GuitarArchive

Silvius Leopold Weiss

Suite No. 4
(Kennard)

GA 209

SCHOTT

NOTE

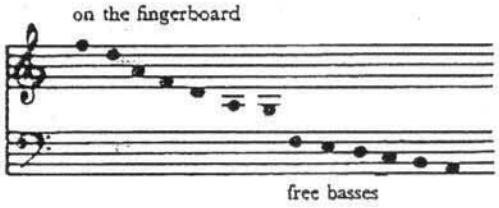
SYLVIUS LEOPOLD WEISS was born in Breslau in 1686 and died in Dresden in 1750. He came of a family of lutenists; his father Johann Jacob was a talented musician and theorbo player; his brother Johann Sigismond was a well-known lutenist as was also his own son Johann Adolphus.

As a young man Sylvius Leopold went with the Polish Prince Alexander Sobieski to Rome, living there for some six years until the prince's death in 1714 when Sylvius Leopold went back to Düsseldorf after a short stay at the Court of Hesse-Cassel.

In 1717 he obtained the post of Court Lutenist to the Elector of Saxony and resided thereafter in Dresden. He was included in the band of the twelve best musicians which that Court sent to Vienna in 1718.

Ernst Theophile Baron, a contemporary lutenist, writes in his book on the lute (*Historisch-theoretisch und practische Untersuchung des Instruments der Lauten, 1727*) that Weiss was famous for his ability to improvise and that few organists could play fugues as well as Weiss was able to do on his lute. He is said to have competed in improvisation while at Dresden with J. S. Bach who was a personal friend and he was considered by many contemporaries as the greatest lute player of all times.

The lute on which Weiss played was that which came into favour towards the end of that instrument's period of popularity, the large 13-course lute tuned in the D minor tuning:



In general this instrument had 6 courses on the finger board, the remaining 7 being free basses, the tuning of which was altered according to the key of the piece. It is clear however from the tablature that Weiss's lute had 7 strings on the finger board although the 7th was rarely stopped.

Sylvius Leopold Weiss left 11 collections of solos, 10 trios, and 6 concertos, all of them at his death in 1750 being in Ms. tablature. Some have been of recent years transcribed into notation in publications such as *Das Erbe Deutscher Musik*.

The present transcriptions for the guitar have been taken from Ms. tablature in the British Museum.

In transcribing for the guitar Weiss's music for the 13-course lute some arrangement is necessary, and generally a transposition to another key. Many of these lute pieces when transposed can nevertheless be very faithfully presented on the guitar.

The manuscript carries no indication of tempo or expression so that those given in these transcriptions are editorial.

Deric Kennard

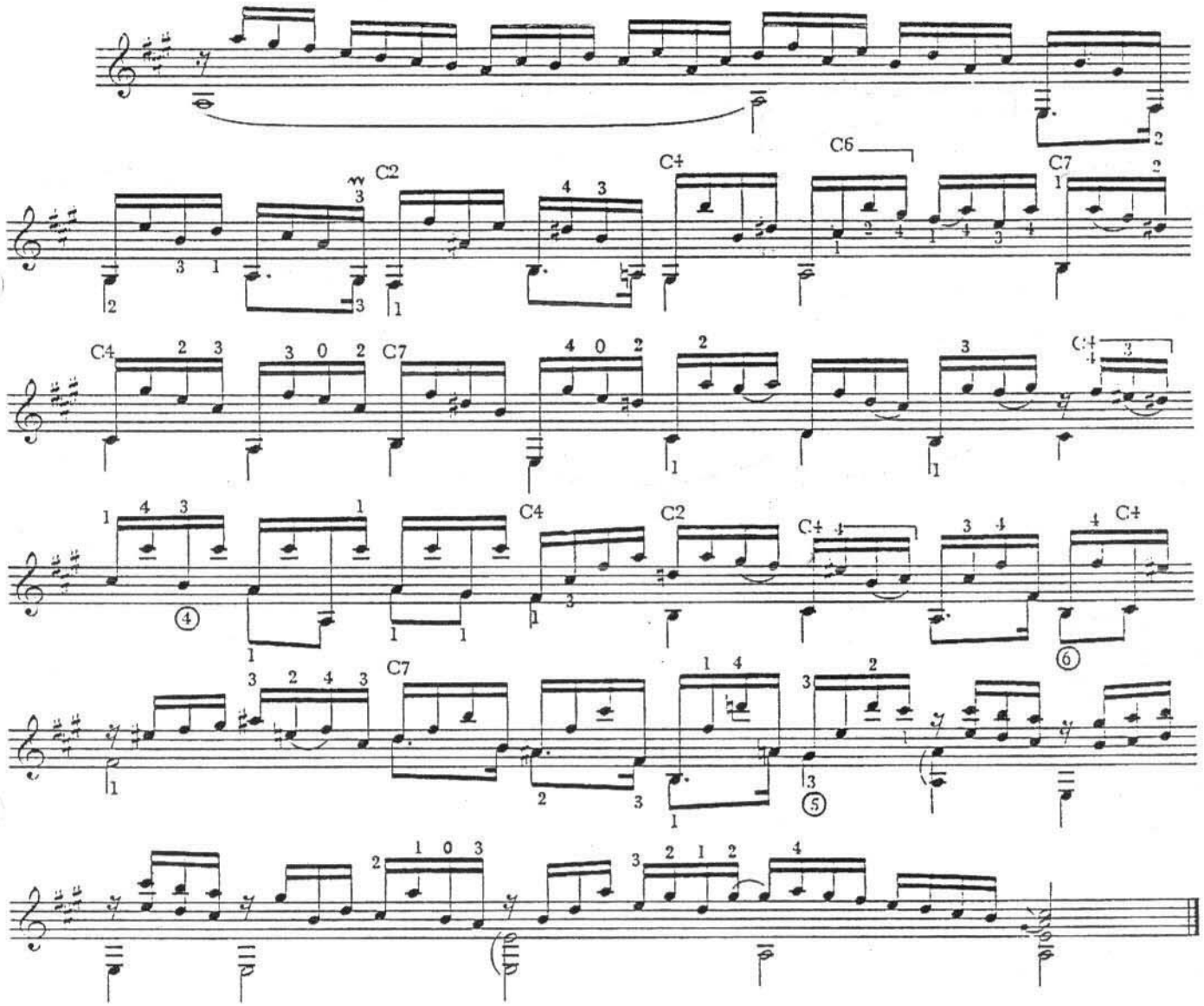
SUITE No. 4

(Original Key F)

Transcribed for the guitar from the lute tablature by Deric Kennard.

S. L. Weiss

PRELUDE



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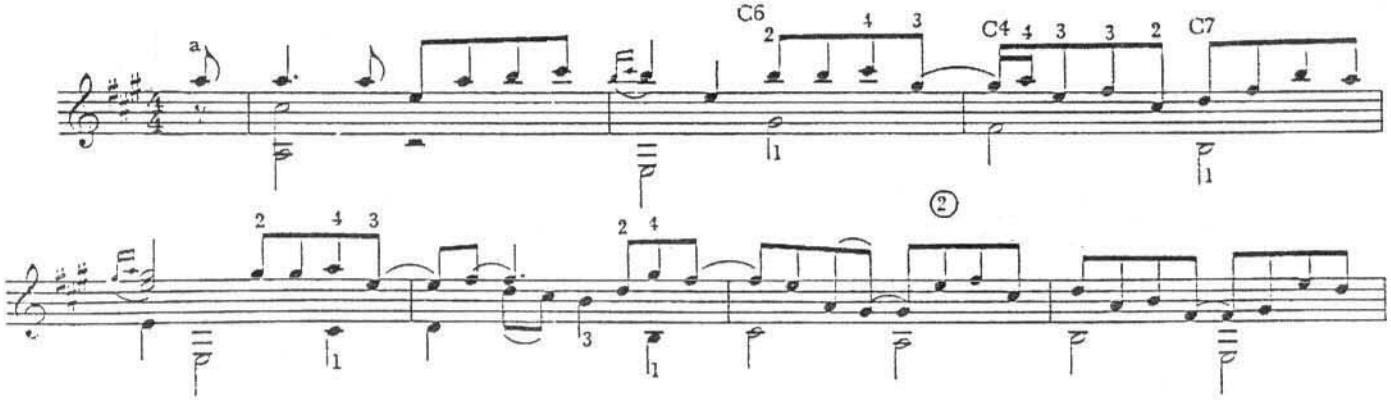

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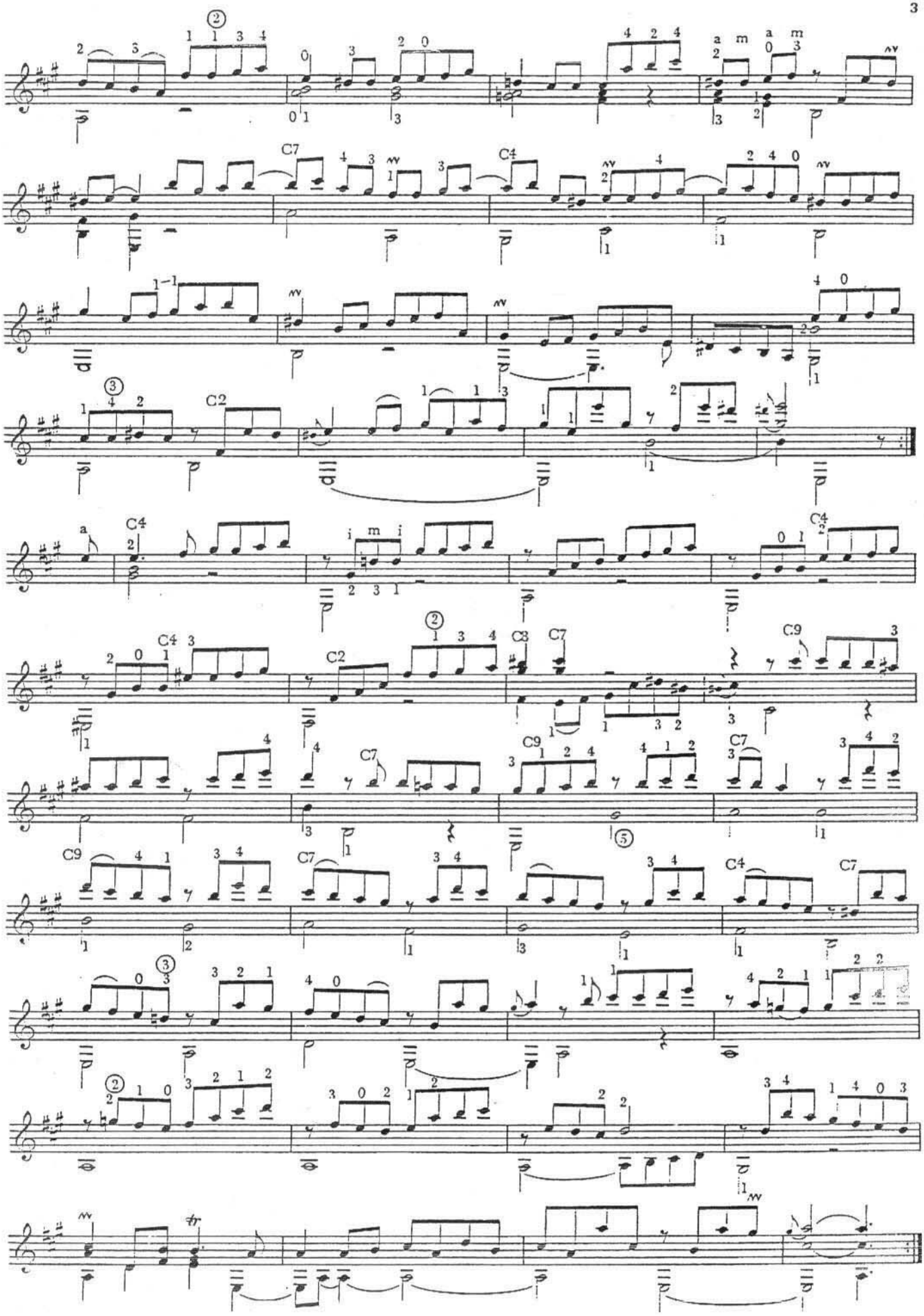
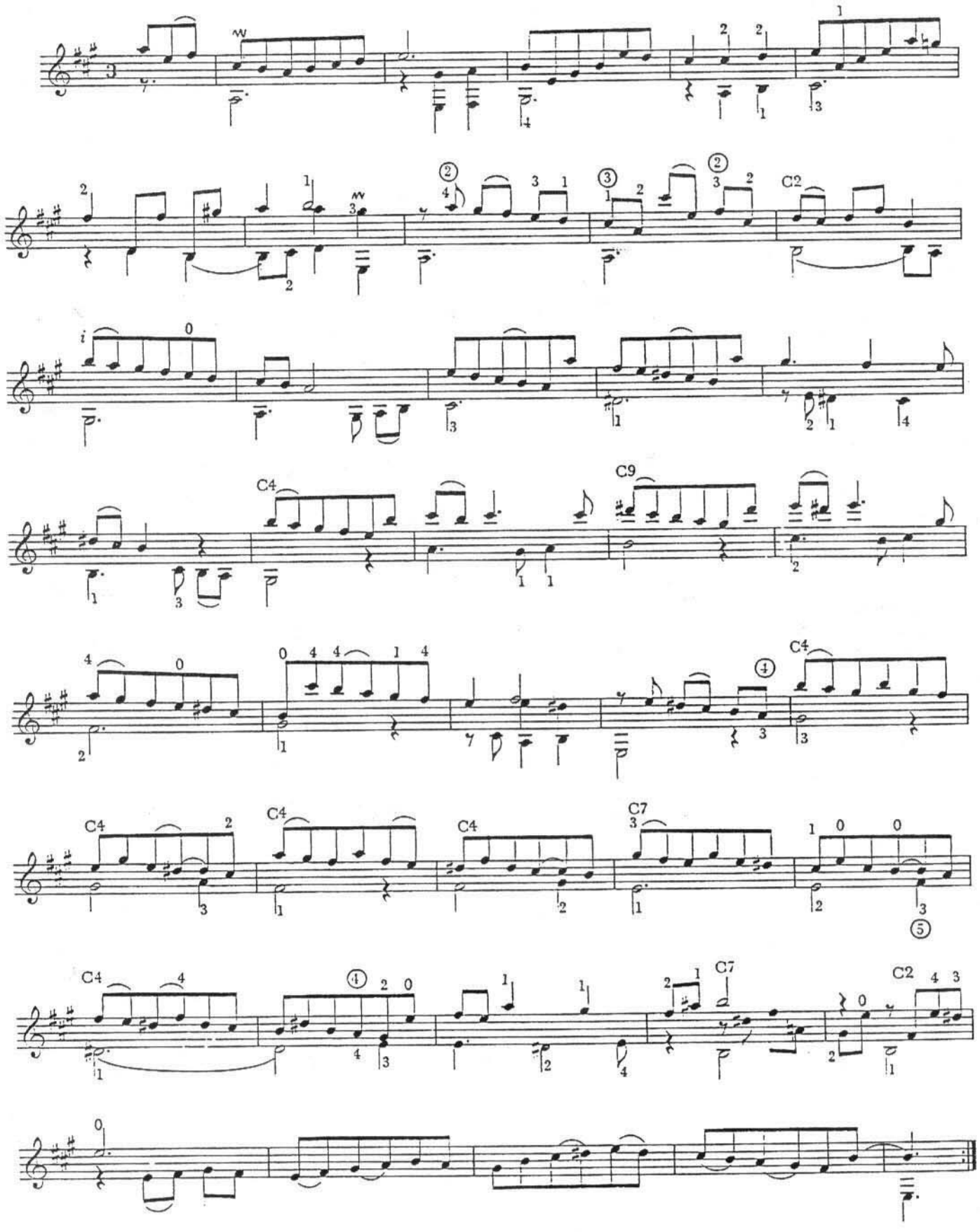
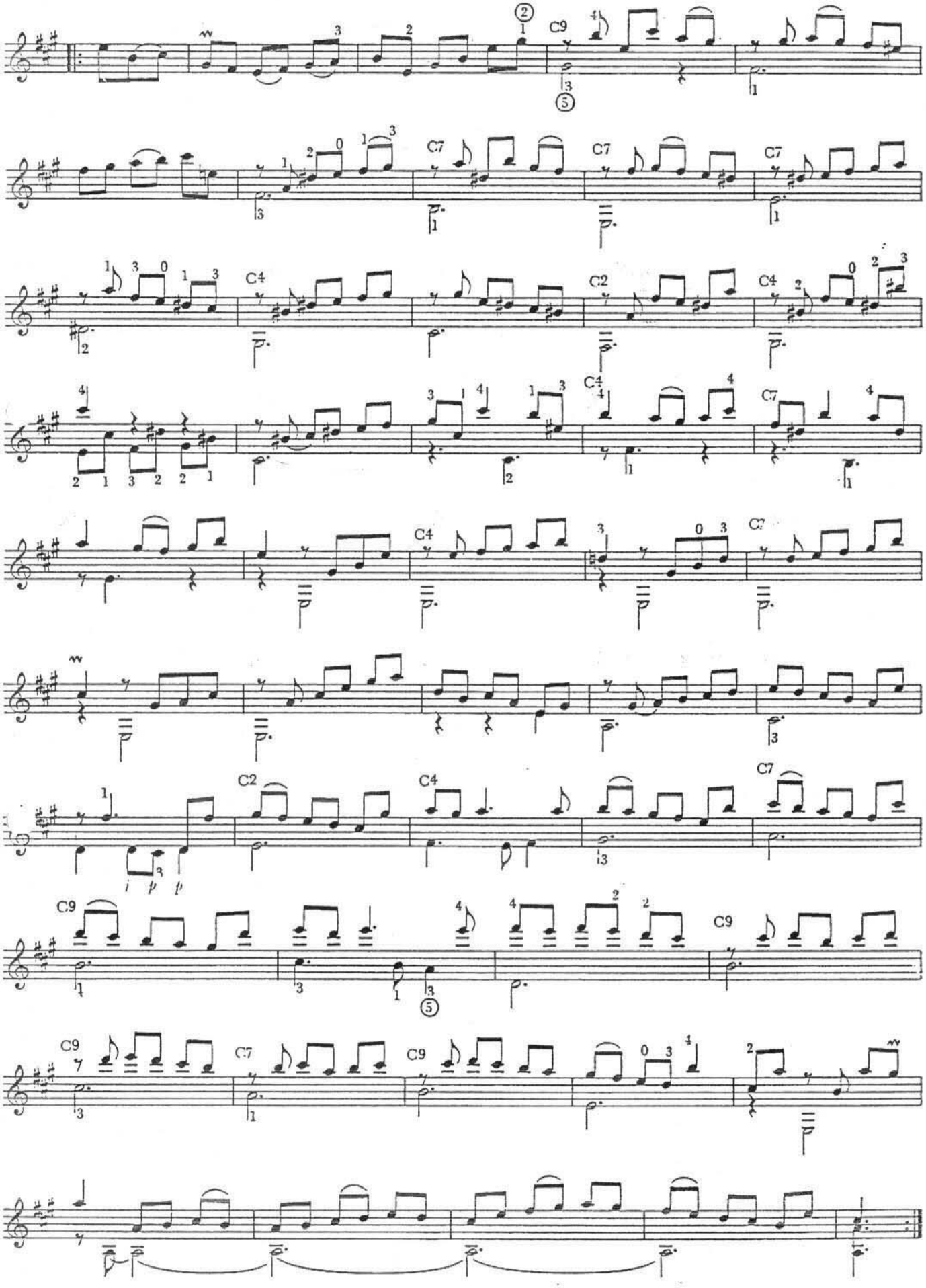


COURANTE

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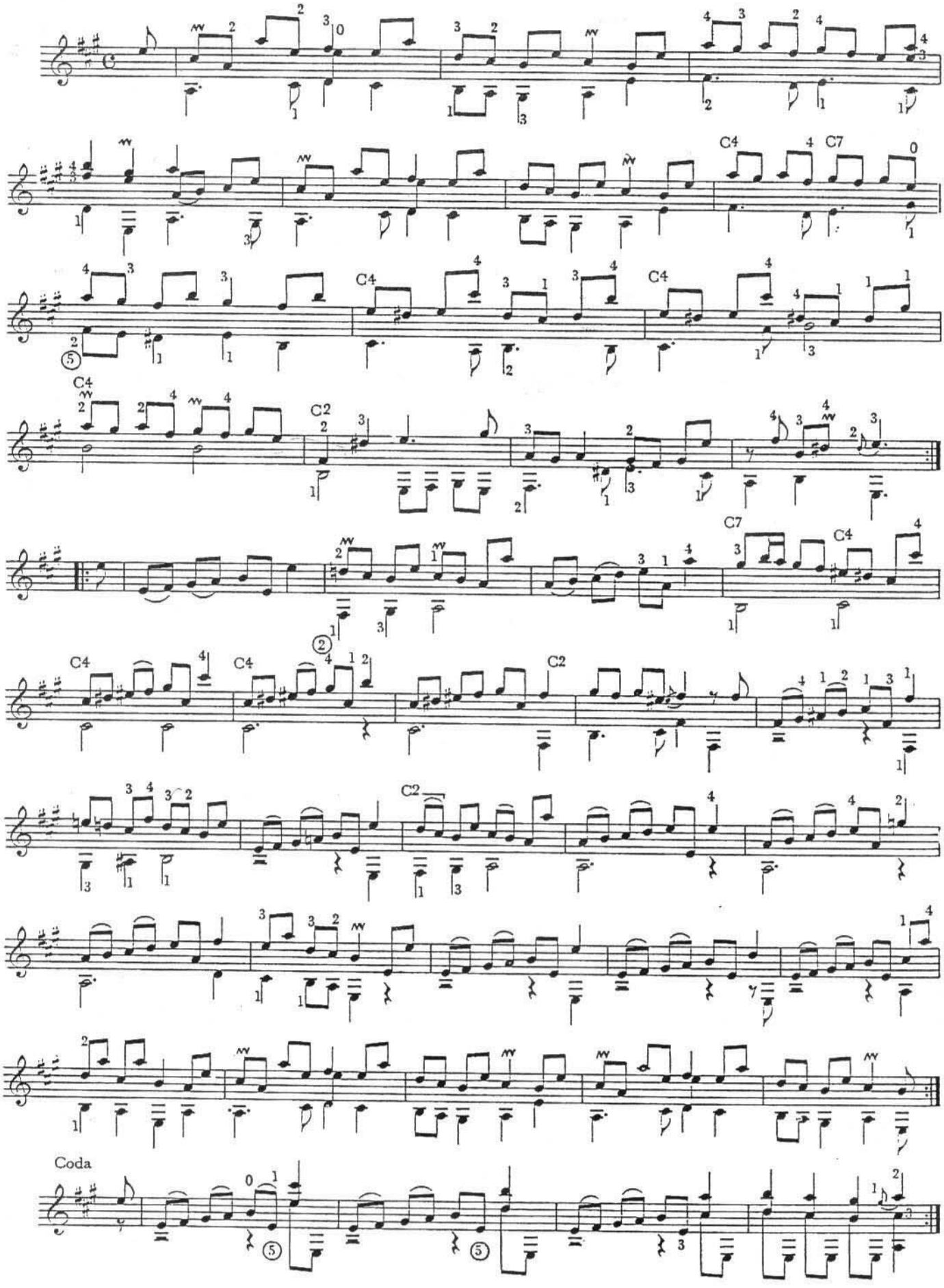

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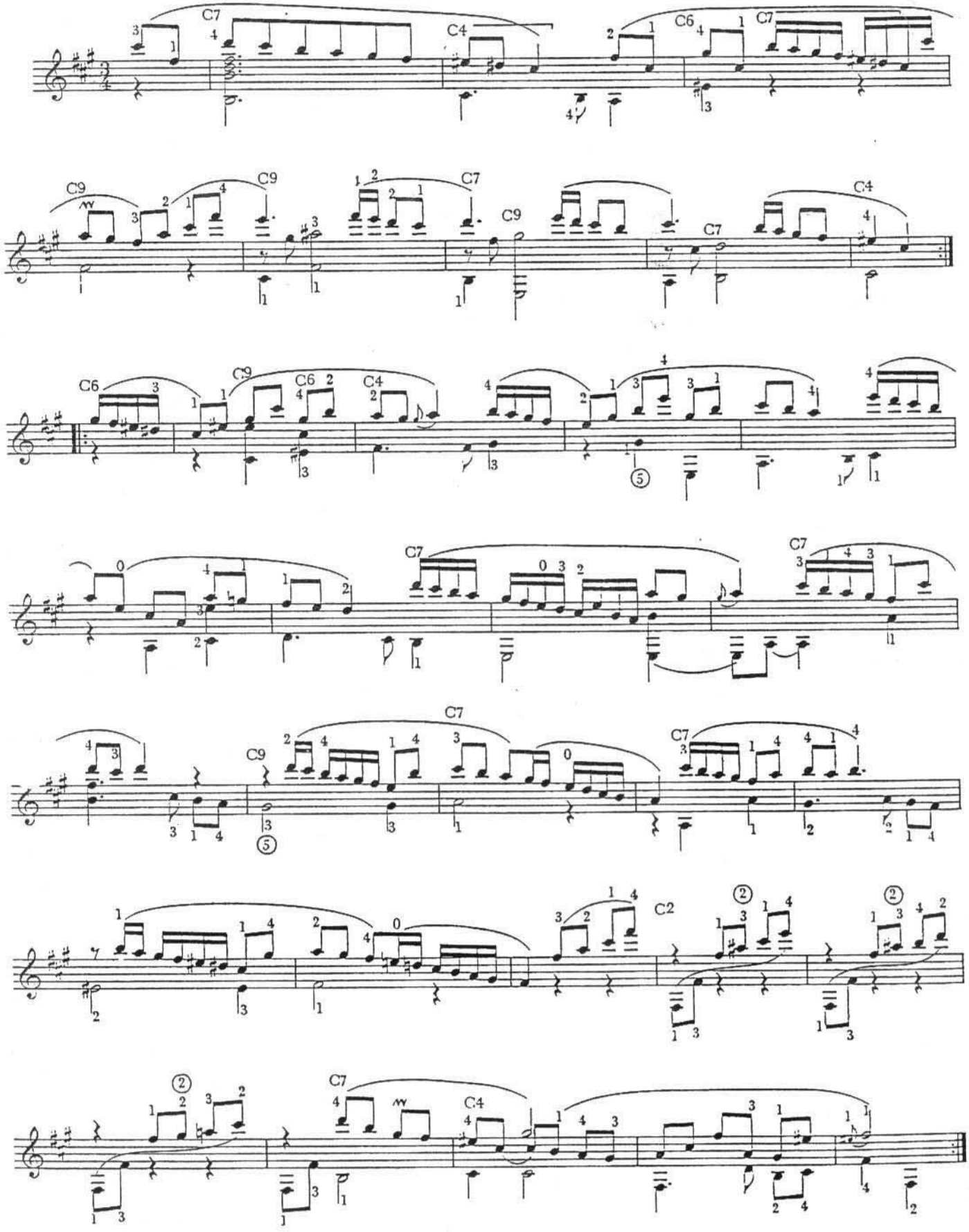

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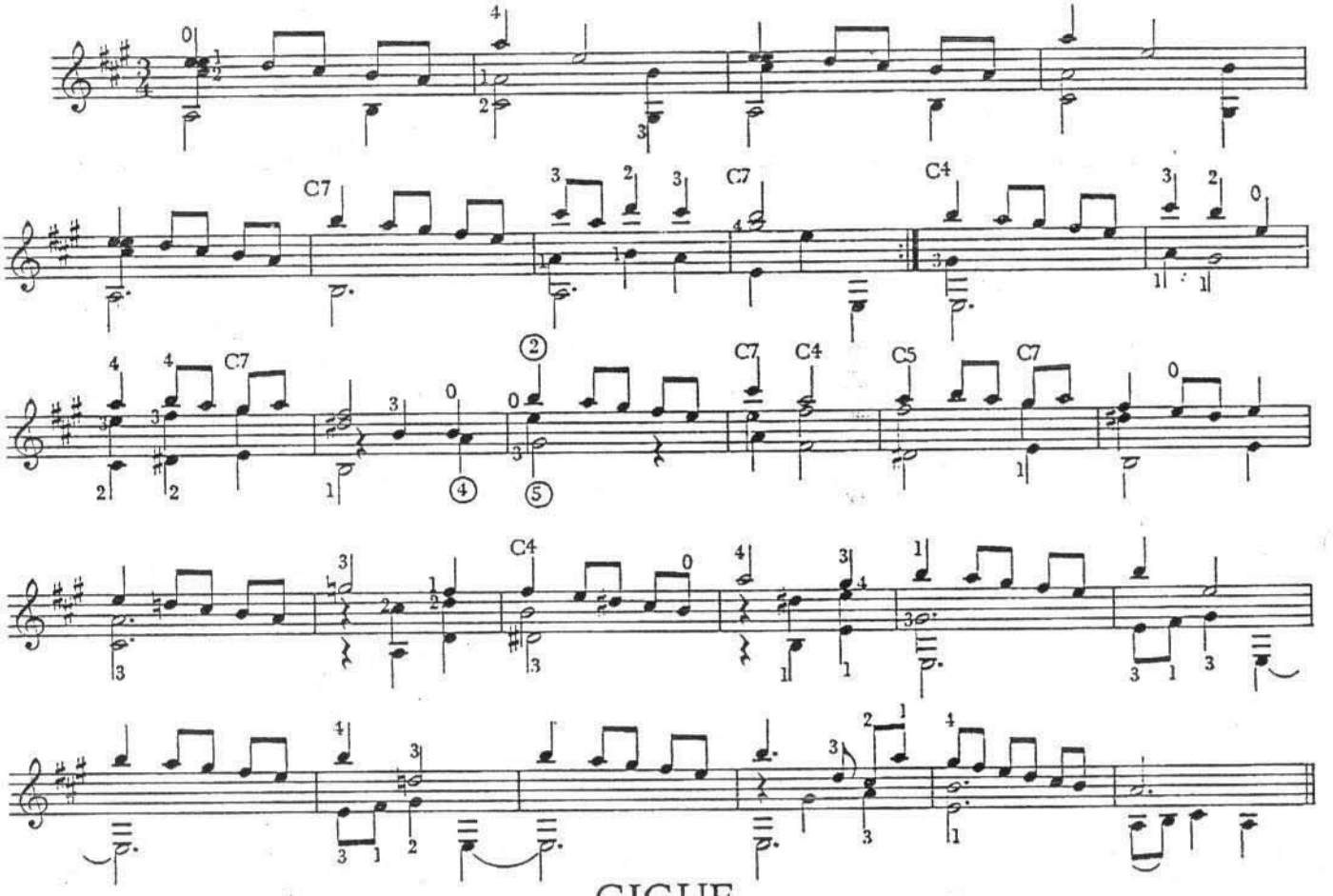

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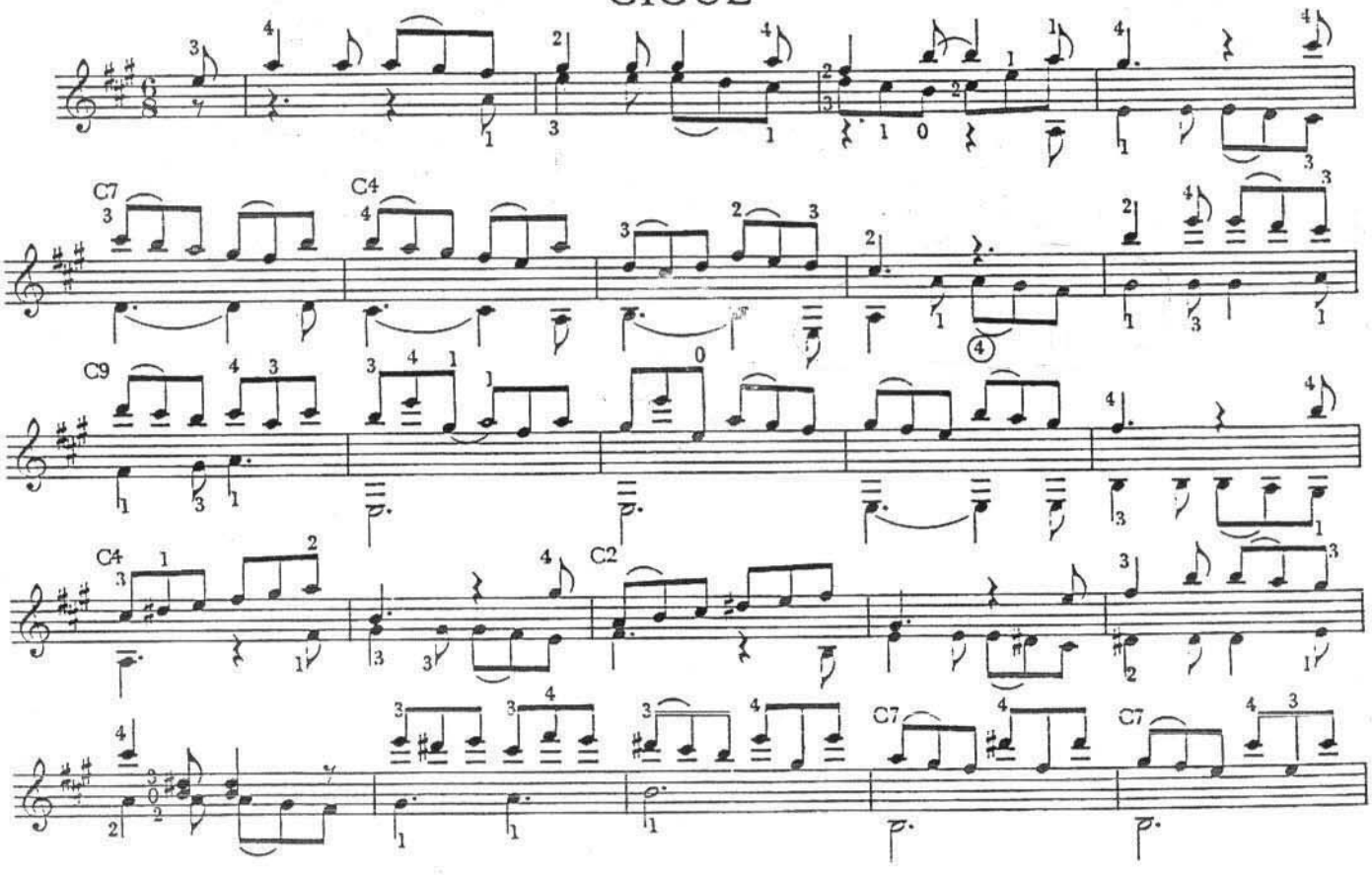

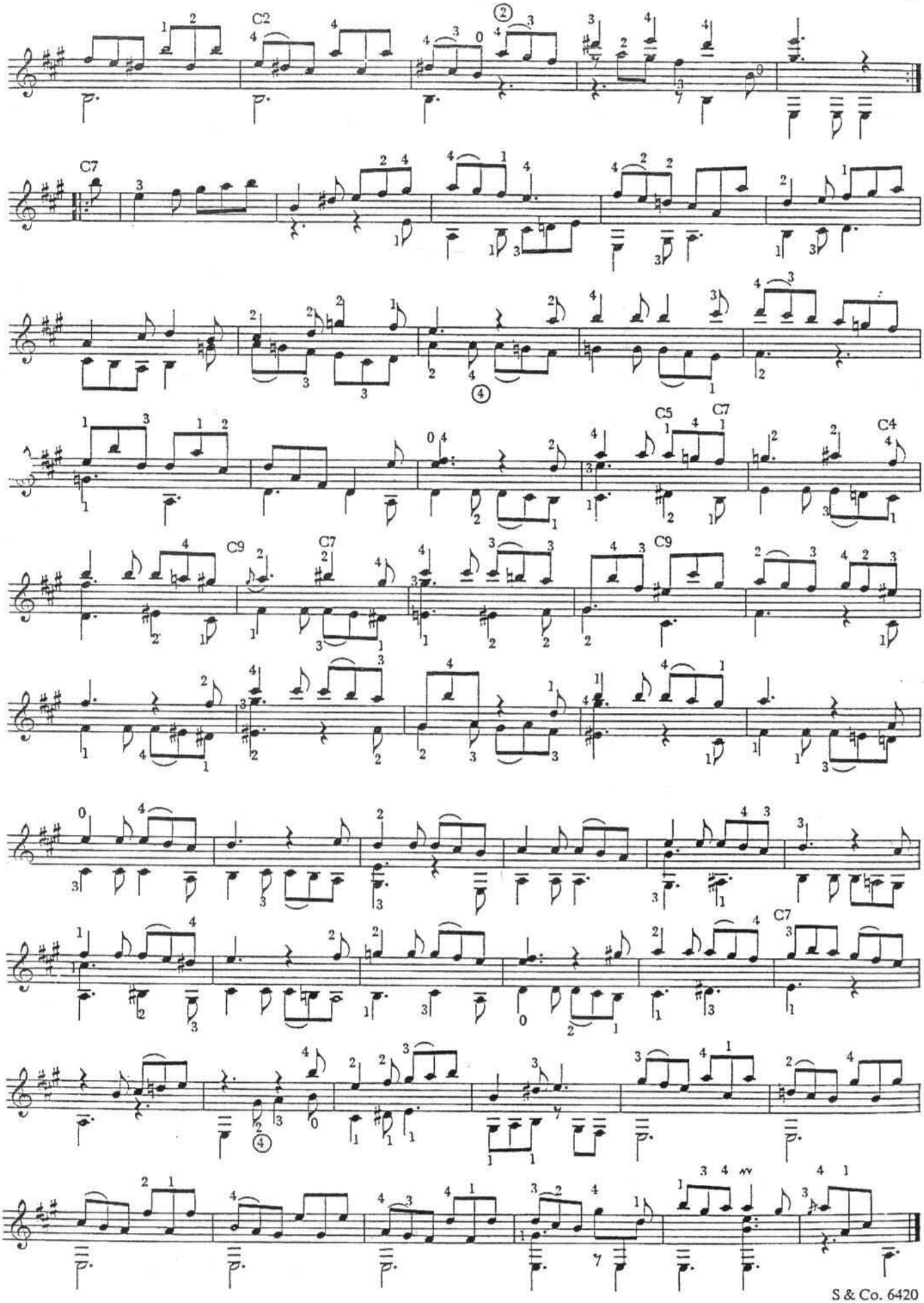
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