Full Score

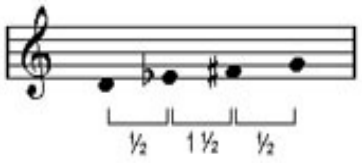
Elia Koussa

Six Genera Studies
(2019)

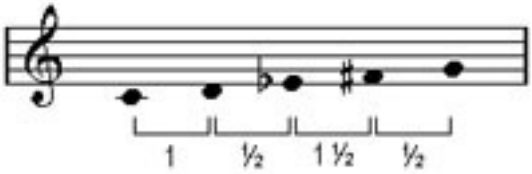
About the material of the pieces:

In the following pieces, six Arabic musical genera (ajnas (in plural),which constitute the building blocks of the Arabic maqamat), are spectrally contemplated, felt and thought.

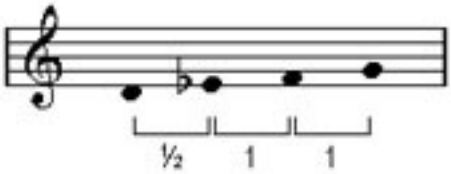
hijaz



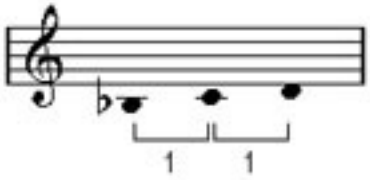
nawa'athar



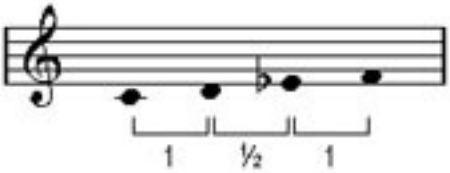
kurd



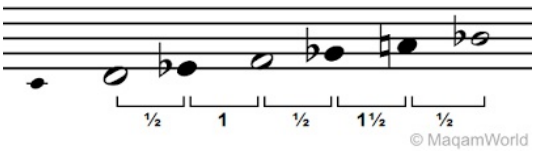
ajam



nahawand



saba zamzam



The idea of the material of those 6 pieces come from a part of my opera, piece no 22 (*Ya Ayyouhal Ab*). There I had the idea of locating the Arabic genera (*Ajnas*) in the harmonic spectrum. We know for example the major triad is found in the spectrum on 4:5:6 so it has one fundamental tone, while the minor triad has one common overtone. I wanted here to explore the case of 6 Arabic genera. But the intervals of this and other Arabic genera are never fixed. The intervals of same genus could change from country to country, or player to player, or even the same player might play the same genus each time with minimal difference. The first piece for example takes the genus *Hijaz*. We can find *Hijaz* on 15:16:19:20, or on 14:15:18:19, or on 12:13:15:16 of the harmonic spectrum. Even though the intervals change minimally between those ratios, all sound like "*hijaz*" for an Arabic or middle-eastern ear. it could have three different fundamentals, three common fundamentals. And this same *hijaz* has also 3 common overtones (20th, 19th and 18th, each one could be a common overtone). In this way I could locate the *hijaz* harmonically in the middle between the common fundamentals and the common overtones. For example if I have the hijaz on B (B-C-D#-E), the three fundamentals are C-C#(+30c)-E and the three common overtones are Dflat-D-Eflat. Fundamentals in the bass register, the genus in the middle, and common overtones in the higher register, all make a good harmonic material and an interesting exploration of the *ajnas* harmonically. Arabic music has always been known to be heard melodically. Here is a possibility for an interesting harmonic exploration.

Full Score

Performance notes:

The first three pieces use an unusual tuning with the sixth string on E-flat, and the fourth string on D 30 cents higher. The last pieces use the normal tuning, except in the 5th piece where the guitarist has to change the bass string to an E-flat.
In the first three pieces the notes on the 4th string are always notated with a quarter tone symbol in parentheses. It should sound in fact only 30 cents higher and not a quarter tone (50 cent).

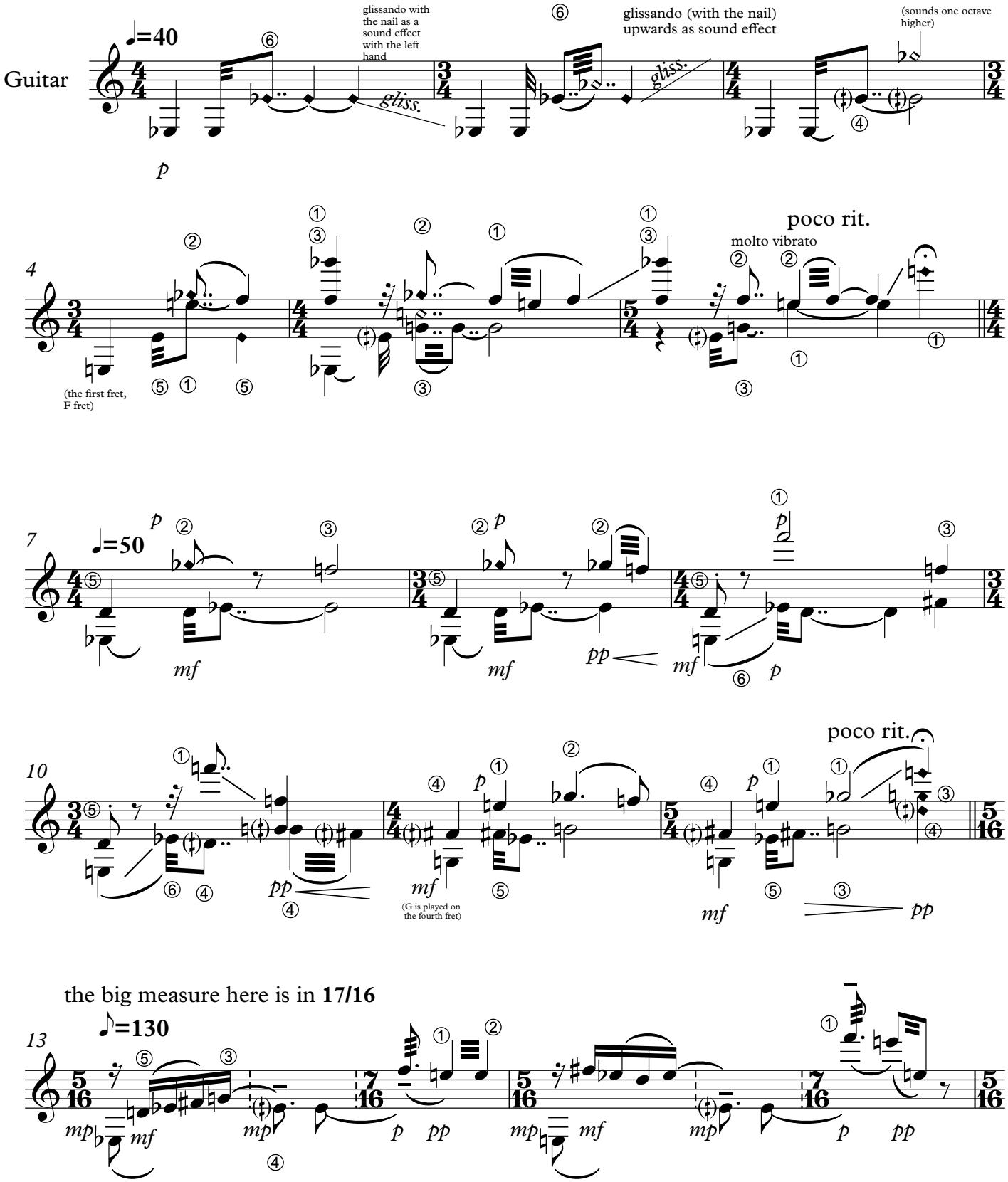
An unusual thing about this work is the last piece which is composed for 2 guitars, other than the previous 5.
The guitarist can choose from the pieces, and they don't have to be played as written in the order.

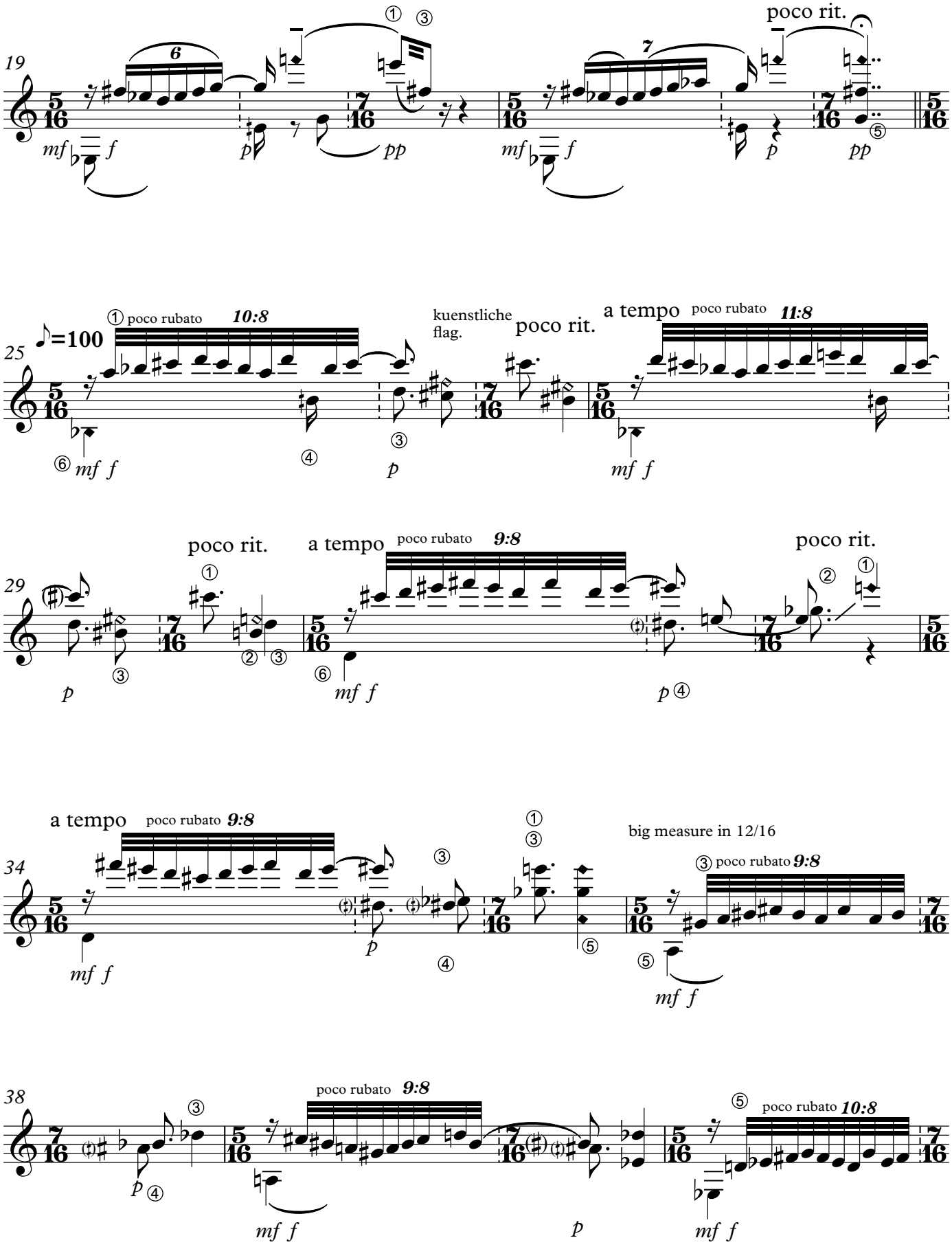
Duration of the work is about 10 minutes

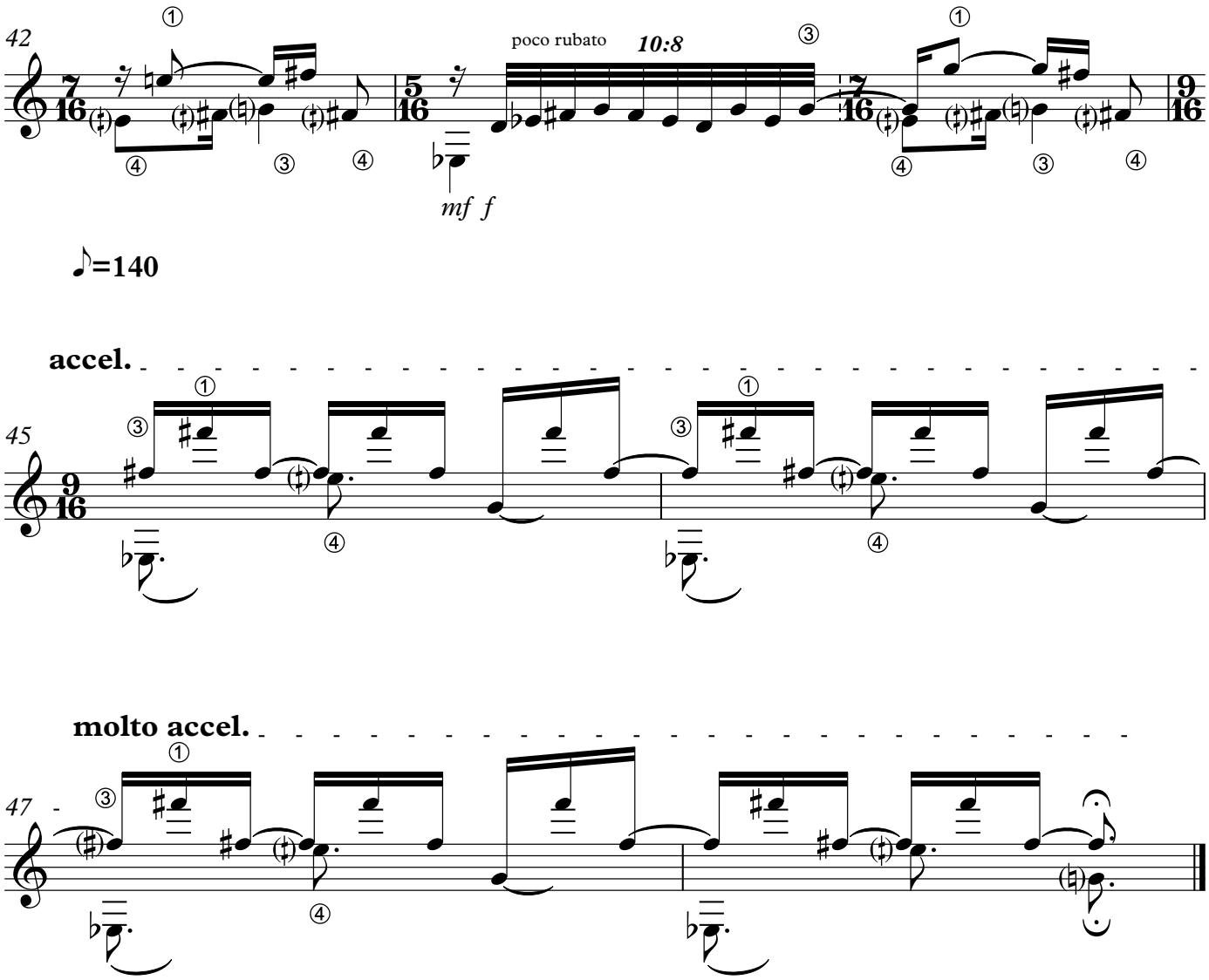
The work is dedicated to Samuel Klemke

Study no. 1
Hijaz

sixth string tuned on E-flat, and fourth string tuned 30 cents higher than D

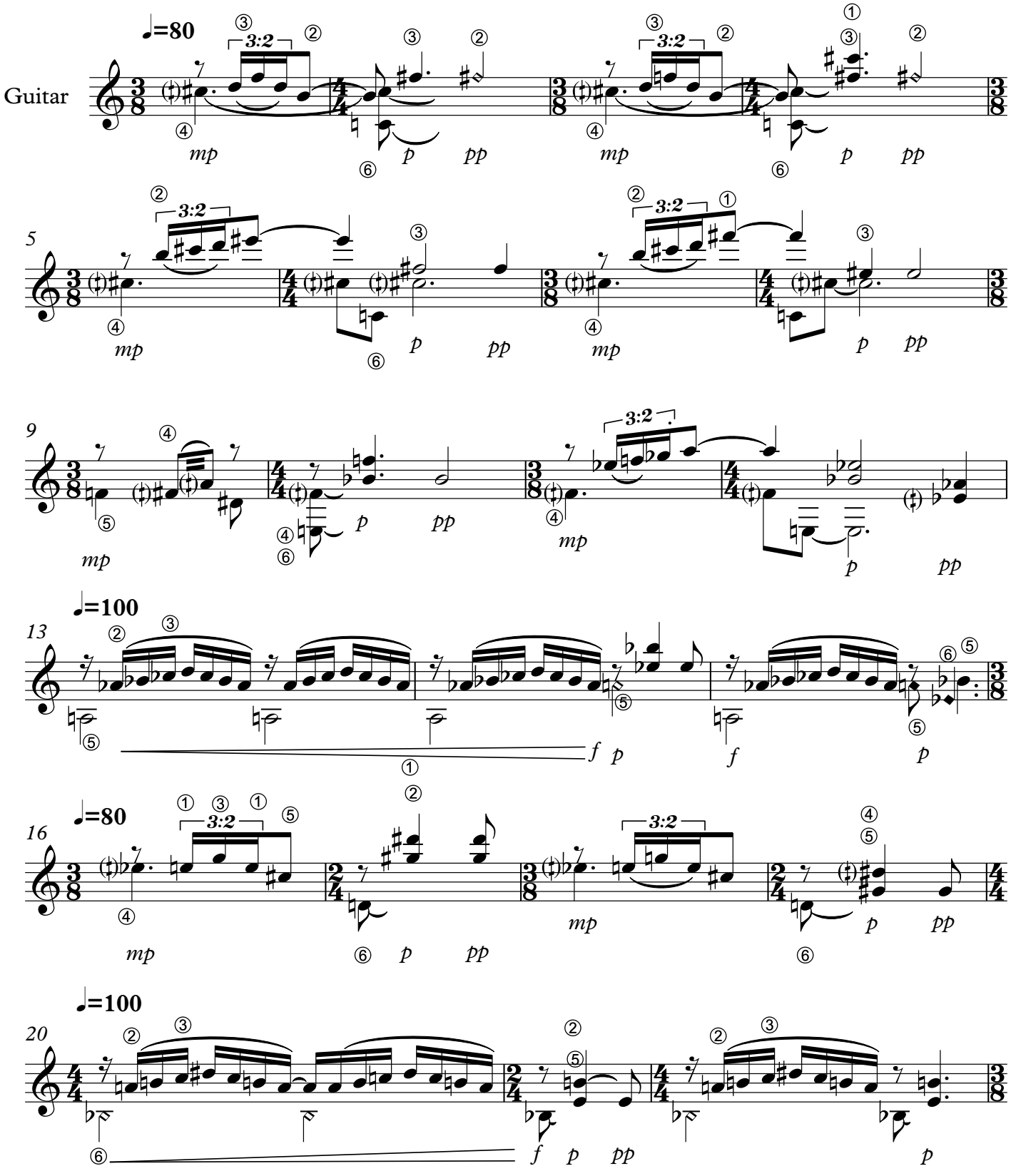


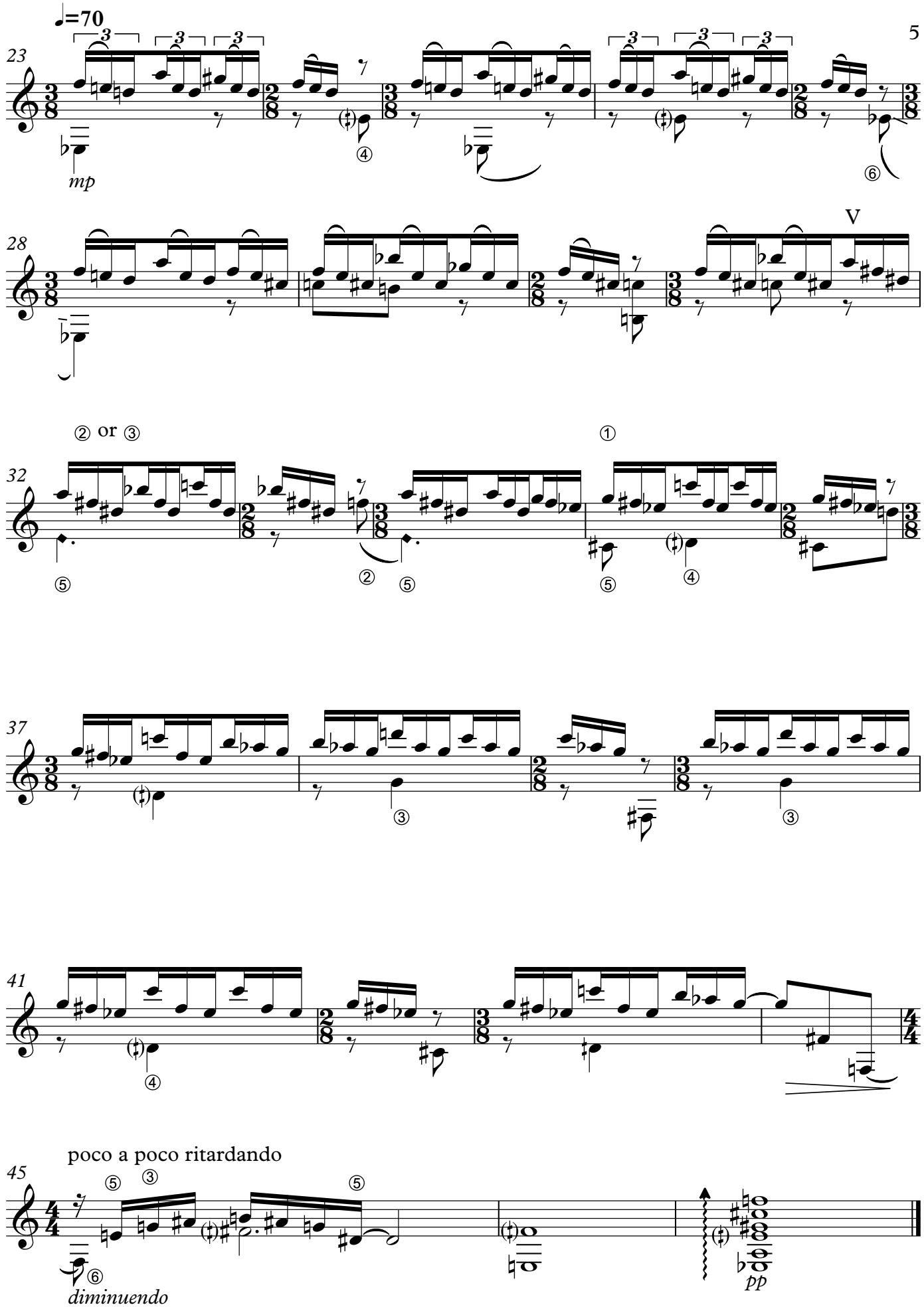

19
poco rit.
25
♪=100
① poco rubato 10:8
kuenstliche flag.
poco rit.
a tempo poco rubato 11:8
29
poco rit.
a tempo poco rubato 9:8
poco rit.
34
a tempo poco rubato 9:8
big measure in 12/16
③ poco rubato 9:8
38
poco rubato 9:8
⑤ poco rubato 10:8


42
poco rubato
10:8
mf f
♪=140
accel.
45
molto accel.
47

Study no. 2
Nawa 'athar

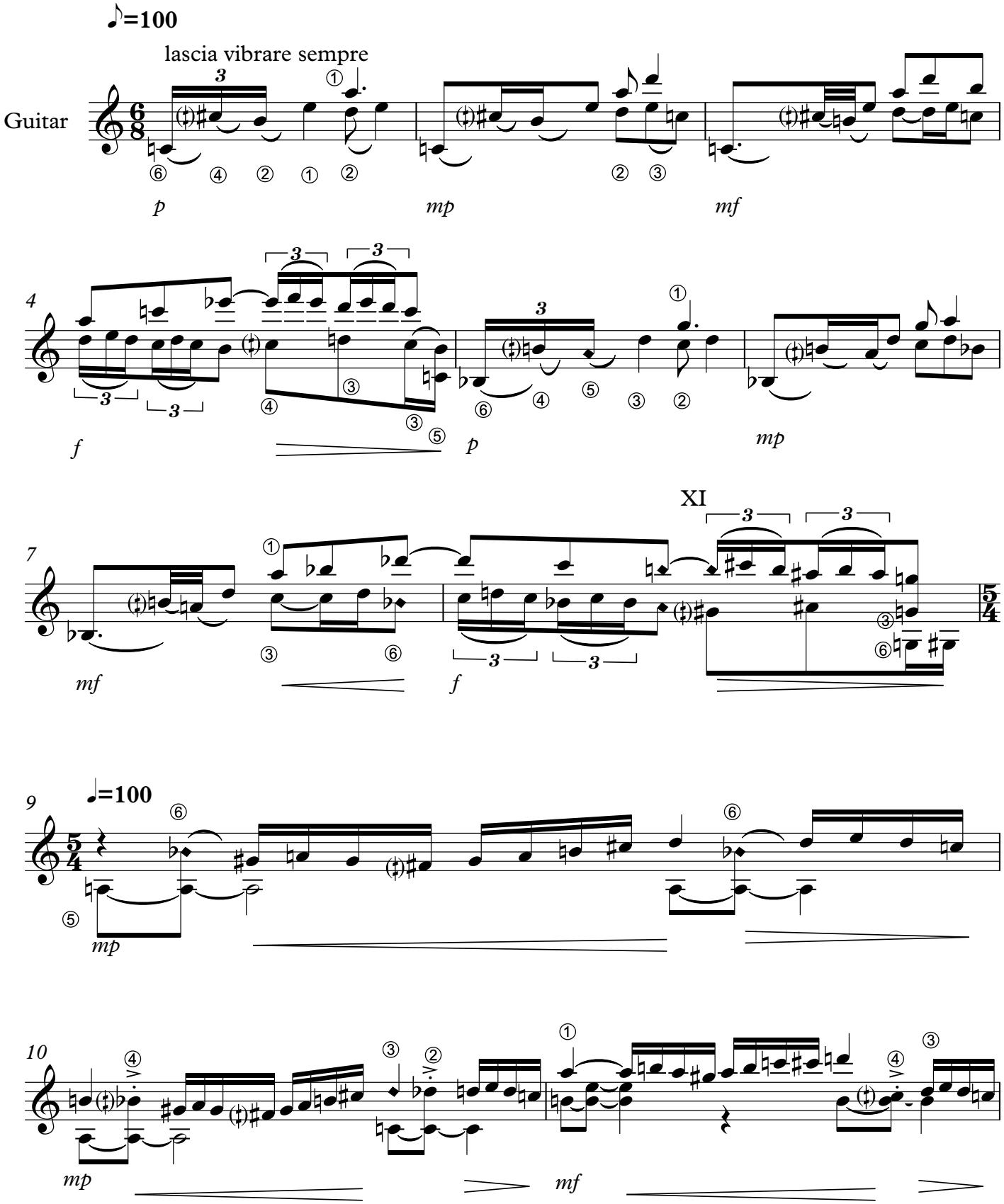
sixth string tuned on E-flat, and fourth string tuned 30 cents higher than D

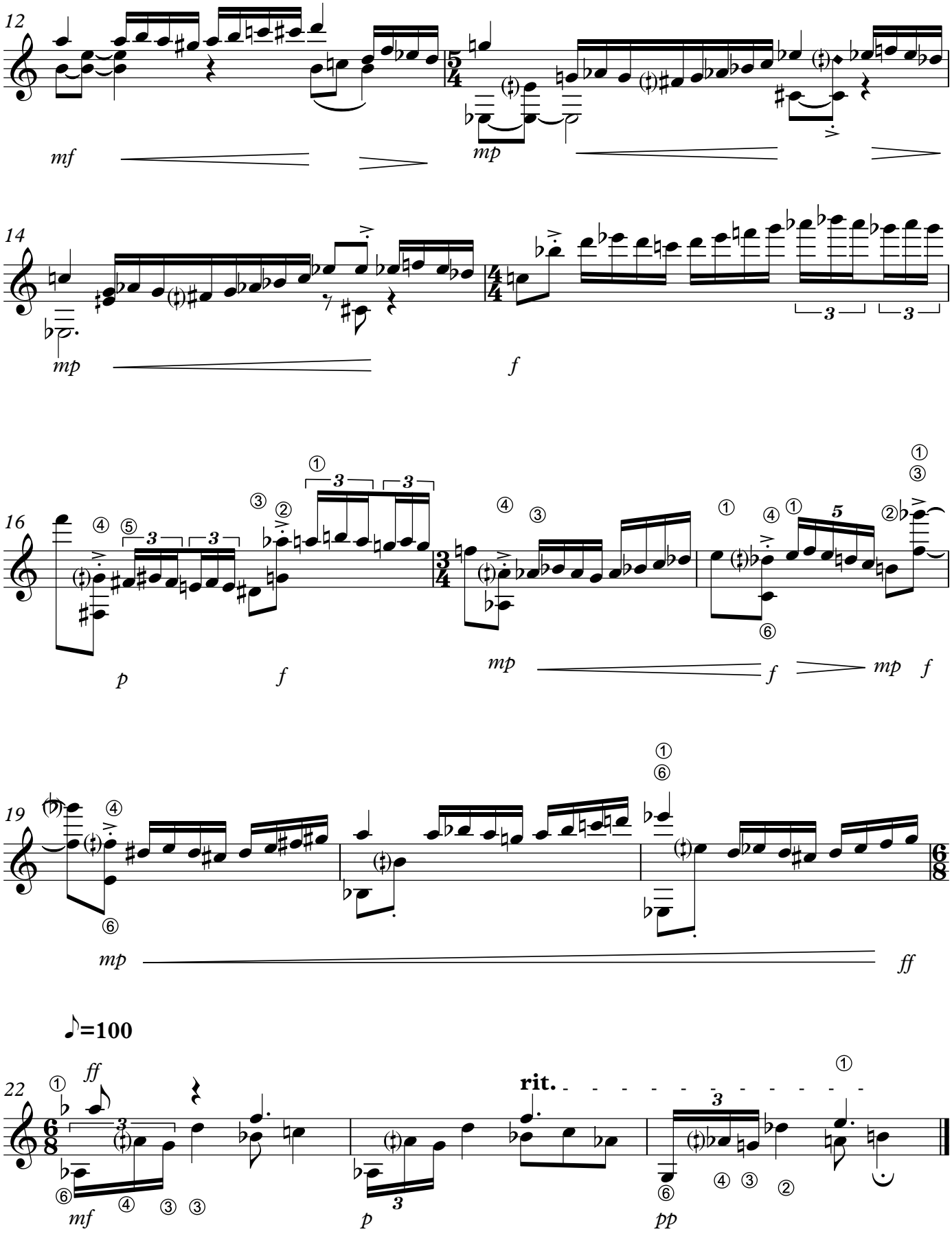



♩=70
23
mp
28
V
② or ③
①
32
37
41
poco a poco ritardando
45
diminuendo
pp

Study no. 3
Kurd

sixth string tuned on E-flat, and fourth string tuned 30 cents higher than D



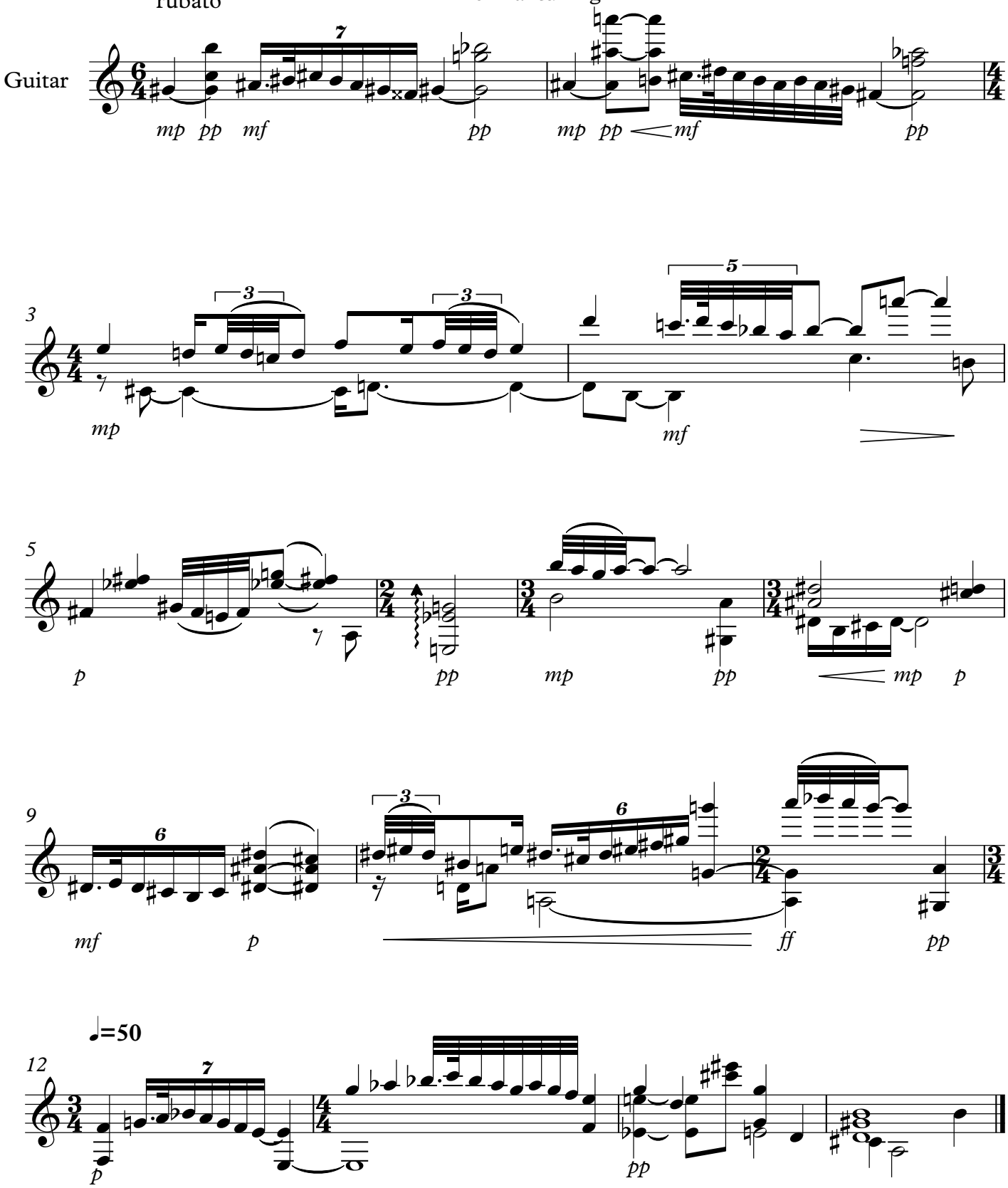

12
mf
mp
14
mp
f
16
p
f
mp
f
mp
f
19
mp
ff
♪=100
22
ff
mf
p
rit.
pp

Study no. 4
Ajam

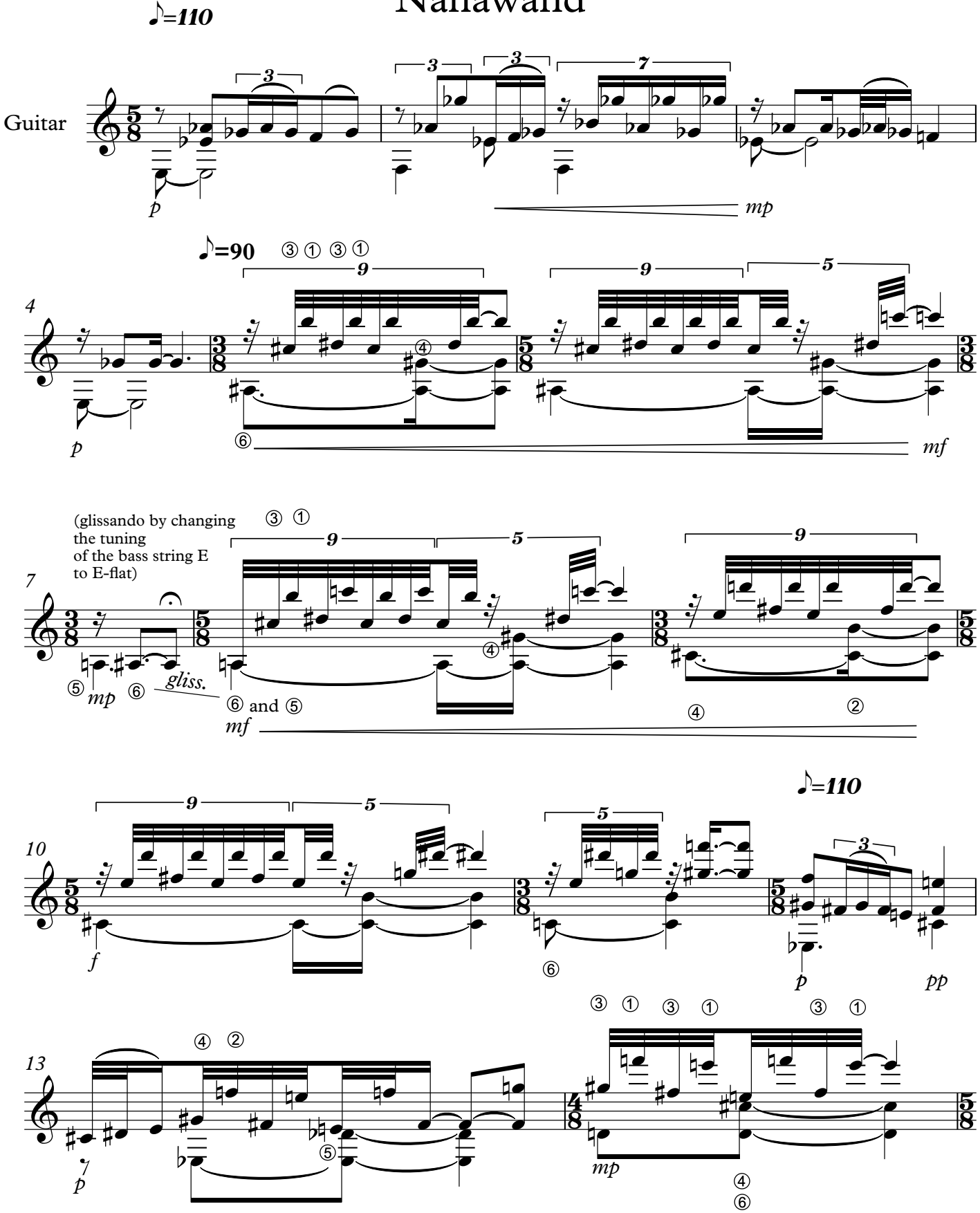
♩=60
rubato

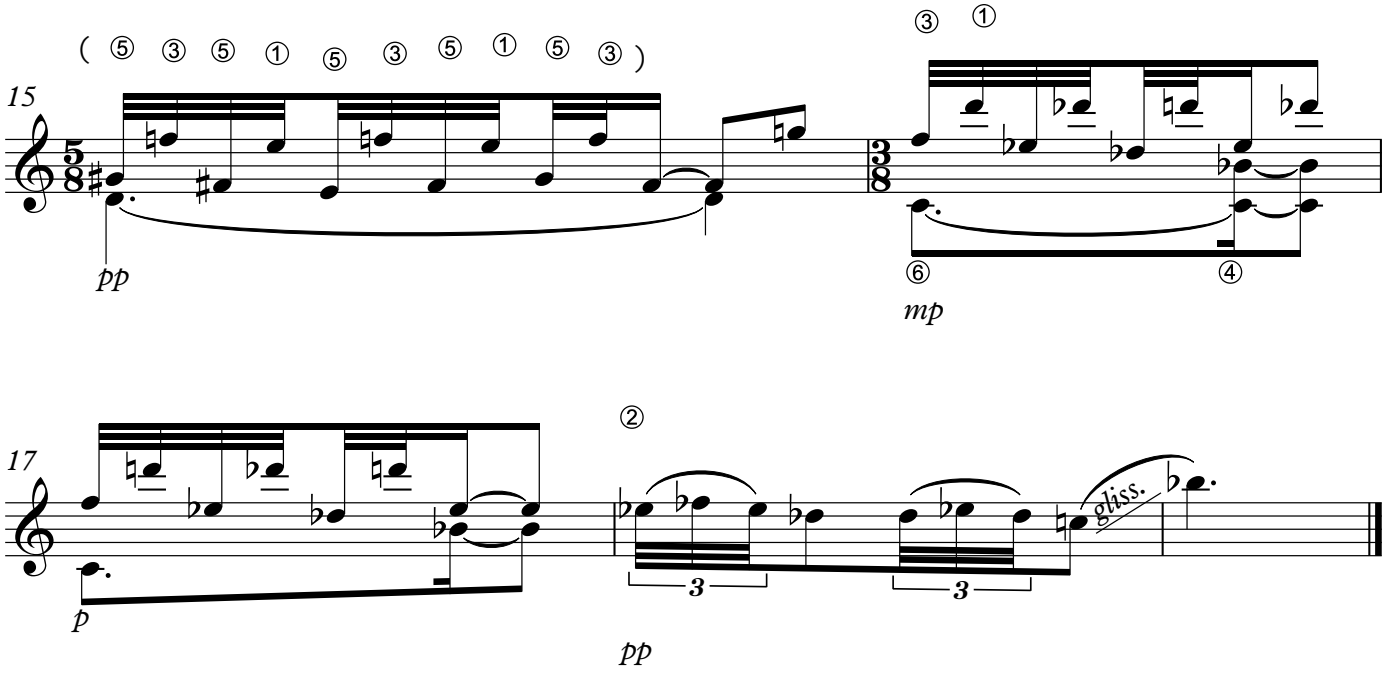
in normal tuning

Guitar

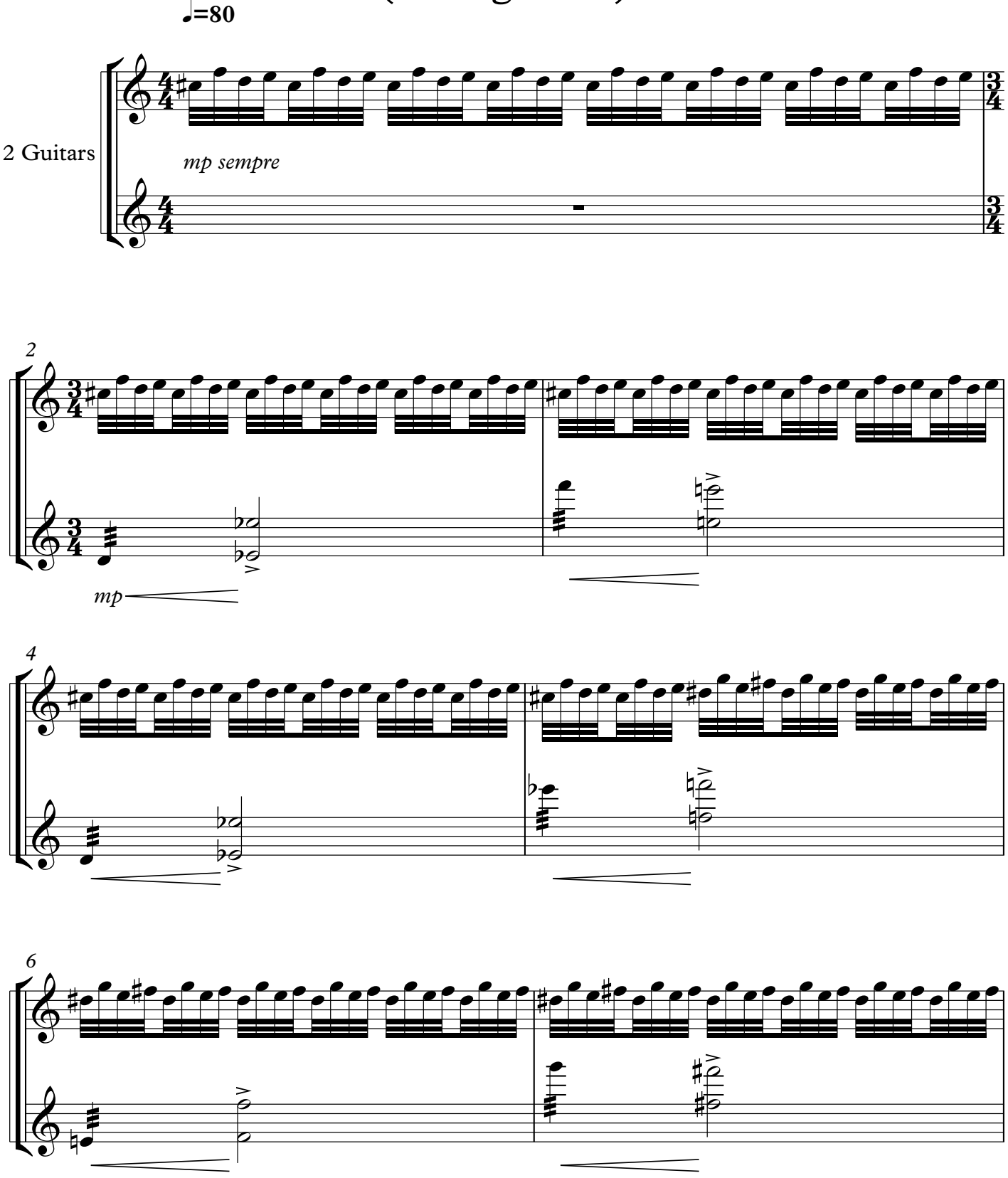


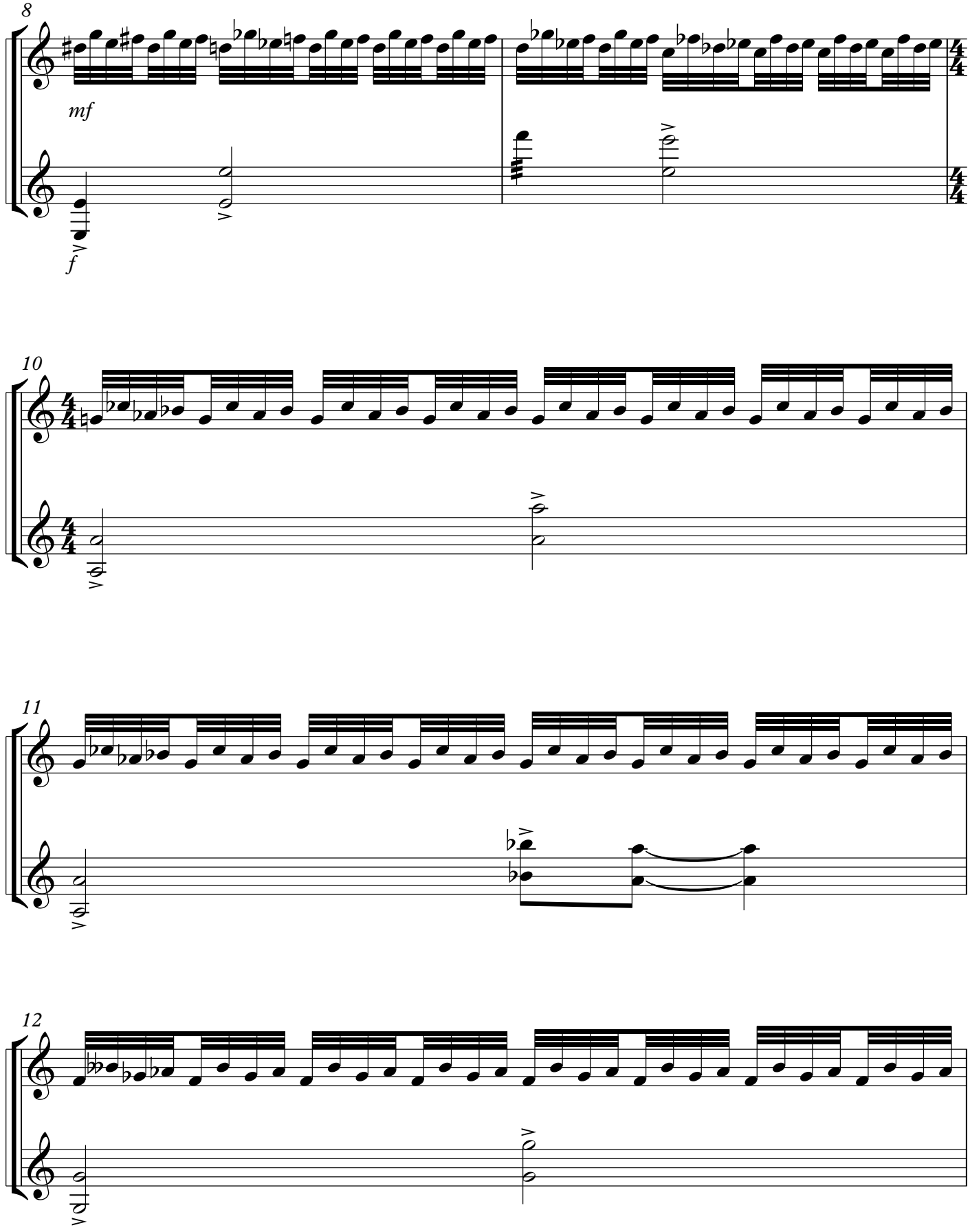
Study no. 5
Nahawand

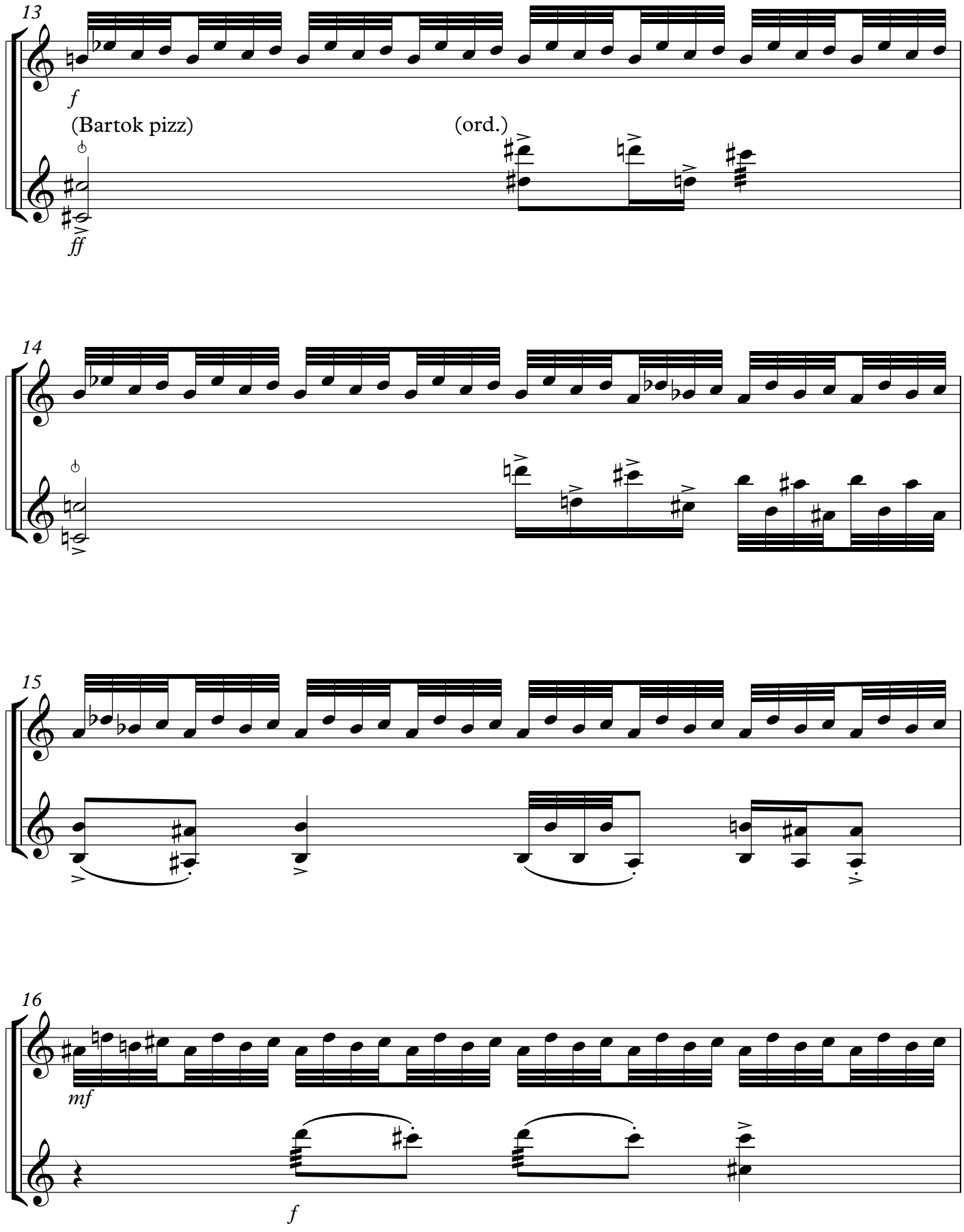


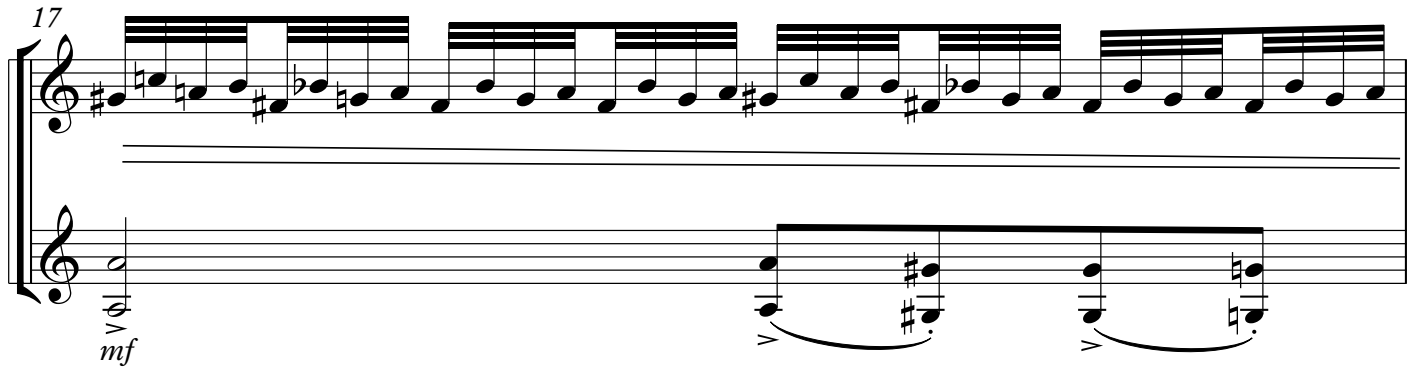
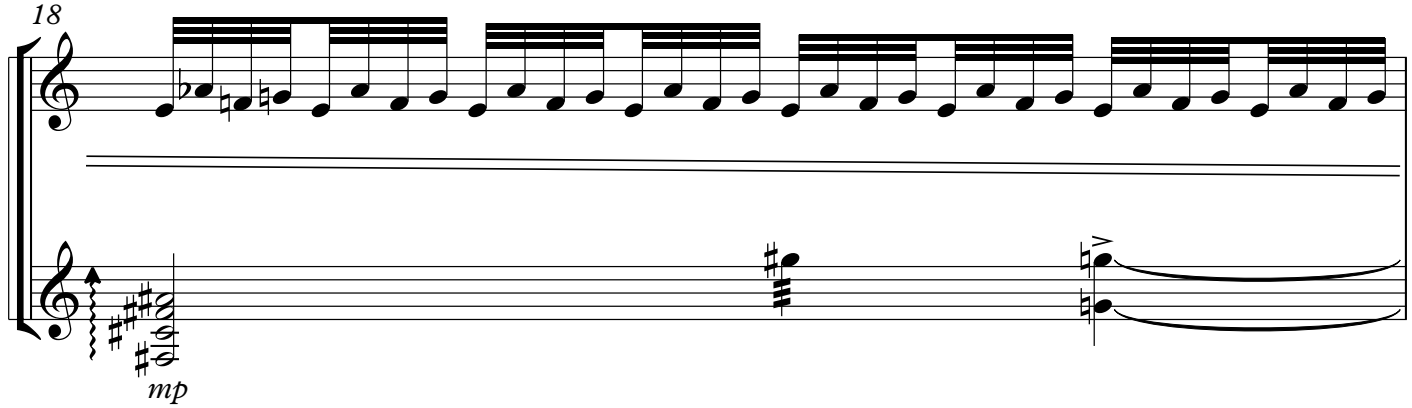
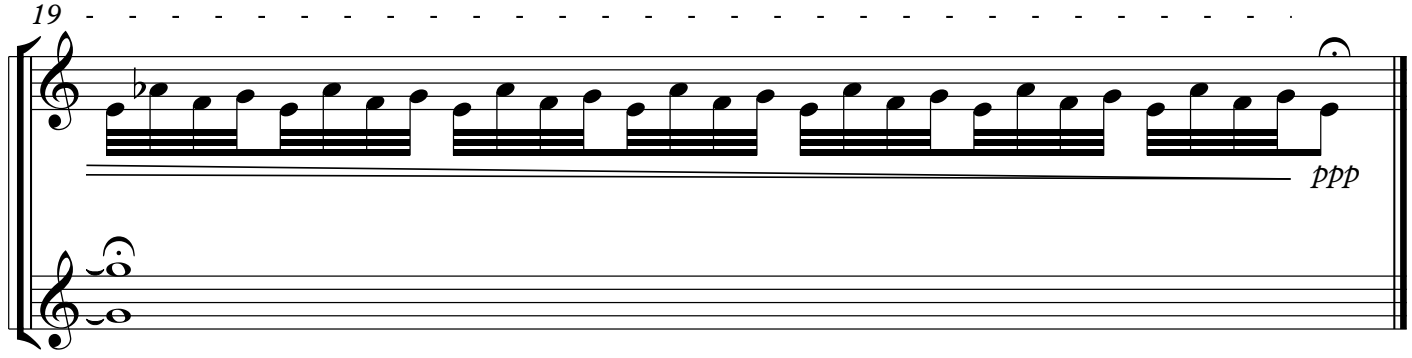

15
(⑤ ③ ⑤ ① ⑤ ③ ⑤ ① ⑤ ③)
pp
③ ①
⑥ ④
mp
17
p
②
3
3
gliss.
pp

Study no. 6
Saba zamzama
(for 2 guitars)




8
mf
f
10
11
12


13
f
(Bartok pizz)
(ord.)
ff
14
15
16
mf
f



molto rall.