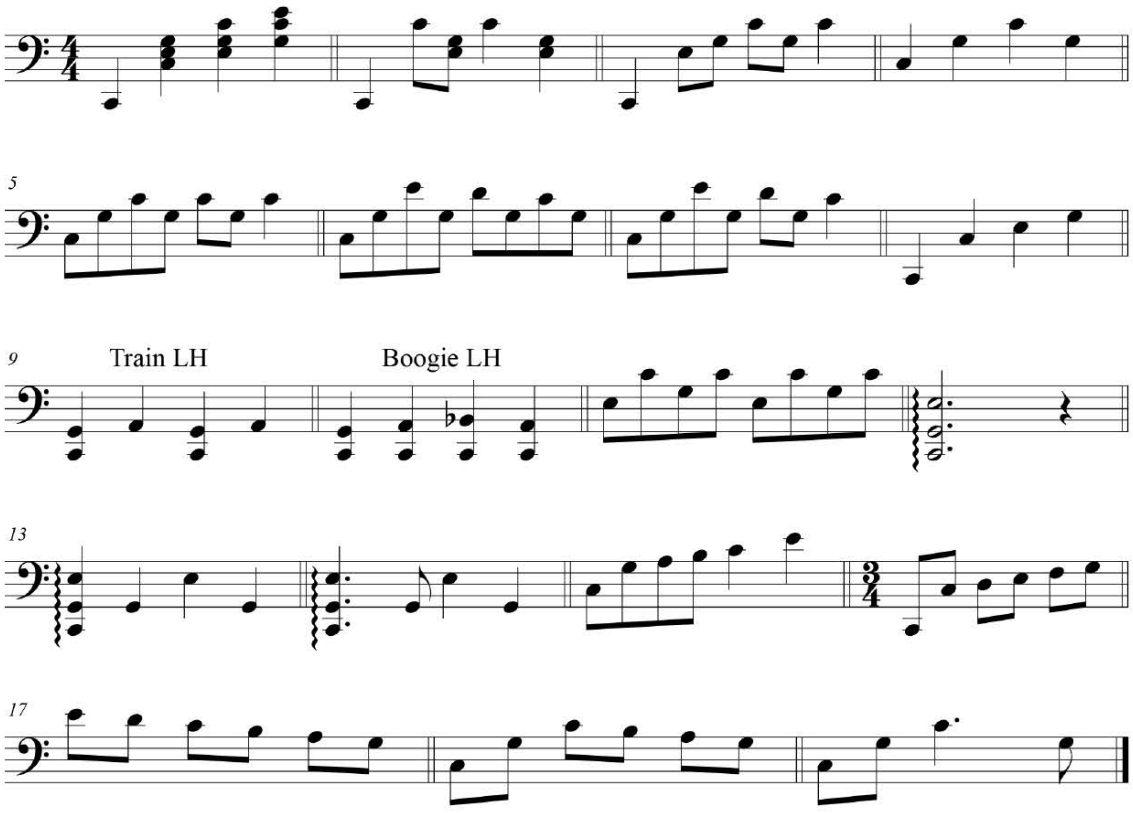
Step #4: Add Left-Hand Accompaniment & Fill-in the Parts

There are many different left-hand accompaniments, and the author is hesitant to "show" you what to do for fear it will stifle your creativity. Every composition has a different style and "flavor" which calls for a different use of chords. But if you promise to use the following "patterns" sparingly, the author will share some of her favorites with you.

We will use the C chord as an example. The tones of a C chord are of course C E G. It is now up to us, as composers, to arrange the chord tones of C E G in a creative and expressive manor that is also playable for our fellow pianists.

Below are some of the author's many L.H. patterns. You may use them in your compositions, too. You can probably think of hundreds more. But be sure that you mix patterns throughout your composition. You don't want to use the same pattern over and over. However, the author has used one pattern over and over "on purpose" in one popular composition: Forever River in Level 6-A. The reason for the repetitious L.H. was that the author wanted to simulate a flowing river that never ceases. So sometimes, repeating a pattern over and over is what you want if it enhances your composition. But be very careful with that type of L.H. It can get boring!

Again, remember that most measures contain only one chord, sometimes two. Don't try to change chords on every tone of your melodic line.



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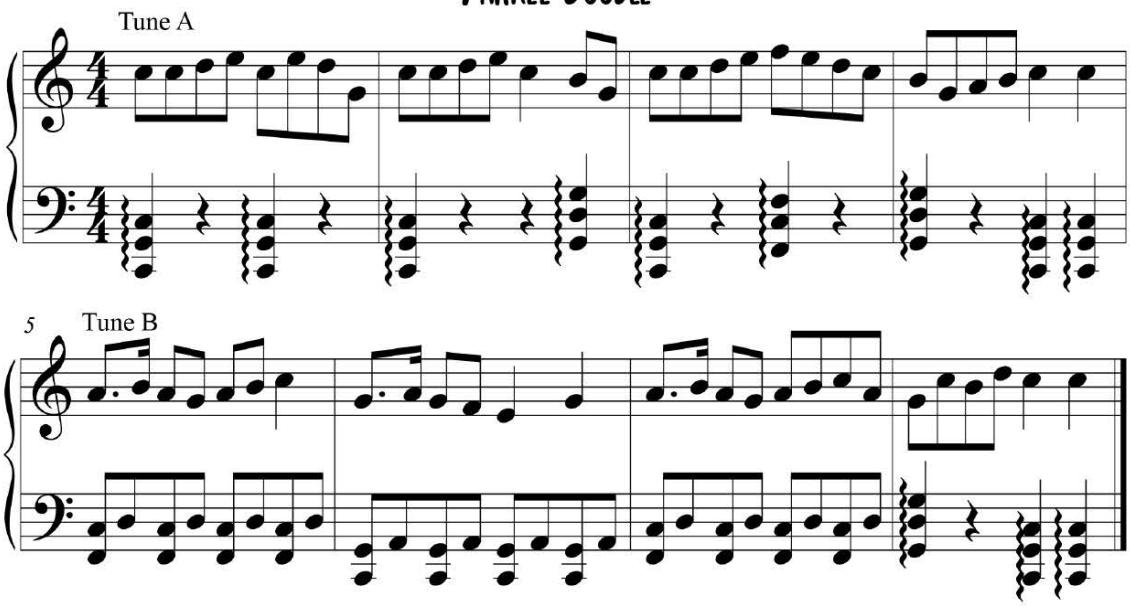
You should use the "mood" of your composition to determine a good accompaniment for it. Below is **Yankee Doodle** again, but this time the composer has selected a simple configuration of the I, IV, V chords in the Left Hand. Measures 1 through 4 are simulating the ruffled sound of a field drum. Measures 5 to the end are to sound like troops marching.

Yankee Doodle



What does "Fill-in-the-Parts" Mean?

"Fill-in the Parts" means that you add tones from the harmony chords that you have chosen to make the melody and the accompaniment sound fuller. This "rule" is for more complex compositions, of course. If you are writing music for beginner pianists, keep the melodic line simple and the accompaniment simple.

On the following page is **Wait a Minute Waltz**. The composer has most probably chosen chords that are different from the chords you chose earlier for this same composition. And that's OK! Rarely do two composers think exactly the same when harmonizing a melodic line.

You will observe that in Measures 20 - 25 and again in Measures 28 - 33, Mayron Cole used one of her favorite chord progressions: C Am Dm G^7 C.

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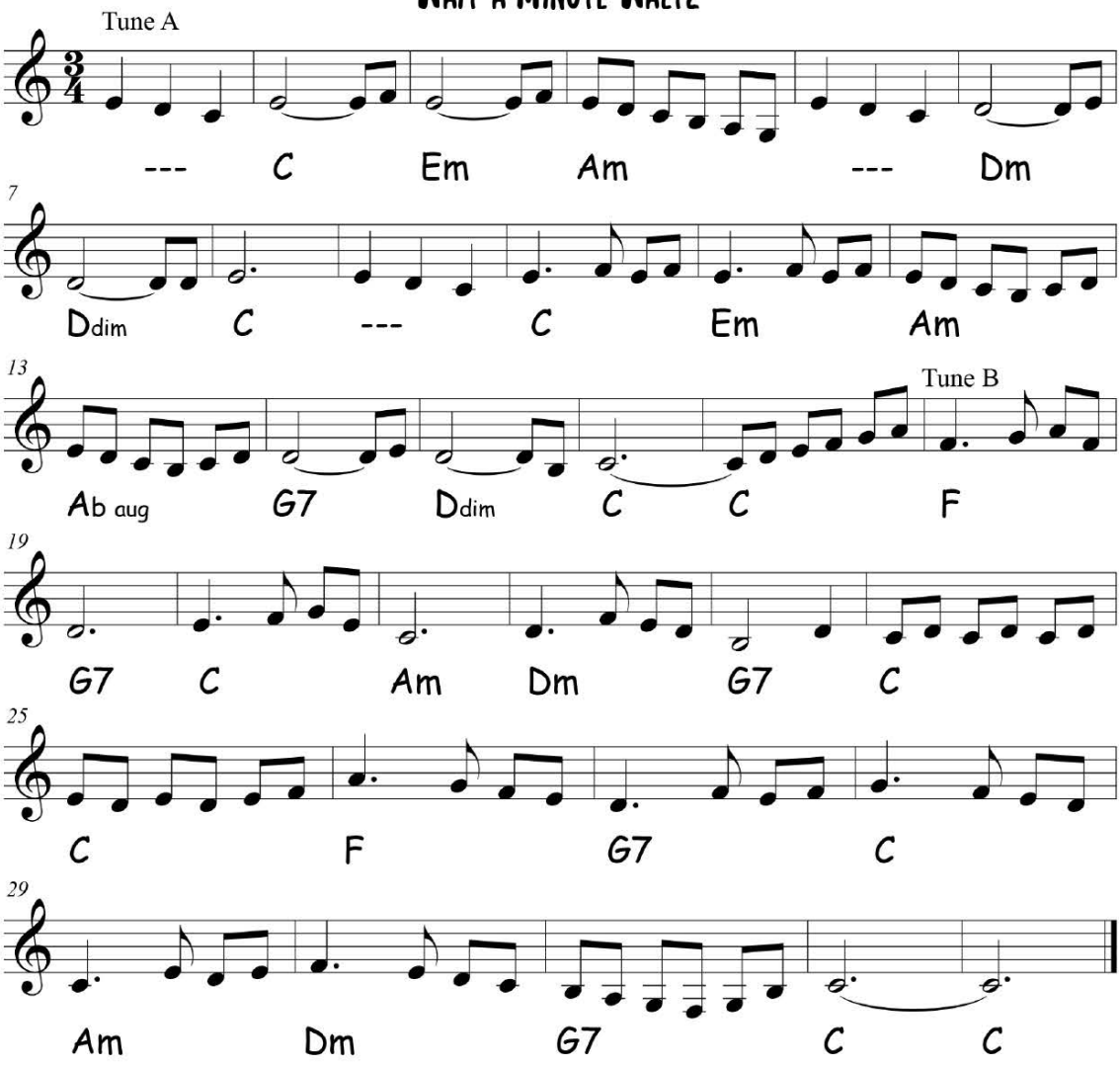
Wait a Minute Waltz



1. The composer could have easily harmonized this melody using only the three primary chords. What are the Roman numerals that stand for the three primary chords found in every major scale? _____ (ii, iii, Vi or I, IV, V?)

2. Measures 1,2,3,4 could have been harmonized with a C chord. But to add interest to her composition, the composer used a C chord in M2 and two secondary chords in M3 and M4. What two secondary chords were used in M3 & M4 _____? (Em & Am or Gm & Fm?)

3. The secondary chords of E minor and A minor make good substitute chords for C Major's chord because the E minor chord and the A minor chord both contain tones that

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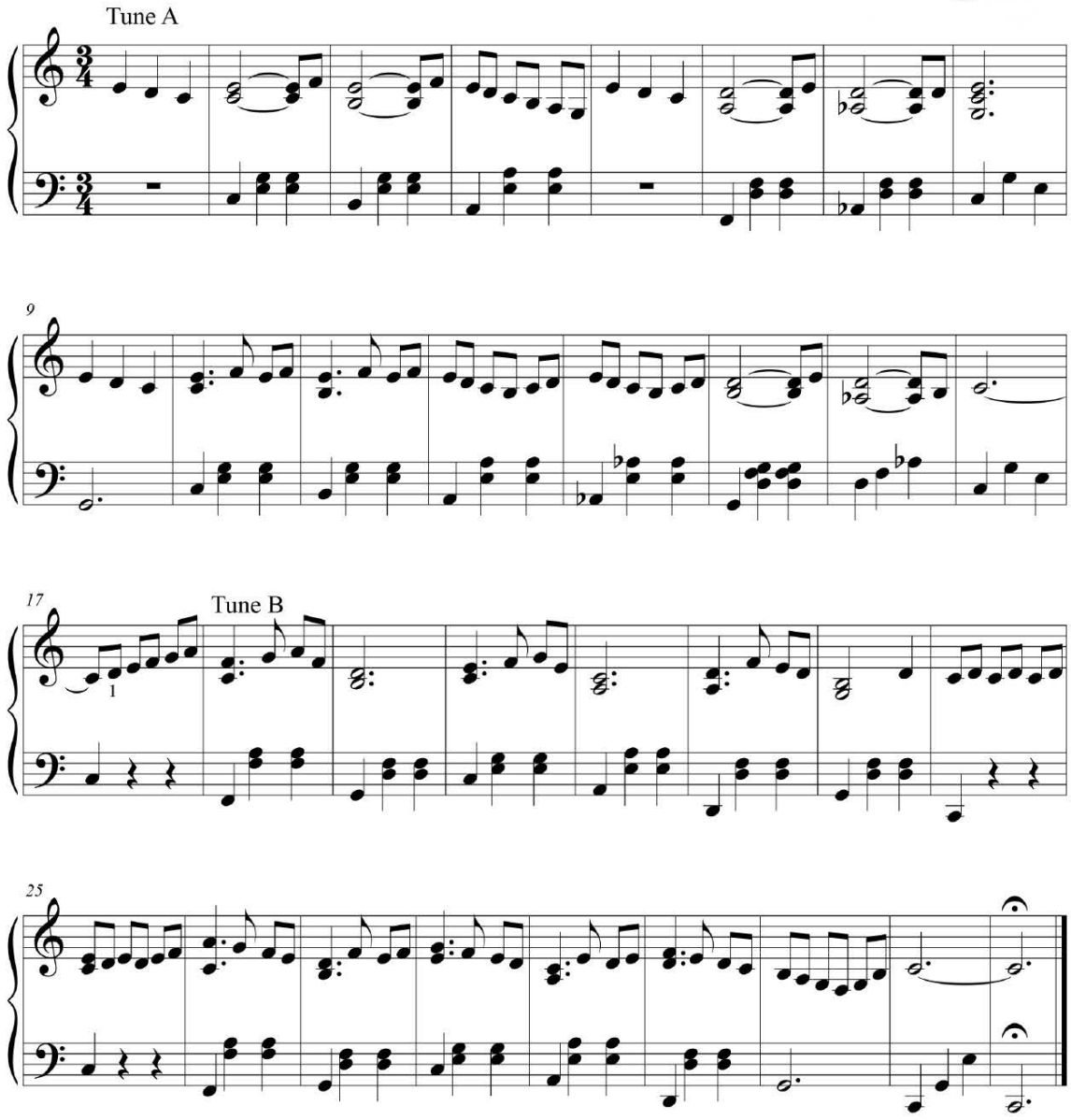
are found in the C Major chord thus making those three chords "kin" to each other. _____ (Yes or No?)

4. Measures 17 might be confusing to you since it is basically a portion of a scale. But the scale has no sharps or flats indicated so it would naturally harmonize with a _____. (G chord or C chord?)



Answers: 1. I, IV, V; 2. Em and Am; 3. Yes; 4. C chord

Wait a Minute Waltz



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Look at the composition on the previous page to answer these questions:

1. In measures 2, 3, and 4 look at the first note in the bass clef. The first bass clef note in M2 is _____ (B or C?); the first bass clef note in M3 is _____ (D or B?); and the first bass clef note in M3 is _____ (A or G?).

2. The above identified tones are _____ (descending or ascending?).

3. Look at the first note in the bass clef in measures 6, 7, and 8. These three tones are _____ (descending or ascending?).

4. The first note in the bass clef in measures 10, 11, and 12 are _____ (descending or ascending?).

5. Finally, you notice the first note in the bass clef in measures 18, 19, and 20 are duplicated in measures 26, 27, and 28. In both of these instances, the tones are _____ (descending or ascending?).

6. The above measures strongly suggest that the composer is using an aural pattern throughout this composition. "Aural" means something that is heard. _____ (Yes or No?)

7. Look at the chord choices found in measures 30, 31, and 32. In measure 30 the chord choice is _____ (E minor or D minor?); in measure 31 the chord choice is _____ (D Major or G Major?); in measure 32 the chord choice is _____ (G Major or C Major?).

8. Why were the chords discussed in Question #7 good choices? _____
(D, G, and C are fun to say or D is the dominant of G and G is the dominant of C?)

9. The first choice of movement of chords is "down a fifth". _____ (Yes or No?)



Answers: **1.** C,B,A; **2.** descending; **3.** ascending; **4.** ascending; **5.** ascending; **6.** D,G, C; **7.** D,G,C; **8.** D is the dominant of G and G is the dominant of C; **9.** Yes

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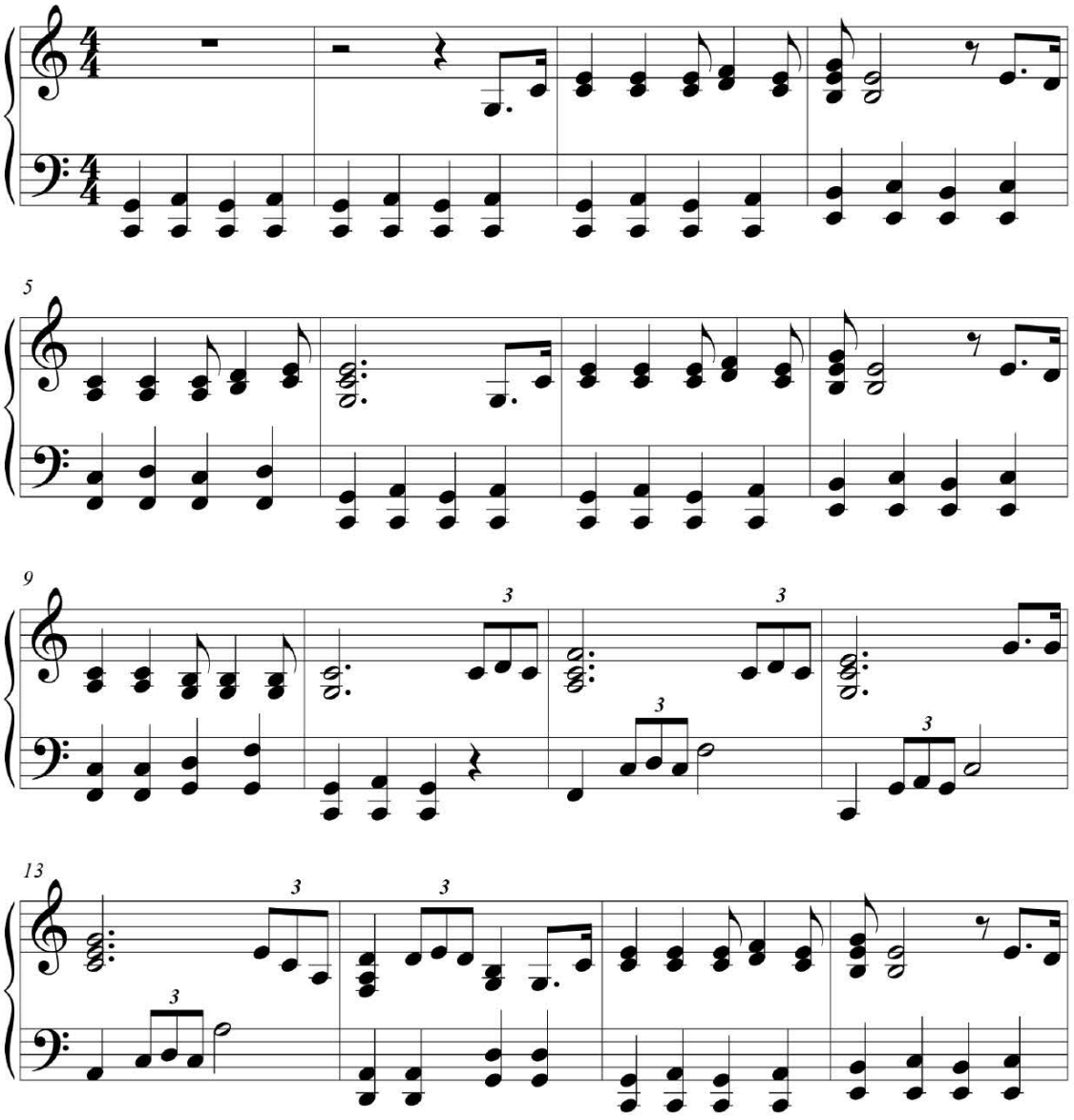
Let's Review

1. The composer must visually "weed out" the non-chord tones when deciding which chords would best harmonize a measure. _____ (True or False?)

2. Chords' first choice of movement is "down a fifth". _____ (True or False?)

3. The composer must decide what "mood" she/he wants to create when adding the LH accompaniment to the melodic line. _____ (Yes or No?)

Summer Roadtrip



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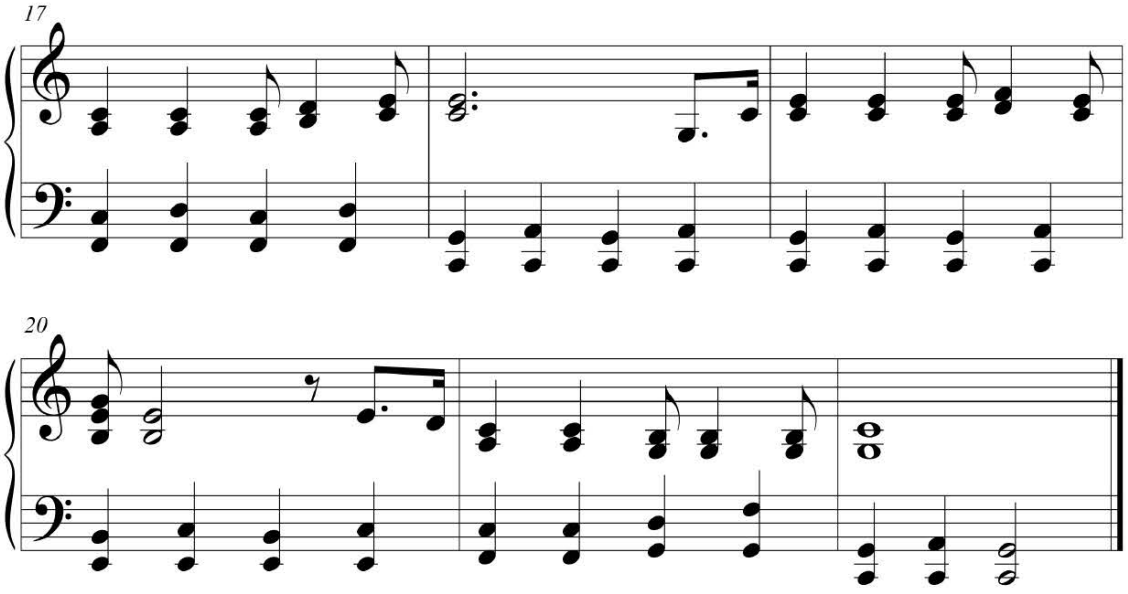

4. The composer should repeat patterns in the LH throughout the composition. _____ (Yes or No?)

5. When the composer slightly changes a pattern, the altered pattern is identified as a _____ (dominant or sequence?).

6. If writing a composition for beginner or early-intermediate pianists, use a simple LH accompaniment and limit the number of chordal tones used in the RH. _____ (Yes or No?)

7. All compositions should be "playable" for one's fellow pianists. _____ (True or False?)

Answers: 1. True; **2.** True; **3.** Yes; **4.** Yes; **5.** Sequence; **6.** Yes; **7.** True



You are now going to write a LH accompaniment to your original melody. First you need to write your melody on the staff paper provided on the next page. Now, do not get all perturbed by having to write your melody again. Some composers write and re-write their compositions many times. Or, you can write another original melody on the next page.

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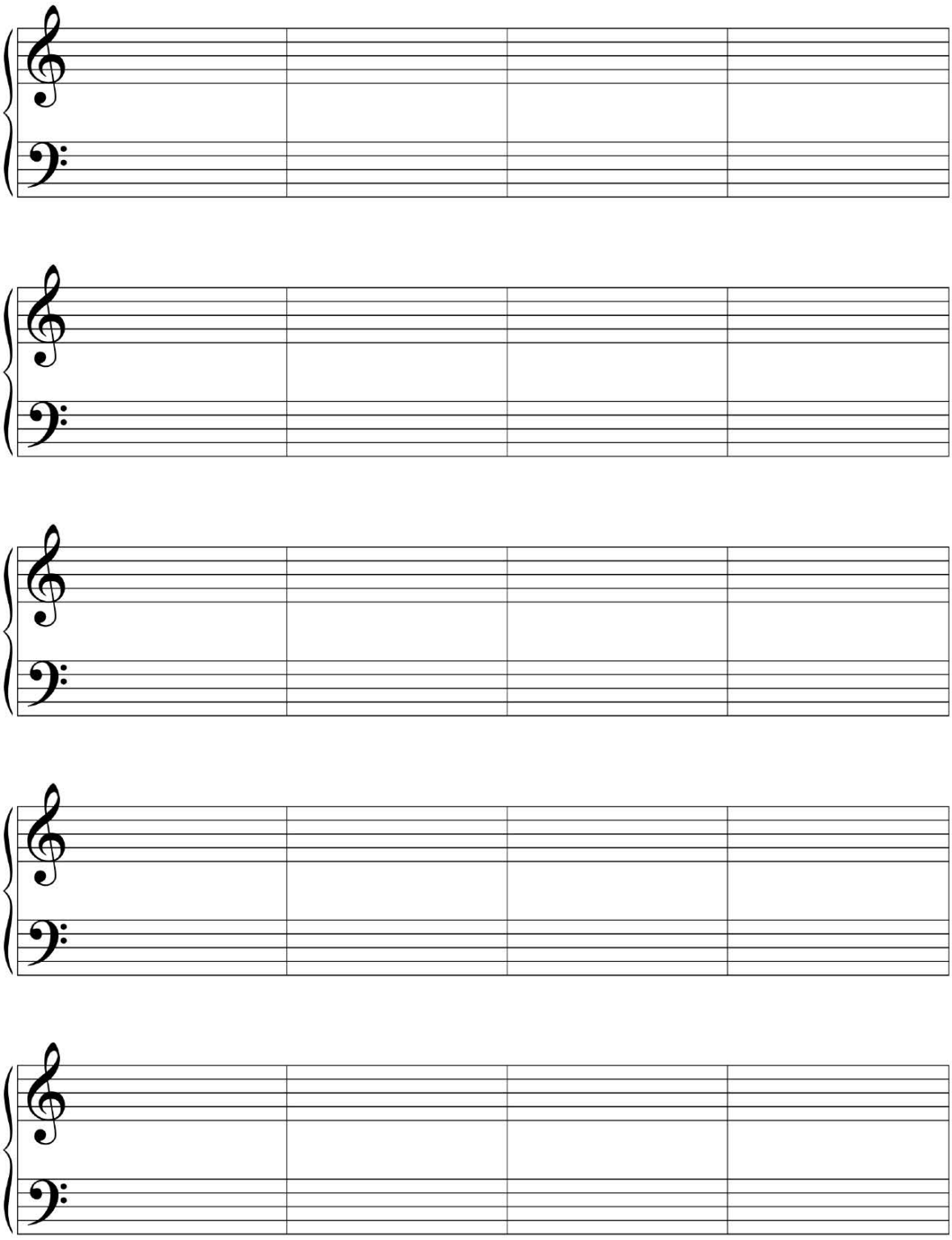

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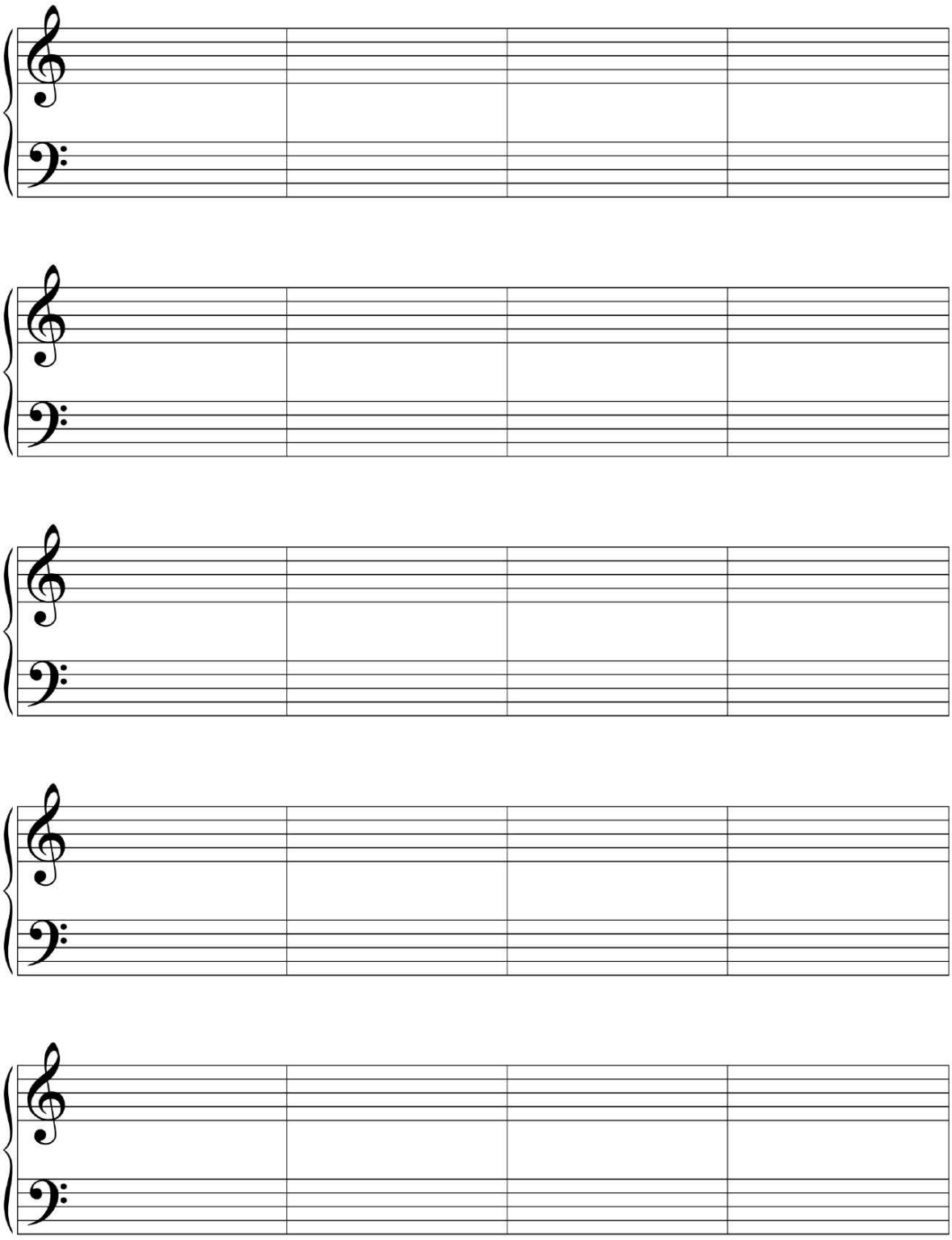

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