SONGS

OF THE

ATHENS OPTIMIST CLUB

INTRODUCTION

In 1931, Optimist International published, in its fourth edition, an official song book for its clubs, thanks not only to the work of Edgar Walsh in St. Louis and Roy L. Nicholson in Milwaukee, but also to the welcoming culture of the Optimist clubs. They were often already singing at every meeting some tune that would relieve their hearts of the week's pain and malaise. The collection included not only several songs parodied with Optimist words, but several popular songs for singing together. That collection had 217 texts, almost all of which merely refer to tunes not notated in the book, since the clubs universally already knew tunes from twenty or so years prior, such as "Dear Old Pal of Mine" or "Always." Now that those tunes have entered the public domain, this edition can include the notation so that today's Optimists can more readily rekindle the social power of singing.

What tunes exist today that can be given Optimist lyrics? Very few, it would seem. In 1906, John Philip Sousa warned that recording technology would one day completely replace the public's love of singing with a passive enjoyment of recorded sound. He wrote,

> Under such conditions, the tide of amateurism cannot but recede, until there will be left only the mechanical device and the professional executant. Singing will no longer be a fine accomplishment; vocal exercises, so important a factor in the curriculum of physical culture, will be out of vogue! Then what of the national throat? Will it not weaken? What of the national chest? Will it not shrink? When a mother can turn on the phonograph with the same ease that she applies to the electric light, will she croon her baby to slumber with sweet lullabys, or will the infant be put to sleep by machinery?

Here we stand more than a century later, noticing that Sousa was not far off. When one asks a neighbor, "What's your favorite song to sing," no doubt the answer is a confused, "I don't really sing." It would seem the popular culture, in a long trend of increased isolation, has made music an especially personal endeavor, rather than social. In my time in the Athens Optimist Club, however, I have found a pocket of modern people who enjoy communal singing. No doubt such pockets exist elsewhere.

This collection primarily contains songs about the Optimist club, optimism in general, smiling, and the joys of getting together. It also includes patriotic tunes that may be useful as well.

Several of these texts from 1931 have been updated not only to reflect the now wider demographic of Optimists, but also Athens's own needs. Nevertheless, other Optimist Clubs, with some modifications, can likewise keep these songs relevant to them if they wish to use them.

The Optimist Club is a real lighthouse of sociability across people of all walks of life, all in the name of optimism itself. It is often said that optimism is seeing the glass half full, rather than half empty. Optimism, because it deals with the water that is actually in the glass, is *realism*, while pessimism is merely fighting phantoms. May this volume assist in our goal of bringing our community to better understand *reality*.

Andrew Owen,
Athens, Tennessee.

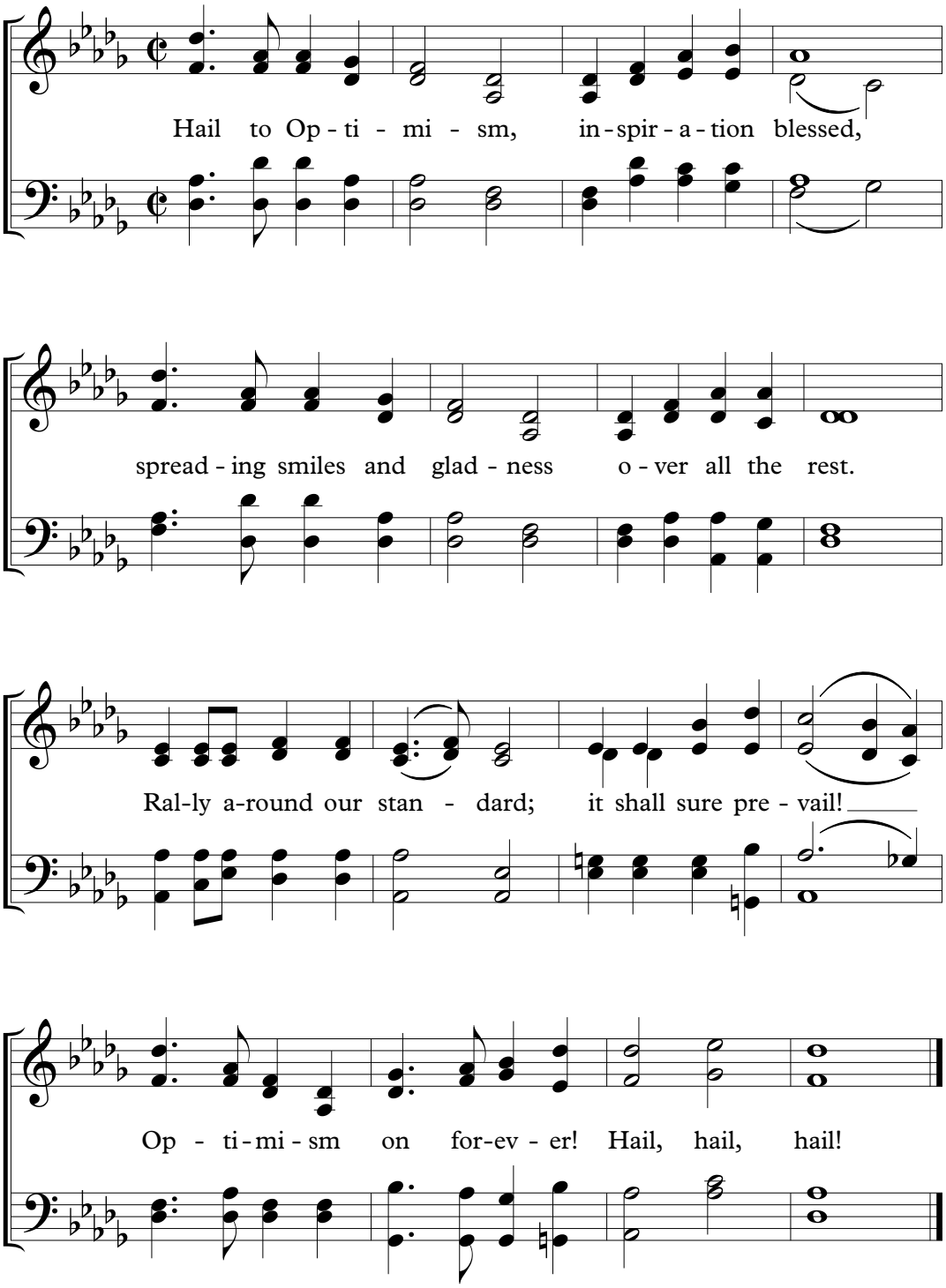
July, 2025.

1 Hail to Optimism
2 Song of the Optimists
3 Bringing Home the Bacon
4 Dear Old Club
5 Loyal Optimists
6 Rocky Toptimists
7 Optimists—Get Together
8 The Pessimist Wail
9 Mummy Song
10 The Song of the Optimists
11 It Isn't Any Trouble
12 Our Emblem
13 No Wonder We Become So Pally
14 O Optimist
15 Striving for the Best
16 A Smile Is Quite a Funny Thing
17 Optimist Service Song
18 Smile as True Optimists
19 Till We Meet Again, I'll Say Adieu
20 Where True Friendship Grows
21 With the Optimists
22 Yes! We Have No Pessimism
23 Start It with a Smile
24 Smile! Smile! Smile!
25 Give Us a Speech
26 Speeches
27 Praise to Our Club
28 Good Old Optimist's Smile
29 Hail, Hail, the Optimists Are Here
30 Hunting Troubles
31 If It's Gloomy
32 The Star-Spangled Banner
33 Columbia, The Gem of the Ocean
34 America
35 Auld Lang Syne
36 My Homeland Tennessee
37 TWU Fight Song
38 Jingle Bells

For the Optimist Club of Athens, Tennessee

Hail to Optimism

From *Songs for the Optimist Club* (1931)
Harm. by Andrew Owen



Song of the Optimists

Optimist Roy L. Nicholson

From *Songs for the Optimist Club* (1931)

Not too fast

mf

We have a club of which proud-ly we
Some-times a child needs a help - er and
Man - y good clubs in our coun - try are

Between verses

p

p

sing, boast - ing a Creed that all good things can bring; wear-ing a
guide, some - one to stand as a friend on the side; need-ing ad -
known, but none can boast of a name like our own; for ex - pla -

rall.

name that is hope-ful and grand, spread-ing a doc - trine of faith o'er the land.
vice and en - cour-age-ment kind, there is one place where such help one can find.
na - tions you need nev - er call, when you say "OP - TIM - IST" you've said it *all.*

colla voce

It's the O - P - T - I - M - I - S - T - S,

p–f

work - ing stead - i - ly, giv - ing read - i - ly, all to bless,

be - ing friends to the child in need, preach - ing hope and suc - cess; it's the

O - P - T - I - M - I - S - T - S, It's the S.

1.

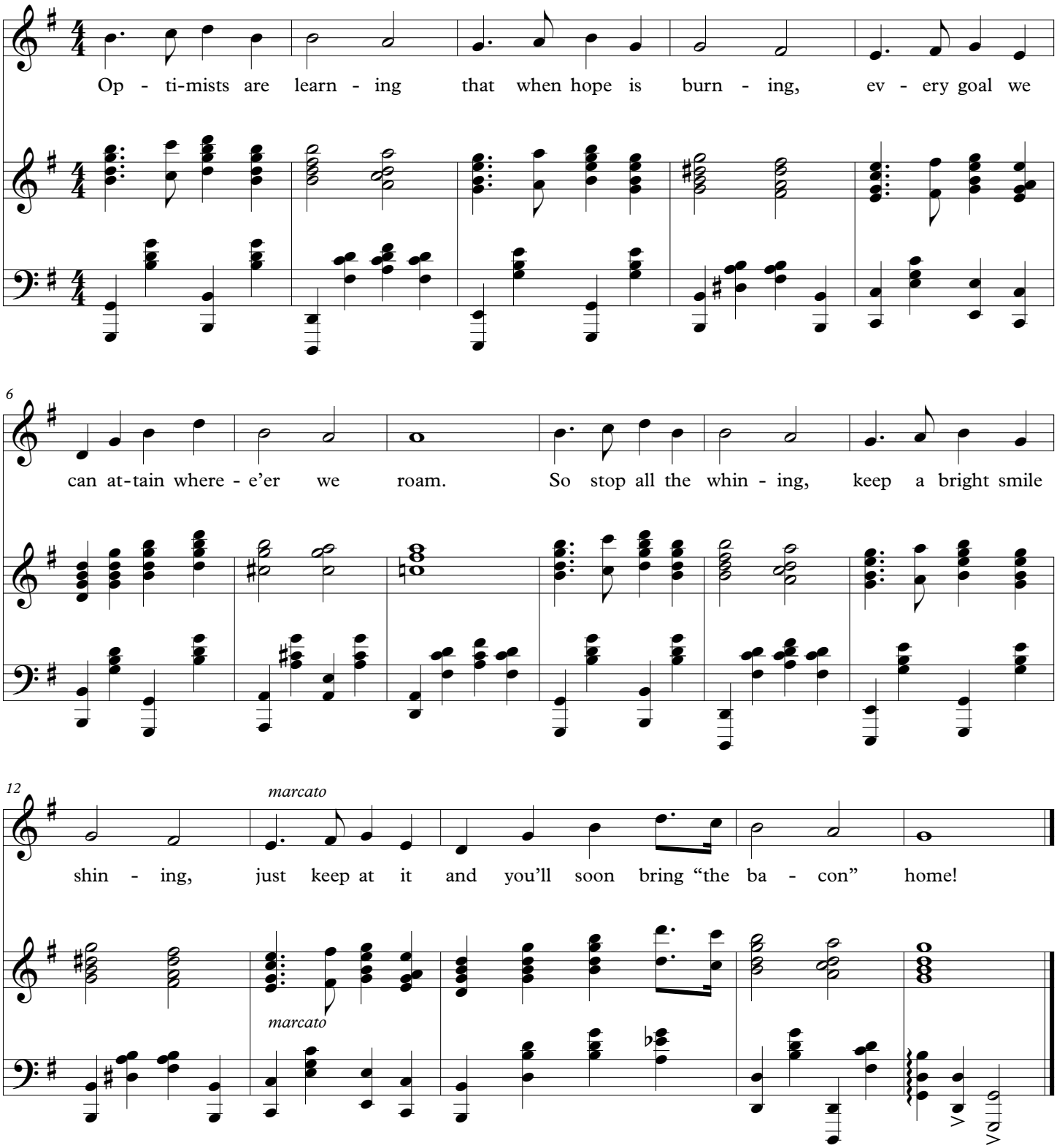
2.

Bringing Home the Bacon

Tune: "Keep the Homefires Burning"

Optimist Roy L. Nicholson

Ivor Novello

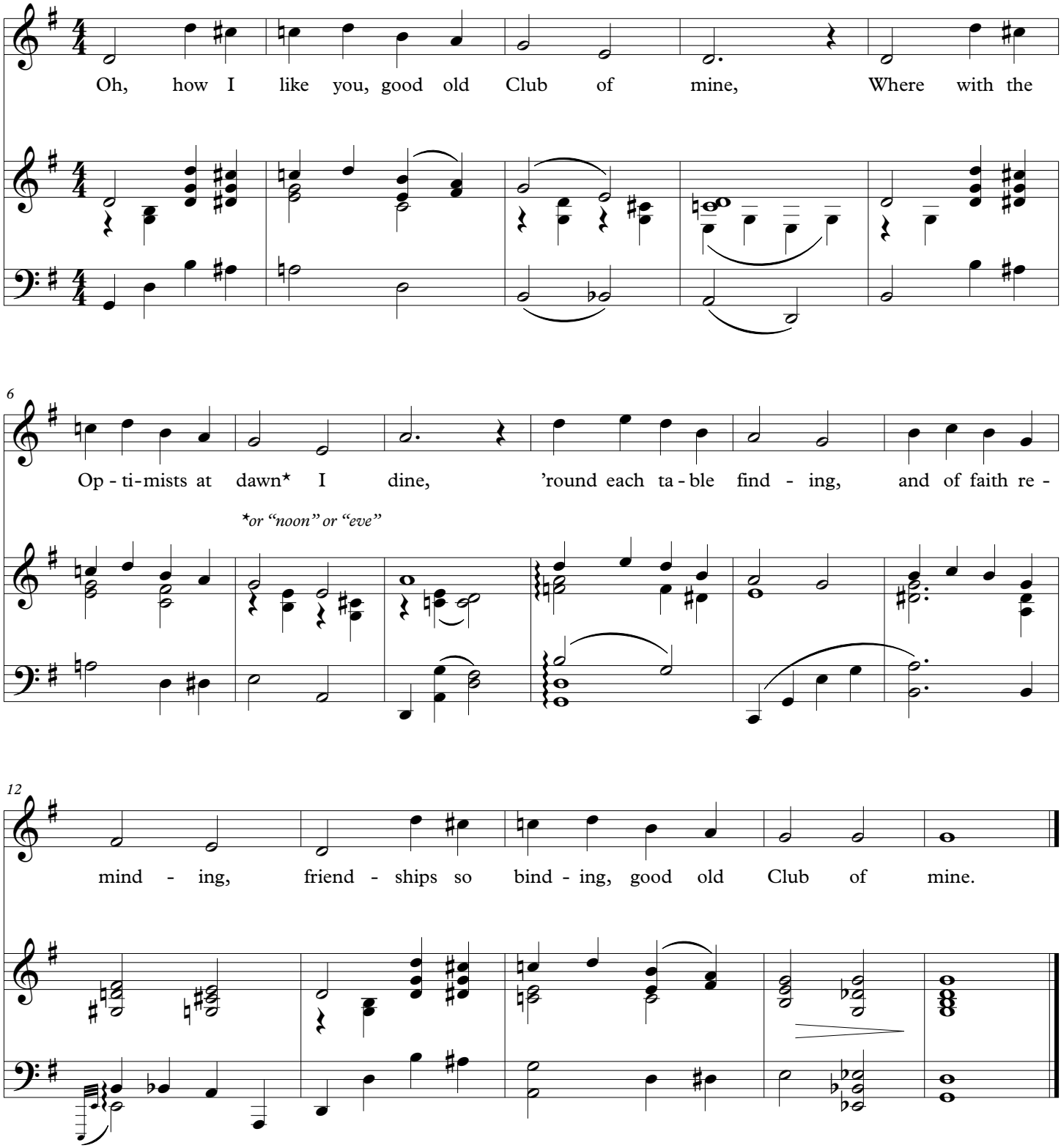


Dear Old Club

Tune: "Dear Old Pal of Mine"

Optimist Roy L. Nicholson

Gitz Rice
(1918)

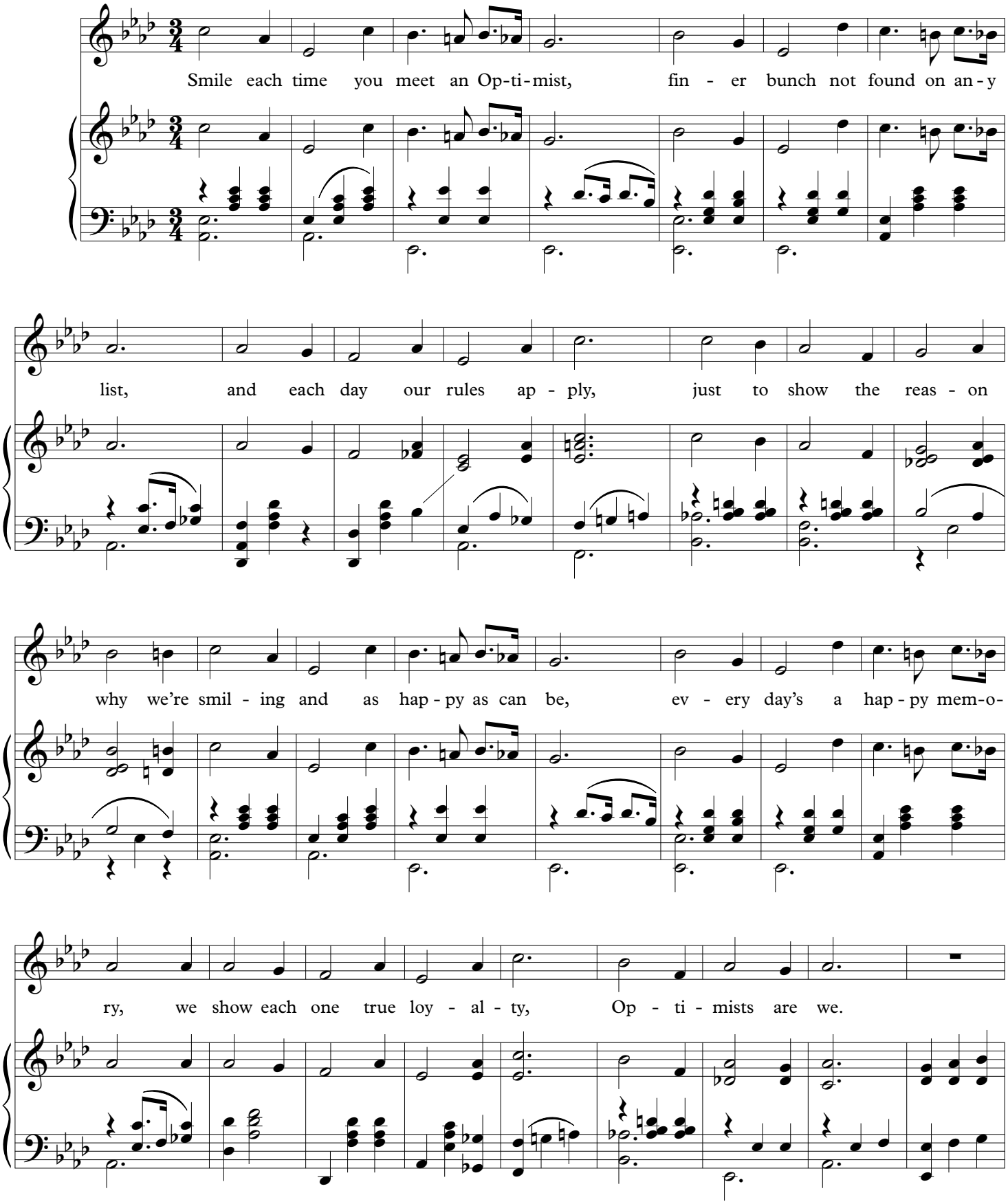


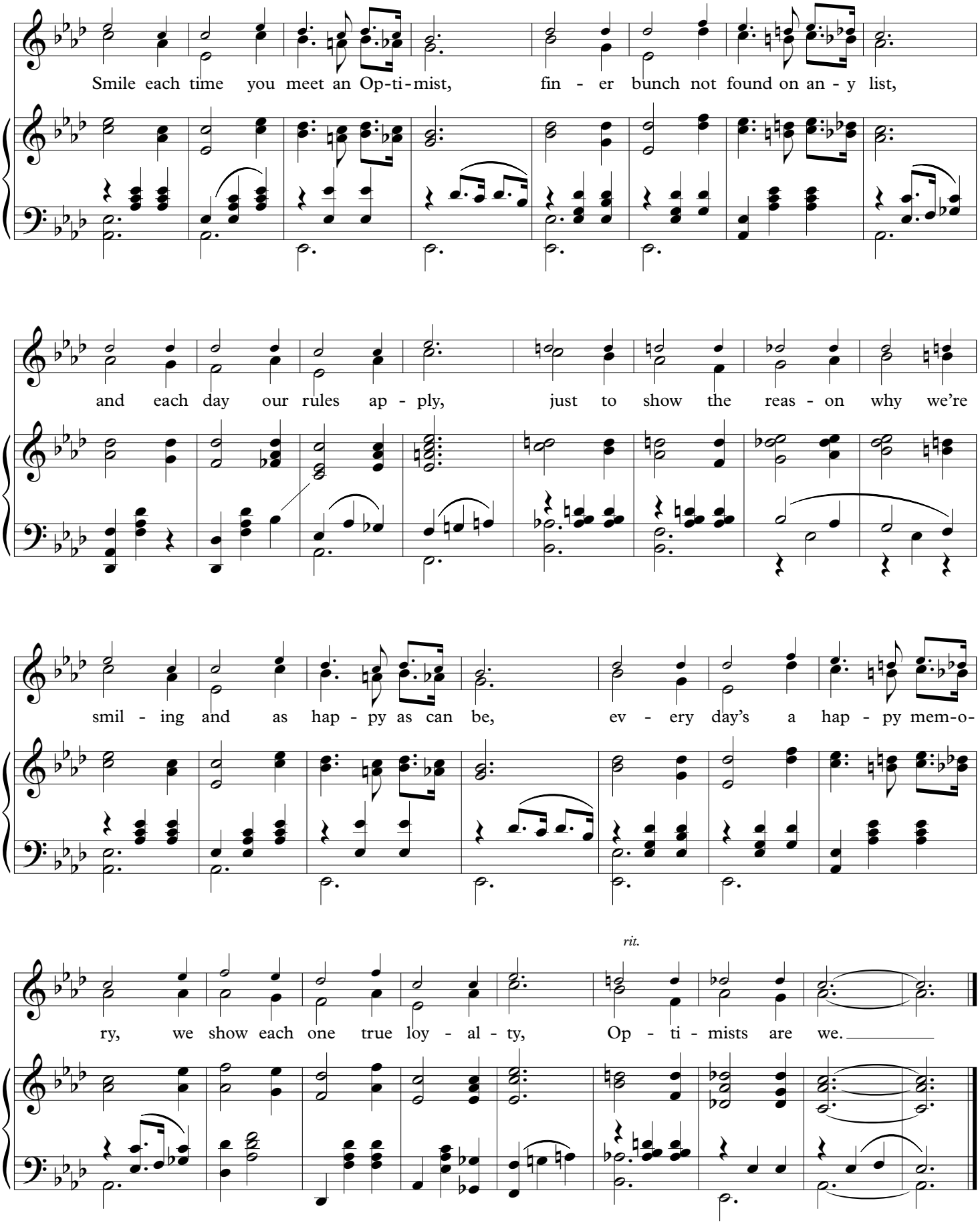
L.P.H.

Loyal Optimists

Tune: "Till We Meet Again" (1918)

Richard A. Whiting




Smile each time you meet an Op-ti-mist, fin - er bunch not found on an - y list,
and each day our rules ap - ply, just to show the reas - on why we're
smil - ing and as hap - py as can be, ev - ery day's a hap - py mem-o-
rit.
ry, we show each one true loy - al - ty, Op - ti - mists are we.

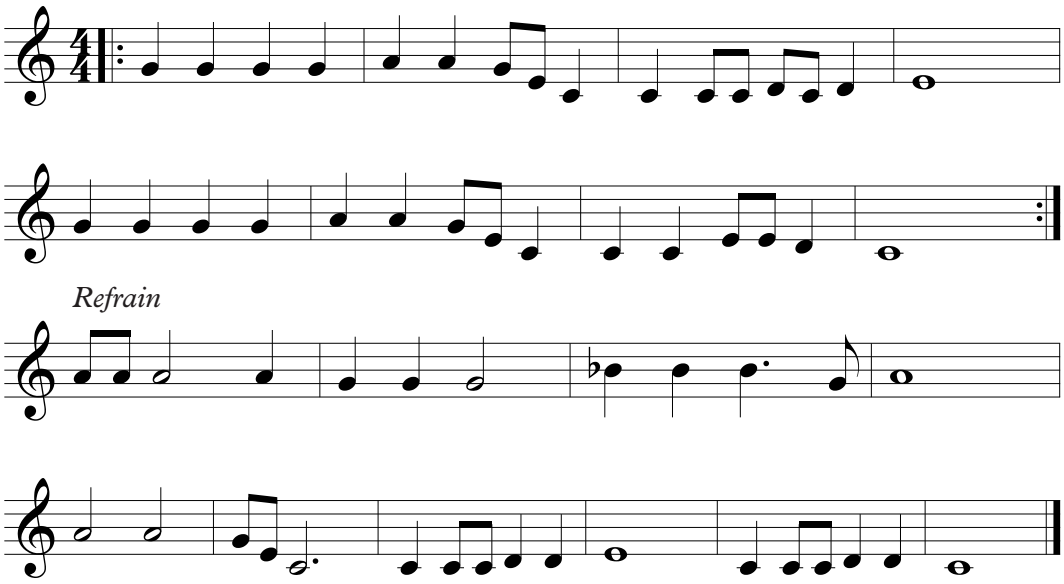
For the Optimist Club of Athens, Tennessee

Rocky Toptimists

Tune: Rocky Top (1967)

Optimist lyrics by
Andrew Owen

Felice and Boudleaux Bryant



Wish that I was with some Optimists down in the Tennessee hills.
Ain't no grouchy folks in Optimists; gladness up to the gills.
Once I had a friend in Optimists, he always made us smile,
Friend of young folks, like all Optimists, he made it all worthwhile.

Refrain
Optimists, you'll always be friends for life to me!
Good old Optimists, in Athens, Tennessee, in Athens Tennessee.

Once two strangers joined the Optimists looking for peace of mind.
Now they're talking health and happiness to everybody they find.
There is something in each Optimist and the same in each friend;
They see sunny sides, not rottenness, and see things to the end.

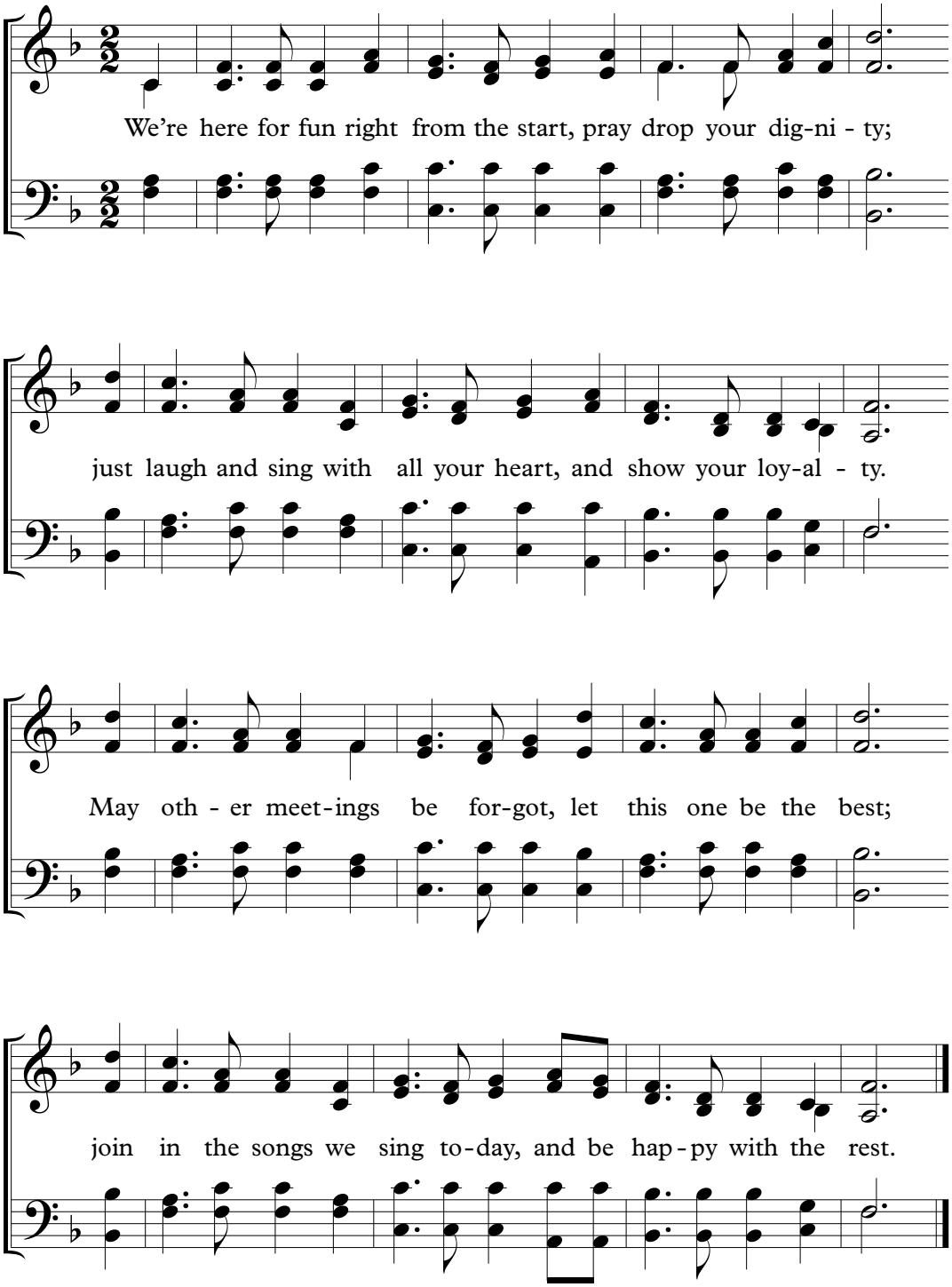
Refrain

(Second half of the verse only)
Worry, anger, fear, and trouble now ain't gonna stand a chance.
Large and noble, strong and happy now, in every circumstance.

Refrain

Optimists—Get Together

From *Songs for the Optimist Club* (1931)
Ed. by Andrew Owen

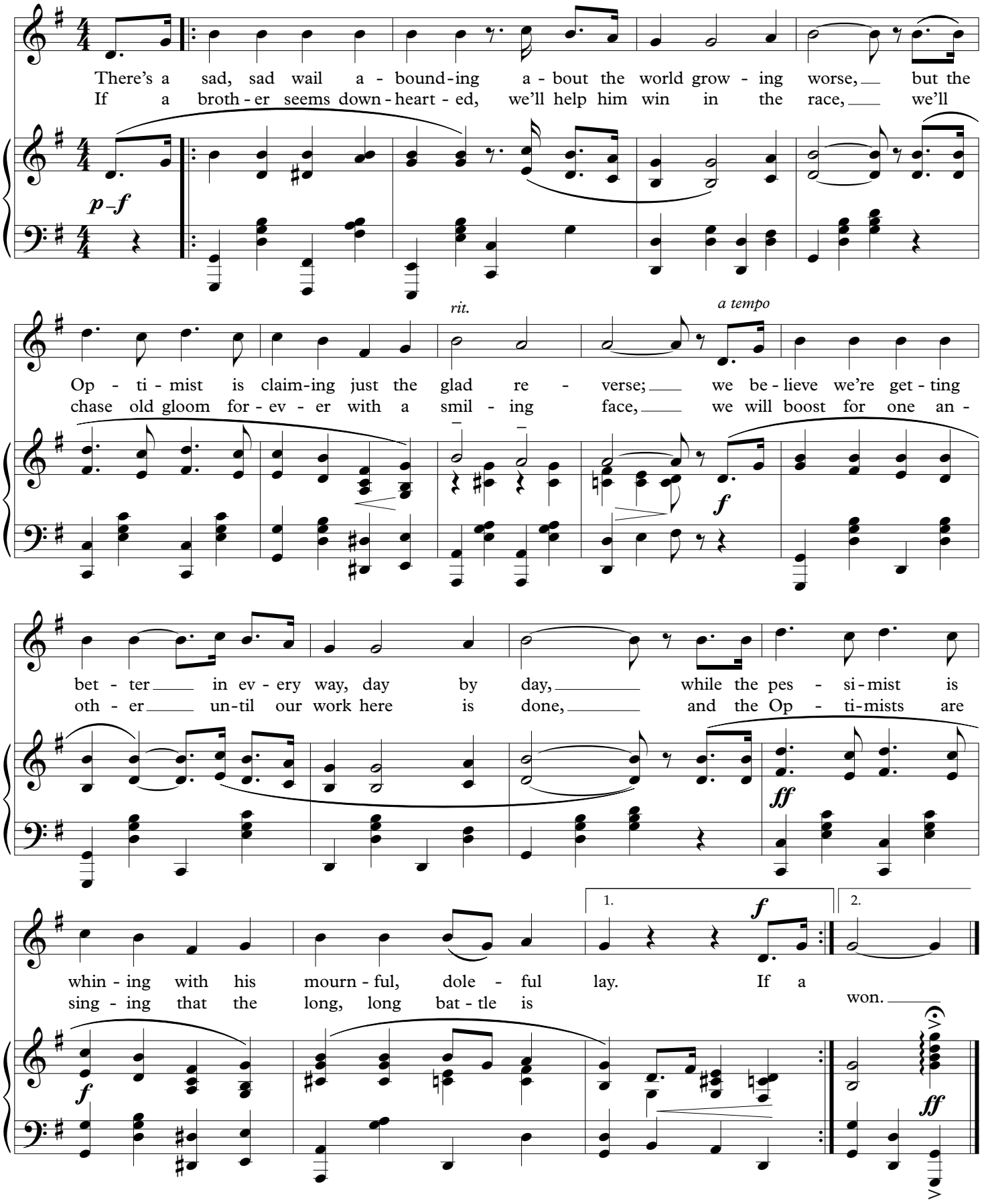


The Pessimist Wail

Optimist G. Ross Goodner

Tune: "There's a Long, Long Trail"

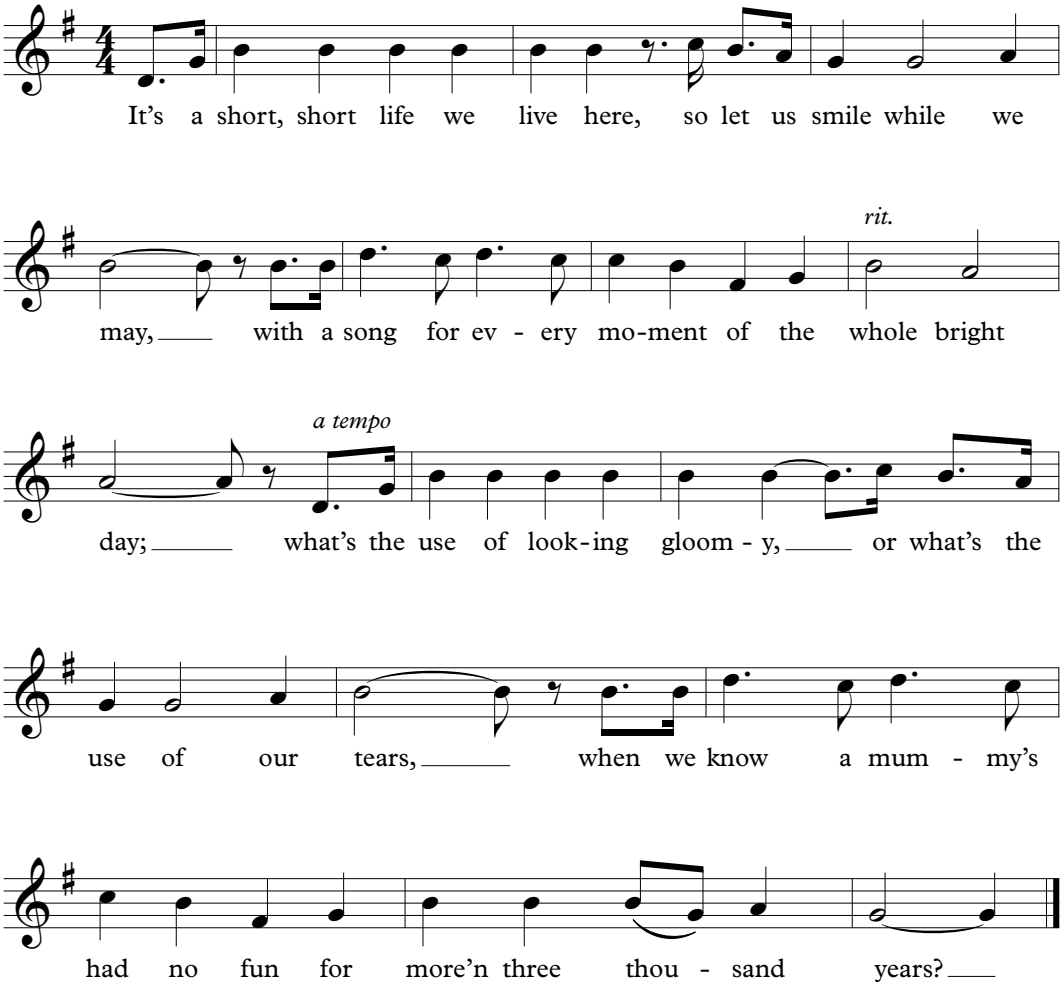
Zo Elliott
(1915)



Mummy Song

Tune: "There's a Long, Long Trail"

Zo Elliott
(1915)



The Song of the Optimists

Tune: The Battle Hymn of the Republic (1861)

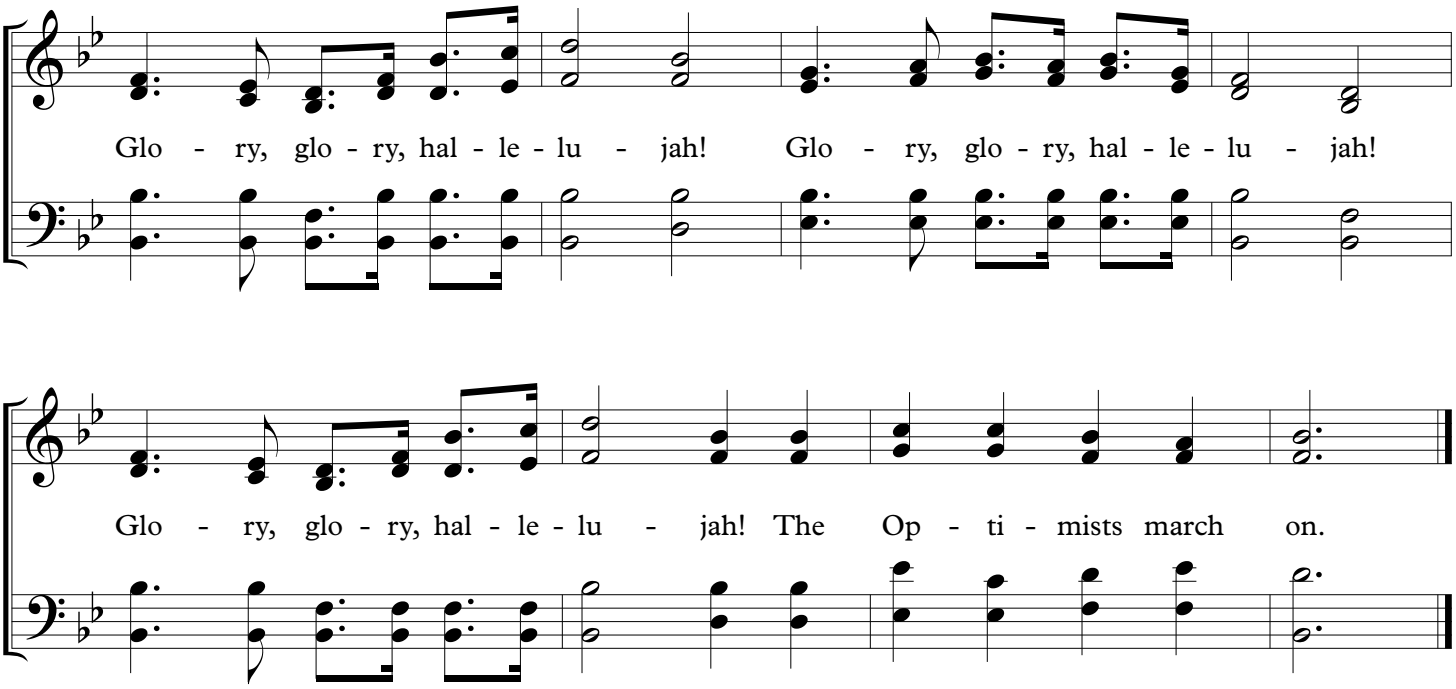
Optimist Bill Faulhaber

USA campmeeting tune

With minds that are de - ter - mined and with voic - es loud and strong, we
With faith in peo - ple we are sure to play a win - ning game. With
The gift of friend - ship is a boon, which each one should as - pire. The
The doc - trine of all Op - ti - mists is Faith and Hope, fair play with

wish to sing through-out this land that good old cheer - ful song: to
thoughts and ac - tions that are pure, we'll glor - i - fy our name. Or -
time is com - ing ver - y soon when no - thing will rank higher. The
pro - gress en - tered in the lists for Ath - ens all the way. The

make each bur - den light - er, as in life we move a - long, as we go march-ing on.
deals will come, or - deals will go, we'll al - ways be the same, as we go march-ing on.
Op - ti - mists will be the folks whom all will then ad - mire, as we go march-ing on.
goal that we are striv - ing for we'll sure - ly reach some day, as we go march-ing on.



It Isn't Any Trouble

Tune: The Battle Hymn of the Republic (1861)

It isn't any trouble just to S-M-I-L-E,
It isn't any trouble just to S-M-I-L-E,
There isn't any trouble but will vanish like a bubble
If you only take the trouble just to S-M-I-L-E.

Refrain
Glory-ory-ory, Halle-luly-uly, ay,
Glory-ory-ory, Halle-luly-uly, ay,
There isn't any trouble but will vanish like a bubble
If you only take the trouble just to S-M-I-L-E.

(Use "G-R-I-N grin," "G-I-ggigle-E,"
"Tee-hee-hee-hee-hee," "L-A-U-G-H,"
"Haw-haw-haw-haw-haw.")

Our Emblem

Roy L. Nicholson

Tune: "Round Her Neck She Wears a Yeller Ribbon" (1917)

G.A. Norton

On his coat he wears a fan-cy but-ton, it's large e-nough and bright e-nough so that it can't be missed;

if you ask him "Why the dec-o-ra-tion?" he'll say "It's there to tell the world that I'm an Op-ti-mist." Op-ti-

mist! Op - ti - mist! There is - n't an - y bet - ter on the list!

On his coat he wears a fan-cy but-ton; he wears it there to tell the world that he's an Op-ti-mist.

On her coat she wears a fan-cy but-ton, it's large e-nough and bright e-nough so that it can't be missed;

if you ask her "Why the dec-o-ra-tion?" she'll say "It's there to tell the world that I'm an Op-ti-mist." Op-ti-

mist! Op - ti - mist! There is - n't an - y bet - ter on the list!

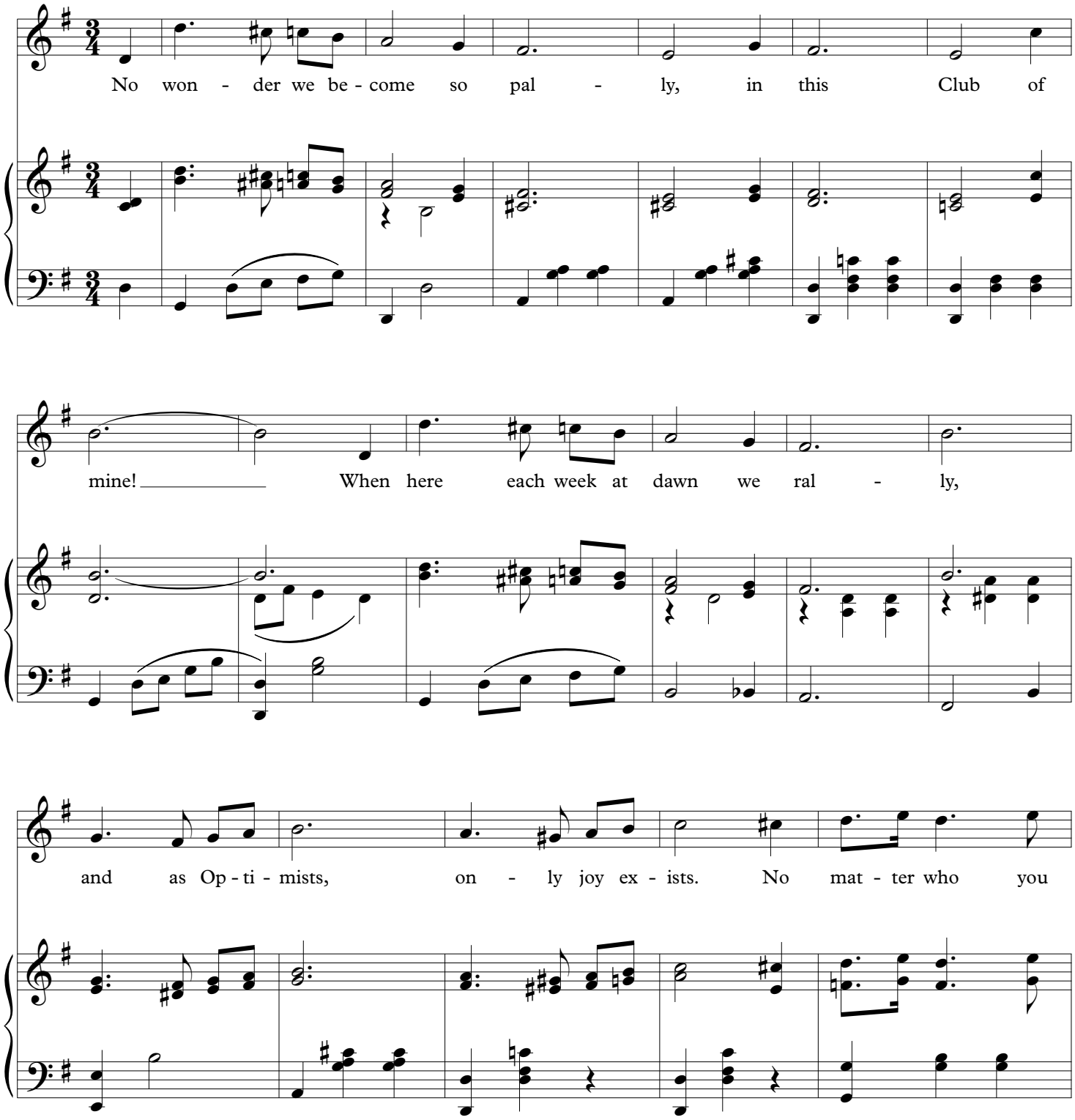
On her coat she wears a fan-cy but-ton; she wears it there to tell the world that she's an Op - ti-mist.

No Wonder We Become So Pally

Tune: "I Wonder What's Become of Sally"

Optimist Roy L. Nicholson

Milton Ager
(1924)



are, or what your trade may be, with - in this Club you'll

find one great fra-ter - ni - ty. So let us live, as forth we

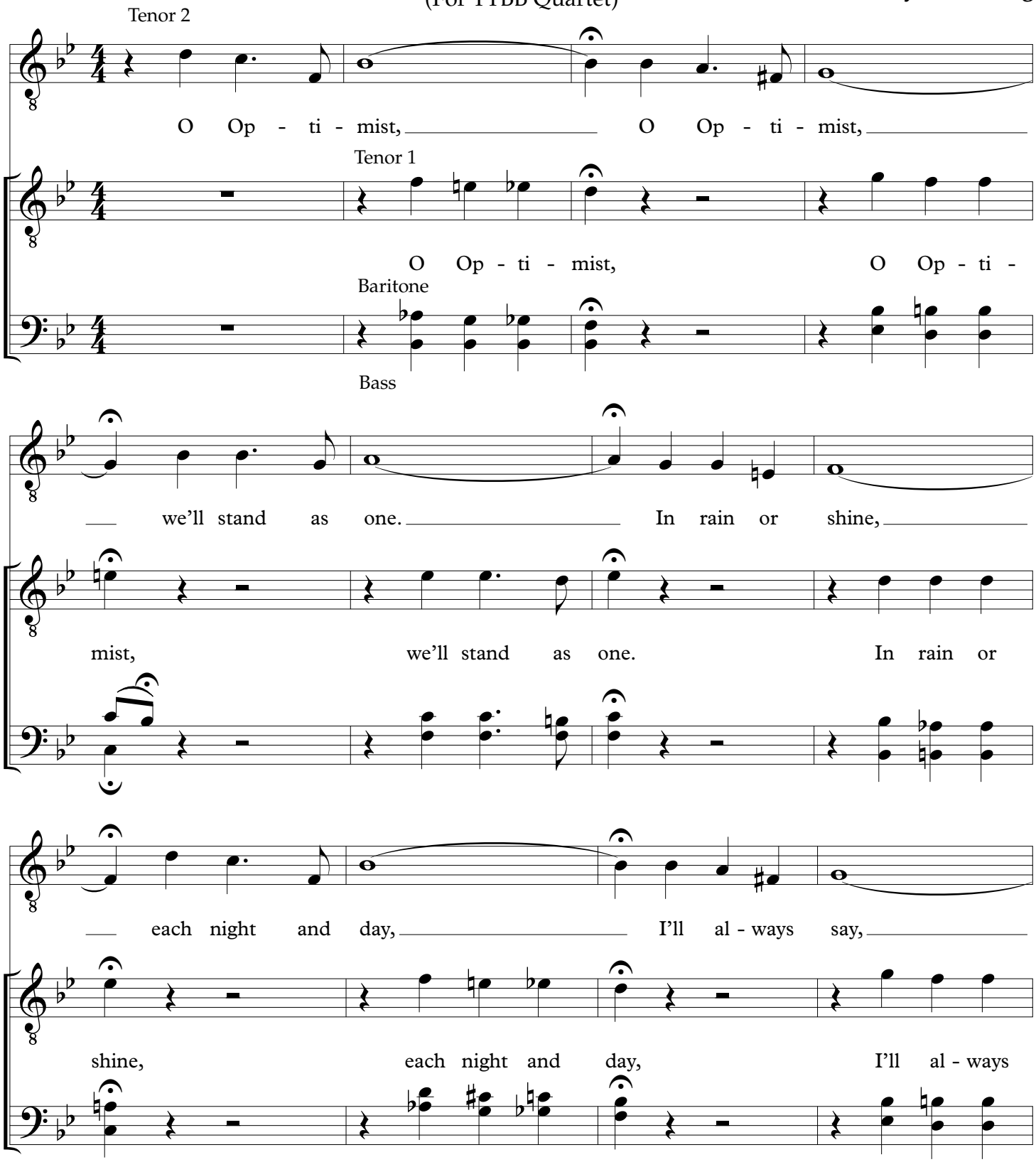
sal - ly, our Creed so di - vine.

O Optimist

Tune: Sweet Adeline (1903)

(For TTBB Quartet)

Harry Armstrong



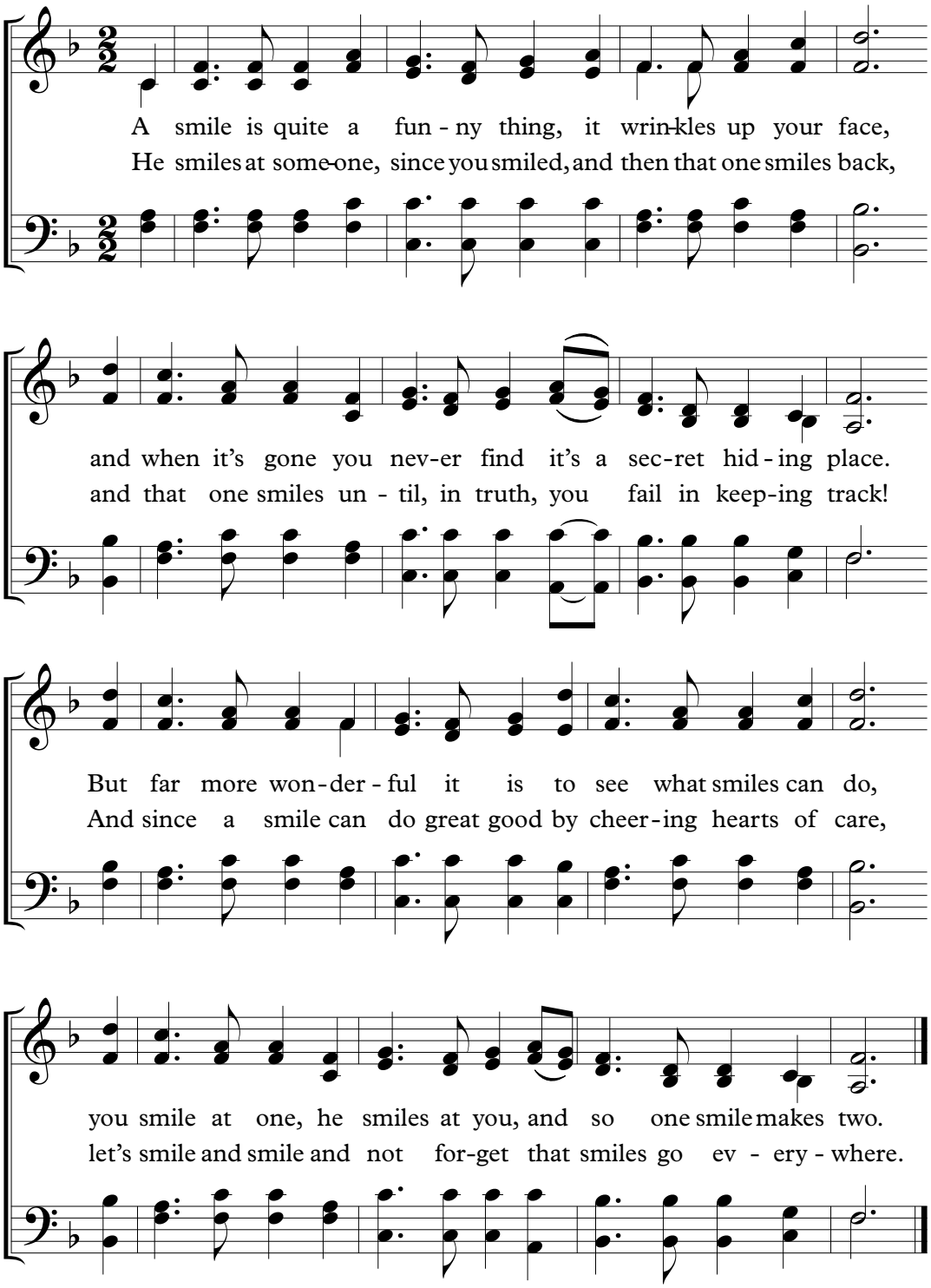
Striving for the Best

Tune: Sweet Adeline (1903)

We Optimists, (We Optimists,)
We Optimists, (We Optimists,)
Of many trades, (Of many trades,)
Our Club consists, (Our Club consists)
But in our ranks, (But in our ranks,)
No gloom exists, (No gloom exists,)
We are striving for the best—
We Optimists.

A Smile Is Quite a Funny Thing

From *Songs for the Optimist Club* (1931)
Ed. by Andrew Owen



Optimist Service Song

Tune: Always

Irving Berlin
(1925)

Valse moderato

I'll be lov-ing you al - ways, I'll be ev-er true, al - ways, when the things you've planned need a help-ing hand, I will ev-er stand, al-ways, al-ways. Days may not be fair, al - ways, That's when I'll be there, al - ways, then the Op-ti-mists strong, help-ing all a - long, Ser-vice be our watch-word, al - ways. al - ways.

1. 2.

Smile as True Optimists

Tune: My Hero

Oscar Straus
(1908)

Valse lento

Smile! Smile! Hap - py and cheer - ful, as true Op - ti -

sostenuto

mists; Smile! Smile! Teach-ing the fear - ful to know

p *cresc.*

Good ex - ists. Smile! Smile! Spread-ing the

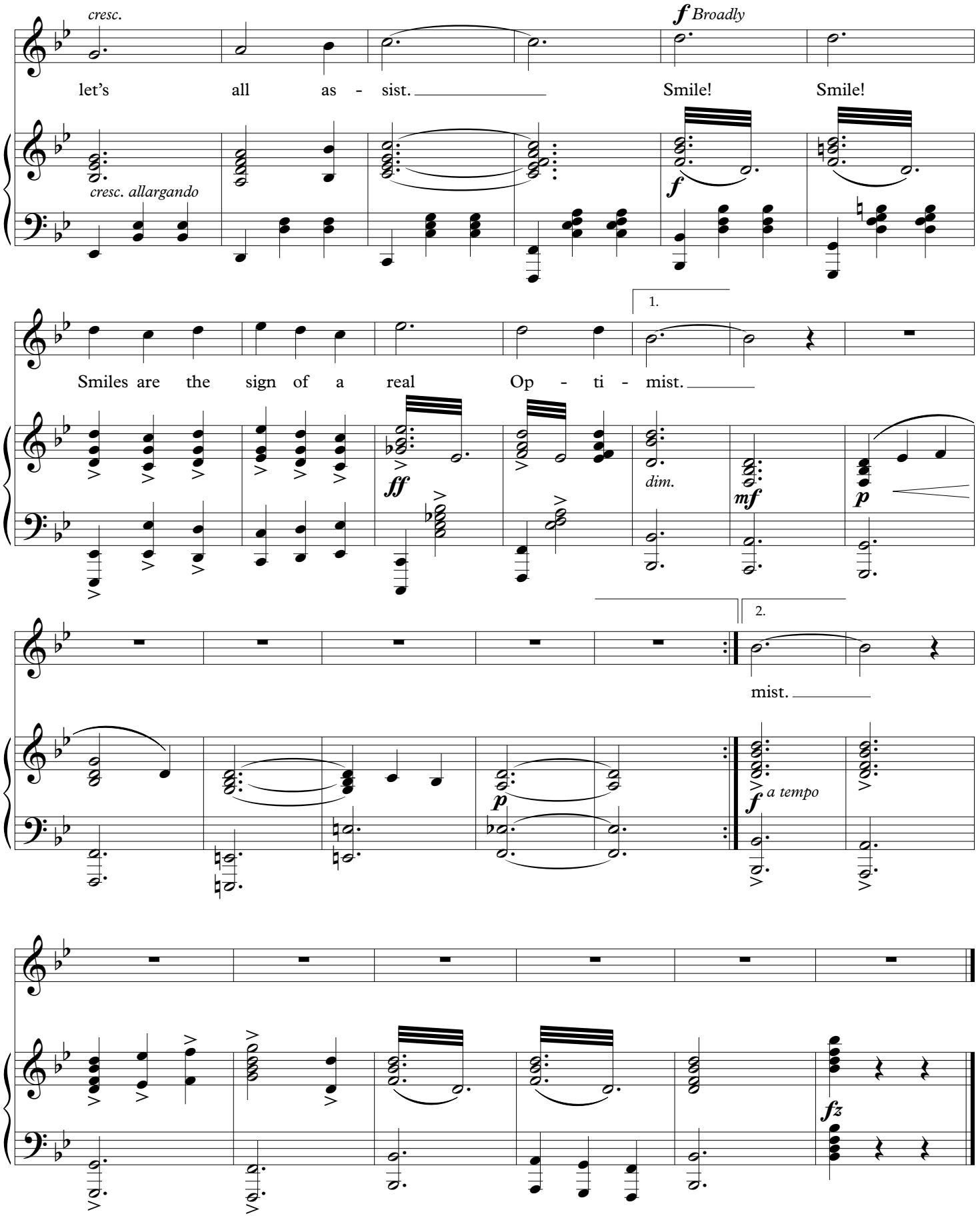
appassionato

mf *cresc.*

f *pp*

sun - shine, tho' days be dark, we'll make ev - ery - one shine,

f *pp*

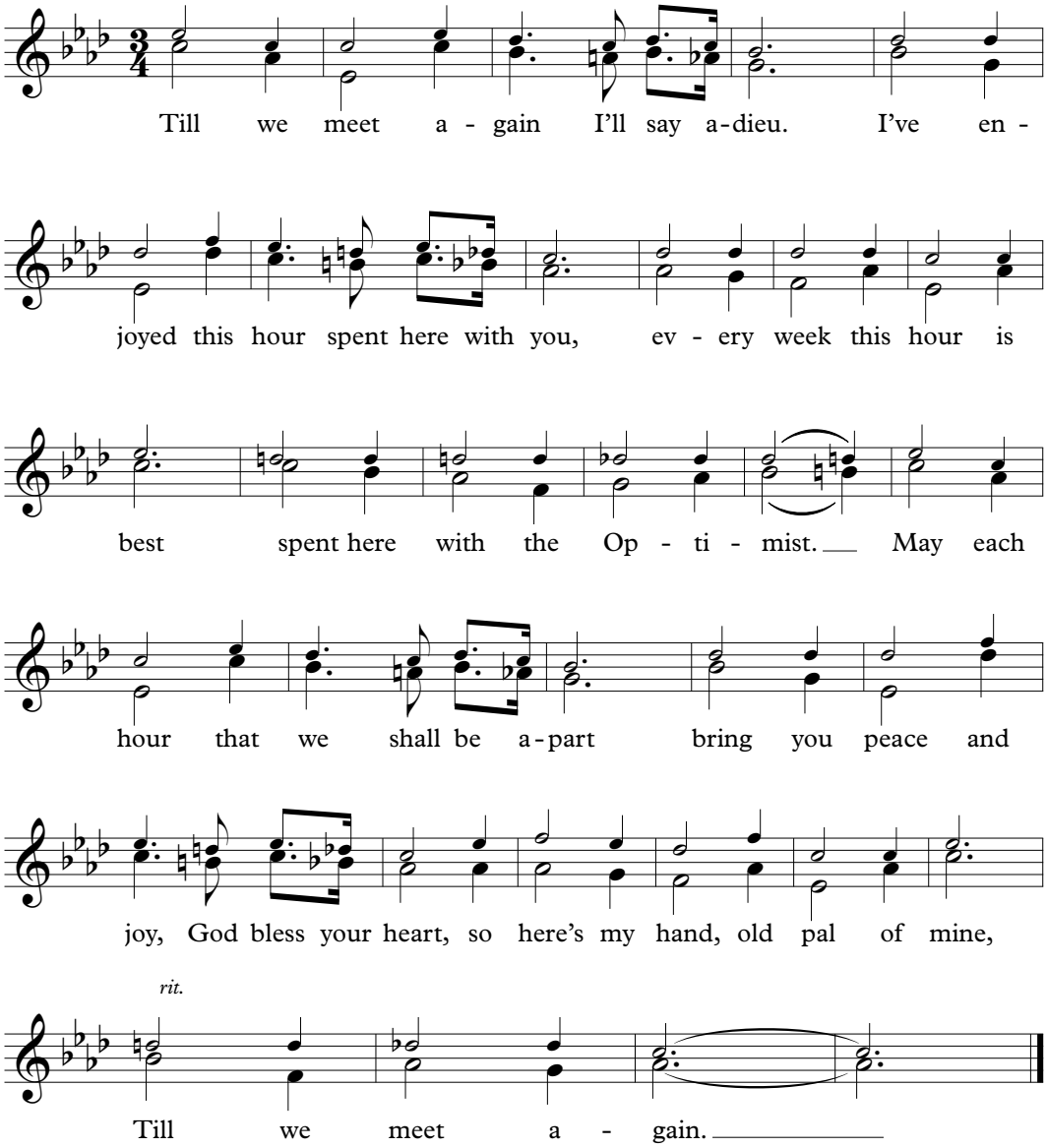

cresc.
f Broadly
let's all as - sist.
Smile! Smile!
cresc. allargando
f
1.
Smiles are the sign of a real Op - ti - mist.
ff
dim.
mf
p
2.
mist.
p
f a tempo
fz

Till We Meet Again, I'll Say Adieu

Tune: "Till We Meet Again"

Wylbert Brown

Richard A. Whiting



Where True Friendship Grows

Roy L. Nicholson

Tune: Iowa Corn Song

George Botsford
(1921)

We are the Op - ti-mists! Op - ti-mists!

No - thing is so fine As this Club of mine. We are the Op - ti-mists!

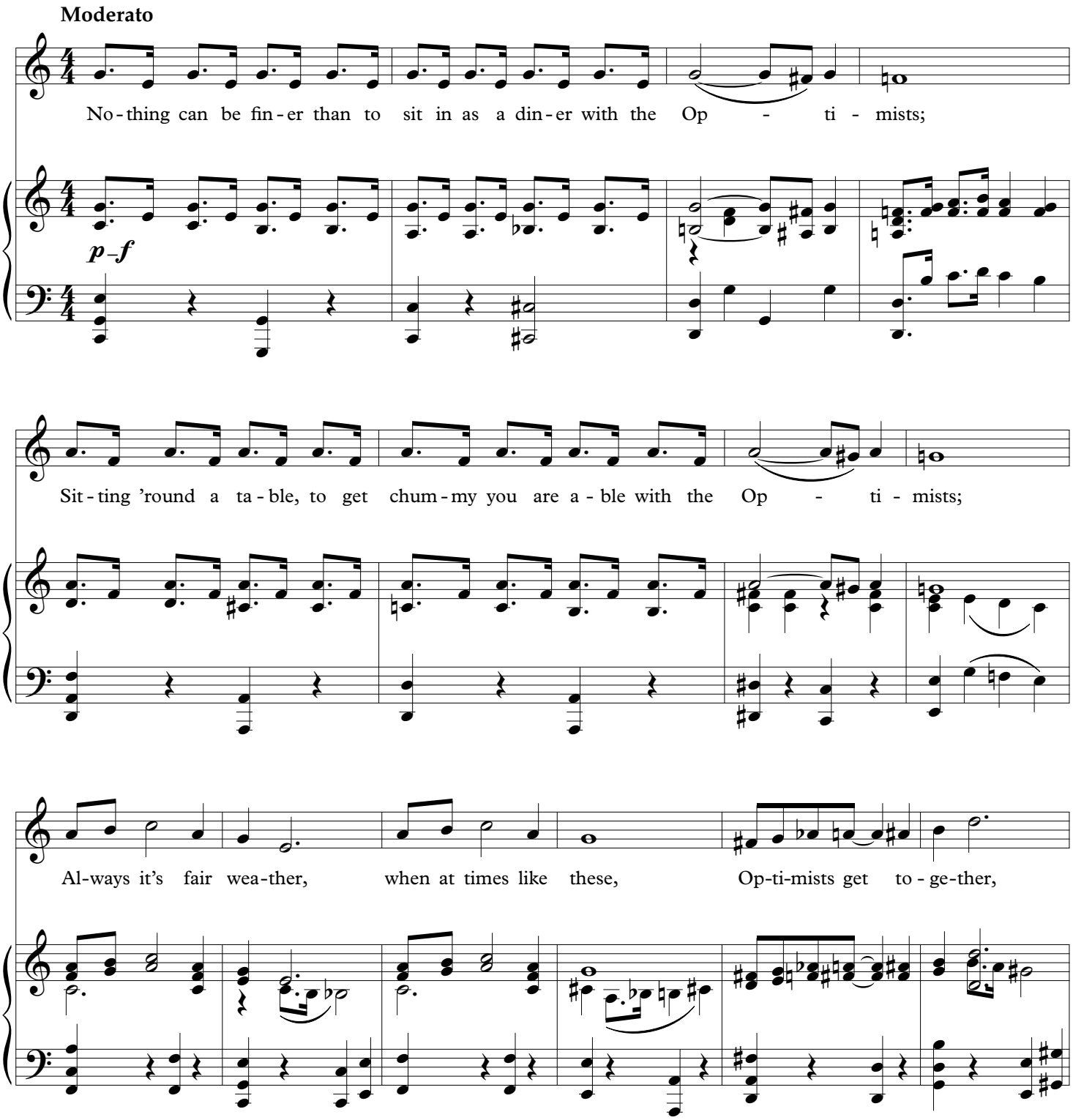
Op - ti-mists! That's where true Friend-ship grows. We are the grows.

With the Optimists

Roy L. Nicholson

Tune: Carolina in the Morning

Walter Donaldson
(1922)



sit-ting a-round at ease. There's a feel-ing steal-ing 'round your heart that's most ap-peal-ing with the

Op - ti - mists; it's to know each oth-er as a sis-ter or a broth-er with the Op - ti-

mists; If I had A-lad-din's lamp for on-ly a day, I'd make a wish and here's what I'd say:

Let my best en-deav-or be to live and work for-ev-er like an Op - ti - mist. mist.

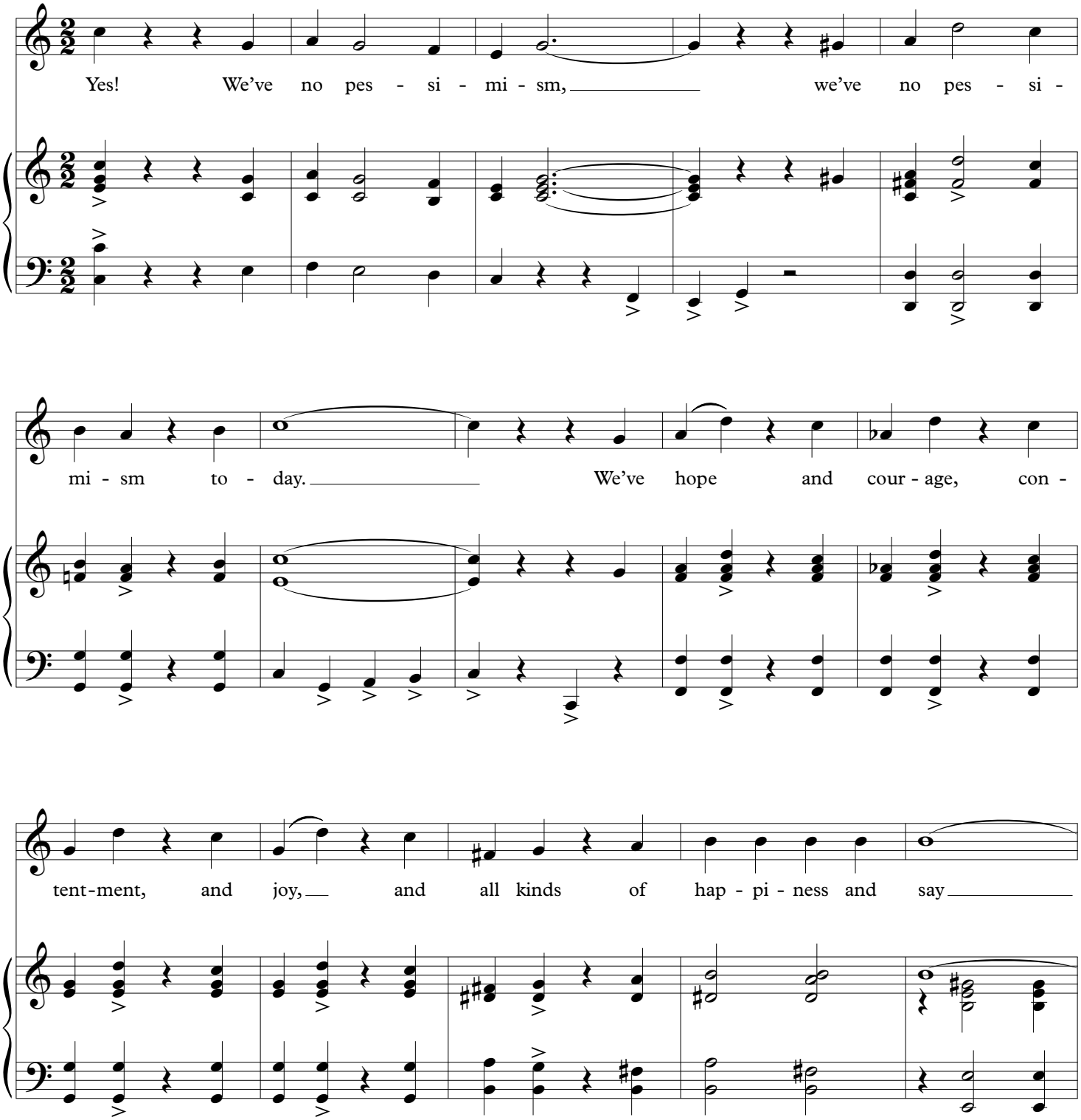
1. 2.

Yes! We Have No Pessimism

Edgar Walsh

Tune: Yes! We Have No Bananas

Frank Silver
(1923)



we have an old fash-ioned phi - lo - so - phy

that drives a - way all fears, but yes! we've

no pes - si - mi - sm, but we've op - ti -

mi - sm to - day.

1.

2.

day.

fz

Start It with a Smile

Tune: Leave Me with a Smile

Charles Koehler
(1921)

Moderato

When it's time for meet-ing, and the friend - ly greet-ing,

start it with a smile, what's the

use of sigh-ing, send all gloom a - fly-ing, start it with a

smile. And while we're to - geth-er, al - ways

fair the wea-ther, sun - shine all the while,

ev - ery song we sing just make the raft - ers ring, and start it

with a smile! smile!

1.

2.

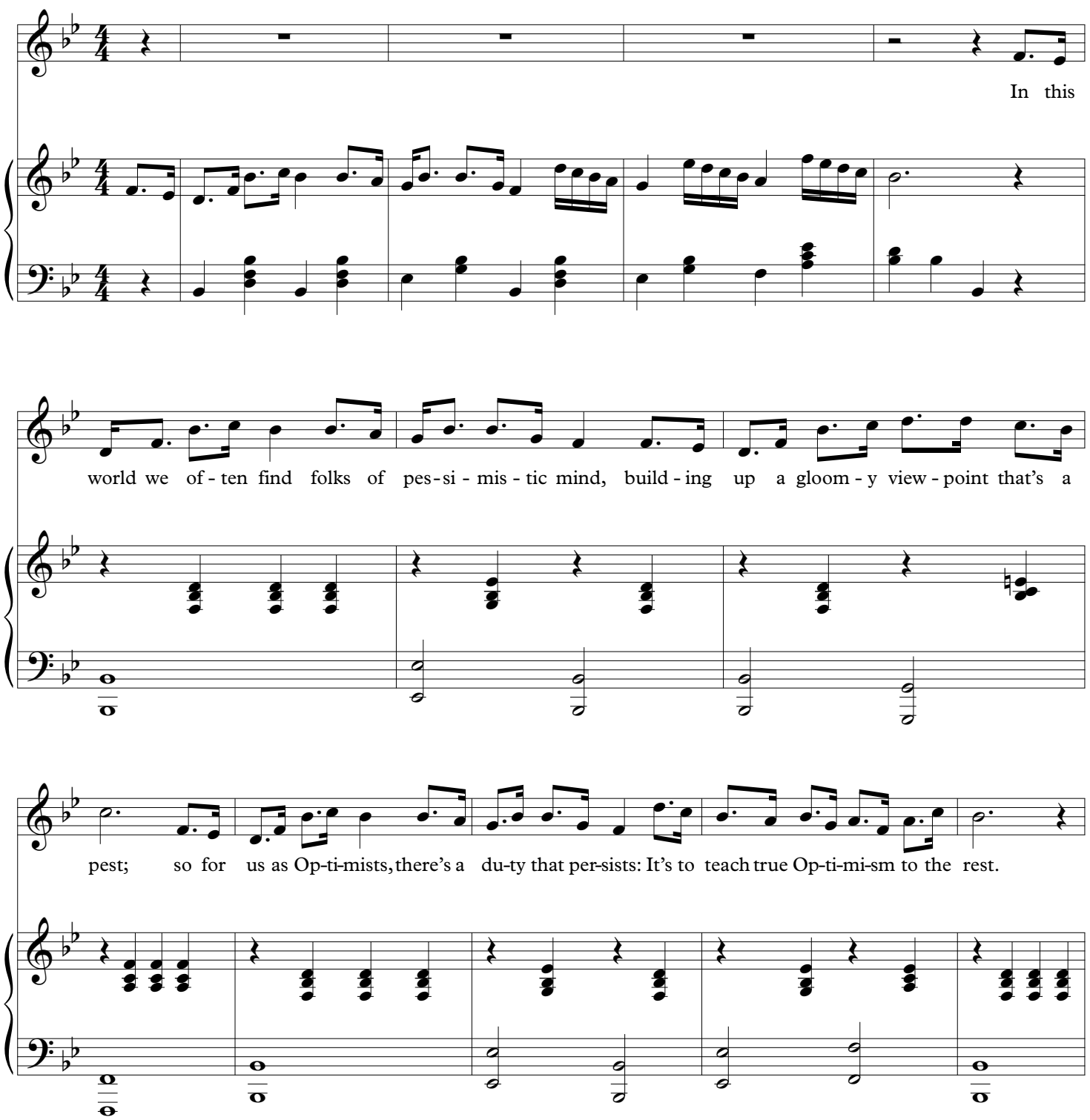
Smile! Smile! Smile!

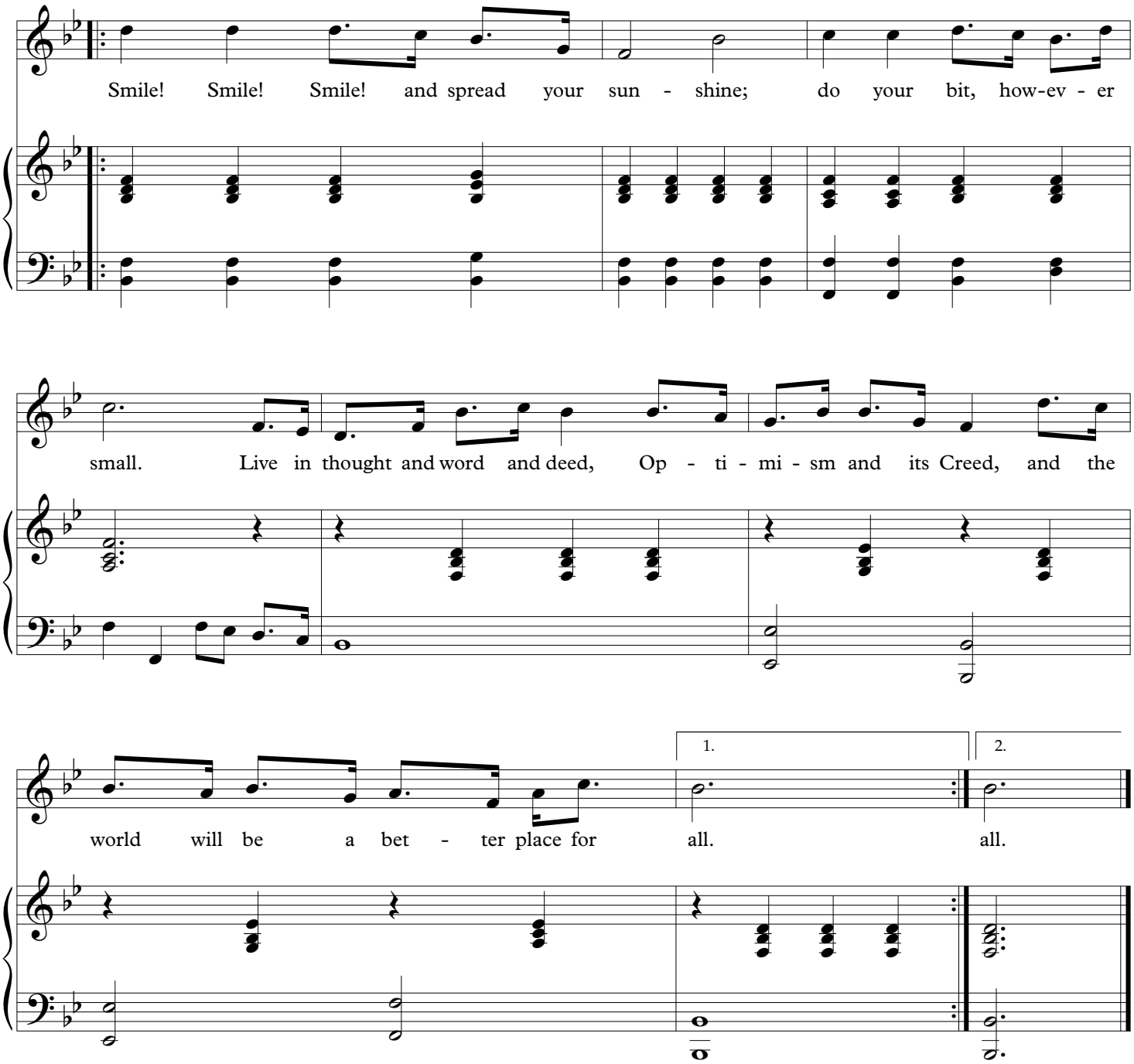
Roy L. Nicholson

Tune: Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!

George Root
(1864)

Tempo di marcia



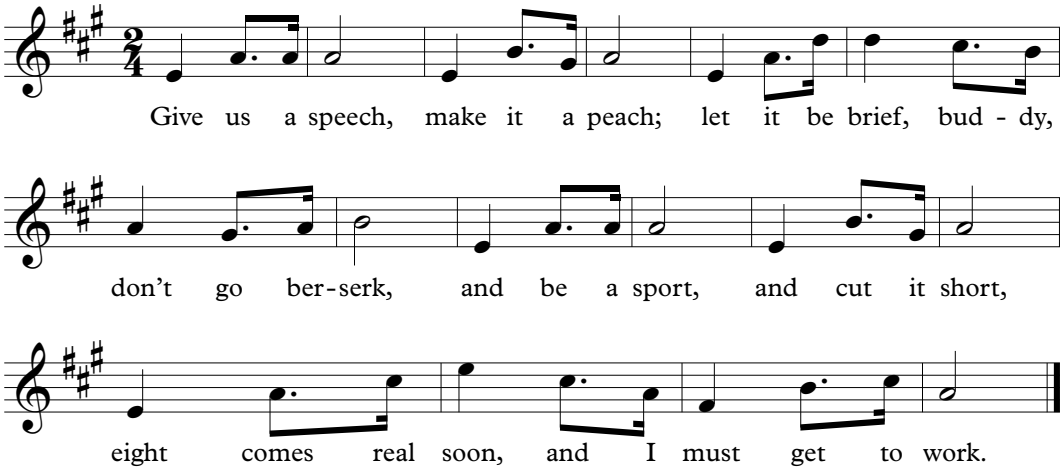

Smile! Smile! Smile! and spread your sun - shine; do your bit, how-ev - er
small. Live in thought and word and deed, Op - ti - mi - sm and its Creed, and the
world will be a bet - ter place for all. all.
1.
2.

25

Give Us a Speech

Tune: "Bridal Chorus from Lohengrin"

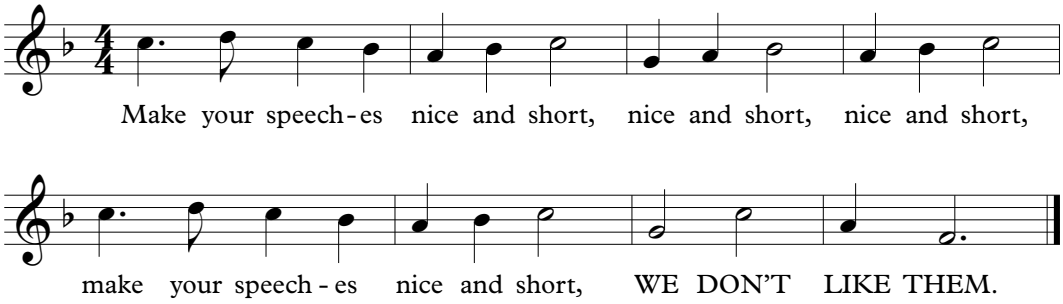
Richard Wagner
(1850)



26

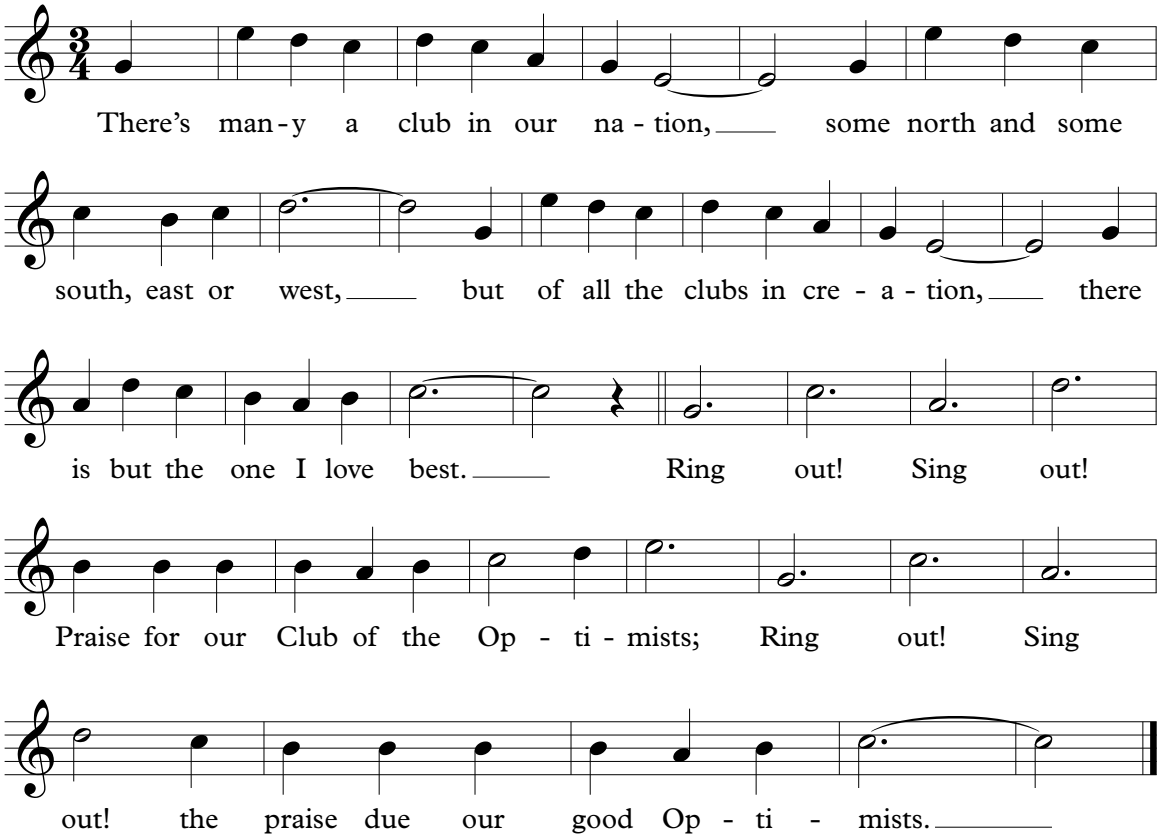
Speeches

Tune: "London Bridge Is Falling Down"



Praise to Our Club

Roy L. Nicholson | Tune: My Bonnie | **Scottish Folk Song**

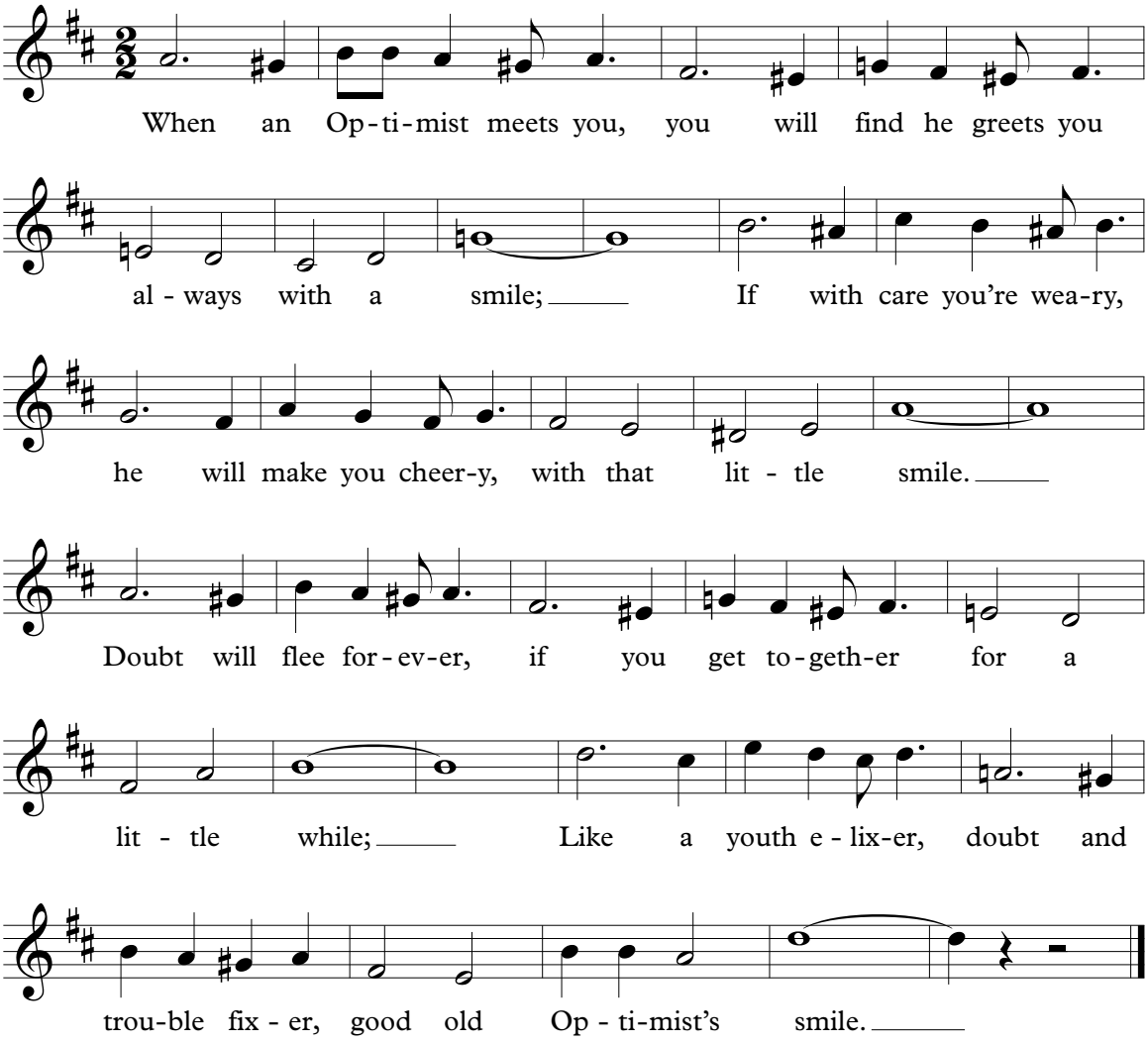


Good Old Optimist's Smile

Tune: Leave Me With a Smile

(Accompaniment on 23)

Moderato

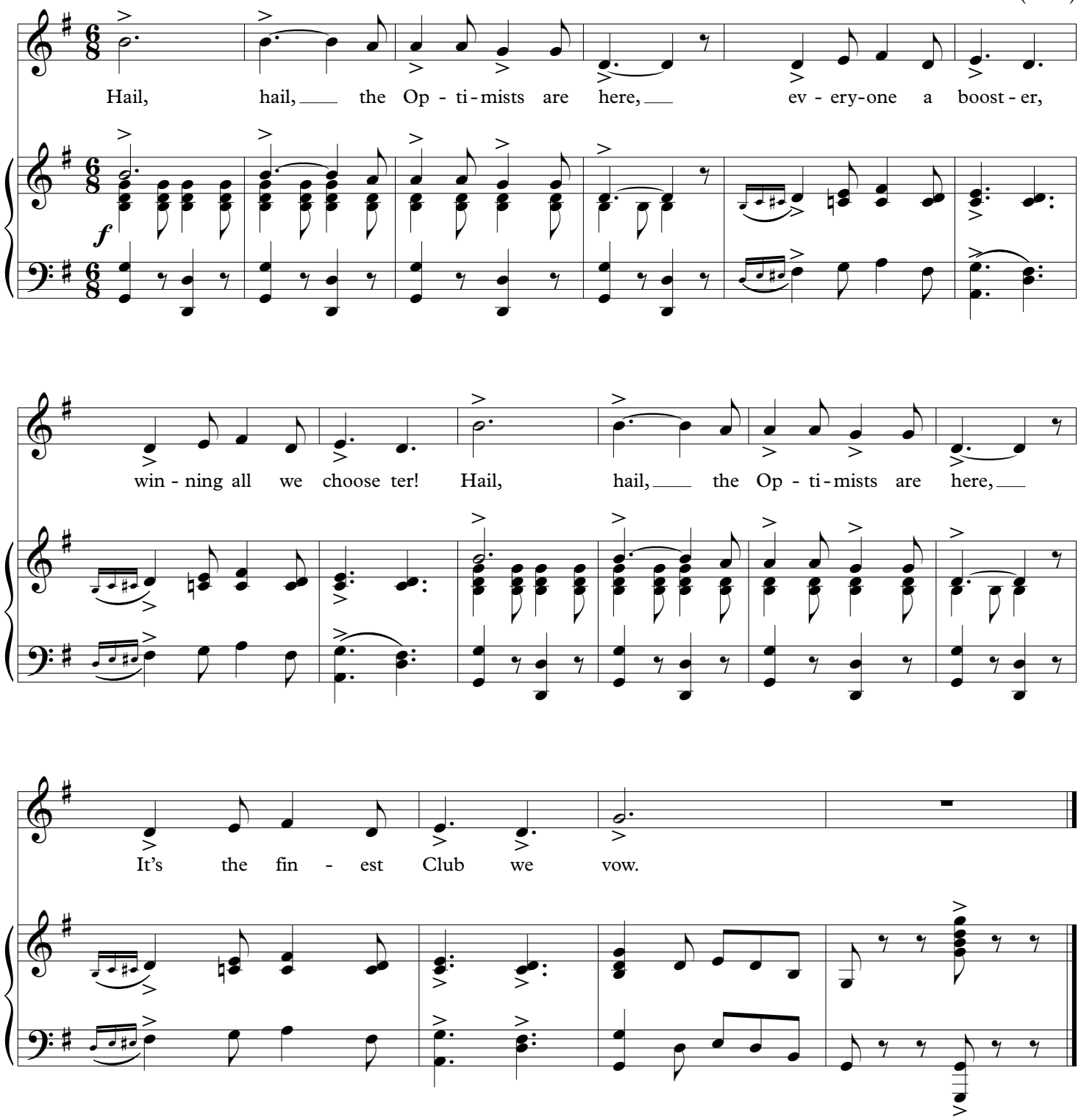


Hail, Hail, the Optimists Are Here

Tune: Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here

Roy L. Nicholson

Theodore Morse
Arthur Sullivan
(1917)



Hunting Troubles

Tune: I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles

George Lau

John William Kellette
(1919)

Valse lente

Opt. duet

Melody

Stop for-ev-er hunt - ing trou-bles, give the "An-cient Grouch" a

twist; they come too high, mer-cy me! Oh my!

They can-not make us quick or spry. For - tune's al - ways

smil - ing, this we now in - sist;

stop for - ev - er hunt - ing trou - bles: Be a

reg'-lar "Op - ti - mist." mist."

1.

2.

If It's Gloomy

Tune: Little Annie Rooney

Roy L. Nicholson

Michael Nolan
(1925)

Waltz tempo

If it's gloom - y, we don't care, for to - mor-row

may be fair; we keep smil-ing, cheer-ful

in heart, and with Op - ti - mi-sm, we do our part.

The Star-Spangled Banner

Francis Scott Key

John Stafford Smith

O say! can you see, by the dawn's ear - ly light, what so proud - ly we hailed at the
On the shore, dim - ly seen thro' the mists of the deep, where the foe's haugh - ty host in dread
Oh, thus be it ev - er when free - men shall stand be - tween their lov'd homes and the

twi - light's last gleam - ing? Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the pe - ri - lous fight, o'er the
si - lence re - pos - es, what is that which the breeze, o'er the tow - er - ing steep, as it
war's de - so - la - tion! Blest with vic - t'ry and peace, may the heav'n-res-cued land praise the

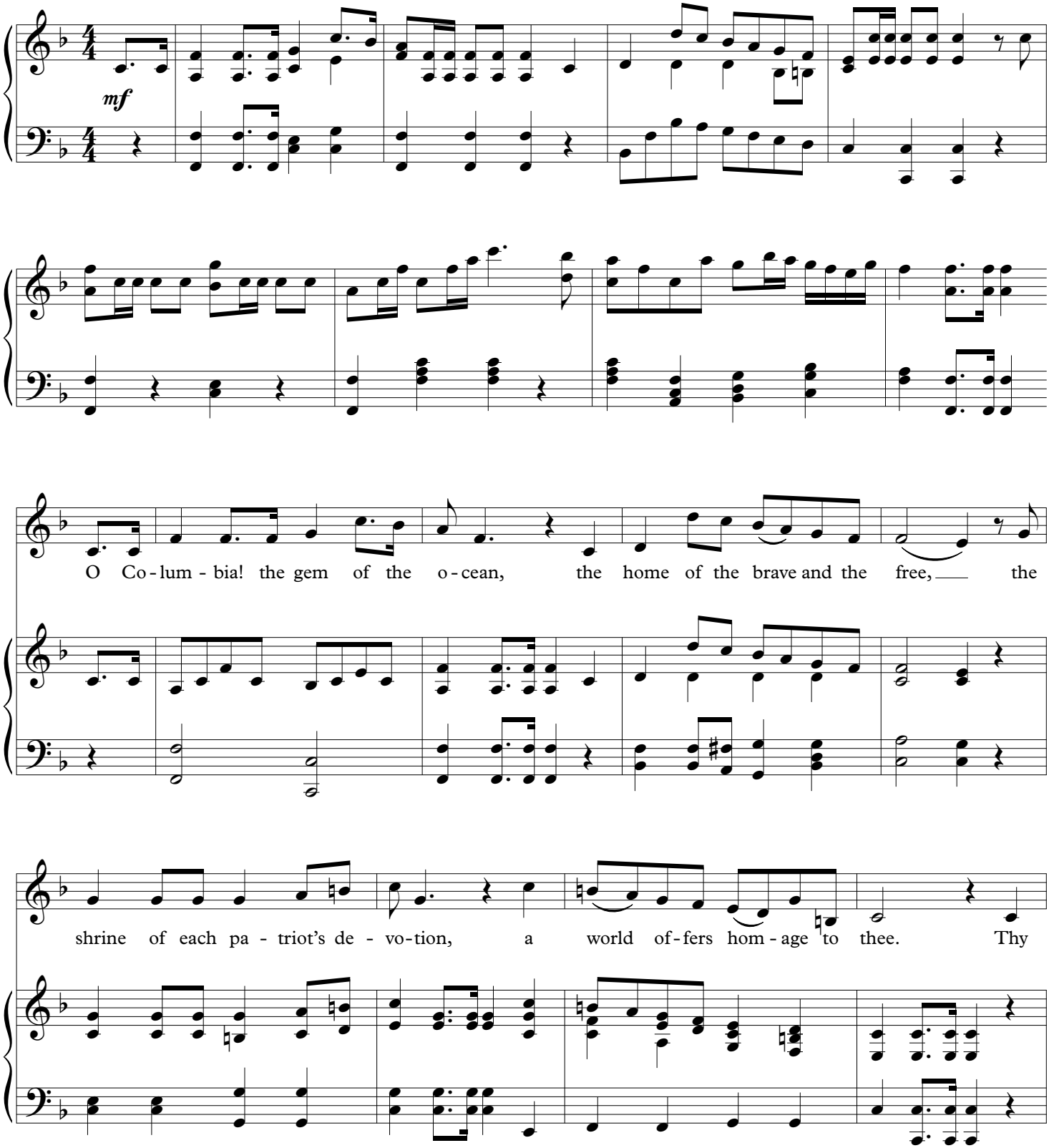
ram - parts we watch'd, were so gal - lant - ly stream - ing? And the rock - et's red glare, the bombs
fit - ful - ly blows, half con - ceals, half dis - clos - es? Now it catch - es the gleam of the
Pow'r that hath made and pre - served us a na - tion! Then con - quer we must, when our

burst - ing in air, gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there. O, say, does that
morn-ing's first beam, in full glo - ry re - flect - ed now shines on the stream; 'Tis the Star-span-gled
cause it is just, And this be our mot - to: "In God is our trust!" And the Star-span-gled

Star-span-gled Ban - ner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?
Ban - ner, oh, long may it wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!
Ban - ner in tri - umph shall wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Columbia, The Gem of the Ocean

Thomas A'Becket, Sr.
(1843)



man - dates make he - roes as - sem - ble, when Lib - er - ty's form stands in view, thy

ban-ners make ty - ran-ny trem-ble, three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue. Three

cheers for theRed, White, and Blue, three cheers for theRed, White, and Blue, thy

ban-ners make ty - ran-ny trem-ble, three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue.

America

Samuel Francis Smith

Henry Carey(?)

With a moderately quick motion

mf

My coun - try, 'tis of thee, sweet land of lib - er - ty,
My na - tive coun - try, thee, land of the no - be free,
Let mu - sic swell the breeze, and ring from all the trees
Our fa - ther's God, to thee, Au - thor of lib - er - ty,

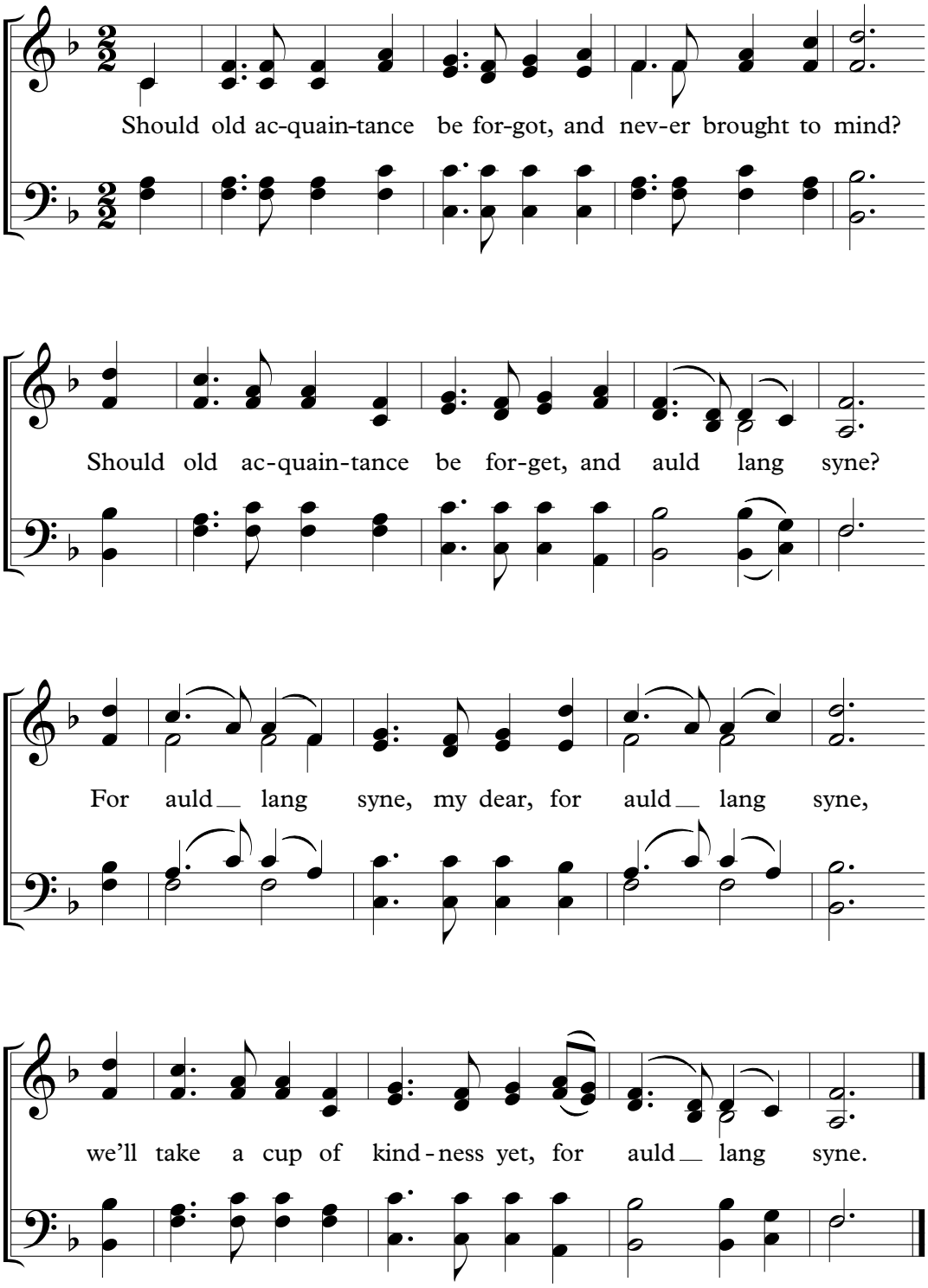
of thee I sing. Land where my fa - thers died! Land of the
thy name I love. I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and
sweet free - dom's song. Let mor - tal tongues a - wake; let all that
to thee we sing. Long may our land be bright with free - dom's

ff

pil - grims' pride! From ev - ery moun - tain side, let free - dom ring!
tem - pled hills; my heart with rap - ture thrills like that a - bove.
breathe par - take; let rocks their si - lence break, the sound pro - long.
ho - ly light; pro - tect us by thy might great God, our King!

Auld Lang Syne

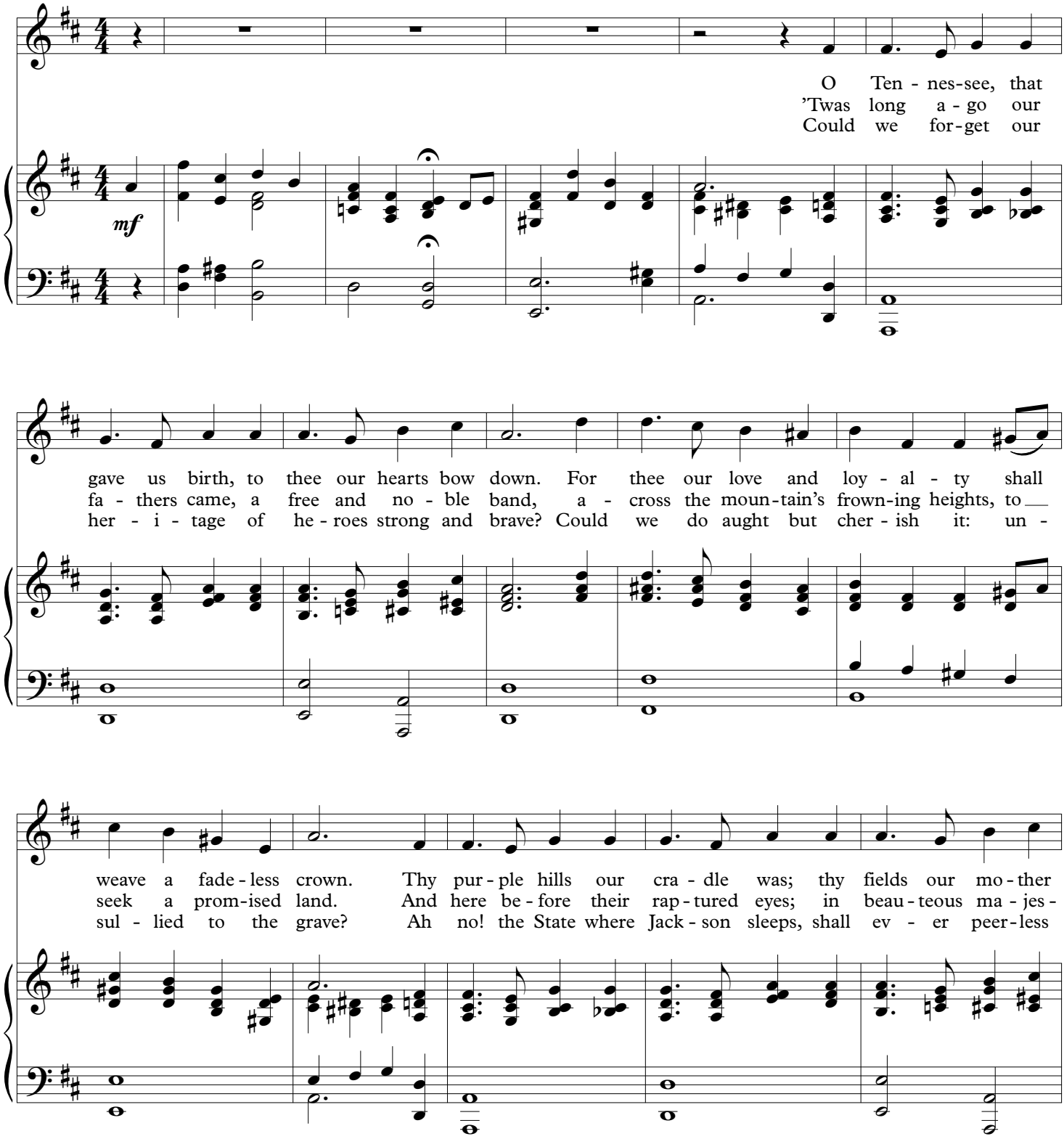
Robert Burns

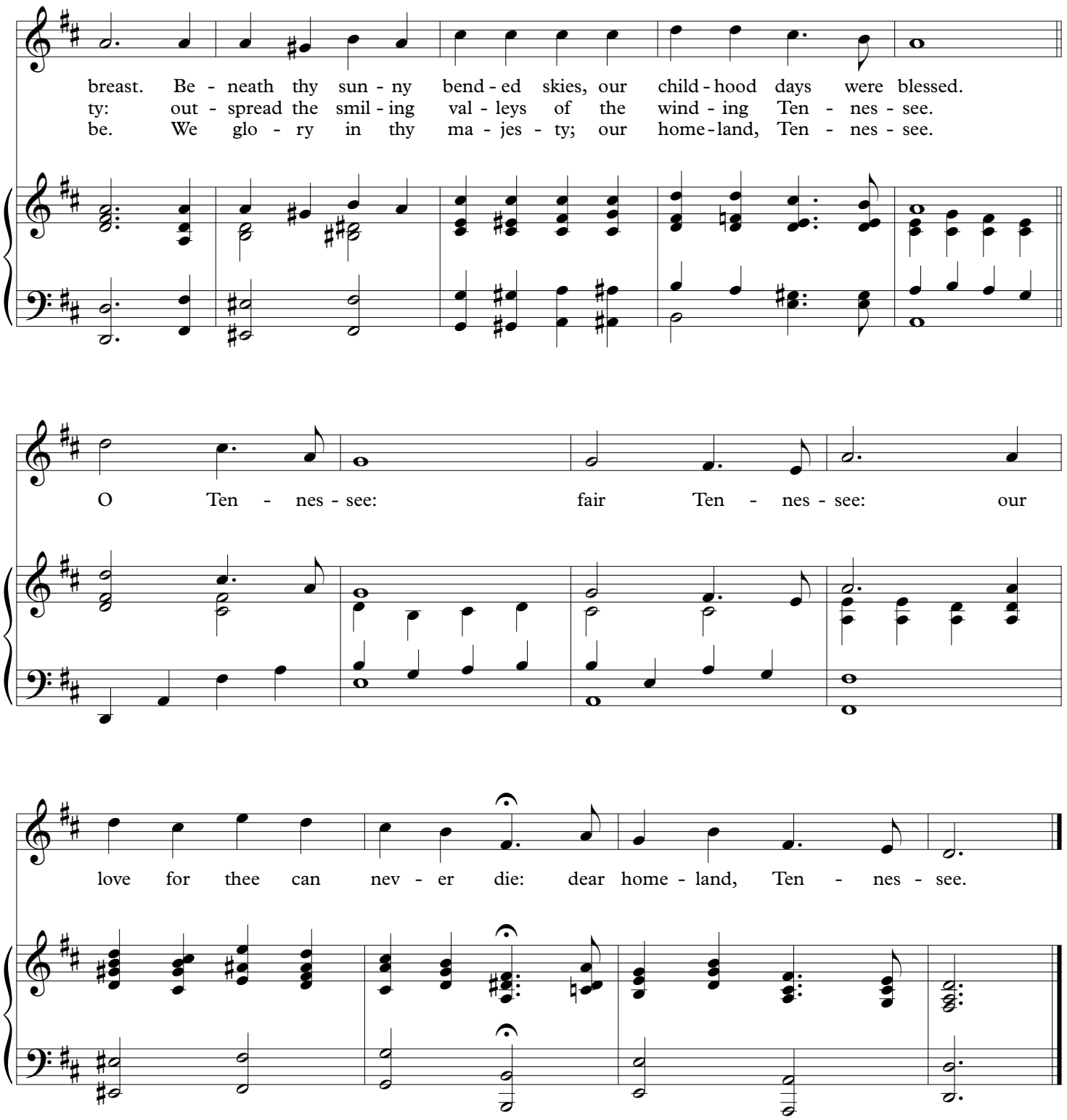


My Homeland Tennessee

Nell Grayson Taylor

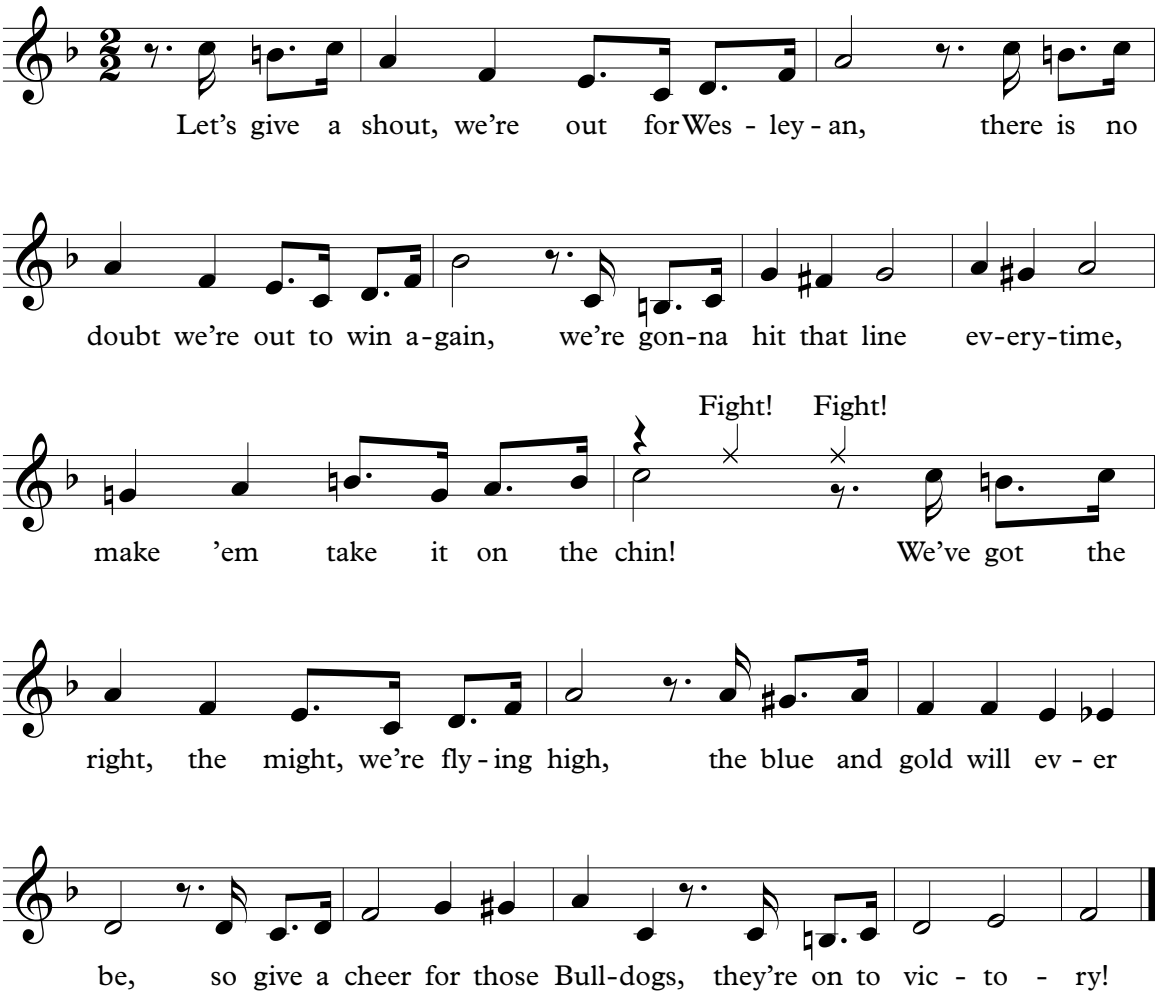
Roy Lamont Smith
(1925)




breast. Be - neath thy sun - ny bend - ed skies, our child - hood days were blessed.
ty: out - spread the smil - ing val - leys of the wind - ing Ten - nes - see.
be. We glo - ry in thy ma - jes - ty; our home - land, Ten - nes - see.
O Ten - nes - see: fair Ten - nes - see: our
love for thee can nev - er die: dear home - land, Ten - nes - see.

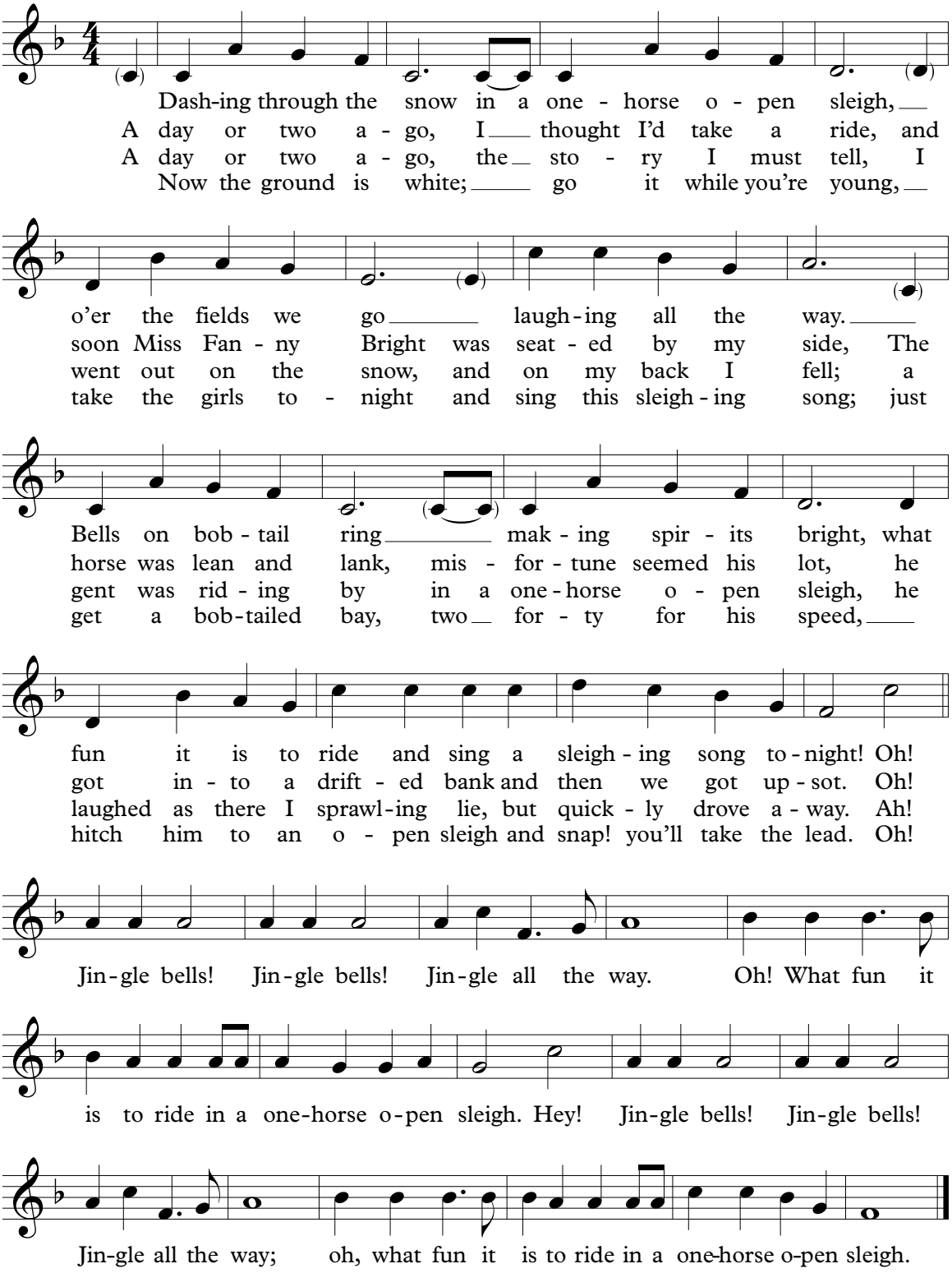
Tennessee Wesleyan Fight Song

With canine gusto



Jingle Bells

James Lord Pierpont
(1857)



The Optimist Creed

Promise Yourself—

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.