INTERVAL IMMERSION

But-the-Pieces Plan: 9-Week Interval Immersion

Overview

This 'But-the-Pieces' lesson plan is designed to help your students improve their knowledge and practical use of intervals in just 9 weeks. This is a great fit for any student who needs to reboot their reading skills, such as students transfering from a note name-focussed method, or for any student who needs extra interval reinforcement outside of their repertoire.

Follow these lesson plans and, after 9 weeks, your students will have the ability to play and recognise intervals of up to an octave. Each week works on a particular interval through improvisation, a game and a composing exercise so that they get a practical sense of how the intervals feel on the piano while learning to identify them in written notation.

The last task each week is a short composing prompt which you'll find at the end of this PDF. I recommend starting these with your student at the lesson, using the improvisation you just did as the starting point. Have your student do as much of the writing here as possible, depending on their age, and assign some part of it for homework only after your student has gained confidence with this at the lesson with you.

Quick Look Lesson Plan

WEEK	ACTIVITIES	NOTES:
Week 1	• 'Suspension Bridge' improvisation • Hill Hike • Composing prompt no.1	
Week 2	• 'Three-Two Trade' improvisation • Strolls and Skitters • Composing prompt no.2	
Week 3	• 'Three-Two Trade' improvisation • Treacherous Treasure • Composing prompt no.3	
Week 4	• 'Flowering Fifths' improvisation • Swifterval • Composing prompt no.4	
Week 5	• 'Doubling Down' improvisation • Interval Bob • Composing prompt no.5	
Week 6	• 'Doubling Down' improvisation • Nimble Neighbours • Composing prompt no.6	
Week 7	• 'Sixth Sense' improvisation • Intervallactic • Composing prompt no.7	
Week 8	• 'Bluesy Backstep' improvisation • Interval Sprinterval Shminterval • Composing prompt no.8	
Week 9	• 'Bluesy Backstep' improvisation • Interval Sprinterval Shminterval • Composing prompt no.8	

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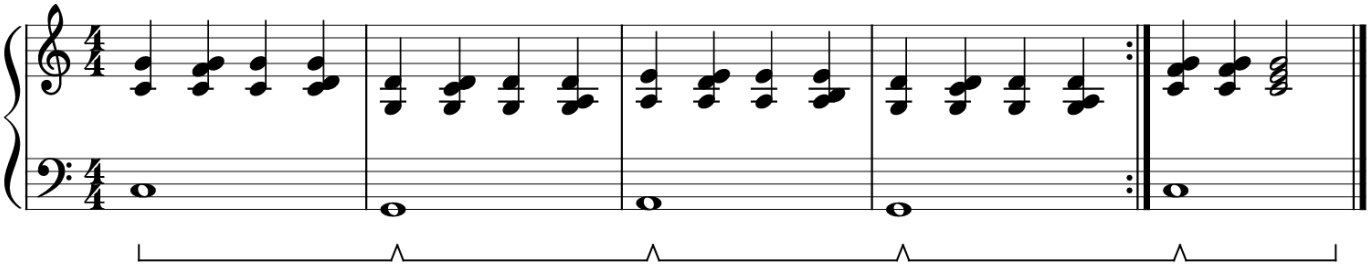
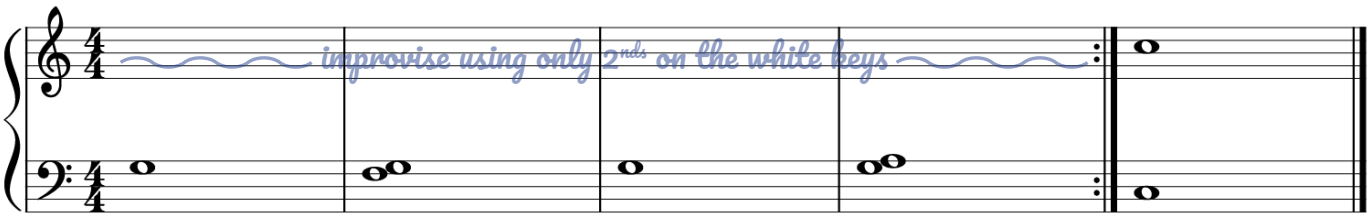
WEEK 1: 2NDS

IMPROVISATION: SUSPENSION BRIDGE

- Discuss 2nds (or steps) and have your student find some on the piano.
- Play this pattern while your student improvises using only 2nds and sames. (Repeat the pattern as many times as you wish before playing the ending.)



- Teach your student this simplified left hand pattern and the ending, then allow them some time to improvise with 2nds and sames in the right hand while keeping the left hand pattern going.



GAME

Play Hill Hike together to practise 2nds up and down on the staff.

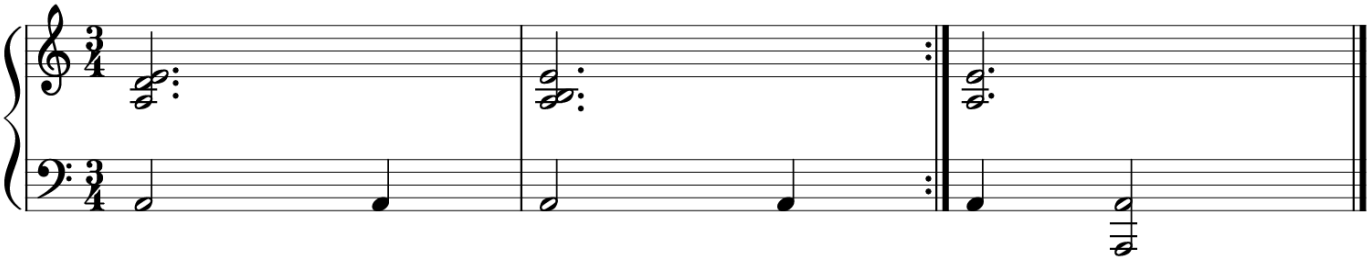
COMPOSING & HOME EXPLORATION

Start composing prompt no.1 together and ask your student to complete it at home.

WEEK 2: 2NDS AND 3RDS

IMPROVISATION: THREE – TWO TRADE

- Play this pattern while your student improvises using only 2nds and sames on the white keys.



- Discuss 3rds (or skips) and have your student find some on the piano.
- Play this pattern while your student improvises using only 3rds and sames.

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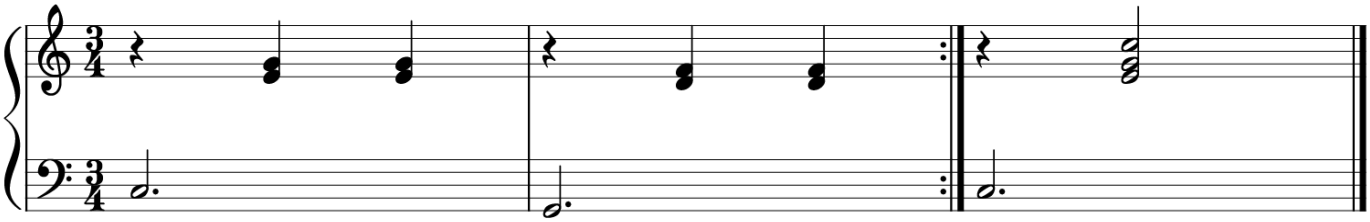
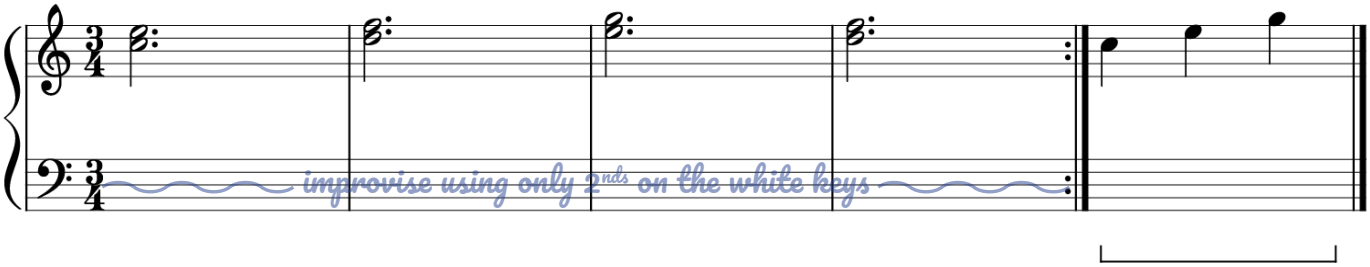


• Teach your student this simplified right hand pattern and the ending, then allow them some time to improvise with 3rds in the left hand while keeping the right hand pattern going.



GAME

Play Strolls and Skitters together to practise 2nds and 3rds on the staff.

COMPOSING & HOME EXPLORATION

Start composing prompt no.2 together and ask your student to complete it at home.

WEEK 3: 2NDS & 3RDS

IMPROVISATION: THREE – TWO TRADE

• Improvise together using the same patterns as last week.
• Improvise together once more. This time, tell your student that you are going to switch back and forth between the two patterns and they need to listen carefully and switch from 2nds to 3rds or vice versa to match your playing.
• Review the solo improvisation pattern from last week and then have your student try it with the pattern in the left hand while improvising in the right hand.

GAME

Play Treacherous Treasure together to practise 2nds and 3rds up and down on the staff.

COMPOSING & HOME EXPLORATION

Start composing prompt no.3 together and ask your student to complete it at home.

WEEK 4: 2NDS, 3RDS & 5THS

IMPROVISATION: FLOWERING FIFTHS

• Discuss 5ths and have your student find some on the piano.
• Play this pattern while your student improvises using only 5ths (harmonic and melodic). They should use both hands and keep their thumbs beside each other as they move around the piano.

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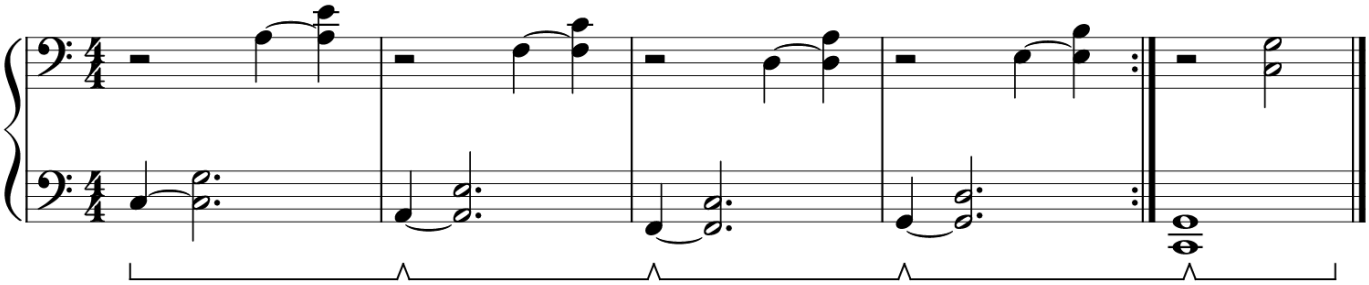


• The solo version of this improvisation is the same for the student. They can hold the pedal down while they experiment with 5ths all over the keyboard.

GAME

Play Swifterval together to practise 2nds, 3rds and 5ths on the staff.

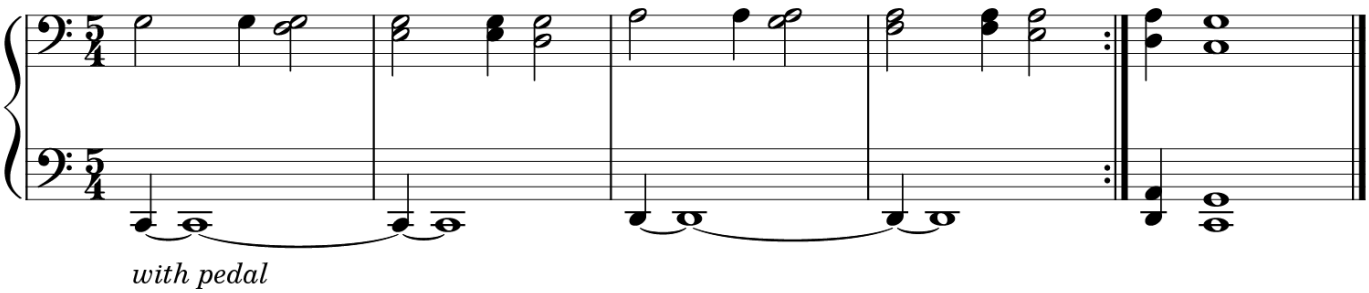
COMPOSING & HOME EXPLORATION

Start composing prompt no.4 together and ask your student to complete it at home.

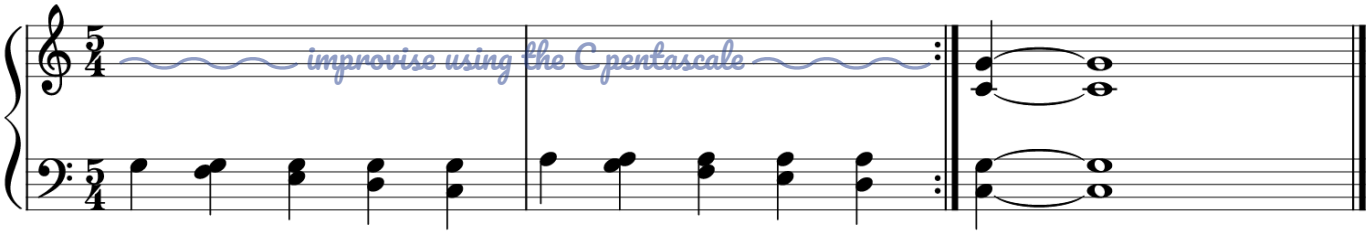
WEEK 5: 2NDS, 3RDS, 4THS & 5THS

IMPROVISATION: DOUBLING DOWN

• Discuss 4ths and have your student find some on the piano.
• Play this pattern while your student improvises using the C major pentascale.



• Teach your student this simplified left hand pattern and the ending, then allow them some time to improvise with the C major pentascale in the right hand while keeping the left hand pattern going. I recommend having them start with long notes in the right hand to make the coordination easier.



GAME

Play Interval Bob together to practise 2nds, 3rds, 4ths & 5ths on the staff.

COMPOSING & HOME EXPLORATION

Start composing prompt no.5 together and ask your student to complete it at home.

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WEEK 6: 2NDS, 3RDS, 4THS & 5THS

IMPROVISATION: DOUBLING DOWN

- Improvise using the same patterns duet and solo as last week but have your student use the D minor pentascale instead of C major.

GAME

Play Nimble Neighbours together to practise 2nds, 3rds, 4ths & 5ths on the staff.

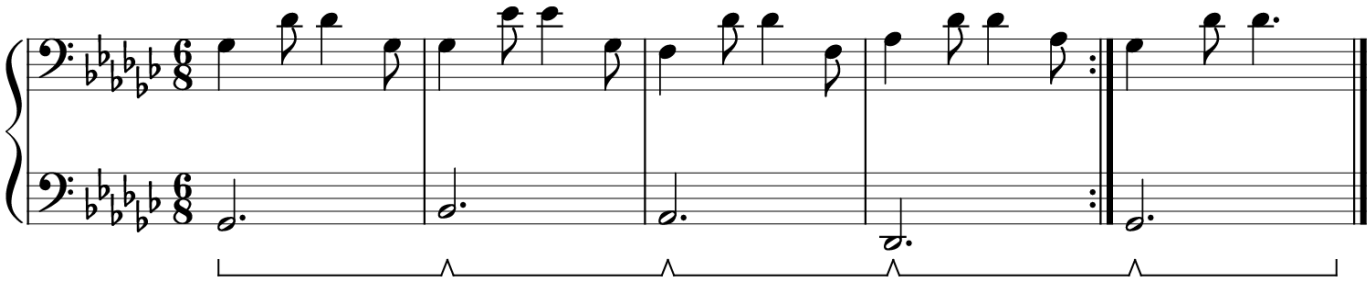
COMPOSING & HOME EXPLORATION

Start composing prompt no.6 together and ask your student to complete it at home.

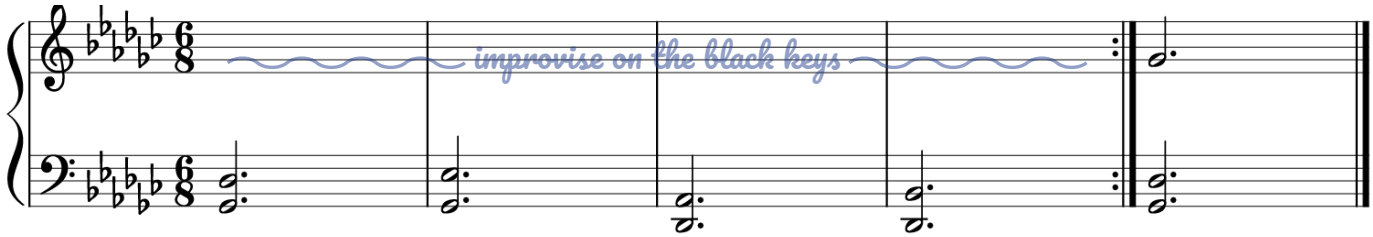
WEEK 7: 2NDS, 3RDS, 4THS, 5THS & 6THS

IMPROVISATION: SIXTH SENSE

- Discuss 6ths and have your student find some on the piano.
- Play this pattern while your student improvises using the black keys.



- Teach your student this simplified left hand pattern and the ending, then allow them some time to improvise with the black keys in the right hand while keeping the left hand pattern going.



- If your student's hand span is not big enough for this pattern, have them play the two notes at the start of each bar with both hands and hold down the pedal.

GAME

Play Intervallactic together to practise 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, 5ths & 6ths on the staff.

COMPOSING & HOME EXPLORATION

Start composing prompt no.7 together and ask your student to complete it at home.

WEEK 8: 2NDS, 3RDS, 4THS, 5THS, 6THS, 7THS & 8VES

IMPROVISATION: BLUESY BACKSTEP

- Discuss 7ths and octaves and have your student find some on the piano.

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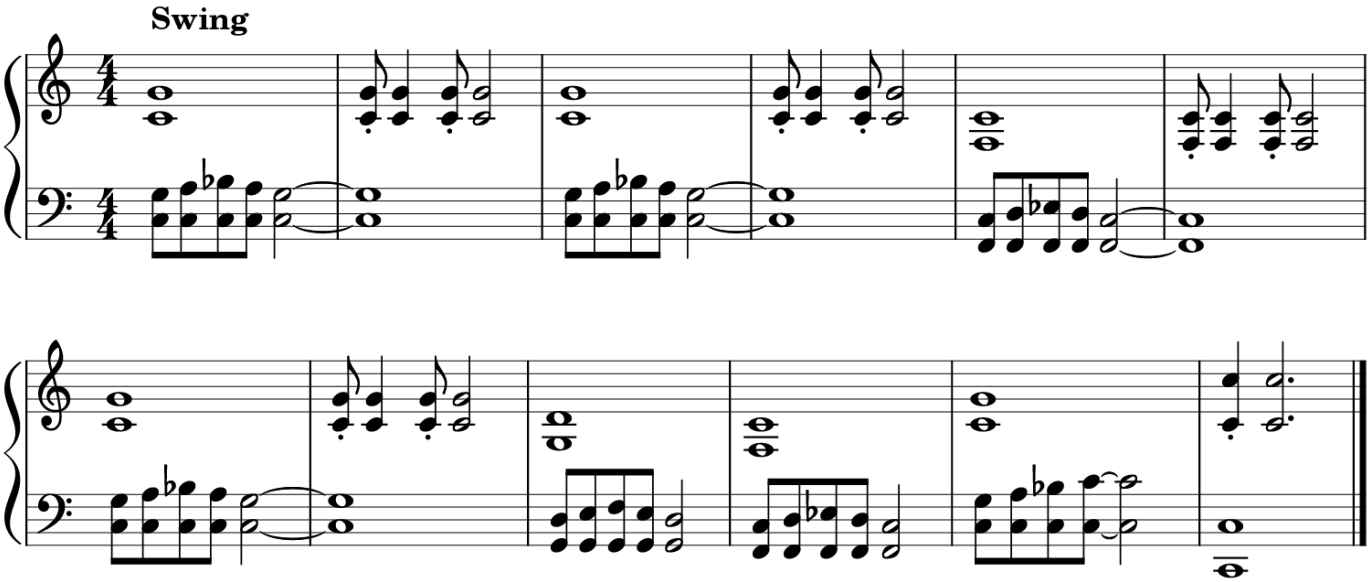
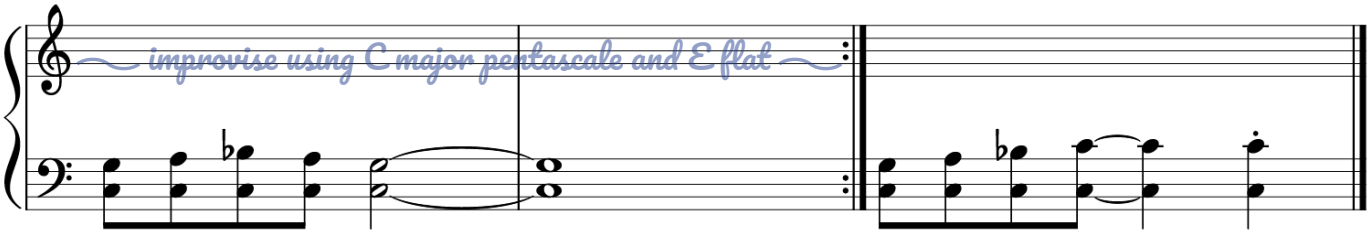
• Play this pattern while your student improvises using the C major pentascale plus E flat (6 notes).



• Teach your student this simplified left hand pattern and the ending, then allow them some time to improvise with the C major pentascale plus E flat in the right hand while keeping the left hand pattern going.



• If your student's hand span is not big enough for this pattern, have them play it with both hands and then hold the long open fifth while their right hand improvises a short phrase.

GAME

Play Interval Sprinterval Shminterval together to practise intervals of up to an octave on the staff.

COMPOSING & HOME EXPLORATION

Start composing prompt no.8 together and ask your student to work on it some more at home.

WEEK 9: 2NDS, 3RDS, 4THS, 5THS, 6THS, 7THS & 8VES

IMPROVISATION: BLUESY BACKSTEP

• Improvise using the same patterns (both duet and solo) as last week.
• If your student is ready and you have the time, you might choose to introduce the 12 bar blues pattern for their solo improvisation.

GAME

Play Interval Sprinterval Shminterval together again to practise intervals of up to an octave on the staff. This time, make sure your students count the intervals in their head and jump straight to the right spot on the staff on their turn.

COMPOSING & HOME EXPLORATION

Take a look at the work they've done so far on composing prompt no.8 and complete it together.

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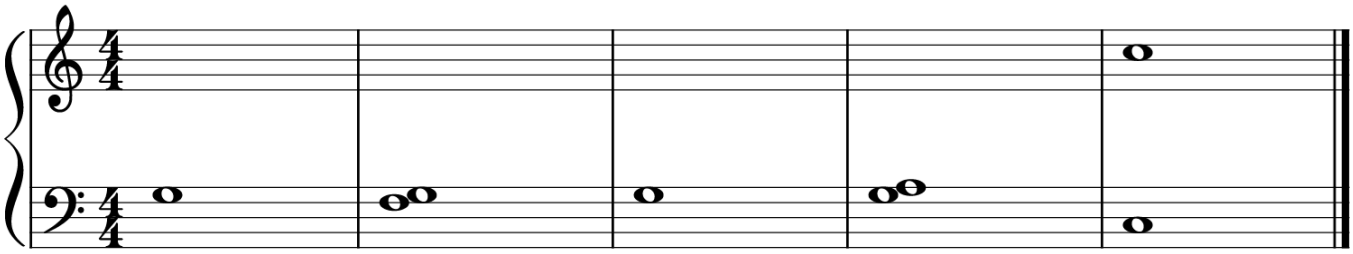
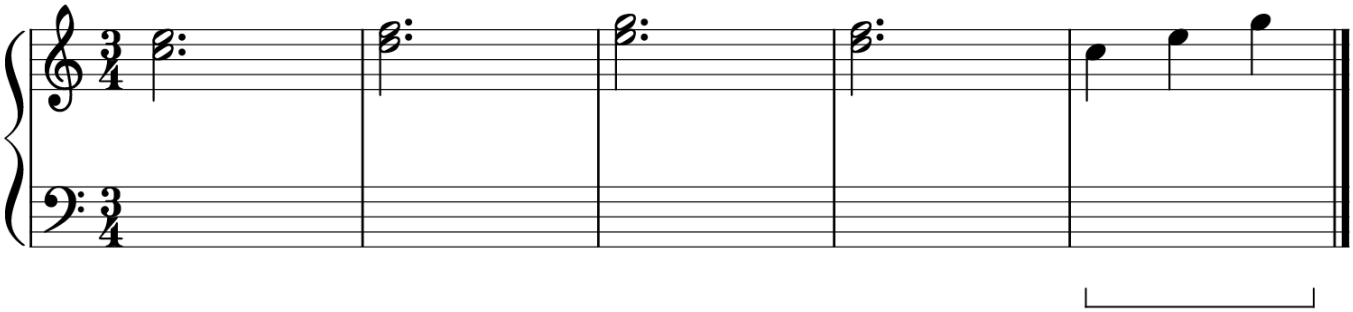
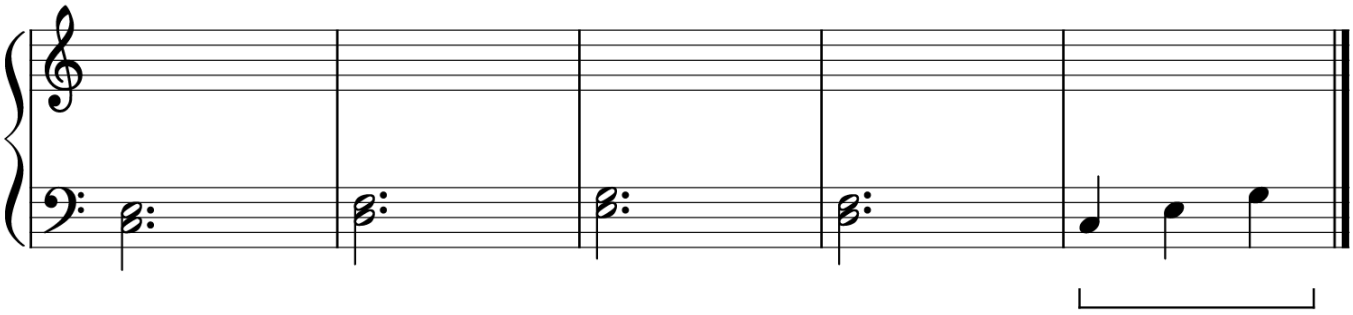
COMPOSING PROMPT NO. 1



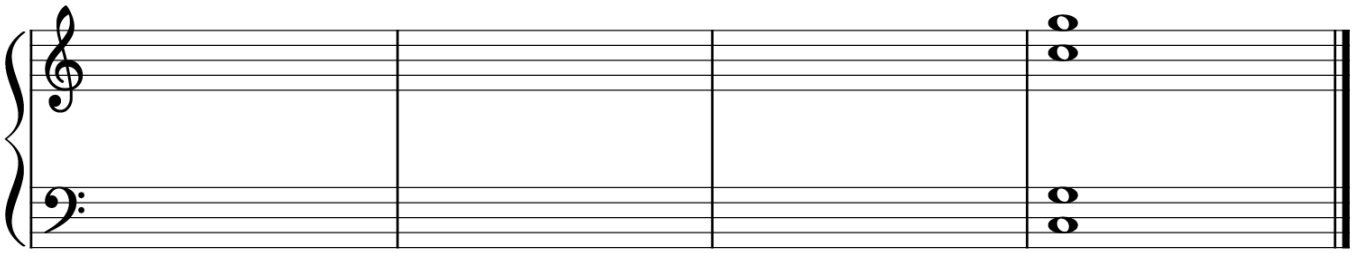
COMPOSING PROMPT NO. 2



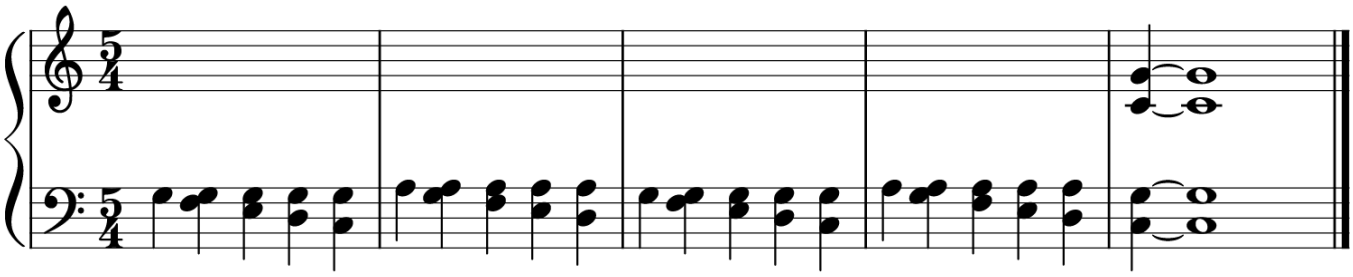
COMPOSING PROMPT NO. 3



COMPOSING PROMPT NO. 4



COMPOSING PROMPT NO. 5



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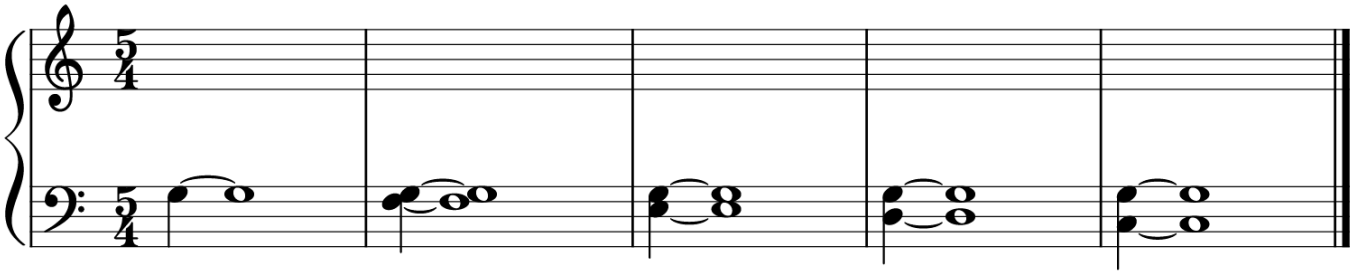
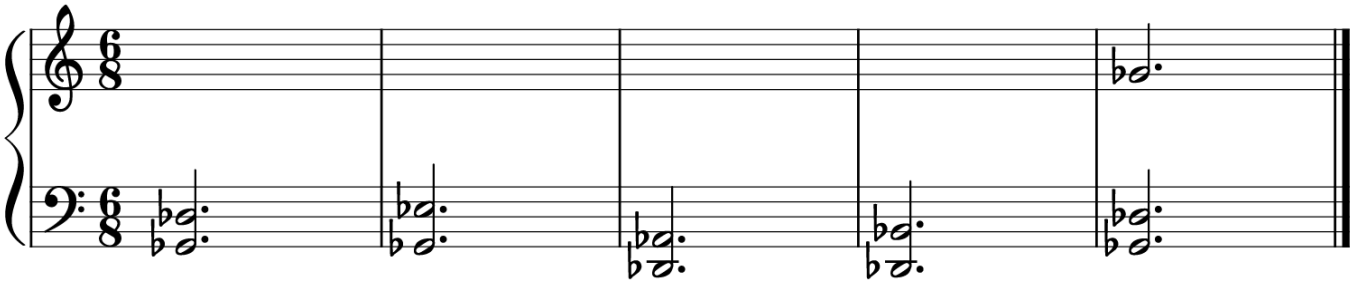
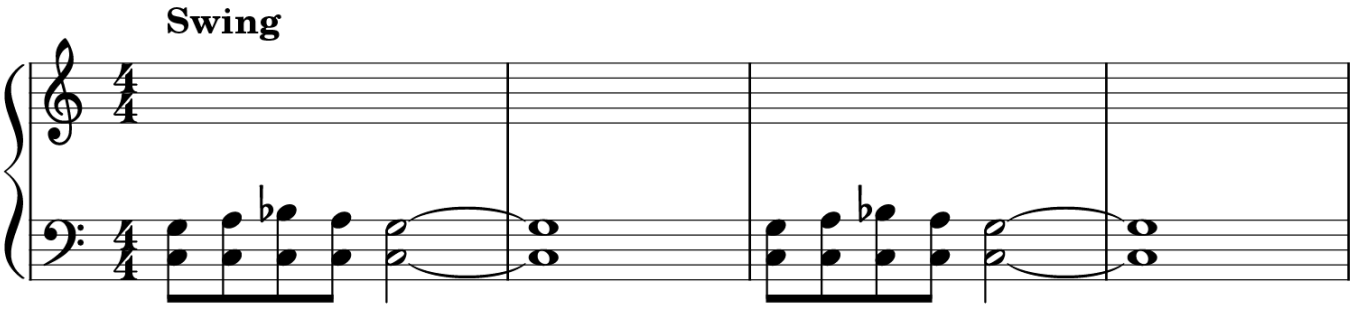
COMPOSING PROMPT NO. 6

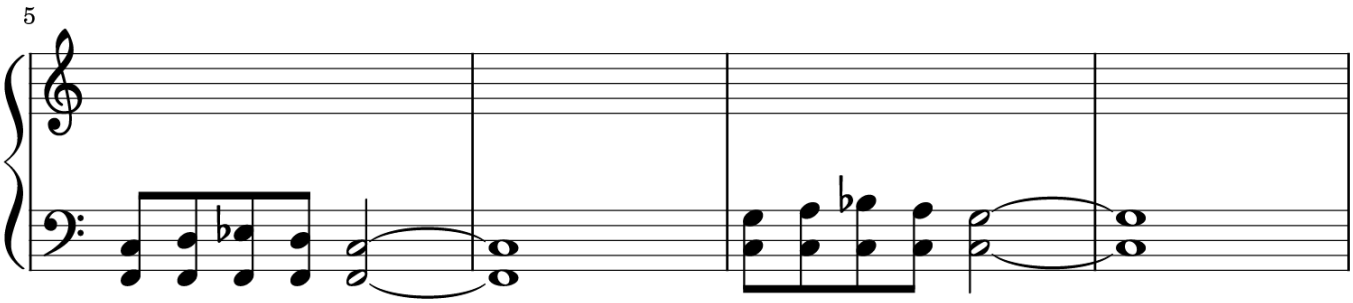


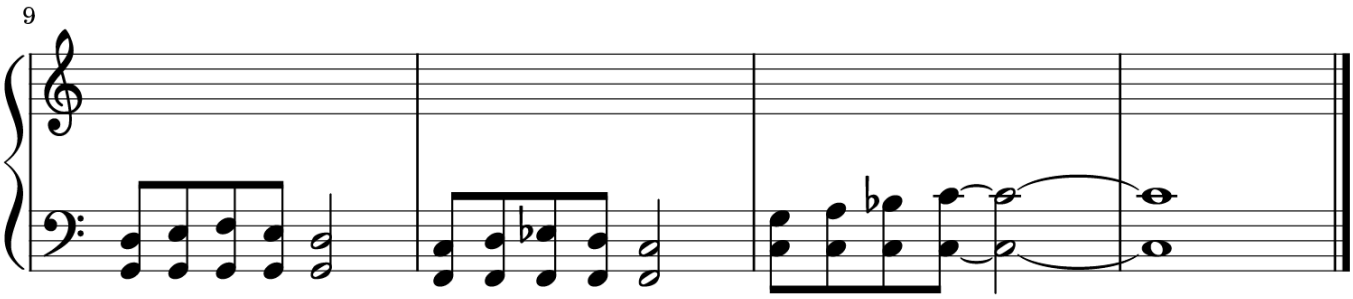
COMPOSING PROMPT NO. 7



COMPOSING PROMPT NO. 8







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