SCRAPS from the RAG BAG

MARCH AND TWO STEP

BY HUBERT TANNER

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Scraps from the Rag Bag.

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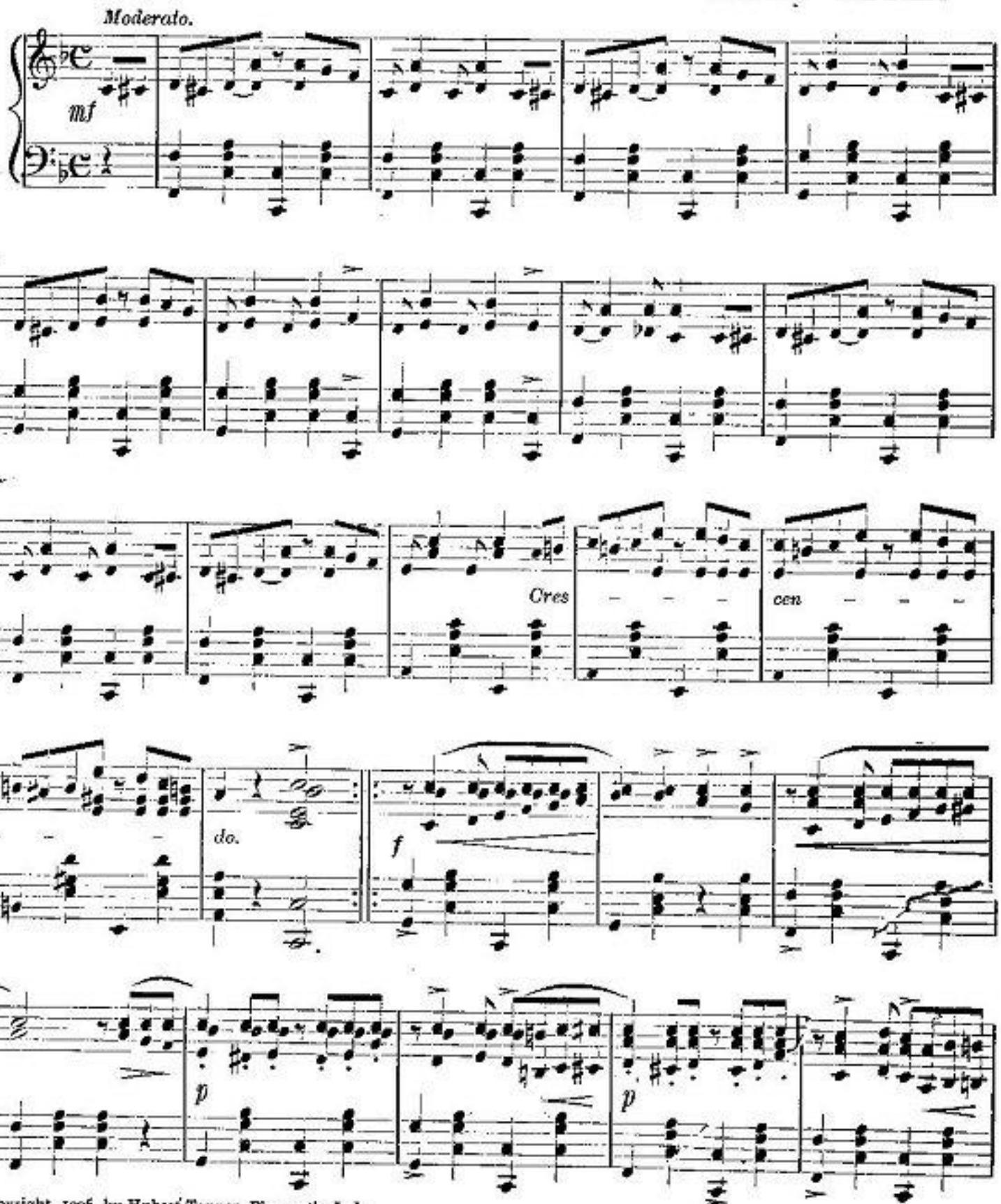

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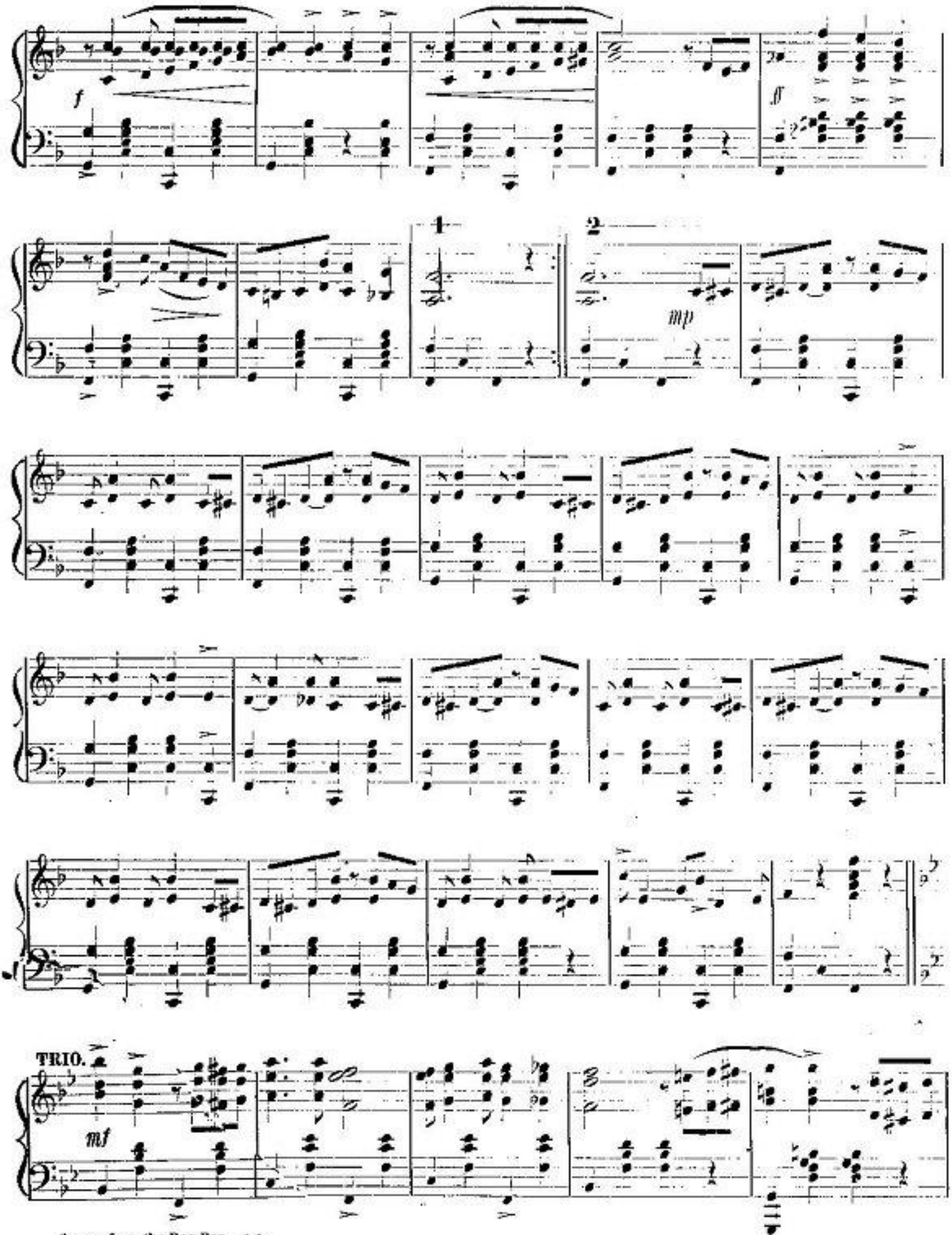

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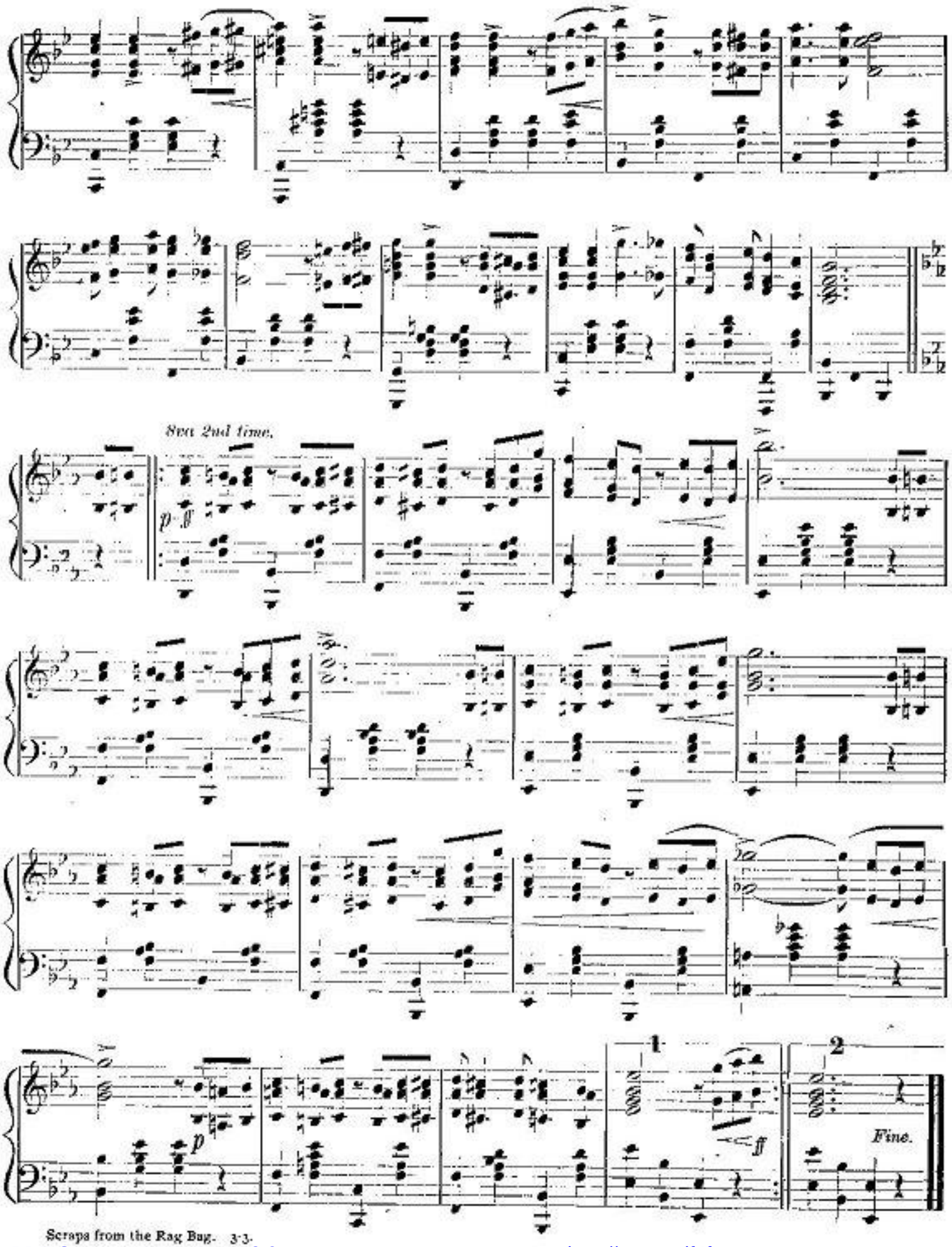

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HOME TOWN RAGTIME
HUBERT TANNER

Much of the story of ragtime is told by the young men and women who composed it, both within the popular music industry and in towns throughout America. Many rags were written by amateurs living in small towns about whom we know nothing.

Fortunately, the grandson of one of these composers, Bill Tanner, is a musician who also plays ragtime. At the All American Ragtime Music Festival at Mill Bridge Village PA in July he played his grandfather's one published composition *Scraps From The Rag Bag--March and Two Step* by Hubert Tanner. He has provided some biographical material about his grandfather which gives us some important insights.

Hubert Tanner was born in Plymouth, Indiana-- a small town about forty miles south of South Bend. The year was 1889.

Music was his first love, and he was fortunate to have an excellent teacher with whom he studied for about six years. He played piano, trombone and flute and "dabbled" in other instruments. He also sang bass.

When he was 15 he organized a symphony orchestra in Plymouth! While still in high school he composed *Scraps From The Rag Bag* which he copyrighted in 1906 and published himself. Not bad for a 17-year old! He also composed some other works, but these are incomplete and unpublished. He graduated from high school in 1907 as Class President. Immediately after graduation he taught school in Skytouk, Oklahoma (Indian Territory). After a year or two he returned to Plymouth and studied piano technology at Valparaiso University. He organized a dance orchestra and also played for silent movies.

In 1915 he opened a music store which he ran until 1955. In addition, he became the first rural mail carrier in the area, eventually serving as Postmaster (1930-1933). He would also buy, recondition and sell pianos in addition to his piano turning trade. With the money saved he bought real estate and stocks. If these duties were not enough he also served as the first band director of the high school in the 1930's. Tanner died in 1965. His widow is still living at the age of 96!

HUBERT TANNER

As with so many young people who composed rags, Music--not necessarily Ragtime--was central in his life. He obviously liked rags and his dance band certainly played them as part of its repertoire, but his classical training had exposed him to many types of music and to a variety of instruments. It seems doubtful that anyone could have lived in Plymouth during the first half of the century without being touched in some way by Hubert Tanner's love of music.

Scraps From The Rag Bag is a fine rag with elements of folk and classic ragtime evident. Its form is AABBACDD. It is well-marked for accents and dynamics, indicating just what the young composer had in mind. The first four bars of the "D" strain are very similar to the "D" strain of *Sunflower Slow Drag* which probably inspired them, but from there on Tanner had lots of original ideas to finish the rag in style. It would also make a good orchestral piece in case anyone would like to arrange it.

Today Tanner's grandson Bill is keeping ragtime alive, and he plans to present programs at colleges and universities throughout Indiana. □

NEXT MEET IN *VAN NUYS* JAN. 29th

Don't miss a special Meet on Sunday Jan. 29th when we'll get together for a ragtime Extravaganza at the Pacific Electric Trolley Station, 16710 Sherman Way, just east of Balboa in Van Nuys. Formerly Abner's Yellow Barn, this picturesque old building was recently designated an historical structure by the L.A. City Council. There will be refreshments, a good piano and lots of ragtime. See you there at 1:30 P.M.

You can eat and browse among the antiques on display.

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