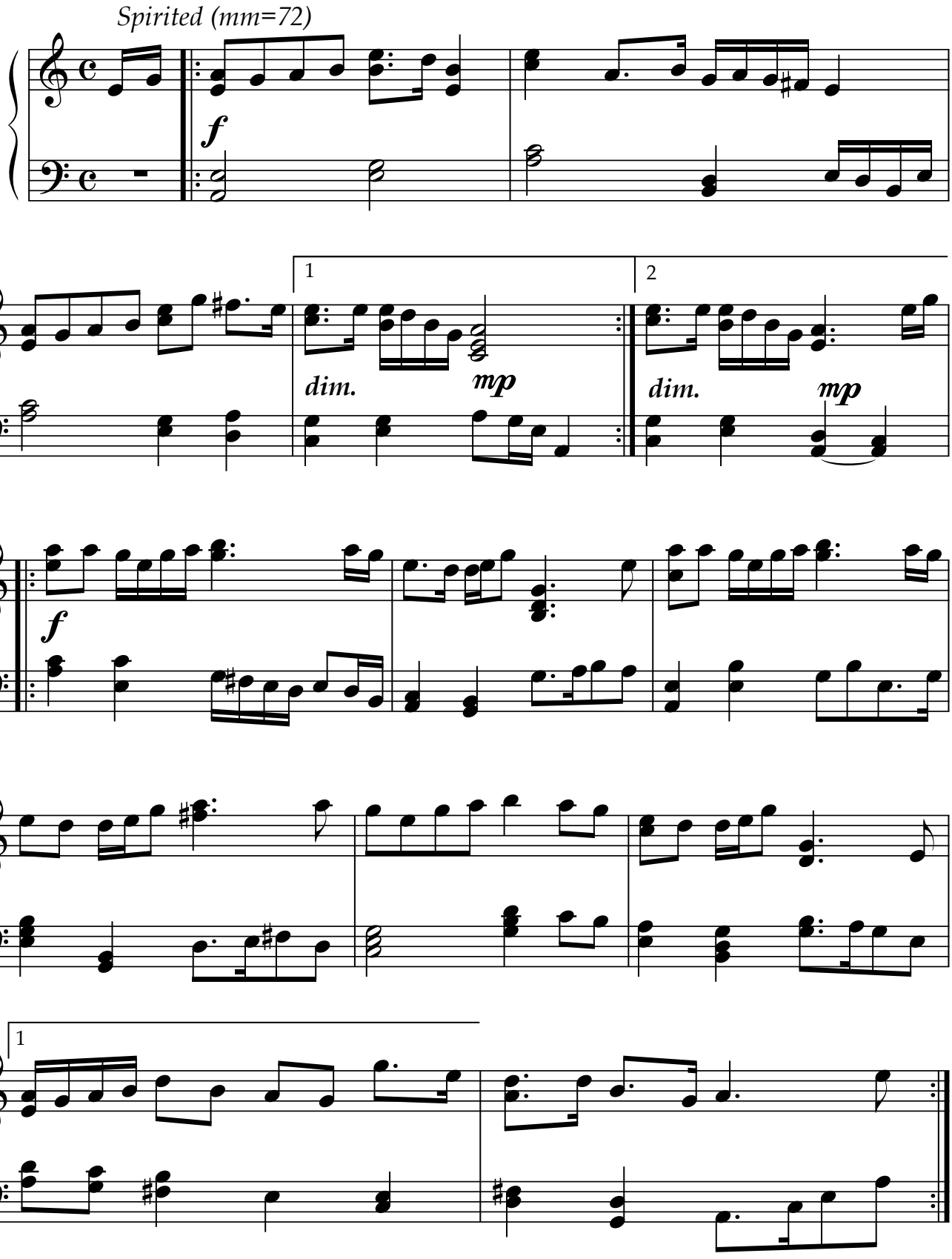
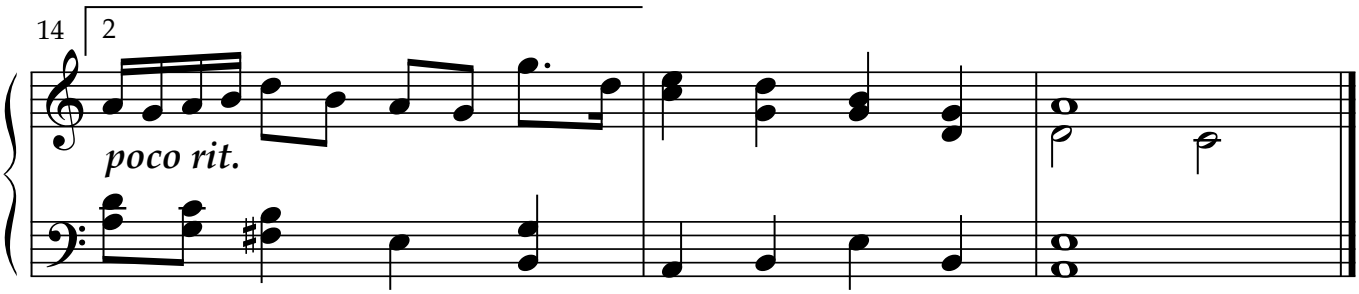
LORD MAYO

David Murphy (17th C.)



LORD MAYO p.2



The composer of this stately piece is said to be one “David Murphy” (“David” - not a common Irish first name even today - is probably meant as a close English approximation to the Gaelic “Dáithi”).

The story goes that the tune was composed by Mr. Murphy to get himself back into the good graces of his patron, the eponymous Lord Mayo, although the circumstances that led to the ill-feeling have not been recorded. We know little else about Mr. Murphy. However, Chief O’Neill in *Irish Minstrels and Musicians* claims that another harper named Thady Keenan in fact composed the tune, leaving us to surmise that Murphy might have been responsible for the lyrics. These consist of fulsome praise of Lord Mayo, perhaps a little hard to take for us today but not untypical of the time. An example: “Mayo! Whose valour sweeps the field / And swells the trump of fame / May Heav’n’s high power the champion shield / And deathless be his name! / Of glory’s sons, thou glorious heir / Thou branch of honor’s root”, etc etc etc ad nauseam.

Fortunately for Mr. Murphy and whatever remained of his self-respect, the Lord apparently relented, with the result that the friendship of nobleman and harper was restored.