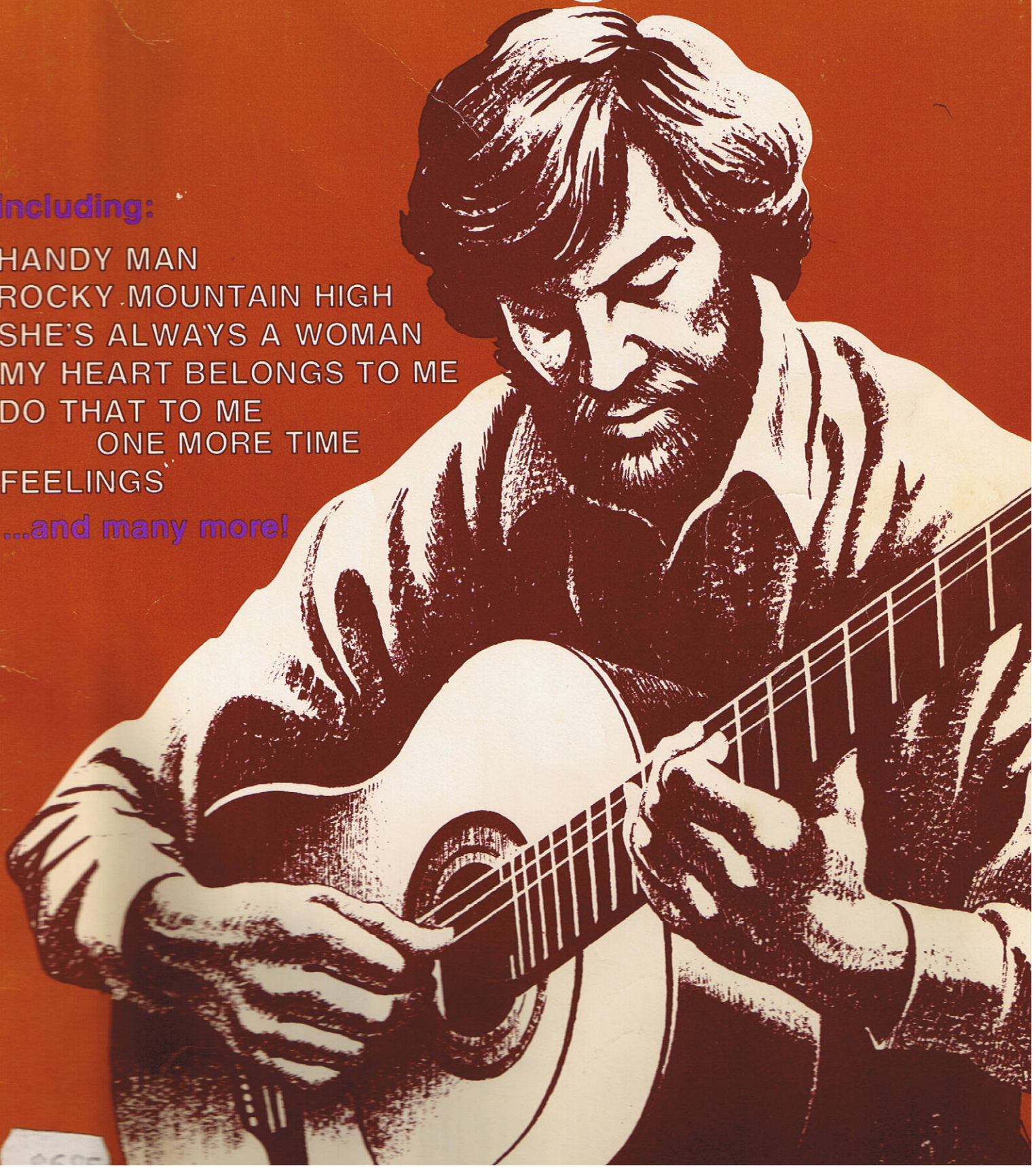
Fingerstyle Specials

solos for guitar



including:

HANDY MAN
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH
SHE'S ALWAYS A WOMAN
MY HEART BELONGS TO ME
DO THAT TO ME ONE MORE TIME
FEELINGS

...and many more!

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PREFACE

What's so special about Fingerstyle Specials? Well, the popularity of fingerstyle guitar is growing by leaps and bounds, and until now there hasn't been much of a selection to choose from in guitar music. Sure there are a few very good books out with solos for the fingerstylist, but usually these books can only be used by advanced players.

Here, presented for the first time, is a collection of today's greatest and best known popular songs arranged especially for the advanced beginner and intermediate player. The arrangements use a variety of classical and acoustic guitar techniques. Some, harder than others, will require note reading skills and technical proficiency. Included are special performance notes for each song, which will give helpful suggestions on how to play some of the tough spots in each song.

In summing up, it is my hope that these special arrangements and performance notes will bring out the best in you and your guitar.

RAY VERNINO
The Arranger

BIOGRAPHY

A native of New Castle, Pennsylvania born in 1951, Ray Vernino began his studies with the guitar at the age of 12. Since then he has made numerous concert appearances at colleges, universities and fine arts centers throughout Eastern United States and Canada. Ray Vernino is a member of the faculty of Youngstown State University where he has earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in Music Education. Vernino is also the instructor of guitar at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania.

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Recorded by BILLY JOEL on COLUMBIA Records

SHE'S ALWAYS A WOMAN

BILLY JOEL

I've arranged this song to be played in the key of C. However, if you notice there is an indication for you to use a capo on the third fret. Thus, you would play in C, but sound in E flat. This piece will also help you gain a good deal of coordination in the right hand. Do not be afraid to spend several hours learning this particular song, it is one of the more difficult selections in this text.

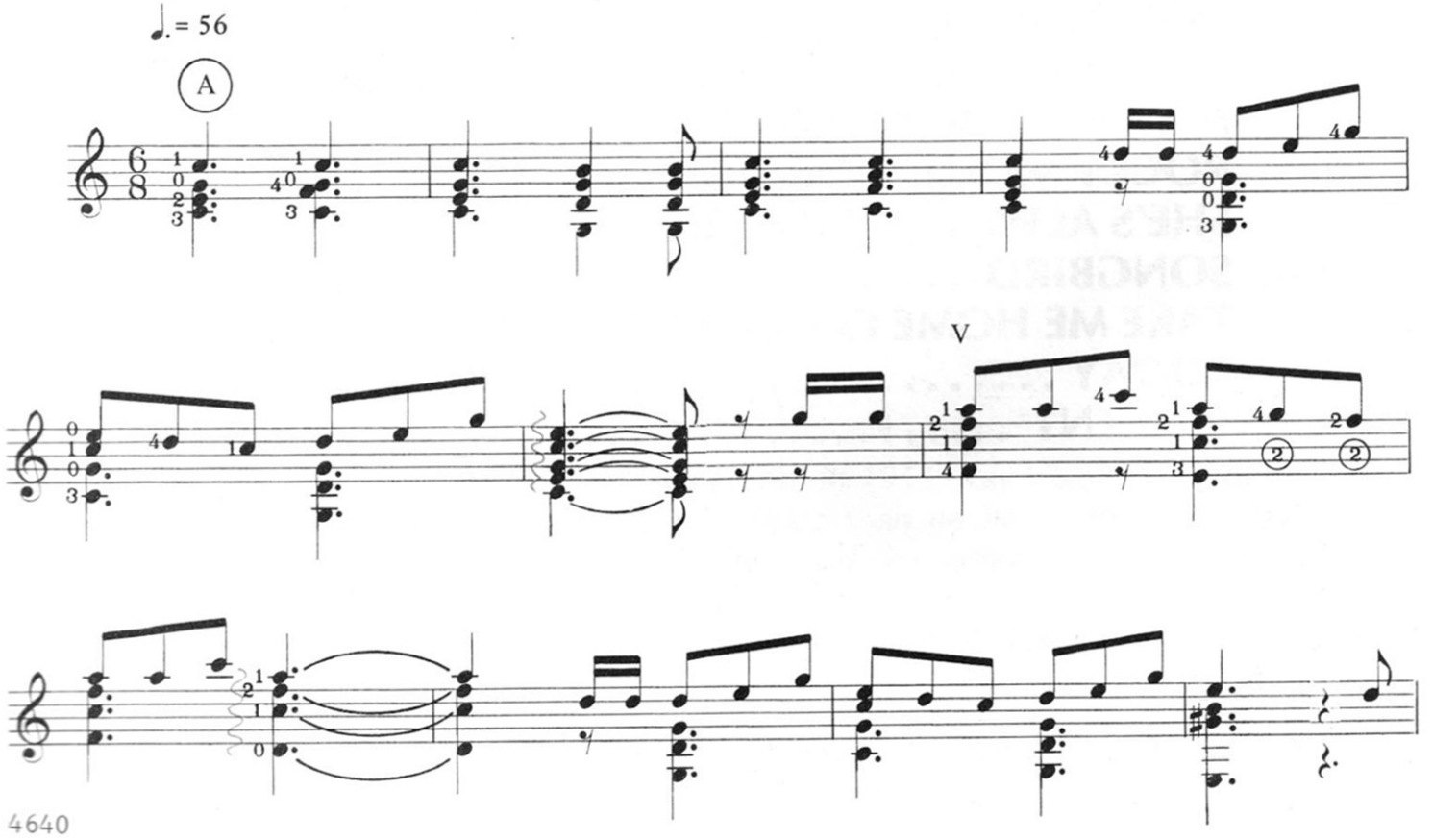
(A) Make sure you sustain the chords in the first line well. (Think Hymnal)

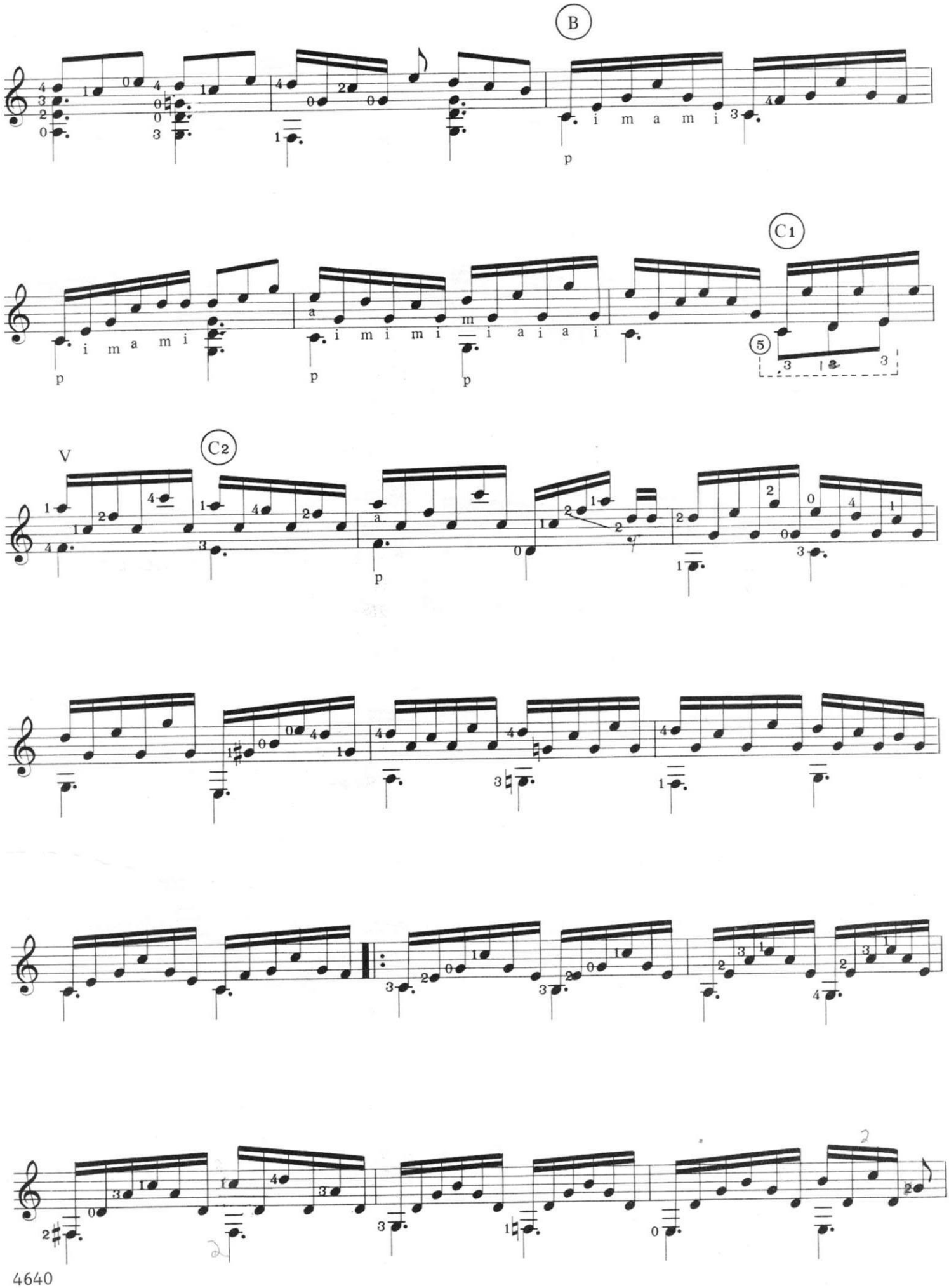
(B) Maintain a nice even arpeggio here and throughout the rest of the song.

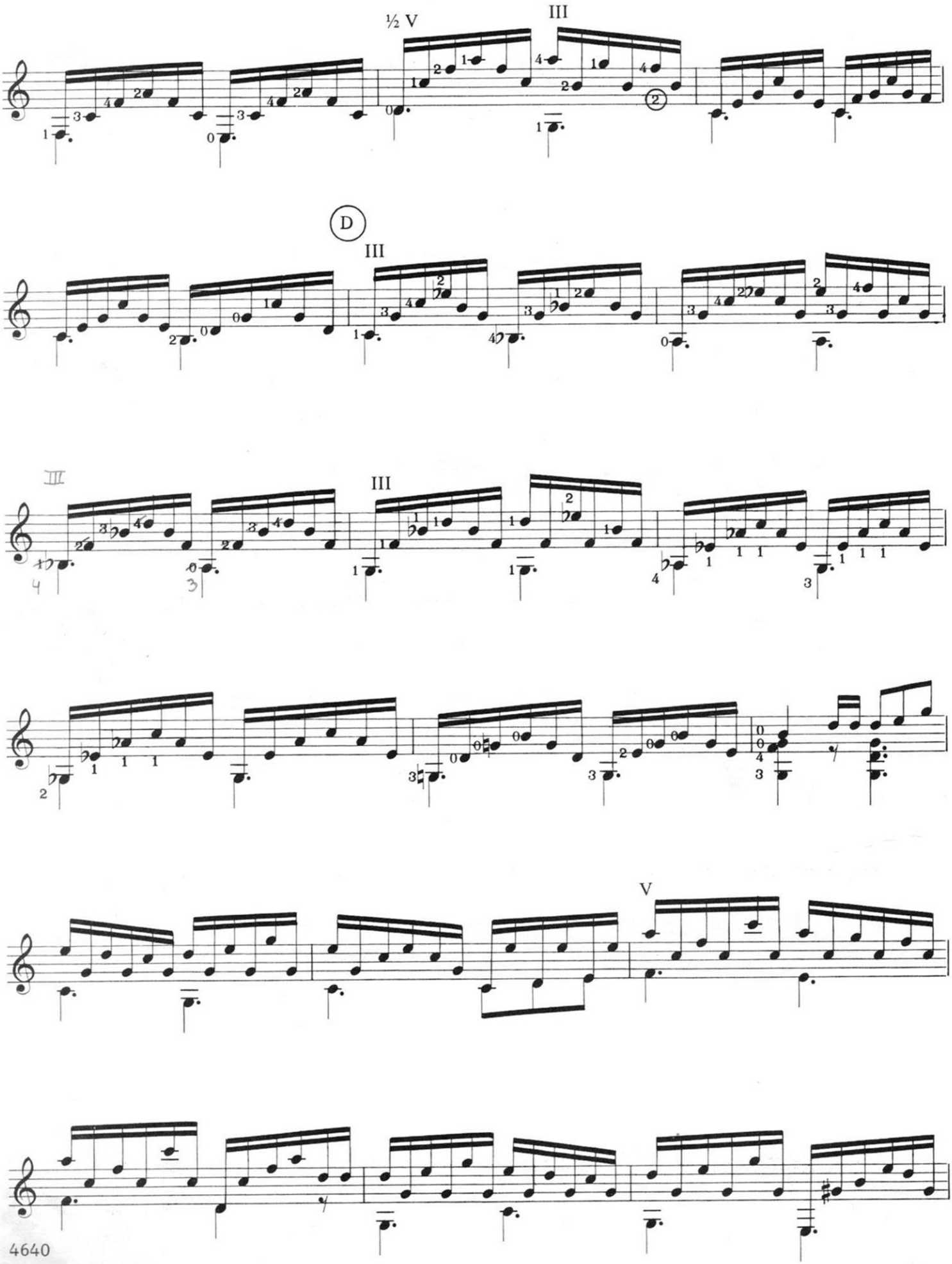
(C) Follow my fingering closely at letters C1 and C2. If you notice the bass line is played with the same finger on the fifth string. This prepares you for the F chord with the E bass.

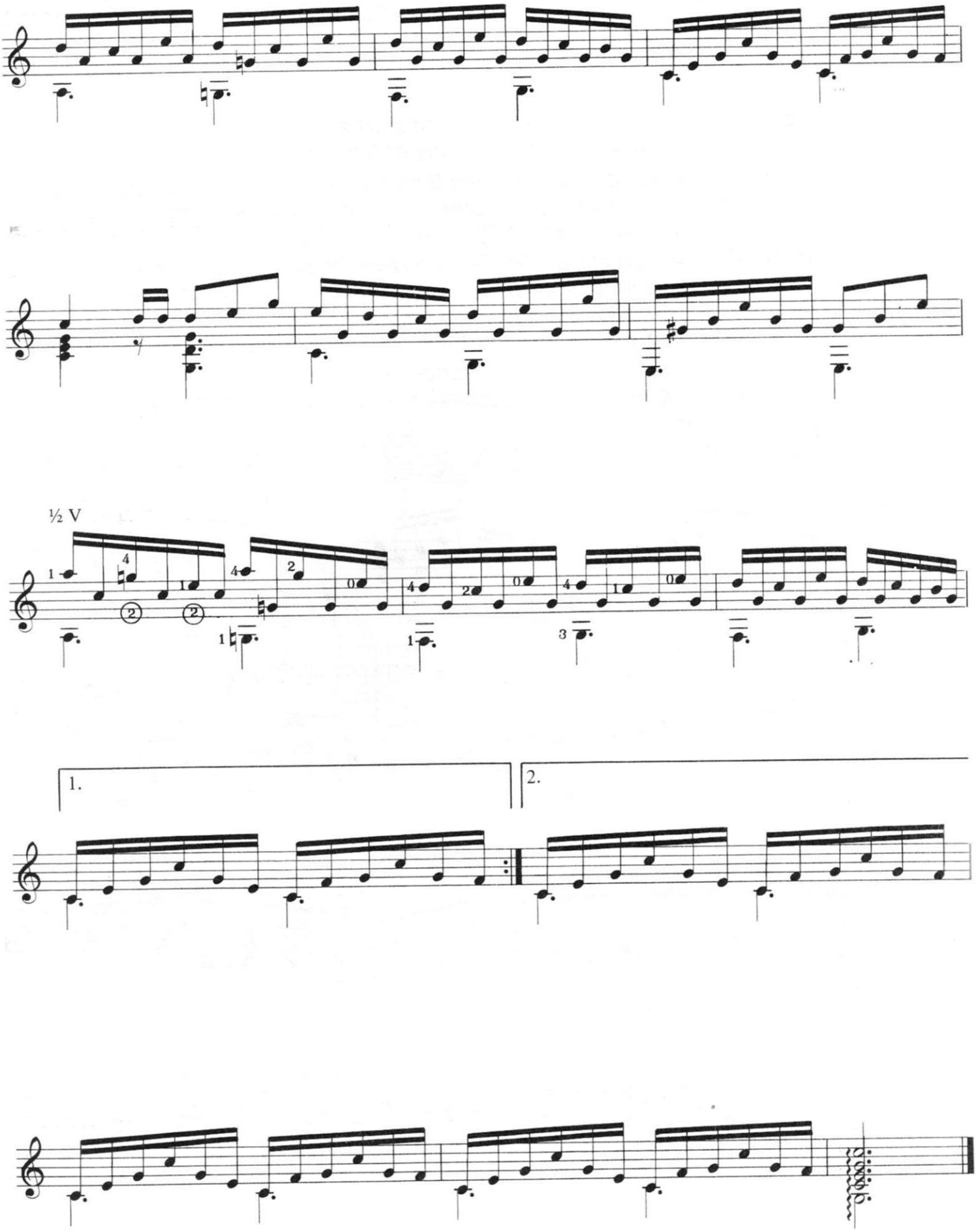
(D) There is a really great modulation that takes place at letter D. Make sure you learn this section well. Read carefully! Watch for the accidentals (sharps and flats).

Capo on 3rd fret for original key (E♭)




B
i m a m i
p
C1
i m a m i
p
i m i m i
p
i a i a i
5
C2
V
p


½ V
III
D
III
III
III
V


½ V
1.
2.

Recorded by BARBRA STREISAND on COLUMBIA Records

MY HEART BELONGS TO ME

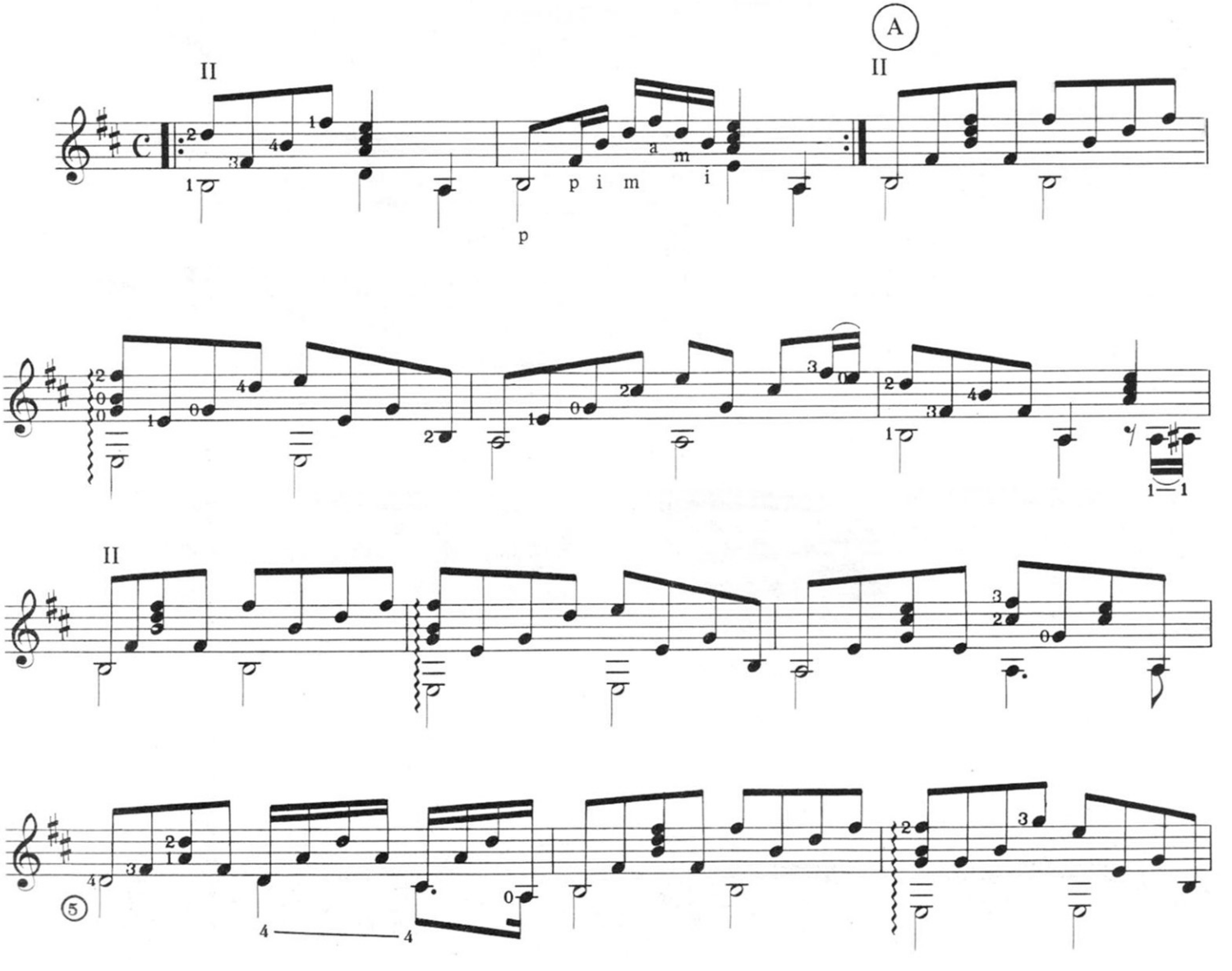
ALAN GORDON

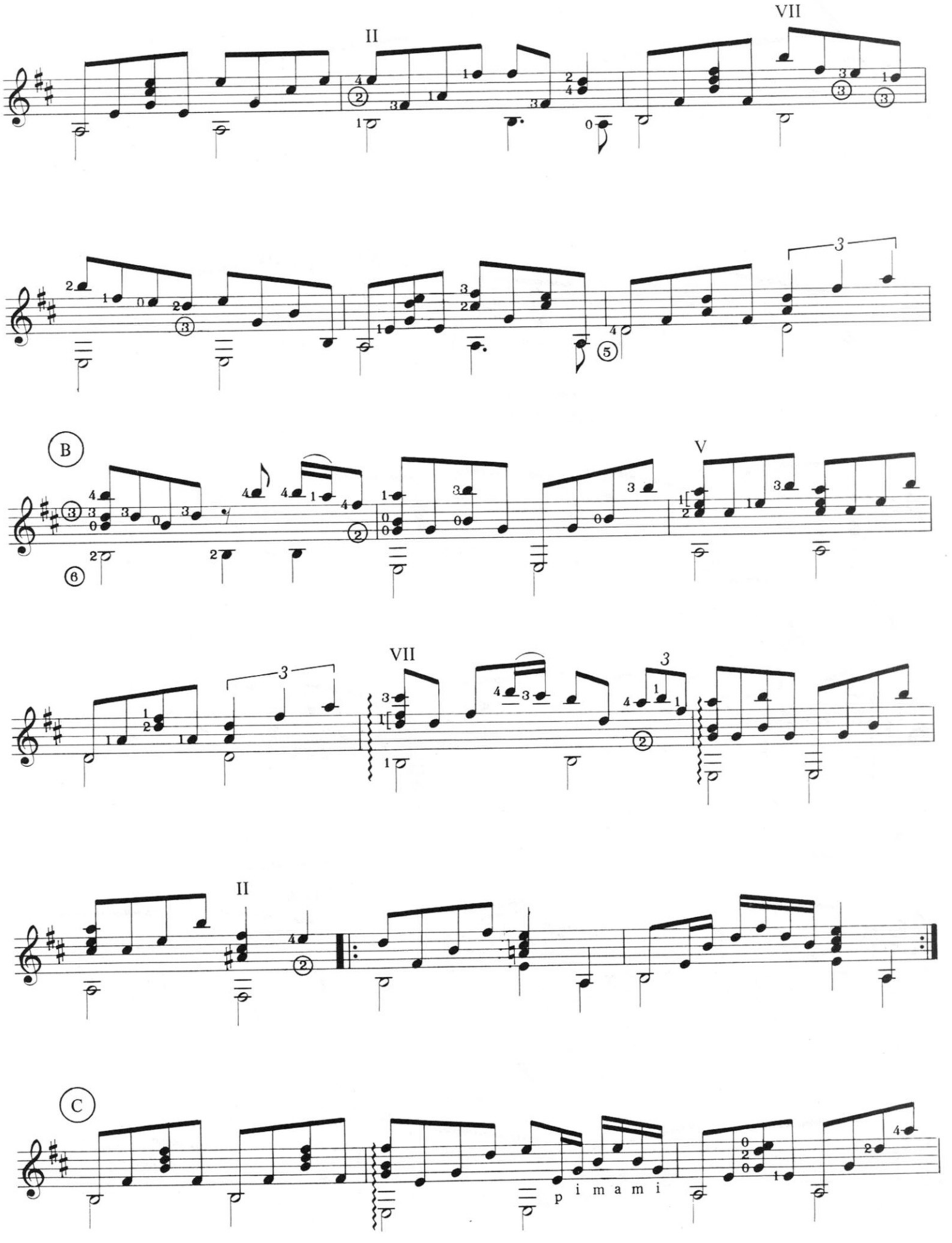
(A) When playing this piece remember to start softly, then gradually increase dynamically as the intensity of the piece unfolds.

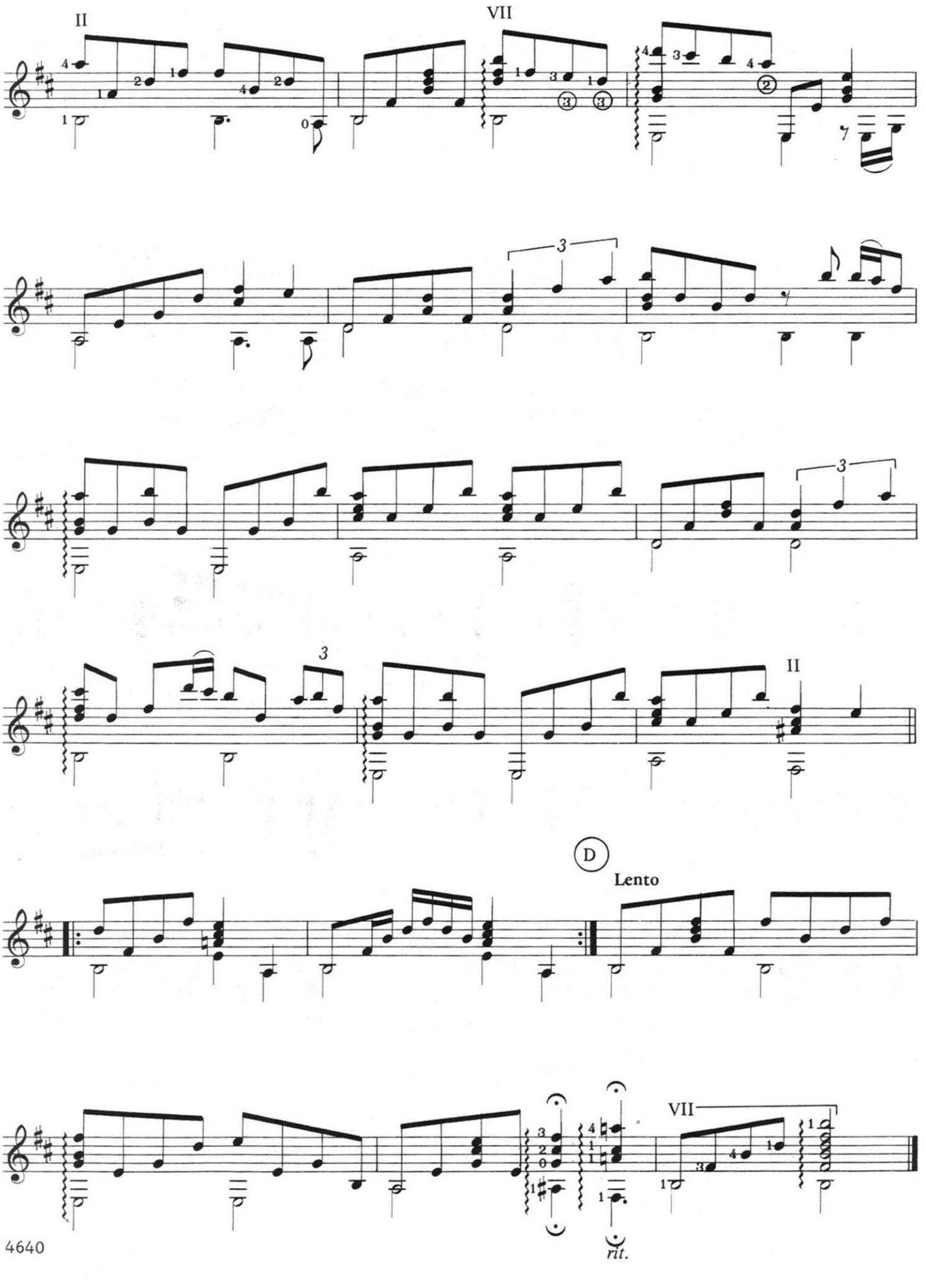
(B) At letter B, watch out for the open B string. (try not to mute it) You will find out that this voicing works quite well in blending with the chorus.

(C) At letter C you are playing the last verse of the song. I augmented the arpeggios a little more at this point along with a few variations in the melodic line. Try to achieve a harp like effect on the chords with the squiggly line in front of them.

(D) Take your time here and really enunciate the final three chords. Your audience will always remember you for saying something nice to them.




II
VII
B
V
VII
II
C
p i m a m i


II
VII
3
3
II
D
Lento
VII
rit.

Recorded by JANIS IAN on COLUMBIA Records

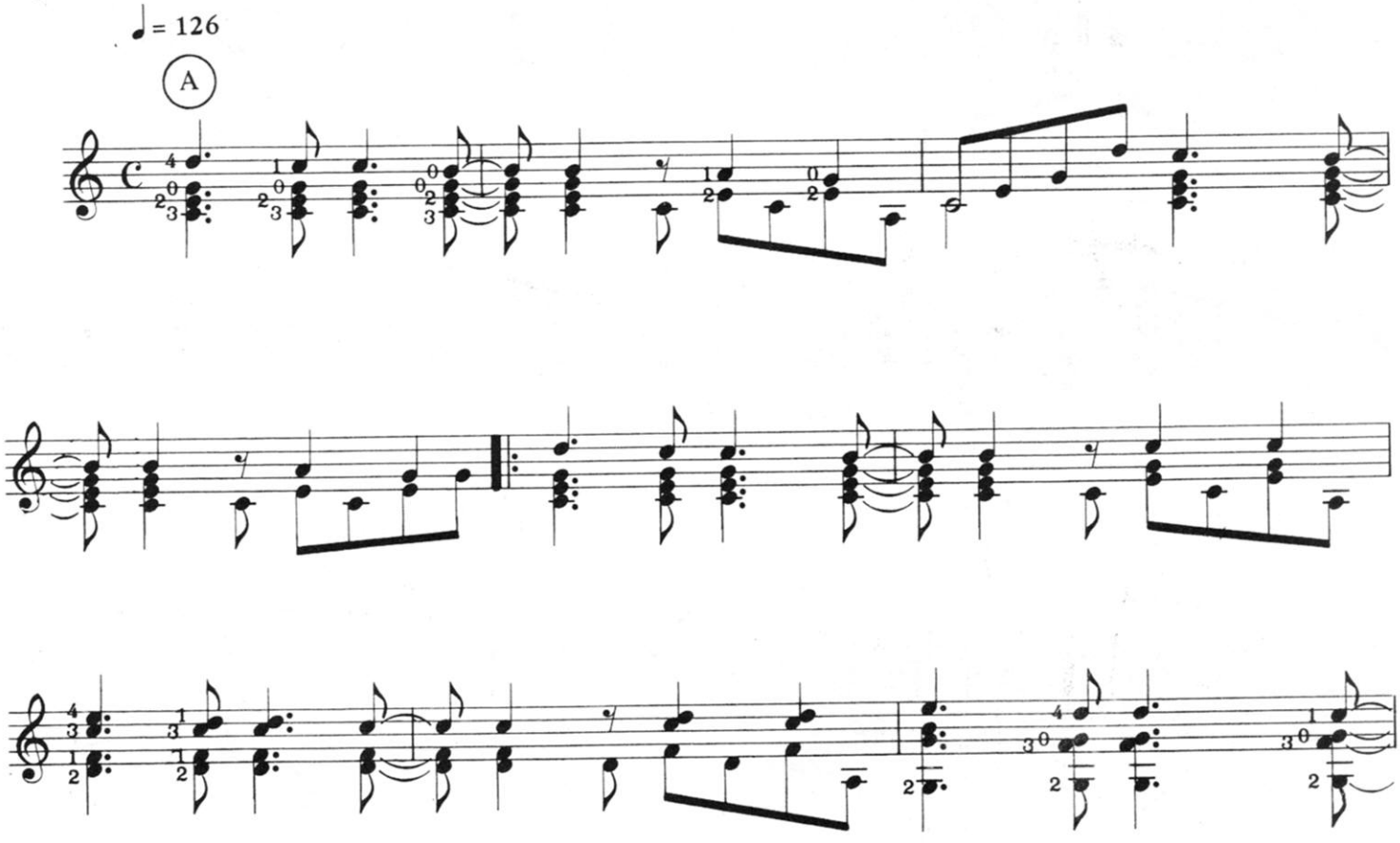
AT SEVENTEEN

JANIS IAN

(A) Be careful of the dotted rhythms in this piece. They're extremely important and give a certain jazz (bosa nova) type flavor to the melody.

(B) At letter B, you may have to work at the bar chords a little to achieve smooth transitions. The little finger also plays an important role in this section.

(C) Letter C is an imitation of the horn (trumpet) solo at the end of the Janis Ian recording. It worked out kinda nice, so I thought I would share it with you.



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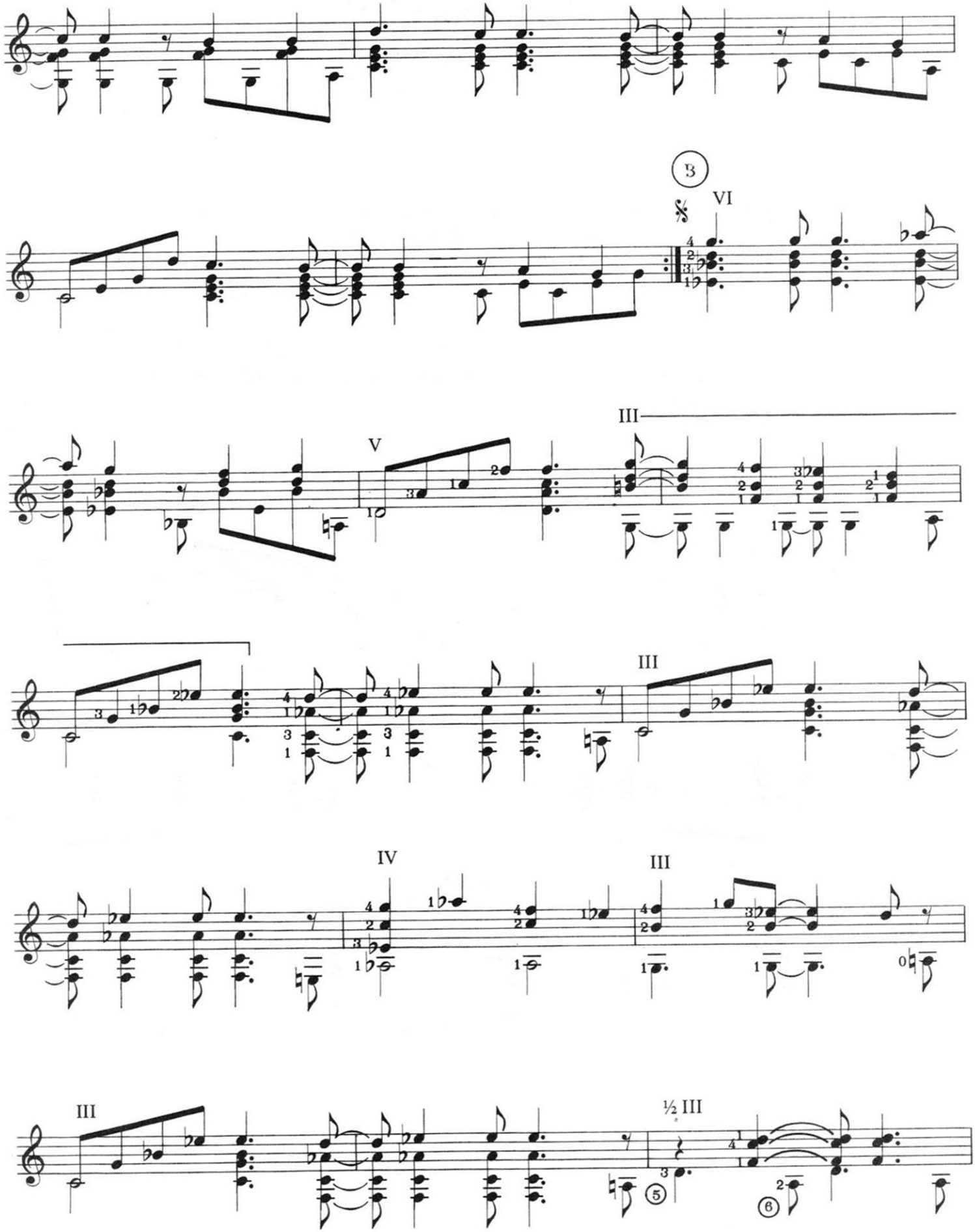
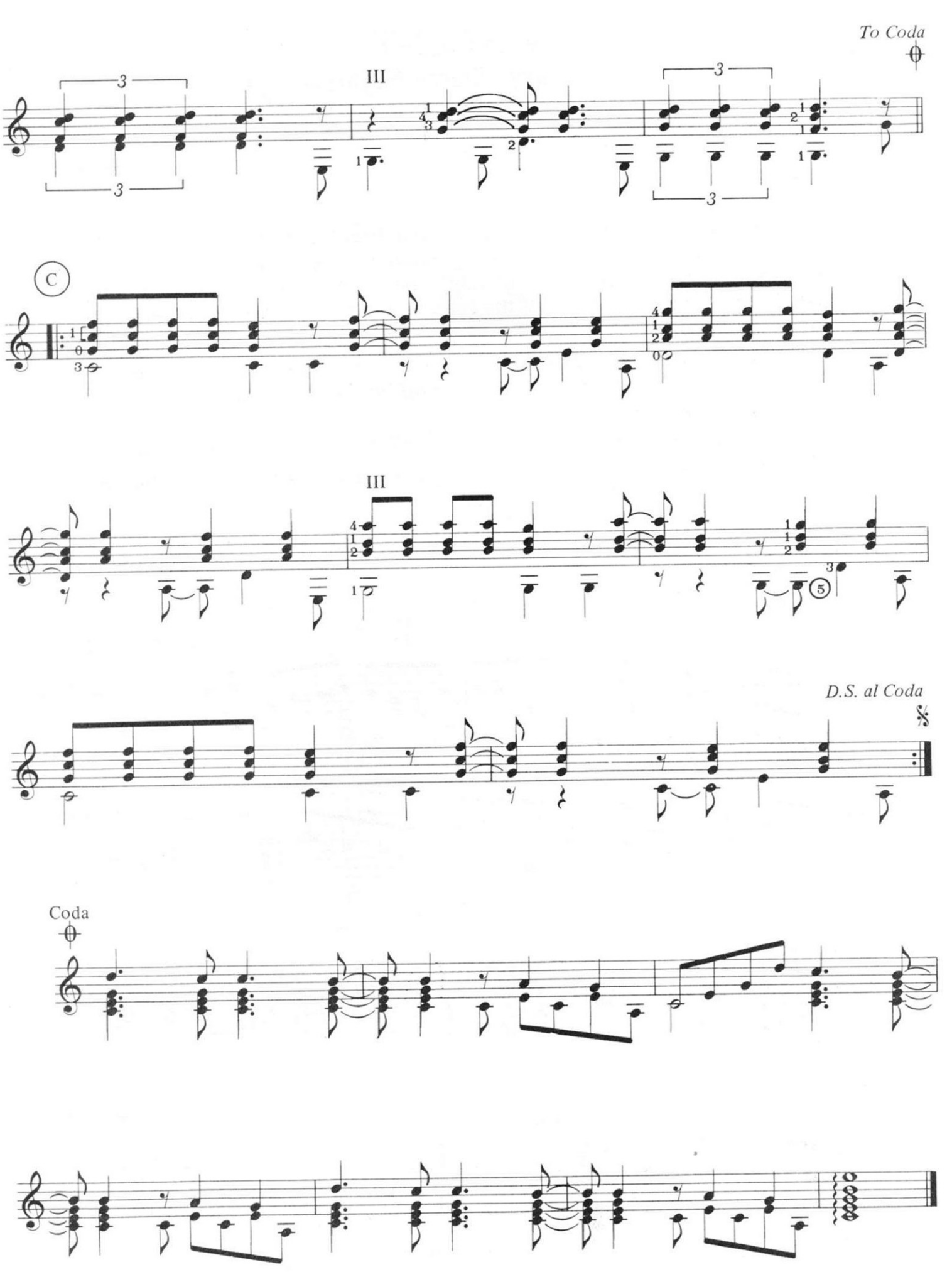

3
VI
V
III
III
IV
III
III
½ III
5
6


To Coda
III
C
III
D.S. al Coda
Coda

Recorded by DON McLEAN on UNITED ARTISTS Records

VINCENT
(Starry, Starry Night)

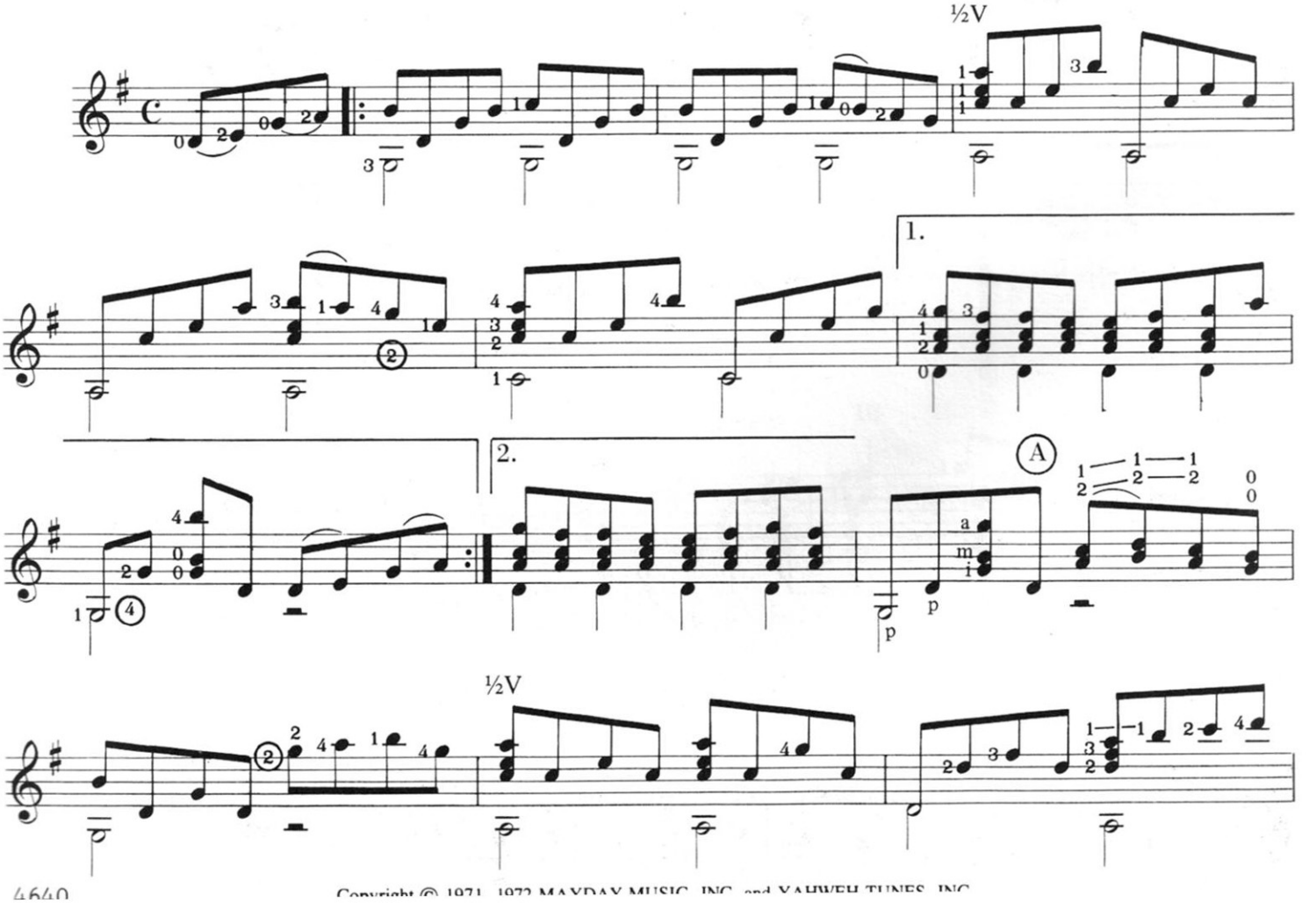
DON McLEAN

VINCENT represented a challenge to me in that I was faced with writing rhythms with poetry. When arranging this song, I was awe struck with the amount of lyrics Don Mclean used when composing it. I did manage to work out an arrangement of the tune and I think you will find it all there. (musically that is)

(A) At letter A you have to slur two notes simultaneously. Use the same two fingers when slurring on the third beat of that measure.

(B) Here's one of those lyrical phrases I mentioned earlier.

(C) A reduction in tempo is indicated here. Return to your original tempo at the a tempo *marking.*



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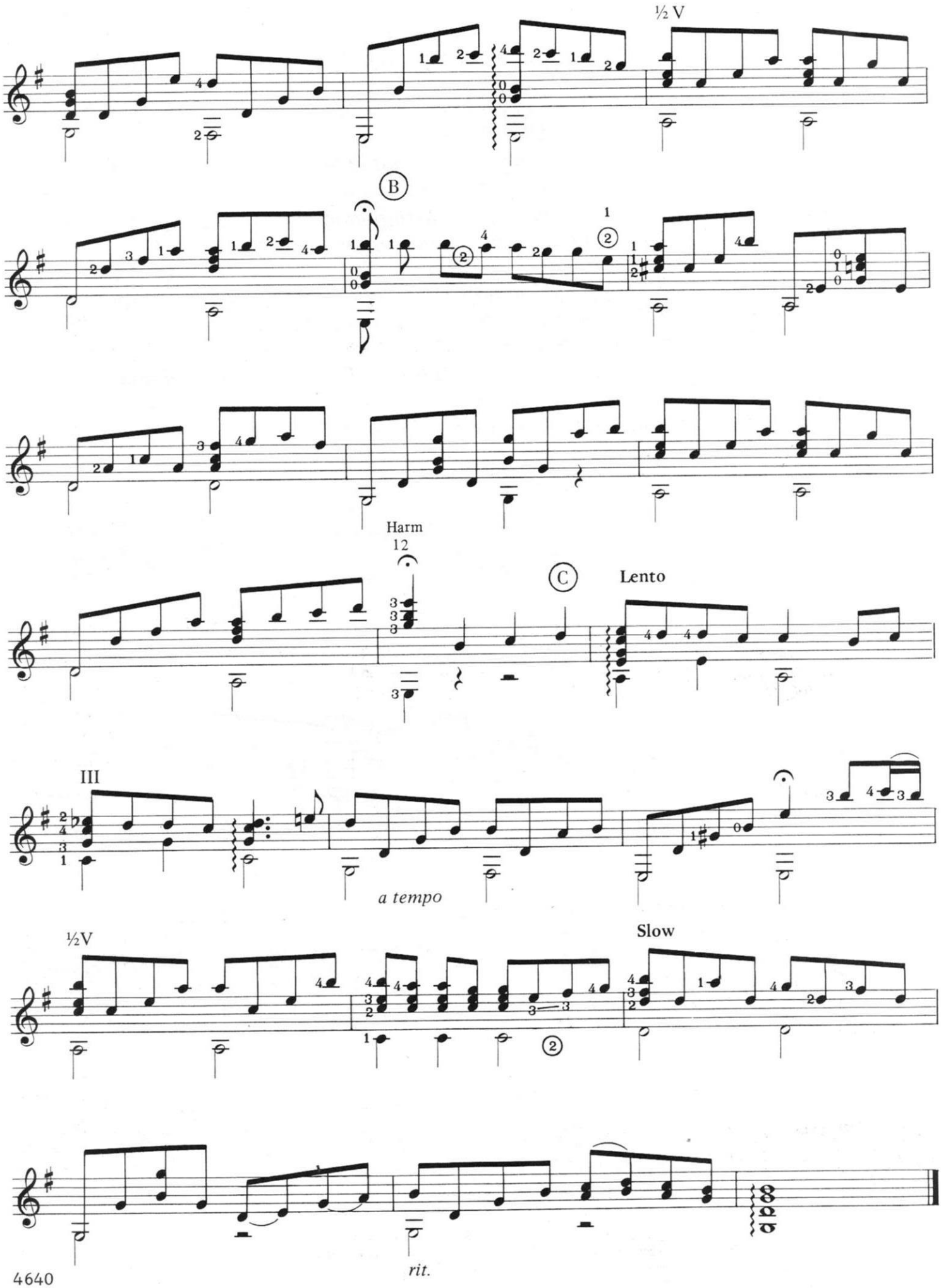

½ V
B
Harm
12
C
Lento
III
a tempo
½V
Slow
rit.

Recorded by BILLY JOEL on COLUMBIA Records

HONESTY

BILLY JOEL

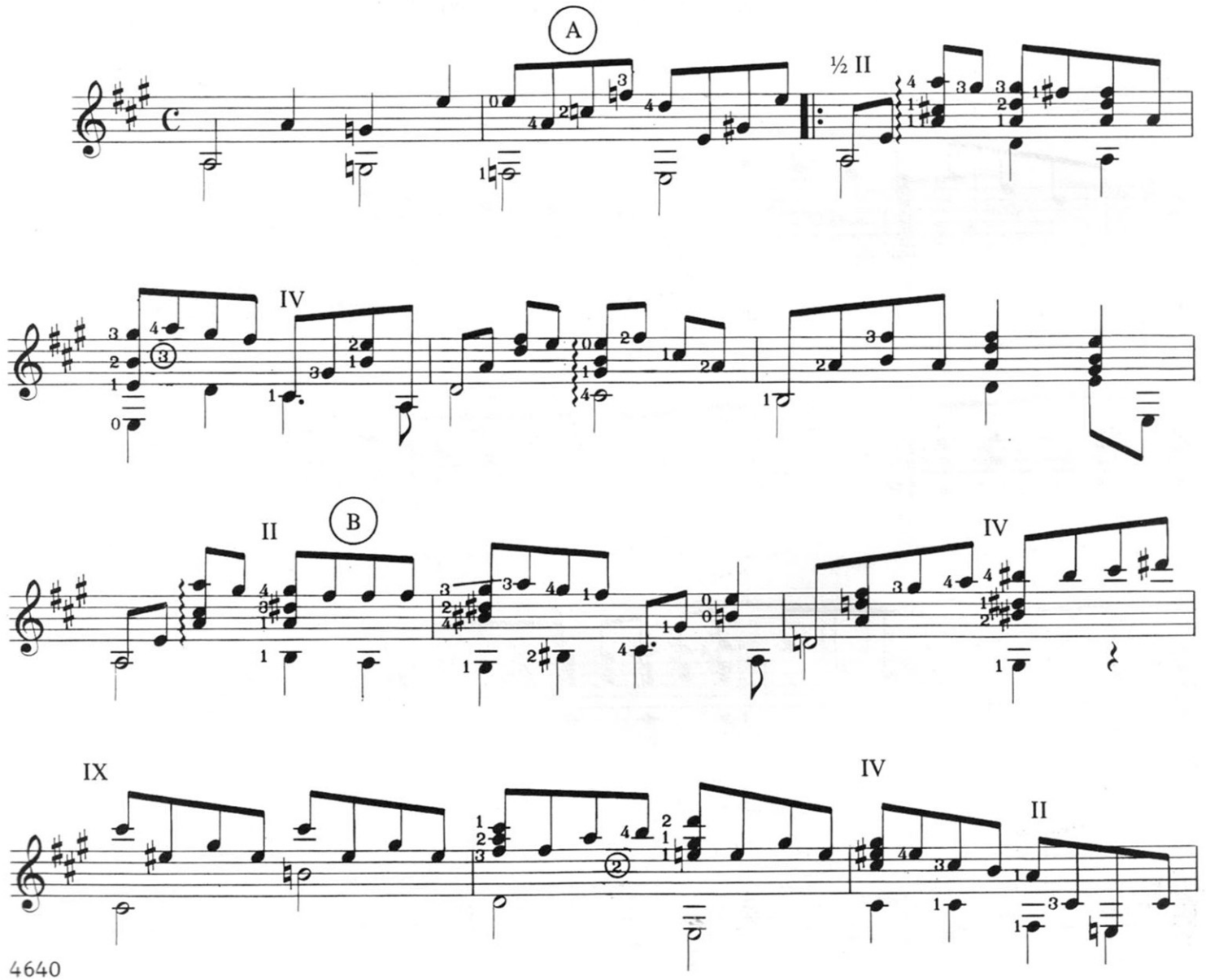
After watching how many Grammys Billy Joel has received for his 52nd Street album, I thought it might be nice to include a song off of that LP.

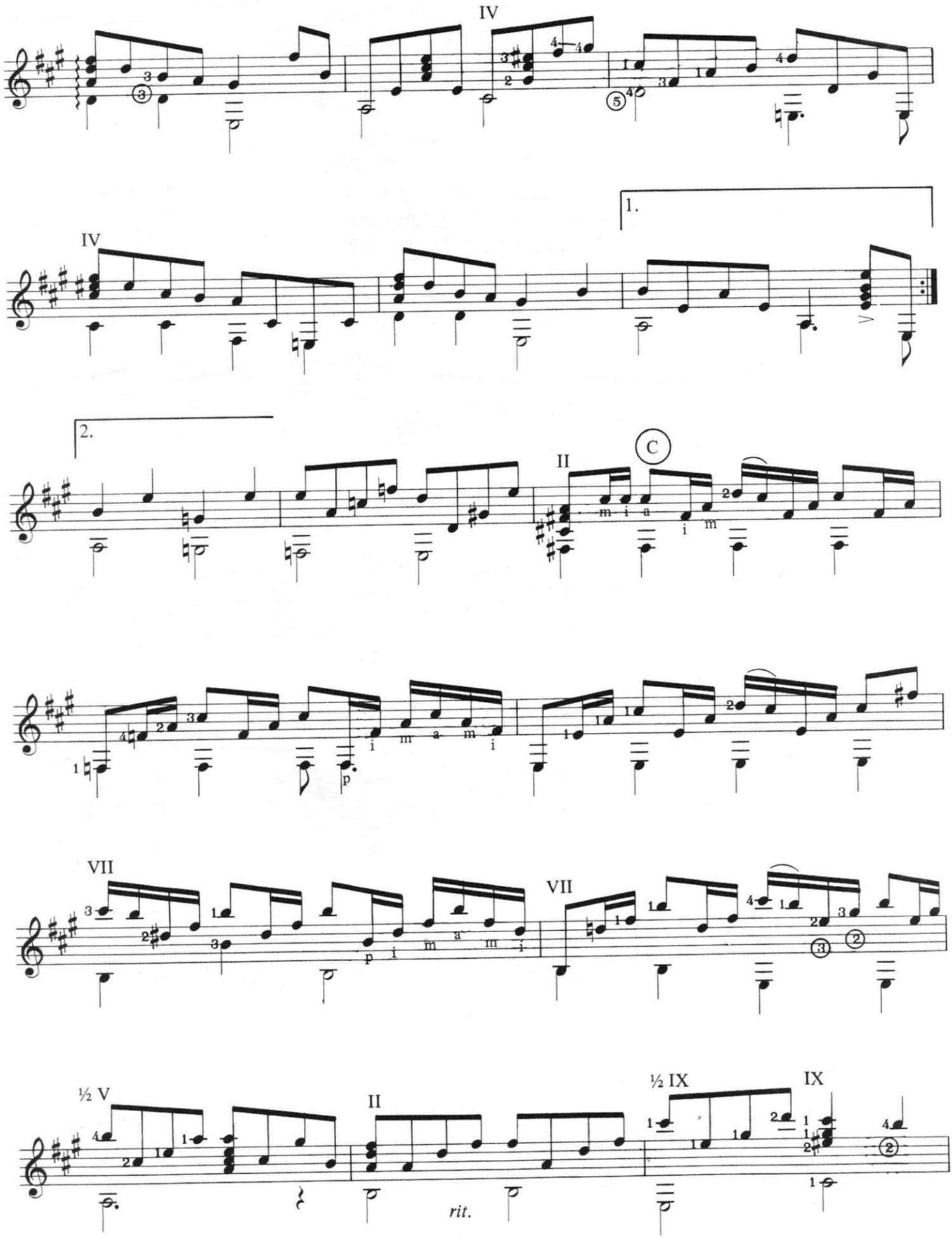
(A) Try not to tie your fingers in a knot at letter A, but rather build the chord from bass note up as you play.

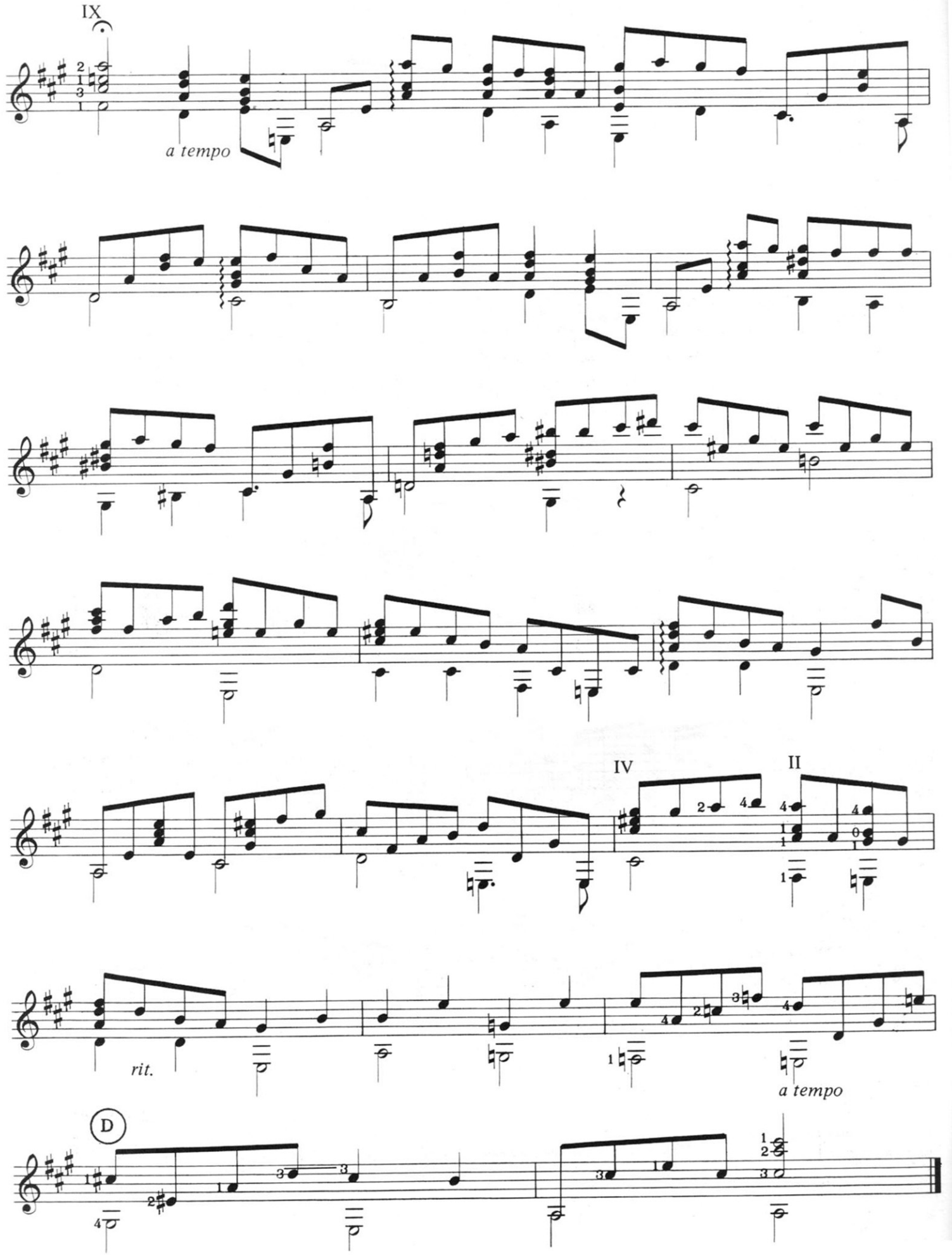
(B) Letter B may cause you some fingering problems, but a little extra work on these two measures should remedy the situation.

(C) At letter C, you are entering the bridge. Do not be intimidated by the sudden rash of 16th notes. Keep the same tempo and use the free stroke on the arpeggios so they will ring.

(D) Augmented chords have always been my favorites and Billy Joel was nice enough to suggest one at the end of this song. Watch out for the e sharp.




IV
IV
1.
2.
II
C
VII
VII
½ V
II
½ IX
IX
rit.


IX
a tempo
IV
II
rit.
a tempo
D

Recorded by JAMES TAYLOR and CARLY SIMON on ELEKTRA Records

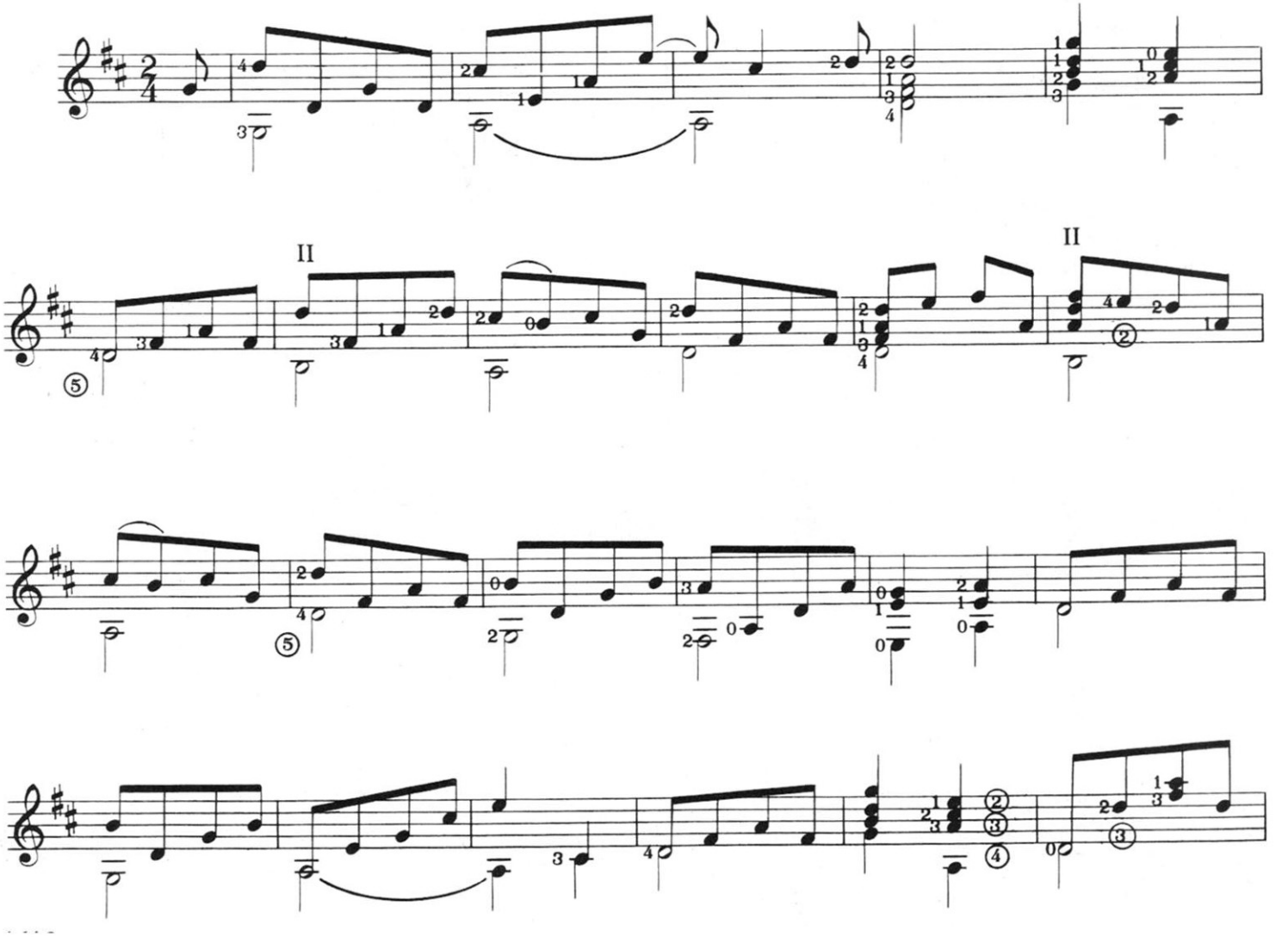
DEVOTED TO YOU

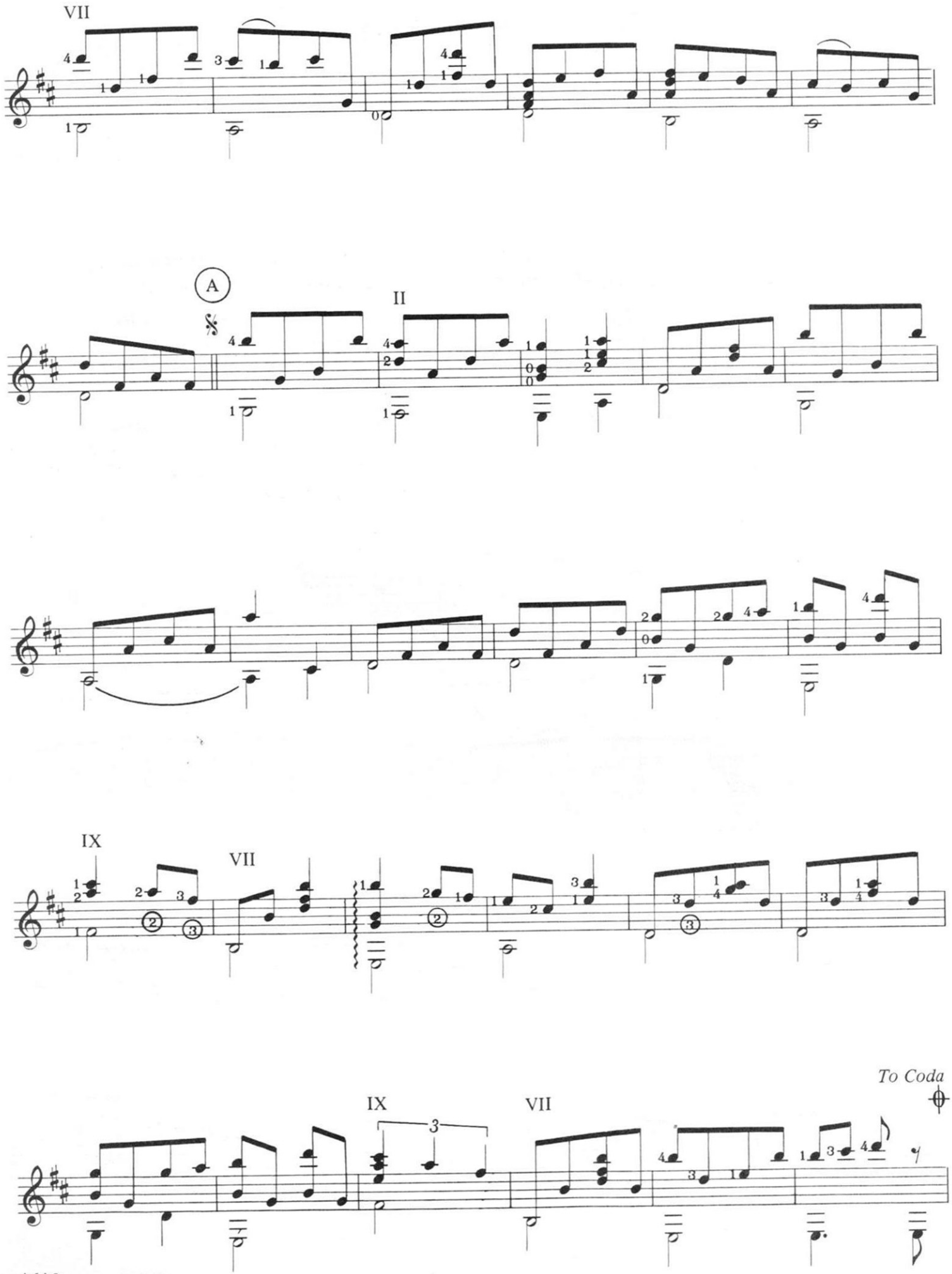
BOUDLEAUX BRYANT

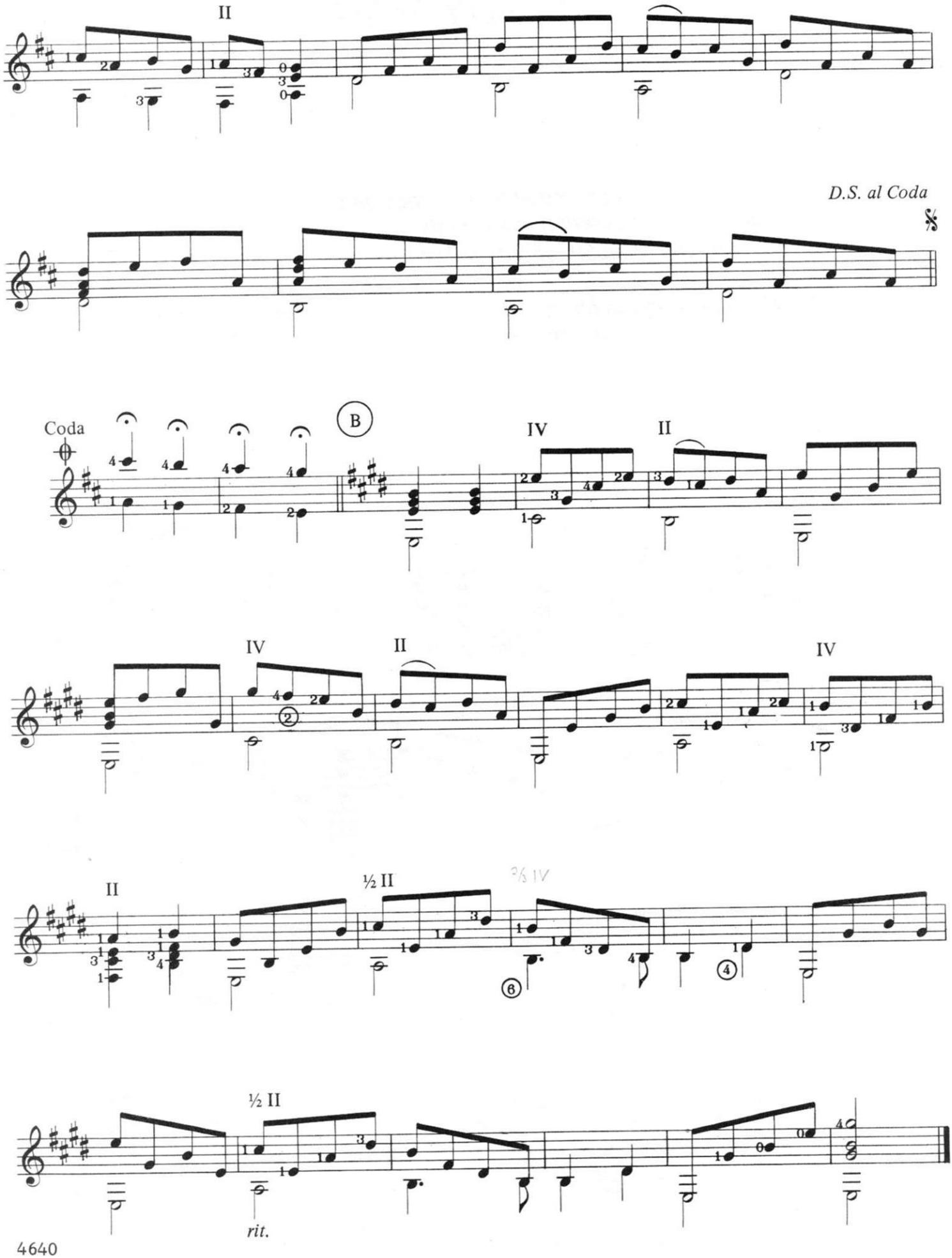
DEVOTED TO YOU is very much like a lullaby. The short four measure phrases which all have defined cadences also bring out this concept.

(A) Letter A represents a pretty good stretch in the left hand for the inexperienced player. I would suggest spending some time with it until you have mastered it. The rewards from this will come later.

(B) At letter B, there is a modulation to the key of E Major. Take your time on the fermatas in the previous measure to help set up this transition.




VII
A
II
IX
VII
IX
VII
3
To Coda


II
D.S. al Coda
Coda
B
IV
II
IV
II
IV
II
½ II
½ II
rit.

Recorded by JAMES TAYLOR on COLUMBIA Records

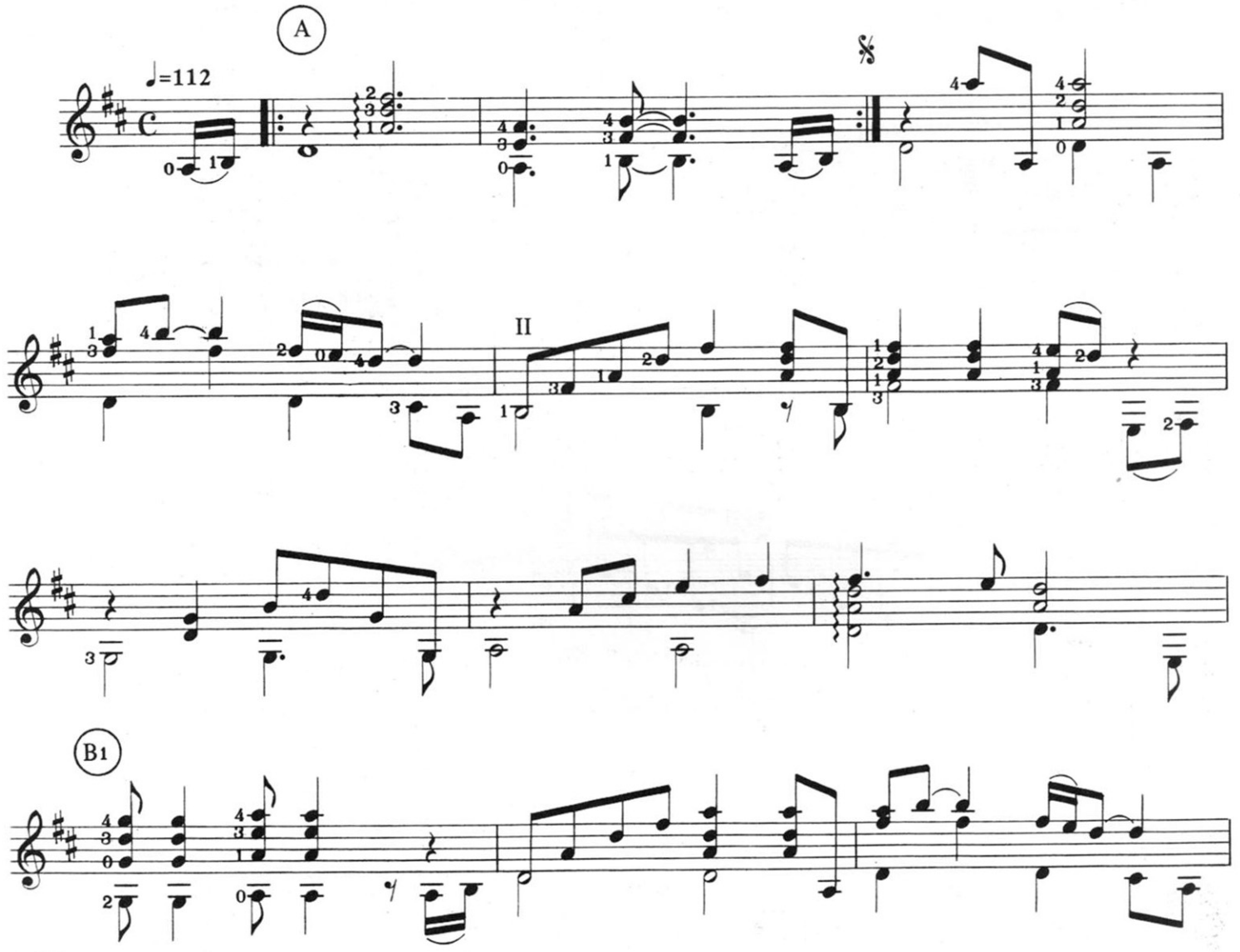
HANDY MAN

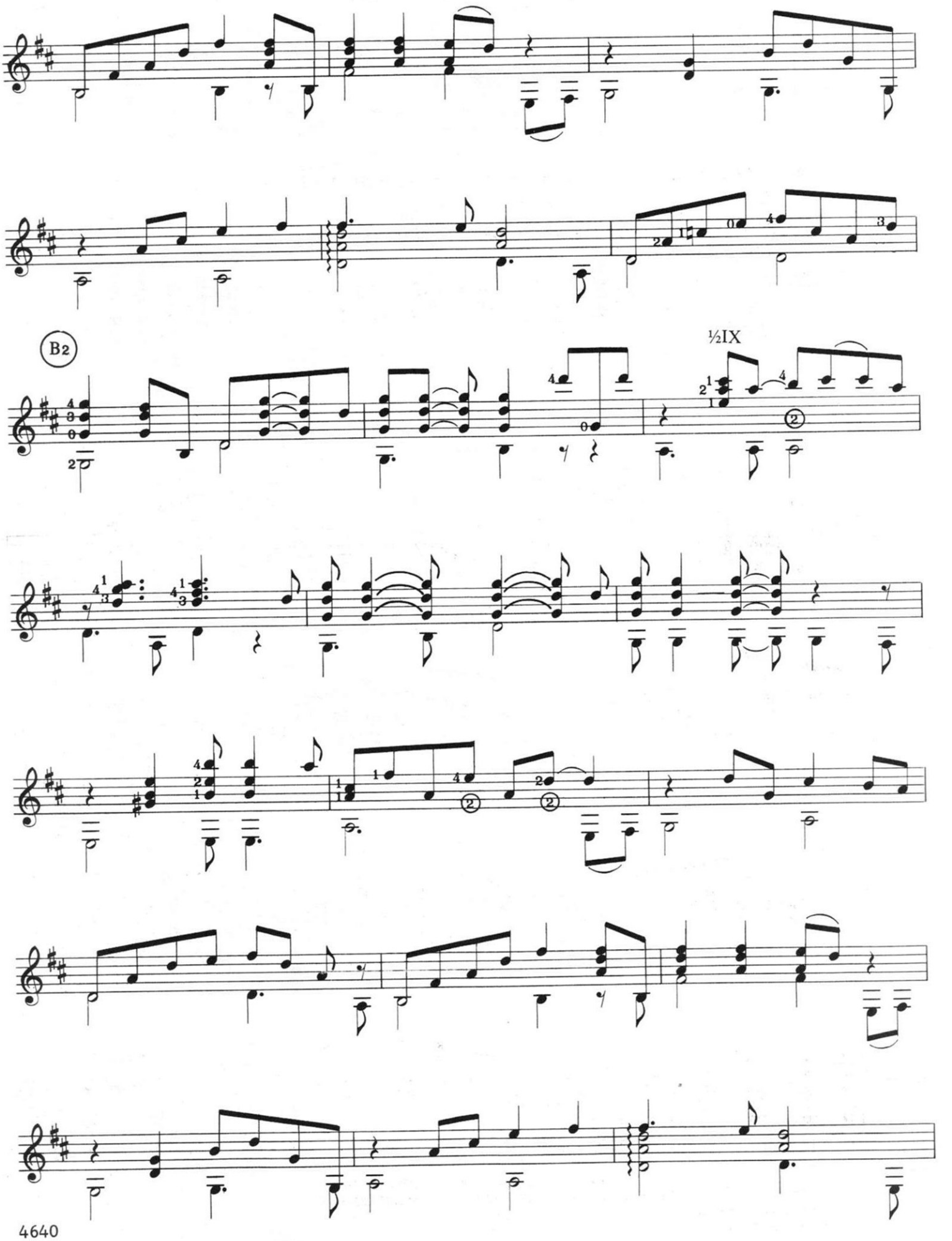
OTIS BLACKWELL
JIMMY JONES

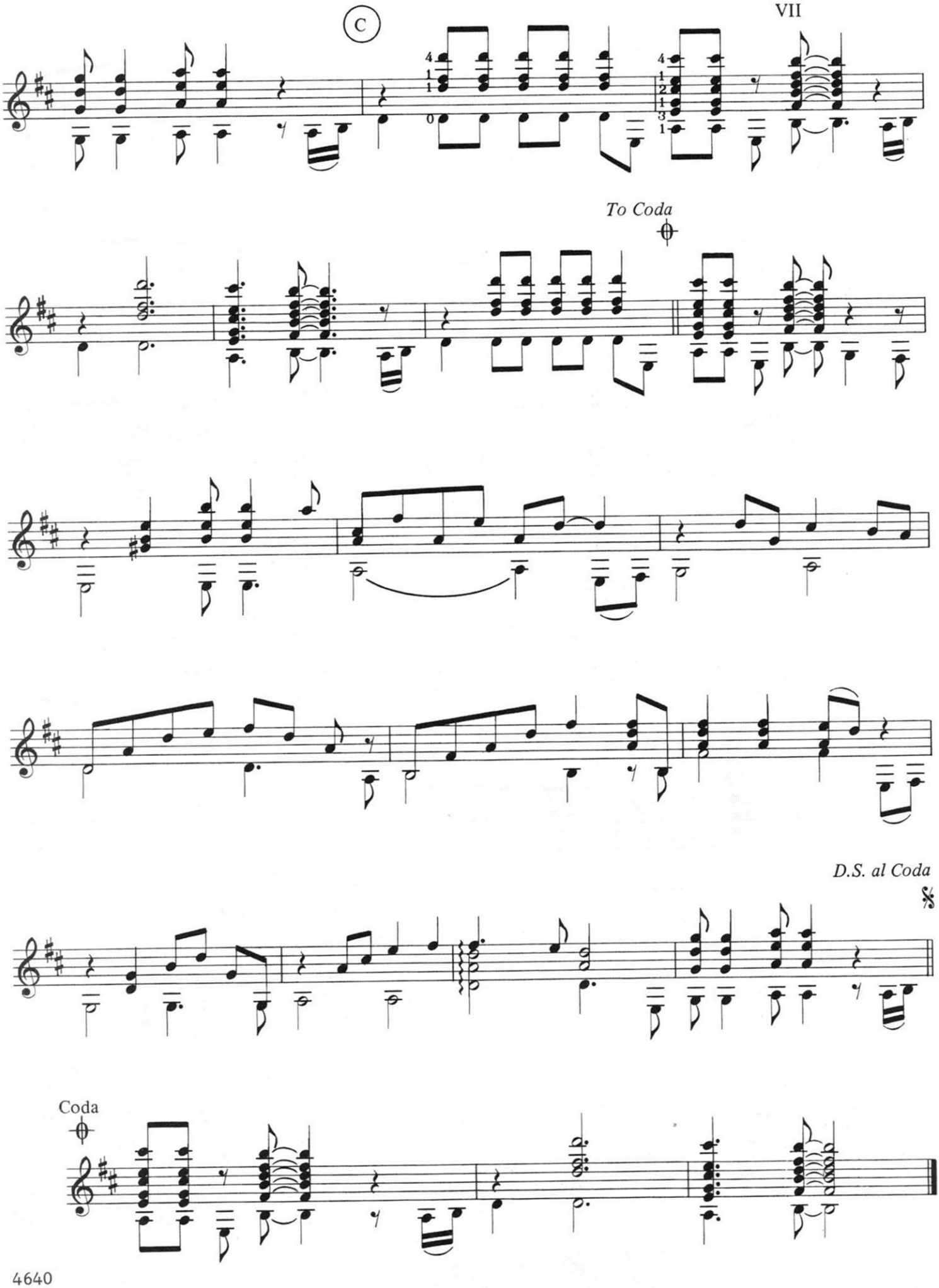
(A) The repeated measures at letter A may be played either two or four times (Player discretion is advised).

(B) Practice the open 5th chords at letters B1 and B2. Make sure they ring.

(C) When playing the chords at letter C, use your index finger like it was a pick in your right hand. Remember to keep this piece in strict rhythm.




B2
½IX


C
To Coda
D.S. al Coda
Coda

Recorded by MORRIS ALBERT on RCA Records and ANDY WILLIAMS on COLUMBIA Records

FEELINGS
(¿Dime?)

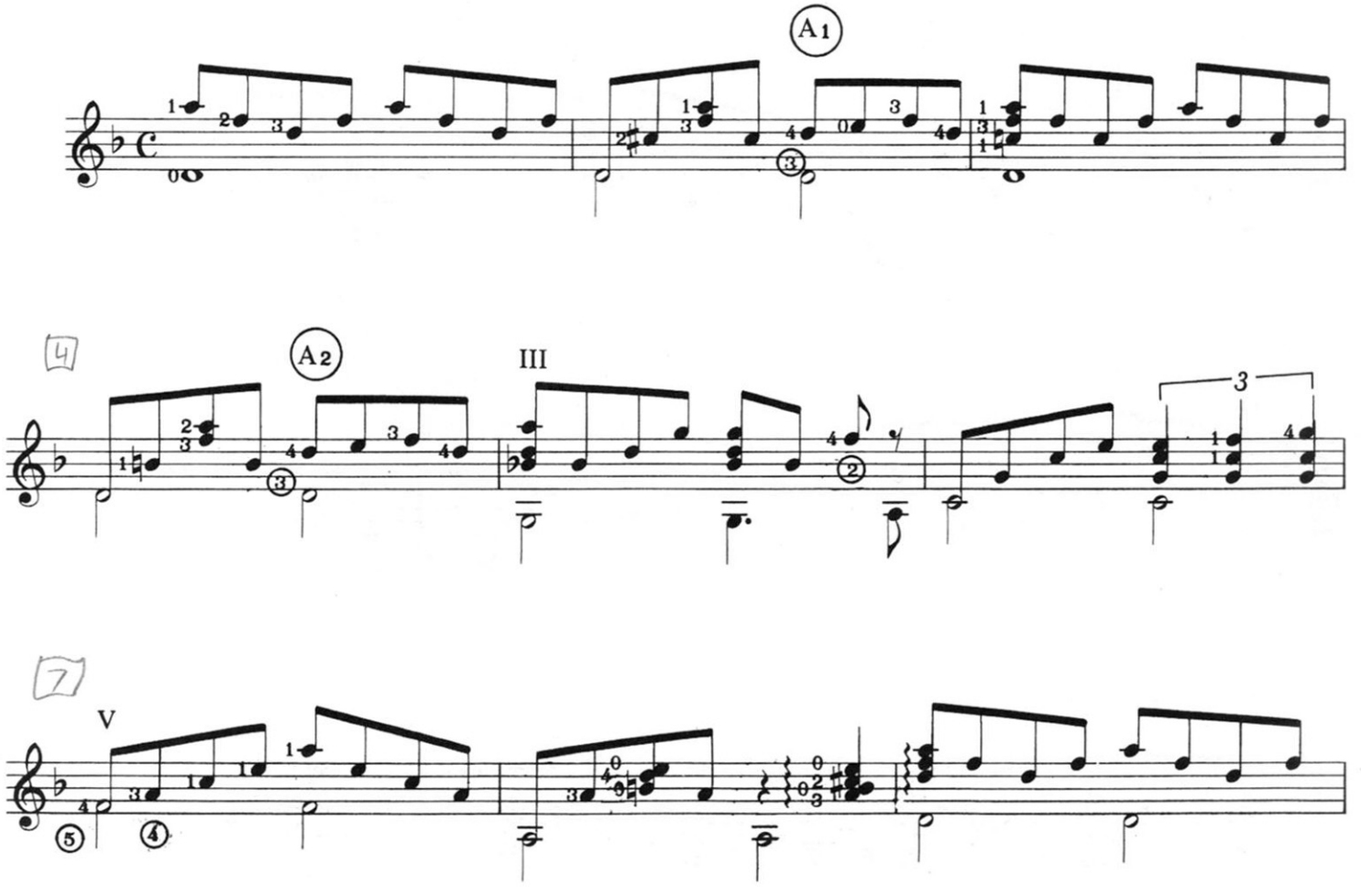
THOMAS FUNDORA

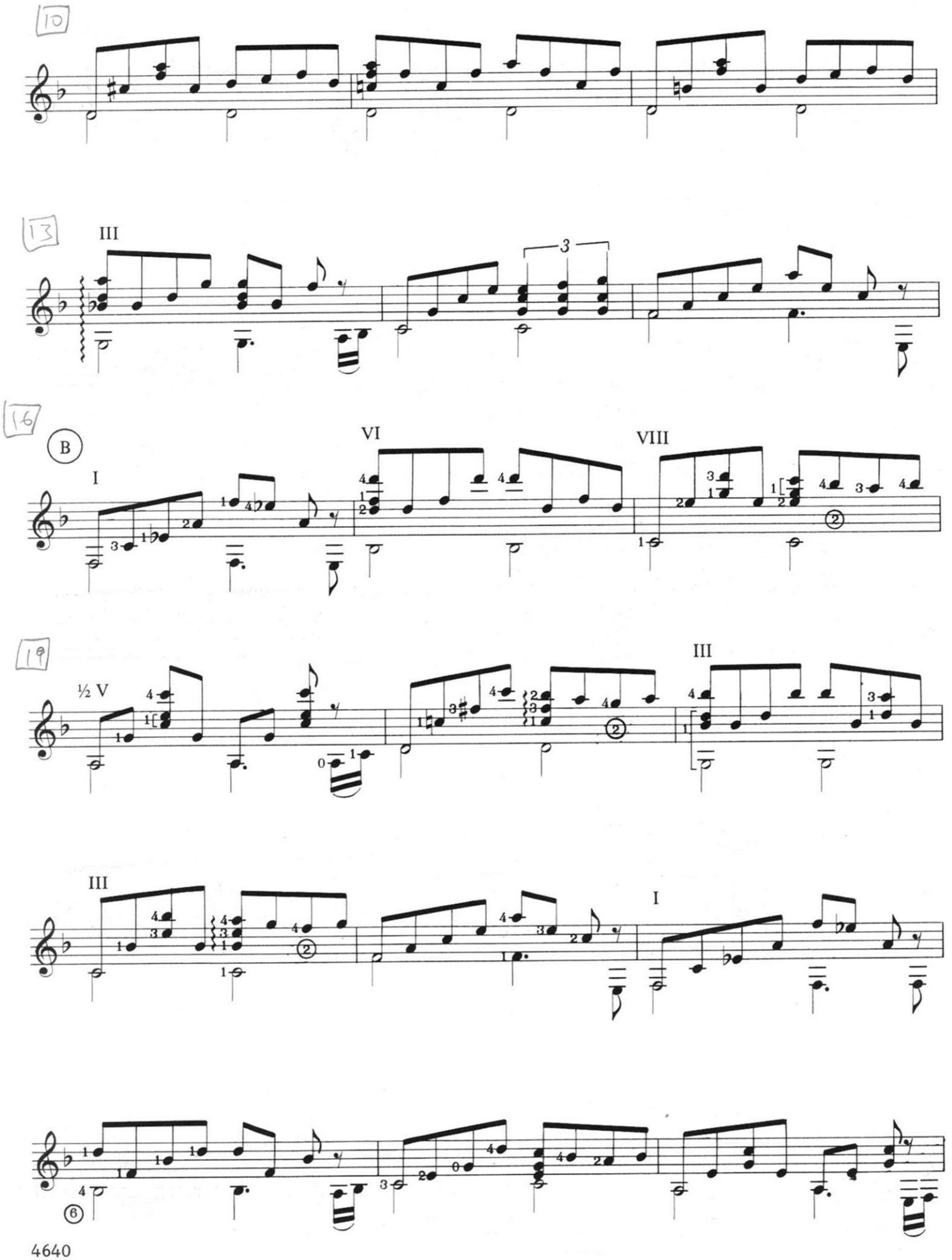
MORRIS ALBERT

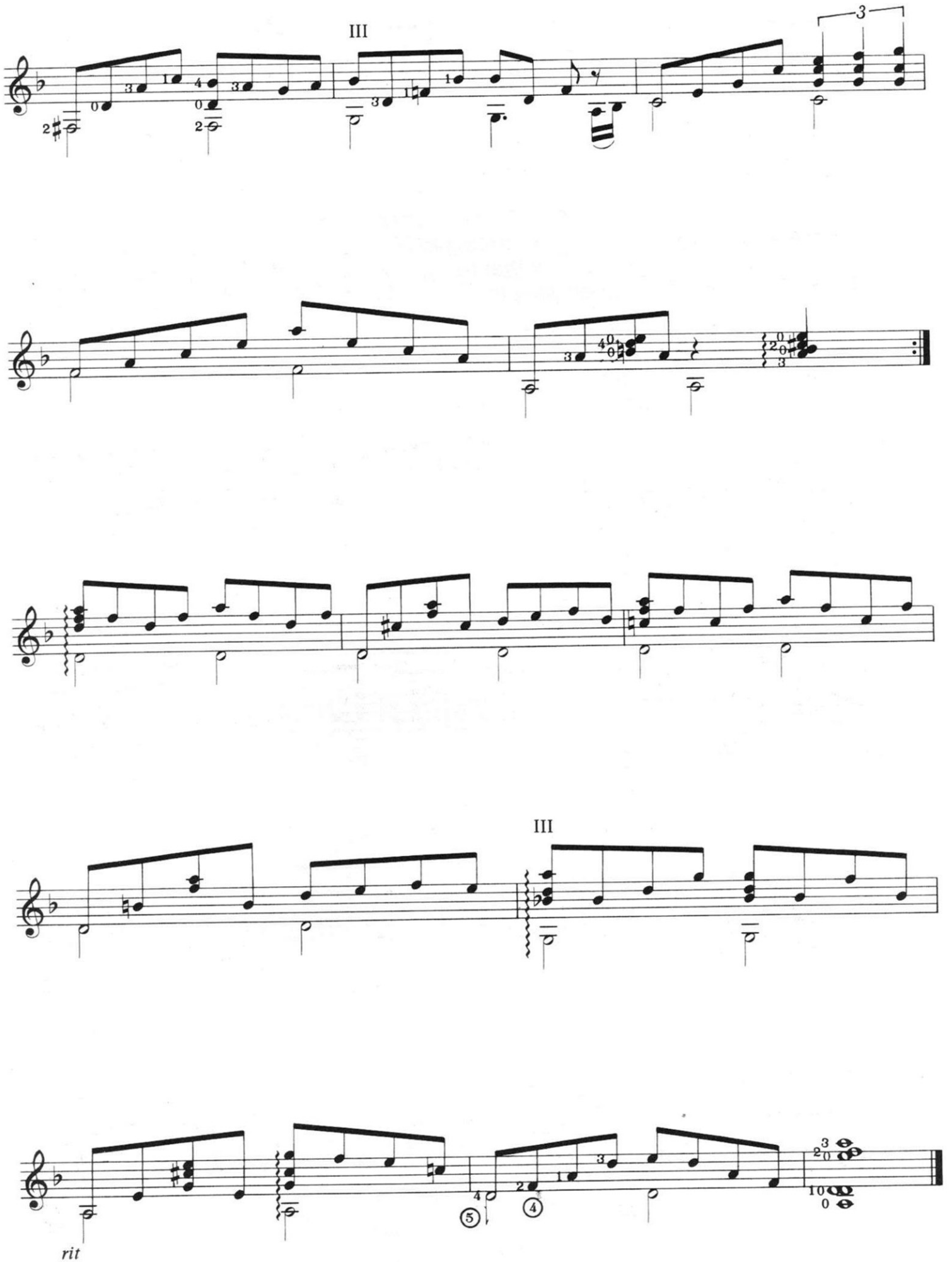
Take your time when playing *Feelings*. This song is well liked and has become a standard in the music industry.

(A) The melody line in this piece is intermixed with the arpeggio in the first few bars. At letters A1 and A2, it is particularly noticeable, so bring it out.

(B) At letter B and several measures afterwards, you will have to sustain several bar chords. Practice them until you have achieved a lot of sustain.




10
13
III
3
16
B
I
VI
VIII
19
½ V
III
III
I
6


III
3
III
rit

Recorded by JOHN DENVER on RCA Records

TODAY

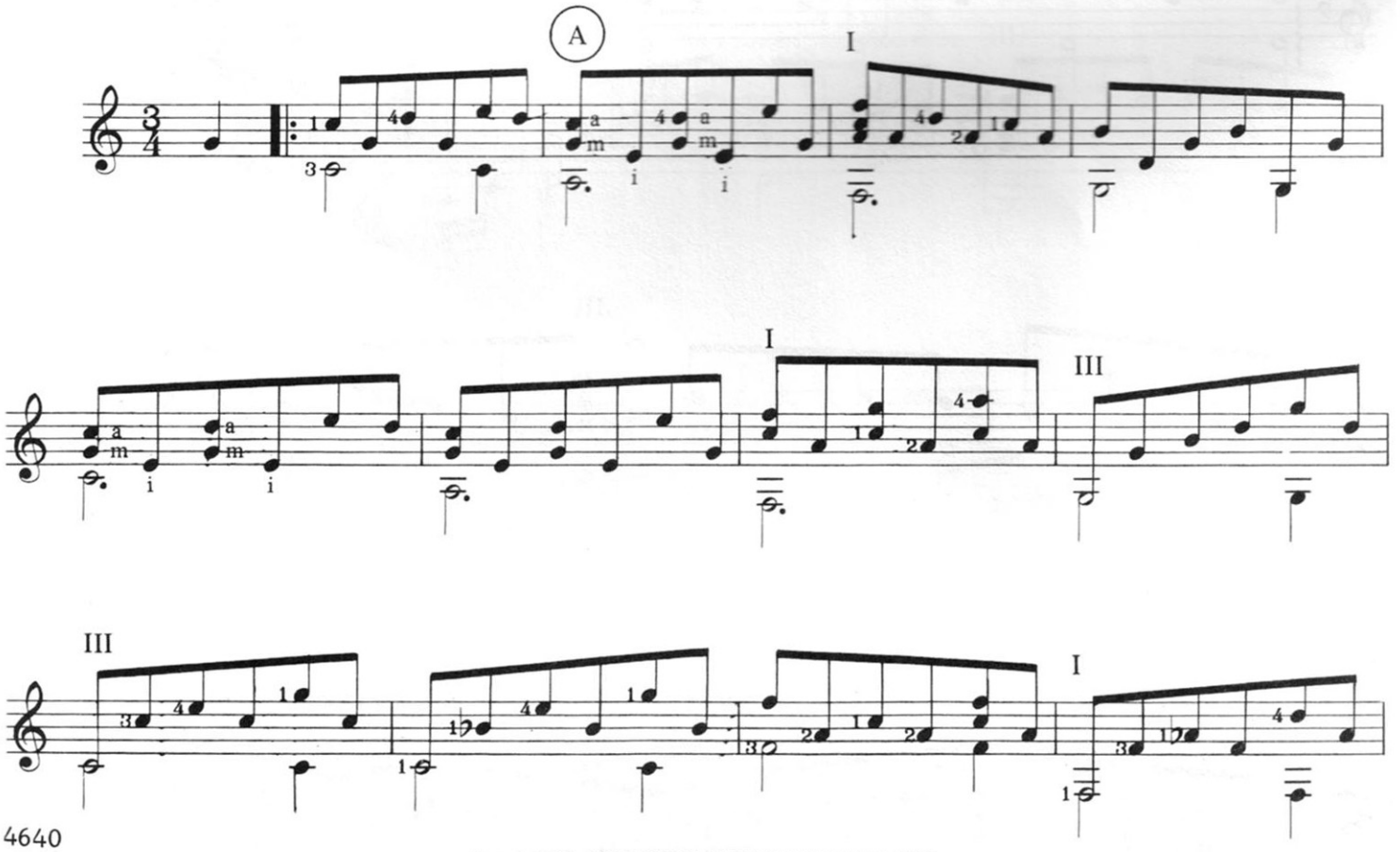
RANDY SPARKS

Through teaching guitar classes the past several years, I've noticed an overall student preference in wanting to learn this song. I'm hoping this arrangement will help satisfy that need, but in case I have failed you, there is at least an opportunity to give your voice a rest.

(A) Learn to play the two top notes in the melody with the same technical strength in the right hand. (M, A)

(B) The left hand fingering at letter B may be different than what you're used to, but it works out well in this case.

(C) There is a modulation (key change) at letter C. It offers the listener a change and also gives you an opportunity to learn and play the piece in a different key.



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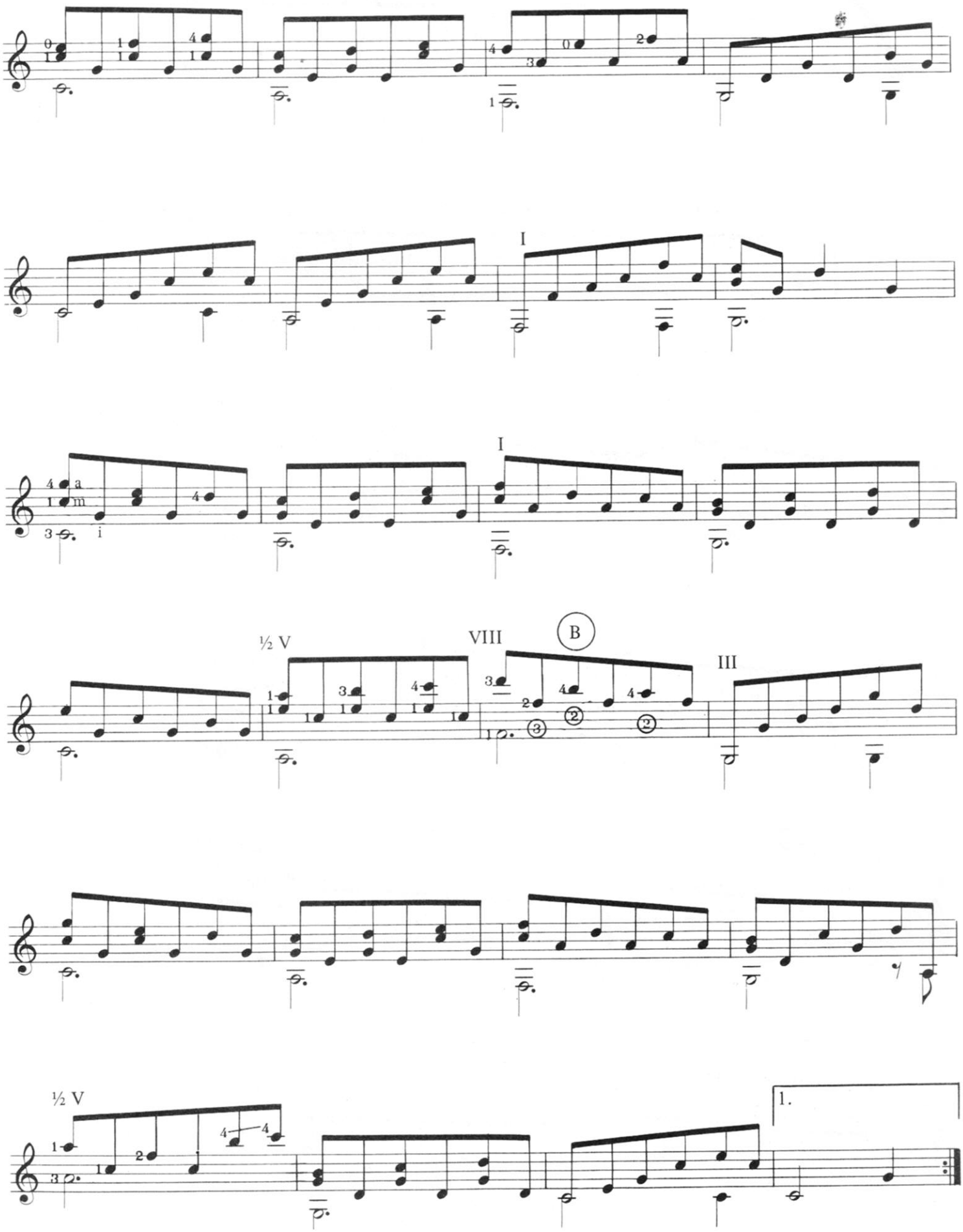
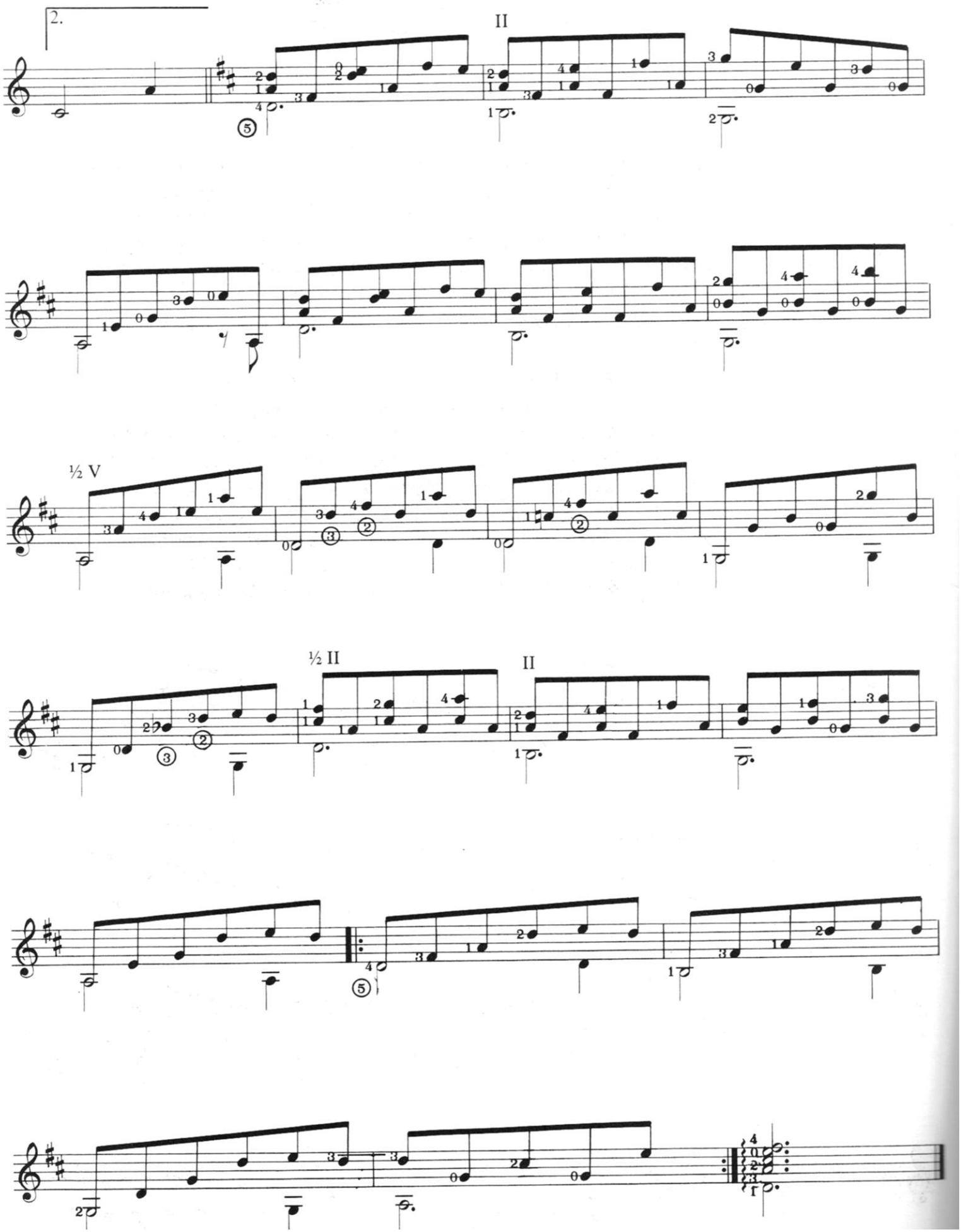

I
I
½ V
VIII
B
III
½ V
1.


2.
II
½ V
½ II
II

(Lady Of Guantanamo)

Spanish Words by
JOSE MARTI

English Adaptation by
BERNARD GASSO

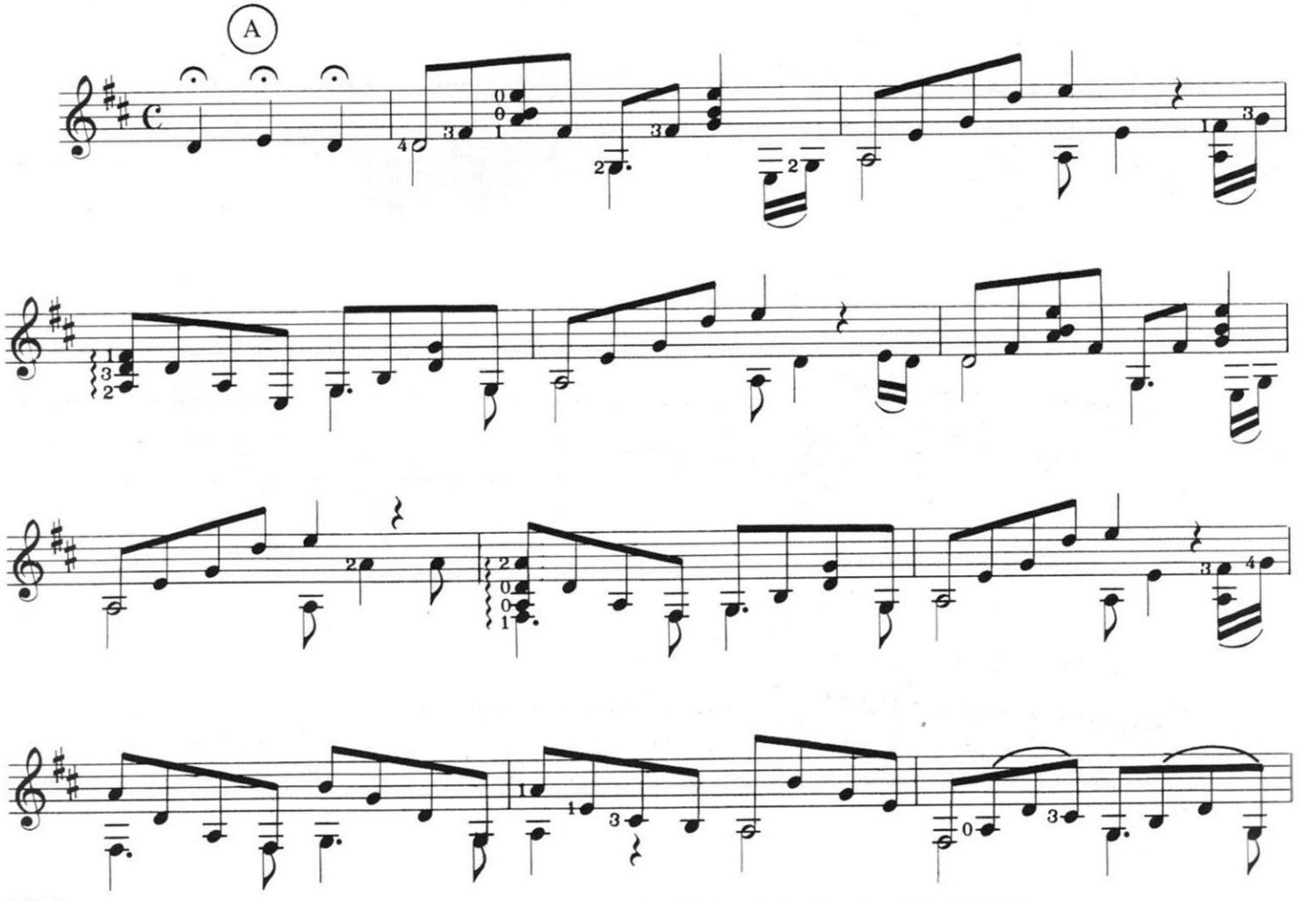
GUANTANAMERA is probably one of the most sophisticated three chord songs ever written. This piece has given me the opportunity to use the Spanish rasqueado that is so intrinsic to the guitar and also a chance to write some rapid right hand arpeggios. Both of these techniques should help you in gaining more understanding of this music and who knows, you might just become friends with your guitar along the way.

(A) I wrote the melody in the bass for the first verse, so thumb do your stuff.

(B) Here's the right hand arpeggio I mentioned earlier.

(C) Letter C is a place to watch out for. Let the 4th string ring on the D chord during the first two beats. A nice stretch with the little finger on the G chord will add to the song also.

(D) Letter D is played entirely with the index finger in the right hand. Practice this until you can hit only those notes indicated. Too much bass will make you sound out of control, so please just the right touch. I have also indicated the up and down strokes in the right hand that I personally play.



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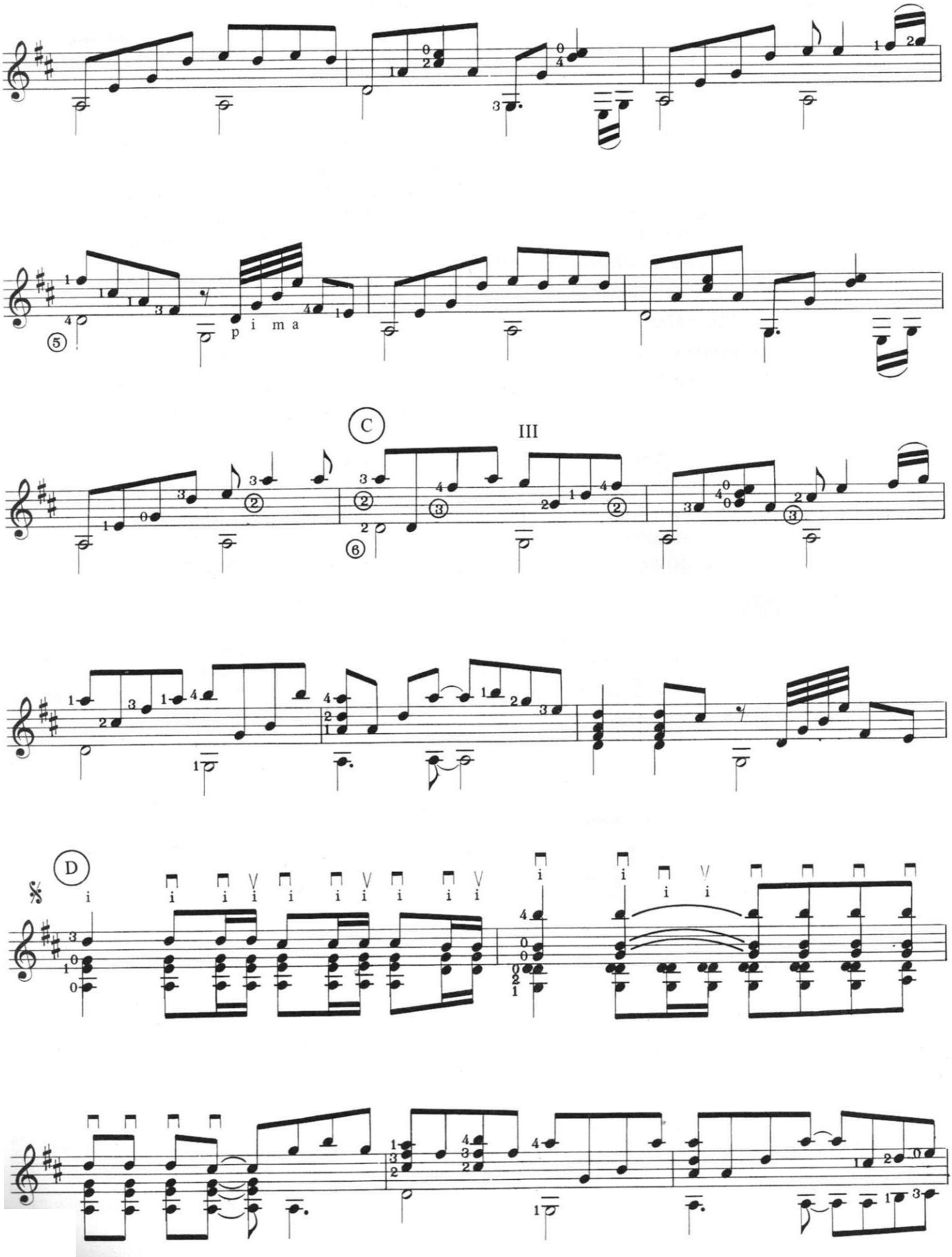
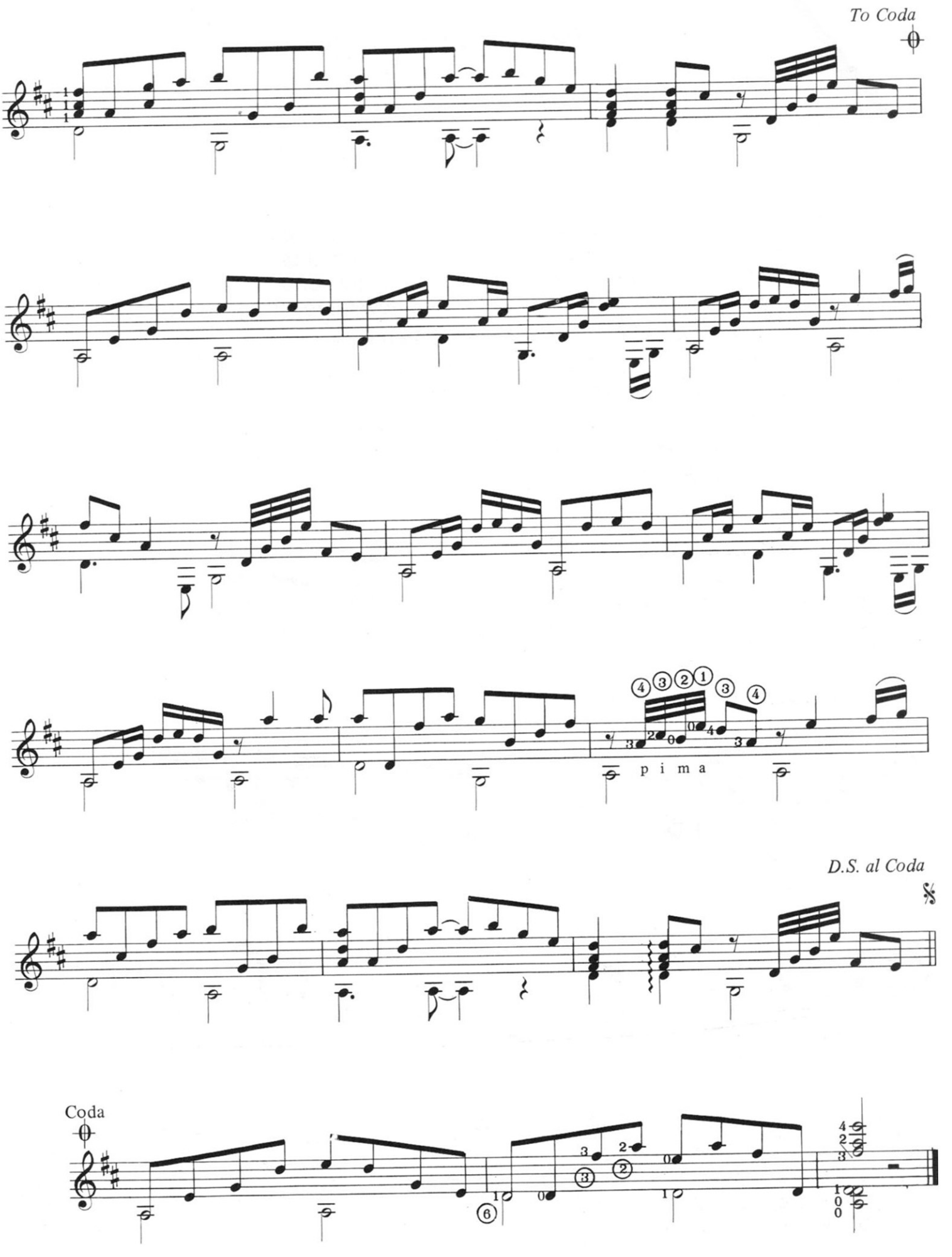

p i ma
C
III
D


To Coda
p i m a
D.S. al Coda
Coda

Recorded by JAMES TAYLOR on WARNER BROS. Records

FIRE AND RAIN

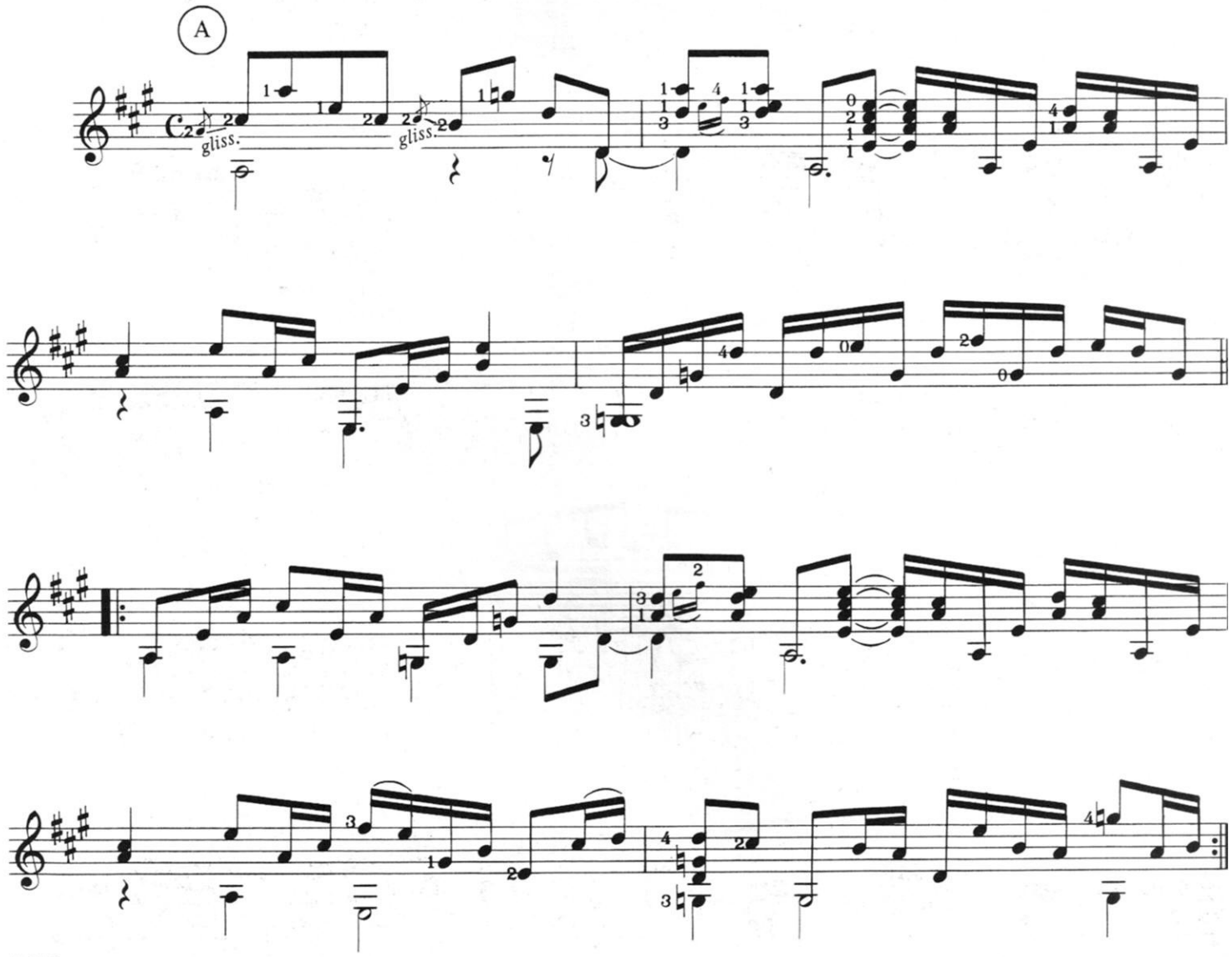
Words and Music by
JAMES TAYLOR

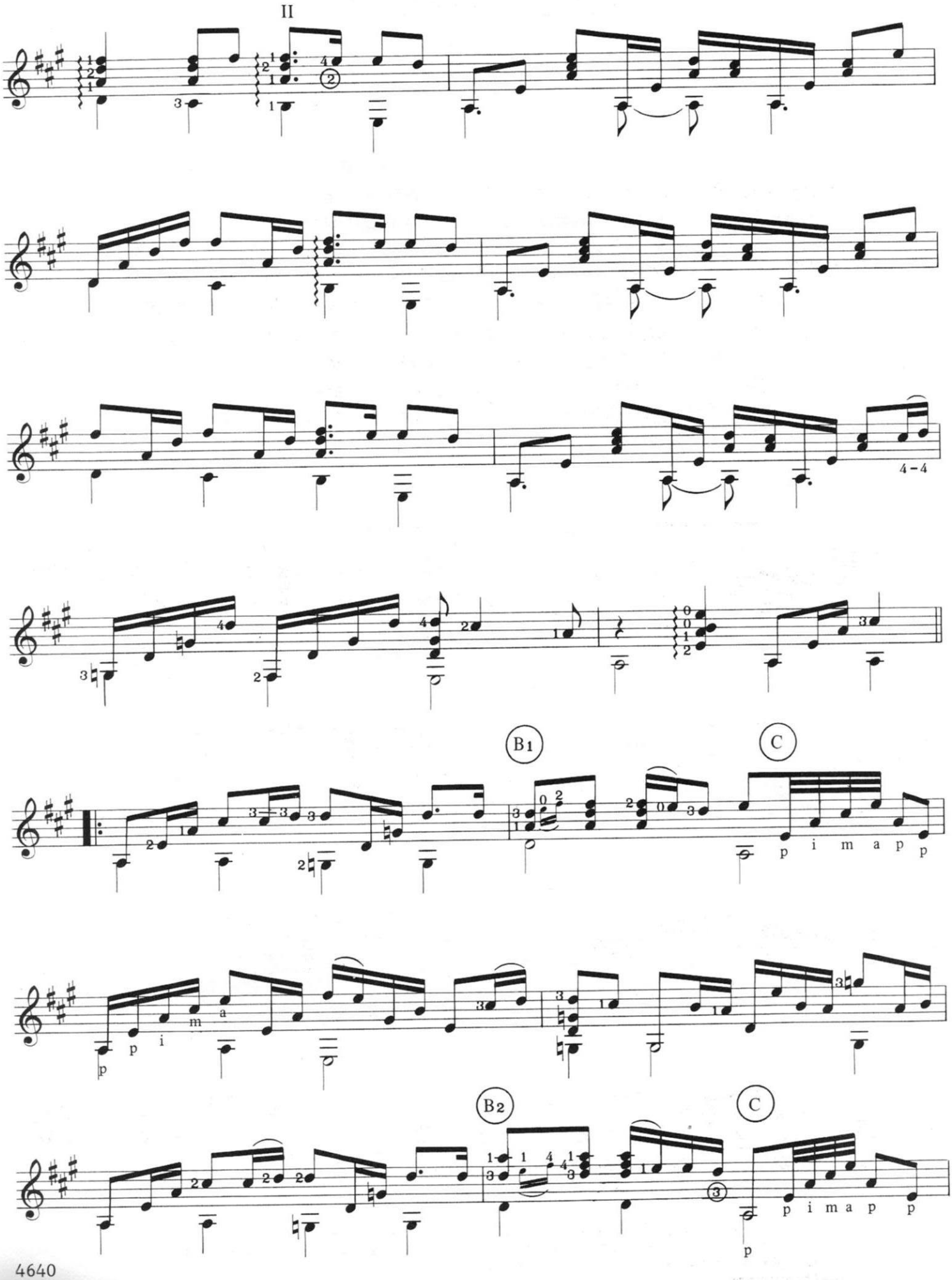
FIRE AND RAIN is probably one of the most requested pieces from the James Taylor repertoire. I made several arrangements of this song before coming up with one that I liked. Using this arrangement, I feel the song will come out sounding natural and flow more evenly on the guitar.

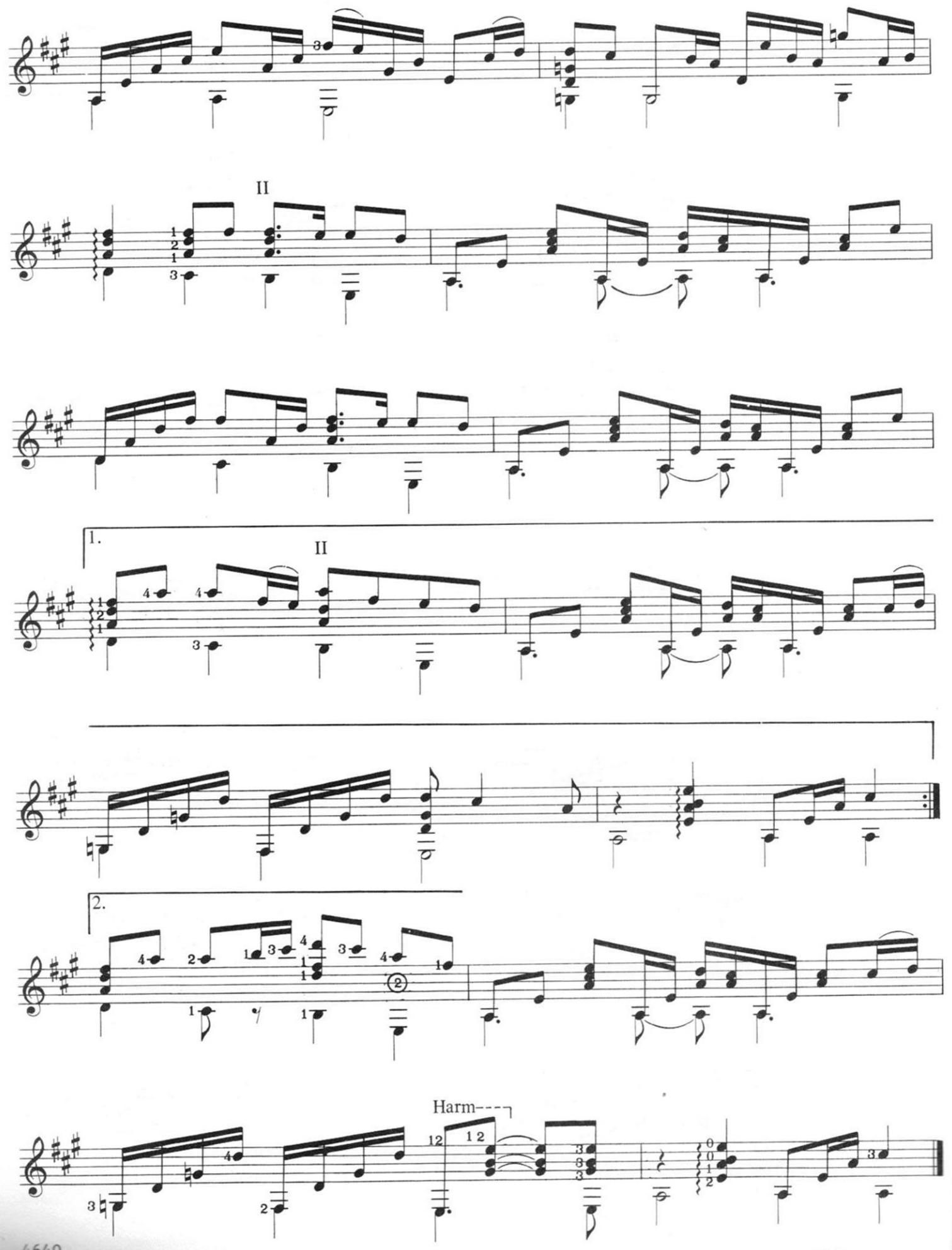
(A) At letter A, play the gliss(es) on the beat with the bass note(s).

(B) At B1 and B2 make sure you get a sharp hammering effect with the chord. Practice them in rhythm all the time.

(C) Letter C represents a right hand indication for a rapid arpeggio. Learning this will make your guitar playing look impressive.




II
4-4
B1
C
p i m a p p
B2
C
p i m a p p


II
II
1.
2.
Harm----

Recorded by JOHN DENVER on WINDSONG Records

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

JOHN DENVER
MIKE TAYLOR

The key to success in ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH will be your ability to stay with the 16th note. I would suggest stressing rhythm first, then I'm sure you will find the melody to be ever present through the running arpeggios.

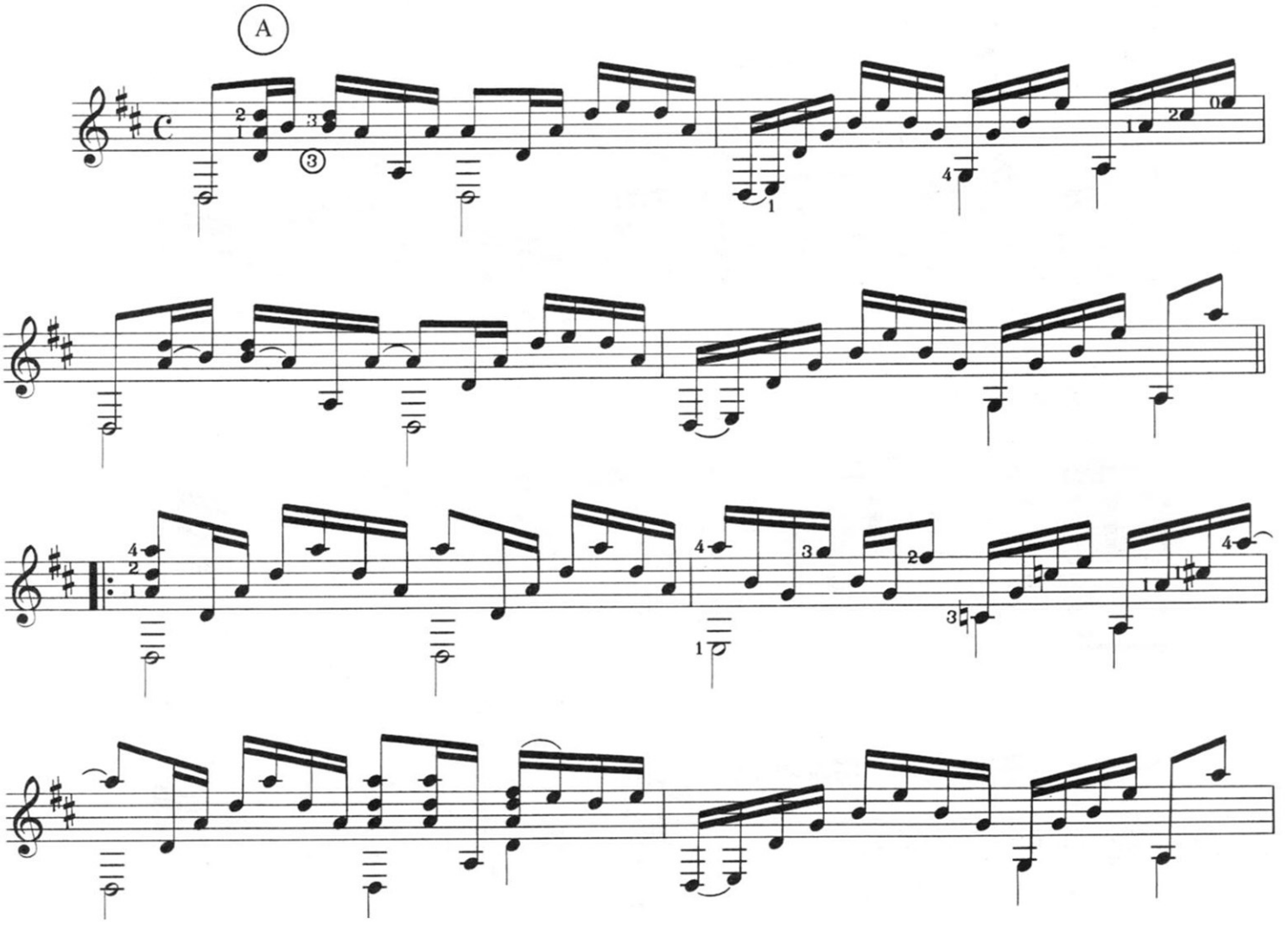
The original key is E major, so try using a capo on the second fret. I think you will find E major to be a brighter key, but once again you must decide.

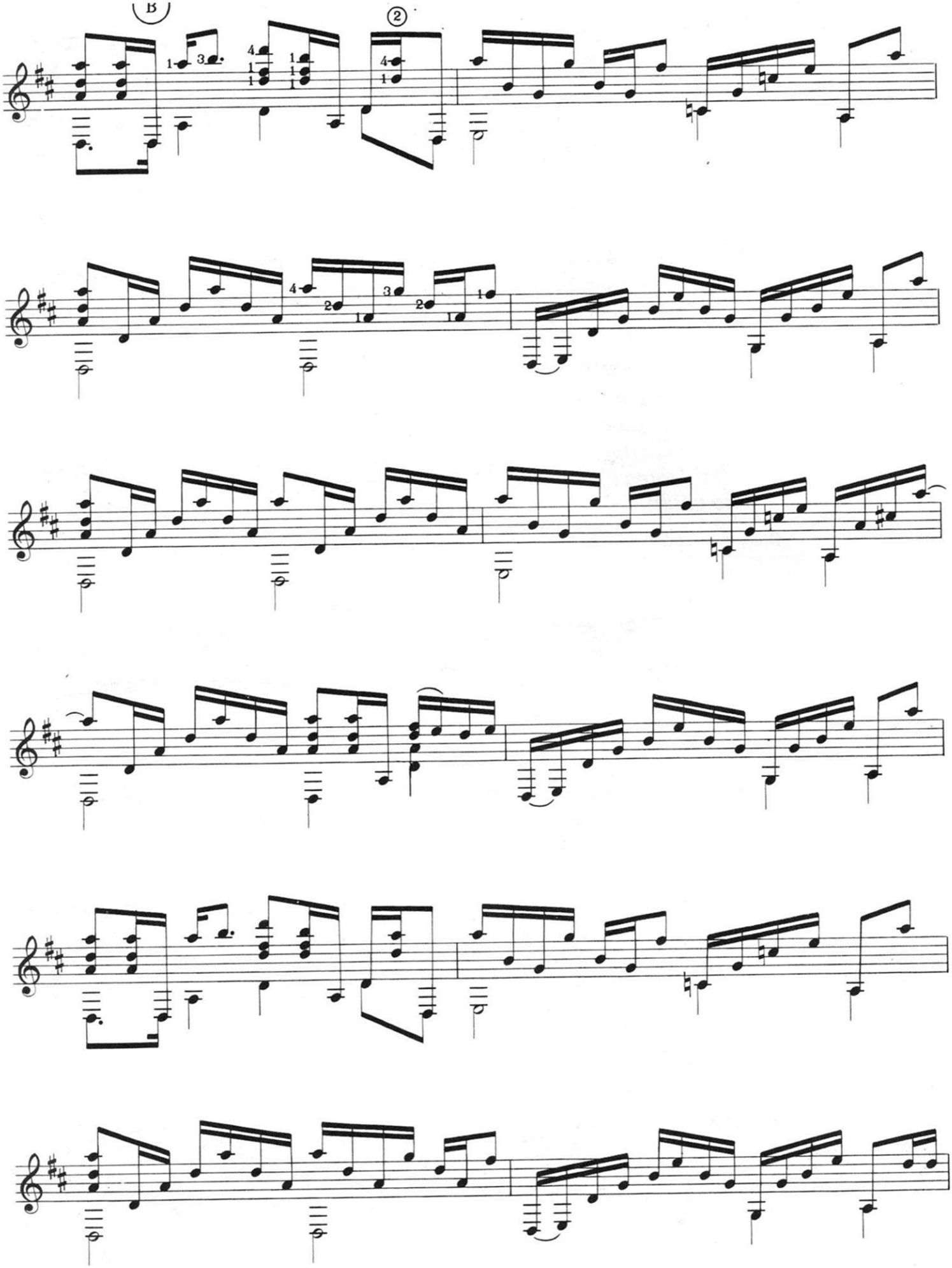
(A) Keep the slurs crisp at letter A. Practice them in rhythm.

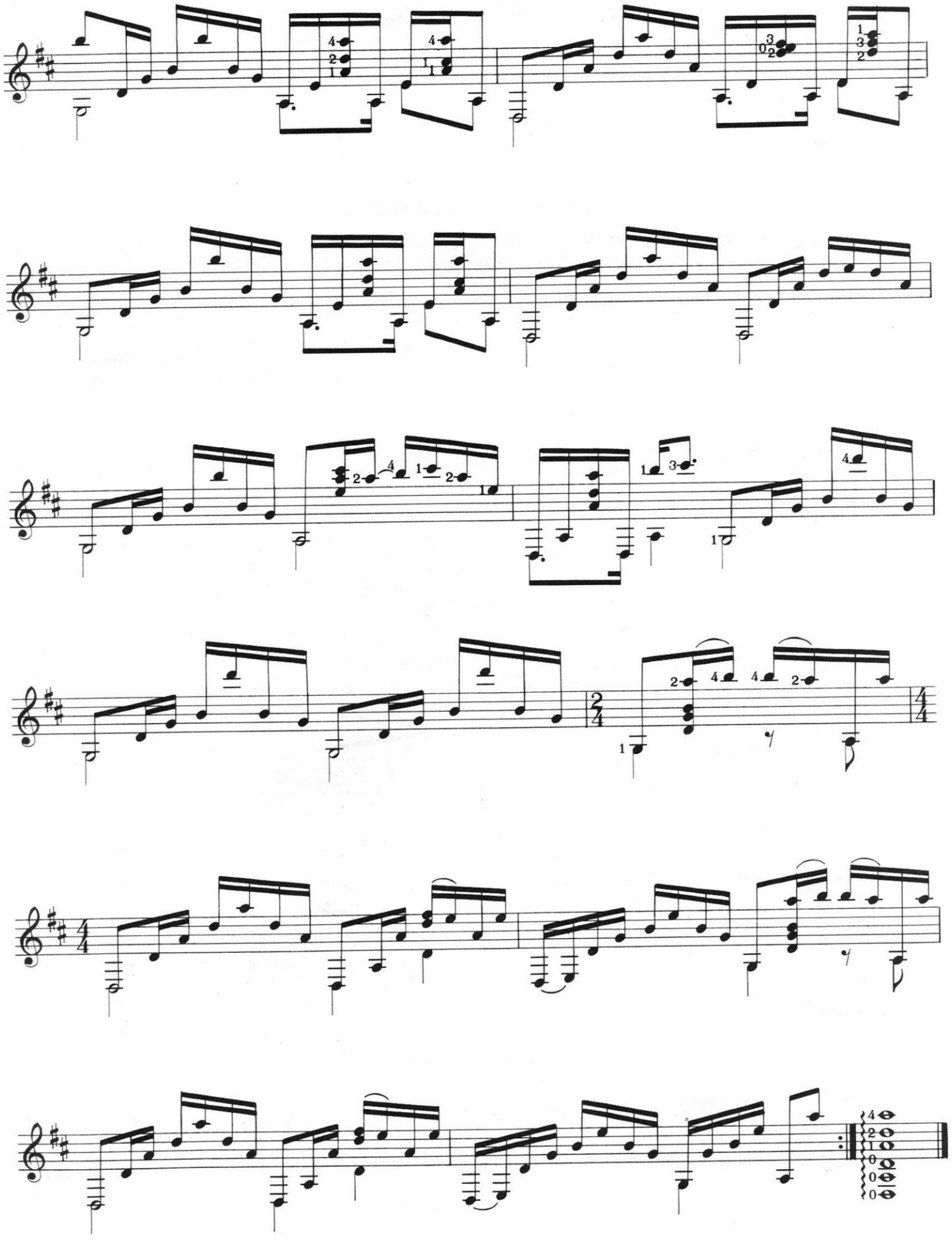
(B) Use the bass notes at letter B to your advantage. Let them ring as you change positions for good sustain.

(C) Don't let the meter change at letter C bother you. Keep the 16th notes constant and play right through it. But, don't forget to count.

⑥ - D, capo on 2nd fret







Recorded by BARBRA STREISAND on COLUMBIA Records

SONGBIRD

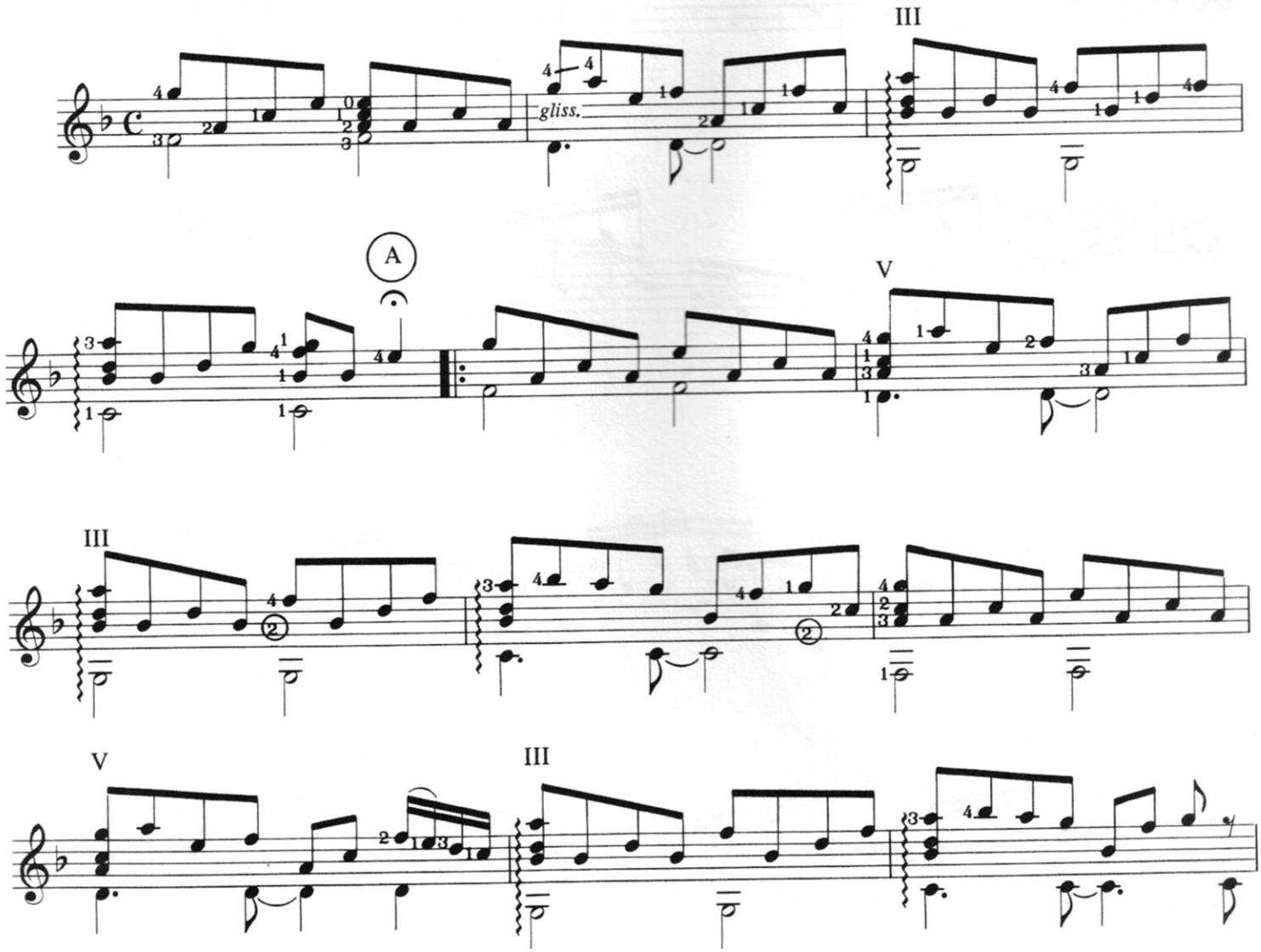
DAVID WOLFERT
STEVE NELSON

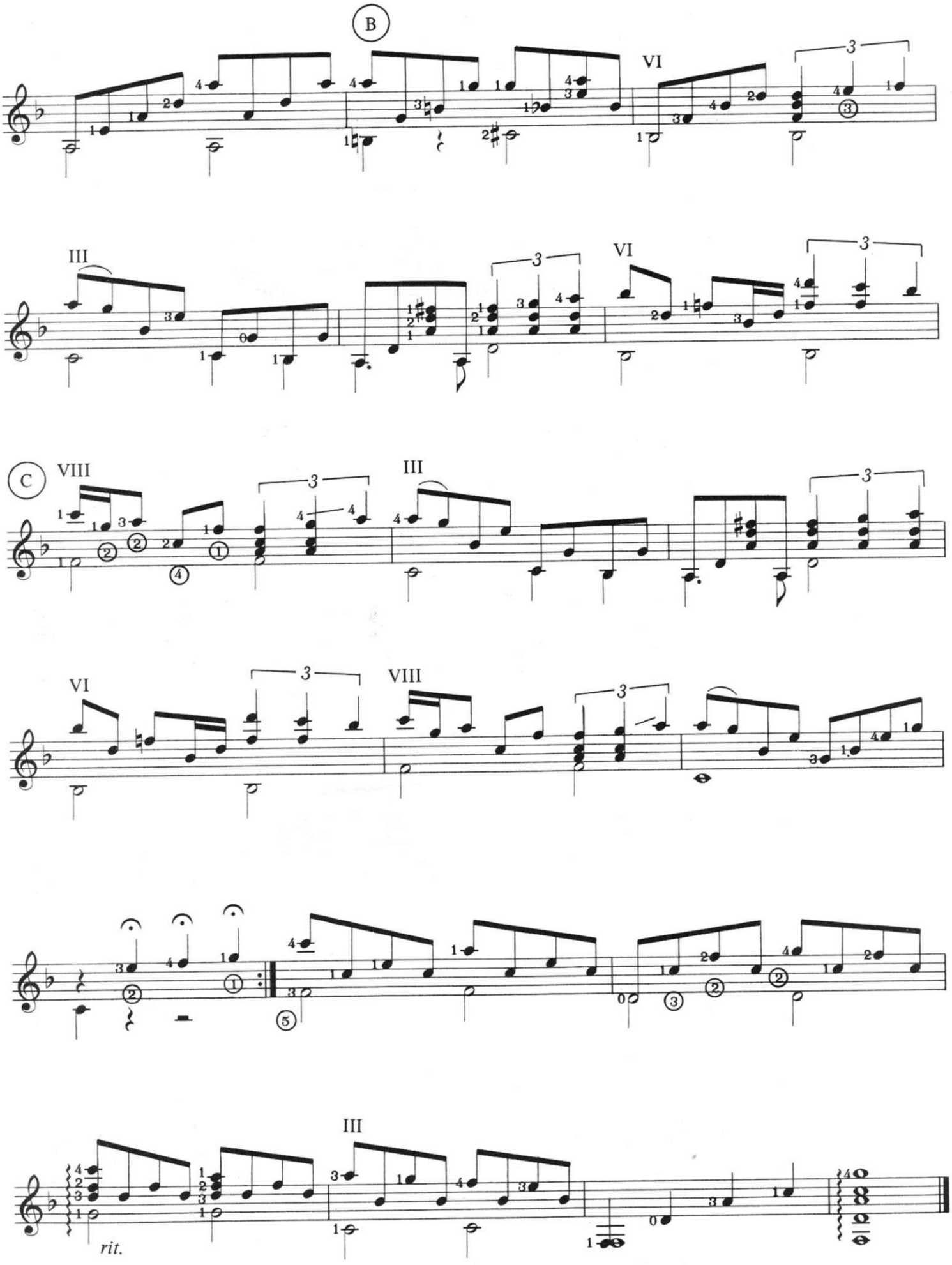
In this arrangement I have included a short four bar introduction.

(A) At letter A, please make note of the fermata. I'm leaving any sort of ritard or pause up to you.

(B) There is quite a bit of chromaticism going on at letter B, so make sure you read carefully.

(C) Practice the F chord at letter C until you can make a smooth transition. Also watch for the quick position shift on the up portion of the second beat in this measure.




B
VI
III
VI
C
VIII
III
VI
VIII
III
rit.

Recorded by THE CAPTAIN & TENNILLE on CASABLANCA Records

DO THAT TO ME ONE MORE TIME

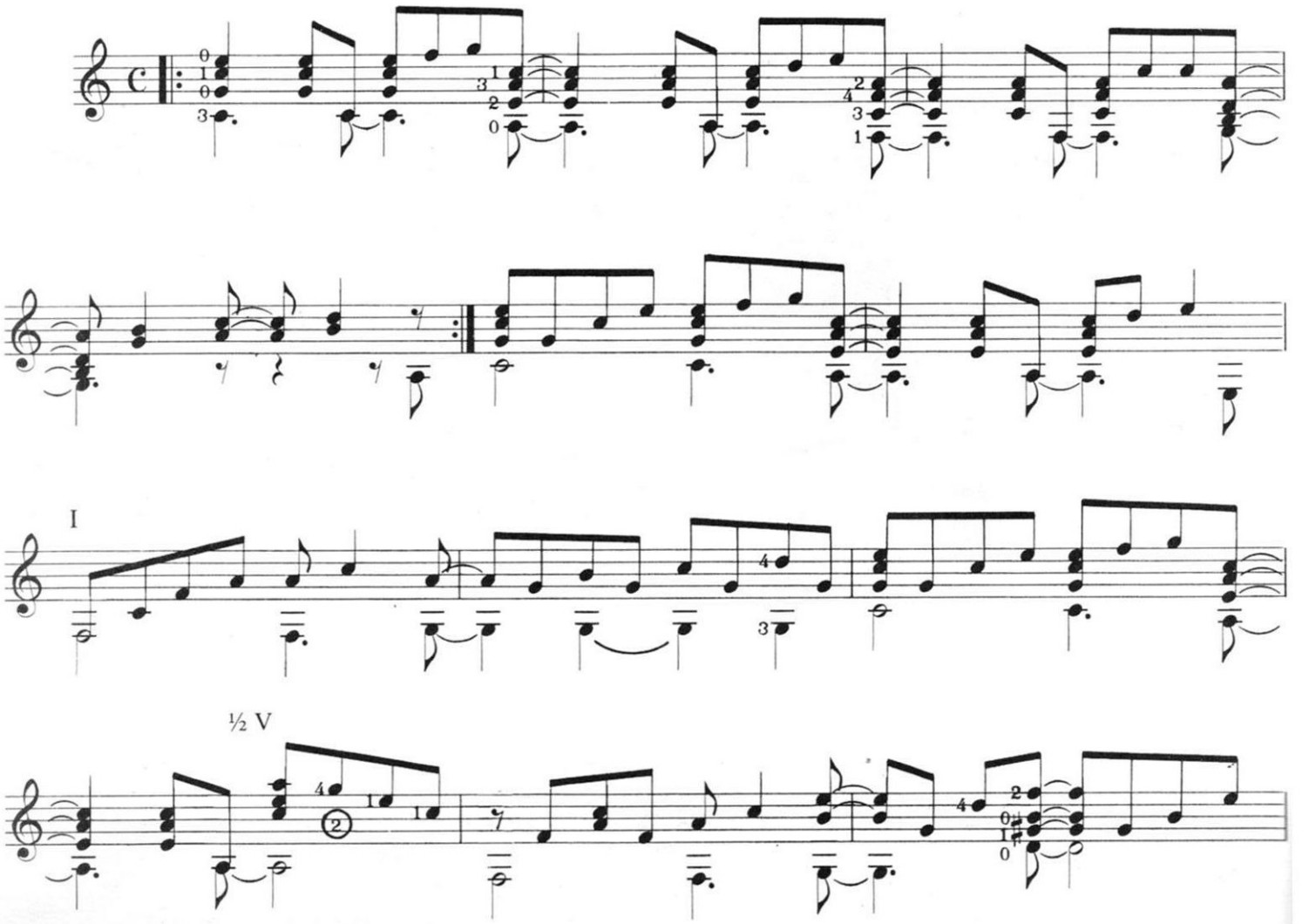
TONI TENNILLE

DO IT TO ME ONE MORE TIME offers you a chance to brush up on your rhythms. When arranging this piece, I had no idea there would be so many up beats to contend with, but upon its completion I felt it was good material pedagogically speaking.

(A) The dominant ninth chord at letter A utilizes a jazz fingering. If you have one of your own that fits or works better—feel free.

(B) You are now in the key of G. Watch for the F sharps and pay close attention to the left hand fingerings in this measure.

(C) This is the last key change (D). At this point you have just one verse to go.



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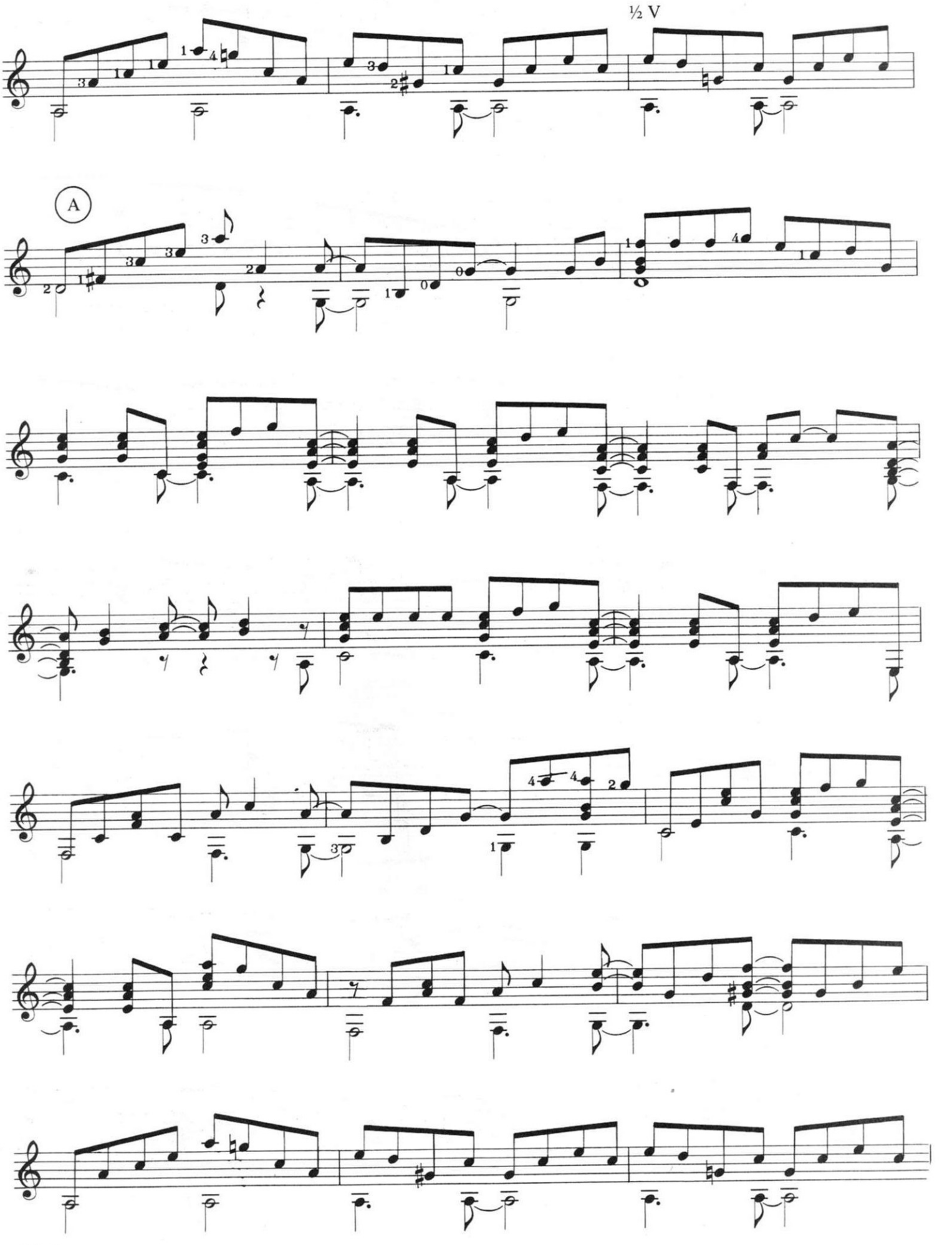
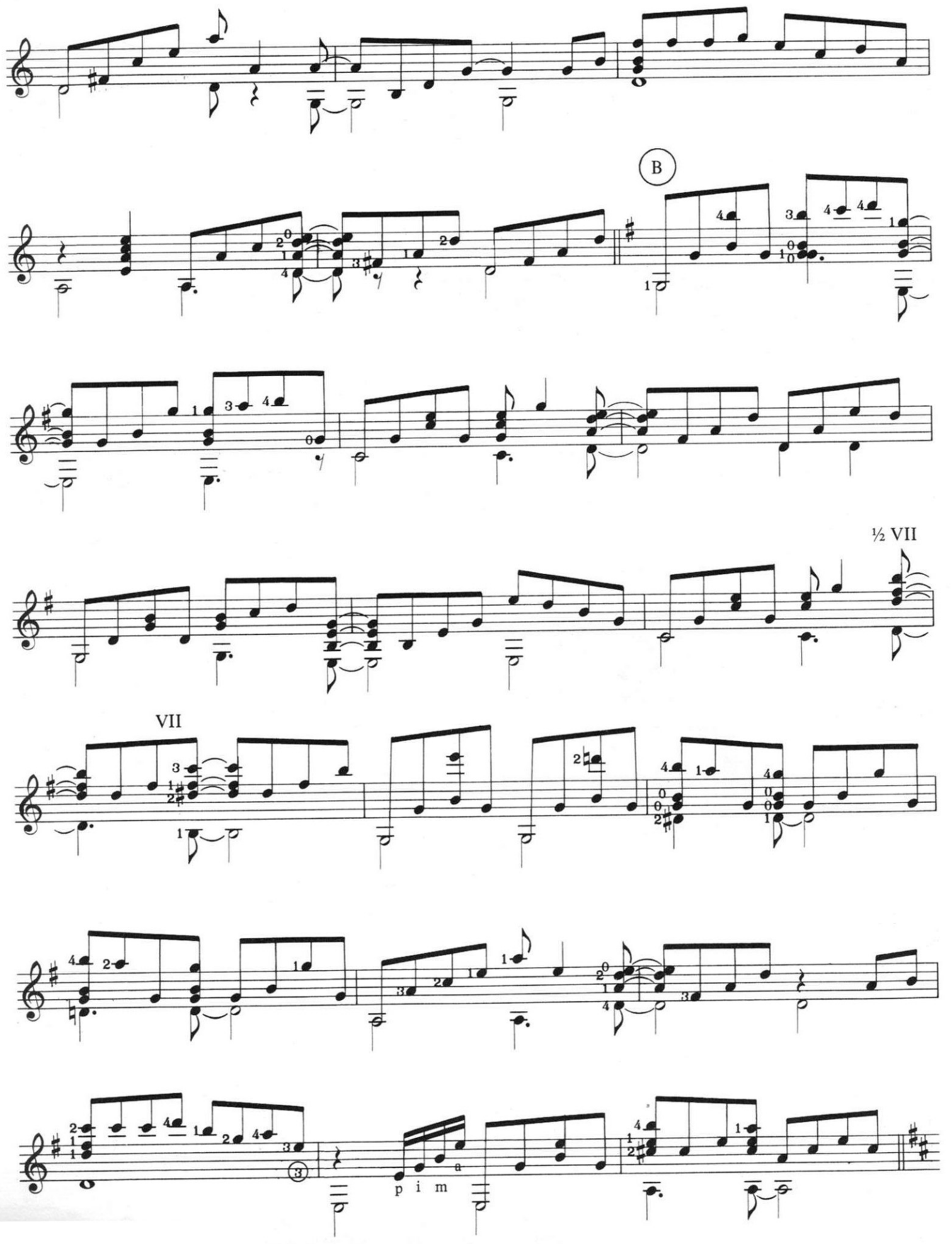
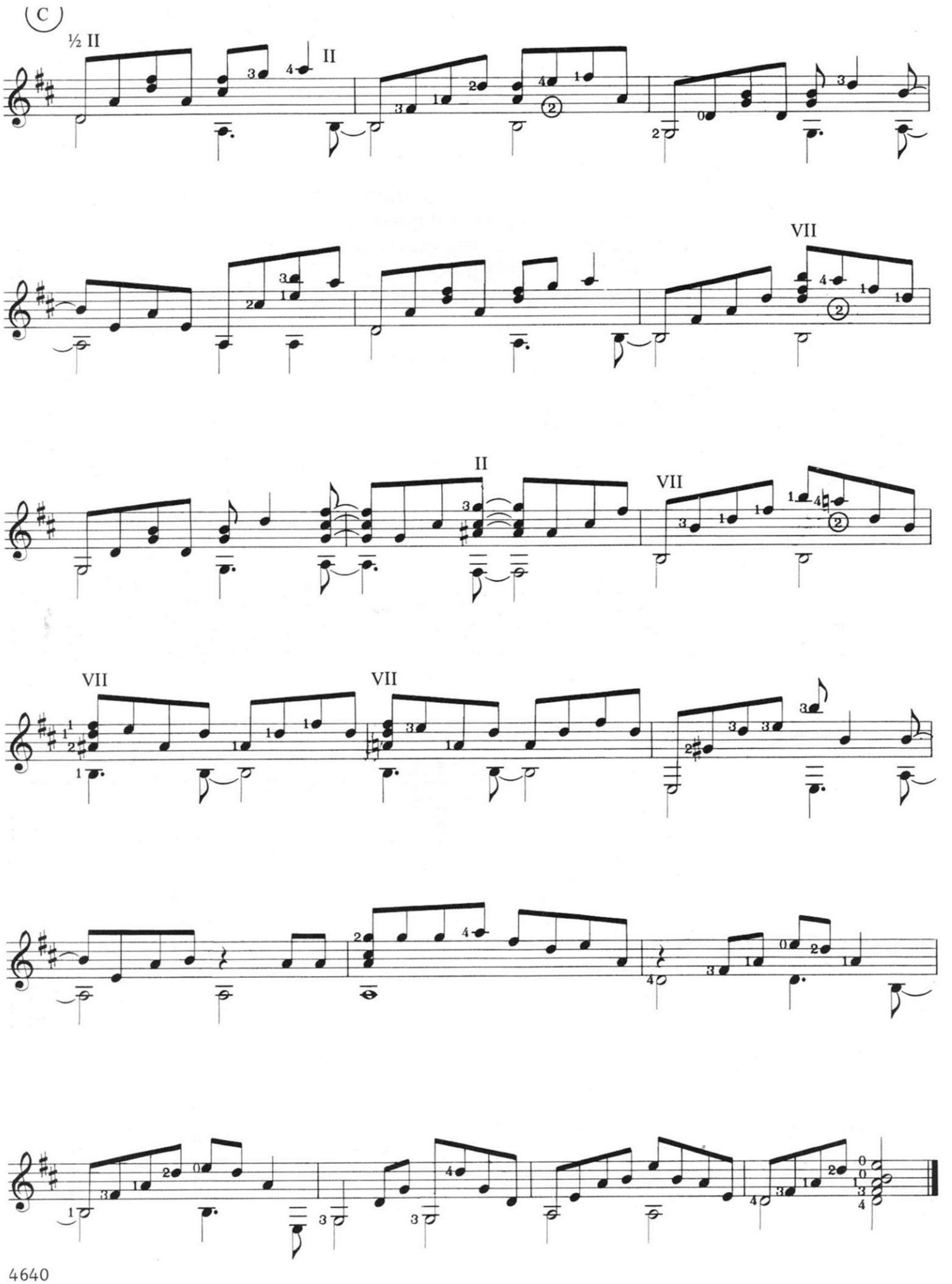

½ V
A


B
½ VII
VII
p i m
a


C
½ II
II
VII
II
VII
VII
VII

Recorded by JOHN DENVER on RCA Records

TAKE ME HOME, COUNTRY ROADS

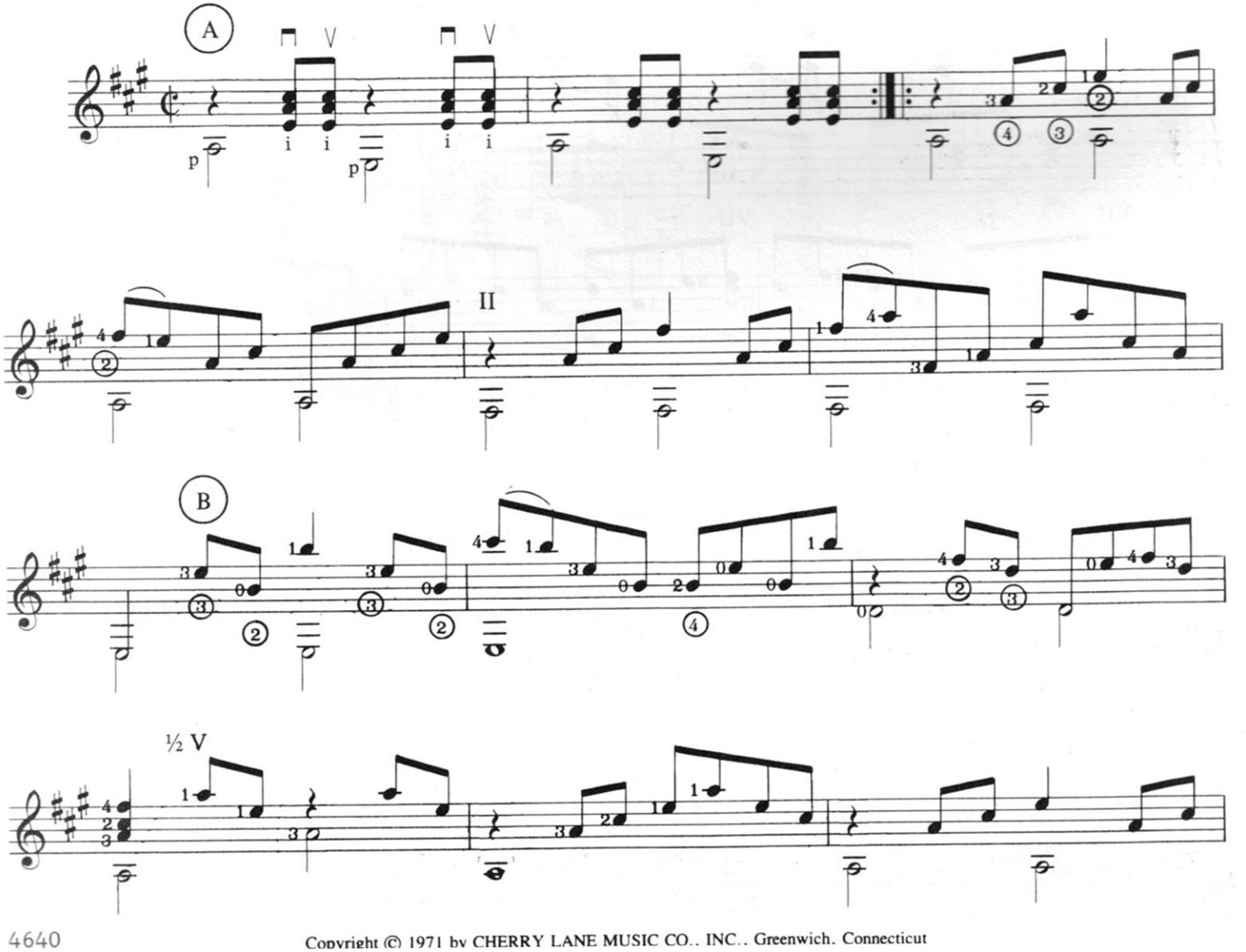
BILL DANOFF
TAFFY NIVERT
JOHN DENVER

TAKE ME HOME, COUNTRY ROADS is probably a bit more of the C&W variety than most of my arrangements. I guess what I like best about this song is that it sounds good on the guitar. (It's also a lot of fun to play). Be careful when reading this piece, because I've written a lot of open string chords.

(A) I call this my Johnny Cash intro. Use P and I as indicated.

(B) Here is an example of the open string chords I mentioned in my introduction.

(C) The rest is easy—just play.



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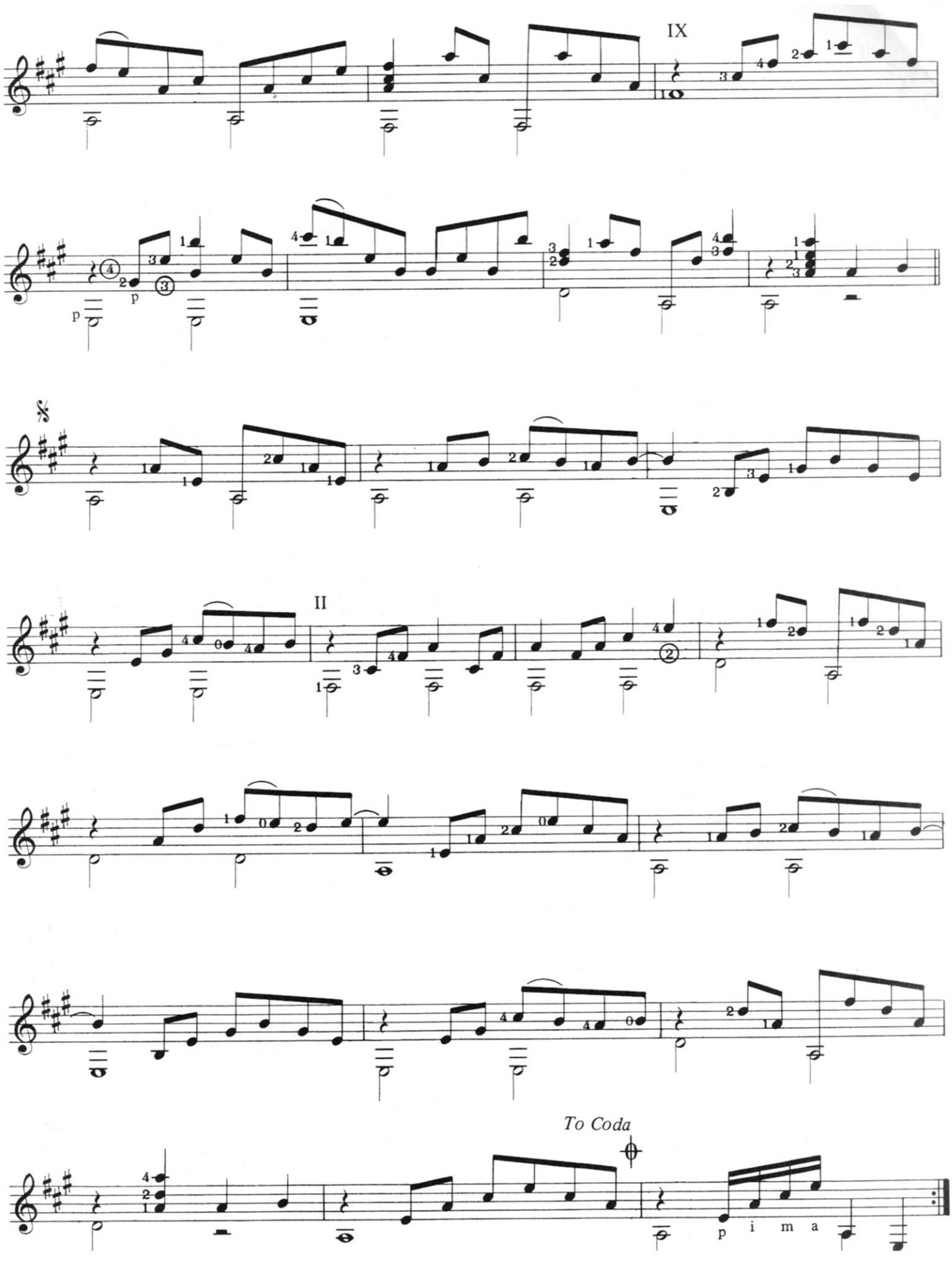
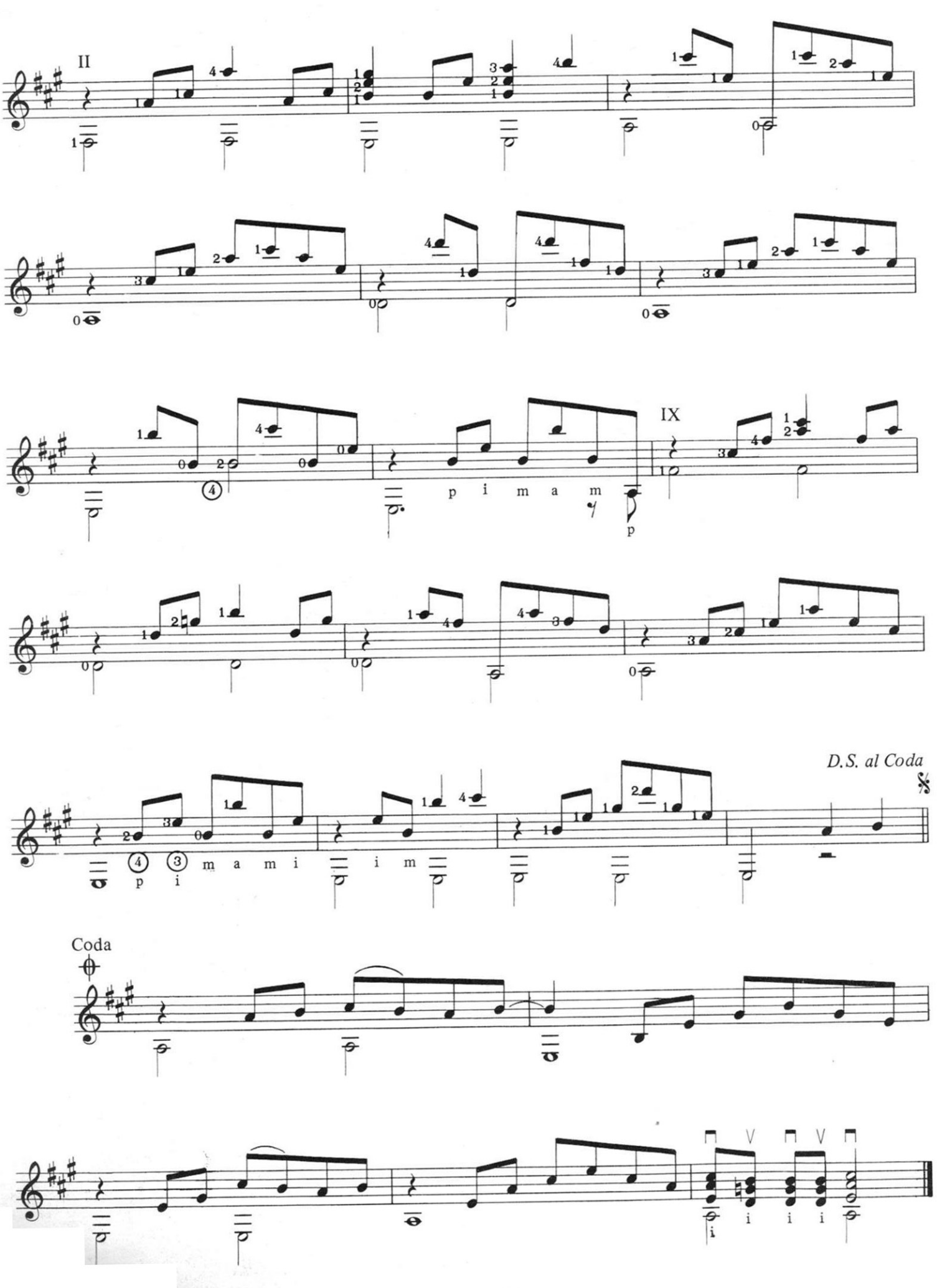

IX
p
p
II
To Coda
p i m a


II
IX
p i m a m
p
D.S. al Coda
p i m a m i i m
Coda
i i i i