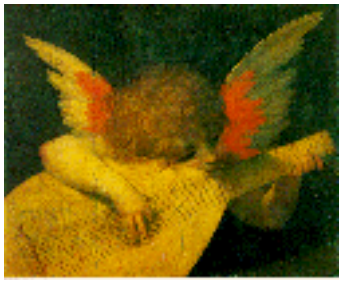

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FERNANDO SOR

L'Encouragement
Opus 34
(second part)

for two guitars

from the New Complete Works for Guitar of Sor, edited by Brian Jeffery

Hebe's Web

A10217

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PREFACE TO THIS NEW EDITION OF ALL SOR'S GUITAR DUETS

It is a special moment to see at last all the guitar duets of Sor now available in a modern edition. I published them in the form of reprints of the original editions in the *Complete Works for Guitar* of Sor (Tecla, nine volumes, 1981), but some of the early editions reproduced there were faded and hard to read and they were only in parts, not score. Now all the duets are available here in Sor's *New Complete Works for Guitar* (from Hebe), re-engraved and in both parts and score, and with some editorial problems resolved which previously must have caused some headaches to performers.

All Sor's known guitar duets date from late in his life (except the *Bolero a Duo* which is a special case). It was not until 1828, when he was fifty years old, that the first of them, *L'Encouragement*, appeared. He was living in Paris at that time, and all the other duets were published in that city between 1828 and his death in 1839. They are of two distinct kinds: compositions at a high level, and works which appear to be for relative beginners.

Three duets stand at the highest level of his achievement:

- *Les Deux Amis* (op. 41), written for performance by Sor and that other virtuoso guitarist of the time, Aguado. It includes passages which Sor says in his method he conceived specially with Aguado's particular way of playing fast running passages in mind.
- *Fantaisie* (op. 54 bis), which has as one of its movements the tremendous *Allegro dans le genre espagnol*, using rasgueado and characteristic Spanish rhythms and harmonies.
- *Souvenir de Russie* (op. 63), eloquent and fine, Sor's last work.

The other nine duets show every sign of having been written for relative beginners, and three (opp. 34, 53 and 55) are even expressly didactic. They are:

- *L'Encouragement* (op. 34).
- *Divertissement* (op. 38)
- *Six Valses* (op. 39)
- *Six Valses* (op. 44 bis)
- *Divertissement militaire* (op. 49)
- *Le premier pas vers moi* (op. 53)
- *Trois duos* (op. 55)
- *Trois petits divertissements* (op. 61)
- *Divertissement* (op. 62)

The *Bolero a Duo* is a special case, and I have advanced the hypothesis that it may not be simply an instrumental duet for two guitars, but rather an accompaniment, for two guitars, to a so far unidentified bolero by Sor for two voices. See the preface to it in this edition.

OPUS 34. L'ENCOURAGEMENT

This piece was first published in Paris in about 1828, with the full title of *L'Encouragement, Fantaisie à deux Guitares … dédiée à une de ses Elèves* (L'Encouragement, fantasy for two guitars, dedicated to one of his lady pupils). The present edition scrupulously respects the structure of that original edition, in which, as can be seen in the Tecla reprint, Sor wrote one part ("Guitare première") which most of the time has only a single line of music and is clearly marked on every page "L'ÉLÈVE" ("The pupil"), and a second part ("Guitare seconde") which consists mostly of chords and is clearly marked, again on every

page, “LE MAÎTRE” (“The teacher”). There is fingering by Sor. In other words, this is a didactic piece, designed for beginners on the guitar to play together with their teacher. The dedication to a lady pupil confirms this. The beauty of the melodies encourages the pupil, while at the same time the piece is designed to fulfil technical aims, and the teacher’s part steadily sustains the rhythm of the piece throughout.

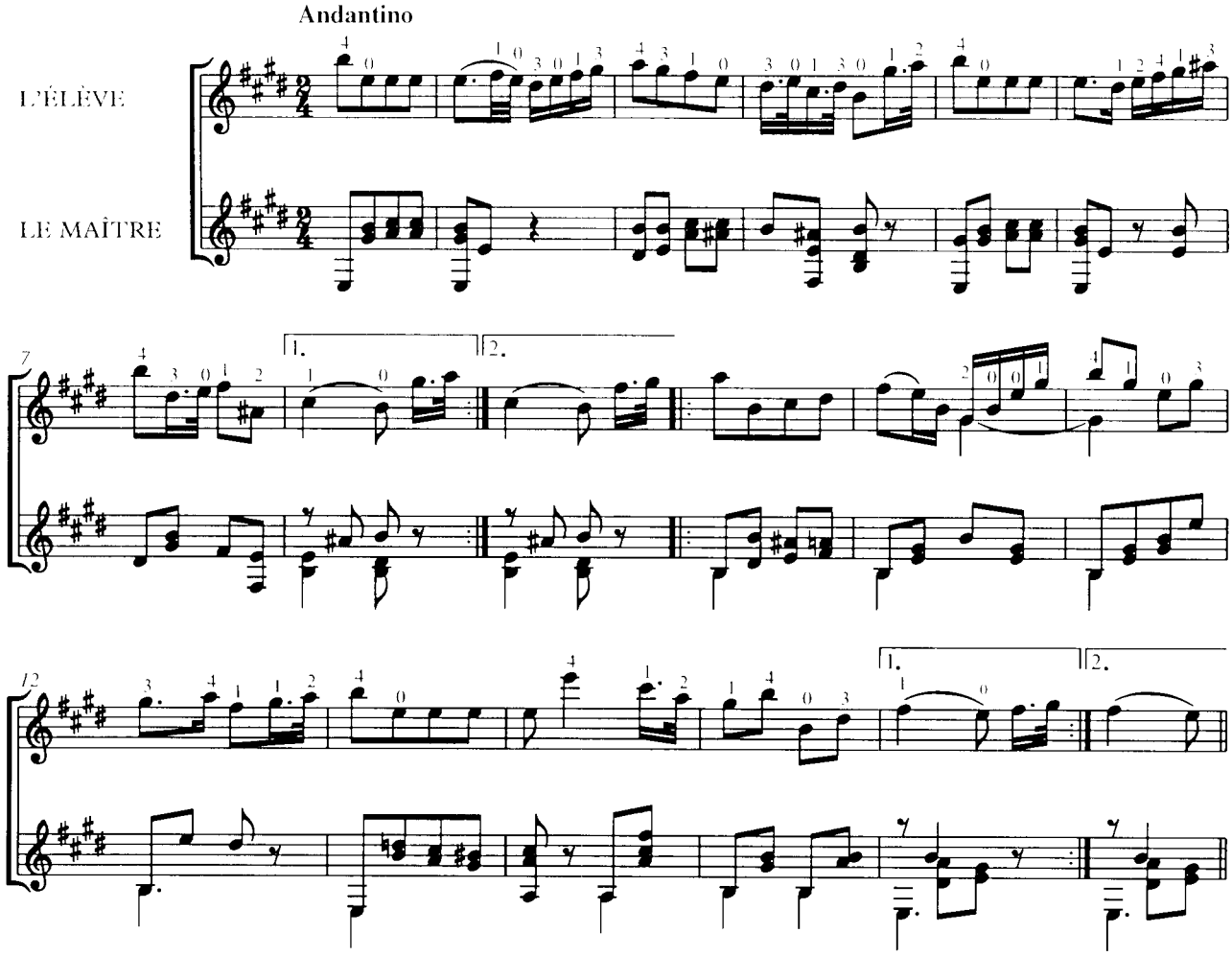
Although *L’Encouragement* is a relatively famous piece, it has had the remarkable distinction of having had its original form fundamentally disguised, in its very structure, right up to some editions of modern times (including the recent Japanese edition published by Gendai Guitar). The piece was arranged by Napoléon Coste, probably in the 1870s, and it is Coste’s version which has been republished in many modern editions, right up to within the last twenty years, but without the name of Coste and without any indication that it is an arrangement in which the structure has been greatly altered.

What Coste did was to change the parts round, altering the piece from its original version in which one part has nearly always a single line and the other mostly chords, to a new version in which the two players continually exchange the single-line part and the chordal part. That is fine if any players wish to use Coste’s version, but it is only an arrangement and does not conform to Sor’s own original intentions as reproduced here in this present edition.

I am grateful to Darren O’Neill for proofreading this edition.

Brian Jeffery

THEME



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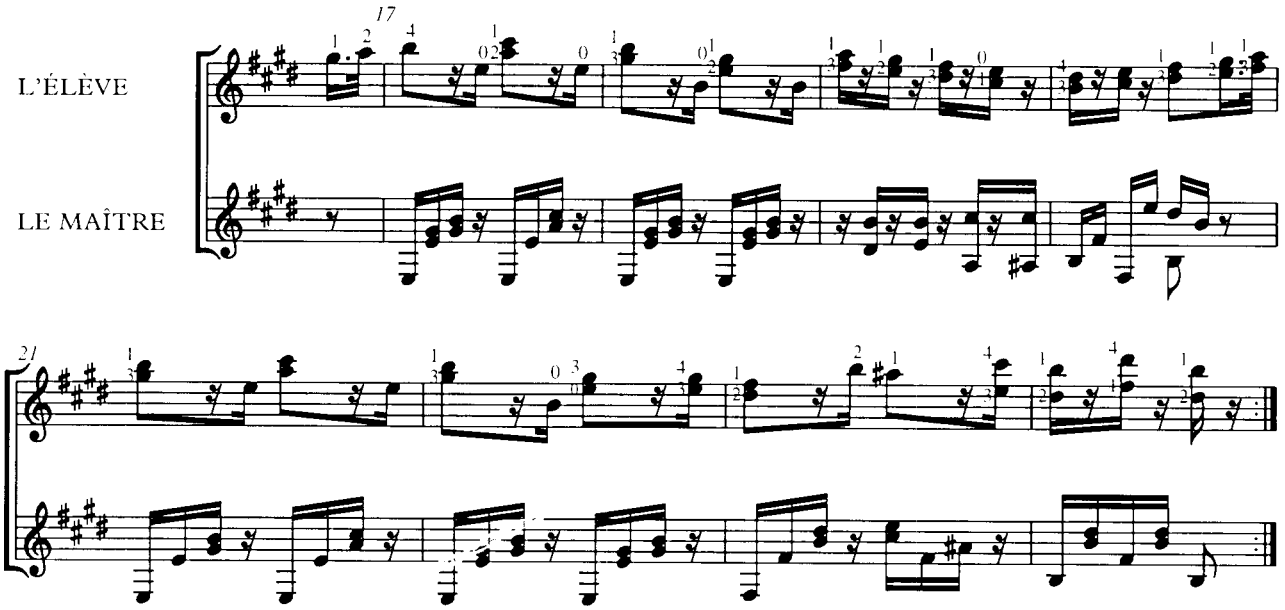

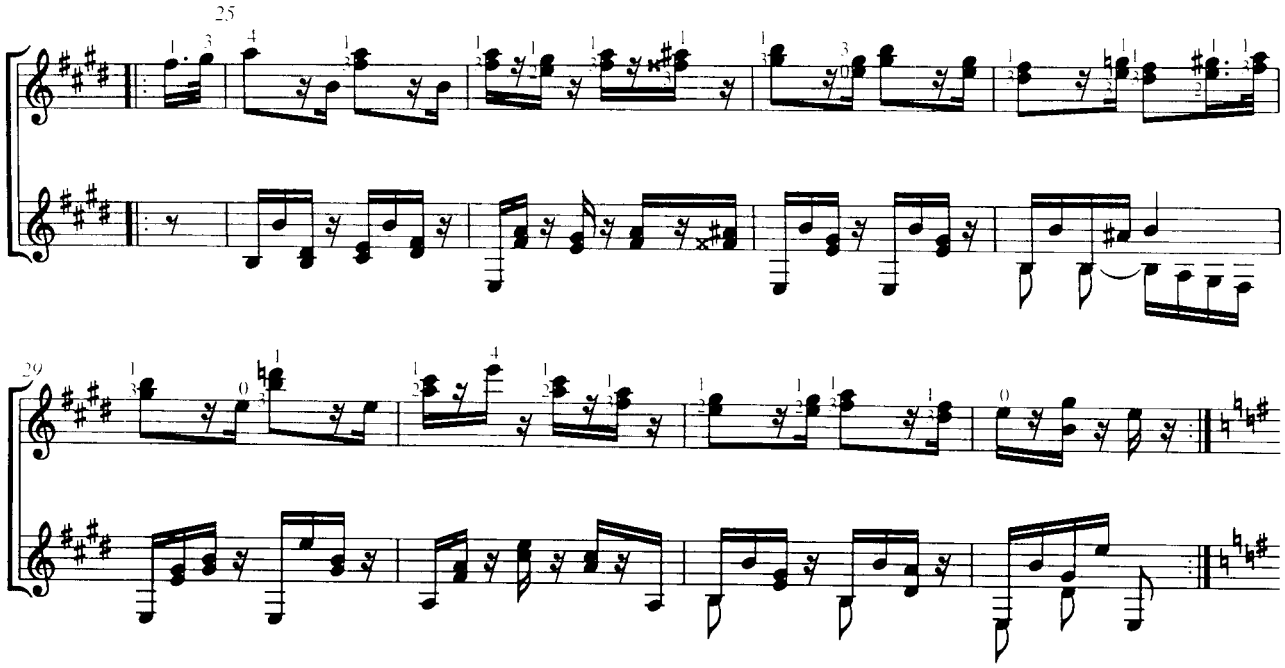

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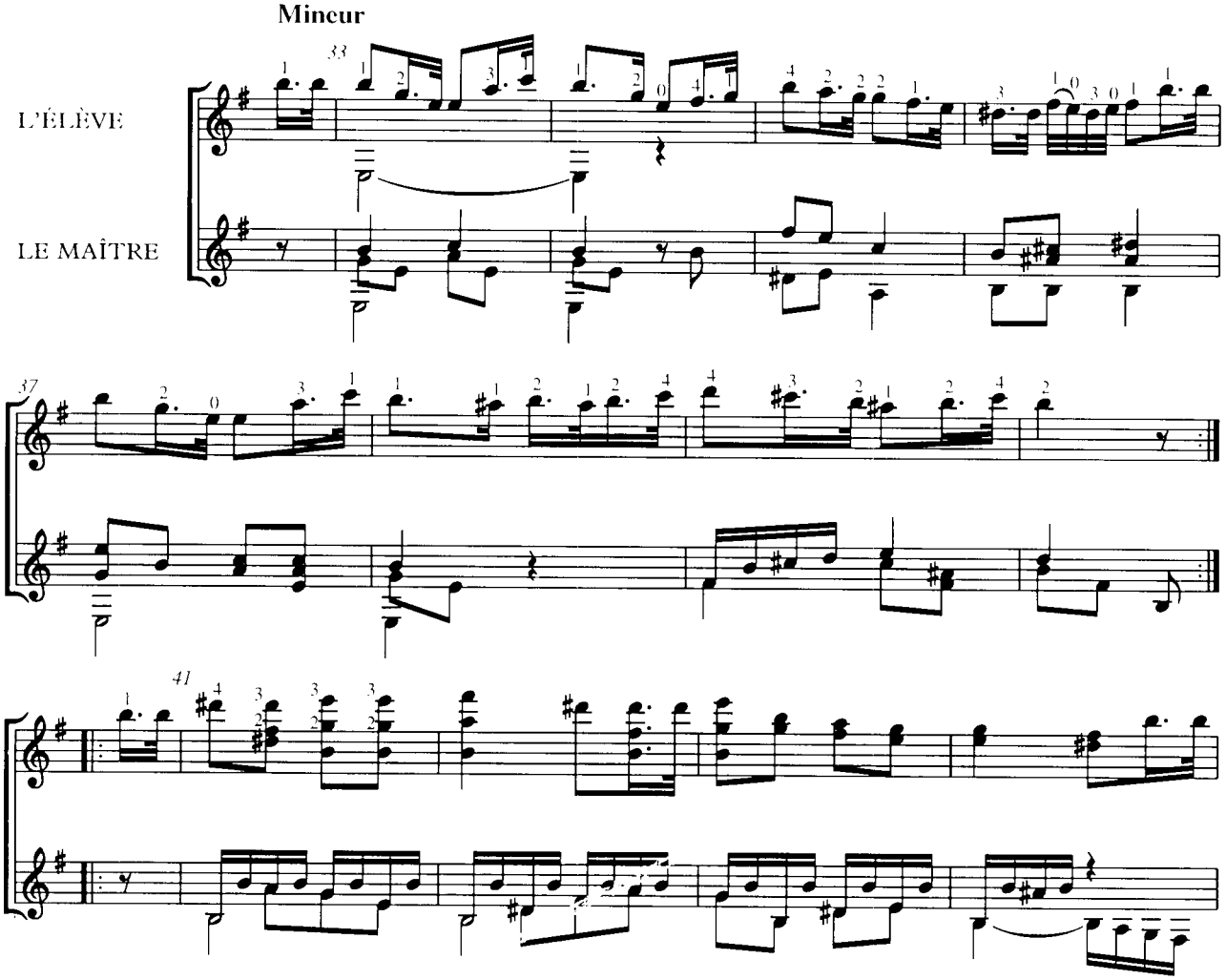

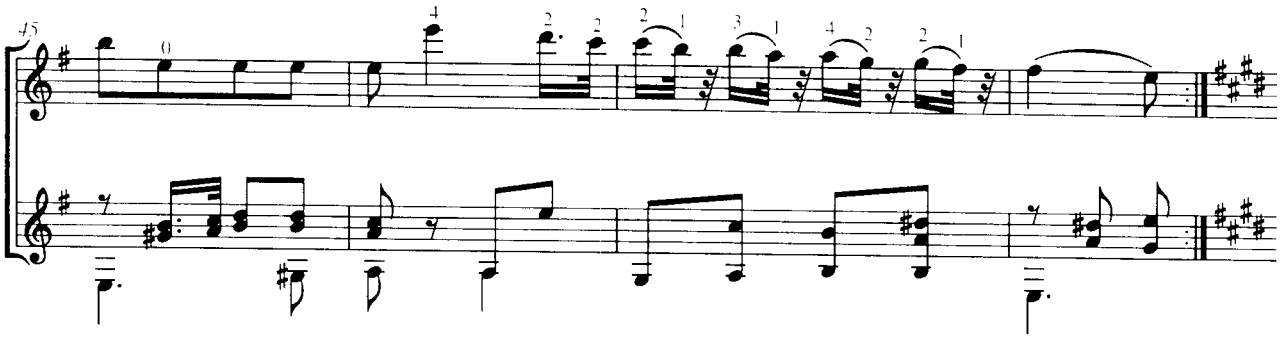

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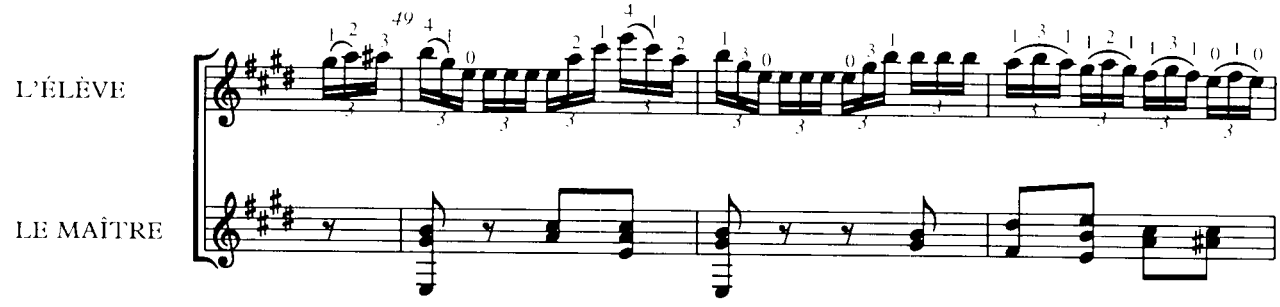

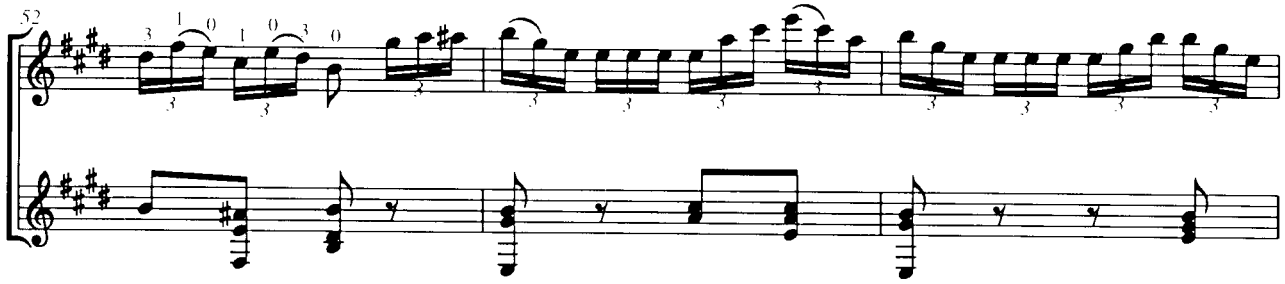

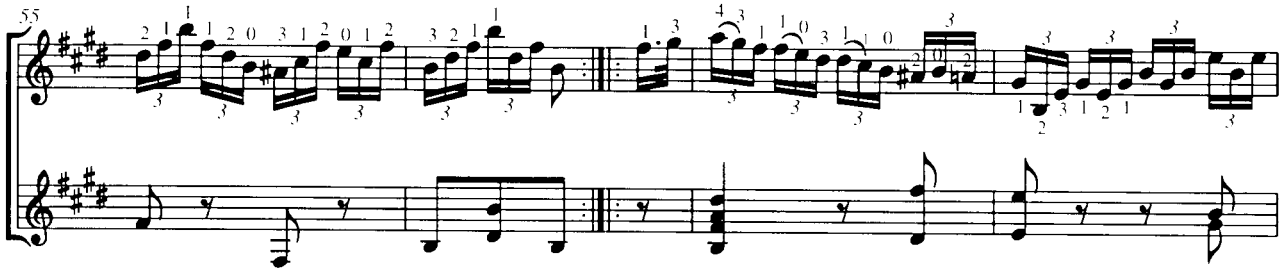

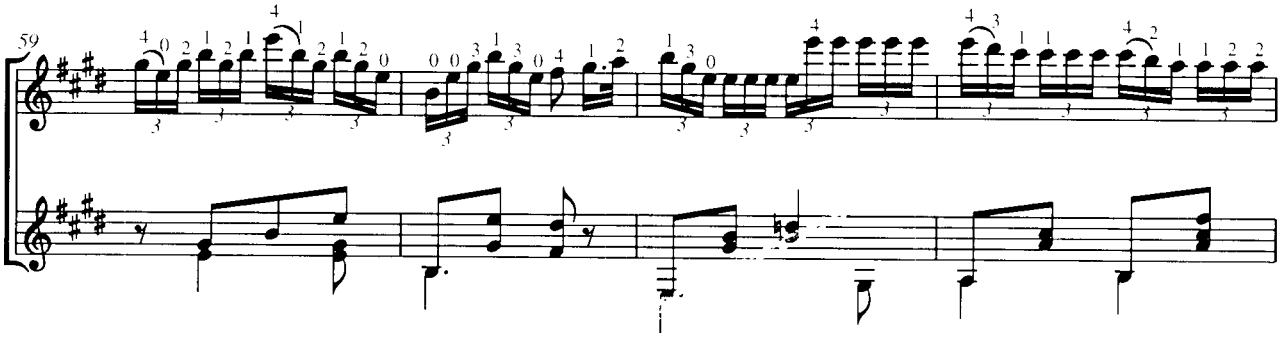

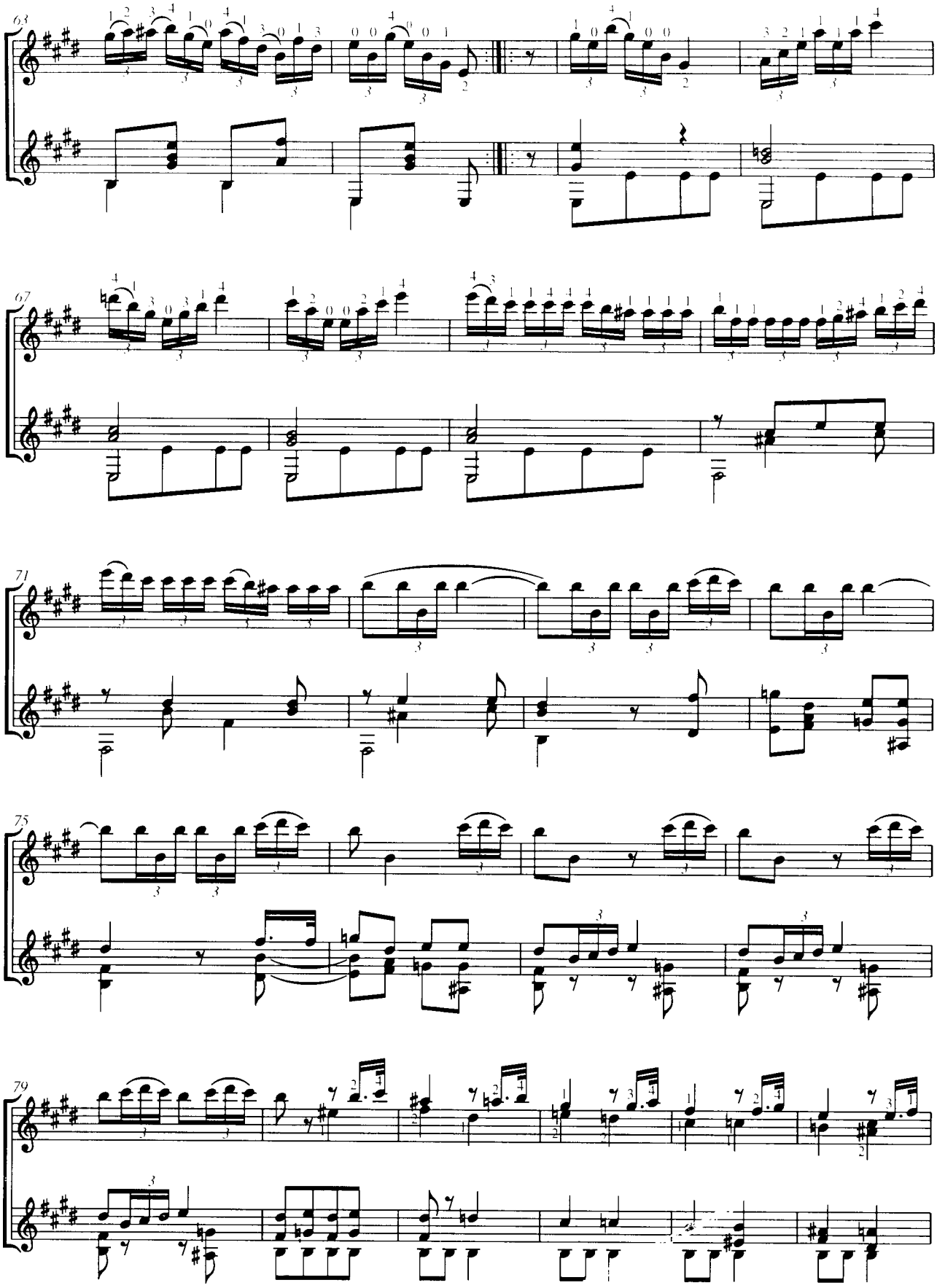

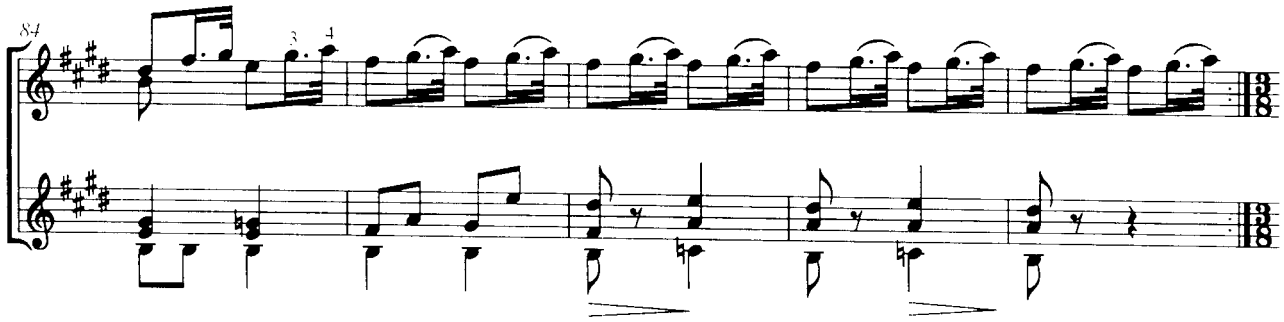

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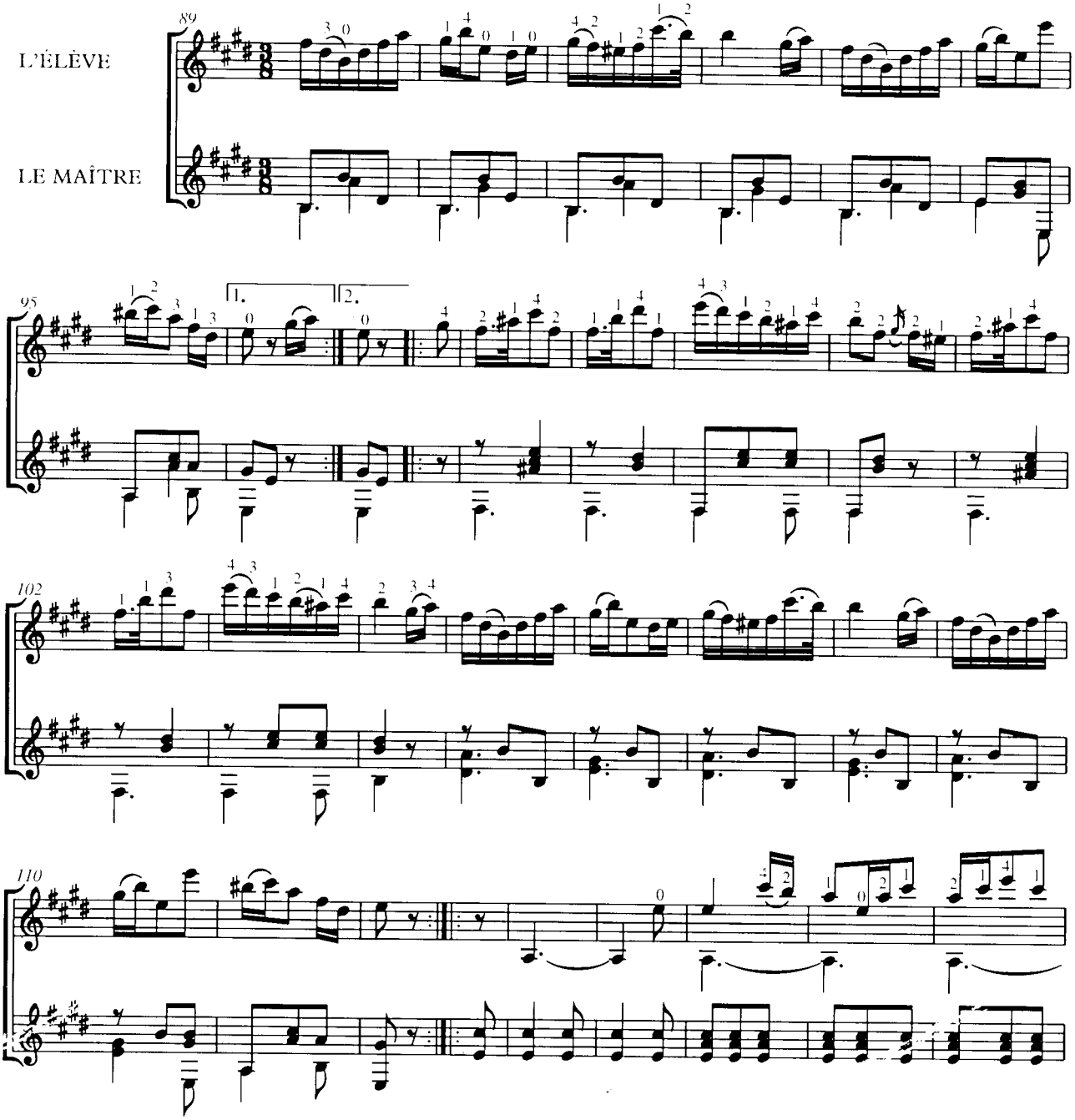

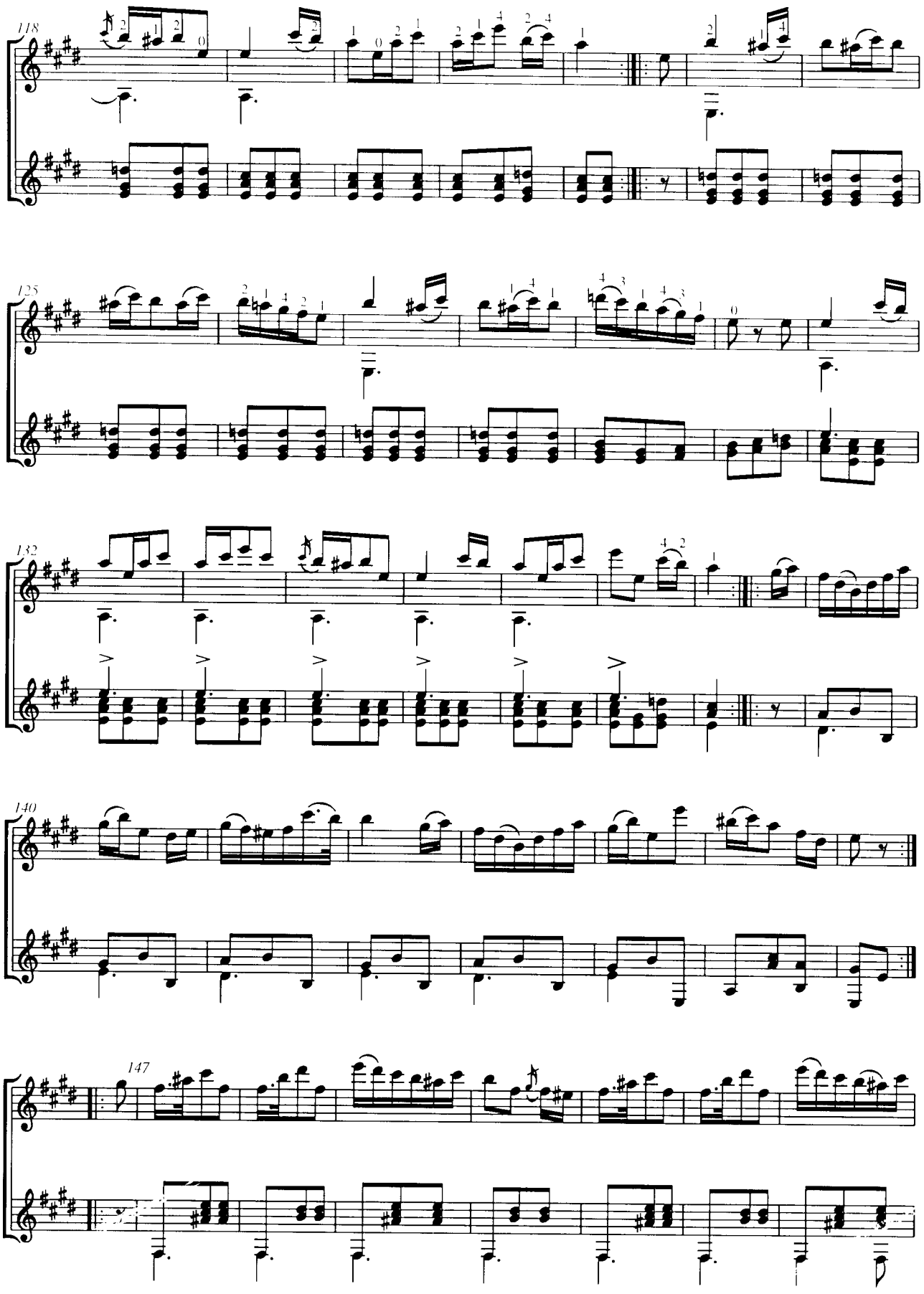
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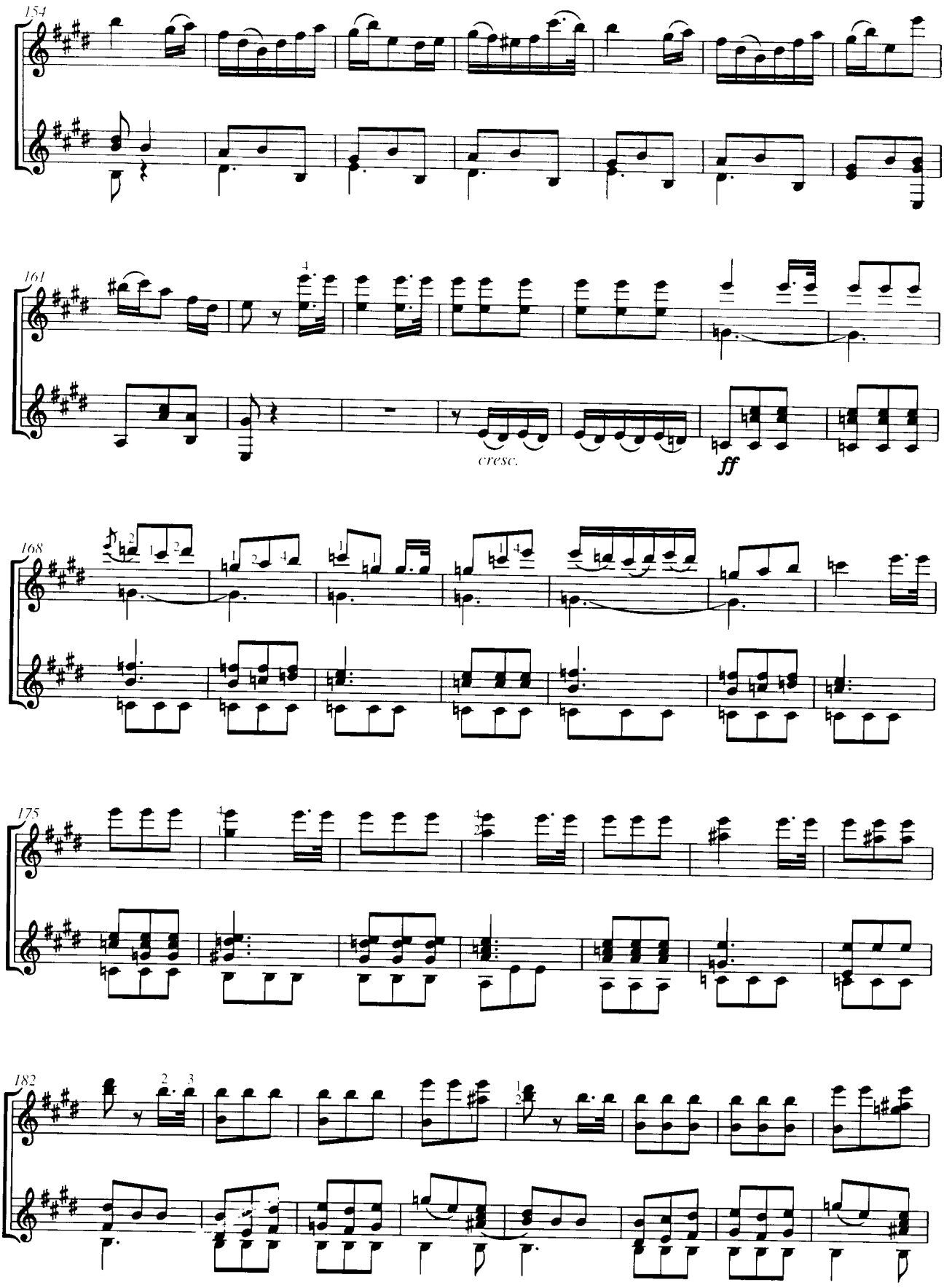
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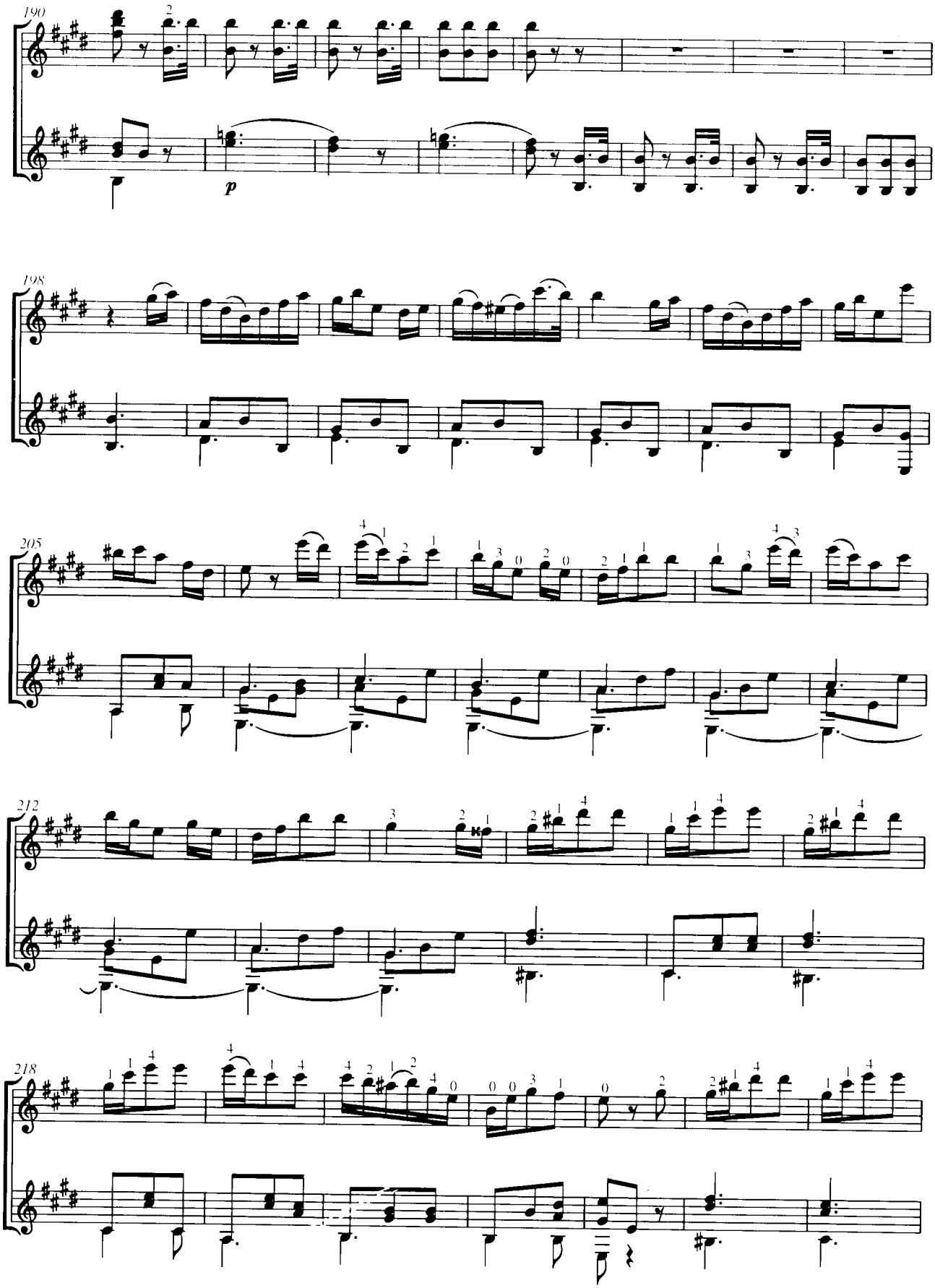
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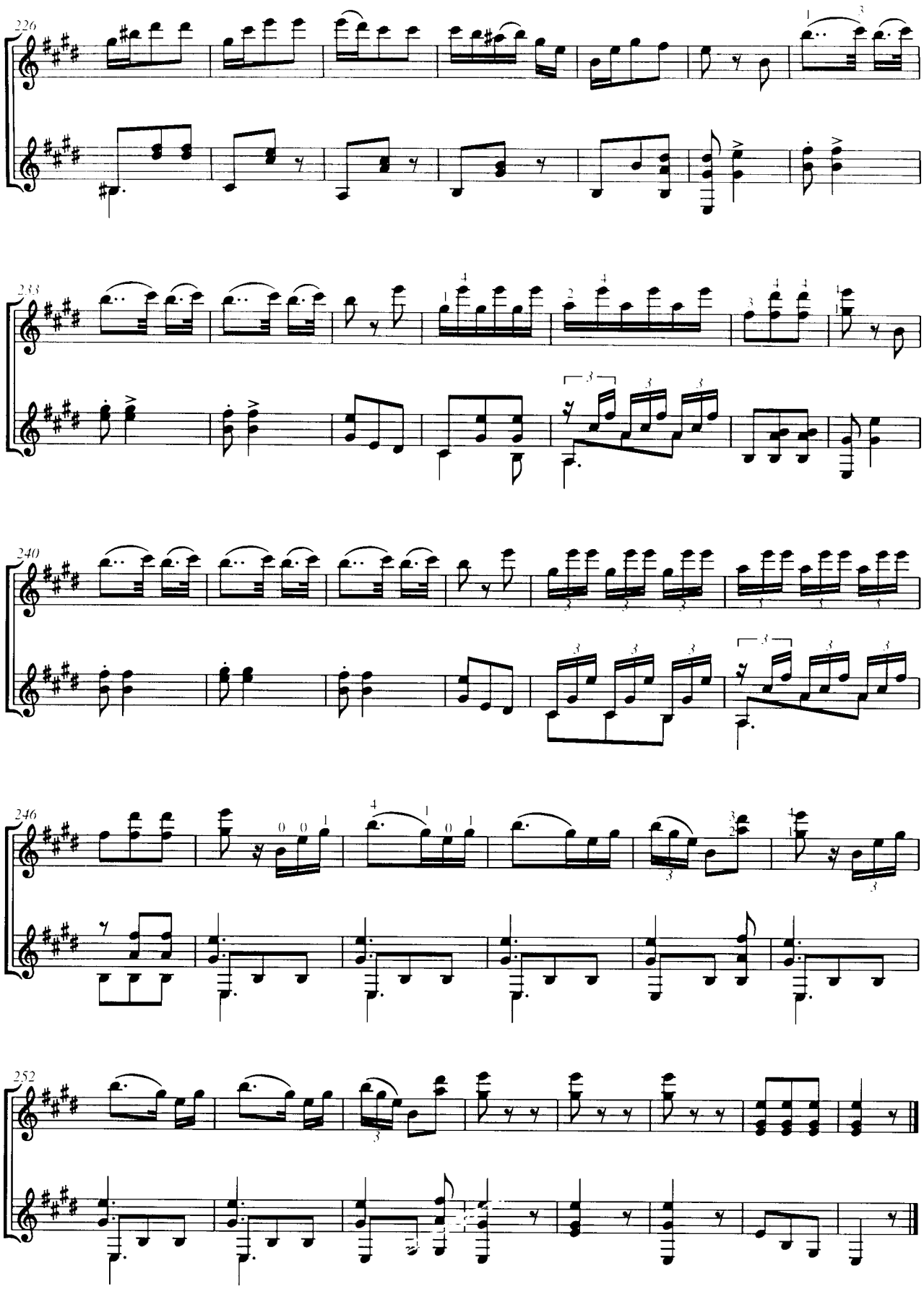
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