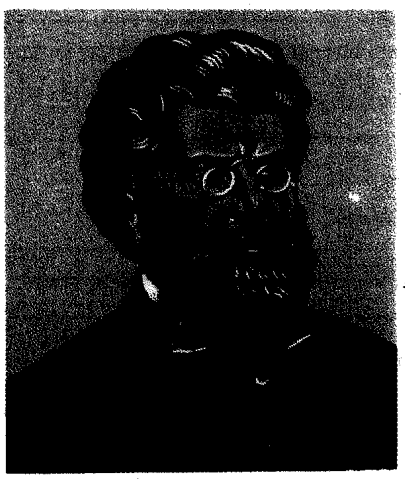


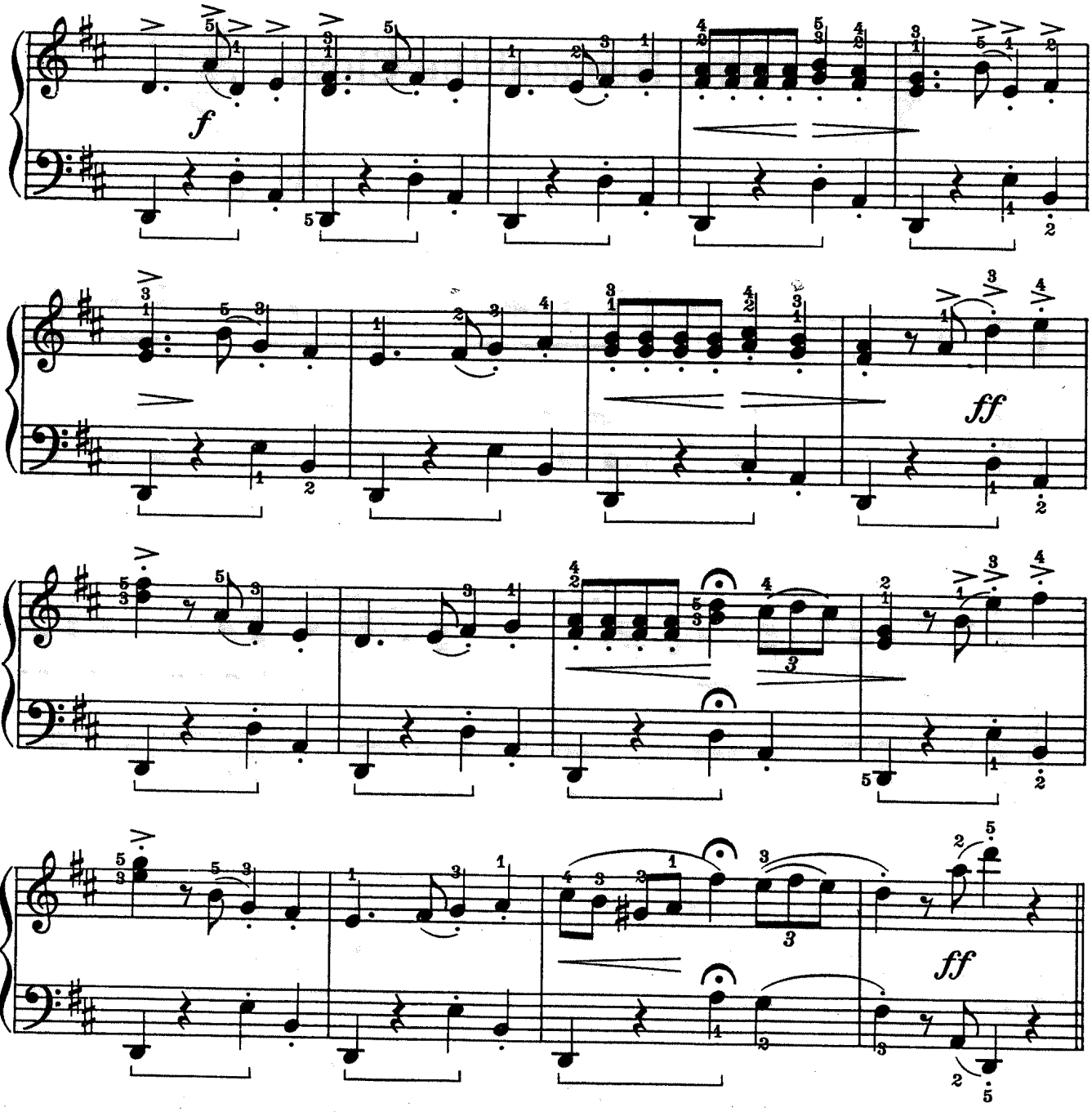
Georges Bizet was born in Paris, October 25, 1838. His mother taught him the rudiments of music when he was only four years of age and he was sent to the Conservatory before he was nine. He won the Grand Prix de Rome when he was nineteen and while studying in Italy he submitted, instead of the prescribed Mass, an Opera which was highly praised. He was a remarkably fine pianist although he did not perform in public. His fame and renown rest upon his two *L'Arlésienne Suites* and the opera, *Carmen*, which placed him in the front rank of modern French composers. The example following is from the first act of *Carmen* and shows the scene wherein Carmen sings and dances in her attempt to captivate Don José, a Spanish captain of the guard. A *Habanera* is a Spanish song and dance which really dates back to Africa by way of Cuba. It was first imported into Cuba by negro slaves after which it naturally found its way into Spain. As in all dance forms *rhythm is uppermost.* Note the alla breve TIME—which means two counts to the bar and one count to each minim. Learn it first, however, in four-four time. Let the staccato be sharp and brittle and do not overlook the two-note slur in each bar.

Habanera from "Carmen"

Bizet (1838-1875)

Moderato

mf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