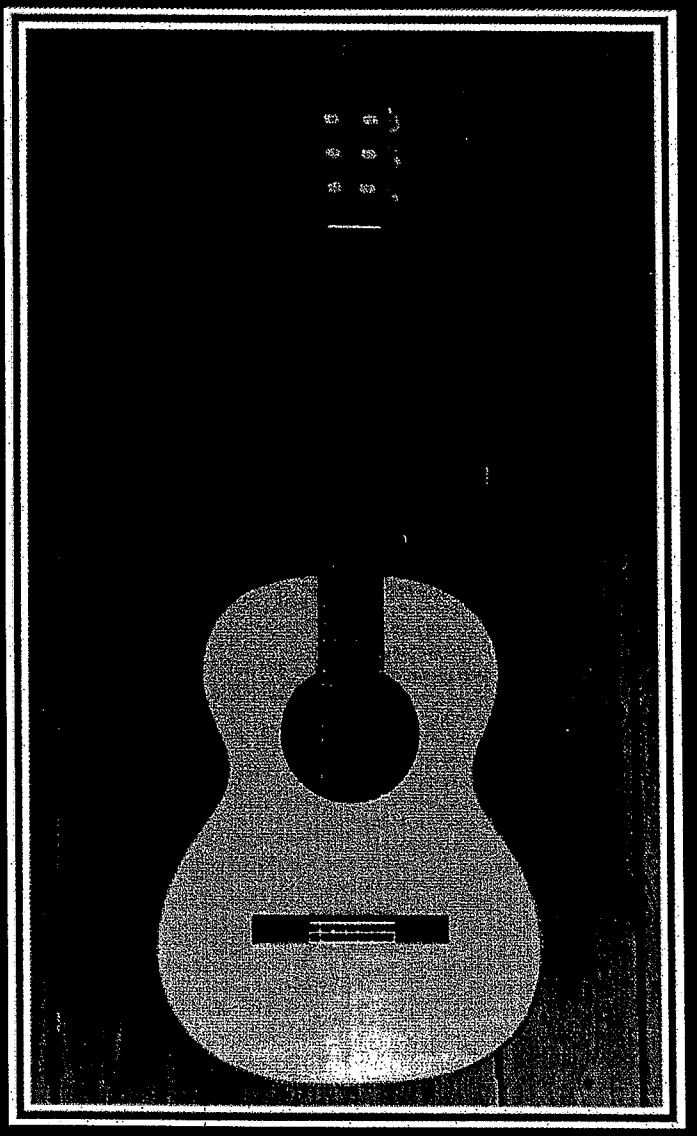
Celtic Music For Guitar



Allan Alexander

Available with CD

Celtic Music for Guitar

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Celtic Music For Guitar

1. Road to Listonvarna/The Morris Dance - Traditional Irish • Two Traditional tunes from Ireland joined in a medley. They sound as if they were written to be played this way.
2. Wo Betyd Thy Waerie Bodie - Lute Piece from Scotland • This is a lute tune from Scotland. Interestingly, the only original part is the first two lines, but they are so haunting that I wrote variations to fill the piece out. I usually try to stay with the original tuning for the guitar, but there is just no way to make this tune work without tuning the 3rd string down to F# to keep the intervals like the lute, and the sixth down to D for the low notes. People who read music might find the tablature easier with this tuning.
3. Nyth Cwcw - Traditional Irish • This is one of the more difficult tunes in the book, but accessible for most people, and great practice for slurs.
4. Heartland Air - Allan Alexander • I wrote this tune for my wife for her birthday. Over time, I have come to realize just how much I love this piece. I never seem to tire of it.
5. Variations on an Untitled Lute Dance - Lute Piece from Scotland • The original of this is a bit different, and can be found in lute tablature, but I actually prefer my modified version. When I play the lute, I use this version.
6. Separation of Soul and Body - Turlough Carolan • This tune really shows you how a great tune, though it is short, can be incredibly effective. It's one of my favorite Carolan tunes. When I perform it, I do each section 2 times, then repeat the entire piece.
7. Corne Yards - Lute piece from Scotland • Another example of a tune that was originally written for the lute. I find it amazing how much it sounds like traditional music from Ireland and Scotland. I love it so much that I had to write additional variations so I could have a longer piece.
8. Thomas Burke - Turlough Carolan • This piece is classic Carolan. It is a wonderful tune. Some of the left hand stretches may be a little difficult if you aren't used to bars, (beginning of the third line) but things like this are really typical of guitar music. Spend the time and learn how to do them and it will make future pieces easier to play.
9. Rug Muire Mac De Dhia - Traditional Irish • This is actually a Christmas tune, though to me it sounds more like "Celtic Blues." It was another piece that was too short for me. I wrote the variation to have more of what I like. It is not too hard to play.
10. Morgan Megan - Turlough Carolan • Another one of my favorite Carolan pieces. It really doesn't need anything, but to make it more interesting to play, I modified the harmonies and melody a bit when I stated the tune a second time.
11. Castles in the Sky - Traditional Scottish • I changed it a bit to make it more appealing. If you want to search, you can find the original melody and try making an arrangement yourself. It's how I started.
12. Carolan's Welcome Home - Turlough Carolan • A very well known Carolan favorite.
13. Sheebag Sheemore - Turlough Carolan • This is supposed to be the first tune Carolan wrote. Because he started playing music late in life, he was not as proficient as other harpists. He was encouraged by a patron to write music so he would have an advantage over other players.
14. Carolan's Ramble to Cashel - Turlough Carolan • Another haunting Carolan melody.
15. The Queen's Dream - Turlough Carolan • Do all the repeats and play it as long as you can. It is a great tune.
16. Comben Market/Ellen O'Grady - Traditional Irish • I wrote the introduction to this for the usual reason, I wanted the tune to be longer. The two pieces make a great medley.
17. A Lilt - Rory Dall • An early lute piece from Scotland. The first part is almost the original; the variation is a pleasant contrast. It's another one of my favorites.
18. Carolan's Quarrel With the Landlady - Turlough Carolan • I love to make the notes ring in this

well known Carolan classic.

19. I Never Knew I Loved Thee - Lute piece from Scotland • An original lute piece from 16th century Scotland. I have not changed a note here. I simply modified the fingering to suit the tuning of the guitar.
20. Mrs. Farrel - Turlough Carolan • I don't remember hearing a recording of this one. It works quite well on the guitar and is classic Carolan
21. Linda's Love - Allan Alexander • One of my pieces that came out sounding Celtic. I came home from hearing Paul McCartney's band, and was inspired to write this little tune for him. The band had played some things that sounded very Gaelic.
22. I Serve a Worthy Ladie - 16th Century mandora piece • This is a 16th century renaissance tune written for mandora. I have filled it out and corrected things so they would make more sense to me. It is one of my favorite tunes from Scotland.
23. Dermott O'Doud - Turlough Carolan • It's easy to overlook the quality of this tune because it's only a page long. Do all the repeats and then play it again.
24. Cremonea - Turlough Carolan • This would work wonderfully as a medley with the above piece or with "The Queen's Dream".
25. The Butterfly - Traditional Irish • One of my favorite Celtic tunes. I have yet to see an arrangement of this tune for guitar. This is a good tune for becoming familiar with higher positions.
26. The Clergy's Lamentation - Turlough Carolan • A nice setting of another Carolan piece. His ability to write wonderful melodies is amazing.
27. A Port - Rory Dall • Some of the harmonies and the phrasing in this tune may seem a little unfamiliar, but if you continue to play it, it will start to sound good. The disc or tape will help on this one.
28. Cary Jane - Allan Alexander • This is a tune that I wrote for a friend of mine. The triplets in line five are fun to play, and it makes a good concert tune.
29. Mrs. O'Neil of Carlane - Turlough Carolan • There is no question that Carolan's music is a "National Treasure" of Ireland.
30. Blackthorn Stick - Traditional Scottish • It was fun harmonizing this and writing the variation.
31. Carolan's Memories - Allan Alexander • In memory of Turlough Carolan.

Because of the number of pieces and amount of time they would have taken on a recording, it was not possible for me to do all the repeats, so I chose certain tunes for full versions. Do as many of the repeats as you feel the piece warrants. When I perform, I do the repeats.

If you have any questions about the fingerings, phrasing or notes in this book, you can contact Allan Alexander via e-mail at dowland@albany.net

Allan Alexander is a guitarist/lutenist whose love is arranging and composing for both instruments. He has recorded many compact discs. Several are available from ADG Productions, and others are available at http://www.mp3.com

Allan is continuing to add to the repertoire of both instruments. He lives in Troy, NY with his lovely wife, an artist and sculptor.

The guitar pictured on the cover was made for Allan Alexander by David LaPlante.

6th September 2000

You'd have liked the tunes I play:
used to hum them in the garden.
Perhaps that's why Blind Mary
sounds like the smell of roses.
The poems? I dunno.
I never understood how anyone
could be so proud and so indifferent
and be both simultaneously.
It was a skill I couldn't but admire.
You liked the articles, were proud
a son of yours went all the way to Samarkand.
(I only know that cos some stranger told me.)
At least you had the what? the common sense?
to let me go my way, perhaps knowing
for the sake of being someone else,
I never would have followed.

I ran across the globe in search of sunlight.
To stand beside this ocean, listening to the surf,
Whistling "Bold Fenian men"
And wishing you were here to see it now.

- Liam Guilar

Liam Guilar is a poet, writer, musician and kayaking enthusiast. He is a highly intelligent, funny and wise person. You can read his on-line book about kayaking through Russia titled "Dancing with the Bear" at: http://www.isu.edu/outdoor/dwbstart.htm. I enjoy our conversations through e-mail. He is bright, insightful, and he can write. His book of poetry is published by Ginninderra press and is available from Liam. You can reach him through e-mail at: dbk@ausinfo.com.au. You can also order the book through the publisher at: http://www.ginninderrapress.com.au.

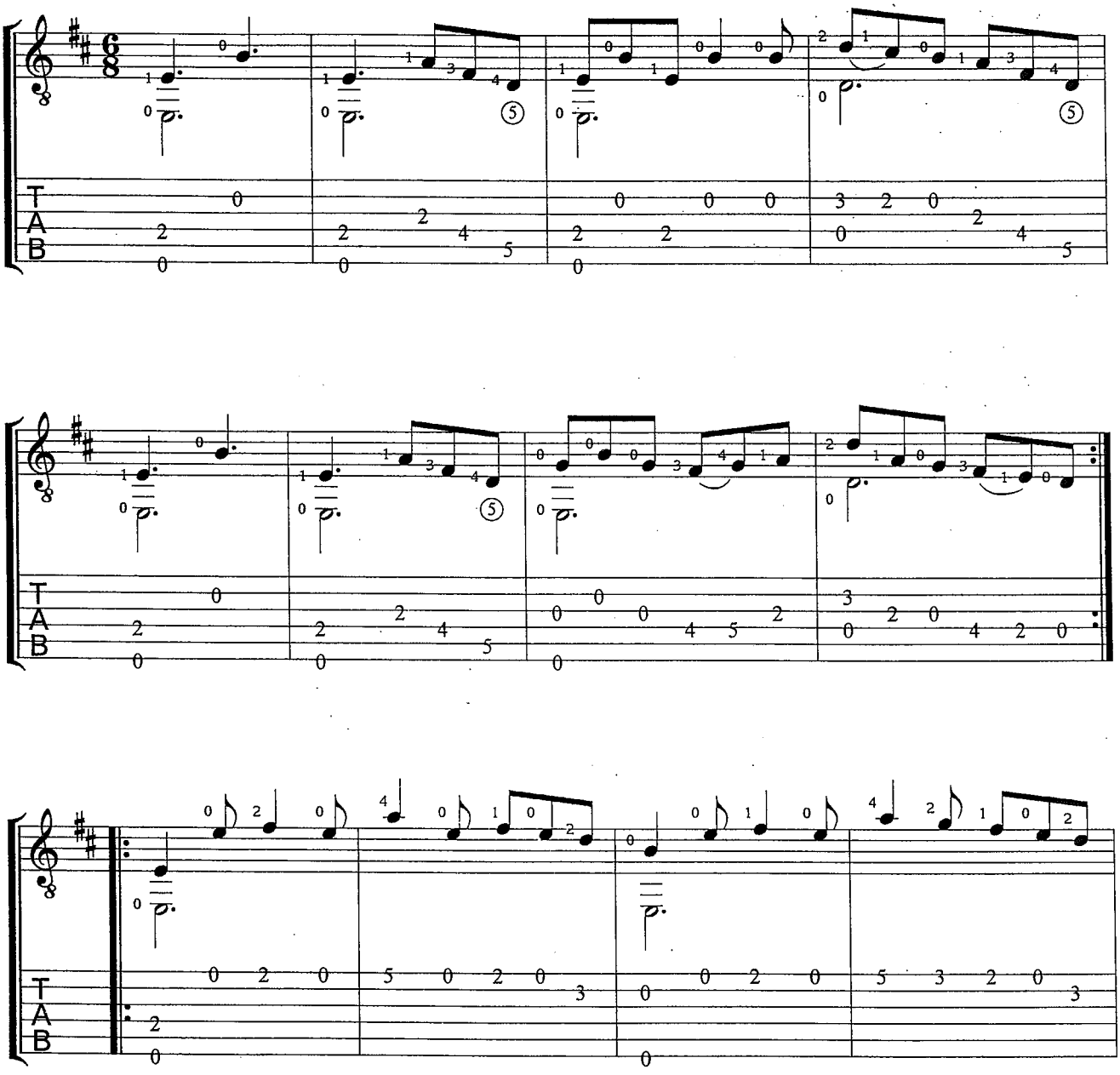
Of himself he says, "I used to play folk songs in Cornish pubs, but I discovered lute music and then Allan introduced me to Carolan's music. I have kayaked in Kirgizstan and Uzbekistan, in what was the CIS, just after it stopped being the USSR. As well as exploring rivers in Northern Sumatra (Indonesia), I've kayaked in Britain, Europe, Australia, and Idaho, which are as strange in some ways as any of the other places. I've traveled on the Trans-Kazak Express (at a time when it was described in the guide books as dirty, dangerous and closed to foreigners), pretending to be Estonian. We got across the Kirgiz border in the back of an apple truck and then got kicked out of Uzbekistan after the police "caught us" without visas in Samarkand. I got out of Moscow a couple of days before the Soviet tanks shelled their own parliament. I have traveled across Siberia in the company of the only non-English-speaking Chinese in China, who seemed to be involved in smuggling lipstick into Russia on the Trans-Manchurian Railway. They seemed to think I was so poor they needed to feed me chicken feet and Chinese Vodka every morning. I'm the only lute-playing poetry-writing kayaking medievalist I know who's been arrested in Samarkand."

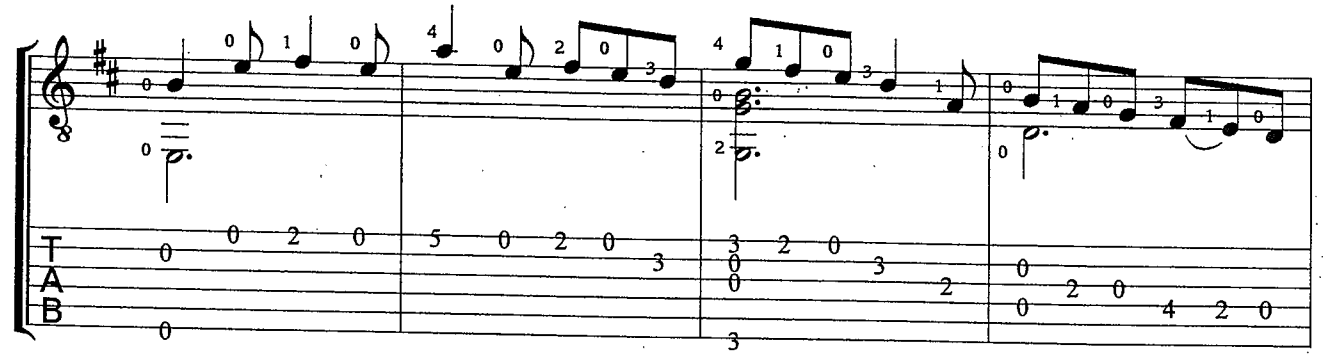
Liam is currently living on Australia's Gold Coast with his wife and children.

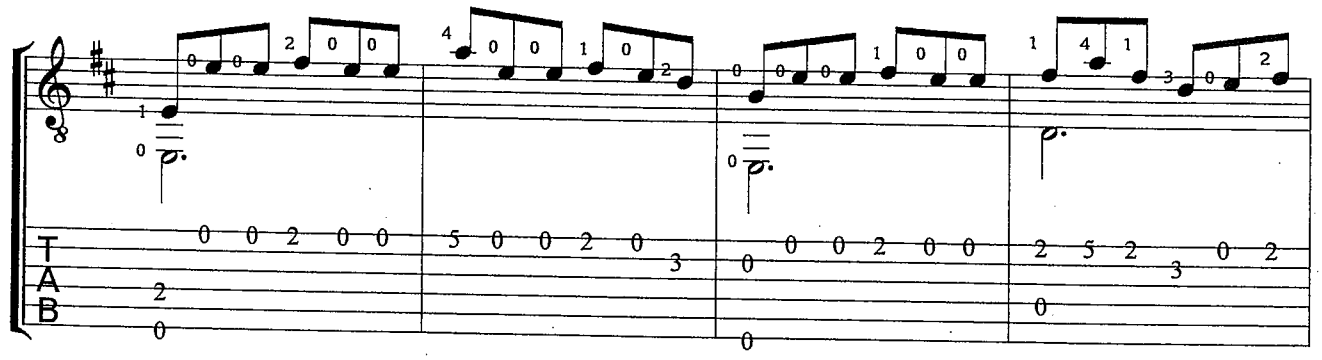
Road to Listonvarna - The Morris Dance

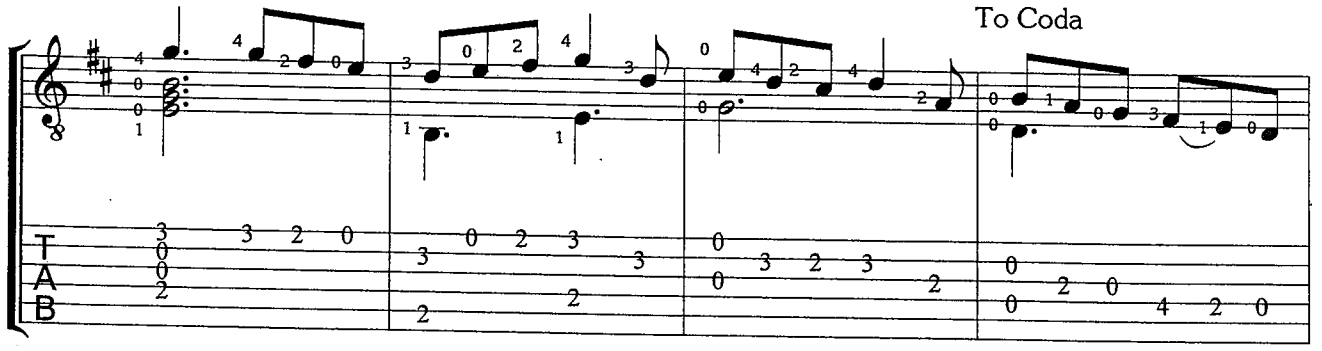
Traditional Irish - Arrangement
by Allan Alexander

♩= 160





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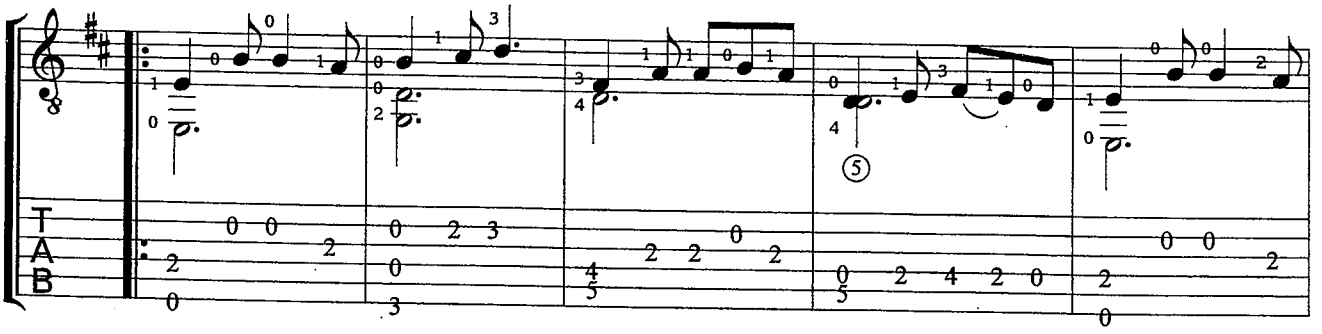

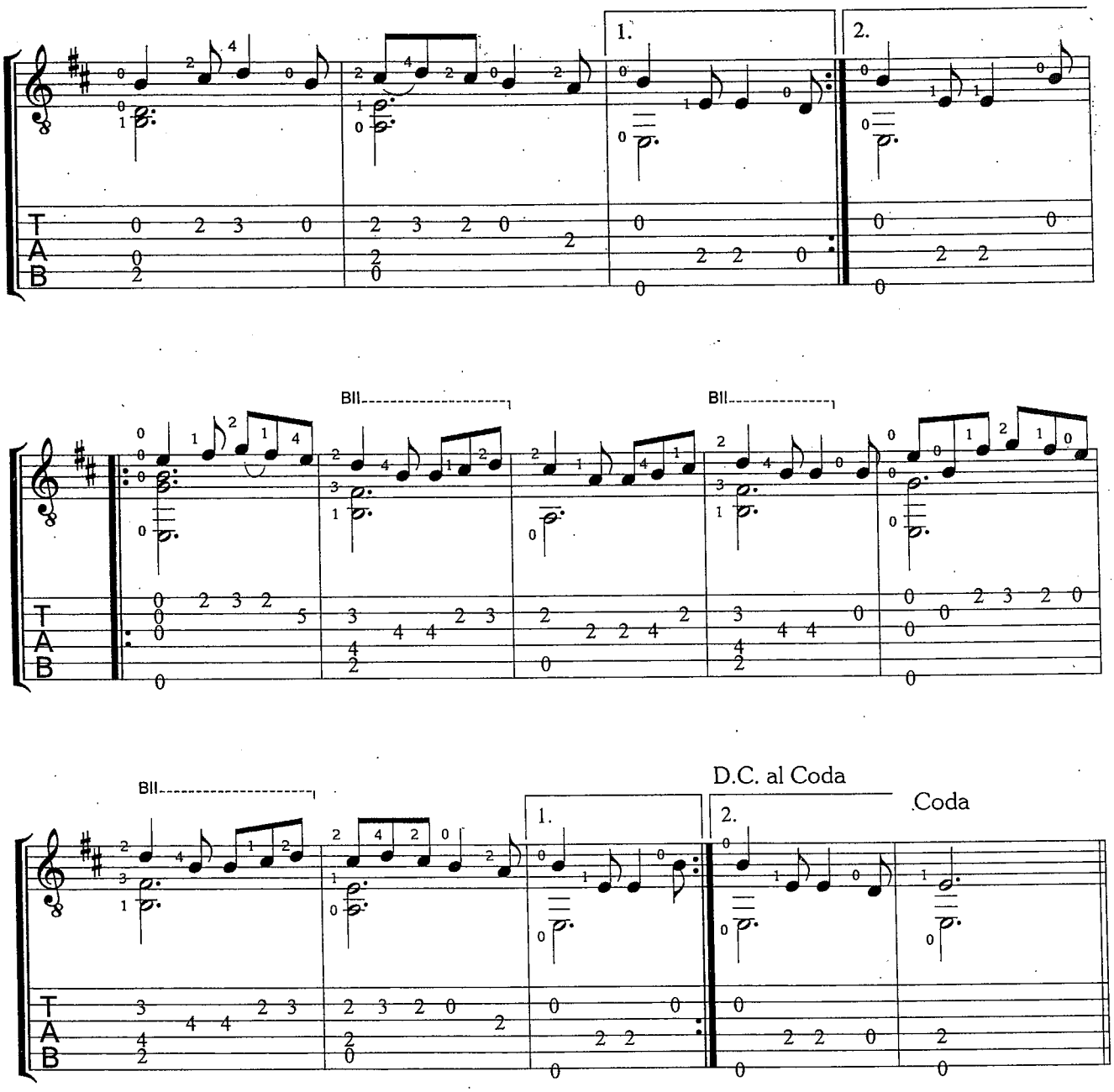
1.
2.
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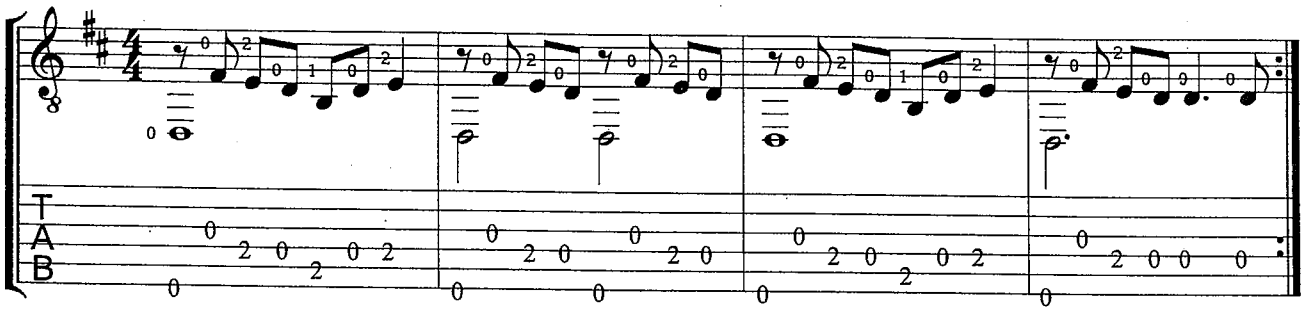
BII
BII
D.C. al Coda
Coda
1.
2.

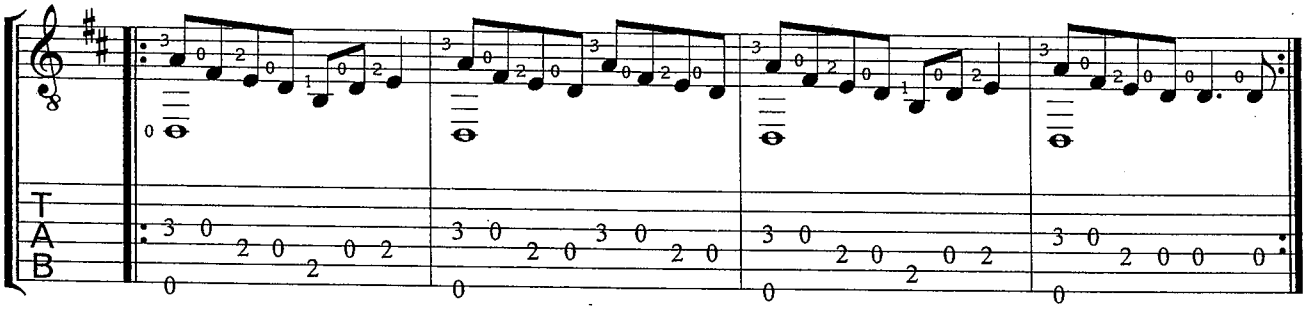
Wo Betyd Thy Waerie Bodie

3rd to F#
6th to D

From the Straloch Lute Manuscript
Arrangement and Variitions
by Allan Alexander

♩= 100





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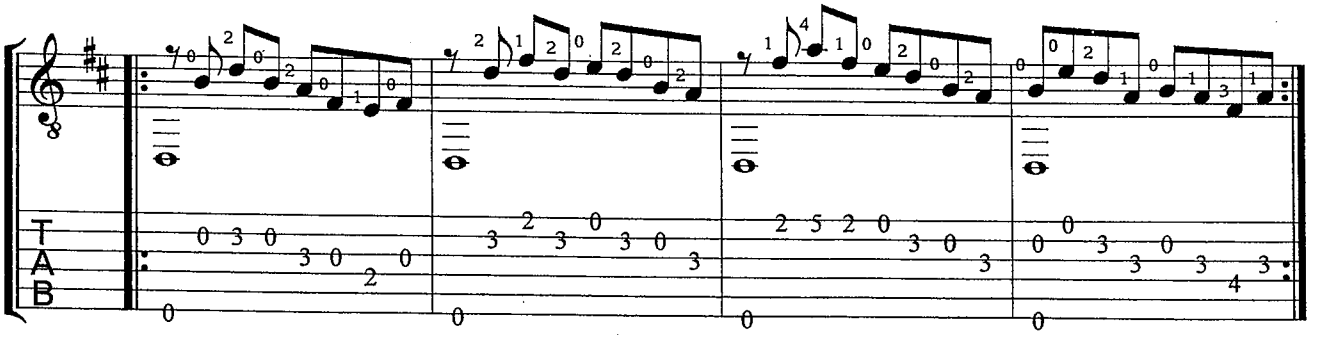

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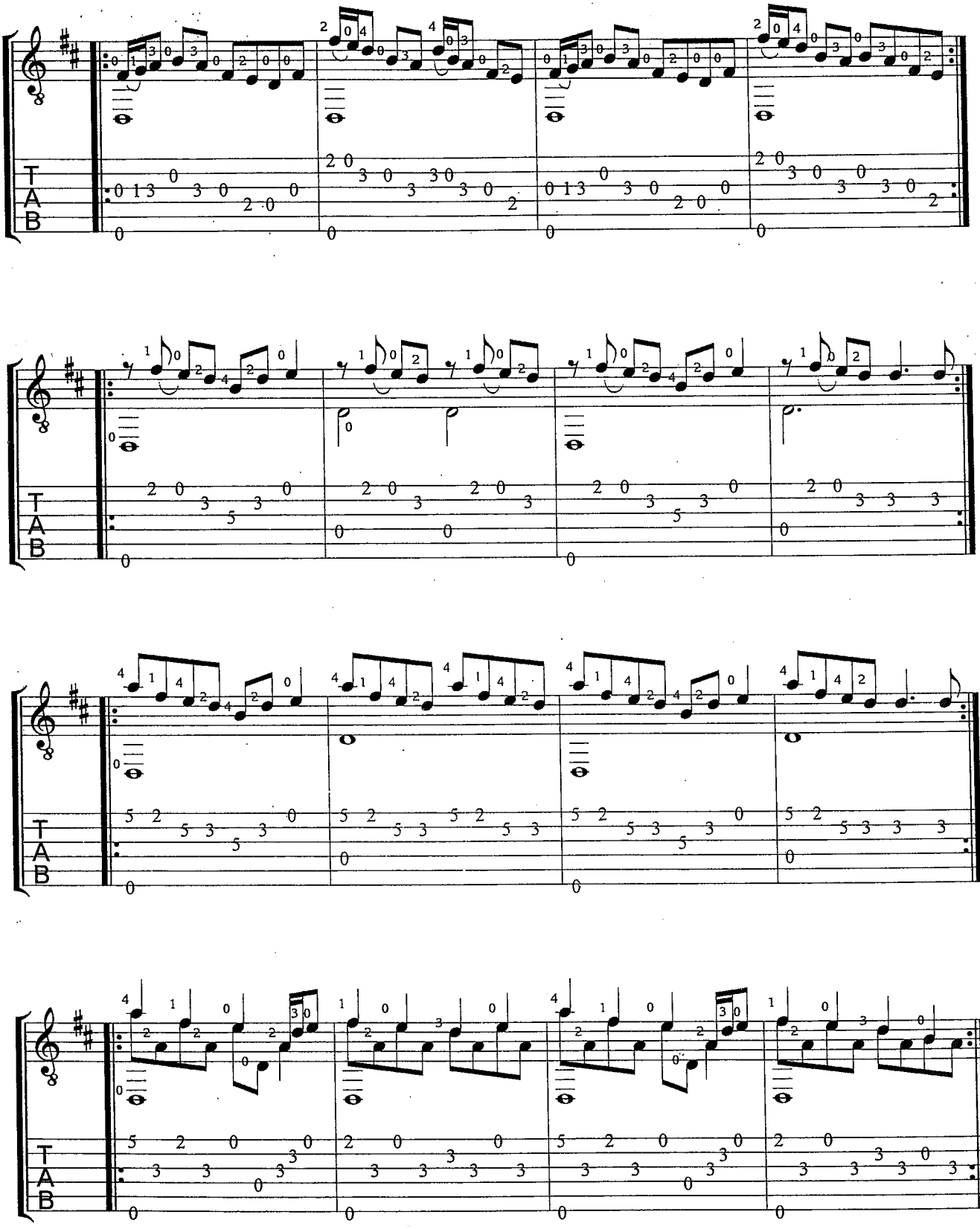

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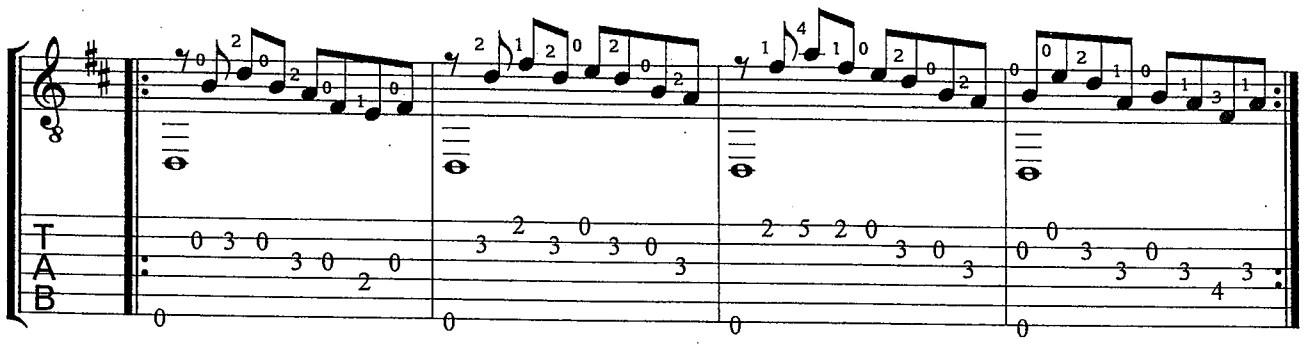
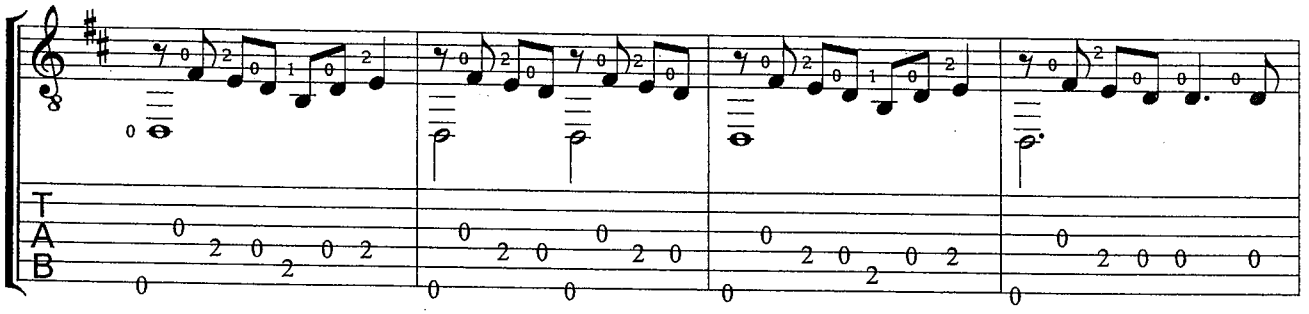
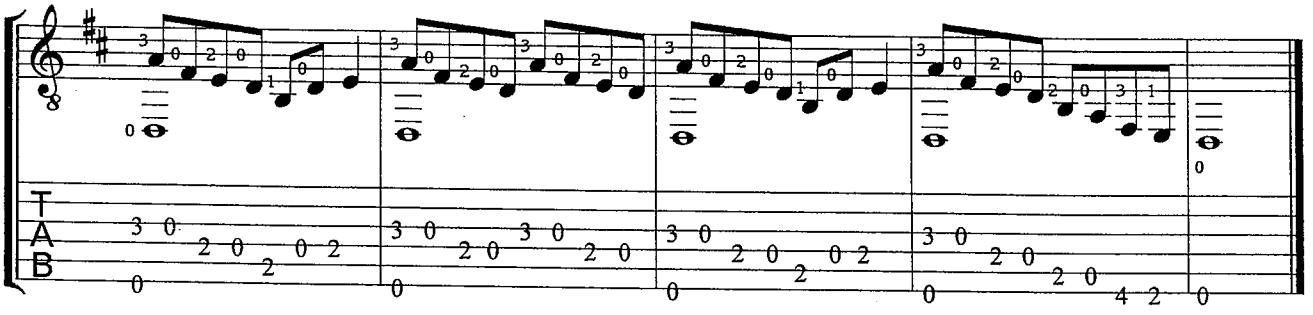
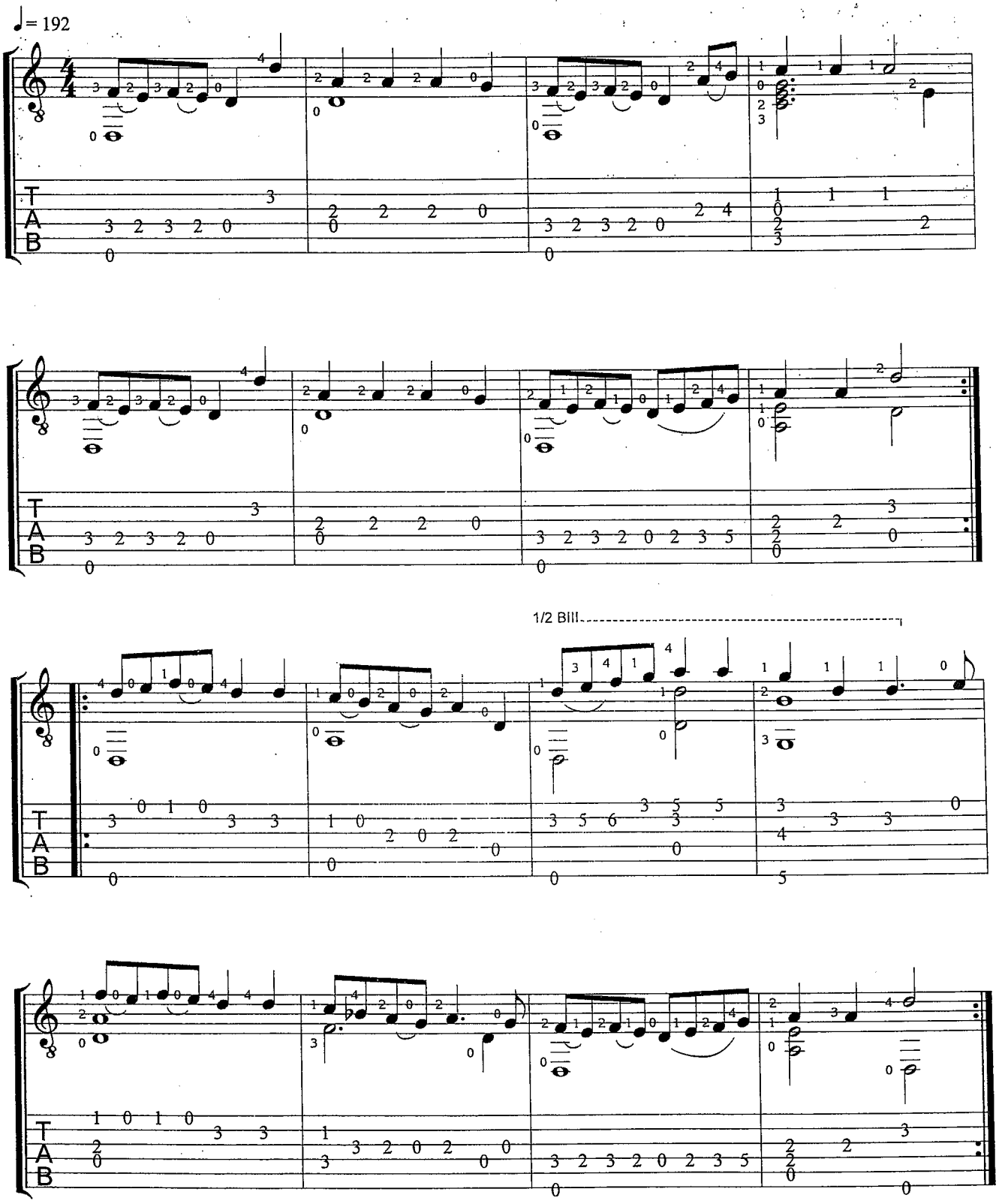






Ayth Cwcw

Traditional Irish
Arrangement and Variations
by Allan Alexander



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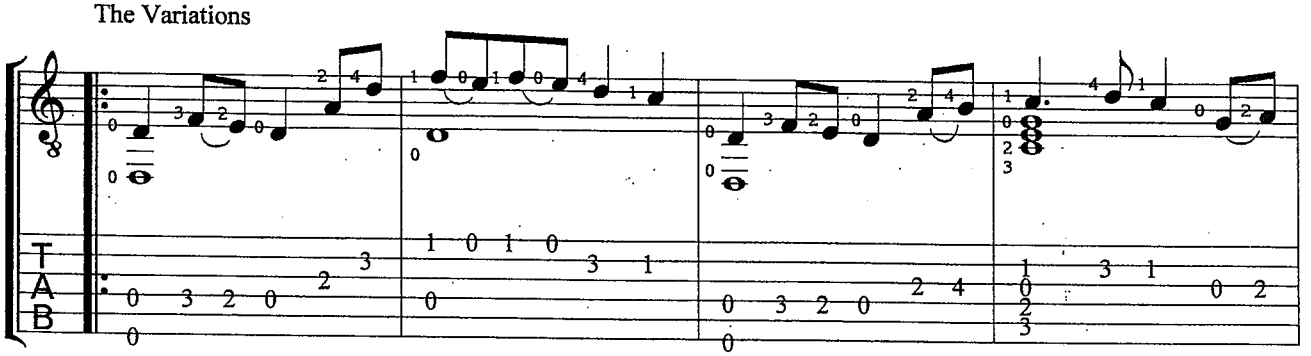
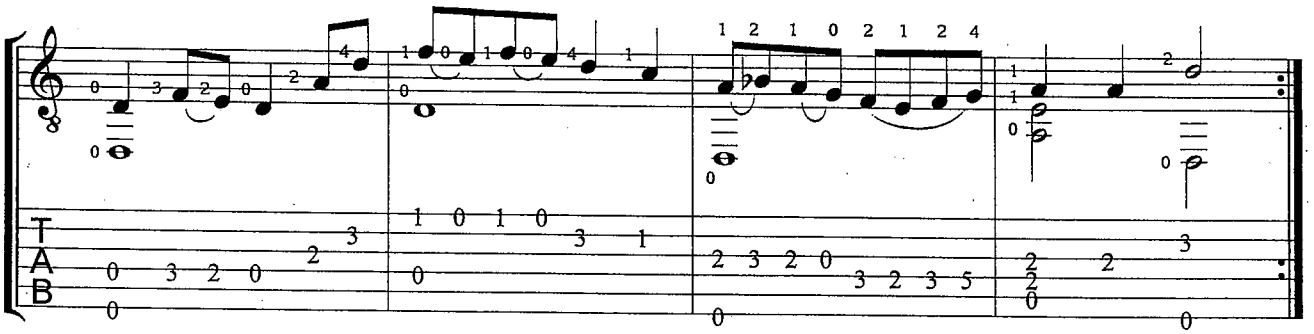
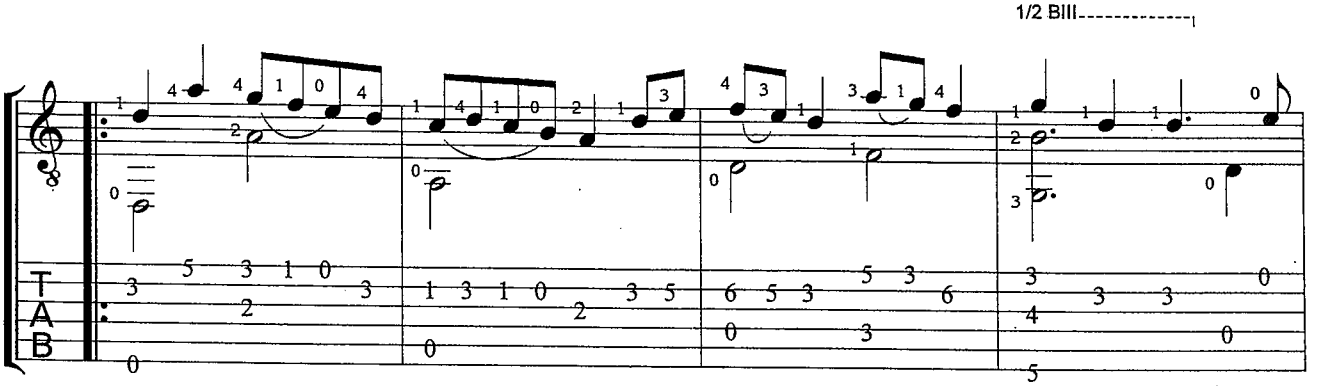
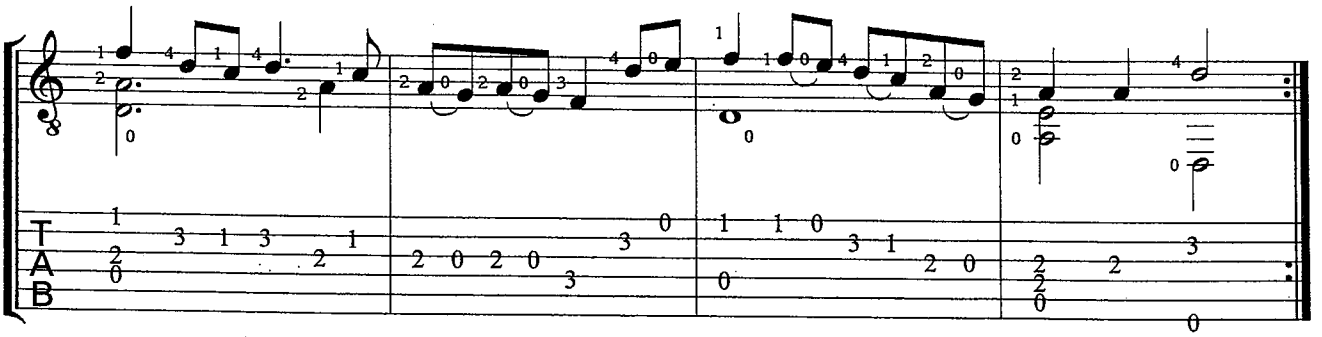


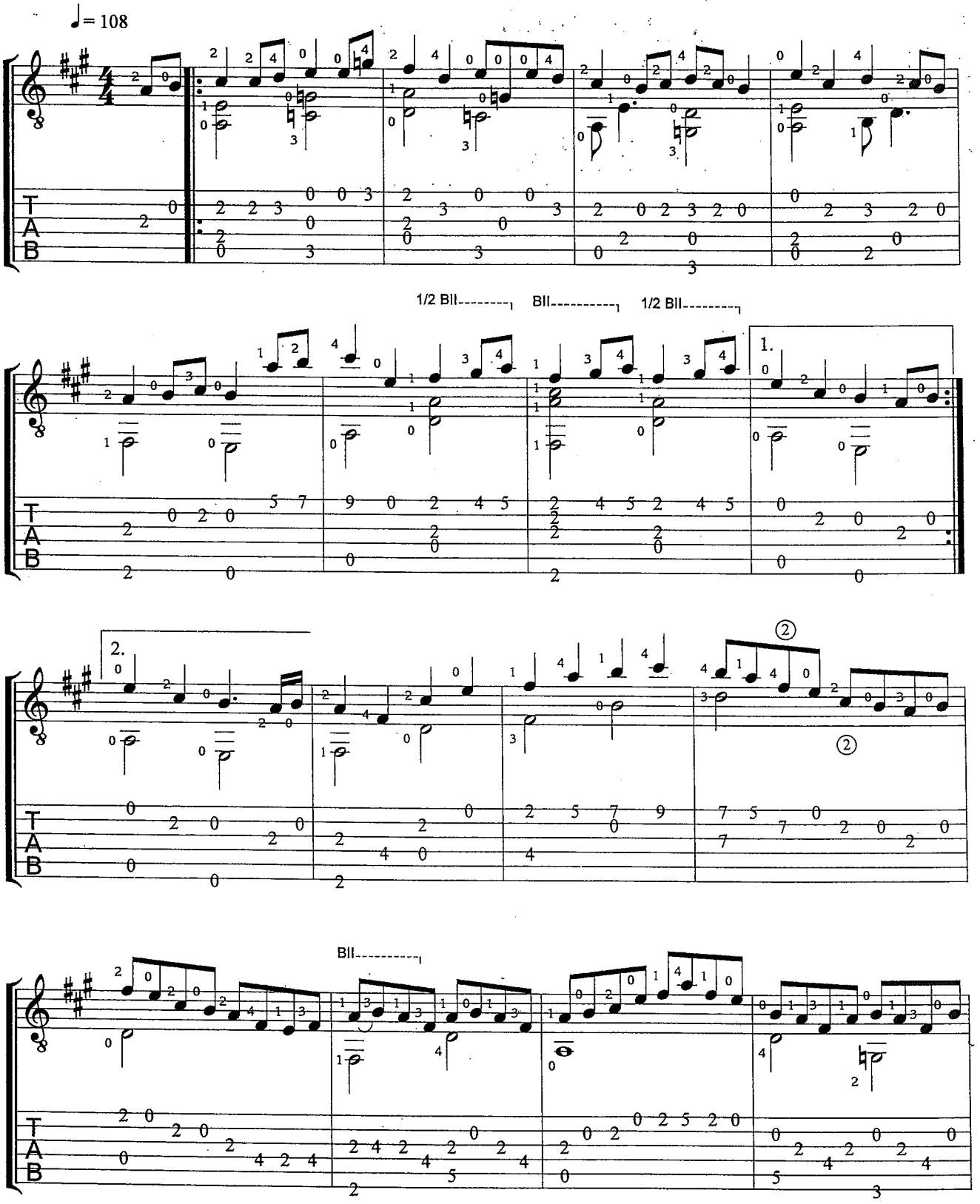


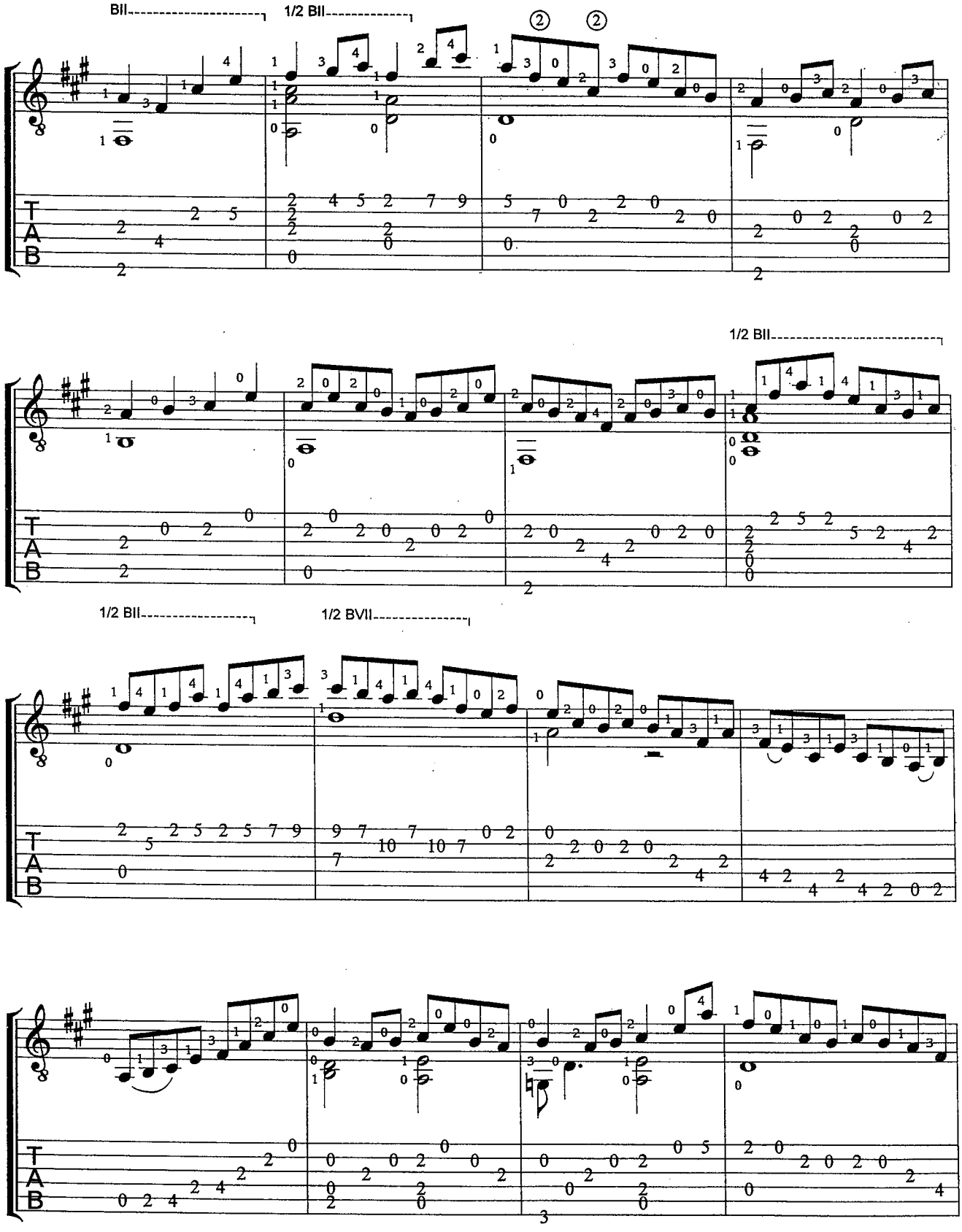




Heartland Air

Allan Alexander
For my wife Gay Malin

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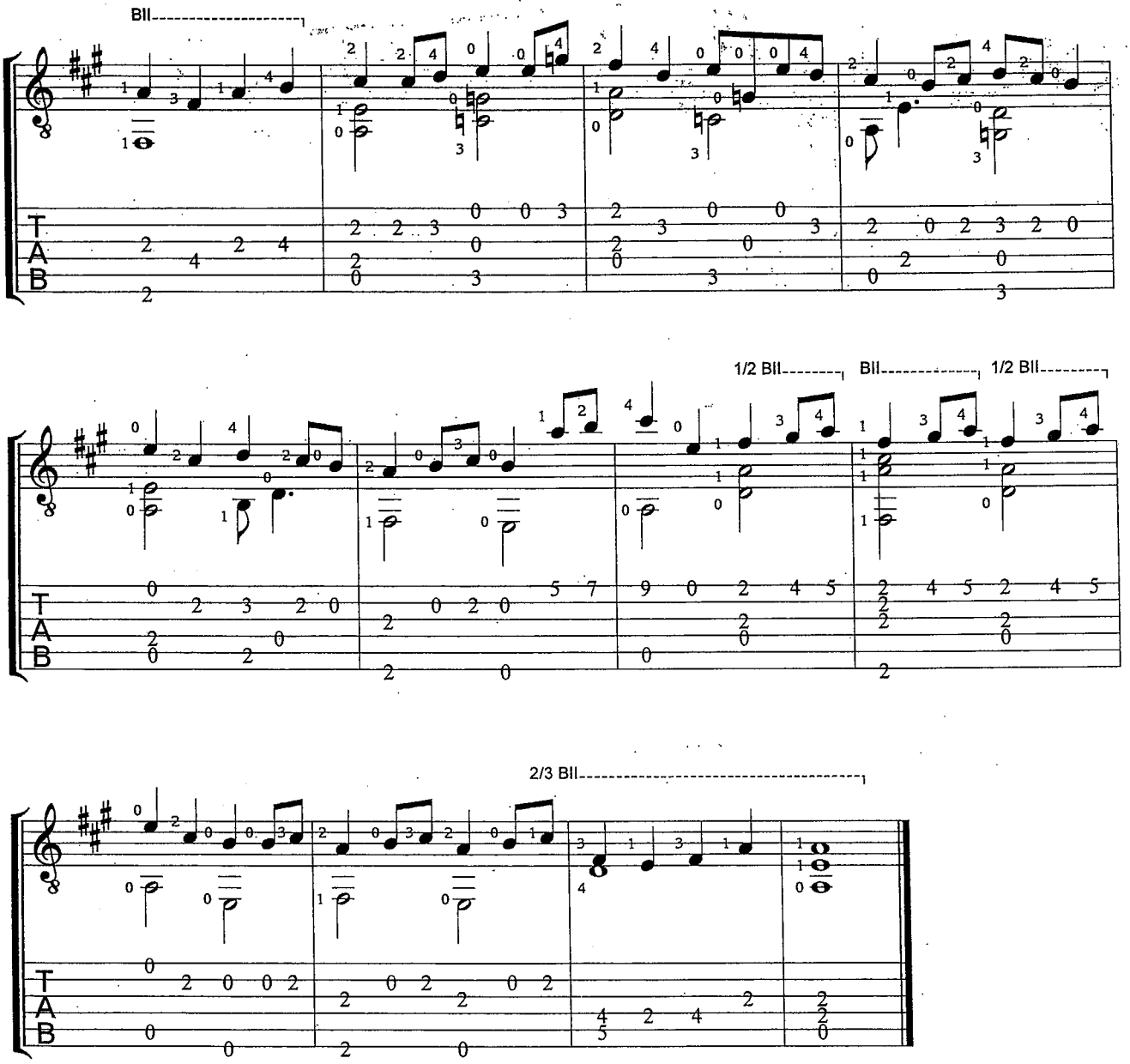
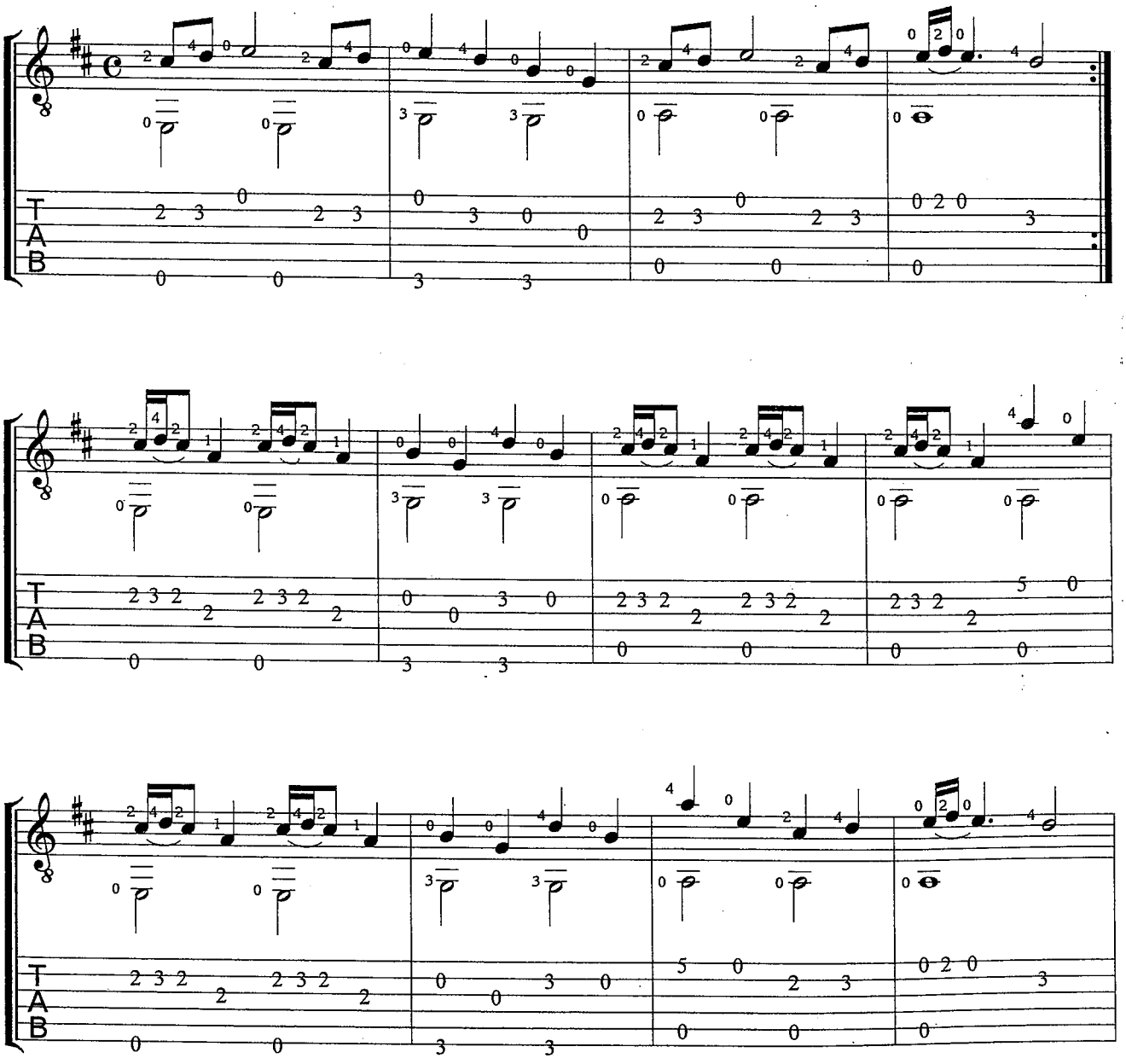
Heartland Air

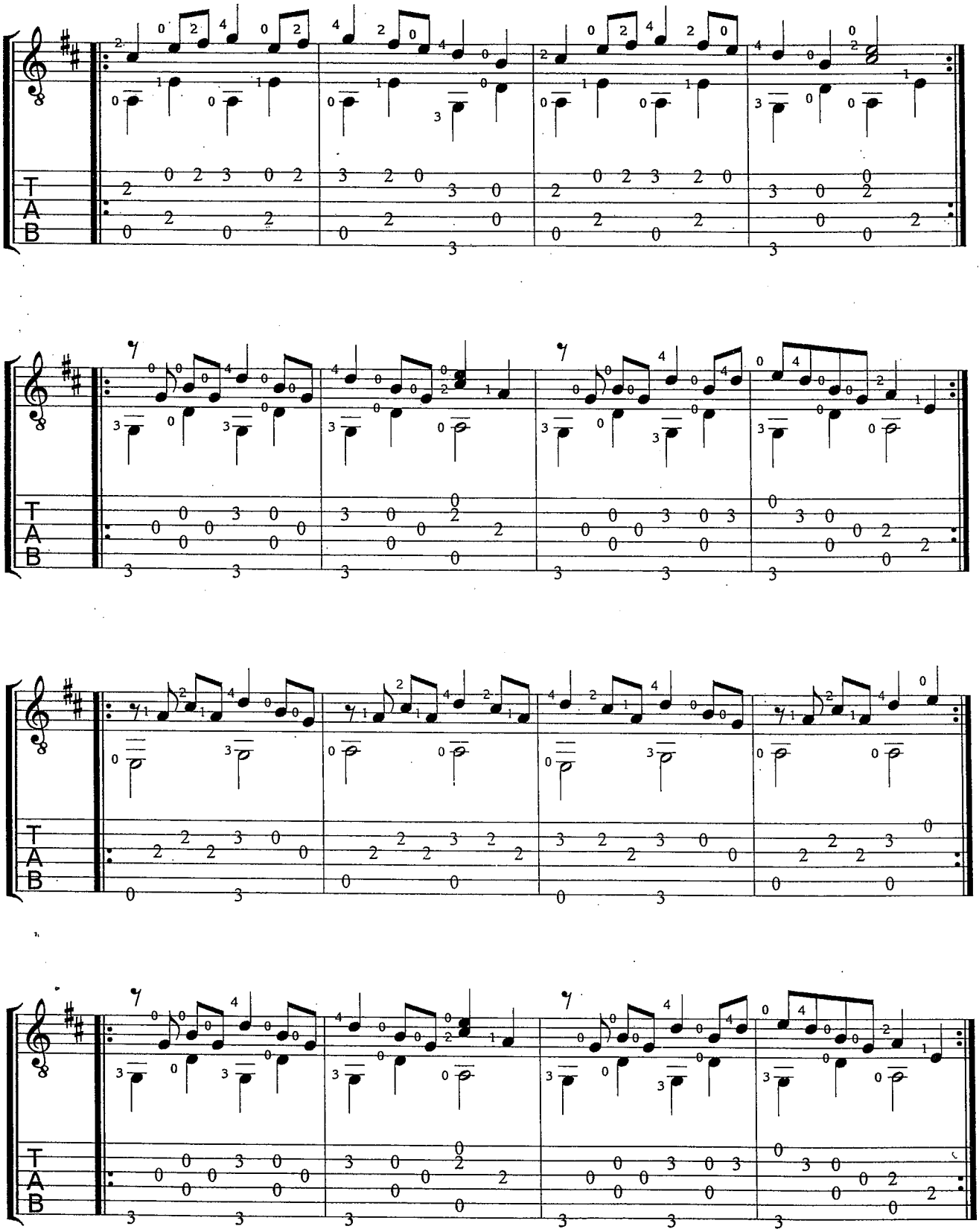


Variations on an Untitled Lute Dance

Based on a Lute piece from
the Rowallan Manuscript
Arrangement and Variations by
Allan Alexander

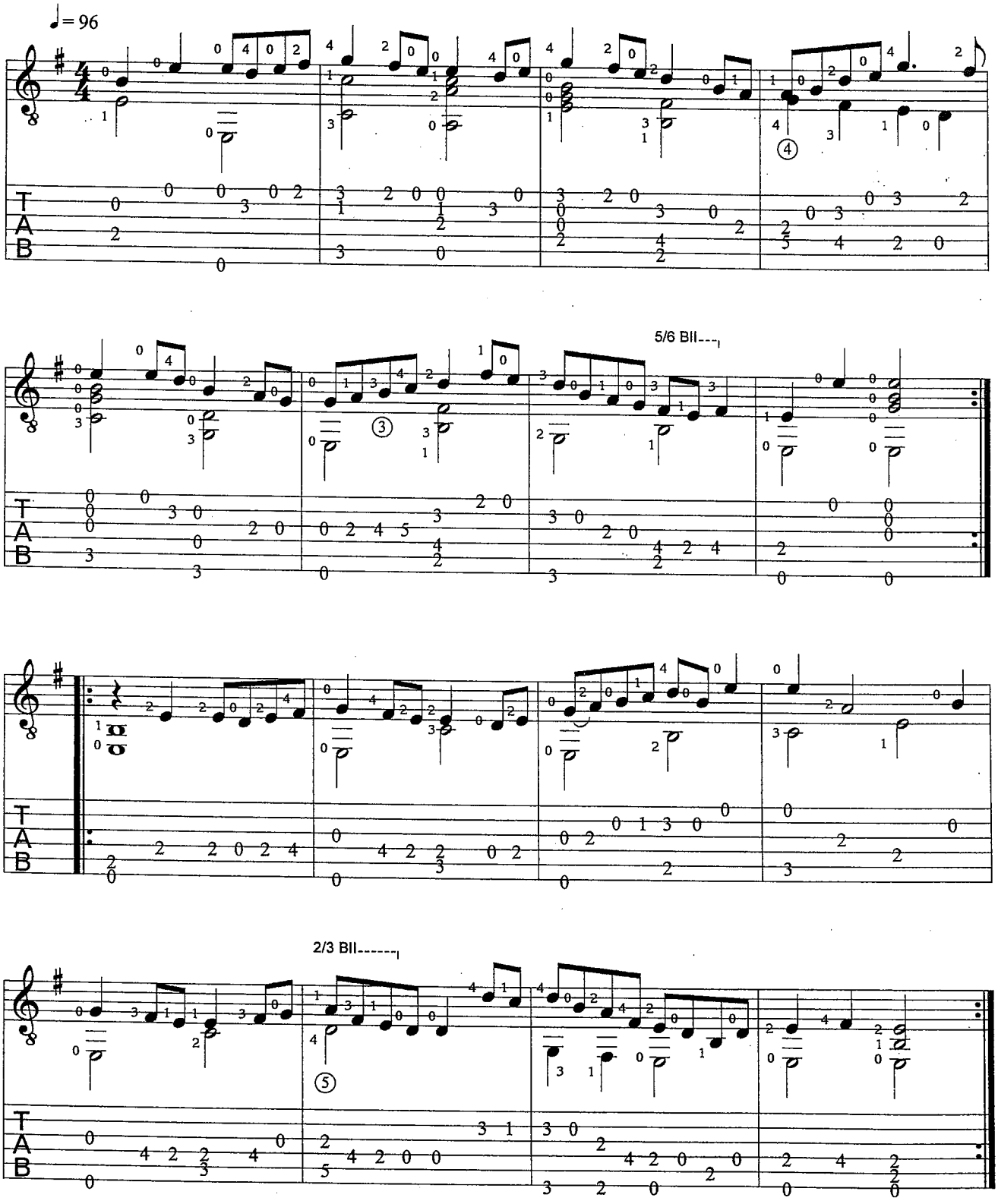
♩ = 208





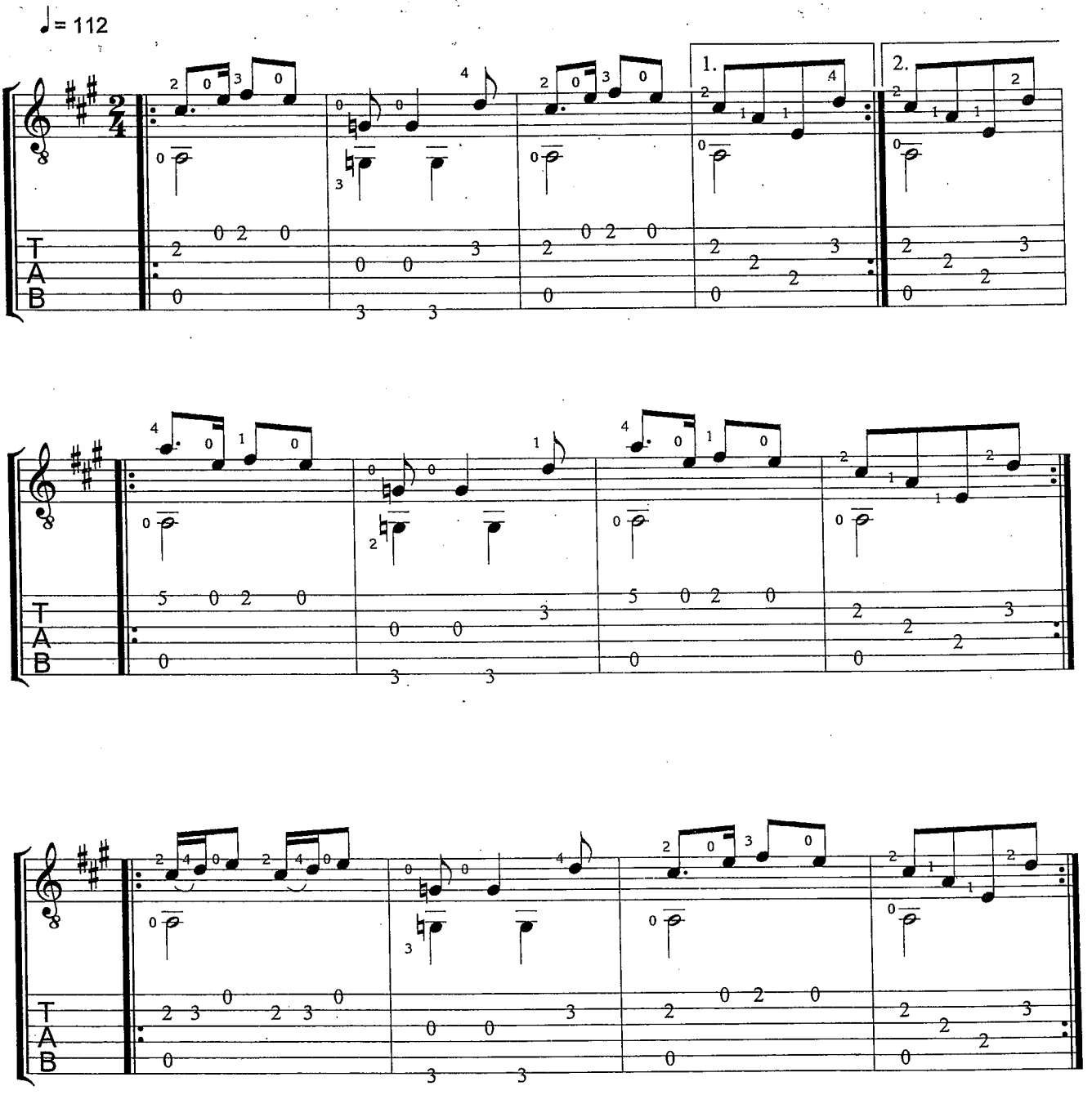
Separation of Soul and Body

Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander

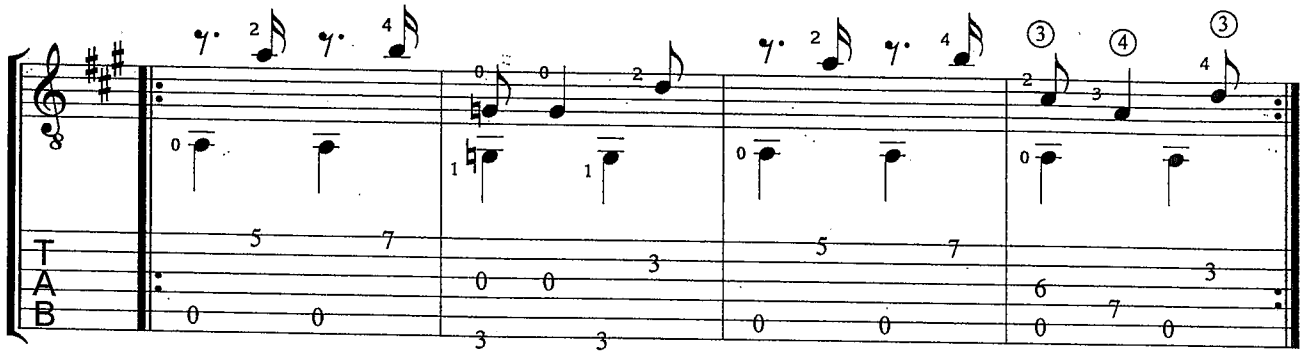


Corne Yards

From Rowallan Manuscript
Variations by Allan Alexander



Corne Yards



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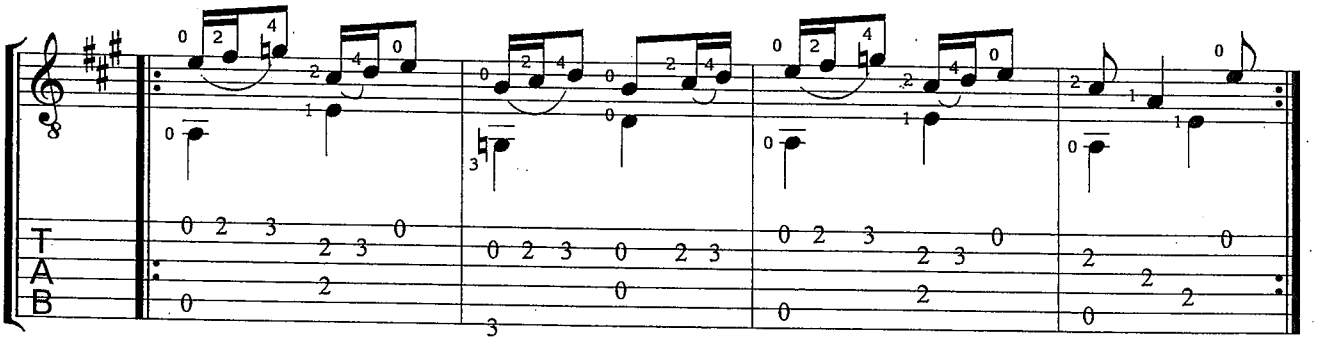
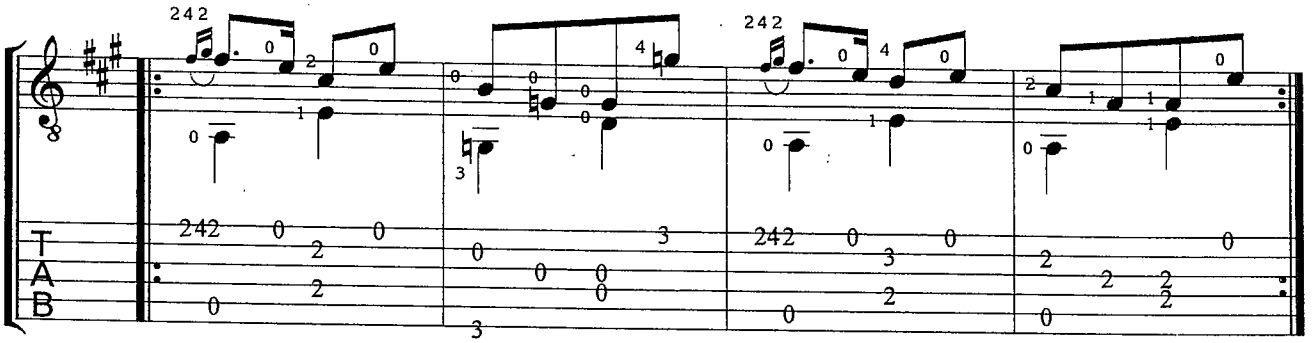
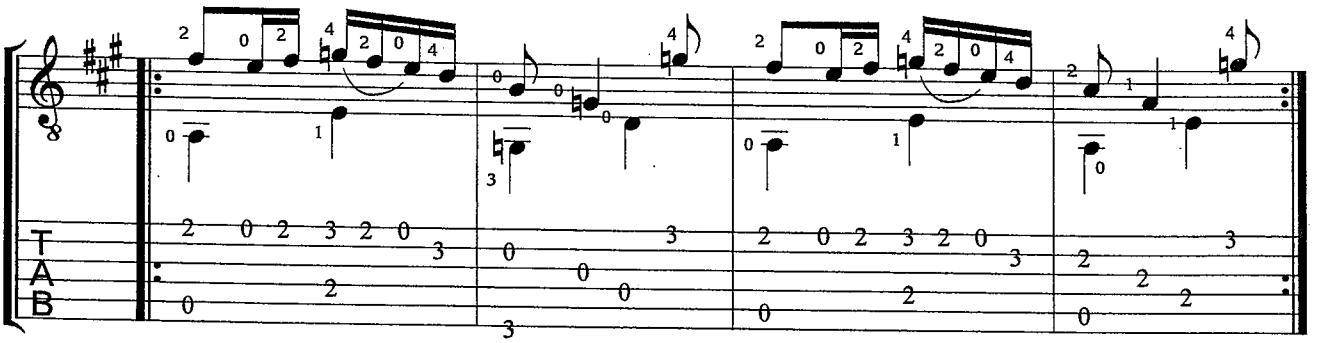
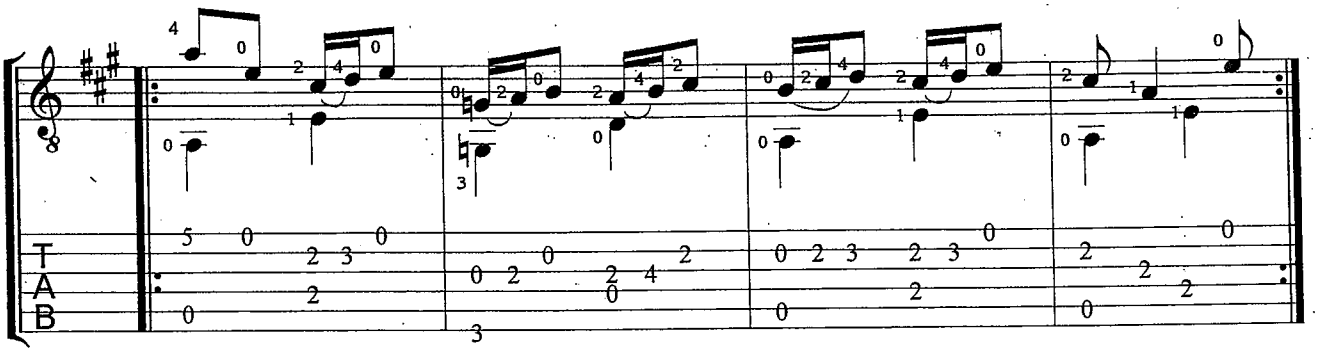
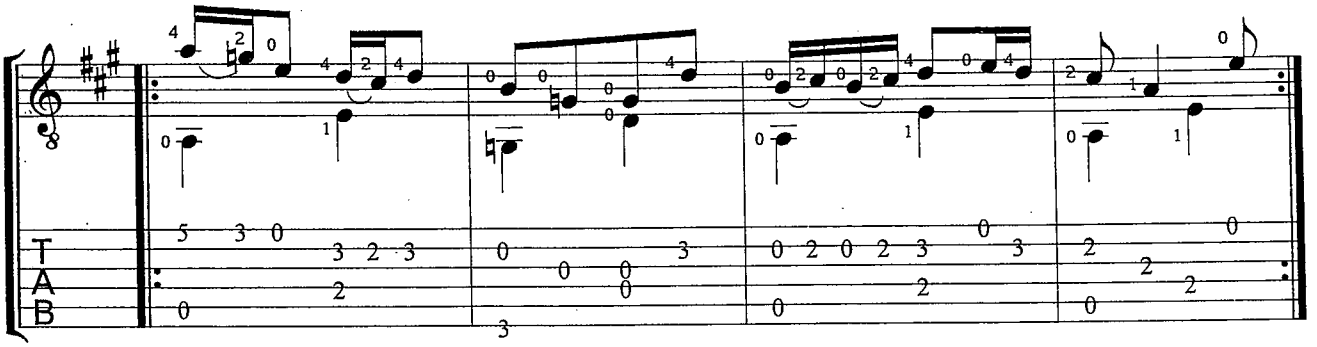


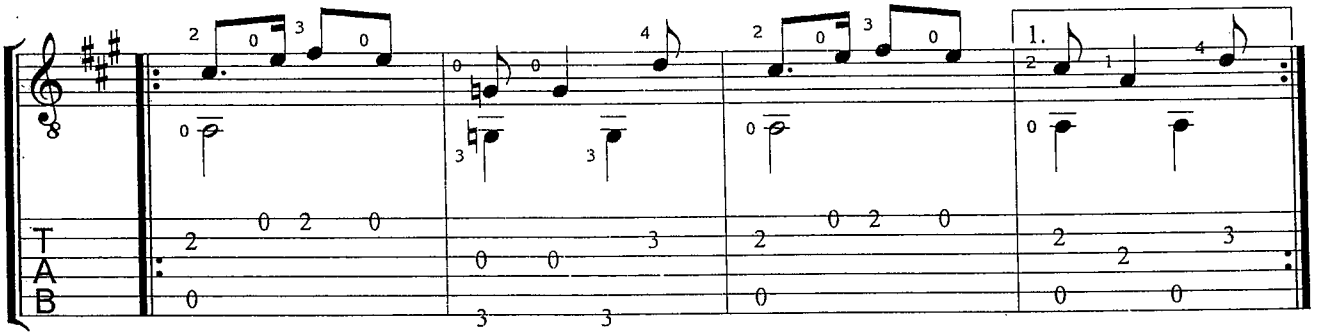


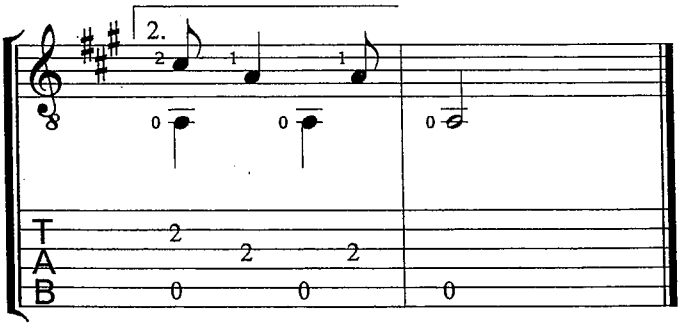


Corne Yards



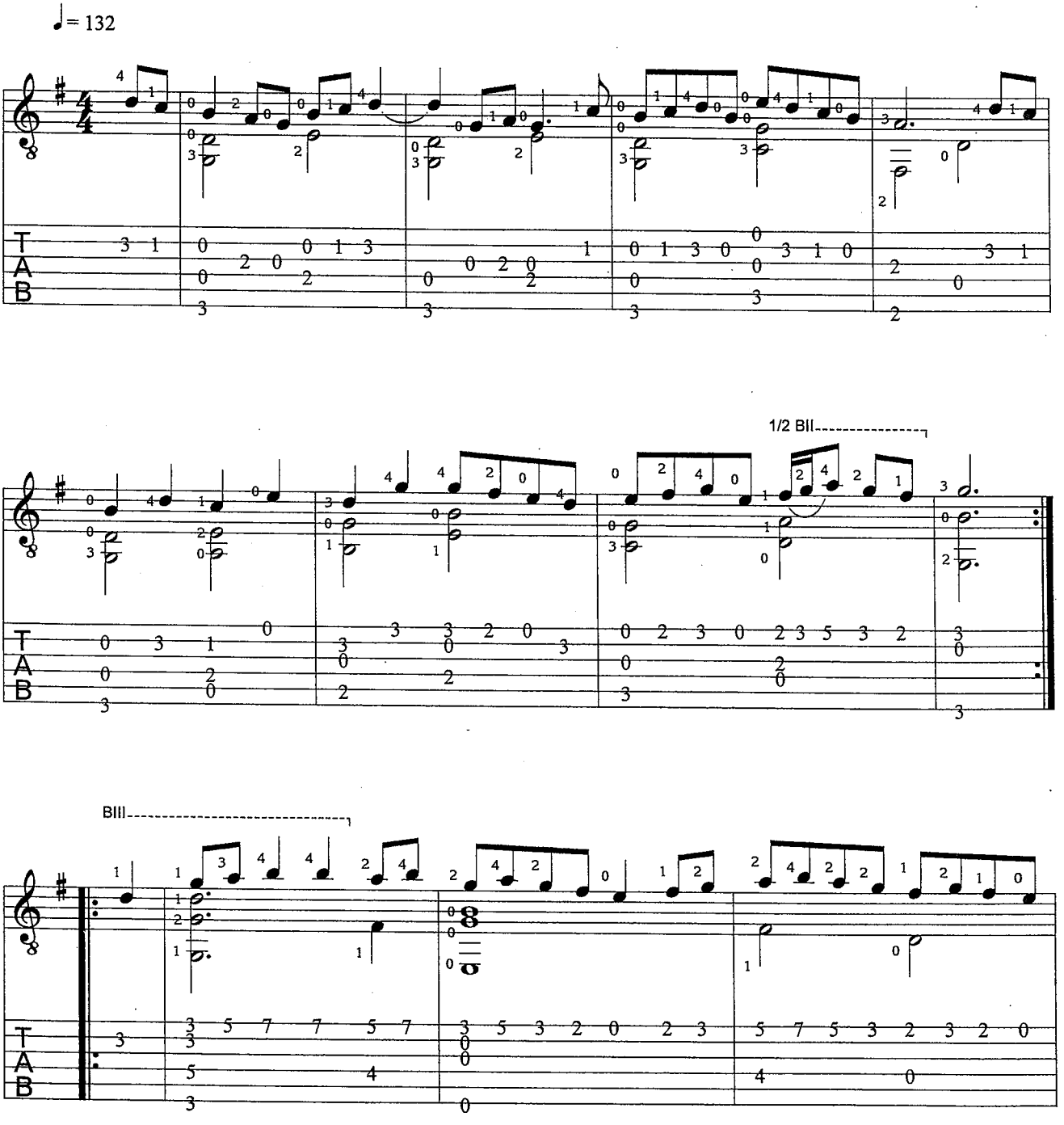


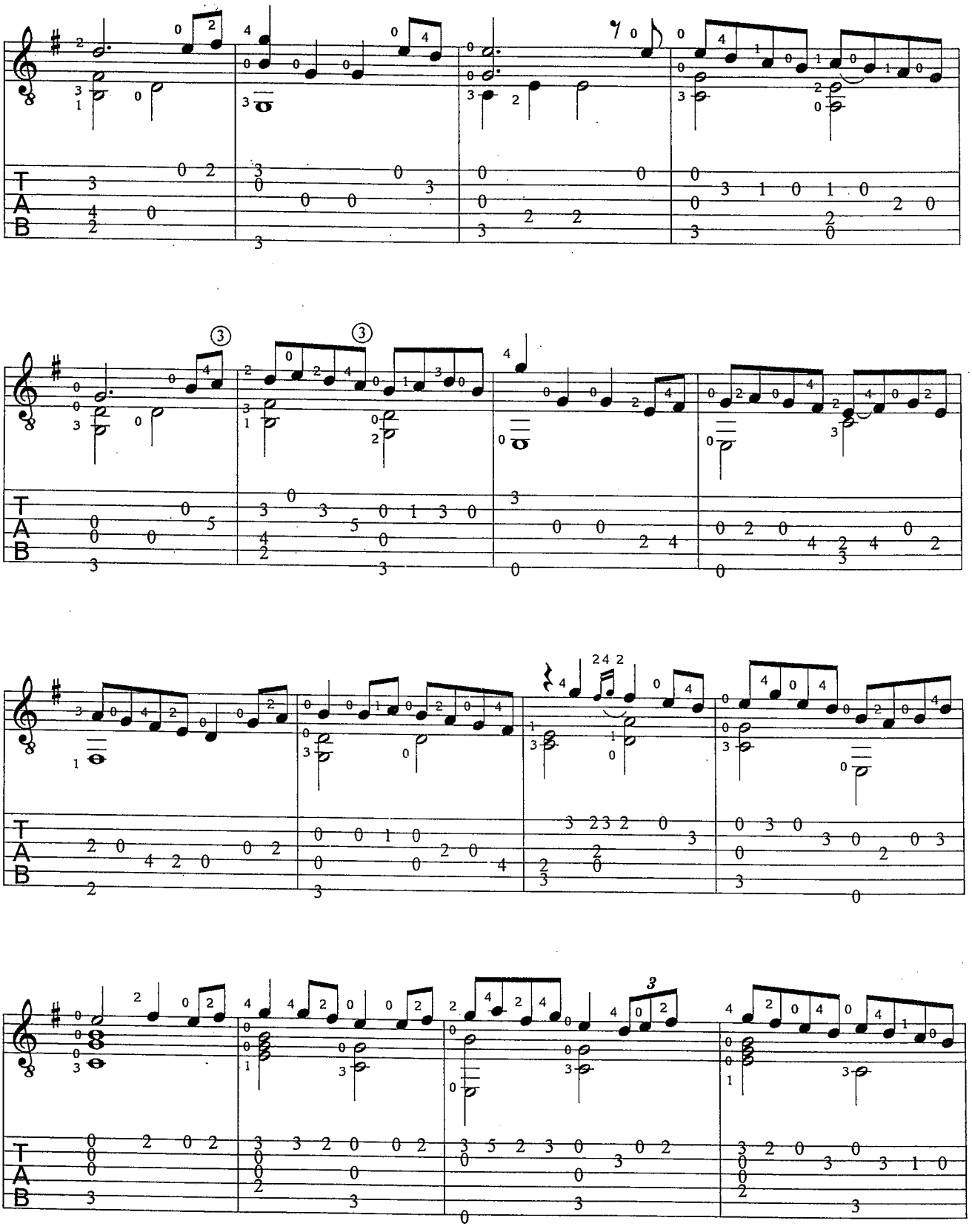


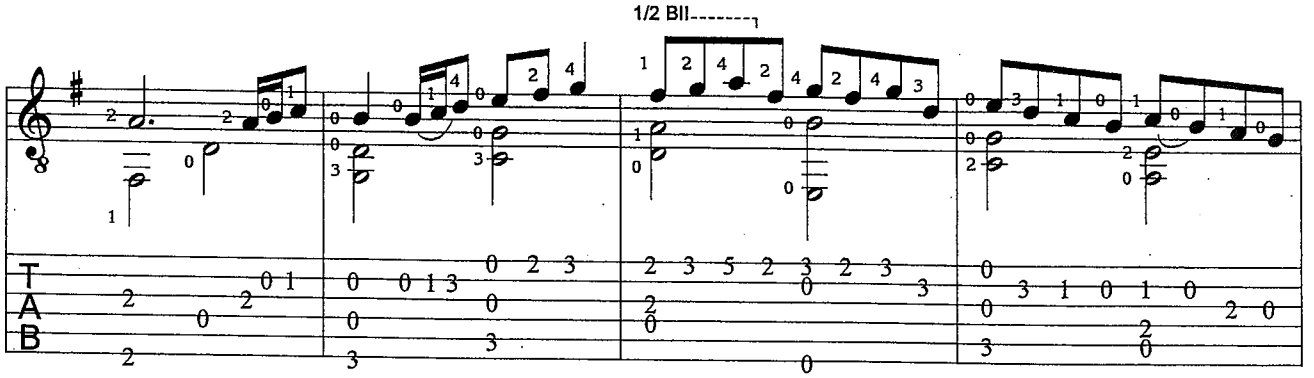


Thomas Burke

Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander



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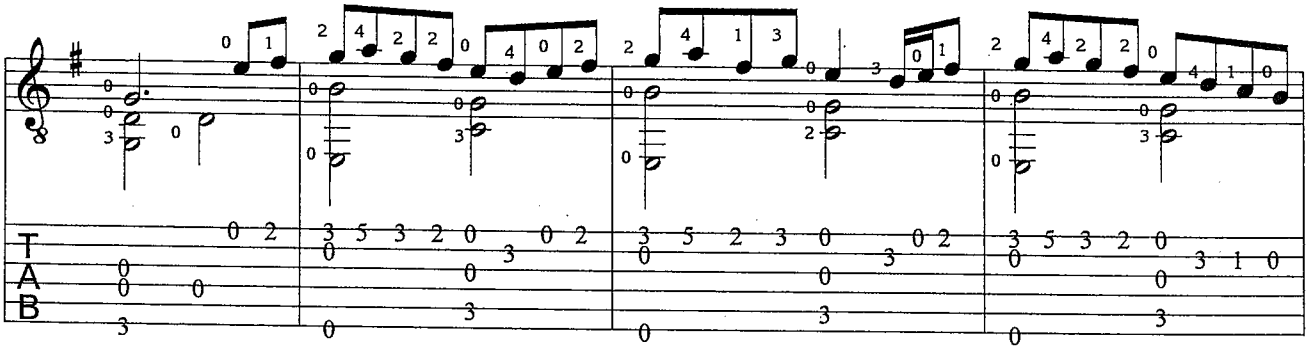

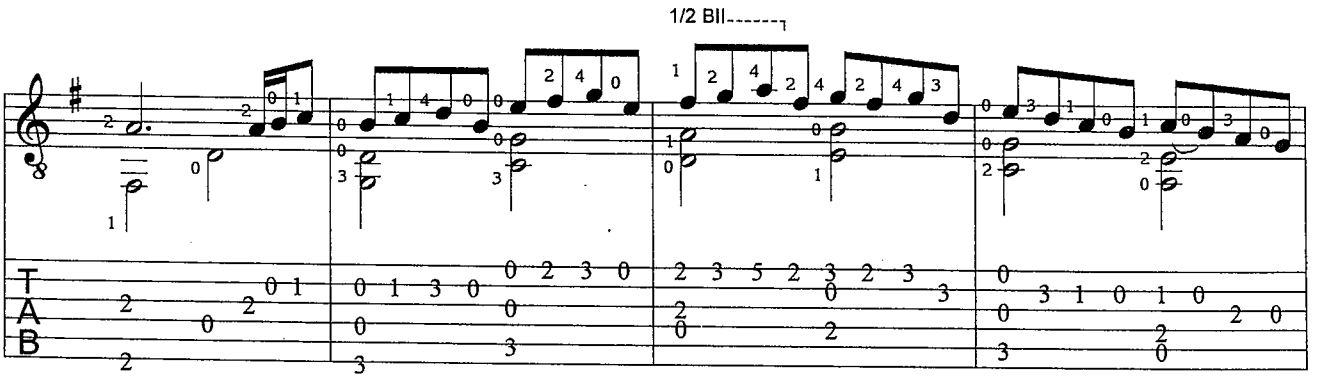
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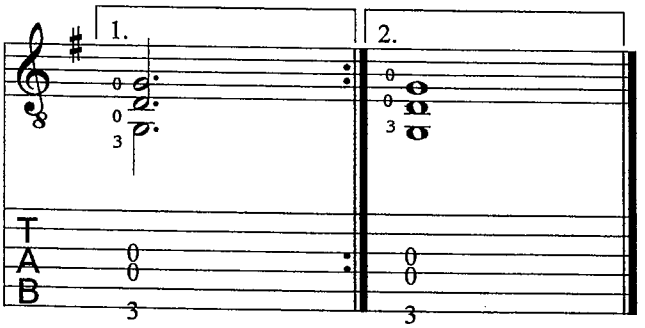
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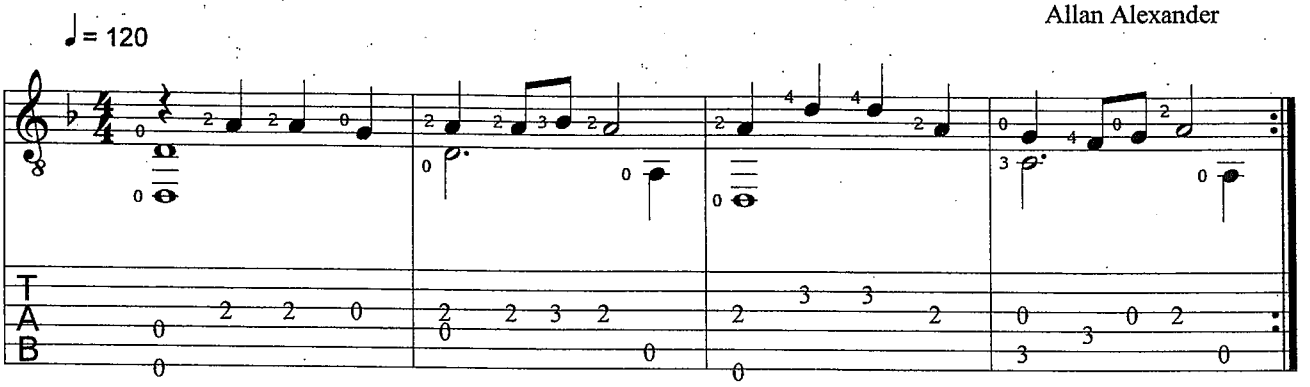
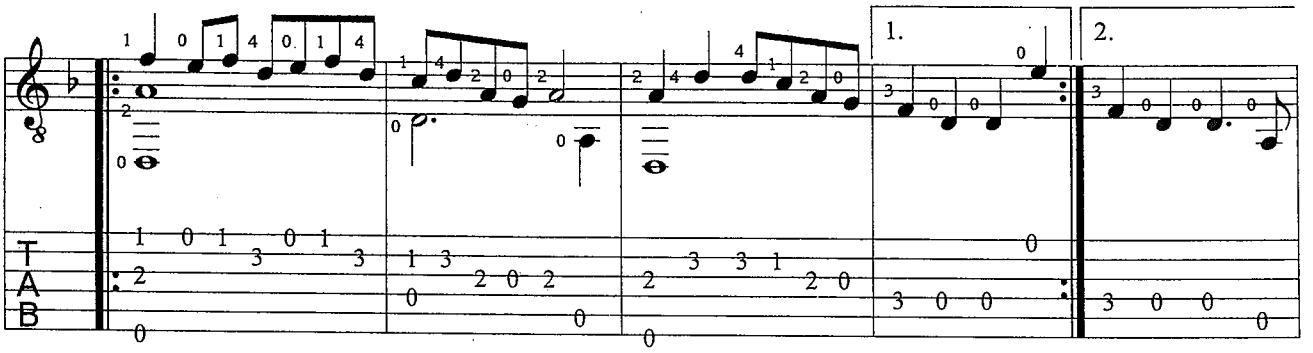
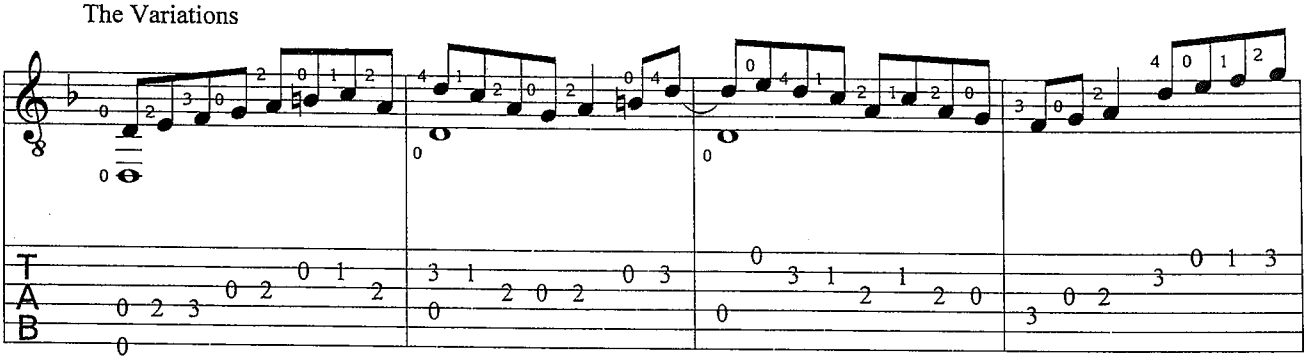
Rug Muire Mac De Dhia

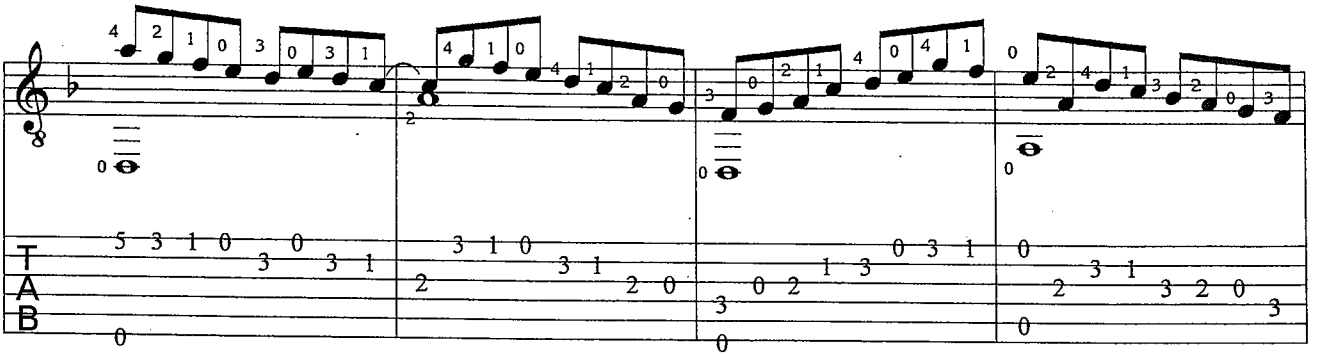
Arrangement and Variations by
Allan Alexander



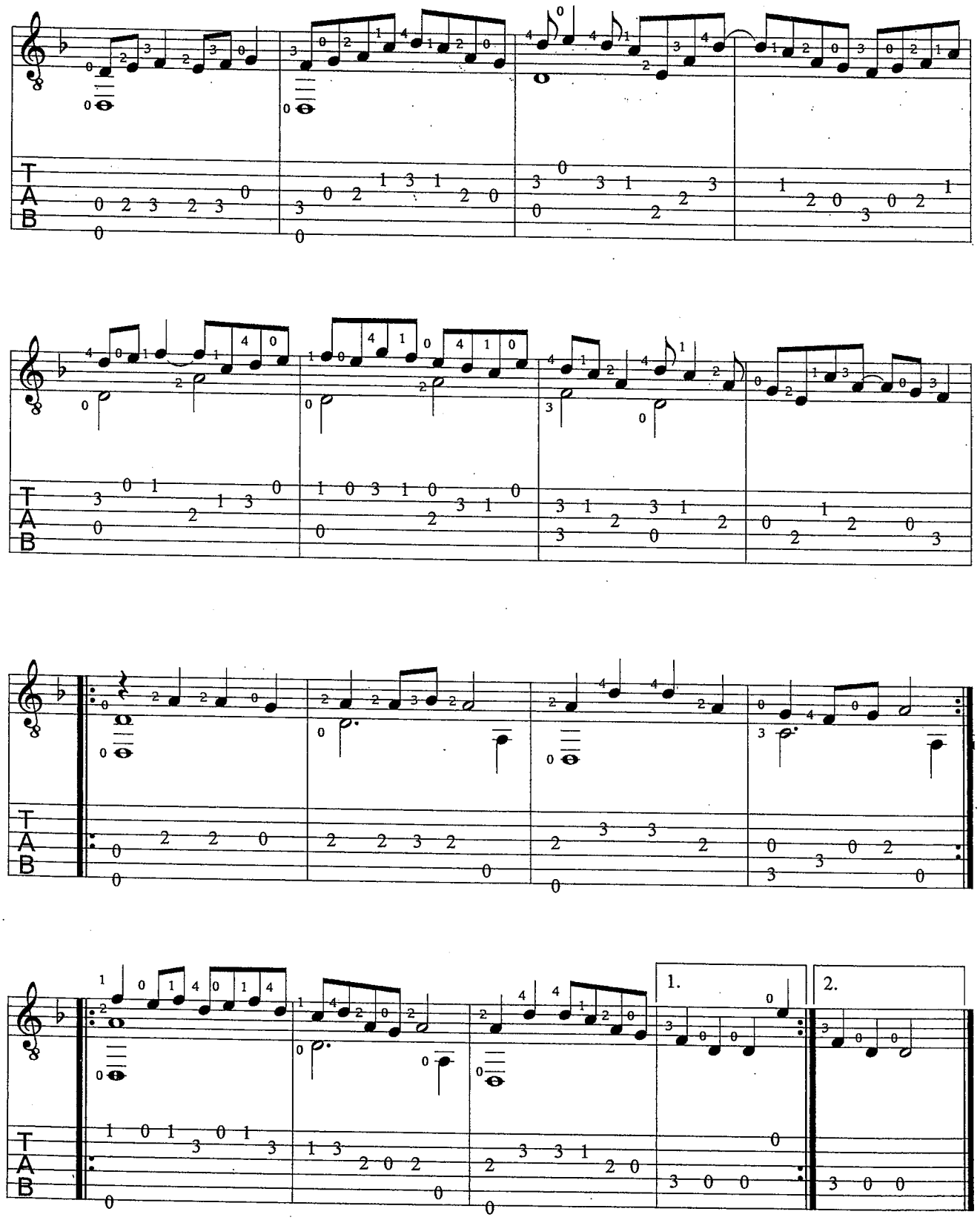


The Variations



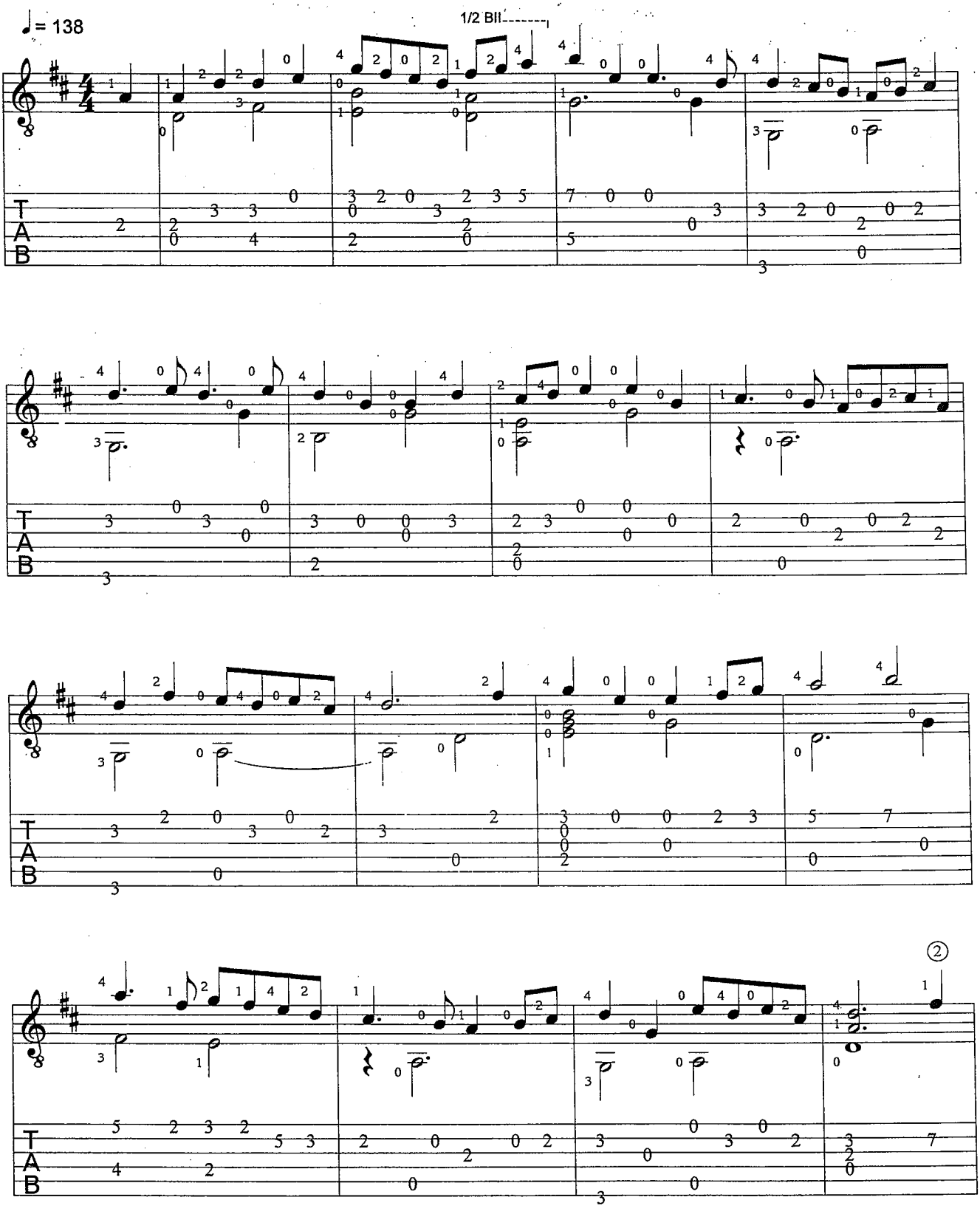


Rug Muire Mac De Dhia

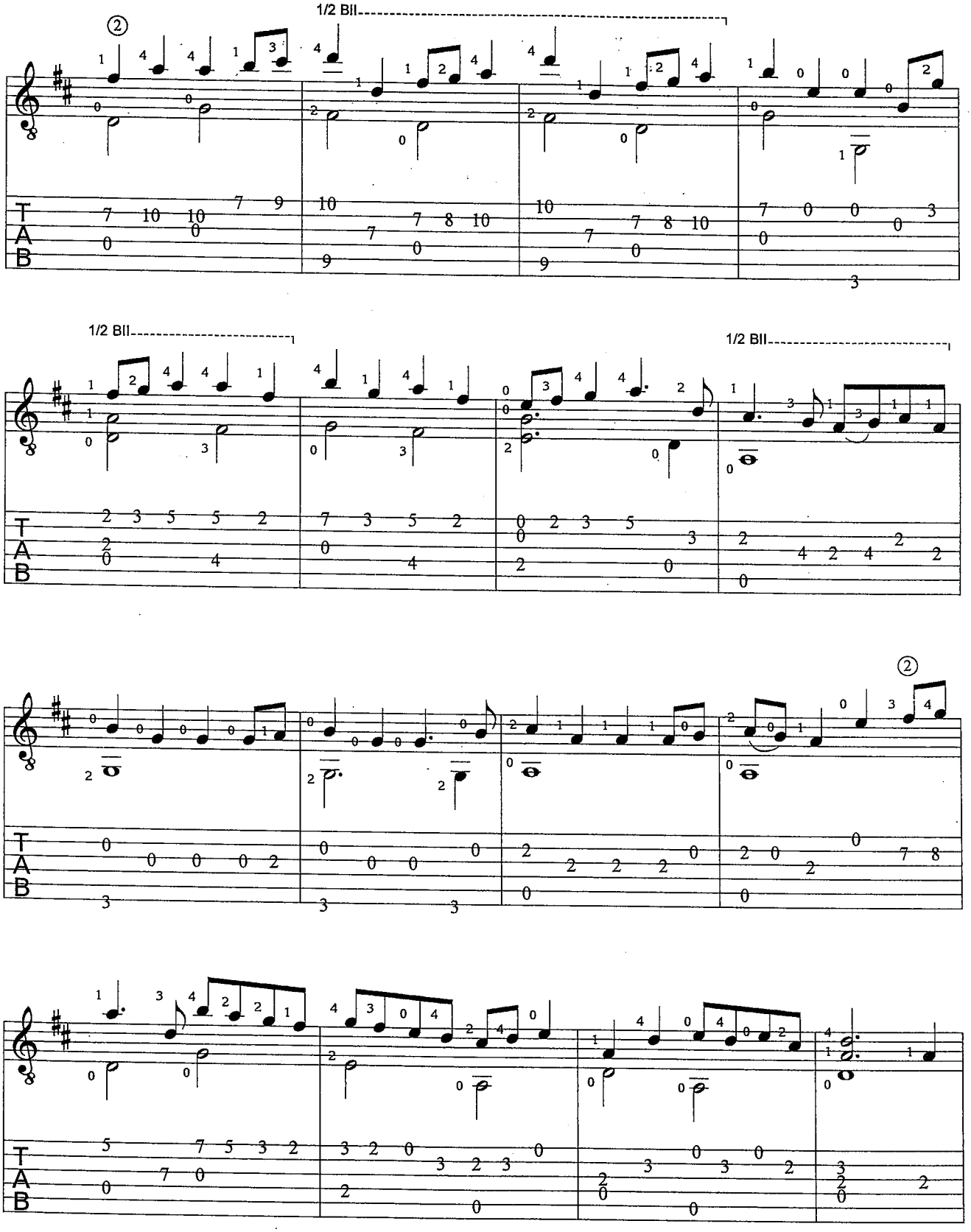


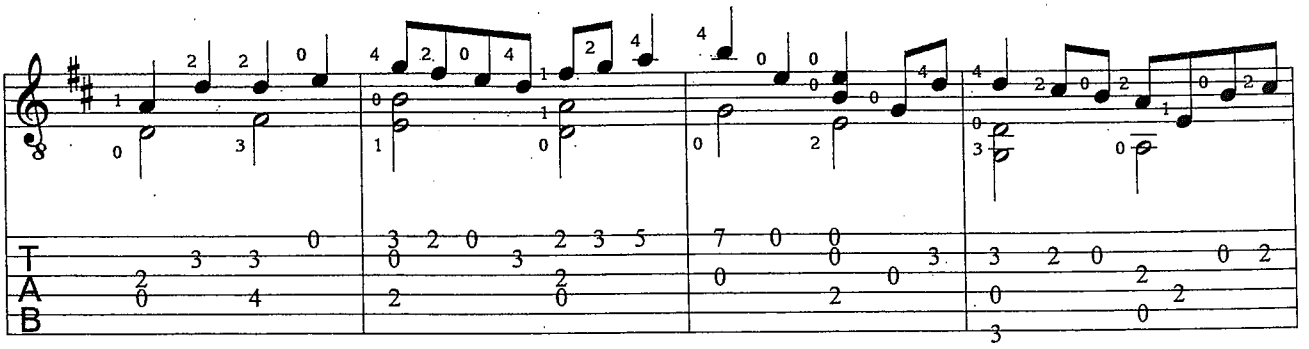
Morgan Megan

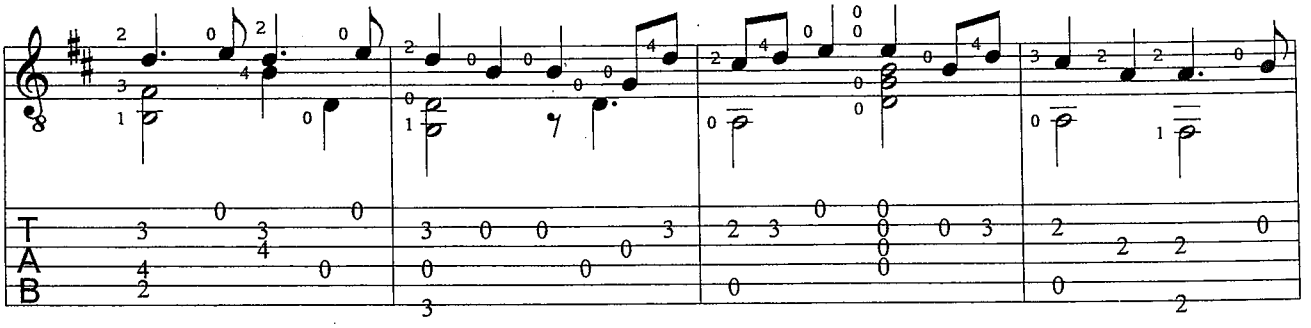
Turlough Carolan
Arrangement by Allan Alexander

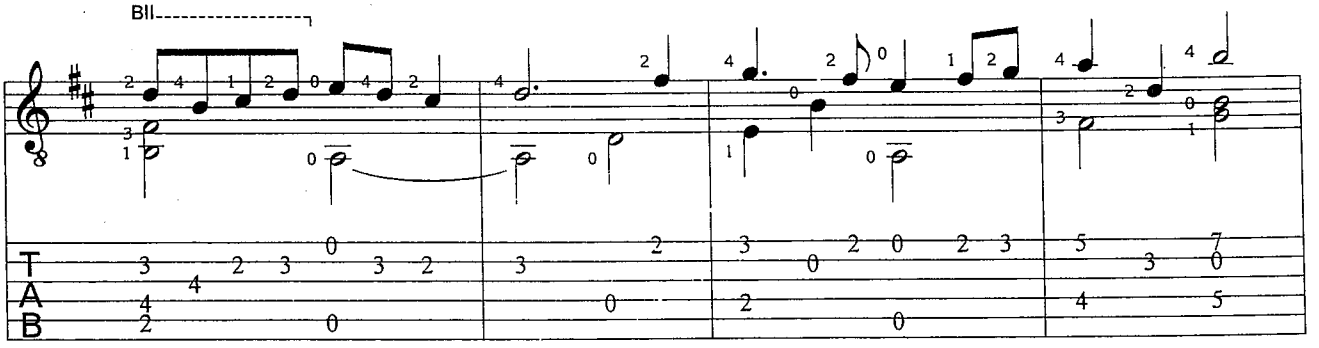


Morgan Megan





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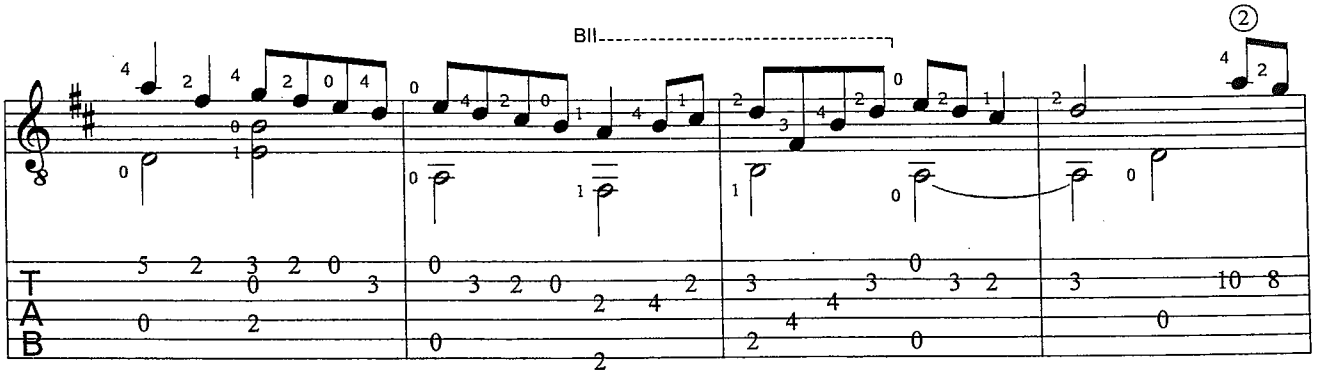
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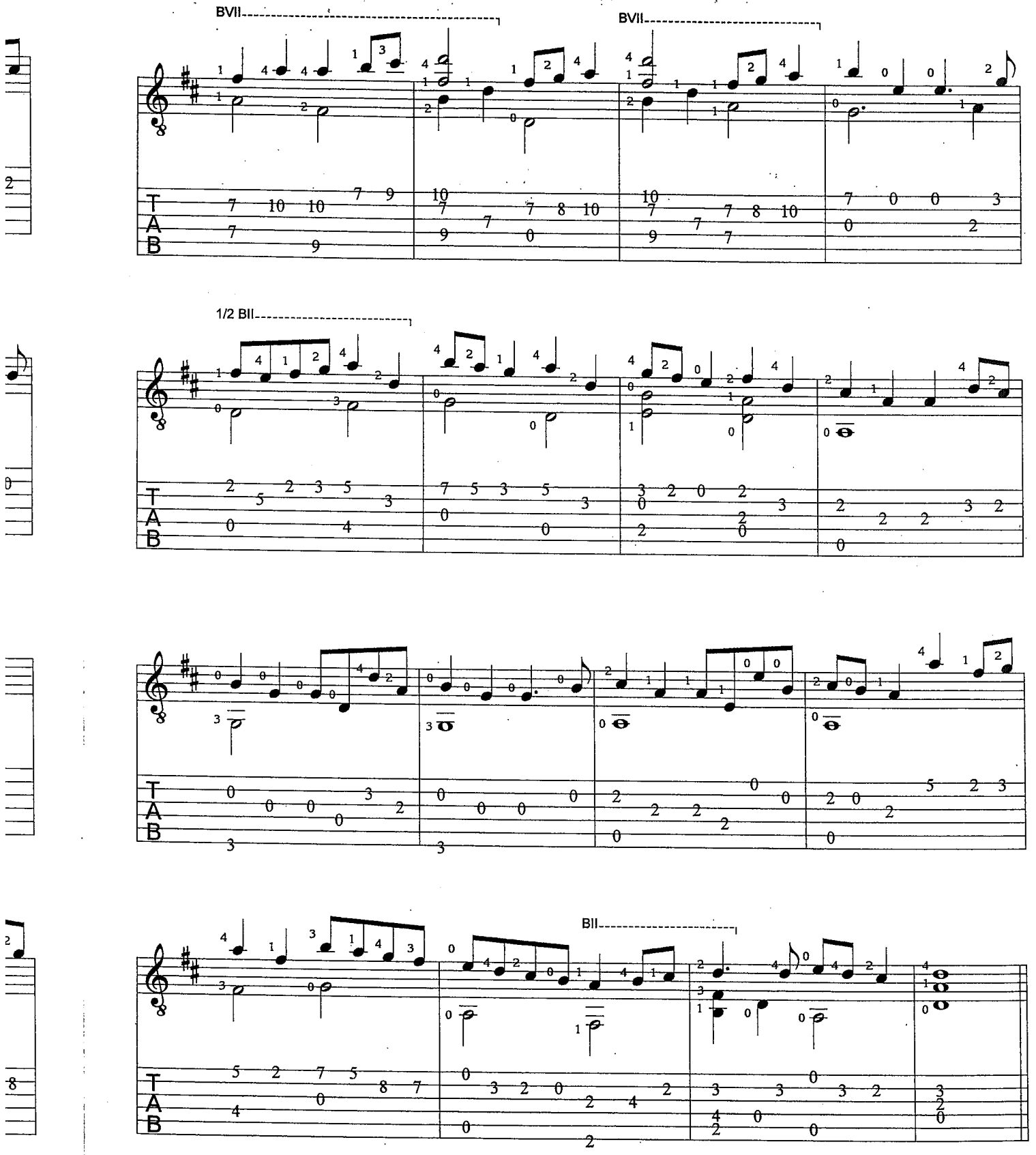
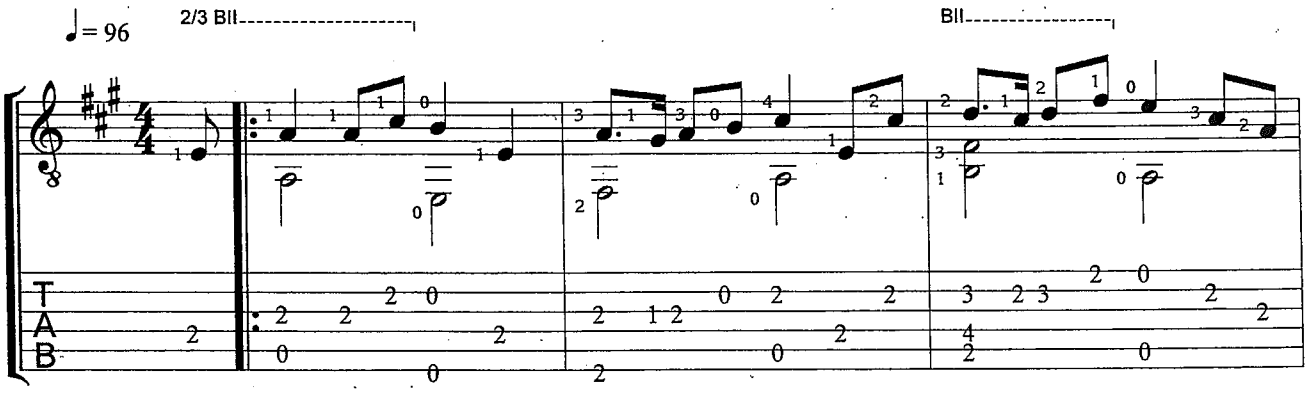
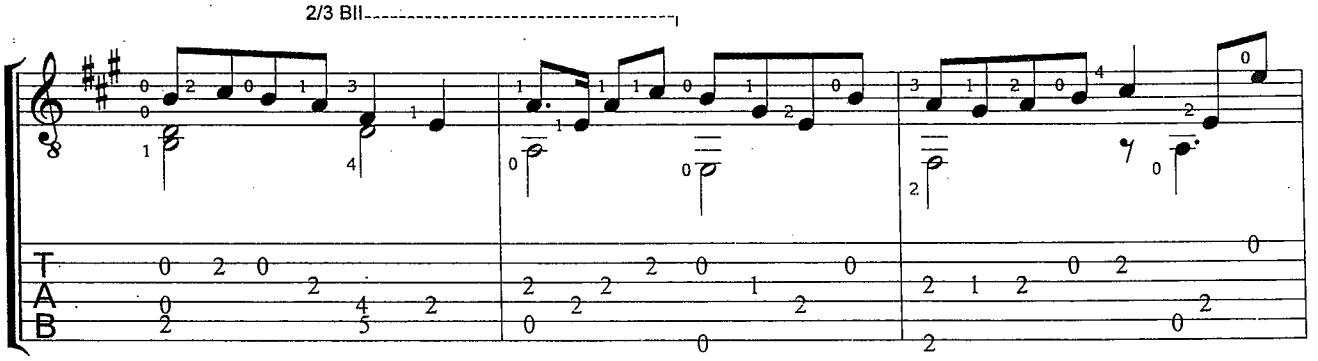
Morgan Megan

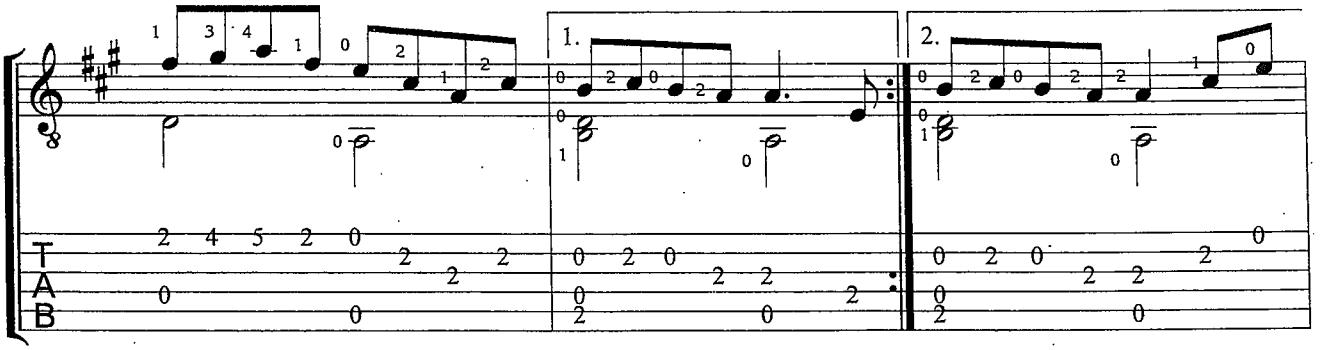


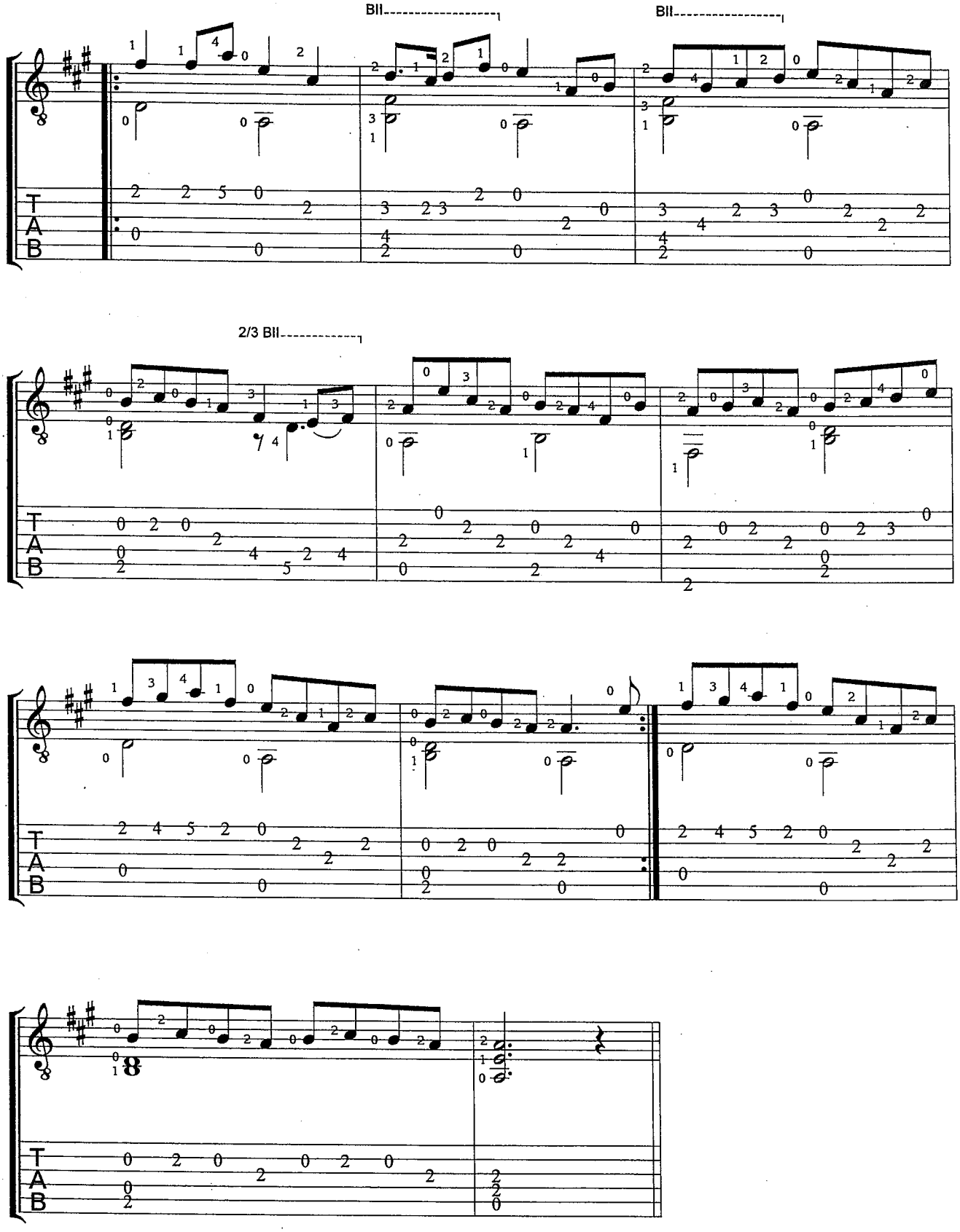
Castles in The Sky

Traditional from Scotland
Arranged by Allan Alexander



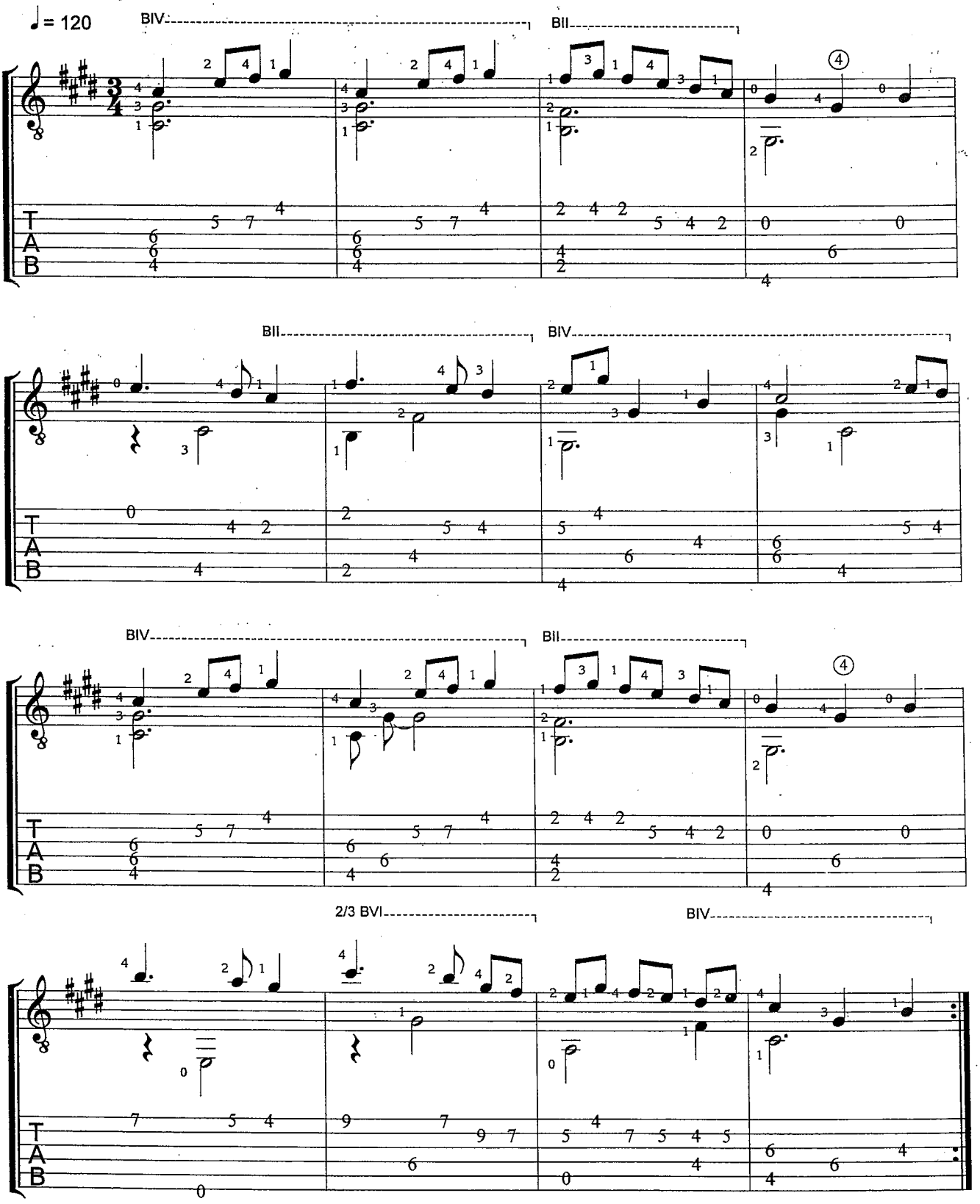


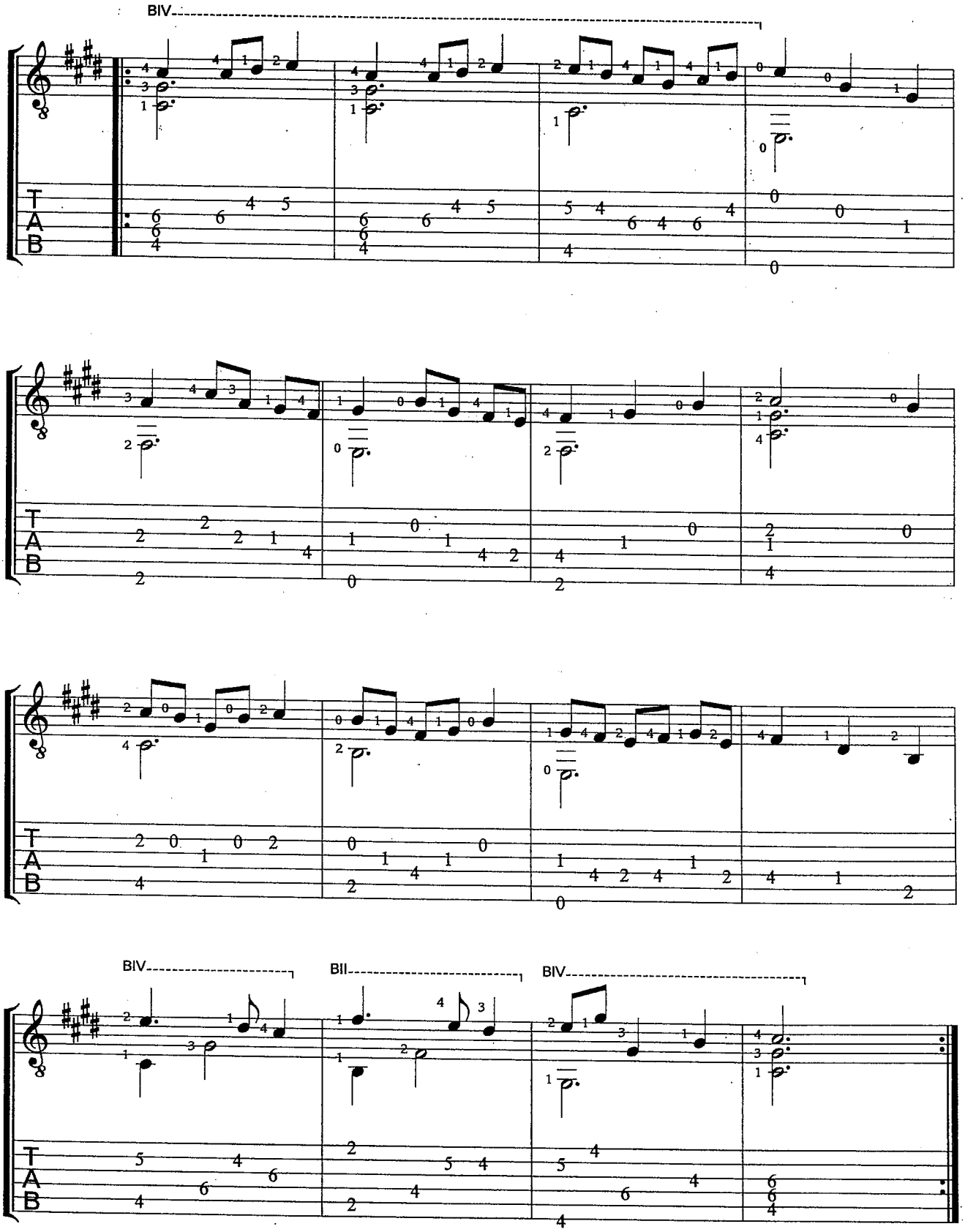



BII
BII
2/3 BII

Carolan's Welcome Home

Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander




BIV
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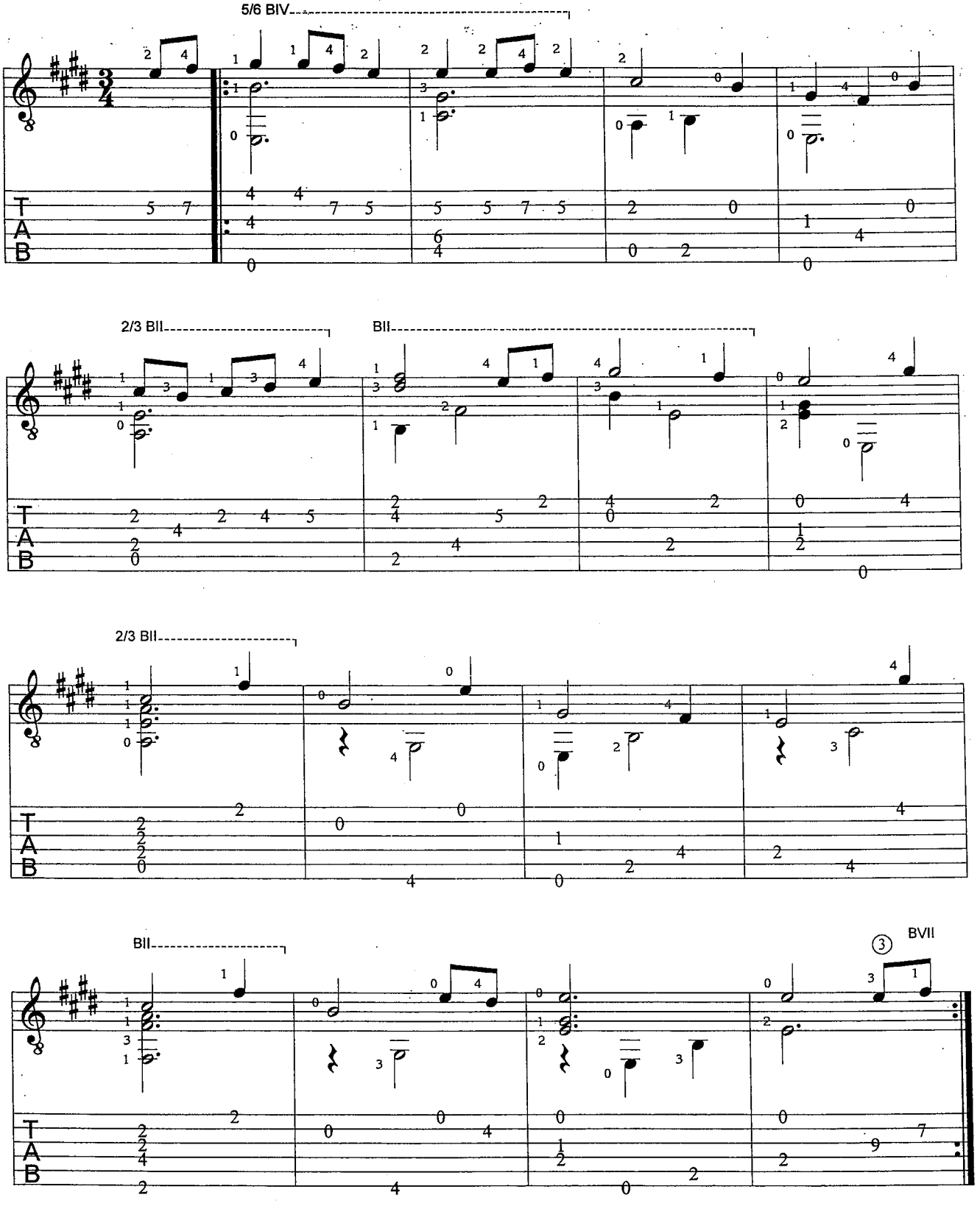
BII
BIV

Sheebag Sheemore

♩= 120

Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander



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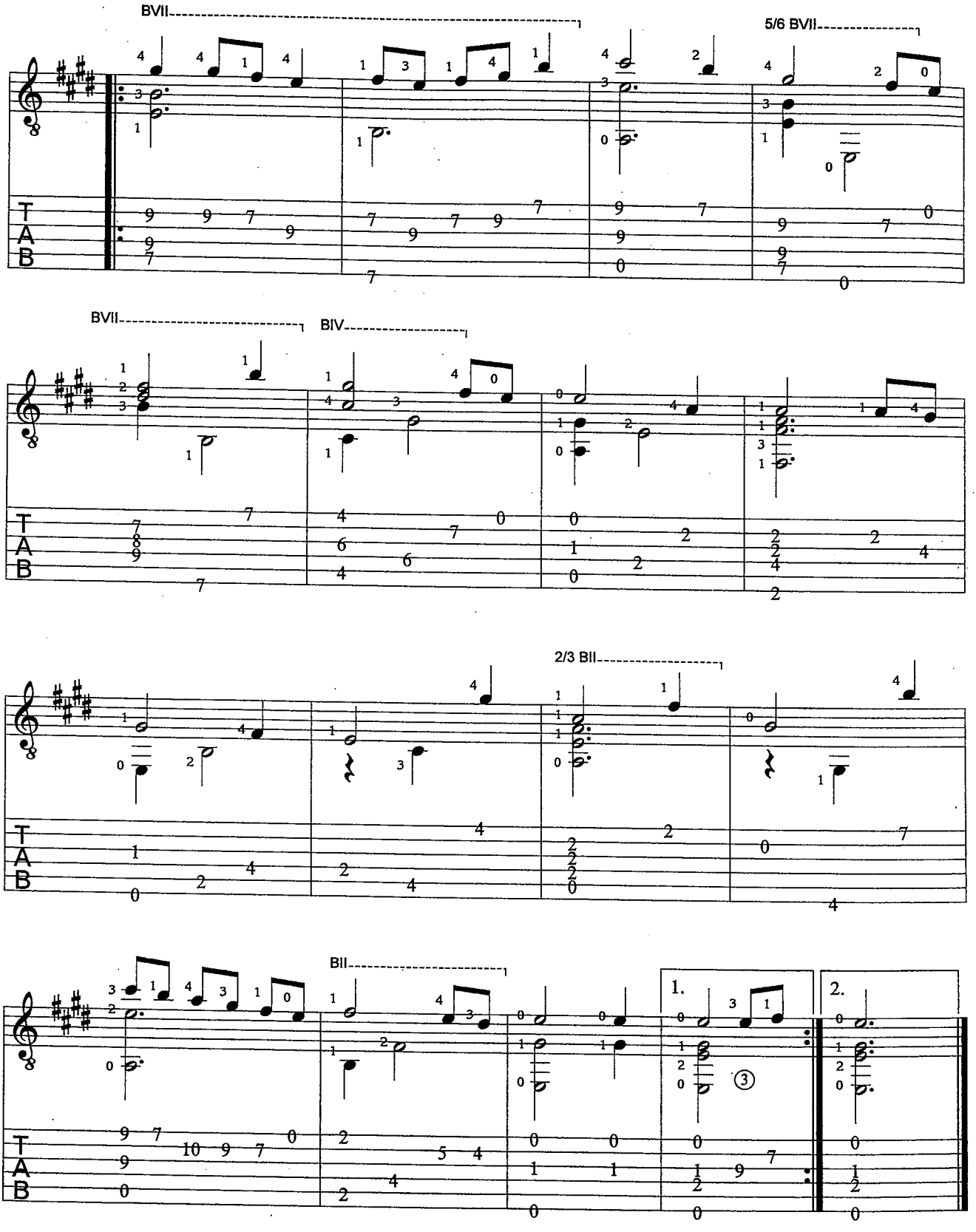
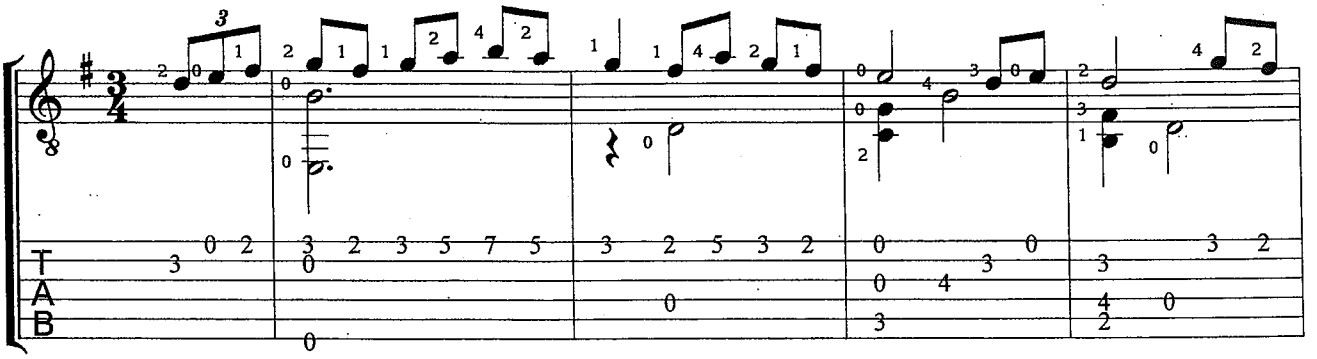
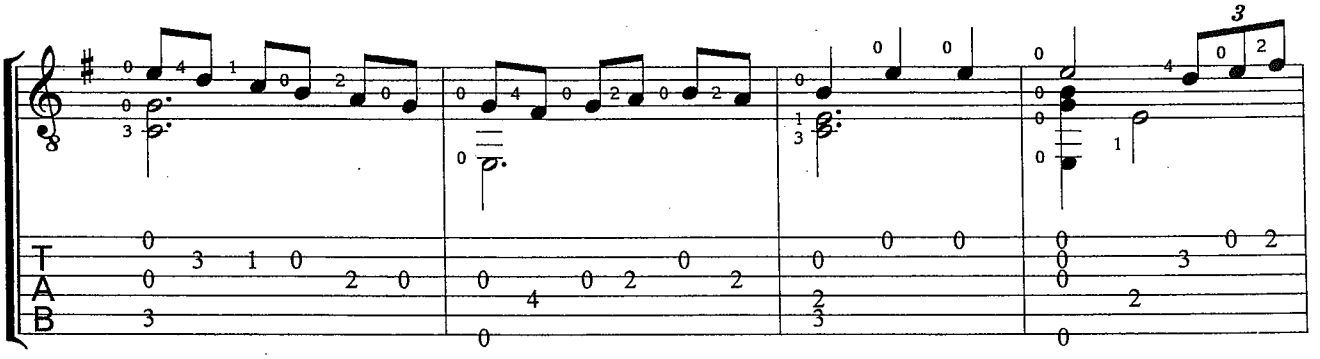


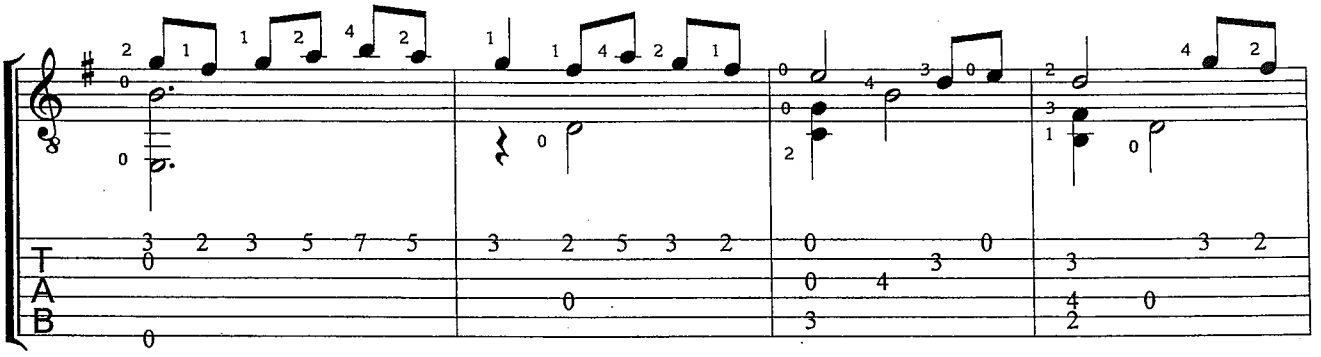
Carolan's Ramble to Cashel

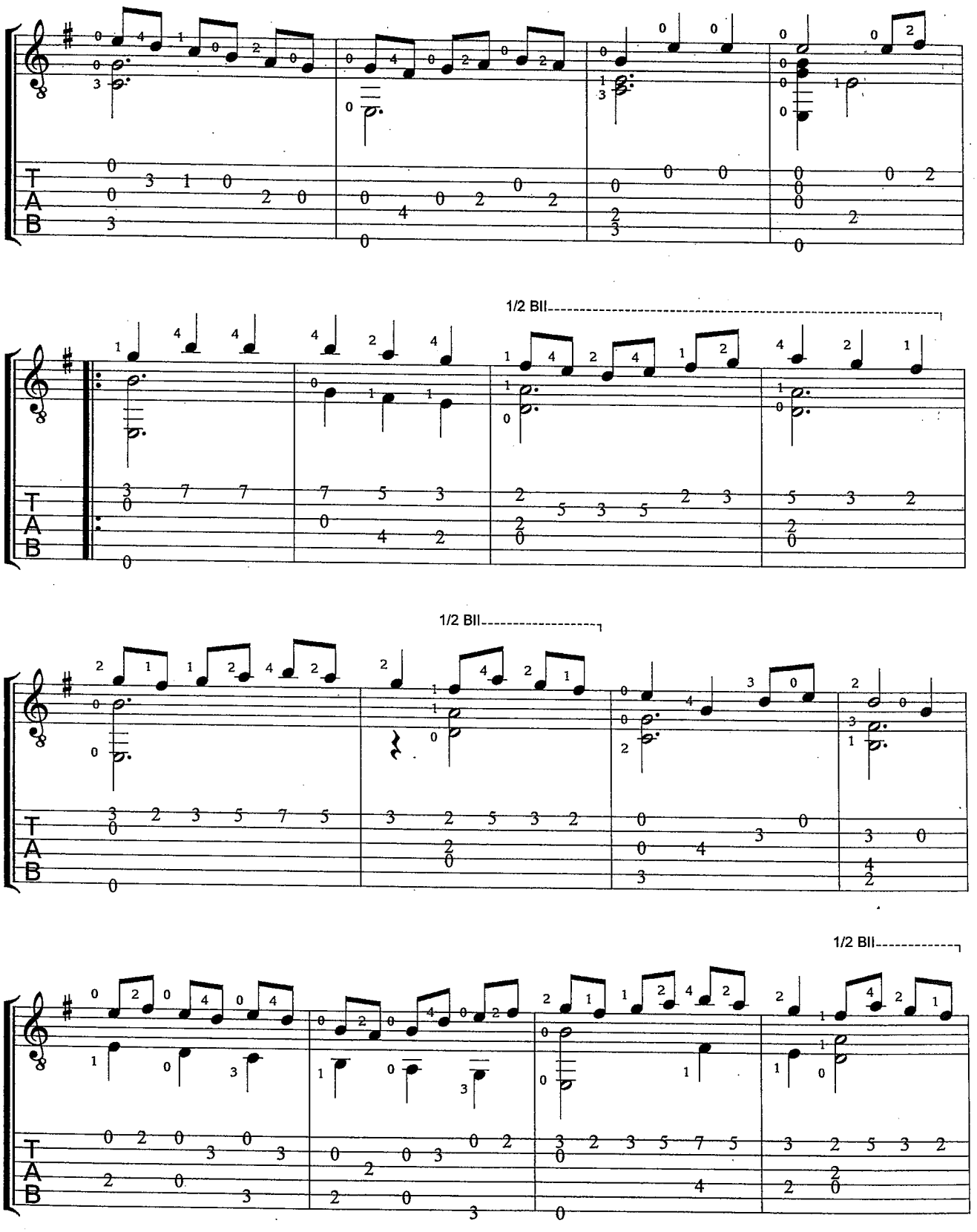
Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander

♩= 120





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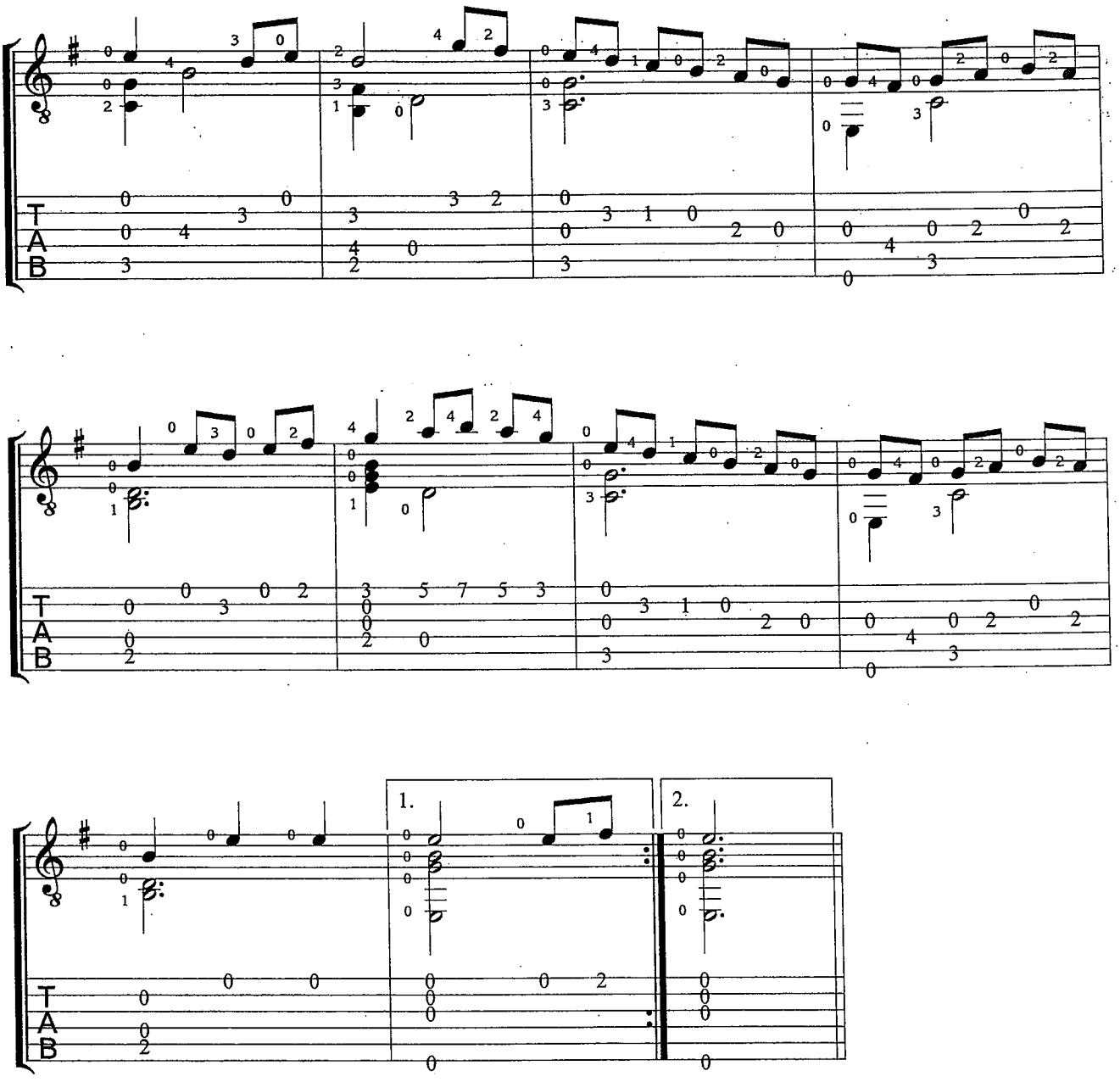
1/2 BII
1/2 BII

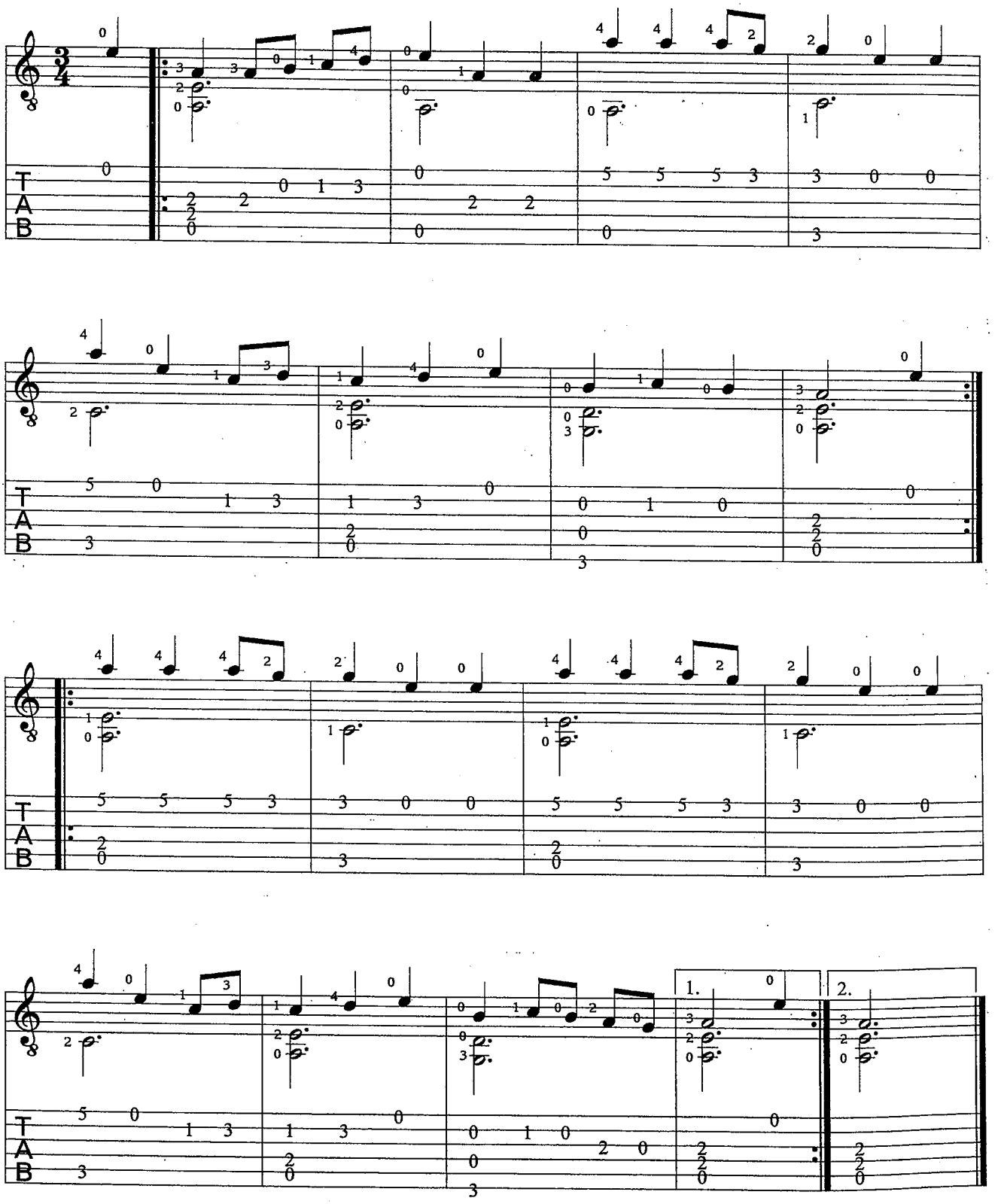
Carolan's Ramble to Cashel



The Queen's Dream

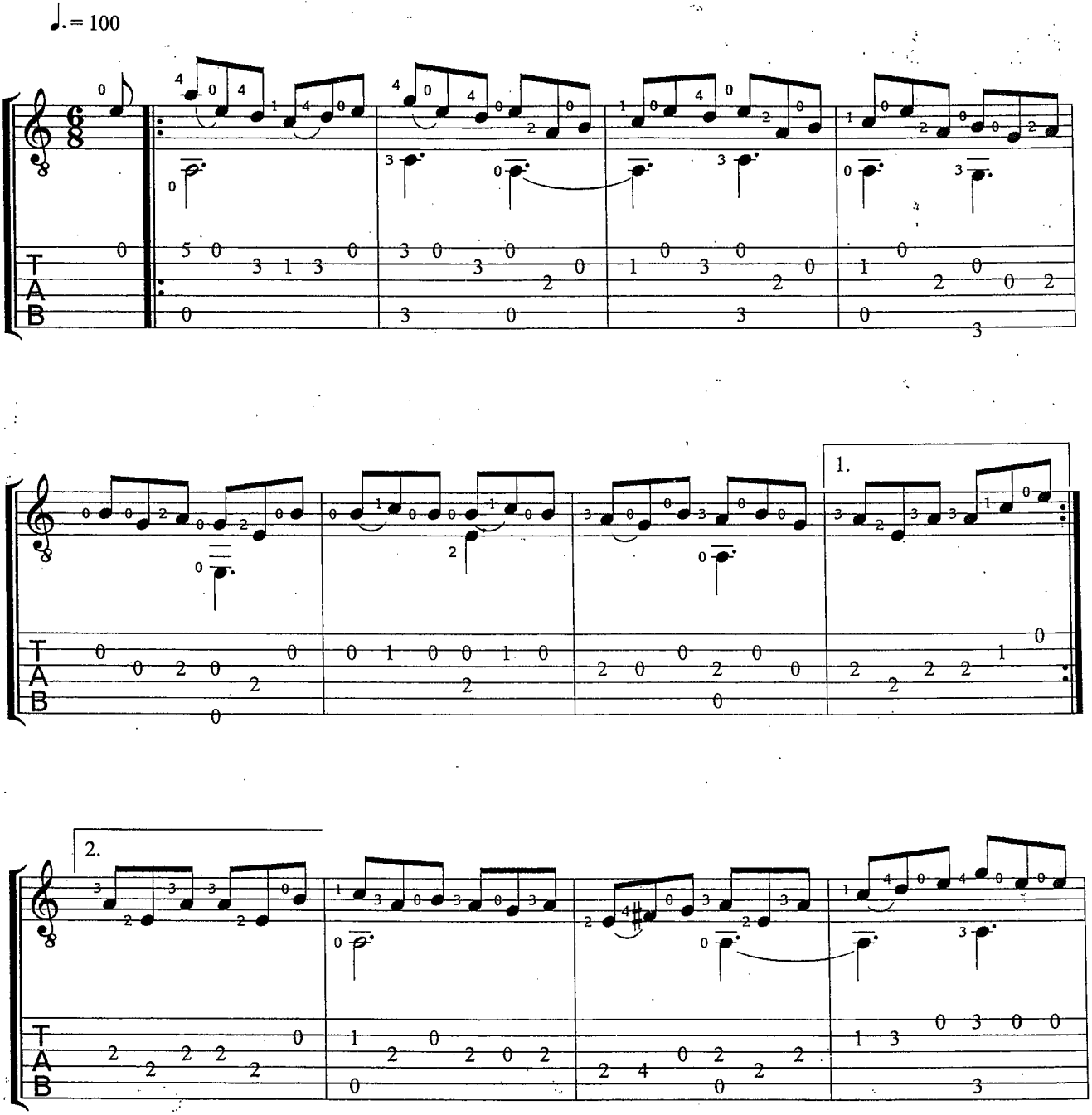
♩= 120

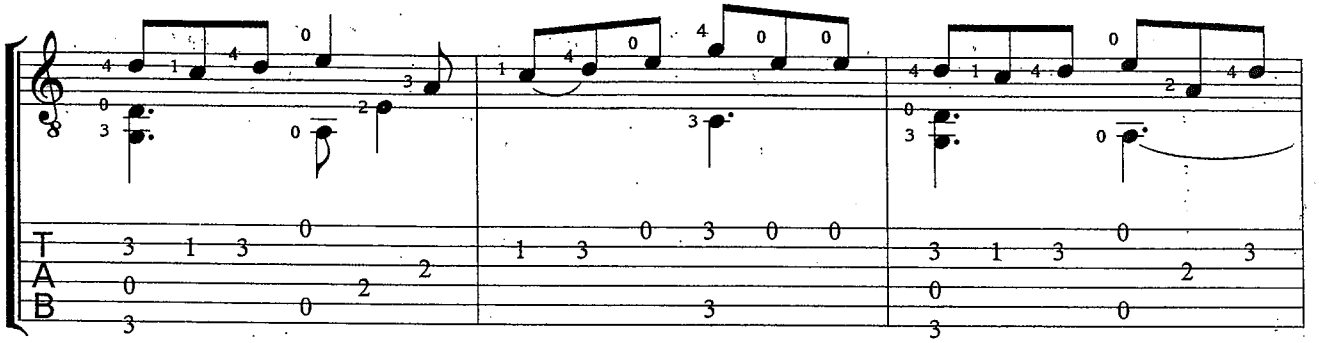
Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander

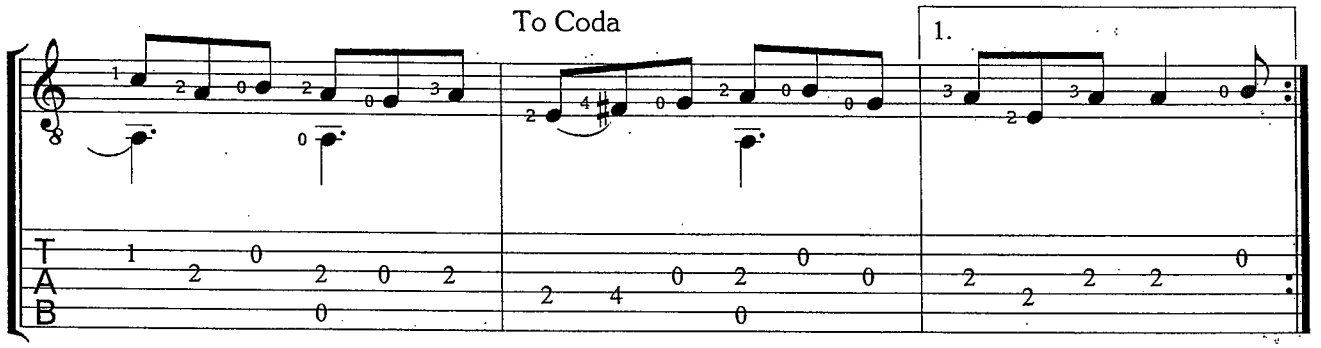


Comben Market - Ellen O'Grady

Arrangement and Variations by
Allan Alexander



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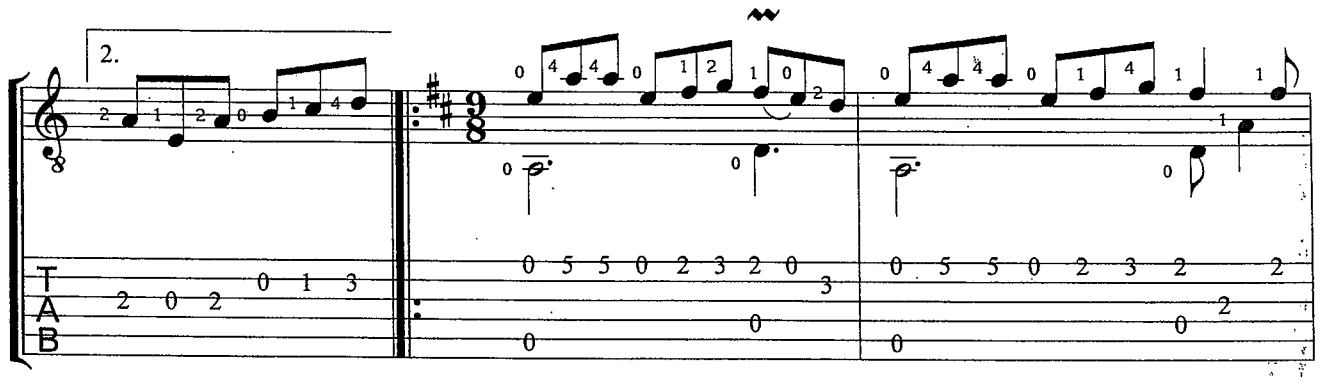
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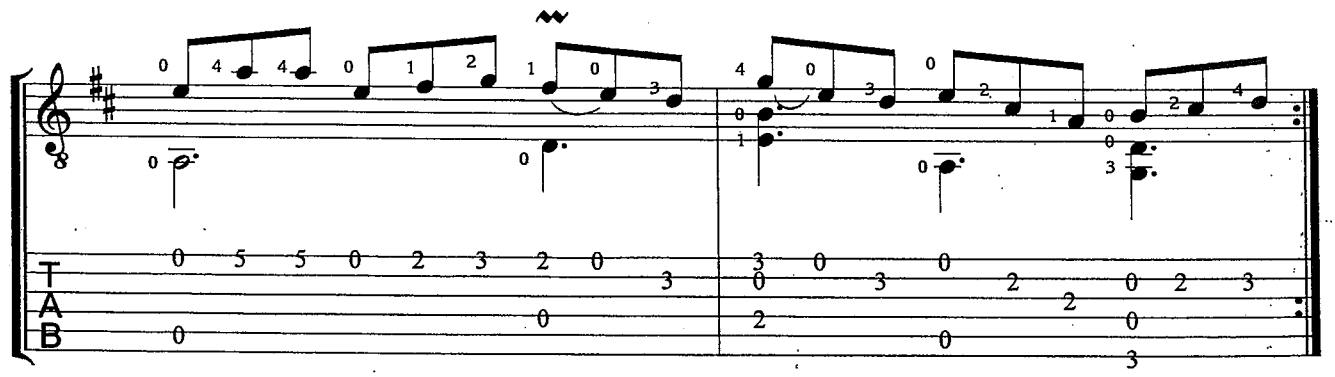
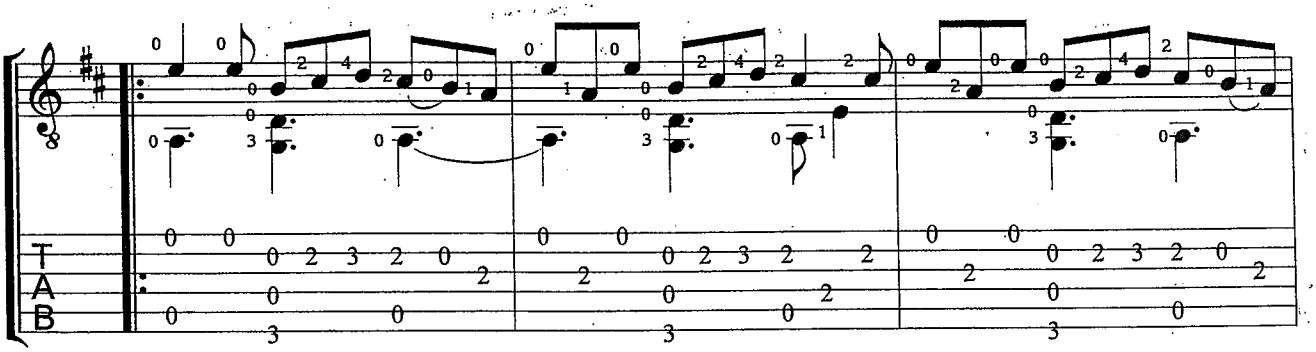
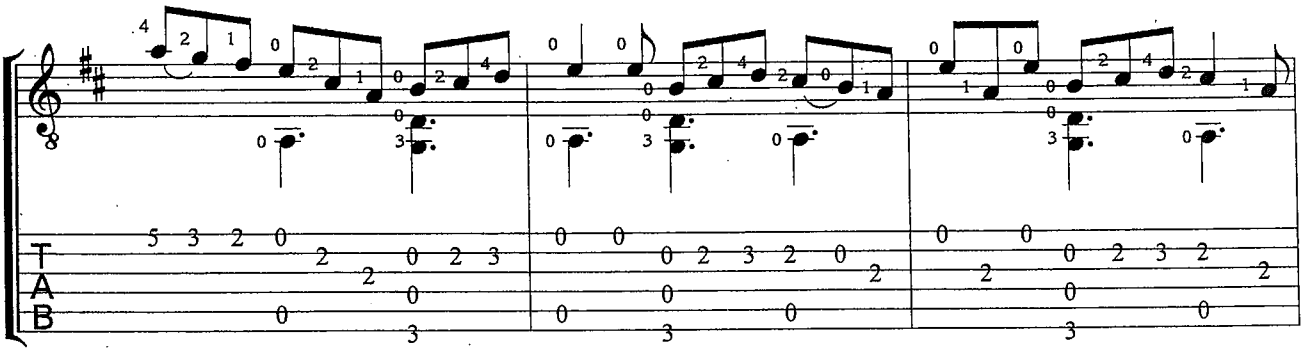
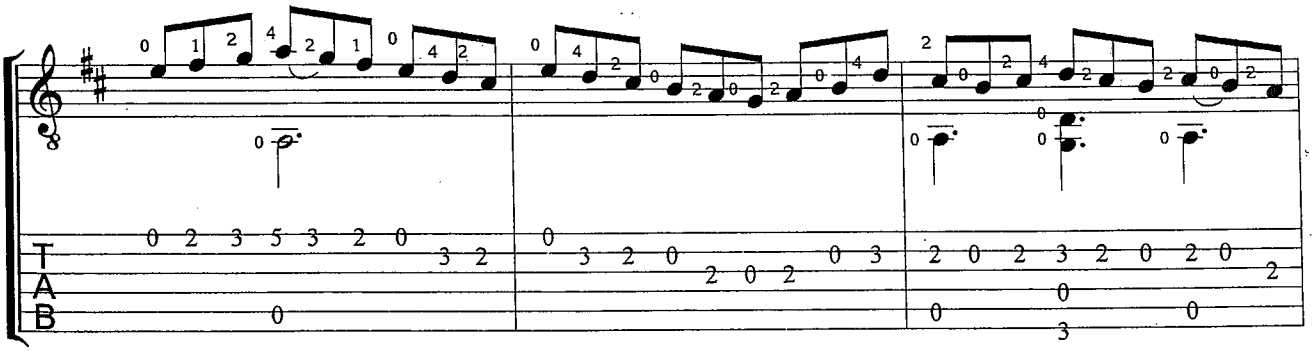


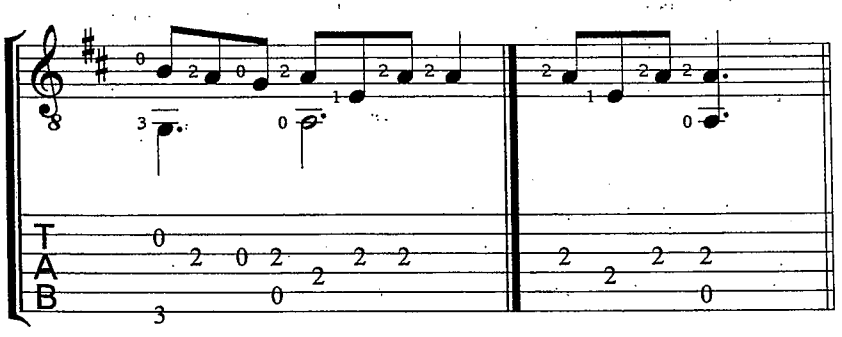






D.C. al Coda

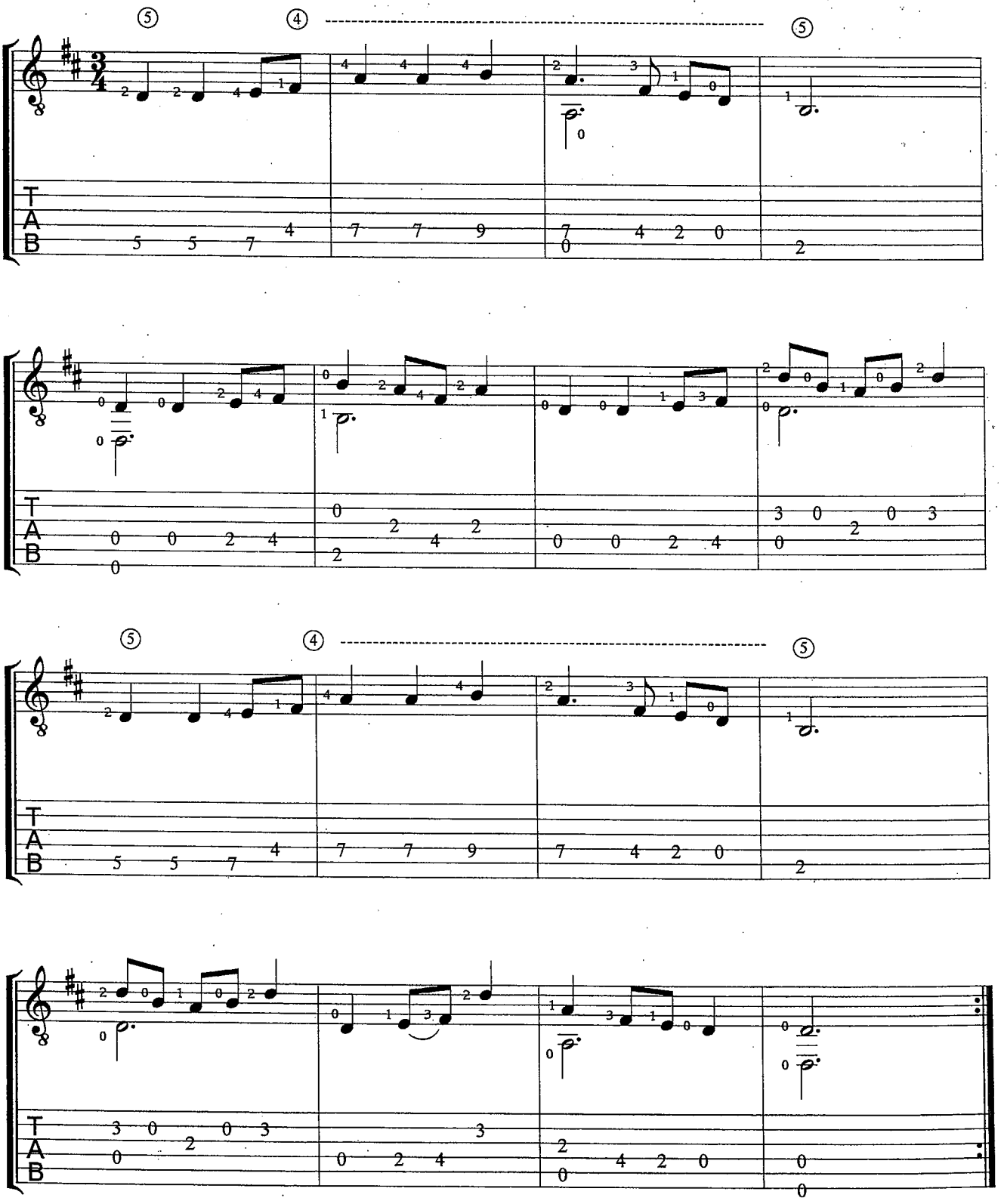
Coda



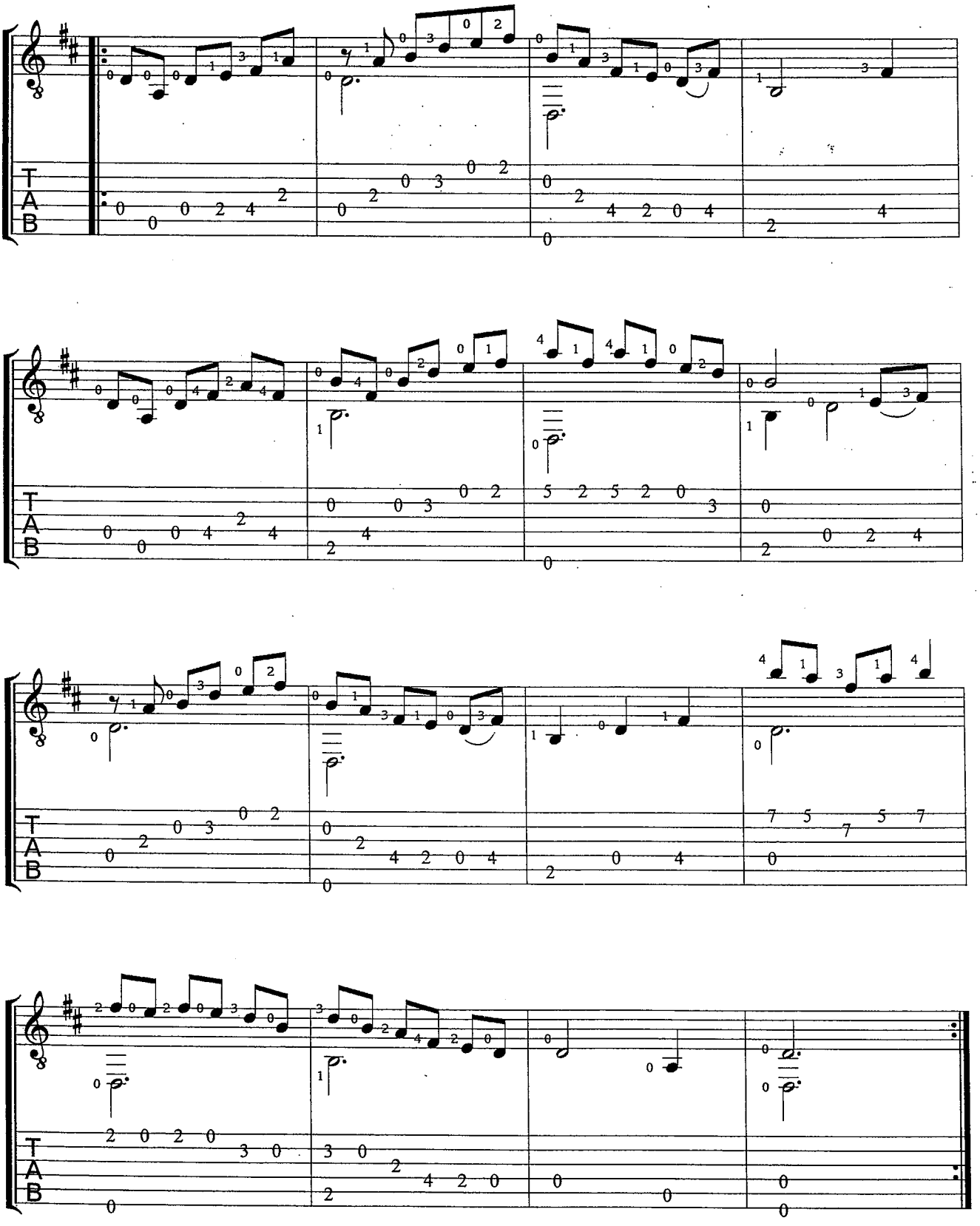
A Lilt

Rory Dall - Arrangement and
Variations by Allan Alexander

♩= 100
6th to D



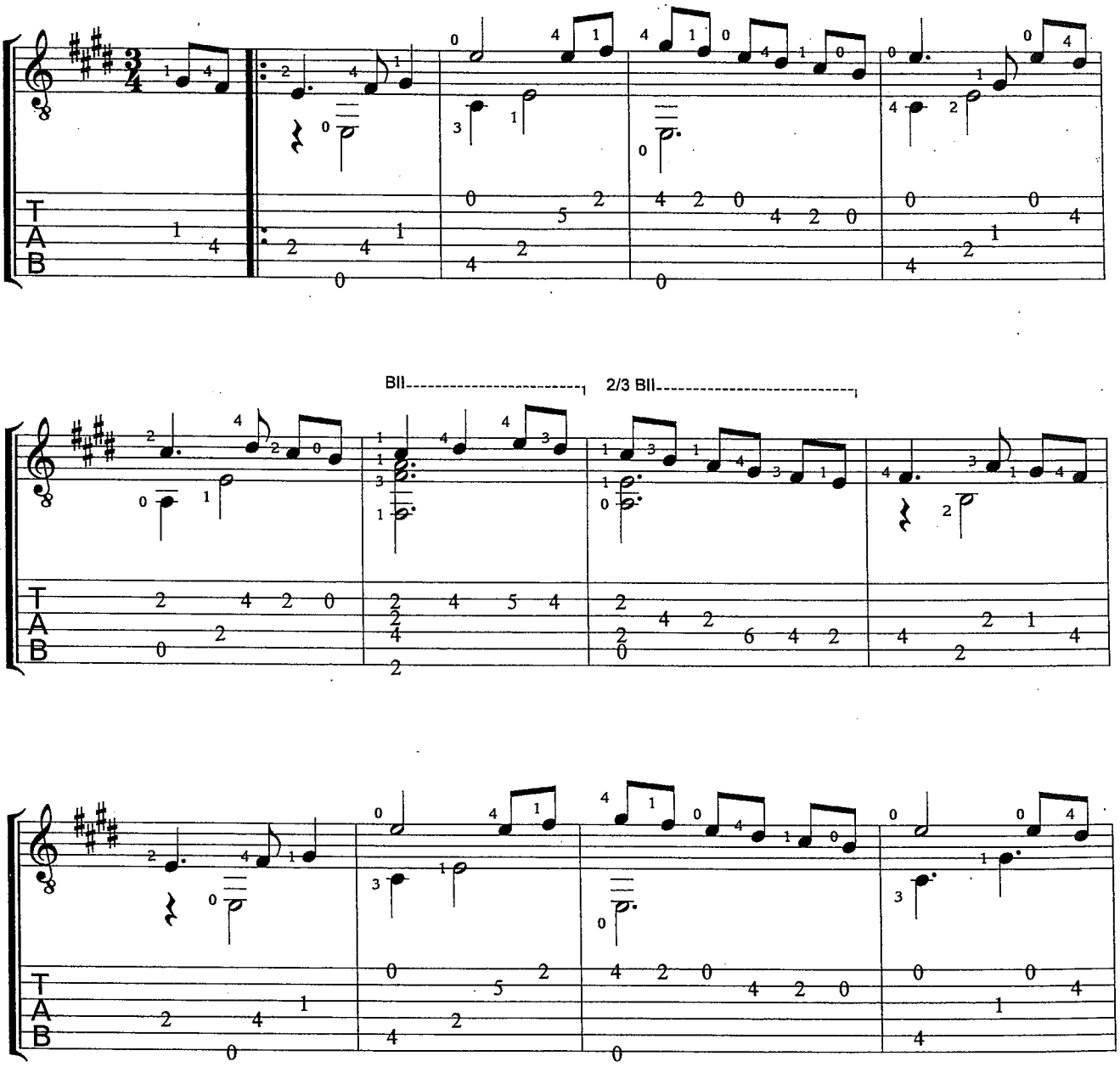
The Variation

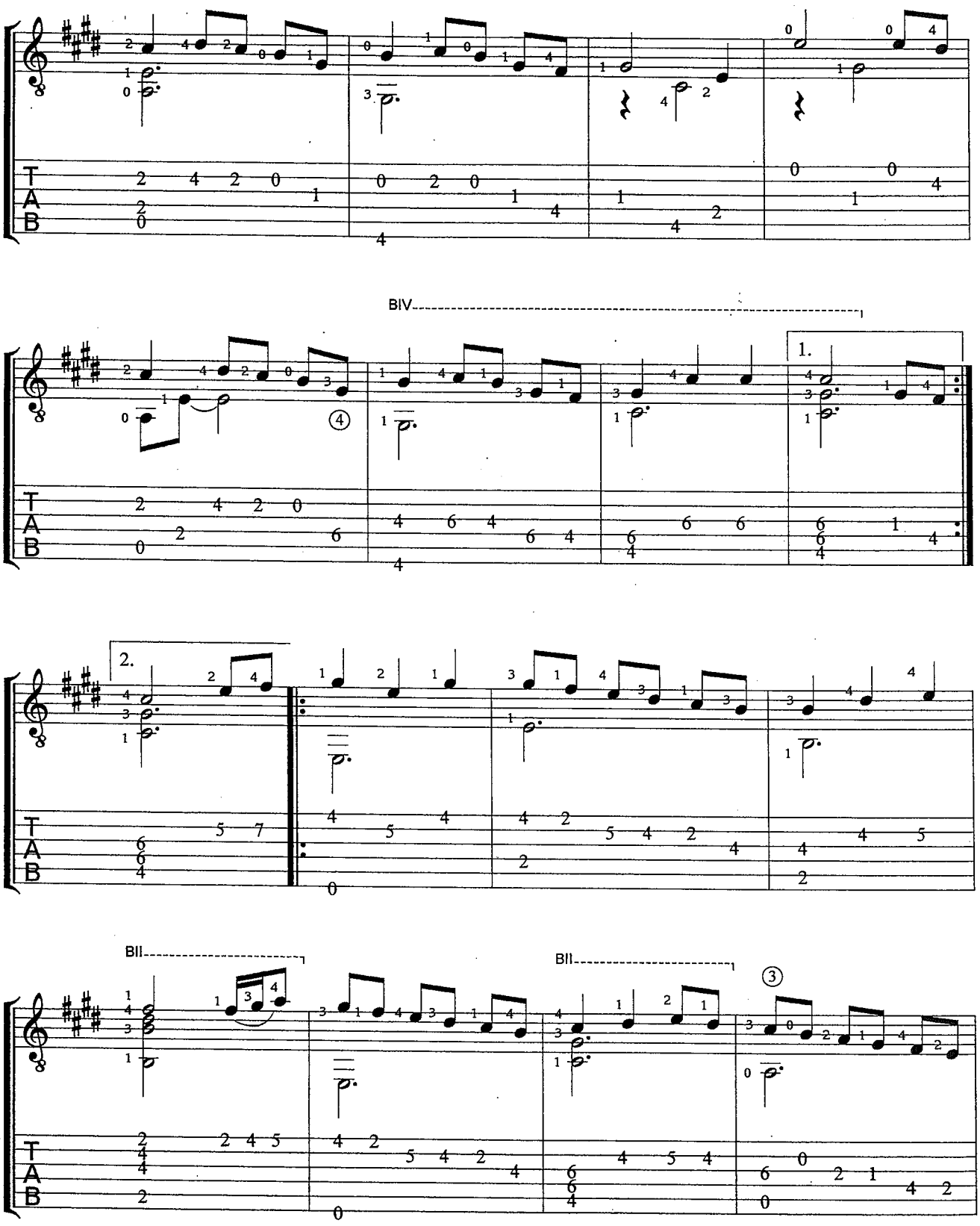


Carolan's Quarrel With The Landlady

Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander

♩= 126

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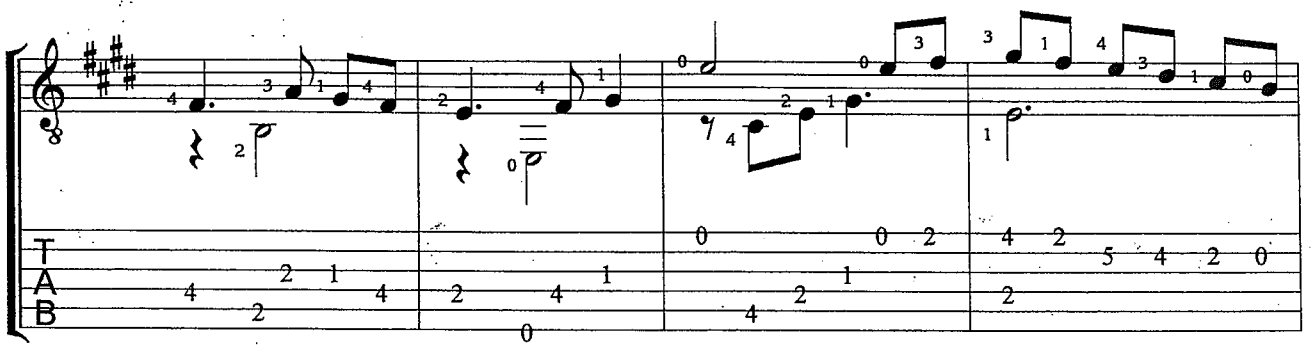
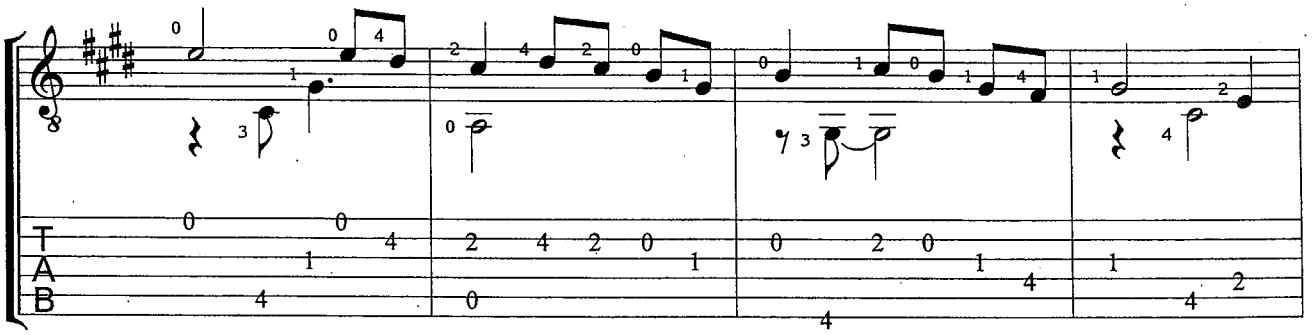
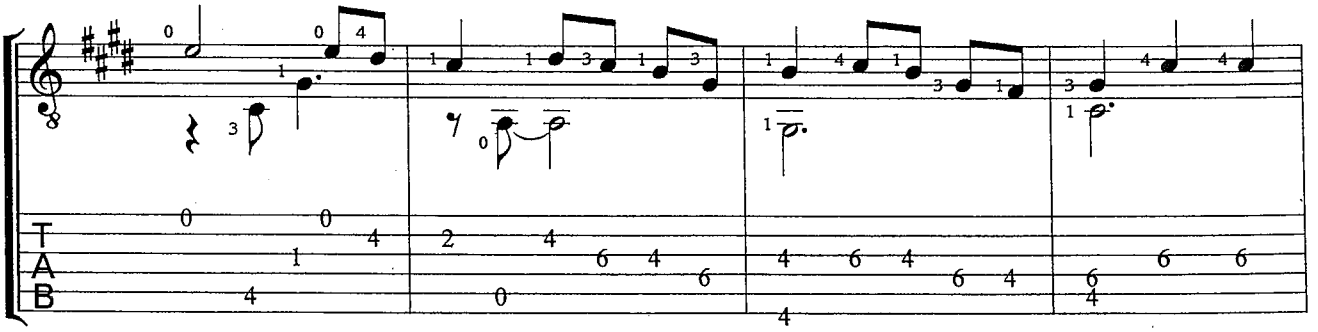
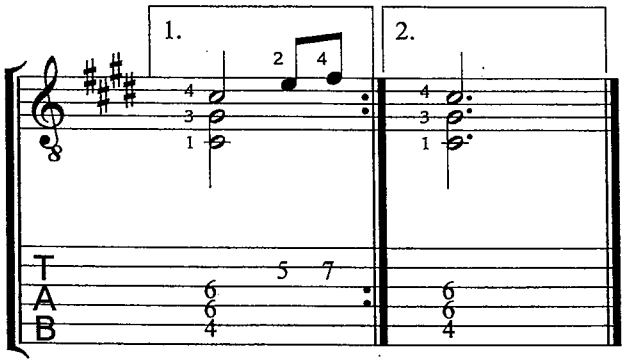




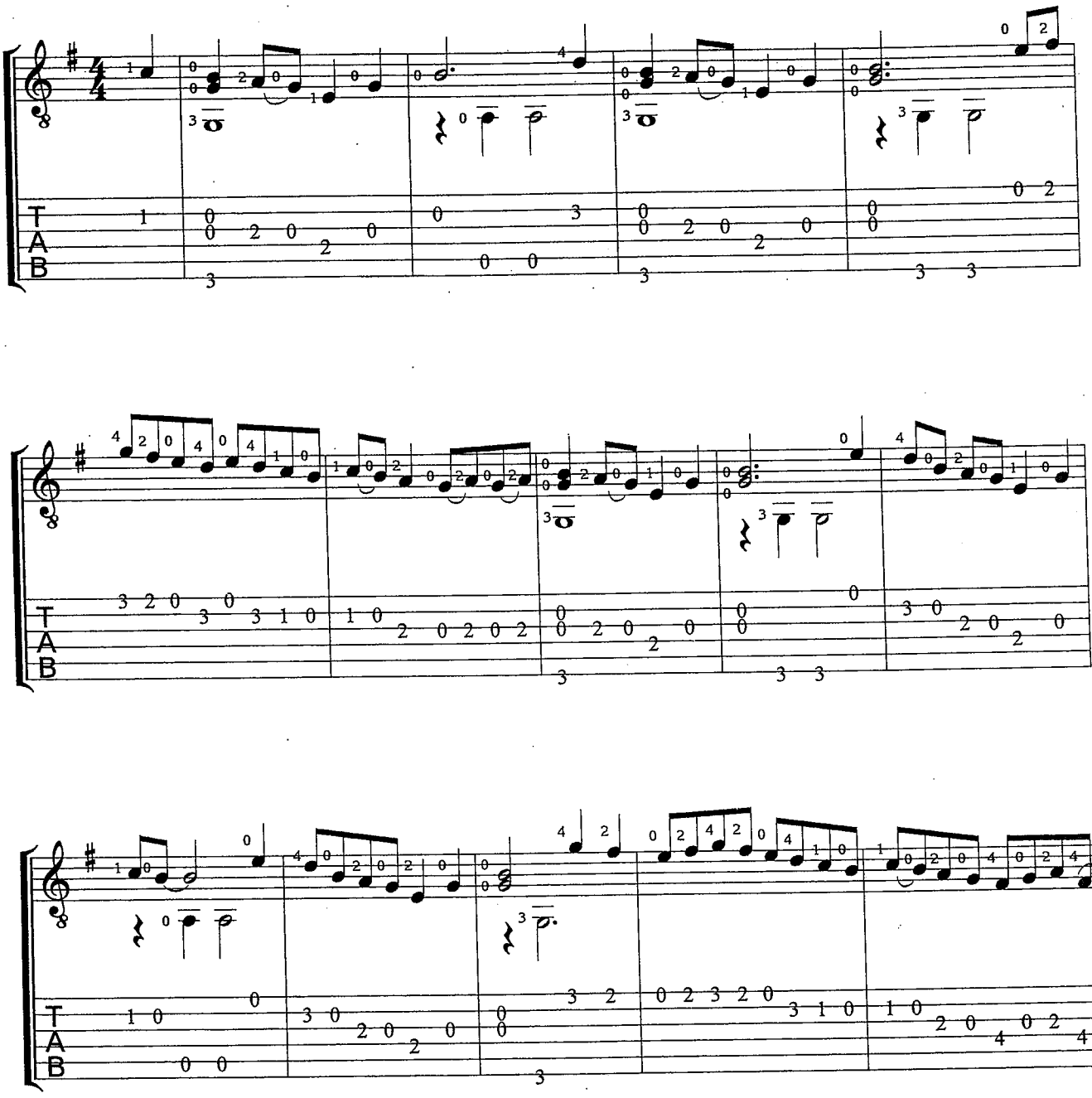


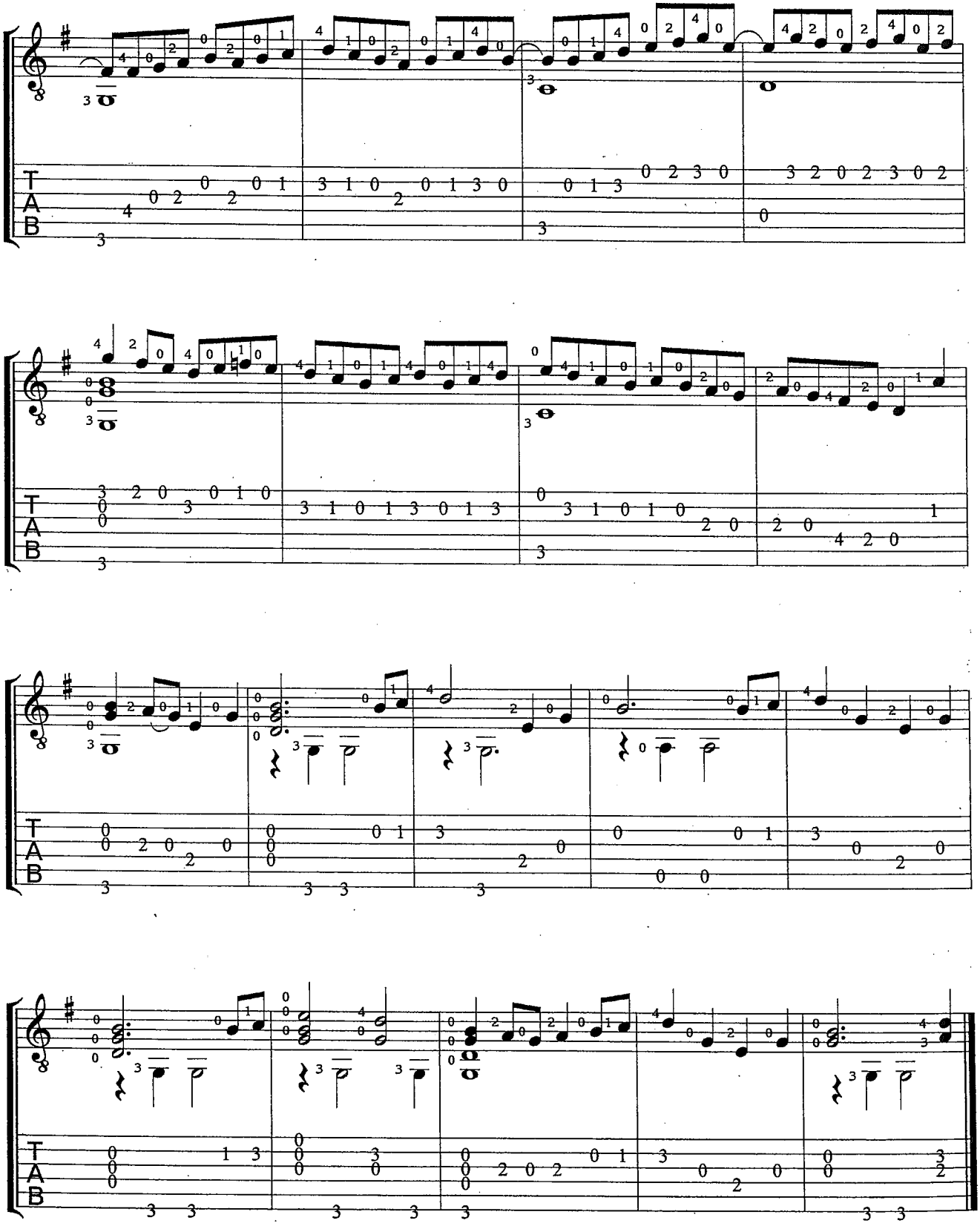

1.
2.

I Never Knew I Loved Thee

Rowallan Manuscript
Arranged by Allan Alexander

♩= 150

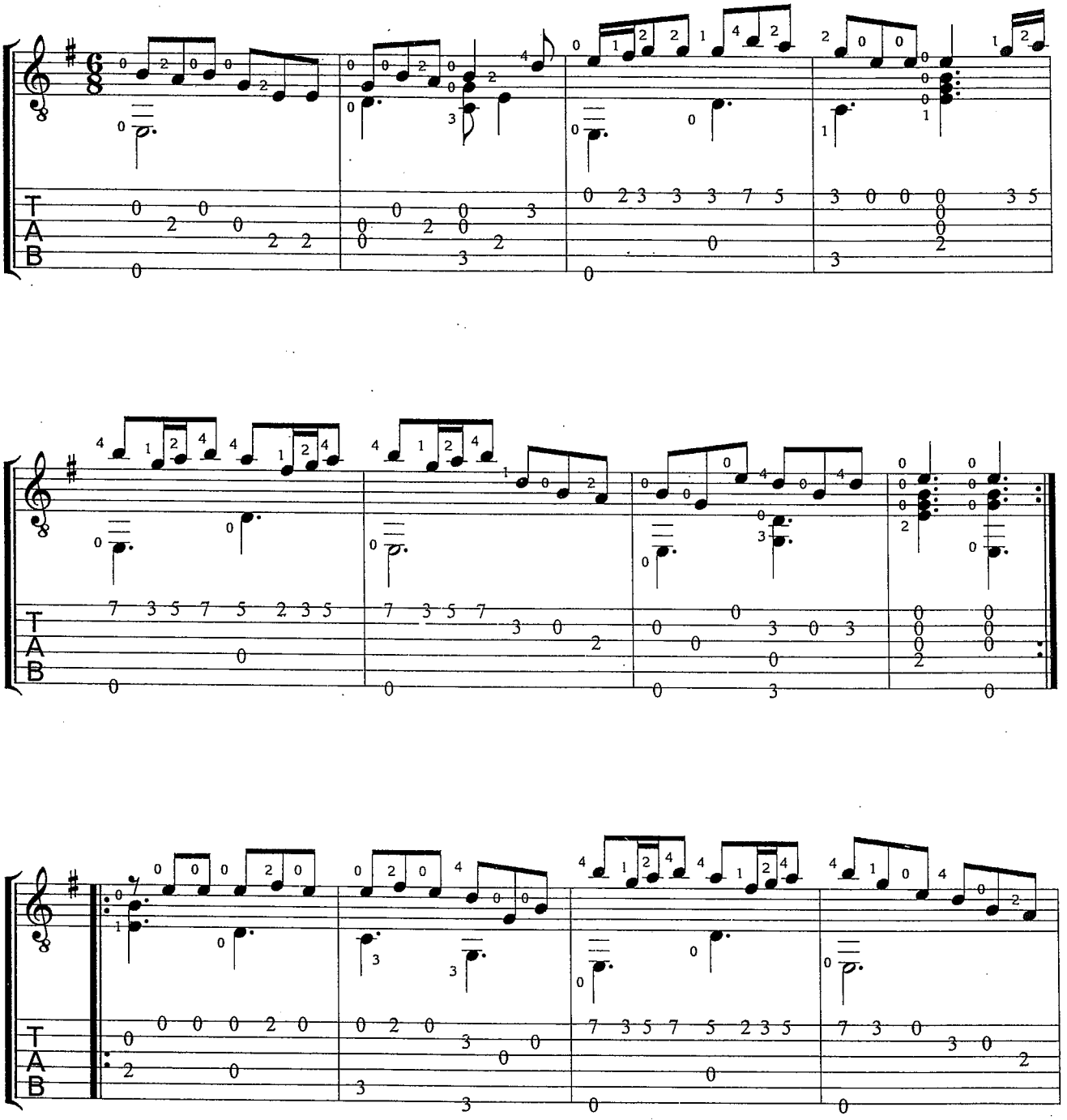


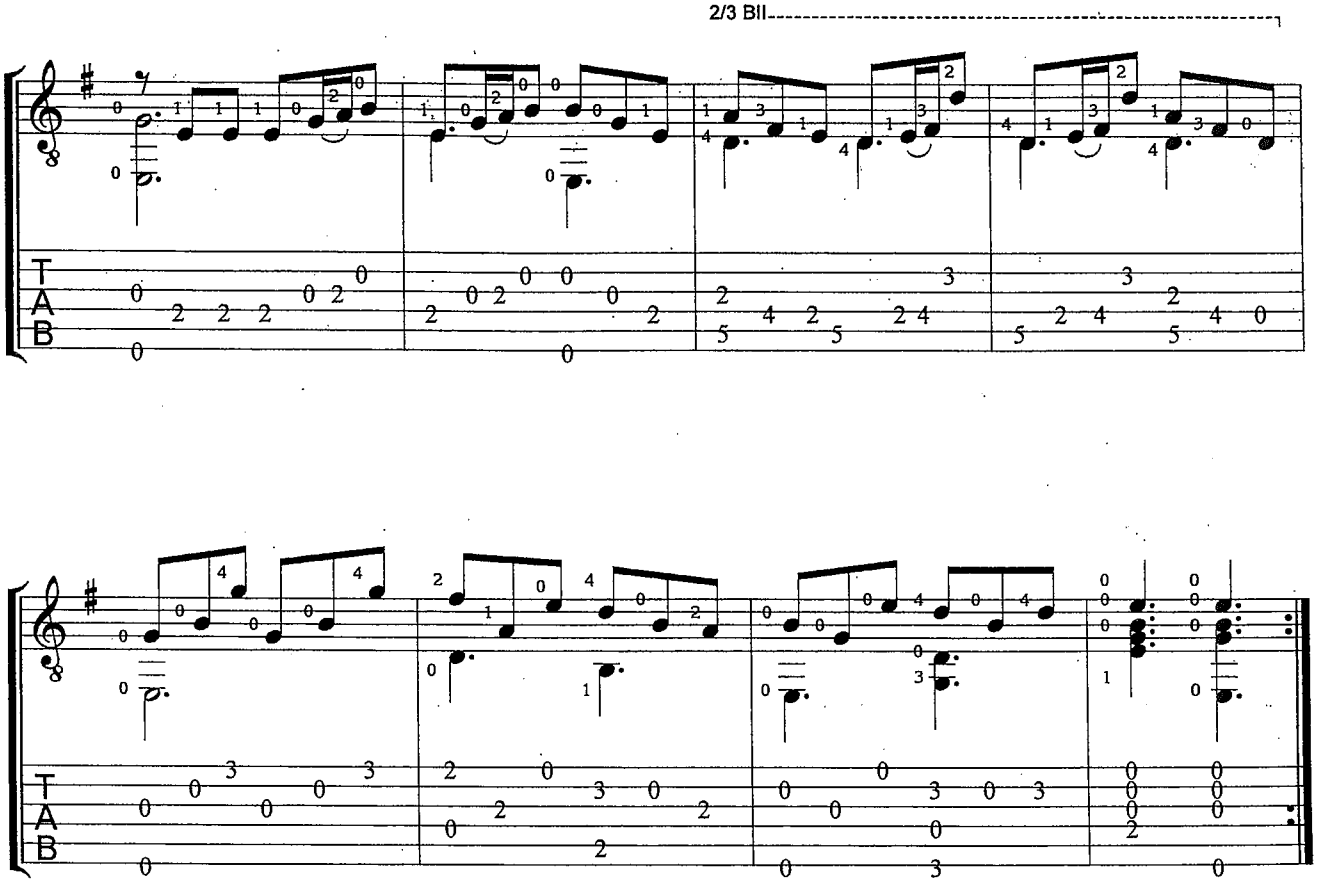


Mrs. Farrel

Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander

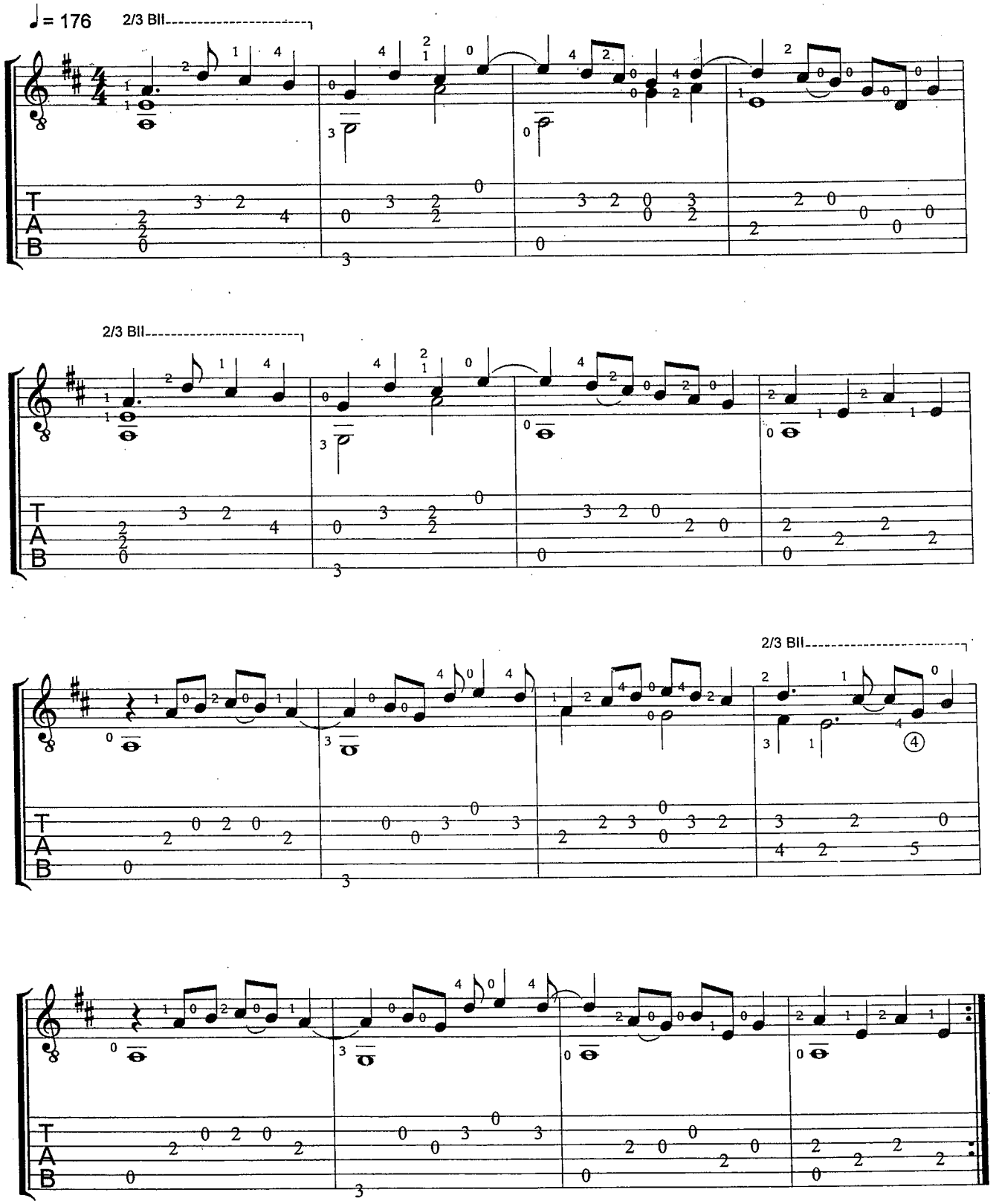
♩. = 120

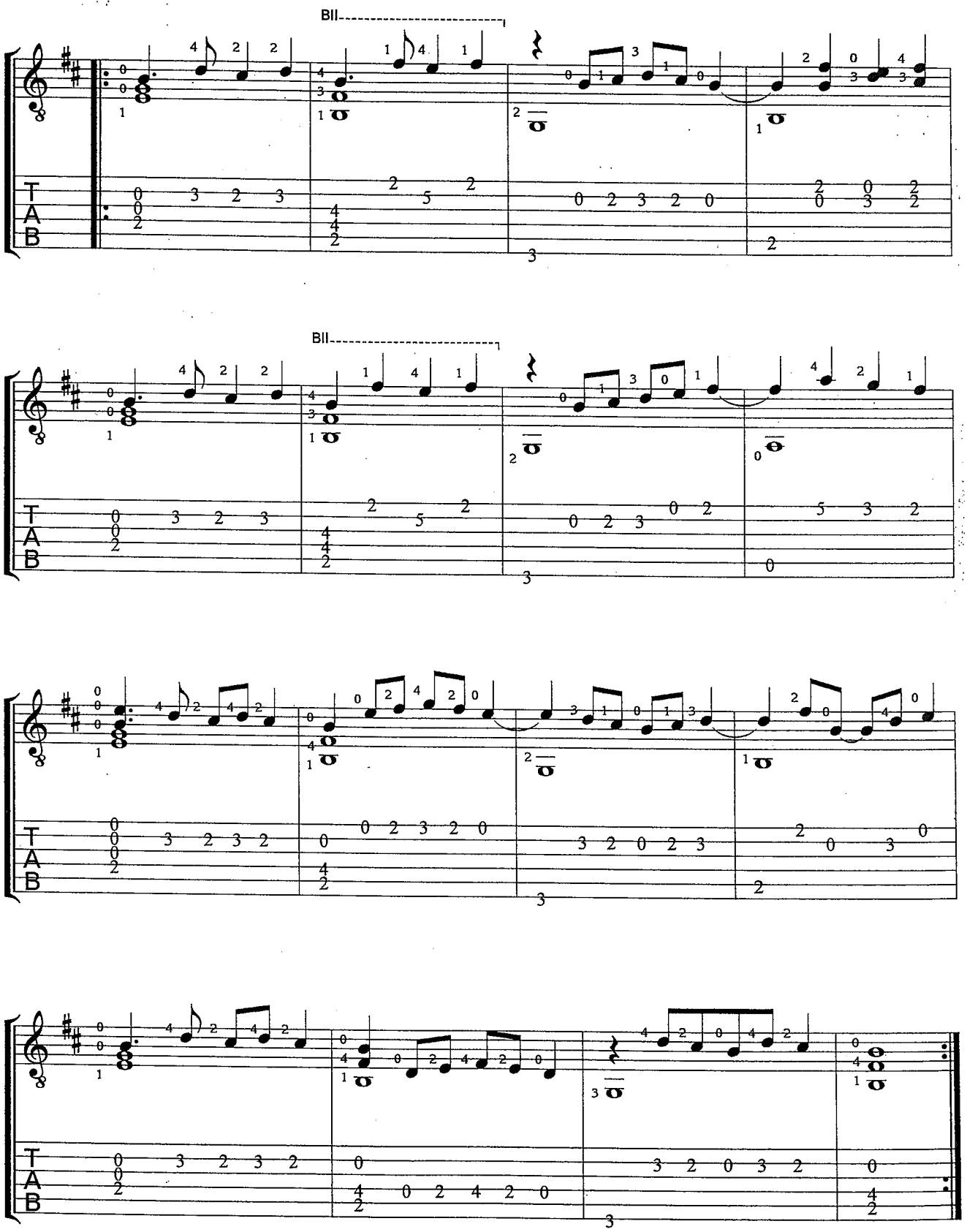



2/3 BII

Linda's Love

Allan Alexander

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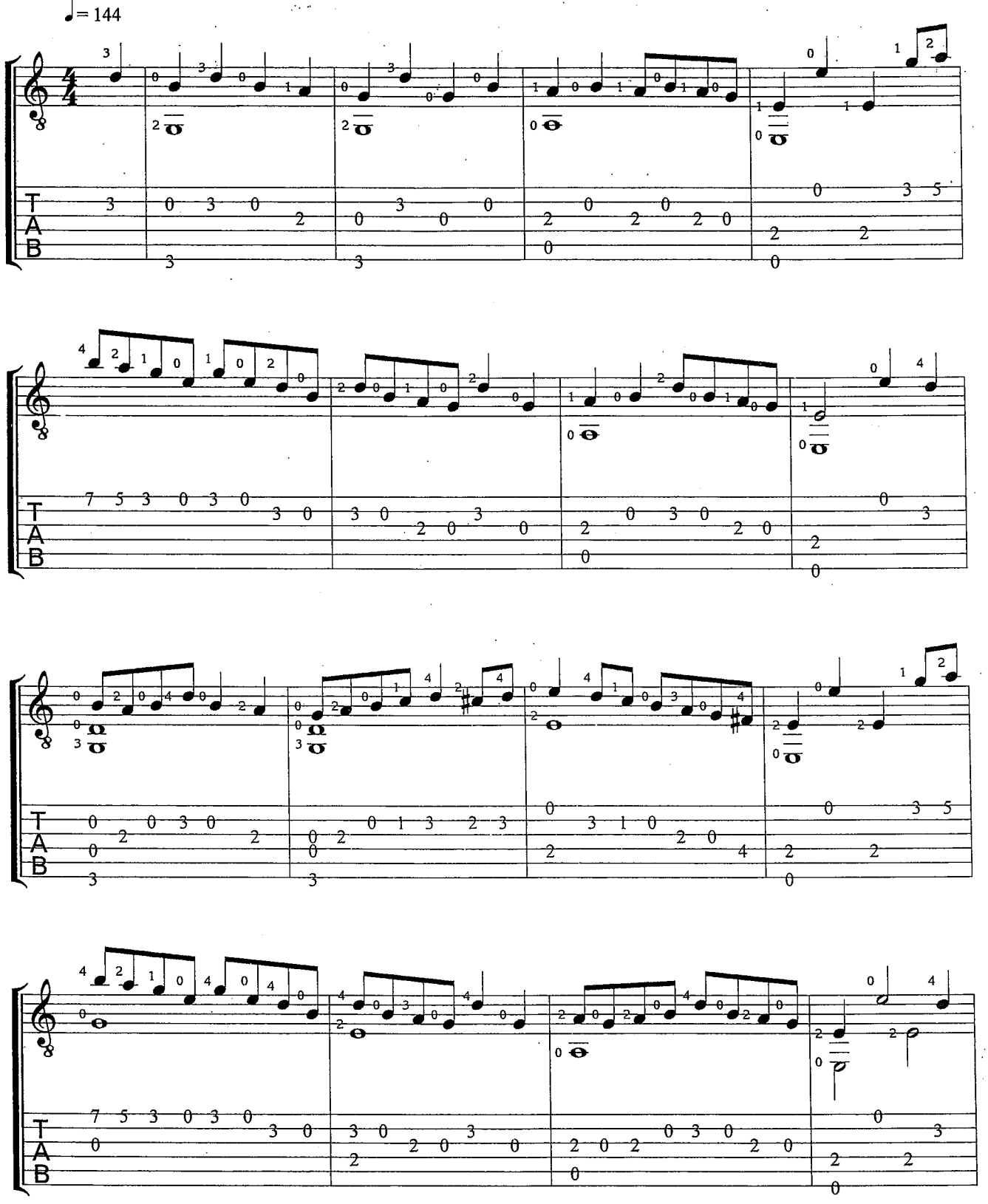
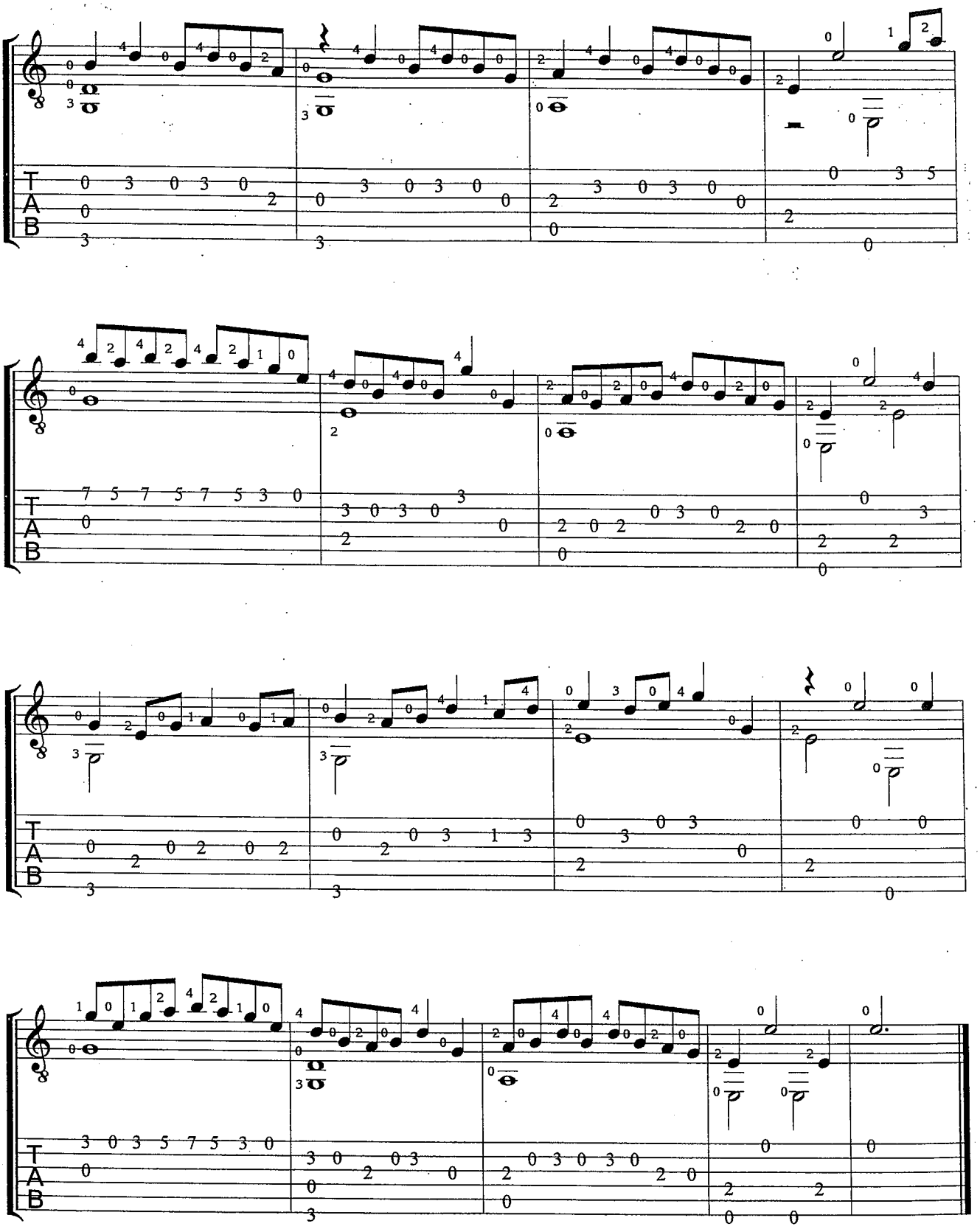
I Serve A Worthy Ladie

From the Skene Manuscript
Arrangement by Allan Alexander





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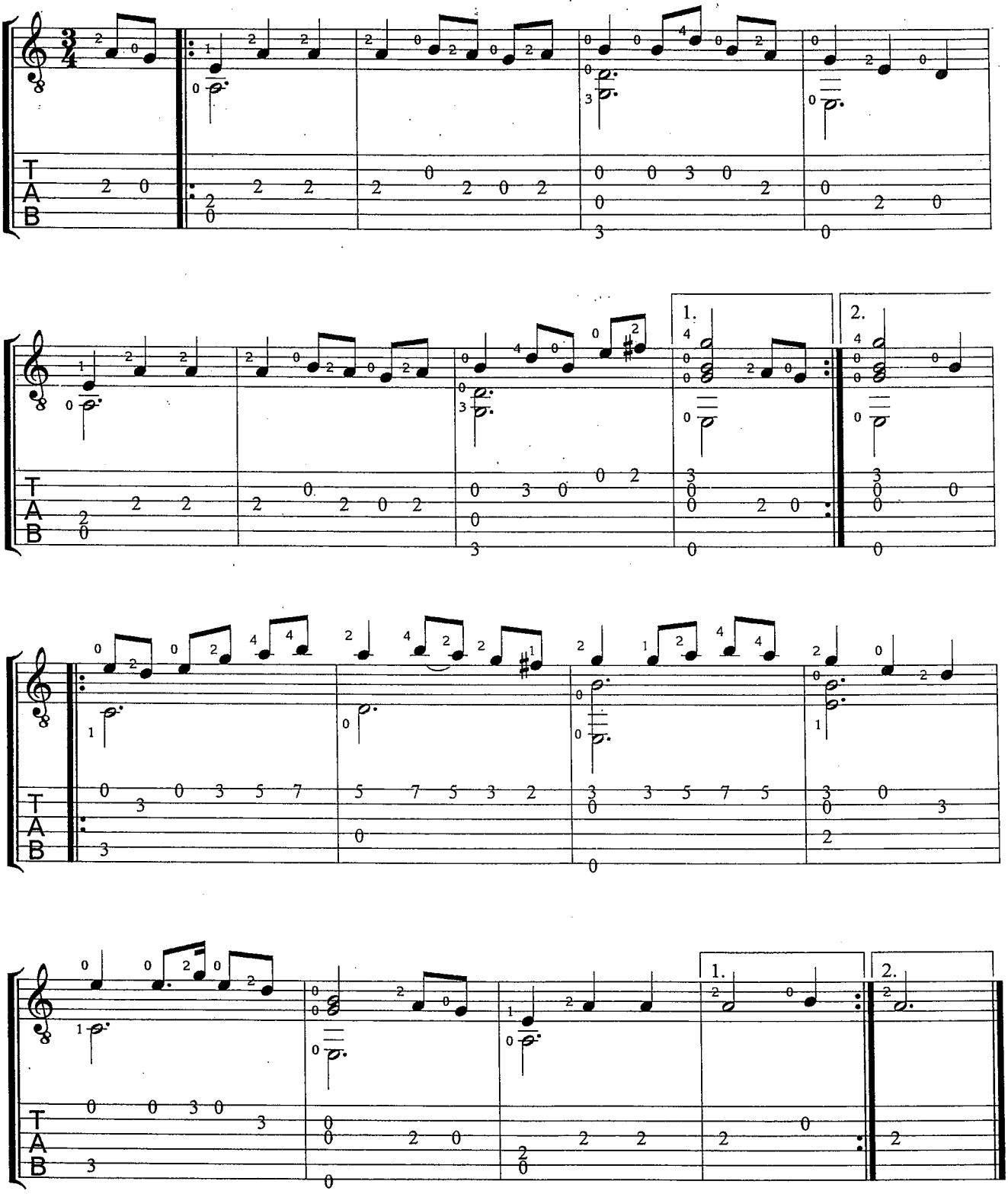
Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander

♩= 120



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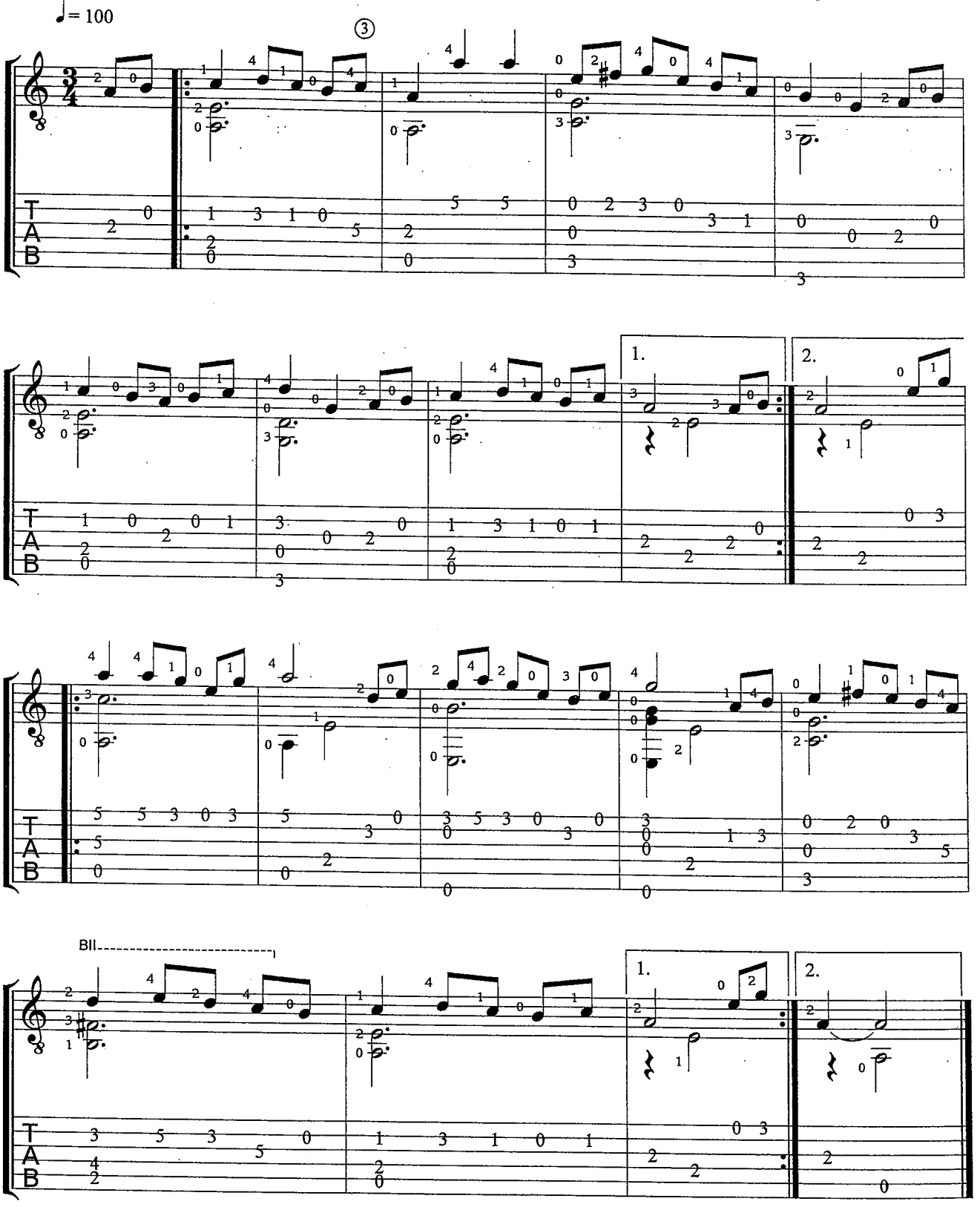
Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander



The Butterfly

Traditional From Ireland
Arrangement and Variations by
Allan Alexander

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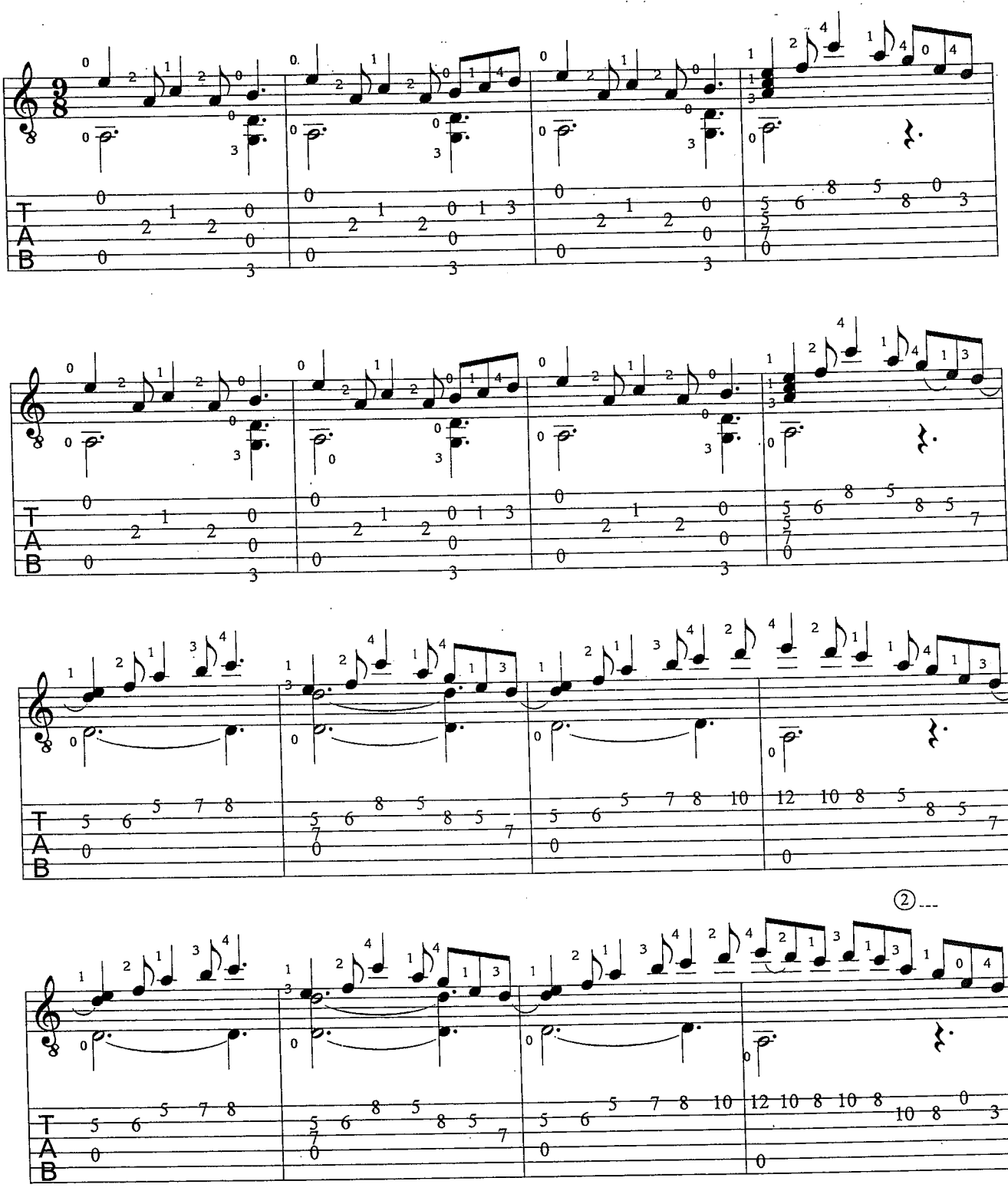

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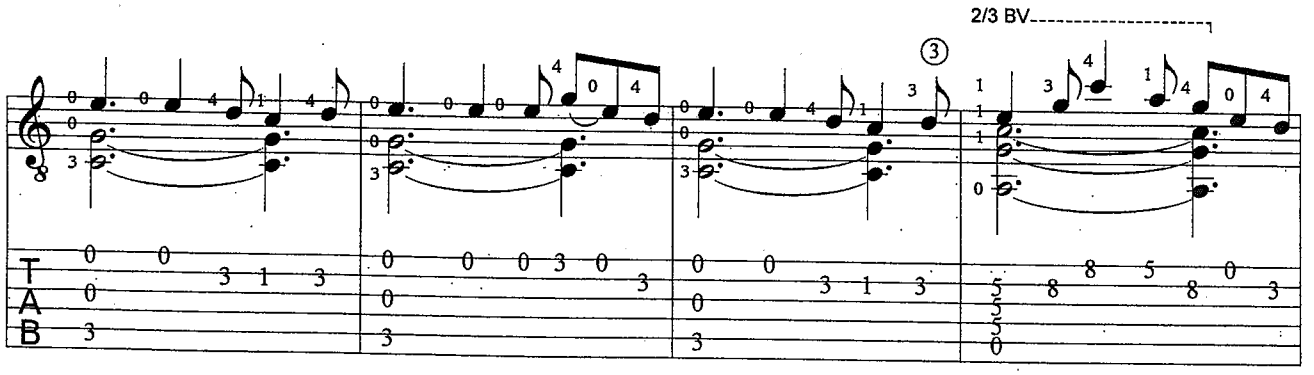

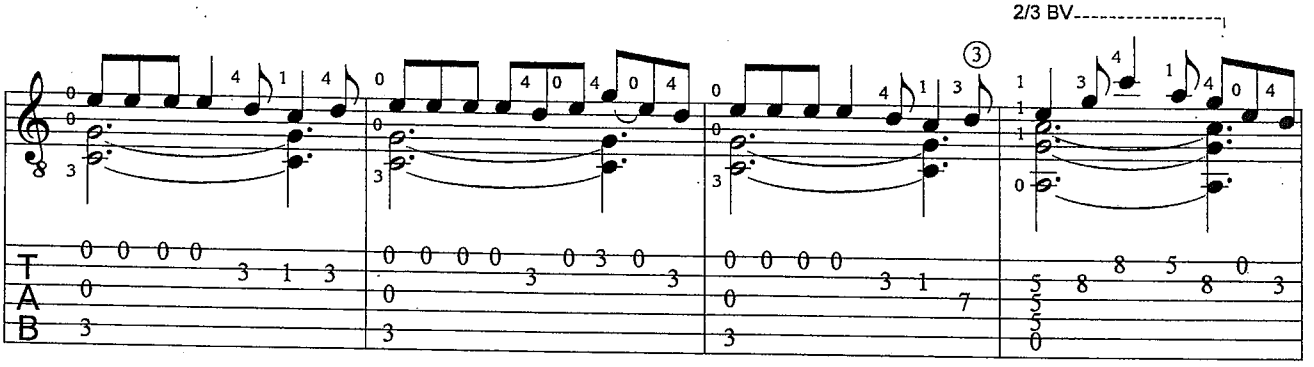

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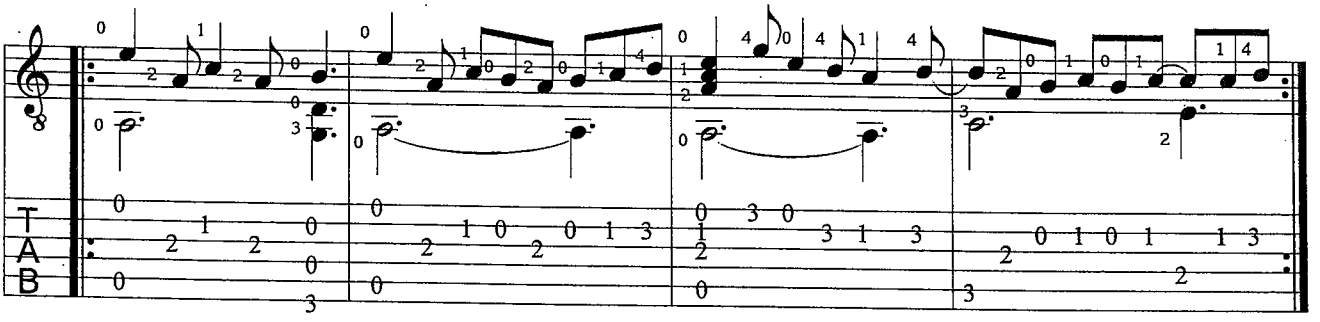

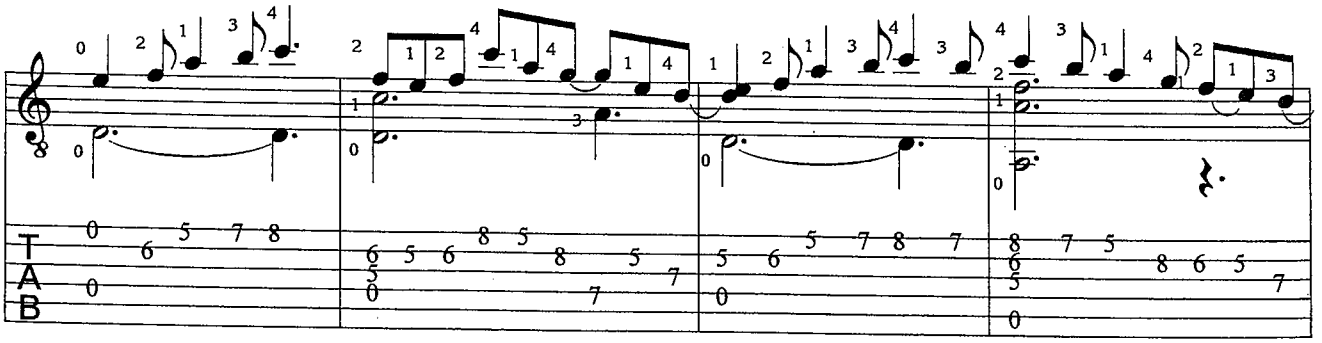

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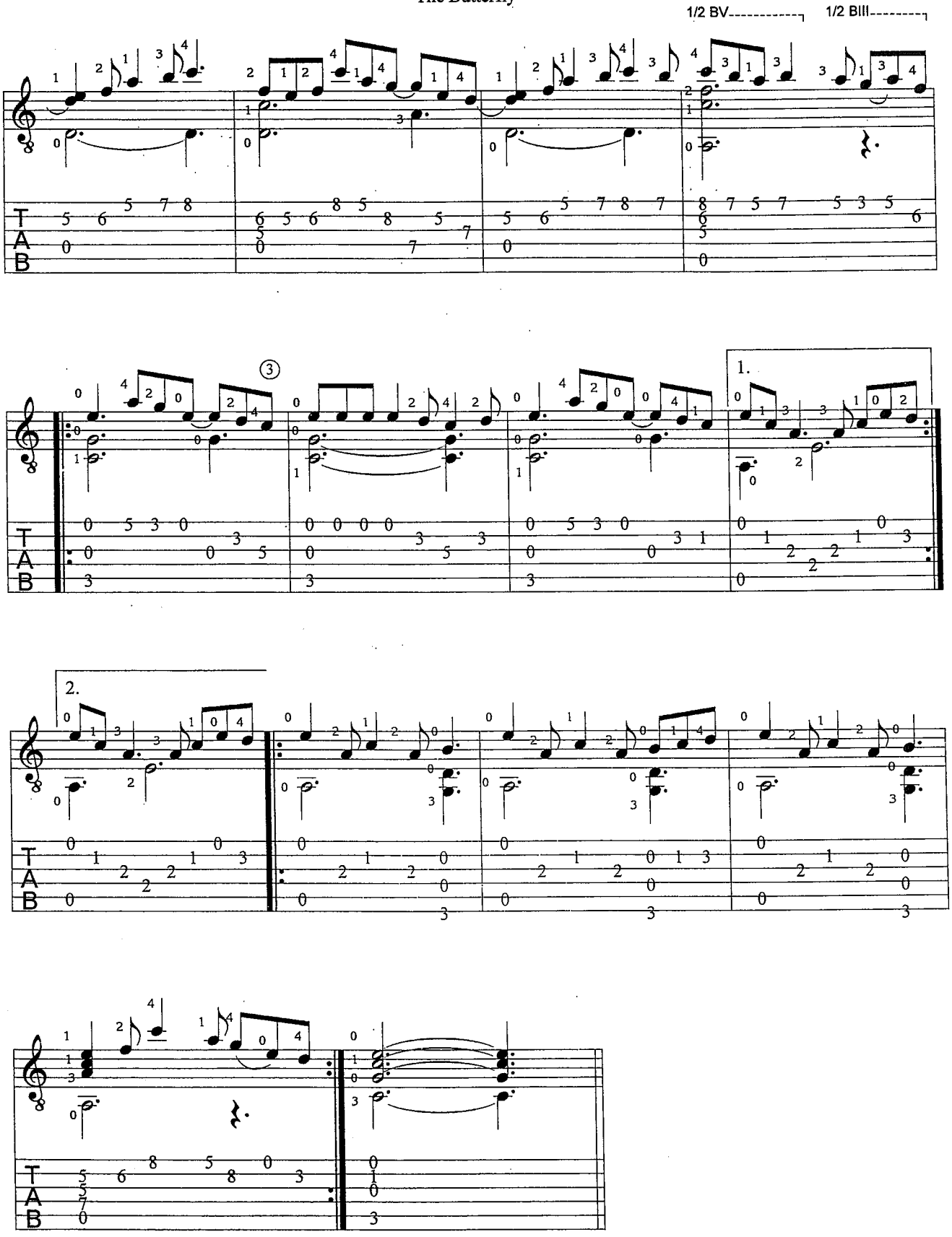
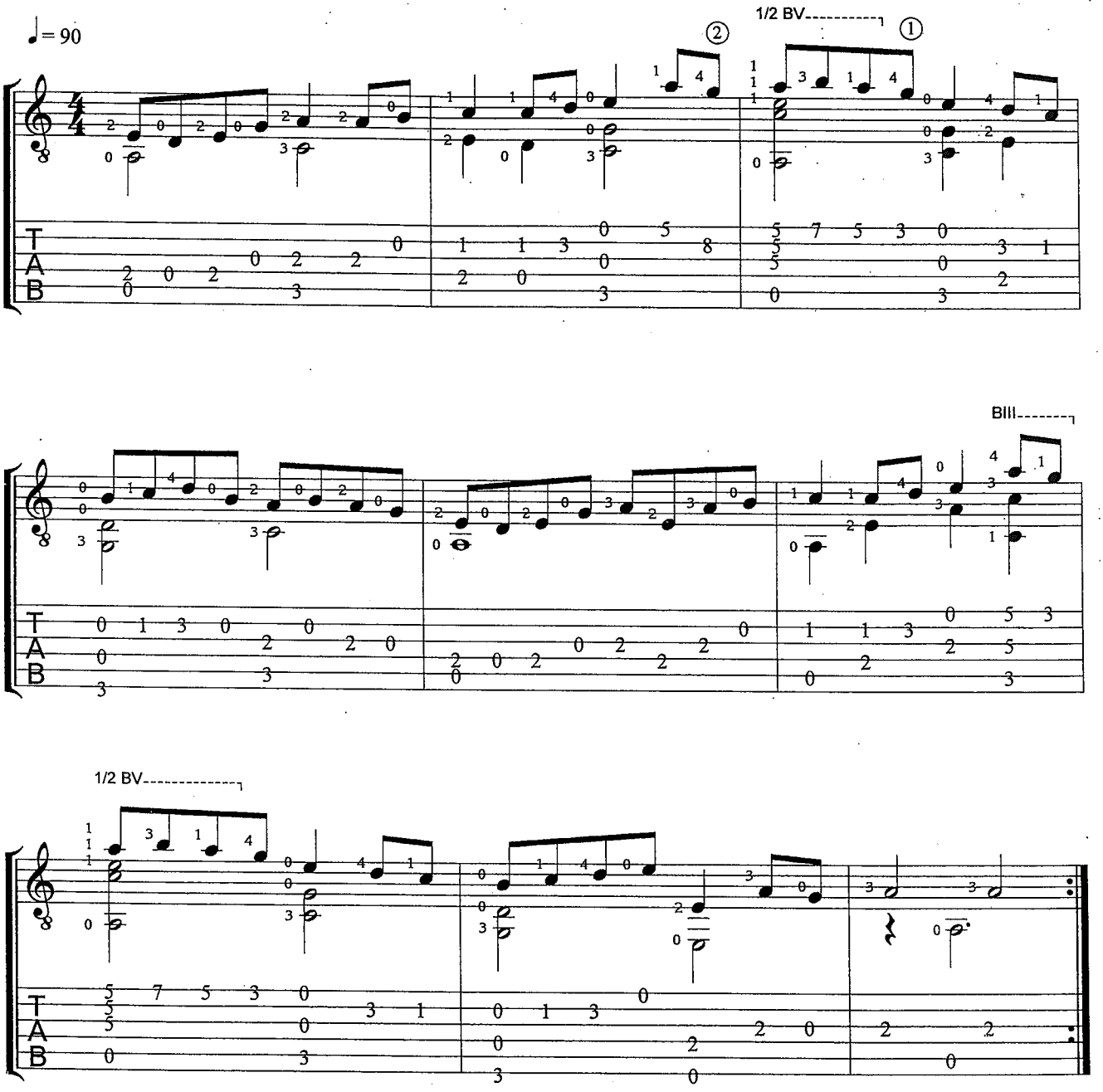
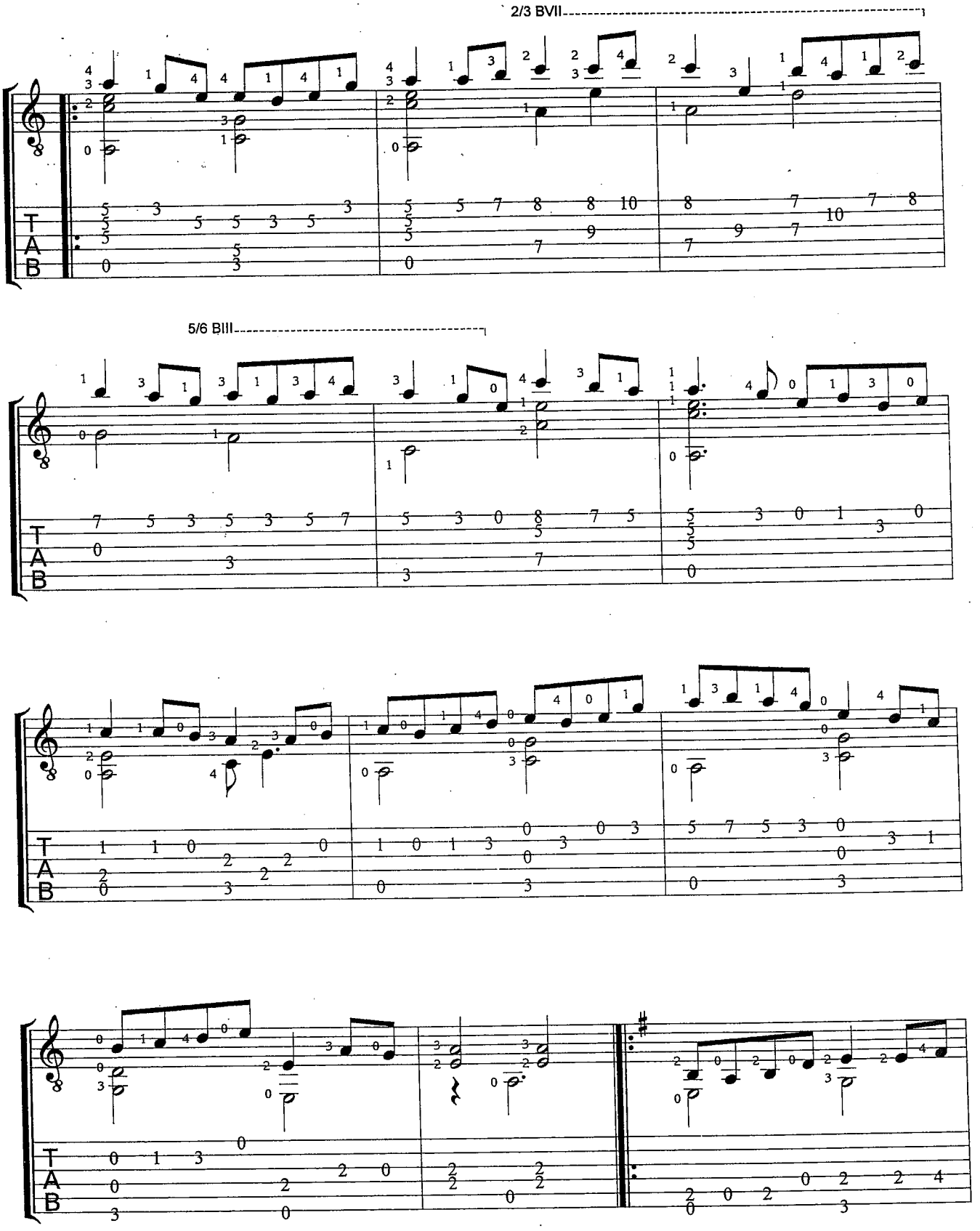


The Clergy's Lamentation

Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander

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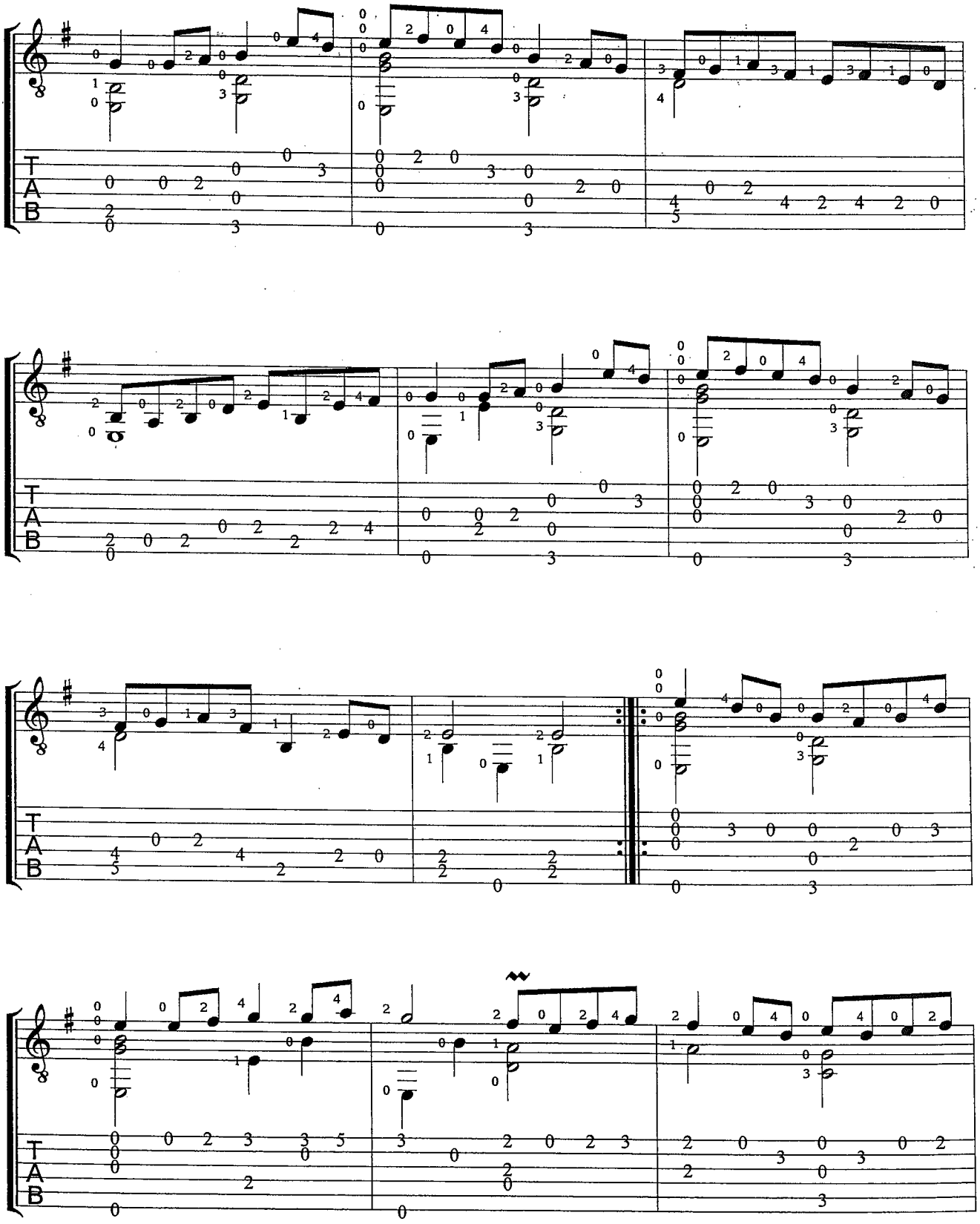

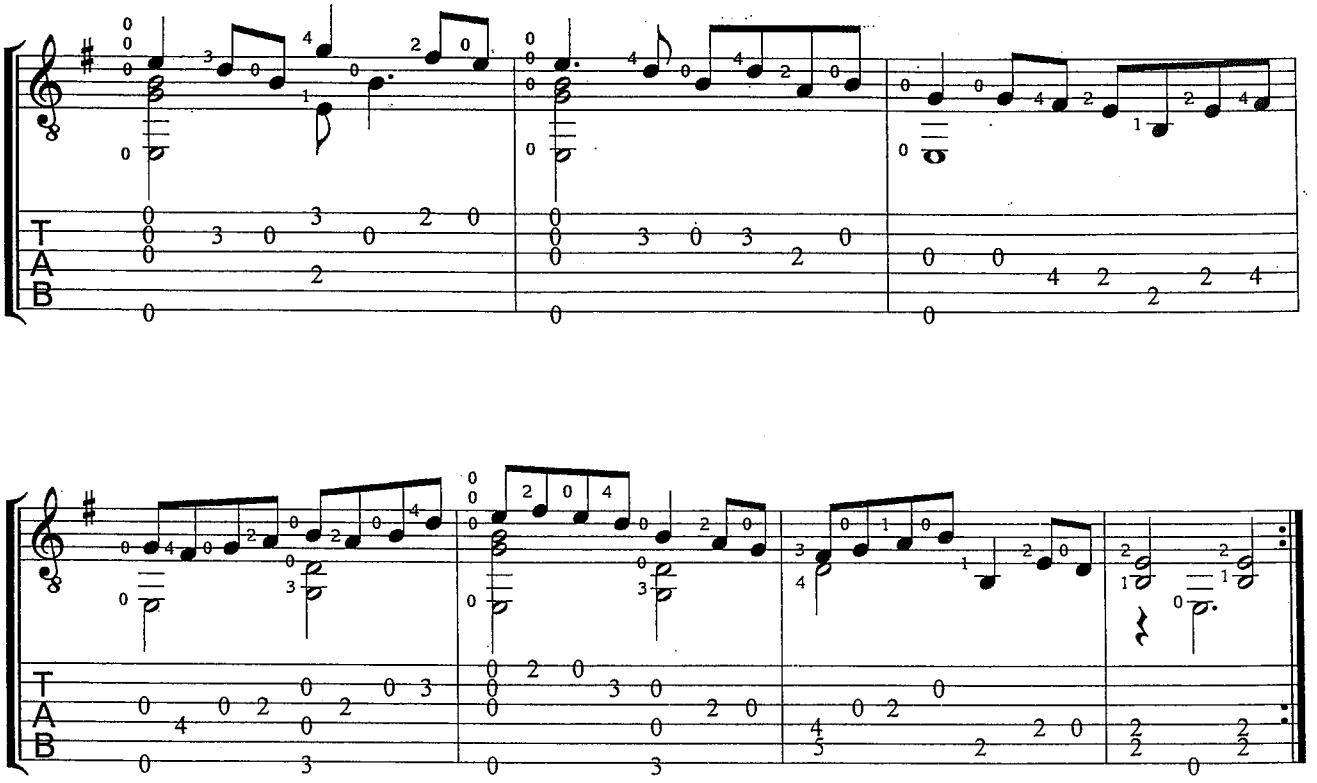

A Port

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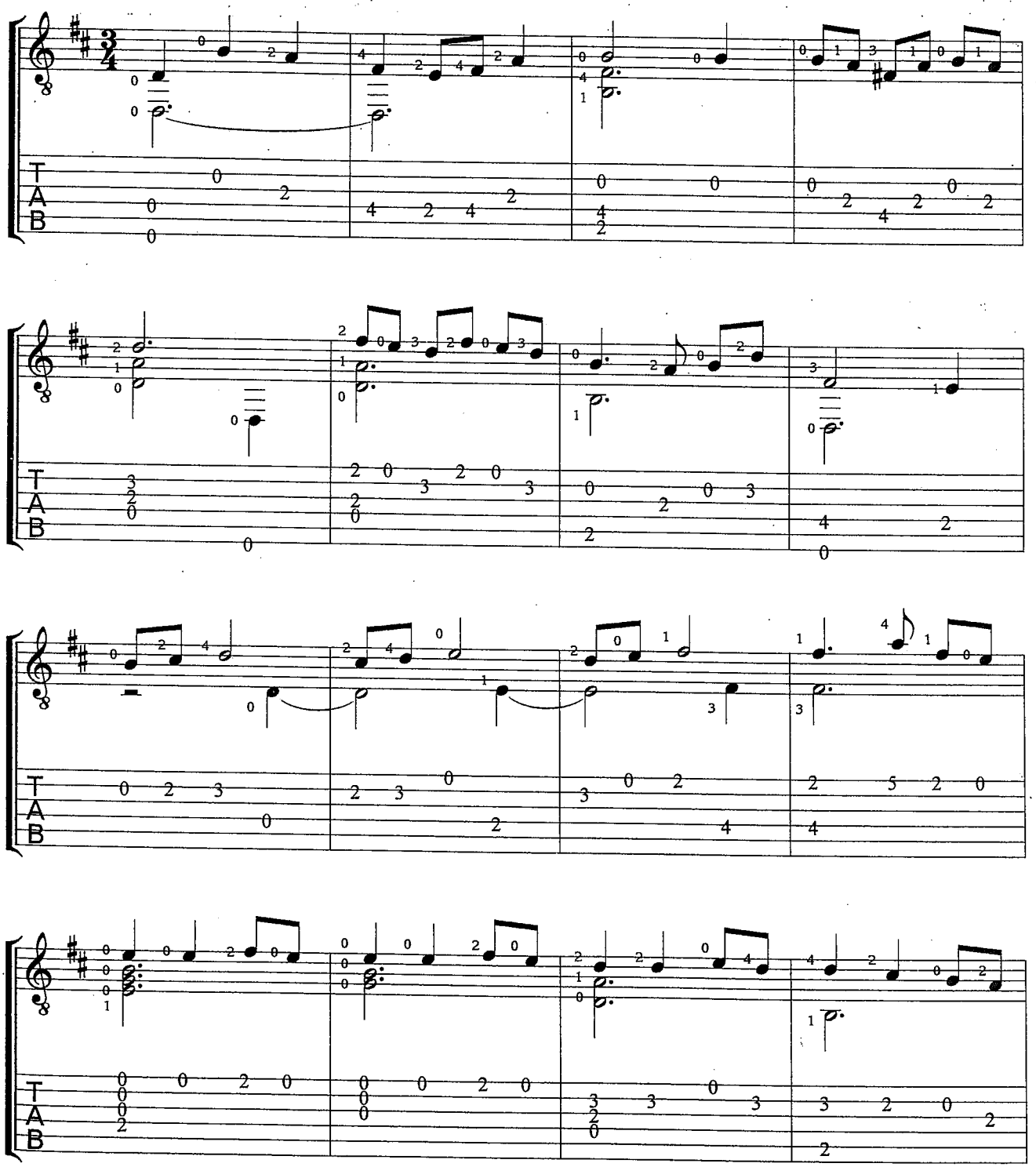
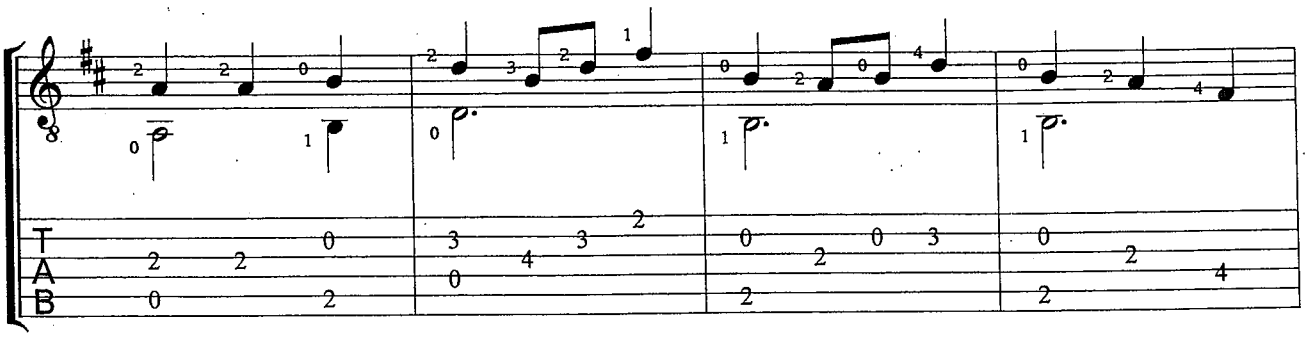
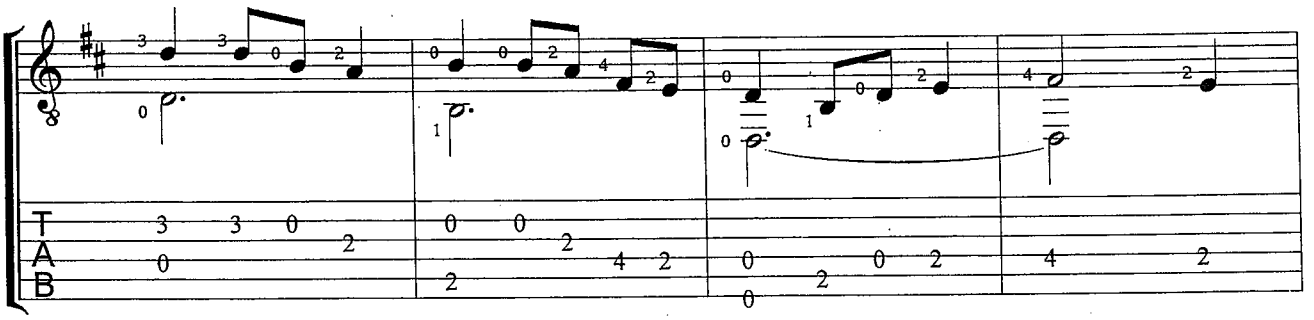
Rory Dall
Arrangement and Variations
by Allan Alexander







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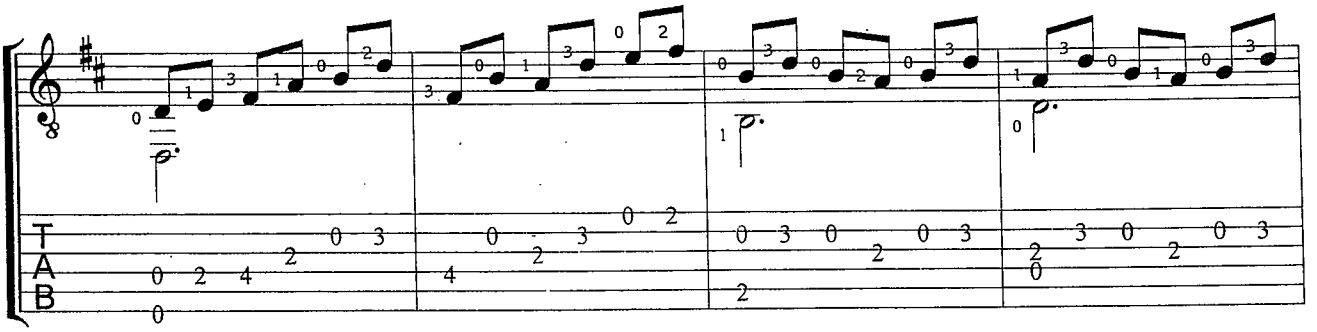
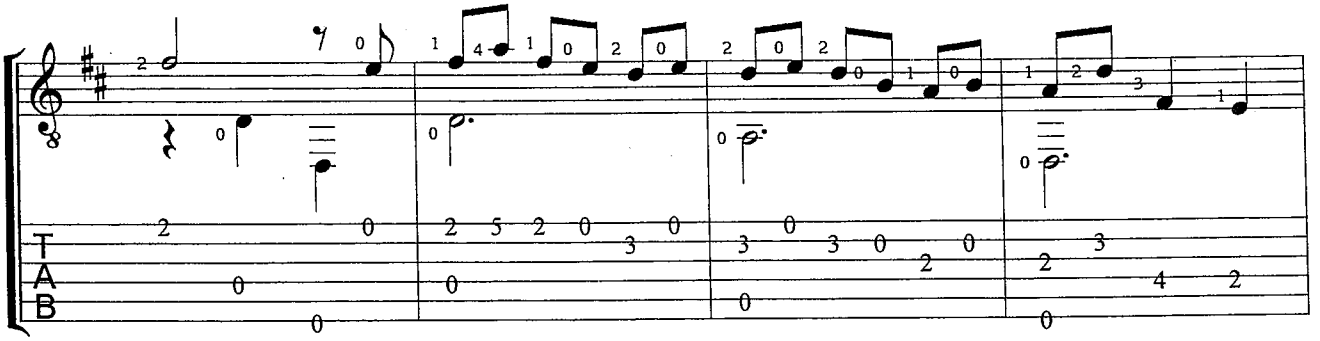
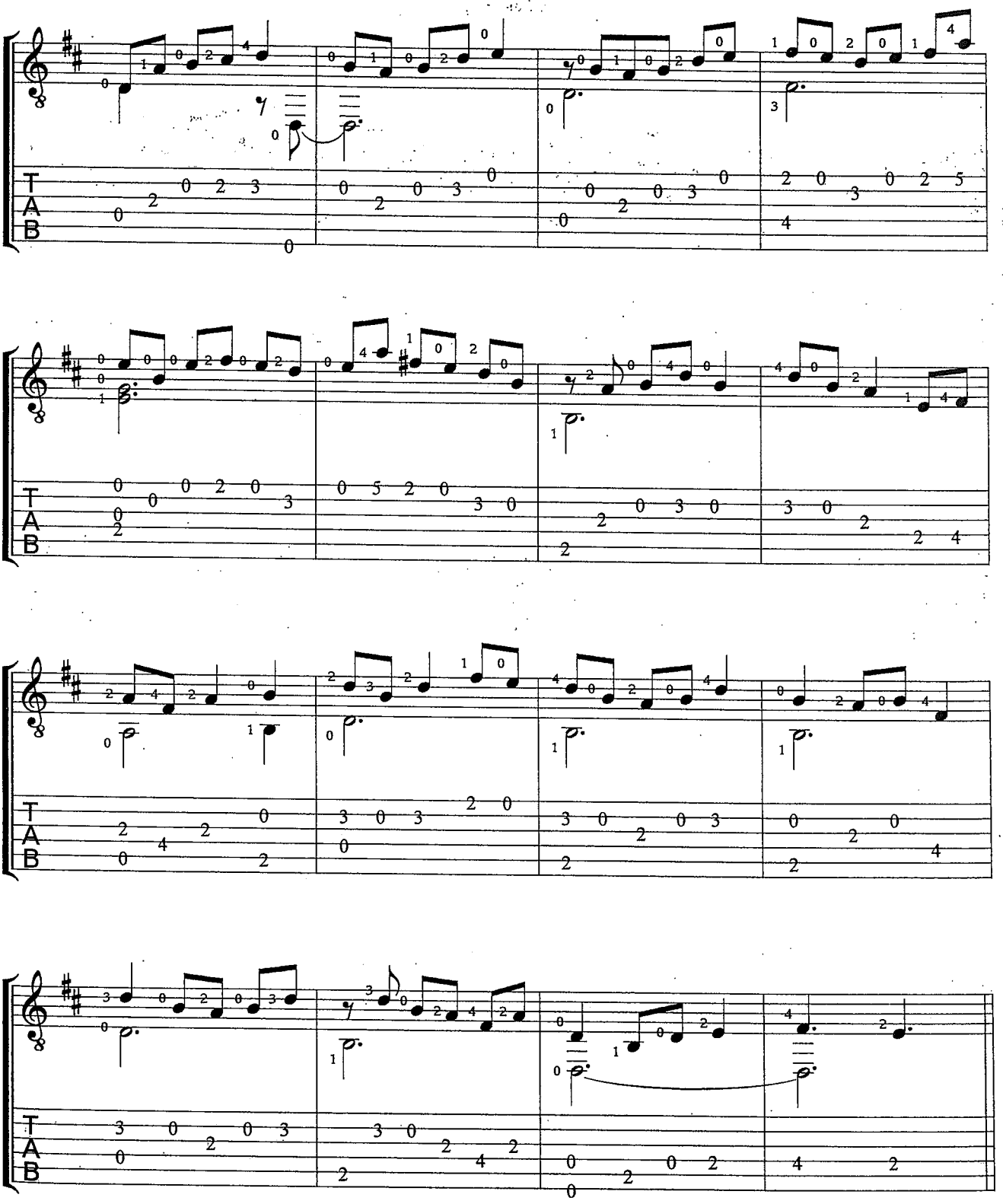


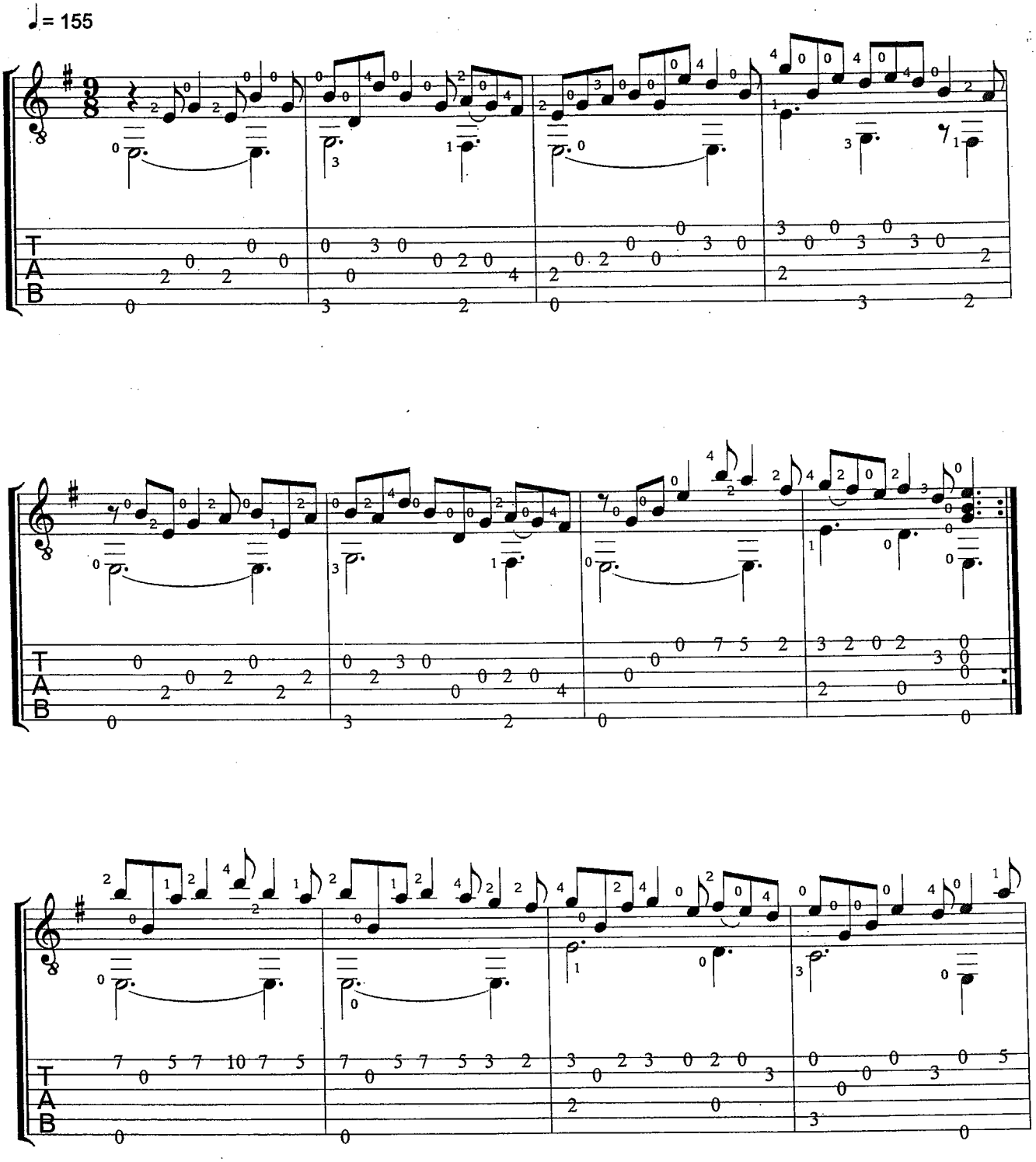


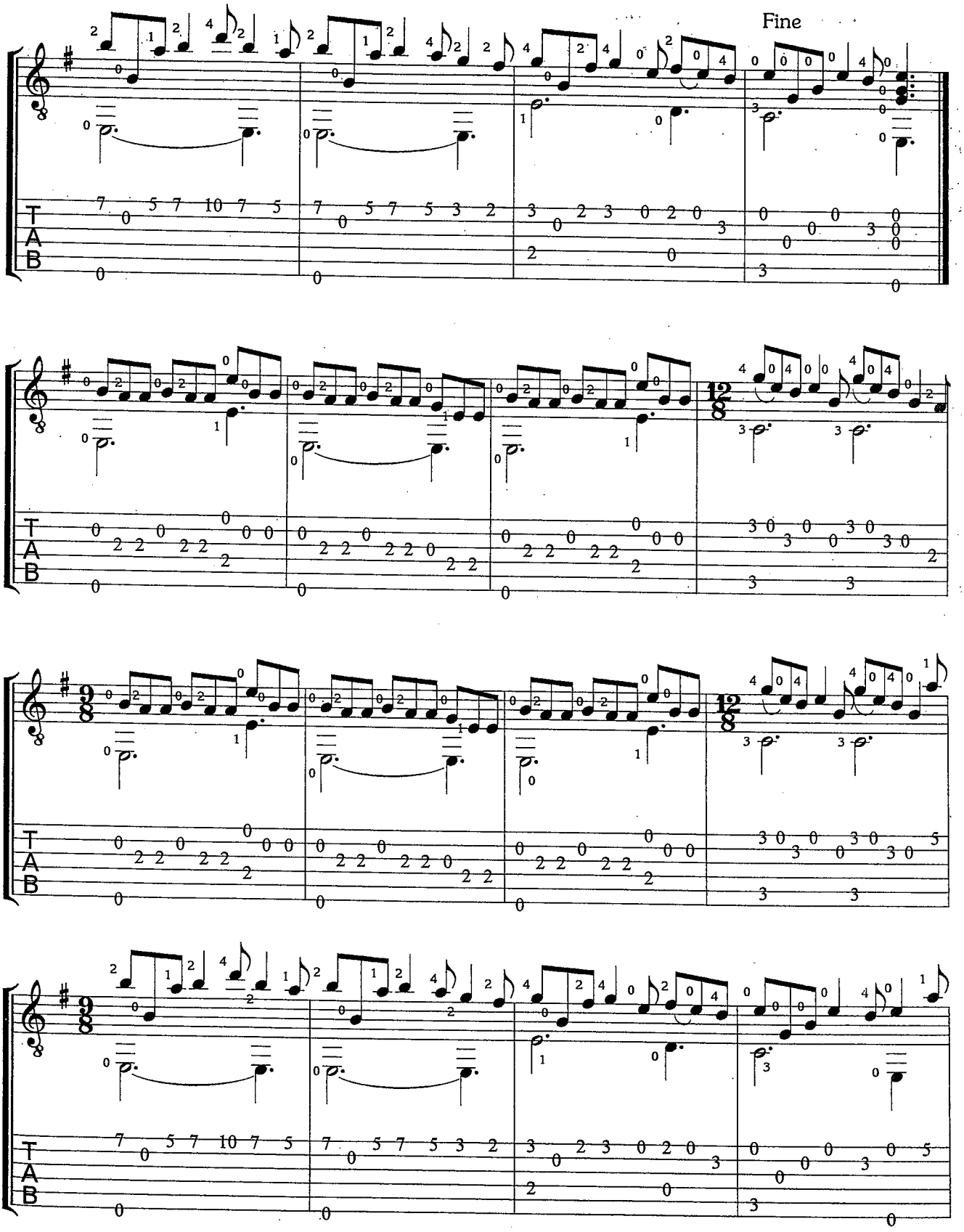


Cary Jane

For Cary Jane Bergen

Allan Alexander

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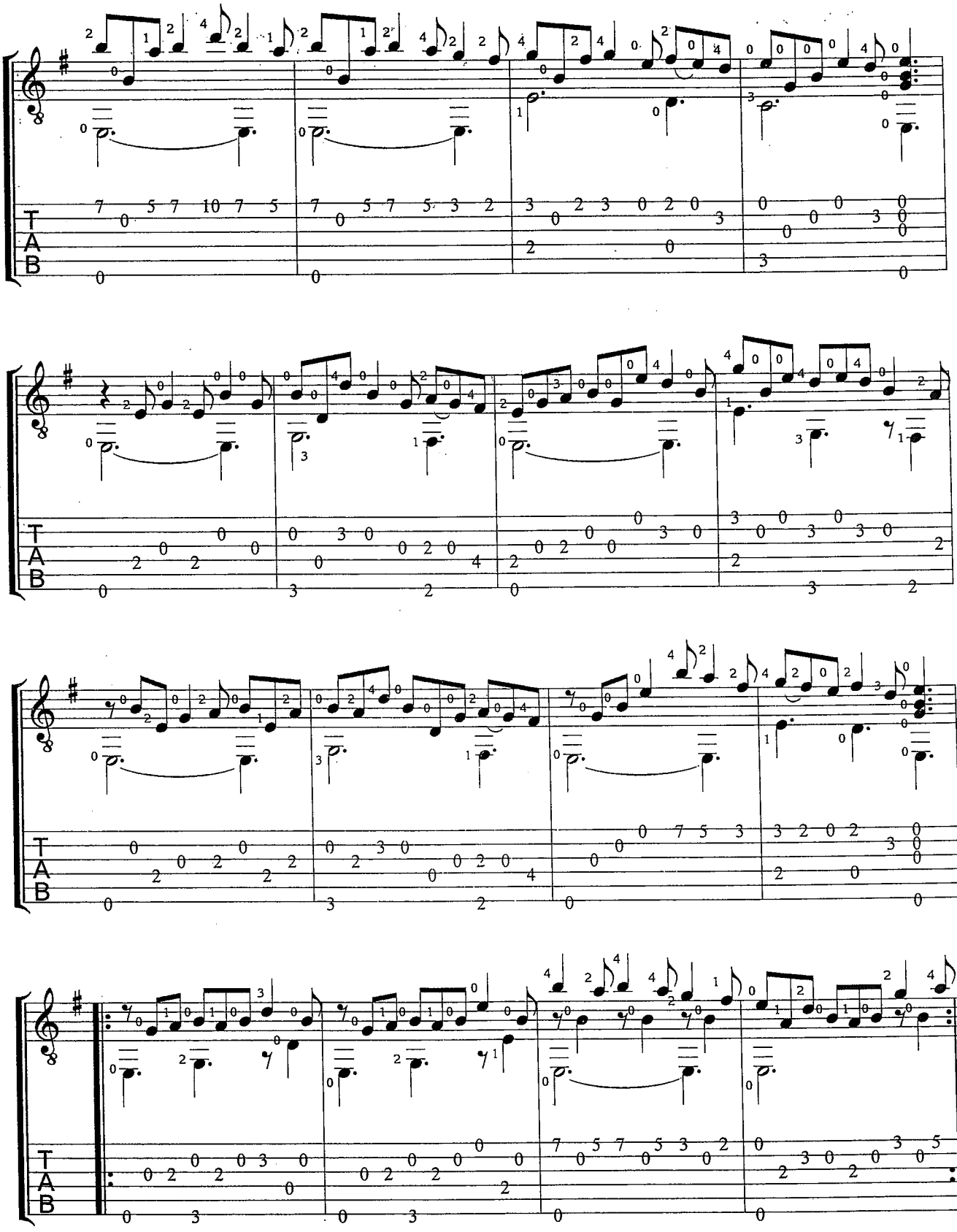

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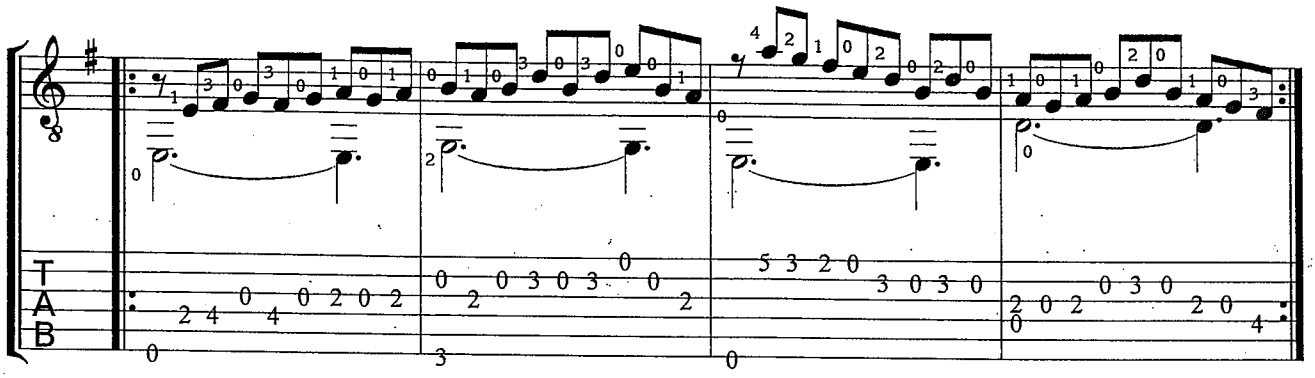
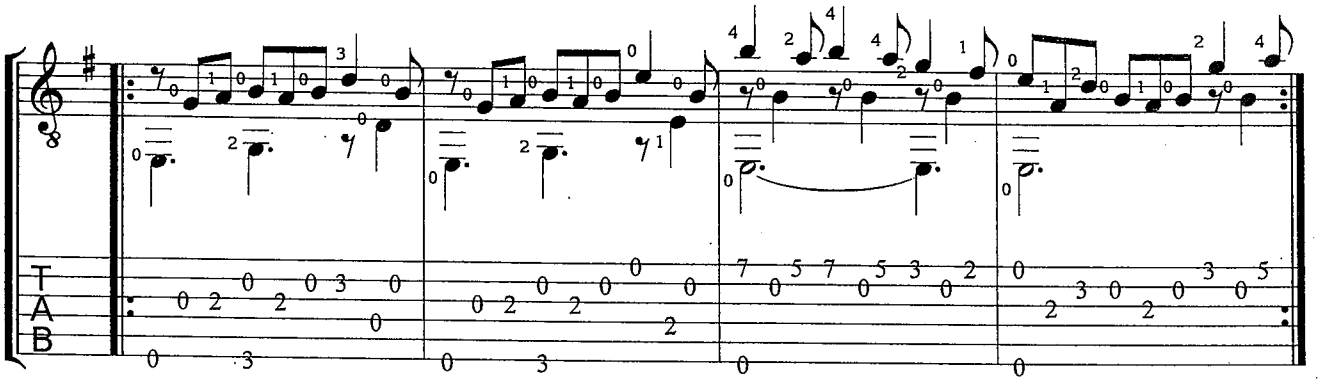
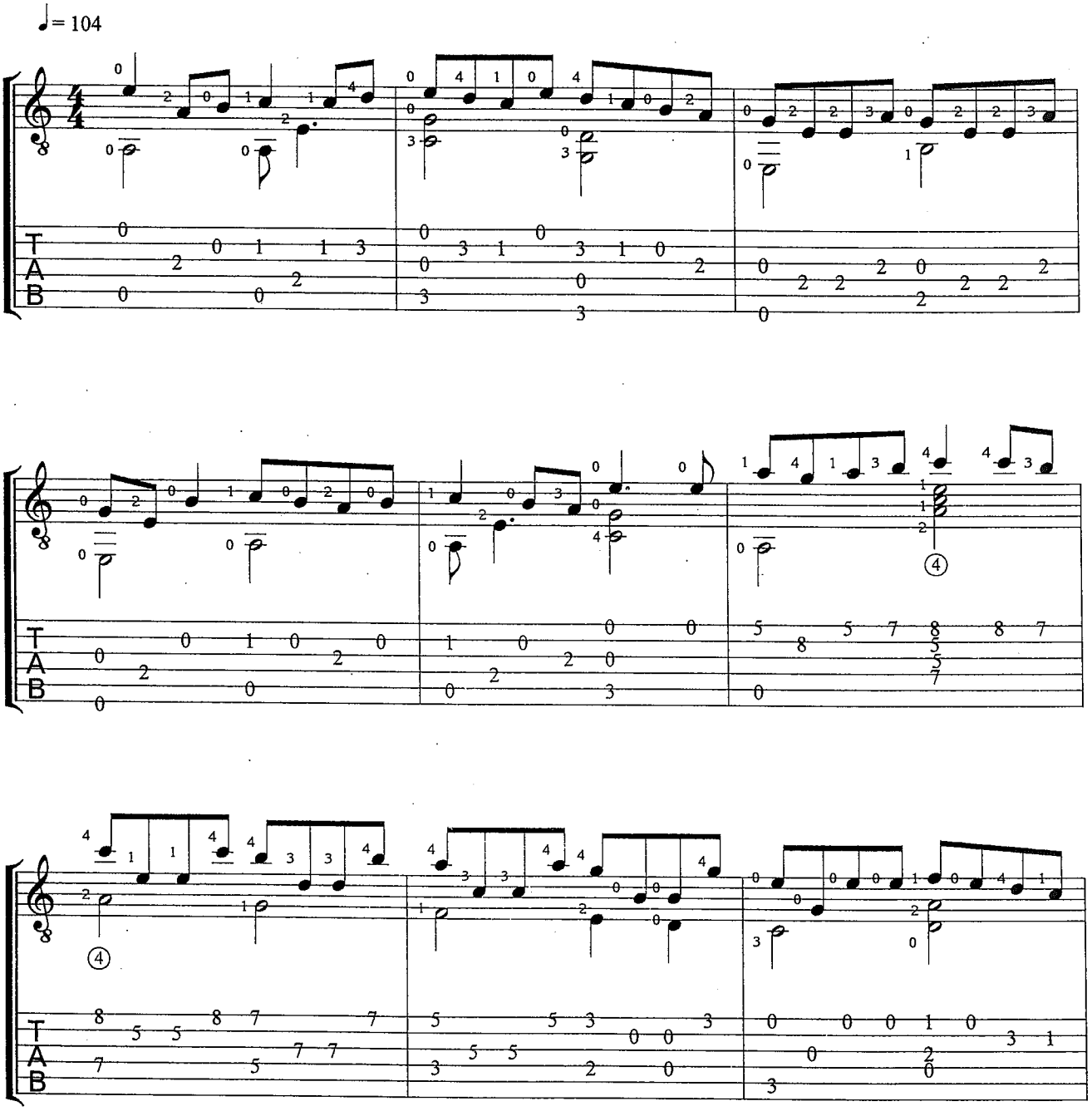
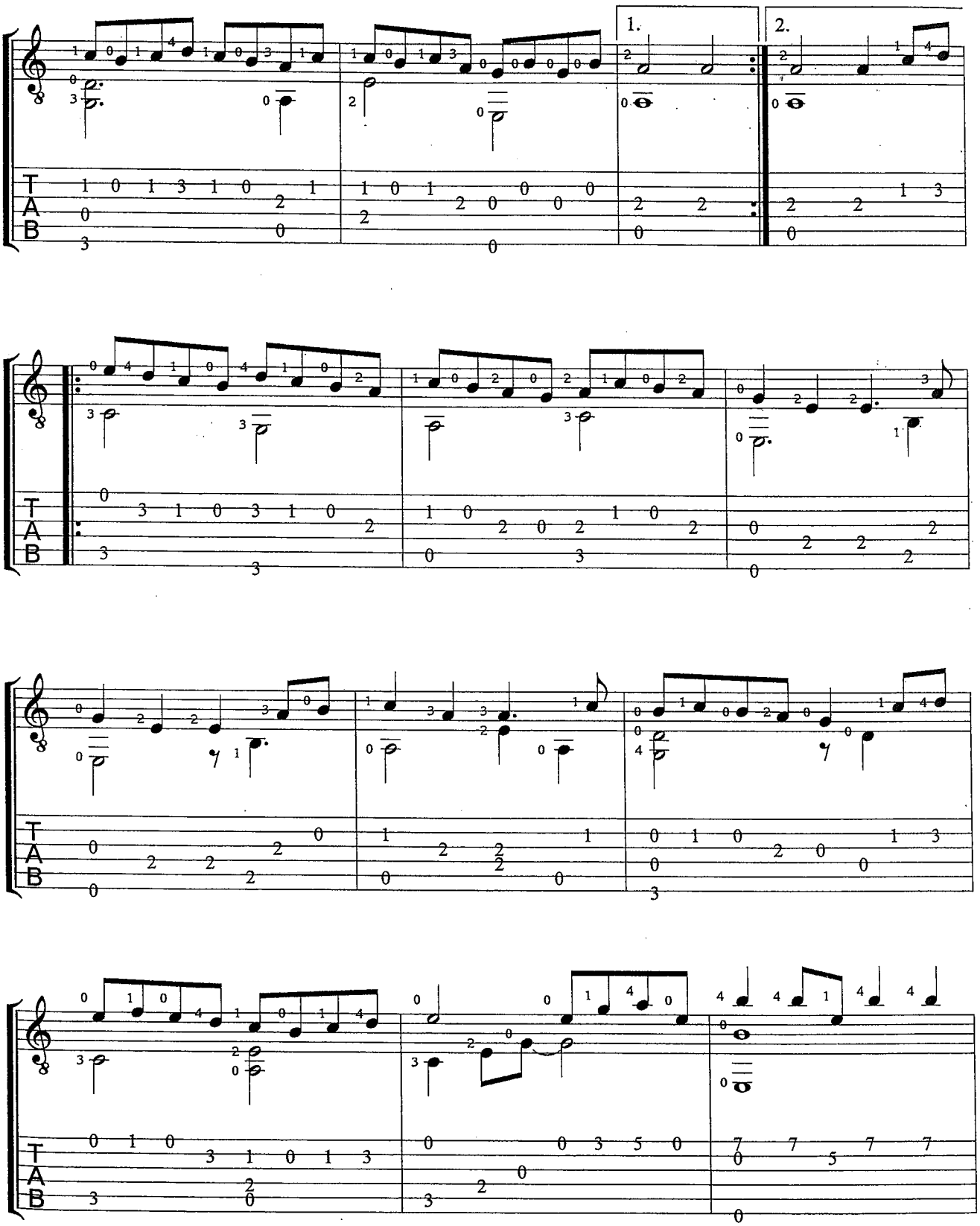




Mrs. O'Neil of Carlane

Turlough Carolan
Arranged by Allan Alexander

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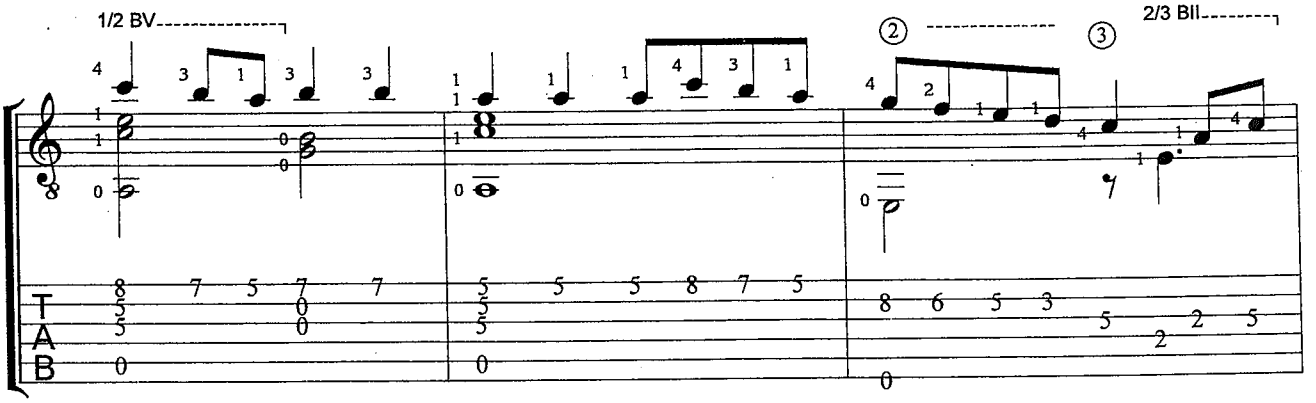
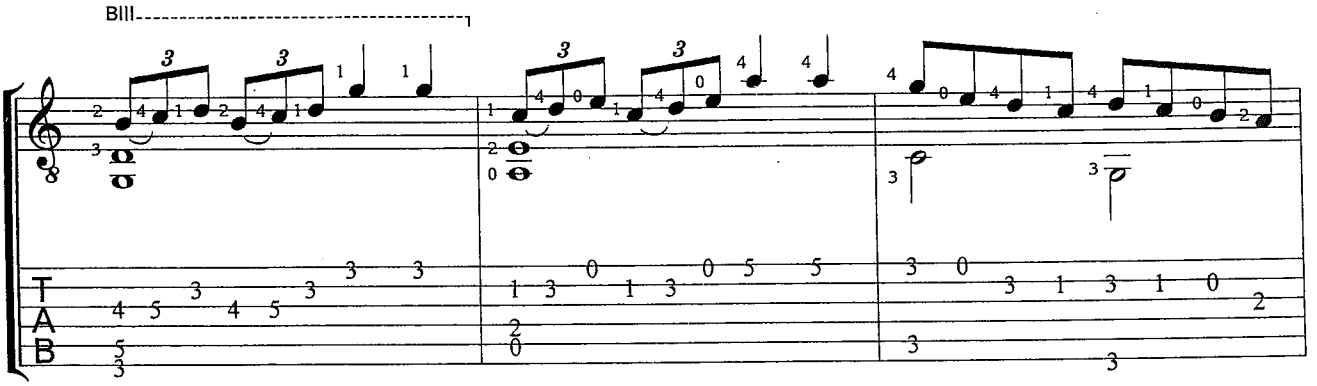
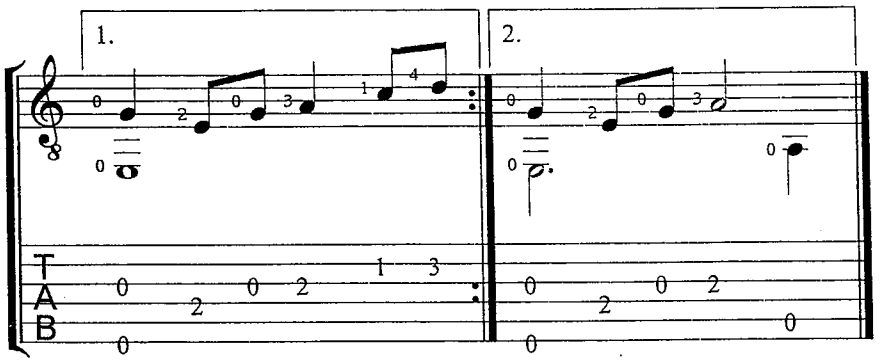
Mrs. O'Neil of Carlane

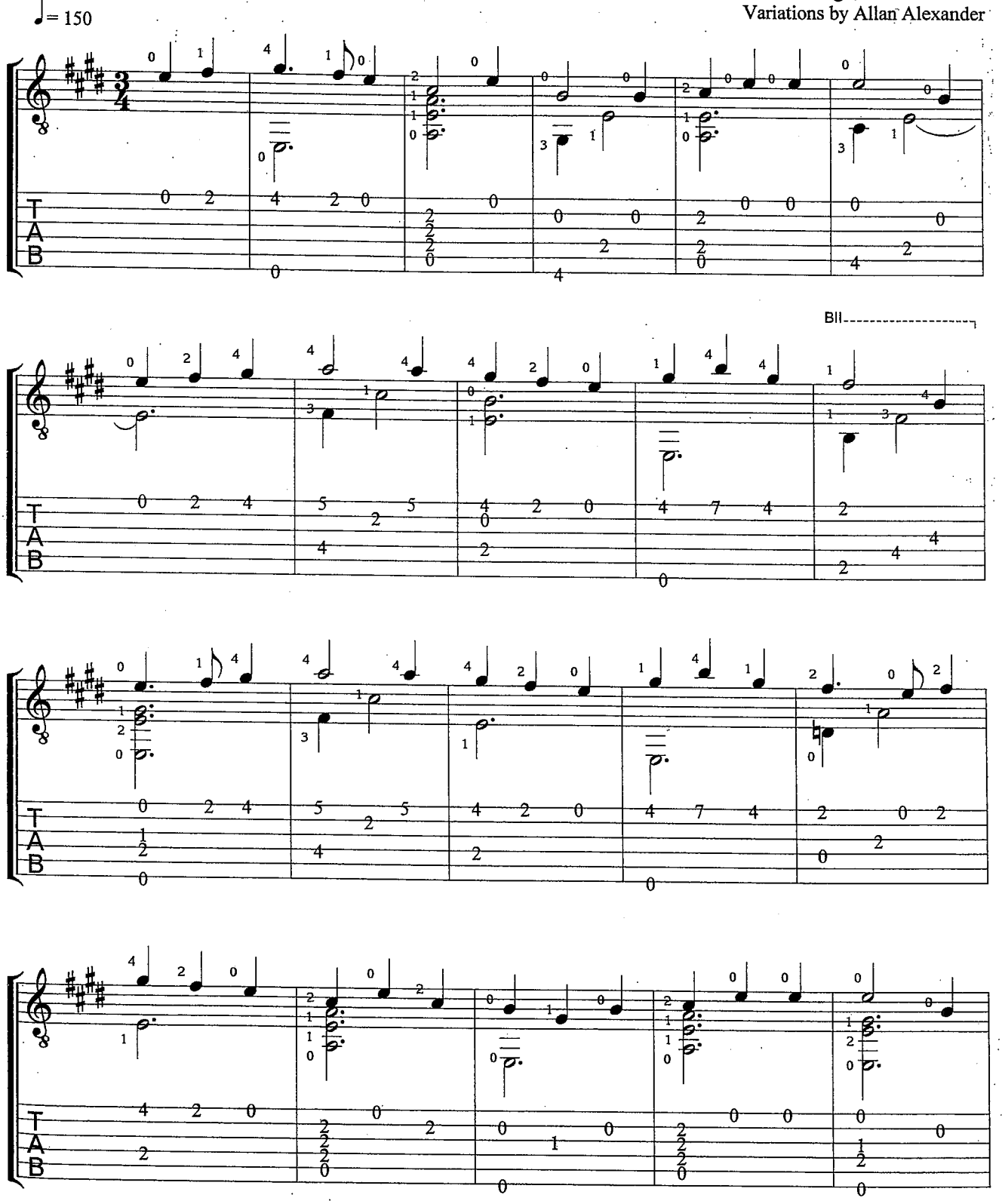




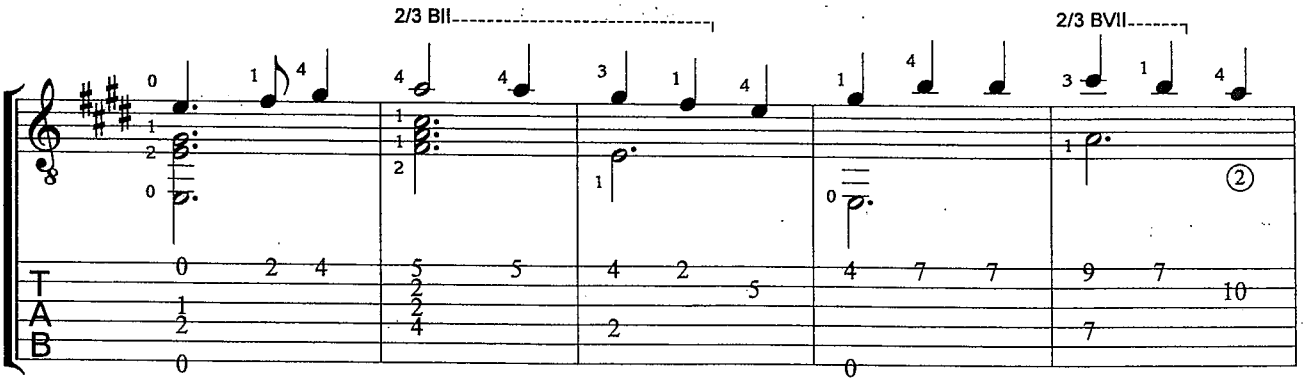


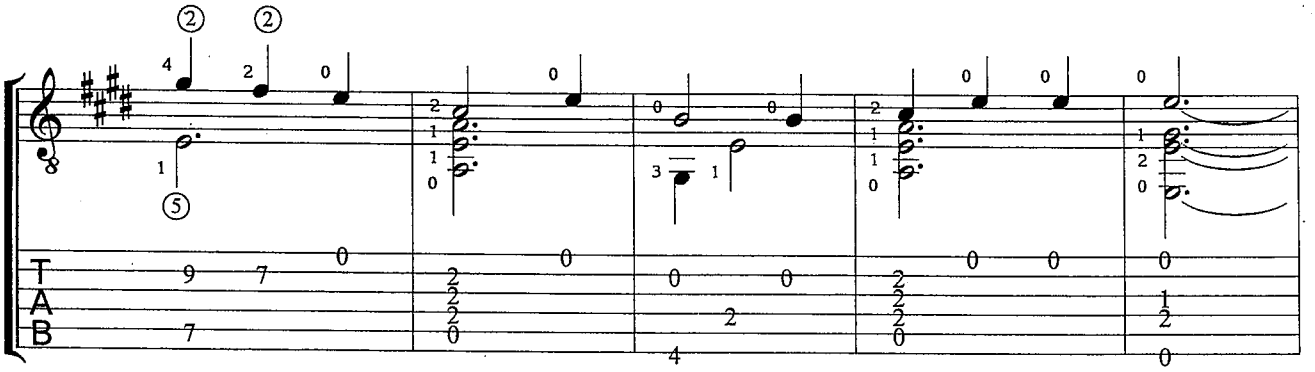
Blackthorn Stick

Arrangement and
Variations by Allan Alexander



Blackthorn Stick





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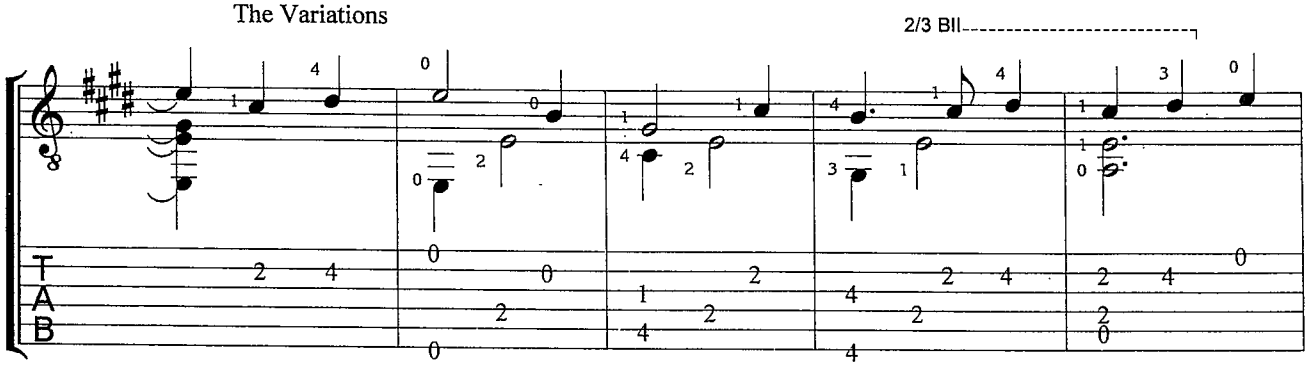

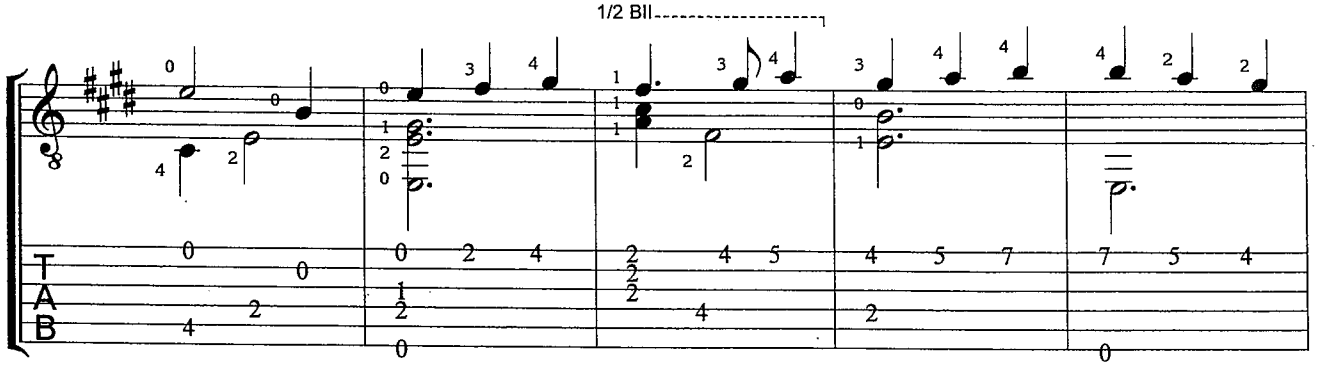

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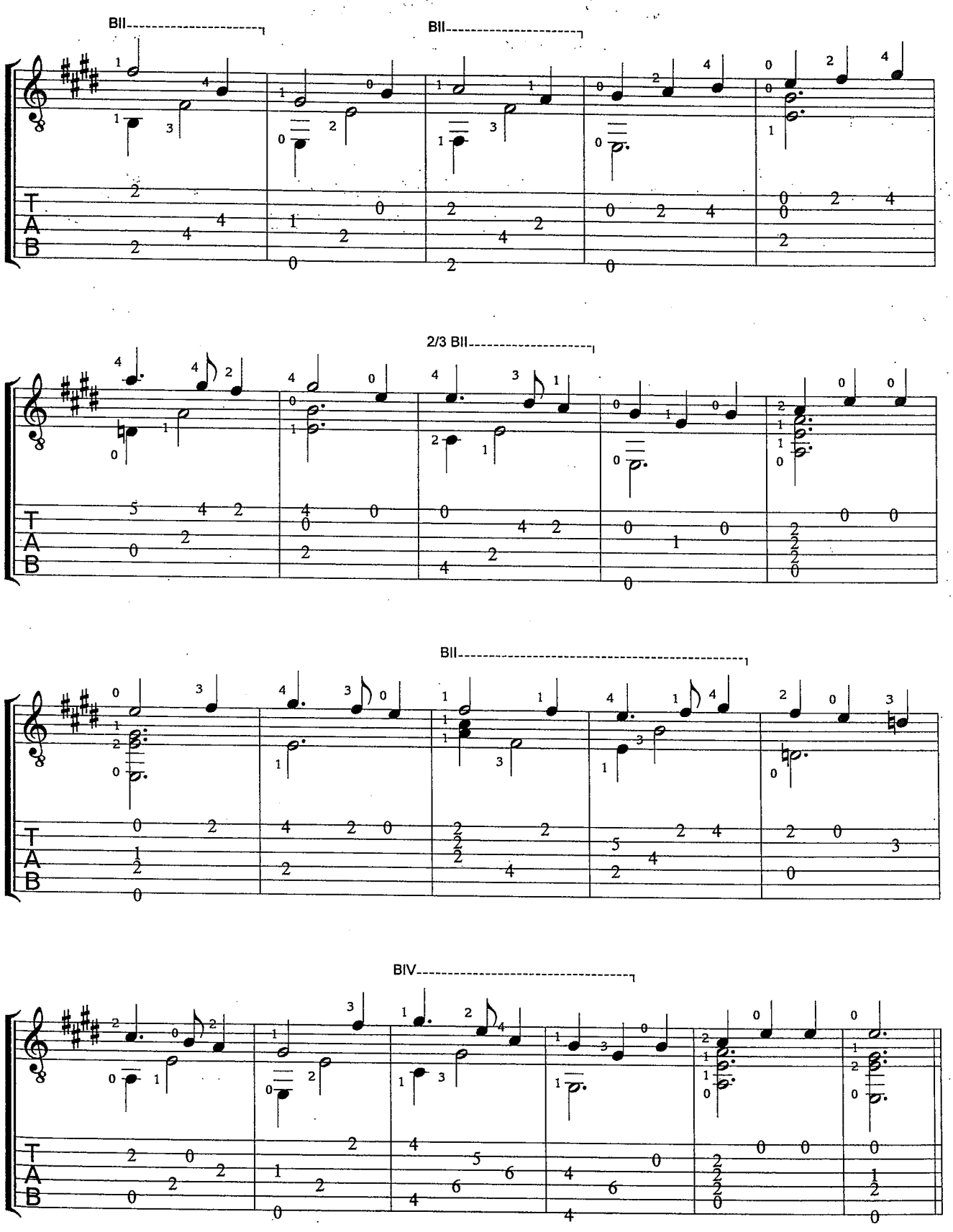
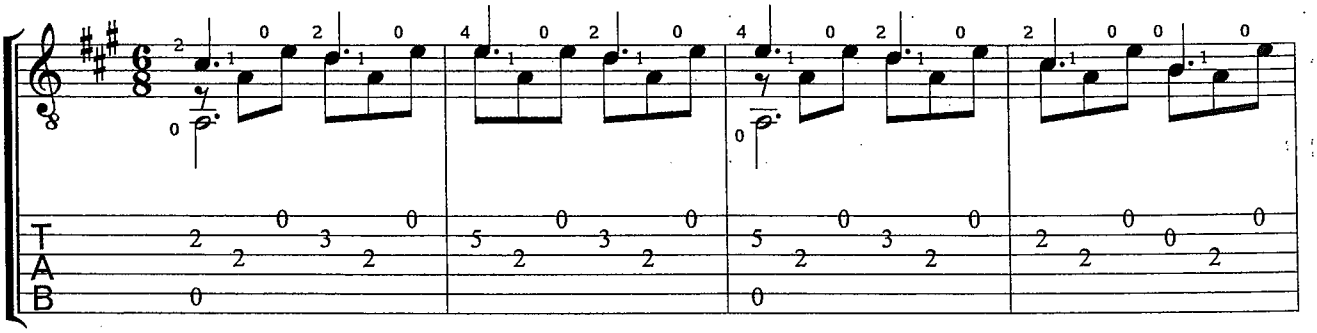


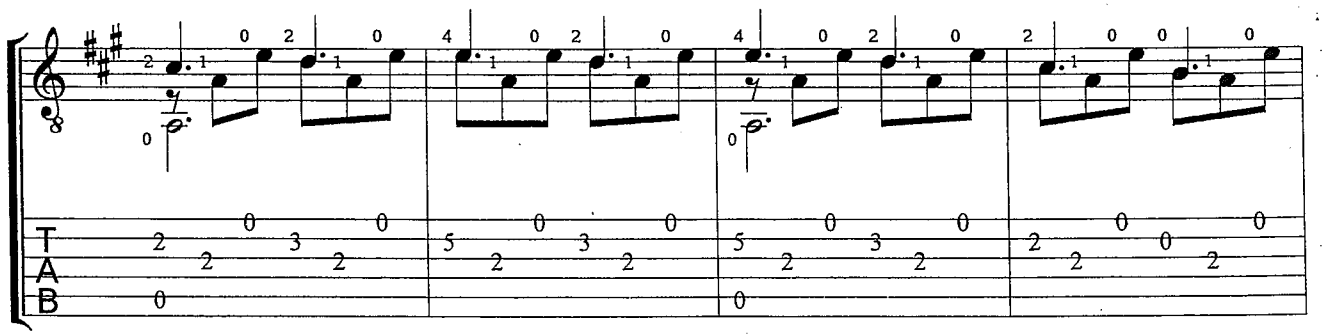
Carolan's Memories

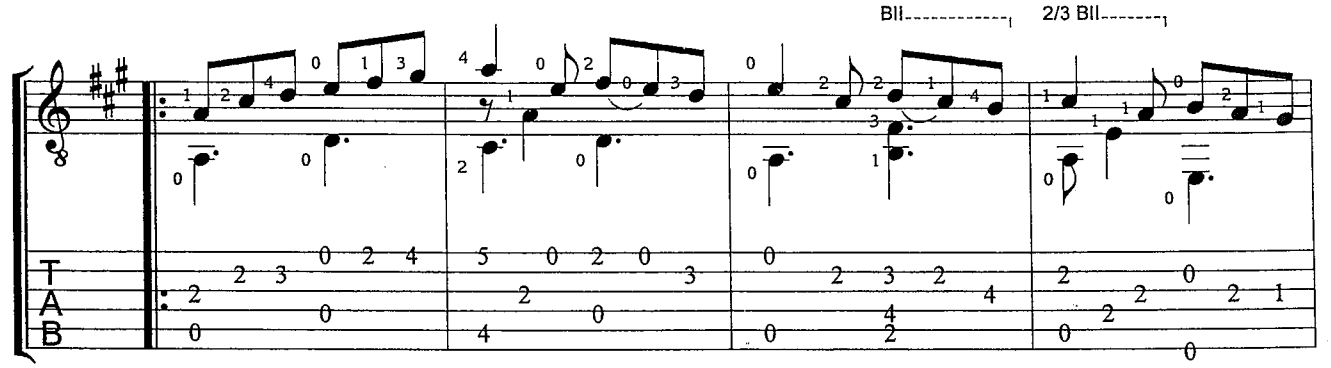
In Memory of Turlough Carolan

Allan Alexander

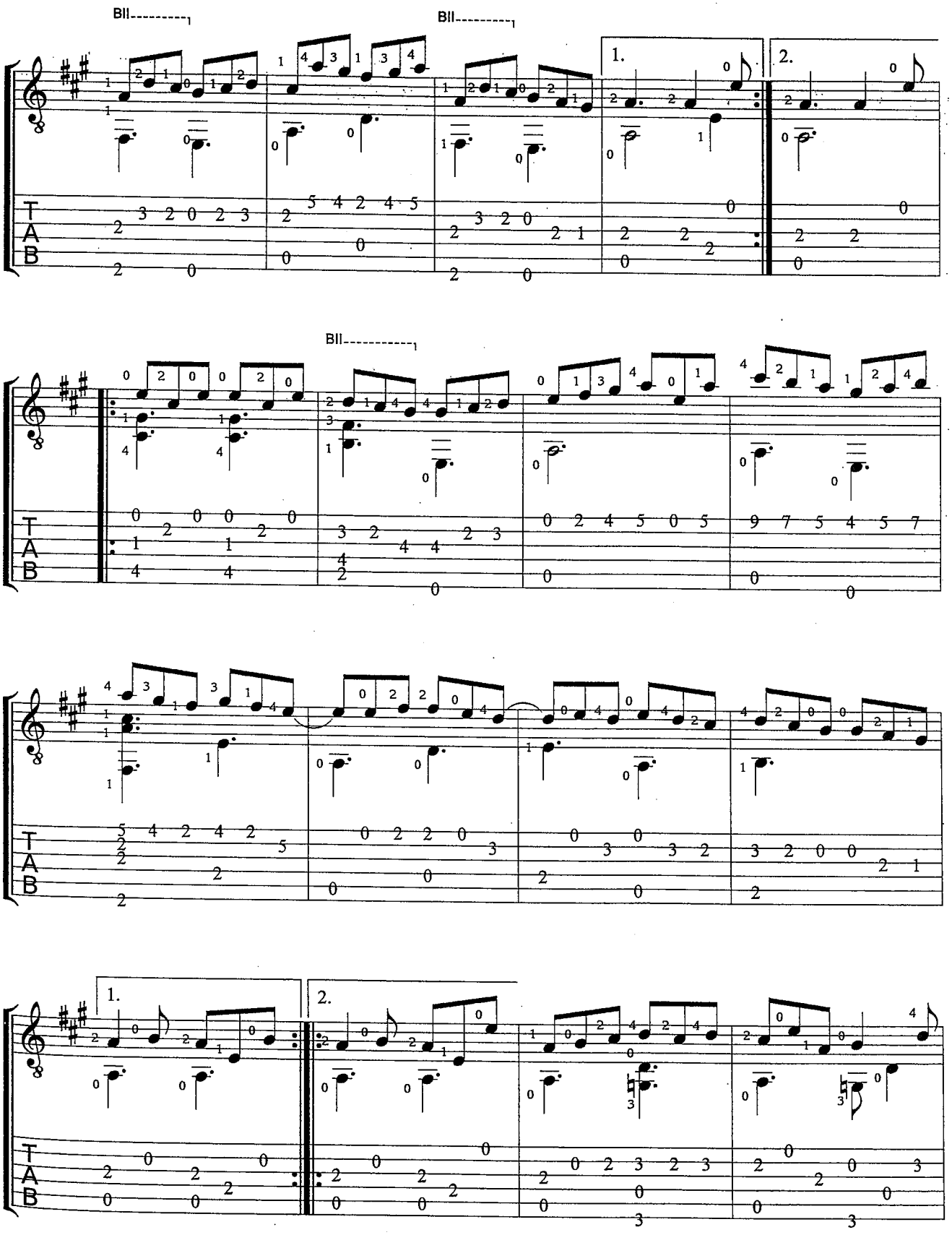
♩ = 141

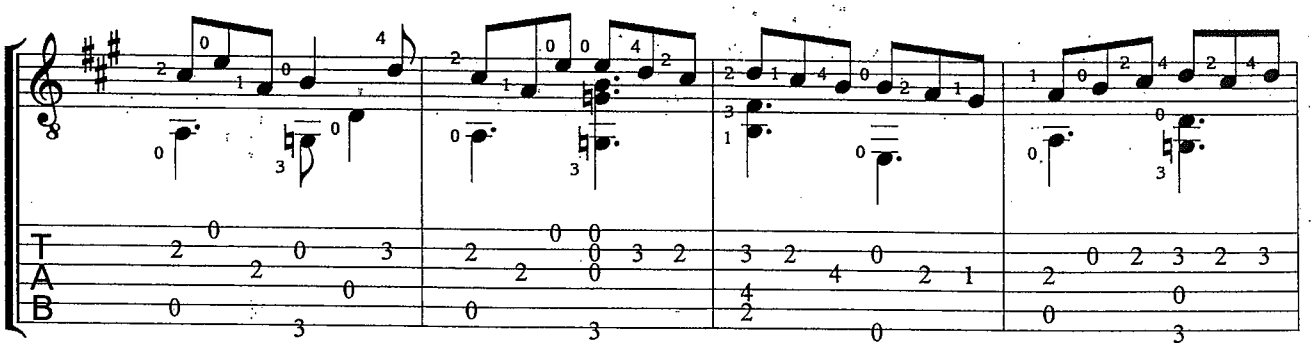


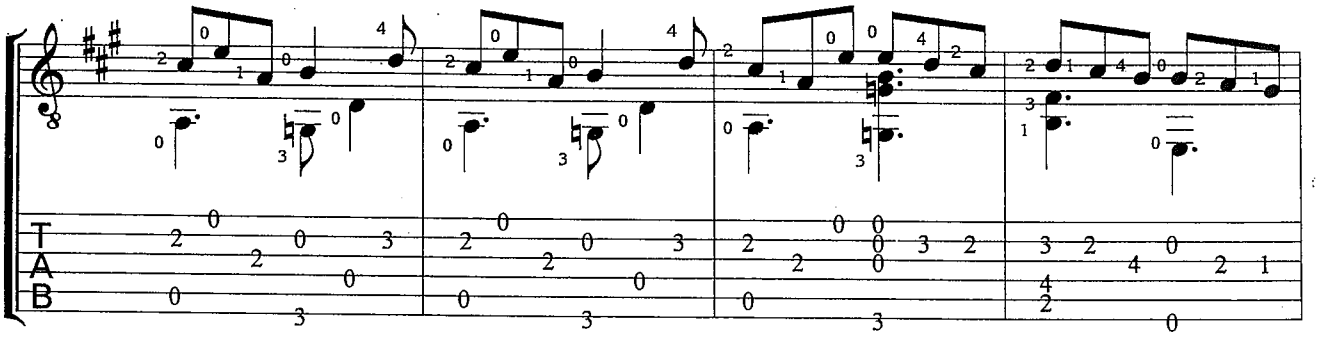


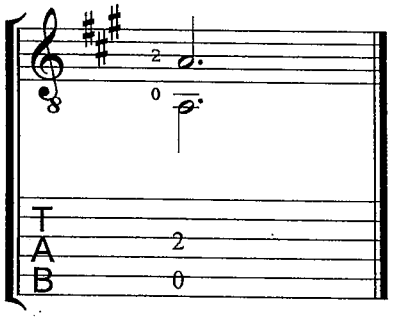


Carolan's Memories









Instruments used for Celtic Music

- *The lute*

The lute was originally an offspring of the Arabic instrument, the ud. It was the most popular instrument of the renaissance. In addition to the typical renaissance repertoire, there is a rich collection of 16th century music from Ireland and Scotland that has survived in lute tablature. Many of these pieces sound like traditional Irish and Scottish Music. Because it was tuned in fourths like the guitar, much of this music is available to the guitarist.

- *The guitar*

The guitar is used for solo, accompaniment and for rhythmic backing. It was first played in the renaissance and was used for both serious and popular music. Usually we see it with six strings tuned mostly in fourths, though a variety of tunings can be used. Steel string guitars are relatively new, coming into use at the end of the 1800's. The classical guitar though, (gut or nylon strings) has a long history and a magnificent repertoire. One of the most flexible of instruments, it can play it's own repertoire plus the music of the piano, harpsichord, harp or lute.

- *The fiddle*

The fiddle is the mainstay of most Scottish and Irish music. The instrument is exactly the same as a violin; fiddle is simply the term used in traditional music.

- *Flutes*

Flutes of one sort or another have been played in the Celtic countries for over a thousand years. The kind in use today is mainly the 'simple-system' flute with six holes and up to eight keys. This became popular in Ireland during the nineteenth century, when classical musicians were abandoning them for the new Boehm-system flute. Modern traditional flutes are usually copies of these early instruments, and almost always made of wood. Their cylindrical bore and wooden construction give a hollow, airy tone, softer than the classical flutes and much smoother than the tin whistle.

- *The penny or tin whistle*

The simplest and cheapest of traditional instruments, yet not so simple to master. The penny, or tin whistle is a simple metal tube, with six holes and a mouthpiece like a recorder, and a range of about two octaves. The cheapest ones cost about $5, though more highly-crafted ones run into the hundreds. Some of today's best players still play nothing but the cheaper brands, and make great music.

- *Bagpipes*

Several forms of bagpipe are used in Celtic music. The basic instrument has a bag of air, inflated by blowing through a blowpipe. Arm pressure on the bag sends air through a reed on a fingered chanter which makes the sound. The usual range is about two octaves. The Scottish highland pipes are the loudest, played standing, usually in pipe bands. The chanter has eight holes and plays a distinctive 'pipe scale'. There are two tenor drones, tuned an octave below the chanter and a bass drone a further octave down. The Irish Warpipes are similar, but have only one tenor drone. More popular in Ireland, and a lot quieter are the bellows-powered uilleann pipes. The chanter has a range of two octaves (in the key of D), often has keys, and in addition to drones (three or four), the uilleann pipes have regulators, extra pipes which can play certain chords. A 'practice set' is often used, which has a chanter but no drones or regulators. In Northumberland (England), the Northumbrian small pipes are similar, with a variable number of keys and up to five drones. They are unique in having being able to cut off air to the chanter; all other pipes have to play continuously. In Brittany they play the binou, which has seven-holed chanter and a single drone. In the Celtic regions of Spain, Asturias and Galicia, the local bagpipe is the gaita, similar to the Scottish pipes, with a single drone. The usual key is C, with a two and a half octave range.

- *Free reed instruments*

This family of instruments was developed in the early nineteenth century. They all work on the same principle: air is blown across a set of paired metal reeds, causing them to vibrate and produce a particular note. All but the harmonica are powered by bellows pulled in and out by the arms (hence 'squeeze box'). The two reeds of a pair are placed in opposite directions, so each is vibrated by either the press or the draw (in or out) of the bellows. 'Single-action' instruments have the pairs tuned a tone apart, so the one key will produce two adjacent notes depending on whether the player is pressing or drawing. 'Double-action' accordions have the reed pairs tuned in unison, so one key produces one note.

- *Accordions and "squeeze boxes"*

The melodeon is a simple single-action accordion. It has ten keys, giving a twenty-note diatonic range, usually pitched in C. It also has two bass keys, which give the chords of the tonic and dominant keys.
The button accordion has a second row of keys, tuned a semitone above the first set, giving a fully chromatic instrument. The most popular kind is tuned to B/C, though C/C#, C#/D and D/D# are also played. Traditional music is mostly diatonic, so the second set of keys is used mainly for ornamentation such as rolls. It also has extended bases.

The piano accordion has a piano keyboard on the left and an extensive bass keyboard on the right hand. It is a double-action instrument (same note on press and draw) and much larger than the button accordion. It is most popular in Scotland and is also widely used in central European folk music.
The concertina is a small, hexagonal accordion, which comes in both double-action chromatic ('English') and single-action diatonic ('Anglo' or 'German') forms. The most common form for traditional music is an Anglo, tuned to C and G, which has the keyboard spread out on both ends of the bellows (usually two rows of five keys on either end) with no bass. The stronghold of concertina playing has been in Co. Clare, where it is particularly common among women players.

- *Banjo*

The American five-string banjo came to Ireland in the nineteenth century, losing one string along the way. It became popular in ceili bands and in ballad groups such as "The Dubliners" and recent recordings by American based Seamus Egan and Mick Moloney are furthering it's spread. The banjo most used in Irish music is a 4-string tenor banjo, with the standard strings replaced by heavier ones, tuned to GDAE.

- *Mandolins, citterns, bouzoukis*

A wide variety of instruments come under the general umbrella of the mandolin family. These have a rounded back and usually four pairs of strings (courses) tuned in unison. The mandolin is usually tuned like a fiddle. Larger versions include the mandola (tuned a fifth below) and the mandocello (an octave below). The mandocello is also known as the octave mandolin and is similar to what is known as the Irish bouzouki - a much modified version of the Greek bouzouki, introduced to Irish music by Johnny Moynihan, in his Sweeney's men days in the late sixties, and now almost a standard in Irish groups. Bouzouki tuning is usually GDAD or GDAE. There are several other variants, including the five course citterns developed by Stefan Sobell (with the name borrowed from a medieval family of instruments) and various hybrids such as Andy Irvine's 'bizarre' (bouzouki-guitar).

- *Harp*

There have been harping traditions in the Celtic countries of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Brittany for hundreds of years and in Ireland at least it was closely tied to the old aristocracy and 'high' culture. Most Celtic harps are small, and can be played on the knee. The Scottish harp is called a clarsach, and the Welsh harp is the triple-harp, a form once popular in art music until superseded by the pedal harp. The triple has three rows of strings, tuned a semitone apart to give a chromatic scale. Most modern players use nylon or gut strings, but some have gone back to the original wire-strung harp, with it's bell-like sound. This is a kind of zither, a trapezoidal board with pairs of strings stretched over it, played with light hammers. It is common to many folk traditions. Much of its association with Celtic music seems to be recent and comes from the American folk tradition, though it also arrived in Scotland and Ireland in the eighteenth century, from England (as best I can make out) and Derek Bell of the "Chieftains" plays a version that he calls a tiompan. The sound is similar to that of the harp.

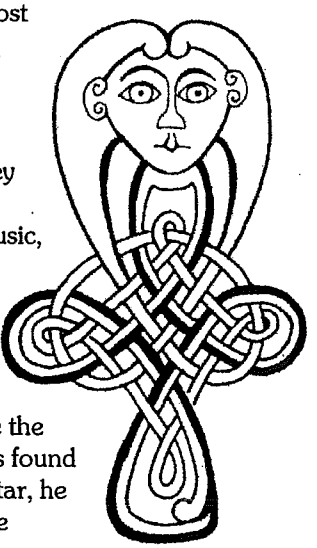
- *Bodhrán*

This is a goatskin drum used widely in Irish music and also becoming popular in other Celtic areas.

- *Other percussion*

The bagpipes used in Scottish military music are usually accompanied by side and snare drums. In Northern Ireland, the gigantic Lambeg drums are a symbol of the Orange (unionist) musical tradition. Also in Ireland, bones (usually short wooden sticks or cow rib bones, clicked against each other, a little like castanets) and spoons are sometimes used to provide accompaniment, though in many groups the rhythmic line is taken over by bouzouki and other fretted instruments.

Celtic Music for Guitar by Allan Alexander contains 31 pieces transcribed for guitar, most of them originating from Ireland and Scotland. The book also includes three charming original pieces written in the Celtic style by Allan. The music is presented in both music notation and guitar tablature for people who do not read music.



Play the beautiful haunting melodies of the Irish Harper O'Carolan, take a musical journey with dances that were written more than 400 years ago and experience Celtic traditional music that is the mainstay of modern players. If you are learning and looking for great music, this is one book that you will not be able to put down. If you are a performer looking for high quality material, these great pieces, expertly arranged, will become part of your permanent repertoire.

The CD, played by Allan Alexander, gives the musician the advantage of being able to hear how these pieces should be played by an expert in this genre of music and will make the learning process easier. Many of these pieces were written for the lute; however Allan has found that they work very well on the guitar. Being an accomplished player of both lute and guitar, he has the knowledge to make accurate, musical transcriptions. Other pieces in this book are traditional tunes that have been arranged specifically for guitar. Many of the selections have variations on the original melodies. This adds another dimension to the music and enhances the performance. Allan is a professional performer and these selections are part of Allan's permanent repertoire.

Joseph Thompson, Classical guitarist and professional musician for 30 years with two guitar books published with Mel Bay says "As a professional classical guitarist, I find that Allan's music has achieved a perfect balance between accessibility and artistic integrity. It is these two elements which allow the performer a certain ease of execution coupled with the great pleasure of playing finely crafted music. Do yourself and your audience a favor. Put Allan Alexander's music in your repertoire."

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Also available:

- Celtic Music for Guitar Vol II- Allan Alexander
- Renaissance Music for Guitar Vol I & II - Allan Alexander
- Christmas Music for Guitar - Allan Alexander
- Celtic Music for Flute & Guitar - Allan Alexander & Jessica Walsh
- Renaissance Music for Flute & Guitar - Allan Alexander & Jessica Walsh
- World Music for Flute & Guitar - Allan Alexander & Jessica Walsh
- Celtic Music for Flute - Jessica Walsh
- The Celtic Piano Collection - Allan Alexander, recorded by Andrew Gordon.

Each book is available with an optional CD. The music is presented in both music notation and guitar tablature. The CD's are also available separately from ADG Records.

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