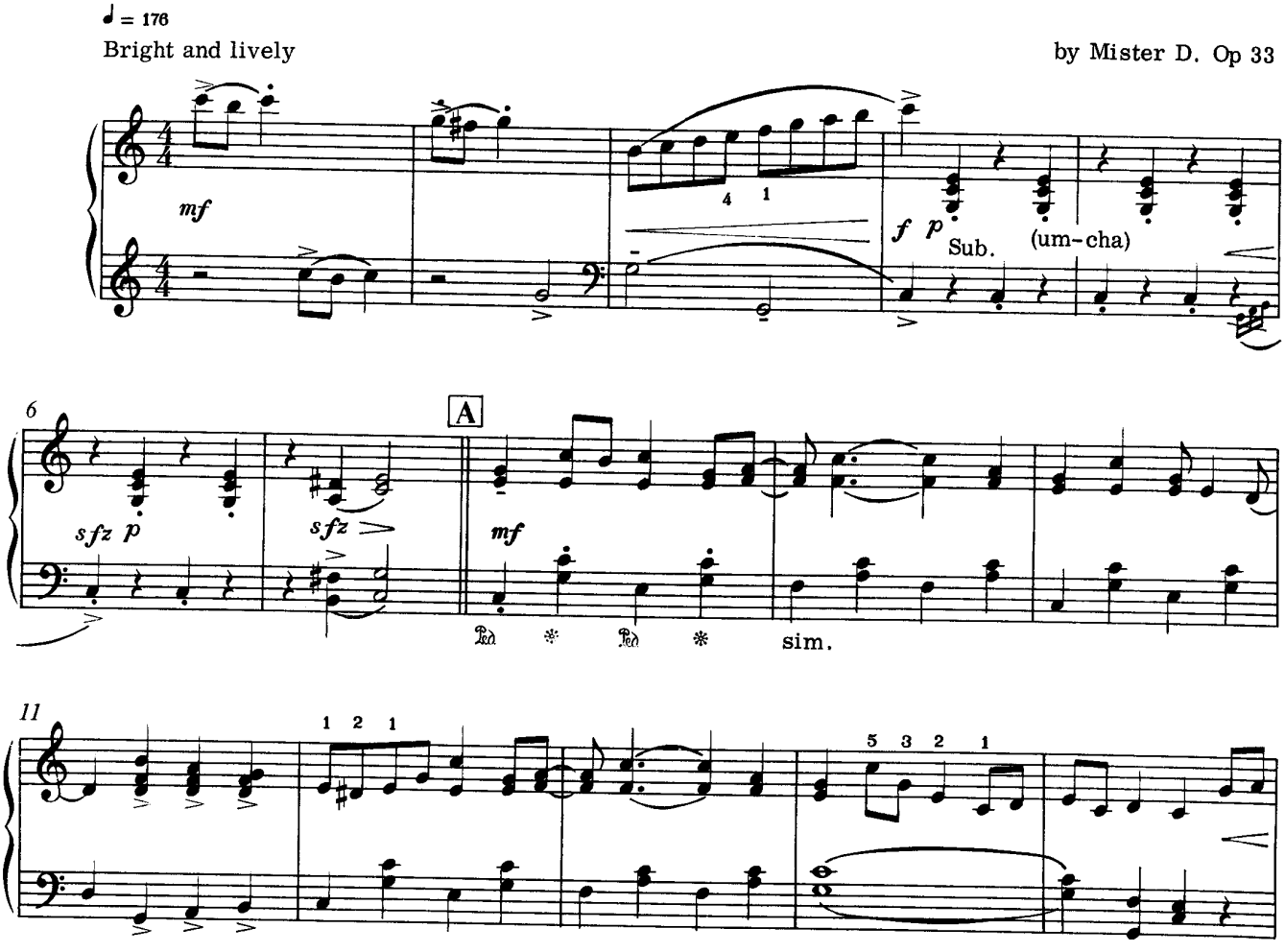
Kentucky Rag

In the 'Blue Grass' country they have these horse and trap races with their high-stepping, elegant horses; this atmosphere is what this rag evokes. The piece should be played prim and refined, with a spritely bass like a dancing, high-stepping horse.

There is a lovely little hidden counter-melody in the bass part in section [B]; try the left hand on its own and you will hear it. The last two bars are a typical bit of Country and Western-type scale and harmony.

N. B. The numbers in square brackets refer to paragraphs in the General Guide to Interpretation.



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Sad Sonatine

Here is a lovely piece which is quite different from others in the album. It is a curious mixture of classical Mozartian delicacy together with folk-like elements and funky, blues-like passages. Although there are some different time-changes you will find that these fit in quite naturally when you know the piece.

The passage at [B] is particularly delicate and needs playing 'sotto voce' whilst still retaining a smooth legato rhythm. At C the left hand chords should be strongly accented with a strong beat. Watch for the sudden dynamic contrasts, these are very important to the mood of the piece.

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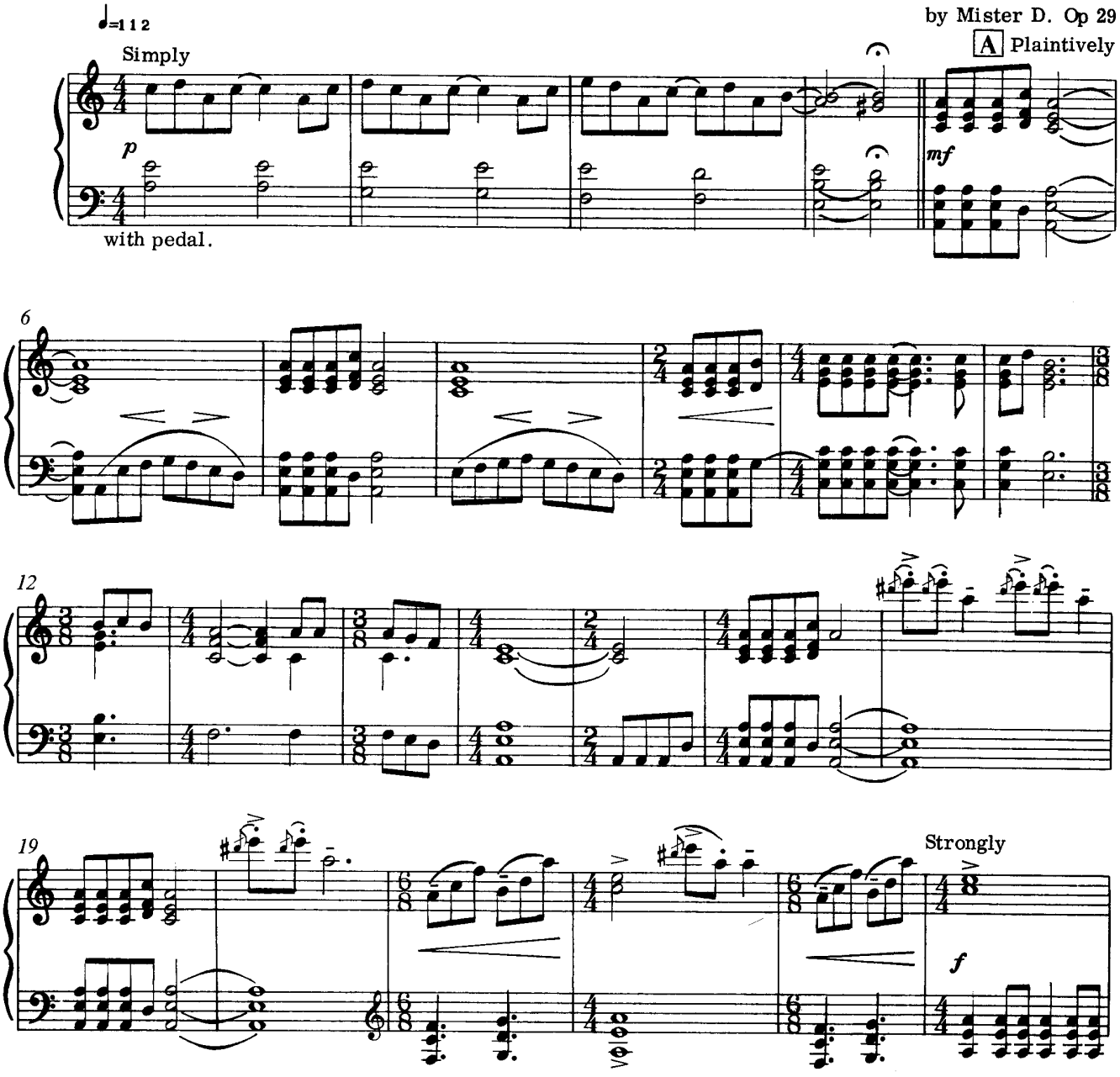

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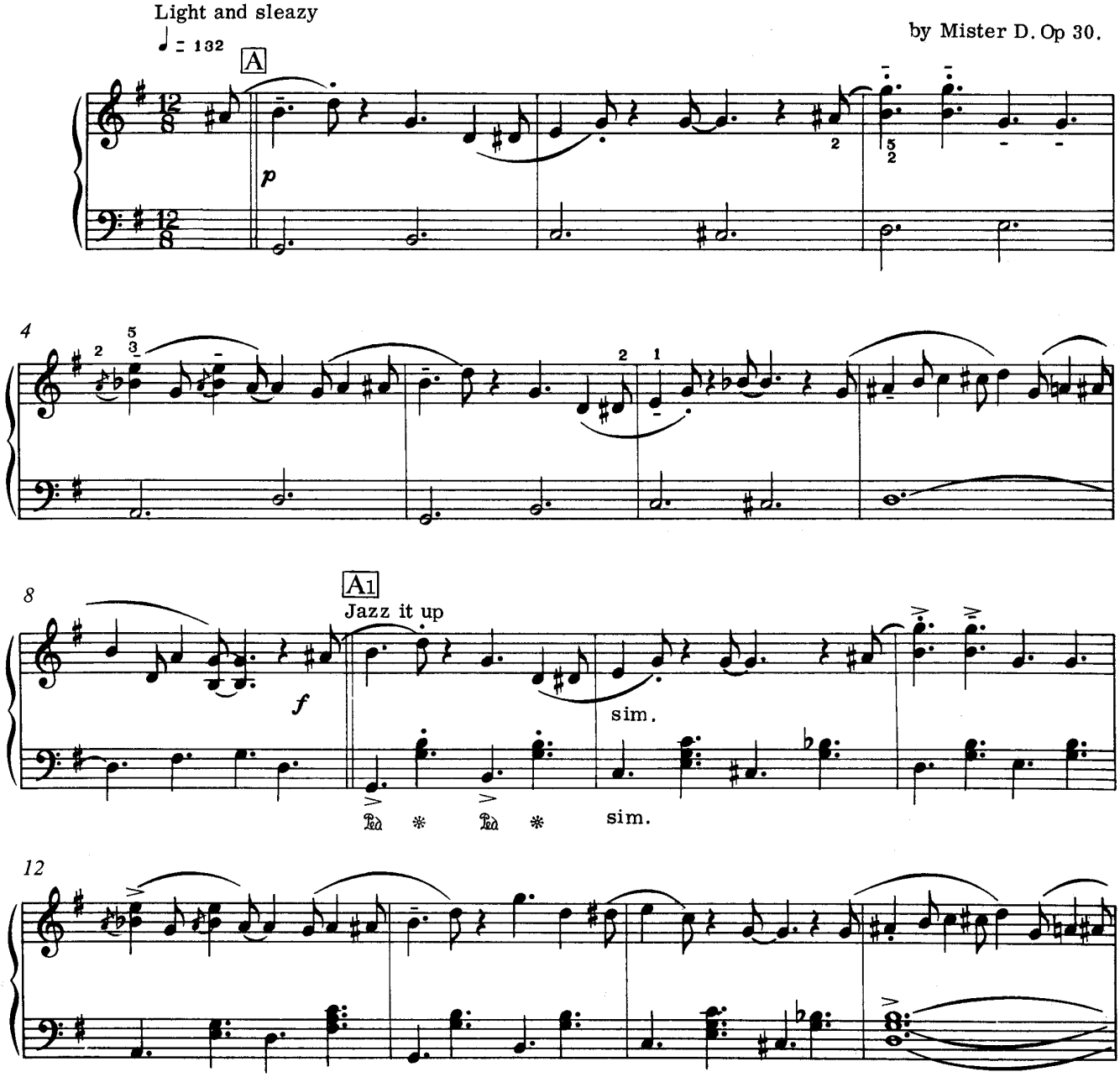
Jazz-A-Belle

Here's a little jazzy 'cat-walk' to complement the CAT'S CAKEWALK in Album I. Its quite easy, but it needs a nice, bouncey rhythm to pull it off. Watch out for the contrasting loud and soft sections, and also for the pauses, which make it a little mysterious and spooky.

Its the sort of thing you might hear in a night club as accompaniment to a sleasy dancer, so try to create the appropriate atmosphere. If you prefer, the whole piece can be played without the pauses.

N.B. The numbers in square brackets refer to paragraphs in the General Guide to Interpretation.



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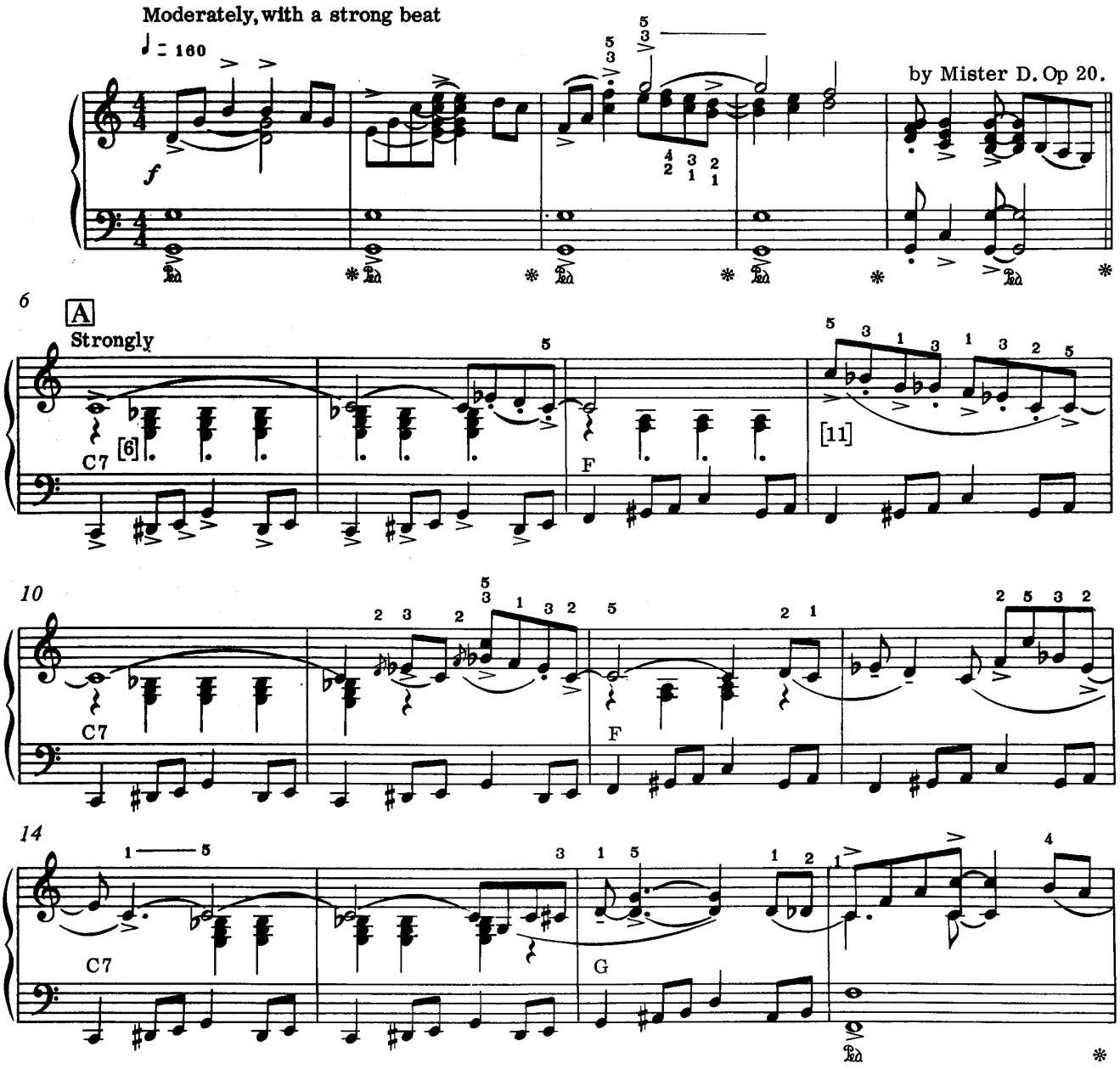
Free'n'Easy

FREE 'N EASY is a sort of embryo Rock Sonata, a good one to cut your teeth on. It is not too difficult, but is quite an extended piece of blues, with various sorts of rock and kind of 'funky' classical interludes. Here, you will be able to experience the 'split hand' technique necessary to solo rock piano playing [5], [6]. The accompaniment chords want to be always precise 'stab' chords in order to cut across the rhythm of the bass.

You'll be able to get lots of practice at blues playing and the 'blues scale' [11] in this piece, but in a rock idiom. The contrasting 'swinging' passages (e.g. [B] and the bouncey bit before [C]) are really to be felt in 2 as against the solid 4 of the rock. Really let these passages take-off, especially at the end. There's some nice bits of 'funky' fingerwork which you will find useful for blues playing.

N.B. The numbers in square brackets refer to paragraphs in the General Guide to Interpretations.



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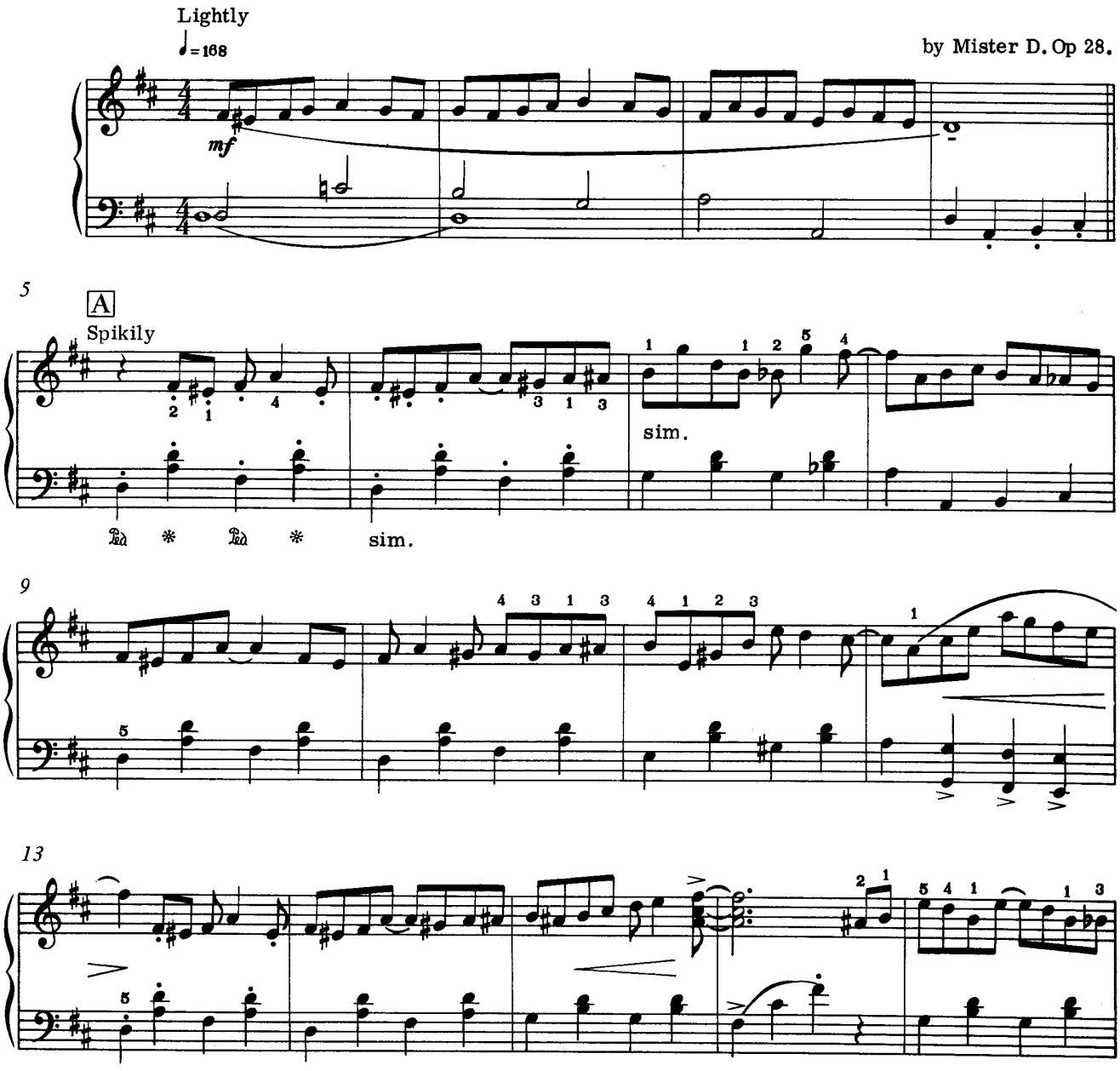
Chicken-Pickin' Rag

Here is another 'new' ragtime piece to complement THE PLASTIC CAKEWALK in Album I. In the heyday of ragtime it was said that "brokers forgot their cares" on hearing it. If you can pick your way through this finger-pickin' CHICKEN-PICKIN' RAG, you will also forget yours!

Do make the bass very light and staccato, except, of course, where it is otherwise marked (e.g. section D). The contrasting cantabile section (D) should sound like a little Victorian musical box, very delicate and sustained.

Really knock out the 'freaky' and 'funky' bits in sections E and F , and especially at the end; but watch for the sudden soft echoes in sections F and G , which are very effective.

N.B. The numbers in square brackets refer to paragraphs in the General Guide to Interpretation.



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Moonrock Boogie

Now you've hit the big time! If you can master this you're close to the Rock Sonatas. It's only a 12-bar blues with a boogie bass, but *now* we're into the heavy rock. There's a lot of the double-rhythm melody that we had a taste of in Rockin' Away, and from [C] onwards you'll need some pretty good fingerwork. The bass must be absolutely even and solid as a rock, no matter what goes on on top.

Make sure that the filling-in phrase (bars 3-4, 7-8) is a smooth contrast to main melody. You do want to *literally* get off the ground with this piece; don't be afraid to get off the keyboard with the right hand, for example at the beginnings of [A], [B], [C], [E] and particulary bars 77-78 where the second note is the bounce from the first. Watch the dotted rhythm from [C] onwards - *not* triplets as in jazz.

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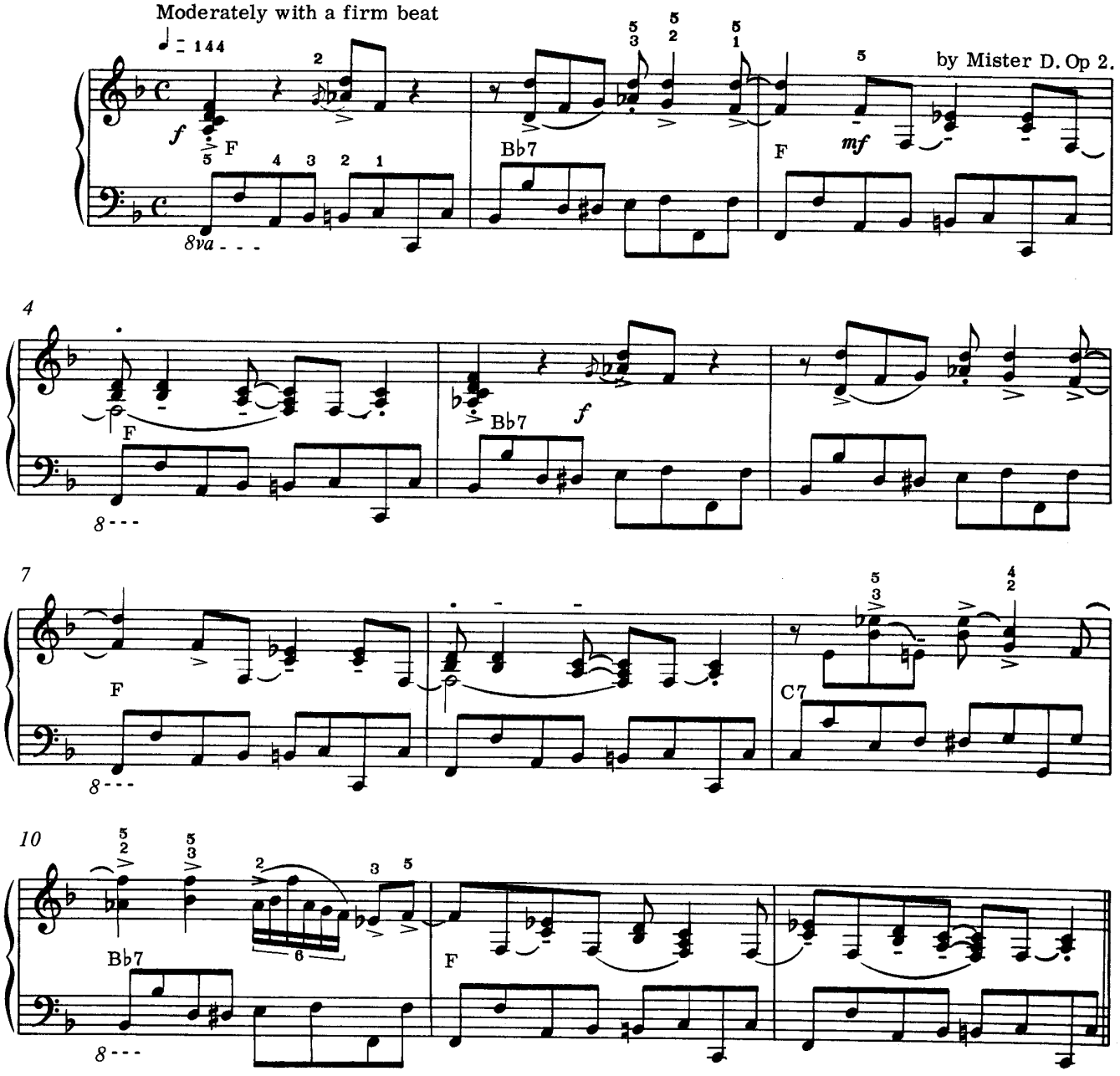

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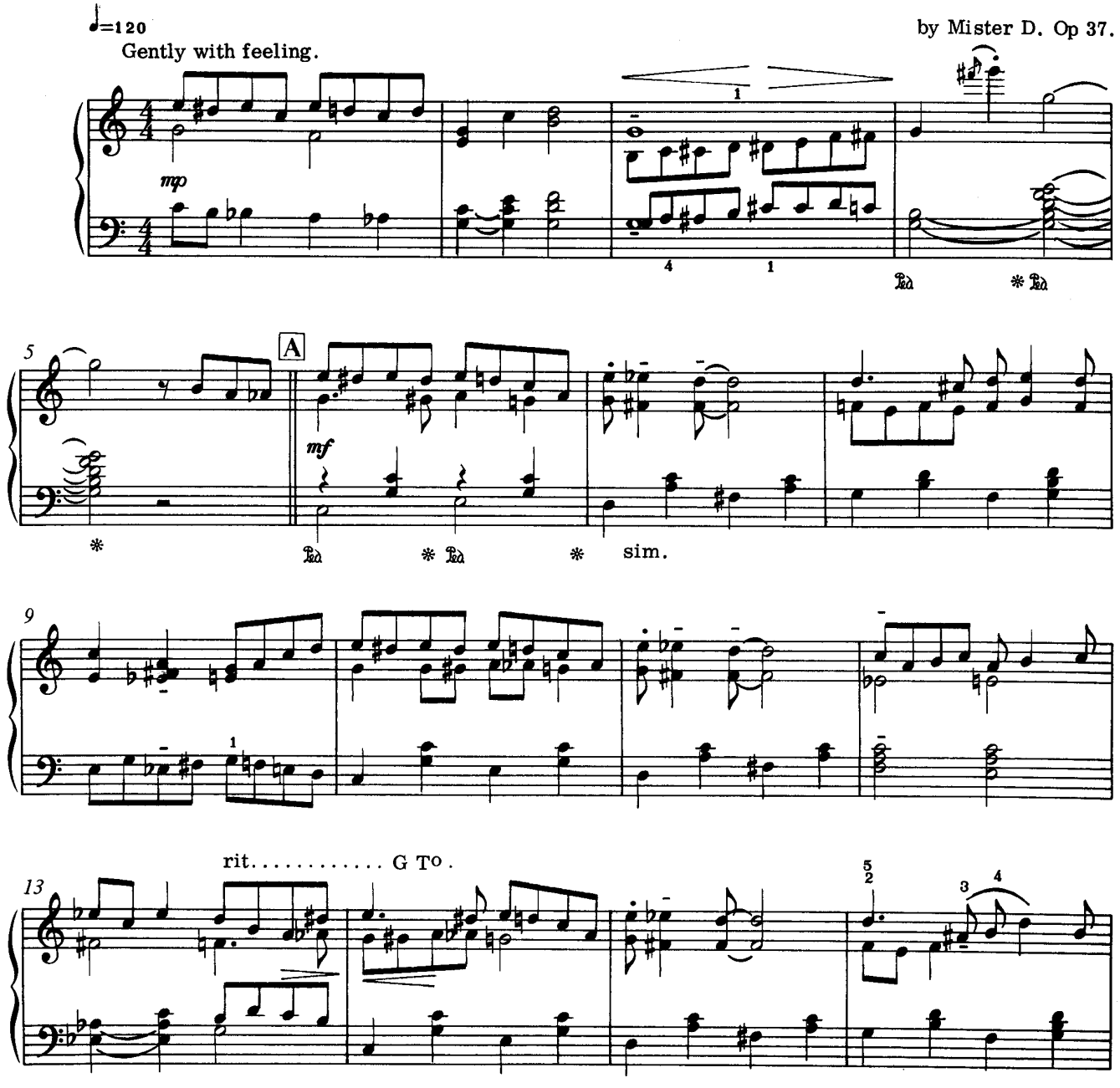
Sentimental Rag

A lot of the basic harmonies and melodies of Ragtime (and from that, jazz and today's popular music) were a translation of 19th Century 'parlour music'. Take away the strong rhythm and syncopation from jazz and popular music and you are left, in many cases, with quite sentimental music.

SENTIMENTAL RAG is a celebration of this sentimentality, but the rhythm and syncopation—particularly in section —bring the piece firmly up to date. A most important feature is the 'curlicue' counter-melody underneath the main melody, dodging between both hands. The chromatic rising and falling 3rds and 6ths want to be like liquid (on the cassette, in the Synthesized Instrumental version, this chromatic run is translated on the synthesizer to a pure glissando).

N. B. The numbers in square brackets refer to paragraphs in the General Guide to Interpretation.



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Crazy Calypso

This piece was an early landmark in breaking away from the usual short, 8 or 16-bar latin piece, and was to lead to the Rock Sonatas. Basic rock music is a synthesis of latin-american and blues, and, although the latin-american element is not usually acknowledged enough, it is its rhythms, modal characteristics and simple primary chord structures which have had a lasting influence on todays' music.

In CRAZY CALYPSO – as in calypsos generally – the modal element is not present, rather is it based on simple primary chords with fresh intricate rhythms. But these have been extended and in fact are moving into the later "Classical Rock" (sections [C] and [J]).

Like rock, and for the same reasons [5] , [6] , latin-american isn't usually played solo on piano, so this piece shows how it can be done and extended.

Some of the other special features are: Latin-Rock rhythms [D] ; typical samba rhythms and chord progressions ([E] , [M]); and Spanish Flamenco style [G] (a strong influence on latin-american).

Play the piece very crisp and rhythmically.

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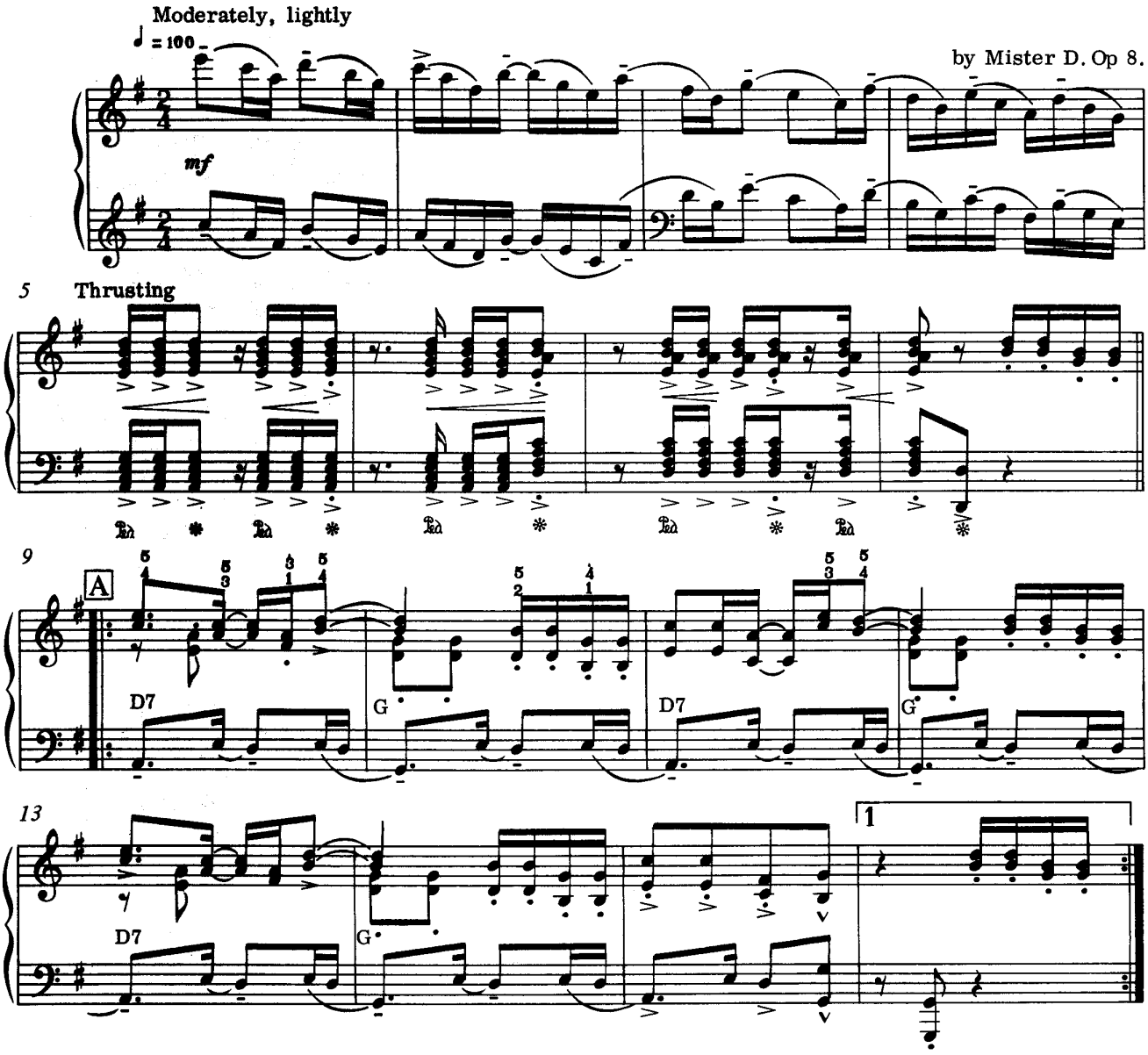

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Houn' Dog; Hogwash; Hoe Down!

Here we have a curious mixture of simplistic sentimentality, a hot hoedown and 'funky' rock. The contrasts are quite violent, so make them very obvious; especially between the spiky un-pedalled sections and the lush pedalled passages.

A lot of use is made of the "blues scale" [11] and the "blues chord" [12], as well as some characteristic early jazz and ragtime chord sequences in the terminal bars of the "hoedown" passages. There are also some strange little modern interludes in sharp contrast to these (e.g. sections E, F, J and K). Some of the passages are *very* fast, and need strong fingerwork. The final pages are very exhilarating, and should be like a frenetic, crazy, stomping hoedown!

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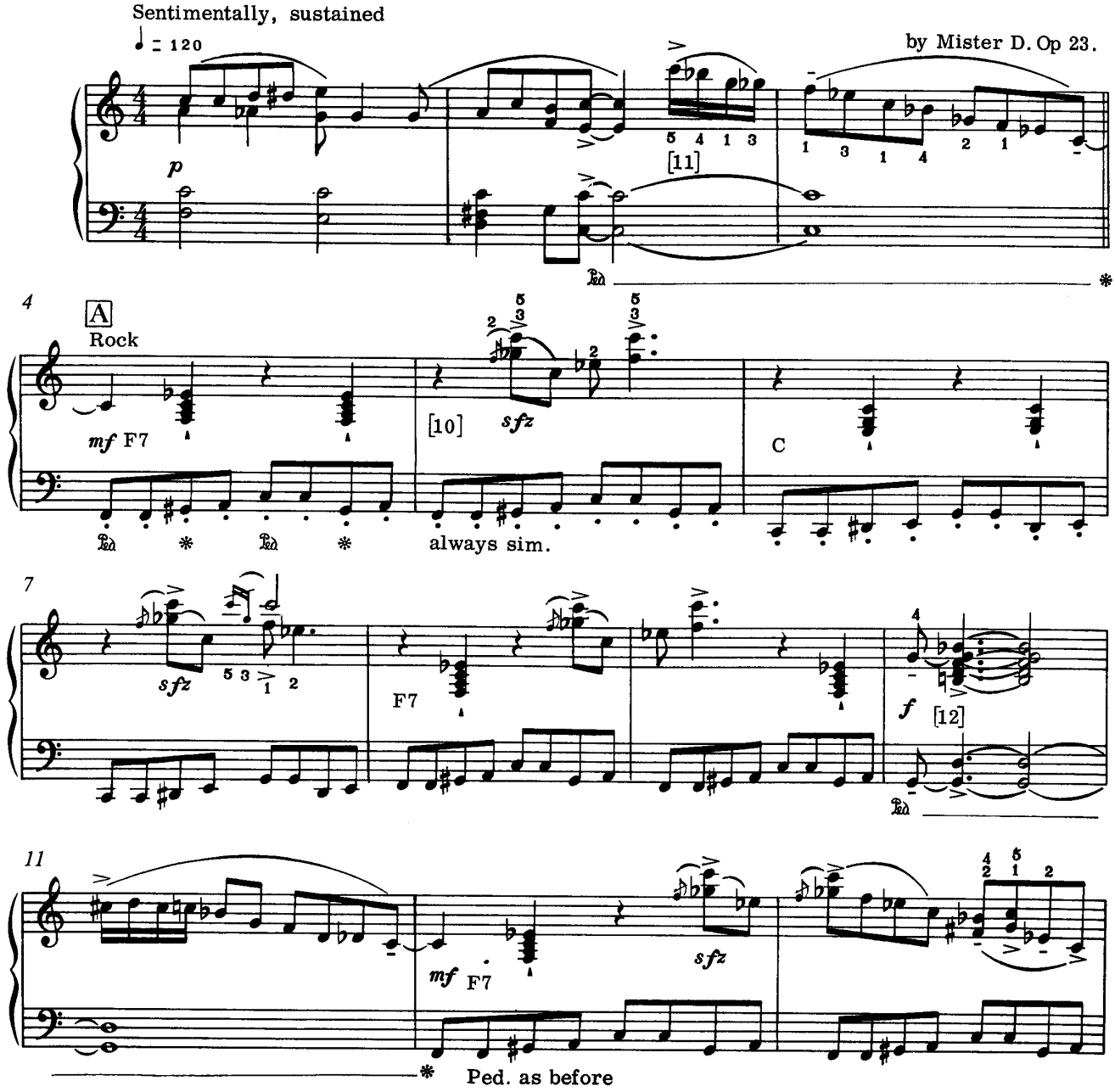

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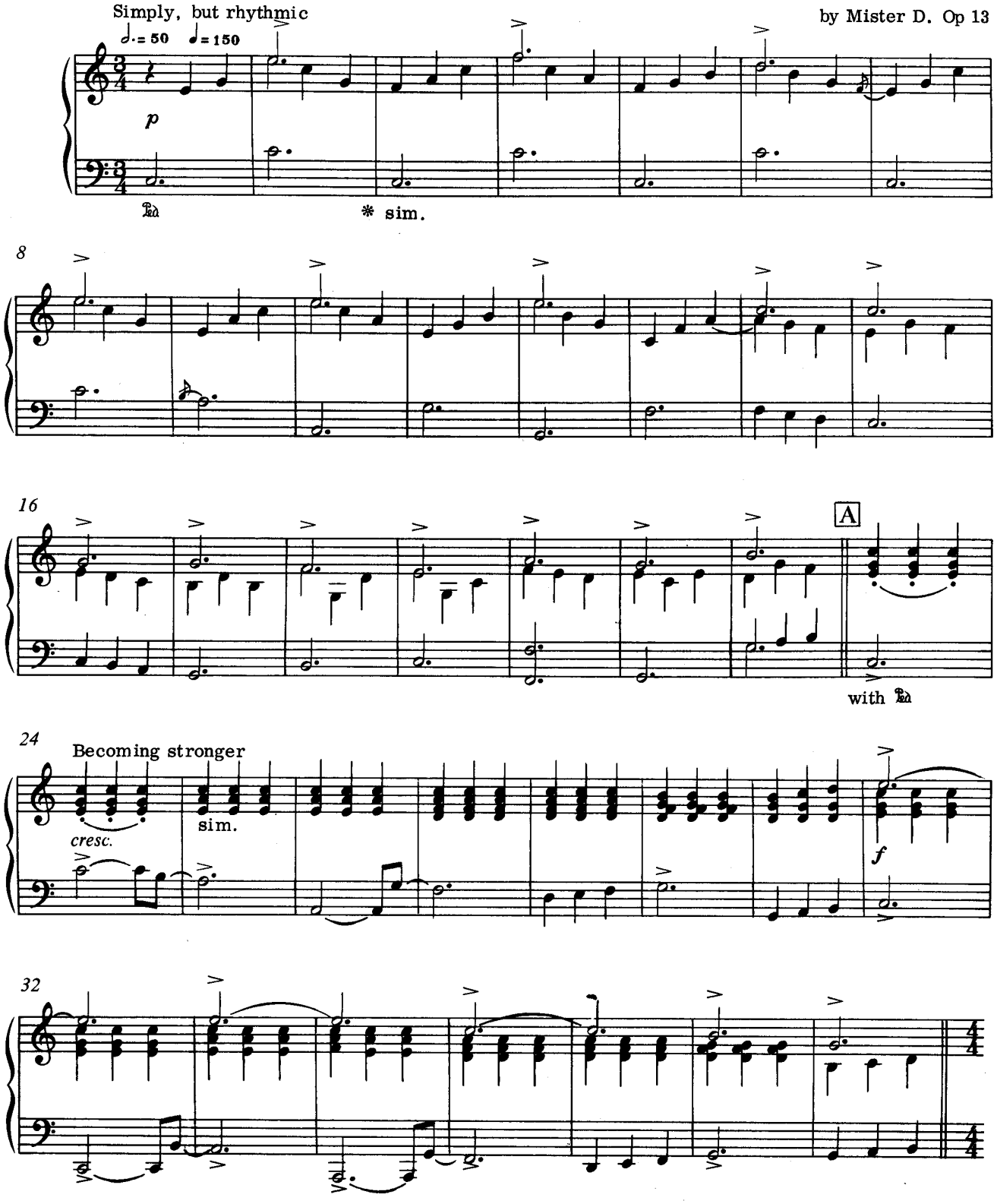
Rock Sonata No.2

For comments on this work, see THE ROCK SONATAS at the beginning of the book.



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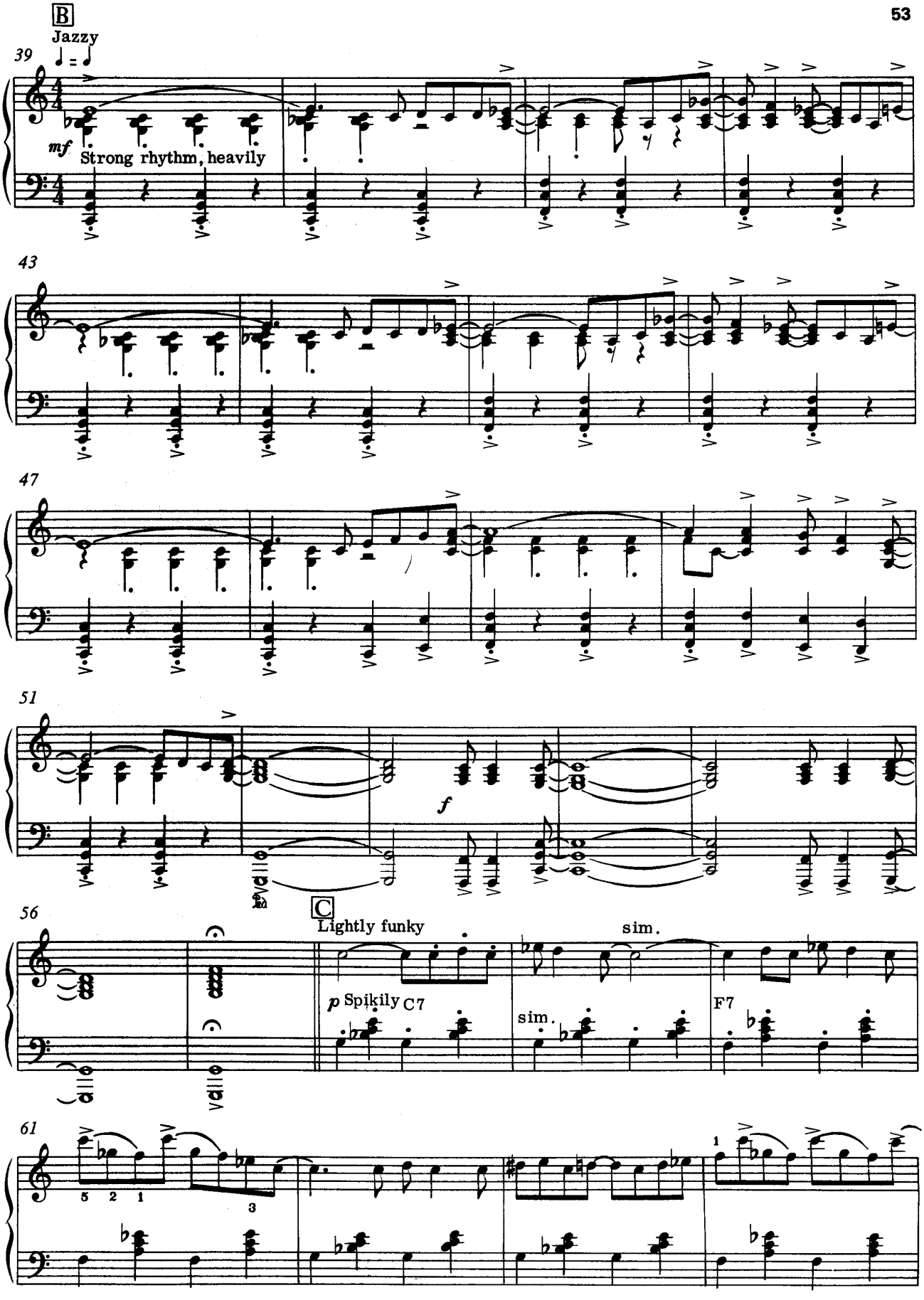
B
Jazzy
39
mf
Strong rhythm, heavily
43
47
51
f
56
C
Lightly funky
p Spikily C7
sim.
sim.
F7
61