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Personal Direction of Axel W. Christensen
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RAG-TIME

INSTRUCTION BOOK

FOR PIANO

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CONTENTS.

Hints for Beginners 4

The Proper Ragtime Touch 6

The First Ragtime Movement 7

Exercise in the First Ragtime Movement 8

Ragtime Simplicity 9

Exercise in the Second Ragtime Movement 10

Exercise in the Third Ragtime Movement 11

Exercise -- Playing Two Chords to the Movement 12

Exercise -- Playing Three Chords to the Movement 13

Ragology 14

Home Sweet Home, in Ragtime 16

Old Black Joe, in Ragtime 17

How to "Rag" two Chords in One Movement 18

How to "Rag" three Chords in One Movement 18

Mendelsohn's Wedding March, in Ragtime 20

Simple Confession, in Ragtime 22

Exercise -- Playing four Chords to the Movement 23

How to "Rag" Four Chords in One Movement 24

The Flower Song, in Ragtime 26

How to "Rag" Waltz Time 28

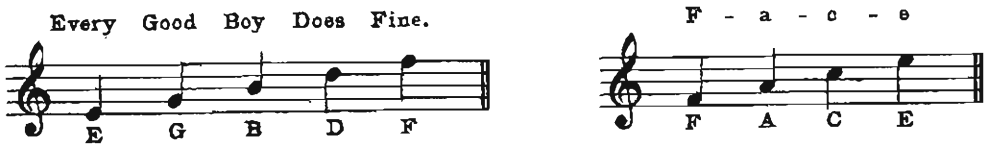
The Ragtime King 30

General Remarks and Pointers 36

The Irmena Rag 32

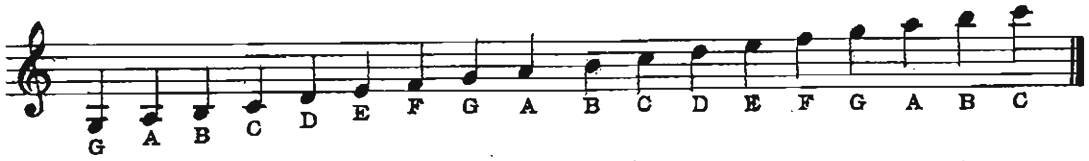
Hints for Beginners.

TREBLE NOTES.



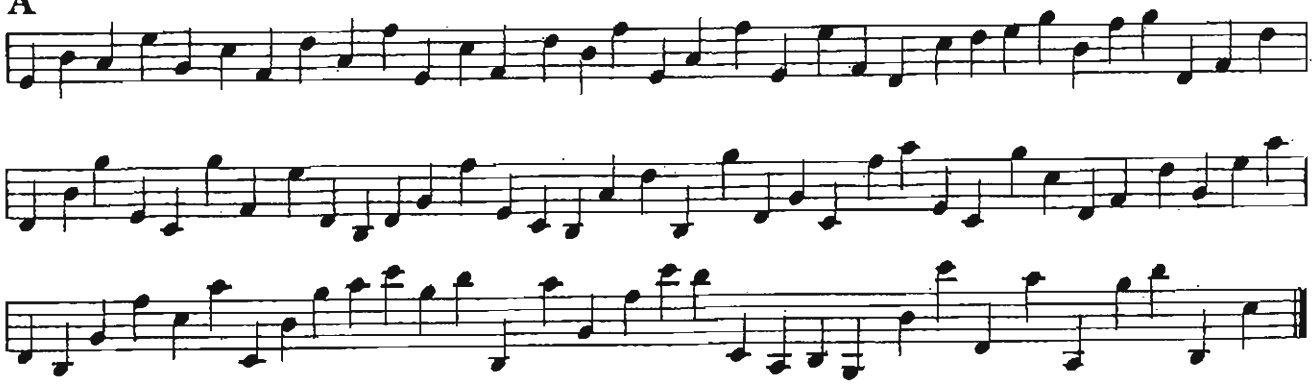
Memorize and locate on the piano the notes on the lines in the treble.

" " " " " " " " " " spaces " " "

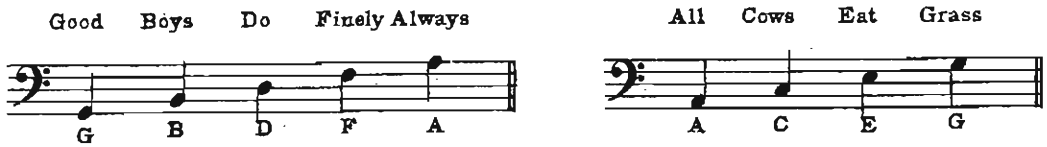


Name and find the following notes on the piano, first in the treble, then in the bass.

A

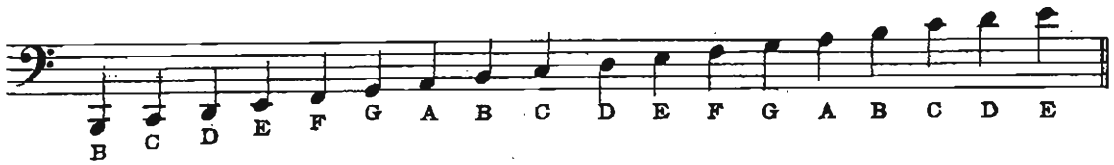


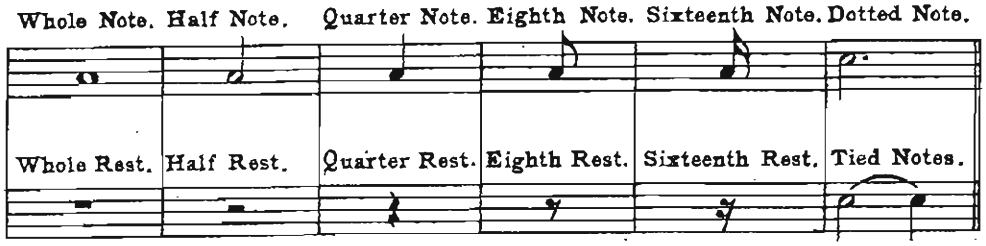
BASS NOTES.



Memorize and locate the notes on the lines in the bass.

" " " " " " " spaces " " "





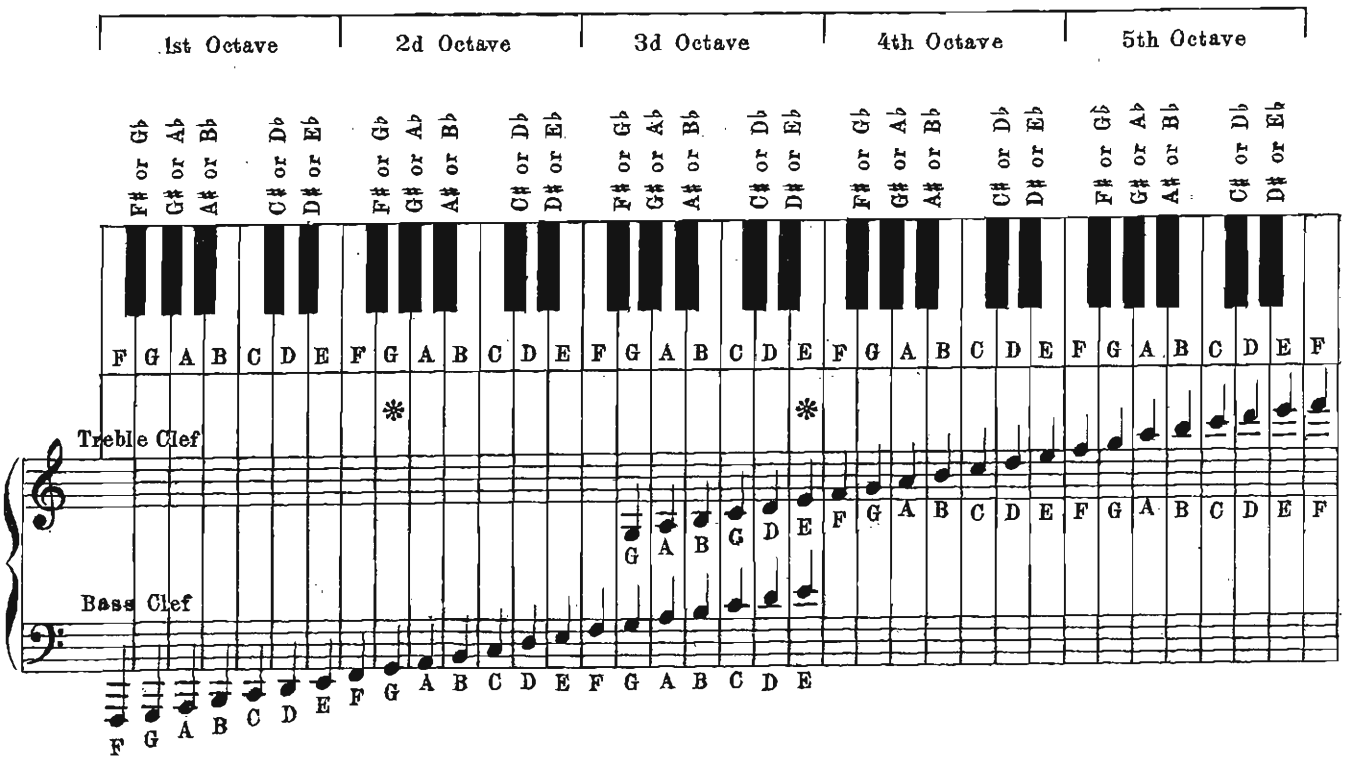
The five lines, upon which the notes are written, form what is called a staff. The upper five lines are called the treble staff; the lower five lines are called the bass staff.

Notes on the treble staff are played with the right hand, while notes on the bass staff are played with the left hand. In a piece of music these two staffs are connected by a "brace" and are played together, the player reading both lines at the same time.

The first seven letters in the alphabet repeated several times are the names of the notes or keys. They are called, in succession, a, b, c, d, e, f, g, a, b, c, d, e, f, g, a, b, c, d, e, f, g, and so on up.

When we speak of "going up" on the piano, we mean going to the right, because the farther we go to the right, the higher are the notes.

Keyboard of the Piano or Organ.



Additions to Christensen's Ragtime Instruction Book for Piano.

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The Proper Ragtime Touch.

One of the most important features about good ragtime playing is the touch, and the pupil is requested to read the following remarks and observe them very carefully.

Play with a strong and firm legato touch.

Sit high enough to allow the forearm and hand to be held in a horizontal position and let the weight of the arm and hand be entirely supported by the keys of the piano while playing.

Do not try to hold the arm up and hold a key down at the same time, because this robs the touch of the required firmness, which is necessary in playing ragtime.

Strike every note firmly with the proper finger, but do not raise the hand in order to strike a key. All motion must be from the knuckles.

All fingers that are not actually striking should be raised as high as possible without disturbing the horizontal position of the hand.

The instant you play a note with a certain finger, the finger which has played the the preceding note should be raised.

Use just as much energy in raising a finger off the key as in striking the key, because the raising and striking motions will then counteract each other and allow the weight of the arm to give the desired firmness to the touch.

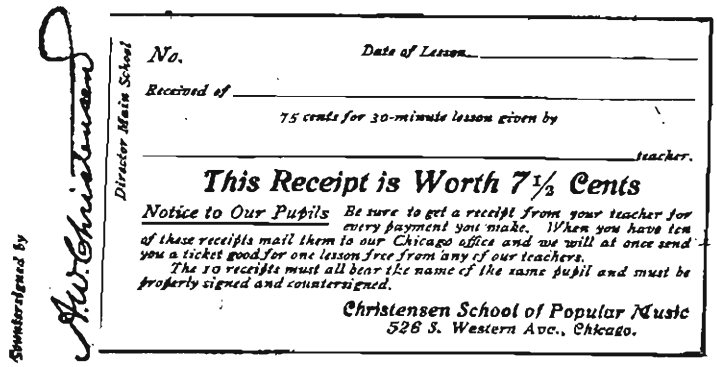
Strike each note with vim and vigor!

When learning a new piece or exercise, play very slow at first and count loud and evenly.

Make your playing keep even with your counting — don't suit your counting to your playing.

Remember to practice one hour each day, or evening.

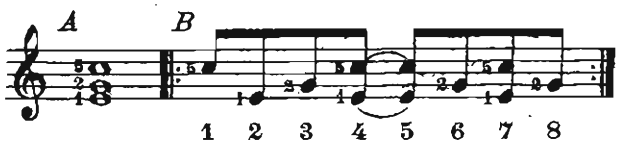
You will gradually develop speed by practicing all your previous exercises of this course every day.



The First Ragtime Movement.

The Christensen system of playing ragtime is based on three different ragtime movements to which we will get the fingers accustomed. We will proceed to take up the first movement.

Example "A" shows a chord, composed of the three notes e, g, and c. Example "B" shows how the same chord is played in the first movement.



The large numbers represent the beats or counts and in this lesson ♪ = 1 beat, ♩ = 2 beats, 𝅗𝅥 = 4 beats and 𝅝 = 8 beats.

The small numbers indicate the fingering, 1 being the thumb (in either hand), 2 the finger next to the thumb, etc.

The first ragtime movement is always played according to the following table which should be memorized:

Count **1** = top note.
" **2** = bottom note.
" **3** = middle note.
" **4** = top and bottom notes.
" **5** = tied and held.
" **6** = middle note.
" **7** = top and bottom notes.
" **8** = middle note.

When there are two middle notes to a chord, they are considered the same as one middle note and are both played together wherever the middle note is called for.

Your touch must be strong and firm, your time smooth and even. Never let go of one key until you strike the next.

All the exercises and pieces in this book should be played very slowly at first (each hand seperately, if necessary) gradually increasing the speed.

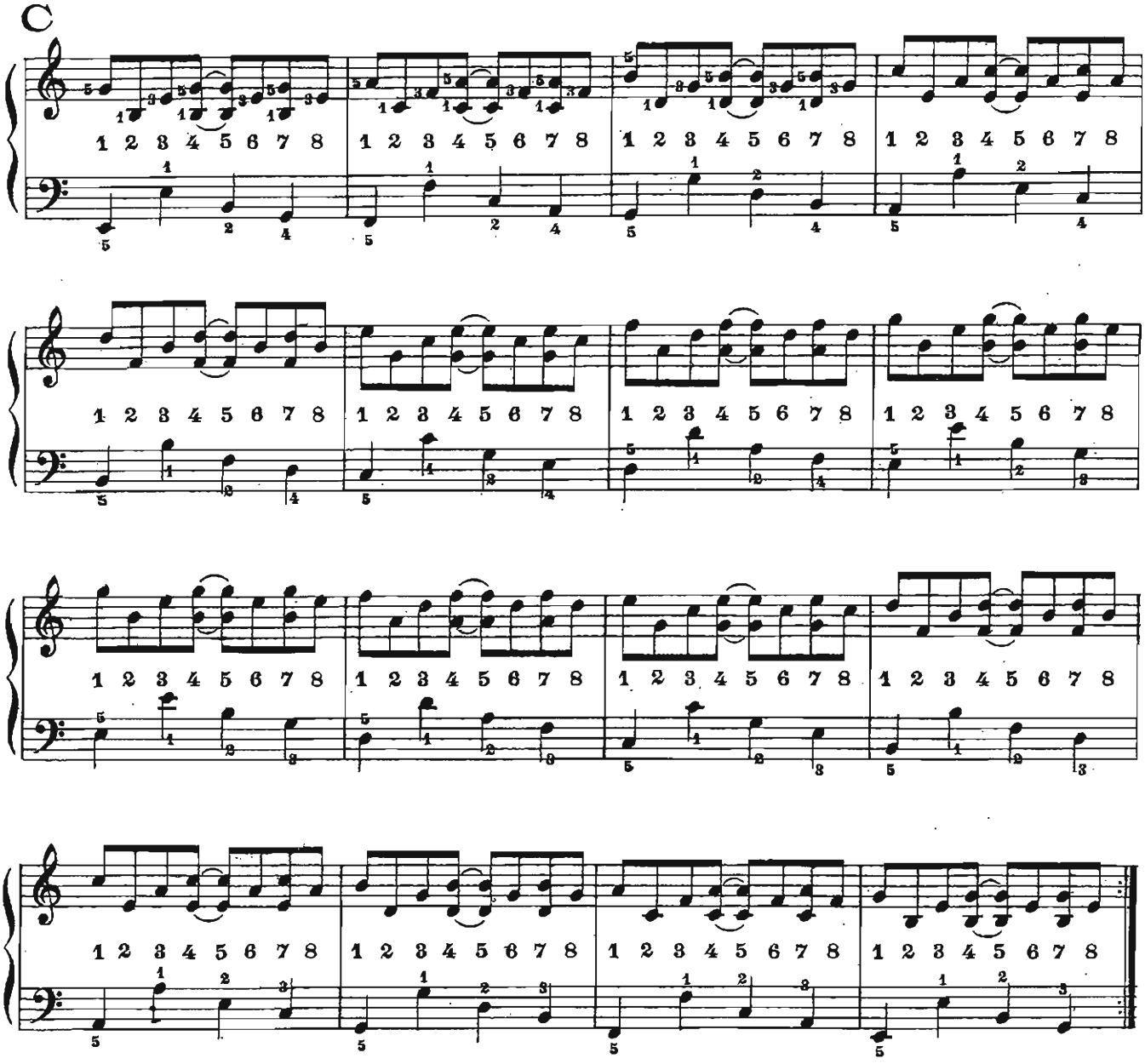
Count the beats out loud.

The bass notes are played on counts **1, 3, 5,** and **7.**

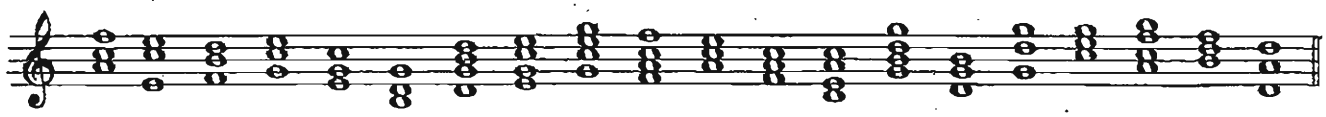
Exercise
In the First Rag-Time Movement.

Play this exercise very slowly at first. As soon as you can play it without the music, gradually increase the speed. Keep the touch strong and firm.

C

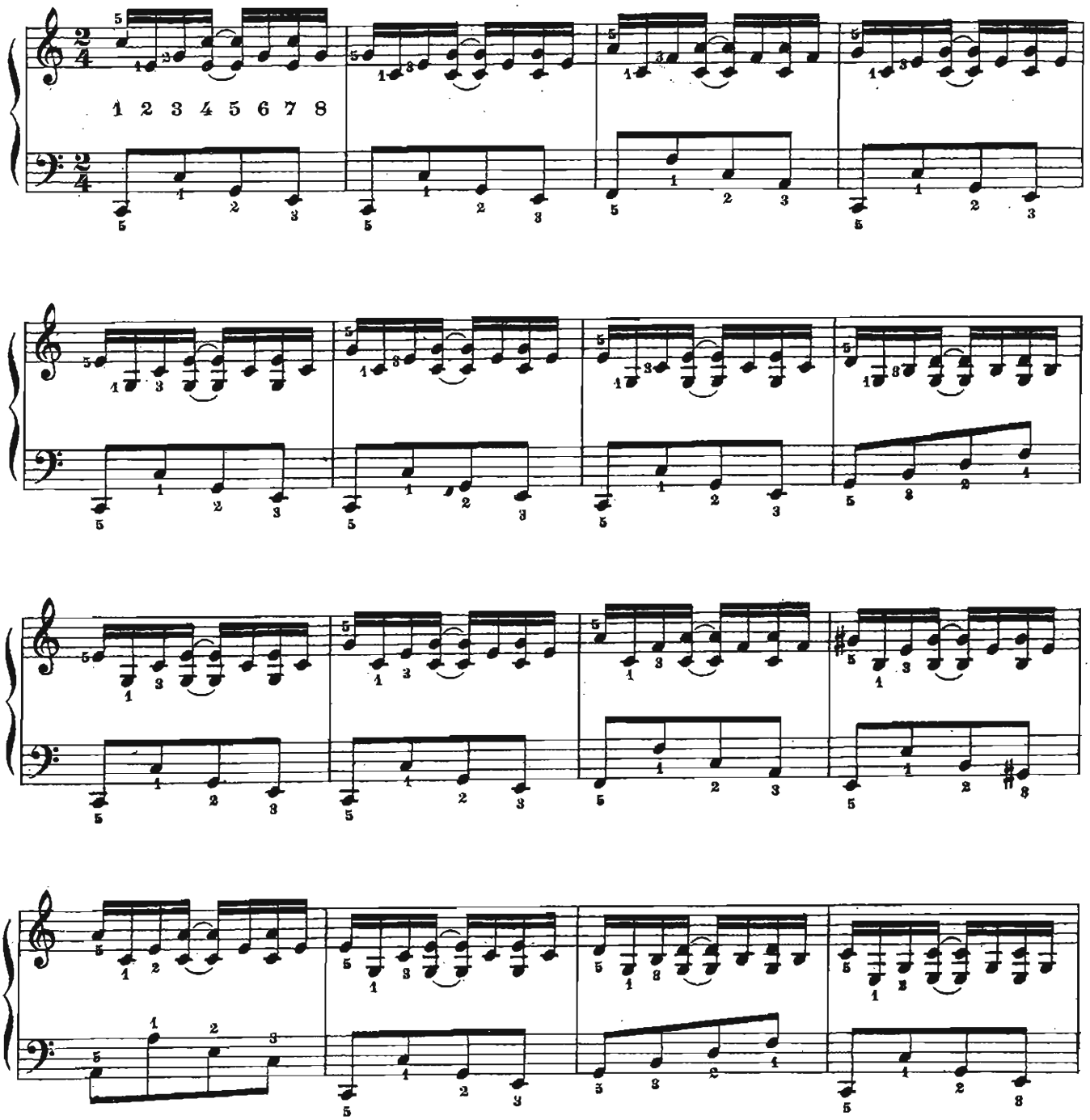


D Play each of these chords in the first movement.



Ragtime Simplicity.

= 1 beat, = 2 beats, = 4 beats, = 8 beats.

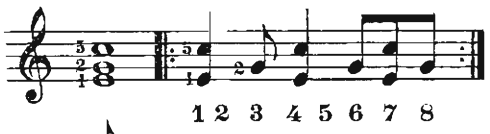


Each measure of the above piece consists of a chord which has been converted into the 1st ragtime movement. Play the chord from which each measure is constructed (in the treble.)

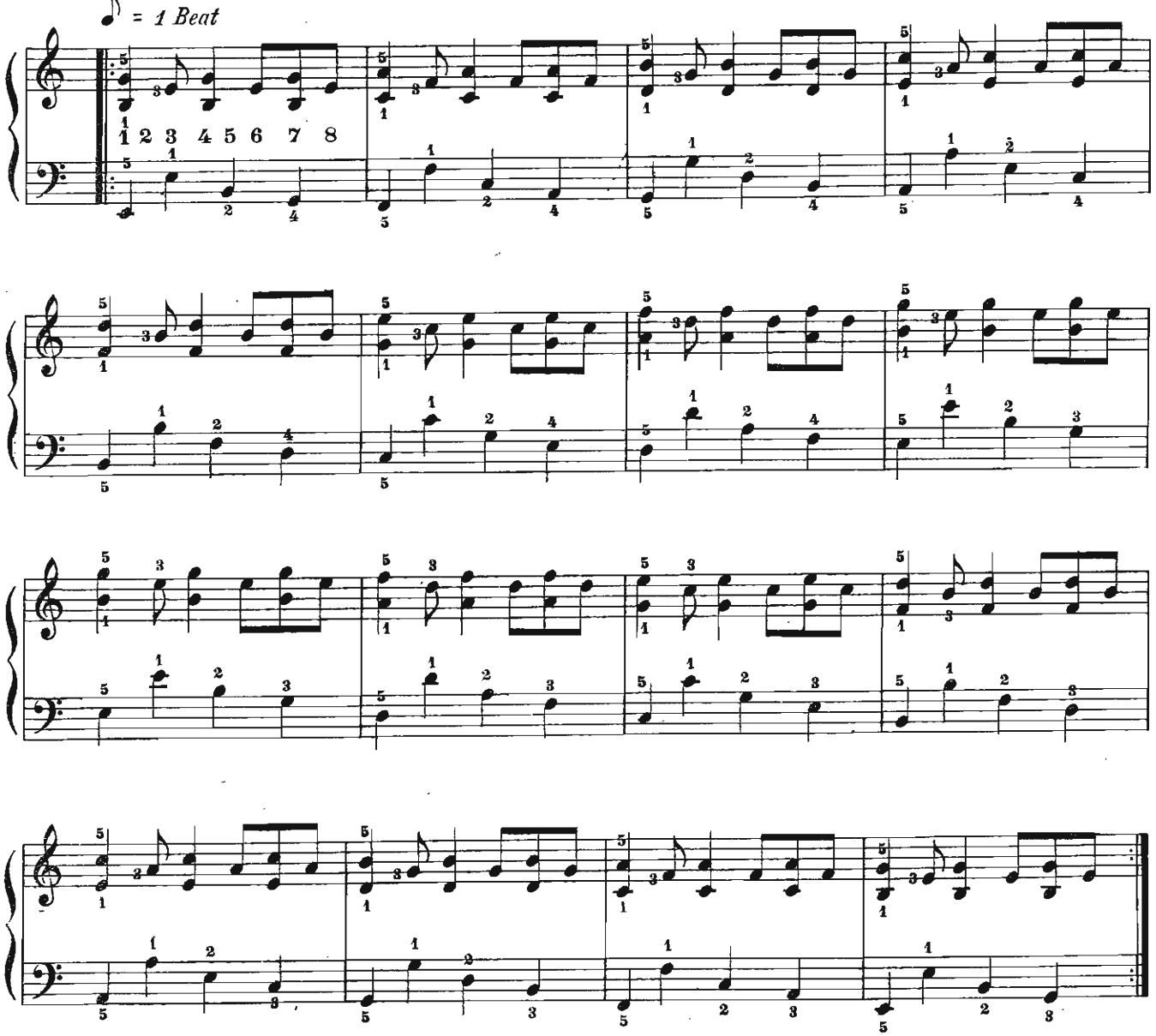
The Second Rag-Time Movement.

Memorize:

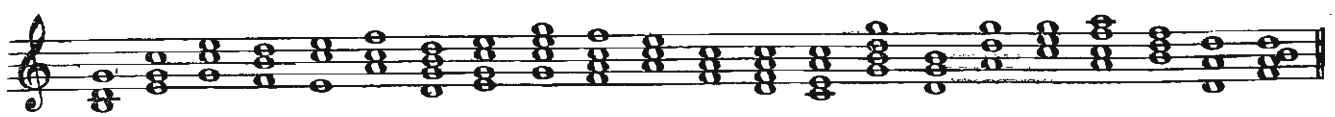
Count 1 = top and bottom notes.
" 2 = not played.
" 3 = middle note.
" 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 same as First movement.



♪ = *1 Beat*



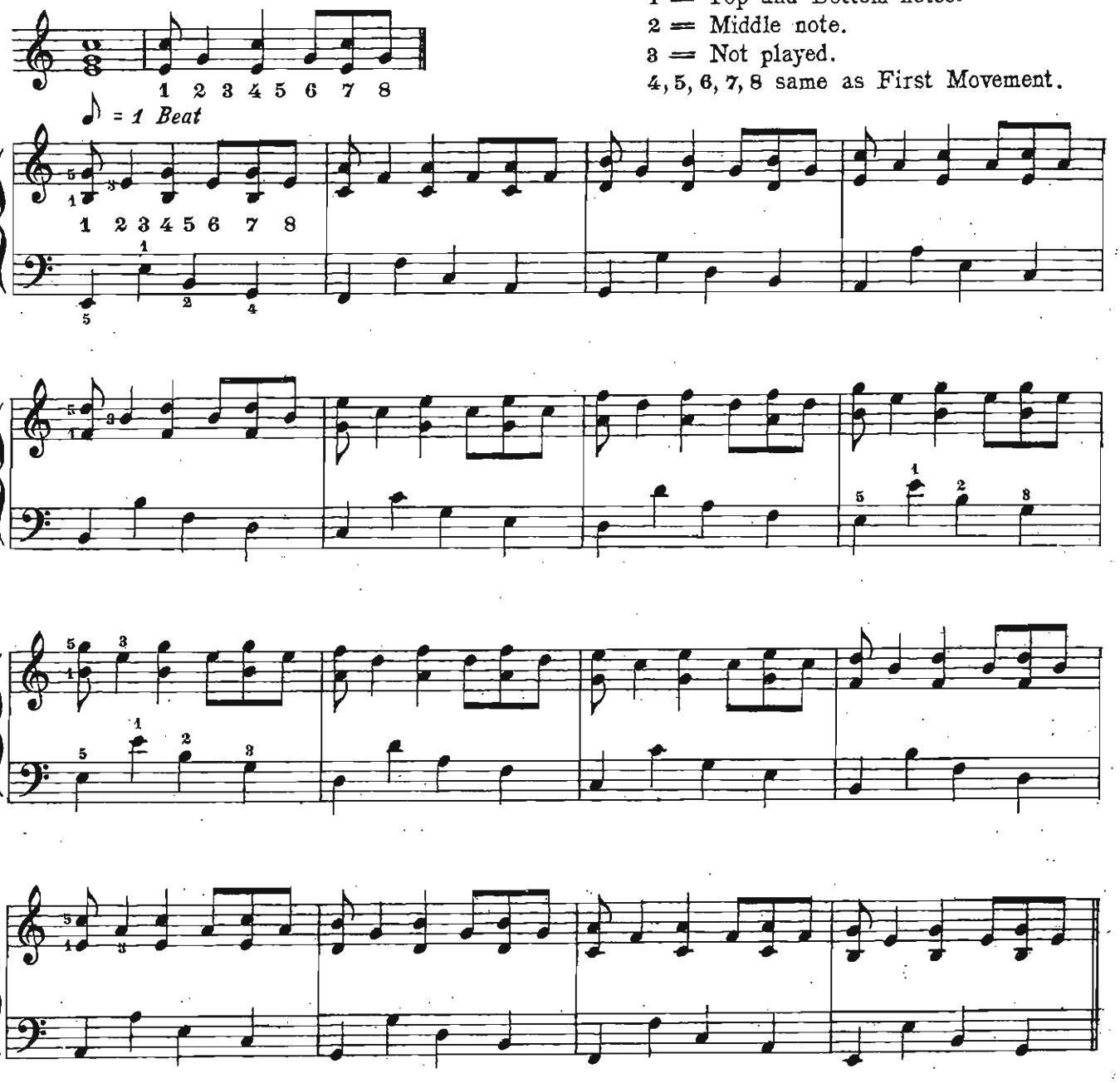
Play each of these chords in the second movement.



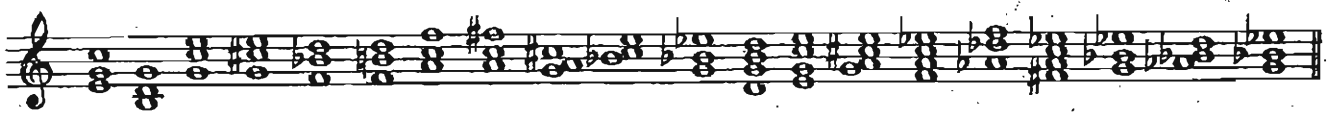
The Third Ragtime Movement.

Memorize:

1 = Top and Bottom notes.
2 = Middle note.
3 = Not played.
4, 5, 6, 7, 8 same as First Movement.

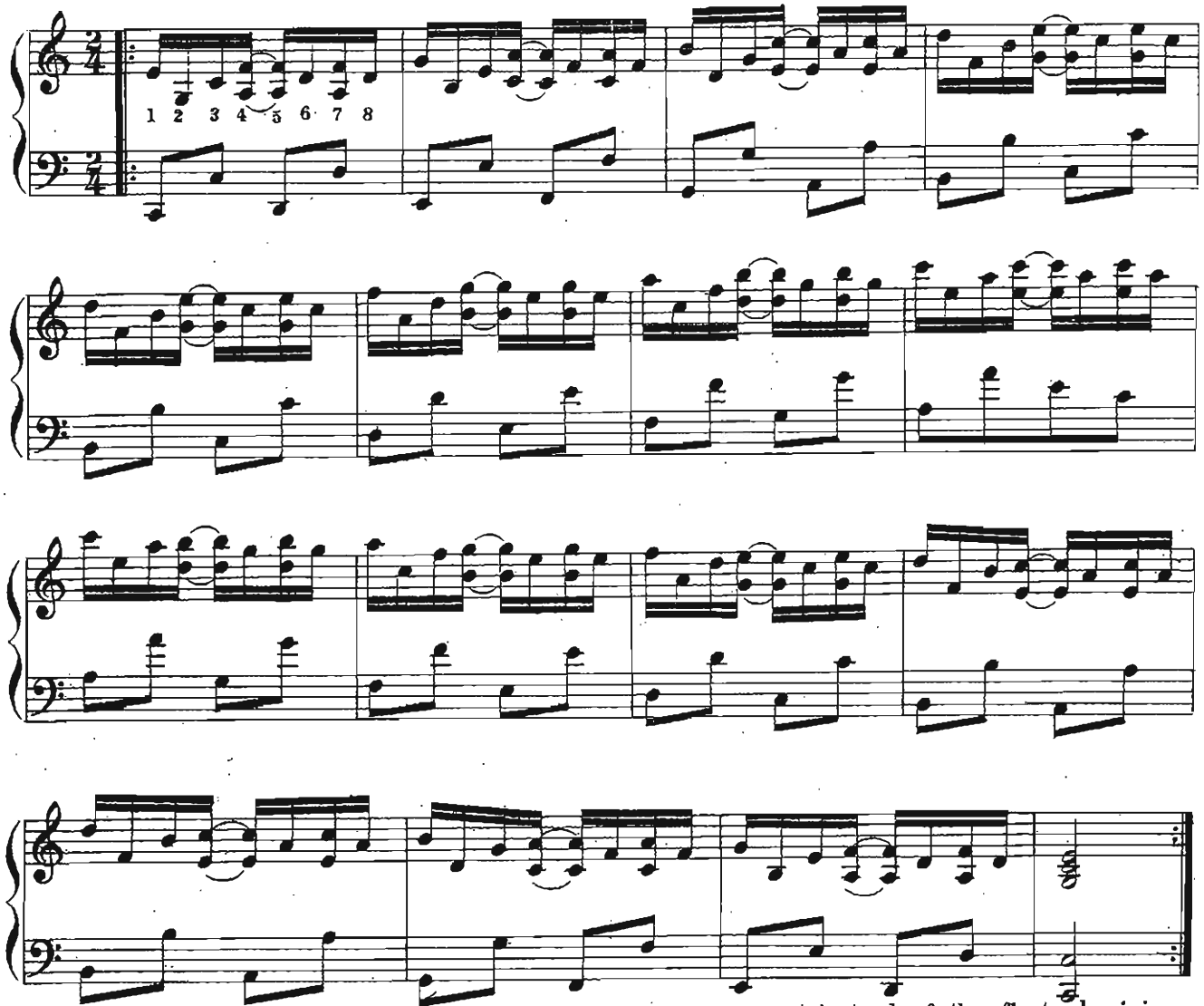


Play each of these chords in the 3d movement.

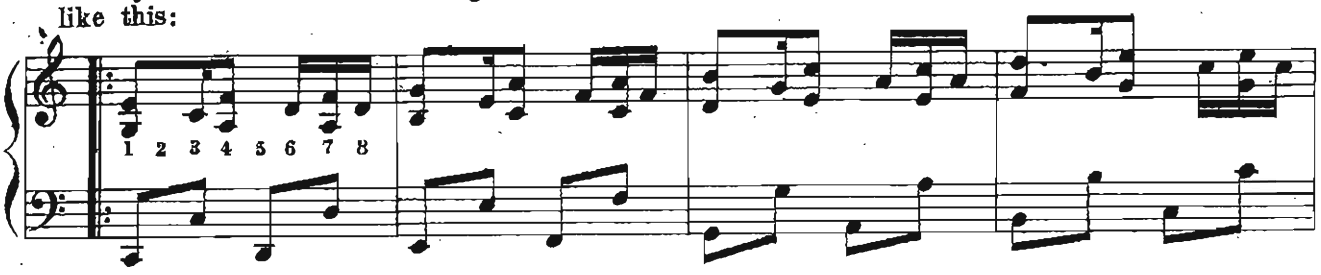


Exercise - Playing Two Chords to the Movement.

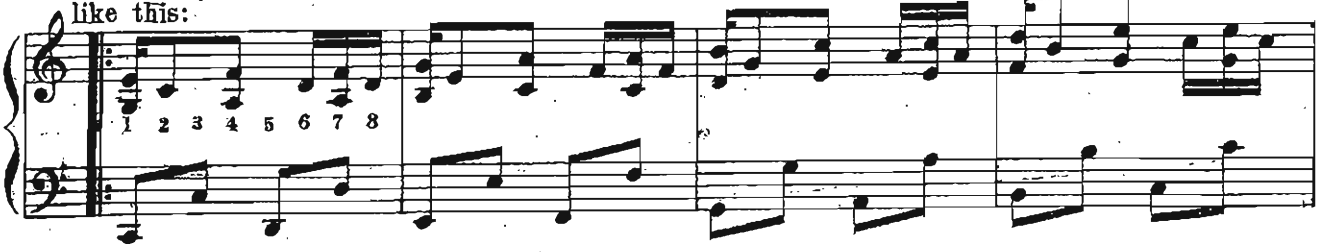
= one beat.



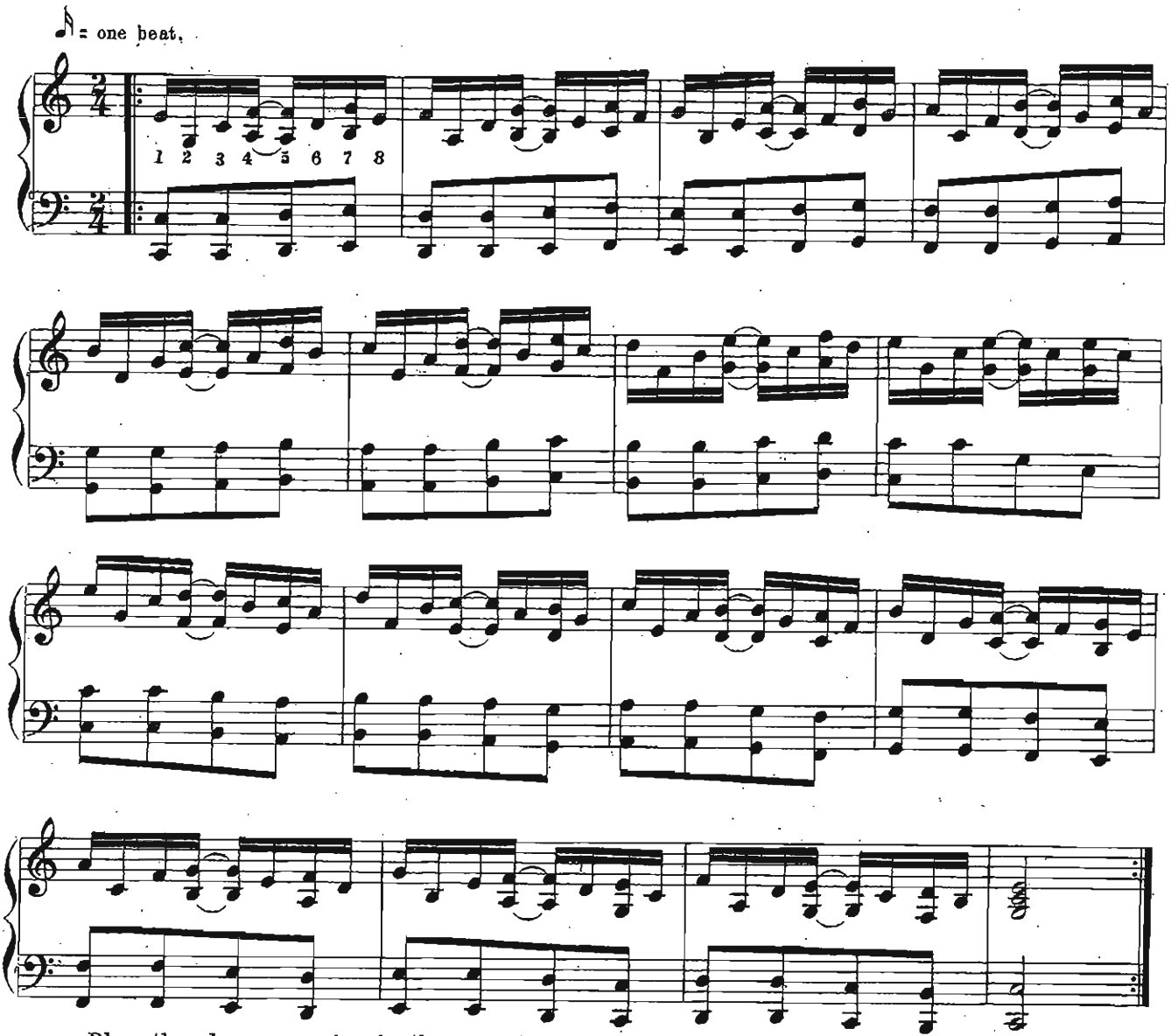
Play the above exercise using the second ragtime movement instead of the first, begining like this:



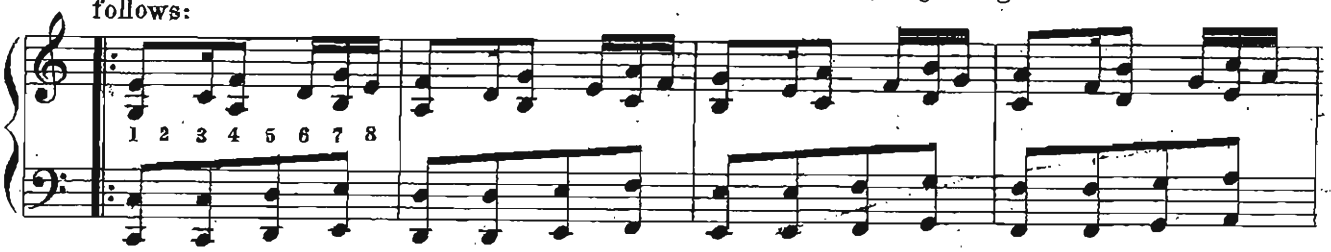
Now play the same exercise in the third movement, begining like this:



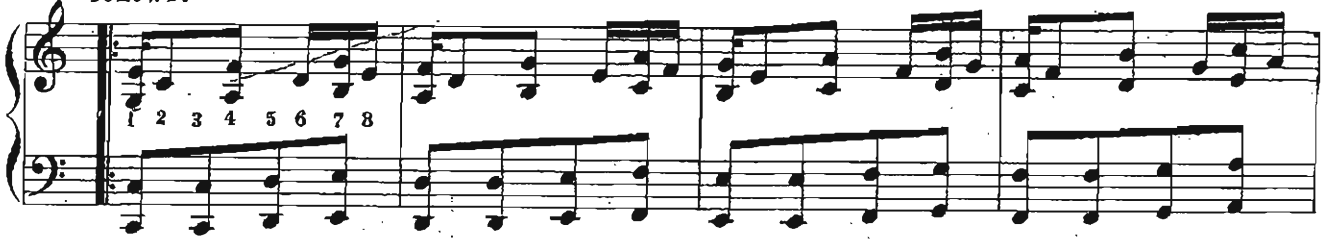
Exercise - Playing Three Chords to the Movement.



Play the above exercise in the second ragtime movement, beginning as follows:

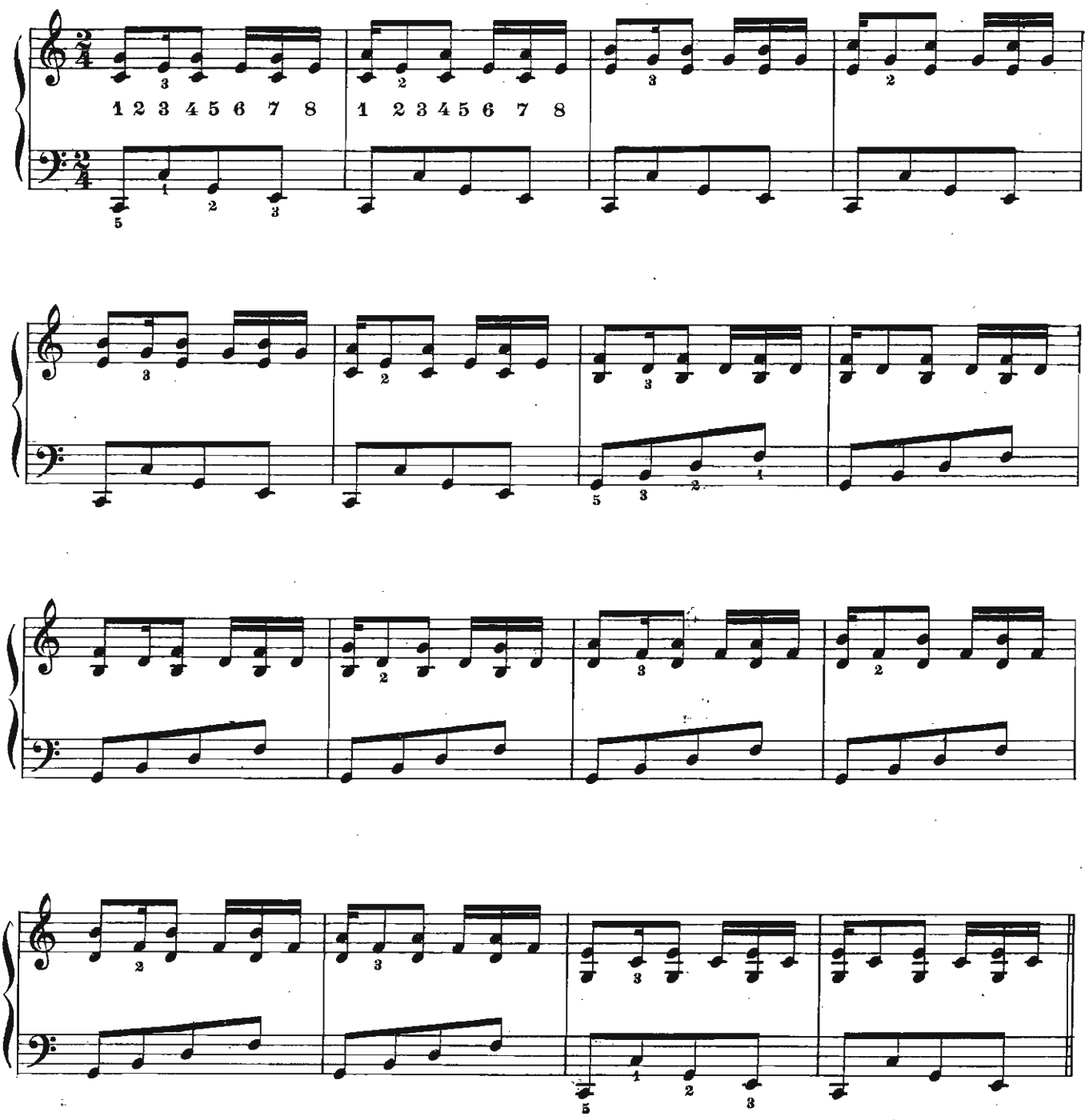


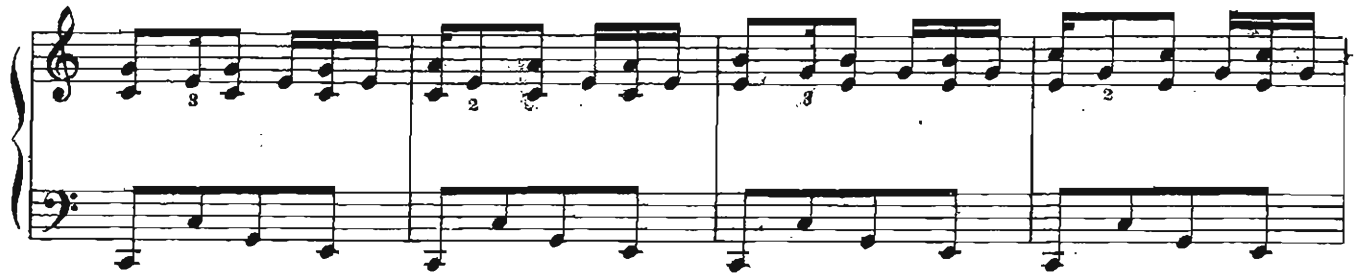
Now play the same exercise in the third movement, beginning as follows:

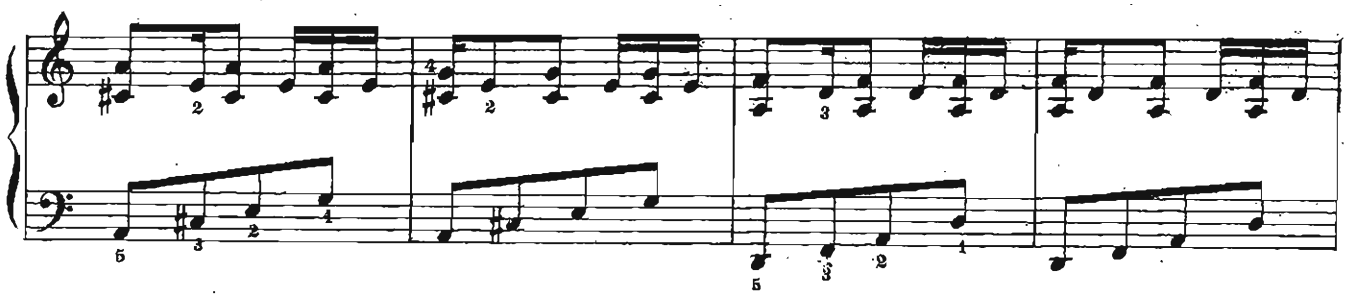


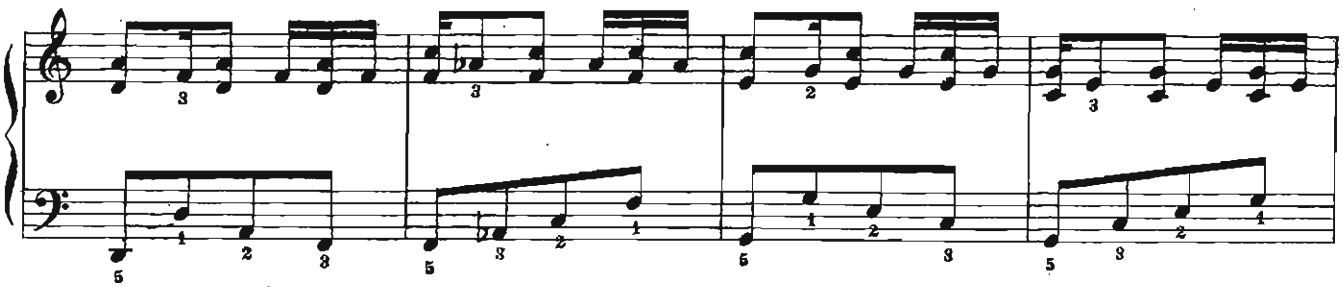
Ragology.

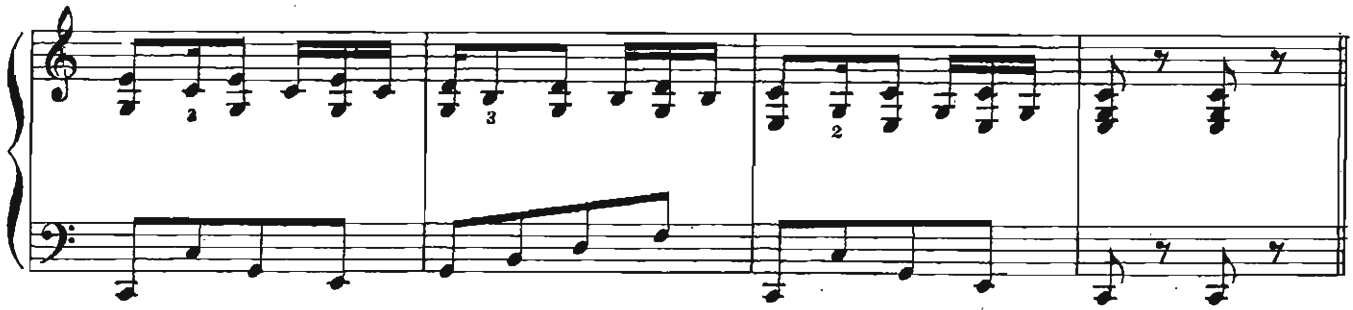
♪ = *1 Beat.*









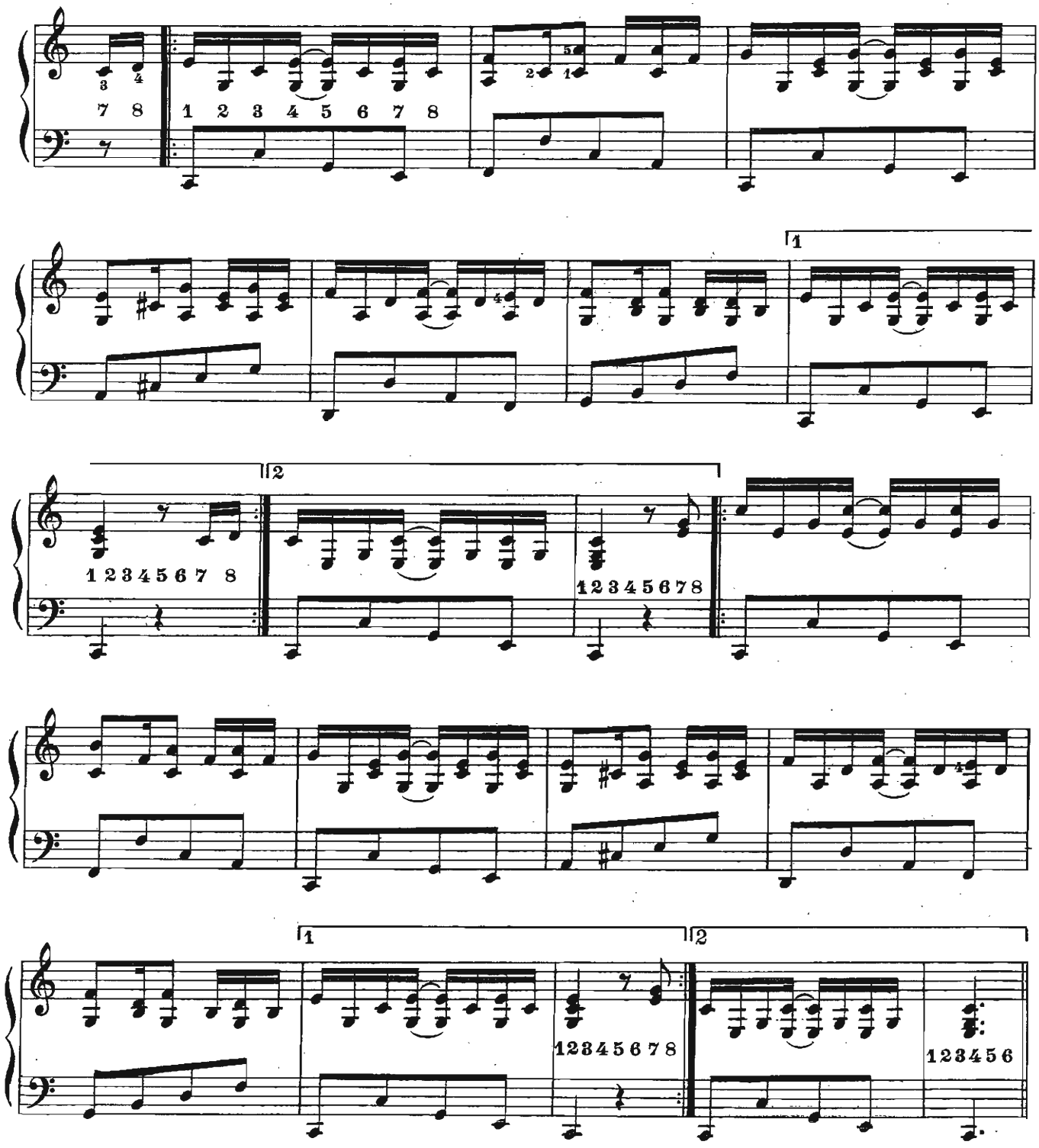


Home, Sweet Home.

IN RAGTIME.

= *1 Beat.*

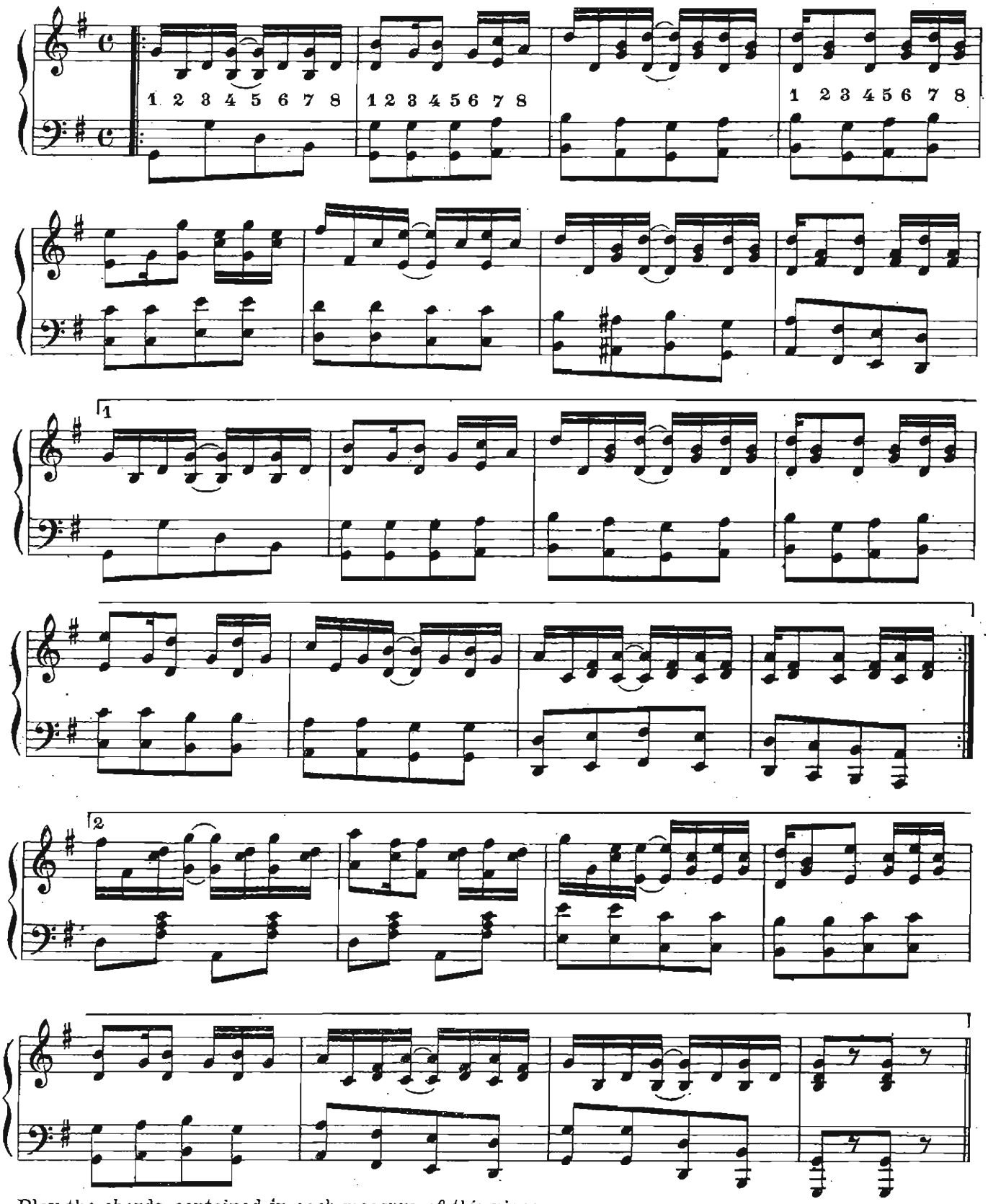
Arr. by A. W. CHRISTENSEN.



Old Black Joe.

IN RAGTIME.

Arr. by A. W. CHRISTENSEN.



Play the chords contained in each measure of this piece.

How to Convert 2 and 3 Chords into 1 movement.

Example "R 1" shows two chords; Example "R 2" shows these two chords arranged in the first ragtime movement, or, in other words, it shows how one ragtime movement can be applied to two chords at the same time.

The eight counts stand for the same notes as ever – top, bottom, middle note, etc. – but where the movement is applied to two chords at once, counts 1, 2, 3 apply only to the first chord and counts 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 apply only to the second chord.

Play each measure of Example "R 3" in the first movement, then in the second movement, and last in the third movement.

When the first chord is the longer of the two (See "R 4" and "R 5") we will divide the movement as follows:

First chord – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Second chord – 7, 8.

Play each measure of "R 6" in all three movements.

When the last chord happens to be the longest (see "R 7" and "R 8") we will divide the movement as follows:

First chord – 1, 2, 3.

Second chord – 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Play each measure of "R 9" in all three movements.

When three chords are to be played in one movement ("S 1") the first chord – 1, 2, 3; second chord – 4, 5, 6; third chord – 7, 8.

This is the case, no matter what the time value of the different chords may be.

Play each measure of "S 2" in all three movements.

When converting any piece into ragtime, the bass notes must, as usual, come in on counts 1, 3, 5, 7. This is done by dividing all bass notes into eighth notes (See "T").

Every eighth note is played 1 time; every quarter note is played 2 times; every half note is played 4 times; every whole note is played 8 times; every dotted quarter note is played 3 times, etc.

Play the "Suwanee River" as it is written.

Now play the treble alone, slowly in the First movement (allowing one movement to every measure).

Next, play it in the Second movement.

Next, play it in the Third movement.

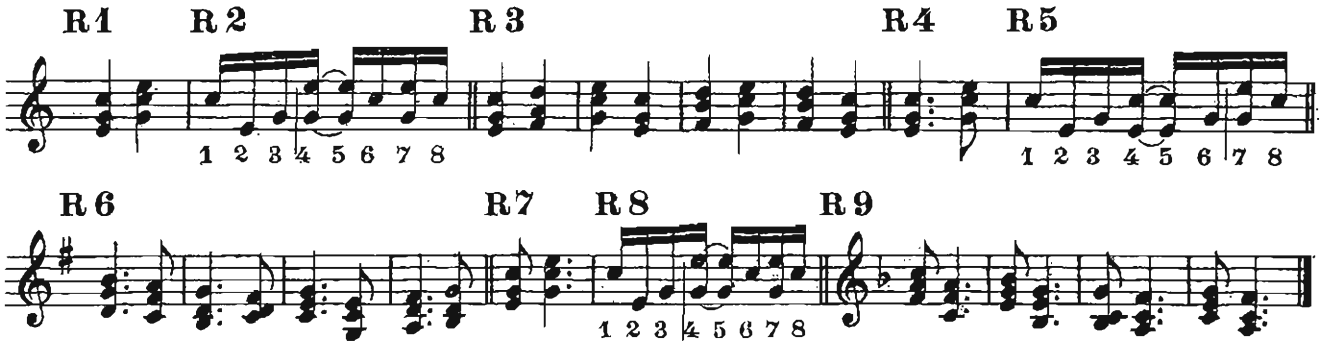
Last, play it in all three movements, using the movements in rotation, like this: First measure in the first movement, next measure in the second movement, next measure in the third movement, next measure in the first movement etc.

Take the bass alone. Play each eighth note once and each quarter note twice. See that the bass comes in only on counts 1, 3, 5 and 7.

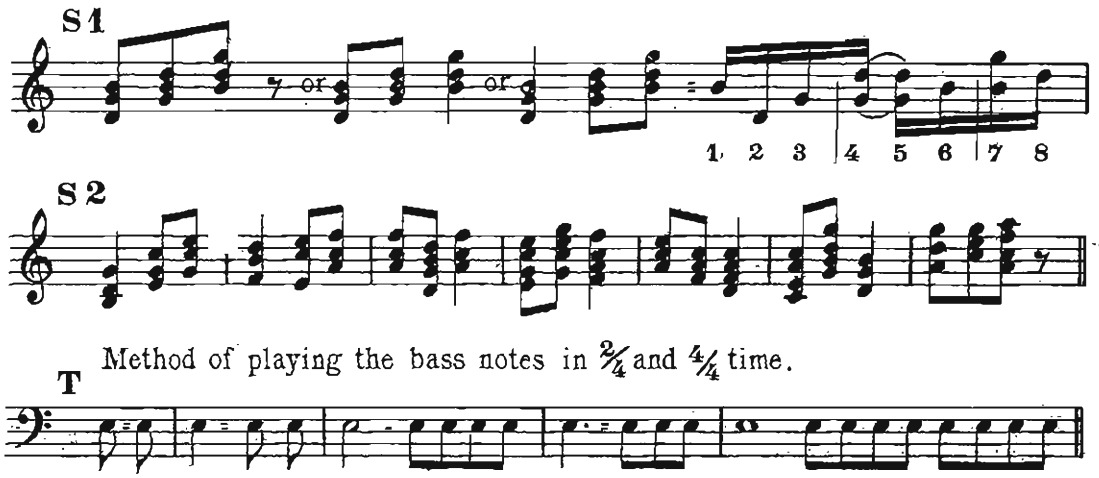
Now play both hands together in all three movements.

NOTE.– The last 8 beats of any piece or strain should not be played in ragtime. In order to give the piece a definite ending, they should be played exactly as it is written.

Playing Two Chords In One Ragtime Movement.



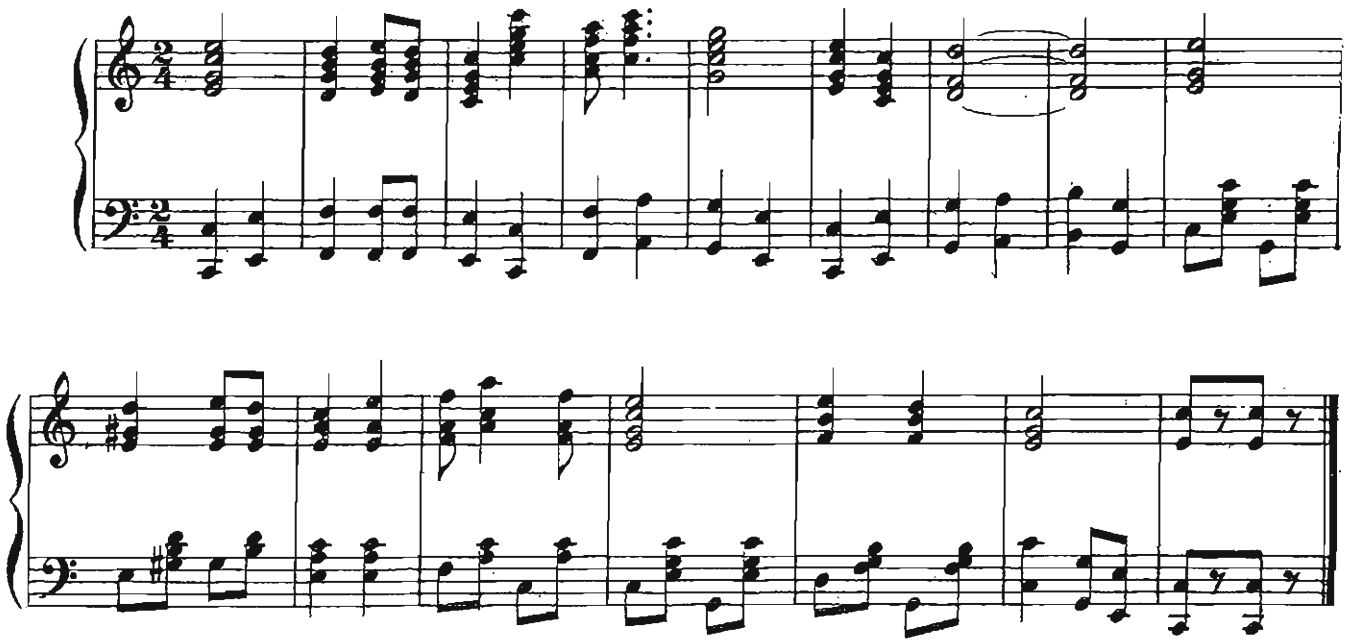
Playing Three Chords In One Movement.



Method of playing the bass notes in $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$ time.

The Suwanee River.

Play the following Exercise in the three movements.

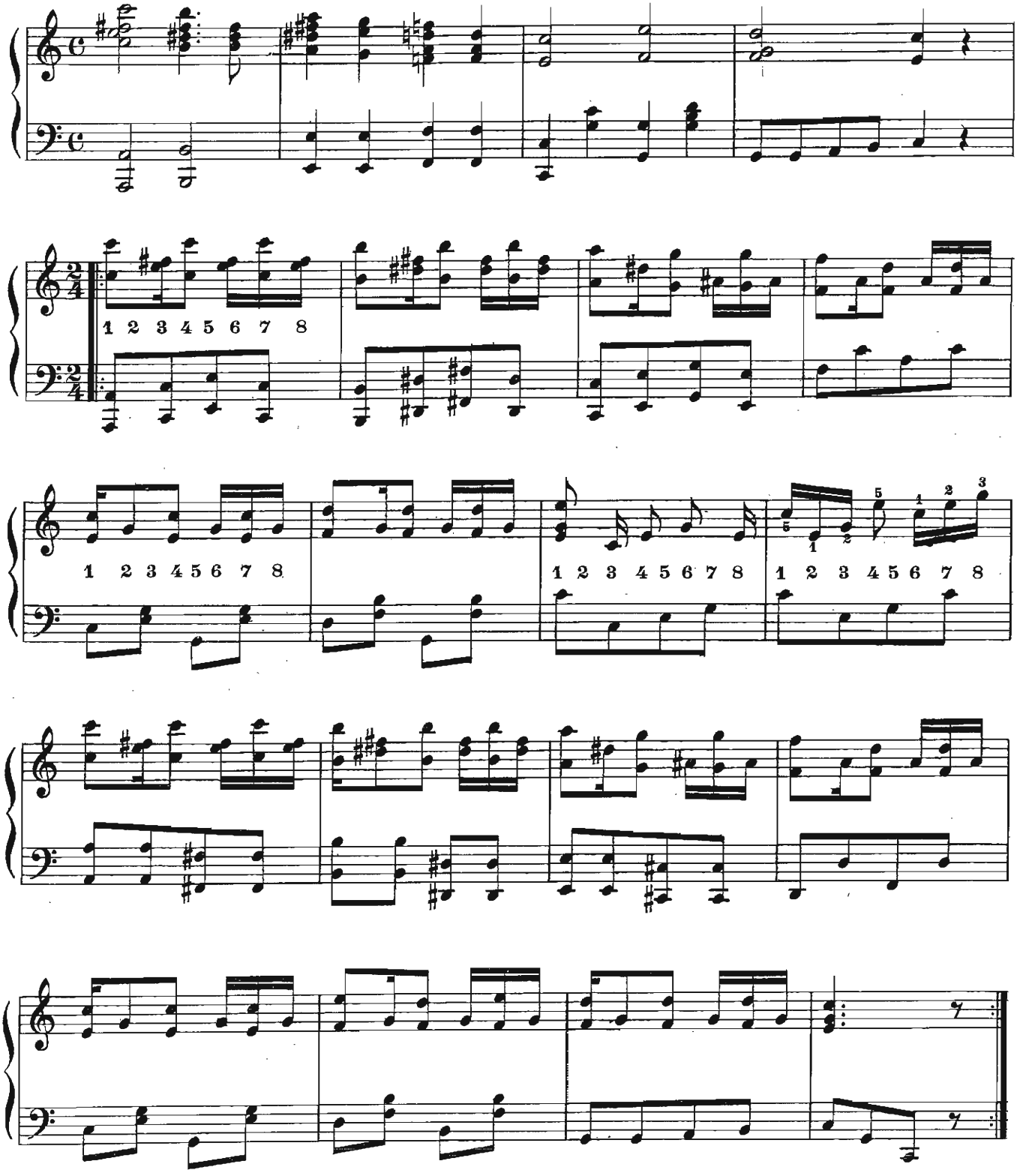


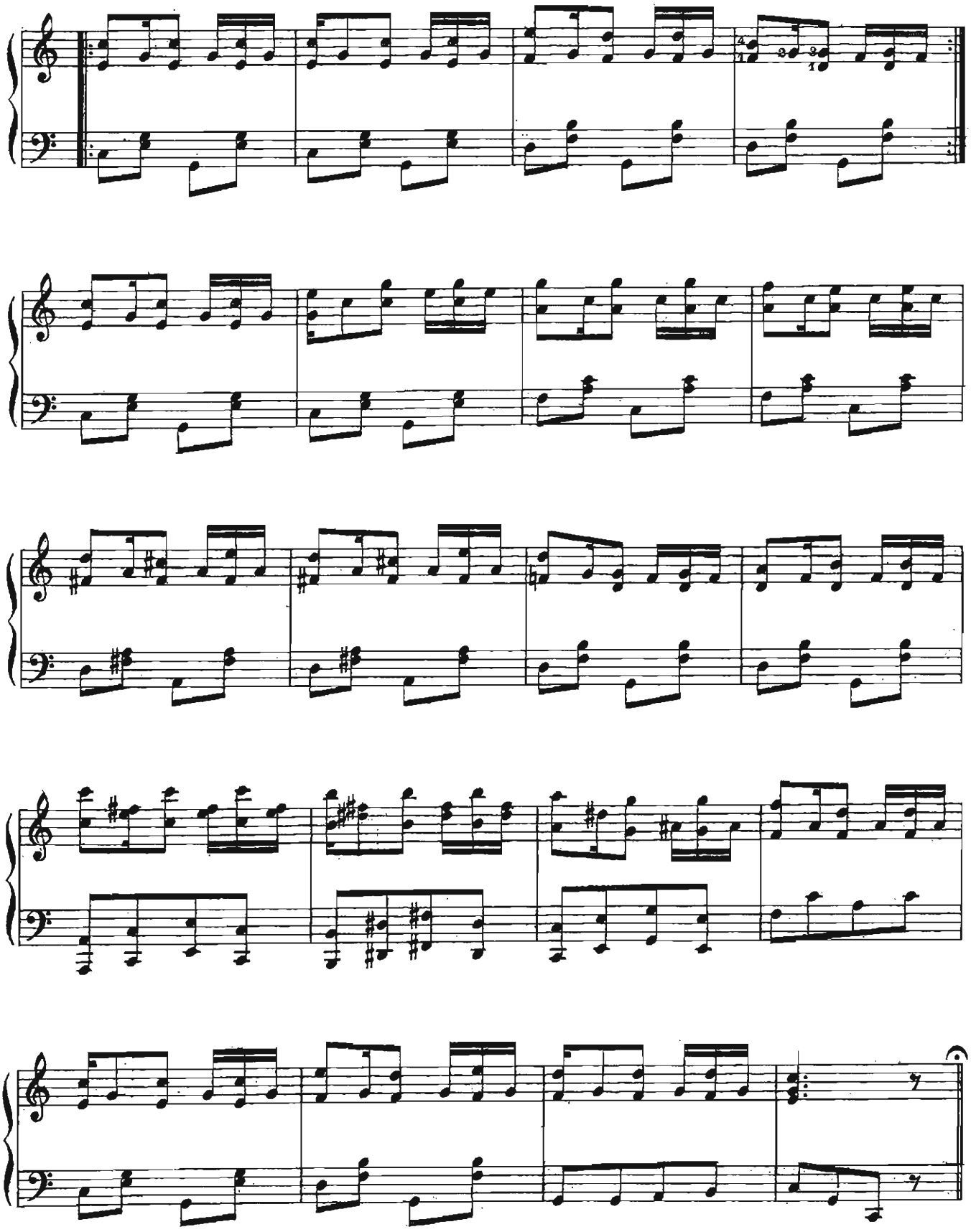
Mendelssohn's Wedding March.

IN RAGTIME.

Arr. by A. W. CHRISTENSEN.

INTRO.



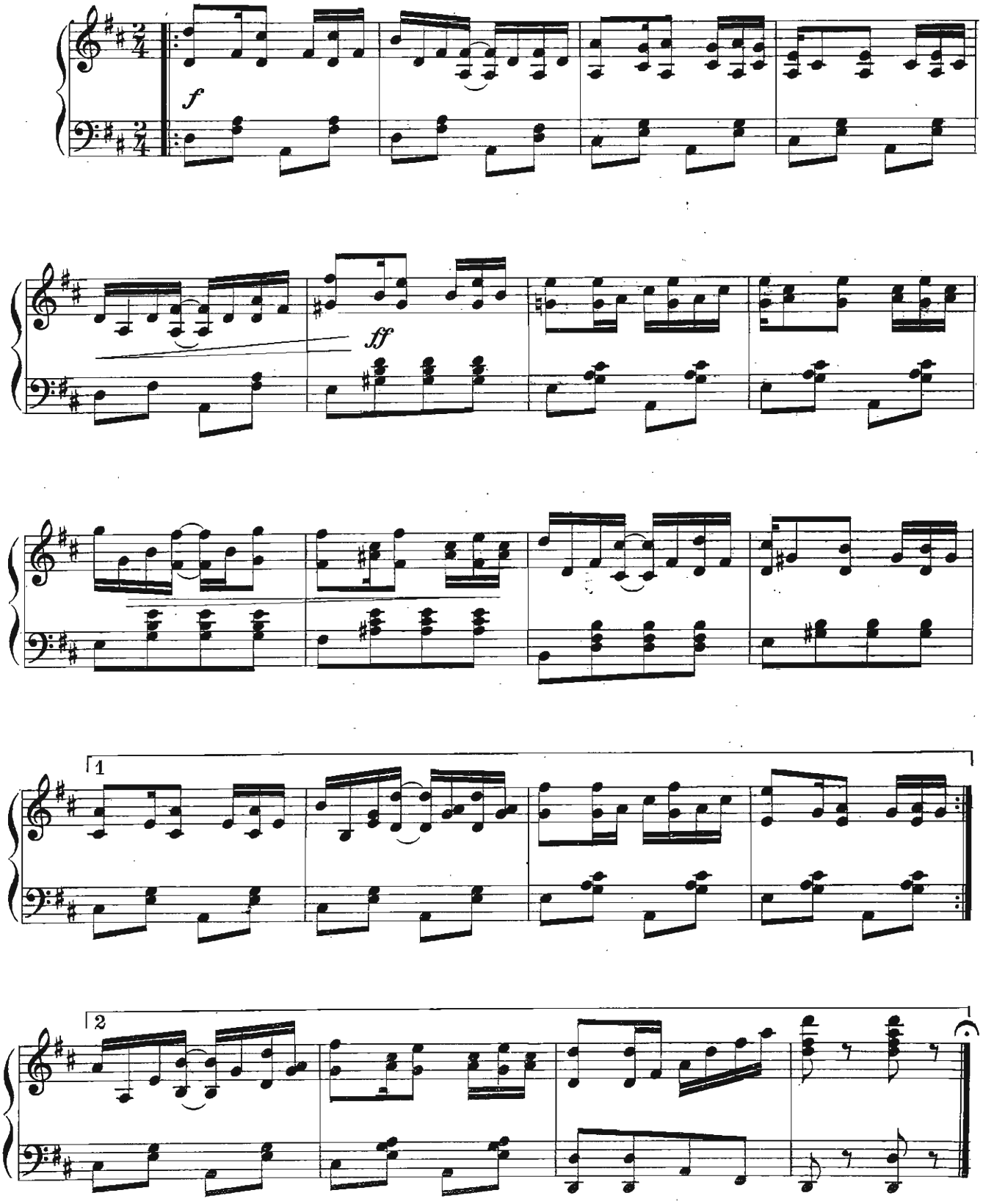


Play the chords in each measure of this piece.

Simple Confession.

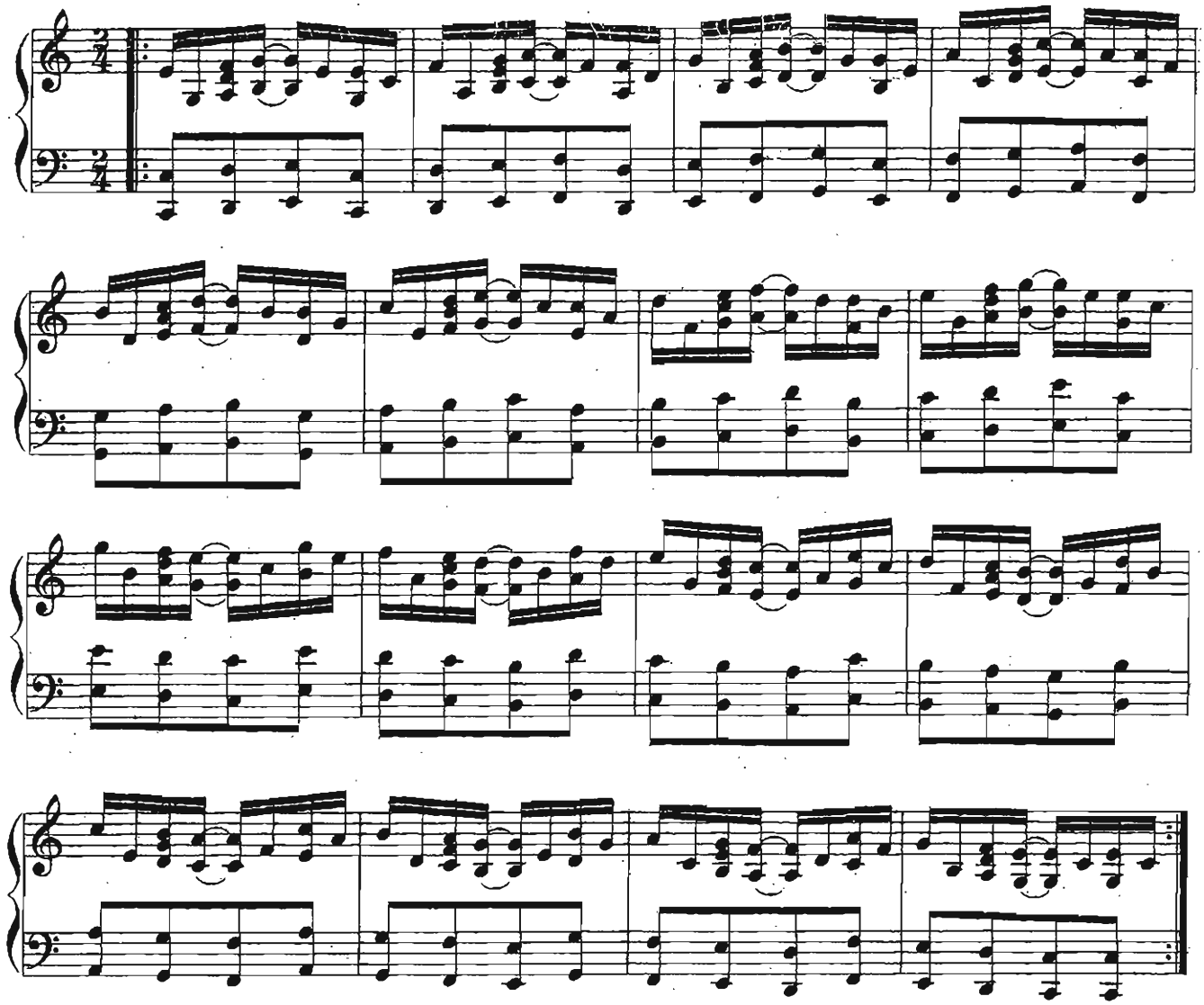
IN RAGTIME.

Arr. by A. W. CHRISTENSEN.

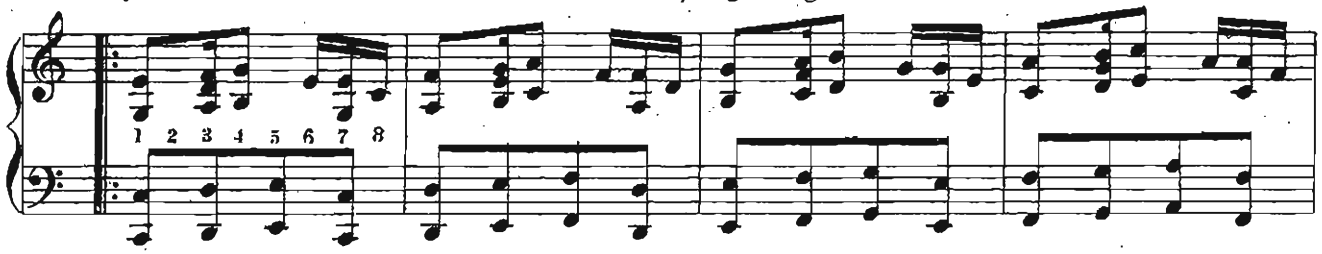


Play the chords contained in each measure of this piece

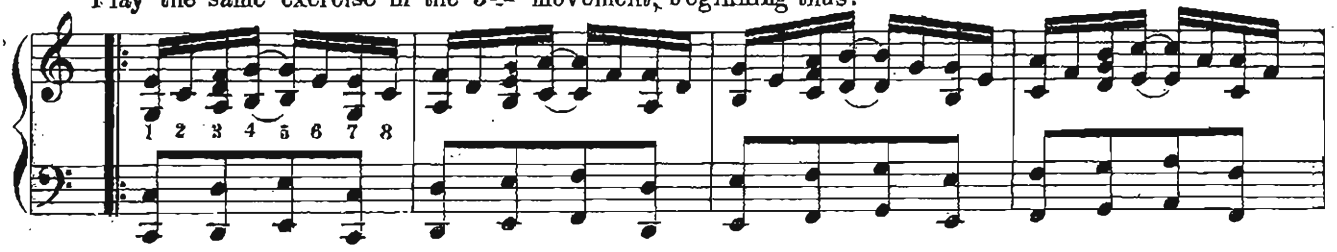
Exercise-Playing 4 Chords to the Movement.



Play the above Exercise in the 2nd Movement, beginning thus:



Play the same exercise in the 3rd movement, beginning thus:



How to Convert 4 Chords into One Movement.

Christensen System of Ragtime Piano Playing - Lesson 8 - Copyright, MCMXI, by Axel W. Christensen

Example "U 1" shows how one ragtime movement can be applied to four chords at once.

Give the first chord counts 1, 2.

Play the whole of the second chord on count 3.

Give the third chord 4, 5, 6.

Give the fourth chord 7, 8.

When playing four chords in one movement the counts 1, 2, – 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, mean the same as heretofore, but "count 3" calls for the whole of the second chord, no matter which of the three movements you may use.

Play each measure of "U 2" in all three movements.

Play Example "U 3" as it is written.

Before playing this piece in ragtime we must first add enough notes to each chord to make three notes in all. The missing middle note will be found either in the bass or in the preceding chord.

Play the piece as it is written and supply the missing middle notes in the treble.

Now play the piece in all three movements.

In the bass, an eighth note followed by an eighth rest is considered the same as a quarter note and will be played twice.

In this piece you are to play two movements to every measure, dividing the measure exactly in half.

Rests, or ties, are not recognized when ragging a piece.

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CAULDRON RAG.

A NEW RAG CLASSIC, INTRODUCING "TRIPLE RAG."

By AXEL W CHRISTENSEN.

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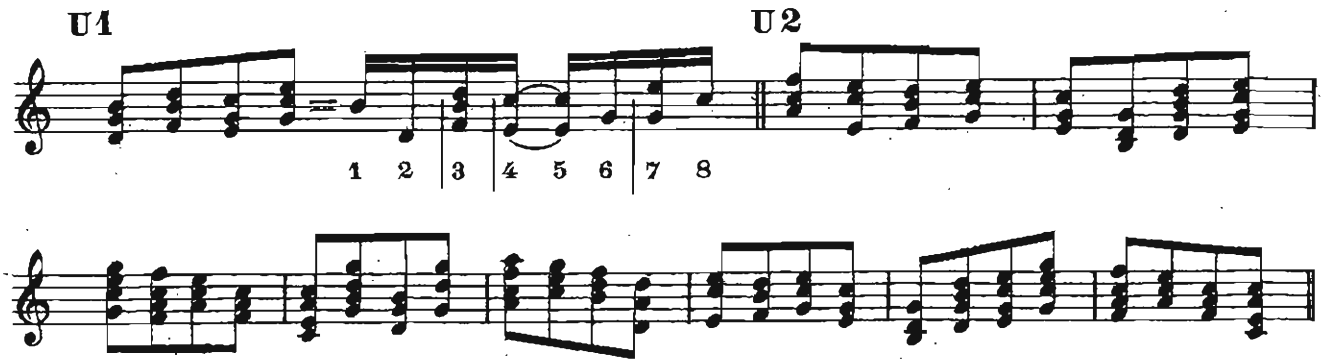
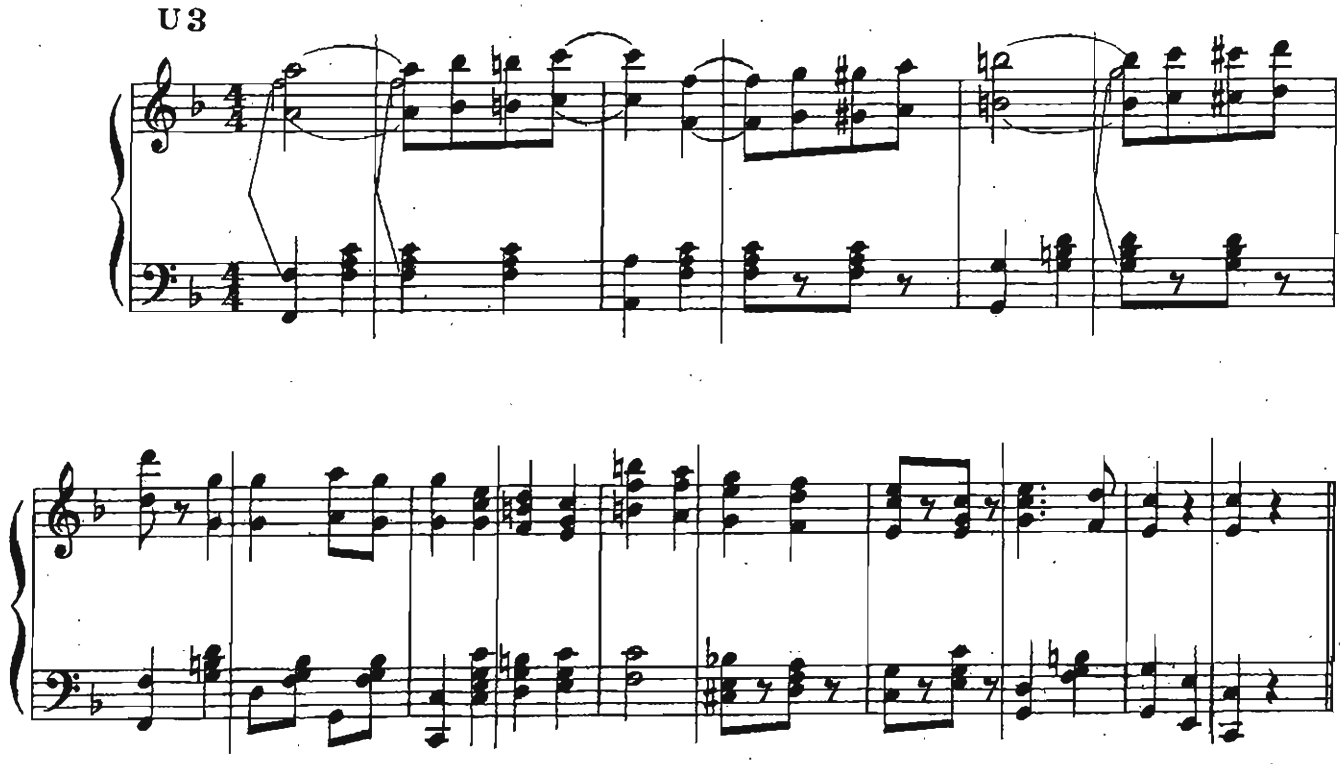
Playing Four Chords In One Movement.



When a piece is written in $\frac{2}{4}$ time play one ragtime movement to each measure.

When a piece is written in $\frac{4}{4}$ time play two ragtime movements to each measure.

Play the following exercise in each of the movements.



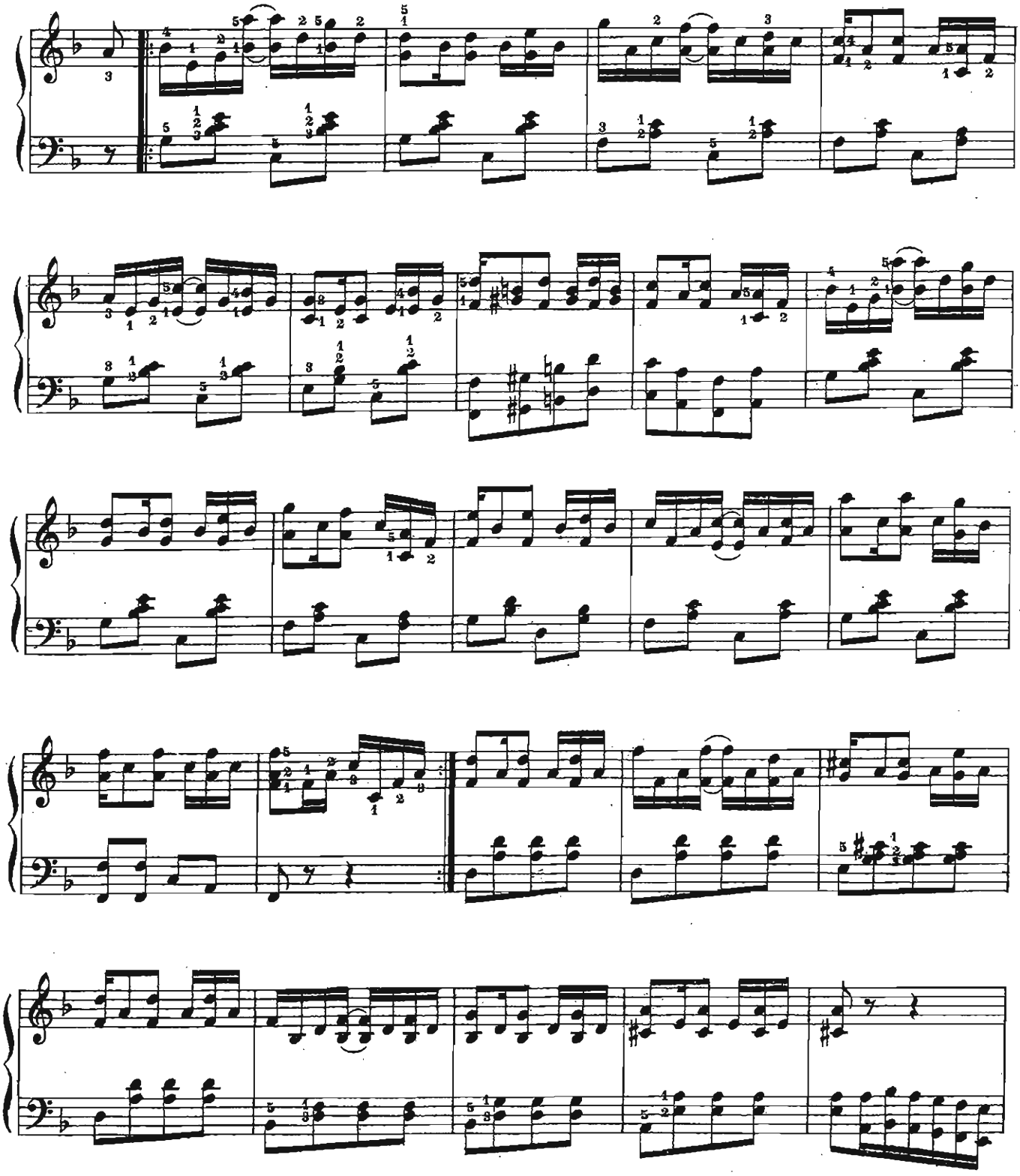
All ragtime should be played in regular two-step time (not too fast) accenting counts 1 and 4 slightly more than the others.

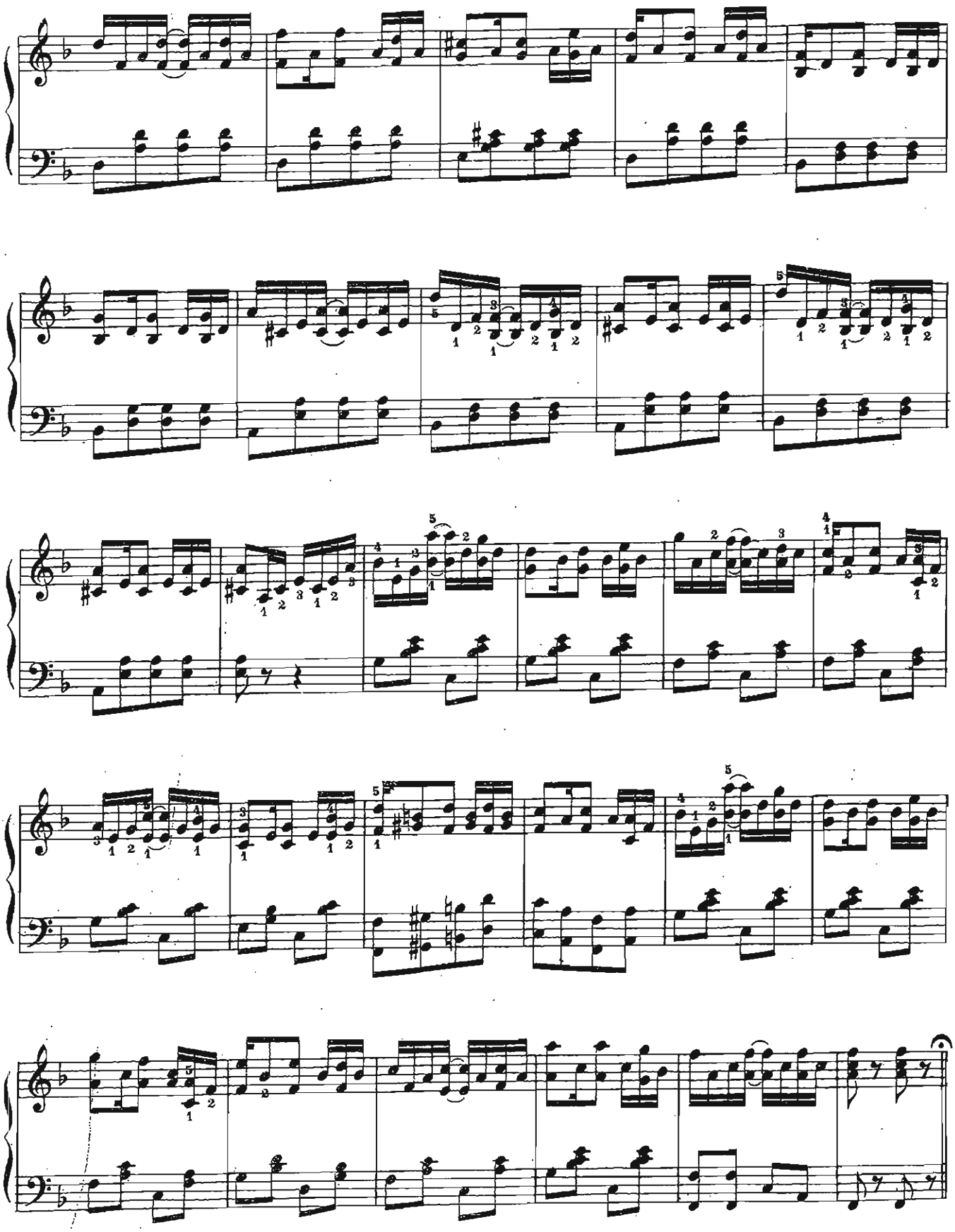
Lange's Flower Song.

IN RAGTIME.

Arr. by A. W. CHRISTENSEN.

Moderato.





Play the chords contained in each measure of this piece

How to "Rag" Waltz Time.

On the opposite page the first line of music (Marked I.) is written in Waltz time, or $\frac{3}{4}$ time; the second line (Marked II) shows how this piece can be converted into ragtime, without disturbing the waltz movement; the third line (Marked III) shows how the same piece can be converted into regular ragtime.

To convert a waltz into waltz ragtime (See Example II) we follow exactly the same rules as usual, except that we omit the last two counts of the ragtime movements. This gives us only 6 beats to every movement, instead of eight. Count number 1 should be accented quite strong, while counts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 are played with the usual firm and uniform touch.

In ragging waltz time, the bass is played just as it is written — that is, three bass notes to each measure on counts 1, 3, 5. Accent count 1.

To convert a waltz into regular ragtime (See Ex. III) we count 8 beats to the measure, and all the chords in each measure are played in one movement. In order to obtain the required four bass notes on 1, 3, 5, 7, play one of the bass notes twice—usually the last bass note in the measure, although sometimes it sounds better to repeat the first bass note.

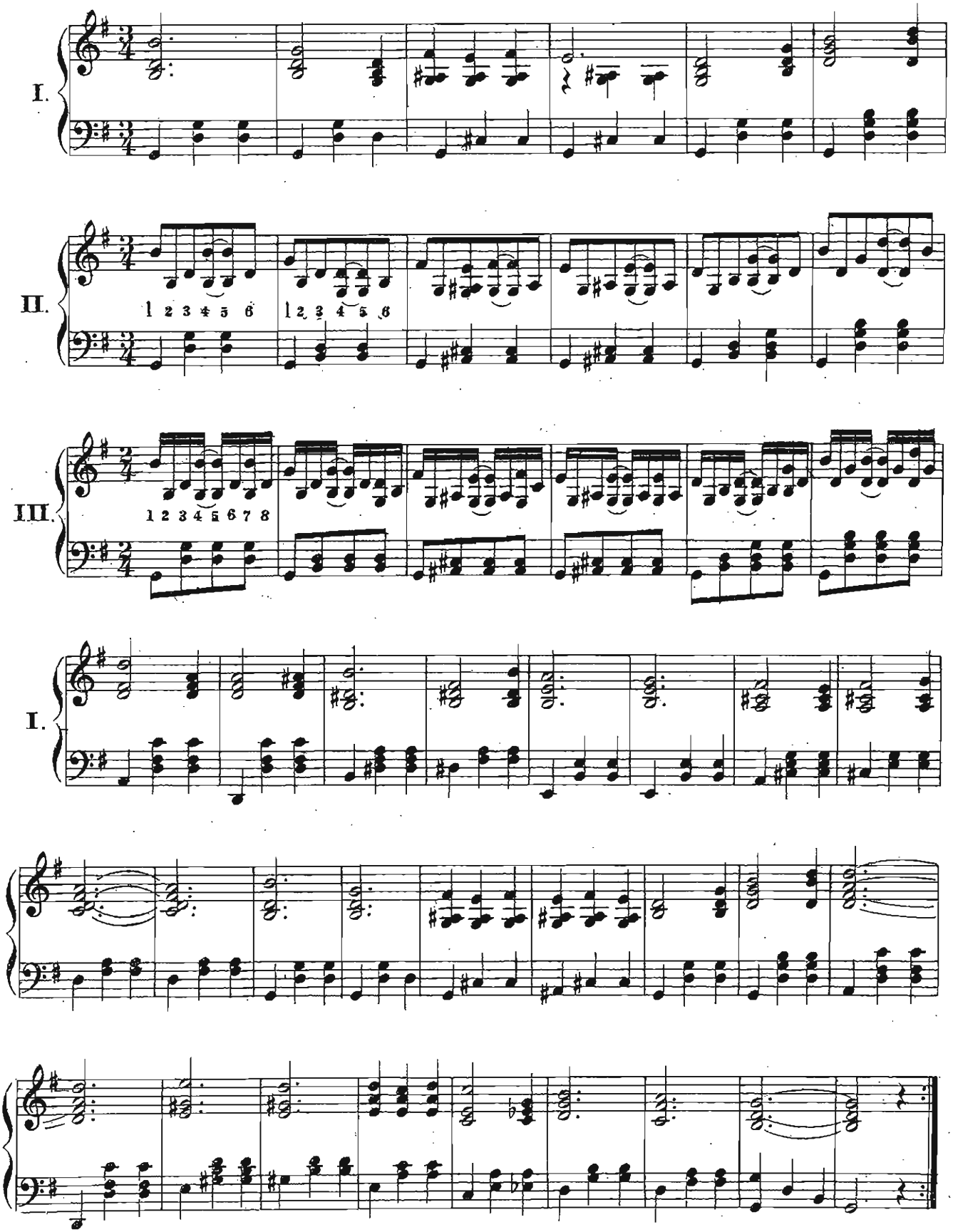
Play the waltz on the opposite page, just as it is written. It begins with the first line and is continued on the fourth line.

Now play this waltz in all three movements—first all the way through in each movement, then using the movements in succession. (See Ex. II)

Next play the waltz in regular ragtime, same as is shown in Ex. III, using all three movements.

Example in "Ragging" Waltz Time.

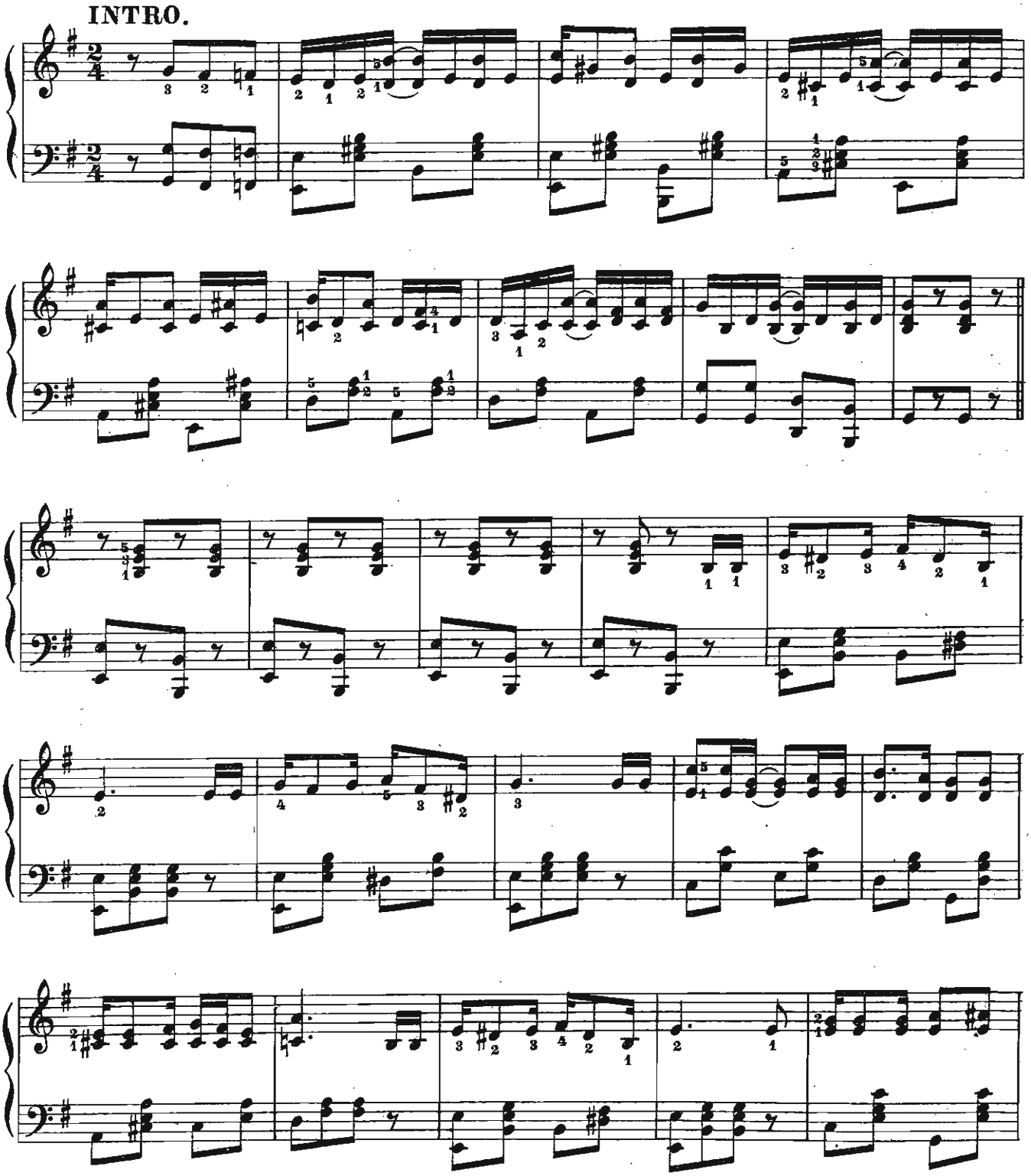
By AXEL W. CHRISTENSEN.

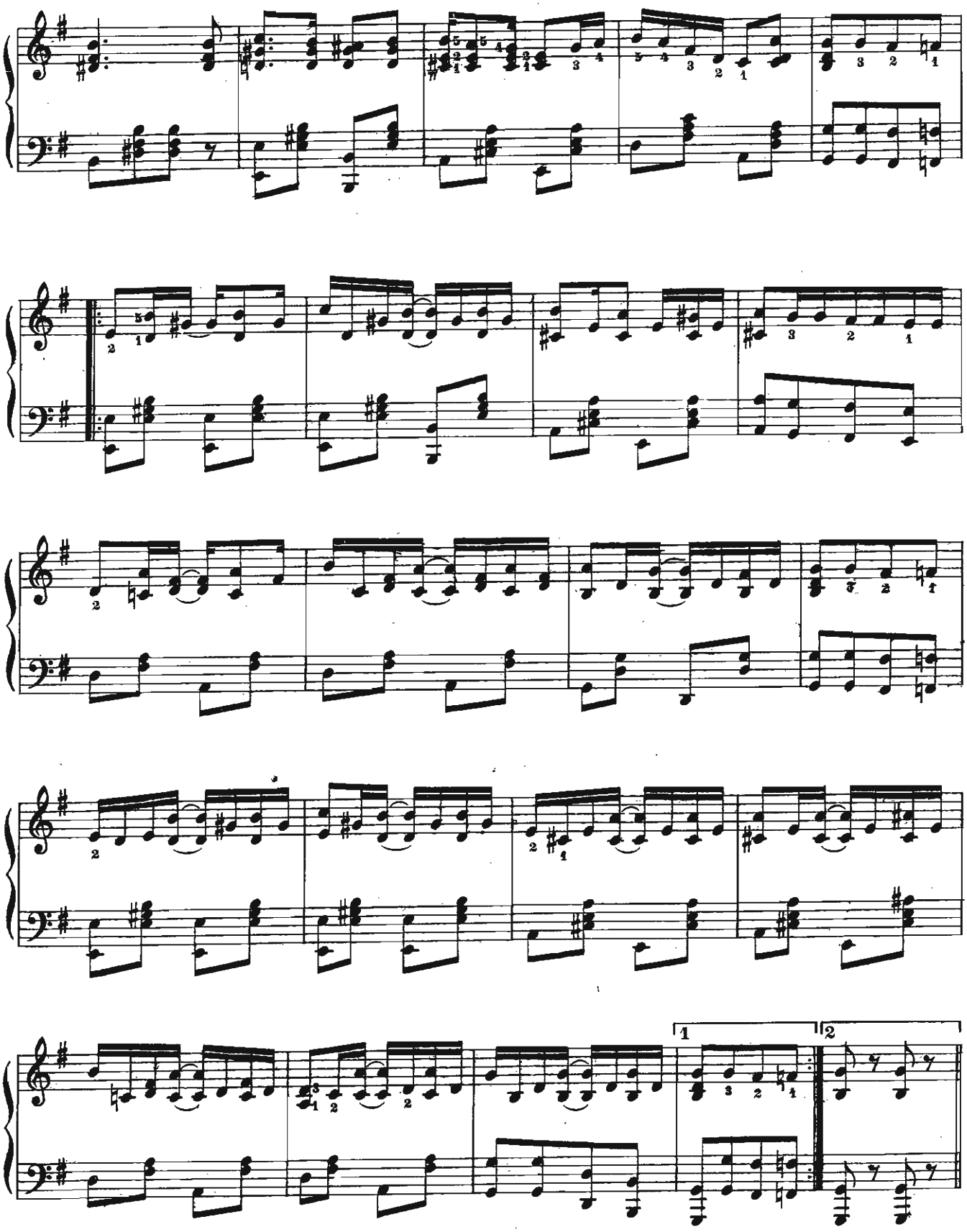


The Ragtime King.

By AXEL W. CHRISTENSEN.

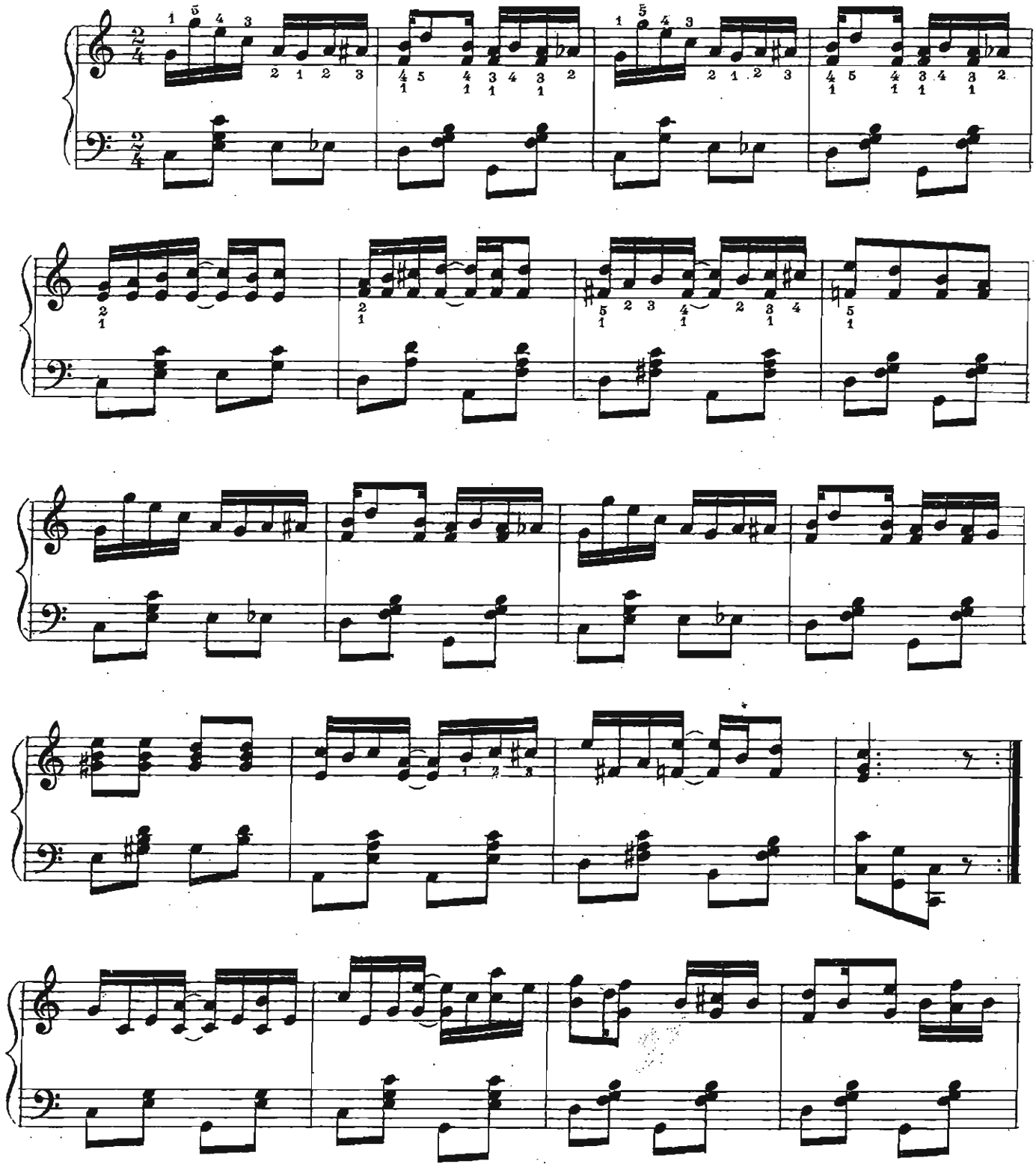
INTRO.





IRMENA RAG.

AXEL CHRISTENSEN.



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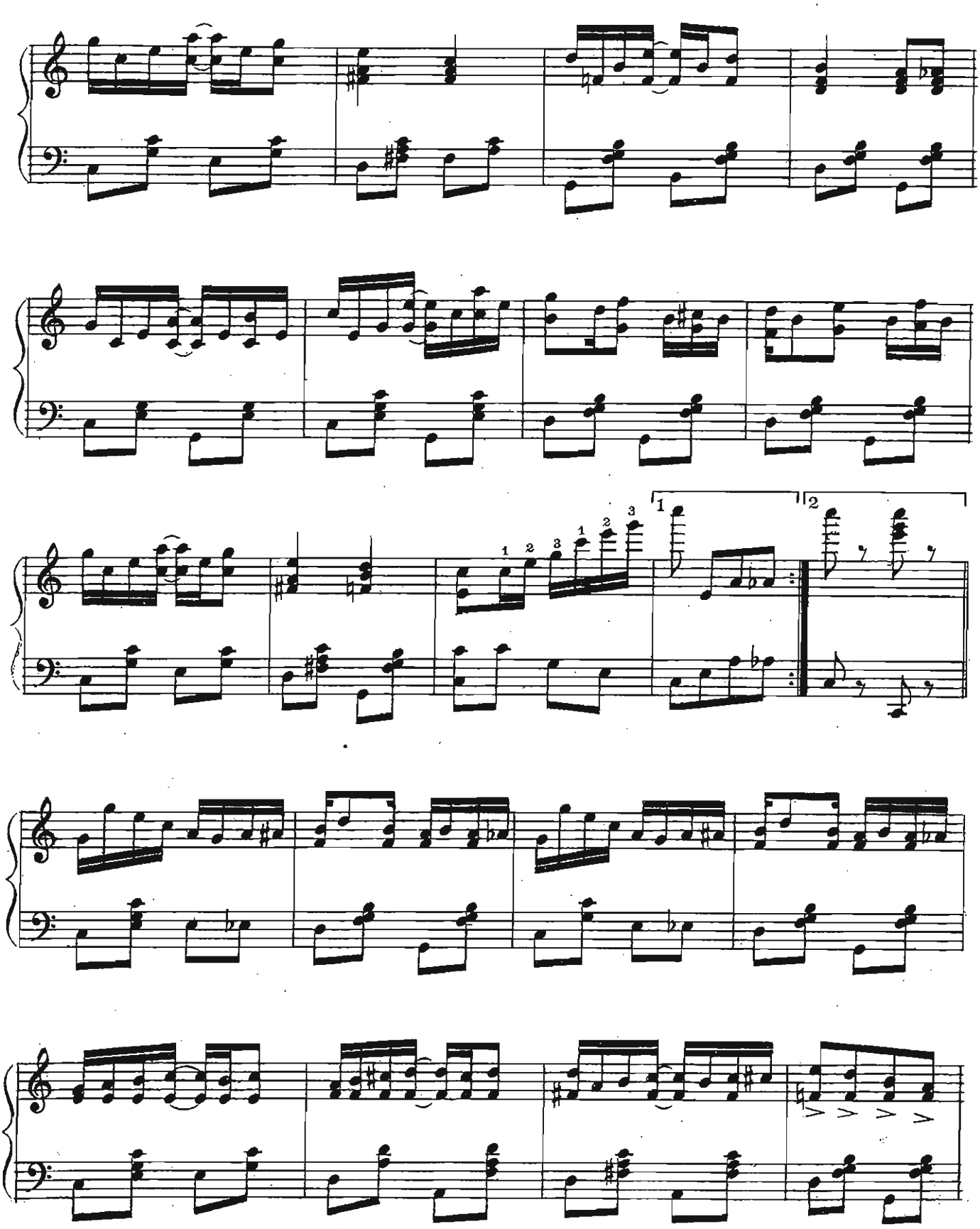
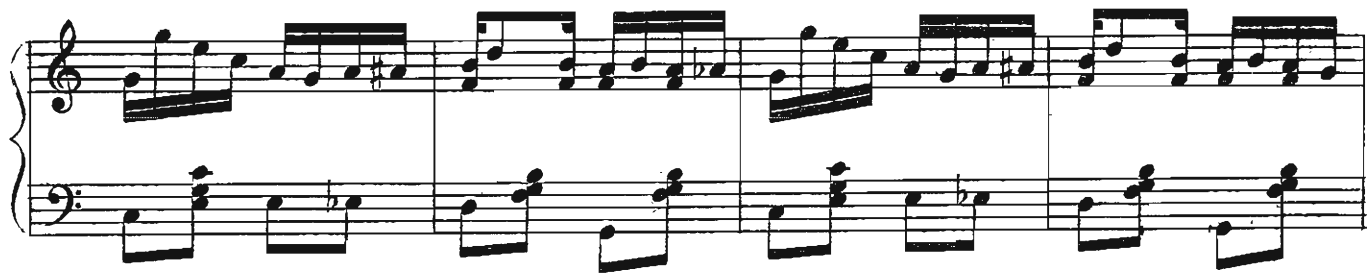
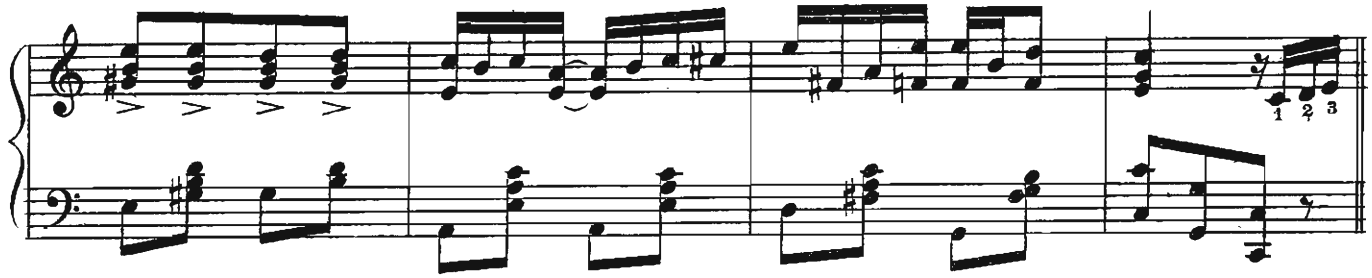
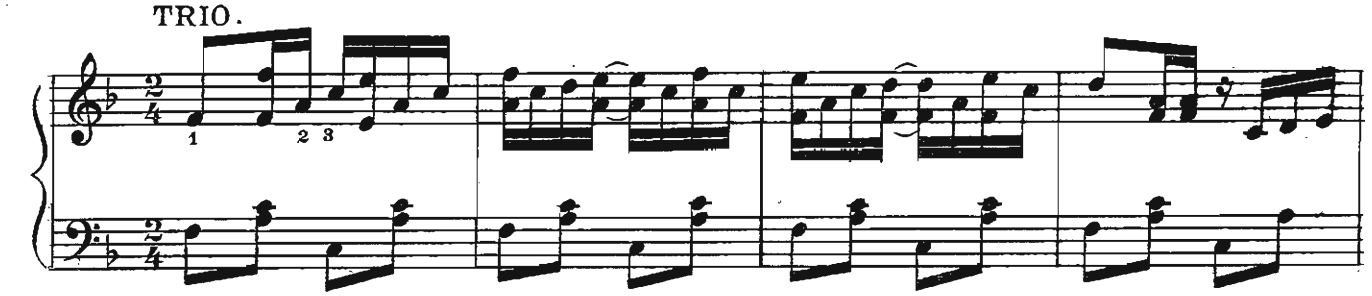
This piece is also published in sheet music form. Price 25 cents postpaid

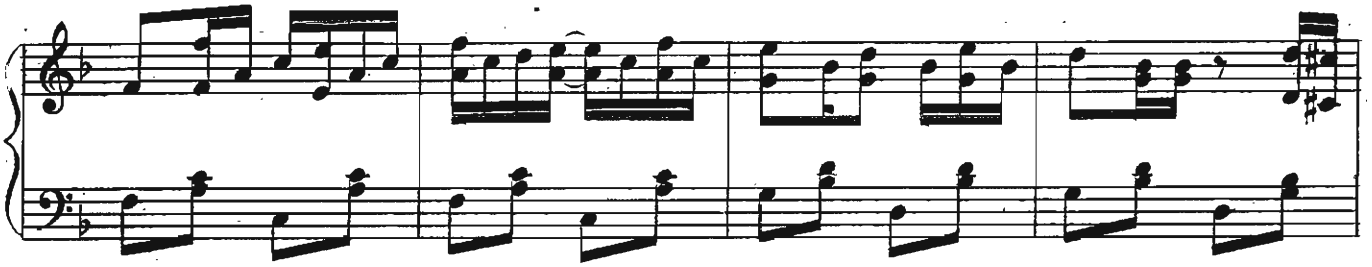


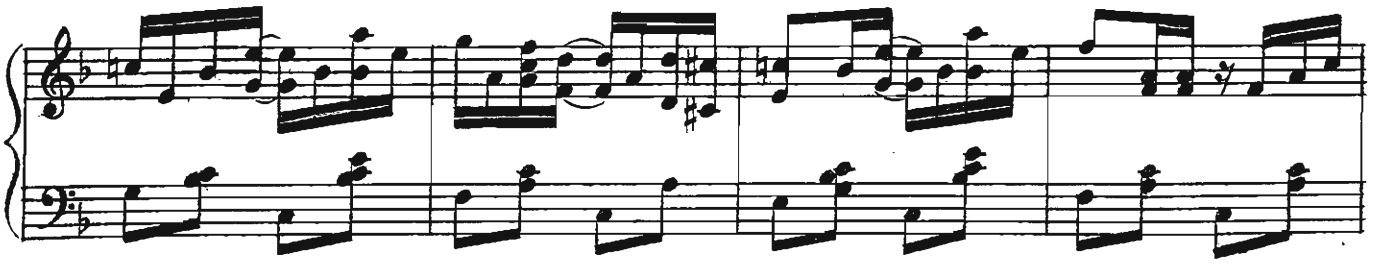


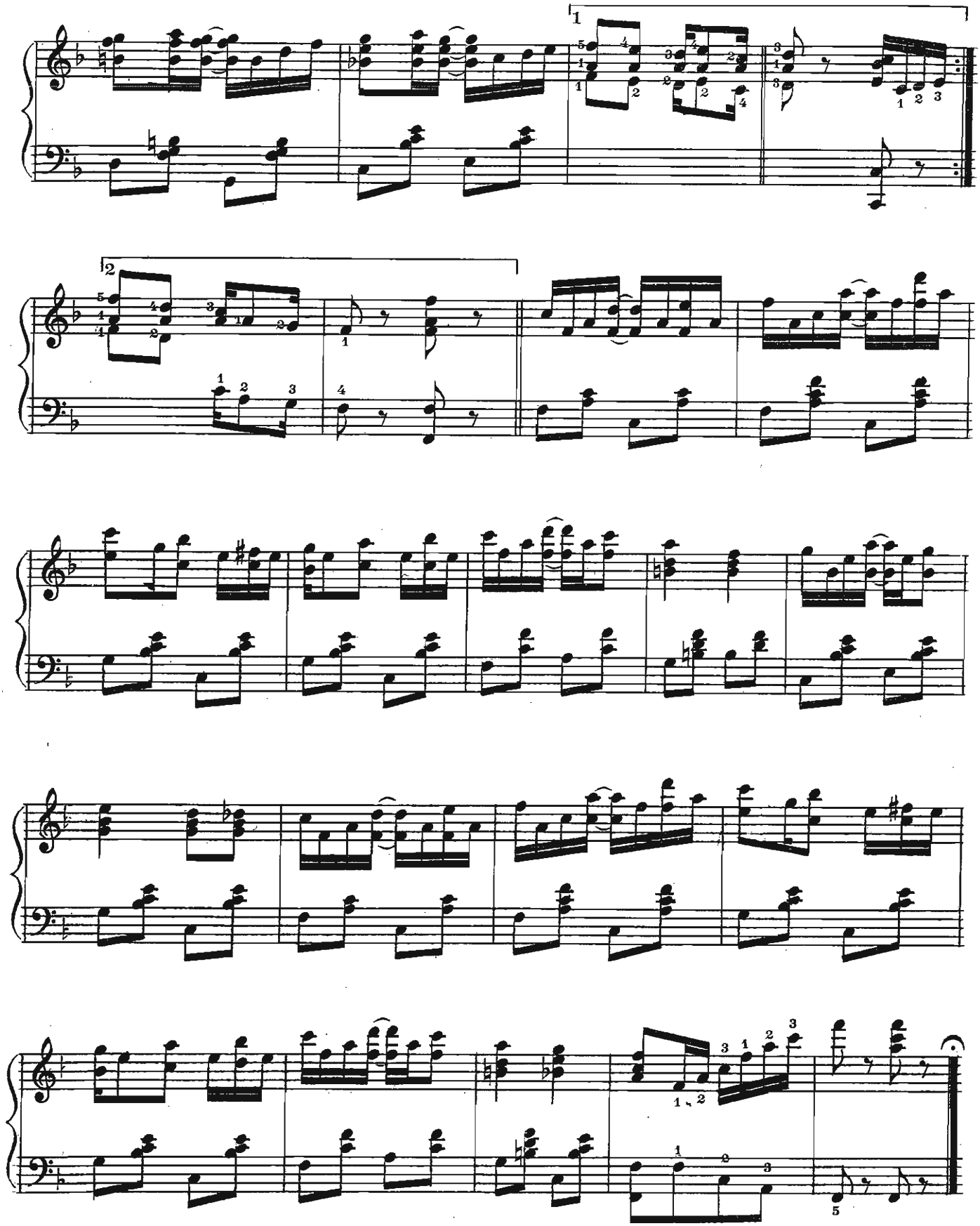


TRIO.





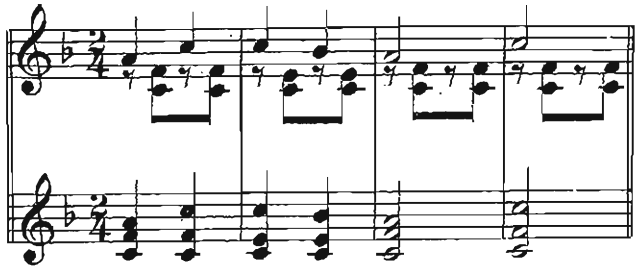




General Remarks.

Pieces arranged like this:

Are considered like this:



and will be converted into ragtime in the usual manner.

When ragging a popular song where a separate line of notes is given for the voice, you will rag only the piano part. In rare instances the piano part does not contain the melody, in which case it will be necessary to add the notes of the melody to the chords in the piano part.

If you wish to rag a melody, which is made up of single notes; form your chords in this manner: Let the note which is given become the bottom note of the chord; the octave of this note will then be the top note and you can find your middle note in the bass. Then rag as usual.

The melody, or octave of the melody must always be the top note of the chord.

Next week you will receive for your 12th lesson the Cauldron Rag. Practice it slowly at first and see that the "triplets" are played in correct time.

Christensen's Ragtime Instructor No. 2

Shows how to convert any piece into brilliant "arpeggio ragtime," playing the entire melody with the left hand, while playing ragtime variations with the right hand. Worth ten times the price but will be sent postpaid for 50 cents, stamps or money order.

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