Shepherd University
School of Music

Piano Proficiency Exam Packet

Exam requirements-pgs. 2-3
Task Score Sheet-pgs. 4-5
Appendix-pgs. 6

Updated Fall 2025

Shepherd University • School of Music
Piano Proficiency Exam
Exam Requirements

The Piano Proficiency Exam

All music majors must begin the Piano Proficiency Exam by the end of the second semester of study. All music majors must pass the Piano Proficiency Exam by the end of their fourth semester. Completion requirements for transfer students will be determined on an individual basis taking into account number of semesters transferred, prior piano study, and impact on degree requirements such as Juncture or recital presentations. Music education majors must pass the Piano Proficiency Exam prior to applying for Juncture 2.

1. Exam Content: A PDF file of the exam content, requirements, and sample repertoire may be found at: https://www.shepherd.edu/music/current-music-students.
2. Course Options: Students should register for the class piano sequence early in the program to prepare for successful completion of the Piano Proficiency Exam. Depending on prior experience, students wishing to take a class piano course will be placed in one of the following course levels:

   MUSC 138 Basic Keyboarding Skills
   MUSC 140 Intermediate Keyboarding Skills
   MUSC 141 Advanced Keyboarding Skills

   - MUSC 141 is required of all music degree programs.
   - For all sections of class piano, students must receive a grade of C or above in order to be qualified to take the exam.

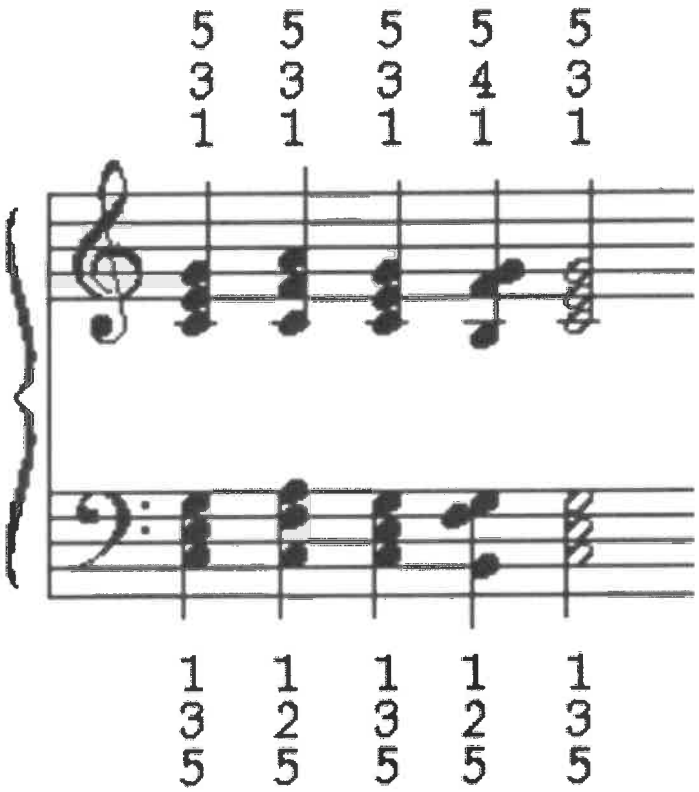
3. First Year Evaluation: At the end of their second semester of study, all music majors are required to take the Piano Proficiency Exam.
4. Transfer Students: Transfer students will receive their PPE plan from the Coordinator of Keyboard Studies and the Director of the School of Music based on courses transferring, an initial piano evaluation, and projected timeline for graduation.
5. Exam Scheduling: Exams will be scheduled during the final exam week of each semester with the Coordinator of Keyboard Studies. Students must pass ALL components of the exam. If a student does not pass one of the components, he/she may retake that portion of the exam at a later time.
   a. Students who fail to sign up for the exam will be put on probation within the School of Music.
   b. Students who do not show up to assigned times will be put on probation within the School of Music.
6. Failure to Complete: Students who fail to complete the PPE in the proscribed timeframe may request one additional chance. Any/All of the following may be required:
   a. Additional parts of the PPE may be required.
   b. The student will be required to perform the remaining sections of the PPE in front of the full-time faculty.

Students **must** receive a passing score on the MCE exam and pass **all** portions of the PPE in order to progress through or remain in their program.

Recommended practice supplement: The Piano Proficiency Exam Review Book (ISBN: 9780190933937)
https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-piano-proficiency-exam-review-book-9780190933937?q=Piano%20proficiency&lang=en&cc=us#

For all music majors::

Primary Chords (Cadences)- Prepare the chord progression of I, IV 6/4, I, V 6/5, I in all major and minor keys, playing the same notes in both hands. Correct voice leading and a steady pulse must be observed. Students will perform 1 Major and 1 minor key during the exam, as selected by the examiner.
Here is the sample of C Major Cadence.
Apply the same pattern (chord progression) to all the other major and minor. Both hands together.



I — IV6/4 — I — V6/5 — I

Five-Finger Pattern Vocal Warm-Up: all 12 keys. See Appendix for score.
Prepare harmonization of a melody from the PPE packet. Add the appropriate I, IV, V primary chords to the examples. See Appendix for score.
Sight-Reading: Harmonize a melody at sight. Add the appropriate I, IV, V cadential chords.
Sight-Reading: Transpose a melody (example of No. 4) with accompaniment at sight.
Sightread a short composition of two-parts at sight.
Choral score-reading. Students will play any two parts together. See Appendix for score.
Band score-reading. Students will play two parts together. See Appendix for score.
Demonstrate mastery of a prepared piece from the PPE packet. See Appendix for score.
Demonstrate mastery of another prepared piece from the PPE packet. See Appendix for score.

Shepherd University • School of Music
Piano Proficiency Exam
Tasks Rating Form: updated Fall 2025

Date _____ **Name** _____

Total Score _____ **Pass** _____ **Fail** _____

Signature of Juror _____

1. Demonstrate specific technical skills: Select major and minor close-position cadence. Students will perform 1 major and 1 minor key to be selected by the adjudicator.
   _____ Used traditional fingerings.
   _____ Cadences were performed with no restarts or hesitations.
   _____ Cadences were performed with correct notes.
   _____ Tempo was appropriate and consistent.
   _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task.

   Keys selected: _____ _____

2. Five-Finger Pattern Vocal Warm-Up: all 12 keys.
   _____ Warm-up was performed at a singable tempo.
   _____ Warm-up was accurately performed.
   _____ Traditional and accurate fingering was used.
   _____ Exercise was performed with minimal interruption/restarts.
   _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task in a musical manner.

3. Prepare harmonization of a melody from the PPE packet. Name of Melody: _____.
   _____ Melody was accurately prepared.
   _____ Appropriate harmonic accompaniment in the left hand.
   _____ Tempo was appropriate and consistent.
   _____ Harmonization was performed with minimal interruption/restarts.
   _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task in a musical manner.

4. Sight-Reading: Harmonize a melody at sight.
   _____ Melody was accurately performed.
   _____ Appropriate harmonic accompaniment in the left hand.
   _____ Tempo was appropriate and consistent.
   _____ Harmonization was performed with minimal interruption/restarts.
   _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task in a musical manner.

5. Sight-Reading: Transpose a melody (example of No. 4) with accompaniment at sight.
   _____ Melody was transposed correctly.
   _____ Appropriate harmonic accompaniment in the left hand.
   _____ Tempo was appropriate and consistent.
   _____ Harmonization was performed with minimal interruption/restarts.
   _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task in a musical manner.

Shepherd University • School of Music
Piano Proficiency Exam
Tasks Rating Form: updated Fall 2025

6. Sightread a short composition of two-parts at sight.
   _____ Melody was accurately performed.
   _____ Traditional and accurate fingering was used.
   _____ Tempo was appropriate and consistent.
   _____ Exercise was performed with minimal interruption/restarts.
   _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task in a musical manner.

7. Choral score-reading. Students will play any two parts together.
   _____ Rhythms were performed accurately.
   _____ Parts were performed accurately.
   _____ Tempo was appropriate and consistent.
   _____ Exercise was performed with minimal interruption/restarts.
   _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task.

8. Band score-reading. Students will play two parts together.
   _____ Rhythms were performed accurately.
   _____ Parts were performed accurately.
   _____ Tempo was appropriate and consistent.
   _____ Exercise was performed with minimal interruption/restarts.
   _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task.

9. Demonstrate mastery of a prepared piece from the PPE packet.
   Selection: _____
   _____ Tempo was consistent and appropriate.
   _____ Traditional and accurate fingering was used.
   _____ Harmonies were performed accurately.
   _____ Exercise was performed with minimal interruption/restarts.
   _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task in a musical manner.

10. Demonstrate mastery of another prepared piece from the PPE packet.
    Selection: _____
    _____ Tempo was consistent and appropriate.
    _____ Traditional and accurate fingering was used.
    _____ Harmonies were performed accurately.
    _____ Exercise was performed with minimal interruption/restarts.
    _____ Demonstrated mastery of the task in a musical manner.

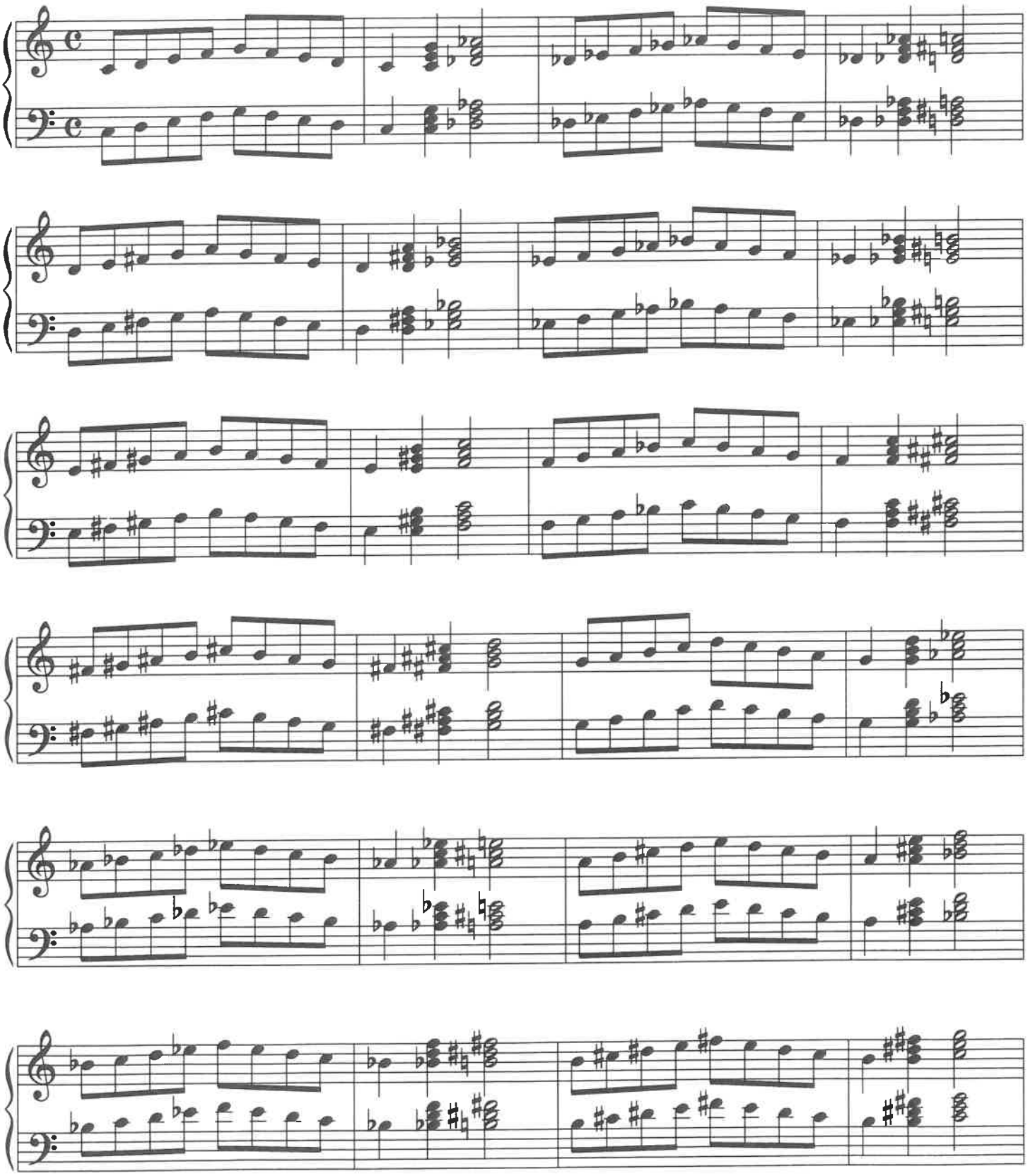
TOTAL _____

*** Requirement for passing the exam: no less than three points in any one section**

Shepherd University • School of Music
Piano Proficiency Exam
Appendix

A. Five-Finger Pattern Vocal Warm-Up: all 12 keys.
B. Prepare harmonization of a melody from the PPE packet. Add the appropriate I, IV, V primary chords to the examples. Nos. 1-3.
C. Choral score-reading. Students will play any two parts together.
D. Band score-reading. Students will play two parts together.
E. Demonstrate mastery of prepared pieces from the PPE packet. Nos. 1-3.

A. Five-Finger Pattern Vocal Warm-Up: all 12 keys.



This warm-up may begin or end with any key. It may also descend.

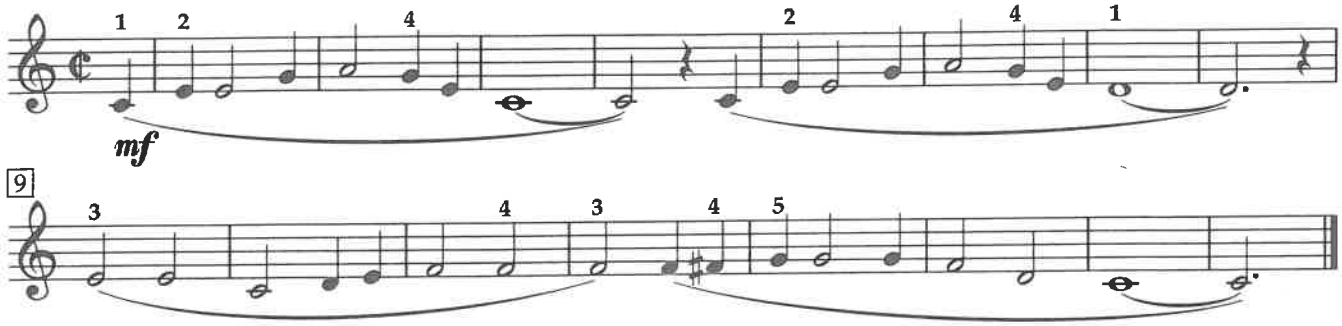
B. Prepare harmonization of a melody from the PPE packet. Add the appropriate I, IV, V primary chords to the examples. Nos. 1-3.

168 MIDI

1. *NEW RIVER TRAIN*

American

Allegretto

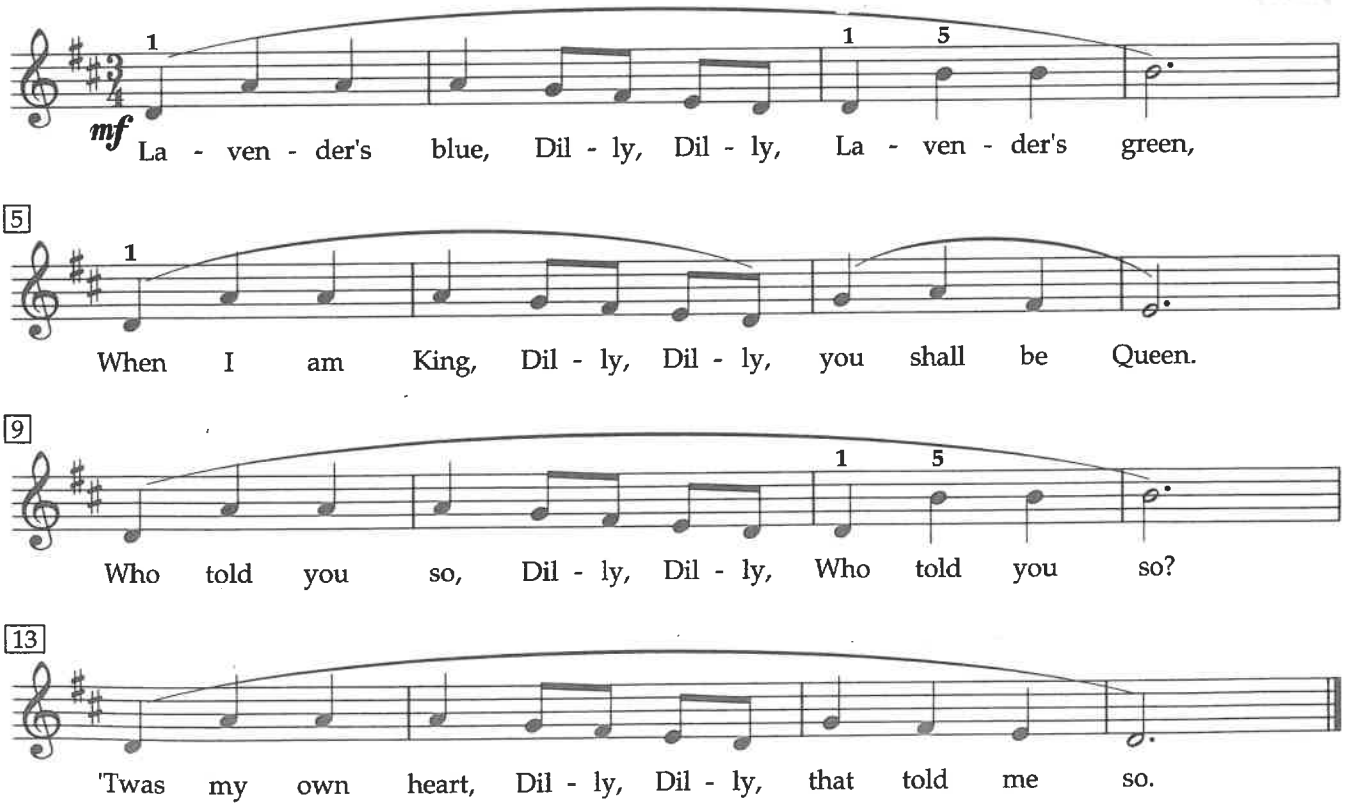


169 MIDI

2. *LAVENDER'S BLUE*

Old English Folk Song

Allegretto

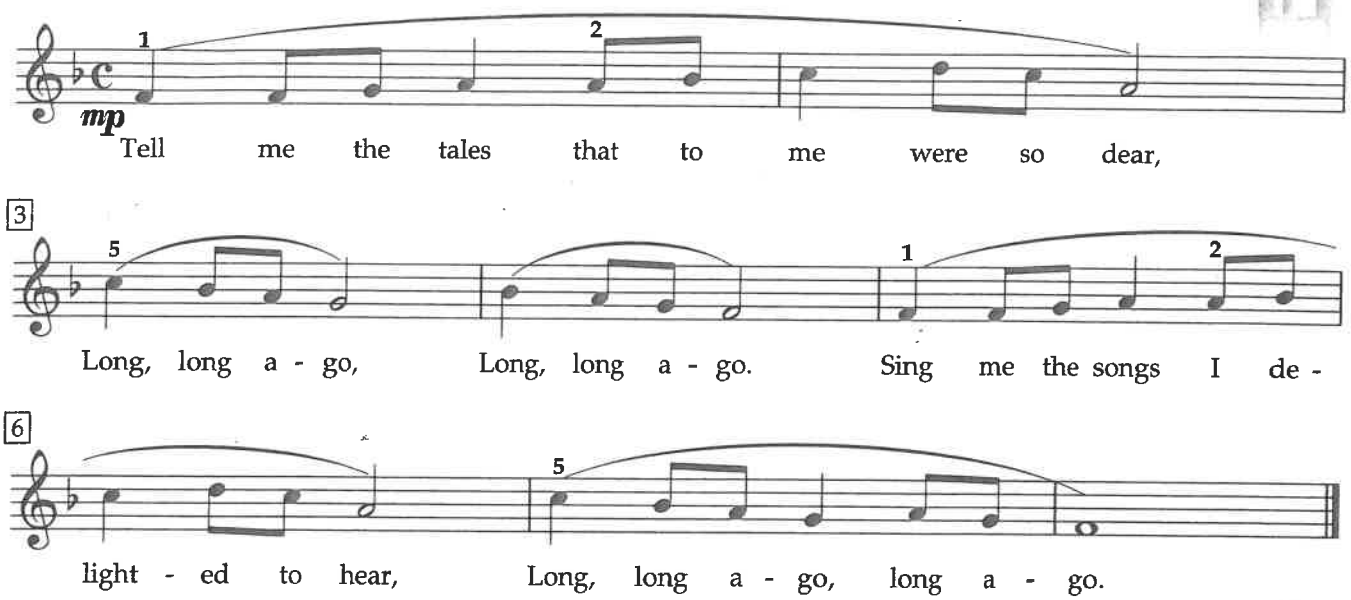


3. *LONG, LONG AGO*

170 MIDI

Thomas H. Bayly (1797–1839)

Andante

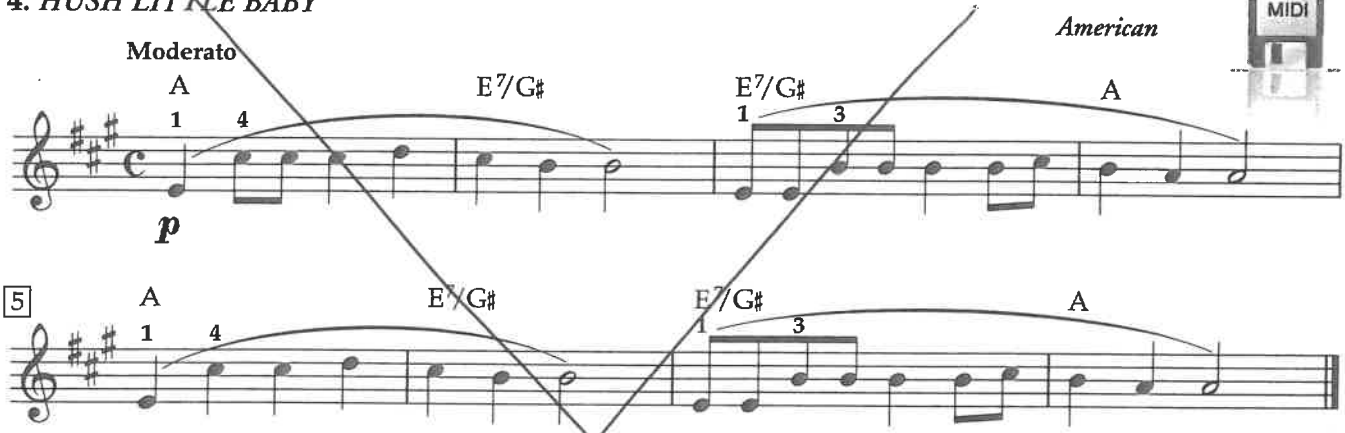


4. *HUSH LITTLE BABY*

171 MIDI

American

Moderato

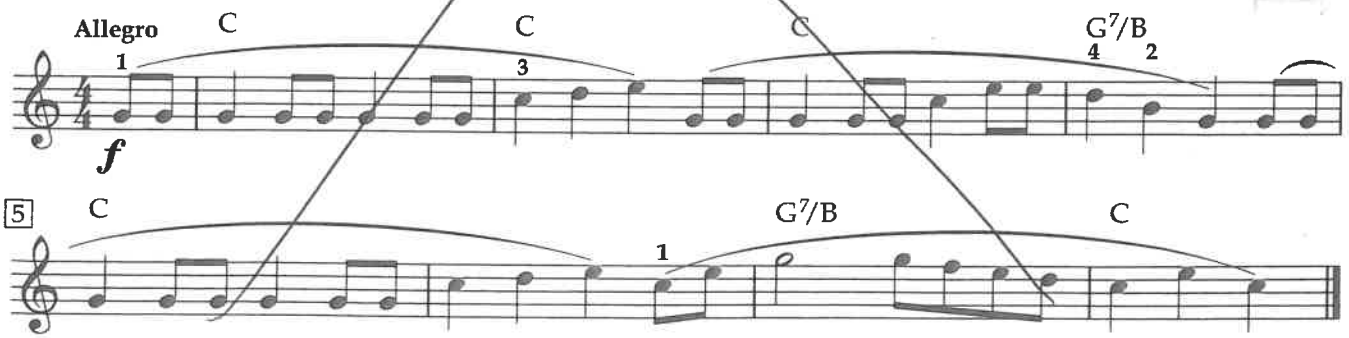


5. *WILLIAM TELL OVERTURE*

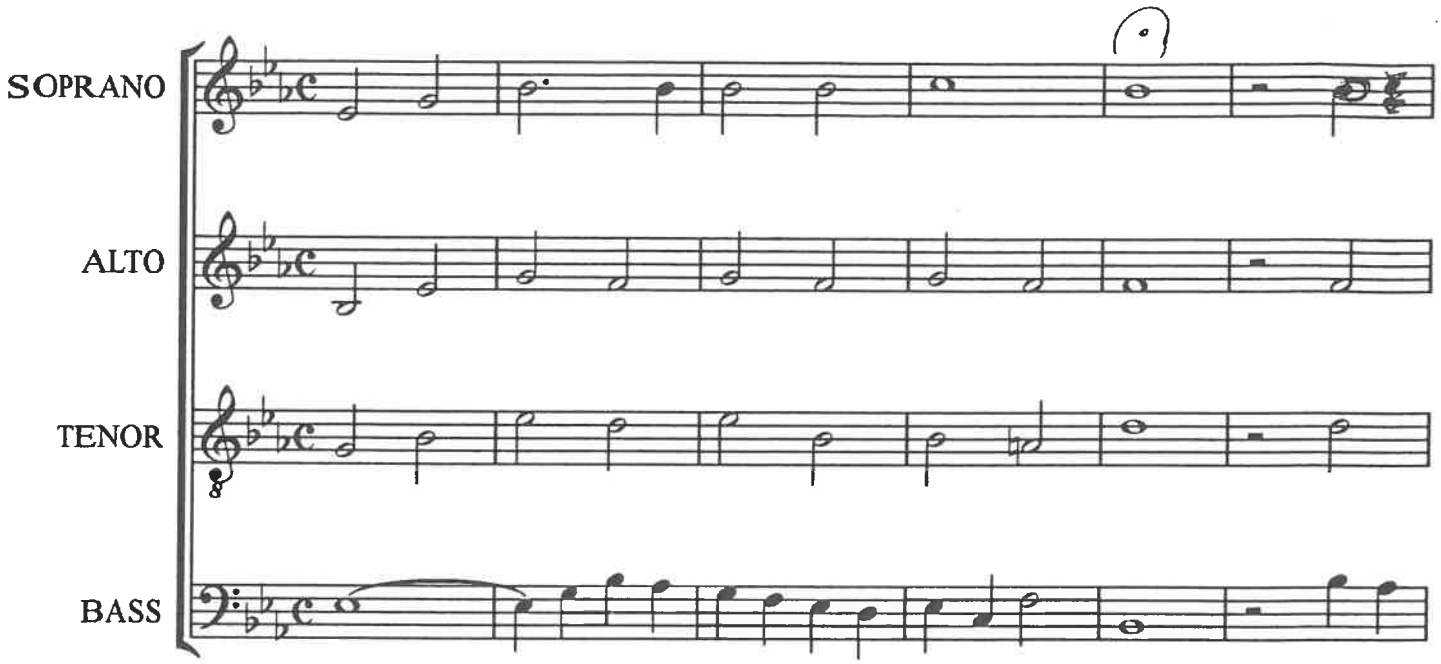
172 MIDI

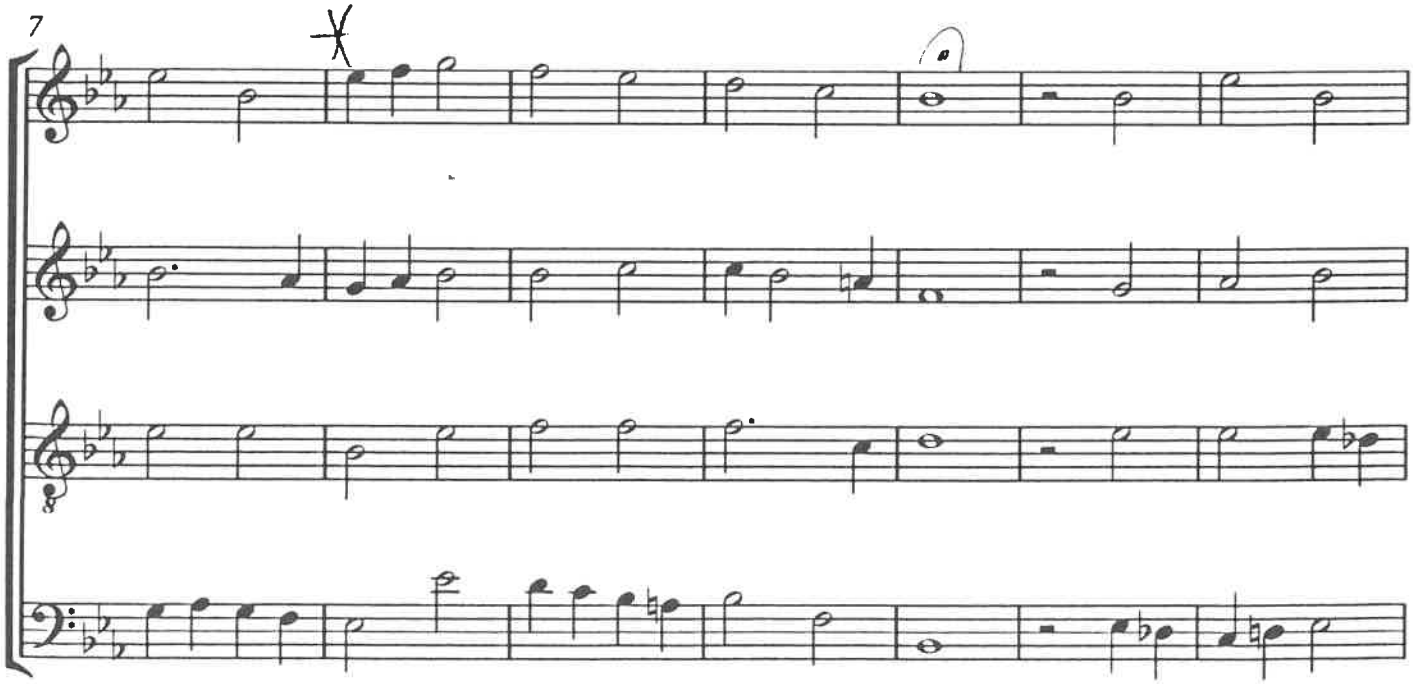
Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868)

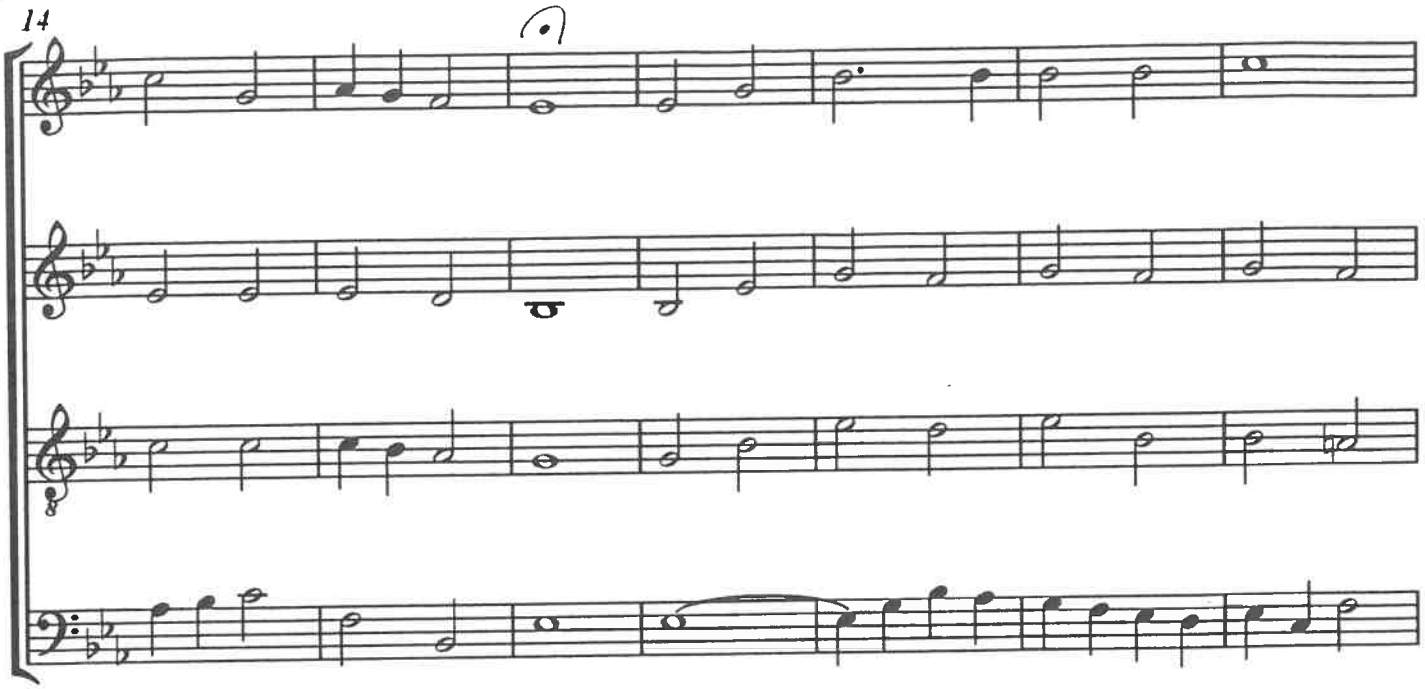
Allegro

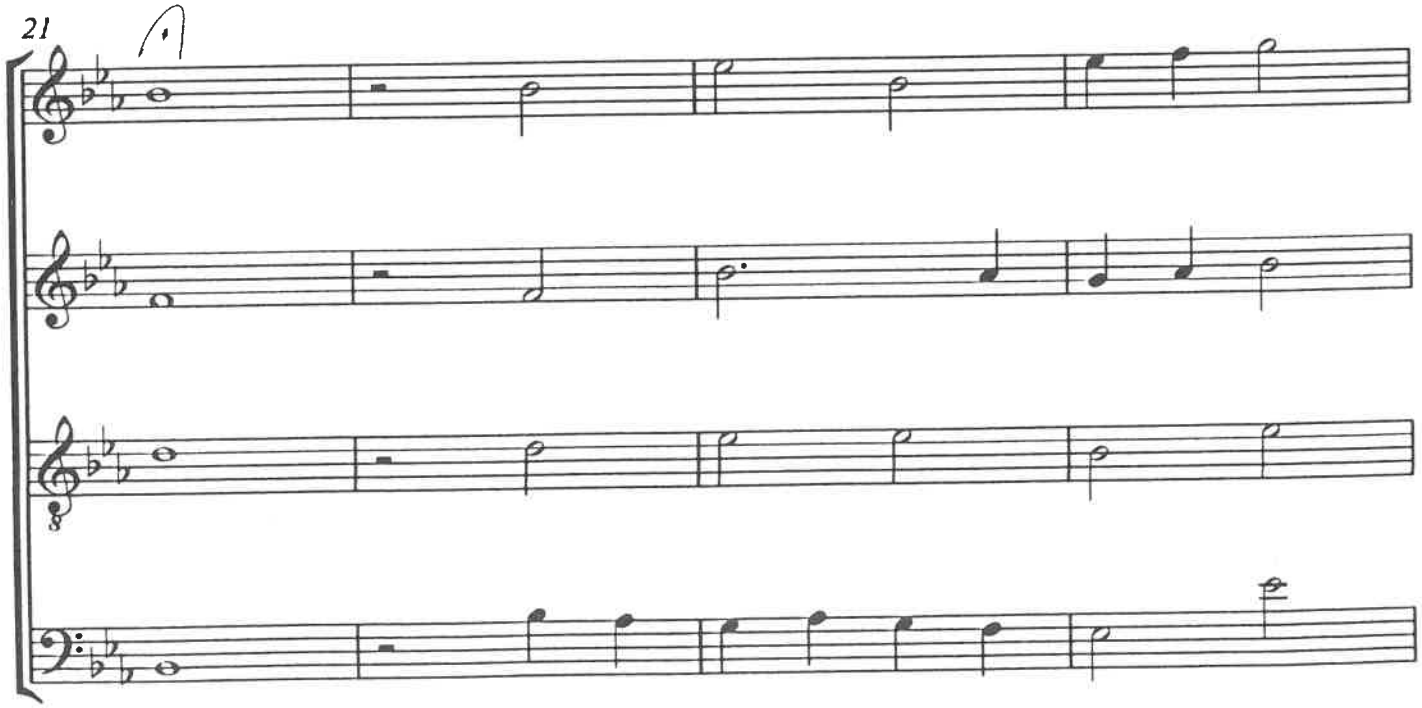


C. Choral score-reading. Students will play any two parts together.






14


21

D. Band score-reading. Students will play two parts together.

Band Score

Practice the band score in the following ways:

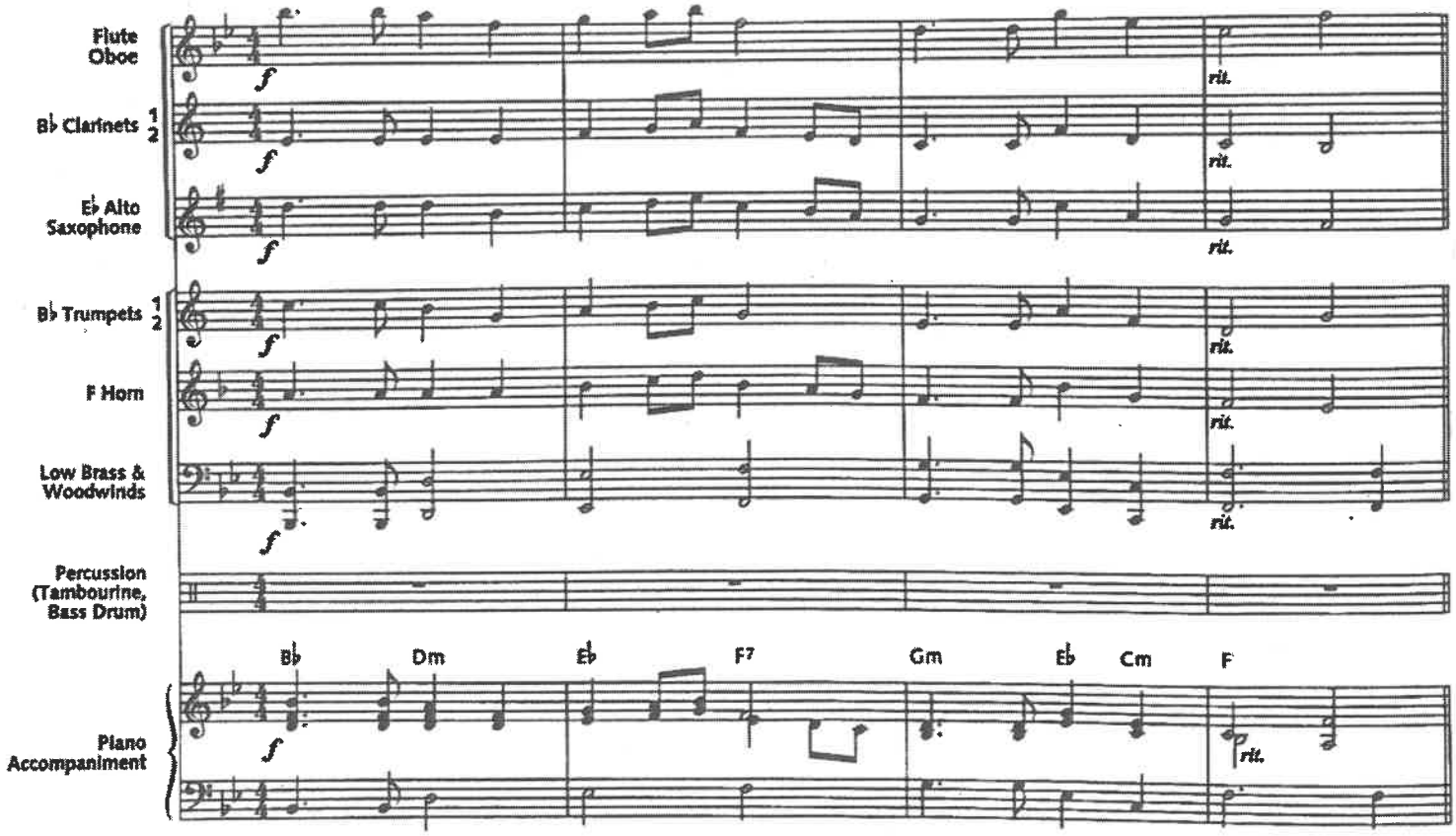
1. Each single line transposing the B♭ clarinets, E♭ alto saxophone, B♭ trumpets and F horn to concert pitch.
2. Combinations of two parts as follows:
   a. Flute/oboe and B♭ clarinets.
   b. Flute/oboe and E♭ alto saxophone.
   c. B♭ trumpets and low brass & woodwinds.
   d. F horn and low brass & woodwinds.
3. Combinations of three parts as follows:
   a. Flute/oboe, B♭ clarinets and E♭ alto saxophone.
   b. B♭ trumpets, F horn and low brass & woodwinds.
4. The piano accompaniment.
5. As a multiple piano ensemble with class members playing one, two or three parts each.

WOODLAND OVERTURE
(EXCERPT)

S-25

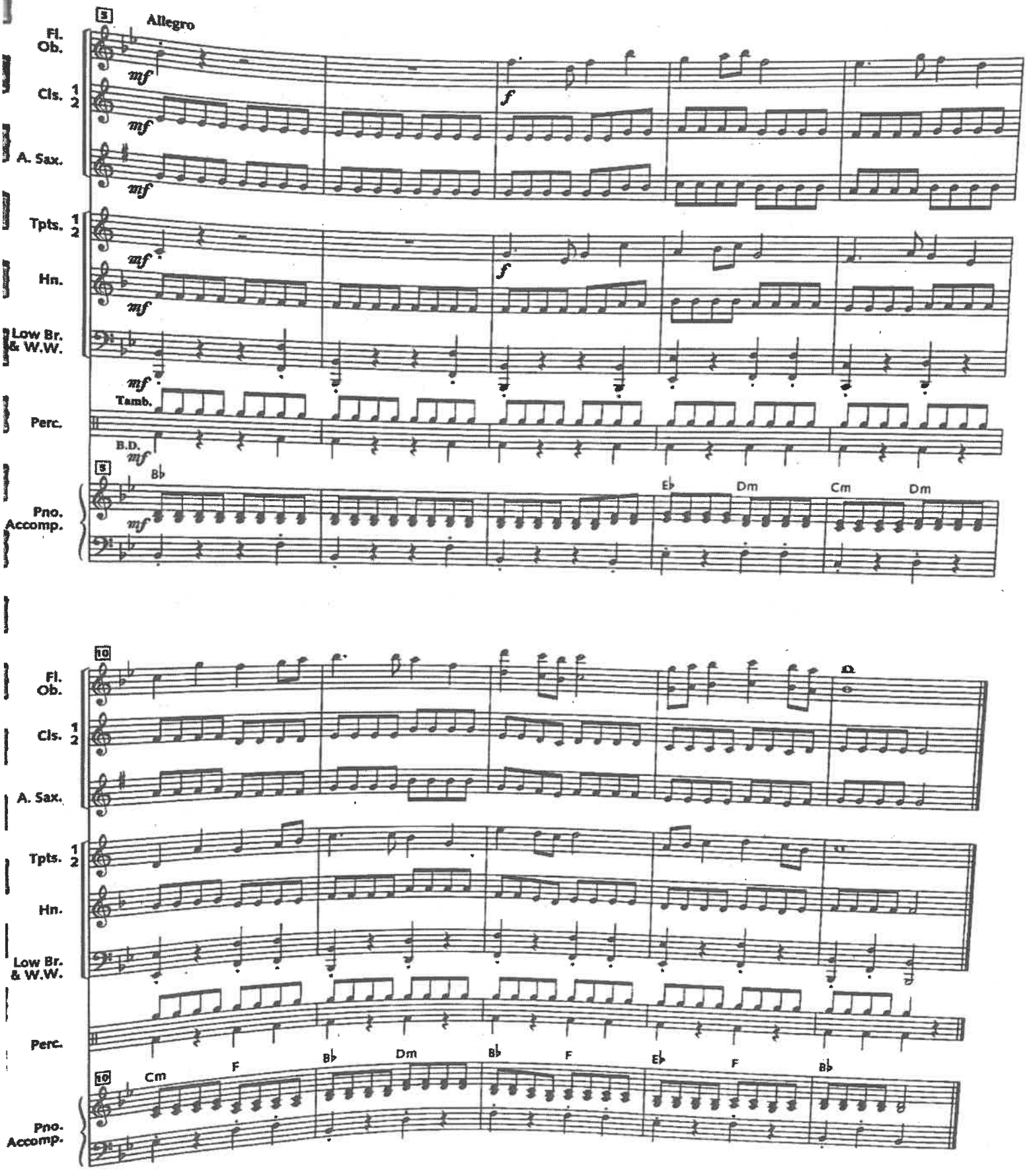
John O'Reilly

Maestoso



"Woodland Overture" from ALFRED'S YAMAHA BAND SERIES by John O'Reilly

Copyright © MCMXCV by Alfred Publishing Co.


5
Allegro
Fl.
Ob.
Cls. 1 2
A. Sax.
Tpts. 1 2
Hn.
Low Br. & W.W.
Perc.
Tamb.
B.D.
Pno. Accomp.
B♭
E♭
Dm
Cm
Dm
10
Cm
F
B♭
Dm
B♭
F
E♭
F
B♭

E. Demonstrate mastery of prepared pieces from the PPE packet. Nos. 1-3.

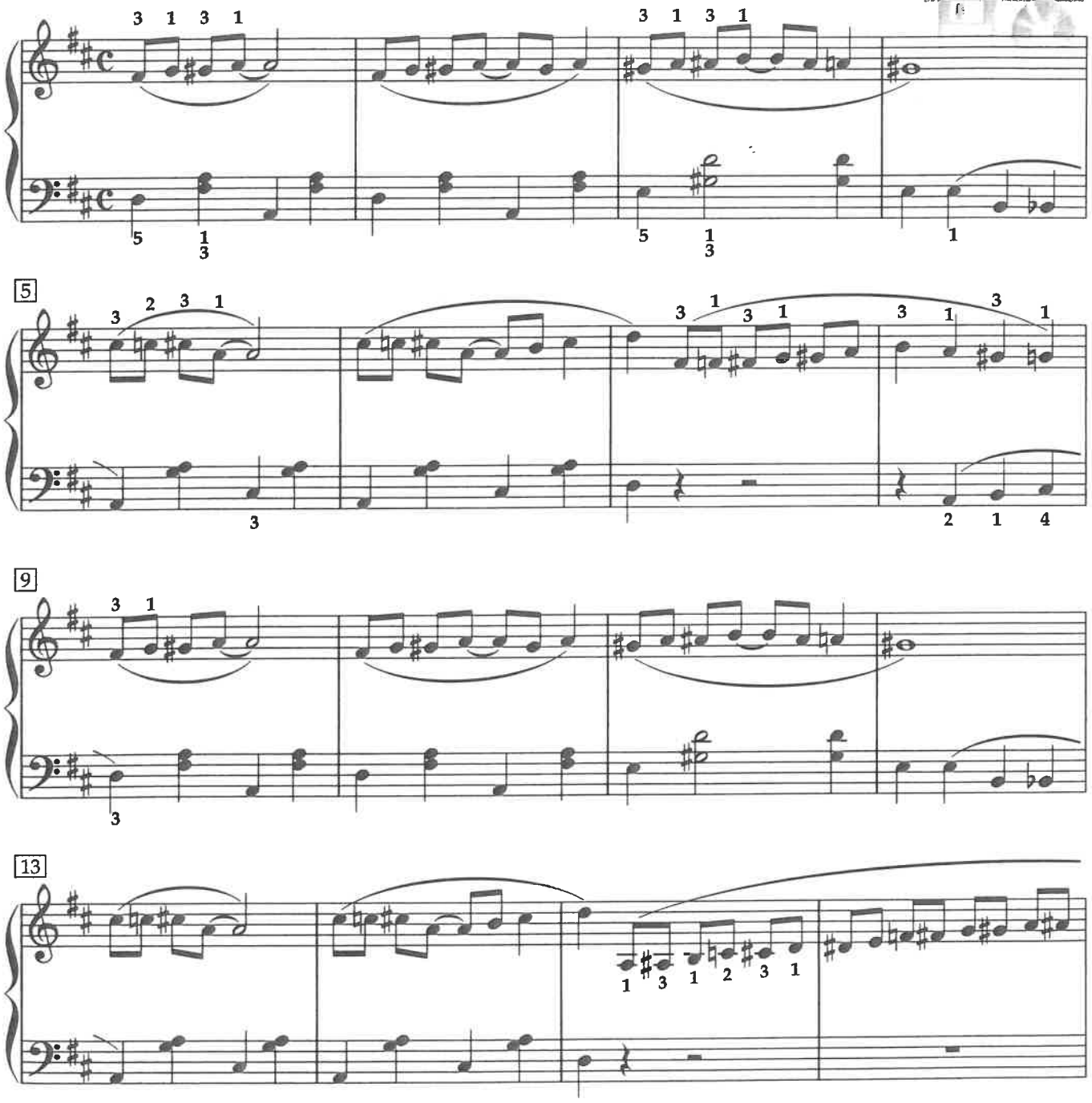
C

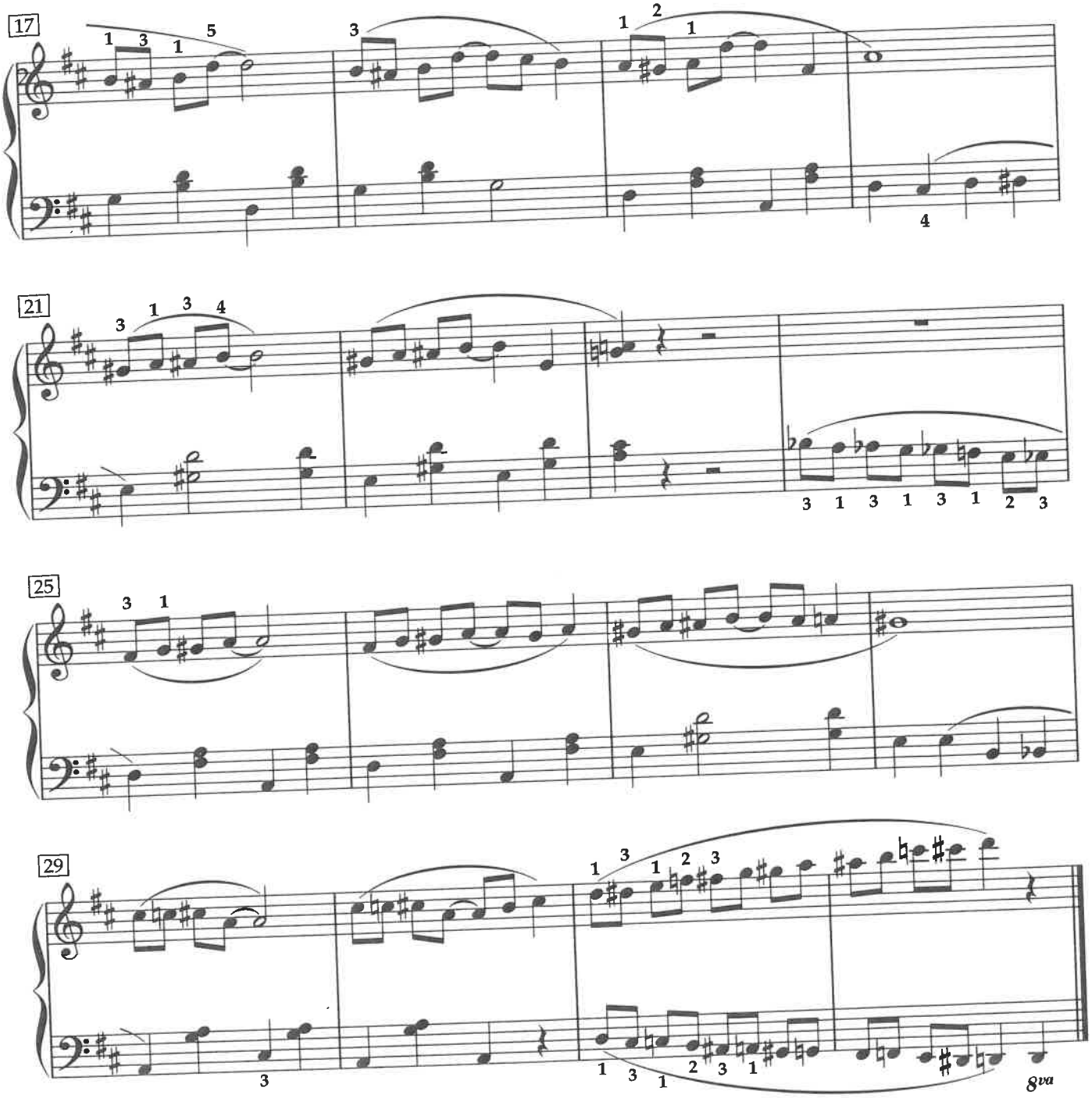
CHROMATIZONE RAG

154 41–42

MIDI

Ann Collins





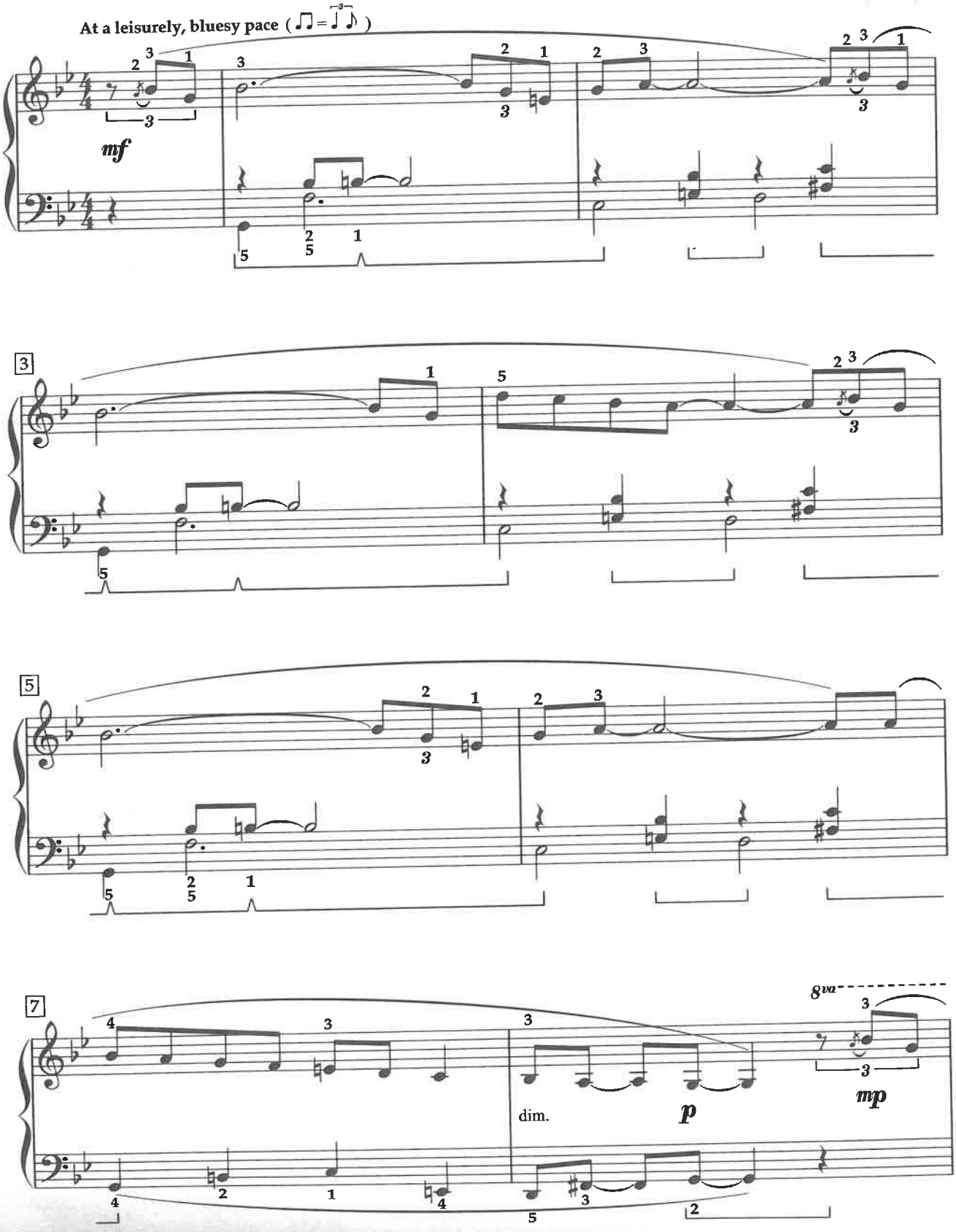
From HILLEY/OLSON. Piano for the Developing Musician, 6E. © 2006 Wadsworth, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc. Reproduced by permission. www.cengage.com/permissions.

234

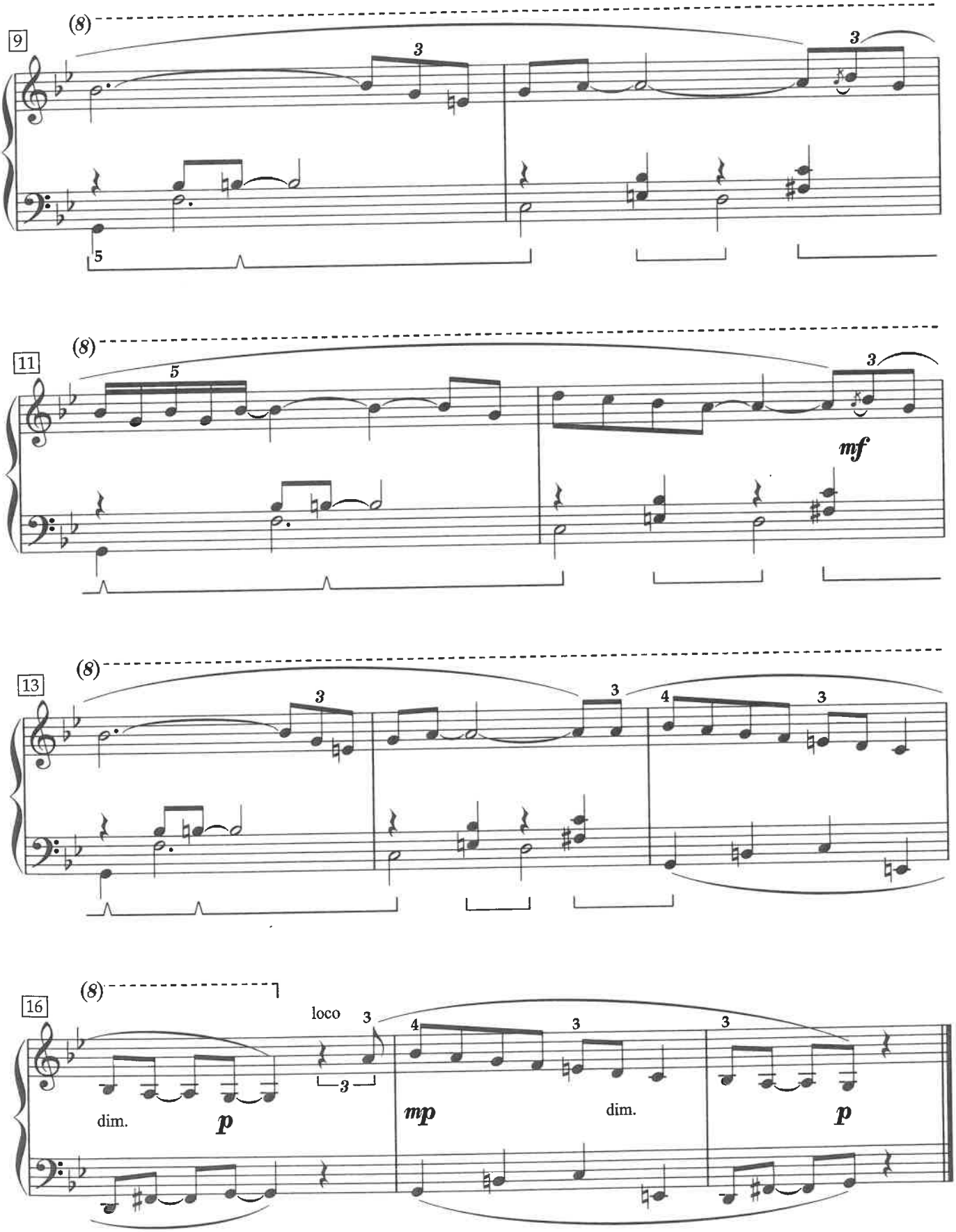
MIDI

31. *TO B OR NOT TO B FLAT*

Catherine Rollin



"To B or Not to B Flat" from Spotlight on Jazz Style (#6509). Copyright © 1992. Reprinted with permission of Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.: www.alfred.com.


9
(8)
3
3
5
11
(8)
5
3
mf
13
(8)
3
3
4
3
16
(8)
loco
3
4
3
3
dim.
p
mp
dim.
p

3

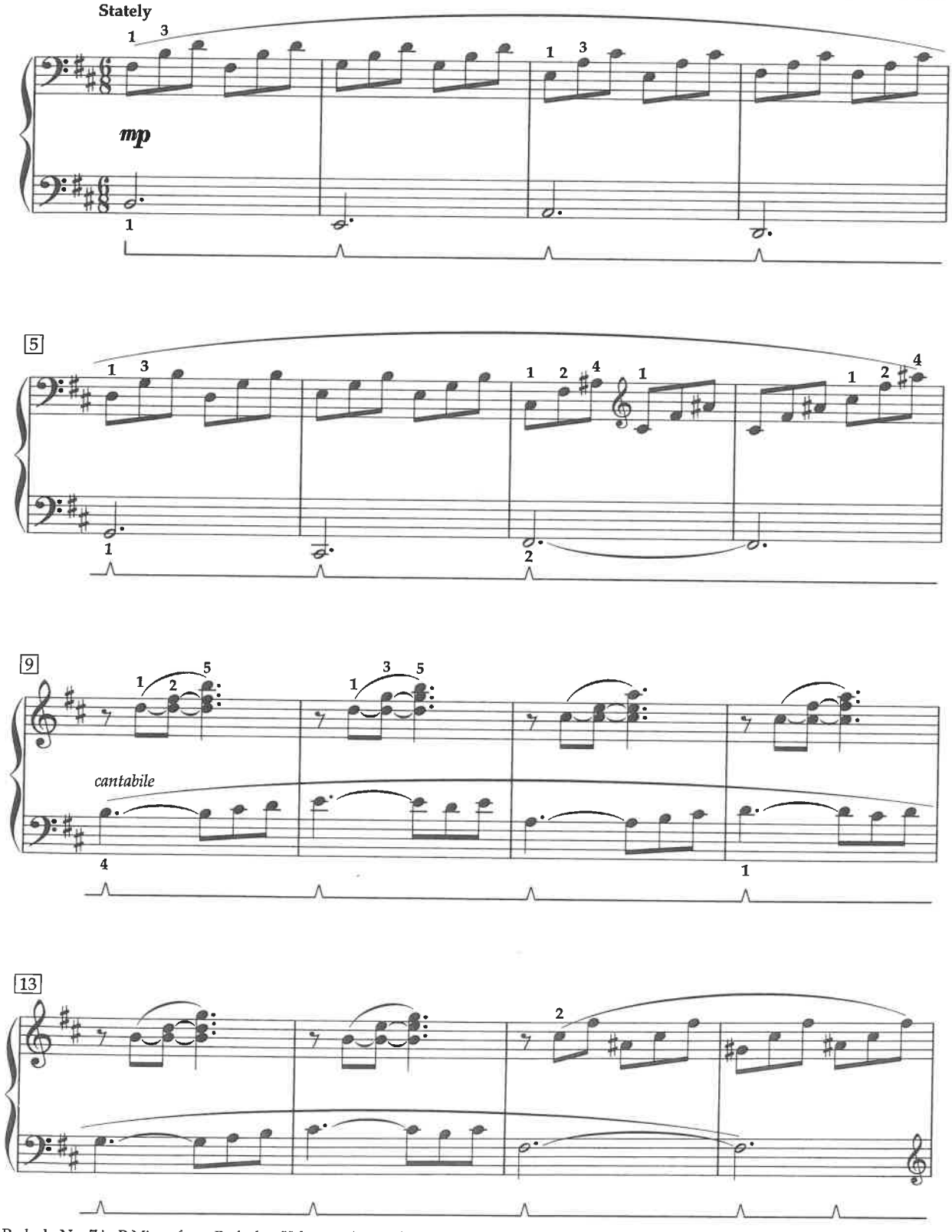
Prelude

The **prelude** is a short character piece that establishes and maintains a particular mood. This piece is based on a continuous variation of a series of chords, which is called a *chaconne.*

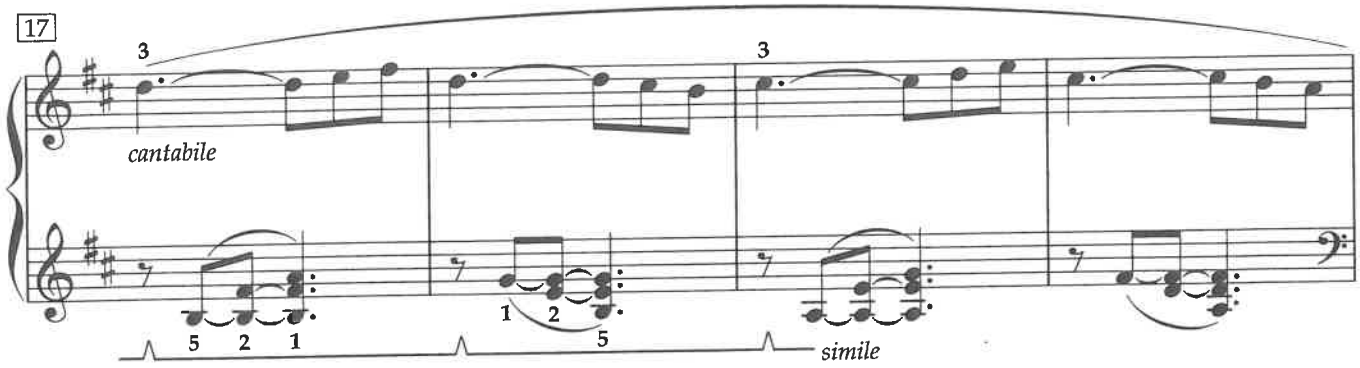
30. *PRELUDE NO. 7 IN B MINOR* (*Chaconne*)

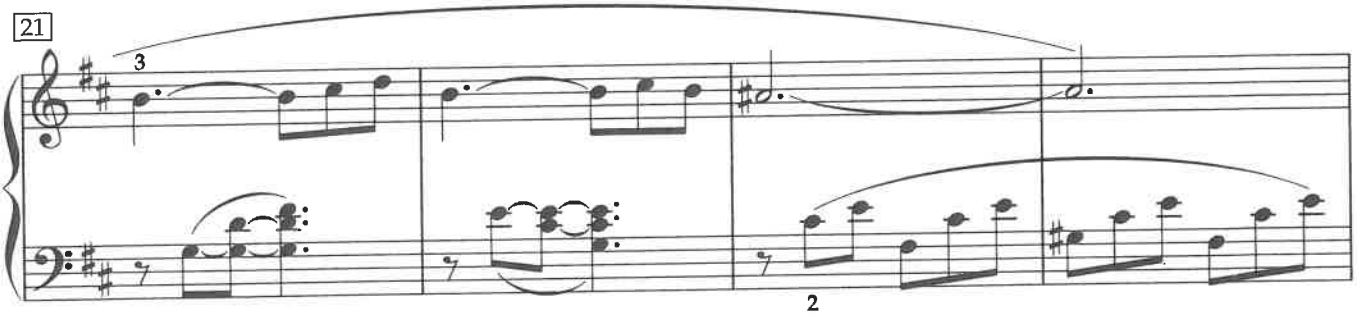
Robert D. Vandall

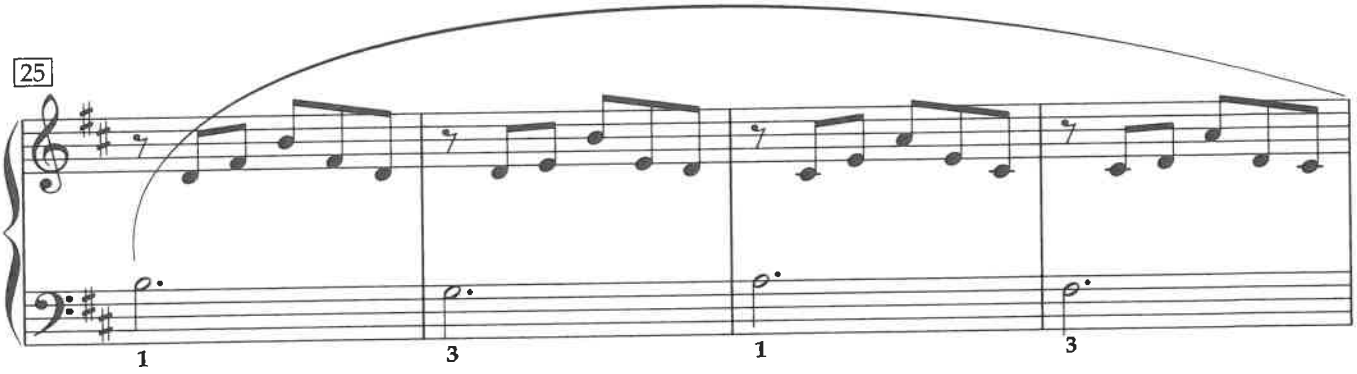
233 59–60

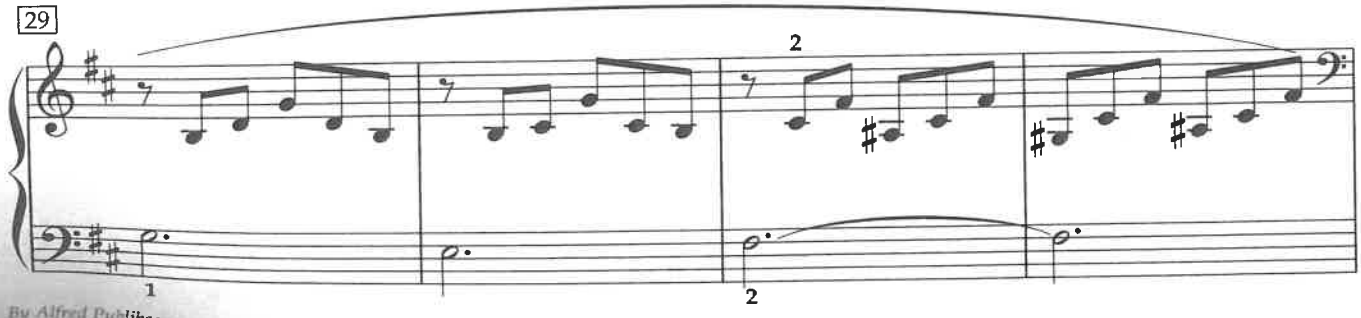


Prelude No. 7 in B Minor from Preludes, Volume 1 (#88296). Copyright © 2006. Reprinted with permission of Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.: www.alfred.com.

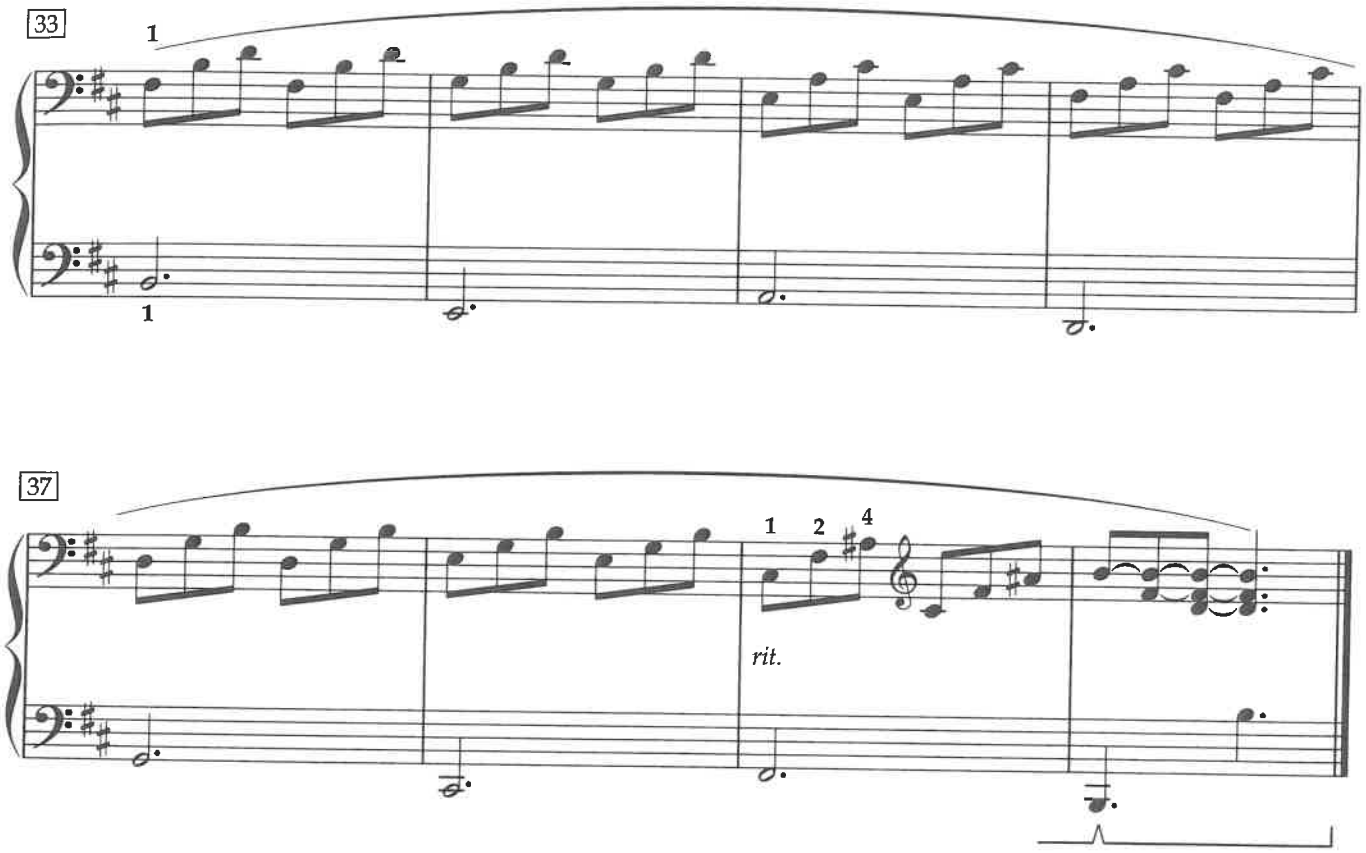








By Alfred Publishers


33
1
1
37
1 2 4
rit.