PRESENTS

JAZZ WORKSHOP SERIES

Saxophone Master Class Complete

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The saxophone :

It is known as a reed musical instrument that is a staple in jazz bands. The saxophone was invented by Antoine-Joseph (Adolphe) Sax, born on 1814 in Dinant, Belgium. His father was a maker of musical instruments. During his youth, Adolphe studied the clarinet and flute at Brussels' Conservatory. His father's passion for creating musical instruments influenced him greatly and he began plans of improving the tone of the bass clarinet.
1841 - Adolphe Sax first showed his creation (a C bass saxophone) to the composer Hector Berlioz.
1844 - Adolphe Sax reveals his creation to the public through the Paris Industrial Exhibition. On February 3 of that same year, Adolphe's good friend Hector Berlioz conducts a concert featuring his choral work. Hector's choral work arrangement is called *Chant Sacre* and it featured the saxophone. In December, the saxophone had its orchestral debut at the Paris Conservatory through the opera "Last King of Juda" by Georges Kastner.
1845 - French military bands replaced the oboes and bassoons with Bb and Eb saxhorns.
1846 - Adolphe Sax obtained patent for his saxophones that had 14 variations. Among them are: E flat sopranino, F sopranino, B flat soprano, C soprano, E flat alto, F alto, B flat tenor, C tenor, E flat baritone, B flat bass, C bass, E flat contrabass and F contrabass.
1847 - On February 14 in Paris, a saxophone school was created. It was set up at “Gymnase Musical”, a military band school.
1888 – The first saxophone was built in the US by Gus Buesher.

Adolphe Sax (1814-1894)

IMPROVING YOUR SAXOPHONE SKILLS

If this is your goal, here is how you can achieve it:

1. Practice EVERYDAY (weekends included), even if it is for 5 minutes
2. Listen to music EVERYDAY
3. Have patience, this is not a race!

LONG TONES

This is the best way to warm up your embouchure. There are several reasons why we do Long Tones:

- It makes your embouchure (combination of lips, mouth, mouthpiece and reed) strong. The lip has hundreds of muscles, which need to be trained to play the saxophone.
- You learn how to use the diaphragm, how to breath correctly, how to open your throat, how much pressure each note needs, a sound balance throughout the instrument and little by little you will be able to hold the notes longer.
- It works your personal sound. The sound is the first thing people is going to notice when you play.
- Is the perfect way to know your saxophone; what notes are naturally out of tunes in the horn, right position, right posture…
- You can work on your tempo when you do it with a metronome.

First you need to know and control the mouthpiece. For me the body of the sax is the speaker. <u>You should be able to play songs and scales with the mouthpiece</u>.

MOUTHPIECE EXERCISES

1. Play a steady note and make sure the note starts without an explosion or bending it. Play it as long as you can. (First week)
2. When you can play one note steady then try to play three notes: a middle sound, a high sound, a low sound. For the high sound you need to press the diaphragm and the corners of the mouth, not the lip. To get a low sound you will have to drop the jaw, this will require more amount of air. (Second week)
3. When you can play three notes as you wish, pretty in tune, try to make the sound of a siren (middle-high-middle-low-

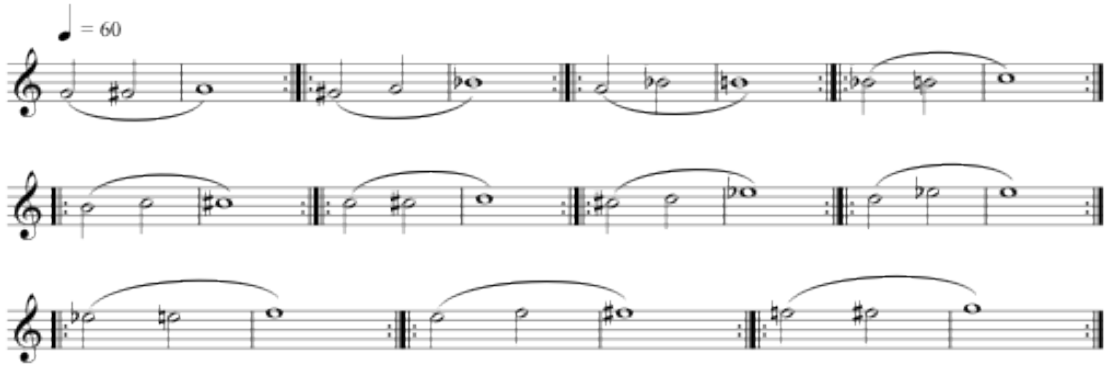
middle sounds) by moving the jaw up and down and giving the appropriate amount of air

4. Start playing easy songs like twinkle, twinkle; happy birthday, etc.
5. Play major scales

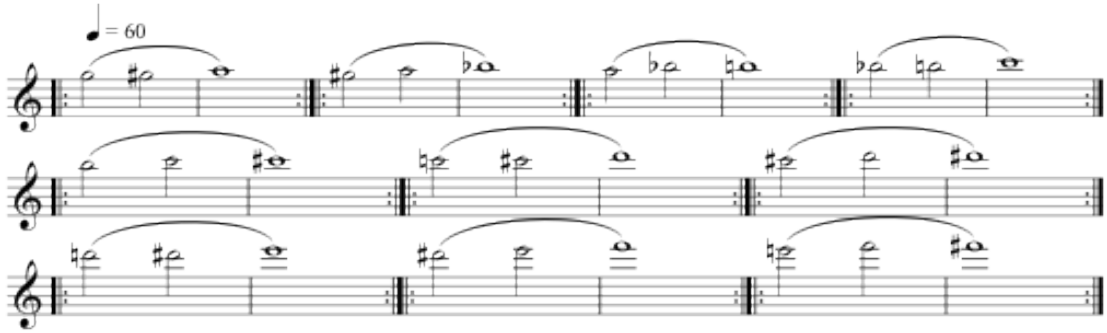
LONG TONES EXERCISES

You can find and create many long tones exercises, here are five that work very good for me. Remember not to over do them. One exercise a day, EVERYDAY, is enough. You can stay one week with each one or pick different ones when you see that you have a problem in a note, a register, etc.

1. Use metronome and tuner:

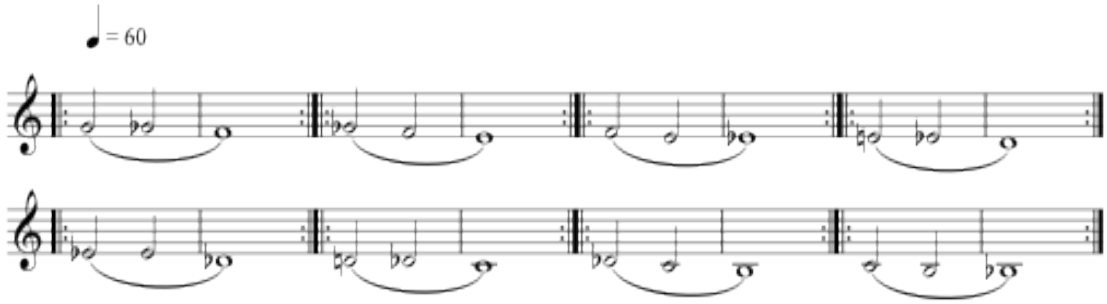


Repeat each twice to improve the mistakes done the first time. Do it one whole octave and use different registers like below. You should be happy with the sound that you are producing, concentrate on the sound, do not let your brain think in another thing, just the sound that it is coming out the horn!



When playing high register make sure you have a big sound, not a tinny one which occurs when biting the mouthpiece (you should never ‘bite’ the mouthpiece!) and opening the throat (imagine yourself saying Ah).

Or the low register:

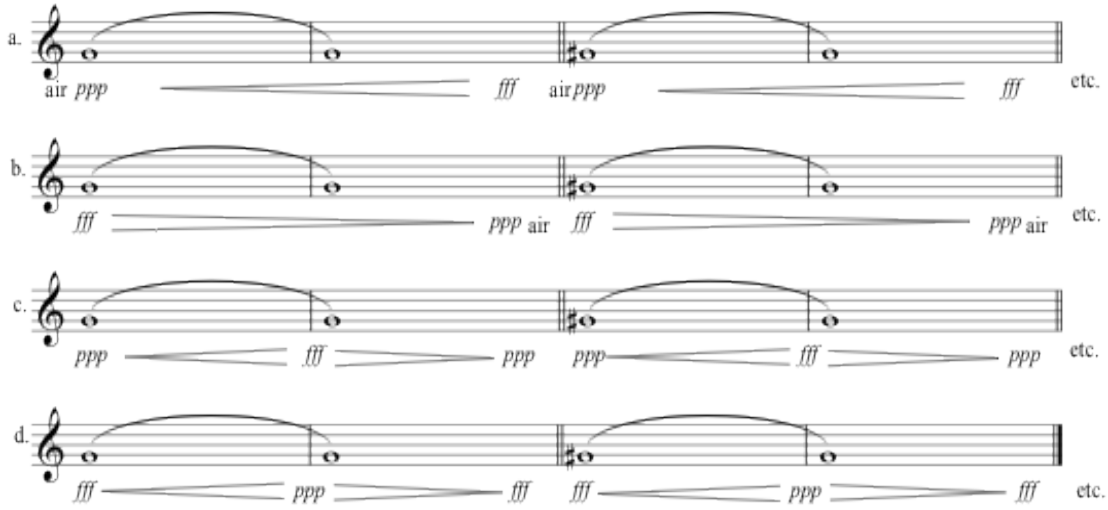


2. Sustain same note as long as possible. Breath thru nose without taking the lips out of the mouthpiece. Do it using piano or tuner at a *mf* dynamic mark. Do it on middle register first and then on high and low registers.

3. Long Tones using dynamics. Do it with a tuner or piano (piano much better so you train your ears and not your eyes ;-) Start by

    a. Blowing only air, till the air becomes sound. Do it chromatic up to a P5.
    b. Play a loud sound by removing the tongue from the reed. Be careful not to make an explosion sound at first.
    c. Start very piano to loud and pianissimo again
    d. Reverse of c.

    You can use metronome or not.

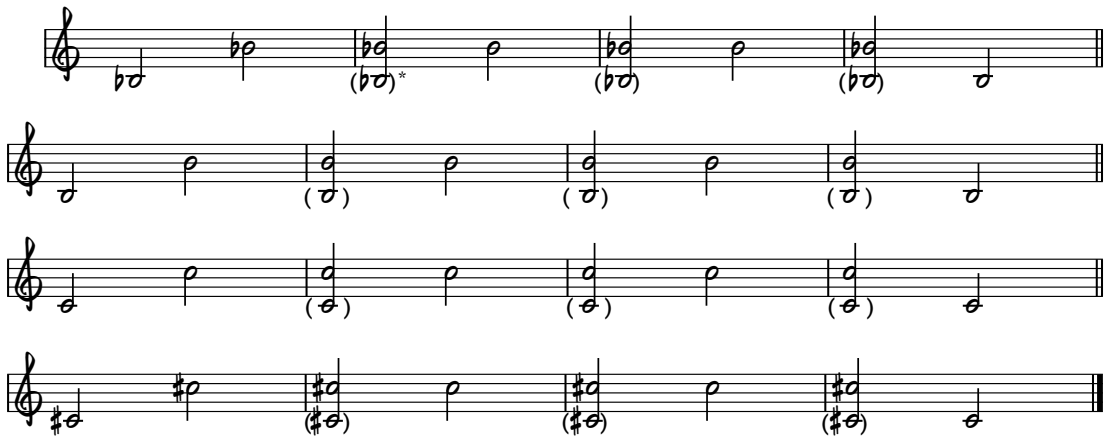


OVERTONES (Matching Tones)

This is one of the best exercises to develop tone production and intonation on the saxophone. By matching the regular note with the overtone sound, your sound will become richer and fatter.

If we start playing a low Bb and press the reed we will get the 1st partial of the overtone's series, which is the middle Bb (always fingering the lower Bb without the octave key); if we press more then we get the 2nd partial, the 13th above the note we are fingering, in this case an F; with more pressure we get the 3rd partial which is the the high Bb, so two octaves above the note fingered; the 4th partical is two octaves and a major 3rd above the fingered note, in this case a high D, and you can keep going.
Note that you will not get these overtones if you do not hear the note in your inner ear first!! So just by pressing the reed you will not get these evertones.

♩ = 60



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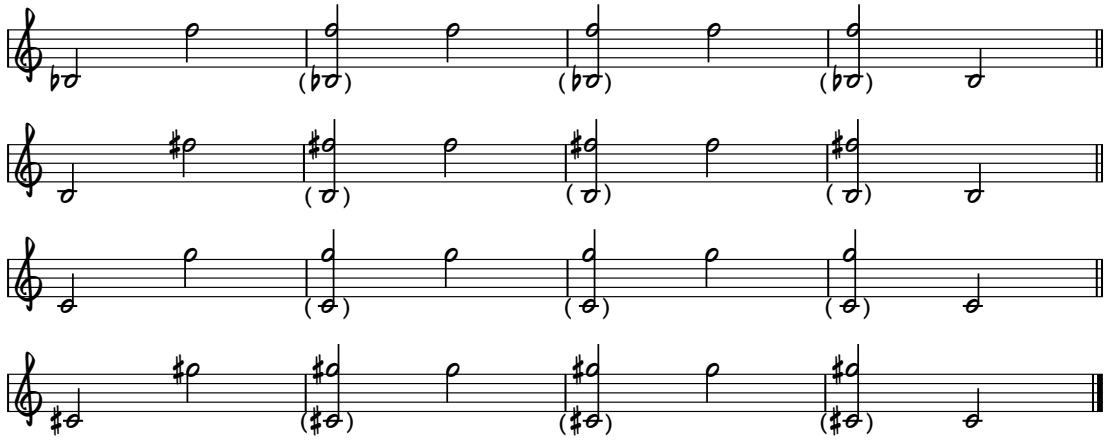
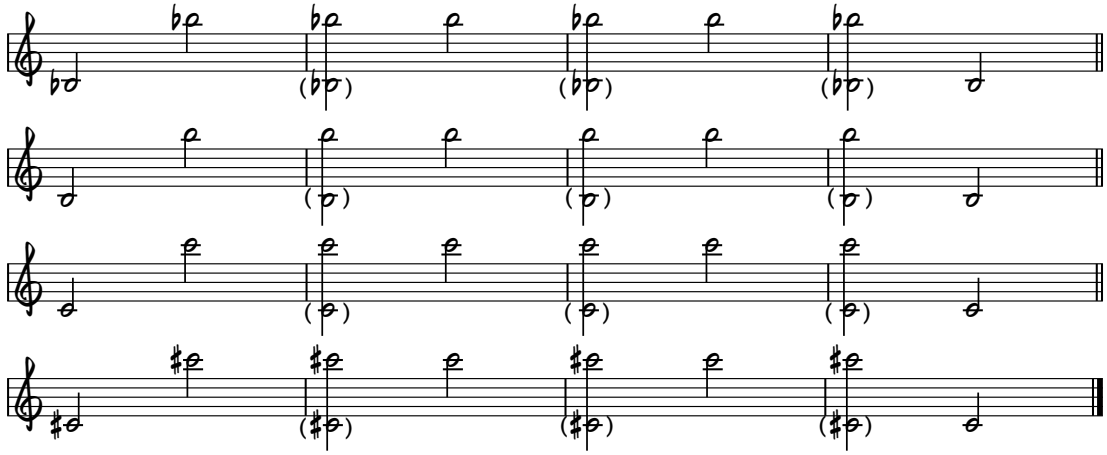


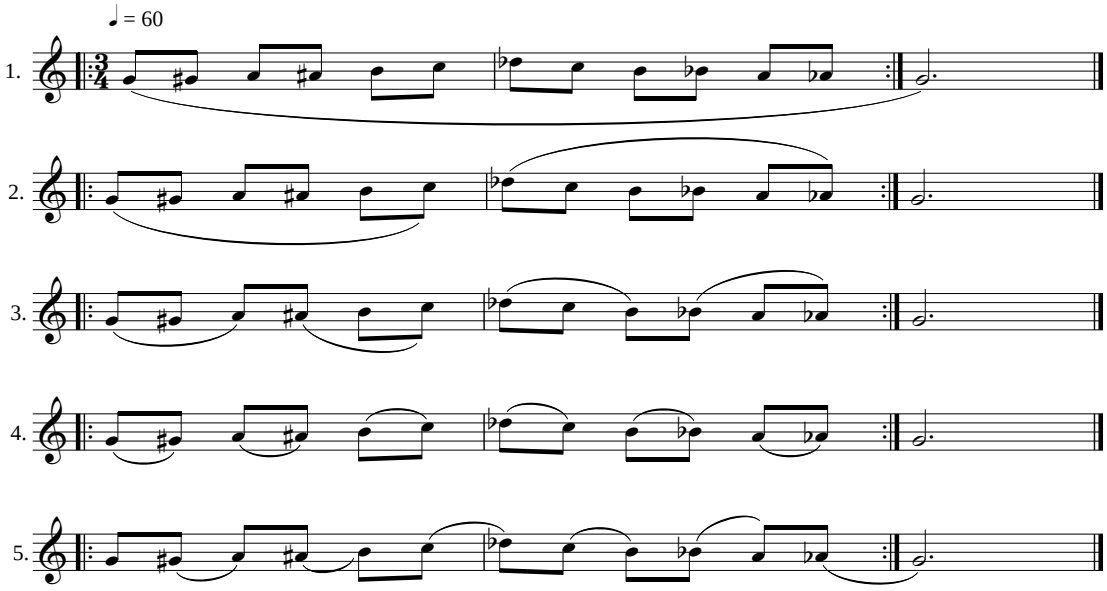
THIRD PARTIAL



* In parenthesis is the note that has to be fingered to produce the overtone note.

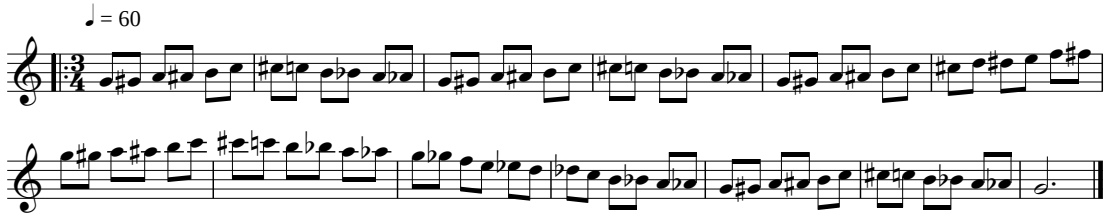
FINGERING EXERCISES

After the warm-ups exercises you need to be familiar with the instrument. I do fingering exercises. For beginners the best ones are from the book Klosé for saxophone.
This one is a little more advanced and should be done in ALL keys with different articulations as follow:

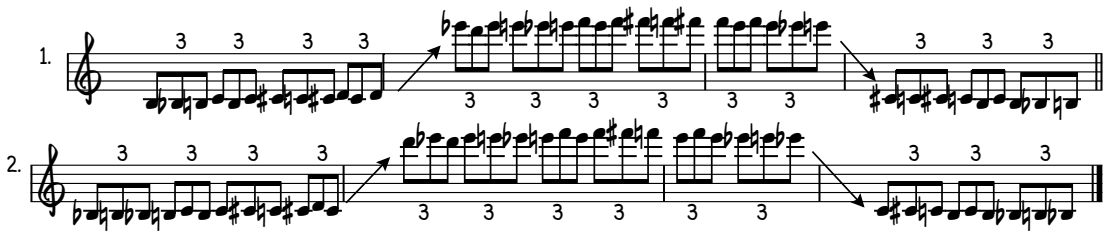


Start by playing one by one, two times each until you are familiar with the articulation, then do all of them together, from beginning to end. Increase the speed as you get familiar with them. I do all of them in one breath; then I play them half step higher or lower.

Using the same articulation as above you can play the extended version of the exercise:

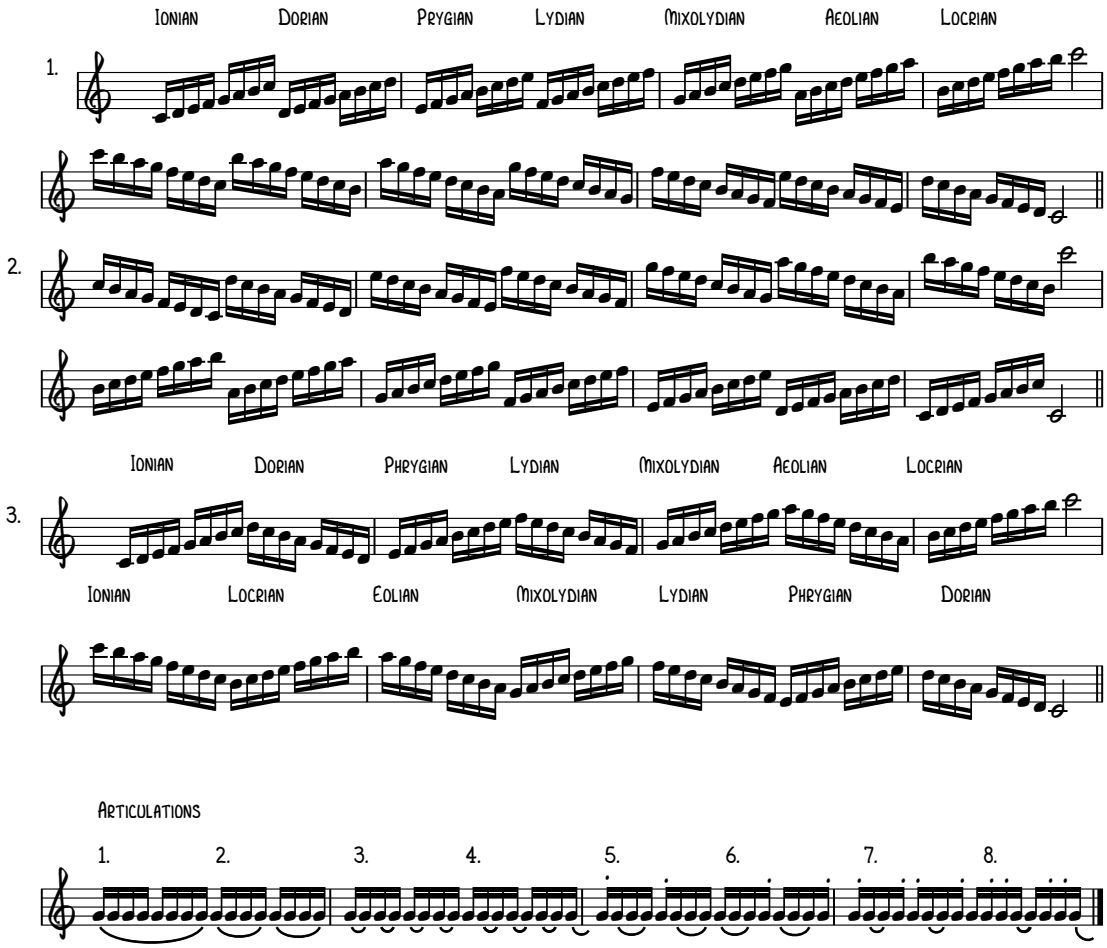


This is a very useful fingering exercise using the full range of the horn (saxophone) in triplets. Do it even with metronome and add articulation later on:



SCALES

Scales are not supossed to be your enemy. Try to be friendly to them. I know it is frustrating to play them at the beginning because we make mistakes all the time and we are not able to play a C major scale correctly infront of your teacher BUT once you pass this stage, then it is really fun to play them. Find the way of enjoying them: play them with different rhythms, different speeds, different articulations…Remember that they are the alphabet of music and you will be using them ALL the time. I bet you can learn them all in two weeks, just learn one a day (12 days). Everyday you start with a new one and after learning it, play the other ones you leanr the previous days!
Once you have all the major scales under your fingers then you can start playing them in different ways. Here is an example how to play the scales thru modes (starting from each one of the notes of a scale):



1. Start by playing each one of them going up, starting from each one of the notes of the scale (start with major scales).
2. Scales going down while the root moves up. In C major play C major going down, then D dorian going down, E phrygian going down, etc.
3. One mode going up the next mode down.

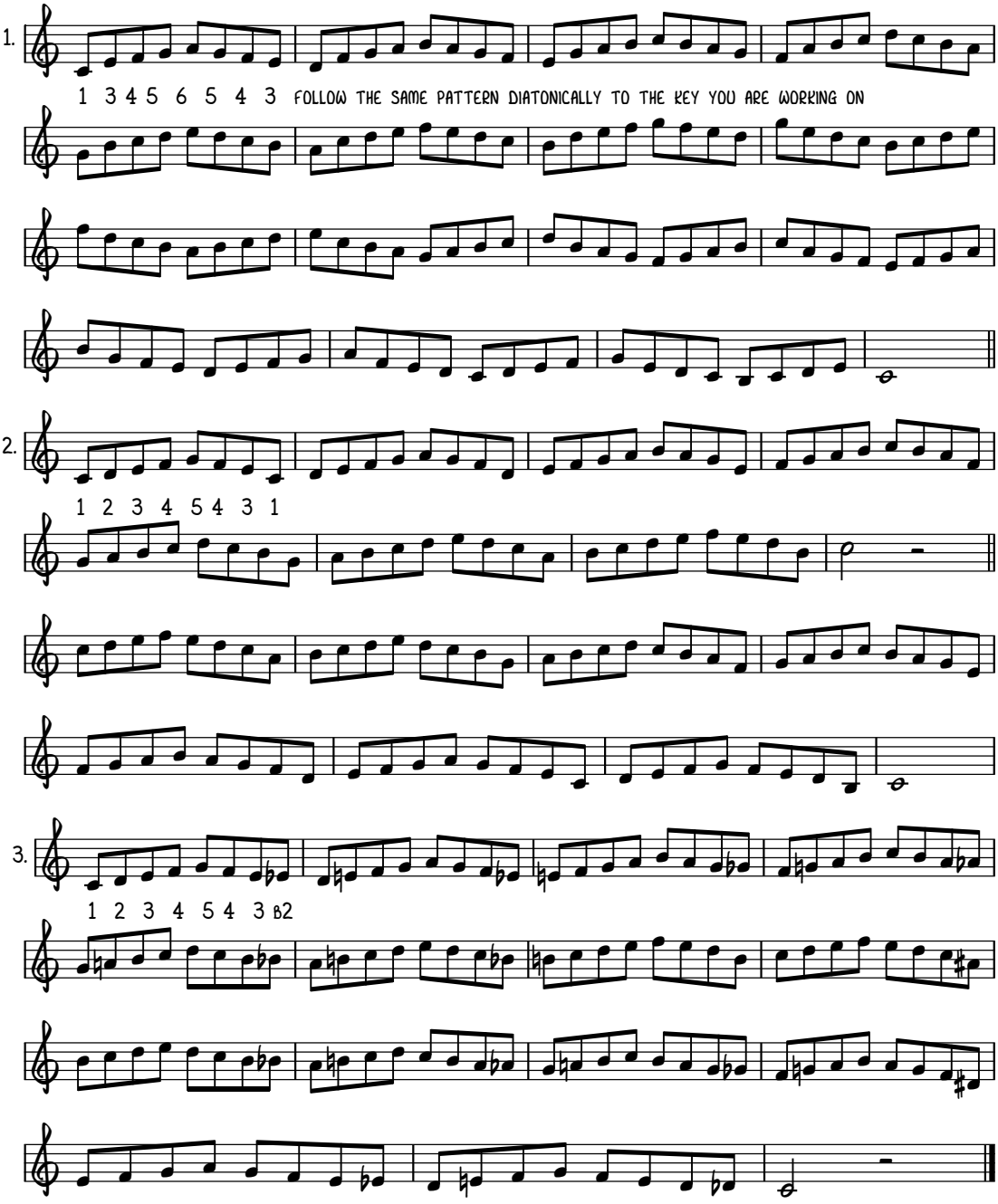
You should play them with different articulations, starting with #1 till #8, then start making up your own articulation, like slur them every three notes.

It is a MUST to do them in all 12-keys with different root motion:

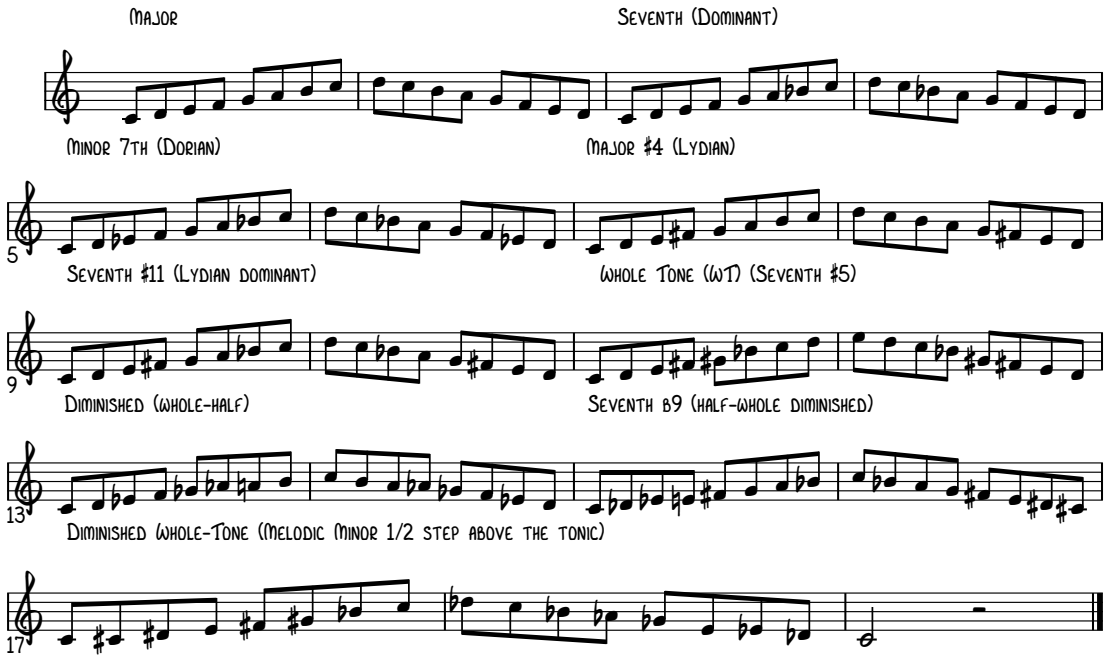
- Thru the cycle of fifths (C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab-Db-Gb-B-E-A-D-G)
- Cycle of fifth with different motion (G-D-A-E-B-Gb-Db-Ab-Eb-Bb-F-C)
- Chromatic (C-C#-D-Eb-E-F-F#-G-Ab-A-Bb-B) and viceversa (C-B-Bb-A-Ab-G-Gb-F-E-Eb-D-Db-C)

When you play without difficulty in the Major keys, then you should play them with other qualities: minor (dorian, melodic, harmonic), dominant, lydian, etc.

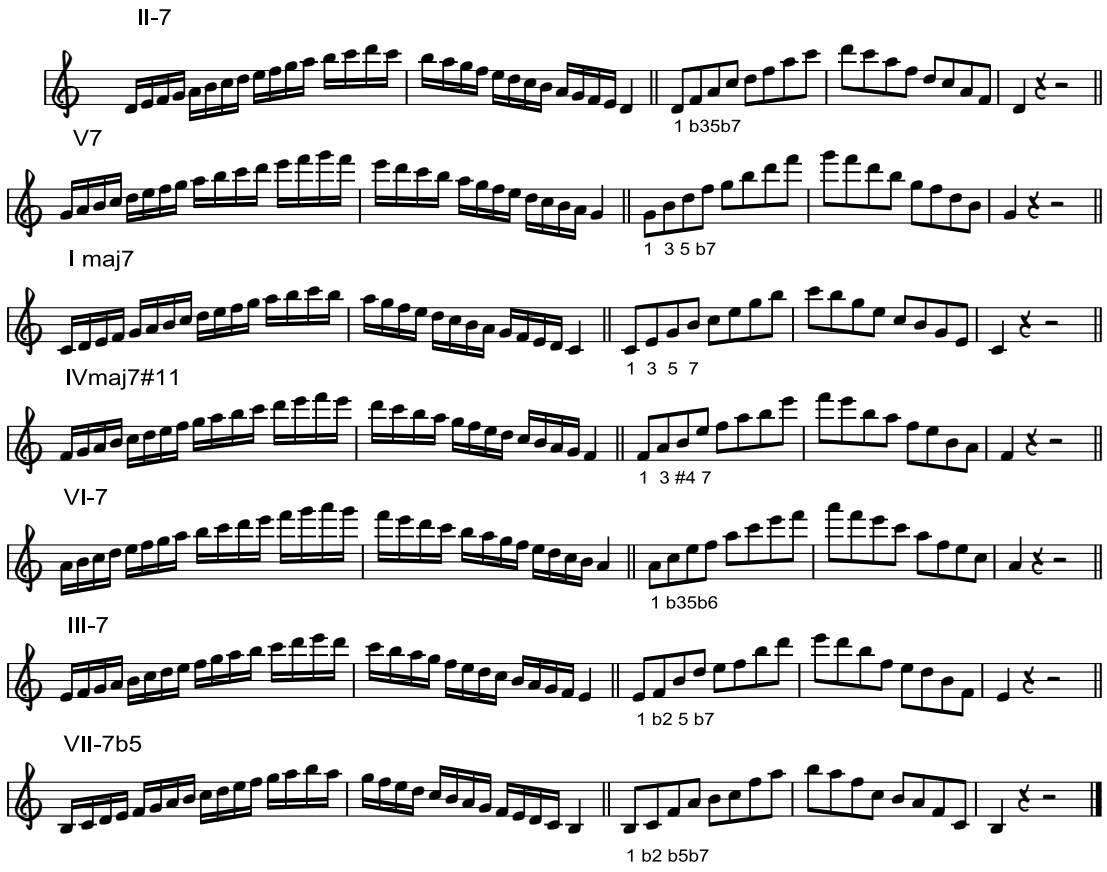
Knowing a scale is not just to be able to play it up and down but to be able to do different exercises based on the scale. Here are 3 exercises you need to play in all 12 keys. Tip: You can play the Hanon, The Virtuoso Pianist exercises on the saxophone!


1.
1 3 4 5 6 5 4 3 FOLLOW THE SAME PATTERN DIATONICALLY TO THE KEY YOU ARE WORKING ON
2.
1 2 3 4 5 4 3 1
3.
1 2 3 4 5 4 3 b2

Another way I practice scales is by playing them in the same key and different qualities: Ionian – Mixolydian – Dorian – Lydian – Lydian Dominant – Whole Tone – Dominished WH – Diminished HW – Diminished Whole Tone (Altered)

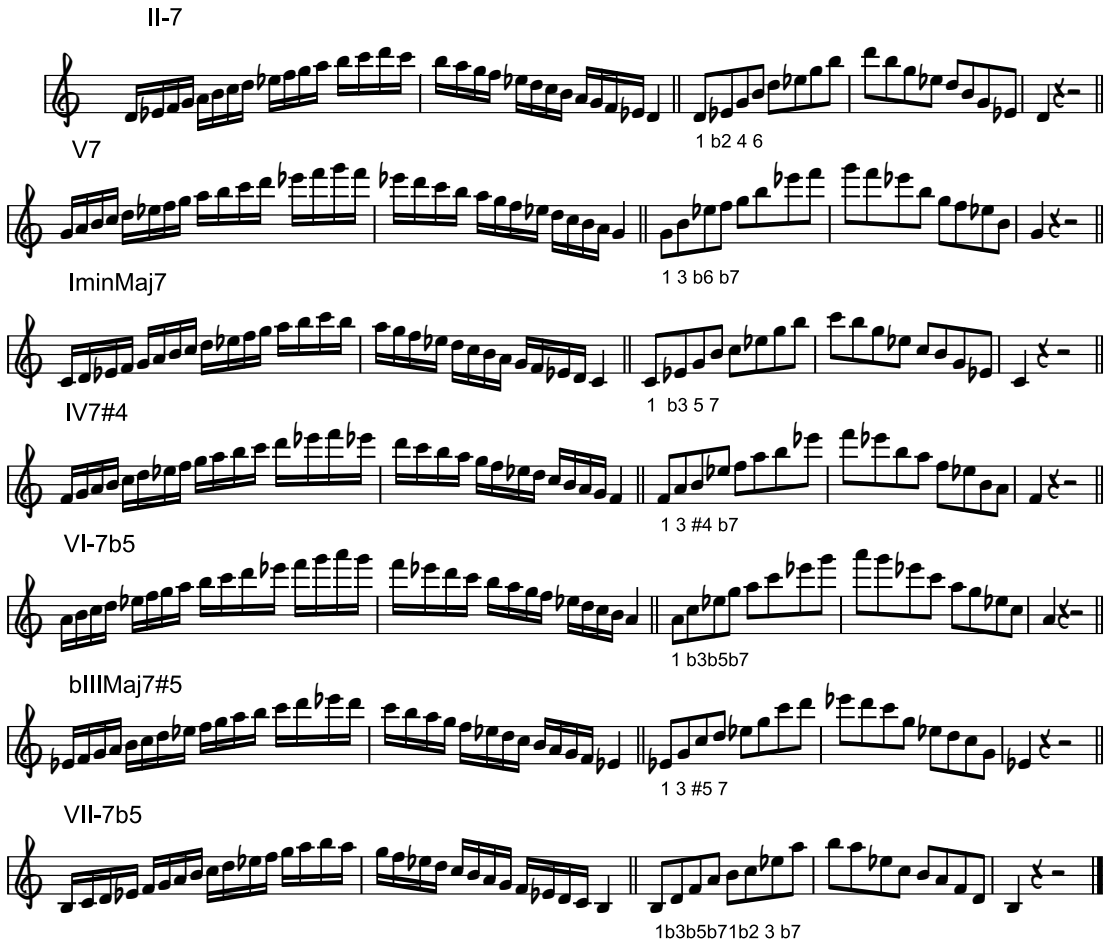


An advanced way of practicing scales thru the ii-V-I idea (example in Major harmony)



In this exercise we are playing the scales diatonically (in one key) and playing the characteristic notes of the mode in each arpeggio. Example: the characteristic notes of Maj#4 will be 1-3#4-7.

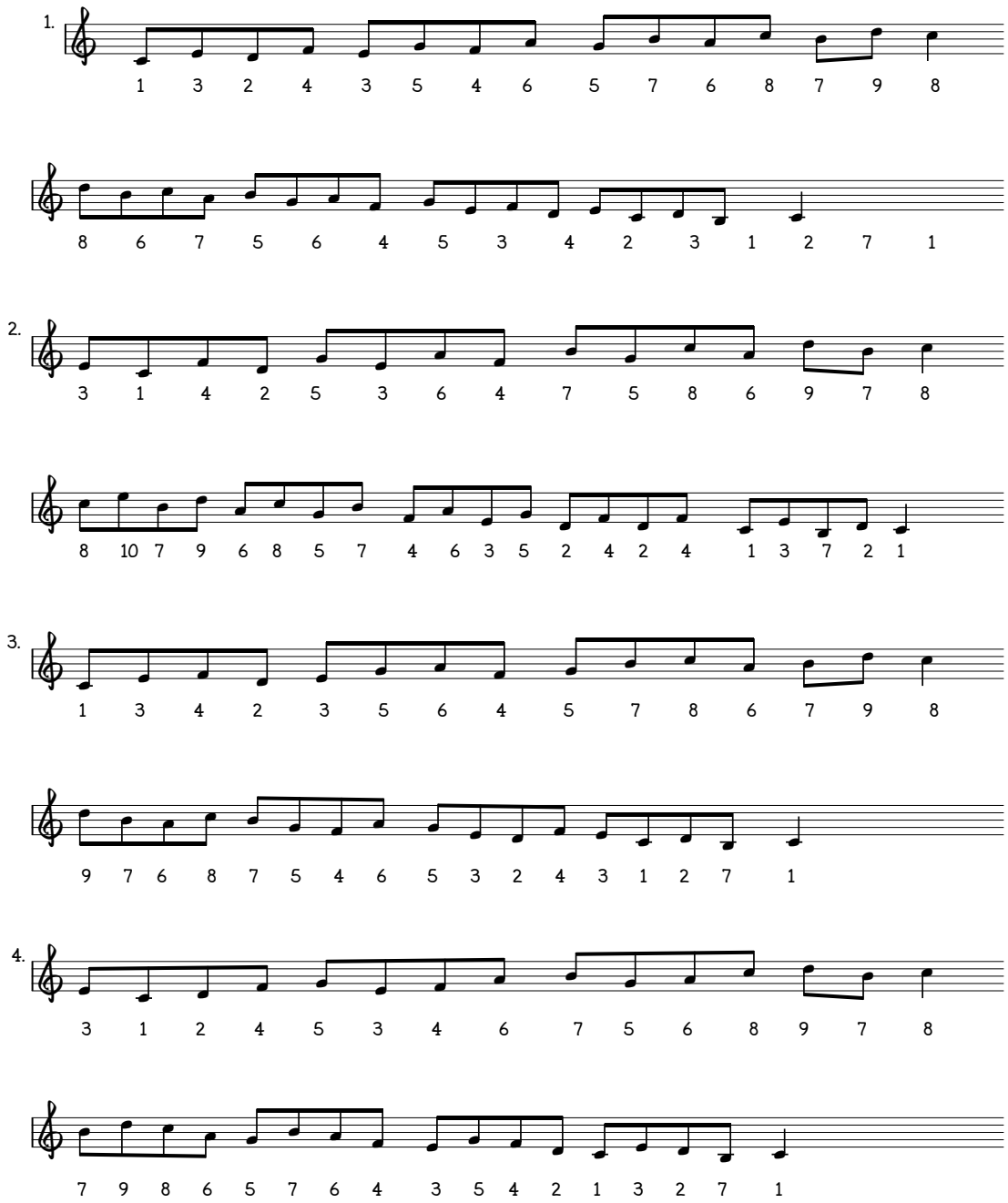
Example in Melodic minor harmony



BROKEN THIRDS (4th, 5th, 6th, 7th)

When you have the scales under your fingers, playing them in broken motion, meaning playing them skipping notes, it is not difficult.

I start with broken thirds (then do the same in 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th):

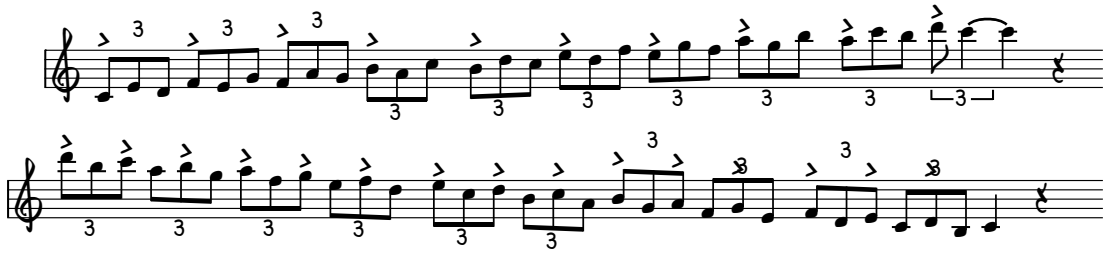


The numbers below them are the place the note has on the scale. It is a good idea to start thinking in numbers because then you can transpose exercises, chords, melodies, etc. much easier.

Exercise 1 are thirds going up; 2. The thrids going down, starting from the 3rd of note of the scale; 3. One up and one down; 4. The other direction of #3.

<u>As always this MUST be done in all 12-keys and with different qualities.</u>

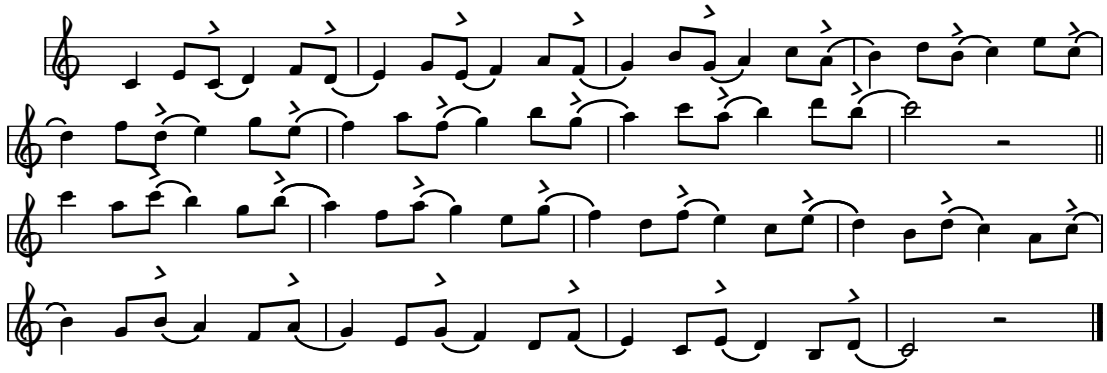
It is also important to do the broken thirds with triples. After having them under your fingers start using different articulations (here are two examples of articulation). Also do it in all four forms as above.



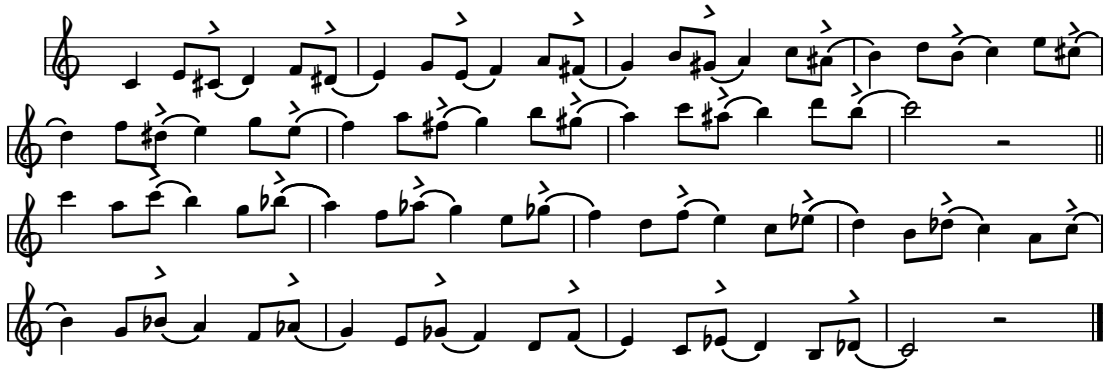
ENCLOSURE

Here is another exercise I like to work on since works very good to emphasize a note. In this first exercise, each note of the scale is enclosed (we play the note above and below the one we want to enclose)

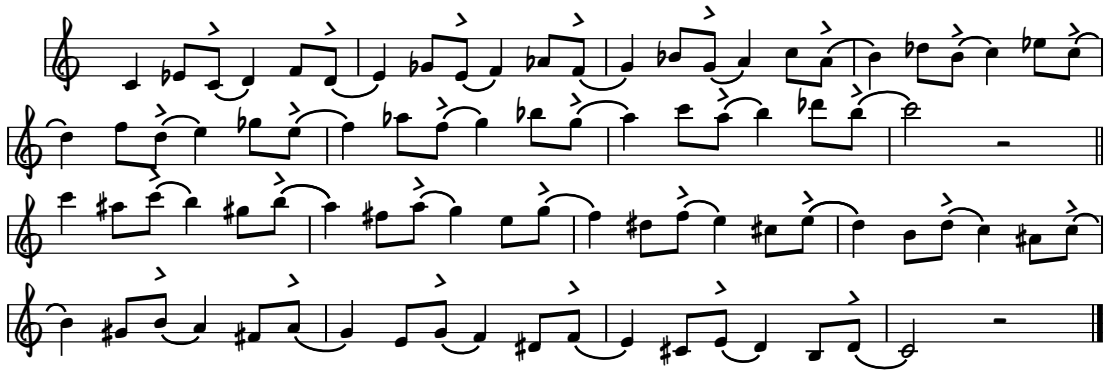
1. Diatonic Enclosure



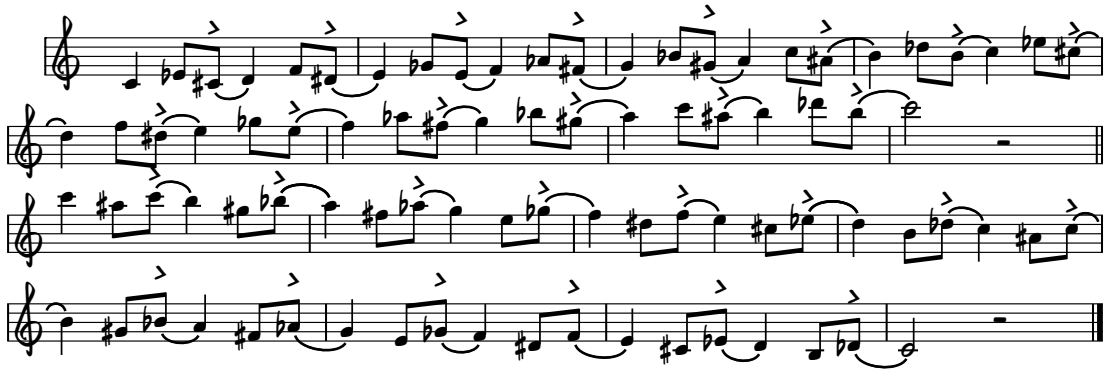
2. Diatonic – Half Step Enclosure



3. Half Step – Diatonic Enclosure



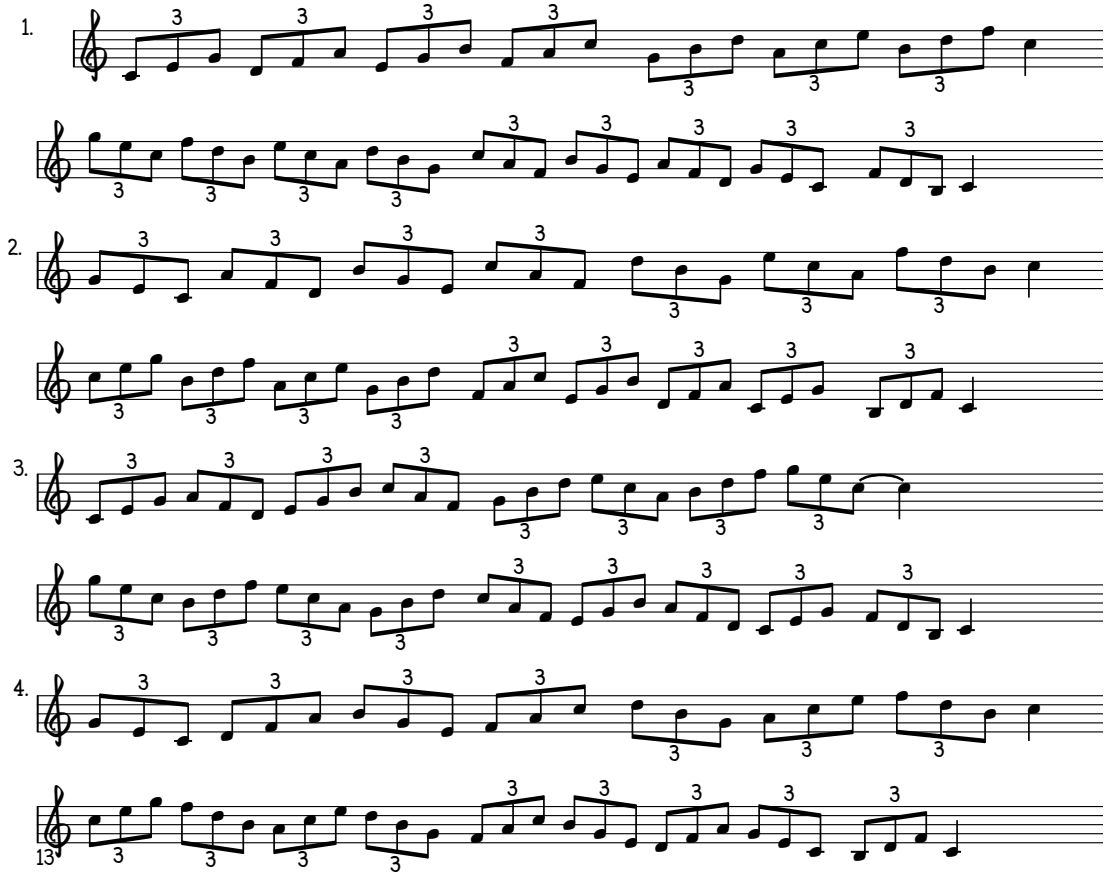
4. Chromatic Enclosure



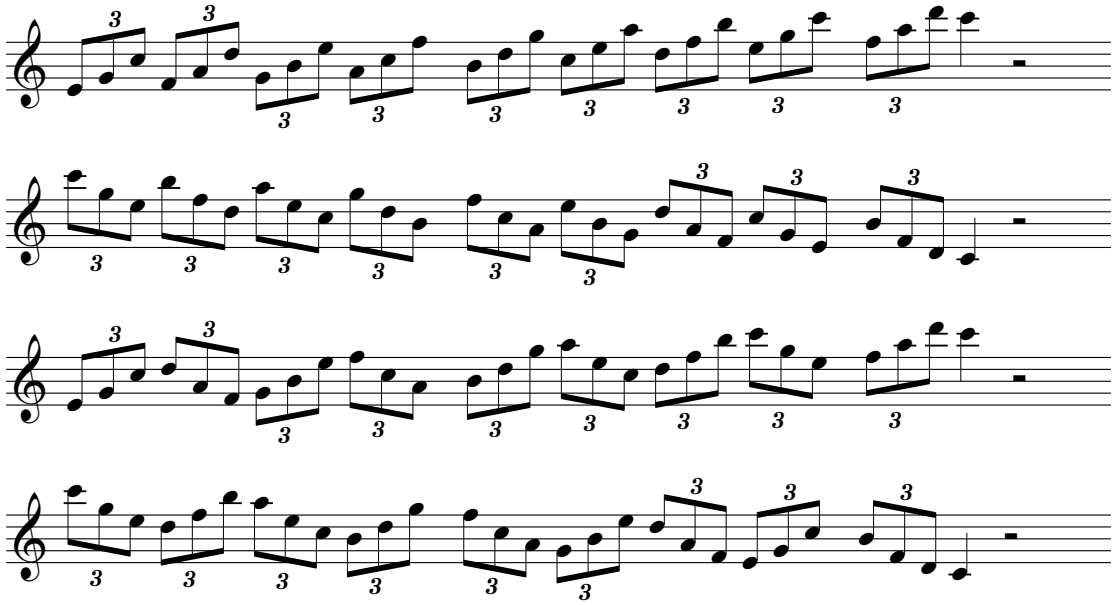
TRIADS

Chords are the most important notes that defines a scale. They can be three notes (triads) or four notes (seventh chords). They have to be under our fingers so we can use them whenever we need to. Here is a serie of exercises that will help you to achieve it.

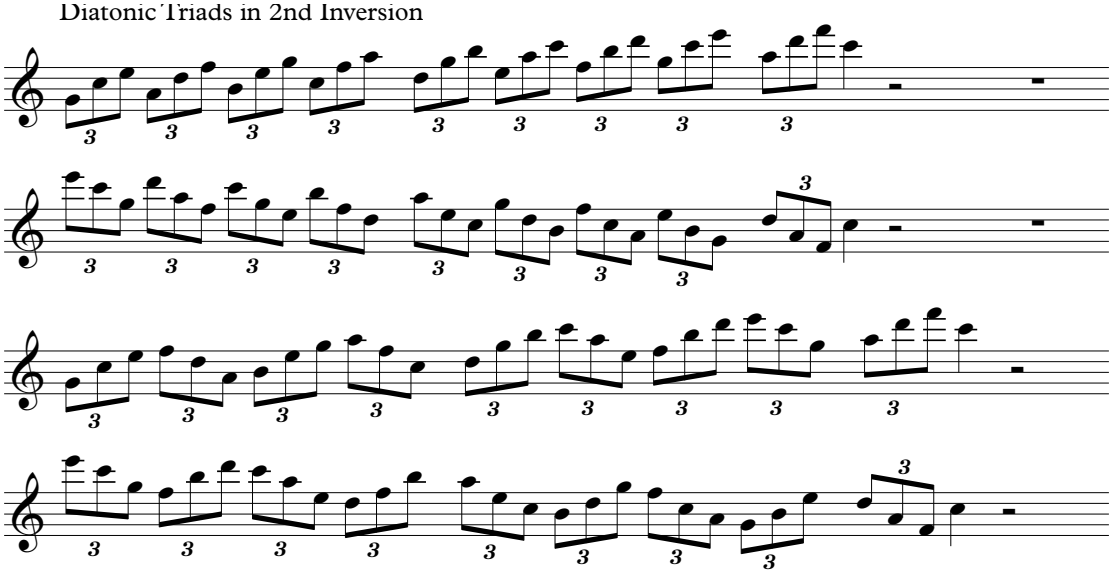
This one is the same as the broken thirds but with triads. Once you are familiar with them you should add different articulations:



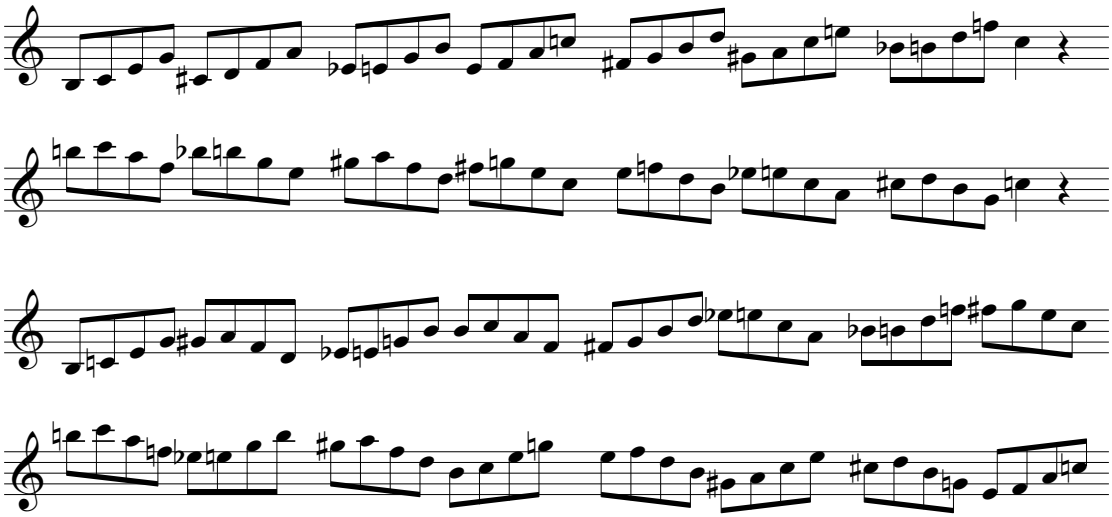
Diatonic Triads in 1st Inversion



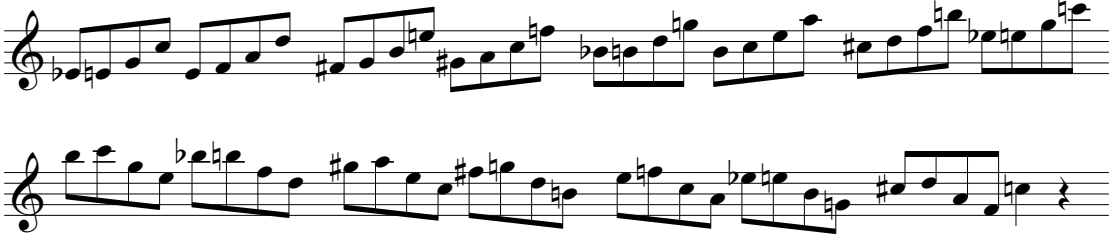
Diatonic Triads in 2nd Inversion



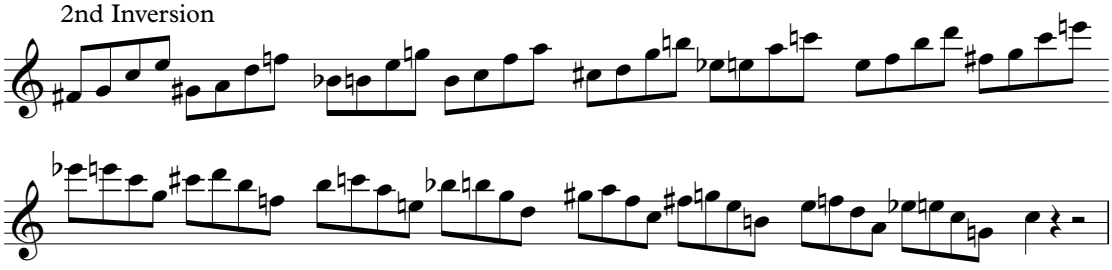
Diatonic Triads starting 1/2 Step below (approaching note)



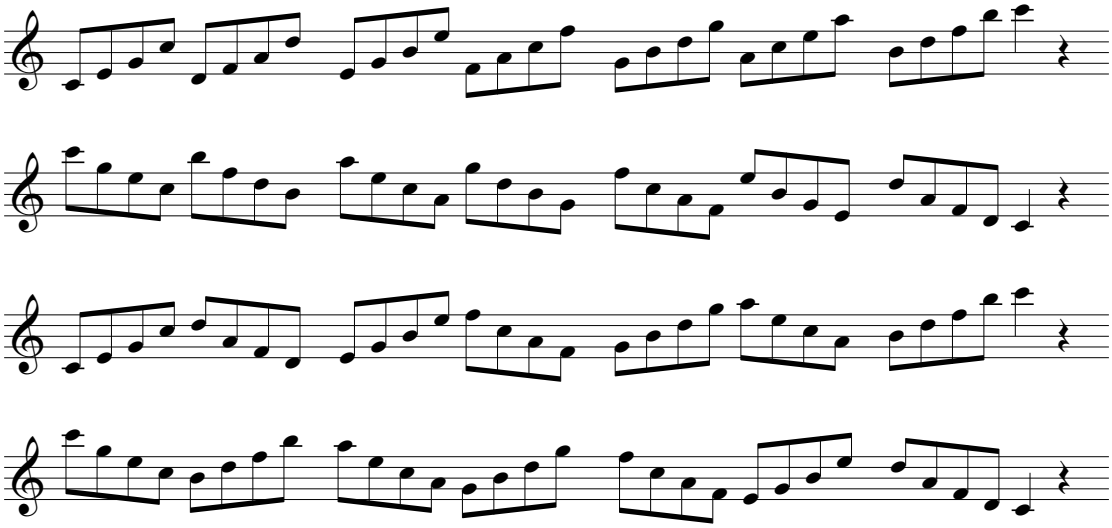
Practice the same exercise in 1st and 2nd inversions.
1st Inversion



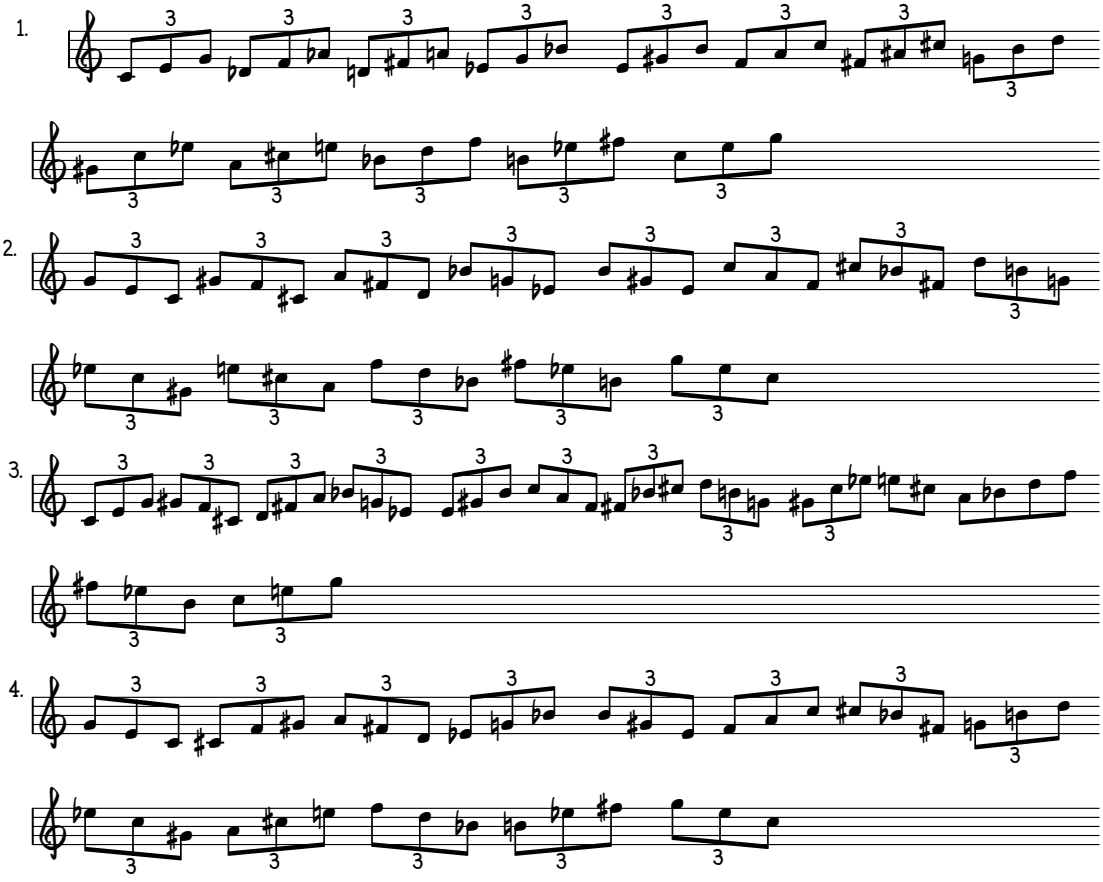
2nd Inversion



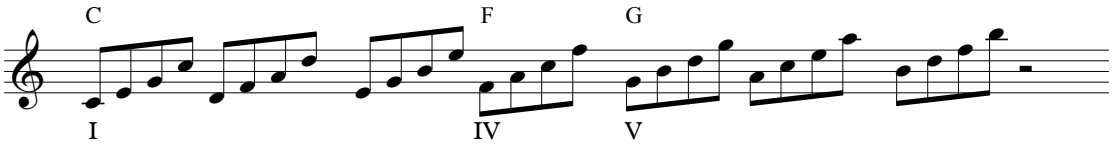
Diatonic Triads 1-3-5-8



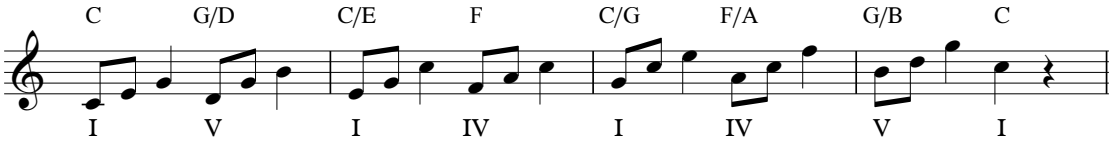
Chromatic Triads

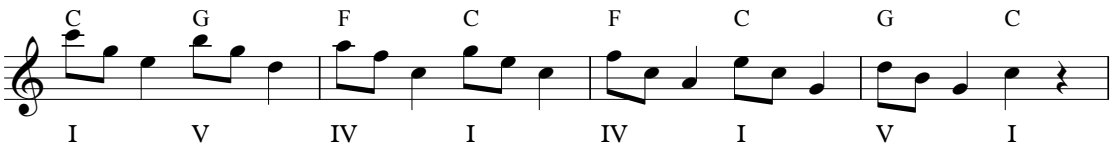


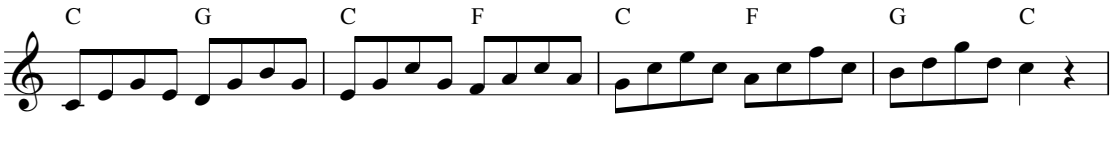
Triads based on I IV and V degrees

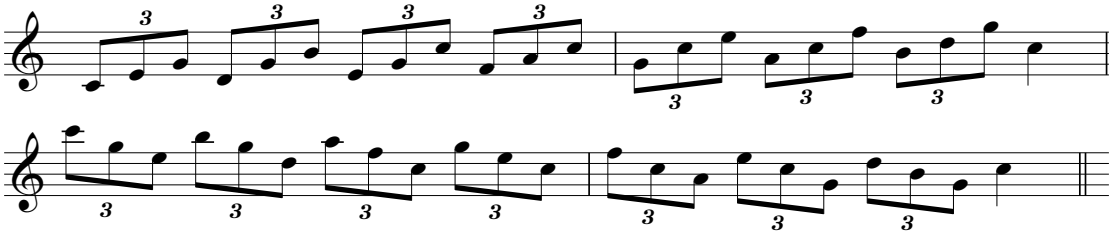


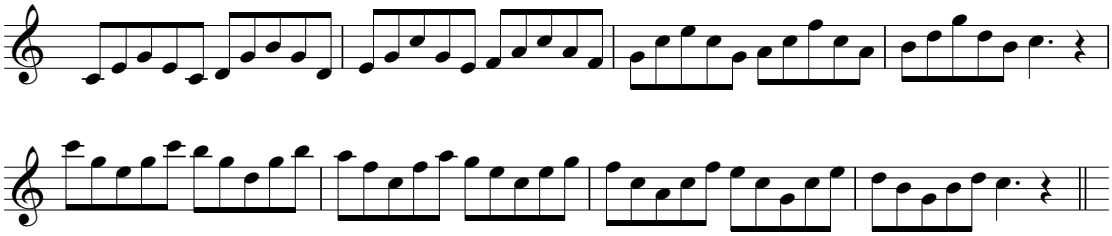
Here are some exercises that follow this same partern

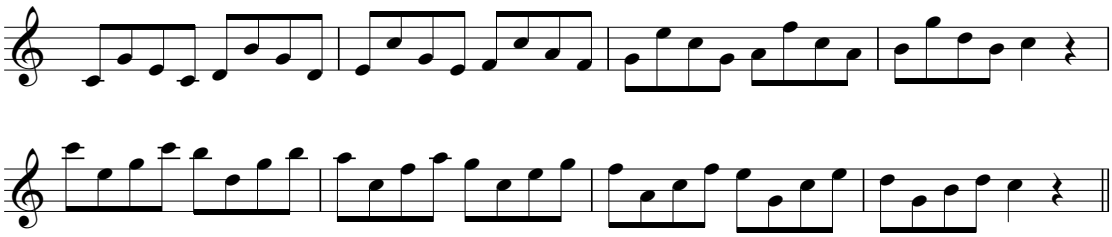


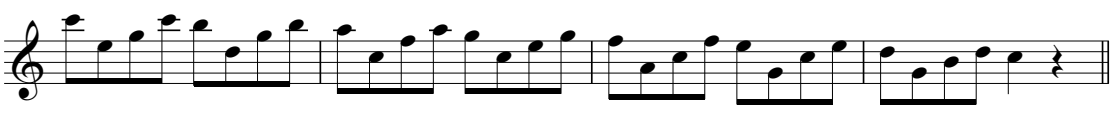




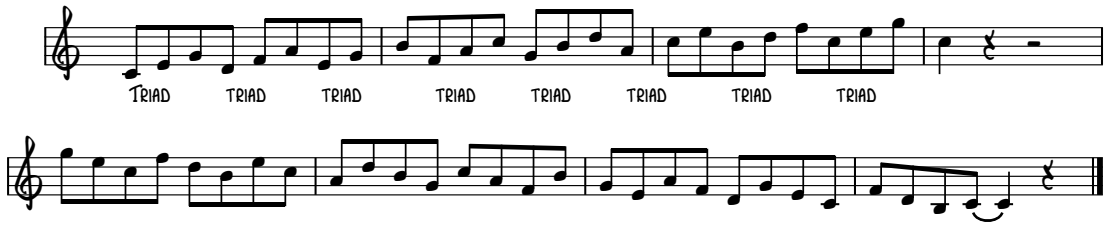




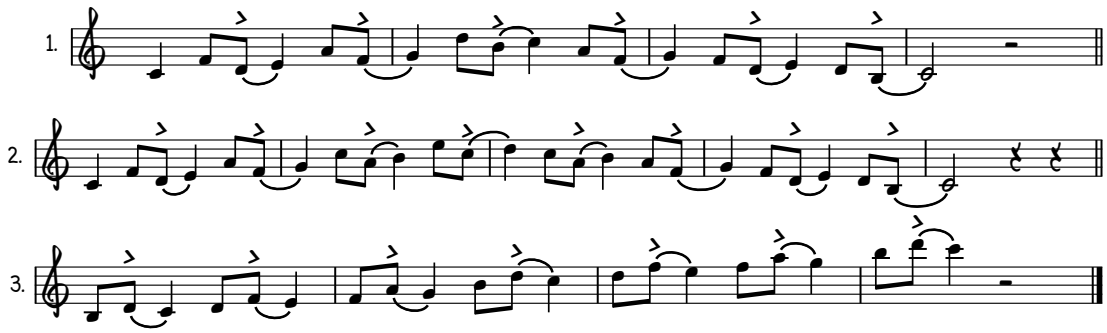




Triads are much easier if we play them in triplets simply because they have three notes; but we can also experiment playing them in 8th notes:

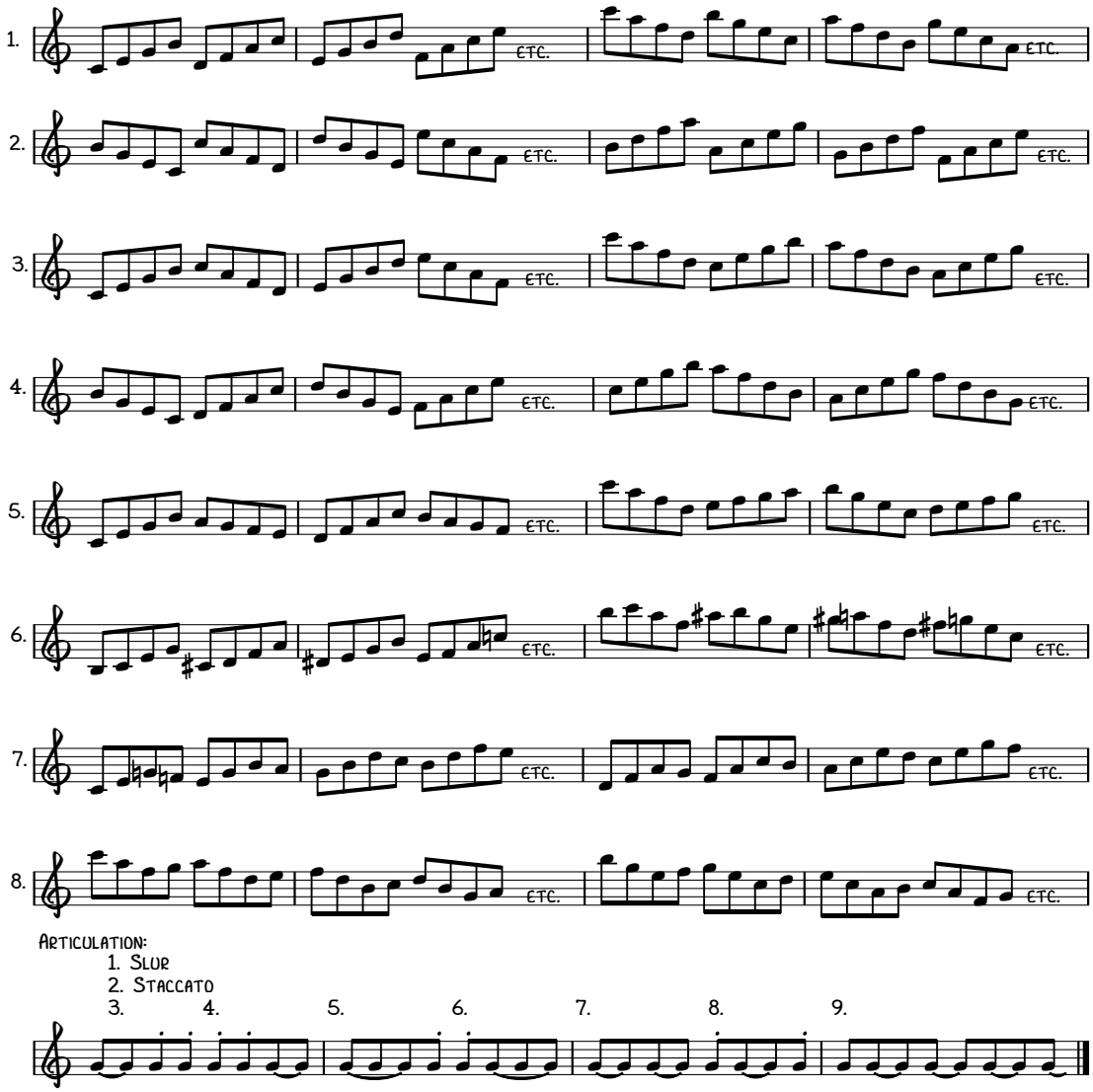


Triads encloure are also a great exercise to do so we learn how to approach them. This is used a lot by jazz players:



7th CHORDS

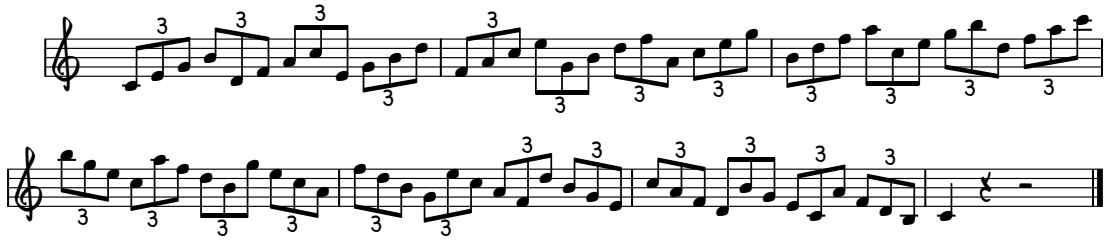
As mentioned before, when we add the 7th note of the scale to a triad, this becomes a 7th chord. Exercise 1-4 are the same as the broken trids and triads, and one more time, once you get familiar then add articulation:

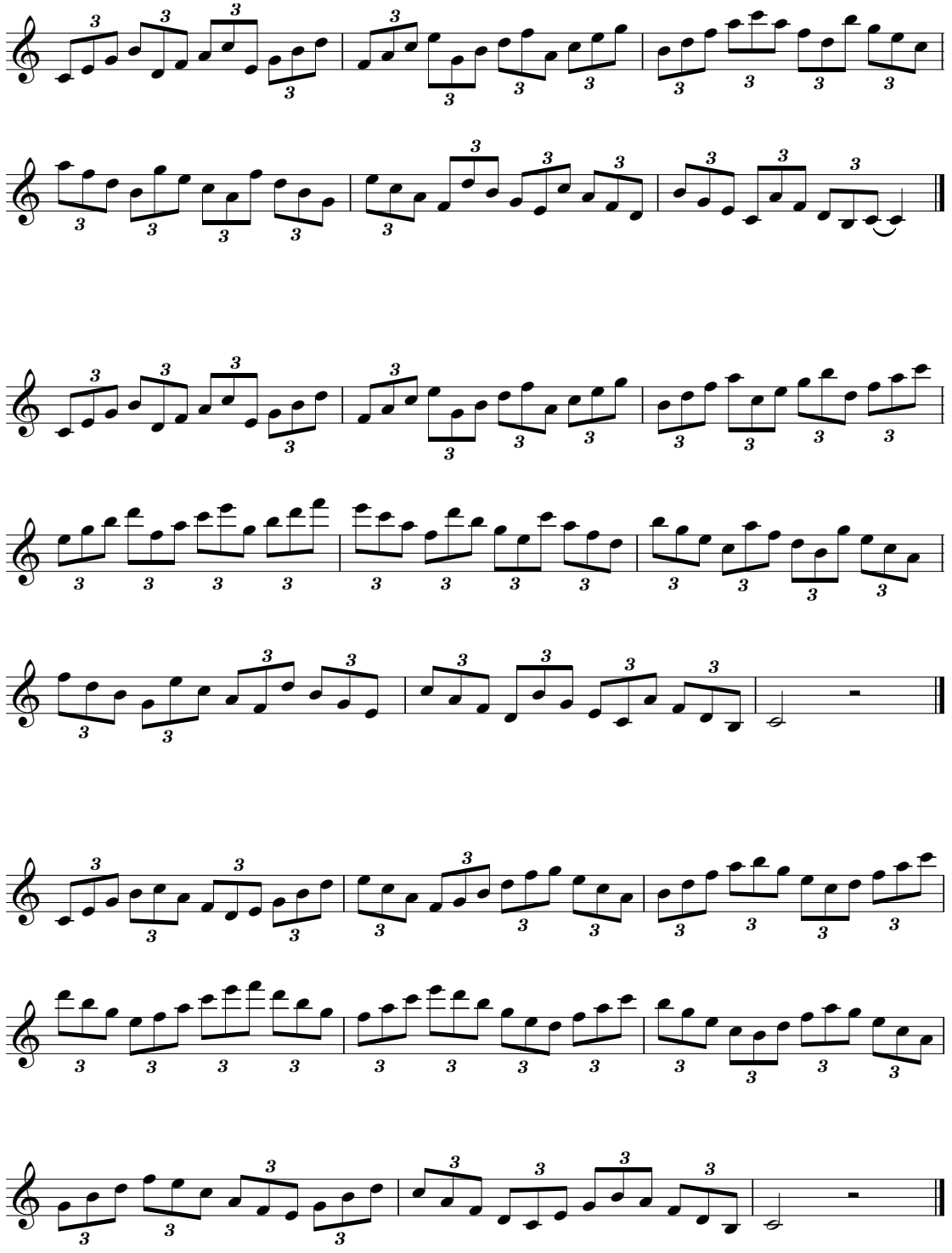


Exercise 5 connects each diatonic 7th chord with the scale.
Exercise 6 is the 3rd inversion of the 7th chord or you can see it as the chromatic approach to a triad, done diatonically.
Exercise 7-8 is a diatonic triad connected by a scale note.

All of the above exercises have to be done with the nine articulations, at least, and all 12-keys.

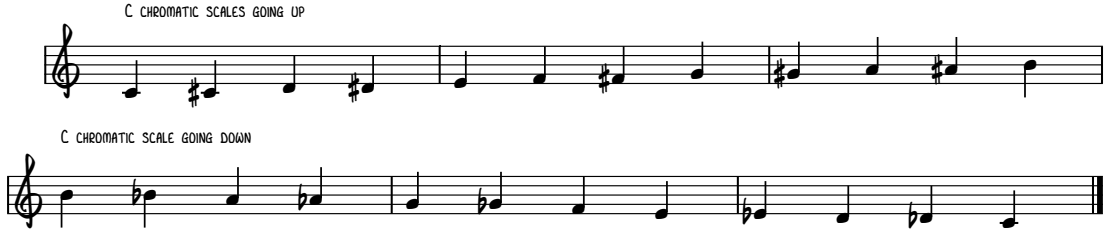
As the triads are easy when played in triplets, the 7th chords are easier when played in 8th notes, so we should change them as well and play them in triplets:





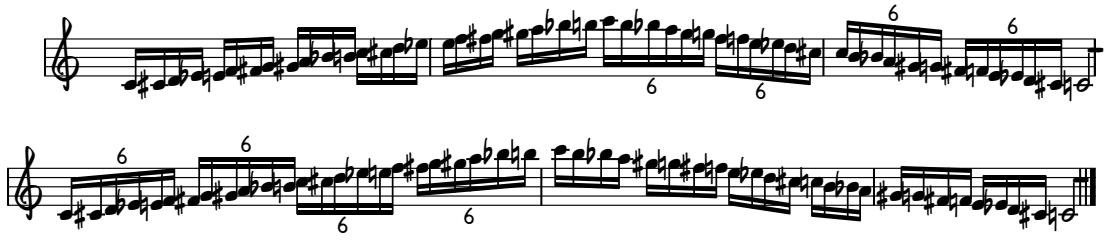
PRACTICE WITH CHROMATISMS:

There is one chromatic scale and it covers all 12 notes, does not matter what note you start, it is always the same scale.

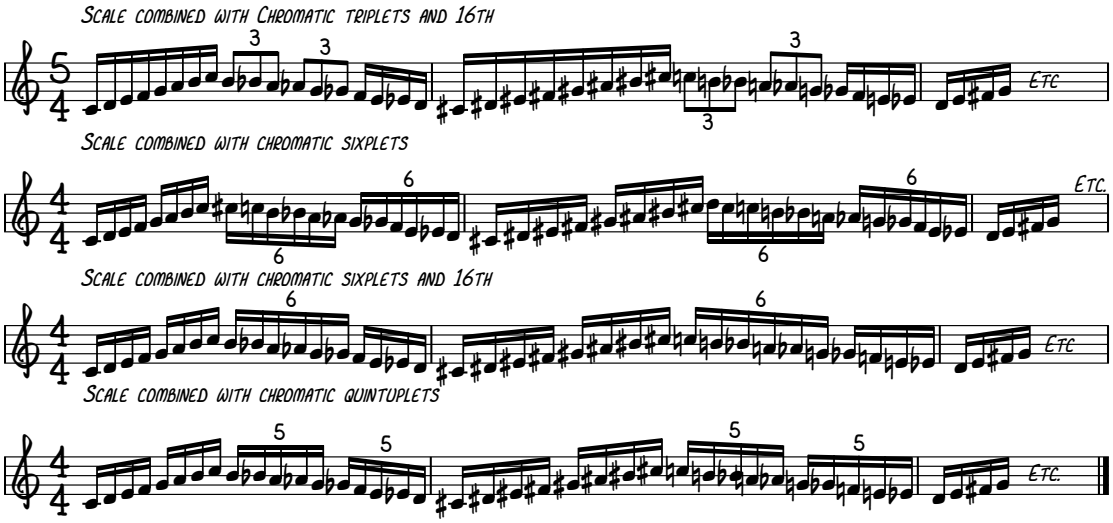


Here there is a series of exercises combining scales and arpeggios with chromaticism. These are just some of the unlimited combinations you can make:

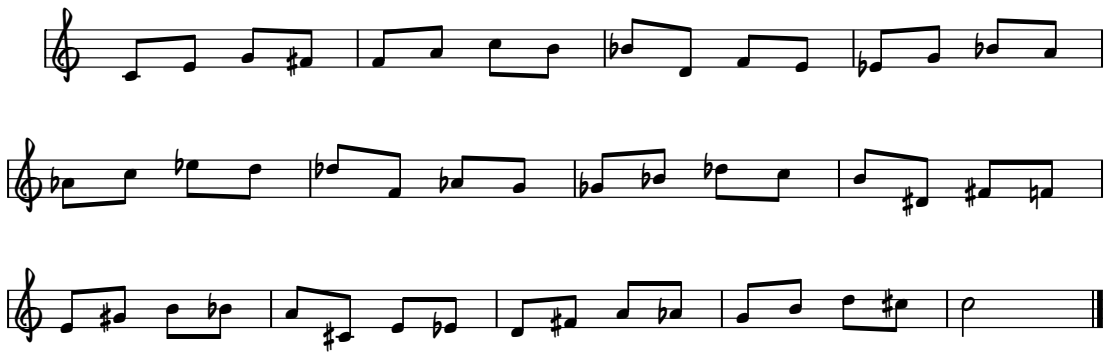
- Chromatic scale up in 16th notes and going down in sixplets and vice versa:



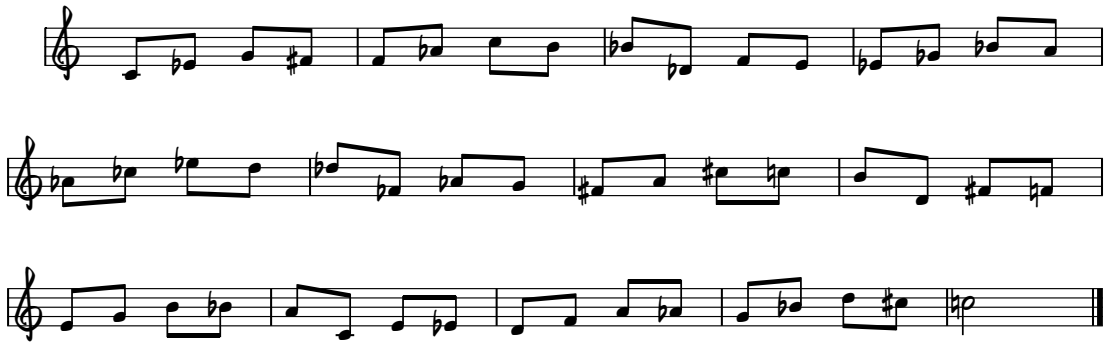
- Major scales combined with chromatism



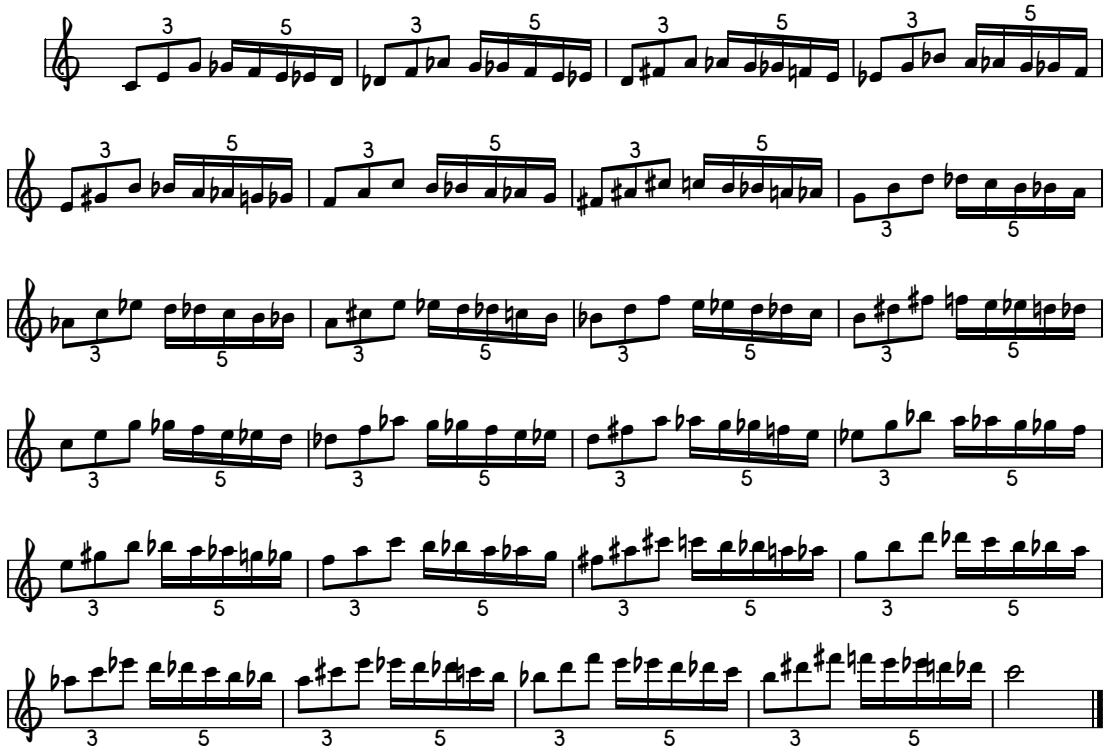
Major Triads combined with passing tone



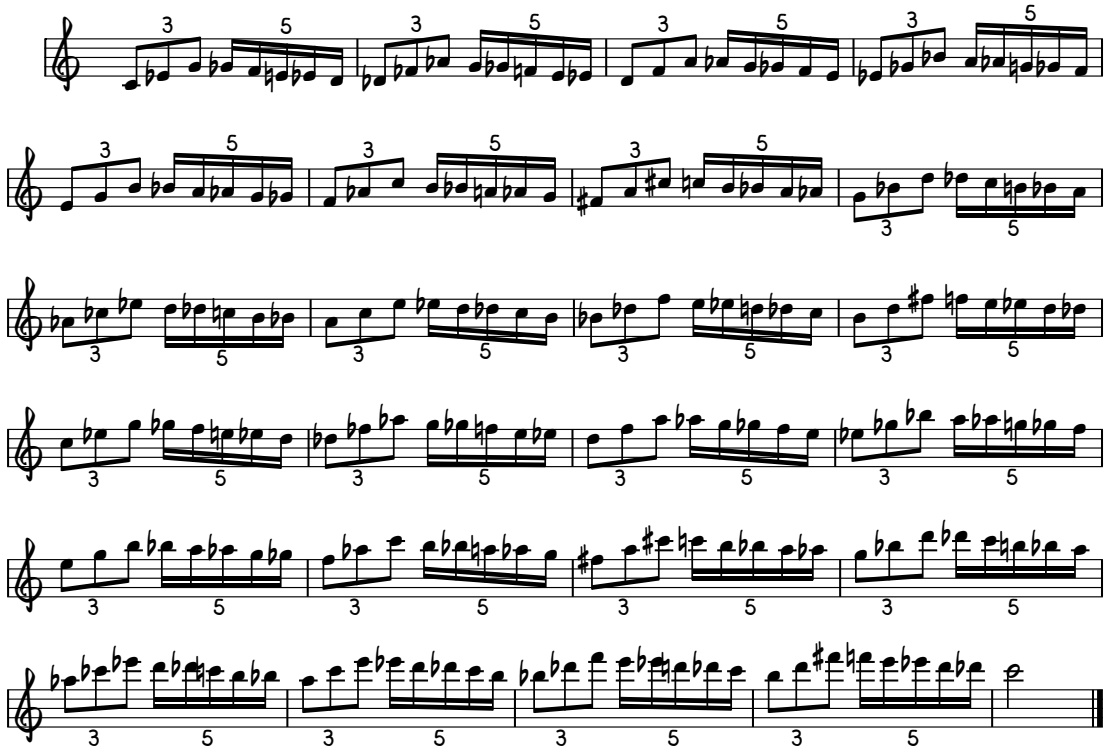
Minor Triads combined with passing tone



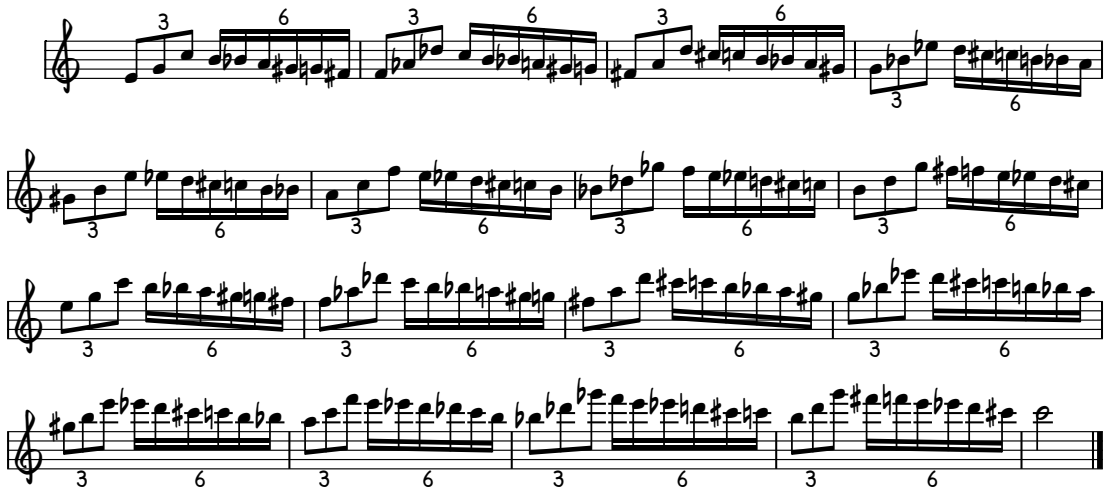
Major triads triplets combined with chromatic quintuplets



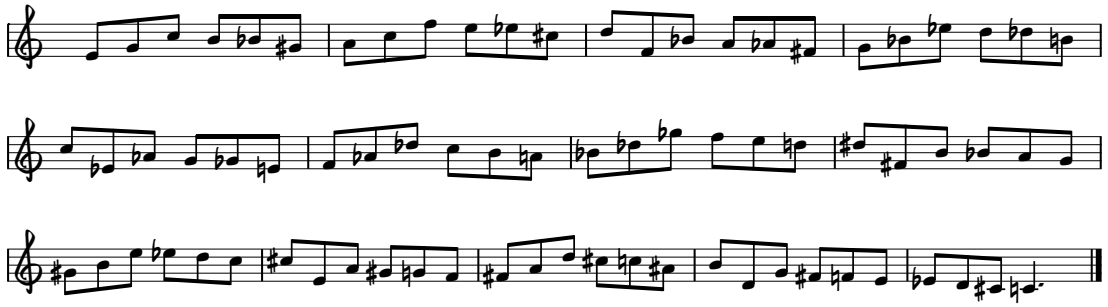
Minor triads triplets combined with chromatic quintuplets



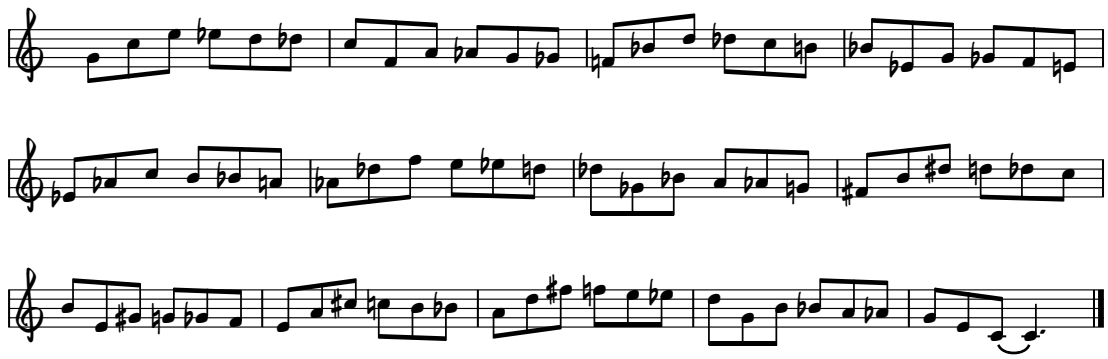
Major 1st inversion triads in triplets combined with chromatic sextuplets



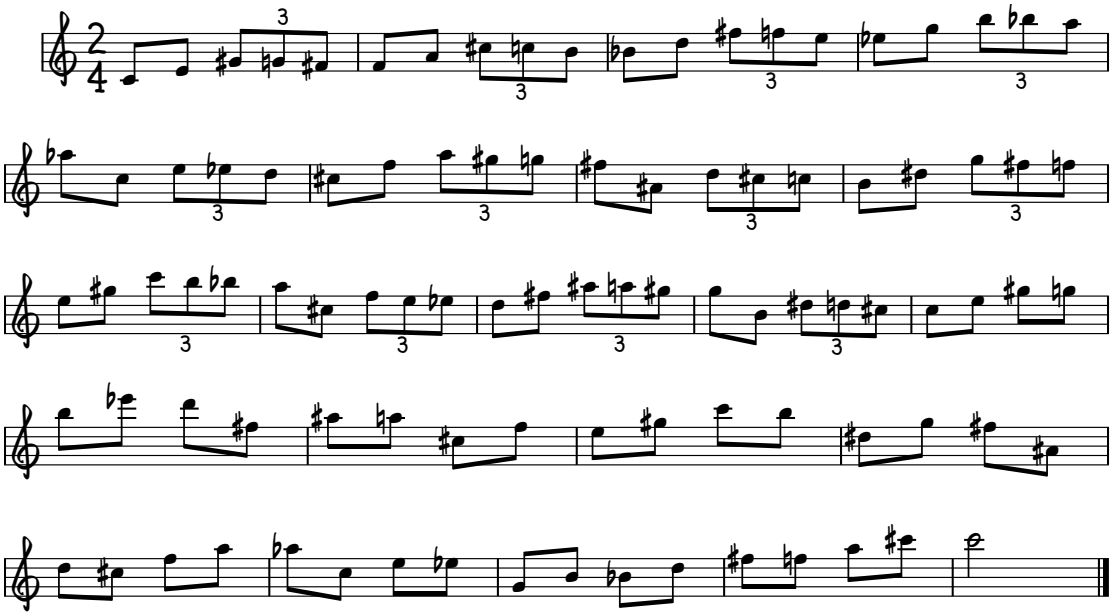
Major triads in 1st inversion with enclosure



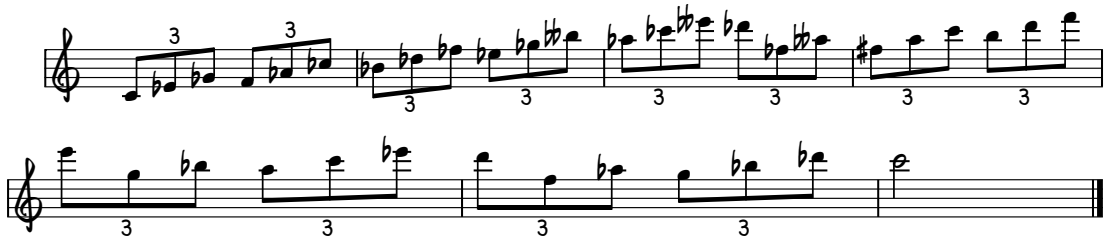
Major triads in 2nd inversion



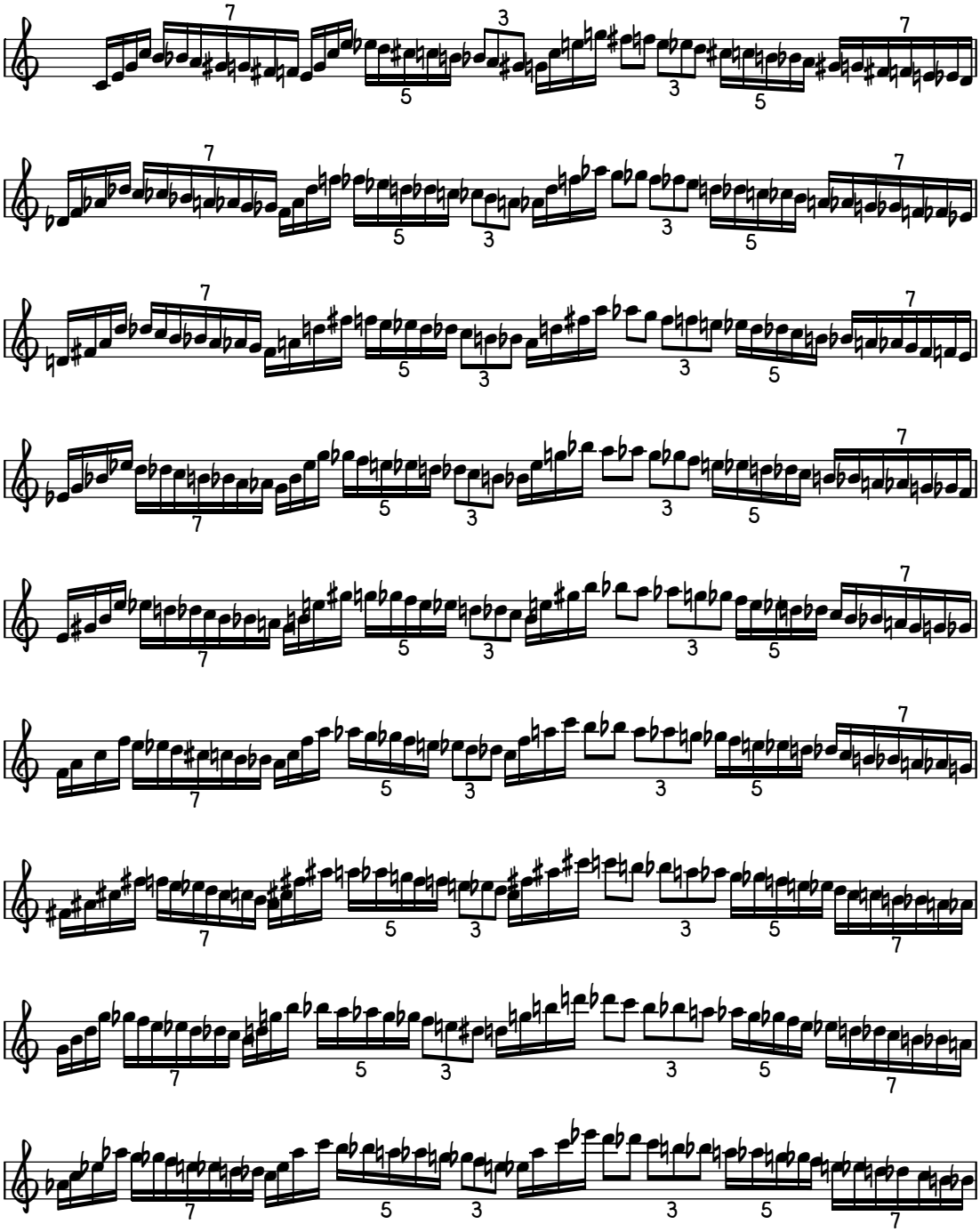
Augmented triads with passing tone

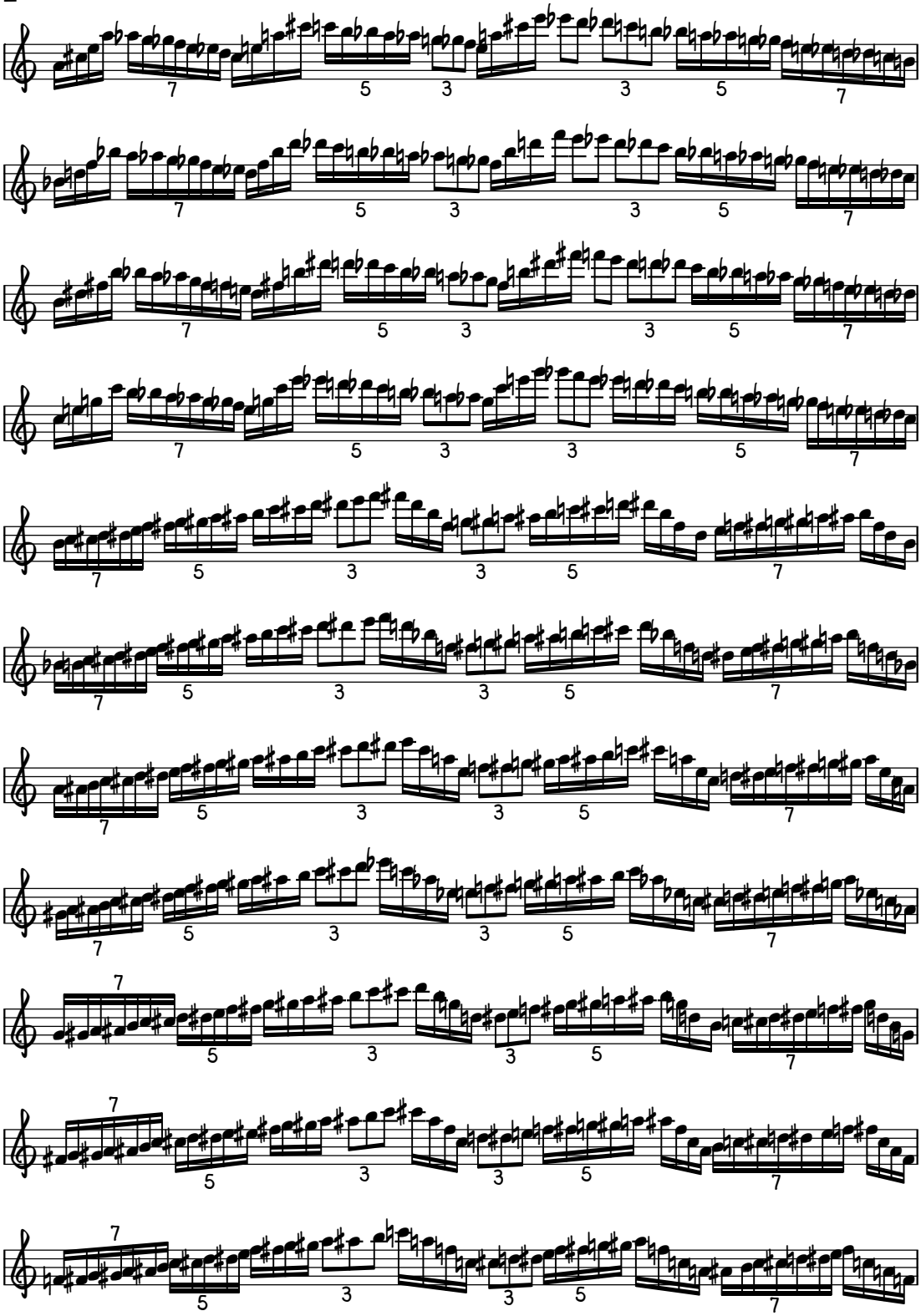


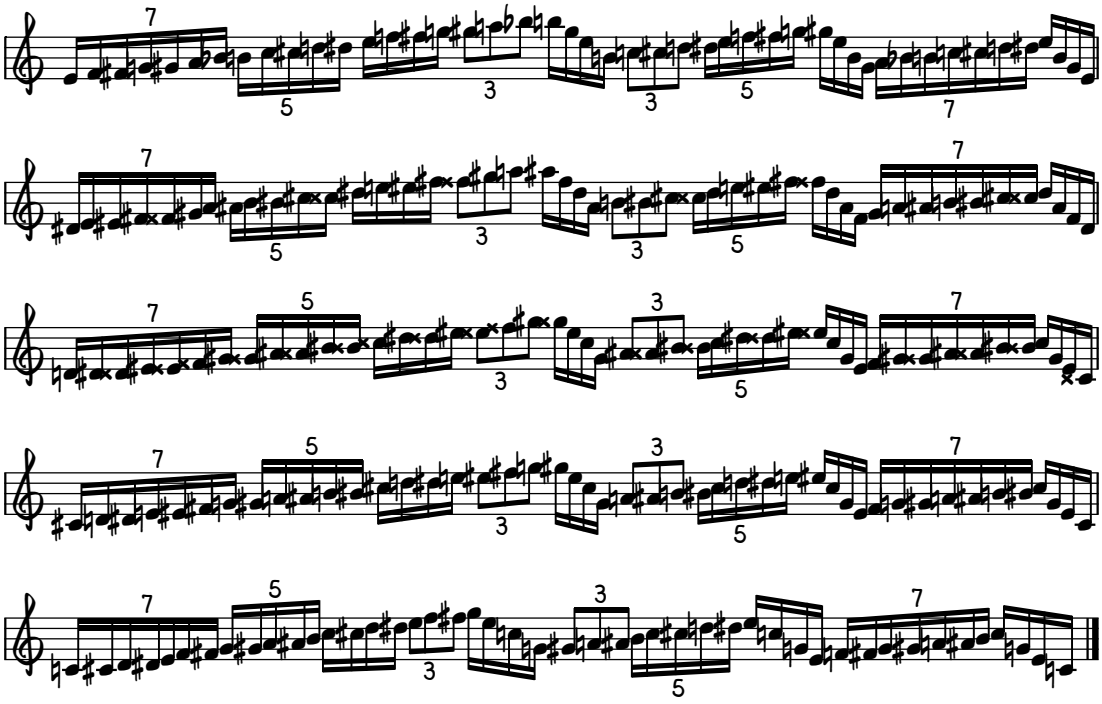
Diminished triads over the circle



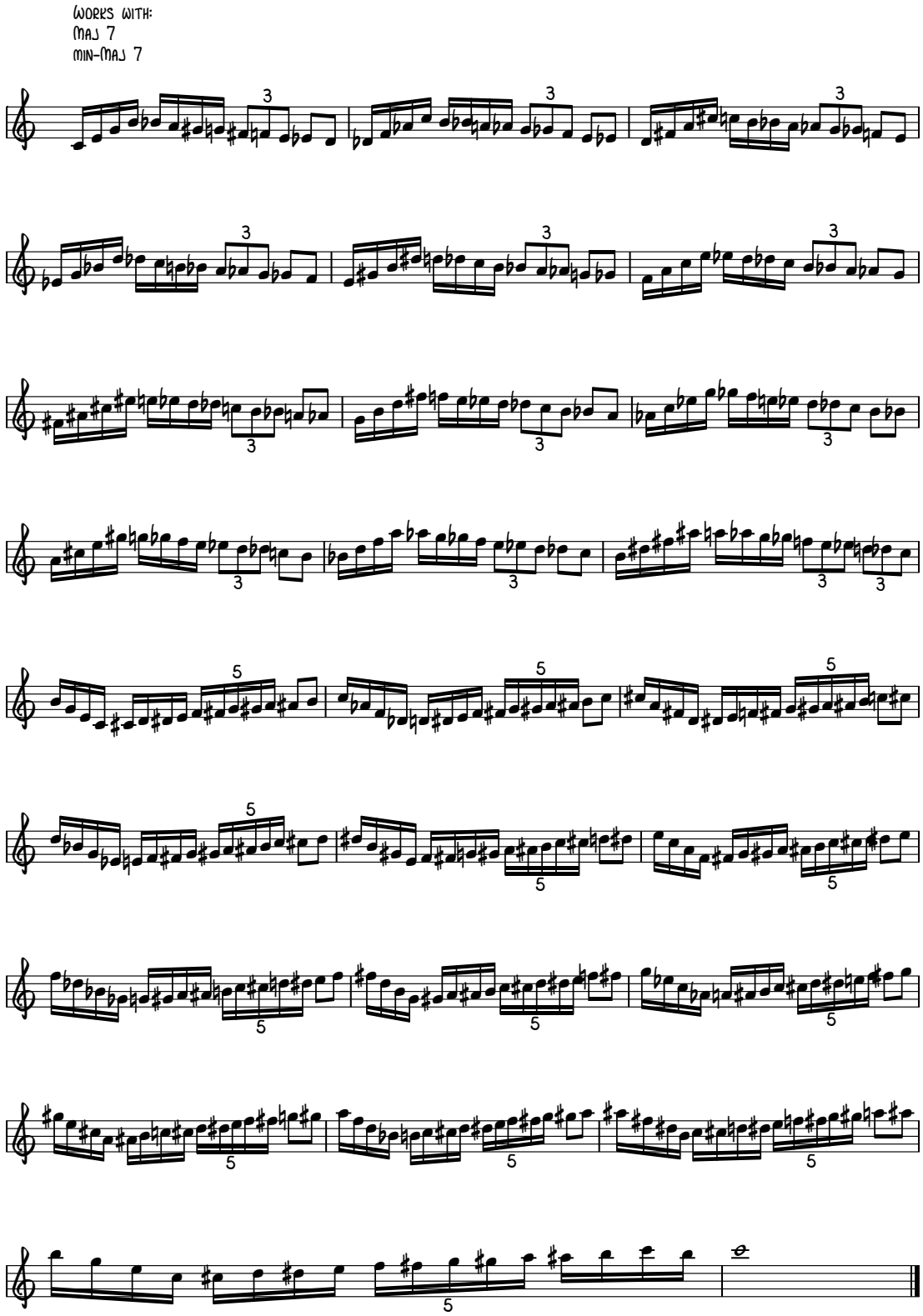
Root position, 1st and 2nd inversion triads with chromatism



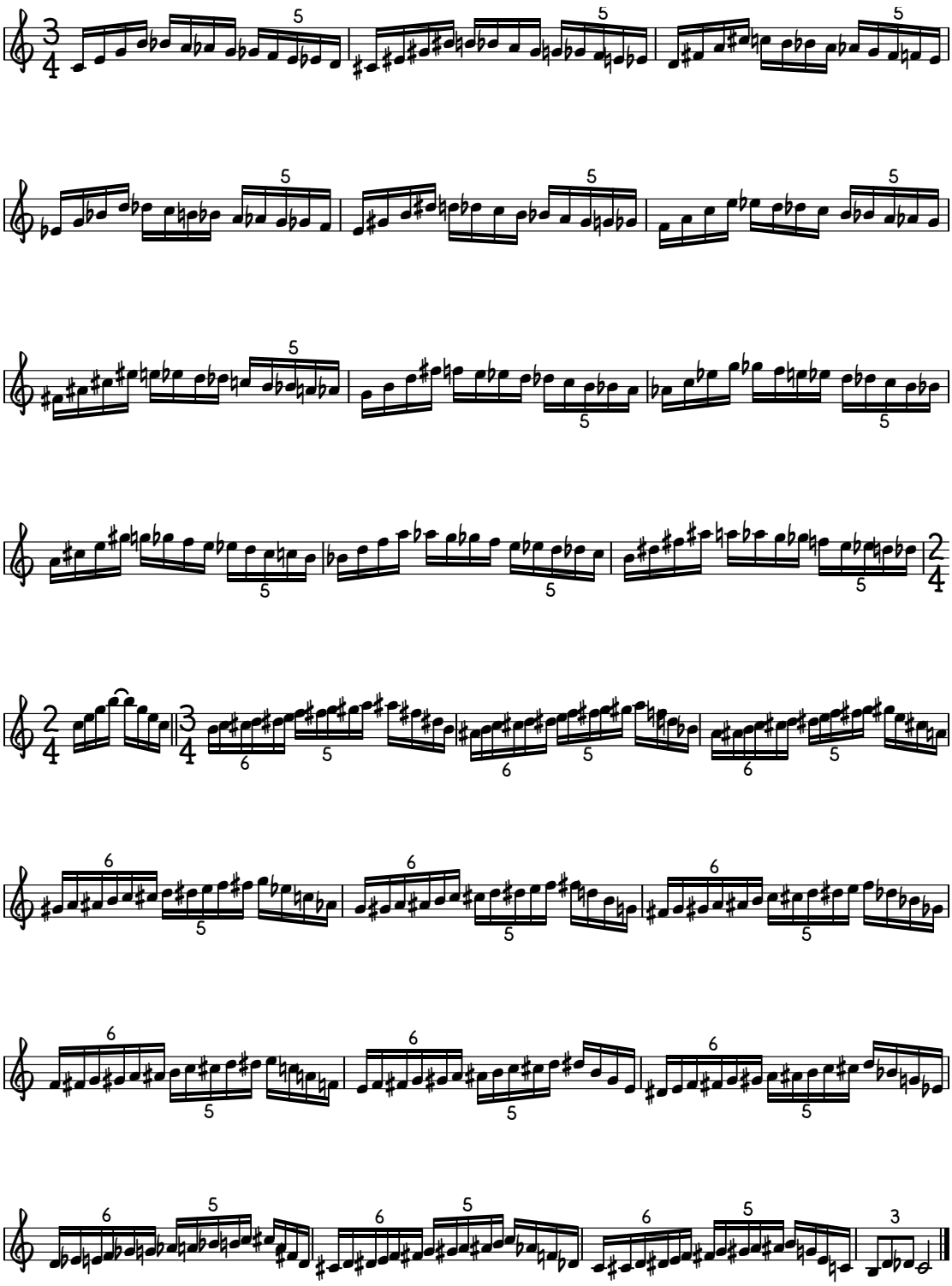




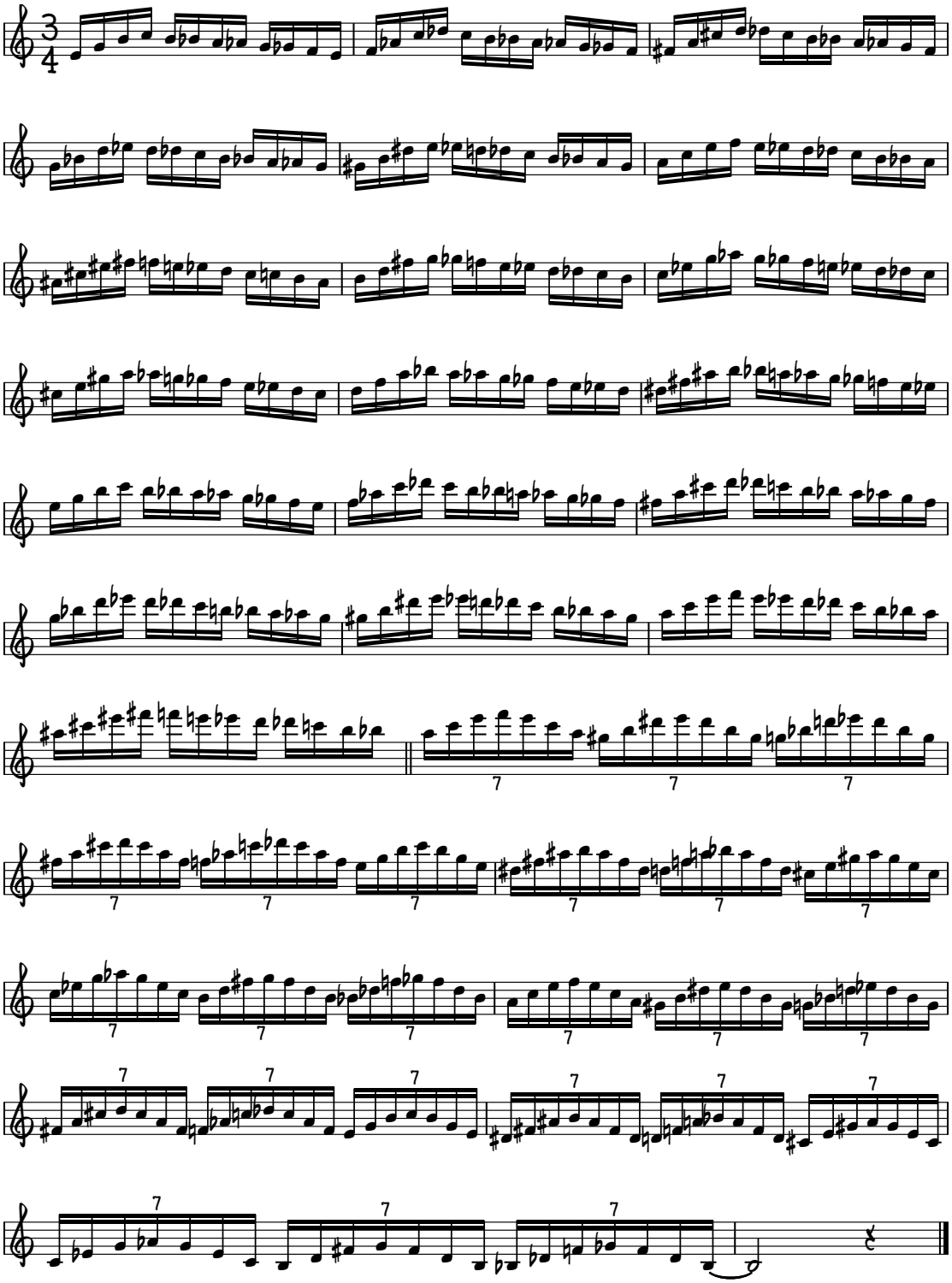
Major 7th arpeggio up and chromatic down, version 1



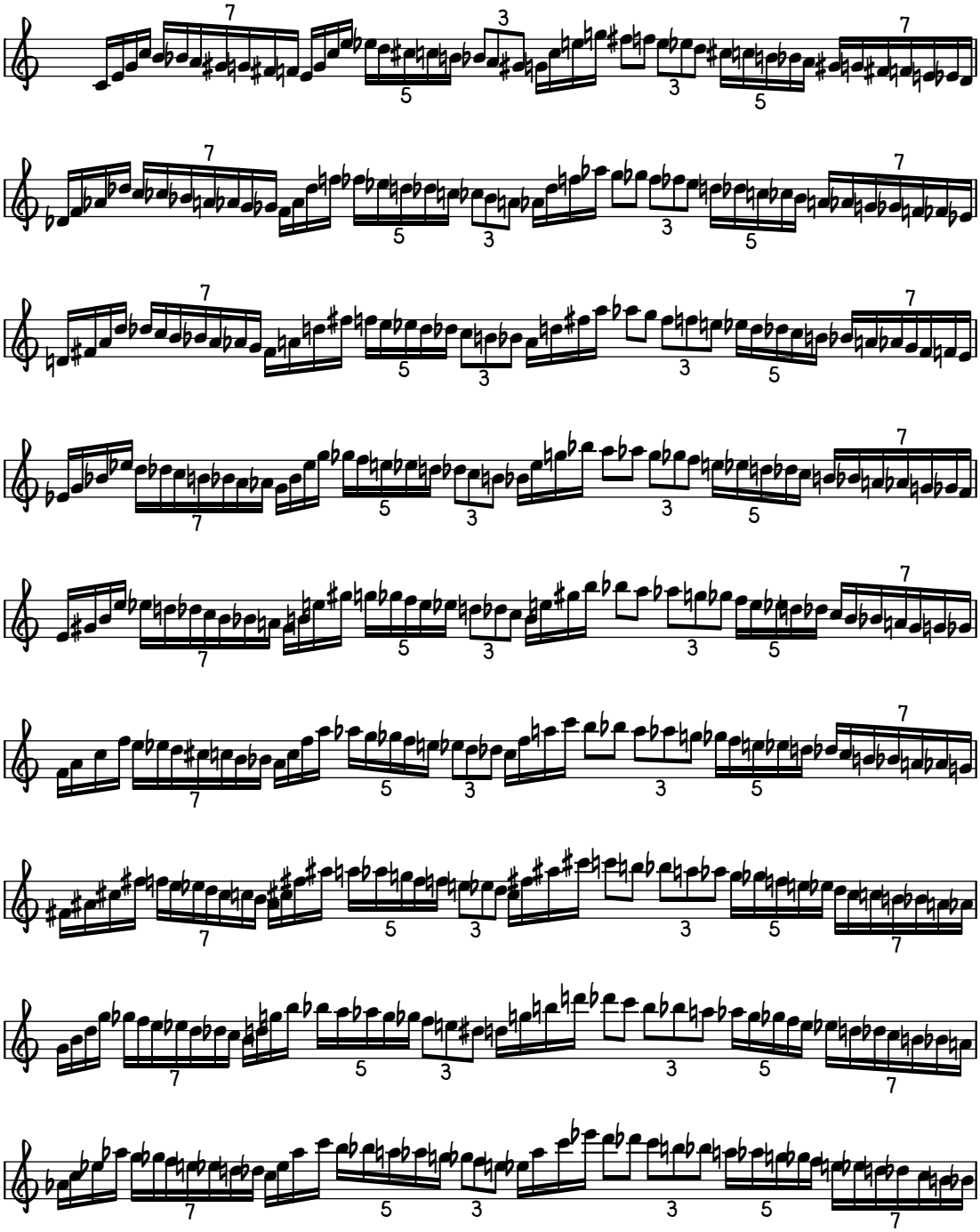
Major 7th arpeggio up and chromatic down, version 2

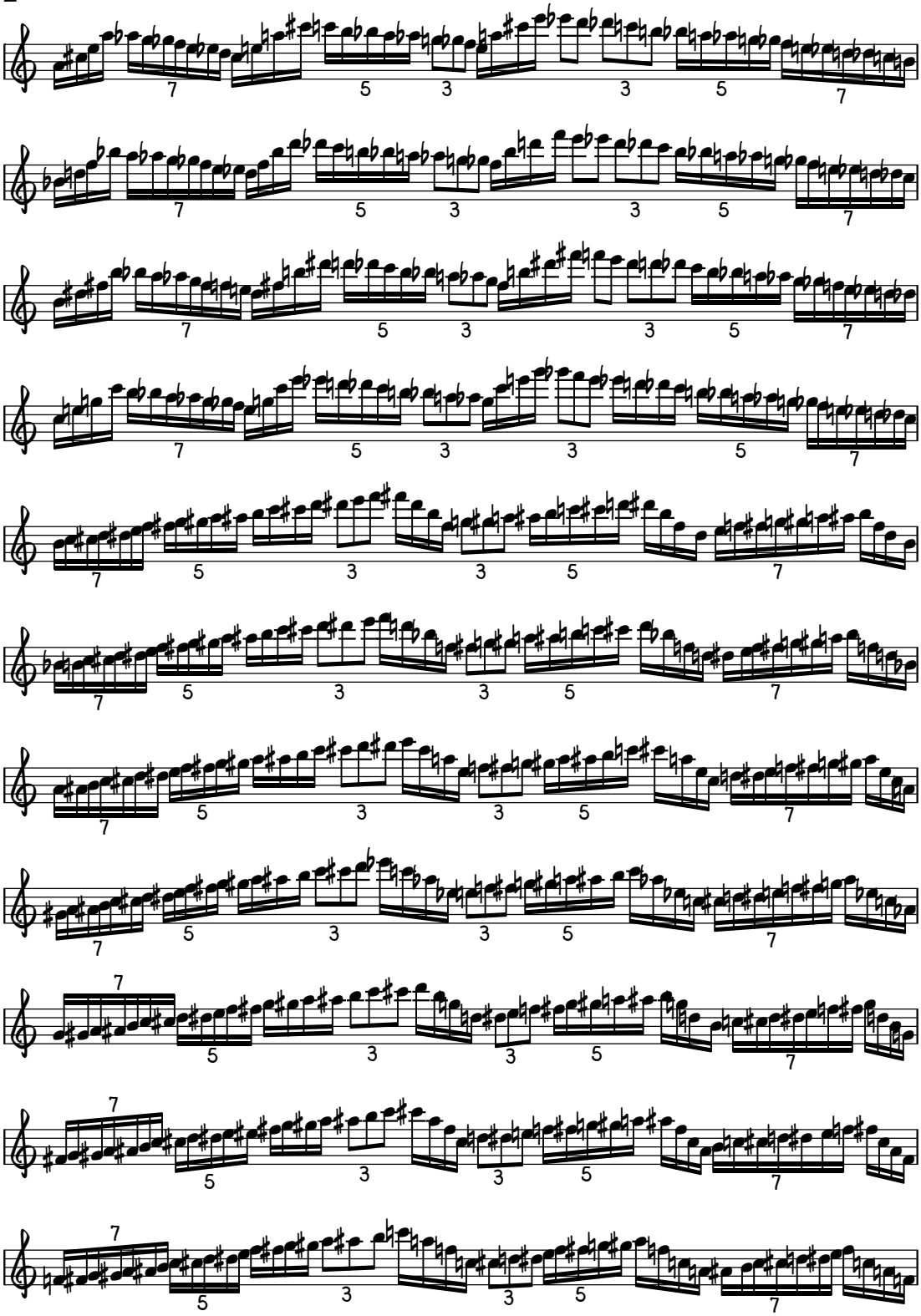


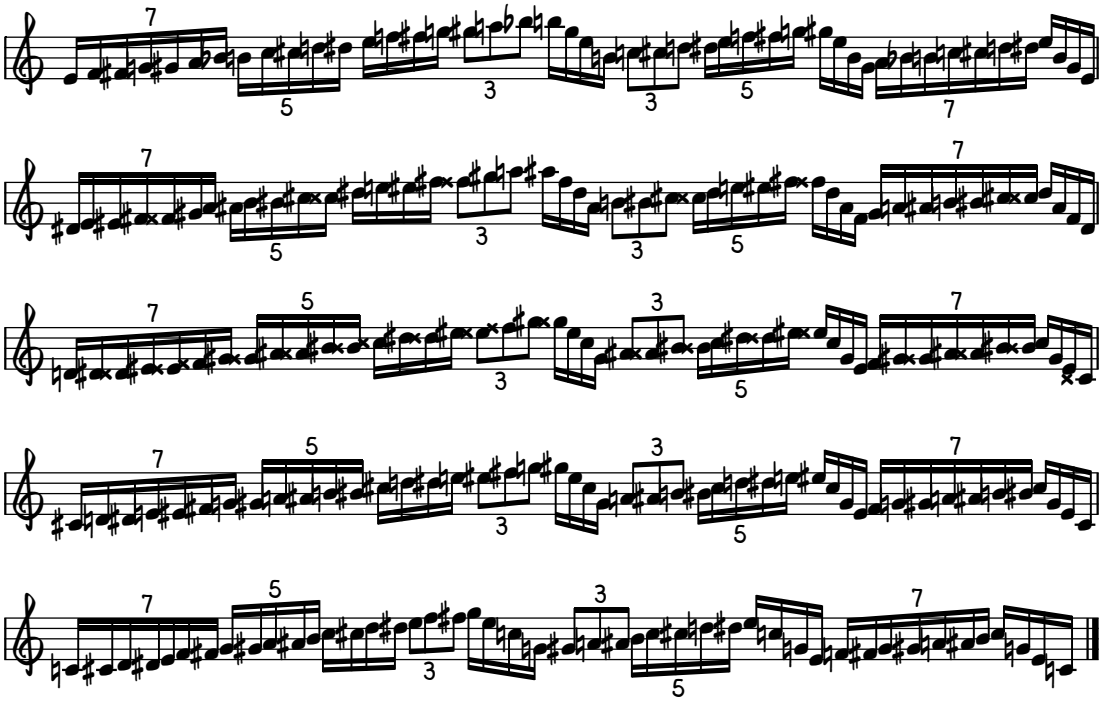
First inversion Major 7th arpeggio going up combined with chromatic scale going down in group of 7 notes



Mixing 1st, 2nd and 3rd inversions of a Major (or min-Maj7) arpeggio with chromatism

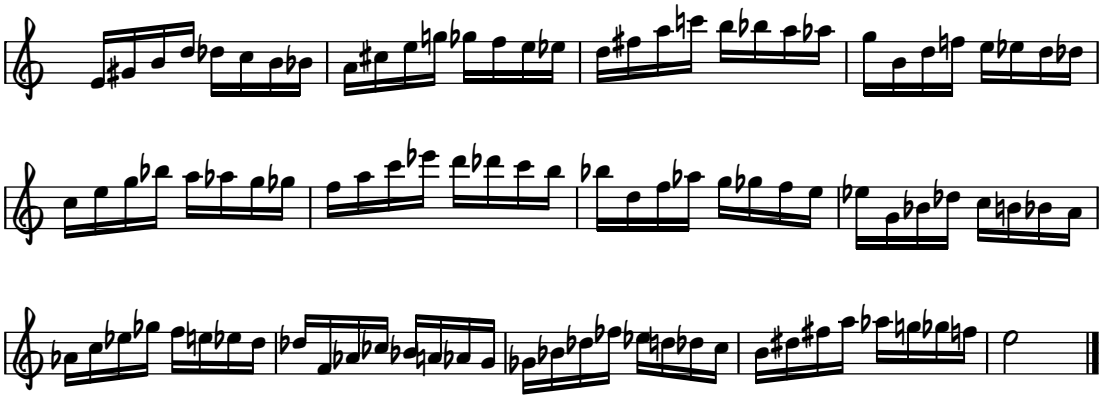




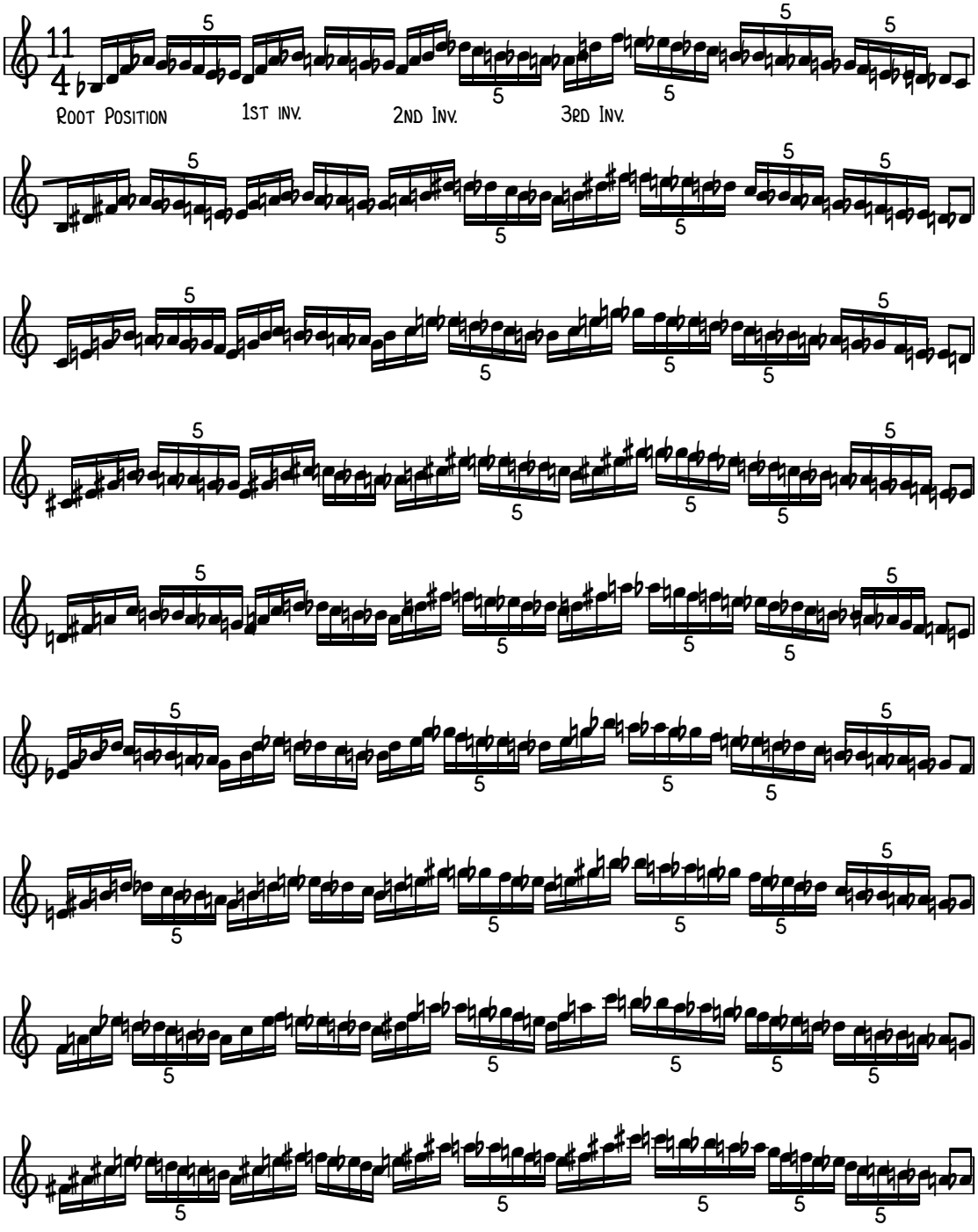


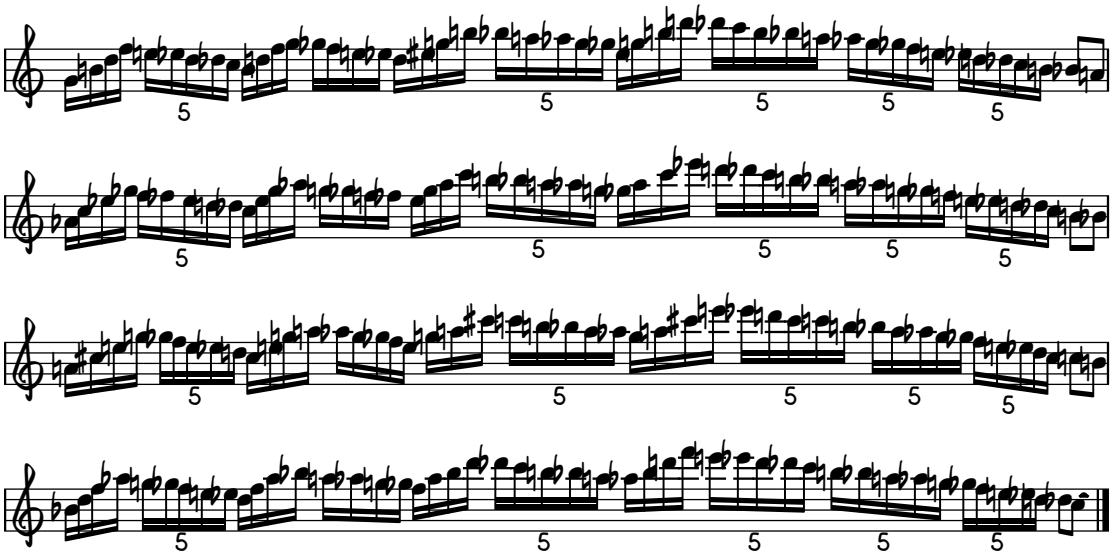
Dominant arpeggio with chromatism over the circle

WORKS OVER:
Dom 7
min 7
half diminished



Mixing 1st, 2nd and 3rd inversions of a Dominant arpeggio with chromatism

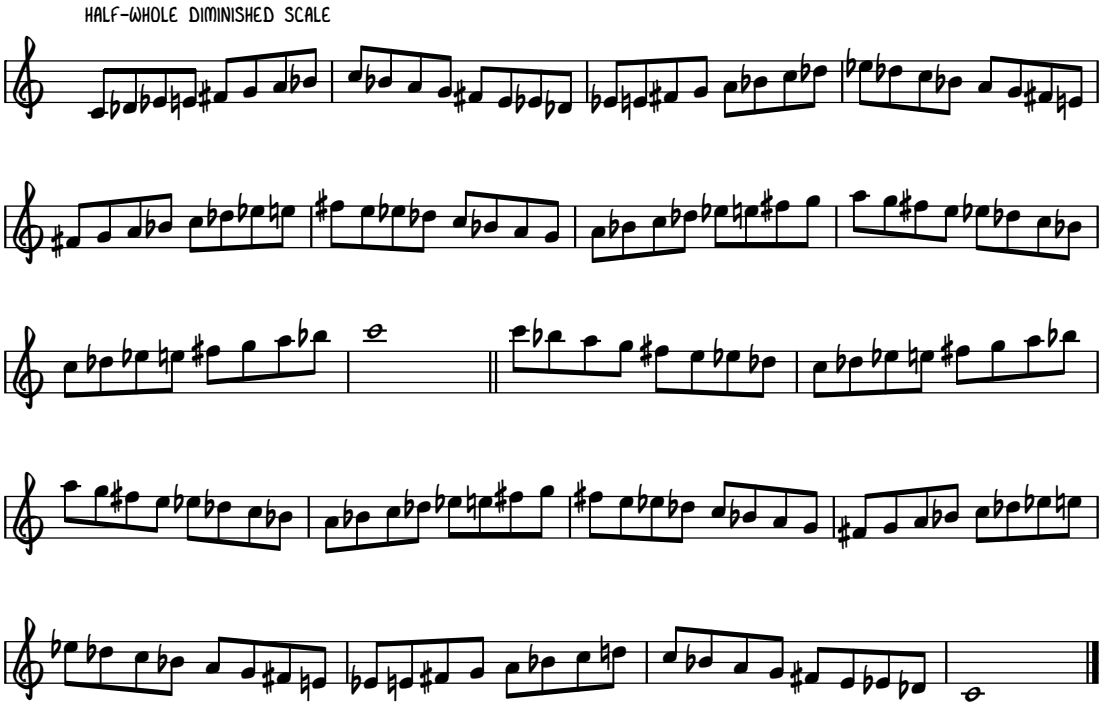




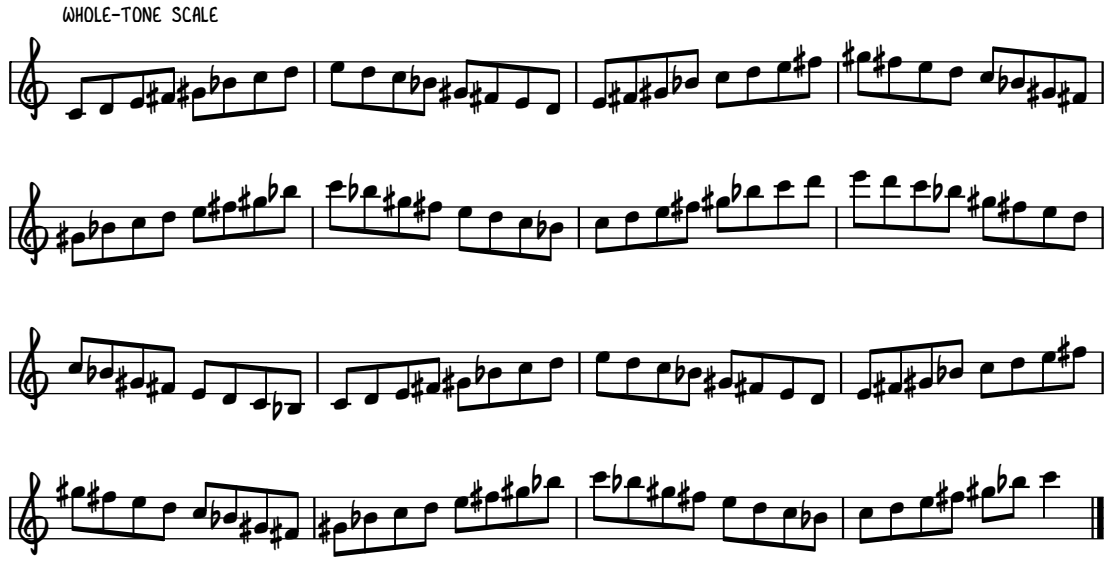
Symetrical Scales

Are scales with even number of notes.

Half-Whole Diminished Scale. There are 3 different HW Diminished scales (starting from C, C# and D or Eb, E and F, etc)



Whole Tone Scale. There are 2 different WT scales, starting with C and C# or D and Eb, etc.



Recommended Biography:

- Top-Tones for the Saxophone by Sigur M. Rascher
- Exercises in All Practical Keys by Salviani-Iasilli. Publisher Carl Fisher
- 25 Daily Exercises for Saxophone by H. Klose. Publisher Carl Fisher
- Jazz Conception for the Saxophone by Lennie Niehaus. Try Publishing Company
- Here you can find a lot of information by the JEA Faculty: **www.jazzeducationabroad.org/education/**