THIRD CELLO SUITE

plus the *Sarabande* from the Sixth Cello Suite

by J. S. Bach

arranged for guitar by Jeffry Hamilton Steele

As heard on the CD album *Voice of Creation* (Prism Recordings)

PrismMusic
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978-282-3106
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photo by Sharon Howard

THIRD CELLO SUITE

plus the *Sarabande* from the Sixth Cello Suite

by J. S. Bach

arranged (in G major) for guitar by
Jeffry Hamilton Steele

Like many guitarists, I played Bach's Third Cello Suite in the key of A for years – owing to the root notes of the three most common chords being available on open strings. But I always felt something was not right, particularly in the dominant pedal section of the Prelude. When played in A, most transcribers put the pedal note on the open sixth string; but this displaces the E one octave down from its original pitch relationship to the harmonically suspended voices above – diluting the effect of this transcendent passage. I also felt that, when playing the suite in A, I was doing an inordinate amount of barring at the second fret. In G, the Suite as a whole seems more guitaristic to me (though there are still a few passages that are easier to play in A).

Because the Baroque lute was tuned in thirds – allowing scale passages to be rendered across adjacent strings with harp-like effect – I frequently emulate this effect in my fingerings. Although influenced by earlier arrangements of this Suite, I have over time evolved my own particular counterpoint to Bach's suggestive solo lines.

As the Baroque lute was strung with less tension than is the modern guitar, I suggest that tuning your guitar down a half-step will make it sound more in character with the period. It also makes life easier for the left hand. After a few months tuned down, the wood of the guitar will begin to resonate with greater depth. You may also try lighter guage strings. If possible, avoid using a guitar with deep timbre; find something dry and light in the bass.

Jeffry Hamilton Steele

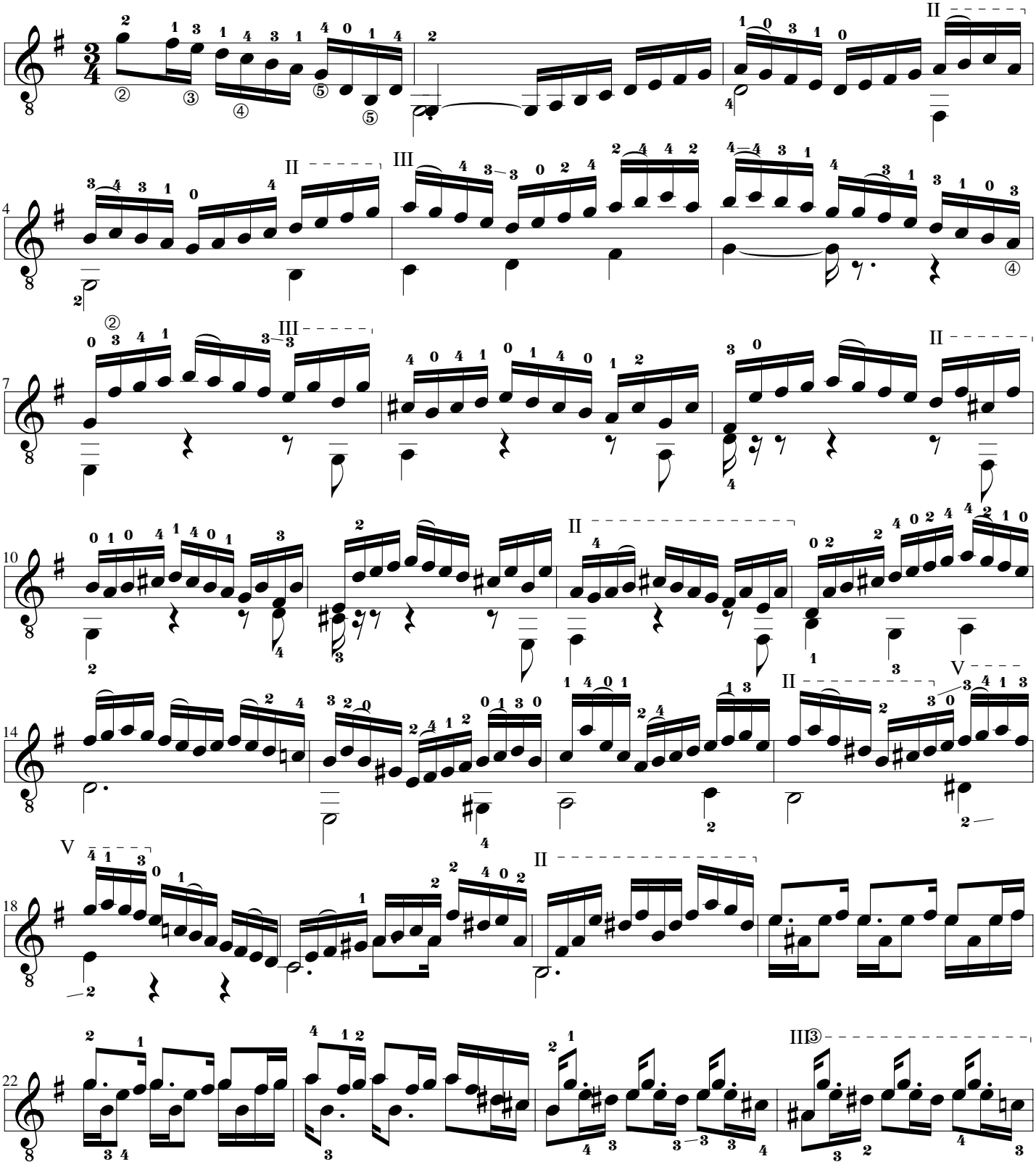
Cello Suite No. 3

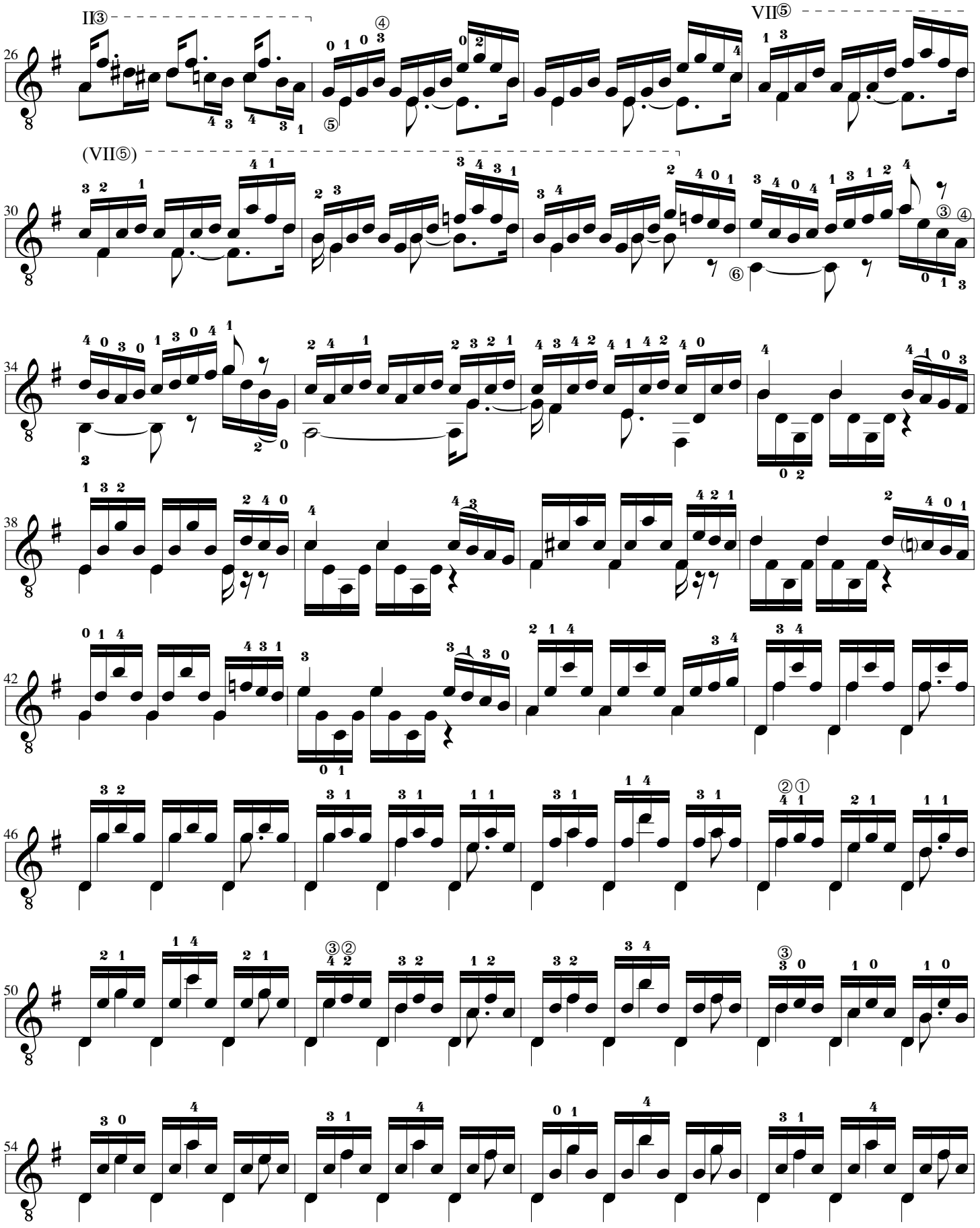
Originally in C Major

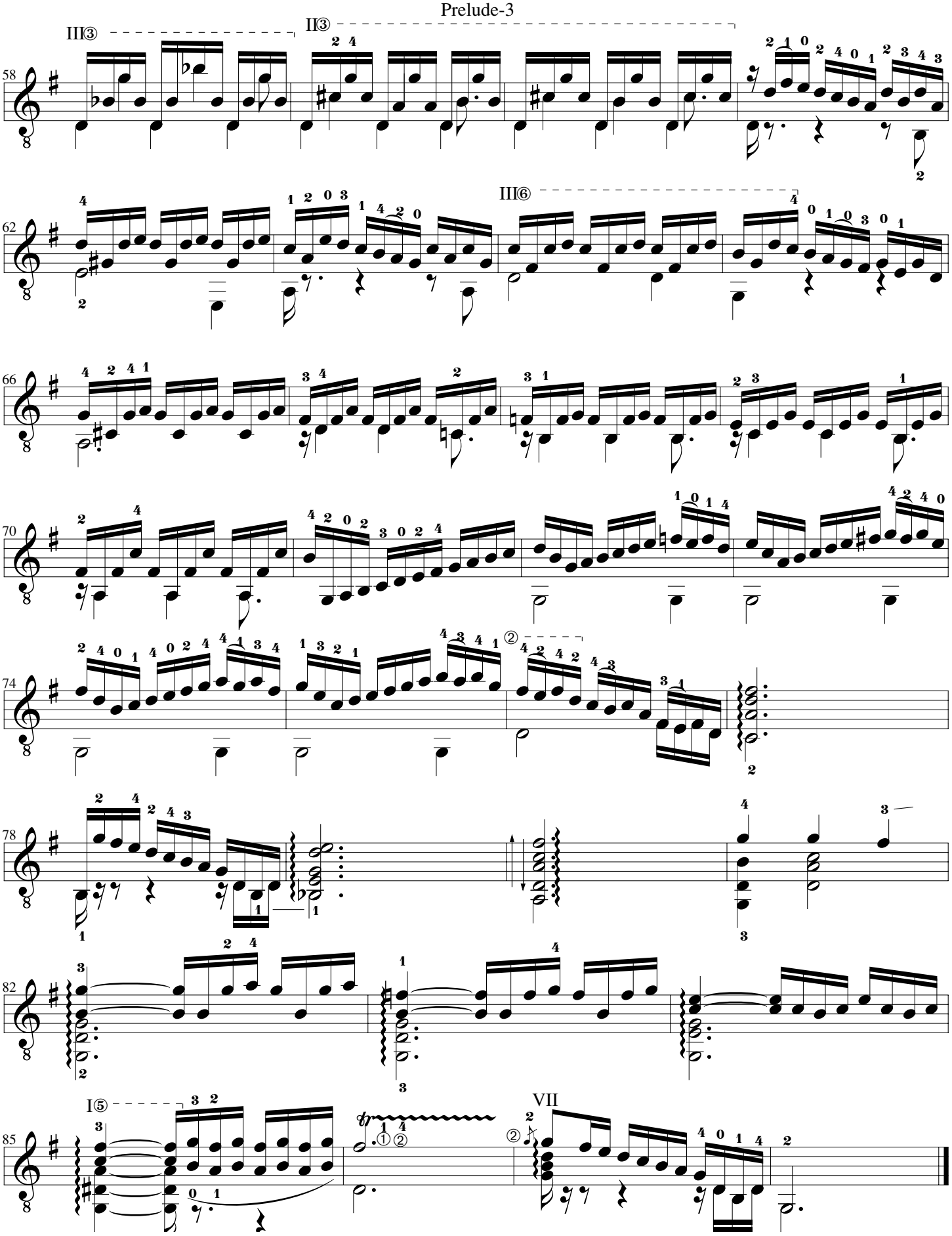
J. S. Bach

Arranged for guitar by
JEFFRY HAMILTON STEELE

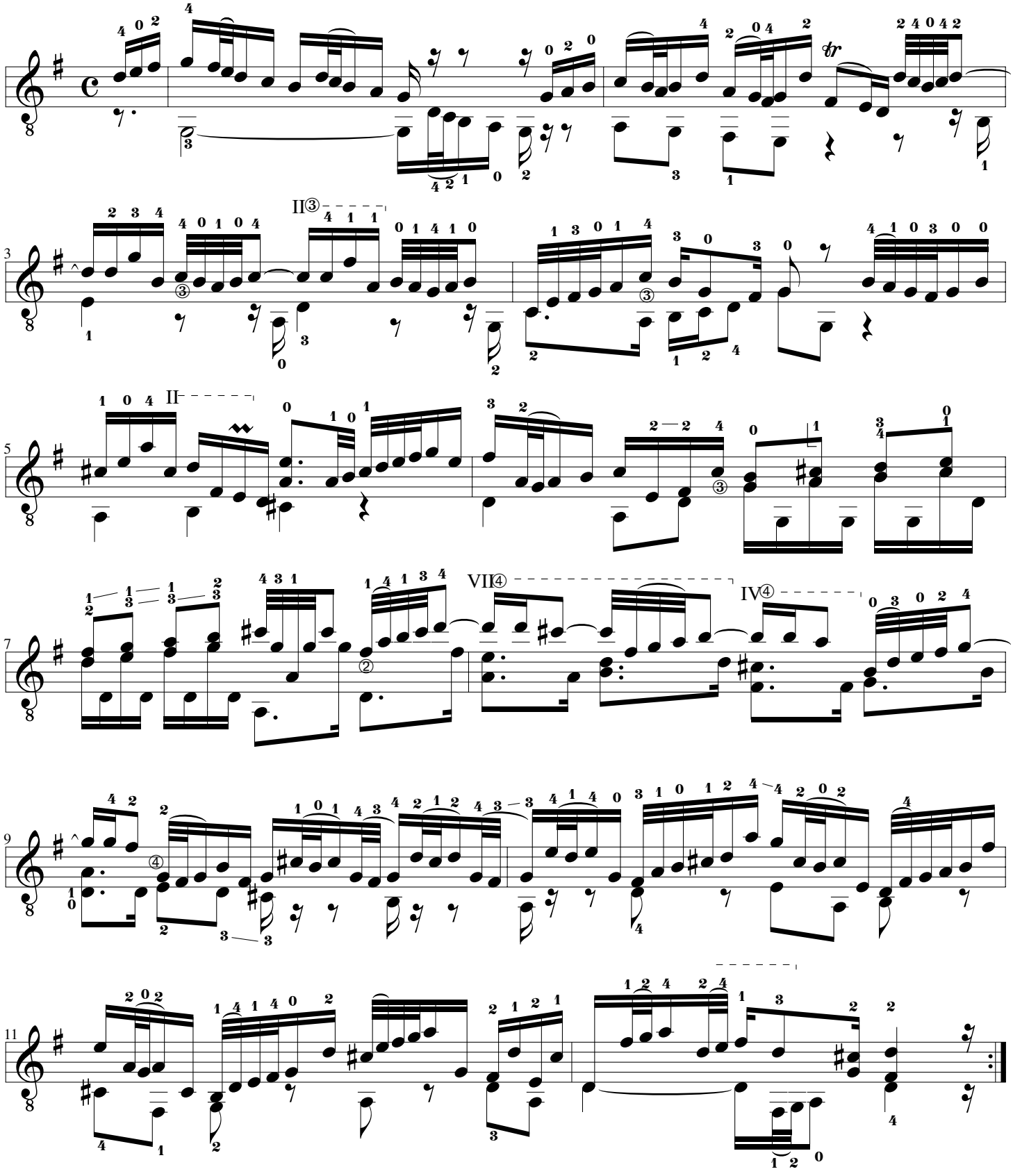
I. Prelude

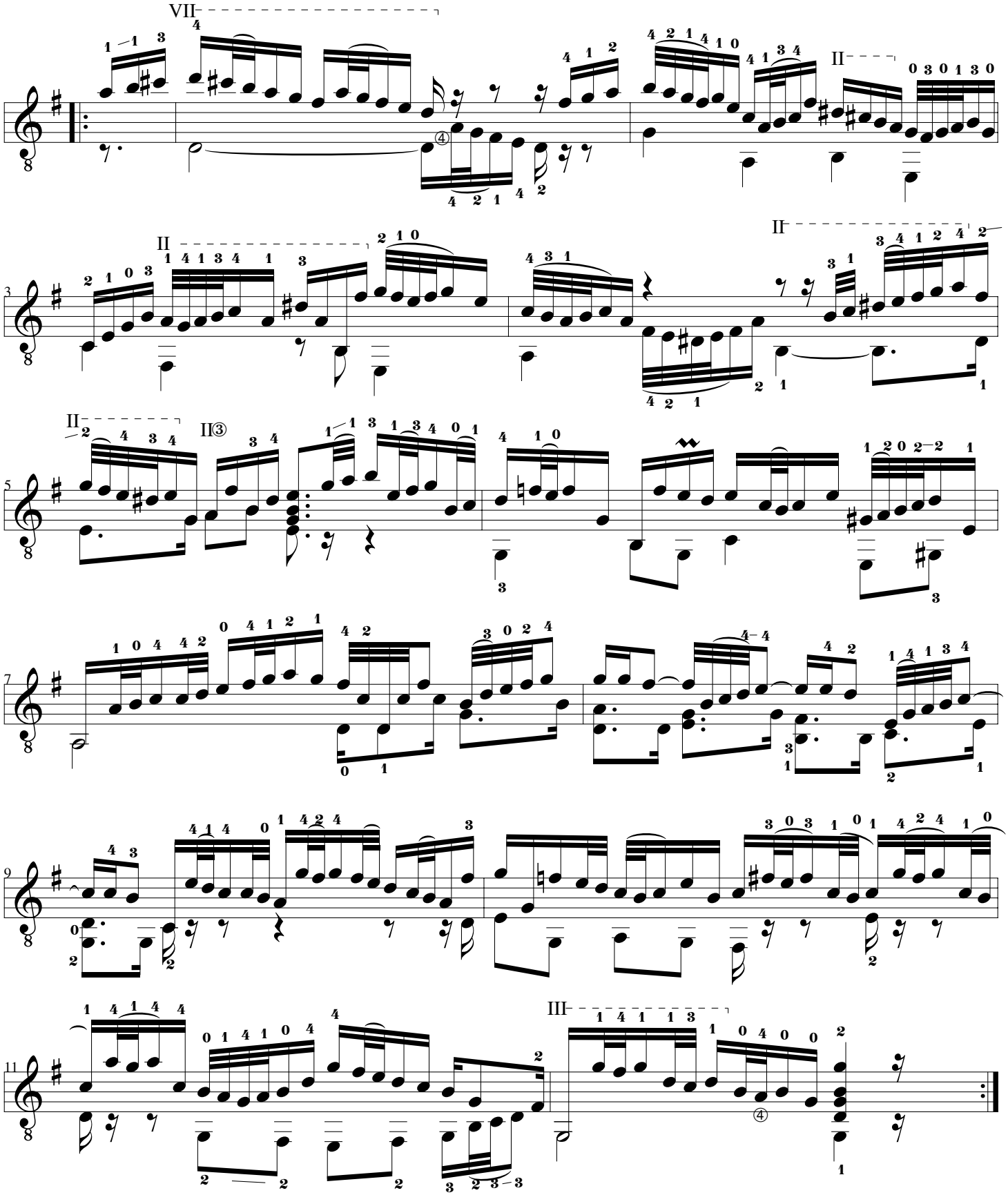



II③
VII⑤
(VII⑤)
26
30
34
38
42
46
50
54

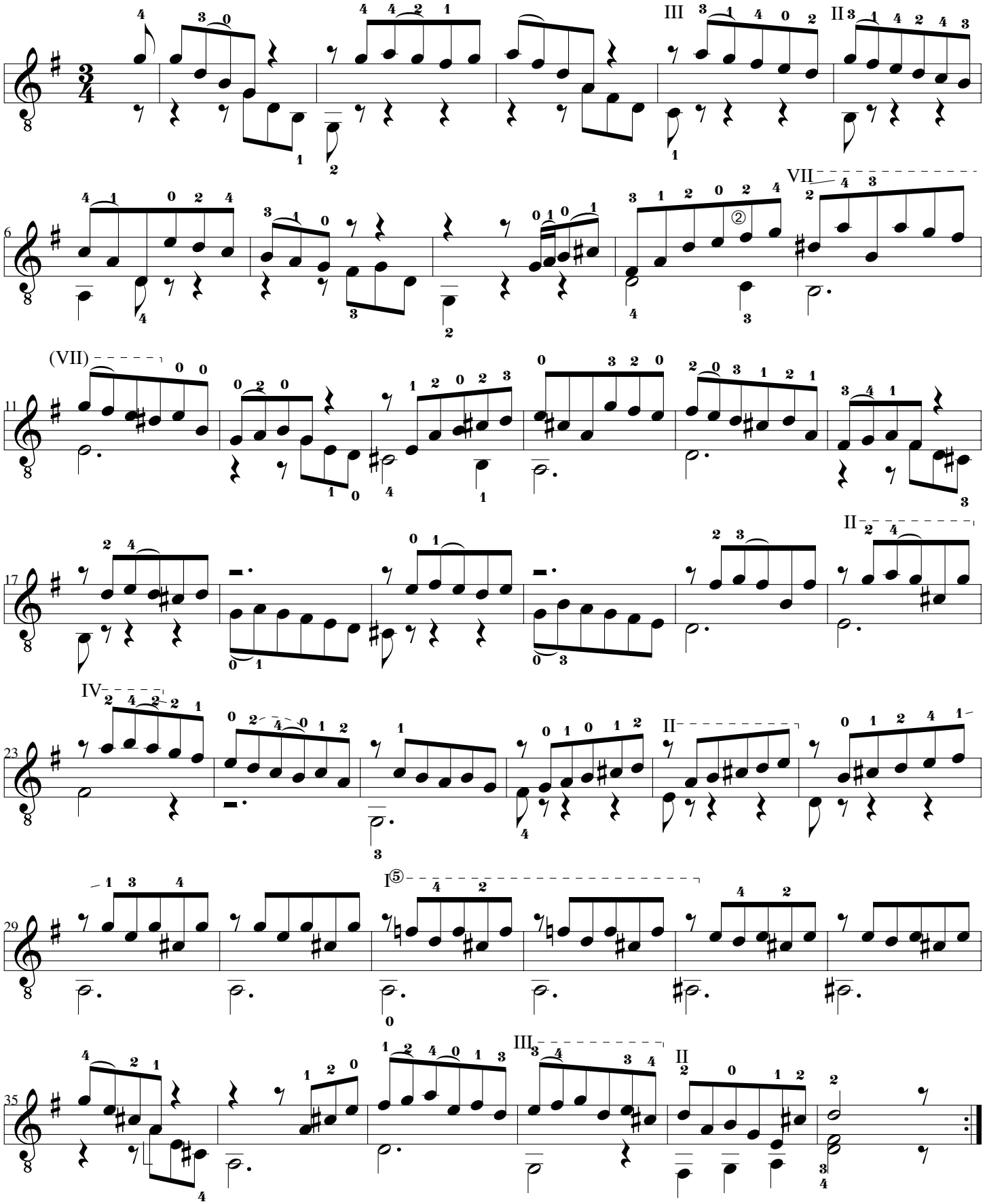

III③
II③
58
III⑥
62
66
70
74
78
82
I⑤
VII
85

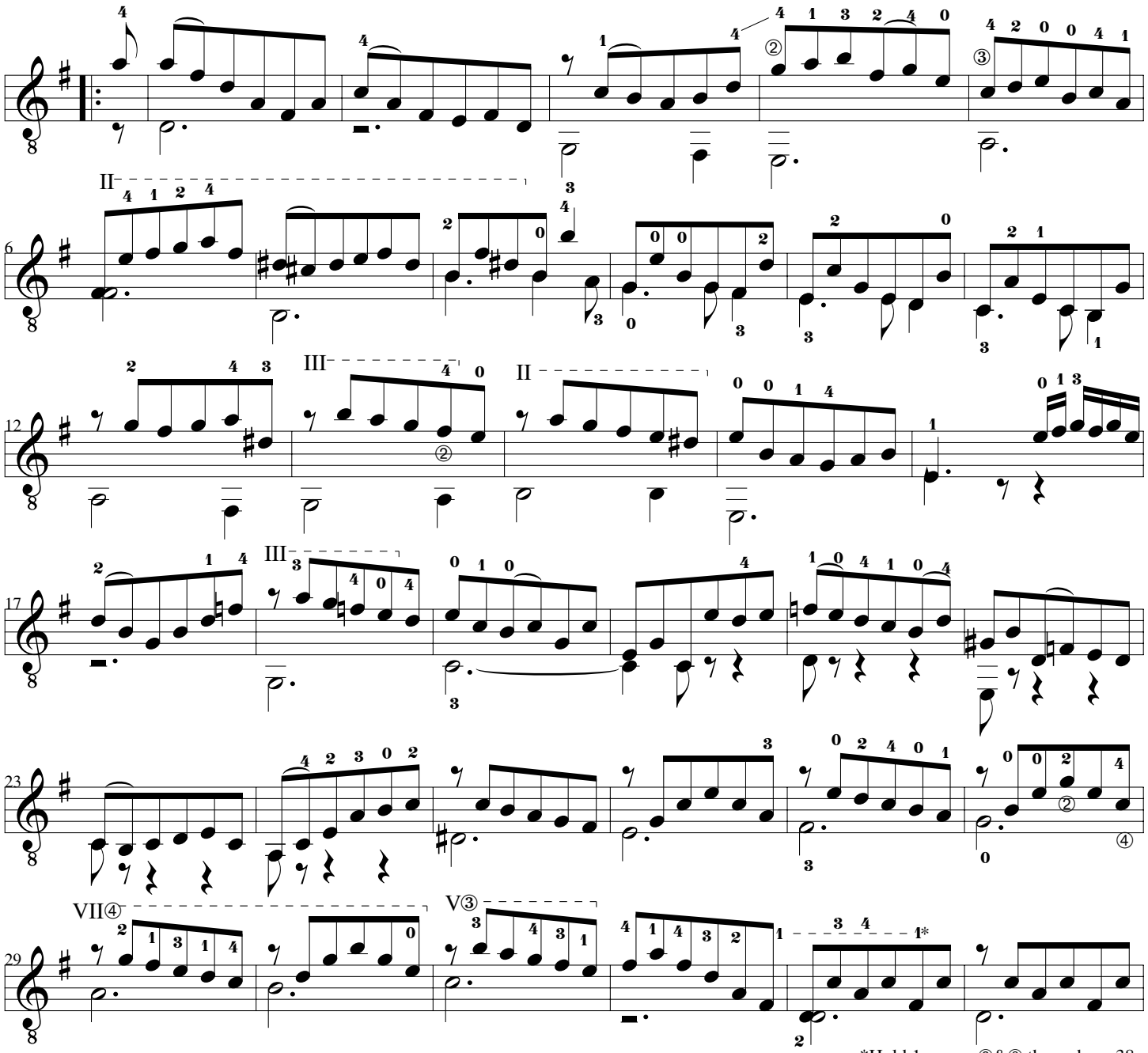
II. Allemande




VII
II
II
II
II
II③
III

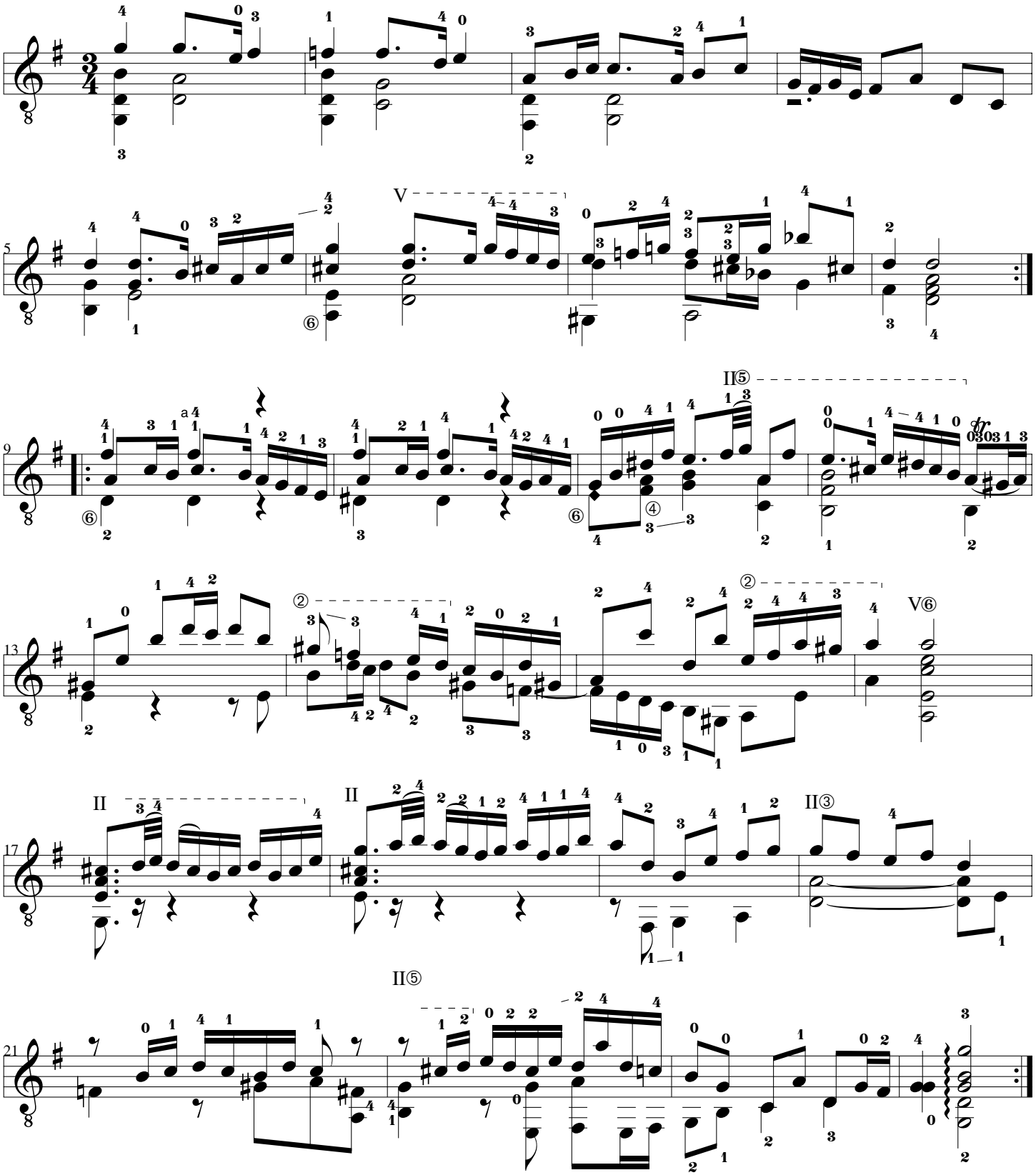
III. Courante



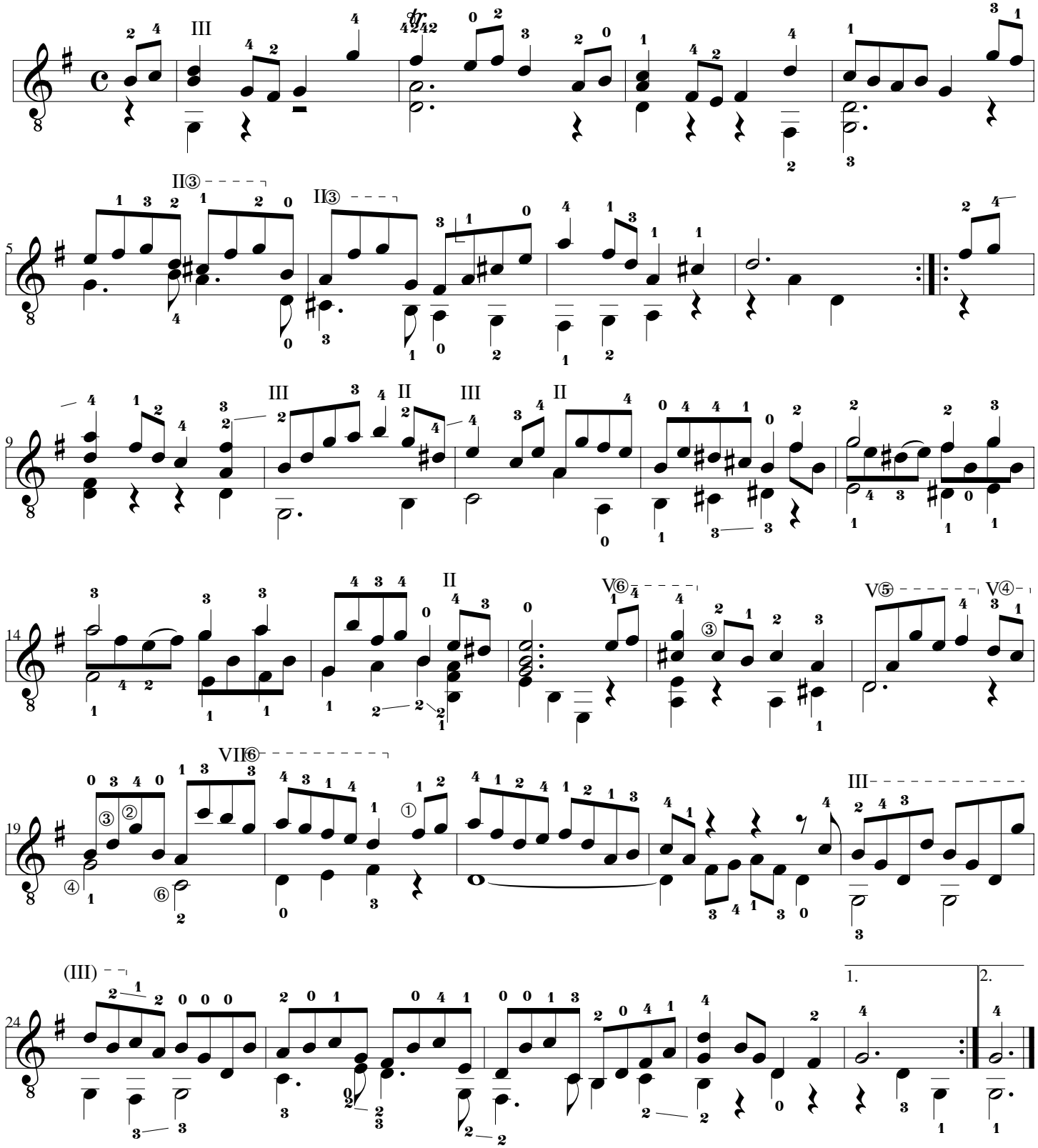


*Hold 1 across ②&③ through m. 38.

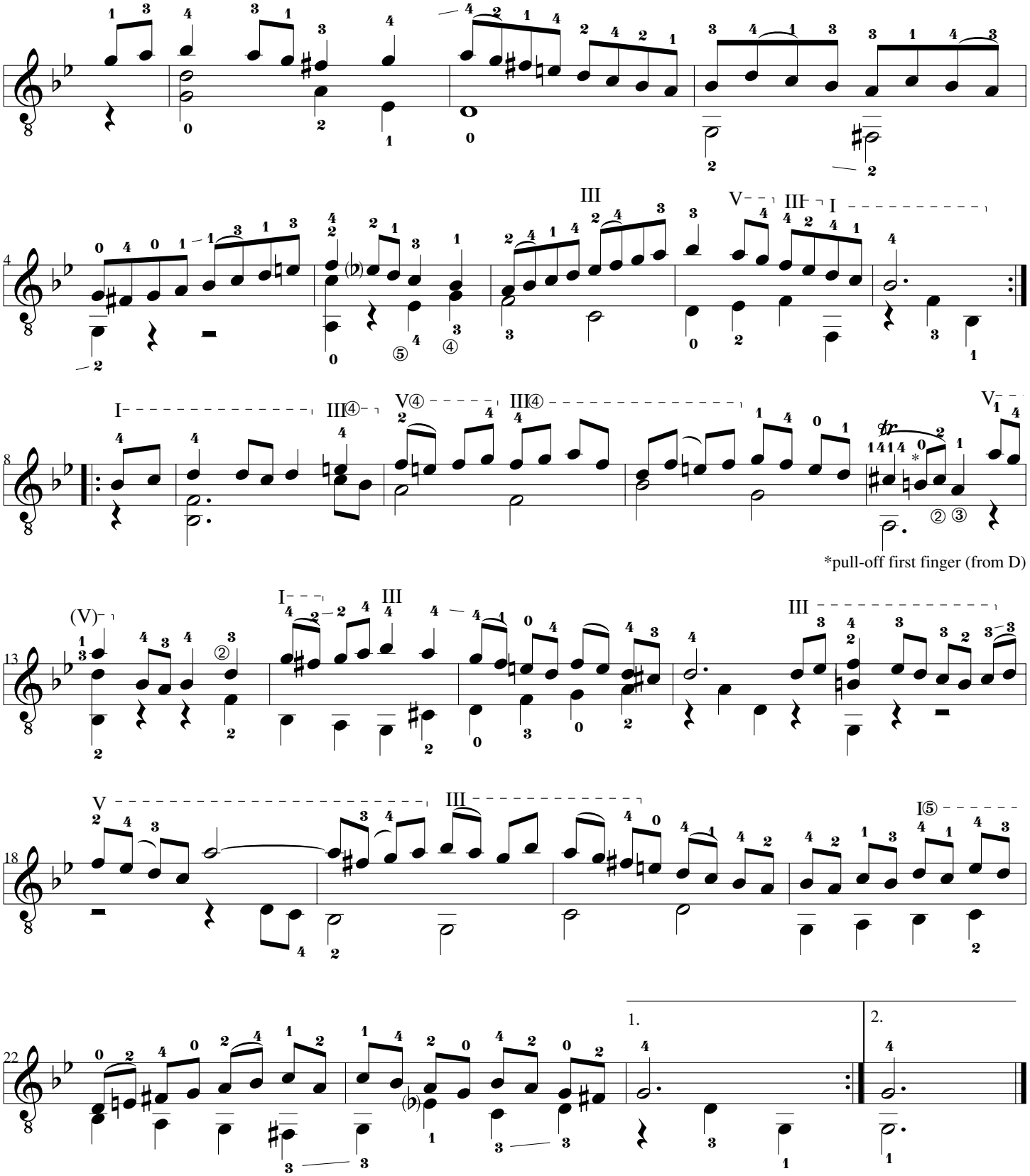
IV. Sarabande



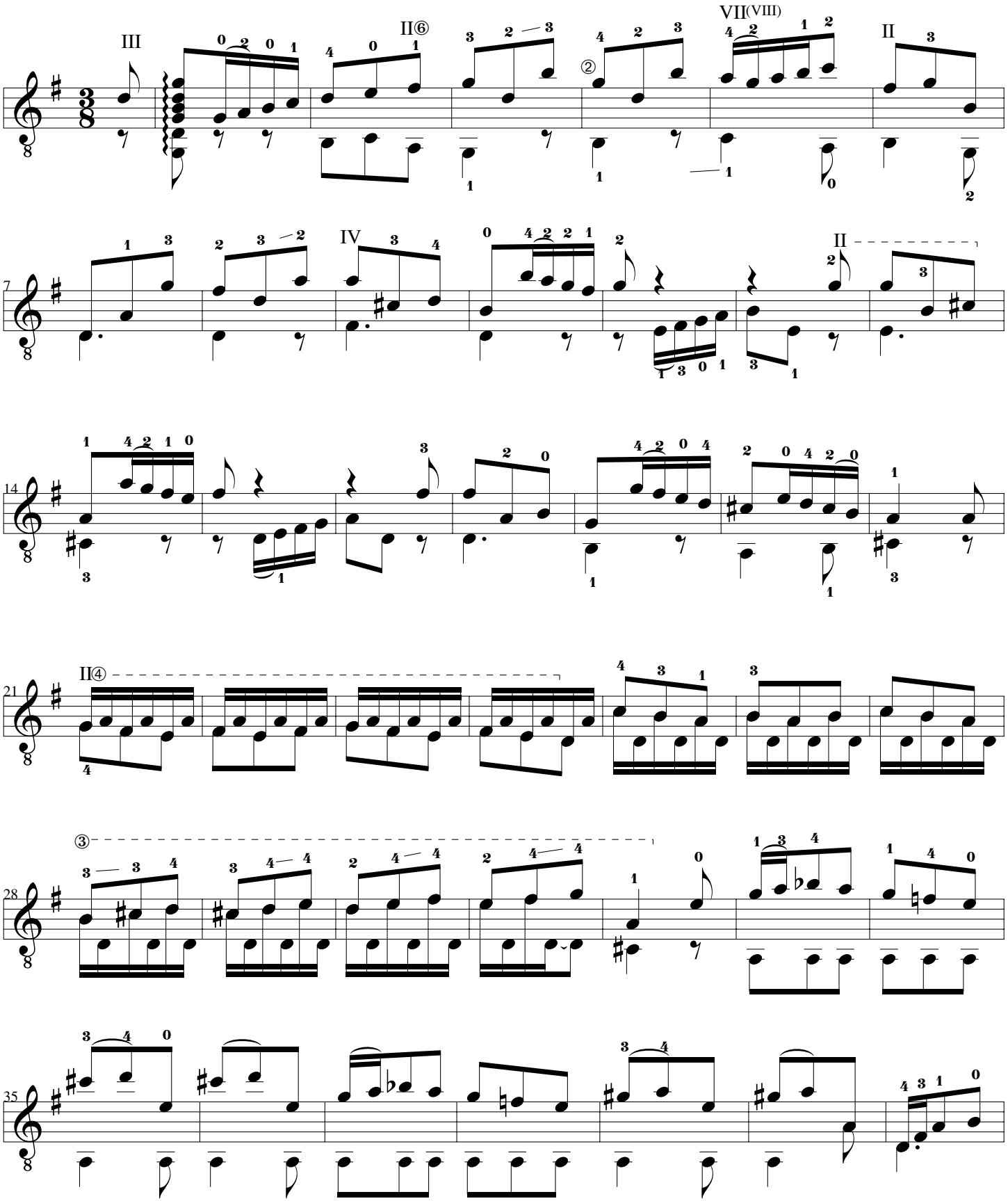
V. Bourrée I

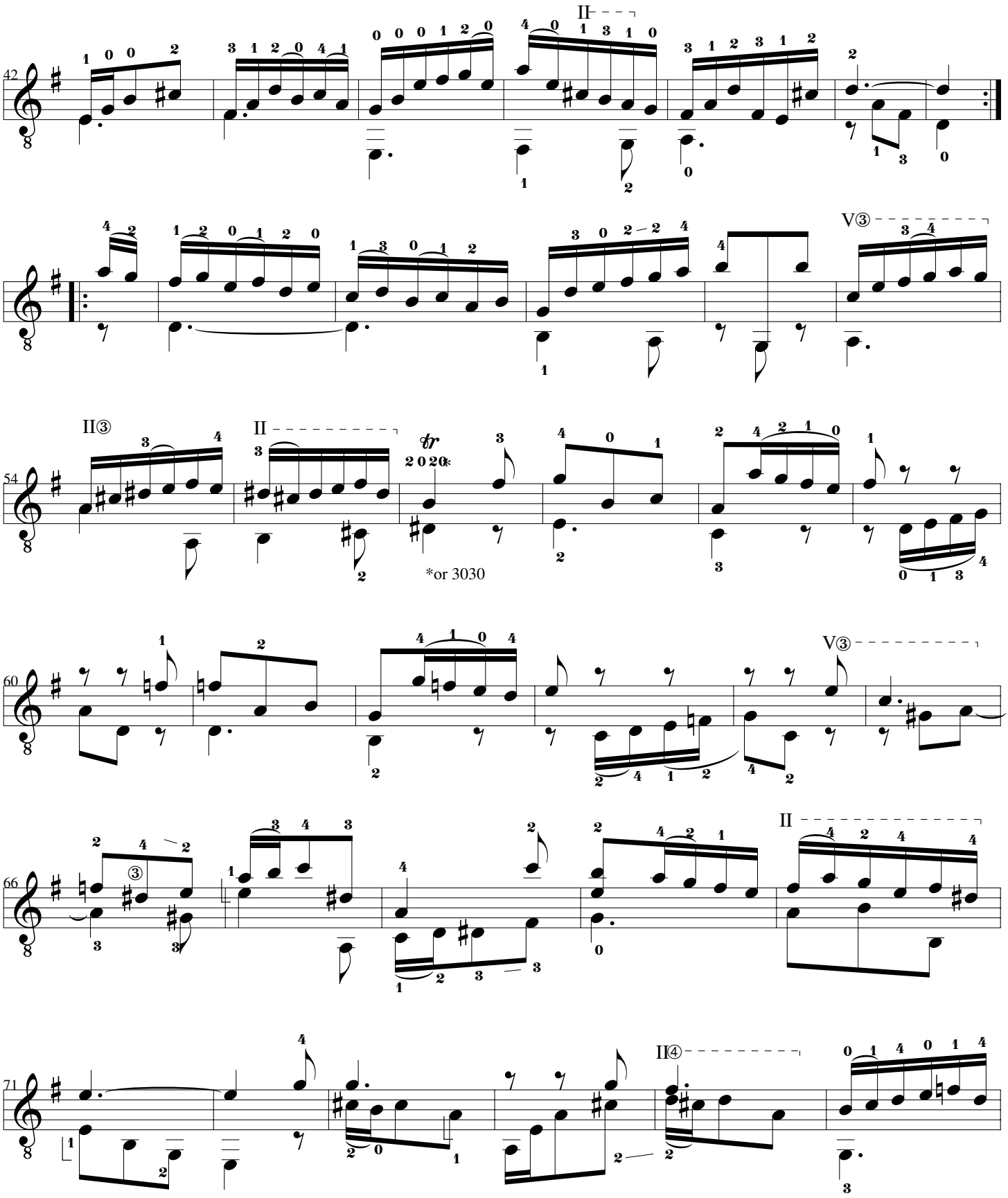


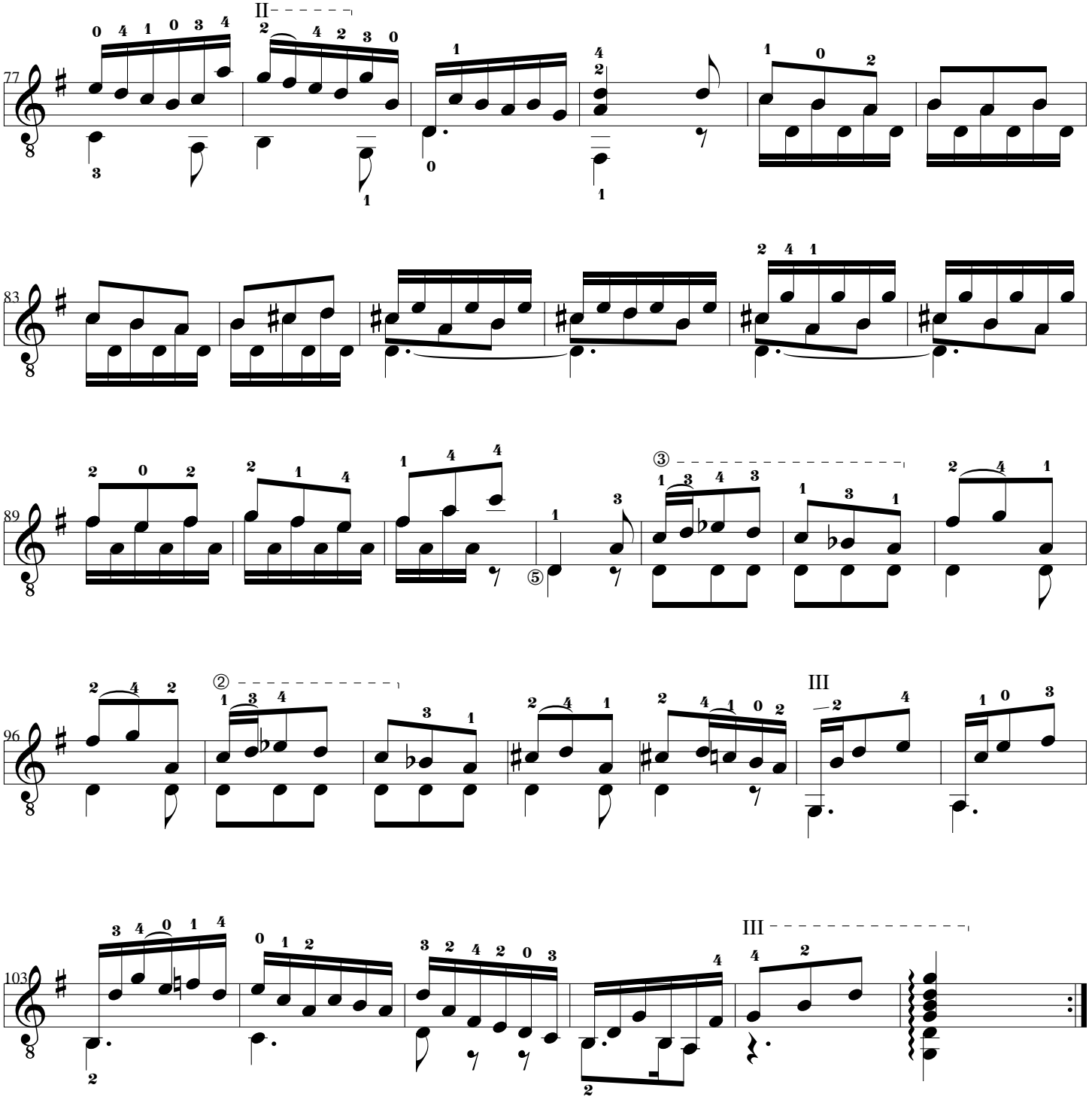
Bourrée II



VI. Gigue




42
II
V③
II③
II
54
*or 3030
60
V③
66
③
II
71
II④


II
III
III

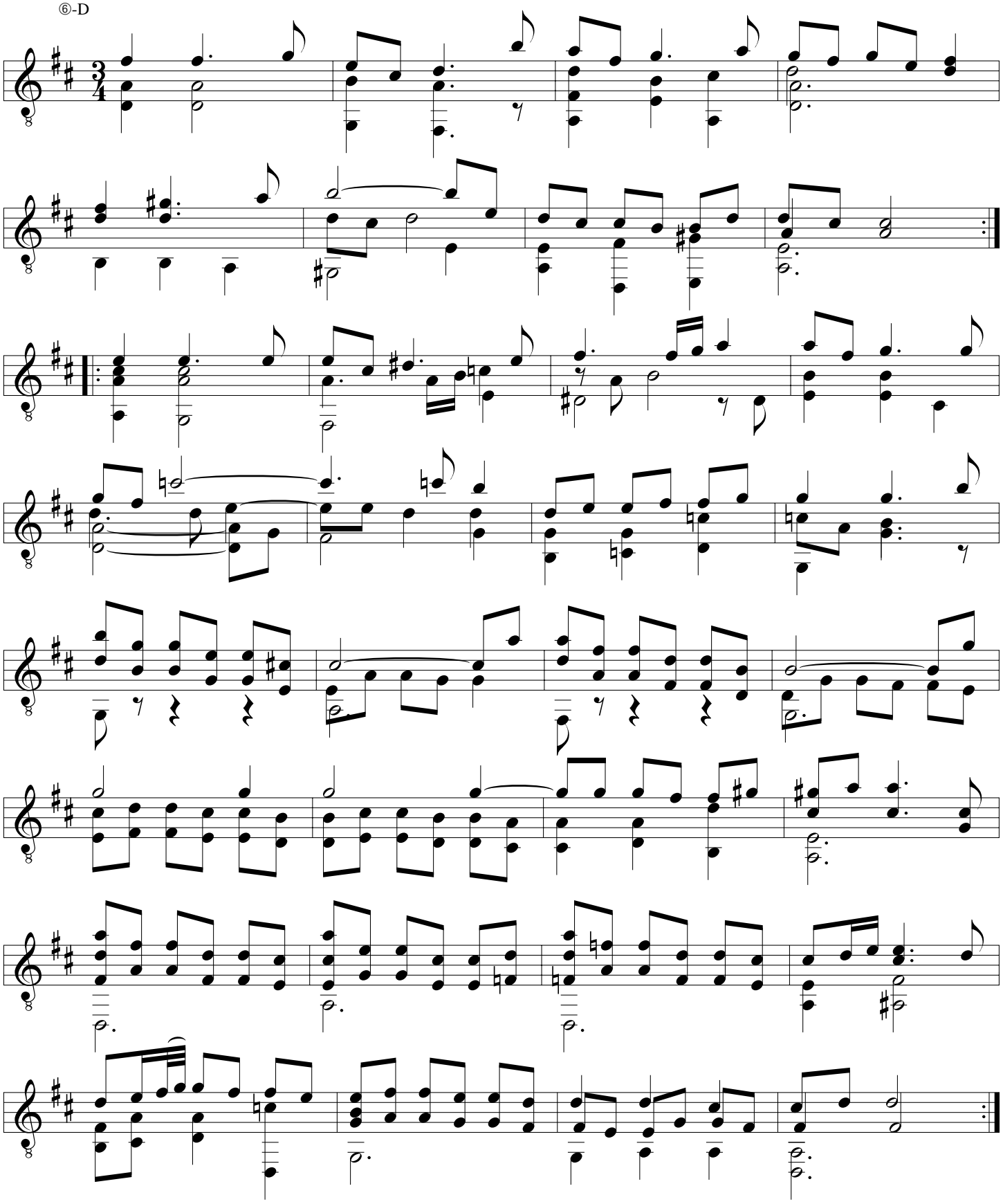
Sarabande in D

from the Sixth Cello Suite

J. S. BACH

arranged for guitar by
JEFFRY HAMILTON STEELE

⑥-D



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