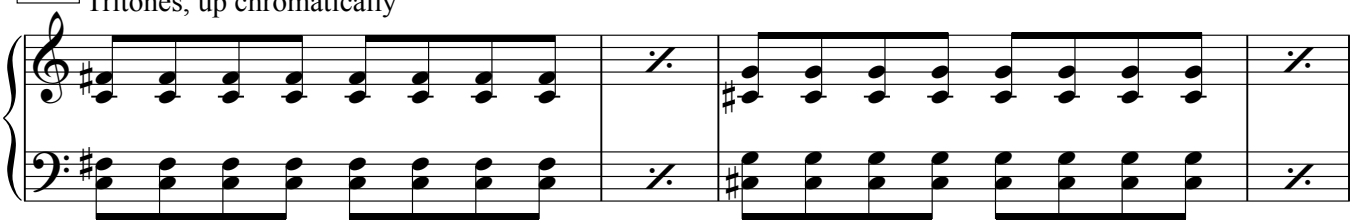
Four Mallet Warm-Up

When played straight through without stopping,
this warm-up takes exactly 30 minutes to complete.

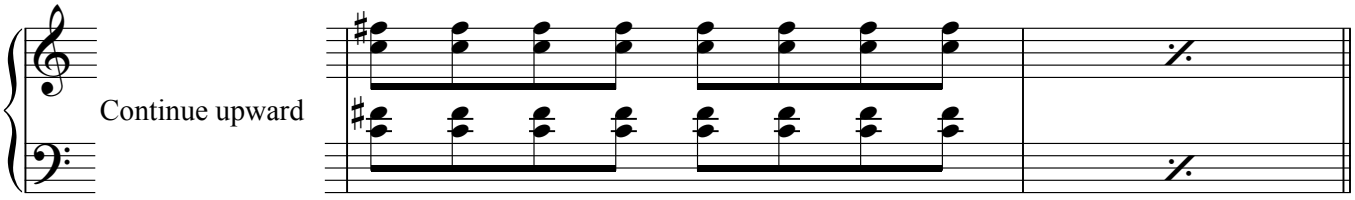
Brian Mueller

1a ♩ = 80

Tritones, up chromatically

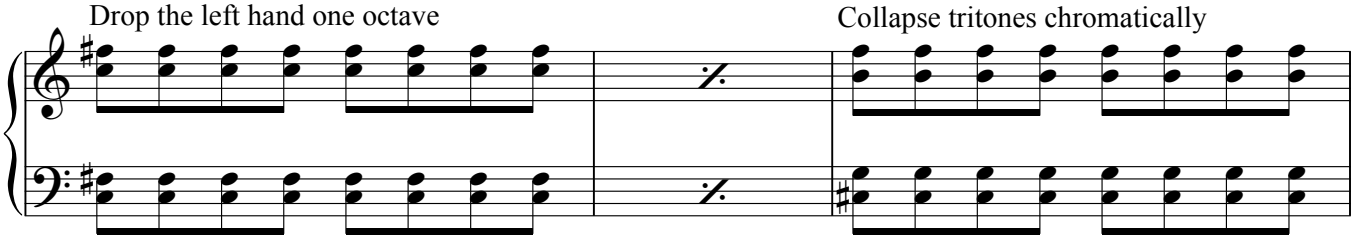


Continue upward

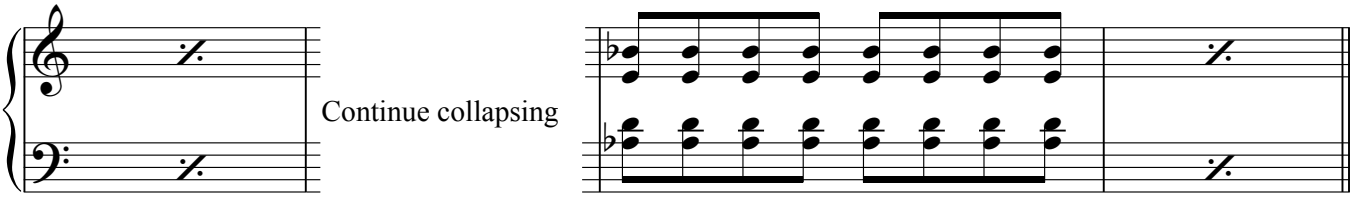


Drop the left hand one octave

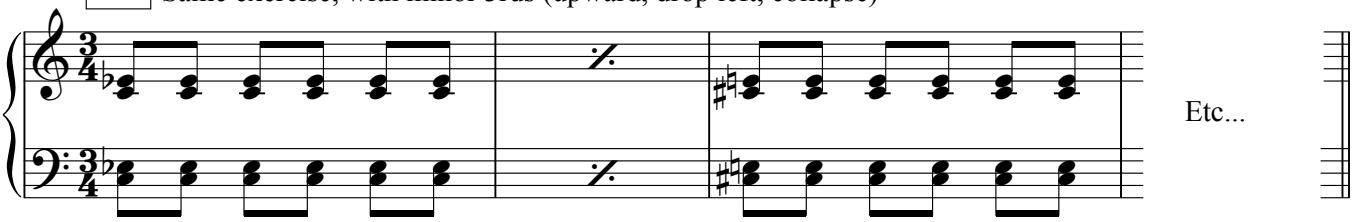
Collapse tritones chromatically



Continue collapsing

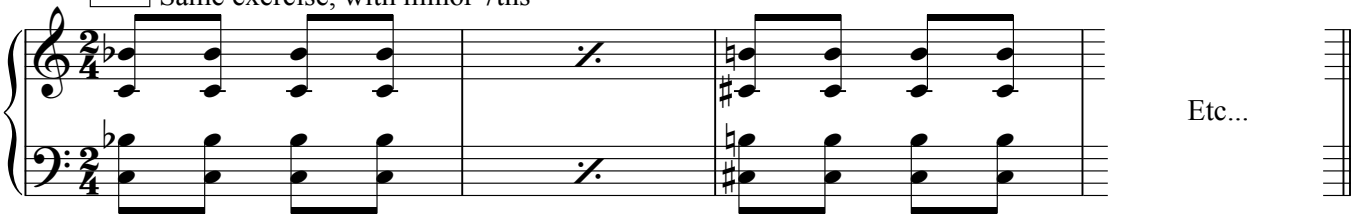


1b Same exercise, with minor 3rds (upward, drop left, collapse)



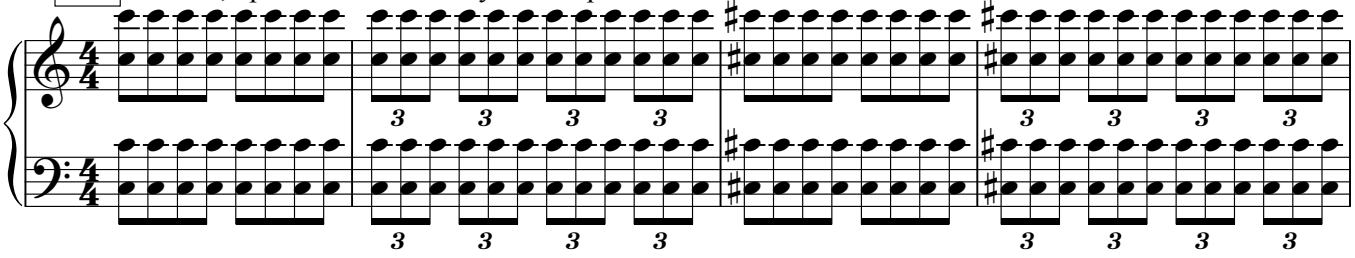
Etc...

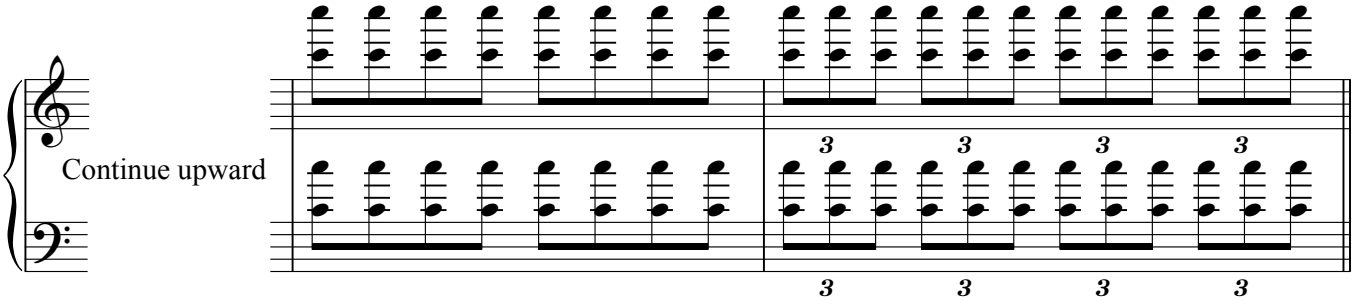
1c Same exercise, with minor 7ths



Etc...

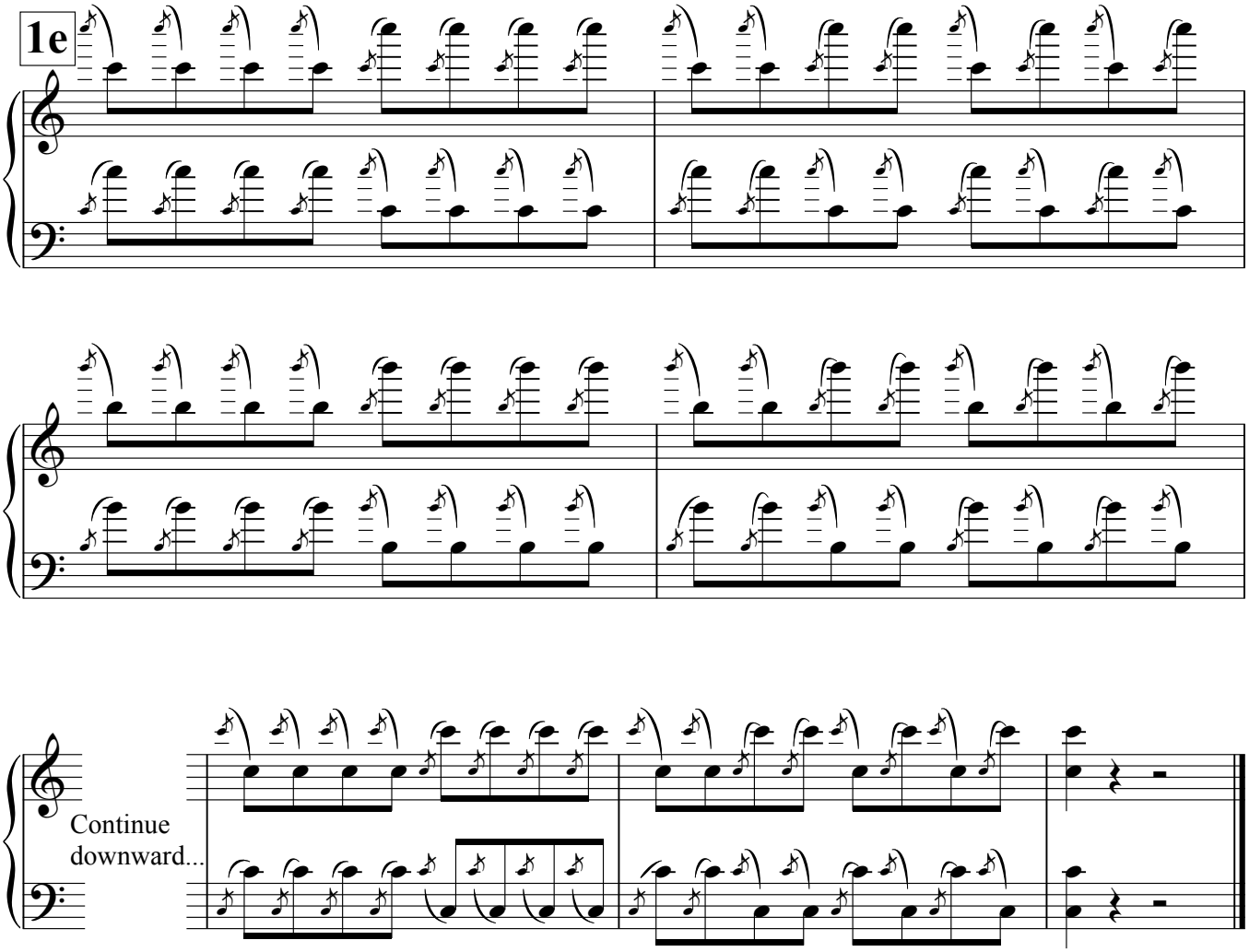
1d Octaves, upward chromatically with triplets



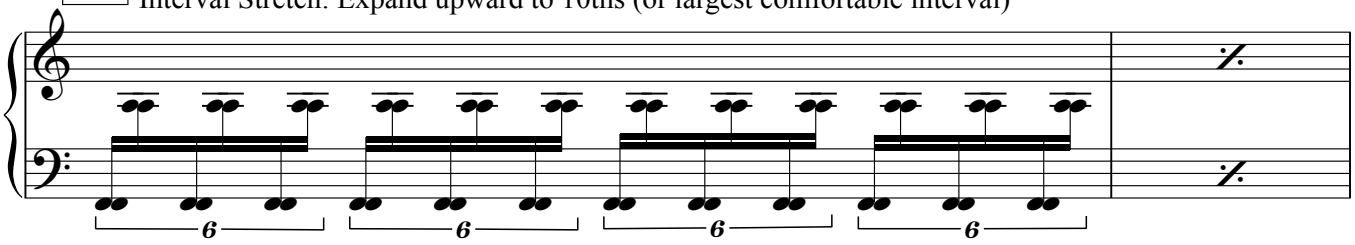


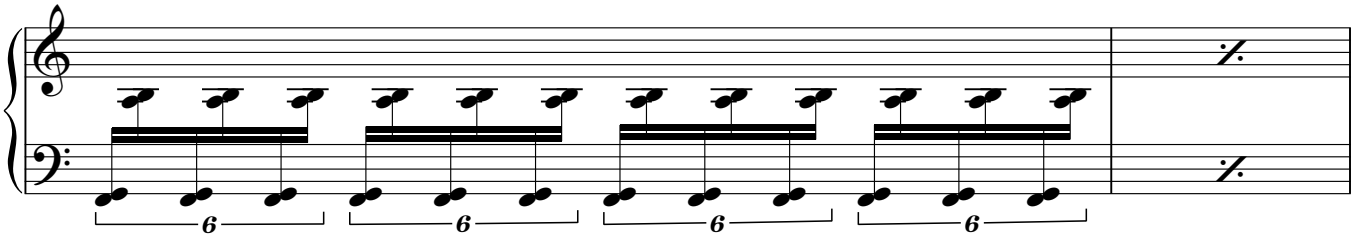
Downward, with mixed double laterals (this pattern or an improvised combination)

1e



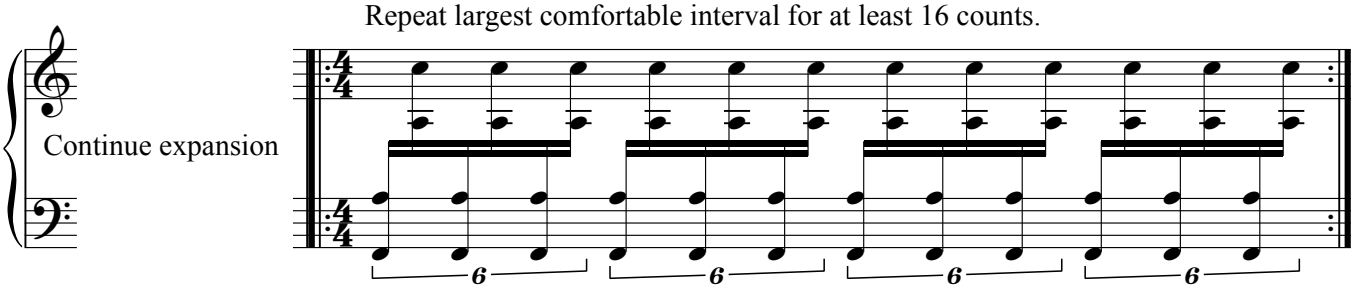
2a Interval Stretch: Expand upward to 10ths (or largest comfortable interval)



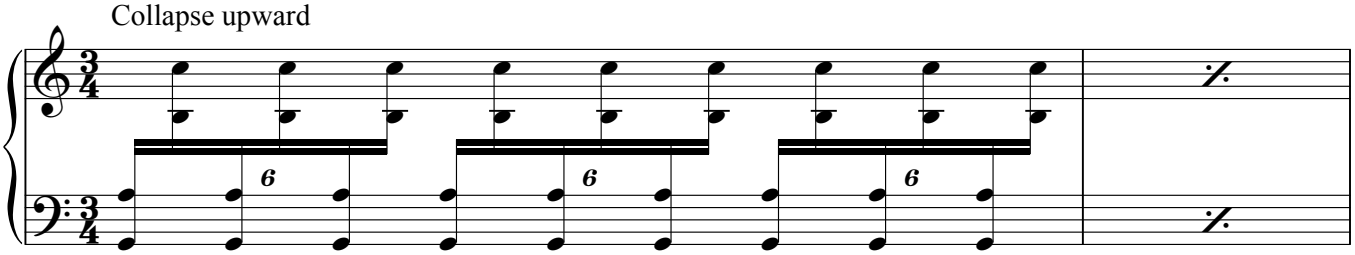


Repeat largest comfortable interval for at least 16 counts.

Continue expansion

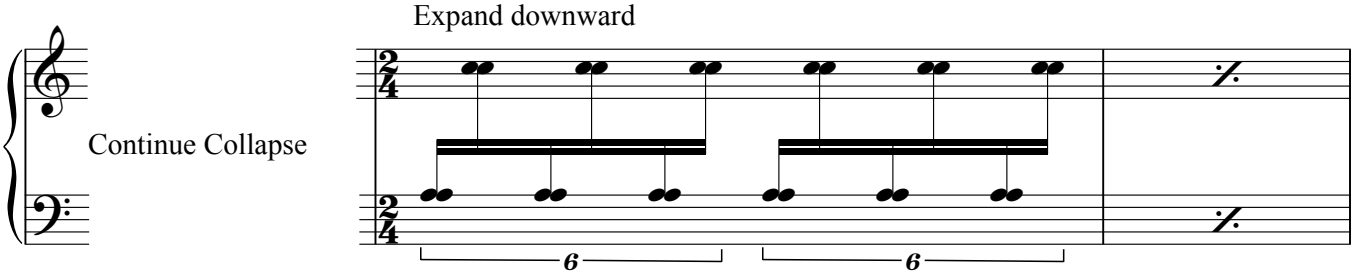


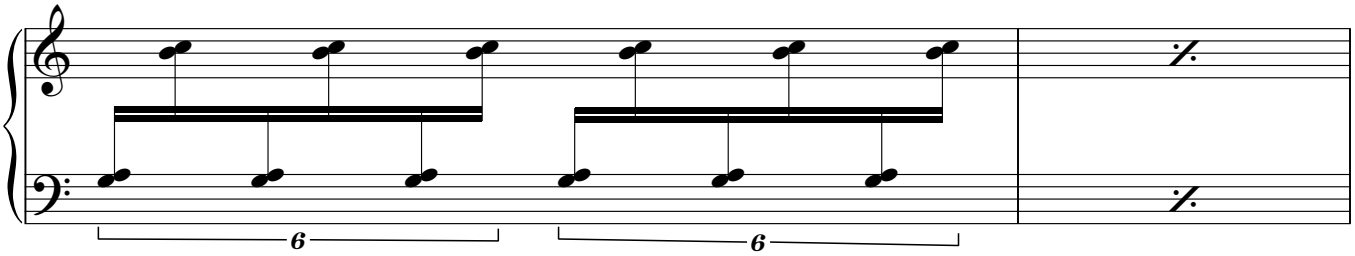
Collapse upward

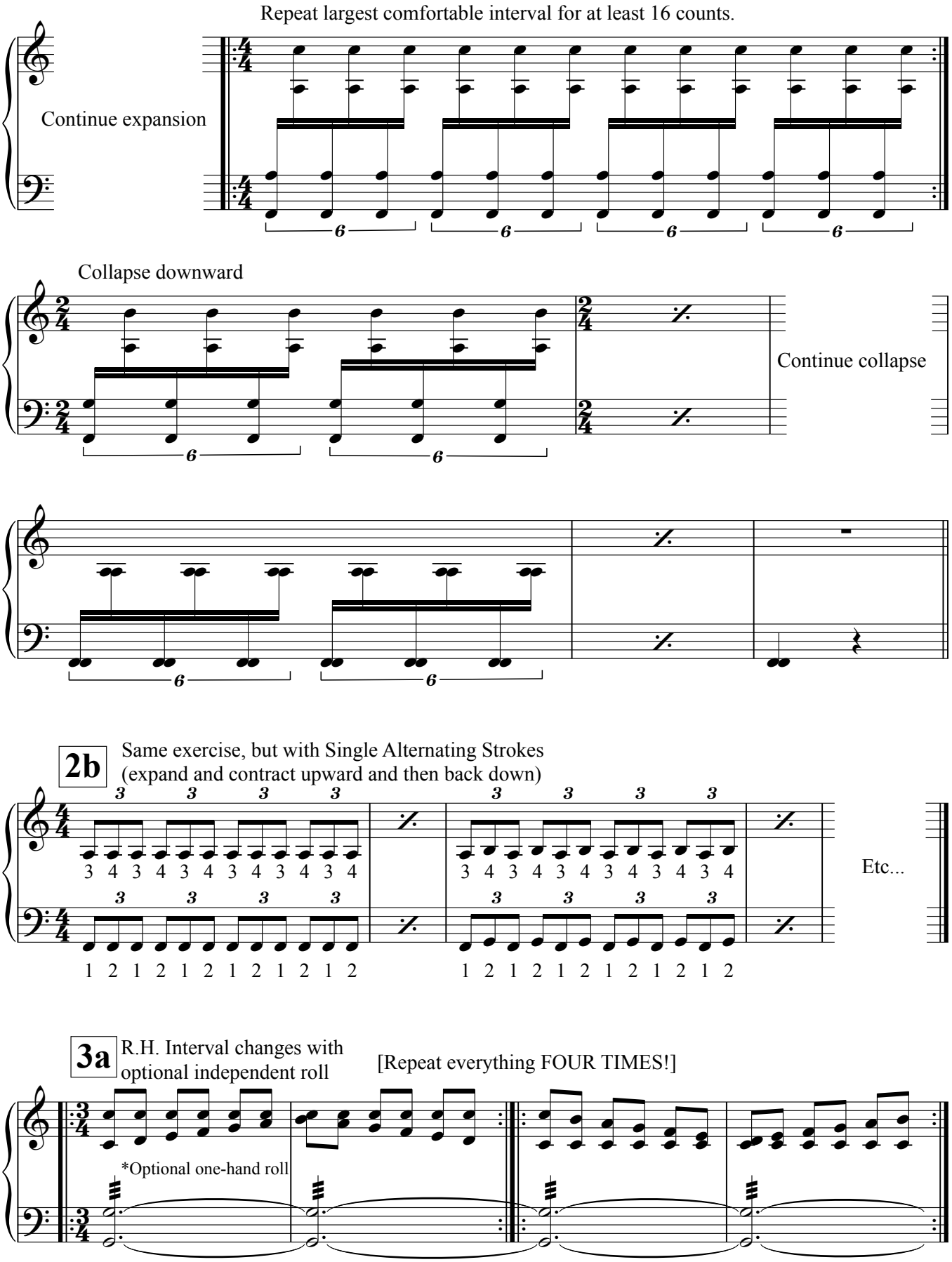


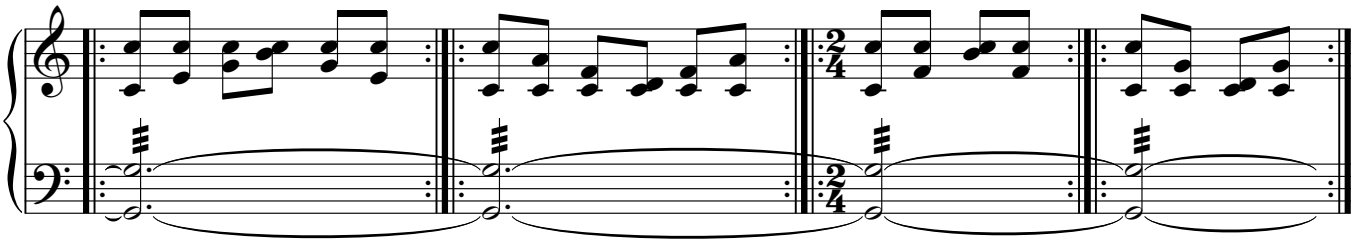
Expand downward

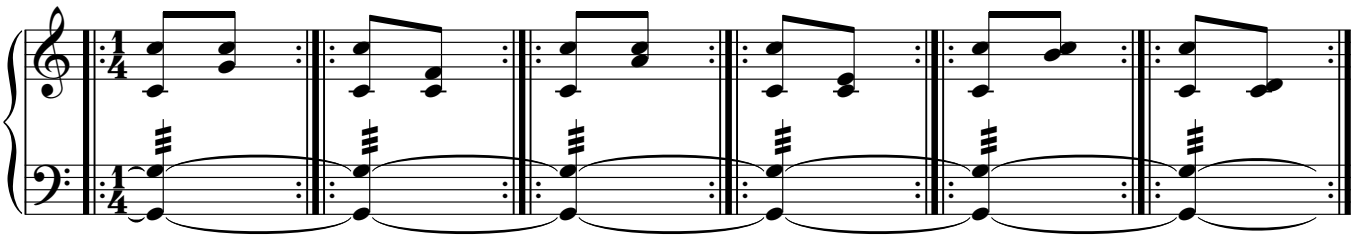
Continue Collapse

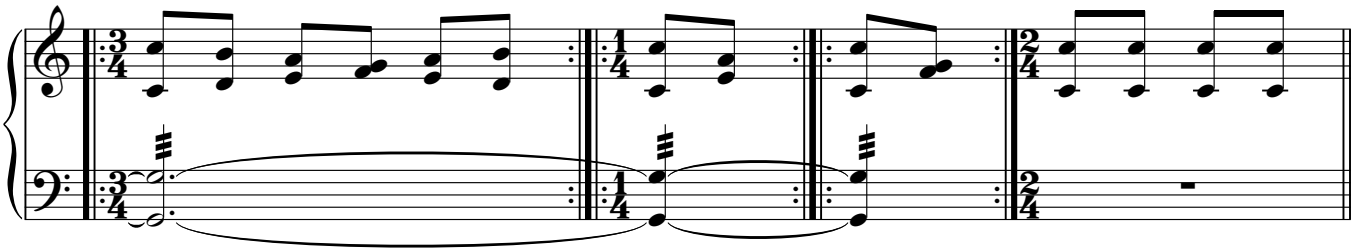




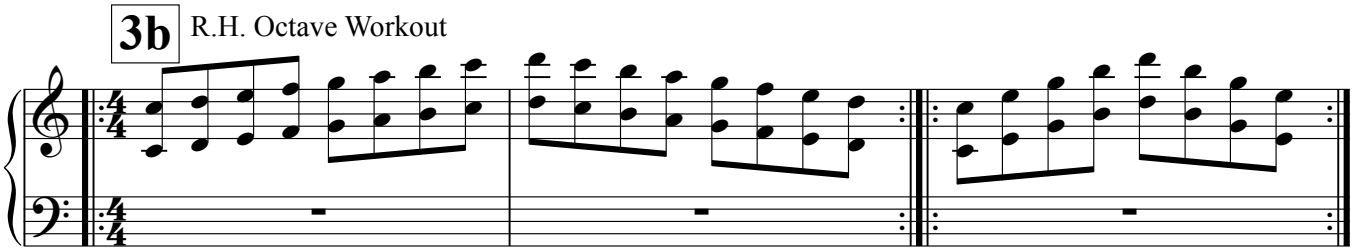

Repeat largest comfortable interval for at least 16 counts.
Continue expansion
Collapse downward
Continue collapse
2b
Same exercise, but with Single Alternating Strokes
(expand and contract upward and then back down)
3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4
1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2
Etc...
3a
R.H. Interval changes with
optional independent roll
[Repeat everything FOUR TIMES!]
*Optional one-hand roll

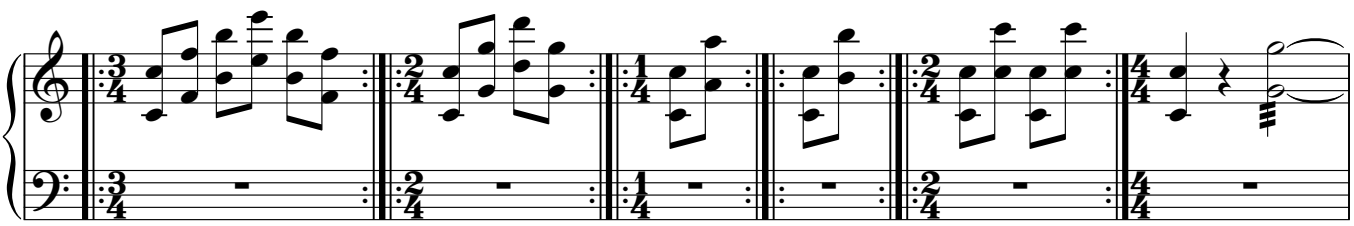




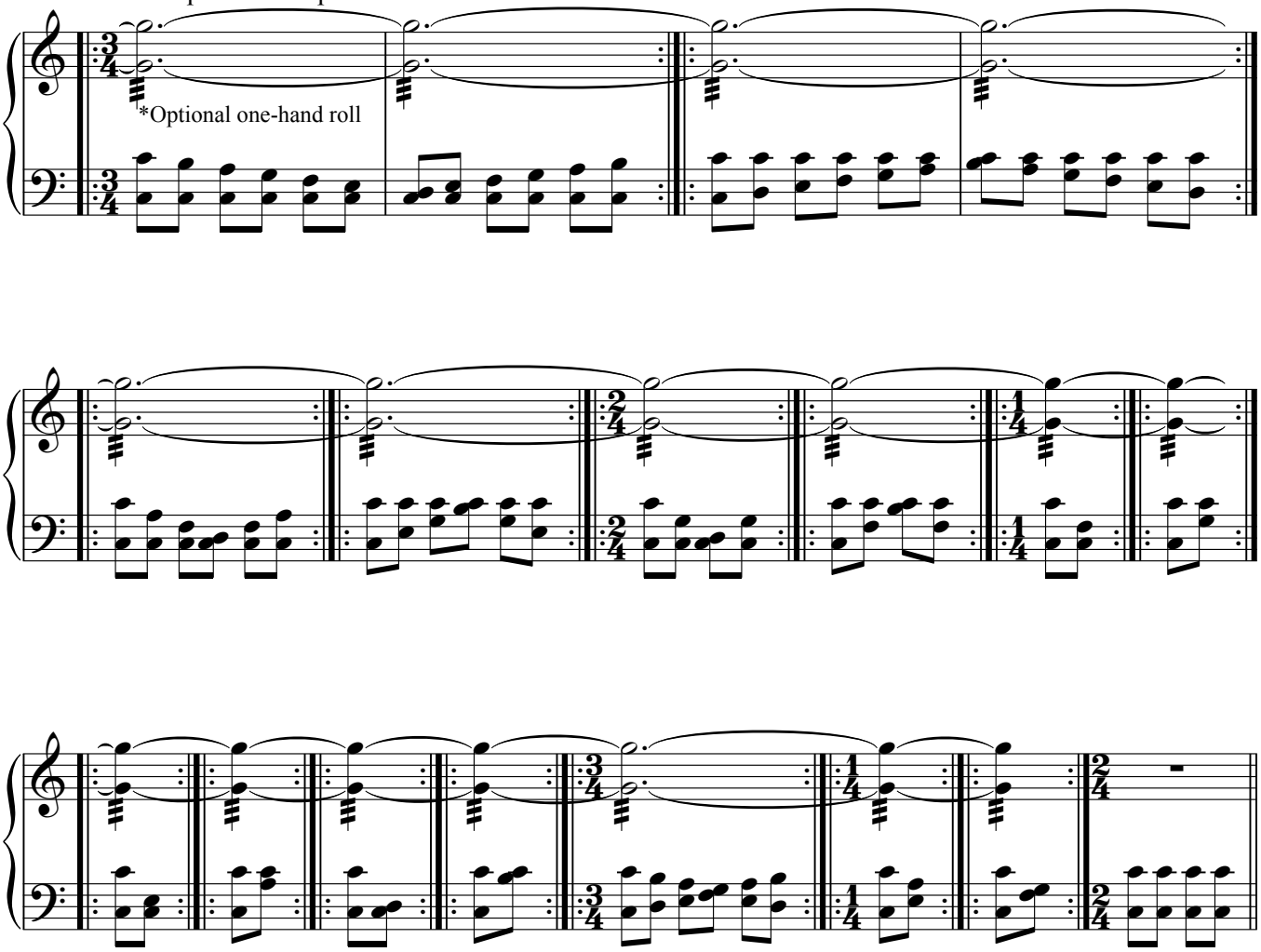


3b R.H. Octave Workout

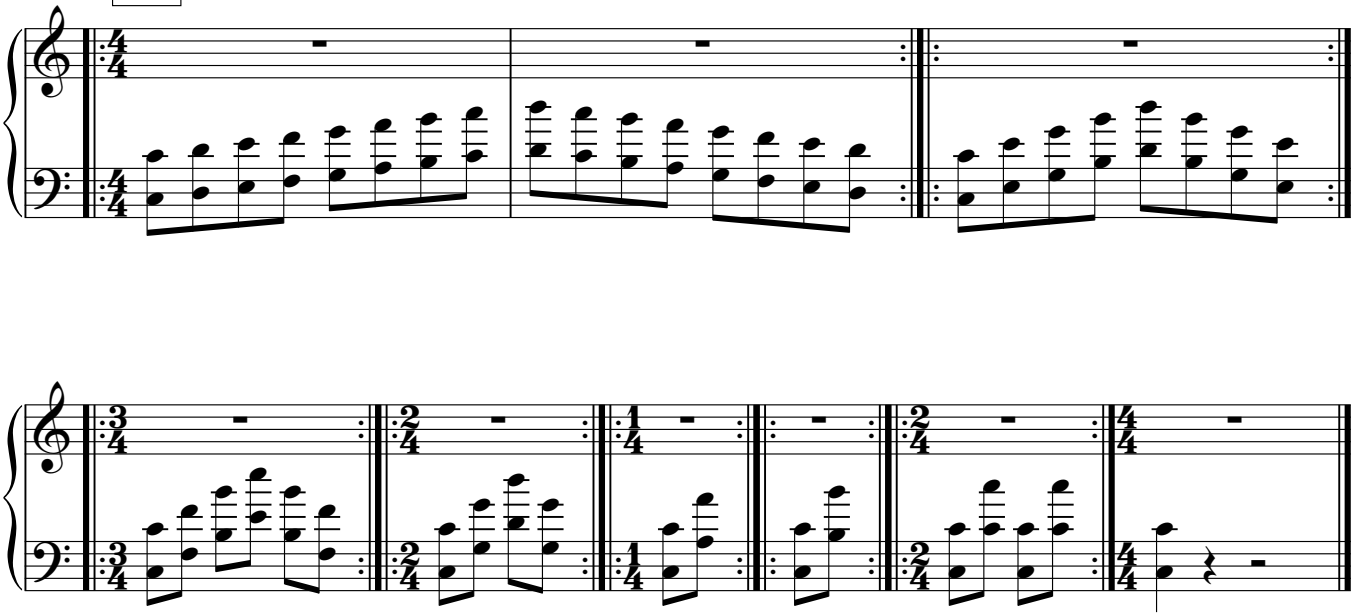




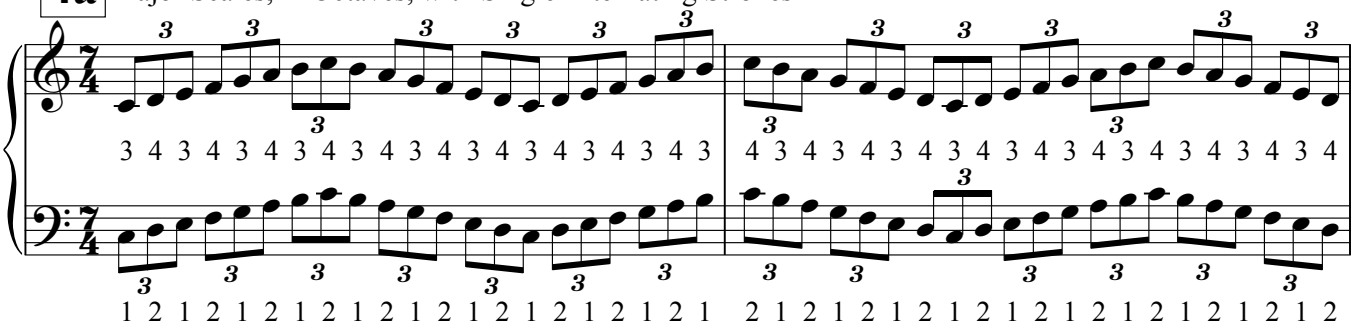
3c L.H. Interval changes with optional independent roll

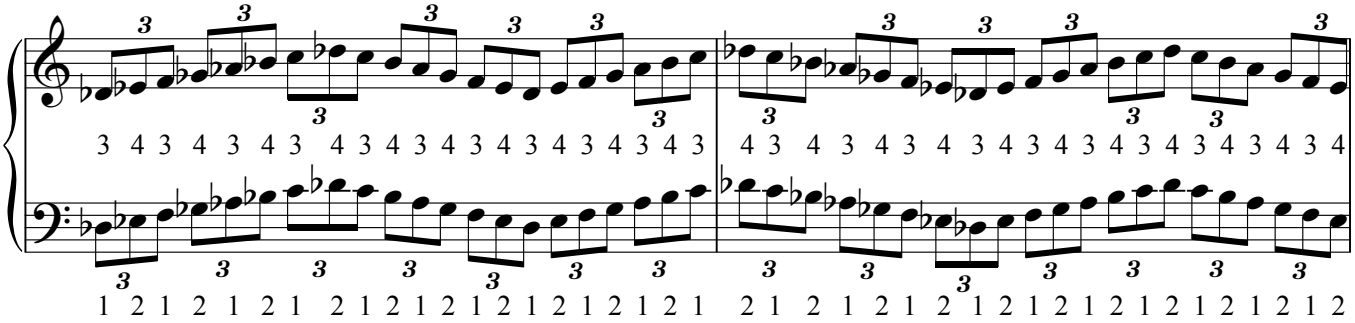


3d L.H. Octave Workout

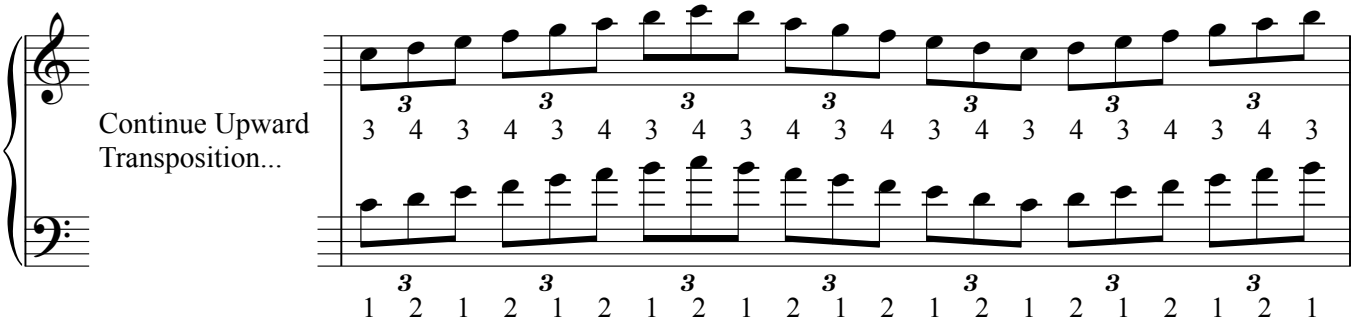


4a Major Scales, in Octaves, with Single Alternating Strokes

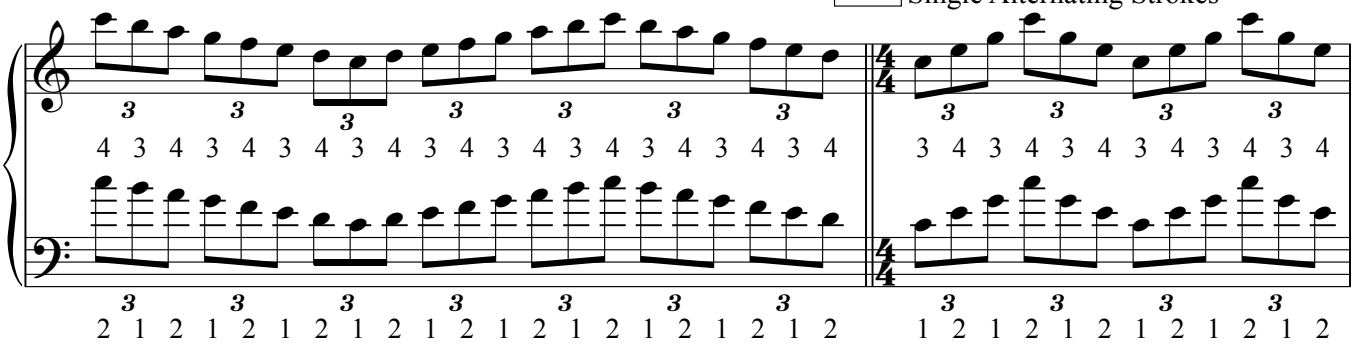


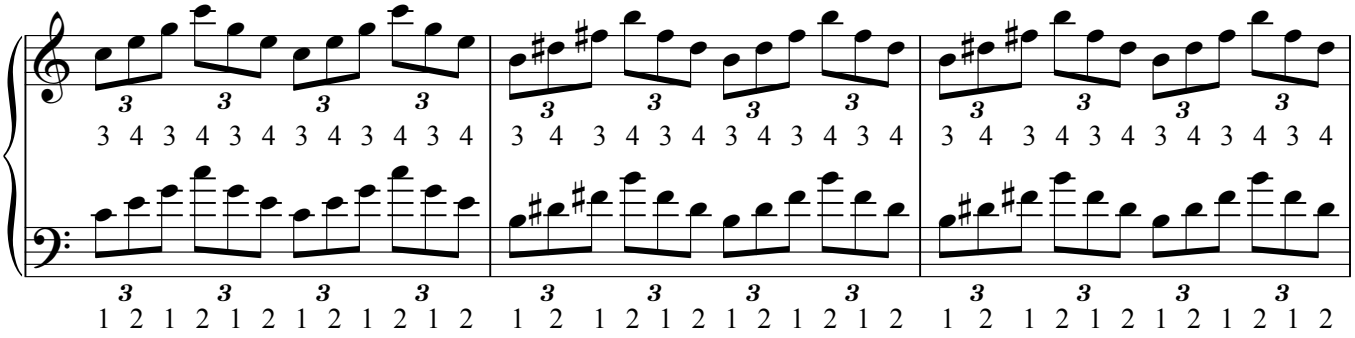


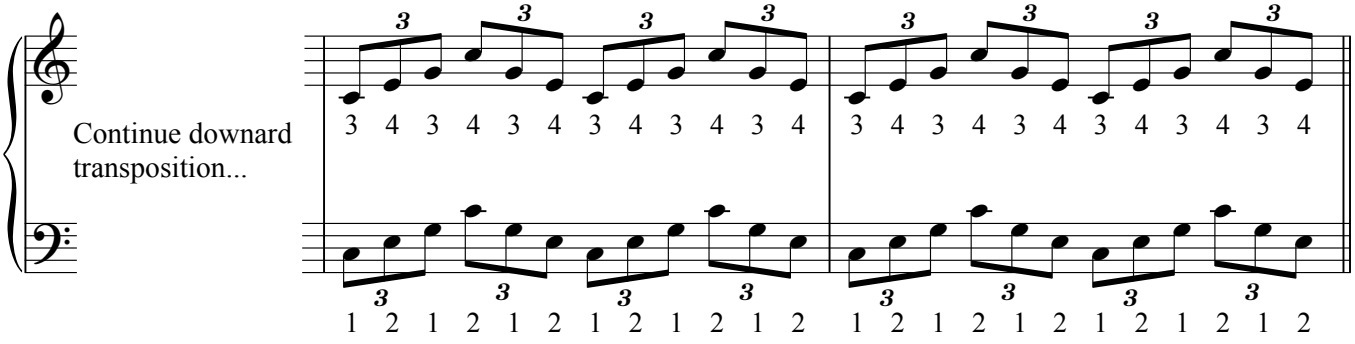
Continue Upward Transposition...



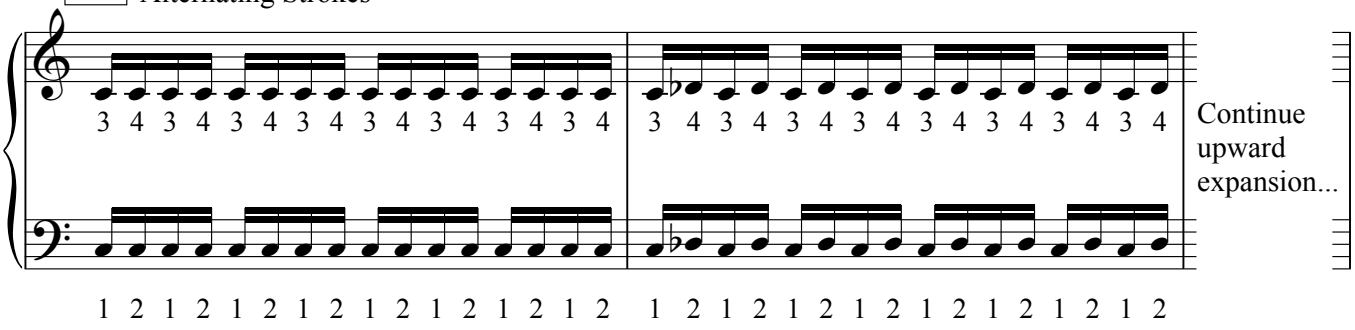
4b Arpeggios, in Octaves, with Single Alternating Strokes

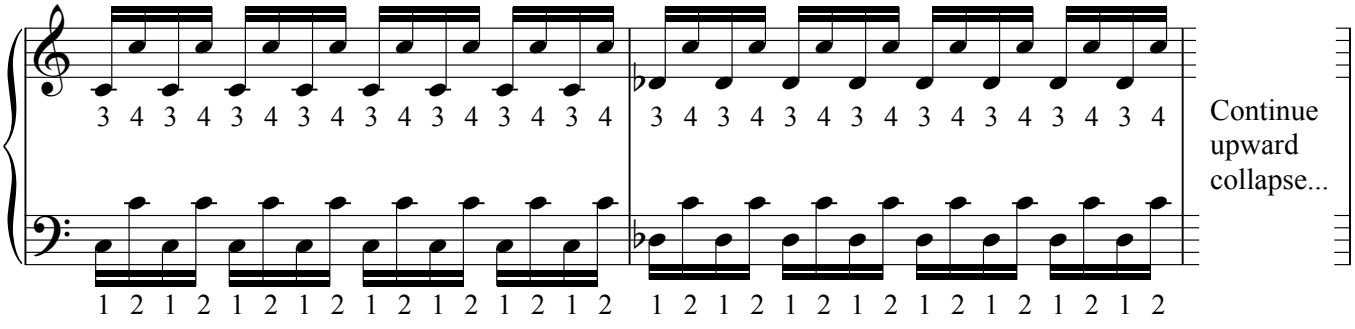


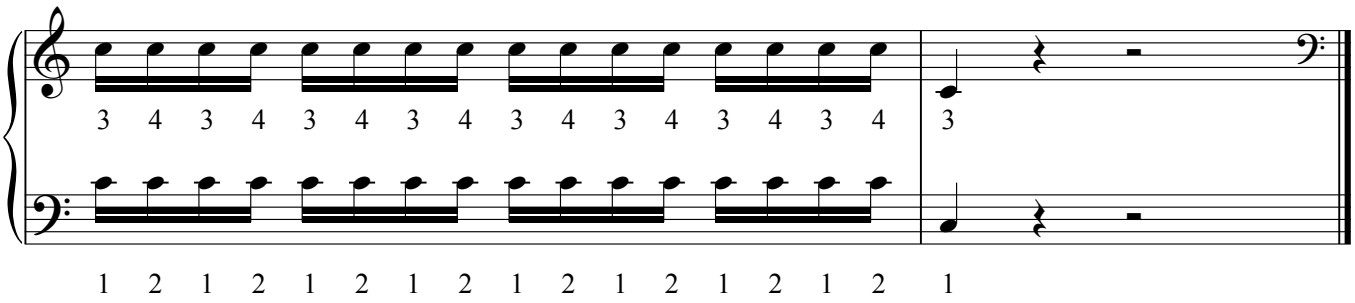




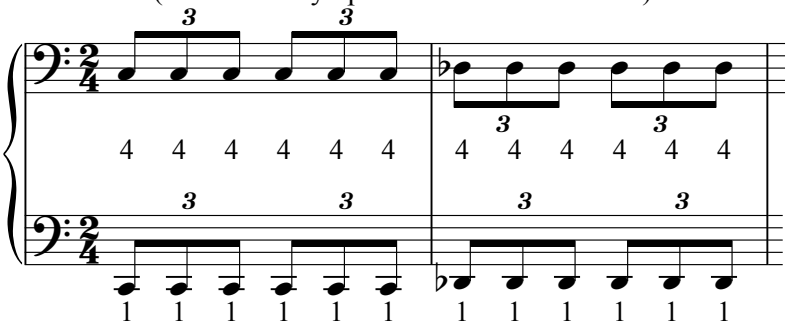
4c Chromatically Expanding
Alternating Strokes



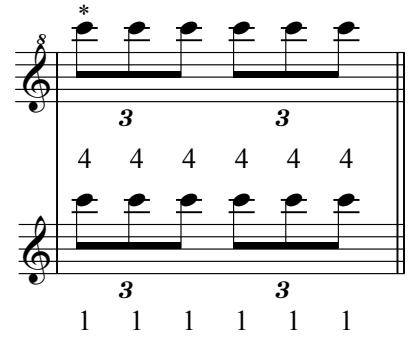




5a Single Independent Workout
(chromatically upward with outer mallets)

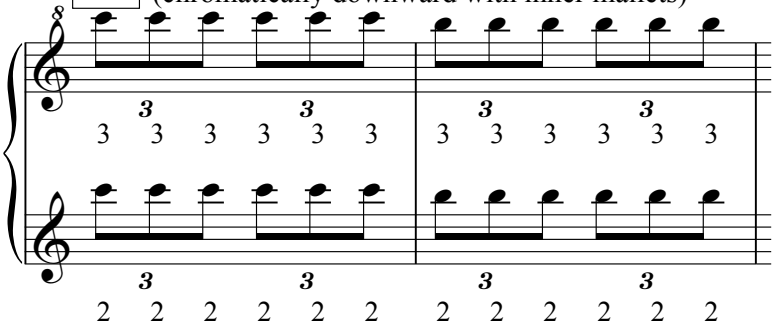


Continue upward...

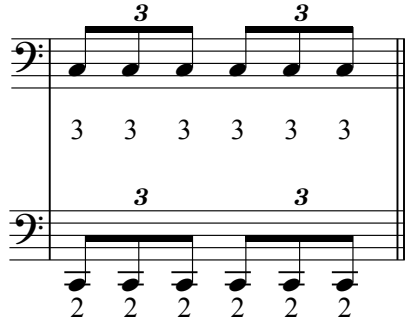


* right hand is up 8va
(on the hightest C of a 5-octave marimba)

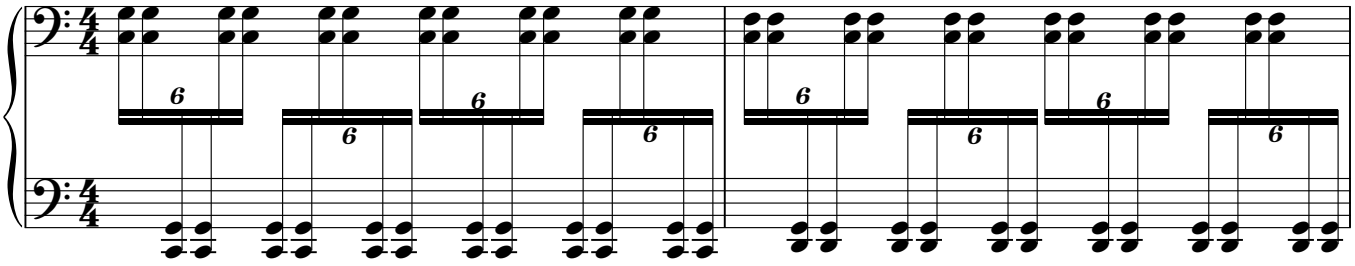
5b Single Independent Workout
(chromatically downward with inner mallets)

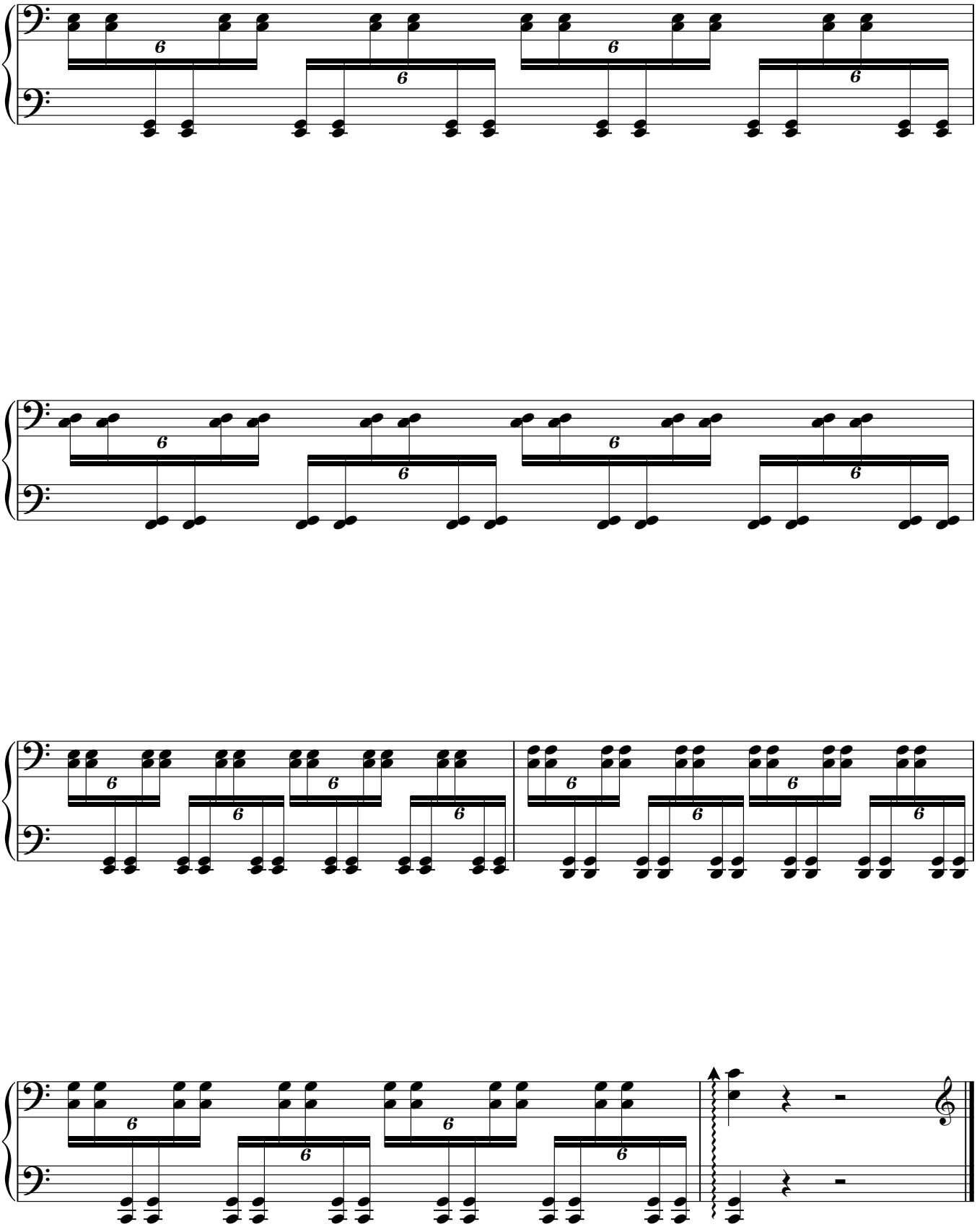


Continue downward...



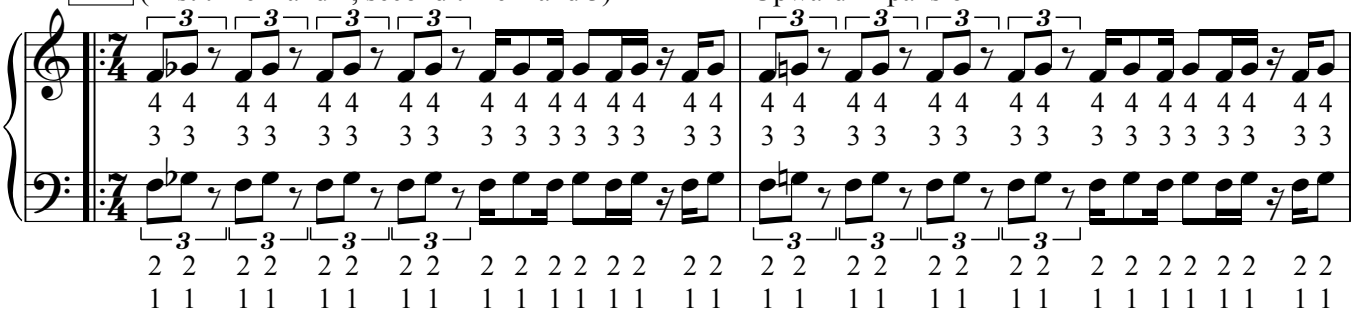
5c Collapsing and Expanding Doubles





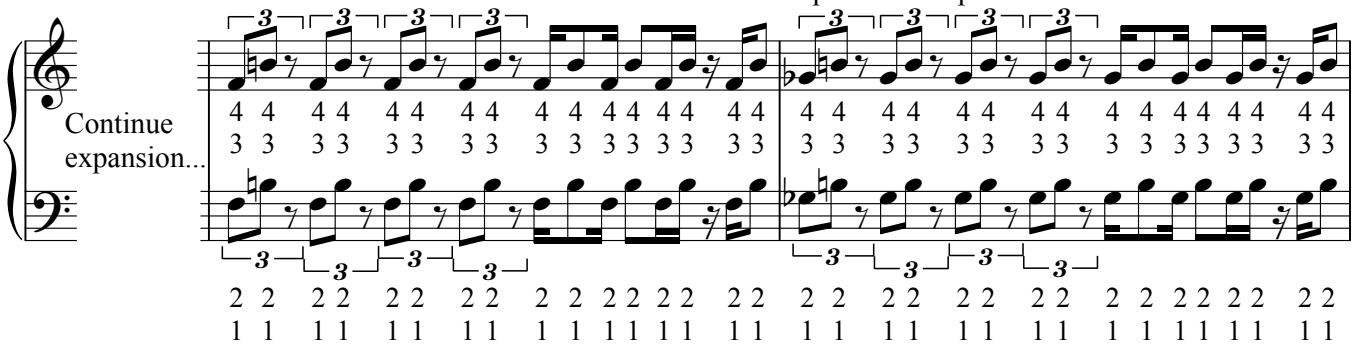
6a Ascending Single Independents
(first time 2 and 4, second time 1 and 3)

Upward Expansion

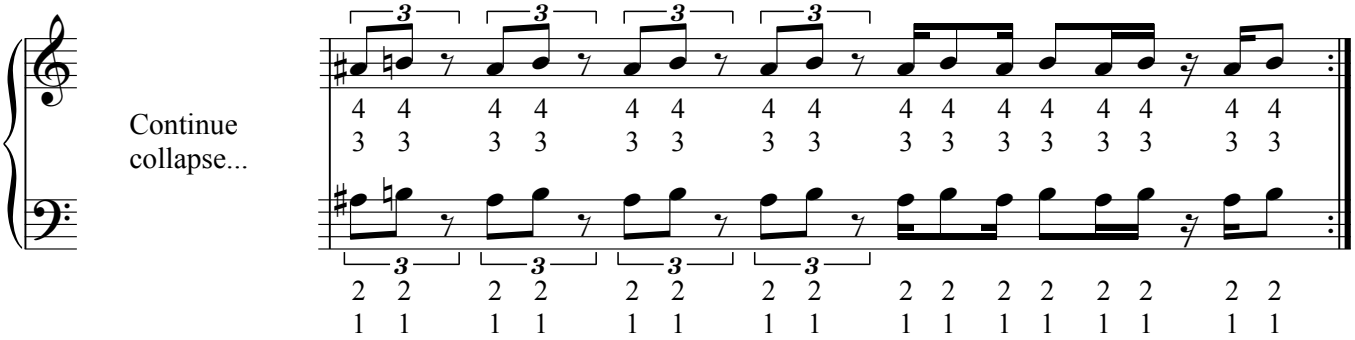


Upward Collapse

Continue expansion...

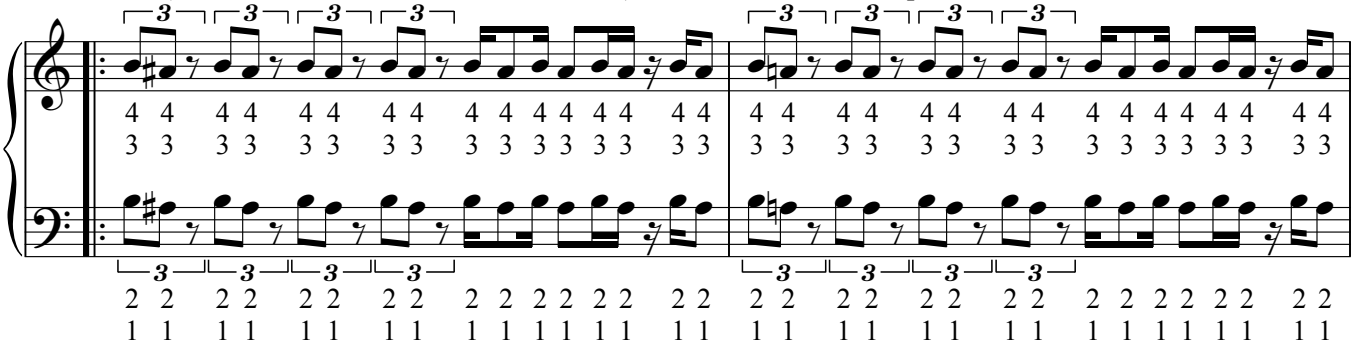


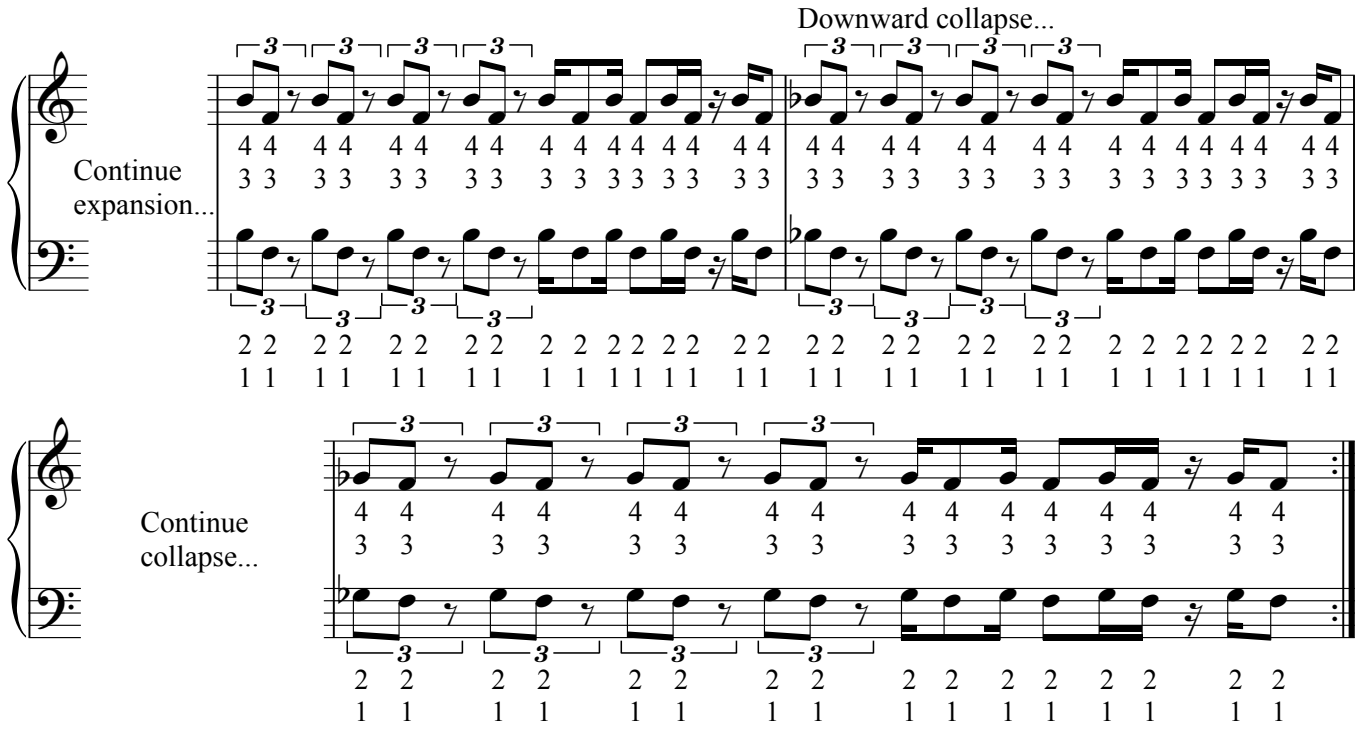
Continue collapse...



6b Descending Single Independents
(first time 2 and 4, second time 1 and 3)

Downward expansion...





Ideas for Possible Variations:

Personalized variations on these exercises are highly encouraged. I have several simple variations that I frequently use, depending on my needs and the state of my technique. The main ones are listed below:

1) Change the Repetition Count. You can increase repetitions on less comfortable spots in the routine, or reduce the repetitions to expedite the warm-up process.

2) Change the Register. Most of the exercises can be played in a higher or lower register, which can be beneficial - especially, playing the octave workout (3b and 3d) down an octave is a good hand strengthener.

3) Change Rhythmic Intensity. Any time an exercise features a long series of one rhythmic value, you can either permanently or temporarily switch to a faster or slower rhythm. For instance, during exercise 1d, I often substitute two beats of 16th notes for the last two beats of triplets to intensify the workout. I also substitute triplets for some of the 8th notes in 1e. I sometimes substitute triplets for some of the 8th note repetitions of octaves in 3b and 3d. Also in 5a and 5b, sixteenths can substitue for the triplets (I usually replace the second beat of every fourth measure with triplets - but if I am feeling up to it I will play 16ths for the entirety of every 4th measure).

4) Change the Scale or Mode. In exercises that feature scales or arpeggios (exercise groups 2, 3, and 4), you can choose a different scale or mode to operate in. The interval stretch exercises (group 2) can be played in many positions. The interval change and octave exercises (group 3) also can be played in different keys - this can be particularly challenging. Most accessibly, the major scale / major arpeggio alternating exercises (group 4) can cover any combination of scales, modes, and arpeggios of chords containing 3 or 4 notes. I like to choose a mode (such as Dorian) for the scales on the way up, and play the related chord (minor 7th chords) on the way down.

5) Vary the One-Handed Roll. The independent roll used in exercises 3a and 3c can be played on different pitches and intervals. I particularly like using a 5th (G-D) in place of the octave. I also try to keep the dynamic down as low as possible, and often use a pair of very hard mallets in the rolling hand, while rolling slowly and softly, to develop better independent roll finesse. As noted in the score, you can leave out the roll during these exercises if you would rather focus on the interval changes exclusively.

6) Change the Tempo. Obviously, the routine, or any of the individual exercises, could be played at a tempo other than quarter = 80. I have found that, with the rhythmic variations listed above, I don't really need to increase the tempo to get more out of the routine. If you find that some of them are too difficult at 80, do not hesitate to slow down. Playing any exercise correctly is far more important than playing it quickly.