BACH ALBUM

For Guitar

Transcriptions by
VAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD

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Johann Sebastian Bach – Compositions for the Lute

FOREWORD

The present volume is published by The American Guitar Society as a memorial in honor of the 250th Anniversary of the birth of the celebrated Bach, "Father of Music".

Inasmuch as biographies of Bach are to be had in many editions in every library it is not necessary here to go into the details of his life, but merely to state that he was born at Eisenach, Germany on March 21, 1685 and died at Leipzig, July 31, 1750. It is, however, somewhat significant that Bach wrote for the lute and that he also played the instrument and that in this year of 1935, "when bizarre and extravagant modernism is rampant" that the appreciation of Bach's works and particularly his "monumental polyphonic work is constantly on the increase". That many of Bach's works are eminently suited to the guitar has long been known by guitarists, but a number of his works have been more popularized on that medium through the public performances of Andres Segovia, which have caused the staid music critics to exclaim of their beauties on that instrument.

Somewhat of a haze has enveloped the Bach Lute compositions up until the past fifteen years or so, due to the fact that even the Bach Society itself was somewhat divided and to a great extent sought for some years to cover up or to deny the existance of the Suites and other pieces for the lute. Since the lute was a neglected and almost obsolete instrument it was not particularly in the interest of the Society to dwell upon the lute music of Bach. However, it is of the utmost importance to lutenists of the present day as well as to guitarists, and the majority of the works which have received such high praise from the critics when performed on the guitar by Andres Segovia, have been works which were originally written for the lute by Bach.

The only available examples of these worthy but almost entirely unknown solo pieces of Bach which were originally written for the lute, are a Praeludium, a Praeludium with Fugue, a Fugue and four complete Suites for the Lute. Dr. Hans Dagobert Bruger, eminent lutenist and musicologist who passed away recently in Germany, quotes the following as authentic as to the source of these Lute pieces. "For the Praeludium, (original key C minor) a manuscript of Joh. Peter Kellner's, a friend and contemporary of Bach, the title which reads – "Praelude in C Minor pour la Lute, di J. S. Bach". This is also listed in the old Peters Edition (No. 200), "pour la luth". For the "Suite No. 1", in a collected volume by J.L.Krebs, a pupil of Bach, the inscription "Praeludio con la Suite (da) Gio. Bach", work for the Lute. For the "Suite No. 2 (original key C minor), a hand copied manuscript (not autographed) written in French Lute tablature and stating that the Praeludium, Sarabande and Gigue were copied from the Suite which had title – "Partita al Liuto, C Moll, composta dal Sig. J. S. Bach". This was mentioned in the Thematic list of Bach's works as for "Lute or Klavier". The Suites were not numbered in the original text, but, as Dr. Bruger says: "This seems to be the best method of distinguishing them". For the "Praeludium with Fugue" (original key E major) merely the subtitle in Bach's own hand appears – "Prelude pour la Lute ou Cembal".

Of the Third Suite, Tappert mentions that he himself found the autograph in the Brussels Library in ordinary notation, the subtitle reading – "Suite pour la Luth par J. S. Bach". As Dr. Dagobert Bruger says, "It is worthy of note that mention of this autograph is completely avoided by the Bach Society". Bach's solo pieces for the lute of course required an abundant technic as they were suited to the skilled lutenists of his time, but there were also some of great beauty which demanded less technical skill." Dr. Bruger says: "There can be no further doubt that Bach must signify to the lute player of the future what he has for a long time to the pianist and violinist – the High School of Technic and the way to complete mastery".

In addition to the Suites and other pieces written originally for the Lute, a number of Bach works fit admirably to the technic and musical capacity and coloring of the guitar and some of them "lay on the strings" in such a way as to show evidence that Bach may have worked some of these out for the lute or on the lute, an instrument with which he was familiar and which he held in highest esteem. It has been the aim of the Editor of this volume to include herewith a number or such works as transcriptions.

Los Angeles, Calif. April 23, 1935

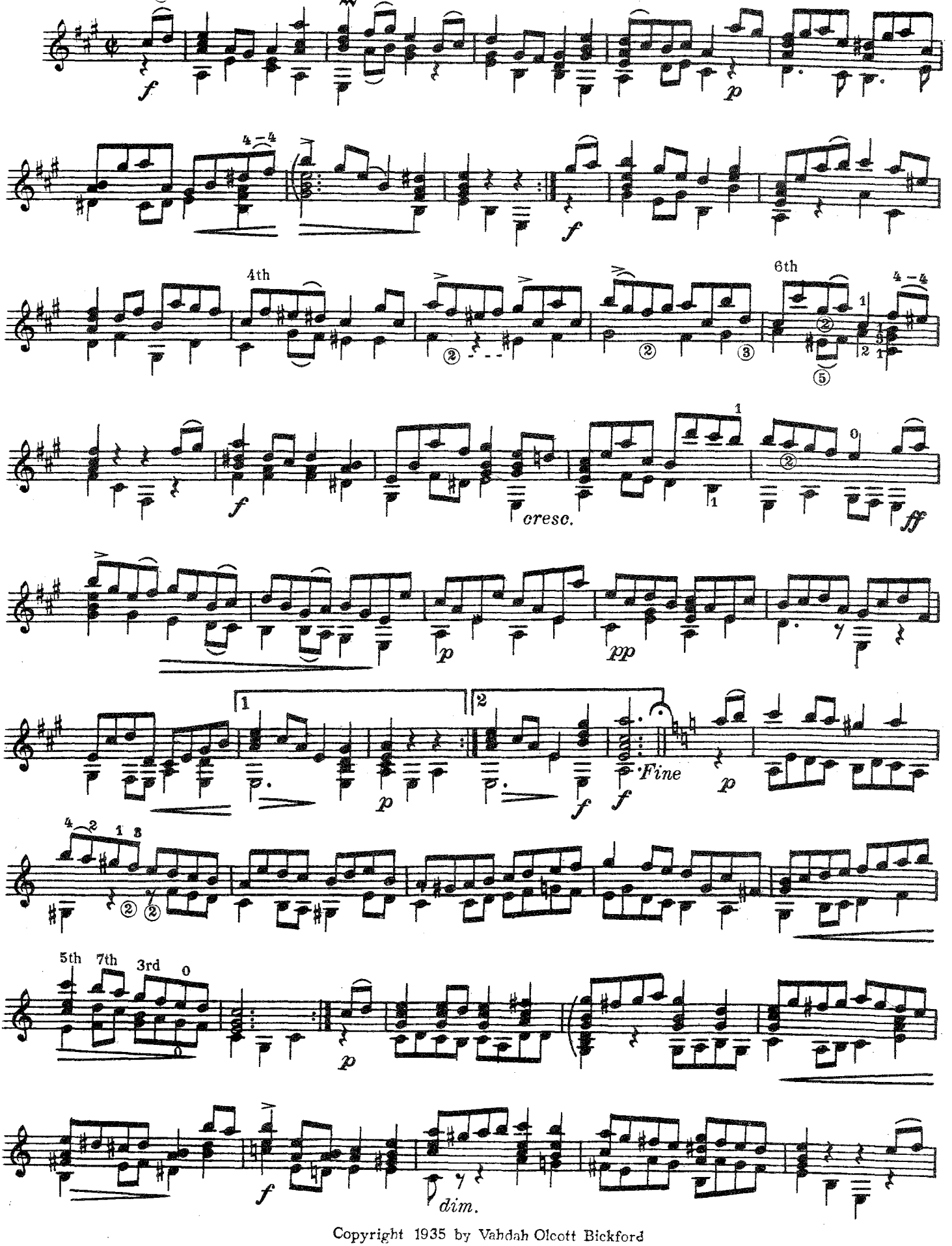
VAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD

Bourrée

(From Third Cello Suite)

Allegro moderato

Transcription by
C. F. FISET



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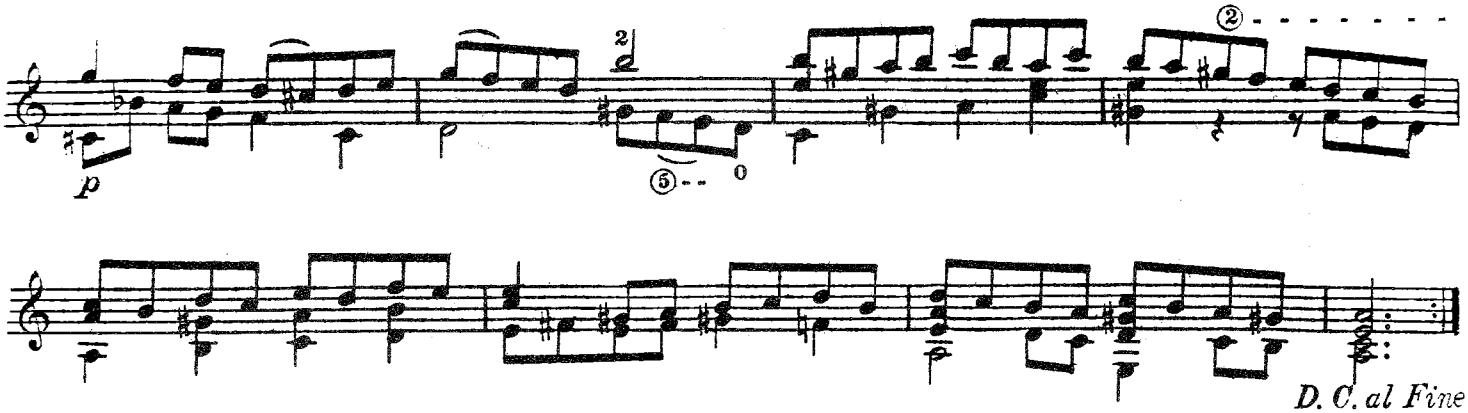

To Dr. C. F. Fiset

Sarabande

(From the Fifth English Suite)

Transcription by
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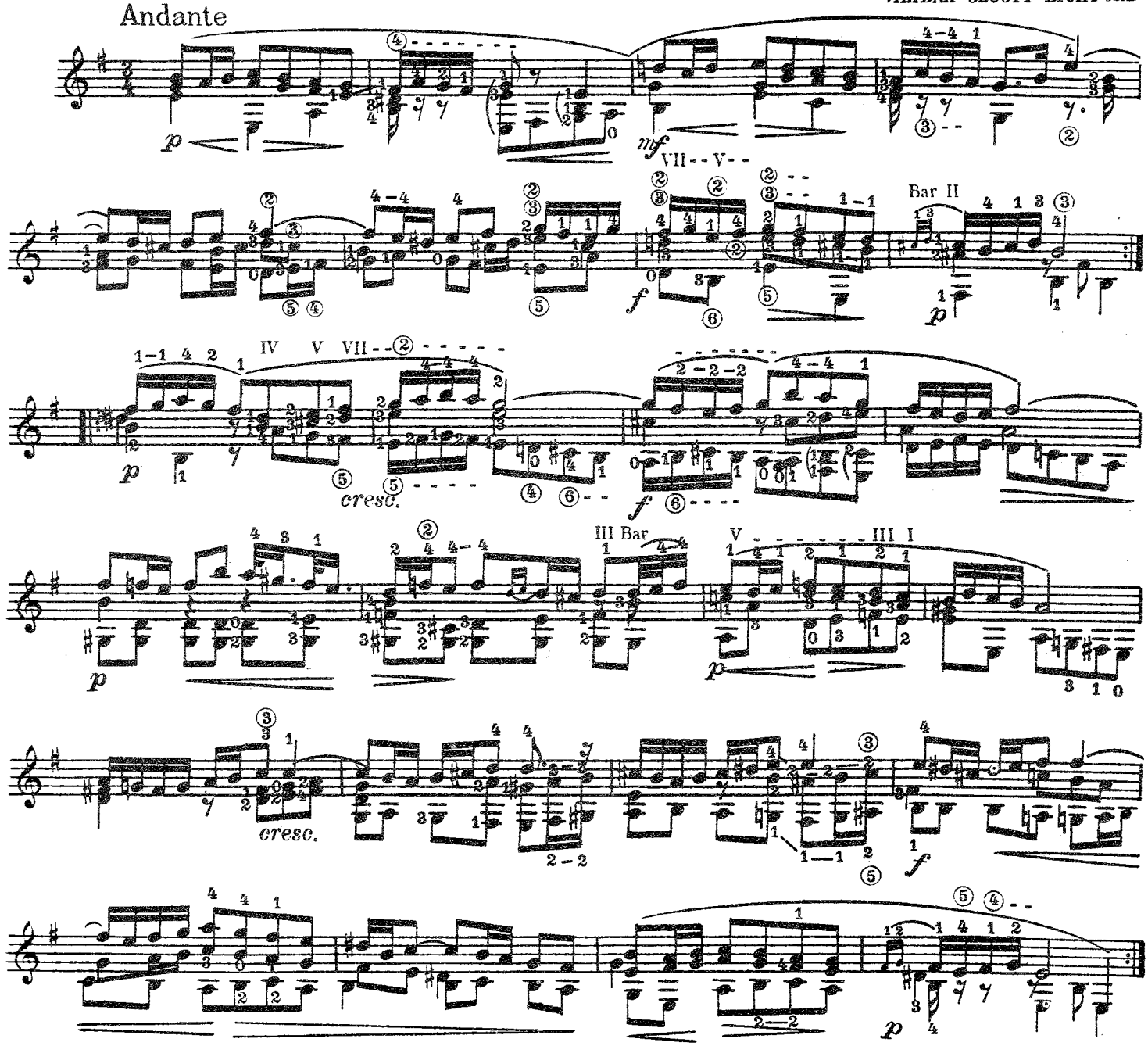
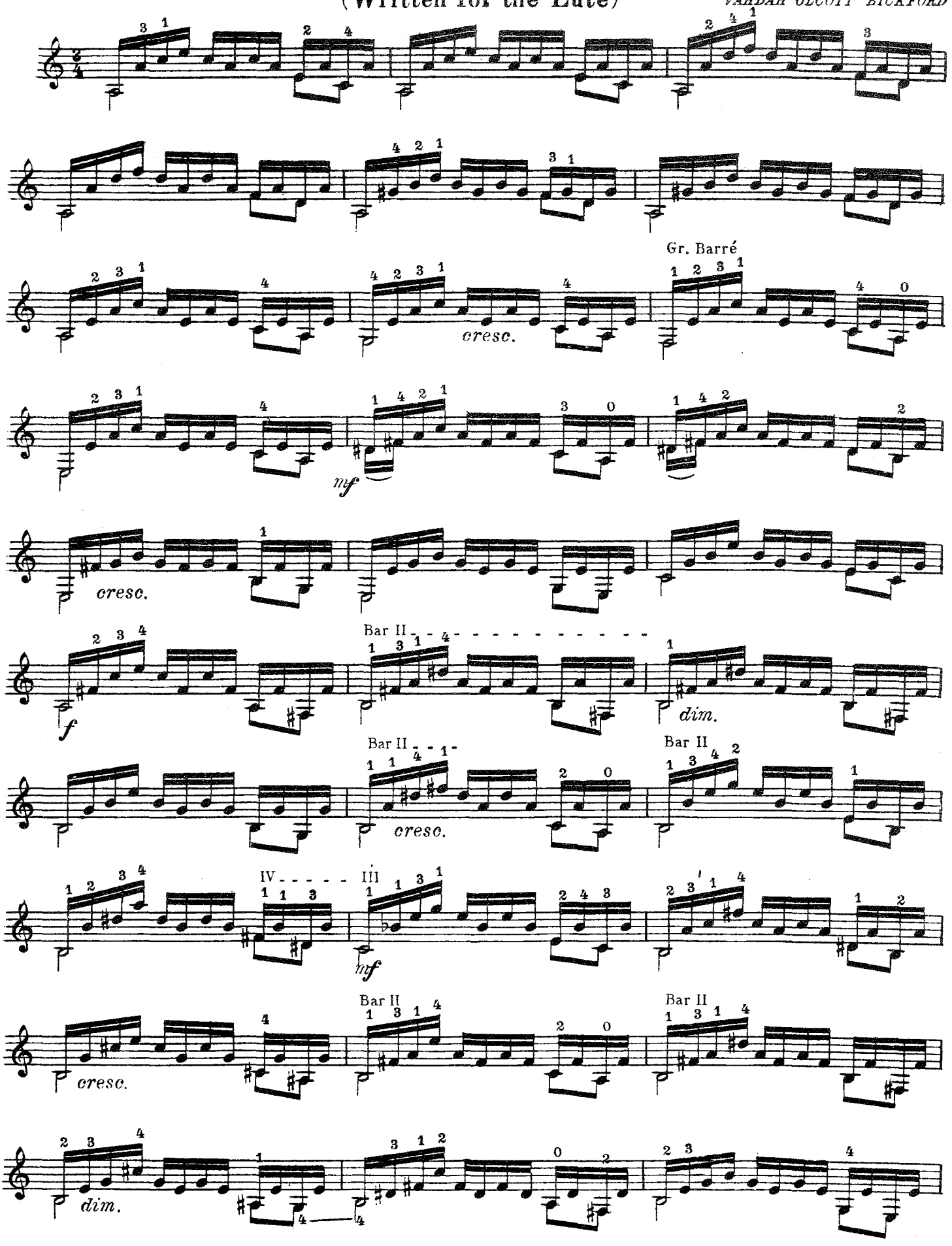
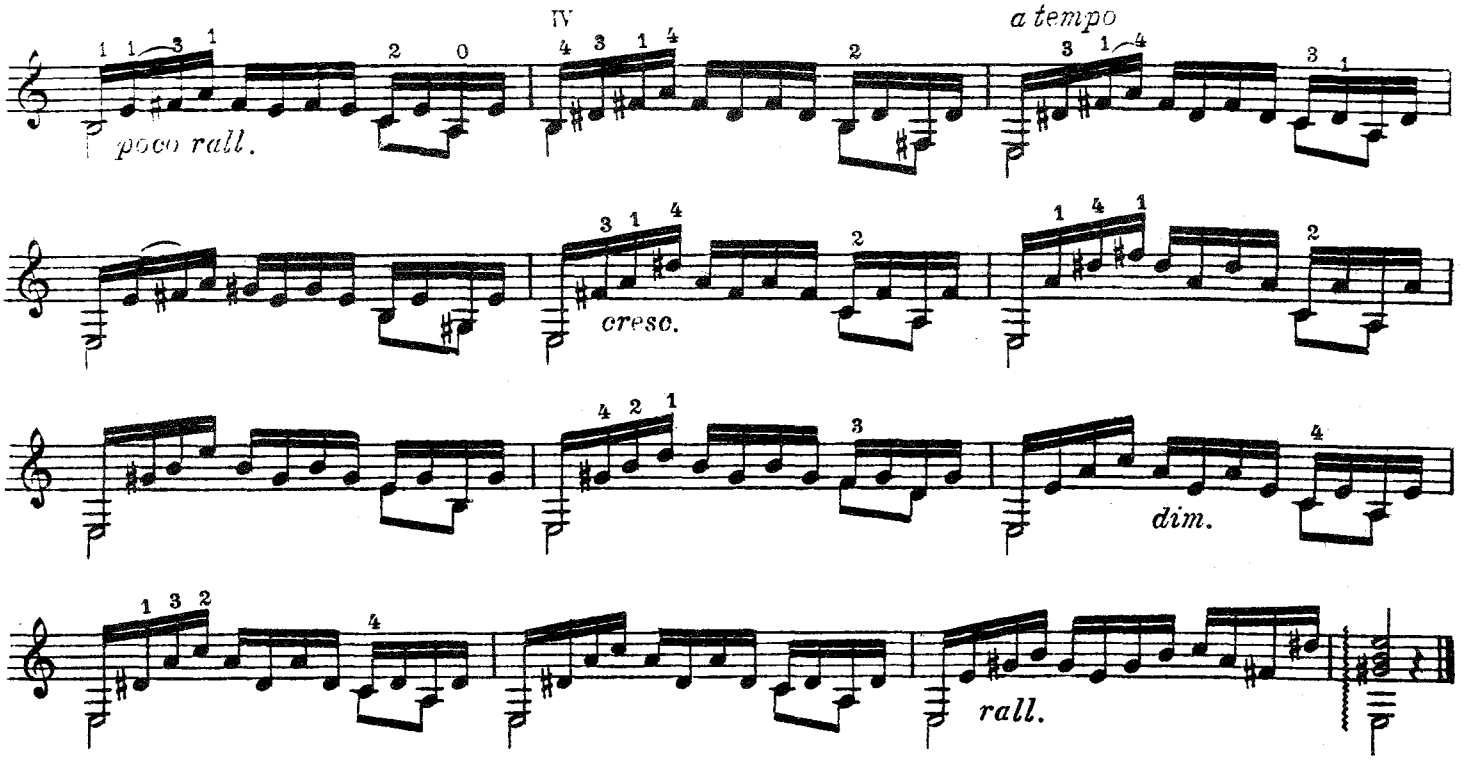
Andante



Präludium
(Written for the Lute)

Edited for Guitar by
VAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD





Bourrée

(From Suite for Lute in E Minor)

Transcription by
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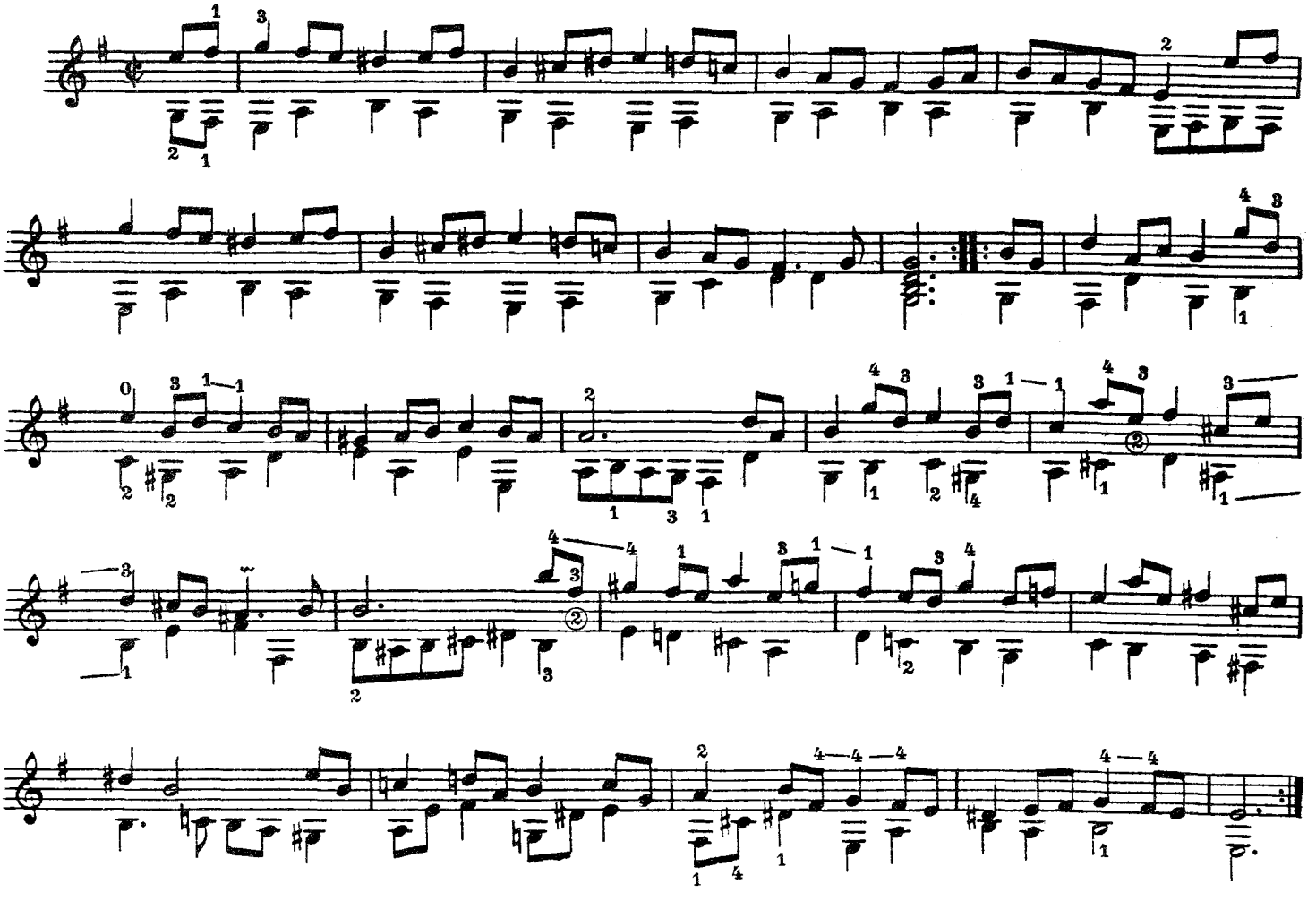
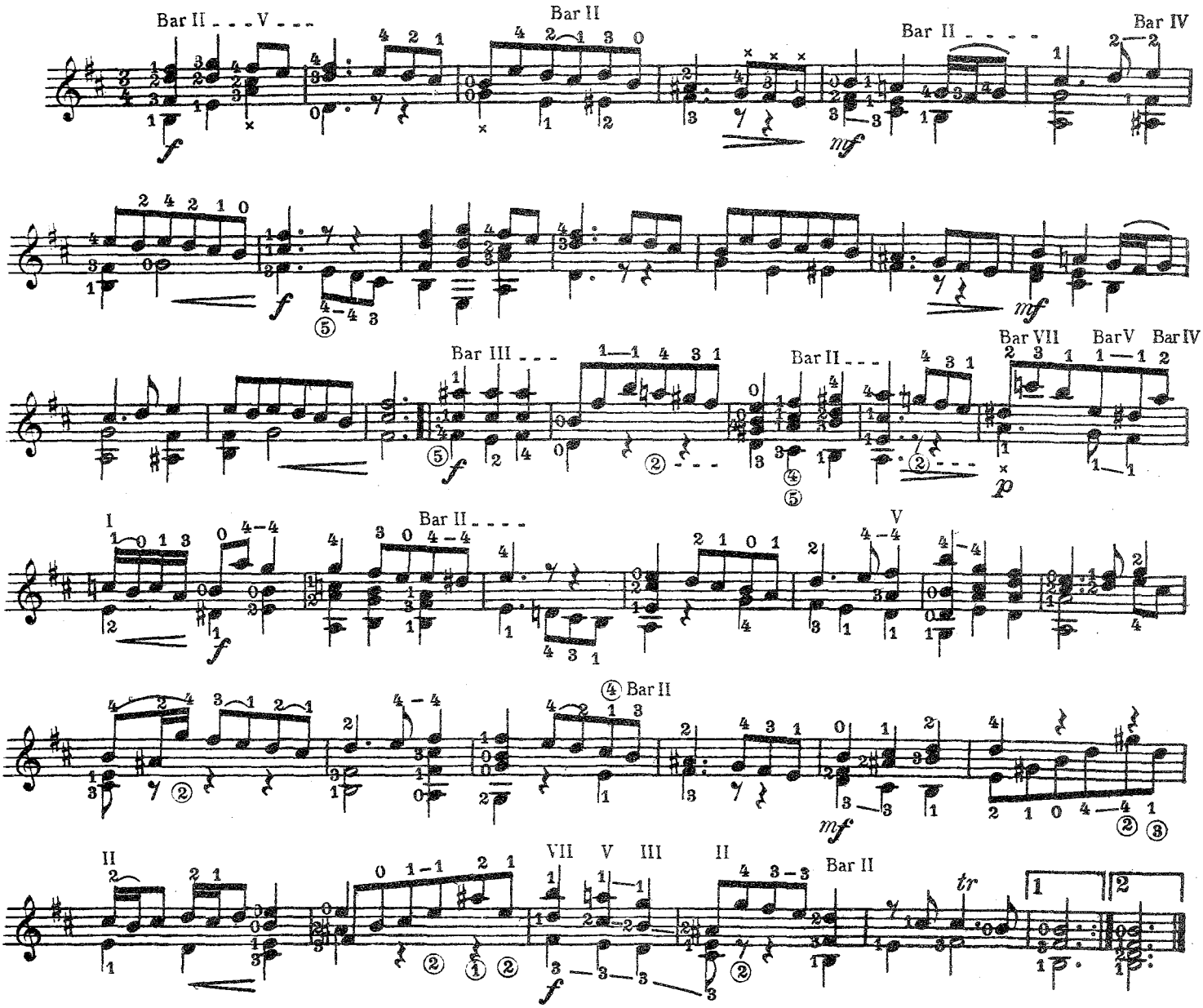


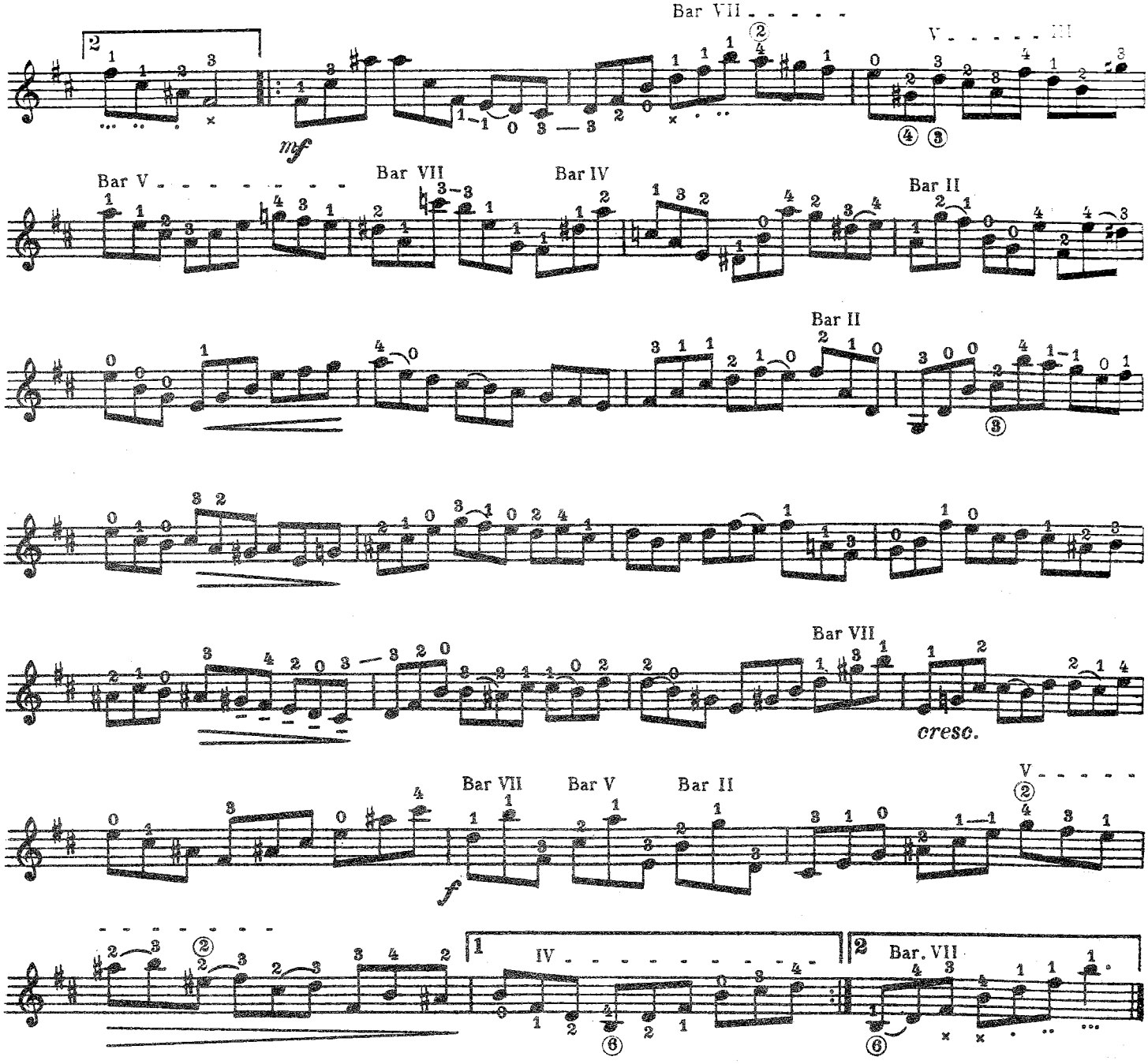
Suite in B Minor

I
SARABANDE

Transcription by
ERWIN SCHWARTZ - REIFLINGEN
Edited by
WAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD

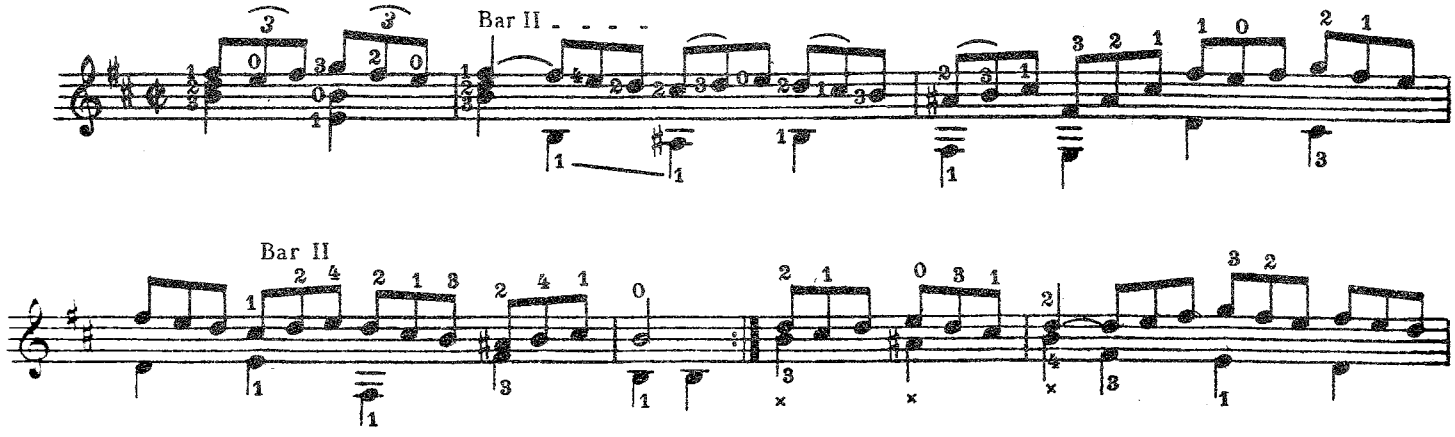


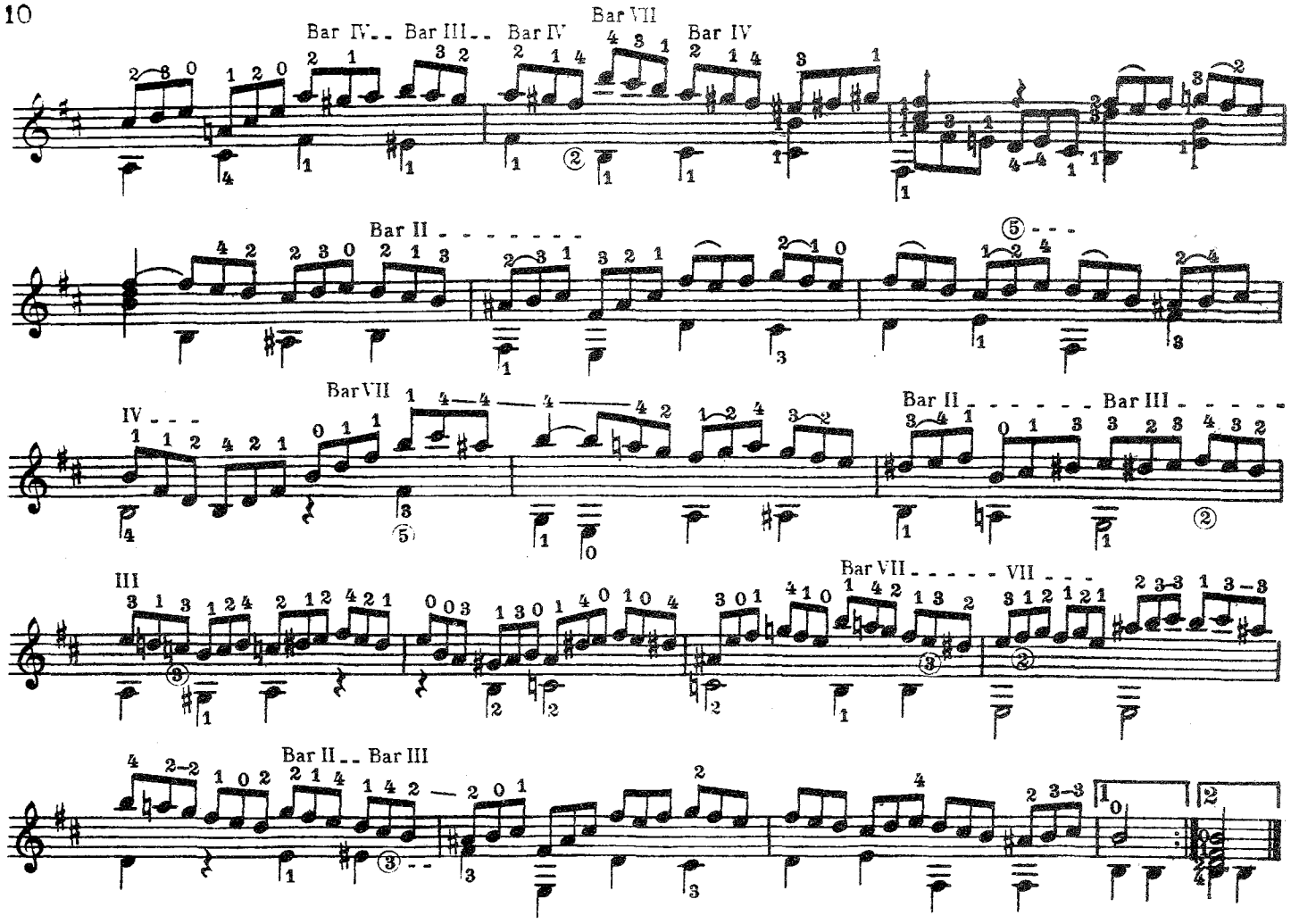
II
Double



III

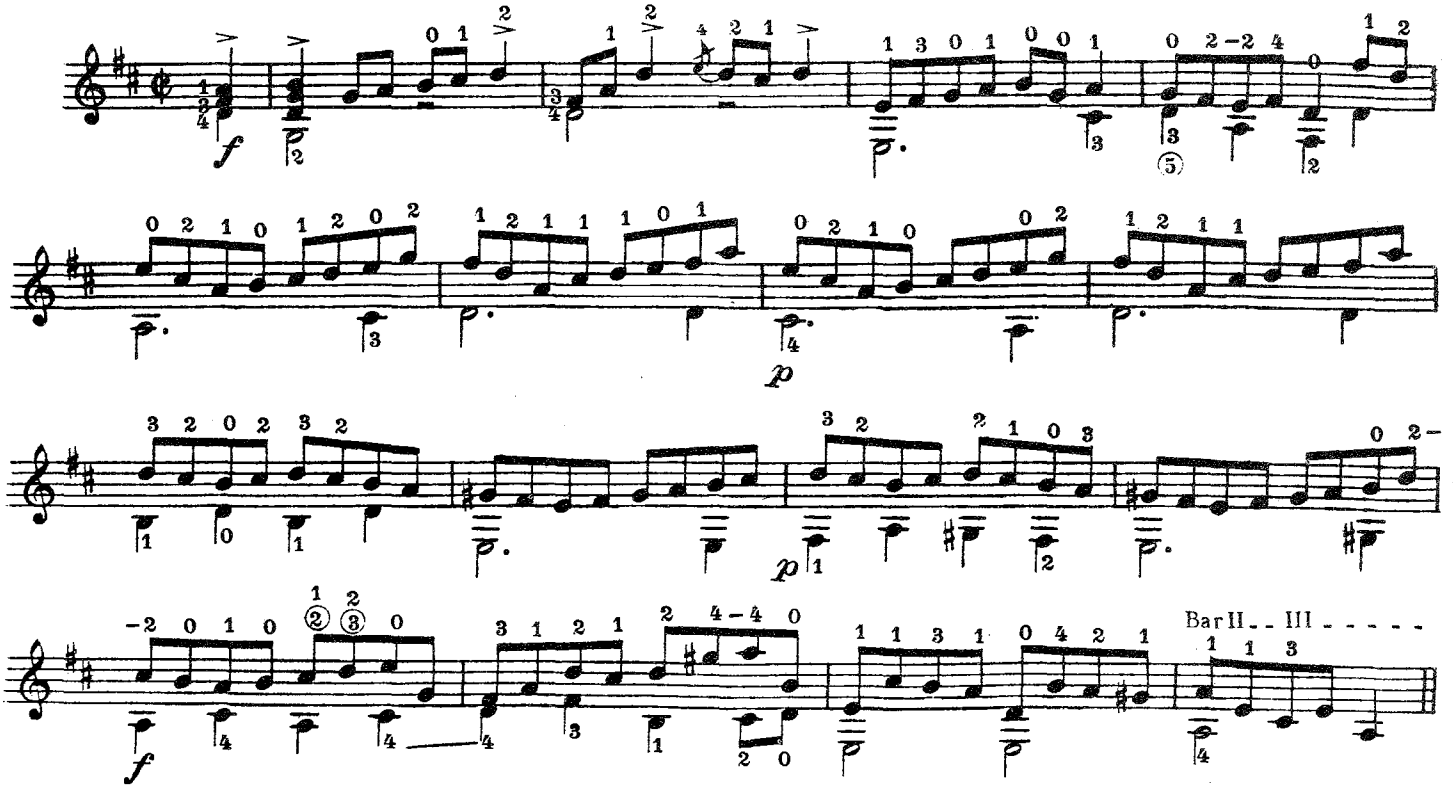
Gavotte en Rondeau




Bar IV
Bar III
Bar IV
Bar VII
Bar IV
Bar II
Bar VII
Bar II
Bar III
Bar VII
VII
Bar II
Bar III

III

Bourrée


f
p
p
f
Bar II
III

V Bar - - -

V Bar - - - -

Bar II - - - -

III - - - Bar III

Musette

Transcription by
ERWIN SCHWARTZ - REIFLINGEN

6th String tuned to D

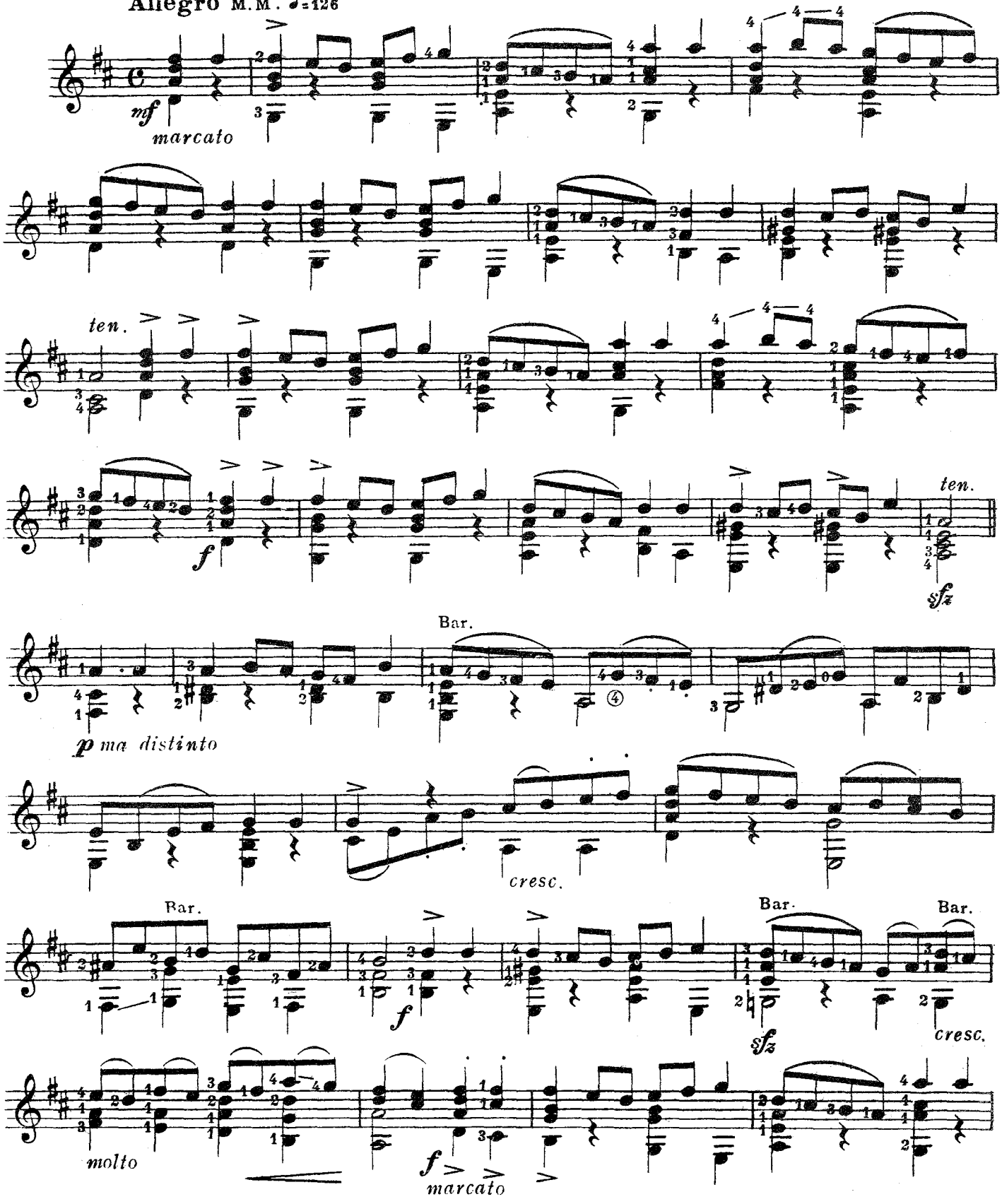
Bar II - - - -

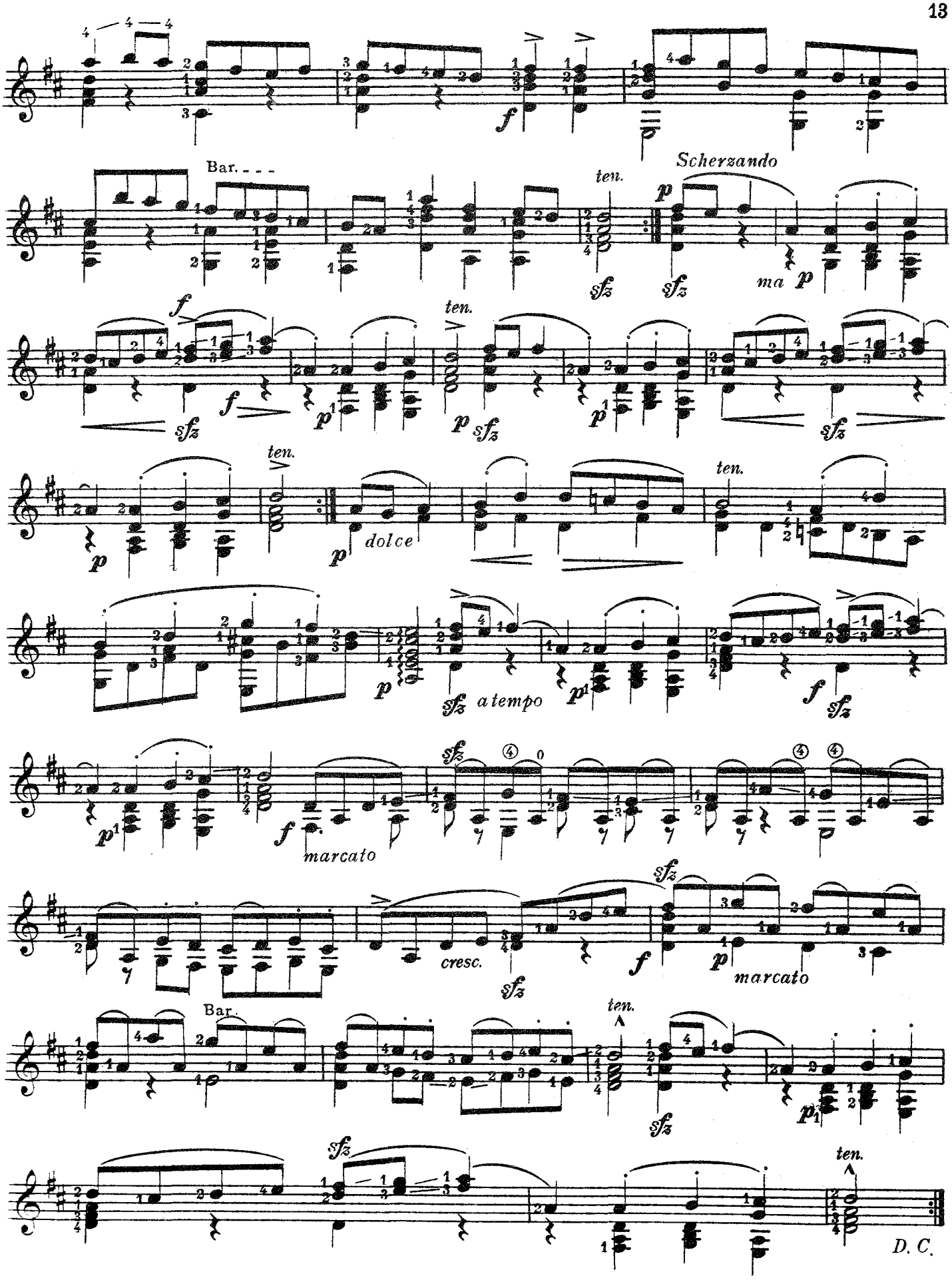
To my husband

Gavotte in D Major

From the 6th CELLO SONATA

J. S. BACH
Transcription by
Vahdah Olcott Bickford



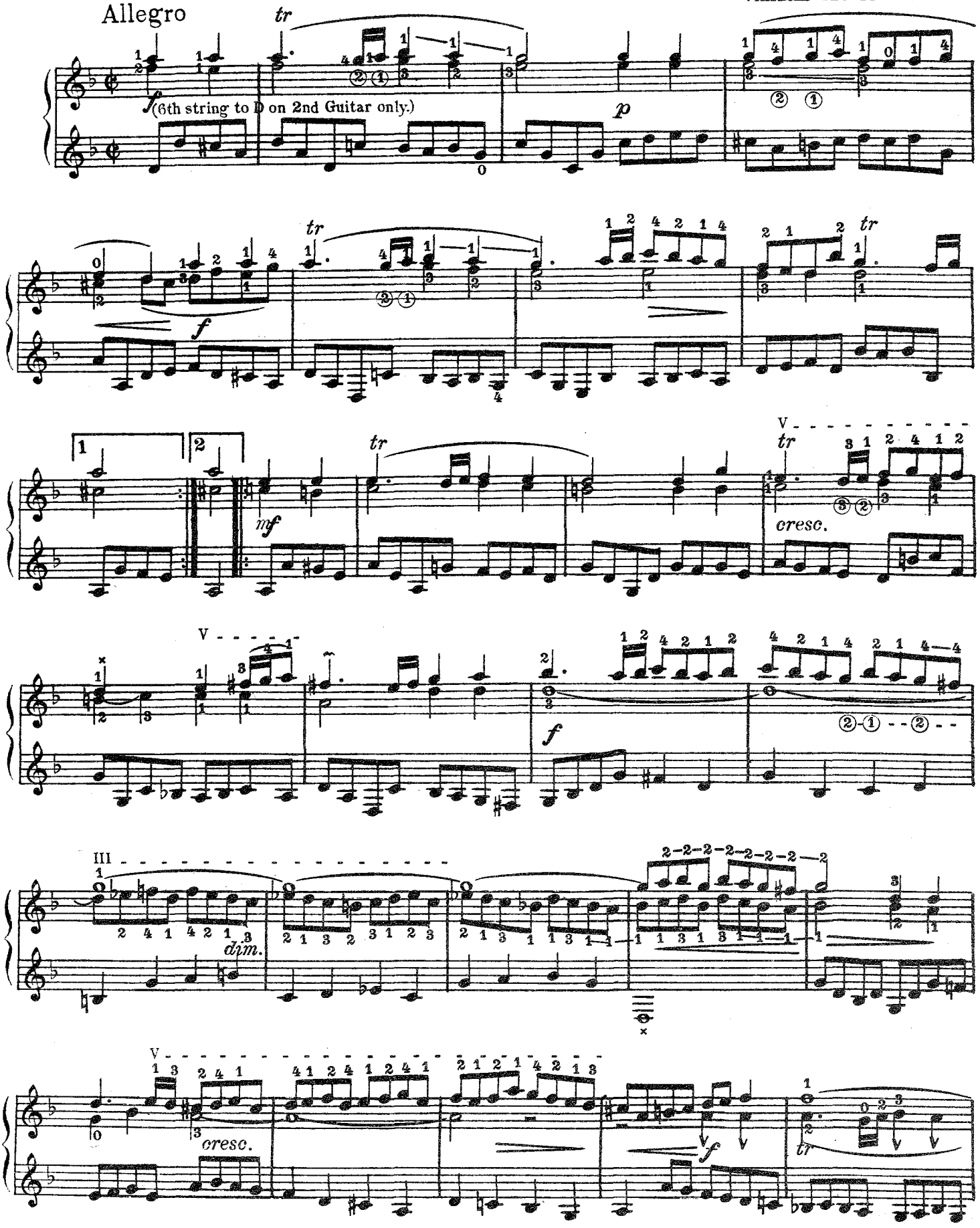

Bar.
Scherzando
ten.
sfz
ma p
dolce
atempo
marcato
cresc.
D. C.

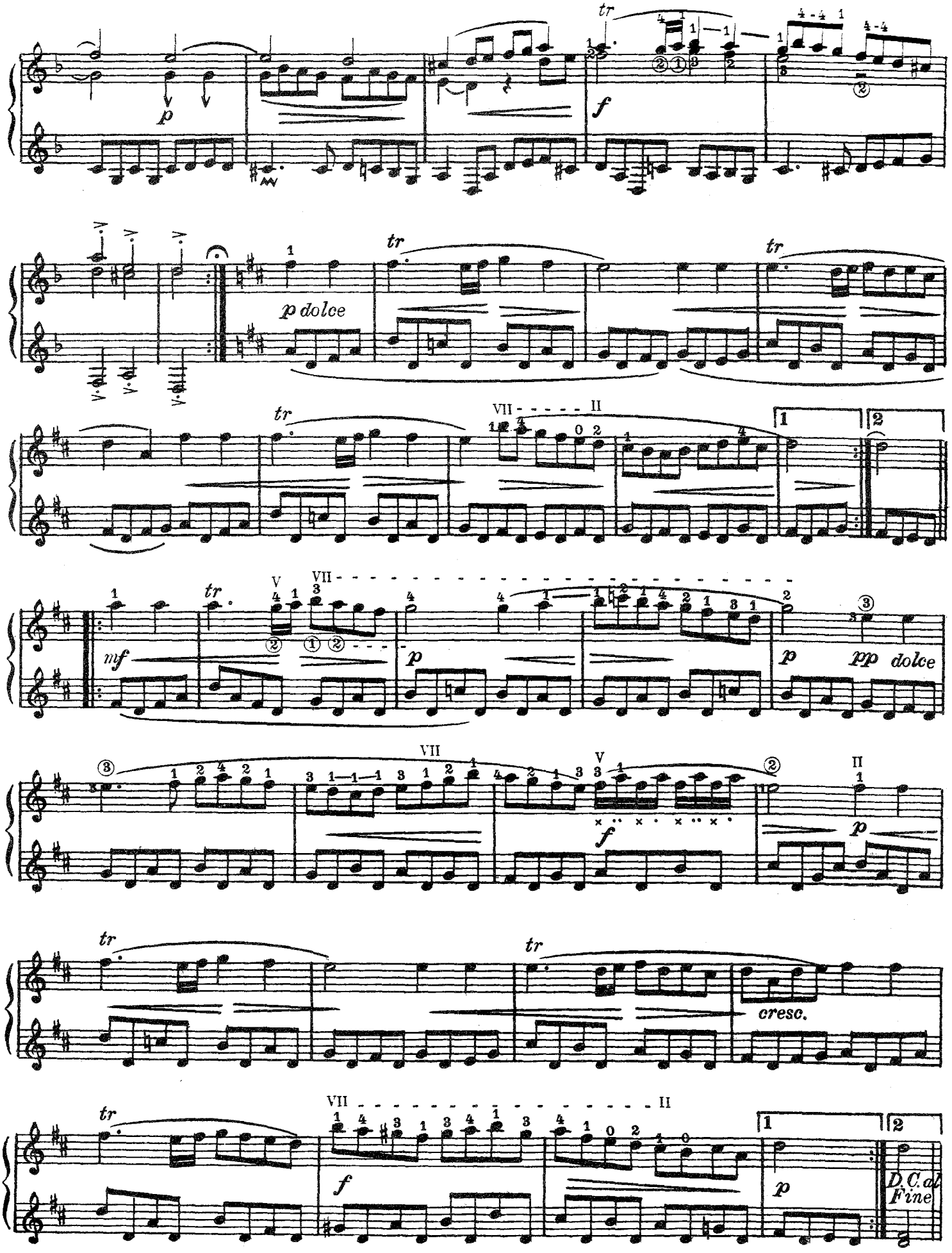
To the distinguished Argentine Guitarist, Señor Vicente Gascon

Gavotte

From the Sixth English Suite

Transcription by
VAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD




p
f
tr
p dolce
VII
II
mf
V
pp dolce
cresc.
D.C. al Fine

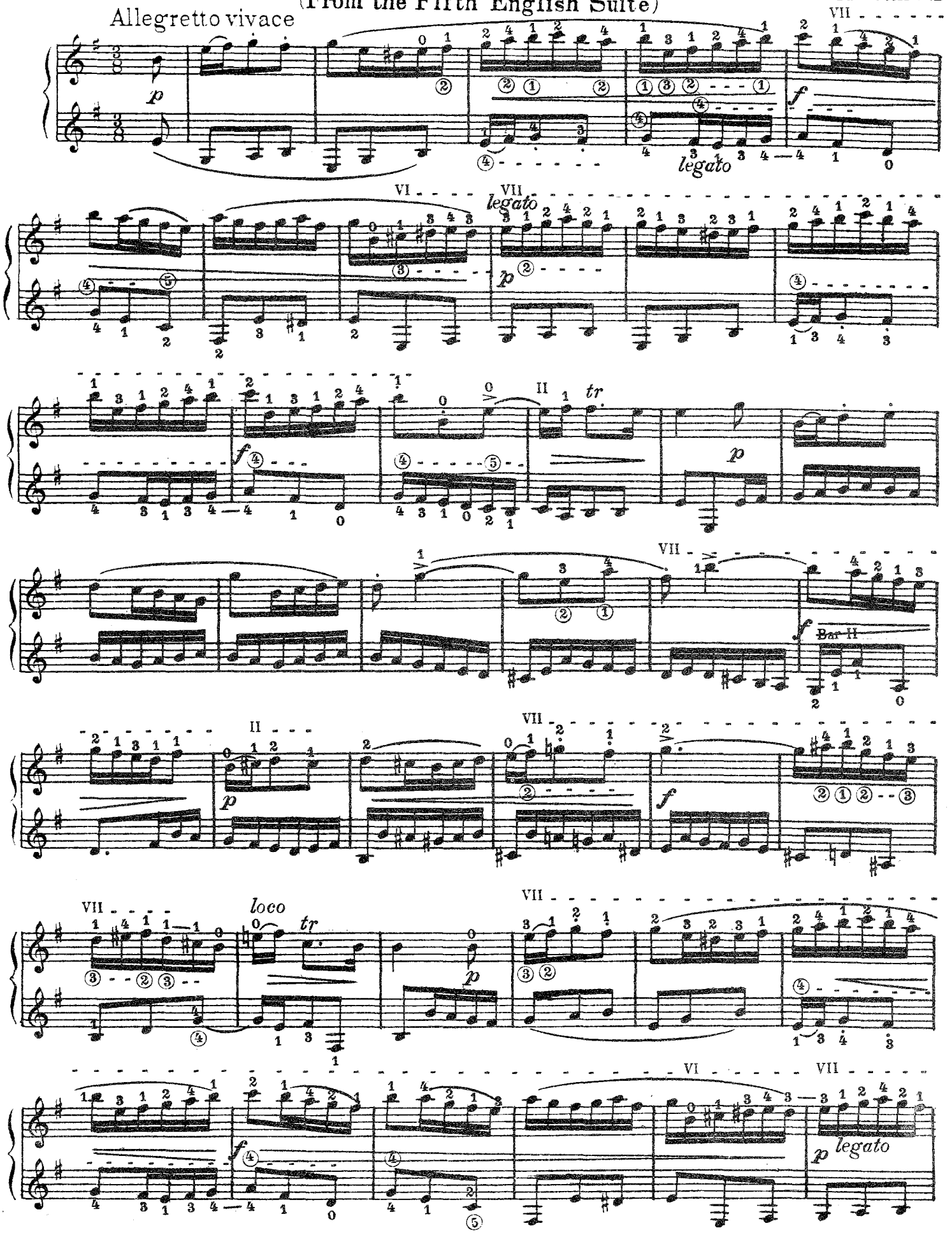
To Amelia and Ray Peebler

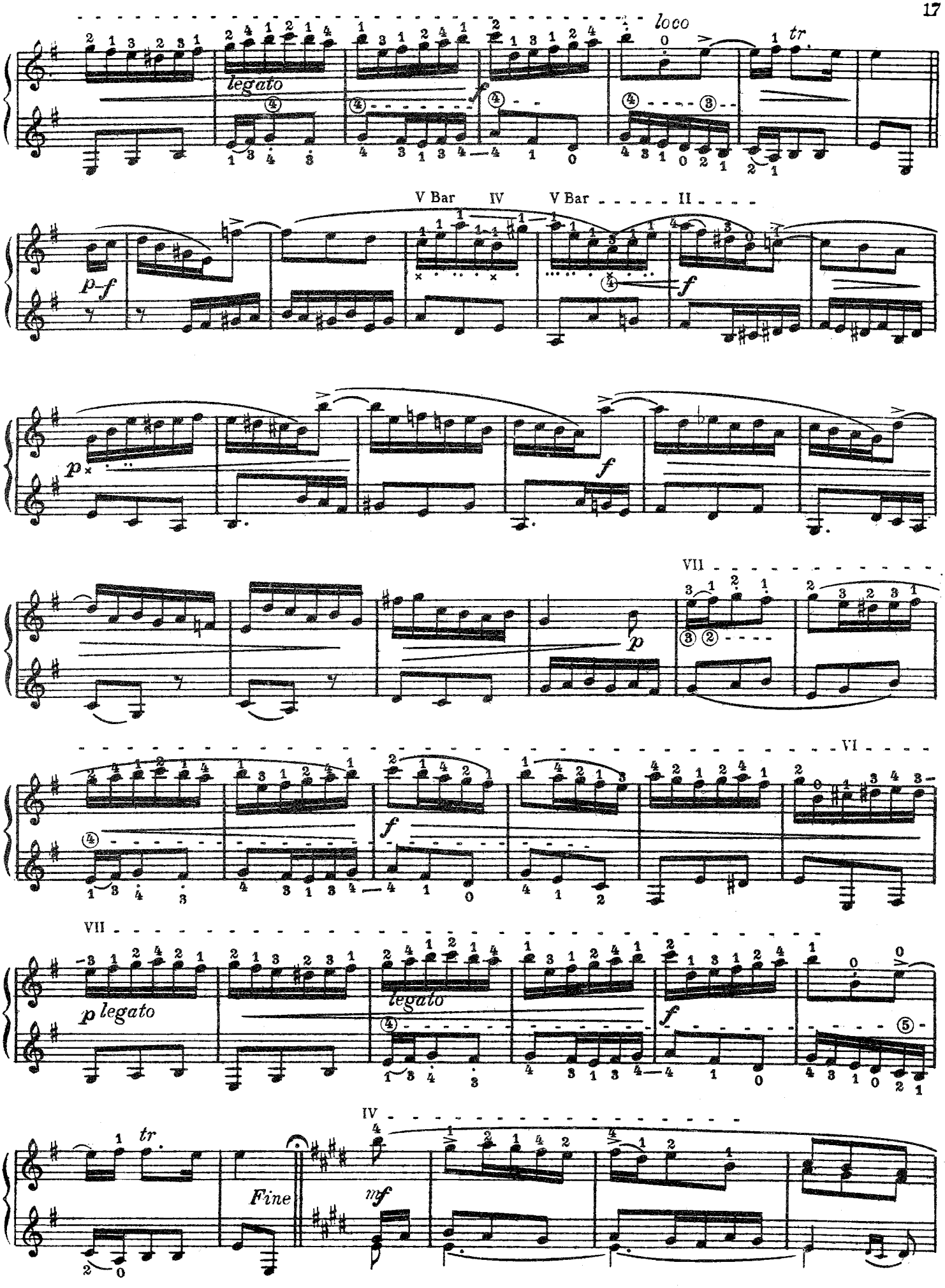
Passepied

(From the Fifth English Suite)

Transcription by
VAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD

Allegretto vivace




loco
tr
legato
f
V Bar
IV
V Bar
II
p–f
f
p
f
p
VII
VI
f
VII
p legato
legato
f
IV
tr
Fine
mf

IV

mf *p* *mf* *tr* *p* *p* *D.C.al Fine*

To Marta Tejedor

March

Transcription by
VAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD

Allegro (M. M. ♩ = 60)

f

6th String to D on 2nd Guitar only

tr *ff* *f*

cres - - - cen - - - do

Bar II

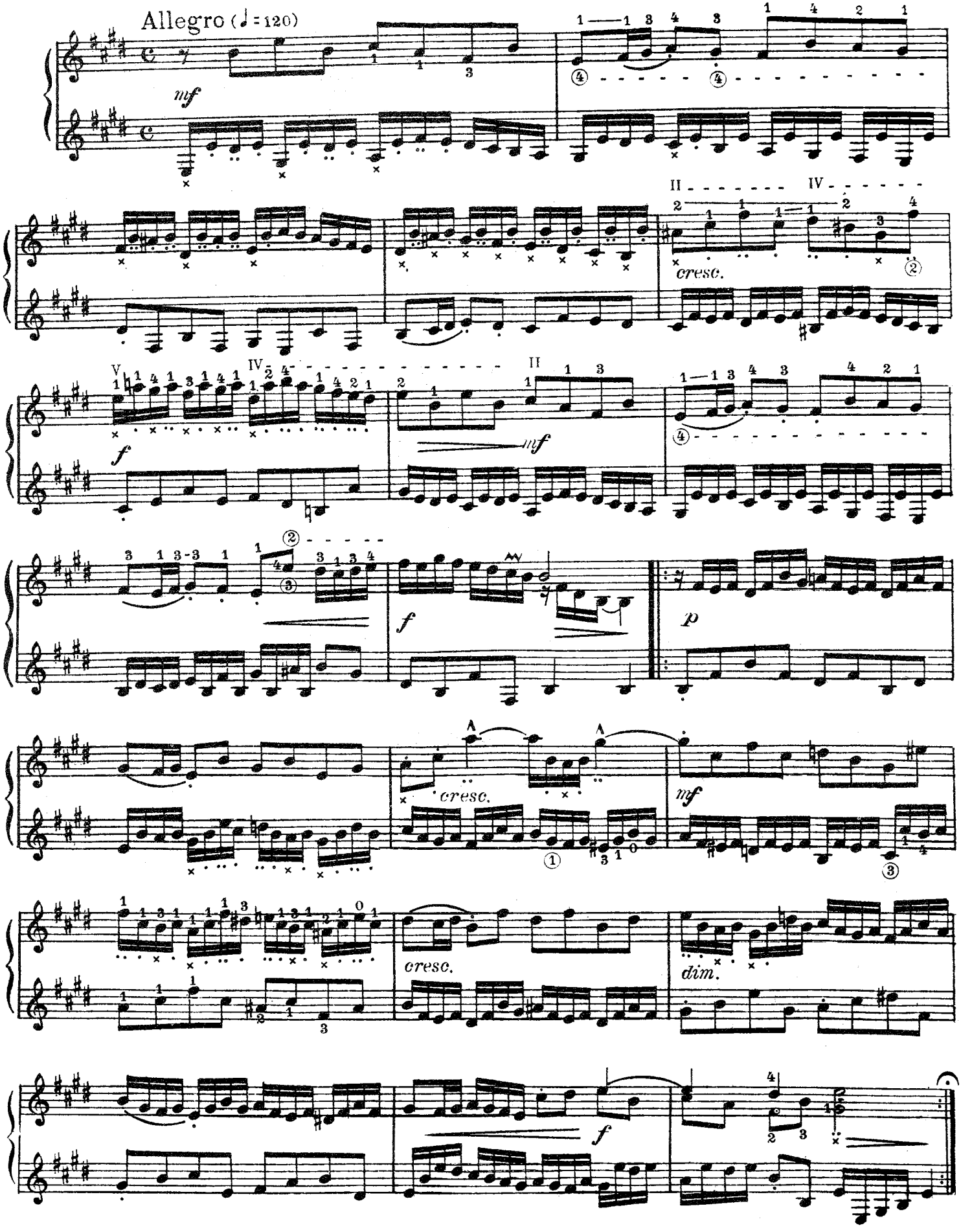
ff

To Amelia and Roy Poehler

Prelude

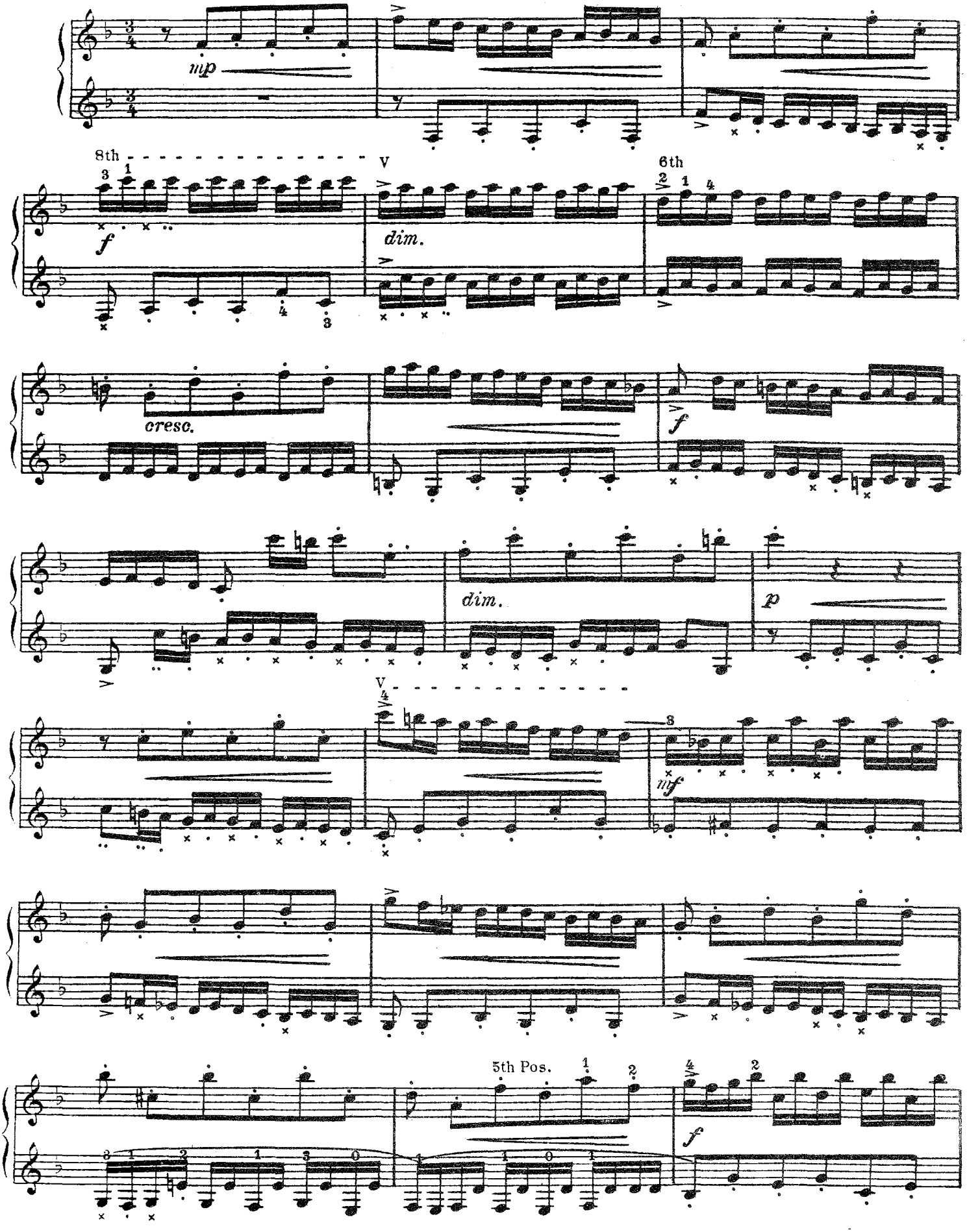
Transcription by
VAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD

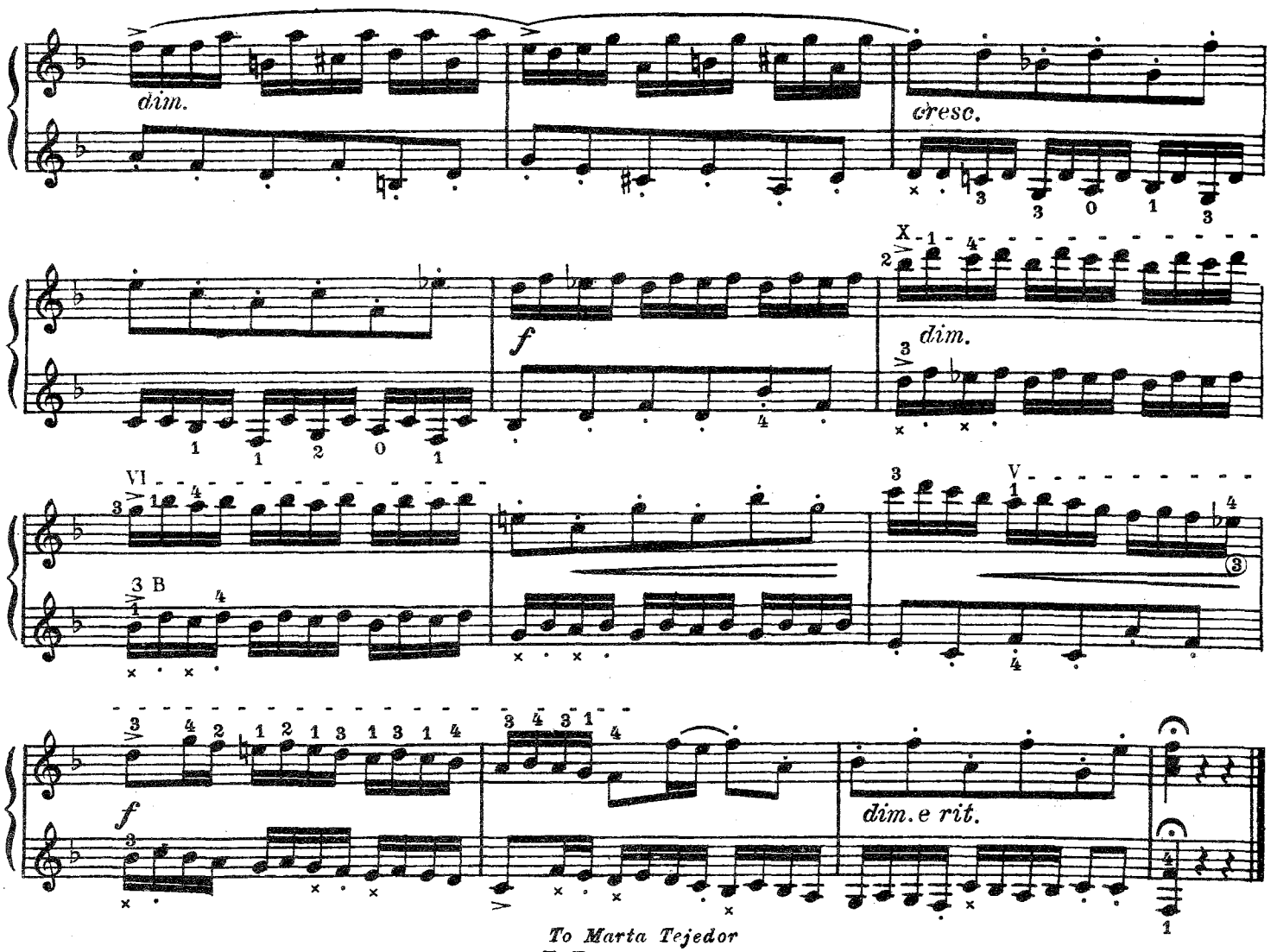
Allegro (♩ = 120)



Invention No. 8

Transcription by
ZARH MYRON BICKFORD



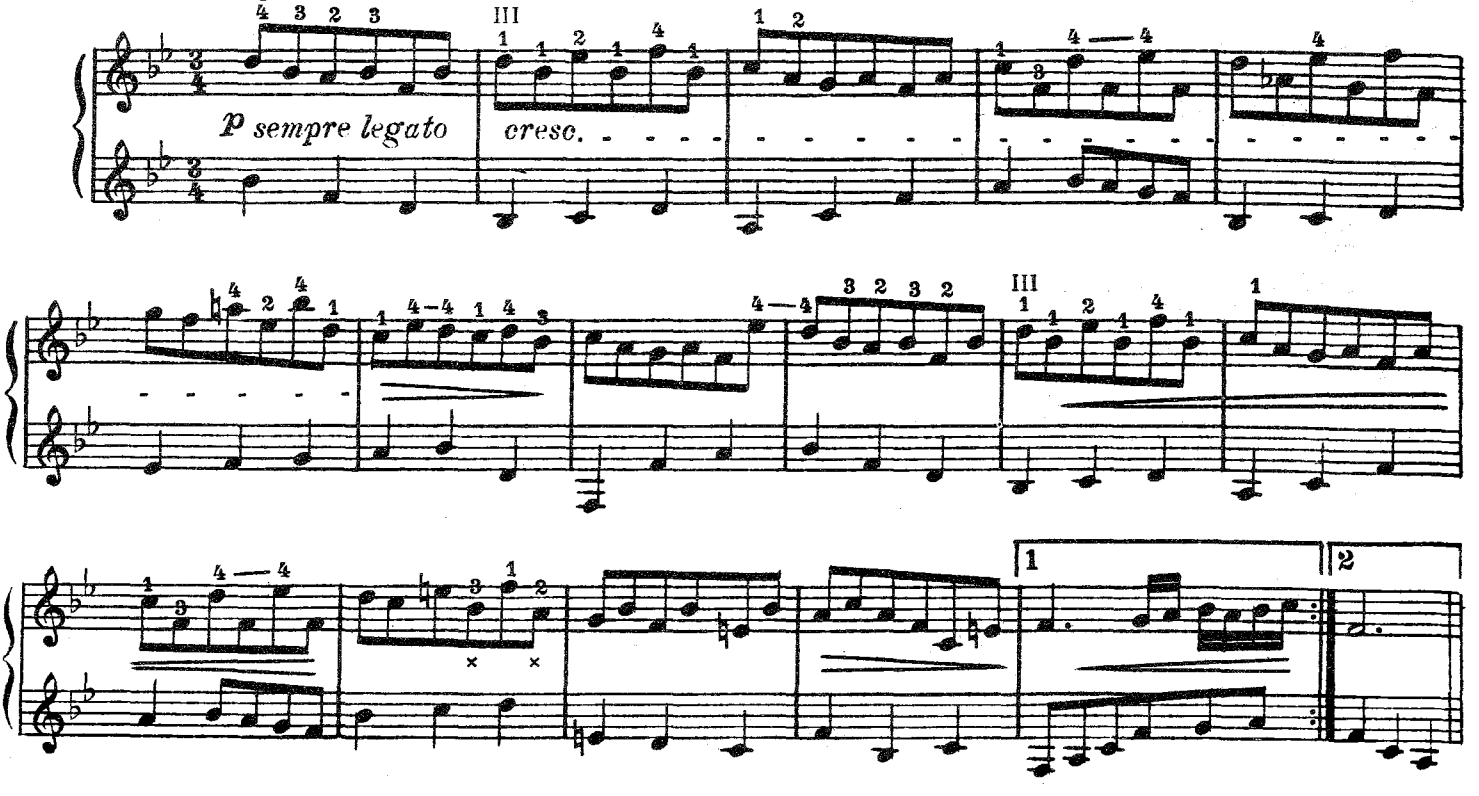


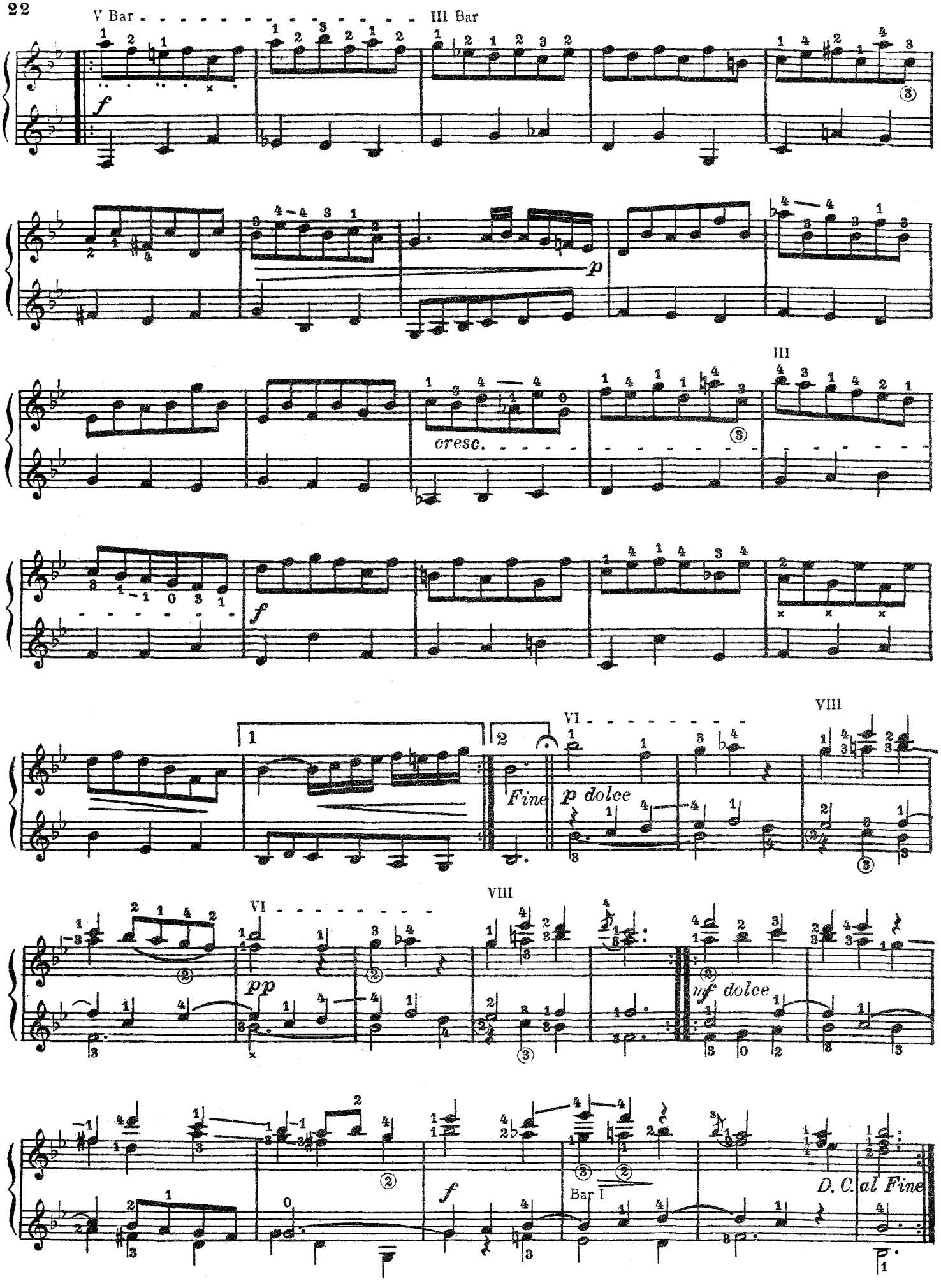
To Marta Tejedor

Menuet

Allegretto animato **(From the First Partita)**

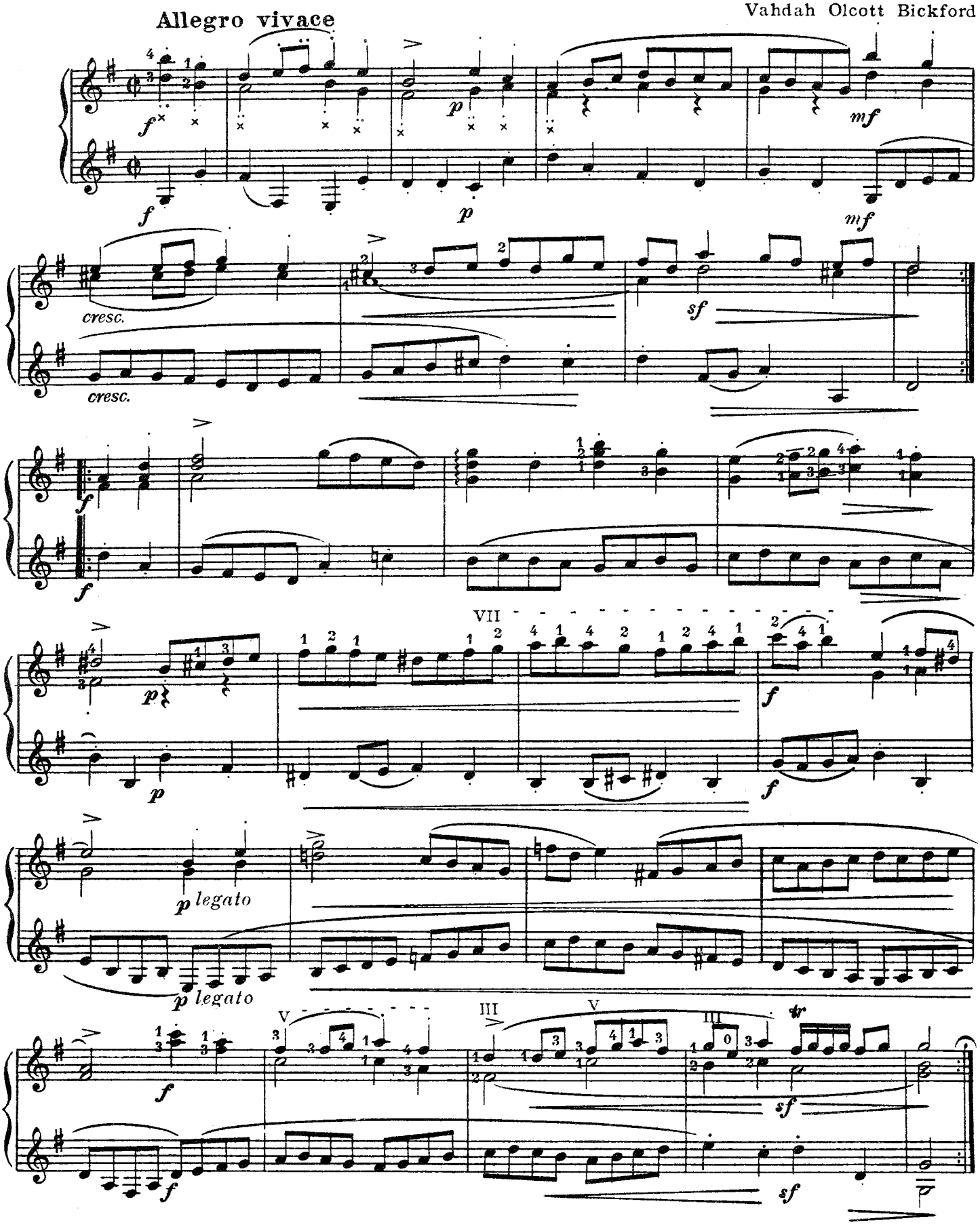
Transcription by
VAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD




V Bar
III Bar
f
p
cresc.
III
f
VI
VIII
1
2
Fine
p dolce
VI
VIII
pp
mf dolce
f
Bar I
D. C. al Fine

Gavotte

GUITAR DUET **(From the FIFTH FRENCH SUITE)**

J. S. BACH
Transcription by
Vahdah Olcott Bickford

Allegro vivace