Foreword

The piano began to supersede the harpsichord around the same time the United States of America became an independent nation. Piano music has remained extremely popular in the U. S. A. ever since. During the 19th century, the piano became a fixture in most American homes, and American piano manufacturers such as Alpheus Babcock (1785–1842), Jonas Chickering (1798–1853) and Henry Steinway (1797–1871) made some of the best instruments in the world. During the 20th and 21st centuries, the piano has remained in wide use, even when radio, television and recordings have threatened its dominance. American music publishers have always focused on piano music more than any other area of music, publishing numerous works by both foreign and American composers. This volume focuses on a variety of styles and ethnic influences found in American piano music from the late 1700s forward.

American Piano Music to 1865. Important American keyboard composers during the late 18th and early 19th centuries include Alexander Reinagle (1756–1809), James Hewitt (1770–1827), Benjamin Carr (1768–1831) and Raynor Taylor (1747–1825). Although these composers were not born in America, all of them came to this country in their early years and spent their entire professional careers in the United States, and therefore can be regarded as American composers.

Between 1820 and the start of the American Civil War (1861), piano music for amateurs developed rapidly. Popular types of piano music during this period included sets of variations, dances, and abstract genres, with rondos being the most numerous. Starting in the 1840s, a Romantic influence could be felt, due to visiting European virtuosos. Anthony Philip Heinrich (1781–1861), Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869) and William Mason (1829–1908) were three of the best-known composers from this period.

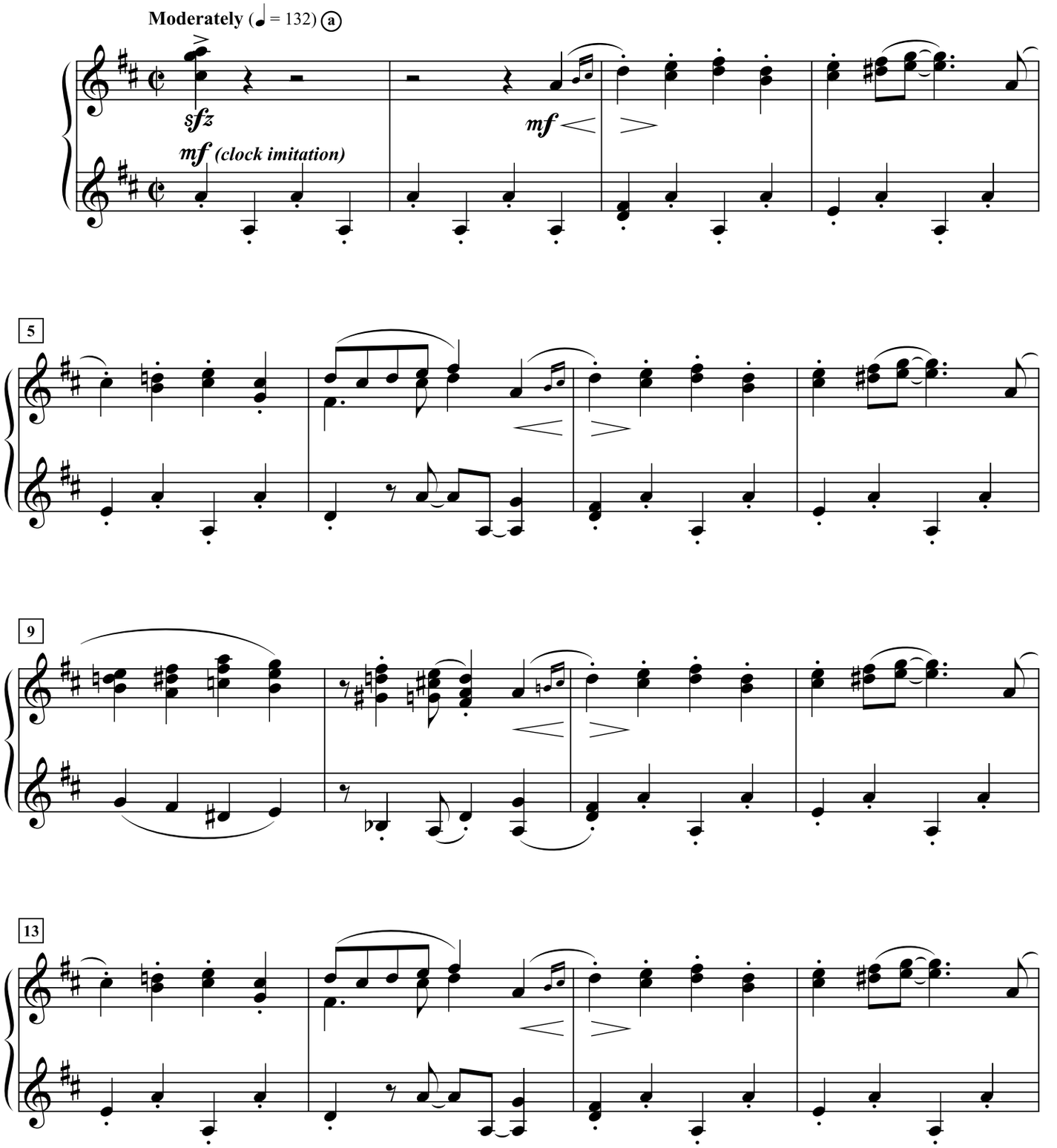
American Piano Music from 1865 to 1920. From the end of the Civil War (1865) to the early 20th century, American piano music was dominated by the traditions of central Europe. Most important American composers had studied in Europe, primarily in Germany. A group of composers centered in Boston ("The Boston Group") included John Knowles Paine (1839–1906), George W. Chadwick (1854–1931), Amy Beach (1867–1944), Daniel Gregory Mason (1873–1953), Edward MacDowell (1861–1908) and Ethelbert Nevin (1862–1901). These composers wrote suites, sonatas, fugues and sets of small pieces. Other composers during this time included Charles Griffes (1884–1920), who was greatly influenced by the French Impressionists and Asian music, and Charles Ives (1874–1954) who worked in isolation and refused to follow any rules he did not invent himself. Ives often fused elements from the Romantic vocabulary with elements of American folk music.

American Piano Music since 1920. American piano music has seen a great deal of stylistic diversity since 1920. Many composers followed a more serious, craftsman-like compositional style based on principles established by The Boston Group. Composers writing in this period include Aaron Copland (1900–1990), Roger Sessions (1896–1985), Ross Lee Finney (1906–1997), Samuel Barber (1910–1981) and Elliott Carter (b. 1908). Notable composers of 12-tone piano music include Milton Babbitt (b. 1916), George Rochberg (b. 1918) and Charles Wuorienen (b. 1938).

Piano Music of Popular Inspiration. Ragtime and early jazz, created by African-Americans such as Scott Joplin (1868–1917) and Louis Armstrong (1900–1971), spread to mainstream culture and transformed American social dancing and popular music. Legendary American composer George Gershwin (1898–1937) combined elements of jazz with those of the mainstream concert tradition. "Novelty" music of the 1920s was inspired by ragtime, popular dance music, and Impressionistic elements (including the whole-tone scale and parallel fourths). Zez Confrey (1895–1971) composed *Kitten*

The Syncopated Clock

Leroy Anderson (1908–1975)



a Composer's metronome indication.

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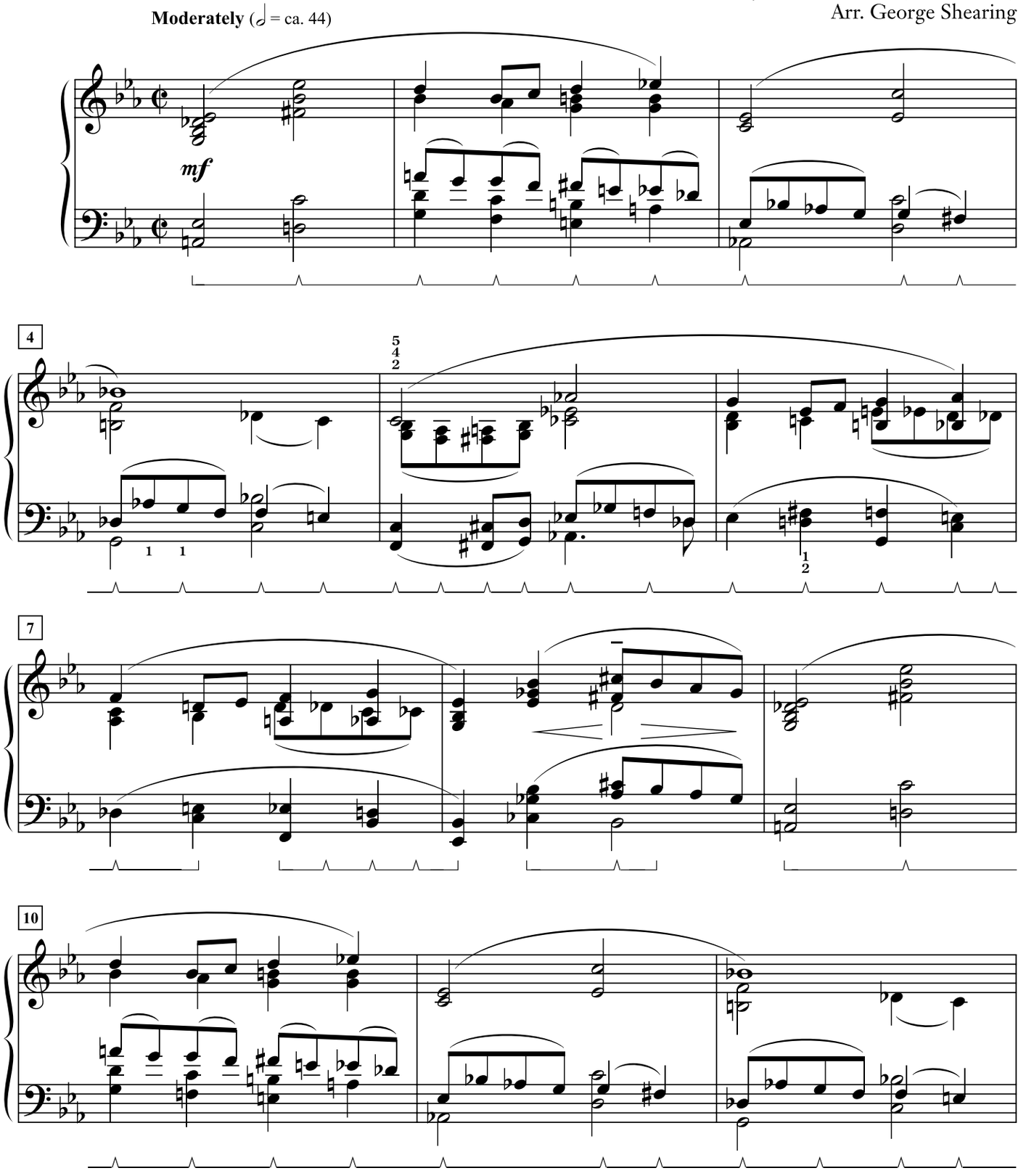
Over the Rainbow

Lyrics by E.Y. Harburg (1898–1981)
Music by Harold Arlen (1905–1986)
Arr. George Shearing



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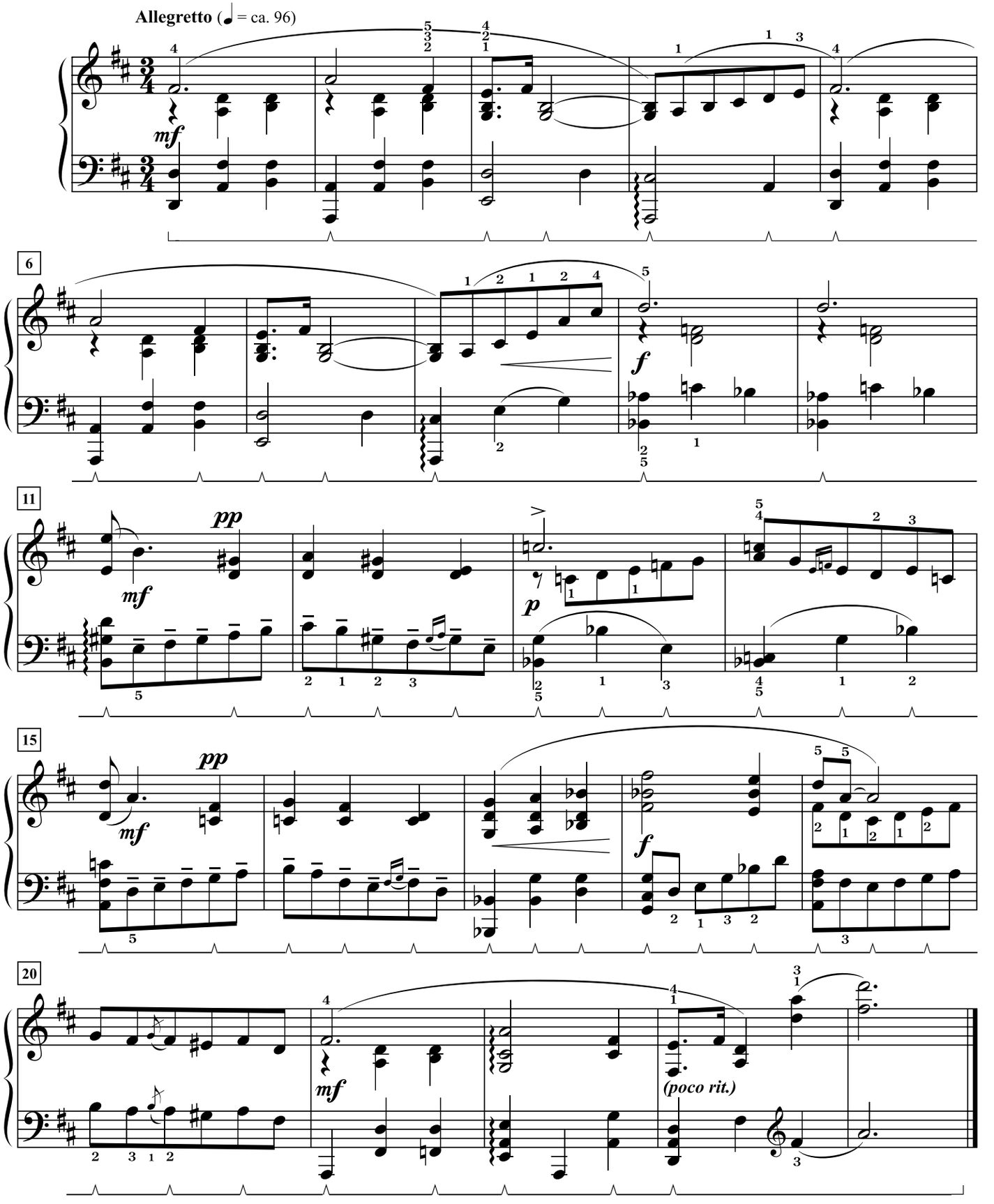
Love Song

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)



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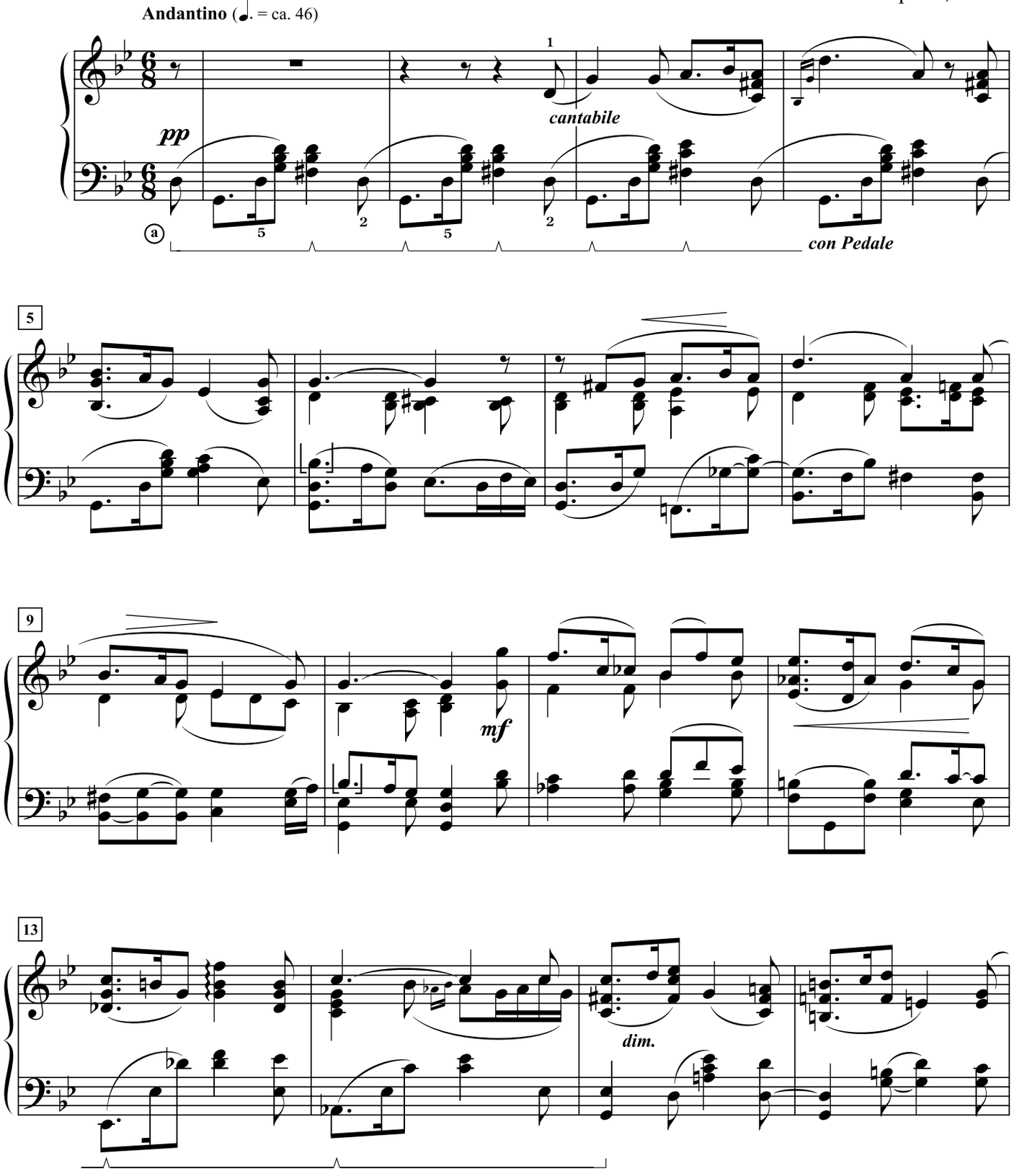
Barcarolle

Amy Beach (1867–1944)
Op. 28, No. 1



ⓐ Pedal indications are by the composer.

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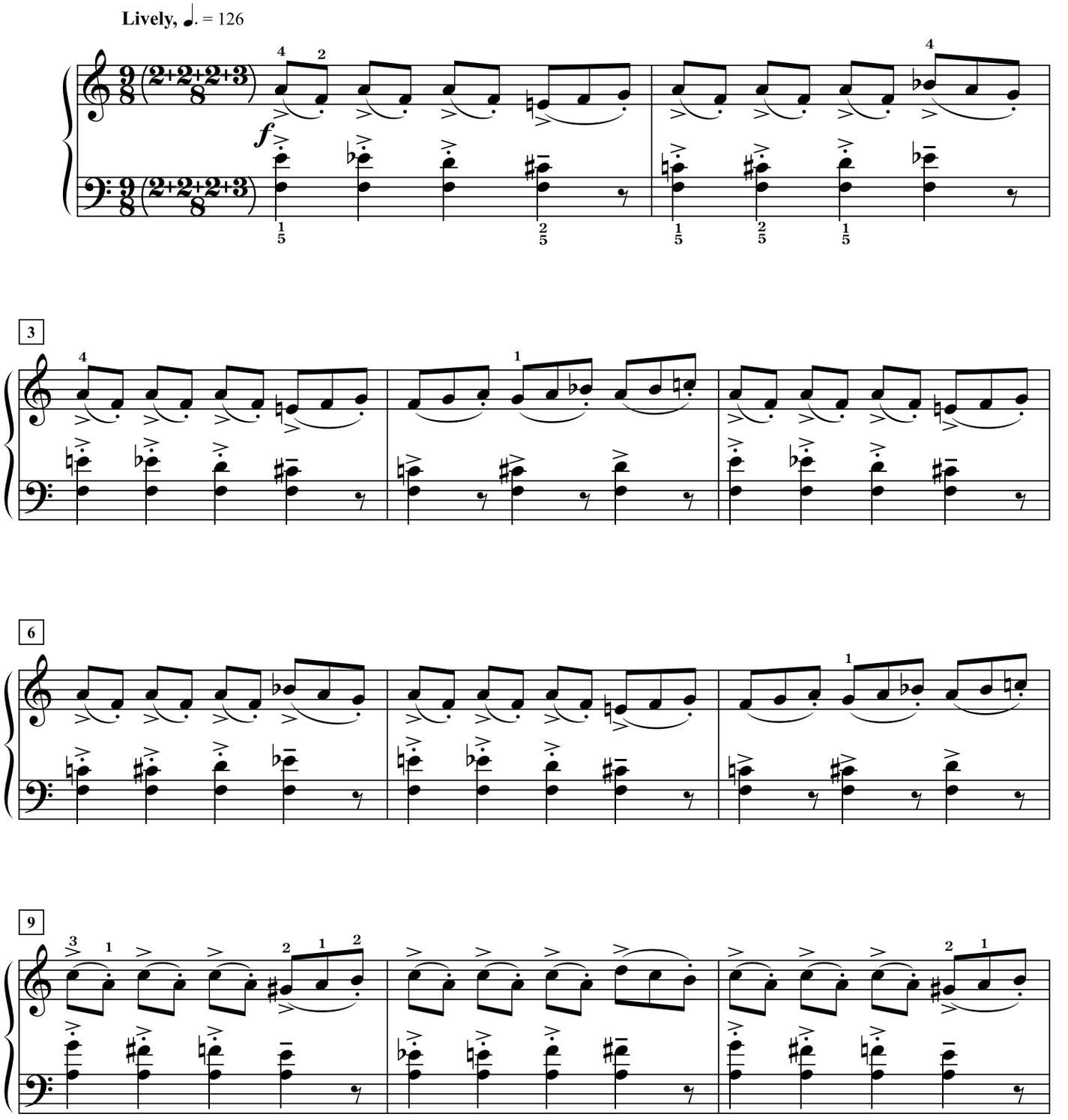
Blue Rondo a la Turk

Dave Brubeck (b. 1920)



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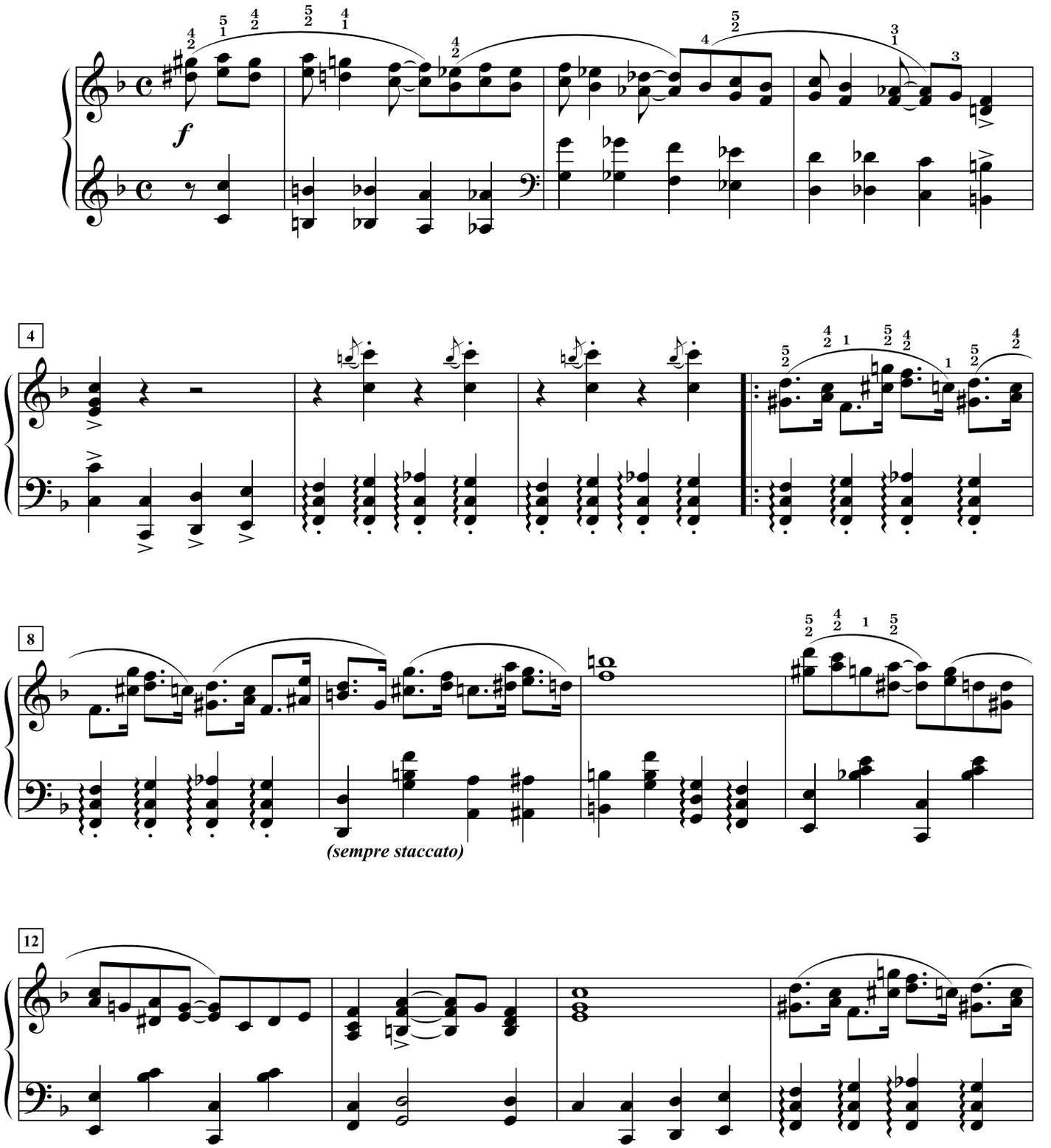
Kitten on the Keys

Zez Confrey (1895–1971)

Allegro moderato (♩ = ca. 152)



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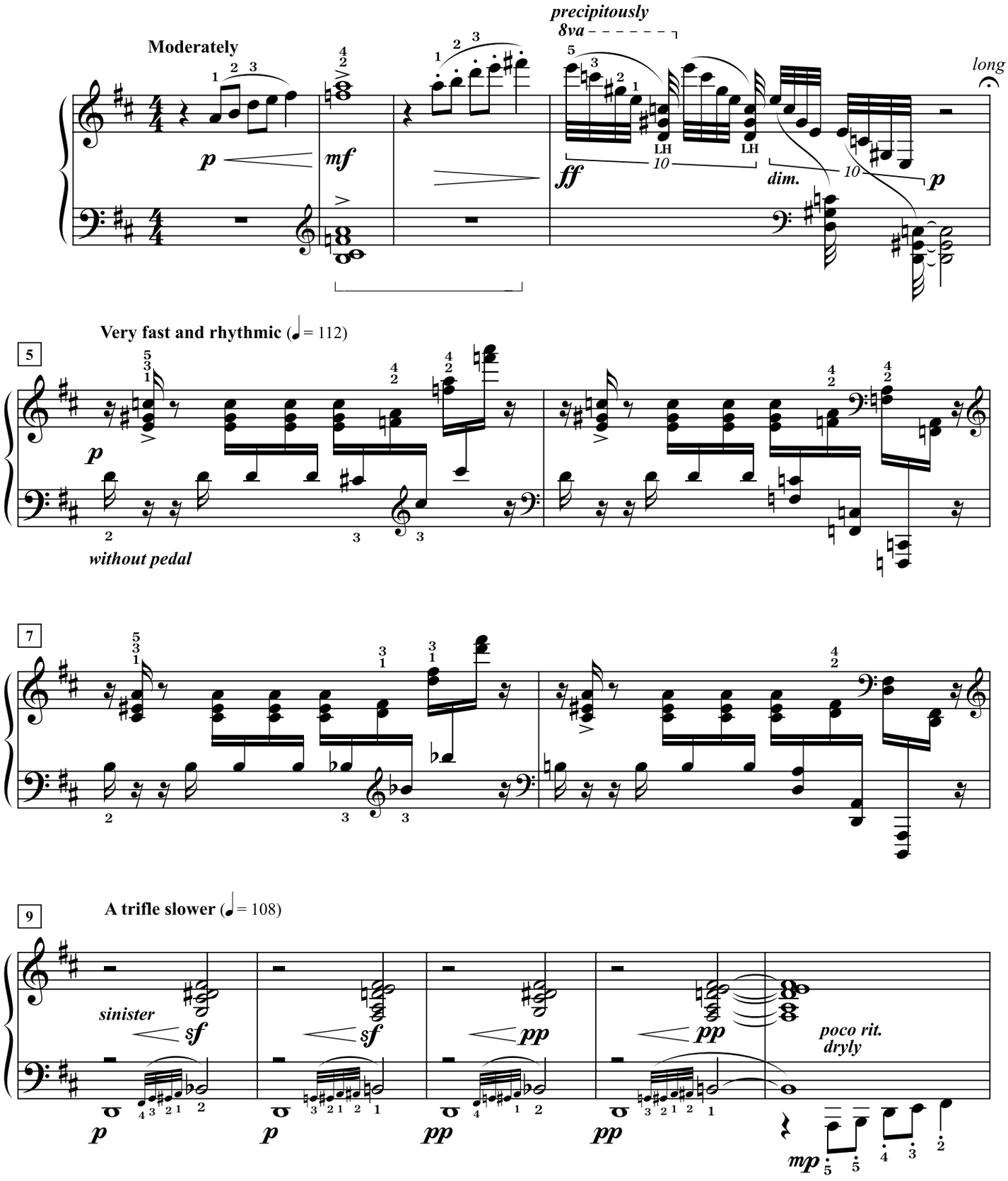
The Cat and the Mouse

"Scherzo Humoristique"

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)



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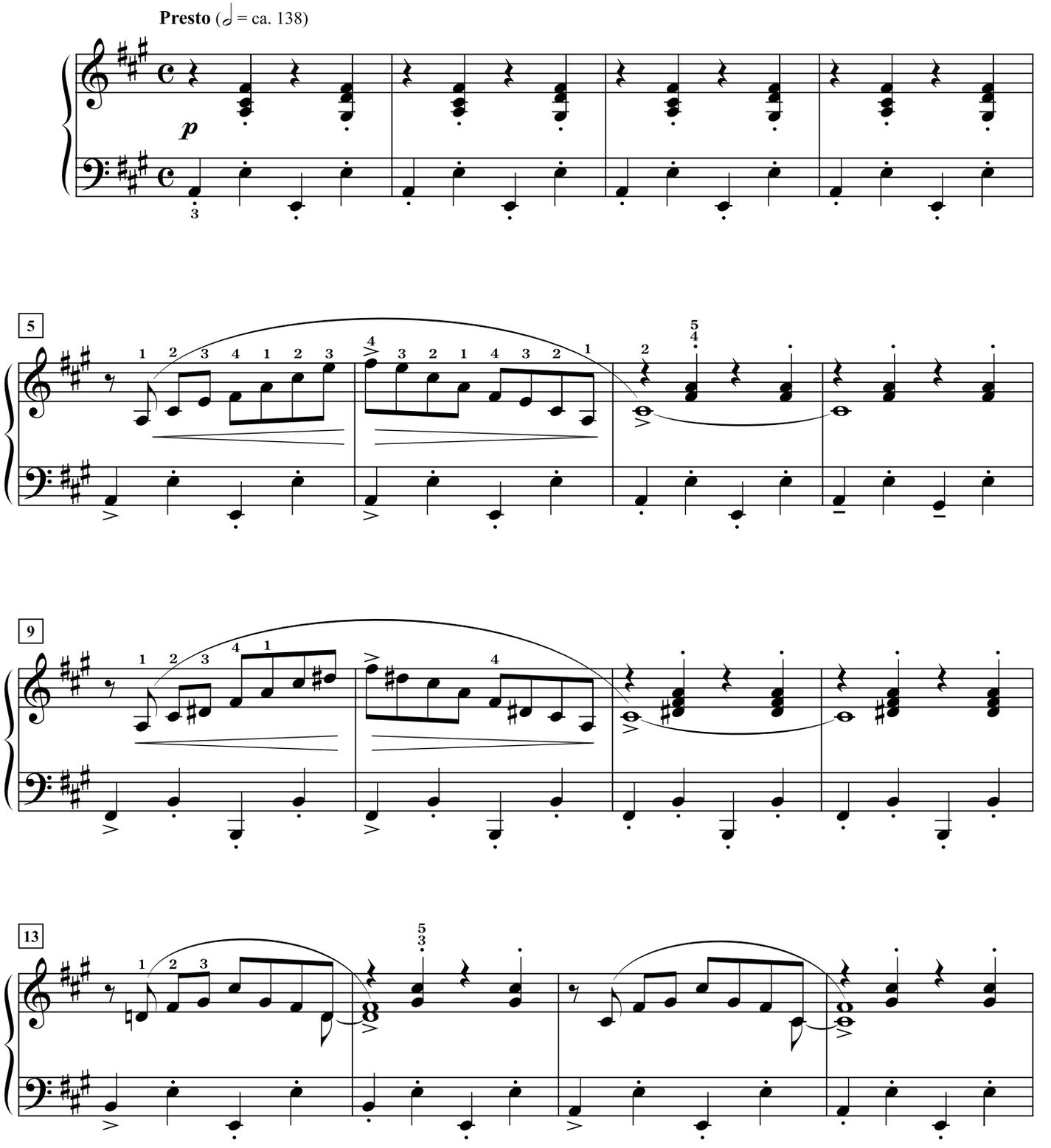
Dizzy Fingers

Zez Confrey (1895–1971)



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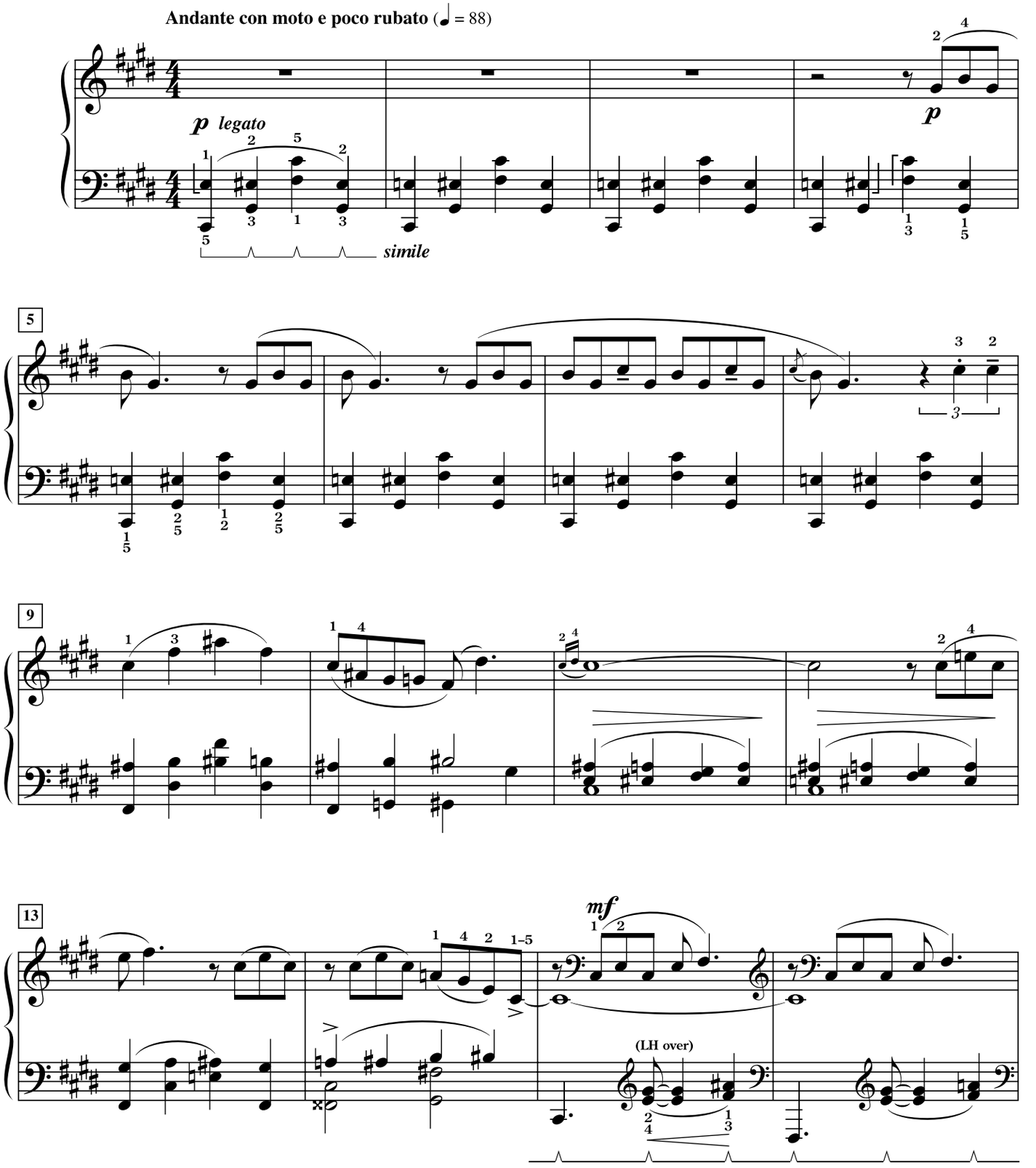
Prelude II

(Blue Lullaby)

George Gershwin (1898–1937)



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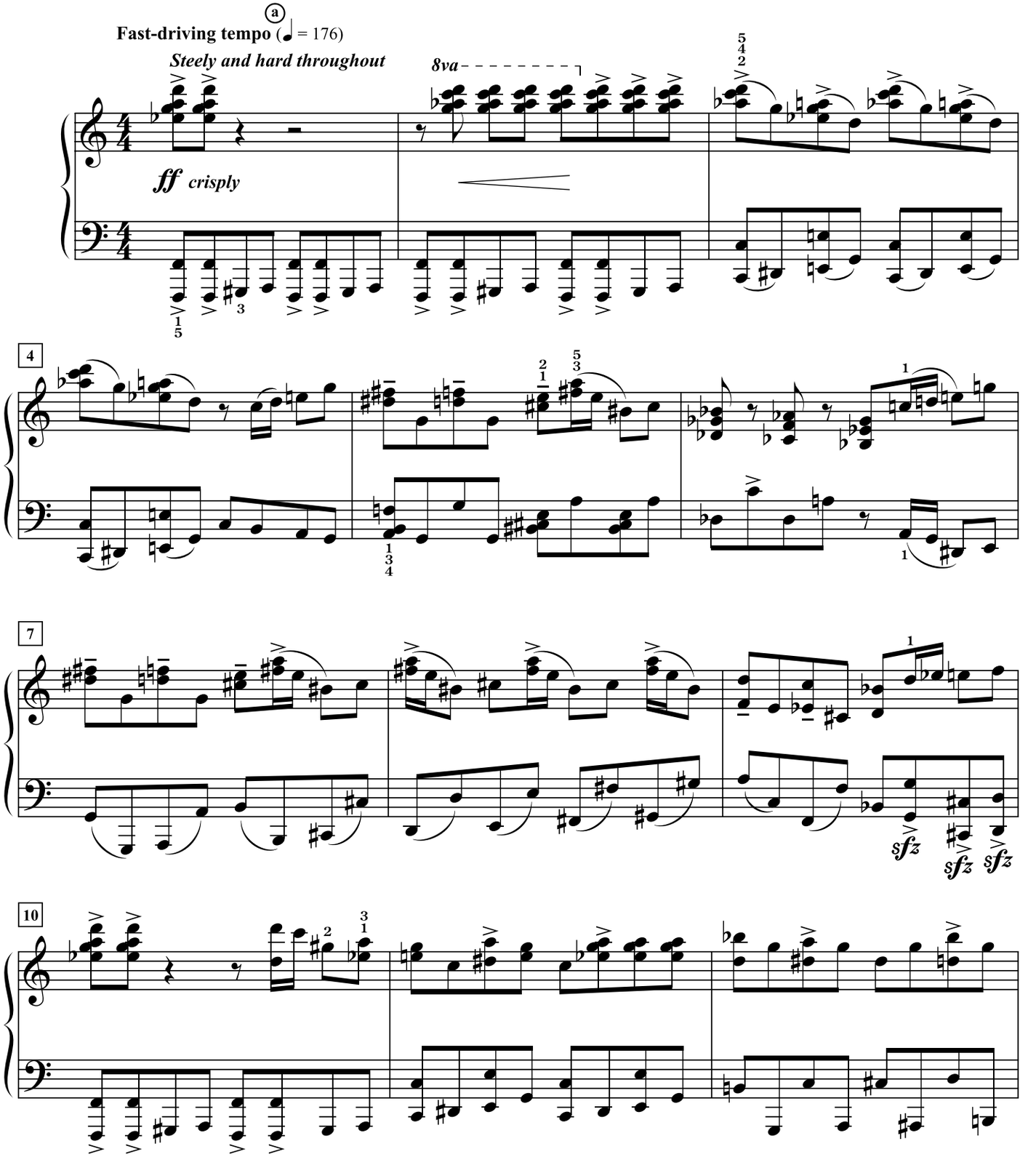
Boogie Woogie Etude

Morton Gould (1913–1996)



ⓐ Composer's metronome marking.

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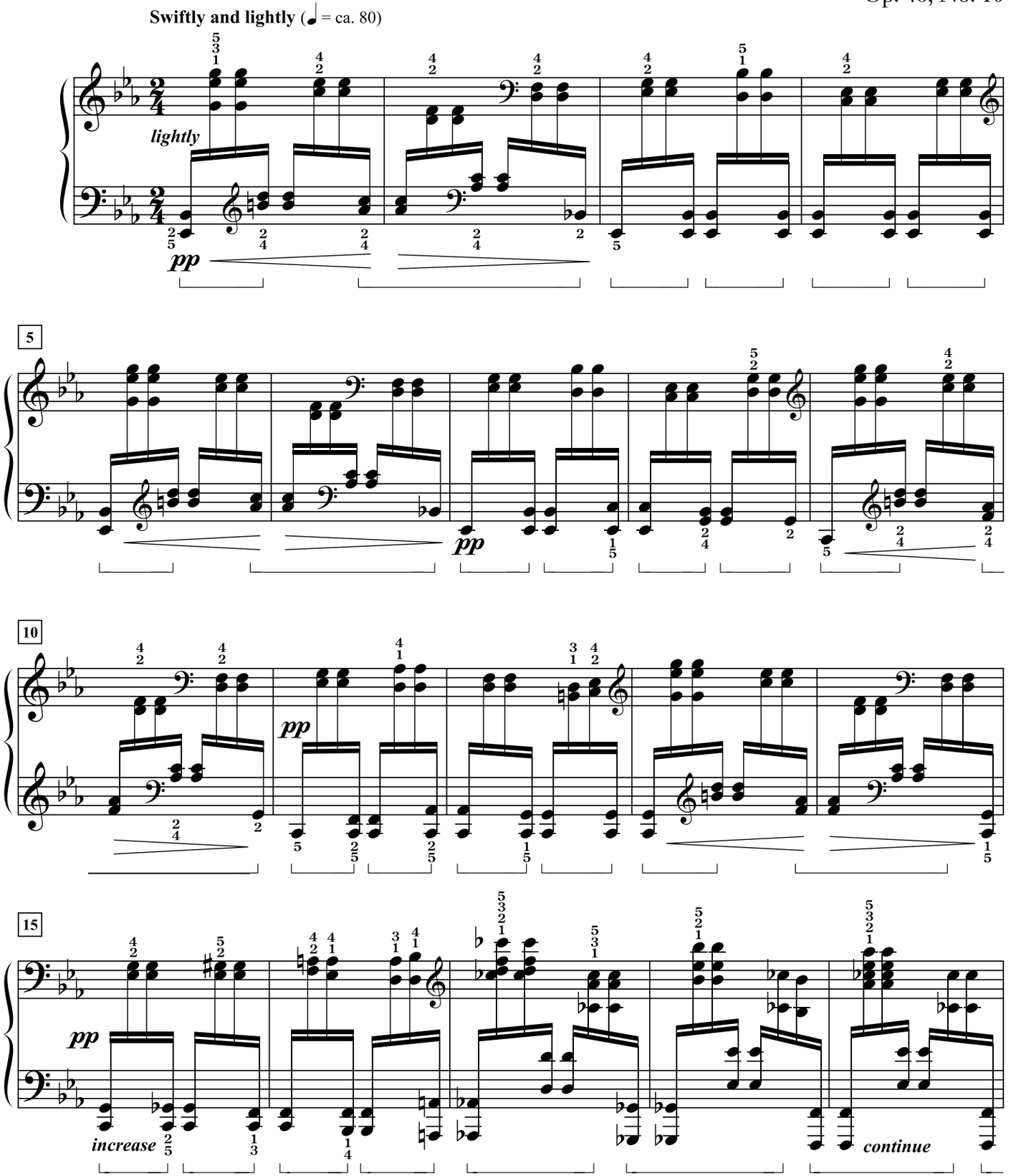
March Wind

Edward MacDowell (1860–1908)
Op. 46, No. 10



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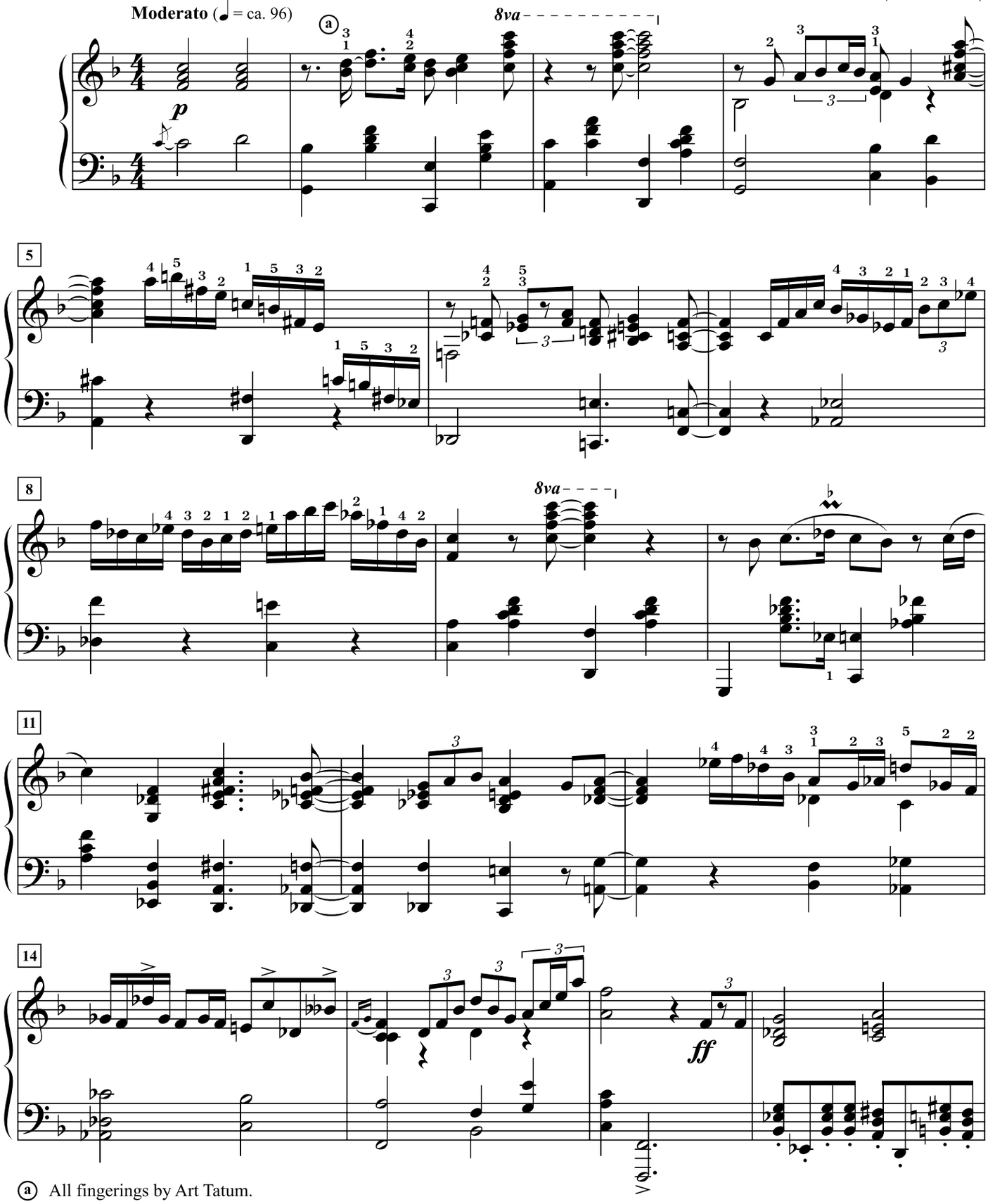
Blue Moon

Richard Rodgers (1902–1979)
Lyrics by Lorenz Hart
Arr. Art Tatum (1909–1956)



a All fingerings by Art Tatum.

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