AXEL CHRISTENSEN'S NEW INSTRUCTION BOOK FOR

RAG AND JAZZ

PIANO PLAYING

MADE IN U.S.A.

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Cordially yours
Axel V. Christensen

The "Syncophonic" Touch

One of the most important features about good ragtime playing is the touch, and the pupil is requested to read the following remarks and observe them very carefully.

Play with a strong and firm legato touch.

Sit high enough to allow the forearm and hand to be held in a horizontal position and let the weight of the arm and hand be entirely supported by the keys of the piano while playing.

Do not try to hold the arm up and hold a key down at the same time, because this robs the touch of the required firmness which is necessary in playing ragtime.

Strike every note firmly with the proper finger, but do not raise the hand in order to strike a key. All motion must be from the knuckles.

All fingers that are not actually striking should be raised as high as possible without disturbing the horizontal position of the hand.

The instant you play a note with a certain finger, the finger which has played the the preceding note should be raised.

Use just as much energy in raising a finger off the key as in striking the key, because the raising and striking motions will then counteract each other and allow the weight of the arm to give the desired firmness to the touch.

Strike each note with vim and vigor!

When learning a new piece or exercise, play very slow at first and count loud and evenly.

Make your playing keep even with your counting — don't suit your counting to your playing.

Remember to practice one hour each day, or evening.

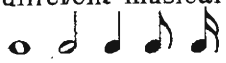
You will gradually develop speed by practicing all your previous exercises of this course every day.

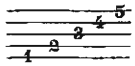
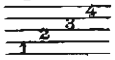
PUPILS PLEASE NOTICE

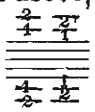
MISSED LESSONS

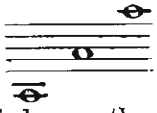
Musicians of the country have adopted the rule which requires students to pay for all MISSED LESSONS, except in case of protracted illness.

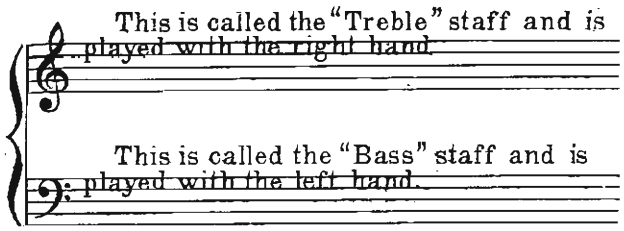
Your teacher has a right to expect you to pay for LESSONS MISSED unless you notify in advance by telephone or letter.

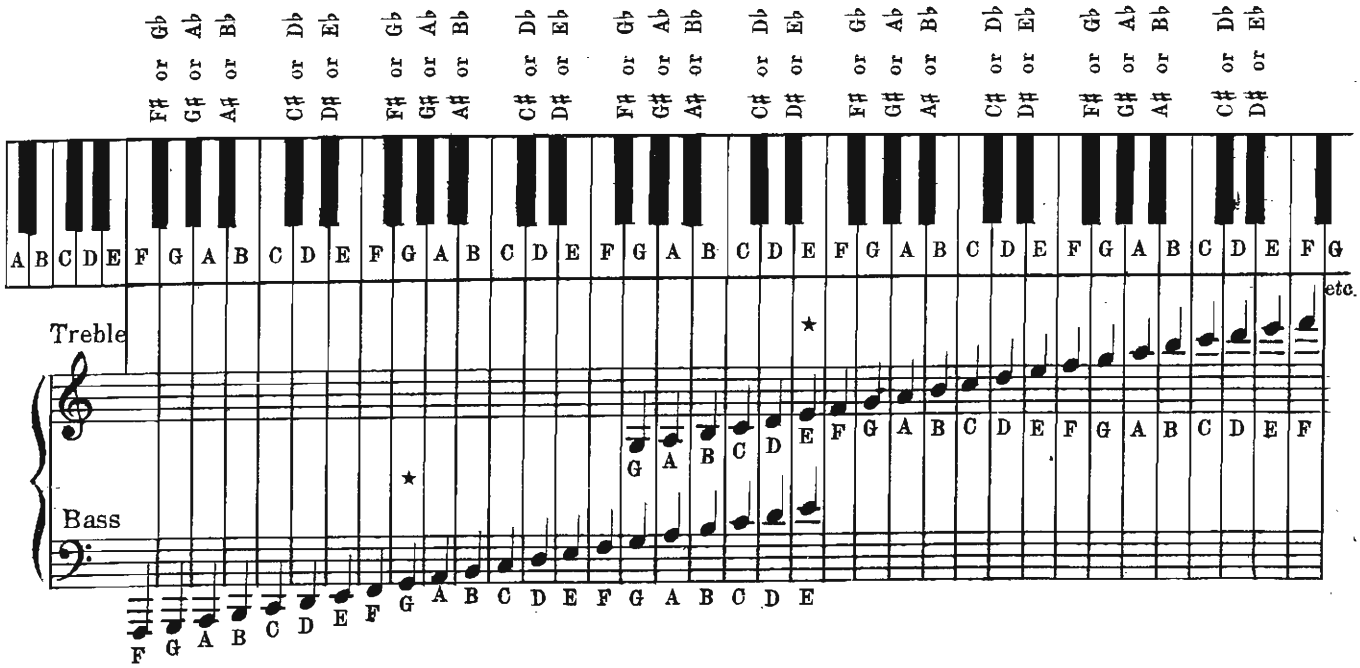
The different musical sounds that compose a piece of music are signified by notes. These are notes: 

The pitch of a note, or its location on the piano keyboard, is determined by its position on the staff. This is a "Staff." You will notice that the Staff is composed of five lines, between which are four spaces. When we speak of the "First line," we mean the bottom line; the "Second line" is the next line higher up, and so on up, the "Fifth line" being the top line as shown here:  The spaces are numbered the same way, as shown here: 

There are not enough lines or spaces on the staff to indicate all the keys on the piano, therefore extra lines are added above or below the staff when necessary like this These lines are numbered according to their distance from the main staff and are called "First line above," "Second line above," "First line below," "First space above," "First space below," etc., like this: 

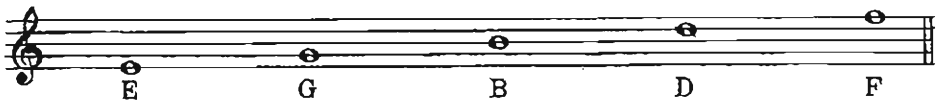
The names of the notes, or keys on the piano, are the first seven letters of the alphabet (A, B, C, D, E, F, G) repeated over and over. For instance the note "A" appears in three different positions on the Treble (right hand) staff  but while each of these notes has the same name, the second "A" is located seven tones higher on the piano than the first "A" and the third "A" is seven tones higher than the second "A". On the piano keyboard when we speak of going "Higher" we mean going to the right, while "Lower" means to the left.

Piano music is written on two staves, like this: 



In the Treble the notes on the lines are as follows:

First line "E"; 2nd line "G"; 3rd line "B"; 4th line "D"; 5th line "F".

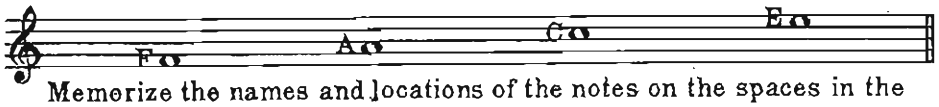


Strike each of the above notes on the piano; beginning with the First line "E"; call each note by name as you strike it, like this: "First line E, second line G, third line B, fourth line D, fifth line F.

Repeat this until you have thoroughly memorized the names and locations of the notes on the five lines.

The notes on the spaces in the Treble are:

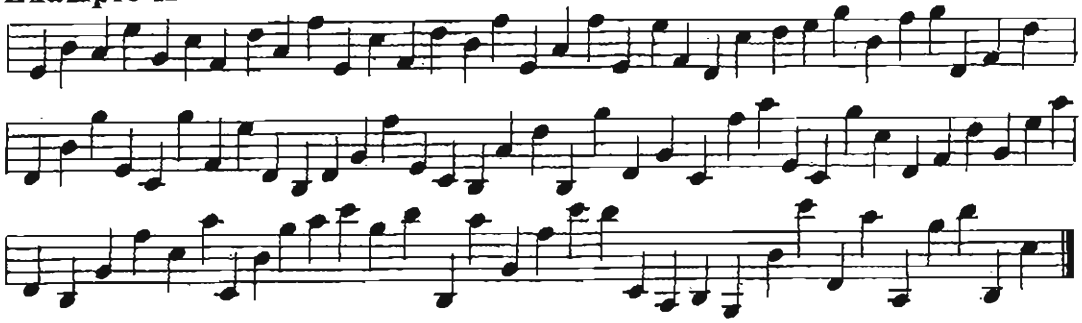
1st space "F"; 2nd space "A"; 3rd space "C"; 4th space "E".



Memorize the names and locations of the notes on the spaces in the same way.

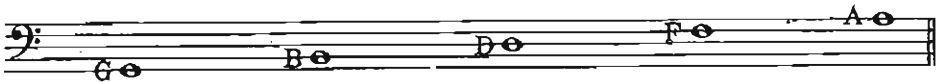
Now name and strike on the piano all the notes in the following example in the treble

Example A



In the bass the names of the notes on the lines are as follows:

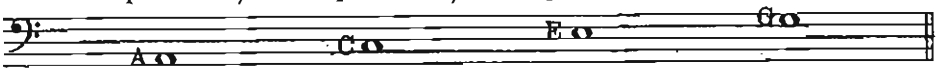
1st line "G"; 2nd line "B"; 3rd line "D"; 4th line "F"; 5th line "A".



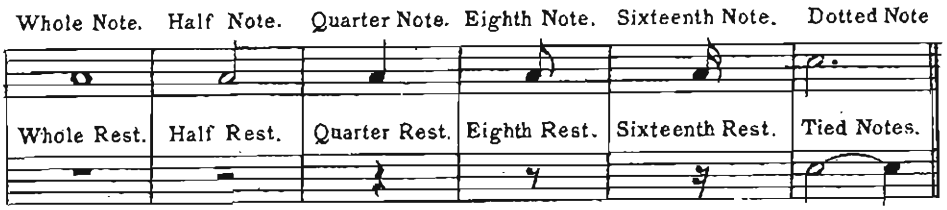
Memorize and locate the notes in the bass the same as you did in the treble.

The notes on the spaces in the bass staff are:

1st space "A"; 2nd space "C"; 3rd space "E"; 4th space "G".



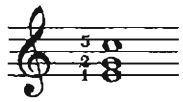
Now go back to Example A. This time you will consider it as written in the Bass Clef. Name and strike all these notes in the bass.



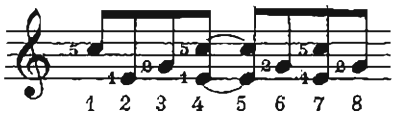
Jazz - Syncopation - or Ragtime - whichever you call it - is built up on certain fixed laws or principles, the same as harmony, mathematics, or any other science.

Jazz is made up of movements - rhythms - figure - breaks, etc.

Every measure of a typical jazz tune is simply one or more chords that have been broken up in some fashion or other.

Here is a chord. 

And here is that same chord broken up - or "jazzed up" into what we will call the "First Ragtime Movement."



This is done according to the following rule, or formula.

You will count eight beats to the measure in order to identify every part of the rhythm and you will notice that,

Count 1 is the top note of the chord.
Count 2 is the bottom note.
Count 3 is the middle note.
Count 4 is the top and bottom note.
Count 5 is tied and held.
Count 6 is the middle note.
Count 7 is the top and bottom note.
Count 8 is the middle note.

In the same manner any other chord of three notes can be "jazzed up" or converted in the First movement. Any group of chords - in fact any melody - can be handled the same way.

See Example 1.

Strike the chord, marked A", and then play the next measure, marked "B", slowly and accurately. (Count eight beats to the measure.)

This is the same first movement shown above, but applied to another chord.

Proceed with the next chord and the measure following.

Convert into the first ragtime movement each of the following chords ("C.")

Example D shows a chord consisting of four notes and next to it we find that same chord converted into the first movement. You will notice that the top and bottom notes are played on count 1, the lower middle note on count 2, the upper middle note on count 3 and both middle notes together on counts 6 and 8. Play this example carefully – count loud.

Play the next chord and measure following in the same manner.

Convert each of the following chords (Ex. F) into the first movement – continue to count loud.

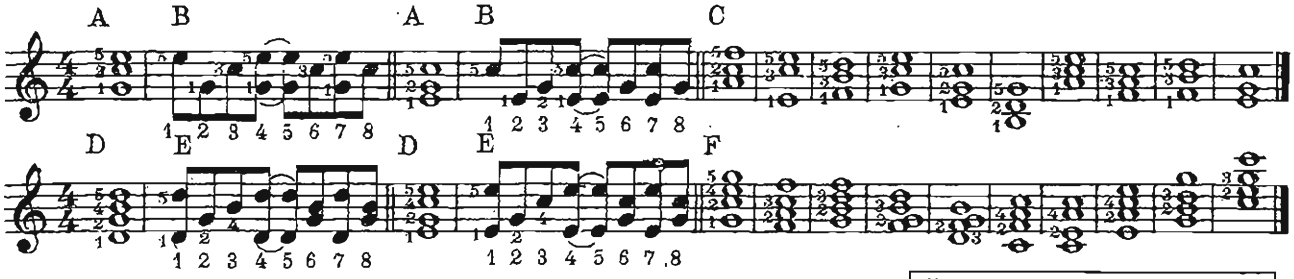
Example 2.

Practice this example slowly and carefully with a strong legato touch.

The First Ragtime Movement.

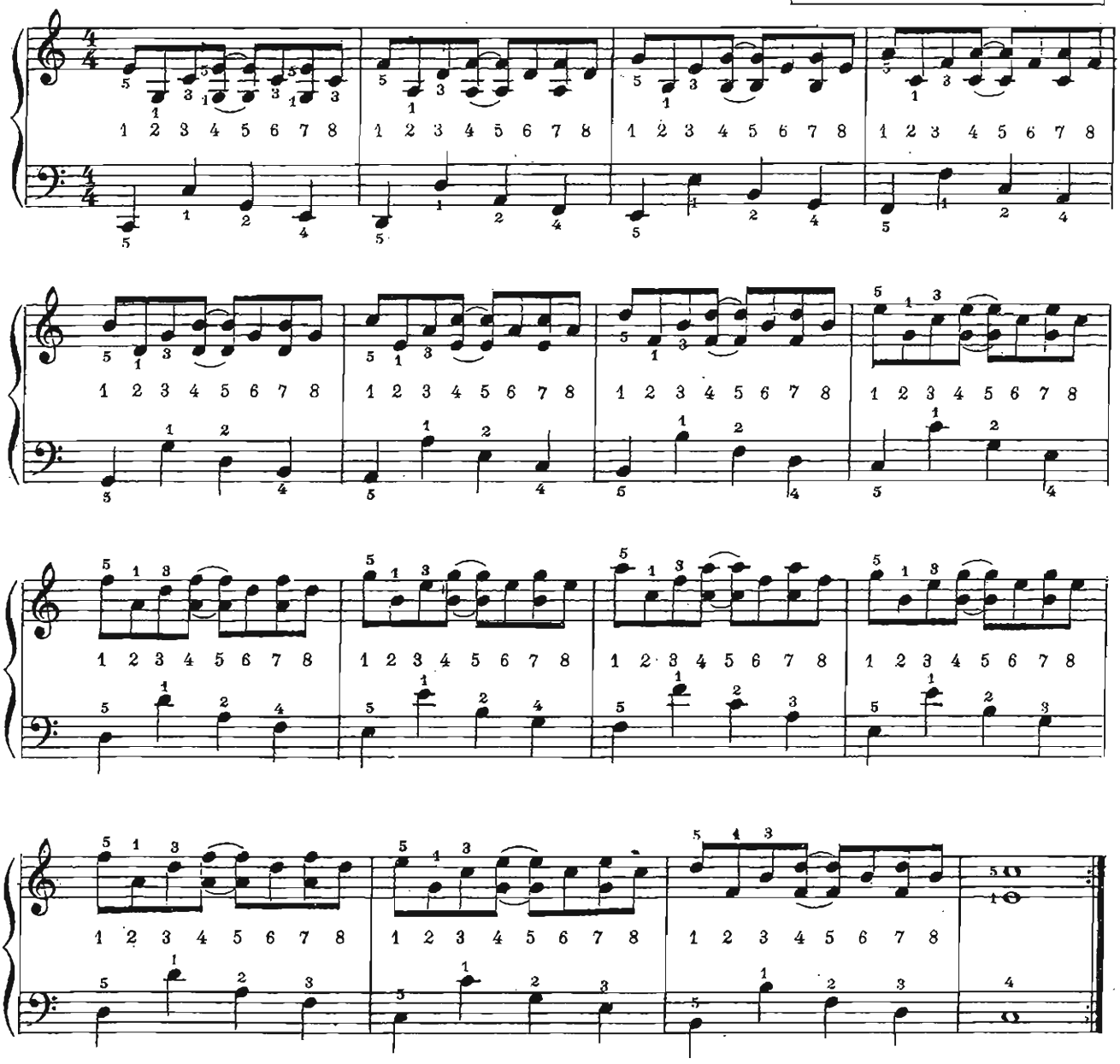
EXAMPLE 1.

In $\frac{4}{4}$ time, ♪ = 1 beat, ♩ = 2 beats, 𝅗𝅥 = 4 beats, 𝅝 = 8 beats.

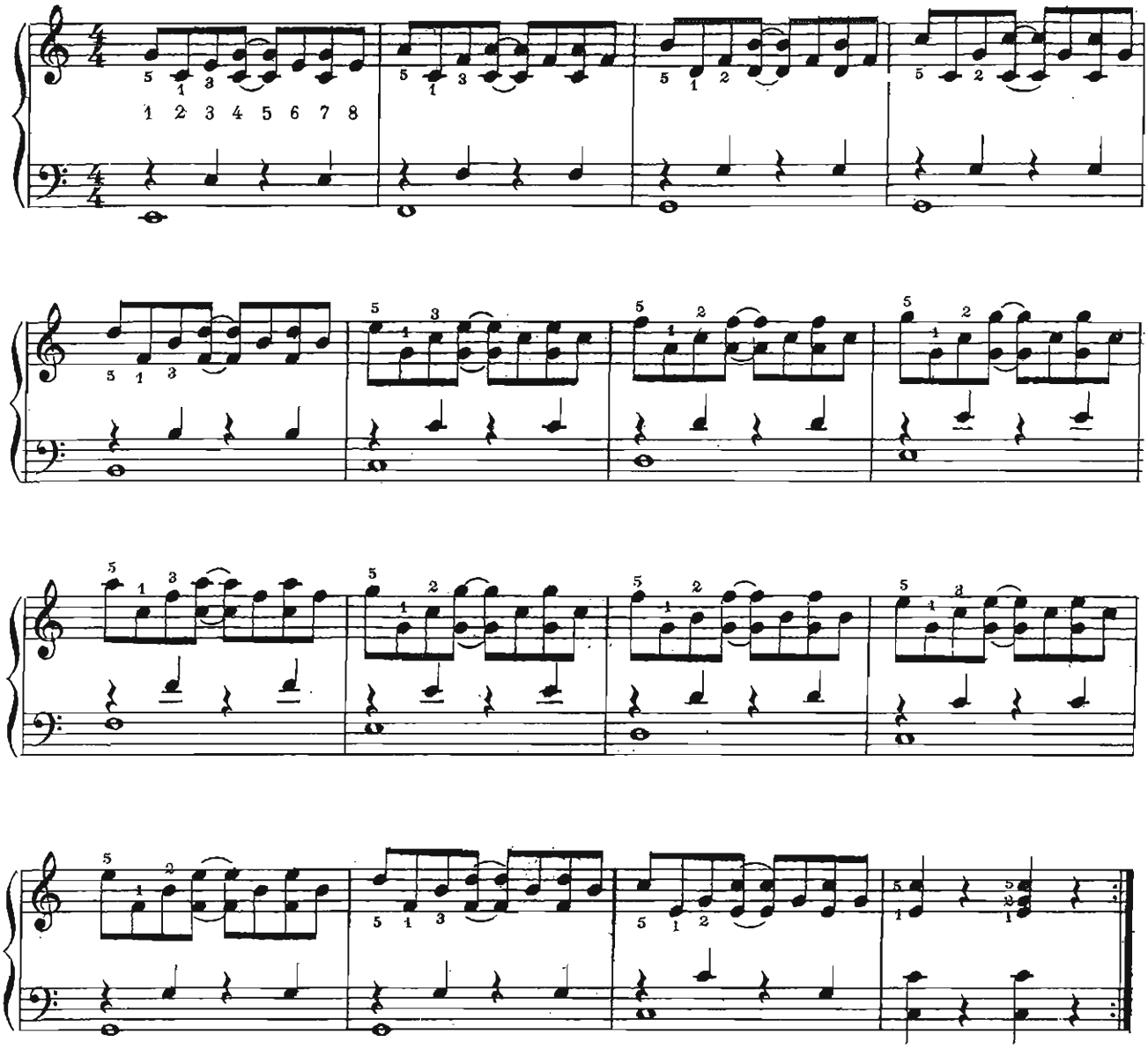


EXAMPLE 2.

Play with a strong, firm legato touch. Strike each note with vim and vigor. Get a "Kick" into every tone. Play slowly at first.

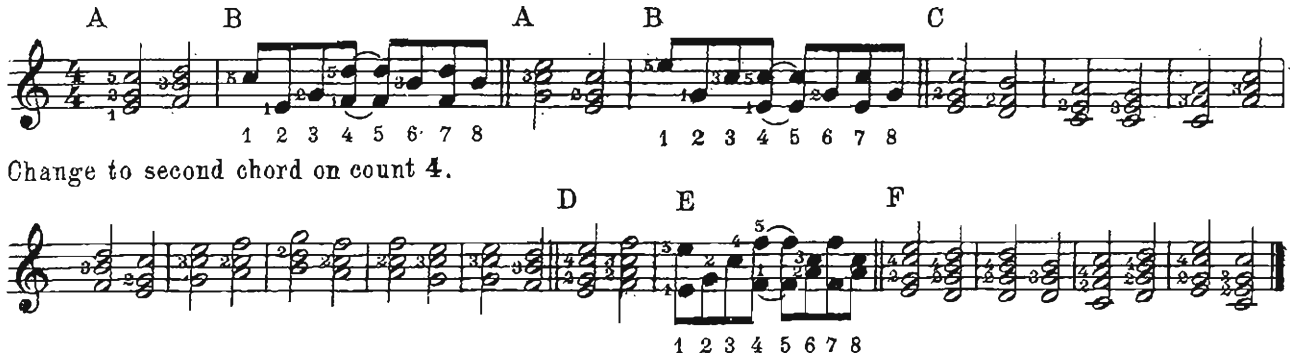


EXAMPLE 3.



Ragging two chords
in one movement, or measure.

EXAMPLE 4.



Change to second chord on count 4.

Example 3.

Play this in the same manner as Example 2.

Example 4.– Ragging Two Chords.

When a measure contains two chords both chords are played in one movement. The movement is played the same as where only one chord is used, count 1 being the top note, 2 the bottom note, 3 the middle note, 4 the top and bottom notes, etc., except that on count 4 you jump to the second chord and for counts 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 the notes of the second chord are used.

Play the chords in the first measure (Ex. A) then play the next measure which illustrates how these two chords are converted into one ragtime movement. Play this again.

Now play the next two measures in the same manner.

Convert each of the following measures (Ex. C) into the first ragtime movement in the same way.

Practice the following exercise.

Playing Two Chords to Each Movement

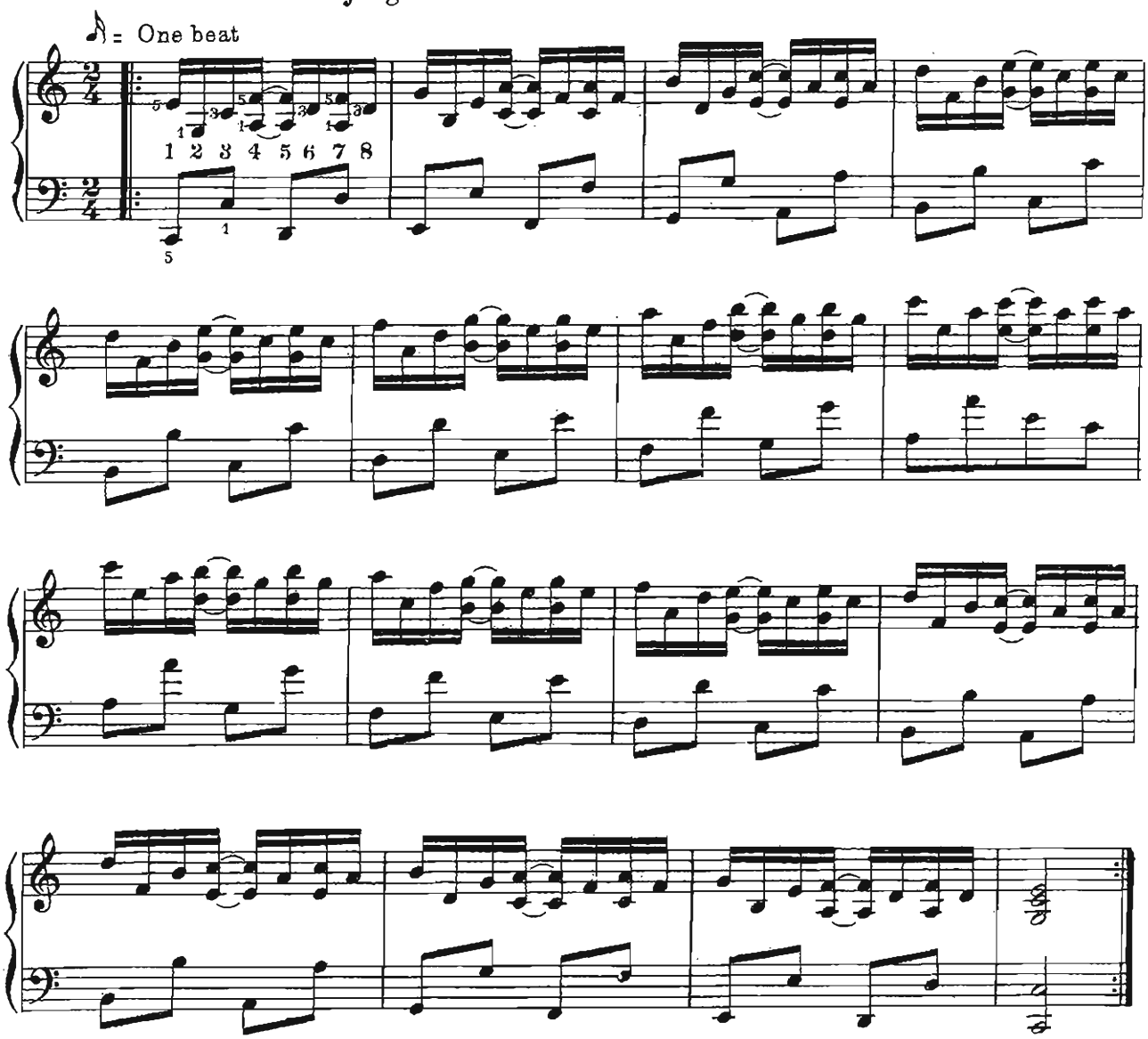
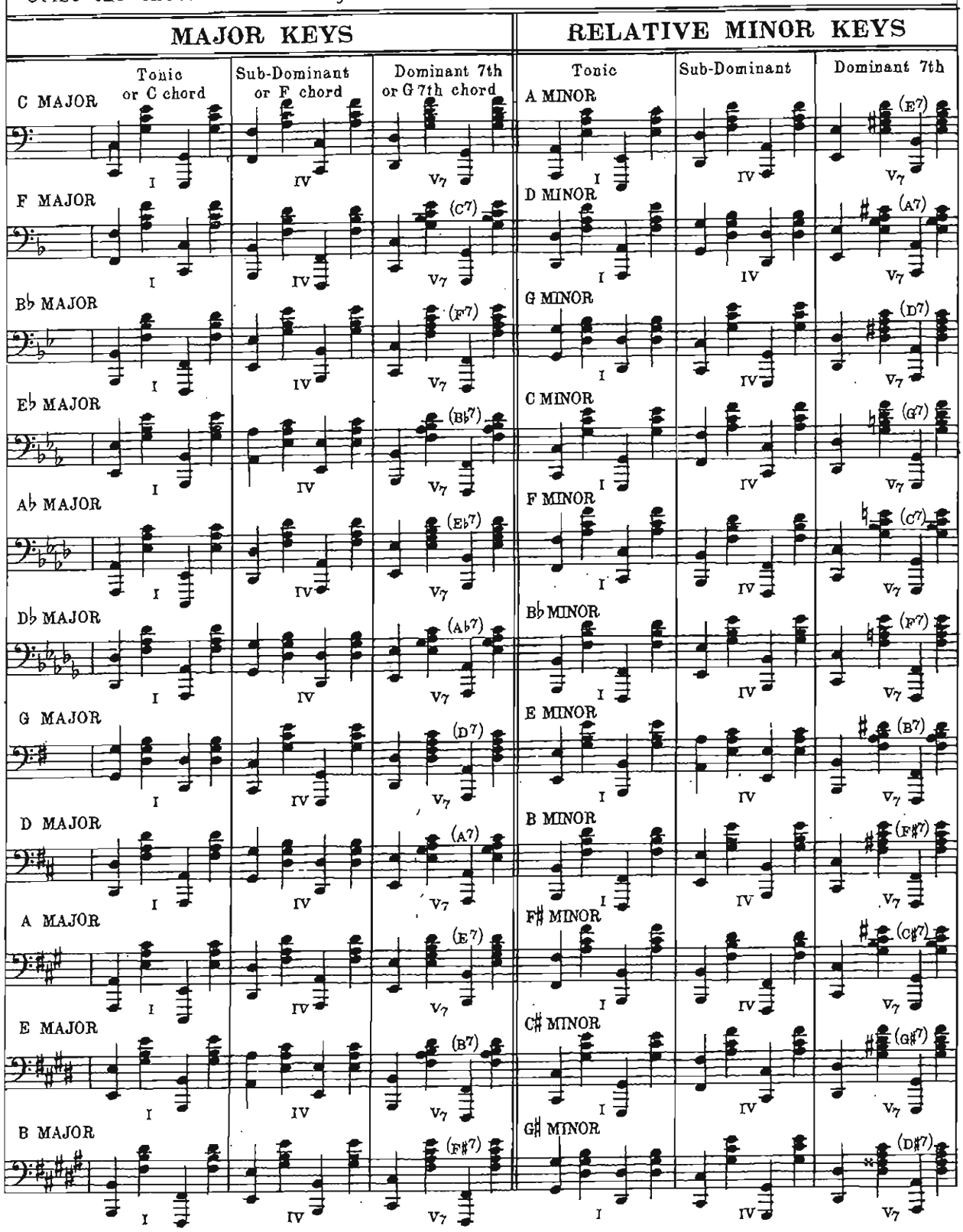
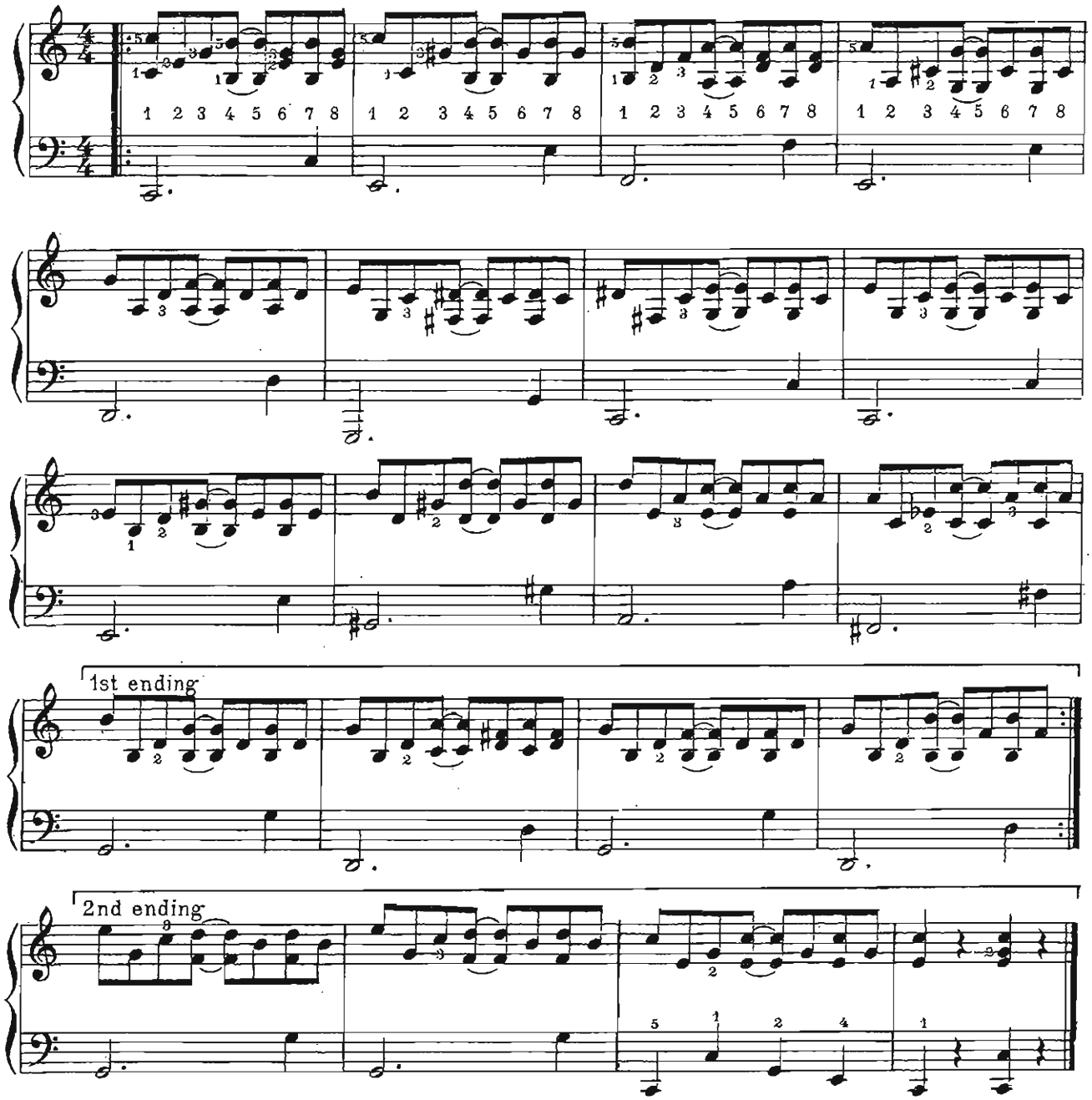


TABLE OF PRINCIPAL CHORDS

Use these combinations in supplying the bass, as indicated by the numerals in Examples: 7, 14, 20, etc.—also when converting, or "jazzing up" popular song tunes. Memorize the chords for one key each week until all are thoroughly mastered.

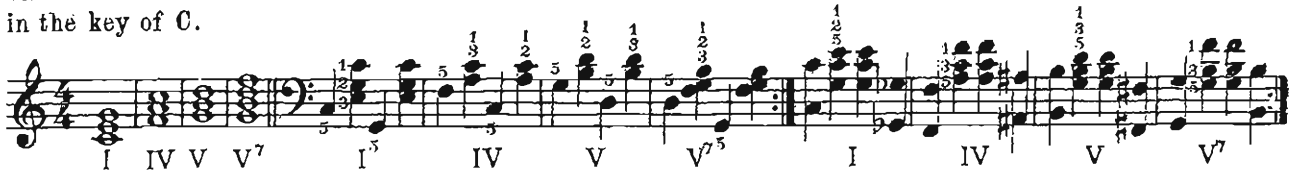


EXAMPLE 5.



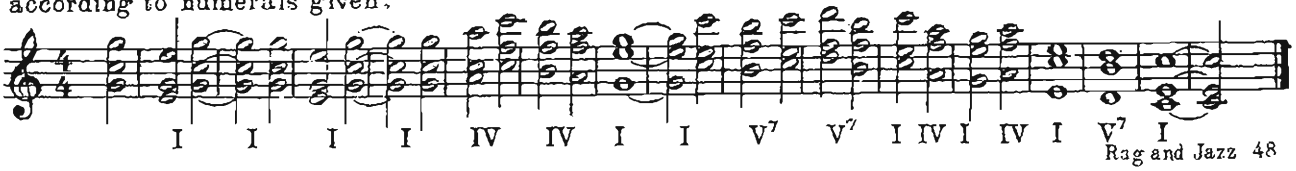
Chord combinations in the key of C.

EXAMPLE 6.

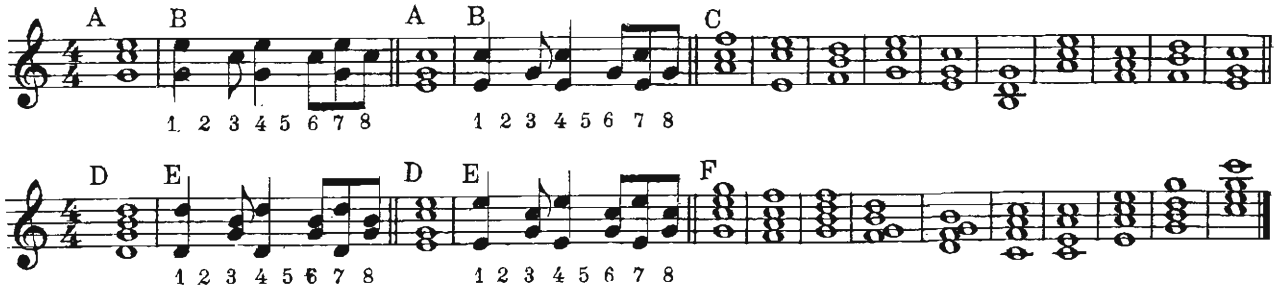


Rag this piece and supply bass according to numerals given.

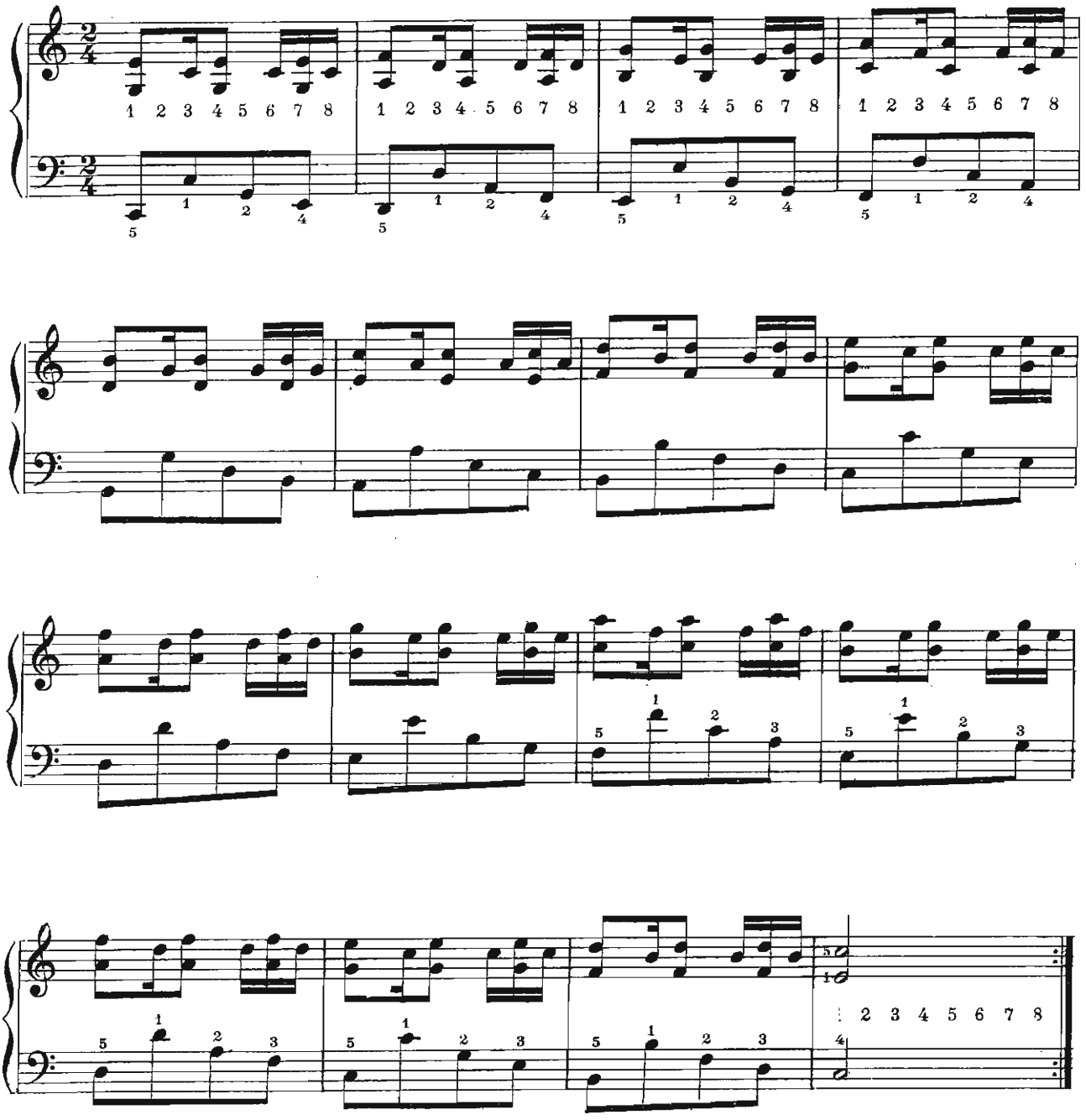
EXAMPLE 7.



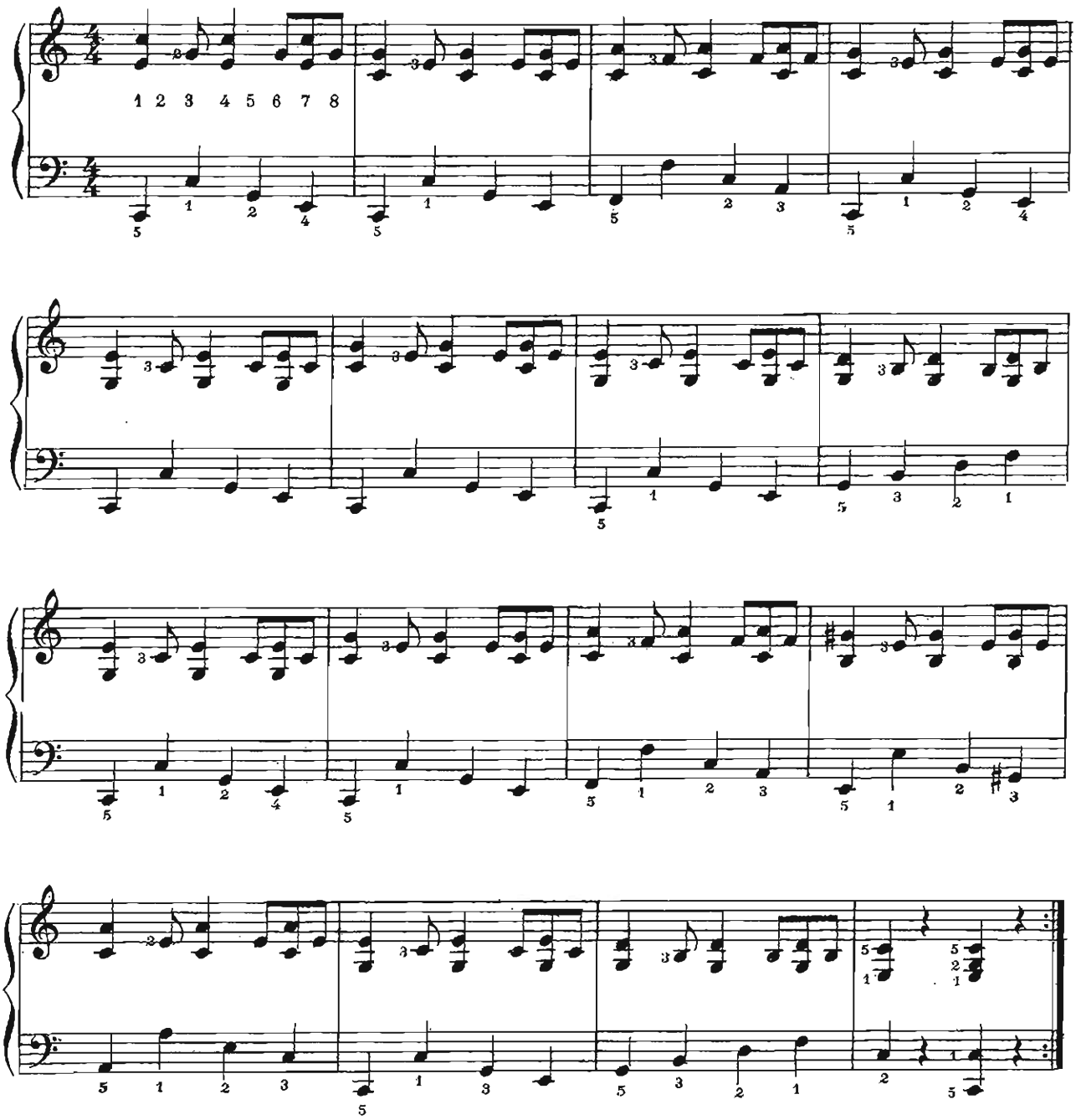
EXAMPLE 8.



EXAMPLE 9.



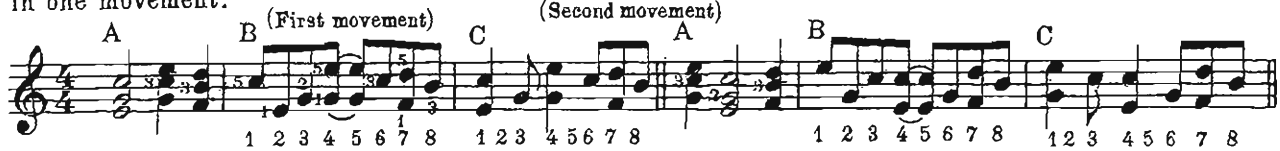
EXAMPLE 10.



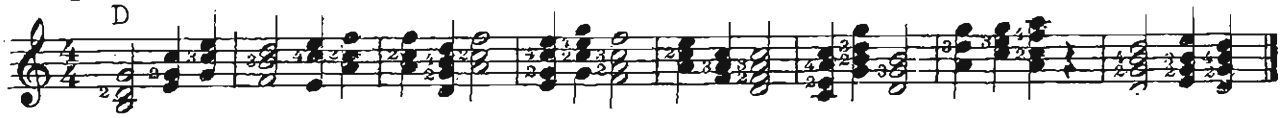
Ragging three chords in one movement.

EXAMPLE 11.

(Second movement)



Change to second chord on count 4 — third chord on count 7.



Example 10.

A further example of the Second Movement. Practice this slowly and carefully at first.

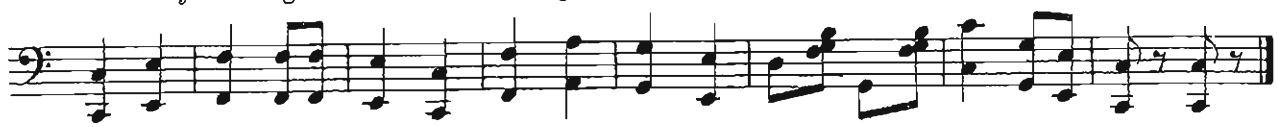
Example 11. – Ragging Three Chords

This shows how a measure containing three chords can be played either in the first or second movement. You will notice that you jump to the second chord on count 4 and to the third chord on count 7.

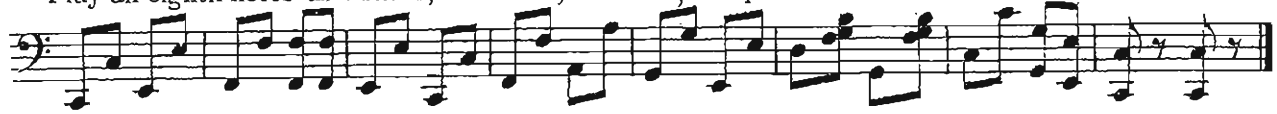
Go over the examples A-B-C a few times

Then play each measure of Example D in the same manner, that is, convert each measure into the first movement; then go back and convert the same into the second movement.

When converting any piece into ragtime, the bass notes should, as usual, come in on counts 1, 3, 5, 7. This is done by dividing all bass notes into eighth notes. — For instance, if written like this:



Play all eighth notes as written, but divide, or double, the quarter notes — like this:



Play the "Suwanee River" as it is written.

Now play the treble alone, converting each measure into the First movement.

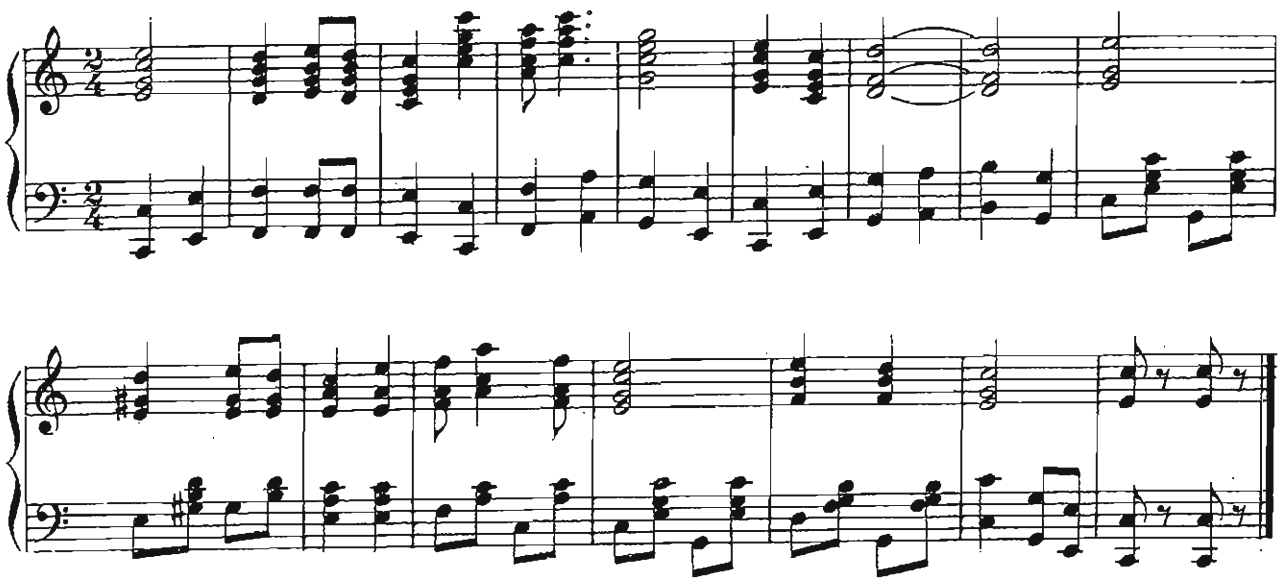
Next, play it in the Second movement.

Now, play the bass alone, in eighth notes according to the above illustration.

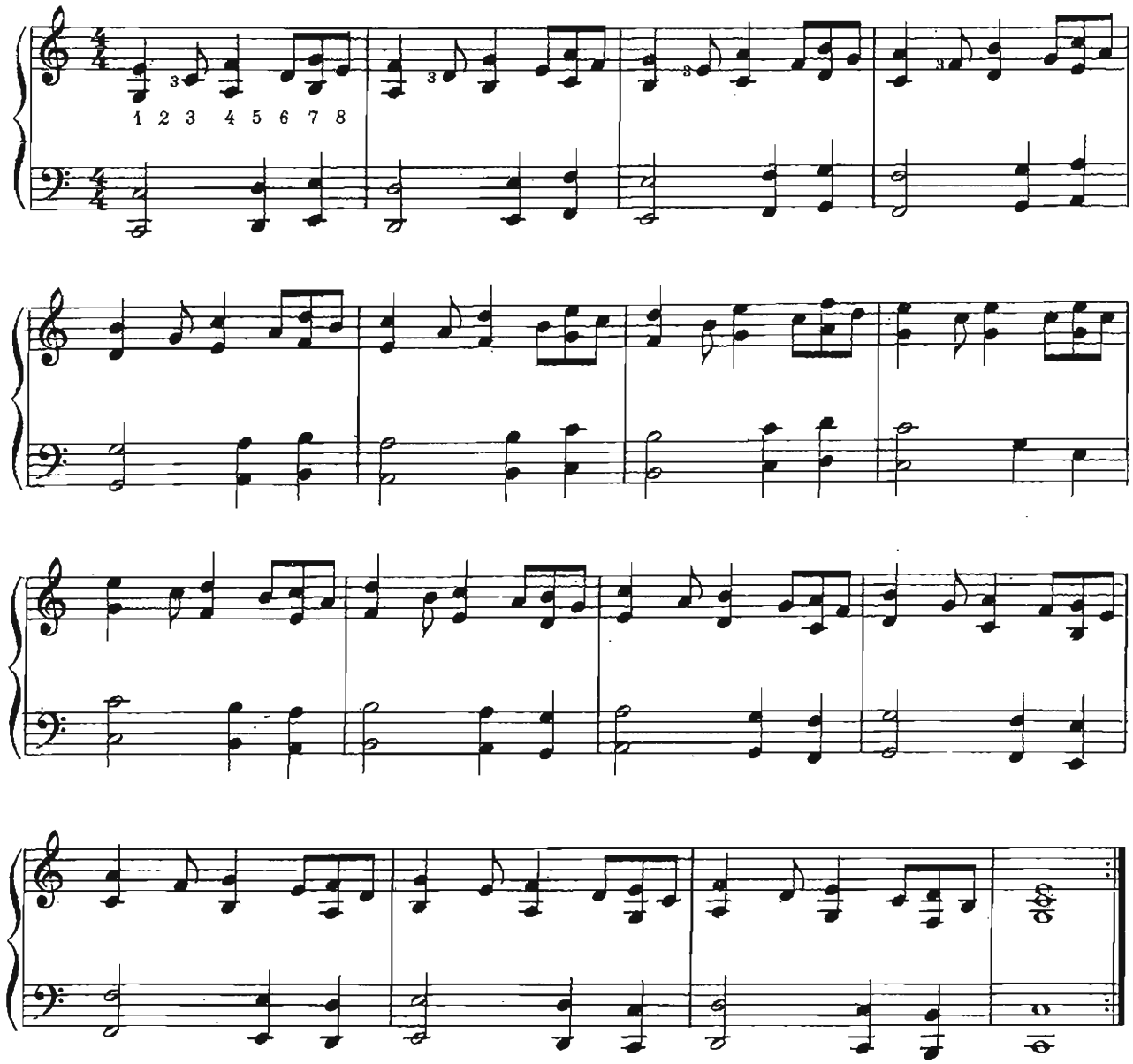
Next, play both chords together — first in the First movement — then using the Second movement.

NOTE. — The last 8 beats of any piece or strain should not be played in ragtime. In order to give the piece a definite ending, they should be played as written.

THE SUWANEE RIVER

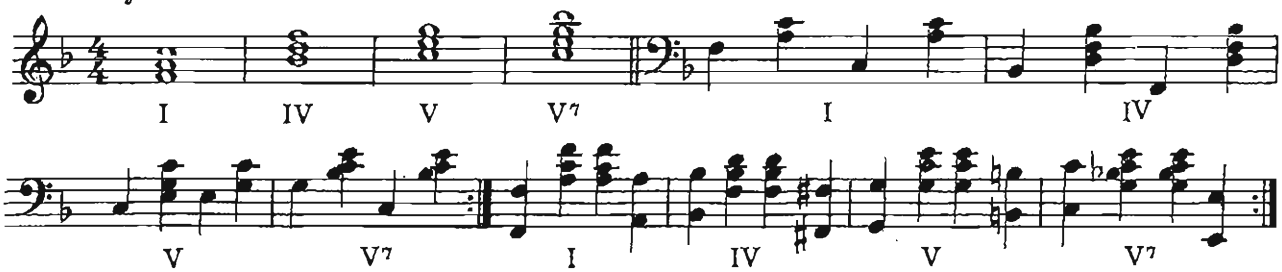


EXAMPLE 12.



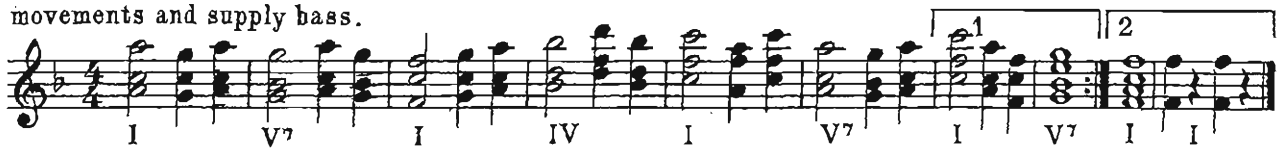
Chord combinations in the key of F.

EXAMPLE 13.



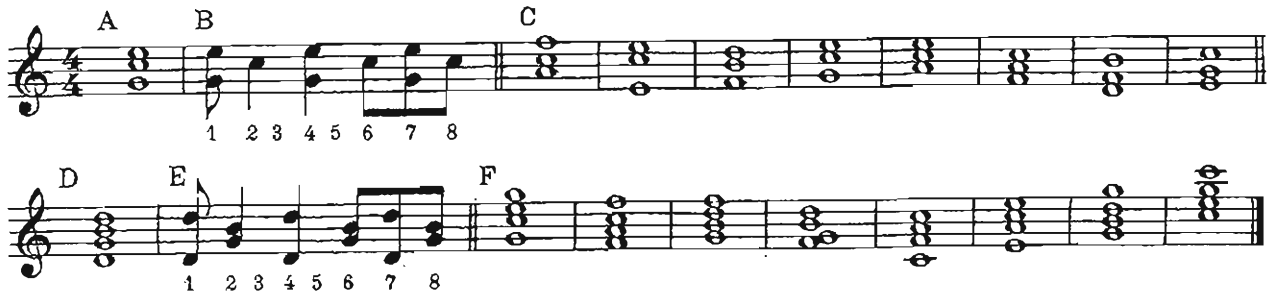
Convert into first and second movements and supply bass.

EXAMPLE 14.

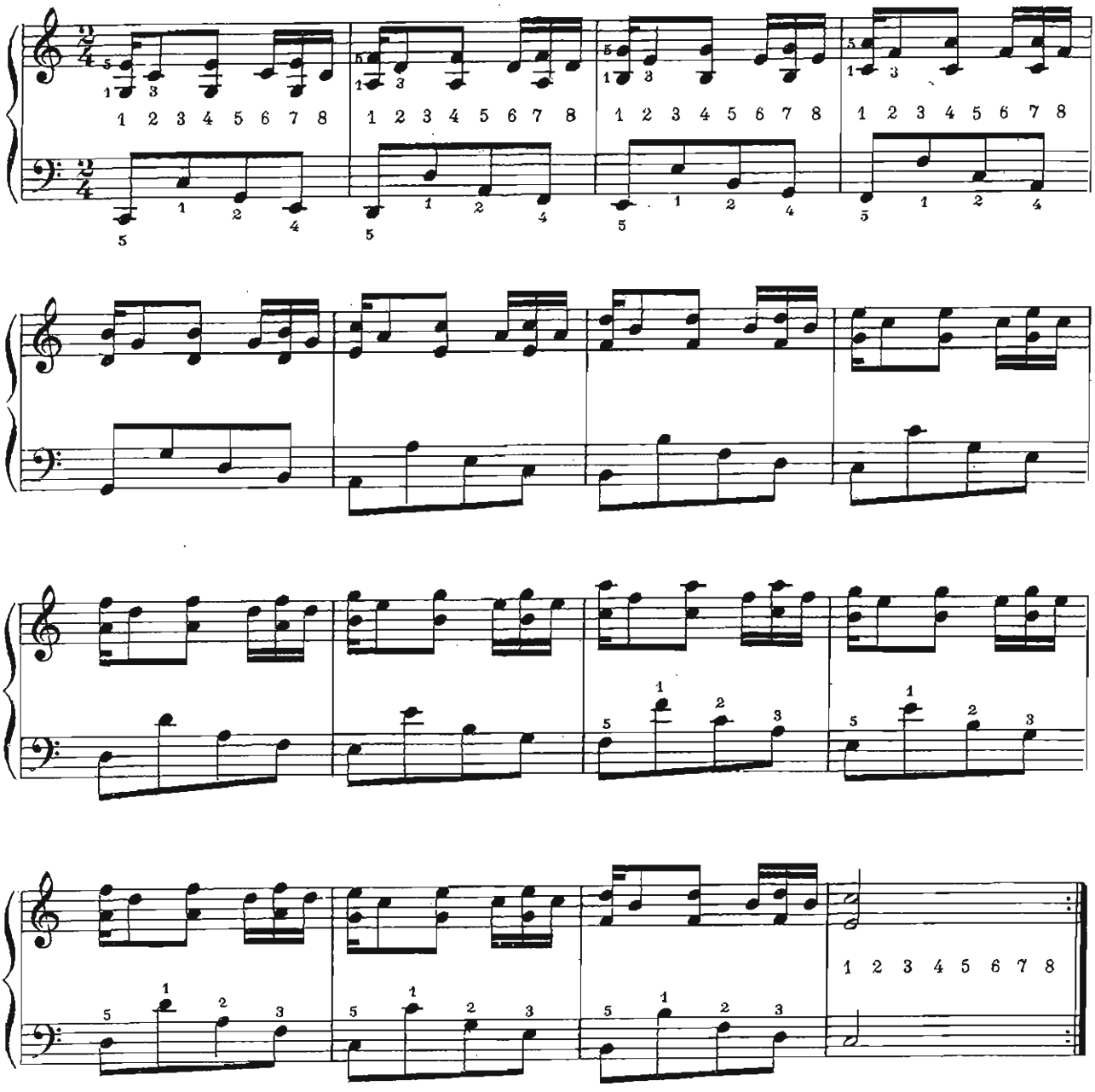


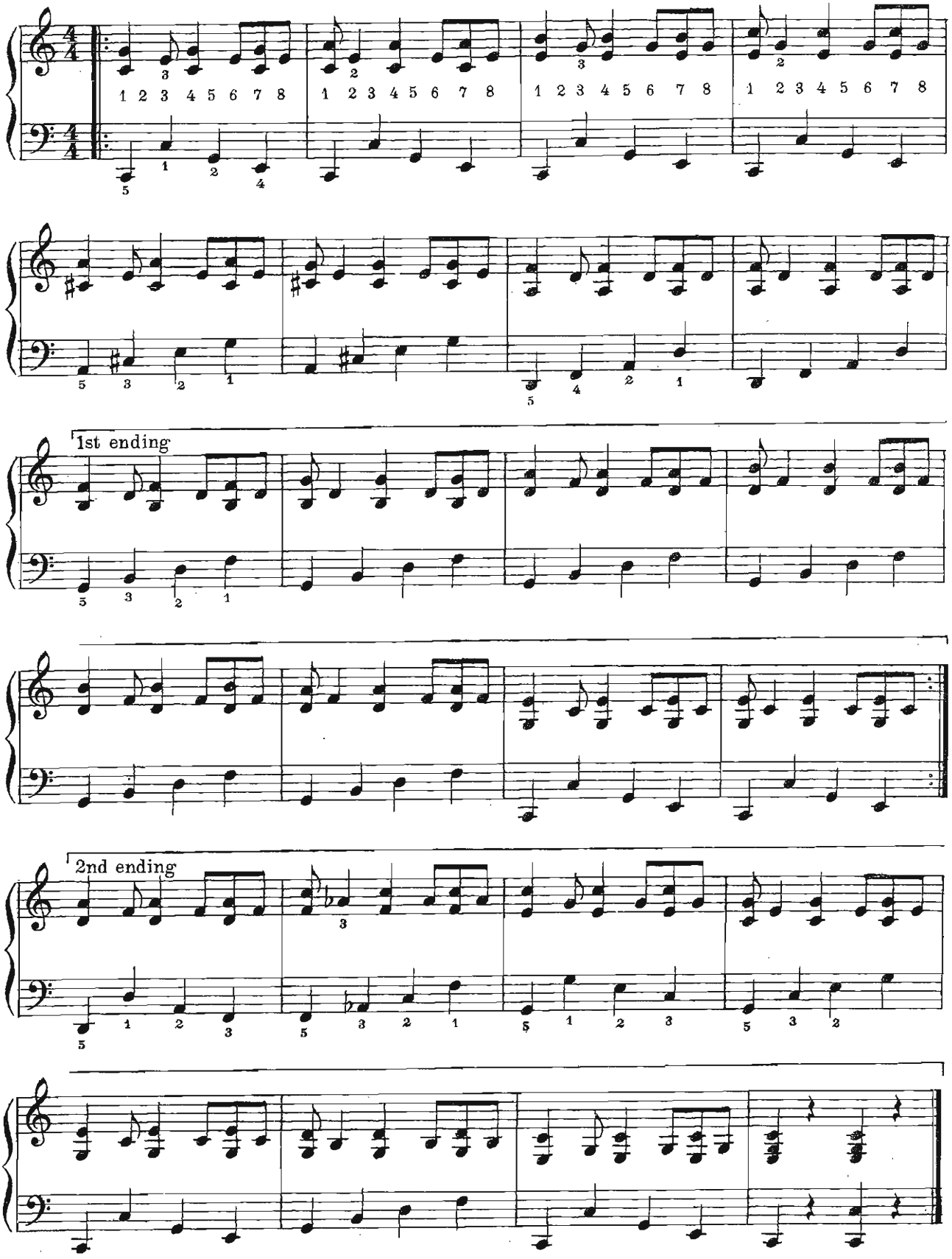
EXAMPLE 15.

The Third Movement.

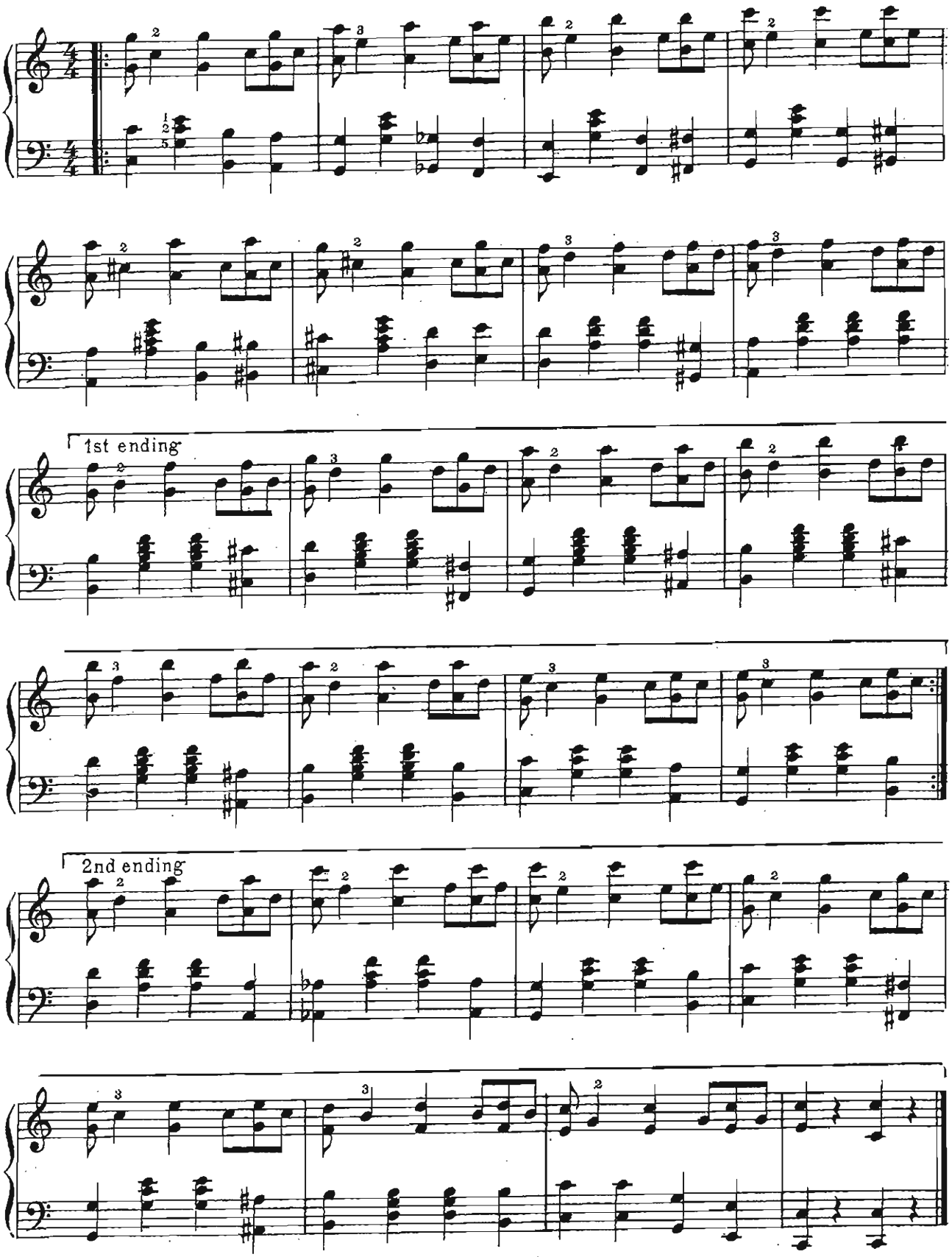


EXAMPLE 16.




1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1st ending
2nd ending

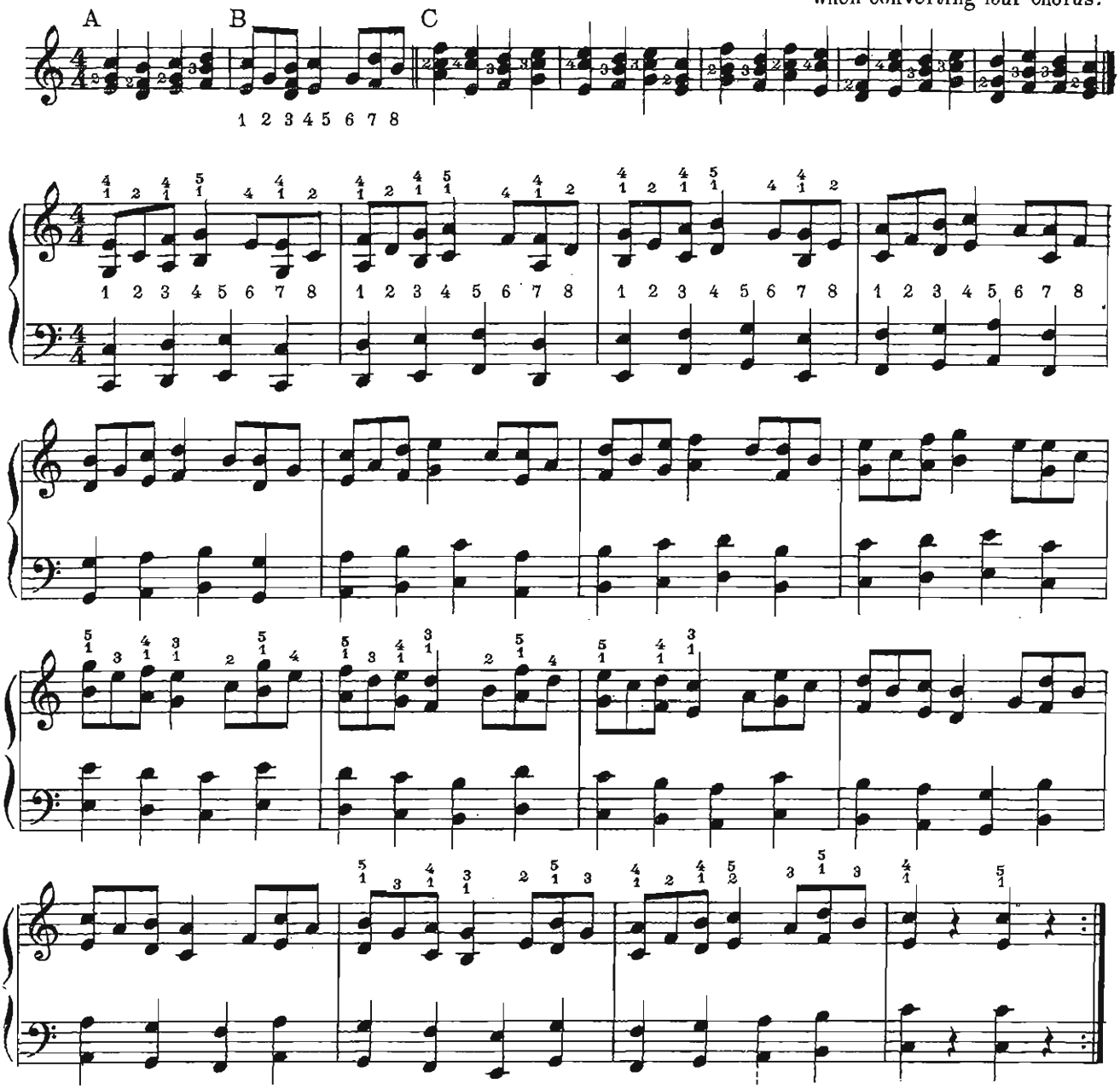
EXAMPLE 17.



EXAMPLE 18.

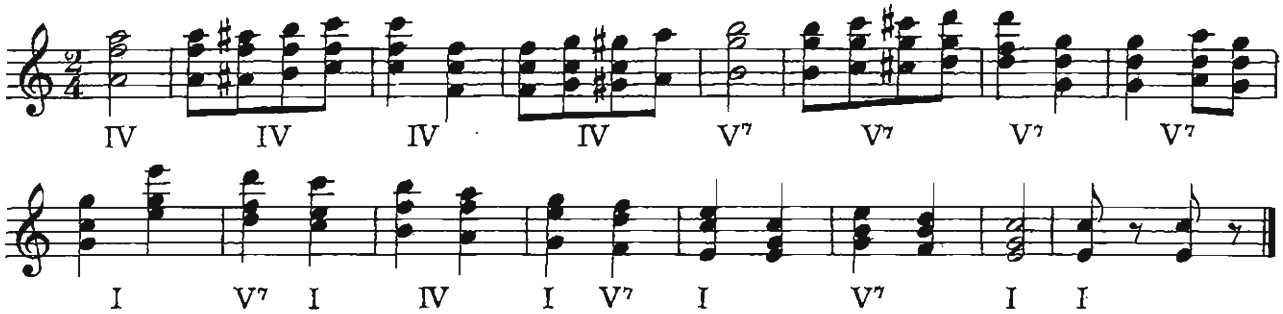
Ragging four chords
in one movement.

Use only the third movement
when converting four chords.

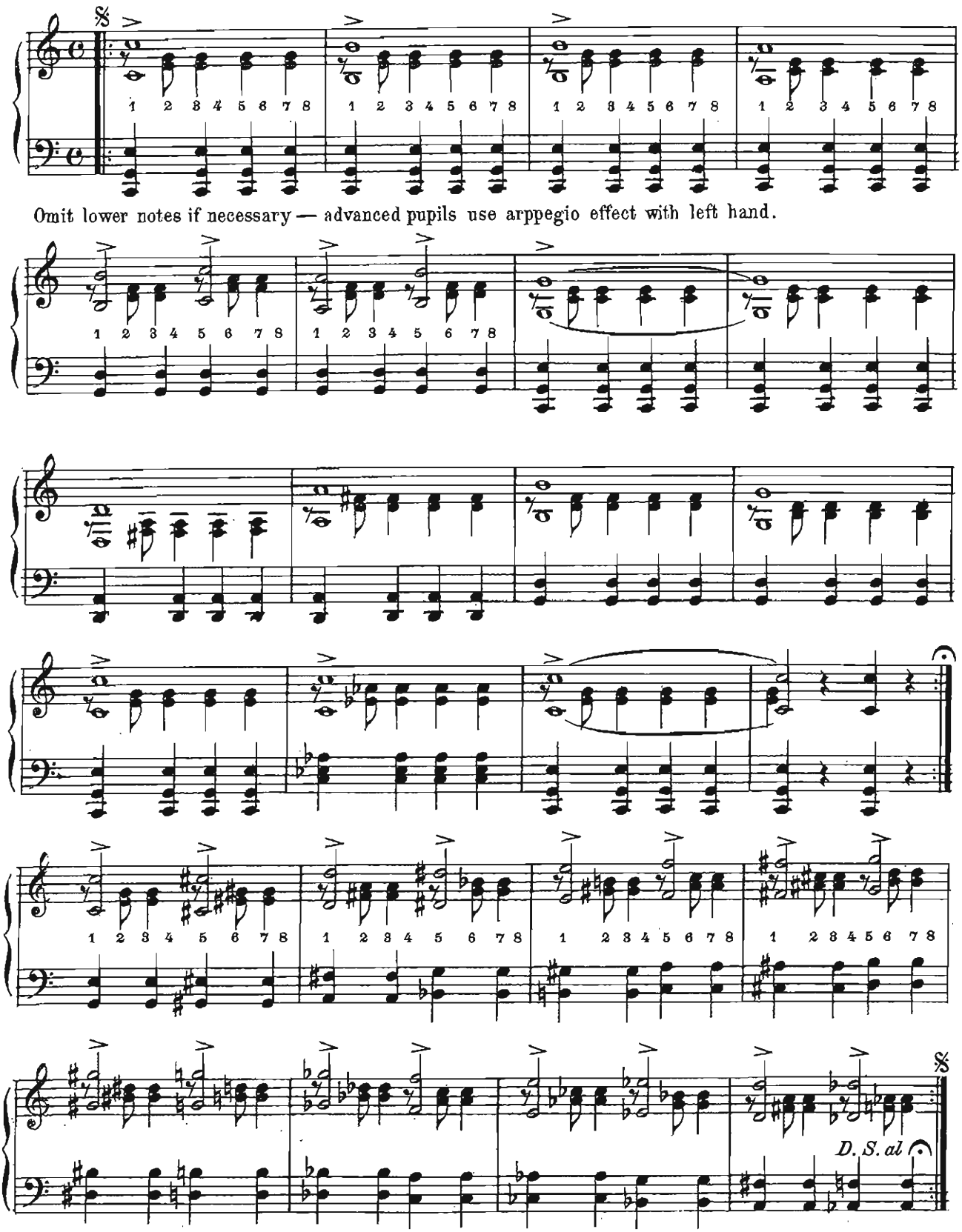


EXAMPLE 20.

Convert and supply bass.



EXAMPLE 20a



Omit lower notes if necessary — advanced pupils use arppegio effect with left hand.

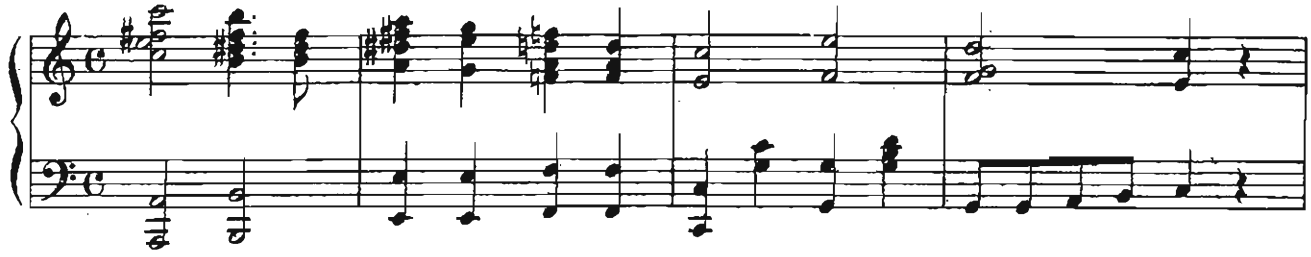
After the above number has been thoroughly mastered as written then convert it into the various movements.

Mendelssohn's Wedding March.

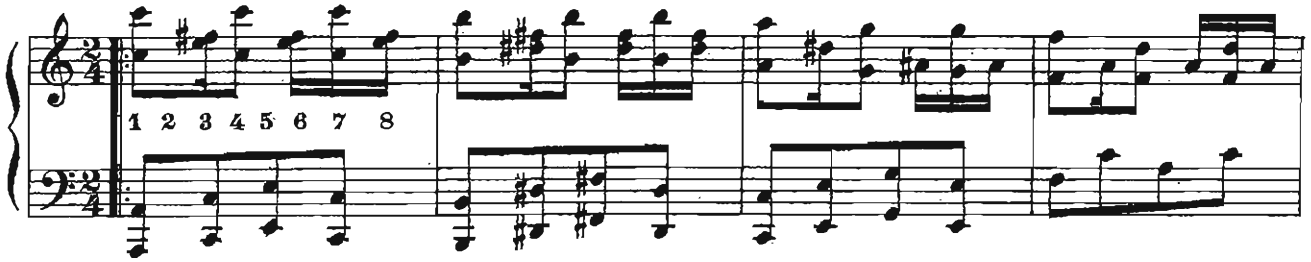
IN RAGTIME.

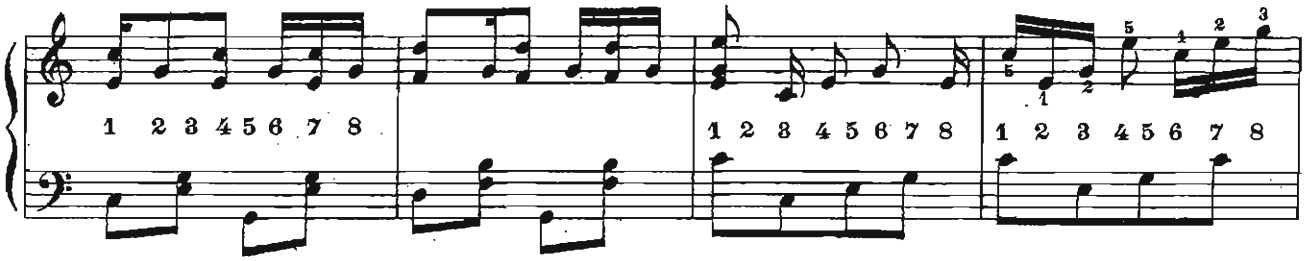
Arr. by A. W. CHRISTENSEN.

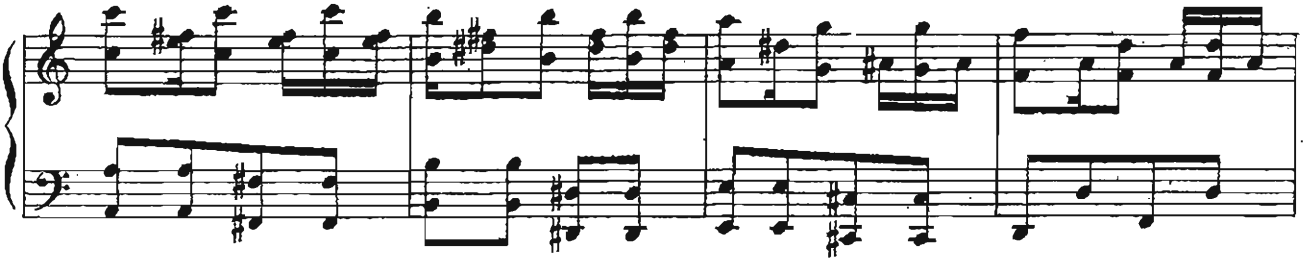
INTRO.

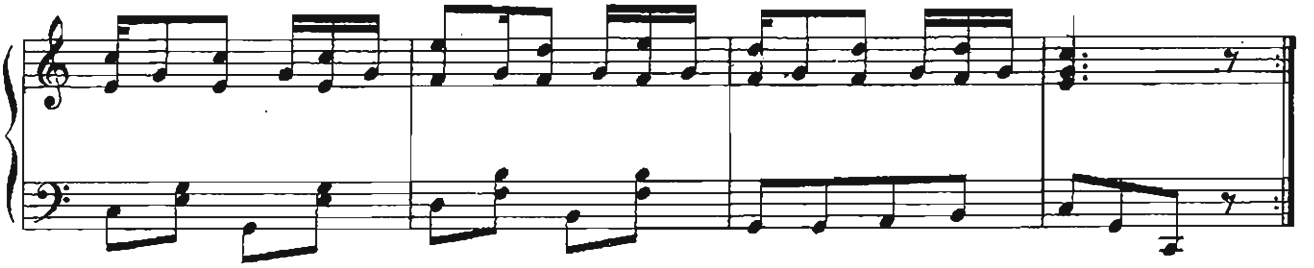


Play the chords contained in the treble.





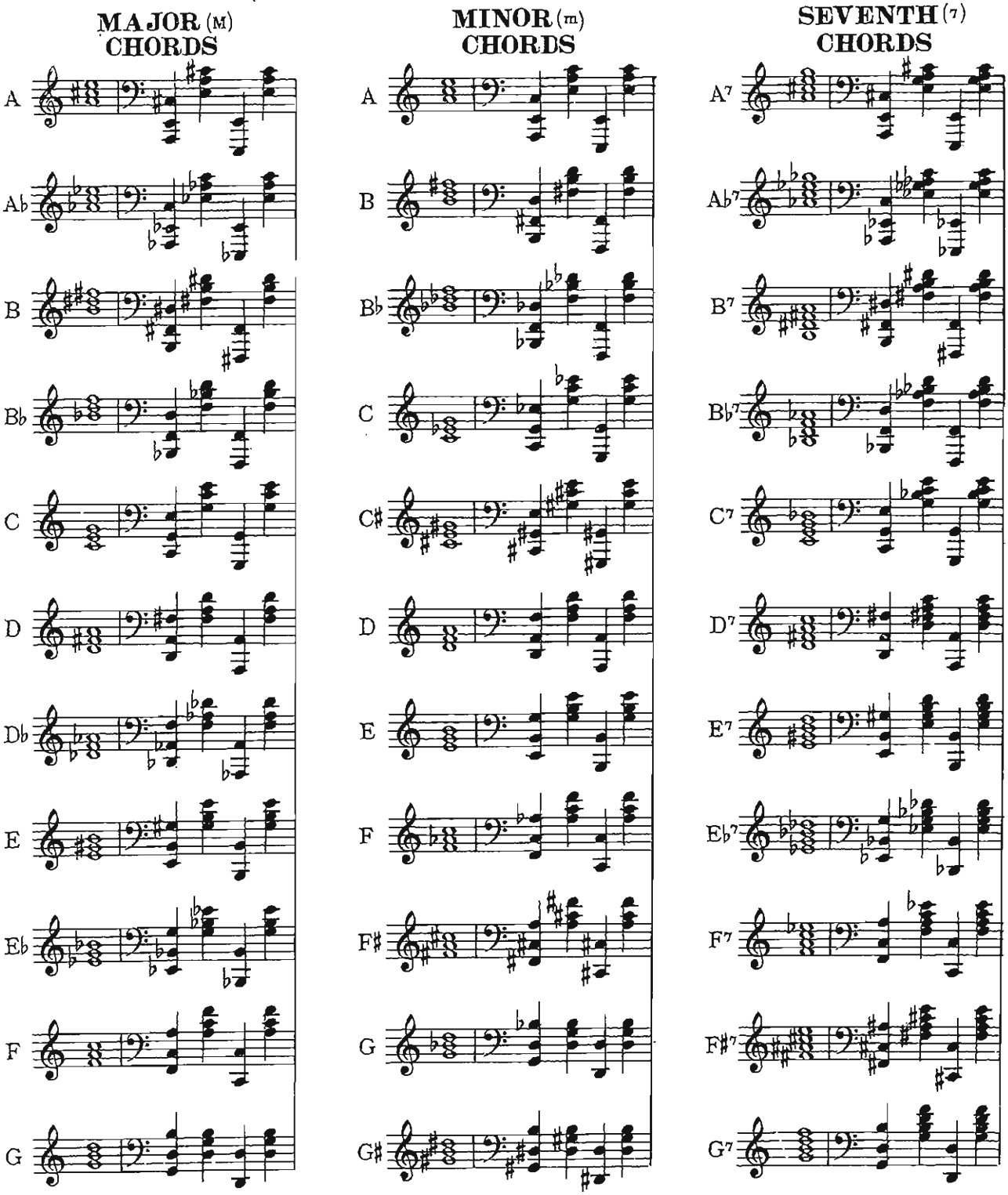




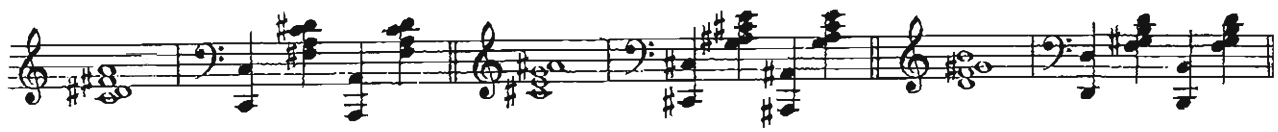
PRINCIPAL CHORDS

Arranged in alphabetical order for quick reference.

(Octaves may be used in place of the 10ths if necessary.)



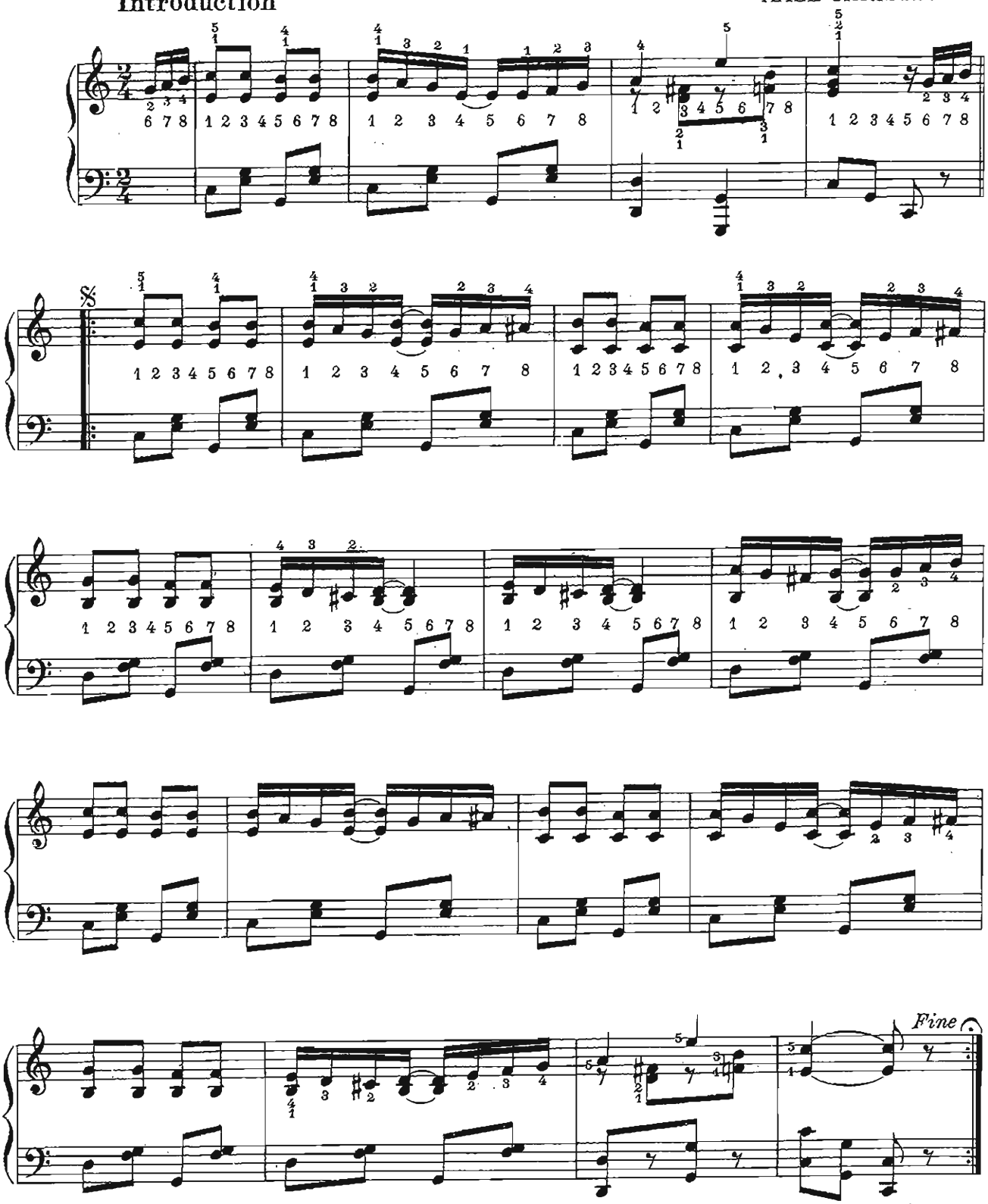
Diminished Seventh (°7) Chords



THE WEBSTER GROVE RAG

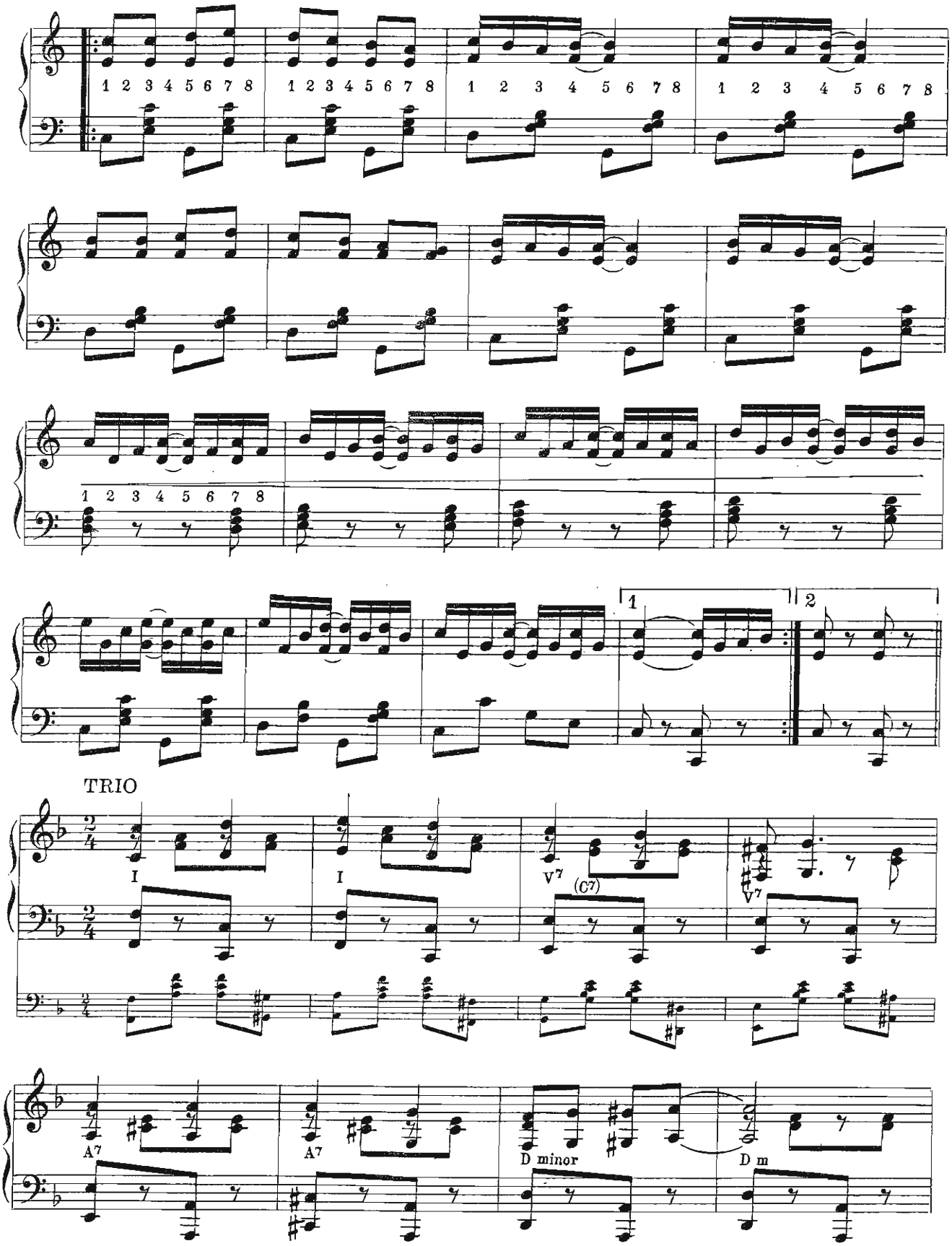
Introduction

AXEL CHRISTENSEN

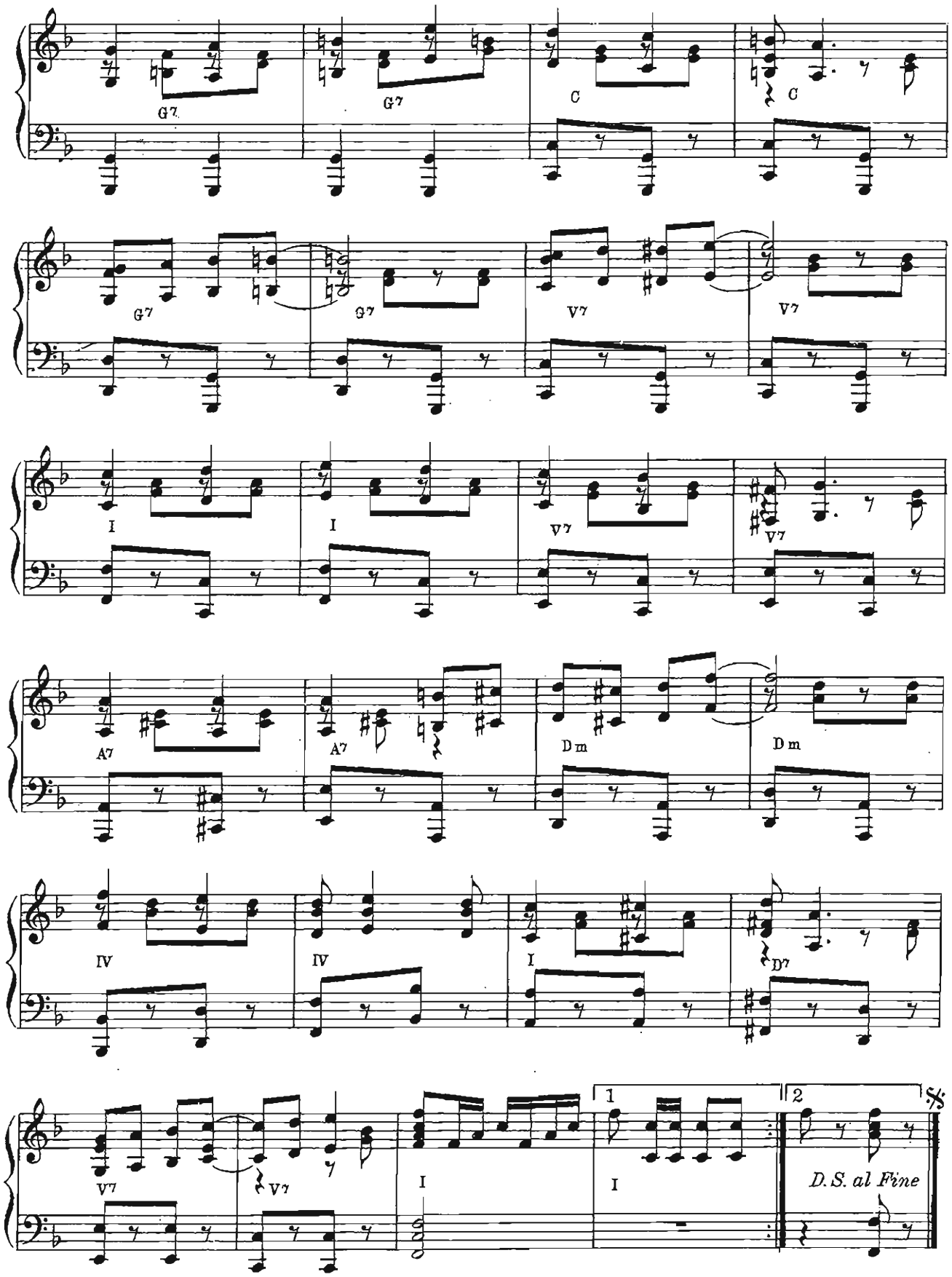


Pupils Note: First play this rag as written; then convert the Trio into the various ragtime movements.

Copyright, 1915, by Axel W. Christensen

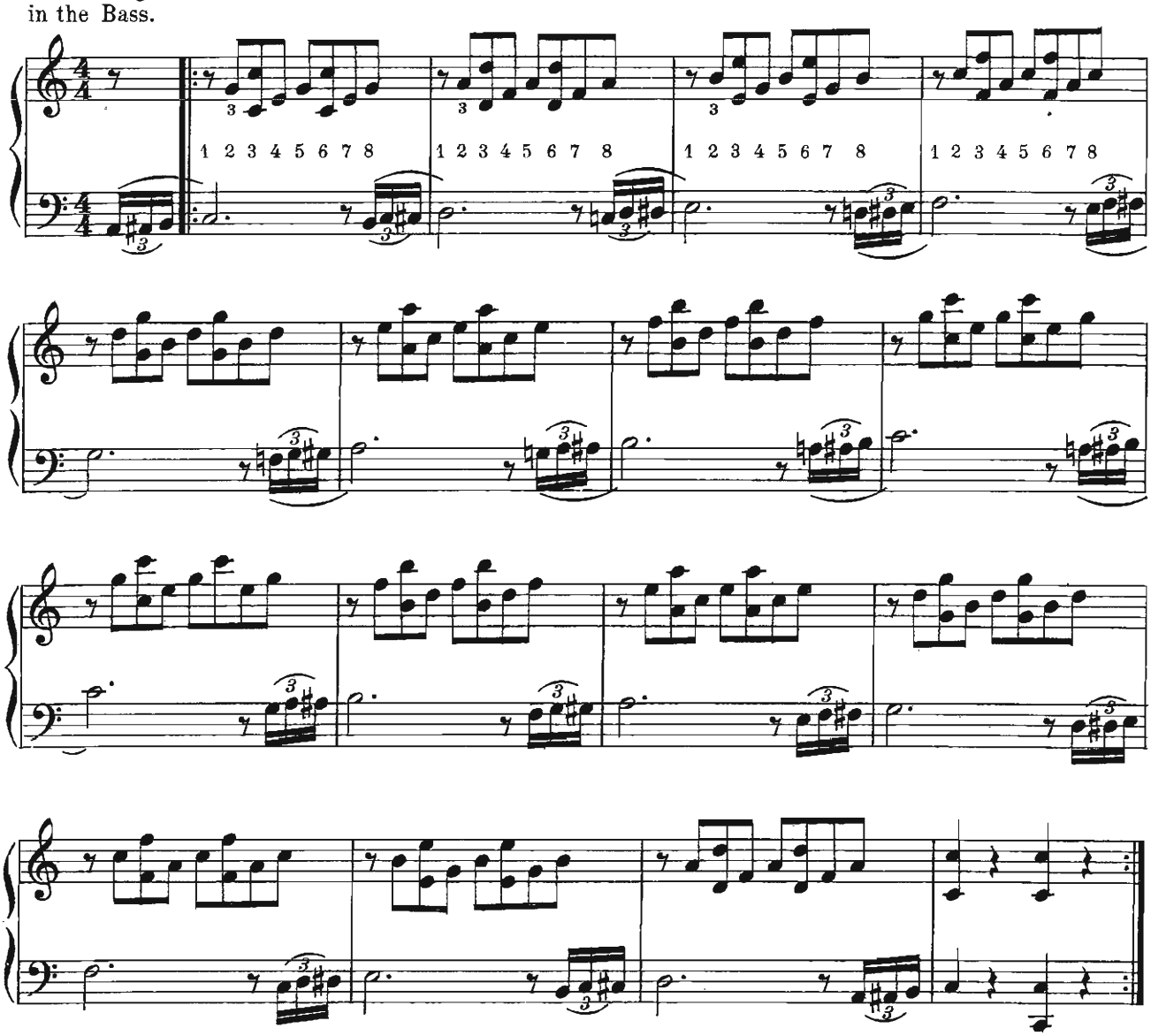


Advanced pupils continue double bass arrangement


G7
G7
C
C
G7
G7
V7
V7
I
I
V7
V7
A7
A7
Dm
Dm
IV
IV
I
D7
V7
V7
I
I
1
2
D.S. al Fine

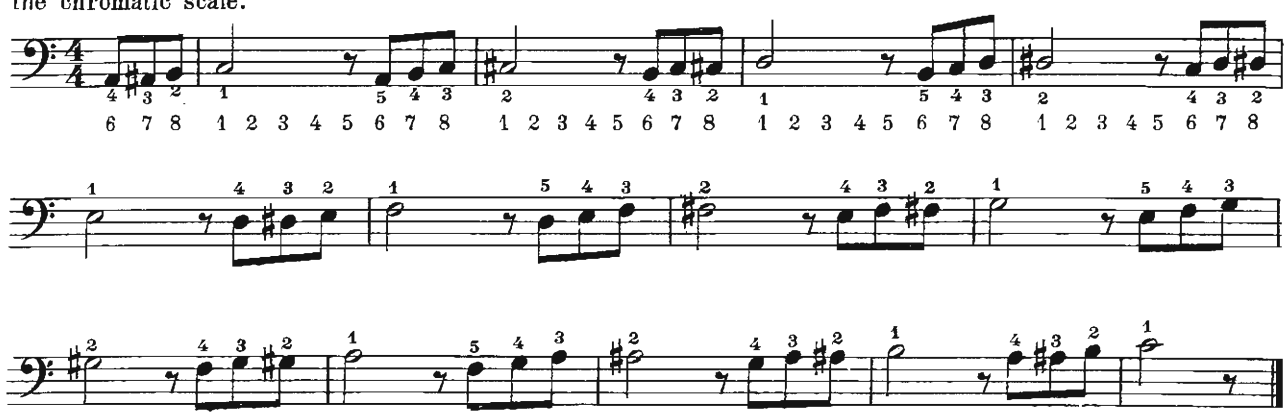
EXAMPLE 23.

Illustrating the "Smear" in the Bass.



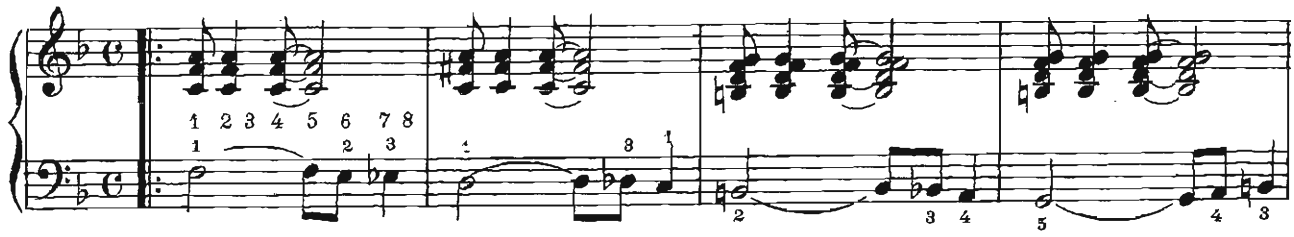
EXAMPLE 24.

Fingering for "Smearing" the chromatic scale.

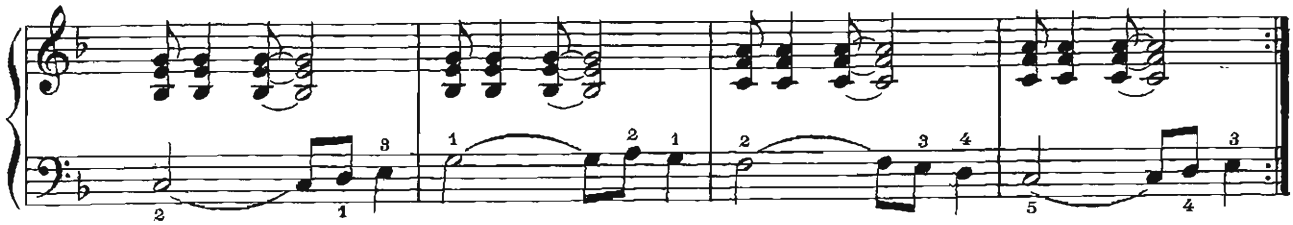


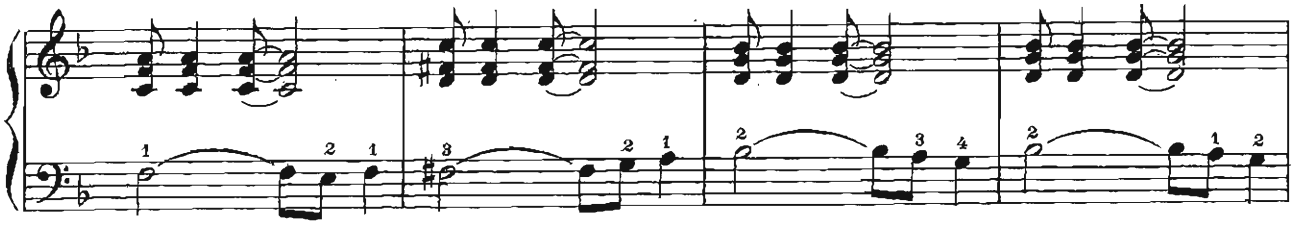
EXAMPLE 25.

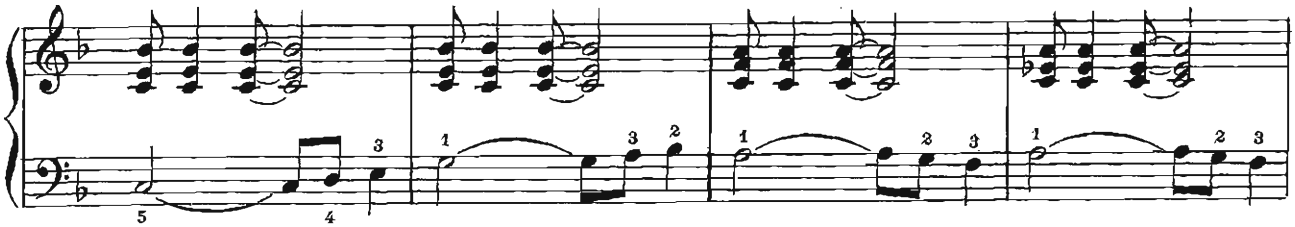
The Fifth Movement.

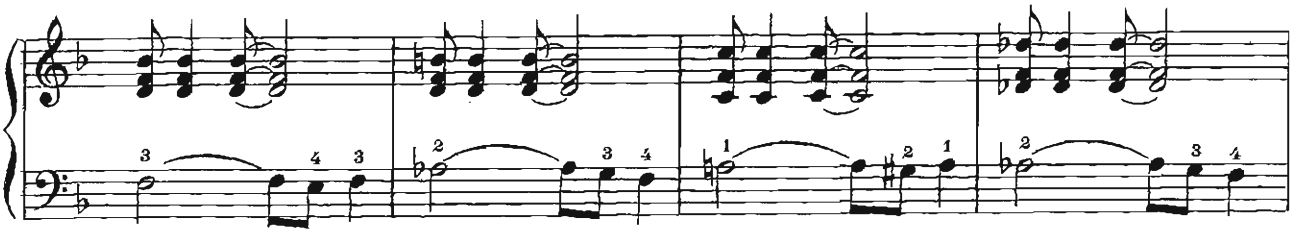


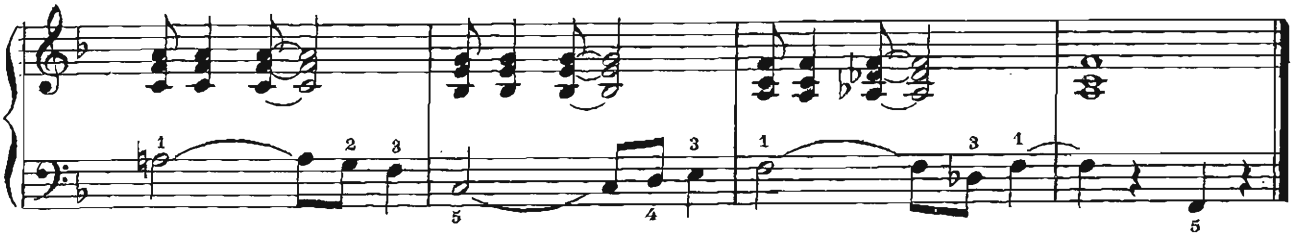
Bass can be played in octaves if desired.







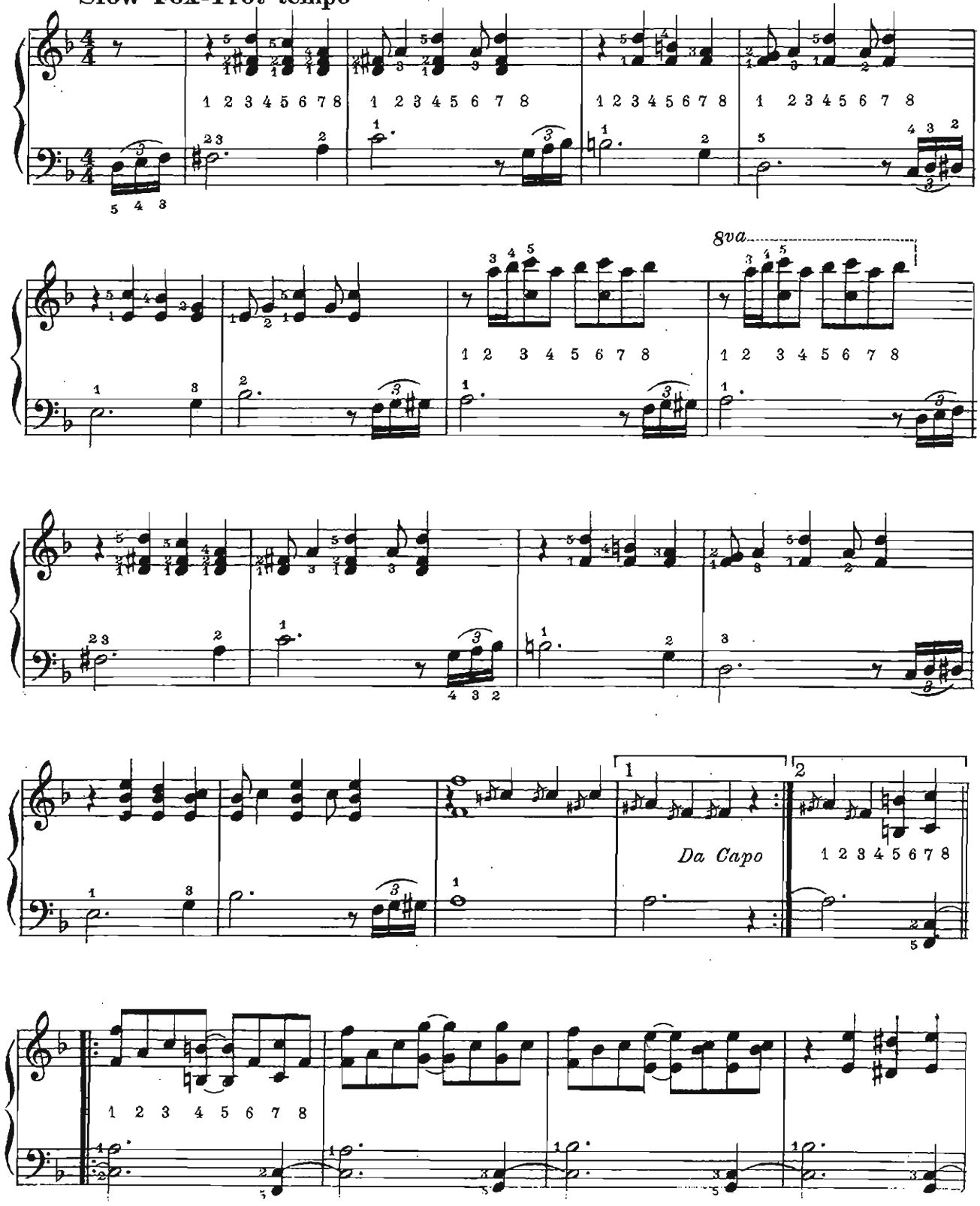


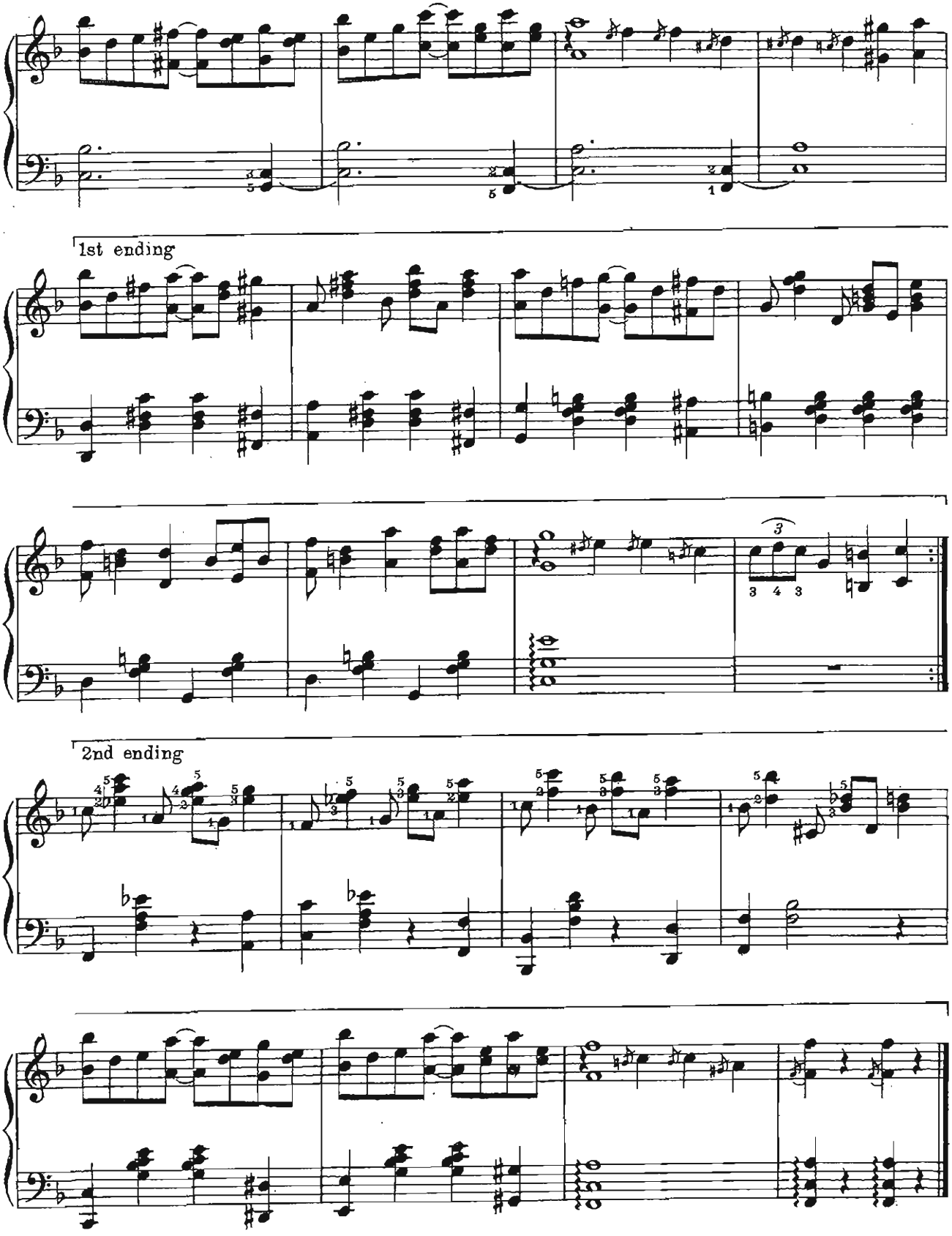


Illustrating the "Smear"
"Bassing Bass," "Arpeggio Bass," etc.

EXAMPLE 26.

Slow Fox-Trot tempo




1st ending
2nd ending

Ragtime Rings The Bell

Words & Music by
AXEL CHRISTENSEN

Slow Fox Trot Tempo

Moderato

6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8
She went a - way to learn to play The kind of mus - ic Wag - ner
She got a seat for-got to eat Those rag - gy strains were so de -

made Not the kind that A - lex - an-der played Nor the kind to which the danc-ers swayed up-on her scales, As hard as
vine She just had them play-ing all the time "No more clas-sic tunes" she said "for mine" I want to learn, I sim-ply

nails, she practiced man-y hours each day, Till she wandered in a cab-a - ret, where she heard them play-ing rag they say.
yearn to play those rag-time strains some day Tho' I learned to play the oth-er way this is all I ev - er want to say.

CHORUS *Play chorus in Slow Fox Trot Tempo - Same as if written in 4/4 time like the verse.*

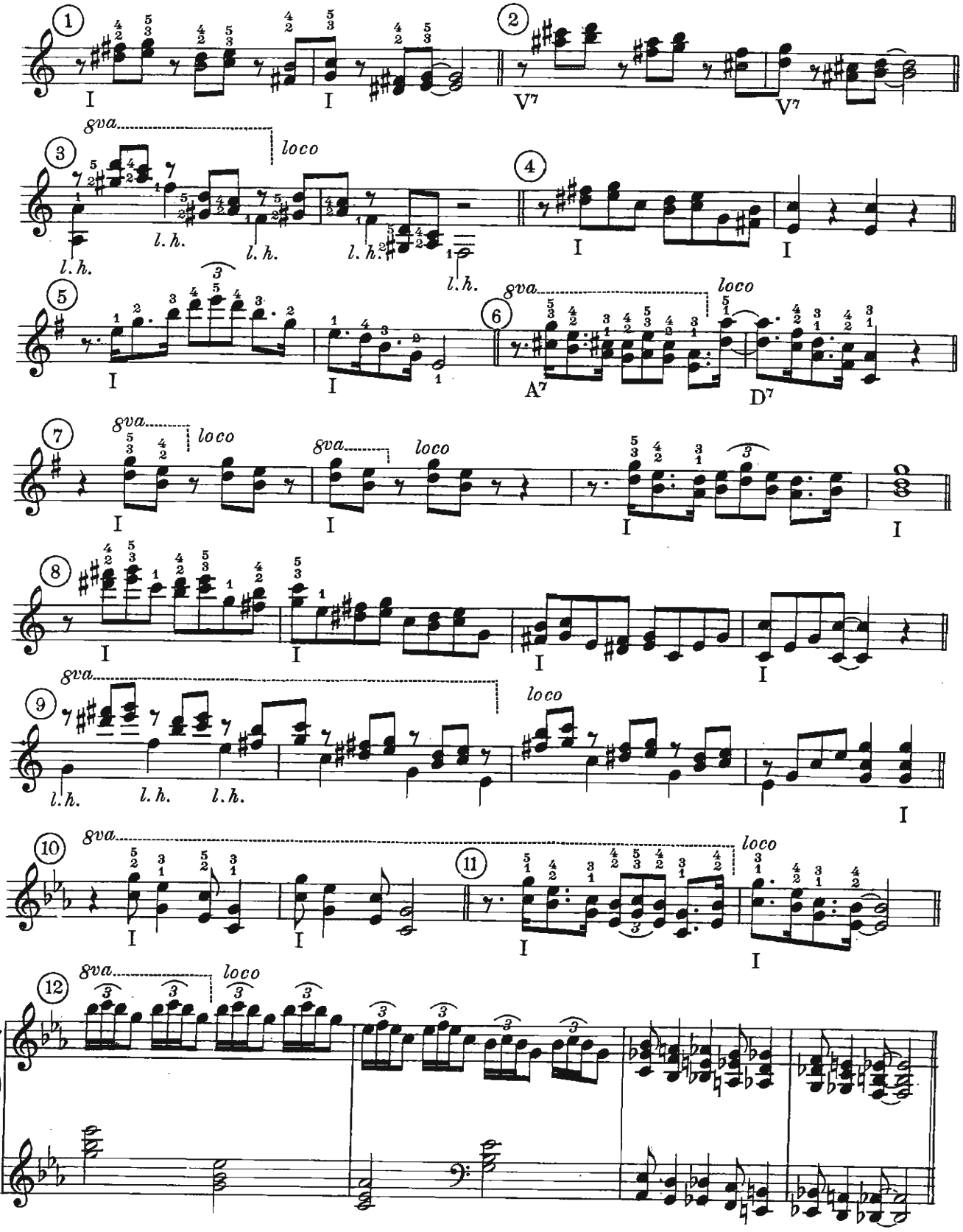
I E7 IV A7 Dm I I I E7 E7 Am
Syn - co - pate it, hes - i - tate it, Rag it thro' and thro' Har - mon - ize it hyp - no -

Am G D7 V7 V7 I E7 IV A7 Dm I
tize it I am strong for you Get that tin-gle, get that jin-gle, Get that swing as

I I E7 E7 Am C7 I V7 I I
well Warm and hap-py bright and snap-py Rag time rings the bell.

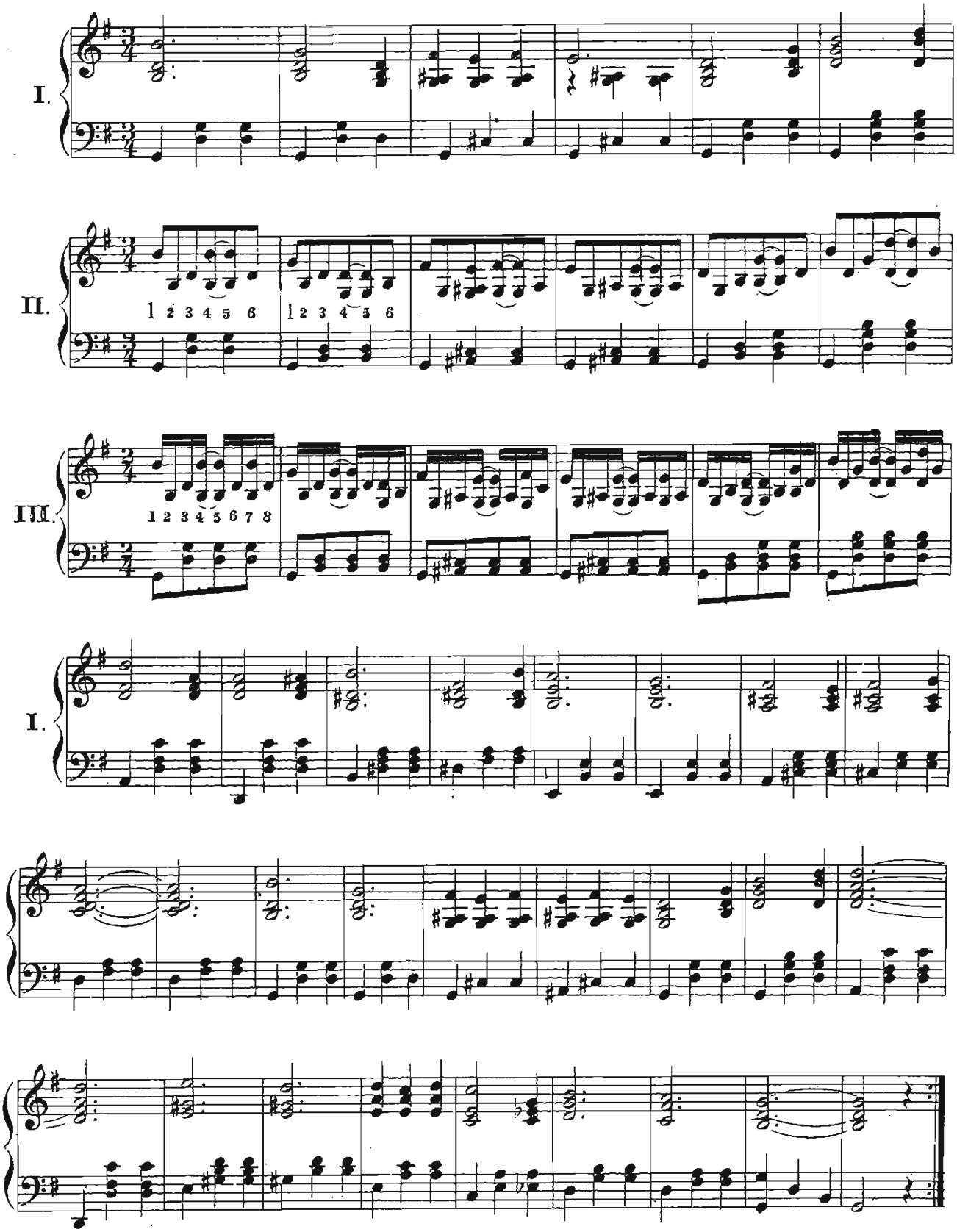
A FEW BREAKS

Fill in Bass as indicated.

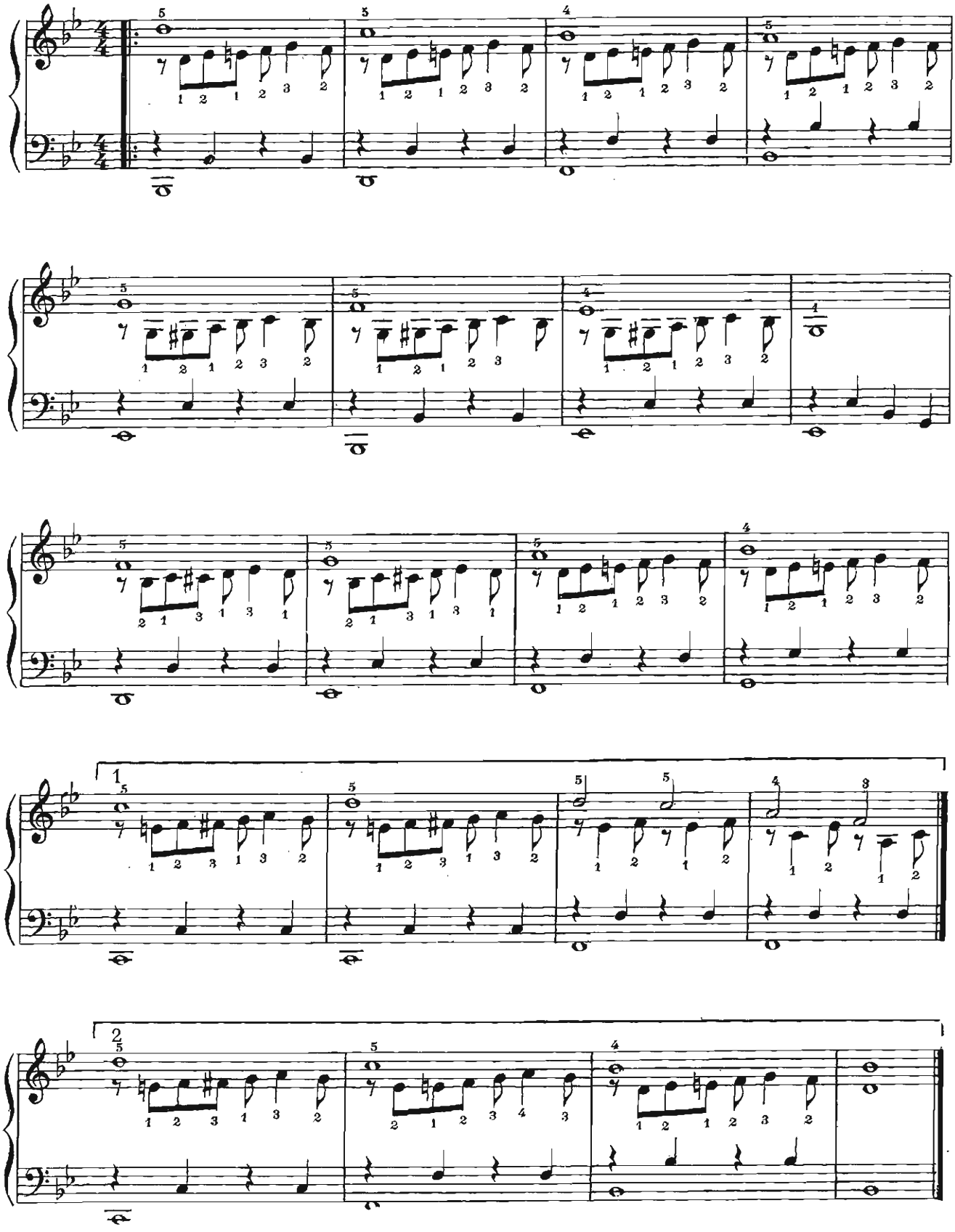


Example in "Ragging" Waltz Time.

By AXEL W. CHRISTENSEN.

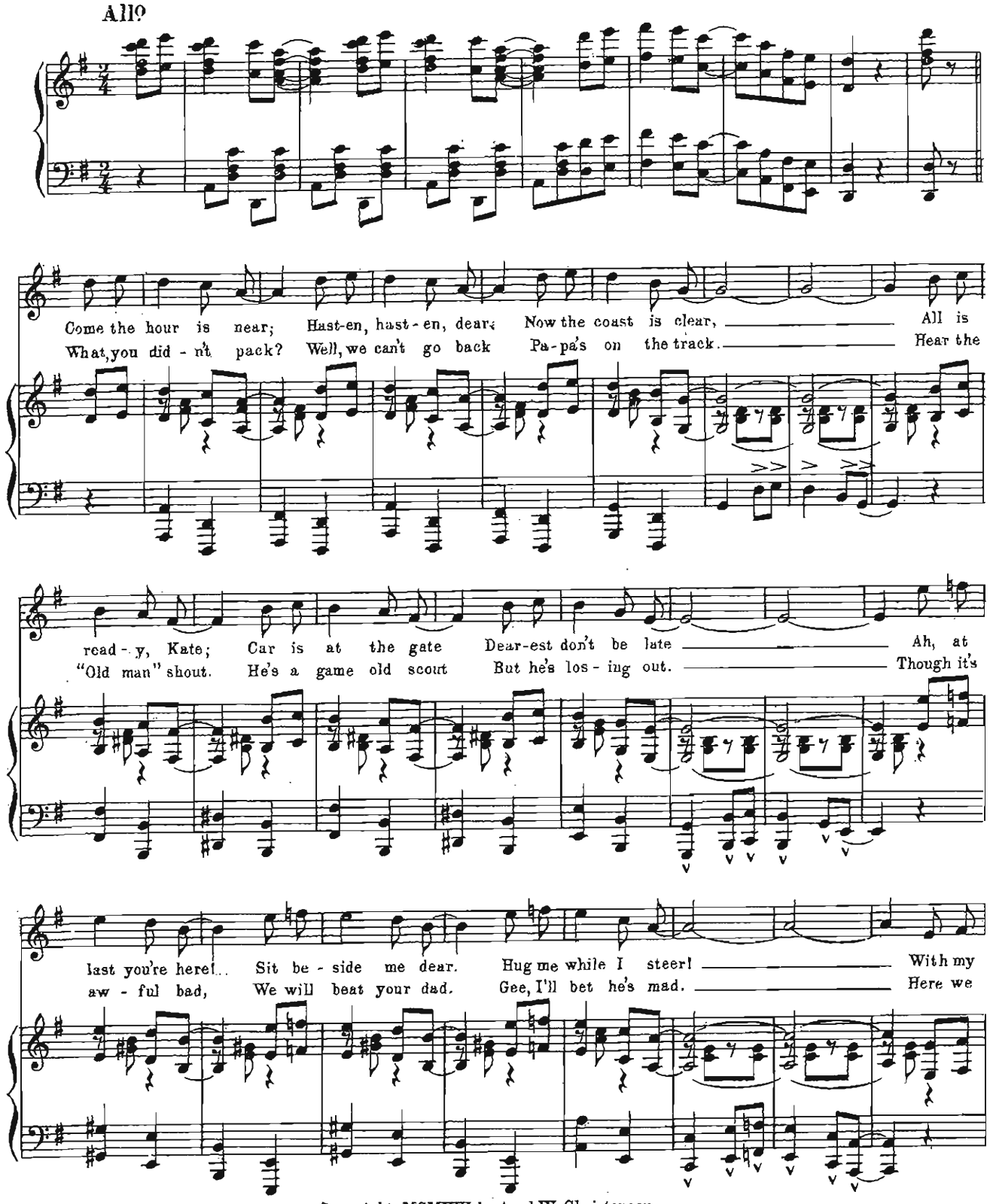


EXAMPLE 27.



IN MY RACING CAR

Pupils Note { First play the whole piece as written.
Then "rag" the chorus as per previous directions.



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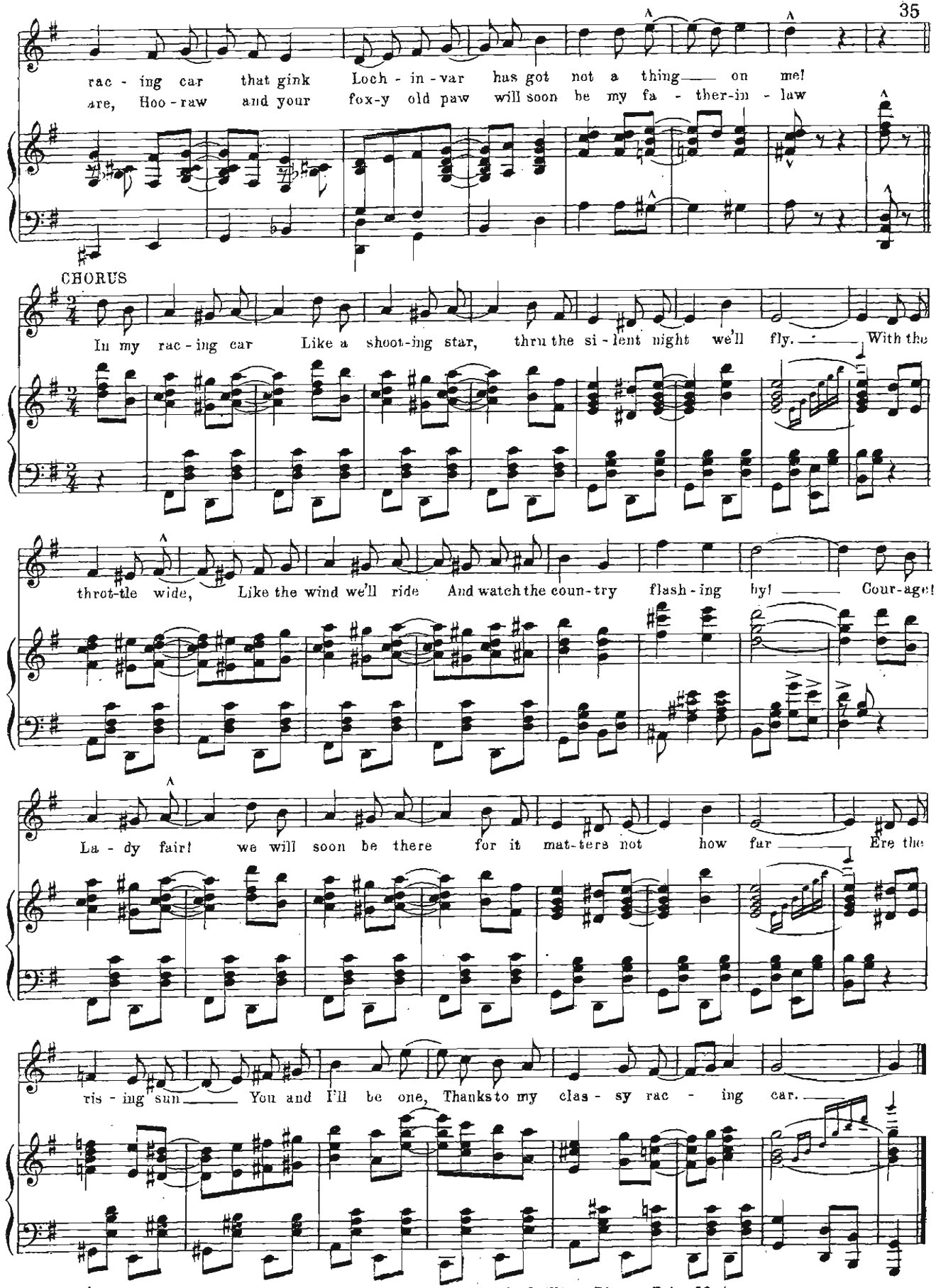
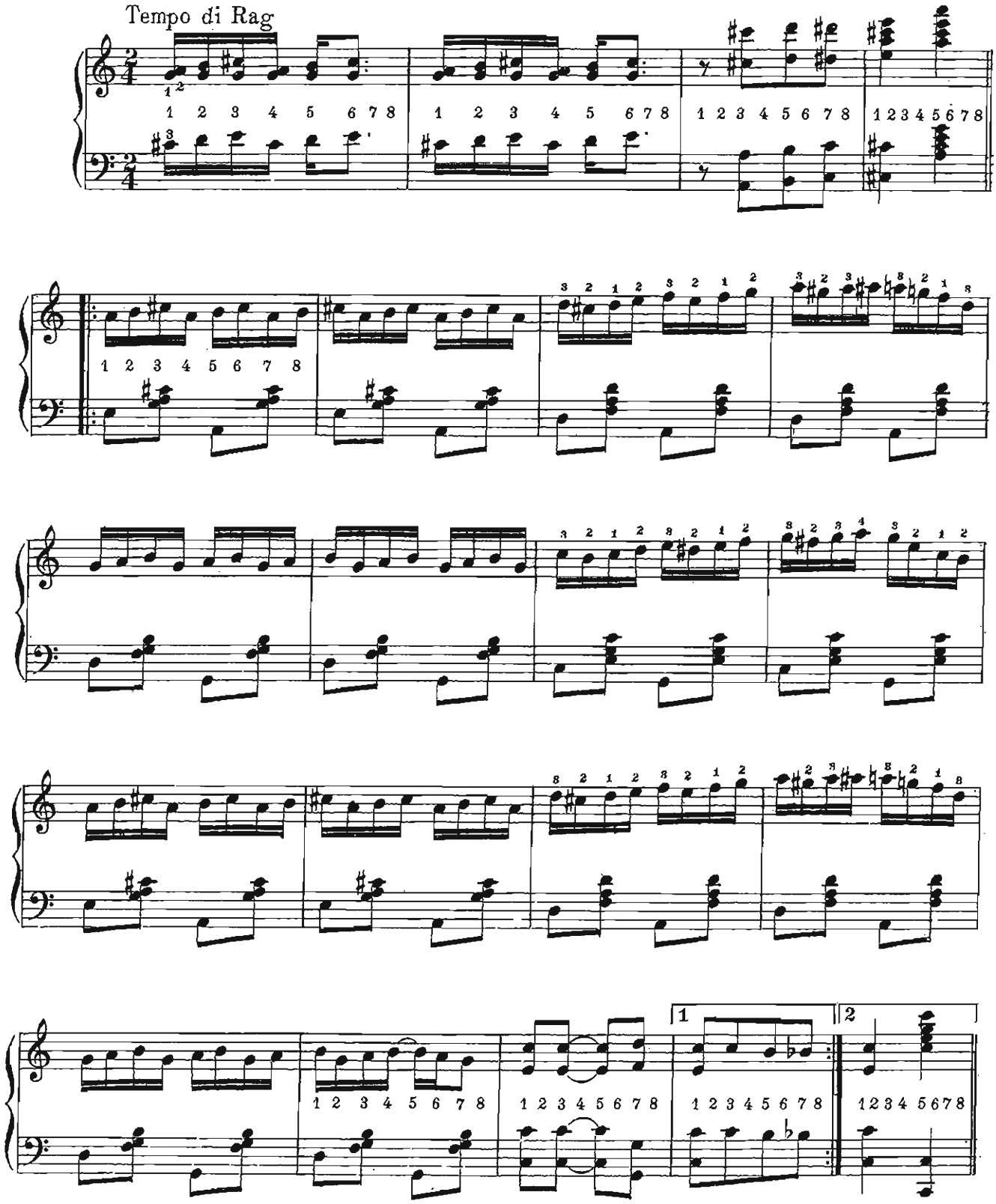


Published also in sheet music form with extra choruses arranged for brilliant Piano —Price 30 cts.
Also on U. S. "Word-Roll."

REINETTE RAG



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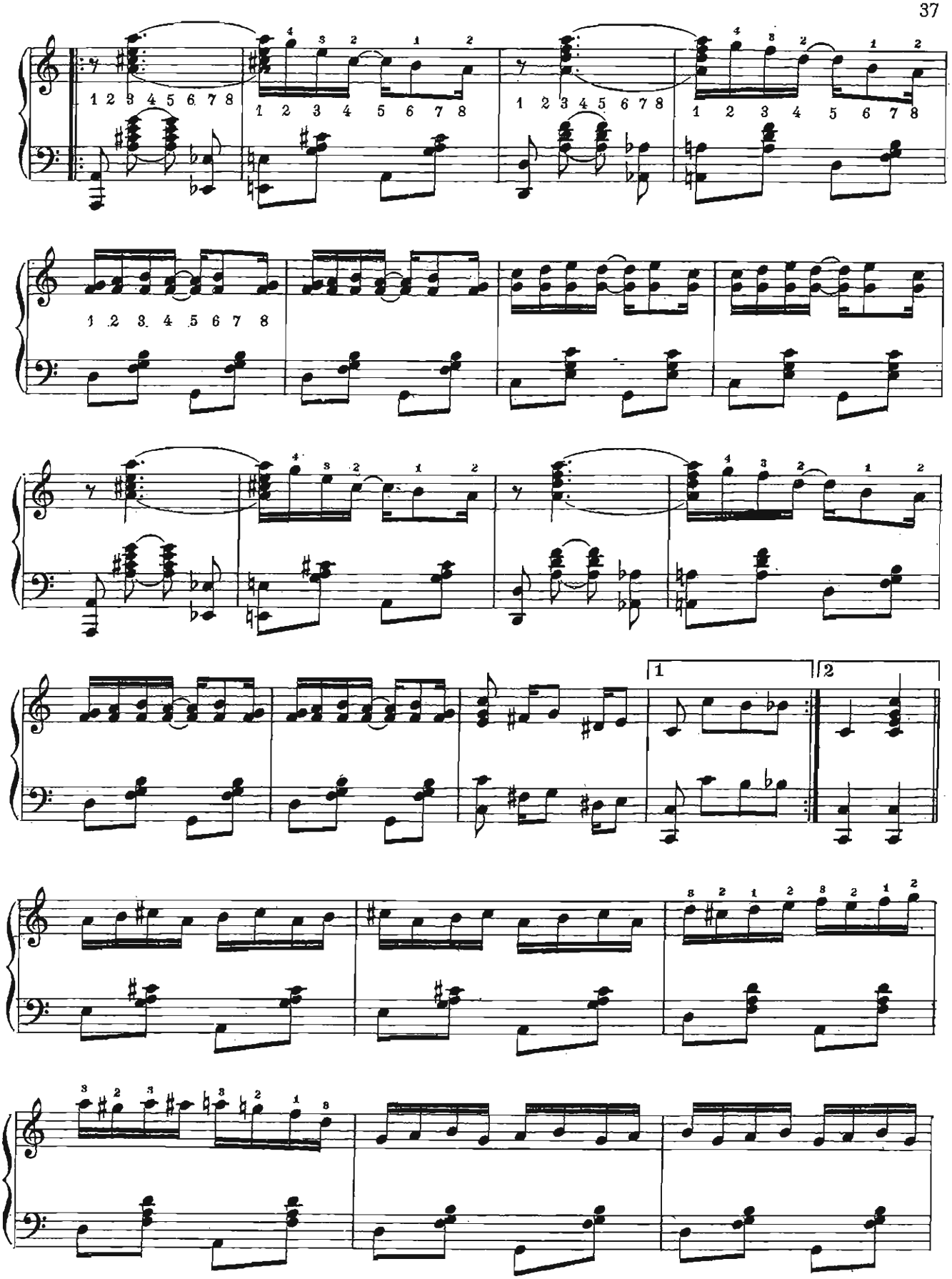
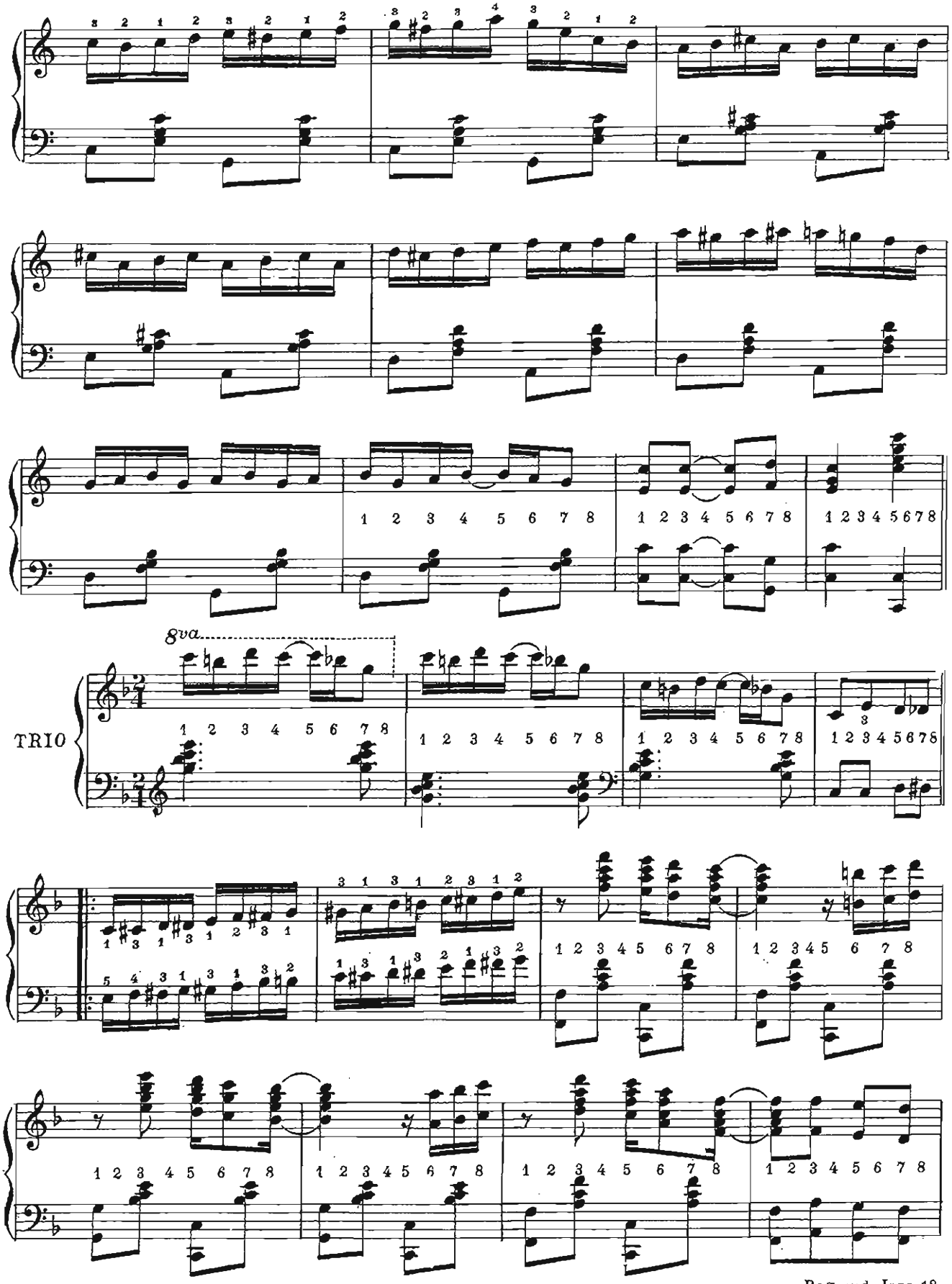
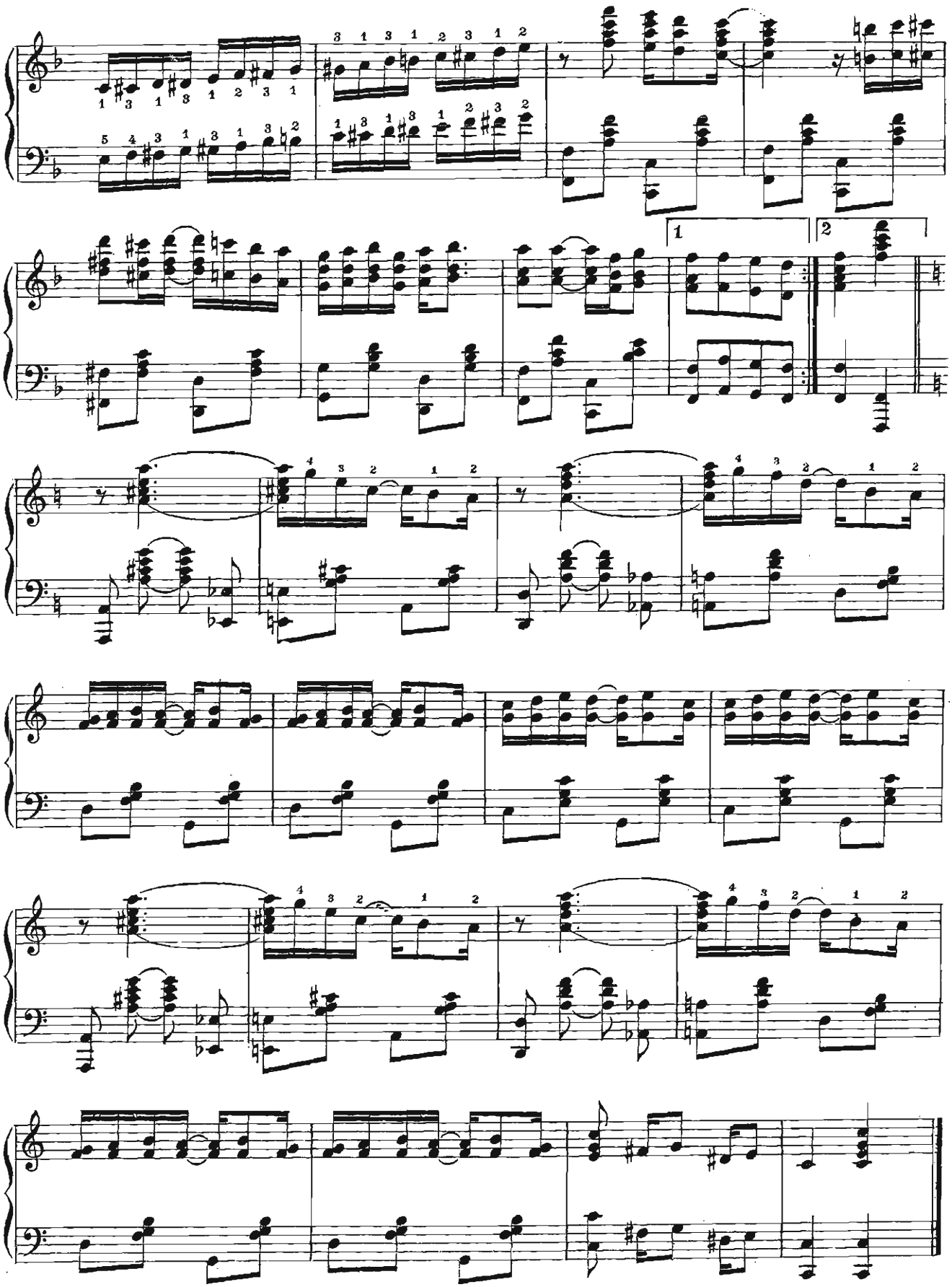
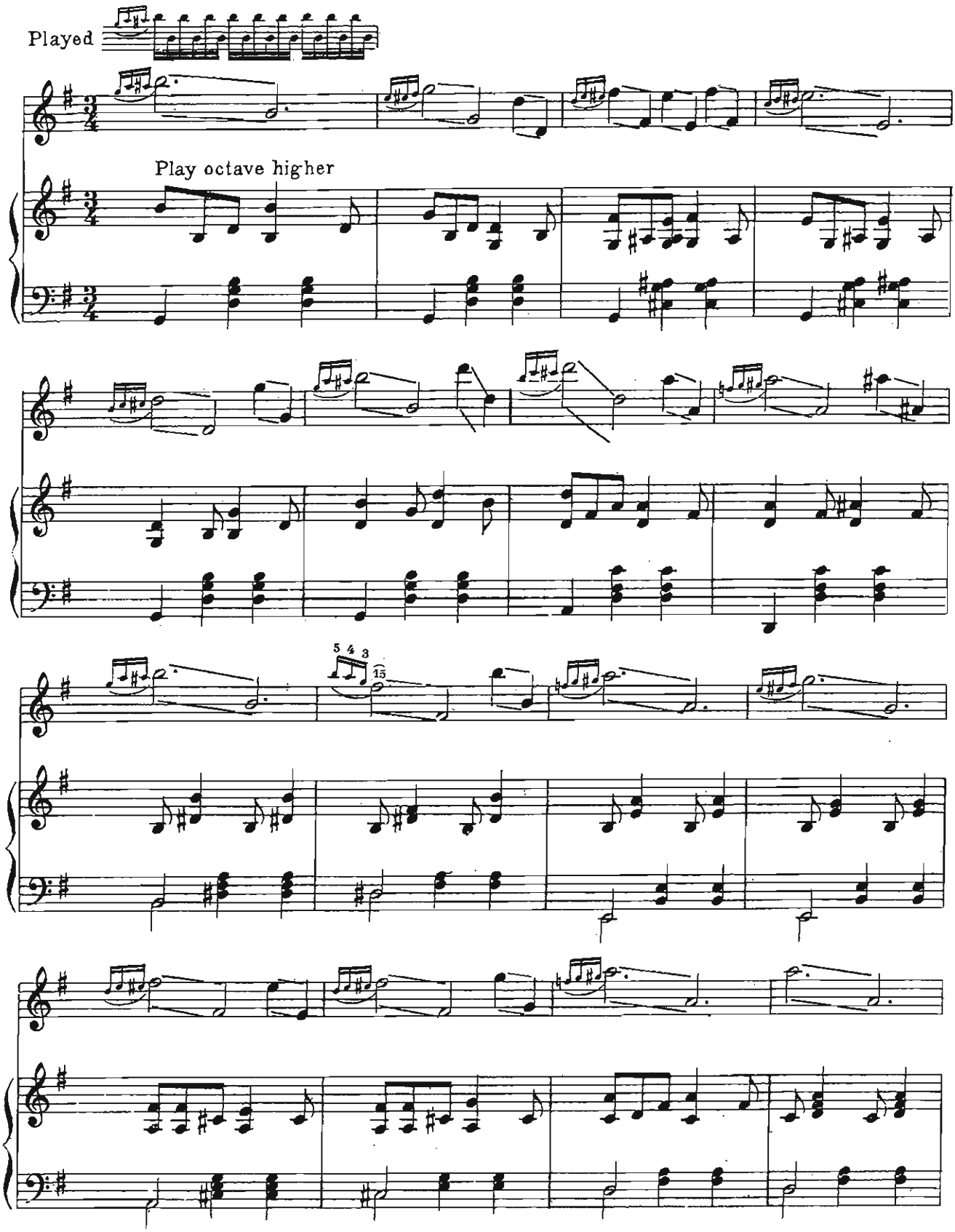


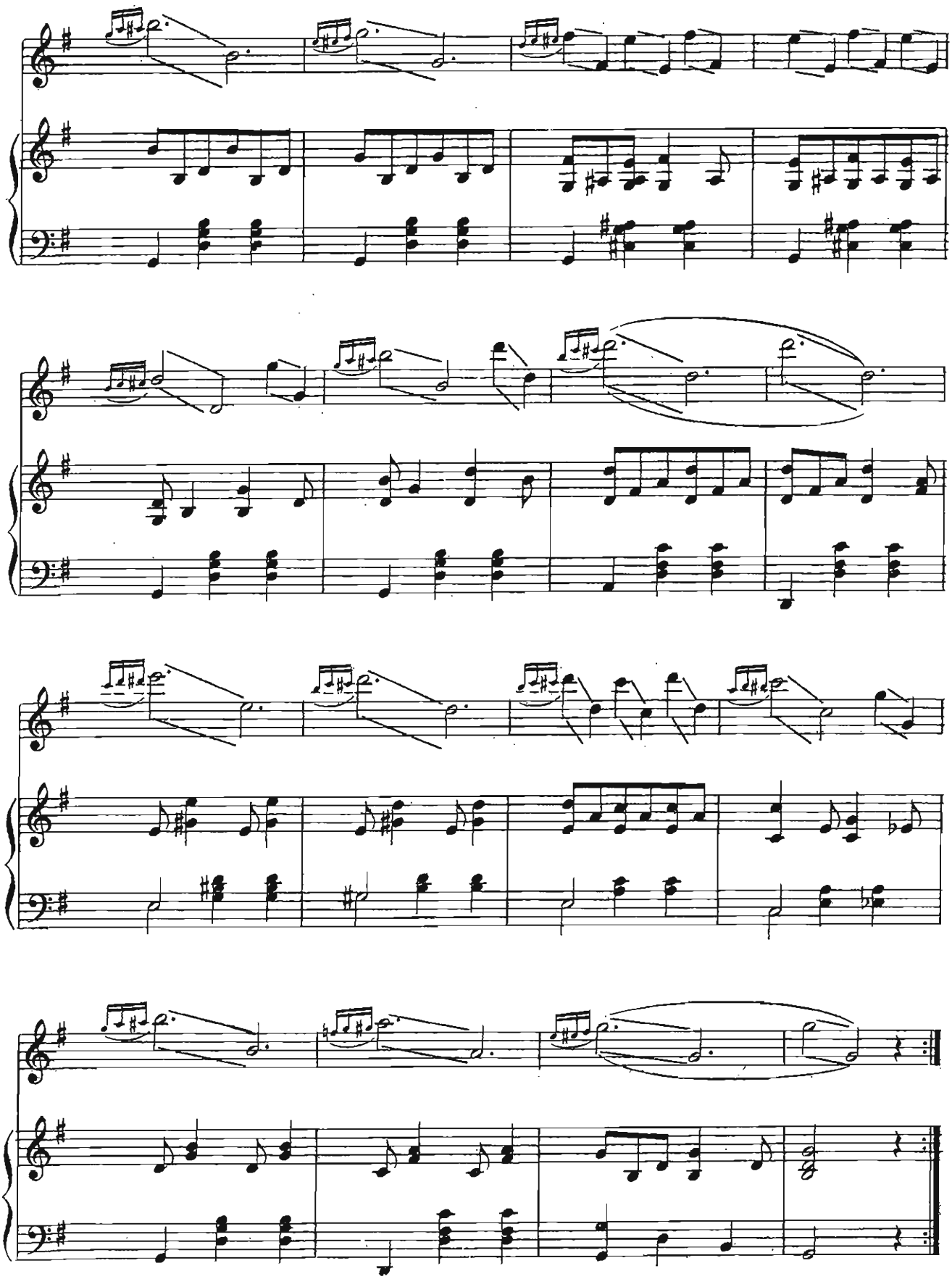

8va
TRIO



EXAMPLE 29.

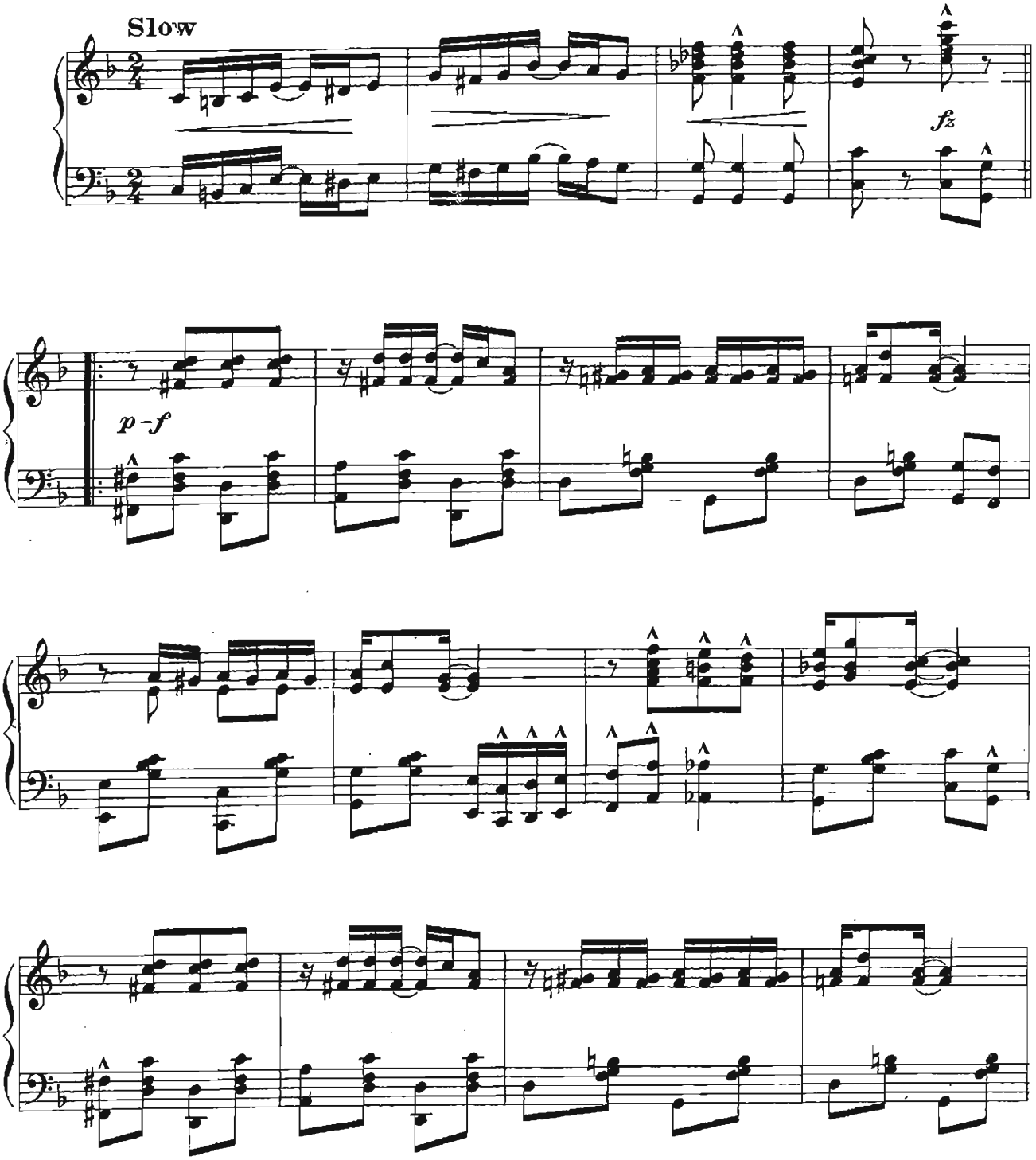
Illustrating Waltz Ragtime.

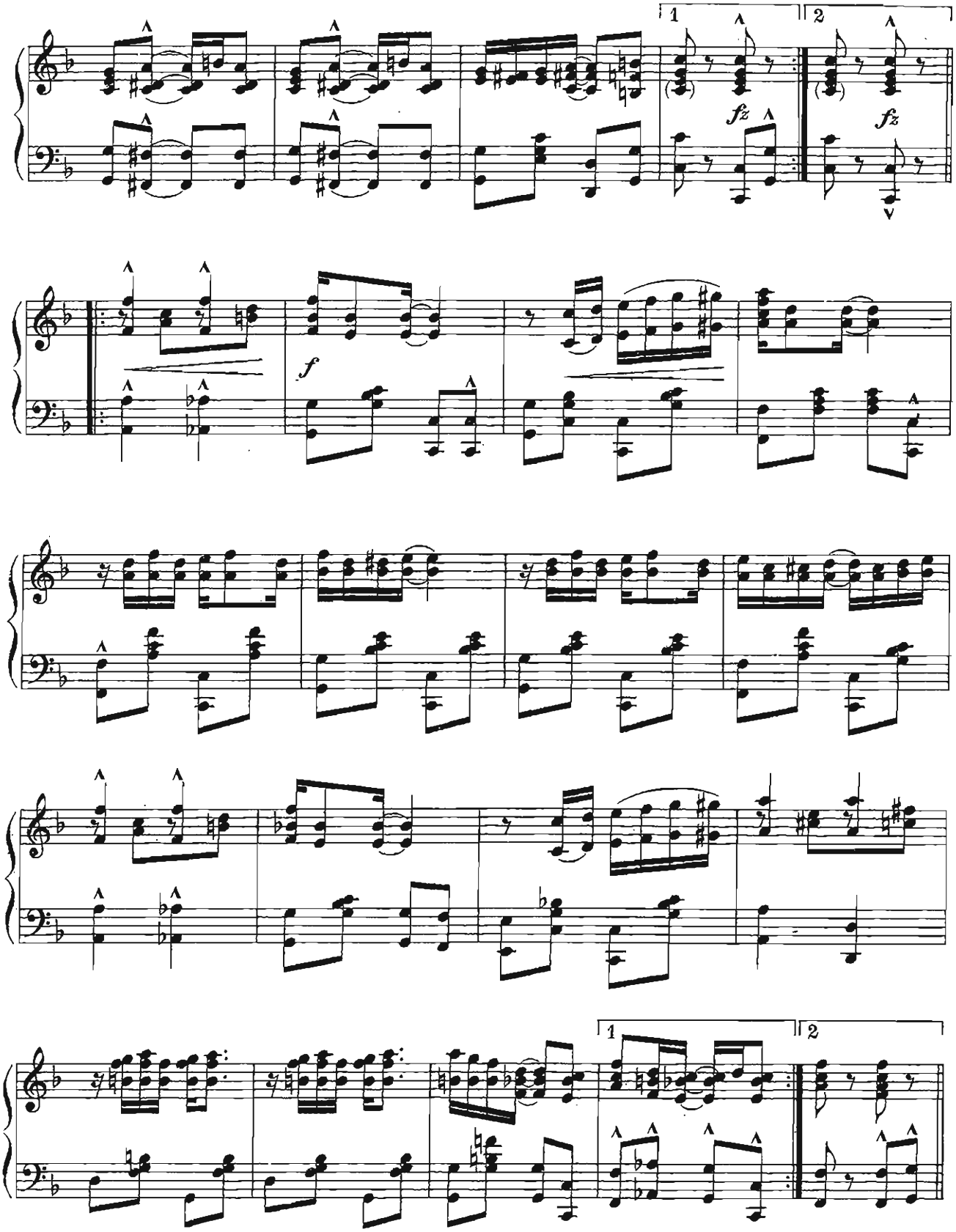


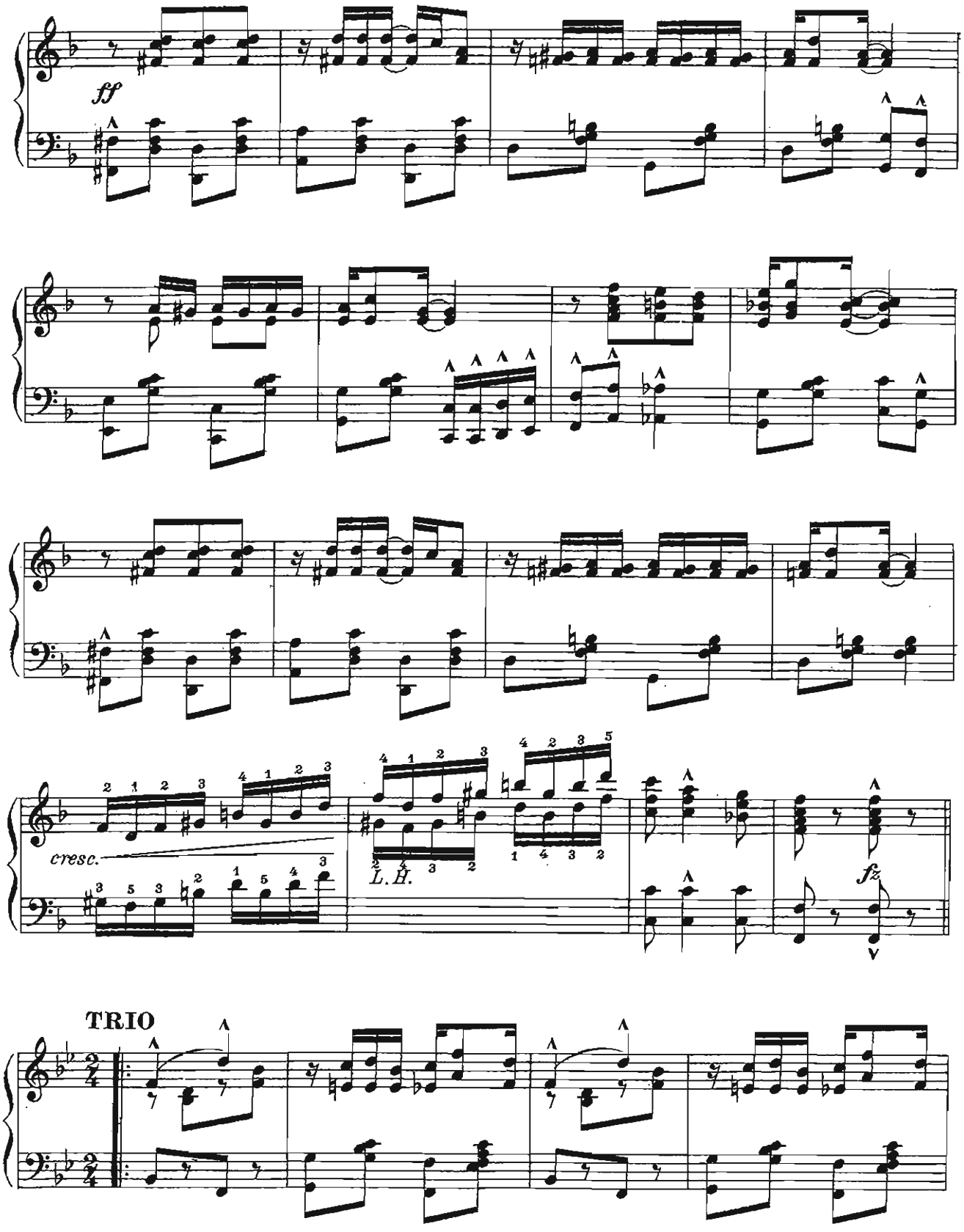


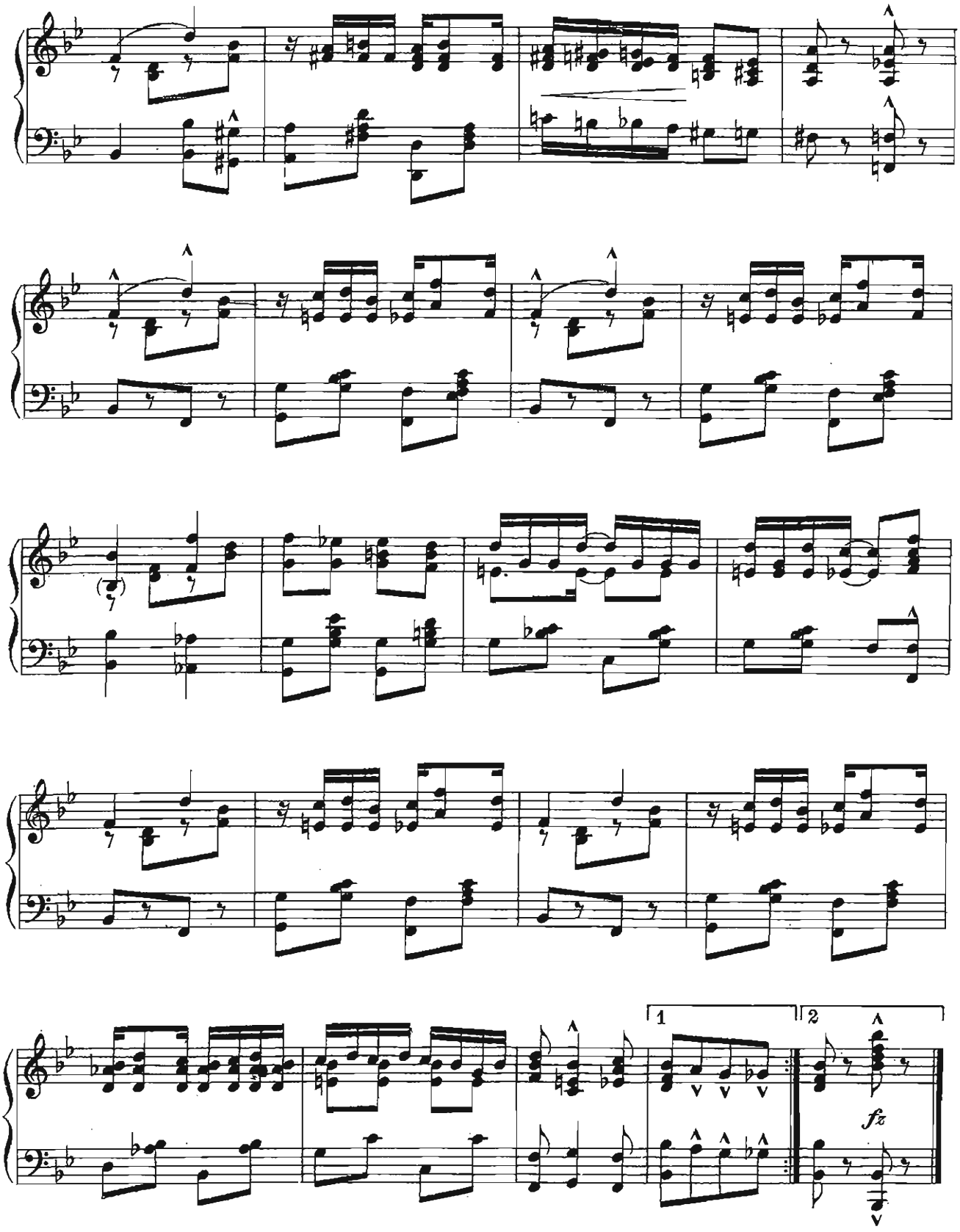
PATHETIC RAG

AXEL CHRISTENSEN



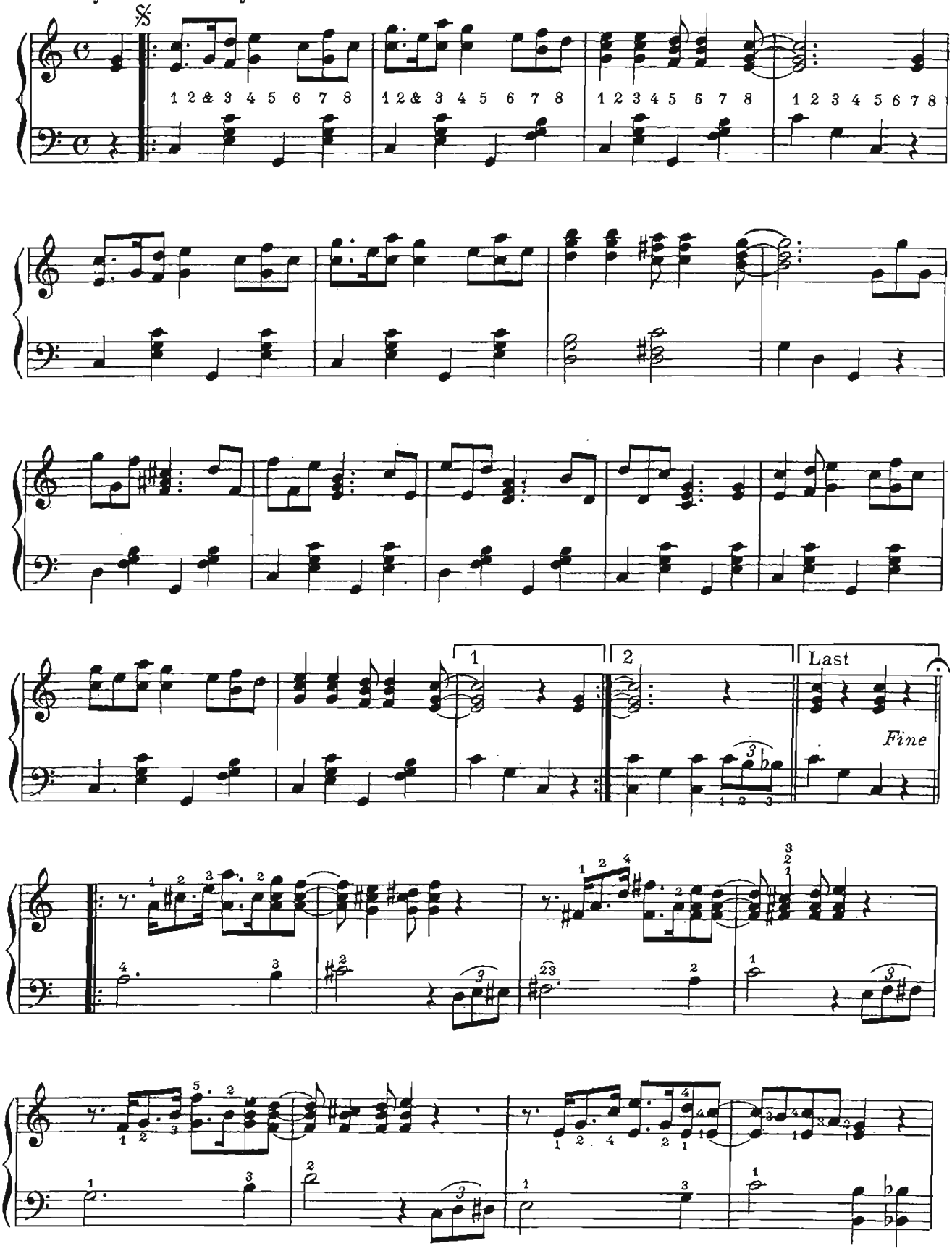

1
2
fz
fz
f

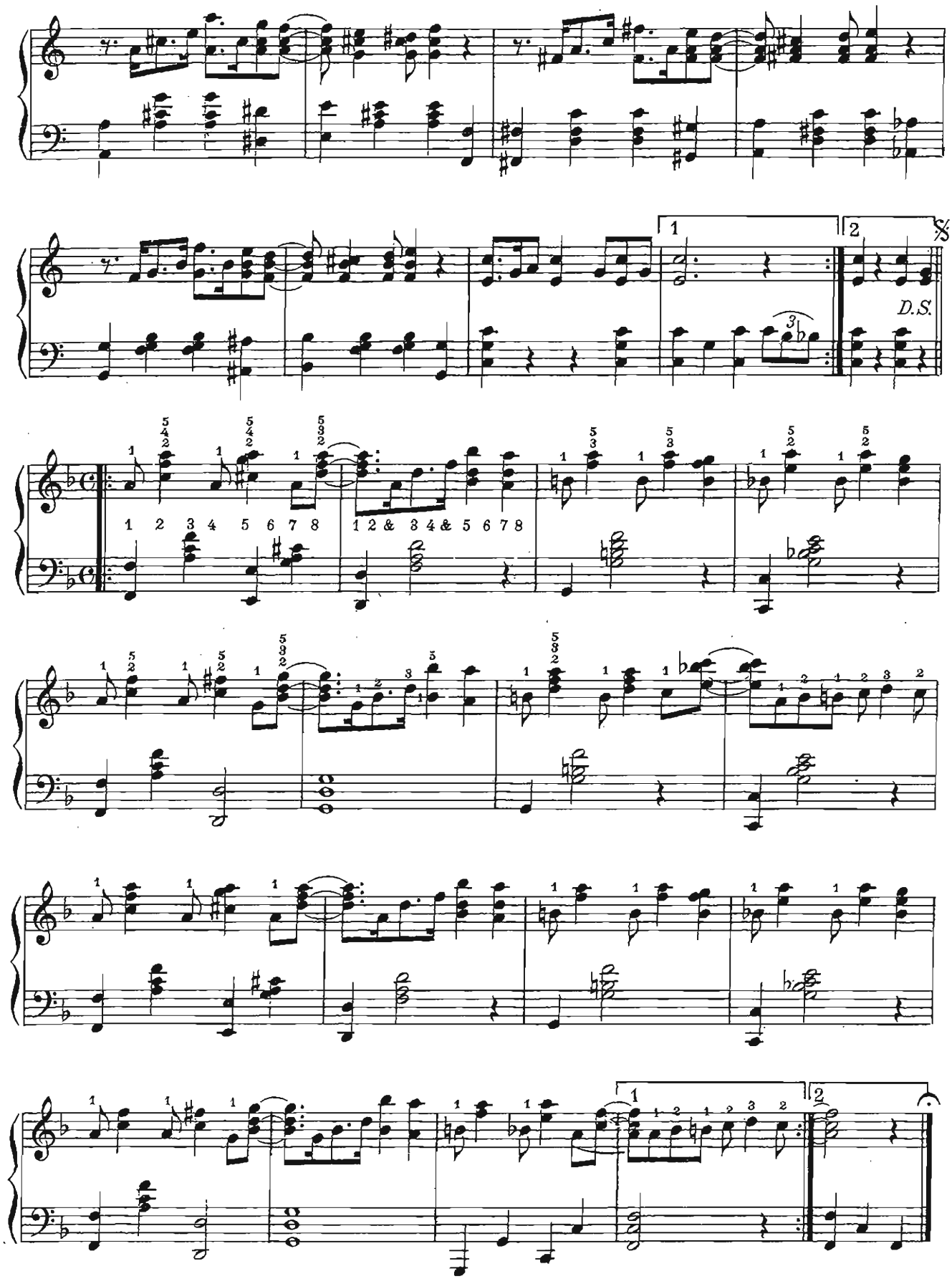
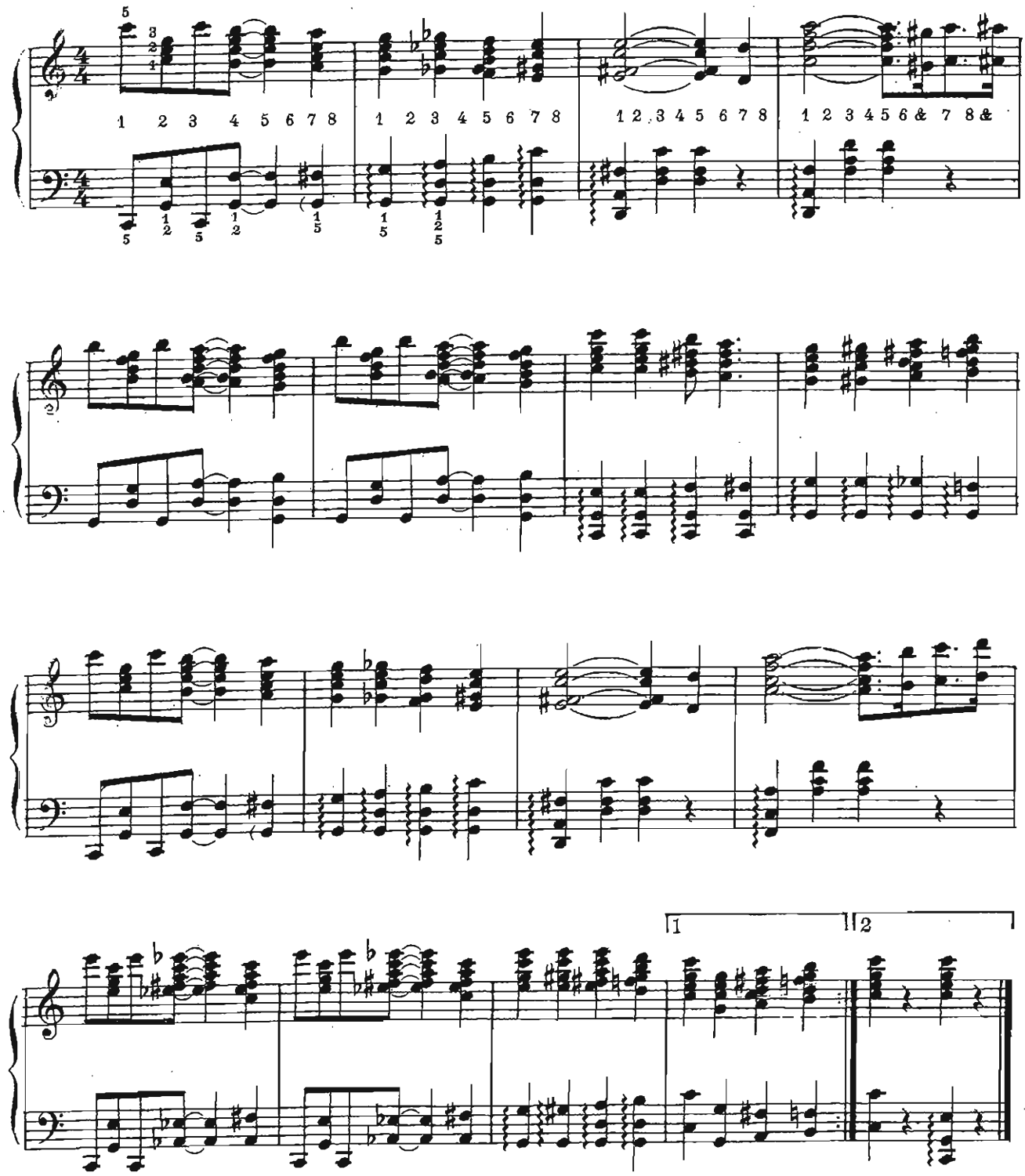

ff
cresc.
L.H.
fz
TRIO


1
2
fz

EXAMPLE 30.

A study in various rhythms.




1
2
D.S.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1 2 & 3 4 & 5 6 7 8

EXAMPLE 31