The MAYRON COLE PIANO METHOD

Prelude from Carmen

Georges Bizet 1838-1875

Bizet (pronounced *bee-ZAY*) was born in Paris, France to a musical family. His father was an amateur singer and composer, and his mother was the sister of a famous voice teacher.

In 1848, Bizet was enrolled in the prestigious Paris Conservatory of music. He was only nine years old. When he was seventeen, a student assignment at the Conservatory led him to write his first symphony: Symphony in C. This beautiful symphony was never performed during his lifetime, but it was performed in 1935. When Georges Bizet was twenty, he won the coveted Prix de Rome which gave him three years of financial support while he concentrated on composing. Regretfully, during the period spent in Rome, Bizet completed just a few compositions—and only four of those compositions are around today.

Bizet returned to Paris in 1860 because his mother was in ill health. Upon his return, Bizet was offered a teaching position at the Paris Conservatory. He turned-down the position because he wanted to spend all of his time composing—especially composing operas! But the operas that he wrote at the beginning of this period did not fare well. One opera had only moderate success.

Of course, the lack of public acceptance for his music caused Bizet to be depressed. But in 1875, Bizet completed a work that should have boosted his writing career to the highest of levels: it was his dark opera, *Carmen*. But the story of *Carmen* proved too much for the people of Paris! The story is set in Spain and deals with the exotic culture of gypsies. *Carmen* worked at a cigarette factory, and the earthy overtones of the musical story (which included a brutal murder and promiscuity) were too indelicate and distasteful for the high-fashioned opera attendees in Paris. The opera sustained a short run in the opera house.


George Bizet

This was the supreme blow to Bizet! His health was deteriorating quickly, and three months after *Carmen* premiered, Bizet died of a heart attack. He was a broken man!

Ironically, five years later *Carmen* returned to the Parisian stage after a series of successes in Vienna, Brussels, London, and New York. Many musicologists have claimed *Carmen* to be one of the best operas ever written!

It should be remembered that Georges Bizet was also a fine pianist. He could have easily had a career as a concert pianist if he had so wished. But Bizet's *Carmen* will forever live on as his greatest accomplishment!

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Prelude Preview

Look at the treble staff in measure 4 of Prelude from Carmen. There you see a trill symbol. Since this is a "romantic" trill (written in the Romantic Period of music) you will quickly alternate with the written note and the tone **above** it in its scale. Thus, in this case you will trill between B and C♯. Back in the Baroque Period of music (1600-1750) a composer would start the trill on the HIGHER of the two trill notes.

NOTE: The two ending notes for the trill in measure 4 are shown as grace notes A♯ and B.



Look at the treble staff in measures 31 through 34. The right hand is playing a G octave tremolo. Tremolo means "to tremble." But how fast do you alternate the two Gs? In this case, the tremolo has three beams which tell you to tremolo at the speed of 32nd notes. But who can possibly count the 32nd notes while you are performing this composition at full speed? The answer is: no one! So simply tremolo as fast as you can and smile!

Measures 55 through 59 and 79 through 83 have 16th note triplets. A 16th note triplet equals one eighth note. Rather than trying to count each of the three notes, simply play the 16th note triplet as quickly as you can in the span of ½ of a beat.

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Key Signature Review

1. What are the seven sharps in order? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

2. What are the seven flats in order? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

3. To find the name of the relative minor based on the Major scale, you go _____ from the tonic note of the Major scale.
(up a whole step or down a minor third)

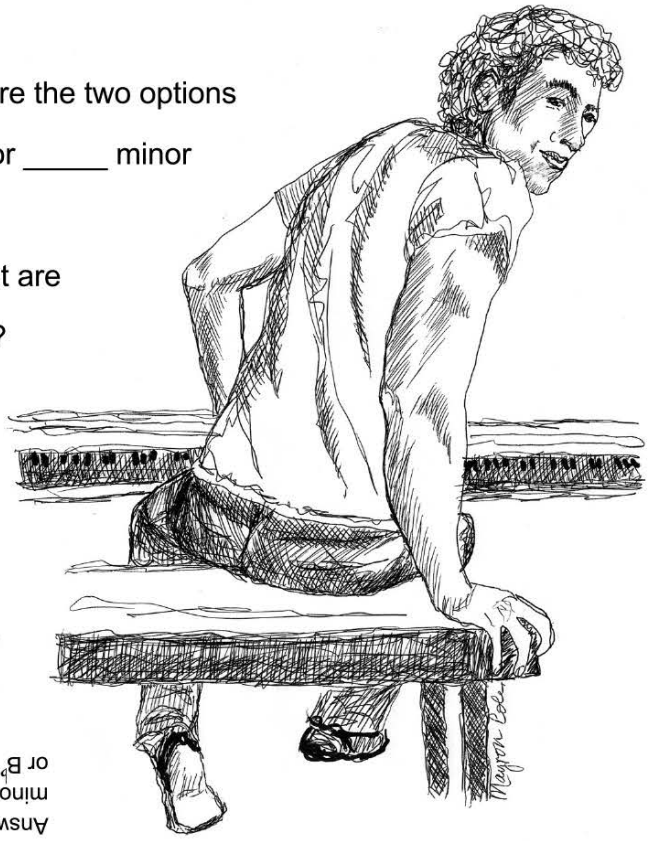
4. If a composition is written in 3 sharps, what are the two options for what key it is written in? _____ Major or _____ minor

5. If a composition is written in 2 flats, what are the two options for what key it is written in? _____ Major or _____ minor

6. If a composition is written in 5 flats, what are the two options for what key it is written in? _____ Major or _____ minor

7. If a composition is written in 4 sharps, what are the two options for what key it is written in? _____ Major or _____ minor

8. If a composition is written in 1 sharp, what are the two options for what key it is written in? _____ Major or _____ minor



Answers: 1) F, C, G, D, A, E, B; 2) B, E, A, D, G, C, F; 3) down a minor third; 4) A Major or F♯ minor; 5) E♭ or C minor; 6) D♭ Major or B♭ minor; 7) E Major or C♯ minor; 8) G Major or E minor

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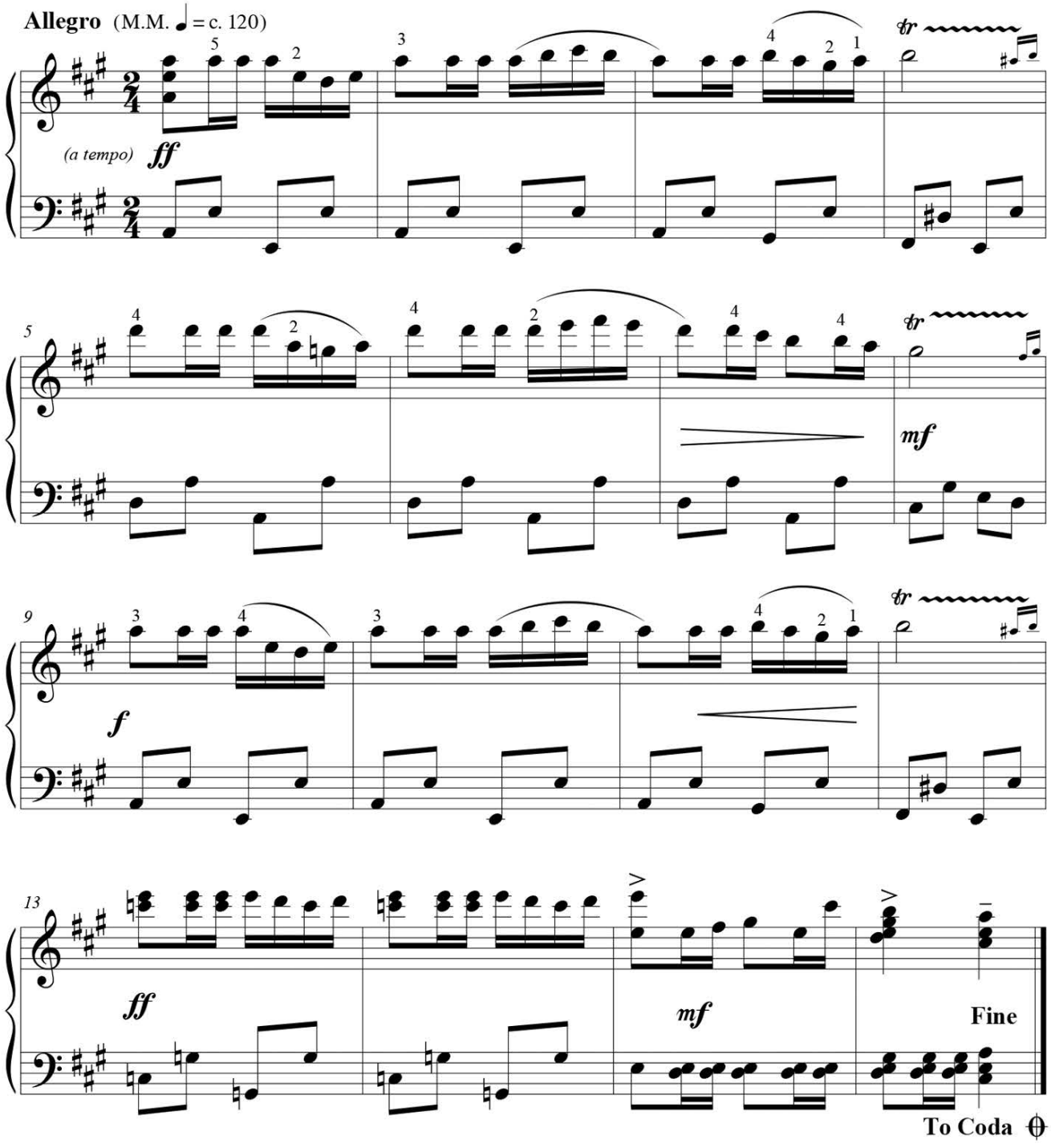
Prelude
from Carmen

(orchestrated accompaniment has a 2 measure count-in)

Georges Bizet
arranged by Colleen Cole



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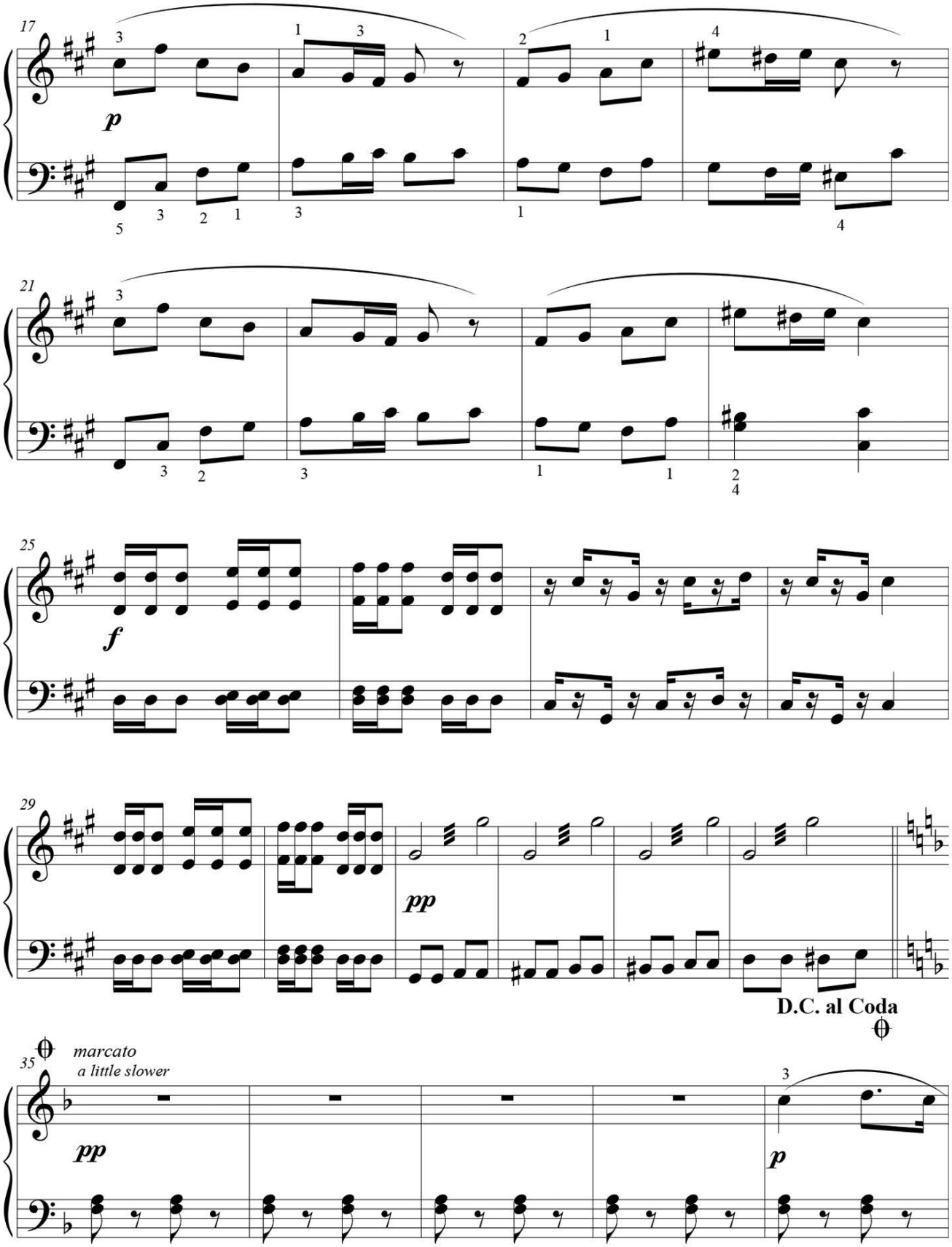

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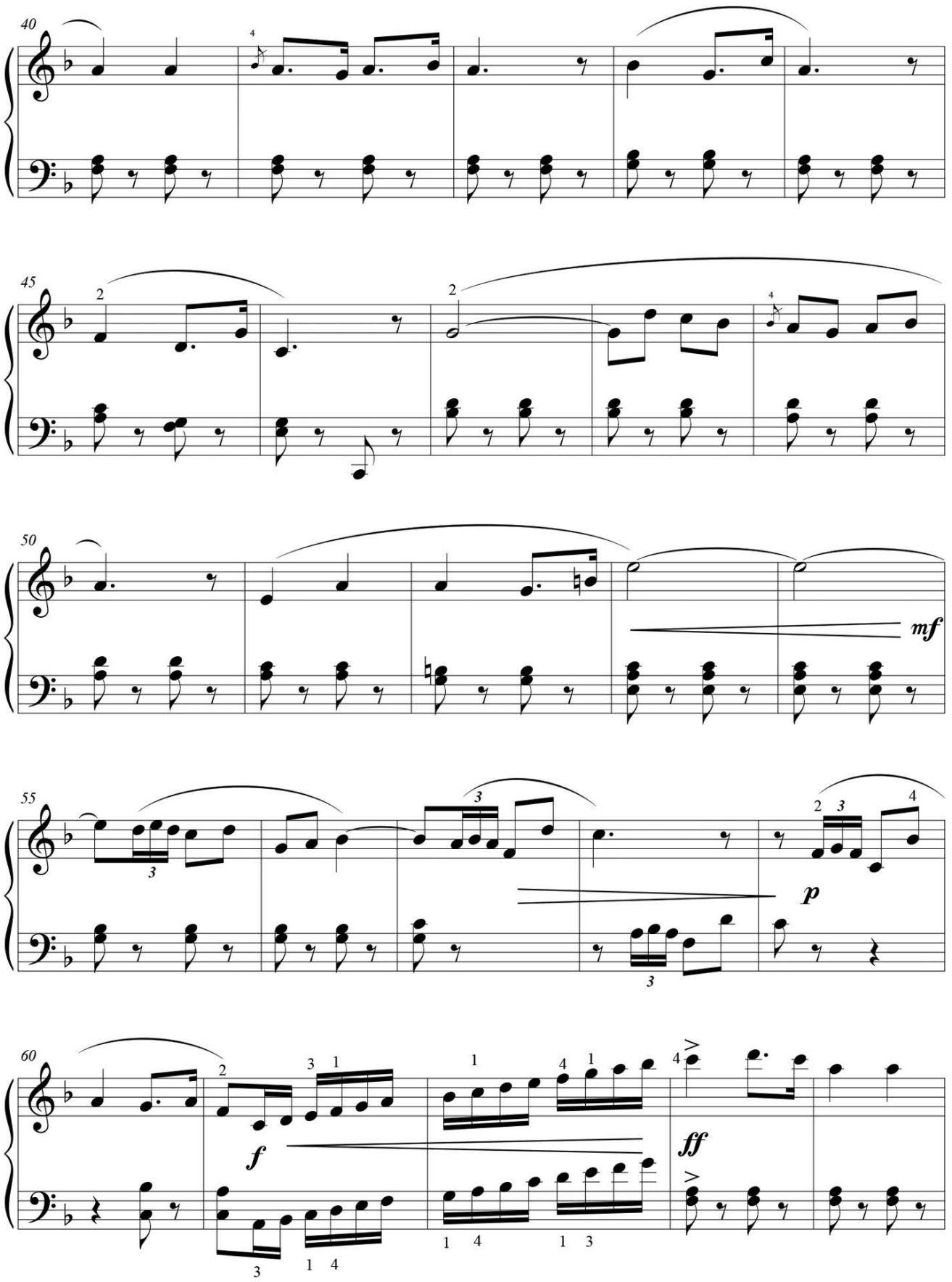

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65

70

p

75

ff

80

82

D.C. al Fine



Célestine Galli-Marié played the role of Carmen in the premiere cast on March 3, 1875

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