Advanced Études

for Guitarists in the 21st Century

Michael Bemmels

2022

Études for Guitarists in the 21st Century

This unique set of 30 études draws upon influences from both classical and popular styles of music, depicting the experience of musicians in this current digital era. Through the internet, radio, TV, and my work as a music teacher in a multicultural metropolitan area, I am unceasingly exposed to an enormously large variety of musical styles. As such, in my own mind, it seemed perfectly natural to compose in a way that melded so many different styles together.

As these are études, and intended to carry pedagogical purposes, I might wish to use this opportunity to share my ideas about how they should be performed. Many details of a musical piece are fairly objective and easy to explain: the pitches, rhythms, articulations, etc. I hope that I have succeeded in communicating this information clearly enough in the notation in the score.

What about the ambiguous, yet highly sought advice concerning more subtle facets of musical interpretation: dynamics, tempo fluctuations, tone, fingerings, etc.? I have attempted to notate some suggestions which seemed reasonable to me in the score, but actually, I am not the one to tell you how to perform these études: *you* are the only person who can discover how you should perform them! Whatever do I mean?! I would like to suggest that musical performance should involve the *personal feeling intuition* of the performer.

How can a performer engage his or her *feeling intuition?* To give a few brief pointers, you can start by bringing conscious attention to the centre of your chest (your heart area). Take a few deep breaths, ask your heart how it feels, and silently, spaciously listen for an answer. Allow it to speak whatever it is trying to speak. Switch off your scrutinizing brain, and remove all critical constraints. You may find that a regular practice of meditation or journalling will help develop your skills in quieting the mind and getting in touch with your feelings. If you can practice connecting to the music with your heart open and freed in this manner, then a genuine and feeling musical interpretation will begin to emerge as you play. I don't know what this is going to be for you, you have to play the music and find out for yourself!

Though it is not often spoken of, I believe that authentic feeling engagement is an absolutely essential part of musical performance. Ask your brain how to understand the objective, technical matters, but ask your heart how to execute the music with feeling. They must ultimately work together; they are *both* valuable sources of information. You might discover different answers on different days, and surely *your* answers will be different than the answers that another performer discovers. In my view, as long as the performer is being sincere, then the performance will be valid and acceptable. Remember: even though I am the composer, my performances of these études embody just one of my own personal interpretations of them. This is the way that musical performance works! It's subjective, it's personal, it's temporary, it's constantly changing, it's something that cannot be documented definitively…

I hope that these will be inspiring and enjoyable pieces of music, and I look forward to hearing your own interpretations of these works, as varied and unique as they all might be.

Michael Bemmels
July 2022

Advanced Études

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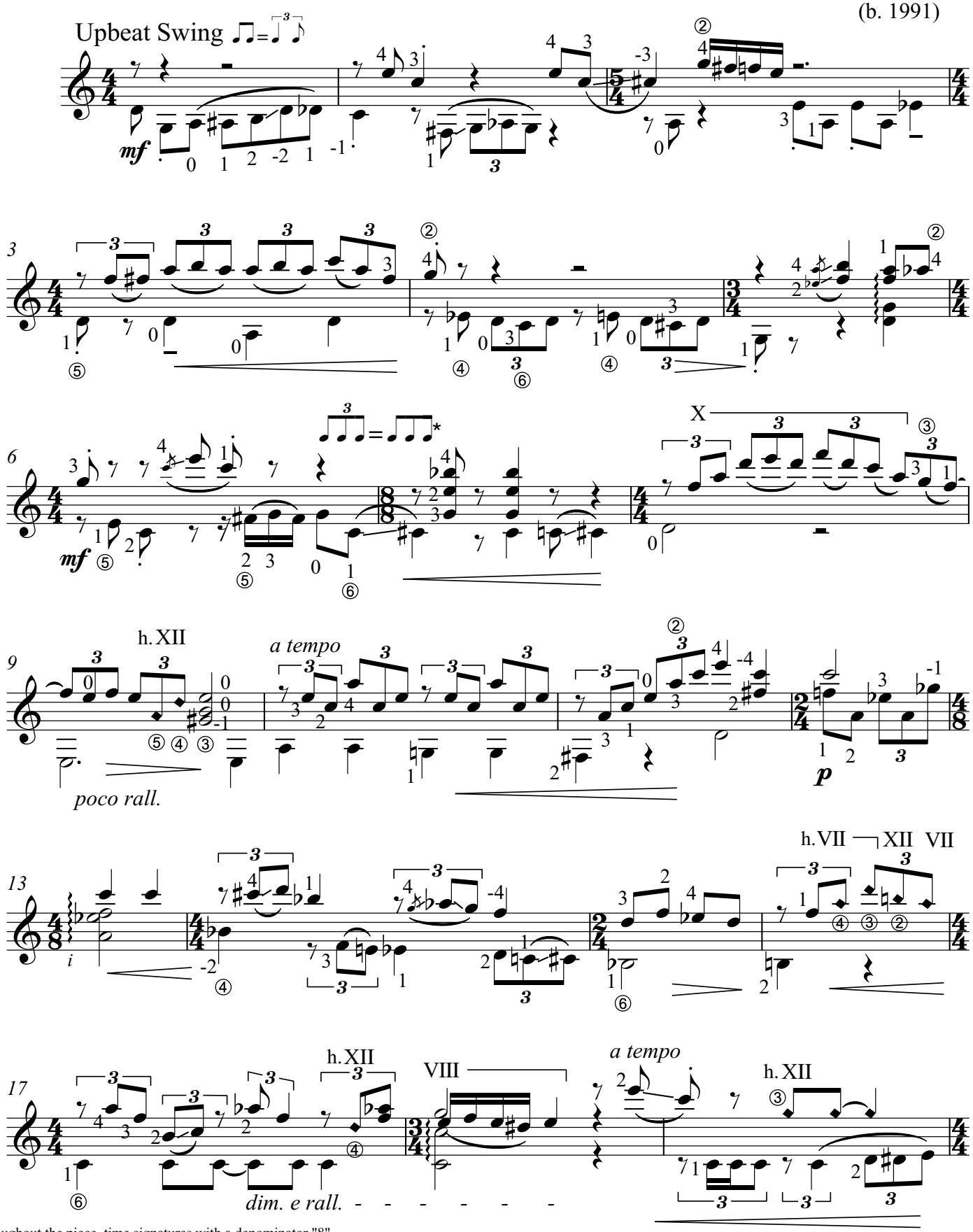
No. 1 - Laughing the Jitters Away

Michael Bemmels
(b. 1991)



*Throughout the piece, time signatures with a denominator "8" derive the eighth note pulse from the triplet eighth notes in 4/4 time.

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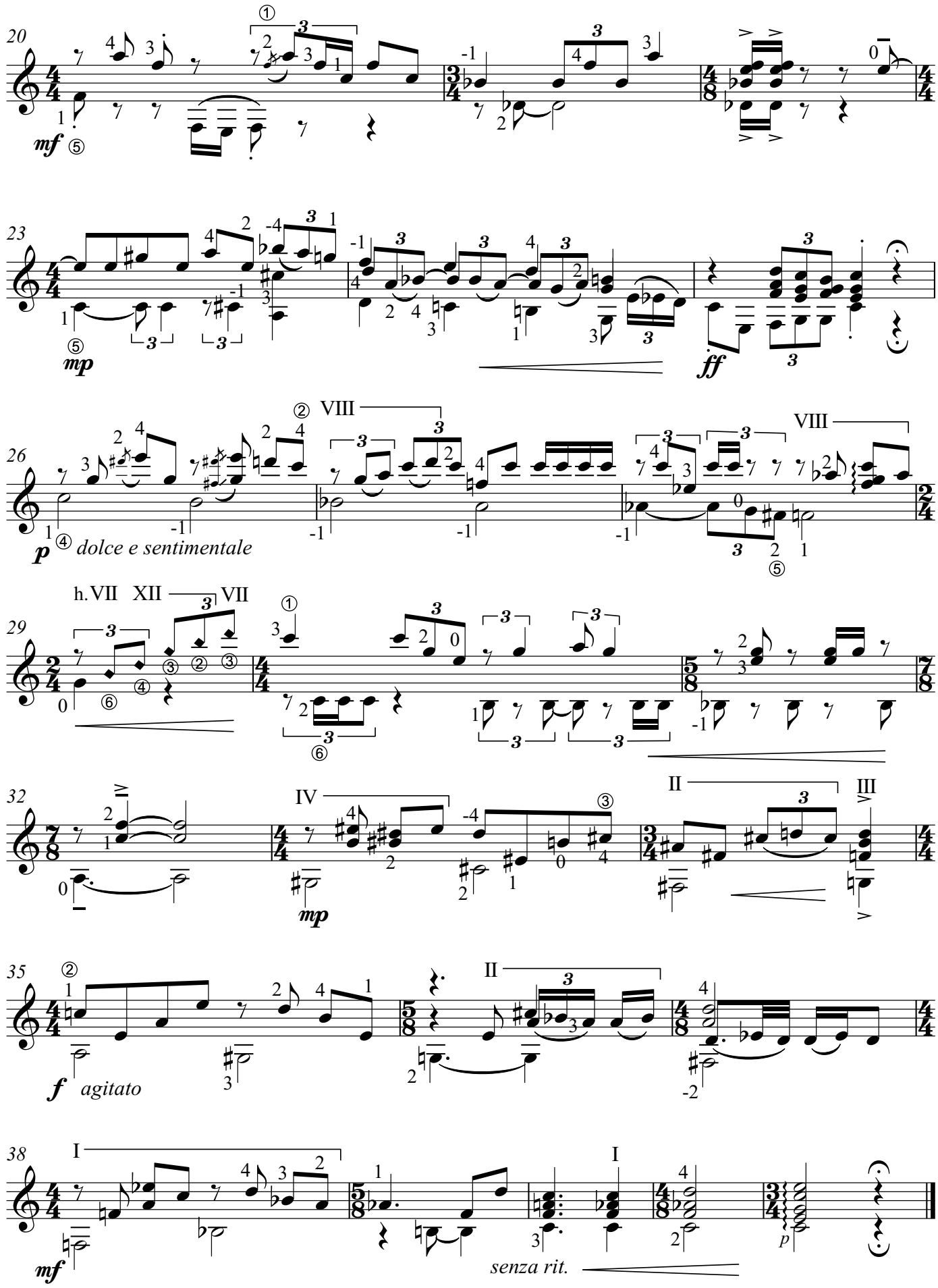
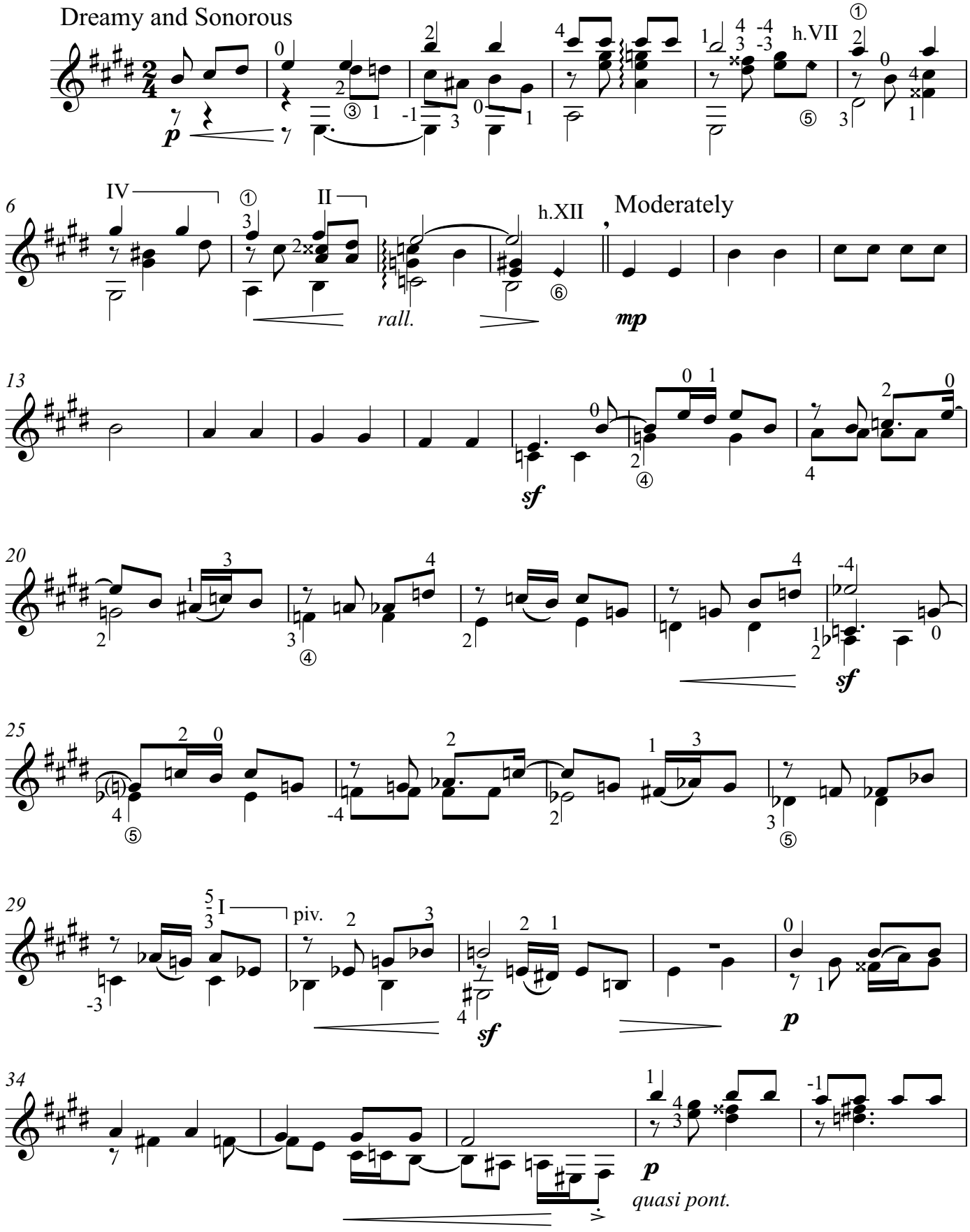
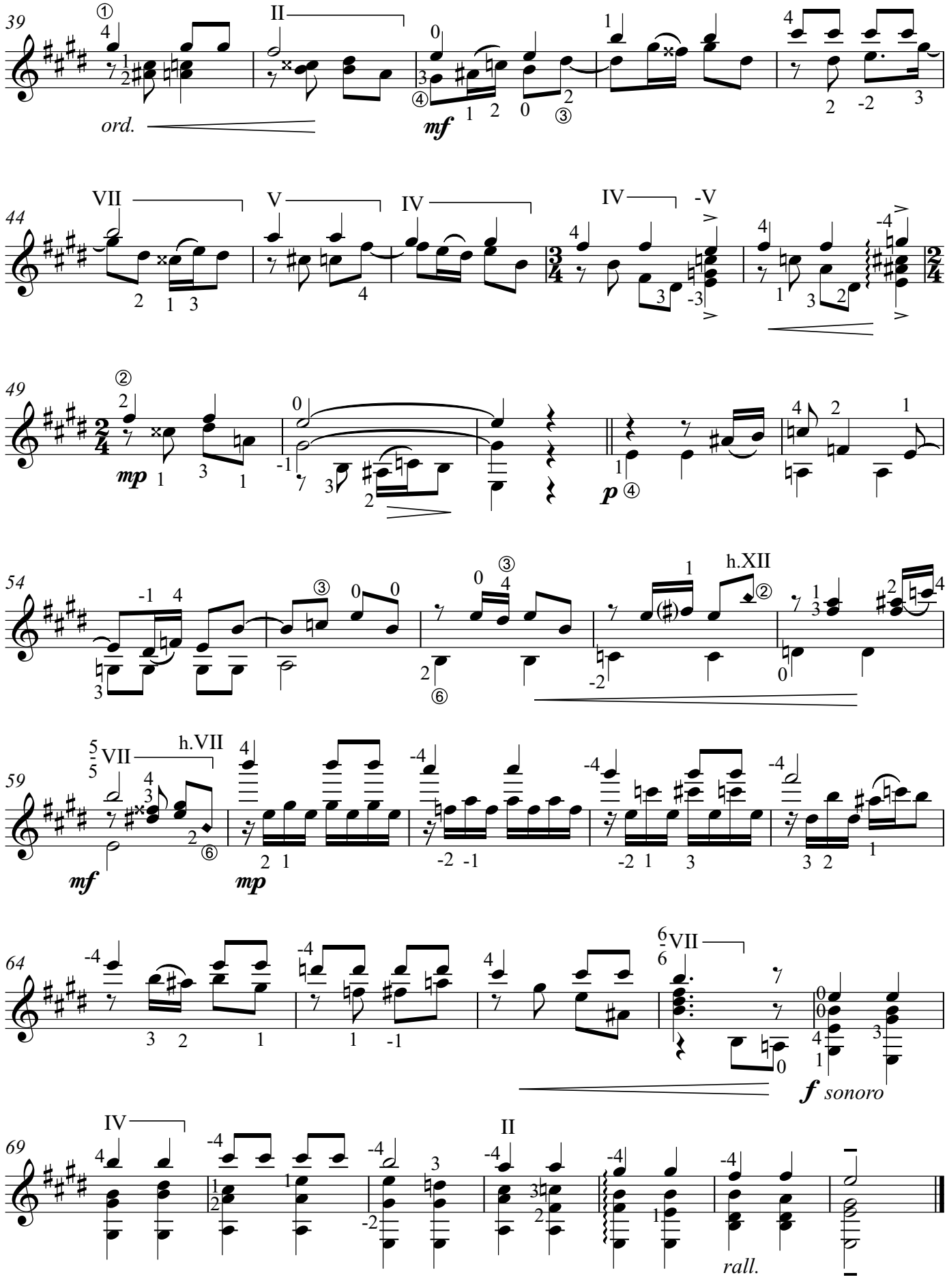

20
mf
23
mp
ff
26
p
dolce e sentimentale
VIII
29
h.VII XII
VII
32
IV
mp
II
III
35
f
agitato
38
I
mf
senza rit.

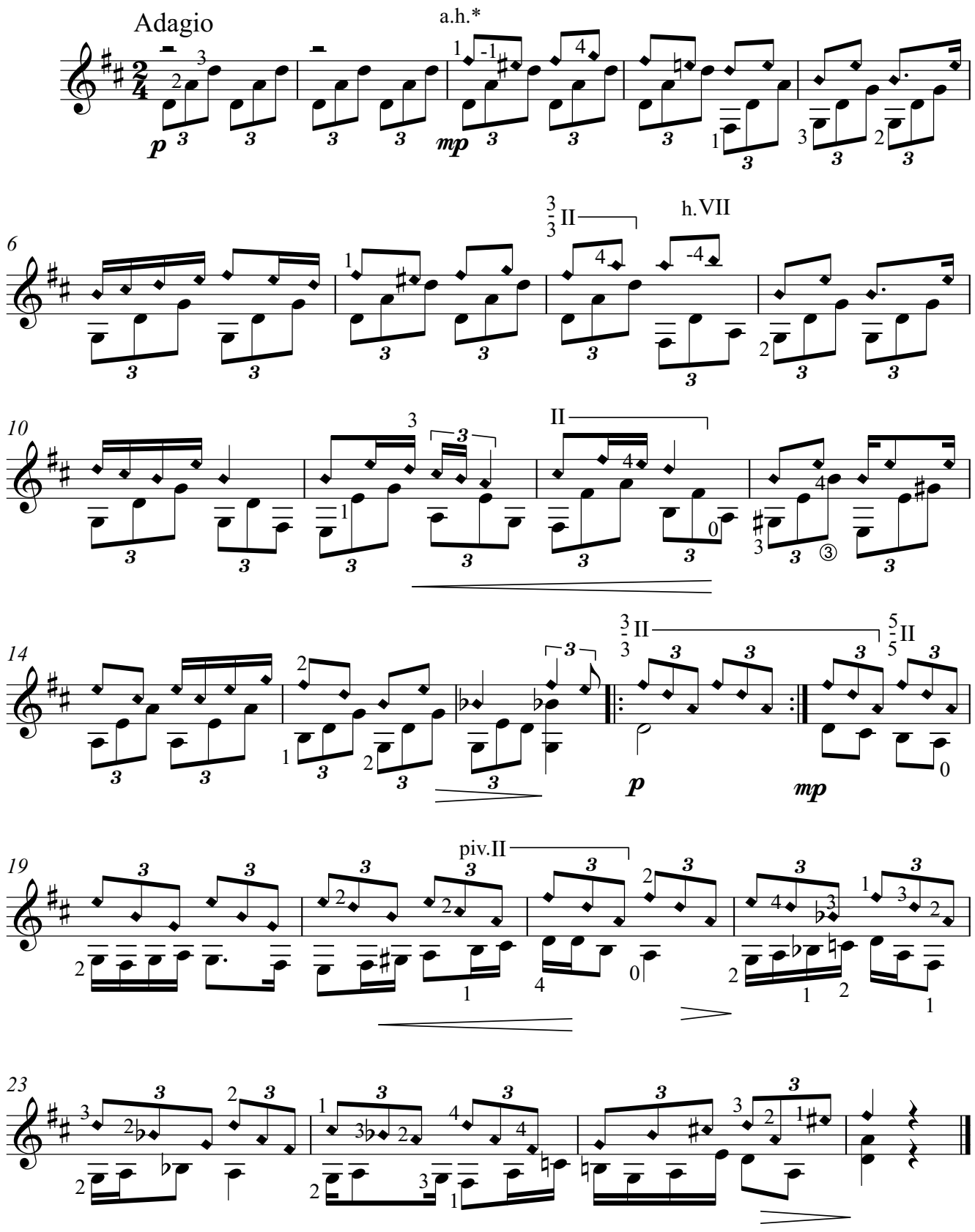
No. 2 - Baa, Baa, Fughetta




39
ord.
mf
44
mp
p
49
54
h.XII
59
h.VII
mf
mp
64
f sonoro
69
rall.

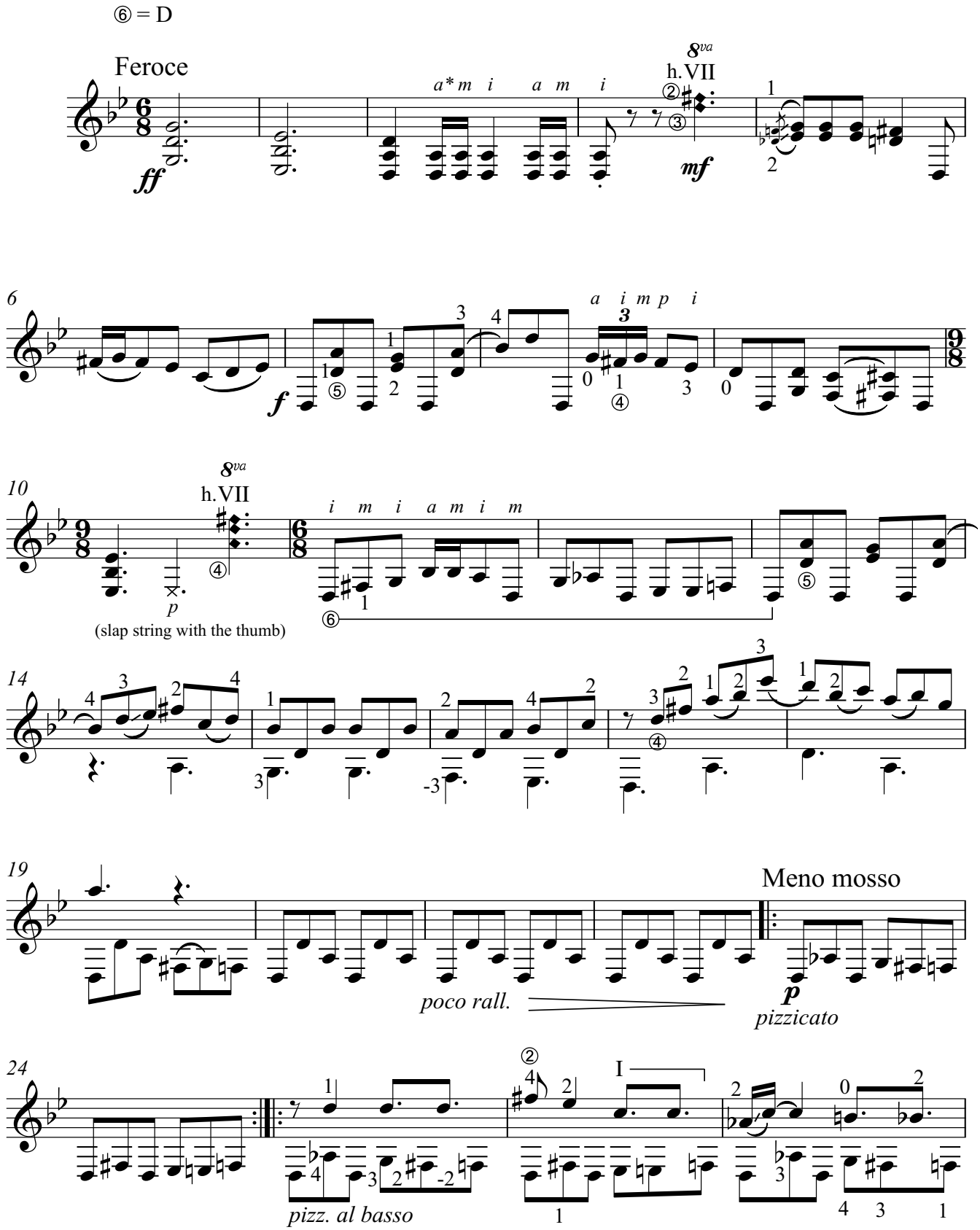
No. 3 - Memory Box

Capo 6th Fret

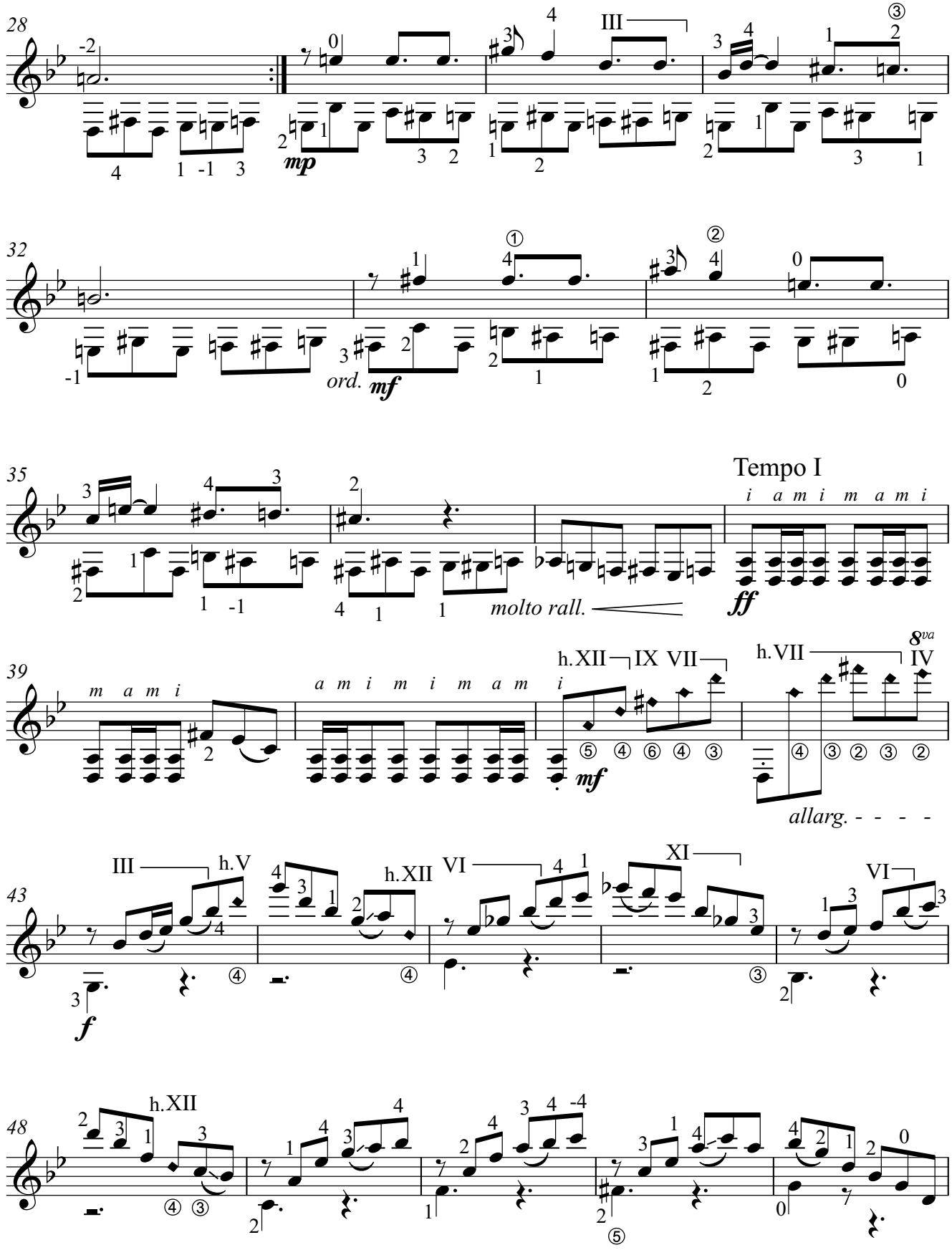


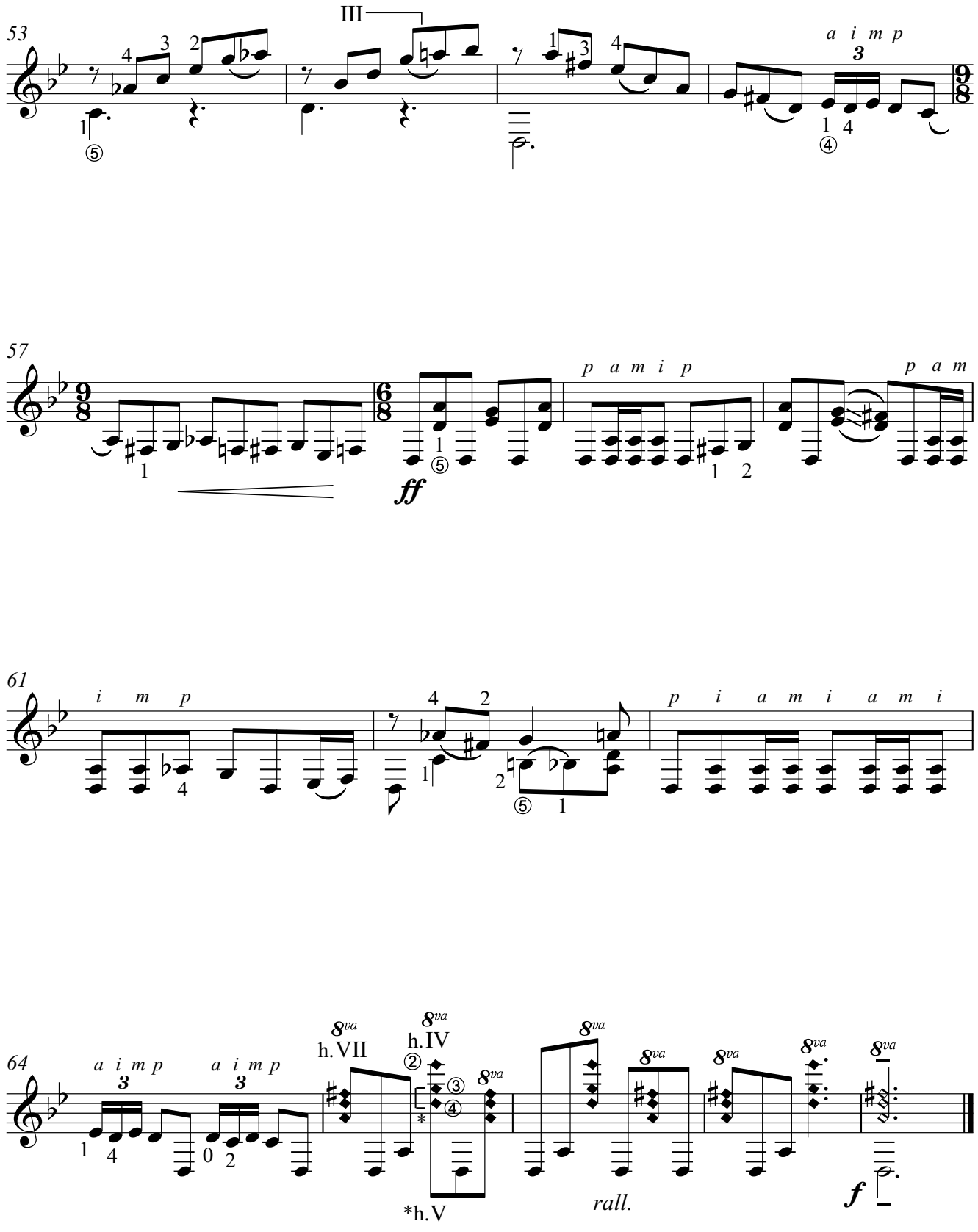
*Upper voice played as artificial harmonics, sounding one octave higher than written

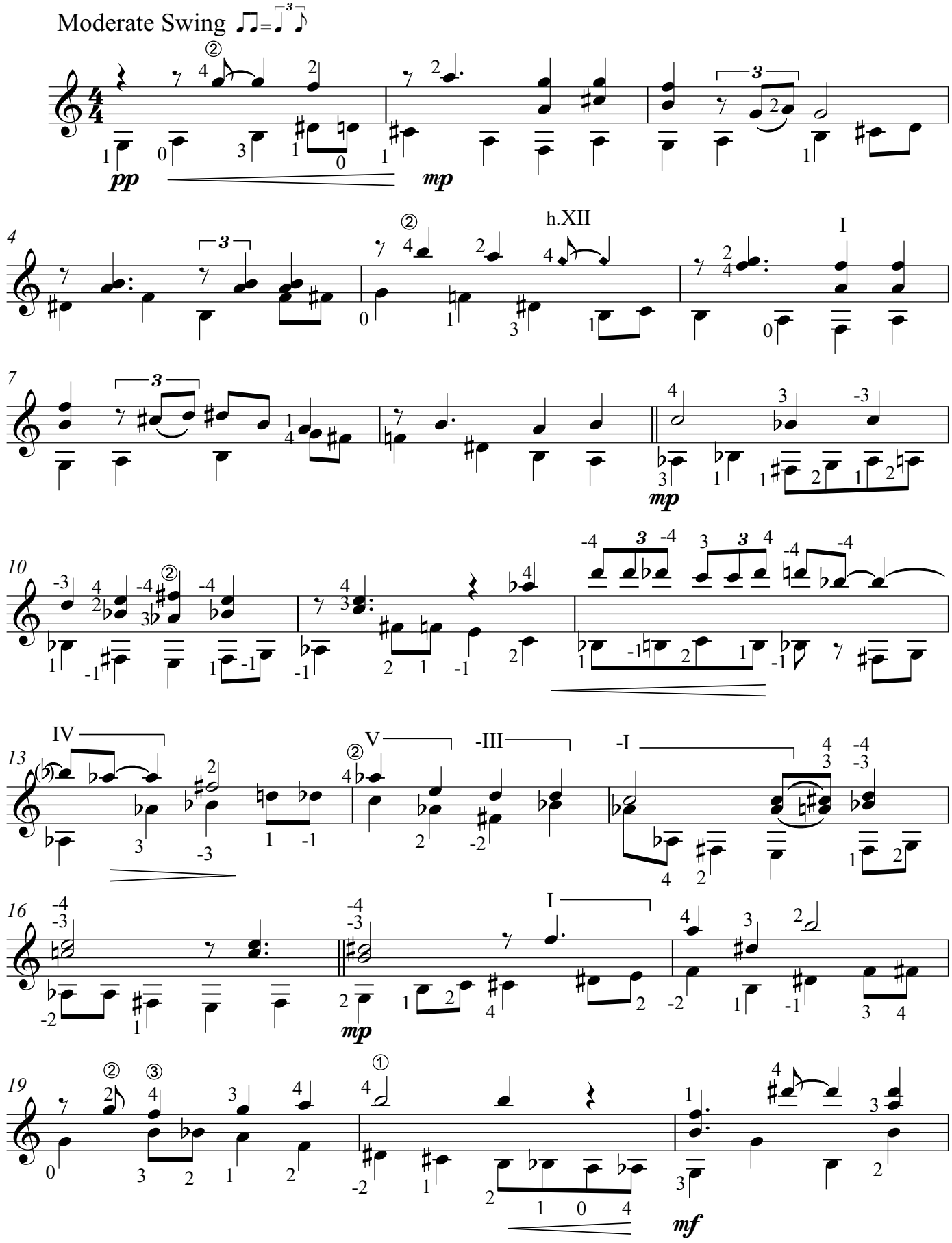
No. 4 - Matador's Nemesis

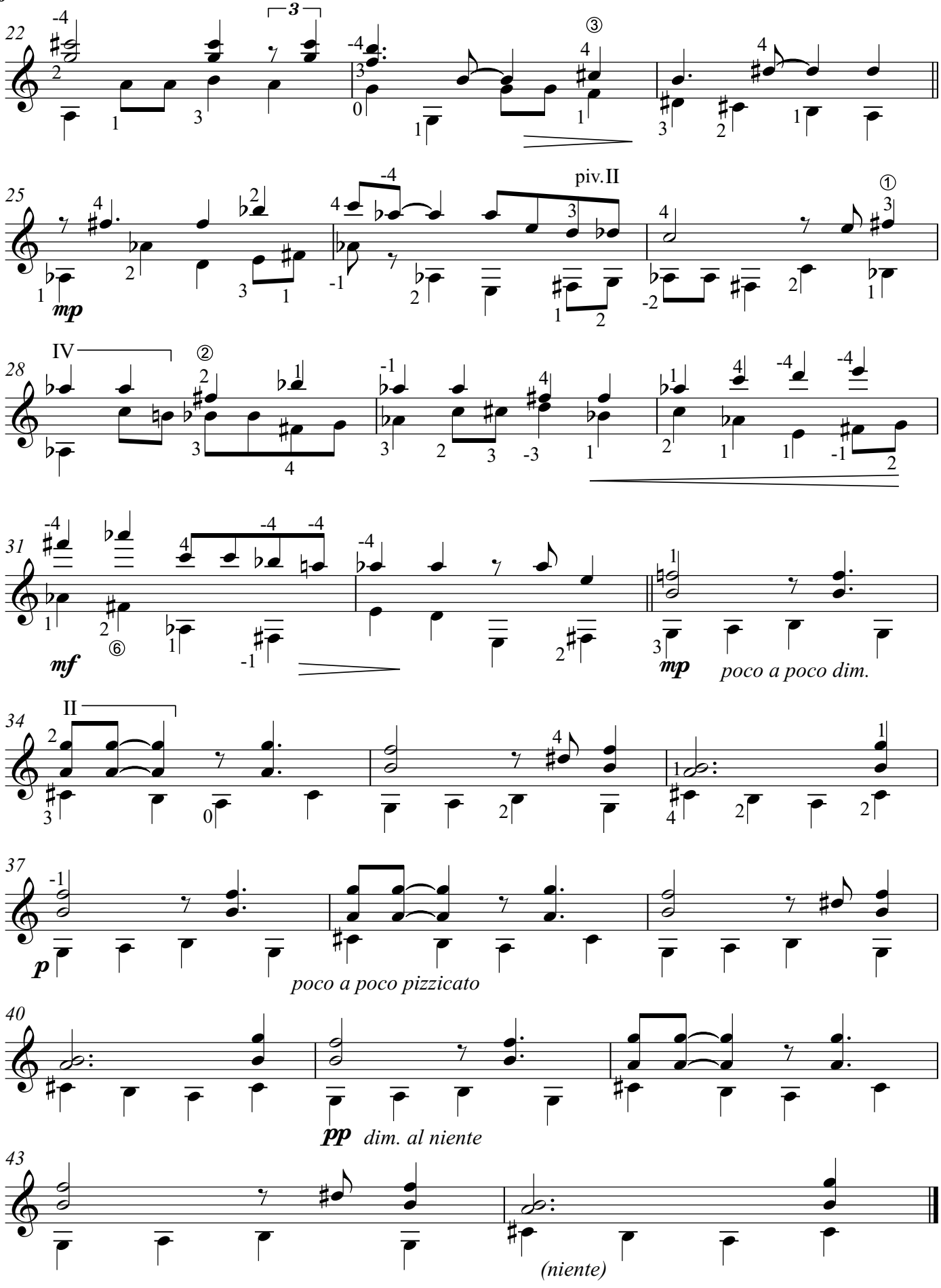


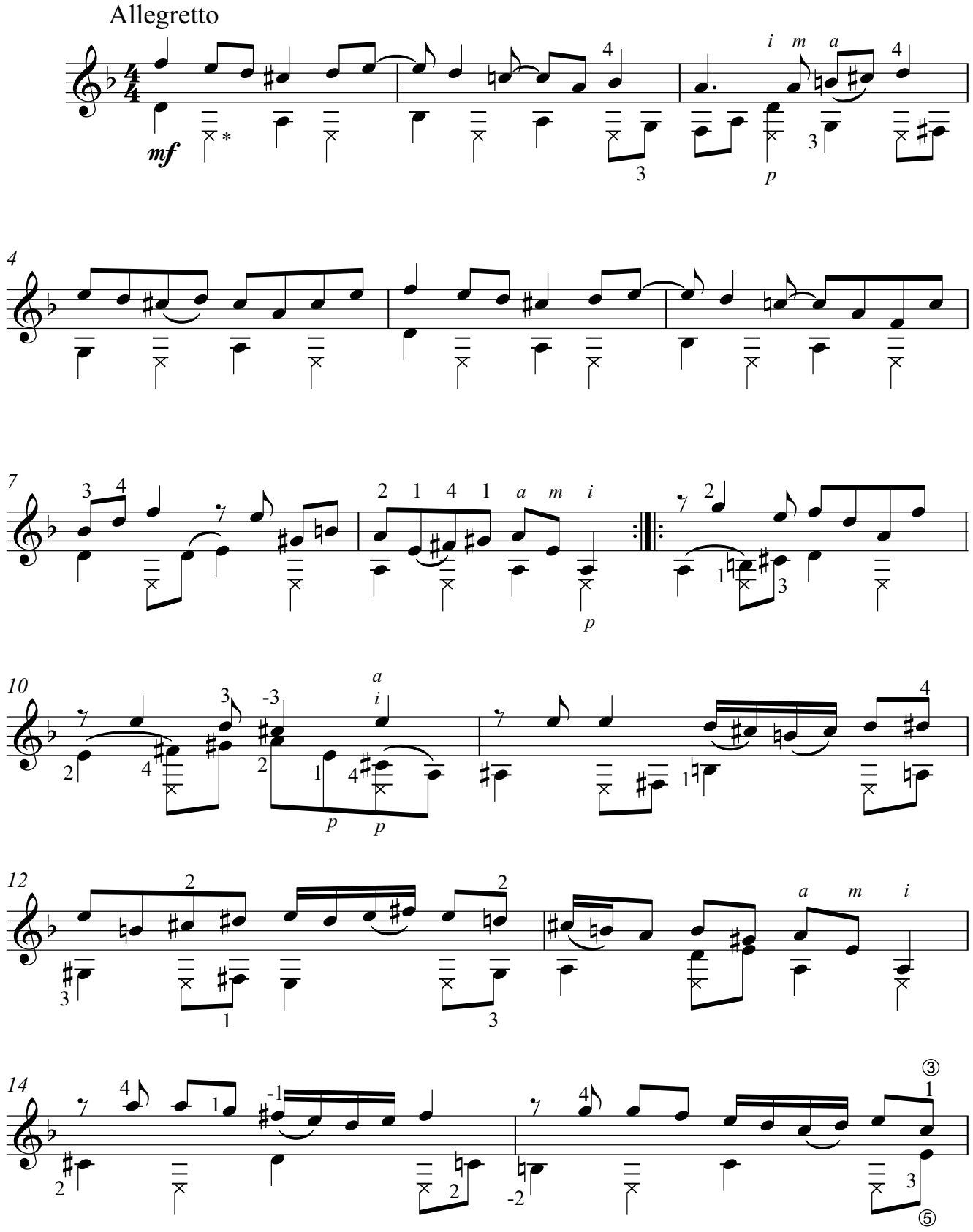
*Use the *a* finger to pluck through both the 5th and 6th strings together


28
III
mp
32
ord.
mf
35
molto rall.
Tempo I
i a m i m a m i
ff
39
m a m i
a m i m i m a m i
h.XII
IX
VII
h.VII
8va
IV
mf
allarg.
43
III
h.V
h.XII
VI
XI
VI
f
48
h.XII

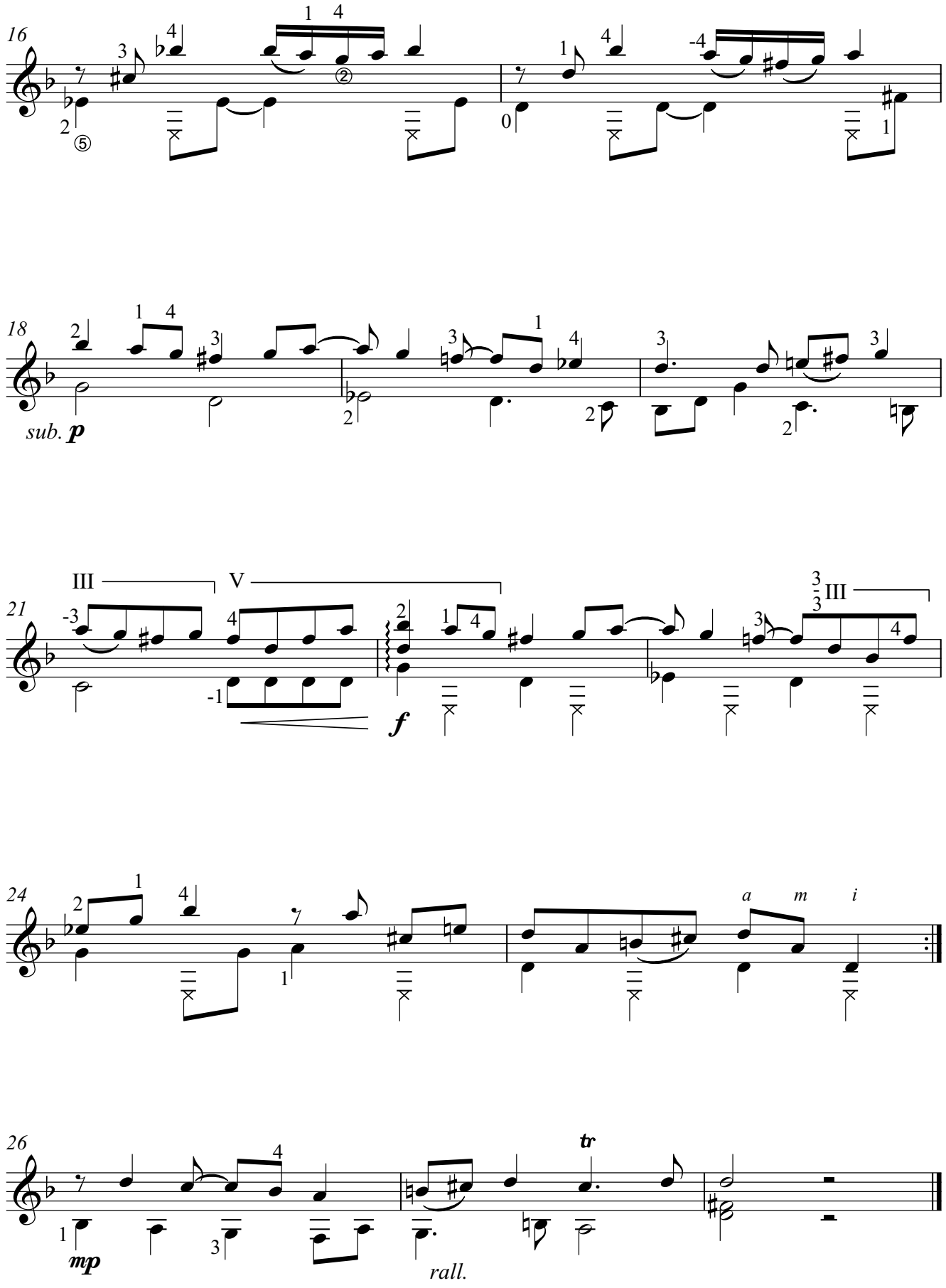

53
III
a i m p
57
p a m i p
p a m
ff
61
i m p
p i a m i a m i
64
a i m p
a i m p
h.VII
h.IV
*h.V
rall.
f


Moderate Swing
pp
mp
h.XII
I
mp
IV
V
-III
-I
I
mp
mf

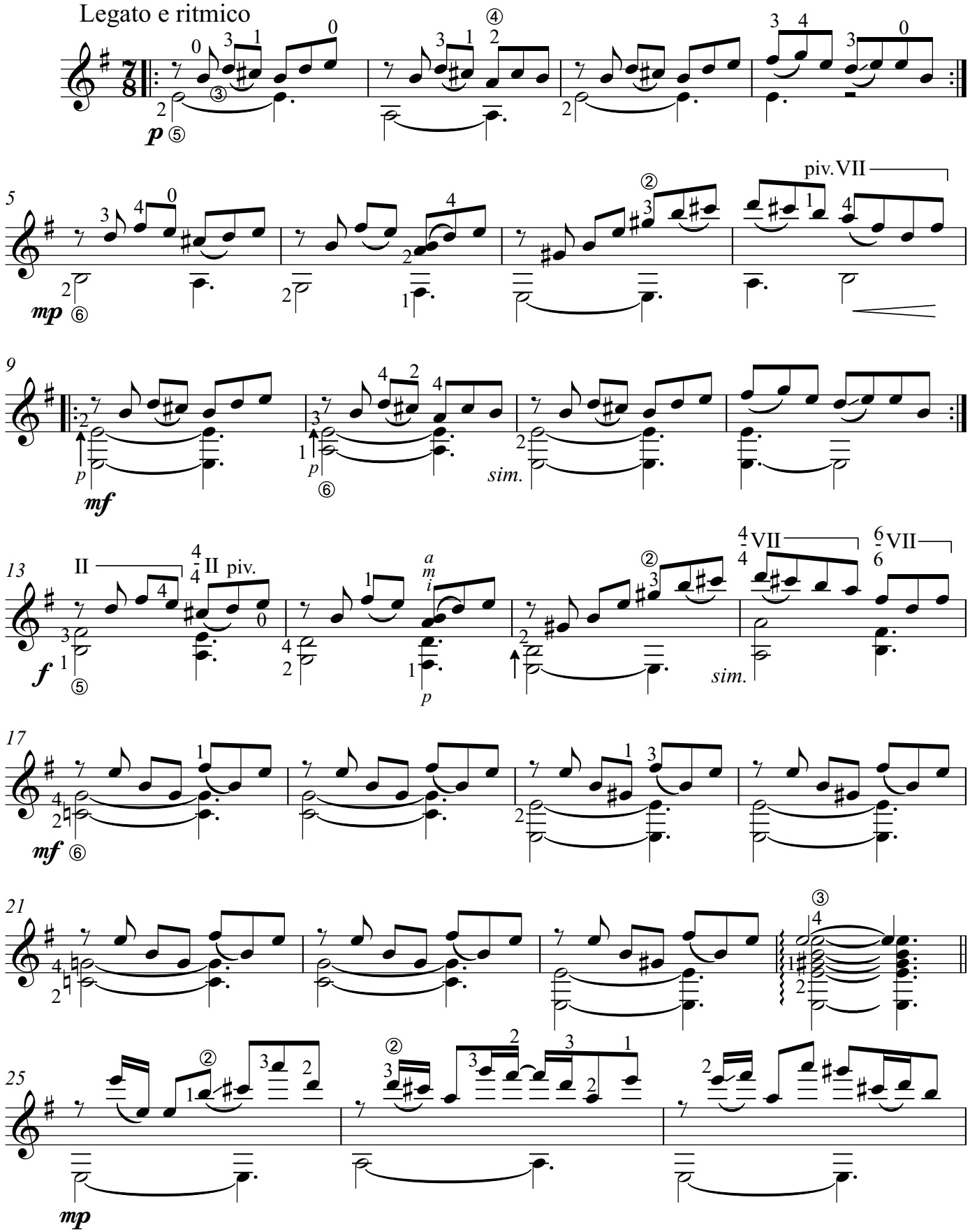

22
25
mp
piv.II
28
IV
31
mf
mp
poco a poco dim.
34
II
37
p
poco a poco pizzicato
40
pp
dim. al niente
43
(niente)

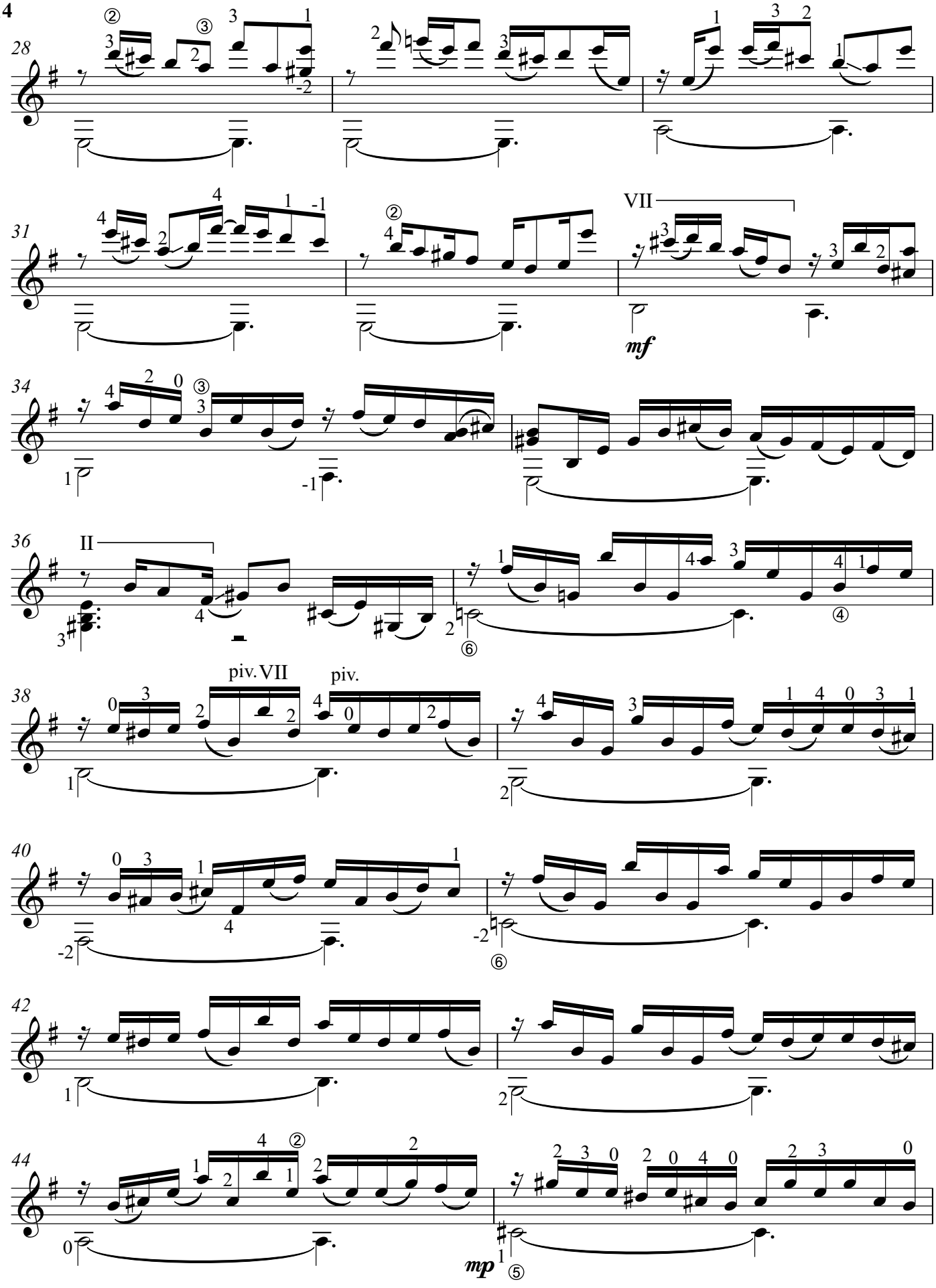


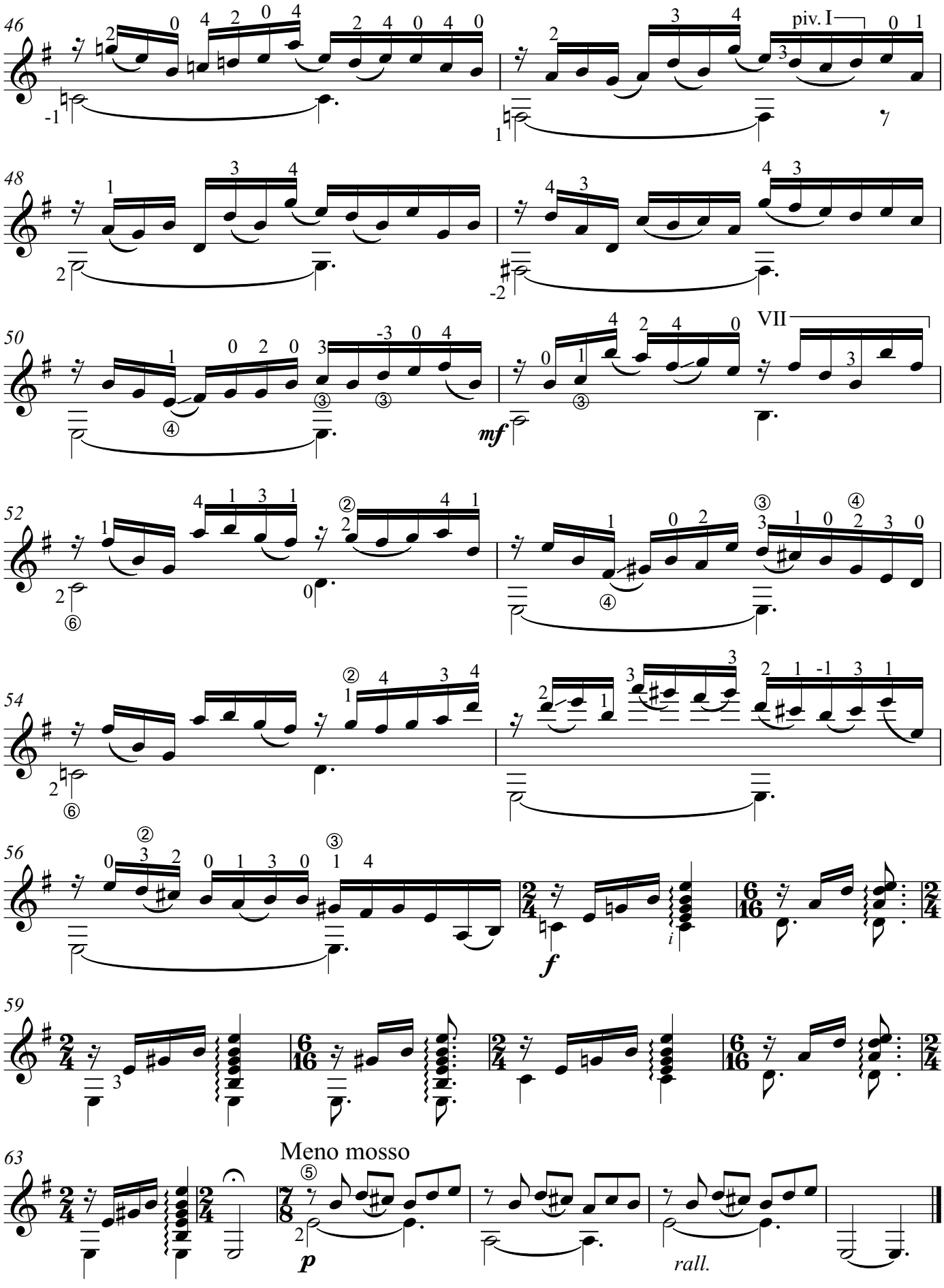
*Slap the 6th string with the right-hand thumb.


16
18
sub. p
21
III
V
f
III
24
a m i
26
mp
tr
rall.

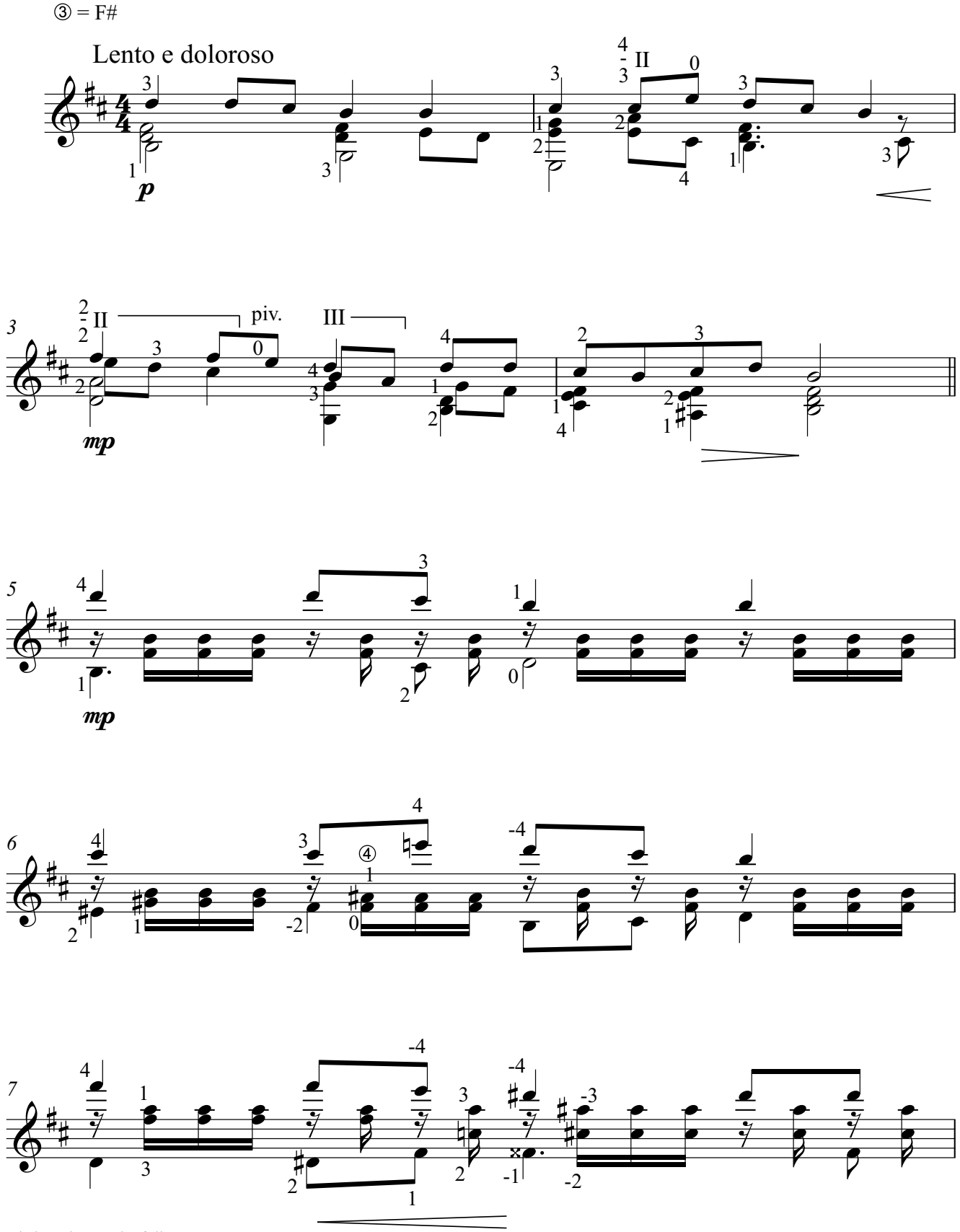
No. 7 - Journey Downstream



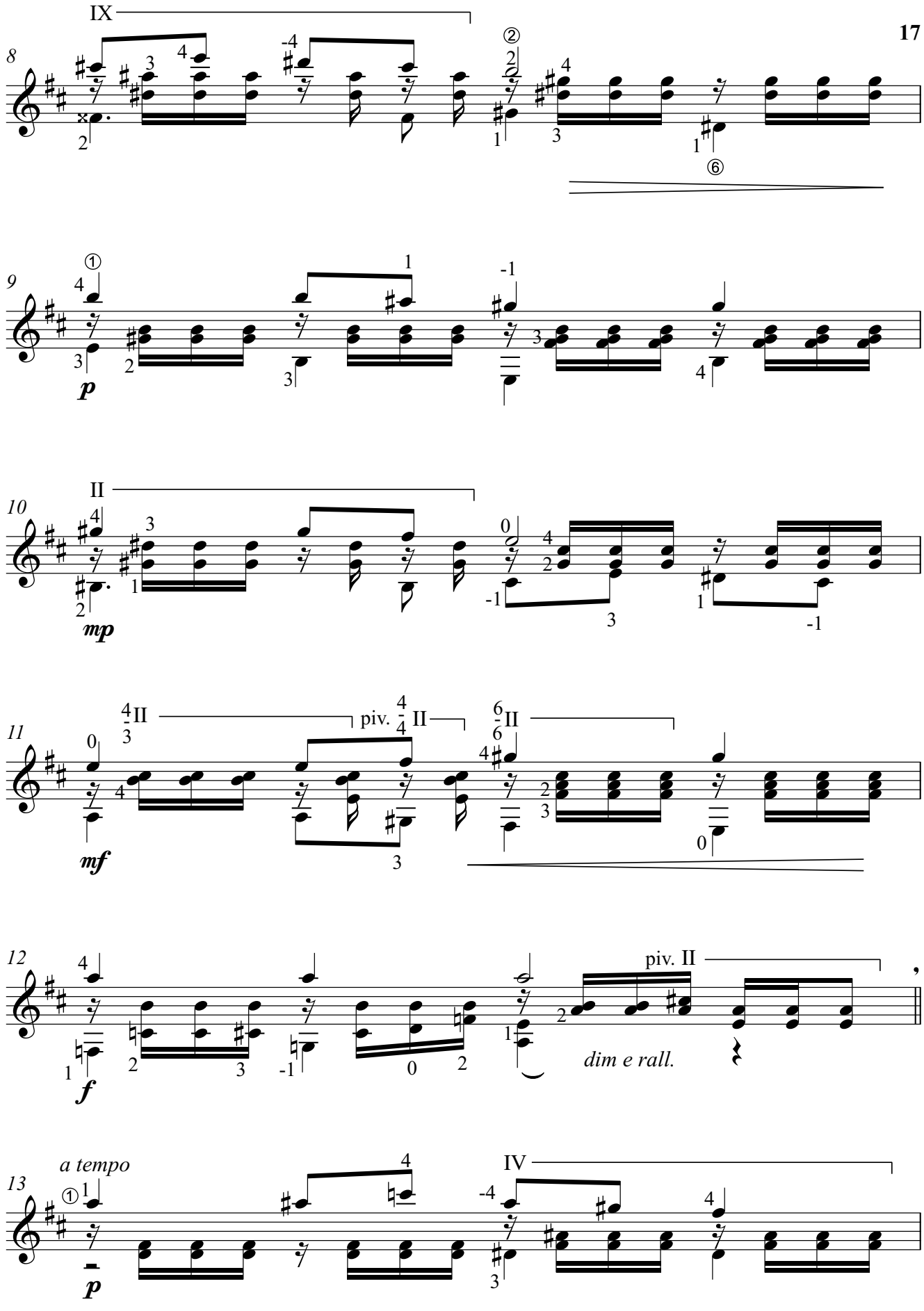

28
31
VII
mf
34
36
II
38
piv. VII
piv.
40
42
44
mp

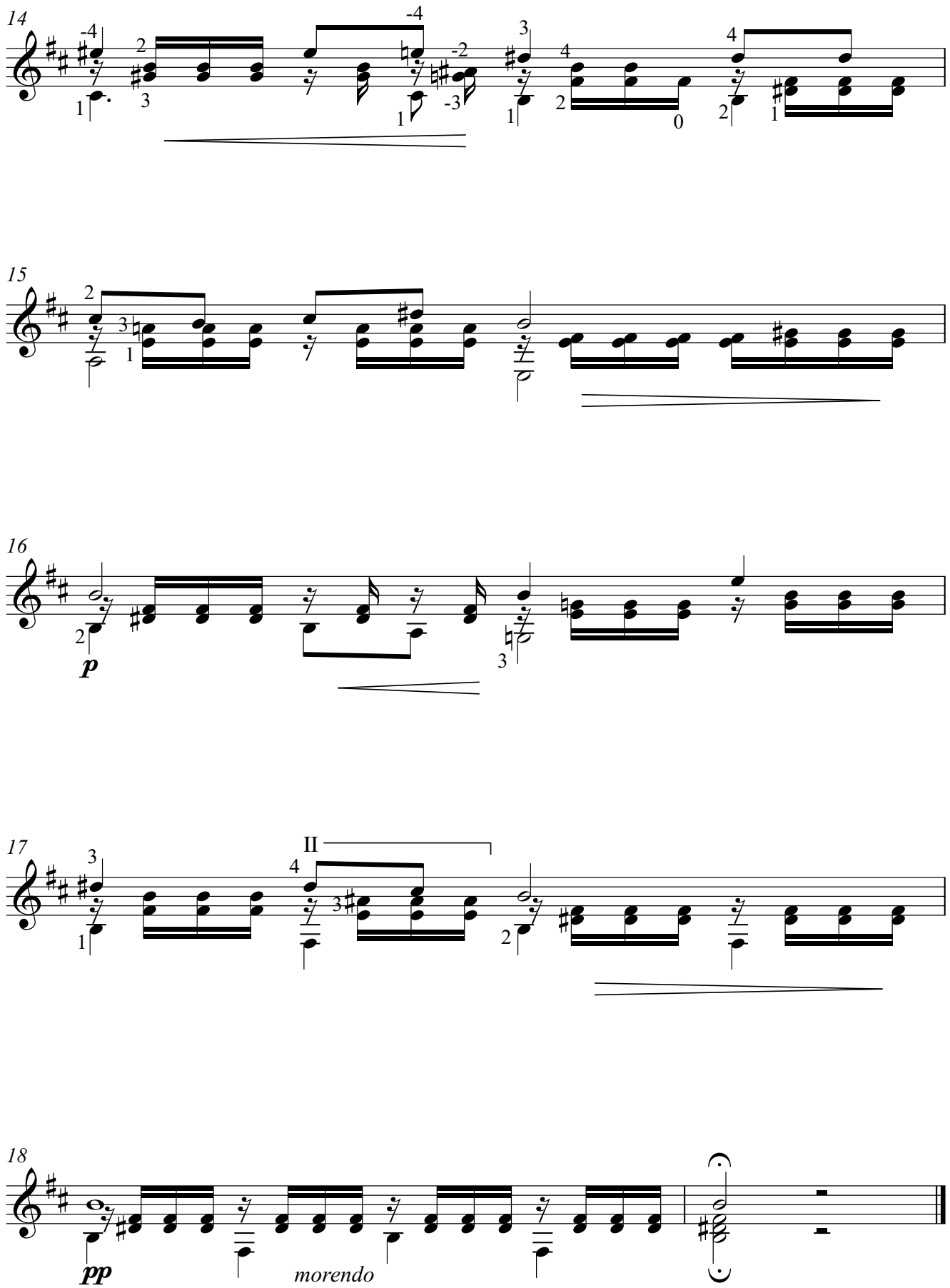

46
piv. I
48
50
VII
mf
52
54
56
f
59
63
Meno mosso
p
rall.

No. 8 - The Goslings Are Mourning

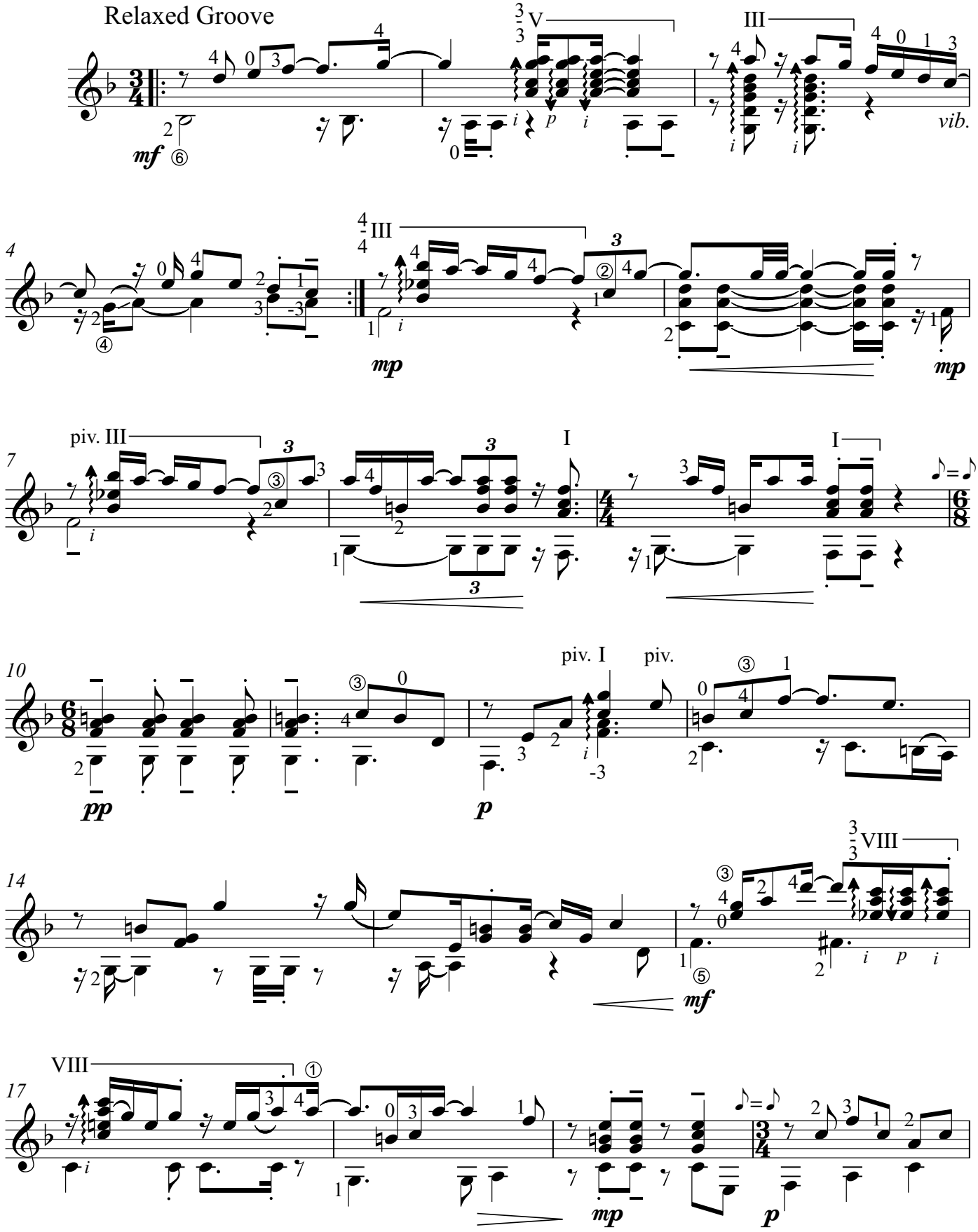


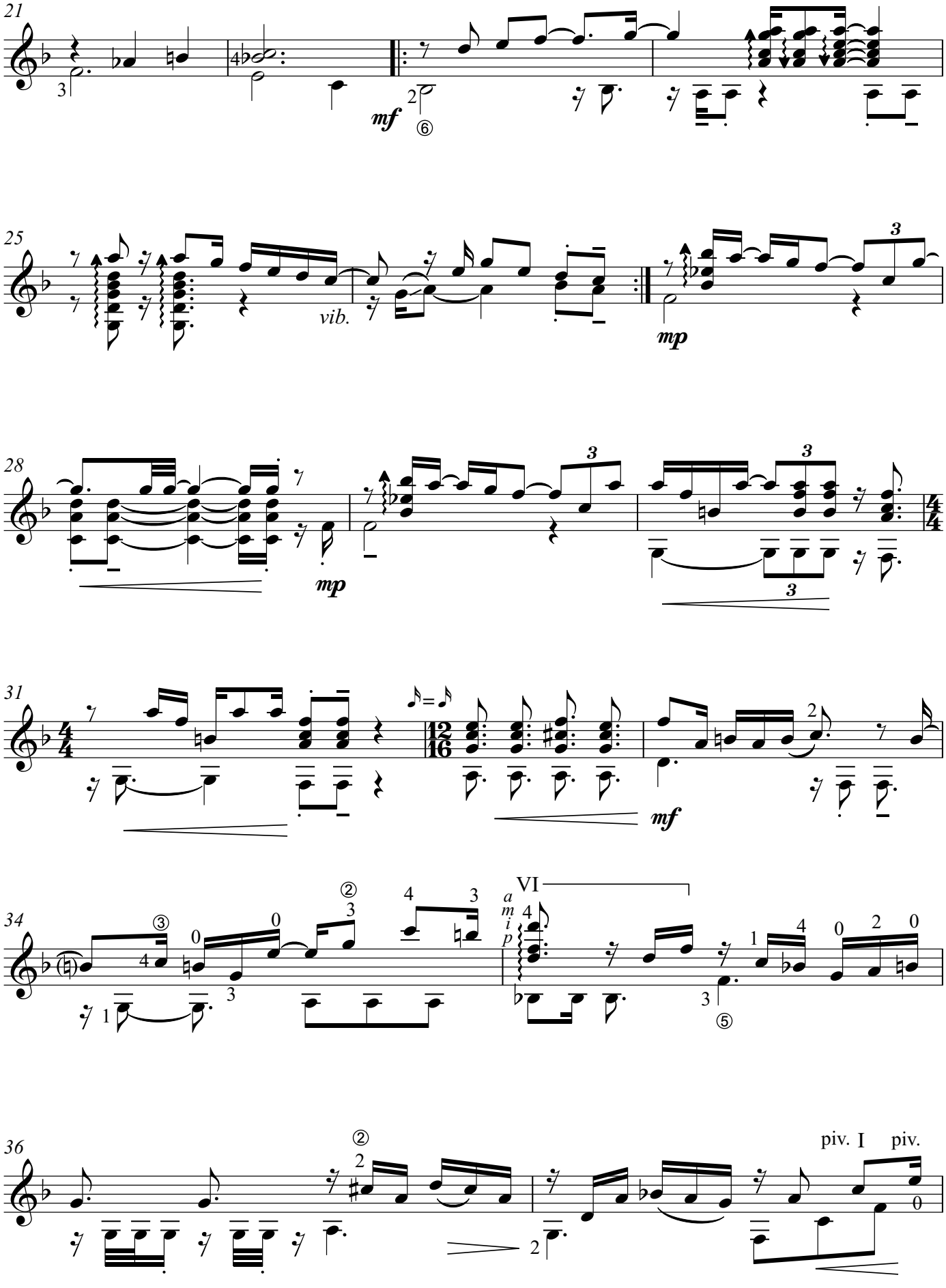
*This piece is based upon the folk song
"Go Tell Aunt Rhody."

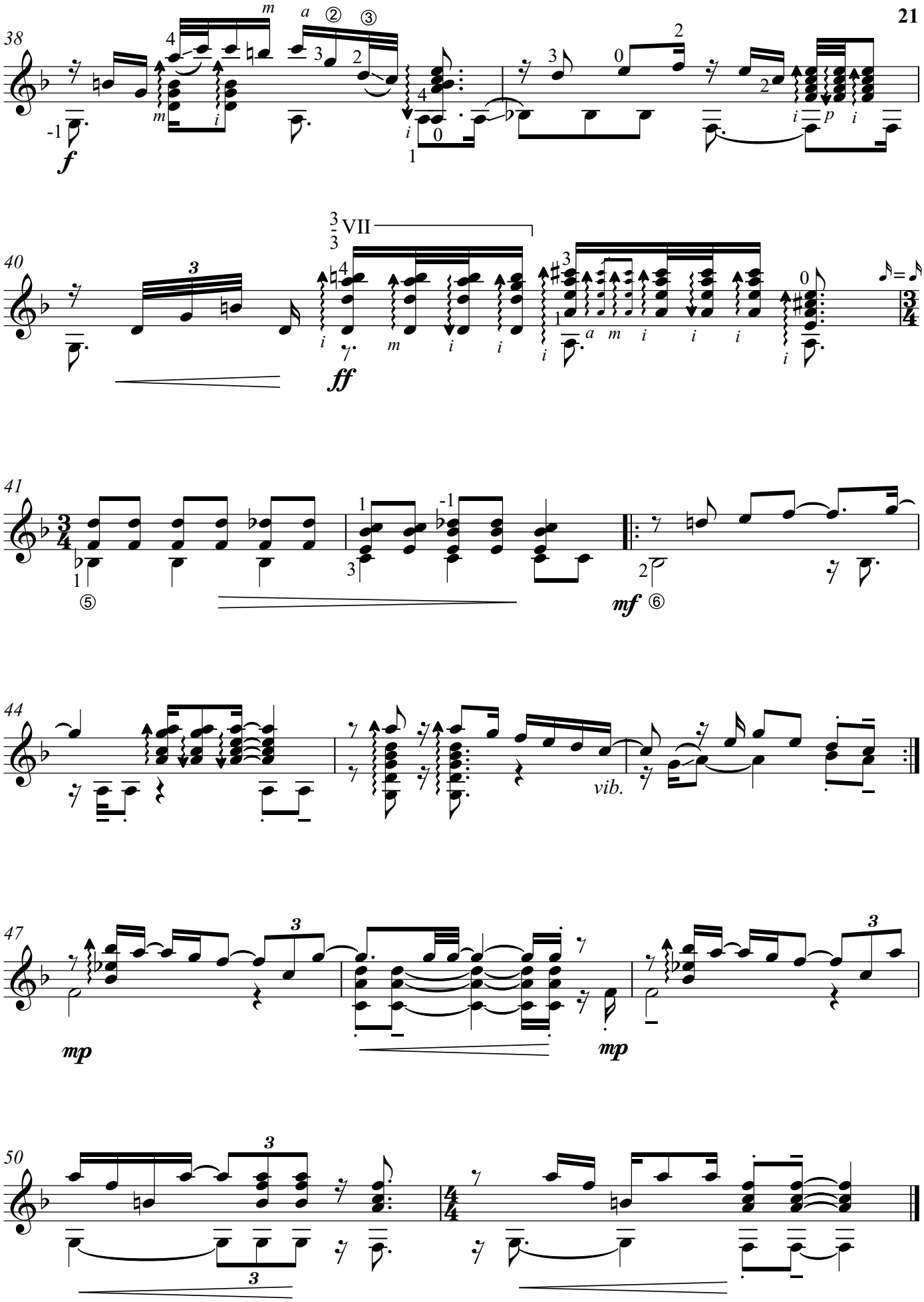

8
IX
9
p
10
II
mp
11
II
piv. II
mf
12
piv. II
f
dim e rall.
13
a tempo
p
IV


14
15
16
p
17
II
18
pp
morendo

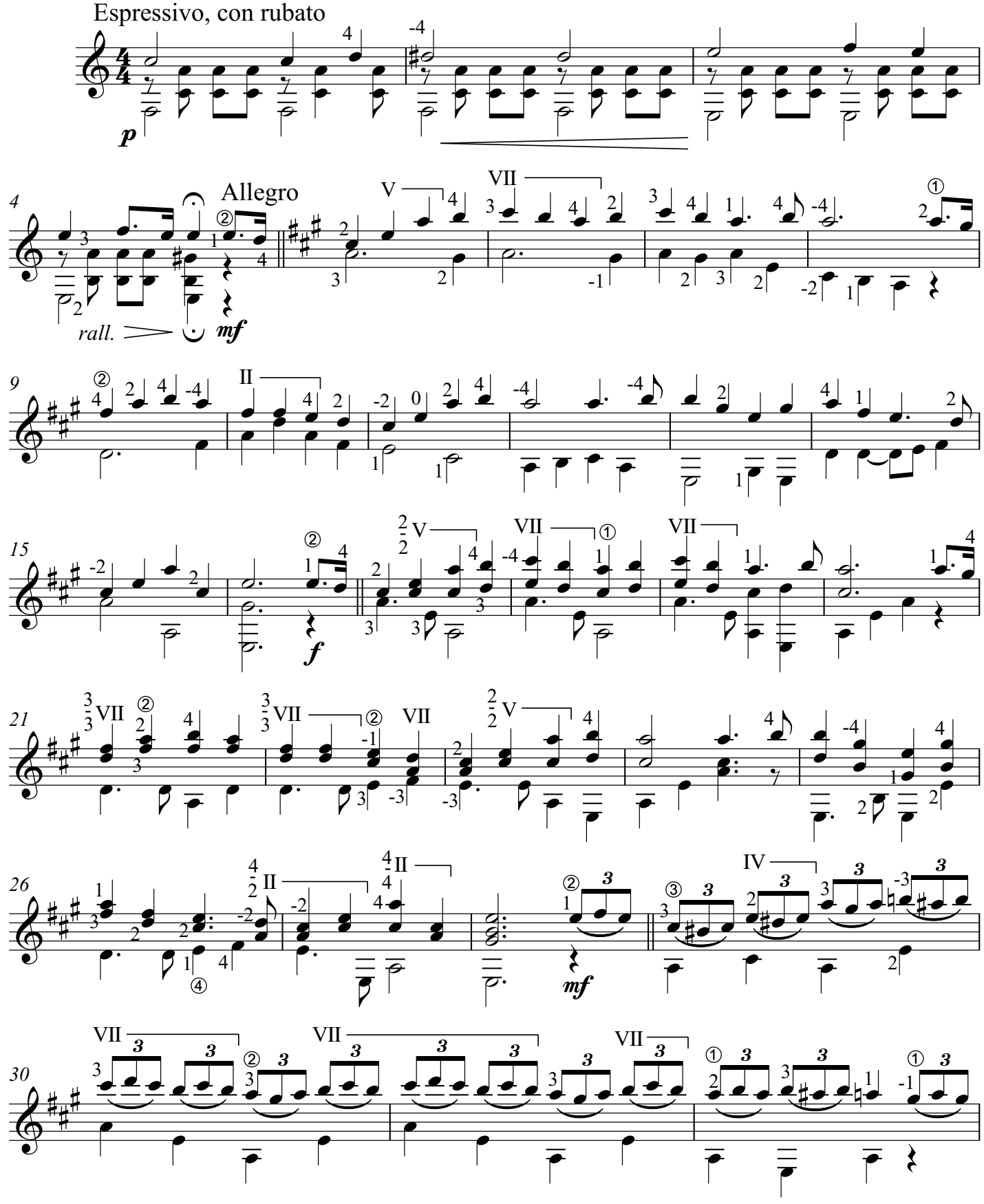
No. 9 - A Modern Rondo

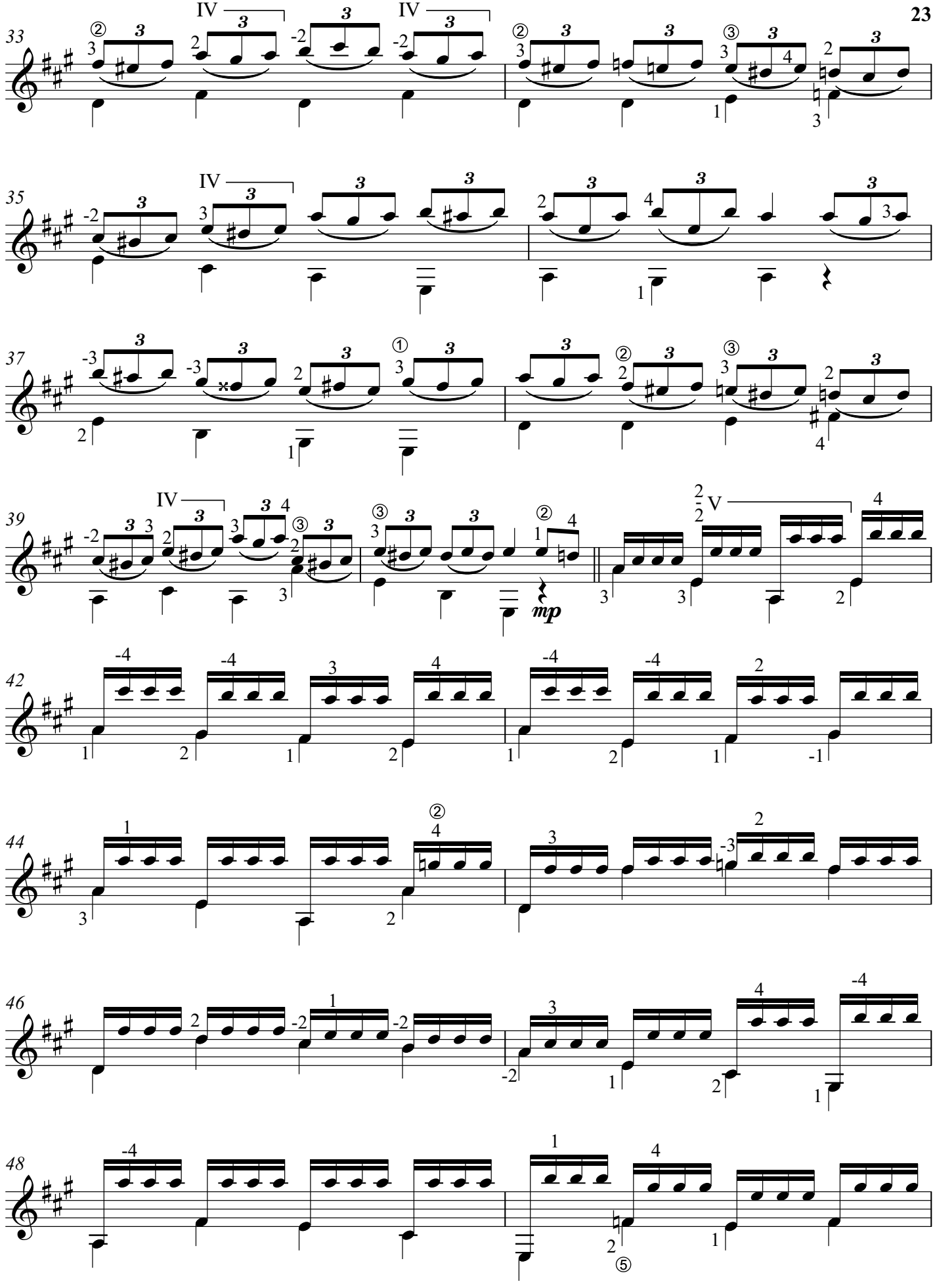


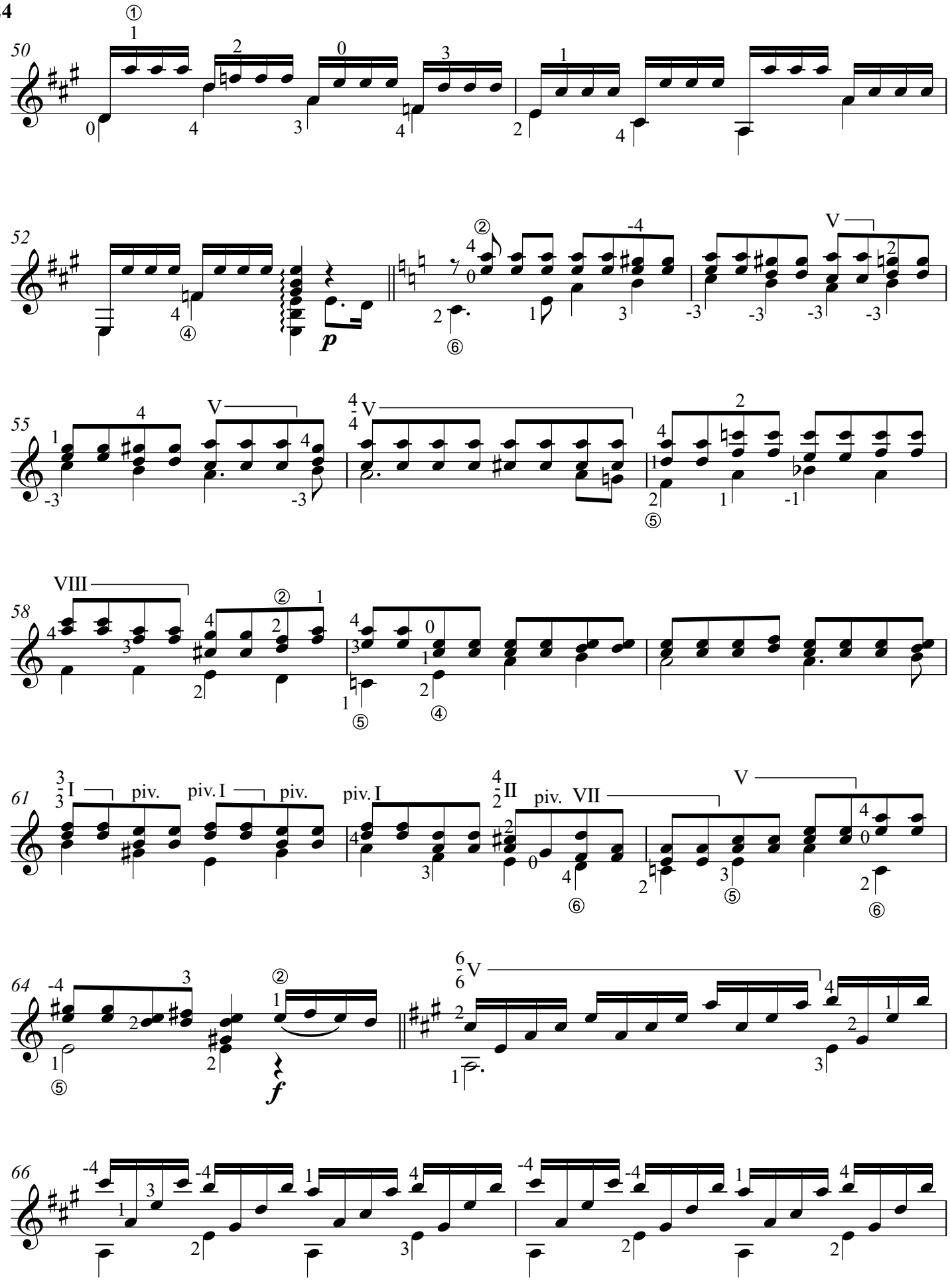

21
mf
25
vib.
mp
28
mp
3
31
mf
34
VI
a
m
i
p
36
piv. I piv.

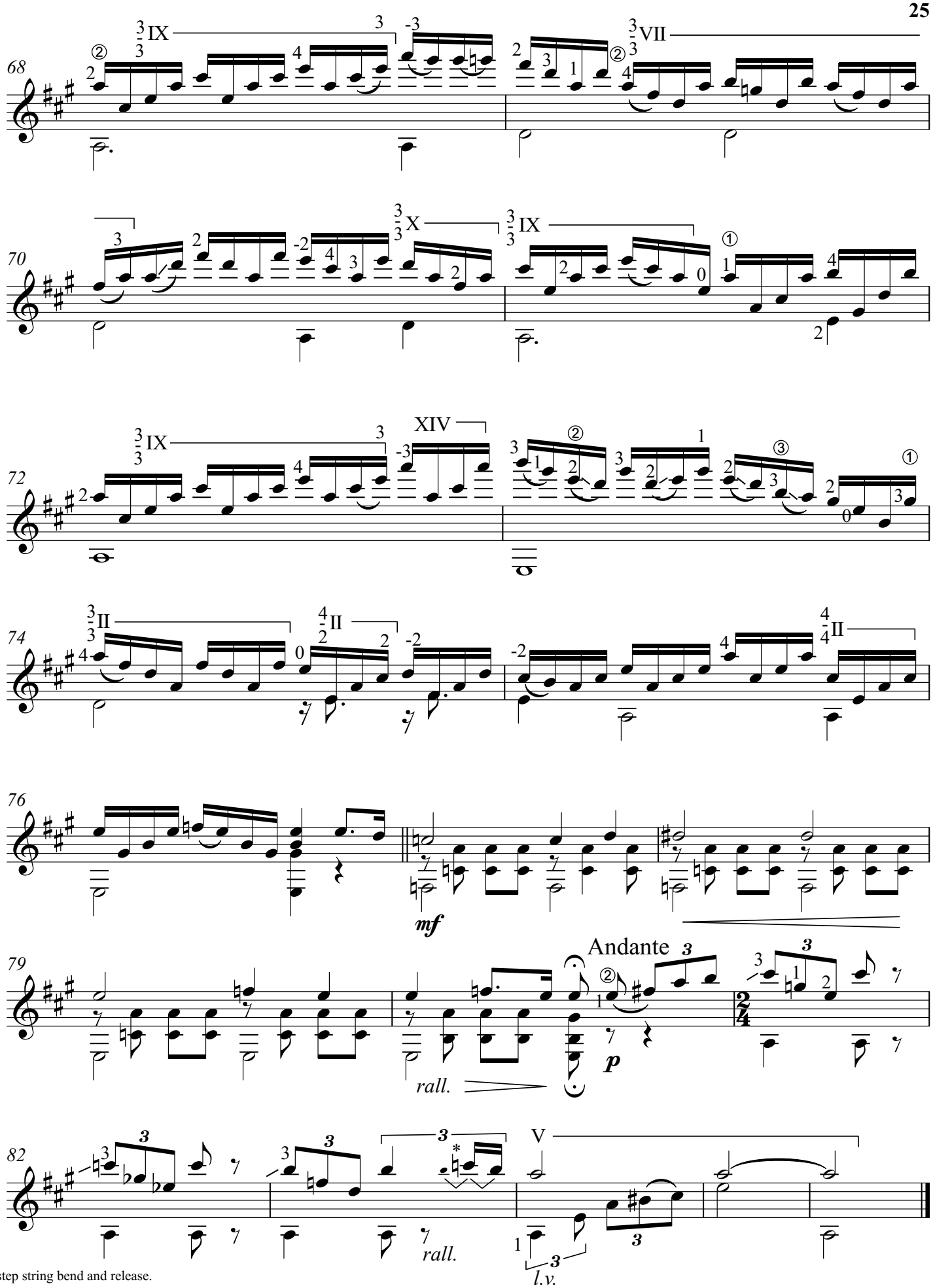

38
f
40
ff
VII
41
mf
44
vib.
47
mp
mp
50

No. 10 - Blue Theme and Variations




33
IV
IV
35
IV
37
39
IV
V
mp
42
44
46
48


50
52
55
58
61
piv.
piv. I
piv.
piv. I
piv. VII
64
66



*Half-step string bend and release.