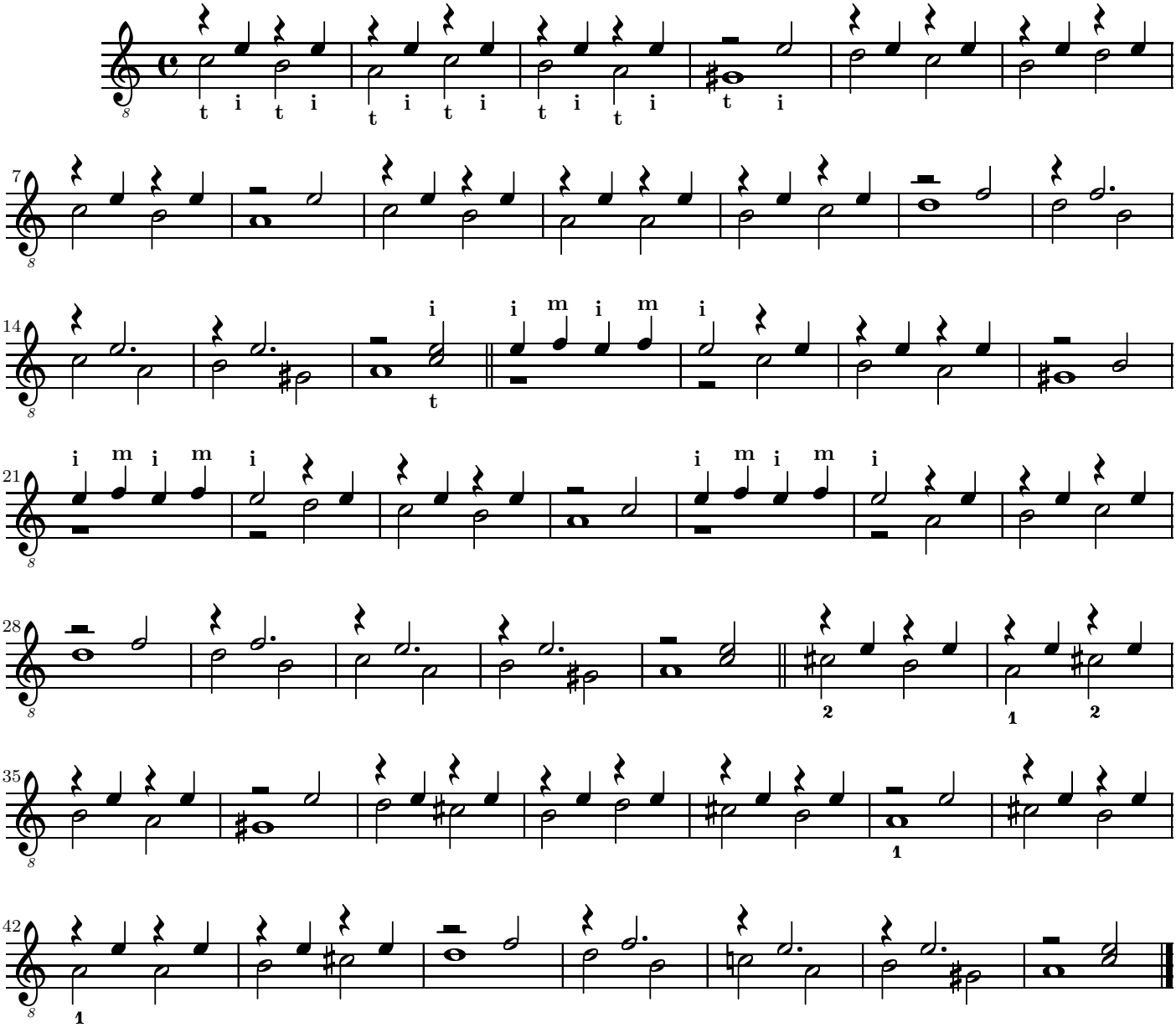
Seven Easy Pieces for Guitar

2005 David Raleigh Arnold

1 Three String Prelude

The thumb should play *apoyando*, leaning or trap stroke, meaning that the thumb falls to the string next to the one just played and leans against it, except when that next string is supposed to be sounding also. [1]



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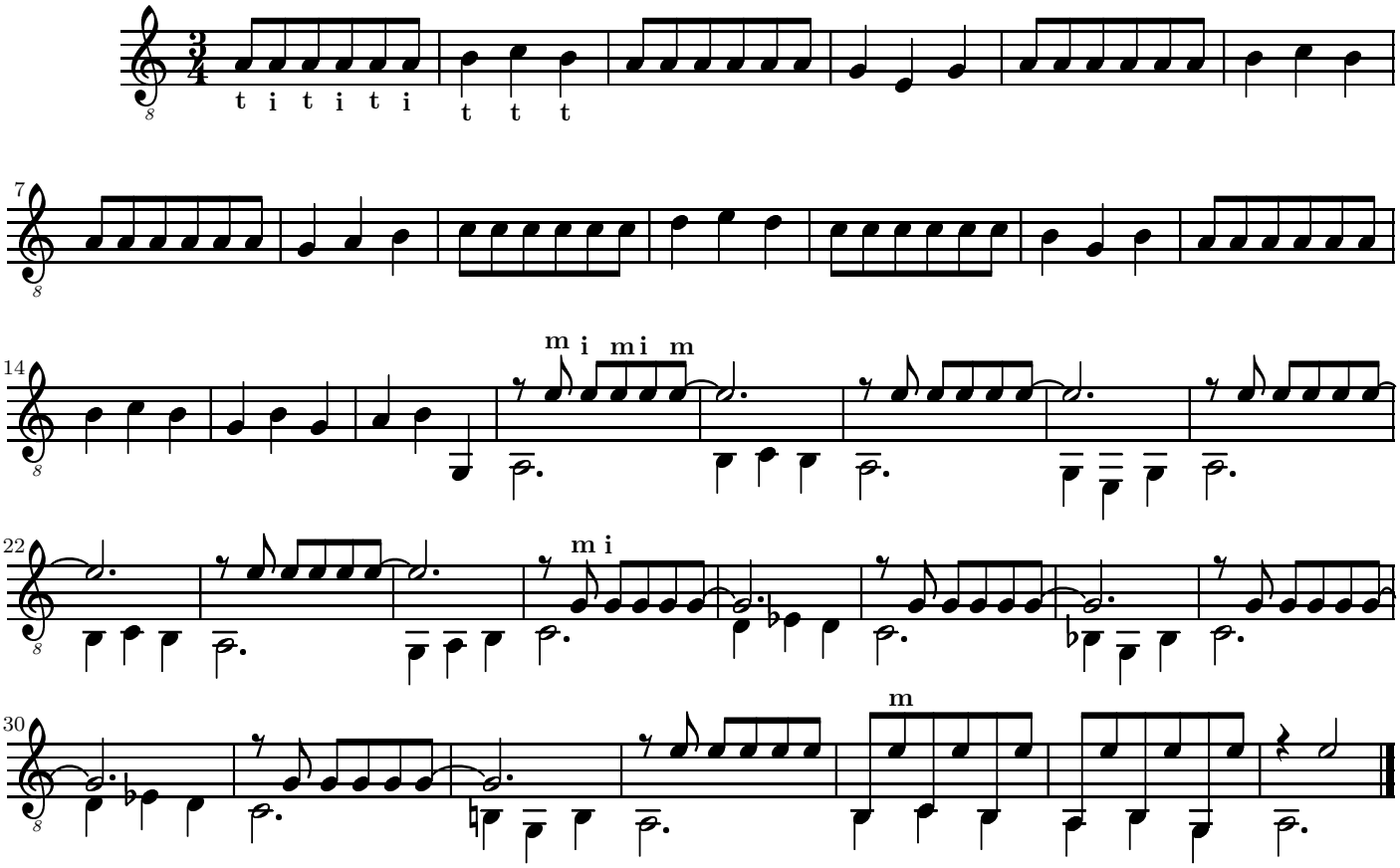
2 Jazz Eighths

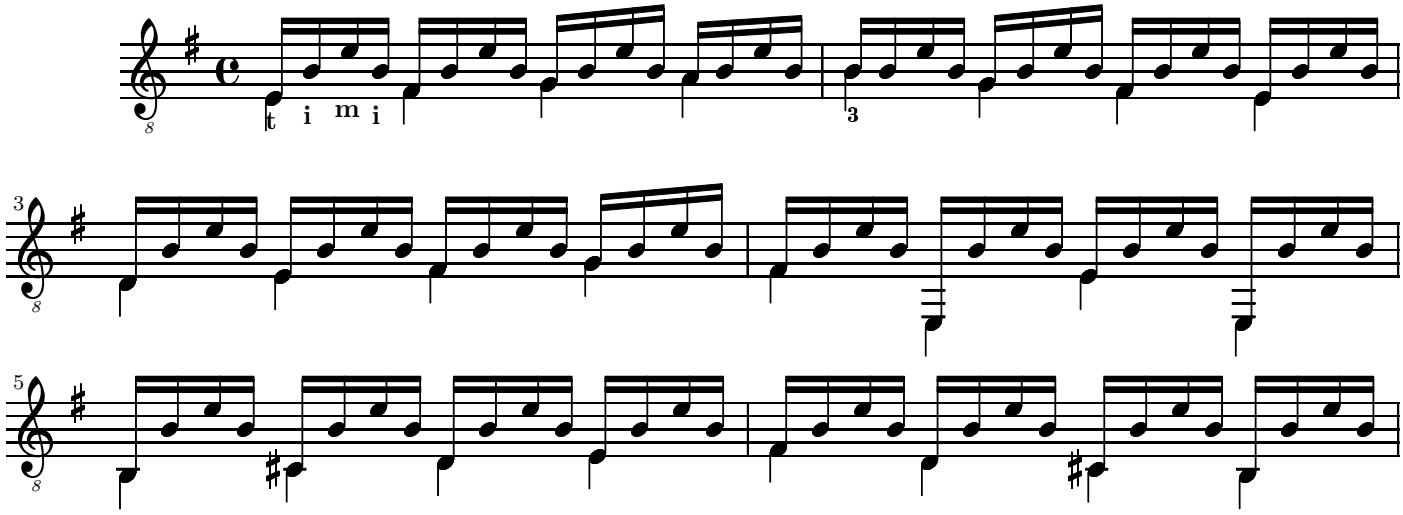
When the thumb and finger are alternating, playing a single string, the thumb does not lean because that would sound too uneven. Play the first sixteen measures without trap stroke, except for the last G. Of course you want trap stroke for the low notes in the rest of it where possible.

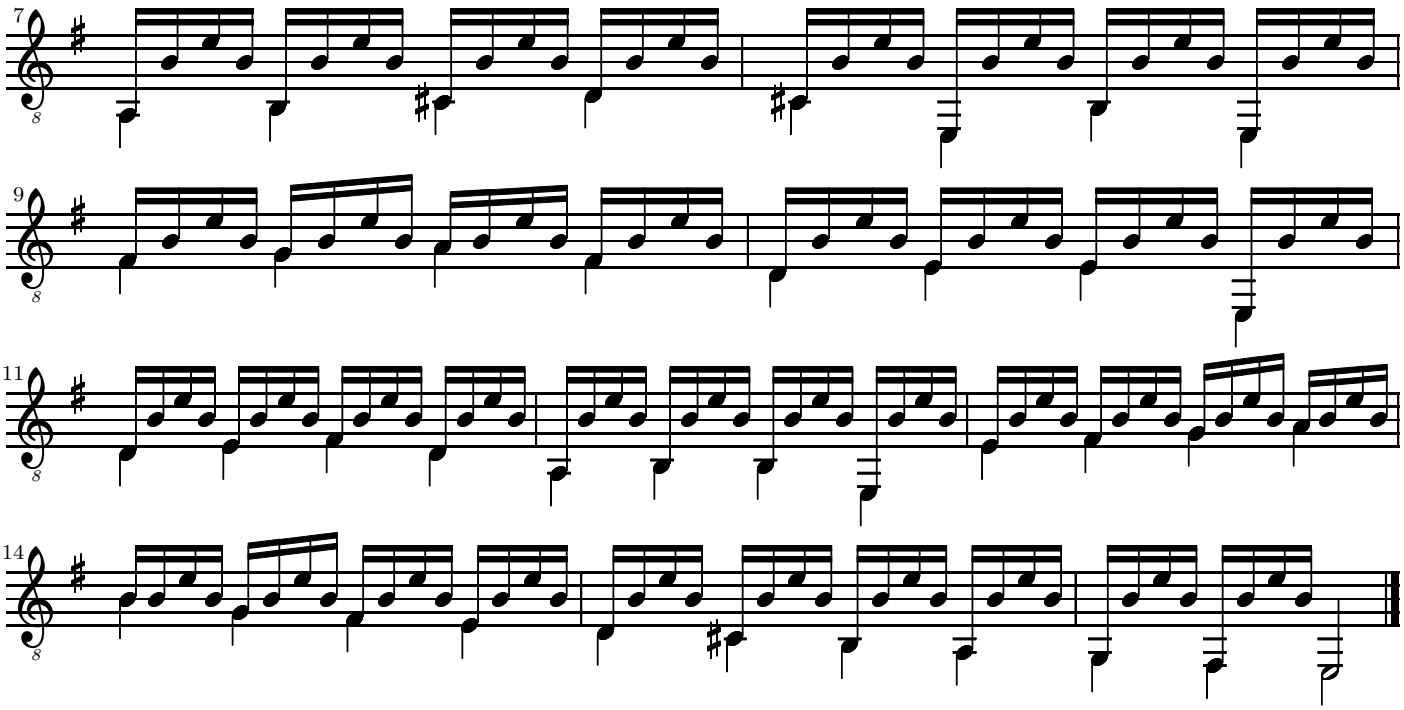
The challenge is to keep consistent rhythm all the way through when playing eighth notes.



3 Puddle Mode

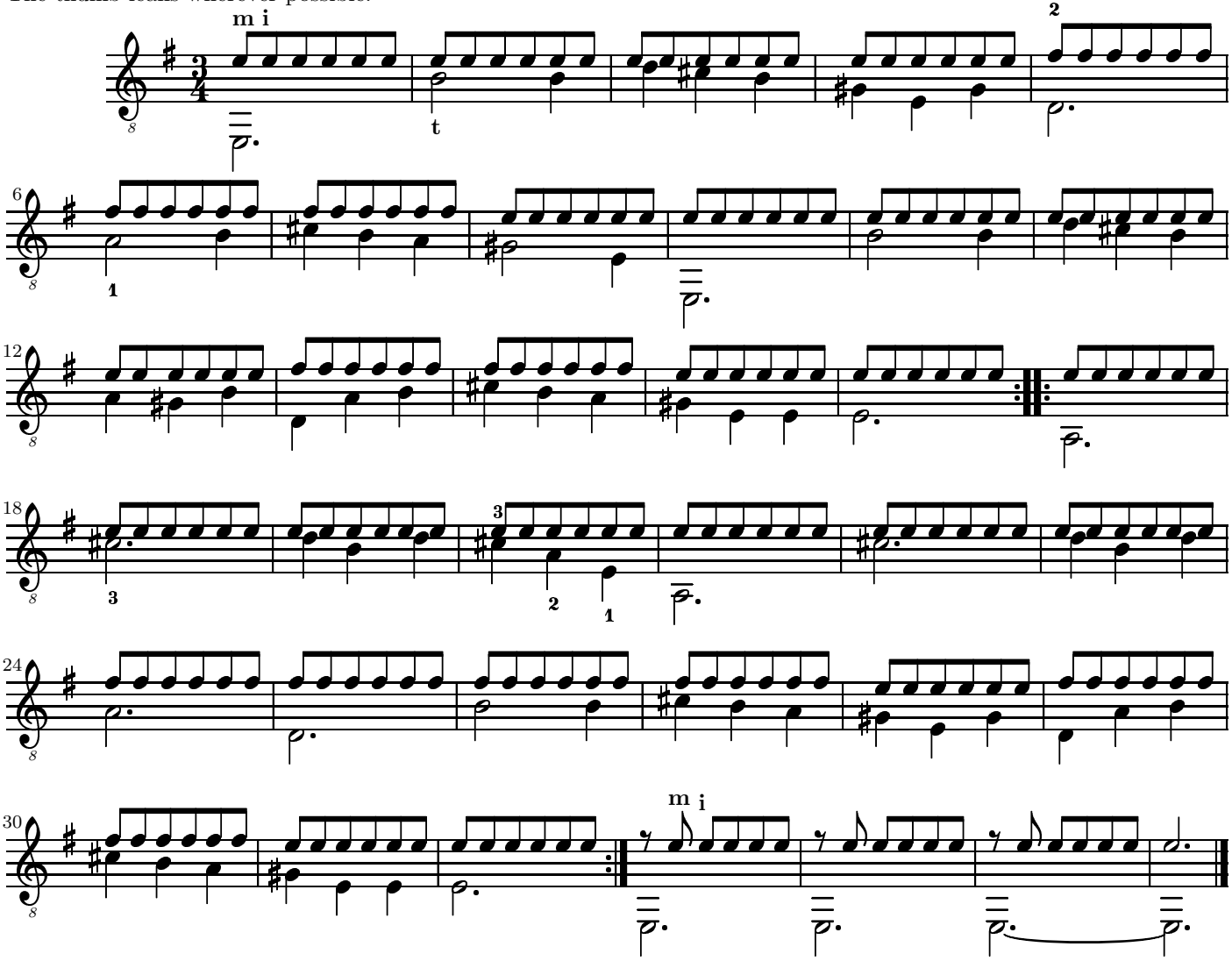
This piece is entirely in second position, and the fourth finger is not used. Every note played with the thumb is a trap stroke.





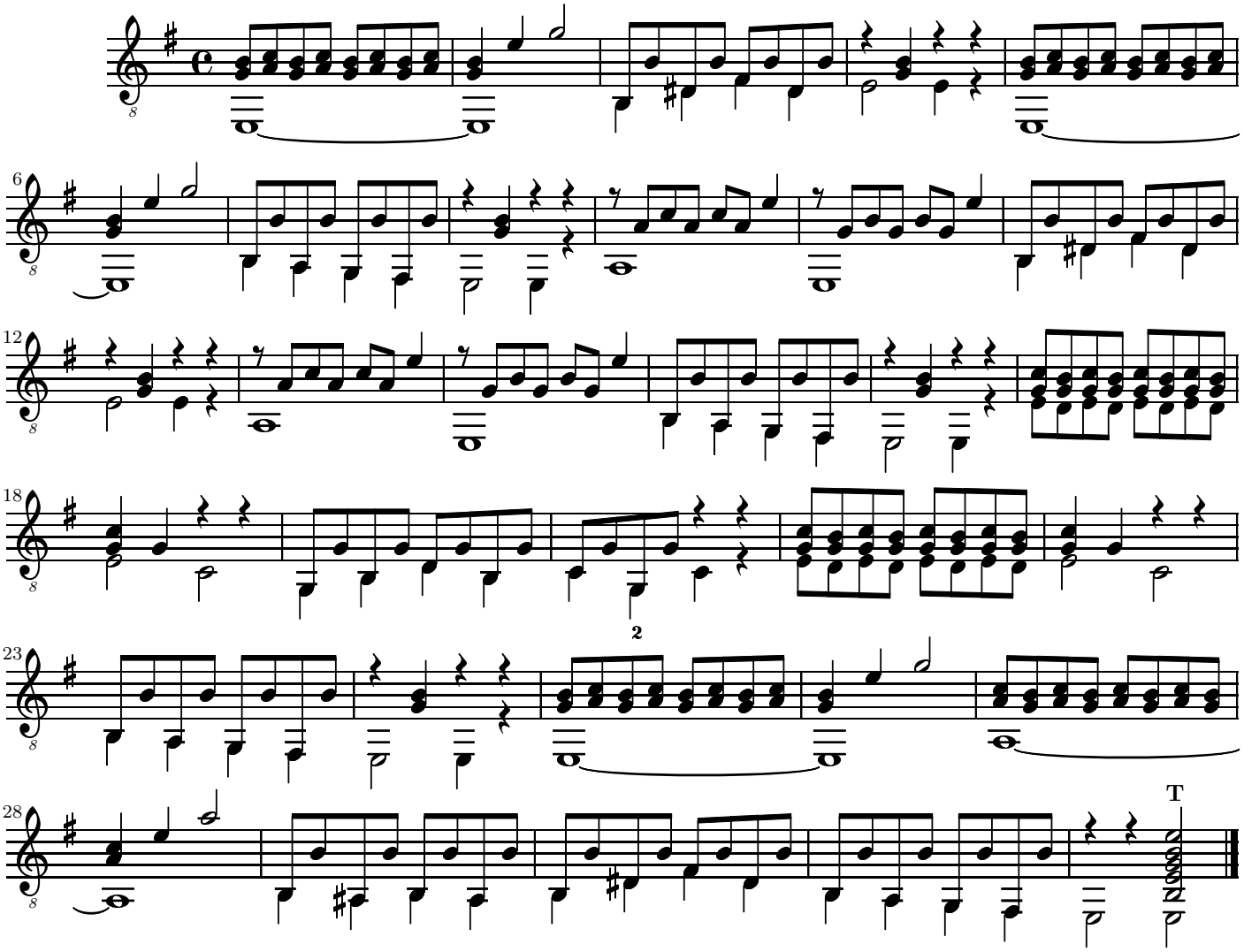
4 Melancholy Jig

The thumb leans wherever possible.



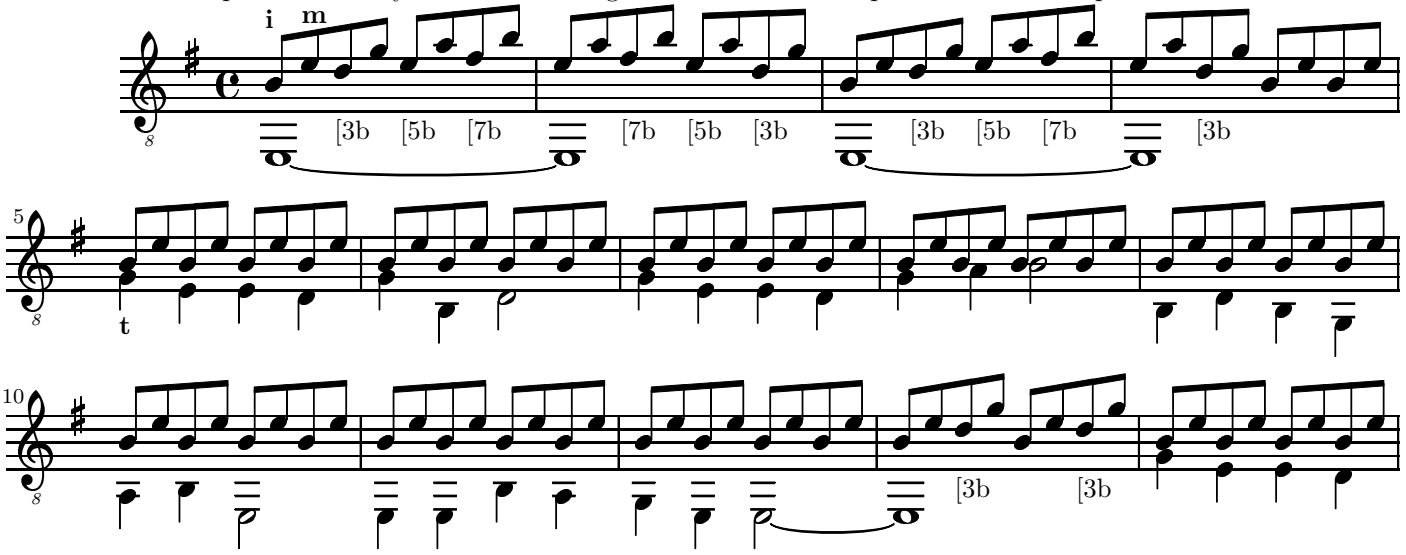
5 Old Wood

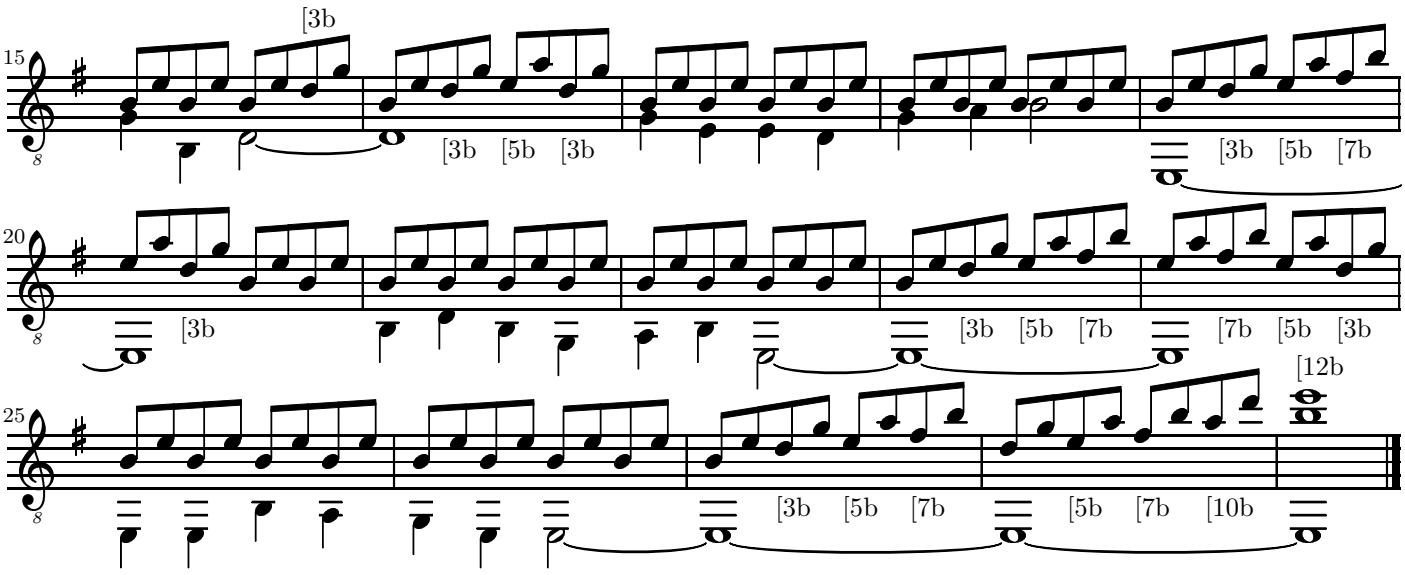
The ring finger plays the 1st string, middle plays 2nd, index plays 3rd, and thumb *apoyando* where possible.



6 The Birds

This is based on an Appalachian folk tune called “Leatherwing Bat”. [10b means bar the tenth fret to the “B” string. You are in second position when you are not barring. The thumb does trap strokes wherever possible.

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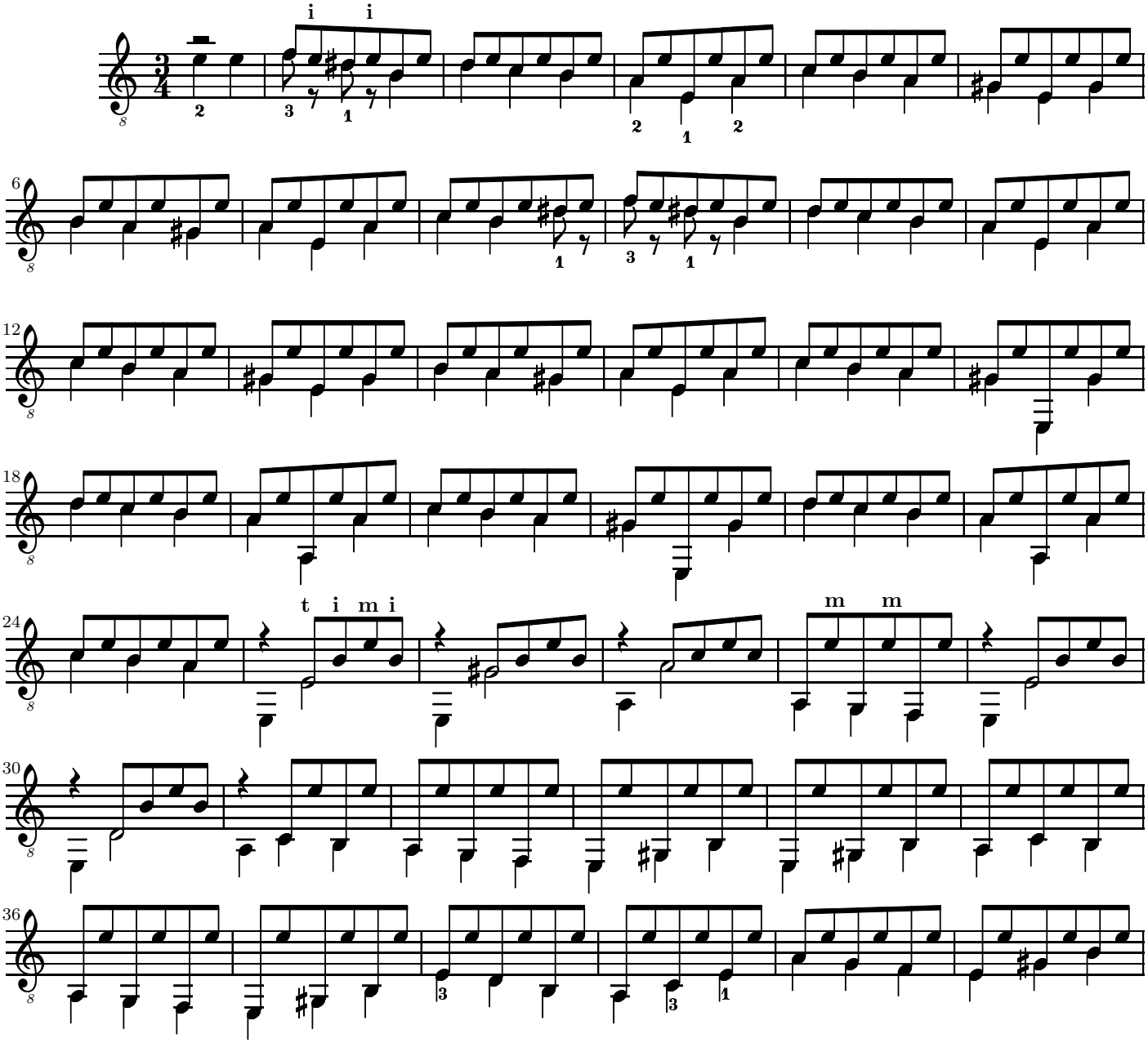
[3b [5b [3b
[3b [5b [7b
[3b
[3b [5b [7b
[7b [5b [3b
[12b
[3b [5b [7b
[5b [7b [10b

7 Fandango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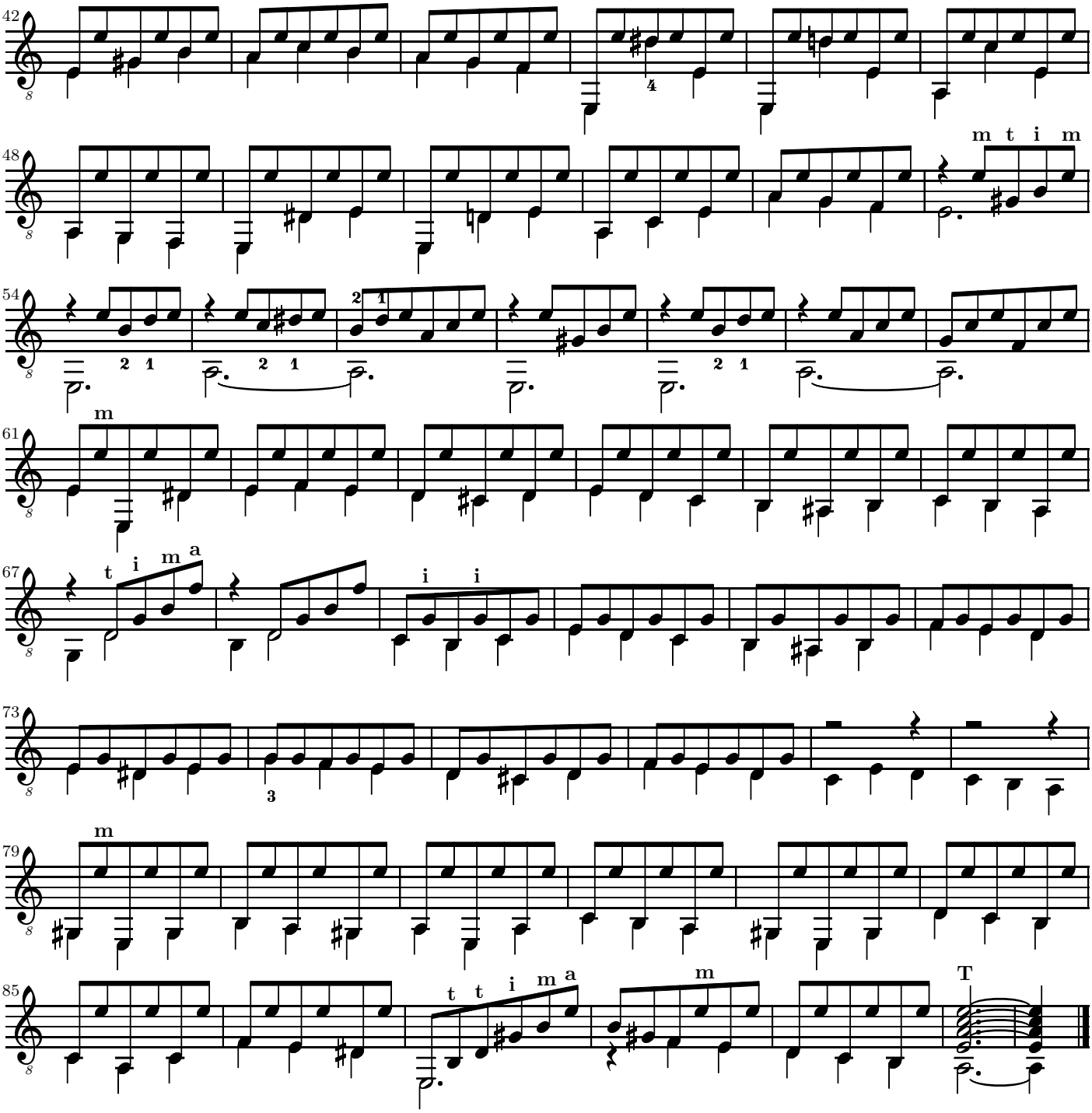

8 Afterword

Thumb *apoyando* is good, but finger *apoyando* is for the beginner to avoid, because it is likely to promote hyperextension of the finger and that necessarily entails loss of control. Electronic metronomes are great. To apply dynamics to these pieces, do some or all of these in every piece. Try their opposites, too:

Plain cresc., decresc. and dim. Get louder or softer through a phrase or section.

Rainbows. Get louder as the notes get higher, and vice versa.

Dynamic phrasing. With less contrast, get louder in the beginning of a phrase, taper off at its end.

Echoes. In "Old Wood", play the first two bars loud, the next two soft, then do it again.

Echo repeats. In "Melancholy Jig", play the first volta (turn) loud and the repeat soft.

Fade out. The ending of "Puddle Muddle" fades to very very quiet.

The first, second, third, and seventh pieces are perfectly playable with a flat pick. I suggest that the pick attack the string in the direction of the next note.