ISBIN

Gilbert

# 12 Easy Studies For 10 String Guitar in Yepes Tuning

# 12 EASY STUDIES FOR 10 STRING GUITAR IN YEPES TUNING

GILBERT ISBIN

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To listen to these studies visit https://gilbertisbin.com/compositions/guitar/

# GILBERT ISBIN

Belgian composer Gilbert Isbin's compositional and performing style defies genre, blending elements for contemporary classical, jazz, early music, world music and improvisation.

He has been compared favorably to the likes of Ralph Towner and Egberto Gismonti, his music described as 'oblique, subtle, and hauntingly beautiful'.

Isbin has performed in concert on festivals and major venues throughout Europe and the US.

As a leader and co-leader, he has released an impressive string of recordings for various labels with international acclaimed artists as Cameron Brown, Joe Fonda, Bruce Arnold, Jeff Gauthier, Scott Walton, Sandro di Stefano,…

His compositions for guitar(s), lute(s) and ensemble are published by Mel Bay, Berben Edizioni Musicali, The Uk Lute Society, Lantro Music, Golden River Music, Auurk Ed, Amazon.com…

# INTRODUCTION TO 12 EASY STUDIES FOR 10 STRING GUITAR (YEPES TUNING)

I welcome these excellent studies from Gilbert Isbin.

As a recent convert to the 10-string guitar, I found these studies useful for getting to grips, as it were, with the four extra strings. In these studies, the low notes are generally notated to be held for long durations, which gives the performer time to look ahead to the next bass note.

**What is Yepes Tuning?**

On a six-string guitar, if you play the open first string, then suddenly stop it ringing, you will hear sympathetic resonance from the other strings, especially the fifth and sixth. Do the same with the note F, and there will be no sympathetic resonance. Therefore, the guitar's sonority is biased towards the open strings. The great classical guitarist, Narciso Yepes (1927 - 1997) discovered that with four extra strings tuned to C, Bb, Ab and Gb, all twelve notes of the chromatic scale could generate sympathetic resonances. So, even if you never play these extra strings, they are still making a contribution to the overall sonority of the guitar.

The lowest three strings are tuned up an octave, making the C the lowest note. The Bb is the exact same pitch as the 5th string 1st fret, the Ab is the exact same pitch as the 6th string 4th fret, and the Gb is the exact same pitch as the 6th string 2nd fret. Sometimes the notes are of course notated as sharps: A#, G#, and F#. You will get plenty of reading practice of both flats and sharps with these studies.

**Right-Hand Technique**

The technique of playing bass notes on multi-string guitars requires some discussion:

**Descending adjacent bass strings:** always use rest strokes with the right-hand thumb when moving from the 6th string to the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th (as in the first line of Study 1). This will stop the previously-played note from ringing on. If you do not use rest strokes, the sustain from all the clashing of adjacent notes will confuse the harmony.

**Ascending adjacent bass strings:** As you go from, say, the 10th string to the 9th, the 10th string will keep ringing, unless you stop it. You can stop it after sounding the 9th string - just hop back with your thumb, placing it on the 10th string. Or - and this is often preferable - play the 10th string with a rest stroke (as usual) then just before you play the 9th string lean back into the 10th string, touching it with the side of your thumb while stopping it ringing, then play the 9th string with a rest stroke.

**Gapped movement in the bass:** Sometimes the bass moves by leap, not to an adjacent string. This can be problematic in that you have to decide how to stop the note you are leaving, while trying to gauge the distance to the next note. I generally stop the first bass note just before leaping to the next. This allows some daylight to enter between the notes, but usually this is not a bad thing.

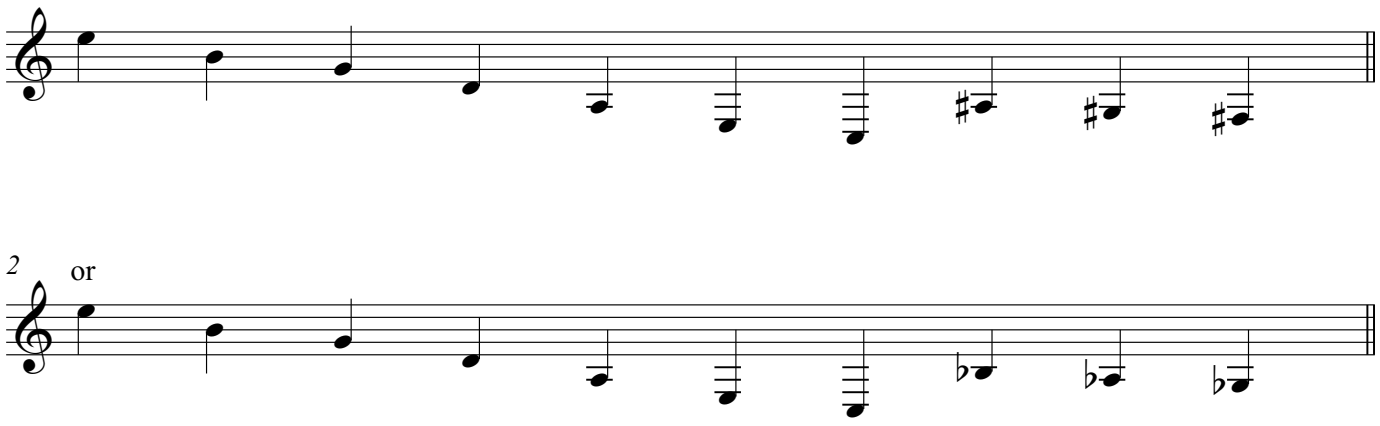
Do all bass notes need to be stopped? No, they don't. Sometimes a note will die before you need to stop it, and sometimes it doesn't sound so bad if you let it sustain. But allowing a bass note to sustain should be an interpretive choice, it should not be left ringing due to poor technique. These studies will teach you how to control your guitar, if you make a conscious decision about how to articulate each bass note.

**The Music**

Apart from arranging old music, there are many compositions written specifically for the 10-string guitar in Yepes Tuning, and much of that uses modern harmony and rhythms. Gilbert Isbin has written these studies not merely from a technical point of view, he has also composed music which explores interesting harmonies and rhythmical contours. These studies will help prepare you for the contemporary repertoire for the instrument.

Rob MacKillop

# NARCISO YEPES TUNING



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# STUDY 1

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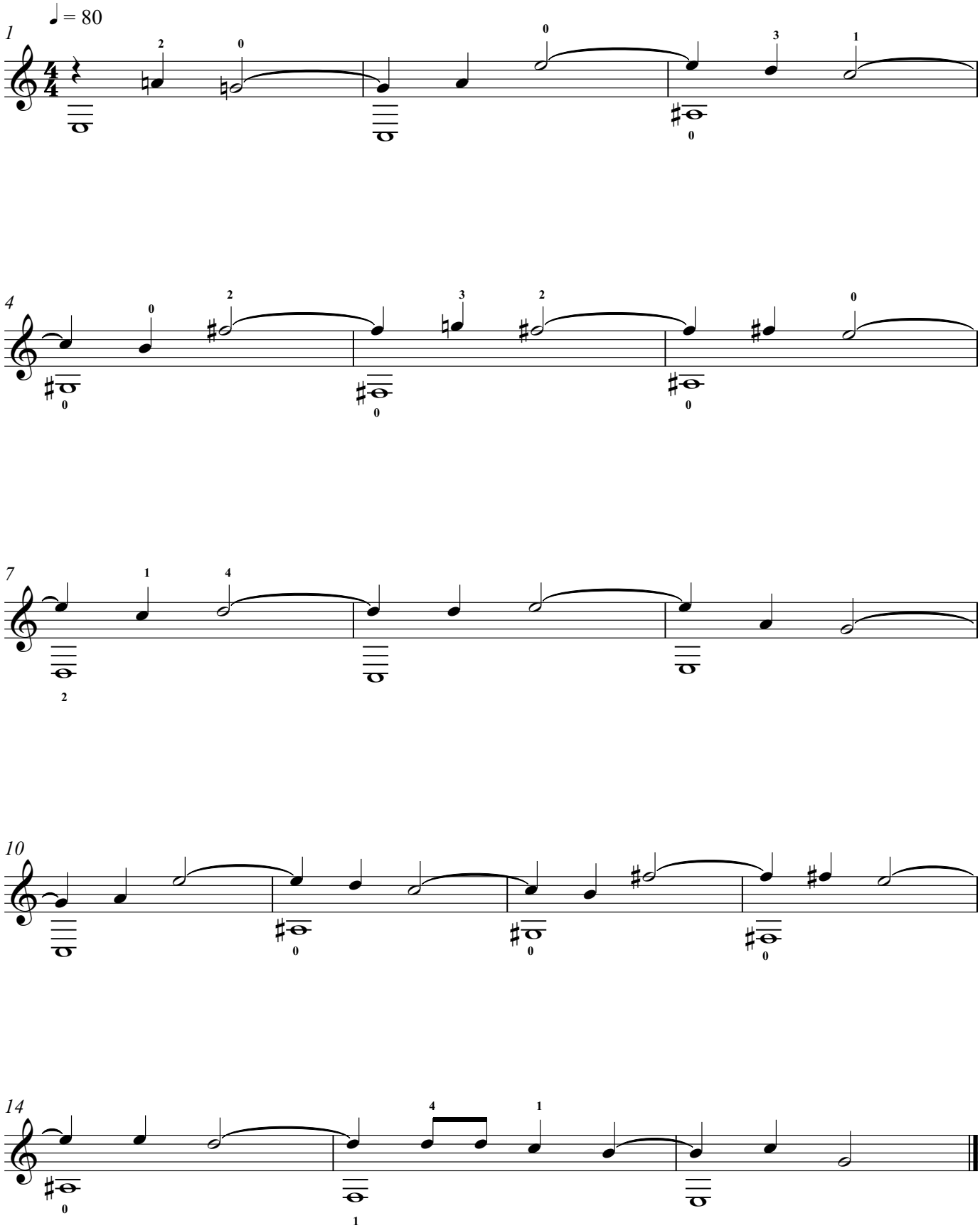

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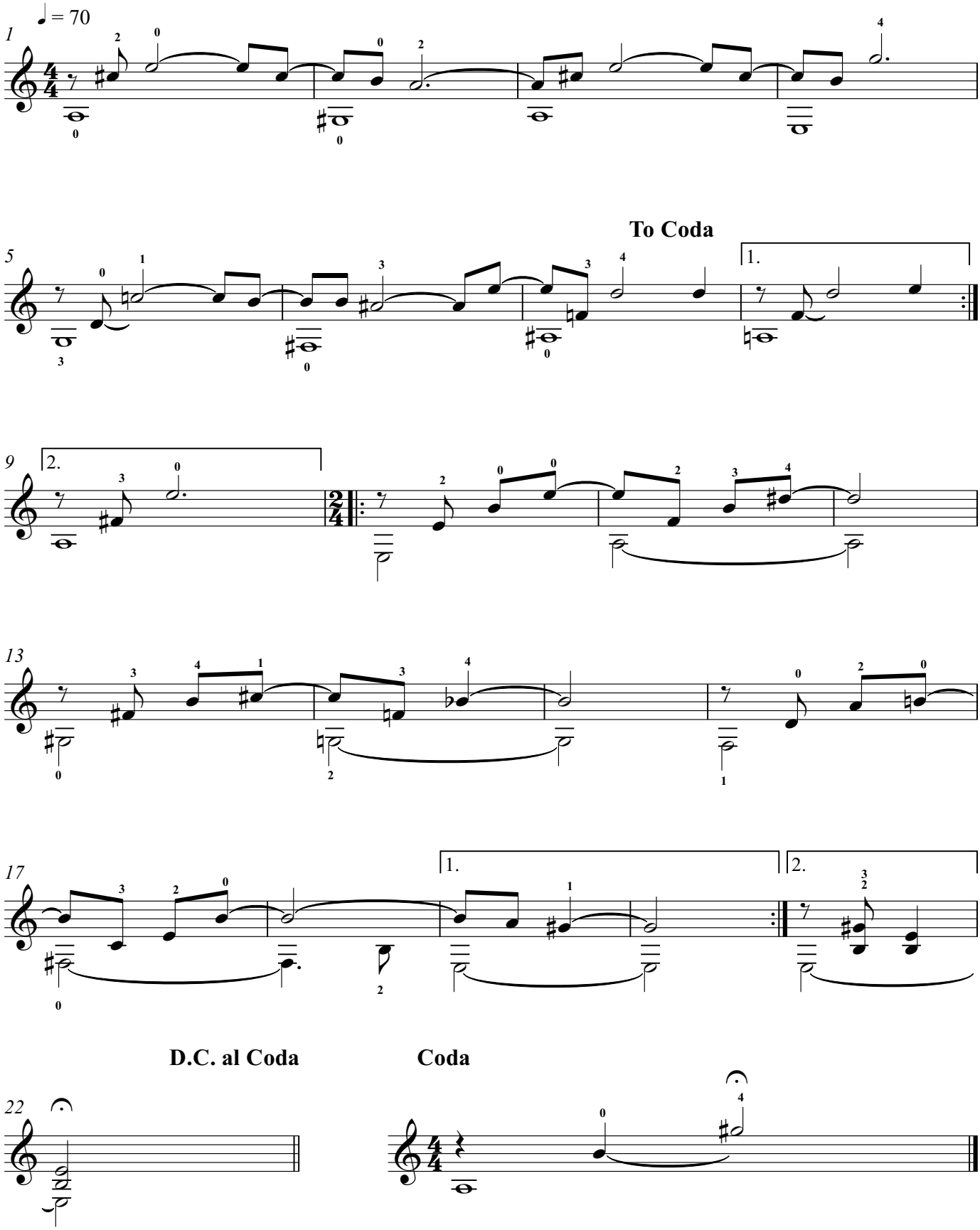

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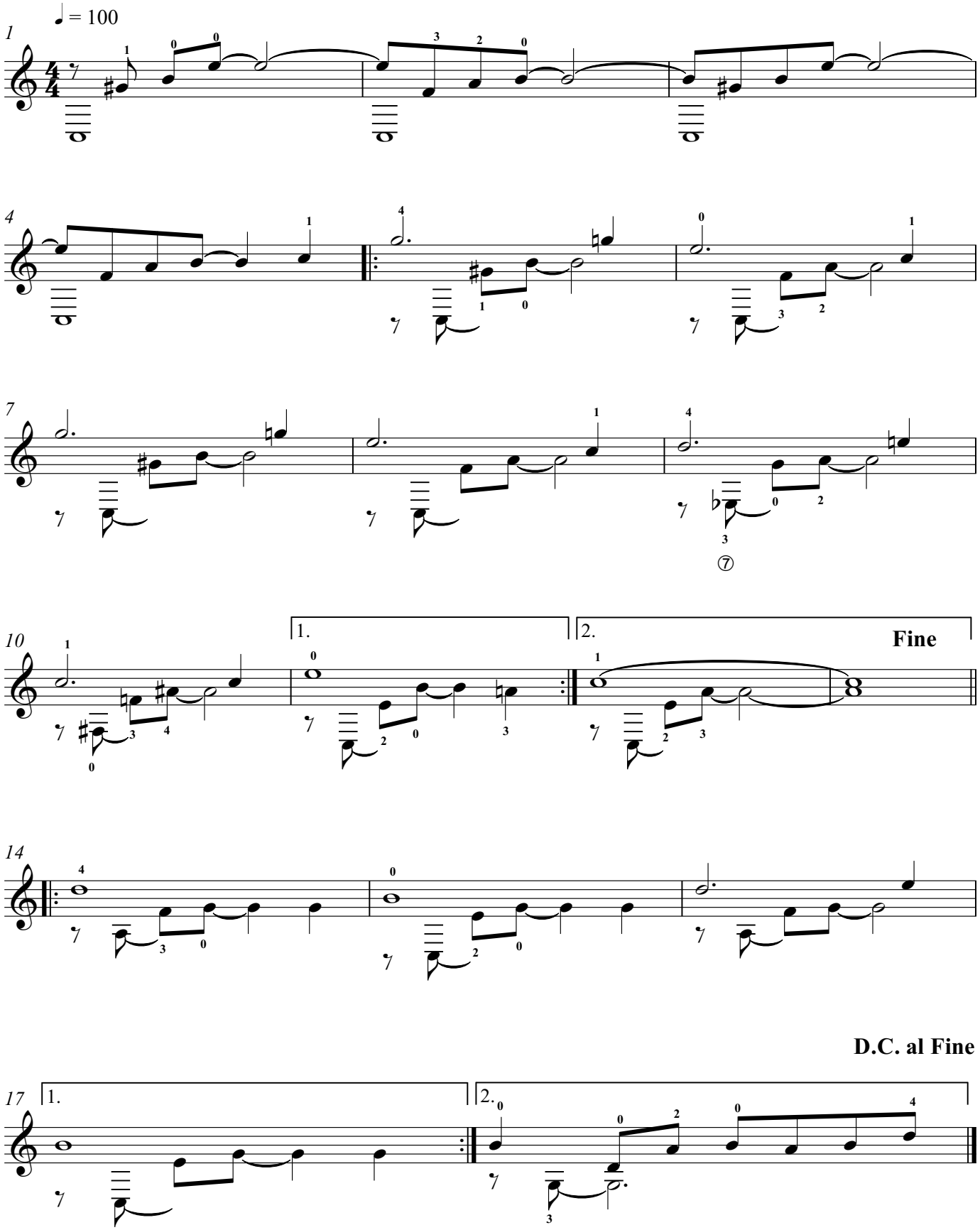

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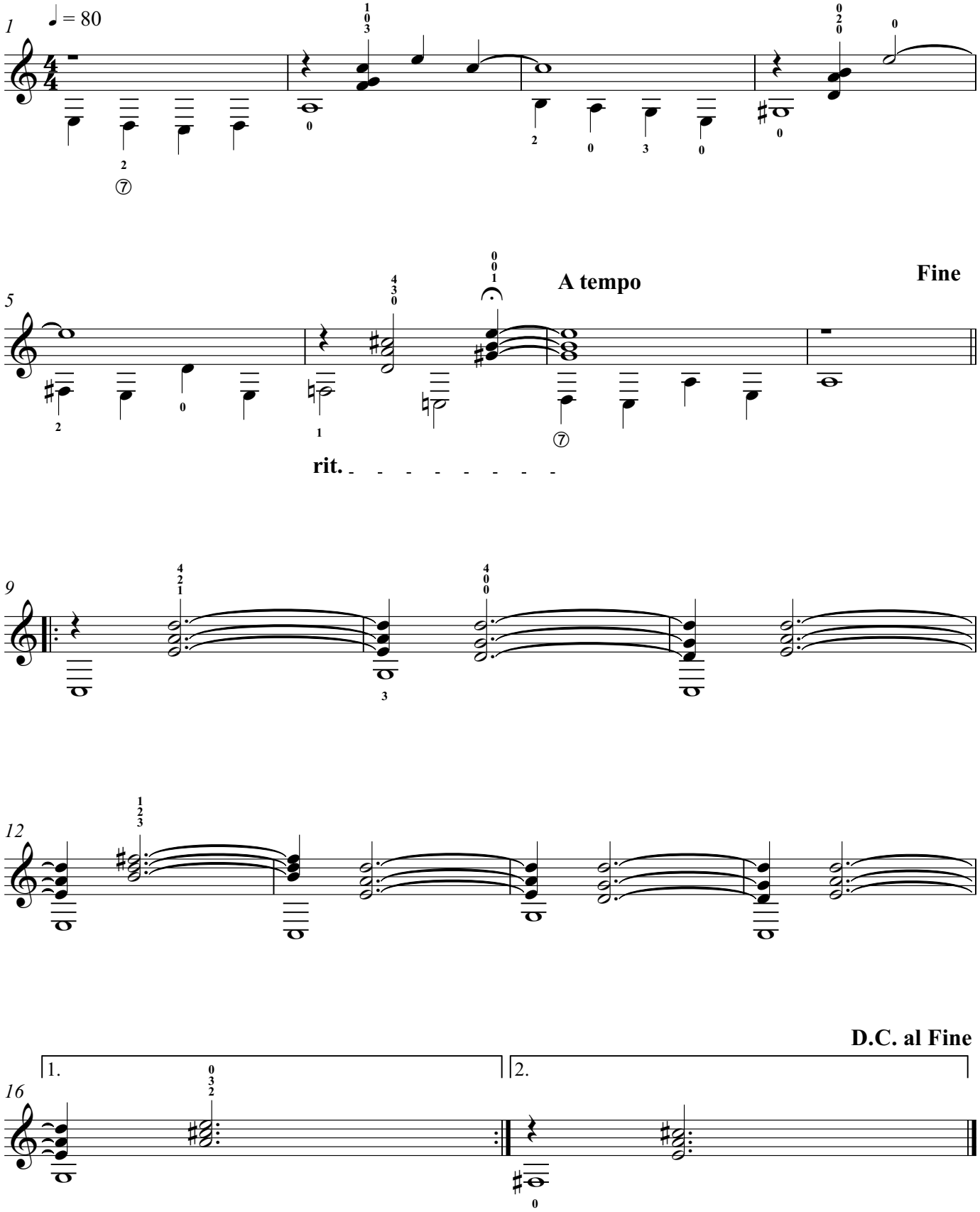

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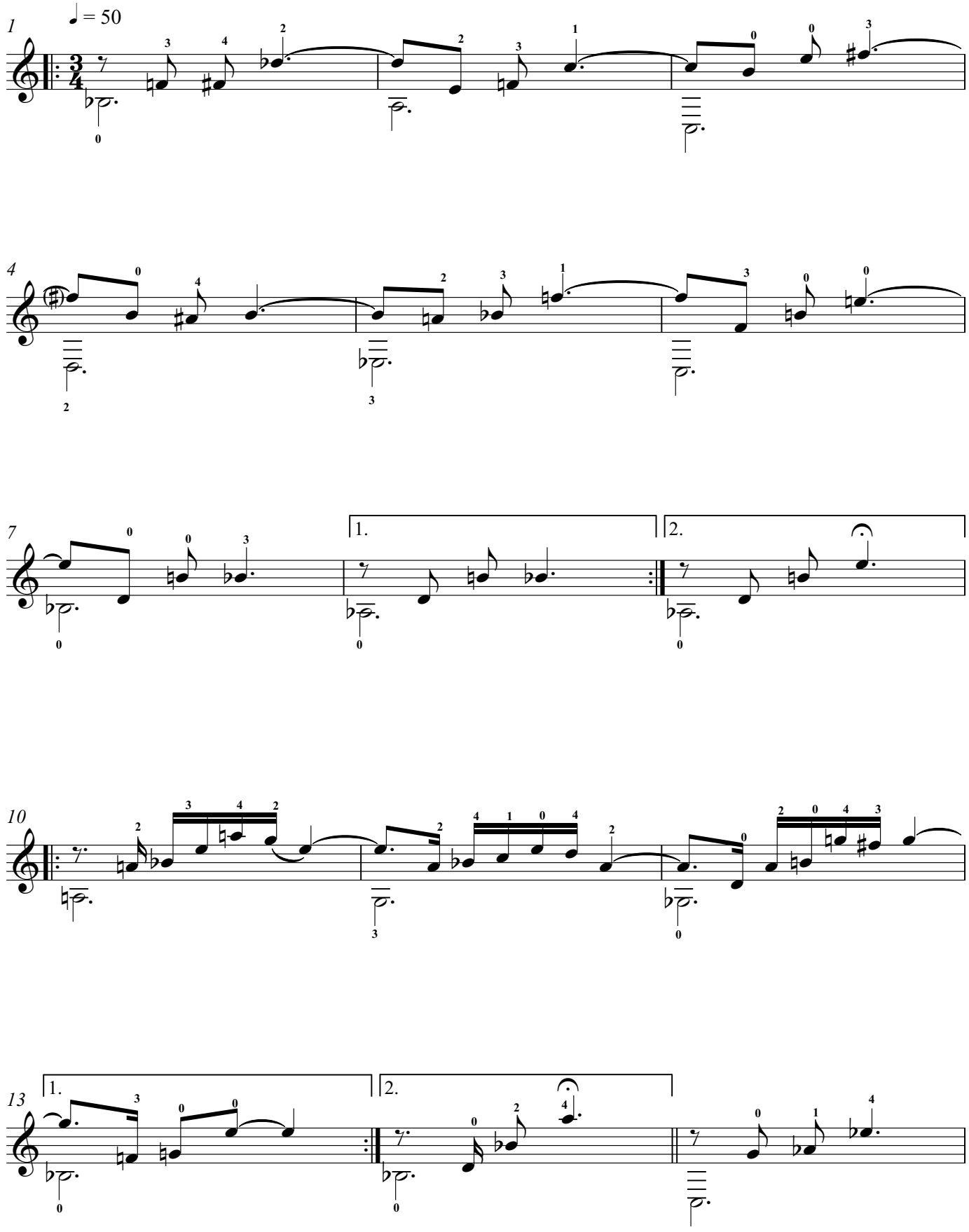

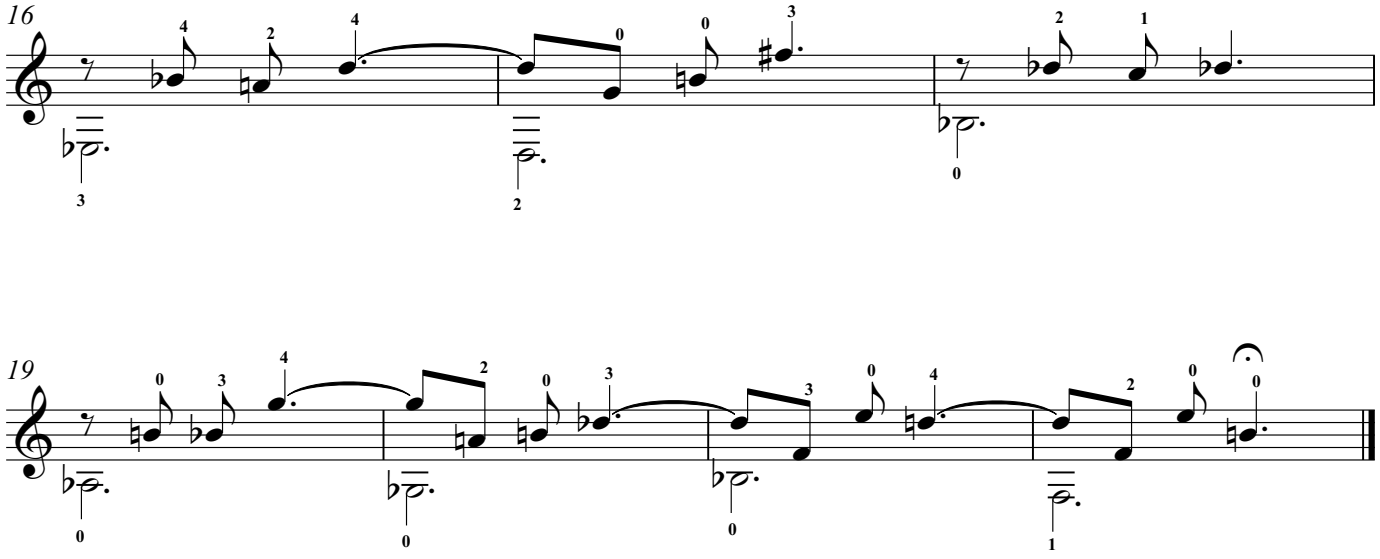
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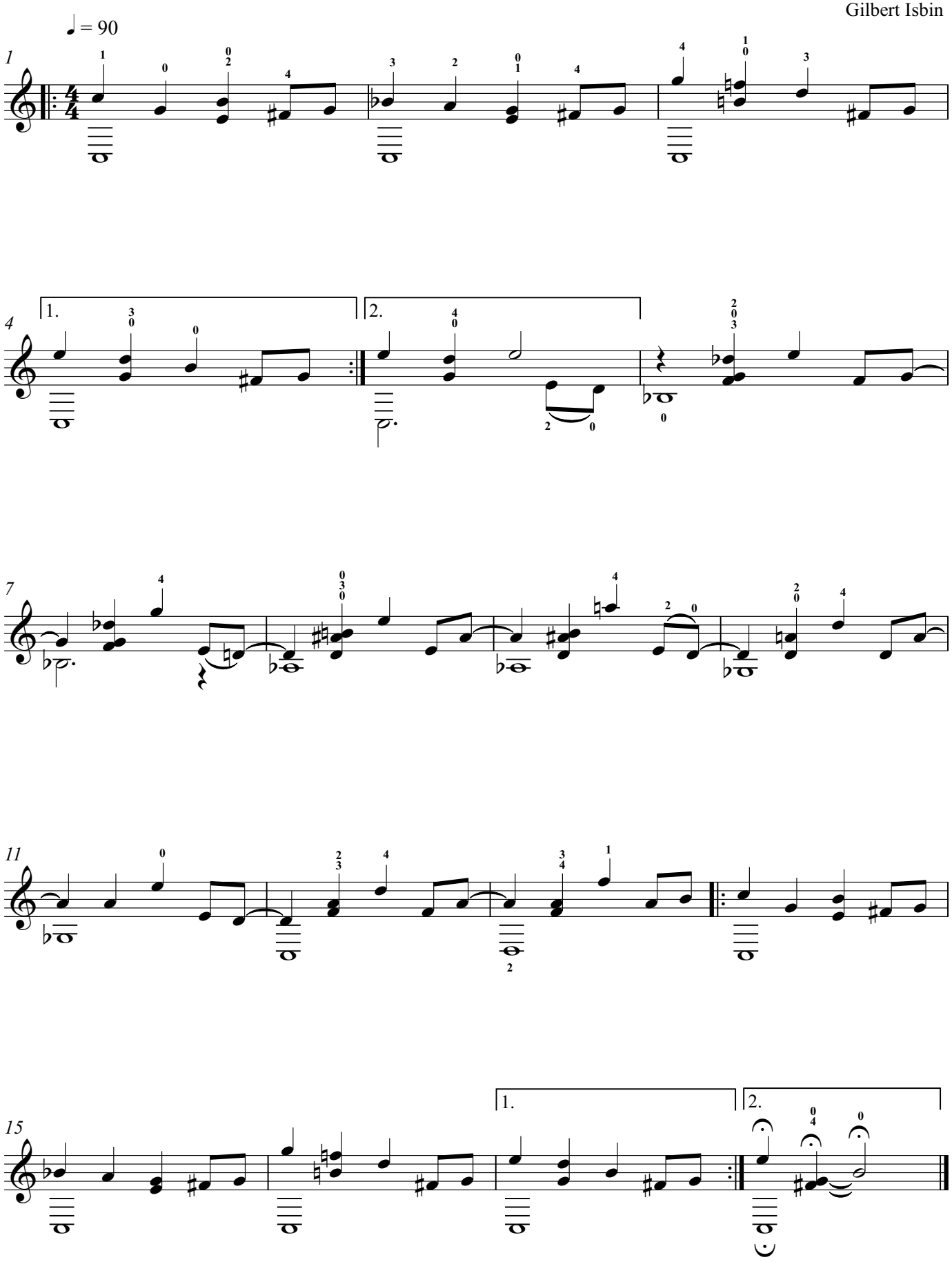

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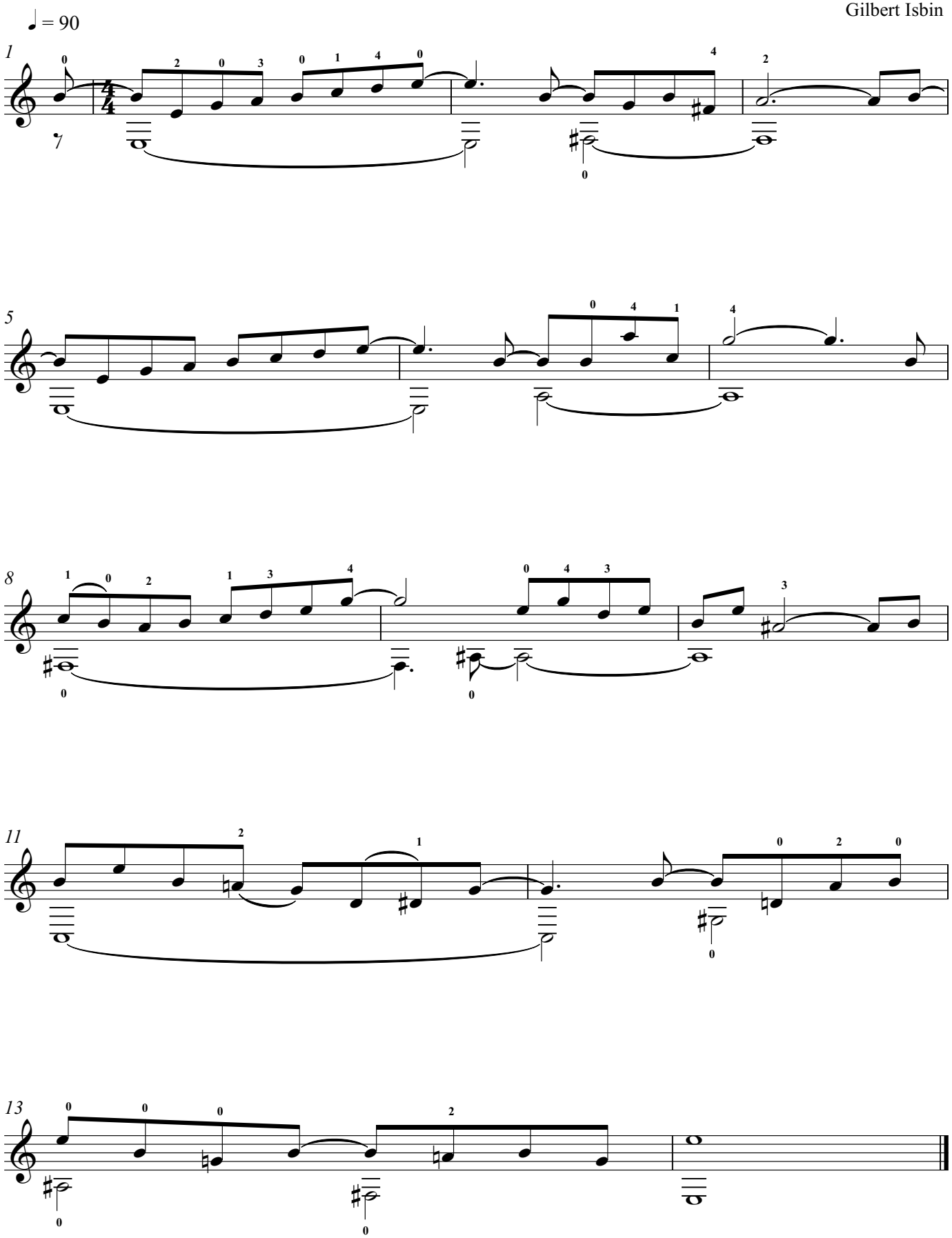

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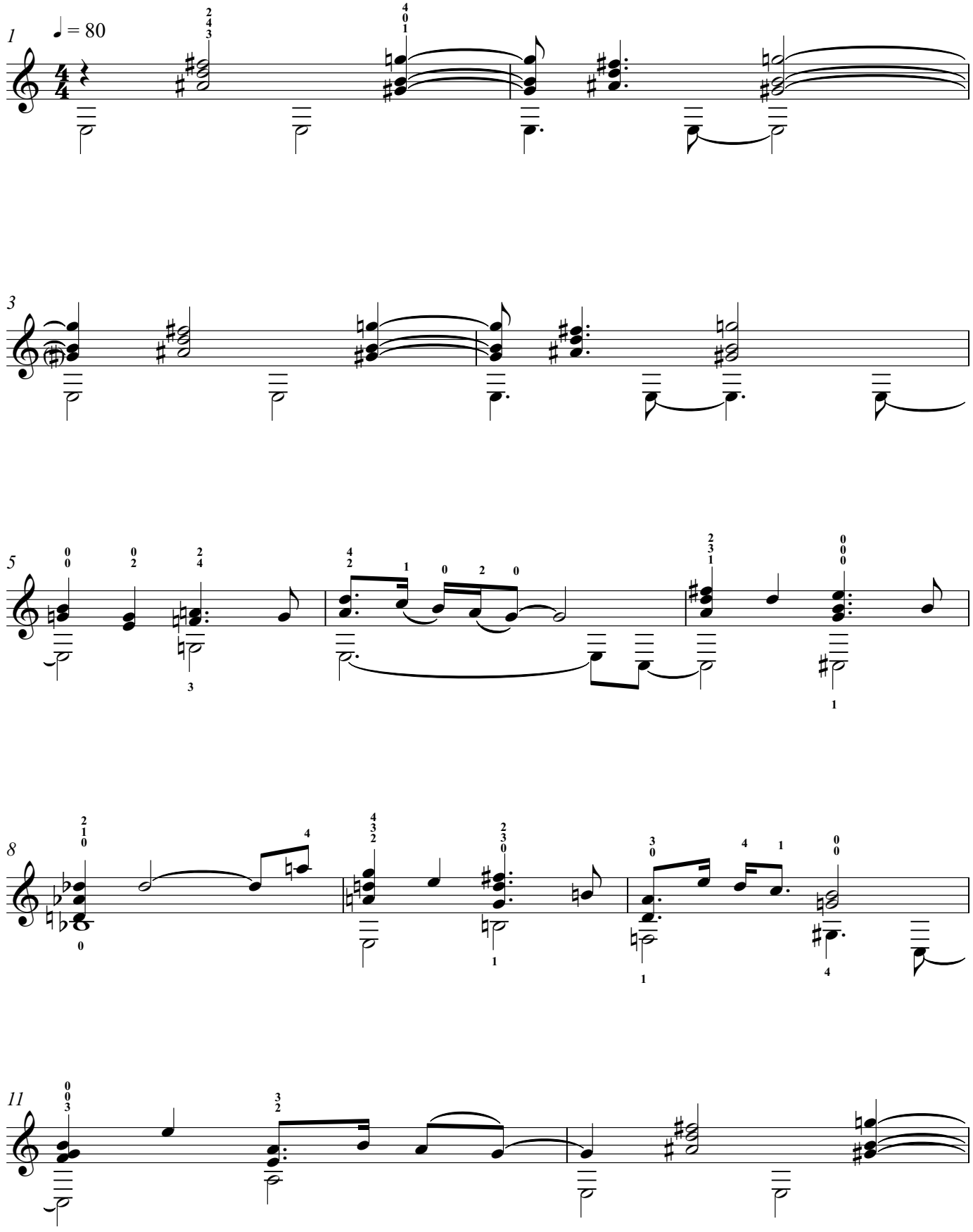

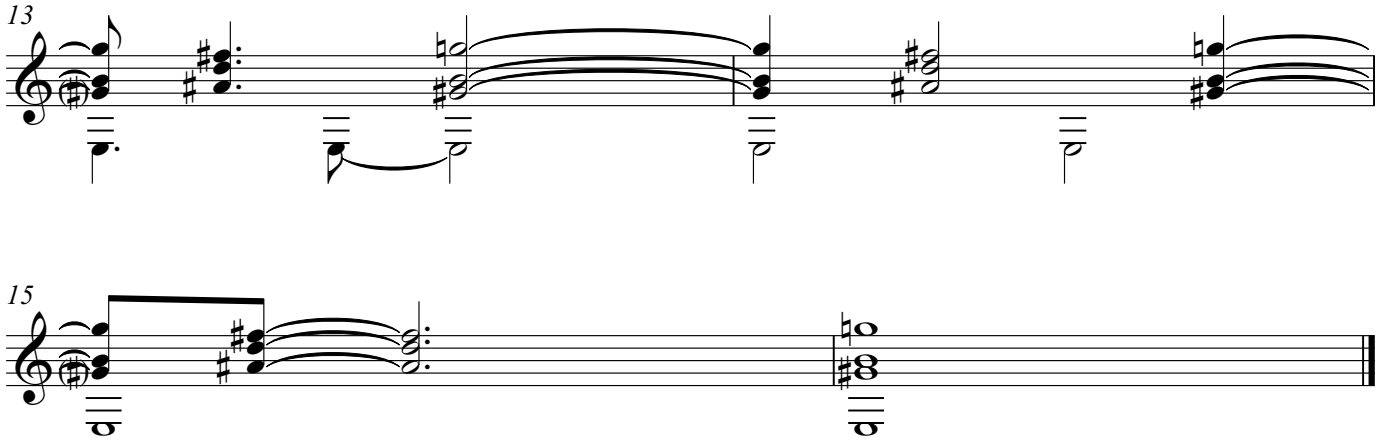
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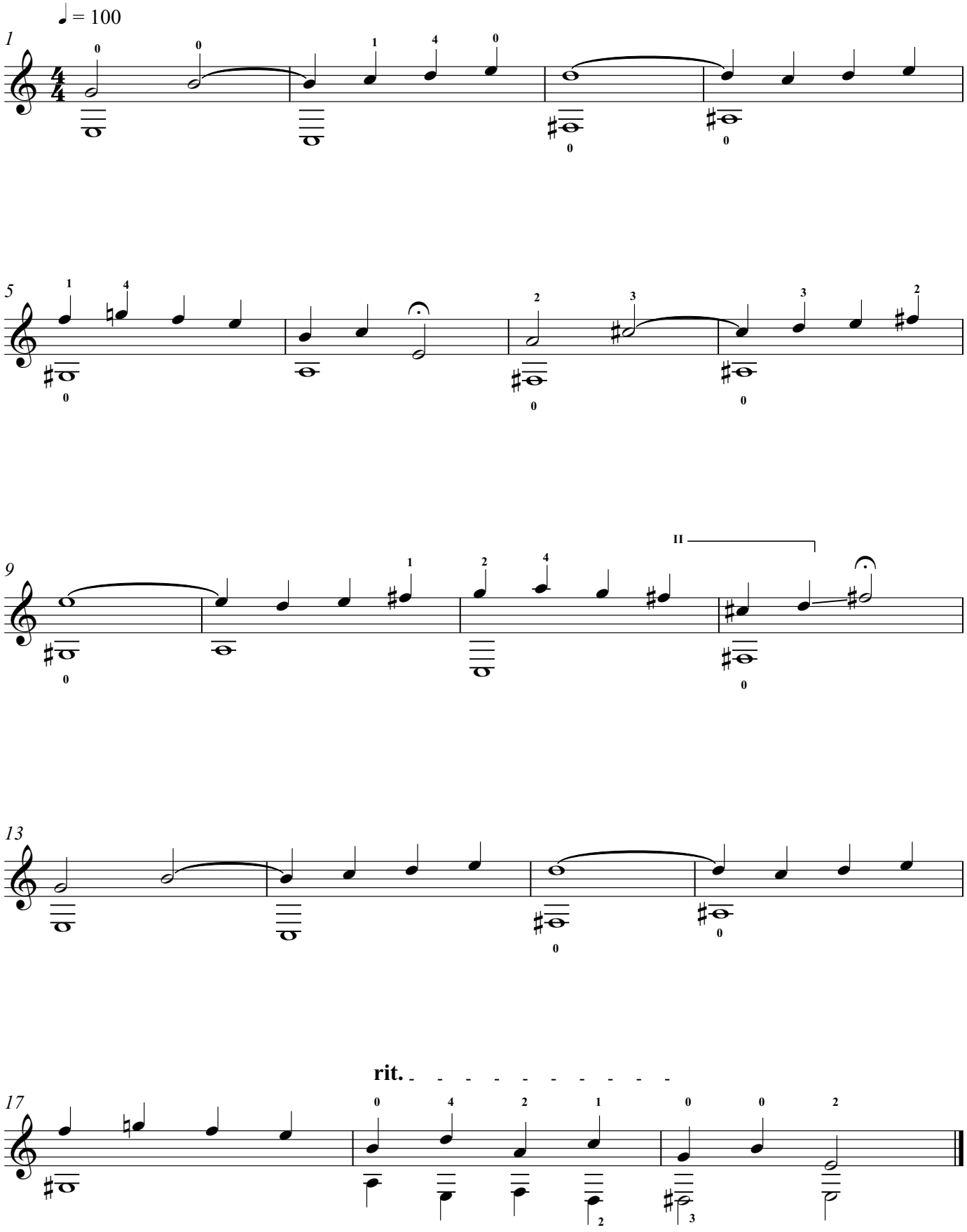

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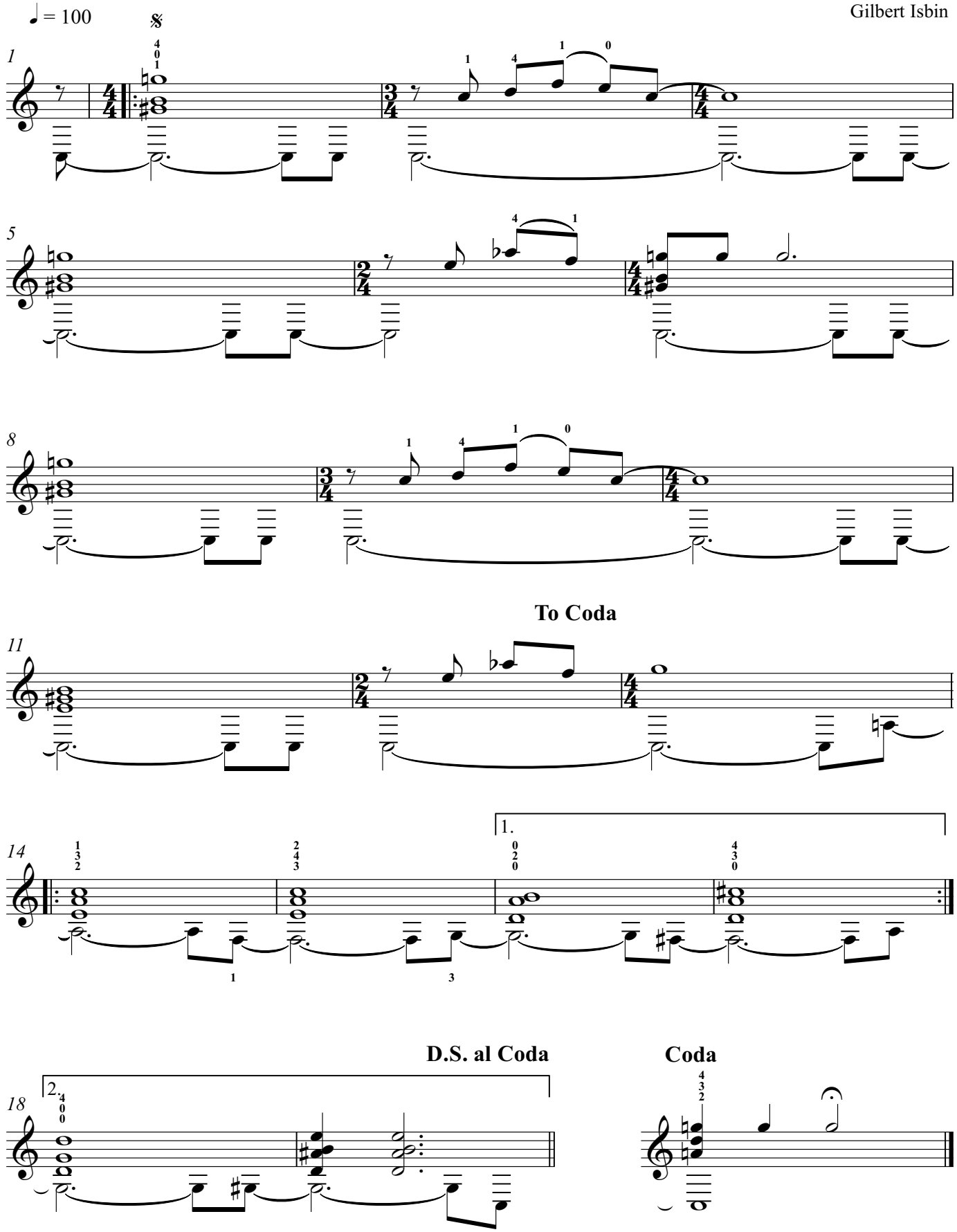

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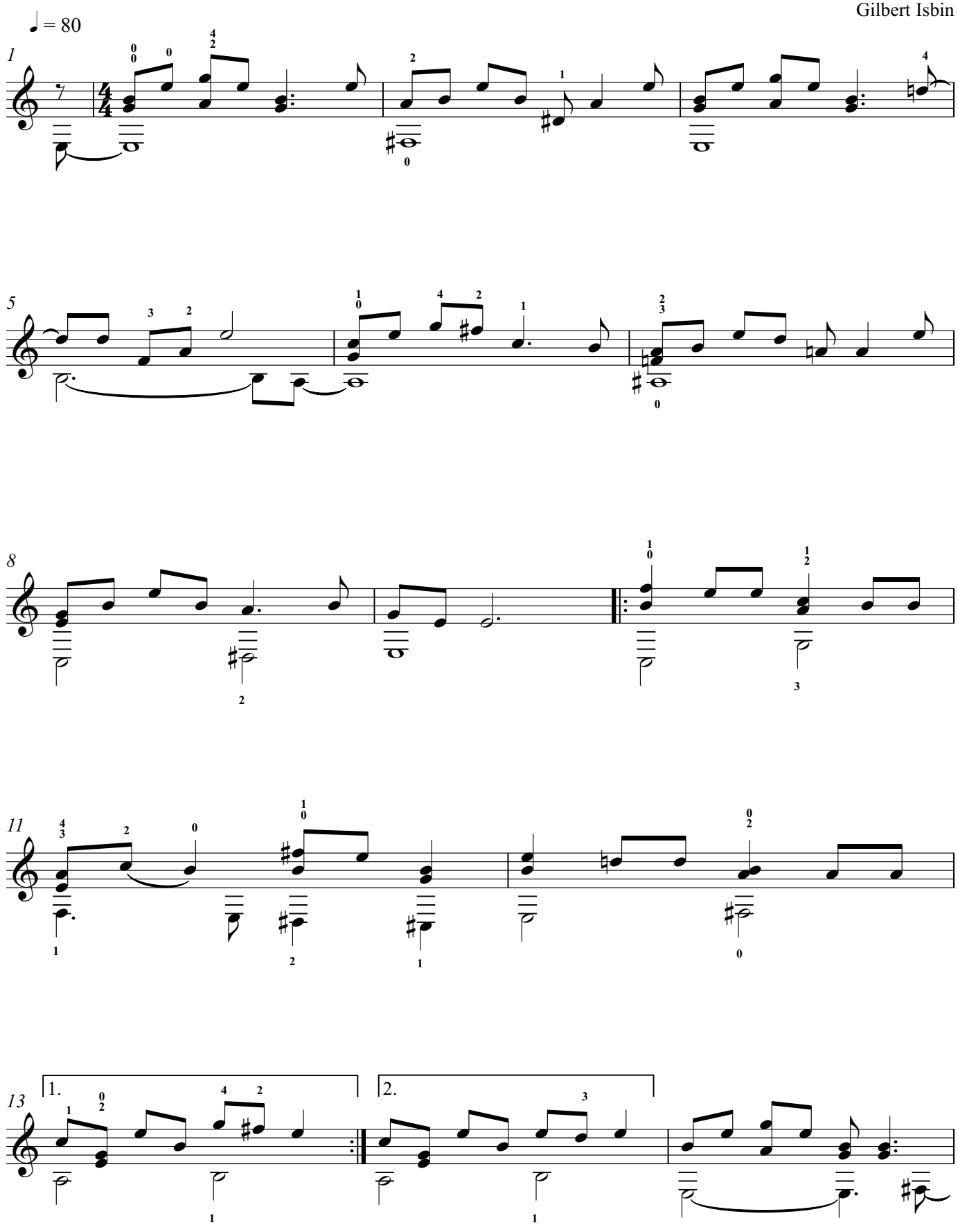

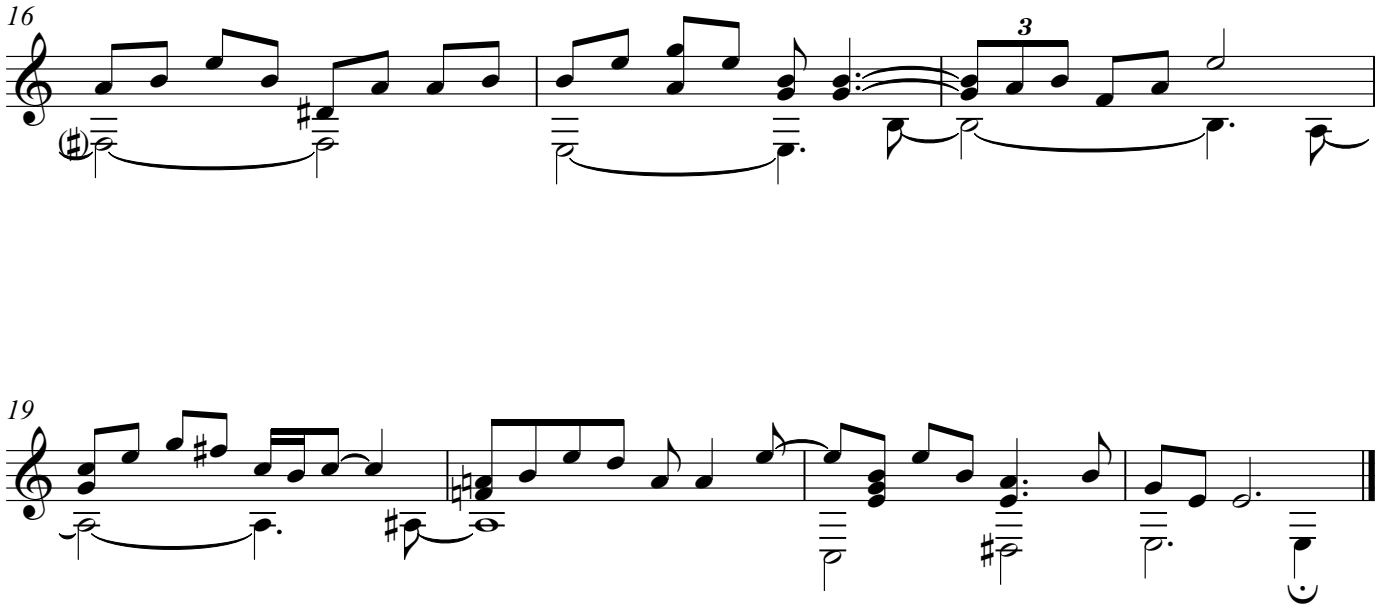
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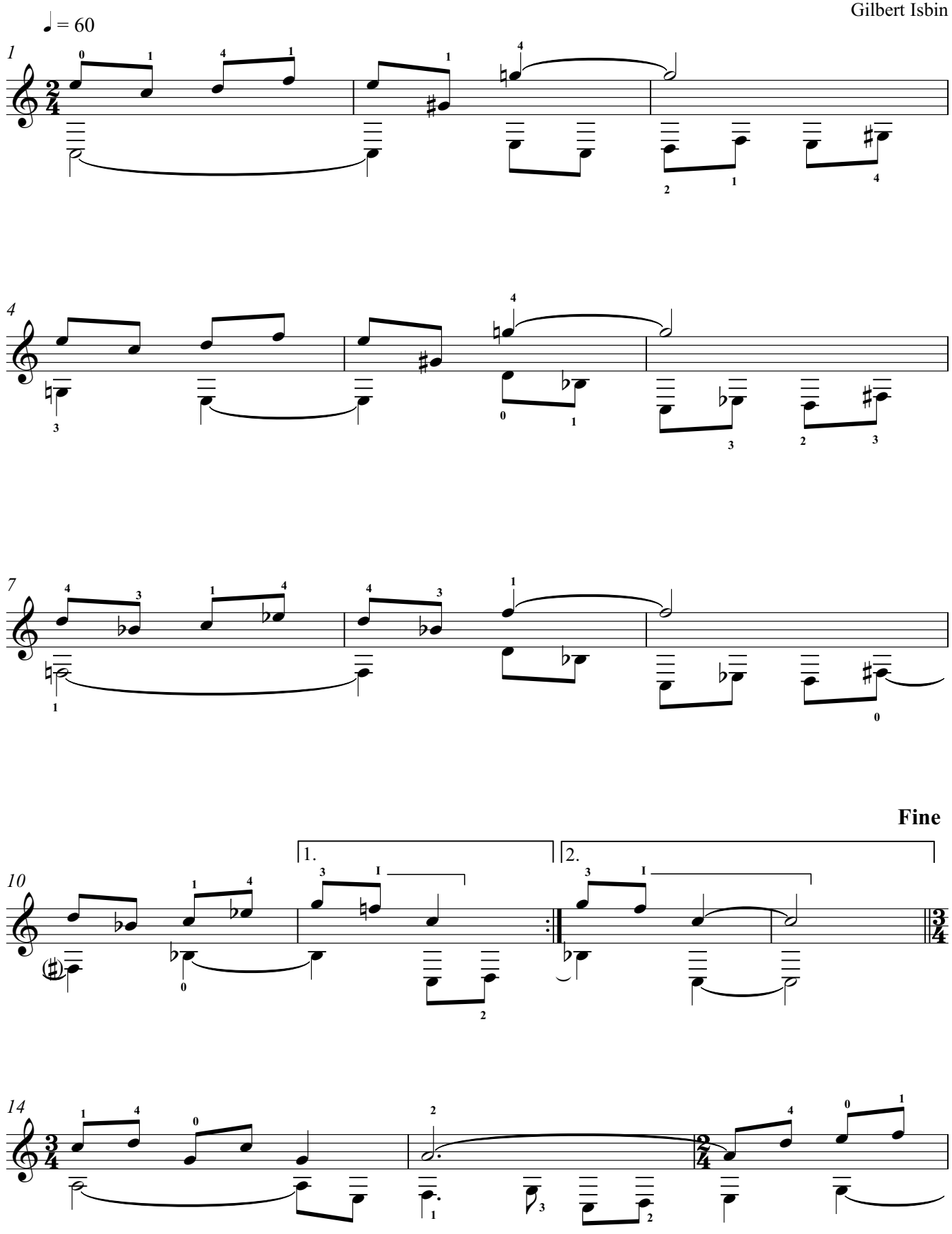

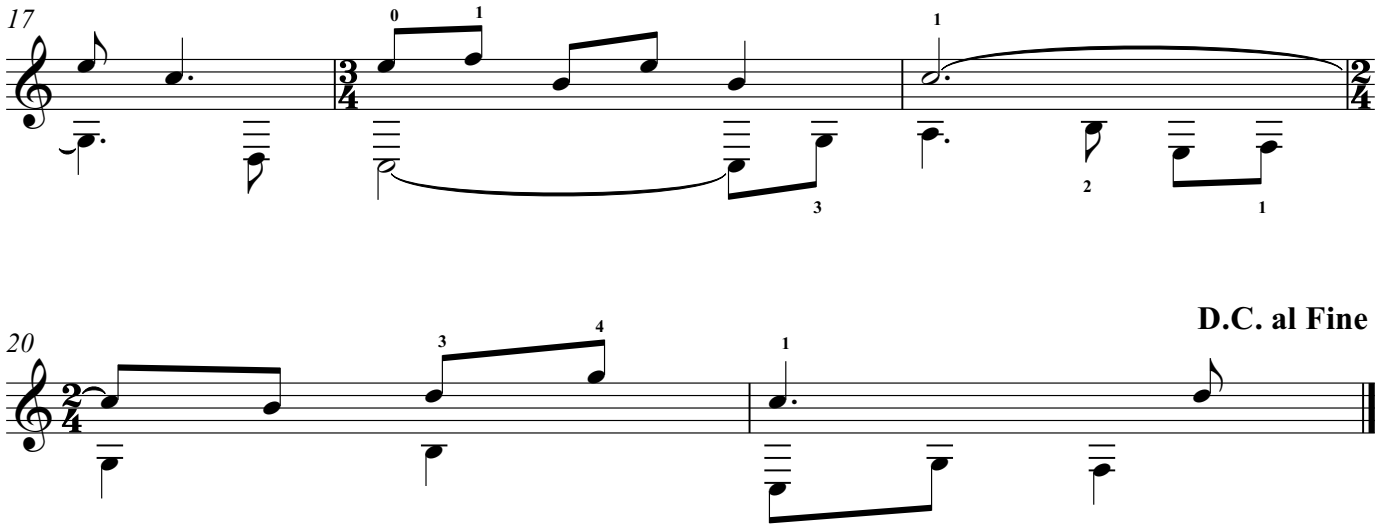
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