Carolina Shout

as recorded by James P. Johnson on August 15, 1944; reissued on Lp Swaggie S 1211. (Drum accompaniment by Eddie Dougherty.)

This was the ultimate "test-piece" for every aspiring Stride pianist. Johnson recorded it several times, first as piano rolls (1918 and 1921). Duke Ellington as well as Fats Waller, Cliff Jackson and Joe Turner (to name only a few) learned *Carolina Shout* note-for-note from the 1921 piano roll. Ellington also considered this piece as "the most solid foundation" for him, and recorded it as a solo in 1956. Johnson composed its basic themes while working at Jim Allan's in The Jungles (1914), and *Carolina Shout* reveals the influence of the various musical dimensions from which he drew inspiration.

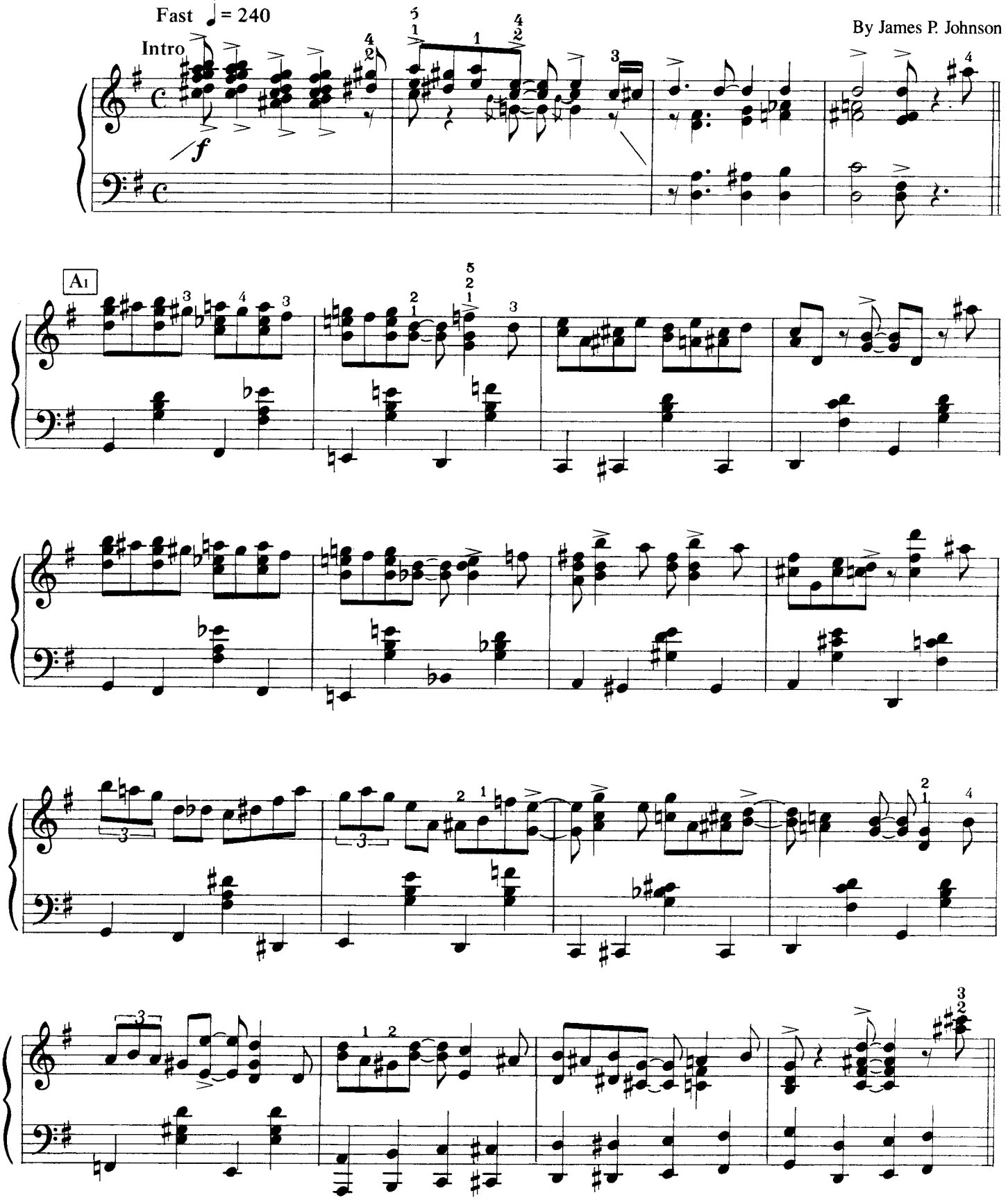
The theme of the A strain originates from a traditional ragtime motive freely picked up and elaborated by various early jazz musicians. The B and the D strains are very reminiscent of the fiddle or banjo music played at set dances. The C strain is built upon a call-and-response pattern and is clearly the pianistic transposition of black religious music, featuring the high and spirited "shout" of the preacher and the ecstatic response of the congregation. The E strain reiterates these concepts.

The story of Johnson's early recordings of *Carolina Shout* parallels the transition from the "fast-shout" style to the Stride style. *Carolina Shout* was cut on piano rolls in 1918 and in May, 1921 and then recorded on October 18, 1921 for the Okeh label. These three renditions are very dissimilar. Both the piano rolls retained some of the mechanical nature of ragtime and "fast-shout" (some of which is also due to the piano roll medium). The 1918 roll in particular has very few tenths and "back beats" in the accompaniment, it lacks the Coda, and features an odd 23-bar B strain never used again by Johnson. The 1921 roll is much more articulated both in phrasing and rhythm, featuring tenths, "back beats" and a Coda. It is very close to the 1921 Okeh recording, but does not feature the right hand variation on the A_2 strain. This variation, built on a double-third based phrasing, establishes the definitive Stride "sound," and is featured for the first time in the 1921 Okeh recording, which is the "final" version of *Carolina Shout*.

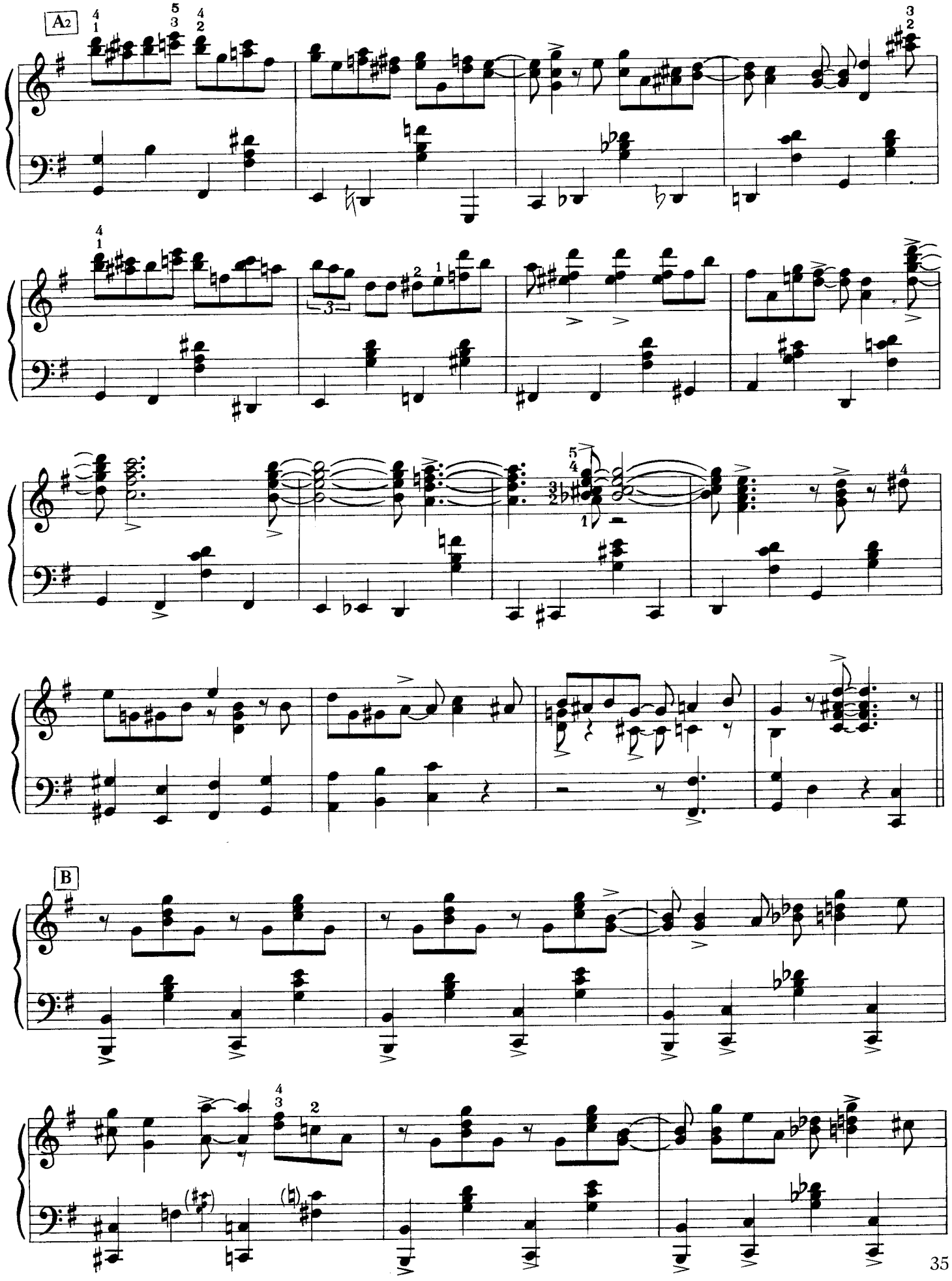
The 1944 rendition reported here is close to this version, with a fantastic drive added.

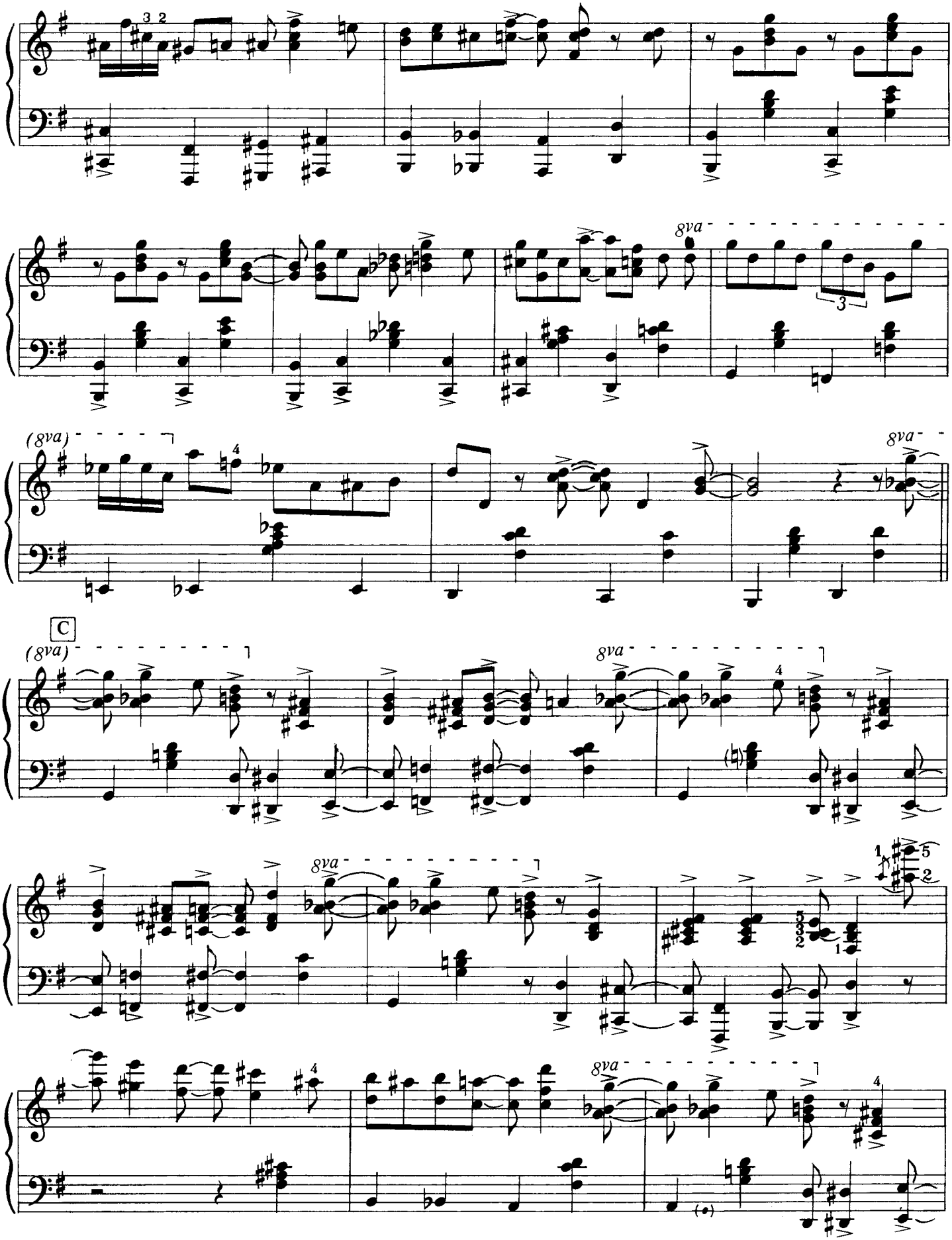
Carolina Shout

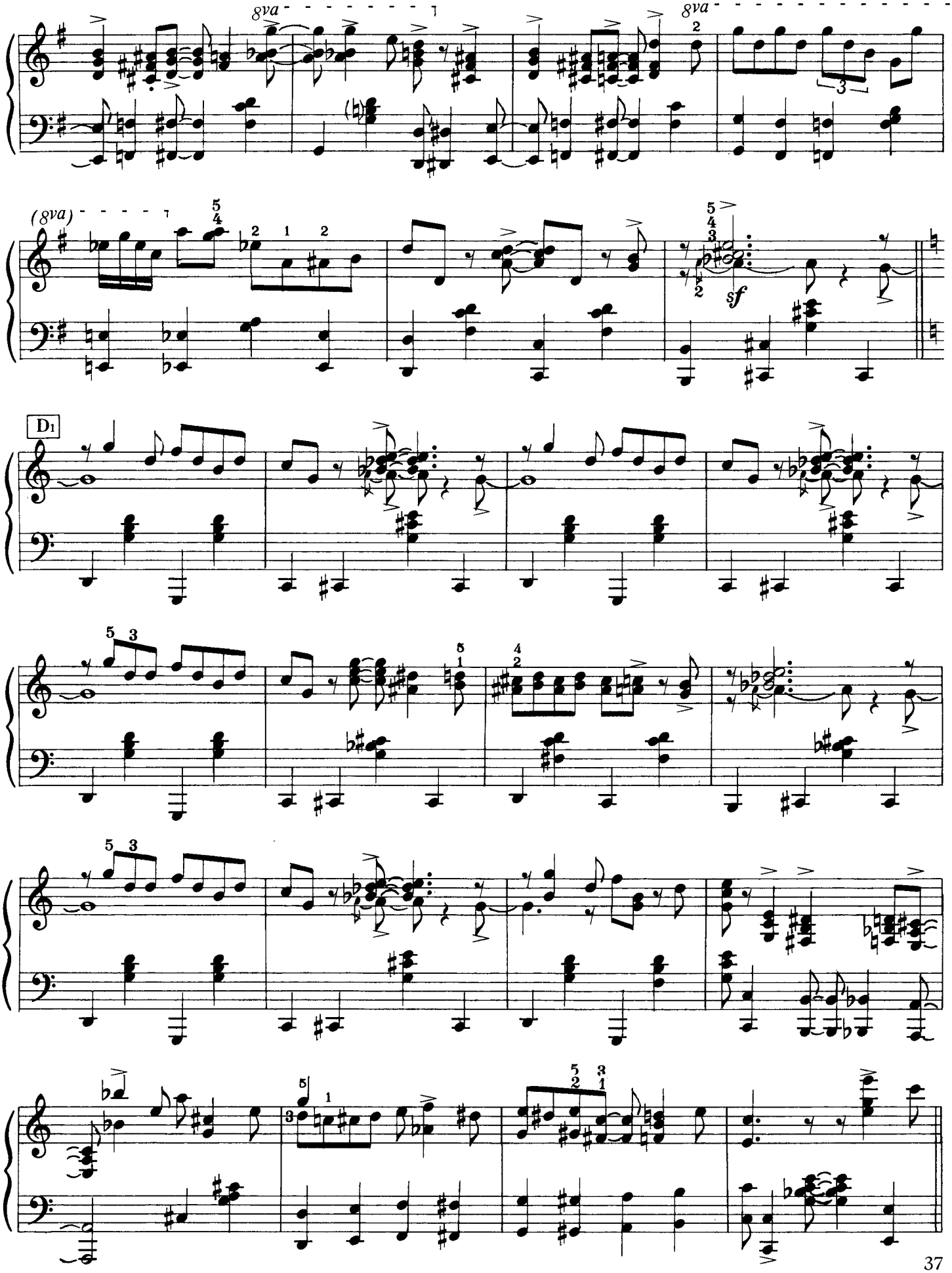
As Performed By James P. Johnson

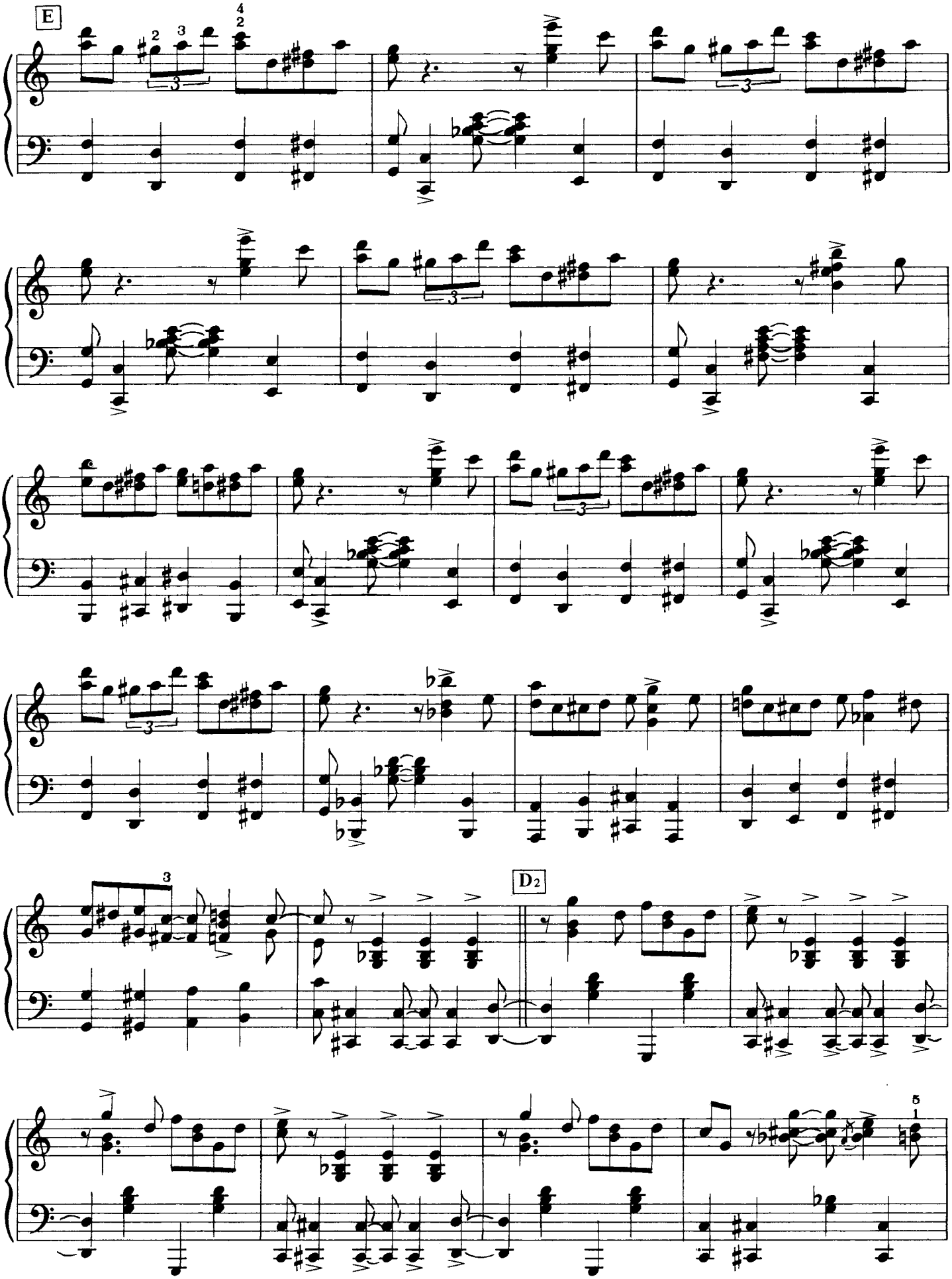


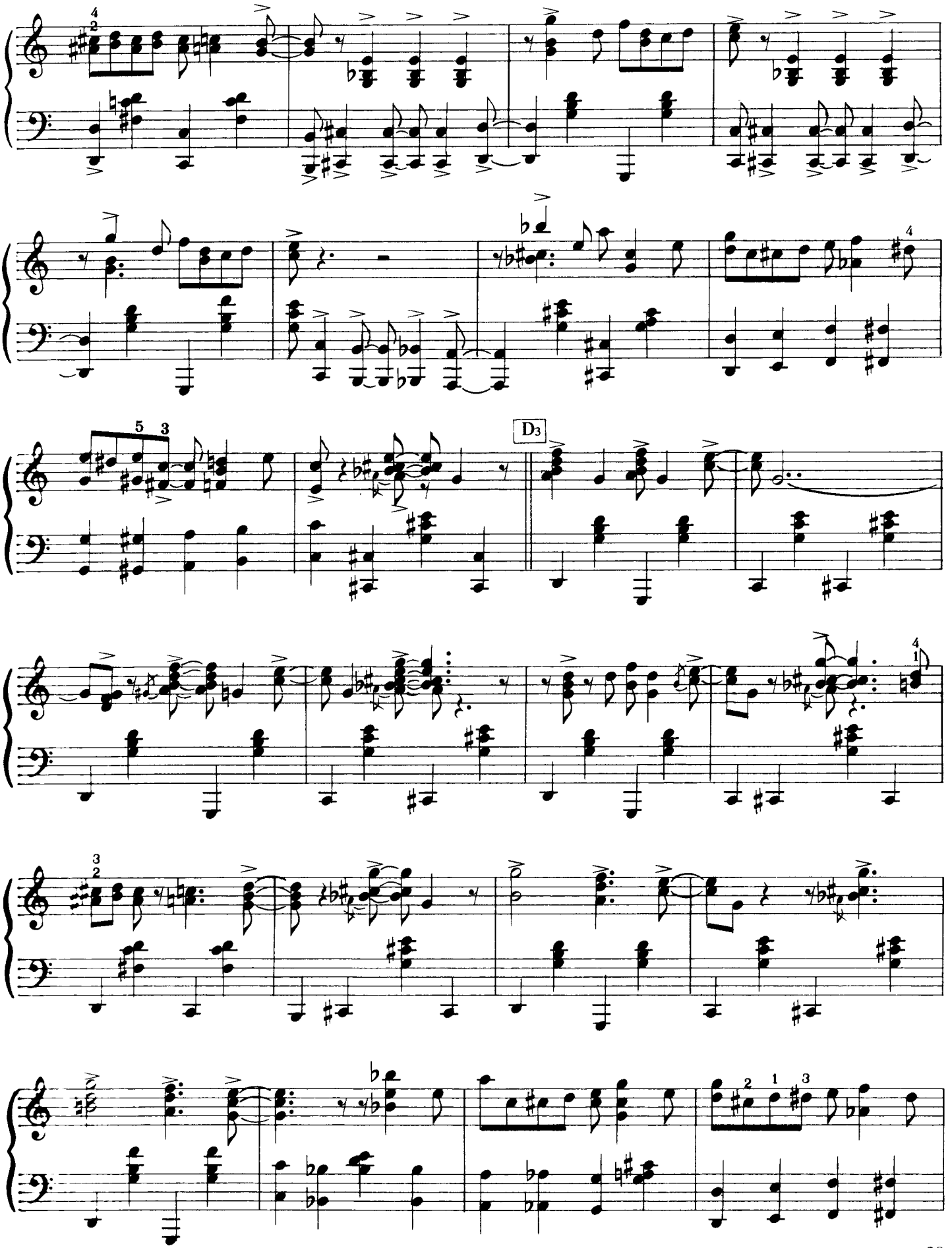
© Copyright 1926, 1989 by MCA MUSIC PUBLISHING, A Division of MCA INC., 1755 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. Copyright Renewed.
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved Made in USA

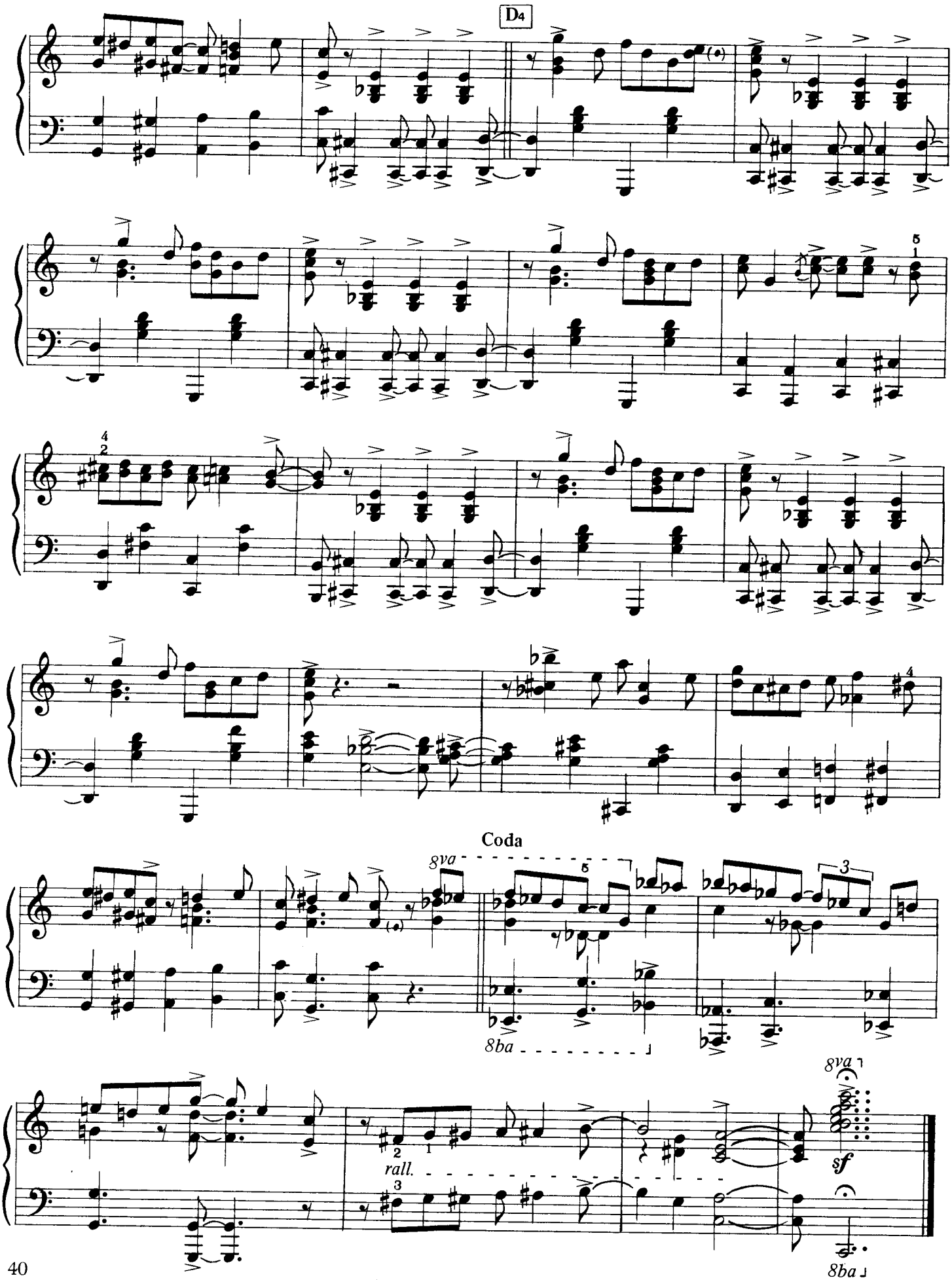

A2
B


8va
(8va)
C


8va
8va
(8va)
sf
D1


E
D2


D3


D4
Coda
8va
8ba
rall.
sf
8va
8ba