MICHAEL AARON PIANO COURSE

GRADE TWO

THE MODERN APPROACH TO PIANO STUDY

BELWIN MILLS MUSIC LTD

001 Front Cover.png

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PREFACE

The simple, direct and modern approach which characterized GRADE ONE of this course, has been incorporated in the design of GRADE TWO. Below is an outlined plan of this book.

OUTLINE PLAN OF GRADE TWO

MELODIC MATERIAL

Original melodic material, especially composed to carry out a definite and progressive pedagogical plan. Easy arrangements of the Masters to awaken a desire to know more of the great music literature.

NOTE READING TESTS

To facilitate note reading, the student is asked to spell out words by writing the correct letter name of each note, in specially designed tests. These have been extended to include leger lines and spaces. These little games add interest to an important phase of music study.

PEDAL STUDIES

As the average student is inclined to experiment with the pedal, much to the annoyance of the family and the neighbours, it was deemed necessary to include Pedal Studies which clearly illustrate the correct usage of the pedal.

CONSTRUCTION OF MUSIC

Many aids in the form of Explanatory Charts give the student a knowledge of Theory, Harmony and the construction of music which is so essential to good musicianship.

DICTIONARY OF MUSICAL TERMS

The various musical terms used in this book are defined in the musi dictionary on page 63.

STUDENTS PRACTICE RECORD

Systematic and daily practice lead to good results and a record of same is necessary in order to analyze the student's progress.

In summation, the purpose and aim of this book is to build solidly on the foundation established in GRADE ONE, increase the technical facility of the student, stimulate his appreciation of music, and serve as a reliable guide and helpmate to the teacher.

Michael Aaron

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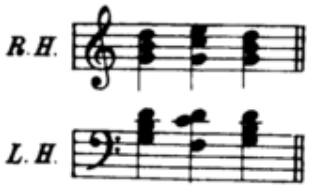
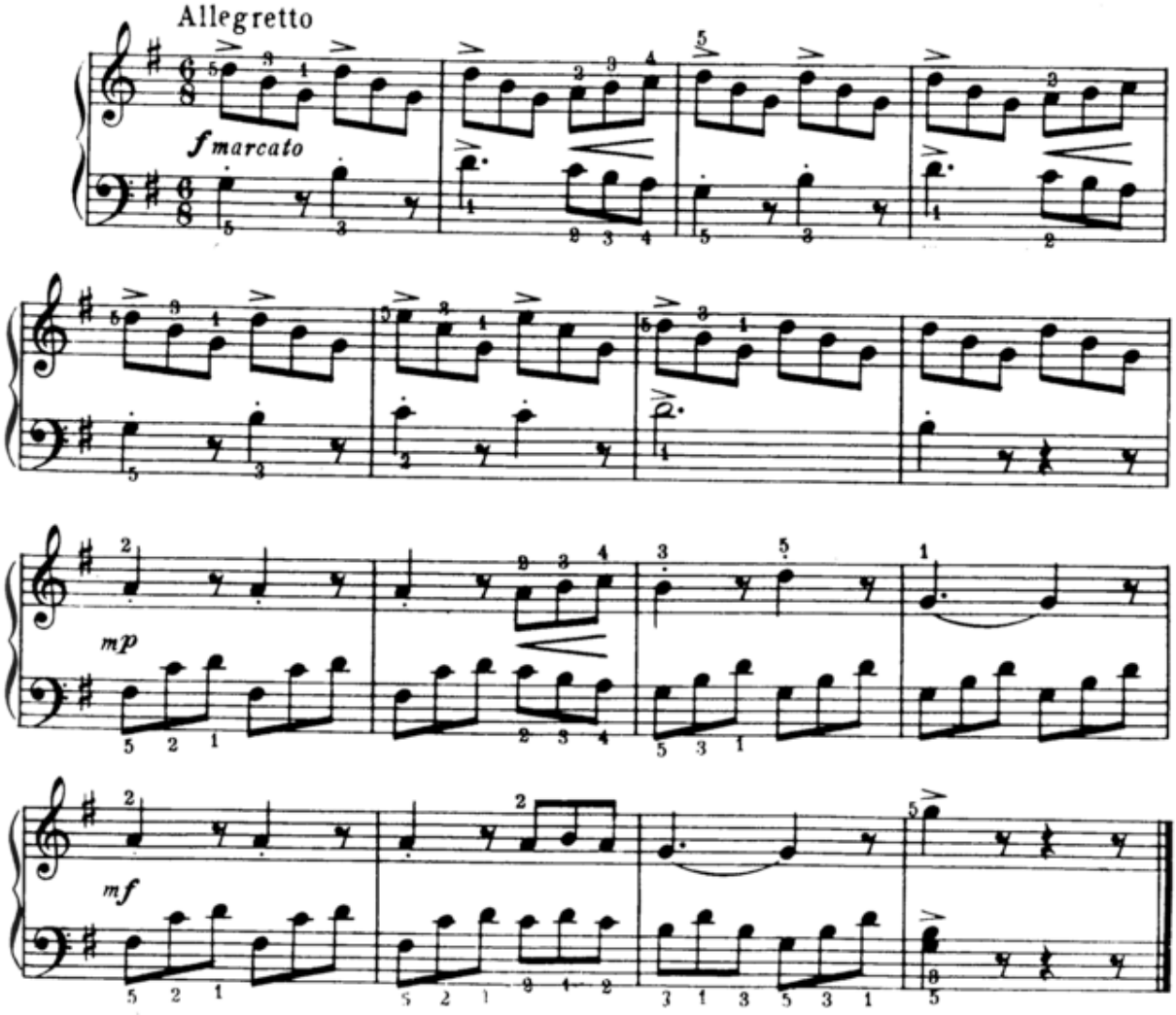
Riding in the Park

(Broken Chords)

Play this piece in a brisk and lively manner. The notes of the Treble Staff are composed of two broken chords. The notes of the Bass Staff are also composed of two broken chords.



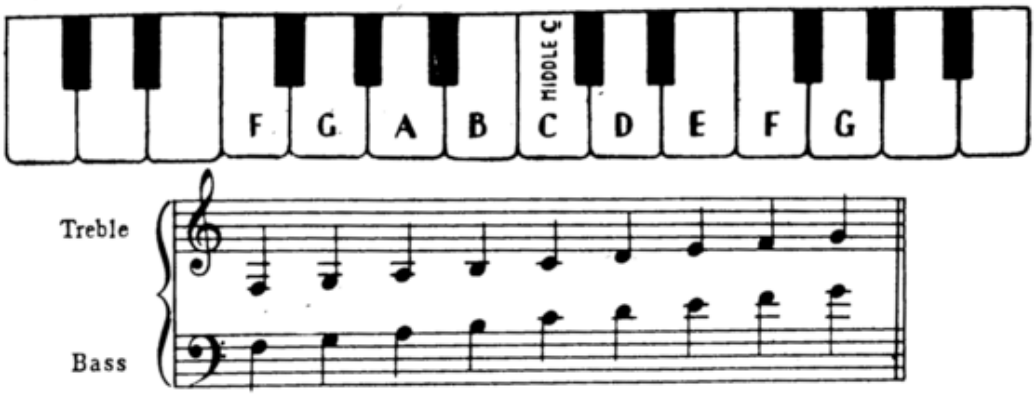


004 Riding in The Park.png

NOTE READING TESTS

LEGER LINES AND SPACES ABOVE MIDDLE C AND BELOW MIDDLE C

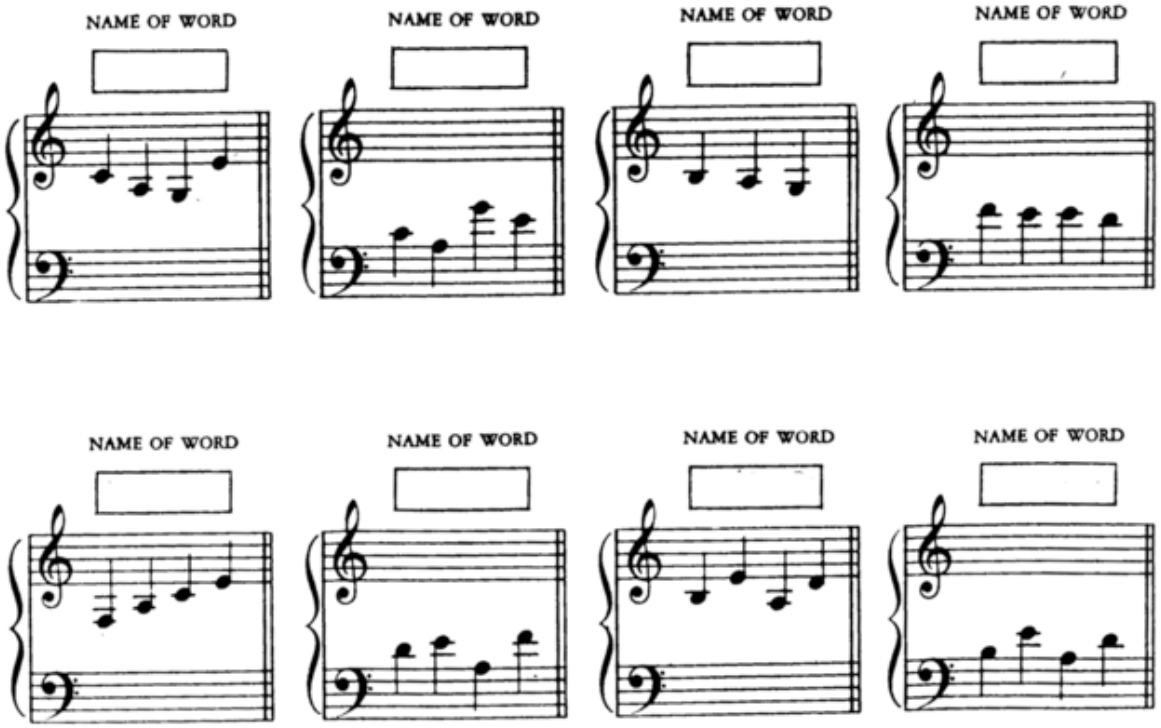
In order to write music ABOVE or BELOW the staff, we have ADDED short lines and spaces called LEGER LINES and SPACES. The following chart shows how music may be written ABOVE or BELOW MIDDLE C without changing the CLEF signs.



In the above illustration the notes of the TREBLE STAFF and the notes of the BASS STAFF are played on the SAME KEYS of the piano.

See if you can SPELL OUT words by writing the correct letter name of each note.

To complete each test you must play the correct notes on the piano.

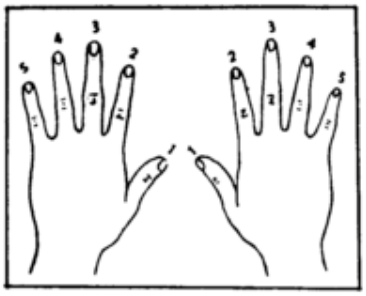


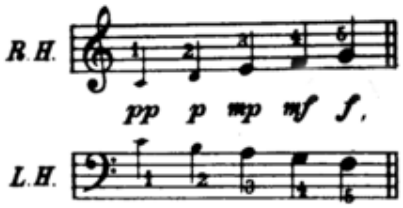
005 Note Reading Tests.png

Five Finger Study

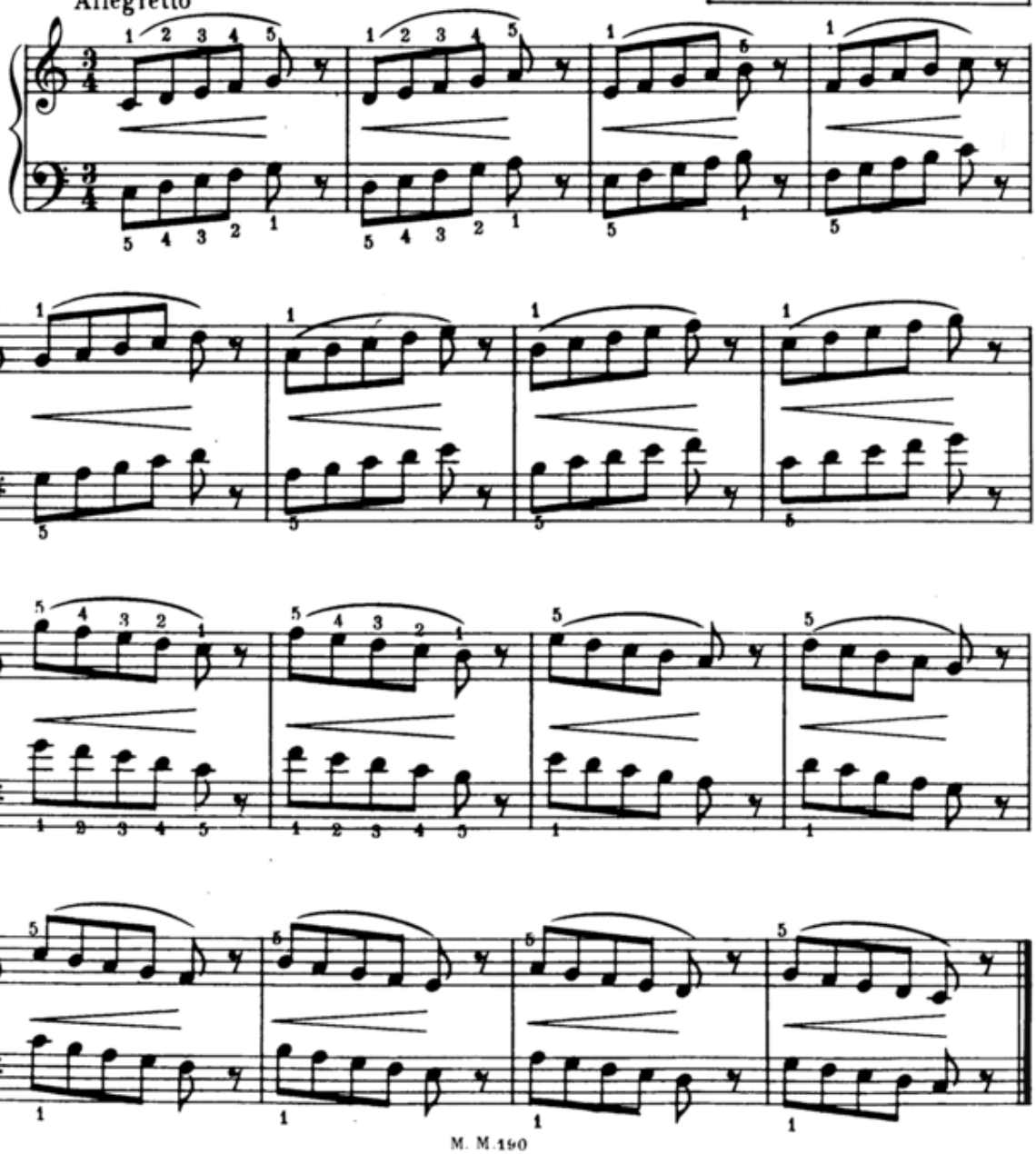
(Five Note Group)

In order to play music properly, it is essential to have a well developed hand. The first, second and third fingers of the hand are strong, while the FOURTH and FIFTH are usually weak. To strengthen the weak fingers, practise each five note group in the following manner:





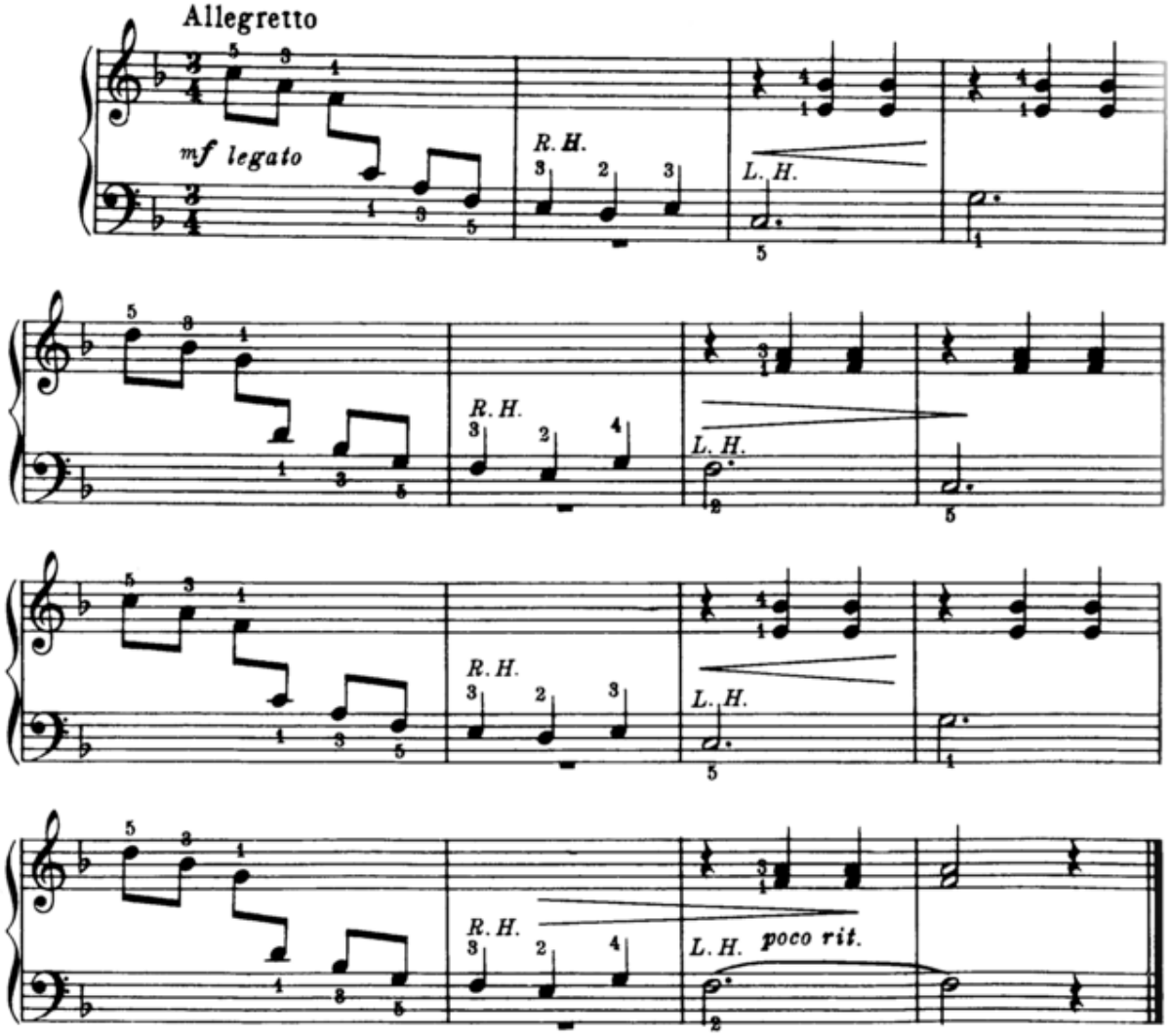
Allegretto



006 Five Finger Study.png

Surf Riders

In the first bar of each line, cross the right hand over the left, BEFORE the left hand completes the bar. This will prepare your right hand for the next bar and help you keep a smooth, even tempo.

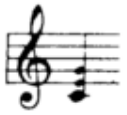


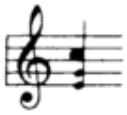
M. M. 190

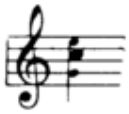
INVERSIONS OF TRIADS

The word INVERSION means a change of order or position.

C MAJOR TRIAD

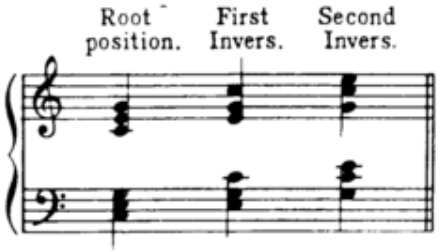
In GRADE ONE we studied the first or **ROOT POSITION**  C the ROOT, at BOTTOM

Now place C the ROOT of the chord on top, and you have **FIRST INVERSION**  C the ROOT, on TOP

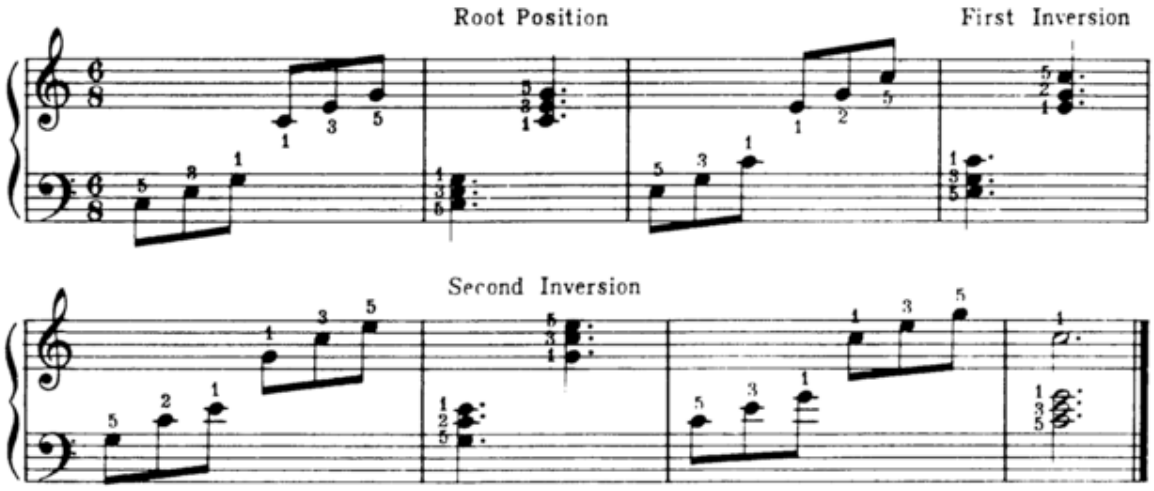
Place E the 3rd of the chord on top, and you have **SECOND INVERSION**  C the ROOT, in the MIDDLE

Here are the three positions in one bar.

C MAJOR TRIAD



CHORD STUDY IN INVERSIONS



The above Chord Study may be practised in all keys.

M. M. 190

Song Without Words

To develop a good SINGING TONE, play with a "HEAVY ARM" and "CLINGING FINGERS".

Andante cantabile

p

poco rit.

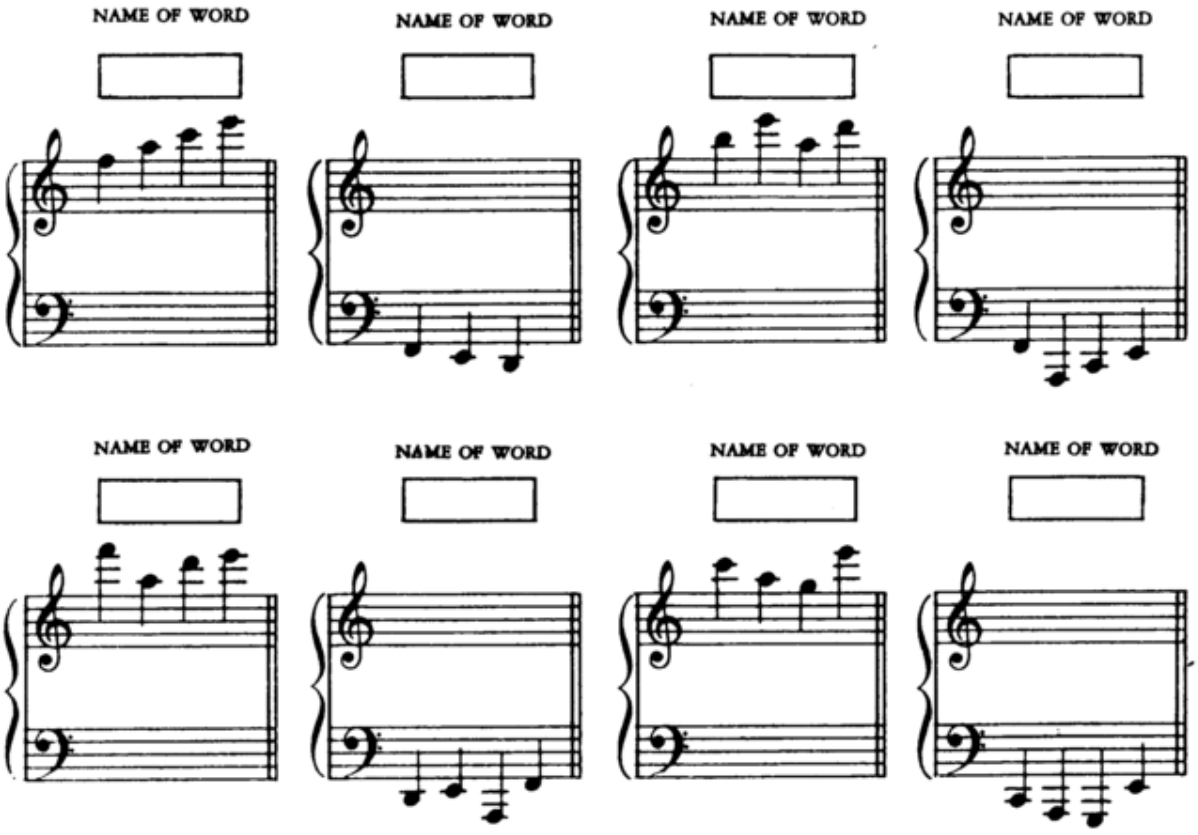
009 Song without words.png

NOTE READING TESTS

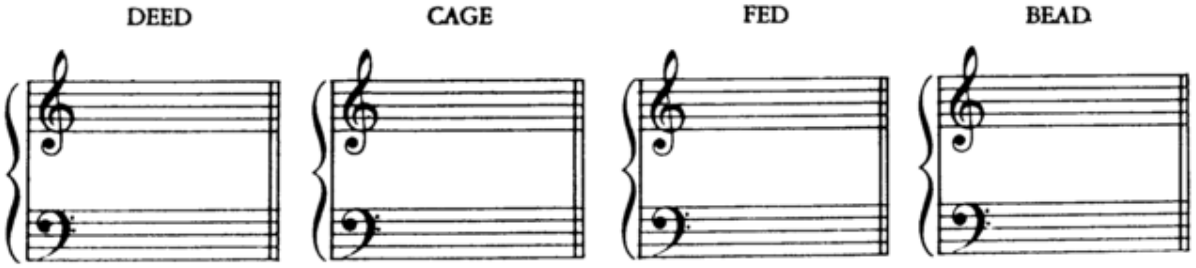
(LEGER LINES AND SPACES ABOVE THE TREBLE AND BELOW THE BASS)

SPELL OUT words by writing the correct letter name of each note.

To complete each test you must play the correct notes on the piano



SPELL OUT the following words with the correct notes. Write on LEGER LINES and SPACES.



M. M. 100

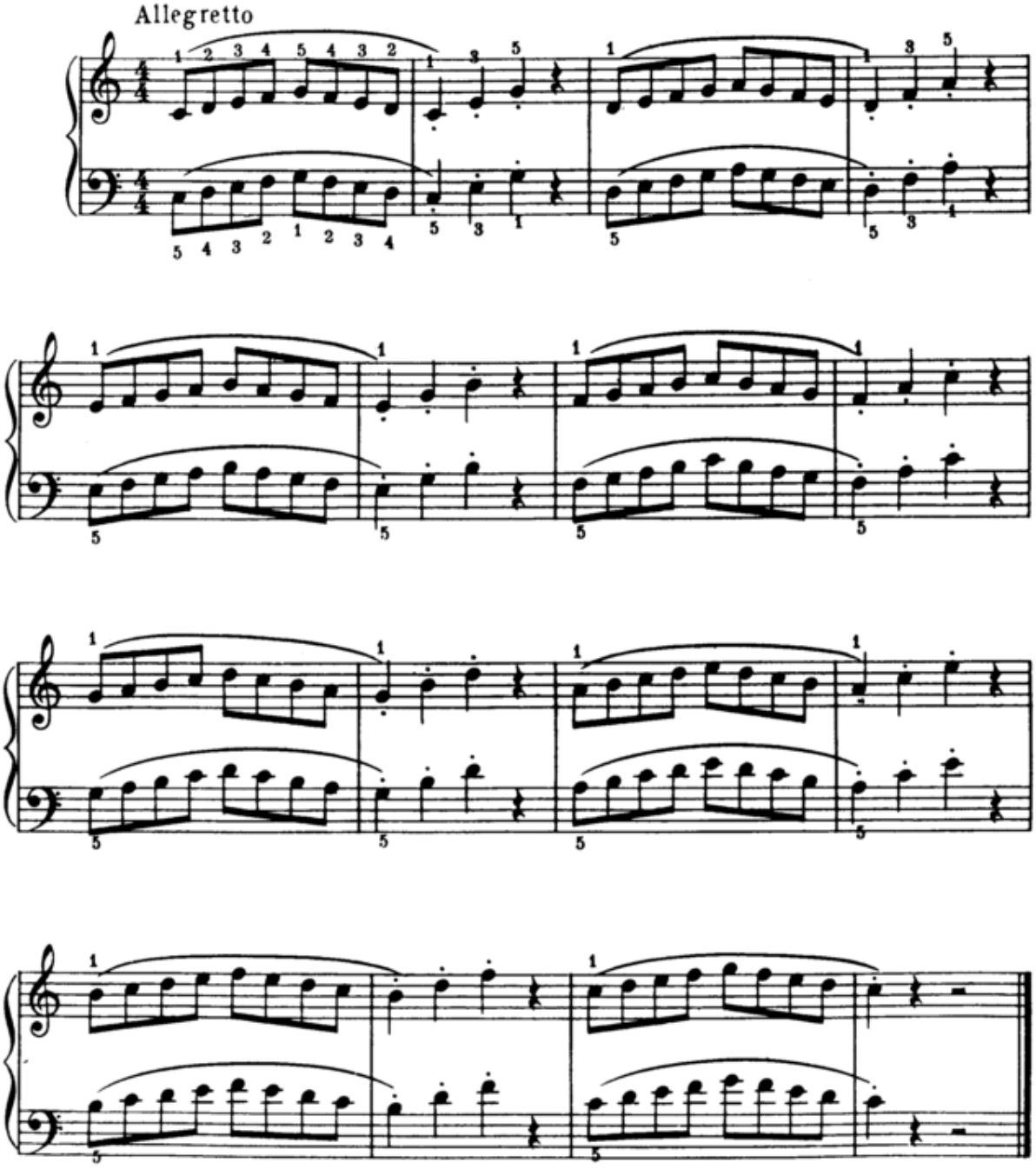
010 Note Reading Tests.png

Five Finger Study

(Nine Note Group)

FIRST TIME—Practise one note to the beat (quarters or crotchets)

SECOND TIME—Practise two notes to the beat as written (eighths or quavers)



011 Five Finger Study.png

Minstrel Show-Boat

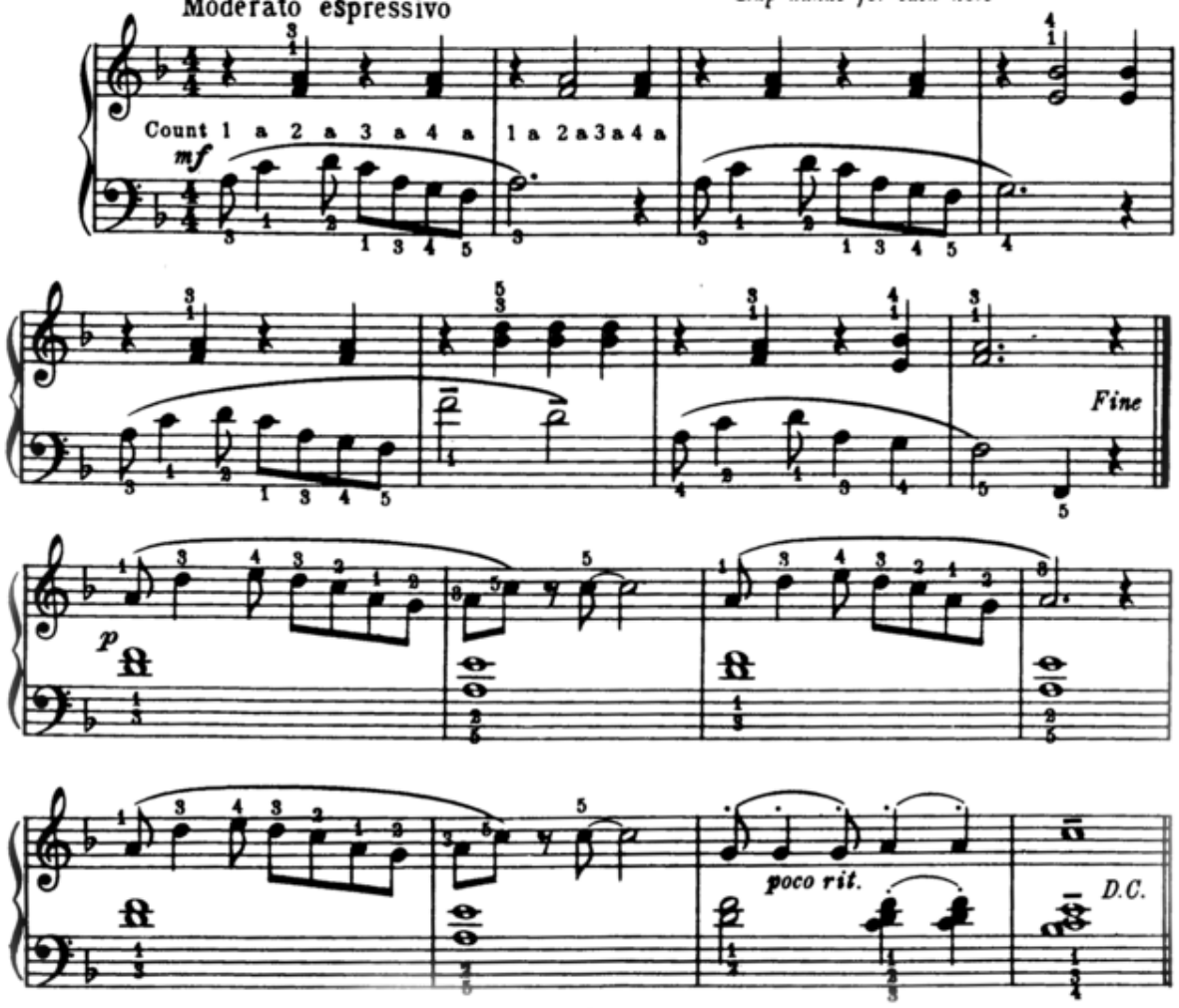
(Syncopation)

Study RHYTHMIC DESIGN
before practising this piece.

RHYTHMIC DESIGN

Clap hands for each note

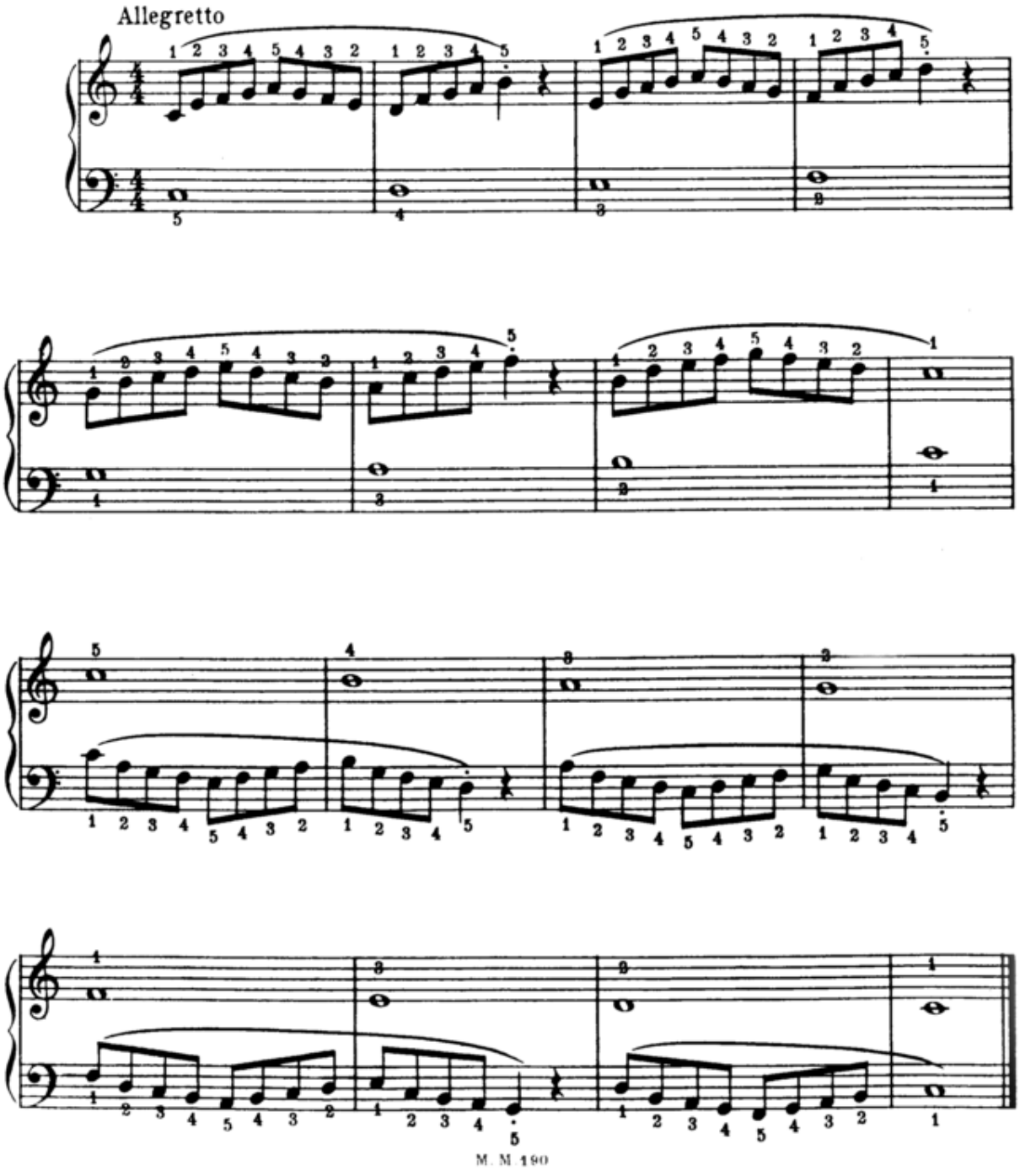
Moderato espressivo



012 Minstrel Show Boat (Syncopation).png

Extension Study

(Extension between 1st and 2nd fingers)



013 Extension Study.png

TABLE OF NOTE VALUES

Quarter note (crotchet)

equals

Two eighth notes (quavers)

or

Four sixteenth notes (semiquavers)

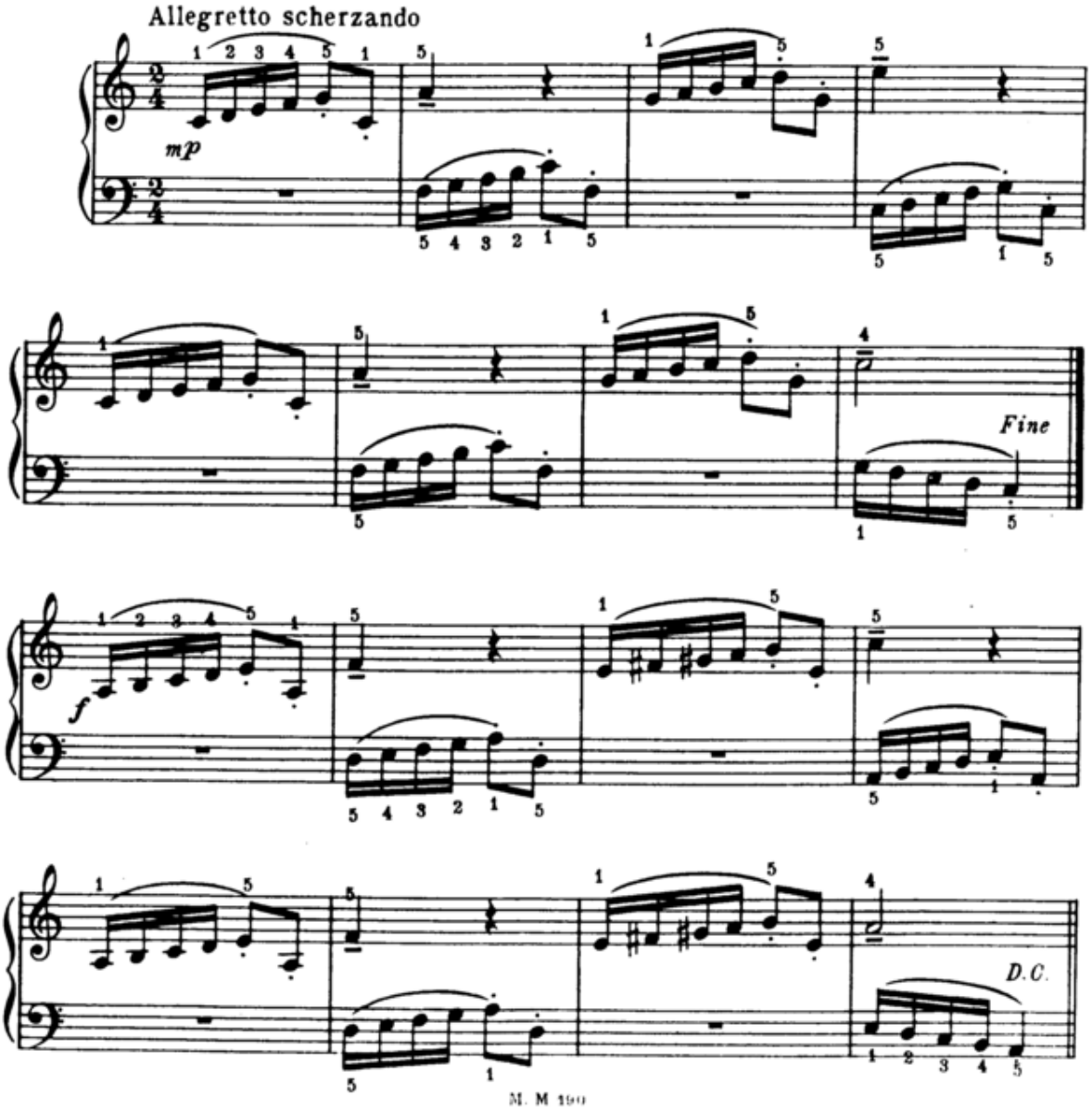
RHYTHMIC DESIGN

Count 1 a 2 a | 1 a 2 a |

Clap hands for each note

Study in Sixteenths (semiquavers)

Each five note group under the slur should be played with one impulse. Practise with a high finger legato.



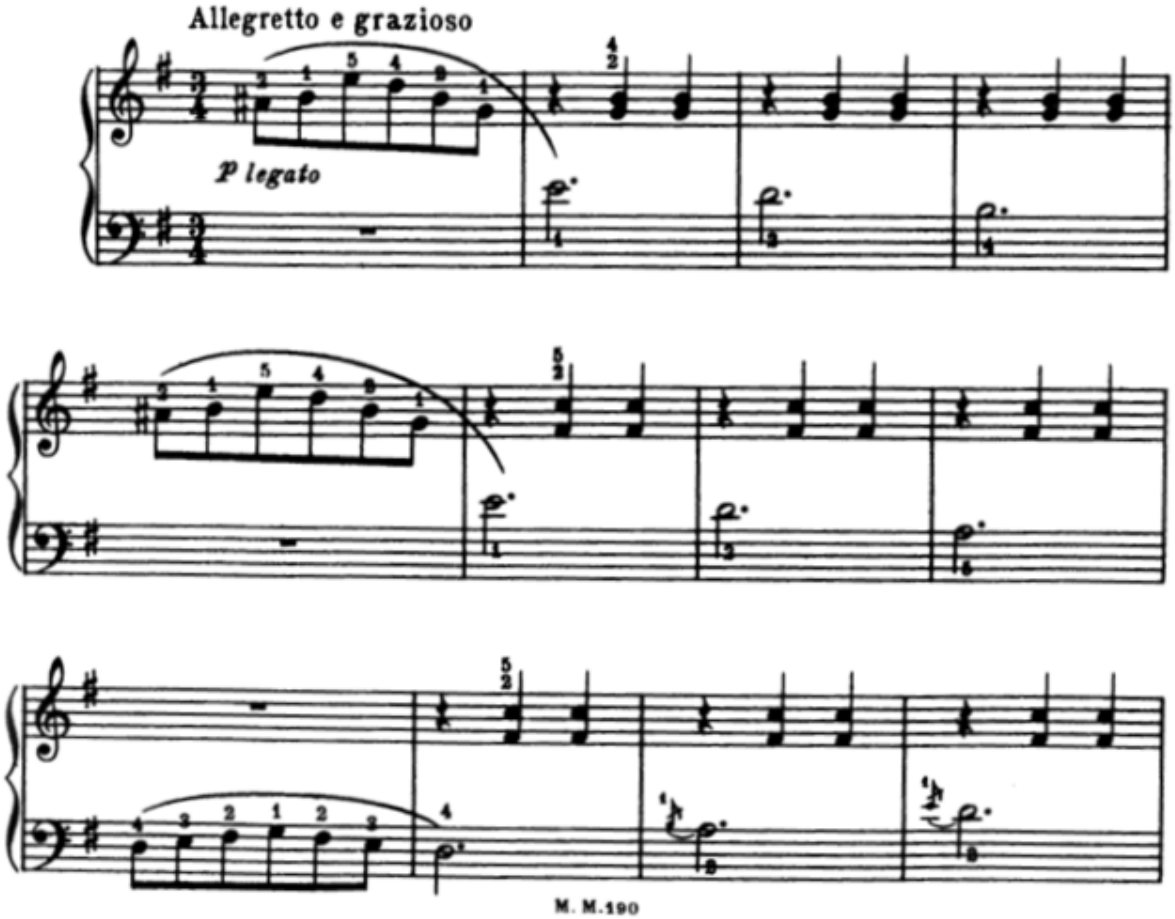
M. M 100

014 Study in sixteenths.png

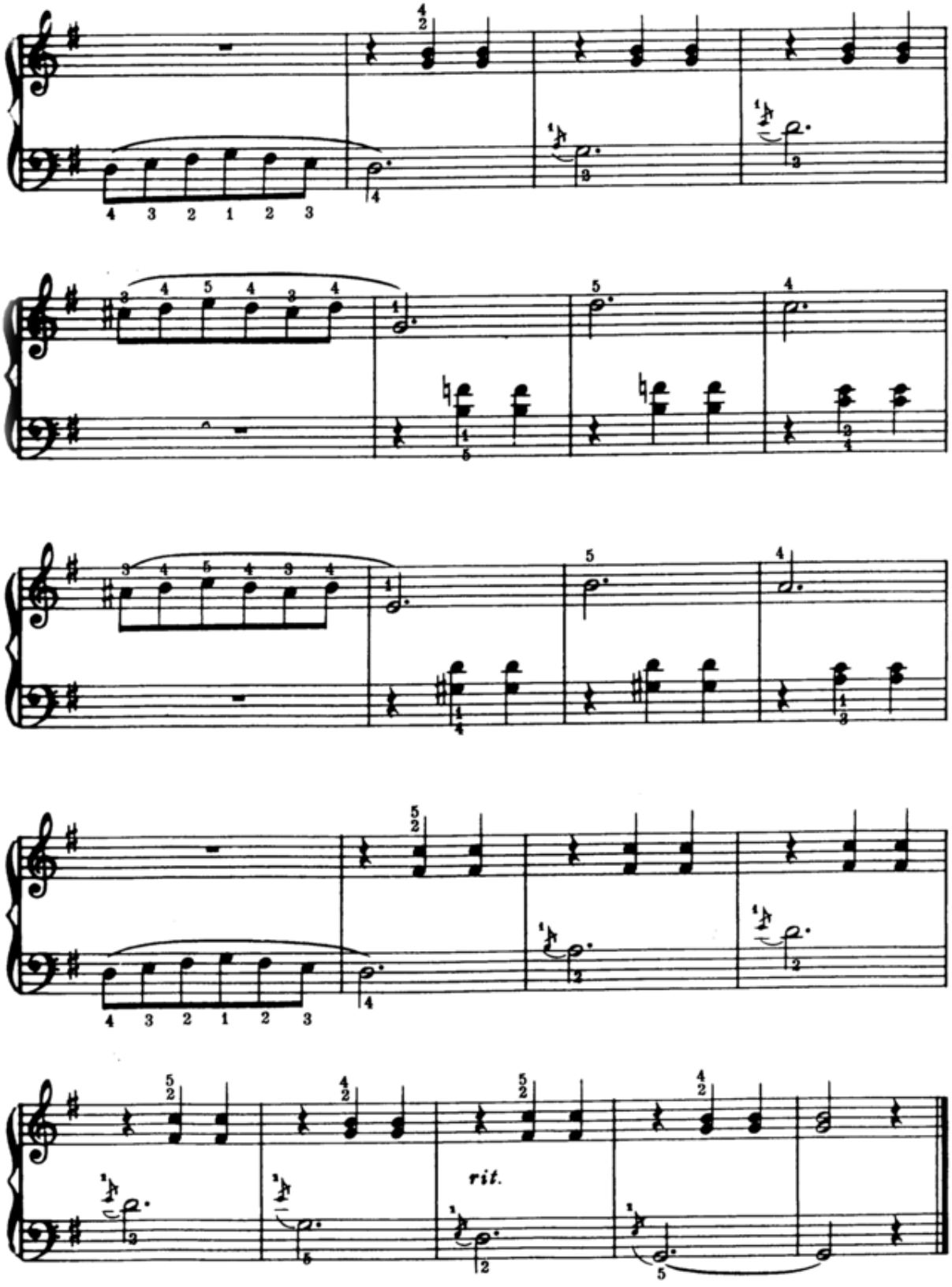
In A Goldfish Bowl

The ACCIACCATURA commonly known as a GRACE NOTE ( ) is usually played with a very light and quick motion. Think of the GRACE NOTE as belonging to the note which follows it.

In this piece the GRACE NOTES should not be played too quickly as they are a part of the melody.



015 In a Goldfish Bowl.png



016 In a Goldfish Bowl page 2.png

Extension Study

(Extension between 1st and 2nd, and 4th and 5th fingers)

Practise this study four ways

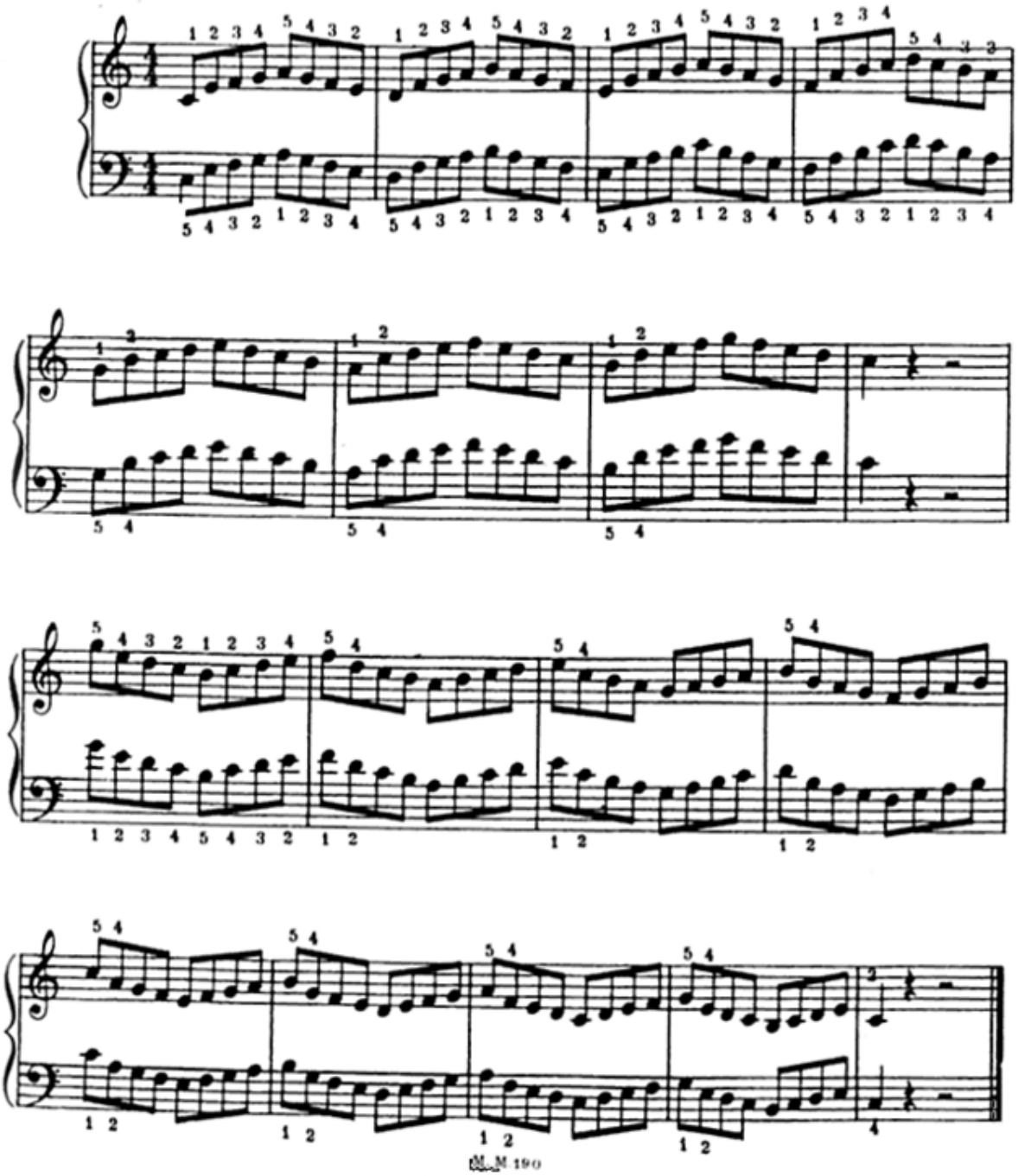
1st — Hands separately, one note to the beat (quarter notes or crotchets)

2nd — Hands separately, two notes to the beat (eighth notes or quavers)

3rd — Hands together, one note to the beat

4th — Hands together, two notes to the beat

HANON

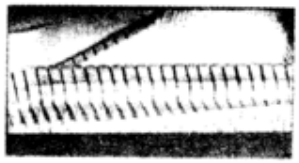


017 Extension Study.png

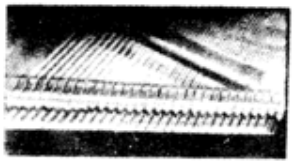
THE DAMPER PEDAL

Look at the strings of your piano and you will notice the FELT BLOCKS (DAMPERS) lying against them.

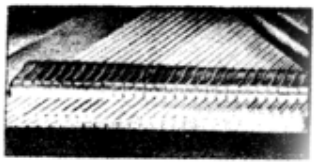
Now strike a key on the piano and observe how its DAMPER is raised. This permits the string to vibrate and the tone to continue sounding.



Release the key and you will see the DAMPER fall back into place against the string, thereby stopping the sound.

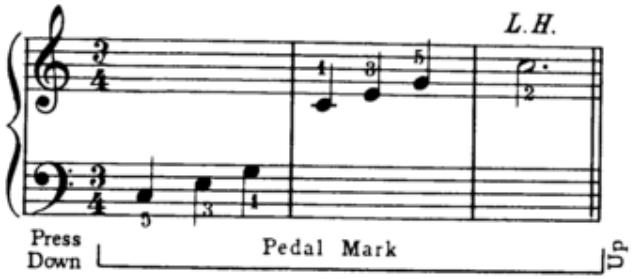


Look at the PEDALS of your piano. The one on the RIGHT is called the DAMPER PEDAL. Press this pedal down with your foot. Notice how this action raises ALL the DAMPERS off the strings.

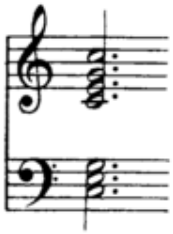


Now release the DAMPER PEDAL and all the DAMPERS fall back into their proper places against the strings.

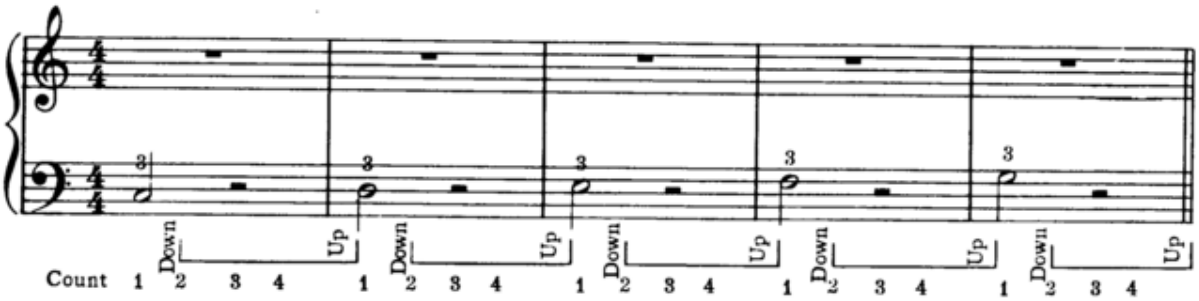
Press the DAMPER PEDAL down and play the following notes.



Hold the pedal down and you will hear this chord. This blending of tones enriches your piano playing.



The DAMPER PEDAL may also be used to connect tones as in the following:

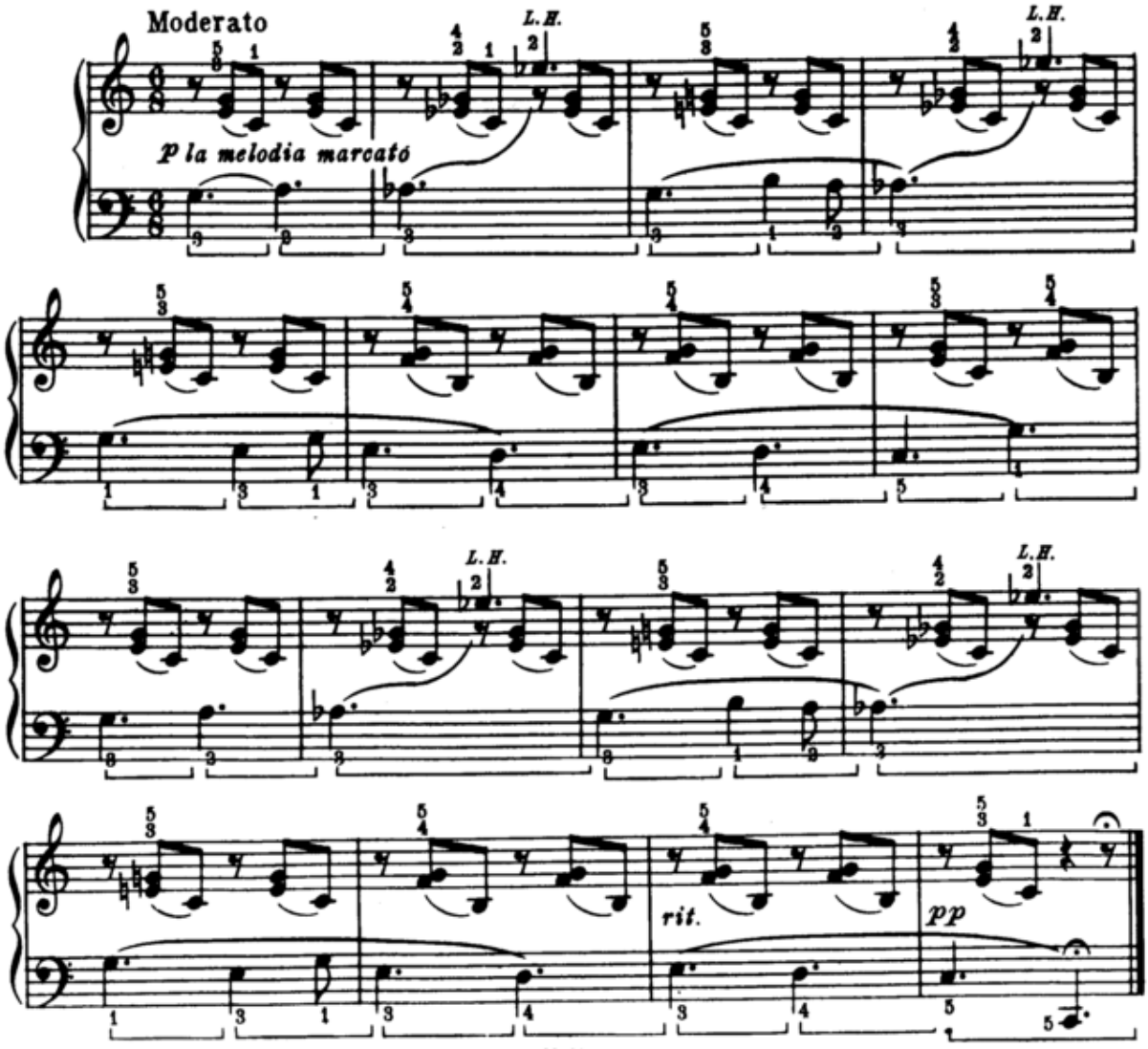


Press the damper pedal DOWN on the numeral 2 and UP on numeral 1. Pedalling after the key has been struck is known as SYNCOPATED PEDALLING and is used to give clarity to your playing and to avoid a sloppy effect of overlapping tones.

018 The Damper Pedal.png

Dreamland

The use of the DAMPER PEDAL will aid you in connecting the melody and will also provide a rich harmonic background. Be sure to pedal as marked.



019 Dreamland.png

THE DOMINANT–SEVENTH CHORD

Next to the TONIC CHORD (I) the DOMINANT-SEVENTH (V^7) is the most important chord in harmonizing music.

With the use of these two chords, TONIC and DOMINANT-SEVENTH, it is possible to harmonize or form the accompaniment to many well known melodies and songs.

HOW TO FORM A DOMINANT-SEVENTH

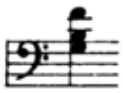
Dominant on 5th note of scale

Dominant 7th

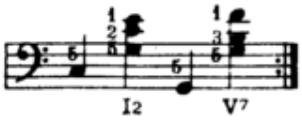
← — — — — added 7th
Count UP seven letters from lowest note G, thus: G A B C D E F
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Here are the four positions of the DOMINANT-SEVENTH

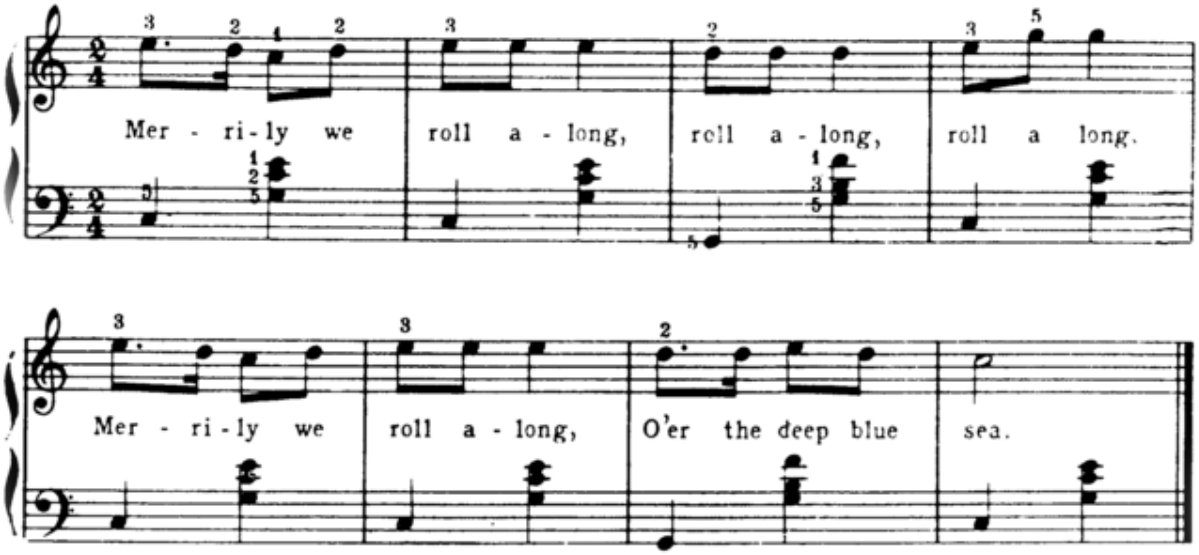
Here is the DOMINANT-SEVENTH an octave higher with the D omitted.



Practise the following accompaniment several times



Now play **MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG**

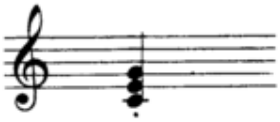


020 Dominant 7th Chord.png

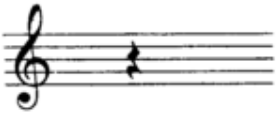
FOREARM STACCATO

HAND IN POSITION TO STRIKE

DOWN ARM

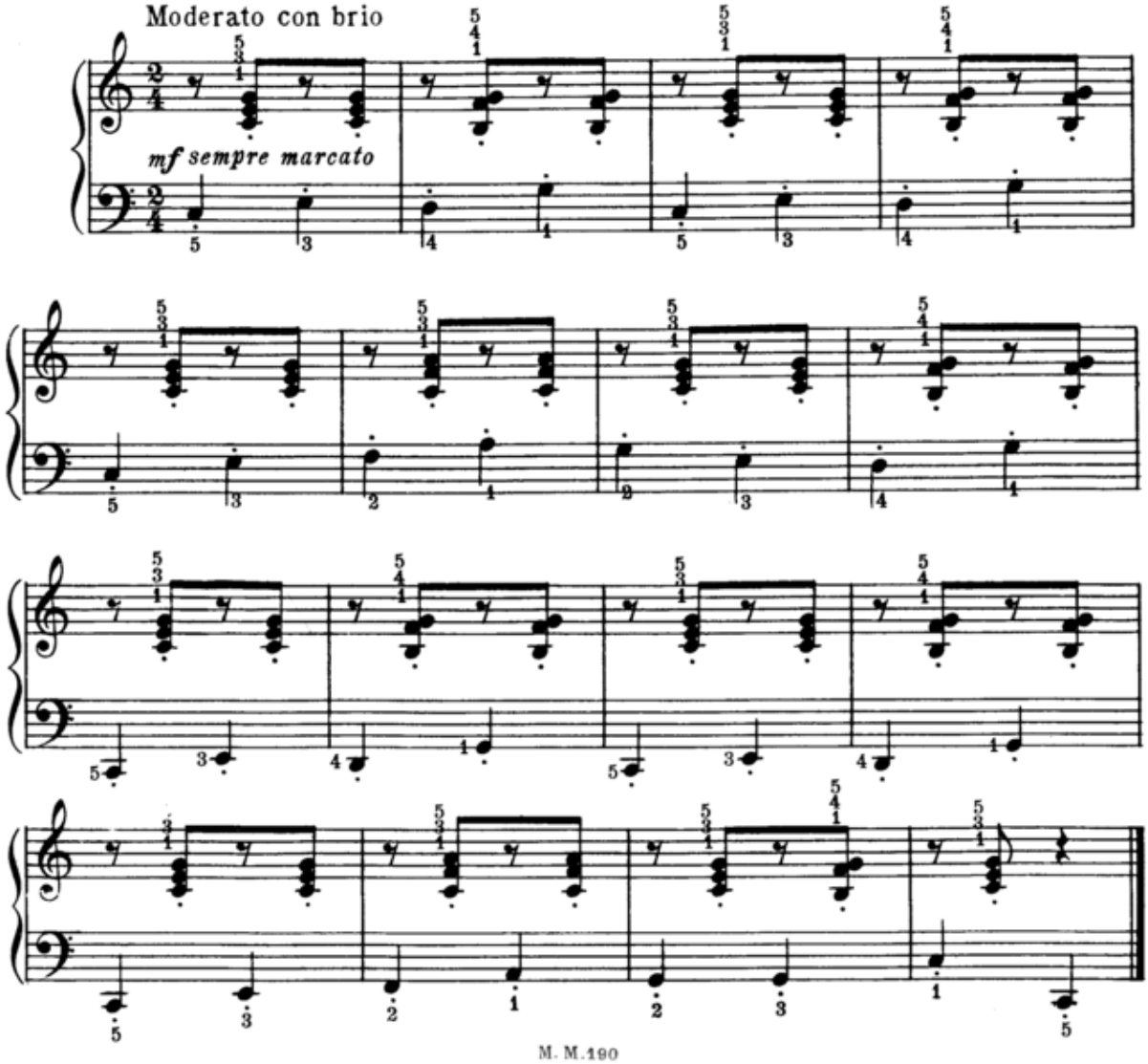


UP ARM



At The Band Rehearsal

Play the chords with a forearm staccato touch.



M. M. 190

021 Forearm Staccato.png

STEPHEN FOSTER
(B.1826-D.1864)

Stephen Foster is known as the greatest writer of American folk-songs. His melodies are simple, but very expressive, and will live as long as music is sung or played. Among his many famous songs, "Swanee River" is the most popular.

Swanee River

Play with expression and shade your melody

Andante cantabile

STEPHEN FOSTER

p 'Way down up-on the Swa-nee Riv-er, Far, far a - way,

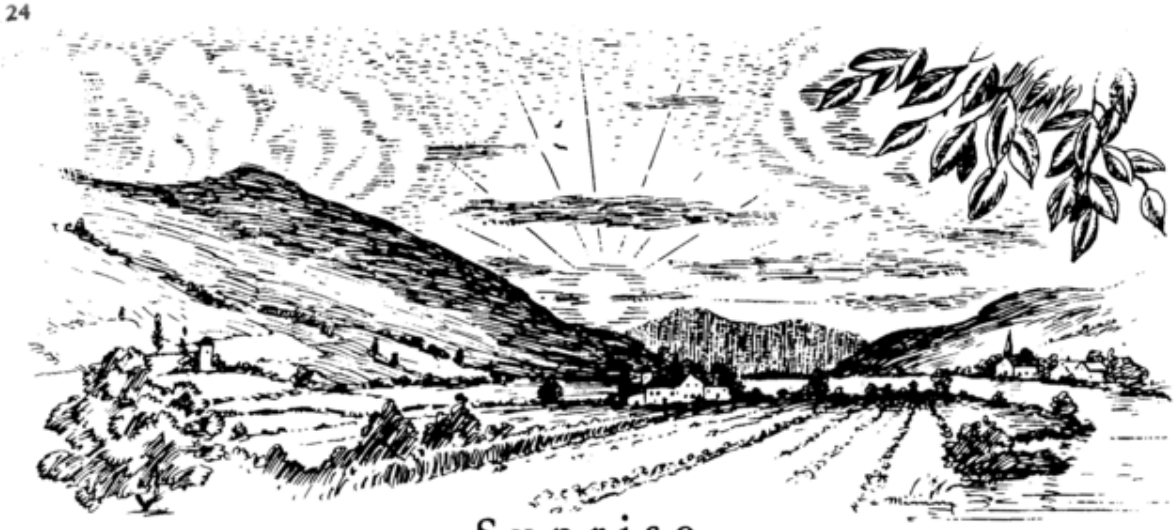
That's where my heart is turn-ing ev - er, That's where the old folks stay.

p All the world is sad and drear-y, Ev - 'ry - where I roam;

p Oh, dark - ies how my heart grows wear-y, Far from the old folks at home.

M. M. 190

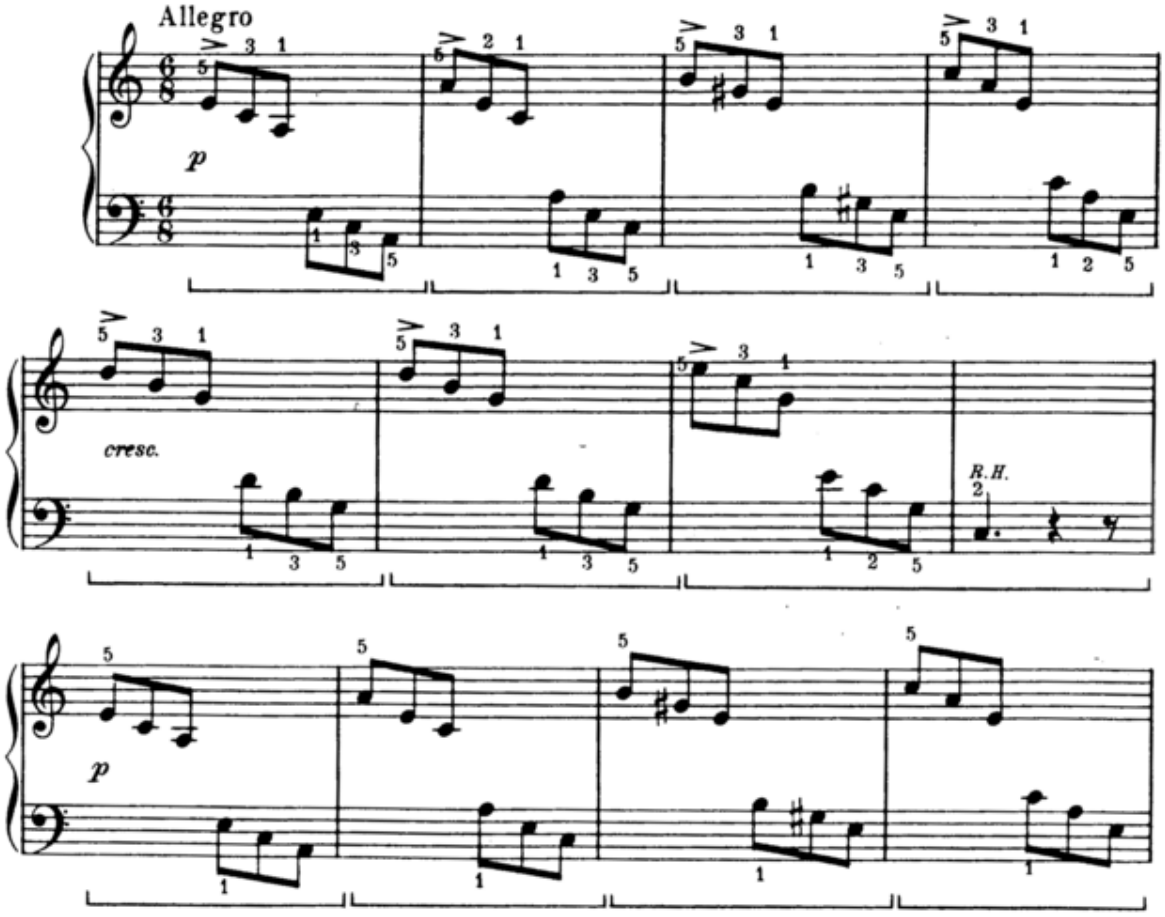
022 Swanee River.png



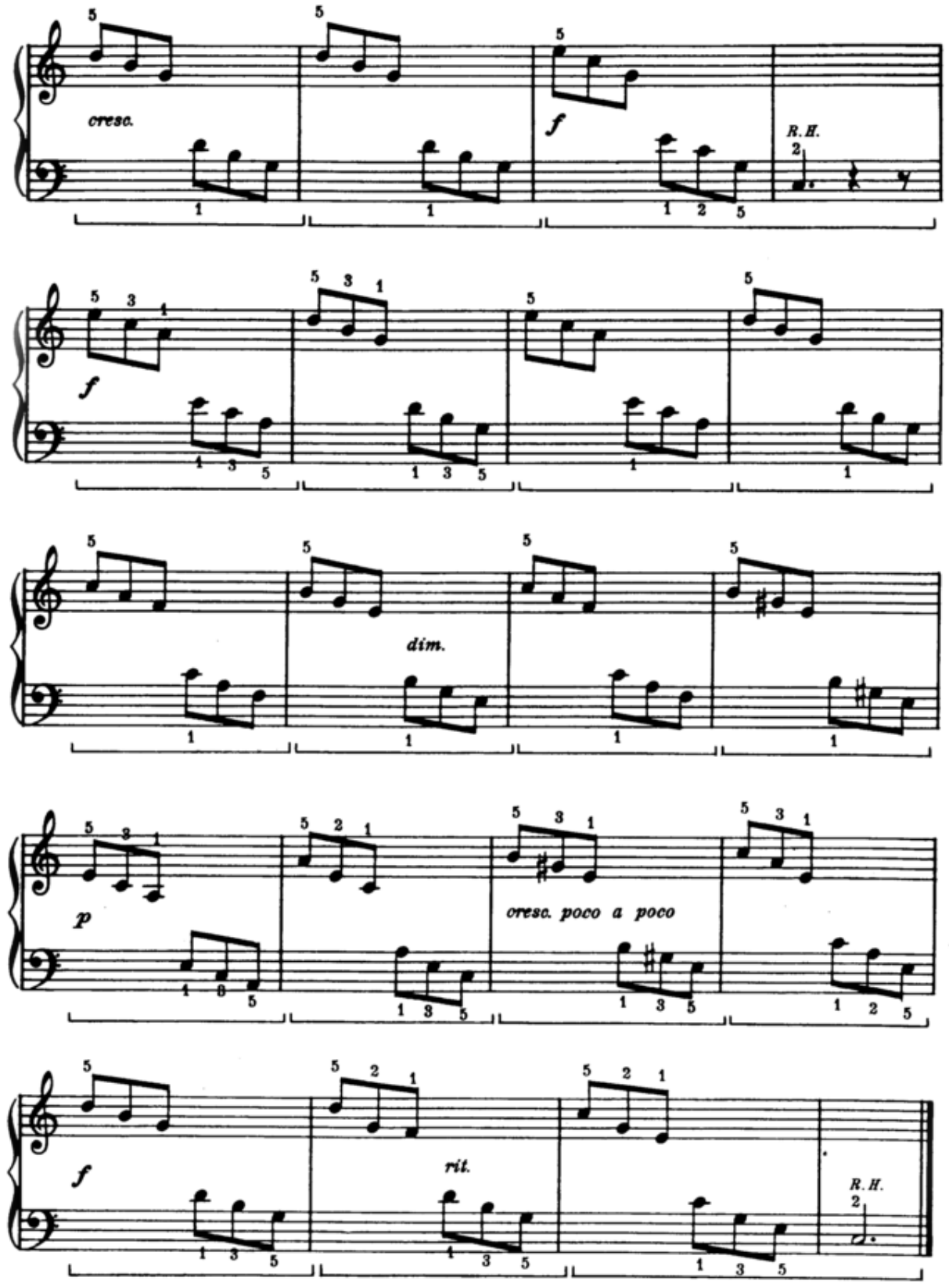
Sunrise

(Broken Chords)

The first note of each bar should be strongly accentuated. This will bring out the HIDDEN MELODY. Use DAMPER PEDAL as MARKED. Practise each three note group as a chord. This will give you additional chord practice and will also help in attaining speed.



023 Sunrise (broken Chords).png



024 Sunrise (broken Chords) Part 2.png

FRANZ SCHUBERT (B.1797-D.1828)

Schubert was a great composer who might have risen to greater heights, if death had not overtaken him at the early age of thirty-one. His "Unfinished Symphony" is a favourite among music lovers and possesses that haunting loveliness and purity which are characteristics of Schubert's music. He also created a new and distinctive form in song writing and will always be remembered for his many songs of rare beauty.

Theme from Unfinished Symphony

F. SCHUBERT

Allegretto espressivo

Count 1 a 2 a 3 a

p

marcato il basso

poco rit.

a tempo

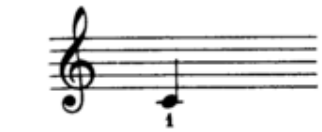
dim.

e rit.

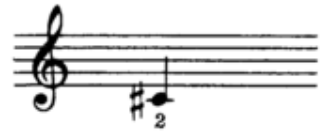
025 Unfinished Symphony Theme.png

CROSSING THE THUMB

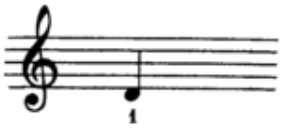
THUMB ON C
2nd finger ready to strike



2nd FINGER ON C♯
Thumb crossing UNDER

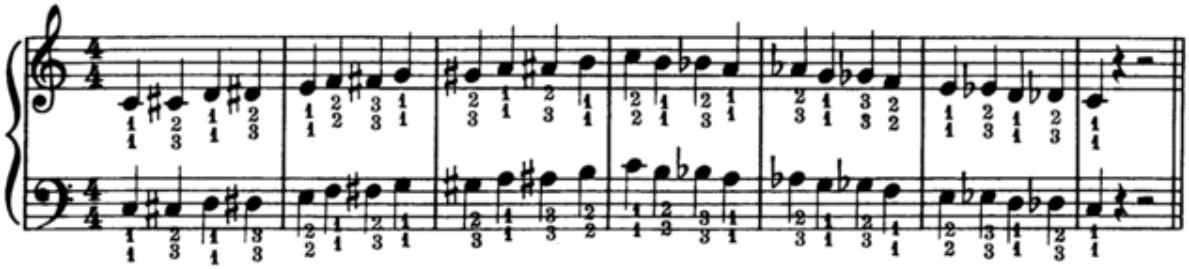


THUMB ON D



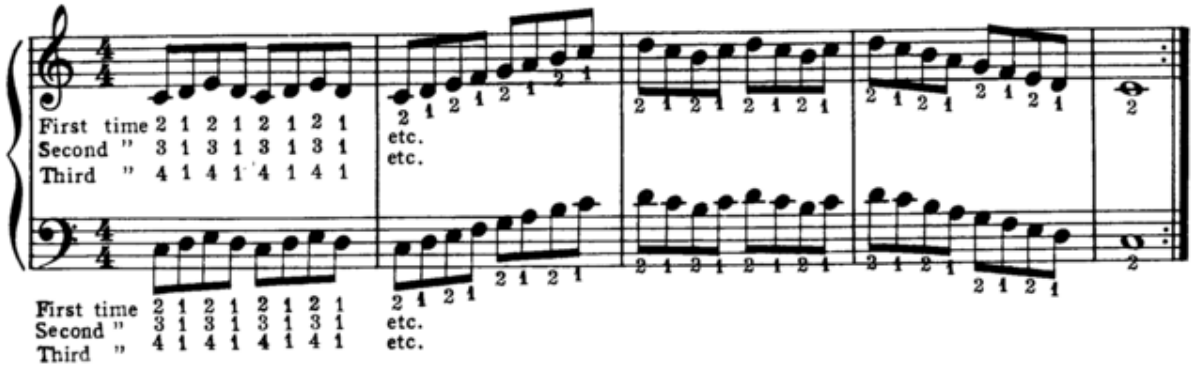
CHROMATIC SCALE

The CHROMATIC SCALE is a series of twelve half-step intervals. A RELAXED THUMB will help you attain smooth crossings. Practise hands separately. This scale should be practised daily.



STUDY IN THUMB CROSSINGS

Practise hands separately and slowly. The speed may be increased gradually.

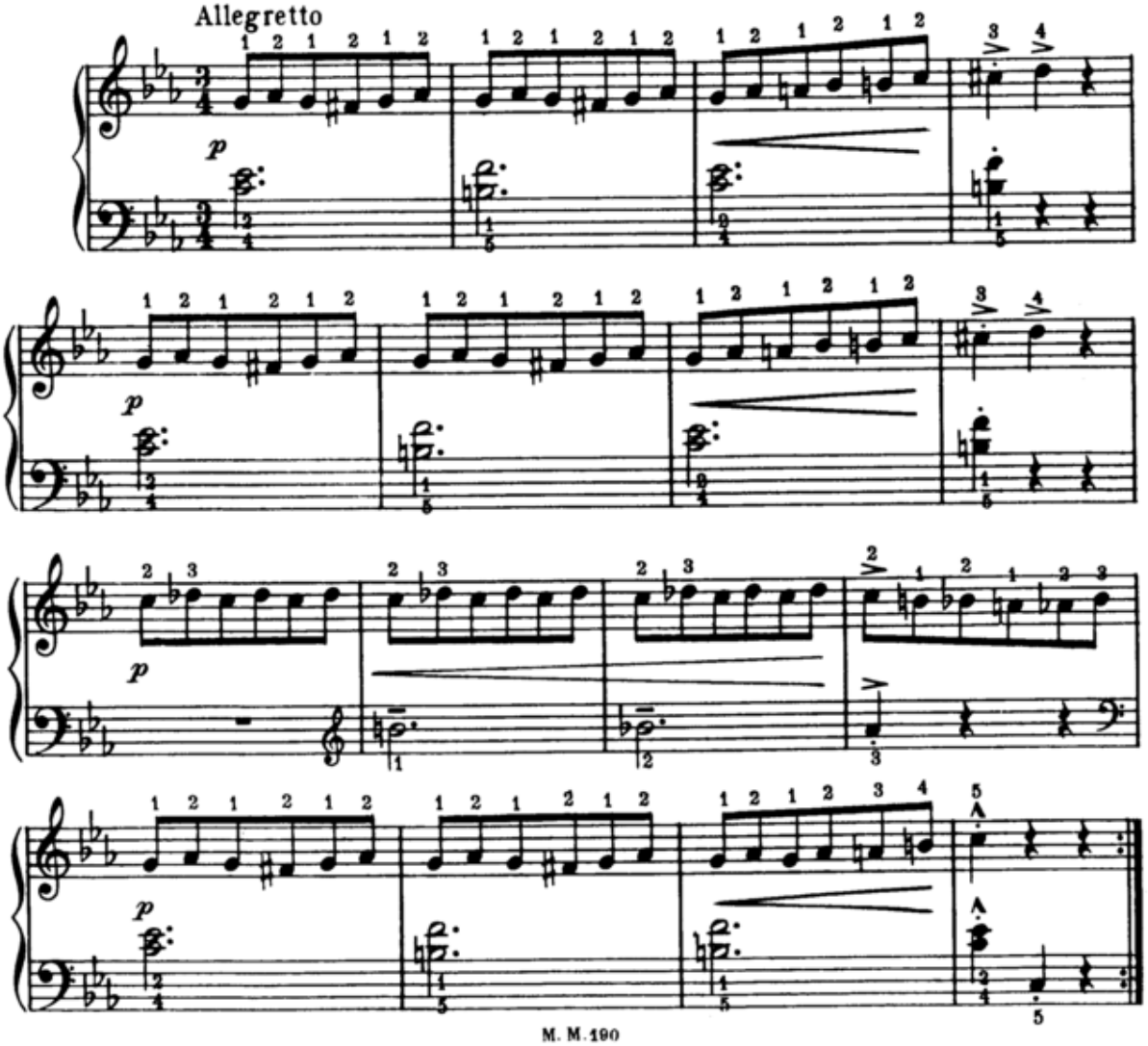


026 Crossing the Thumb.png

The Mosquito

(Thumb Crossings for Right Hand)

Notice the form or structure of this piece. It is composed of notes of the CHROMATIC SCALE. Play with a LIGHT and RELAXED THUMB. The first three bars suggest the humming sound of the mosquito and the fourth bar the "sting" and ensuing slap.

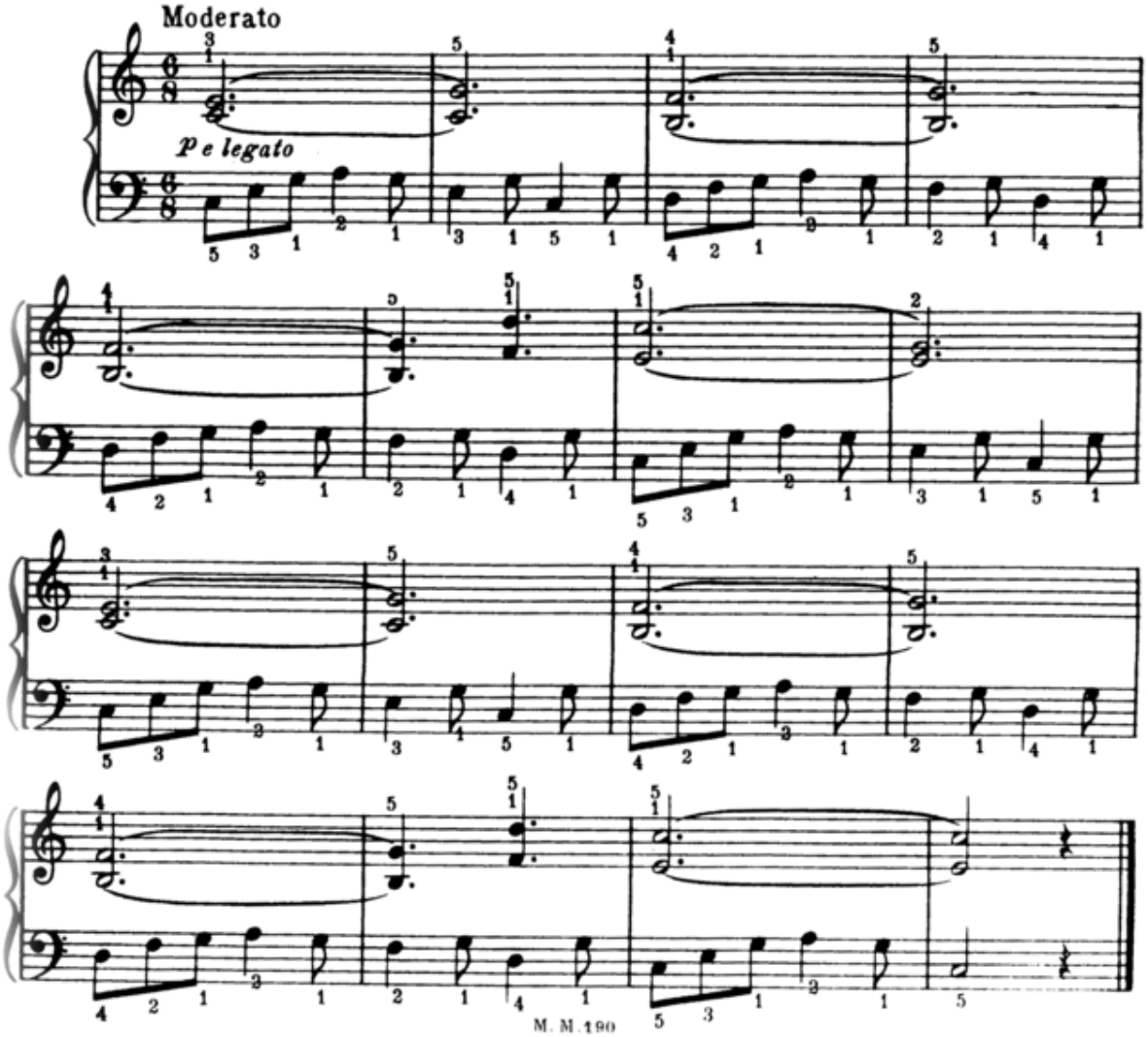


027 The Mosquito (Thumb Crossing right Hand).png

Cradle Song

(Thumb Crossings for Left Hand)

Try to "feel" the rocking of the cradle as you play the left hand. The upper dotted half notes of the right hand are MELODY NOTES and should be accented so that they may be heard above the left hand accompaniment.



028 Cradle Song (Thumb crossing Left Hand).png

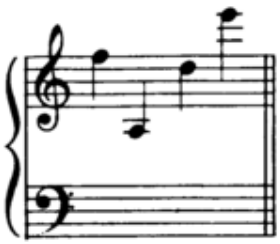
NOTE READING TESTS

(All Positions)

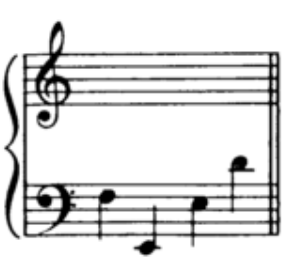
SPELL OUT words by writing the correct letter name of each note.

To complete each test you must play the correct notes on the piano.

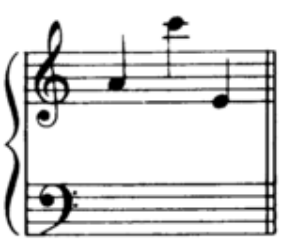
NAME OF WORD



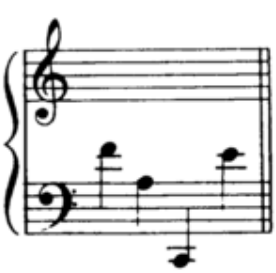
NAME OF WORD



NAME OF WORD



NAME OF WORD



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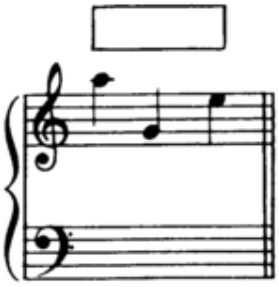
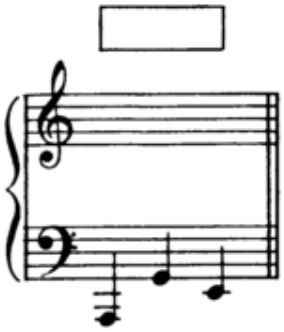
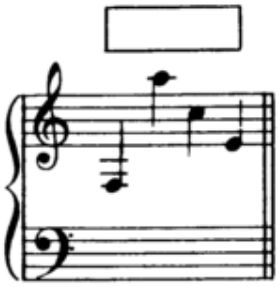


NAME OF WORD



NAME OF WORD



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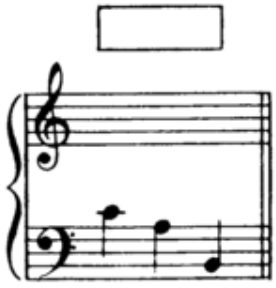

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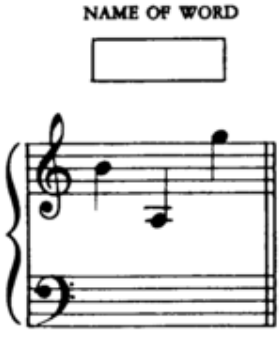

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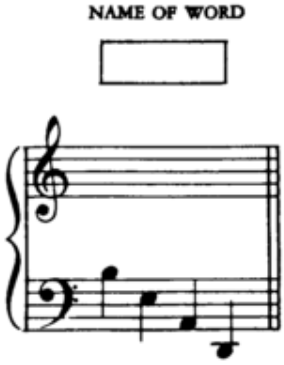

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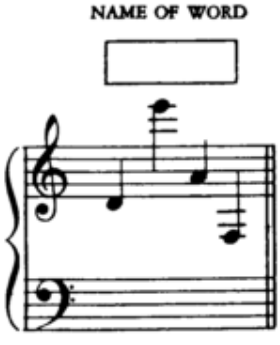
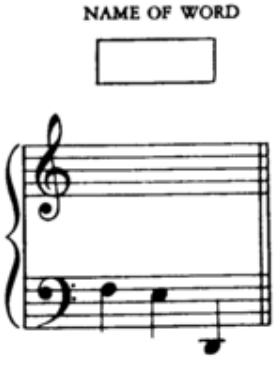
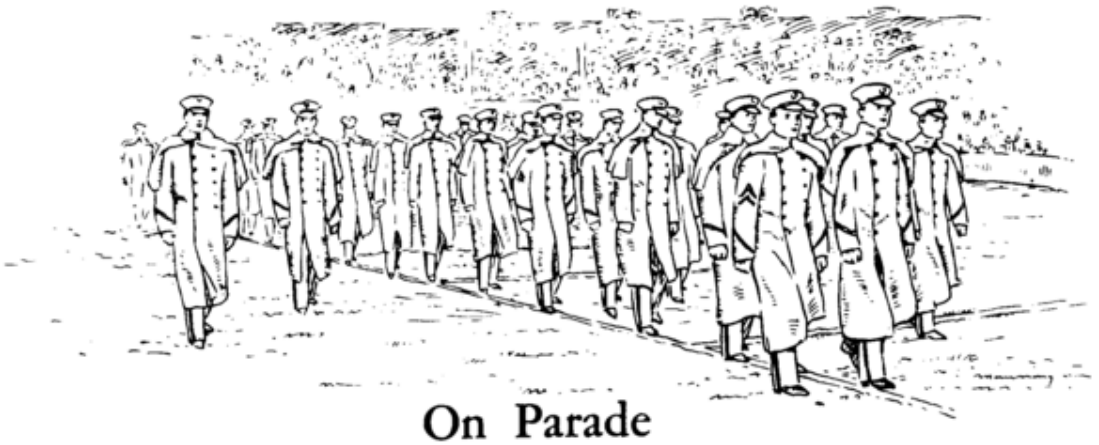


NAME OF WORD

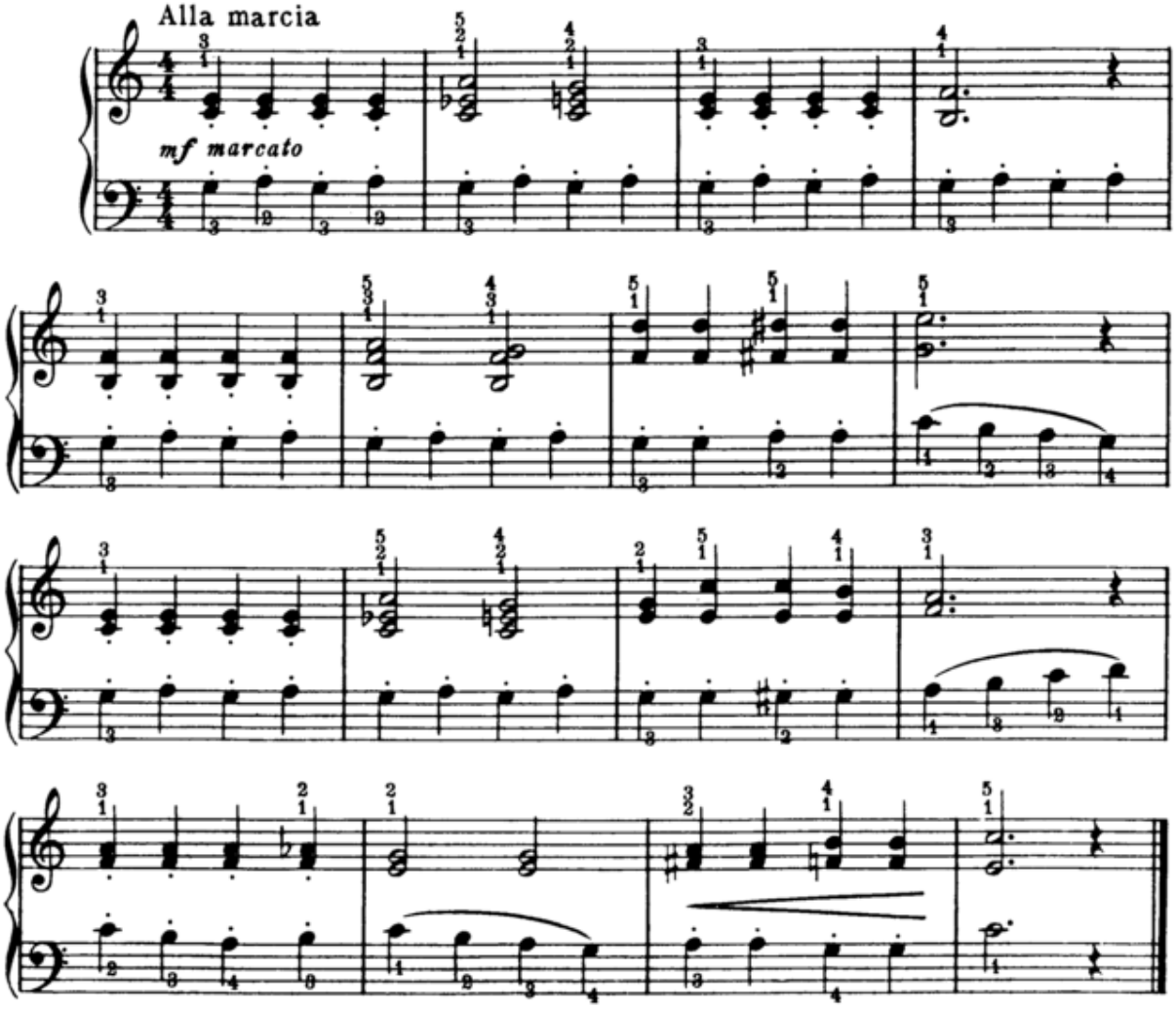


029 Note Reading Tests.png



On Parade

Marches should always be played with well marked rhythm and accents. In $\frac{4}{4}$ time the FIRST BEAT or count is the strongest and is called the PRIMARY ACCENT. The next accent falling on the THIRD BEAT or count is called the SECONDARY ACCENT and is played with a lighter accent.



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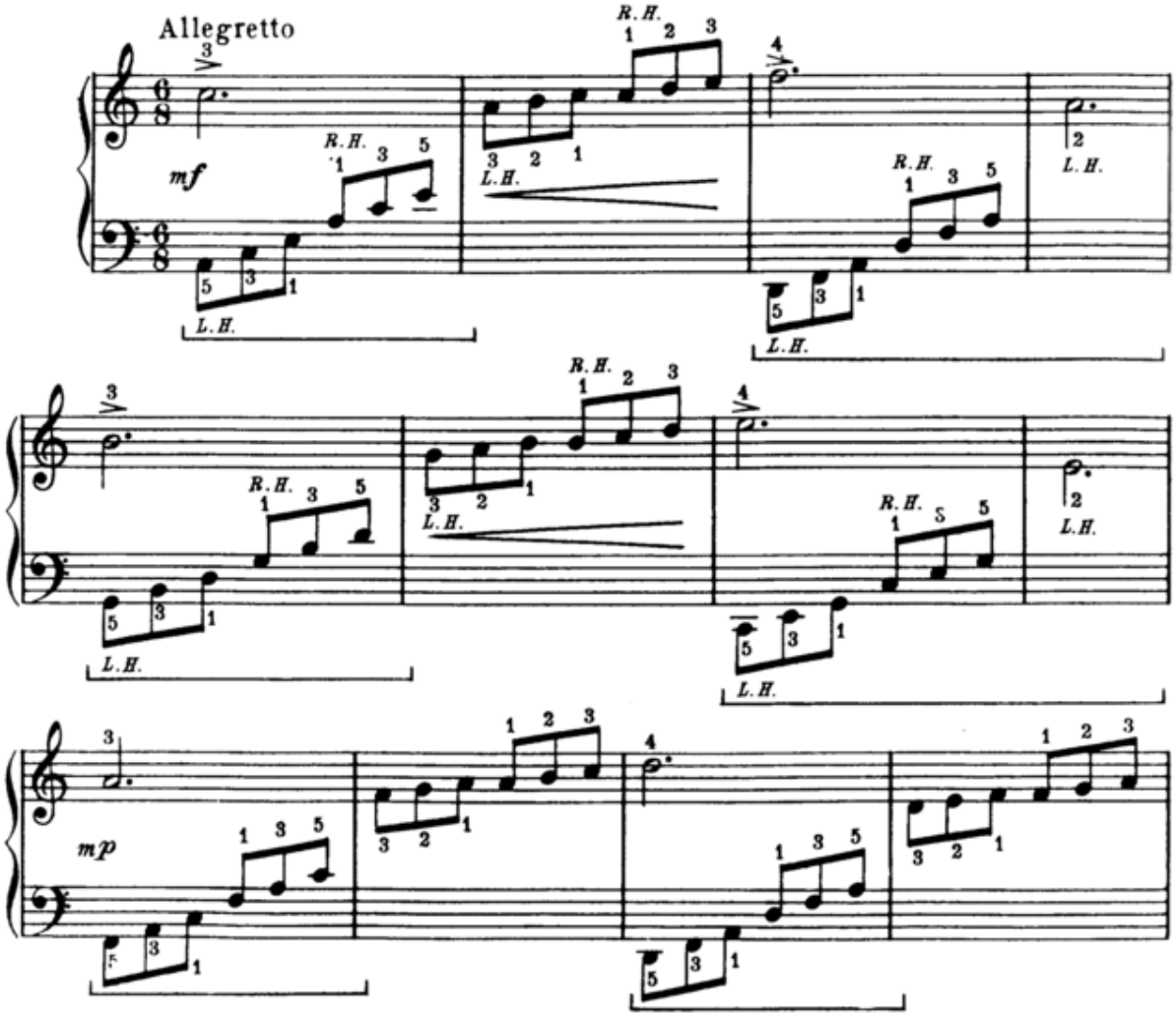
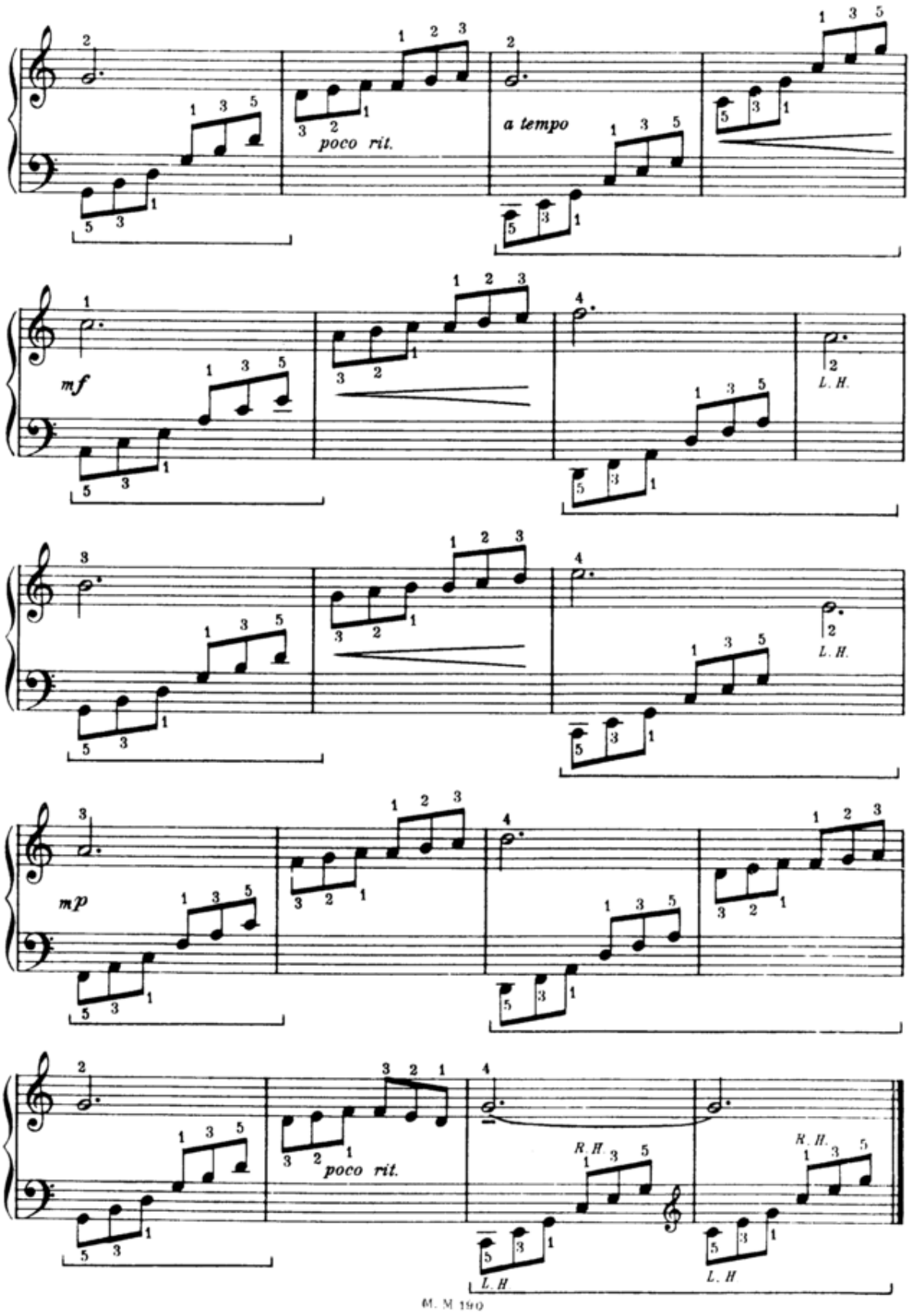
030 On Parade.png

The Breakers

Have you spent a day at the sea shore? If you have, you probably experienced the thrill of the surging tide, as it rolled on to the beach and broke into countless white caps. Try to picture this when playing "THE BREAKERS". The melody is in the treble staff and should be well accented. Use the pedal as indicated.



031 The Breakers.png



032 The Breakers Part 2.png

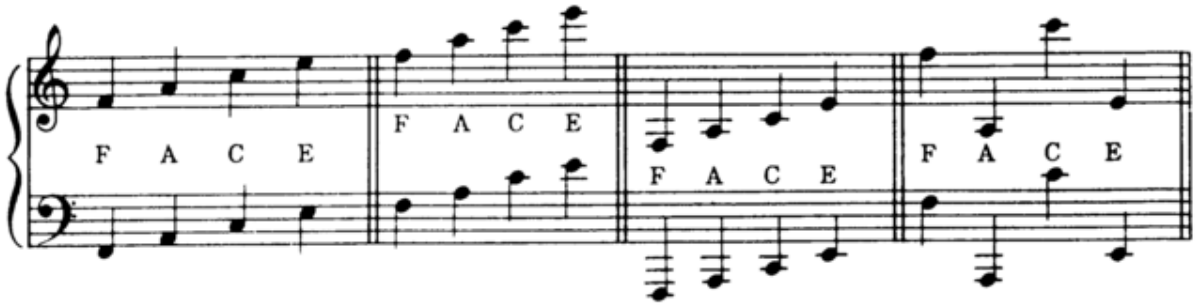
NOTE READING TESTS

(Four Positions)

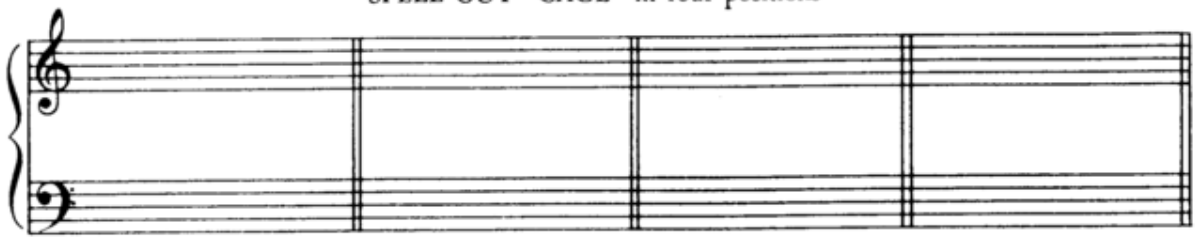
See if you can SPELL OUT the following words with the correct notes in four positions on the staff.

EXAMPLE

SPELL OUT "FACE" in four positions



SPELL OUT "CAGE" in four positions



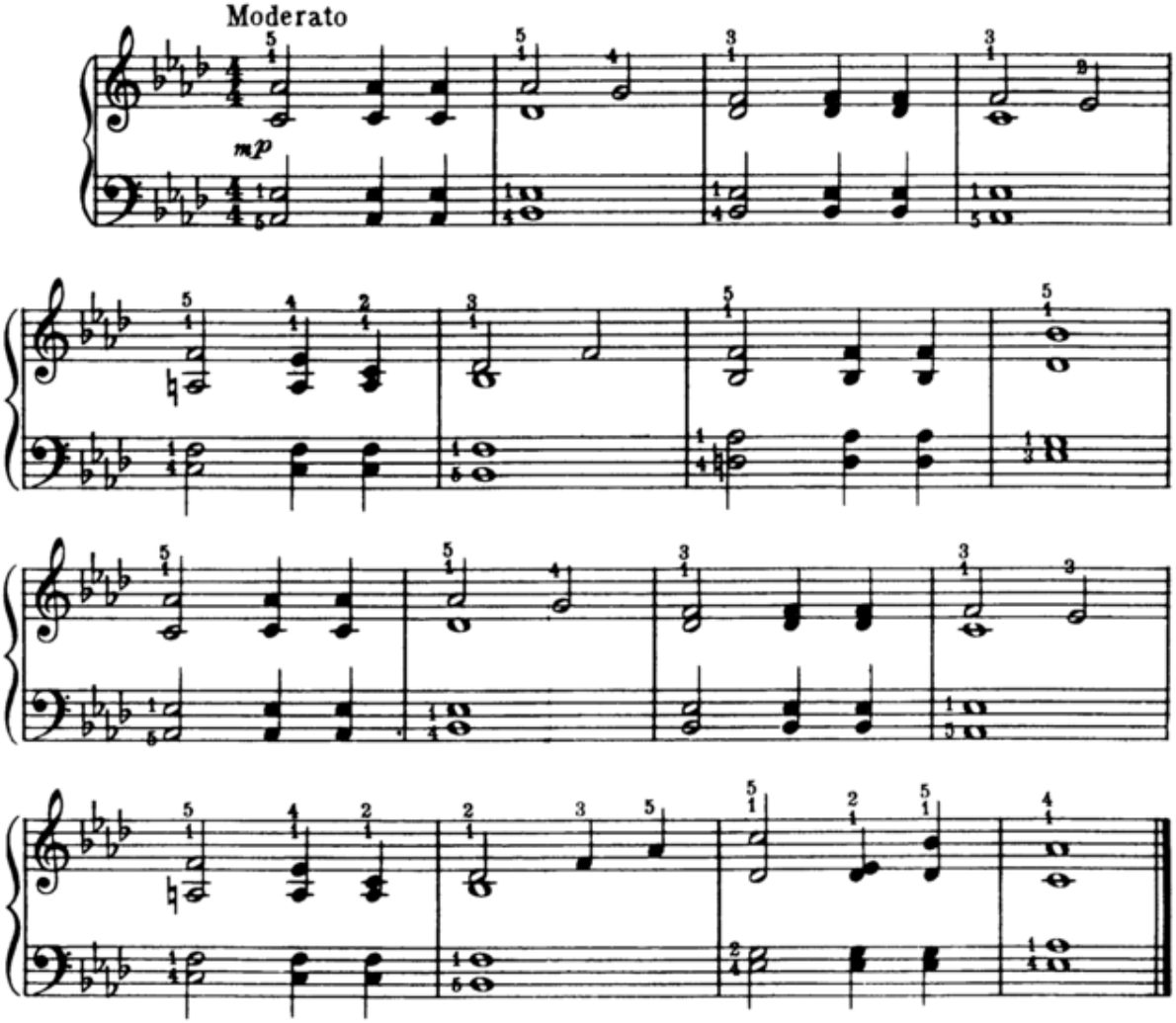
SPELL OUT "DEAF" in four positions

SPELL OUT "BAG" in four positions

033 Note reading Tests (4 positions).png

Chorale

Notice the new key signature A FLAT MAJOR. The four flats in this key spell B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ and will help you to remember the flats. Play the chords with a DOWN ARM touch and strive for a full rich "organ tone".



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034 Choral.png

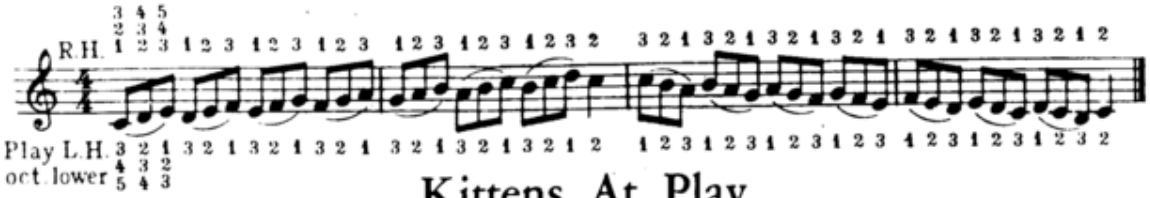
STUDY IN TRIPLETS

Practise this study three ways.

1st — Finger 1-2-3 throughout

2nd — Finger 2-3-4 "

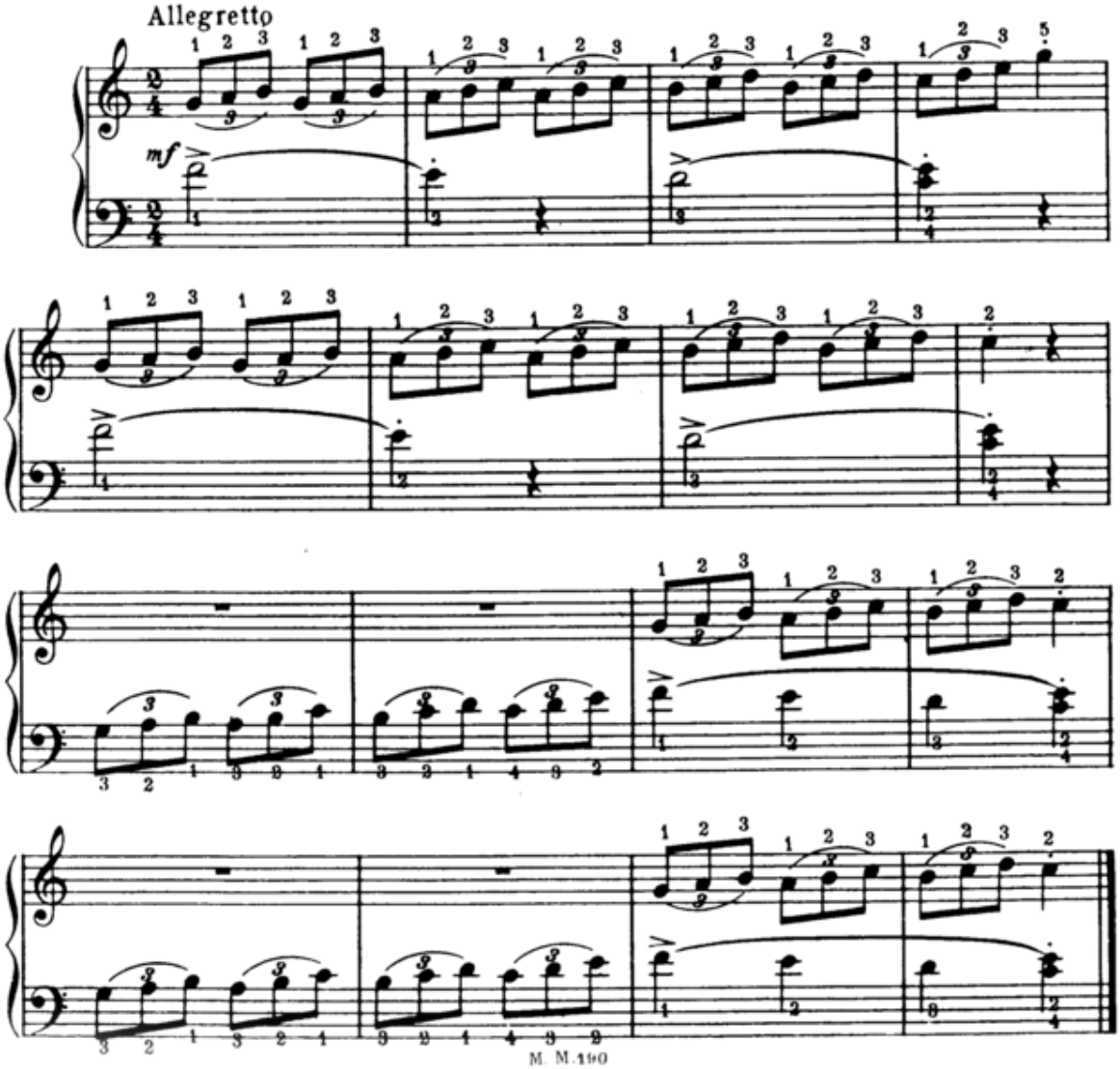
3rd — Finger 3-4-5 "



Kittens At Play

(Triplets)

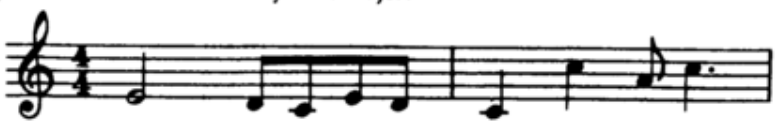
The TRIPLETS( ) in this piece are eighth notes and should be played three notes to the beat instead of the usual two. If you say the word "Won-der-ful" it will help you to feel the RHYTHM. Count in this manner ONE-der-ful, TWO-der-ful.



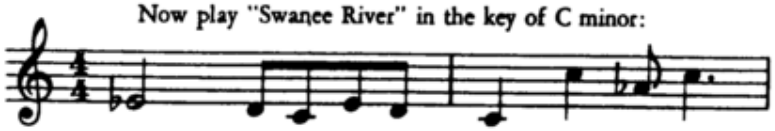
035 Kittens at Play (triplets).png

MINOR SCALE

The MINOR SCALE or KEY is often used to express sad or mysterious moods in musical composition. For example, play "Swanee River" in the key of C major:



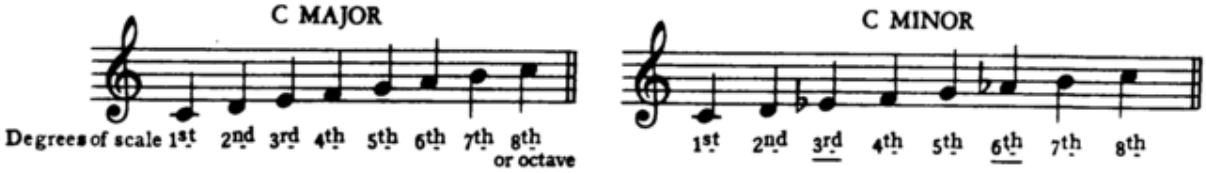
Now play "Swanee River" in the key of C minor:



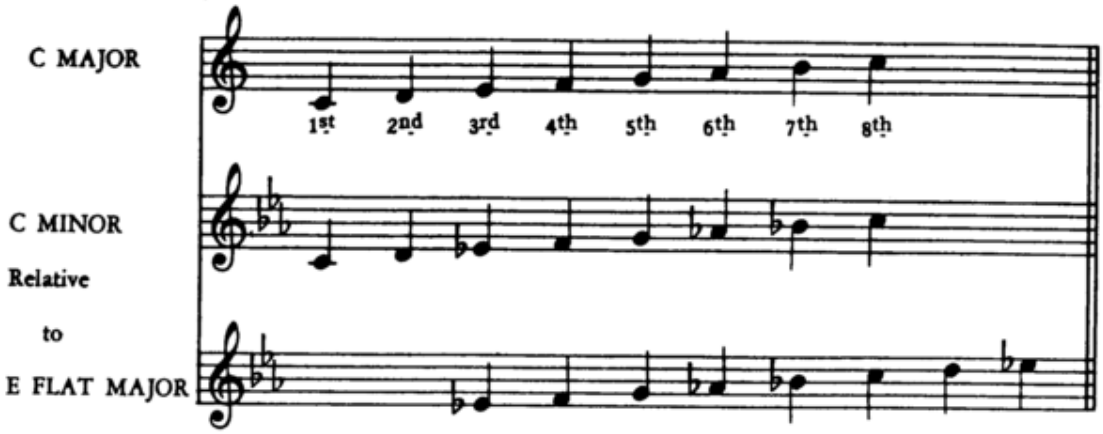
Notice how the FLATTED E and A change the mood of the piece to one of sadness.

Every MAJOR SCALE can be changed to a MINOR SCALE (harmonic form) by lowering the 3rd and 6th degrees a half step.

EXAMPLE



In the ORIGINAL or NATURAL FORM of the MINOR SCALE the 3rd, 6th and 7th degrees of the major scale were lowered a half step.



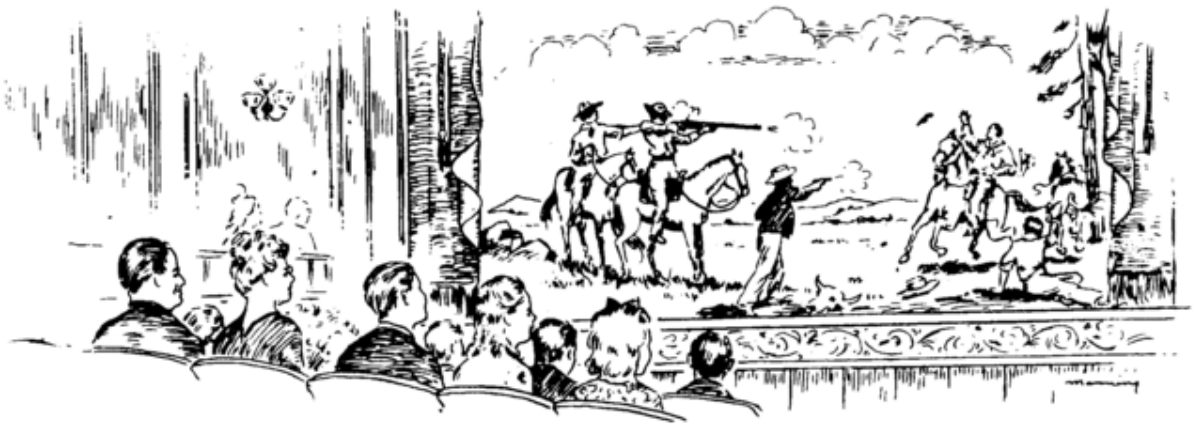
The LOWERED 3rd, 6th and 7th degrees E♭-A♭-B♭ are also found in the KEY of E FLAT MAJOR. Therefore C MINOR is called a RELATIVE of E FLAT MAJOR and has the same KEY SIGNATURE.

The 3rd degree of the MINOR SCALE will always give you the name of its' RELATIVE MAJOR.

The 6th degree of the MAJOR SCALE will always give you the name of its' RELATIVE MINOR.

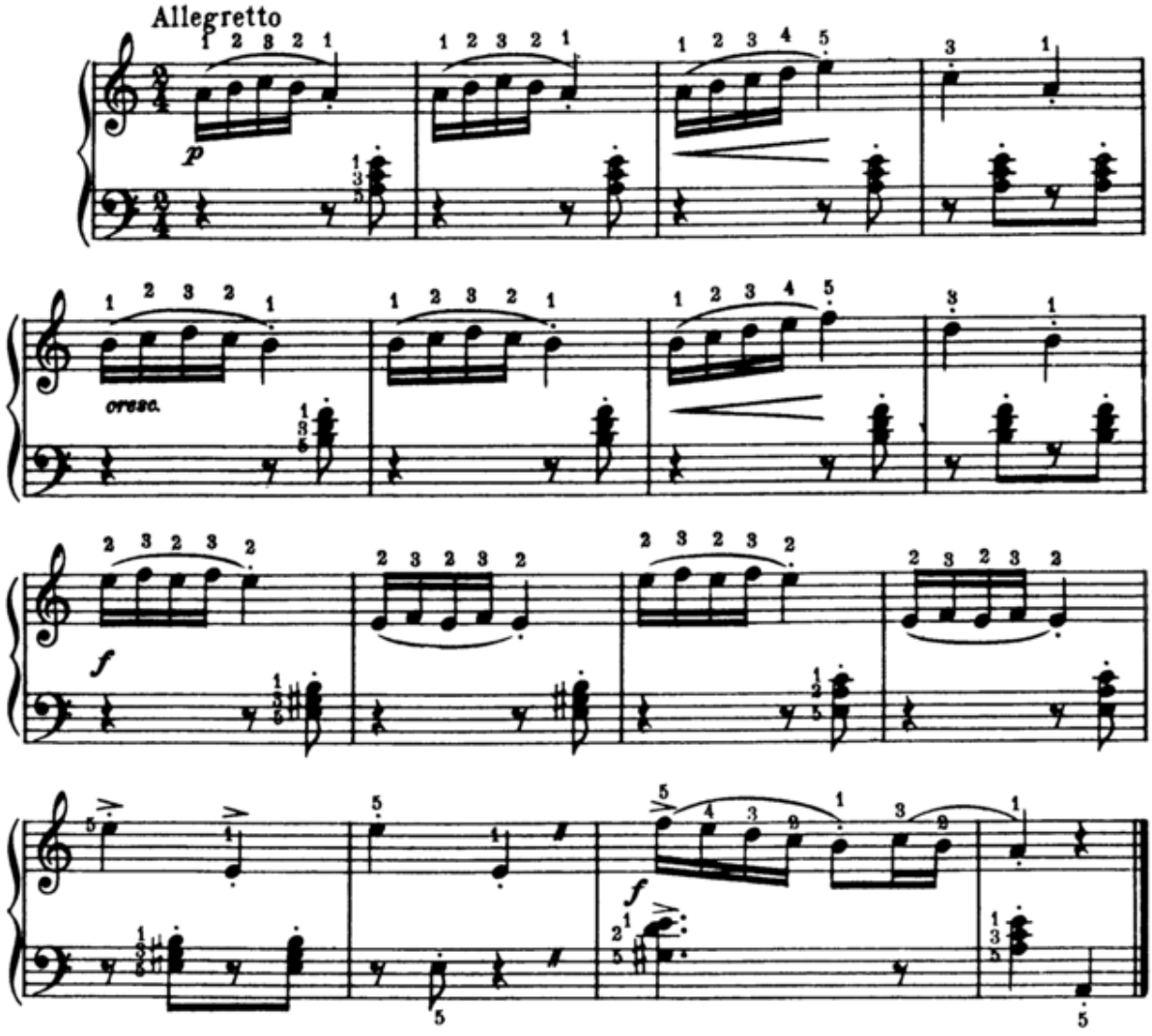
The HARMONIC FORM is the one most commonly used.

M. M. 190



Film Thriller

"FILM THRILLER" is an impression of a Saturday Matinee at the Films. The Film Serials usually present plenty of exciting action. Try to express this in your playing of this piece.



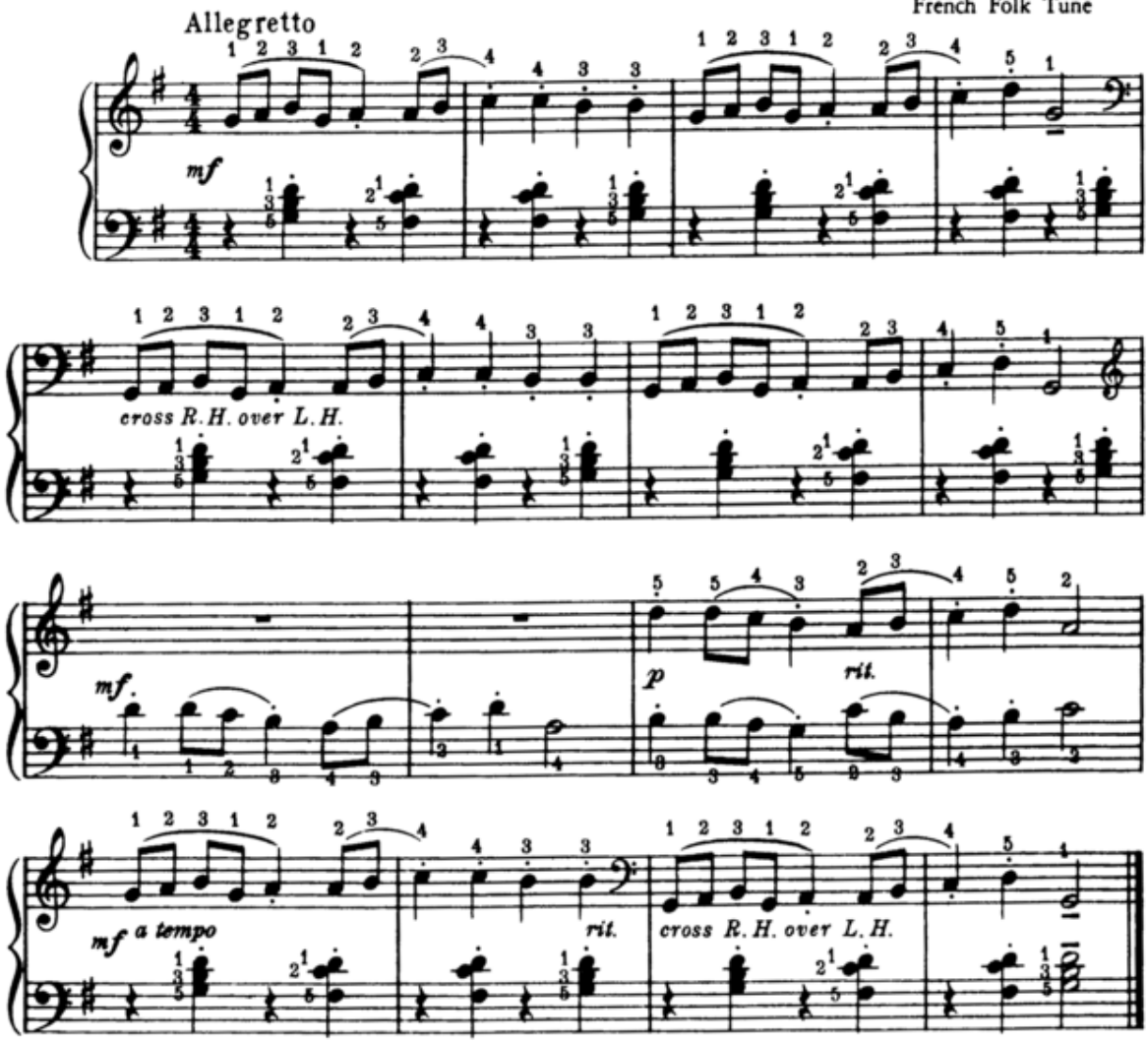
M. M. 190

Alphonse et Gaston

(Cross Hand)

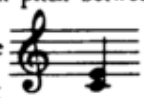
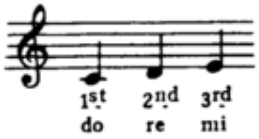
Play this arrangement of a French Folk-tune in a gay and lively manner. Study the first line thoroughly before practising the cross hand part in the second line.

French Folk Tune

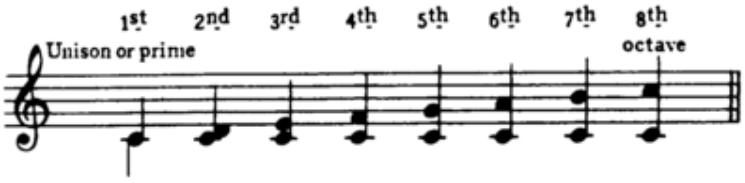


038 Alphonse et Gasgon (Cross Hands).png

INTERVALS

An INTERVAL is the difference in pitch between two tones of the scale. Intervals are counted from the first note of the scale upwards. For example  is called a 3rd because the upper note E is the third note of the major scale. 

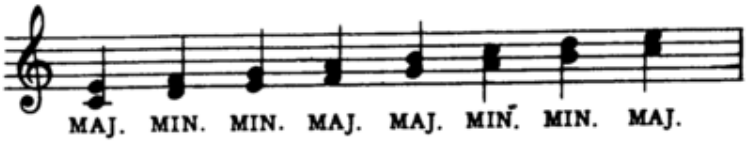
INTERVALS OF THE C MAJOR SCALE



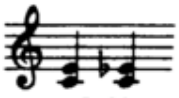
MAJOR AND MINOR THIRDS

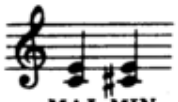
A MAJOR 3rd is an interval of FOUR HALF STEPS.
A MINOR 3rd is an interval of THREE HALF STEPS.

Here are the major and minor 3rds built on each degree of C major scale.



Any MAJOR 3rd may be changed to a MINOR 3rd by LOWERING the upper note a half step or RAISING the lower note a half step.





Any MINOR 3rd may be changed to a MAJOR 3rd by RAISING the upper note a half step or LOWERING the lower note a half step.

039 Intervals.png

The Canary

(Trill Study)

To obtain an even trill you must practise slowly at first. Listen carefully to your playing and try to "match" each tone.

Allegretto

p legato

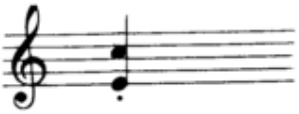
poco rit.

040 The Canary (Trill Study).png

WRIST STACCATO

HAND IN POSITION TO STRIKE

DOWN STROKE



UP STROKE

Study in Wrist Staccato

Moderato

mf

M. M. 190

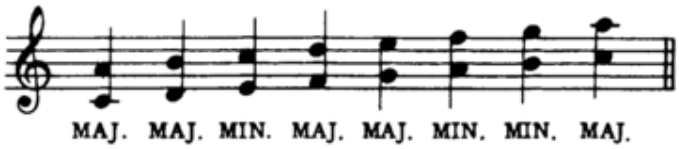
041 Wrist Staccato.png

MAJOR AND MINOR SIXTHS

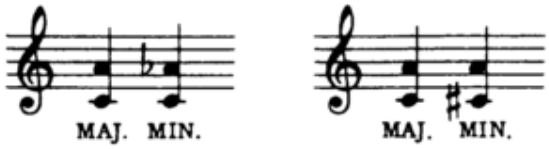
A MAJOR SIXTH is an interval of NINE HALF STEPS.

A MINOR SIXTH is an interval of EIGHT HALF STEPS.

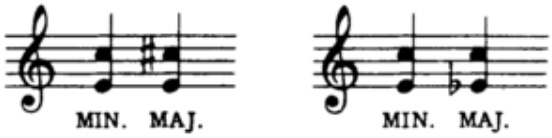
Here are the major and minor SIXTHS built on each degree of C MAJOR SCALE.



Any MAJOR 6th may be changed to a MINOR 6th by LOWERING the upper note a half step or RAISING the lower note a half step.



Any MINOR 6th may be changed to a MAJOR 6th by RAISING the upper note a half step or LOWERING the lower note a half step.



042 Major & Minor Sixths.png

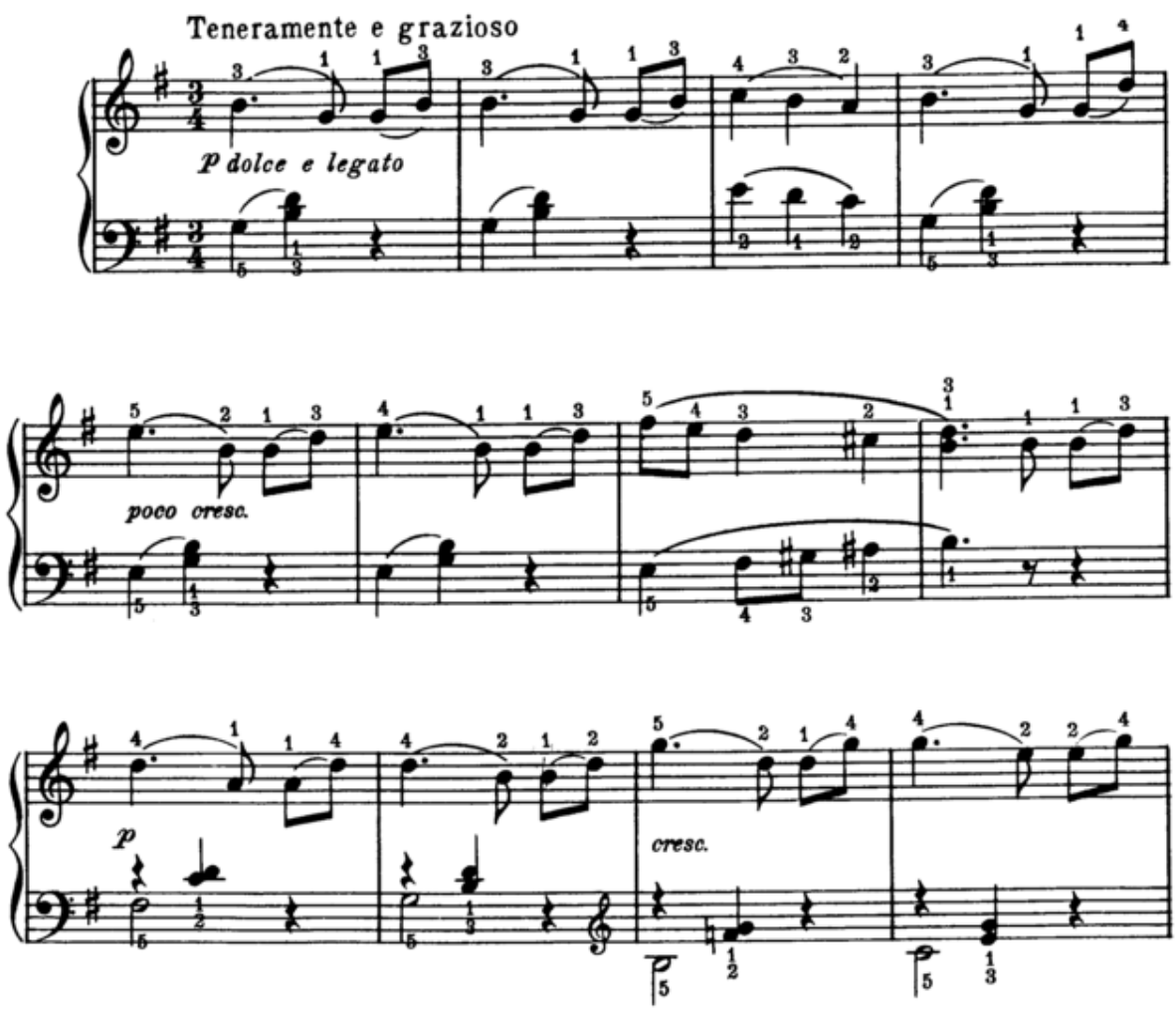
JOHANNES BRAHMS (B.1833-D.1897)

Brahms' music is everywhere admired for its wonderful craftsmanship. Brahms, the man, was very quiet and scholarly, and his own severest critic. He was very painstaking in his composing and therefore progressed slowly in order to attain perfection. Although a symphonist and composer of two piano concertos in D minor and B flat major, both true masterpieces, Brahms also wrote many shorter works for the piano. Because of his brilliance, and creative imagination, he has been classified as one of the great "Three B's", of music, namely Bach, Beethoven and Brahms.

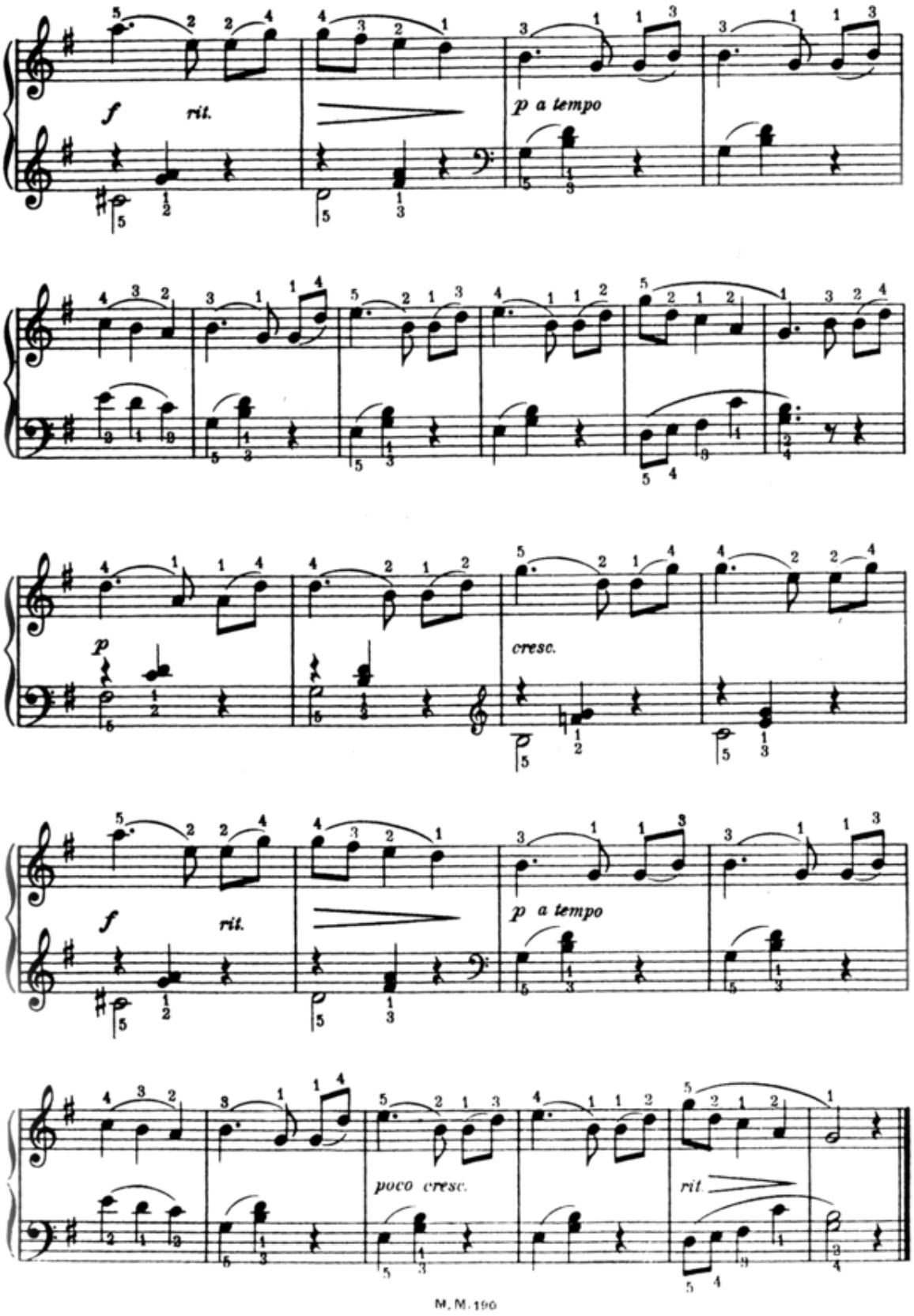
Waltz

In this lovely waltz by Brahms one feels the "floating" sway of the dancer. Follow the expression marks carefully.

BRAHMS



043 Waltz.png

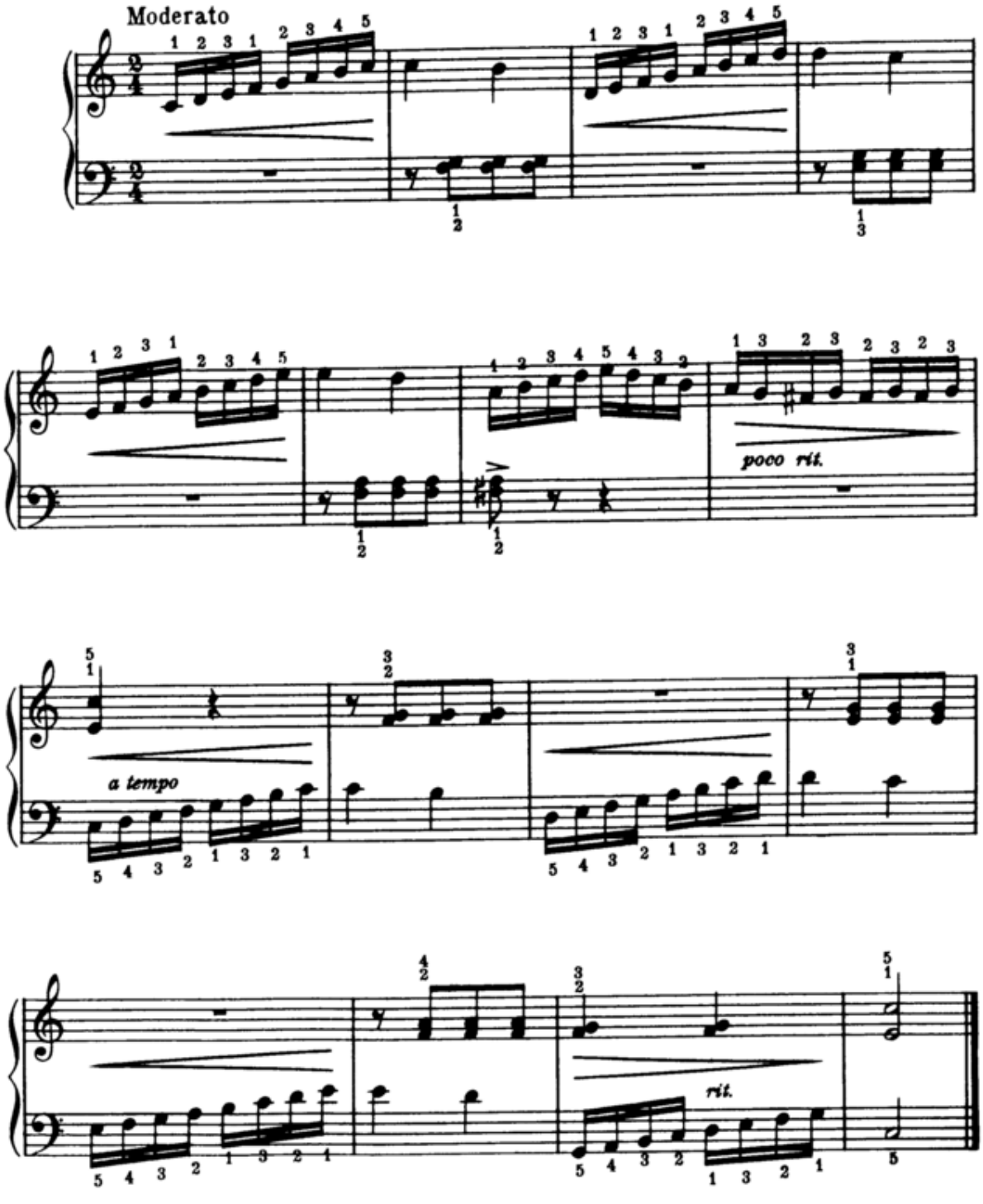


044 Waltz Part 2.png

Scale in Sixteenths (semiquavers)

As a general rule INCREASE your tone gradually as you play UP the scale and DECREASE your tone as you play DOWN the scale.

The fifteenth bar of this study is an exception to this rule and should be played with a gradual decrescendo.



045 Scale In Sixteenths.png

Fireflies

(Study in Style)

Play this piece with a light and "airy" touch. Notice that the left hand is played in the treble.

All slur and staccato marks should be carefully observed. They add meaning and character to your playing.

Allegretto

P e leggiero

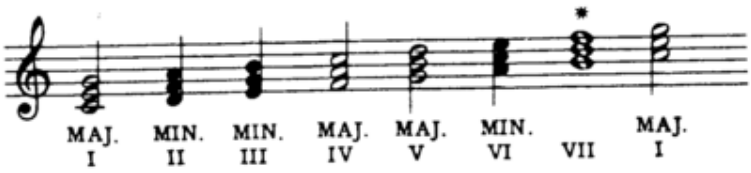
rit.

046 Fireflies.png

MAJOR AND MINOR TRIADS

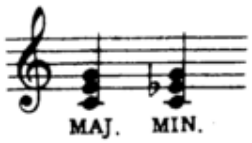
We learned the three MAJOR TRIADS of the major scale in GRADE ONE	(do) TONIC I	(sol) DOMINANT V	(fa) SUB-DOMINANT IV
Now we will study the three MINOR TRIADS on the 2nd, 3rd, and 6th degrees of the major scale.	(re) SUPER-TONIC II	(mi) MEDIANT III	(la) SUB-MEDIANT VI

MAJOR AND MINOR TRIADS OF C MAJOR SCALE



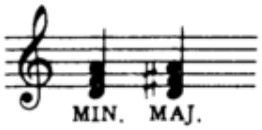
Any MAJOR TRIAD may be changed to a MINOR TRIAD

by LOWERING the 3rd of the chord a half step.



Any MINOR TRIAD may be changed to a MAJOR TRIAD

by RAISING the 3rd of the chord a half step.



Note to Teacher

Major and minor triads of other scales may be introduced at the discretion of the teacher.

* The DIMINISHED TRIAD is explained in MICHAEL AARON PIANO COURSE, GRADE THREE.

047 Major & Minor Triads.png

The Old Tar

All sixteenth notes should be practised at three different speeds.

1st as quarter notes, one note to a count. (crotchets)

2nd as eighth notes, two notes to a count. (quavers)

3rd as sixteenth notes, four notes to a count. (semiquavers)

Allegretto

mf

048 The Old Tar.png

On Wings of Song

The melody of this beautiful song by Mendelssohn rises above the smooth even flowing accompaniment of the left hand. Shade the accompaniment as well as the melody.

F. MENDELSSOHN (B.1809-D.1847)

Andante cantabile

p e tranquillo *l. h.* *l. h.*

mf *poco accelerando*

a tempo

rit. *p a tempo*

rit. *a tempo* *f* *p* *rit.* *pp*

049 On Wings of Song.png

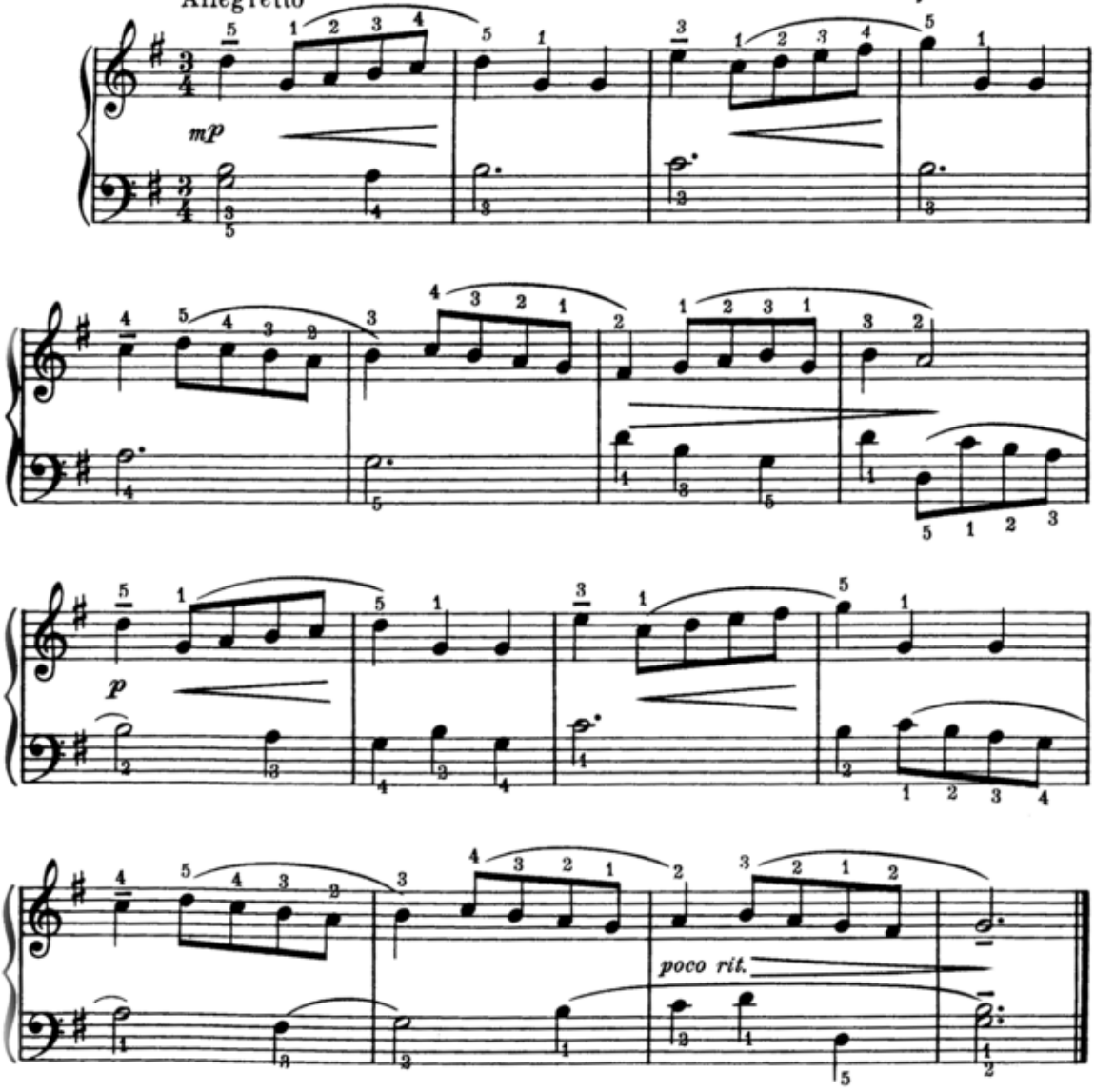
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (B.1685-D.1750)

Although Bach lived and composed in the early Eighteenth Century, his music possesses that immortal quality which belongs to all ages. Bach has often been called a "musicians' musician", and rightly so, since his music proved to be a source of inspiration to many of the great composers. The student will also derive much benefit from the study of Bach, which is so helpful in training the fingers and the mind. Bach wove his melodies into beautiful designs in much the same manner as a master weaver of carpets. His "Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues" in all keys is one of the great contributions to the development of music.

Minuet

To make your playing of "MINUET" more expressive, be sure to "shade" the melody. One way of shading is to INCREASE the tone when the melody goes UP and DECREASE the tone when the melody goes DOWN , but there are as many different ways of shading as we have moods.

Allegretto J. S. BACH



M. M. 190

050 Minuet.png

Jig

Rhythm has often been called the "Heart Beat of Music". Without rhythm music is lifeless. In "JIG" the first and fourth beats are strongly accentuated. Play as rapidly as possible; however, do not sacrifice clarity for speed.

Allegro con brio

f marcato

M. M. 190

051 Jigg.png

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN (B.1770-D.1827)

Beethoven's music possesses a lofty and noble character, and is best described in his Piano Sonatas and Symphonies which rank among the world's greatest music literature. Despite being handicapped by deafness in his later years, it was then that he composed some of his best music. This shining example shows how one can overcome even the greatest of handicaps if the ambition and desire is strong enough.

Turkish March

In this march by Beethoven you can hear the footsteps of the soldiers in the distance. As they come closer and closer the music increases in volume. Play the grace notes with a light touch.

Allegretto

BEETHOVEN

p

mf

poco cresc.

f

poco rit.

052 Turkish March.png

The Whistler

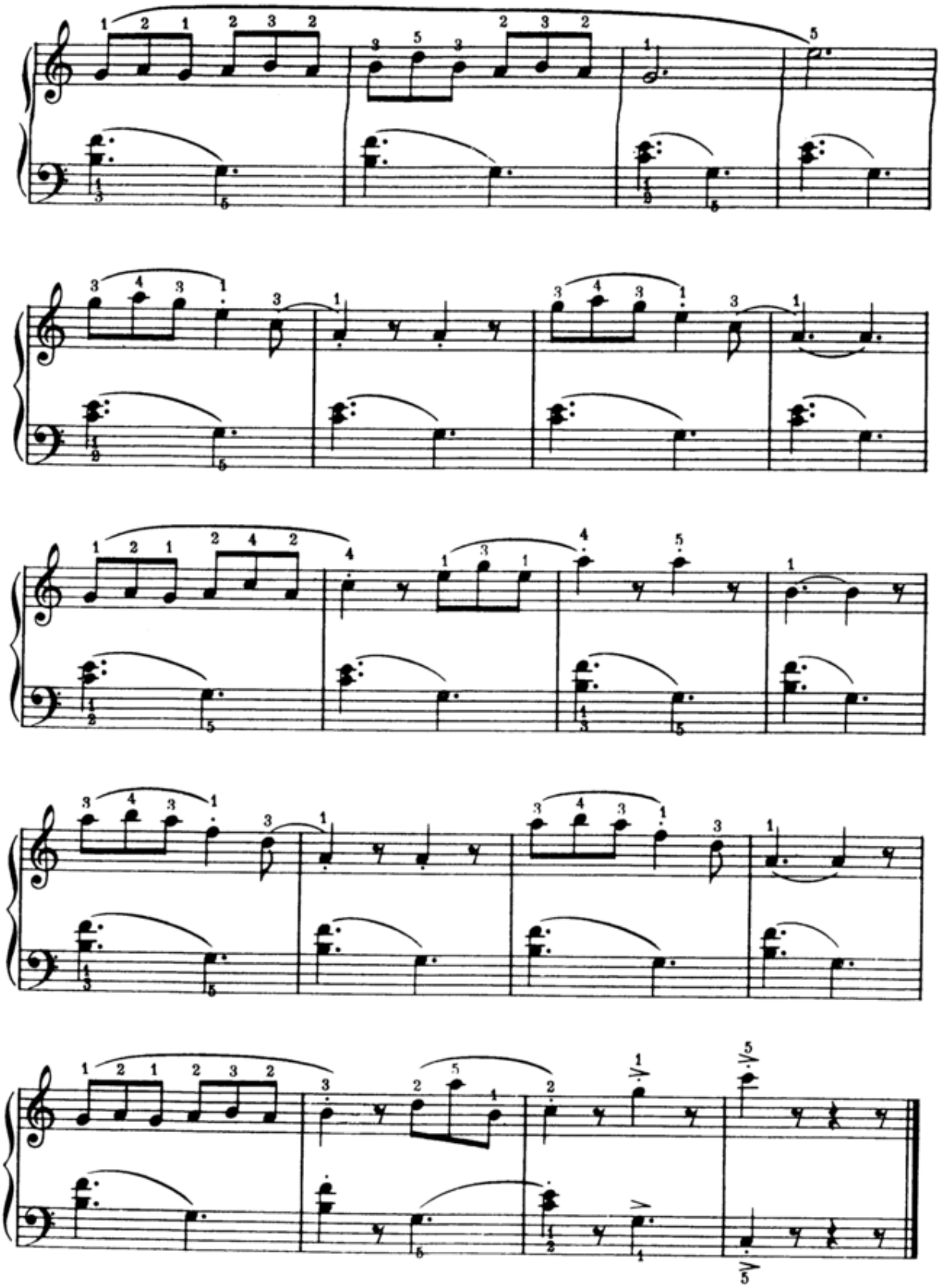
Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheeks of tan,
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes.

Whittier

Allegretto

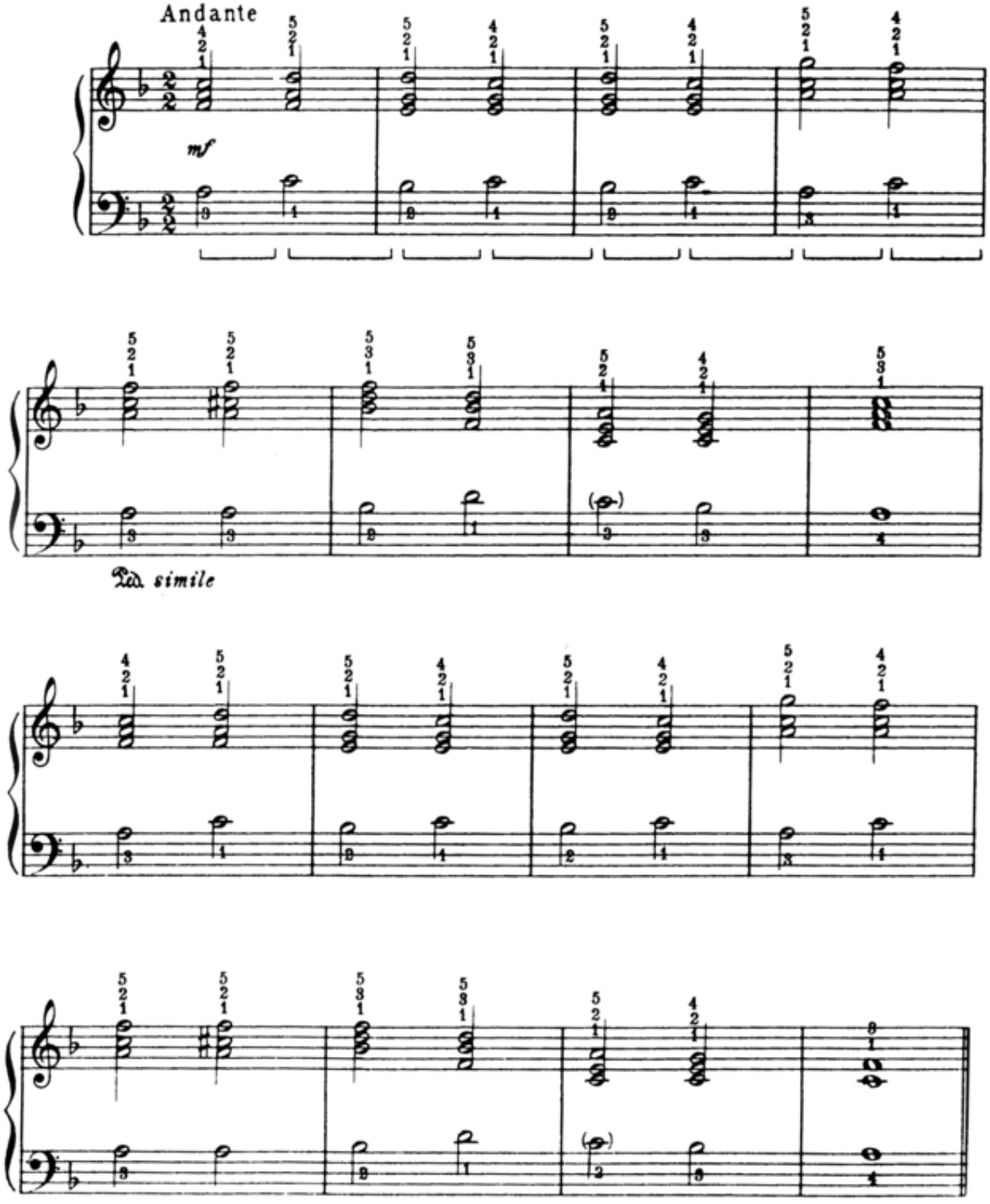
mf

053 The Whistler.png

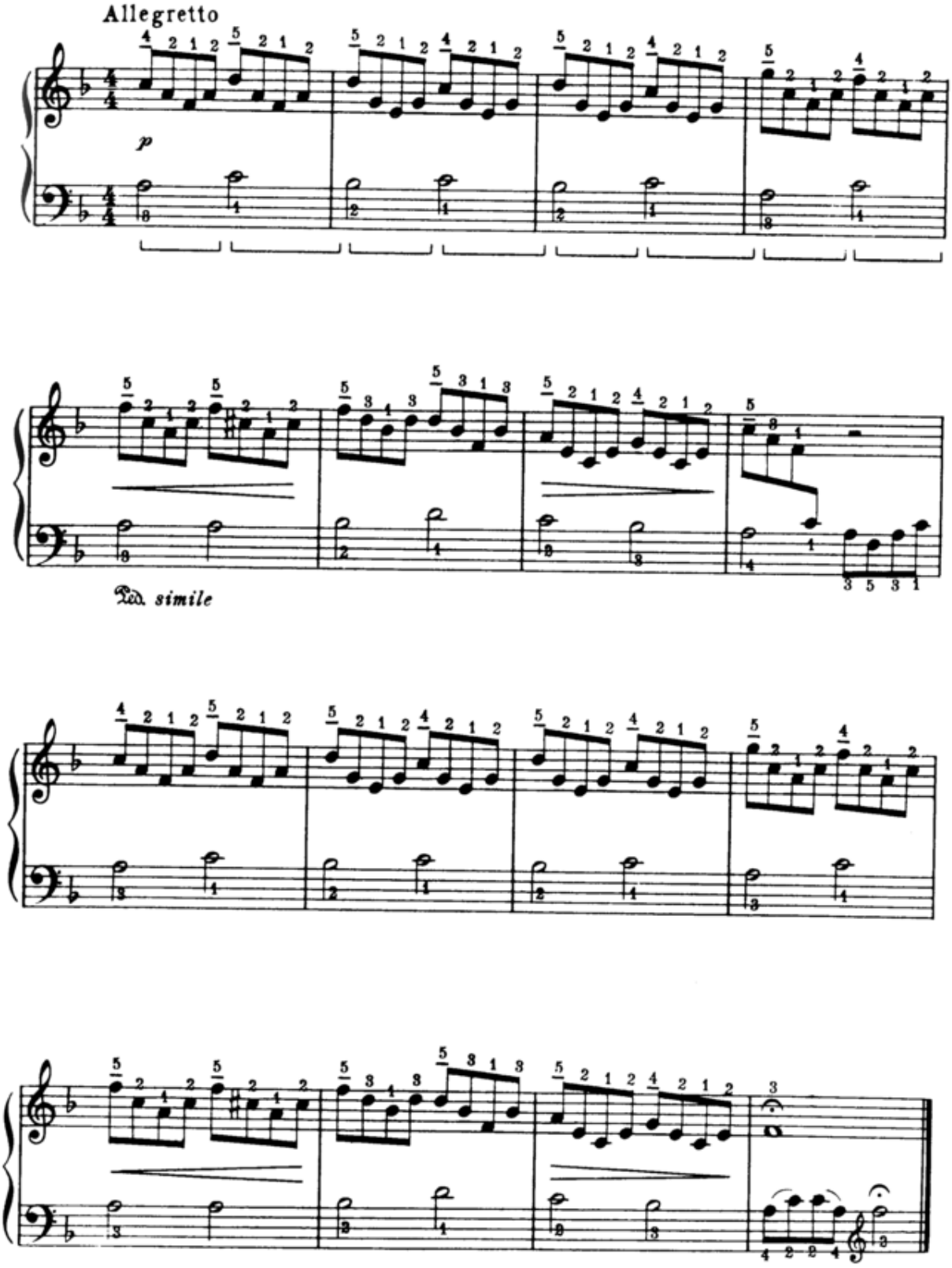


Prelude

Notice the new time signature. This means a half note will now receive one beat. When you have learned the first page thoroughly you will have less difficulty in mastering the second which is composed of the same chords in broken form.



M. M. 100



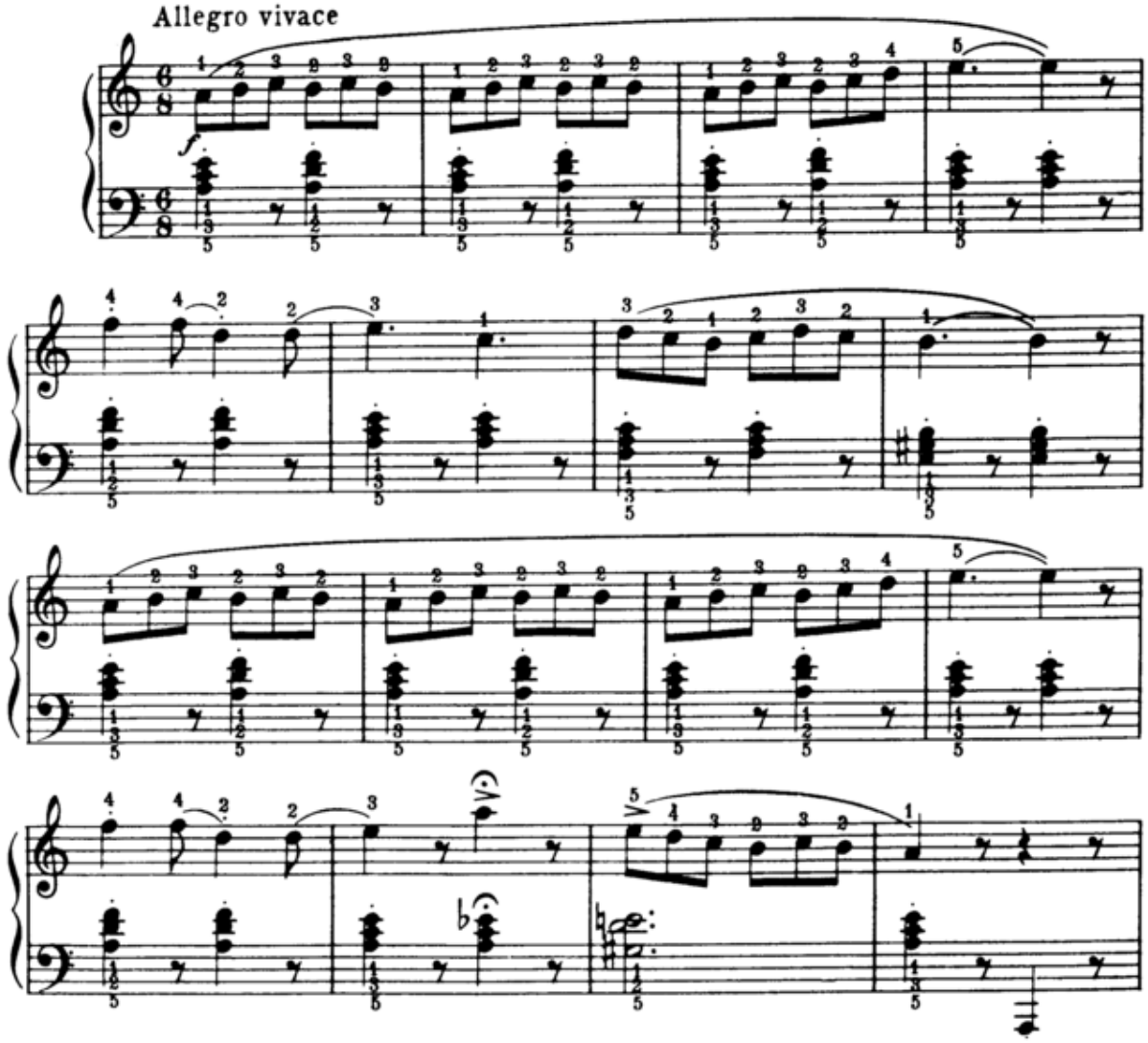
056 Prelude Page 2.png

Tarantella

The name TARANTELLA is derived from a poisonous spider called a tarantula. The victims of this poisonous spider were said to be imbued with a wild desire to leap into the air and dance for hours.

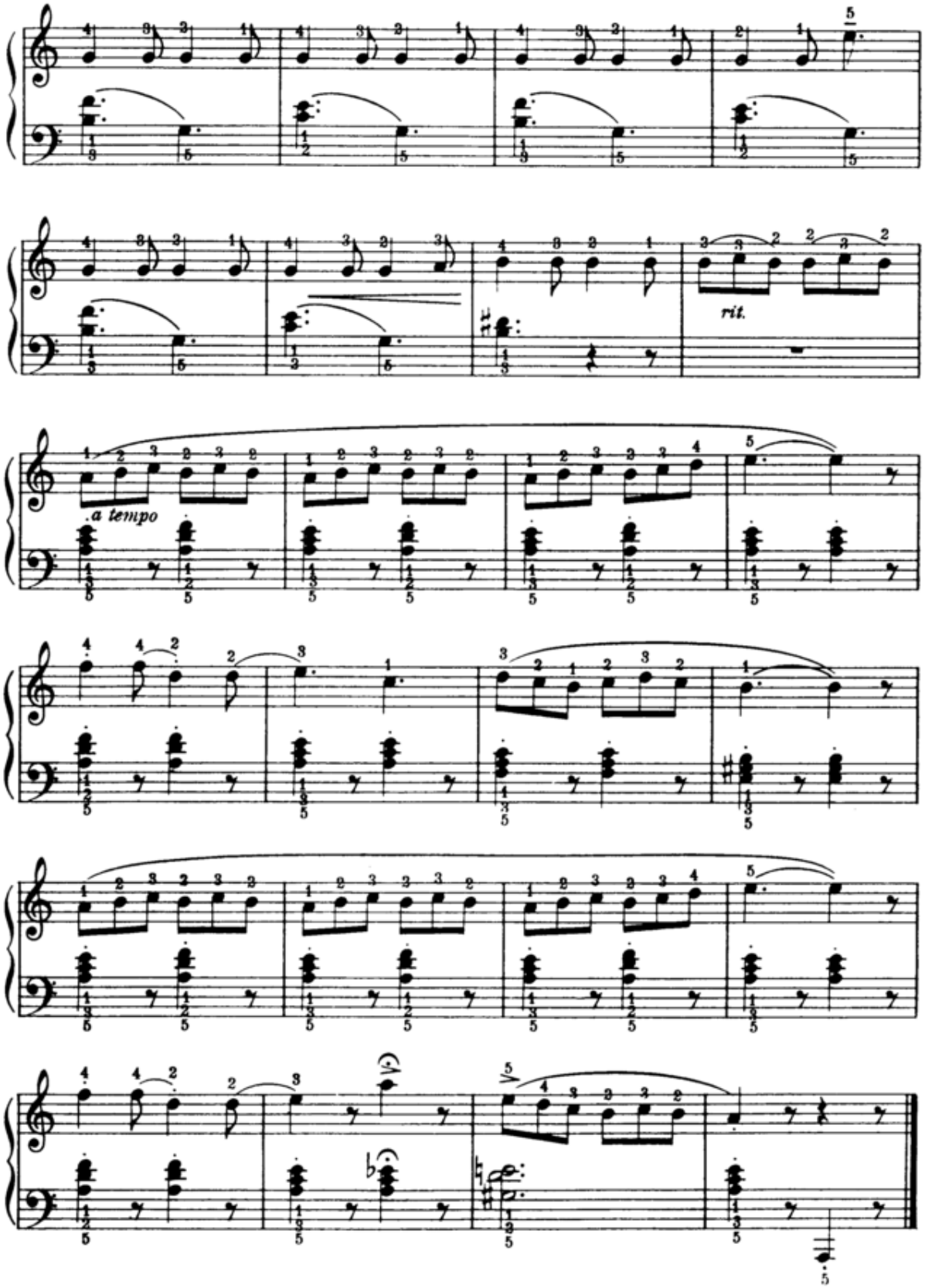
Be sure to play "TARANTELLA" with strong rhythm and well marked accents on the FIRST and FOURTH beats.

Allegro vivace



M. M. 160

057 Taremtella.png

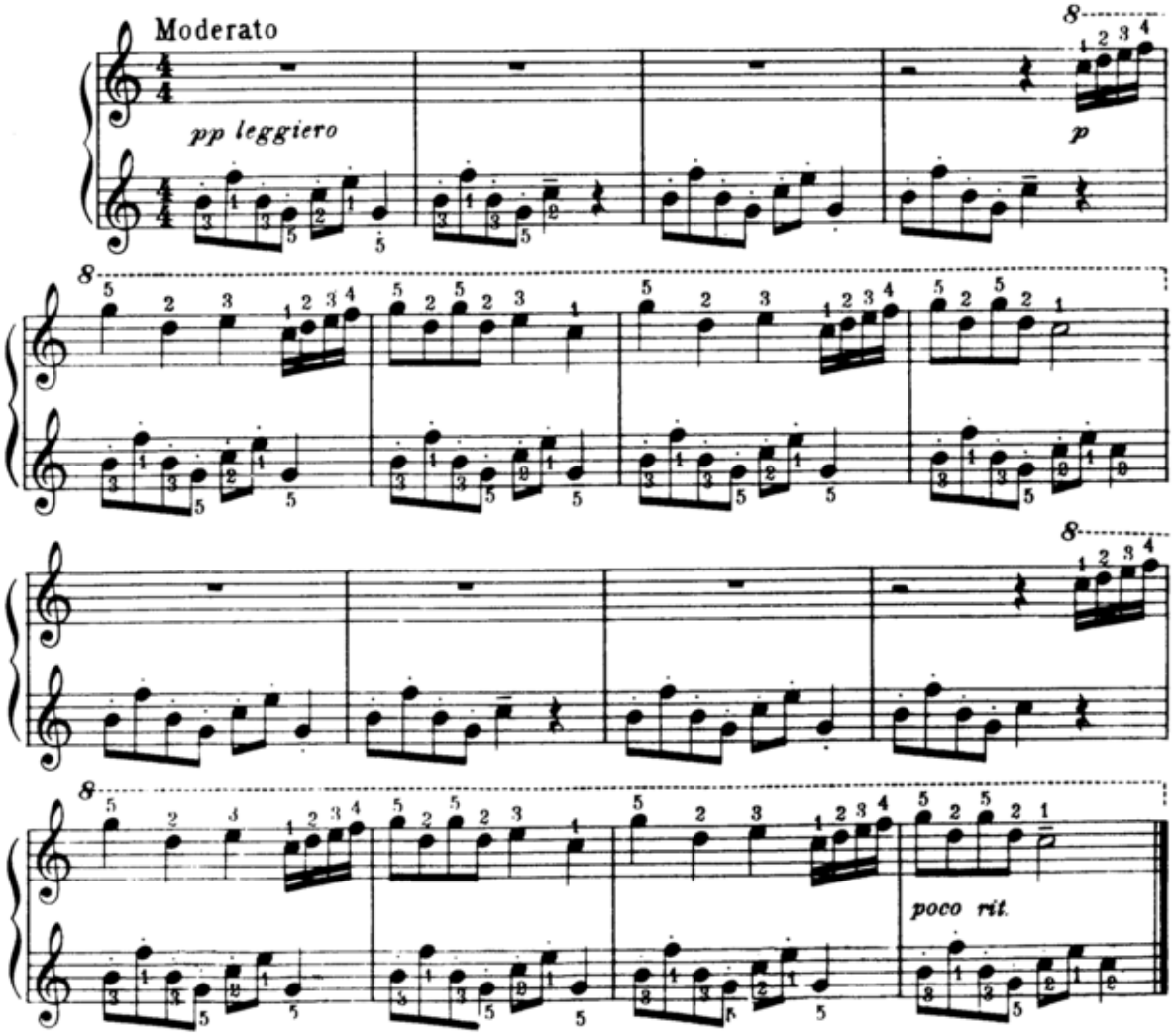


058 Taremtella page 2.png

In The Toy Shop

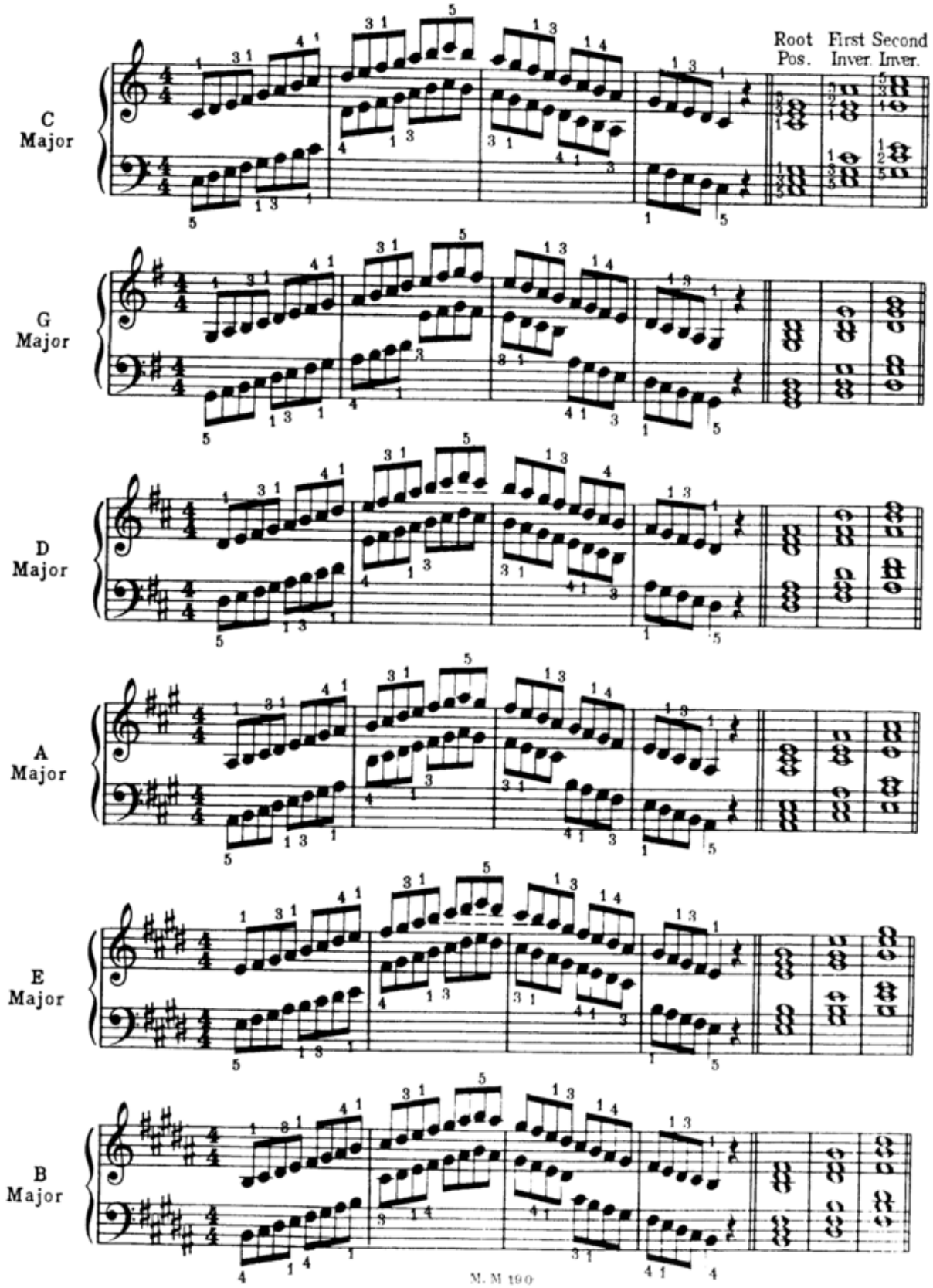
This piece describes a scene in a toy shop. See if you can guess which musical instrument is being imitated.

8---------- means play an octave higher.



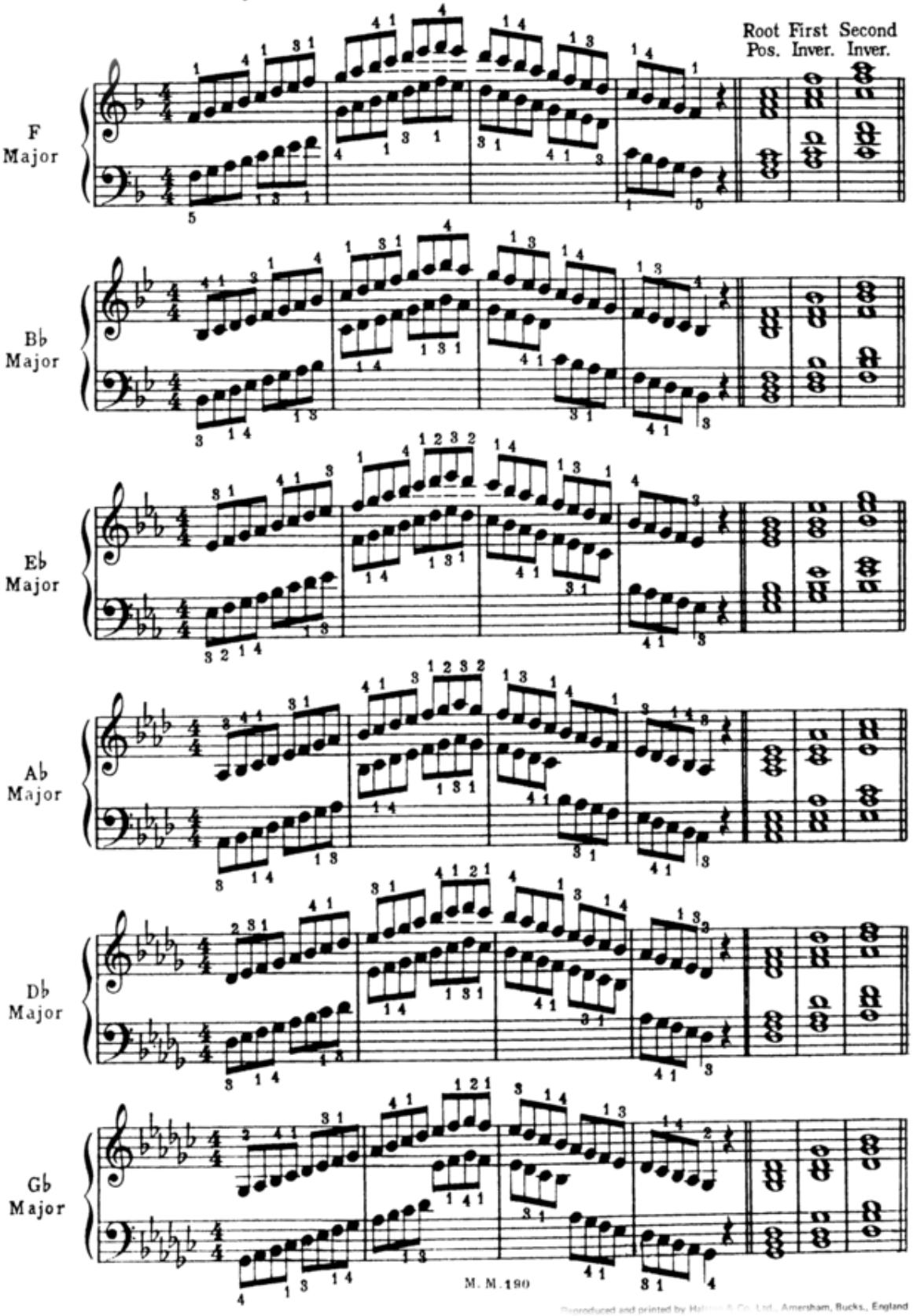
059 In the Toy Shop.png

MAJOR SCALES AND MAJOR TRIADS



060 Major Scales & Major Triads.png

MAJOR SCALES AND MAJOR TRIADS



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061 Major Scales & Major Triads Page 2.png

DICTIONARY OF MUSICAL TERMS

MUSICAL TERM	ABBREVIATION or SIGN	MEANING
A Tempo	*A tempo*	On time
Accelerando	*Accel.*	Increase speed gradually
Accent Mark	>	Accent note
Agitato	*Agitato*	Agitated
Alla marcia	*Alla marcia*	In march style
Allegretto	*Allegretto*	Merrily (fairly rapid)
Allegro	*Allegro*	Fast
Andante	*Andante*	Slowly
Animato	*Animato*	With spirit, lively
Cantabile	*Cantabile*	In a singing or vocal style
Con brio	*Con brio*	With spirit
Crescendo	*Cresc.* <	Gradually louder
Da Capo	*D.C.*	Return to the beginning
Decrescendo	*Decresc.* >	Gradually softer
Diminuendo	*Dim*	Softer by degrees
Dolce	*Dolce*	Sweetly
Espressivo	*Espressivo*	With expression
Fine	*Fine*	The end
Forte	*f*	Loud
Fortissimo	*ff*	Very loud
Grazioso	*Grazioso*	Gracefully
Hold	𝄐	Sound note longer than its actual value
Il canto	*Il Canto*	The melody
Left Hand	*L.H.*	To be played by the left hand
La Melodia	*La Melodia*	The melody
Legato	*Legato*	Smooth and connected
Leggiero	*Leggiero*	Light and airy
Lento	*Lento*	A little slower than andante
Marcato	*Marcato*	Play with emphasis
Mezzo-forte	*mf*	Moderately loud
Mezzo-piano	*mp*	Moderately soft
Misterioso	*Misterioso*	In a mysterious manner
Moderato	*Moderato*	Moderate rate of speed (not too fast)
Molto vivace	*Molto Vivace*	Very lively
Piano	*p*	Soft
Pianissimo	*pp*	Very soft
Poco	*Poco*	Little
Poco a poco	*Poco a poco*	By degrees
Poco moto	*Poco Moto*	A little motion
Presto	*Presto*	Very fast
Repeat Sign	𝄇	Repeat
Right Hand	*R.H.*	To be played with the right hand
Ritard	*rit.*	Gradually slower
Scherzando	*Scherzando*	In a playful manner
Sempre	*Sempre*	Always
Sforzando	*sfz*	Very strong accent
Simile	*simile*	Same as indicated previously
Slight Accent	–	Sustain
Staccato	*Stacc.*	Detached, short
Tempo	*Tempo*	Rate of speed
Teneramente	*Teneramente*	With tender emotion
Tranquillo	*Tranquillo*	Quiet, calm
Vivace	*Vivace*	Fast and lively
Vivo	*Vivo*	Lively, briskly

STUDENT'S PRACTICE RECORD

Student's Name..Address..

Teacher's Name..Address..

Date	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Grade	Teacher's Report