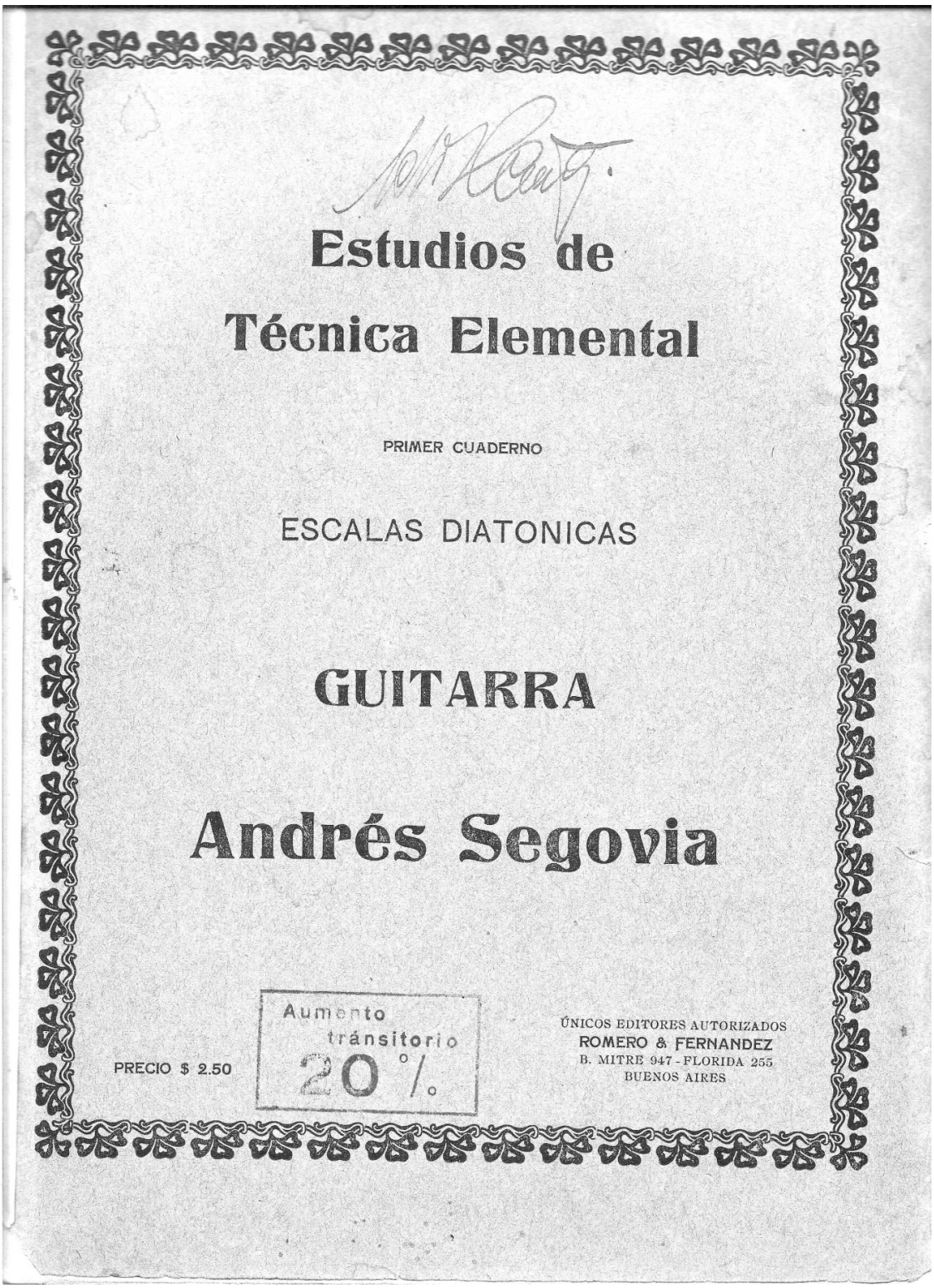
First Edition of the “Segovia Scales,” as

Estudios de Técnica Elemental (Buenos Aires, pre-1928[?])



Estudios de Técnica Elemental

PRIMER CUADERNO

ESCALAS DIATONICAS

GUITARRA

Andrés Segovia

PRECIO $ 2.50

Aumento tránsitorio 20 %

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An English translation of Andrés Segovia's introduction to his *Estudios de Técnica Elemental, Primer Cuaderno: Escalas Diatónicas para la Guitarra* (Buenos Aires: Romero y Fernández, [pre-1928]), by Charles Postlewate, Marisa Herrera Postlewate, and Alfredo Escande.

The thoughtful musician who reviews the history of the guitar from its beginnings would be surprised by the lack of a reasonable system of studies and exercises in a connected sequence, through which the student may progress from the very beginning to the highest level of the instrument. This lack of method could be blamed, perhaps, on the two or three names in which the guitar is summarized in the best of its spirit—Sor, Aguado and Tárrega. If they were to be forgiven, especially Sor and Tárrega, it would be because of an admirable reason: having devotedly invested their hours in creating the only valued works that the guitar possesses today. Aguado was concerned with the teaching of a permanent method, an effort that was not a total waste. His didactic work is of greater value than his diminished output as a composer, although his *School of the Guitar* is an inorganic set of studies without a progressive logic. It is certainly valid for those who have passed the elementary stages and have achieved an advanced level of playing. But, the beginning student will find himself helpless with this book; the beautiful lessons that comprise a part of this method will sound good to the student, but are useless in training his fingers; and he will need a Doctorate for the other lessons.

Of the three mentioned names, only Tárrega —who admirably transformed the guitar into a sensitive instrument—could have best written a work in which he would have effectively brought together the breadth of his talent and the knowledge of his experience. With such a book he could have advised with the same advantage and discretion as he advised during his lifetime; and, he could have explicitly stated his intentions as a teacher in an indisputable testimony that would have proven to be a fertile service for the distant future of the guitar while, of equal importance today, he could have dispelled the many false followers who incompetently teach in his name.

We therefore see that the technique of our beautiful instrument has not yet had its definite structure and believe that it is up to us to found it. No one has wanted to leave traces of his first steps on the guitar, as if he feared to reveal to the student the mystery of his own apprenticeship, or as if he had never studied at all. We, on the other hand, are extraordinarily pleased to establish this structure, in order to help, by using examples of the problems that we have overcome, with the complete development of the artistic possibilities of the student.

In order to obtain a firm technique on the guitar, one should not abandon the patient exercise of scales. Practicing scales two hours a day will correct poor hand positions, gradually increase the strength of the fingers and prepare their joints for later studies of speed. Thanks to the independence and flexibility gained by the fingers, one can quickly gain a quality that is difficult to possess later: a physically beautiful tone; and I say "physically" because the tone and its infinite shadings are not the result of stubborn determination, but rather the innate excellence of the spirit.

To get the most from the following exercises, play them strong and slowly at first and then lightly and faster. One hour of scales will be of more benefit than many other strenuous, and frequently unproductive, exercises, and will succeed in solving a greater number of technical problems in less time.

ANDRÉS SEGOVIA

NOTE: Other exercise books will appear successively with progressive studies. The next will consist of 20 different formulas of simple and double arpeggios.

Ha de sorprender al músico juicioso que revise desde sus comienzos la historia de la guitarra, la falta de un sistema razonable de estudios y ejercicios de tal manera ligados entre si, que pueda el alumno ascender por ellos desde las primeras letras al dominio superior del instrumento. De ésta falta de método podria tal vez culparse á los dos ó tres nombres en que la guitarra ha resúmido lo mejor de su espiritu — Sors, Aguado y Tarrega — si no los excusara una razón admirable: la de haber invertido religiosamente sus horas en dotarla de las únicas obras estimables que hoy posee. Sobre todo Sors y Tarrega. En Aguado existe la preocupación de la enseñanza de un modo permanente y no del todo baldío. Su obra didactica es superior á su menguada tarea de compositor, á pesar de que su "Escuela de la guitarra" es un conjunto inorgánico de estudios sin lógica progresiva, pero válidos, desde luego, para quien ha pasado de las primeras nociones y va llegando á las últimas. El estudiante de los primeros cursos se encuentra alli desamparado; las bellas lecciones inútiles que componen una parte de ese método adulan el oido del alumno sin adiestrar sus dedos y para las otras necesita previamente la categoria de doctor.

De los tres nombres citados, únicamente Tarrega — el admirable sensibilizador de la guitarra — pudo haber dejado escritas mejor que nadie, algunas páginas en que se hubieran sintetizado eficazmente la amplitud de su talento y la sabiduria de su experiencia. Desde el libro hubiera aconsejado con tanto provecho y discreción como aconsejó durante su vida, y explicita su voluntad de maestro en un testimonio inmutable habria prestado un servicio fecundo al remoto porvenir de la guitarra y otro de igual importancia en nuestros dias: la excomunión de cuantos falsos continuadores, enseñan torpemente en su nombre.

Vemos pues que la técnica de nuestro bello instrumento no ha tenido aún su arquitectura definitiva y creemos que á nosotros corresponde fundarla. Nadie ha querido dejar huella de sus primeros pasos en la guitarra, como si temieran entregar al alumno el misterio de su aprendizage ó como si jamas hubieran estudiado. A nosotros en cambio nos complace extraordinariamente fijarlas para ayudar, con ejemplos de propios esfuerzos vencidos, al completo desenvolvimiento de las posibilidades artisticas del alumno.

Para conseguir una tecnica firme en la guitarra no debe abandonarse el paciente ejercicio de las escalas. Trabajandolas dos horas al dia, se irá corrijiendo la mala posición de las manos, graduando la fuerza de los dedos y preparando las articulaciones para posteriores estudios de velocidad. Gracias á la independencia y elasticidad que proporcionan á los dedos, puede adquirirse tempranamente una cualidad muy dificil de poseer mas tarde: la belleza fisica del sonido; y digo fisica porque la sonoridad y sus matices infinitos no son el resultado de tercos propositos de voluntad, sino de innatas excelencias del espiritu.

Para que los ejercicios que siguen sean provechosos, pulsense lenta y vigorosamente primero y mas suave y ligeramente despues. En una hora de escalas se condensan otras muchas de penosos ejercicios con frecuencia esteriles, y se logra resolver en menos tiempo mayor número de problemas técnicos.

ANDRES SEGOVIA

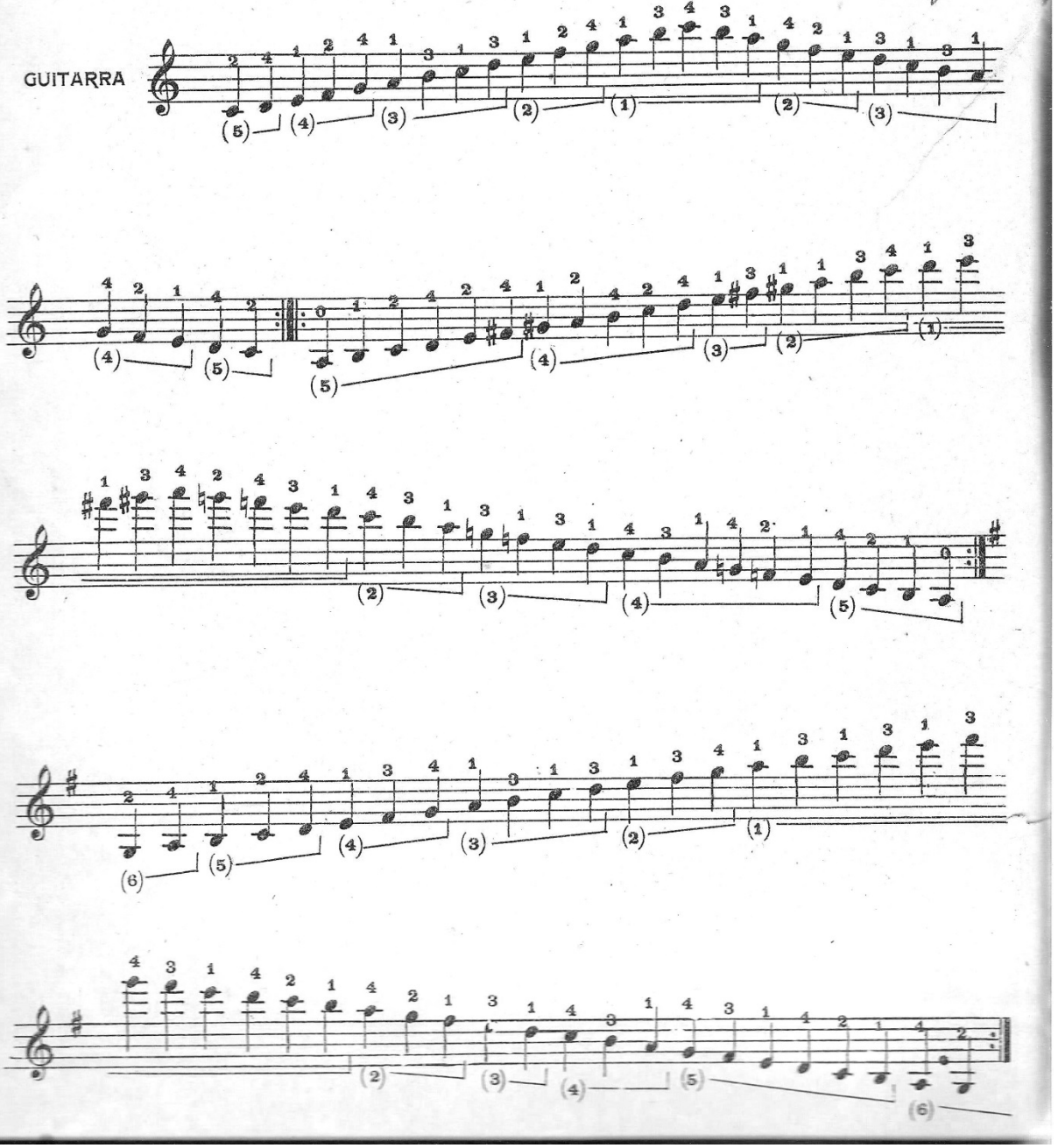
NOTA: Apareceran sucesivamente otros cuadernos con estudios progresivos para ambas manos. El pròximo constara de 20 fórmulas distintas de arpegios sencillos y dobles.

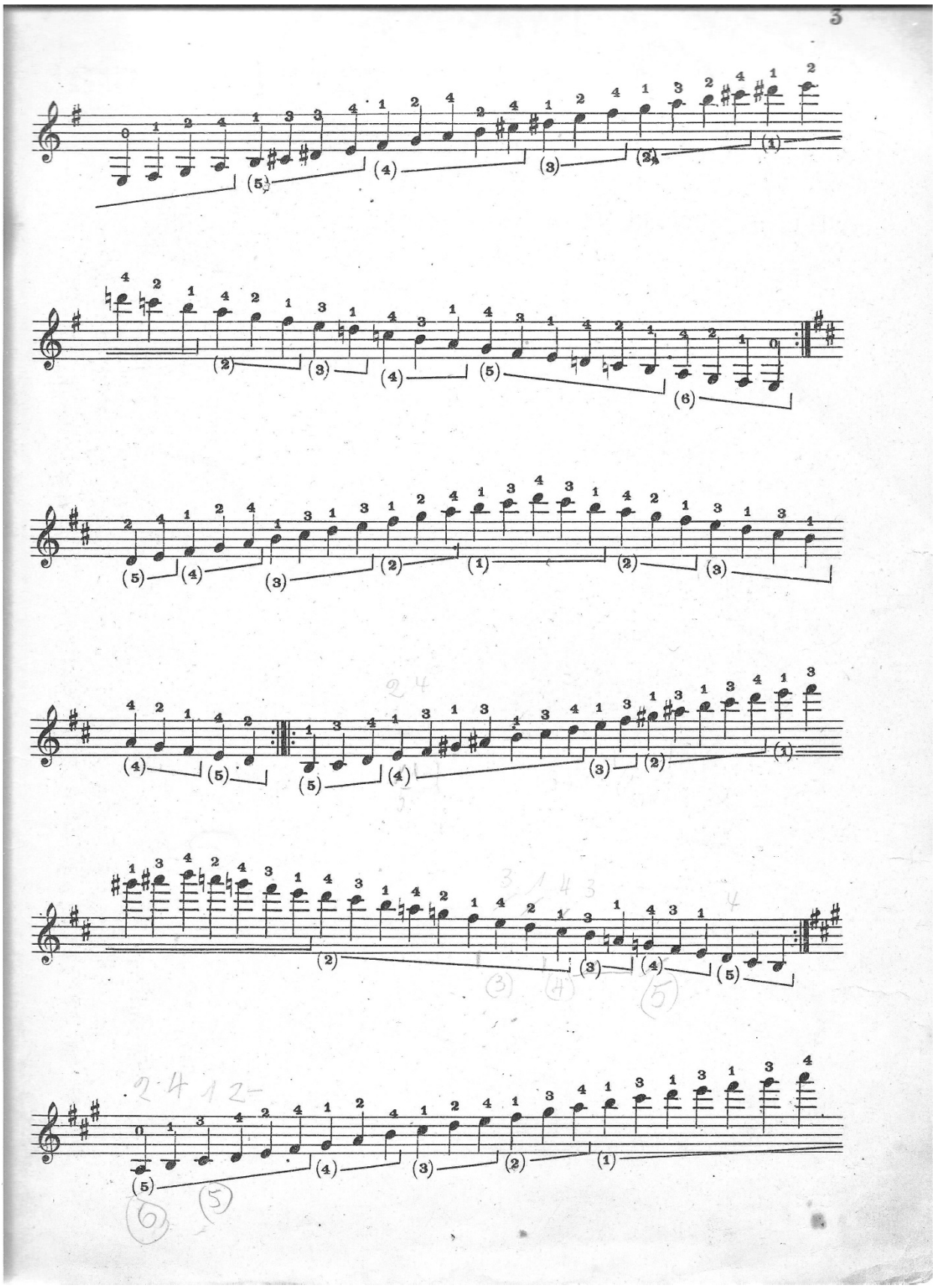
Estudios de Tecnica Elemental

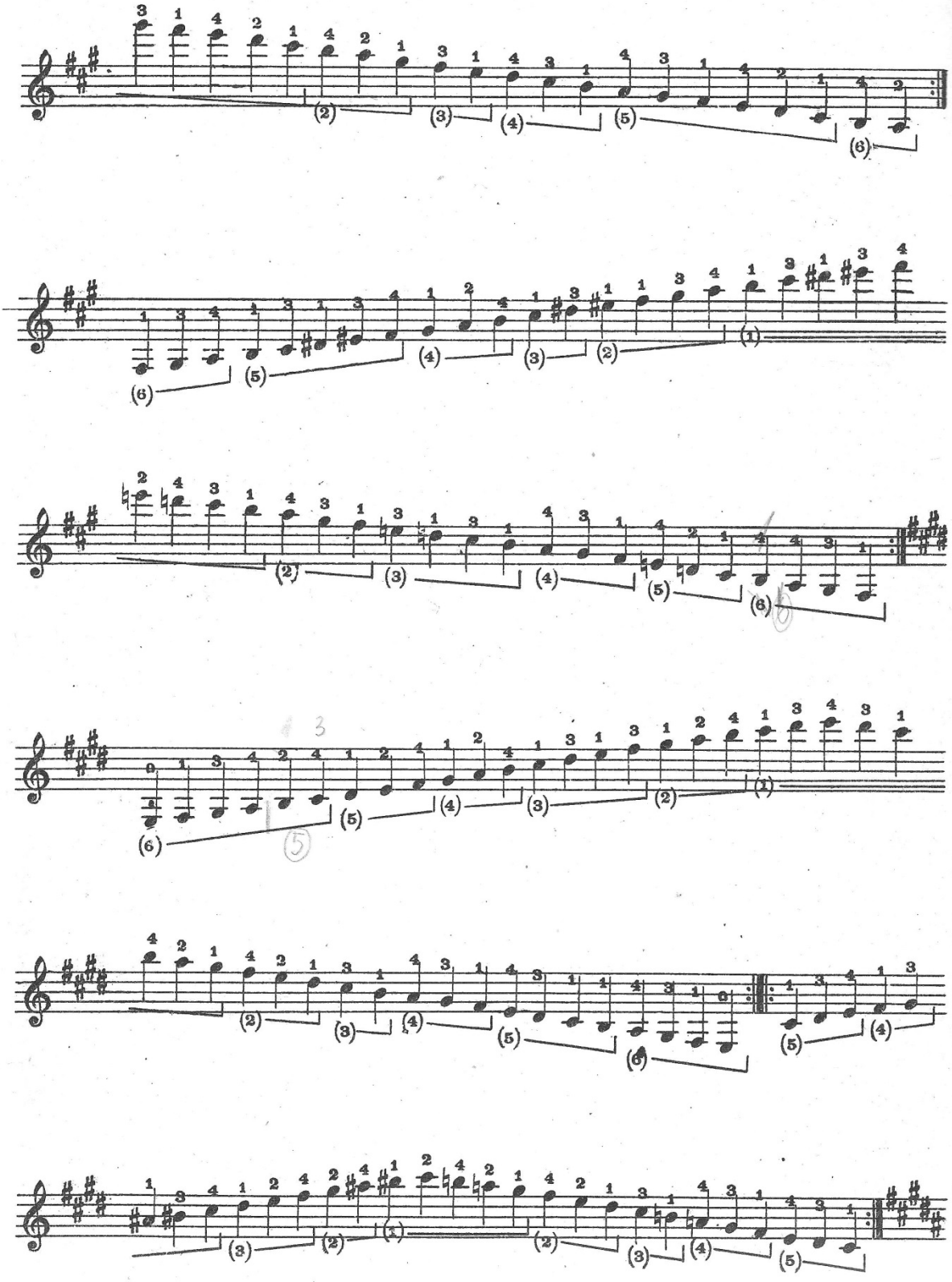
ESCALAS DIATONICAS

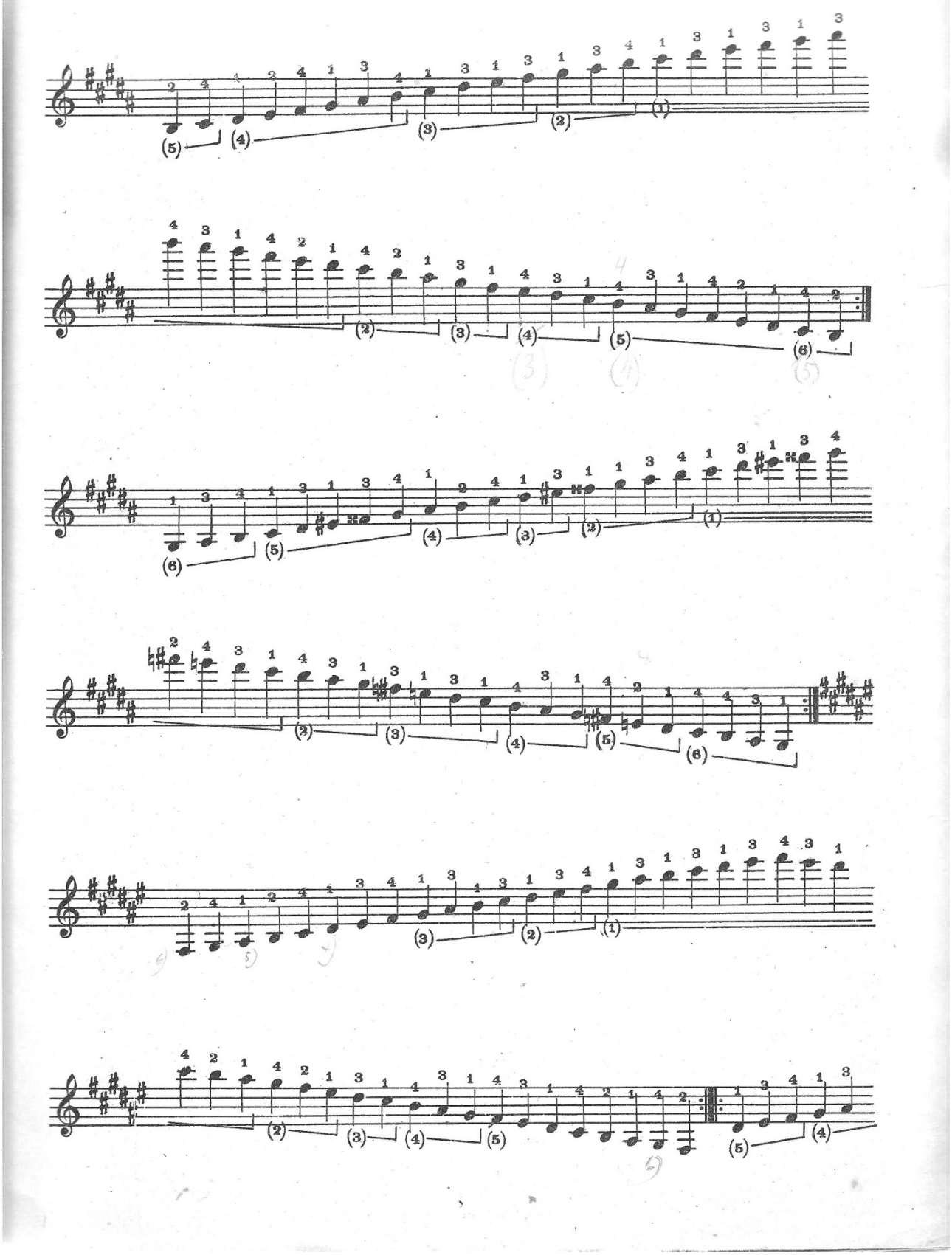
Primer Cuaderno

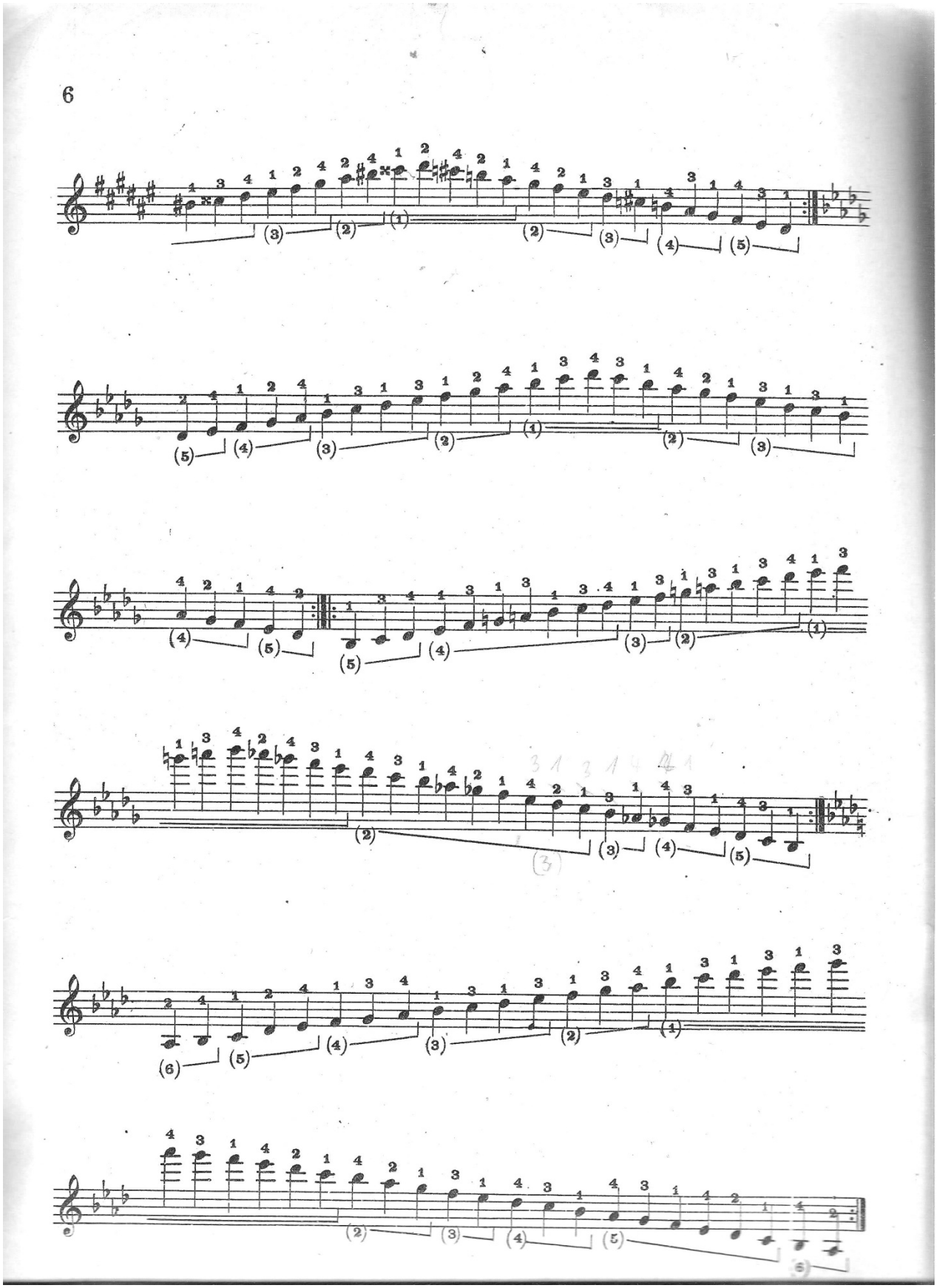
ANDRES SEGOVIA

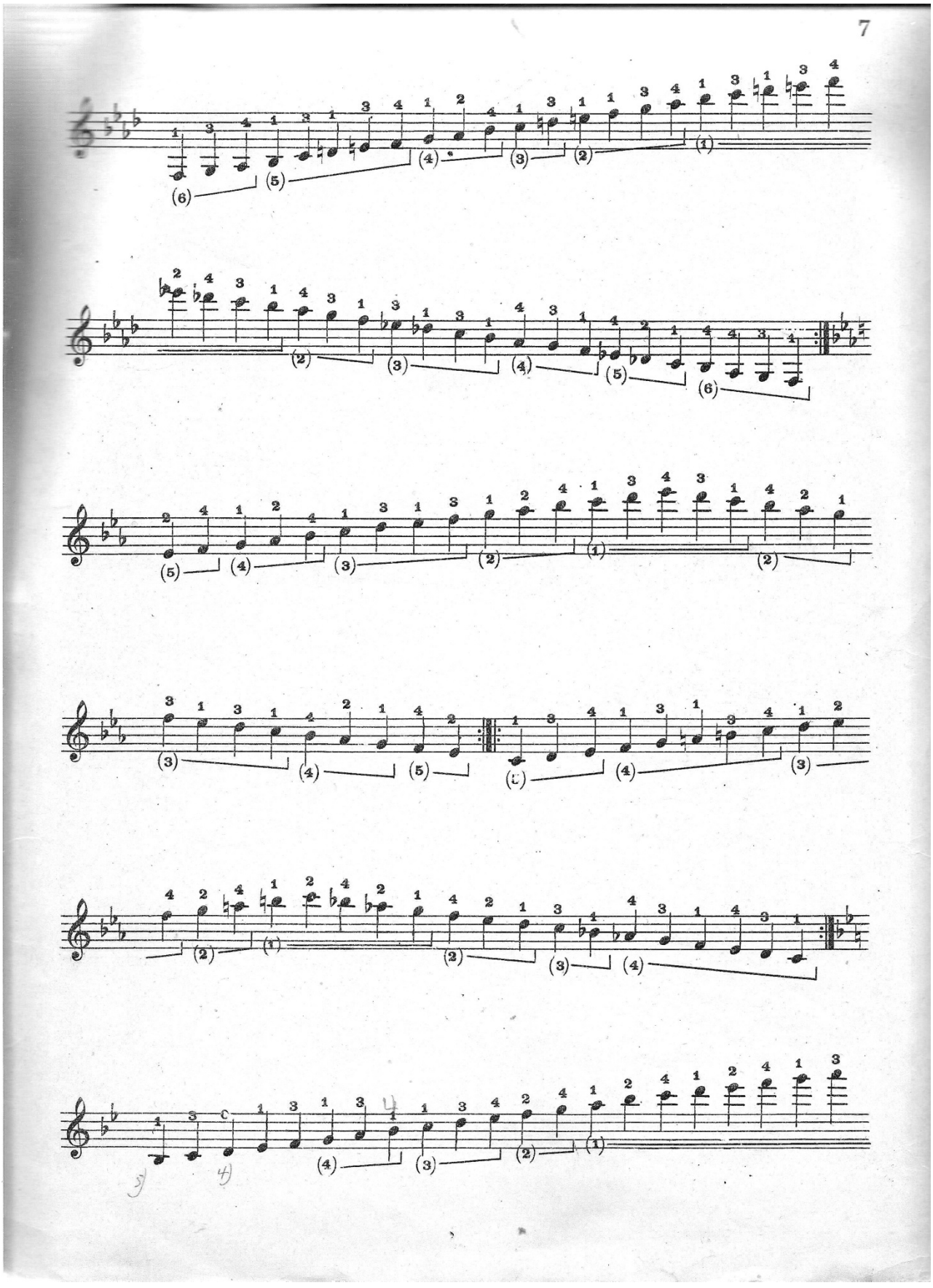


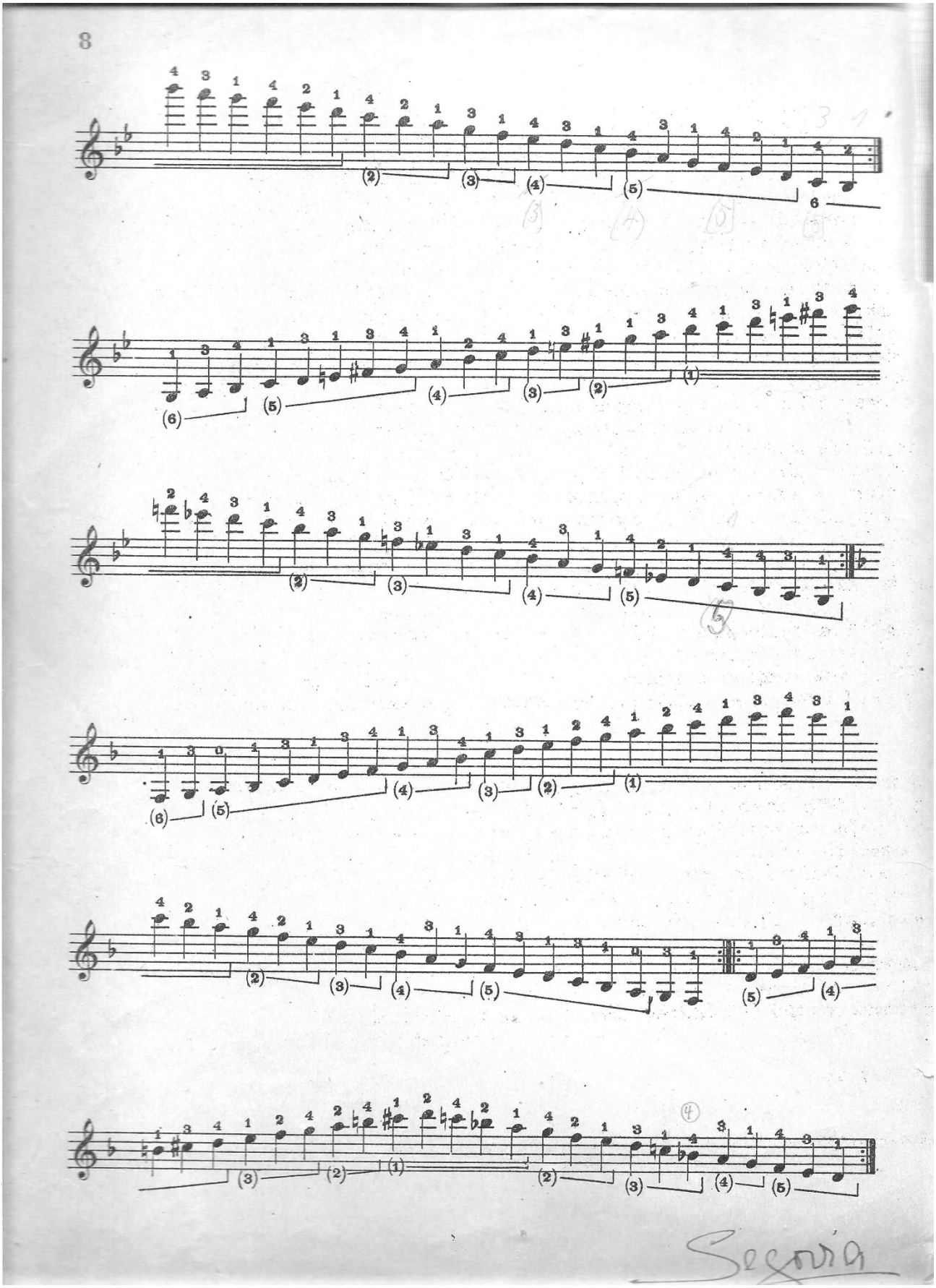








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Segovia