Romantic

(1830-1900)

The term "romanticism" derives from the French word *roman,* meaning "novel, romance." The Romantic movement started in the 18th century as a literary movement in Germany. Writers during this period had their imagination awakened by scenes of nature, folklore, magic and medieval romances. The romantic is apt to be intensely subjective and views the world in terms of his or her personal feelings. The classical artist, on the other hand, is apt to be more objective in approaching art and life.

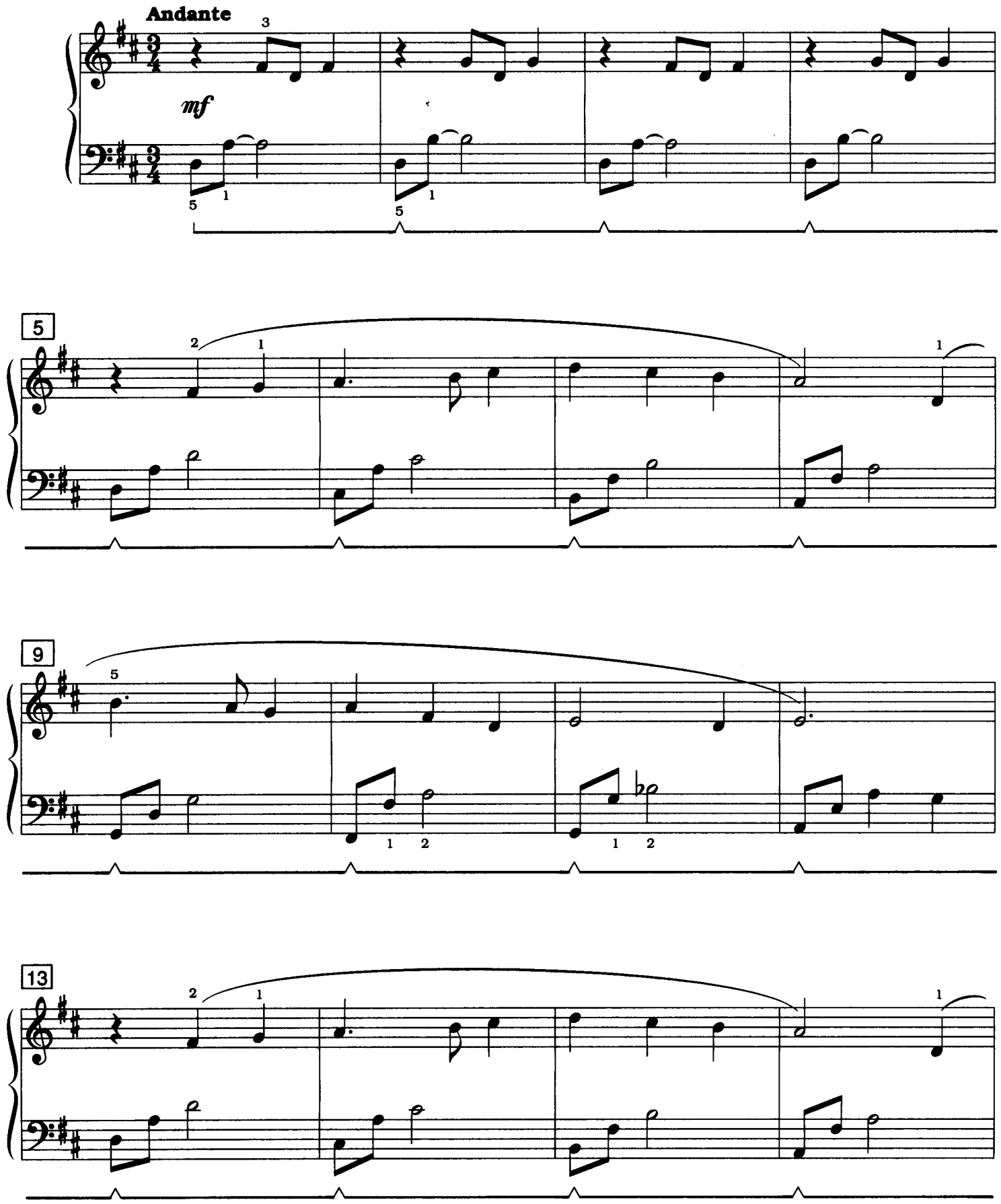
Romantic Style

Romantic melody was marked by a lyricism that gave it an immediate emotional appeal. These beautiful, singing melodies are apparent in a large number of works called *character pieces.* They are relatively short works, demonstrating a definable mood or character, and are often in ABA form. Other works could be described as "programmatic," and suggest mood rather than pictures or forms. Harmonies tend to be richer and are used for beautiful color effects. Almost all music of the Romantic period requires the use of the damper pedal. As the instrument itself became much heavier, more sonorous and capable of a tremendous range of volume and expression, pianists and composers began to explore these possibilities within the music itself. As the range and texture of keyboard music increased, the use of the damper pedal to connect and sustain larger chords became of paramount importance.

Rubato

The term *rubato,* which in Italian means "robbed," is widely applied to music from the Romantic style period. It can be thought of as a general elasticity of the pulse, preferably a give-and-take in the tempo. Usually, it is the melody hand that fluctuates while the accompaniment remains steady.

Romantic Composers

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)
Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)
Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)
Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

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