LEARN THE PIANO

with

CLIFFORD EVANS

A.R.A.M.; L.R.A.M.; Cert. Ed.

Clifford Evans was born in the U.K. and began learning the piano at the age of 5. As a teenager he played in public, and competition successes followed, with prizes at the Birmingham Conservatoire and the Royal Academy of Music. Whilst a student there he won the Beethoven prize and several others, culminating in a British Council scholarship for advanced piano studies at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire 1971-73. As a professional musician, he has taught in many schools and music colleges, instructing children, students, adult beginners, music teachers and professional performers with equal dedication and enthusiasm. He gains much pleasure from helping people achieve that which they think impossible. The teaching has been combined with many well-received piano recitals in the U.K., France and Austria. Recitals at London's South Bank were highly praised by the music critics of the Guardian, Daily Telegraph and Sunday Times newspapers, also the magazine, 'Music & Musicians'. In 1984 Clifford Evans was appointed Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in recognition of his services to music. Since 1987 he has concentrated mainly on teaching and developing a highly efficient learning method for adult beginners, for whom he created and produced the piano course, "Learn the Piano with Clifford Evans".

Thankyou to my wife Maryvonne for her wisdom, criticism, patience and encouragement. Thankyou to my family; Etienne, Anne-Sophie and Steve, for providing criticism, inspiration and motivation. Thankyou also to all my pupils past and present, who have given me much encouragement.

C. E. 1998

Contents

Finding your way around: *The order is according to the video, not as in the book. Some sections exist only in the video and therefore don't have page numbers. Relevant video access references in hours, minutes and seconds are included in brackets. If you coincide your VCR zero counter with the tone at the beginning of each video, this will help you find the correct place on the tape, but remember that video machines do vary in their accuracy. On the main title of each video section, the relevant page number of the book is shown for your easy access.*

Video no. 1

Posture (1m. 18s.)
Keyboard (3m. 34s.)
Staves & Clefs (8m. 12s.)
4 Golden rules of practising
5 Right hand notes (9m 53s.)
6 Middle C position notes (15m. 33s.)
6 Left hand notes (16m. 51s.)
Fingers and thumbs (19m. 28s.)
6 Middle C position (22m. 15s.)
6 Exercise 1 (22m. 33s.)
7 Exercise 2 (25m. 8s.)
7 Exercise 3 (26m. 59s.)
8 Exercise 4 (29m.)
8-9 Cockles and Mussels (30m. 54s.)
9 Twinkle, twinkle little star (33m. 26s.)
10 Good King Wenceslas (35m. 47s.)
11 Bobby Shafto (38m. 37s.)
12 Note values (41m. 25s.)
13 Bars, barlines & time sigs (43m. 1s.)
12 Some typical rhythms (44m. 17s.)
Metronome (46m. 39s.)
13 Exercise 5 (48m. 30s.)
14 Study 1 (51m. 7s.)
14 Study 2 (53m. 53s.)
14 Musorgsky theme (55m. 20s.)
13 Rests (56m. 27s.)
15 Whistling tune (Ex 6) (58m. 20s.)
16 Wandering song (1h. 1m. 18s.)
17 Lightly row (1h. 4m. 3s.)
18 More left hand notes (1h. 8m. 1s.)
19 Exercises C position (1h. 14m. 6s.)
19 Exercise 7 (1h. 15m. 46s.)
19 Exercise 8 (1h. 16m. 47s.)
19 Exercise 9 (1h. 17m. 50s.)
19 Exercise 10 (1h. 18m. 38s.)
20 Twopenny rice (1h. 19m. 20s.)
21 Study 3 (1h. 21m. 37s.)
22 Jingle bells (1h. 23m.)
23 Scales (1h. 24m. 55s.)
24 Eighth notes/quavers (1h. 30m. 58s.)
25 Study 4 (1h. 33m. 27s.)
26 Boston (1h. 35m. 59s.)

Video no. 1 continued

27 London Bridge (1h. 38m. 45s.)
Keysignatures (1h. 42m. 16s.)
28 Exercises in G (1h. 43m. 15s.)
28 Exercise 11 (1h. 44m. 10s.)
28 Exercise 12 (1h. 45m. 1s.)
28 Exercise 13 (1h. 45m. 42s.)
28 Exercise 14 (1h. 46m. 40s.)
23 Scale in G major (1h. 47m. 18s.)
29 Mozart theme (1h. 48m. 56s.)
30 Dvorak theme (1h. 52m. 36s.)

Video no. 2

Accidentals (1m. 17s.)
31 Musette by J.S.Bach (2m. 34s.)
32 Exercises in F position (7m. 47s.)
23 Scale in F major (11m. 43s.)
33 Italian musical terms
34 Drink to me only (13m. 43s.)
35 Alouette (the lark) (18m. 46s.)
36 J'ai du bon tabac (22m. 23s.)
37 Ledger lines (25m. 33s.)
38 Chords (27m. 41s.)
38 Broken chords (35m. 48s.)
39 Study 5 (38m. 57s.)
40 Maria zu lieben (41m)
41 Study 6 (44m. 2s.)
42 Ten green bottles (47m. 21s.)
43 More time signatures (51m. 48s.)
43 Grouping of notes (52m. 43s.)
44 Jolly good fellow (54m. 23s.)
33 Pedals (58m. 17s.)
45 Sixteenth notes (1h. 1m. 48s)
46 Highland bagpipes (1h. 3m. 59s)
49 Auld lang syne (1h. 15m. 17s)
50 Dominant 7th chords (1h. 20m. 13s)
51 Study 7 (1h. 22m. 22s)
52 Study 8 (1h. 27m. 2s)
53 Exercises in A minor (1h. 29m. 10s)
53 Scale in A minor (1h. 31m. 40s)
54 Robin ddiog (1h. 35m. 29s)
55 Greensleeves (1h. 39m. 1s)
56 Ave Maria (1h. 46m. 5s)

Golden rules of practising

1 Firstly cut your nails so that they don't protrude beyond the pad of the finger: that's essential to enable you to play with curved fingers.

2 Practise slowly, with thoughtful repetition of short sections, each no longer than 2-4 bars, making sure that you overlap the sections by at least one beat.

3 Pay careful attention to fingering. The notes should be played with the same fingers every time you play a piece of music.

4 Do a great deal of "hands separate" practice before putting hands together.....then continue practising hands separately, mixing this with "hands together" practice for thorough progress.

5 Don't rush the tempo as soon as you can play a piece of music, but keep it steady. Even if the direction is "Allegro", save that for later when you have more control of the fingers and notes.

6 If you have any pain in the arms, hands, wrists or fingers, then stop immediately and have a rest. Pain can be caused by tension, and injury can result, so relax and don't get tight when you're playing the piano: this way you can avoid both injury and harsh tone.

7 Try not to look at your hands whilst reading the music, except when finding the initial hand position. Avoid looking down and up from the music to the keyboard and back again. If you do have to look down for the occasional change of hand position or jump, try not to lose your place in the music.

8 Spend at least 5 minutes per day learning to recognise firstly right-hand, then left-hand notes. Practise writing them down on manuscript paper, test yourself by naming them, and finally play them on the piano. This will help you to progress more fluently by improving your reading of music.

9 Practise in short, regular sessions of about half an hour at least once a day. Regular sessions produce the best progress, so the secret is "little and often". Long sessions are not the answer, since concentration tends to deteriorate after 30-40 minutes.

10 Resist the temptation to rush ahead to the next task before you have achieved a good polished result. Proceed slowly and thoroughly in order to progress further.

11 Constantly revise old material, perhaps devoting one practice session a week to this, eventually building up your own collection of favourite pieces to play for relaxation or to entertain your friends.

12 If you feel that incorrect habits are developing, then go back and repeat earlier material whilst being as self-critical as possible.

Right hand notes

Study these notes until you know them well

Spend at least five minutes per day doing this

Try naming the notes without using FACE or EGBD

R.H. spaces
(right hand)

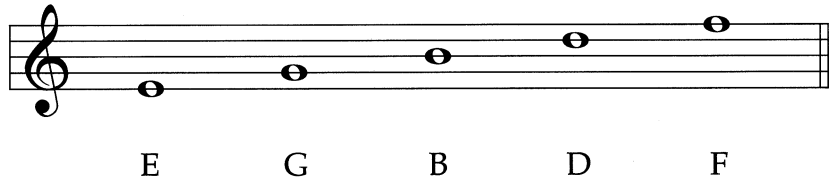
1

Write, name and play

2

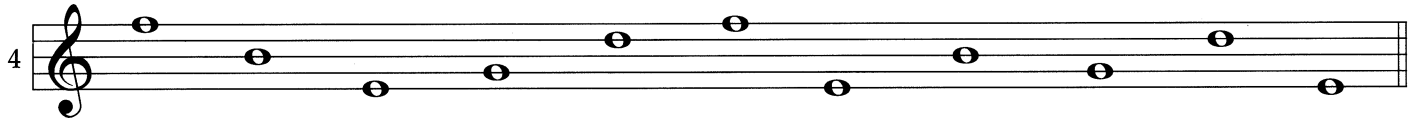
R.H. lines

3



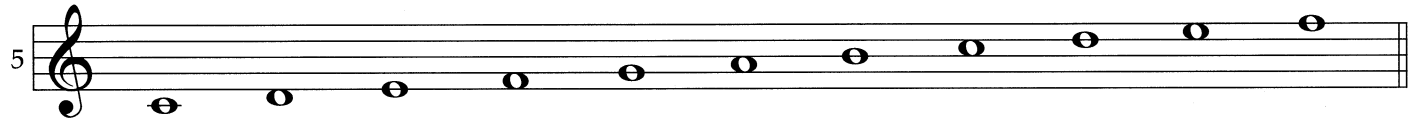
Write, name and play

4



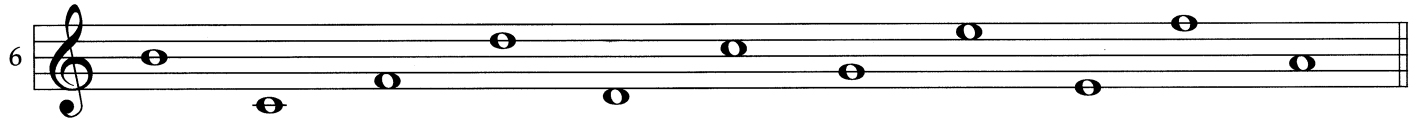
R.H. lines and spaces

5



Write, name and play

6



Middle C position notes

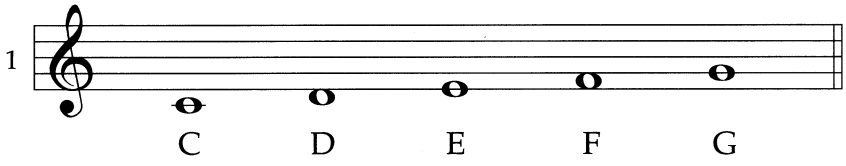
These are the most important notes for now

You may rely a little on fingering at first

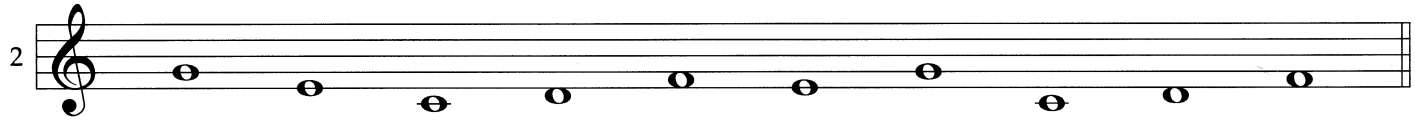
RH notes are easier than LH notes

Try to recognise notes quickly

5 R.H. notes

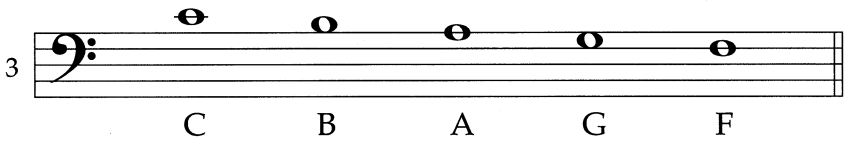


Write, name and play

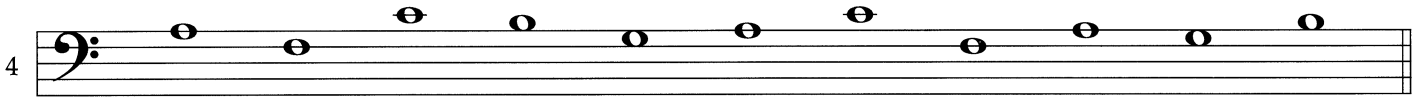


5 L.H. notes

(left hand)



Write, name and play



Exercise 1

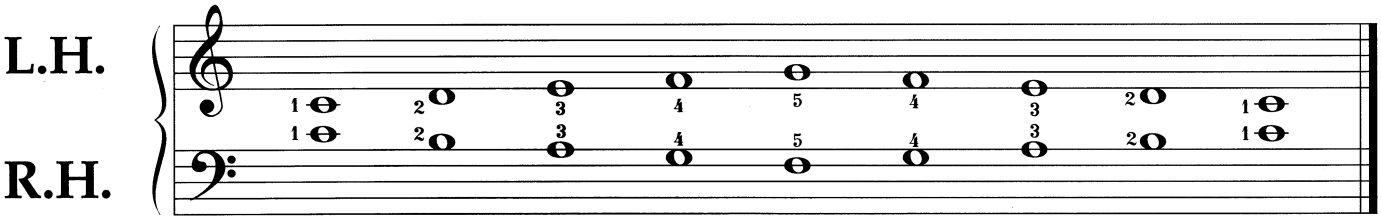
Practise slowly at first

Find the "middle C position"

Squeeze 4th & 5th fingers harder

Make notes same length and loudness

Practise hands separately before hands together



Exercises in middle C position

Change hands at diagonal lines

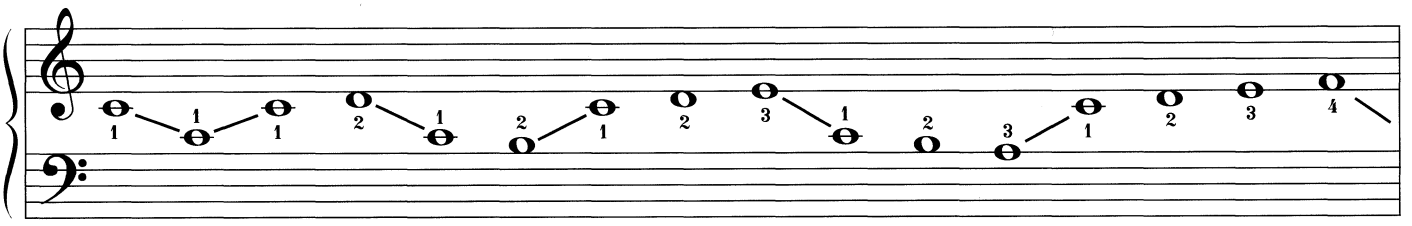
Listen to your sounds very carefully

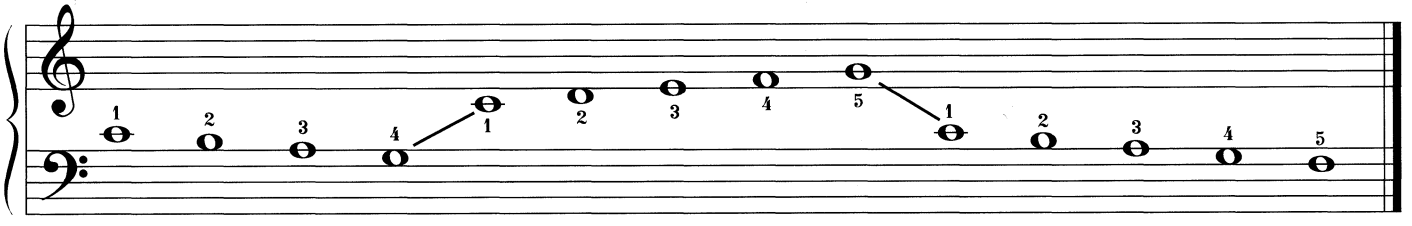
Play notes the same length and loudness

For a louder sound, squeeze finger harder

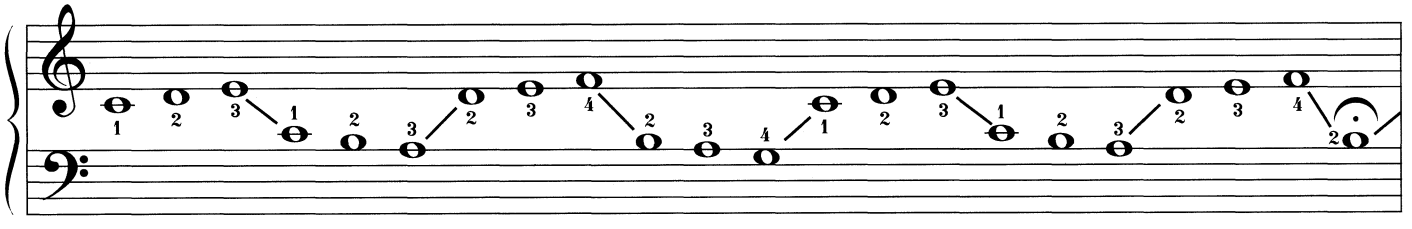
For a quieter sound, squeeze finger more gently

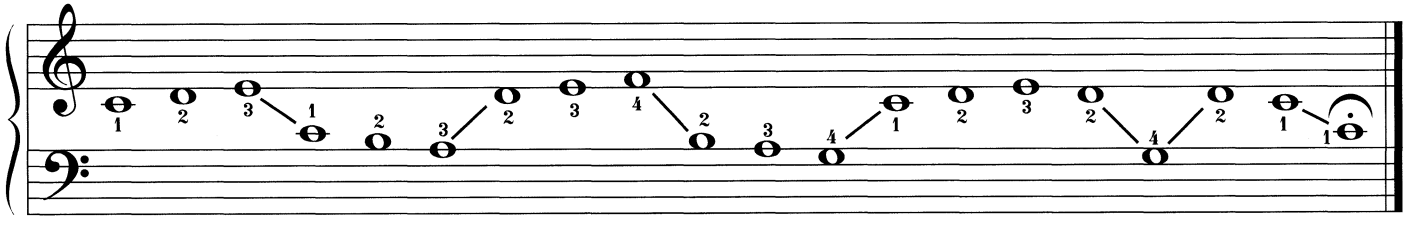
Ex. 2





Ex. 3





Don't rely completely on fingering

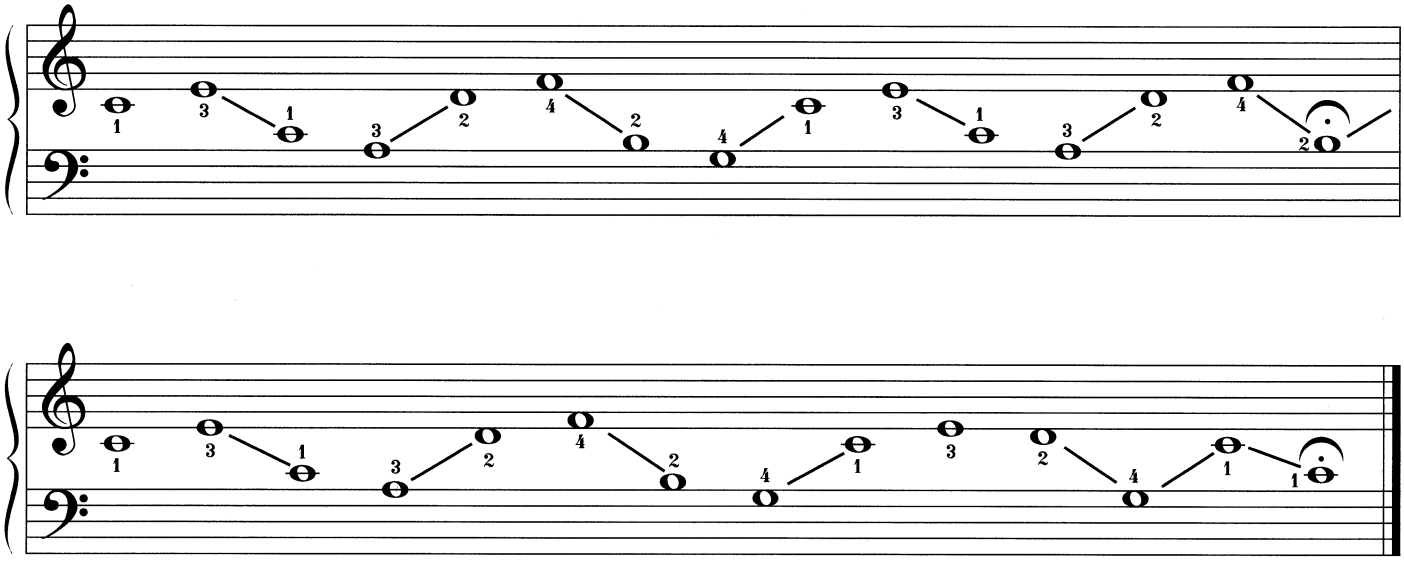
Practise naming notes before playing

The notes progress in intervals of a third

So remember to"miss out" a finger and a note

Don't overlap notes and play only one at a time

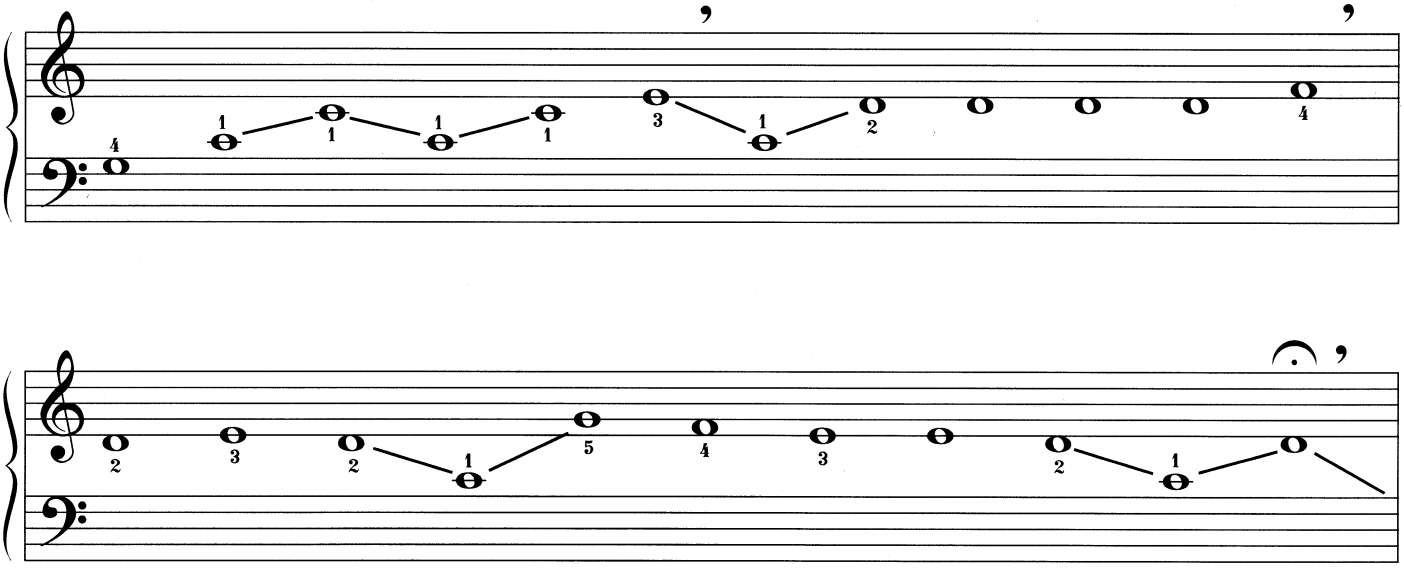
Ex. 4



Cockles and Mussels

Watch out for repeated notes

Lift the finger up before restriking the note



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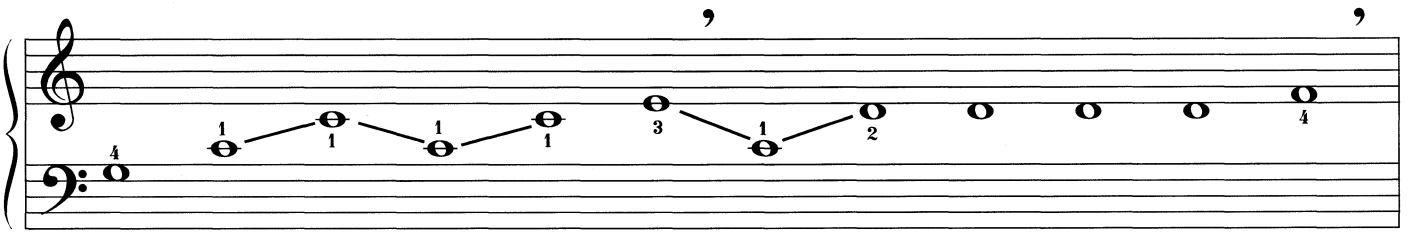
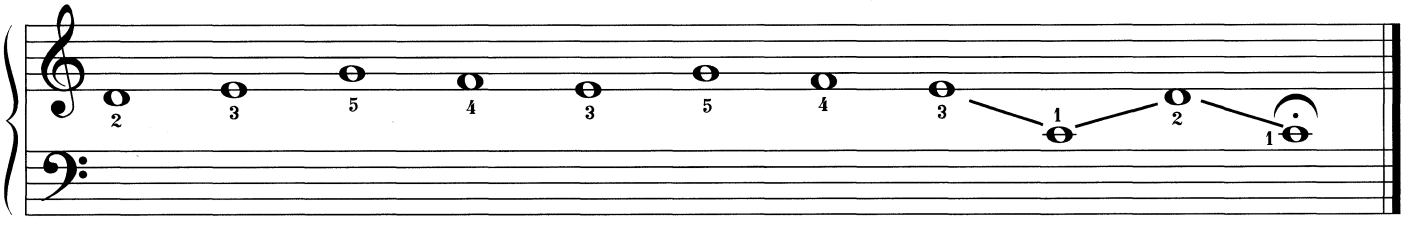




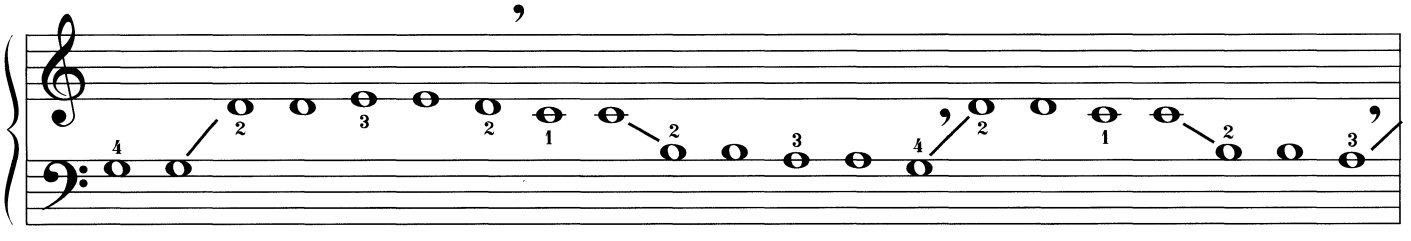
Twinkle, twinkle little star.

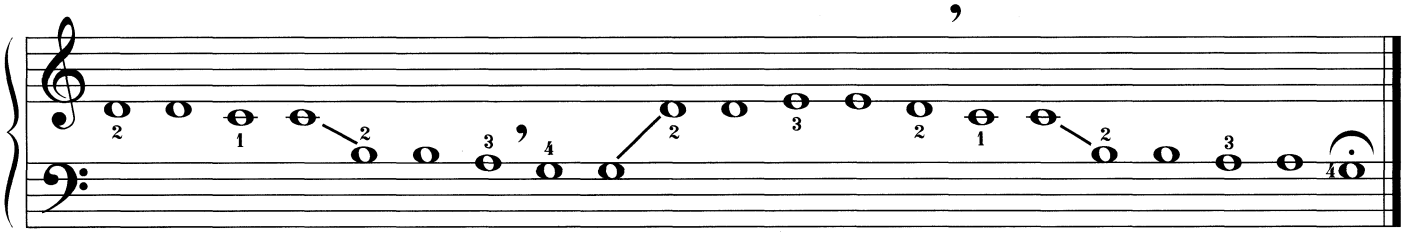
Watch out for repeated notes

Make a slight gap at the commas

Be sure to learn the left hand notes

Practise naming all the notes before playing





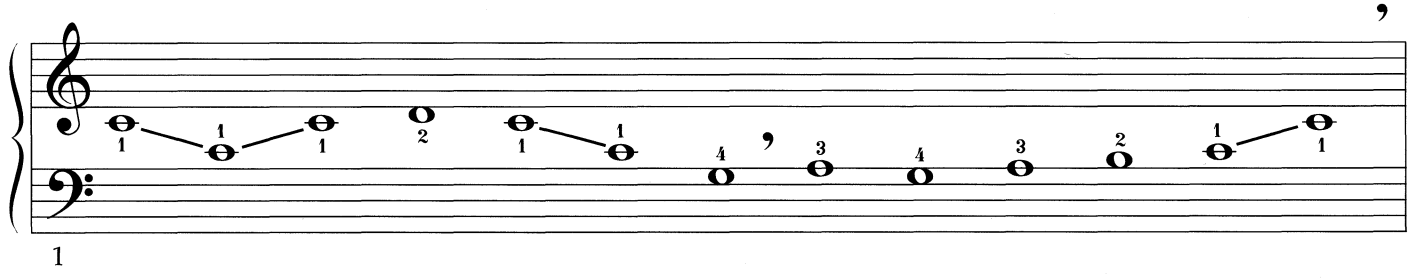
Good King Wenceslas

Make a slight break at the commas

Make the last 3 notes longer than usual

Make sure your LH fourth finger works well

Work the fingers by squeezing from the knuckle



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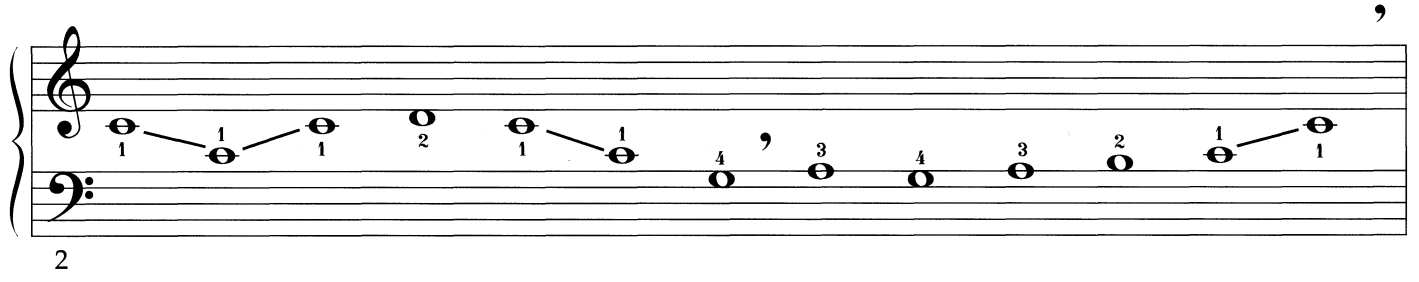

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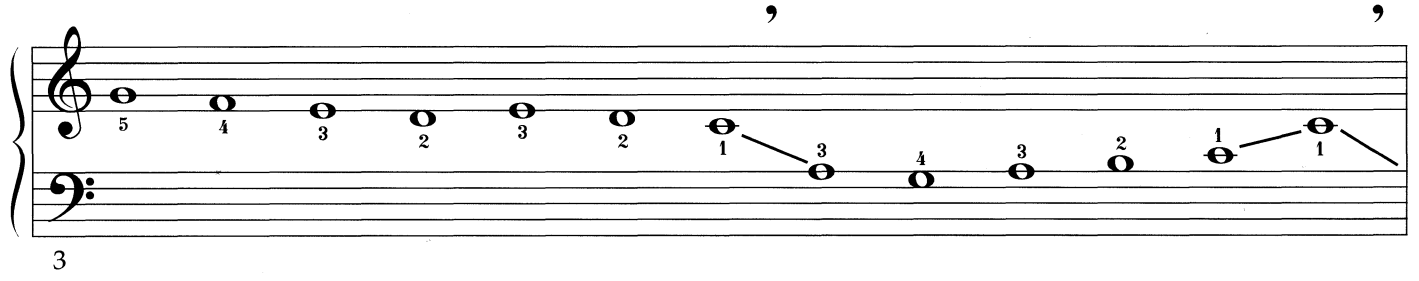

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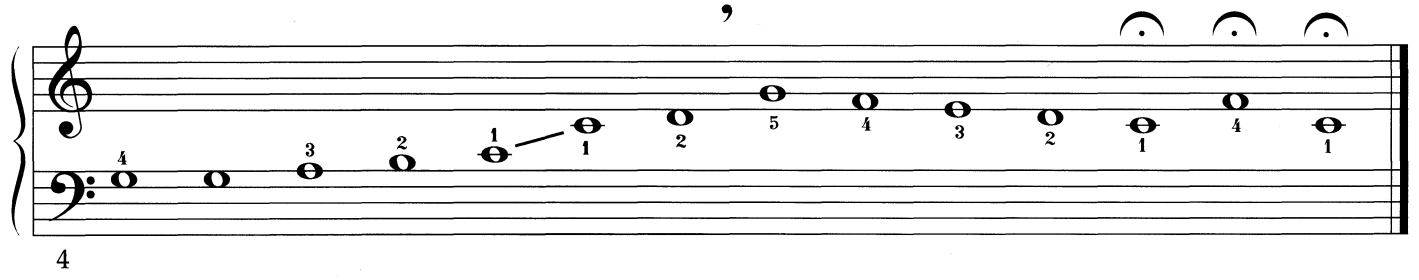


4

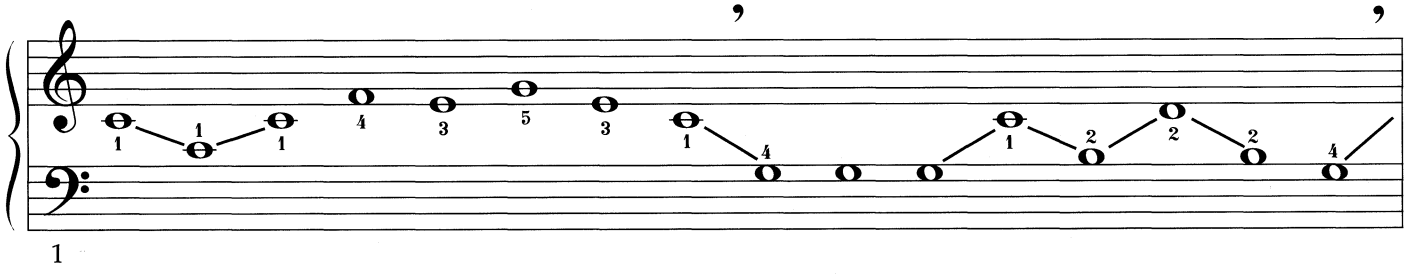
Bobby Shafto

The diagonal lines show where to change hands

Observe the pause mark on the last note

Make the repeated notes sound clearly

Make a small gap at each comma



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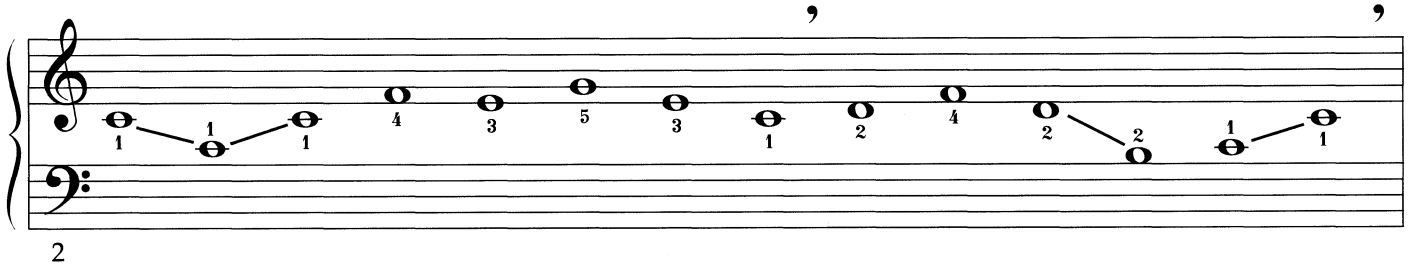

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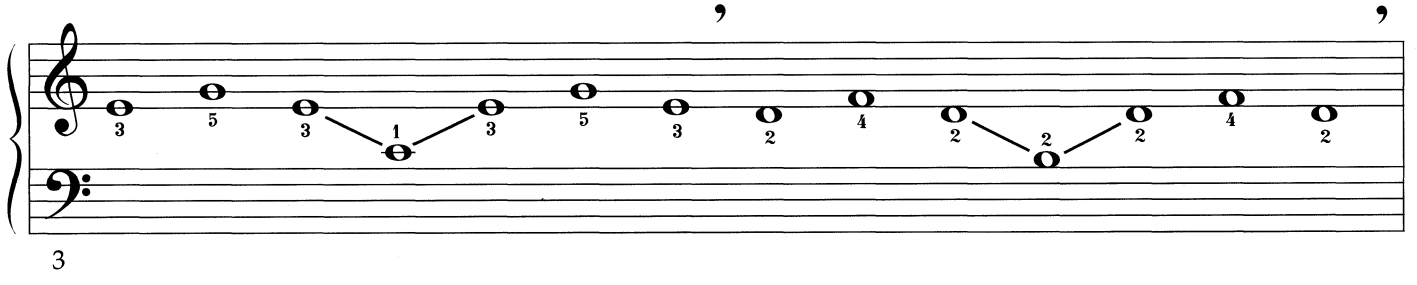

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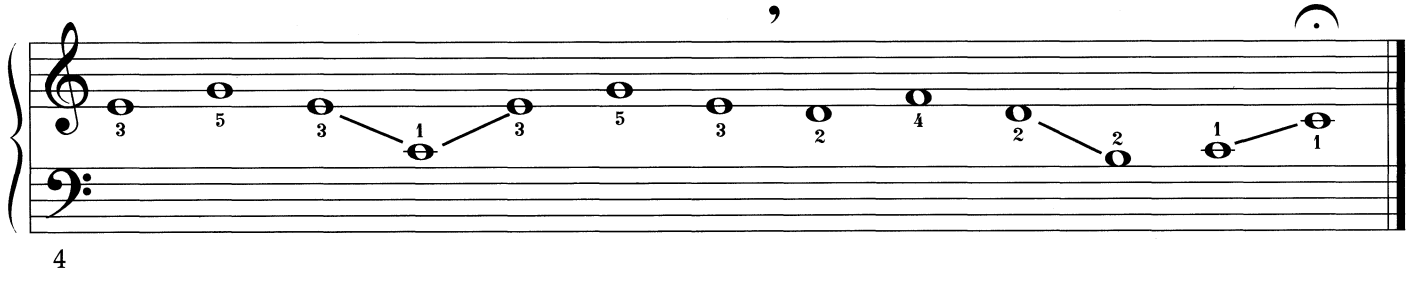


4

Note values

Example 1

A quarter note/crotchet lasts one beat

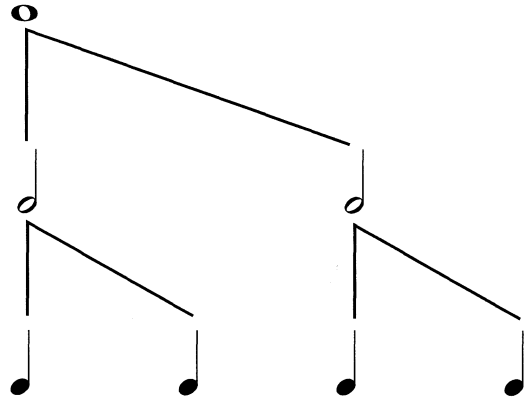
A half note/minim lasts two beats

A dotted half note/minim lasts 3 three beats

A whole note/semibreve lasts four beats

How they subdivide

Example 2



A whole note or semibreve

divided into two, makes...

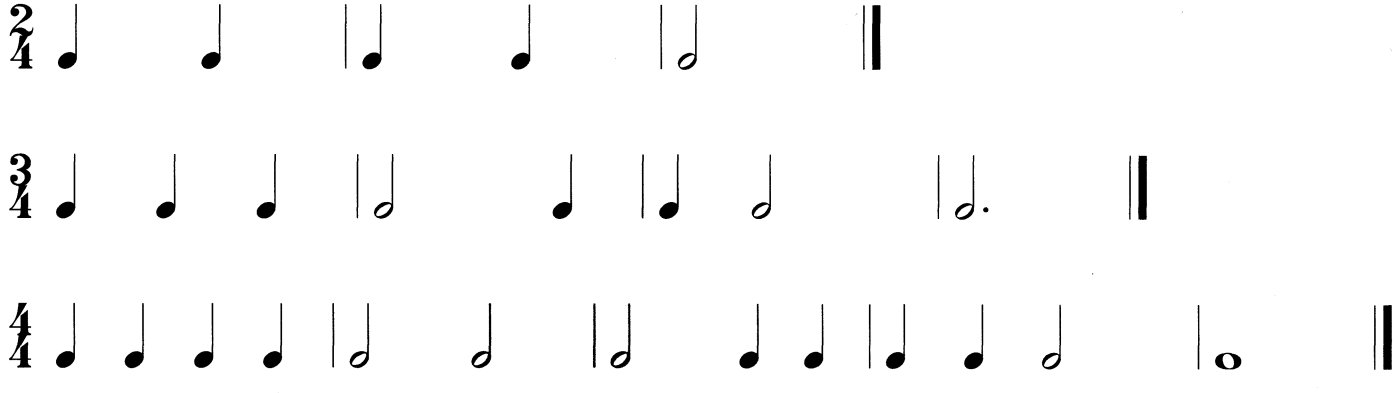
Two half notes or minims

each divided into two, make...

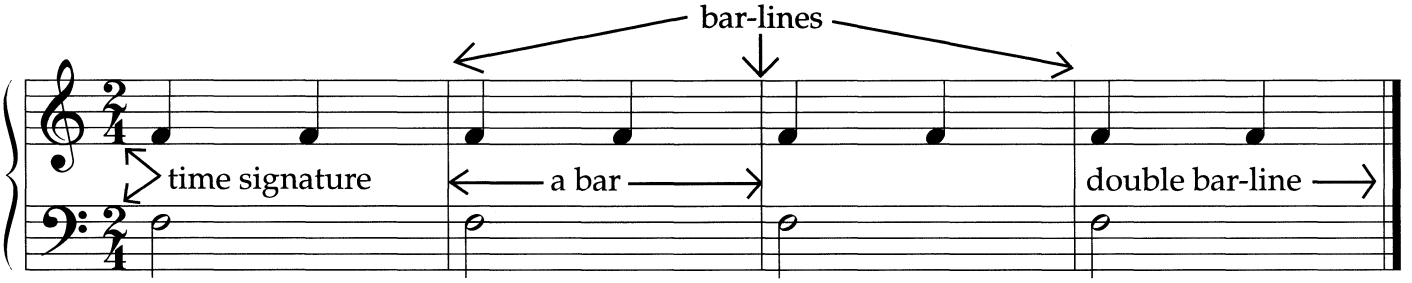
Four quarter notes or crotchets

Some typical rhythms

Example 3

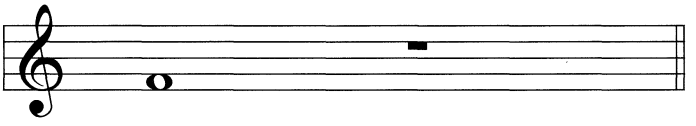


Bars, bar-lines & time signatures

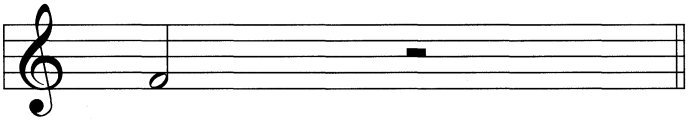


Rests

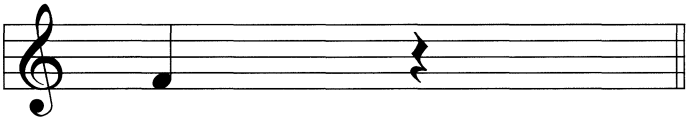
Whole note (semibreve) and rest
(also used for a whole bar's rest)



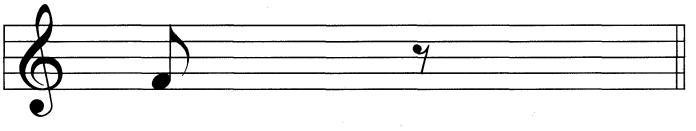
Half note (minim) and rest



Quarter note (crotchet) and rest

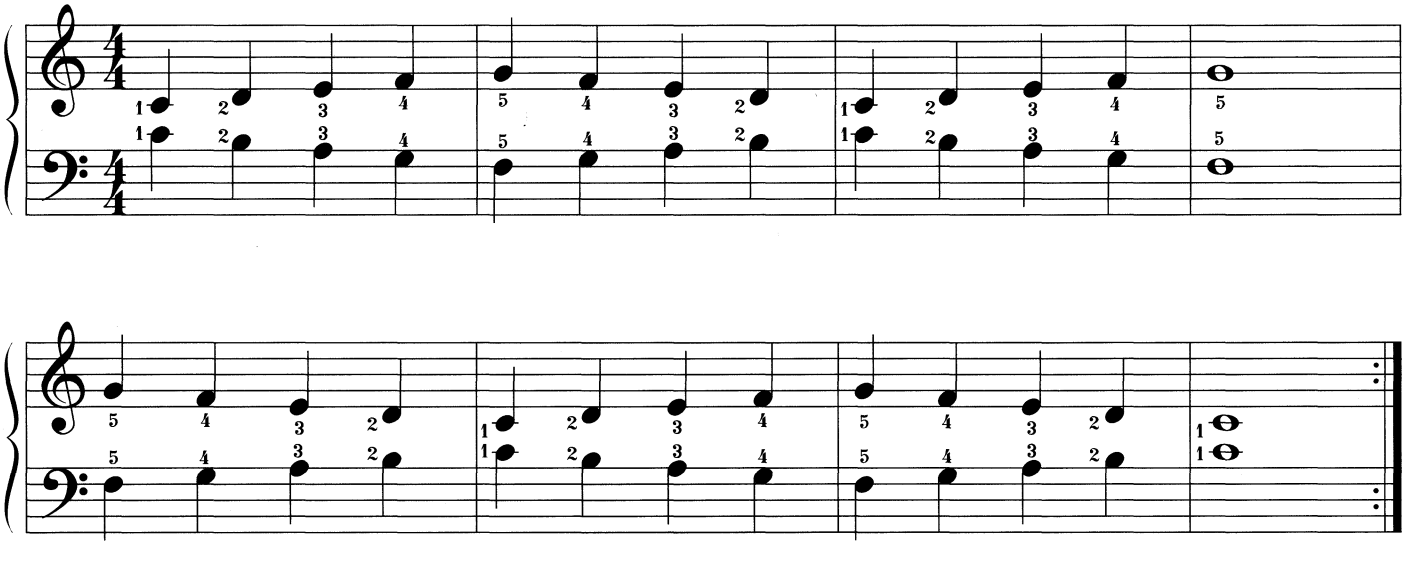


Eighth note (quaver) and rest



Middle C position

Ex. 5 ♩ = 100

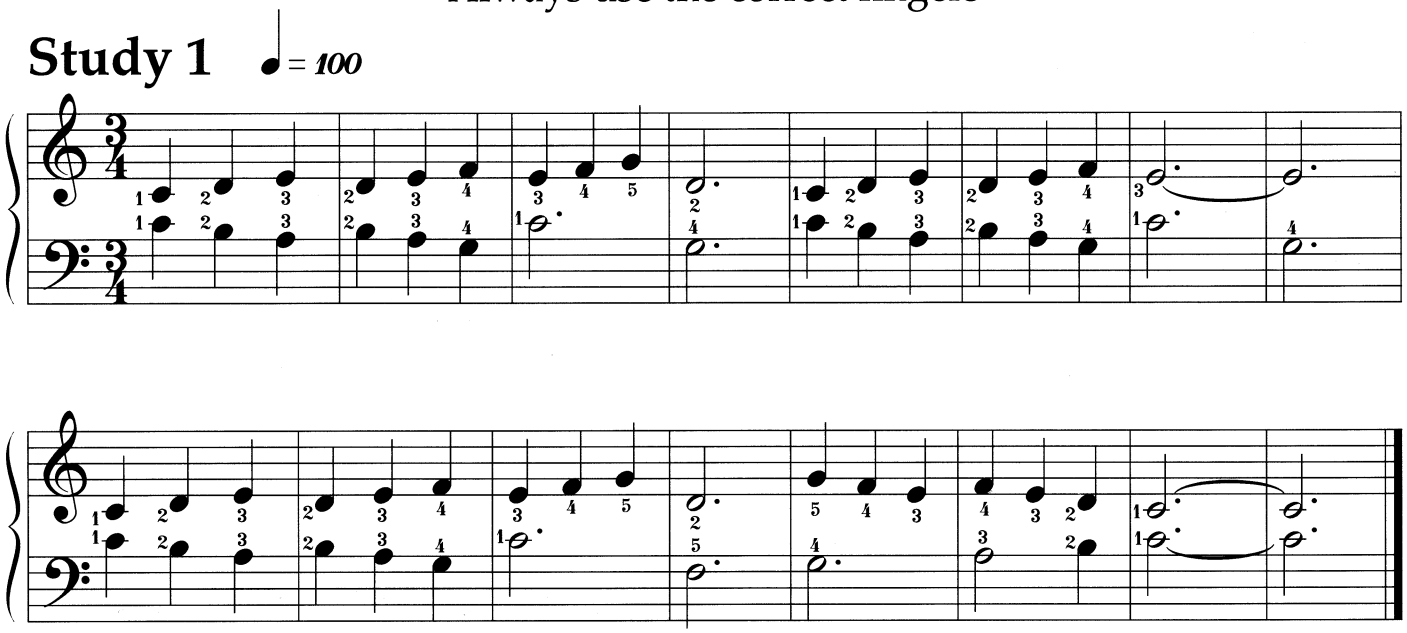


Studies 1 & 2

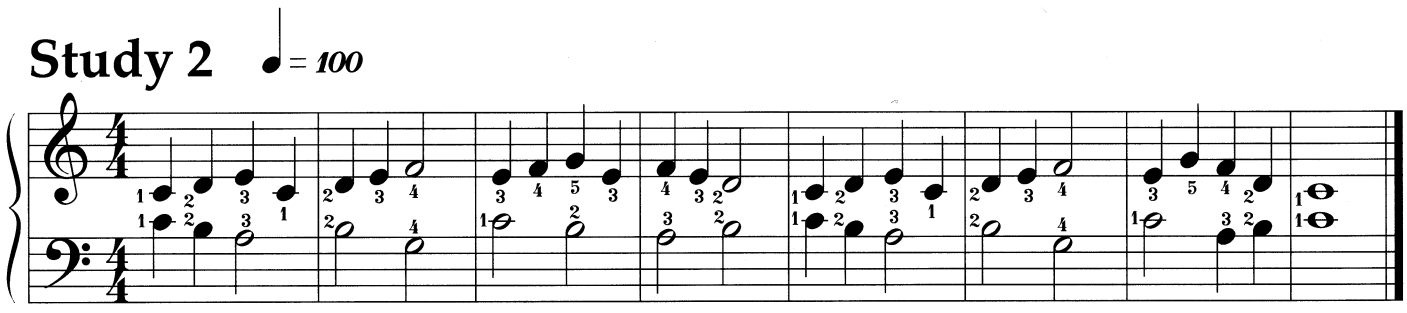
Observe the tied notes

Always use the correct fingers

Study 1



Study 2

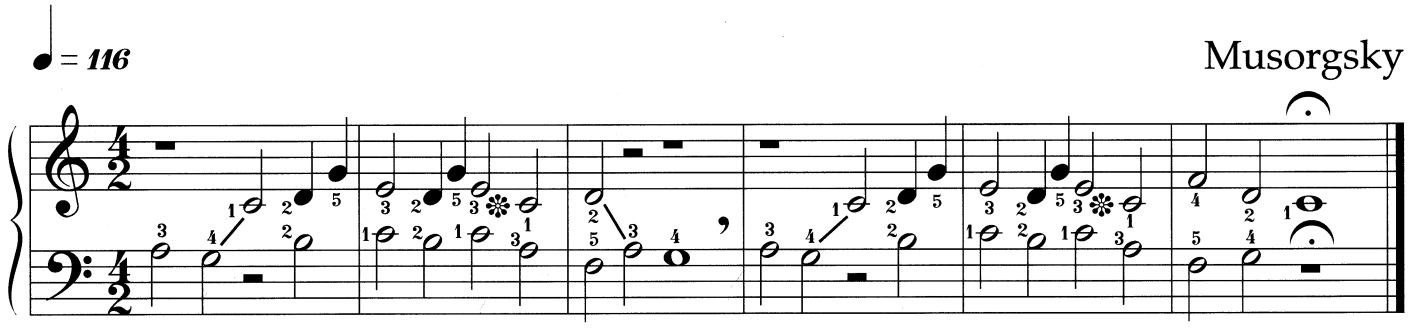


Promenade from 'Pictures at an Exhibition'

Join RH not LH notes at the asterisks

Observe the pause mark at the end

Watch out for the rests



Whistling Tune

(Exercise 6)

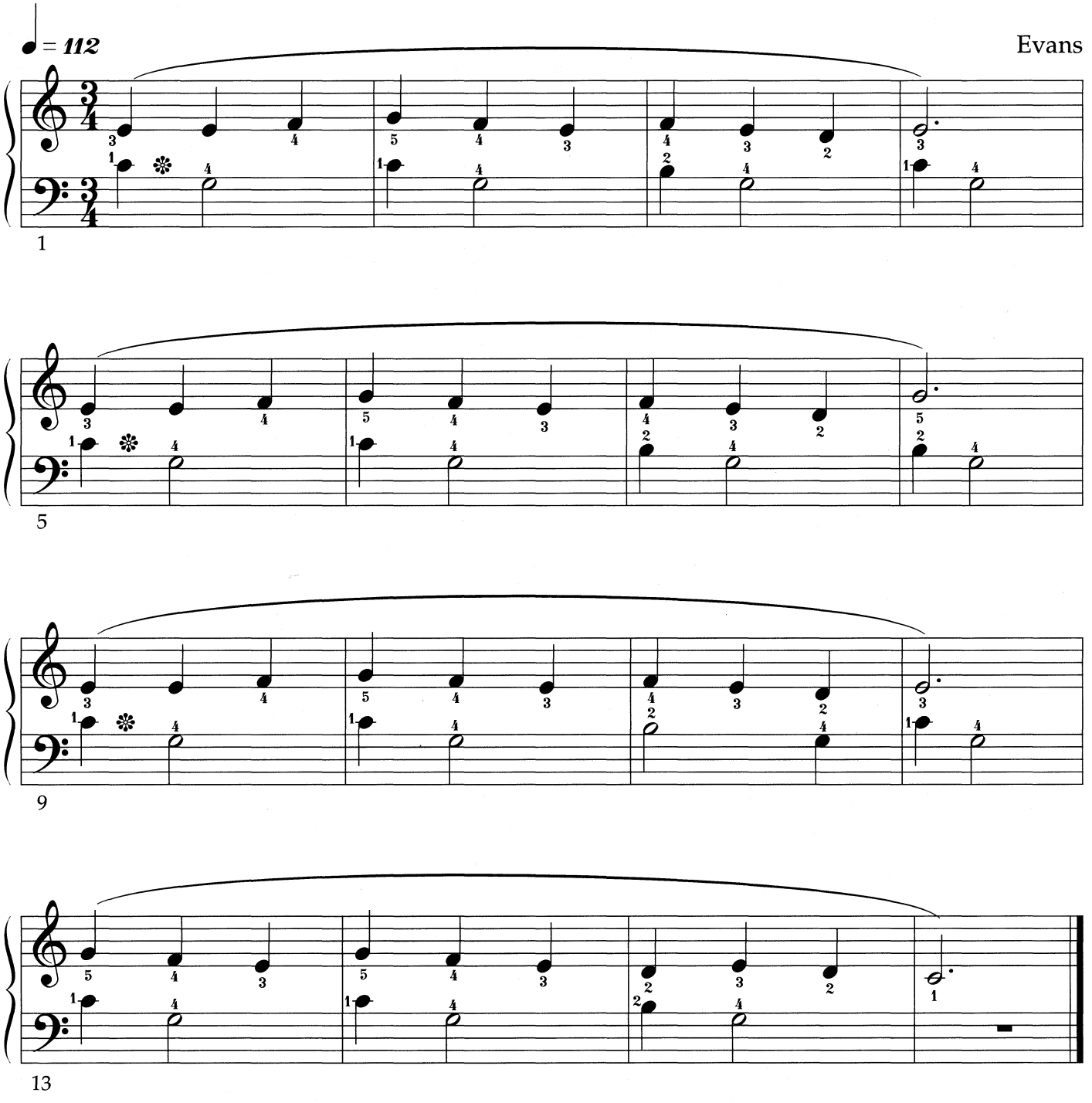
Join LH notes at places marked with an asterisk

Hold the LH half notes for their full length

Make a small gap between the slurs

Join the notes under the slurs

Observe LH rest in last bar



Wandering Song

Play eight notes higher under the dotted line

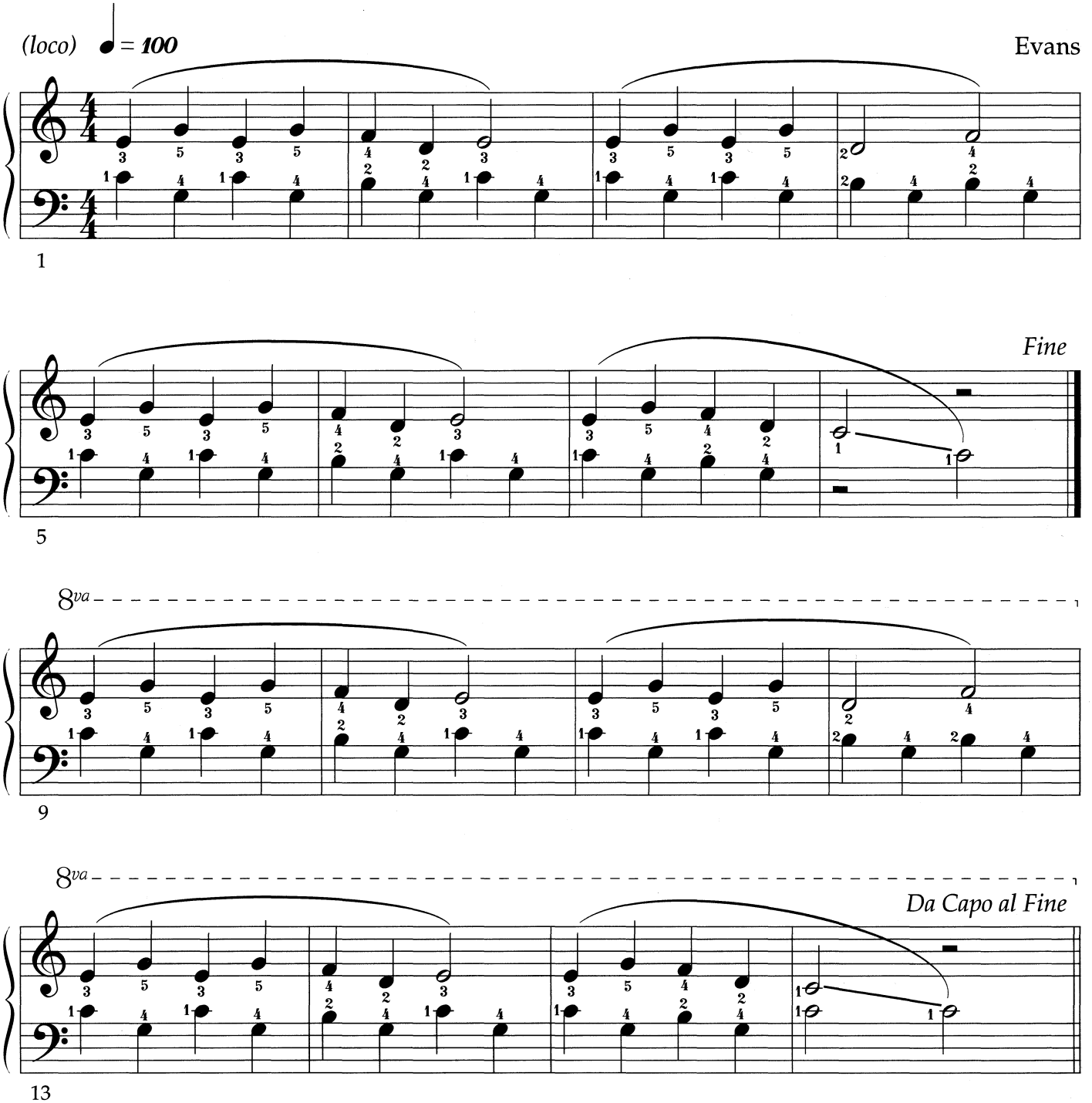
"Da Capo" means 'go back to the beginning'

"loco" means 'return to normal pitch'

Join all RH notes under the slurs

Take care to observe the rests

"Fine" means 'end'



Lightly row

Join LH notes at asterisks

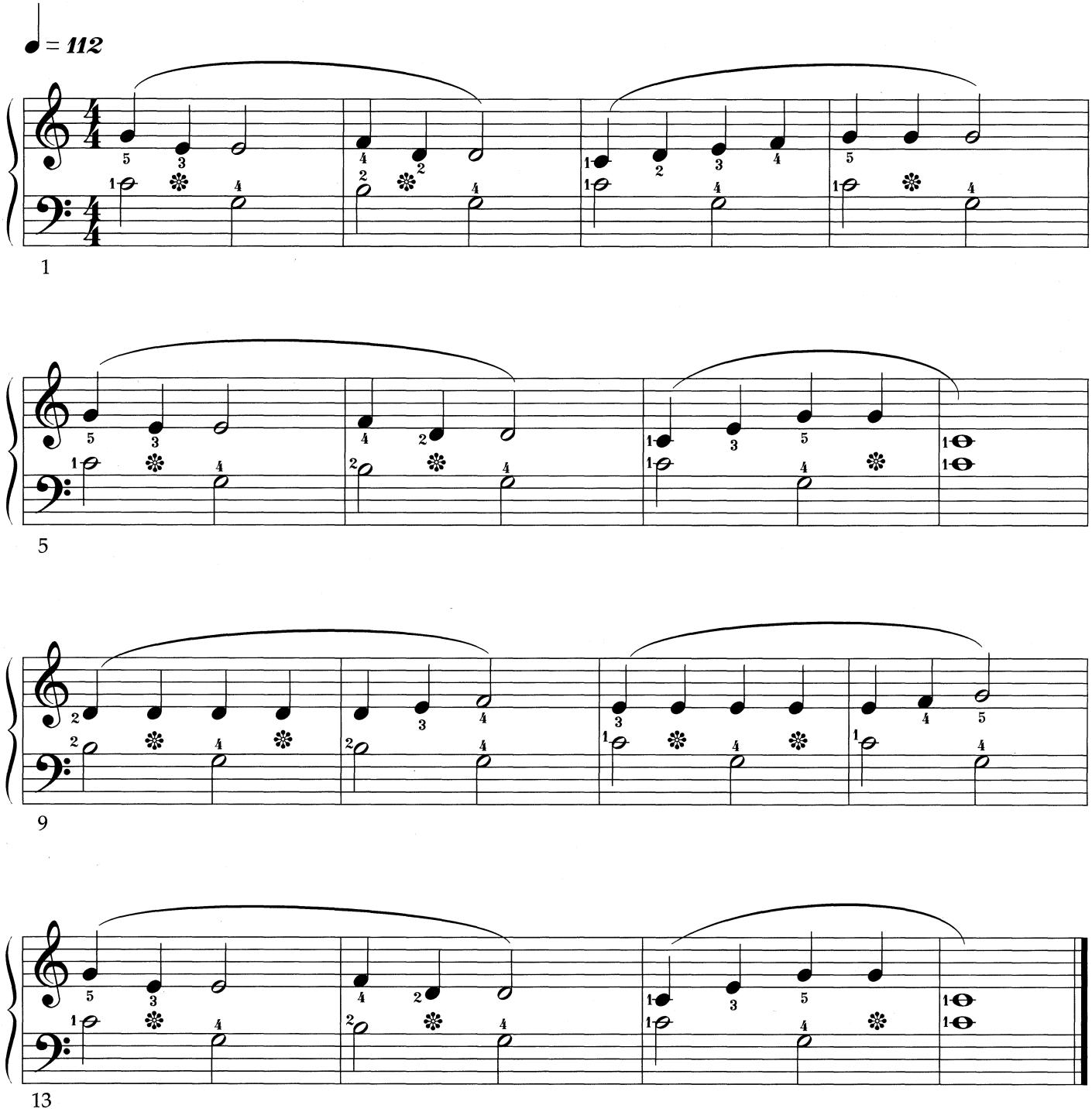
Join all notes under the slurs

Play RH repeated notes clearly

Make a slight gap between the slurs

Practise slowly and hands separately at first

Play RH an octave higher 2nd time if you like



More left hand notes

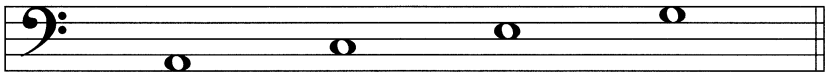
Learning these will help your progress

Learn to recognise these notes very quickly

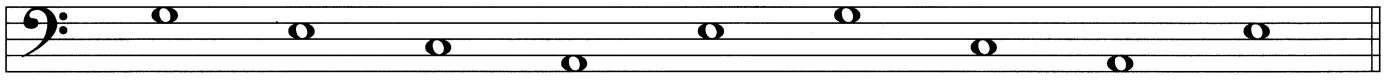
Learn these LH notes as efficiently as RH notes

Also practise finding the notes on the keyboard

L.H. spaces

1 

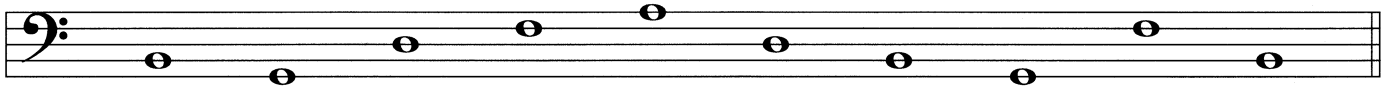
Write, name and play

2 

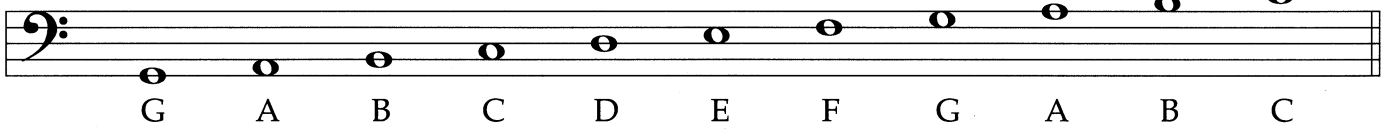
L.H. lines

3

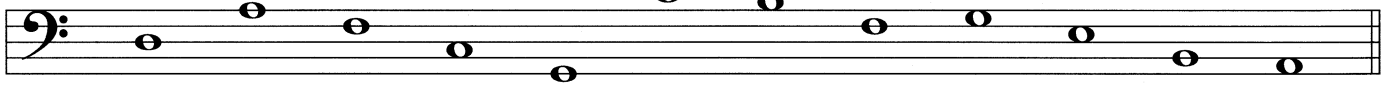
Write, name and play

4 

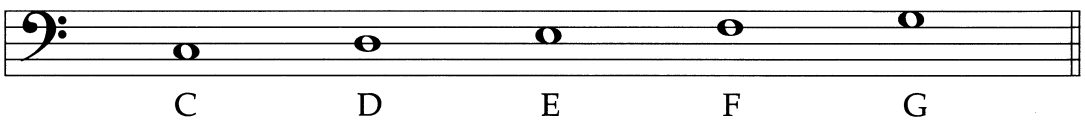
L.H. lines and spaces

5 

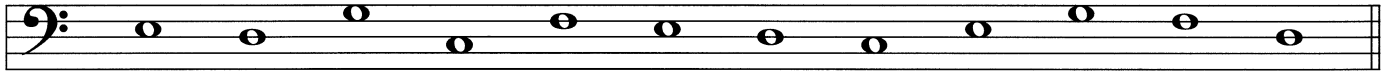
Write, name and play

6 

L.H. notes

7 

Write, name and play

8 

Exercises in C position

These help progress

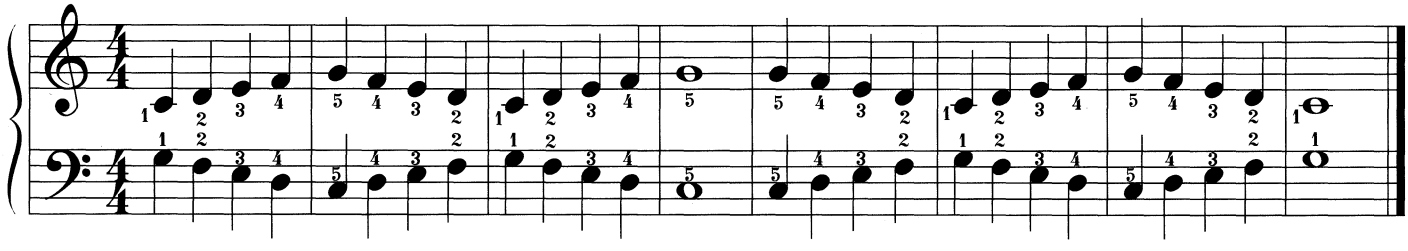
The RH thumb is on middle C

The LH thumb is on G below middle C

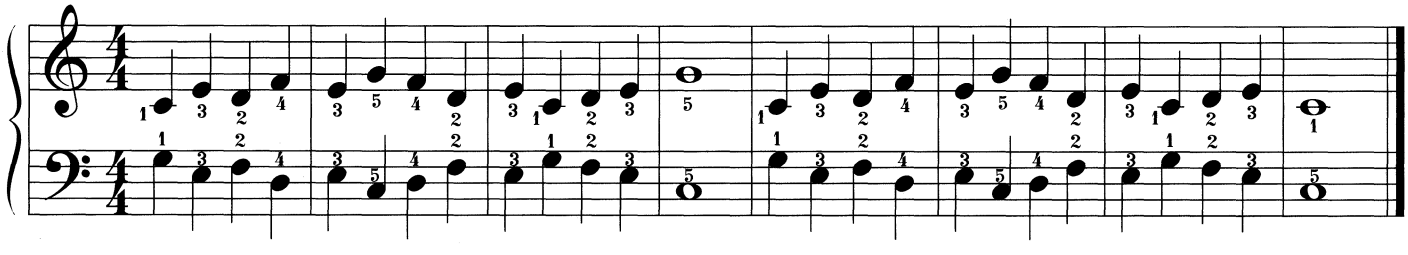
There's a gap of 2 notes between the thumbs

LH 5th finger is on C, an octave below middle C

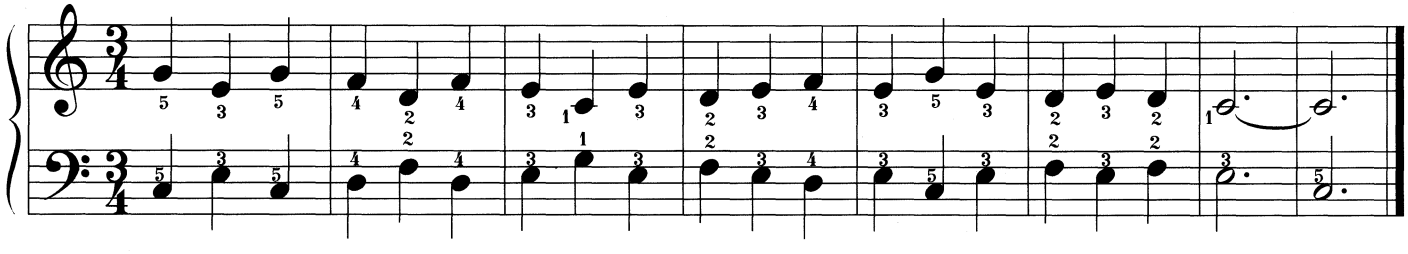
Ex. 7 ♩ = 100



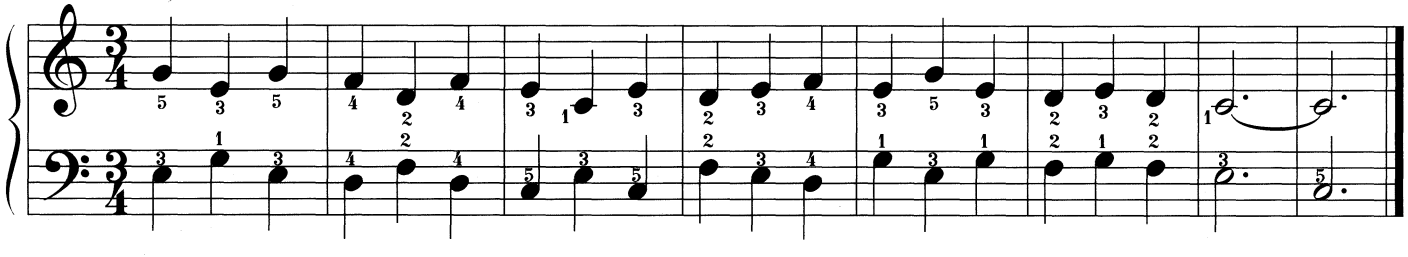
Ex. 8 ♩ = 100



Ex. 9 ♩ = 100



Ex. 10 ♩ = 100



Half a pound of twopenny rice

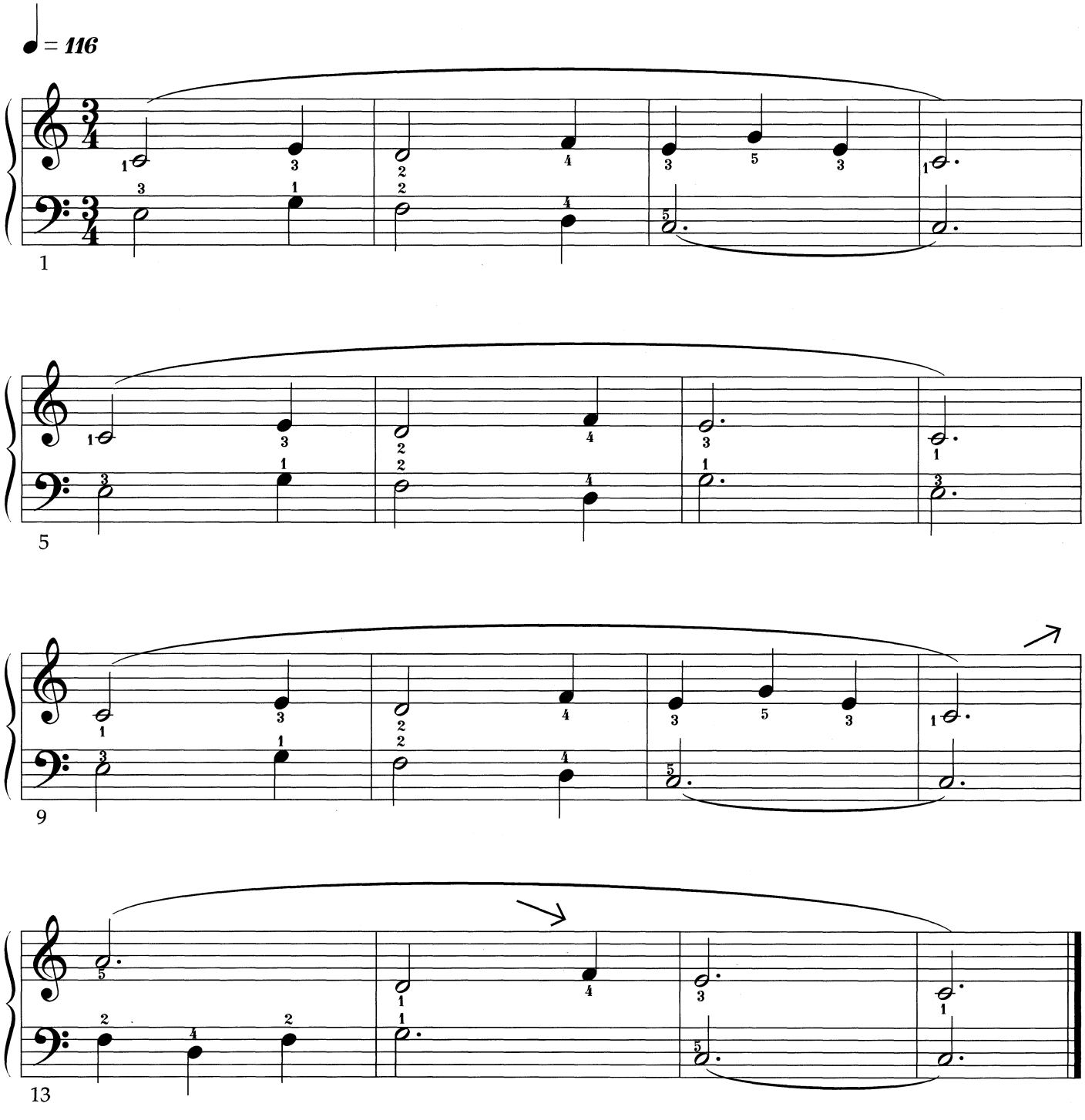
Watch out for the LH tied notes

Arrows show small RH movements

RH 5th finger stretches to A in bar 13

Learn one line at a time really thoroughly

Remember to join the notes under the slurs



Study 3

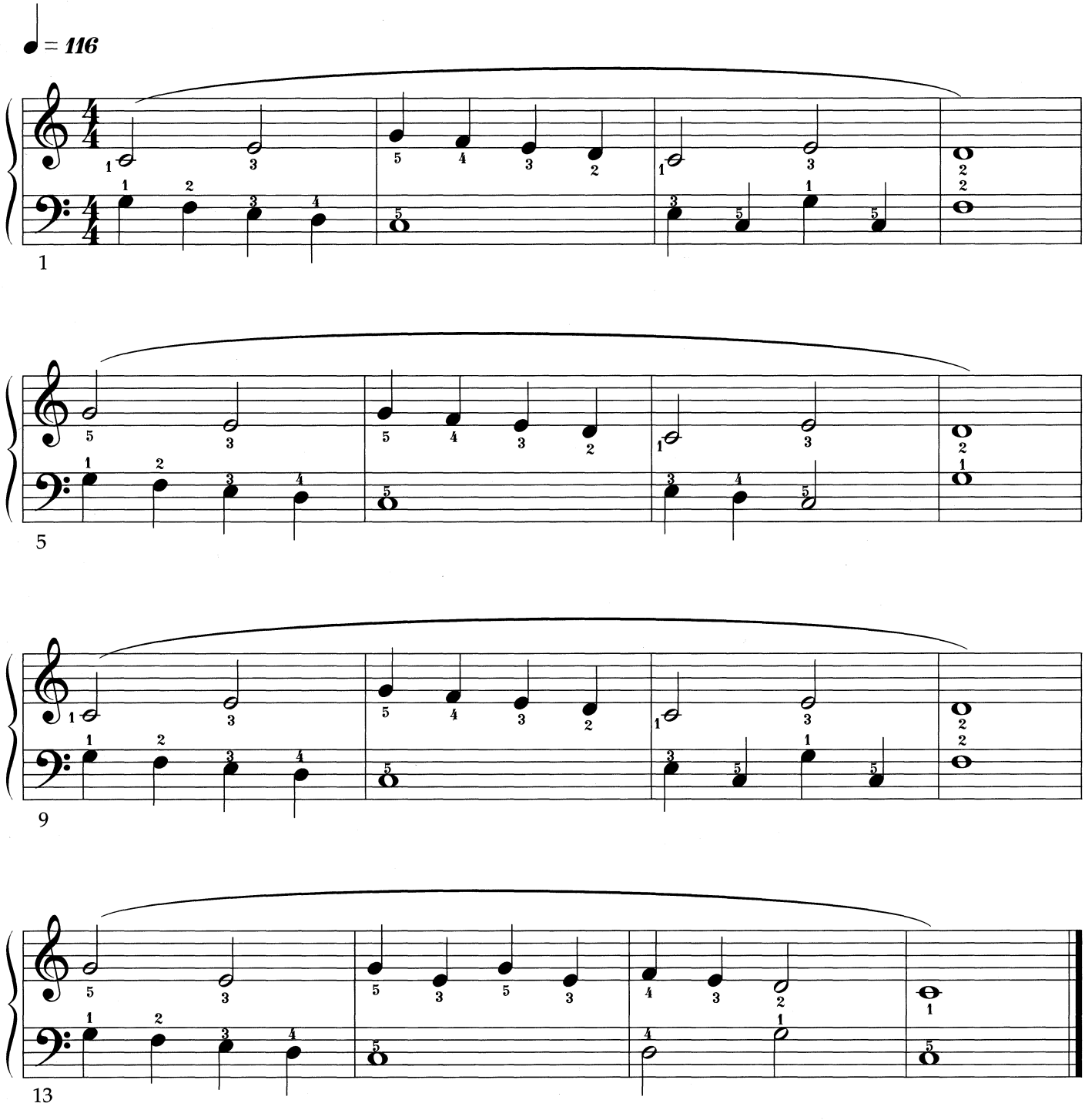
This will help co-ordination

Join all the notes under the slurs

Make a slight gap at the ends of slurs

Hold the whole-notes for their full length

Practise hands separately before hands together



Jingle bells

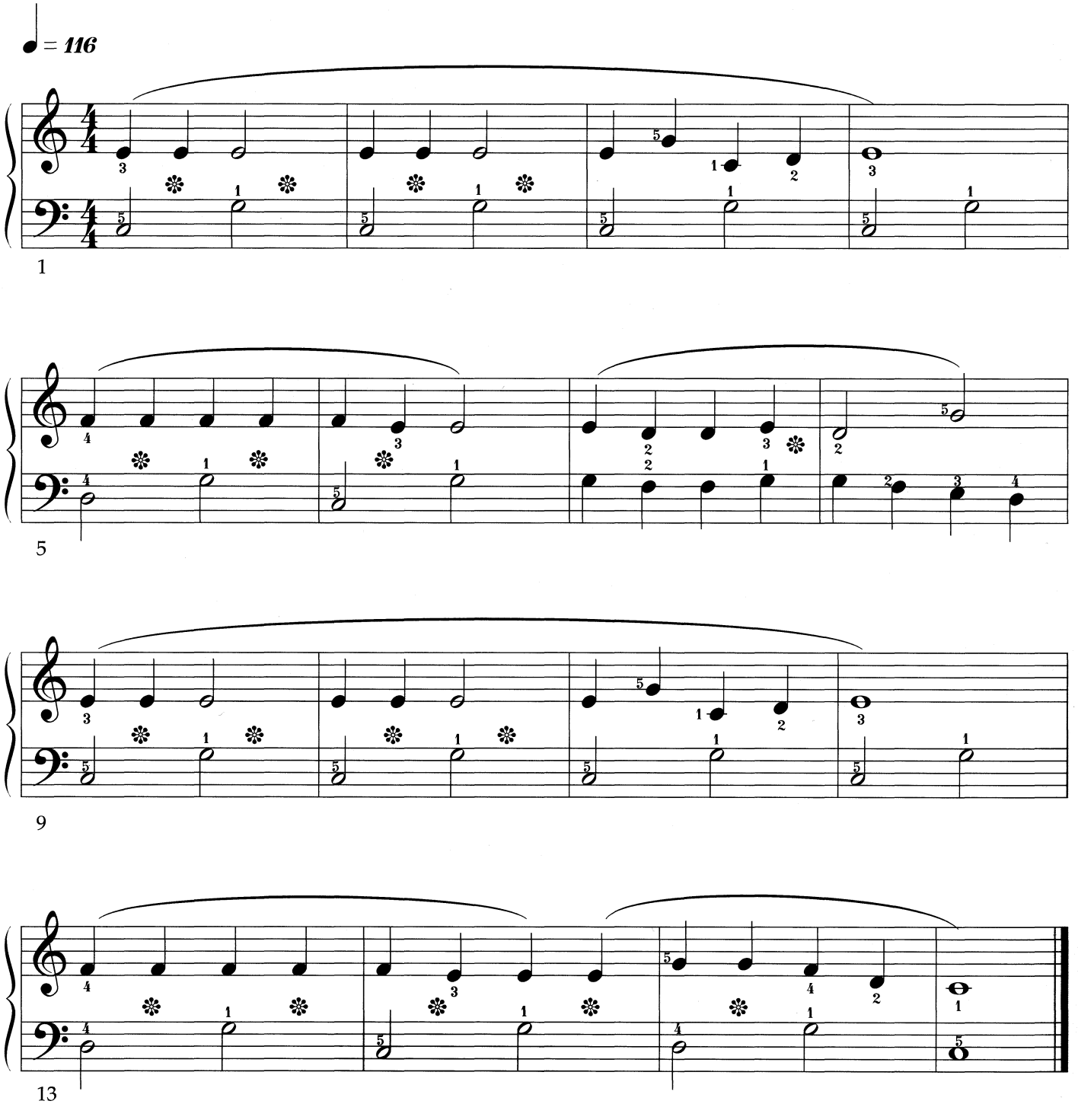
This is the chorus only

Practise this slowly at first

Towards end of line 2 join RH notes

Keep the LH notes joined at other asterisks

Practise hands separately before hands together



Scales

Practise slowly at first

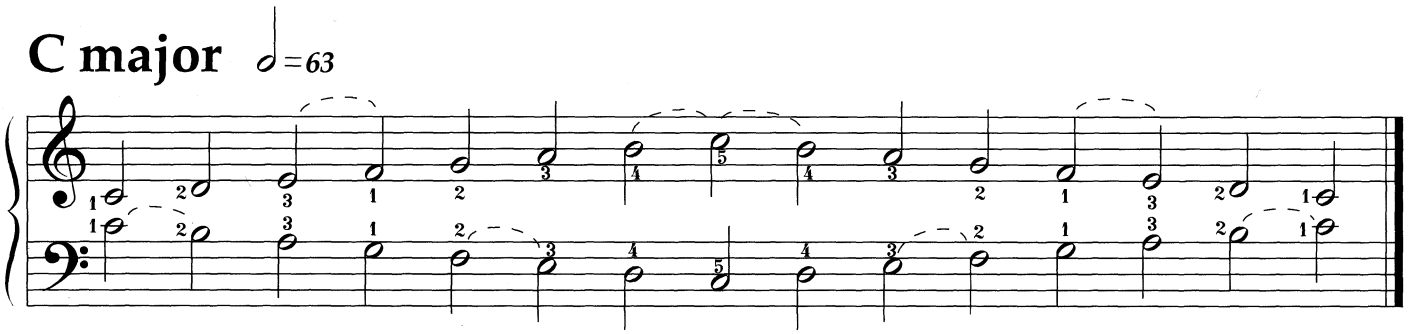
Practise scales a little each day

Practise hands separately at first

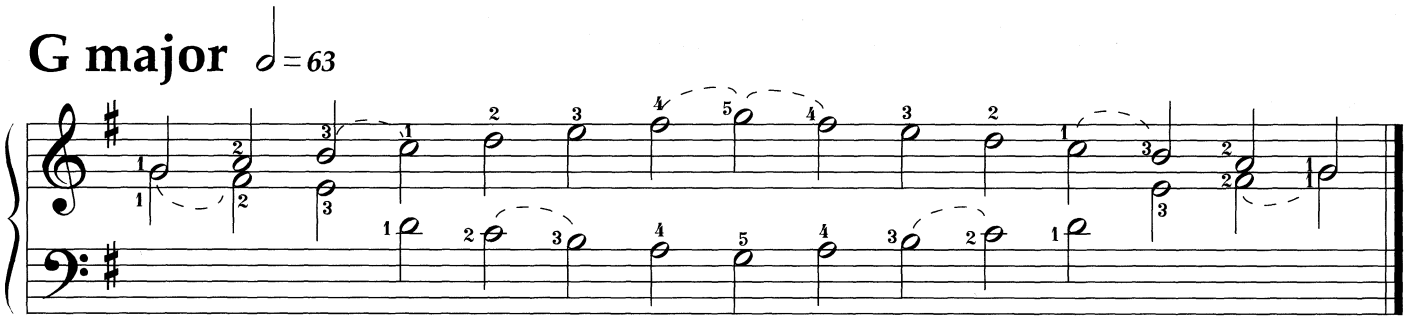
Scales will help you build up confidence

Dotted slurs show where the semitones are

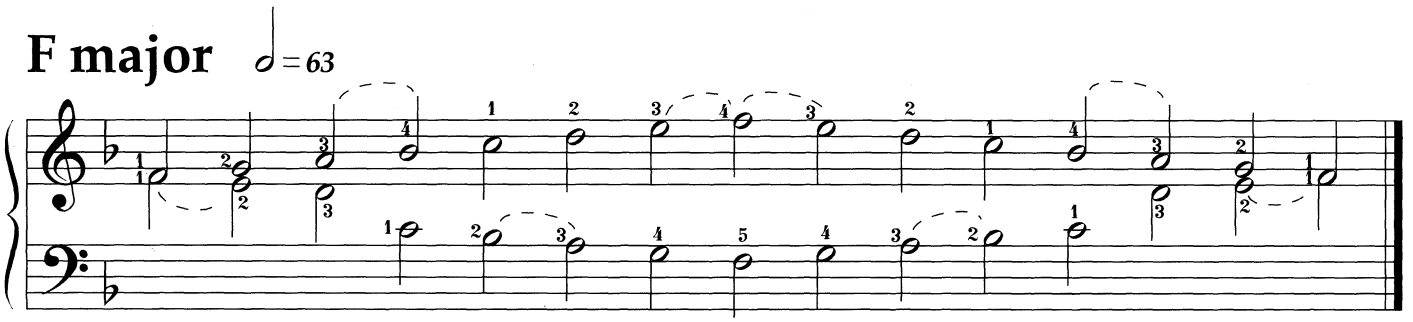
C major



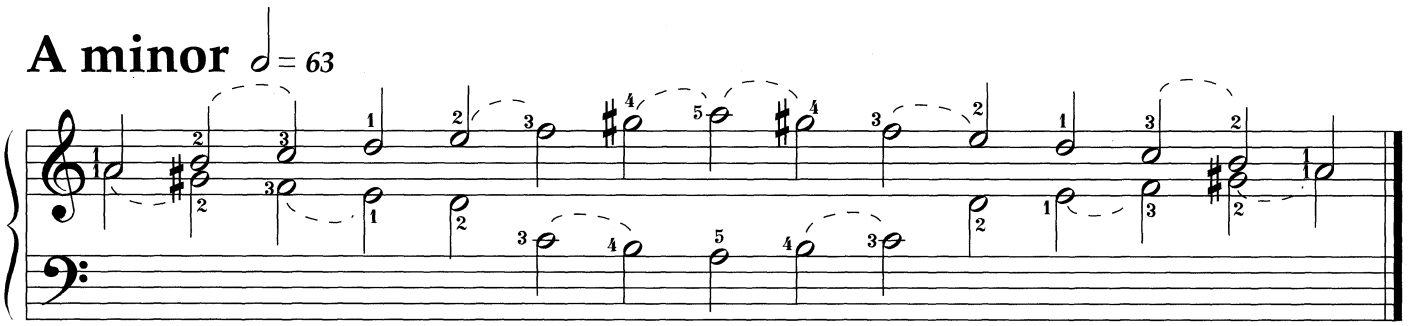
G major



F major



A minor



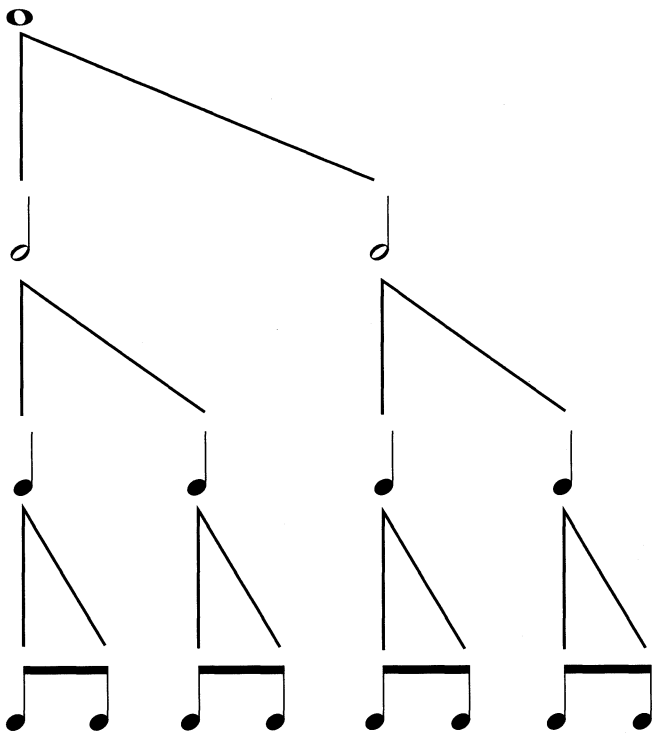
More note values

(Eighth notes or quavers)

Example 1

How they subdivide

Example 2



A whole note or semibreve

divided into two, makes...

Two half notes or minims

each divided into two, make...

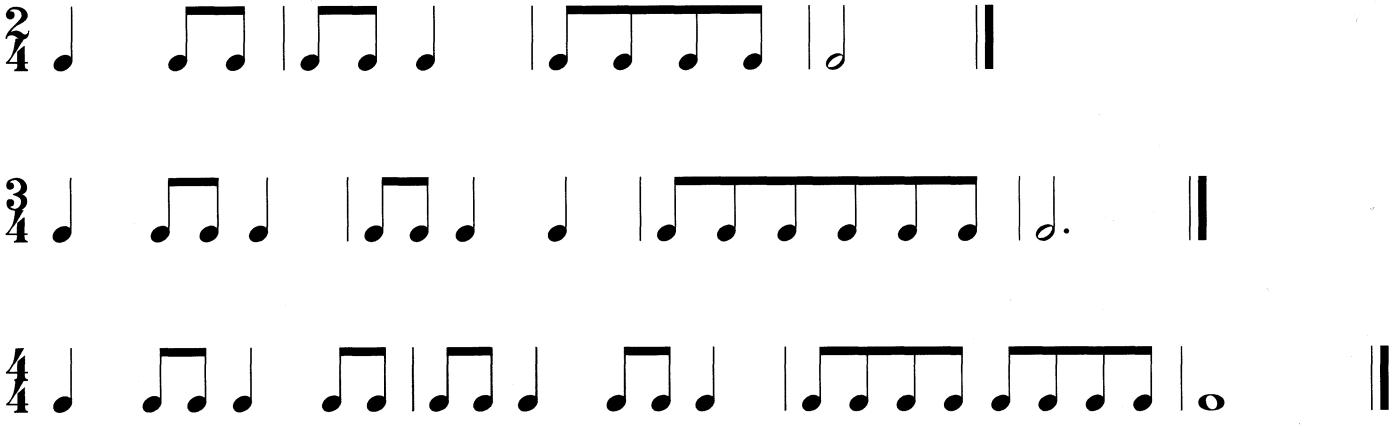
Four quarter notes or crotchets

each divided into two, make...

Eight eighth notes or quavers

Some typical rhythms

Example 3



Study 4

(Eighth notes or quavers)

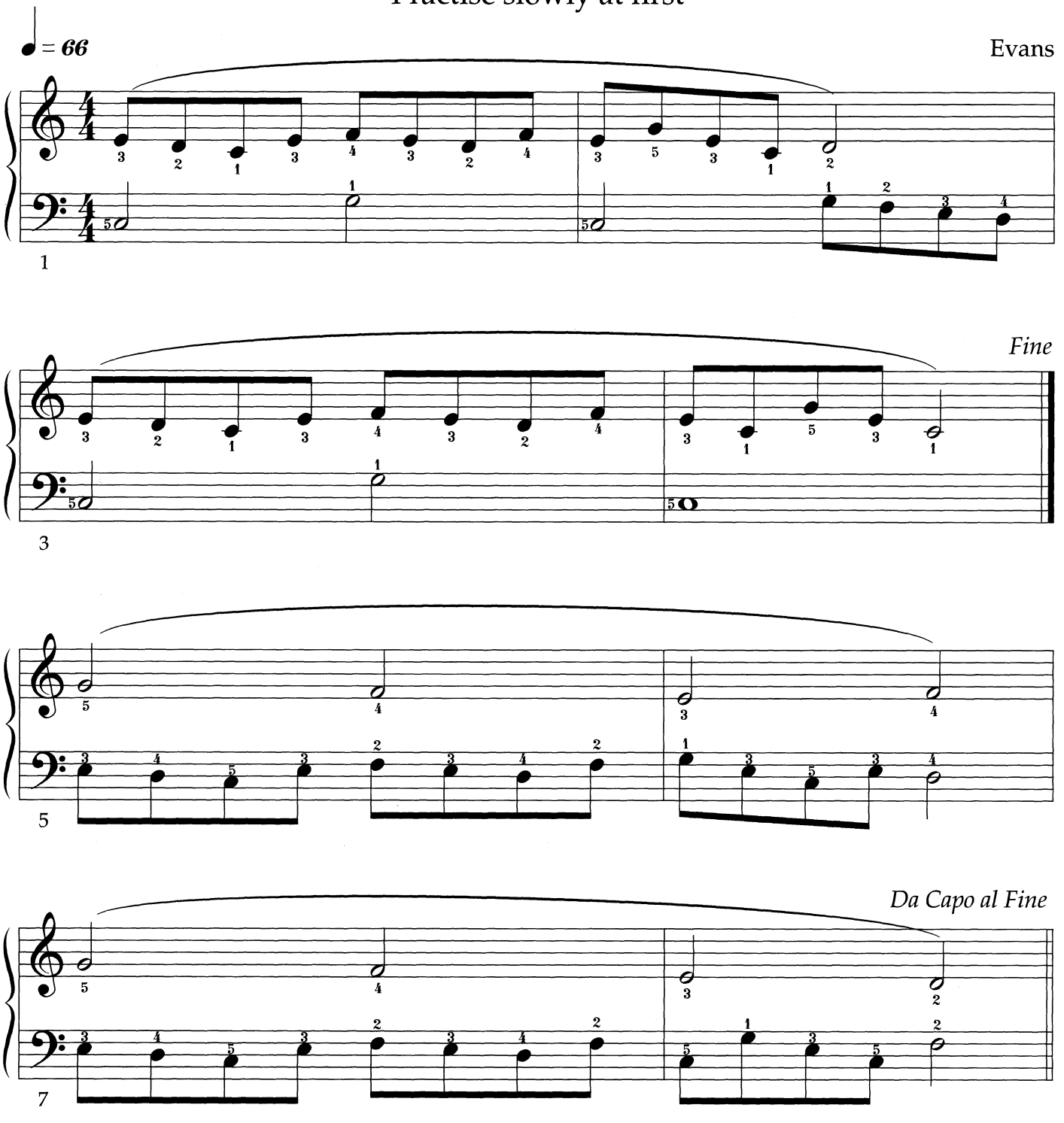
Here's a good opportunity to use eighth notes

Hold down longer notes for their full length

Do lots of 'hands separate' practice at first

Remember the 'Da Capo' repeat

Practise slowly at first



Boston

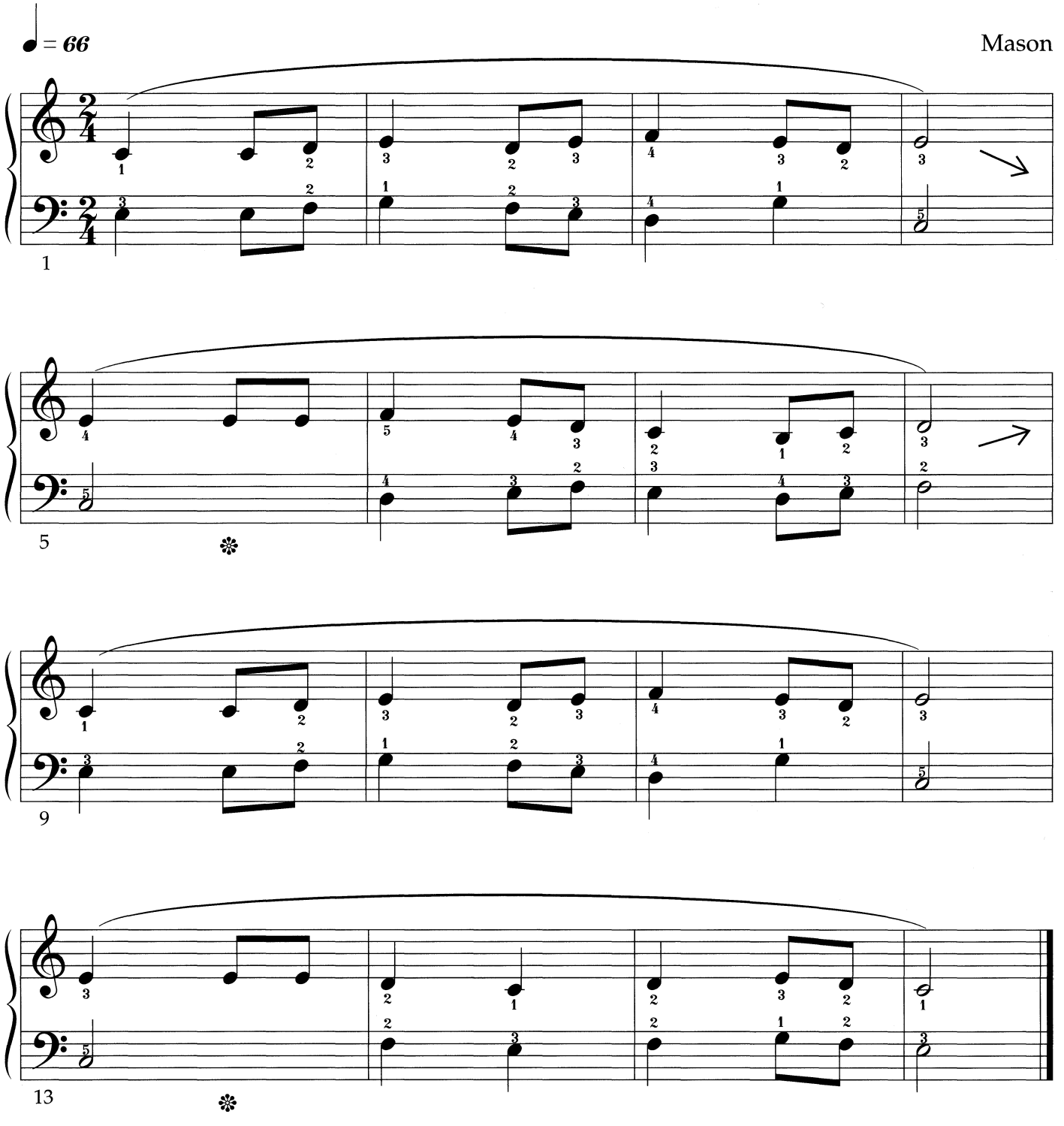
Quarter notes are twice as long as eighth notes

The arrows show changes of hand position

Count 2 quarter or 4 eighth notes in a bar

Join the LH notes at the asterisks

Join all notes under the slurs



London Bridge

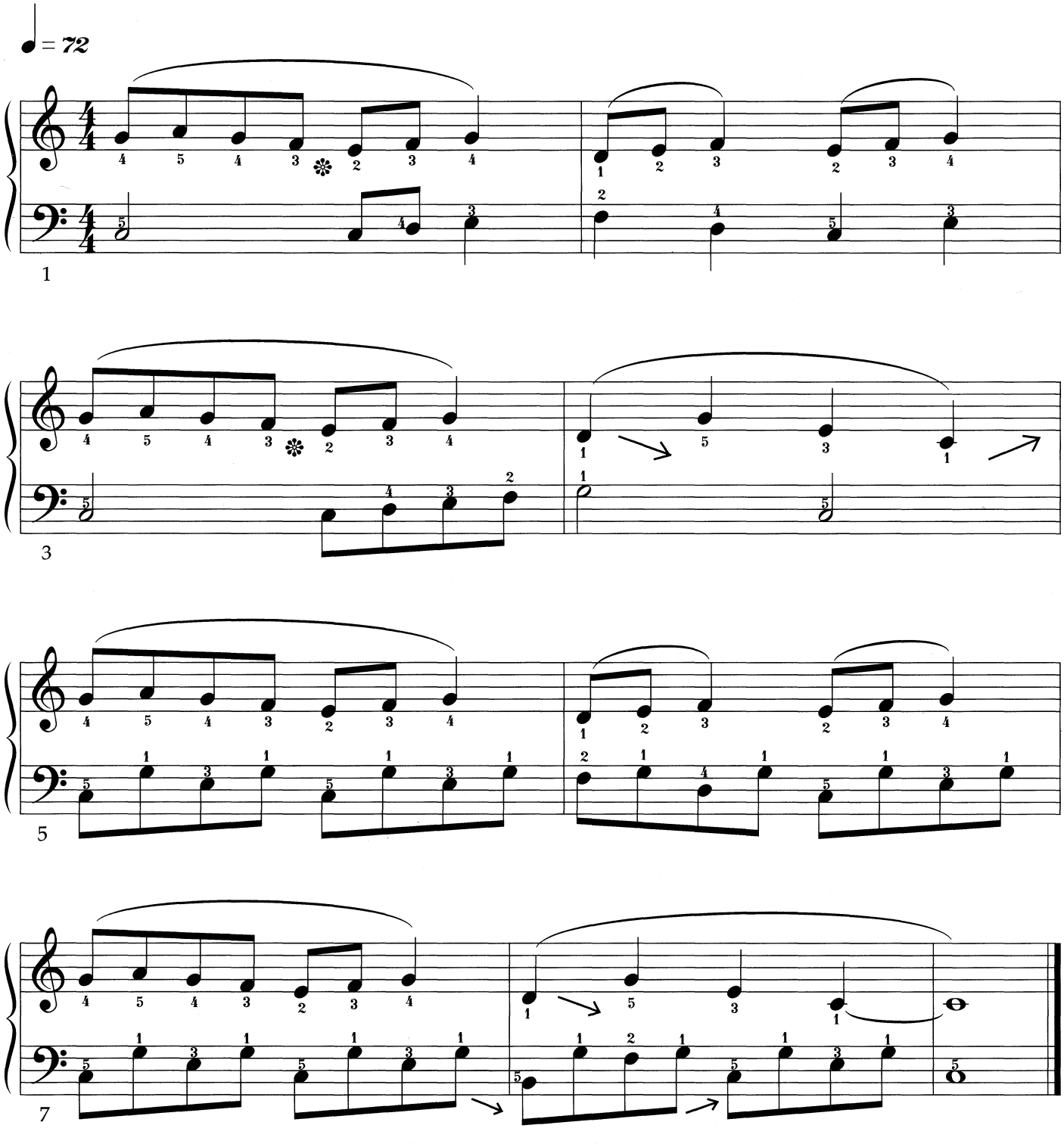
Join the RH notes at the asterisks

The LH stays mainly in the C position

The RH changes position at the arrows

Watch out for the RH tied note at the end

Practise and enjoy the "Alberti bass" bars 5-8



Exercises in G position

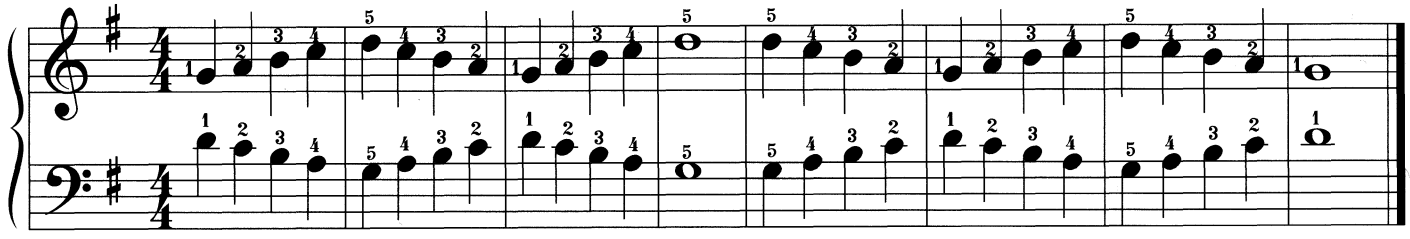
These exercises will help you play more music

Practise them hands separately at first

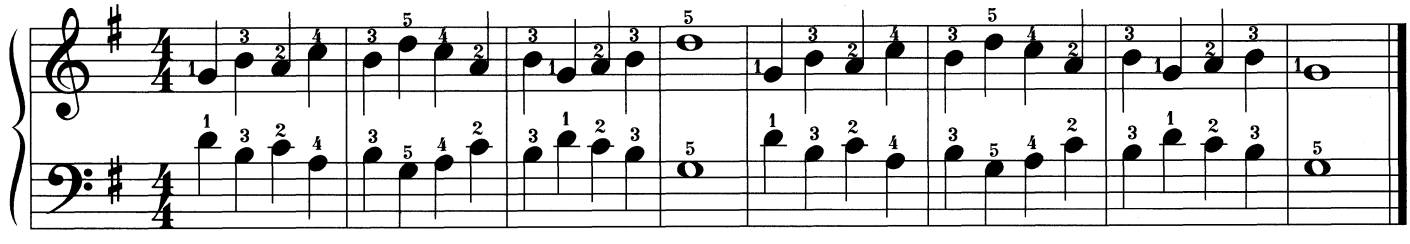
Watch out for the tied notes

Practise slowly at first

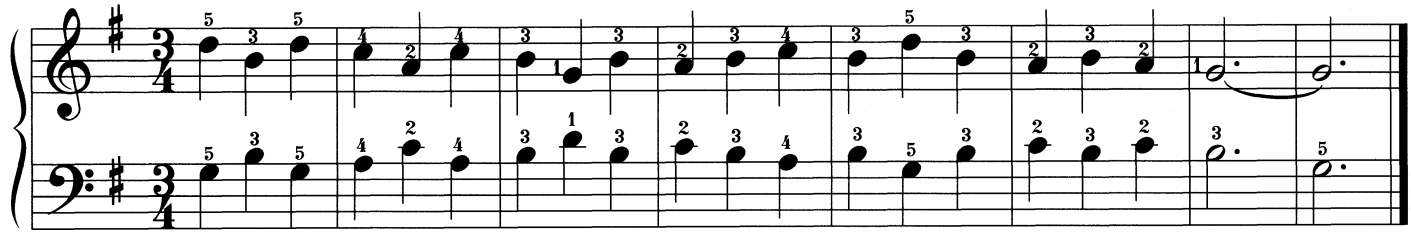
Ex. 11 ♩ = 112



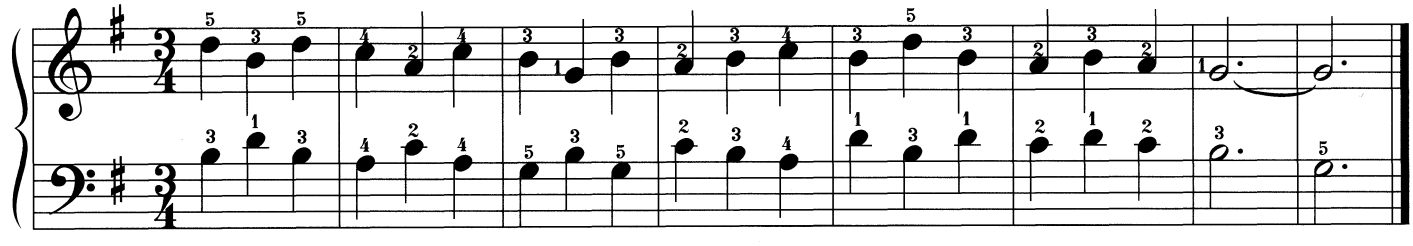
Ex. 12 ♩ = 112



Ex. 13 ♩ = 112



Ex. 14 ♩ = 112

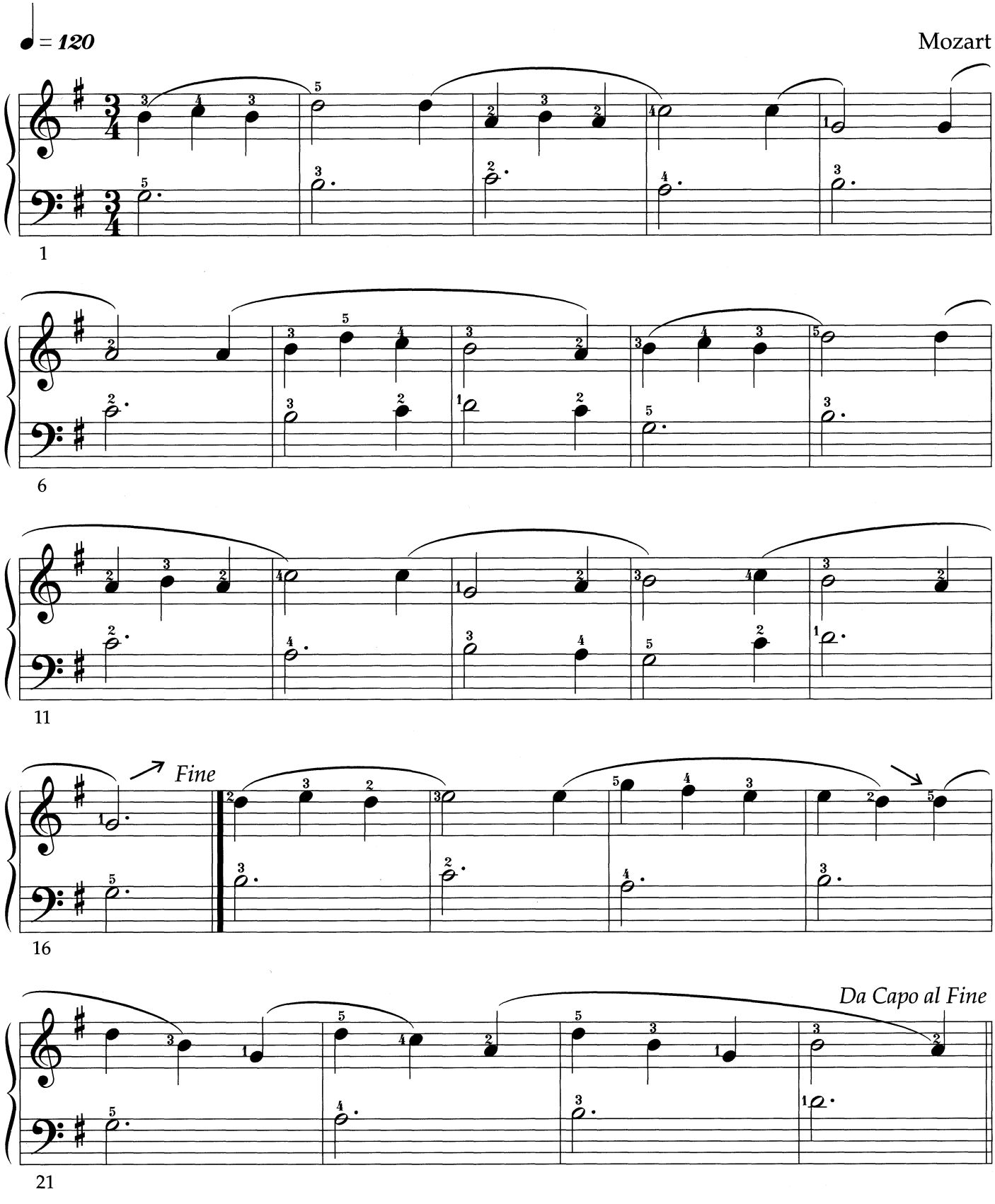


Sonata theme

Theme from Sonata in A major (K331)

The music has been transposed to G major

Make sure you play legato under all the slurs



Theme from 'New World' Symphony

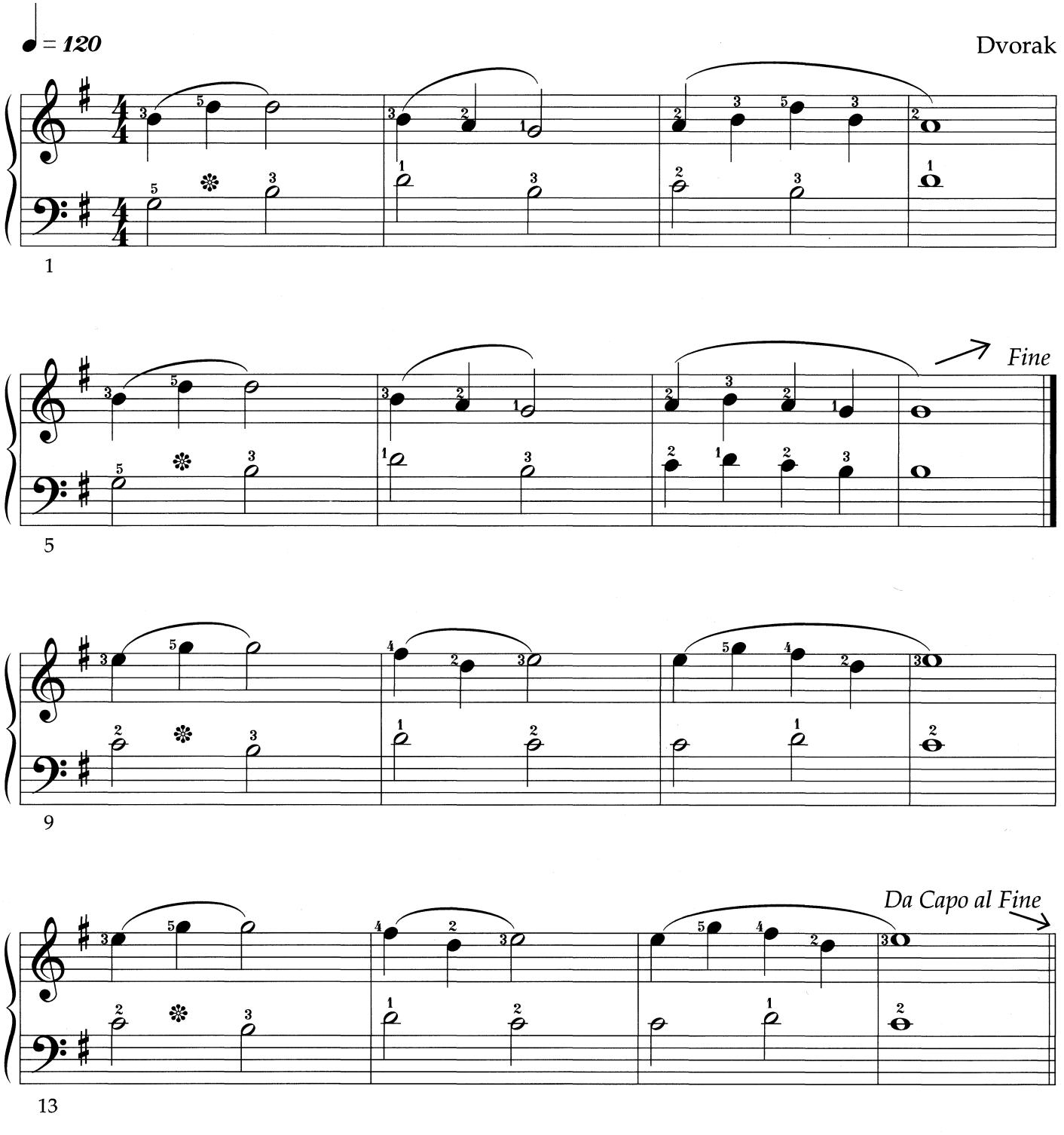
Watch out for F sharps in the RH (bars 9-16)

Remember to join LH notes at the asterisks

Play whole notes for their full length

Remember 'Da Capo' repeat

Finish at 'Fine'



Musette

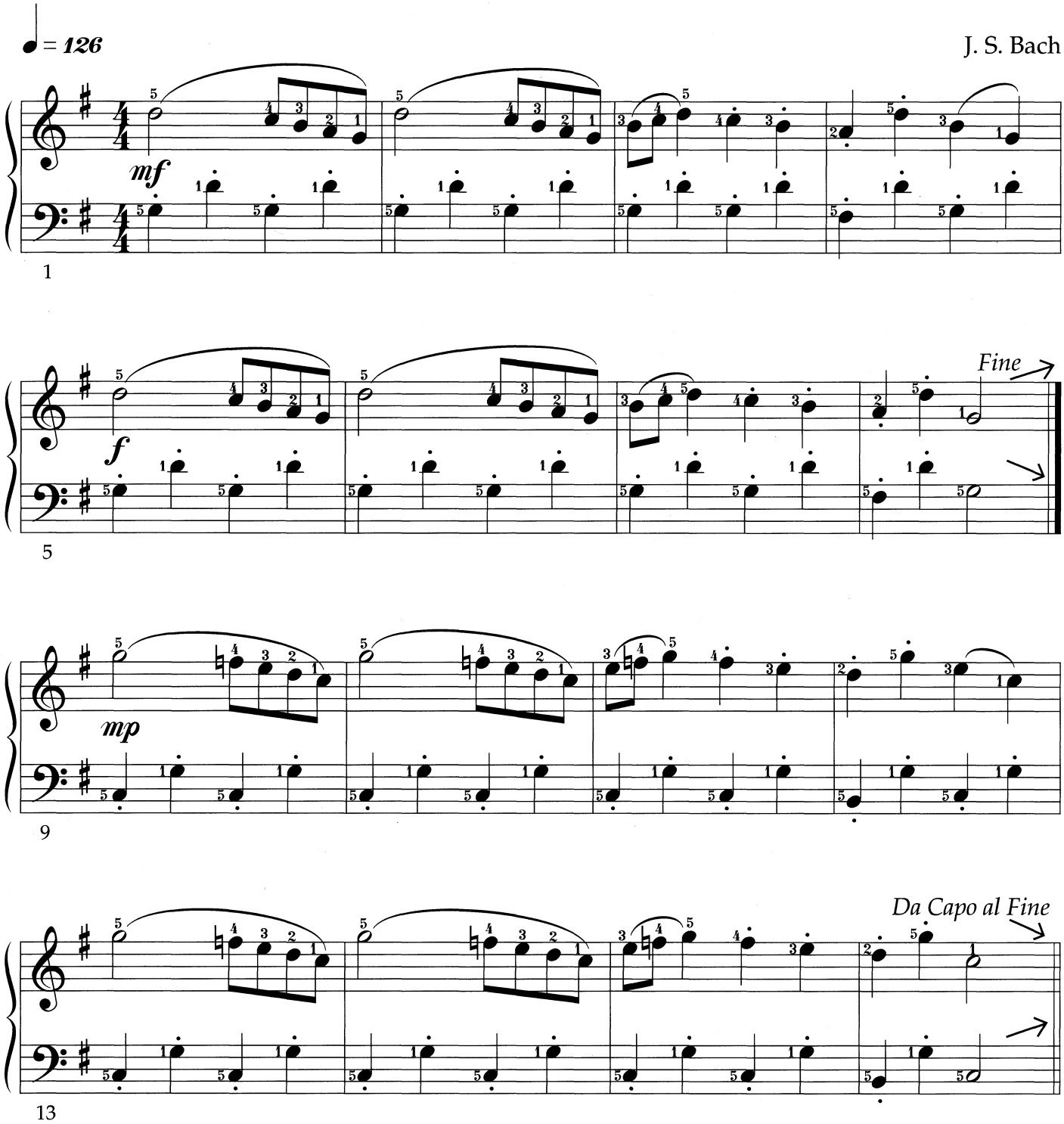
Watch out for natural signs

Play the LH staccato notes detached

Lots of hands separate practice needed

The arrows show changes of hand position

Play RH notes under the slurs legato (joined)



Exercises in F position

This new position will improve your range

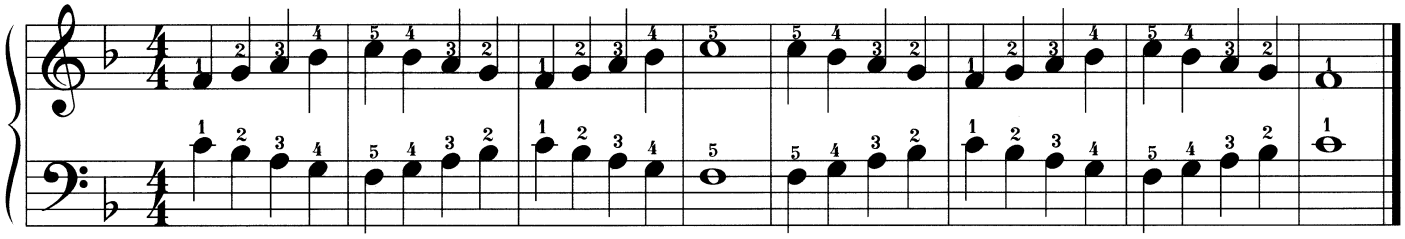
Don't play them too fast too soon

Observe the fingering carefully

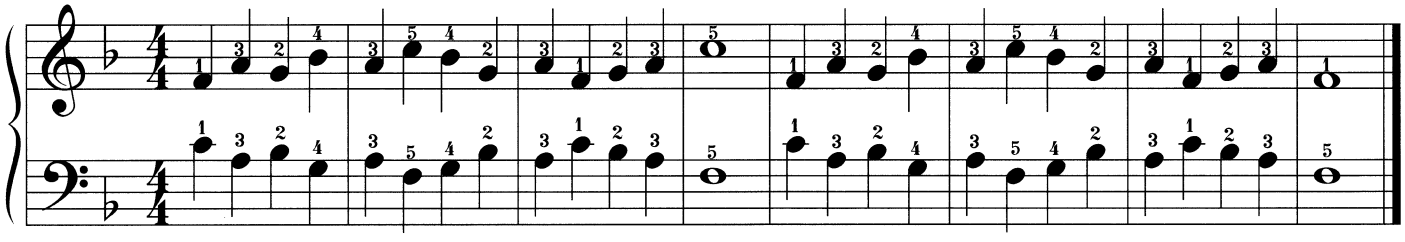
Watch out for the tied notes

Watch out for B flats

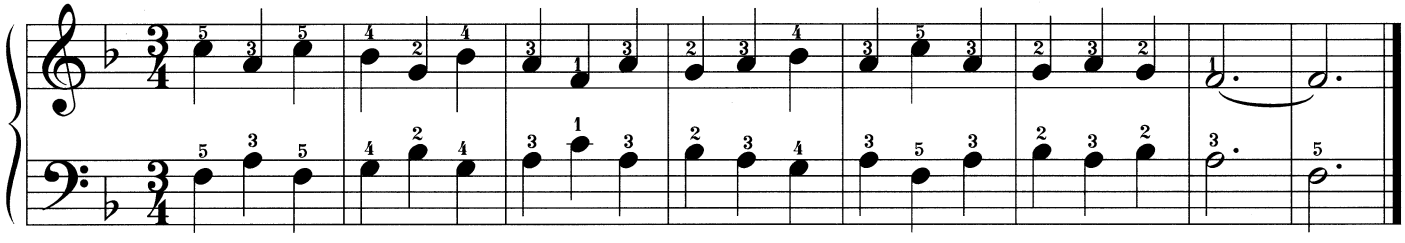
Ex. 15 ♩ = 112



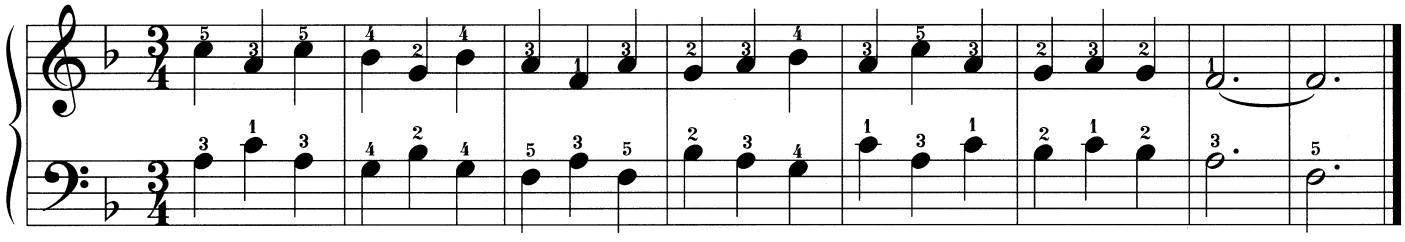
Ex. 16 ♩ = 112



Ex. 17 ♩ = 112



Ex. 18 ♩ = 112



Italian musical terms

ff or fortissimo	very loud
f or forte	loud
mf or mezzo forte	moderately loud but not as loud as *forte*
sf or subito forte	suddenly loud
pp or pianissimo	very quiet
p or piano	quiet
mp or mezzo piano	moderately quiet but not as quiet as *piano*
cresc. or crescendo	becoming gradually louder
dim. or diminuendo	becoming gradually softer
decresc. or decresendo	becoming gradually softer
rit. or ritardando	getting slower
legato	smoothly and joined
staccato	short and detached
tempo	speed
tempo primo	the original speed
a tempo	in time
piu	more
mosso	motion
poco	a little
presto	fast
allegro	quickly
allegretto	fairly quickly but not as quick as *allegro*
andante	at a moderate pace or at a walking pace
lento	slowly
cantabile	in a singing style
largamente	broadly
simile	continue likewise
e	and
fine	end
da capo al fine	back to the beginning and play until *fine*

Pedals

Right pedal *or* sustaining pedal	allows the strings to vibrate freely
Left pedal, una corda *or* soft pedal	produces a quieter sound
Middle pedal *or* sostenuto pedal	*(grand piano)* retains only the depressed notes
Middle pedal *or* practice pedal	*(upright piano)* produces a very quiet sound

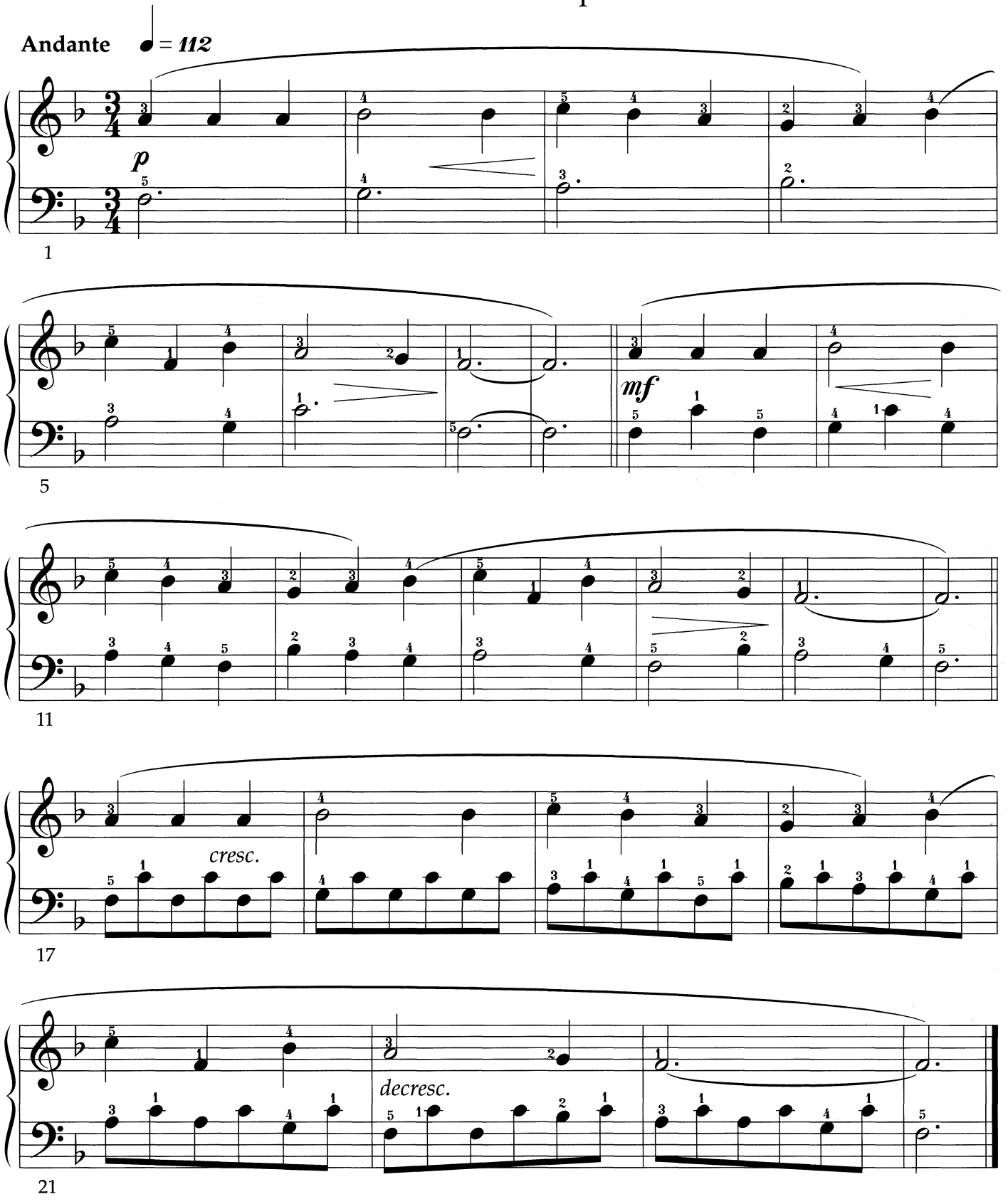
Drink to me only

Practise slowly at first

The LH gets more complex

Rotary movement in LH from bar 17

Make a break between each phrase in the RH



Alouette

(The lark)

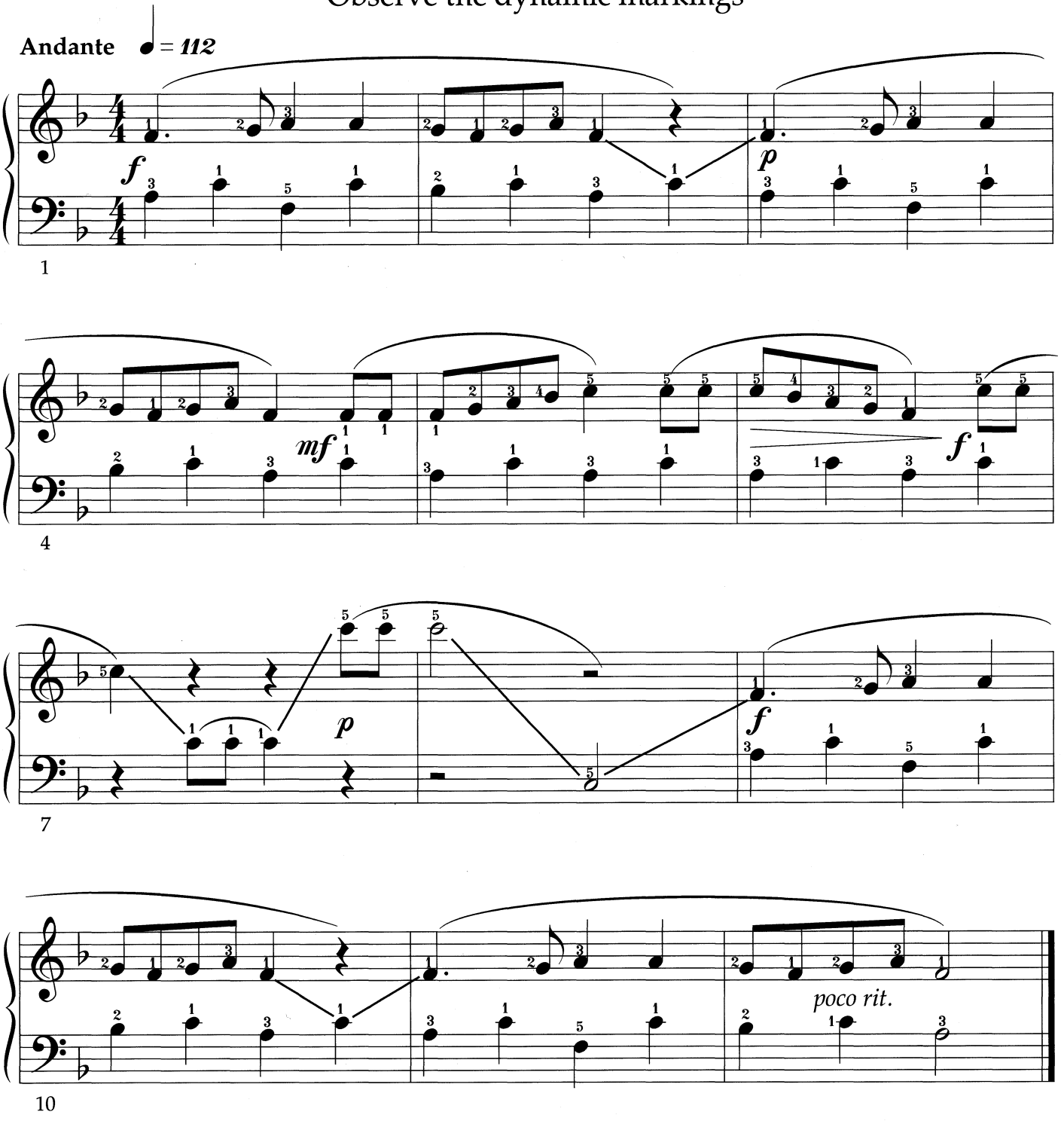
Diagonal lines show the melody changing hands

Play all the RH quavers in their correct places

Make the dotted crotchet Fs long enough

Don't hold down notes during rests

Observe the dynamic markings



J'ai du bon tabac

(I have some good tobacco)

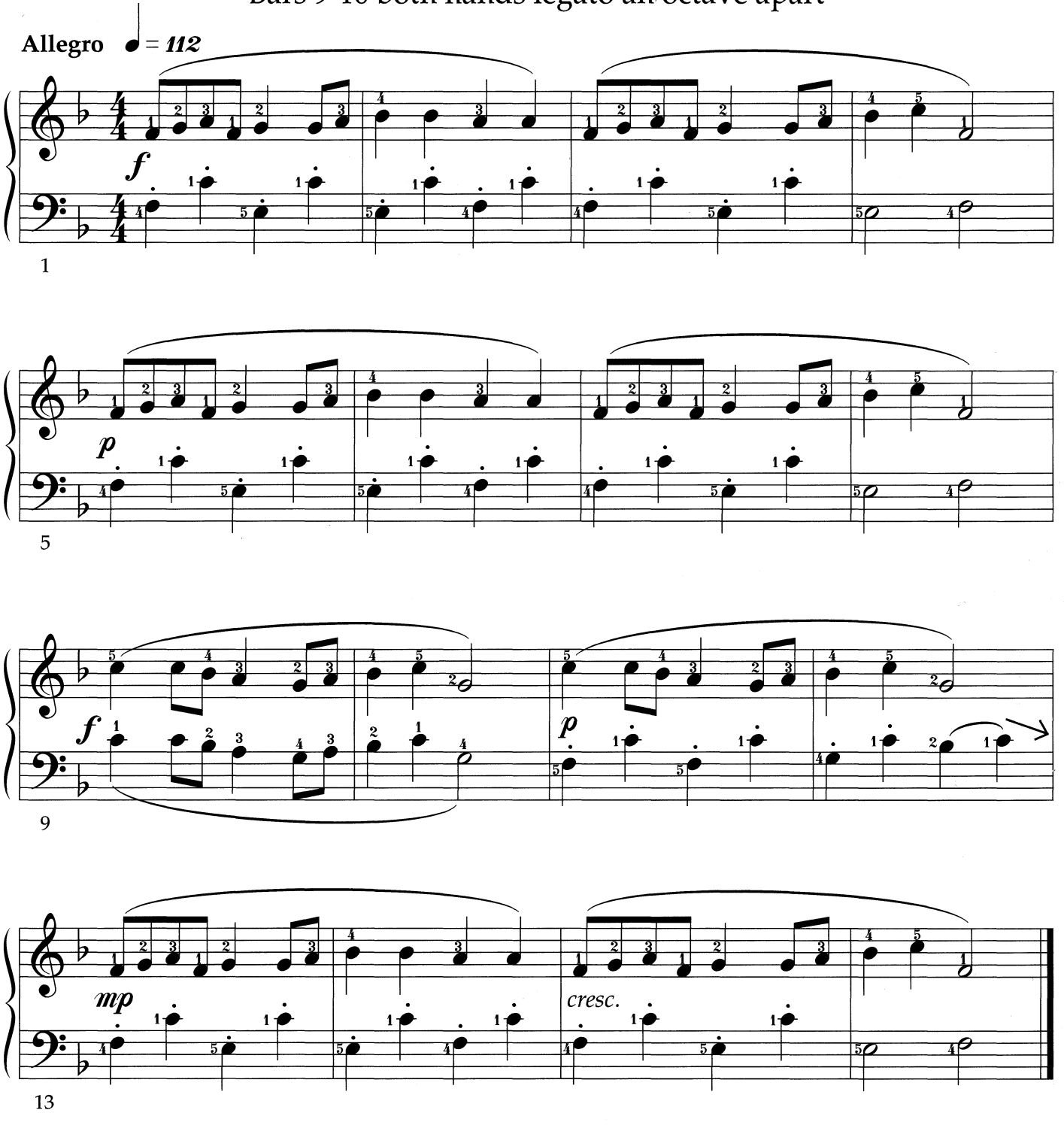
Legato notes in RH

Many staccato LH notes

LH begins with 4th finger on F

Don't play this too quickly too soon

Bars 9-10 both hands legato an octave apart



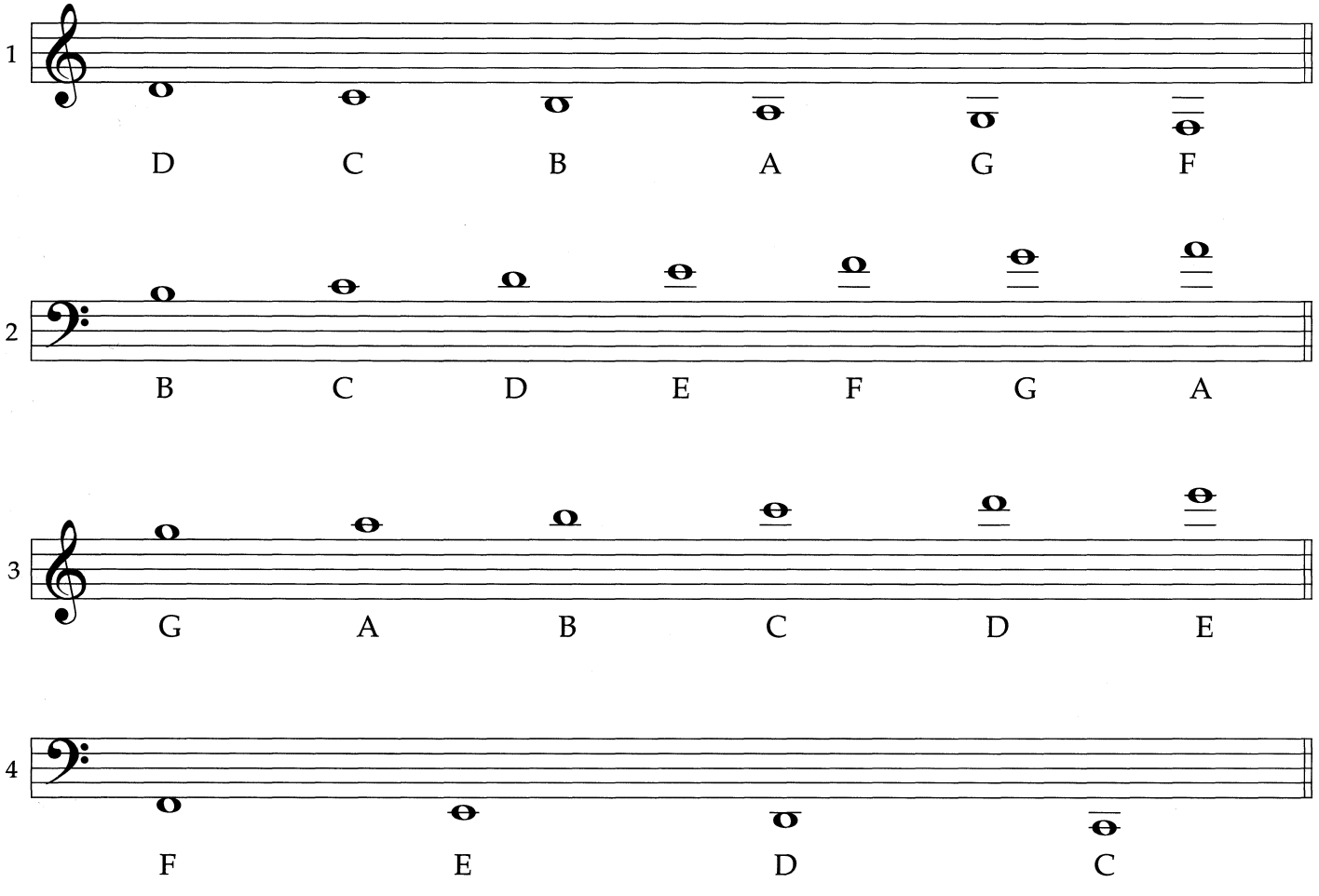
Ledger lines

Spend time learning these

Here are all the notes in this book

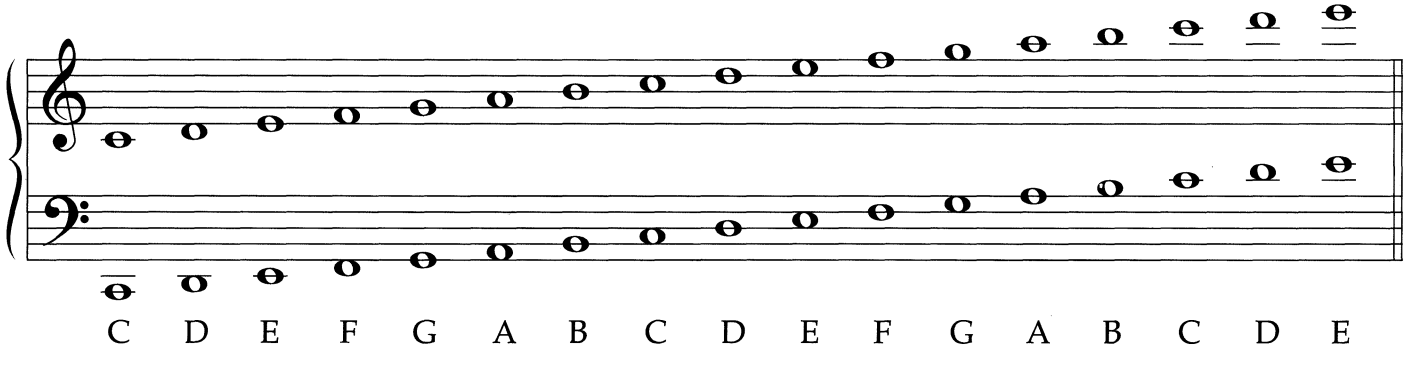
Ledger lines are notes outside the stave

These will help you learn music more quickly



Note revision

Practise naming and playing all these notes

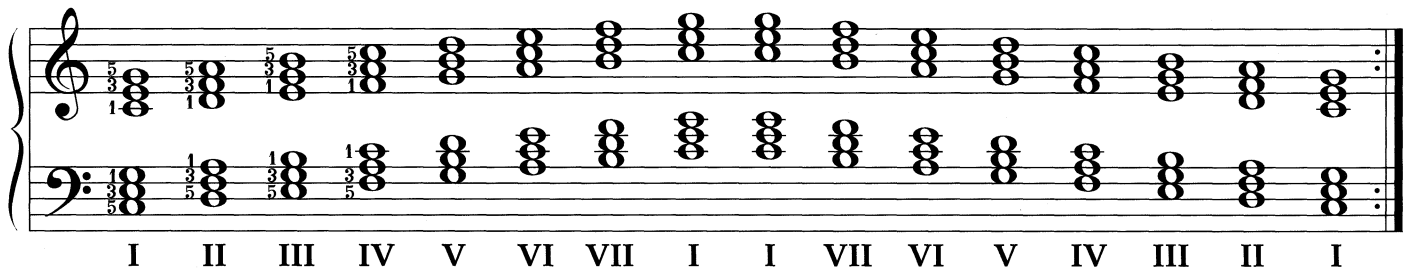


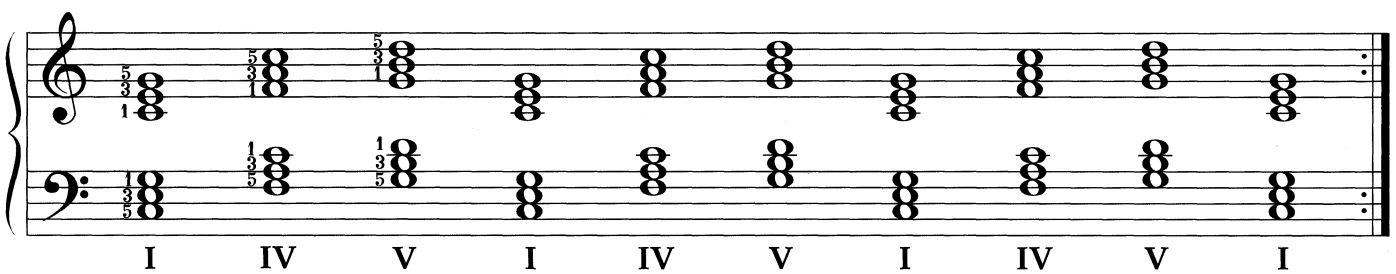
Chords

Chords will help you learn music more quickly

Relax arms to help produce good sound

Use 'Lift, Drop and Rest' technique

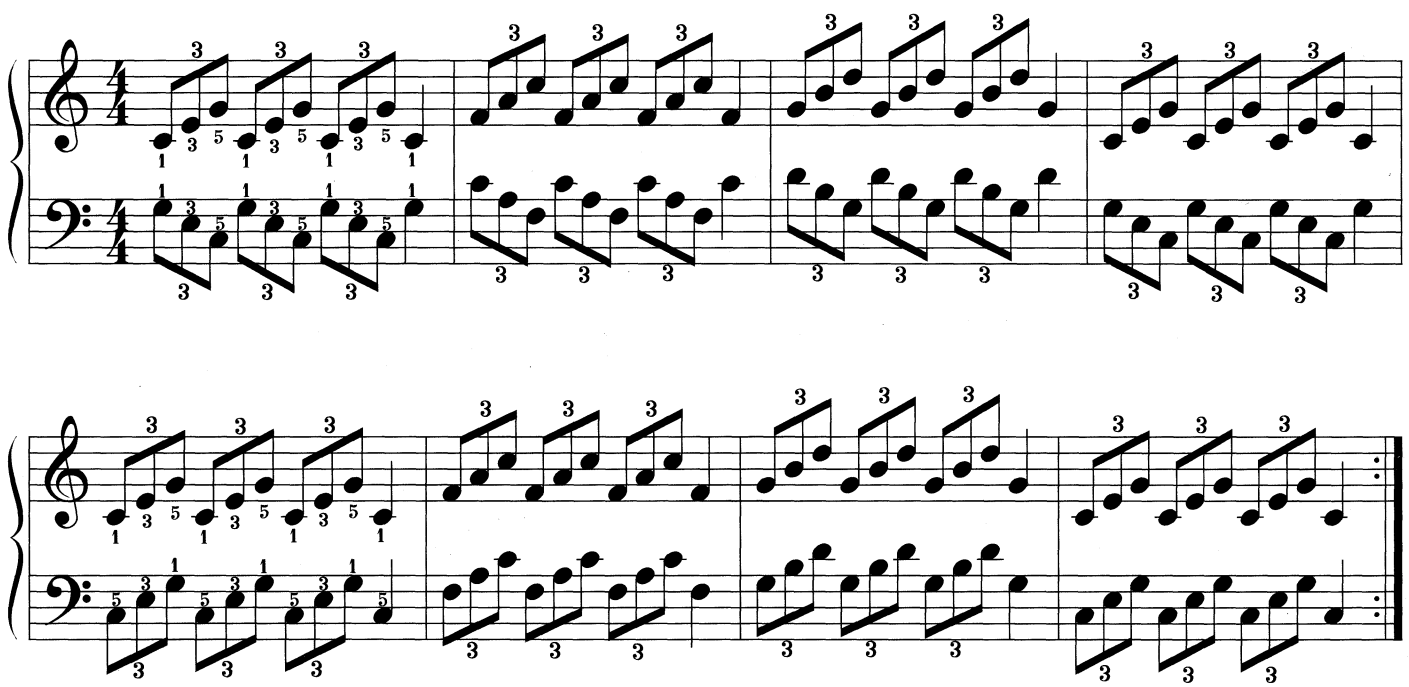




Broken chords

'Triplets' are 3 quavers in the time of 2

Use circular movement, flexible wrist & forearm



Study 5

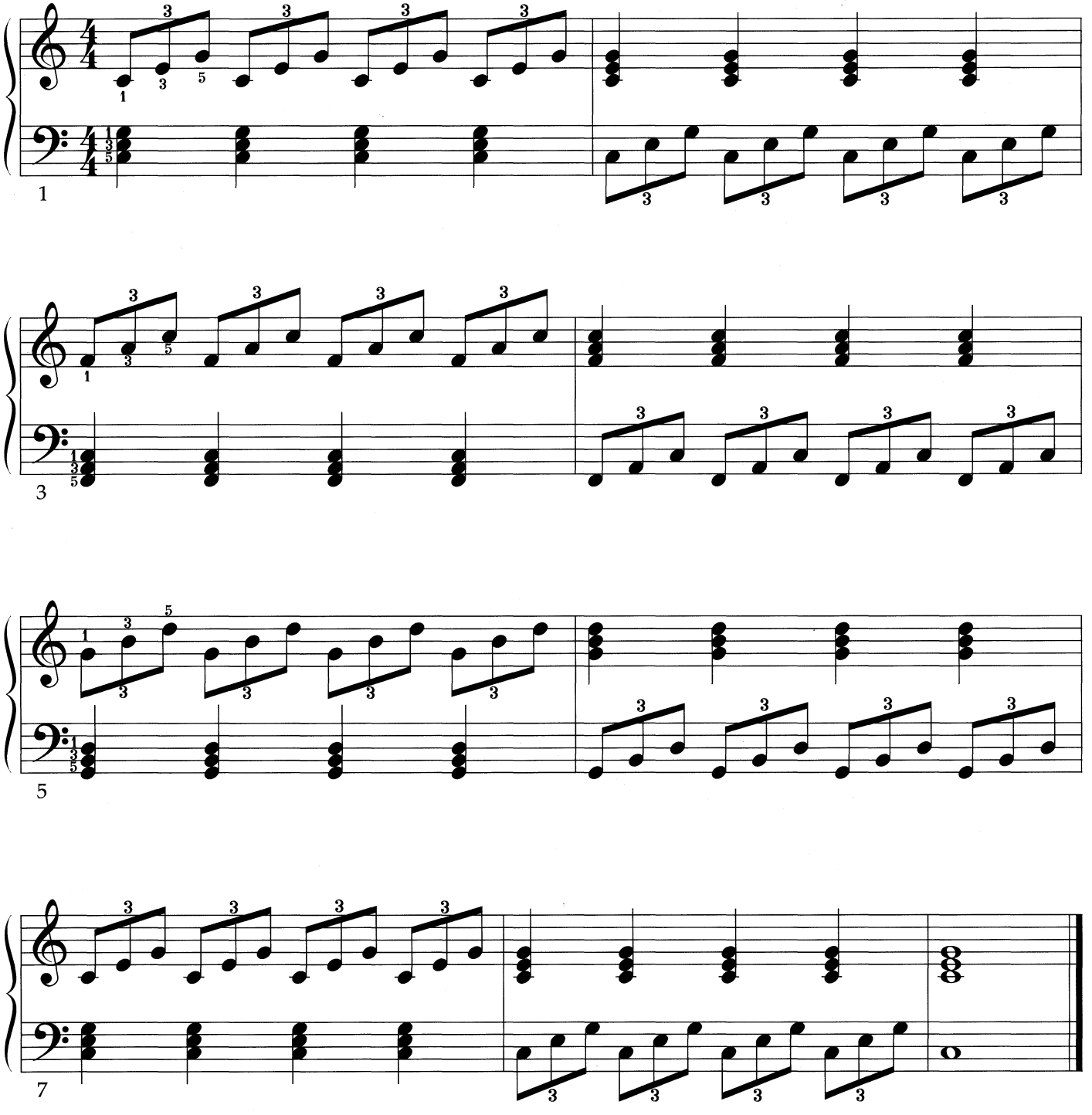
(Broken and unbroken chords mixed)

This combines 'Up-Down' & circular movements

Practice will improve your coordination

Practise hands separately first

Practise slowly



Maria zu lieben

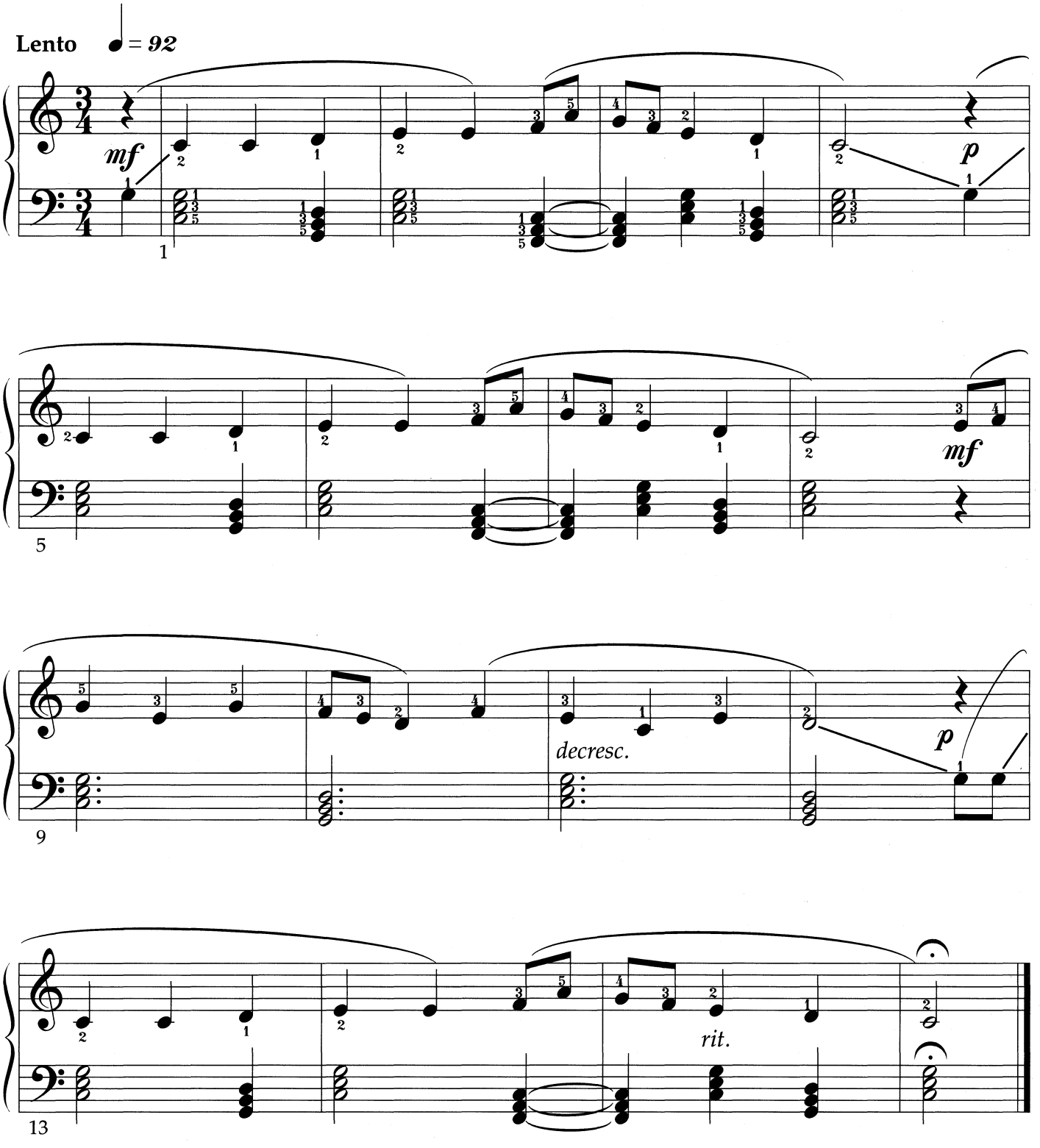
(For the love of Mary)

Make a small gap at the ends of phrases

Melody in the RH, chords in the LH

Watch out for the tied chords

Observe the RH rests



Study 6

(Chord inversions)

Inversions change the bottom note of the chord

F & G major chords have same fingering as C

This study will help develop your technique

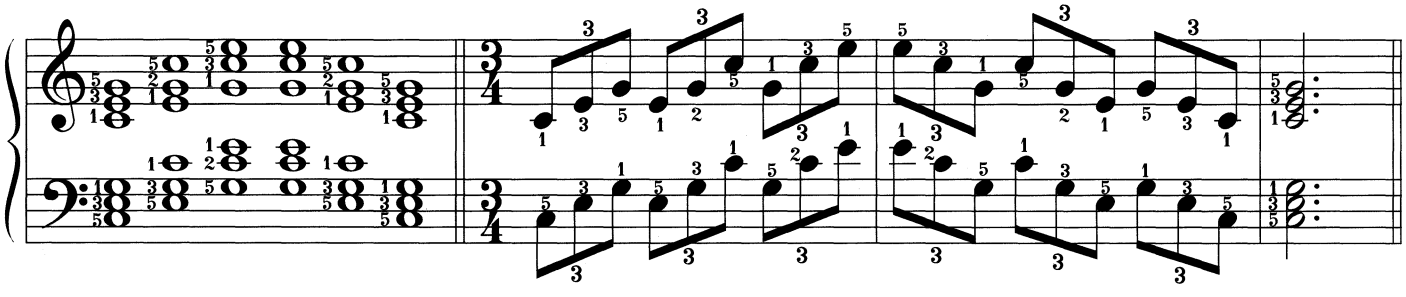
Root positions, 1st and 2nd inversions

Practise firstly unbroken, as written

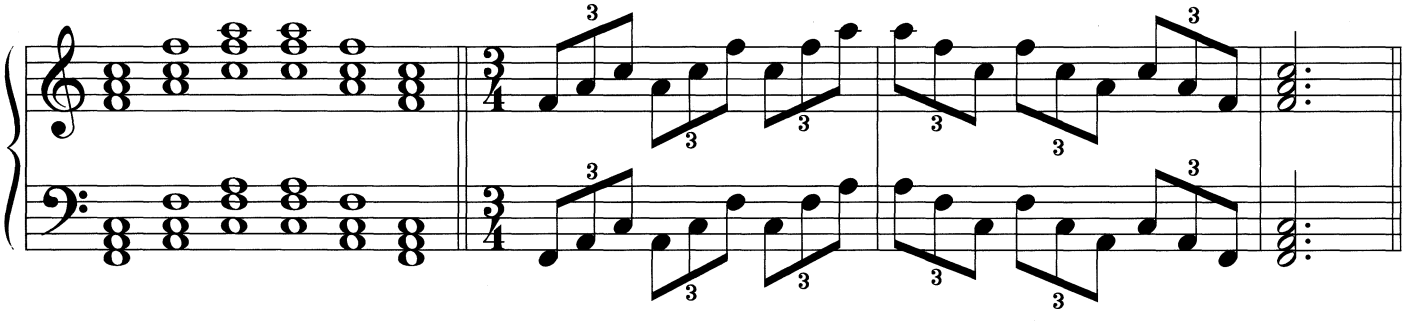
Then practise broken chords

Hands separately first

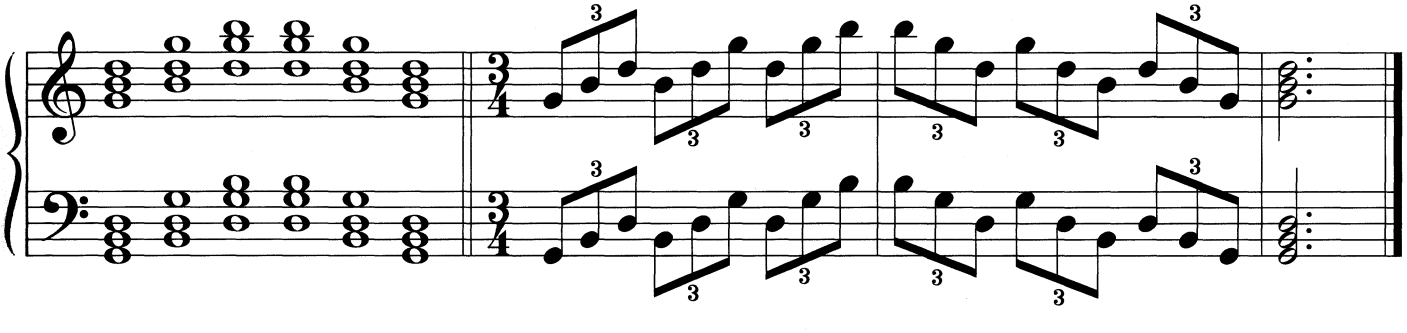
C major chord



F major chord



G major chord



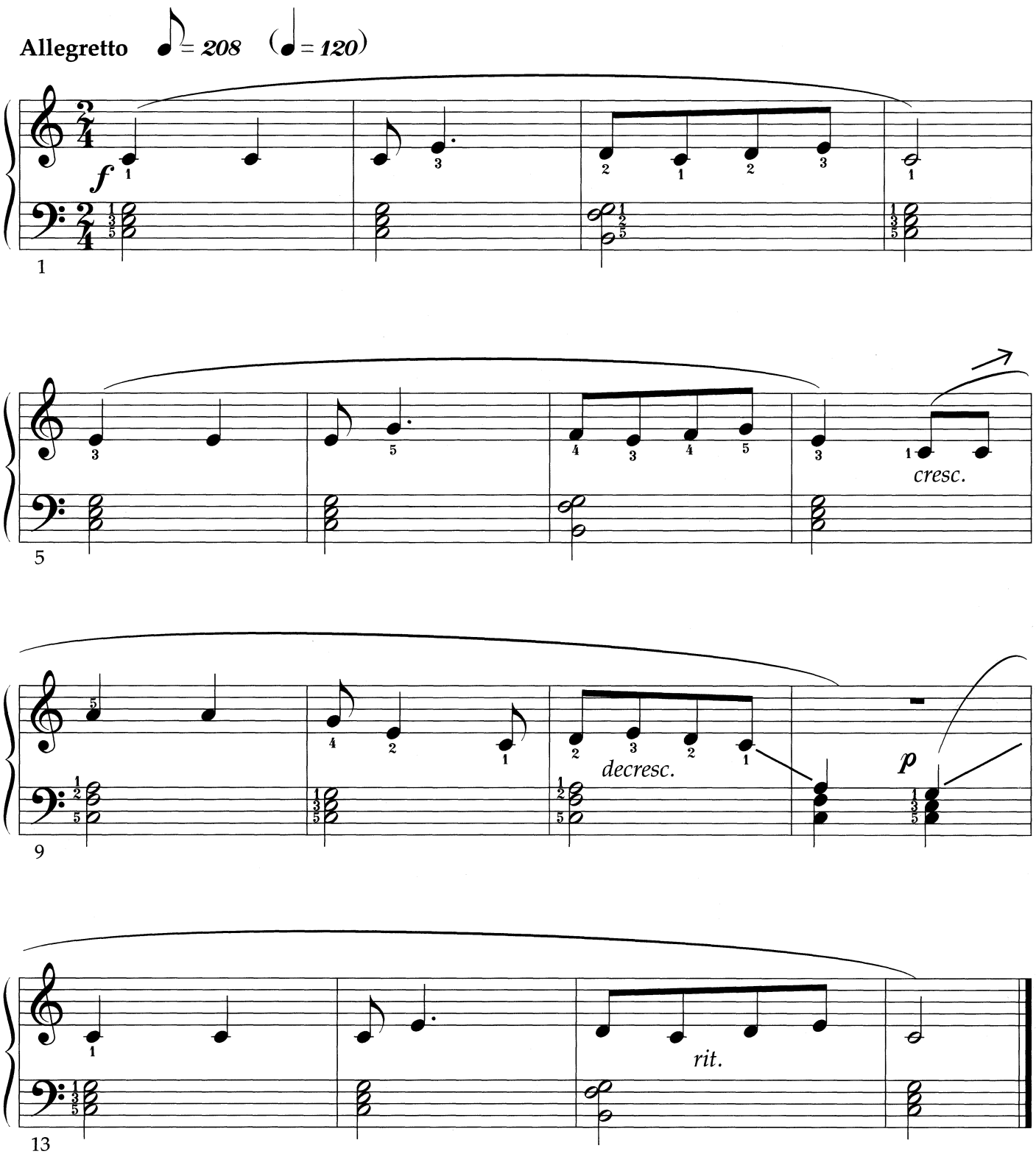
Ten green bottles

Dominant 7th chord in LH (bar 3)

In bar 12 the melody goes into LH chord

Count 3 quavers for the RH dotted crotchets

Notes between the beats produce syncopation



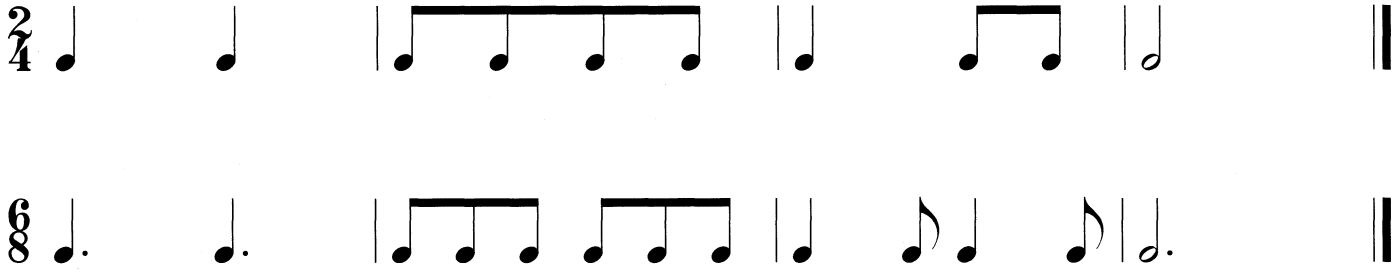
More time signatures / Grouping of notes

Clap and compare these rhythms

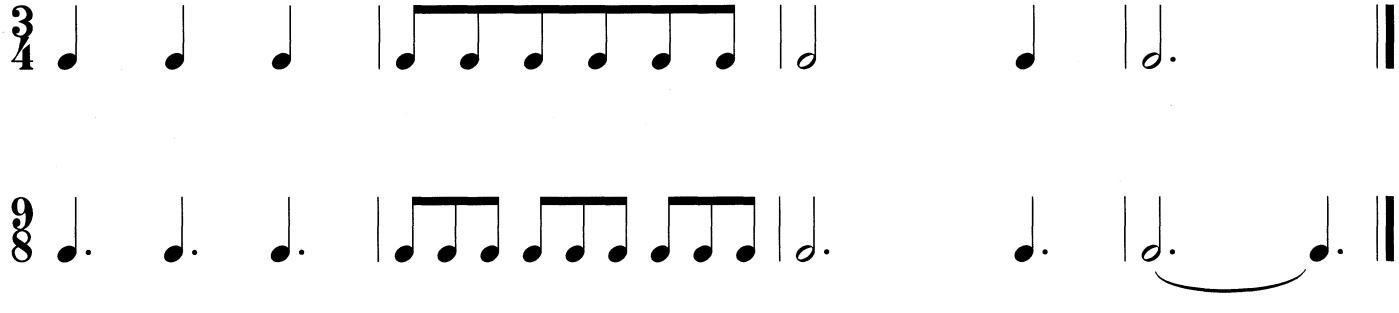
In simple time the beat is divided into two

In compound time the beat is divided into three

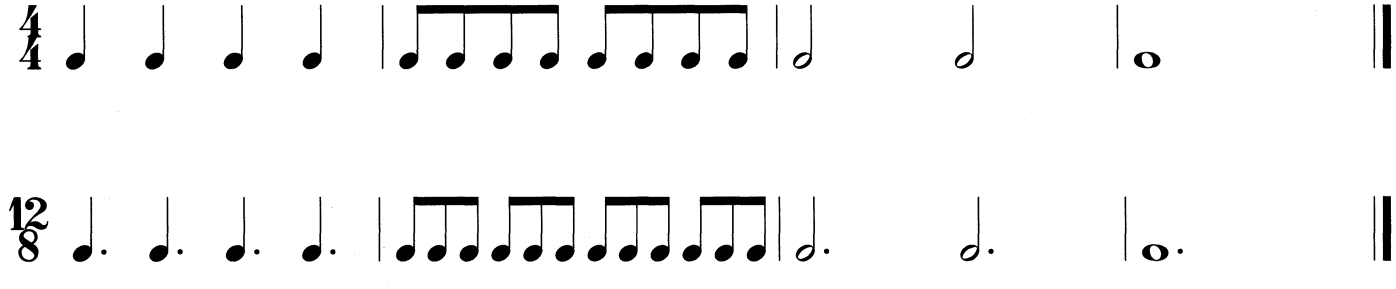
2 beats in a bar



3 beats in a bar



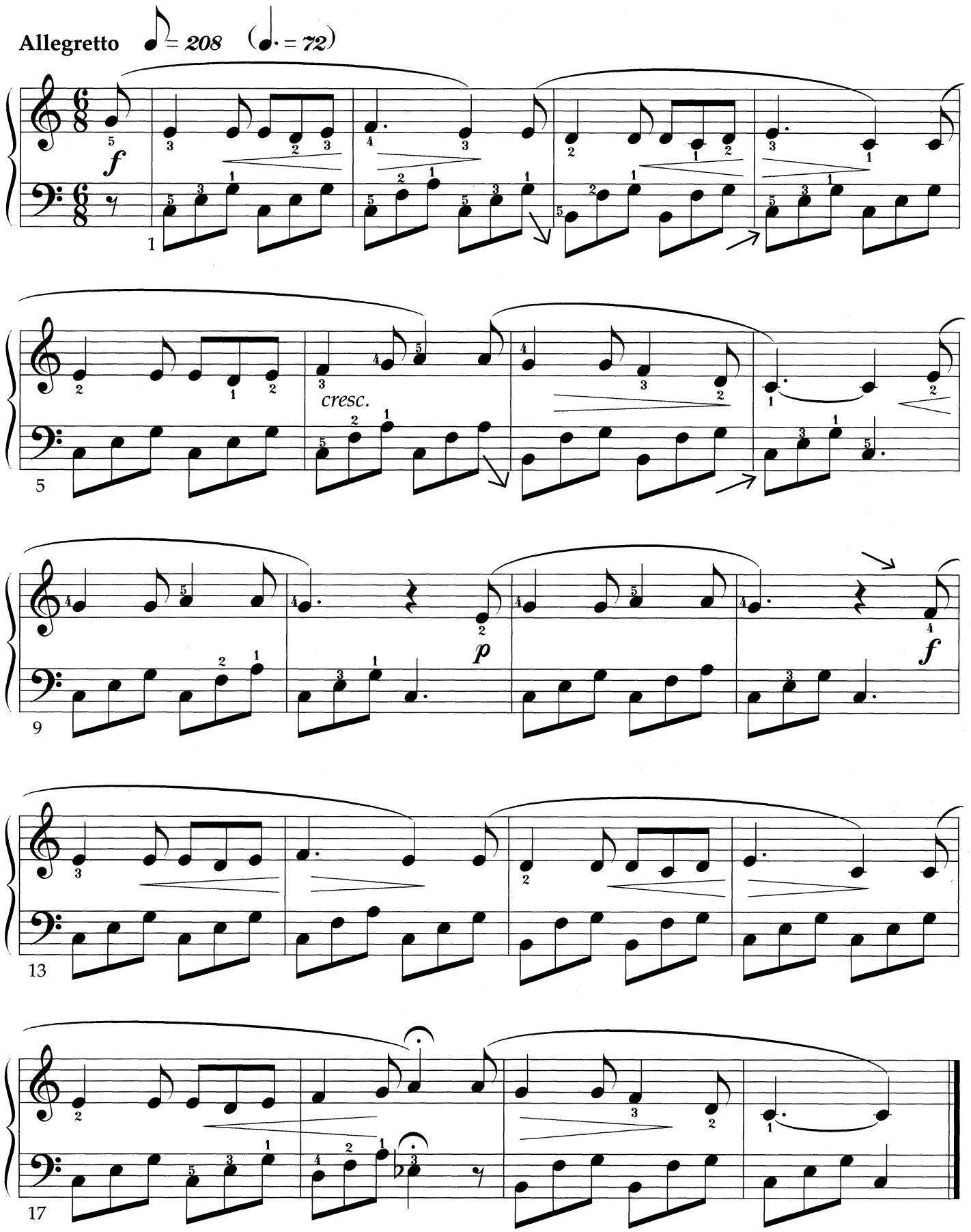
4 beats in a bar



For he's a jolly good fellow

Practise LH in block chords at first

Practise changes of hand position at arrows



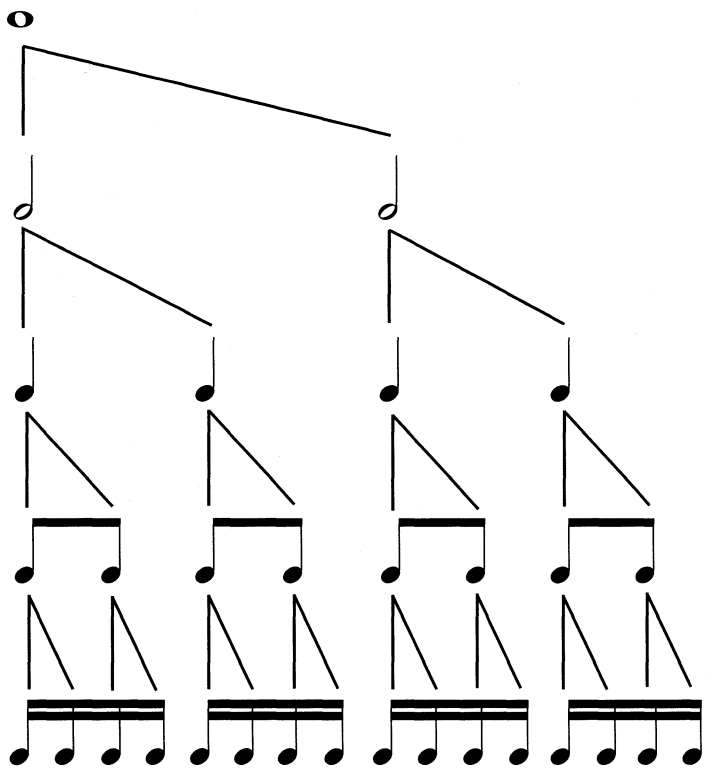
More note values

(Sixteenth notes or semiquavers)

Example 1

How they subdivide

Example 2



A whole note or semibreve

divided into two, makes...

Two half notes or minims

each divided into two, make...

Four quarter notes or crotchets

each divided into two, make...

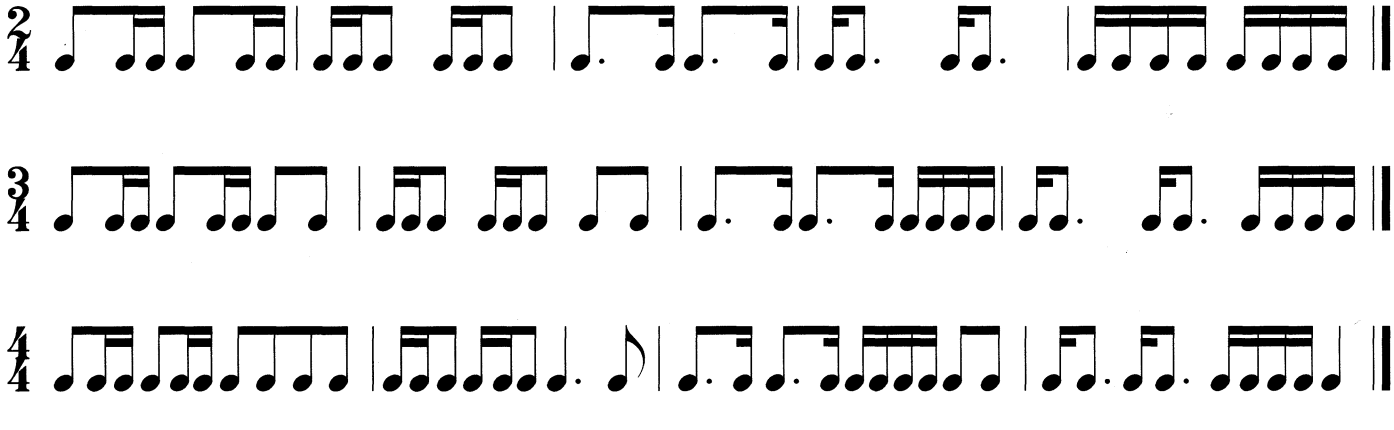
Eight eighth notes or quavers

each divided into two, make...

Sixteen sixteenth notes/semiquavers

Some typical rhythms

Example 3

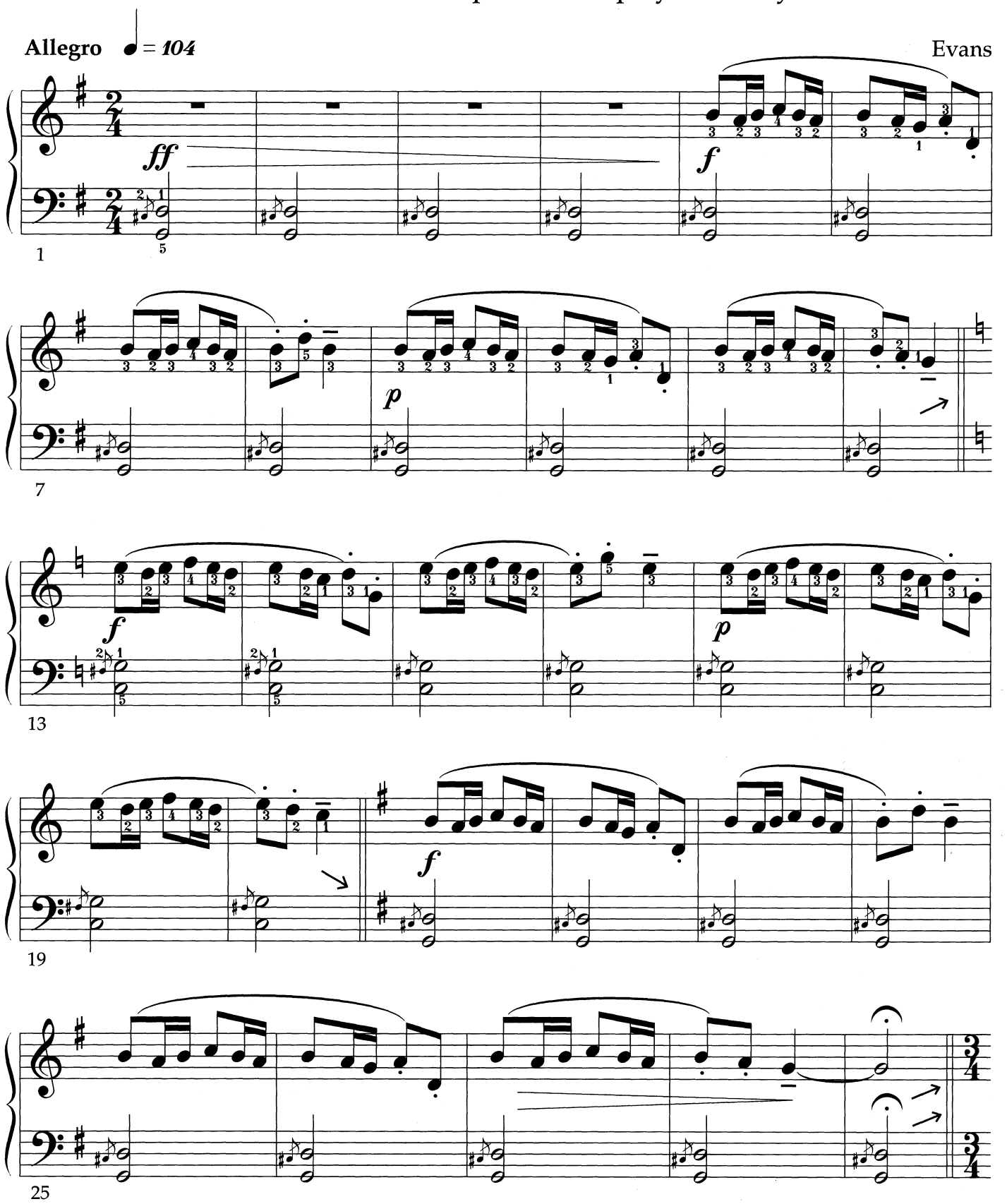


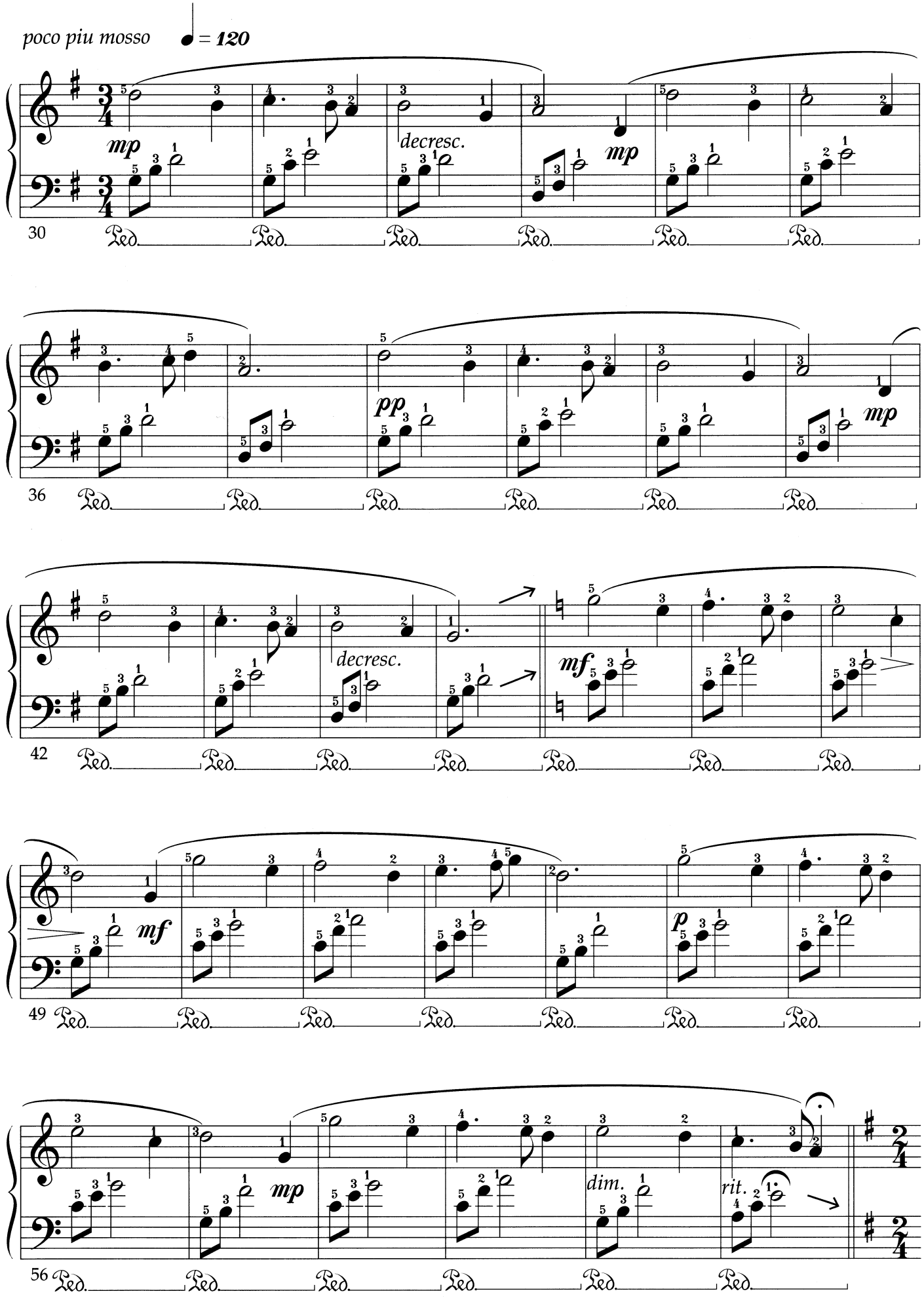
Highland Bagpipes

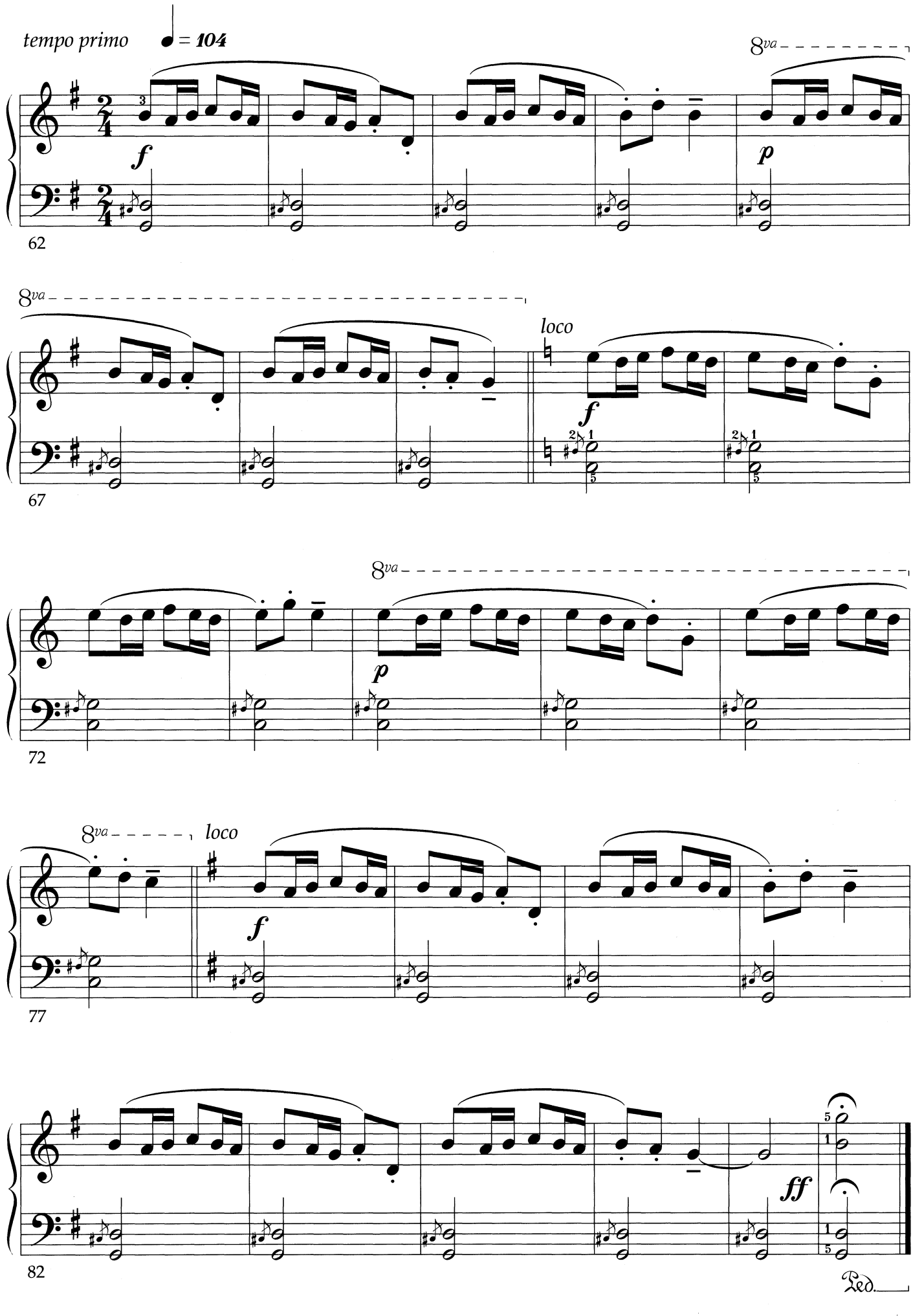
The middle section uses pedal

The LH grace note is played with the G

Make sure the semiquavers are played evenly




poco piu mosso
♩ = 120
mp
decresc.
mp
30
pp
mp
36
decresc.
mf
42
mf
p
49
mp
dim.
rit.
56

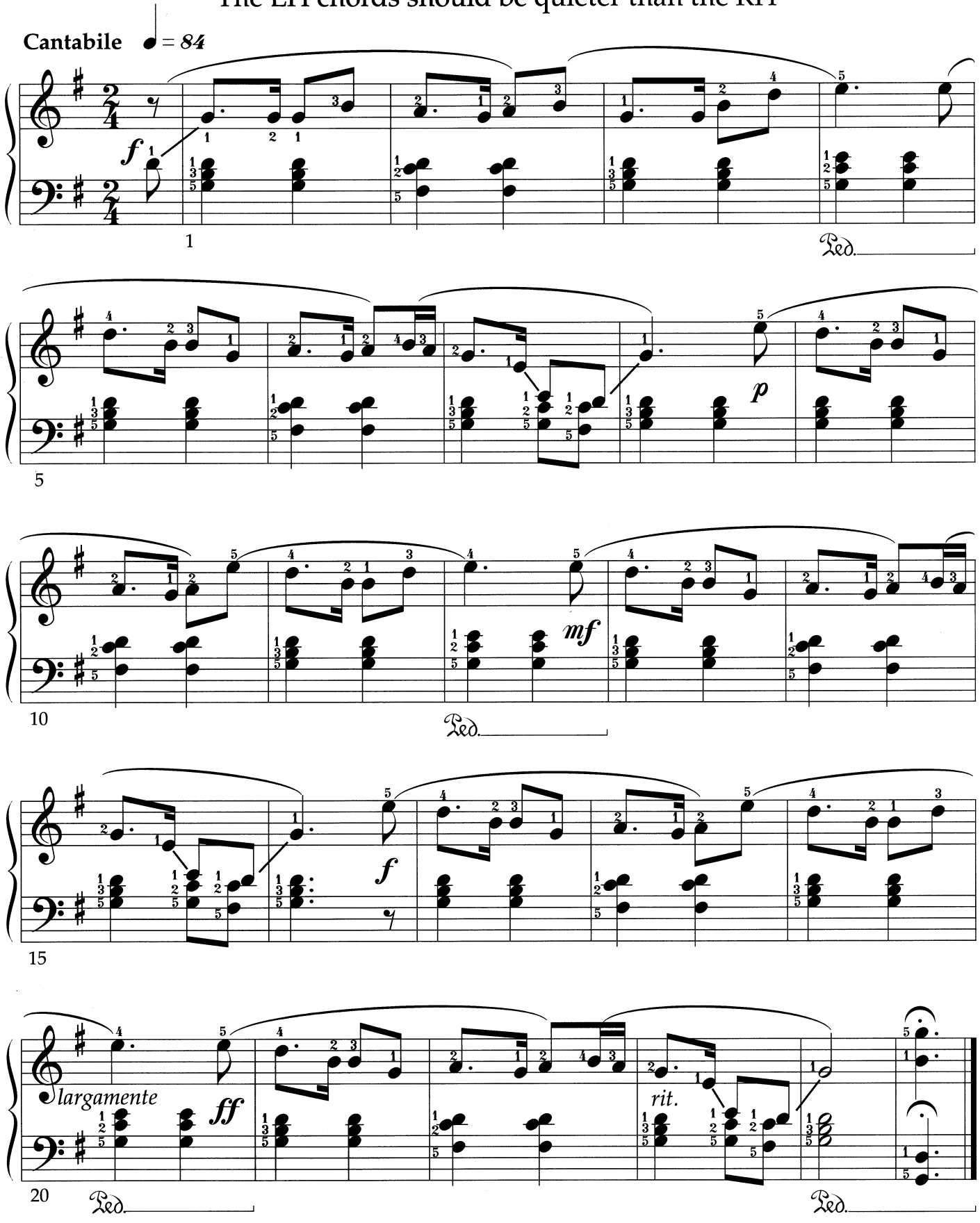

tempo primo
♩ = 104
8va
f
p
62
8va
loco
f
67
8va
p
72
8va
loco
f
77
ff
82
Ped.

Auld lang syne

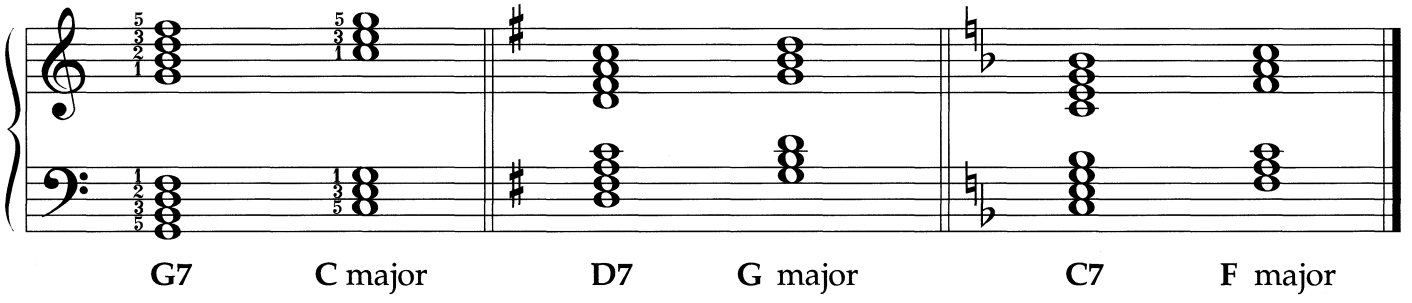
Play the RH **dotted rhythm** accurately

Do lots of **hands separately** practice first

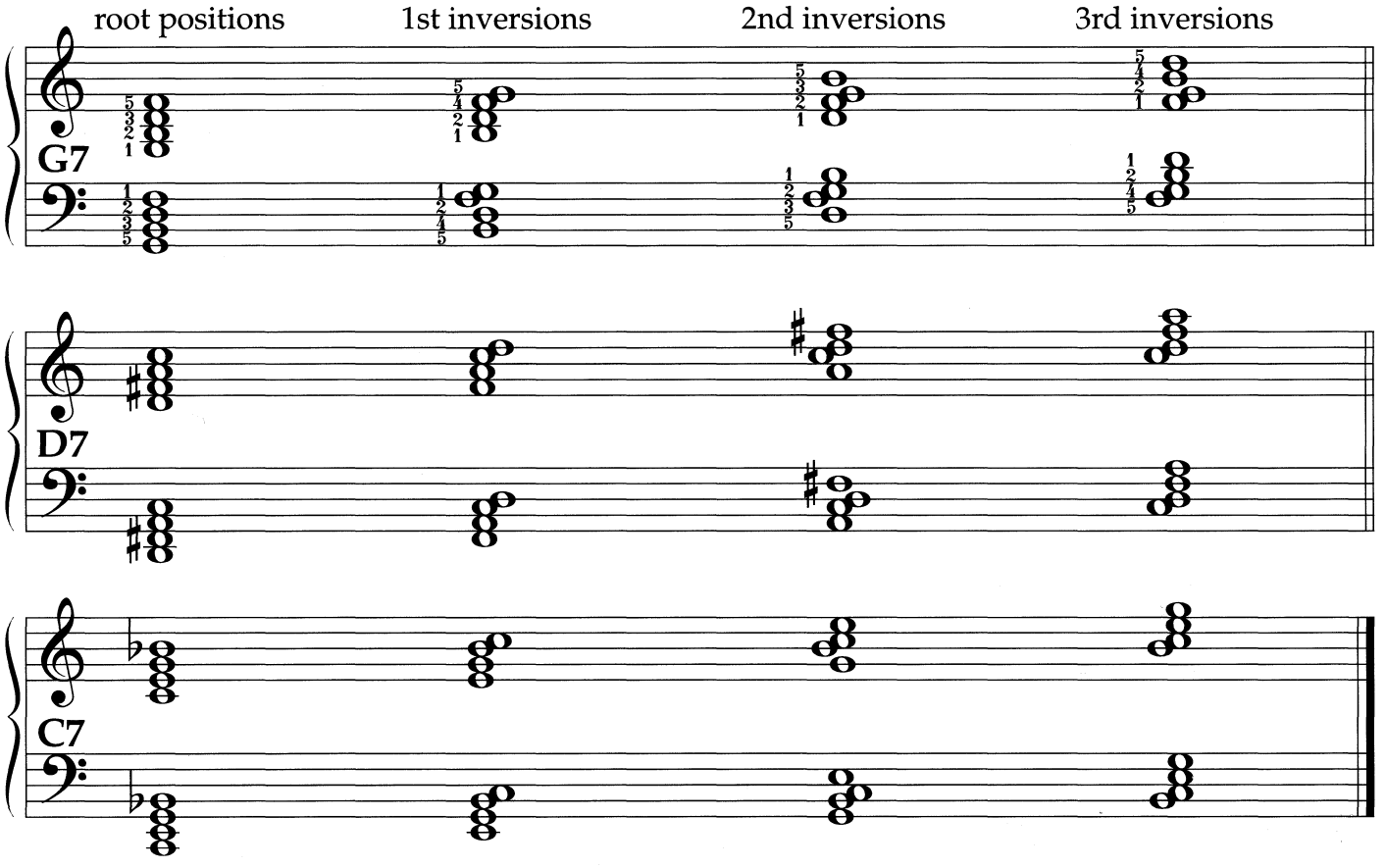
The LH chords should be quieter than the RH



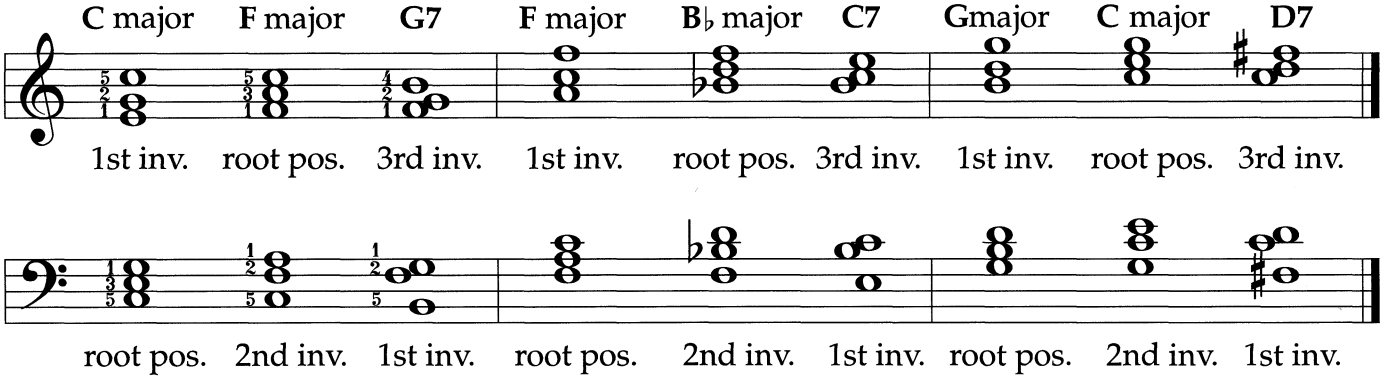
Dominant 7th chords



Inversions of Dominant 7th chords



Chords from scale studies



Study 7

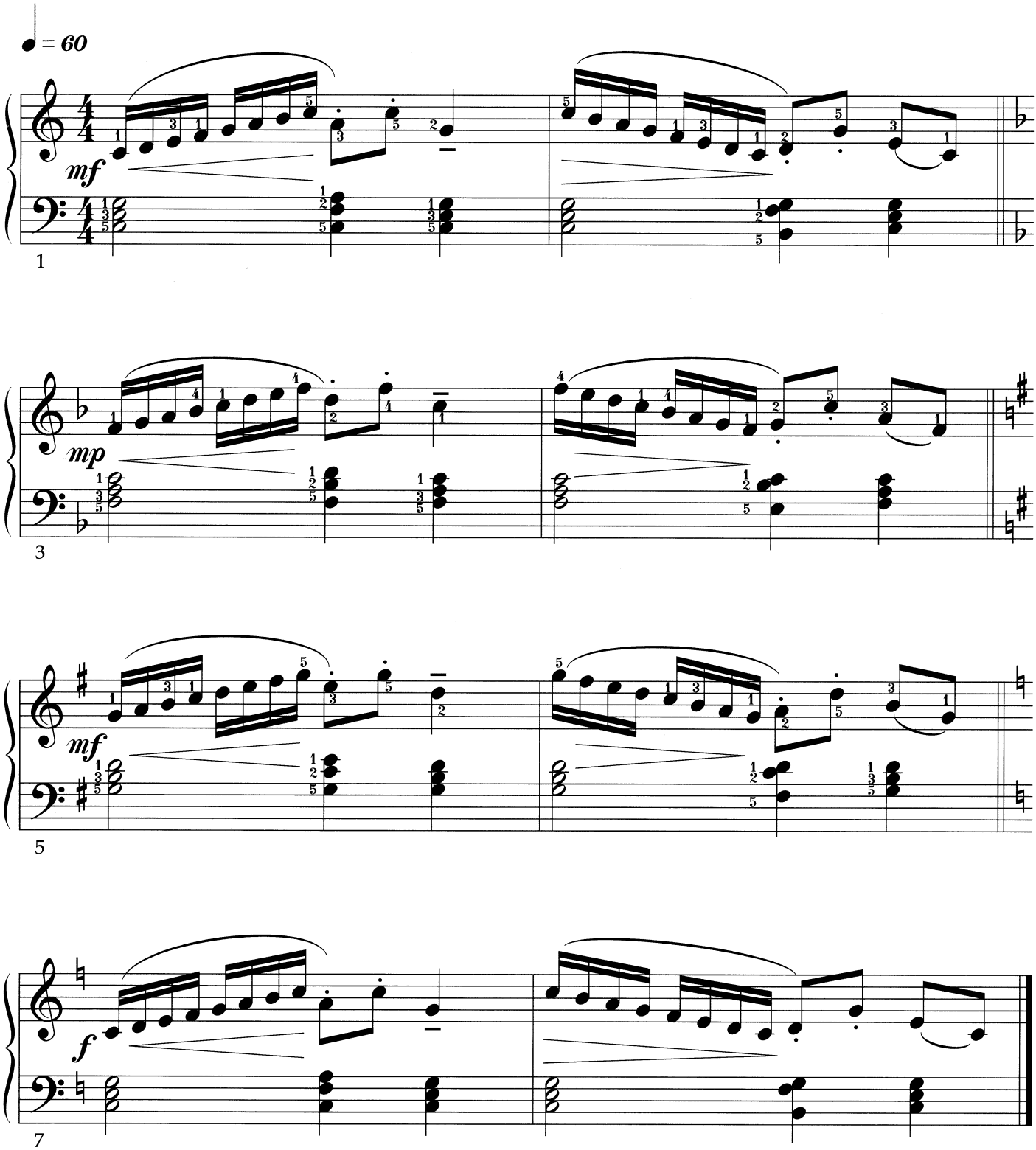
(RH scale study)

This exercise combines chords with scales

Make the RH semiquavers clear & even

Observe the crescendi & diminuendi

Practise slowly at first



Study 8

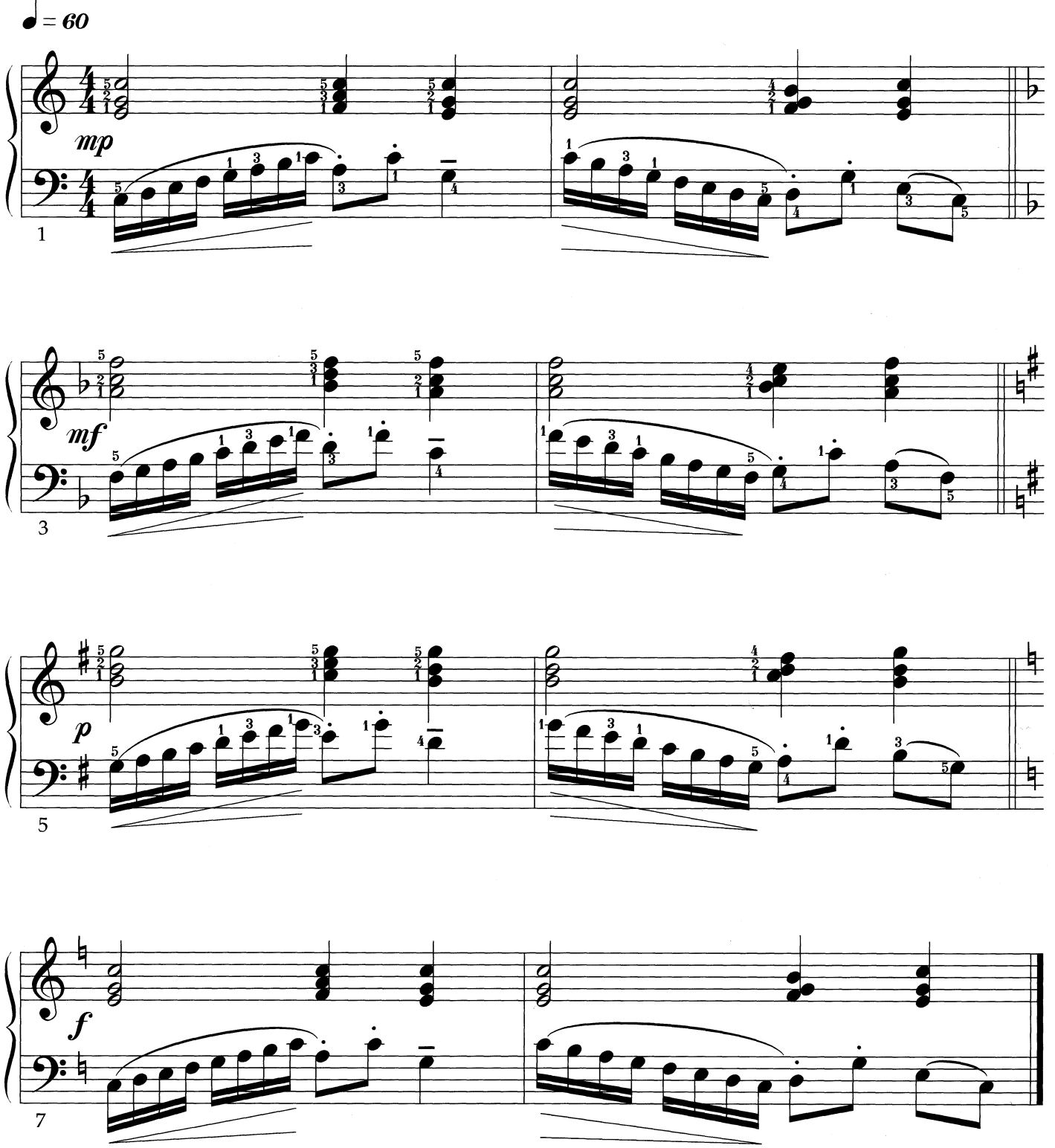
(LH scale study)

The LH has the semiquavers

Remember hands separately at first

Slow, careful practice of short sections

This might need more practice than study 7

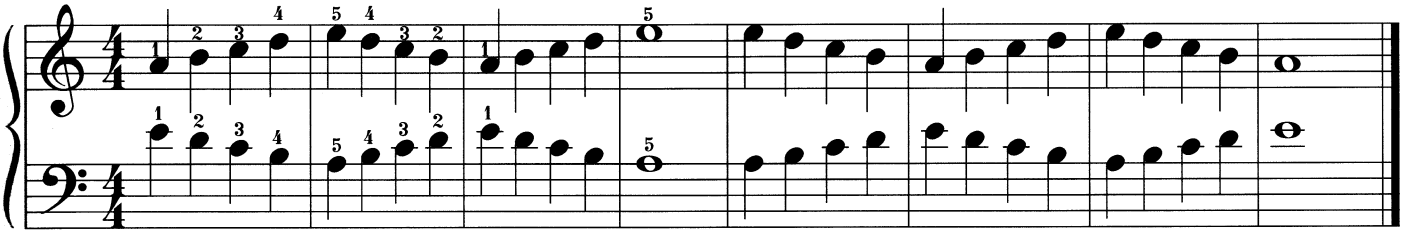


Exercises in A minor

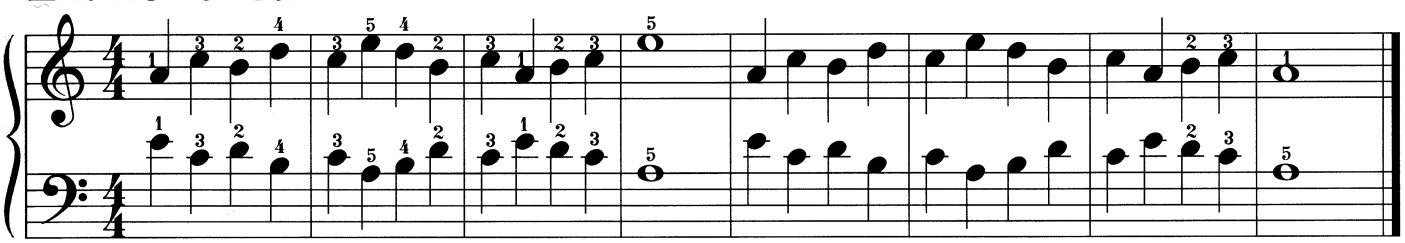
Remember to keep the fingers curved

These will help you play the rest of the book

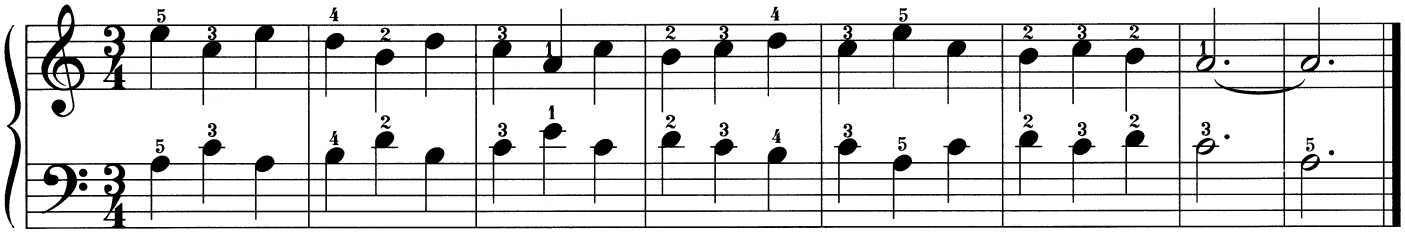
Ex. 19 ♩ = 126



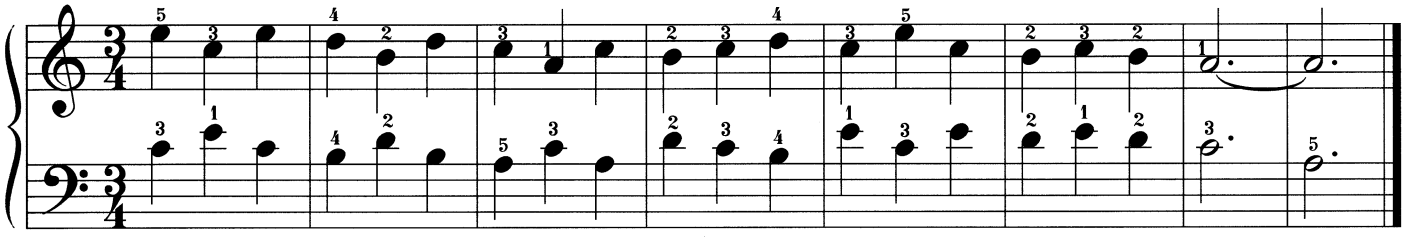
Ex. 20 ♩ = 126



Ex. 21 ♩ = 126

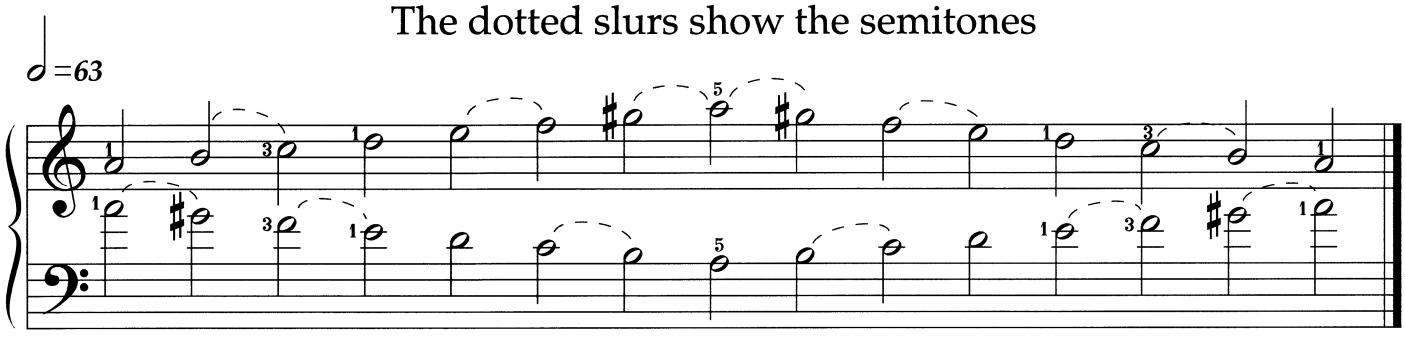


Ex. 22 ♩ = 126



Scale in A minor (harmonic)

The dotted slurs show the semitones



Robin ddiog

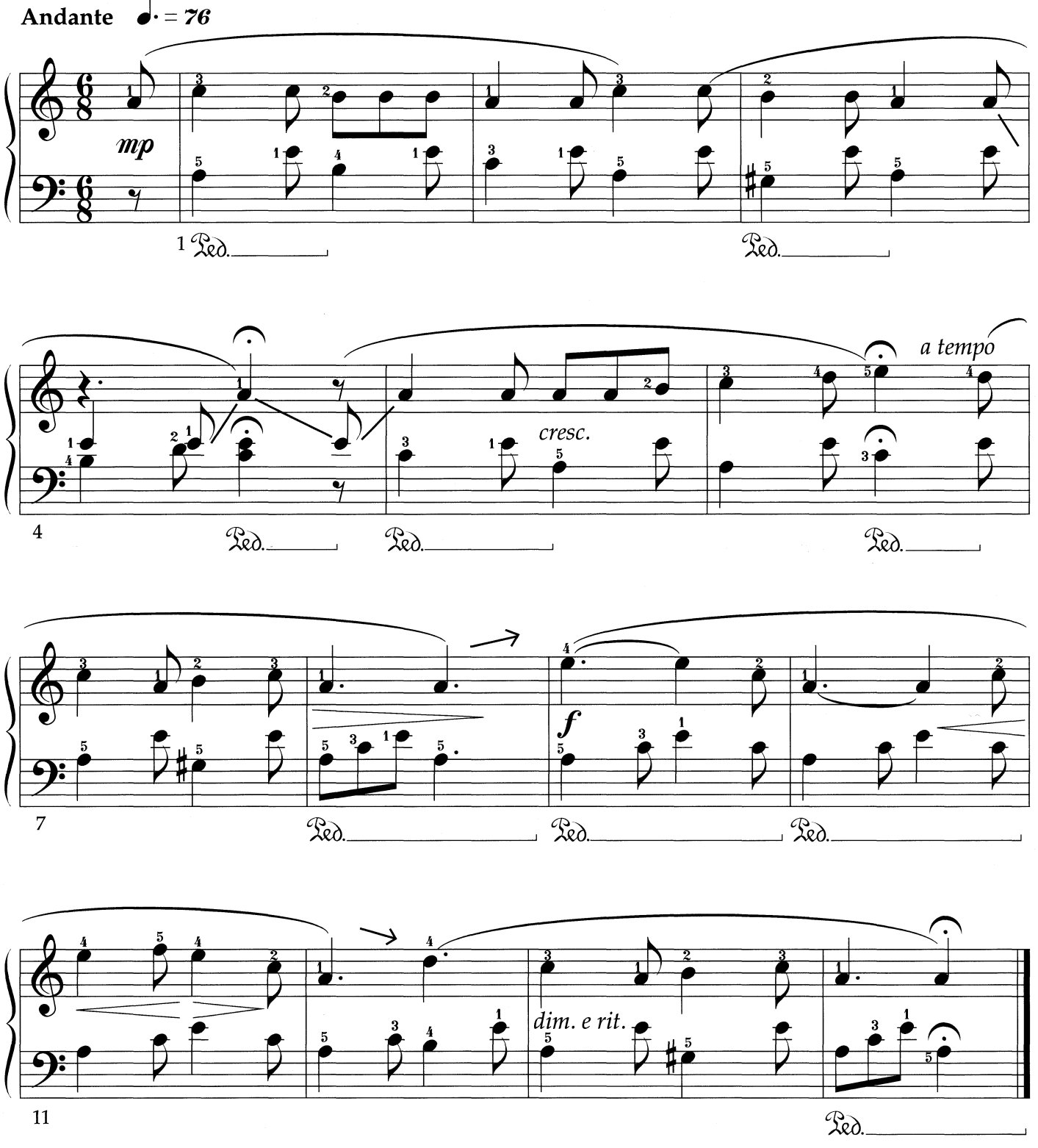
(Lazy Robin)

Observe the RH rests in bar 4

Watch out for G sharps in the LH

Count quavers in this Welsh folk-song

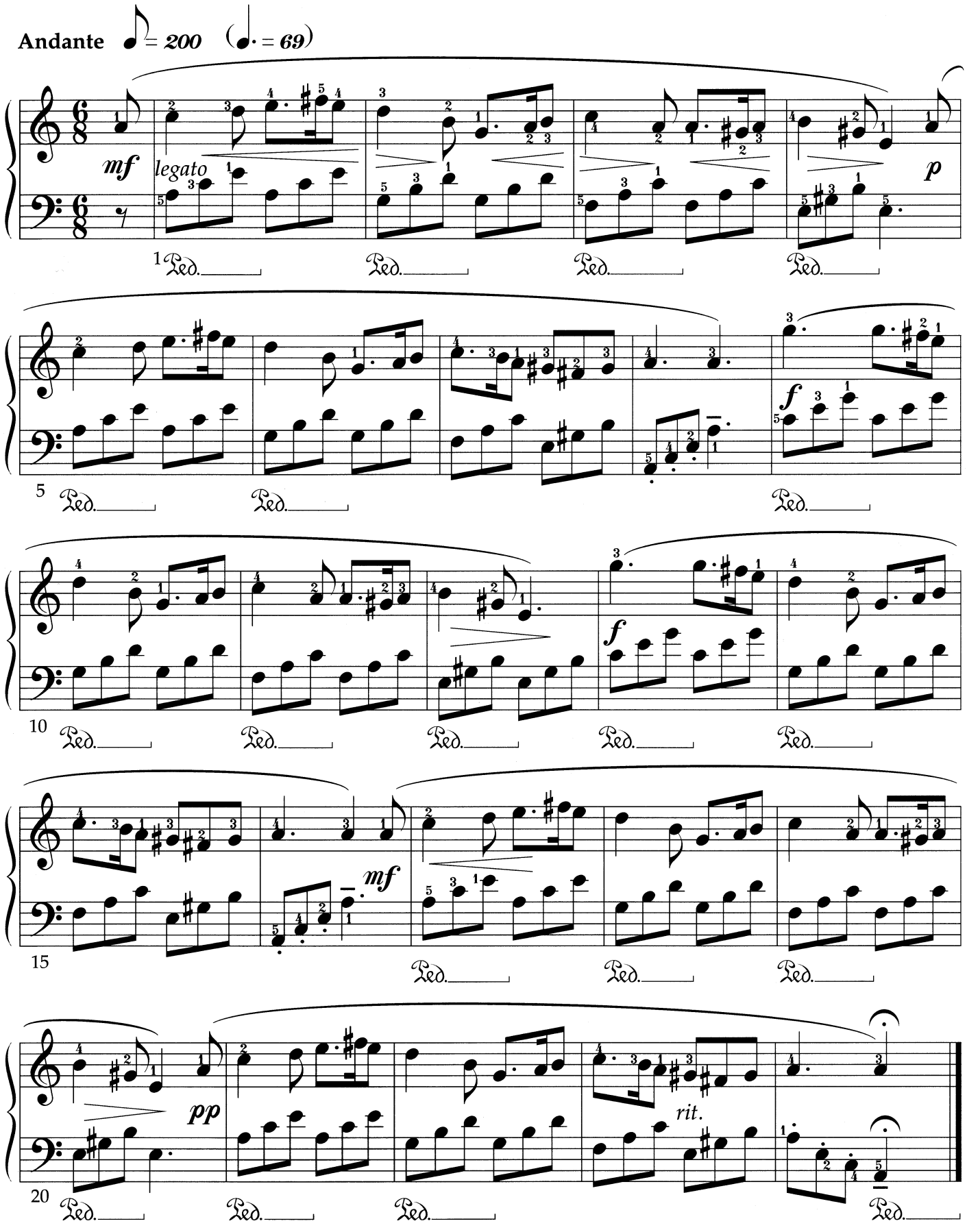
Hold down the crotchets for their full value



Greensleeves

Practise the LH in block chords at first

Take care with the RH dotted rhythms

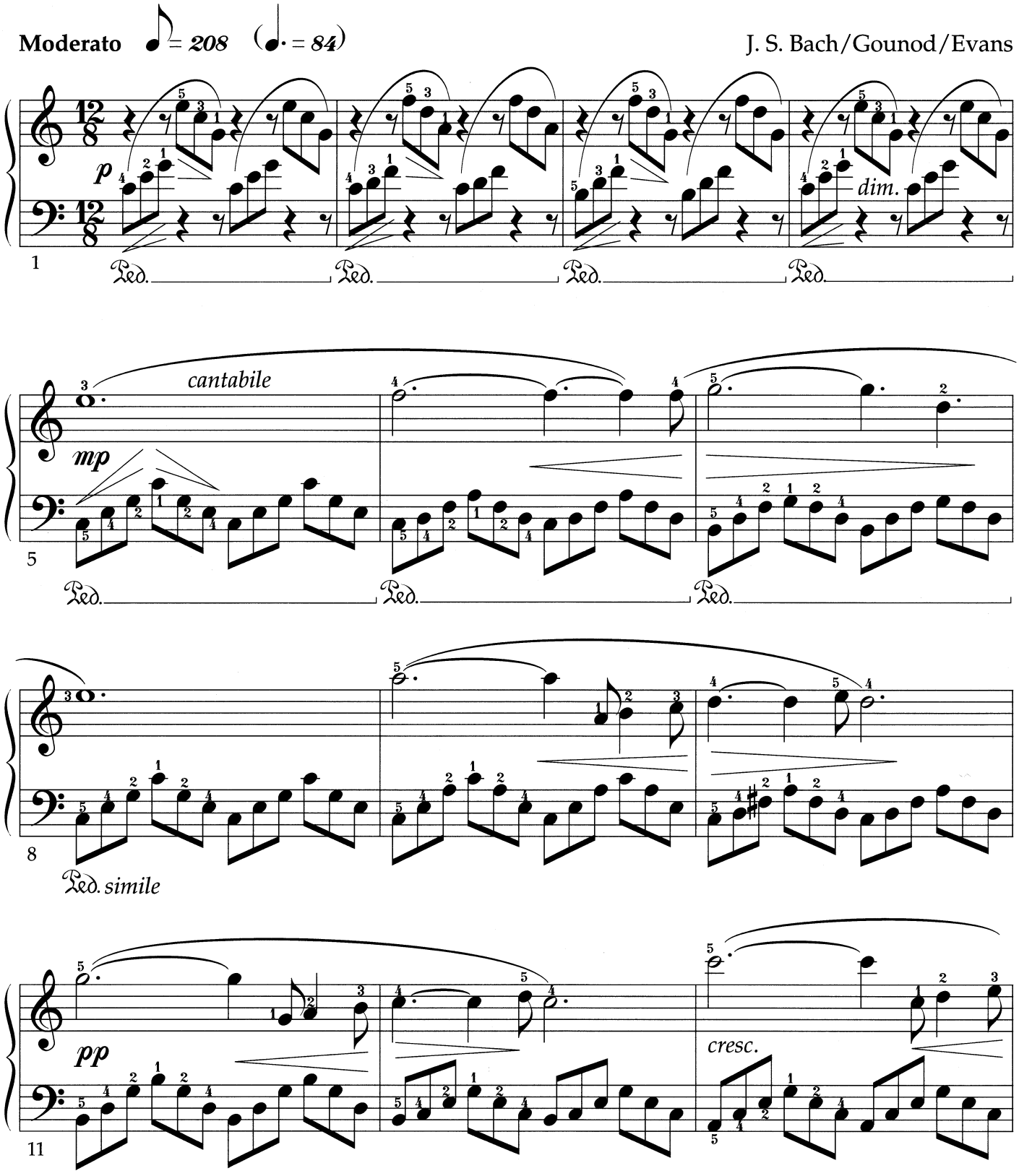


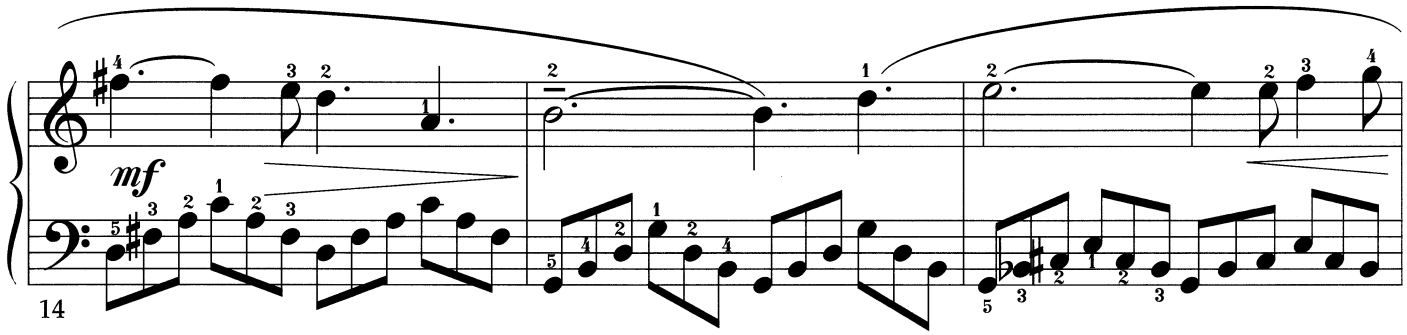
Ave Maria

Block chords practice for the LH

LH must eventually be quieter than RH

Always observe the expression marks carefully

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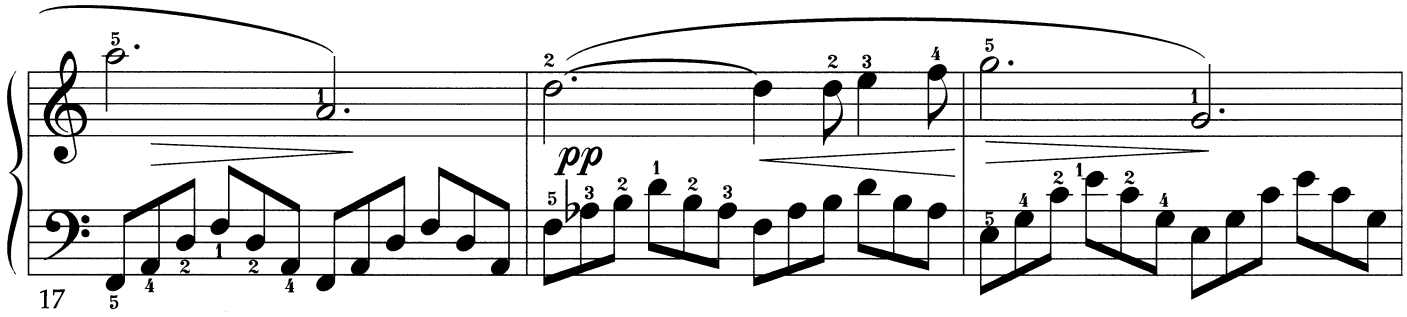
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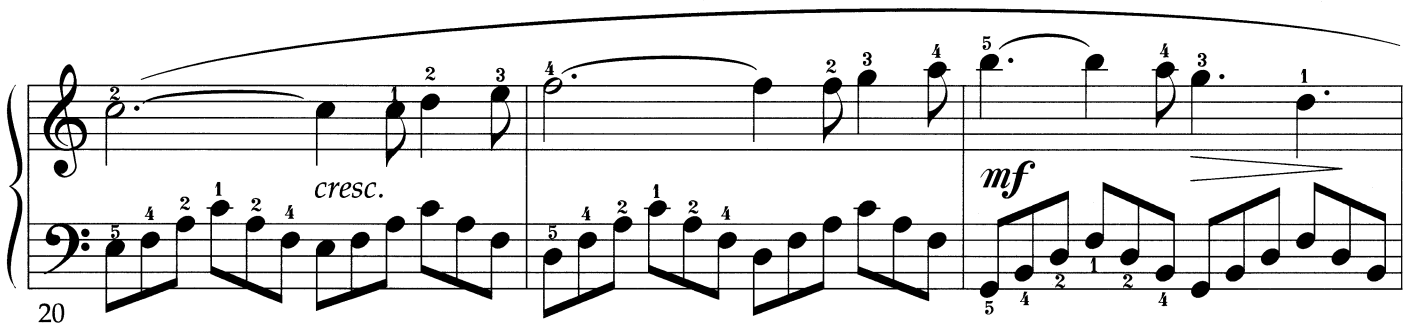
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mf
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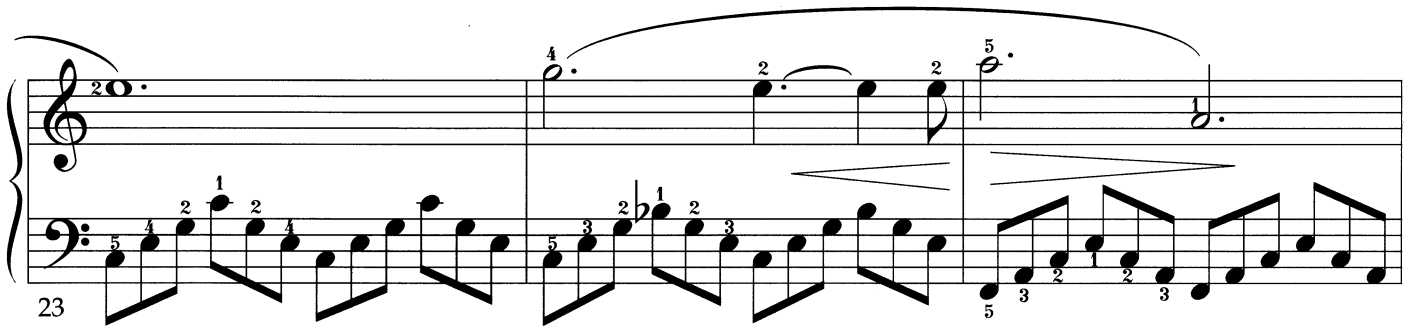
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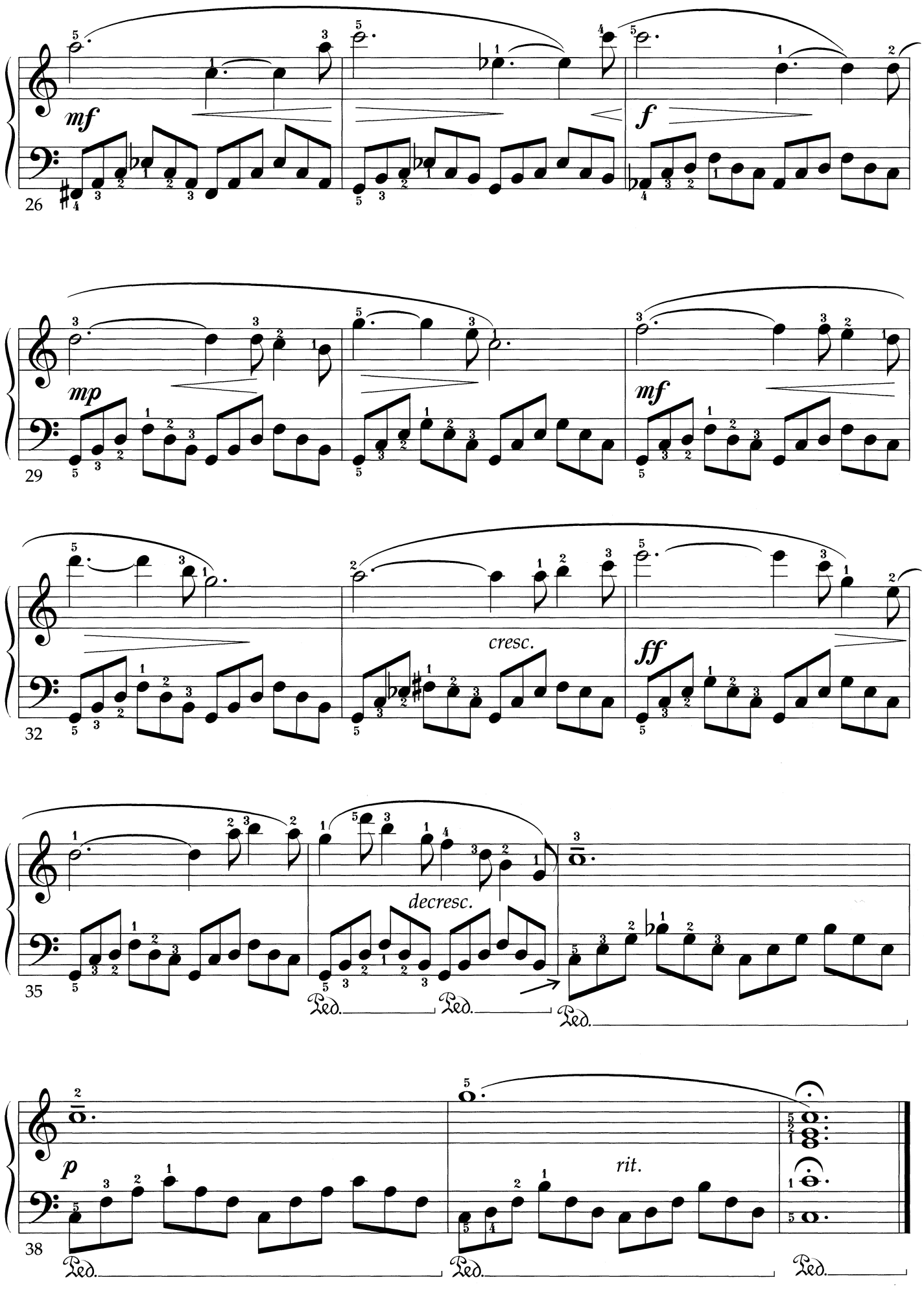
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