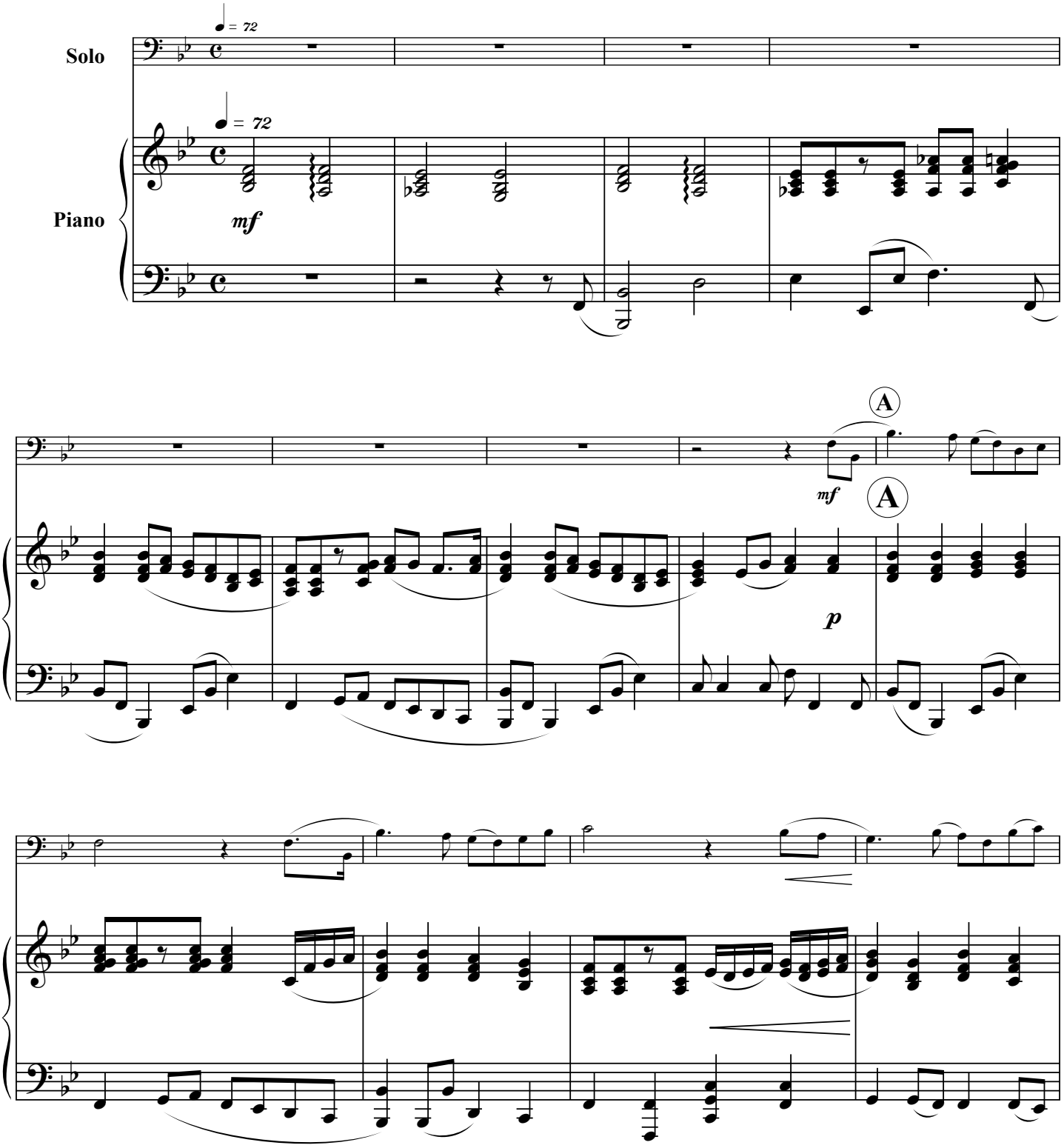
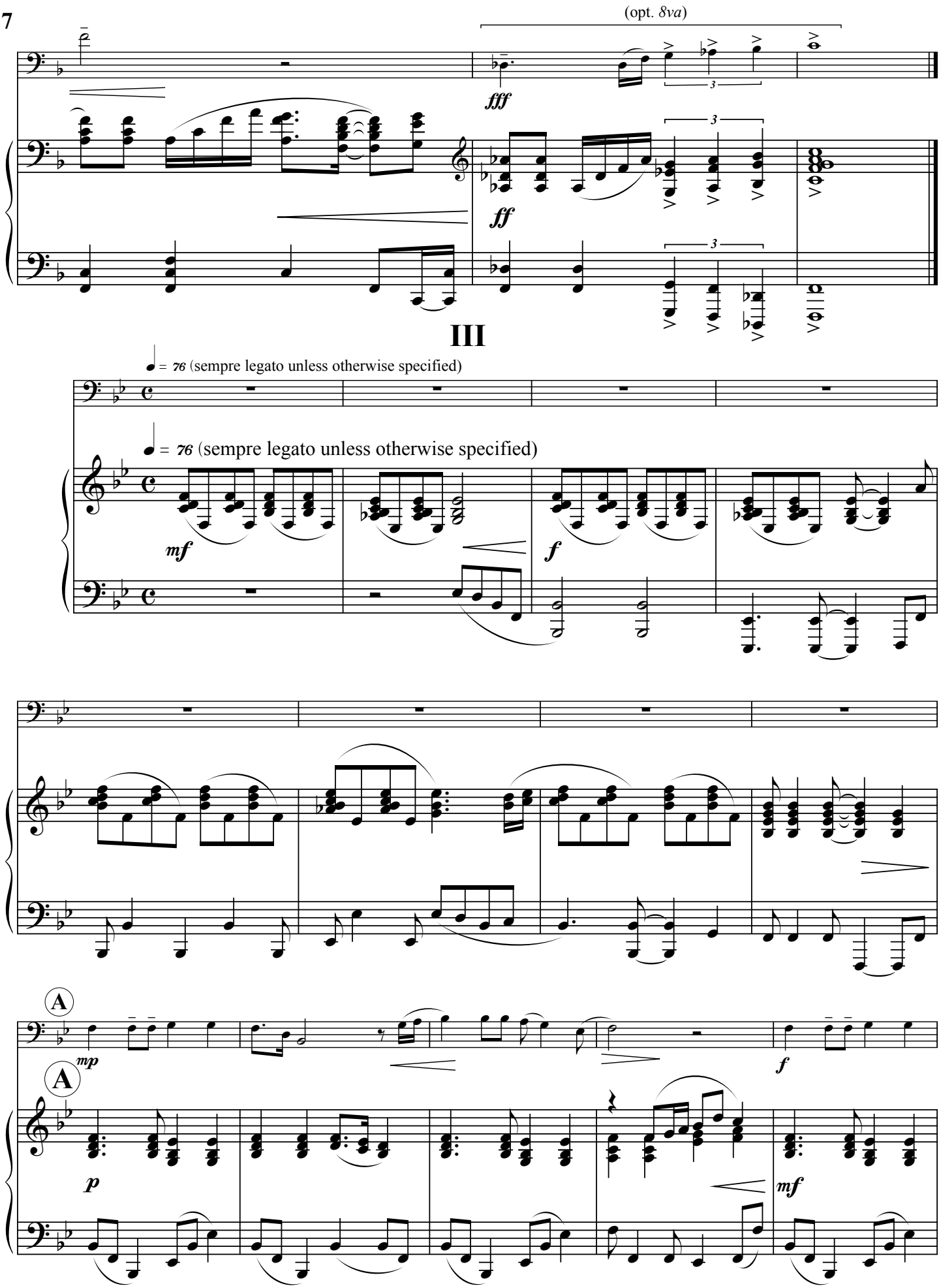
SONATINA

Frank Gulino

I



Copyright © 2008 Cimarron Music Press.
All rights reserved.
www.cimarronmusic.com


(opt. 8va)
fff
ff
III
♩ = 76 (sempre legato unless otherwise specified)
mf
f
A
mp
f
p
mf

About the Composer

A New York City native, bass trombonist and composer Frank Gulino (b. 1987) has enjoyed a number of successes in many facets of music, from performing large orchestral works and staples of the wind band repertoire, to chamber music, jazz, musical theater and solo work.

Educated at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, MD, Mr. Gulino has already made an impression on his generation of musicians. His performance endeavors have led him to perform at such prestigious venues as Avery Fisher Hall of New York City's Lincoln Center, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), Princeton University's flagship Richardson Auditorium as well as the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, home of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Gulino's major teachers include Randy Campora and James Olin, both of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, he has studied with David Fedderly of the Juilliard School and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Vincent Belford of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and international jazz artist Bob Ferrel.

In addition to study with the aforementioned artists, Mr. Gulino has performed on master classes by such recognized performers as David Taylor, Joe Burgstaller and Nitzan Haroz as well as the Boston Brass and the Atlantic Brass Quintet.

Fascinated by more than just the performance aspect of the music industry, Mr. Gulino also teaches and works as a brass instrument repair technician.

Program Notes

In a contemporary musical landscape so dominated by the avant-garde, the number of new pieces coming out that are tonal and pleasant-sounding seems to dwindle every year. Of course progress is desirable, but it appears to me that the preoccupation with revamping the contemporary music scene by writing highly progressive music detracts from the whole purpose of our art form: to listen, enjoy, be moved and maybe get a great melody stuck in one's head. With the *Sonatina*, I set out to write something melodic, tuneful, harmonious – dare I say cute?

While perhaps not a sonatina in the driest of textbook interpretations ("sonatina" implies a movement pattern of fast-slow-fast), this piece does incorporate a sort of "rounding" where ideas from the beginning of the piece reappear at the end. The first and third movements incorporate a similar harmonic progression, and the introductory piano melody from the first movement even returns beneath the singing trombone on the recapitulation of the final movement. Also the overall key scheme of tonic-dominant-tonic is reminiscent of classical sonata form, though this 9-minute composition pales in comparison to lengthy, complex sonatas of the classical and romantic eras. Thus, *Sonatina*.

The first movement of the *Sonatina* focuses on melodic contour. While not technically demanding, the music affords performers many opportunities to be musical – make the most of them! If the printed dynamics don't work for you, make up your own; but have a definite opinion either way. A good performance of this piece has musical direction, dynamic contrast and a smooth, singing style.

"There are only two kinds of songs: Love songs, and pirate songs."

These are the words of Roger Bobo, the legendary tubist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and one of the most revered brass pedagogues of our generation. In gaining experience as a musician, I've discovered the surprising amount of validity to that statement. The second movement of the *Sonatina* was inspired by Mr. Bobo's words, beginning in F-dorian with a dark "pirate song". After a lyrical trombone cadenza supported by rolled, root-position major chords in the piano, the movement opens up into sonorous, singing "love song" in F-major. The pirate song can be a little gruff sounding, and the love song should be absolutely beautiful. Maximum contrast between these two sections is what makes this middle movement effective.

In the third movement, the home key of Bb-major returns, as do several motives from the opening movement. The slow, contemplative interlude at measure 25 should be played softly, but still with direction. It's a much needed break from the otherwise continuous piano accompaniment, so try to make that passage stand out from the texture of the rest of the movement. The high Bb to finish the piece is preferable to the lower one, but, as long as the final downbeat is well-placed and sounds like a fitting culmination to the movement, either note works just fine.

Breathe frequently. Make phrases. Make beautiful music.

Frank Gulino
October 2008