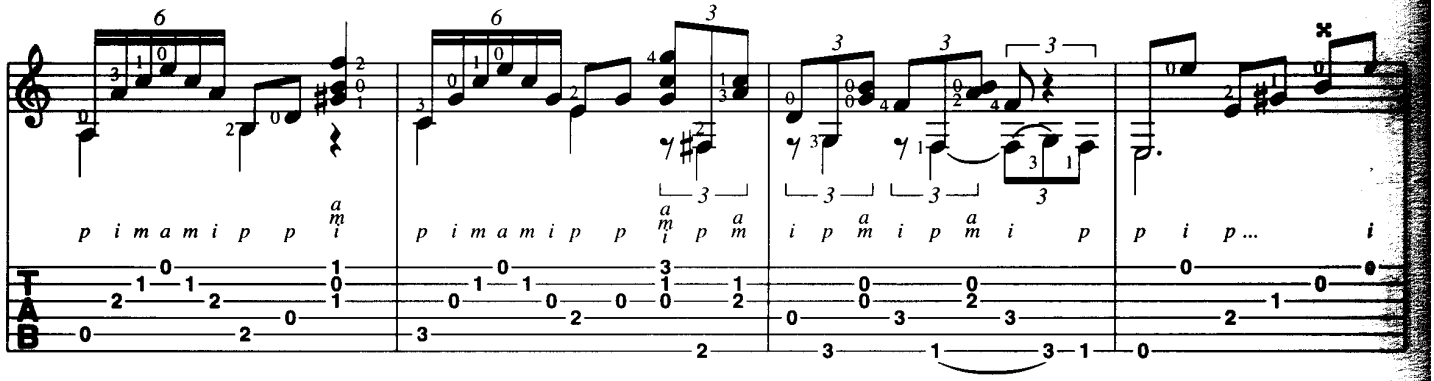


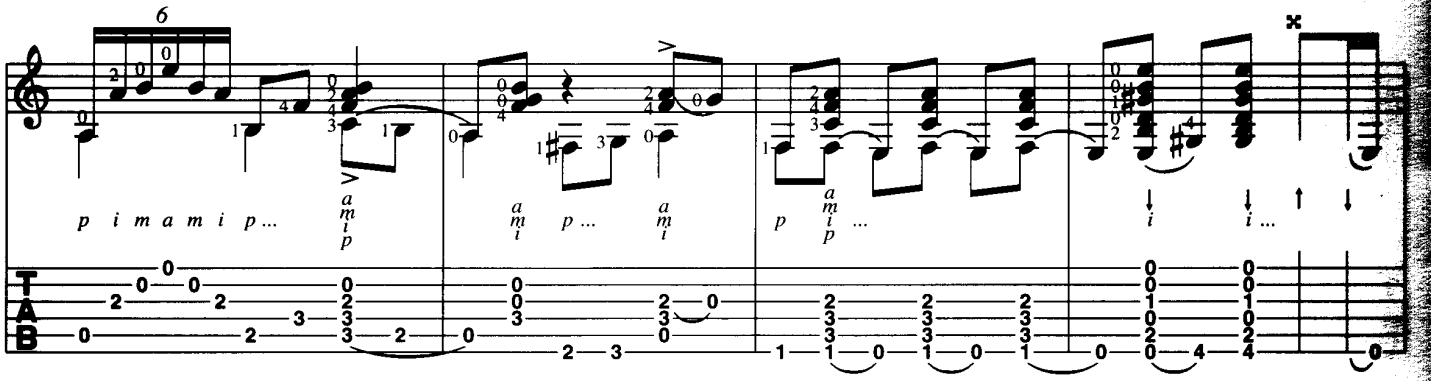


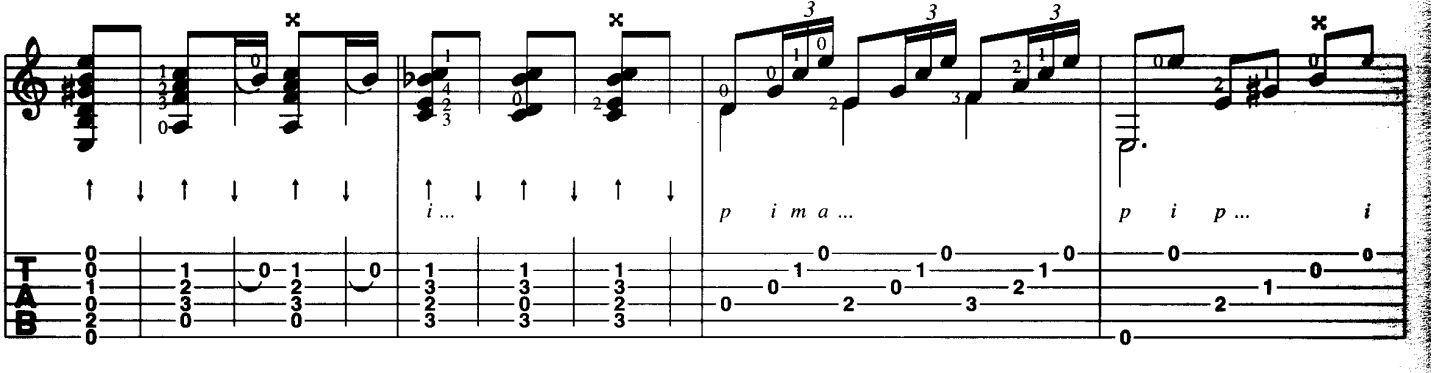


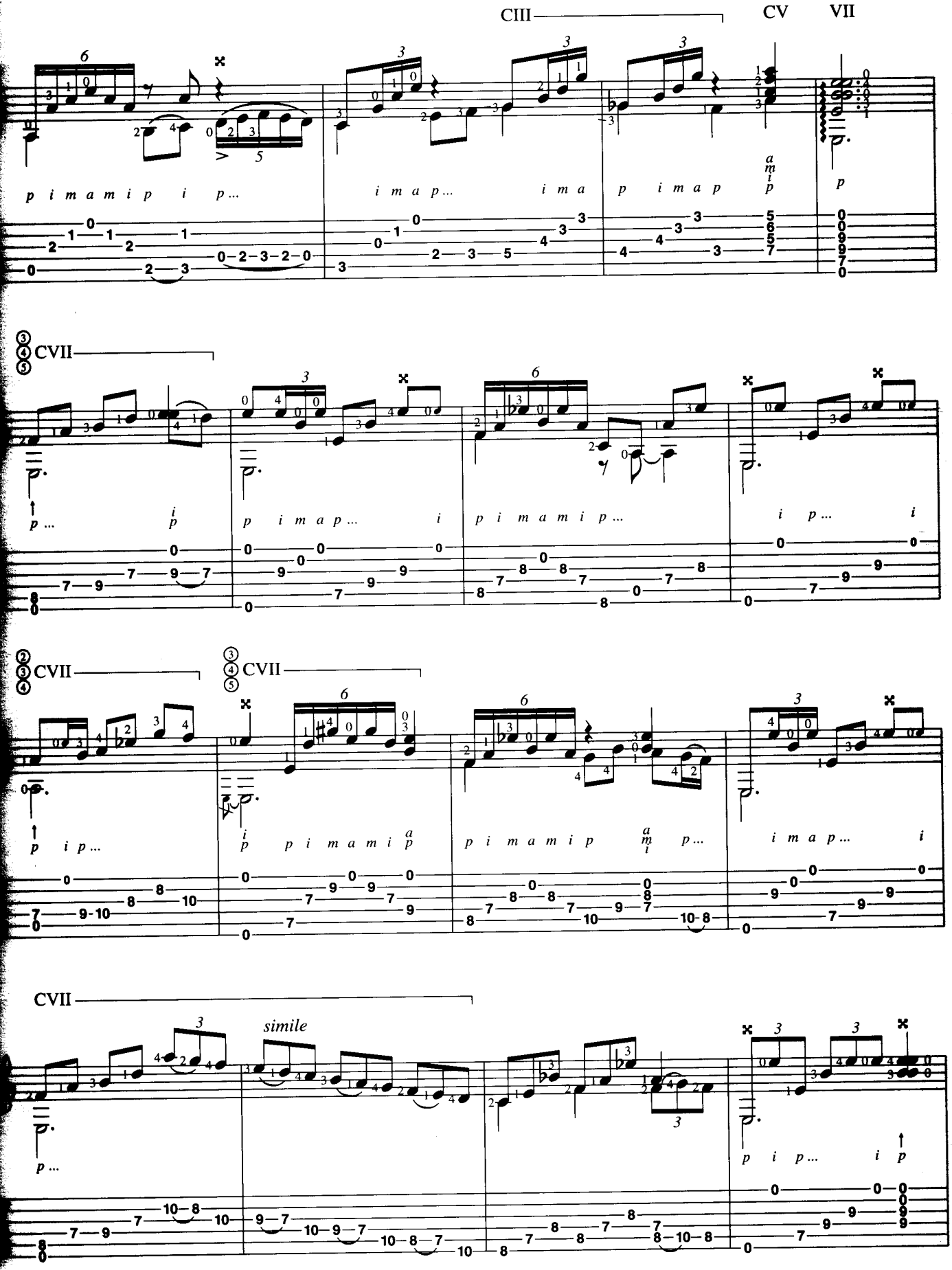

CI
simile
p m i
p m p ... i
p m i p ...
p m i p ...
o a m i i o a m i i i
i i ...
p i m a p

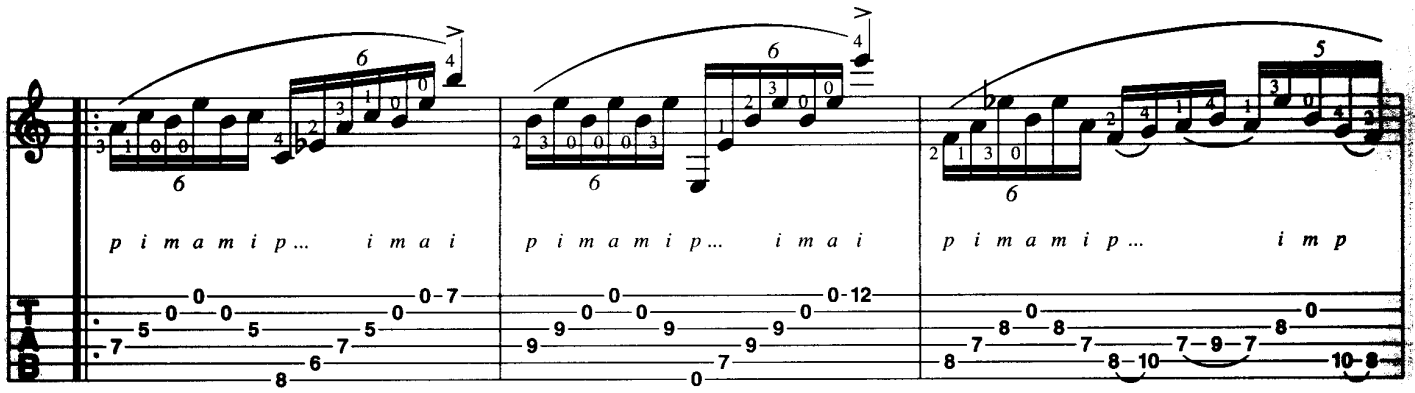

p i m p ...
p i m p i p m
p i m a p i p p i p
p i p ... i
T
A
B


p i m a m i p p i
p i m a m i p p i p m
i p a m i p a m i p
p i p ... i
T
A
B


p i m a m i p ...
p ...
p ...
i
i ...
T
A
B


i ...
p i m a ...
p i p ... i
T
A
B


CIII
CV
VII
CVII
CVII
CVII
CVII
simile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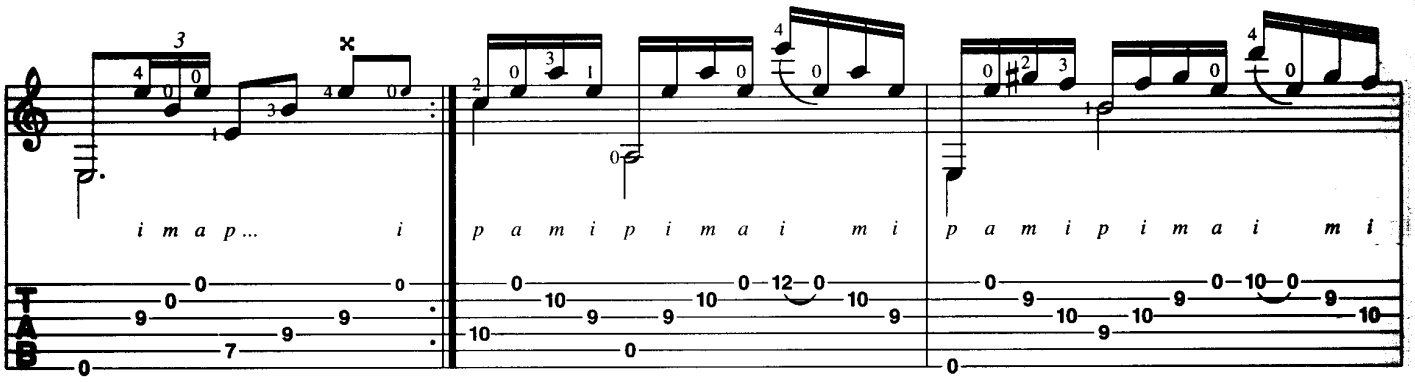
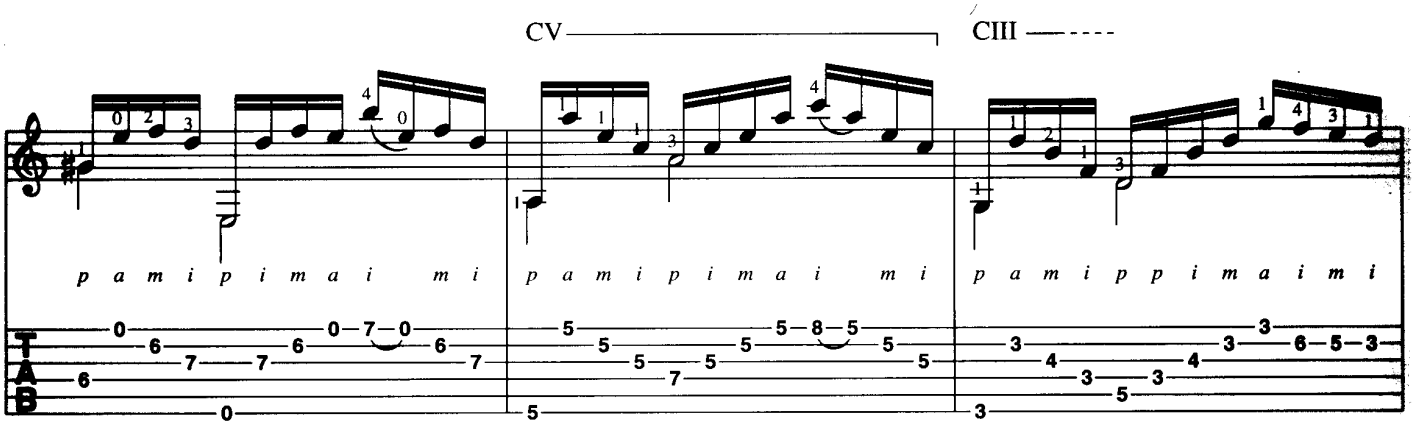
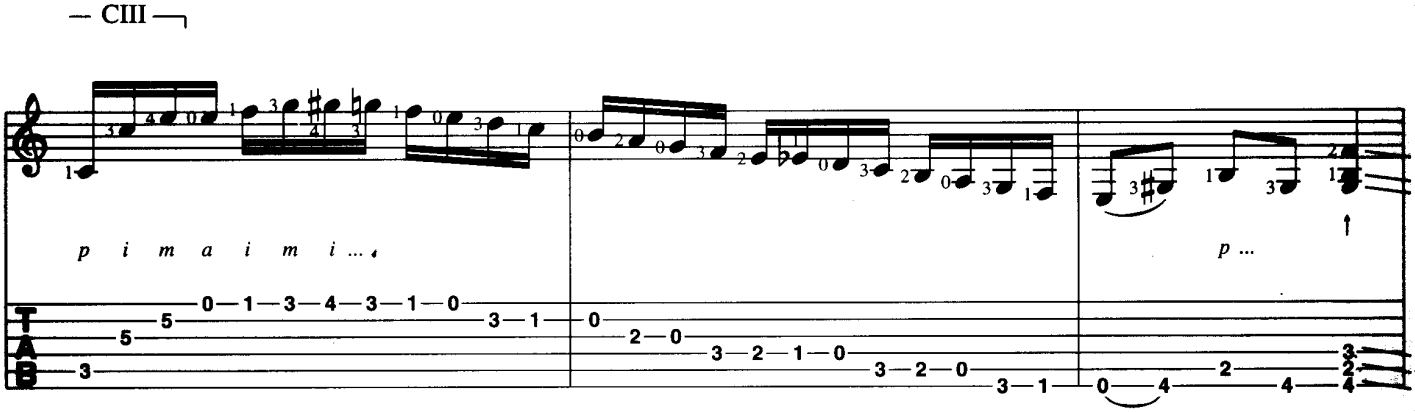
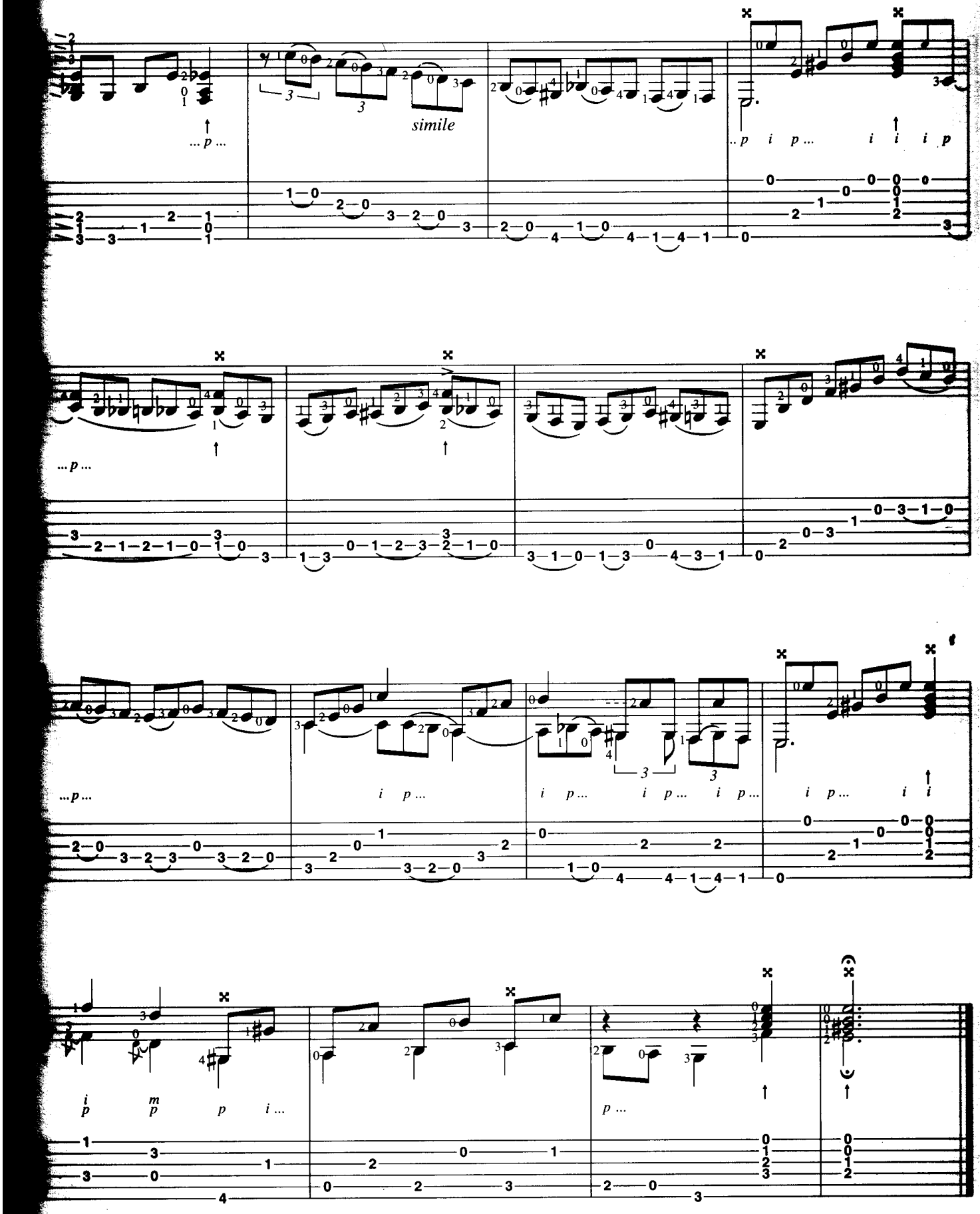
p i m a m i p... i m a i
p i m a m i p... i m p


i m a p... i
p a m i p i m a i m i
p a m i p i m a i m i


CV
CIII
p a m i p i m a i m i
p a m i p i m a i m i
p a m i p p i m a i m i


— CIII —
p i m a i m i ...
p ...

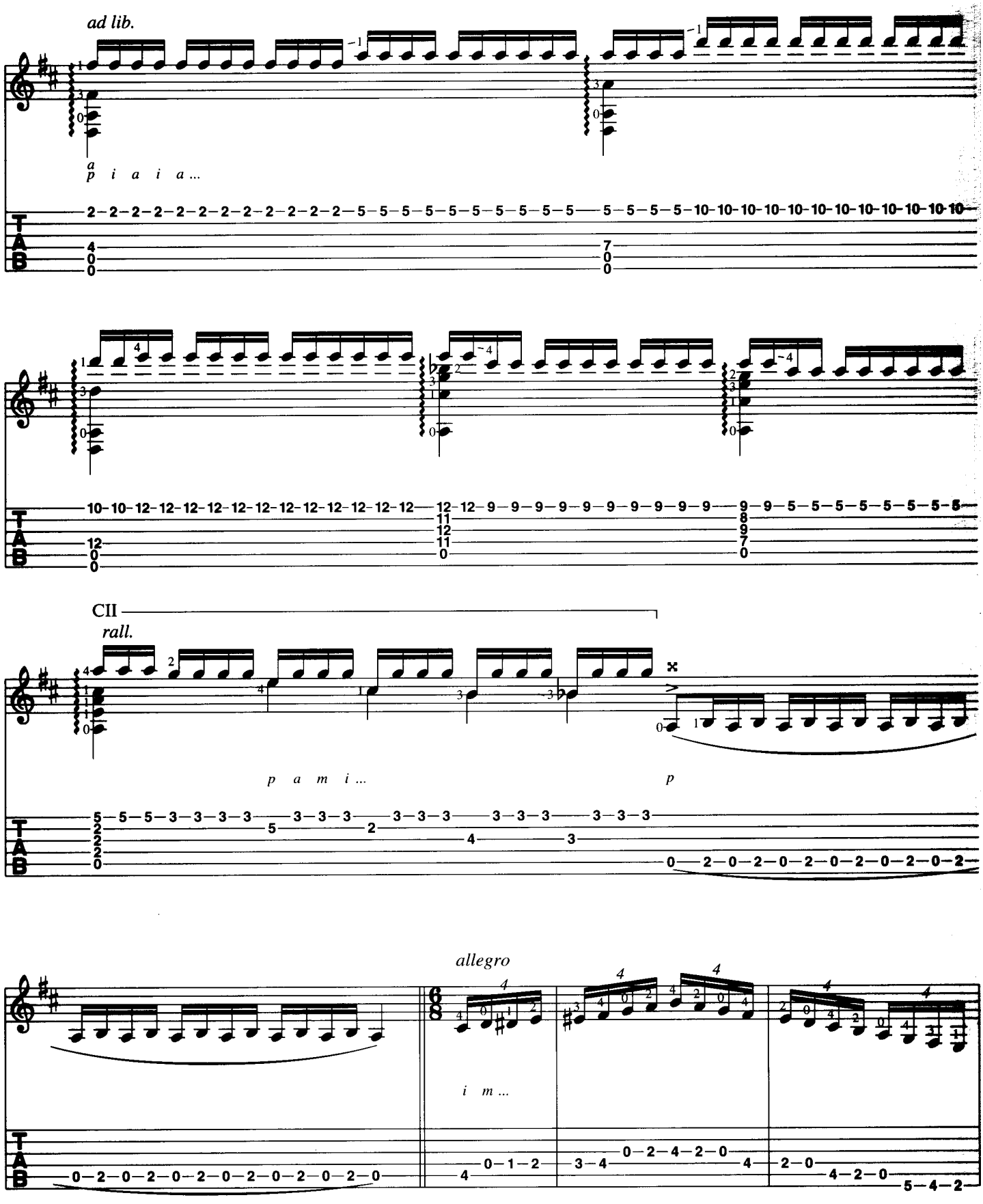

simile

ZAPATEADO EN RE

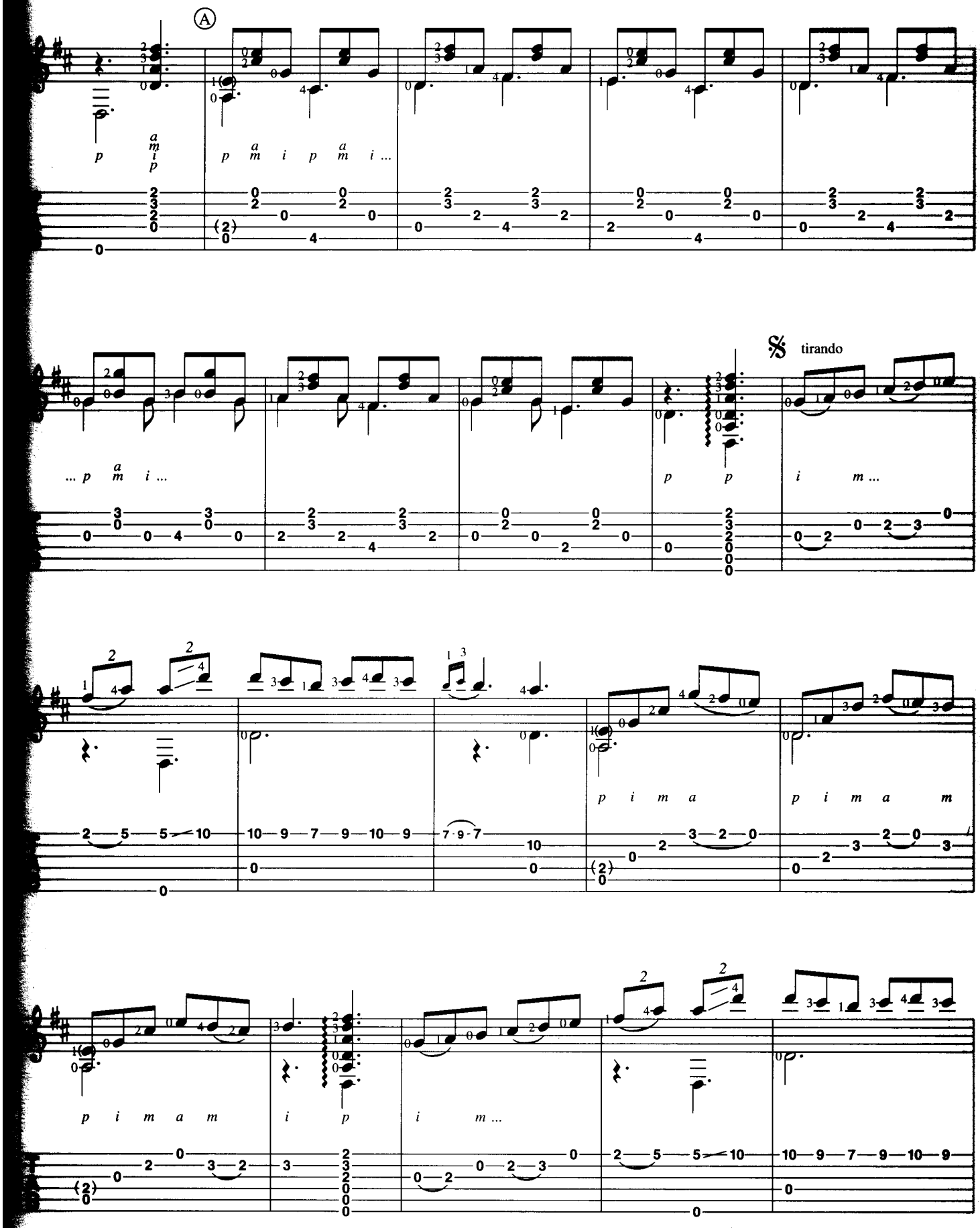
Sabicas

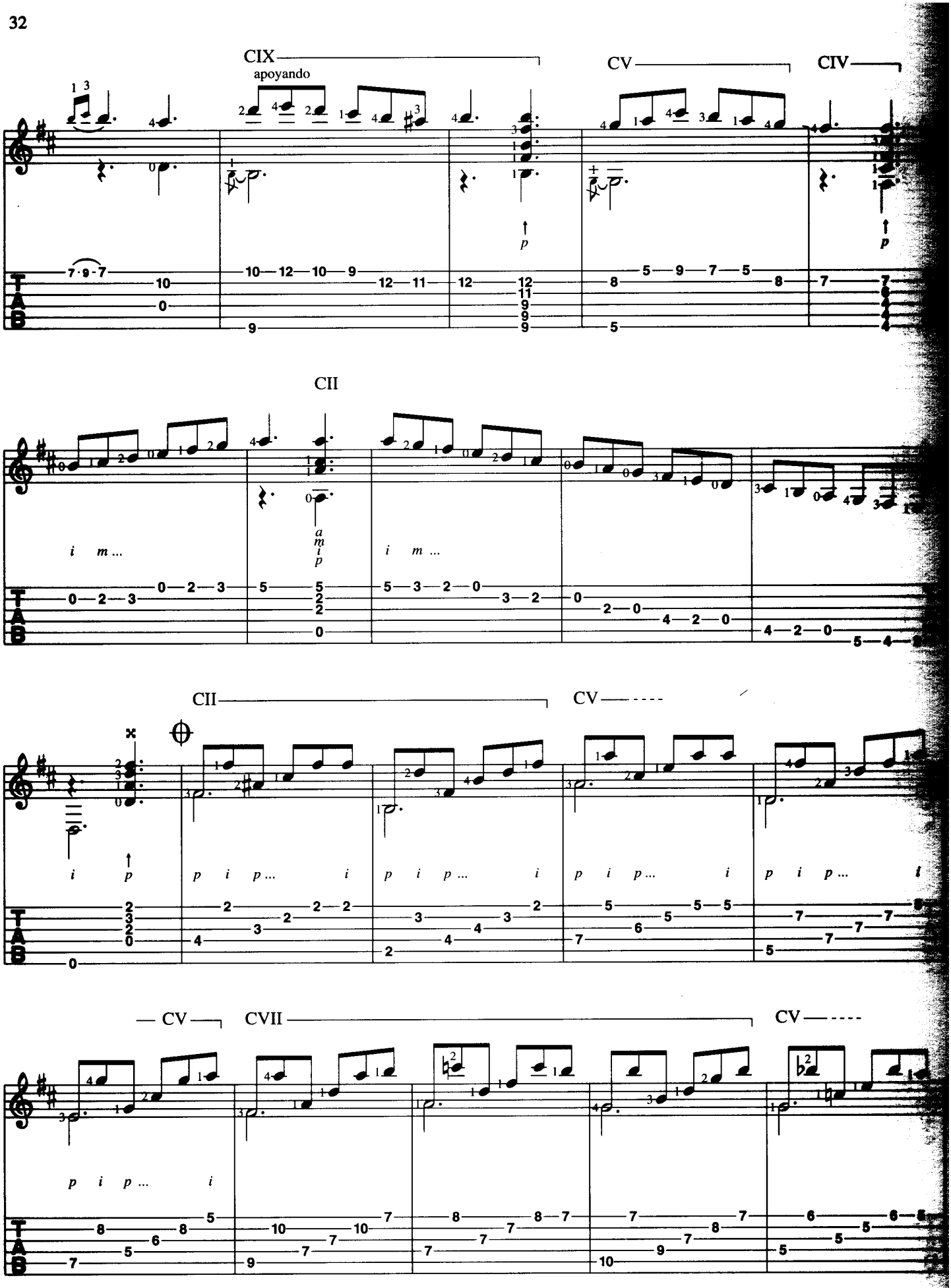
Transcription: Alain Faucher

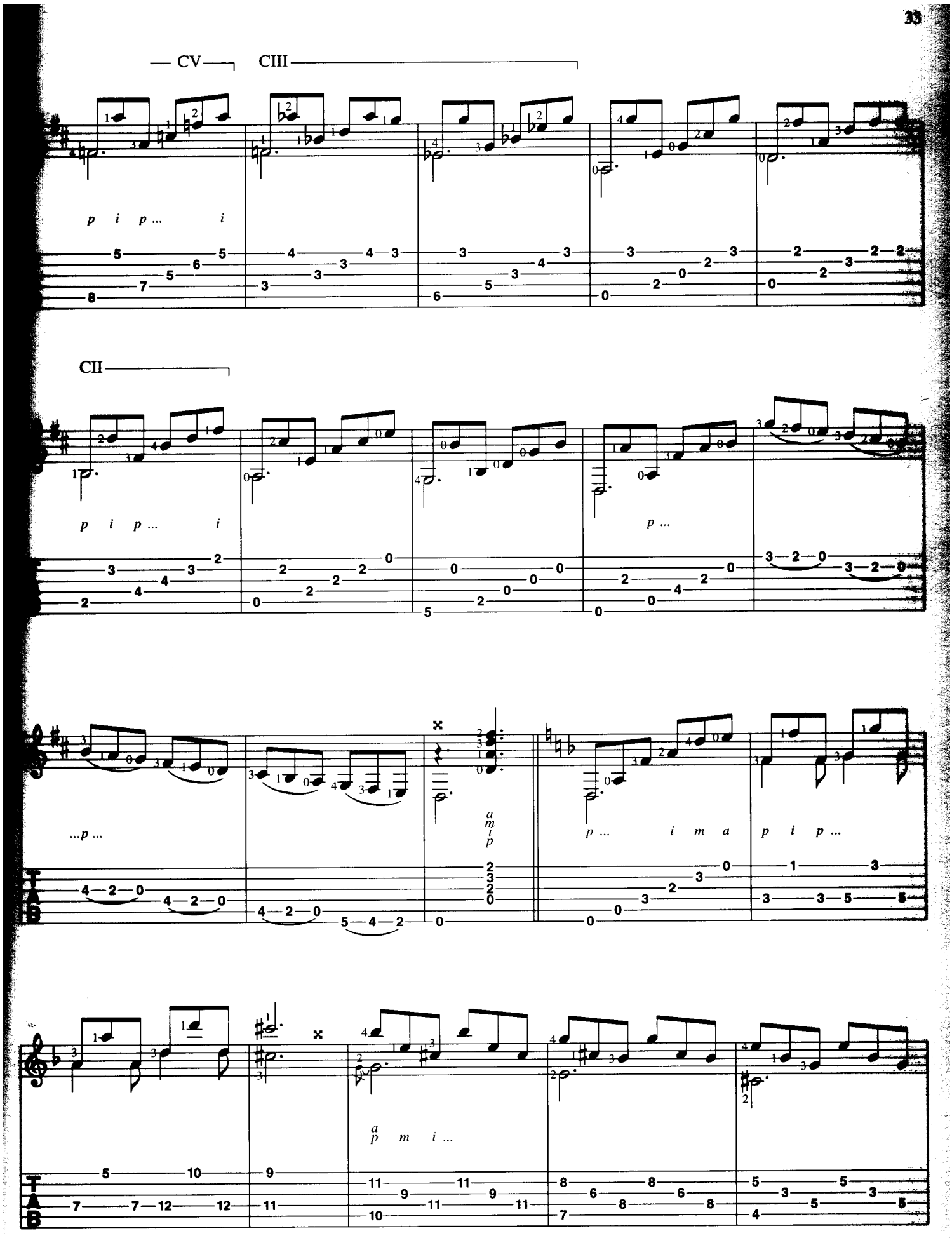
⑥ : Re

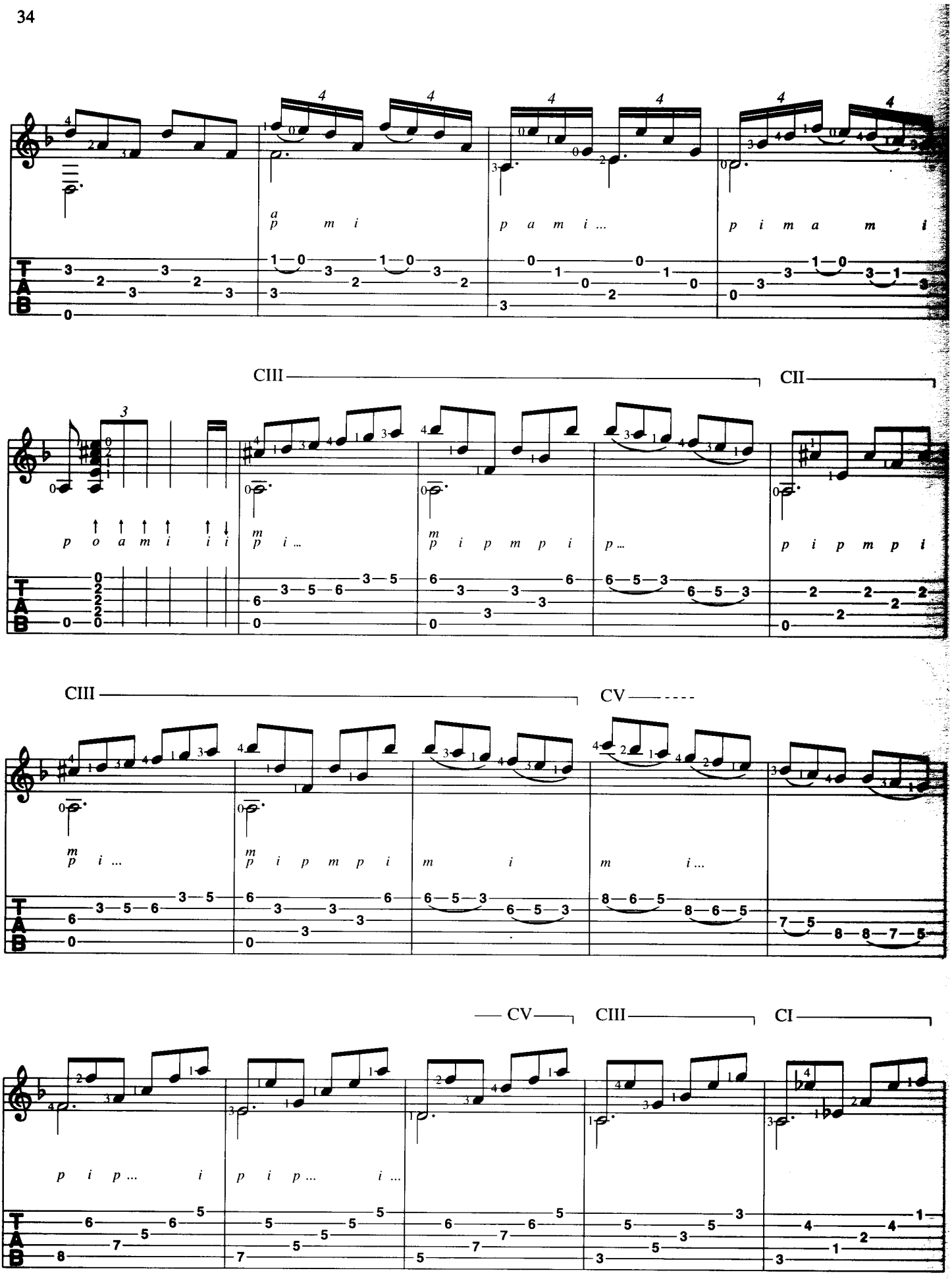


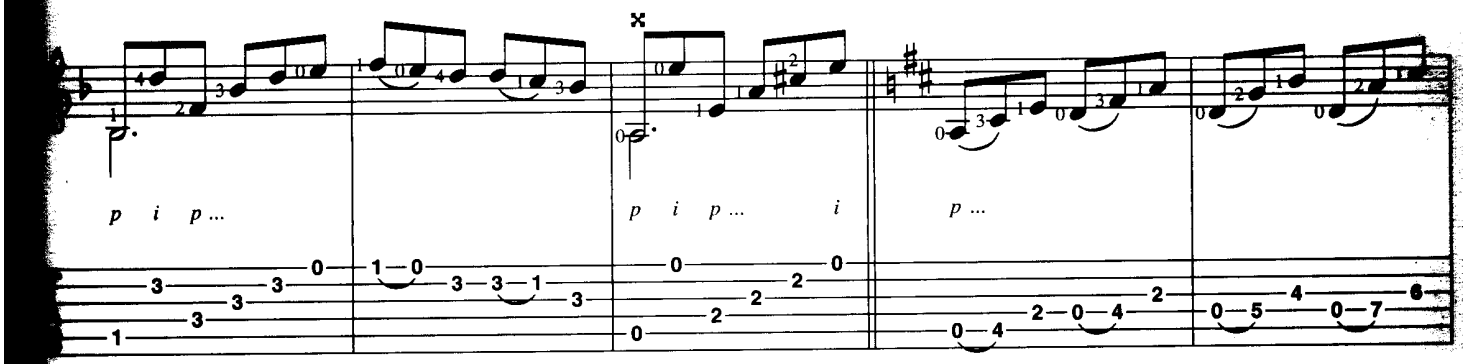
Zapateado en Re By Agustin Castellon © 1960, 1978 Cuban Music Corporation


A
tirando

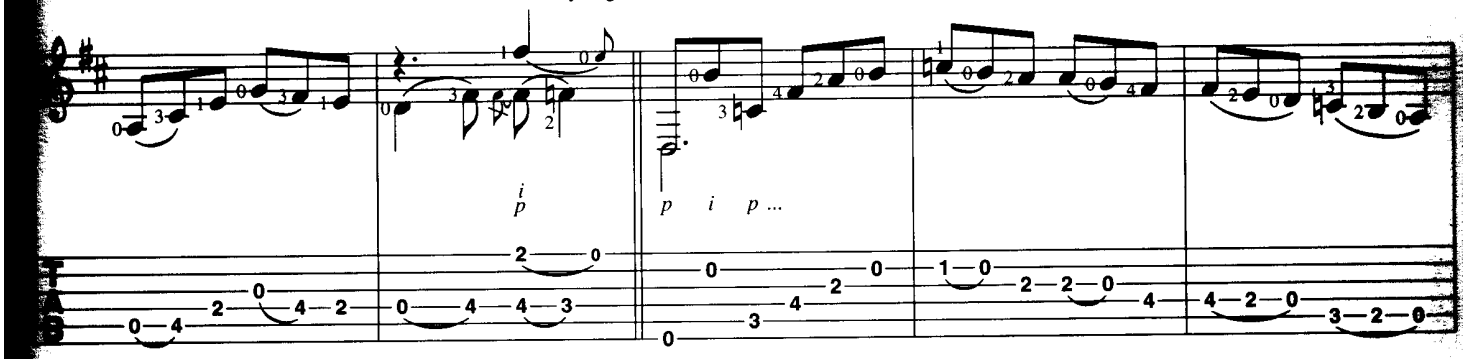

CIX
apoyando
CV
CIV
CII
CII
CV
CV
CVII
CV

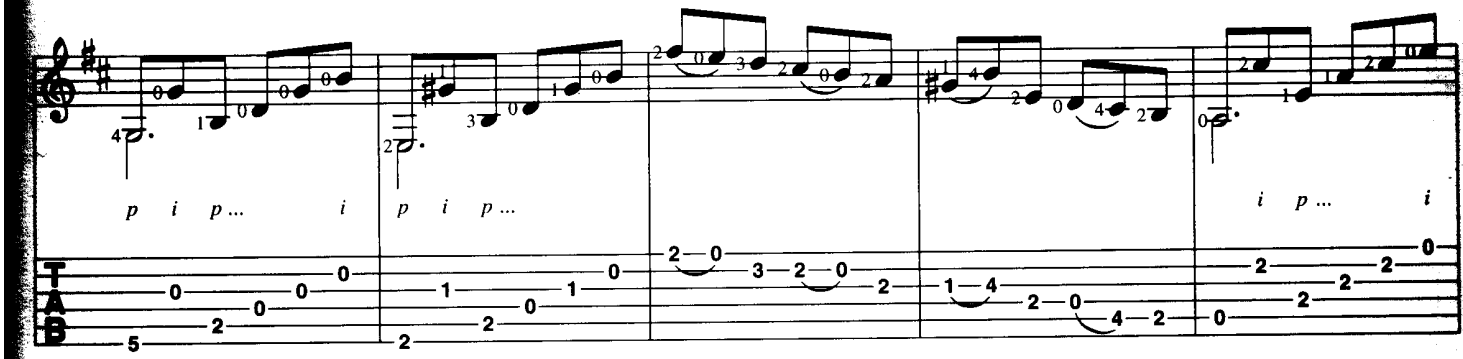

— CV —
CIII
p i p ... i
CII
p i p ... i
p ...
...p ...
a m i p
p ... i m a p i p ...
a p m i ...
T A B

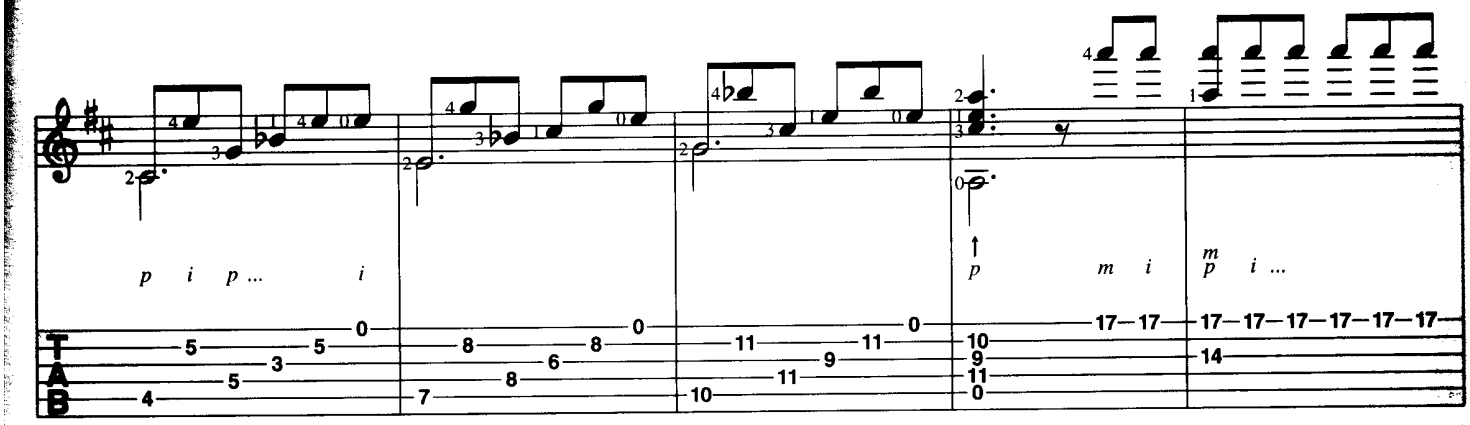

CIII
CII
CIII
CV
CV
CIII
CI

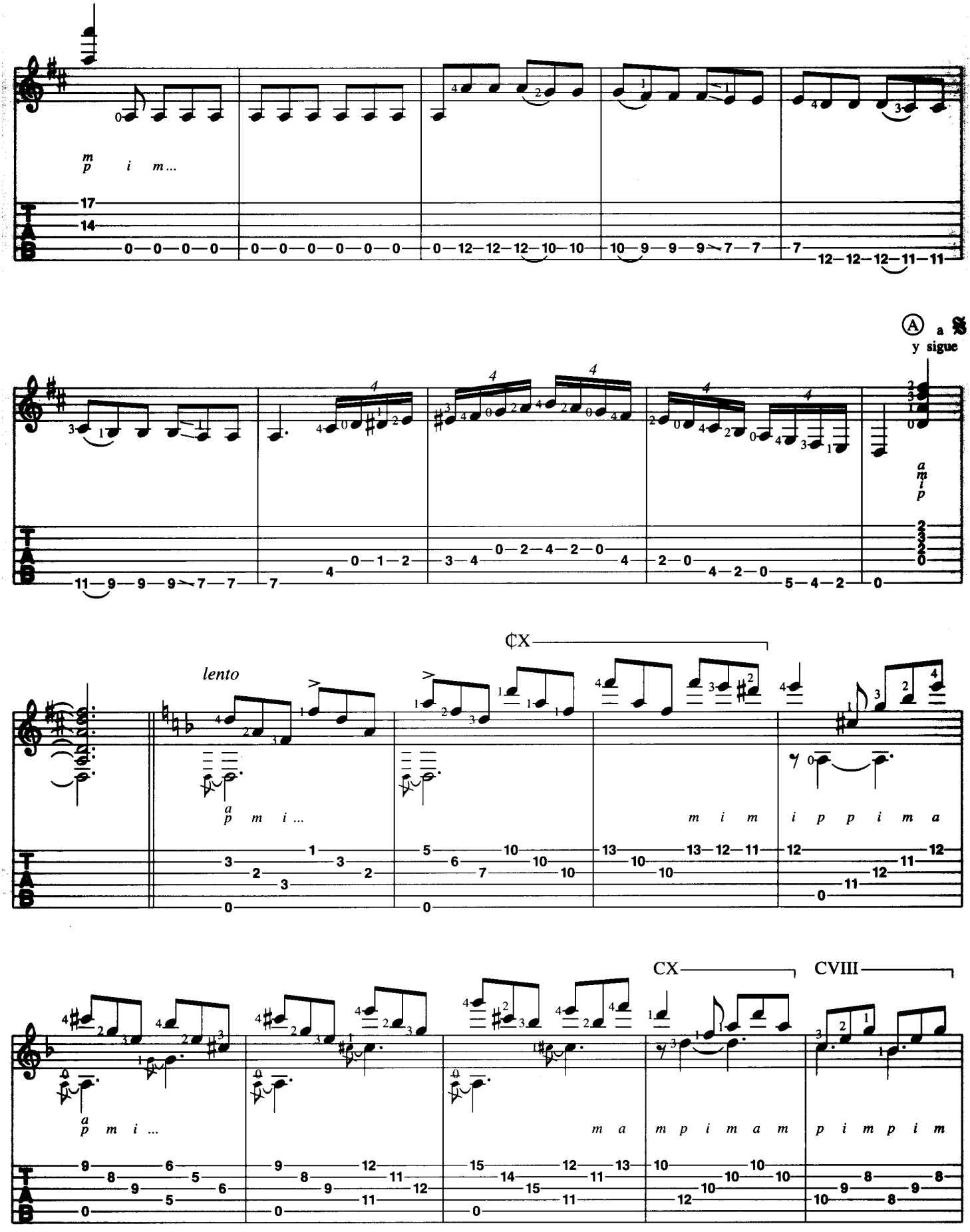


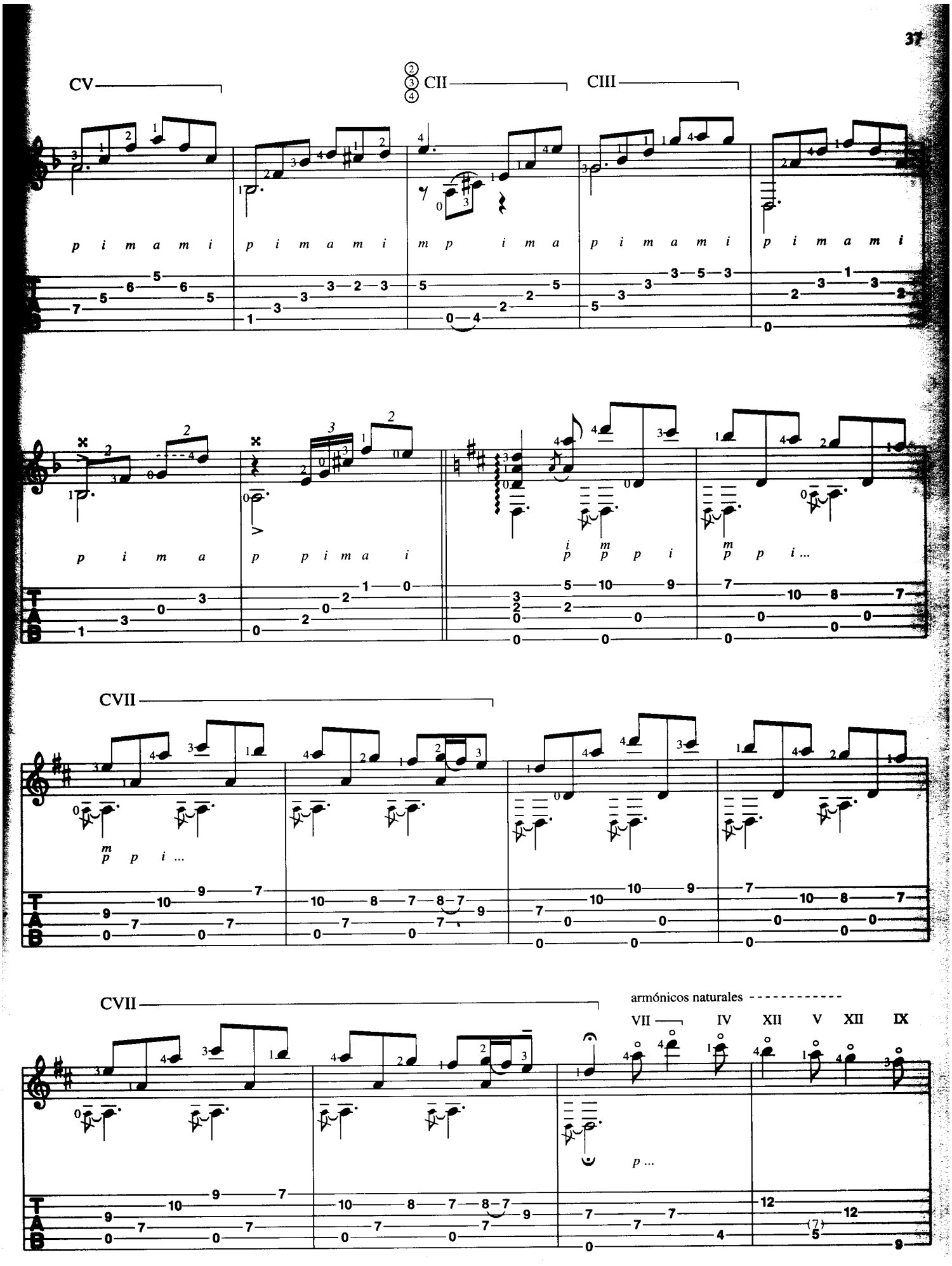
Ⓐ a 𝄋
y sigue

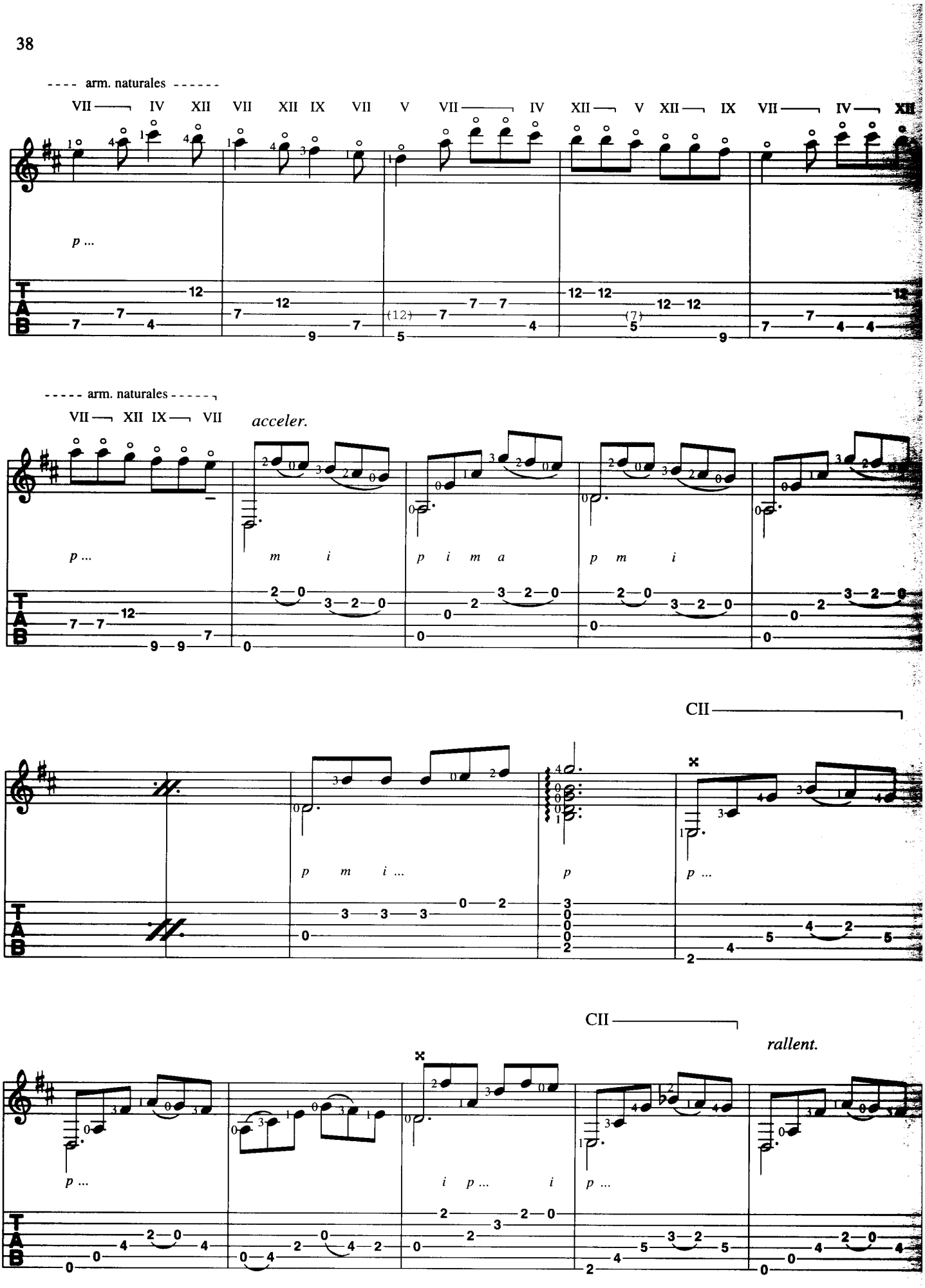


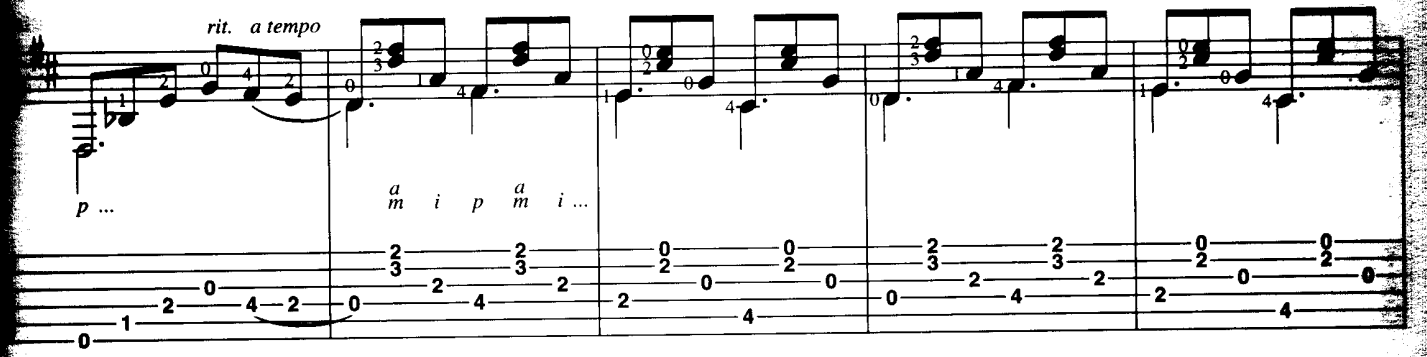


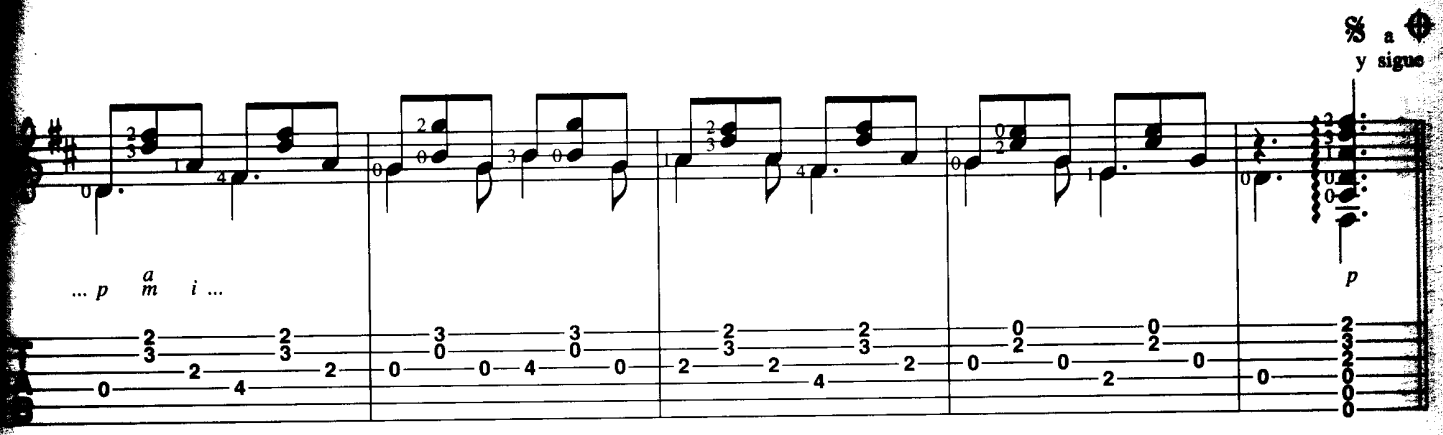


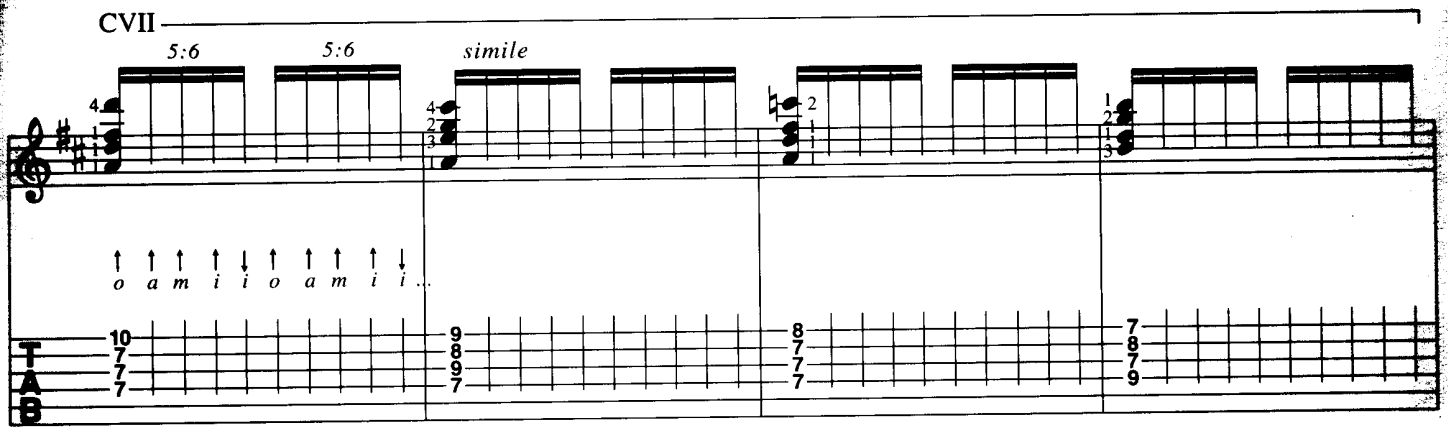

m i m...
Ⓐ a
y sigue
a m i p
lento
¢X
a p m i ...
m i m
i p p i m a
CX
CVIII
a p m i ...
m a
m p i m a m
p i m p i m
T
A
B

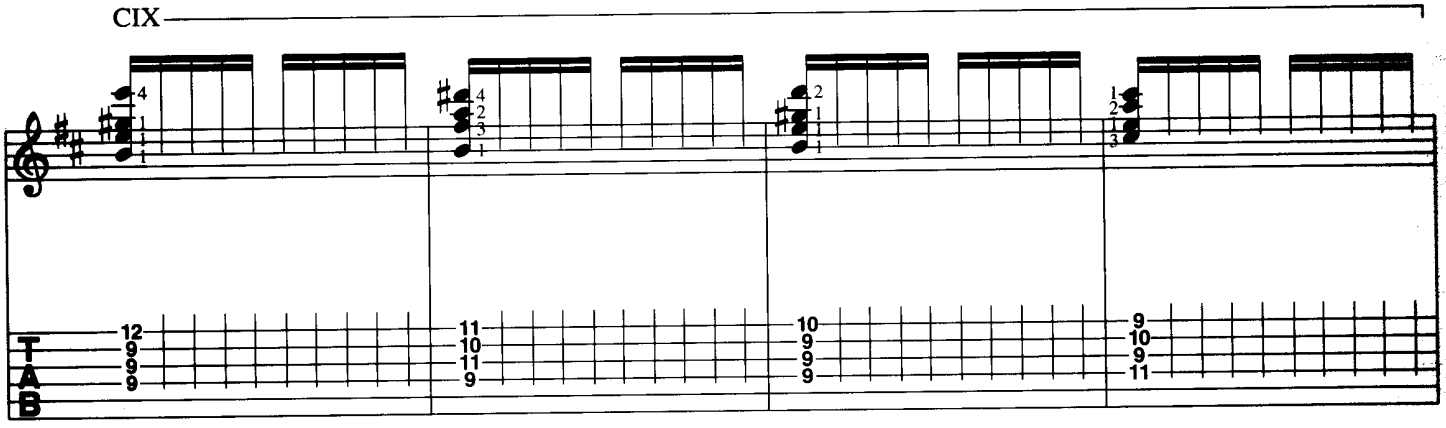

CV
CII
CIII
p i m a m i p i m a m i m p i m a p i m a m i p i m a m i
p i m a p p i m a i
i m
p p p i
m
p p i ...
CVII
m
p p i ...
CVII
armónicos naturales
VII IV XII V XII IX
p ...

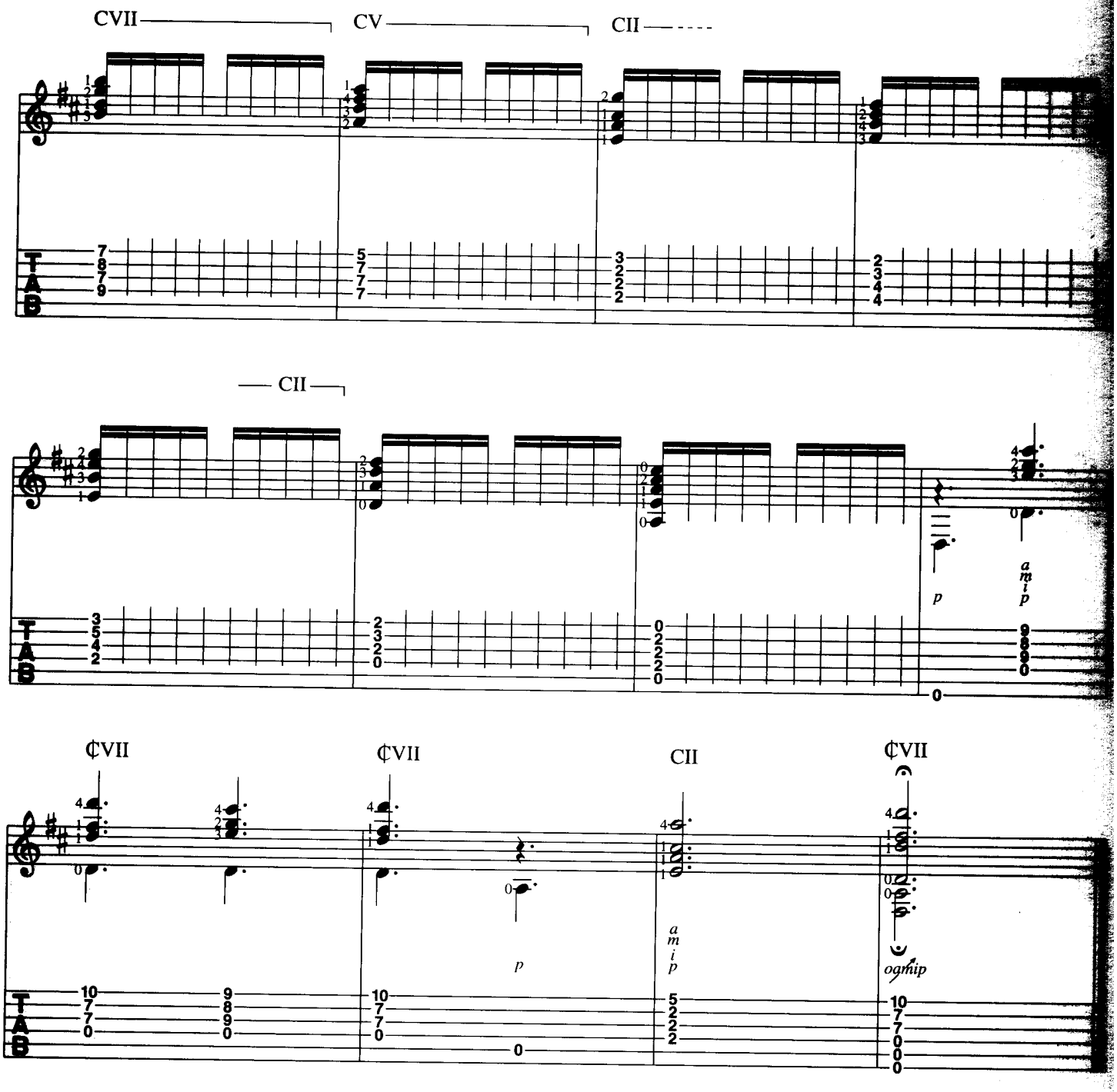

arm. naturales
VII IV XII VII XII IX VII V VII IV XII V XII IX VII IV XII
p ...
arm. naturales
VII XII IX VII
acceler.
p ... m i p i m a p m i
CII
p ... p m i ... p p ...
CII
rallent.
p ... i p ... i p ...
T
A
B


rit. a tempo
p ...
a m i p a m i ...


𝄋 a
y sigue
... p a m i ...
p


CVII
5:6
5:6
simile
o a m i i o a m i i ...


CIX

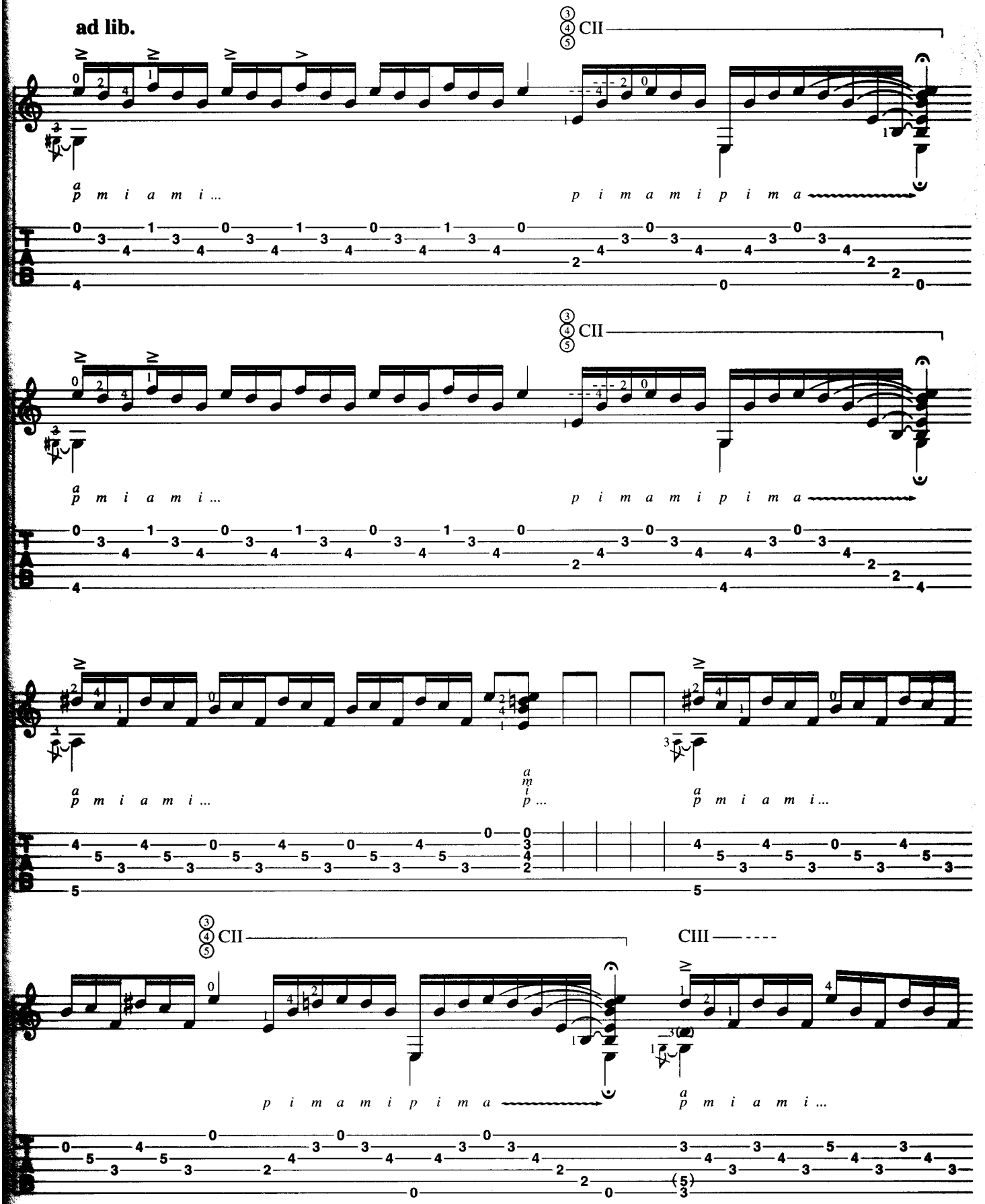

CVII
CV
CII
CII
p
a m i p
¢VII
¢VII
CII
¢VII
p
a m i p
oamip

LA TRINIDAD

Sabicas

Capo: III

Transcription: Alain Faucher



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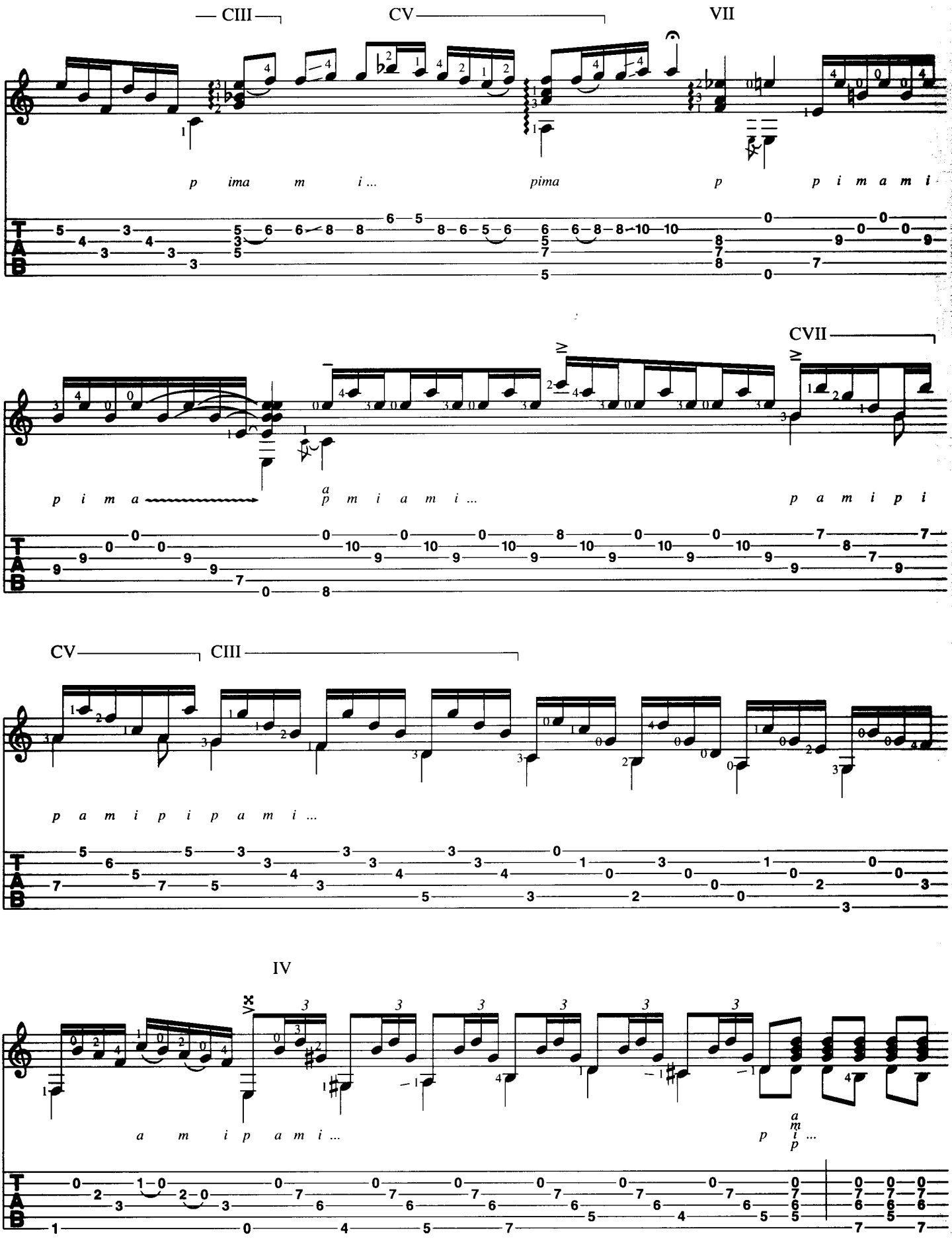
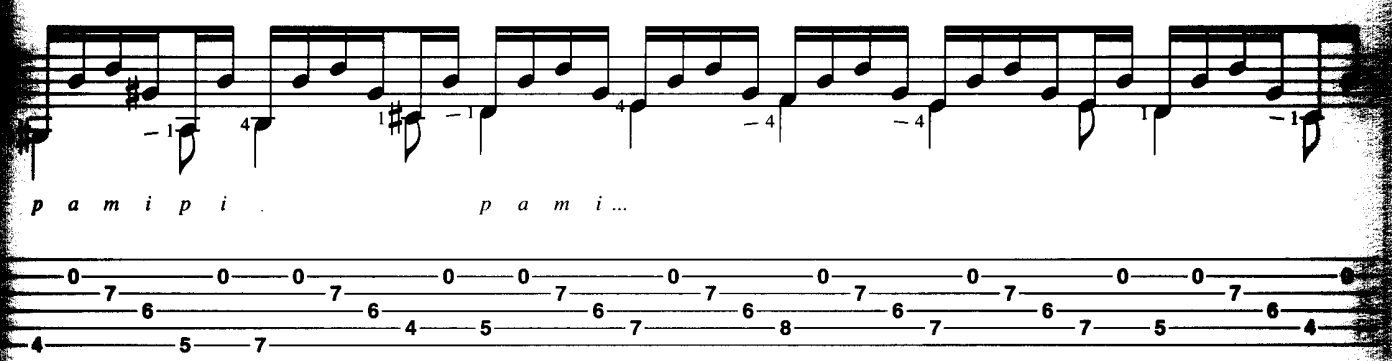

— CIII —
CV
VII
p ima m i ... pima p p i m a m i
CVII
p i m a a p m i a m i ... p a m i p i
CV
CIII
p a m i p i p a m i ...
IV
a m i p a m i ... p a m i p ...



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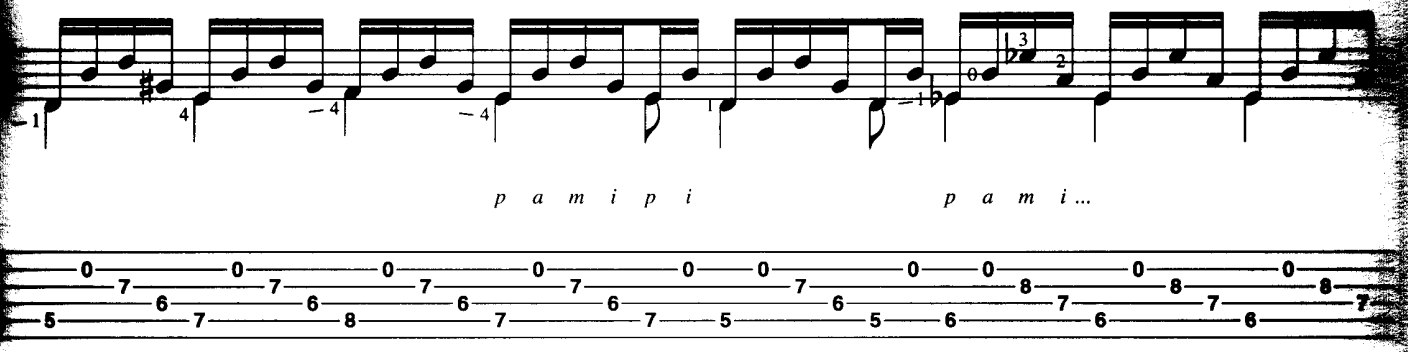
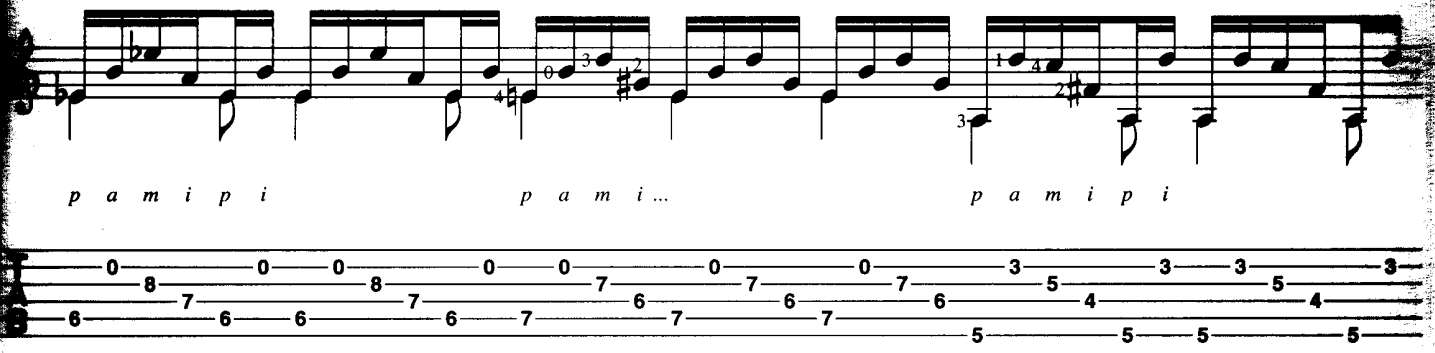
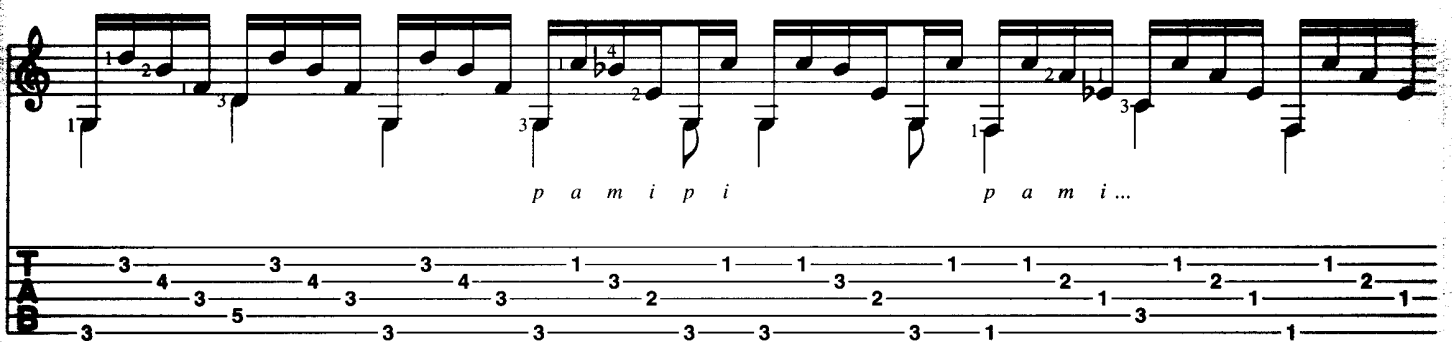


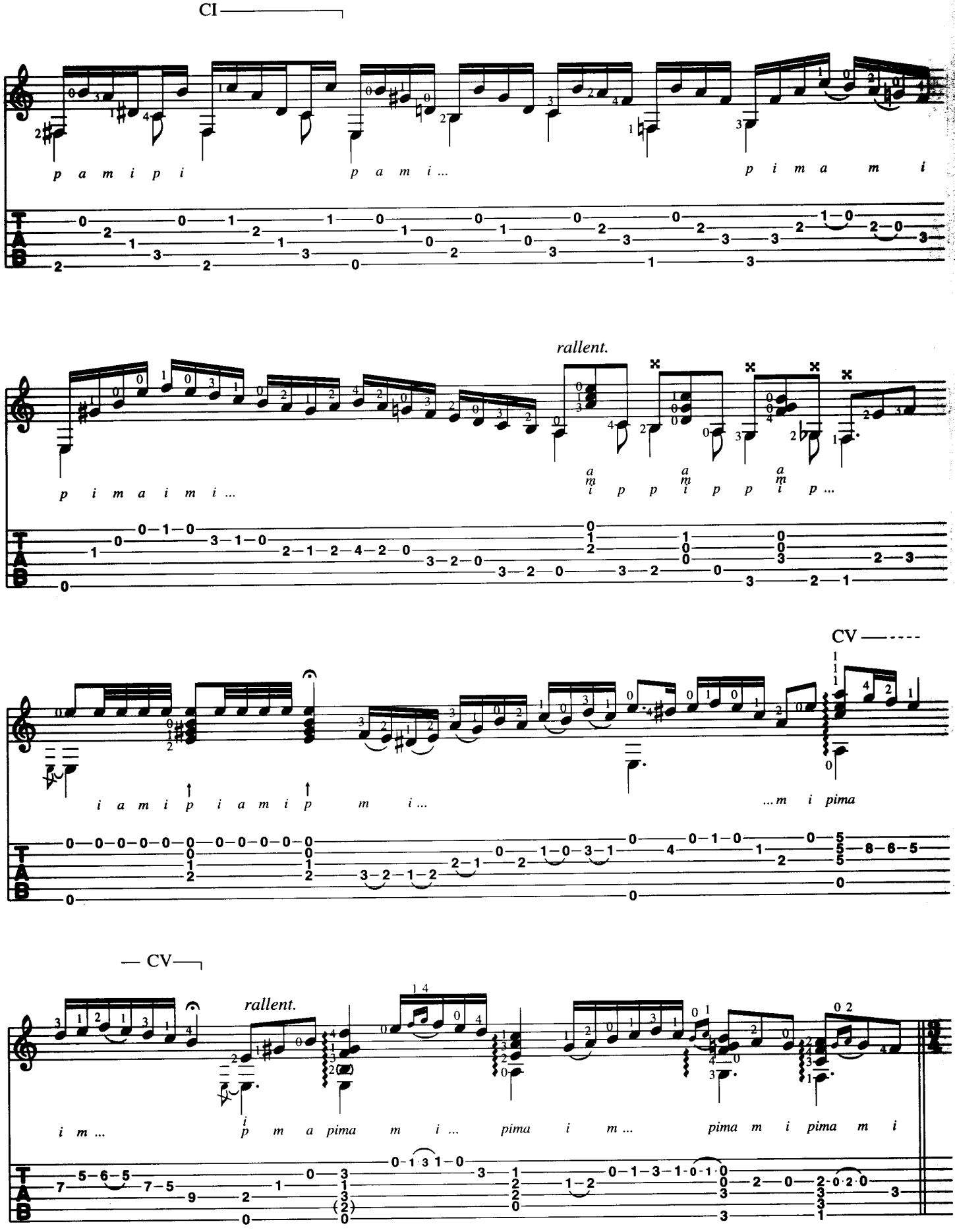
IV

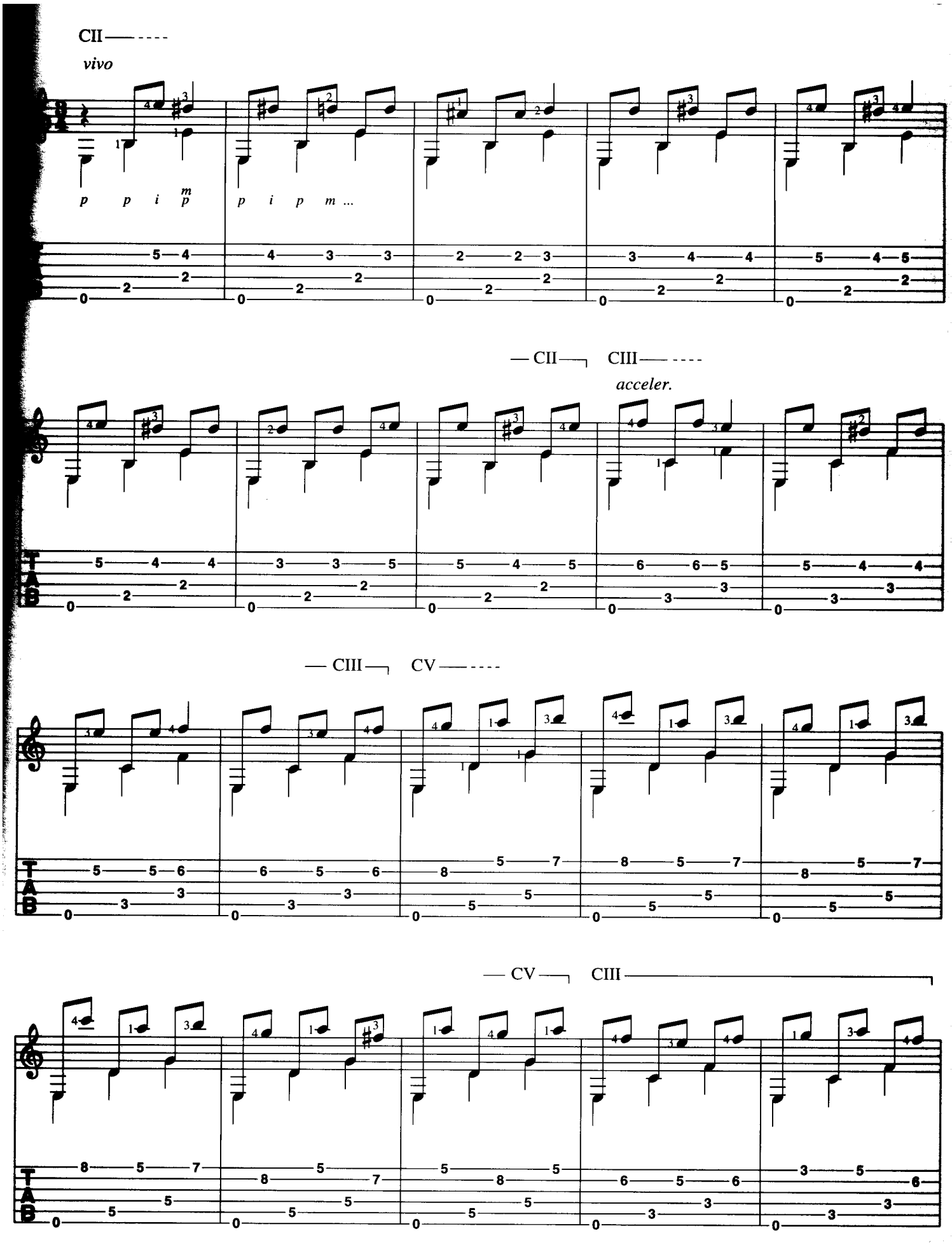
CIII

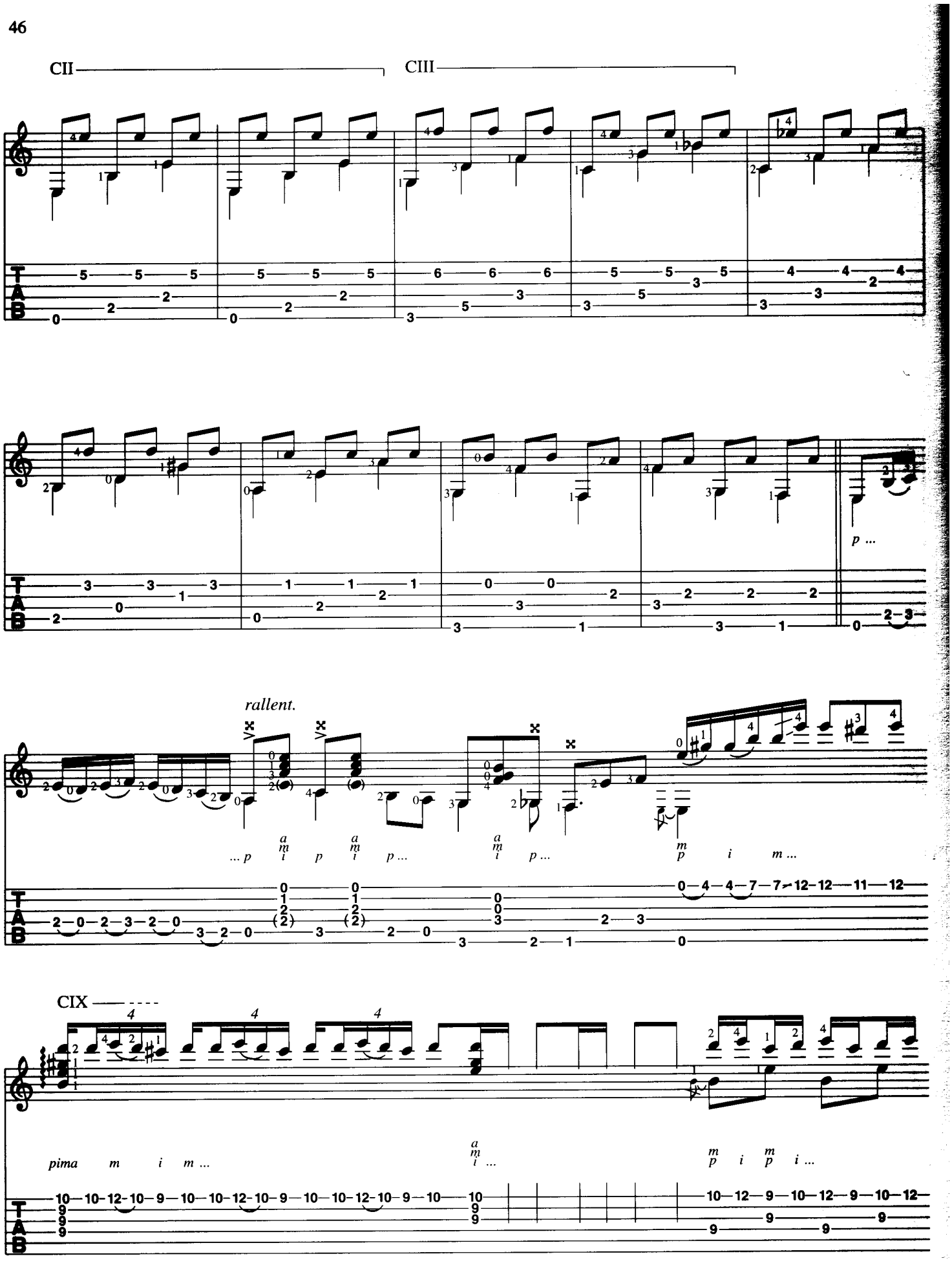


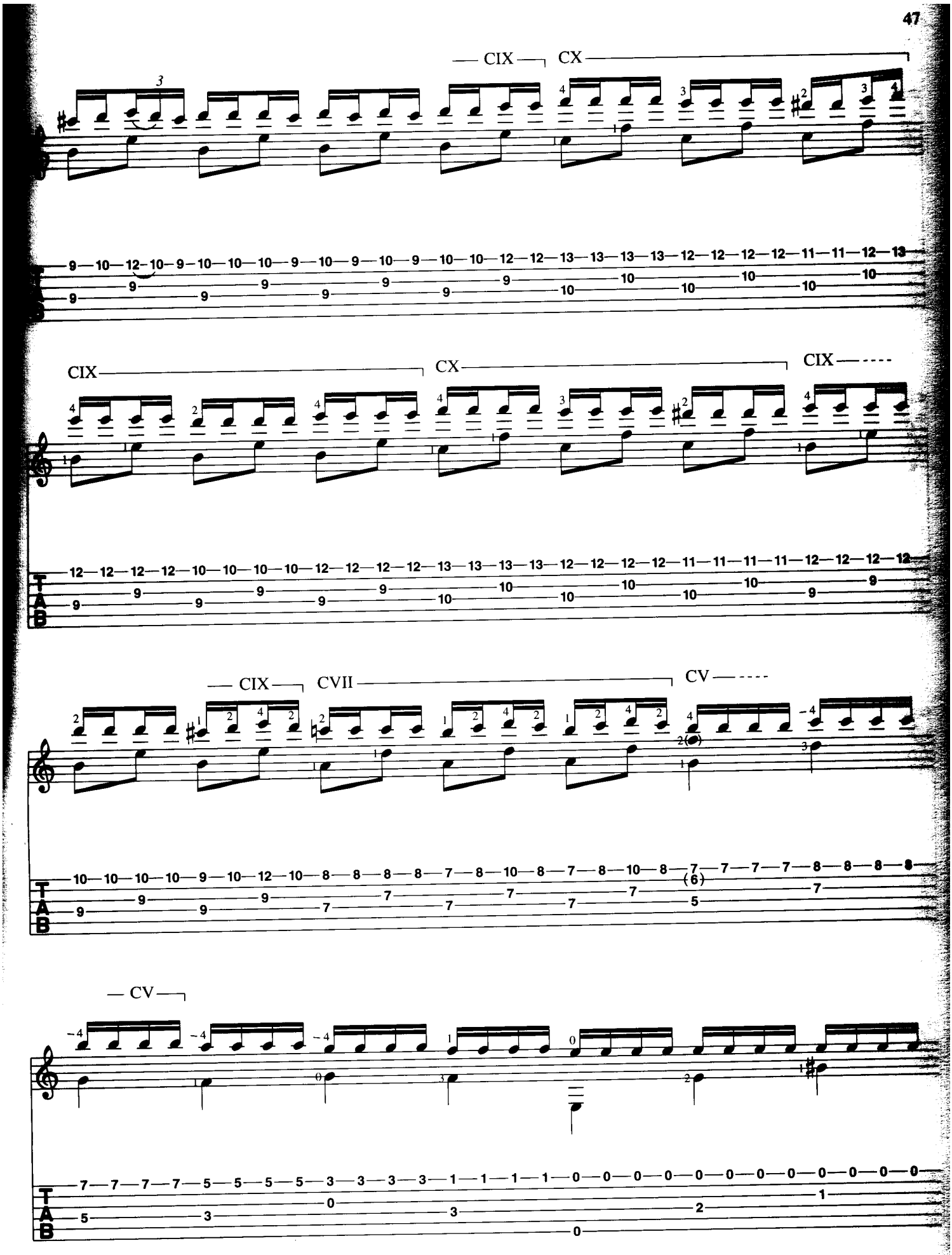
CIII CI

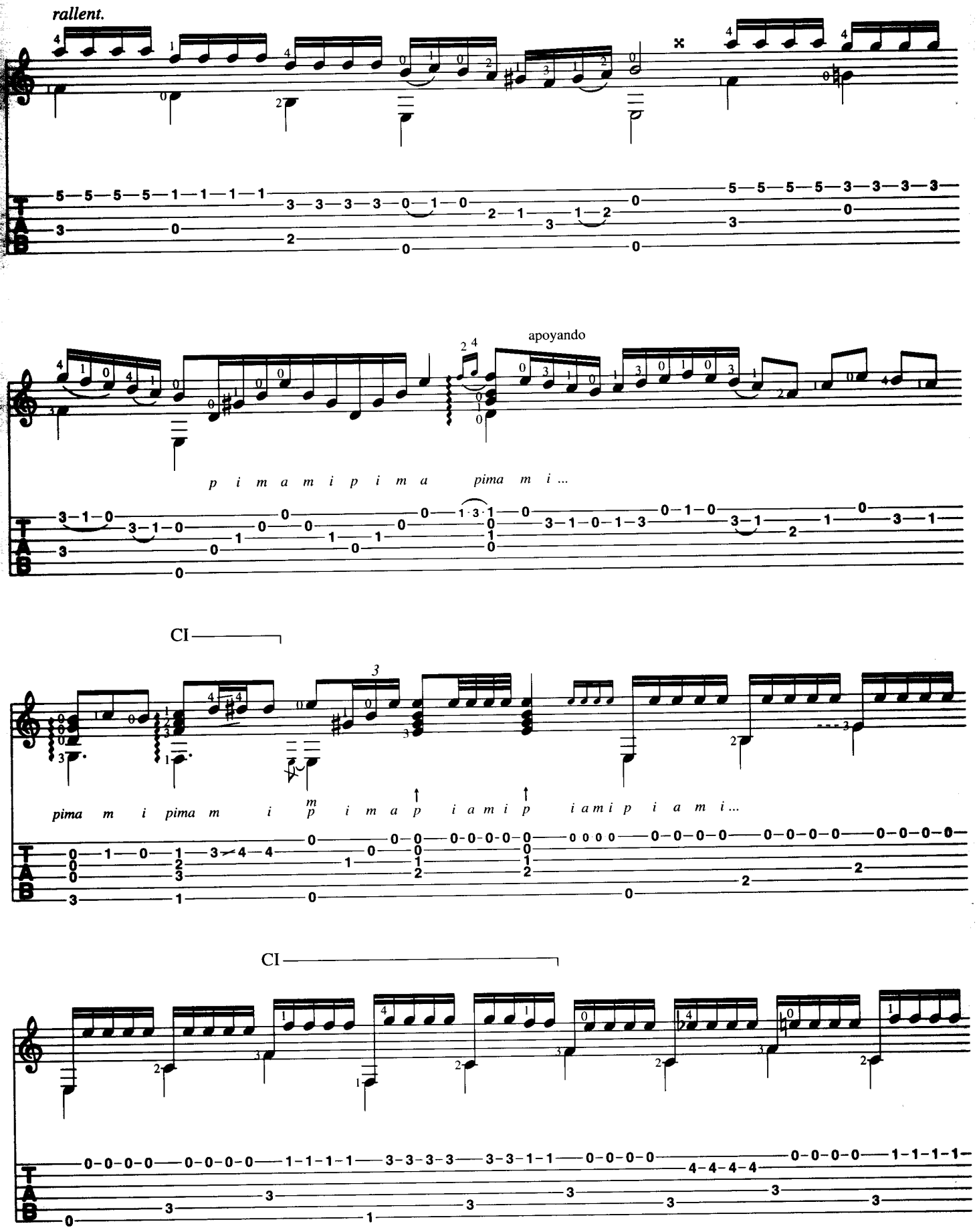


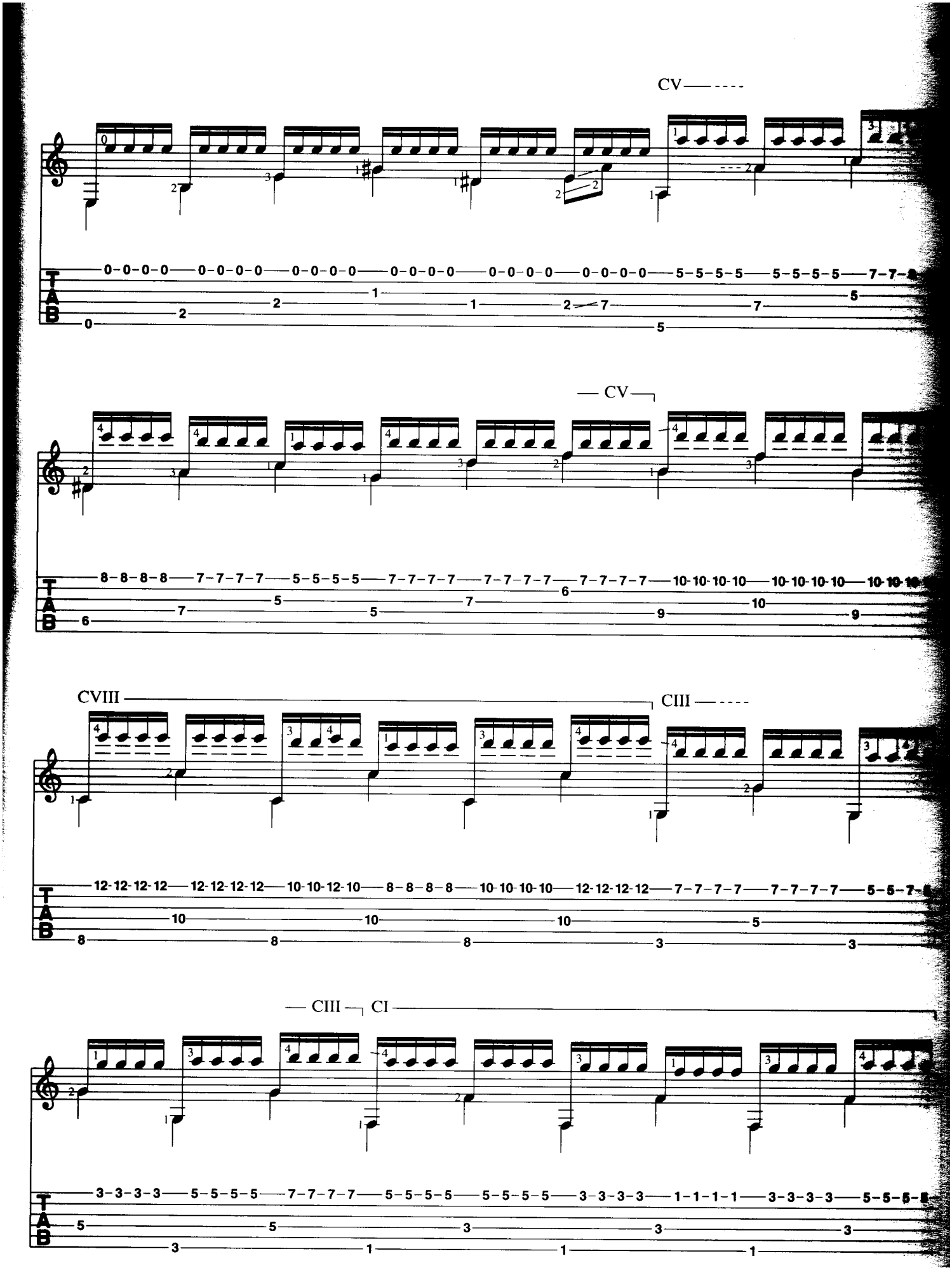

CI
p a m i p i
p a m i ...
p i m a m i
rallent.
p i m a i m i ...
a m i p p a m i p p a m i p ...
CV
i a m i p i a m i p m i ...
...m i pima
— CV
rallent.
i m ...
i p m a pima m i ... pima i m ... pima m i pima m i
T
A
B

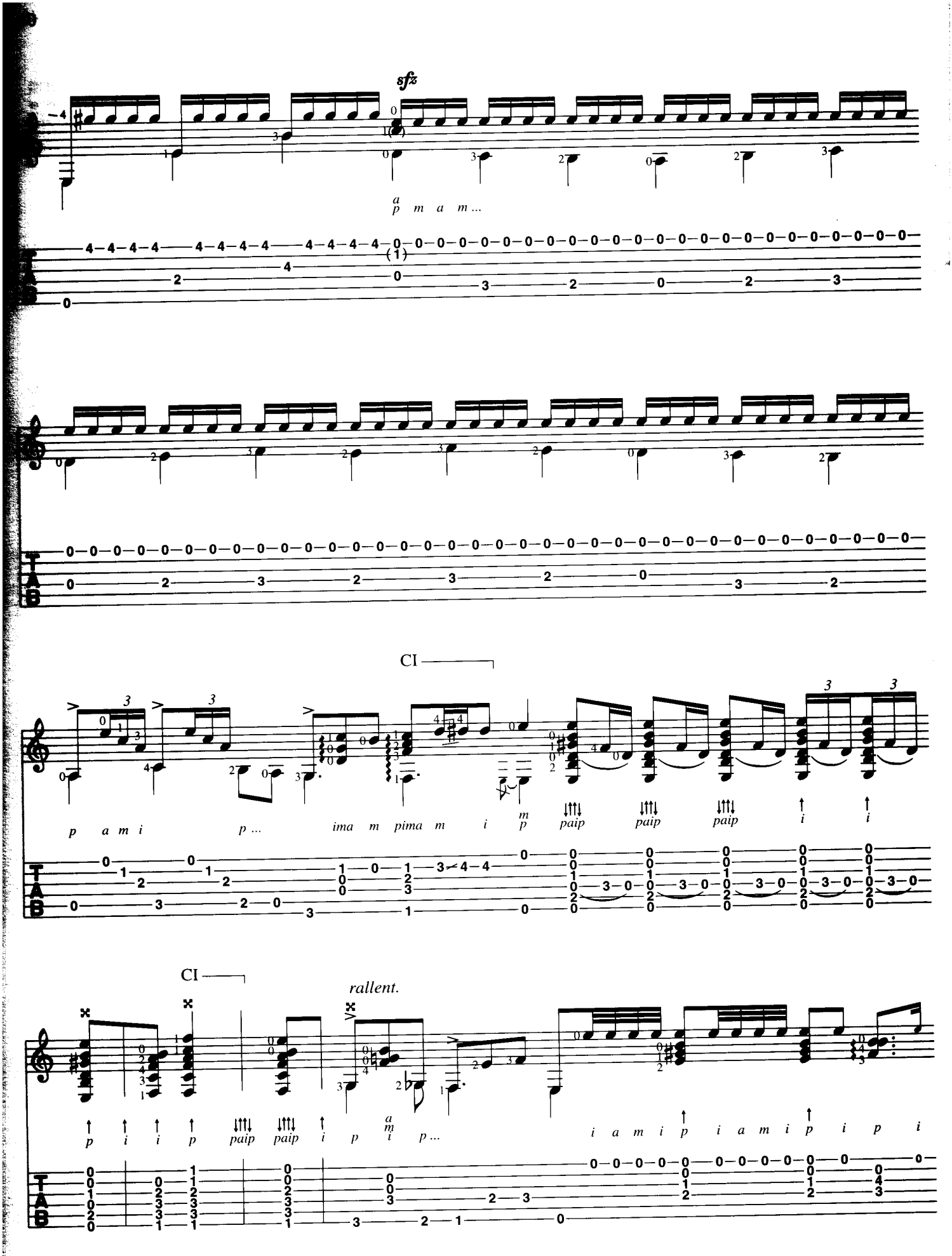

CII
vivo
p p i m p
p i p m ...
— CII — CIII
acceler.
— CIII — CV
— CV — CIII
T
A
B

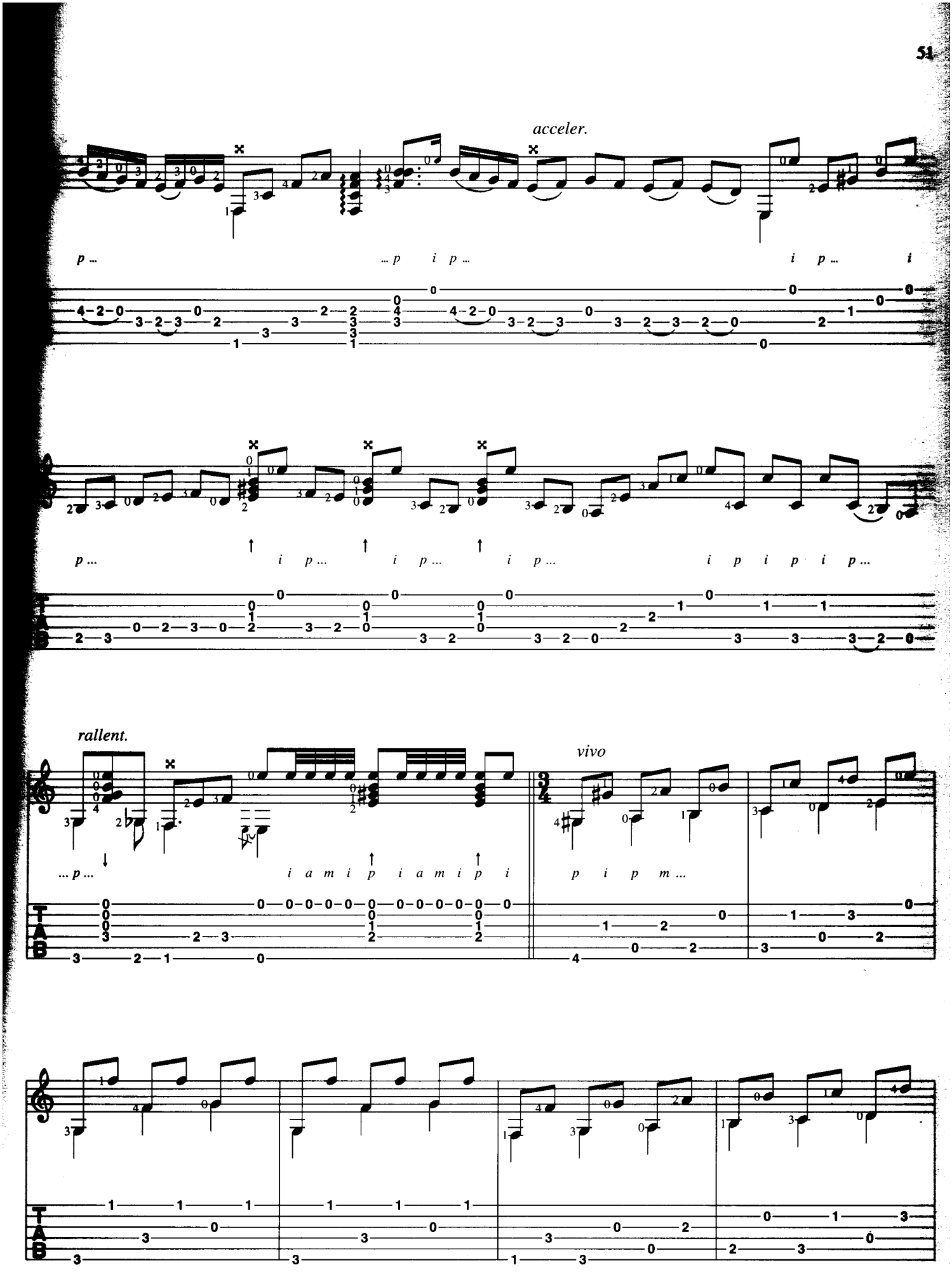

CII
CIII
p ...
rallent.
... p
p ...
p ...
m ...
CIX
pima
m
i
m ...
i ...
p
i
p
i ...

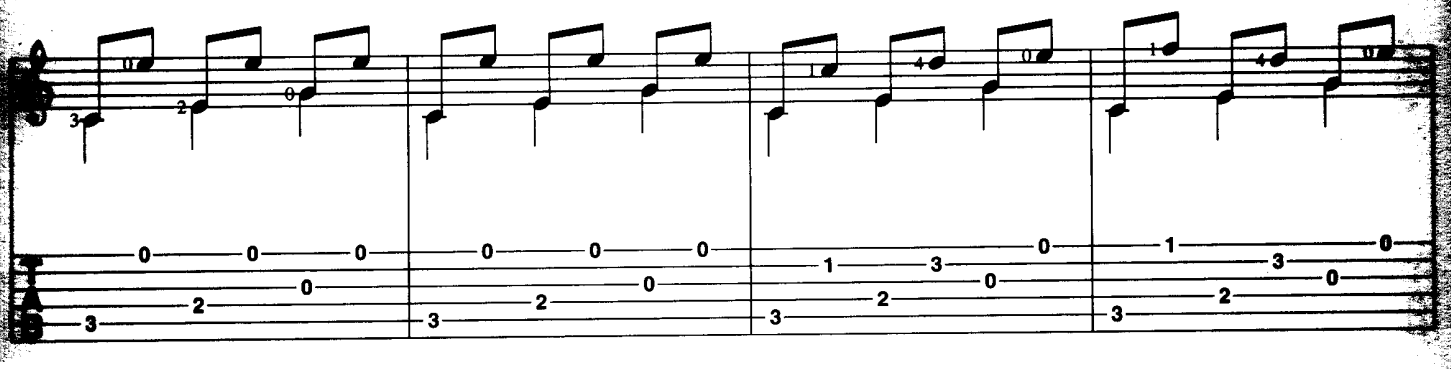

CIX
CX
CIX
CX
CIX
CIX
CVII
CV
CV

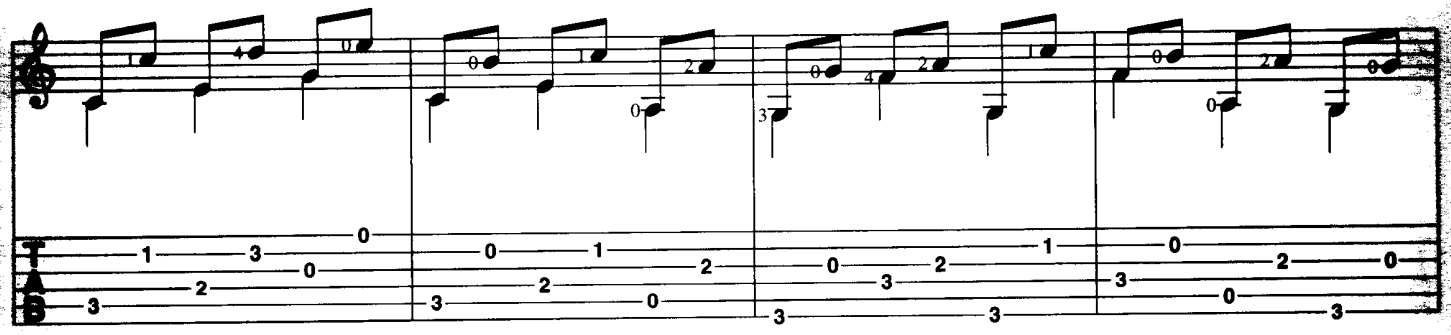

rallent.
apoyando
p i m a m i p i m a pima m i ...
CI
pima m i pima m i p i m a p i a m i p i a m i p i a m i ...
CI


CV
CV
CVIII
CIII
CIII
CI

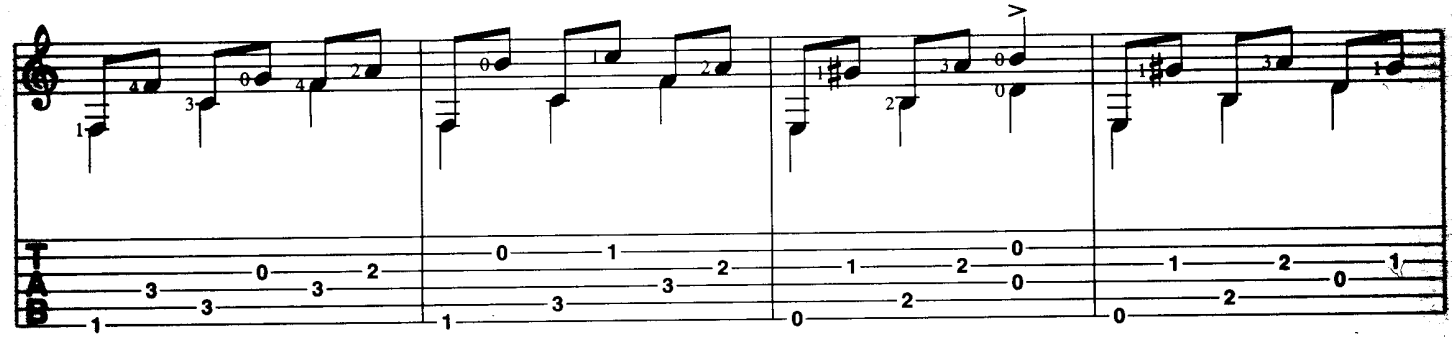

sfz
a p m a m...
CI
p a m i p... ima m pima m i m p paip paip paip i i
CI
rallent.
p i i p paip paip i p a m i p... i a m i p i a m i p i p i

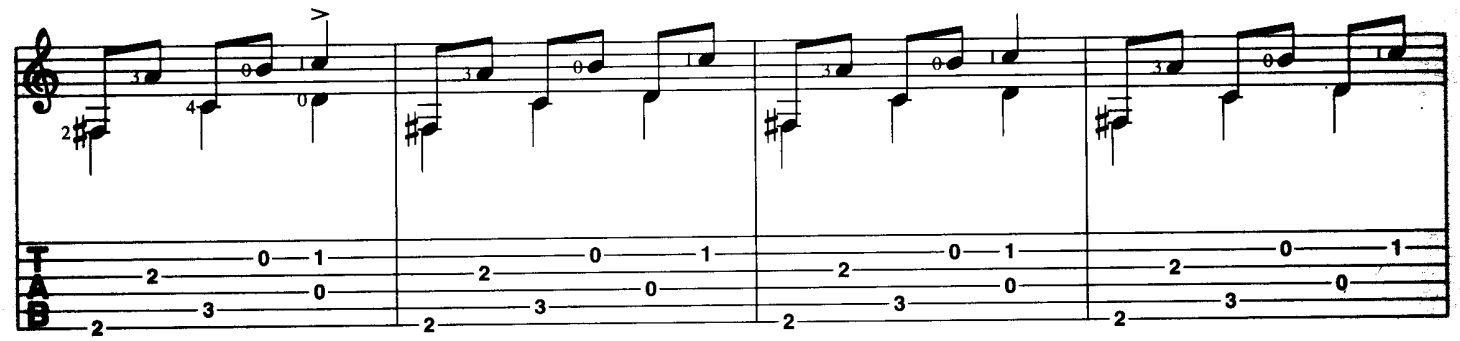

acceler.
rallent.
vivo

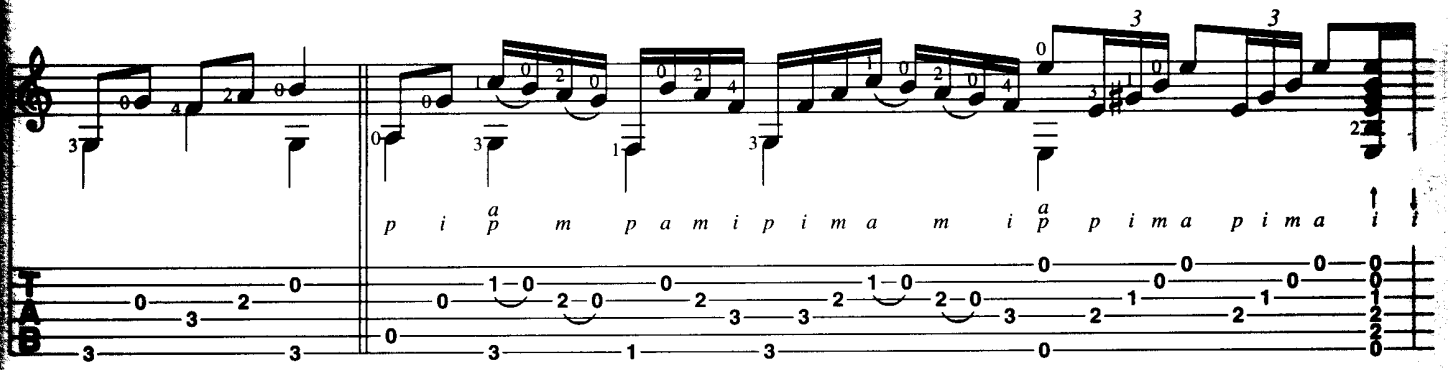




CI



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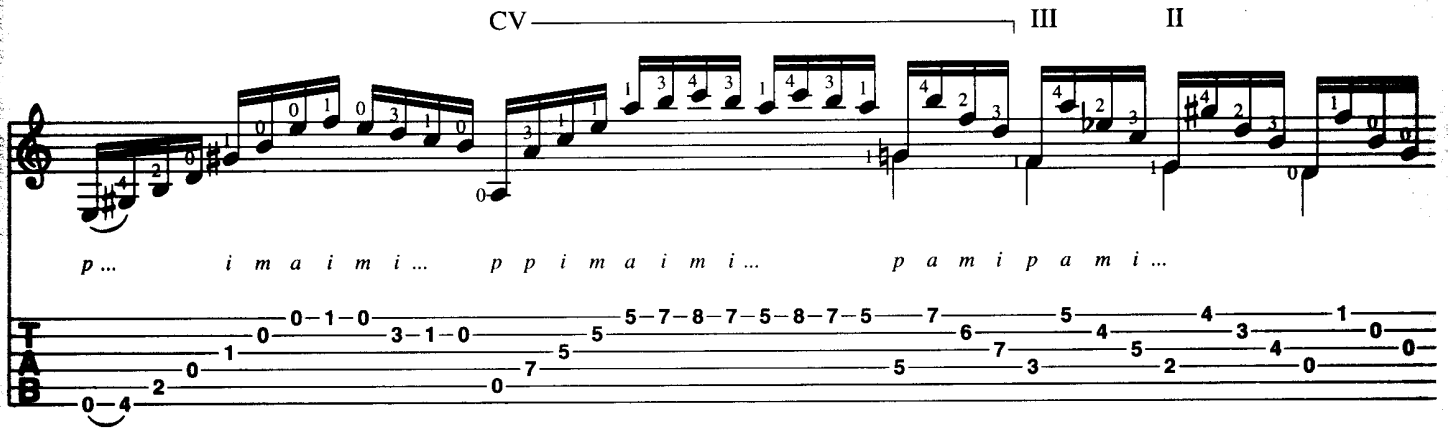
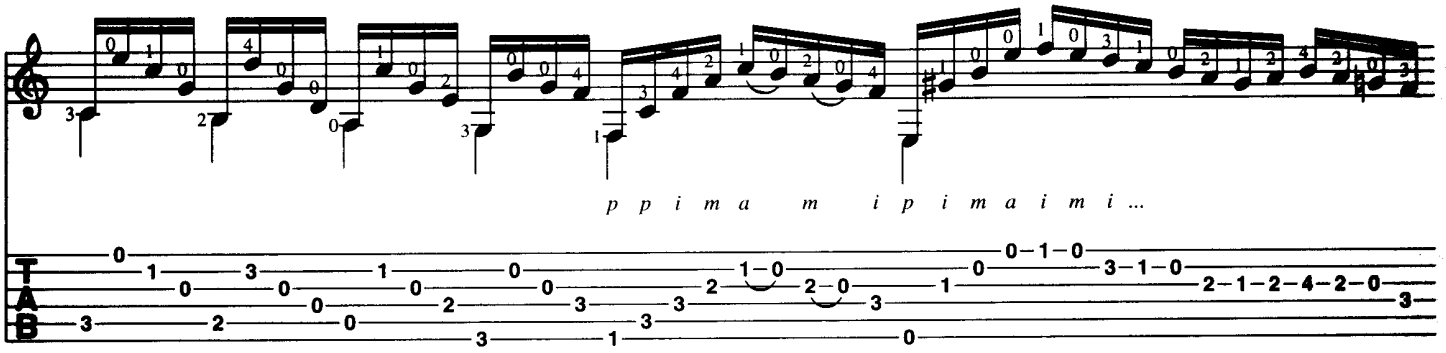
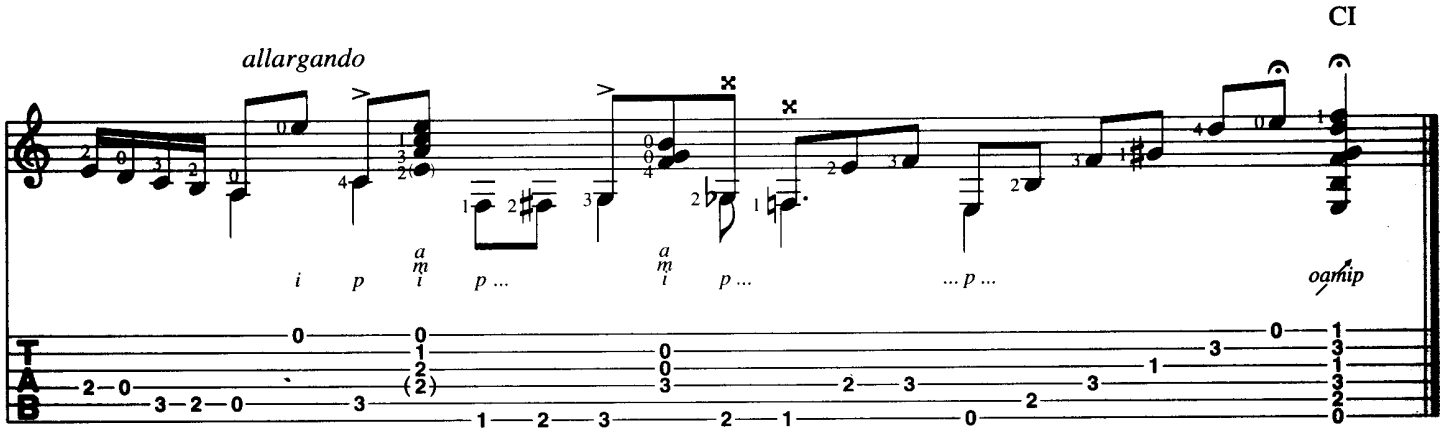

CV
III
II
p... i m a i m i... p p i m a i m i... p a m i p a m i...


p p i m a m i p i m a i m i...


CI
allargando
i p a m i p... a m i p...
...p...
oamip

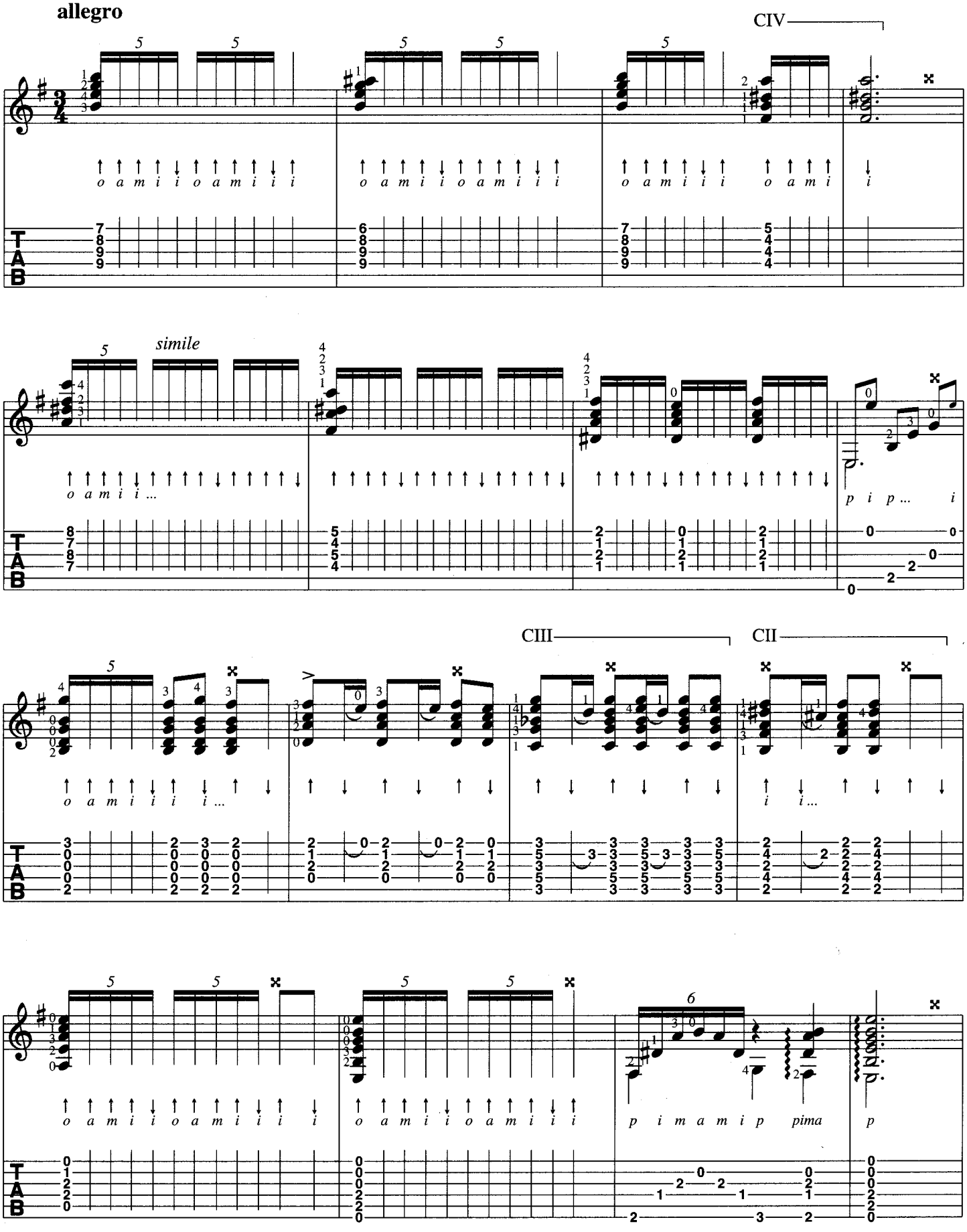
OLE MI CADIZ

Sabicas

Capo: I

Transcription: Alain Faucher

allegro



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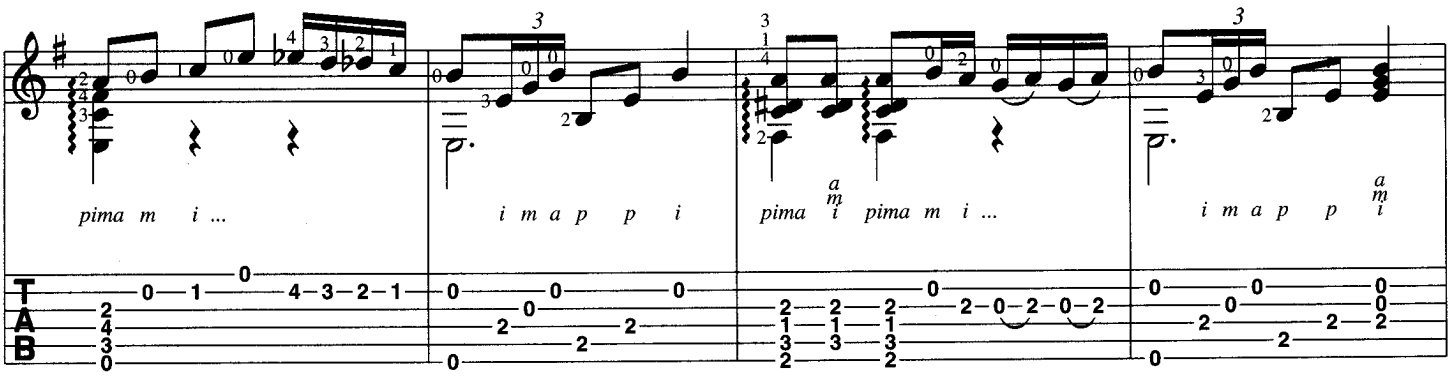
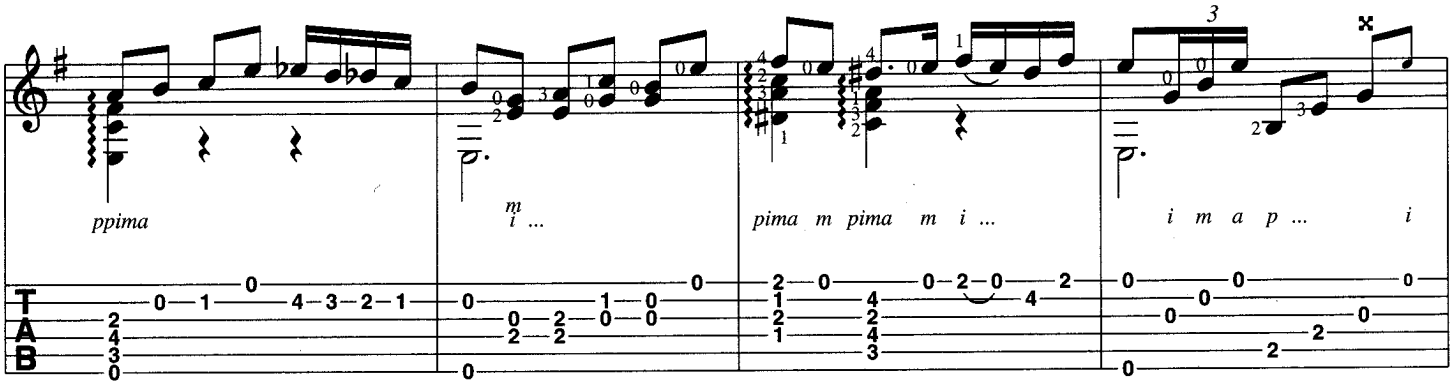
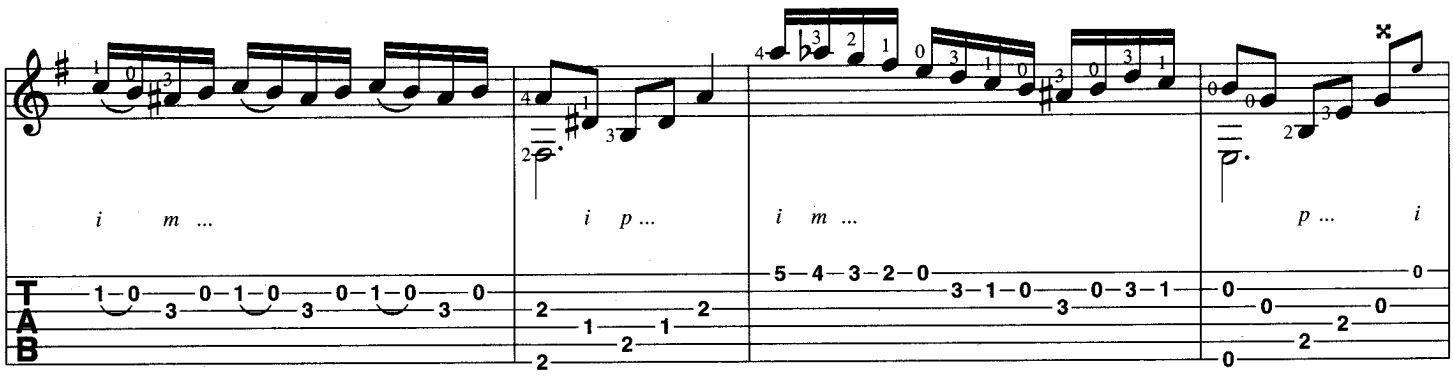
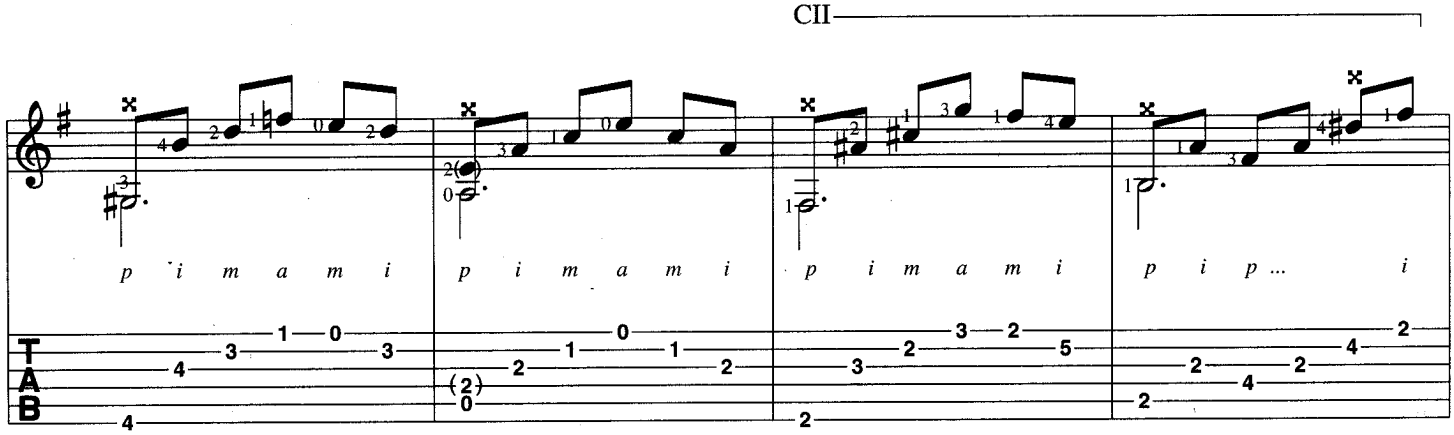
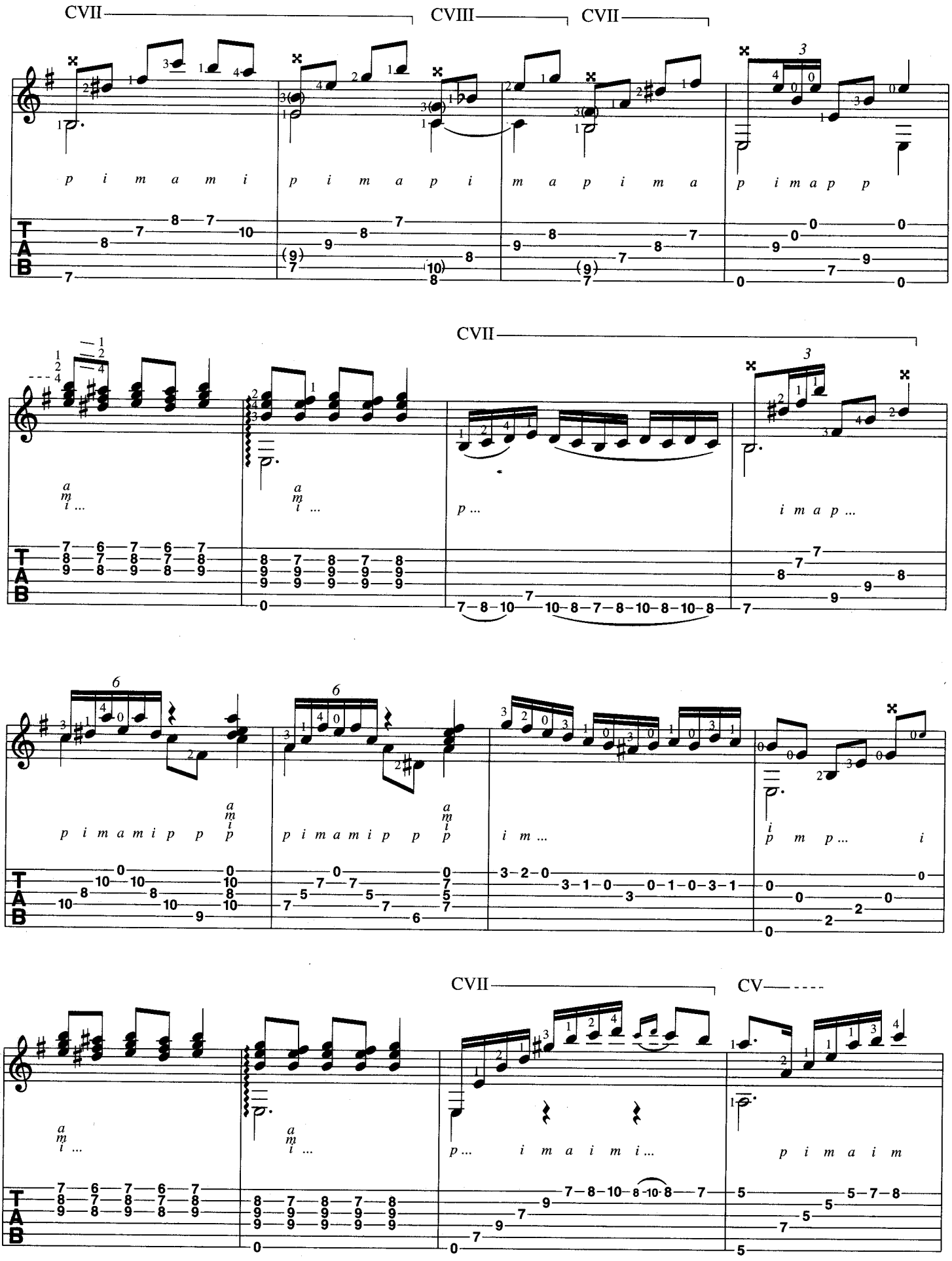
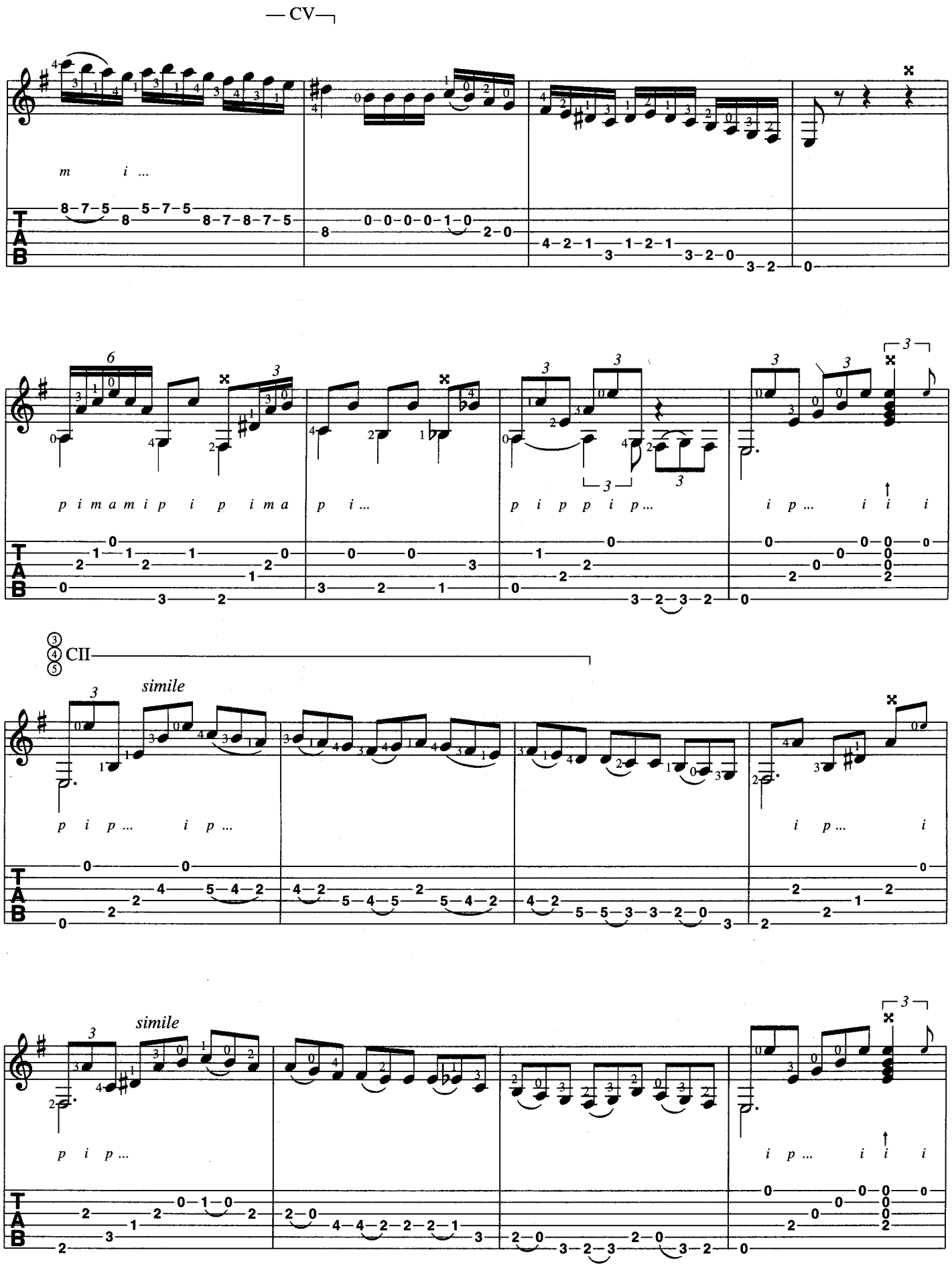

pima m i ...
i m a p p i
pima i pima m i ...
i m a p p i

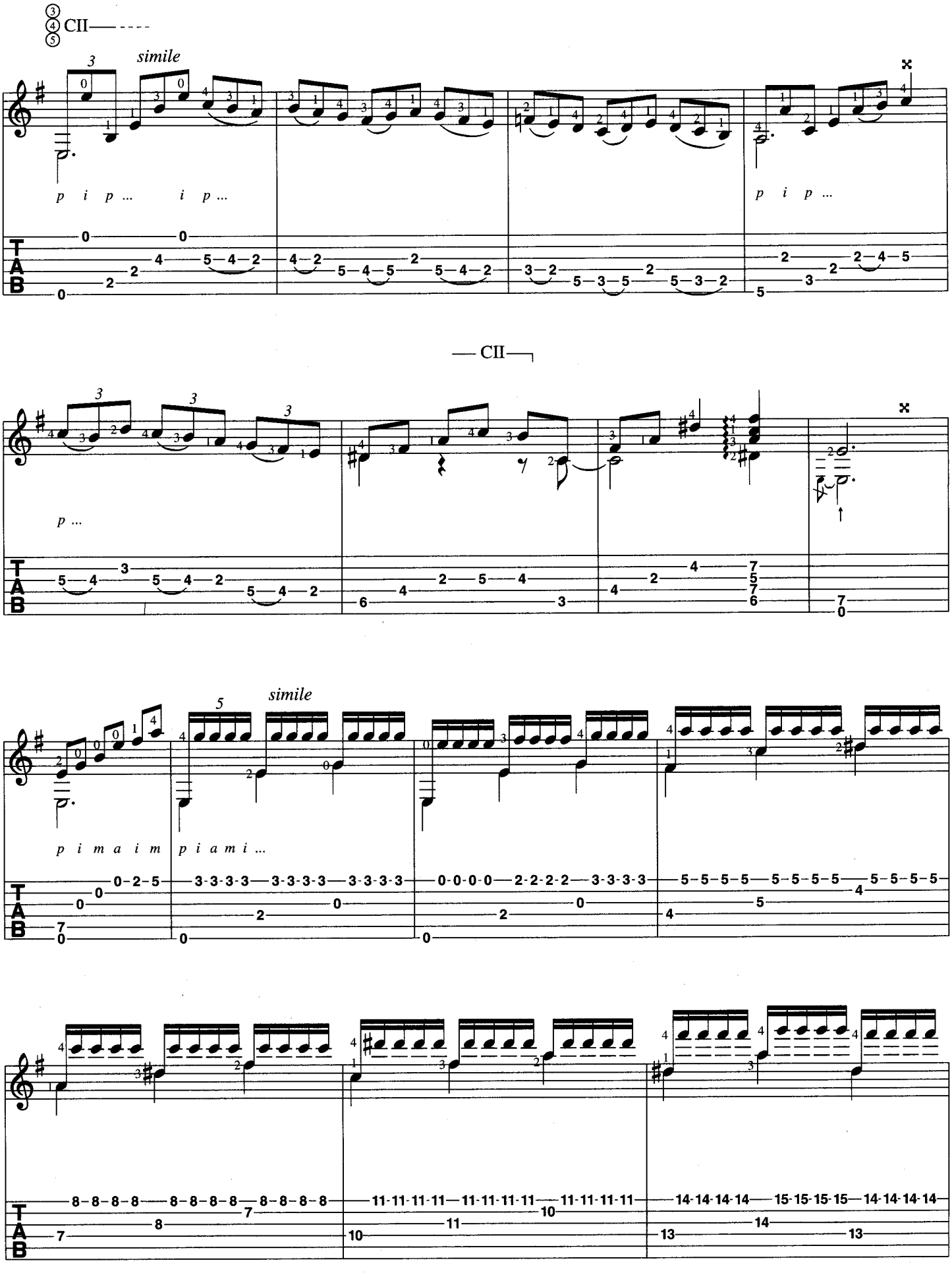

ppima
i ...
pima m pima m i ...
i m a p ... i

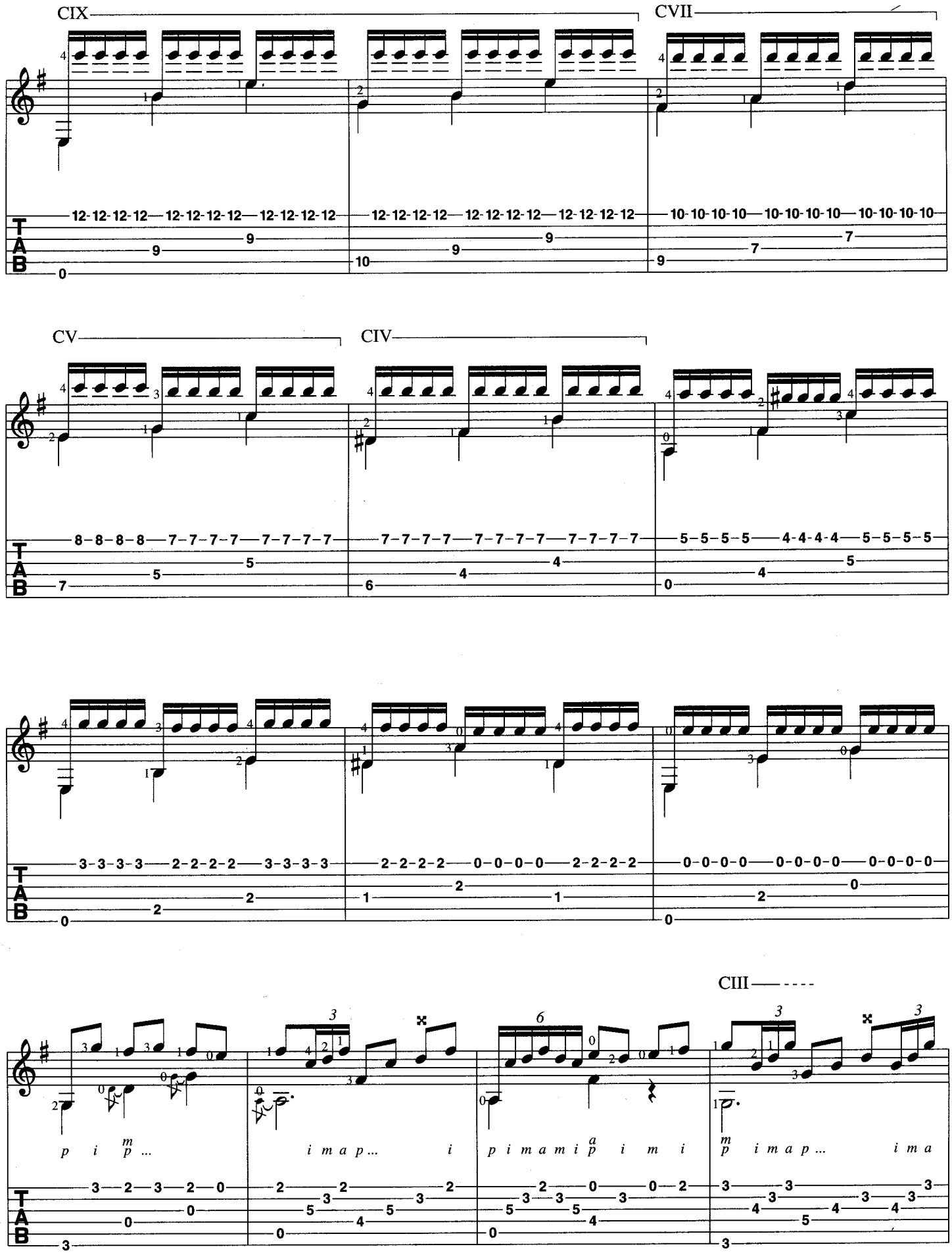

i m ...
i p ...
i m ...
p ... i

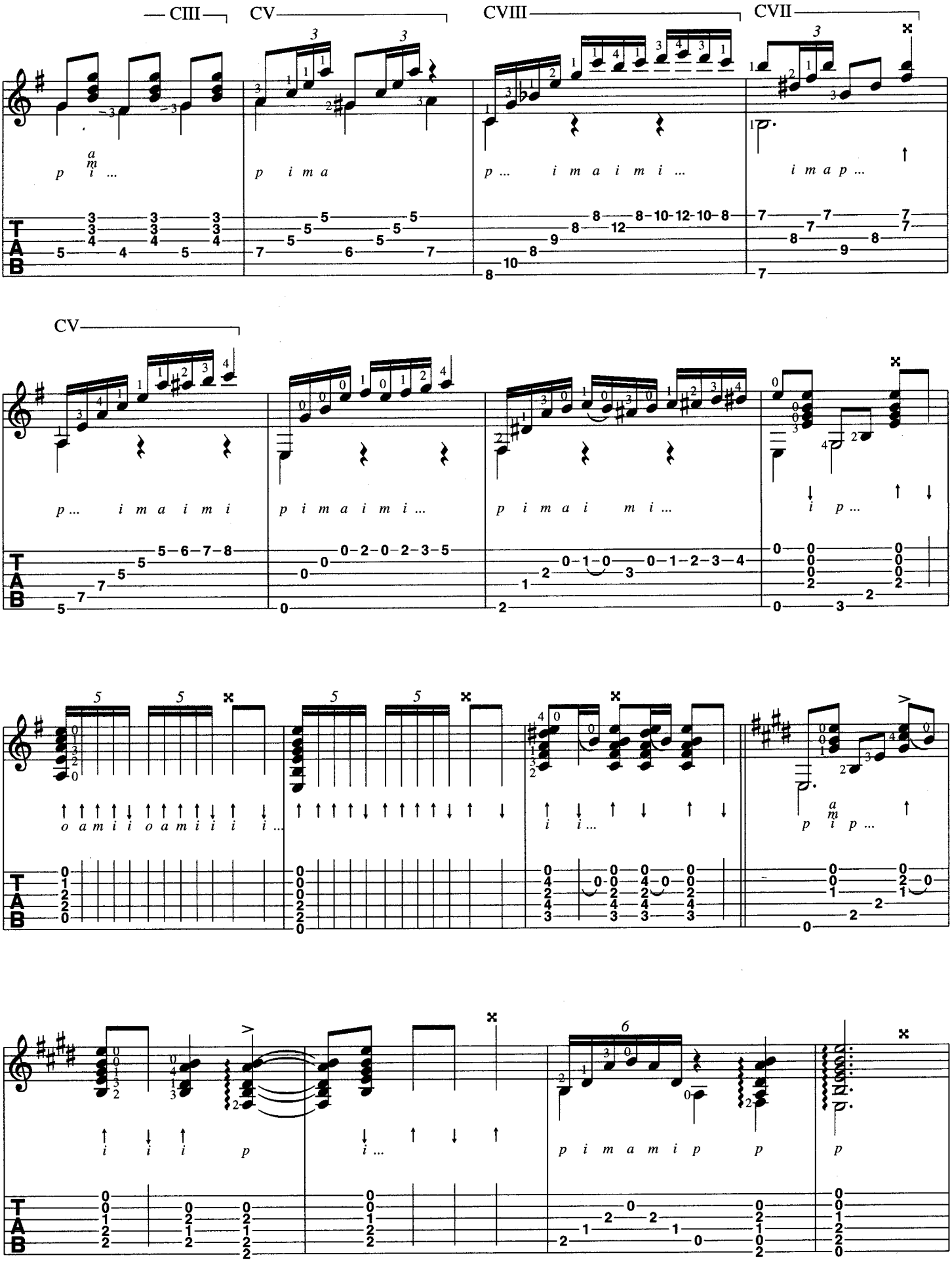

CII
p i m a m i
p i m a m i
p i m a m i
p i p ... i

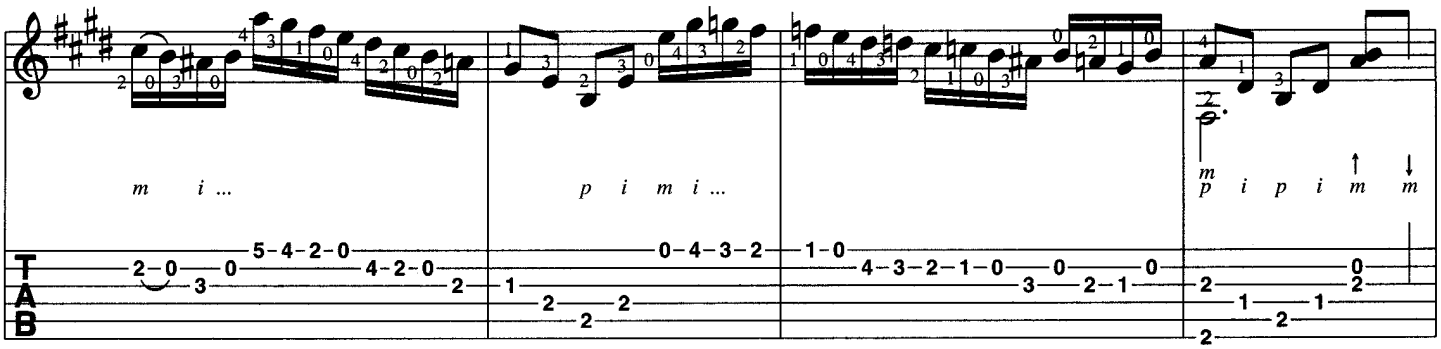

CVII
CVIII
CVII
p i m a m i
p i m a p i
m a p i m a
p i m a p p
CVII
p ...
i m a p ...
p i m a m i p p
p i m a m i p p
i m ...
p m p ... i
CVII
CV
p ...
i m a i m i ...
p i m a i m

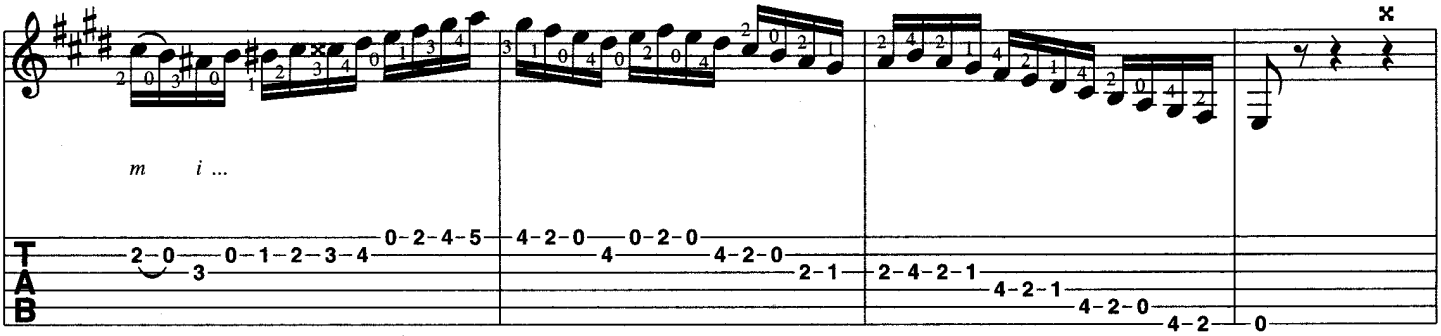

— CV —
m i ...
p i m a m i p i p i m a
p i ...
p i p p i p ...
i p ... i i i
CII
simile
p i p ... i p ...
i p ... i
simile
p i p ...
i p ... i i i
T
A
B

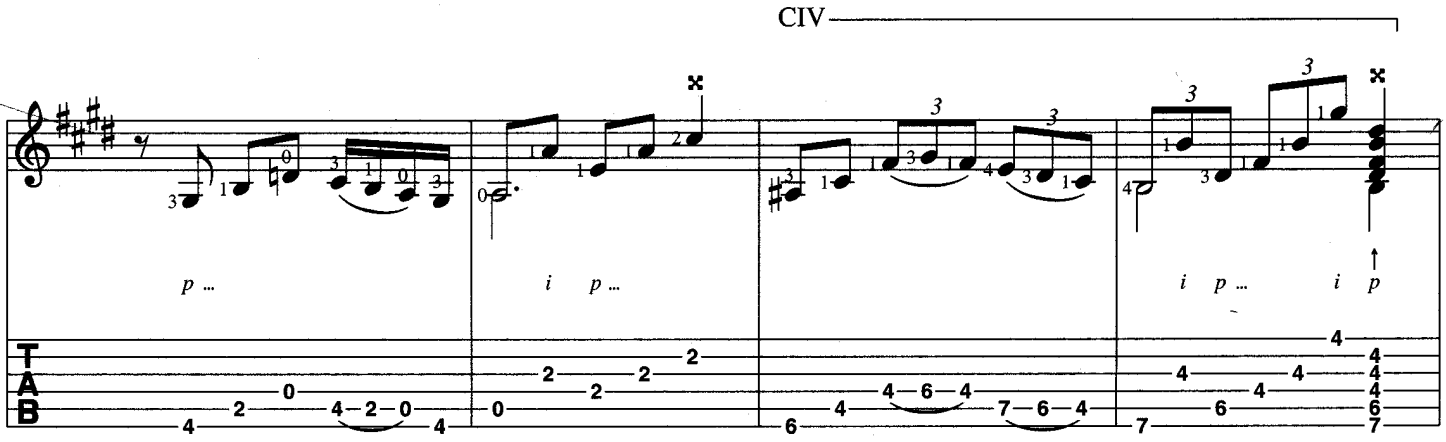

CII
simile
p i p ... i p ...
p i p ...
CII
p ...
simile
p i m a i m p i a m i ...
T
A
B

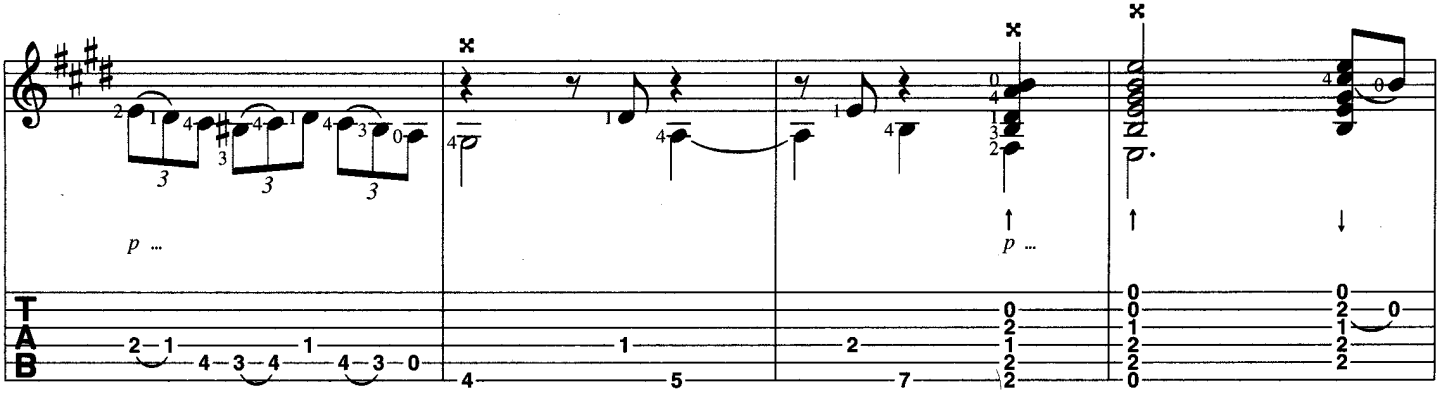

CIX
CVII
CV
CIV
CIII
T
A
B
p i m p ...
i m a p ... i
p i m a m i a p i m i
m p i m a p ... i m a

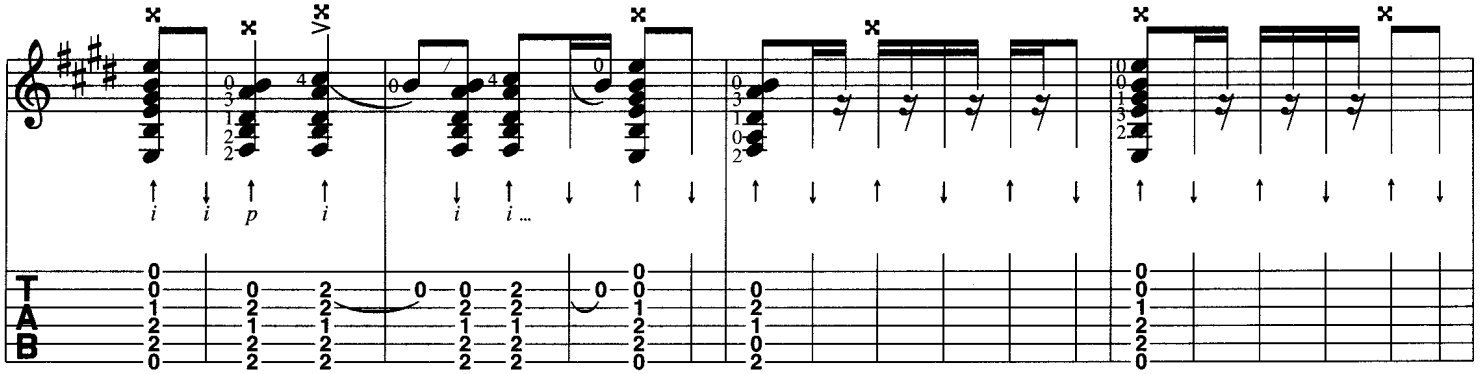

CIII
CV
CVIII
CVII
CV

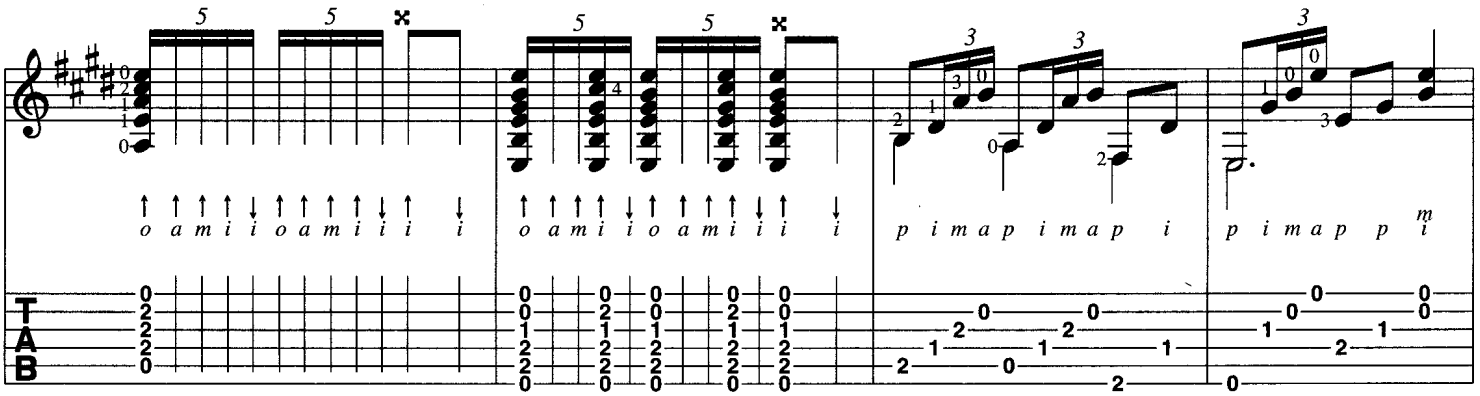

m i ...
p i m i ...
m
p i p i m m
T
A
B

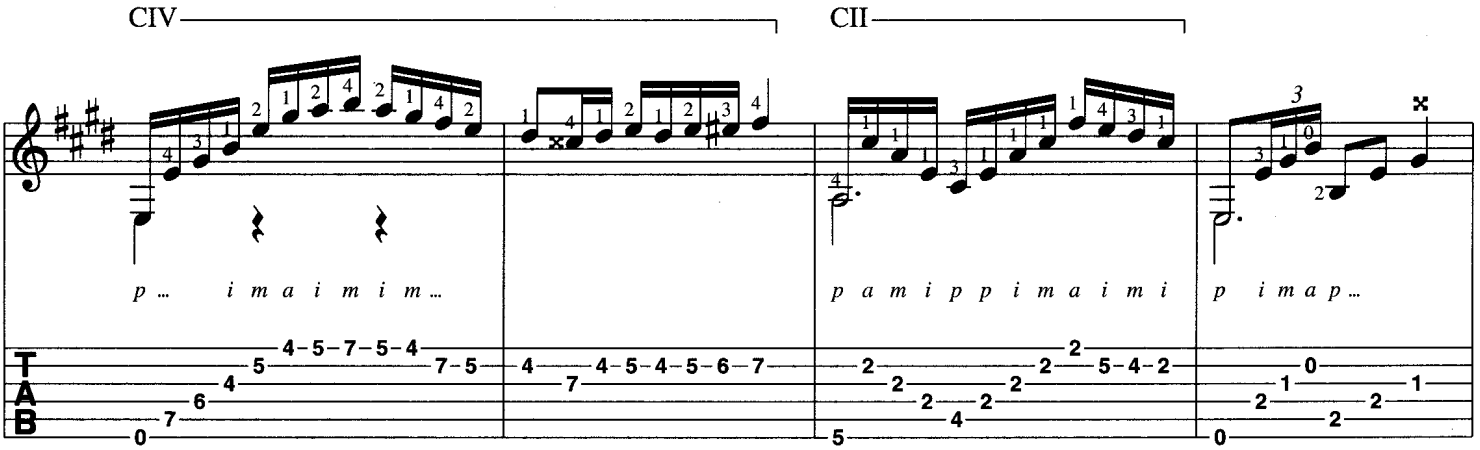

m i ...
T
A
B

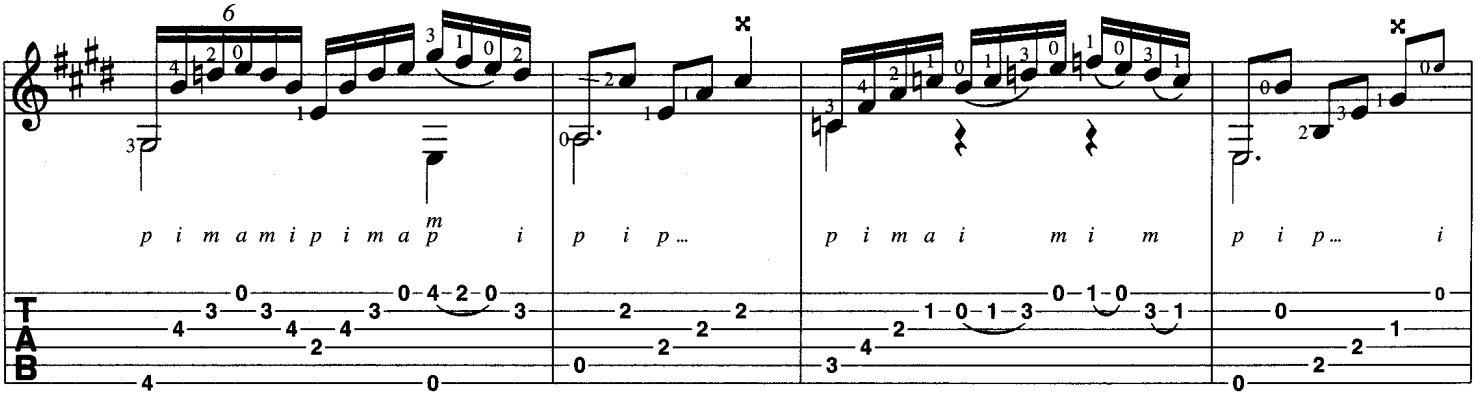

CIV
p ...
i p ...
i p ... i p
T
A
B

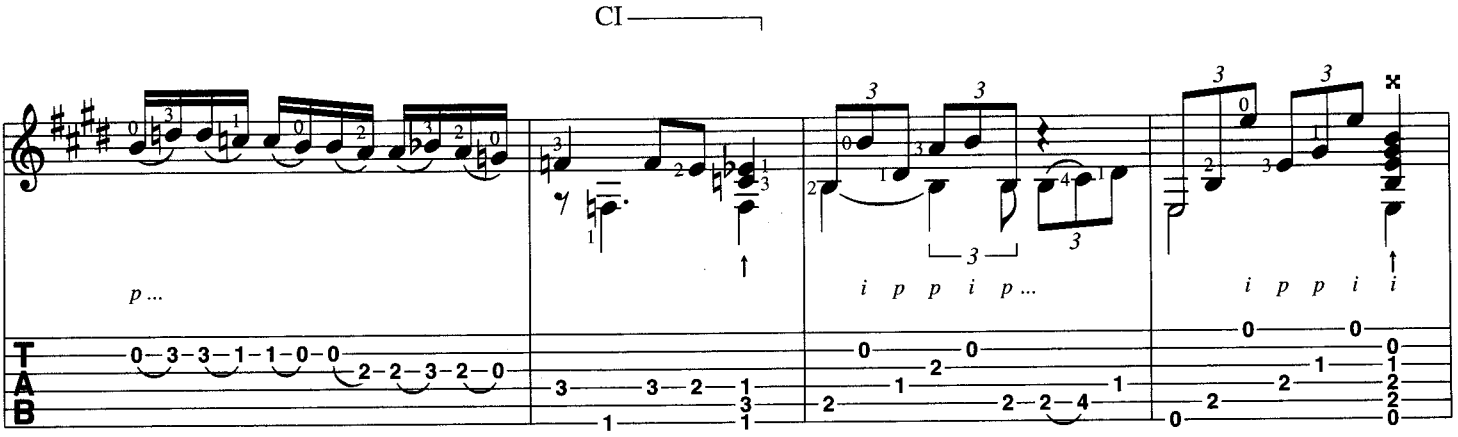

p ...
p ...
T
A
B

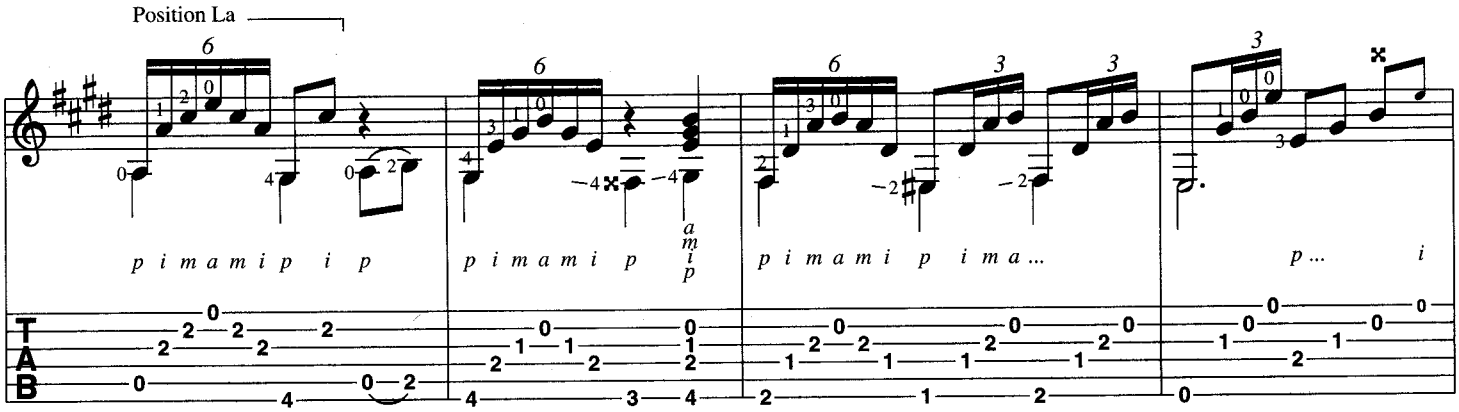


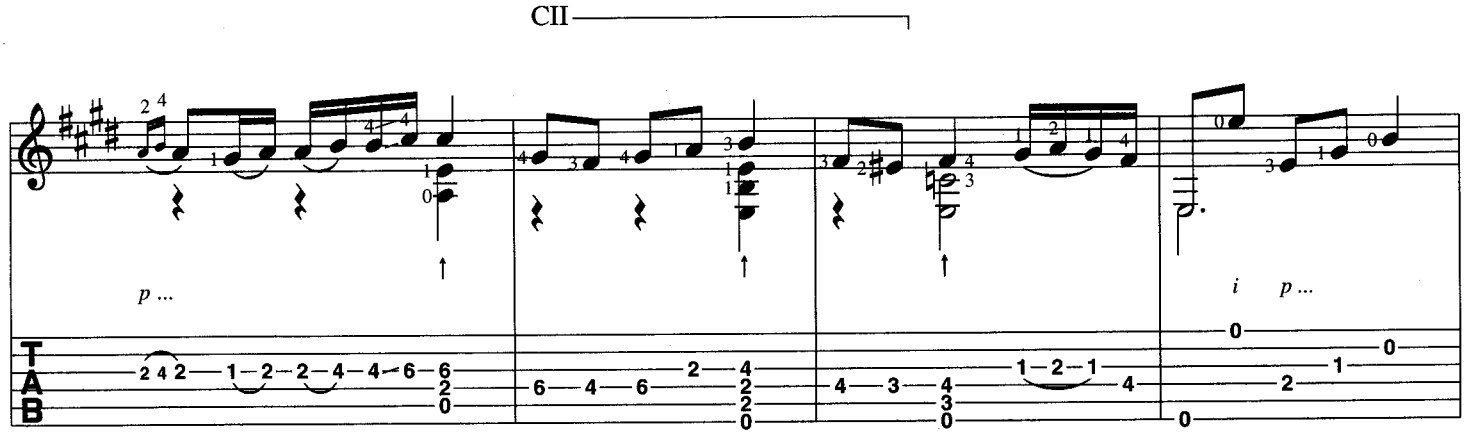


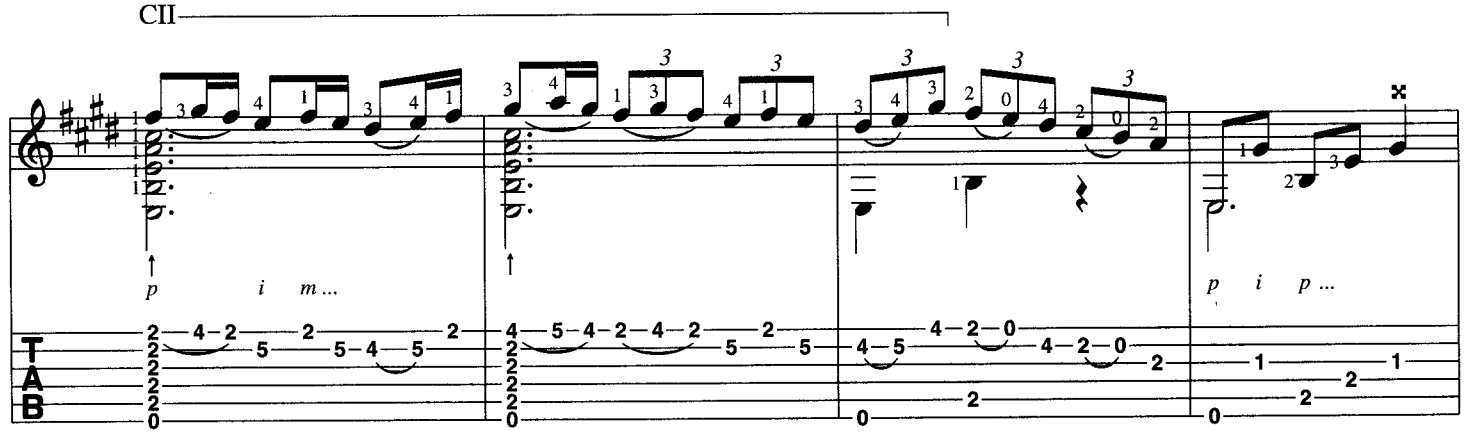

CIV
CII

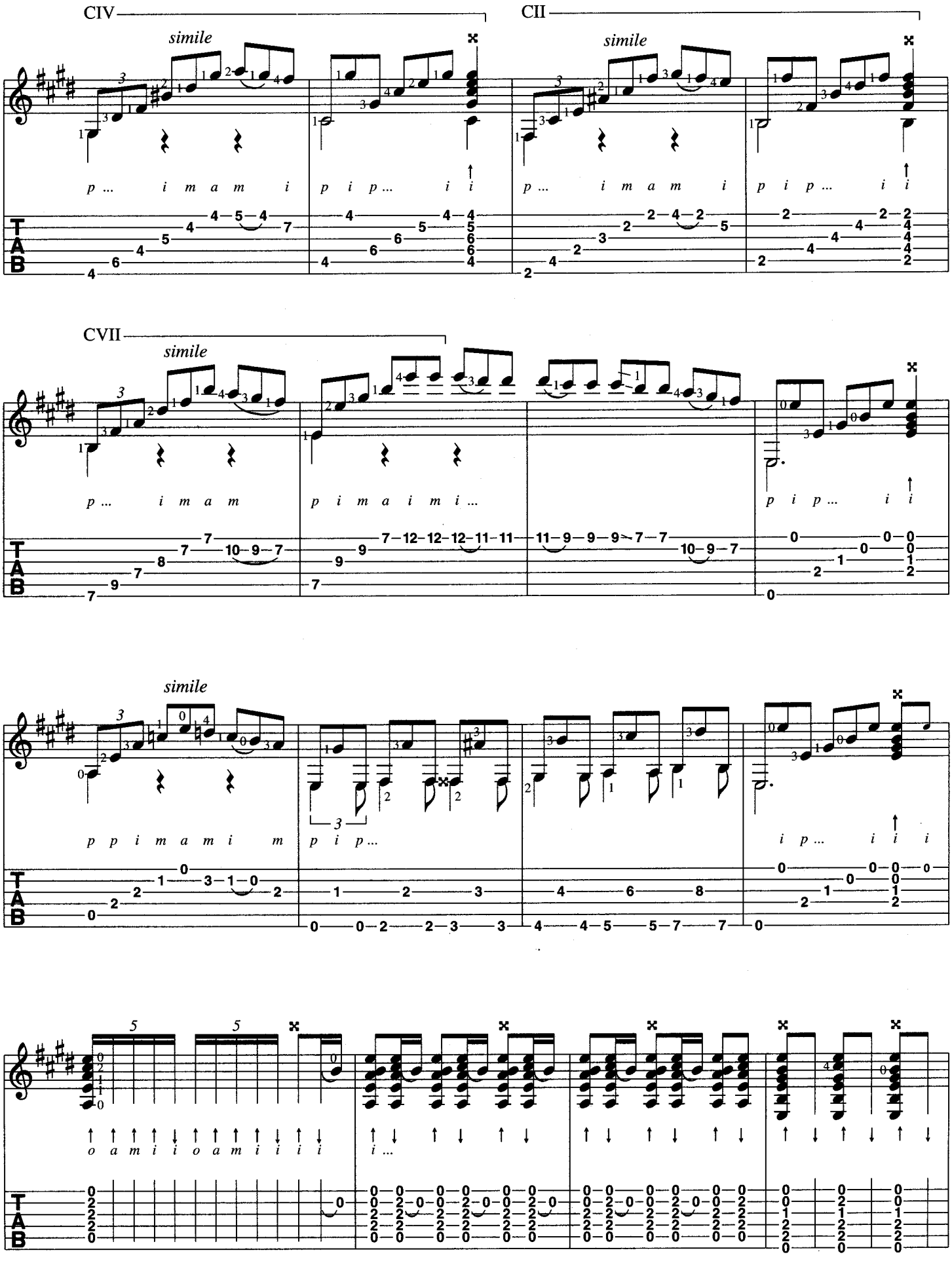


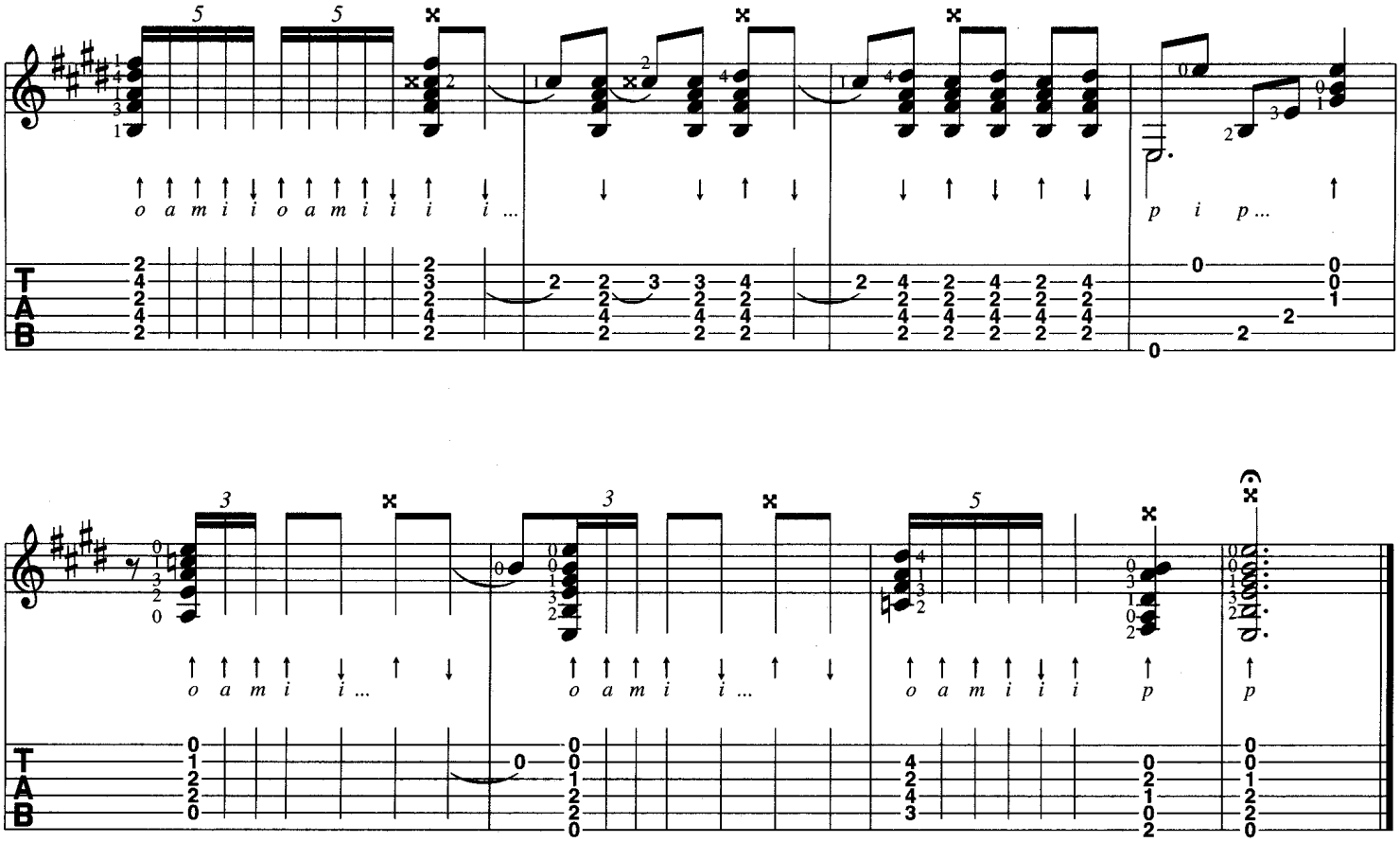

CI
p ...
i p p i p ...
i p p i i


Position La
p i m a m i p i p
p i m a m i p
a m i p
p i m a m i p i m a ...
p ... i


CII
p ...
i p ...


CII
p i m ...
p i p ...


CIV
simile
CII
simile
CVII
simile
simile
T
A
B


CII
o a m i i o a m i i i i ...
p i p ...
T
A
B

o a m i i ...
o a m i i ...
o a m i i i p
p
T
A
B

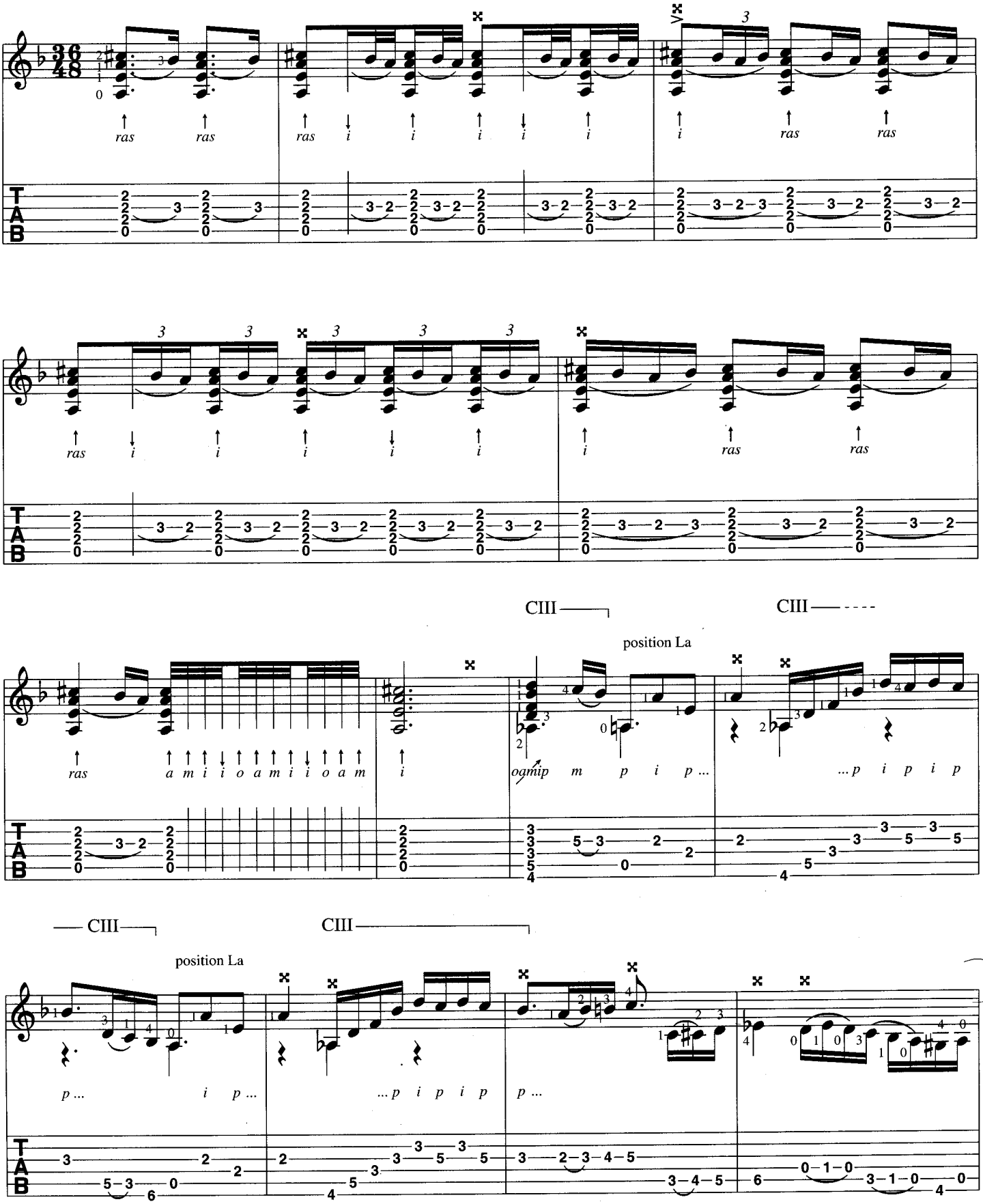
SENTIMIENTO GITANO

Sabicas

Transcription: Alain Faucher

Capo: III

moderato



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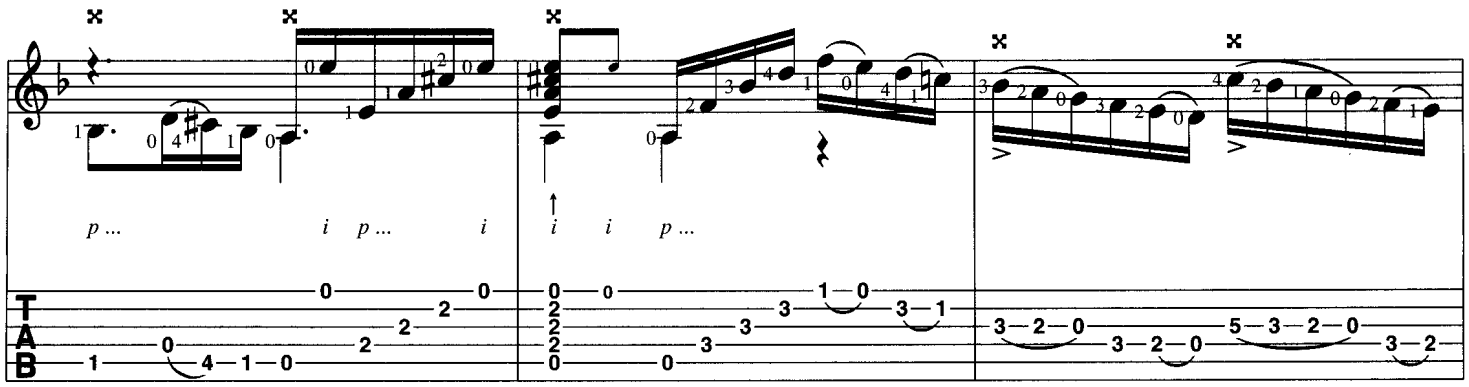
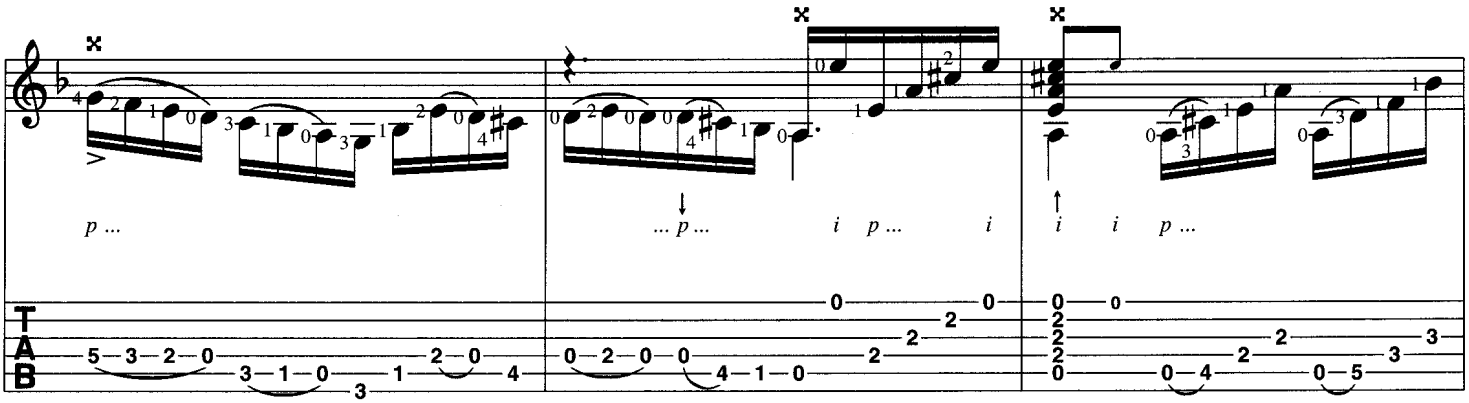
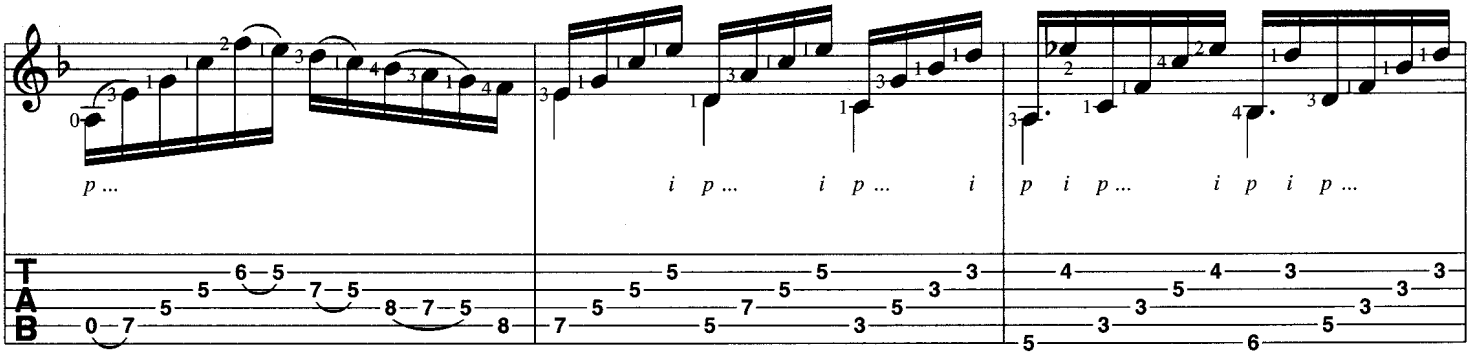


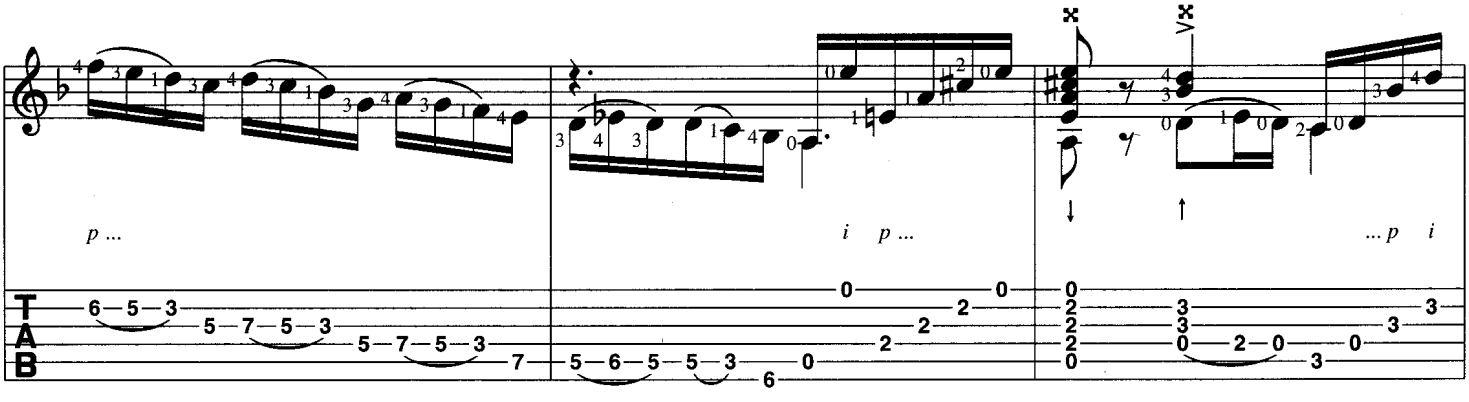
CII CIII

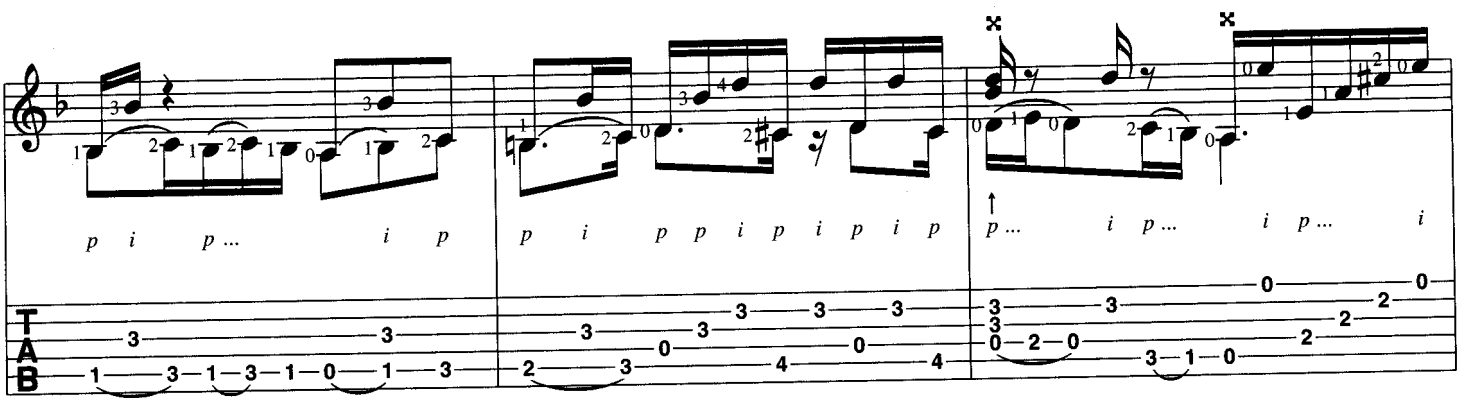


CV CIII



CIII

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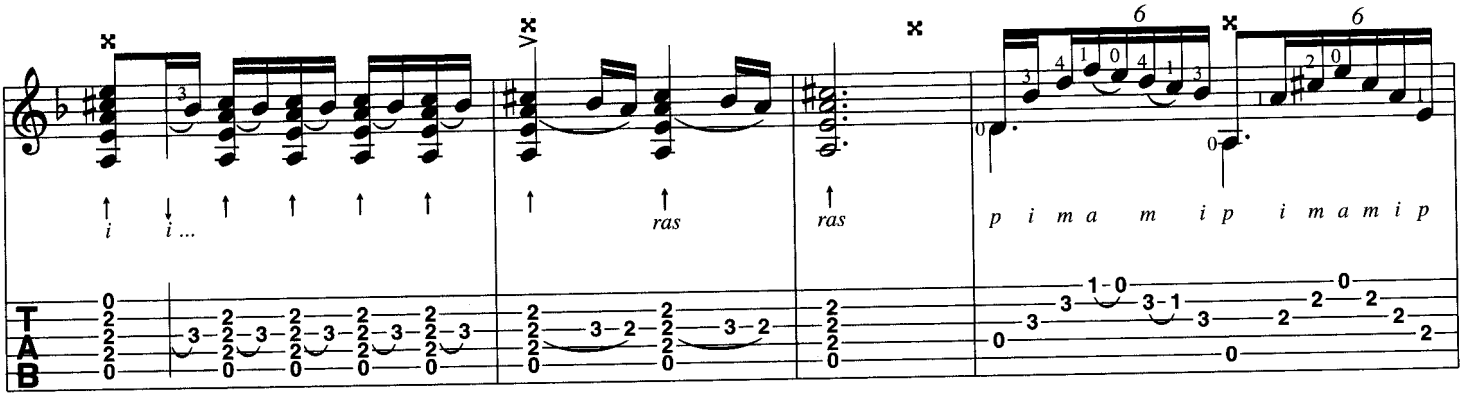
p i p p i p i p i p
p ... i p ... i p ... i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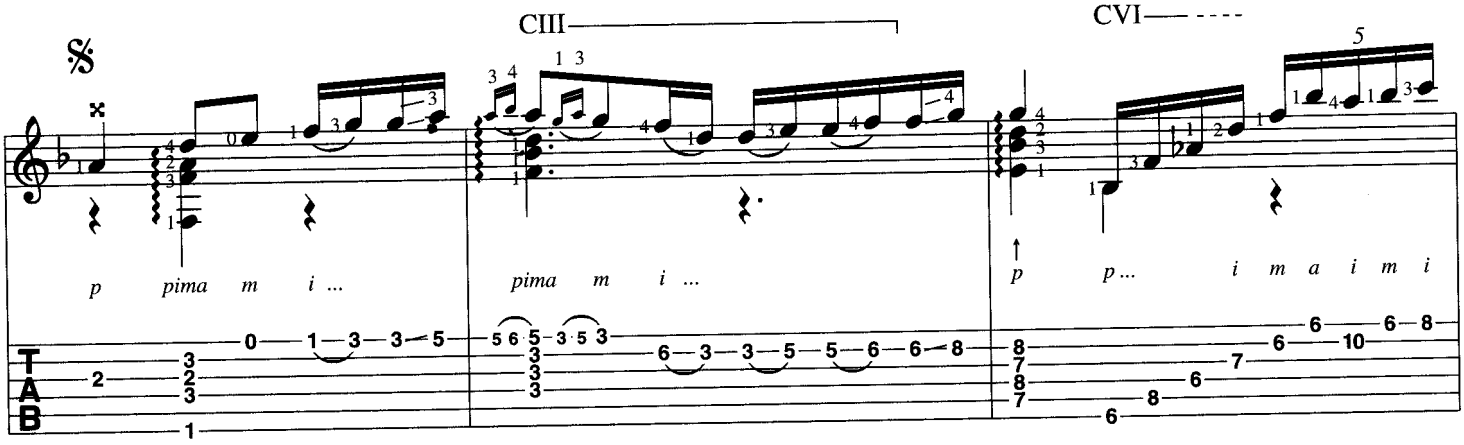
ras
p i m a m i p i m a m i p


CIII
CVI
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pima m i ...
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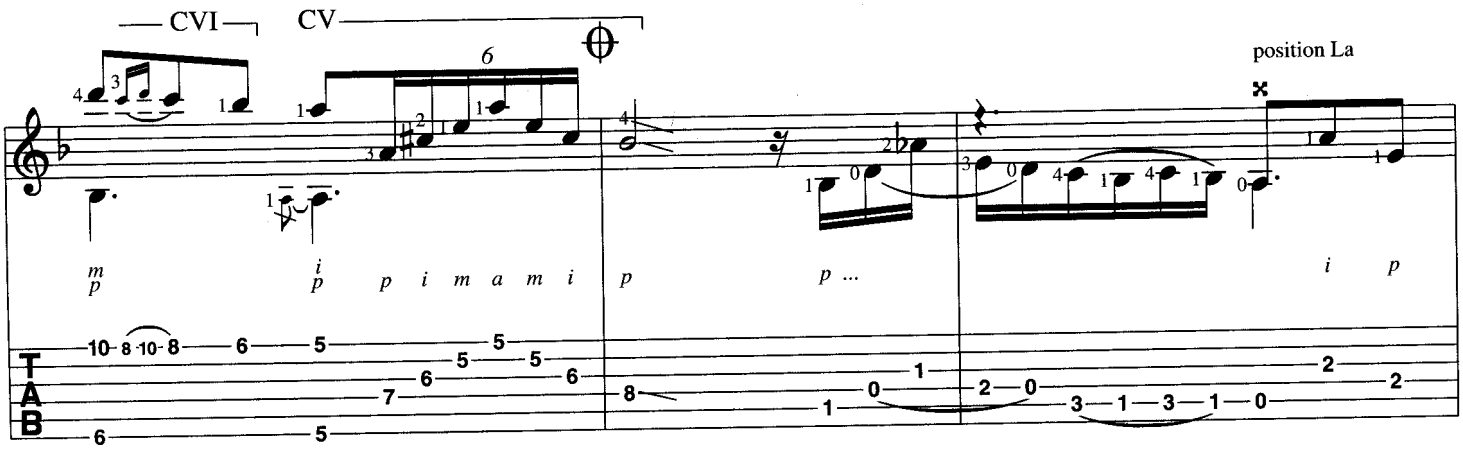
CVI
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position La
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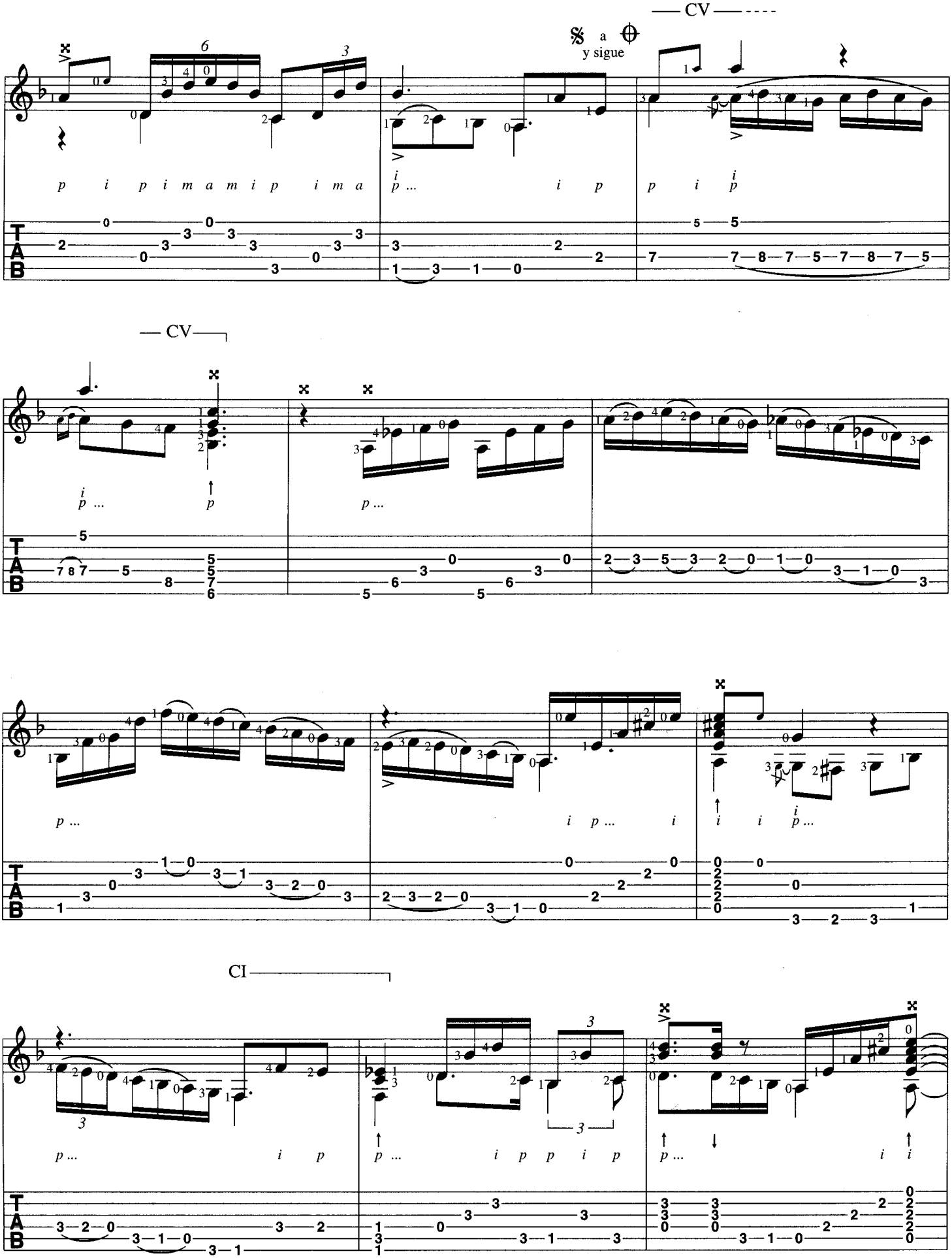
p p ... i p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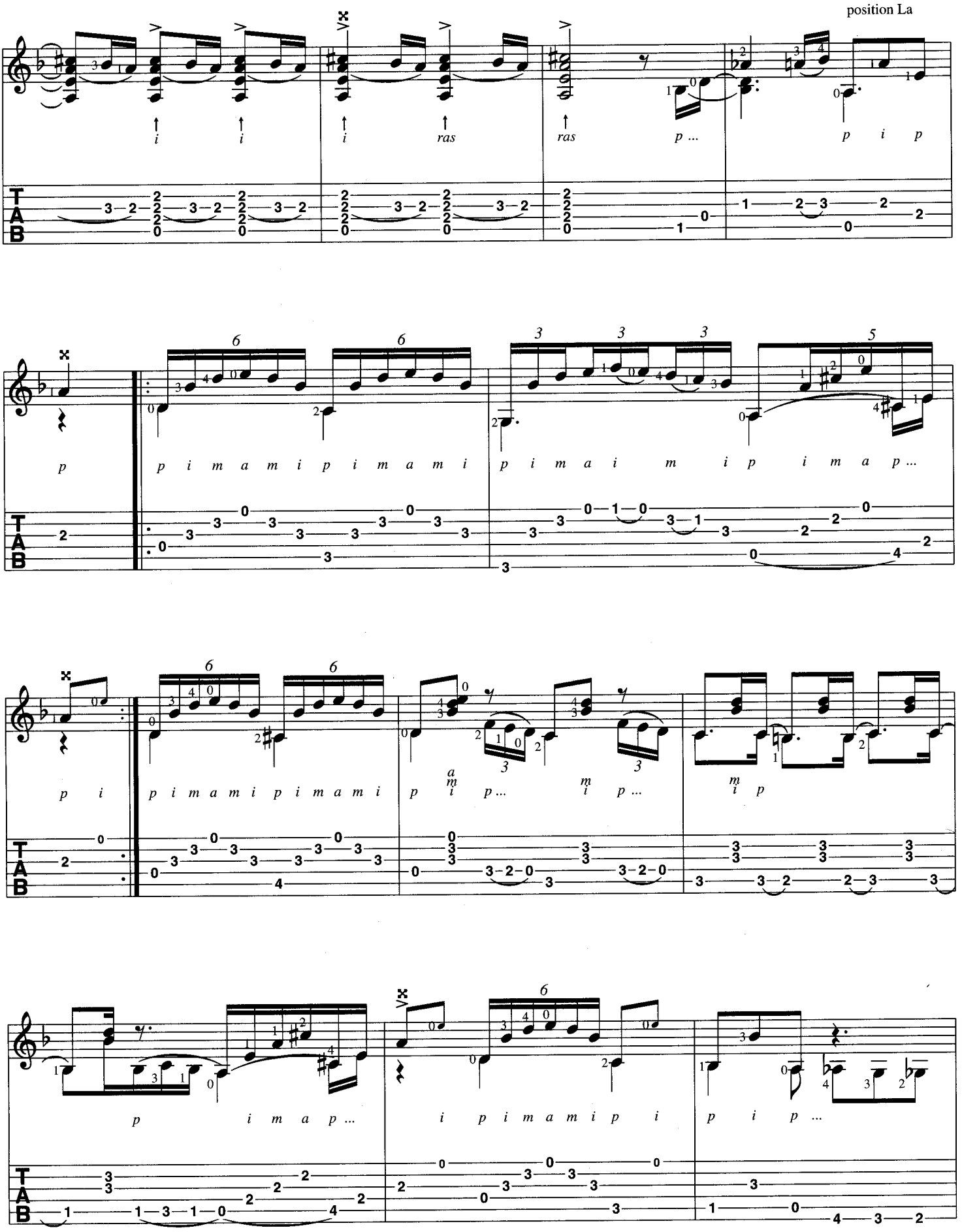
position La
i i i ras ras p ... p i p
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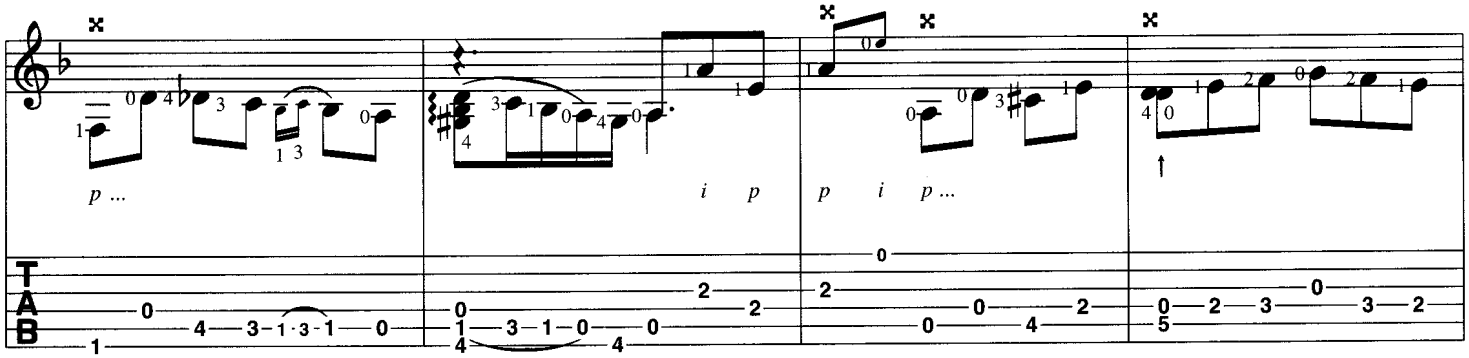
position La



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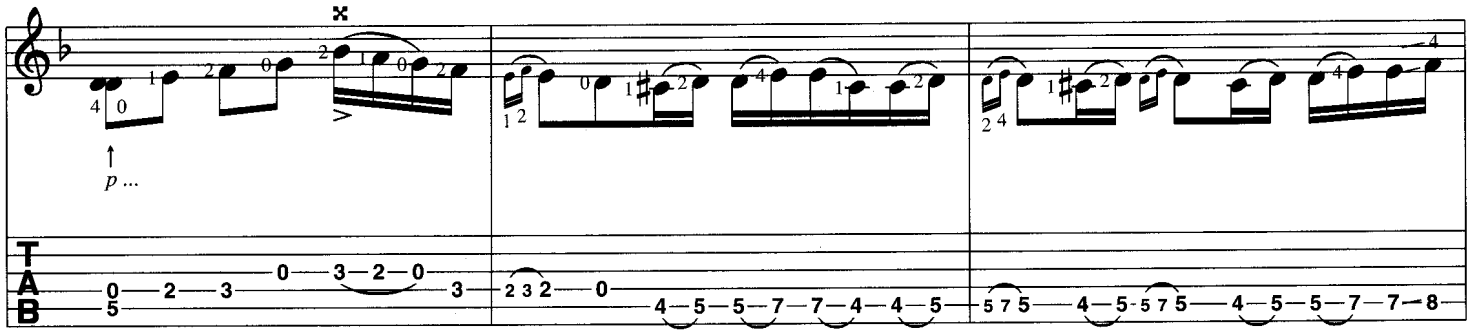

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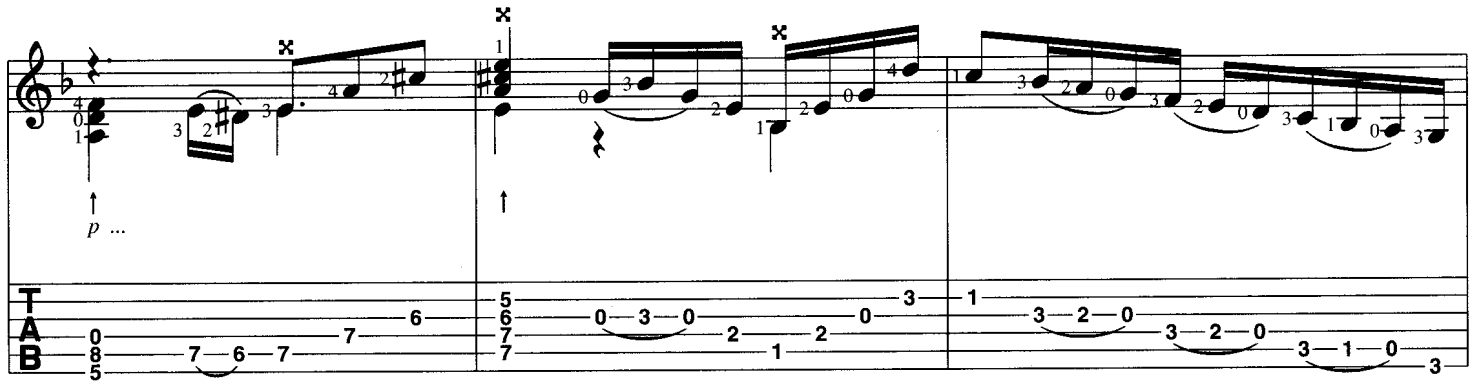

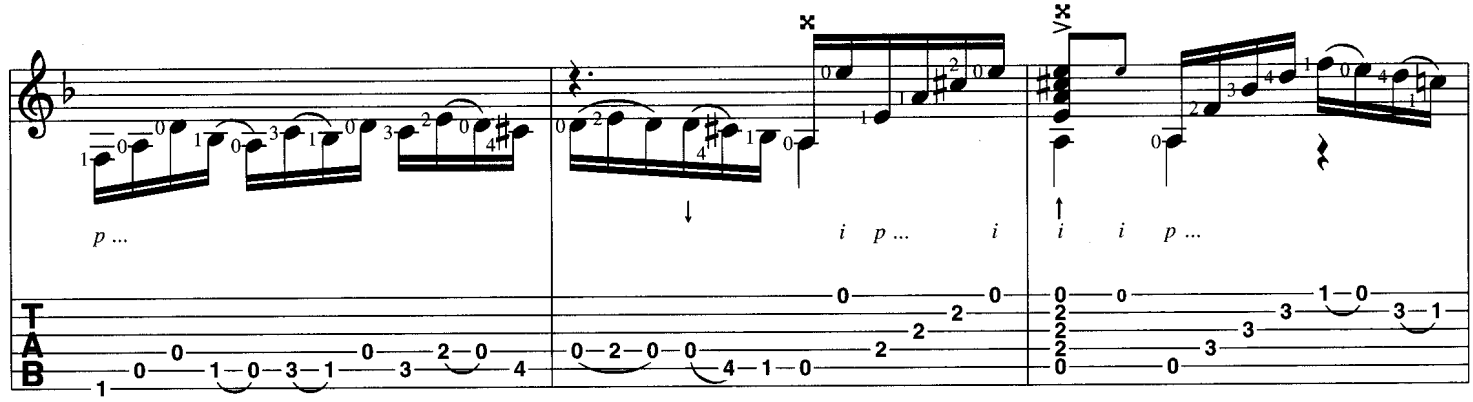

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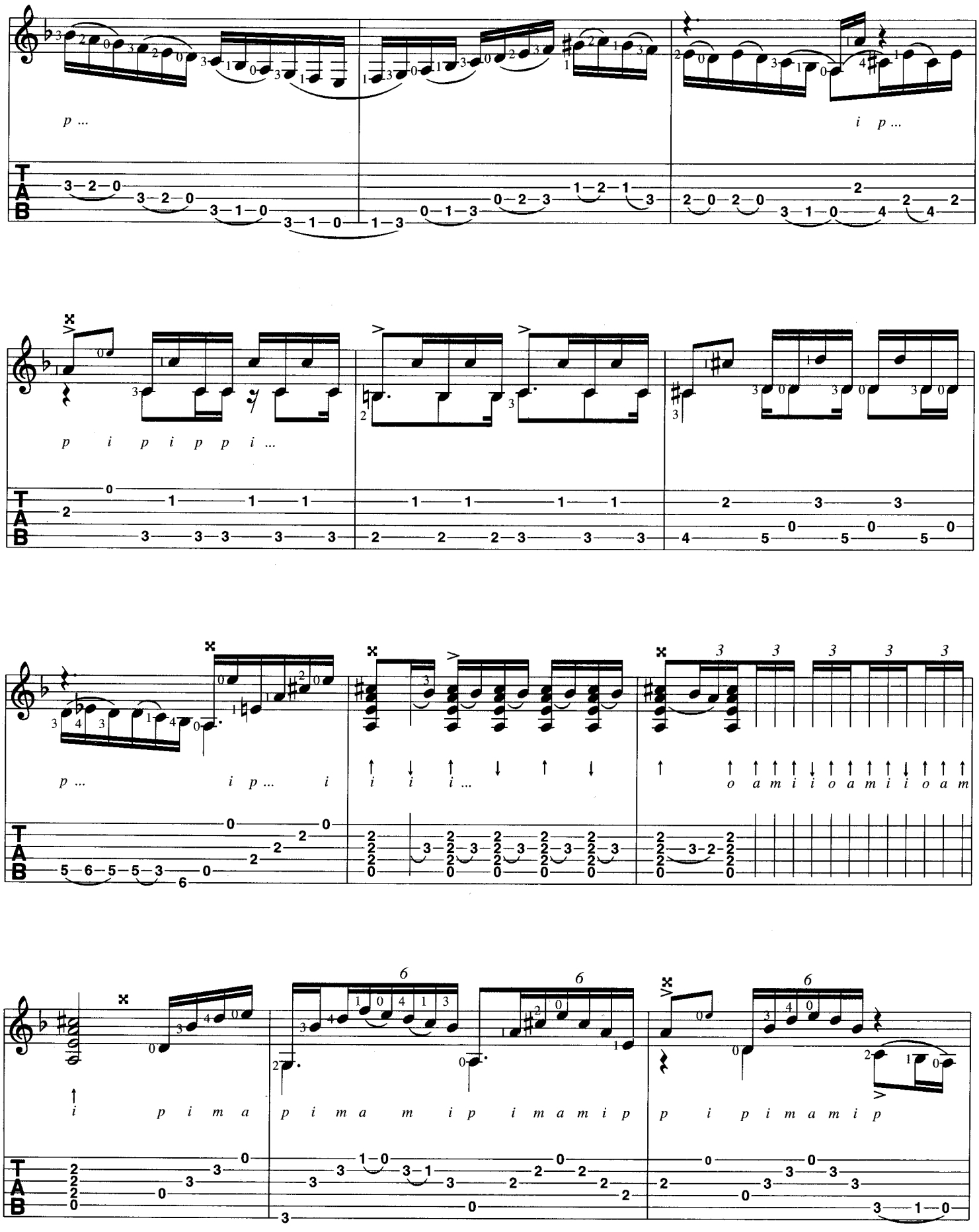
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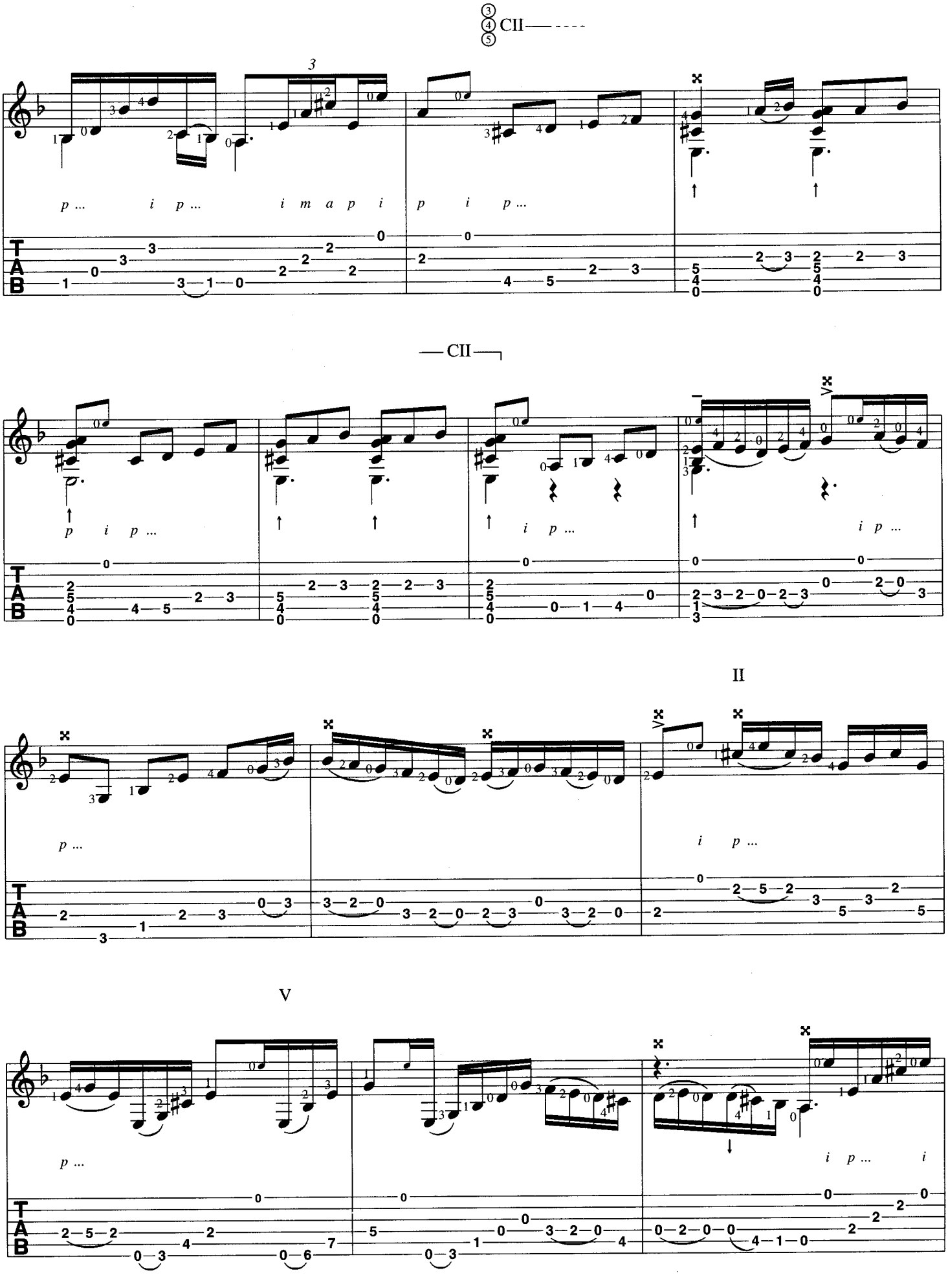
CII
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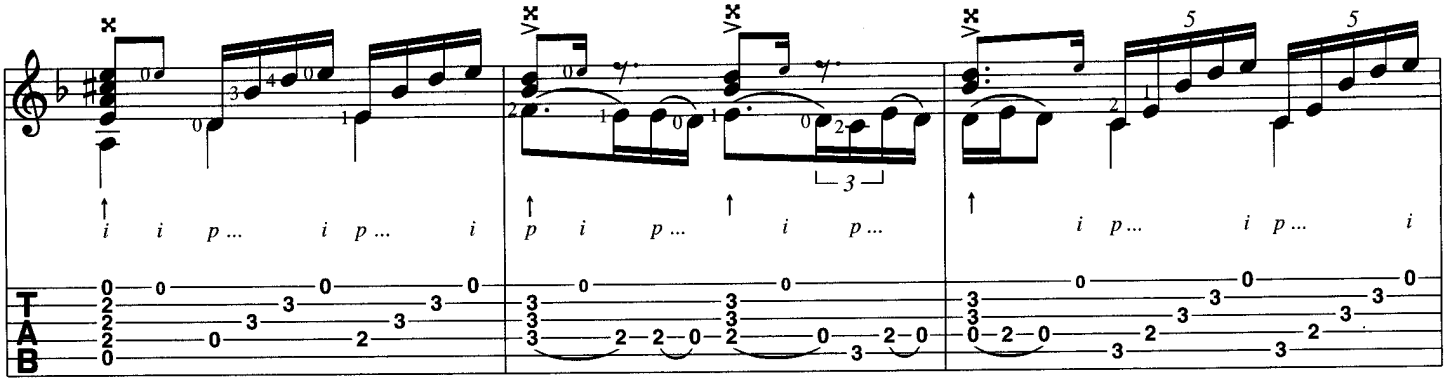
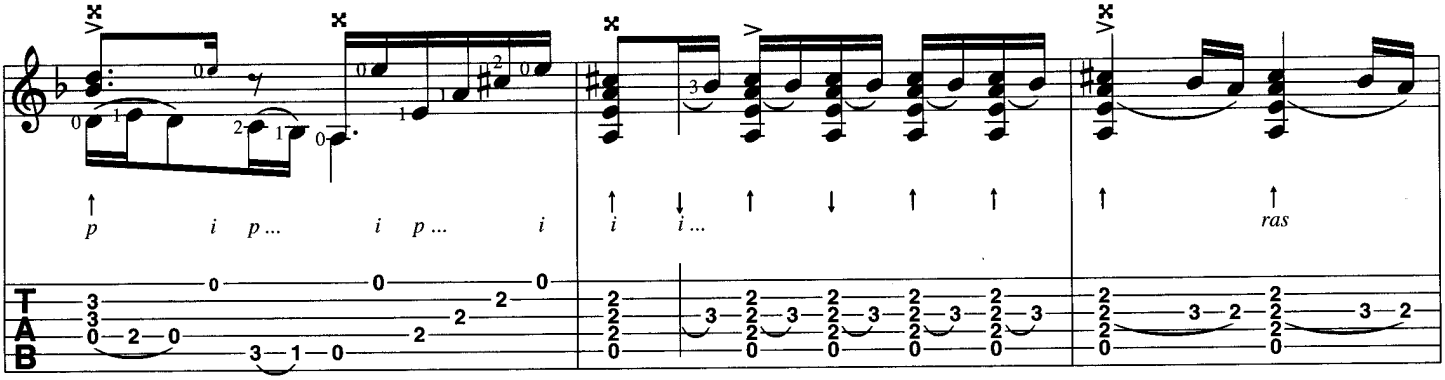
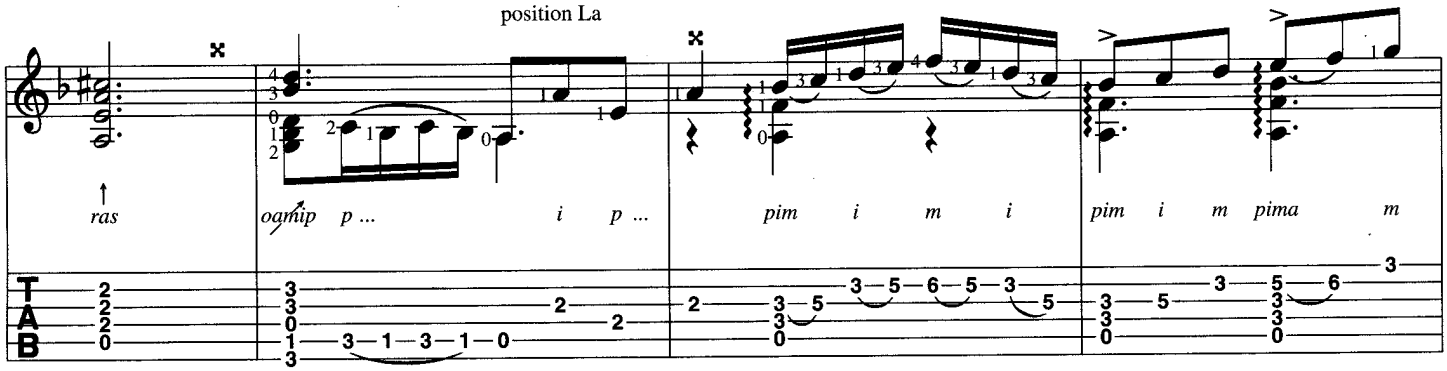




CIII

position La



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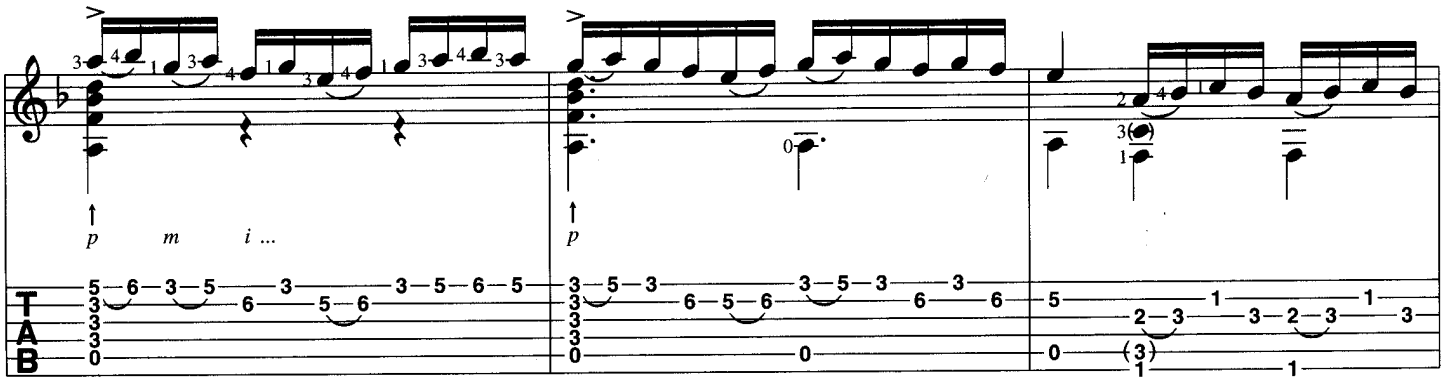

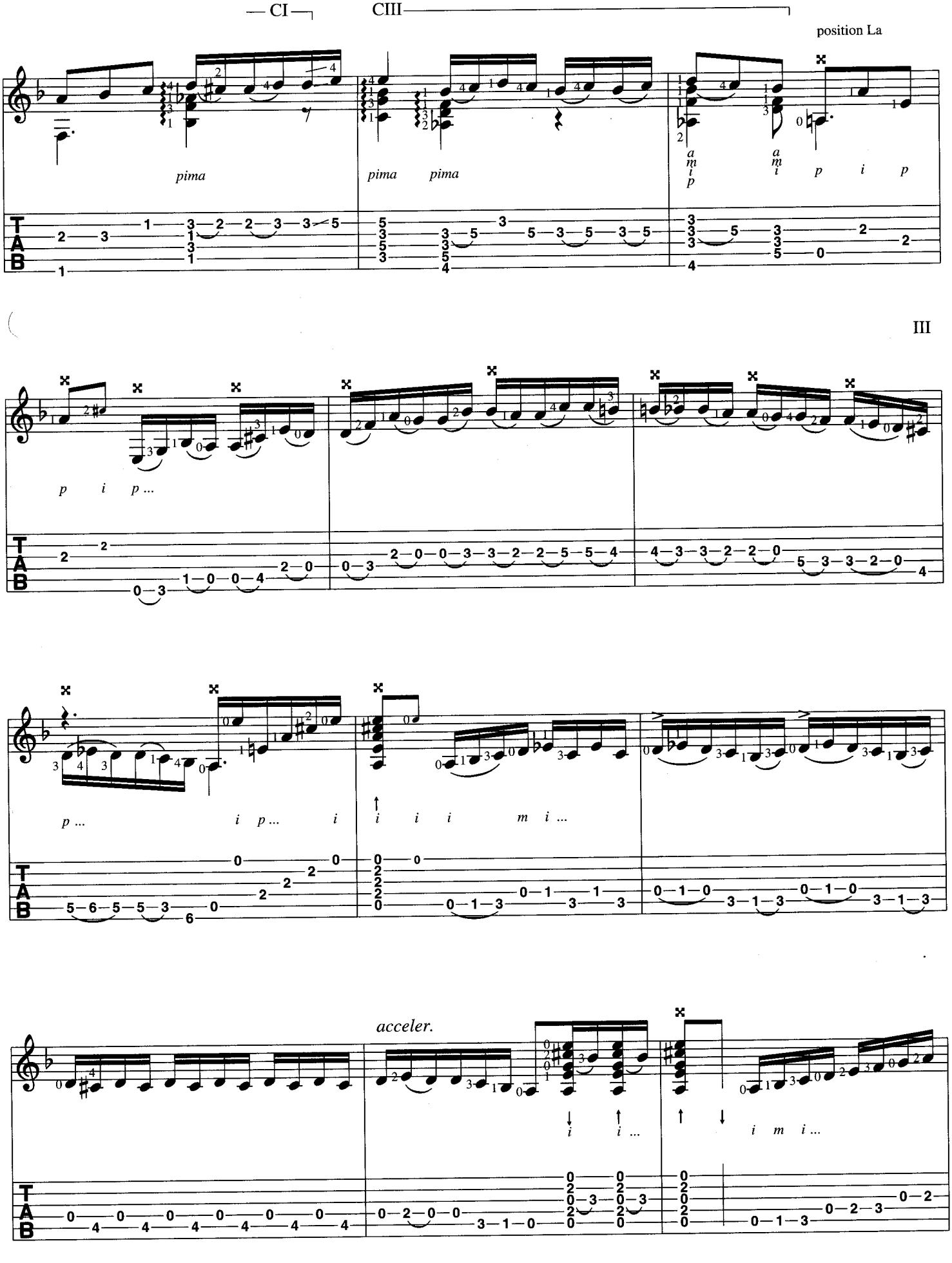
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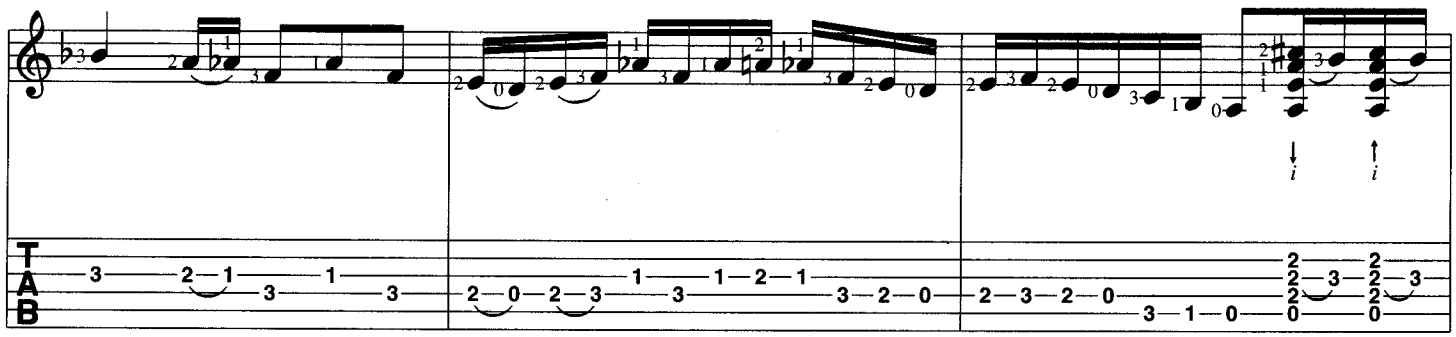
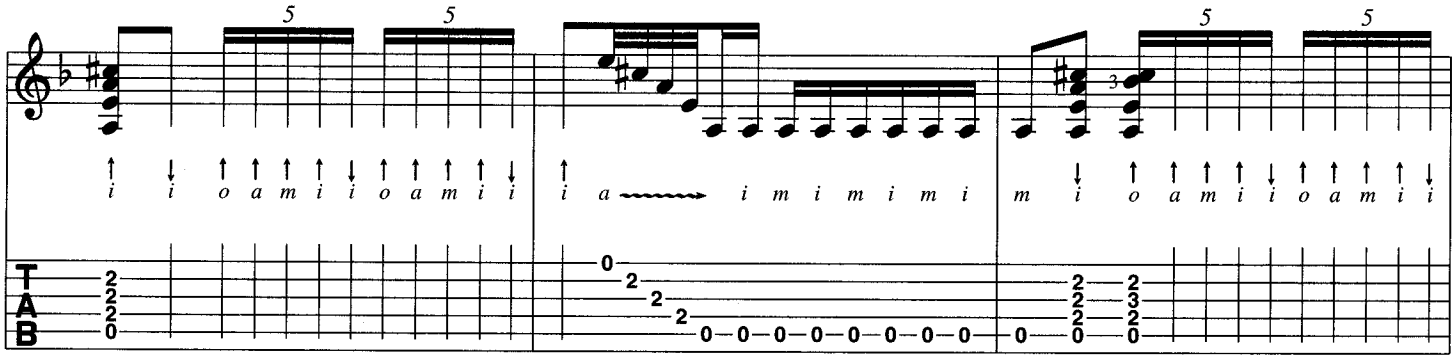
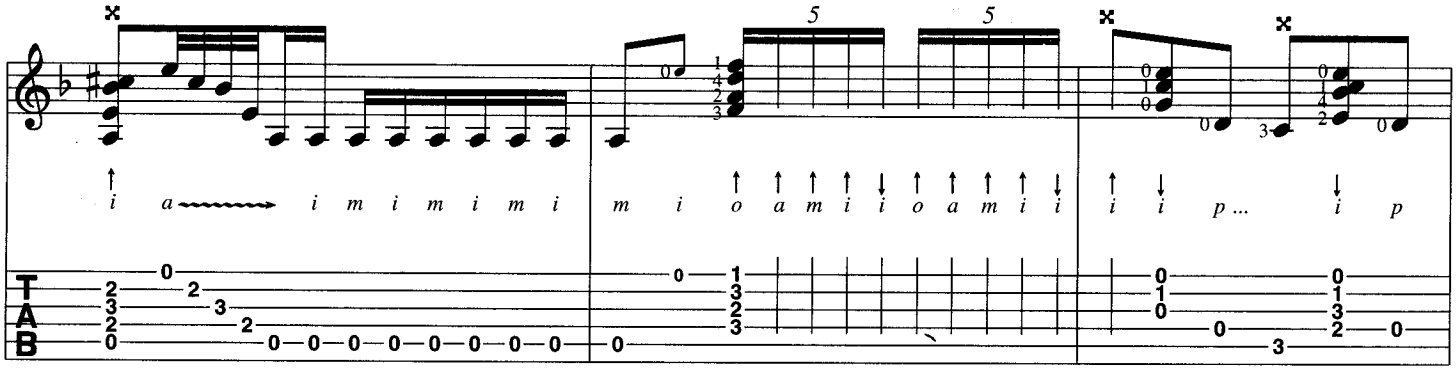
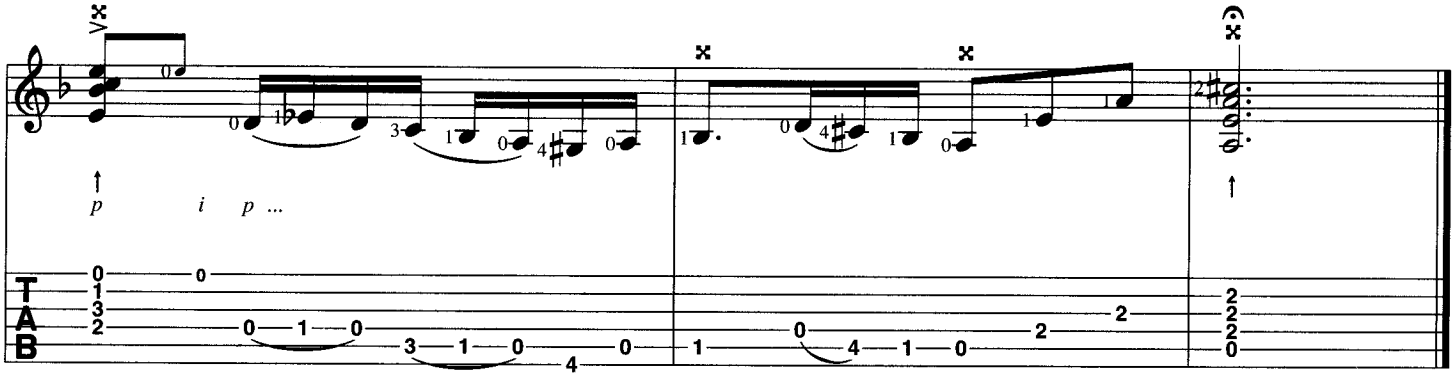








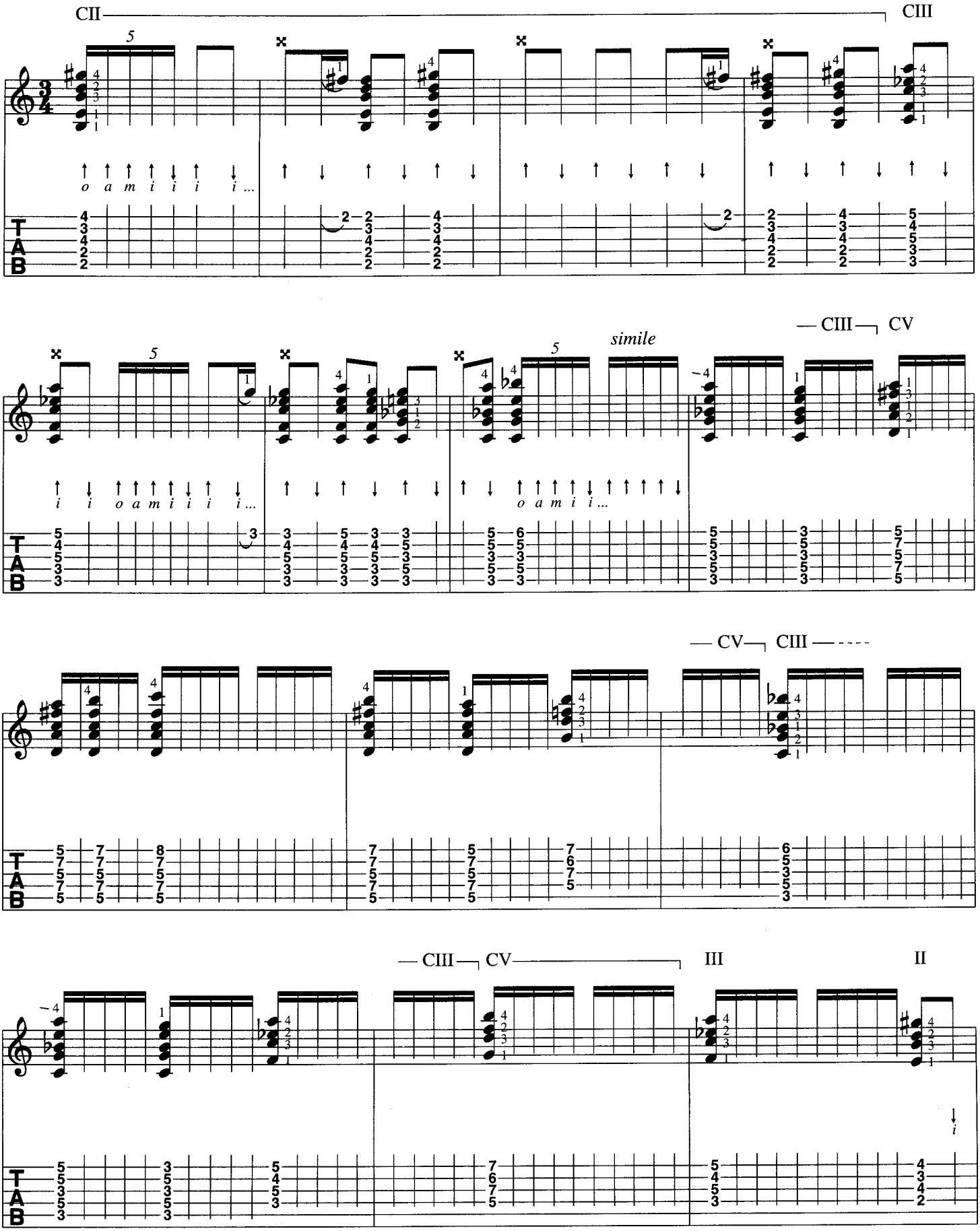
EMBRUJO DE HUELVA

Capo: II

Sabicas

Transcription: Alain Faucher

allegro



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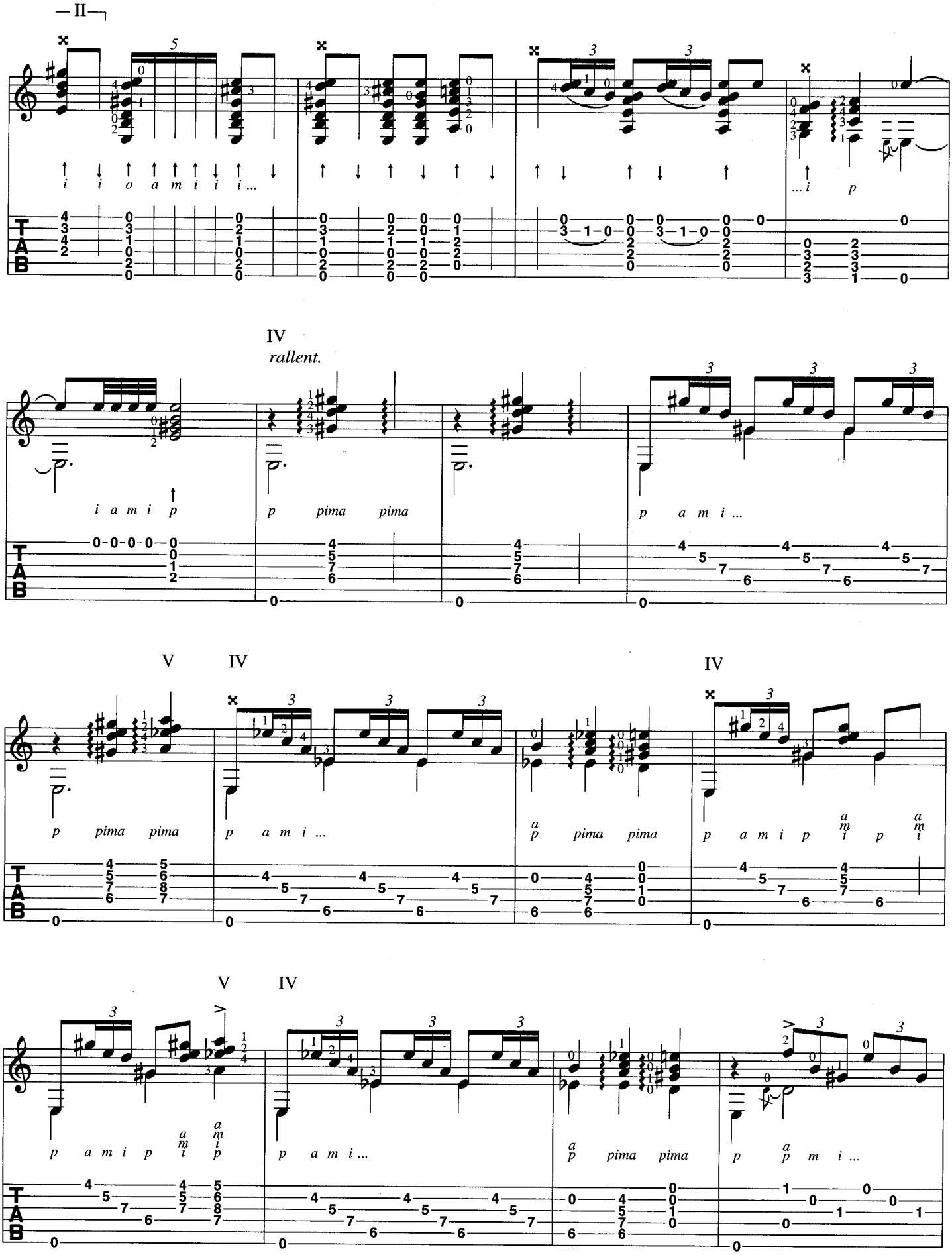
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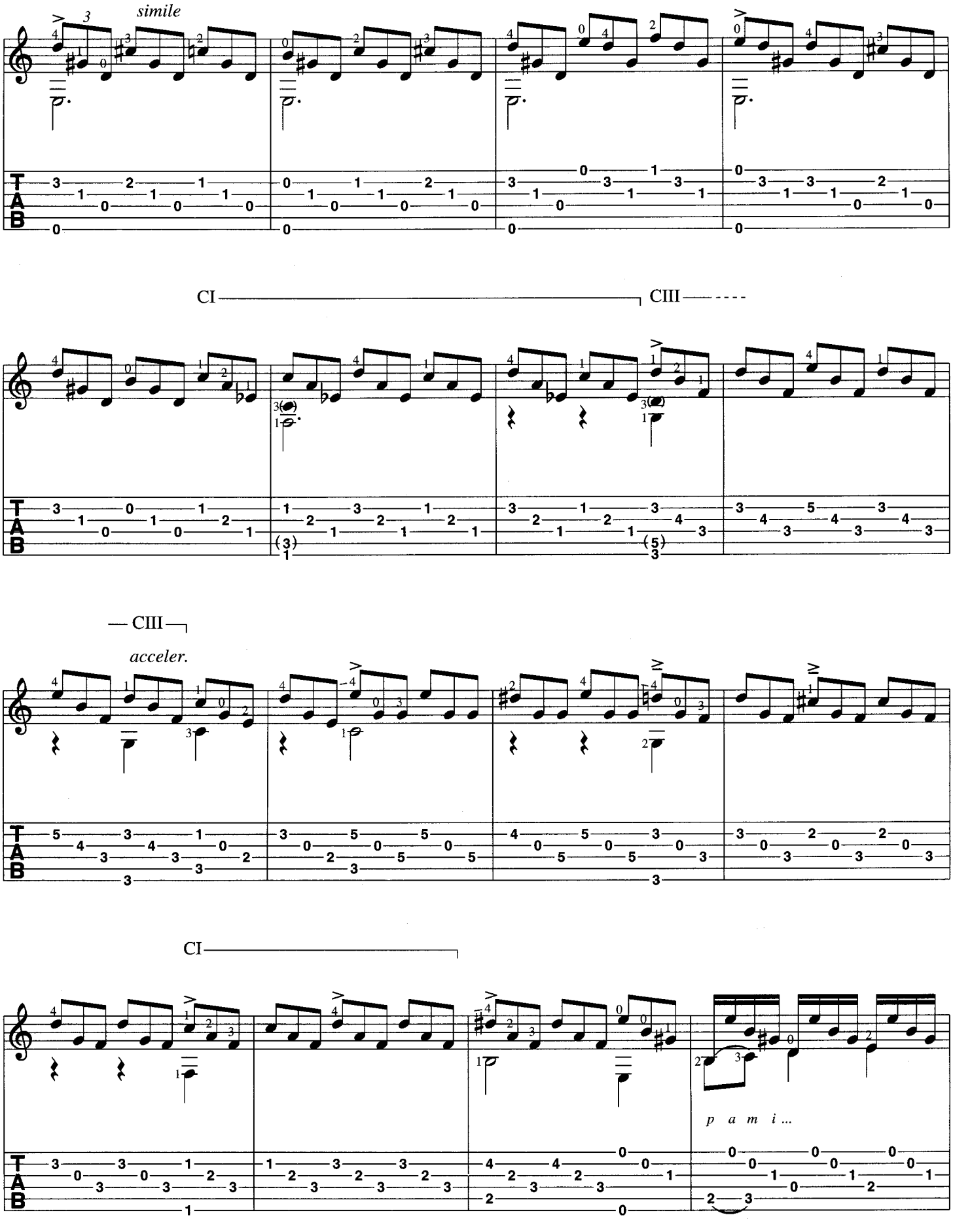
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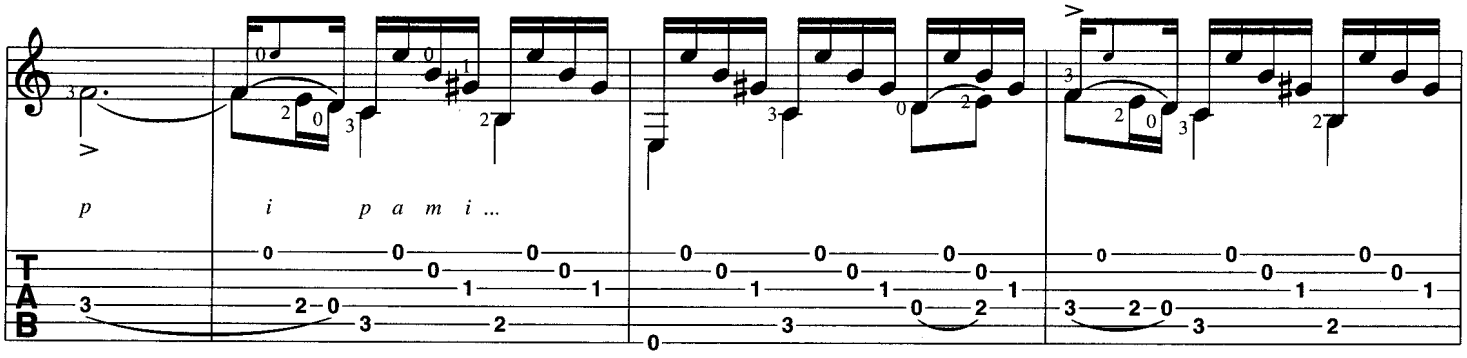
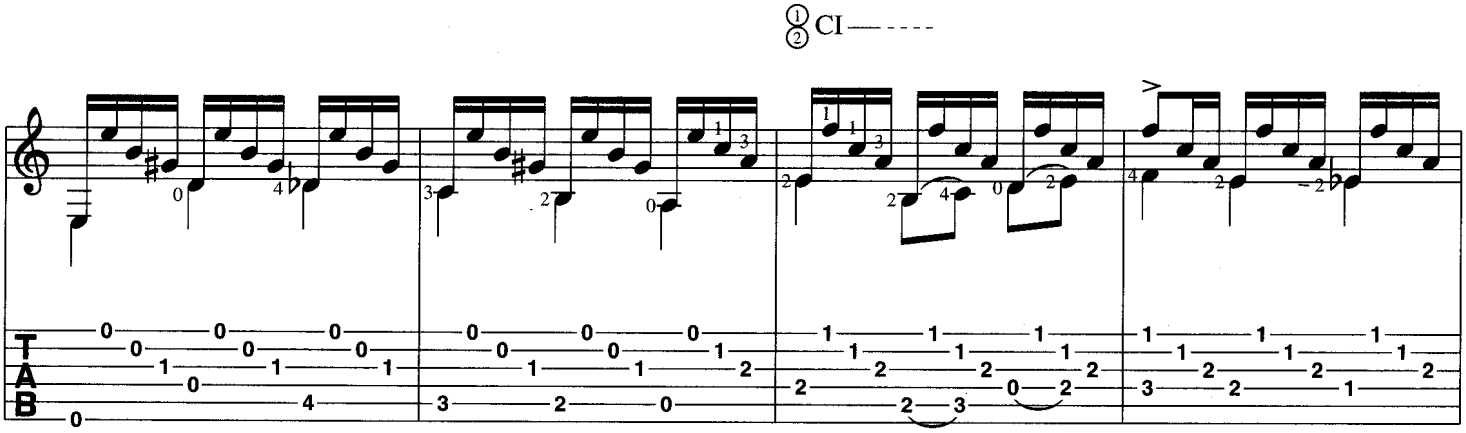
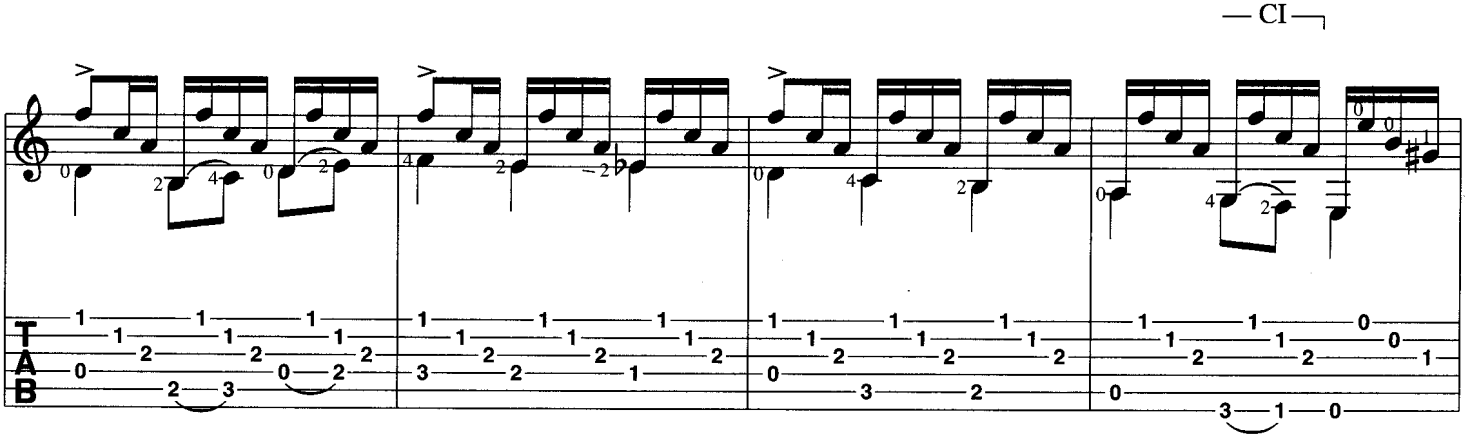
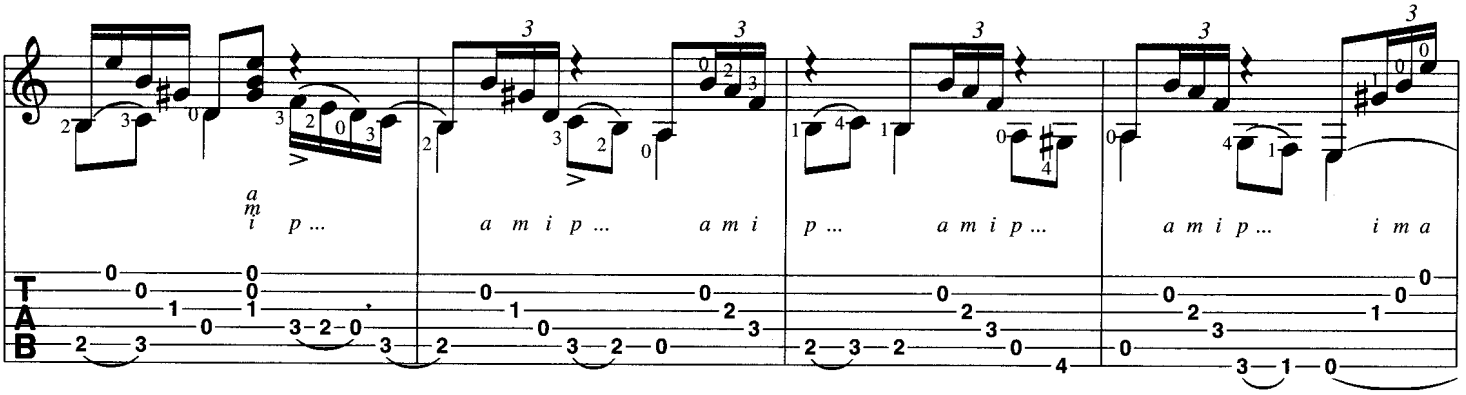
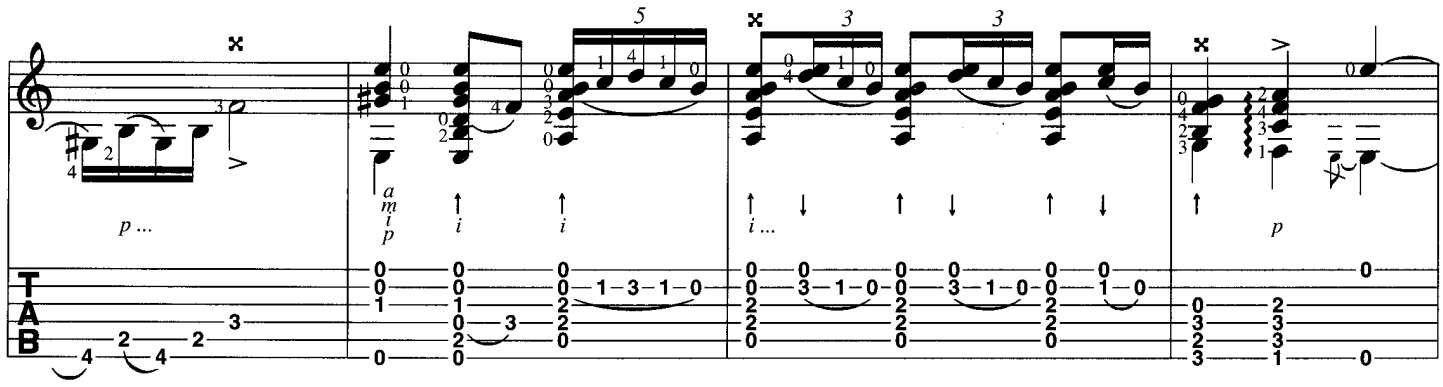
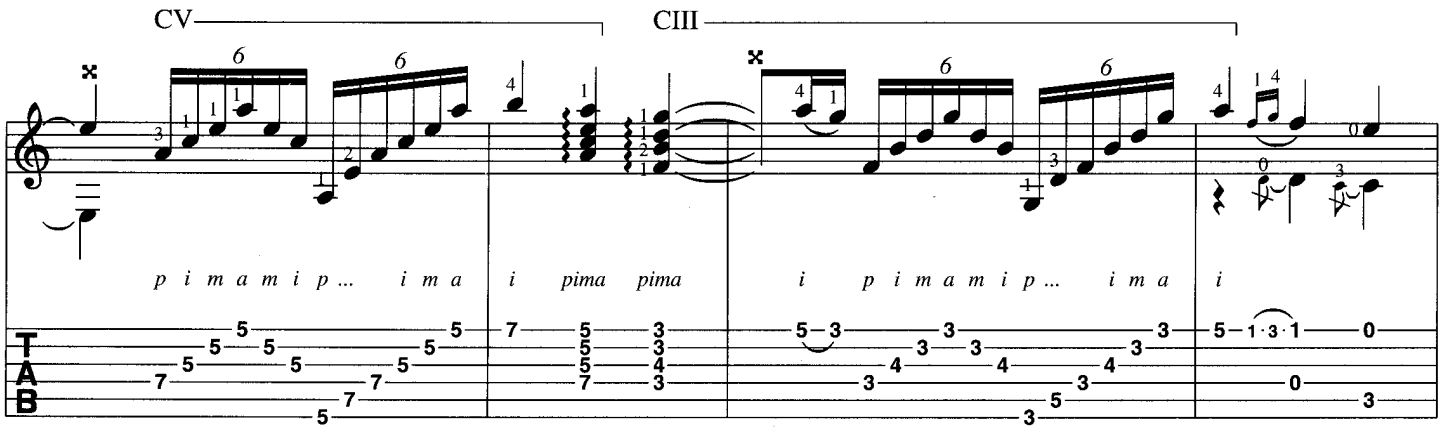


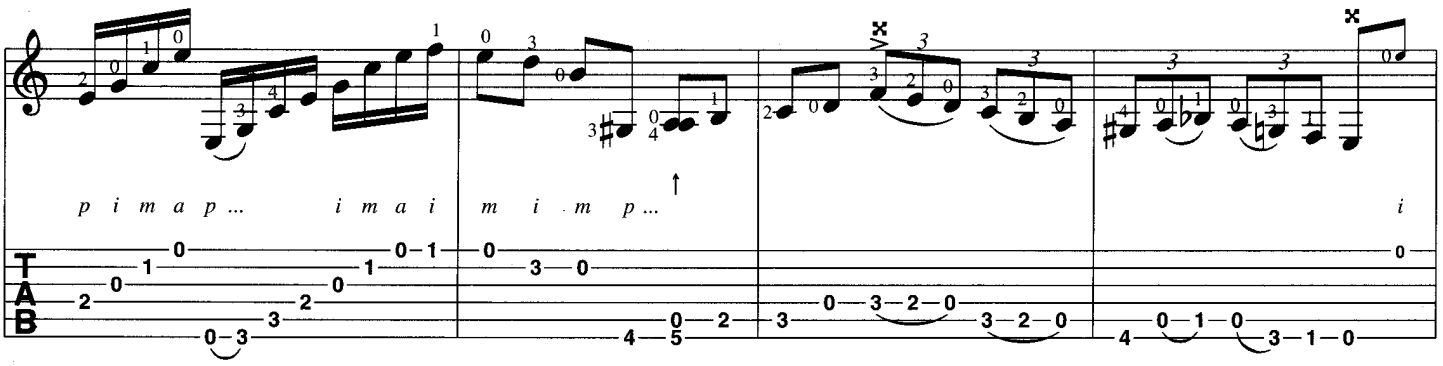


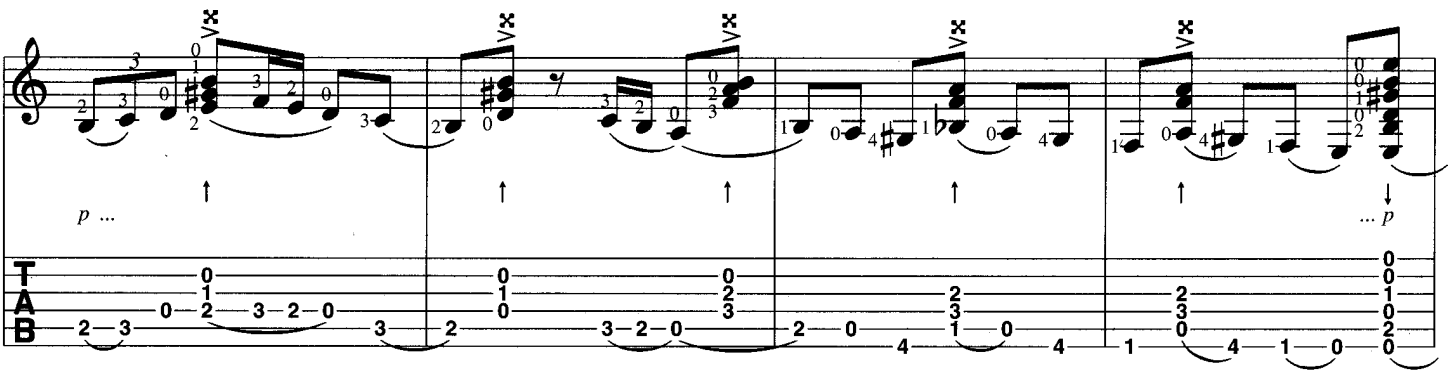


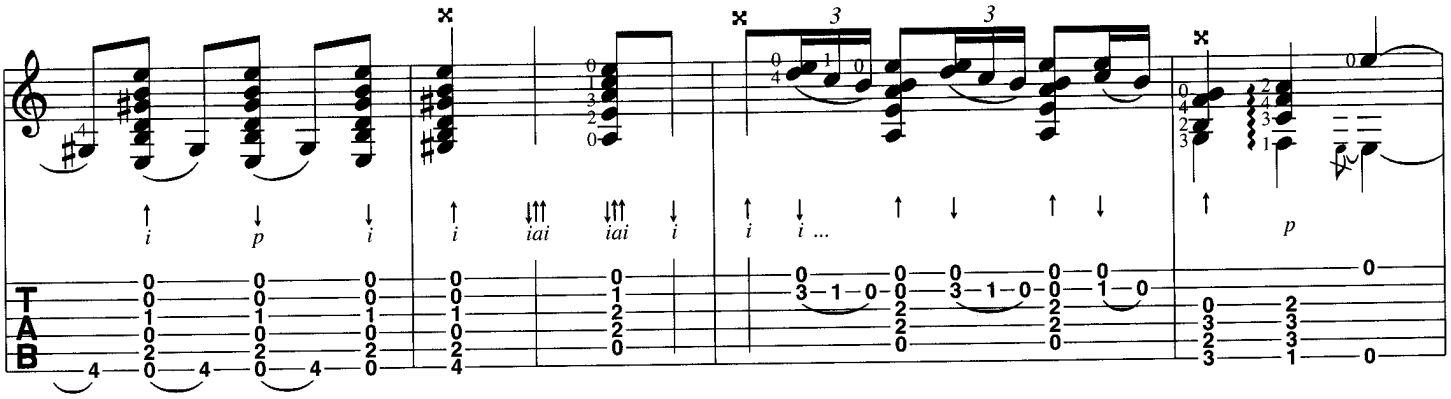





CV
CIII



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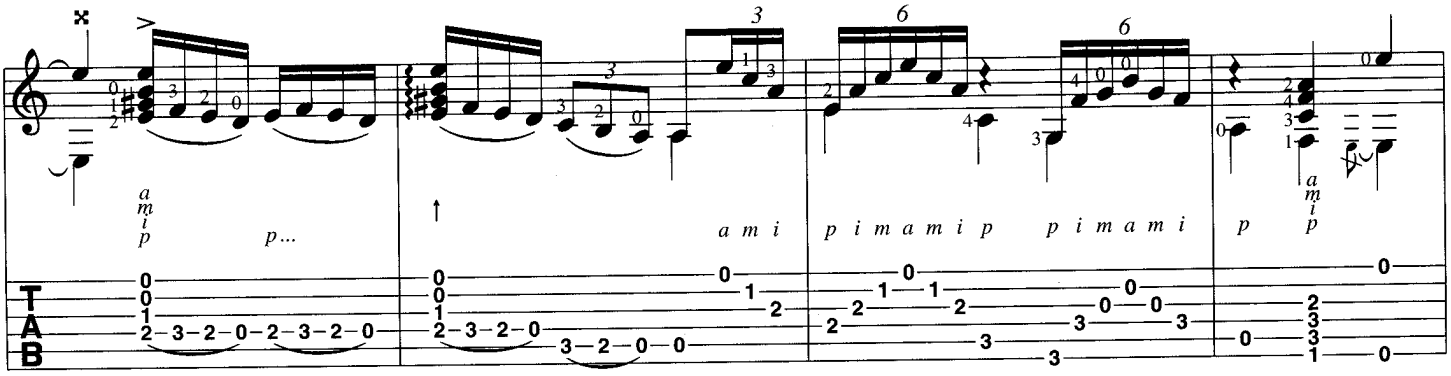
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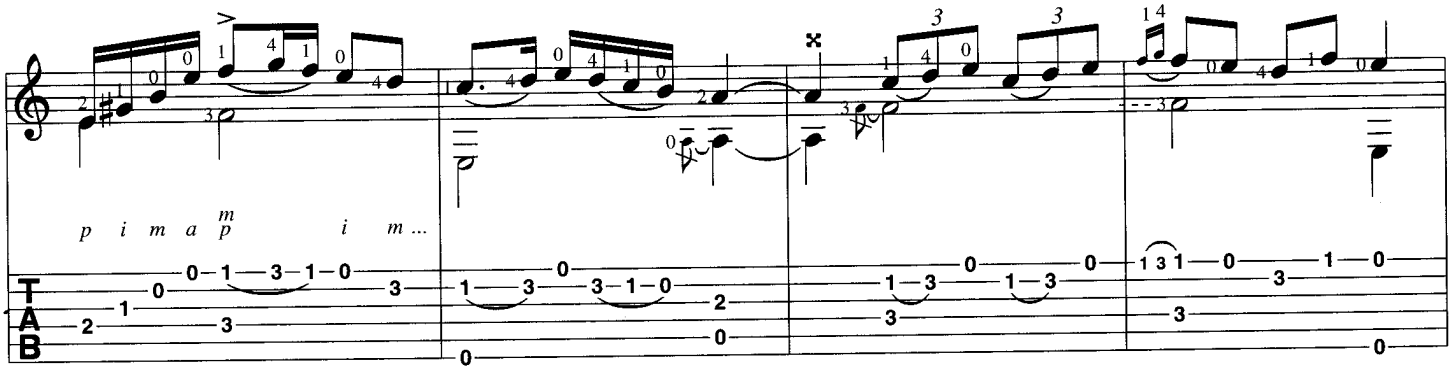
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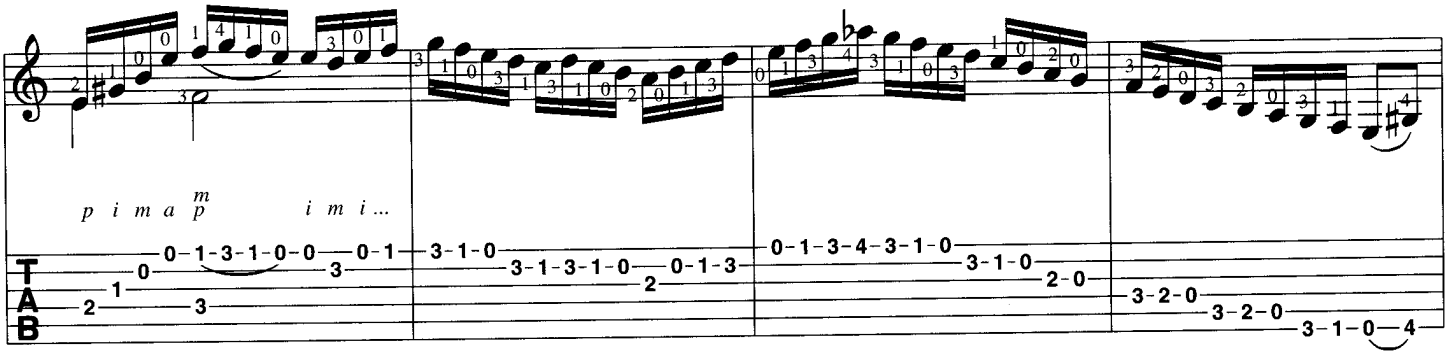
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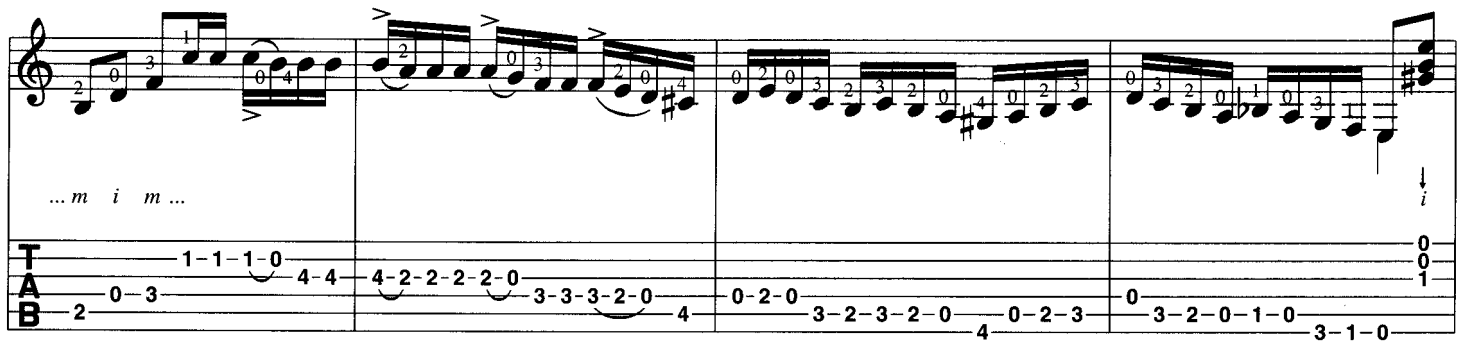
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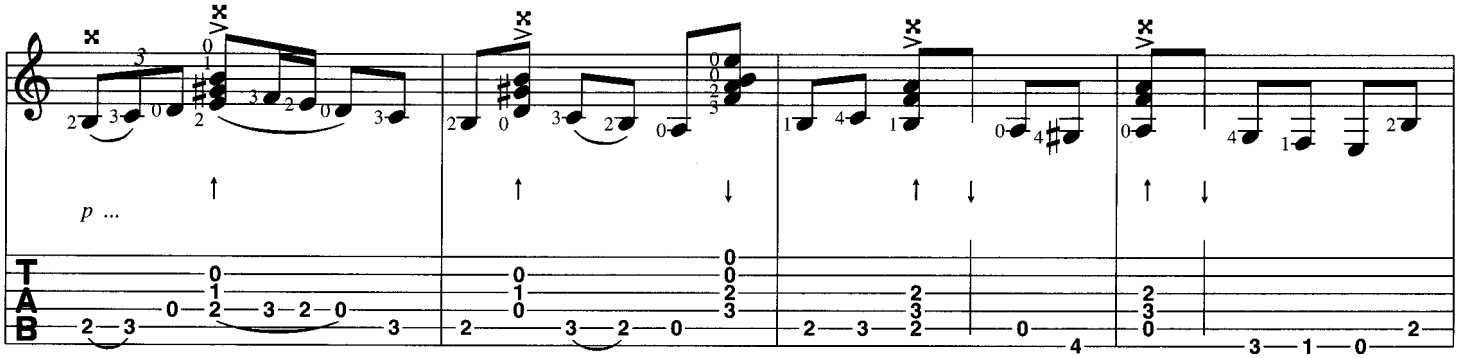
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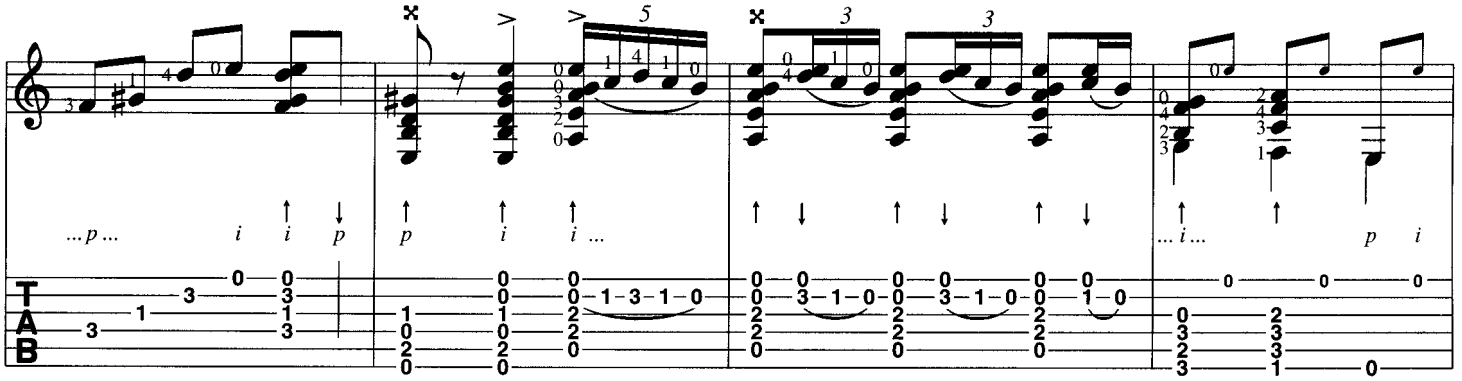
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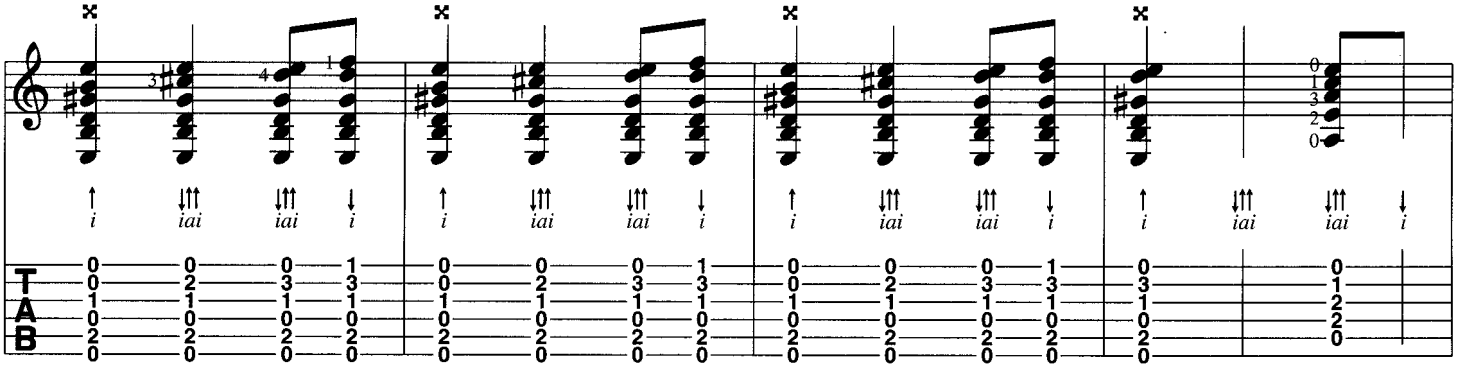
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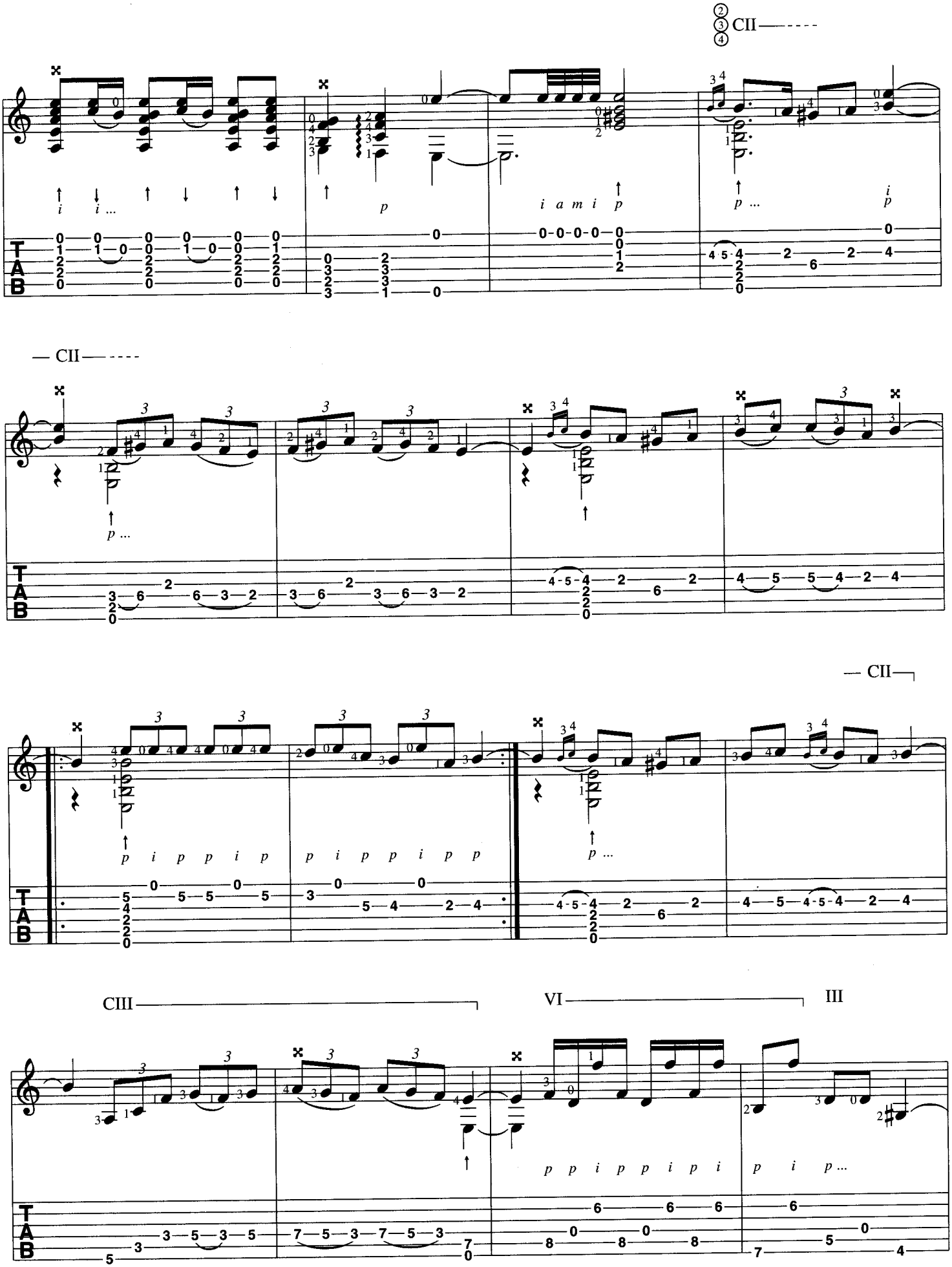
CII
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VI
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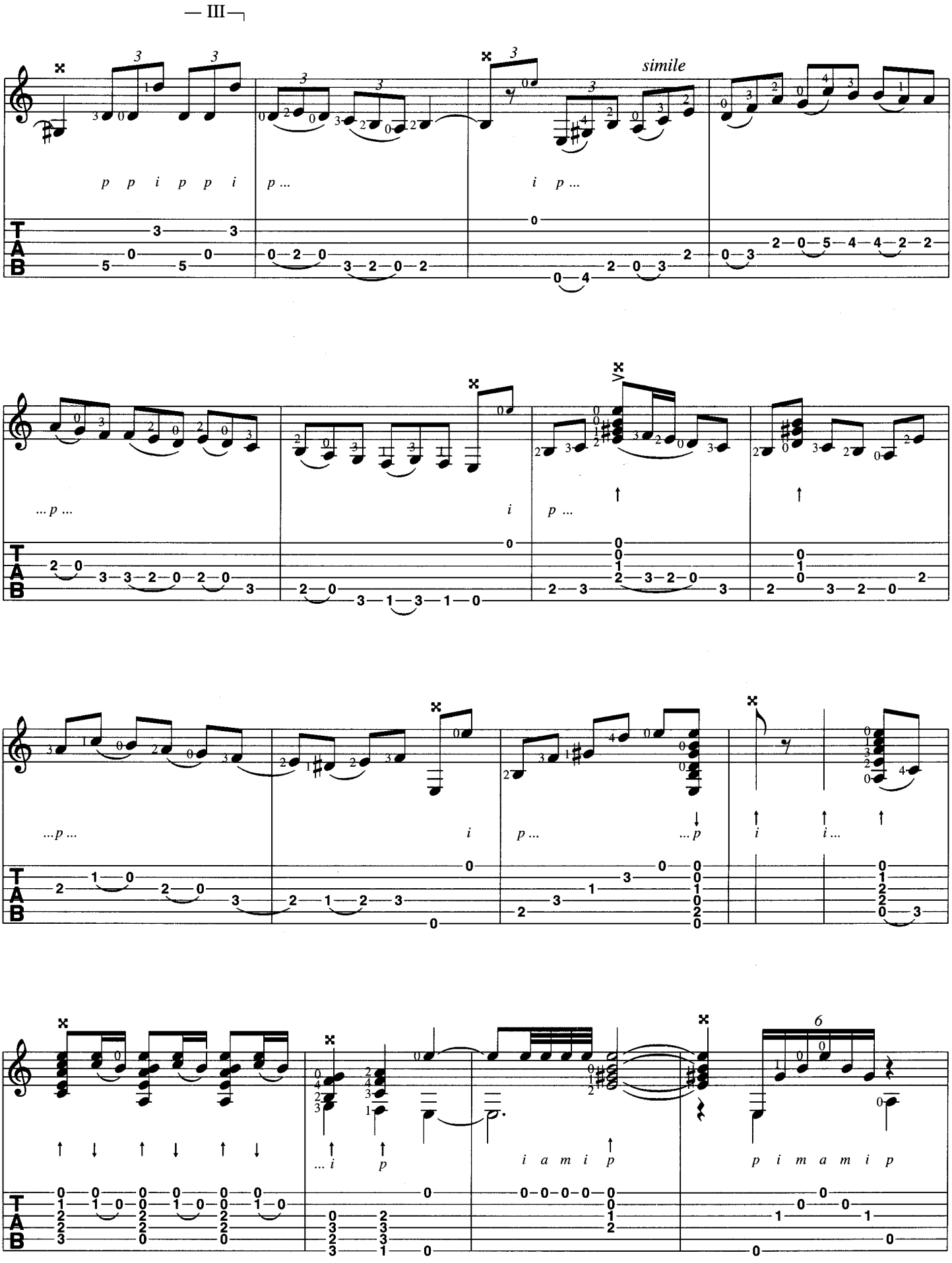
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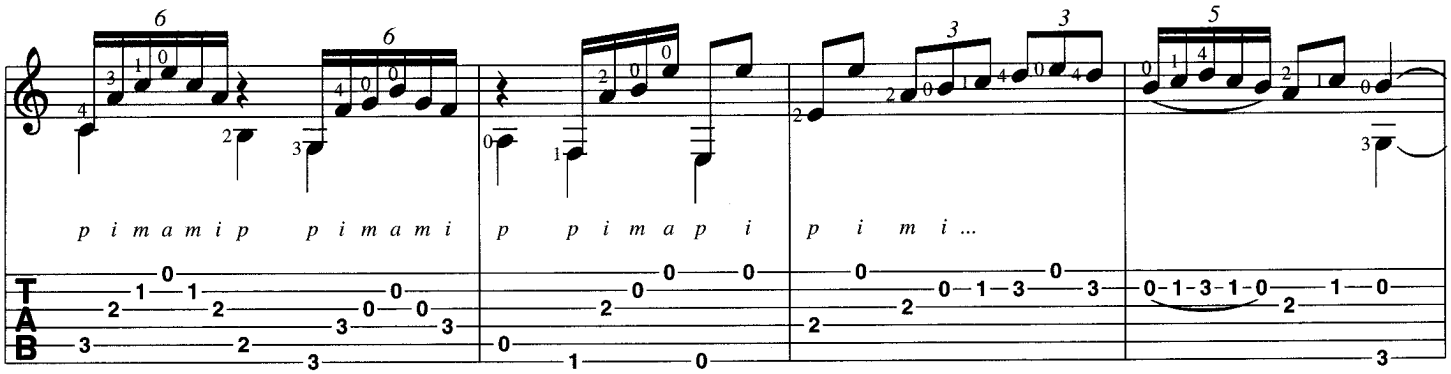
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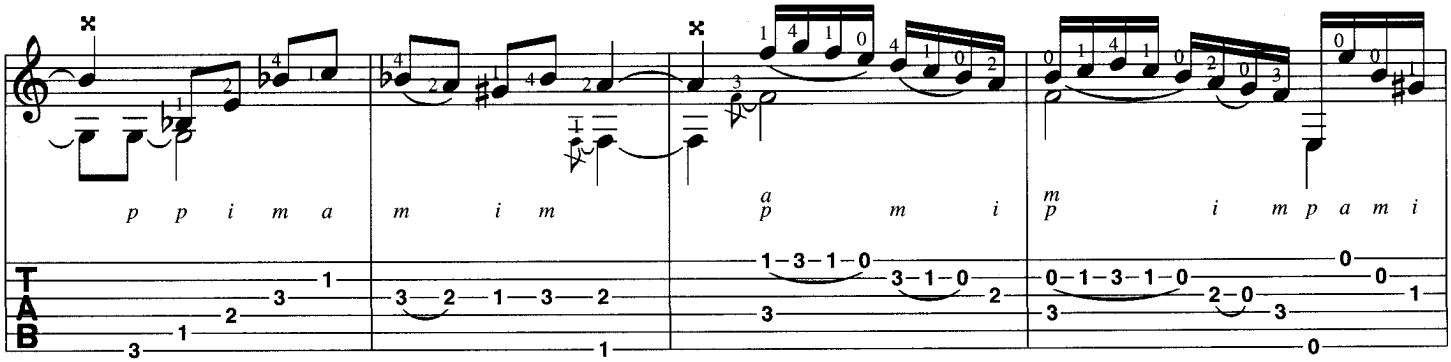
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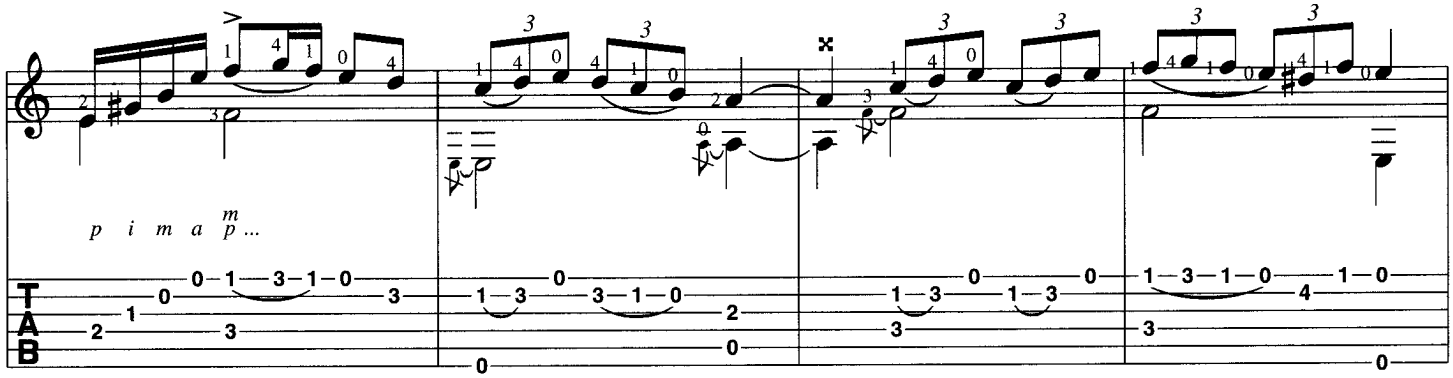
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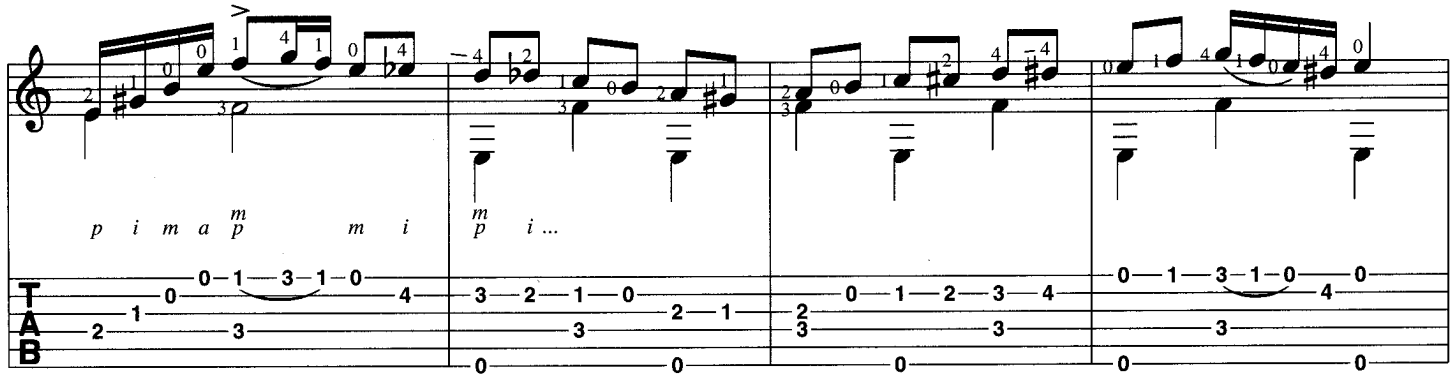
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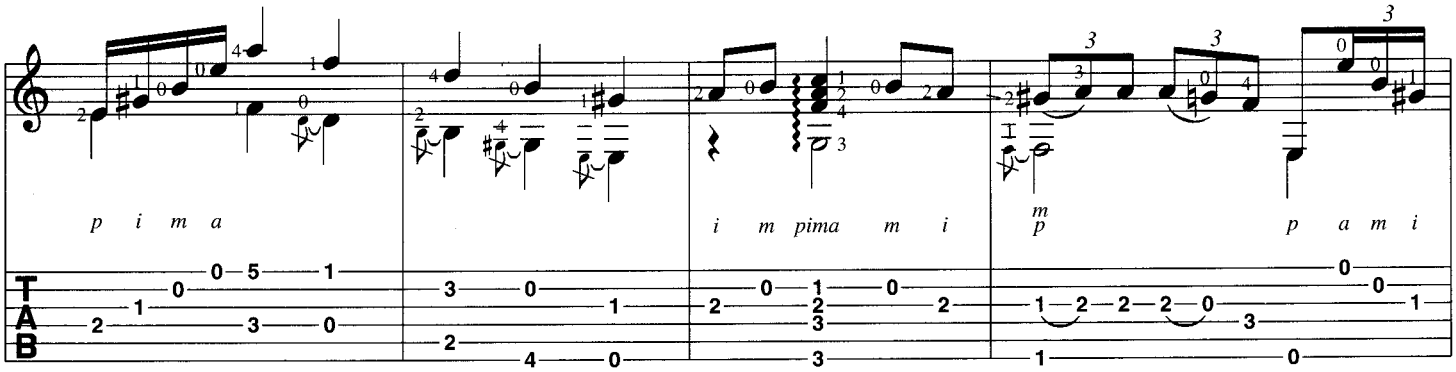
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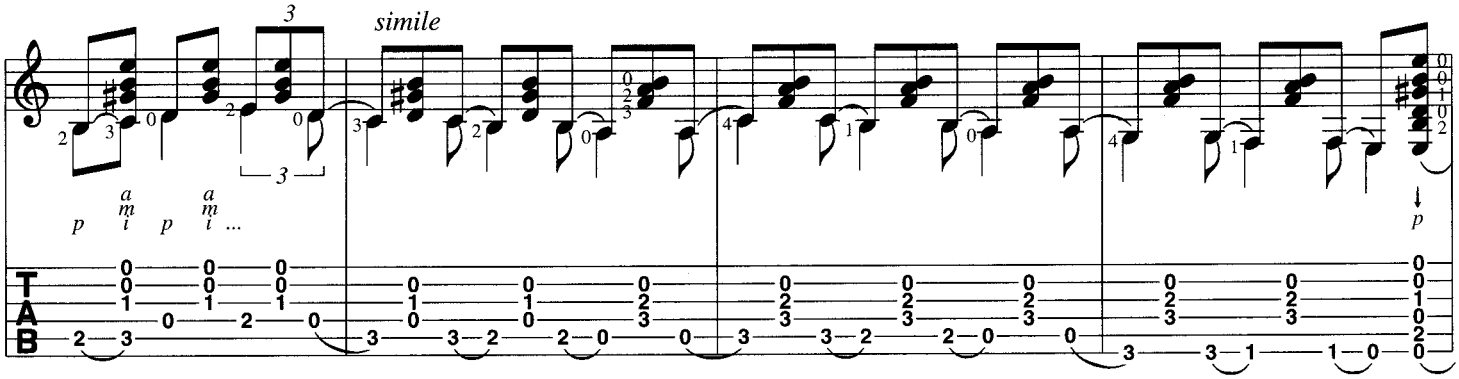
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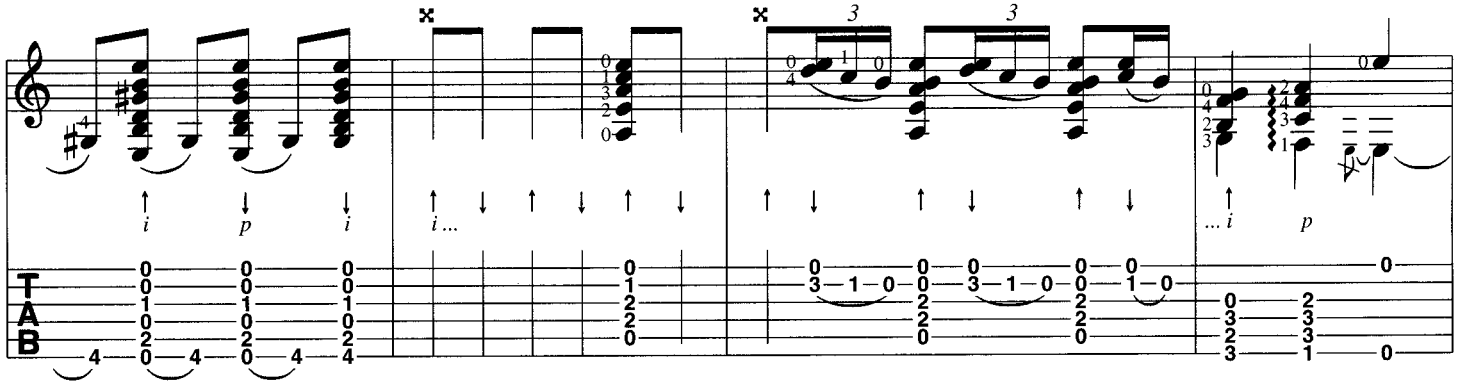
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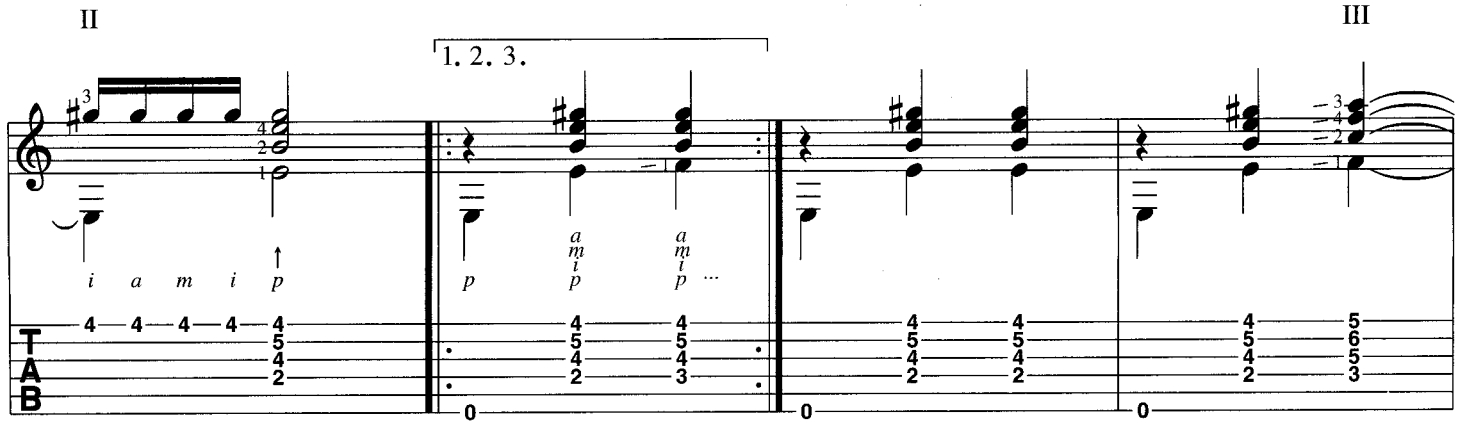
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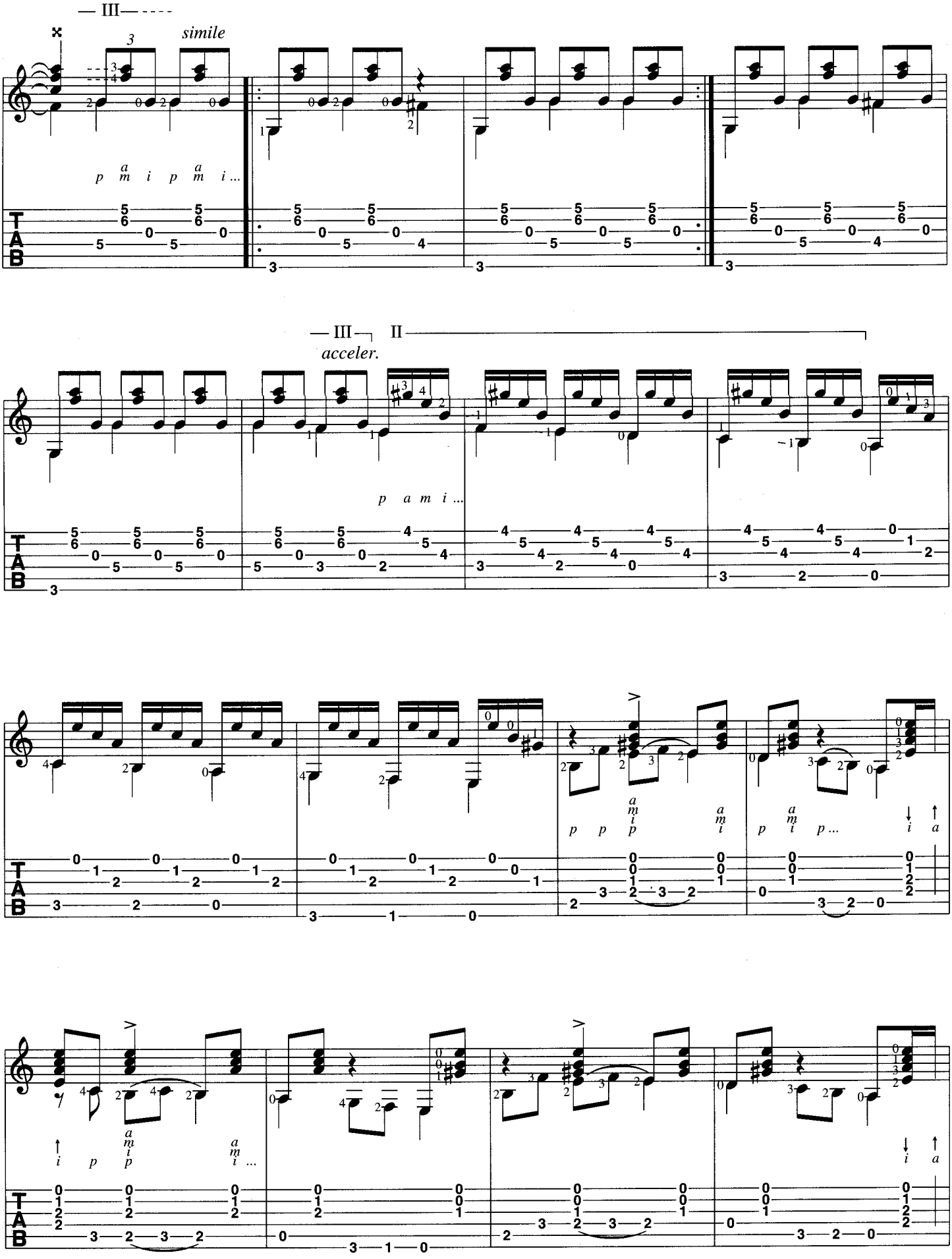
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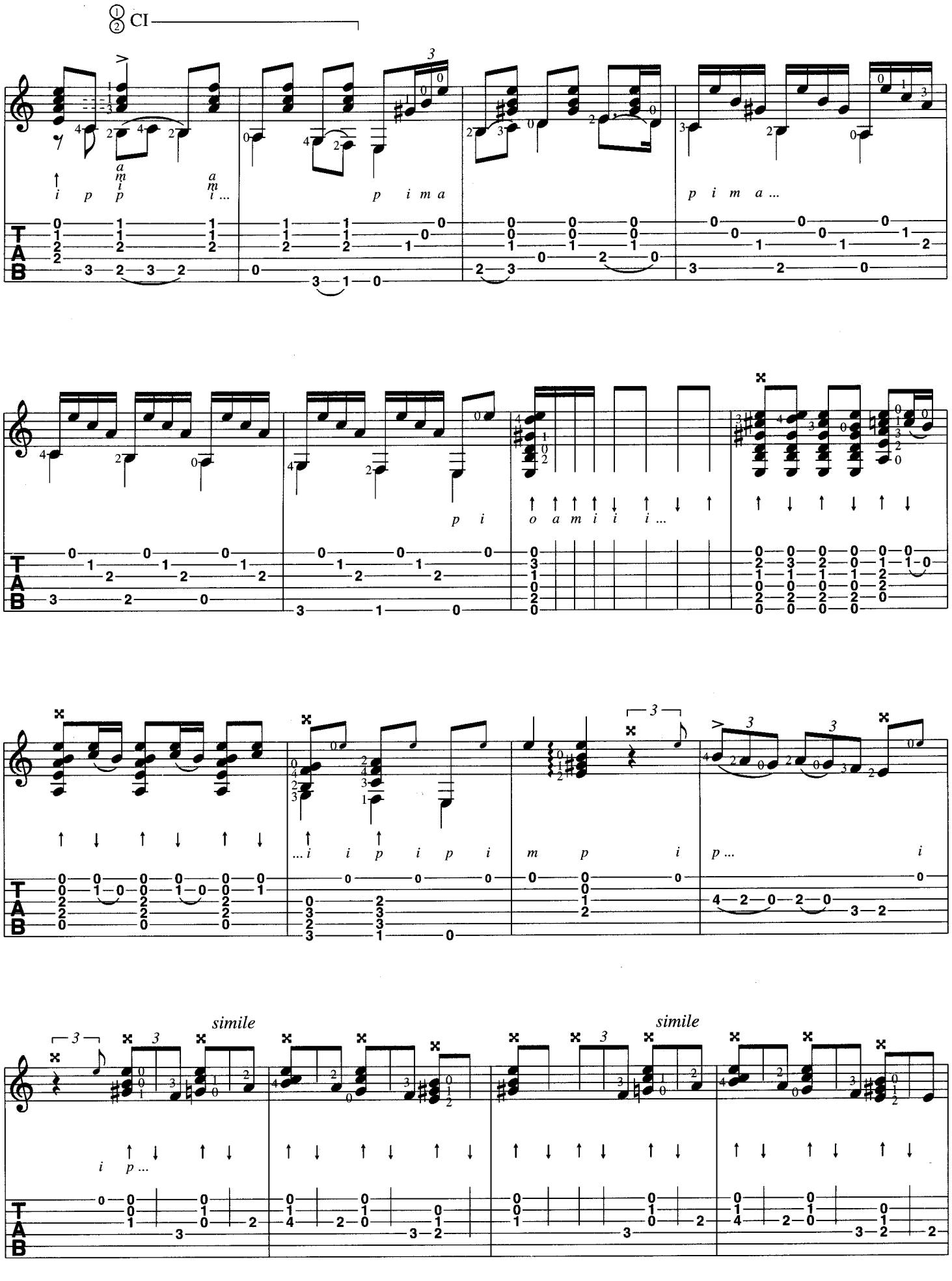
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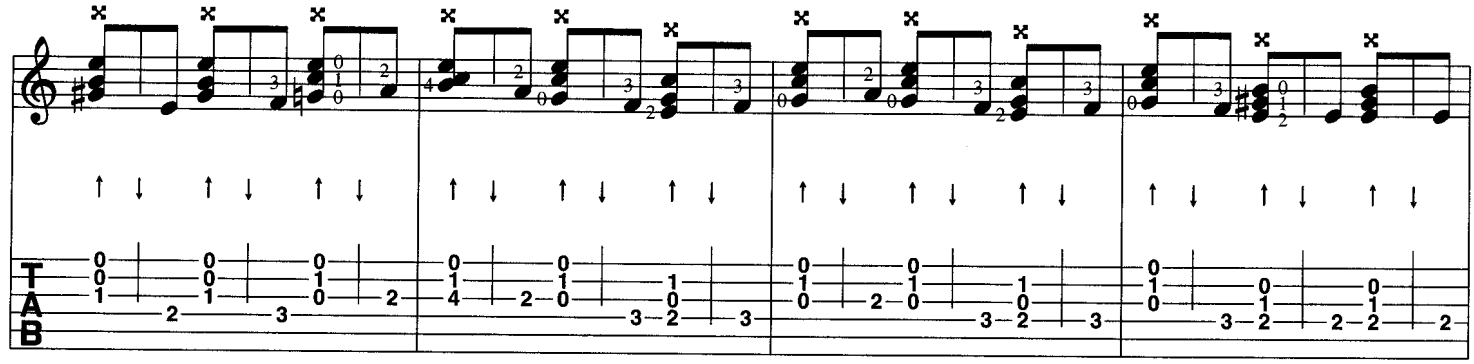

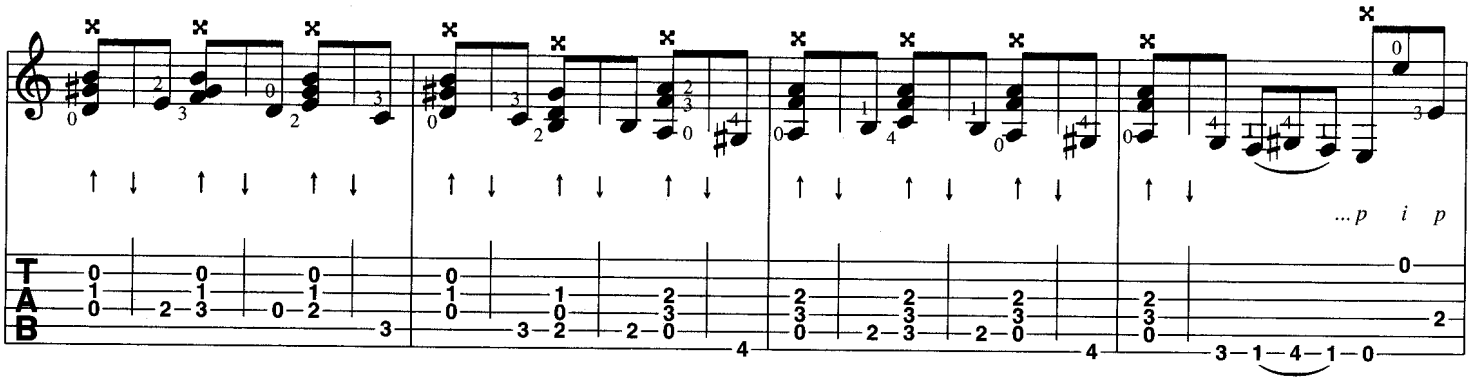
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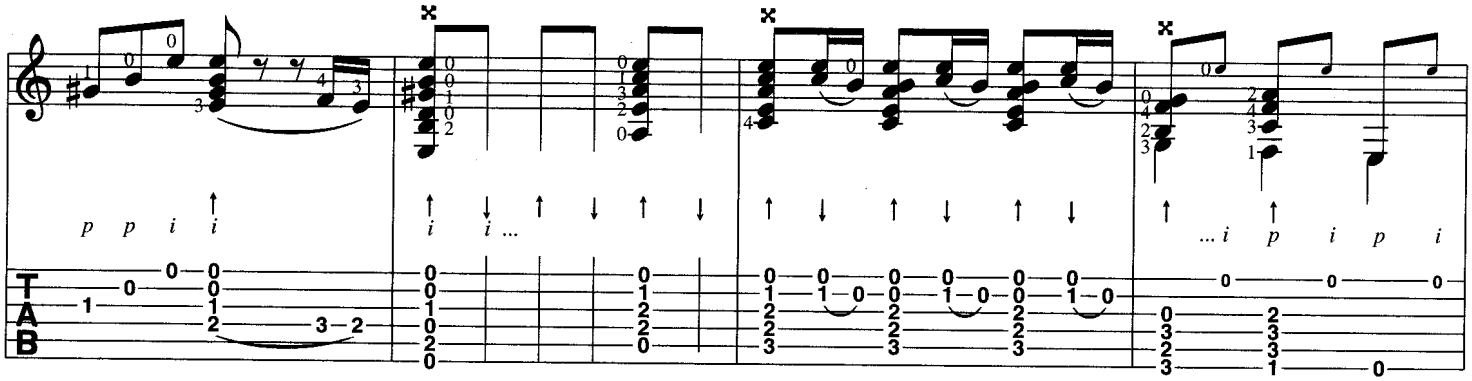
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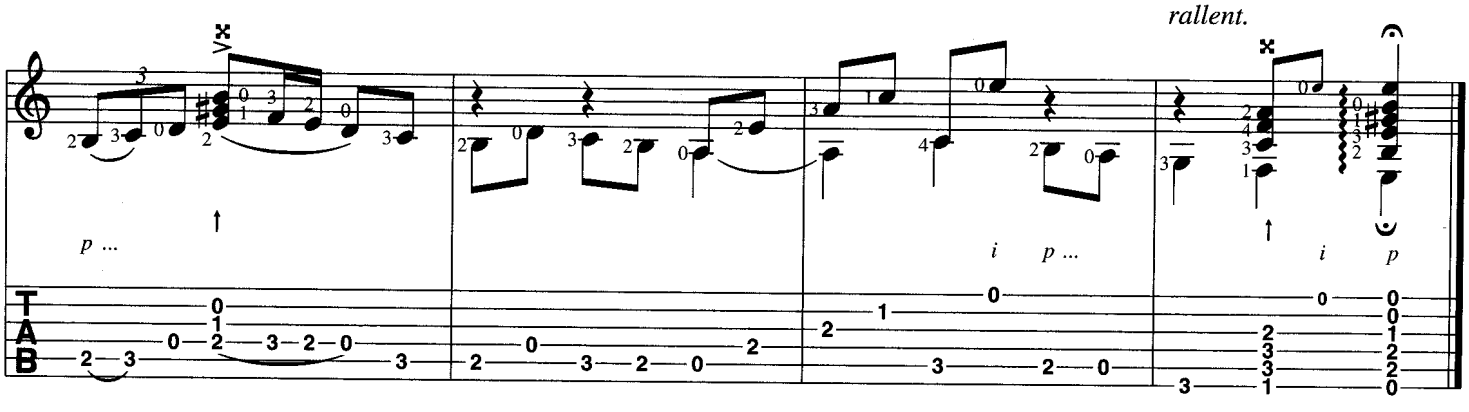
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SABICAS

Rey del Flamenco

FOREWORD

With the recording of the album *Rey del Flamenco*, at the beginning of 1966, Sabicas reached a new stage of maturity in his musical development. His work had freed itself of the influence of Ramón Montoya, and he was able to express himself without hindrance. His style became better defined, allowing his ideas to flourish within new harmonies.

For guitarists, the most remarkable aspect lies in the absolute mastery of the fingerboard and the logical fingering. By this time, Sabicas had turned the pursuit of ergonomy into a fine art. His fondness for diminished chords and their simple yet magic effect, when pursued up and down the fingerboard three frets at a time, is legendary, and he exploited them a great deal at the start of his career. They are to be found in, for example, the tremolo in *Olé mi Cádiz* p. 58, staves 3 and 4, and again in *Zapateado en Re*, p. 33, staff 4. In other types of development he attained maximum effect with economical means, using a minimum of barrés, and making wise use of open strings. See in this instance, for example, the finale of *Aires de Puerto Real*, p. 28, staves 2 to 4, or the finale of *La Trinidad*, p. 53, staves 2 to 4, both facilitated by their key of E major. *Aires de Puerto Real* can be further cited for the elegant way the passages follow on one another on p. 15, staff 4 and p. 19, staff 2. The ratio between the amount of left-hand work necessary and the "quantity" of music engendered is surprising. If such a metaphor were not verging on blasphemy, one might talk of value for money.

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The *Zapateado en Re* was a favourite with both composer and audience. Sabicas was constantly in search of new ideas, and here he transposed a style traditionally played in C into the more open key of D. One can only admire the splendid sequences of arpeggiated chords and the easy left-hand movements.

One of the most thrilling themes is that of the *campanas*, with an impressive repeat in harmonics. Sabicas was an old hand at this technique, which we see in another masterpiece in D, the *Guajira melodica*. These tinkling bells, reminiscent of a music box, remind us also of Papageno's glockenspiel. Sabicas may well have seen a performance of The Magic Flute.

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Olé mi Cádiz starts off in E minor before moving to E major. These are the keys for the *alegrías de Córdoba* and the *Rosa*, respectively, according to an earlier classification that has today fallen into disuse. Sabicas, however, wrote few alegrias in these keys, and took the more commonly used A major instead. This point of interest apart, the piece is quite magnificent in its own right. The atmosphere induced by the use of E minor, the skilfully developed themes and Sabicas' own technical ease make this work a splendid gateway to further study of the contents of this album.

Sentimiento gitano casts the *siguiriya* in a more modern light, and in places foreshadows today's style (see p. 73, staves 1 to 4; or p. 74, staff 3 to p. 75, staff 1). Despite his occasional deliberately spectacular display of brilliance, Sabicas never stooped to pyrotechnics for their own sake. An example can be seen in the *falseta* on p. 67 staff 1 to p. 68 staff 1, a seemingly unceasing cascade of semiquavers. The remate that follows almost comes as a relief, so that the listener, about to beg for mercy, is at last able to draw breath. While the piece is soundly constructed, it is the unstoppable flow of semiquavers that remains in the memory. The flamenco guitar is, after all, so designed that moments of profundity alternate with fireworks, light with dark.

PREFACIO

Cuando a principios del año 1966 Sabicas graba el disco *Rey del Flamenco*, ya ha alcanzado en su evolución musical una segunda madurez. Su discurso ha conseguido emanciparse de Ramón Montoya y su personalidad se expresa libremente. El estilo se decanta, las ideas continúan siendo tan abundantes como de costumbre, surgen nuevas armonías.

Para los guitarristas, lo más notable reside en el dominio absoluto de la utilización del mástil y la racionalidad de la digitación. En Sabicas, la búsqueda de la ergonomía se ha convertido, en ese estadio, en una estética, en un arte en sí. Es conocida su predilección por los acordes disminuidos de soberbios y fáciles efectos producidos al recorrer el mástil mediante desplazamientos de tres trastes. Sabicas lo usaba ampliamente desde sus inicios, lo encontramos, por ejemplo, en el trémolo de *Olé mi Cádiz* p. 58, pentagramas 3 y 4, o bien en el *Zapateado en Re*, p. 33, pentagrama 4. Pero en otros tipos de desarrollos obtiene también un resultado muy eficaz con una extrema economía de medios, sabiendo reducir al mínimo el recurso de las cejillas y utilizar juiciosamente las cuerdas al aire. Ver por ejemplo el final de *Aires de Puerto Real*, por la elegancia de encadenamientos p. 15, pentagrama 4 y 9, y p. 19, pentagrama 2. La relación entre la cantidad de trabajo desarrollado por la mano izquierda y la "cantidad" de música producida es sorprendente. Si la metáfora no fuese tan iconoclasta se podría hablar de una relación calidad-precio insuperable.

La soleá *Aires de Puerto Real*, como acabamos de observar, ilustra brillantemente la buena armonía entre la inventiva musical y la inteligencia de las digitaciones. Descubrimos una profusión de falsetas inéditas que renuevan casi totalmente el material del autor en este palo. Se notará la ausencia de variación en trémolo, bastante inhabitual, que a pesar de todo pasa desapercibida dado lo apretado y coherente del conjunto.

El *Zapateado en Re* era una de las piezas favoritas del autor y su público. Sabicas, creador incansable en busca de innovación, ha transportado a la tonalidad abierta de Re un estilo tradicionalmente tocado en Do. Las magníficas sucesiones de acordes arpegiados fuerzan la admiración por su aptitud para construir una línea lógica y por la mecánica desahogada de la mano izquierda.

Es sin embargo el tema de las campanas el que nos maravilla más, magnificado por su repetición con armónicos. Sabicas está acostumbrado a ese método, recordemos otra obra maestra en Re, la *Gualira melódica*. Aquellas campanillas con ecos de caja de música harían pensar casi en el glockenspiel de Papageno. ¿Oiría Sabicas la Flauta Mágica?

Es interesante resaltar que originalmente tocaba este fragmento mediante armónicos artificiales, con una técnica de mano derecha muy personal en la que el pulgar ejecuta la nota en lugar del anular. Al final adoptaría la forma aquí transcrita, com armónicos naturales. En lo concerniente la ejecucíon, he añadido entre paréntesis, en tres lugares, una digitación que -todo ocurre- parece ajustarse más naturalmente a los dedos que la del propio autor, tal como se observa en algunos videos.

La malagueña, como la farruca y la danza mora, ocupa un lugar privilegiado en el repertorio de Sabicas. Se nutre de una fuente de inspiración continua, razón por la cual, sin duda, su genio se expresa mejor. Podríamos afirmar que nadie le ha igualado en dichos estilos. *La Trinidad* es la más acaba de todas, prácticamente una síntesis de sus ideas más bellas. No le falta más que la copla y el trémolo de *Brisas de la Caleta* para estar completa.

Olé mi Cádiz empieza en Mim y evoluciona en MiM. Son las tonalidades respectivas de las alegrías de Córdoba y de la Rosa según una clasificación hoy abandonada. Sabicas ha dejado pocas alegrías en dichas tonalidades por preferir el LaM, más usual. Ello representaría de por sí un cierto interés por esta pieza si por otra parte no fuese sencillamente magnífica. La atmósfera del Mim, los temas hábilmente desarrollados y la facilidad técnica invitarán al lector a entrar en el estudio de la presente selección a través de esta suntuosa puerta.

Sentimiento gitano conlleva ya una visión muy moderna de la siguiriya y prefigura, en determinados momentos, el estilo actual (véase p. 73, pentagramas 1 a 4, o bien p. 74, pentagrama 3 hasta p. 75, pentagrama 1). Conviene subrayar igualmente un enfoque voluntario espectacular y demostrativo al cual Sabicas no desdeñaba recurrir para subyugar a su público. La falseta de p. 67, pentagrama 1 a p. 68, pentagrama 1, muestra el ejemplo en una cascada de semicorcheas que da la sensación de no querer pararse nunca. El remate llega casi como un alivio: el oyente, a punto de pedir la gracia, puede

por fin volver a respirar. La construcción es hermosa, sin embargo el efecto prima sobre la idea musical. ¡Que importa!, la guitarra flamenca está hecha de tal modo que gusta de alternar los momentos más profundos con el arte pirotécnico, la sombra y la luz.

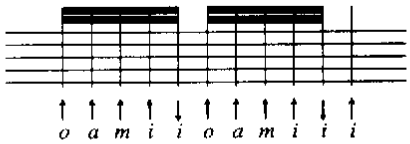
Embrujo de Huelva resume la "manera" Sabicas. Junto a los largos arpegios característicos del fandango encontramos falsetas antiguas (p. 81, pentagramas 2 y 3, o el final en alzapúa), una alusión a la danza mora (p. 64), y la cita de un extracto del *Tientos de los tres ríos* (p. 86, pentagramas 3 y 4) mutado para dicha ocasión de binario en ternario. La forma sincopada y evolucionada del estribillo nos sitúa ya en la época contemporánea.

SOBRE EL SONIDO Y LA TECNICA

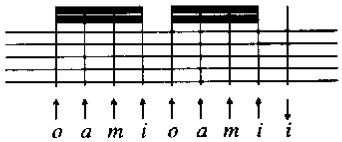
Se podría disertar a lo largo de columnas enteras sobre el sonido de Sabicas. Qué decir, sino que nadie ha hecho sonar el instrumento como él. Fuerza y percusión, pero con redondez e incluso con finura, hacen que se le reconozca entre todos y se le acepte todavía como un modelo. La guitarra de Sabicas es la más perfecta identificación del sonido flamenco.

Ciertas soluciones técnicas que no son más que suyas requieren determinadas precisiones.

Los rasgueados siguen la fórmula habitual con vuelta del índice:



pero en los desarrollos largos y continuos, dicha vuelta queda suprimida:



es el caso por ejemplo al final del *Zapateado* y de *Sentimiento gitano*, las introducciones de *Olé mi Cádiz* y *Embrujo de Huelva*. Aun así, he escrito todos los rasgueados sin tener en cuenta dicha particularidad, prefiriendo ajustarme a los automatismos de los guitarristas de hoy en día.

La técnica de oposición pulgar-índice/medio (ej. *La Trinidad*, p. 46 y 47) se ve substituida por pulgar-índice/anular cuando en los agudos no hay canto sino "pedal" (ej. *La Trinidad* de nuevo, en la conclusión del trémolo, p. 50, pentagramas 1 y 2). La razón equivale aquí a ganar fuerza e intensidad.

Las idas y vueltas del índice son de hecho ejecutadas por los dedos medio + anular juntos. Con objeto de no hacer más pesada la lectura, he pasado por alto ese detalle por considerarlo más bien anecdótico.

El golpe puede hacerse con la vuelta del pulgar, golpeando la tabla bajo los agudos (*Sentimiento gitano*, p. 67, pentagrama 4, tercer compás).

Los apagados se efectúan con el dedo pequeño de la mano izquierda, presionando las cuerdas contra el mástil. Se reconocen en las semicorcheas, alternando con silencios de éstas (*Aire de Puerto Real*, p. 18, pentagrama 3, y *Olé mi Cádiz*, p. 62, pentagrama 1).

SOBRE LA ESCRITURA

- las notas entre paréntesis no se tocan, sino que indican la posición completa de la mano izquierda (salvo en los armónicos del *Zapateado*, cf. infra).
- las alteraciones accidentales no valen más que para la altura en que se encuentran, y no a la octava.
- en las secciones no medidas (*La Trinidad*), un pentagrama equivale a un compás, en lo concerniente a alteraciones accidentales.

A.F.

SABICAS THE ETERNAL

Few performing artists become household names in their lifetime, and fewer still become the stuff of legends, with a permanent place in the pages of history. Yet Sabicas is one of those few.

The irresistible world of music created by Sabicas is both timeless and ageless. Every master of flamenco today recognises him as the unforgettable *tocaor* who inspired his own dreams.

Yet the paths of glory trodden by Agustín Castellón Campos, Niño Sabicas (1912-1990), are not without their own paradox. For a start, he was not born in Andalusia but in far-off Navarre, and fame came to him even further away from Spain, in America. Destiny is not what we always expect.

The young gypsy lad from Pamplona had barely tuned up his first guitar when it became obvious that he was a child prodigy. Since no one he knew was capable of giving him lessons, he had to teach himself with the aid of the few recordings that were available at the time. It was not long before he rose to fame and became the greatest virtuoso of his generation, a position he held unchallenged for many long years. Sabicas took flamenco technique to hitherto unscaled, unimagined heights, leaving his contemporaries far behind in the matter of speed, timbre and purity of sound, not to mention his own numerous compositions. He had a phenomenal sense of *compás* and was unequalled in accompanying, especially playing for dancers.

Sabicas began his professional life by playing with the greatest artists of his time (La Niña de los Peines and Manuel Torres, among others), and in 1937 he joined the company of Carmen Amaya in Buenos Aires, one of the reigning artists of the day, with whom he made many successful tours. He subsequently settled in Mexico for a number of years before finally moving to New York in 1955. He made some fifty records in which he played both solo guitar and accompaniment, but *aficionados* prefer to remember him as the first professional flamenco recitalist.

Sabicas' virtuosity and his impeccable sense of form have imposed high standards on all those who follow him in the art of flamenco *toque*, while his brilliant gifts as a composer have opened up new horizons. His technique, style and immense output have defined today's guitar in terms that it would never have attained without his help. Above all, however, his music has an enchanting power seldom heard elsewhere. How many *tocaores* are able to exert such power over their audience by casting a spell over them? Sabicas was little short of a magician.

Sabicas is no longer with us, but his music remains, much of which can be heard in his recordings. With the notable exception of the transcriptions made by Joseph Trotter for the album "Flamenco puro" in the 1970s, most of Sabicas' works have yet to be published. This is not for want of suitable material, but rather because of the recent dazzling developments in the flamenco guitar, and perhaps even more because of its immediate yet volatile character, closely linked with oral tradition. It goes against the grain to transcribe something so vital in performance to a series of black dots on paper. On the other hand, a written score preserves the music for posterity by publishing the best of the repertoire. Even if his work may be above considerations of current fashion, and even if time cannot harm it, we must remember that that same time does erode our memory. That is why I am particularly happy to be able to publish this collection of Sabicas' finest works, in the knowledge that it is part of the necessary task of passing music on down the generations, and that it is also in response to great demand.

Alain Faucher, Paris, 1999
translated by Mary Criswick

FOREWORD

With the recording of the album *Rey del Flamenco*, at the beginning of 1966, Sabicas reached a new stage of maturity in his musical development. His work had freed itself of the influence of Ramón Montoya, and he was able to express himself without hindrance. His style became better defined, allowing his ideas to flourish within new harmonies.

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One of the most thrilling themes is that of the *campanas*, with an impressive repeat in harmonics. Sabicas was an old hand at this technique, which we see in another masterpiece in D, the *Guajira melodica*. These tinkling bells, reminiscent of a music box, remind us also of Papageno's glockenspiel. Sabicas may well have seen a performance of The Magic Flute.

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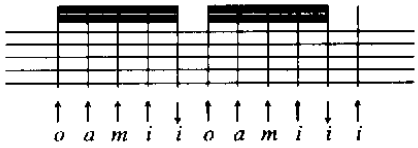
Embrujo de Huelva is a summary of the Sabicas style. Alongside the lengthy arpeggios so typical of the *fandango* we find old *falsetas* (p. 81, staves 2 and 3, or the *alzapúa* finale), an allusion to the *danza mora* (p. 64), and the quotation of an extract from the *Tientos de los tres ríos* (p. 86, staves 3 and 4), transposed for the occasion from duple to triple time. The highly developed syncopated form of the refrain already places this work in the contemporary period.

SOUND AND TECHNIQUE

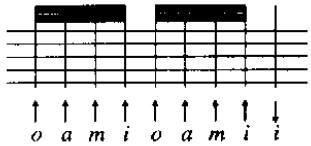
Many pages could be written on the Sabicas sound, pages which could be summed up in the words, "No one has ever made the instrument sound like Sabicas". The power and the percussive effect of his playing, allied with great warmth and finesse, distinguish his performance from that of any other player, and place him even today in the position of maestro. Sabicas' guitar is the most perfect representation of the flamenco sound.

A few techniques that only he used call for a certain amount of explanation.

The *rasgueados* follow the usual pattern, with the index returning across the strings:



but in long continuous development passages, the index does not cross back:



this is the case in, for example, the finales of the *Zapateado* and *Sentimiento gitano*, as in the introductions to *Olé mi Cádiz* and *Embrujo de Huelva*. I have, however, not taken this into account in writing out all the *rasgueados* but rather followed the habitual style of today's guitarists.

The use of the thumb-index/medial finger opposition (e.g., in *La Trinidad*, pp. 46 and 47) is substituted for the thumb-annular/medial opposition when there is no melody in the upper voice, but rather a pedal (as in the conclusion to the tremolo in *La Trinidad*, p. 50, staves 1 and 2). This solution gives greater power and intensity of sound.

The up and down movements of the index finger should be played by the medial and annular fingers together, although for the sake of clarity, this little Sabicas detail is not shown in the score.

The *golpe* may be performed as the thumb returns, striking the table below the upper strings (*Sentimiento gitano*, p. 67, staff 4, bar 3).

Damped notes should be muffled with the little finger of the left hand laid lightly across the strings over the fingerboard, in particular the semiquavers alternating with semiquaver rests (*Aires de Puerto Real*, p. 18, staff 3; and *Olé mi Cádiz*, p. 62, staff 1).

NOTATION

- the notes in brackets are not to be played, but indicate the position for all the fingers of the left hand (with the exception of the harmonics in the *Zapateado*, see above)
- accidentals apply only to the note next to them, and not to other octaves
- in the unmeasured sections (*La Trinidad*), accidentals apply to the entire staff.

A.F.