The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa

Vol. 4 No. 66

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

MARCH

(1908)

FULL SCORE

AS PERFORMED BY

"THE PRESIDENT'S OWN" UNITED STATES MARINE BAND

March, "The Fairest of the Fair" (1908)

"The Fairest of the Fair" is generally regarded as one of Sousa's finest and most melodic marches, and its inspirations came from the sight of a pretty girl with whom he was not even acquainted. It was an immediate success and has remained one of his most popular compositions. It stands out as one of the finest examples of the application of pleasing melodies to the restrictive framework of a military march.

The Boston Food Fair was an annual exposition and music jubilee held by the Boston Retail Grocers' Association. The Sousa Band was the main musical attraction for several seasons, so the creation of a new march honoring the sponsors of the 1908 Boston Food Fair was the natural outgrowth of a pleasant business relationship.

In fairs before 1908, Sousa had been impressed by the beauty and charm of one particular young lady who was the center of attention of the displays in which she was employed. He made a mental note that he would someday transfer his impressions of her into music. When the invitation came for the Sousa Band to play a twenty-day engagement in 1908, he wrote this march. Remembering the comely girl, he entitled the new march "The Fairest of the Fair."

Because of an oversight, the march almost missed its première. Nearly three months before the fair, Sousa had completed a sketch of the march for the publisher. He also wrote out a full conductor's score from which the individual band parts were to have been extracted. The band had just finished an engagement the night before the fair's opening and had boarded a sleeper train for Boston. Louis Morris, the band's copyist, was helping the librarian sort music for the first concert, and he discovered that the most important piece on the program—"The Fairest of the Fair"—had not been prepared.

According to Morris's own story, the librarian, whose job it had been to prepare the parts, went into a panic. There was good reason; considerable advance publicity had been given to the new march, and the fair patrons would be expecting to hear it. In addition, the piano sheet music had already been published, and copies were to be distributed free to the first five hundred ladies entering the gates of the fair.

Morris rose to the occasion. He asked the porter of the train to bring a portable desk, which he placed on a pillow across his lap. He worked the entire night, and the parts were nearly finished when dawn broke. Both were greatly surprised by the appearance of Sousa, who had arisen to take his usual early morning walk. When asked about the frenzied activity, they had no choice but to tell exactly what had happened.

There were many times in the life of John Philip Sousa when he demonstrated his benevolence and magnanimity, and this was surely one of them. After recognizing Morris's extraordinary effort and remarking that it was saving the band from considerable embarrassment, he instructed him to complete his work and to take a well-deserved rest, even if it meant sleeping through the first concert.

With no one the wiser, Louis Morris—hero of the day—was asleep in his hotel as Sousa's Band played "The Fairest of the Fair" for the first time on September 28, 1908. Sousa did not mention the subject again, but Morris found an extra fifty dollars in his next pay envelope —the equivalent of two weeks salary.

Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 50. Used by permission.

Editorial Notes

Throughout Sousa's career as a conductor, he often altered the performance of his marches in specific ways without marking or changing the printed music. These alterations were designed for concert performances and included varying dynamics and omitting certain instruments on repeated strains to expand the range of the musical textures, as well as adding unscripted percussion accents for dramatic emphasis at key points in the music. Although Sousa never documented his performance techniques himself, several players who worked extensively with Sousa provided directions for his frequently performed marches, most notably from cornetist Frank Simon. Many of the marches in this volume of "The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa" were staples in Sousa's regular concert repertoire and were included in the "Encore Books" used by the Sousa Band. A complete set of his Encore Books resides in the U.S. Marine Band Library and Archives and are referenced extensively by the Marine Band not only as a guide for some of Sousa's special performance practice, but also to ascertain the exact instrumentation he employed in his own performances of his marches.

"The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa" appears in chronological order and is based on some of the earliest known sources for each composition. These newly edited full scores correct many mistakes and inconsistencies found in the parts of early publications; however, all of the other expressive markings and the original scoring are largely preserved. Where instruments are added to the original published orchestration, it is guided by the additional parts Sousa sanctioned in his Encore Books where applicable or based on these typical doublings. Additionally, the alterations traditionally employed

by the United States Marine Band in performance are incorporated throughout; either those specifically documented by Sousa's musicians or changes modeled on the customary practices of "The March King" in his own performances.

The musical decisions included in these editions were influenced by the work of several outstanding Sousa scholars combined with many decades of Marine Band performance tradition. These editions would not be possible without the exceptional contributions to the study of Sousa's marches by Captain Frank Byrne (USMC, ret.), Jonathan Elkus, Colonel Timothy Foley (USMC, ret.), Loras Schissel, Dr. Patrick Warfield, and "The March King's" brilliant biographer, Paul Bierley.

Performance practices that deviate from the original printed indications are described below and appear in [brackets] *in the score. There are many instances in which these alterations appear side-by-side with the original markings in this edition in an effort to clearly document where and how these deviations occur. An open diamond marked with an accent in the cymbal part indicates that the cymbal player should let that accent ring for an additional beat before rejoining the bass drum part.*

Introduction (m. 1-4): The recommended tempo is 122 bpm. The articulations in the original parts to this march are notably inconsistent. Most of the sixteenth notes are without any articulation indication, but the common performance practice in the Marine Band is to slur many of these figures beginning with those in m. 3. This edition reflects this practice and regulates all of the articulation inconsistencies. The cymbal crash in the opening measure may be choked or let to ring.

First Strain (m. 5-28): After a *fortissimo* opening to this march, the first strain should be played a notch softer at *forte*. Many of the sixteenth-note triplet figures in this strain have a crescendo marked underneath; accordingly, each may sweep up into an accented downbeat but then relax the dynamic to the basic level of *forte* throughout. Accents are added in the percussion to highlight the melodic shape.

Second Strain (m. 28-53): Only cornets and trombones are tacet at the beginning of this strain while all others play *mezzo-piano*. However, with the *tutti* crescendo and diminuendo in m. 34-36, the brass enters again for just these measures, per Frank Simon's recollection of Sousa's performance practice. After four more measures of tacet, the brass rejoins again in m. 41 for the *tutti* crescendo that leads to one more statement of the first strain. The second time through the second strain is played exactly as the first time.

Trio (m. 53-85): Piccolo, E-flat clarinet, cornets, trombones, and cymbals are tacet beginning with the pick-up note in m. 53. Articulations were once again inconsistent in the original parts for this trio and have been matched in this edition to highlight the wonderful phrase of this melody. Expressive dynamic markings have been added throughout and should be done subtly. The bass drum part is also traditionally altered in performance from the original in this trio to outline the melody, and that practice is documented in this edition.

Break Strain (m. 85-105): All instruments rejoin on beat two of m. 85 with a *subito fortissimo*. Cymbals are choked in m. 86, 88, 94 and 96, but let to ring in m. 89 and 97. In Marine Band performances, a ratchet is traditionally added to the woodblock/snare drum rim part in m. 102-104, and that has been notated in this edition. A quick diminuendo is added to the low brass eighth notes in m. 105 first time, and all others who play on beat two execute a *subito piano* here for the first time through the final strain.

Final Strain (m. 105-139): Piccolo, E-flat clarinet, cornets, trombones, and cymbals are tacet first time and all others play *piano*. Clarinets play the melody down one octave as indicated. All instruments rejoin in m. 137 for the repeat of the break strain. A crescendo is played this time in m. 105 and the last time through is played at a strong *fortissimo* and in the original higher octave for clarinets. Accents in the percussion highlight the rises in the melody in m. 106, 108, 122, and 124, along with two very strong *sffz* accents to answer the downbeat figures from the rest of the band in m. 134 and 135 the last time.

March

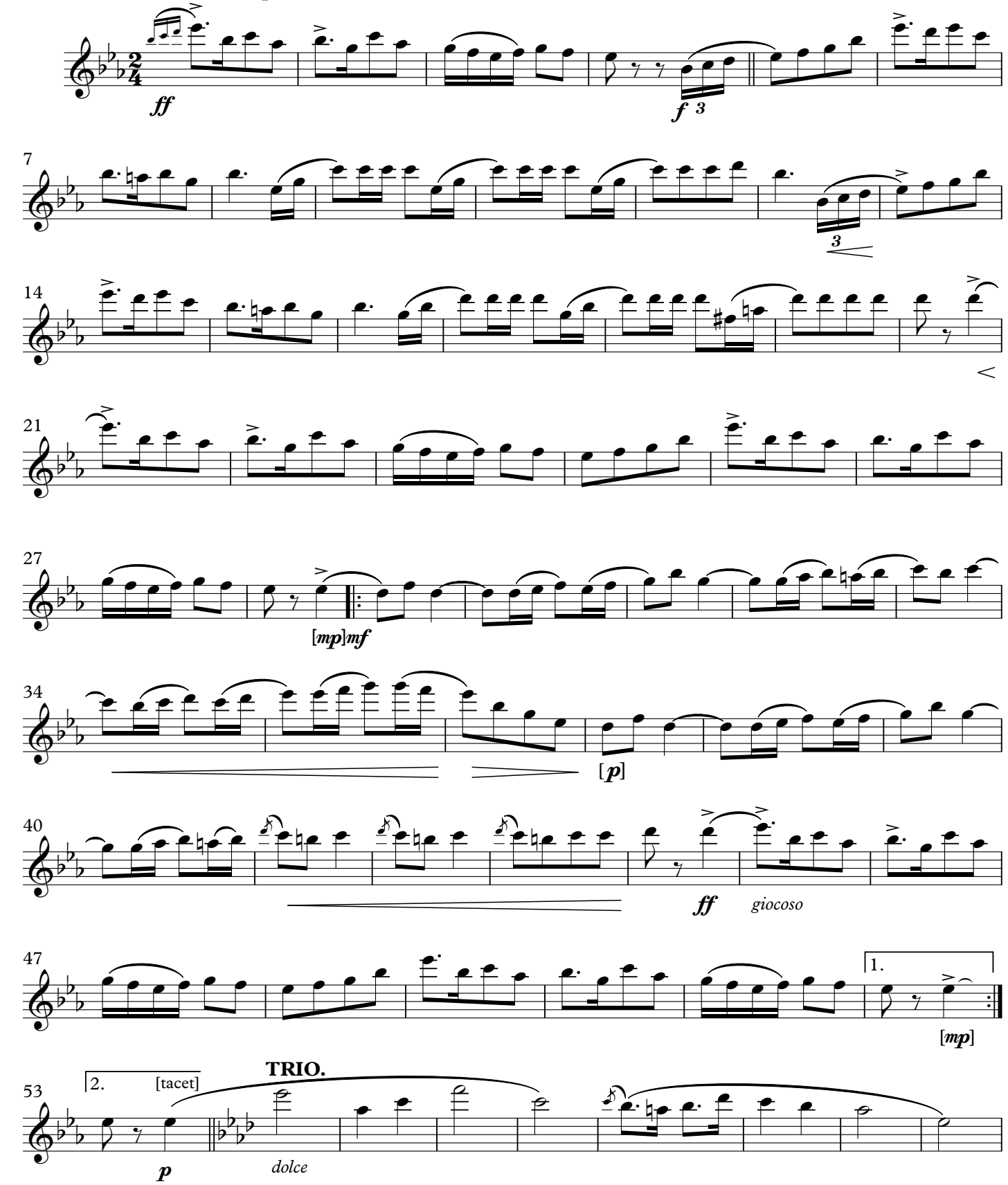
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

Piccolo

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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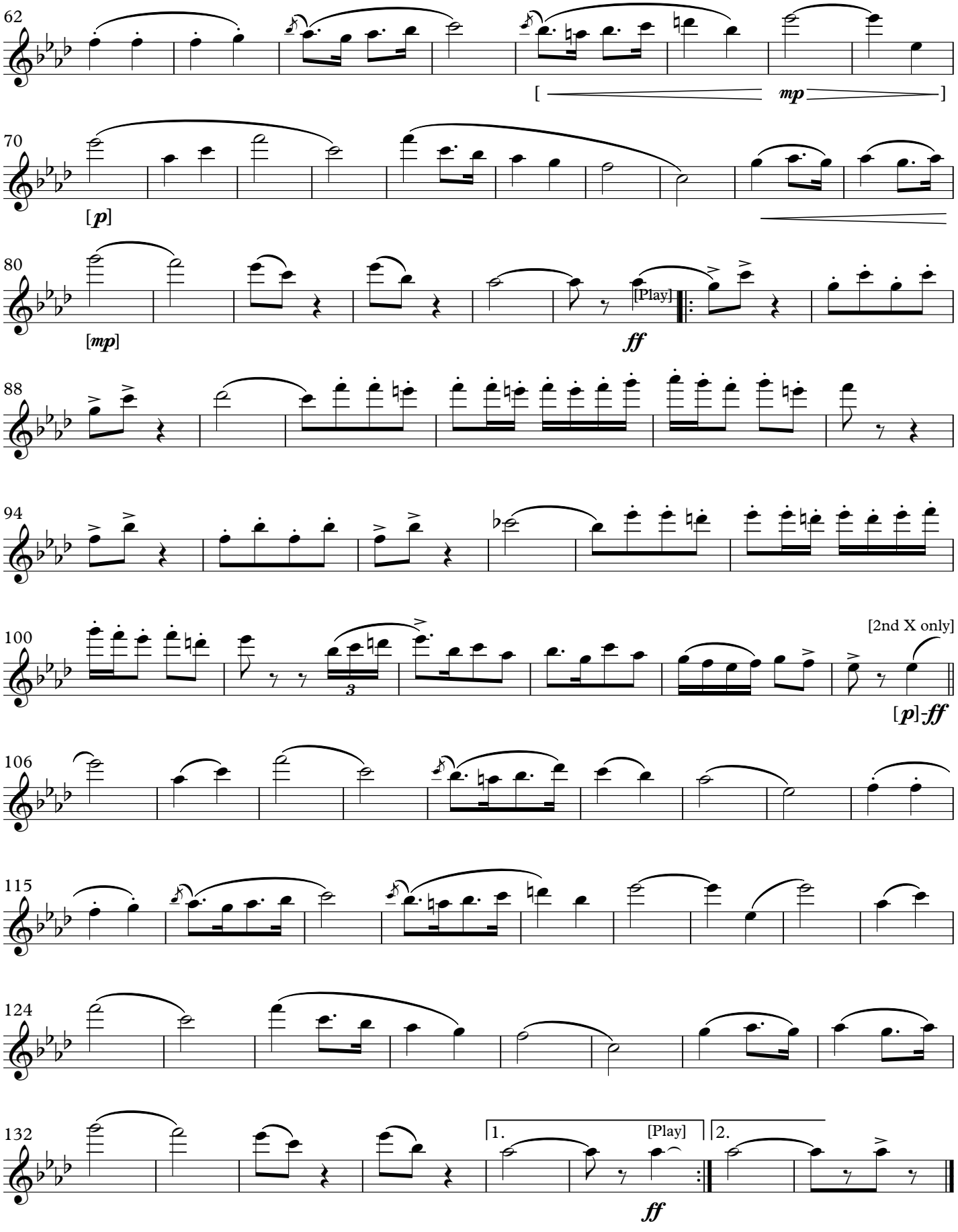

62
[
mp
]
70
[p]
80
[mp]
[Play]
ff
88
94
100
[2nd X only]
[p]-ff
106
115
124
132
1.
[Play]
2.
ff

March

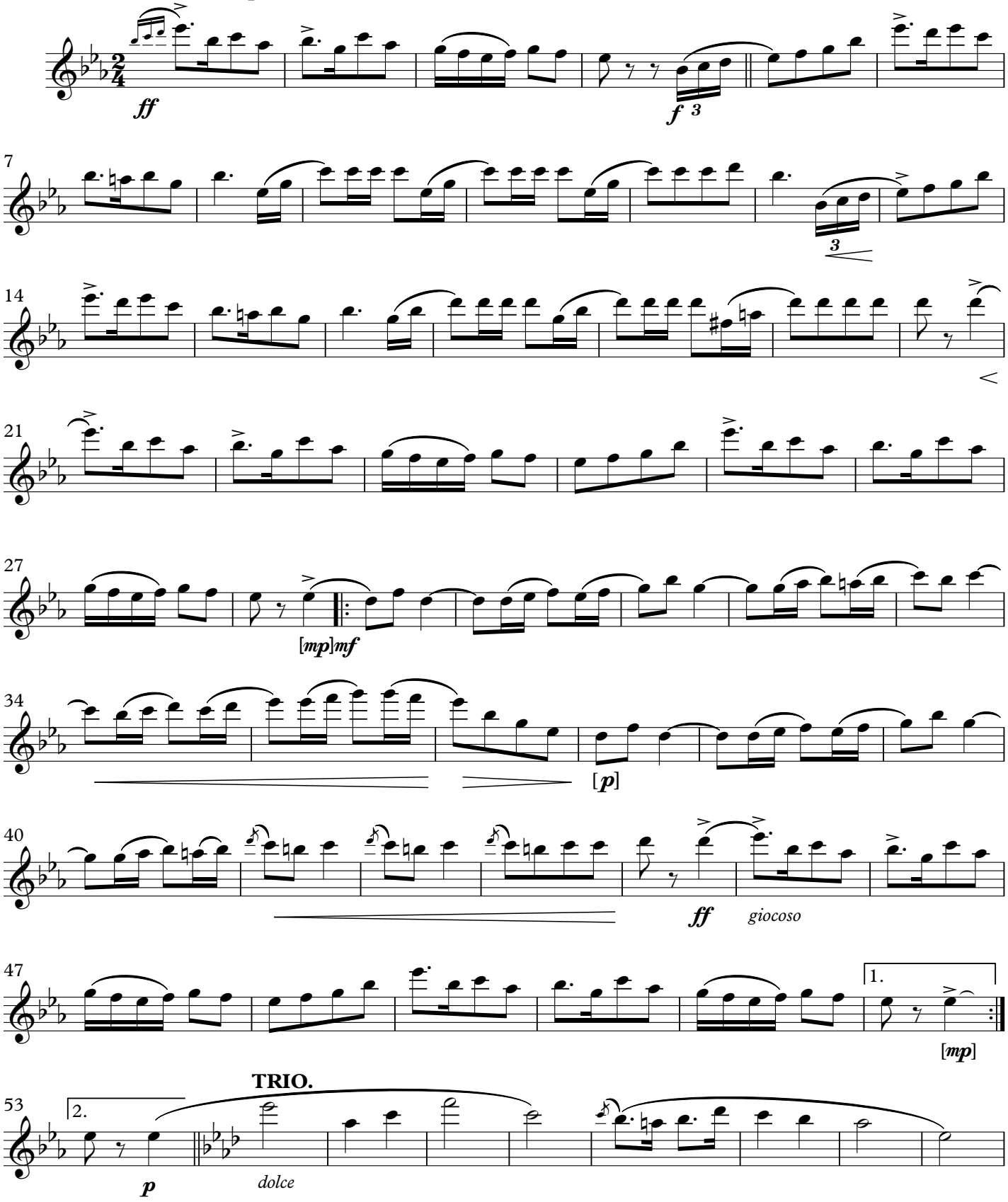
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

Flute

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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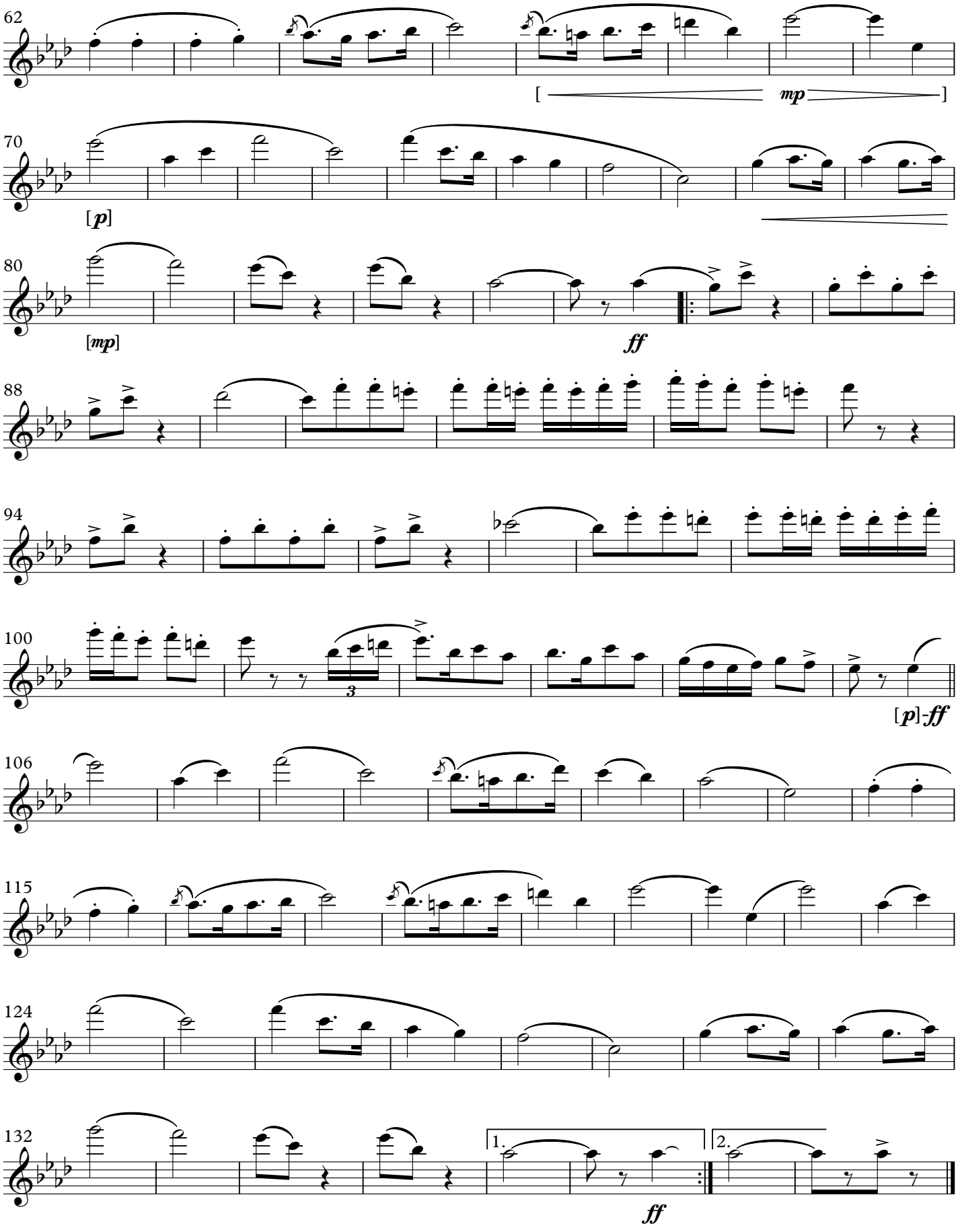
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80
[mp]
ff
88
94
100
3
[p]-ff
106
115
124
132
1.
2.
ff

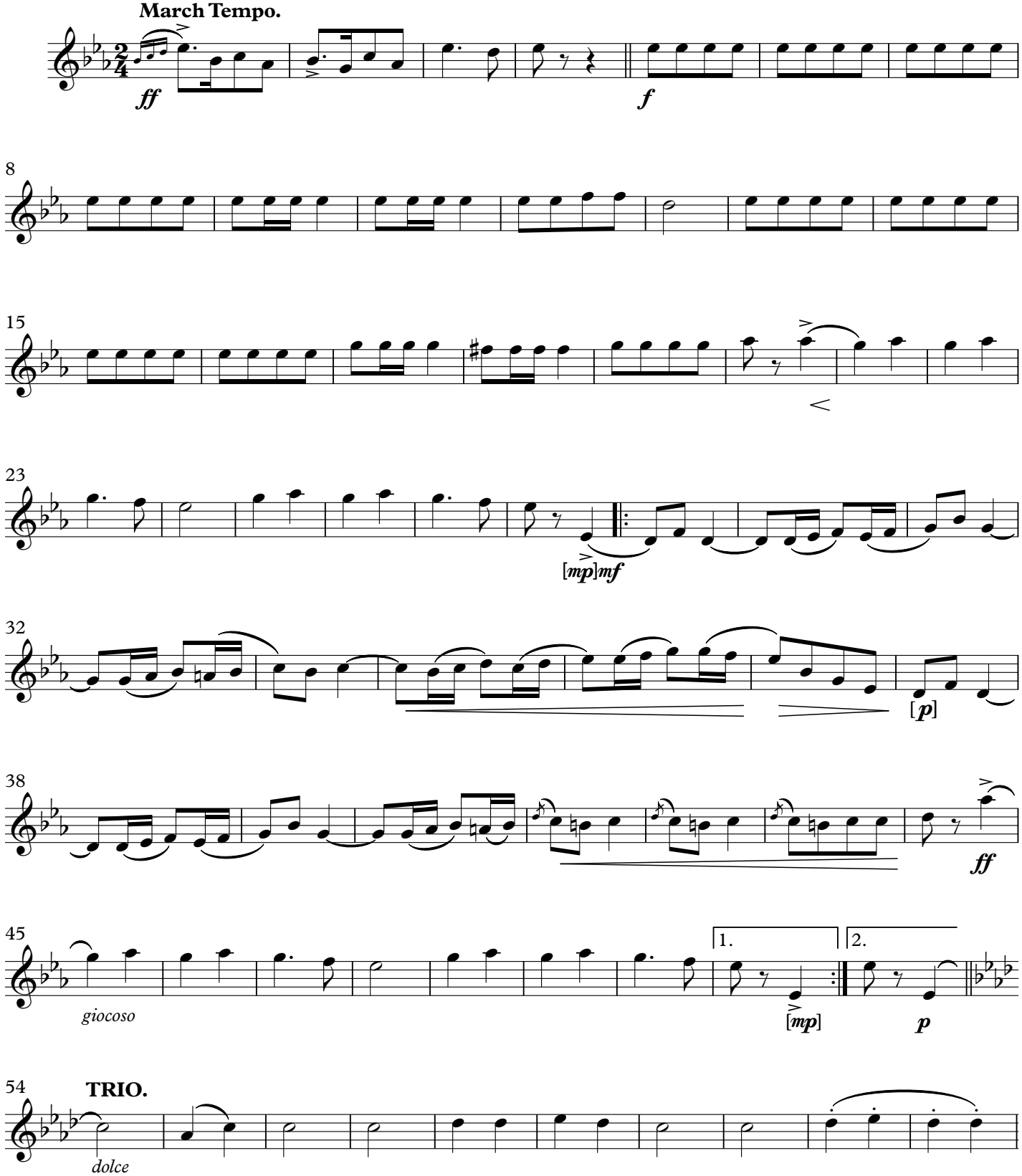
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

1st Oboe

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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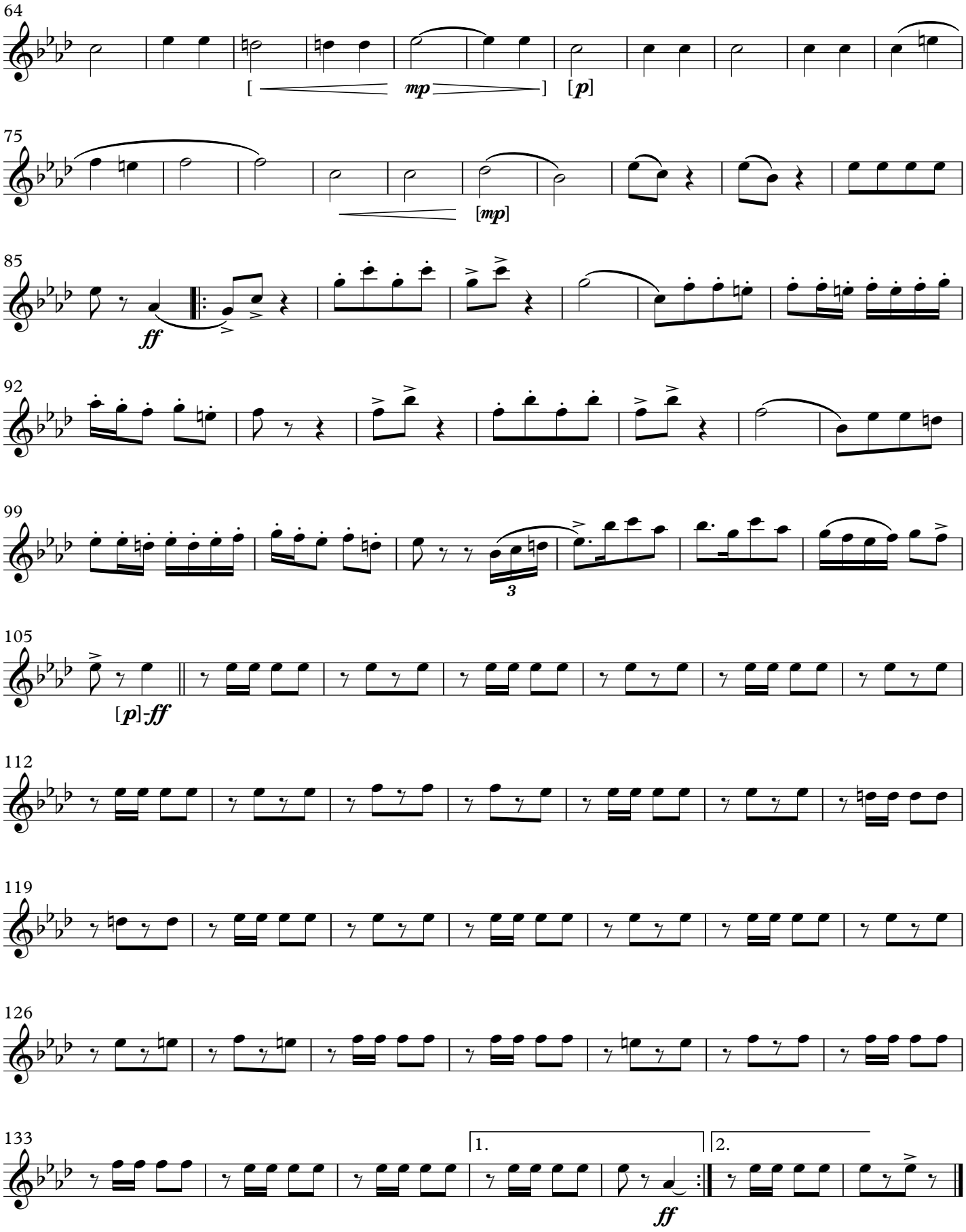

64
[mp] [p]
75
[mp]
85
ff
92
99
3
105
[p]-ff
112
119
126
133
1.
2.
ff

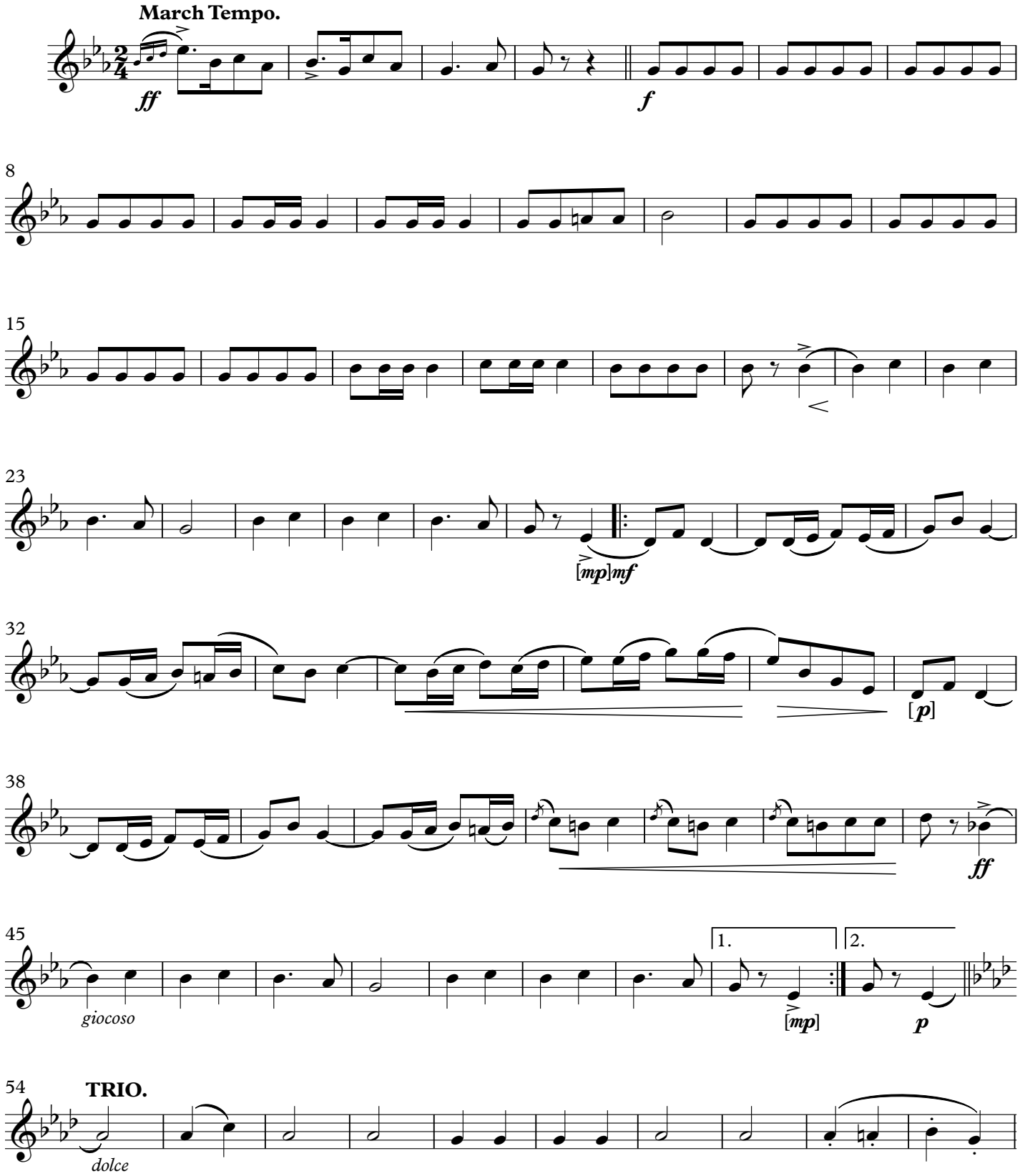
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

2nd Oboe

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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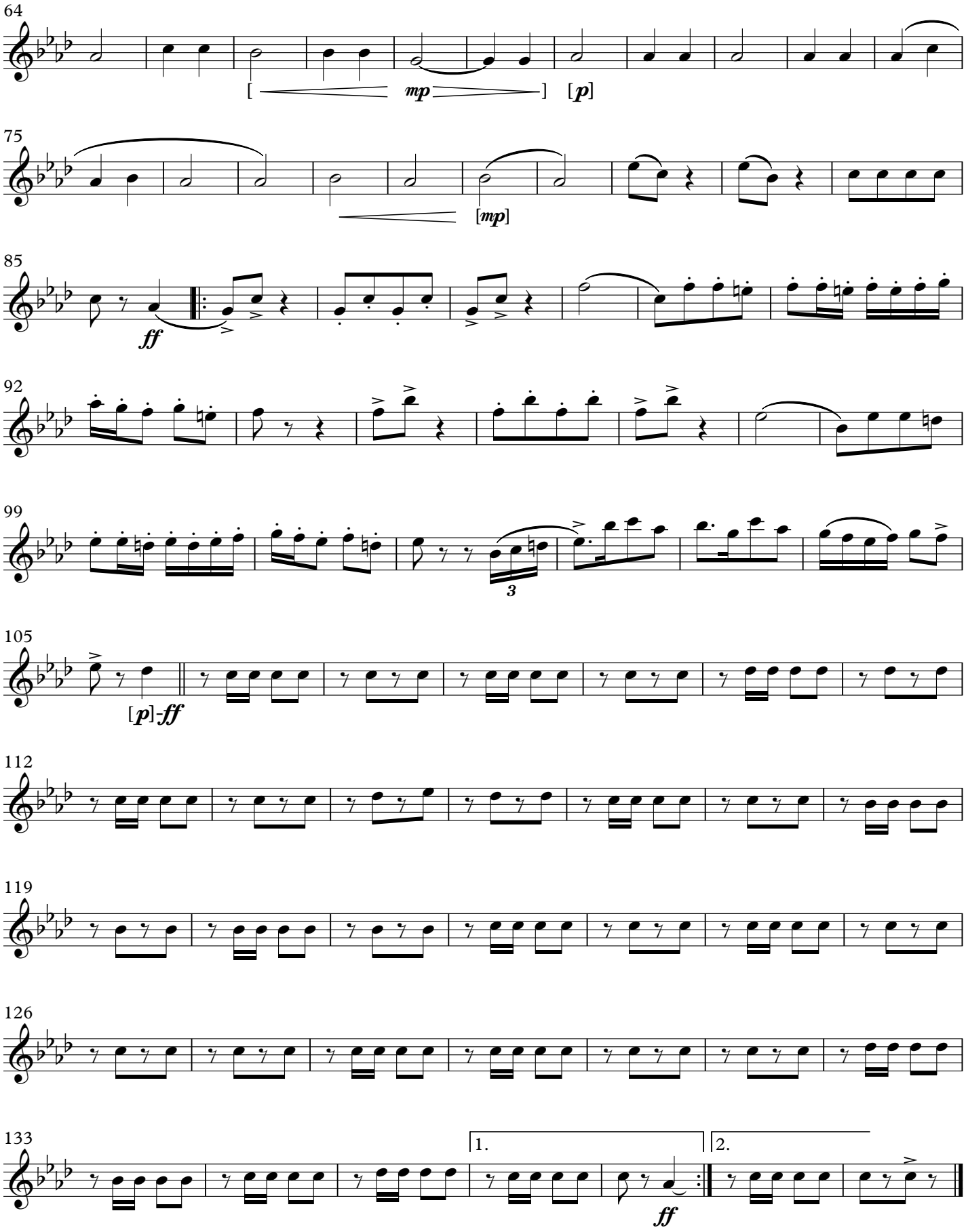

64
mp
[p]
75
[mp]
85
ff
92
99
3
105
[p]-ff
112
119
126
133
1.
2.
ff

March

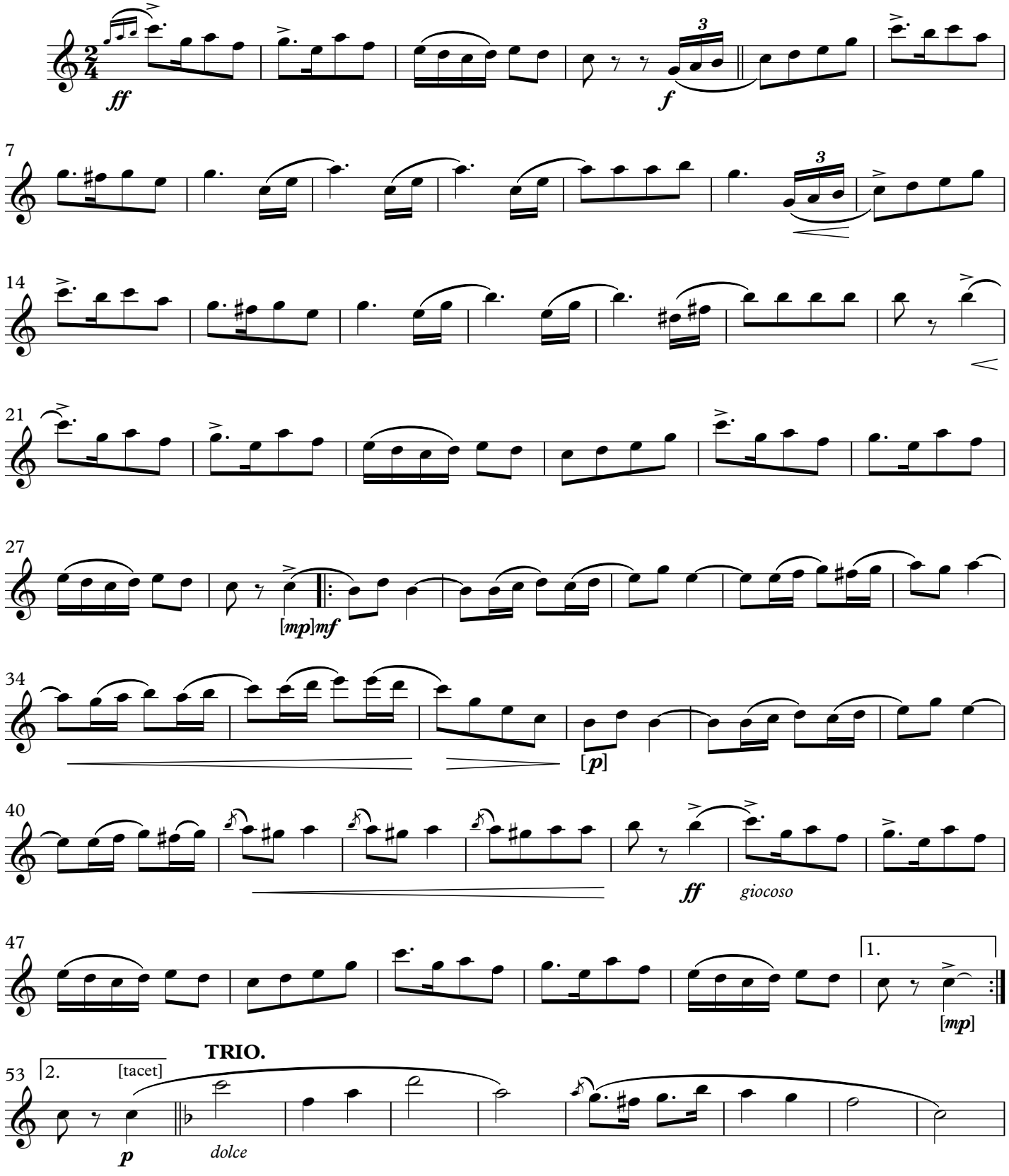
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

E♭ Clarinet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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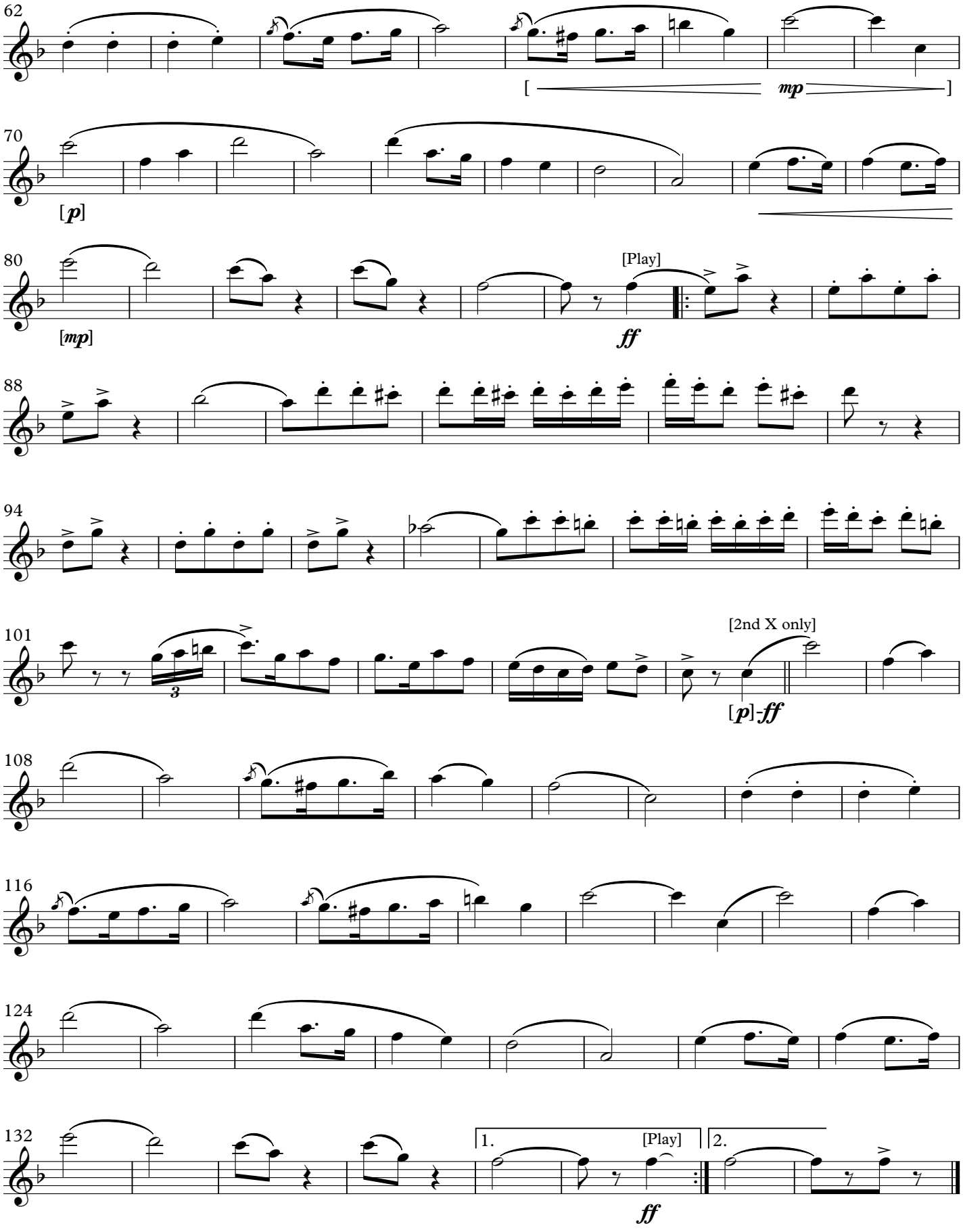

62
[
mp
]
70
[p]
80
[mp]
[Play]
ff
88
94
101
[2nd X only]
[p]-ff
108
116
124
132
1.
[Play]
2.
ff

March

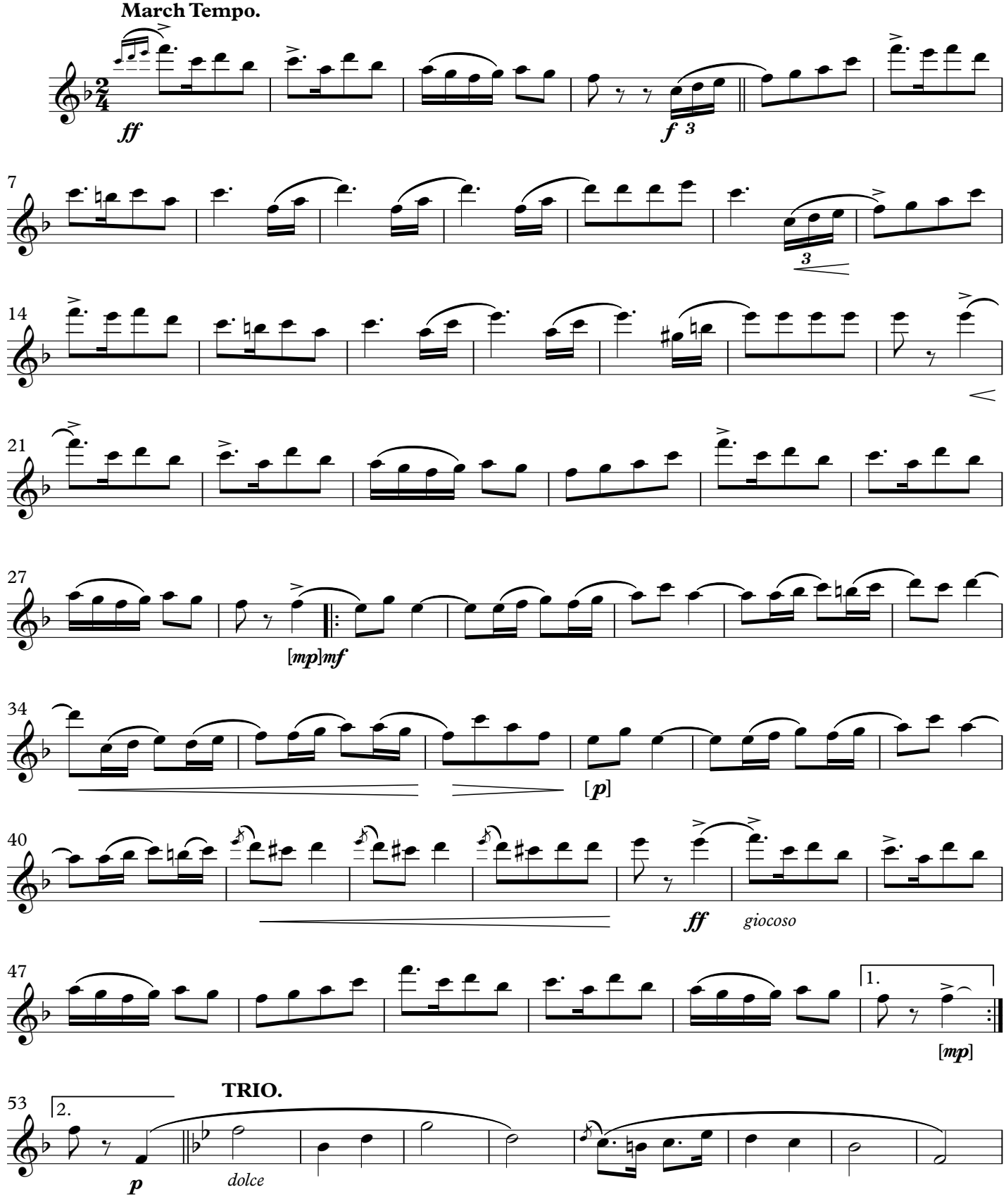
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

1st B♭ Clarinet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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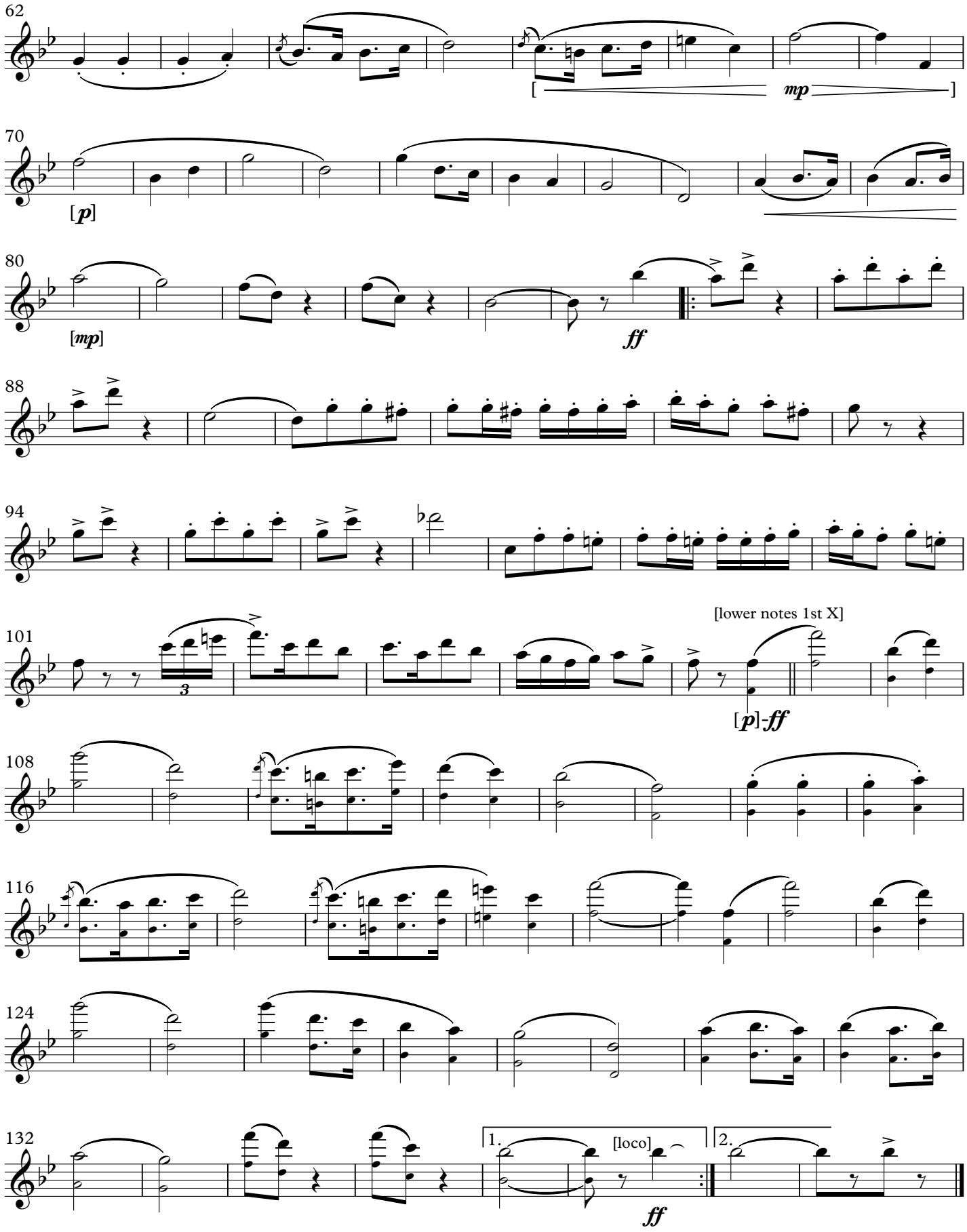

62
mp
70
[p]
80
[mp]
ff
88
94
101
[lower notes 1st X]
[p]-ff
108
116
124
132
1.
[loco]
2.
ff

March

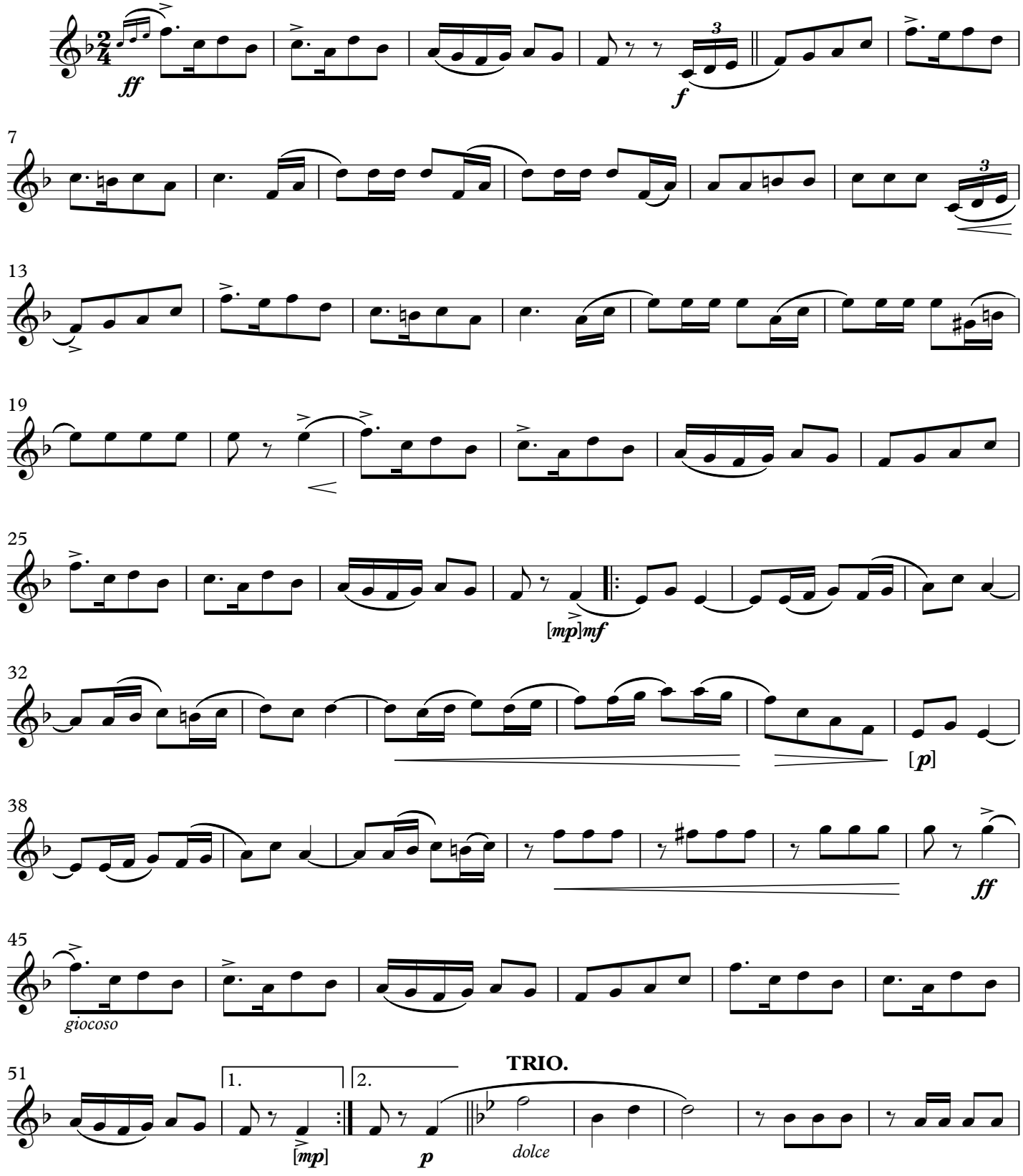
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

2nd B♭ Clarinet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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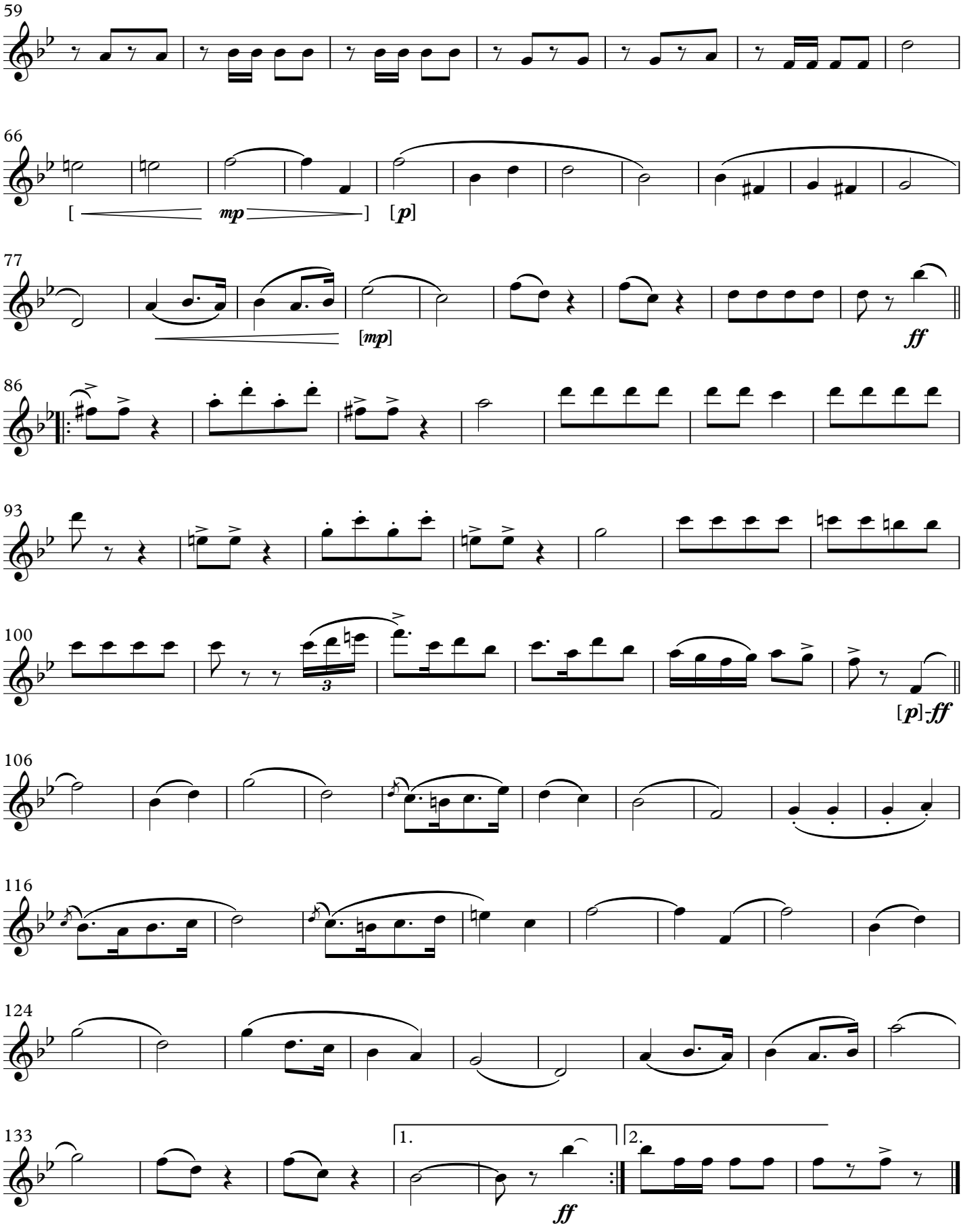

59
66
[mp] [p]
77
[mp]
ff
86
93
100
3
[p]-ff
106
116
124
133
1.
2.
ff

March

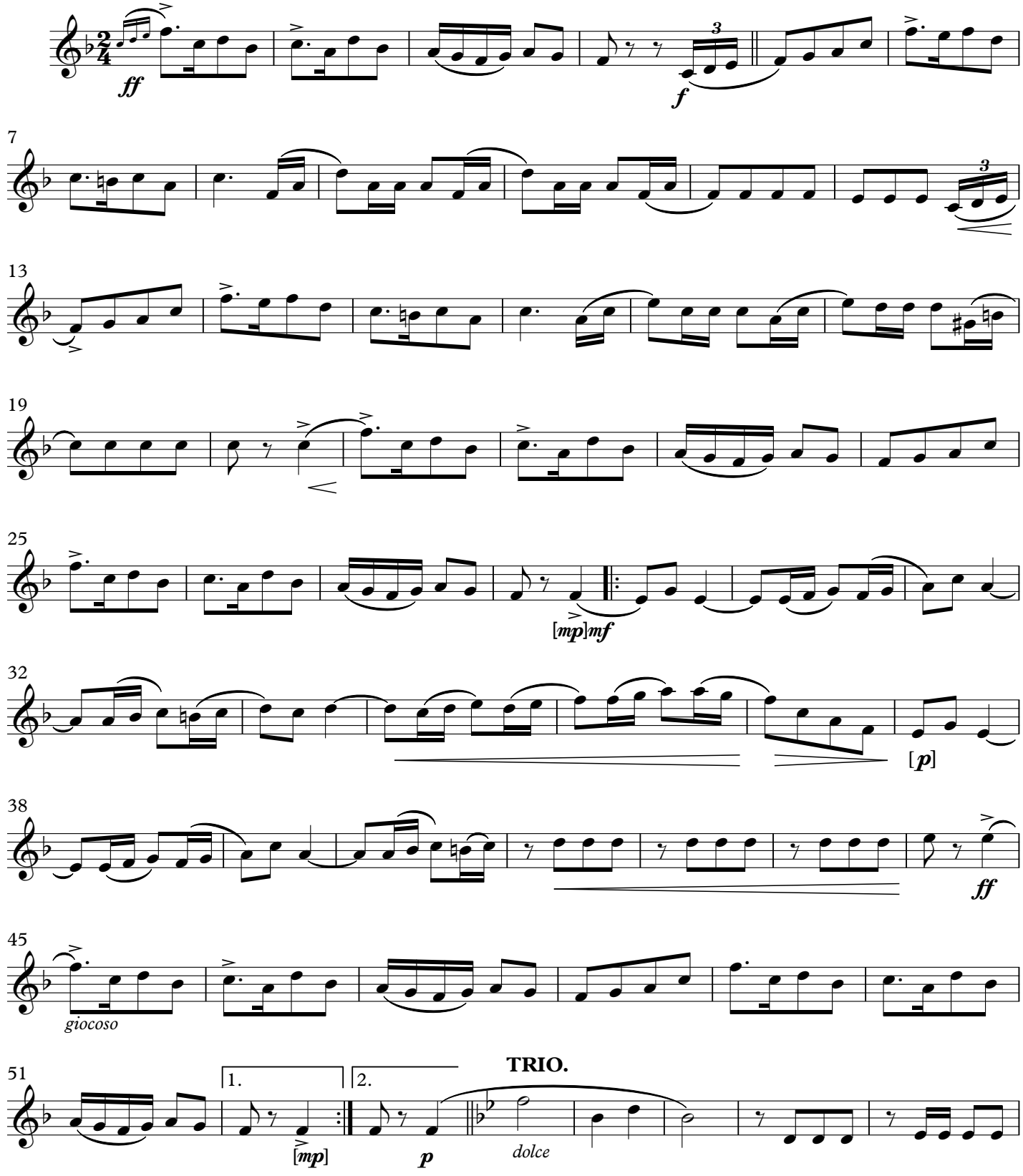
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

3rd B♭ Clarinet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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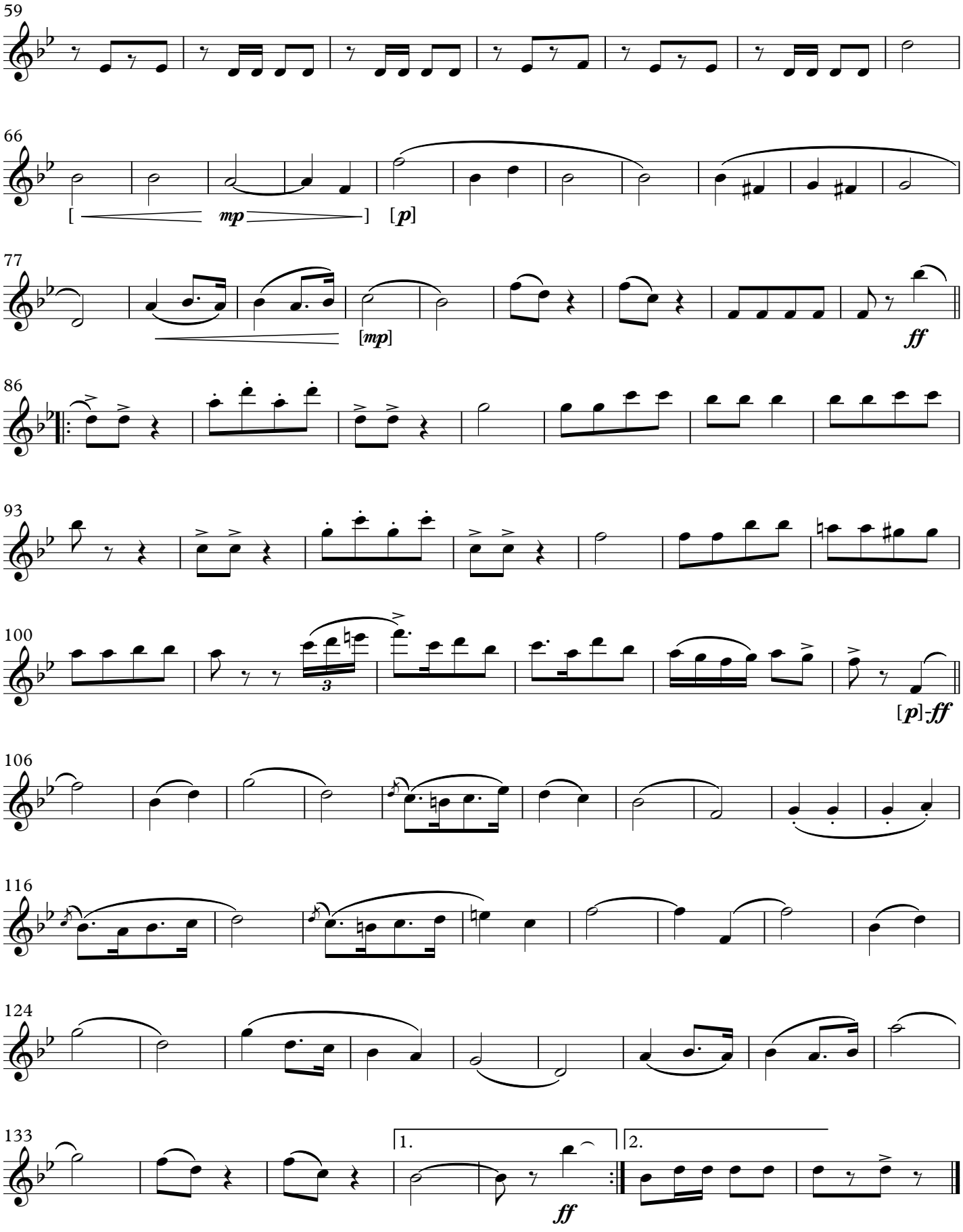

59
66
mp
[p]
77
[mp]
ff
86
93
100
3
[p]-ff
106
116
124
133
1.
2.
ff

March

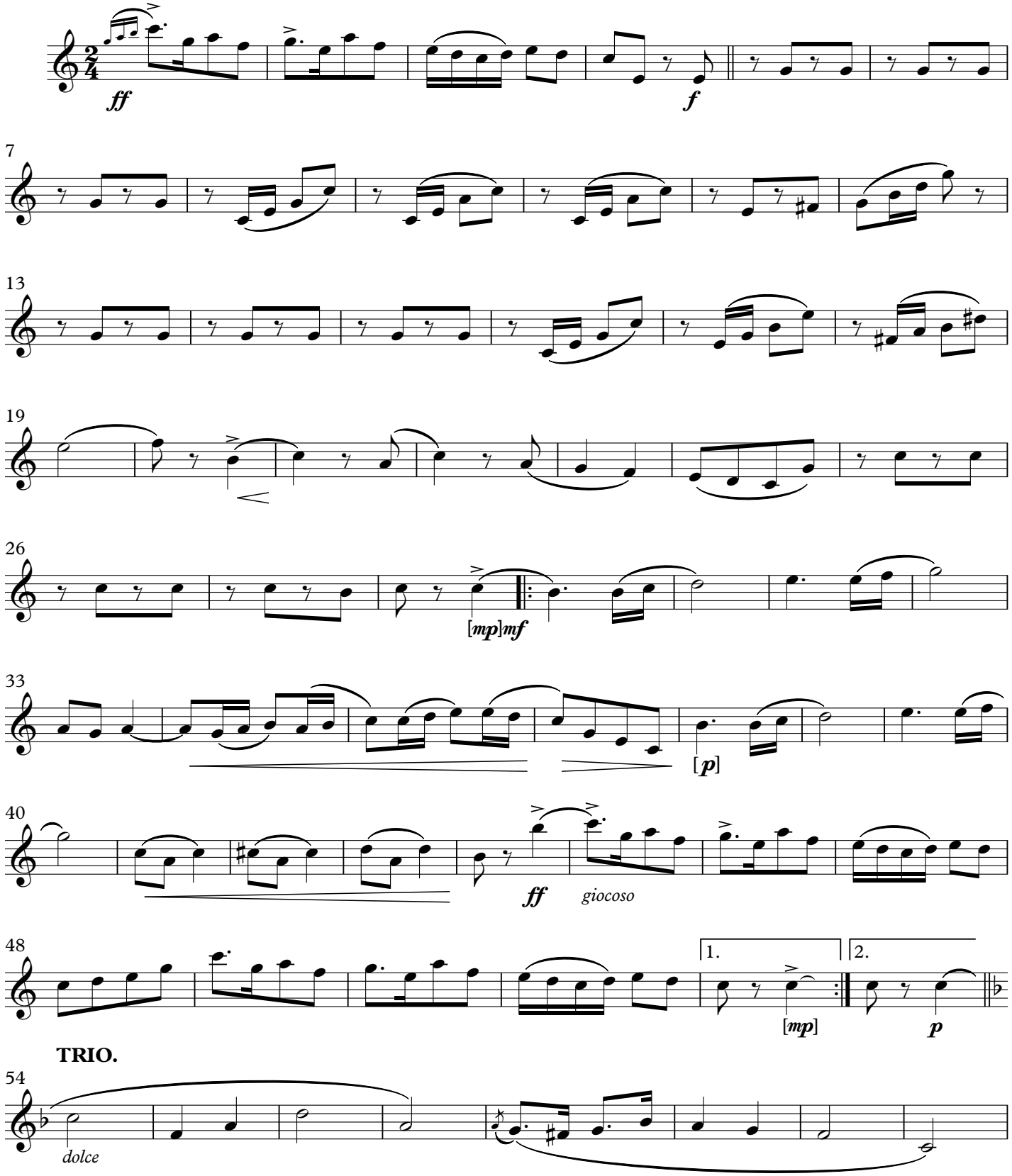
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

E♭ Alto Clarinet
[optional]

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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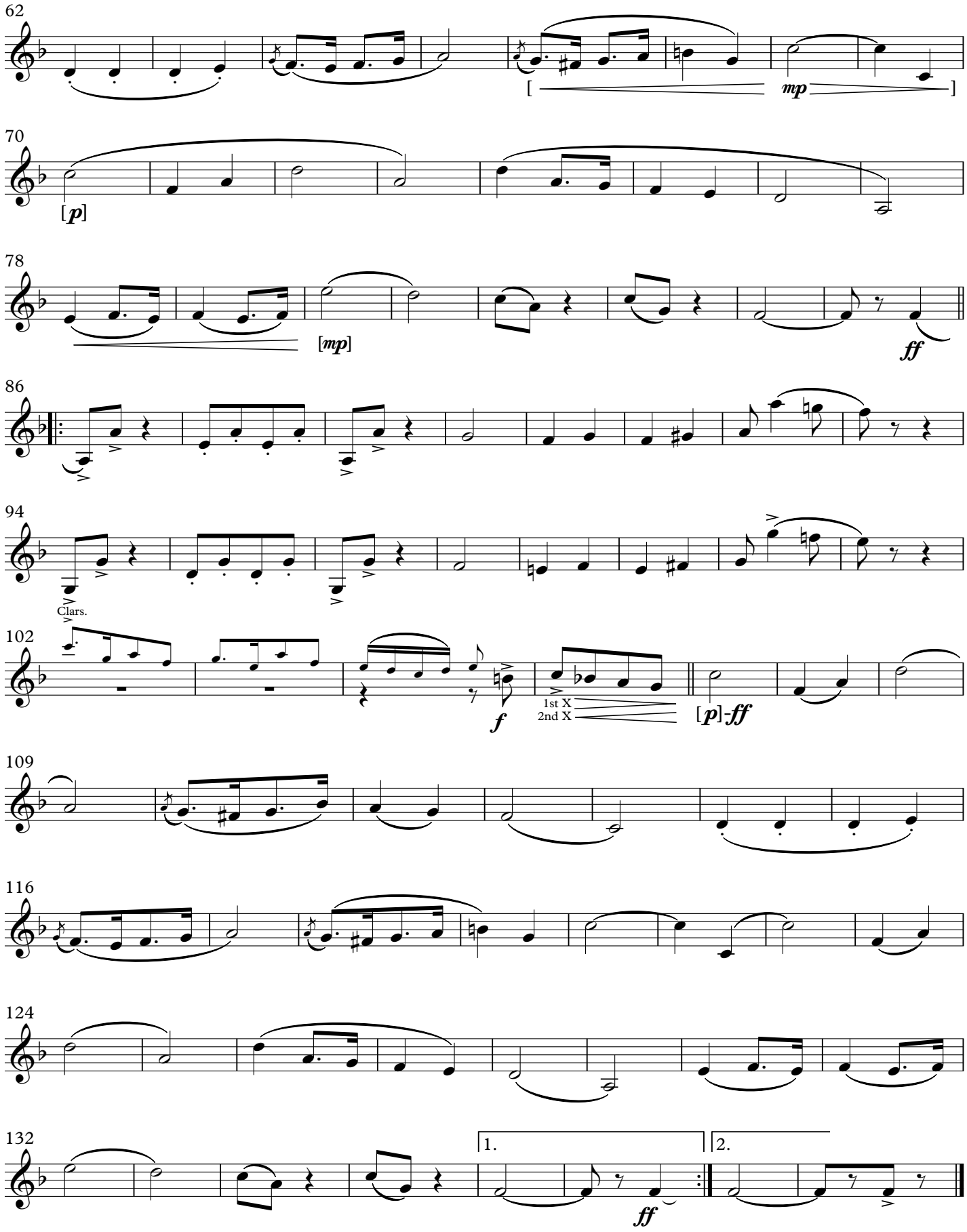

62
[
mp
]
70
[p]
78
[mp]
ff
86
94
Clars.
102
f
1st X
2nd X
[p]-ff
109
116
124
132
1.
2.
ff

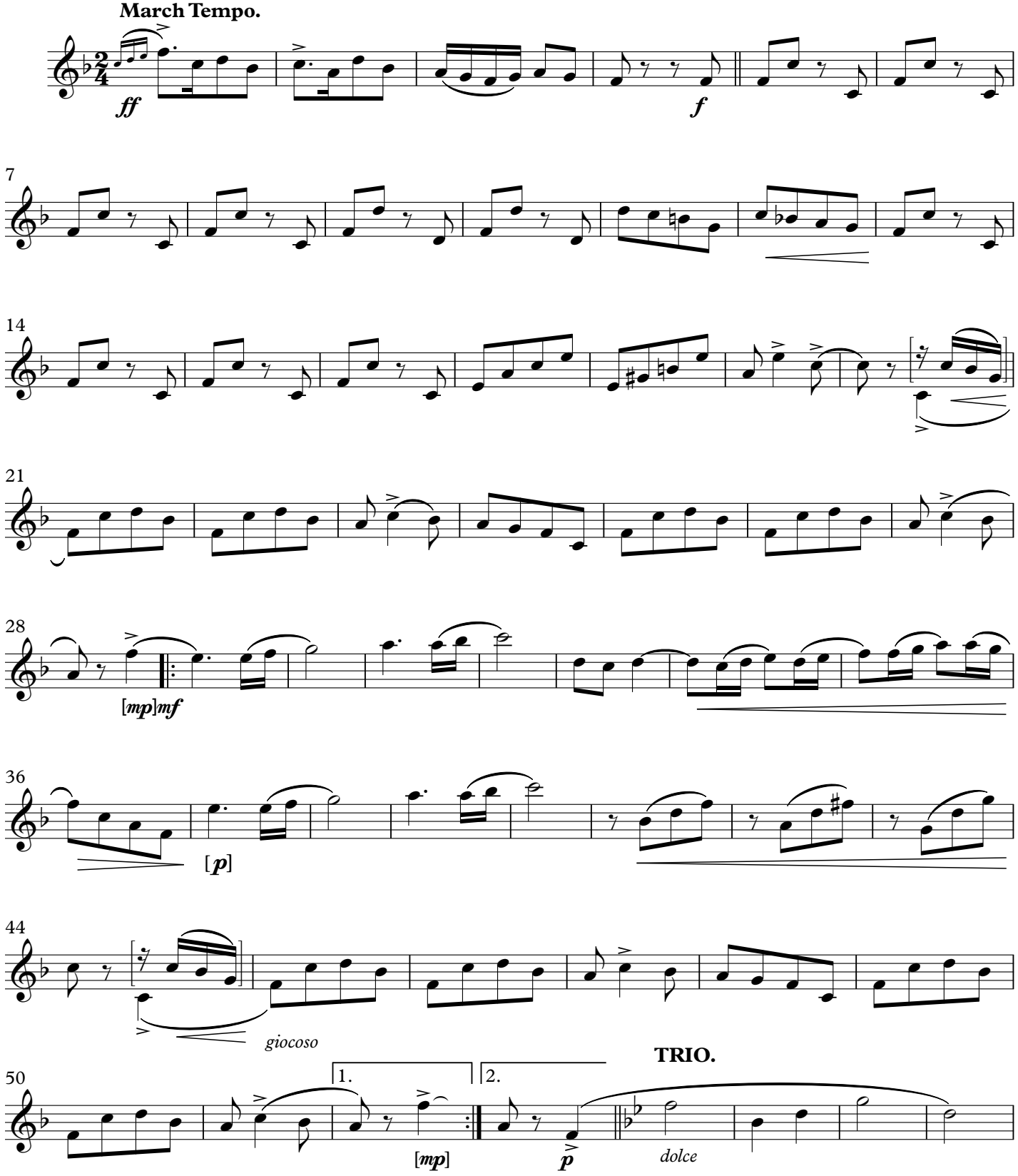
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

B♭ Bass Clarinet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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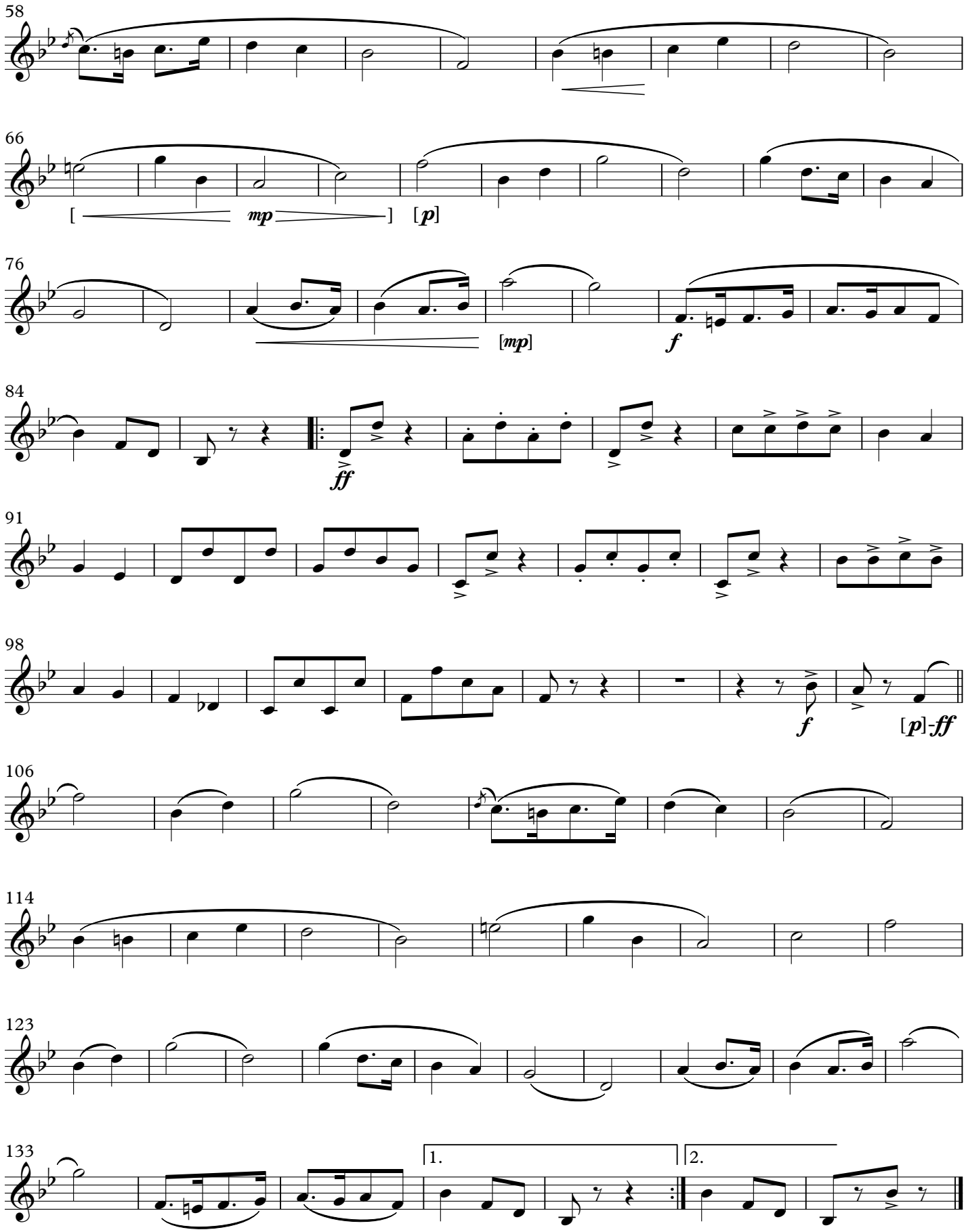

58
66
[mp] [p]
76
[mp]
f
84
ff
91
98
f
[p]-ff
106
114
123
133
1.
2.

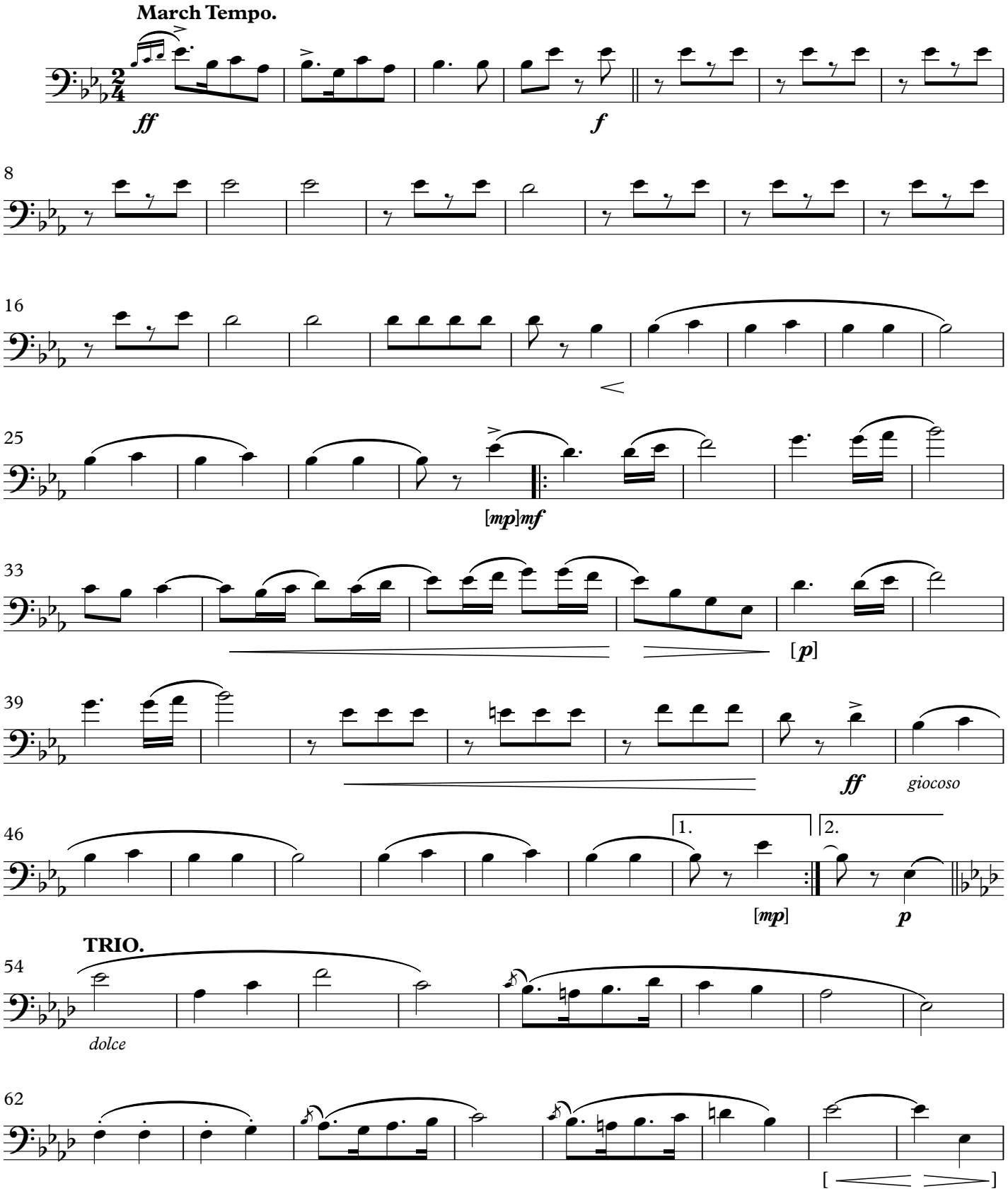
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

1st Bassoon

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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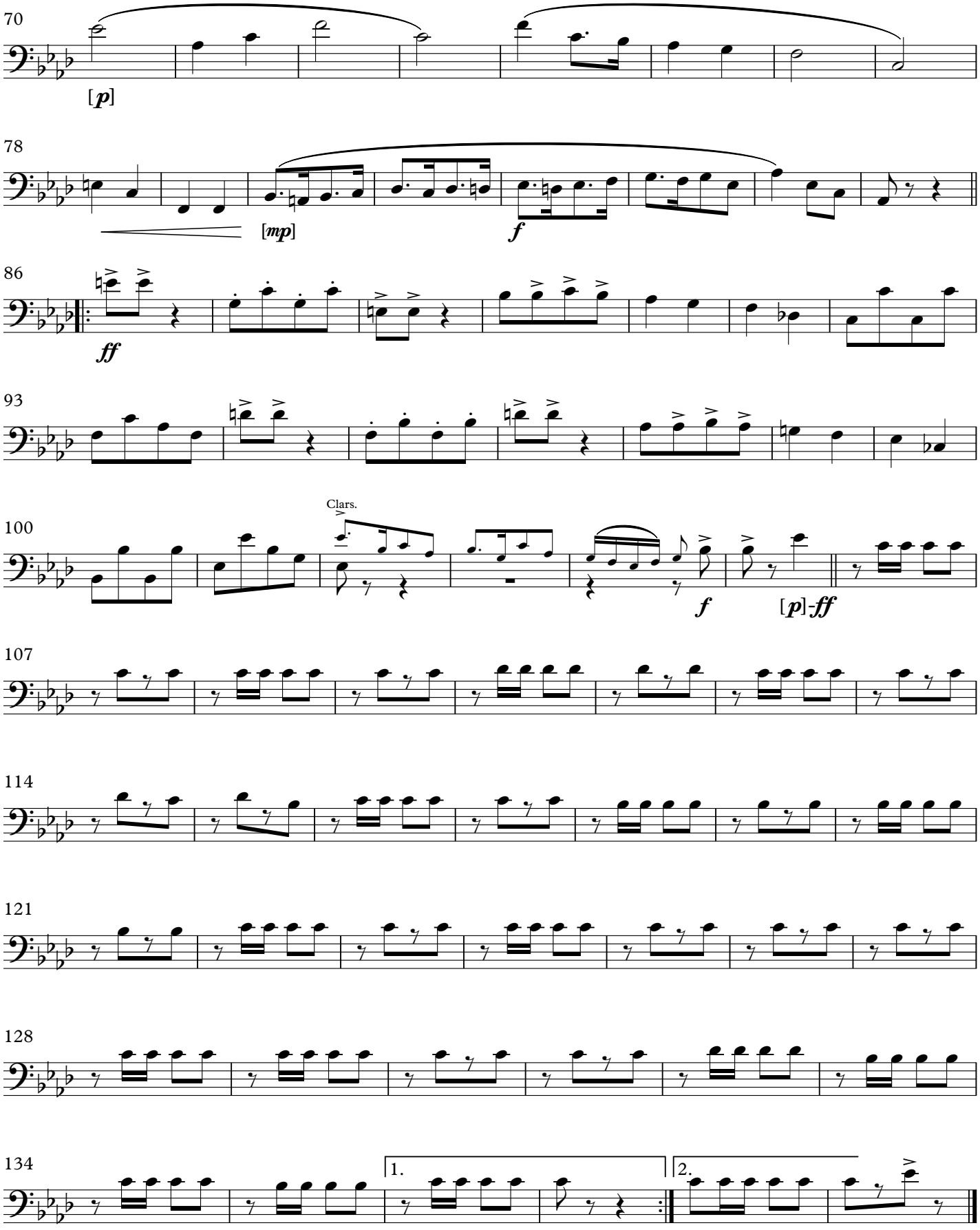

70
[p]
78
[mp]
f
86
ff
93
100
Clars.
f
[p]-ff
107
114
121
128
134
1.
2.

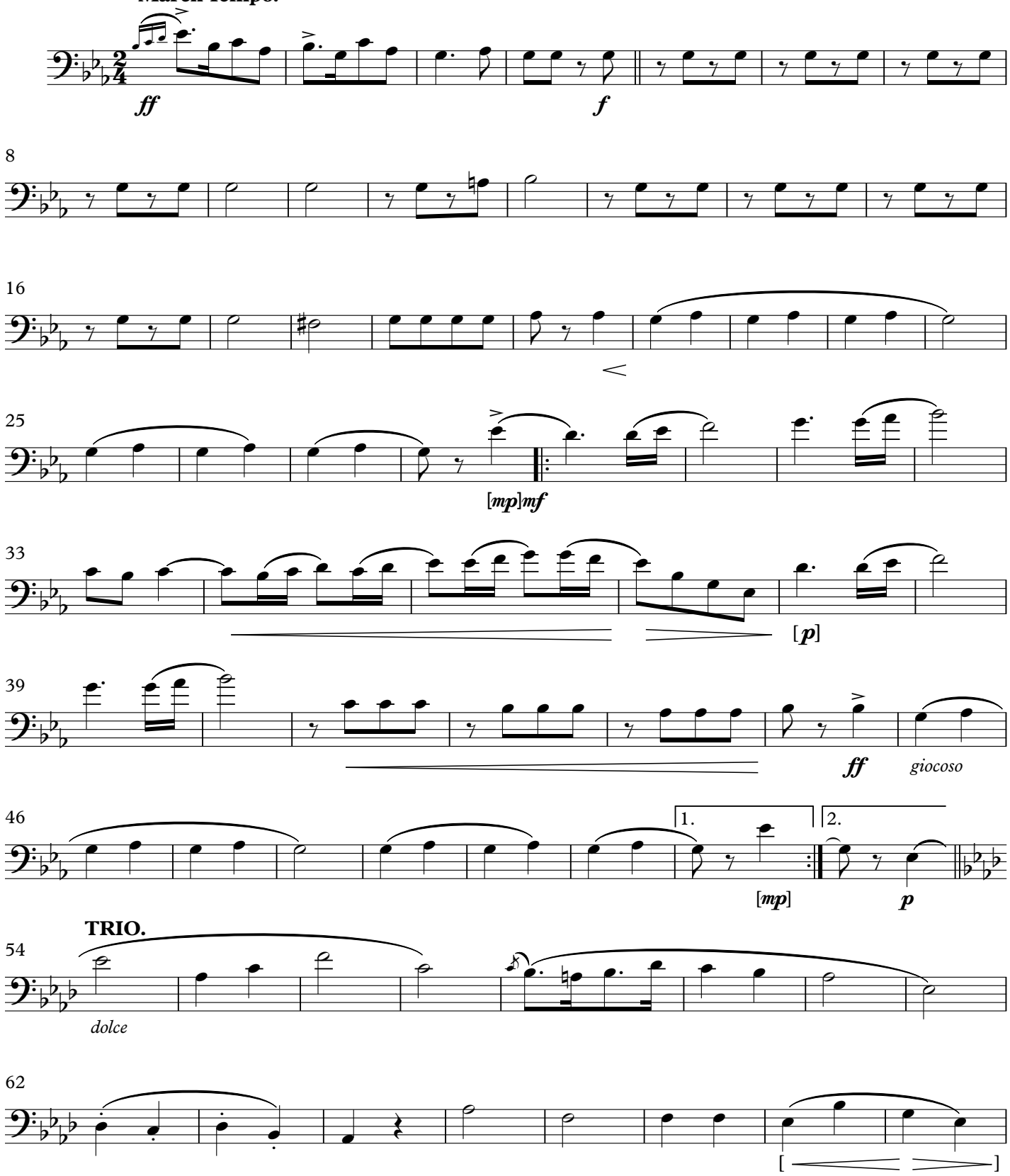
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

2nd Bassoon

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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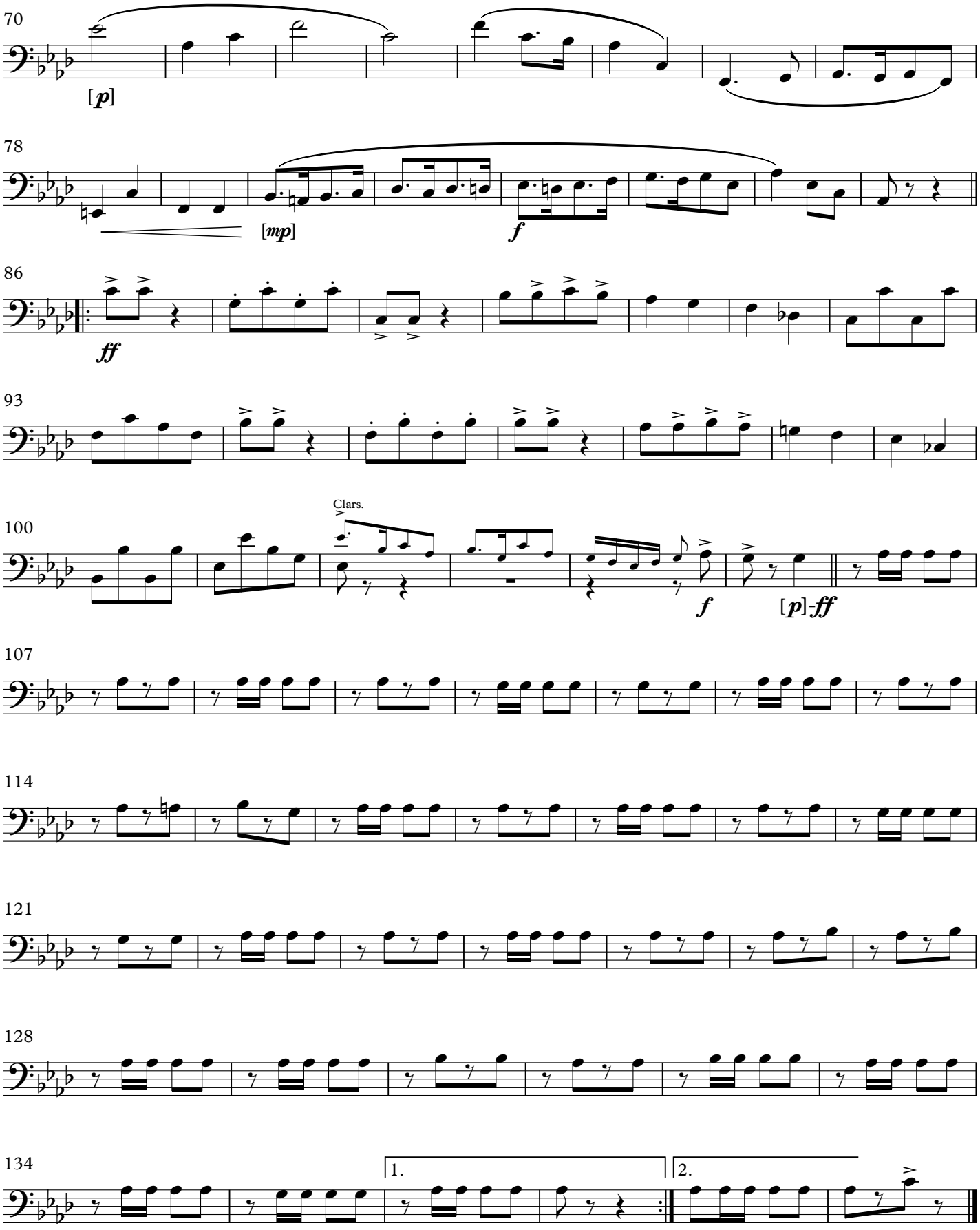
70
[p]
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86
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93
100
Clars.
f
[p]-ff
107
114
121
128
134
1.
2.

March

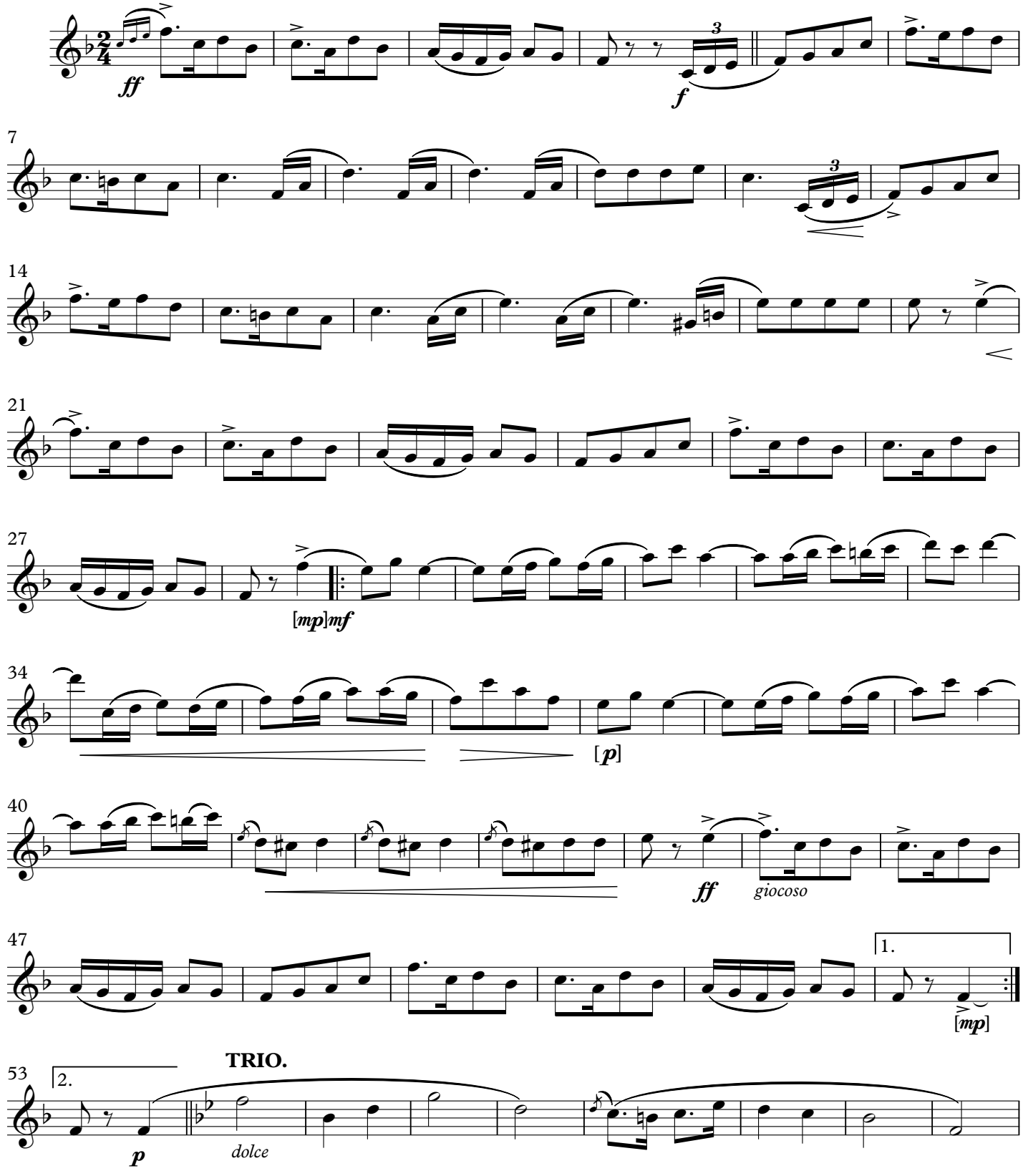
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

B♭ Soprano Saxophone
[optional]

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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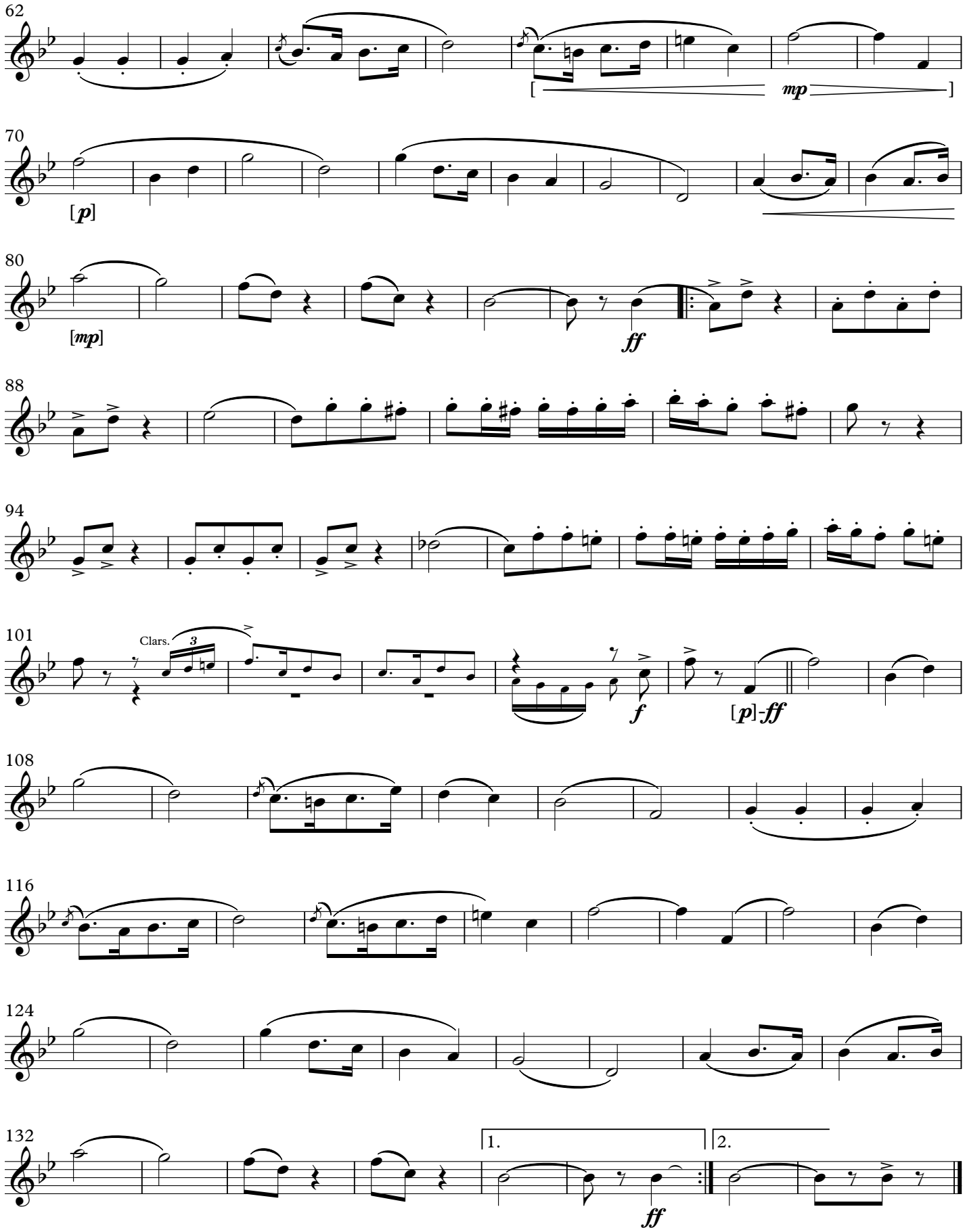
62
mp
70
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80
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94
101
Clars.
3
f
[p]-ff
108
116
124
132
1.
2.
ff

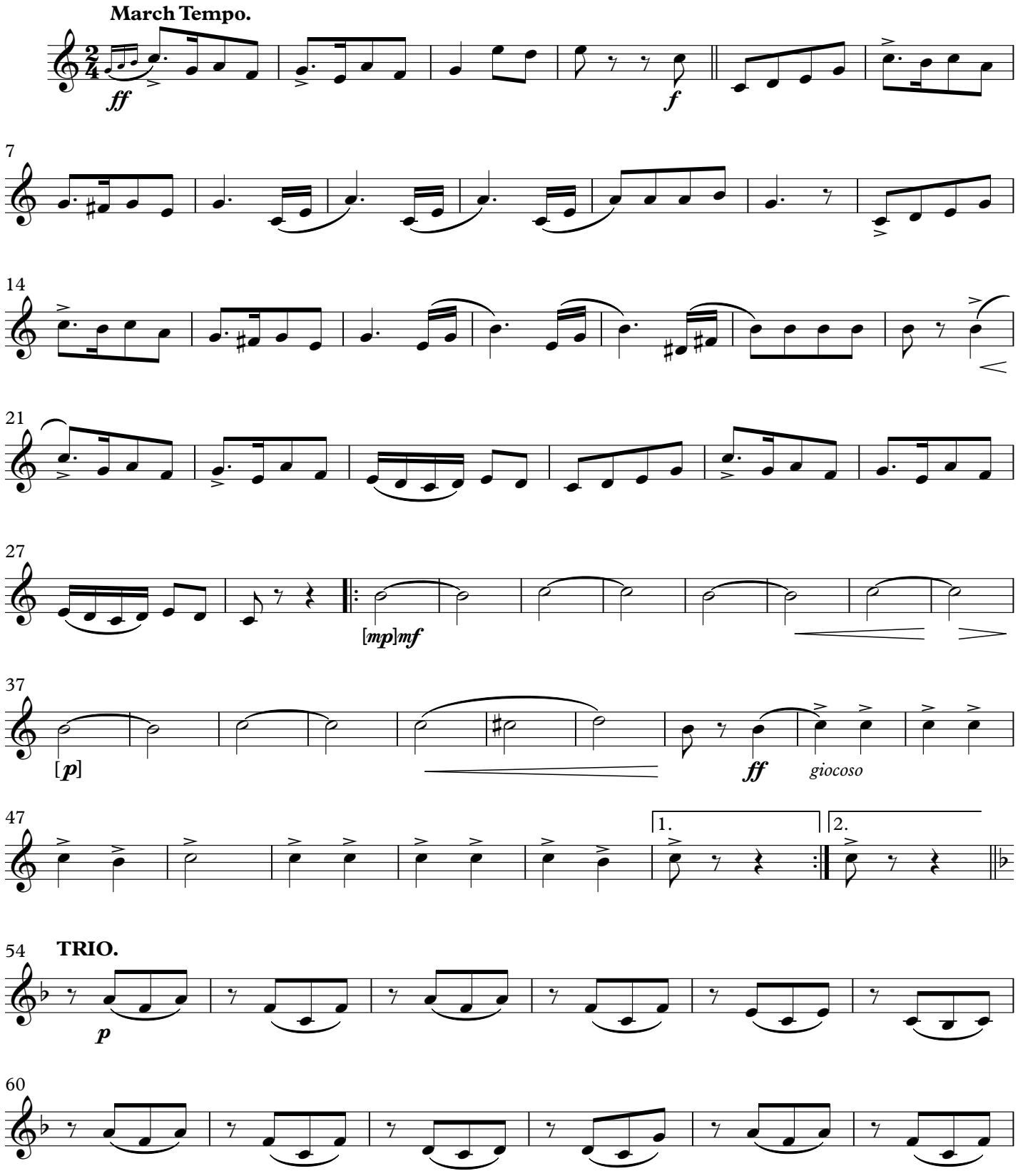
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

E♭ Alto Saxophone

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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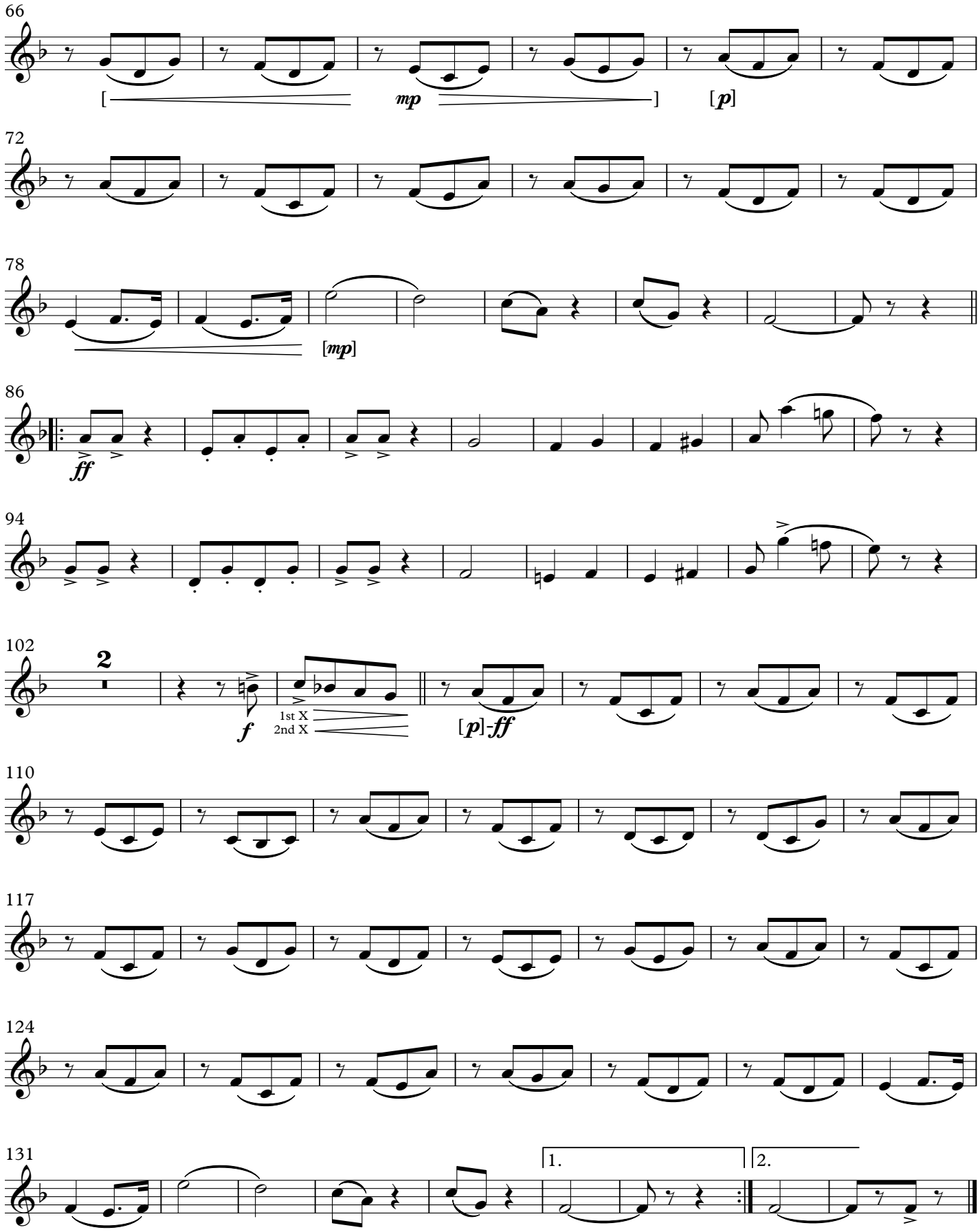
66
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[p]
72
78
[mp]
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94
102
2
f
1st X
2nd X
[p]-ff
110
117
124
131
1.
2.

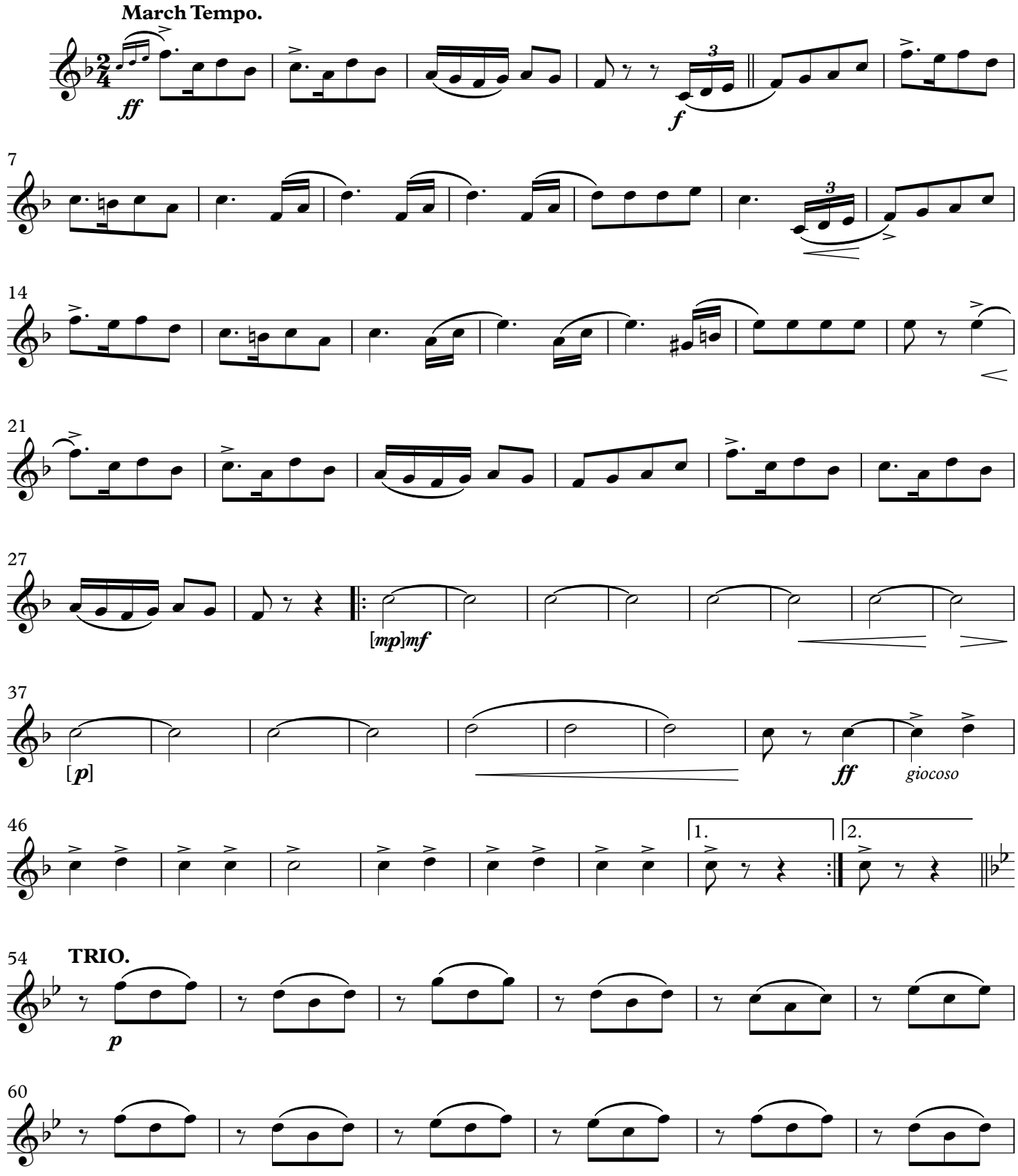
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

B♭ Tenor Saxophone

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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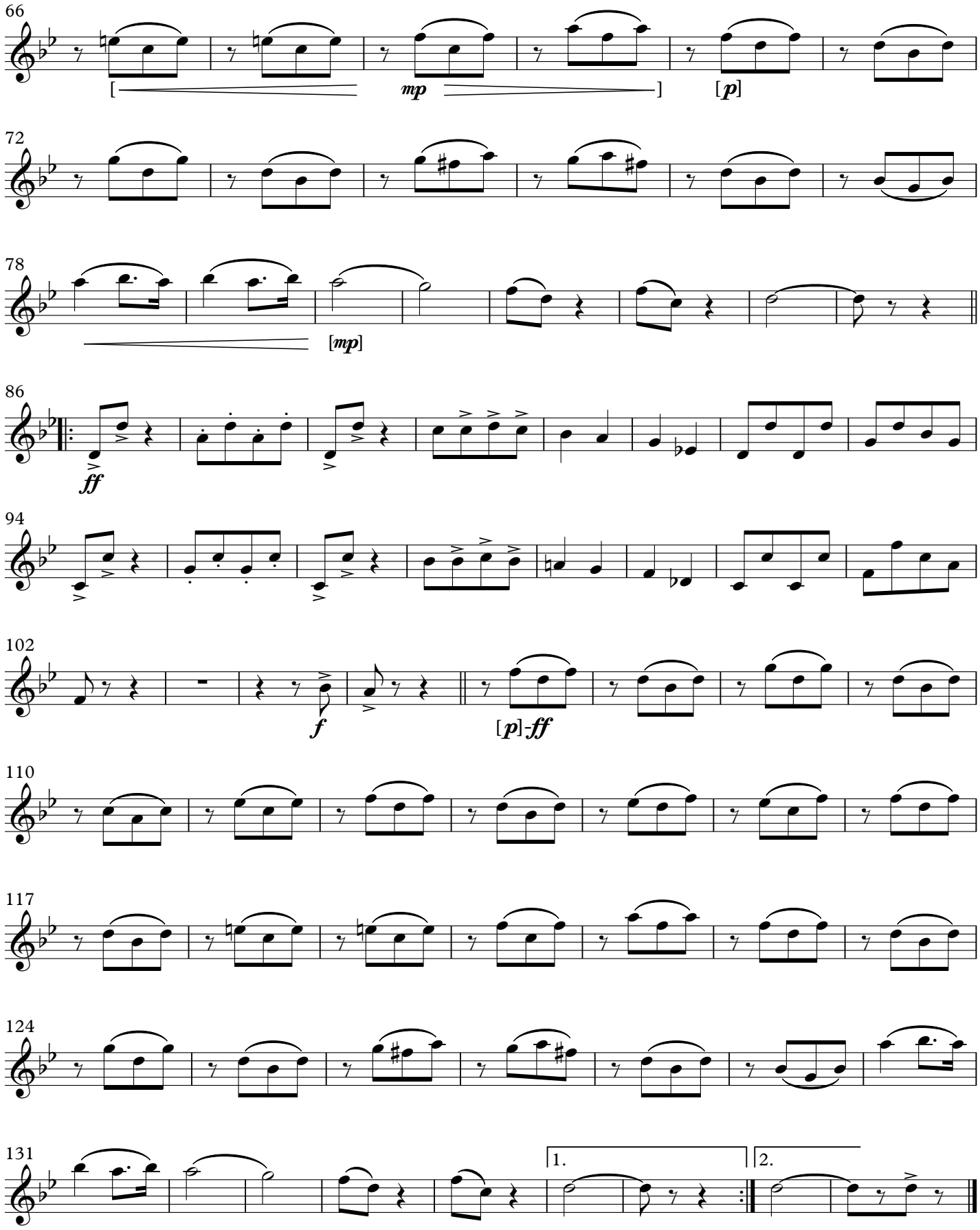

66
mp
[p]
72
78
[mp]
86
ff
94
102
f
[p]-ff
110
117
124
131
1.
2.

March

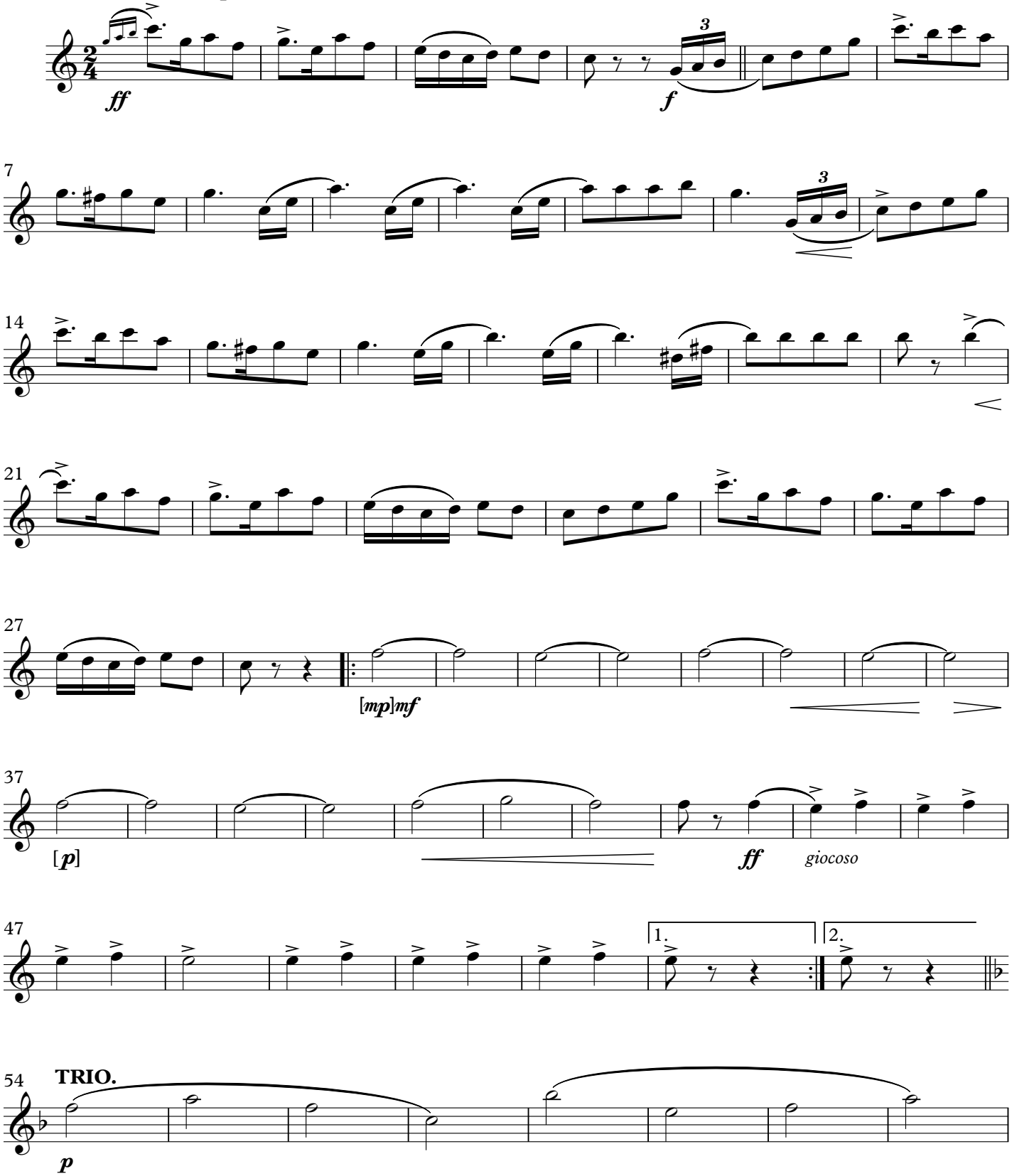
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

E♭ Baritone Saxophone

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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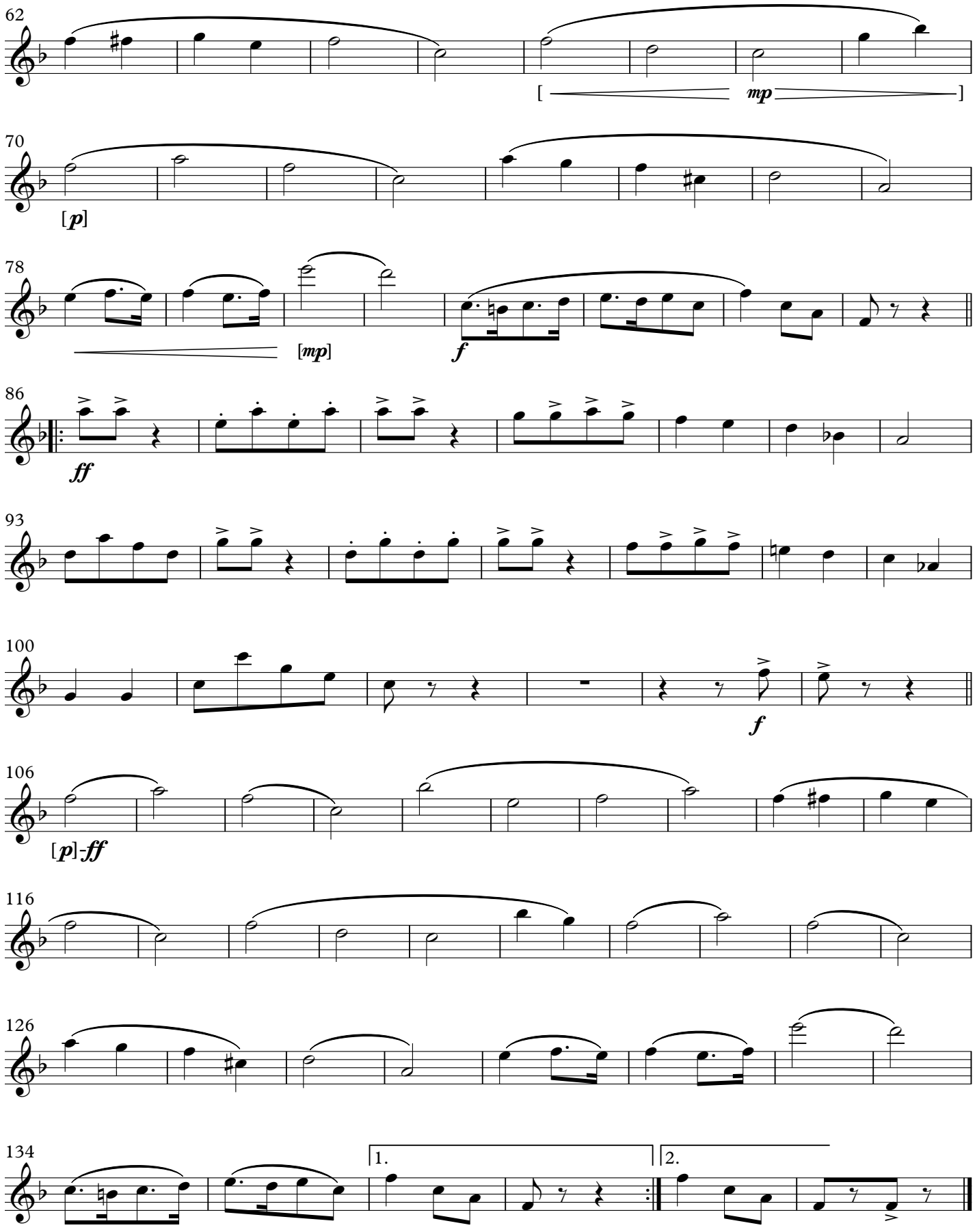

62
[
mp
]
70
[p]
78
[mp]
f
86
ff
93
100
f
106
[p]-ff
116
126
134
1.
2.

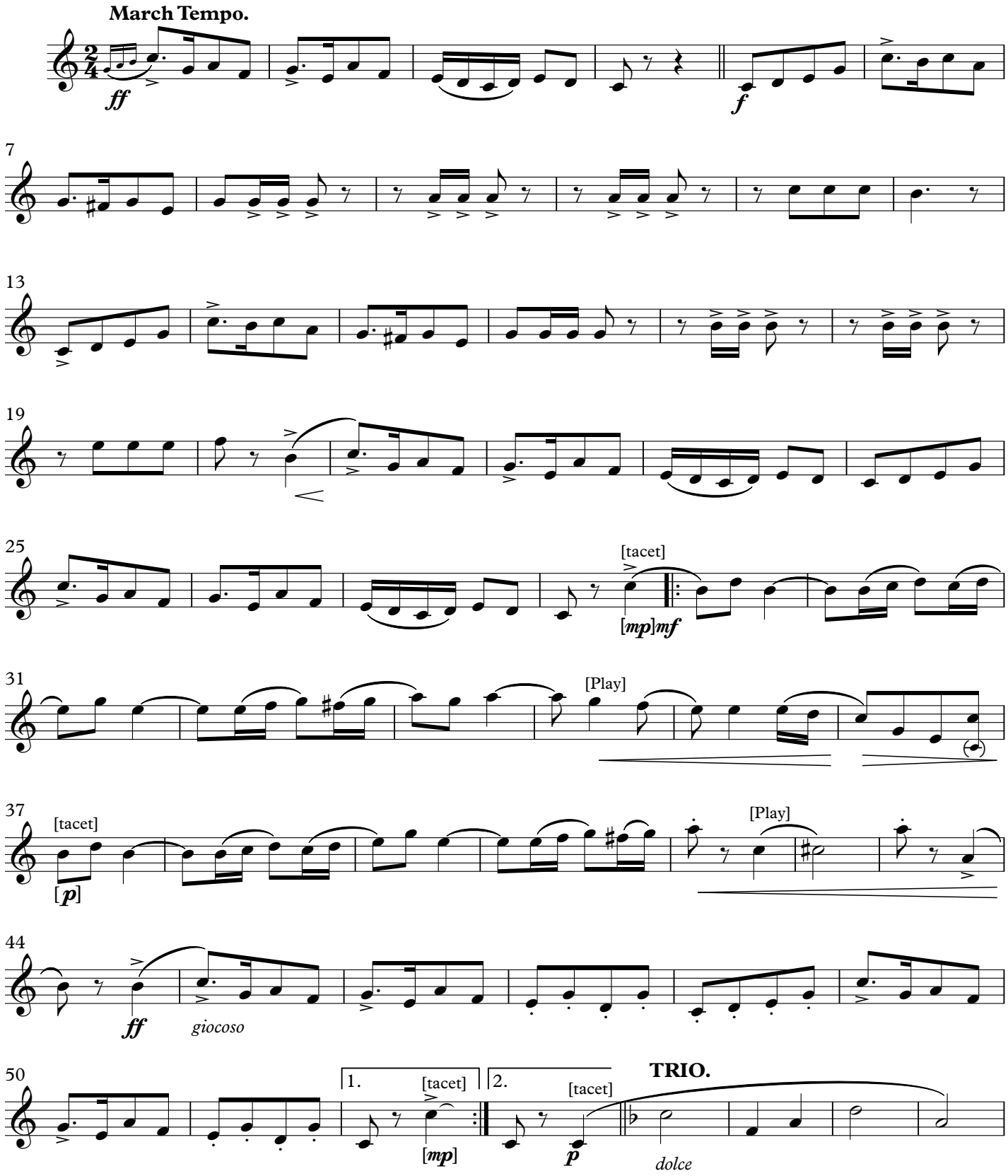
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

E♭ Cornet
[optional]



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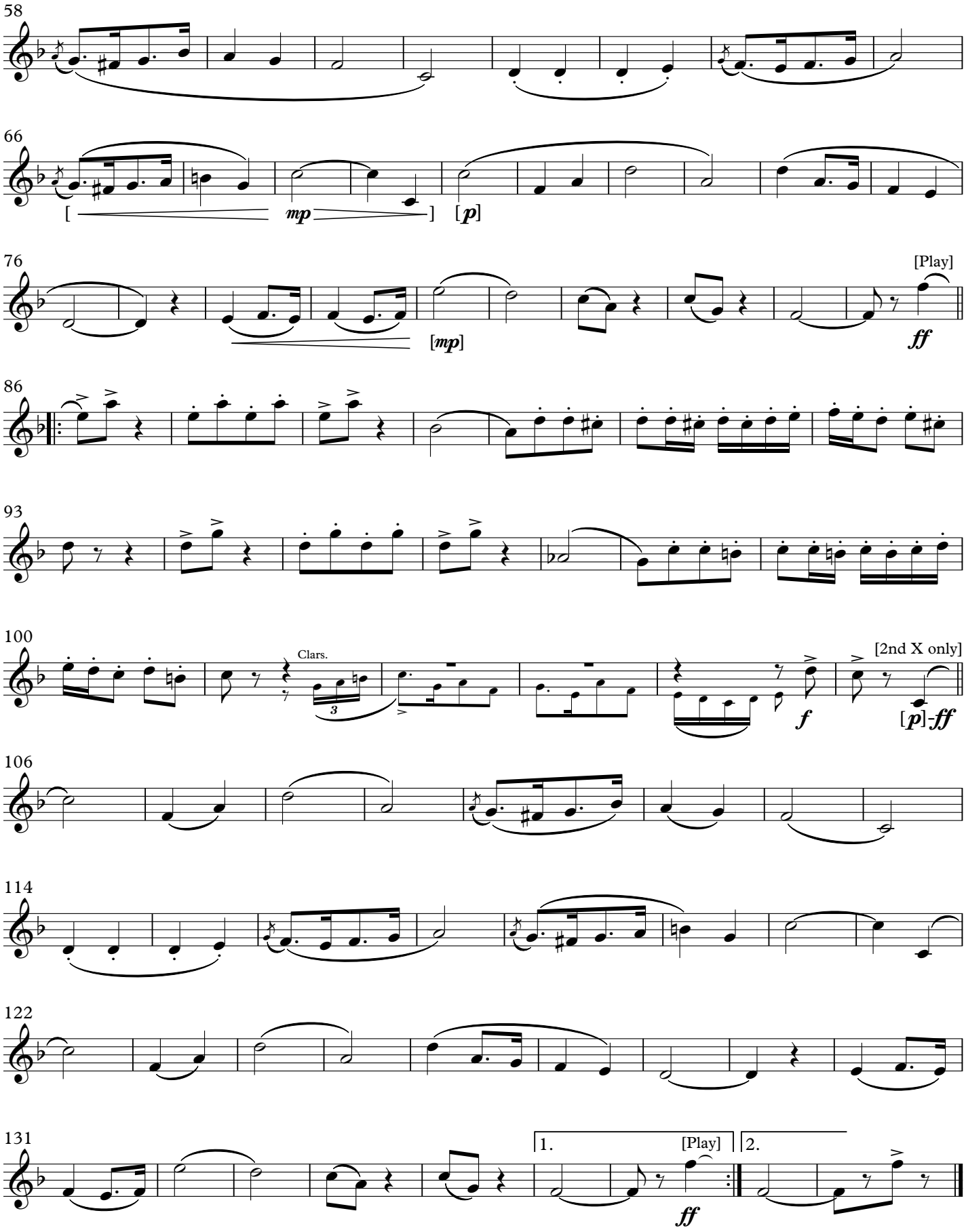

58
66
mp
[p]
76
[Play]
[mp]
ff
86
93
100
Clars.
f
[p]-ff
[2nd X only]
106
114
122
131
1.
[Play]
2.
ff

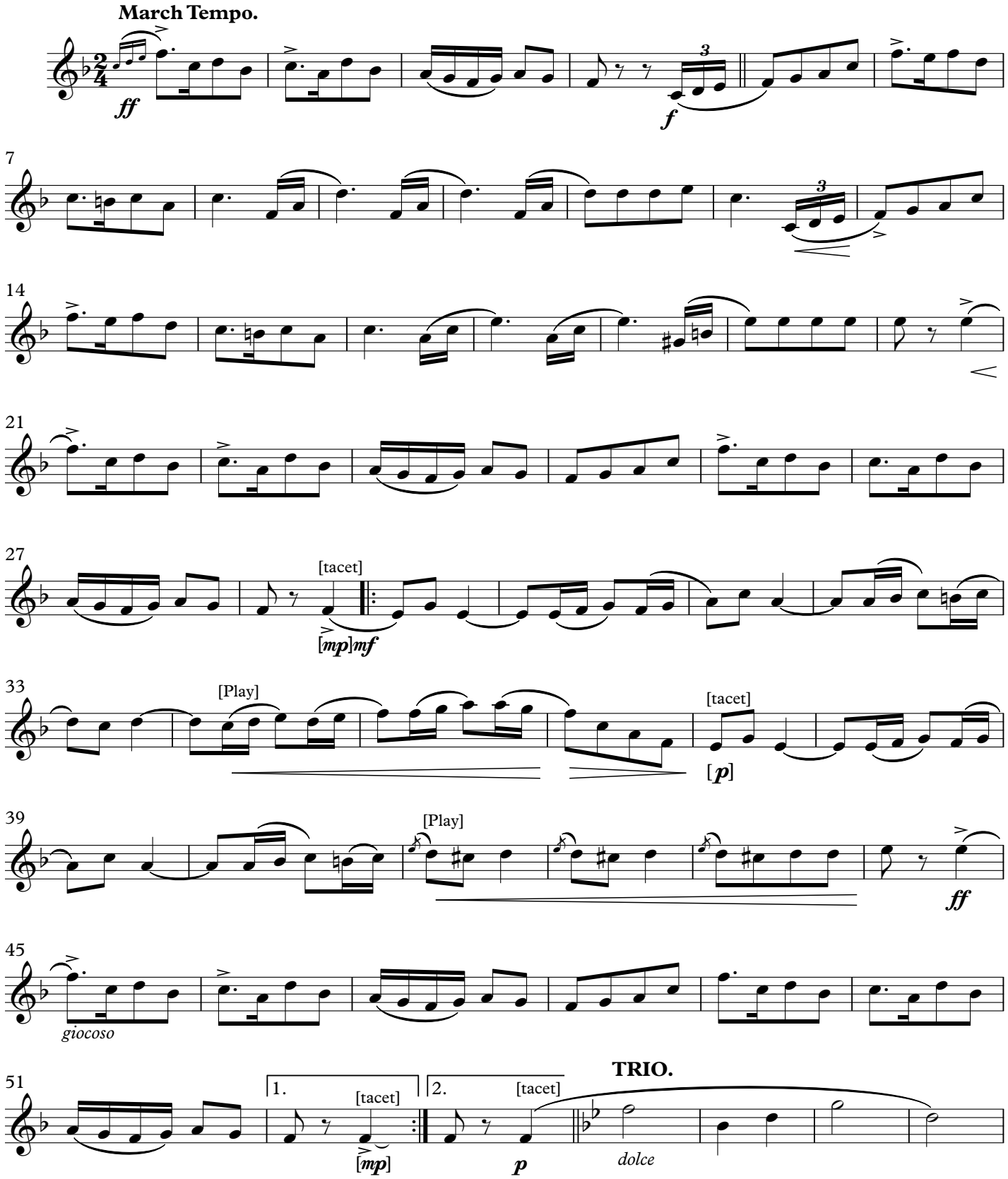
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

Solo B♭ Cornet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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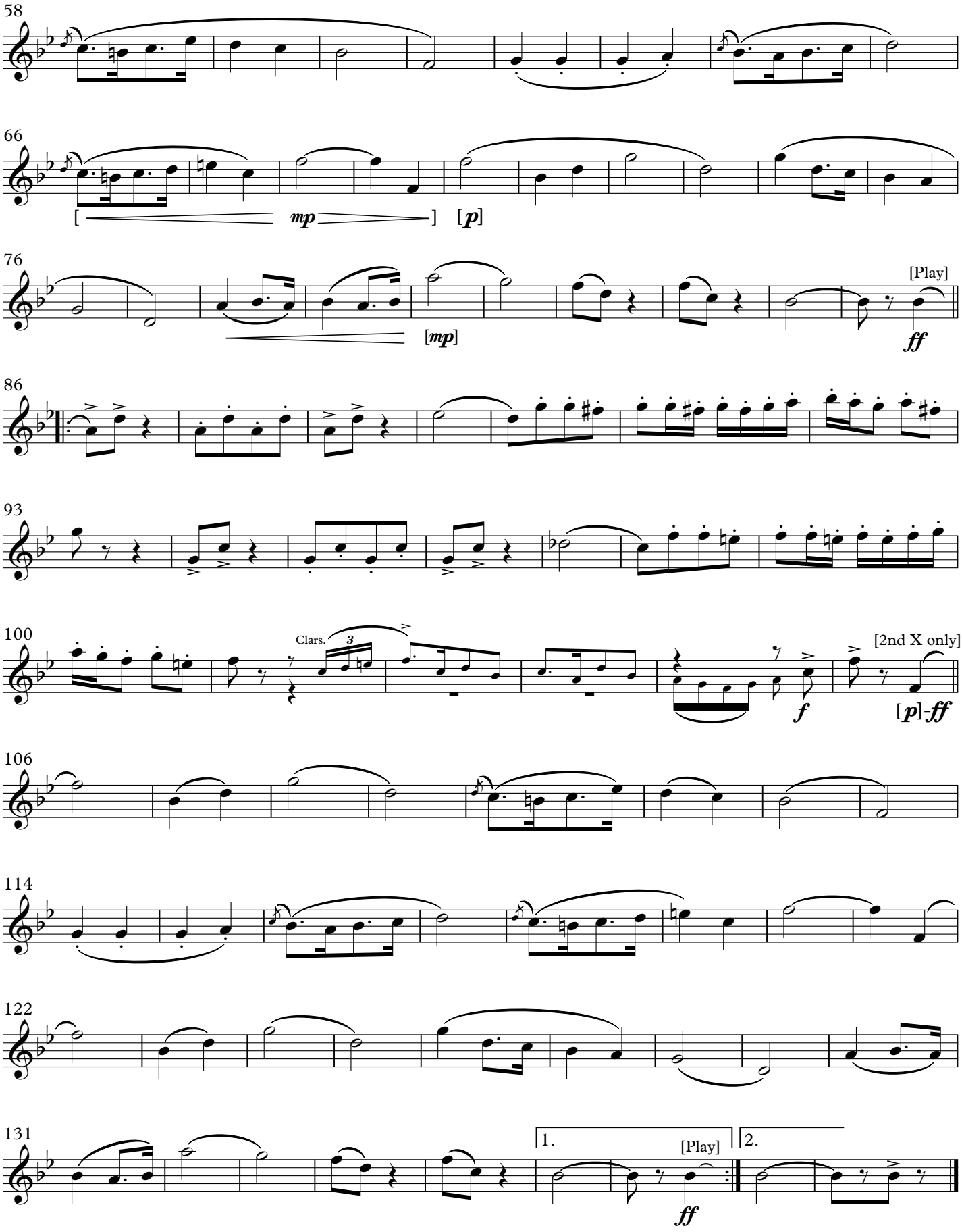
As played by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band


58
66
mp
[p]
76
[mp]
[Play]
ff
86
93
100
Clars.
3
f
[2nd X only]
[p]-ff
106
114
122
131
1.
[Play]
ff
2.

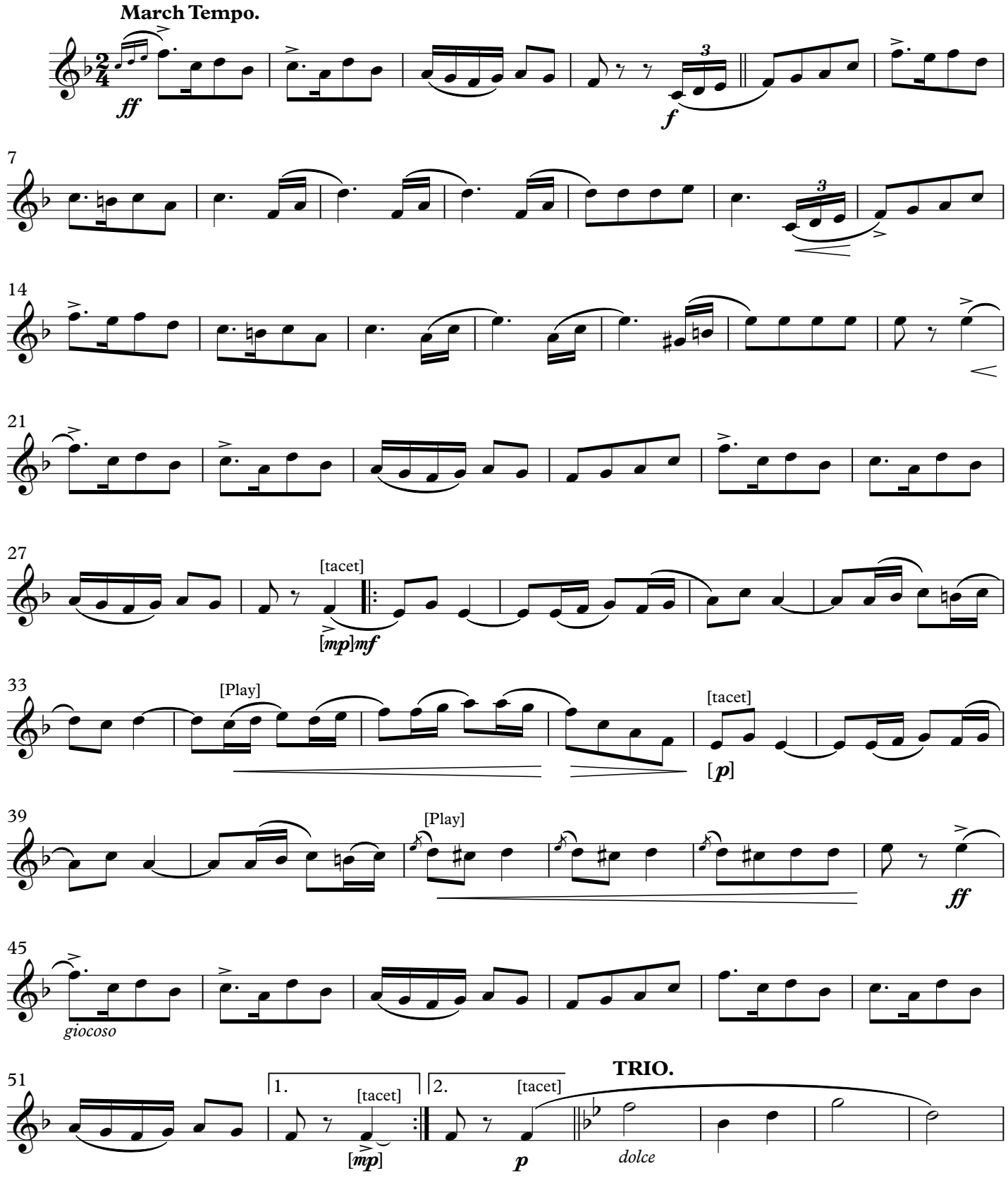
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

1st B♭ Cornet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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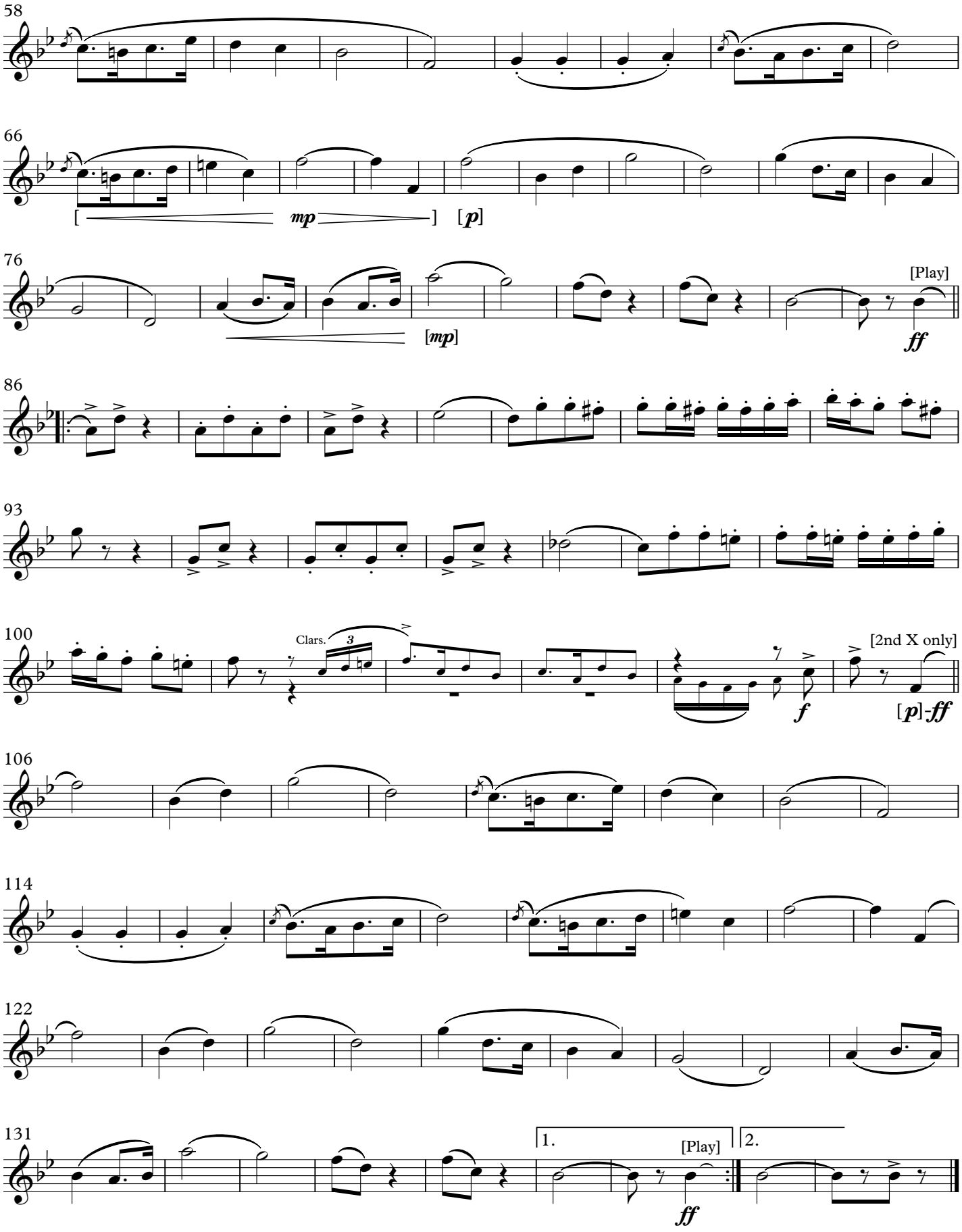

58
66
mp
[p]
76
[mp]
[Play]
ff
86
93
100
Clars.
3
f
[2nd X only]
[p]-ff
106
114
122
131
1.
2.
[Play]
ff

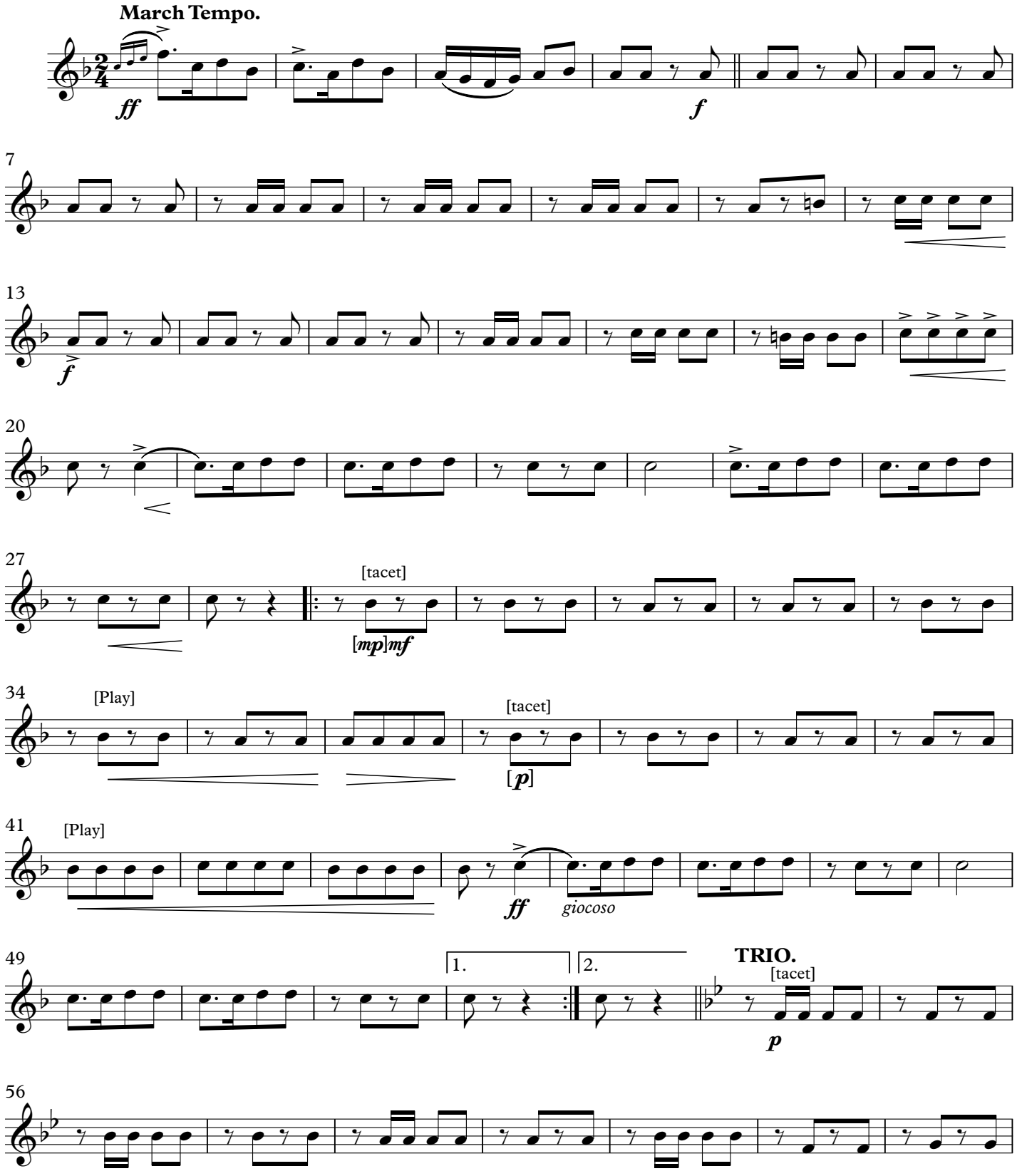
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

2nd B♭ Cornet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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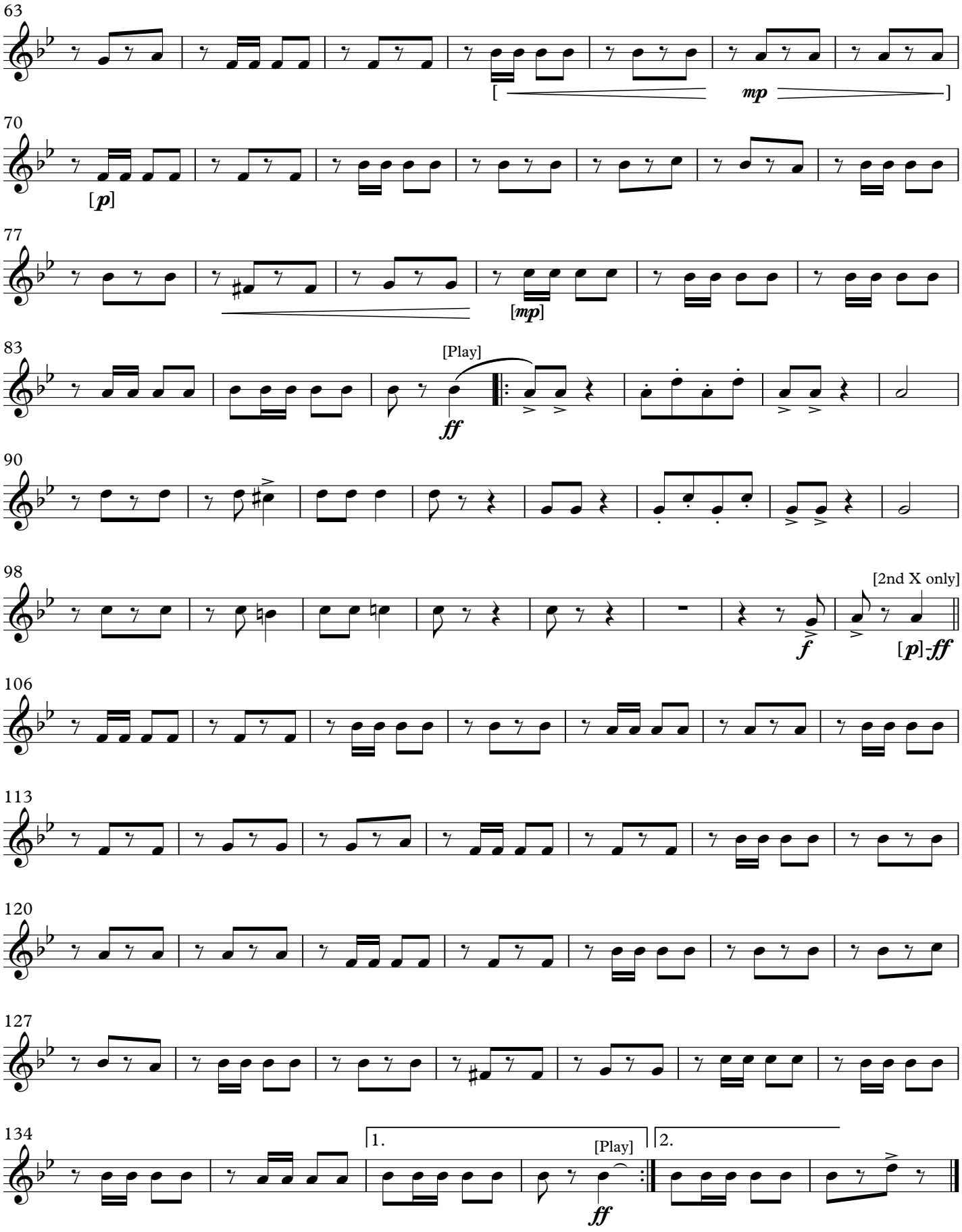

63
[
mp
]
70
[p]
77
[mp]
83
[Play]
ff
90
98
[2nd X only]
f
[p]-ff
106
113
120
127
134
1.
[Play]
ff
2.

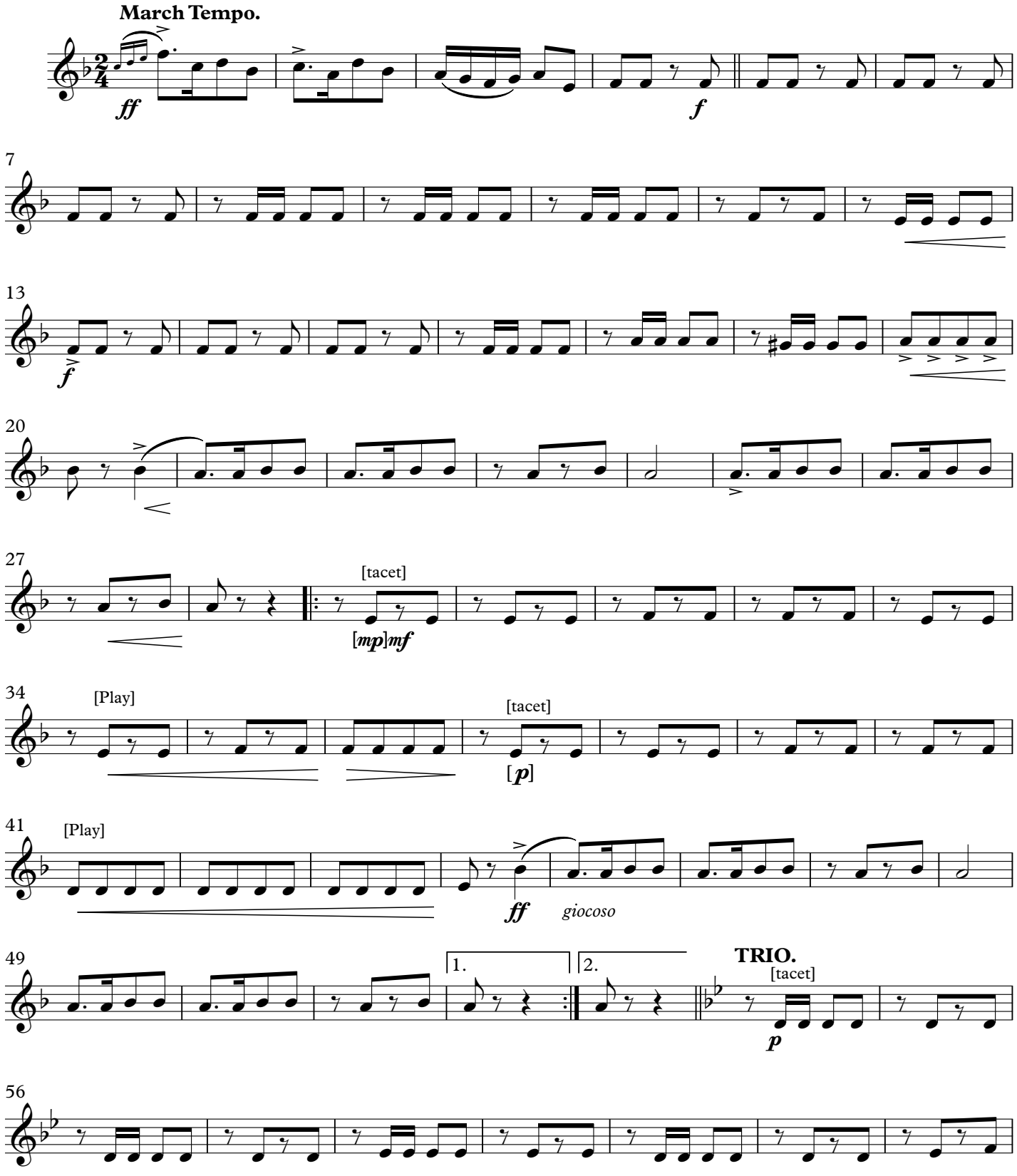
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

3rd B♭ Cornet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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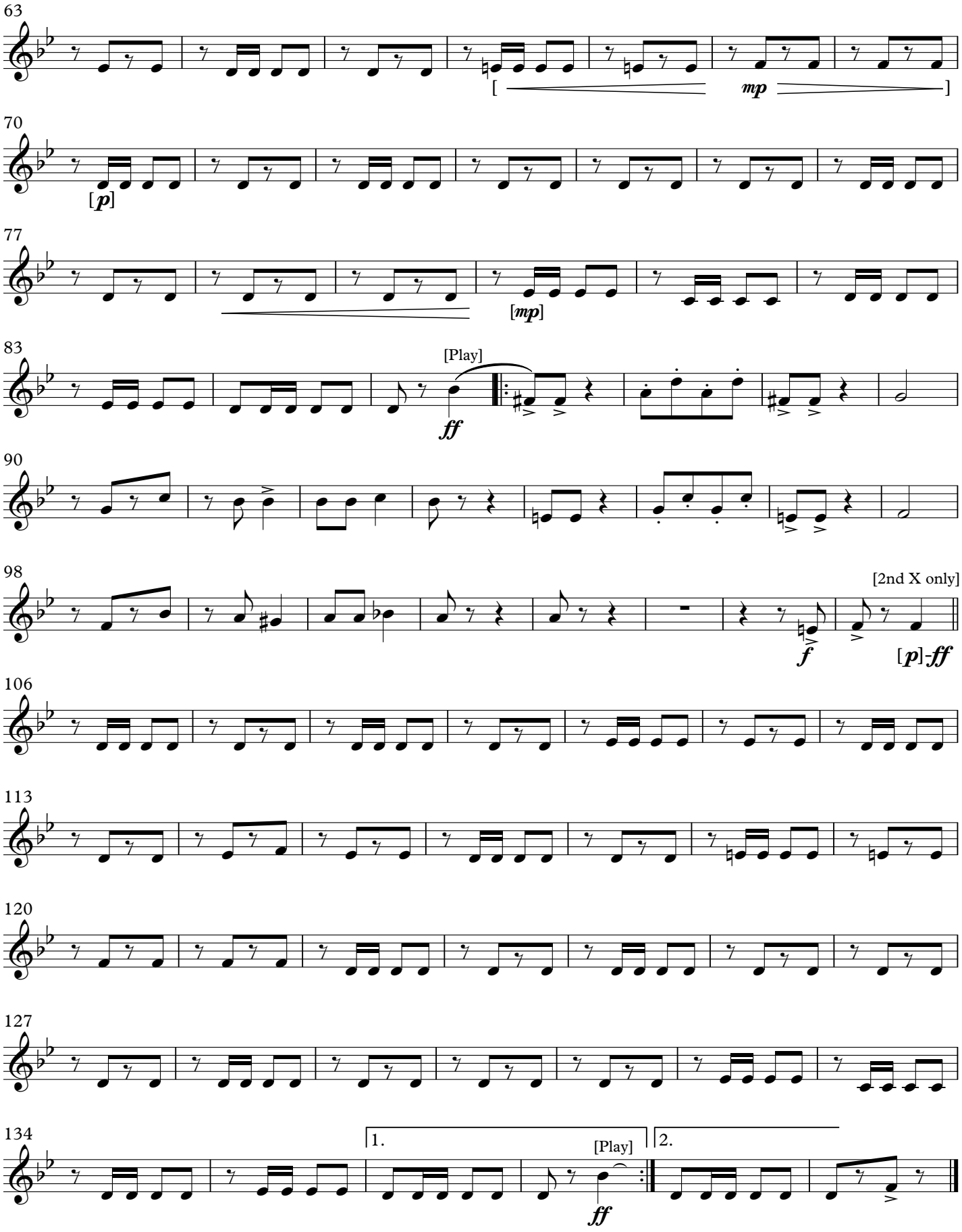
As played by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band


63
[
mp
]
70
[p]
77
[mp]
83
[Play]
ff
90
98
[2nd X only]
f
[p]-ff
106
113
120
127
134
1.
2.
[Play]
ff

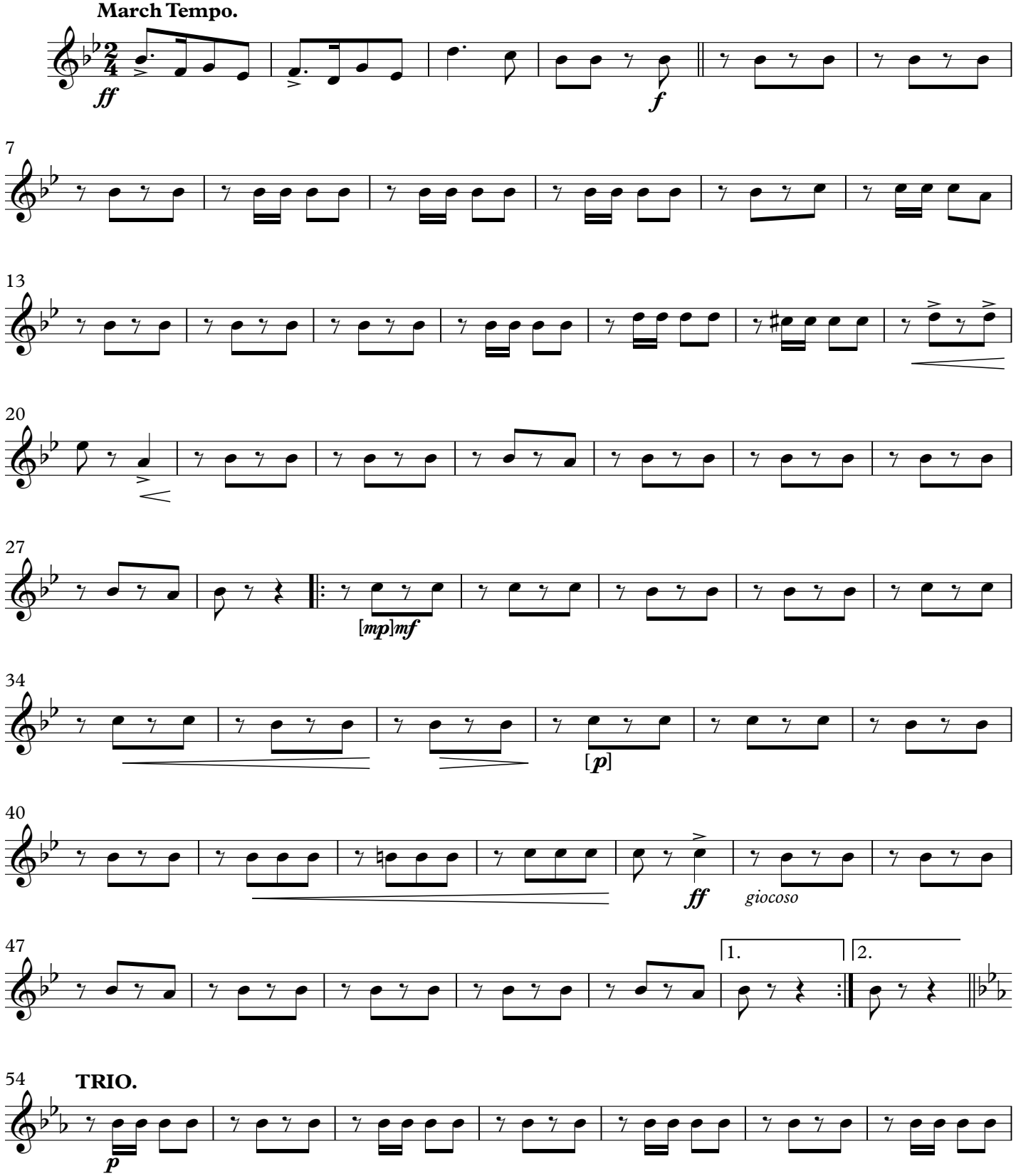
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

1st F Horn

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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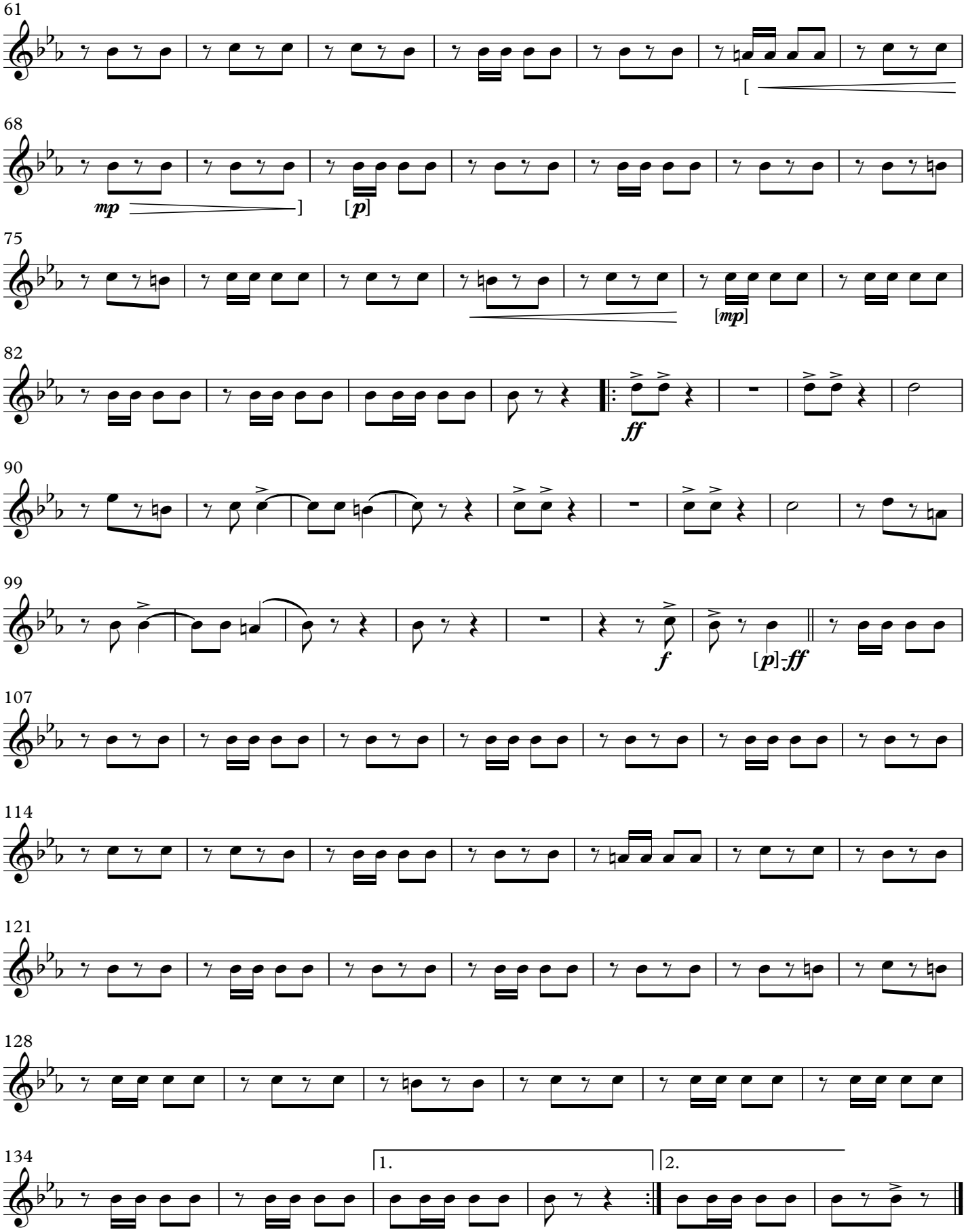

61
[
68
mp
]
[p]
75
[mp]
82
ff
90
99
f
[p]
ff
107
114
121
128
134
1.
2.

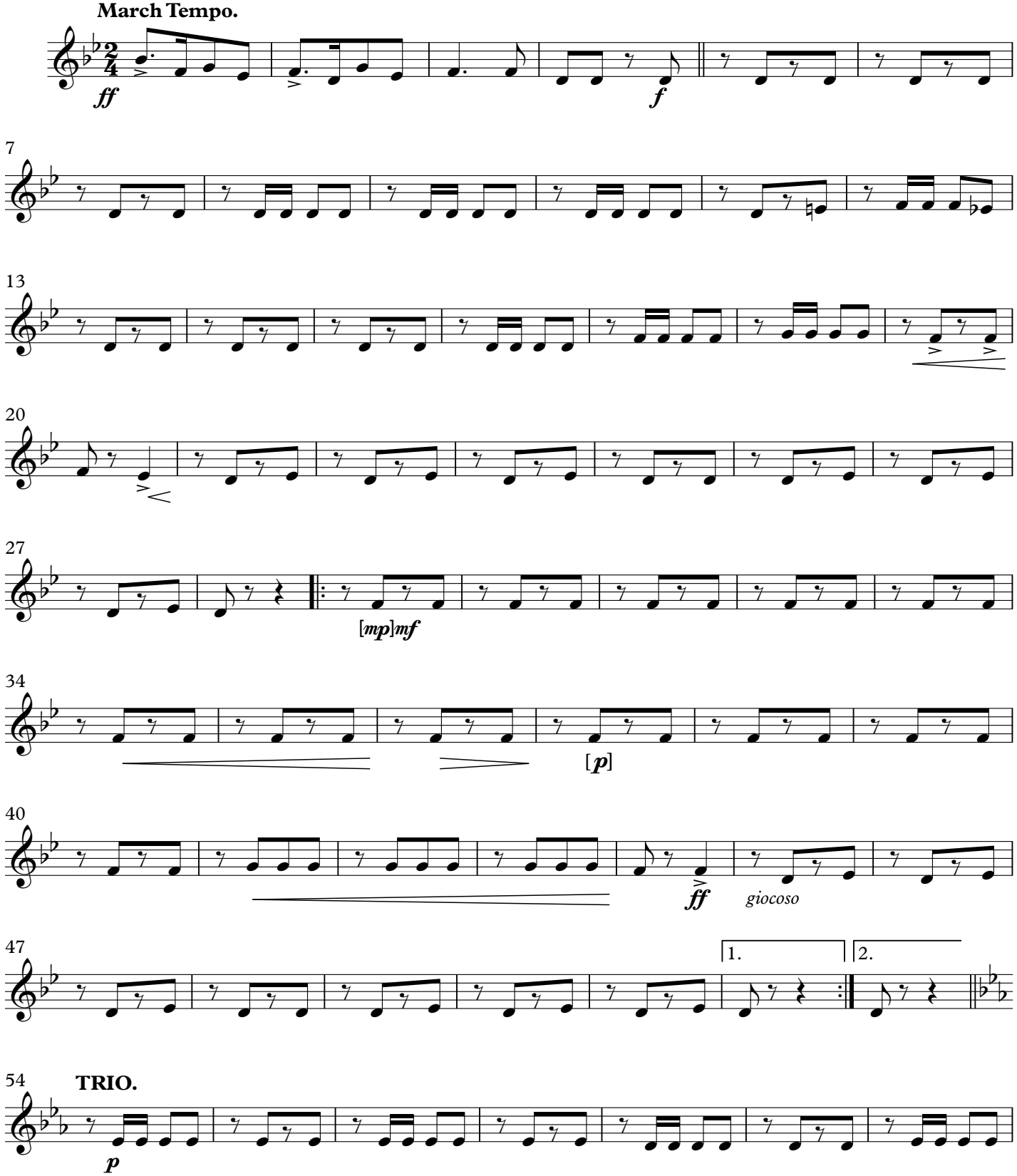
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

2nd F Horn

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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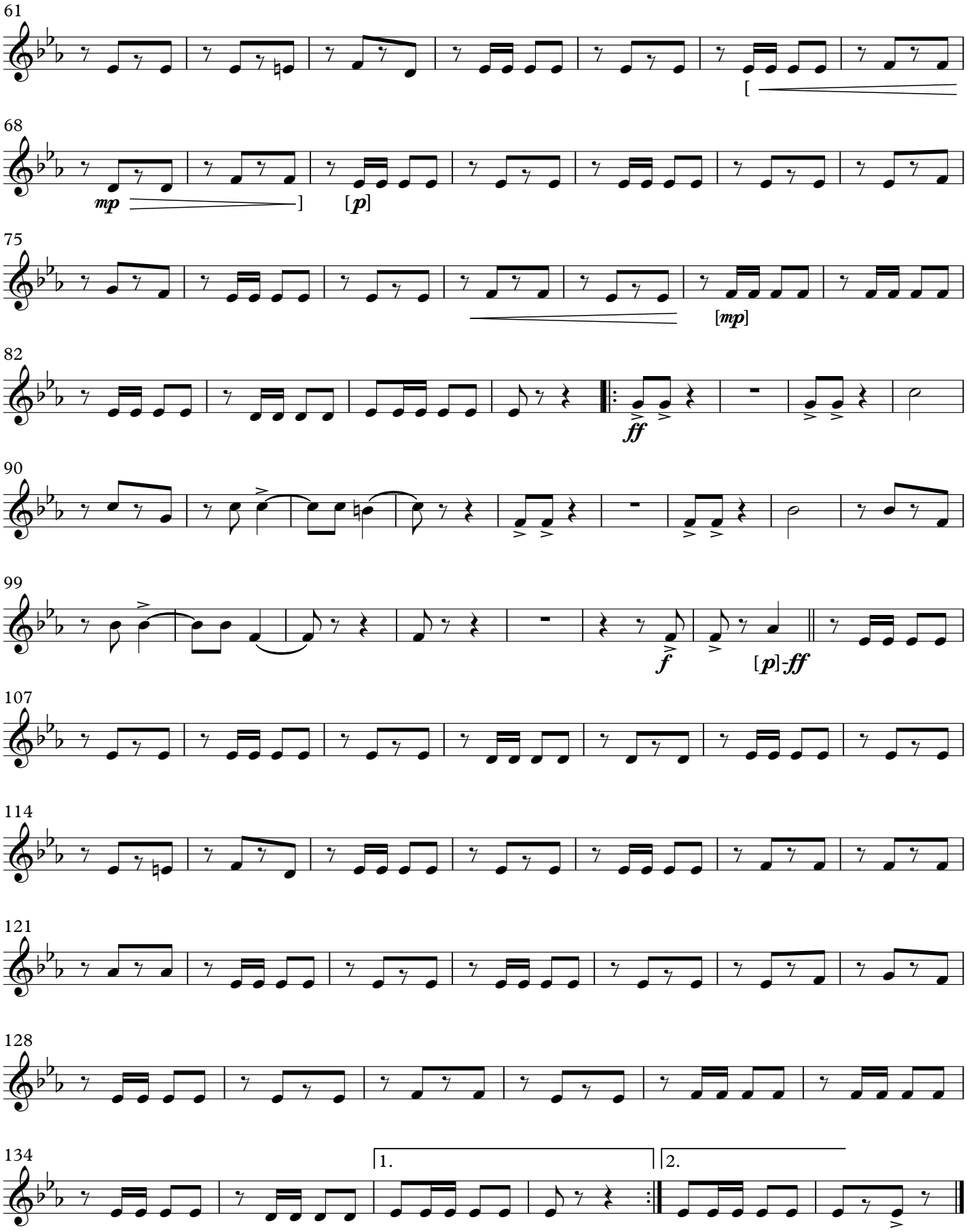

61
[
68
mp
]
[p]
75
[mp]
82
ff
90
99
f
[p]-ff
107
114
121
128
134
1.
2.

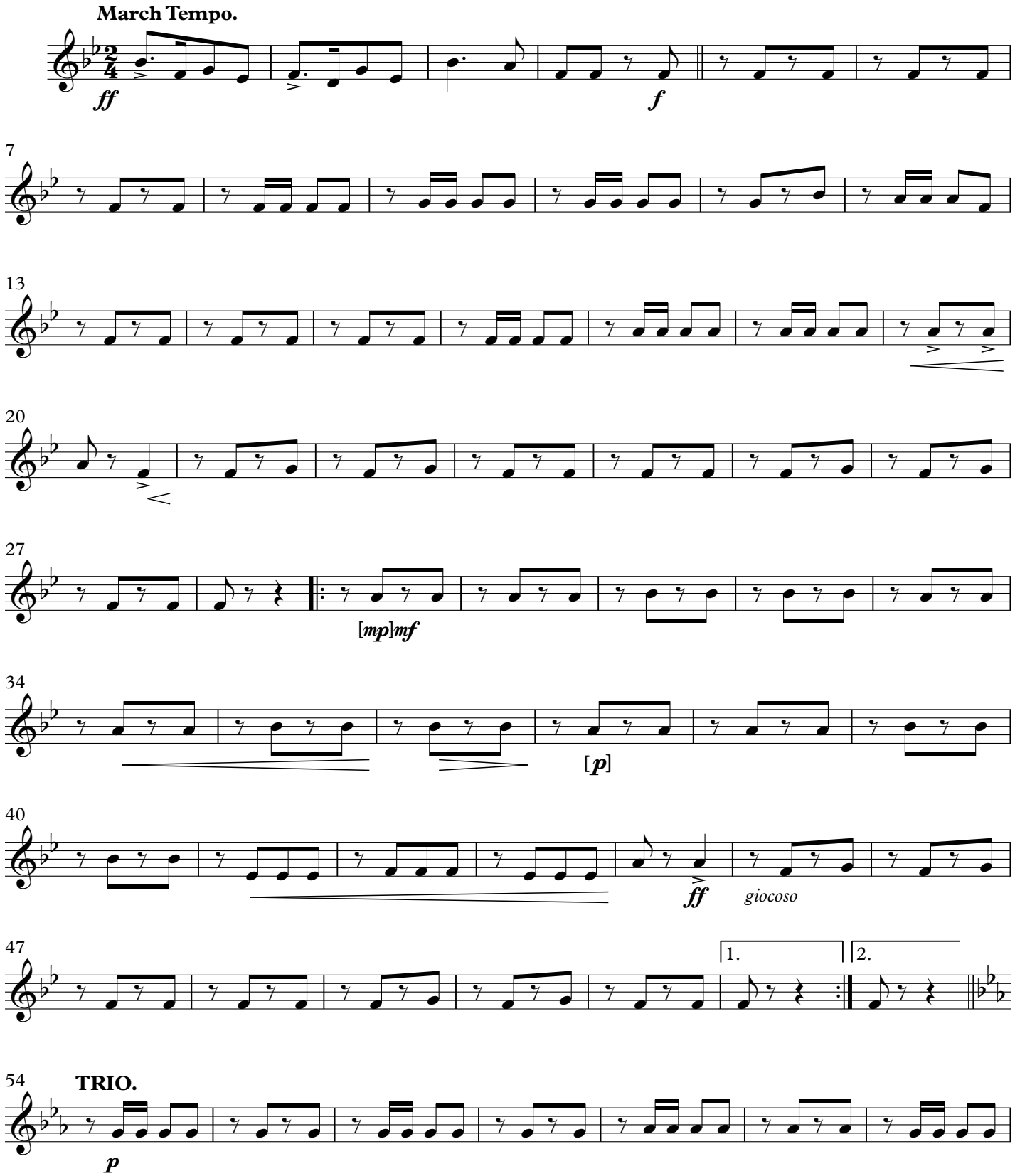
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

3rd F Horn

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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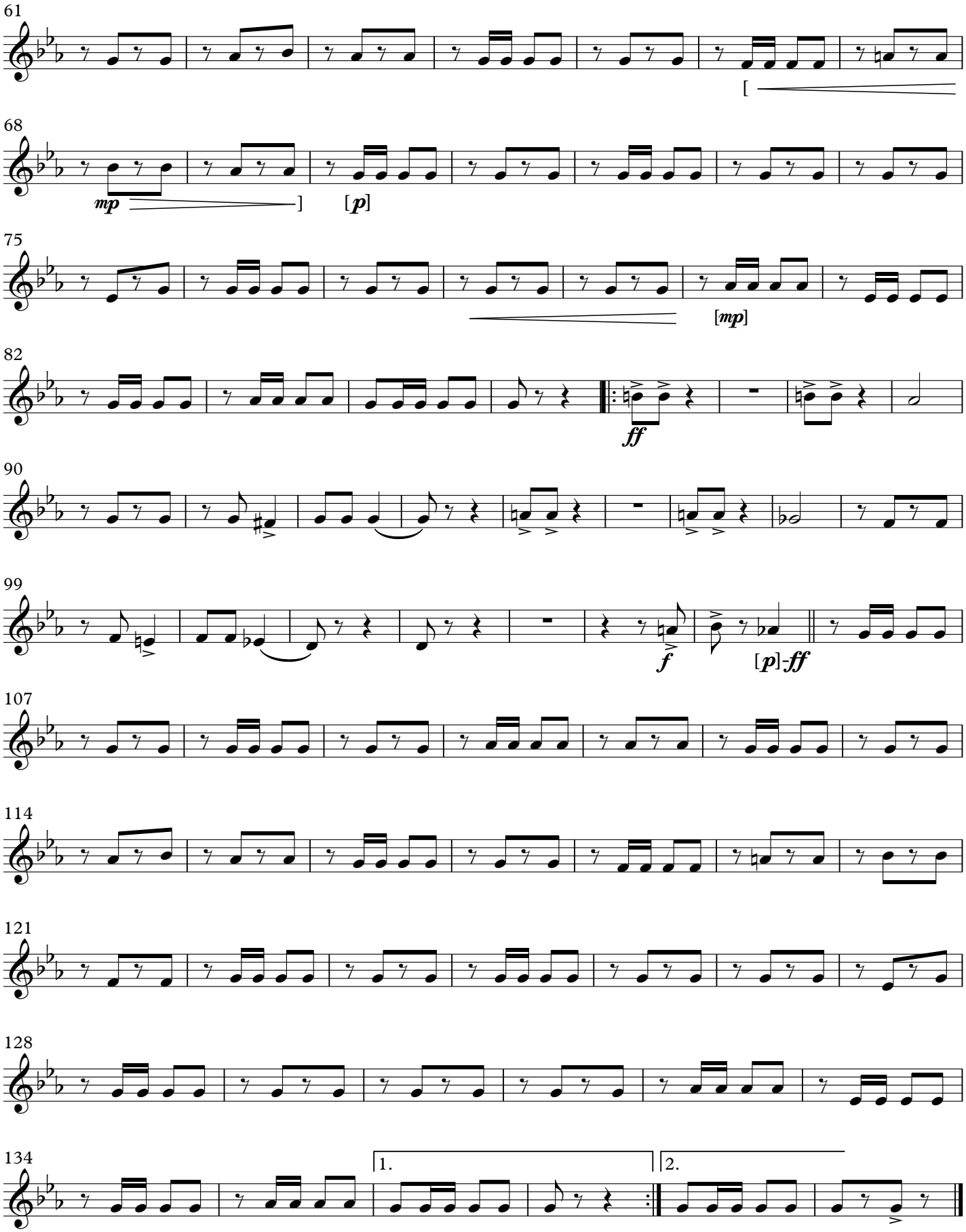

61
[
68
mp
]
[p]
75
[mp]
82
ff
90
99
f
[p]-ff
107
114
121
128
134
1.
2.

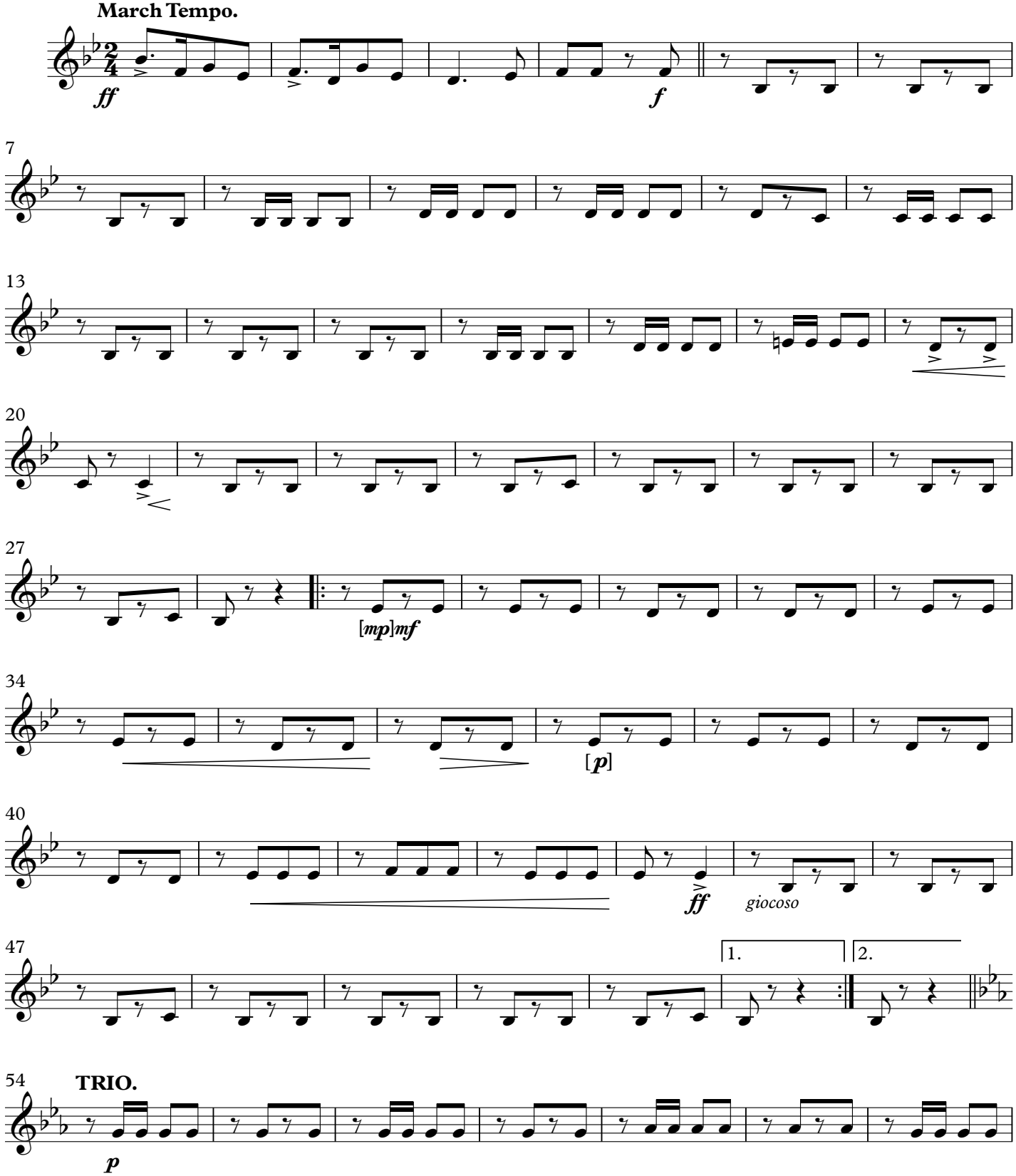
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

4th F Horn

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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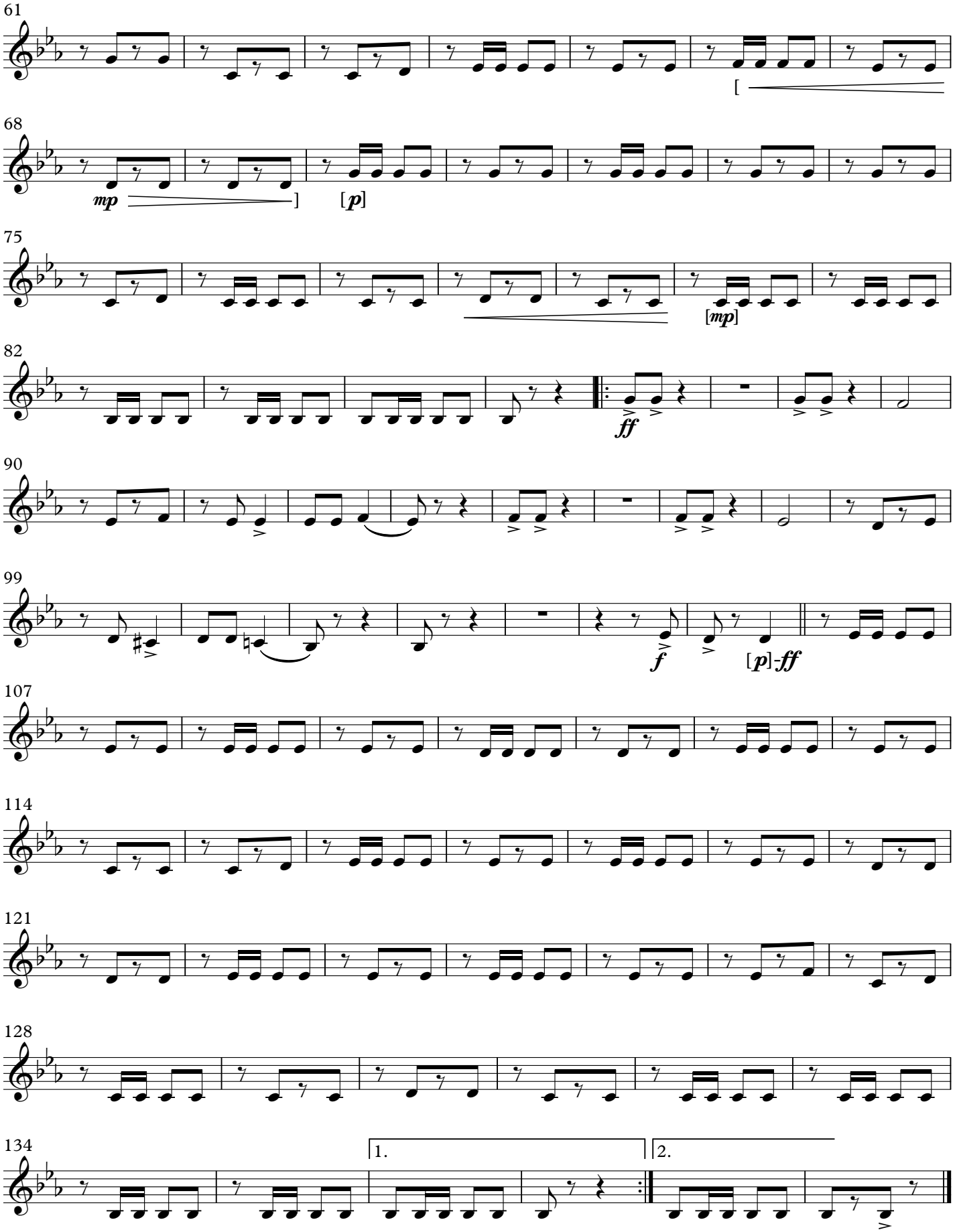

61
[
68
mp
]
[p]
75
[mp]
82
ff
90
99
f
[p]-ff
107
114
121
128
134
1.
2.

March

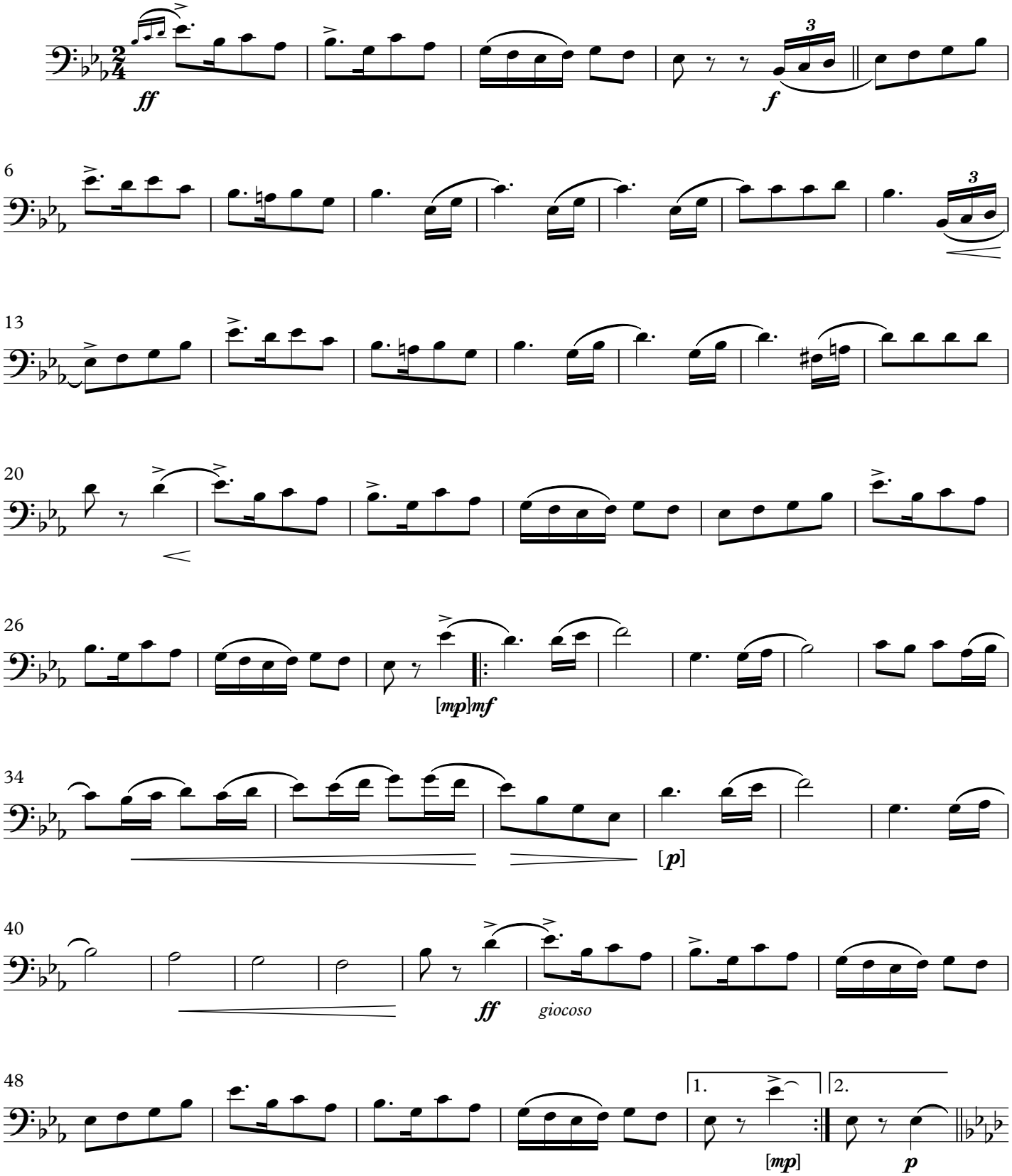
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

Euphonium

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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TRIO.

54

dolce

62

[*mp*]

70

[*p*]

78

[*mp*]

86

ff

94

102

f

1st X
2nd X

[*p*]-*ff*

111

121

131

1.

2.

March

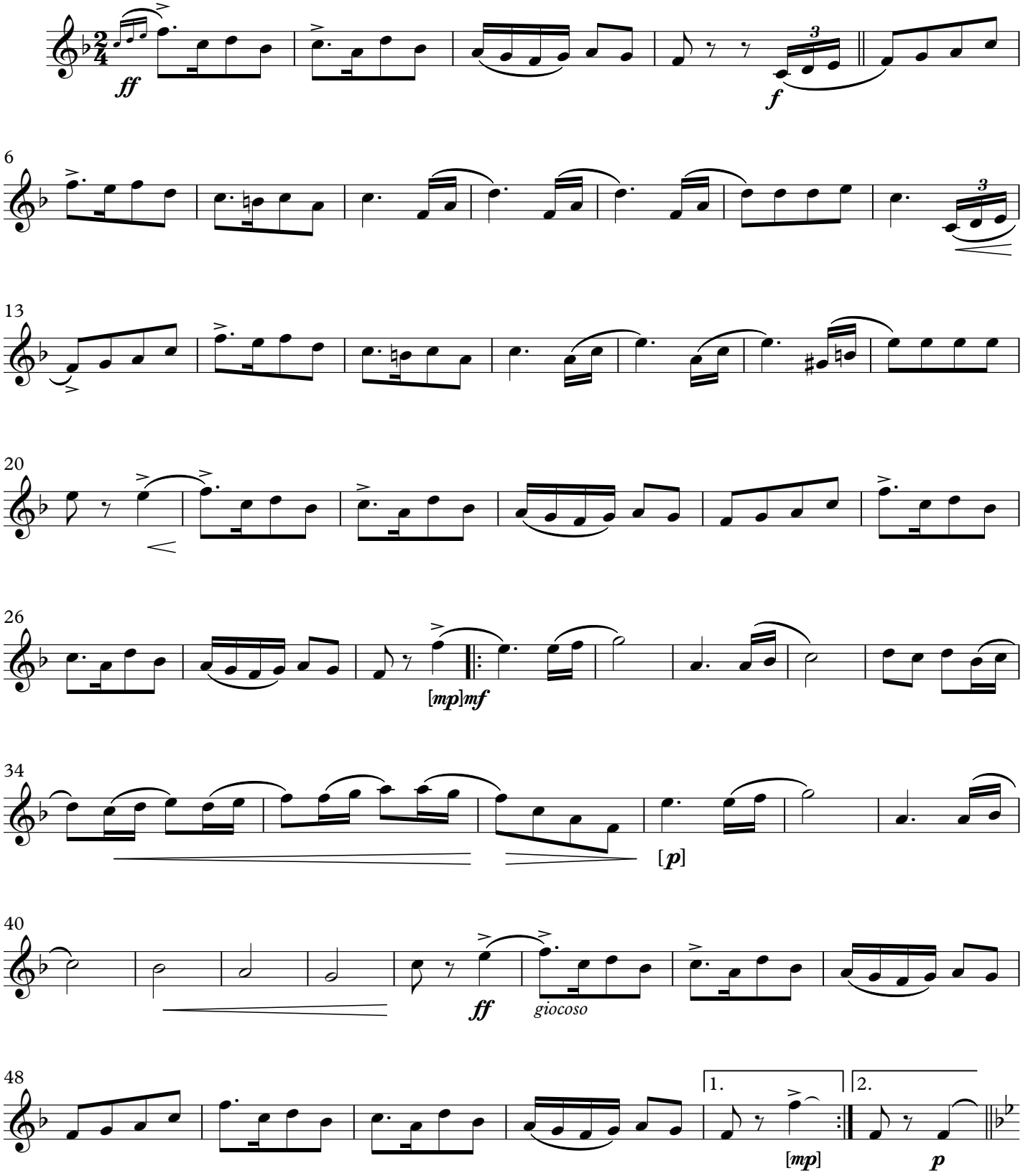
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

Baritone, T.C.

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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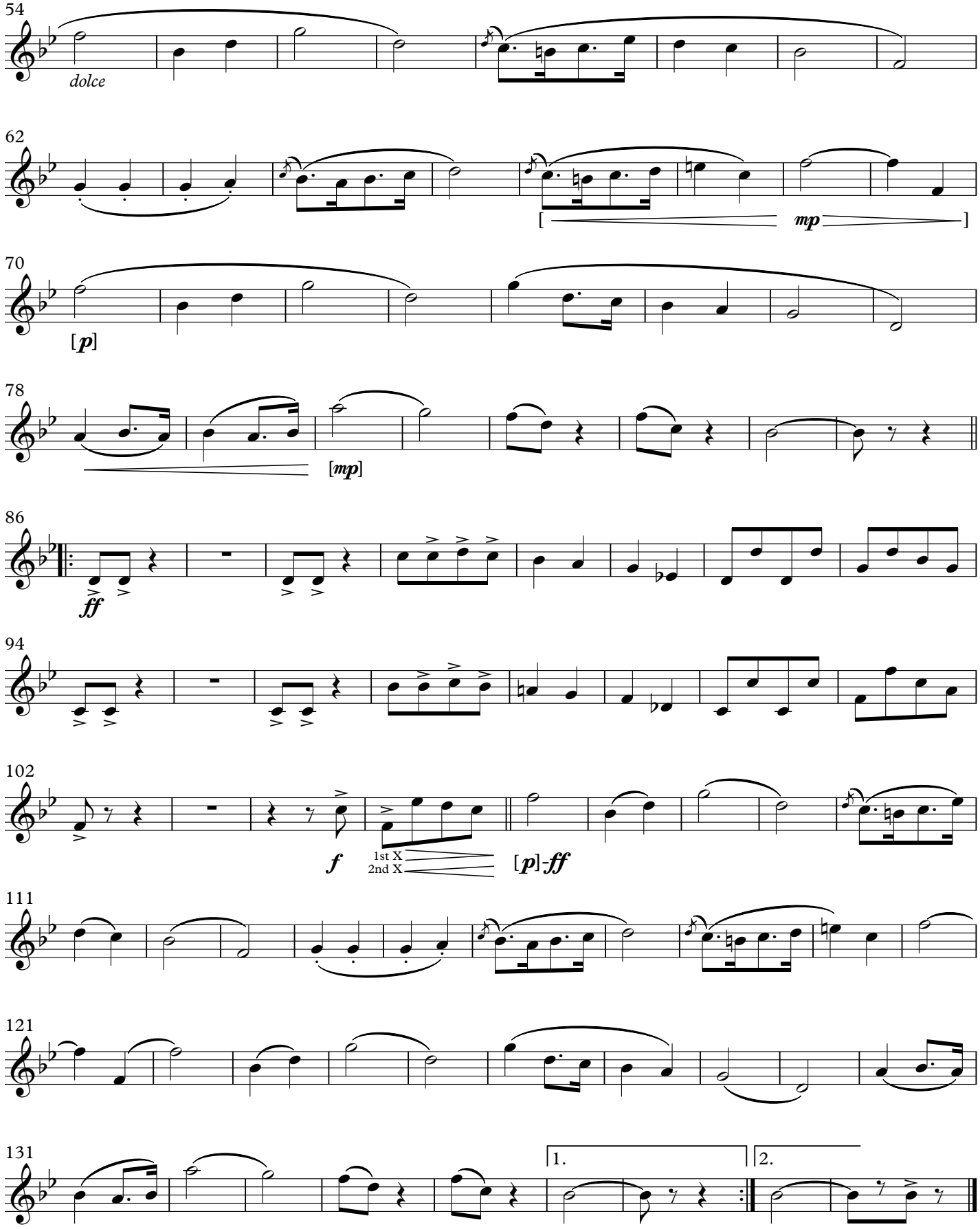
TRIO.


54
dolce
62
[
mp
]
70
[p]
78
[mp]
86
ff
94
102
f
1st X
2nd X
[p]-ff
111
121
131
1.
2.

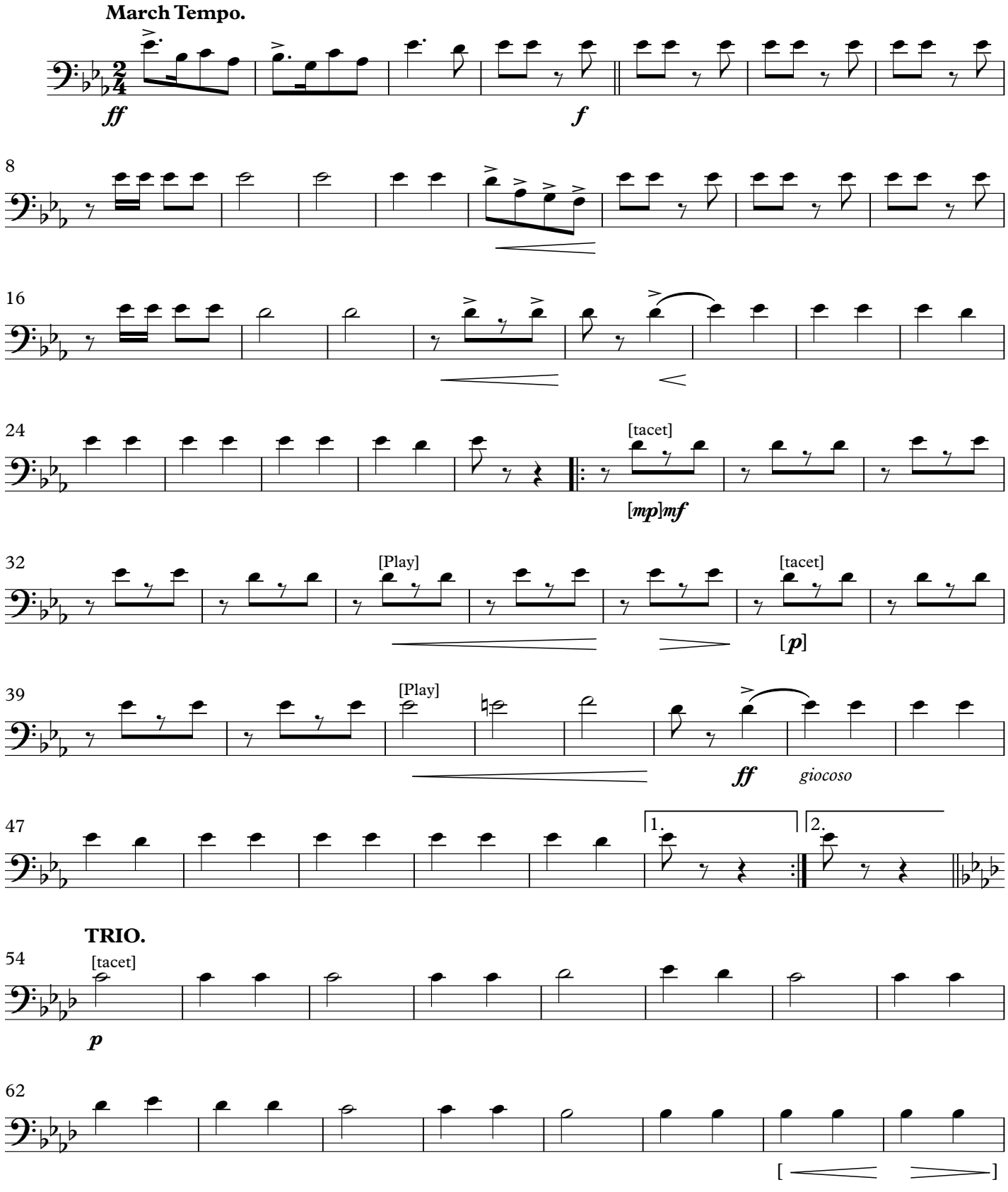
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

1st Trombone

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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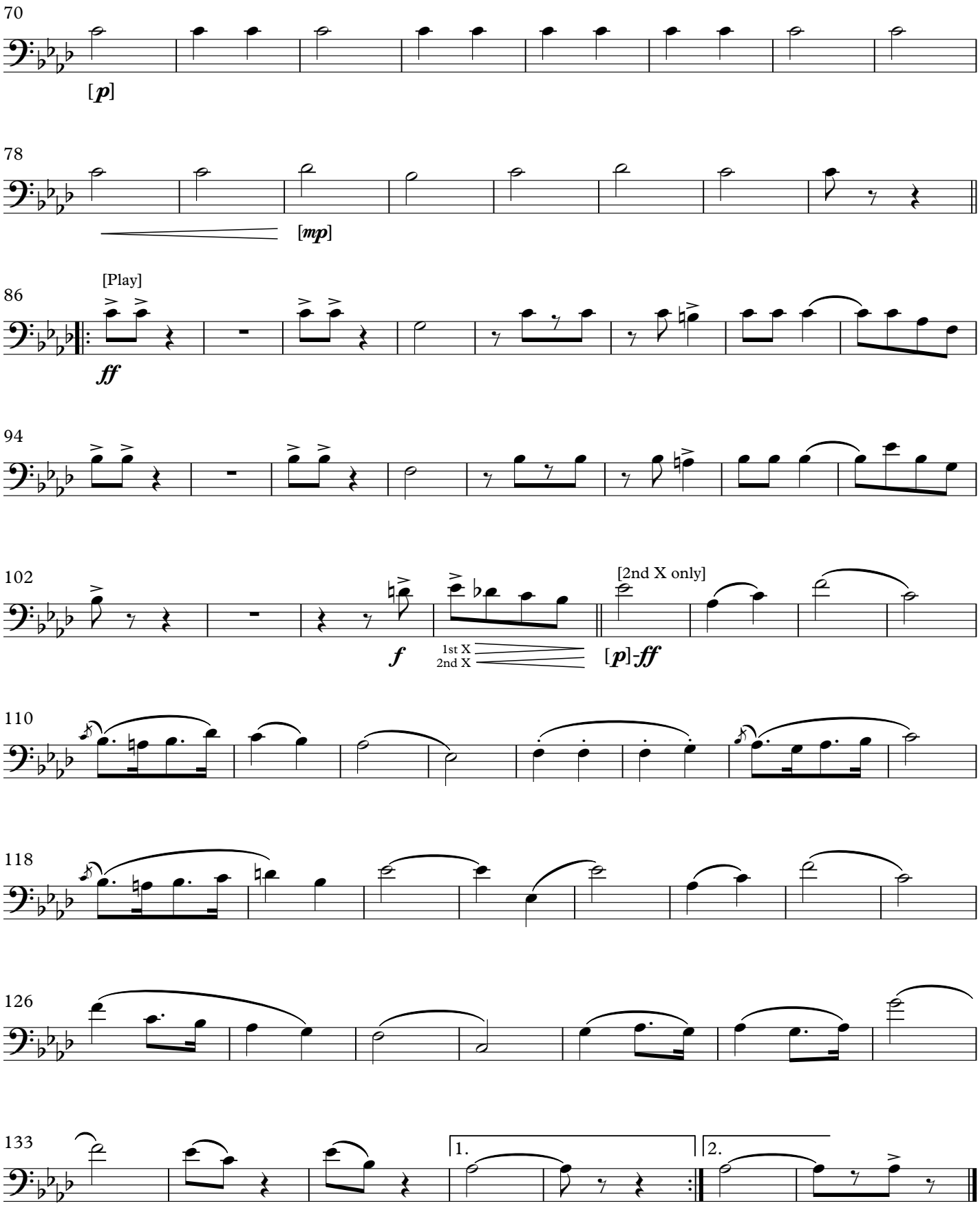

70
[p]
78
[mp]
[Play]
86
ff
94
102
f
1st X
2nd X
[2nd X only]
[p]-ff
110
118
126
133
1.
2.

March

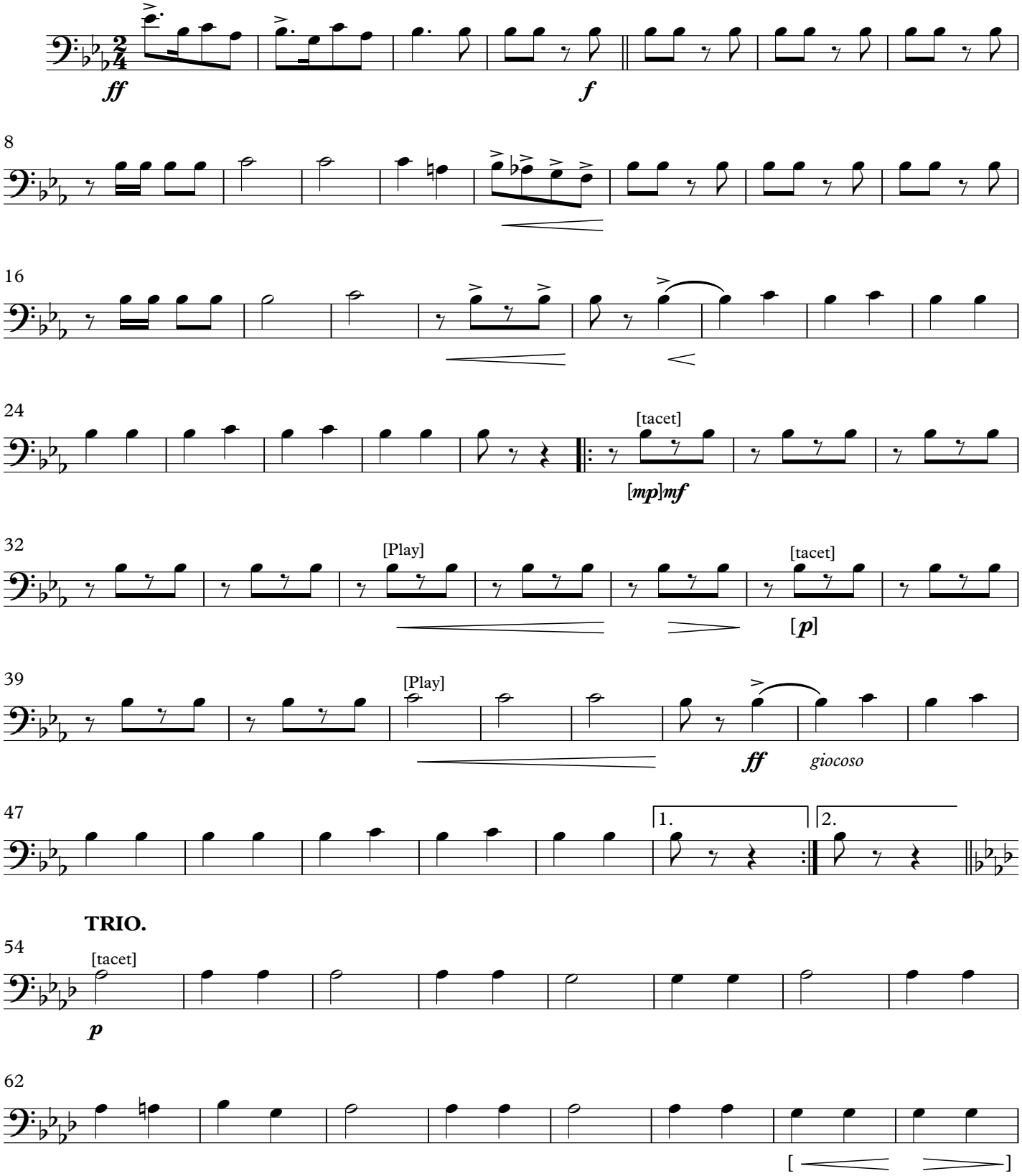
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

2nd Trombone

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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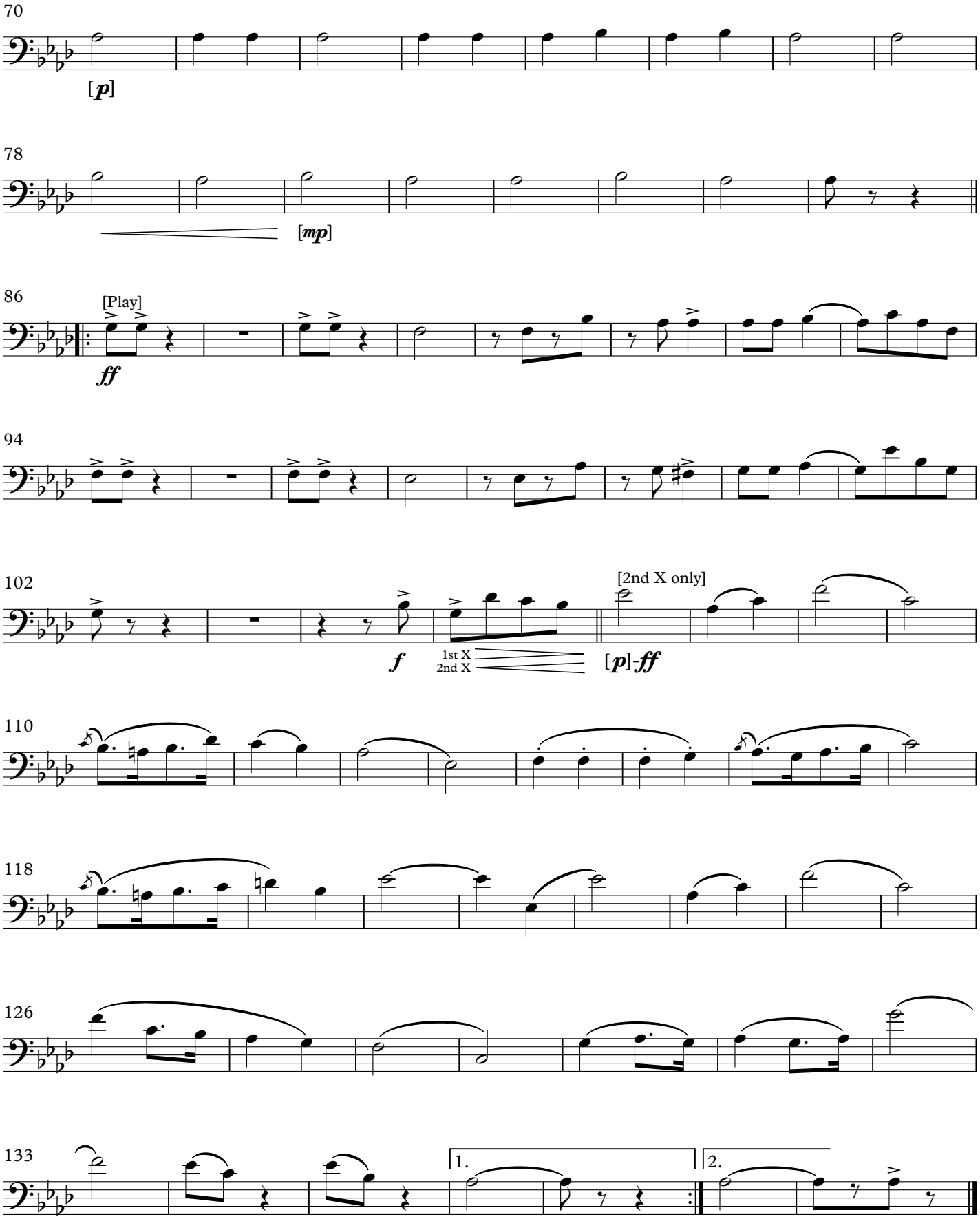

70
[p]
78
[mp]
86
[Play]
ff
94
102
f
1st X
2nd X
[2nd X only]
[p]-ff
110
118
126
133
1.
2.

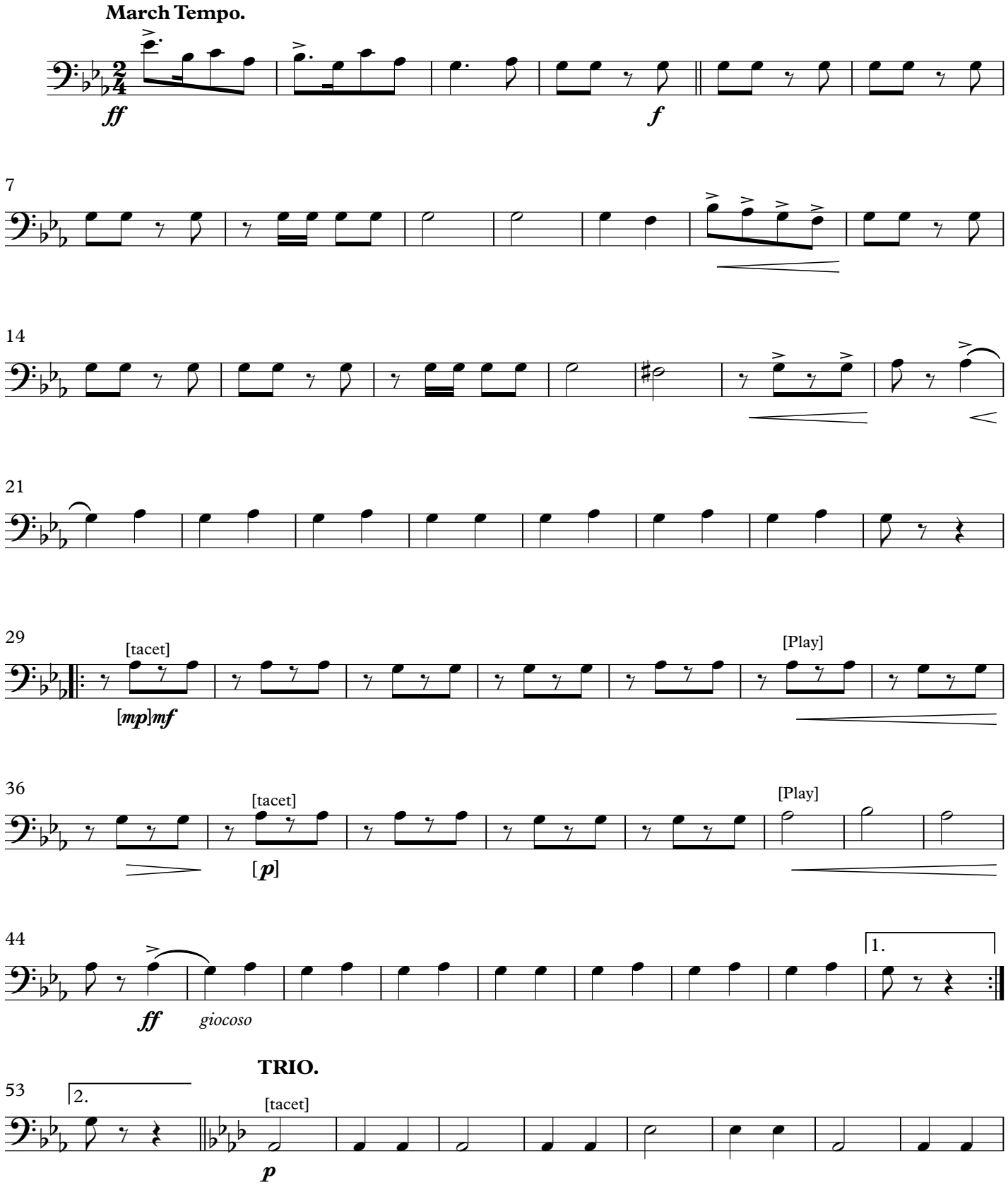
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

Bass Trombone

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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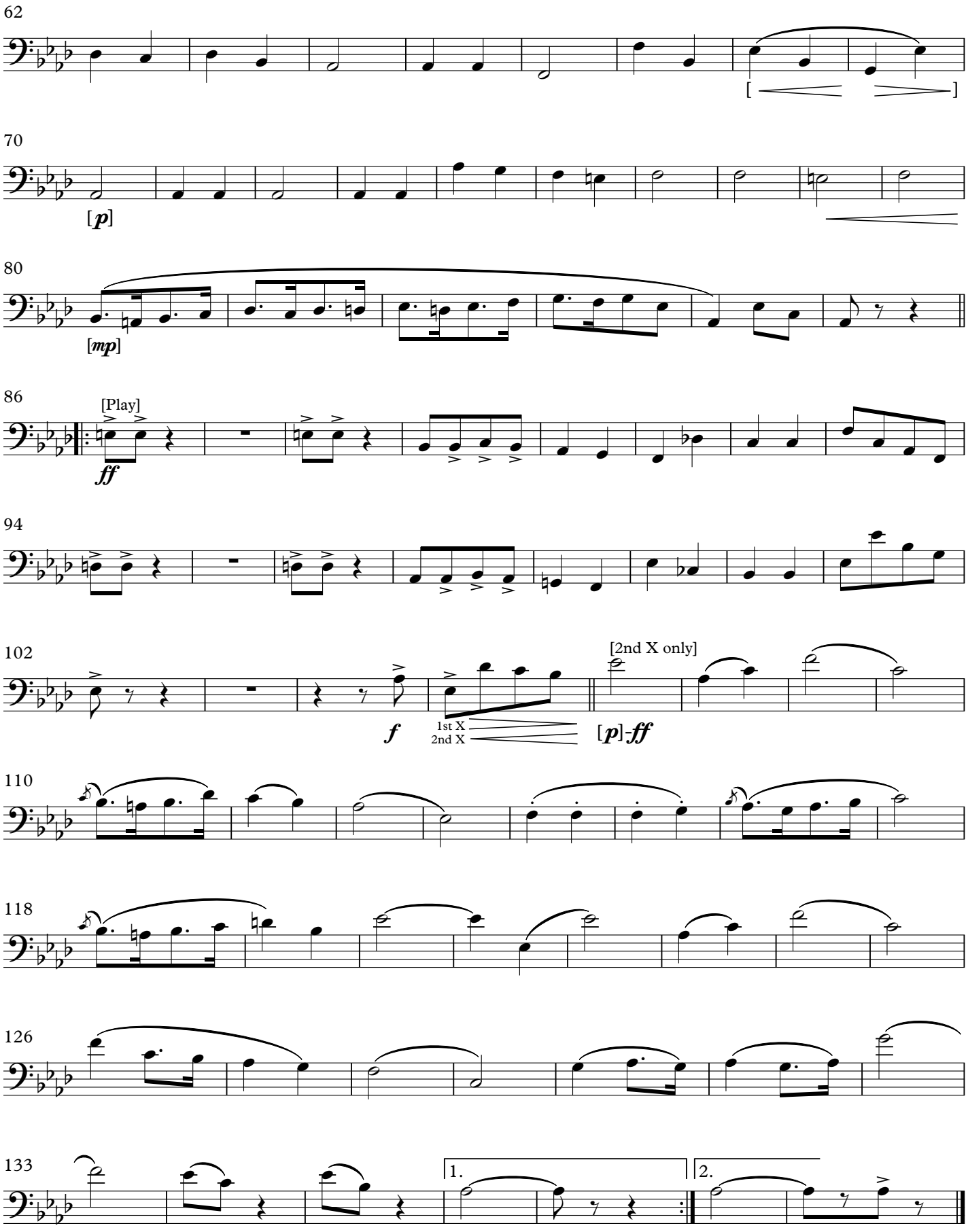

62
[
]
70
[p]
80
[mp]
86
[Play]
ff
94
102
[2nd X only]
f
1st X
2nd X
[p]-ff
110
118
126
133
1.
2.

March

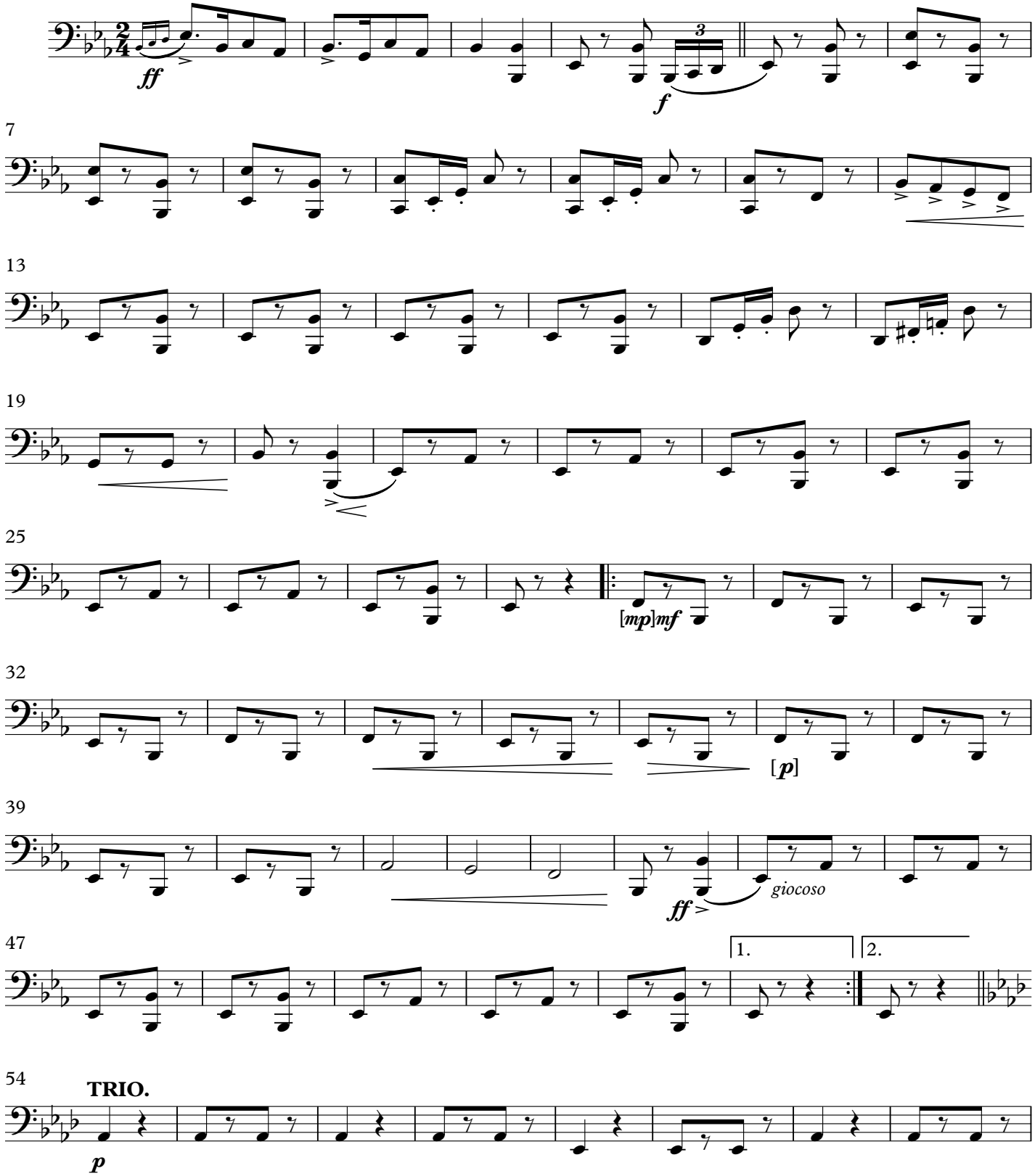
THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

Tuba

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.



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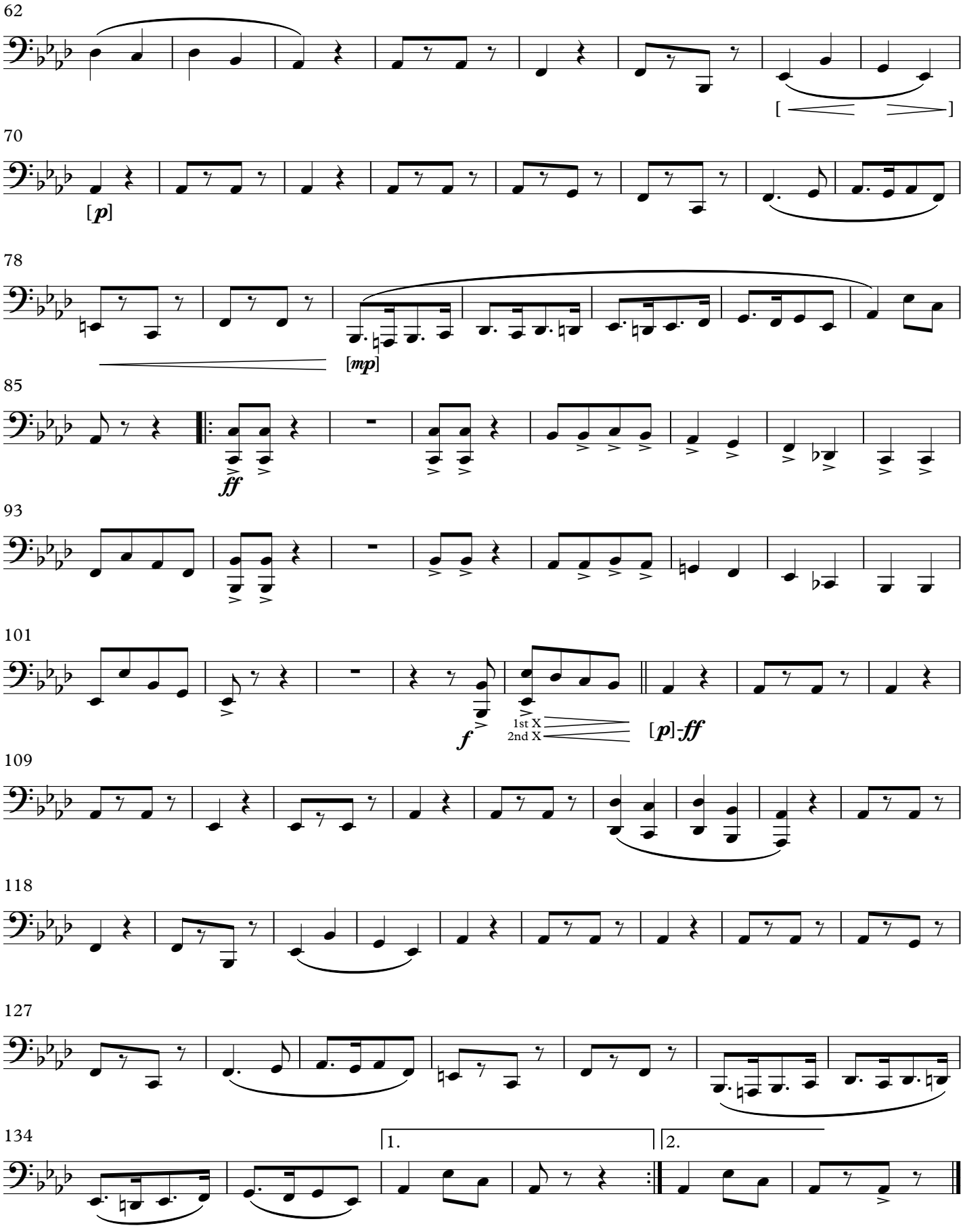

62
[ ]
70
[p]
78
[mp]
85
ff
93
101
f
1st X
2nd X
[p] ff
109
118
127
134
1.
2.

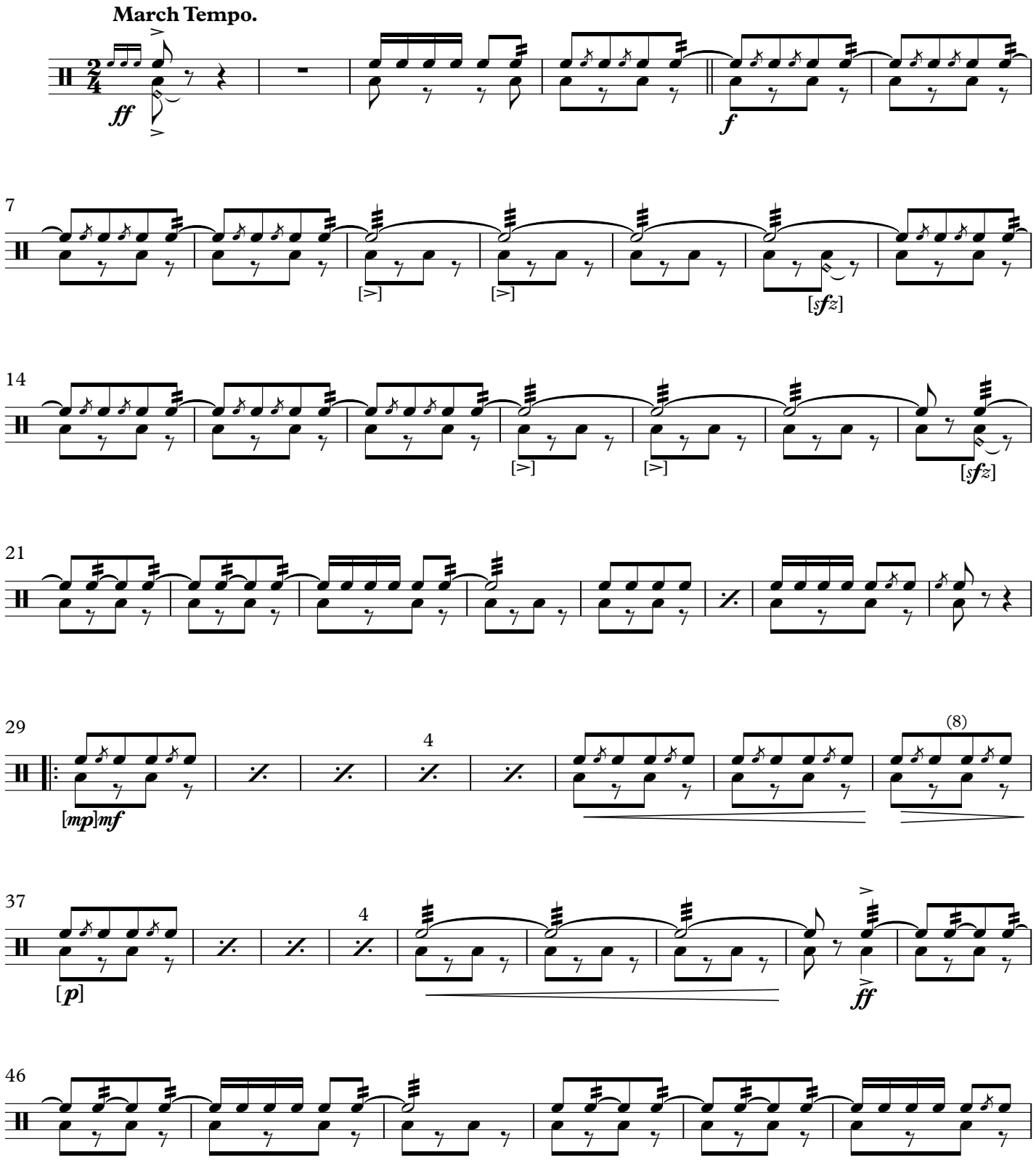
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

Drums & Bells

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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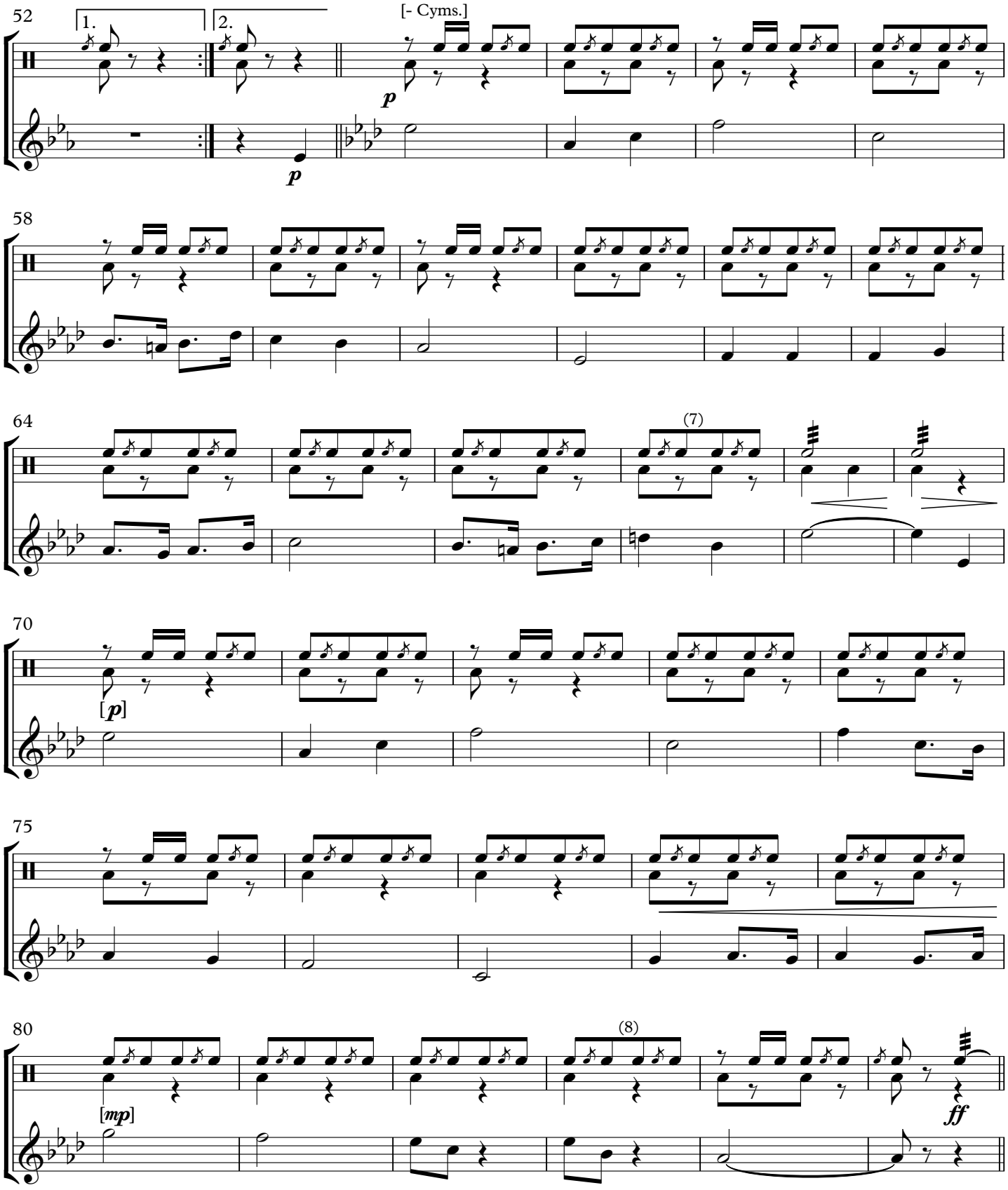
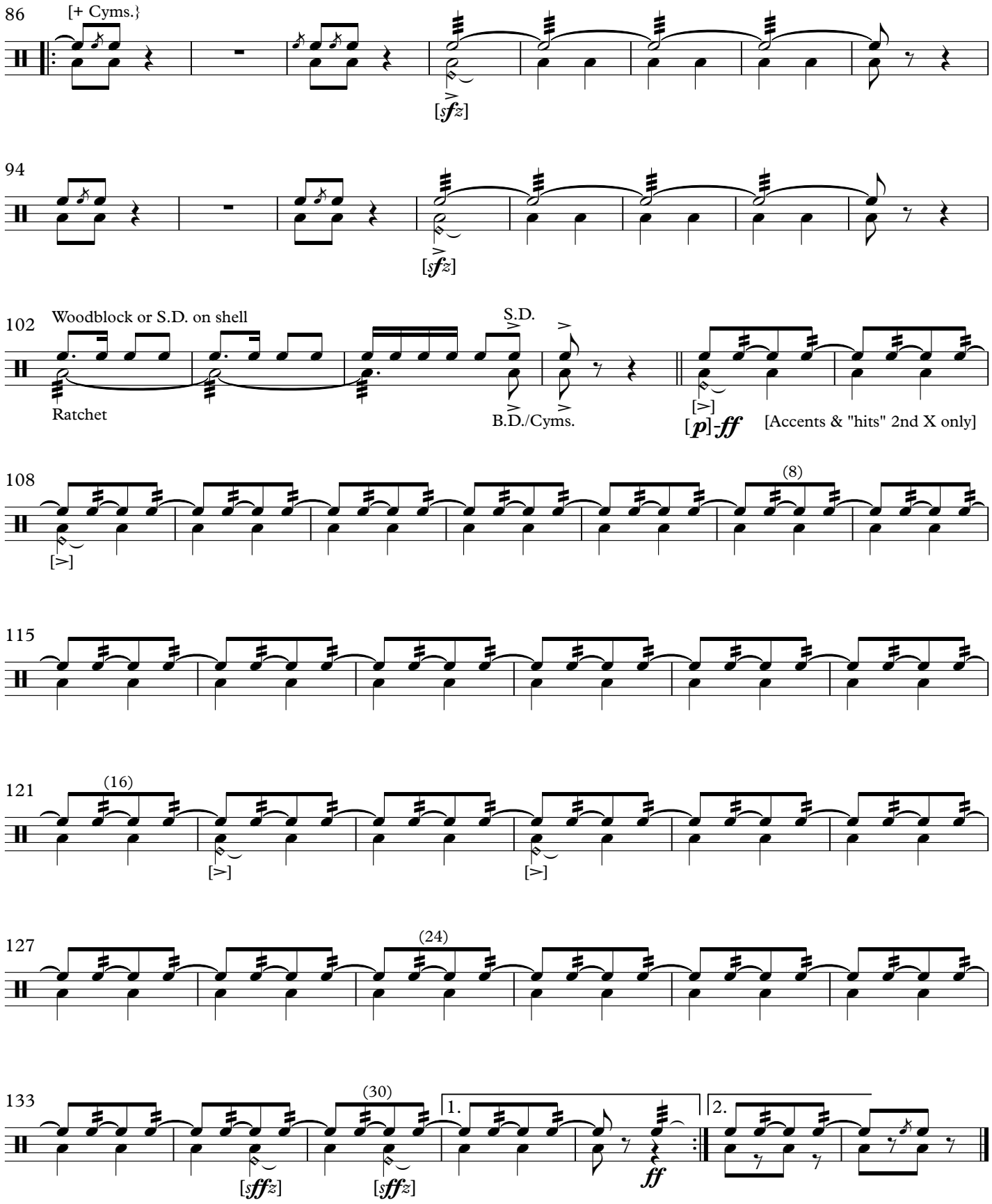
As played by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band

TRIO.



THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR
Drums & Bells



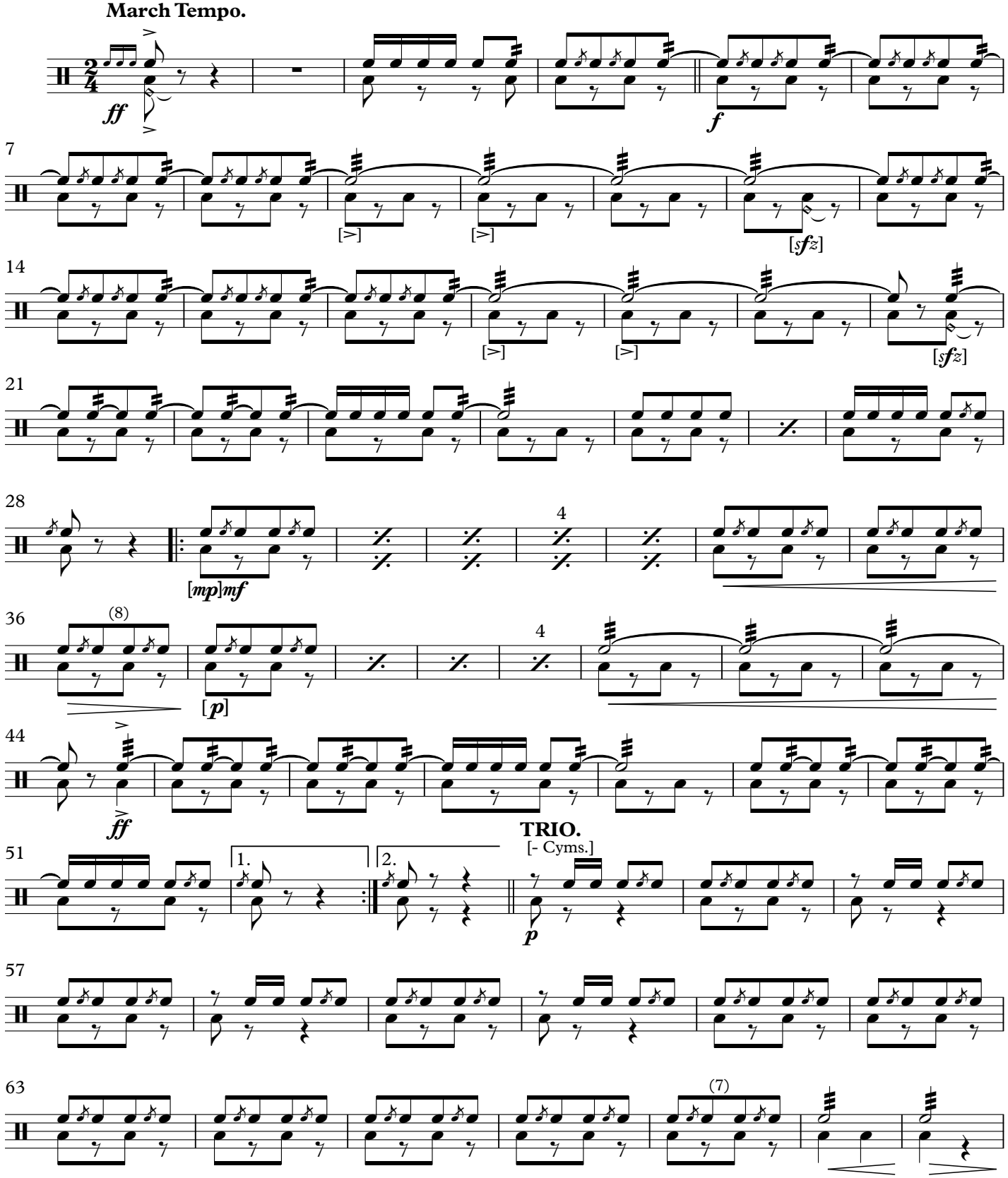
March

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

1908

Drums

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA



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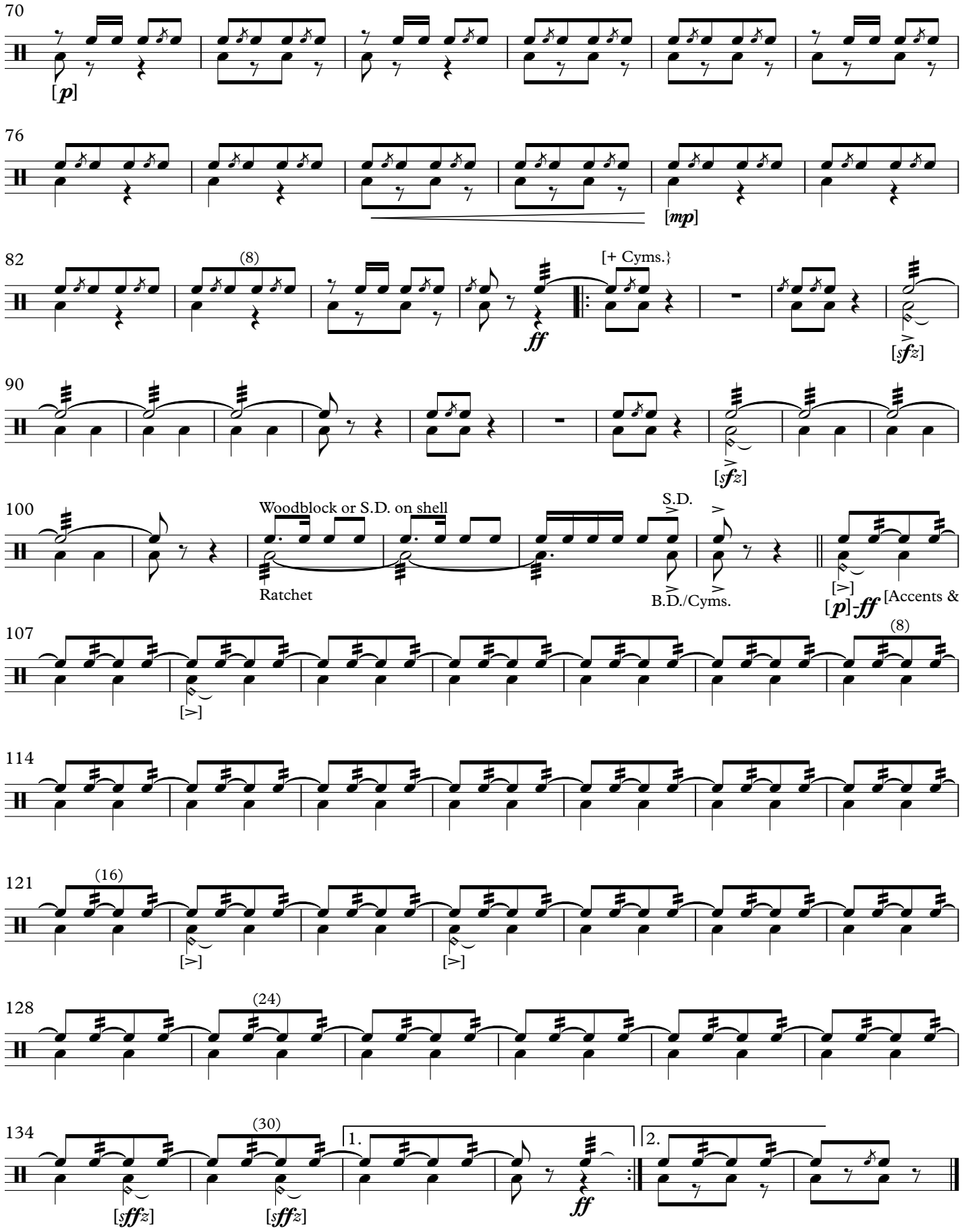
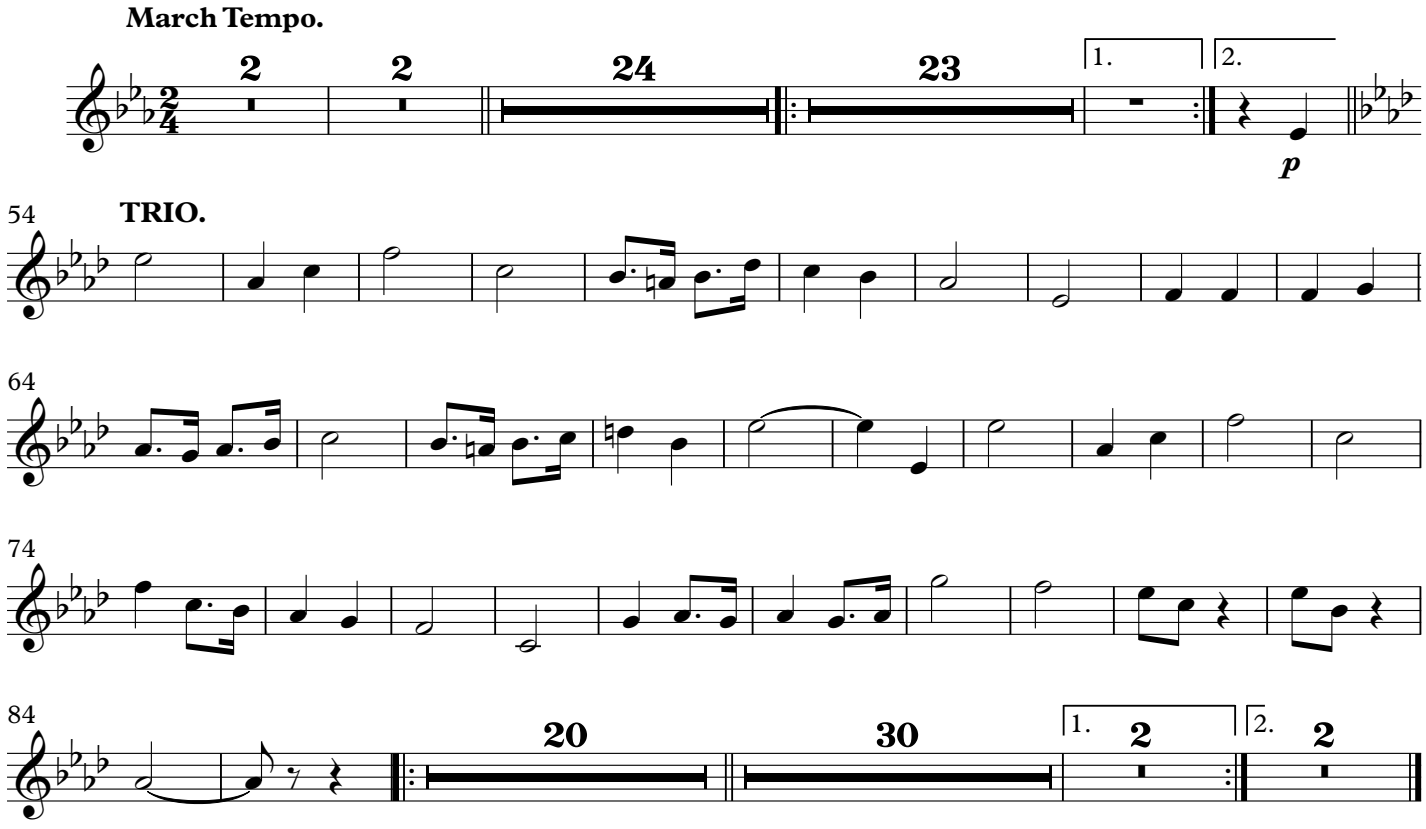
As played by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band


70
[p]
76
[mp]
82
(8)
[+ Cyms.}
ff
[sfz]
90
[sfz]
100
Woodblock or S.D. on shell
S.D.
Ratchet
B.D./Cyms.
[p]-ff
[Accents & "hits" 2n
107
(8)
114
121
(16)
128
(24)
134
(30)
1.
2.
[sfffz]
[sfffz]
ff

Bells