Andersonstown Traditional & Contemporary Music School

KEYBOARD

HANDBOOK

Updated - March 2015

KEYBOARDS & PIANO

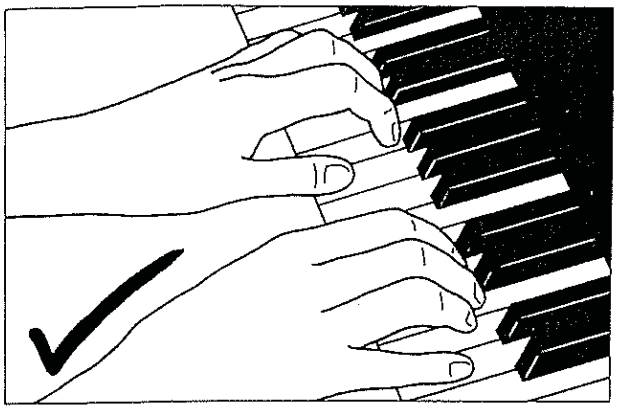
BOOK ONE

How to sit at the piano

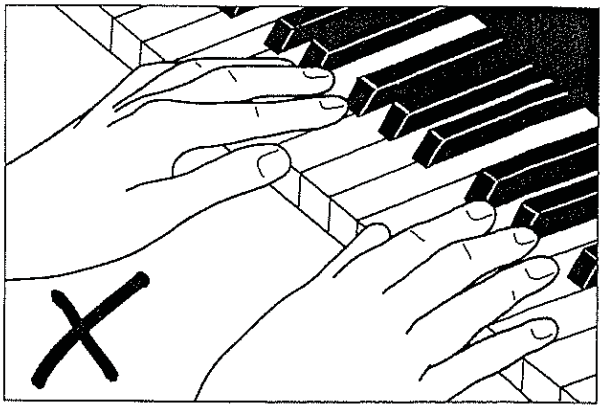
Posture

It is important to sit correctly at the piano otherwise you may develop back problems. Sit facing the middle of the keyboard making sure that you are sitting straight but relaxed. If you feel uncomfortable, lean slightly forward. Adjust your piano stool so that your arms are an inch or so above the keyboard. Make sure your feet are flat on the floor - the right foot may be slightly forward.

Hand Position



Correct hand position

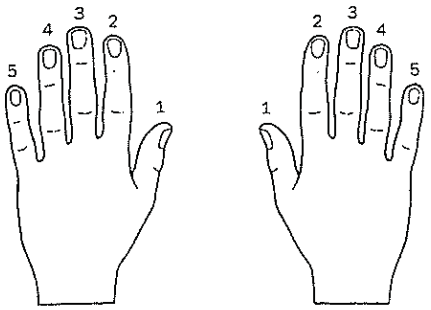


Incorrect hand position

Curve the fingers so that the top of the finger plays the key by falling directly from above. Imagine you are holding a small object in the hollow of your hand as you play and keep your wrist in line with your arm. Place the thumb tip near the tip of the forefinger to form a sort of O. Keep your nails short!

Don't play with flat fingers - if you do, your hand will not be flexible and you will never be able to play anything fast or expressively. Although the fingers should be directly above the keys, make sure that you touch only the key that is being played. Try not to look at your hands as you play.

Fingering



left hand right hand

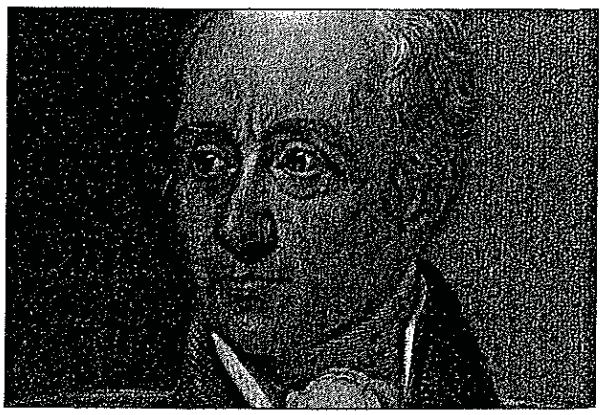
To make learning easier, the fingers of both hands are given numbers. Fingering is numbered from the thumb, this being number 1.

Practise moving each finger as you say its number aloud.

Fascinating snippet

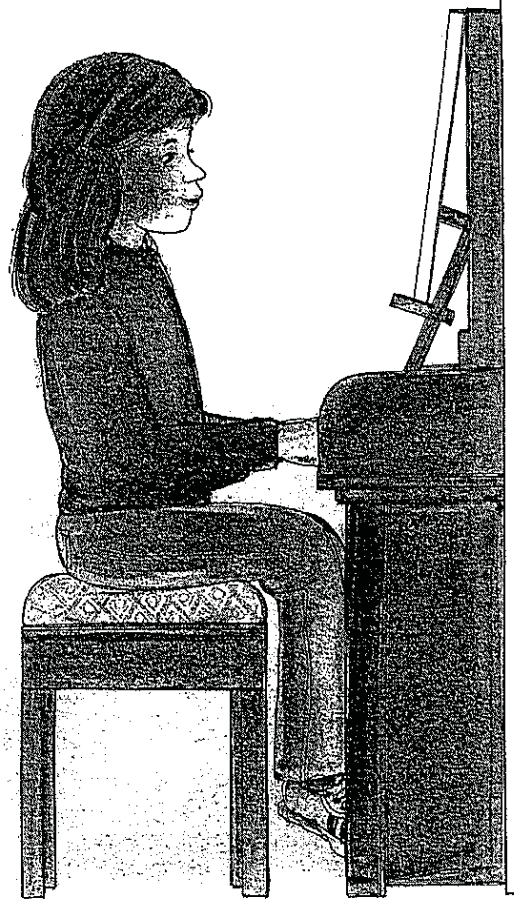
Two piano teachers advocating the graceful wrist movement

Clementi went to great lengths on his pupils' wrists and Moscheles wanted his pupils to play passages of music with glasses of water balanced on their wrists. These ideas may seem rather extreme but why not bear them in mind.



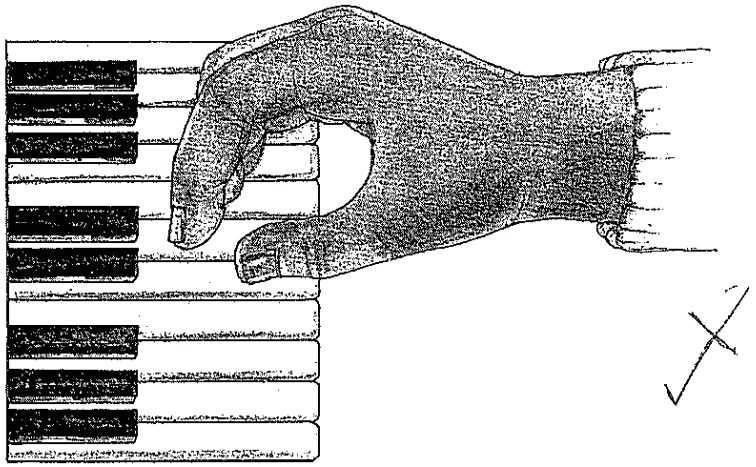
HULTON DEUTSCH COLLECTION LIMITED

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832)



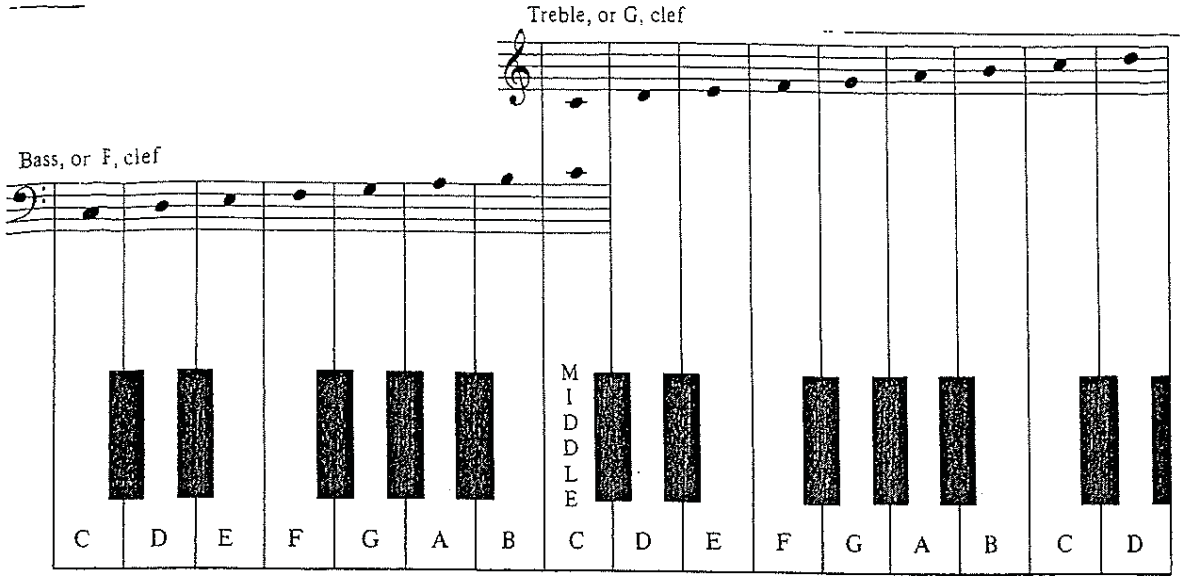
Always

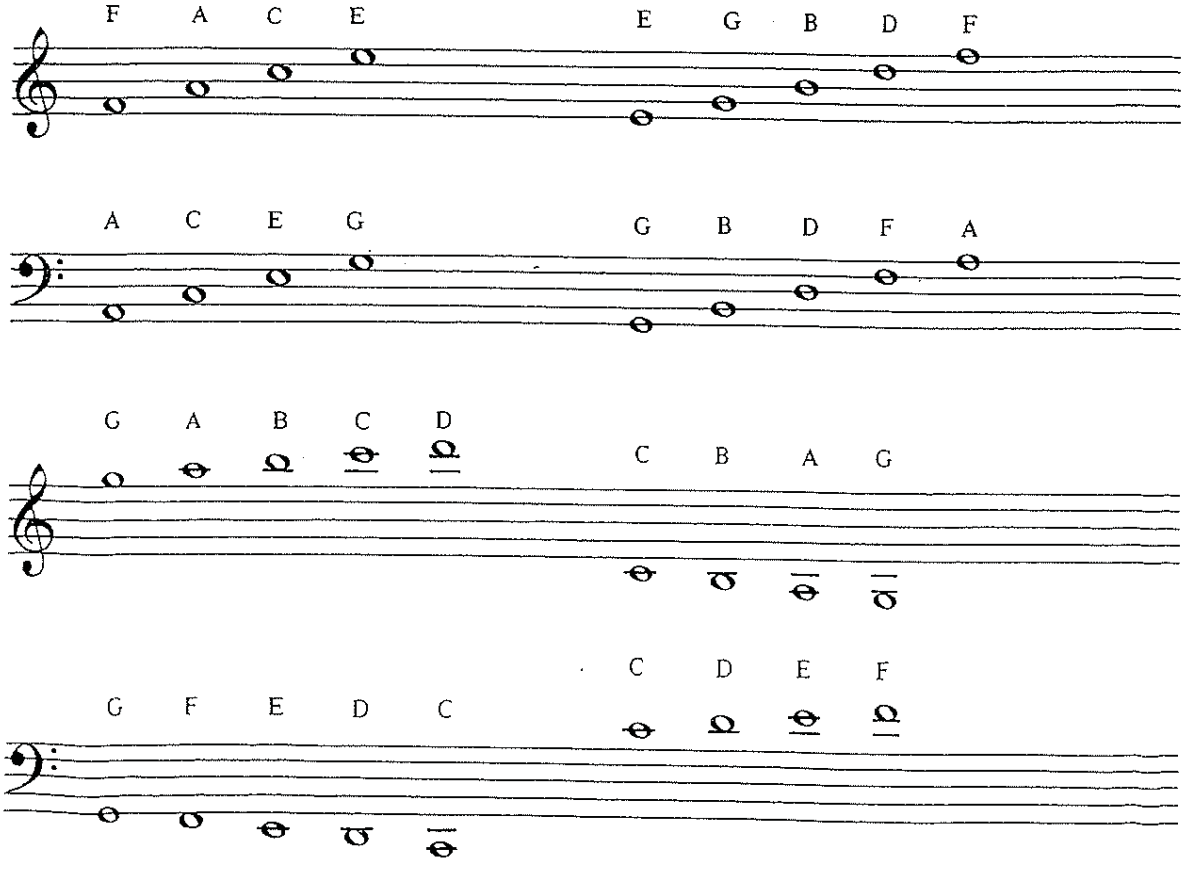
- Play with clean hands and short fingernails.
- Check that the chair or piano stool is in the middle of the keyboard and at the right height.
- Make sure you are sitting correctly.
- Play with curved fingers, like this:



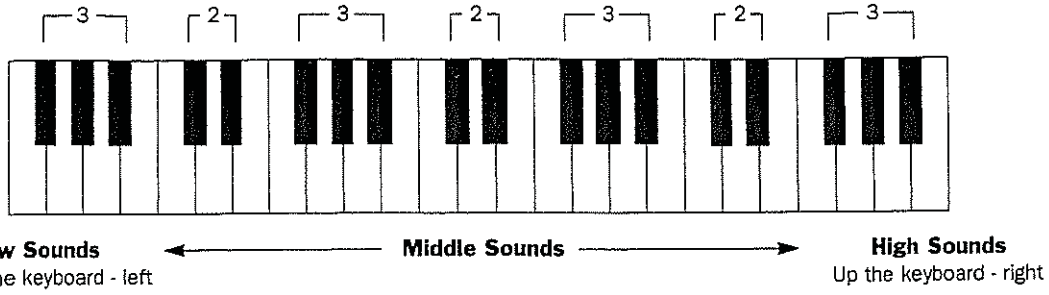
- Use the same fingering every time you play a piece.
- Listen to every sound you make on the piano.

FINDING KEYS AND NOTES





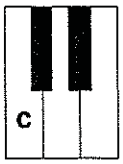
Introducing the Keyboard



The piano keyboard has white keys and black keys, with the black keys in groups of twos and threes.
Starting with the lowest, find all the groups of two black keys on the piano.

Middle C

The note **C** is the white key to the left of the two black keys to the middle of the keyboard is called **Middle C**.

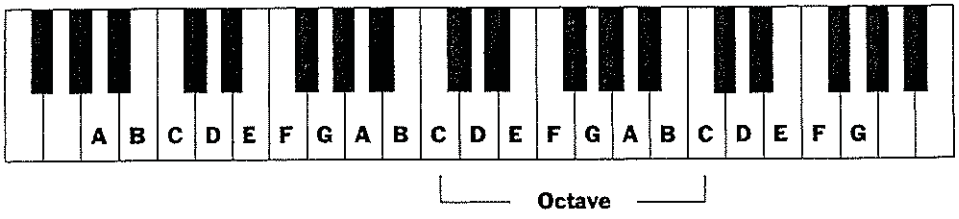


and the **C** that is closest

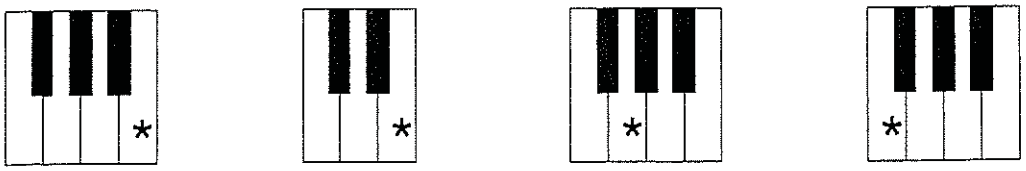
The Musical Alphabet

There are only seven letters used in music and they are the first seven letters of the alphabet - **A B C D E F G.**
These same letters are used over and over again. The distance from one note to the next note with the same letter-name is called an **Octave**.

The White Keys



Practise finding all the **C**s on the keyboard, then all the **G**s.
With your right hand choose a group of three high black notes and play the **A** nearby.
With your left hand choose a group of two low black notes and play the **D** nearby.
What are the notes marked with a * ?



Introducing time

Each piece of music has various patterns of *long* and *short* notes. These patterns are called **rhythm.**
The *position* of the note on the lines and spaces of the stave tells you which key to play, but it is the *shape* or design of the note which tells you its time value. ie. its length in terms of rhythm.

Note Values

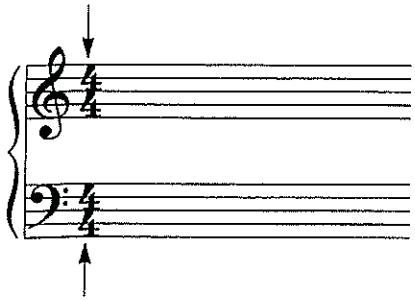
There are different types of notes for different lengths of notes (counts).

semibreve	𝅝	has **4** counts	**1 - 2 - 3 - 4**
dotted minim	𝅗𝅥.	has **3** counts	**1 - 2 - 3**
minim	𝅗𝅥	has **2** counts	**1 - 2**
crotchet	♩	has **1** count	**1**

Time Signature

The **time signature** is written at the beginning of a piece of music to indicate the number of beats in each bar. Note values add up in each bar to make this time signature.

The *upper* number tells you *how many* counts in each bar - in this case **4**.

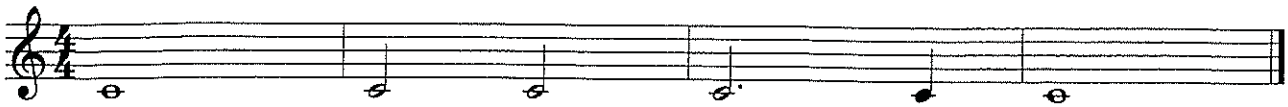


4 = ♩ (a quarter of a semibreve).
Therefore, in the time signature of $\frac{4}{4}$
there are **4** counts in each bar and each count is a ♩

The *lower* number tells you *what kind of* note gets one count.

Right Time!

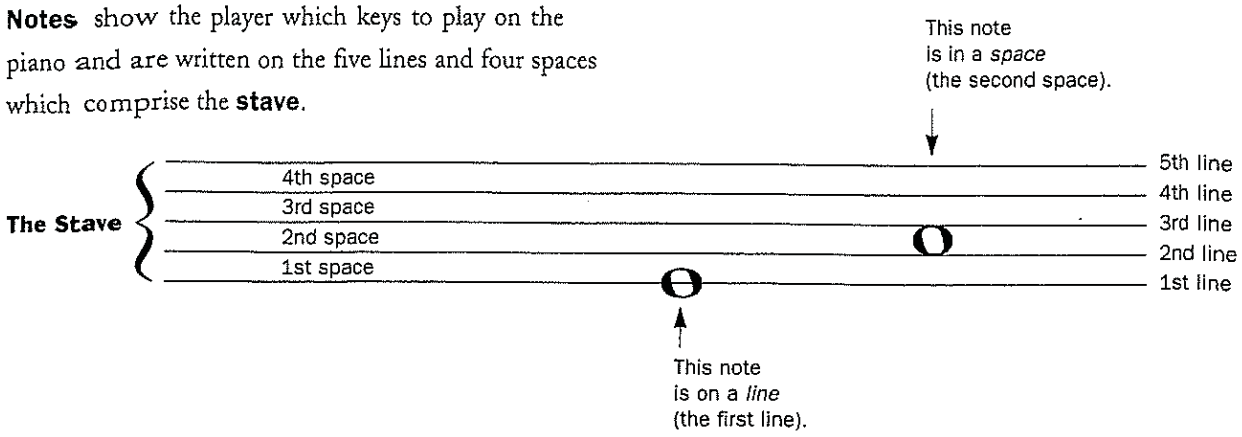
Place the thumb of your right hand on **Middle C** and play this as you count the following rhythm:



Count **1 - 2 - 3 - 4** **1 - 2** **3 - 4** **1 - 2 - 3** **4** **1 - 2 - 3 - 4**

Introducing notation

Notes show the player which keys to play on the piano and are written on the five lines and four spaces which comprise the **stave**.

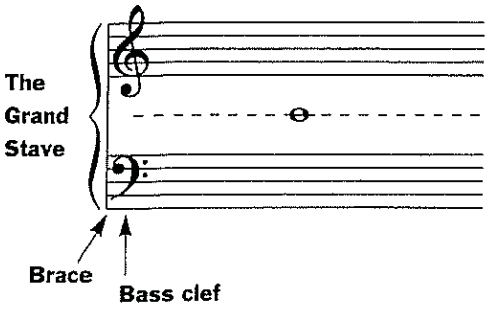


Piano music uses a **treble clef** (or **G** clef) sign for *high* notes (usually played by the right hand using the right half of the piano keyboard).

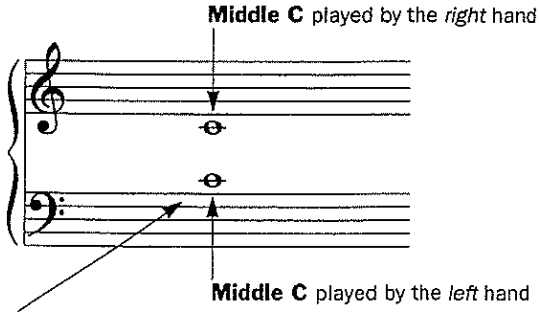
Piano music also uses a **bass clef** (or **F** clef) sign for *low* notes (usually played by the left hand using the left half of the piano keyboard).

For piano music, two staves are joined together by a *brace* - one stave for each hand - and this is called the *grand* or *great* stave.

Middle C

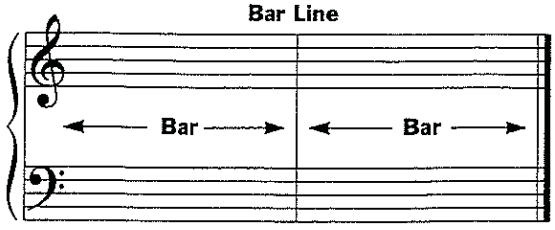


Middle C falls on a line between the two staves but, because it is often played by each hand, it is actually written like this.

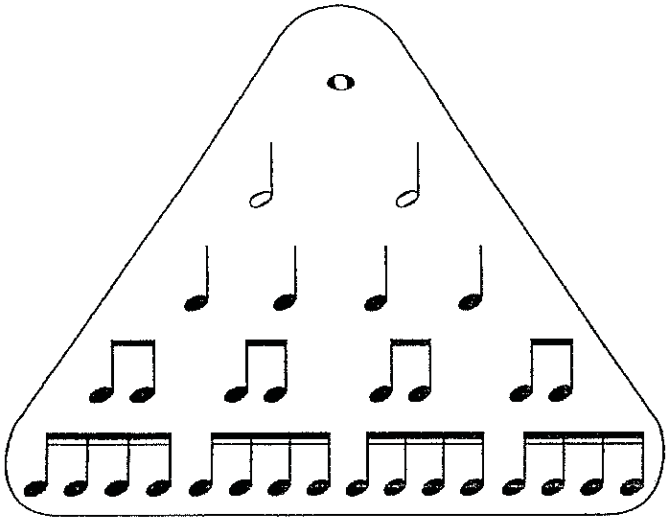


Music is divided into **bars** with vertical **bar lines**. At the end of a piece of music is a *double* bar line.

Each bar contains a number of **beats** (or counts).



The Note Pyramid



The note pyramid is very useful. You can see at a glance the values of notes.

For example, you can see that a semibreve is worth two minims or sixteen semiquavers!

Test Your Observation

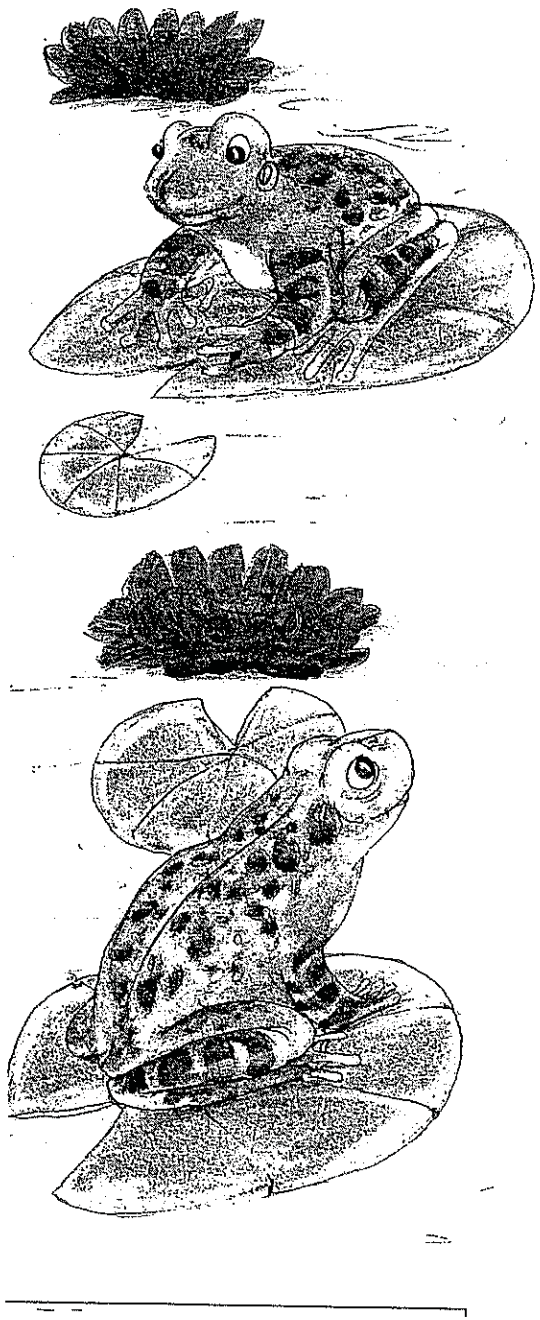
Use the **note pyramid** to put the correct number in each space.

A **semibreve** = ☐ minims,
☐ crotchets,
☐ quavers,
☐ semiquavers.

A **minim** = ☐ crotchets,
☐ quavers,
☐ semiquavers.

A **crotchet** = ☐ quavers,
☐ semiquavers.

There are ☐ crotchets in a semibreve



Rests

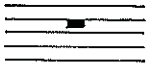
Crotchet rest

One silent beat

Minim rest

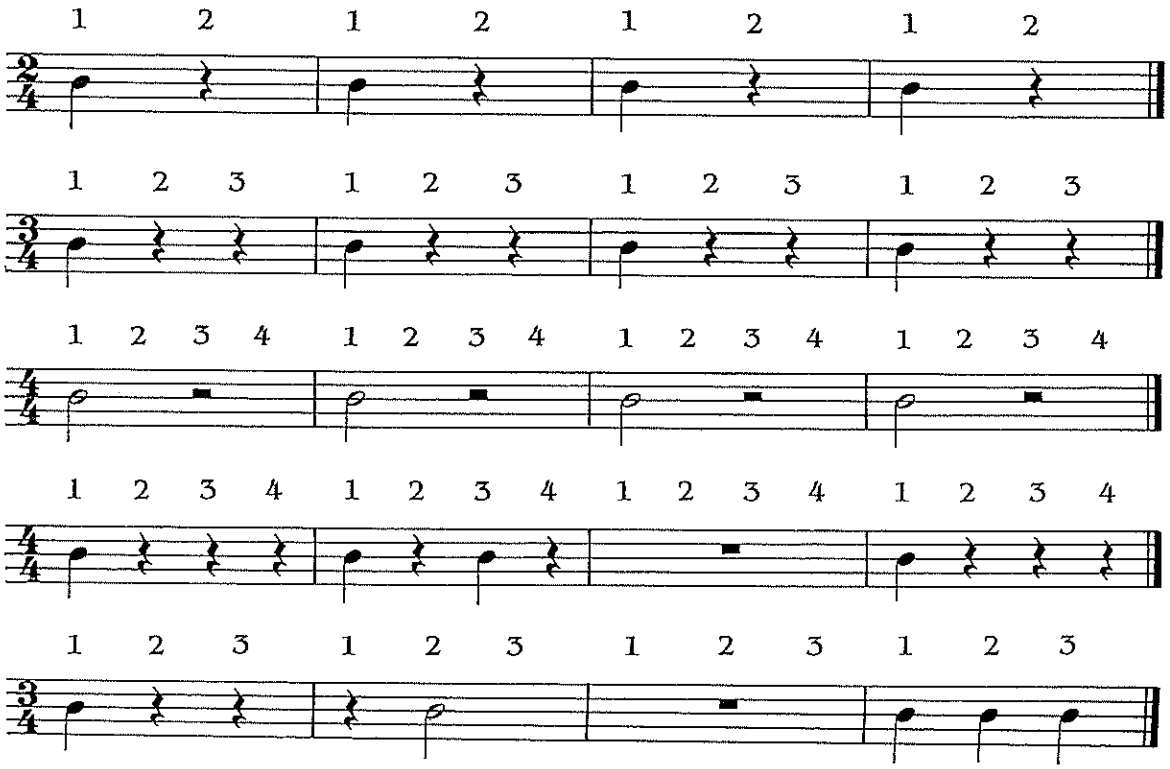
Two silent beats

Semibreve rest

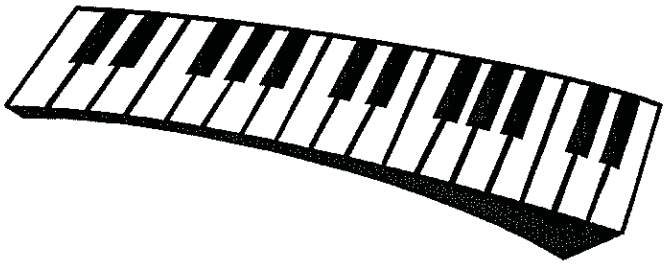


Four silent beats
or a whole bar's rest
even in $\frac{3}{4}$ time

Clap the notes, counting the beats aloud



Some tips to get the most from your practice ...



The most important thing you can do to become better at the keyboard is to practice. We've put together some tips to remind you of the best ways to practice.

Here are a few of the golden rules:

- **SET PRACTICE TIMES**

Aim to practice at the same time every day e.g. after you finish your homework or just after dinner. This will help you to get into a routine.

- **PRACTICE EVERY DAY**

It is better to practice for 10 minutes every day than for one hour once a week. You might find it useful to keep a practice diary.

- **WARM UP**

Practice some easy exercises or scales to get your mind and body back into the idea of playing.

- **WORK ON IT**

Spend some time practising the hard stuff! Be strict with yourself and try to get it as perfect as possible – but don't be too hard on yourself when you don't. If you find something very difficult in a piece or exercise, keep practising it over and over again until you notice an improvement - its the only way you will get better at it!

- **COOL DOWN**

Play something that you know well and enjoy playing. This will help you to relax, especially if you have been practising something really difficult!

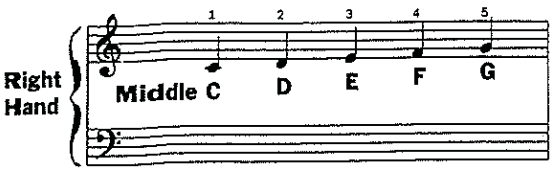
- **EVALUATE**

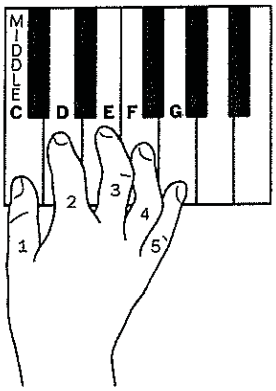
After playing something, ask yourself what was good as well as what could be better. Concentrate on the things you could improve upon rather than just playing the whole piece.

I should be practising for _____ minutes every day!

Remember – The more you practise, the better you will get!

Ready to play





Place your **right hand** in the position shown.
You are now ready to play the notes **C D E F G**.
Play these five notes going up and then down.
Look at where the notes are positioned on the stave (ie. on which line or space).

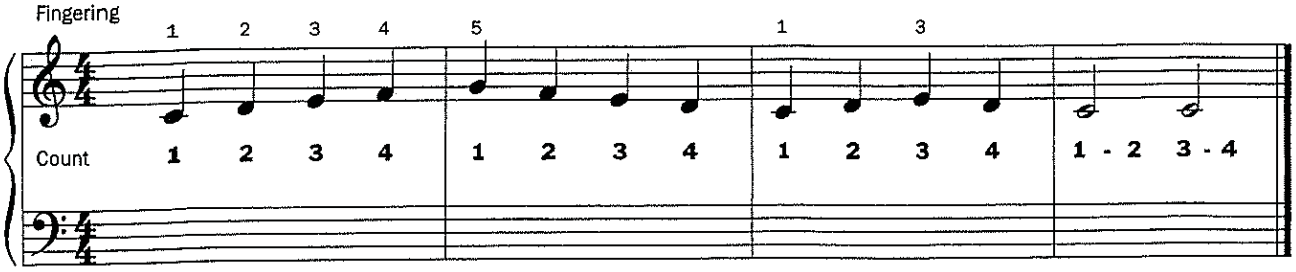
Legato

As you play the exercises below, hold each note until you play the next note. Then let it go - it is a 'see-saw' action. This kind of touch is called *legato* - Italian for smooth or 'joined-up'. It is used for most of the music you will play. Think of smooth, even, connected, but make sure that one sound does not overlap with the next.

Starting points - *Right hand*

Look at the time signature of each exercise and count evenly as you play.

1.



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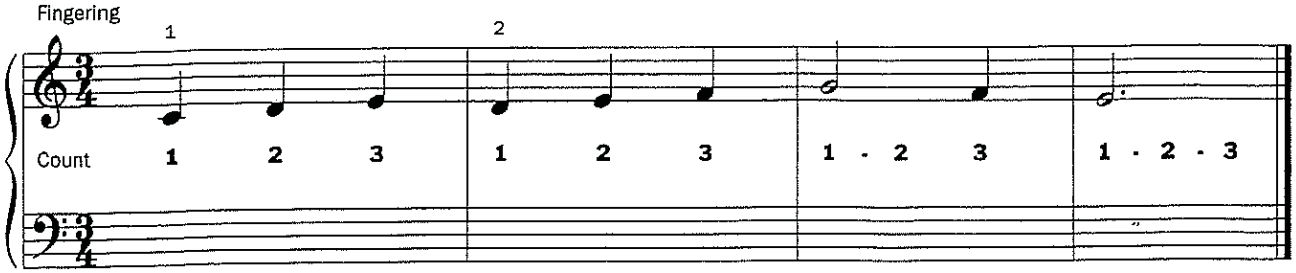
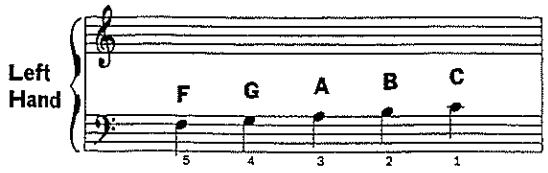
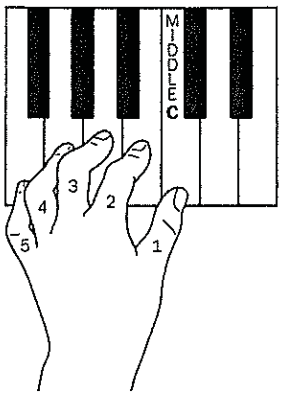


Now practise the above exercises saying the letter-names (in time) as you play. Notice where each note is written on the stave e.g. **D** is in the space *below* the stave, **E** is *on* the 1st line and **F** is *in* the 1st space.

Change hands





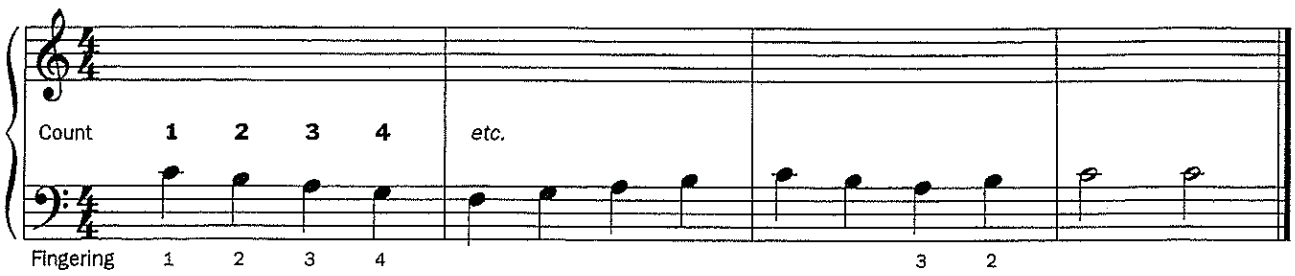
Place your **left hand** in the position shown.
You are now ready to play the notes **F G A B C**.
Play these five notes going down from **Middle C** and then up. Notice where each note is positioned.
Look at page 12: the *stems* go *up* on the *right* of the note head from **Middle C** upwards.
On this page: on these notes the *stems* go *down* on the *left* of the note head from **Middle C** downwards.

Hints and Reminders

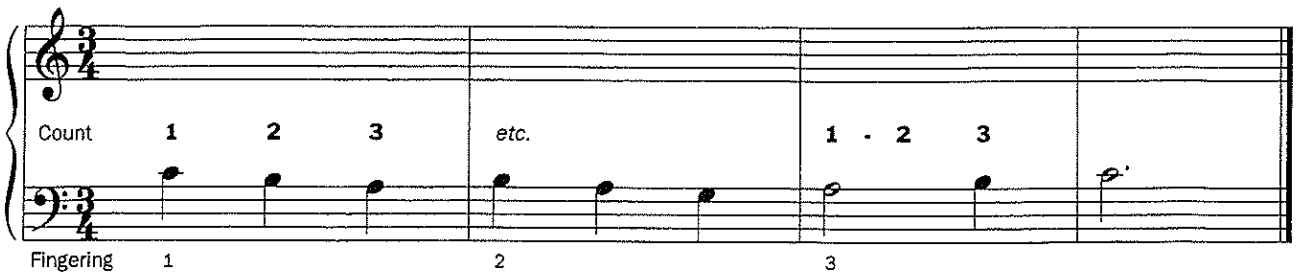
1. Listen as you play - make sure that you are playing legato.
2. Try not to look down at your hands.
3. Remember to hold your fingers in a curved shape.

Starting points - *Left hand*

1.



2.



Now practise the above exercises saying the letter-names (in time) as you play. Notice where each note is on the stave e.g. **B** is *in* the space *above* the stave, **A** is *on* the 5th line, **G** is *in* the 4th space.

Read Aloud

Read Aloud

Old MacDonald

Old Mac-Don-ald had a farm, Ee-eye, Ee-eye, oh! And

on this farm he had some ducks Ee - eye, Ee - eye, oh! Quack, Quack, here Quack,Quack, there

Ev - 'ry - where a Quack, Quack, Quack, Old Mac-Don-ald had a farm, Ee - eye, Ee eye, oh!

Oh when the Saints go marching in

American traditional

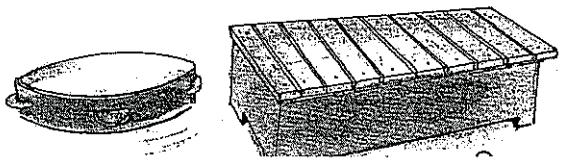
In march style Staccato

f

Oh when the Saints Go marching in Oh when the

Saints go march - ing in I want to be in that

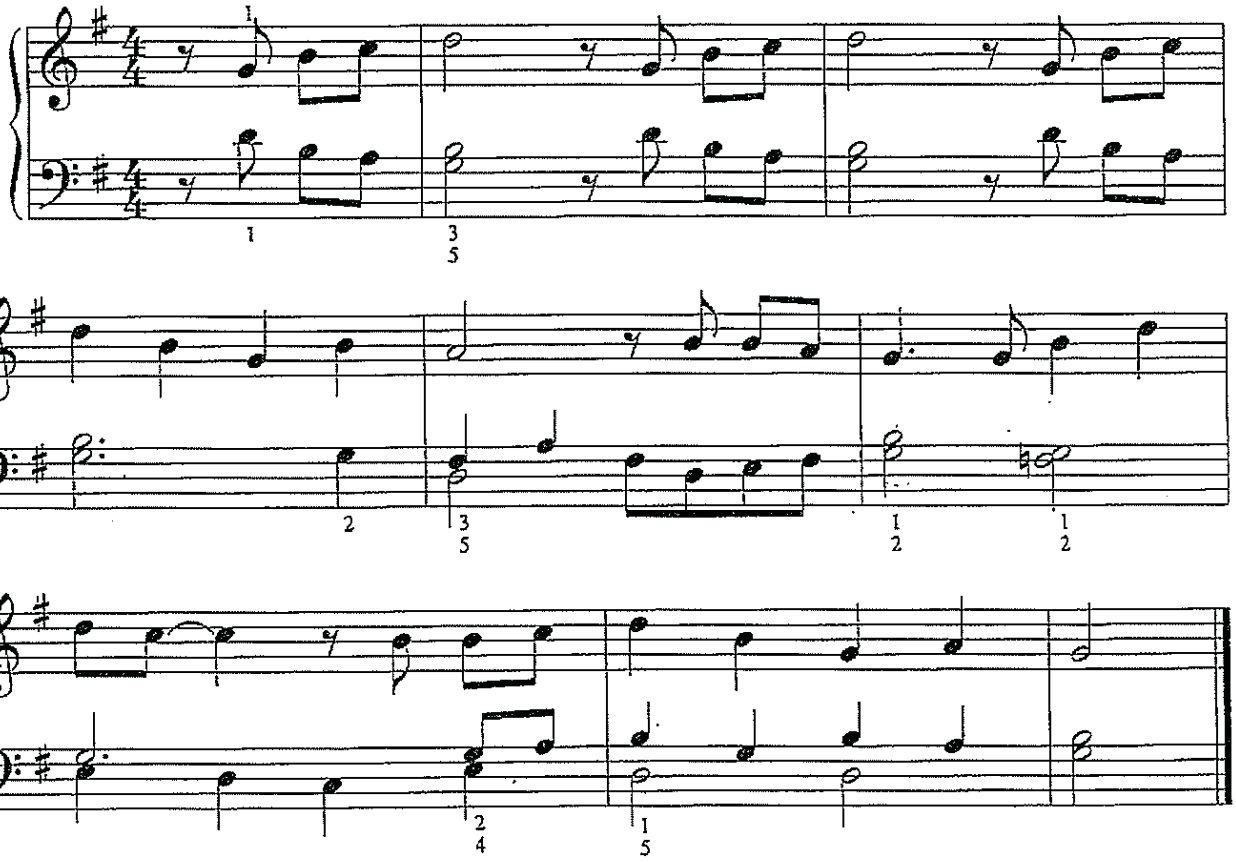
num-ber When the Saints go march - ing in.



When the saints

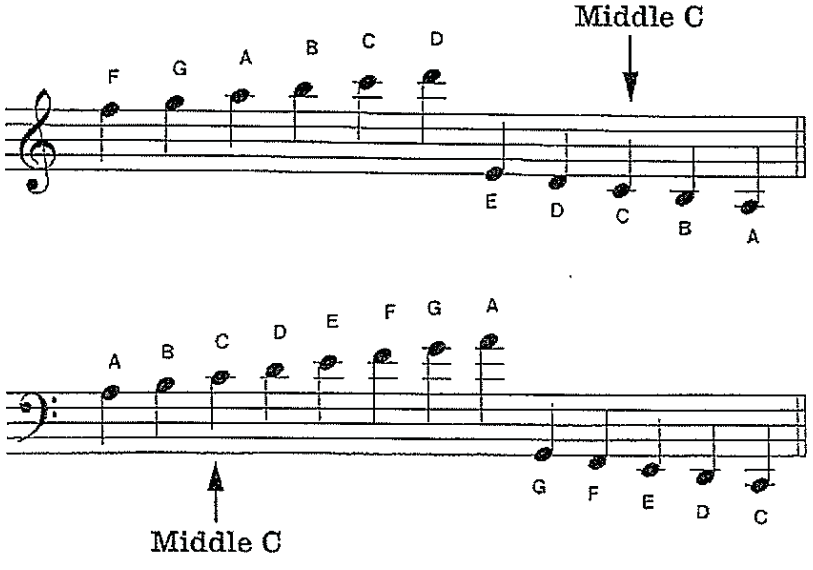
The first note in the left hand of this tune is a D. It has an extra line of its own.

When a note is higher or lower than the staff, it uses extra lines, called ledger lines. Find out more below.



Ledger lines

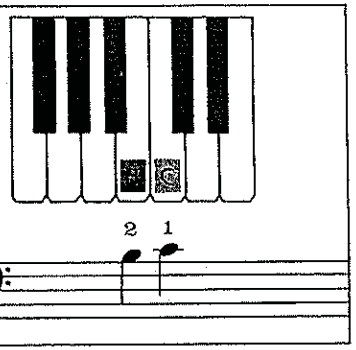
To find out which note to play, count up or down from the last note on the staff like this.



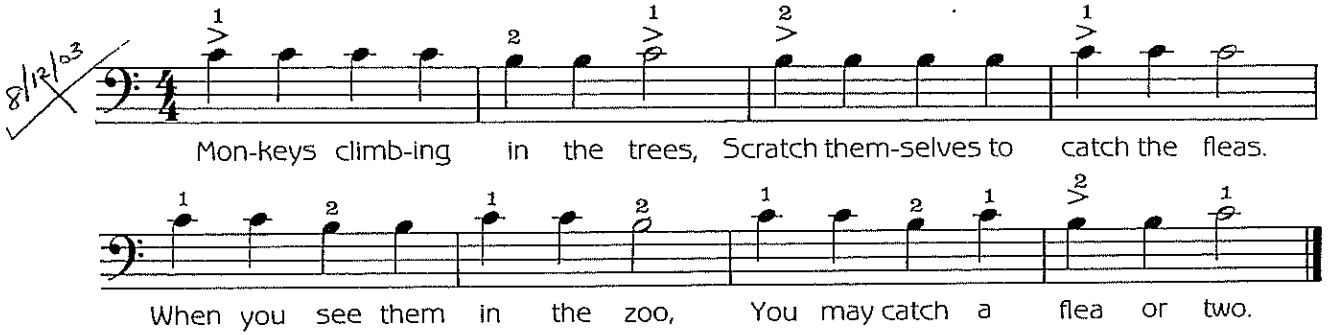
The Dancing Bear

When notes are marked with the pause sign,
hold them for a longer time.

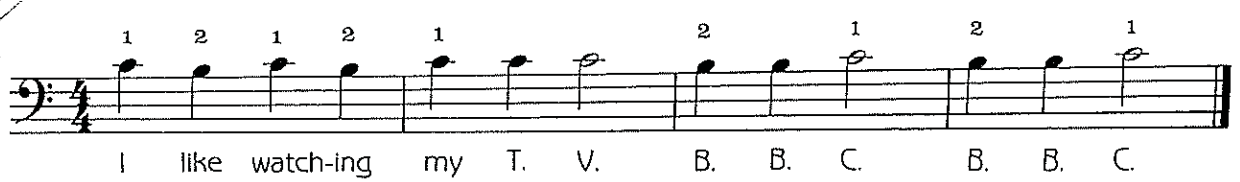
New Note B Left Hand C



Monkeys

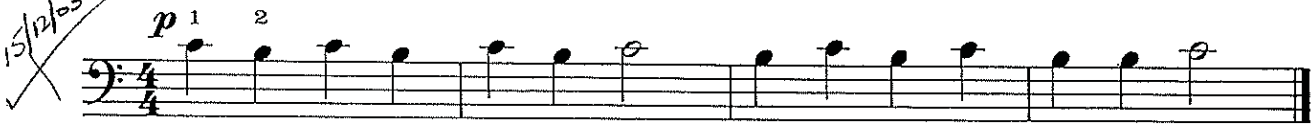


Watching TV



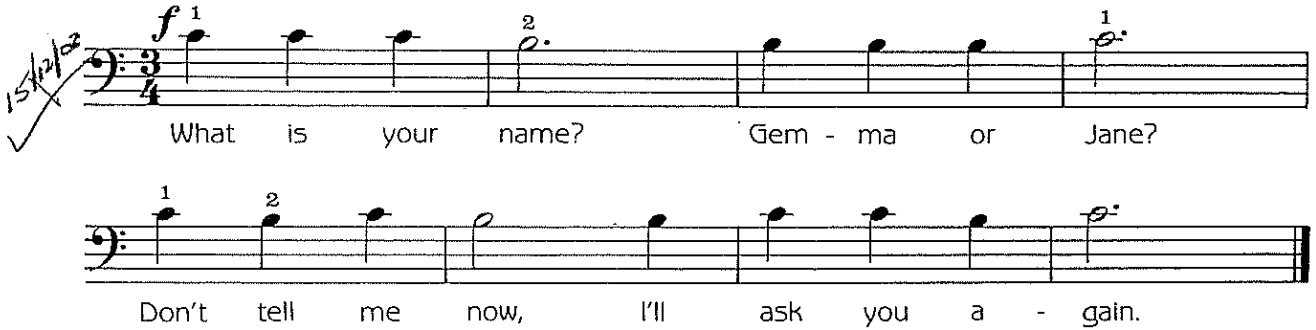
The Caterpillar

15/12/03

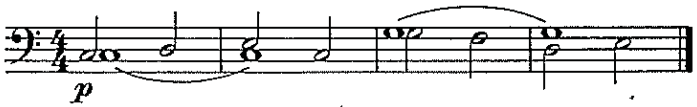


What is your name?

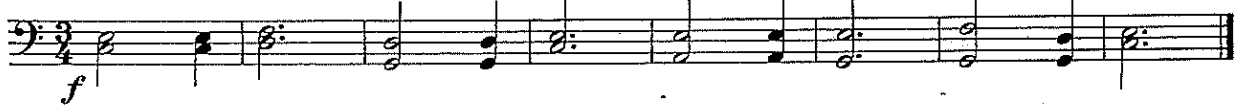
15/12/03



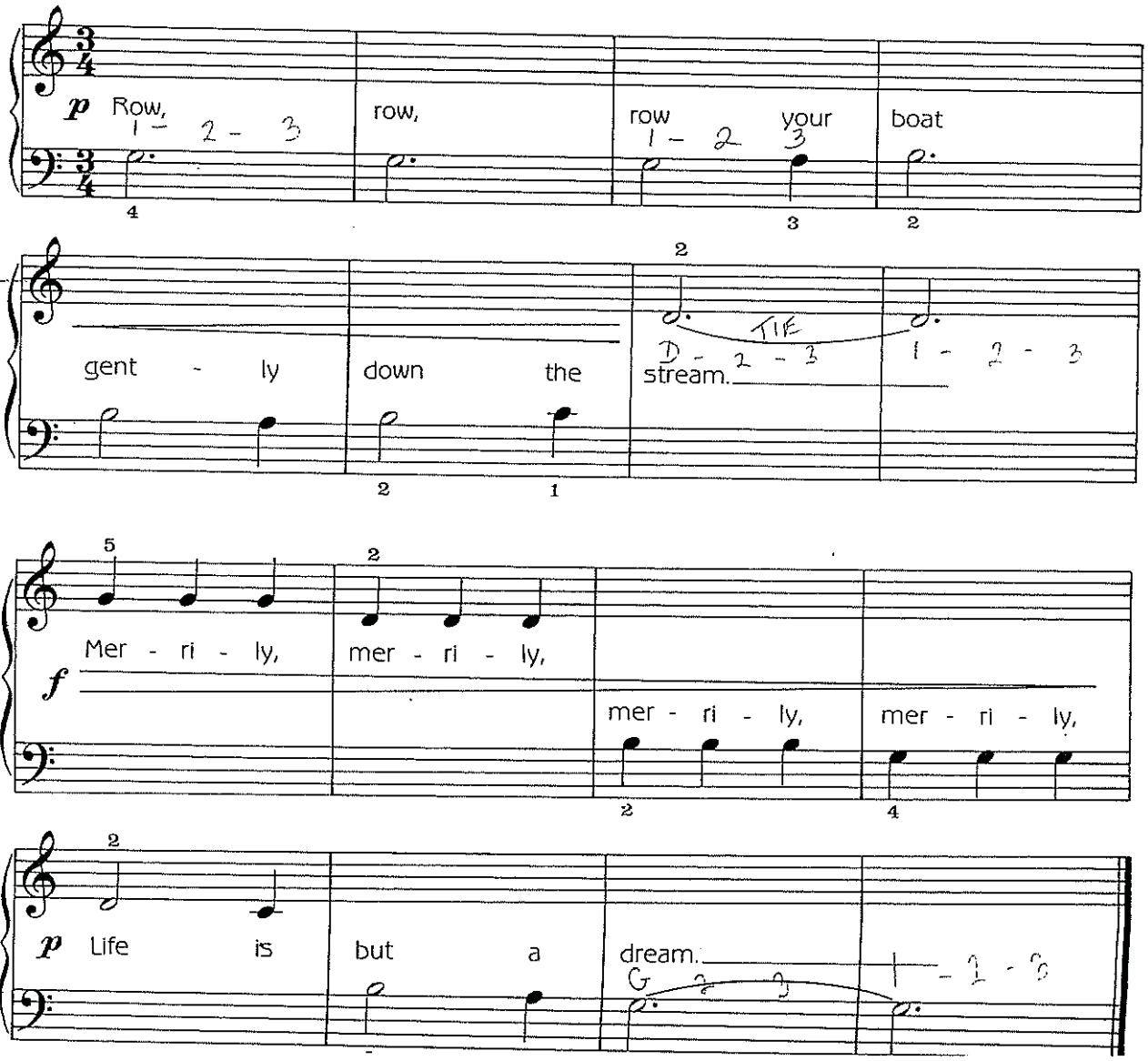
The Caterpillar Accompaniment



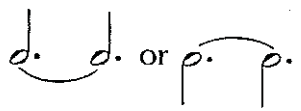
What is your name? Accompaniment



Rowing



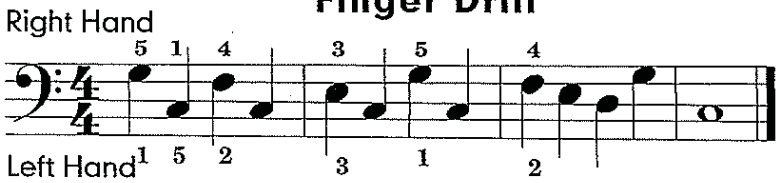
If two notes of the same pitch are joined by a curve



this is called a **tie**.

Play the first note and hold it on for the value of the second note.

Finger Drill

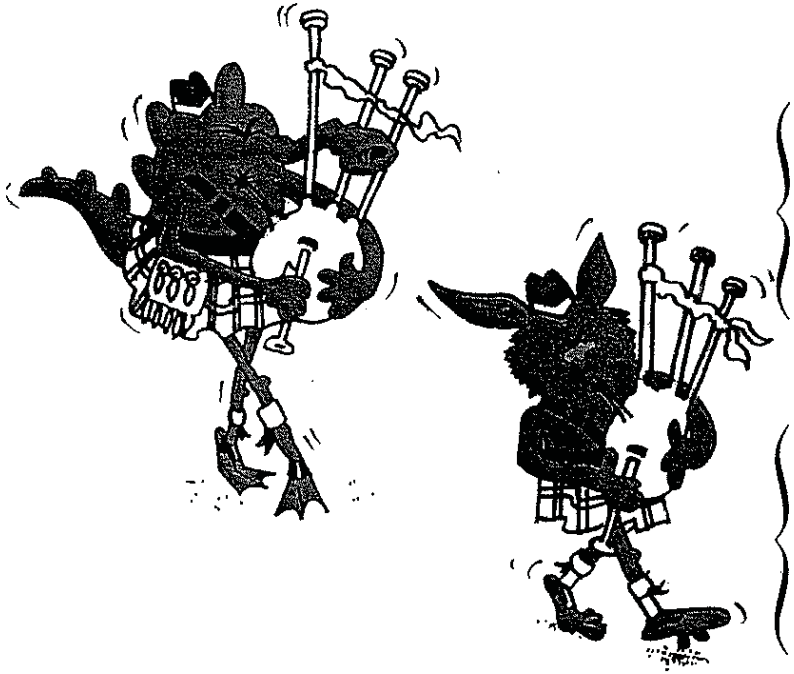


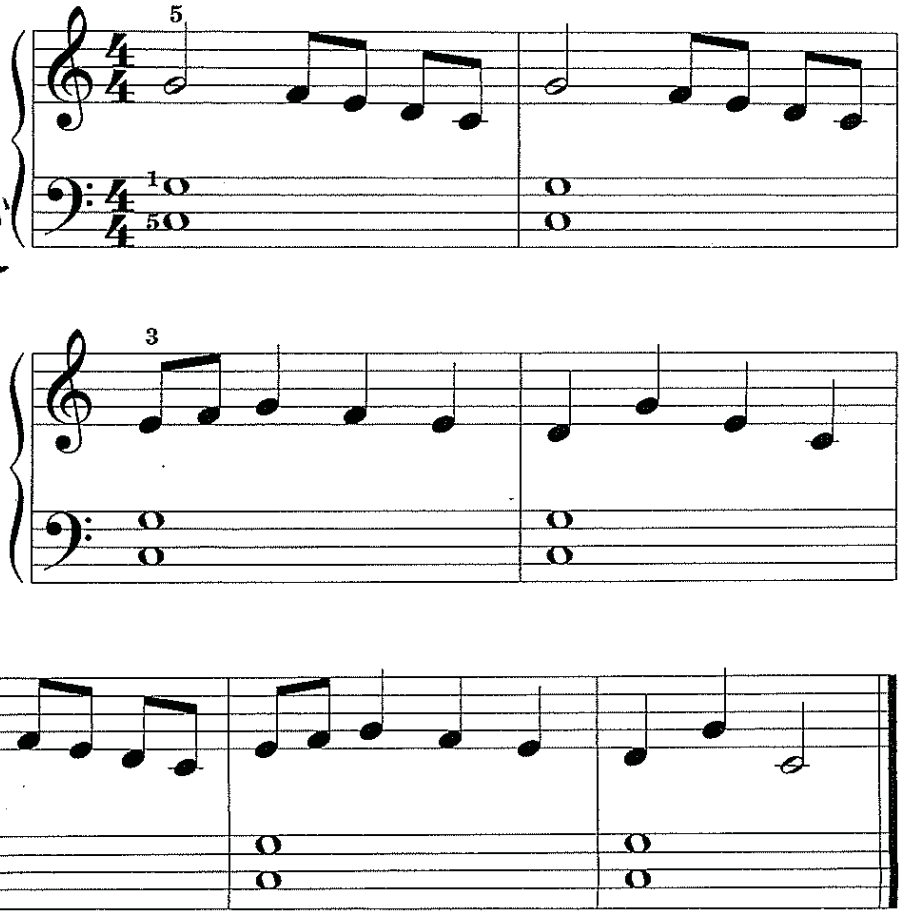
Read Aloud

The Pipers are Coming!

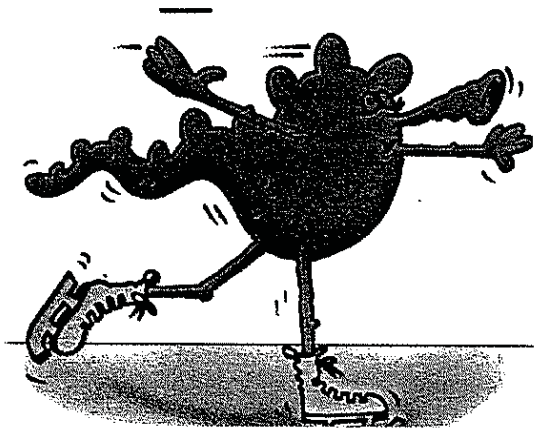
(Musette)

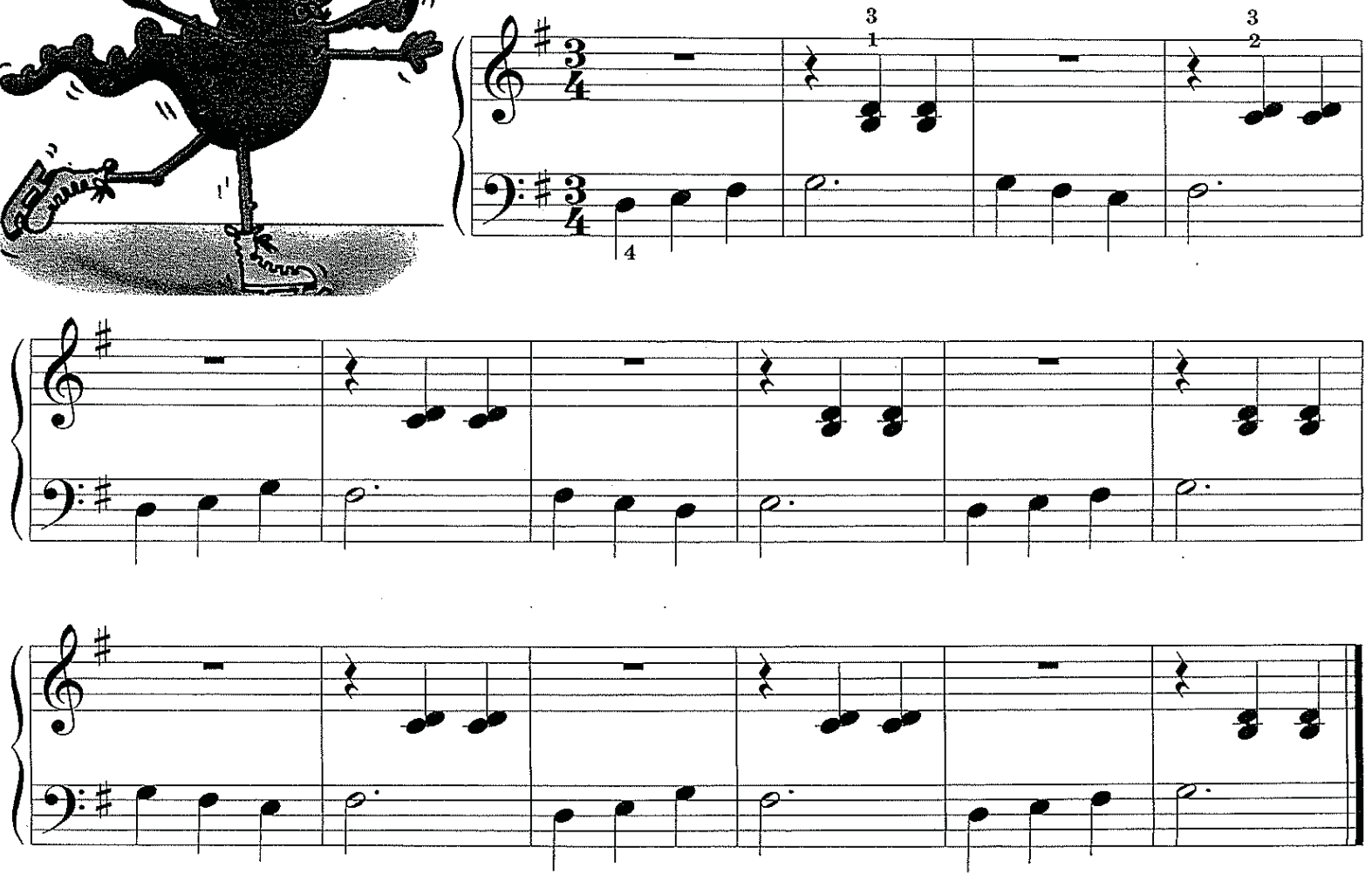
from
J. S. Bach





The Skater

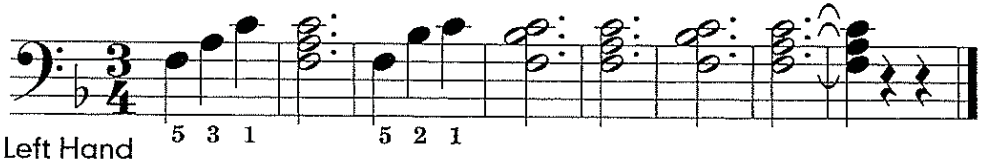




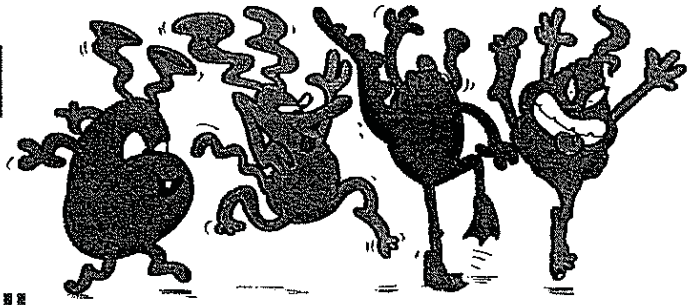
Chords with Stationary Bass

In F Major

Preparatory Exercise

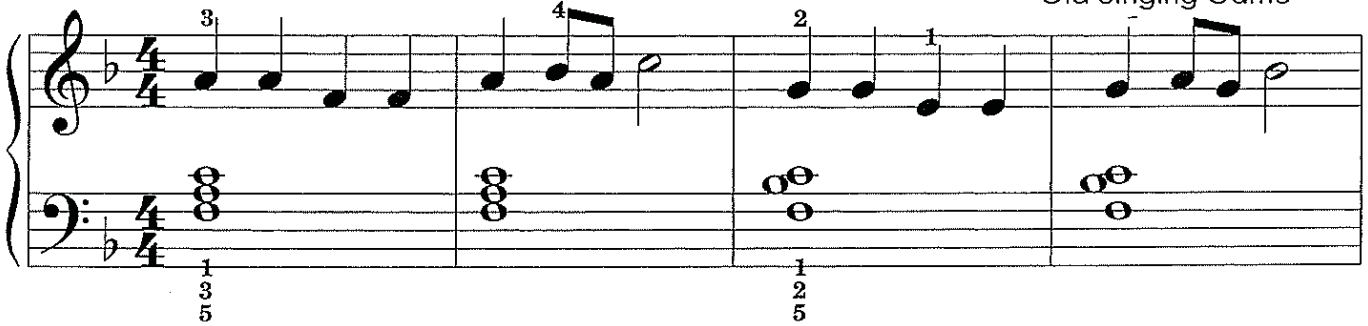


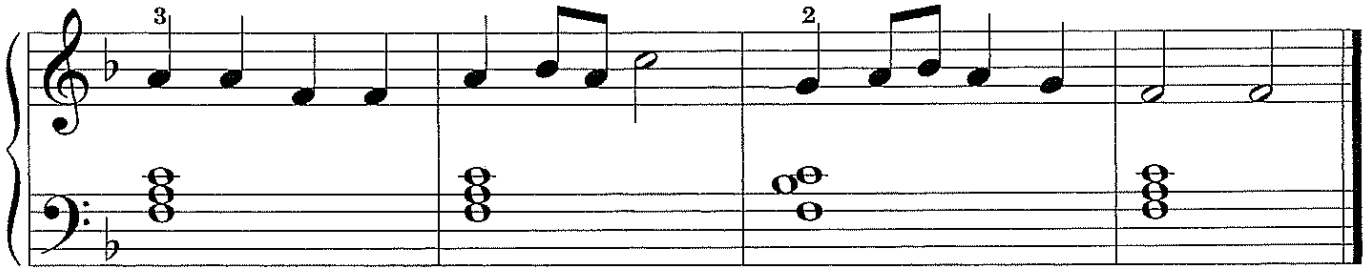
Left Hand

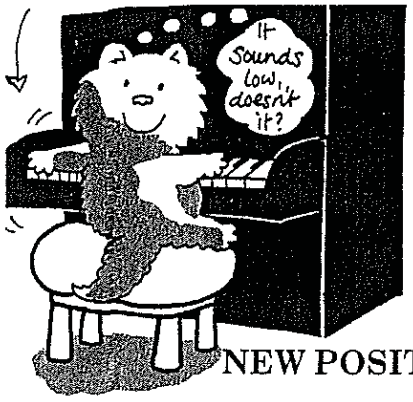


Skip to My Lou

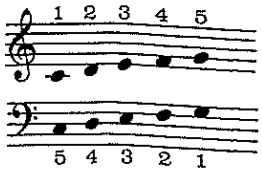
Old Singing Game







STUDY

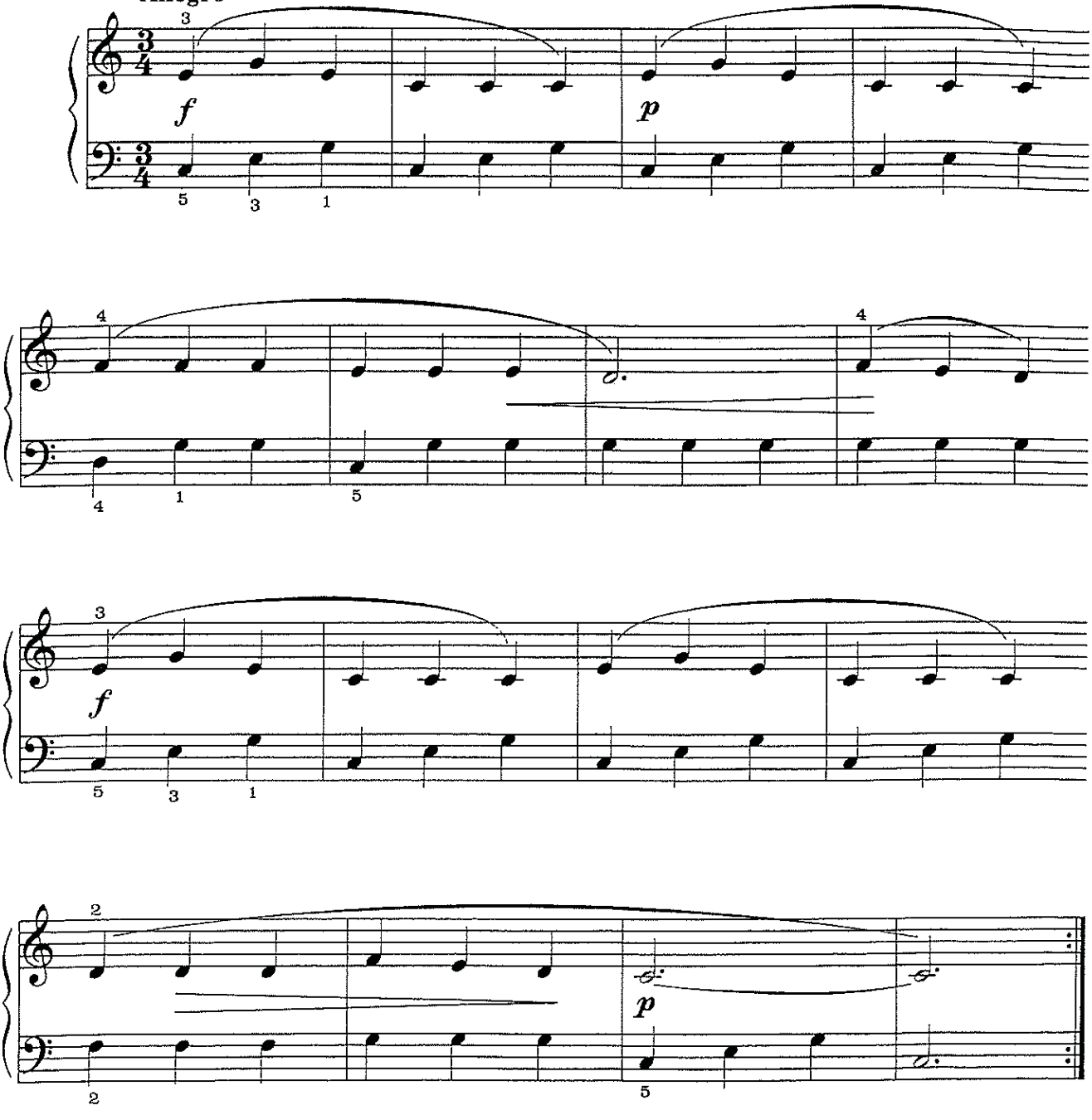


NEW POSITION

5 on the C below Middle C

From C.Czerny

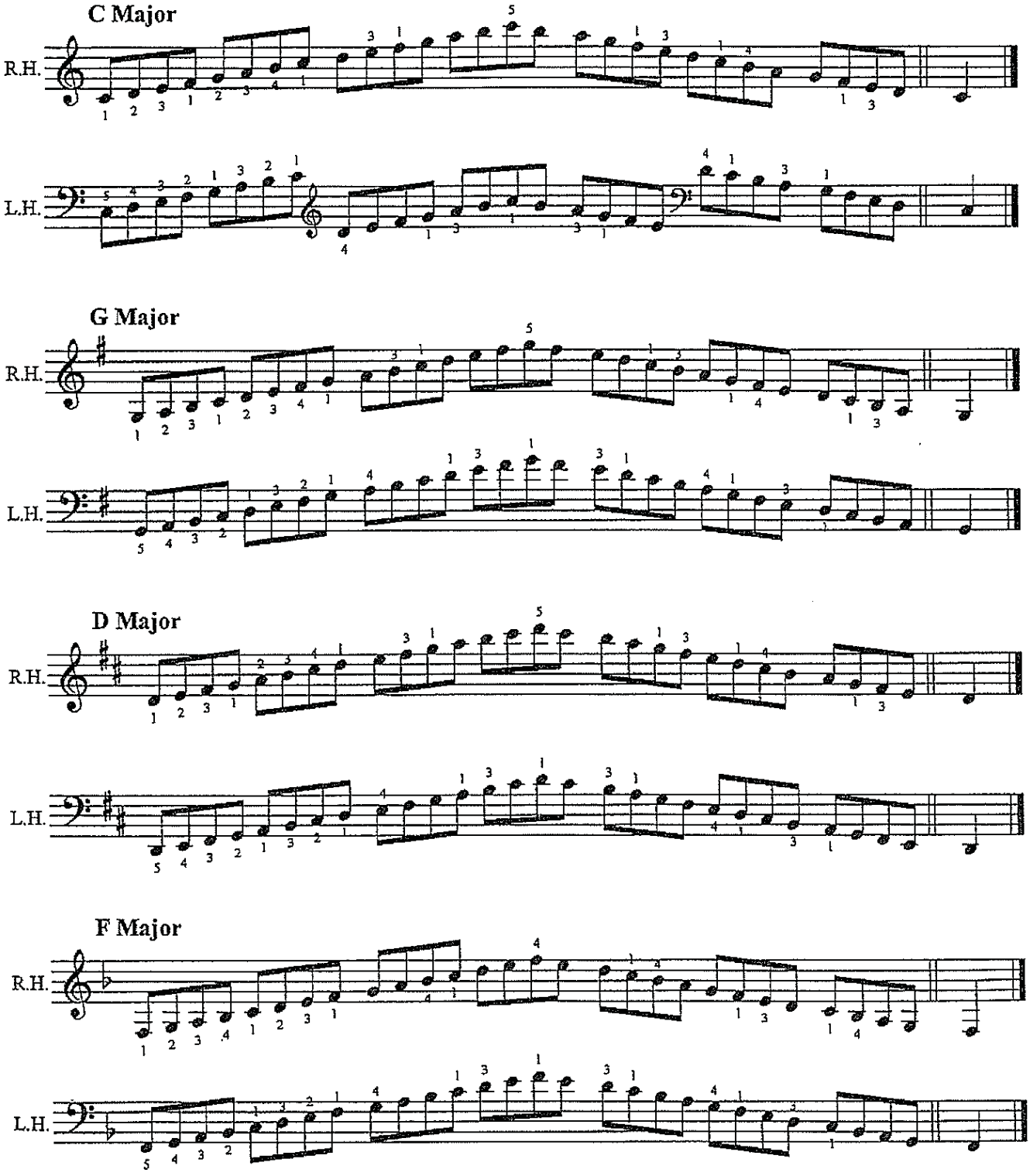
Allegro



SCALES, BROKEN CHORDS AND ARPEGGIOS

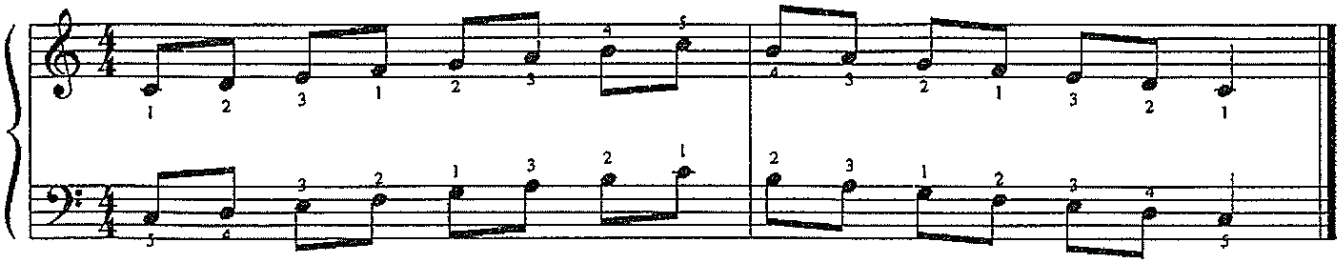
Scales

To be played legato and from memory.
Minimum speed: crotchet = 69.
C, G, D and F majors with separate hands (two octaves).

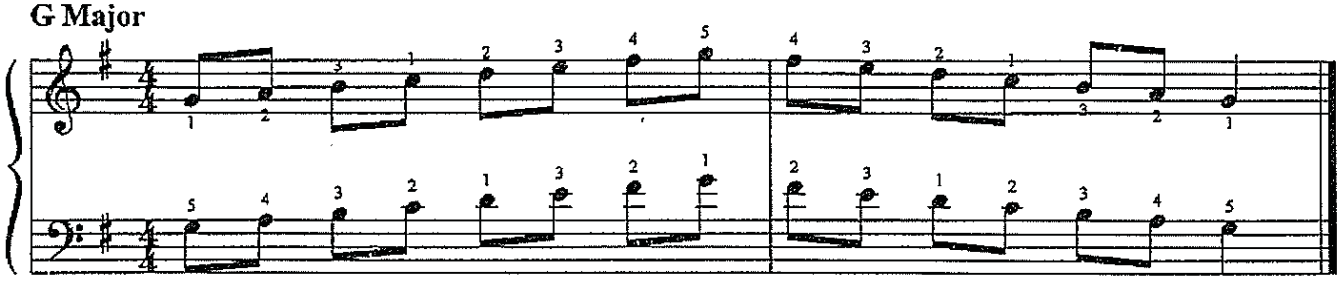


C, G and D major scales hands together similar motion (one octave).

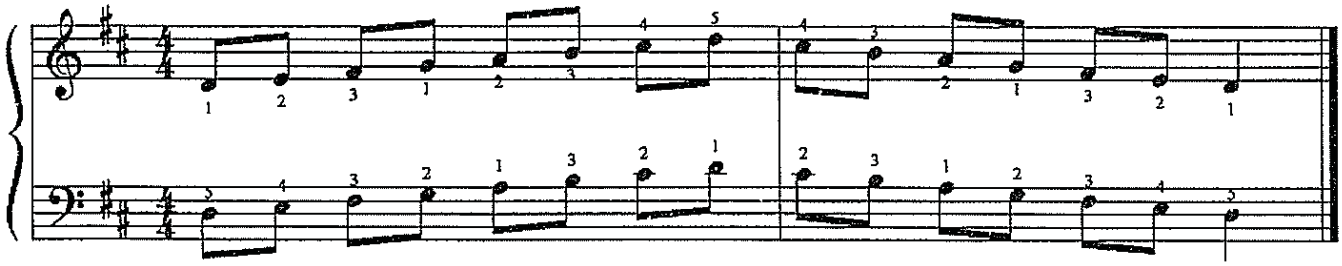
C Major



G Major

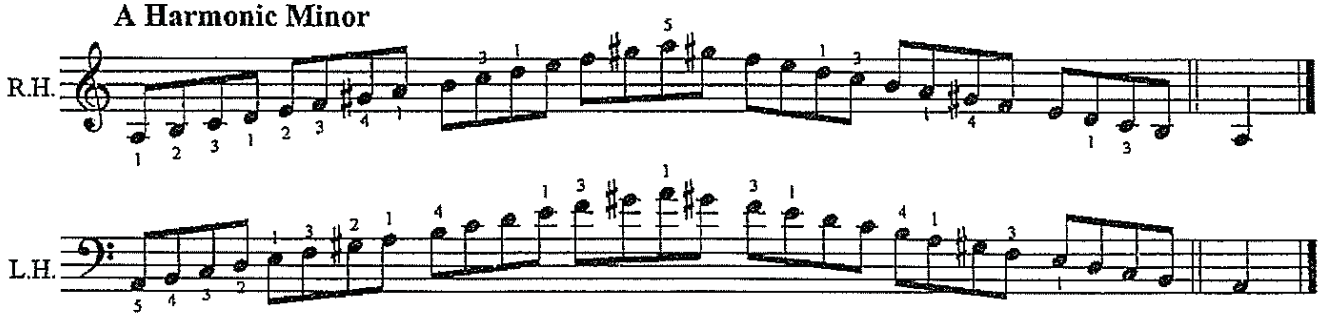


D Major

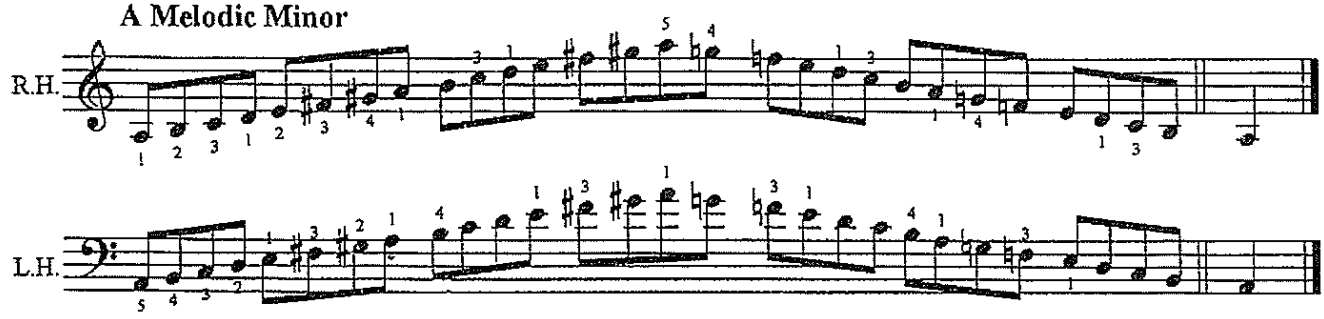


A and D minor scales (melodic or harmonic, at the candidate's choice) with separate hands (two octaves).

A Harmonic Minor



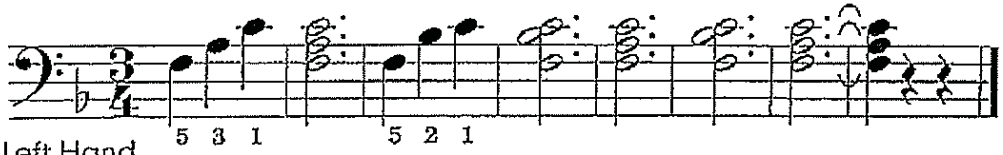
A Melodic Minor



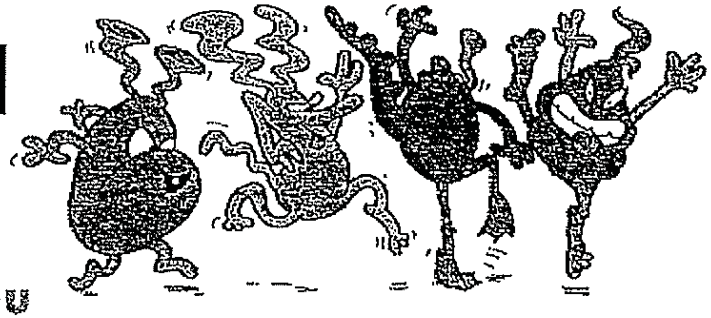
Chords with Stationary Bass

In F Major

Preparatory Exercise

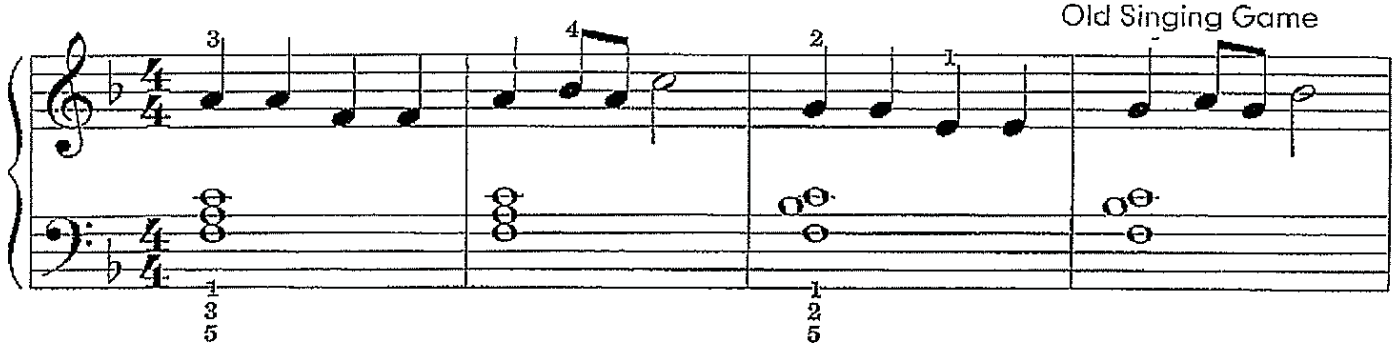


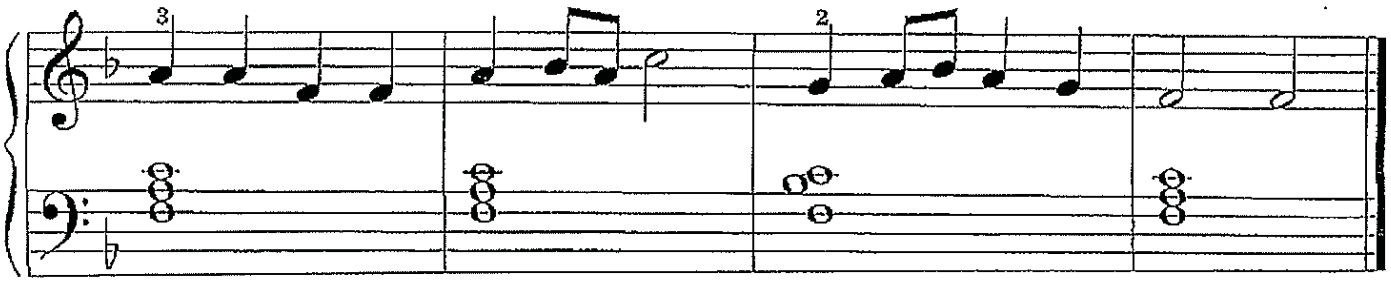
Left Hand



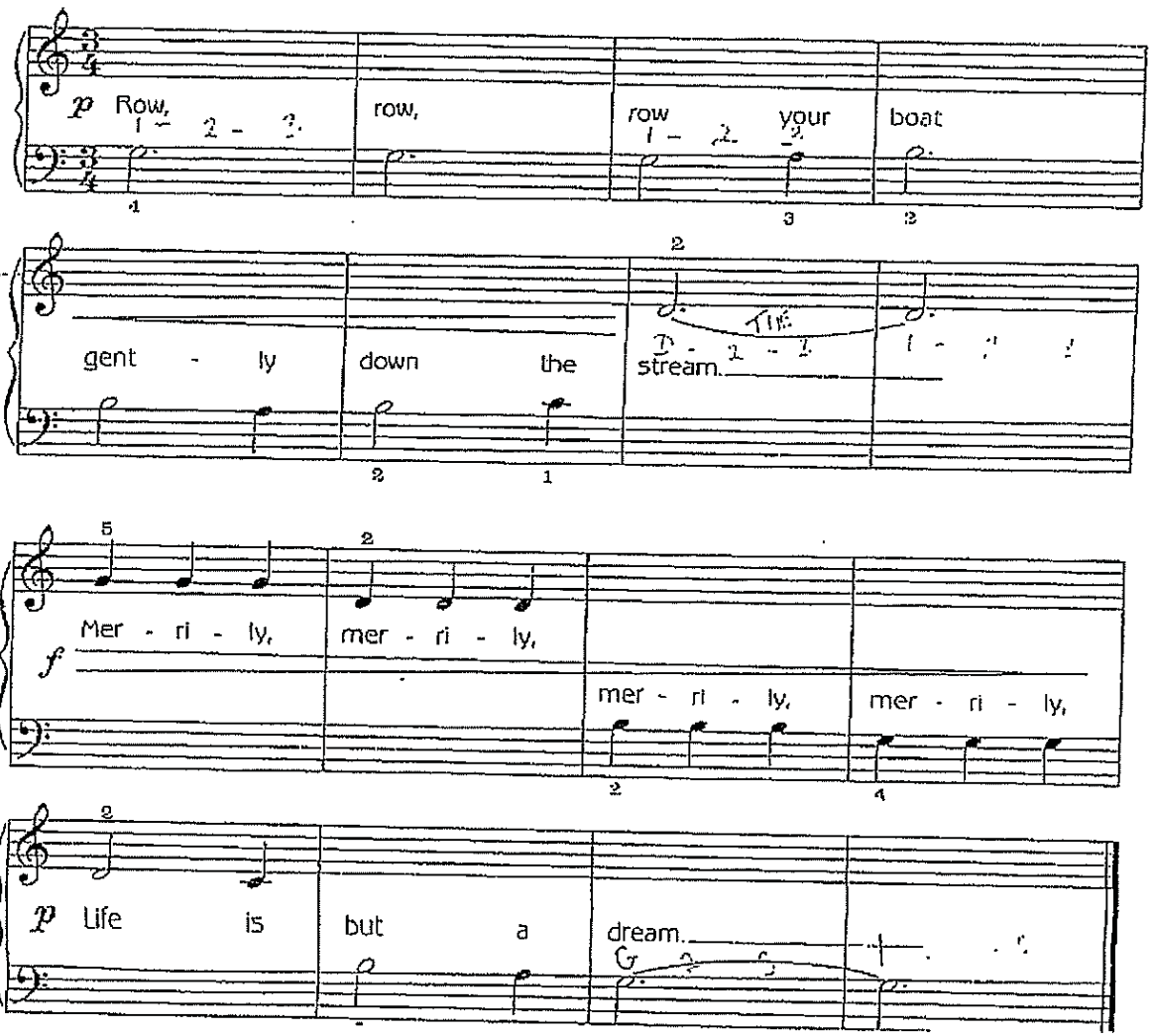
Skip to My Lou

Old Singing Game

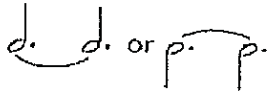




Rowing



If two notes of the same pitch are joined by a curve

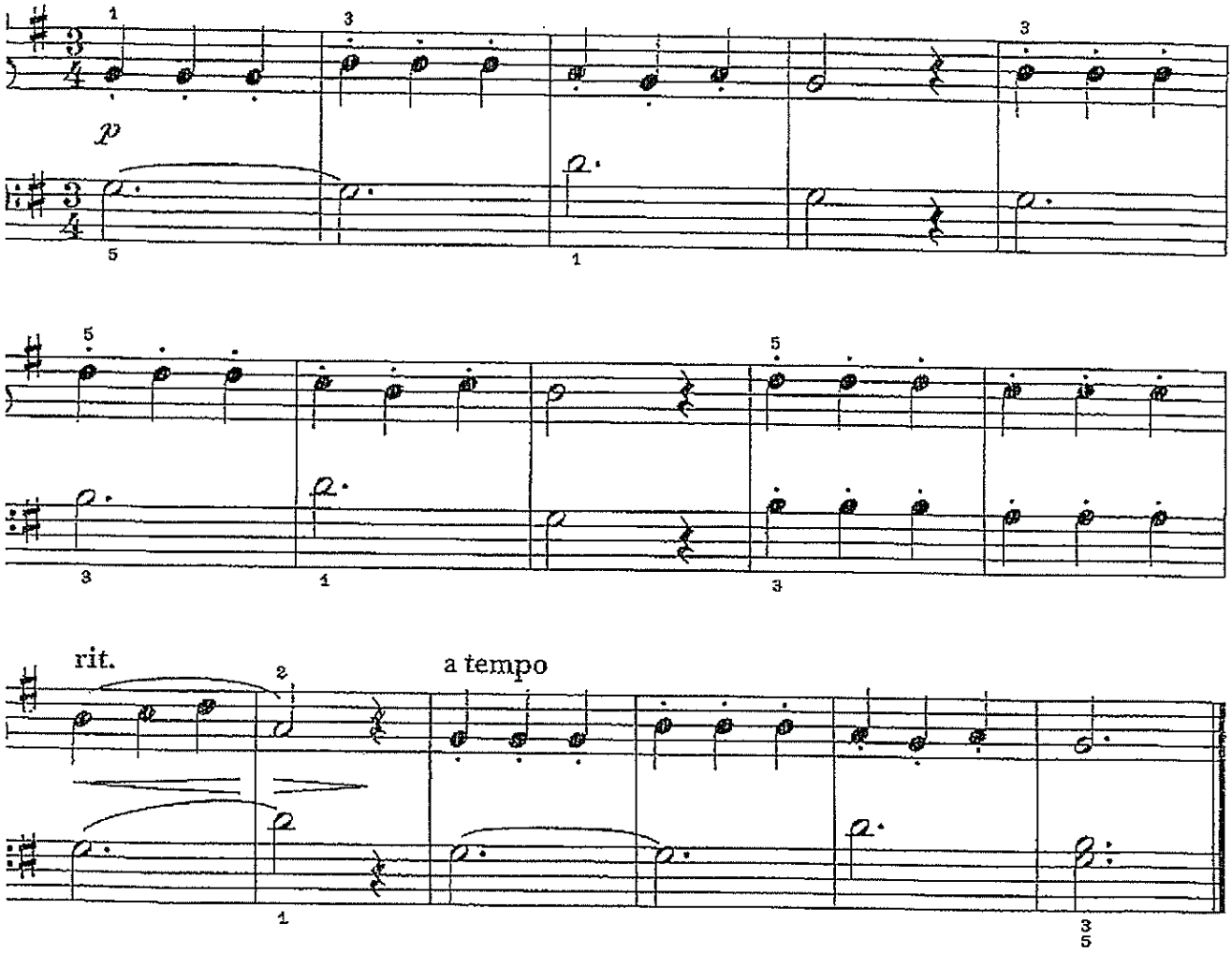


this is called a **tie**.

Play the first note and hold it on for the value of the second note.

The Bouncing Ball

Allegretto

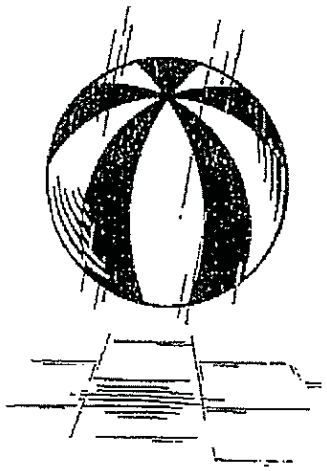


Meeting some Italian terms

staccato = short, clipped

tempo = speed (rate of movement)
a tempo = back to the original speed

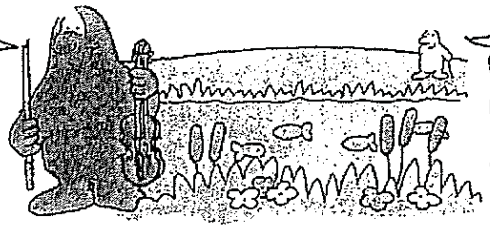
Allegro = bright and quick
Allegretto = fairly quick, but unhurried
Moderato = at a moderate speed
Andante = moving at a walking pace



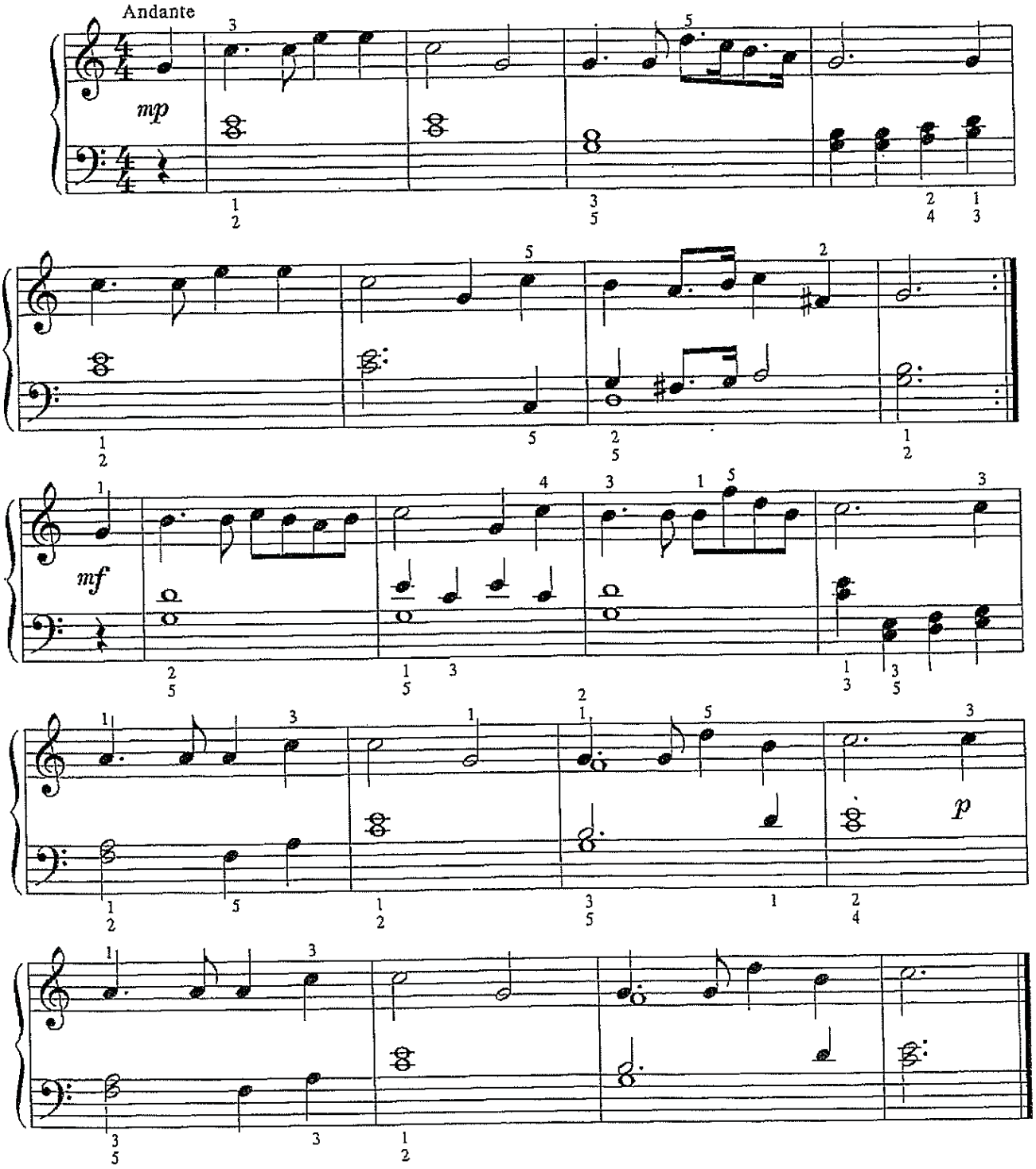
rallentando or *rall.* = gradually getting slower
ritenuto or *rit.* = hold back (i.e. slower at once)
accelerando or *accel.* = gradually getting faster

Theme from the Trout Quintet

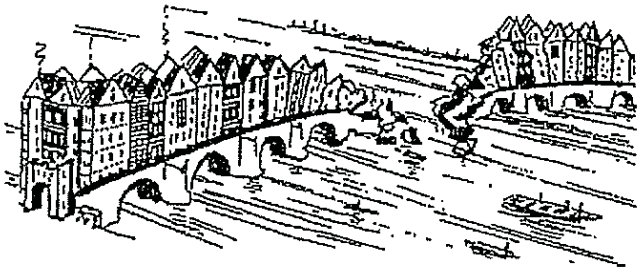
This tune is by the Austrian composer Schubert (1797-1828). *Andante* means "at a walking pace".



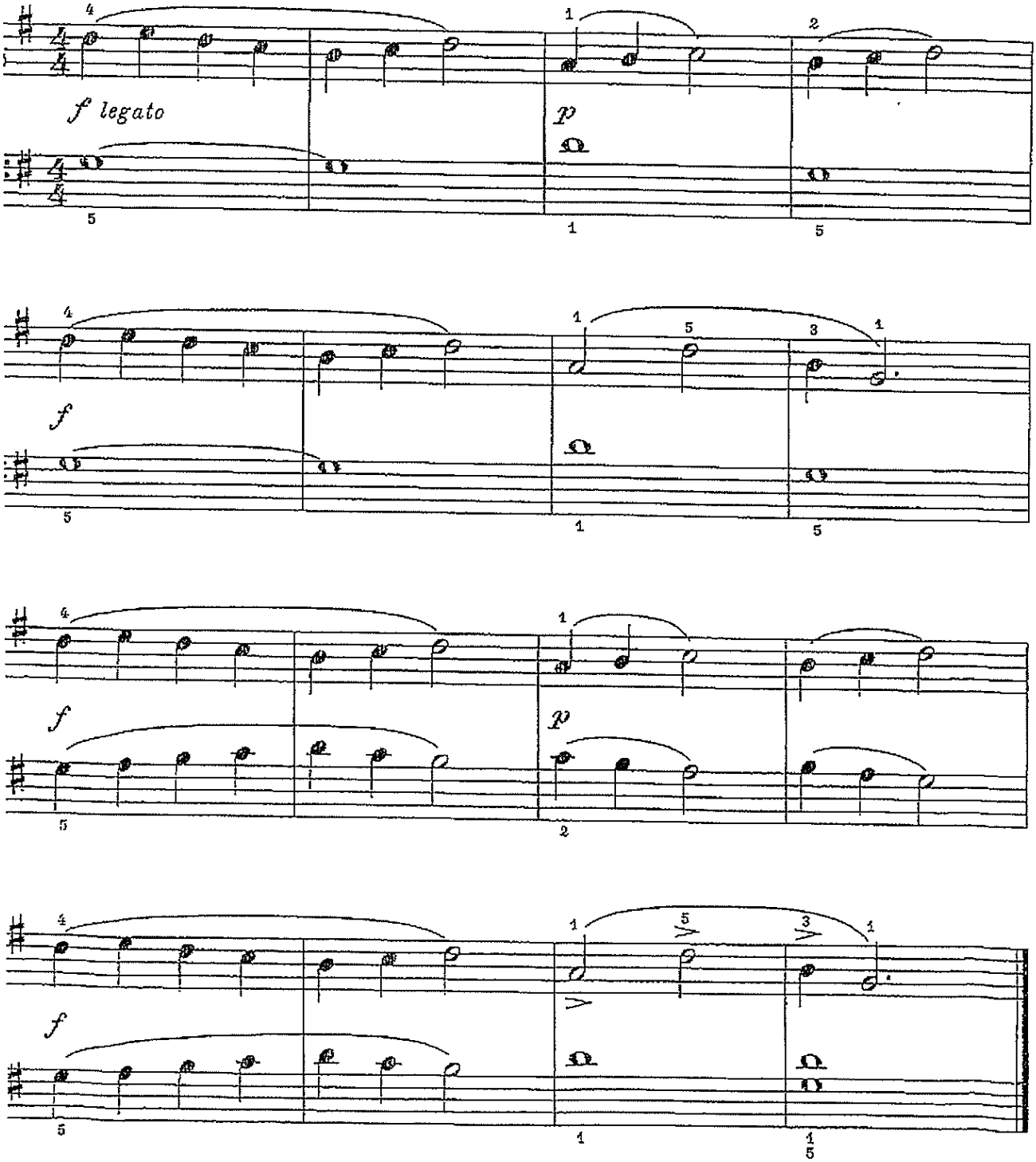
The *Trout Quintet* was written for a violin, a viola, a cello, a double bass and a piano.



London Bridge is Falling Down

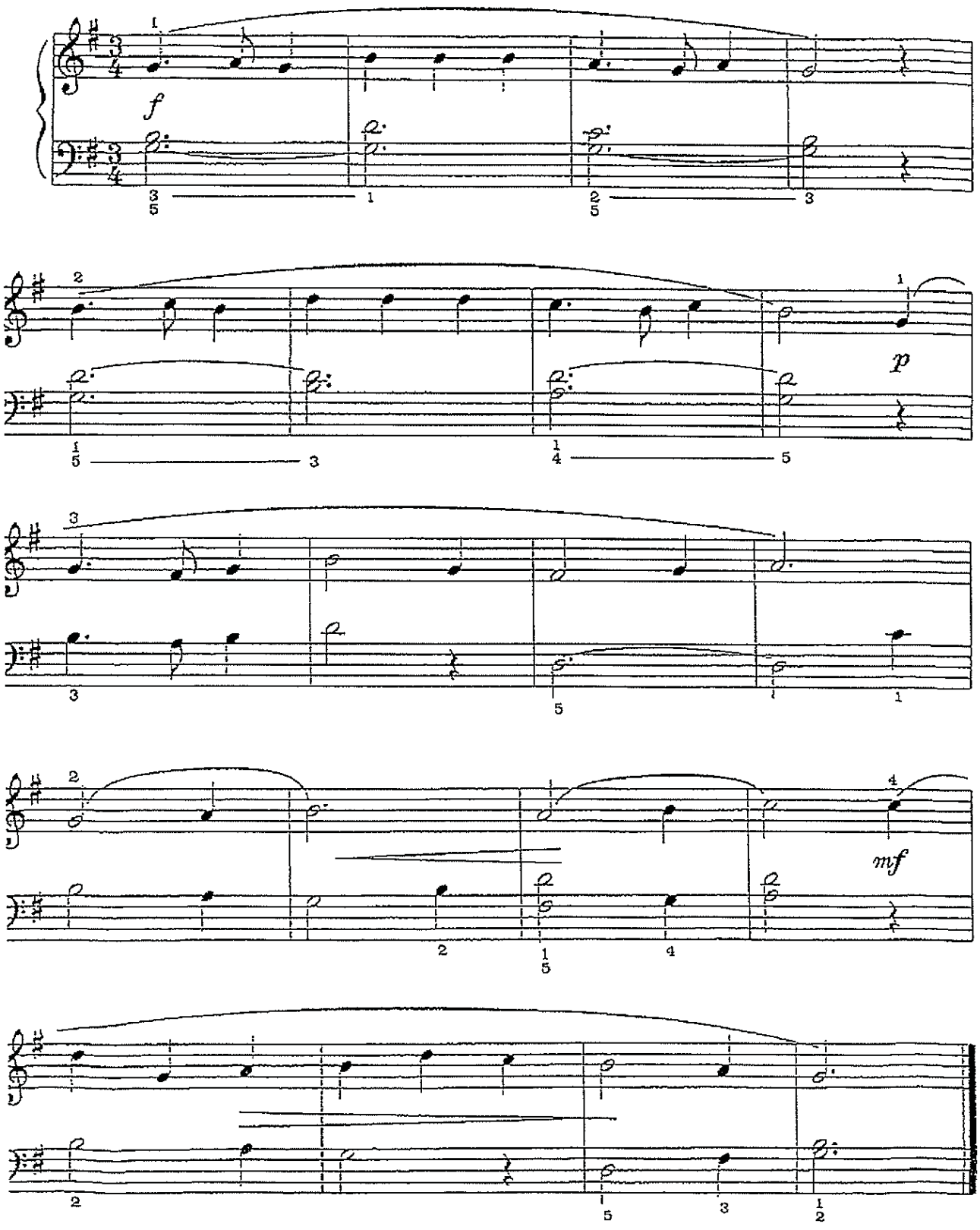


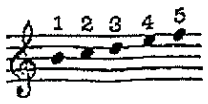
Moderato



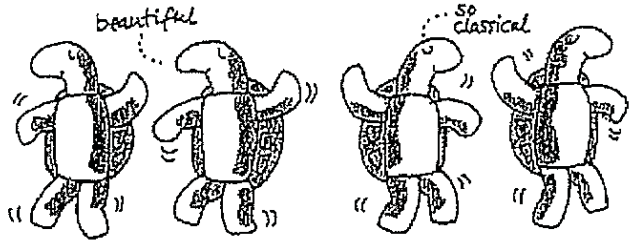
WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO, MY PRETTY MAID?

Nursery Rhyme



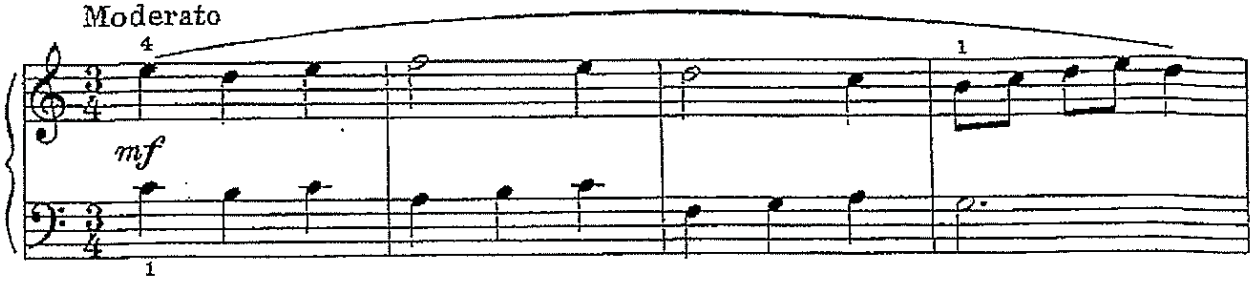


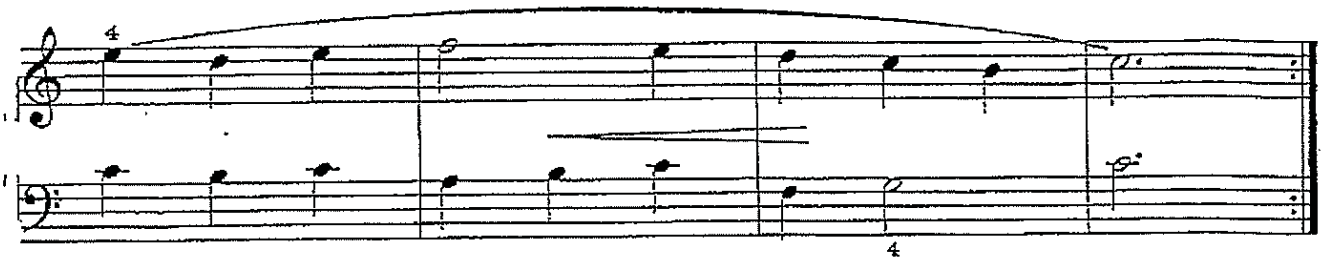
MINUET

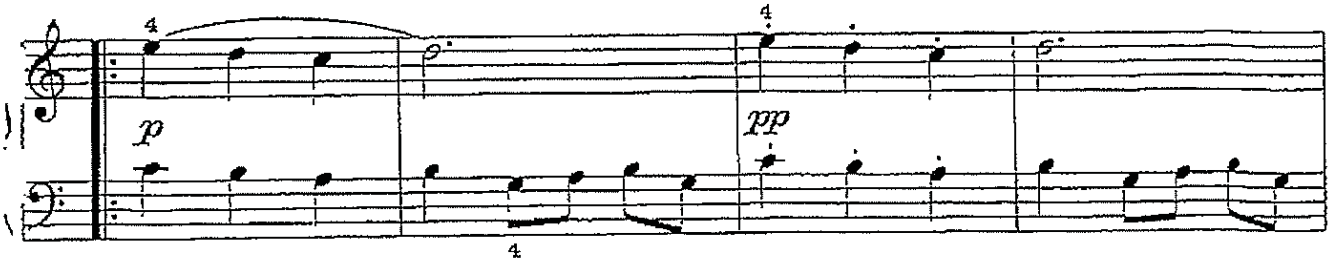


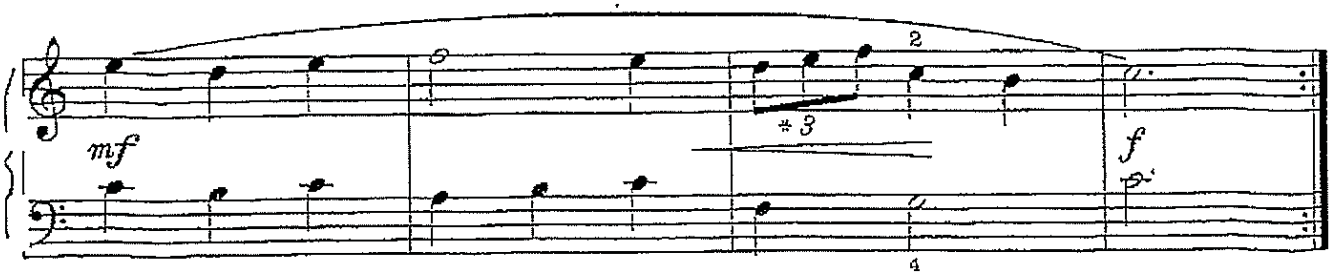
From J.Hook

Moderato









Scarborough fair

This tune is from an old English folk song.

English

Andante

mp

mf

f

mp

Little Waltz

Allegretto

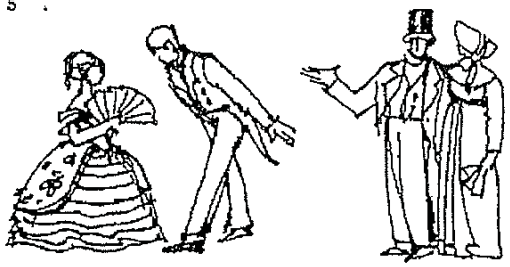
mf cantabile

sempre staccato

R.H. over L.H.

Meeting some Italian terms

cantabile = with singing tone
sempre = always
subito = suddenly
Largo = slow and broad

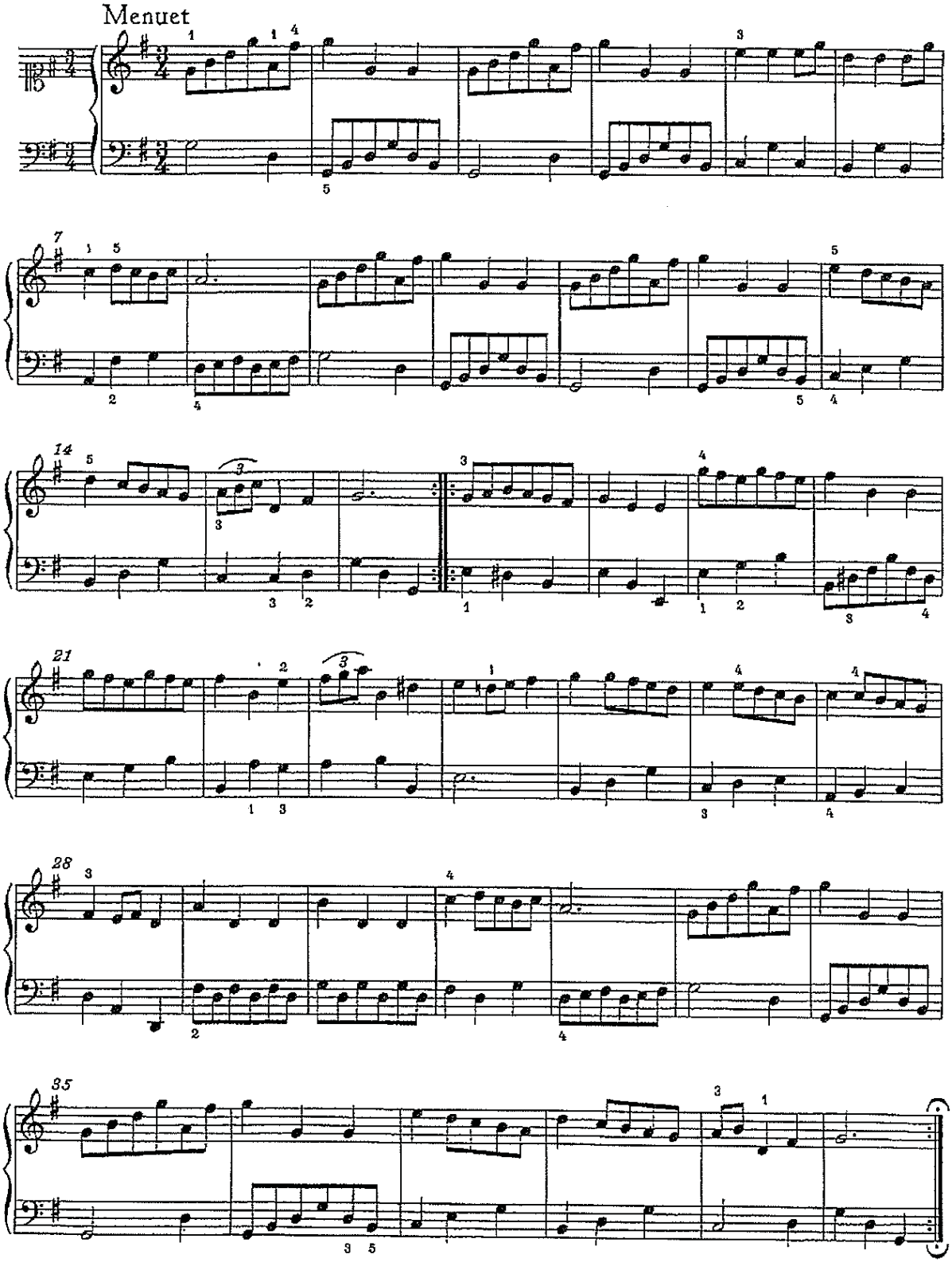


8 This sign means that the written note is to be played an octave higher.

8 This sign means that the written note is to be played an octave lower.

BACH

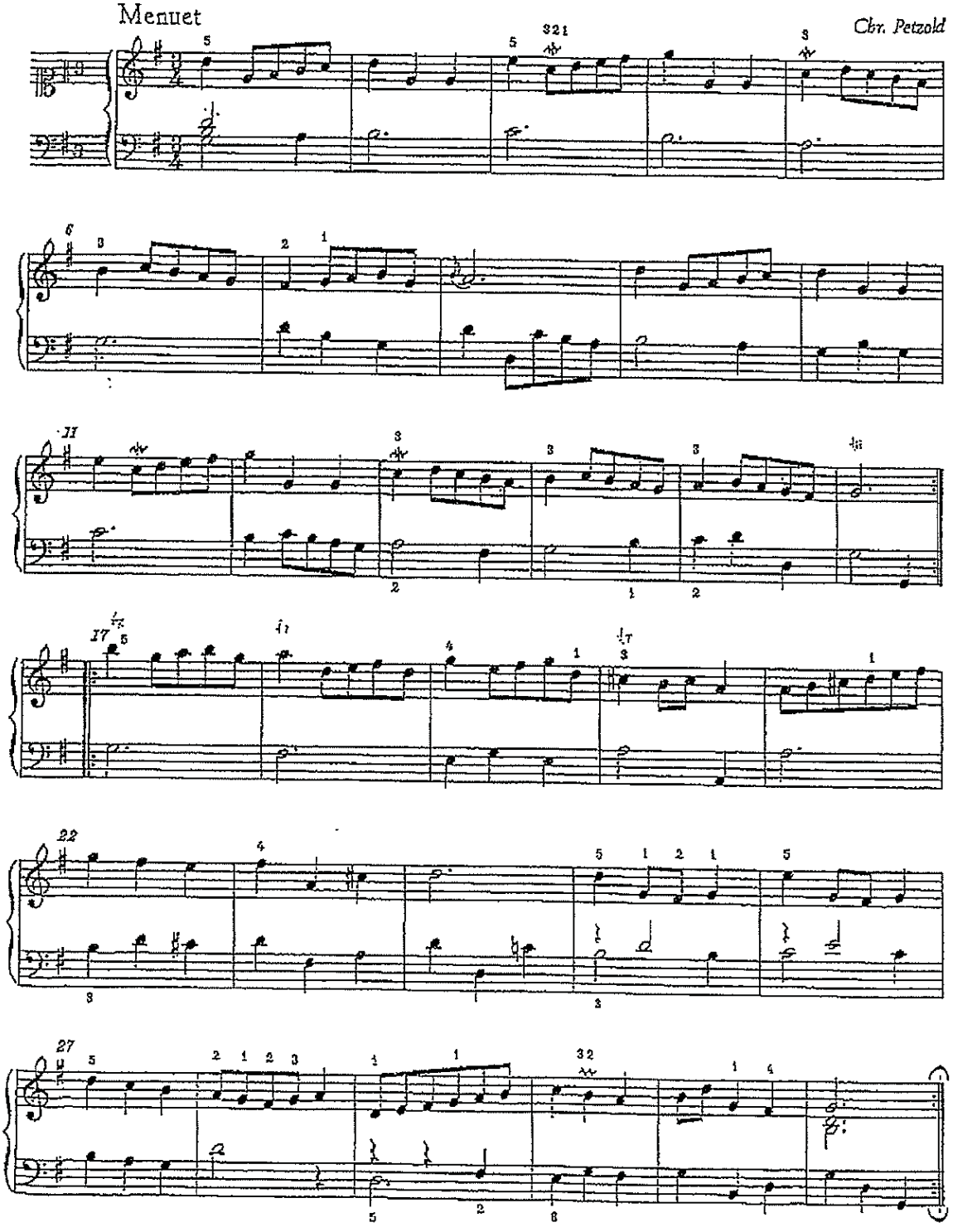
BWV Anh. 116

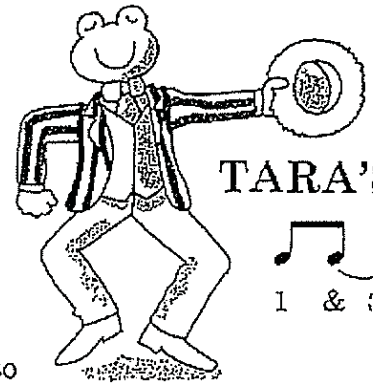


BWV Anh. 114

Menuet

Chr. Petzold





TARA'S RAG

1 & (2) &

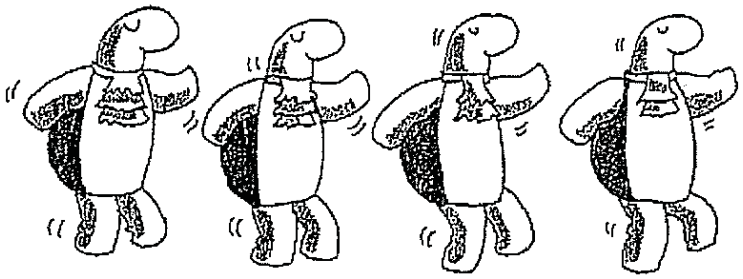
Moderato

f *mp*

mf

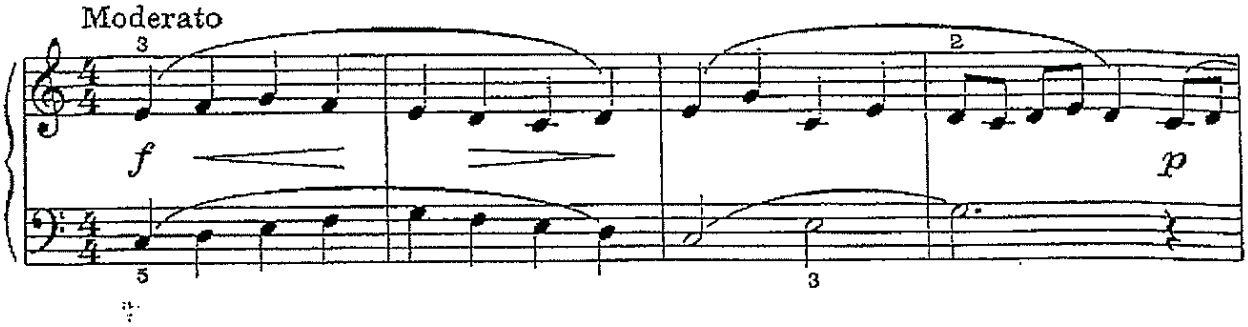
mf

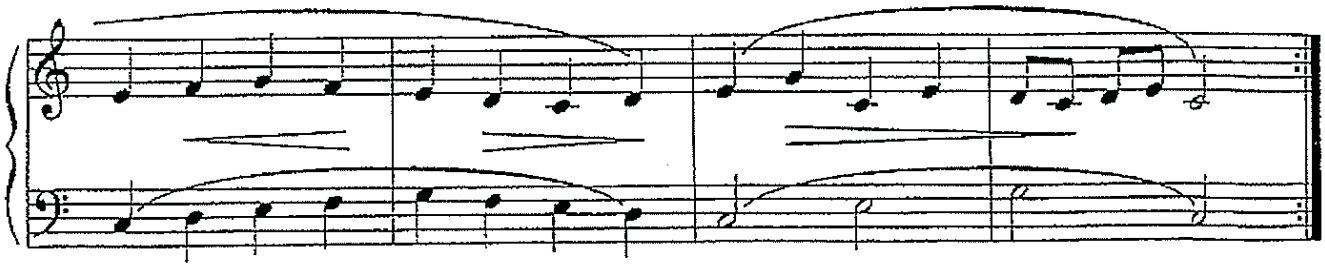
GAVOTTE

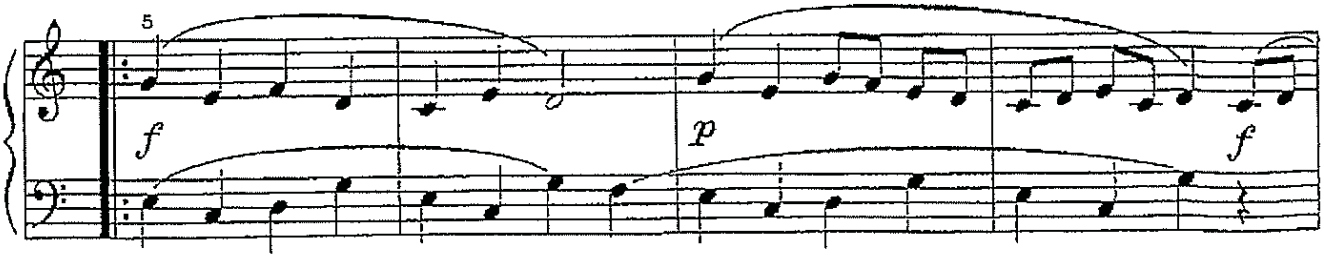


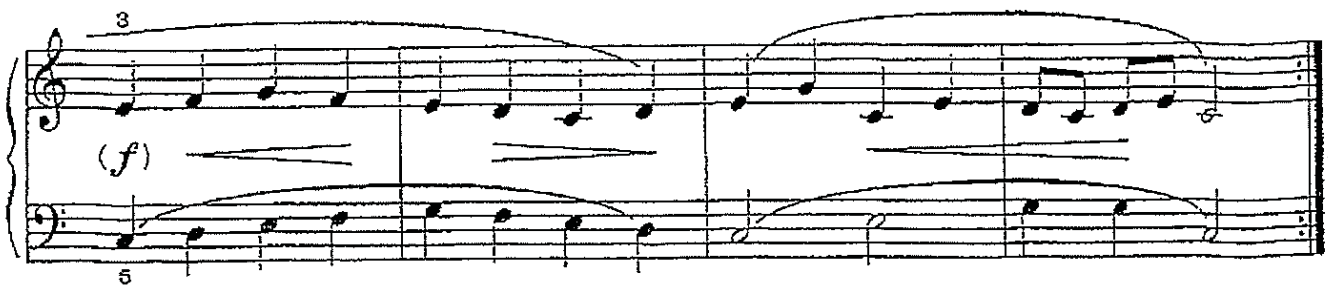
From J.Hook

Moderato

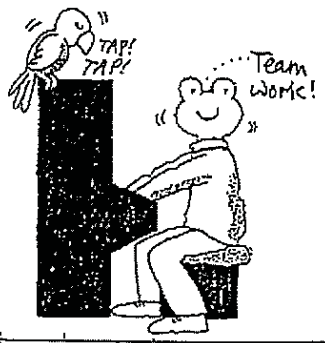








BLACK AND BLUES



p

(*p*)

f

p

f

Morning Has Broken

The opening of this famous melody should present no problems to those who have practised their one-octave arpeggios! The R.H. finger substitution at the beginning of the second bar allows the legato to be continued without any break in the phrase.

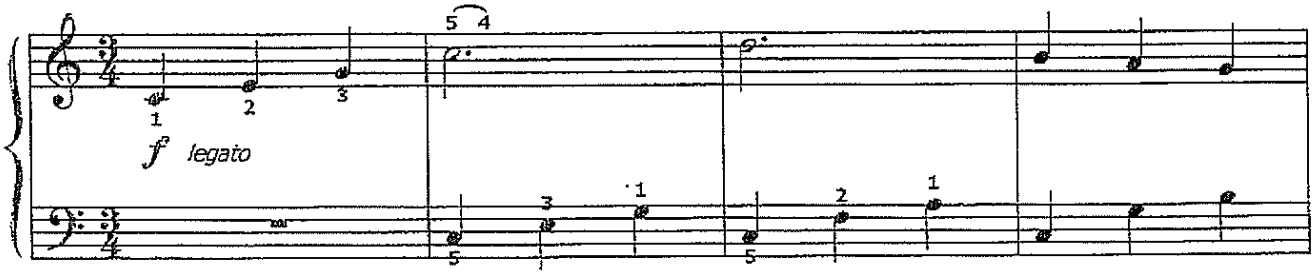
In the first instance the melody is accompanied by a L.H. broken chord figure. This should lilt along gently; take care with the L.H. dotted rhythm in bar 5 – the first note must be held for its full value.

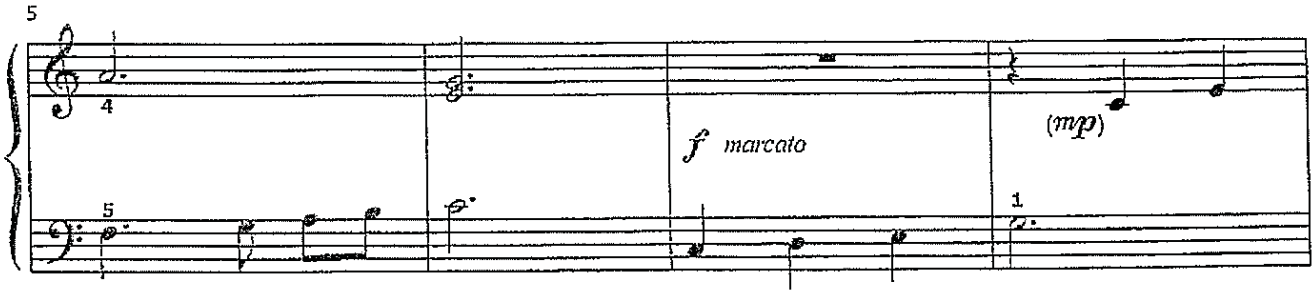
In the second phrase the melody moves into the L.H. and the little two-note accompaniment figure which is heard in the R.H. should be made to sound as though it is in the background.

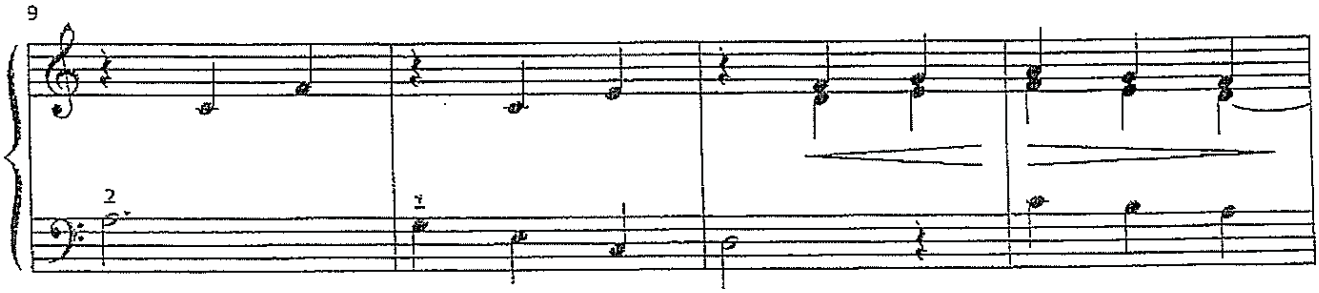
The piece combines and juxtaposes single note lines with more chordal passages; take care with the sustained tied notes which help to bind the harmonies.

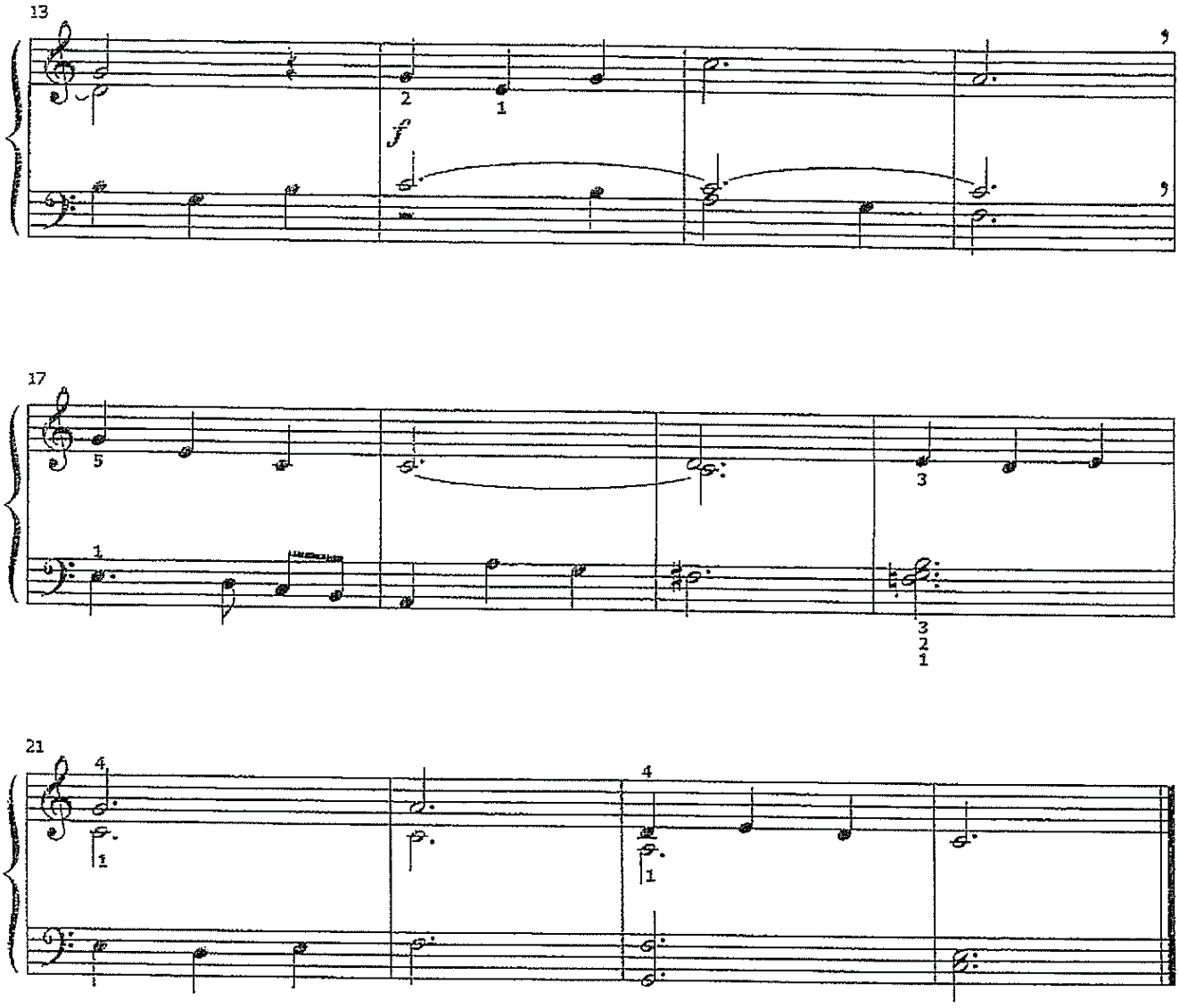
At the end of bar 16, both hands should move swiftly into position for the following phrase.

Flowing ♩ = 138



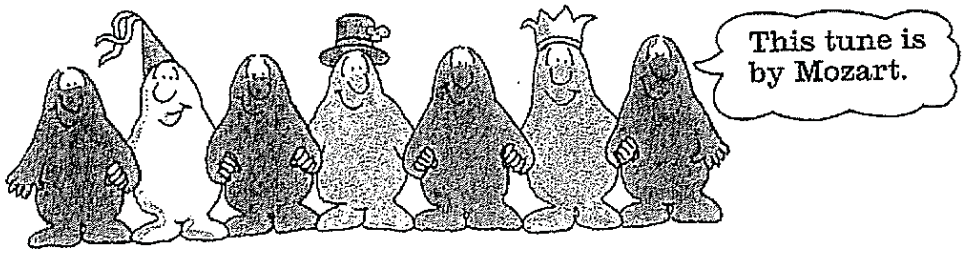





13
9
f
17
21

Rondo

In a rondo, the first tune you hear comes back several times during the piece, with new tunes in between.

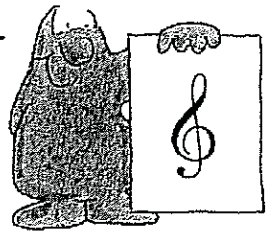


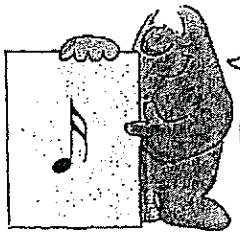
Allegro

mp

mf

The left hand plays in the treble clef at the beginning of this tune.





The groups of semiquavers will become easier if you play them slowly at first.

mp

mf

mp

dim.

f

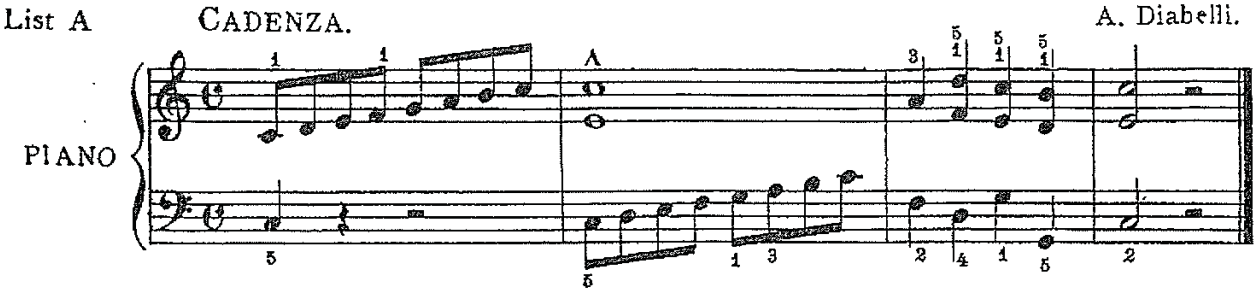
PRELIMINARY

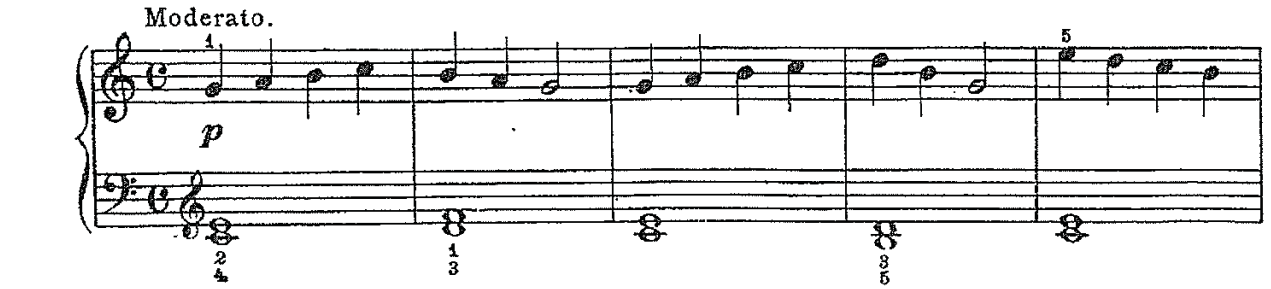
Studies

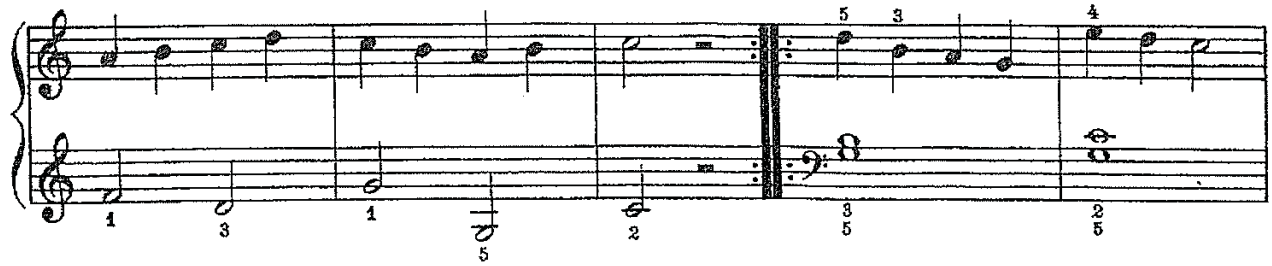
List A

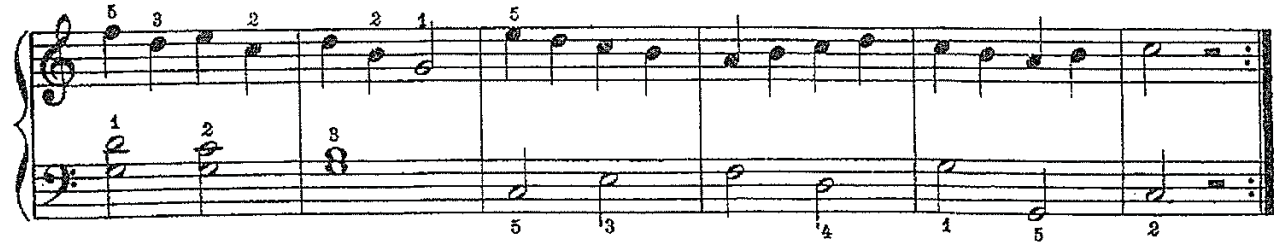
CADENZA.

A. Diabelli.







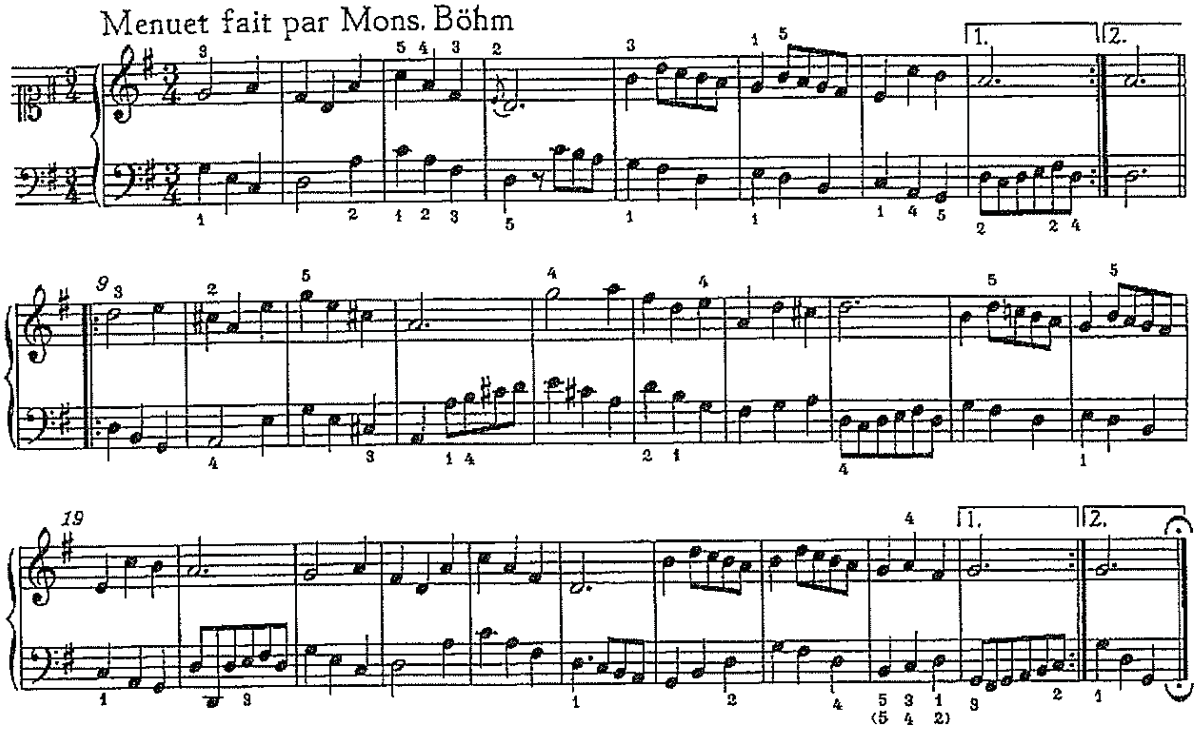


MUSICAL TERMS AND SIGNS USED IN BOOK TWO

ff = very loud *pp* = very soft *mf* = moderately loud *mp* = moderately soft	Adagio = slow Andante = fairly slow Moderato = moderately Allegro = fast Presto = very fast
8 play an octave higher 8 play an octave lower	*Rit. (Ritardando)* = slow down *Accel. (Accelerando)* = get faster *A Tempo* = back to the original speed.
♮ = Natural sign. This cancels a ♯ or ♭ sign. > = Accent. The notes are played with extra force. A dot above or below a note means *staccato* = short, crisp notes.	𝄐 = Pause. The notes are held on for a longer time than their value.
rest	A triplet is a group of three notes in the time of two. Look out for the figure 3. Example: a quaver triplet fills the time of a crotchet.

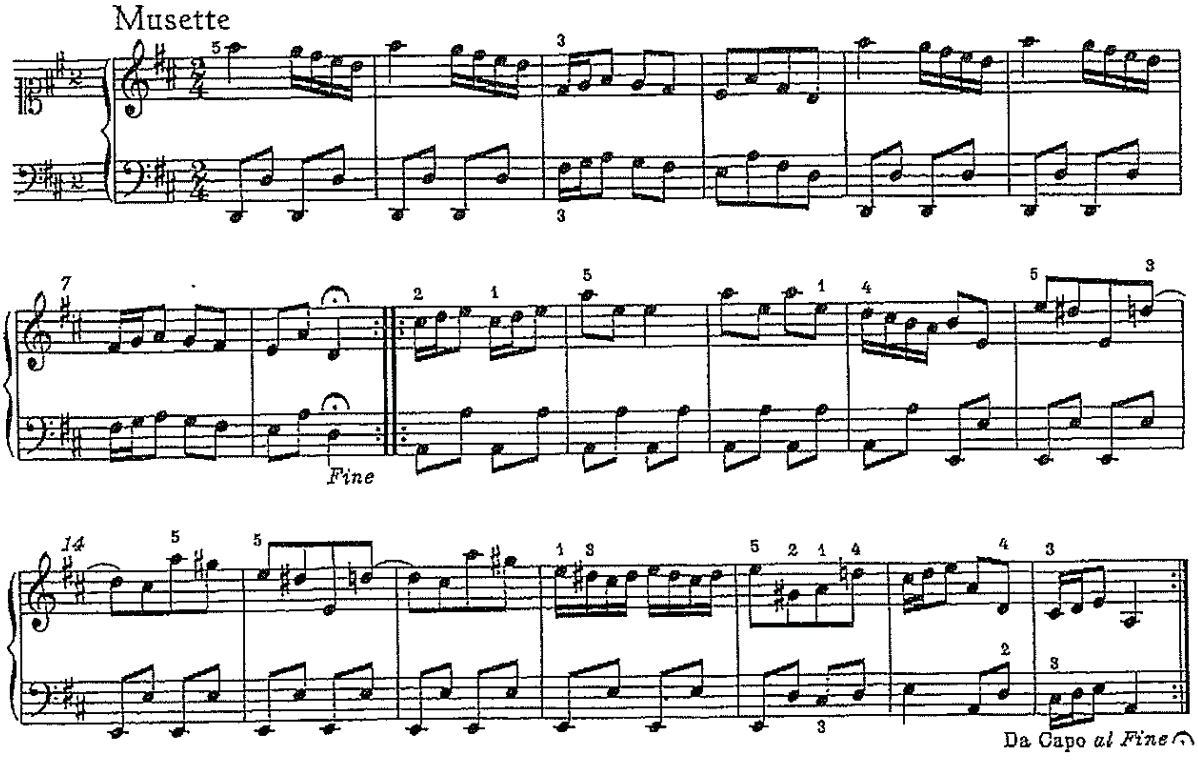
TO REMIND YOU
Don't forget to:
1. Practise regularly every day
2. Practise slowly at first
3. Start by practising hands separately

BACH



22.

BWV Aah. 126



VIVA VOCE

The examiner is looking for awareness and understanding of the musical text. Here are some examples of the sort of question which might be asked at this level of examination.

1. Questions relating to the stave

What is the name given to the five lines and four spaces which the music is written on? (stave or staff)

What is this sign called at the beginning of the stave? (e.g. treble clef or G clef)

What is this line called? (points to bar-line)

Why do we have bar-lines? (the bar-lines divide the music into bars, each bar has an equal number of beats)

Could you show me the double-bar?

What does this sign mean? (points to a repeat mark)

2. Note/rest length names and values

What is the length name of this note/rest? (semibreve, crotchet etc.)

The following diagram gives details of notes, rests and their values:

NAME (American equivalents in brackets)	NOTE	REST	VALUE in crotchets
semibreve (whole-note)			4
dotted minim (dotted half-note)			3
minim (half-note)			2
dotted crotchet (dotted quarter-note)			1½
crotchet (quarter-note)			1
dotted quaver (dotted eighth-note)			¾
quaver (eighth-note)			½
semiquaver (sixteenth-note)			¼