FRANCISCO TÁRREGA

Contents

Introduction 3

Francisco Tárrega. 3

A Note from the Publisher. 4

Tremolo 5

Arpeggios to Tremolo: Voilá! 6

The Thumb 9

Thumb + Fingers = an Orchestra!. 11

Recuerdos de la Alhambra Open-String Version 12

A Strong Suggestion 16

The Left Hand: Shifting 16

Recuerdos de la Alhambra Chord Version 18

Recuerdos de la Alhambra 20

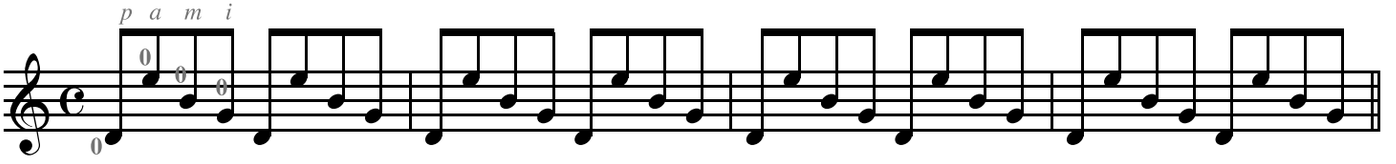
Afterthoughts 24

Arpeggios to Tremolo: Voilá!

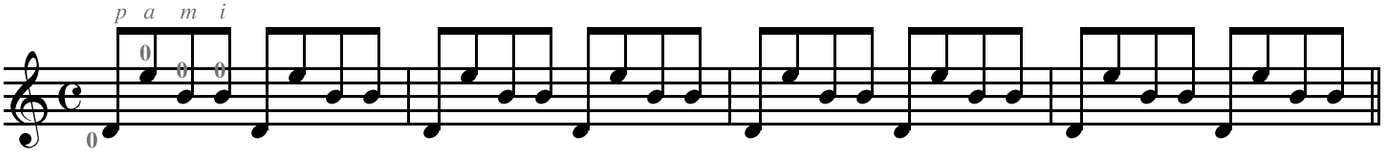
Start by practicing these arpeggio exercises. Plant each finger indiviually (*sequential planting*) and aim for getting each note to sound even both in volume and tone. Yes, that includes your thumb! You'll find later on that the thumb is the "conductor" and the fingers follow. I suggest repeating the exercise below a few times, making that one "set." Repeat the set several times before going on the to the next group of exercises. While working with these, feel the similarity between the arpeggio and the tremolo as you progress toward Exercise 4.

Pay attention to your accuracy, aiming for the same spot on your fingertip with every stroke. It's through *feeling* and *sensation*, not analysis, that we program information into our mental harddrives.

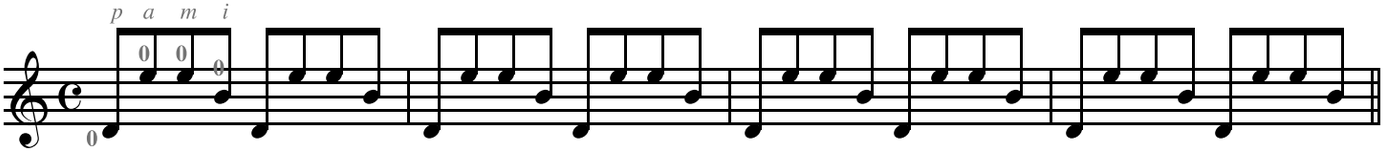
Exercise 1



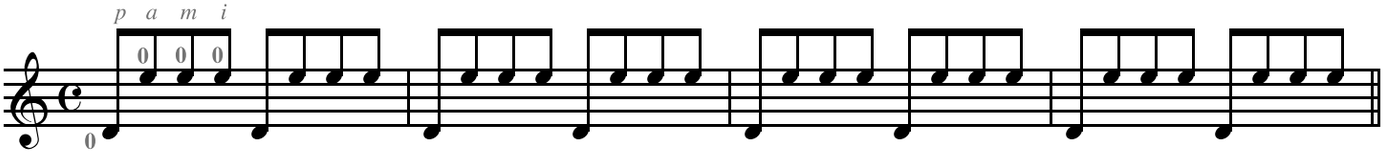
Exercise 2



Exercise 3



Exercise 4



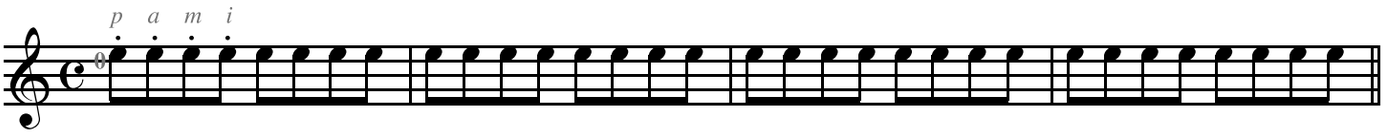
Tightening It Up

I've always found it absolutely invaluable to practice tremolo with all of the fingers, including the thumb, on one string. This allows you to hear the thumb as an equal member of the hand. The thumb commonly accents the notes it plays, and we want to make sure we can control that.

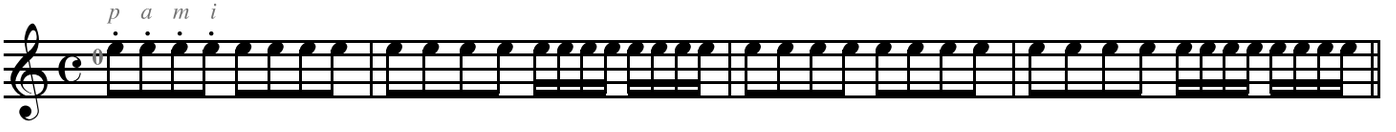
Practice these exercises with a fair amount of staccato. Later, when you play the tremolo at tempo, you will find you're able to control a smooth and well-articulated tremolo without letting the fingers swing wildly; a very important element necessary for controlling articlulation, note length, tempo and dynamics. You're training your fingers to play from the string, not the air.

Note: The goal for the speed bursts (the sixteenth notes) is to make the faster notes feel just as comfortable as the slower notes. Repeat each exercise until it feels easy, then proceed on to the next.

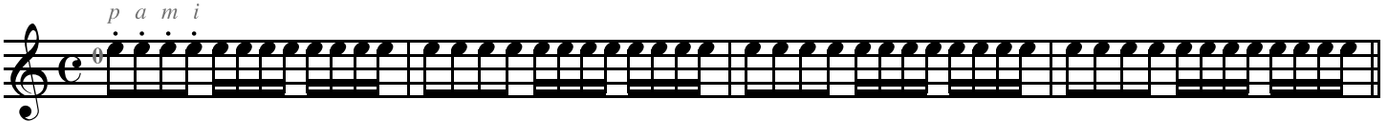
Tremolo Exercise 1



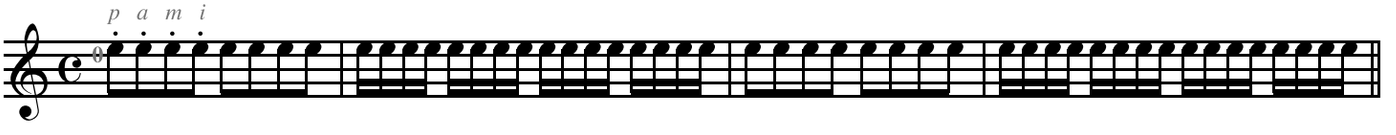
Tremolo Exercise 2



Tremolo Exercise 3



Tremolo Exercise 4



The Thumb

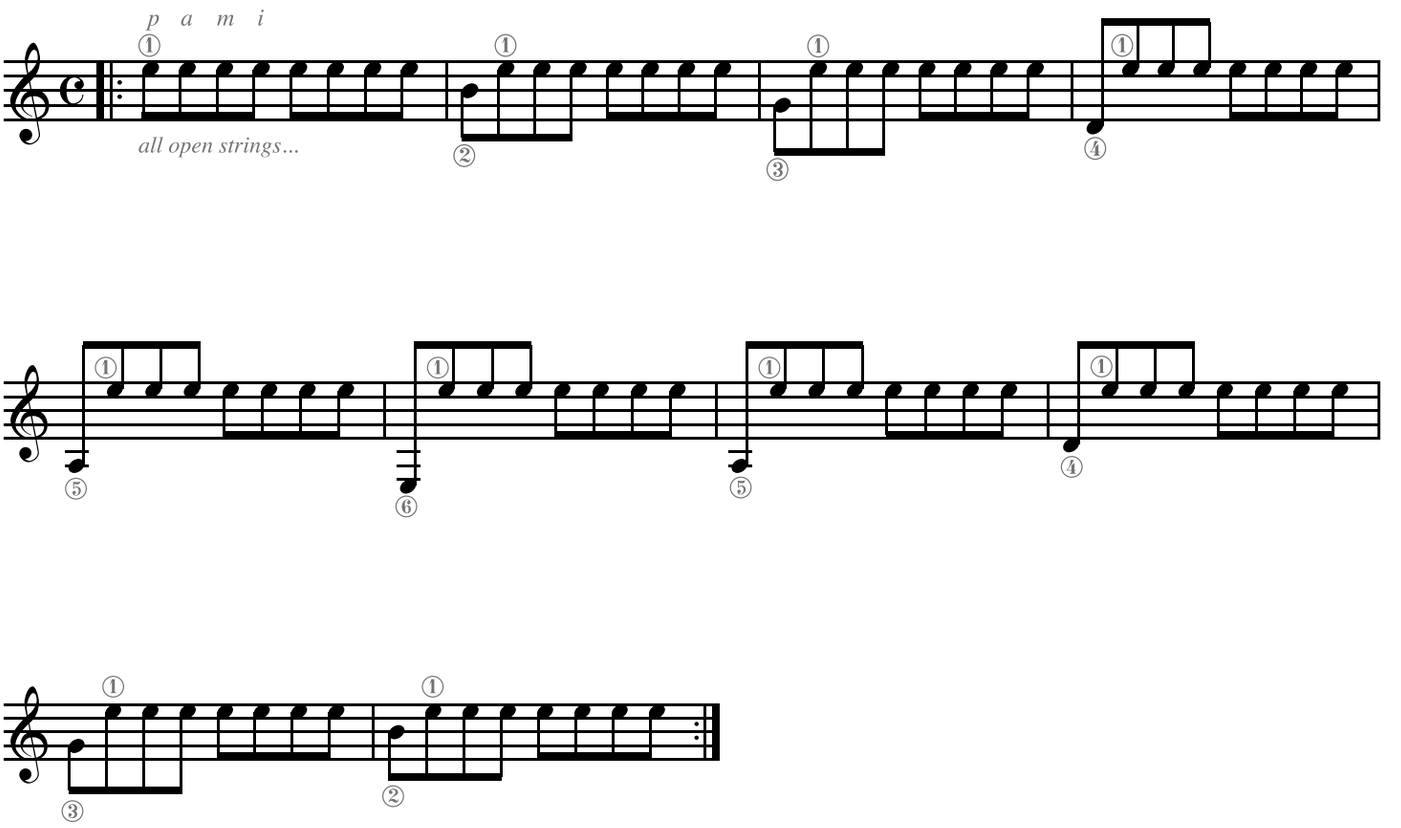
As I mentioned earlier, the thumb is the conductor, while the fingers follow whatever the thumb does. The thumb dictates tempo: If the thumb speeds up, the fingers must as well. If it slows down, the fingers must, also. We work so hard to get the fingers sounding even so we can eventually forget about them and just let the music happen. When tremolo is played at a performance tempo, the notes go by too fast to keep track of them all individually. The best way to keep things even is to control the tempo with the thumb, and then allow the fingers to simply fill in the middle bits, letting your ears tell you whether it is even or not. If your fingers are trained well enough, they will automatically adjust and do whatever they must do to carry out the ears' direction.

So, in short, the thumb is important!

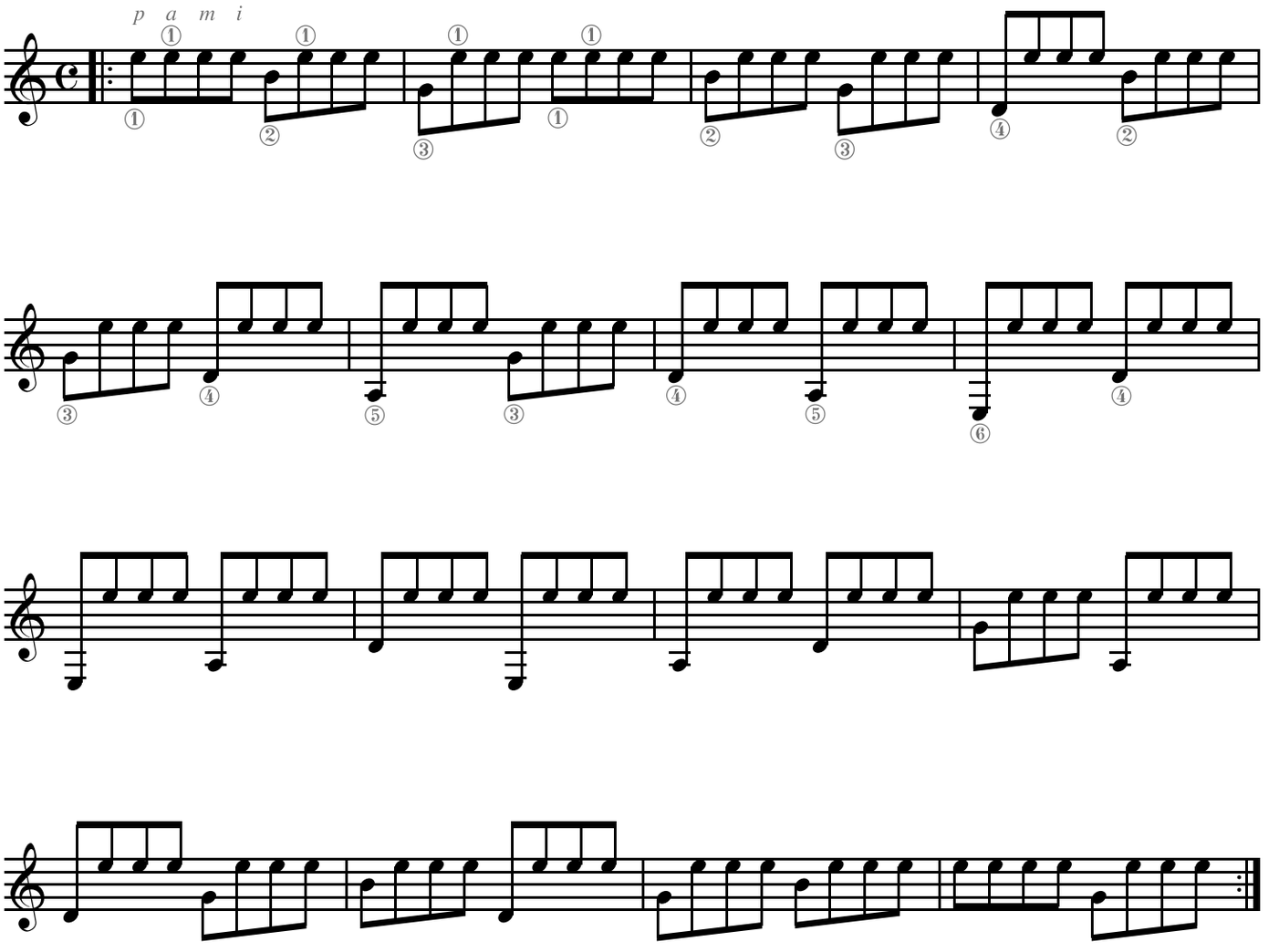
In this set of exercises, we take the single-string exercises and start systematically moving the thumb around to different strings, so the thumb gets used to venturing out bit by bit. We always eventually come back to the single string as a reference point.

Practice this maintaining the preparation/planting of the thumb: As soon as the *i* finger plays, prepare the thumb immediately on the next string. If you find this exceptionally challenging, you might try just isolating the thumb without the fingers.

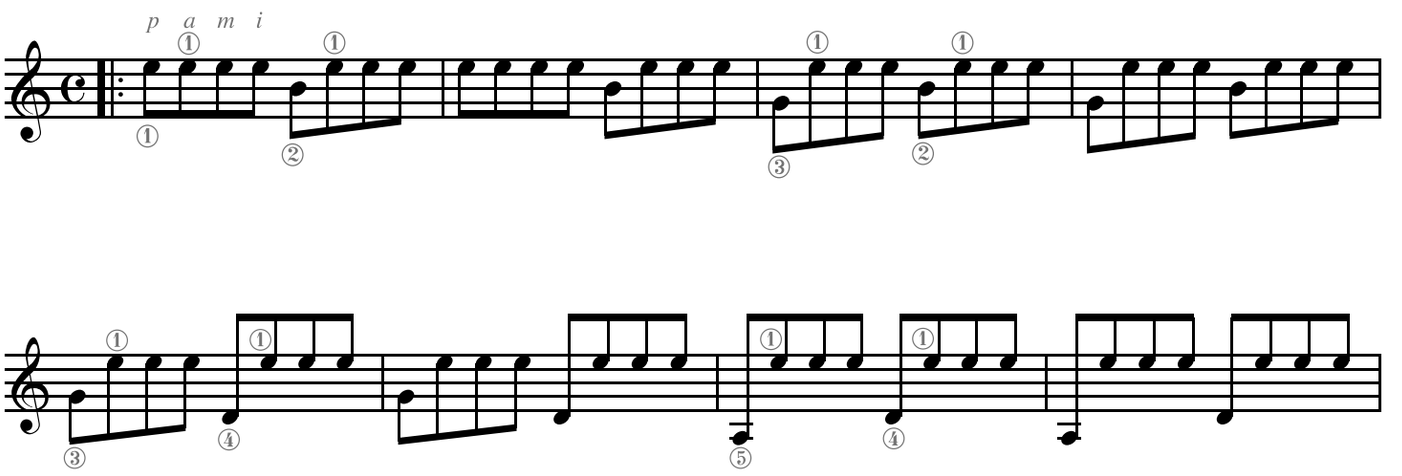
Moveable Thumb Exercise 1



Moveable Thumb Exercise 2

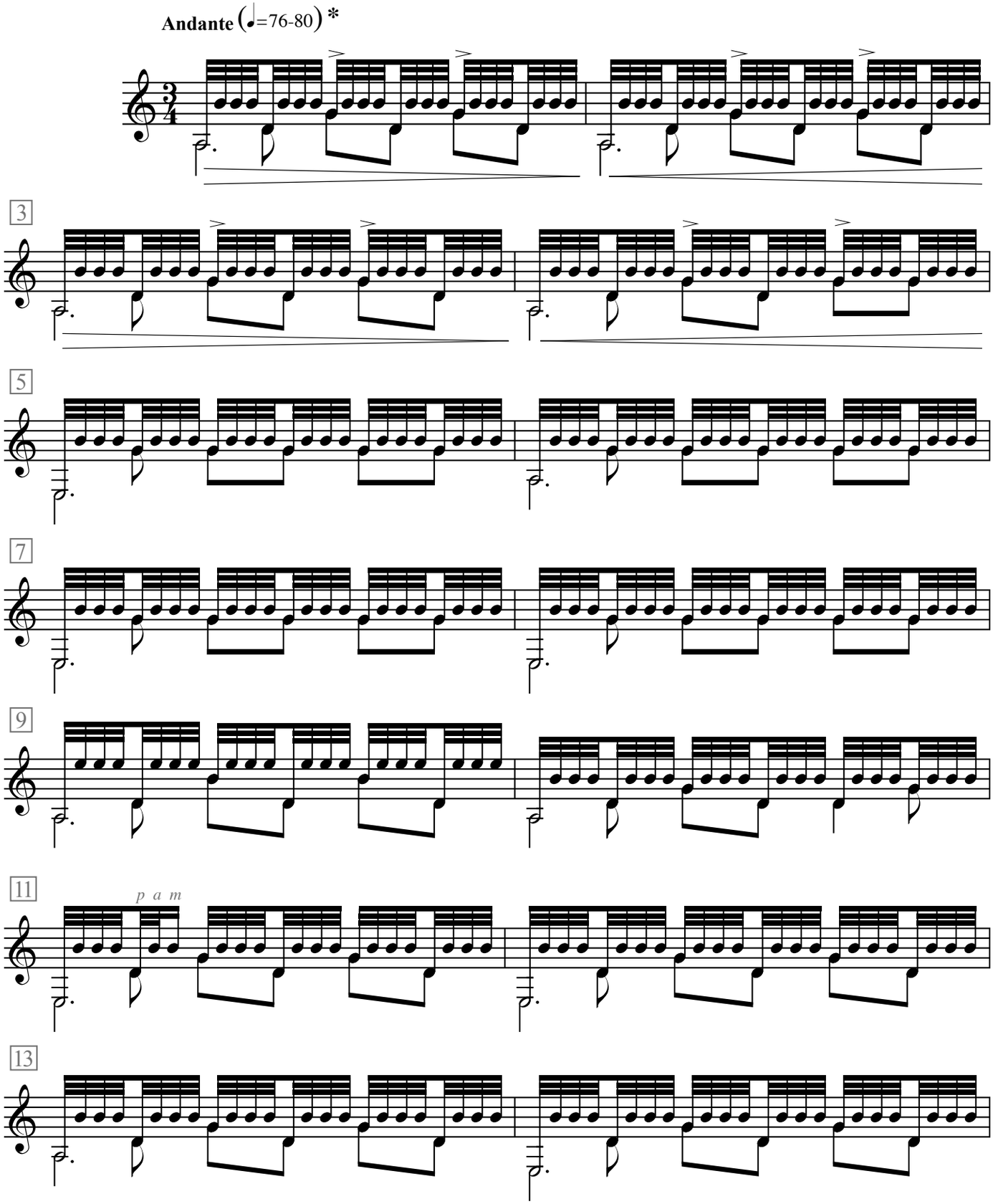


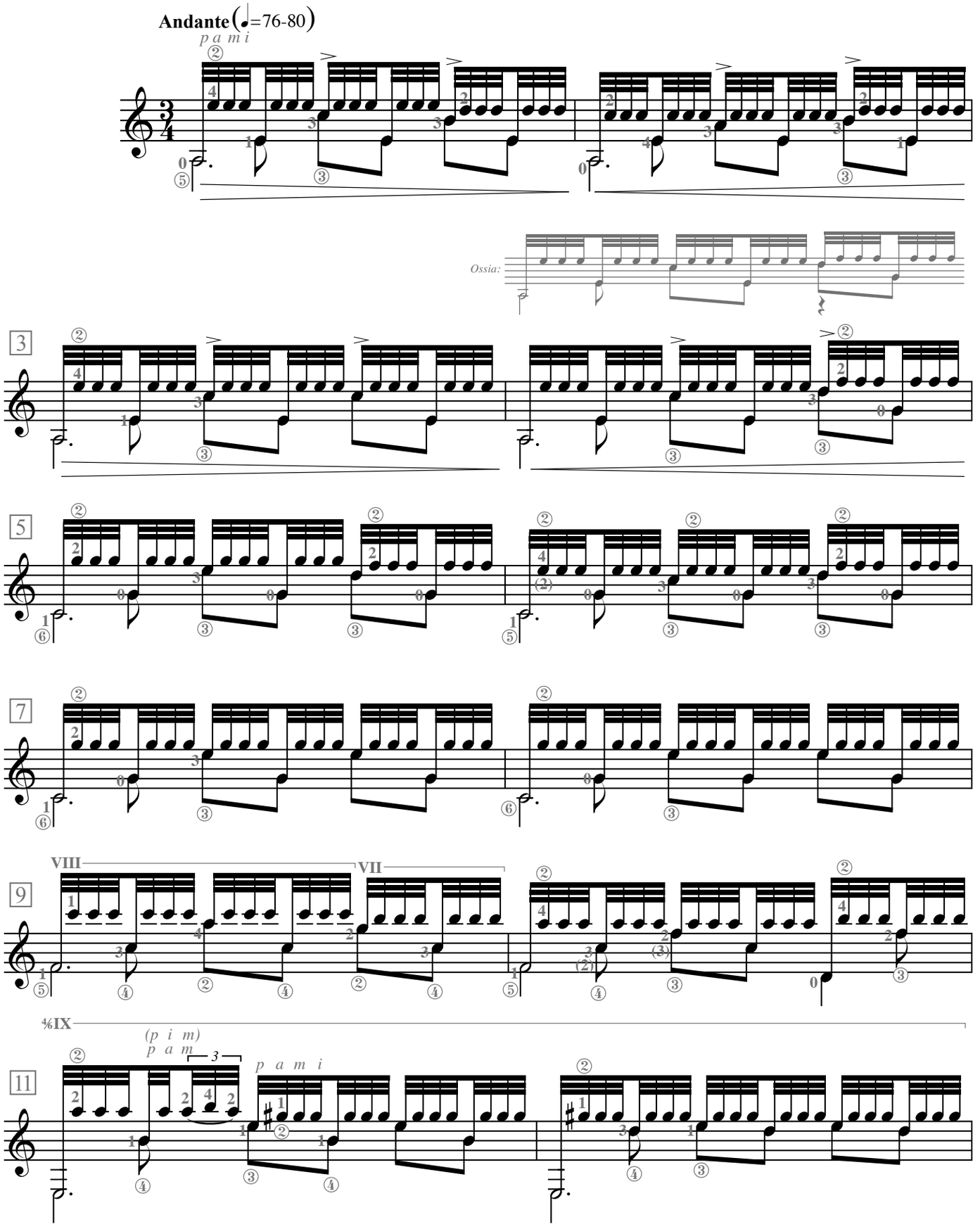
Moveable Thumb Exercise 3



Recuerdos de la Alhambra

Open-String Version



* This metronome marking represents an ideal performance tempo to aspire towards. However, while practicing, aim for ♩=50-60.

Recuerdos de la Alhambra