Contemporary Piano Literature

F. Clark Library for Piano Students

Contemporary Piano Literature

BOOK 1

REVISED EDITION

Frances Clark® Library for Piano Students

Selected and Correlated by Frances Clark
Edited by Louise Goss
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PREFACE

The *Contemporary Piano Literature* series (Books 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) is devoted to choice smaller keyboard works written by some of the composers who have achieved prominence in our time.

The six books of this series were designed as companion volumes to the six books of *Piano Literature of the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries.* Together, the two sets form a representative collection of easier keyboard literature from the time of Bach to the present day.

Many of the pieces in the *Contemporary Piano Literature* books were written on commission for the *Frances Clark Library for Piano Students.* Others were taken from the repertoire of available contemporary works.

Frances Clark

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ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN

1899 -

Alexander Tcherepnin tells us that when he was a small boy in Russia he very much wanted a cello. His parents gave him a handsome one, and he practiced on it for a while—but then he wanted a bicycle, so he sold the cello and bought a bike.

He was an only child in a musical household. His father, Nicolai Tcherepnin, was one of the most important conductors and composers in all Russia. Alexander showed musical talent at an early age. When one of his family or friends had a birthday or anniversary, instead of buying a present he would write a little song on some of his father's music paper and present that as his gift. At school he would slip manuscript paper between the pages of his books and compose pieces in stolen moments.

When his father saw Alexander's ability he decided that lessons at home were not enough and sent him to study at the conservatory in St. Petersburg. His father had studied there before him, as had many other great musicians. He worked hard, and when he was in his teens he was considered one of the most promising young pianists and composers in the country.

In Paris, where he went to complete his musical education, he supported himself for three years by selling some of the little pieces he had composed as a young boy.

After Paris, he journeyed around the world, giving concerts in many far-off places, and finally in the United States. He liked it here so well that after many visits he decided to make this his home.

Because he is such a fine pianist himself, Tcherepnin is able to write very fine piano music. Some of his pieces are written especially for young piano students. In 1954, he wrote *March, Joy and Tears,* and *Relays* for the FRANCES CLARK LIBRARY FOR PIANO STUDENTS.

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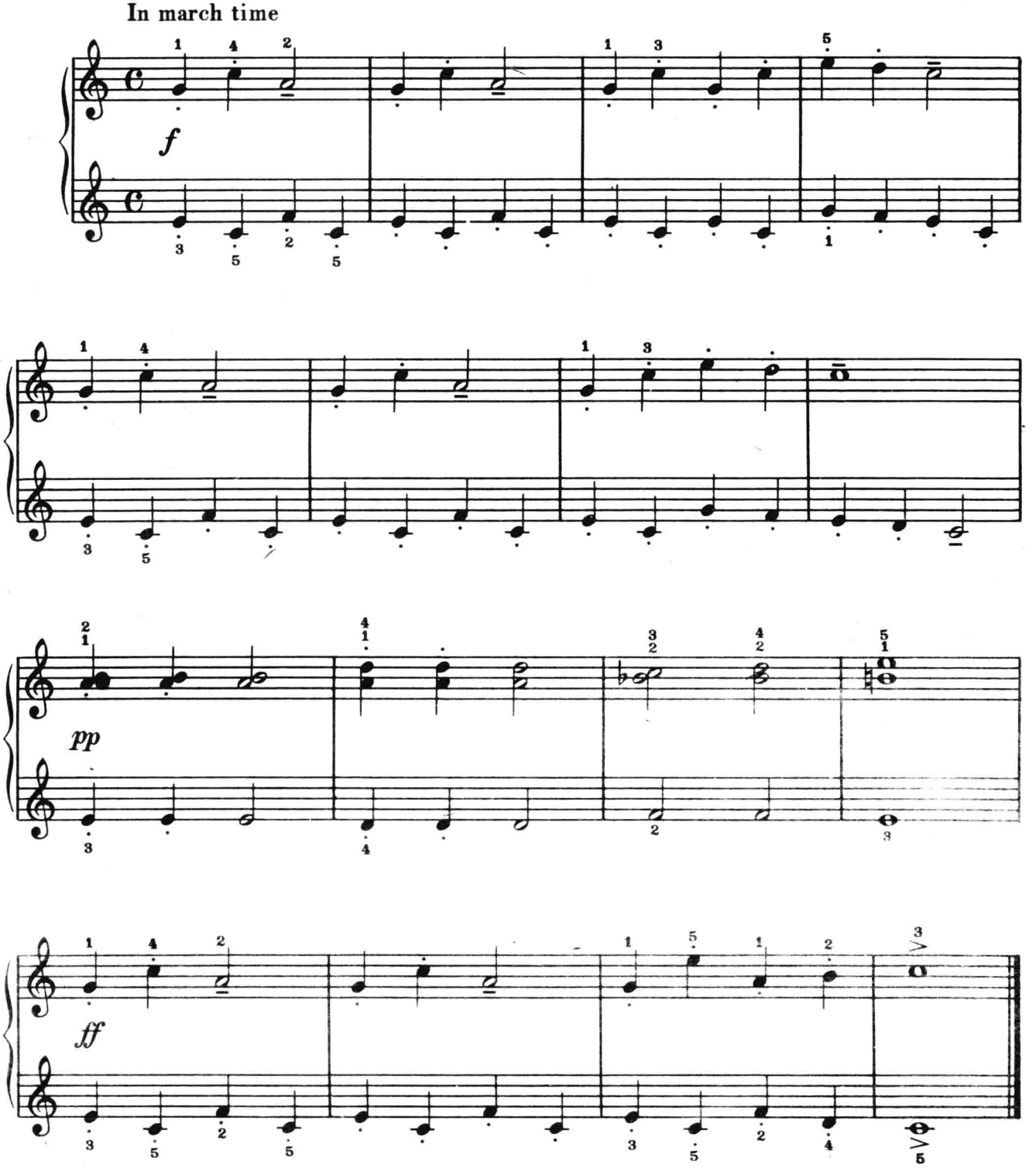
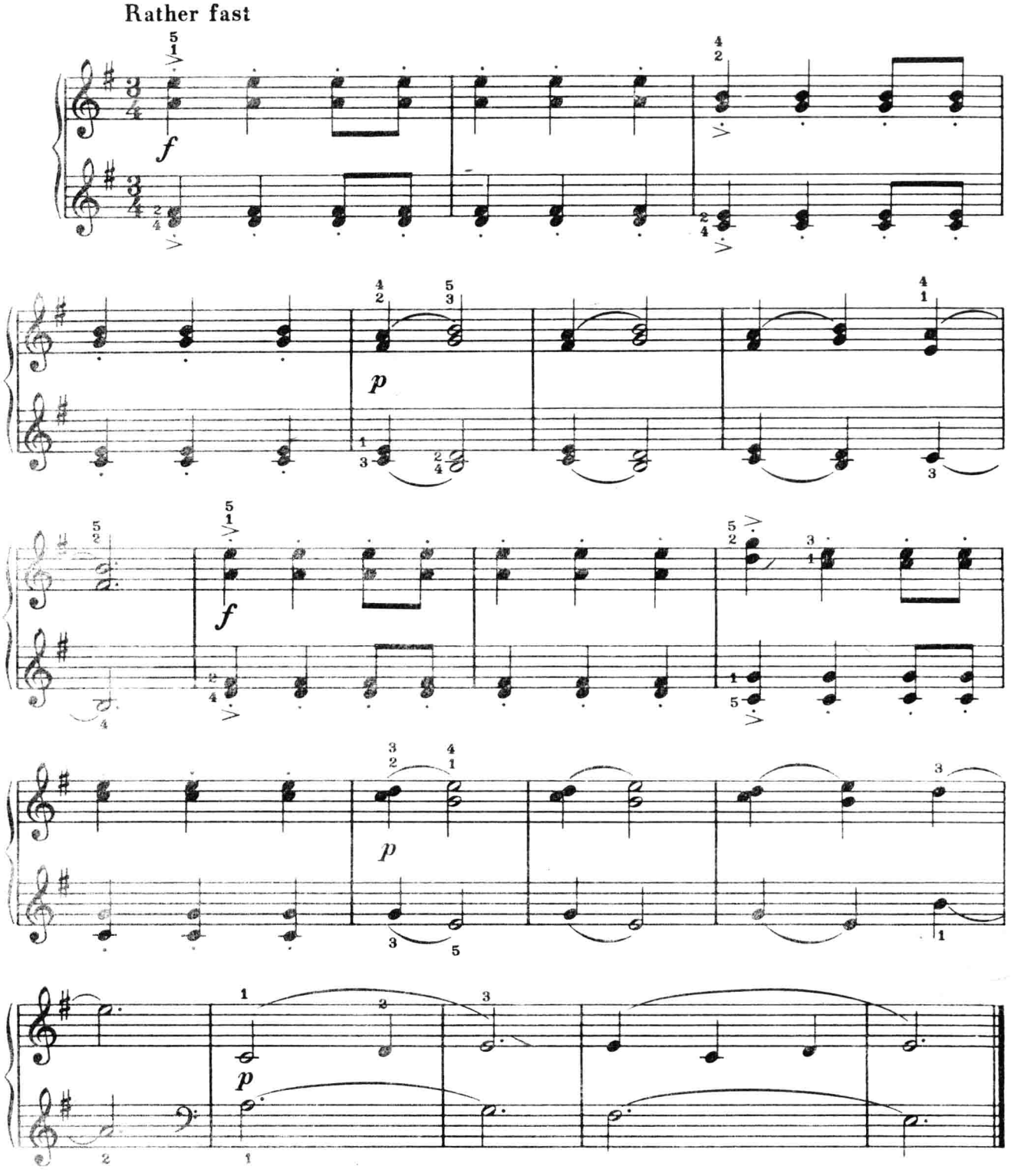
March

ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN



Joy and Tears

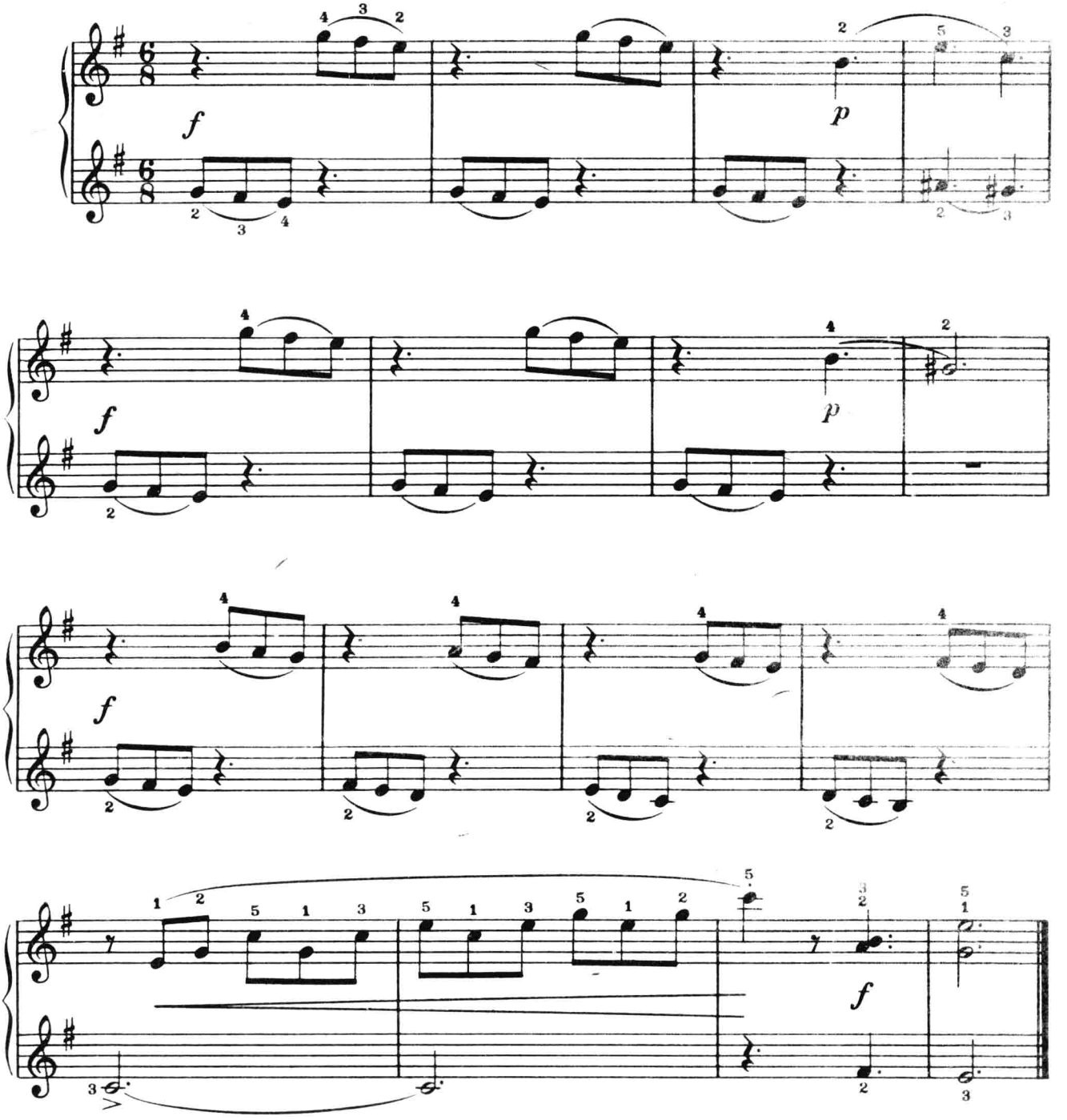
ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN



Relays

ALEXANDER TCHEREPNIN

With animation



BÉLA BARTÓK

1881 - 1945

Béla Bartók was a frail, serious little Hungarian boy, who came of a musical family. His father composed dance tunes and played the cello, and his mother was a fine pianist. It was natural that Béla should inherit a love of music.

His mother recalled that when he was a year and a half old he listened intently to a piece she was playing, and the next day pulled her to the piano and kept shaking his head until she played the right piece. His mother gave him a drum and he beat it in time to her playing; if she changed the rhythm suddenly, he would stop a moment, and then begin again in the new rhythm. When he began playing songs by memory, his mother gave him piano lessons, and by the time he was ten he was giving piano concerts to help support the family.

The first orchestra Béla heard was one in which his father played. It was at a restaurant, and when the orchestra began a famous overture, Béla put down his fork. "How can people eat when such beautiful music is being played?" he cried.

All his life Bartók was interested in folk songs. As a young man he and his friend Zoltán Kodály traveled about Hungary, searching out the unusual and little-known music of the people and writing it down. Later these discoveries were published in several large collections and Bartók made these folk songs the basis of many of his own compositions.

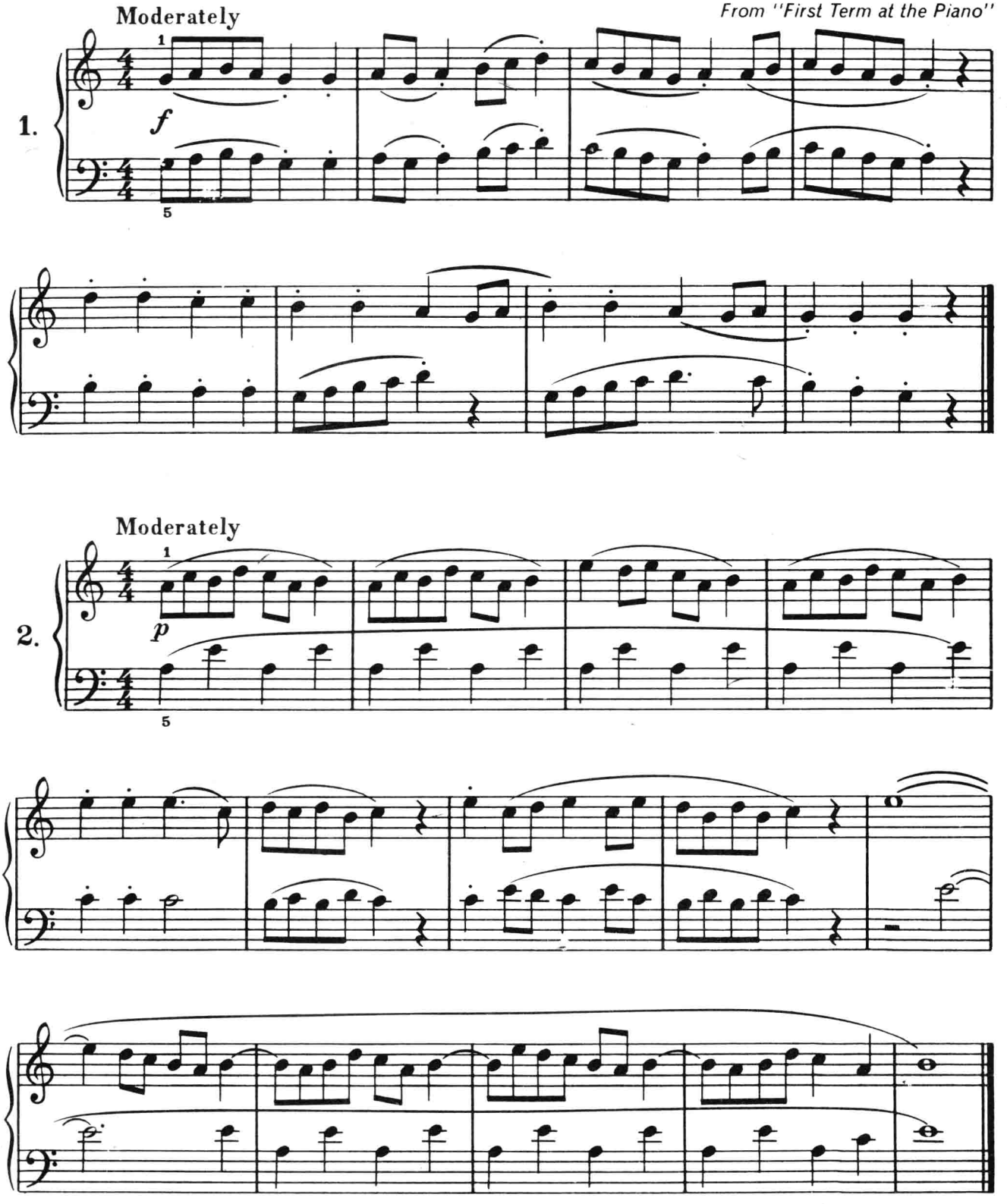
He wrote all kinds of music—orchestral works, string quartets, sonatas, concertos, a short opera, and a great many piano compositions.

The pieces which follow come from a set of student pieces called *First Term at the Piano*.

Two Dialogues

BÉLA BARTÓK

From "First Term at the Piano"



DMITRI KABALEVSKY

1904 -

When Dmitri Kabalevsky was born in St. Petersburg (which is now Leningrad), Alexander Tcherepnin, another child destined to become a famous composer, was five years old and living in that city, too.

Even as a very young boy Dmitri showed talent, but it was not until he was fourteen and the family had moved to Moscow that he began to take music lessons at the Scriabin School. After that he went to the Moscow Conservatory, where he was such a brilliant pupil that when he graduated his name was placed on the Golden Panel of Honor.

In the meantime he had been appointed by the government to a teaching post in a children's school, and he was so disappointed at the lack of good teaching material for children that he wrote many pieces himself, all of them delightful.

Kabalevsky has remained in Russia. He is content to live in Moscow, where he teaches and composes and takes part in the musical life of the city. Operas, ballets, symphonies, piano concertos, and sonatas have come from his pen and have made him known around the world.

The pieces which follow are part of a book called *Twenty-four Little Pieces* which Kabalevsky wrote for his own piano students.

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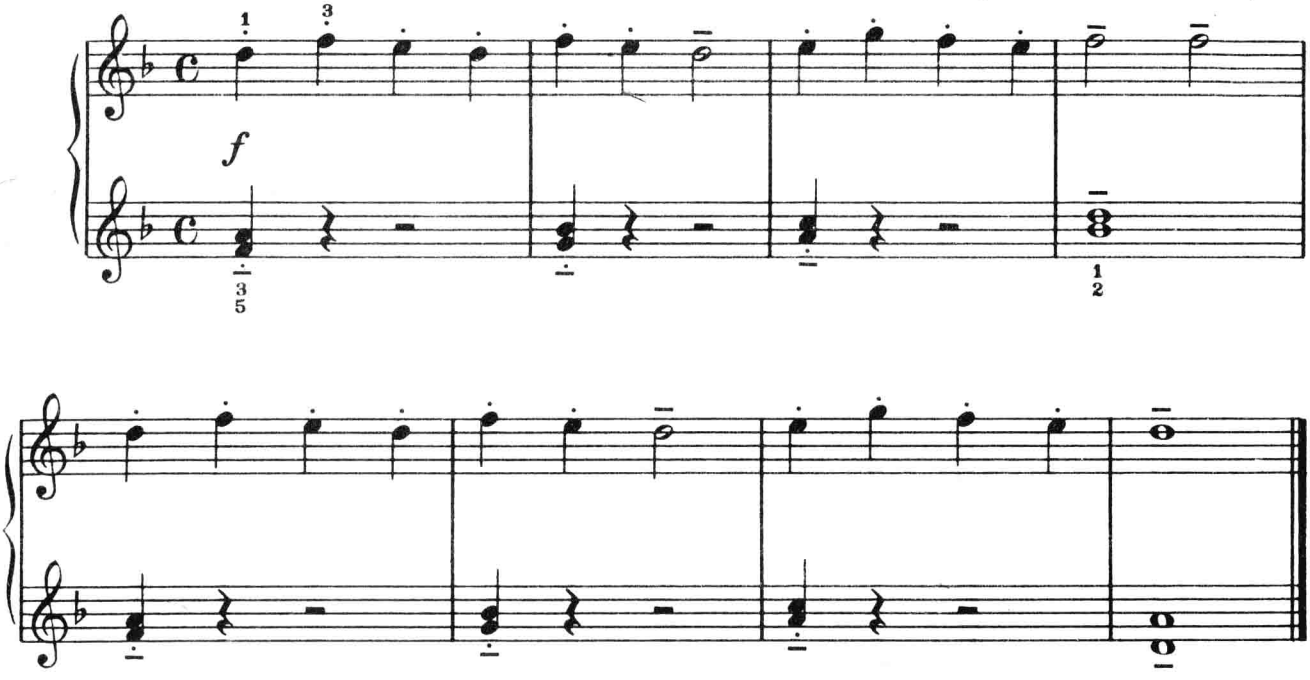
Marching

DMITRI KABALEVSKY

In march time

From "Twenty-four Little Pieces," Op. 39

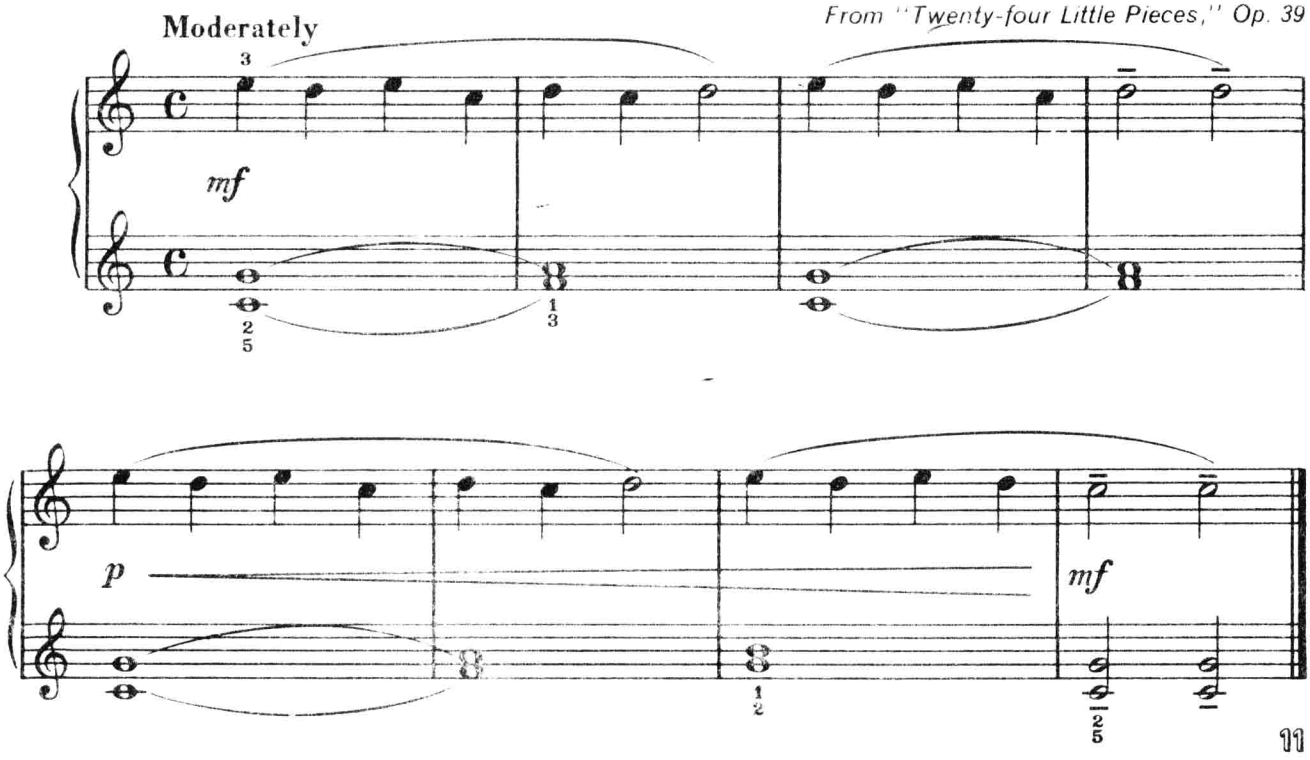


Song

DMITRI KABALEVSKY

Moderately

From "Twenty-four Little Pieces," Op. 39

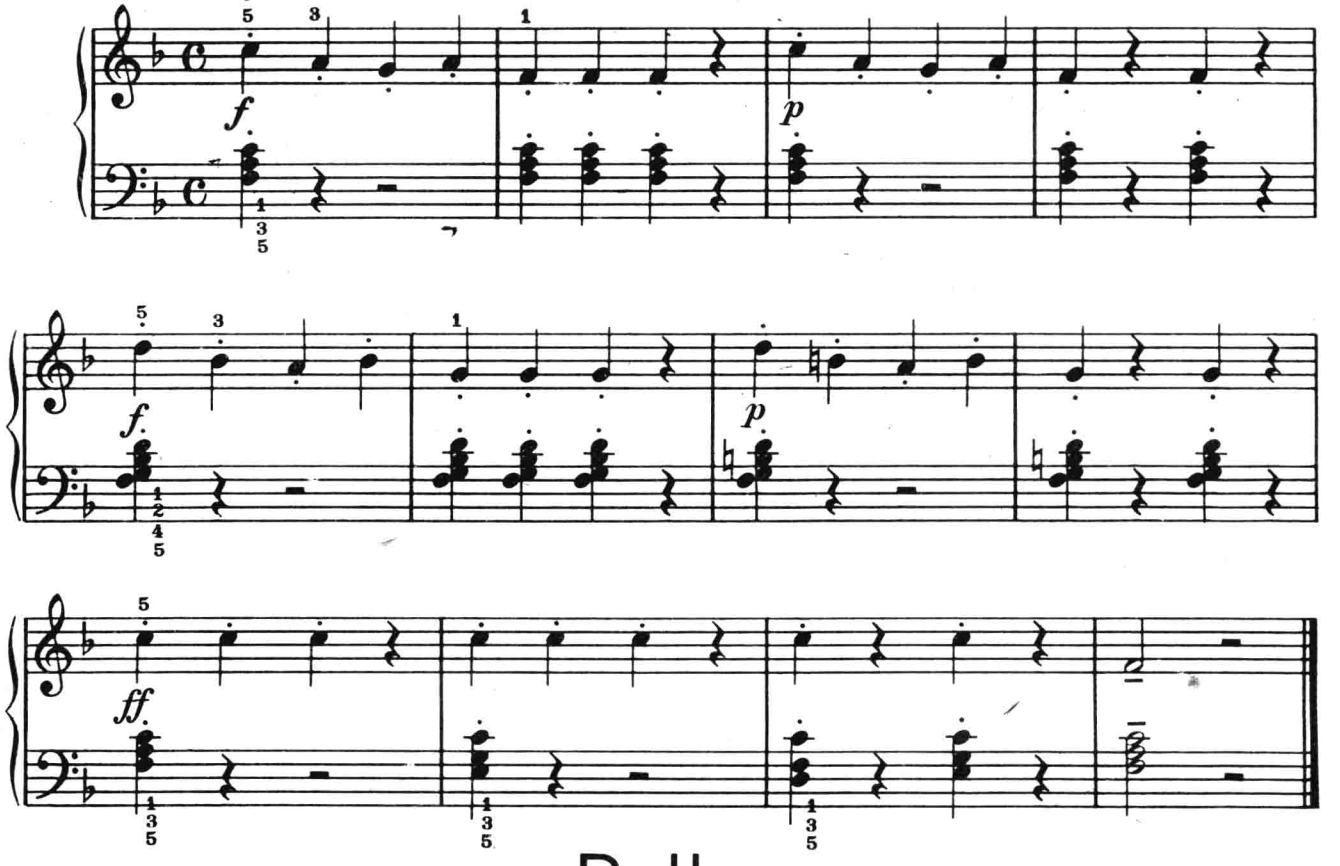


Dance

DMITRI KABALEVSKY

Gaily

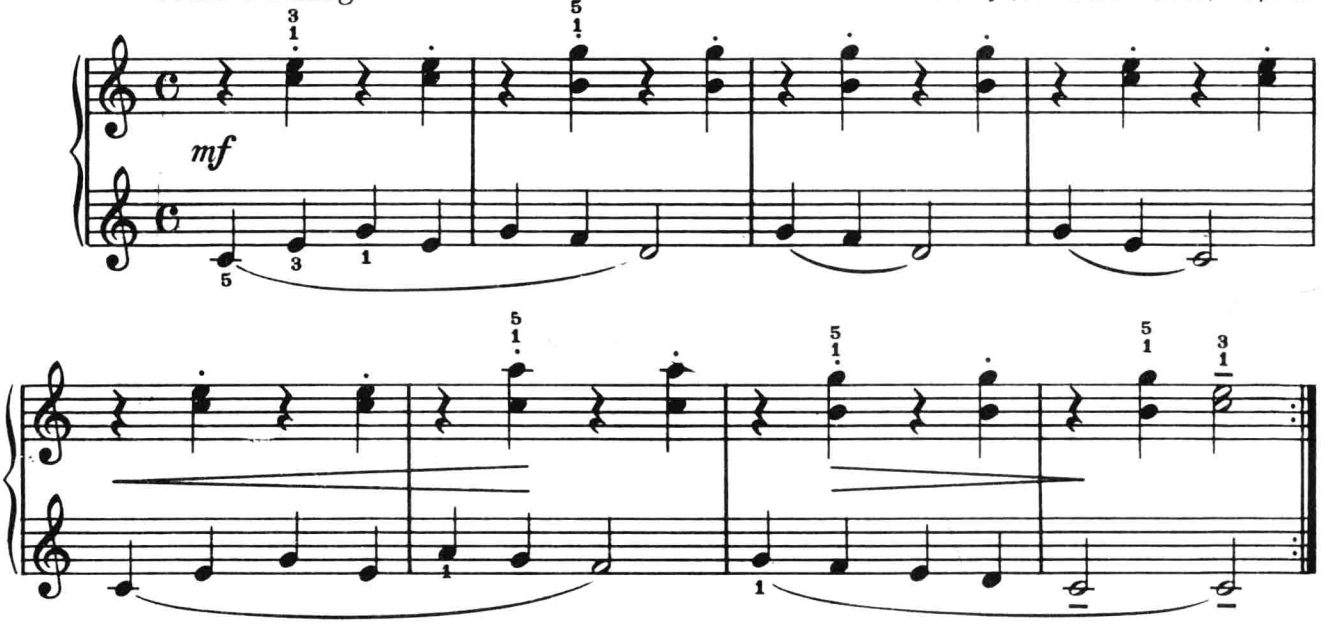
From "Twenty-four Little Pieces," Op. 39



Polka

With a swing

From "Twenty-four Little Pieces," Op. 39

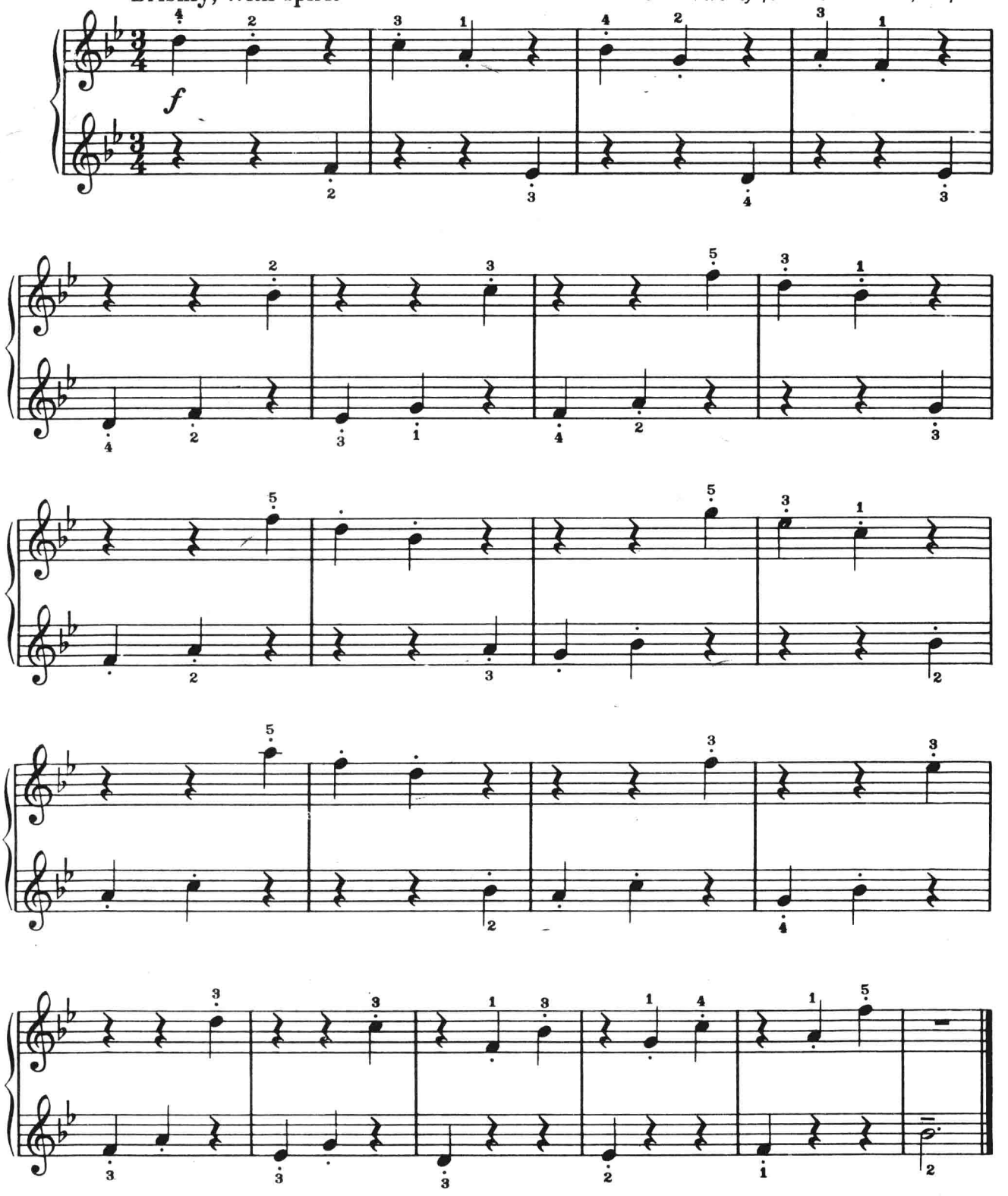


A Game

DMITRI KABALEVSKY

Briskly, with spirit

From "Twenty-four Little Pieces," Op. 39

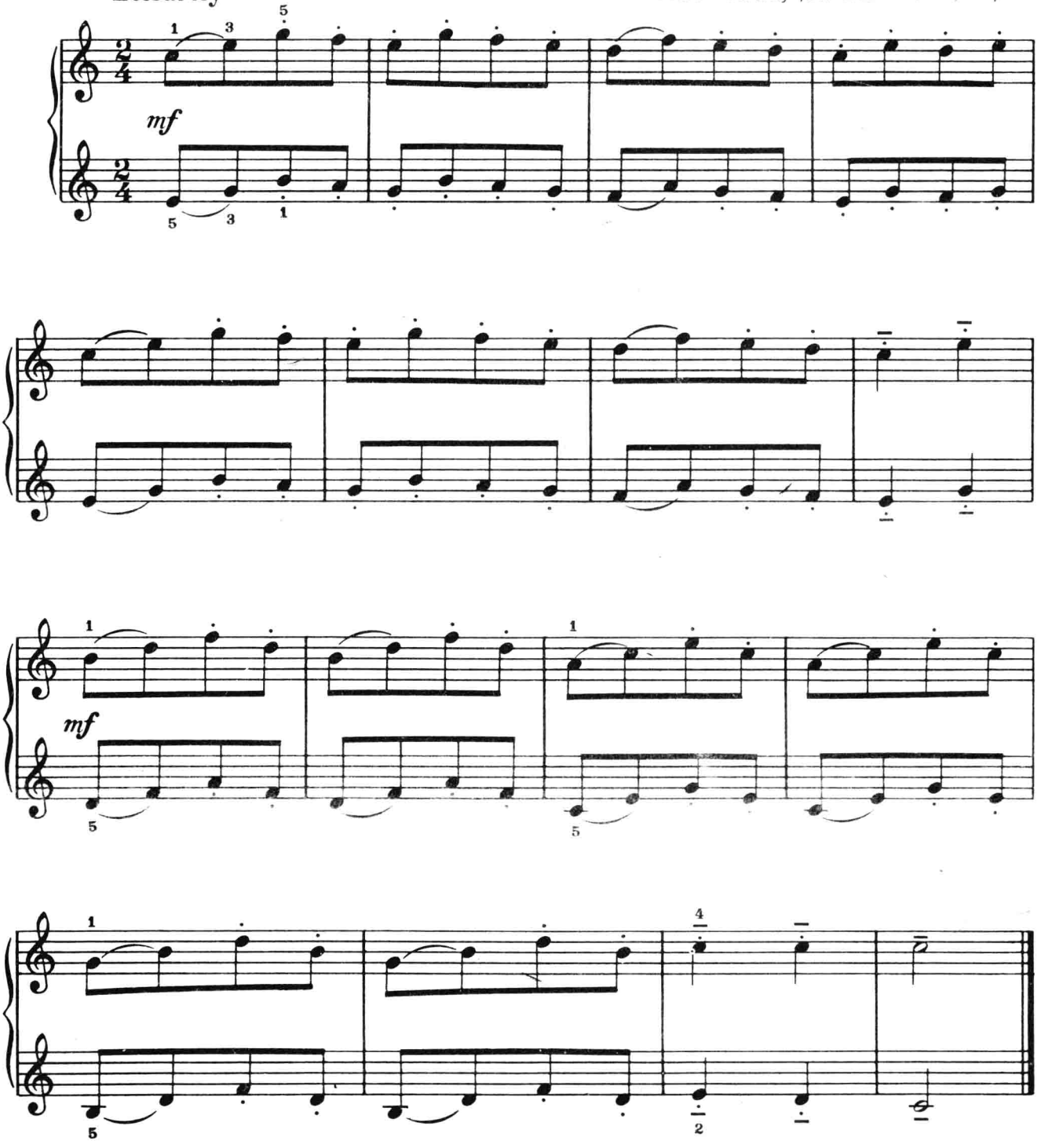


Running Along

DMITRI KABALEVSKY

Leisurely

From "Twenty-four Little Pieces," Op. 39



ALEXANDRE TANSMAN

1897 -

When Alexandre Tansman was a young man in Poland, he divided his time between the study of law at Warsaw University and the study of music with local teachers. But music won out and he devoted himself entirely to composing.

He had begun to compose early. He was only fifteen when he heard one of his works performed in public, and only twenty-one when his compositions won the Grand Prize of Poland.

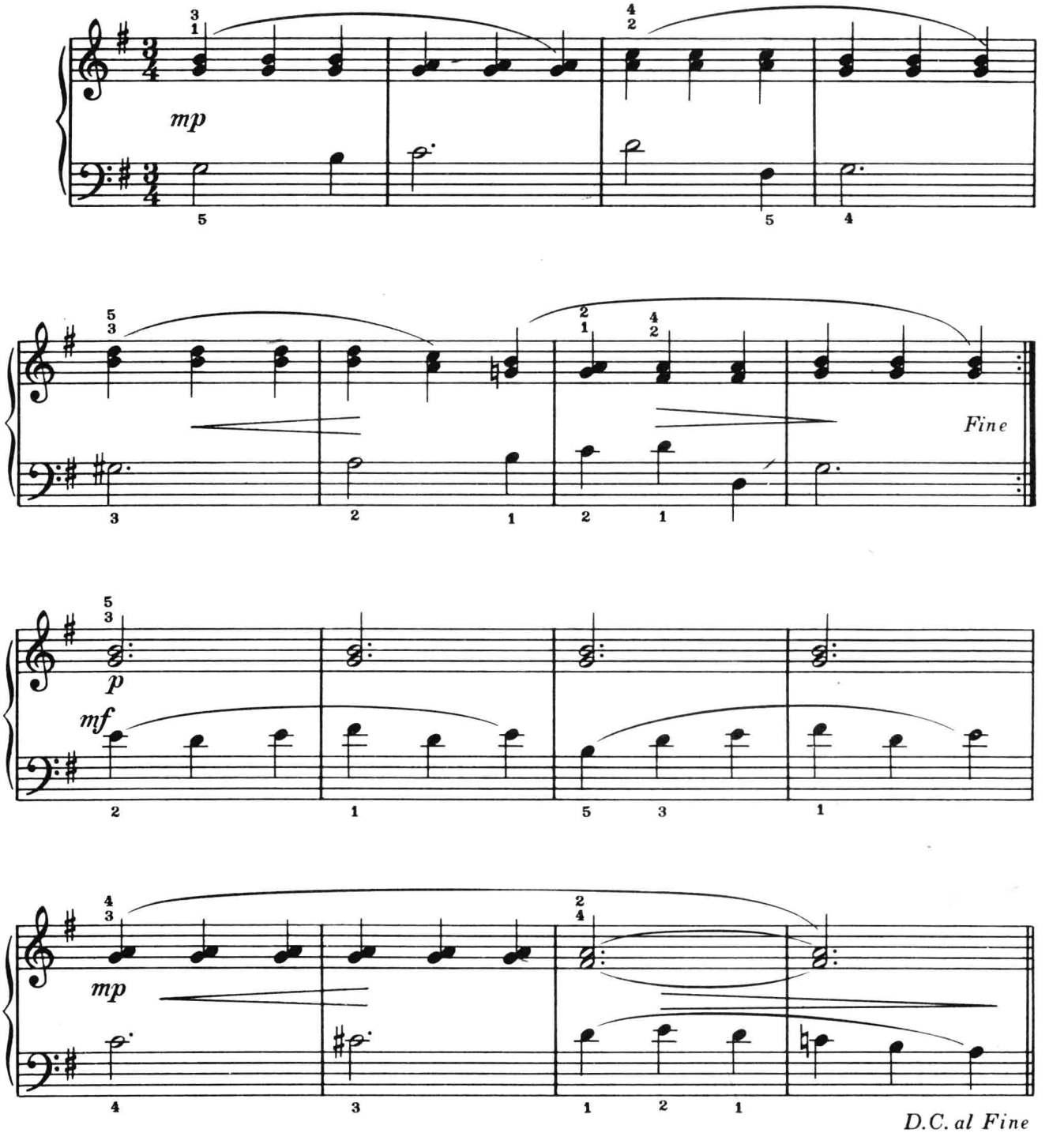
When Alexandre was twenty-three, he settled in Paris where he became a part of its busy musical life. From Paris he made excursions to many countries, appearing as pianist or conductor in his own works. He first came to the United States in 1927, and in 1941 settled here for the years of World War II. Many of his compositions were completed in America, and the first work he wrote here, *Symphony No. 5,* was introduced in Baltimore by the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, with Tansman conducting. While he was here, he was awarded the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge medal for distinguished service to chamber music, and he also wrote the music for several Hollywood films. After the war he went to Paris, where he has lived ever since.

Along with his major works, Tansman has composed hundreds of piano pieces for young students. *A Little Song, Bouncing Ball,* and *Folk Dance* were written in 1954 for the FRANCES CLARK LIBRARY FOR PIANO STUDENTS.

A Little Song

ALEXANDRE TANSMAN

Moderately, in singing style



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