ABRSM

The Manual of Scales, Broken Chords and Arpeggios

for Piano

with an Introduction by Ruth Gerald

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with an Introduction
by Ruth Gerald

ABRSM

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Introduction

This Manual provides a ready reference for the common scale, arpeggio and broken chord patterns, which help to form the building blocks of keyboard fluency. Such fluency is indispensable when dealing with many of the technical demands encountered within keyboard repertoire, particularly of the last four centuries.

This edition is divided into three sections: scales, broken chords and arpeggios. The diatonic scales and arpeggios appear before the non-diatonic ones in their respective sections, and are organized in the circle of fifths. Broken chords are printed before arpeggios because they are frequently learnt first. Within the diatonic scales section, scales for each key are grouped together, since the note patterns, and often the fingerings, are the same whether a scale is an octave apart, in thirds, sixths or octaves.

In addition to the standard scales and arpeggios, this edition includes whole-tone scales and augmented arpeggios to reflect their relevance when playing the music of some late nineteenth- and many twentieth-century composers.

Fingering

The given standard fingerings form a basis of learning and help to establish the habits needed for fluent playing. For some scales an alternative fingering system in common use exists and this is shown in italic type beneath the stave, or, for double thirds, on a separate system. In other places, where alternative fingerings only represent minor modifications, the choices are shown separated by an oblique sign, for example 4/3. In such cases, no significance is attached to which finger is given first. Players should note that the system of fingering given for the double octaves uses fourth fingers on all black keys. This will not suit all hands: large hands can use a mixture of third, fourth and fifth fingers, whereas smaller hands may have to use fifth fingers only.

When practising scales, broken chords and arpeggios, it is important that players use fingering patterns consistently and understand the fundamental principles behind their choices, which they can then apply when fingering pieces or sight-reading. The fingerings provided are not intended to be exhaustive and players should explore all possibilities in determining what is most suitable for them. Besides the size and shape of a player's hands, so much depends on the desired sound, speed and structure of a musical passage.

Practising

There are many important factors to bear in mind when practising scales, broken chords and arpeggios. These include posture, hand position, passage of the thumb, movement of the arm, evenness and quality of sound, co-ordination and balance between the hands, fingering, and an active and discerning ear. Players should always have a musically imaginative aim. Constant repetition without positive listening and evaluation should be avoided as it can do more harm than good.

As soon as a player is familiar with the note and finger patterns, the possibilities for practising scales in different ways are infinite. It is hoped that by giving some ideas below, pianists might be encouraged to use the Manual more creatively, particularly those players who might not be working regularly with an experienced teacher.

In addition to the forms given in the Manual, players may find the following practice suggestions helpful:

Scales

- with hands separately as well as together
- in similar motion, two octaves apart
- with hands a fourth, fifth, seventh or ninth apart
- beginning on the highest note, descending and ascending
- beginning on any degree of the scale
- with hands crossed, either right over left or left over right
- in similar motion over three octaves, with notes grouped in threes
- in similar motion over four octaves, with notes grouped in fours
- with varied rhythmical groupings
- with swung rhythm
- in double thirds as broken thirds, in sixths as broken sixths etc.
- at various speeds with and without a metronome
- with varied dynamics
- with varied touch, such as staccato, legato, non legato and leggiero
- with mixed articulation
- with melodic minors in contrary motion

Broken chords

as above where appropriate

Arpeggios

as above where appropriate and, in addition, in contrary motion over two octaves

Dominant and diminished seventh arpeggios

over three octaves, with notes grouped in threes, in order to avoid the stress always falling on the same finger

On the last page of the Manual two practice scales are included. The Leschetizky or 'Russian' scale can be useful for developing co-ordination, alertness in change of direction, stamina and freedom of movement across the keyboard. The pattern can be applied to arpeggios as well. The divided chromatic octaves, based on alternating whole-tone scales in each hand, is a form found in many of Liszt's works.

Ruth Gerald
June 2001

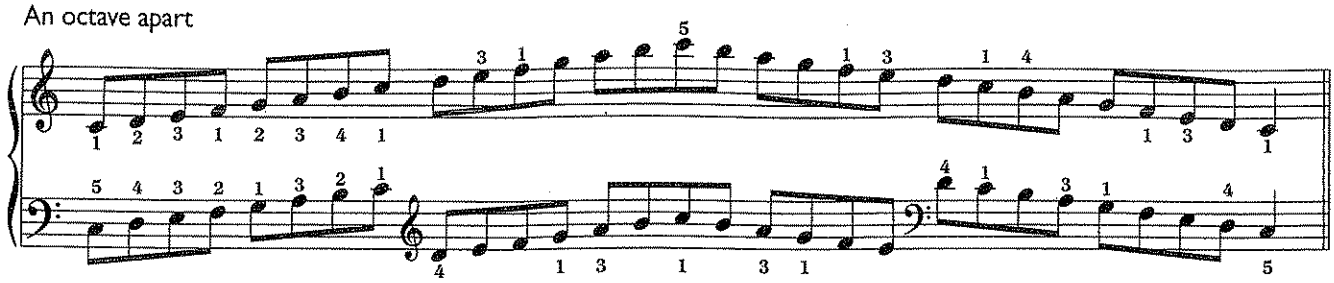
Diatonic scales

C major

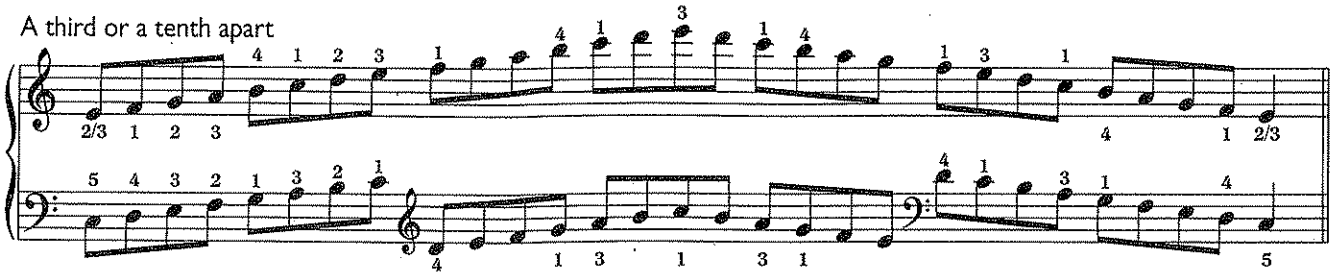
4 on RH B / LH D

Similar motion

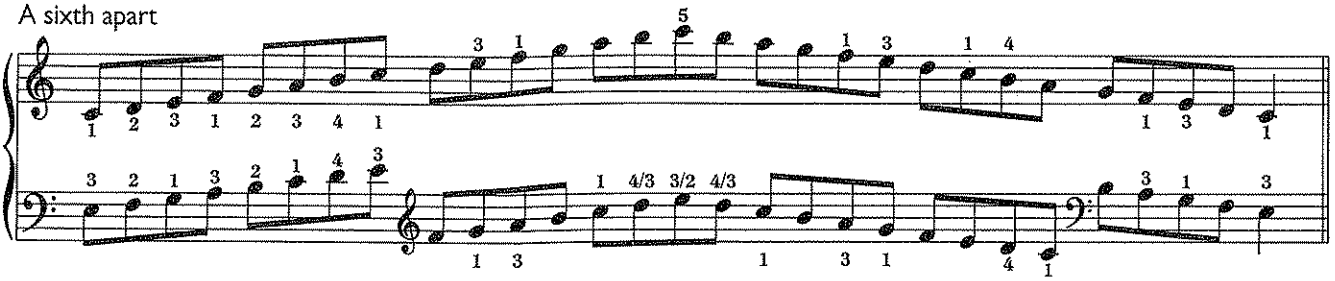
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

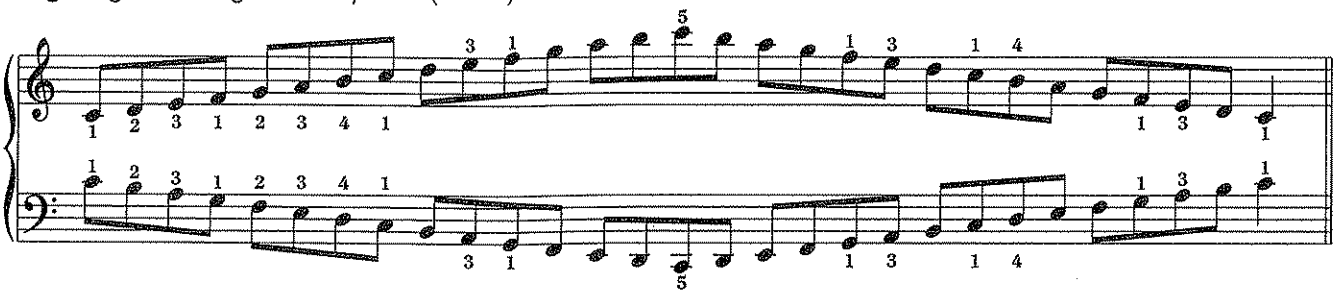


A sixth apart

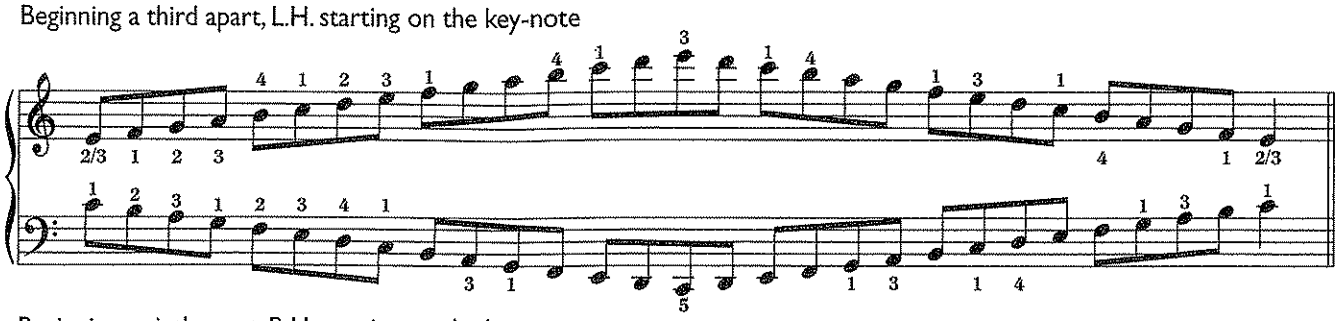


Contrary motion

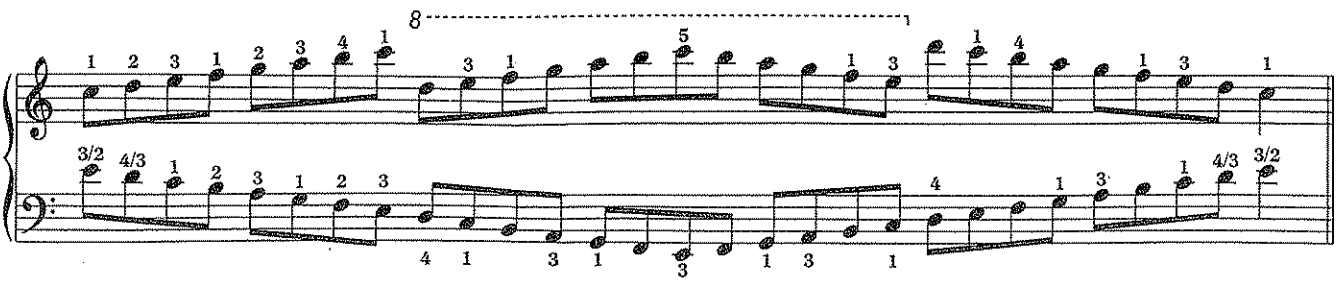
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



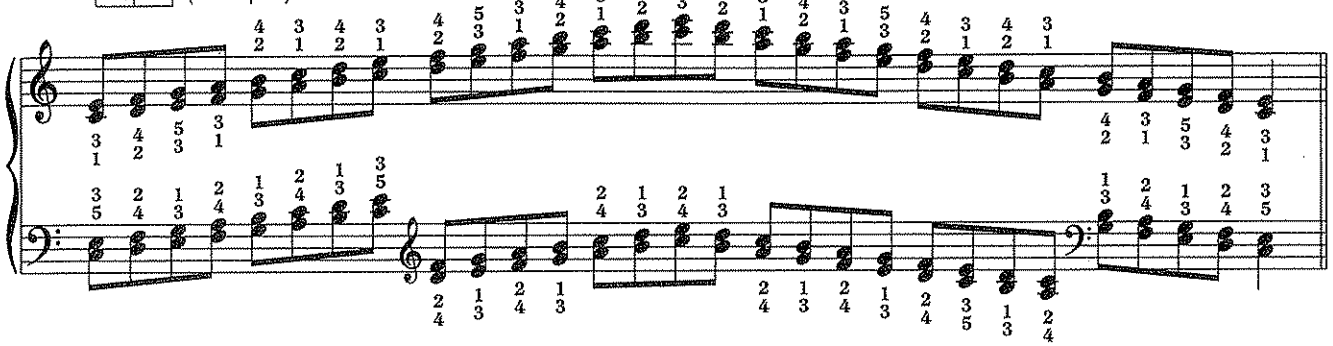
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

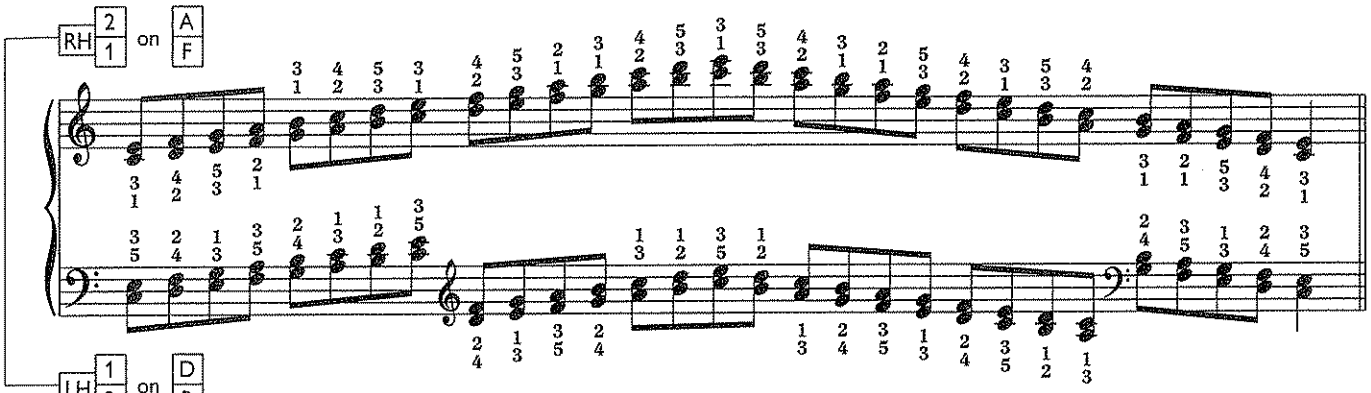
Standard fingering

5 on RH G (upper part) / LH C (lower part)



Alternative fingering

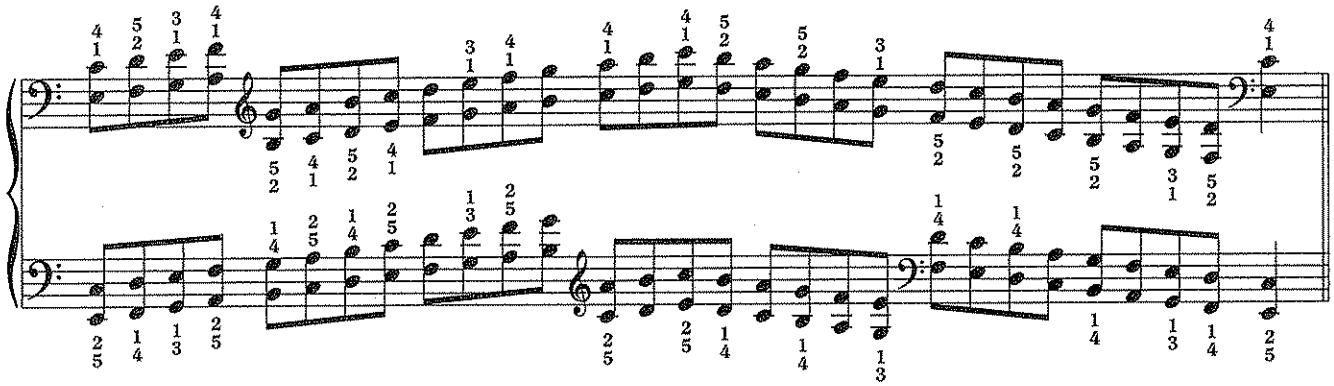
RH 2/1 on A/F



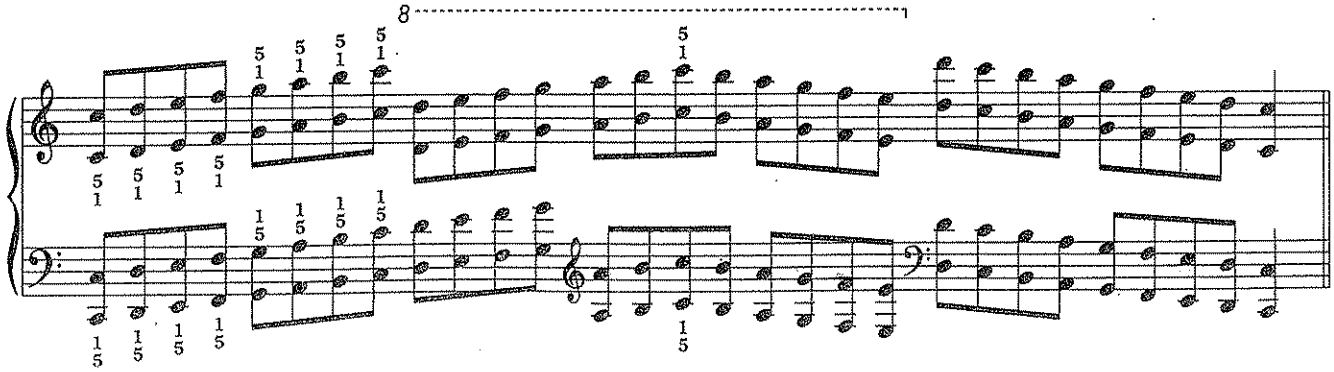
LH 1/2 on D/B

Double sixths

3 on RH E (upper part) / LH G (lower part)



Double octaves



C

4 on RH B♮ / LH D

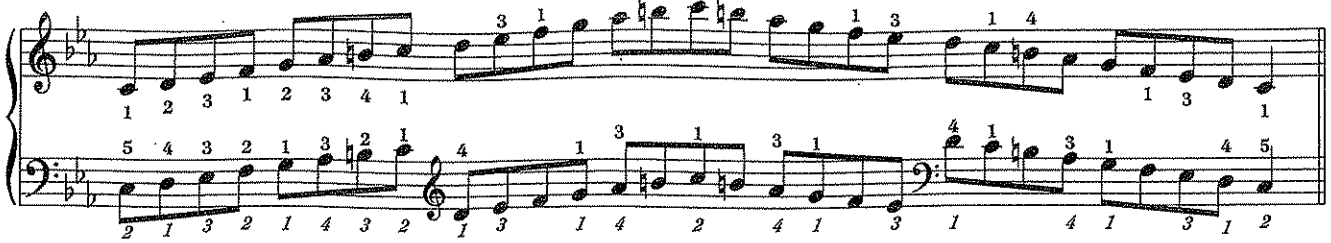
C harmonic minor

Similar motion

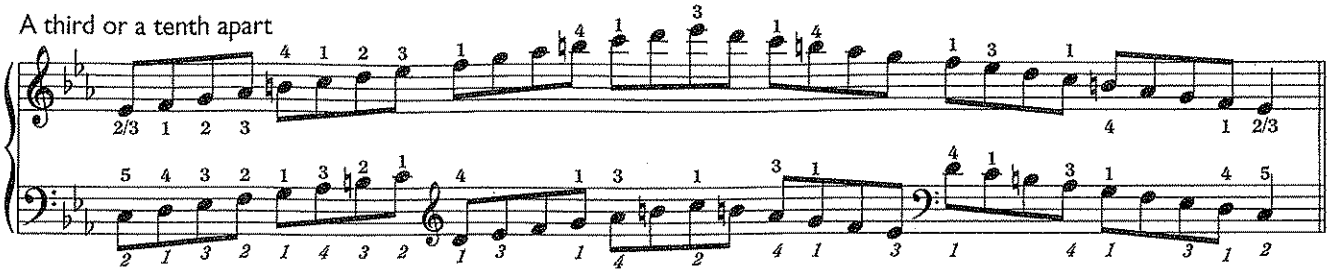
Alternative fingering

LH 4 on A♭

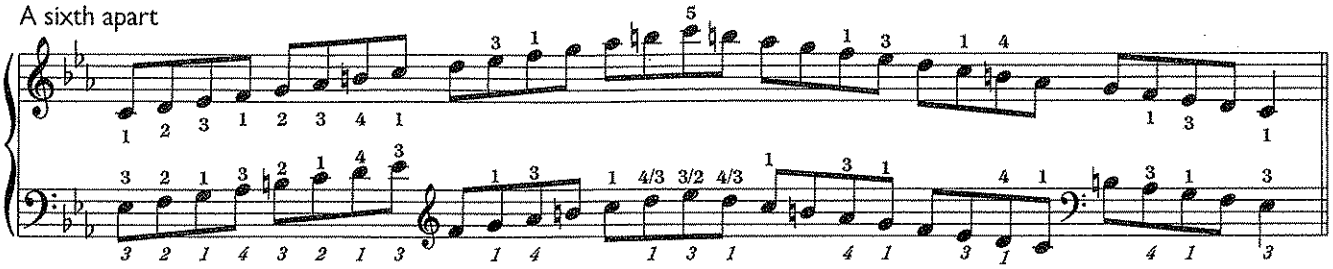
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

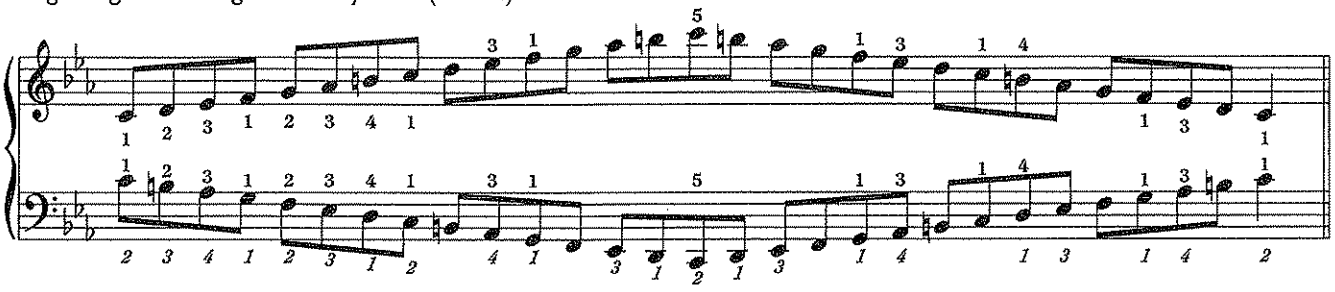


A sixth apart

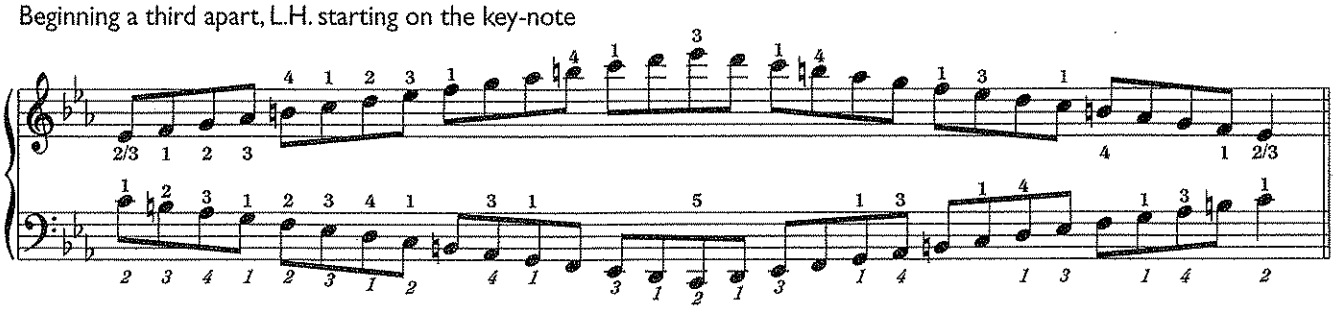


Contrary motion

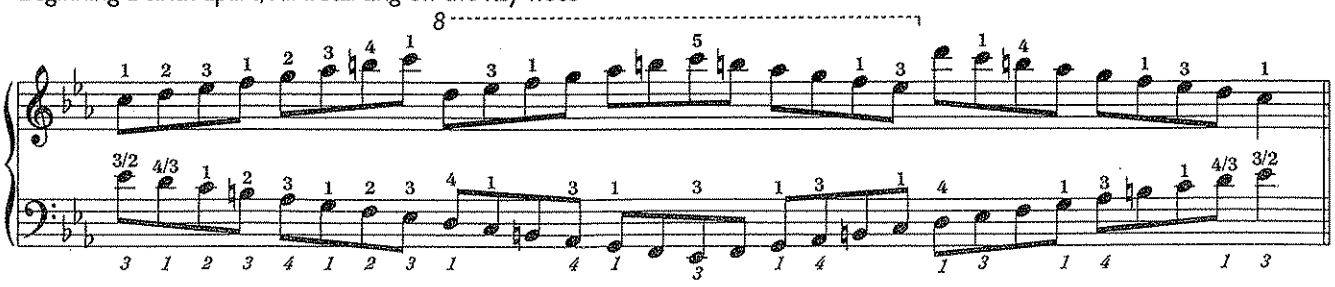
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



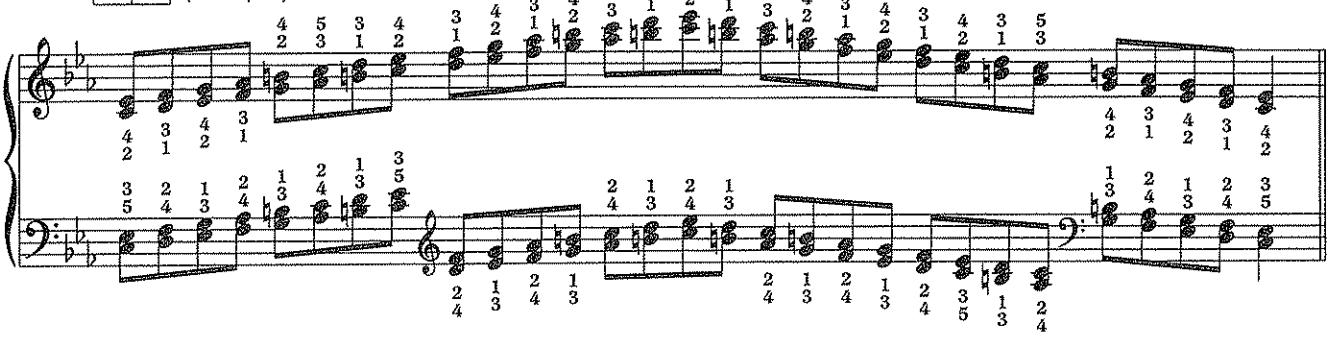
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

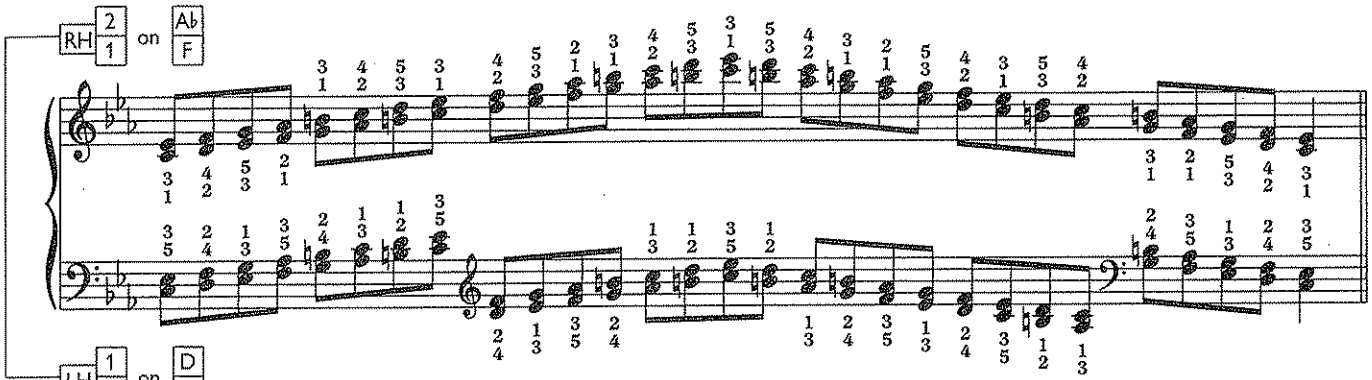
Standard fingering

5 on RH C (upper part) / LH C (lower part)



Alternative fingering

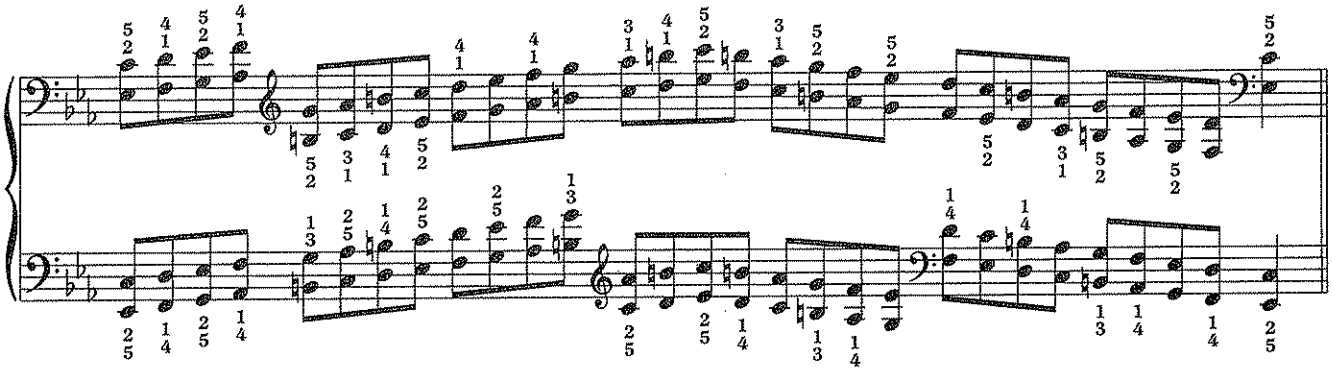
RH 2 / 1 on A♭ / F



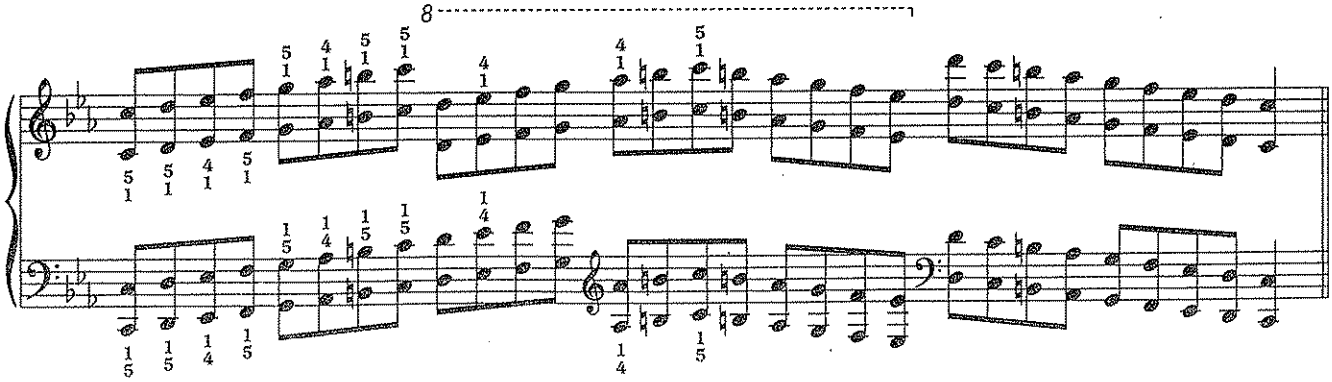
LH 1 / 2 on D / B♮

Double sixths

3 on RH A♭ (upper part) / LH B♮ (lower part)



Double octaves

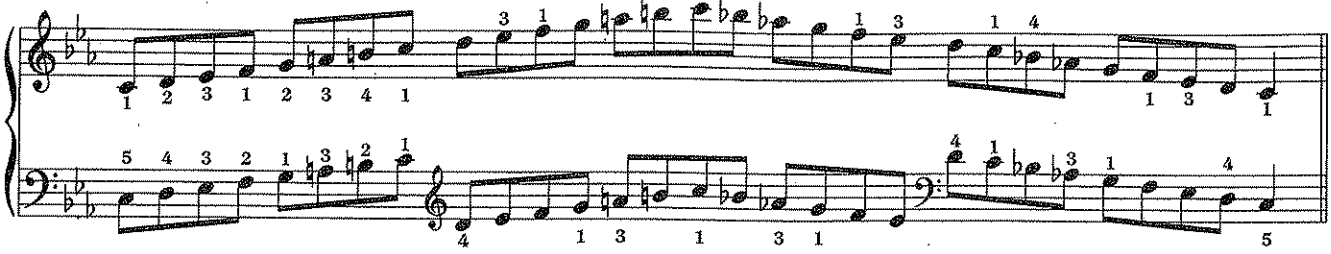


C melodic minor

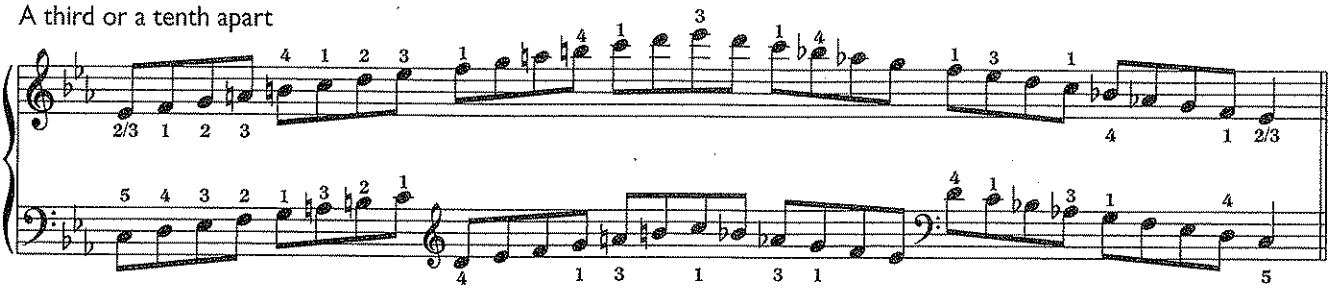
Similar motion

4 on | RH | B♮↑ / B♭↓ |
LH | D |

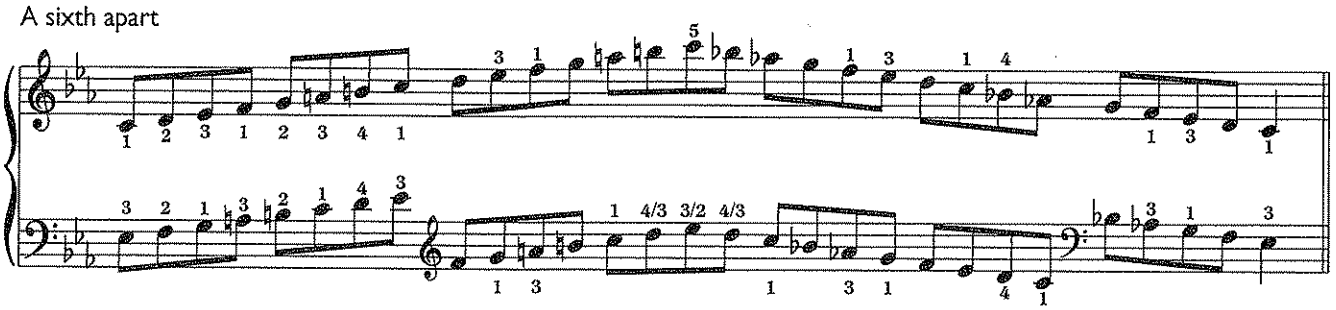
An octave apart



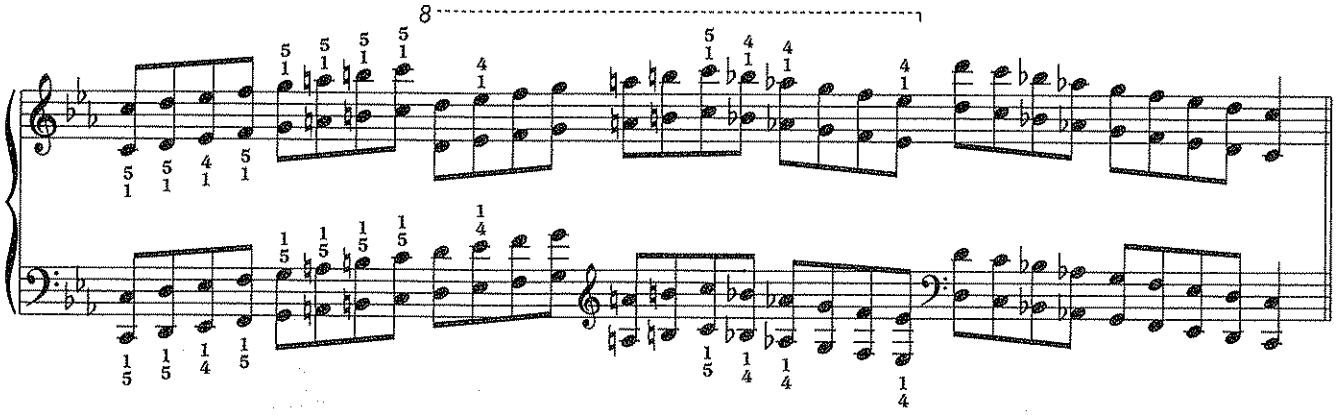
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves



G major

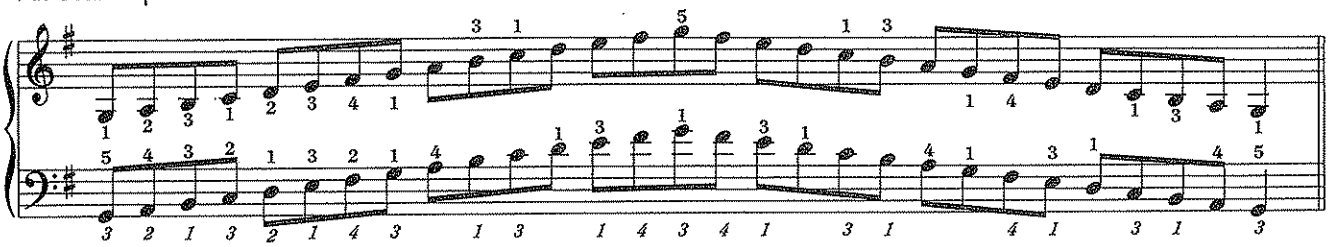
Similar motion

4 on RH F♯ LH A

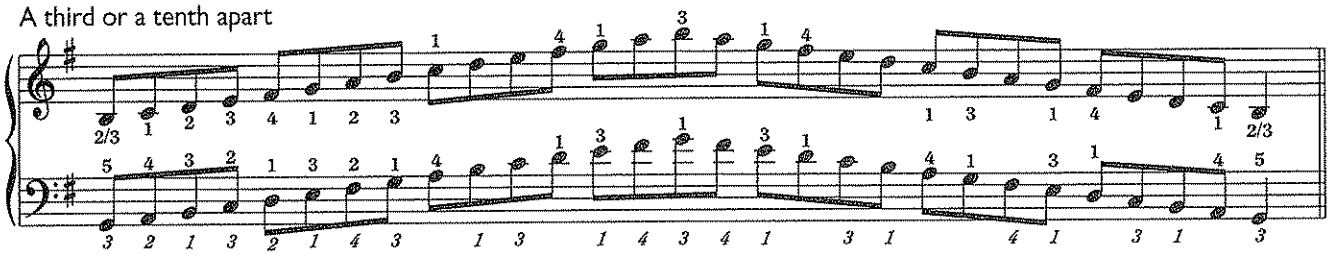
Alternative fingering

LH 4 on F♯

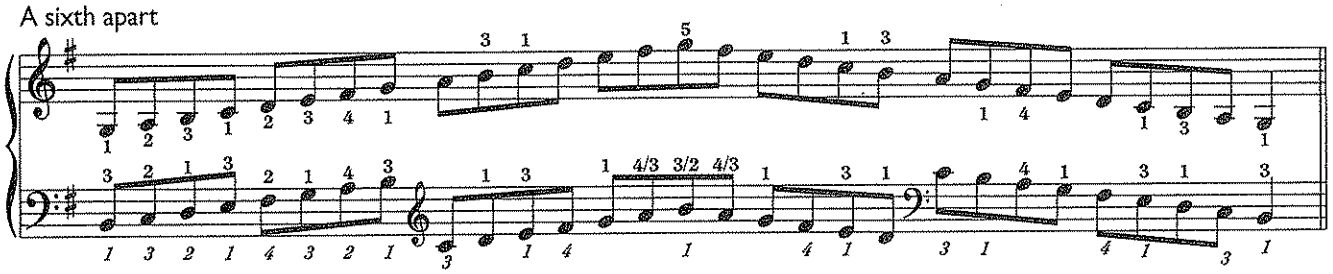
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

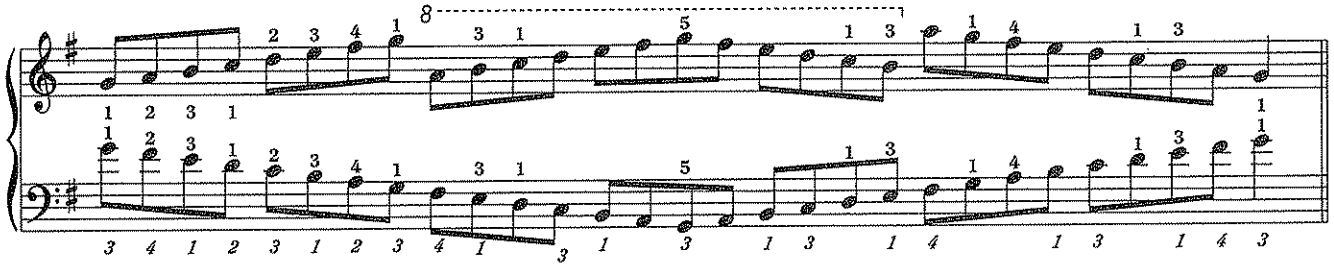


A sixth apart

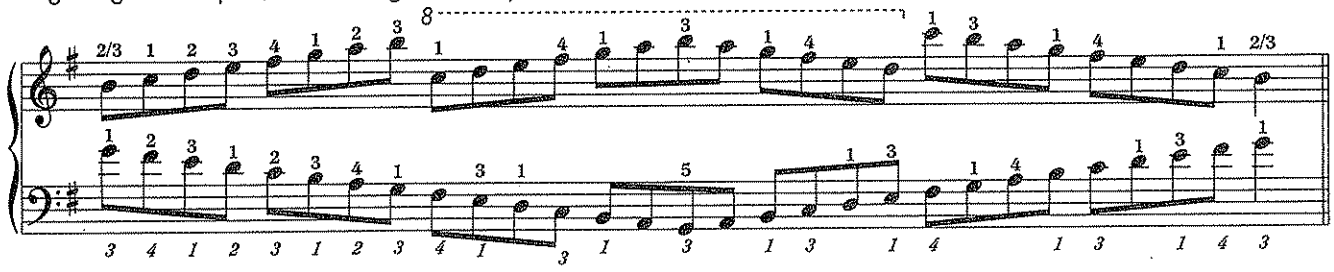


Contrary motion

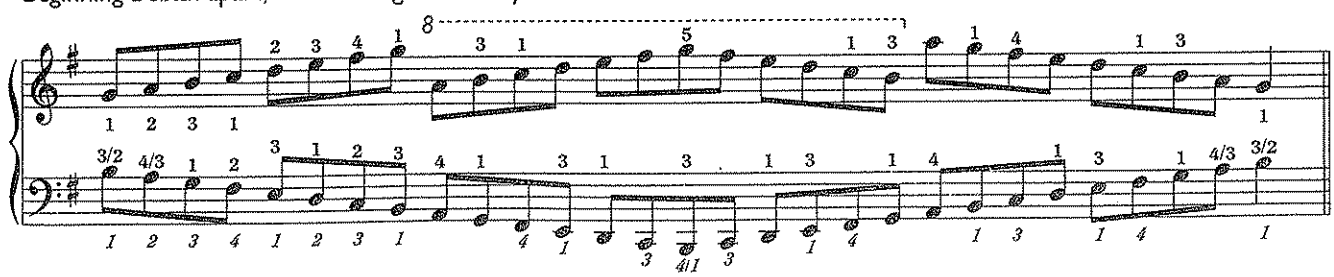
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



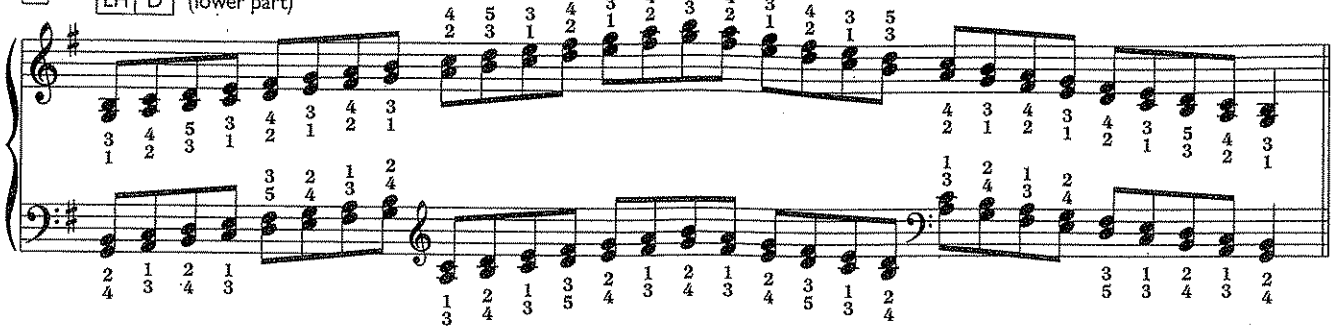
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

Standard fingering

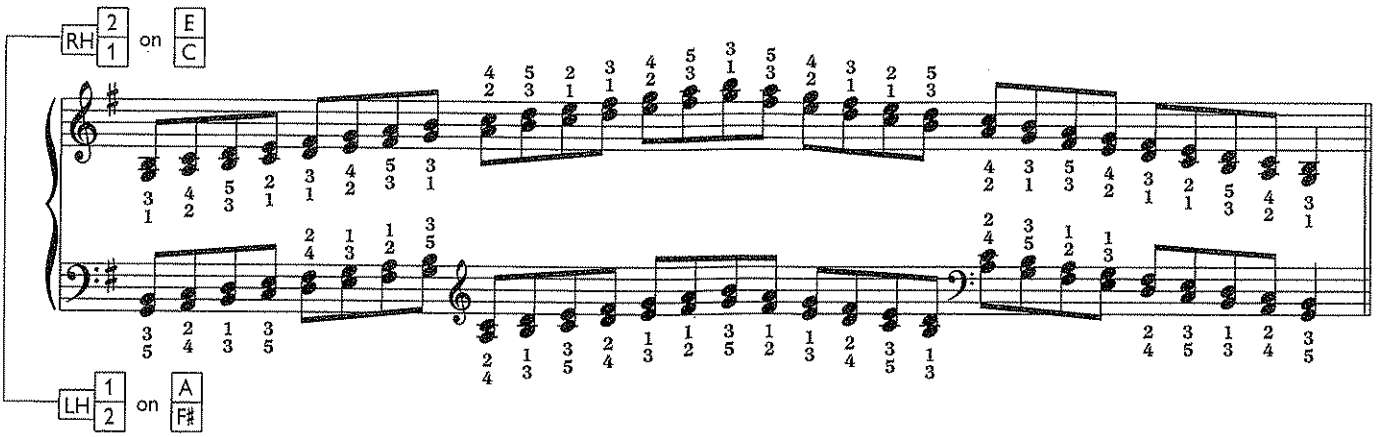
5 on RH D (upper part)
LH D (lower part)



Alternative fingering

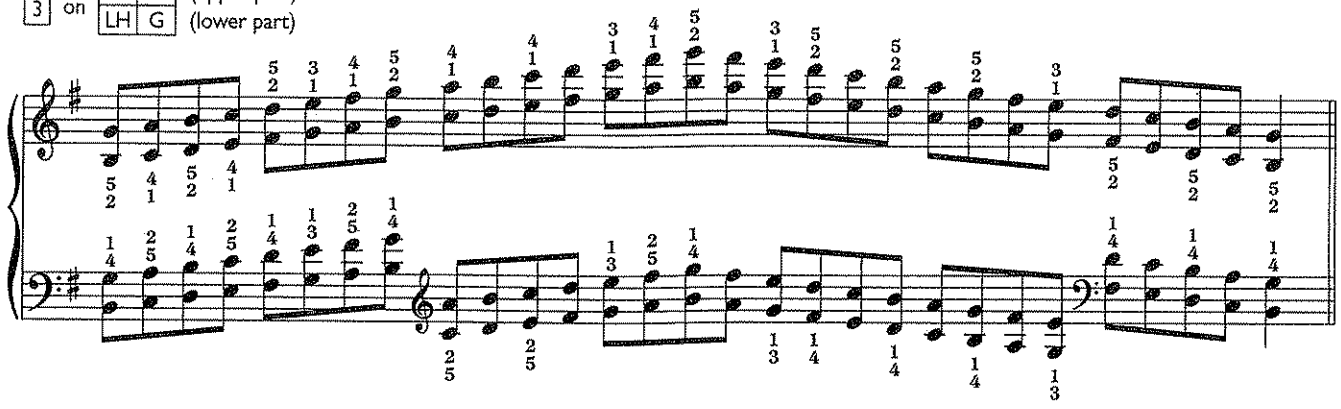
RH 2 1 on E C

LH 1 2 on A F♯

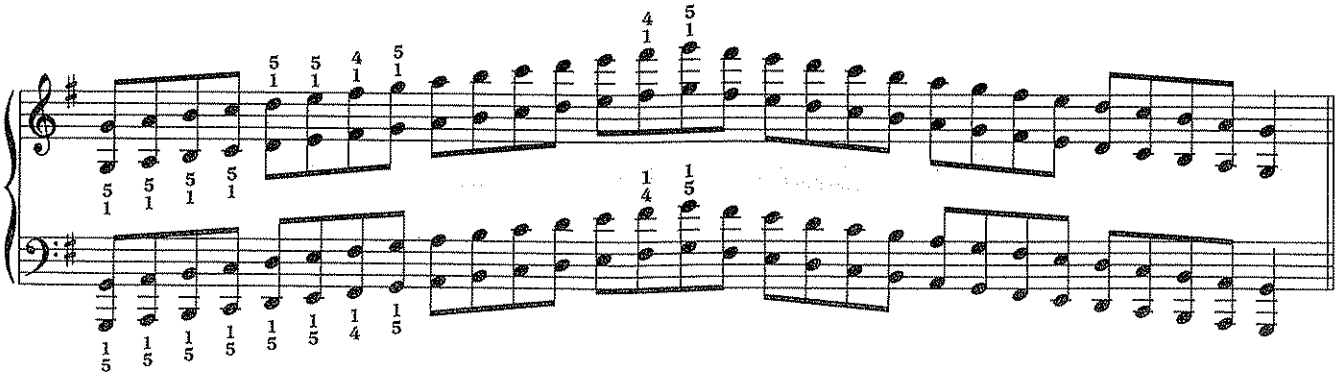


Double sixths

3 on RH E (upper part)
LH G (lower part)



Double octaves



4 on RH F♯ / LH A

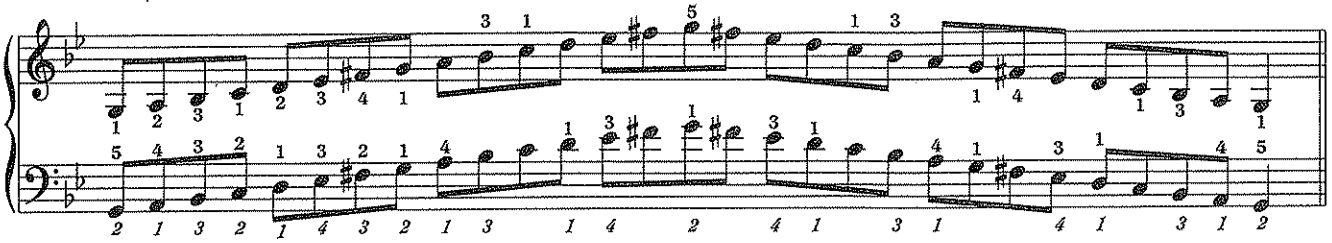
G harmonic minor

Similar motion

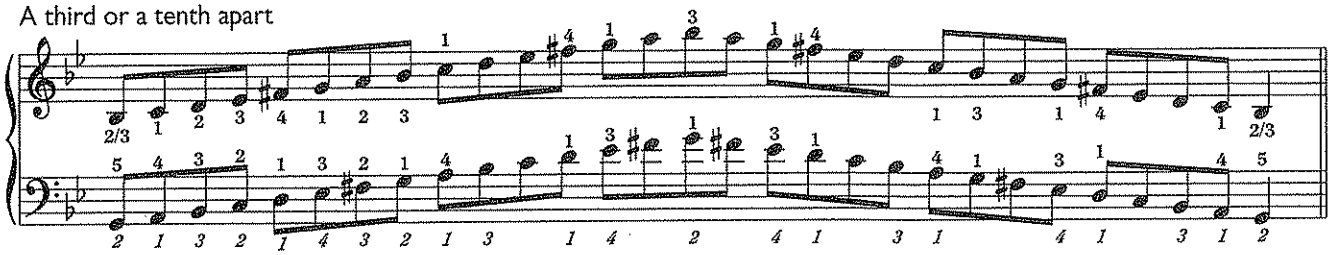
Alternative fingering

LH 4 on E♭

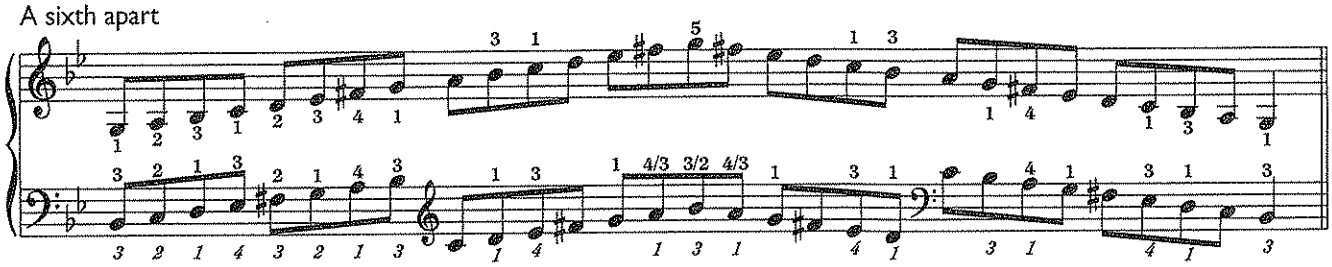
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

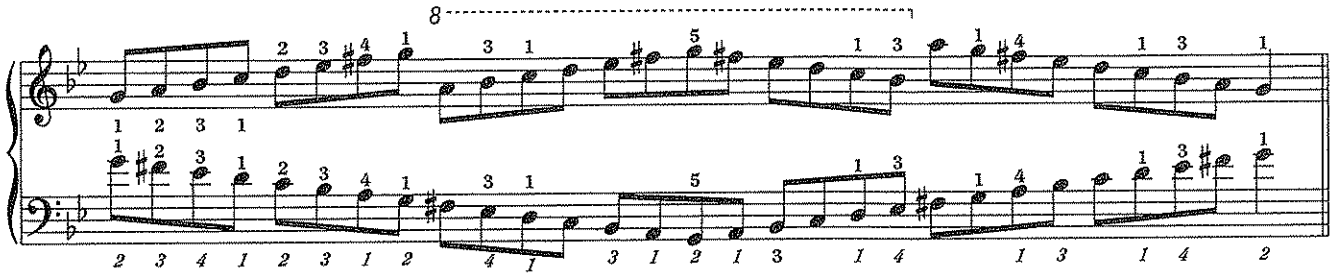


A sixth apart

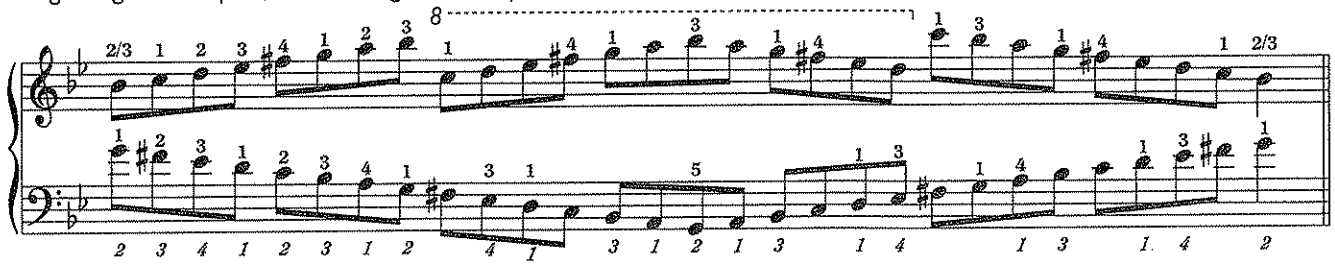


Contrary motion

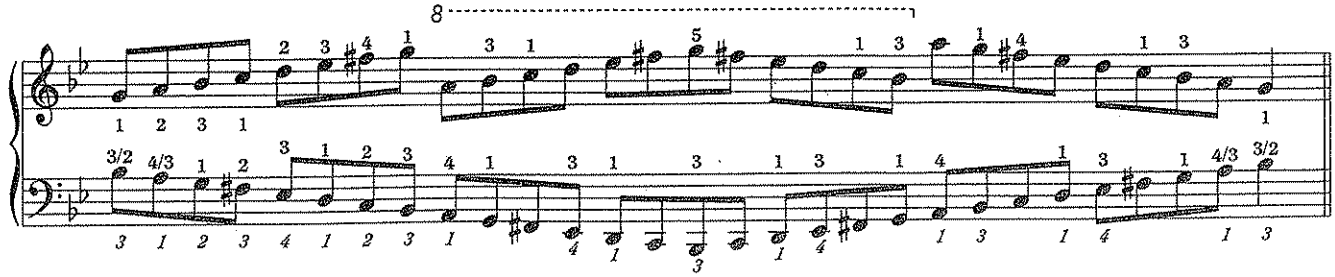
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note

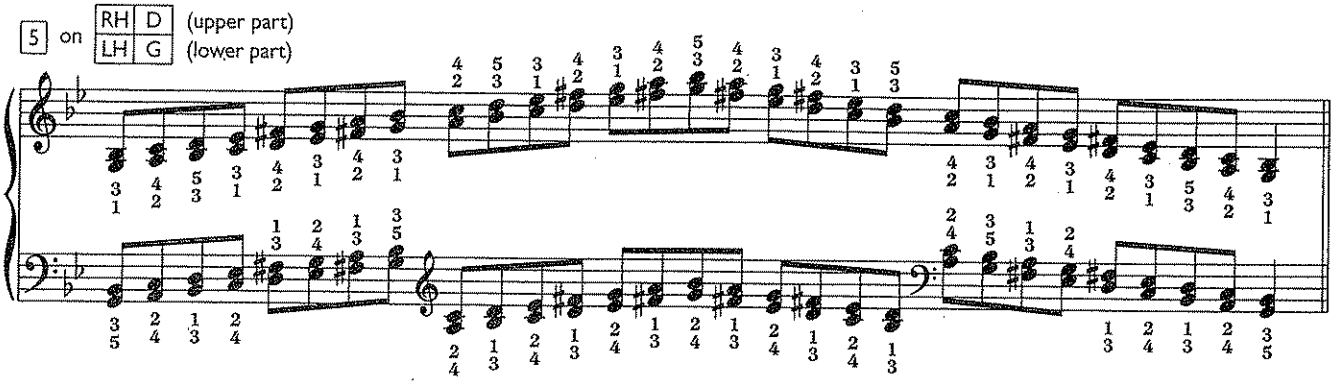


Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

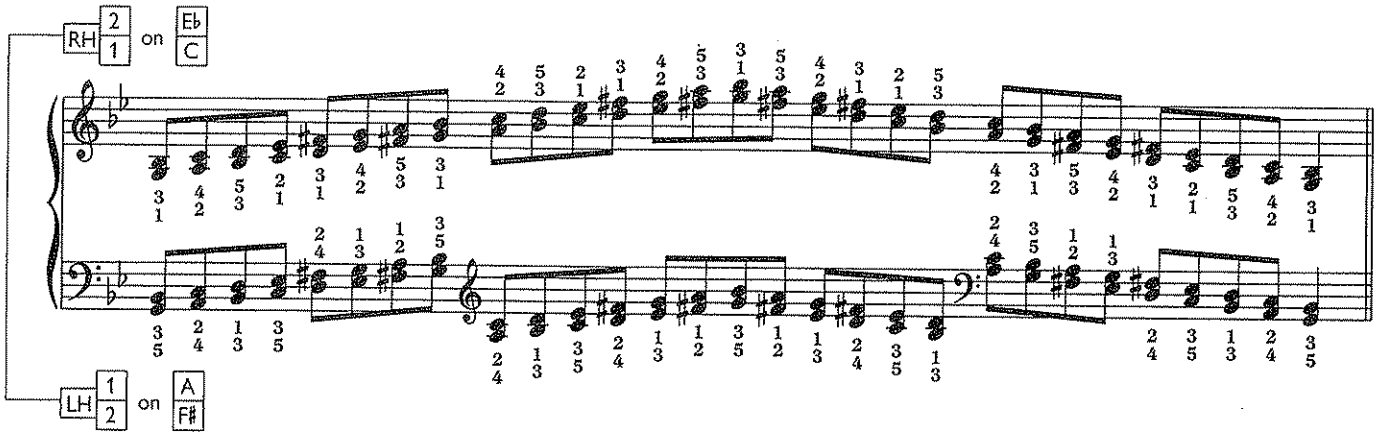


Double thirds

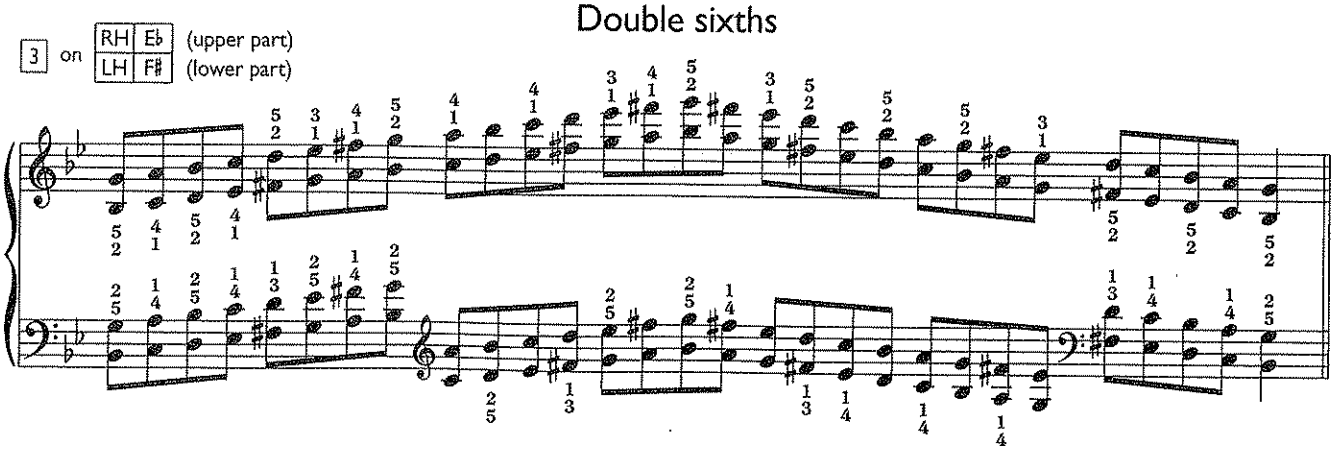
Standard fingering



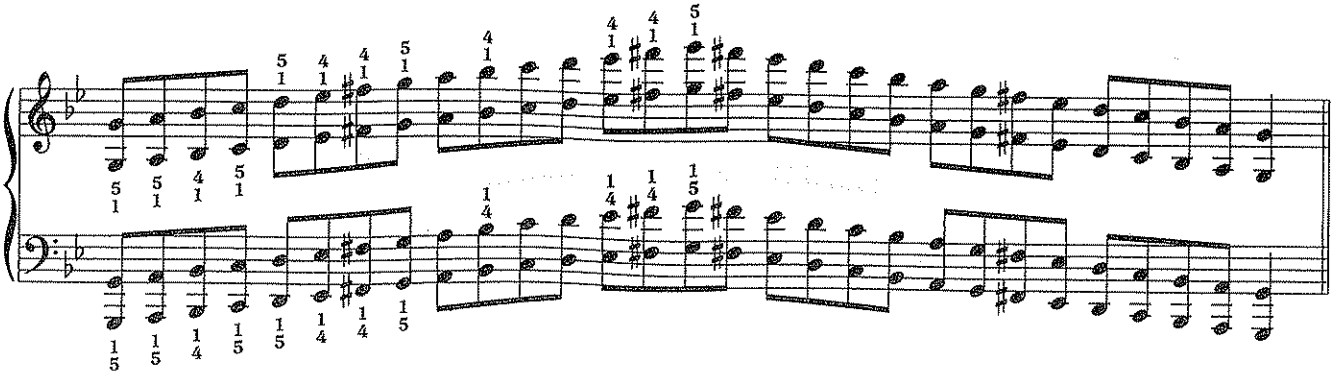
Alternative fingering



Double sixths



Double octaves

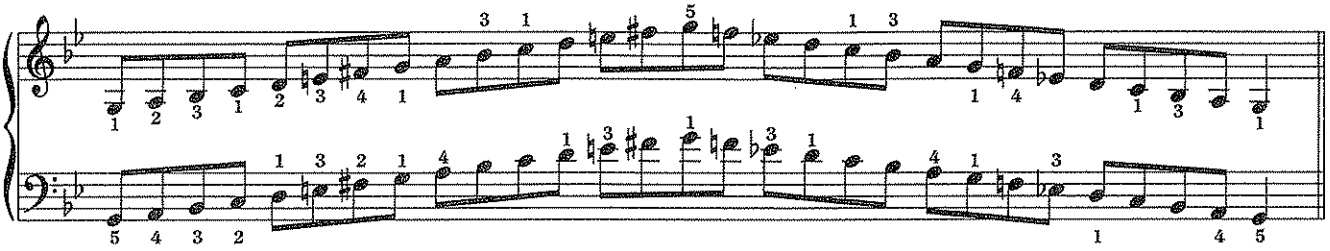


G melodic minor

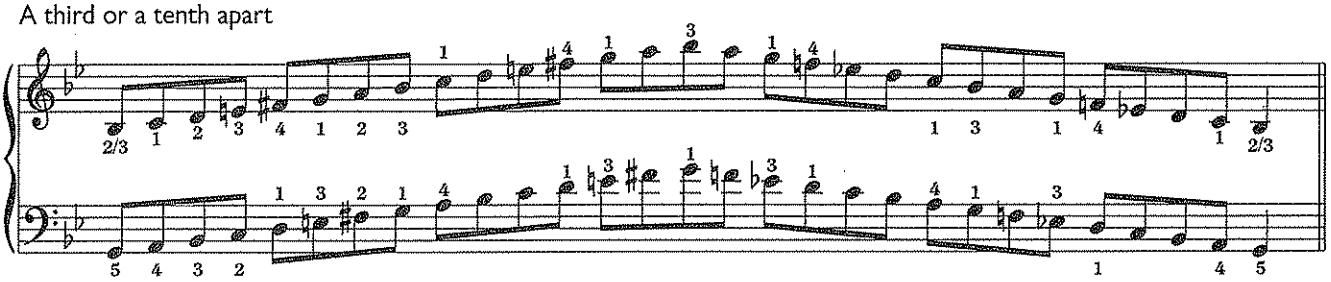
Similar motion

4 on | RH | F♯↑/F♮↓ |
LH | A |

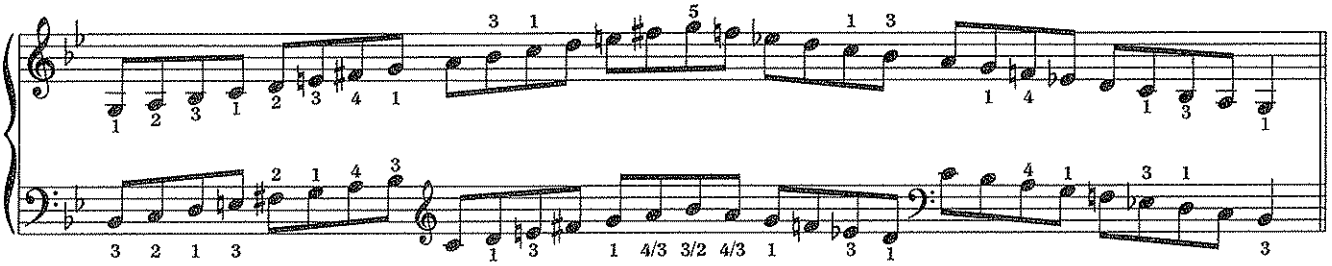
An octave apart



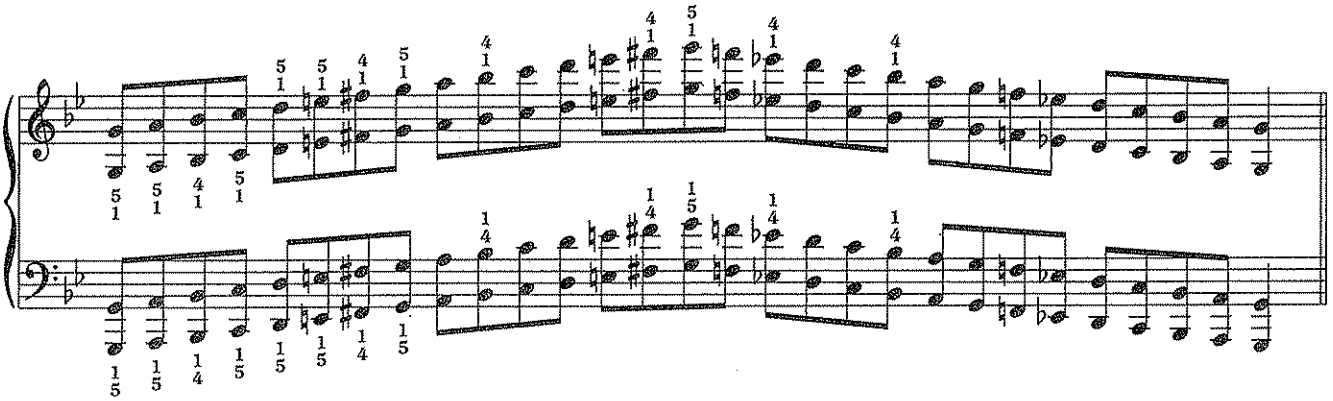
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves



4 on RH C♯ LH E

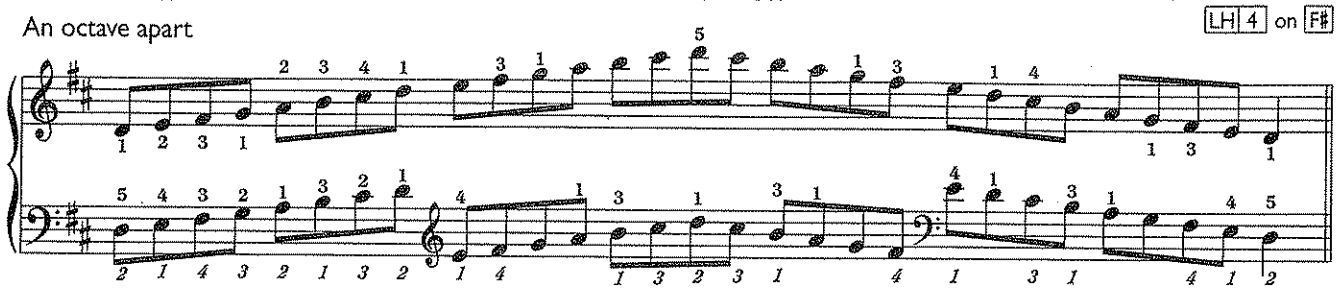
D major

Similar motion

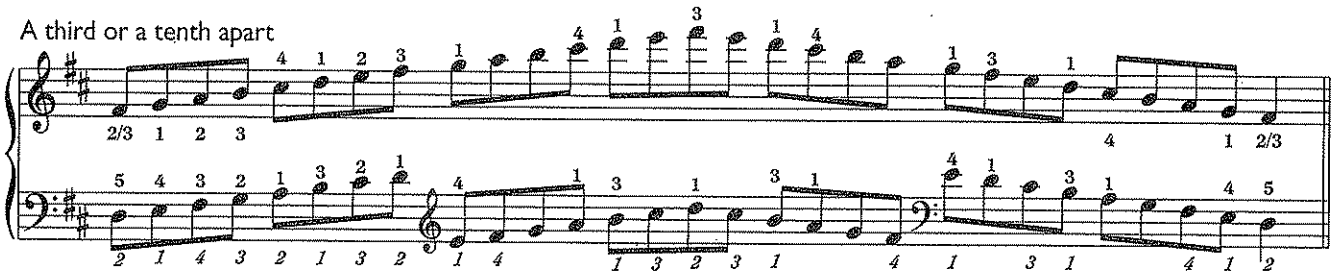
Alternative fingering

LH 4 on F♯

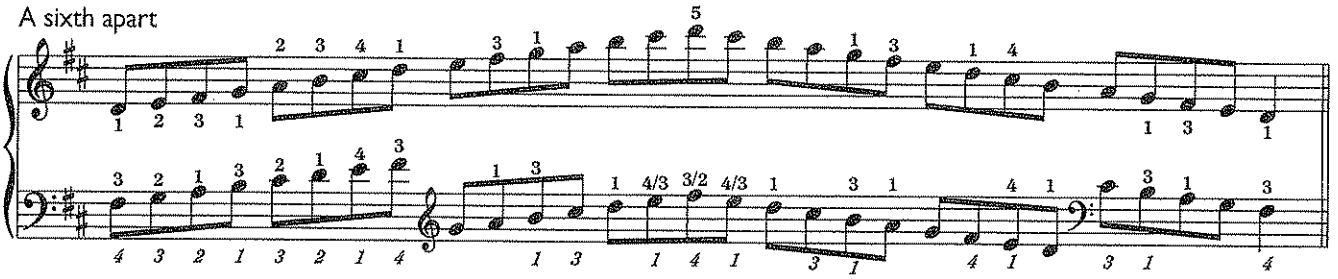
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

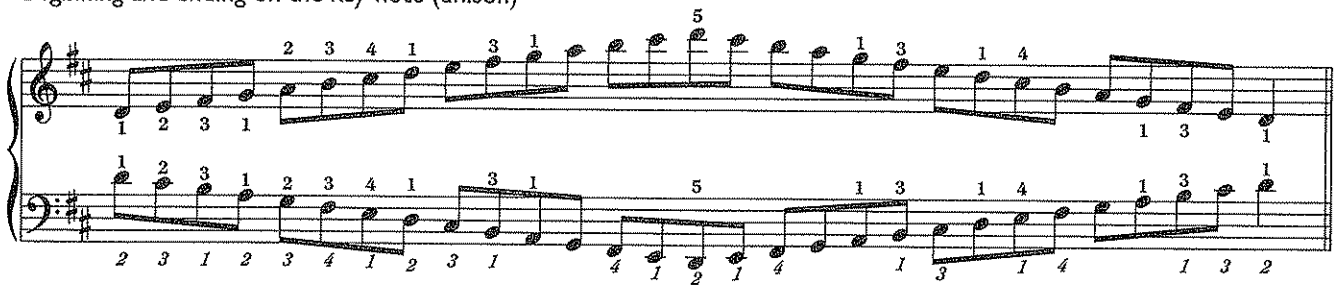


A sixth apart

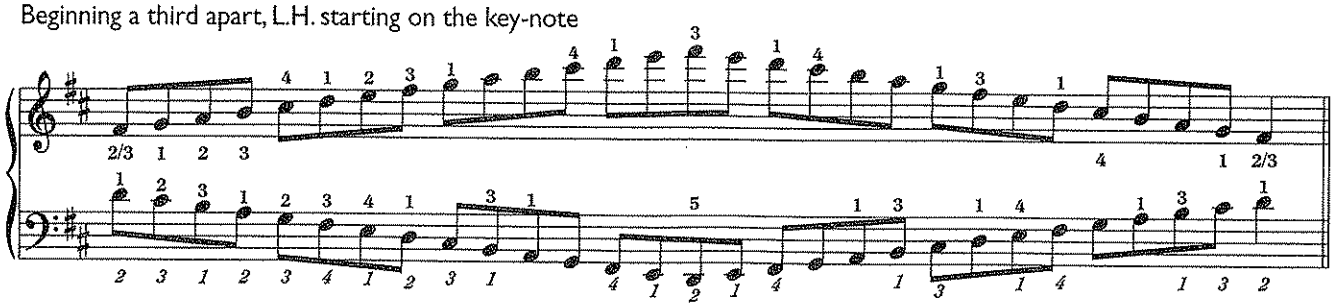


Contrary motion

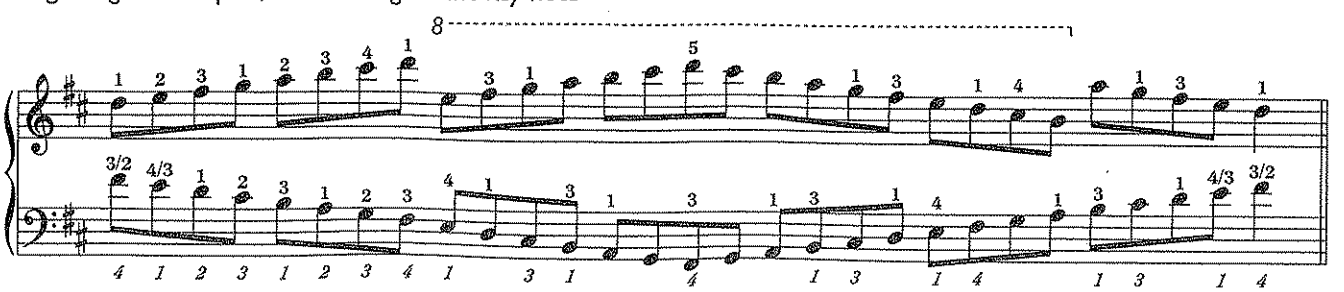
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



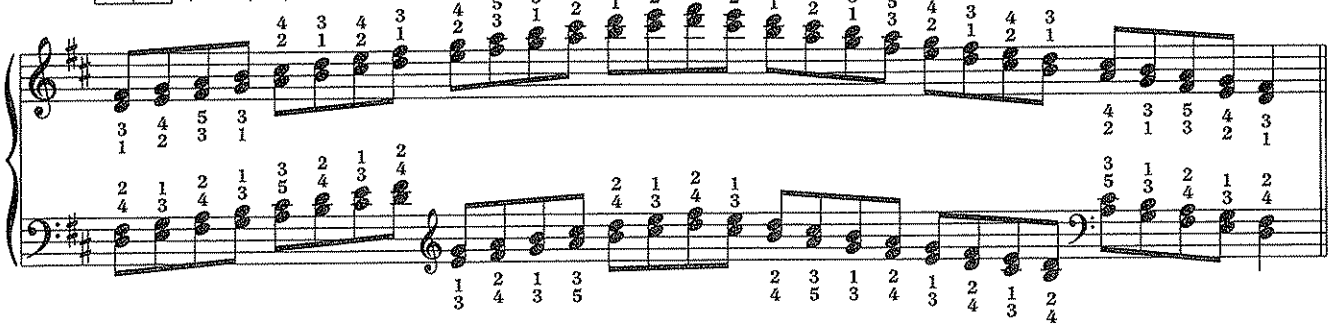
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

Standard fingering

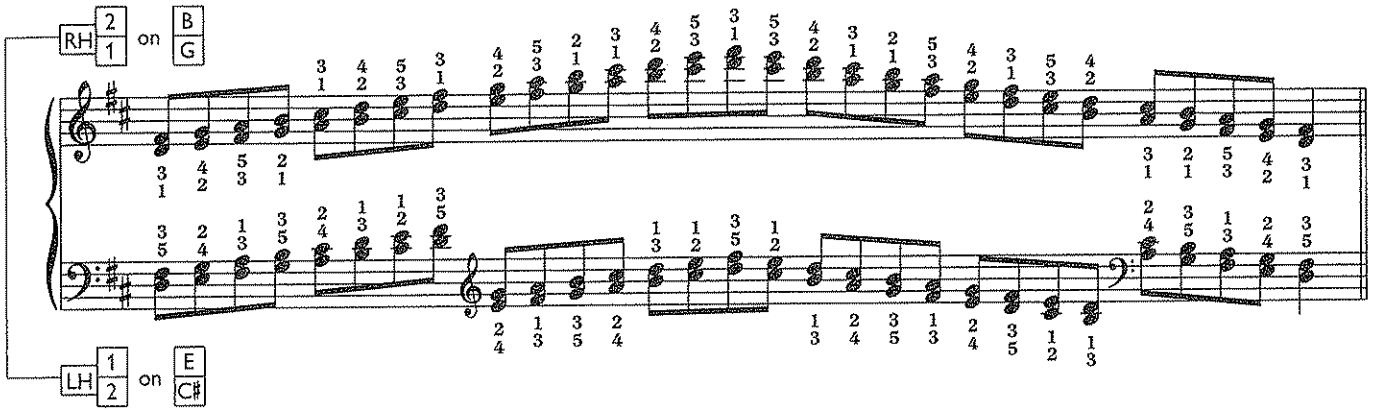
5 on RH A (upper part) / LH A (lower part)



Alternative fingering

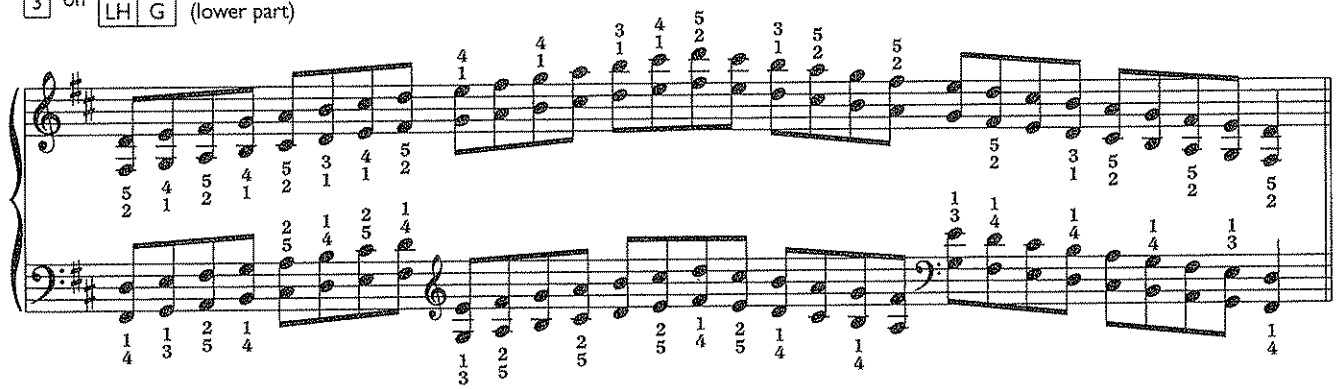
RH 2 1 on B G

LH 1 2 on E C♯

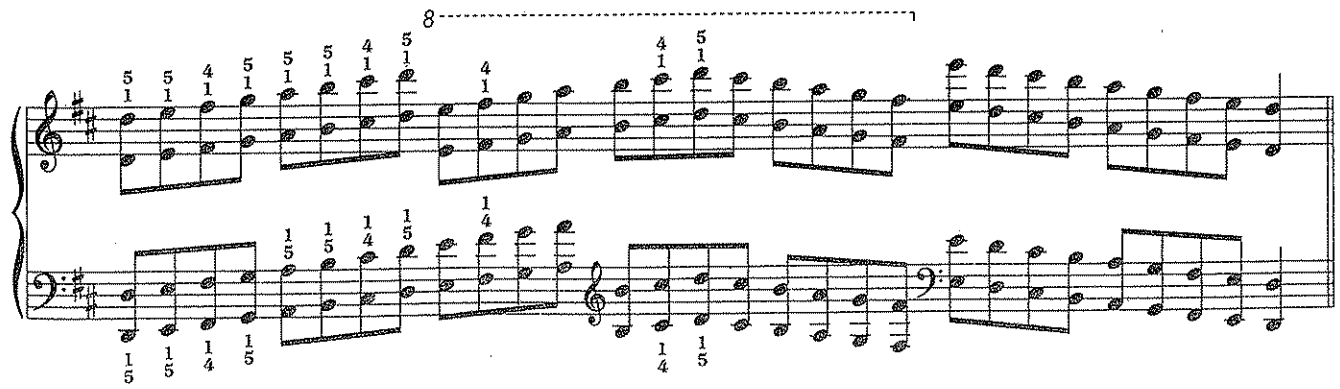


Double sixths

3 on RH B (upper part) / LH G (lower part)



Double octaves

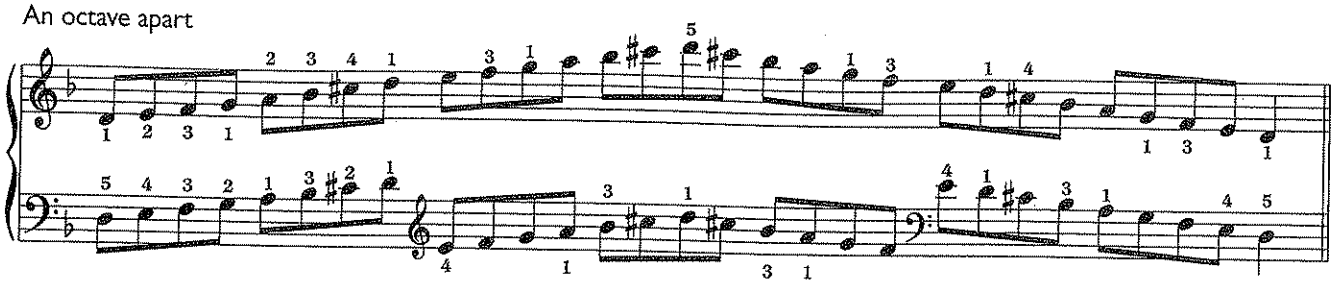


4 on RH C♯ LH E

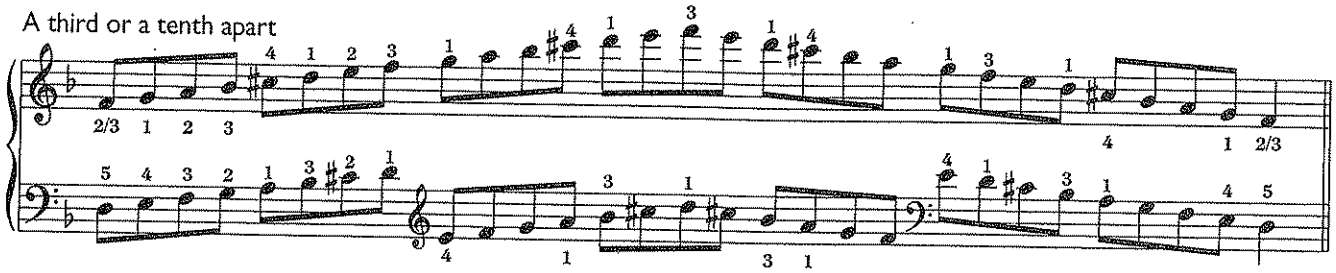
D harmonic minor

Similar motion

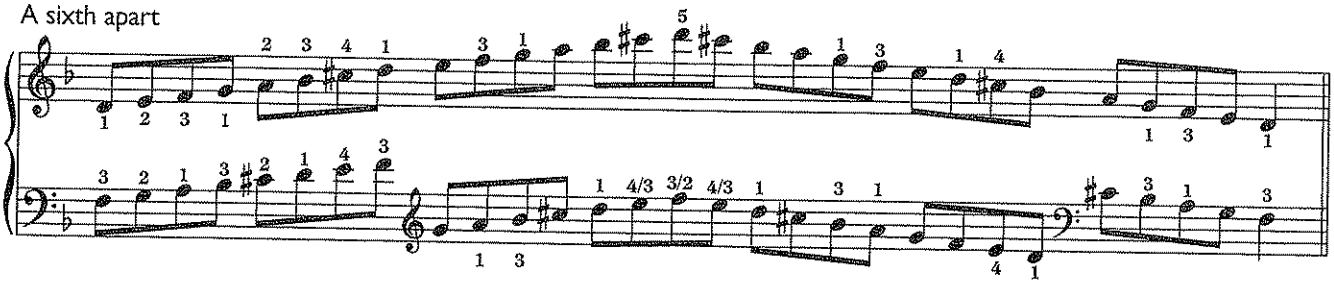
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

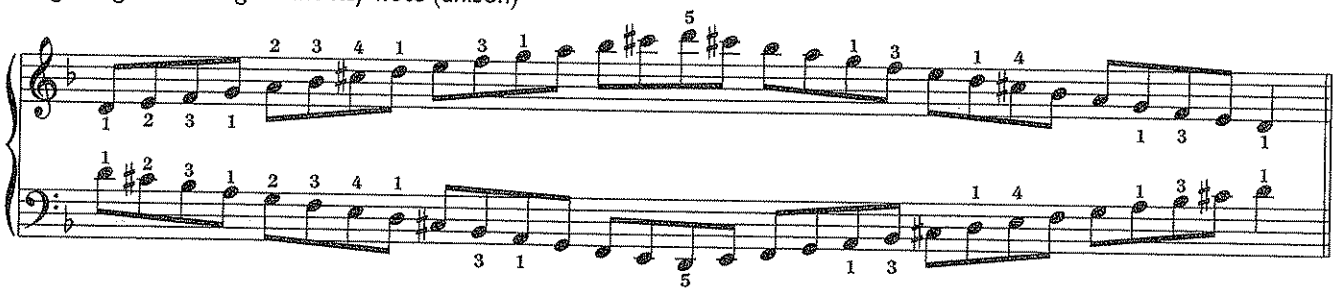


A sixth apart

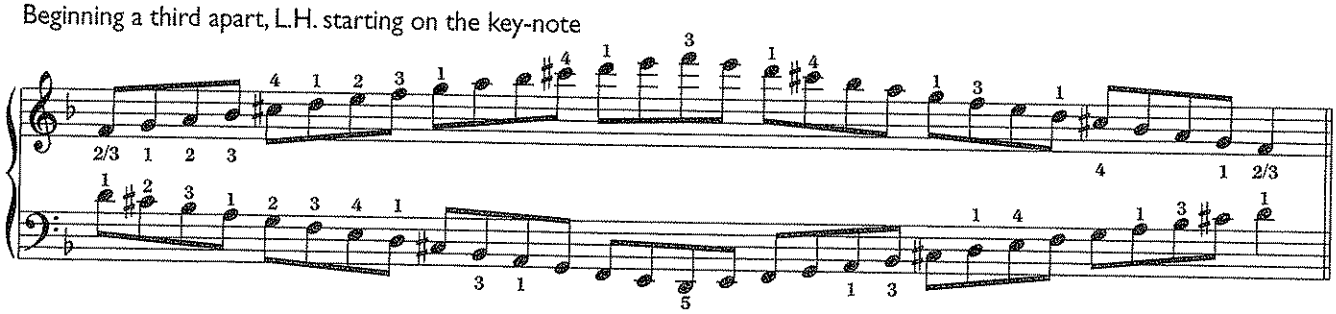


Contrary motion

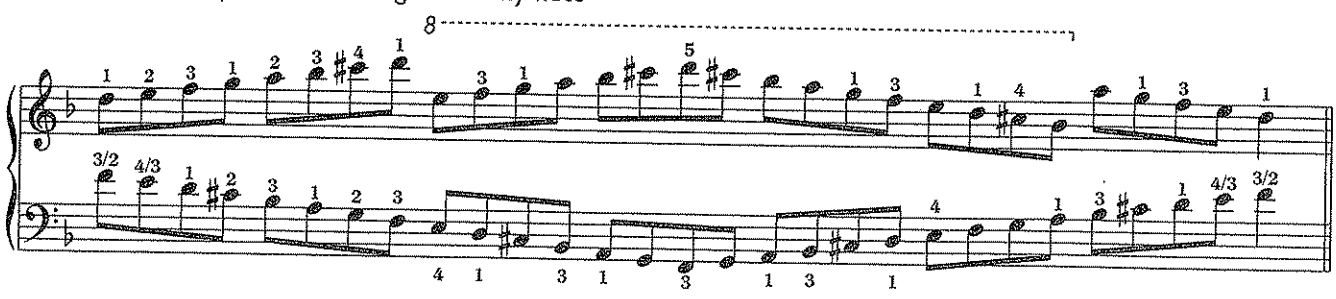
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



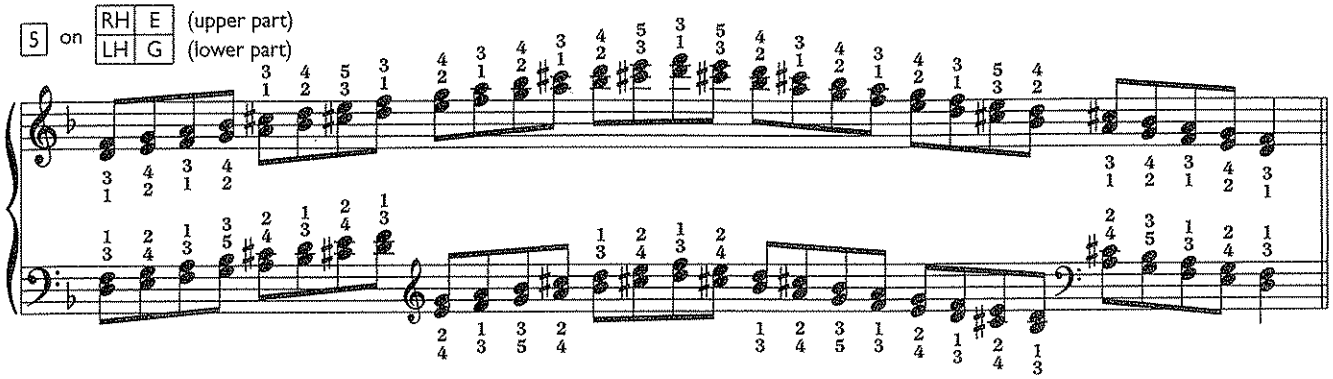
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Standard fingering

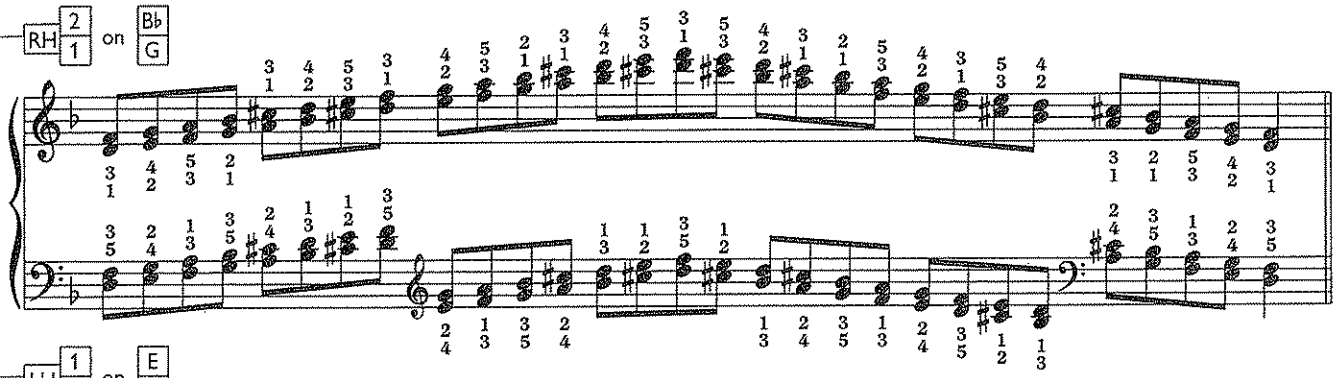
Double thirds

5 on RH E (upper part) / LH G (lower part)



Alternative fingering

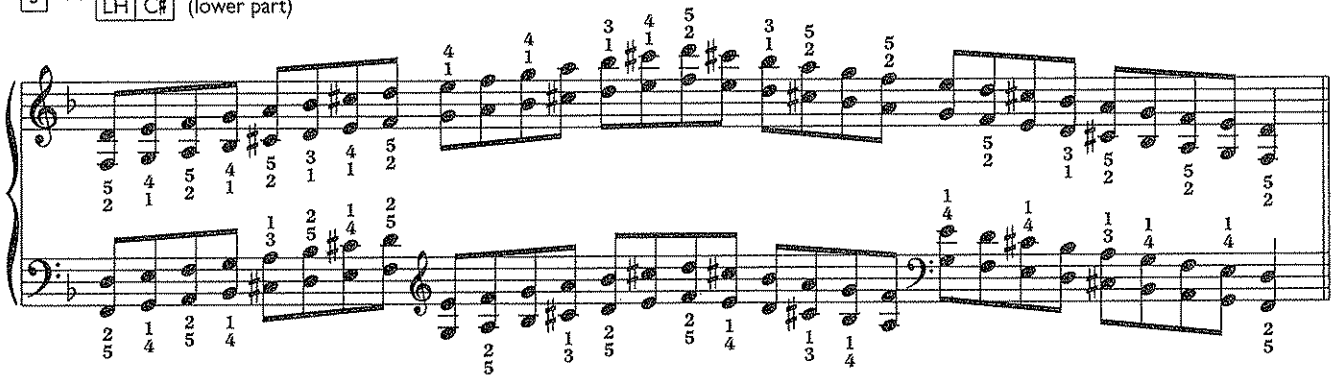
RH 2 / 1 on B♭ / G



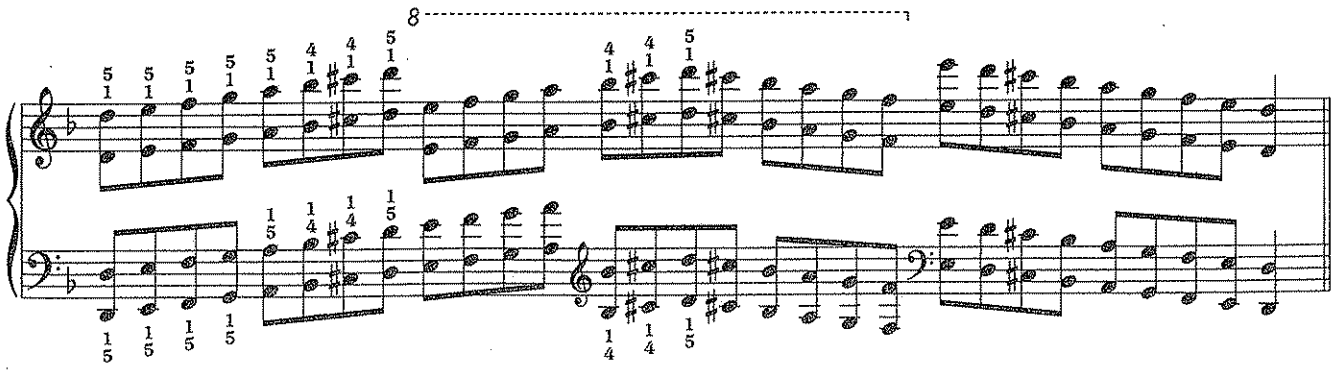
LH 1 / 2 on E / C♯

Double sixths

3 on RH B♭ (upper part) / LH C♯ (lower part)



Double octaves

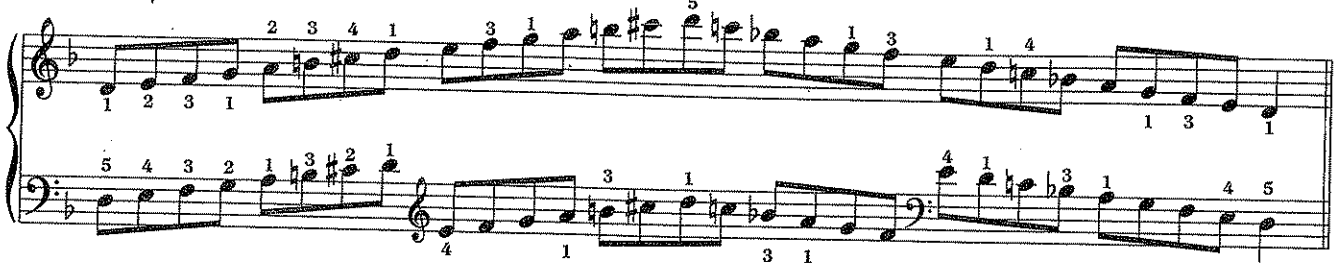


D melodic minor

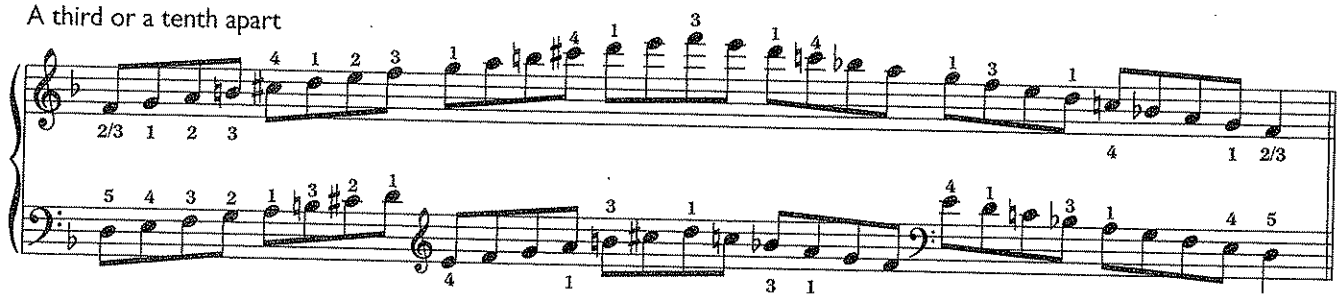
Similar motion

4 on | RH | C♯↑/C♮↓ |
| LH | E |

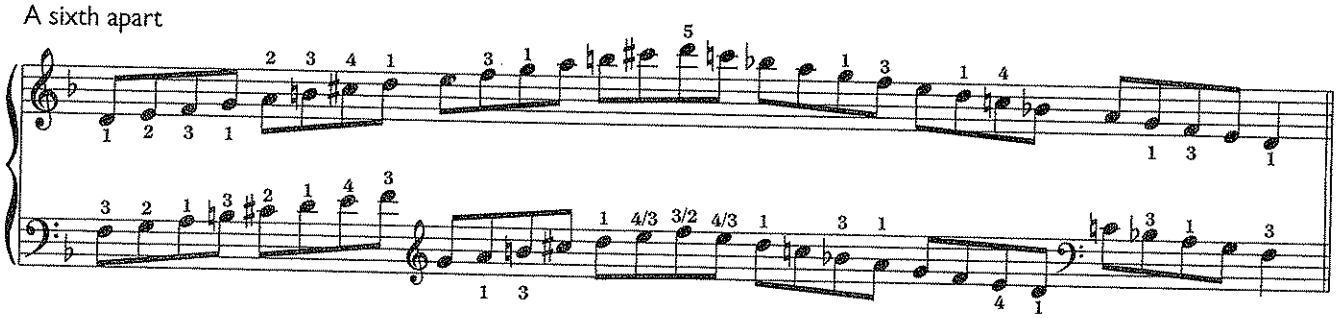
An octave apart



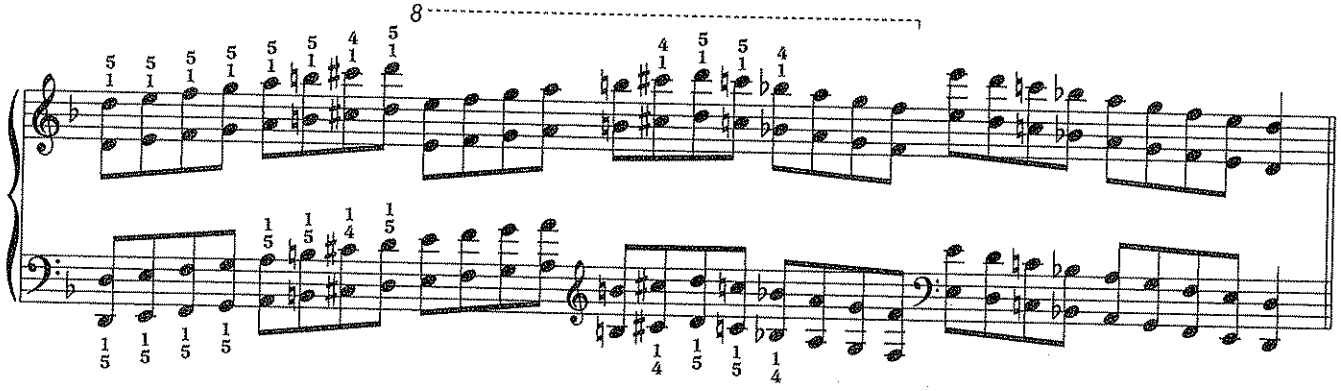
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves



A major

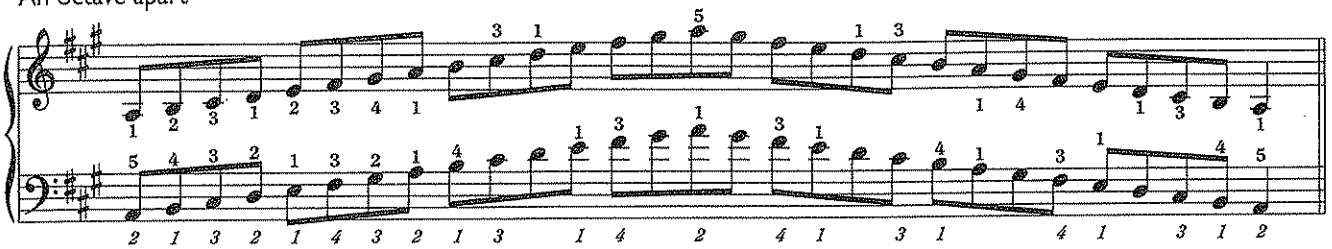
4 on | RH | G♯ | LH | B |

Similar motion

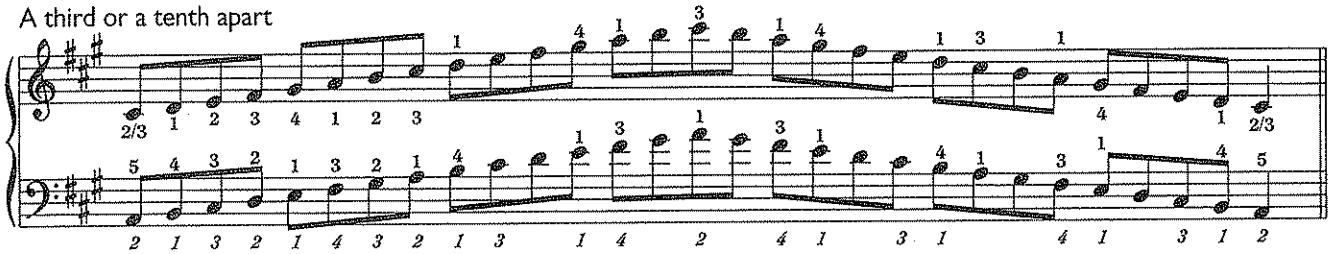
Alternative fingering

LH 4 on F♯

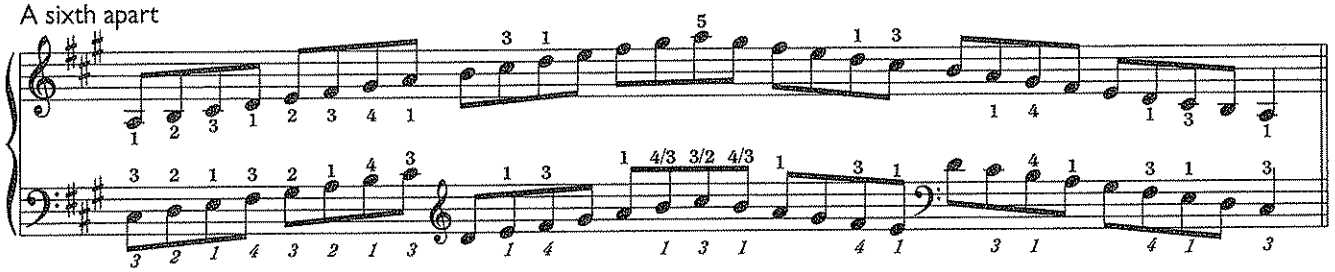
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

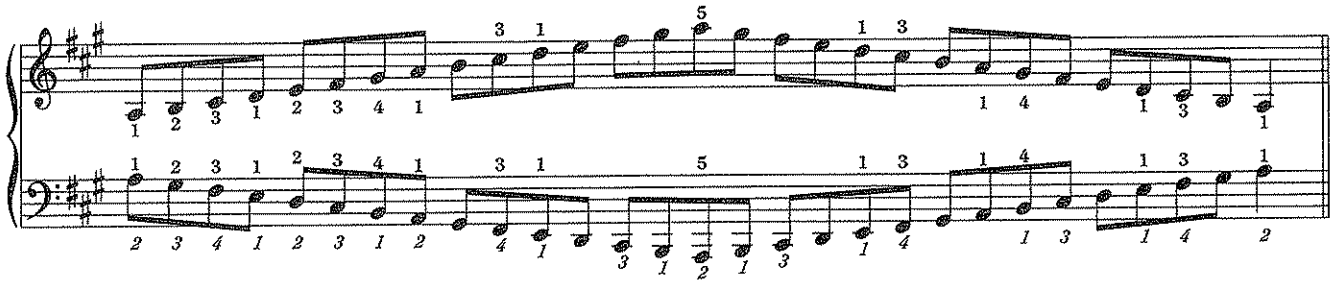


A sixth apart

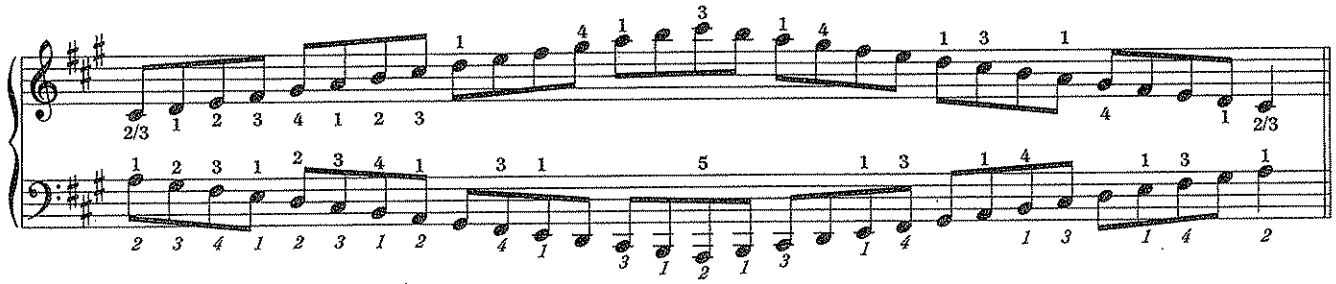


Contrary motion

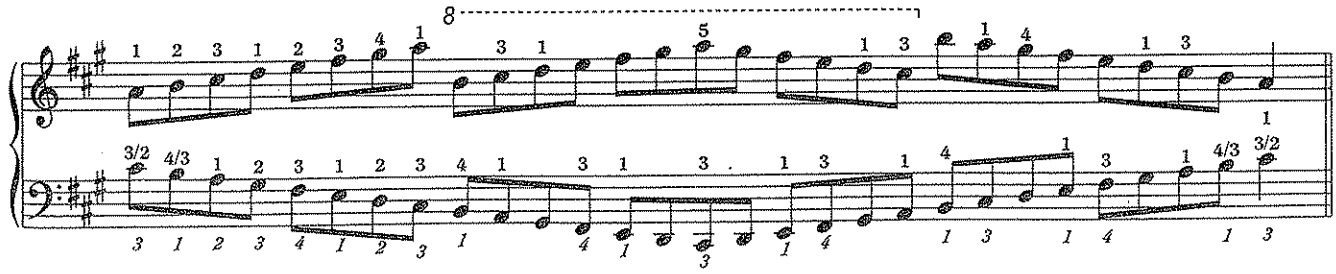
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

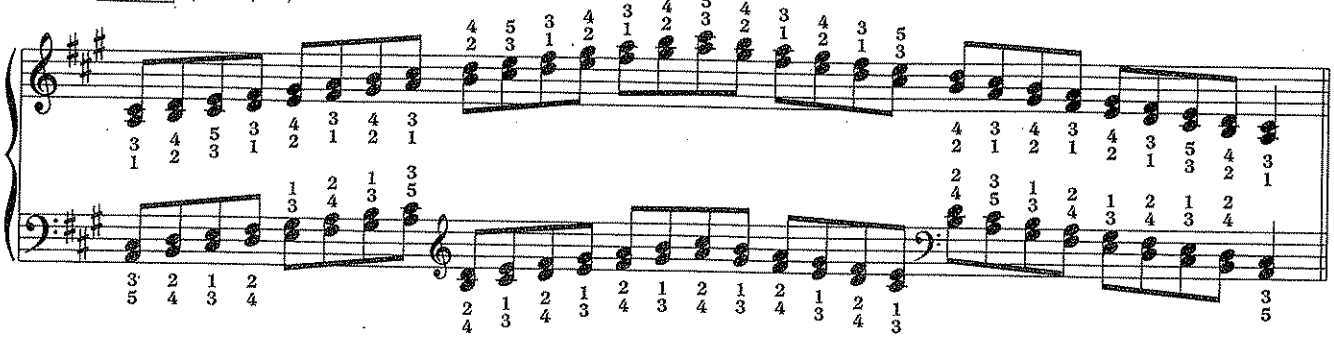


A

Double thirds

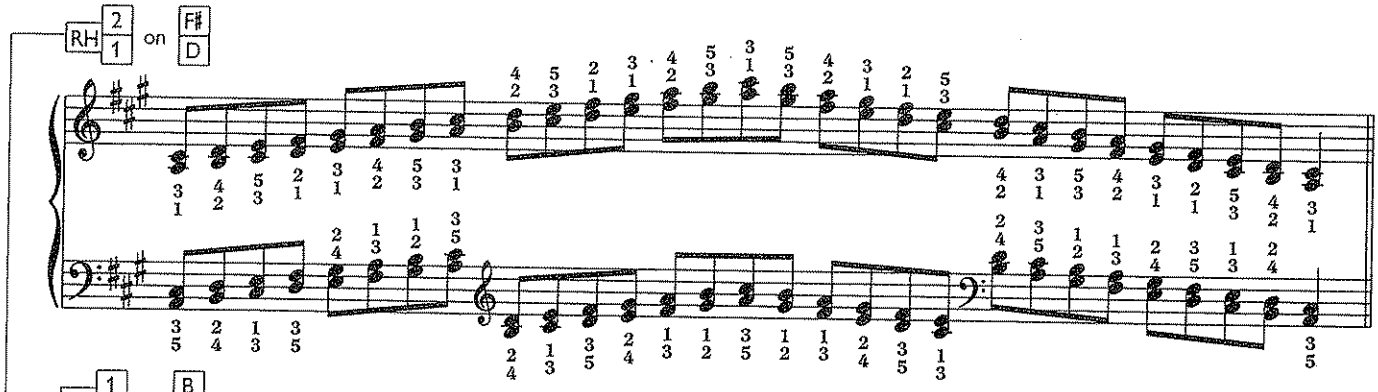
Standard fingering

5 on RH E (upper part) / LH A (lower part)



Alternative fingering

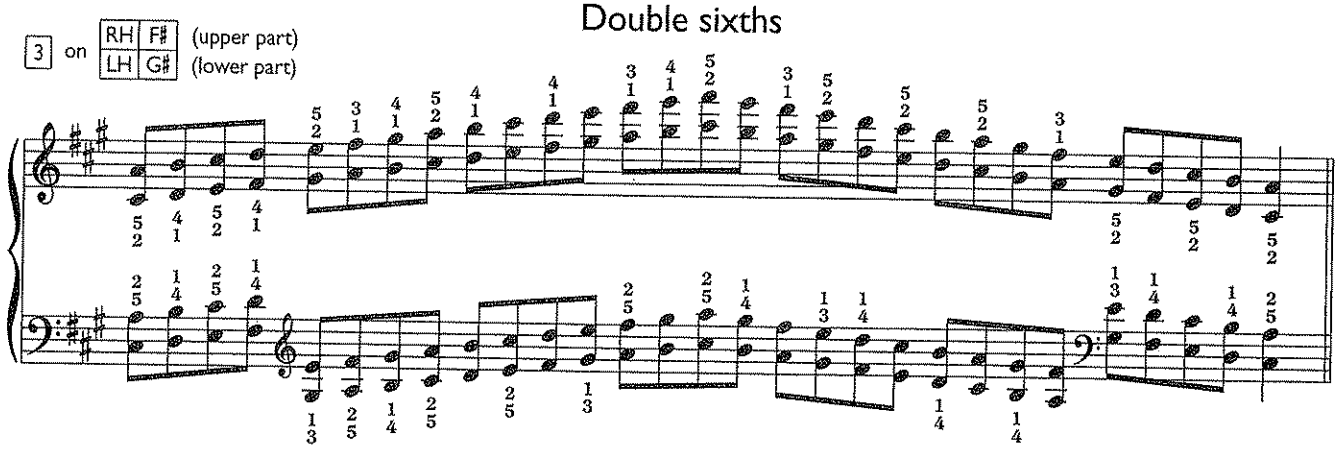
RH 2 / 1 on F♯ / D



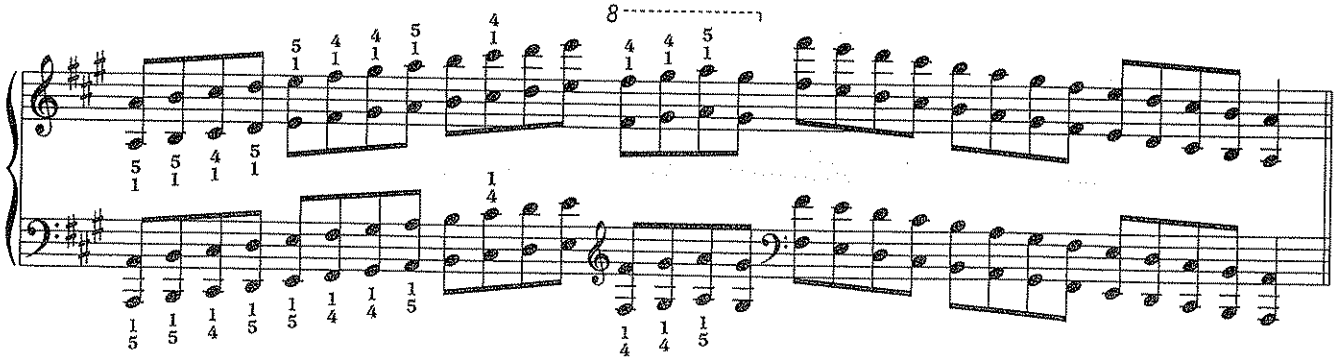
LH 1 / 2 on B / G♯

Double sixths

3 on RH F♯ (upper part) / LH G♯ (lower part)



Double octaves

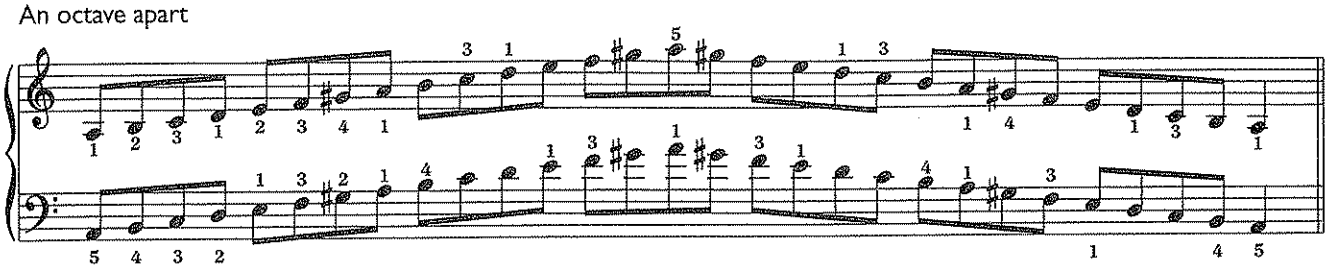


A harmonic minor

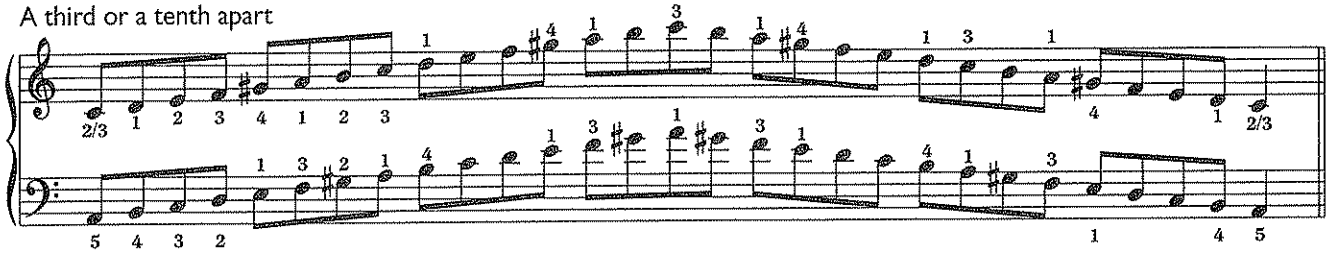
4 on RH G♯ LH B

Similar motion

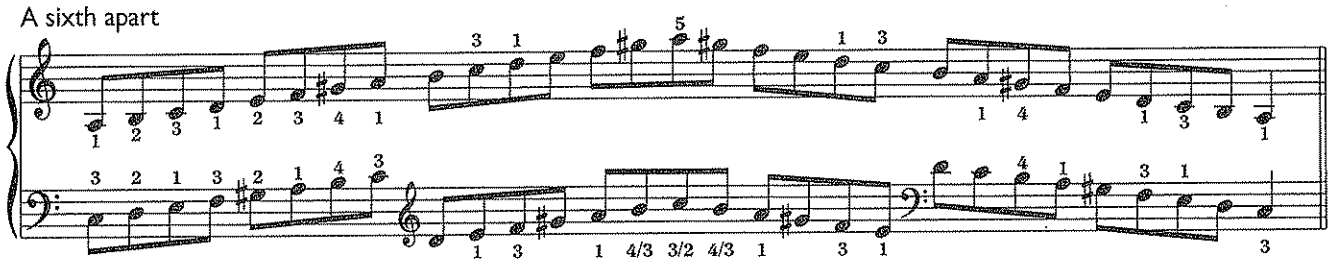
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

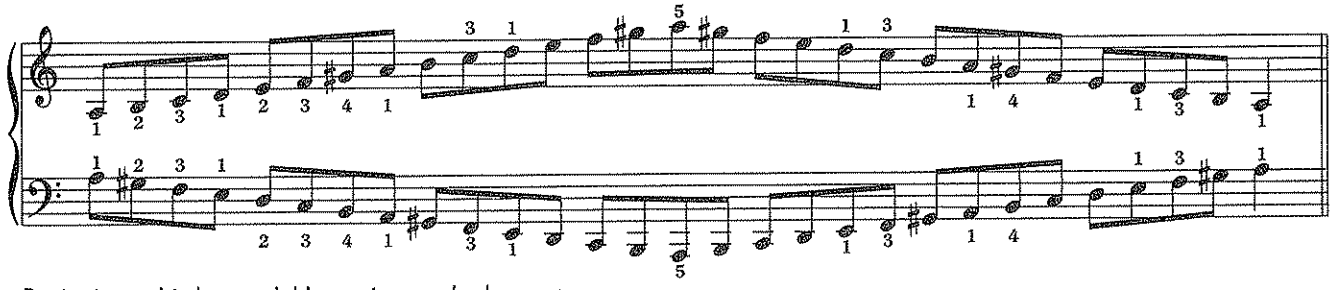


A sixth apart

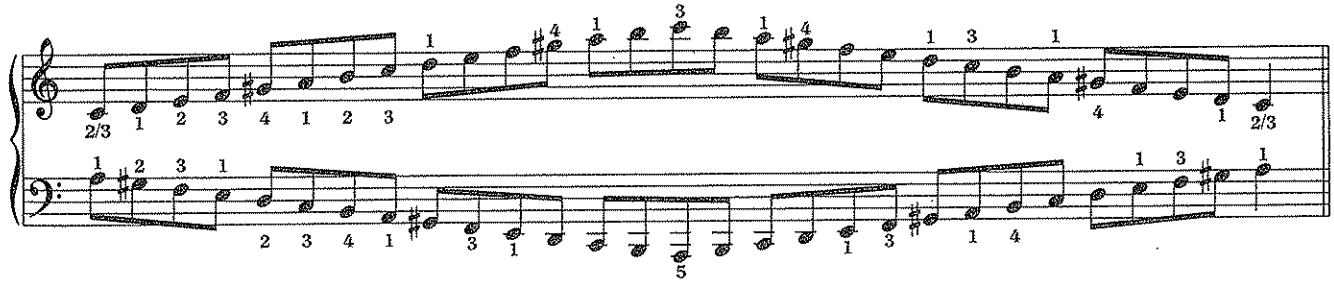


Contrary motion

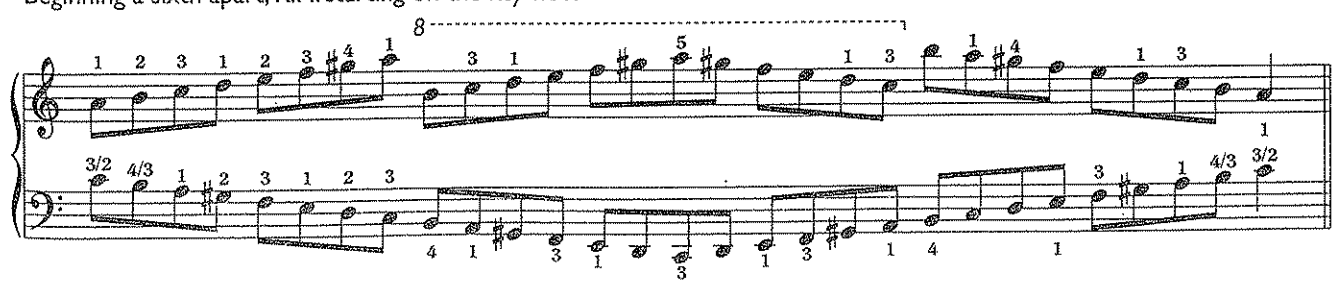
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

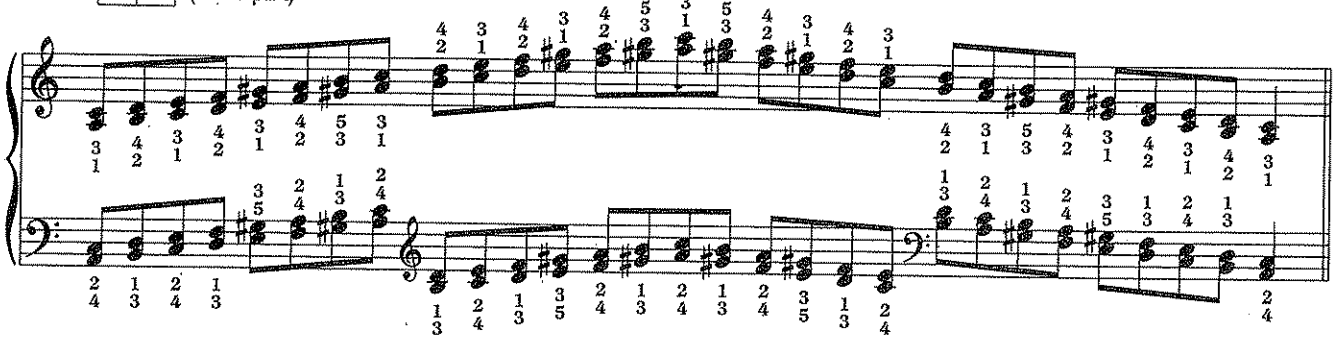


A

Double thirds

Standard fingering

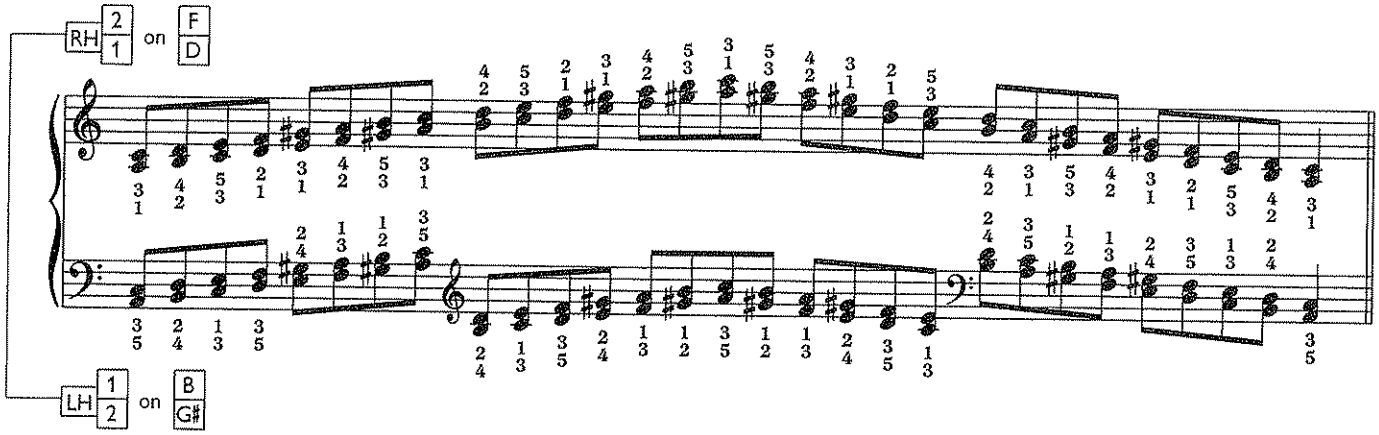
5 on RH B (upper part) / LH E (lower part)



Alternative fingering

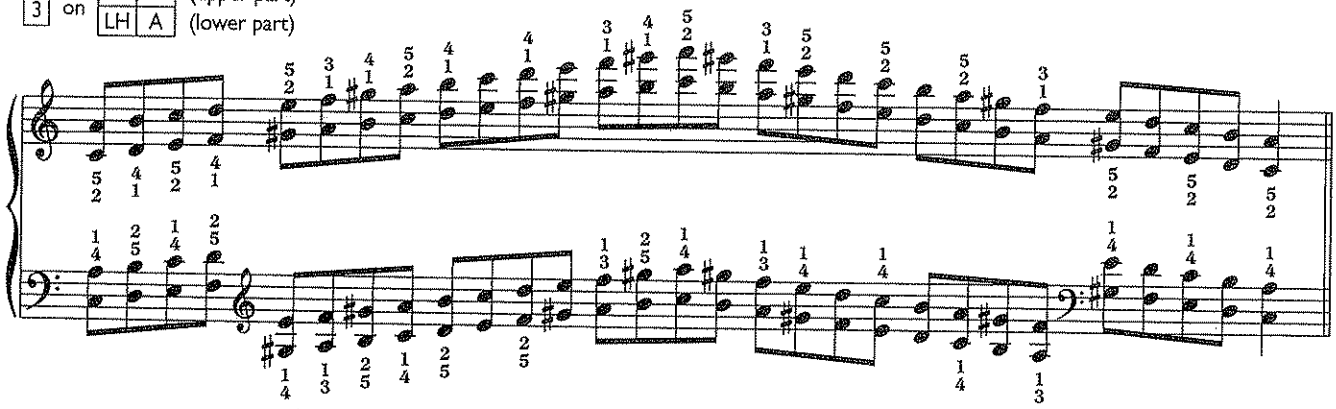
RH 2 / 1 on F / D

LH 1 / 2 on B / G♯

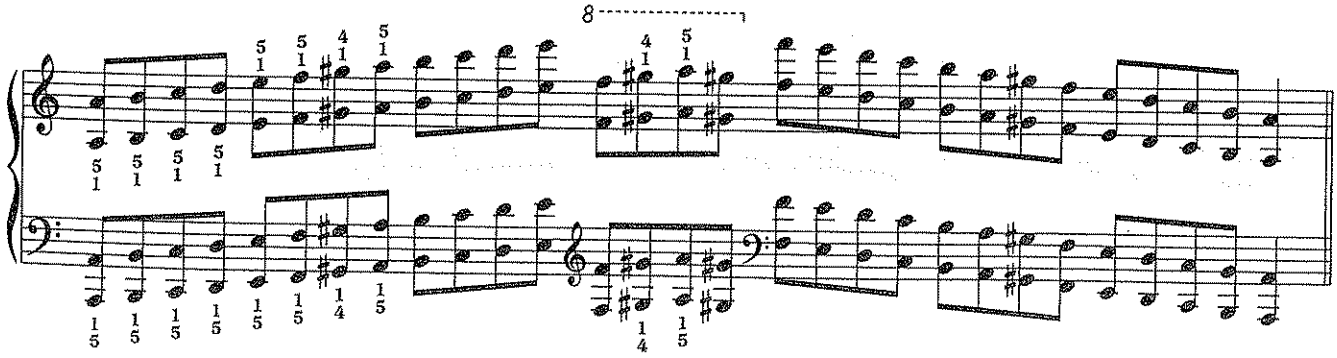


Double sixths

3 on RH F (upper part) / LH A (lower part)



Double octaves



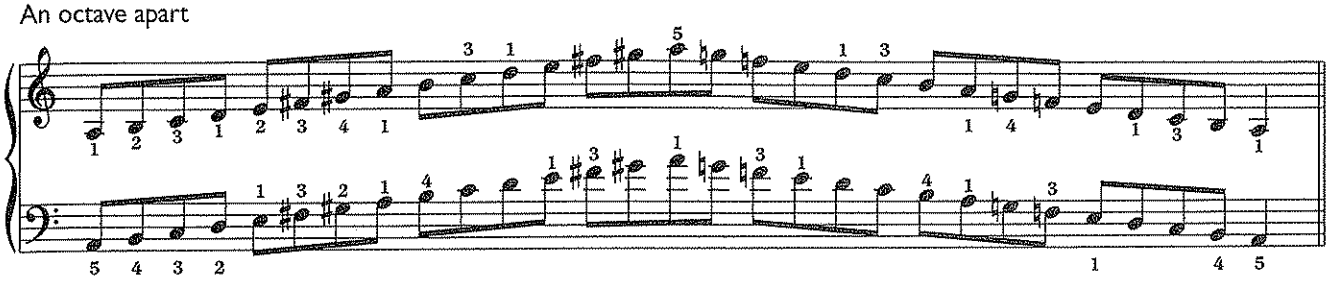
A

A melodic minor

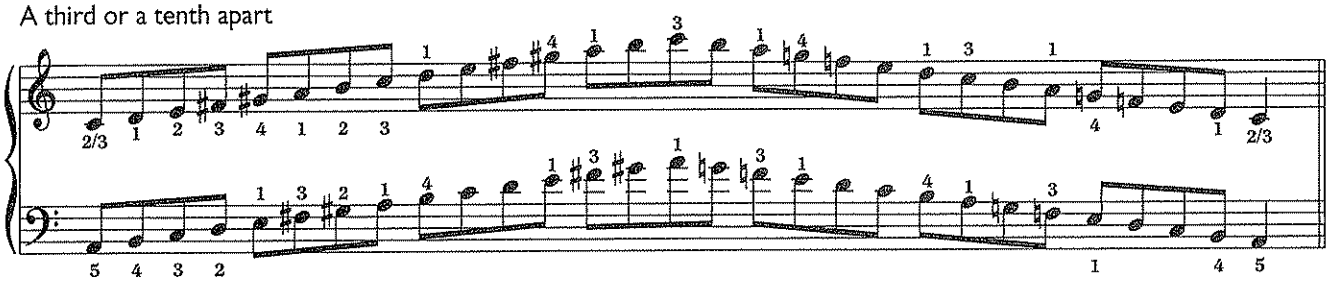
Similar motion

4 on | RH | G♯↑/G♯↓ |
LH | B |

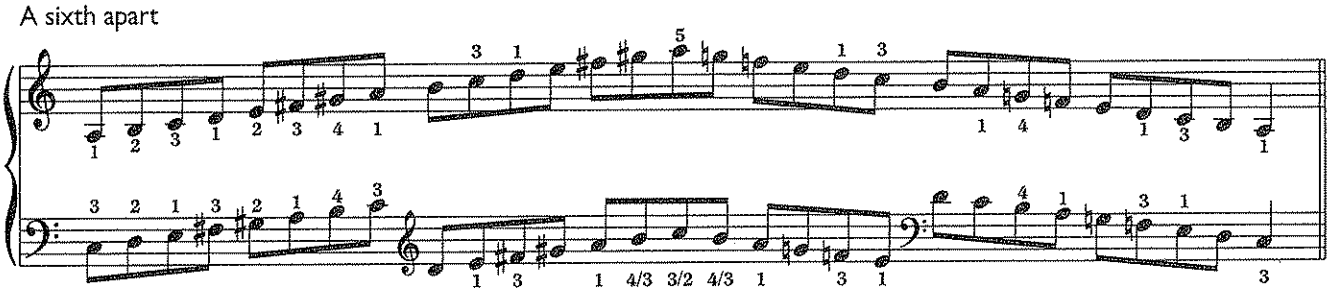
An octave apart



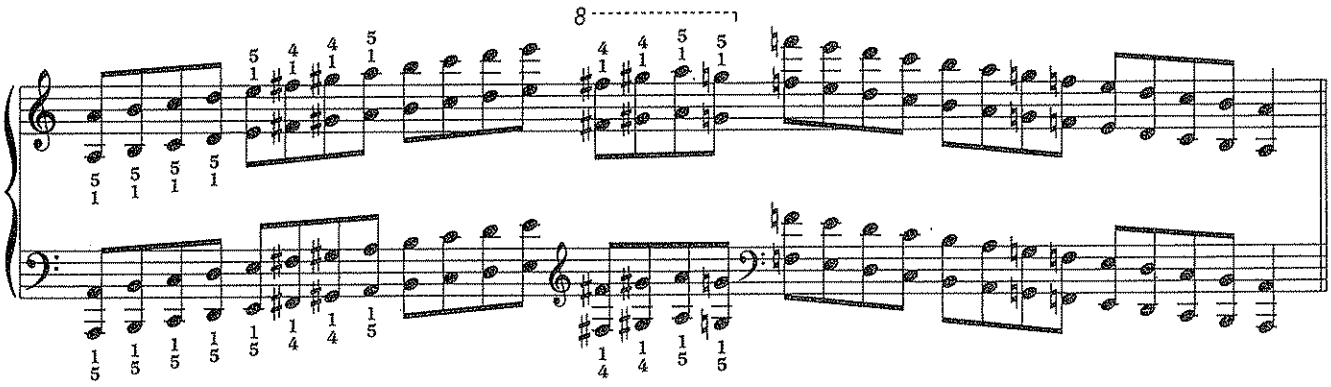
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves

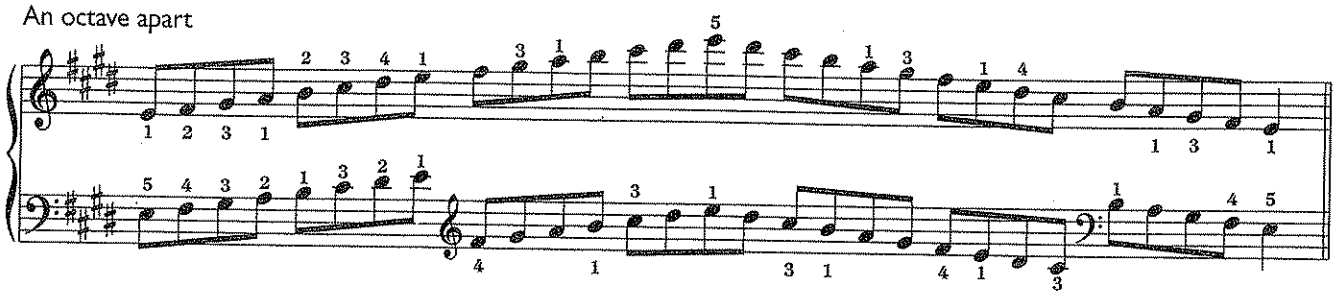


4 on RH D# LH F#

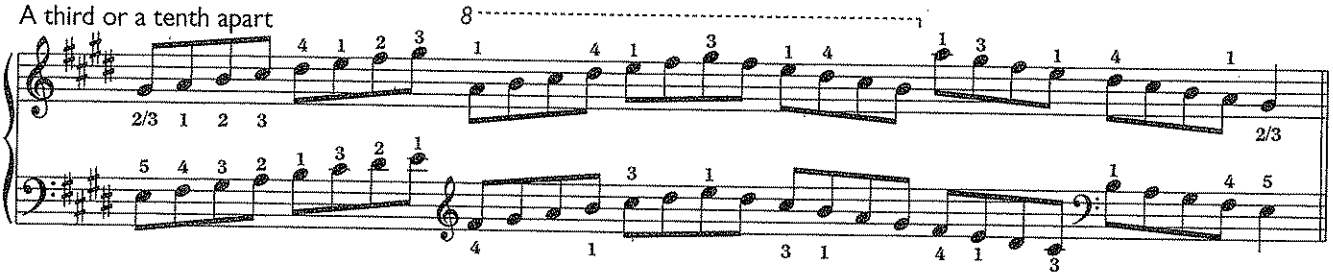
E major

Similar motion

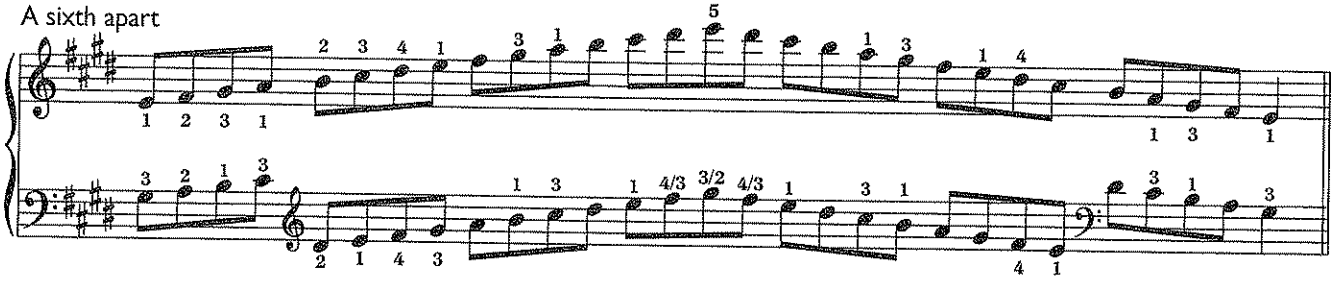
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

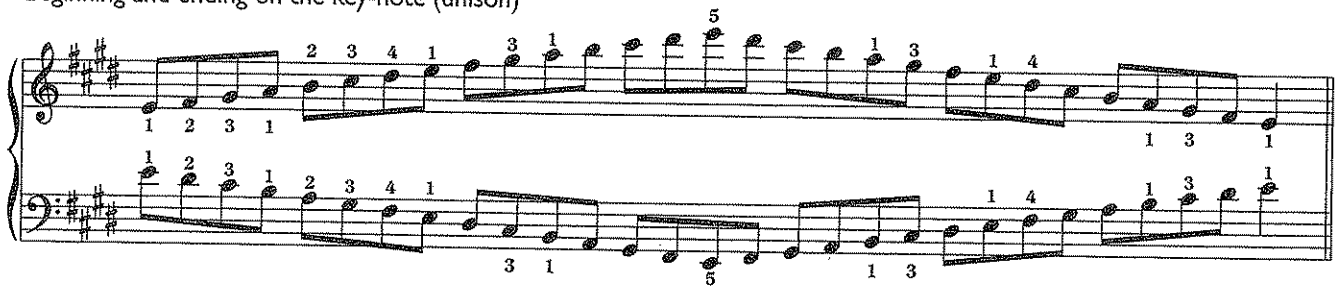


A sixth apart

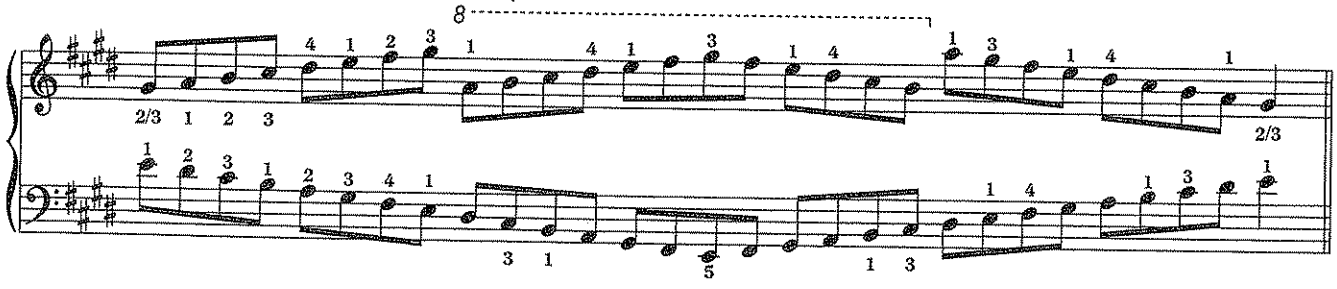


Contrary motion

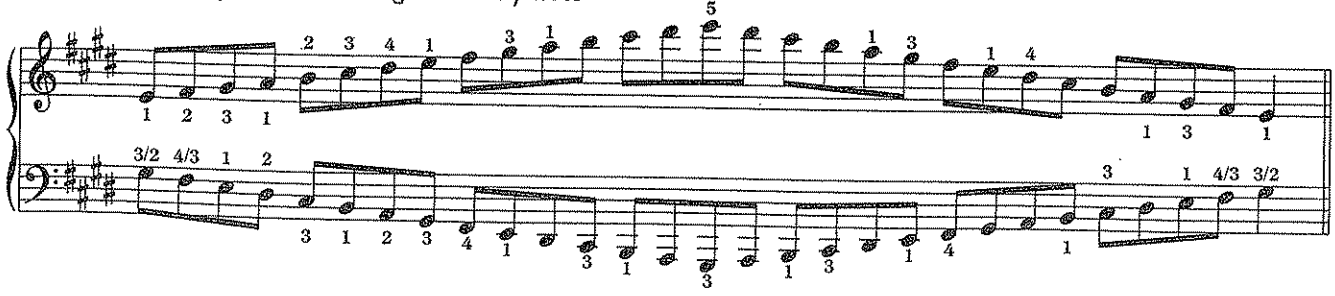
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



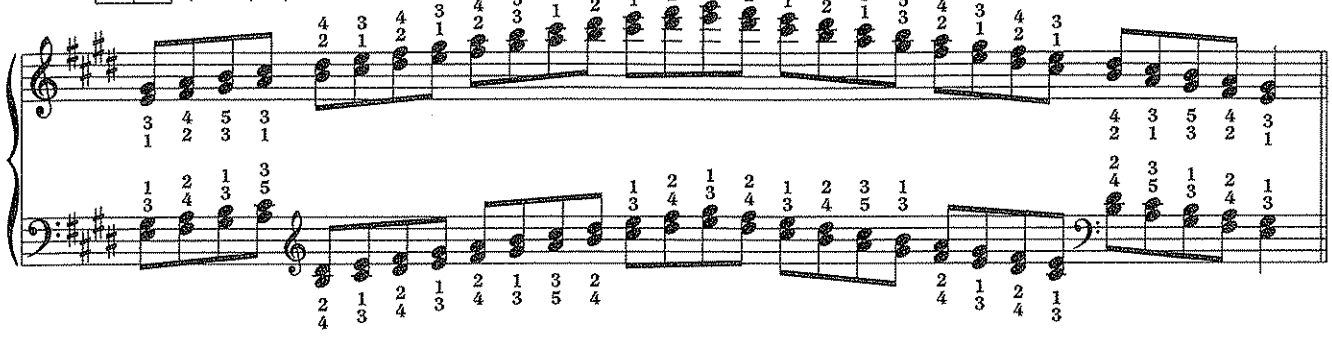
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

Standard fingering

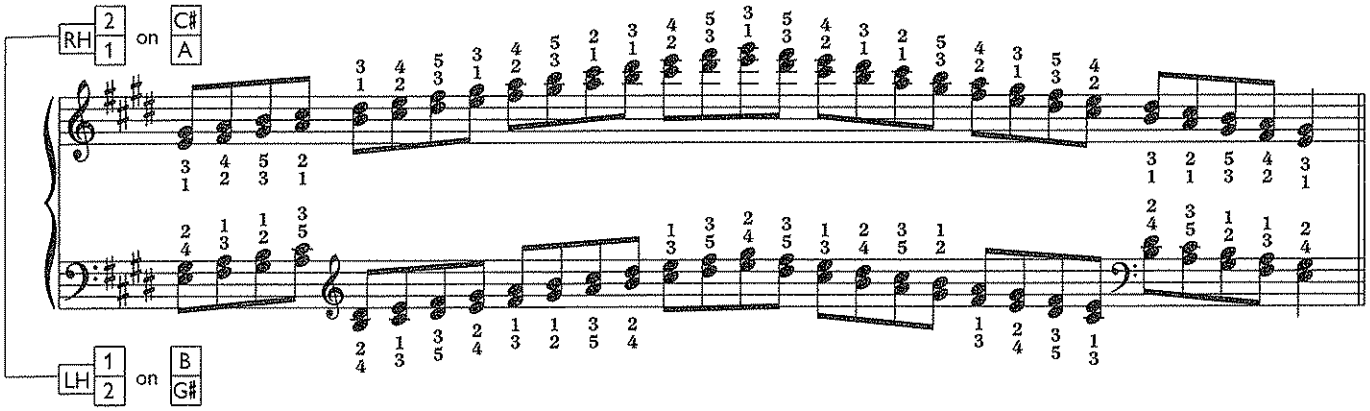
5 on RH B (upper part) / LH A (lower part)



Alternative fingering

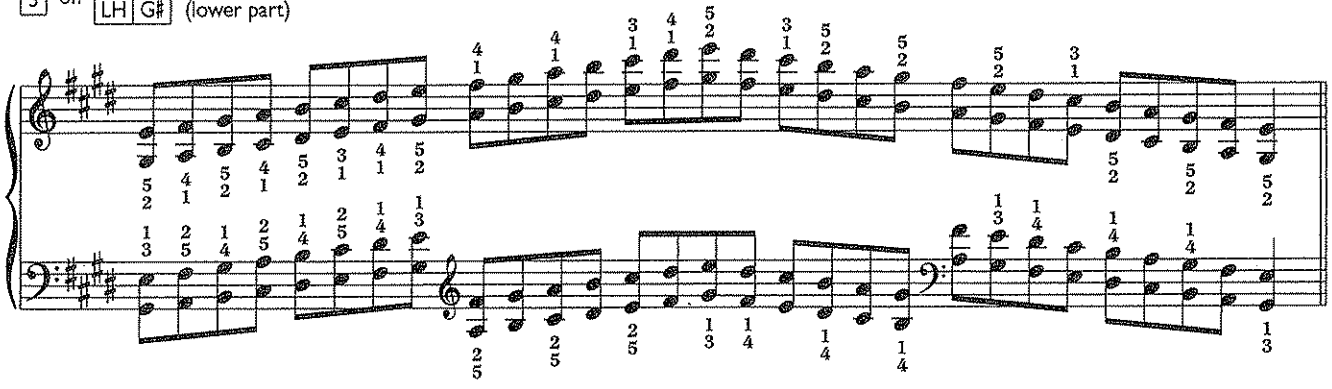
RH 2/1 on C♯/A

LH 1/2 on B/G♯

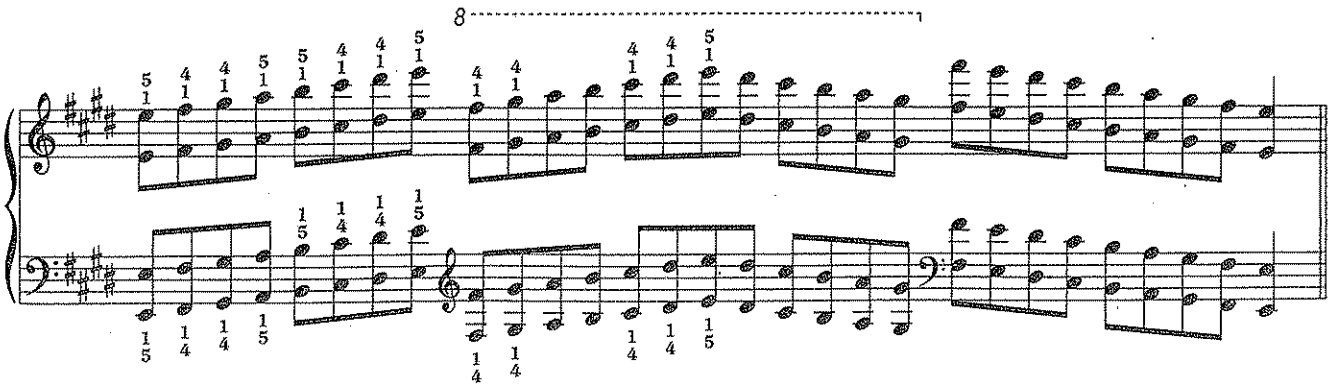


Double sixths

3 on RH C♯ (upper part) / LH G♯ (lower part)



Double octaves

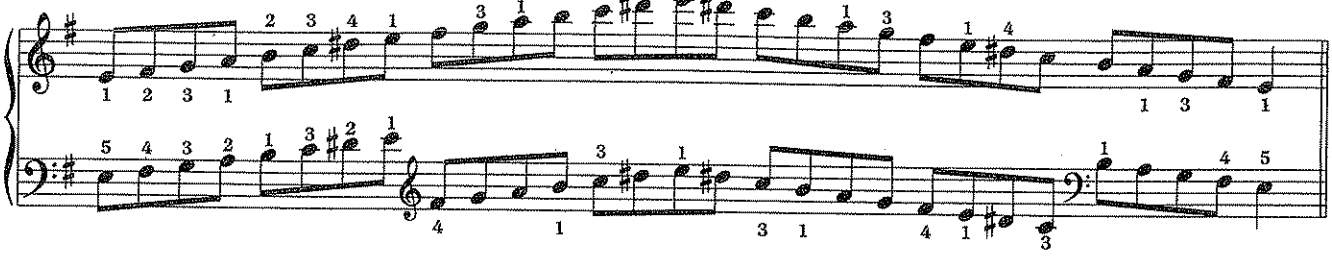


4 on RH D♯ / LH F♯

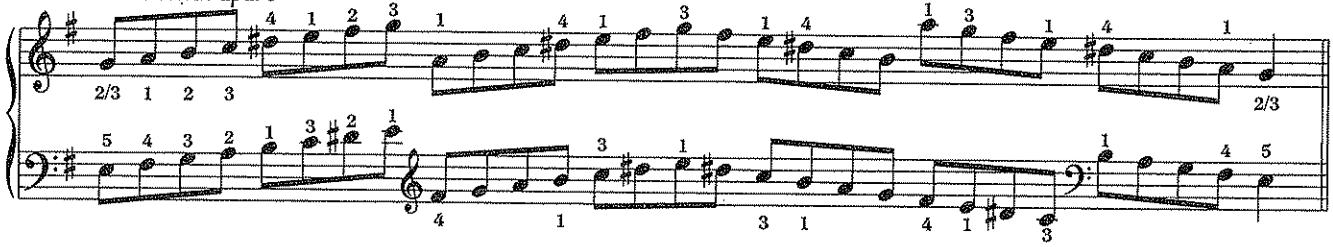
E harmonic minor

Similar motion

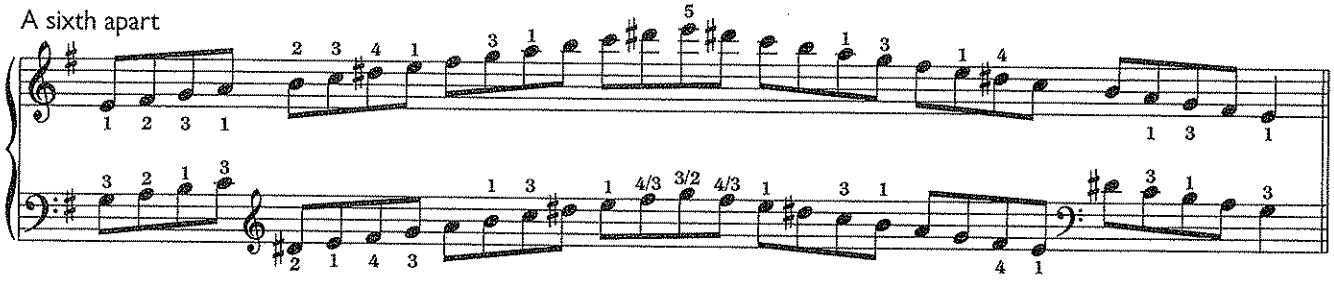
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

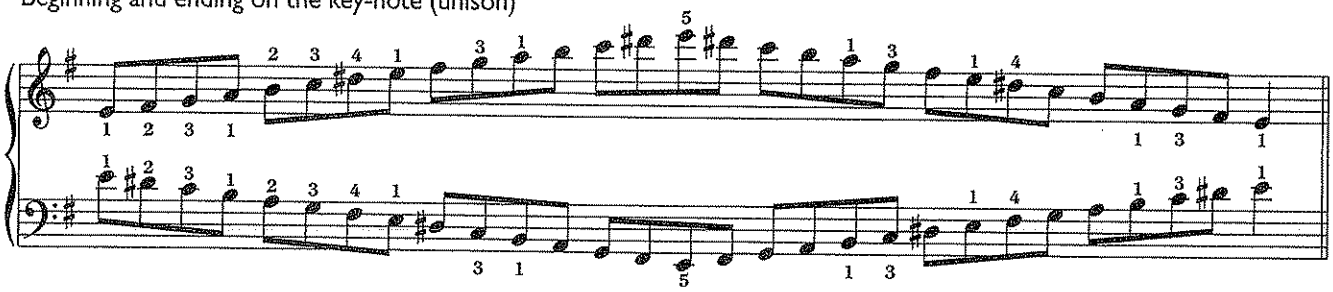


A sixth apart

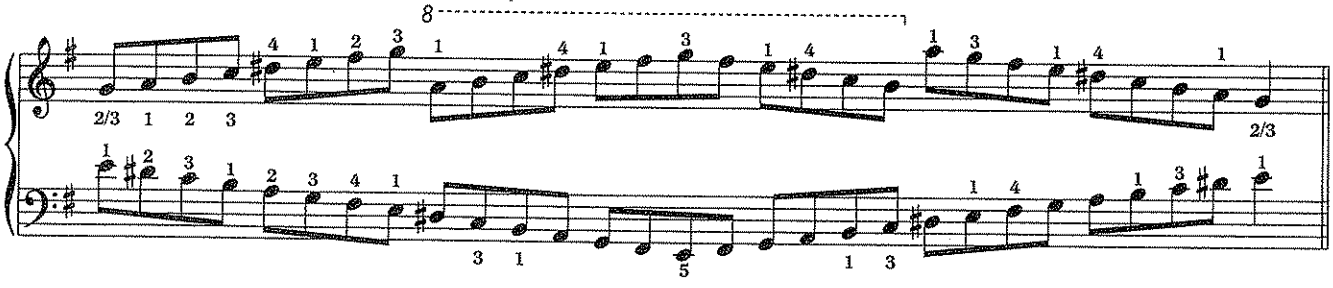


Contrary motion

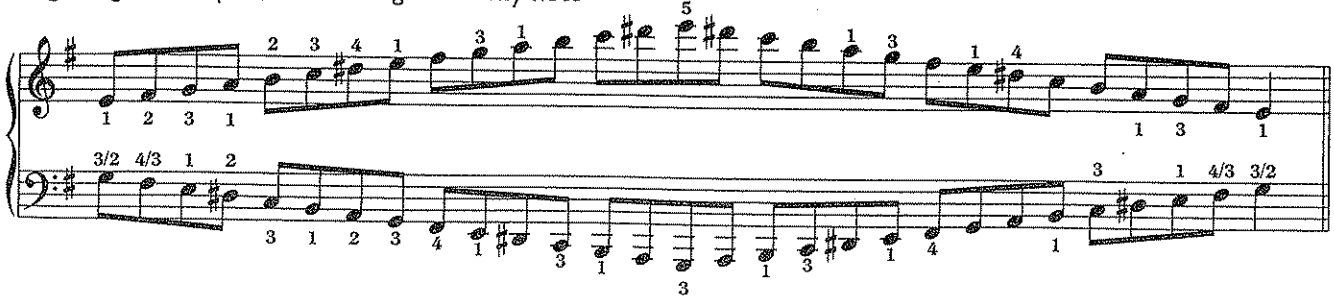
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



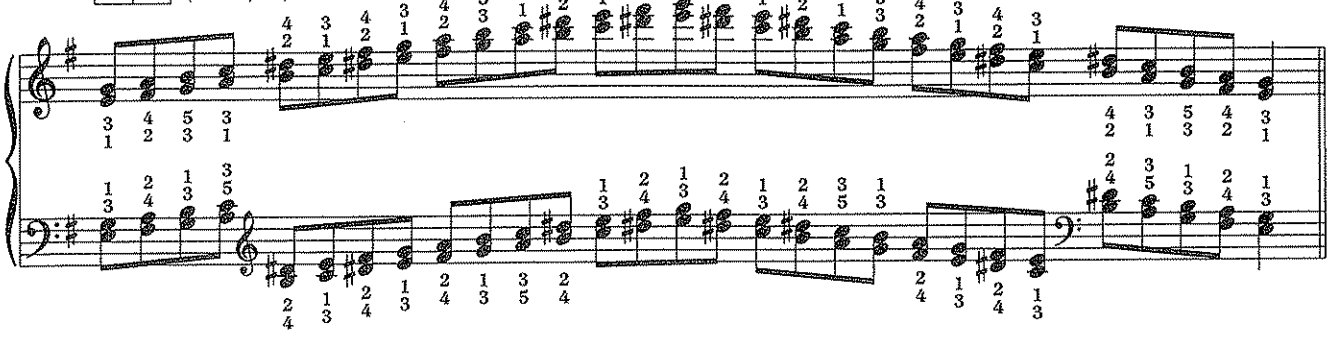
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

Standard fingering

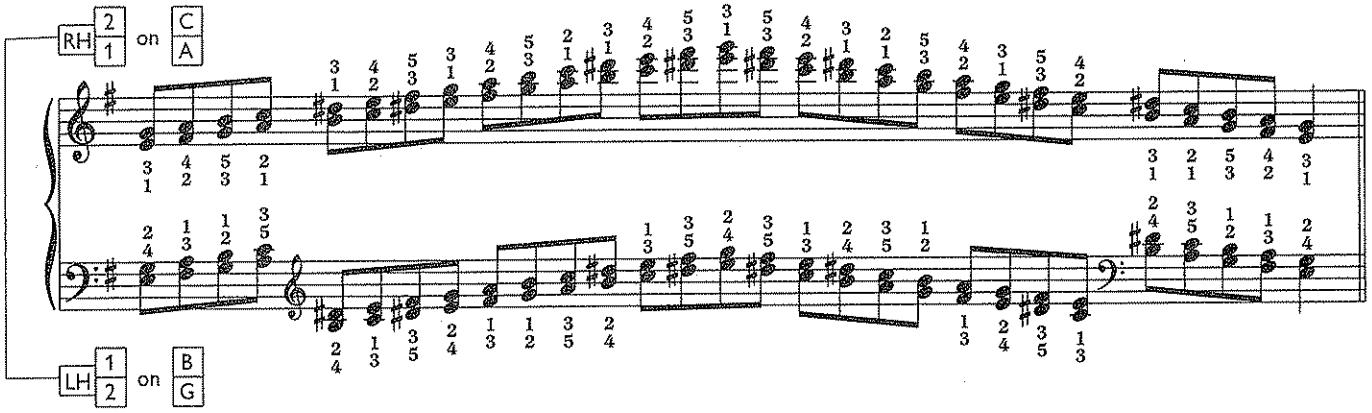
5 on RH B (upper part) / LH A (lower part)



Alternative fingering

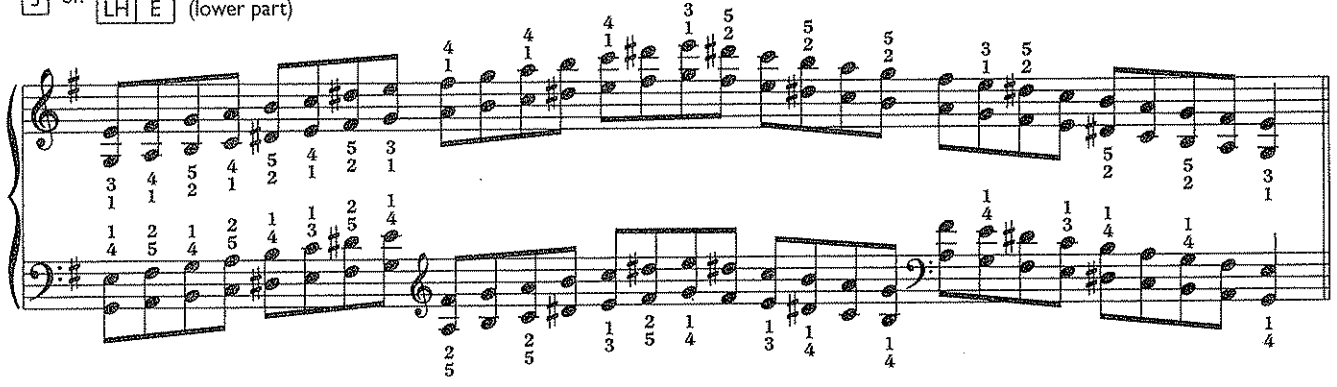
RH 2 1 on C A

LH 1 2 on B G

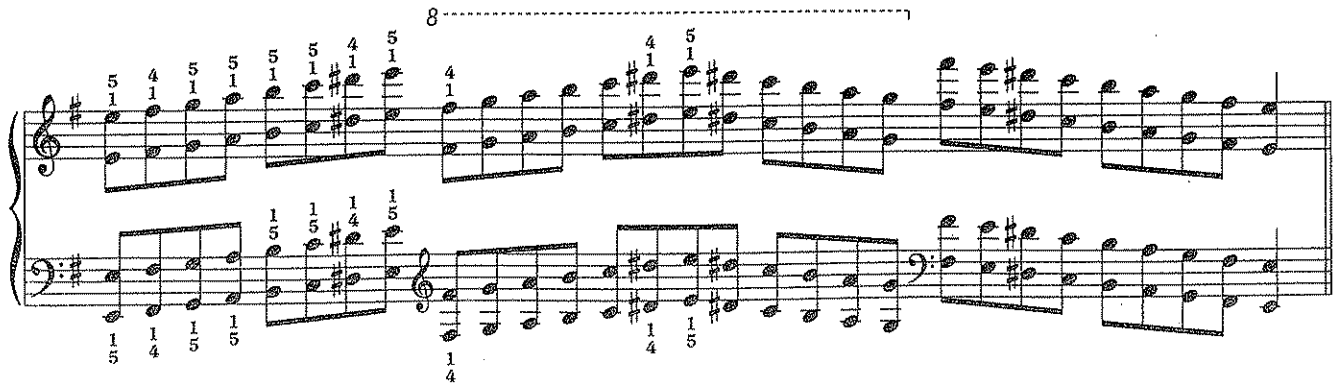


Double sixths

3 on RH E (upper part) / LH E (lower part)



Double octaves

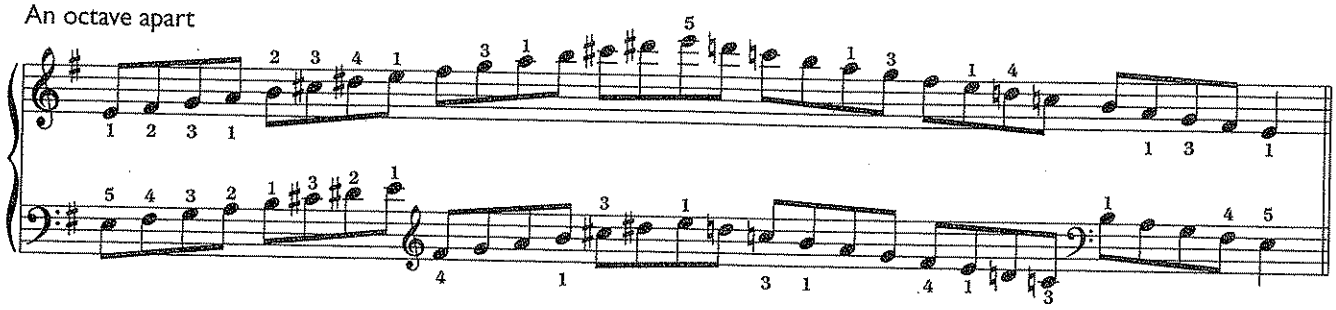


E melodic minor

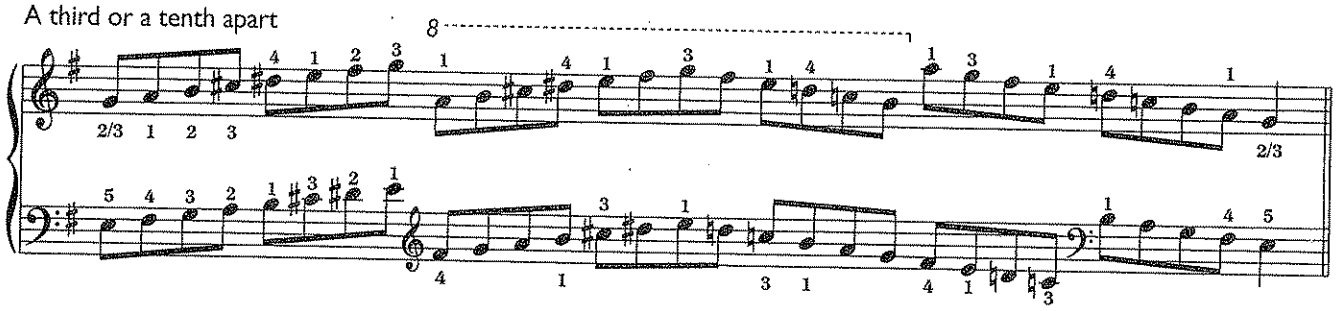
Similar motion

4 on | RH | D♯↑/D♮↓ |
LH | F♯ |

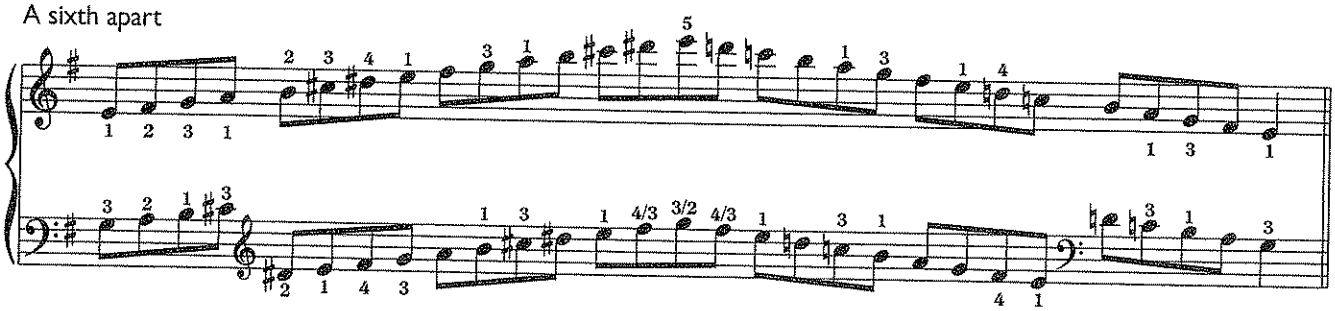
An octave apart



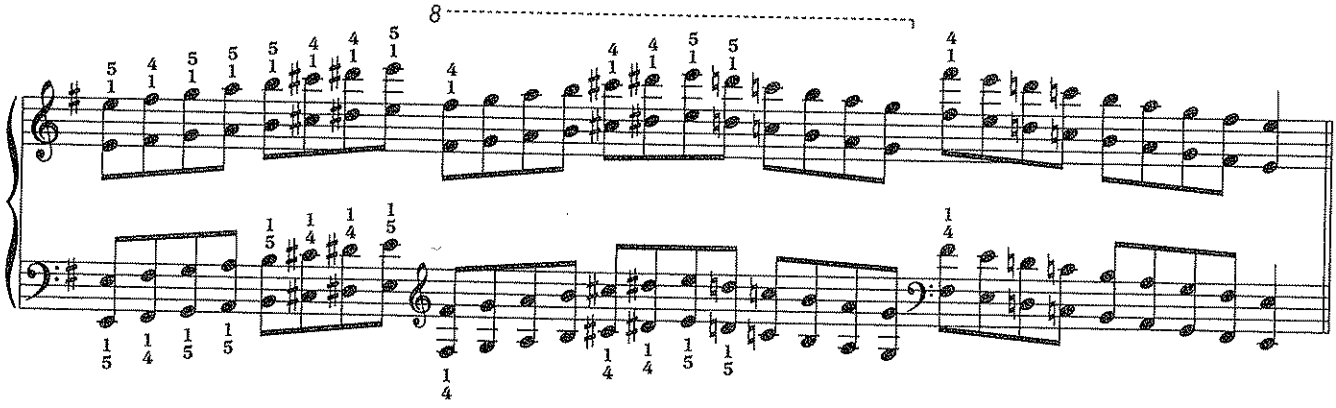
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves

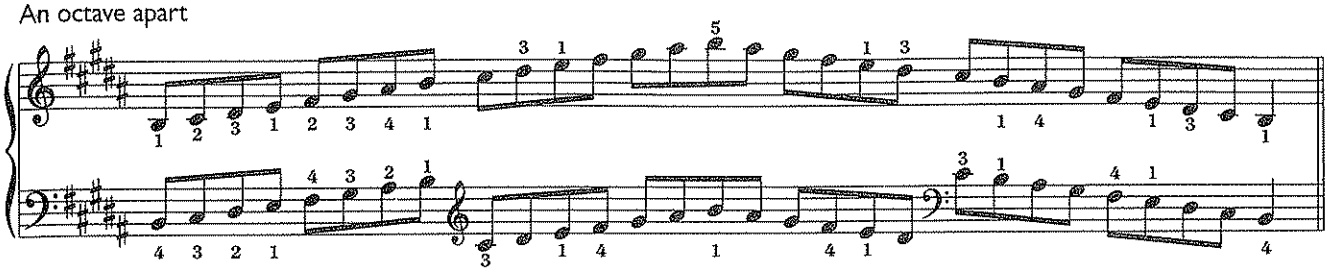


4 on RH A♯ / LH F♯ and on the first note

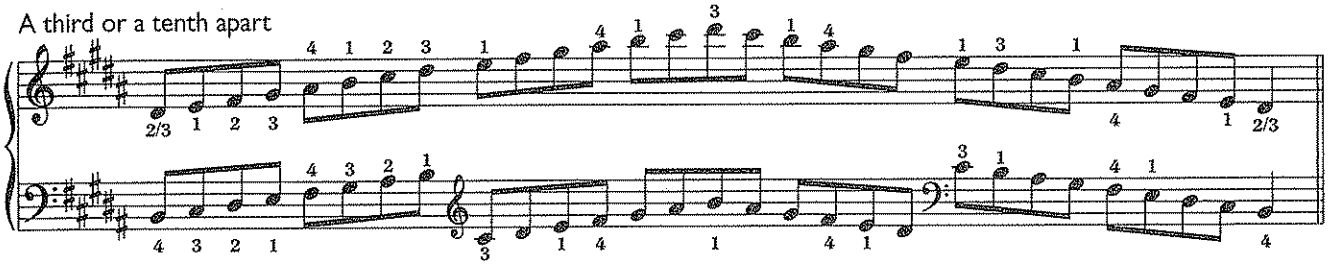
B major

Similar motion

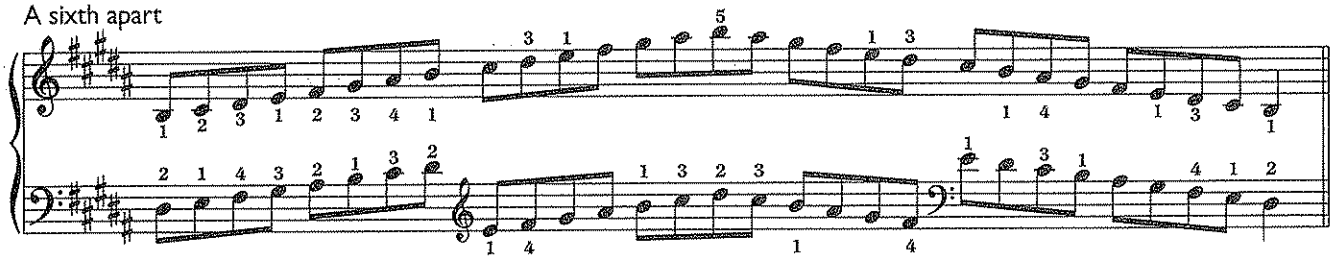
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

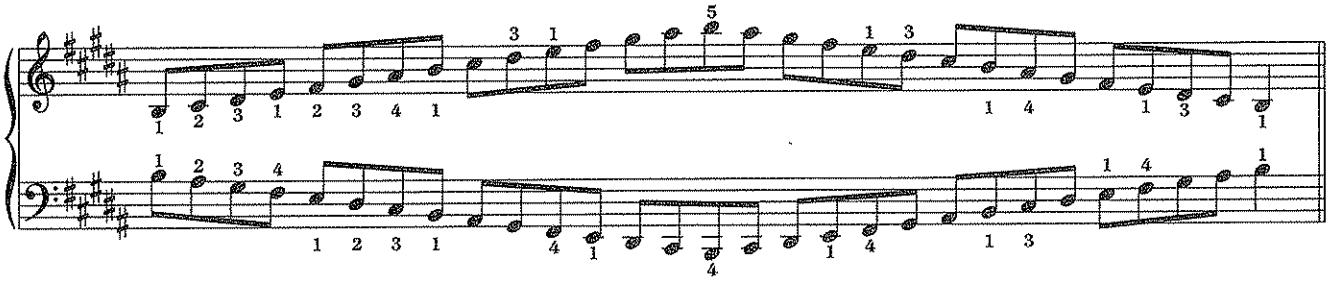


A sixth apart

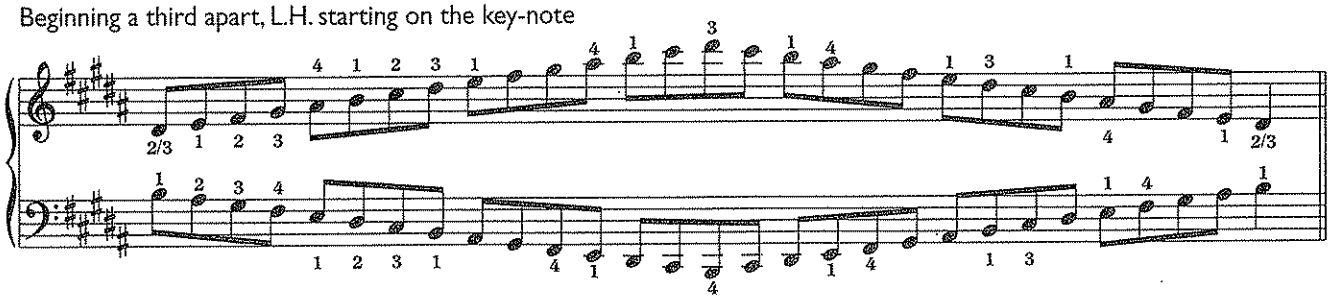


Contrary motion

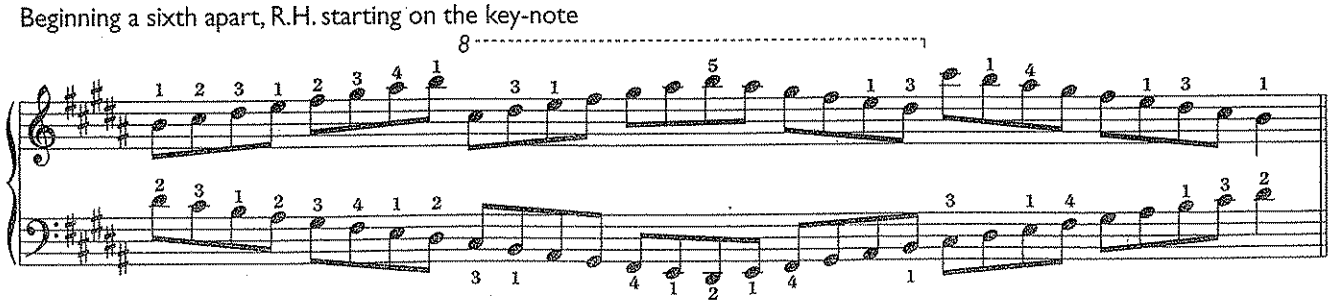
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note

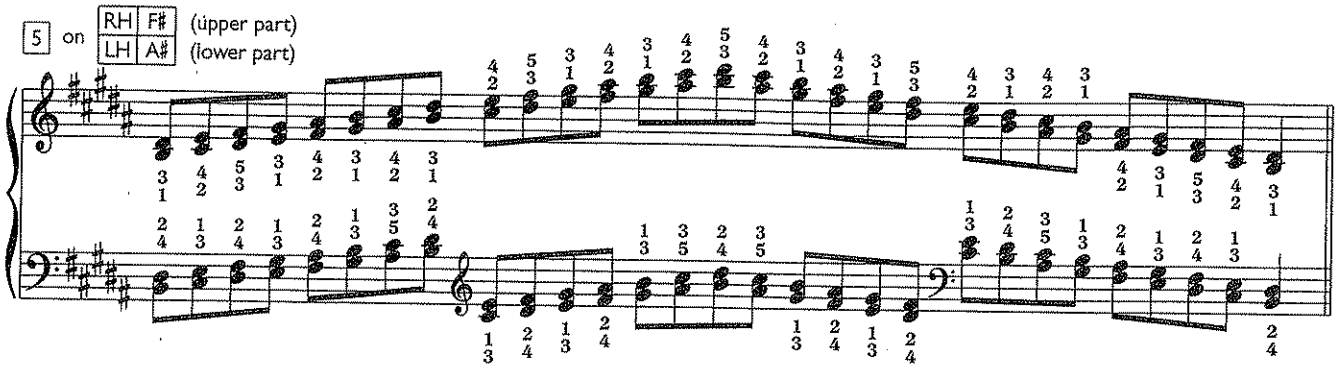


Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

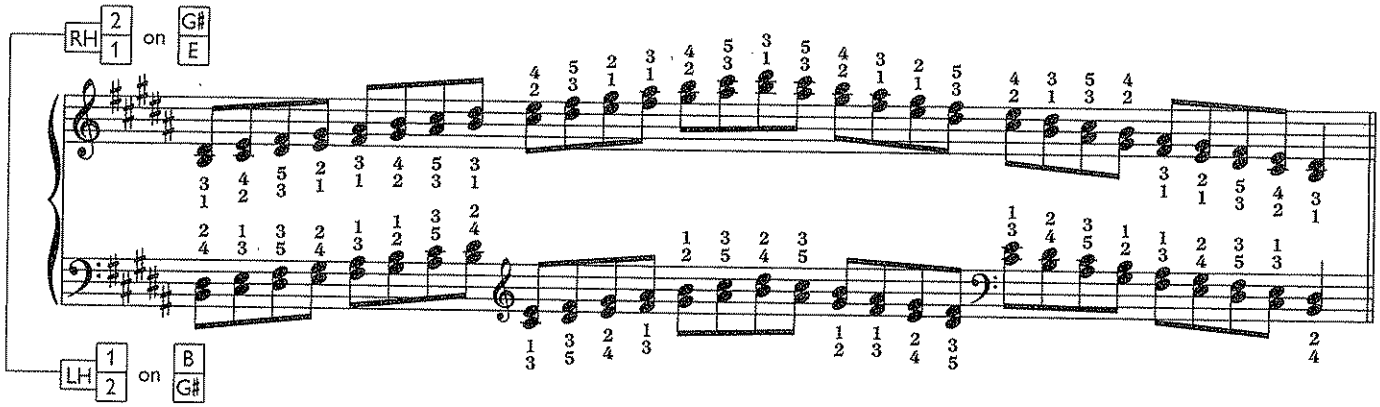


Double thirds

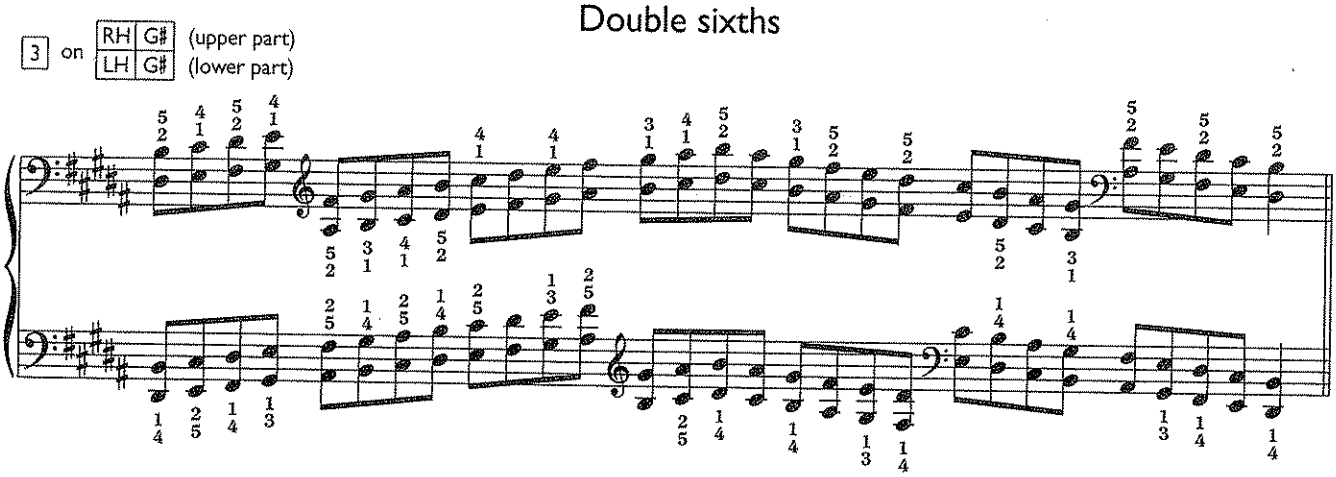
Standard fingering



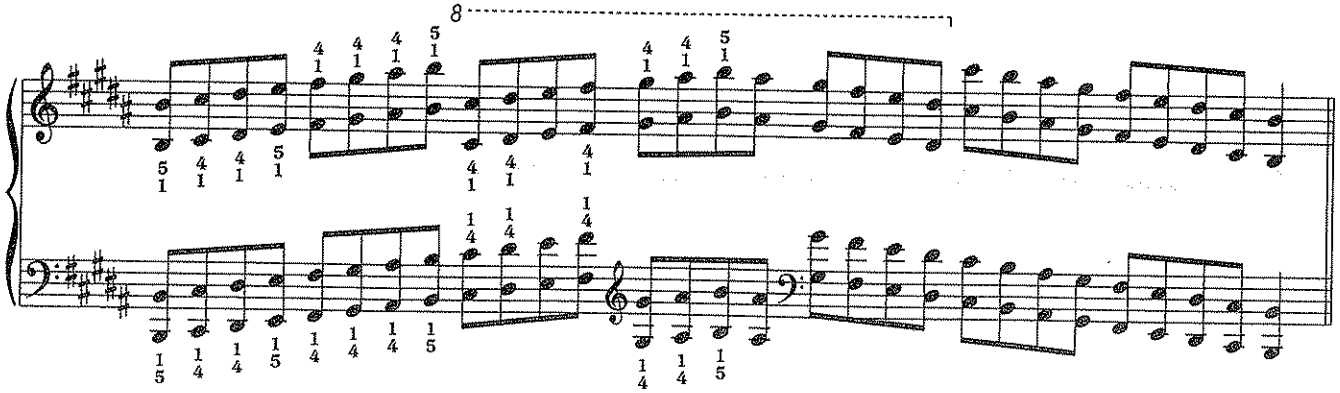
Alternative fingering



Double sixths



Double octaves

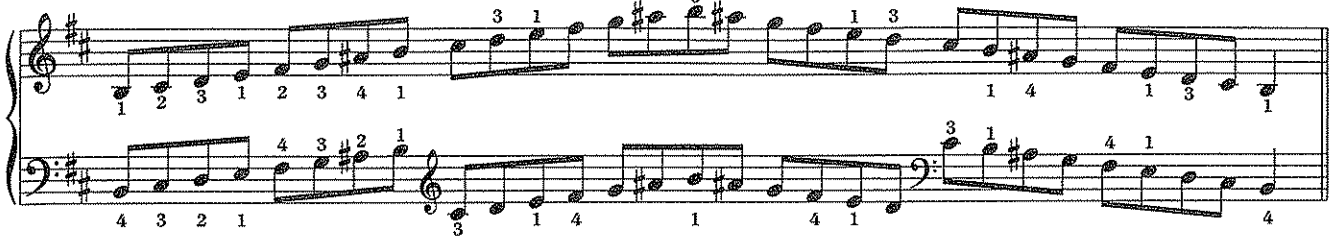


B harmonic minor

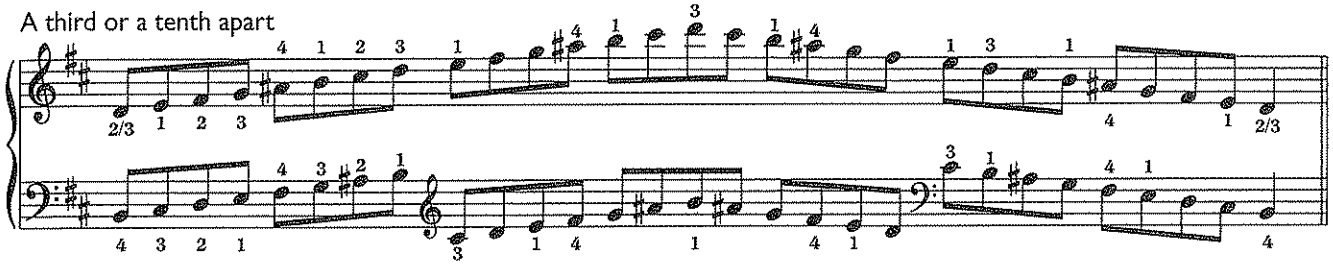
4 on RH A# / LH F# and on the first note

Similar motion

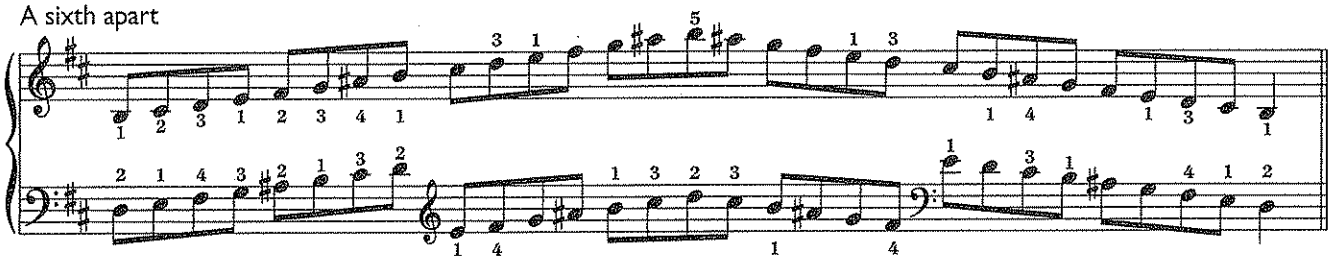
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart



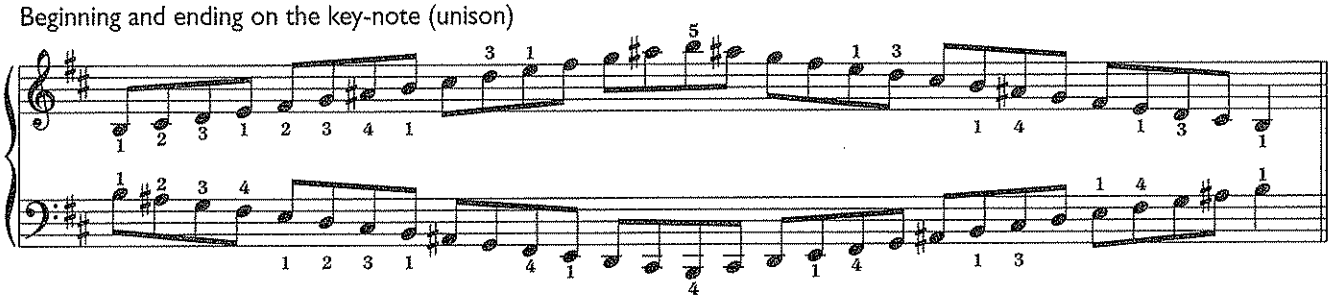
A sixth apart



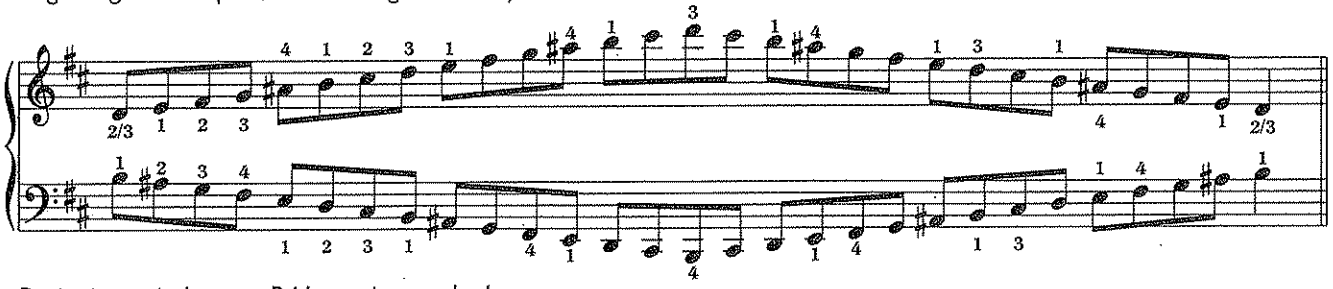
4 on RH A# / LH F# and on the lowest note

Contrary motion

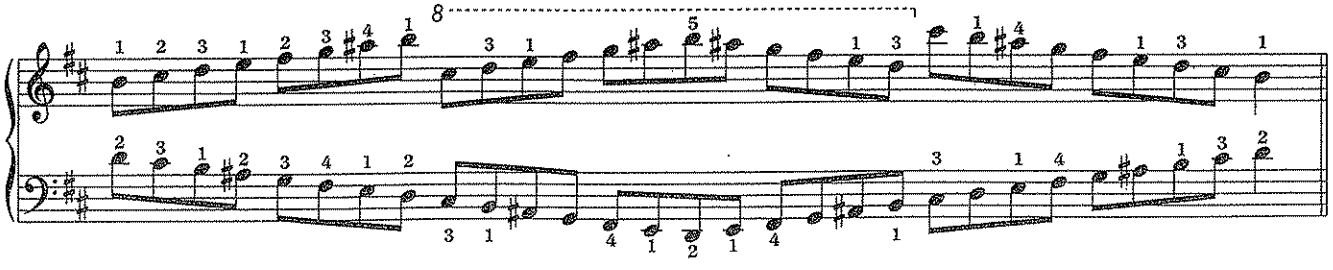
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

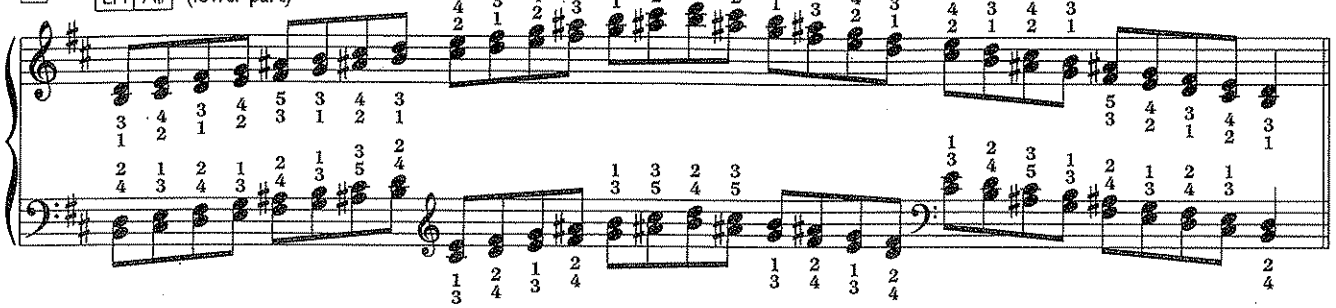


B

Double thirds

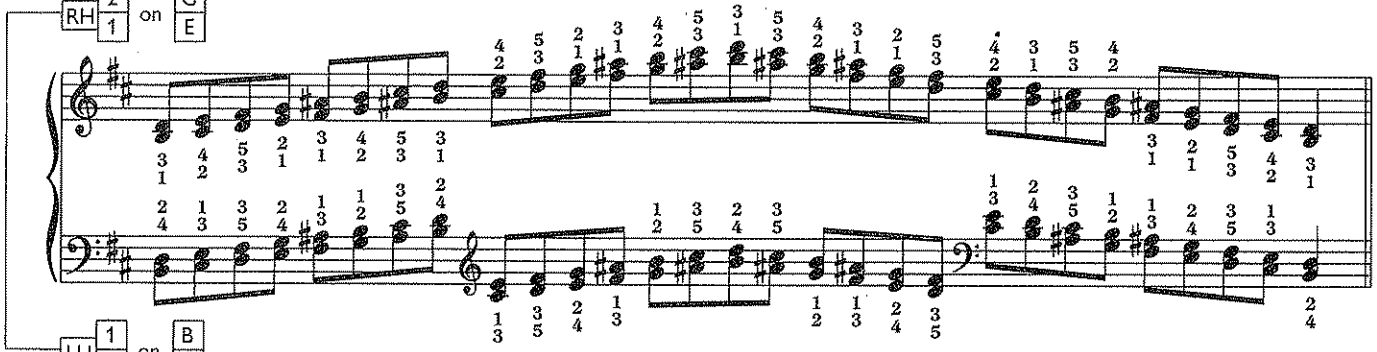
Standard fingering

5 on RH A♯ (upper part)
LH A♯ (lower part)



Alternative fingering

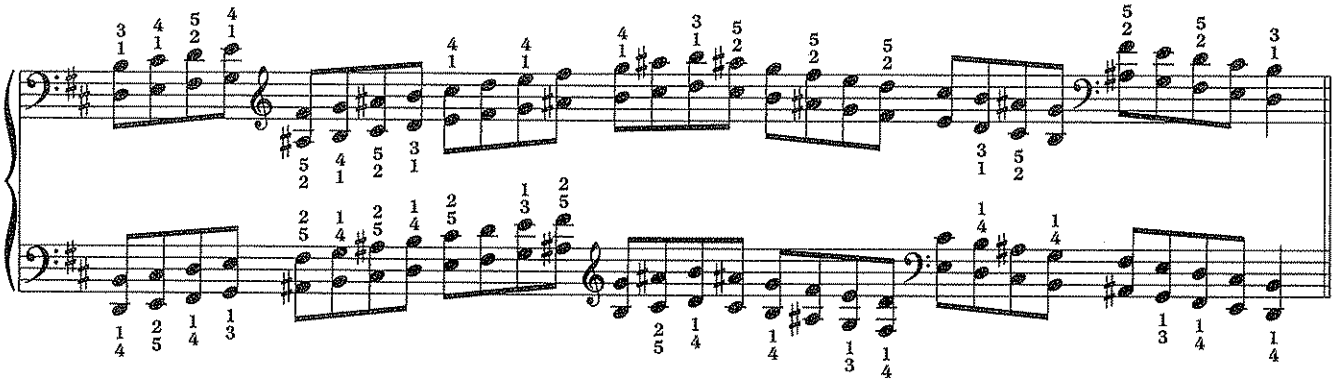
RH 2 1 on G E



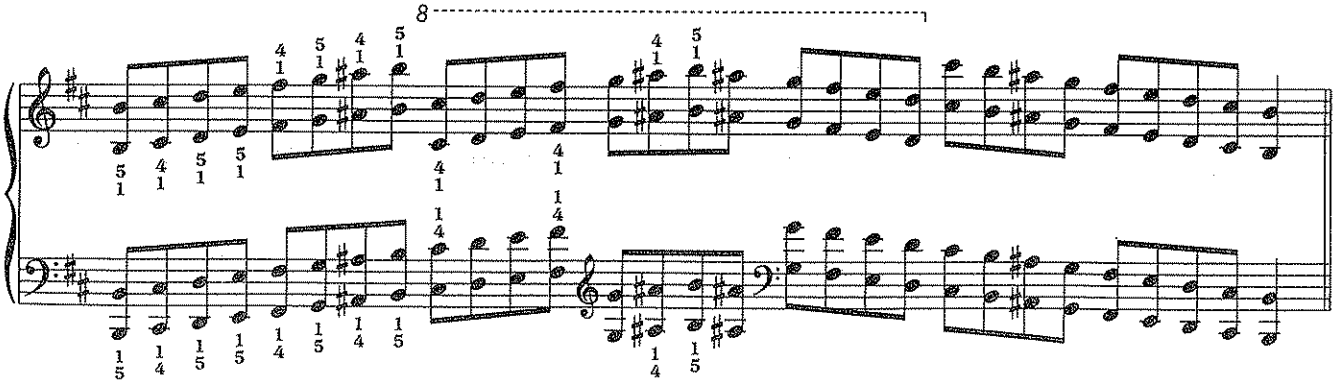
LH 1 2 on B G

Double sixths

3 on RH B (upper part)
LH G (lower part)



Double octaves

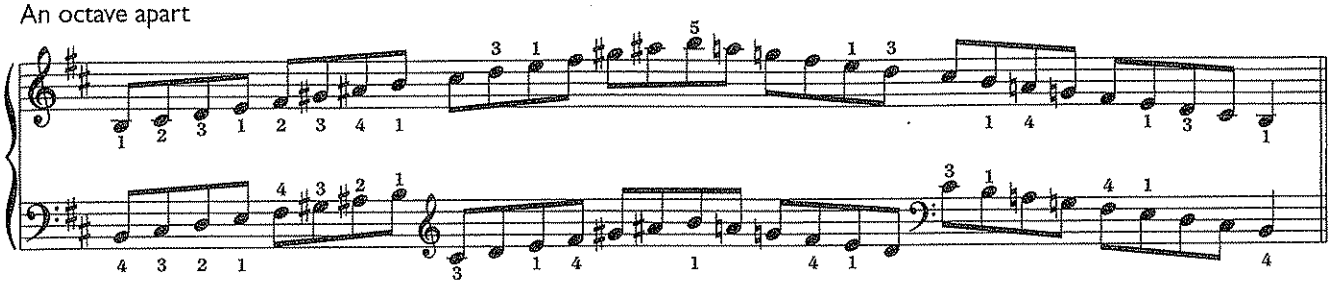


B melodic minor

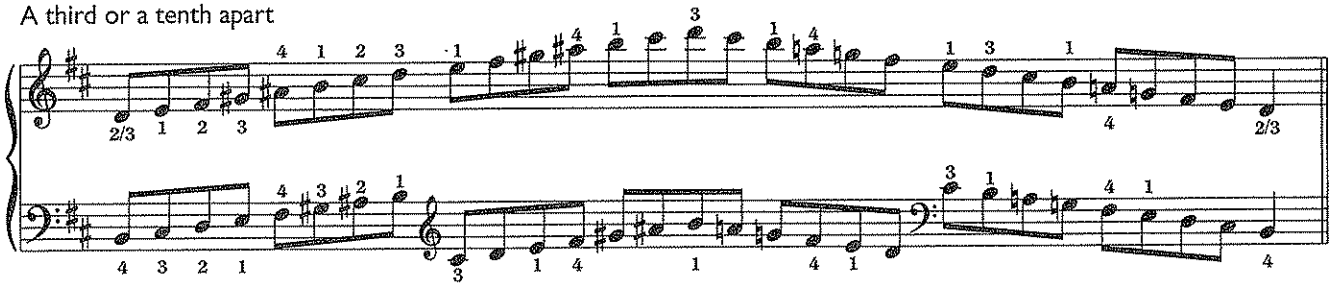
Similar motion

4 on RH A♯↑/A♮↓ LH F♯ and on the first note

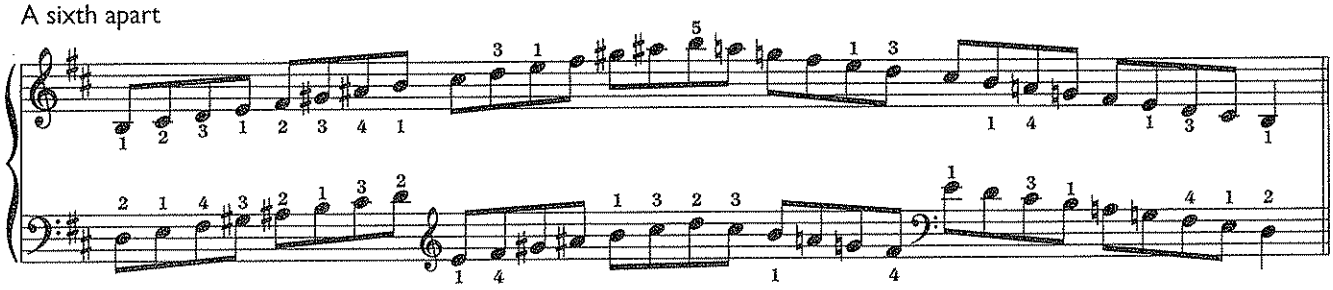
An octave apart



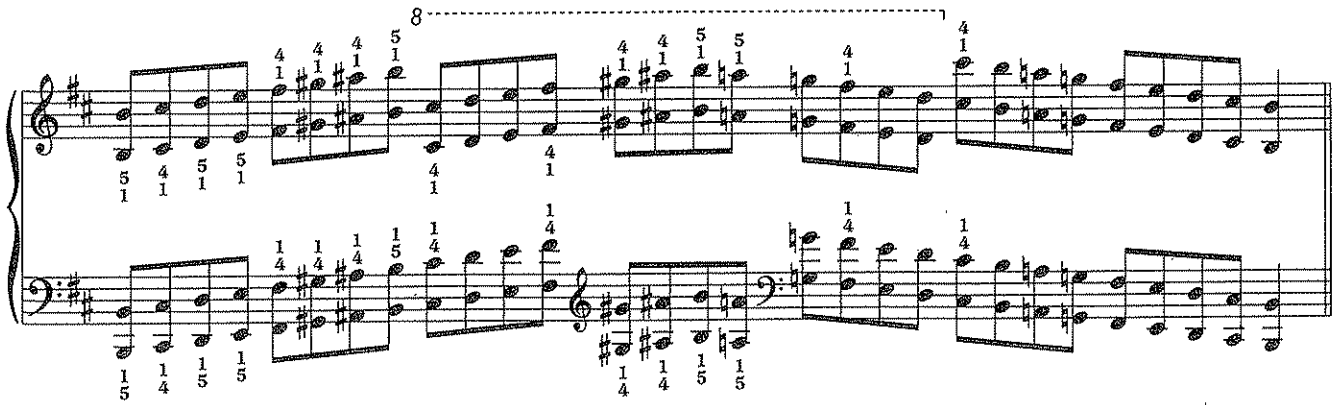
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves

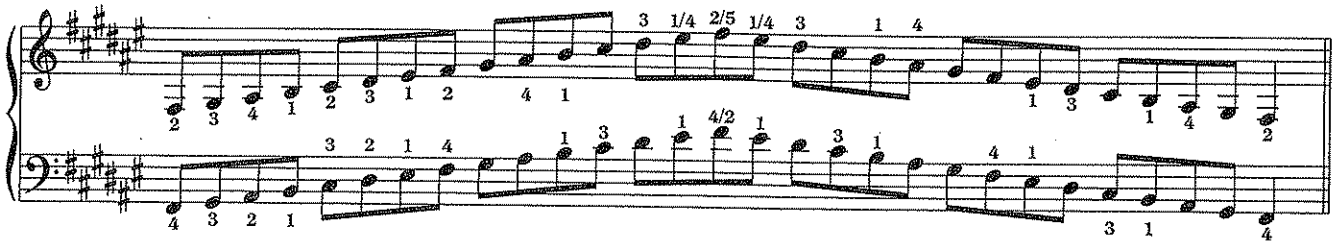


4 on RH A♯ LH F♯

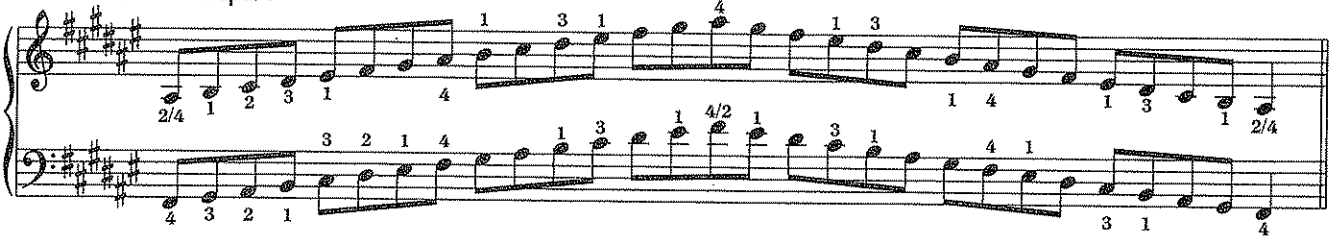
F♯ major enharmonic G♭

Similar motion

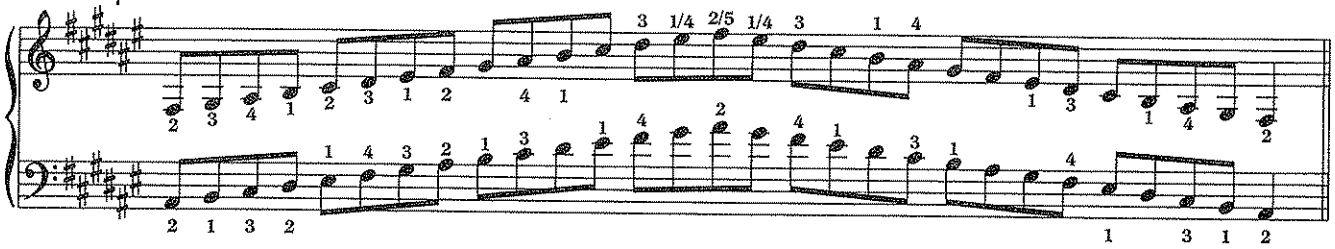
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

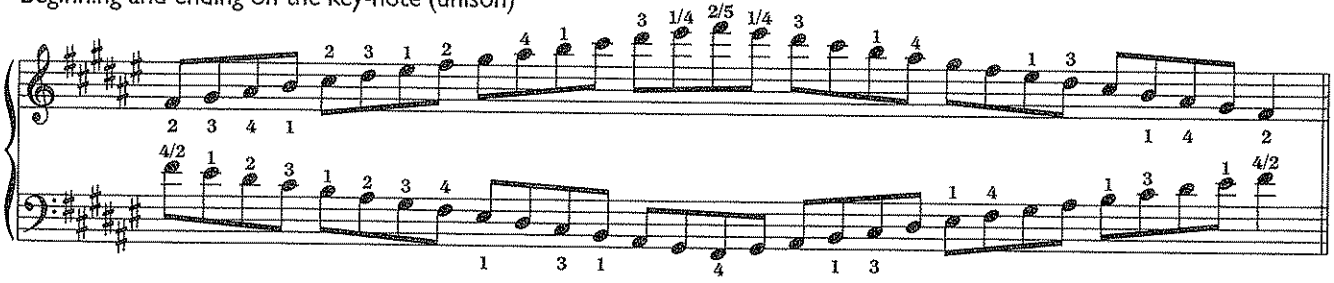


A sixth apart

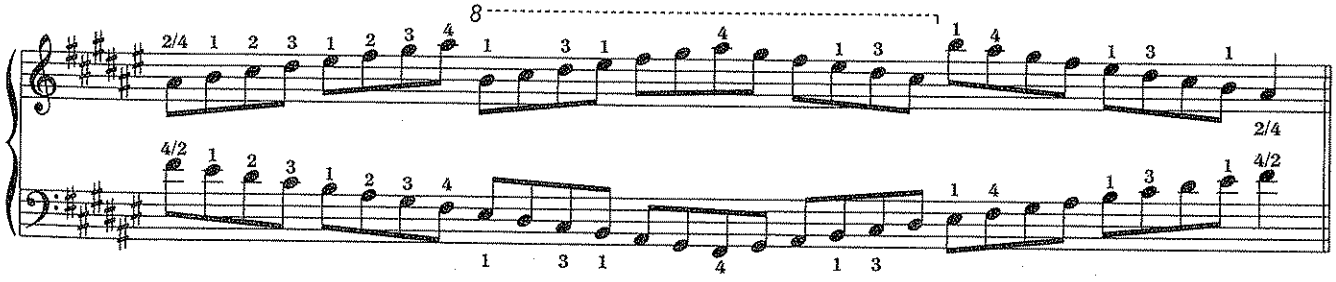


Contrary motion

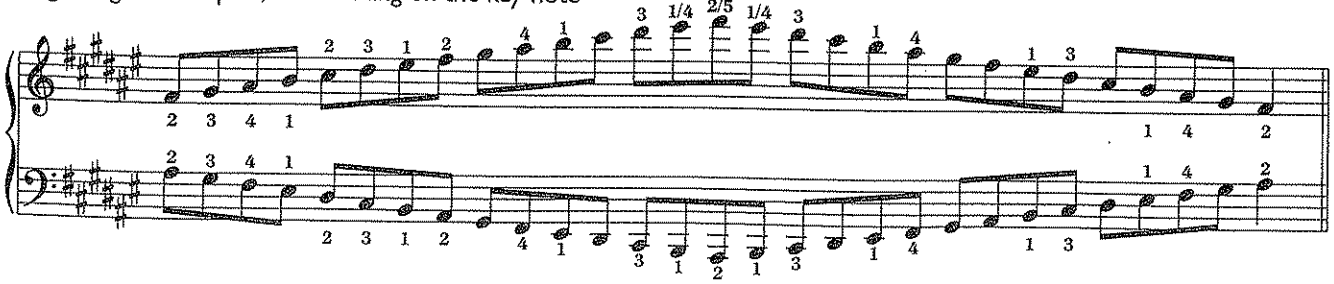
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

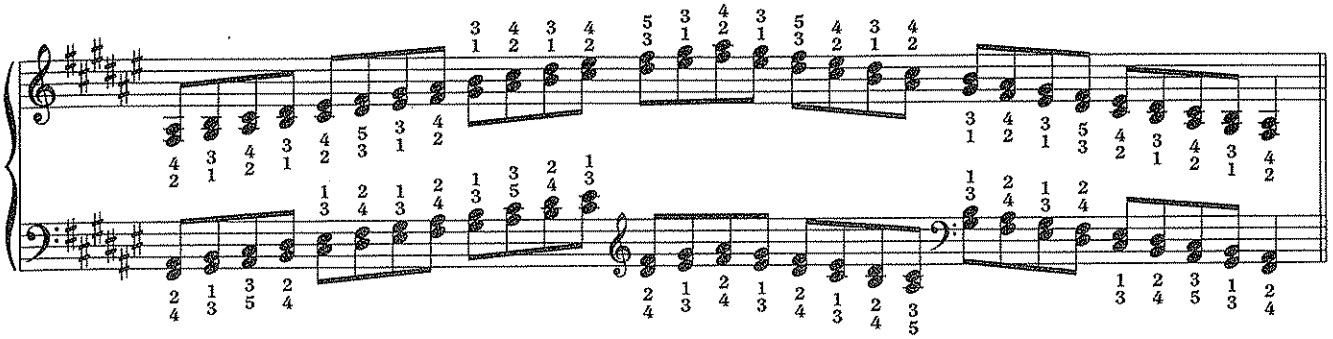


F♯

Double thirds

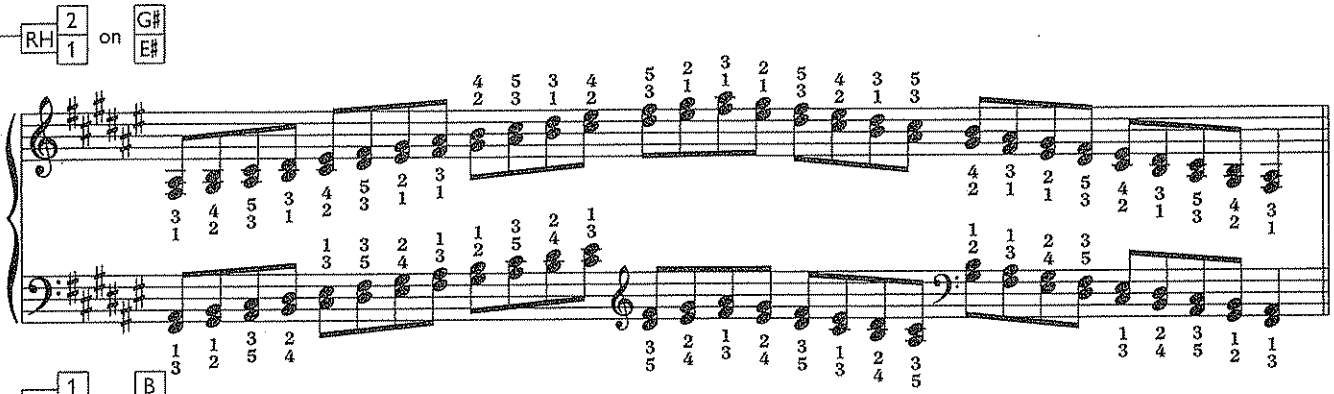
Standard fingering

5 on RH F♯ / LH A♯ (upper part) (lower part)



Alternative fingering

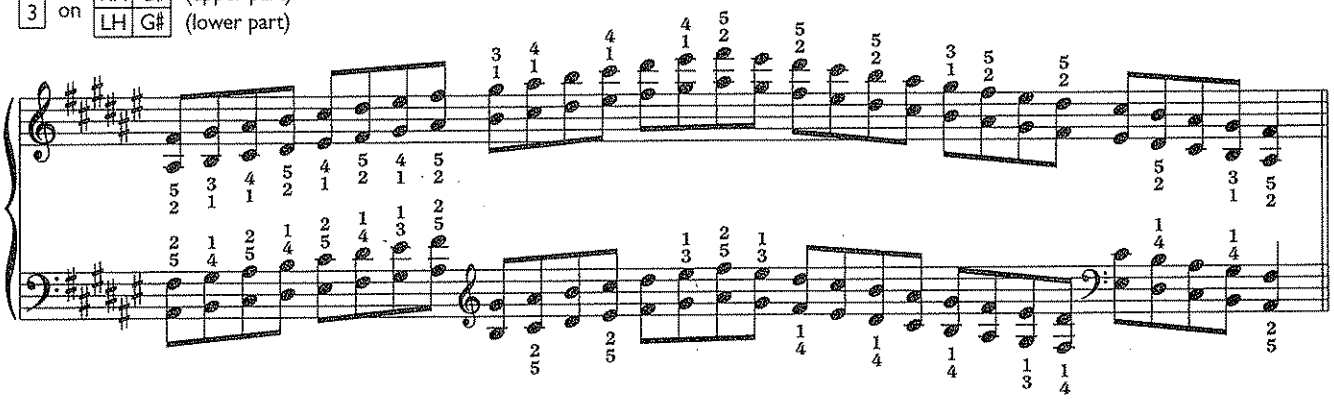
RH 2 / 1 on G♯ / E♯



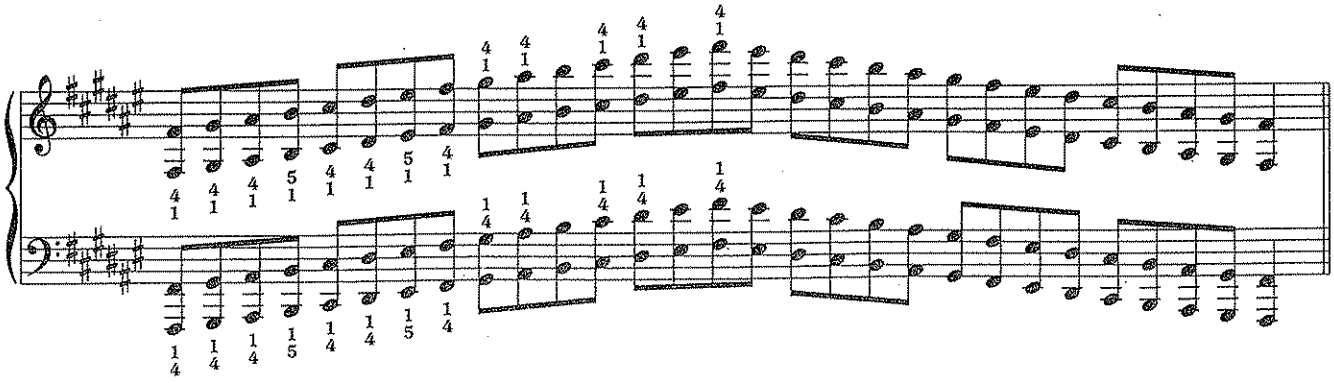
LH 1 / 2 on B / G♯

Double sixths

3 on RH G♯ / LH G♯ (upper part) (lower part)



Double octaves

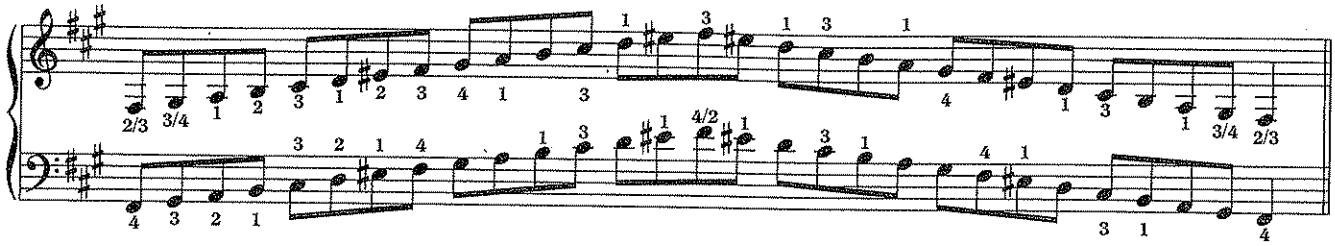


4 on RH G♯ LH F♯

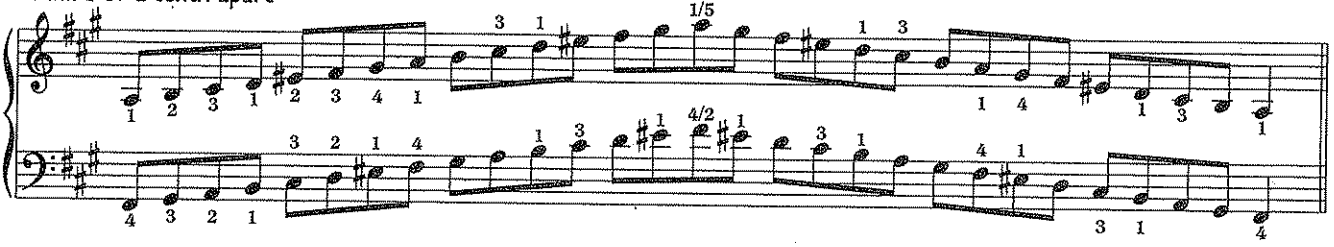
F♯ harmonic minor

Similar motion

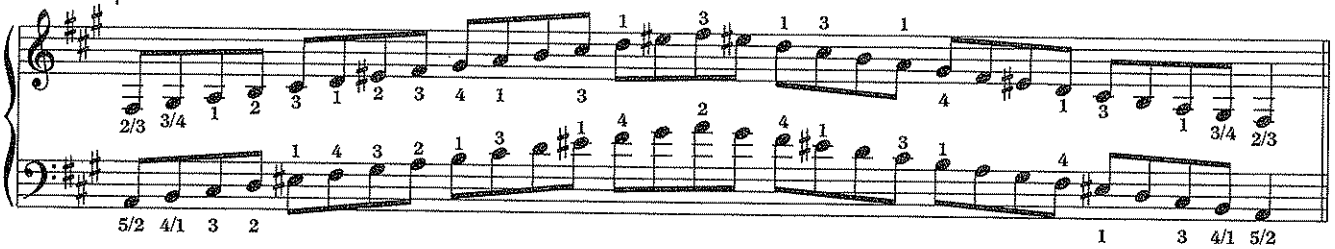
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

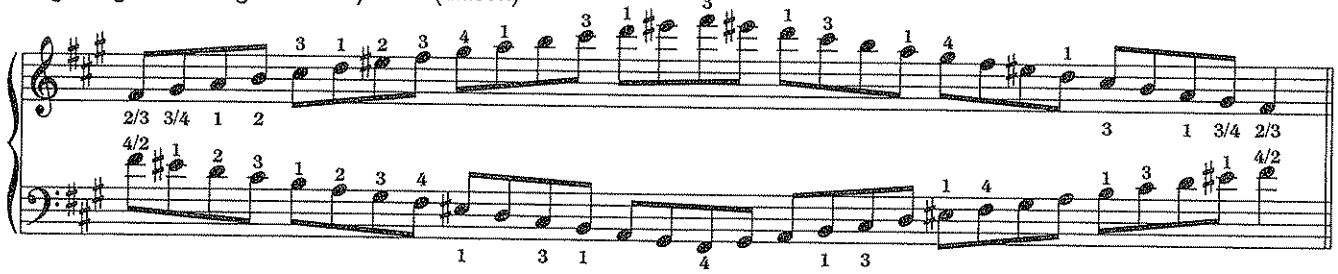


A sixth apart

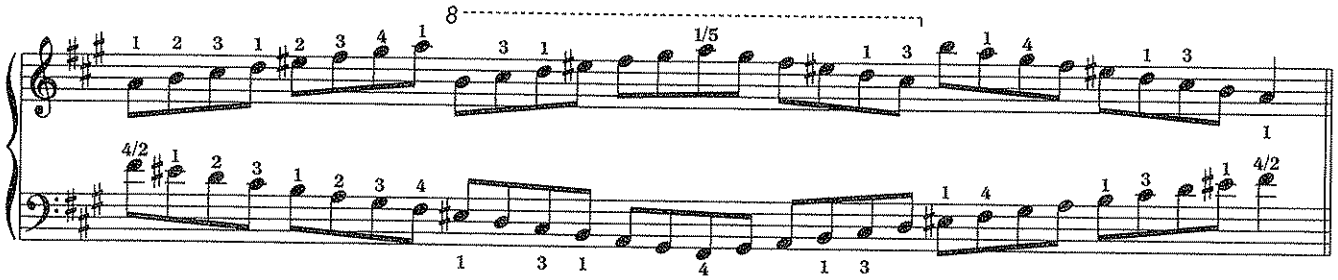


Contrary motion

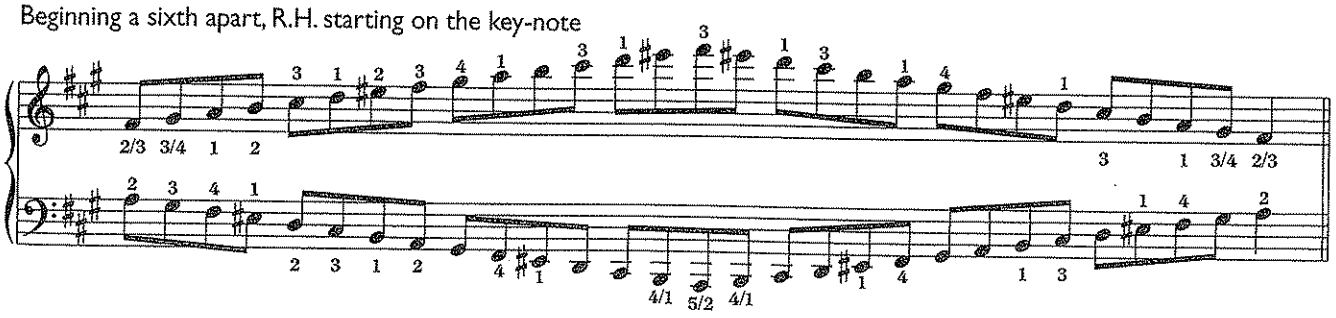
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

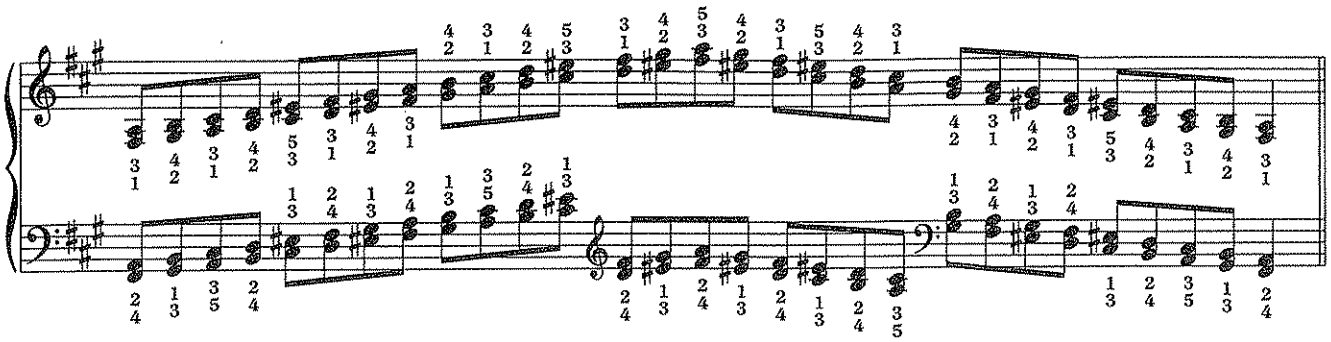


F♯

Double thirds

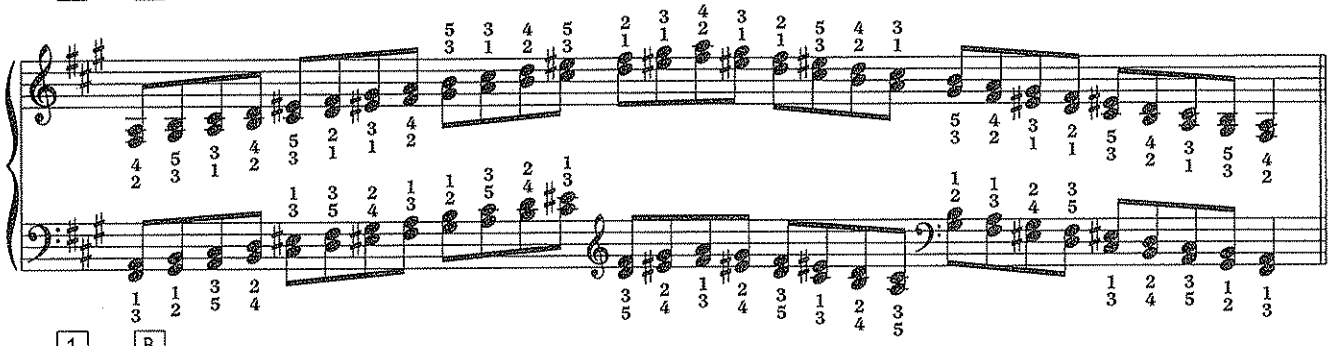
Standard fingering

5 on RH E♯ (upper part)
LH A (lower part)



Alternative fingering

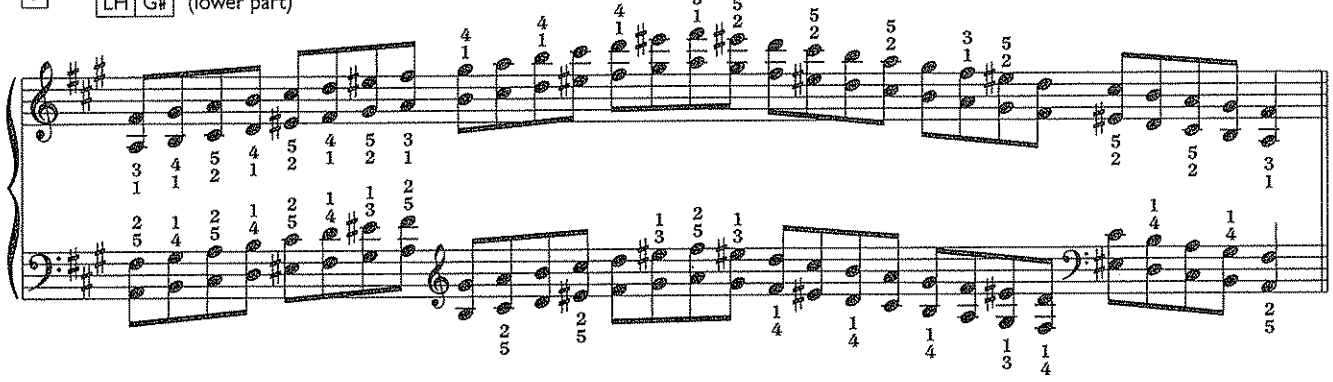
RH 2 1 on F♯ D



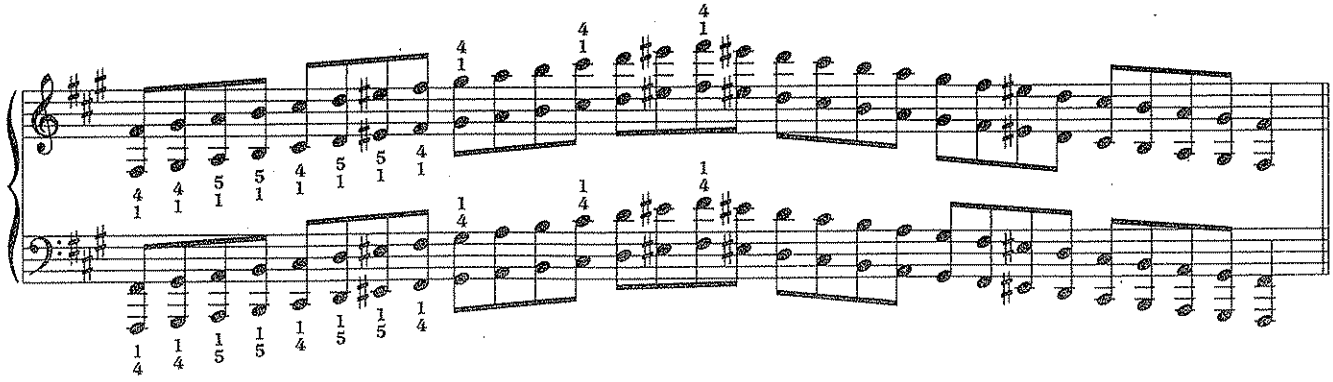
LH 1 2 on B G♯

Double sixths

3 on RH F♯ (upper part)
LH G♯ (lower part)



Double octaves

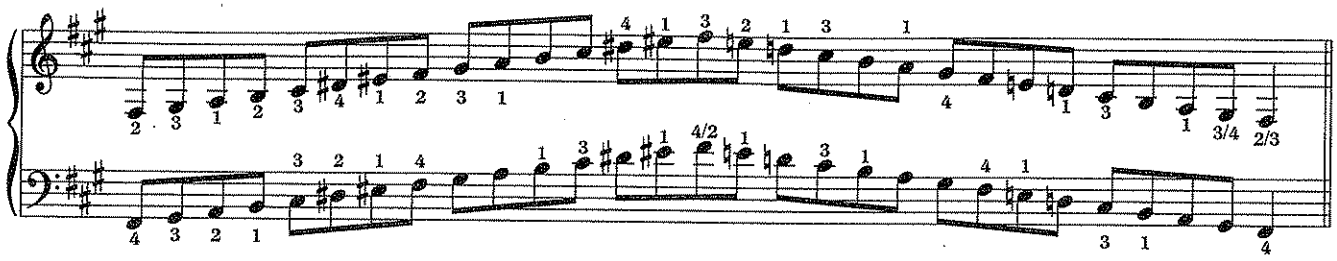


F♯ melodic minor

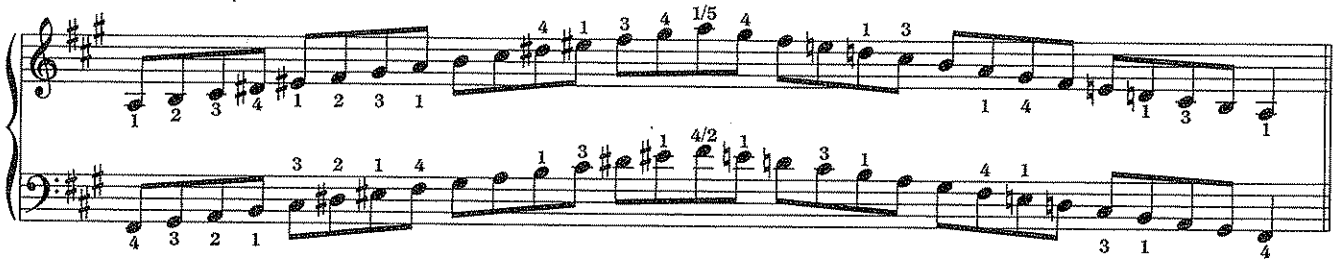
Similar motion

4 on | RH | D♯↑/G♯↓ |
LH | F♯ |

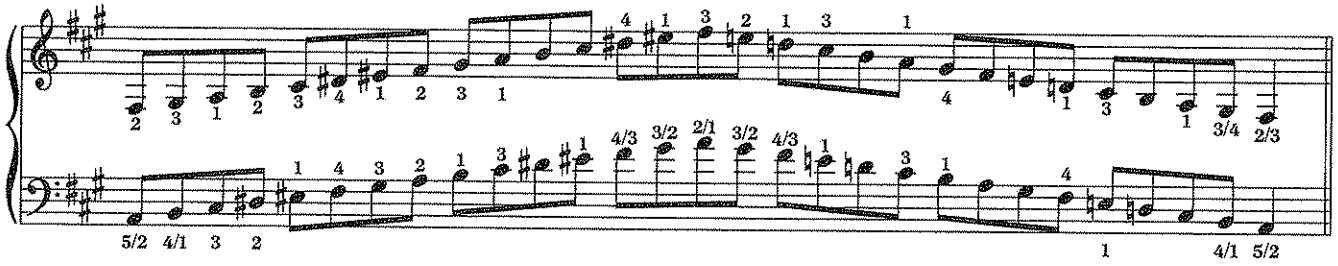
An octave apart



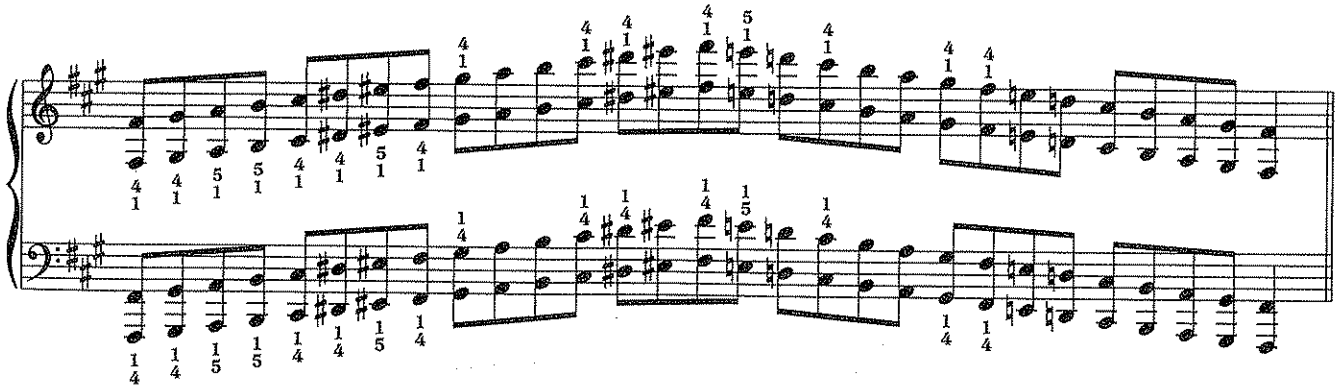
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves

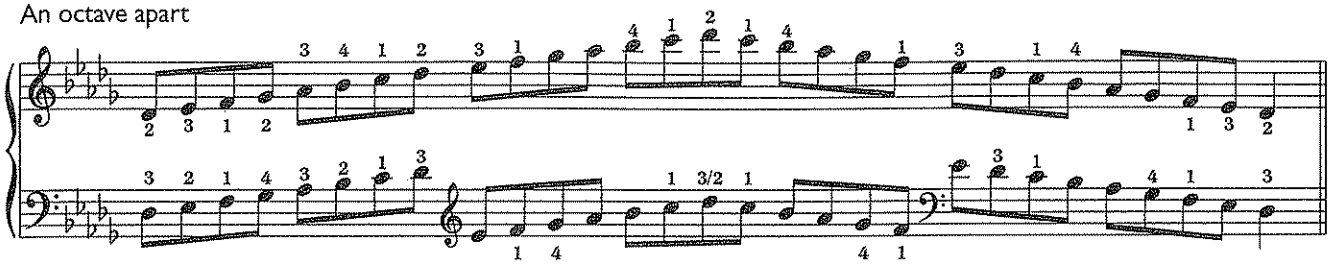


4 on RH B♭ LH G♭

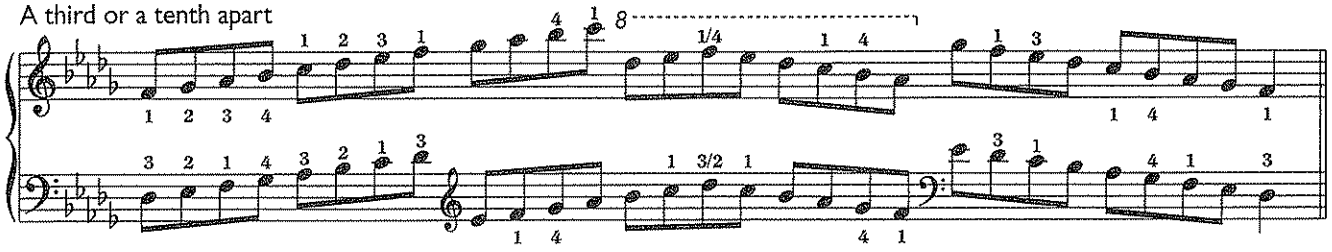
D♭ major enharmonic C♯

Similar motion

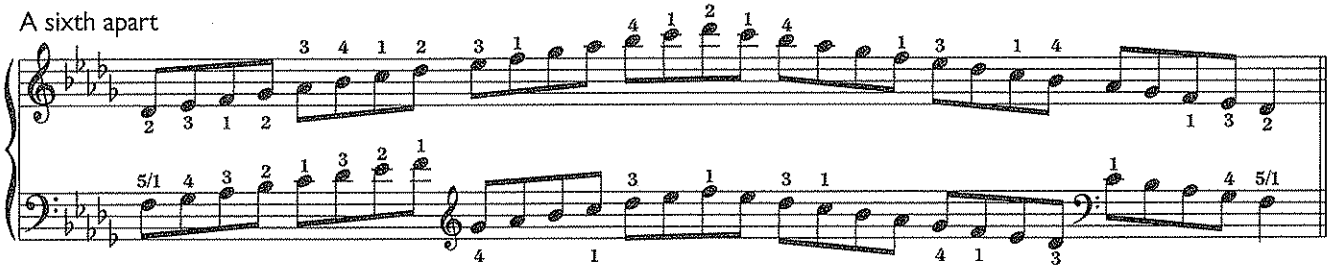
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

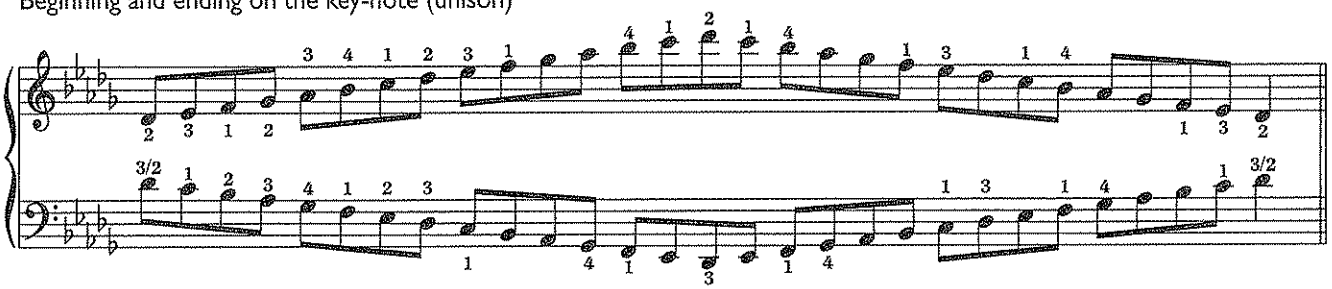


A sixth apart

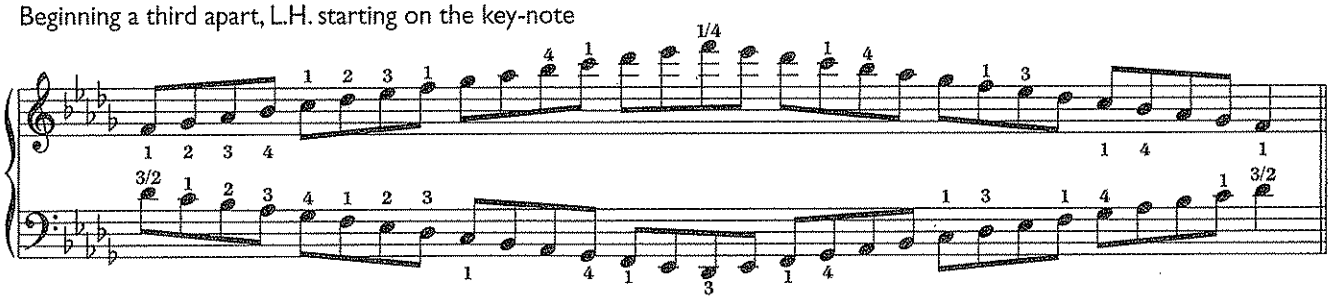


Contrary motion

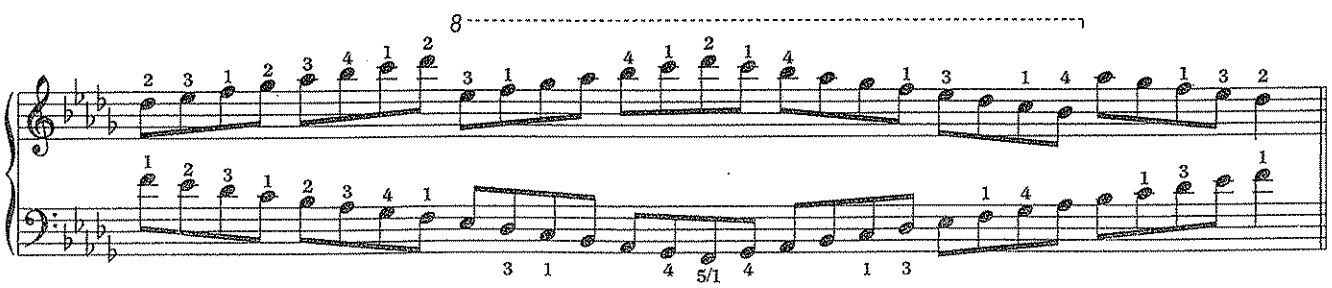
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note

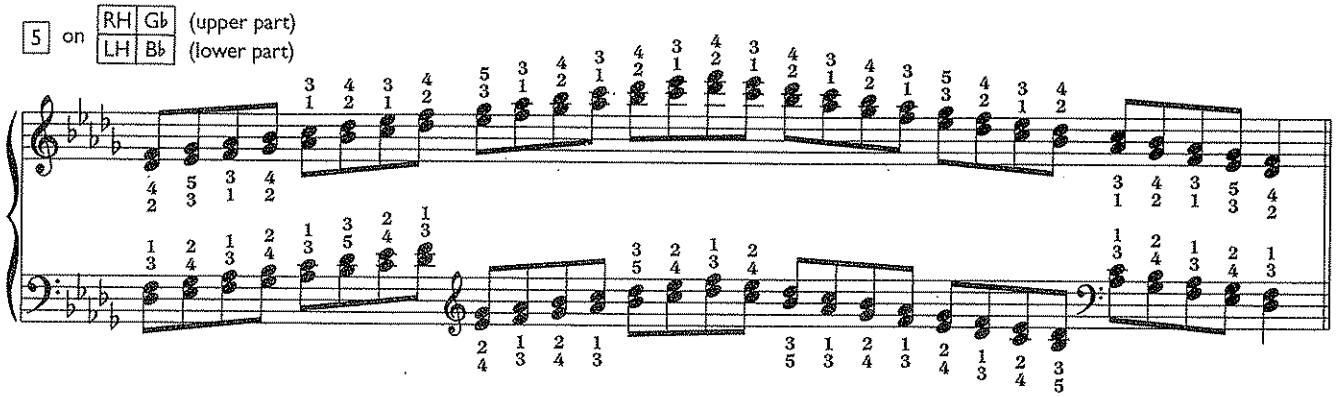


Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

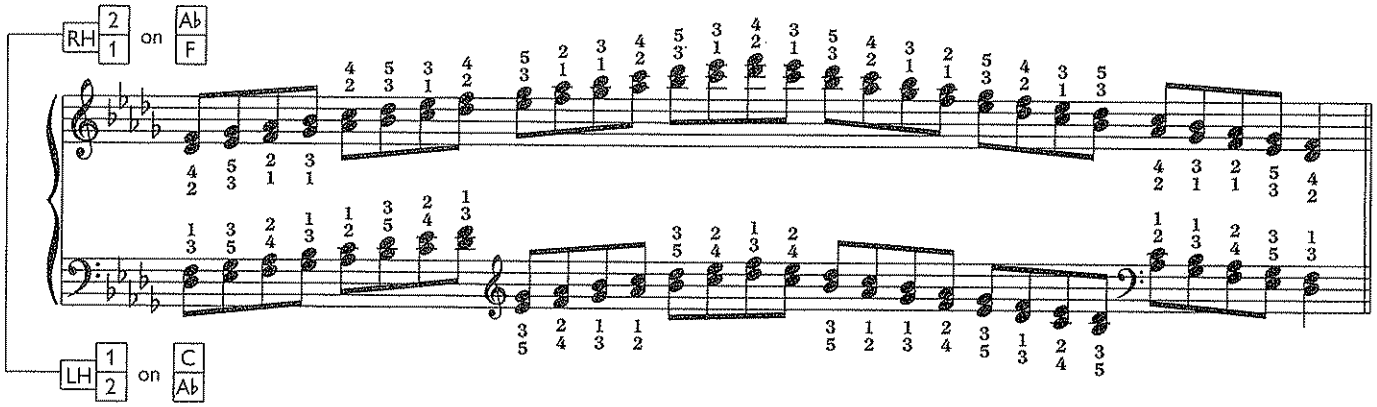


Double thirds

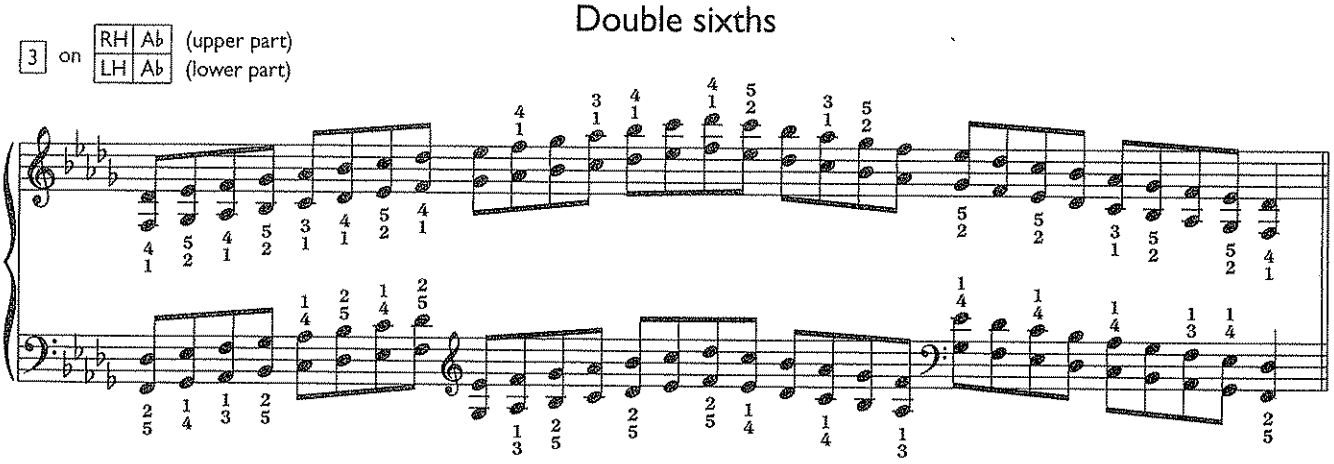
Standard fingering



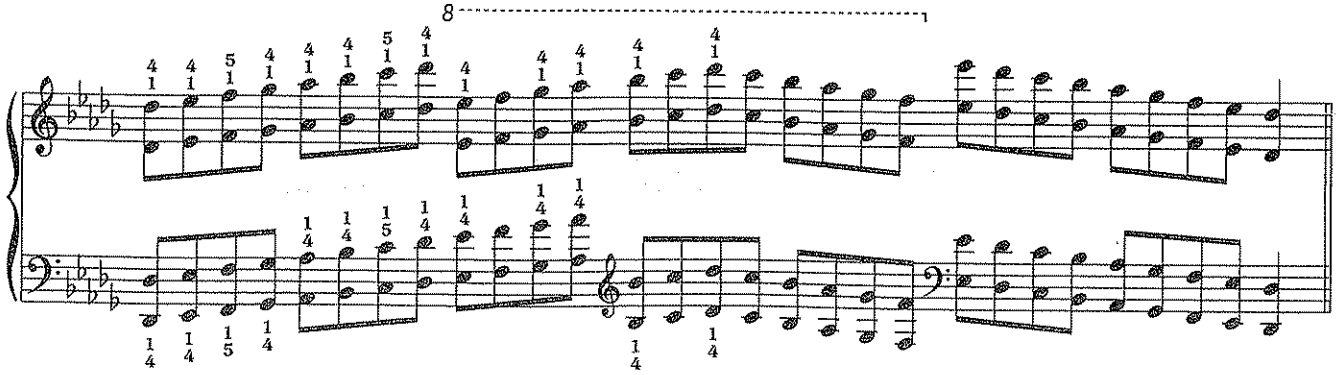
Alternative fingering



Double sixths



Double octaves



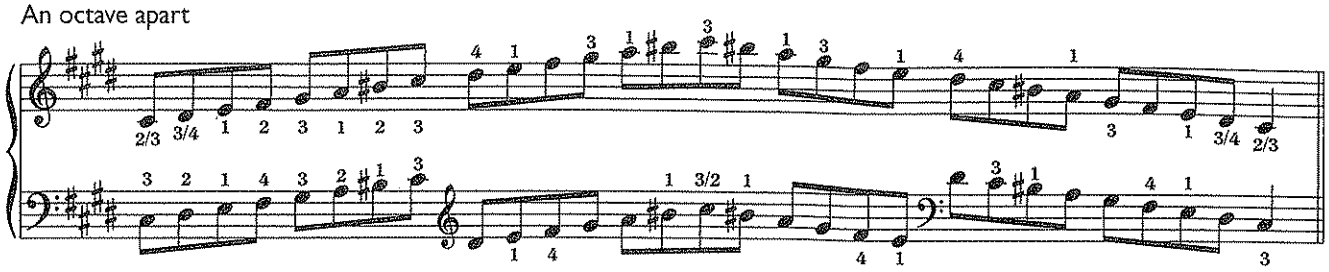
C♯

4 on RH D♯ / LH F♯

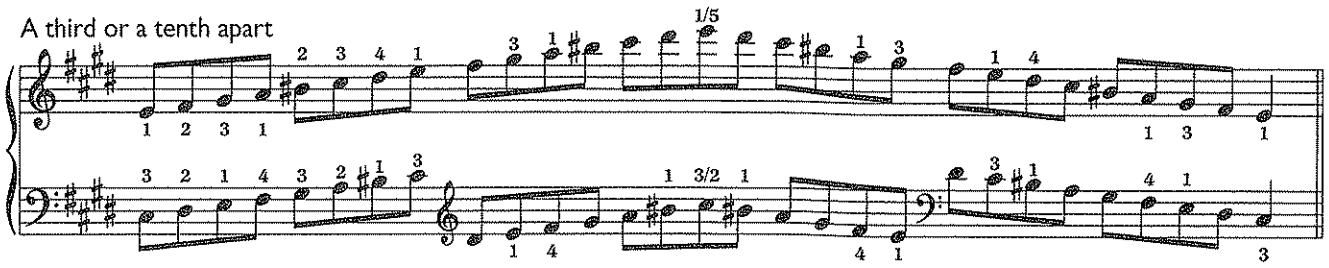
C♯ harmonic minor

Similar motion

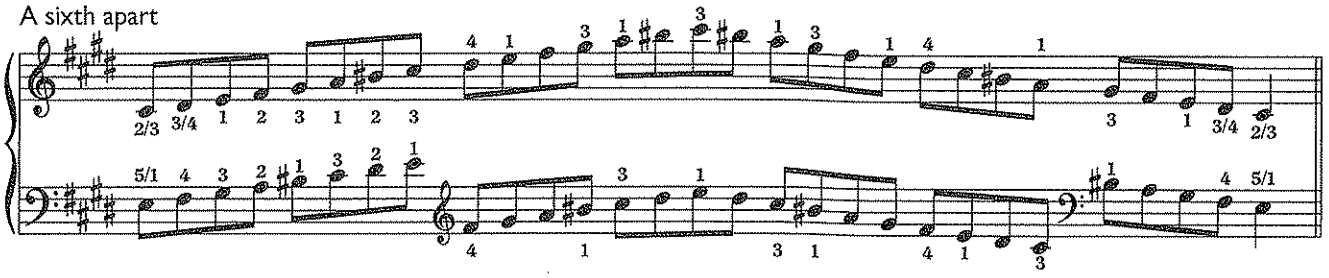
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

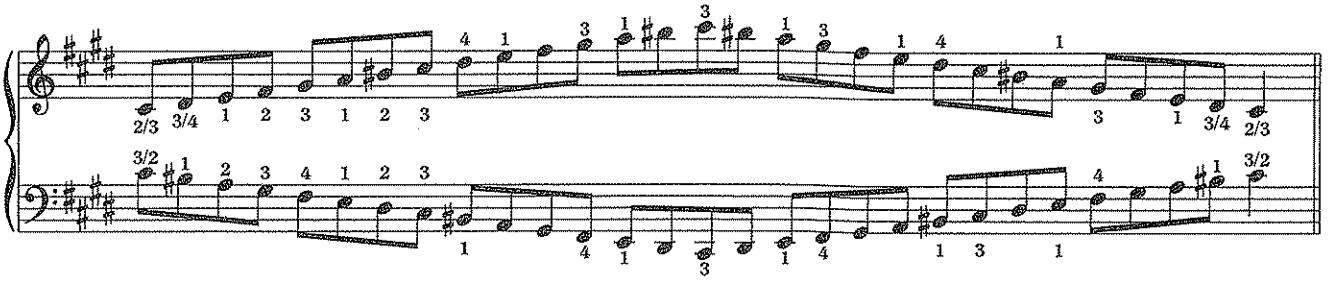


A sixth apart

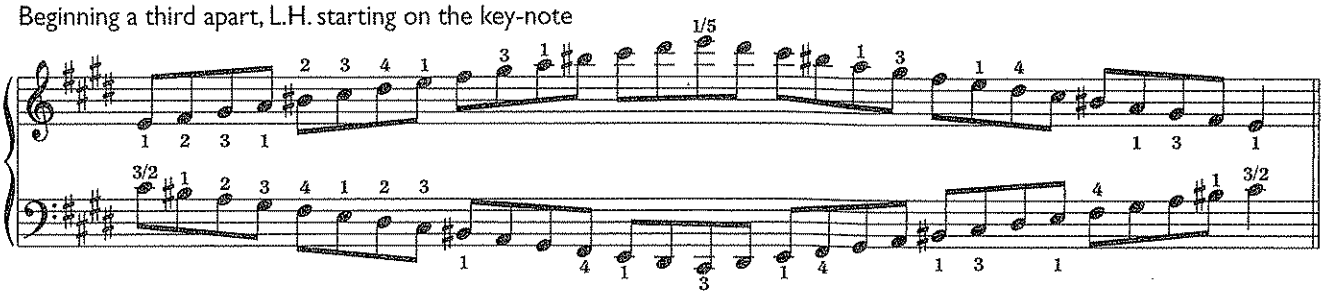


Contrary motion

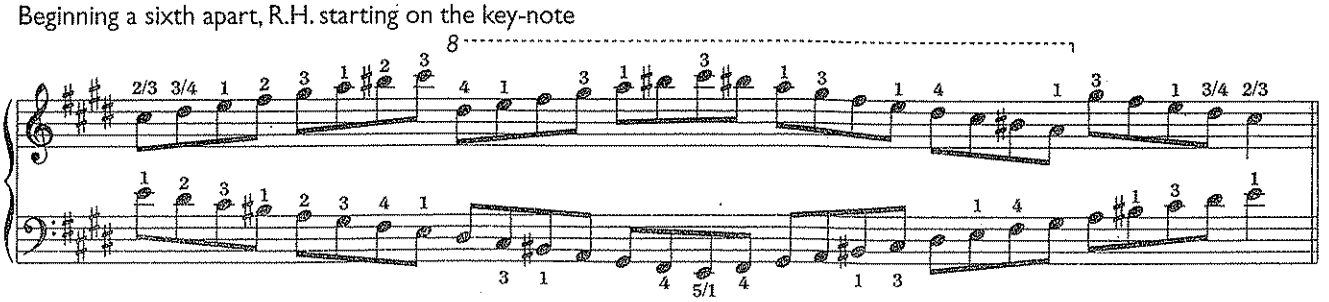
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



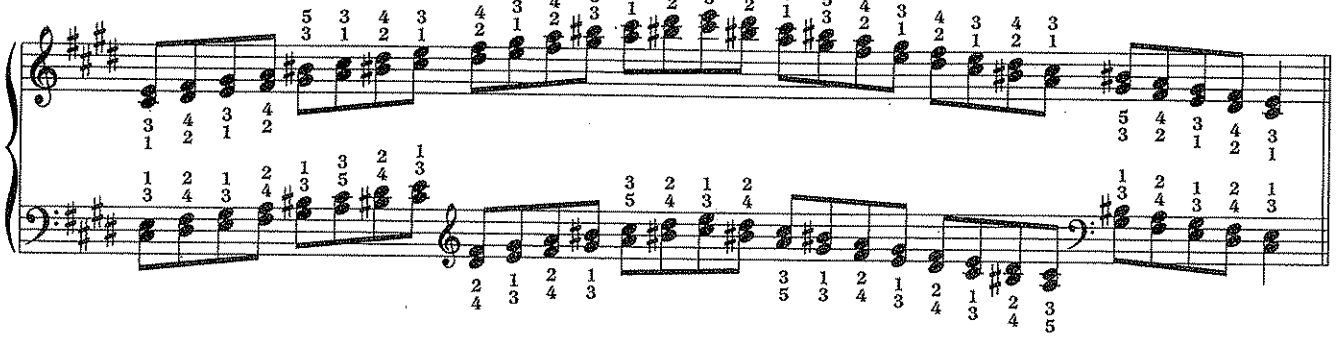
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

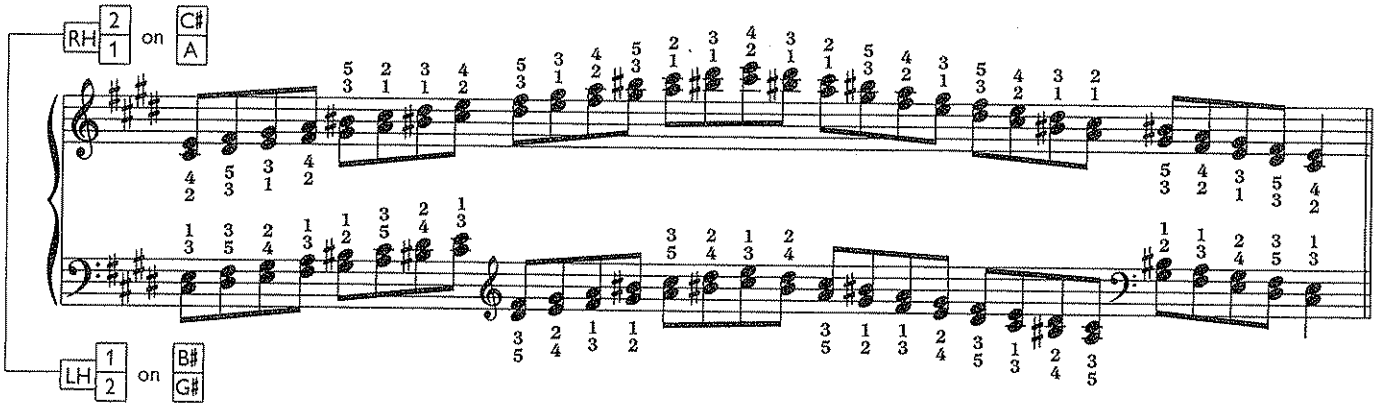
Standard fingering

5 on RH B♯ (upper part) / LH A (lower part)



Alternative fingering

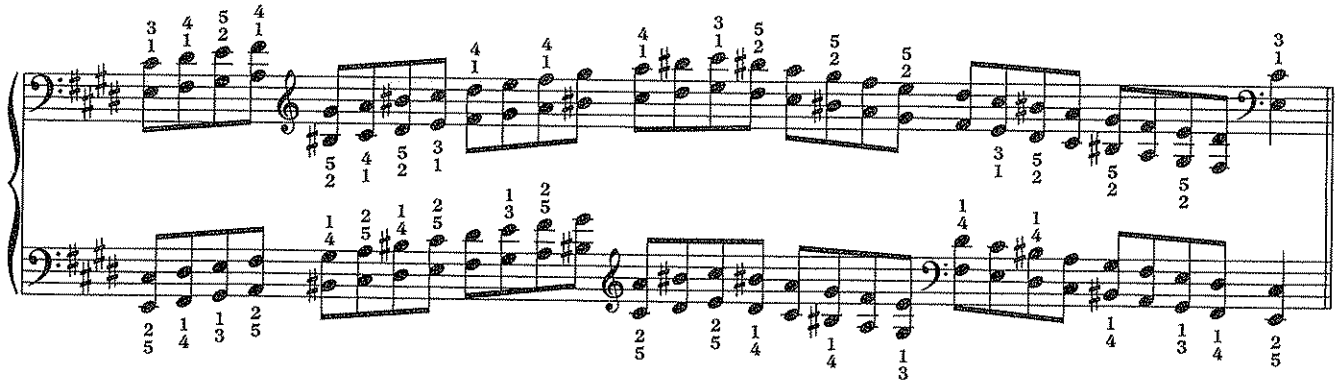
RH 2/1 on C♯/A



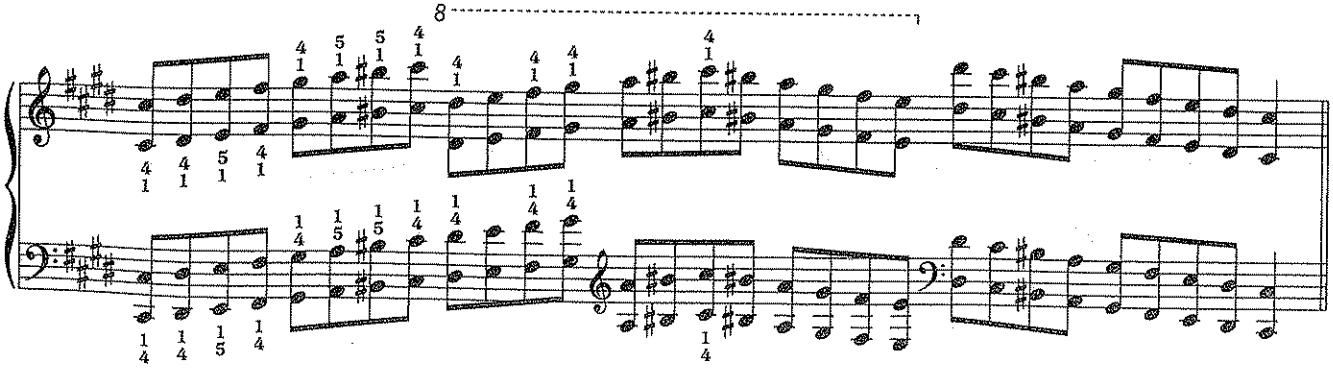
LH 1/2 on B♯/G♯

Double sixths

3 on RH C♯ (upper part) / LH G♯ (lower part)



Double octaves



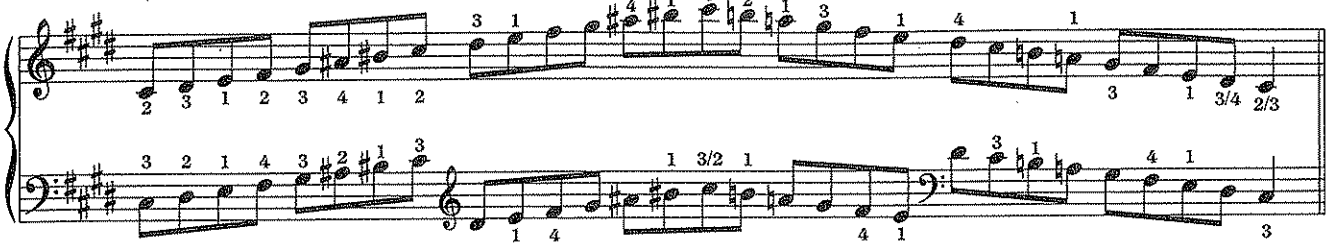
C♯

C♯ melodic minor

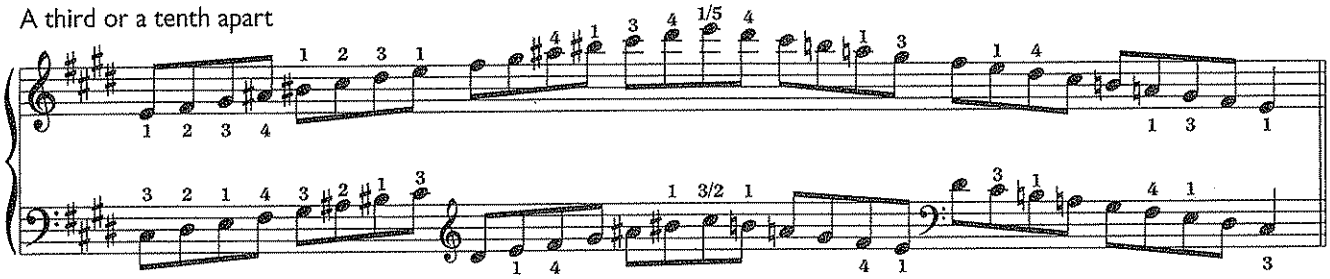
Similar motion

4 on | RH | A♯↑/D♯↓ |
| LH | F♯ |

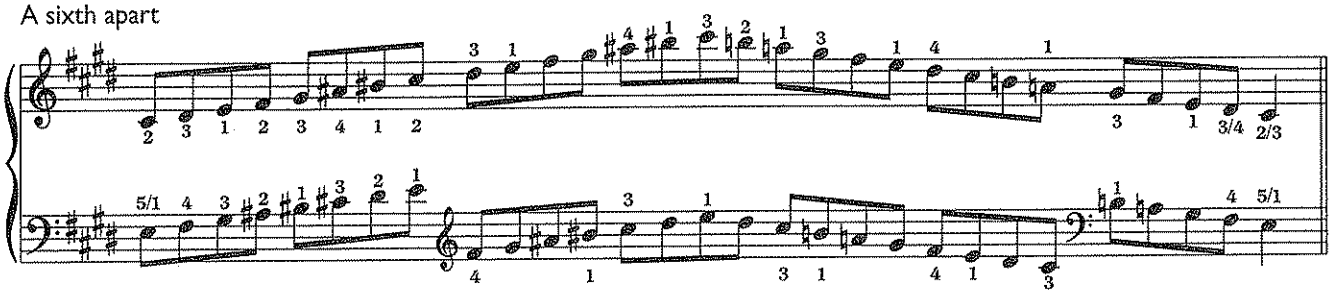
An octave apart



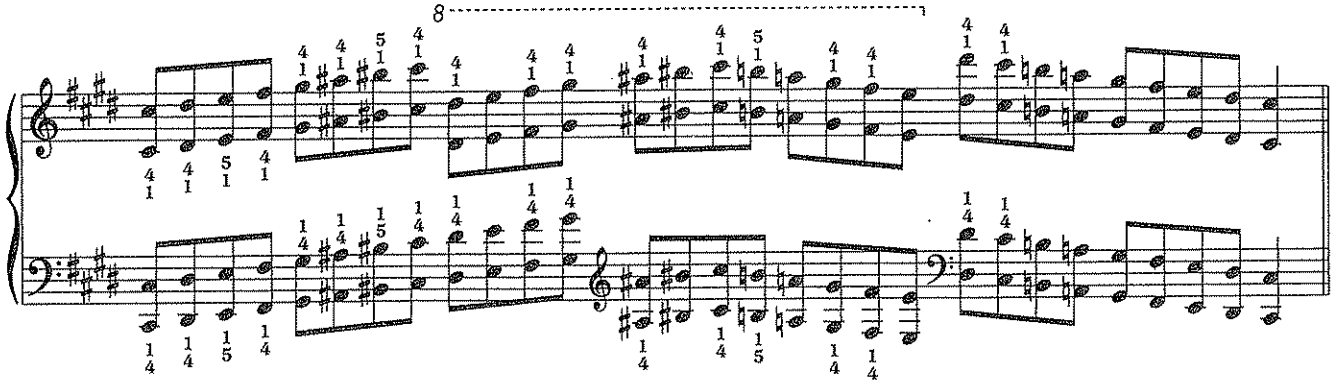
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves

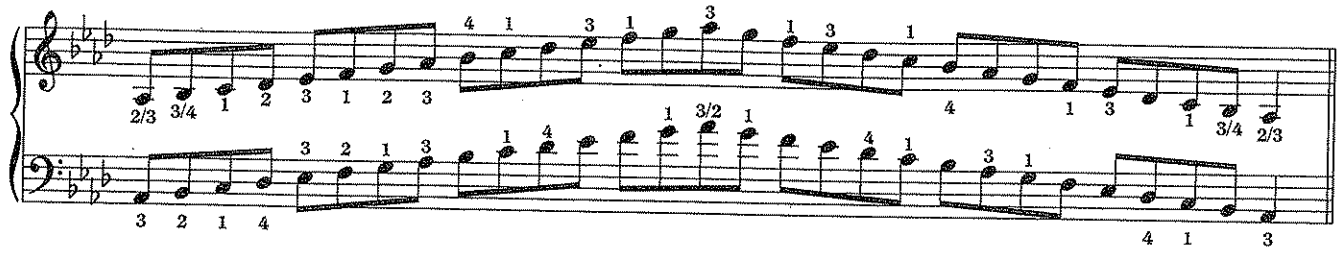


4 on RH B♭ LH D♭

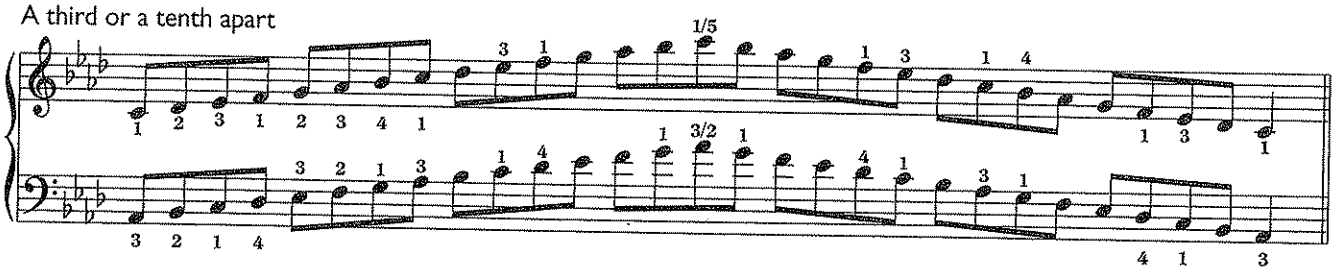
A♭ major

Similar motion

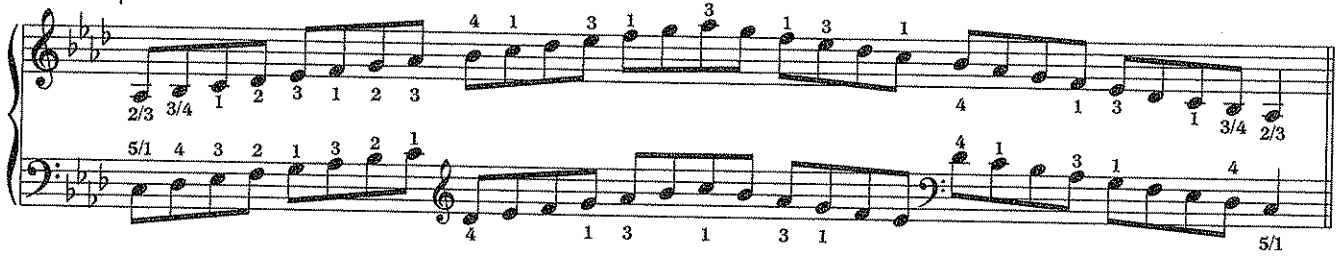
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

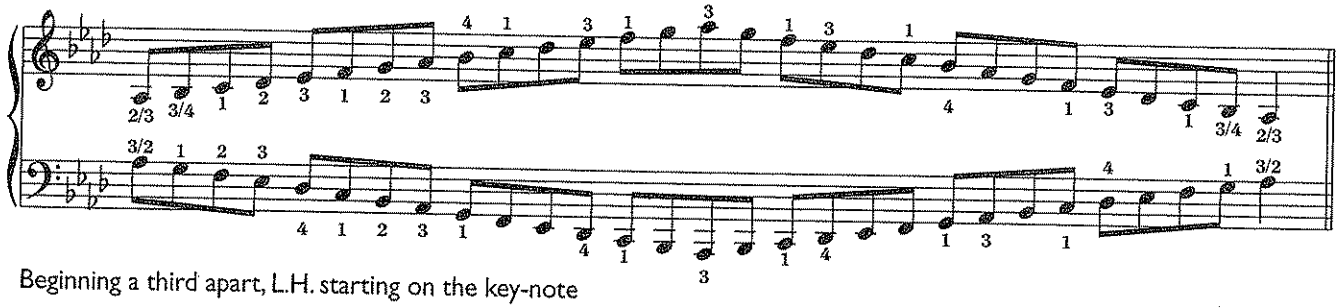


A sixth apart

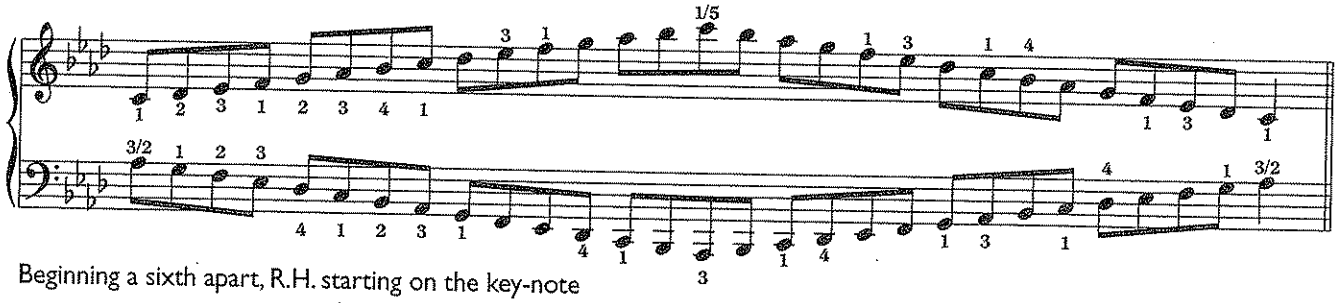


Contrary motion

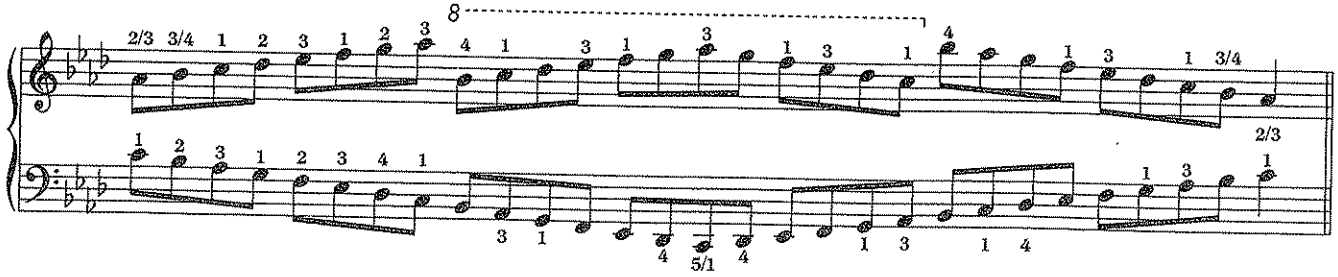
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



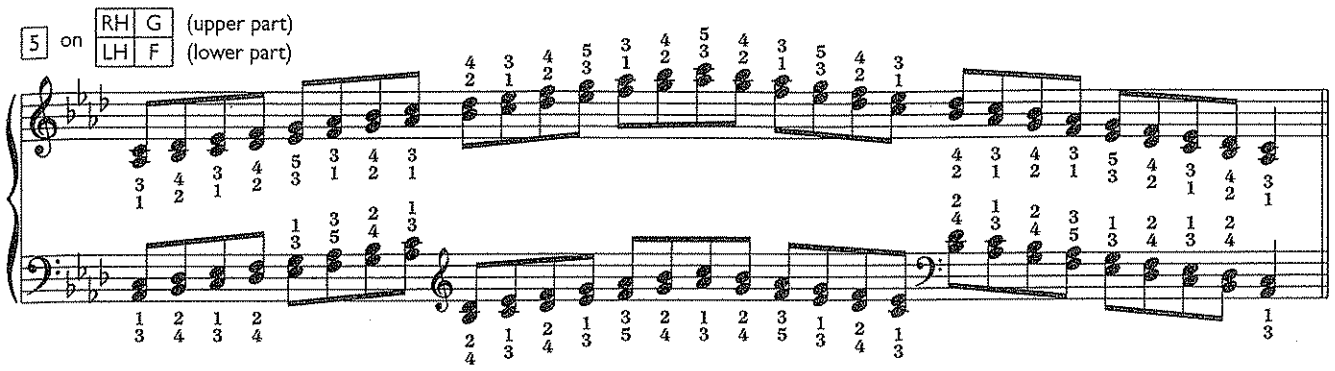
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



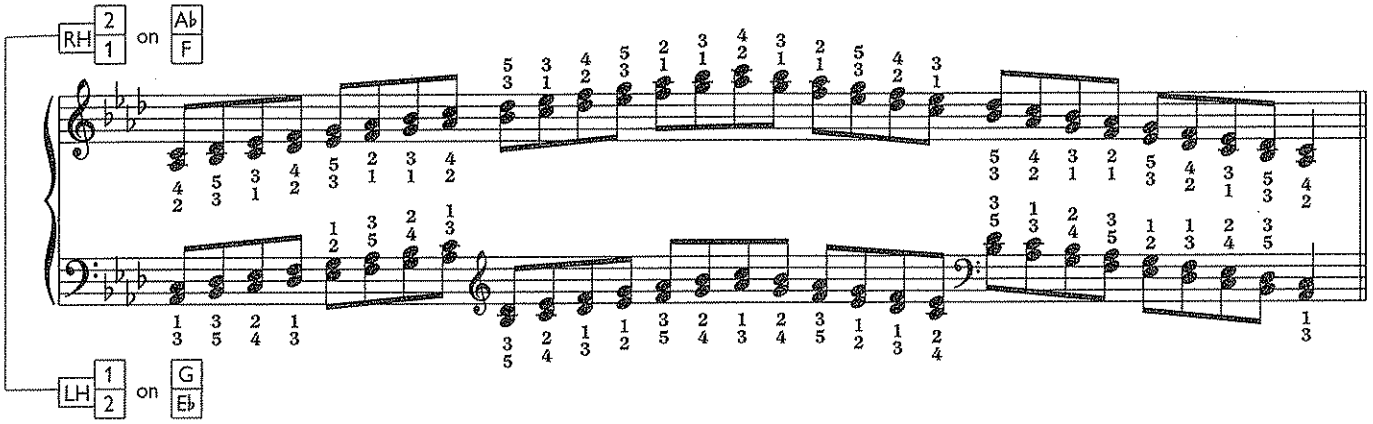
A♭

Double thirds

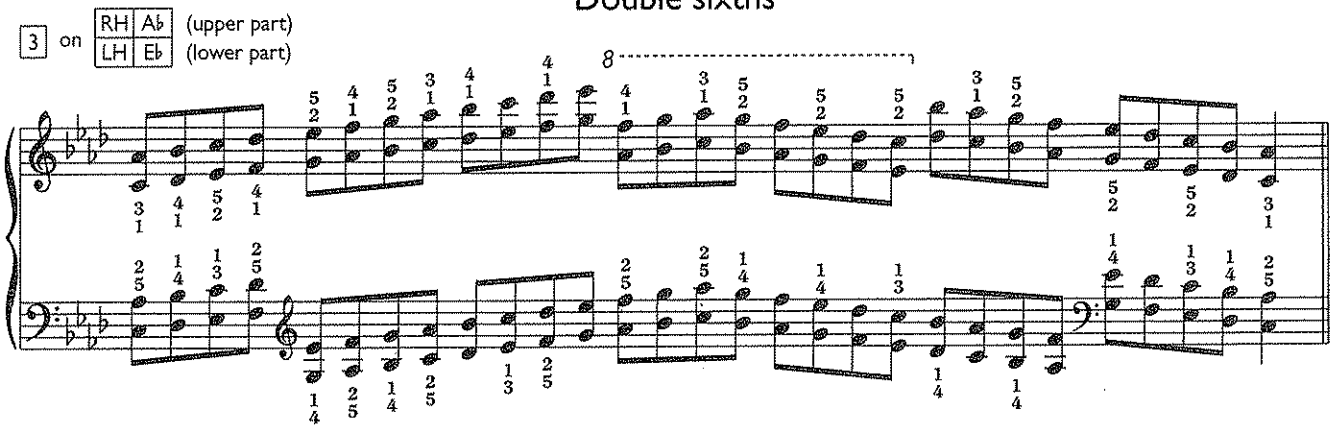
Standard fingering



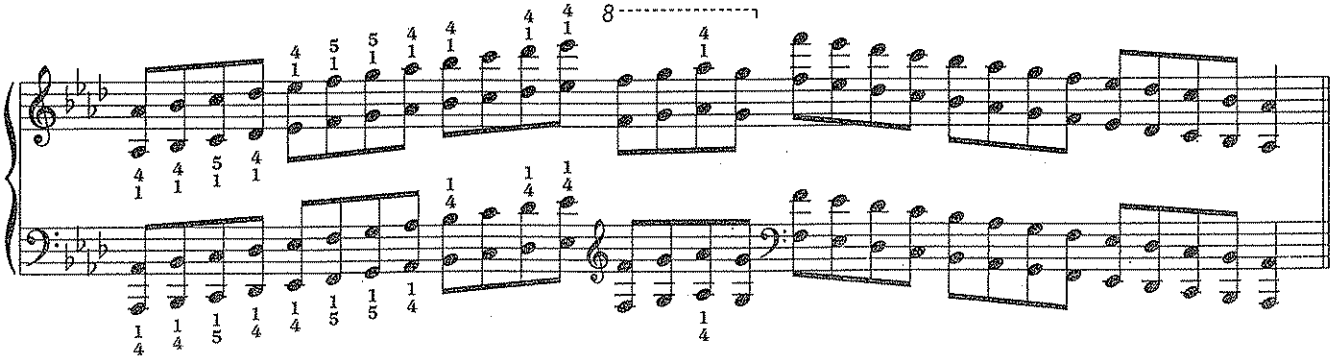
Alternative fingering



Double sixths



Double octaves



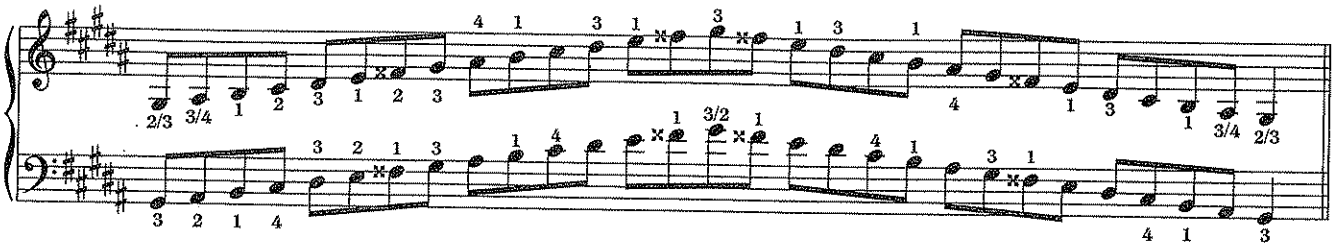
G♯

4 on RH A♯ LH C♯

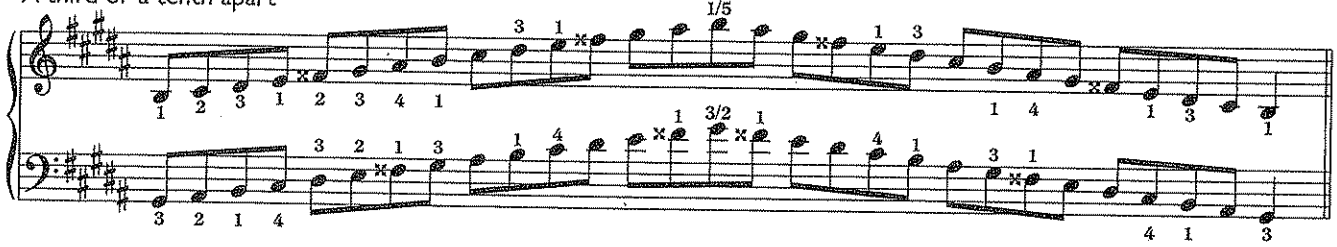
G♯ harmonic minor enharmonic A♭

Similar motion

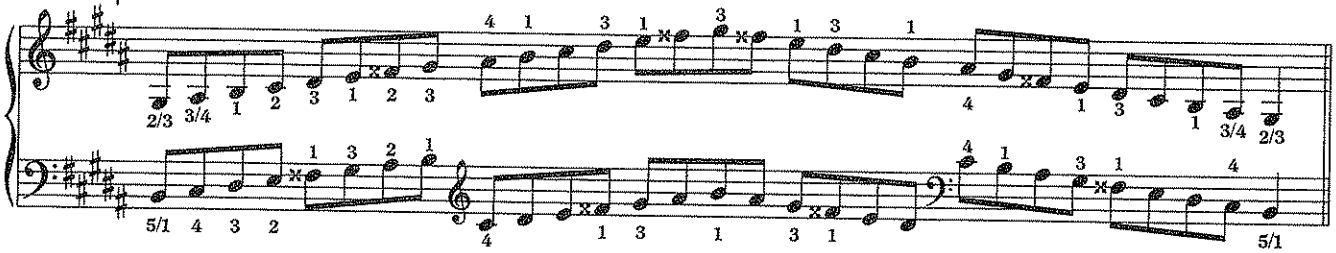
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

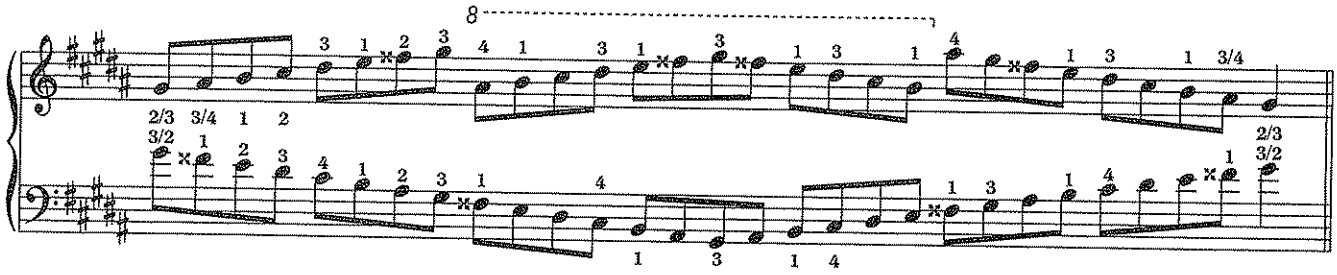


A sixth apart

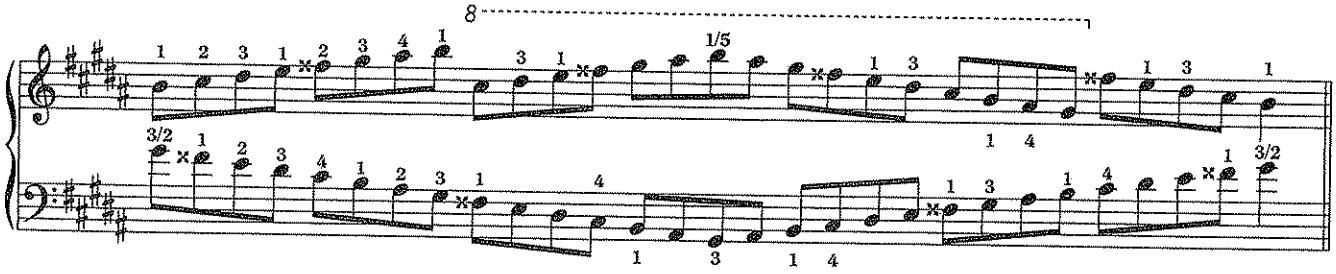


Contrary motion

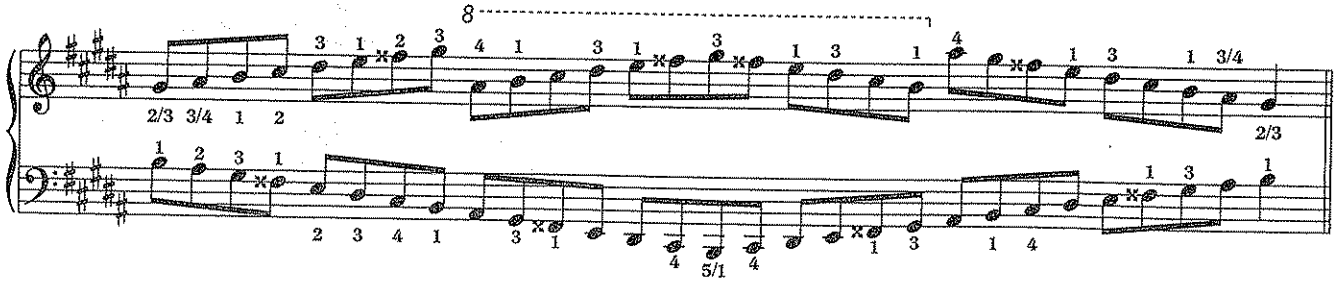
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



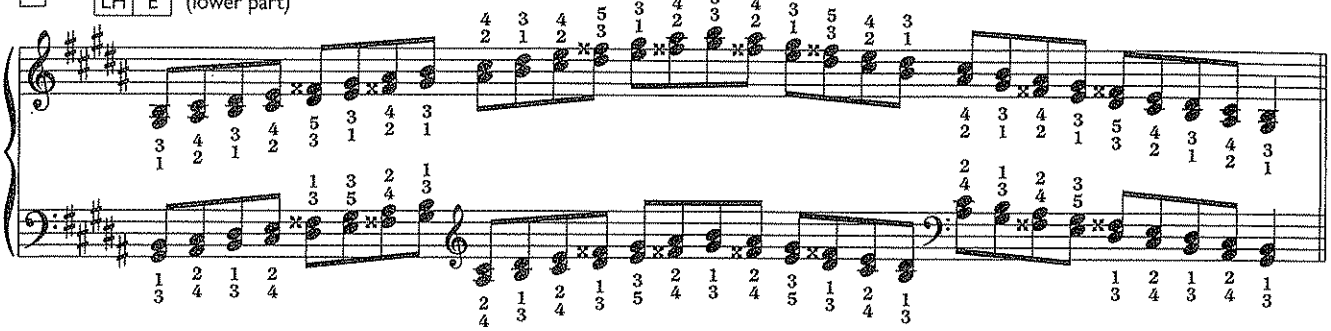
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

Standard fingering

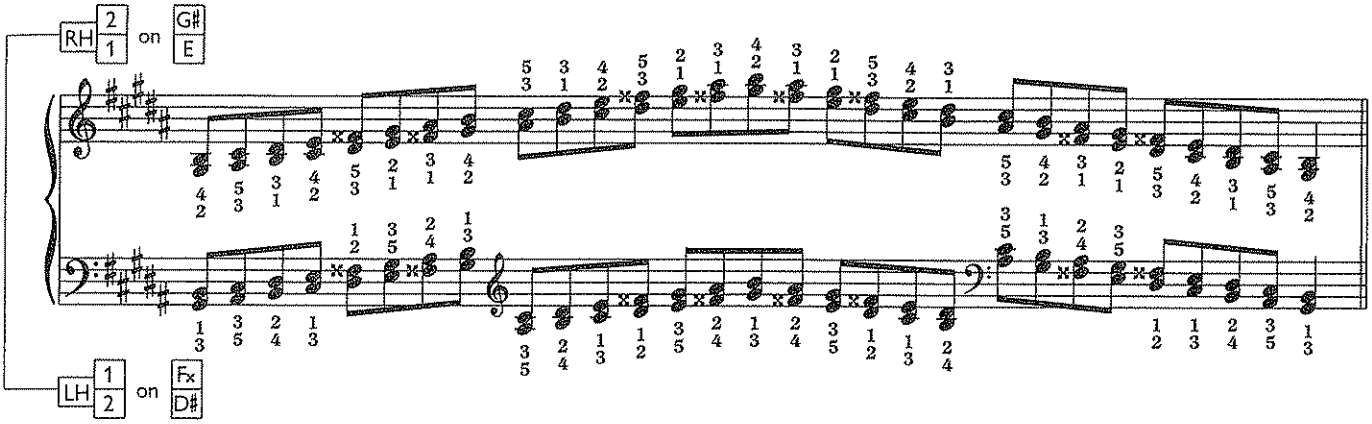
5 on RH Fx / LH E (upper part / lower part)



Alternative fingering

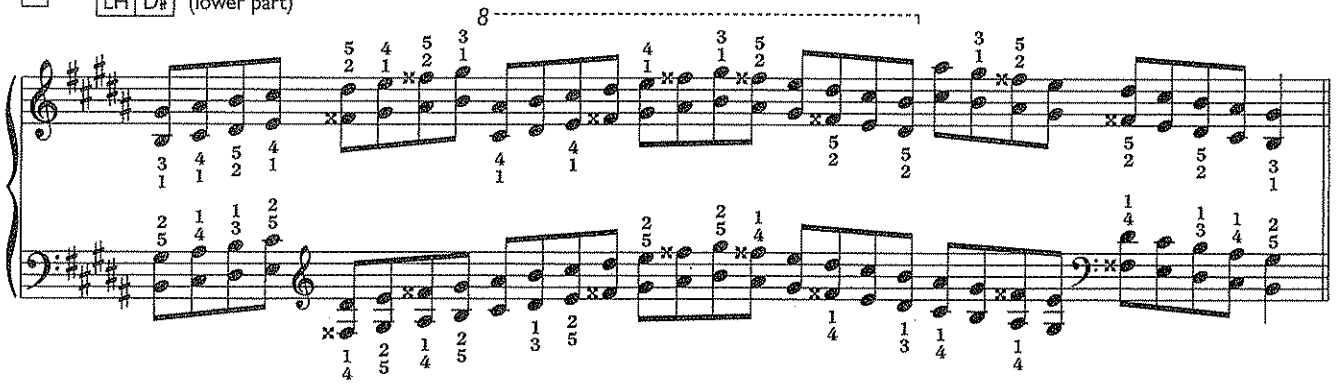
RH 2 1 on G♯ E

LH 1 2 on Fx D♯

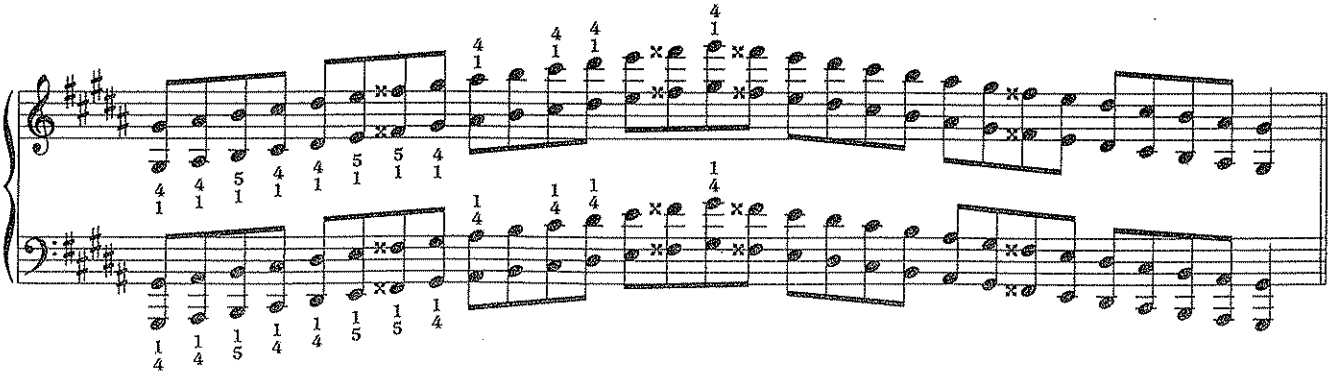


Double sixths

3 on RH G♯ / LH D♯ (upper part / lower part)



Double octaves

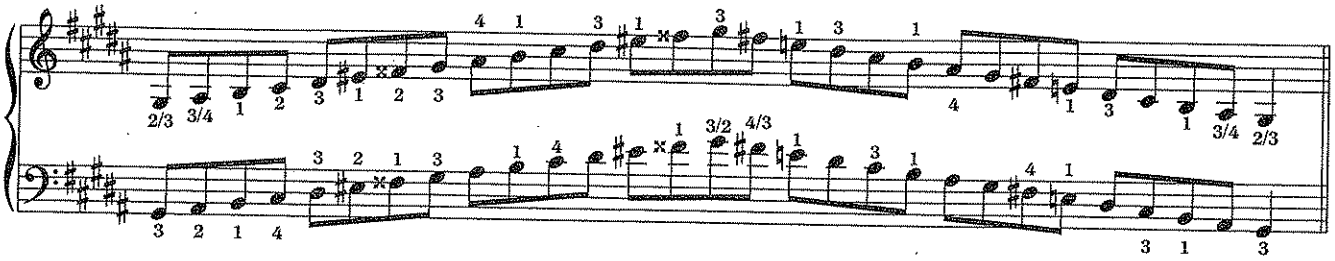


G♯ melodic minor enharmonic A♭

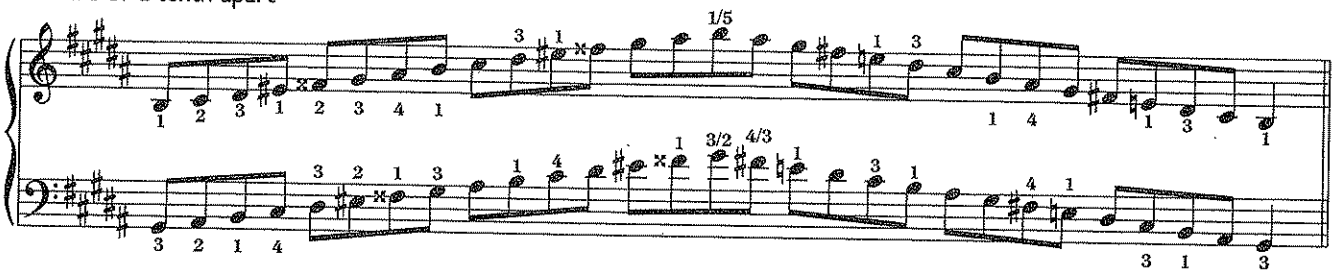
4 on RH A♯ / LH C♯↑/F♯↓

Similar motion

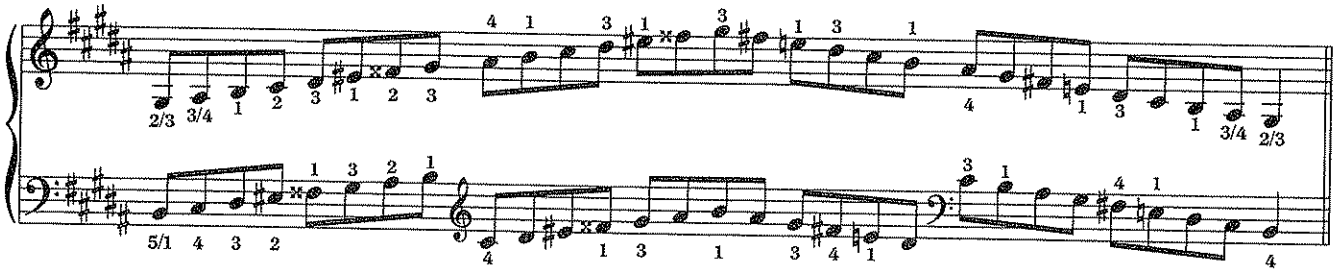
An octave apart



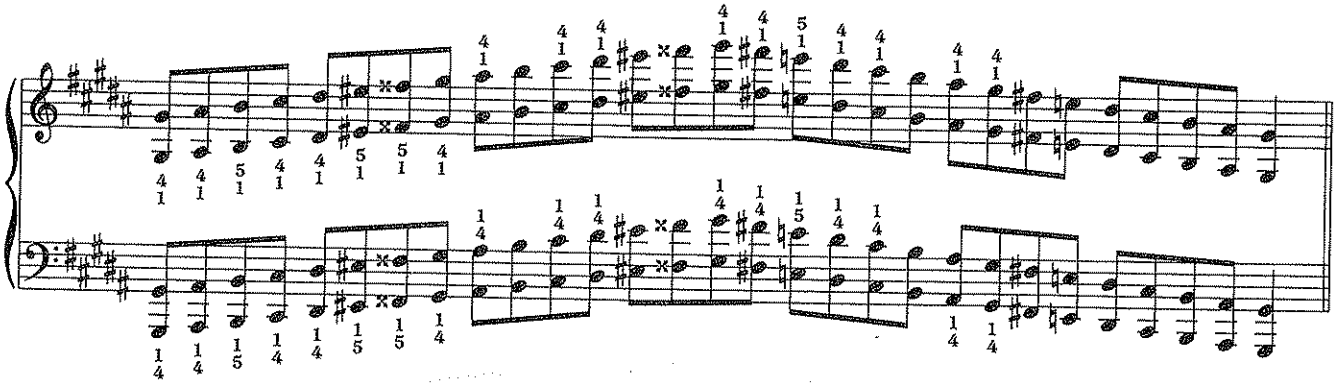
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves

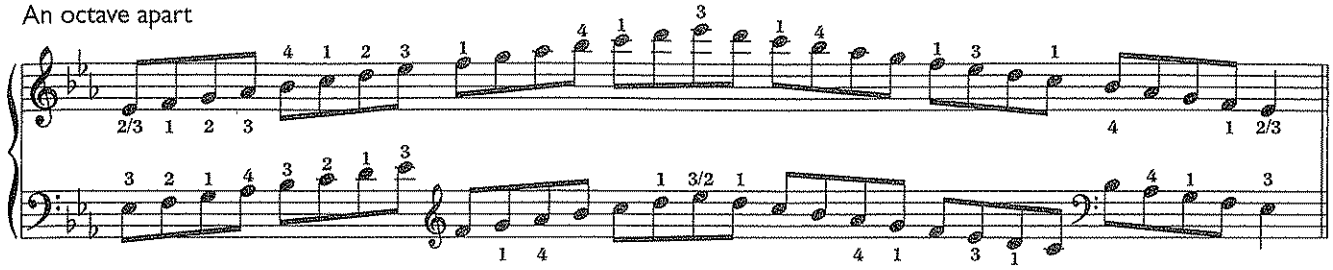


4 on RH B♭ / LH A♭

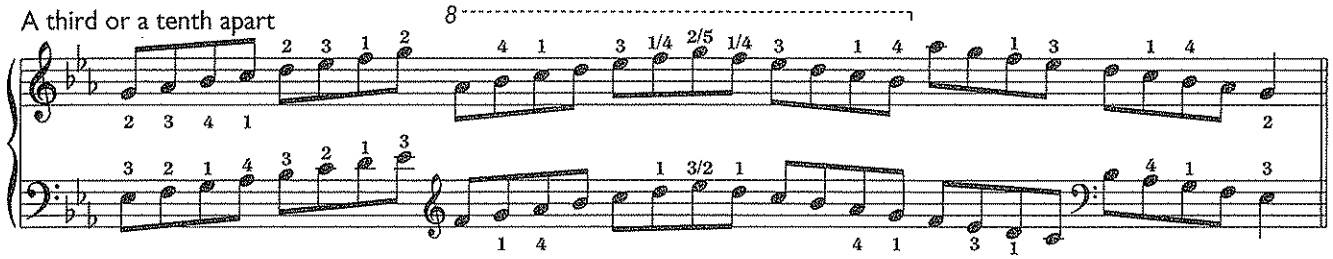
E♭ major

Similar motion

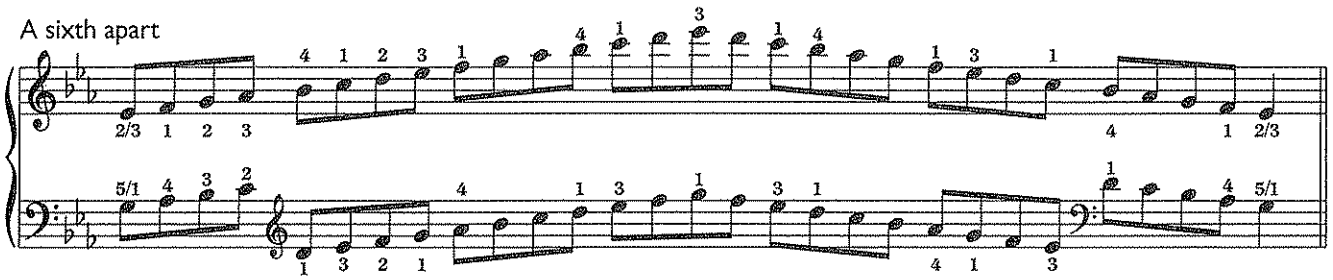
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

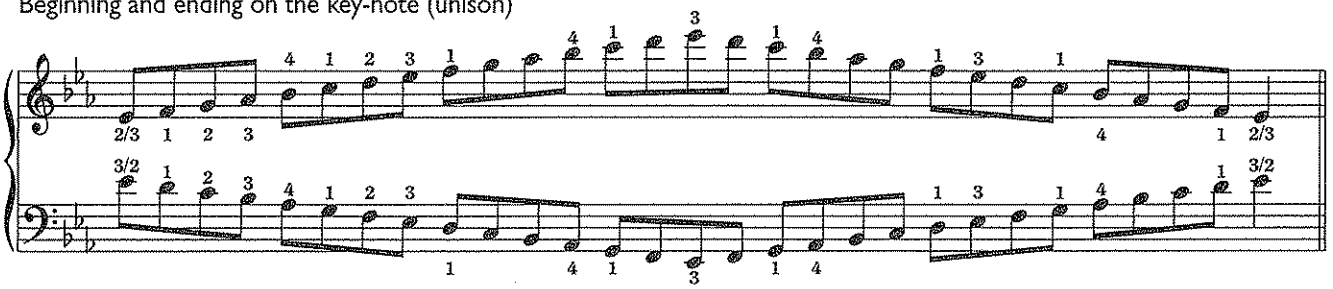


A sixth apart

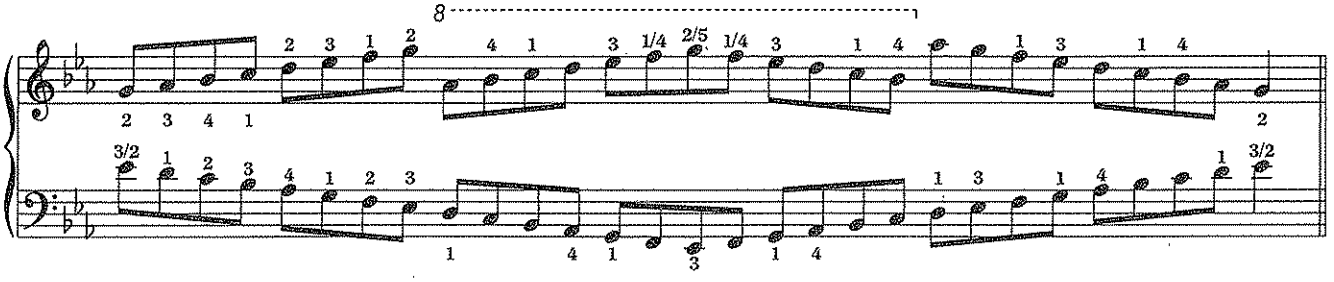


Contrary motion

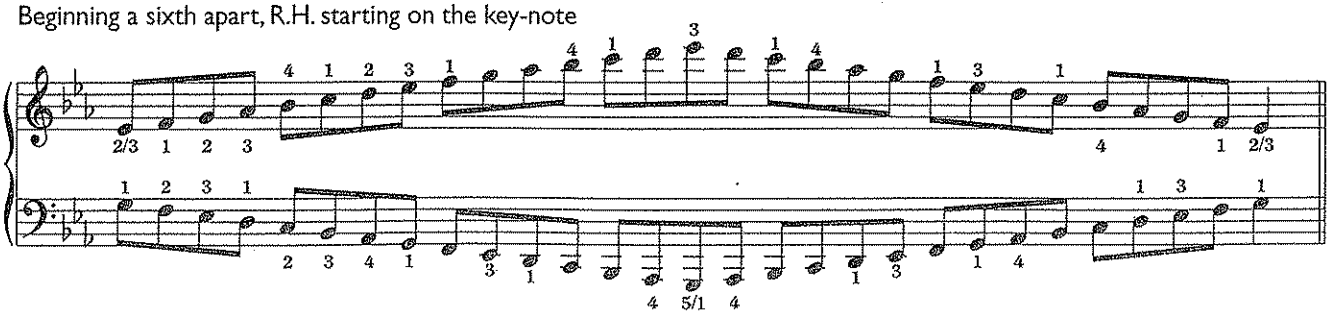
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note

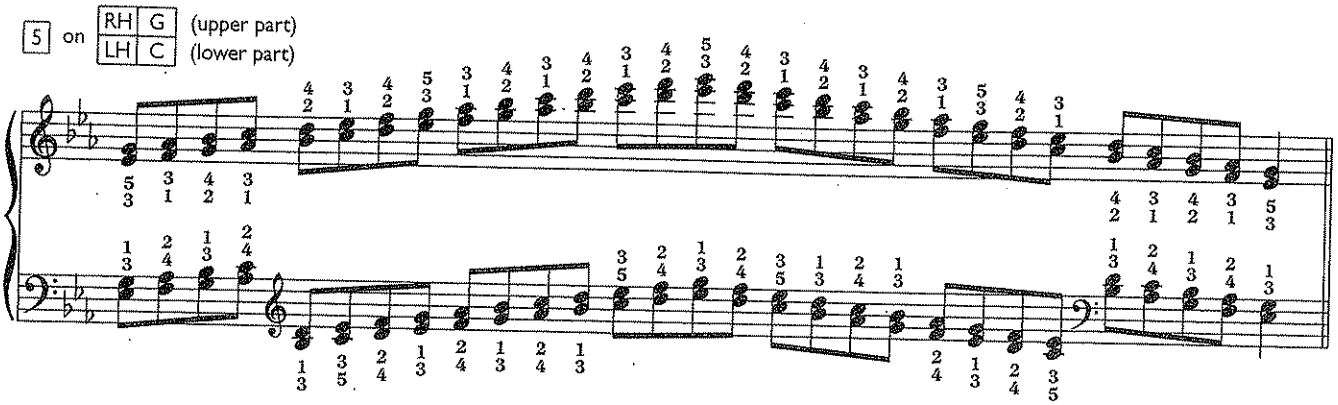


Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

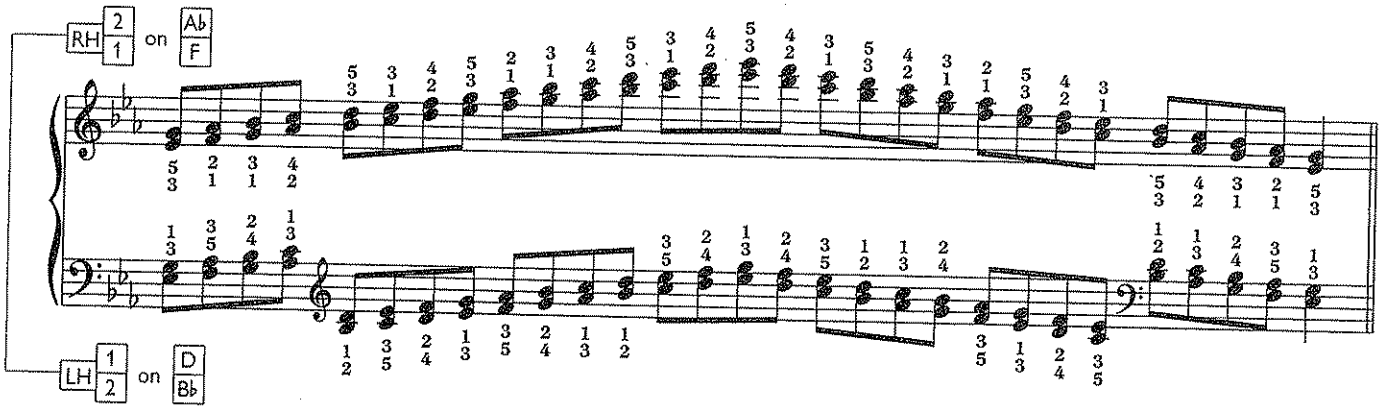


Double thirds

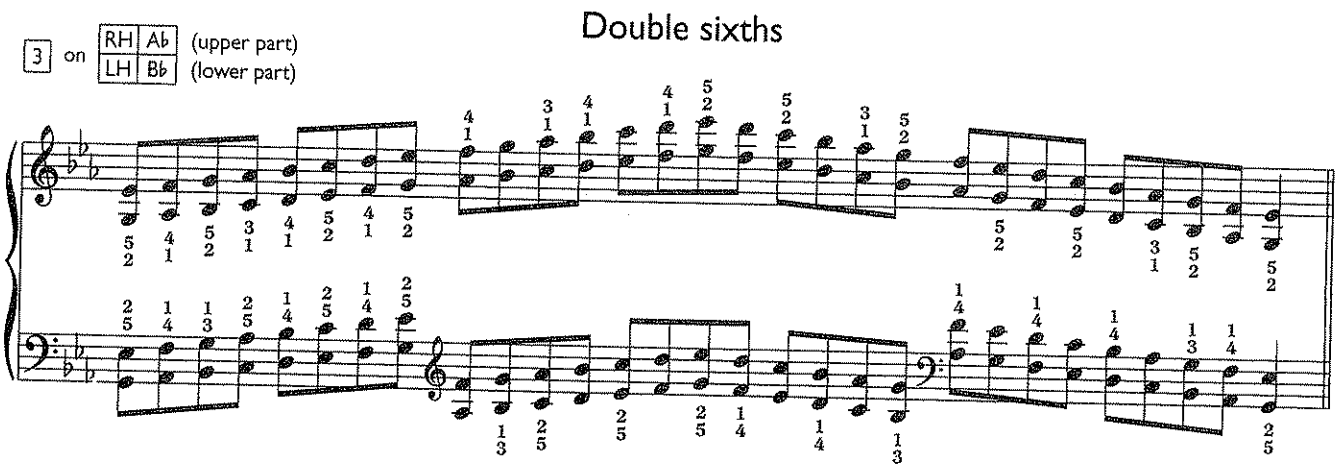
Standard fingering



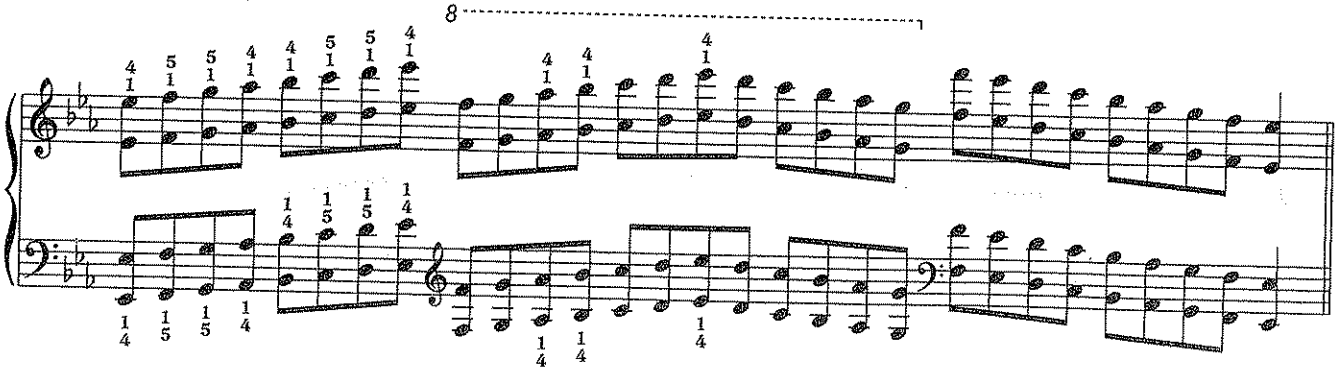
Alternative fingering



Double sixths



Double octaves



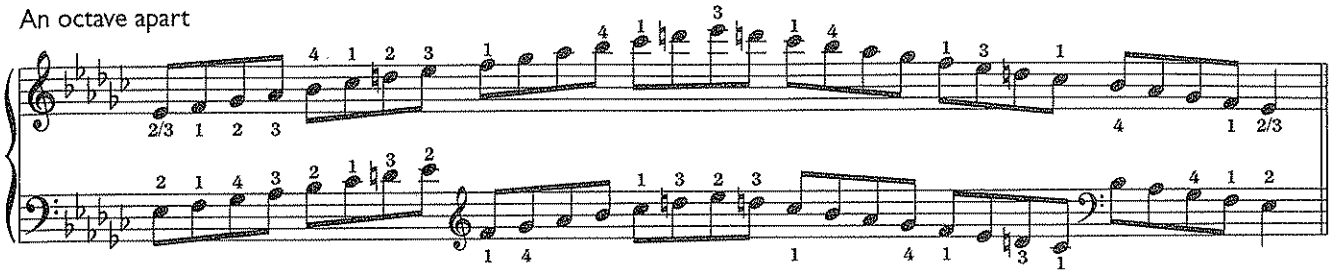
E♭

4 on RH B♭ / LH G♭

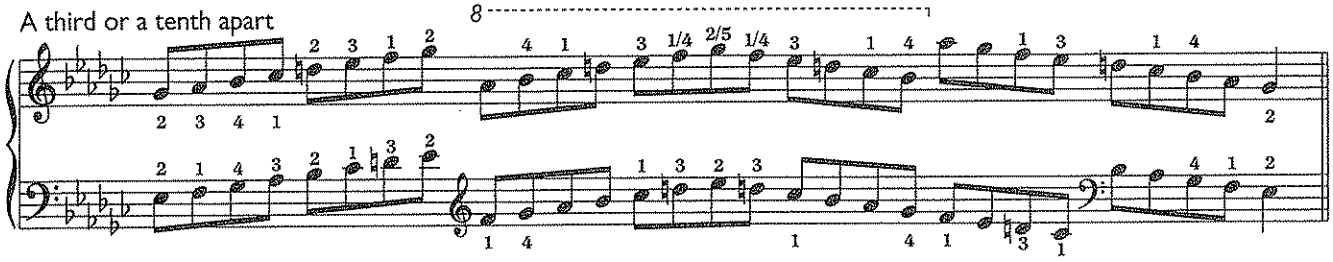
E♭ harmonic minor enharmonic D♯

Similar motion

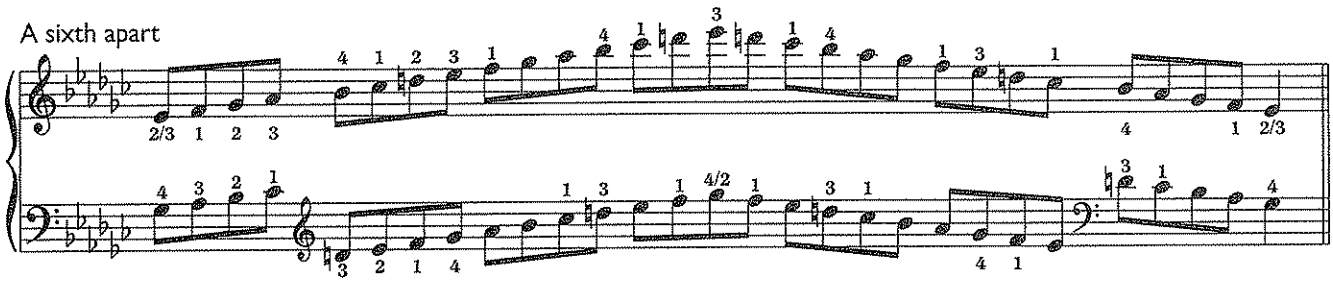
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

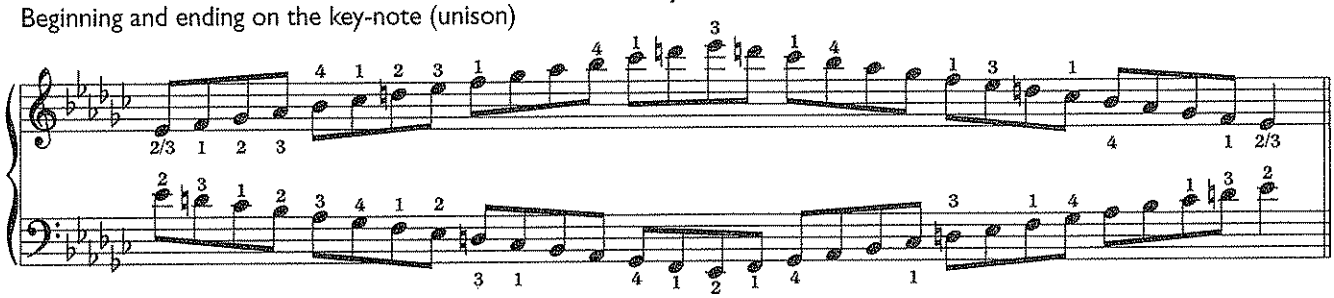


A sixth apart

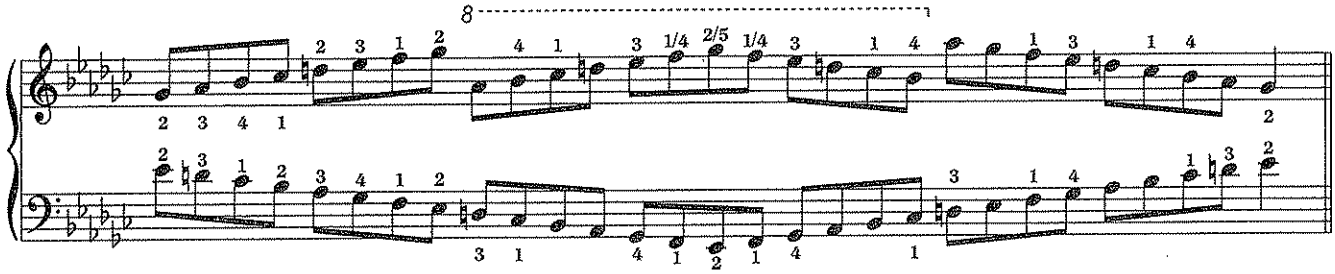


Contrary motion

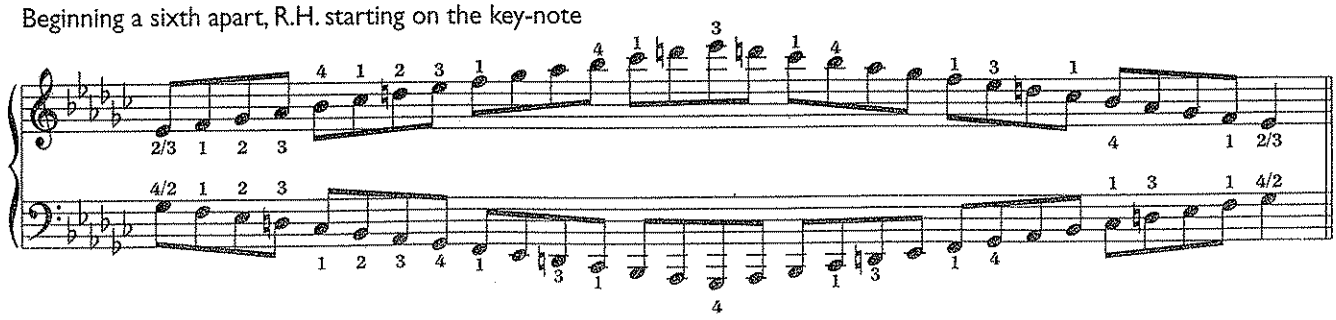
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



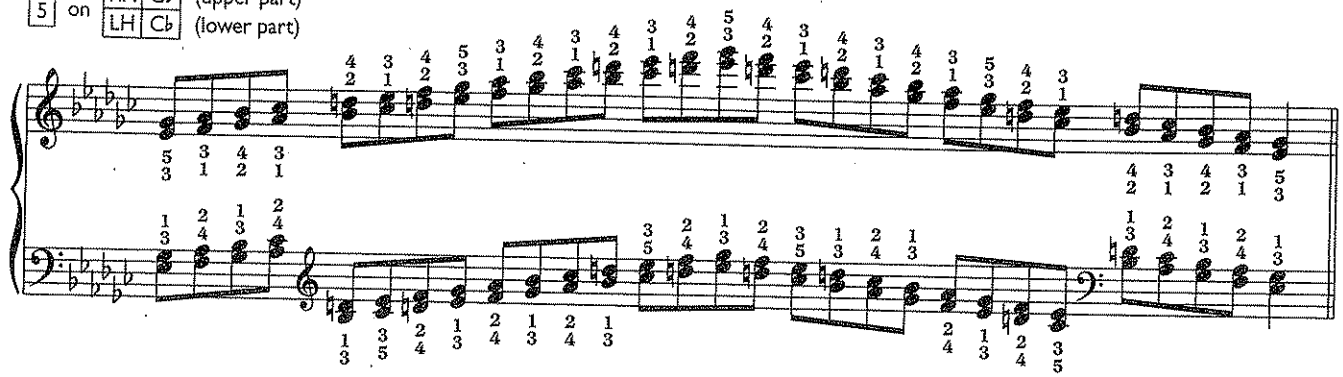
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

Standard fingering

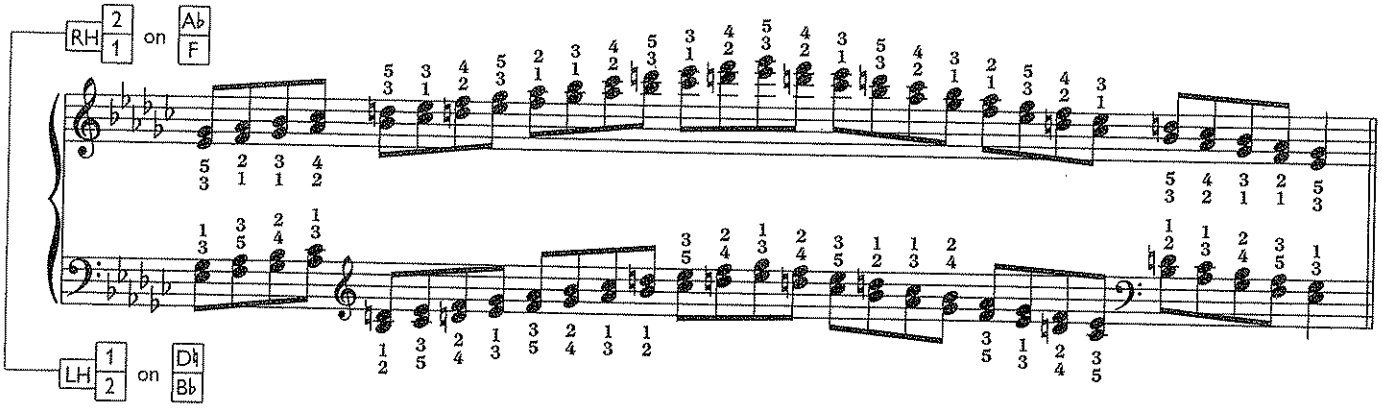
5 on RH G♭ / LH C♭ (upper part) (lower part)



Alternative fingering

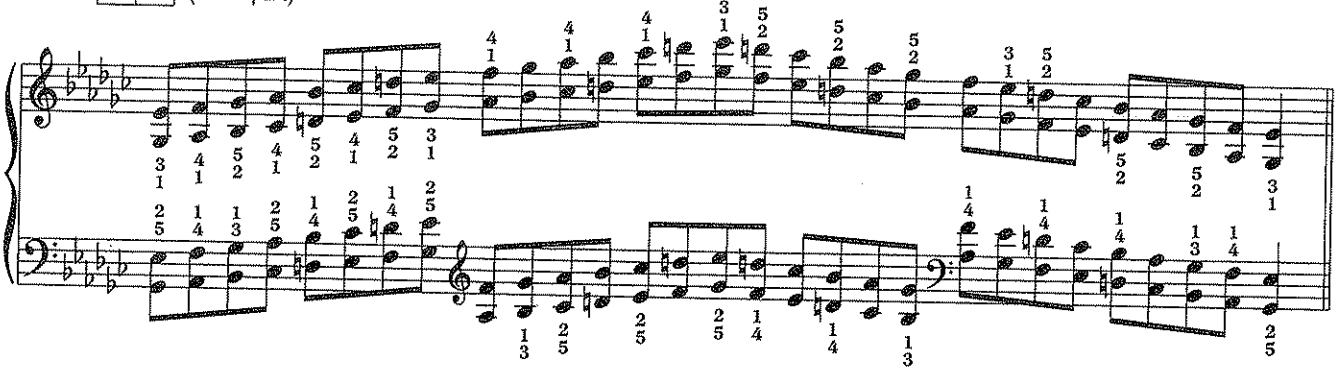
RH 2 / 1 on A♭ / F

LH 1 / 2 on D♭ / B♭

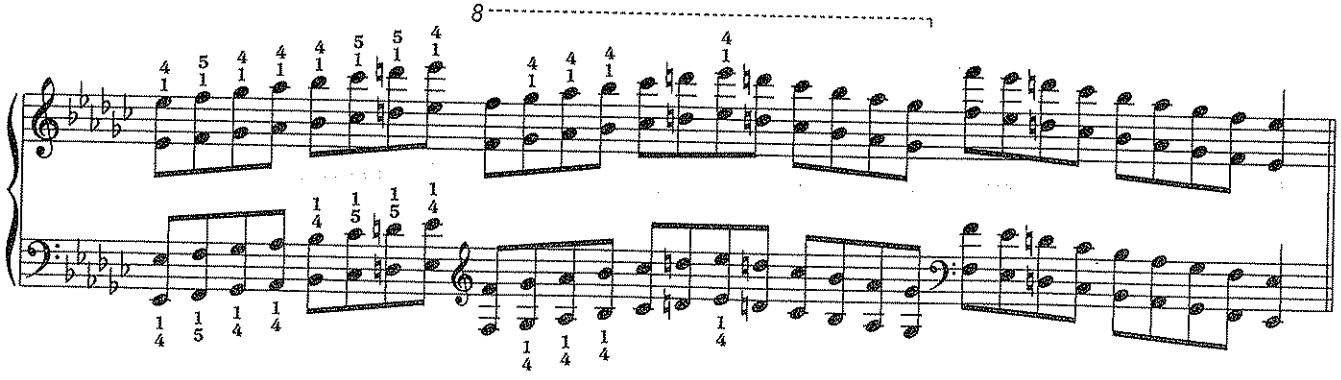


Double sixths

3 on RH E♭ / LH B♭ (upper part) (lower part)



Double octaves



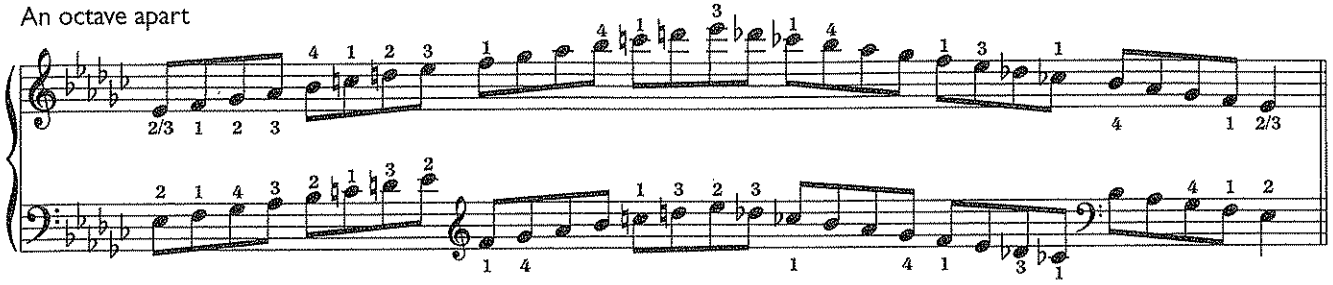
E♭

E♭ melodic minor enharmonic D♯

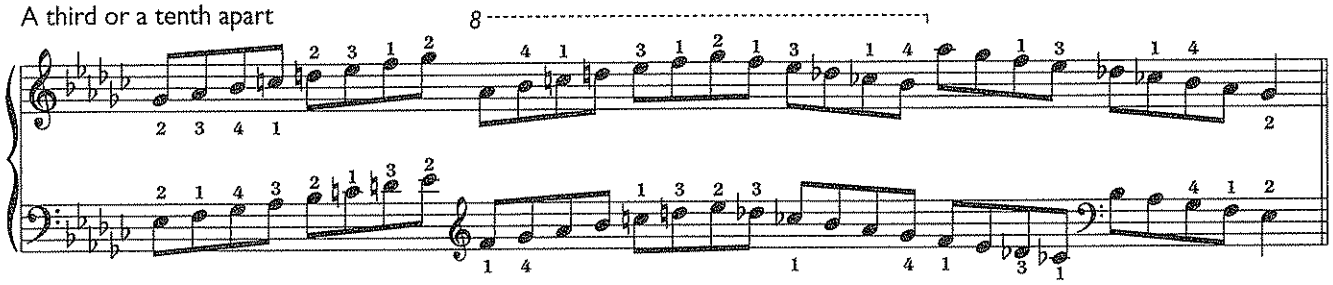
4 on | RH | B♭ | LH | G♭ |

Similar motion

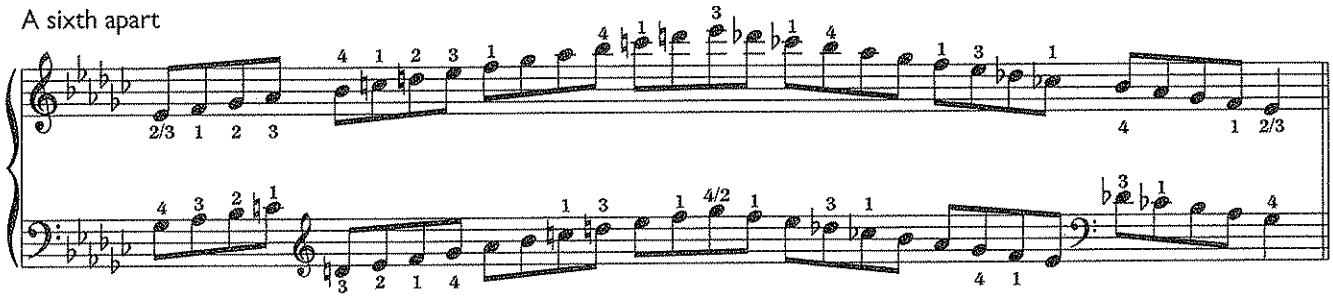
An octave apart



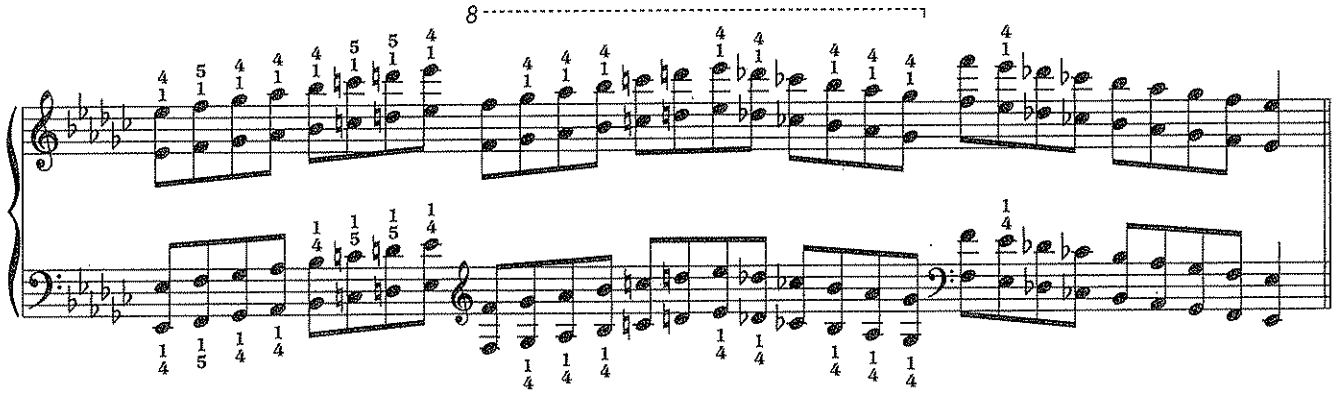
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves

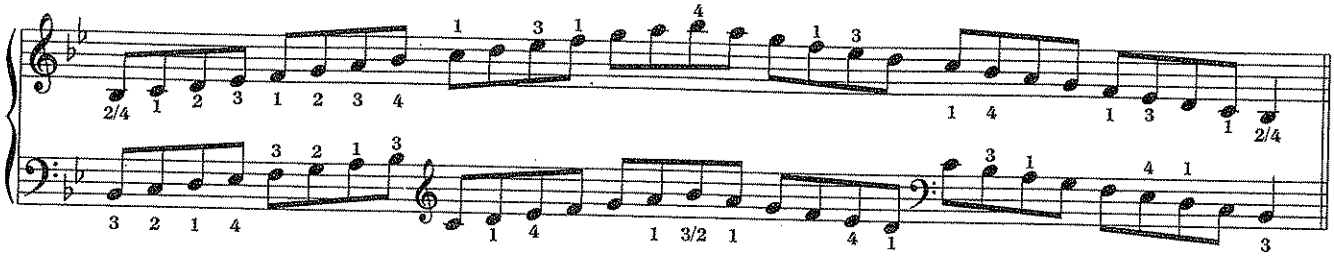


4 on | RH | B♭ | LH | E♭ |

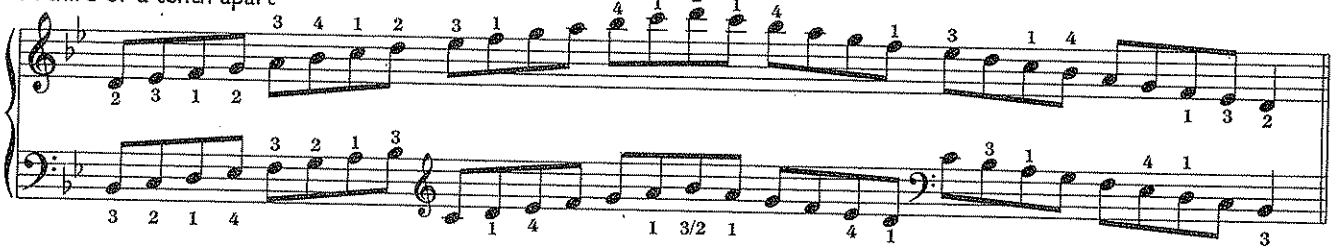
B♭ major

Similar motion

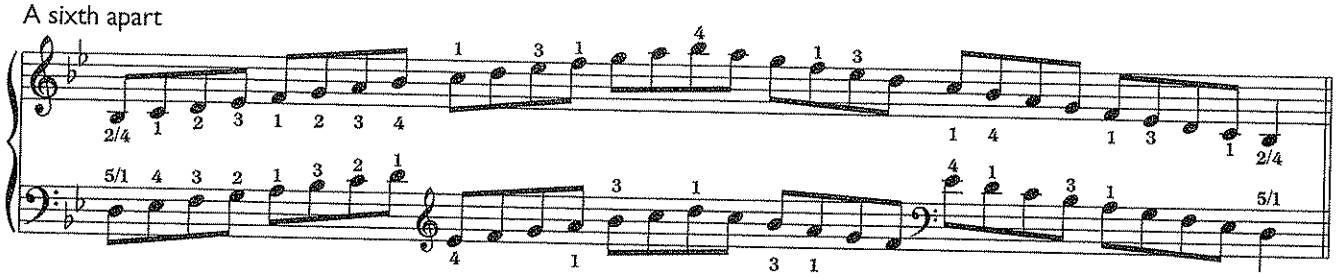
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

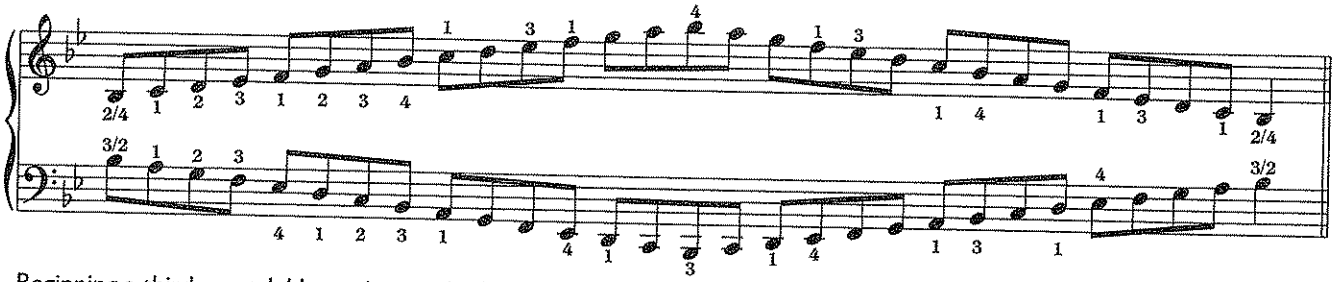


A sixth apart

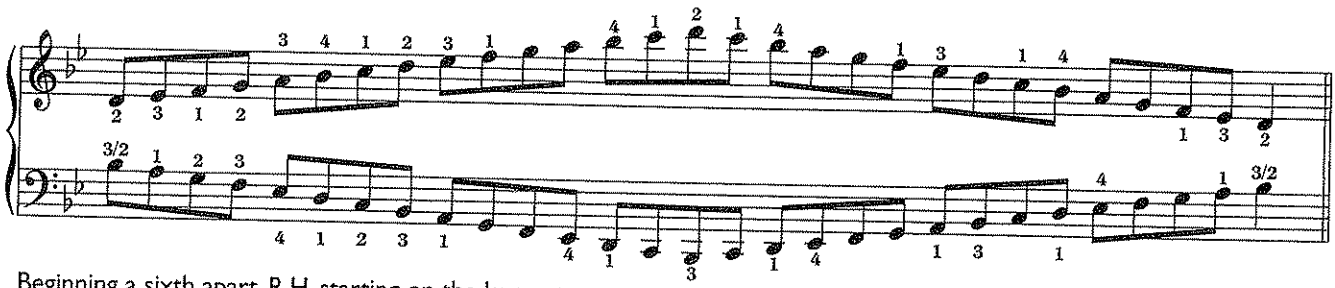


Contrary motion

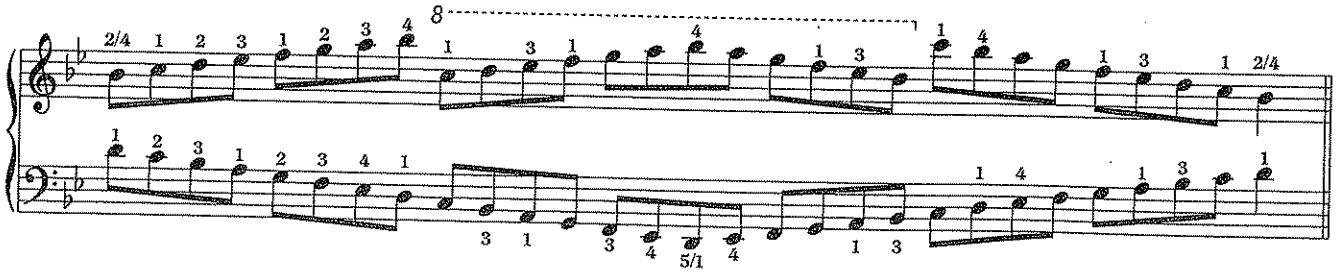
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



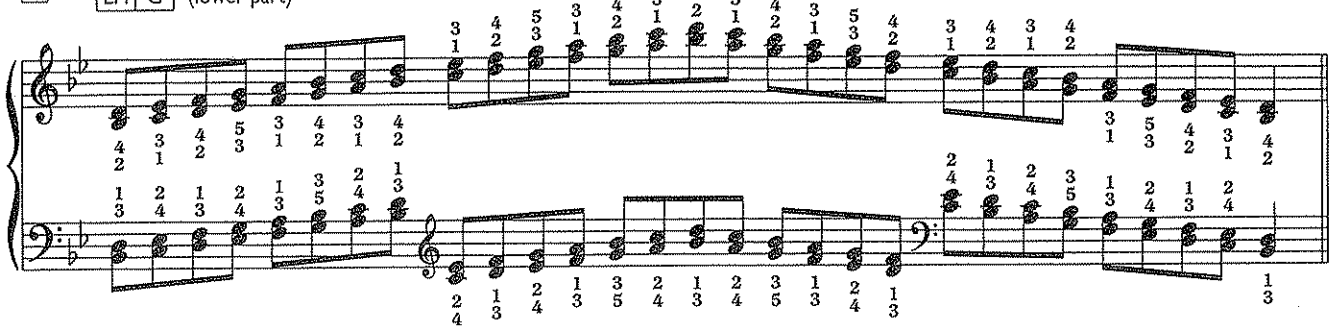
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

Standard fingering

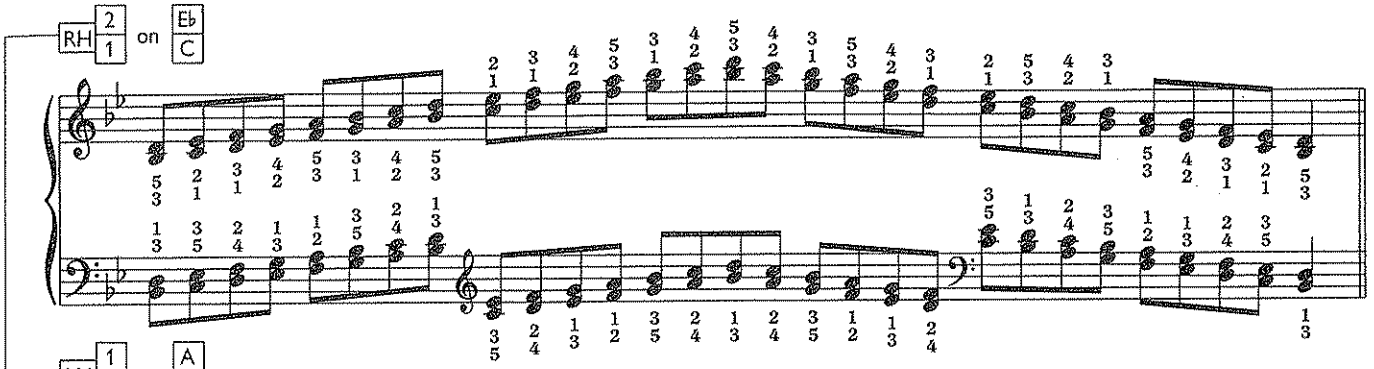
5 on RH G (upper part) / LH G (lower part)



Alternative fingering

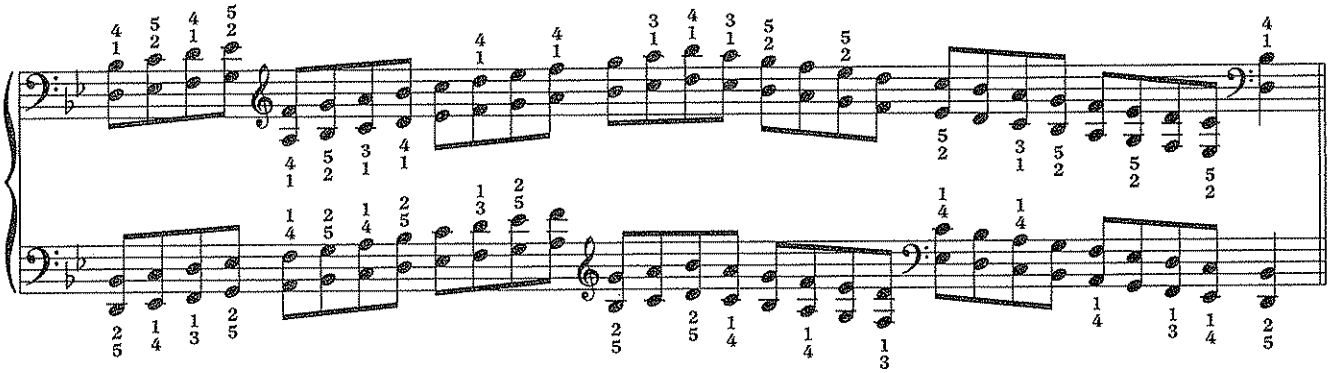
RH 2 1 on E♭ C

LH 1 2 on A F

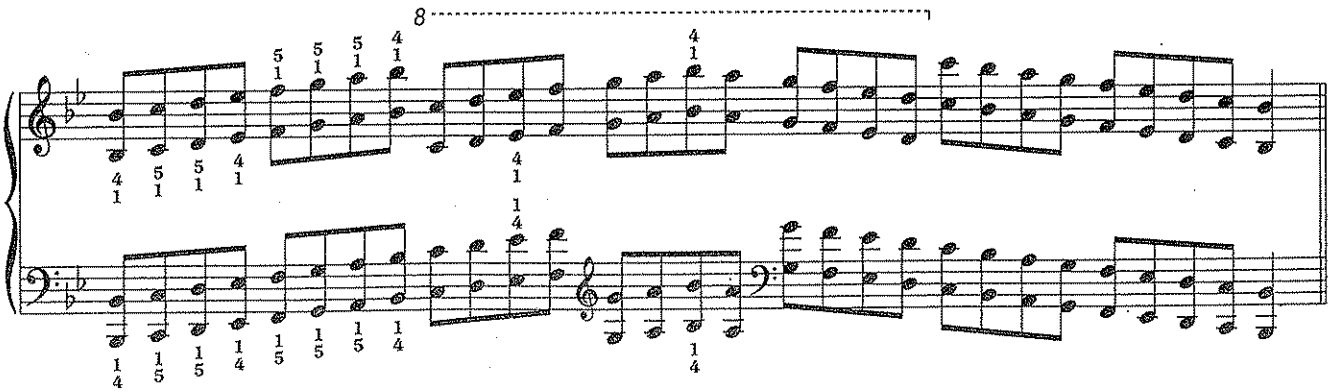


Double sixths

3 on RH A (upper part) / LH F (lower part)



Double octaves

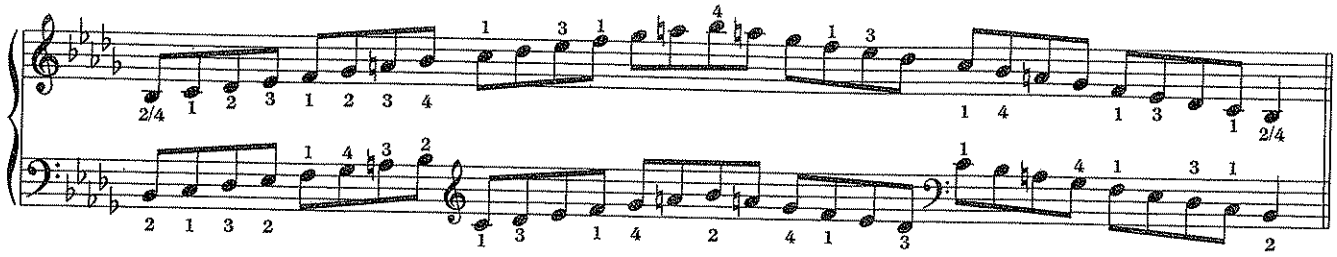


4 on RH B♭ LH G♭

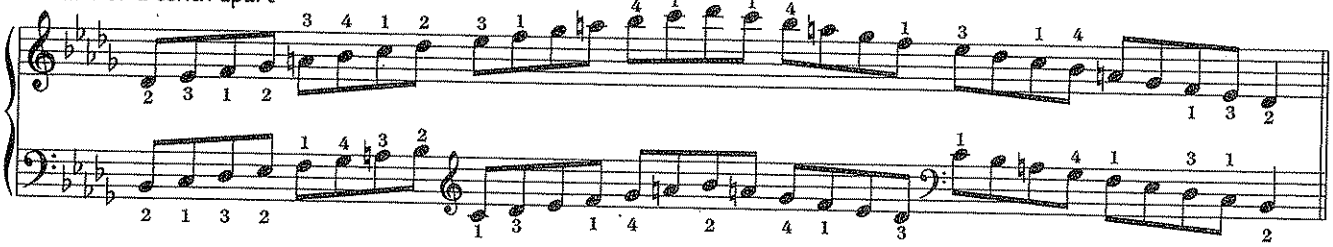
B♭ harmonic minor

Similar motion

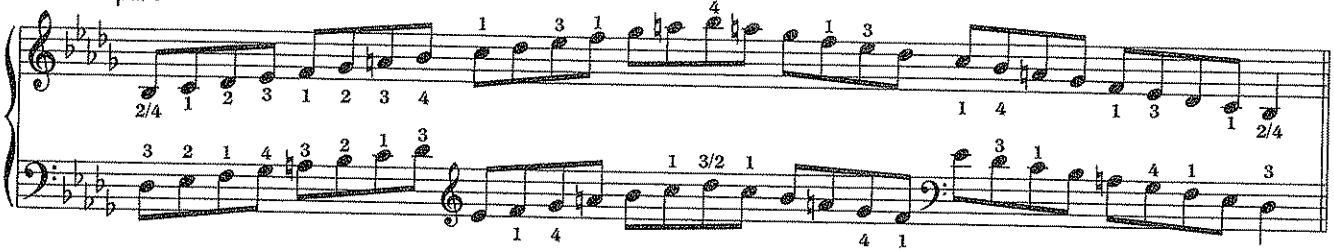
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

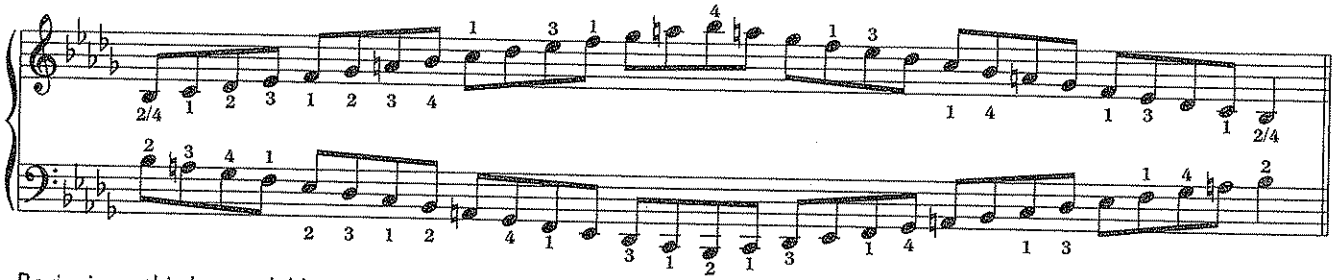


A sixth apart

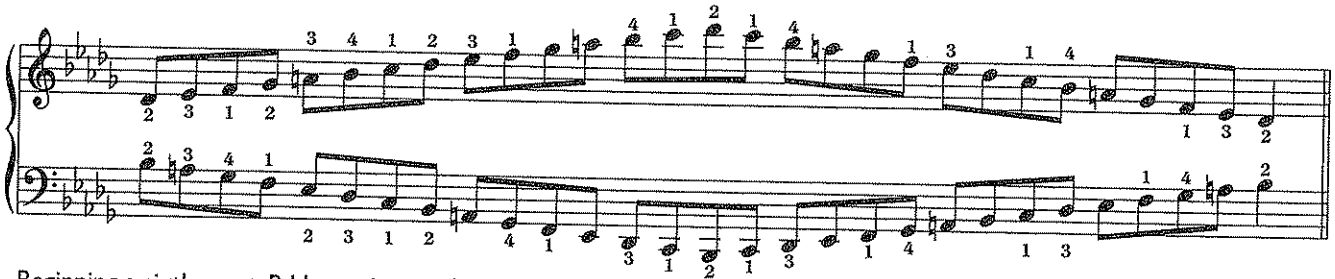


Contrary motion

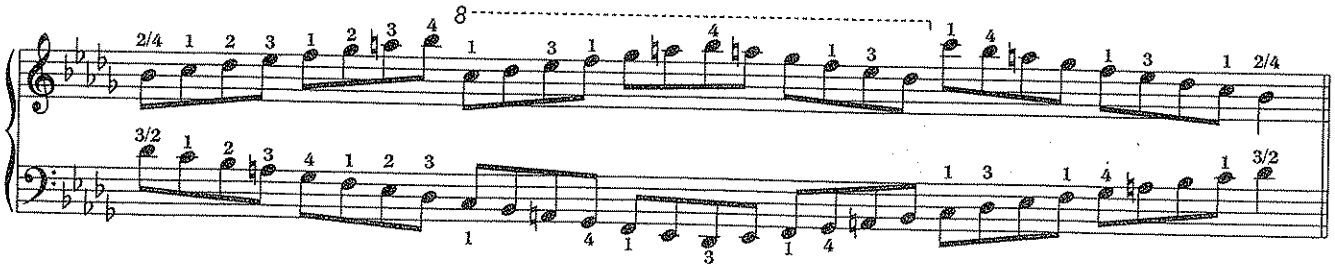
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note

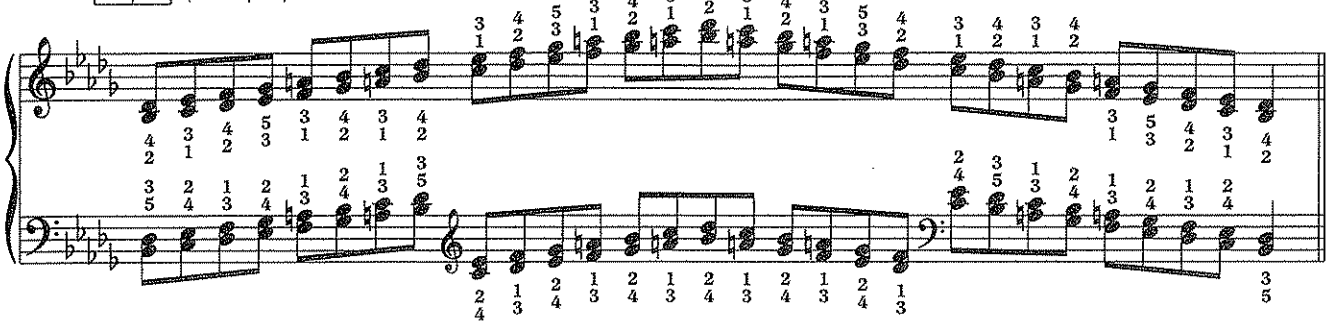


B♭

Double thirds

Standard fingering

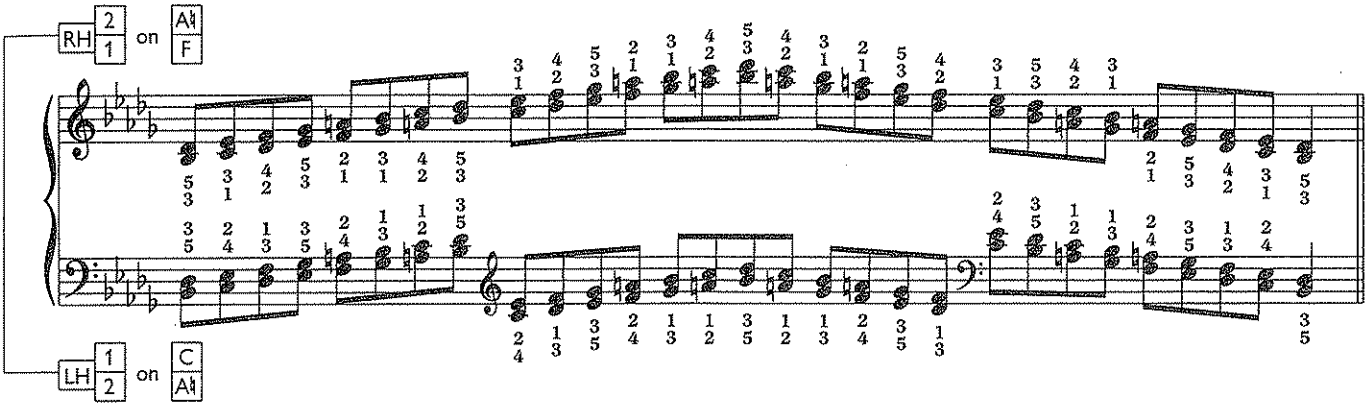
5 on RH G♭ / LH B♭ (upper part / lower part)



Alternative fingering

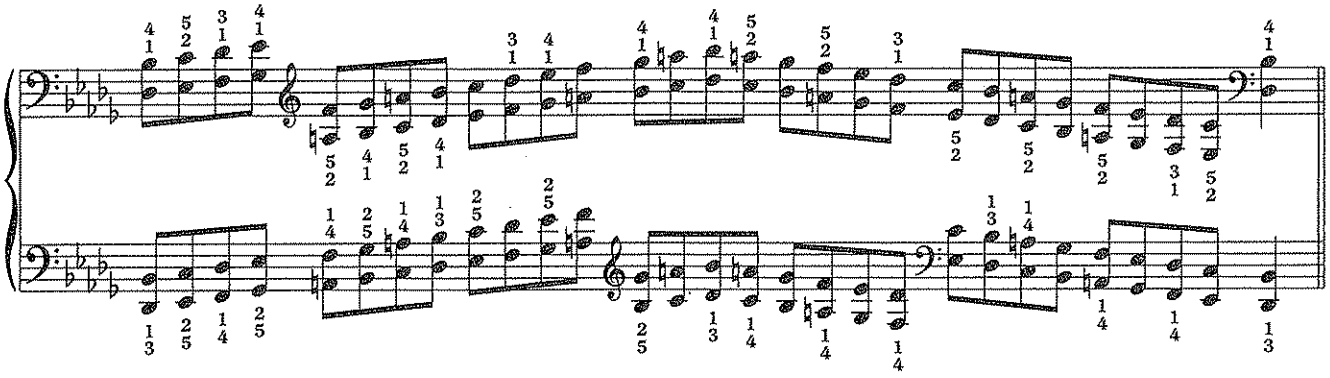
RH 2 1 on A♭ F

LH 1 2 on C A♭

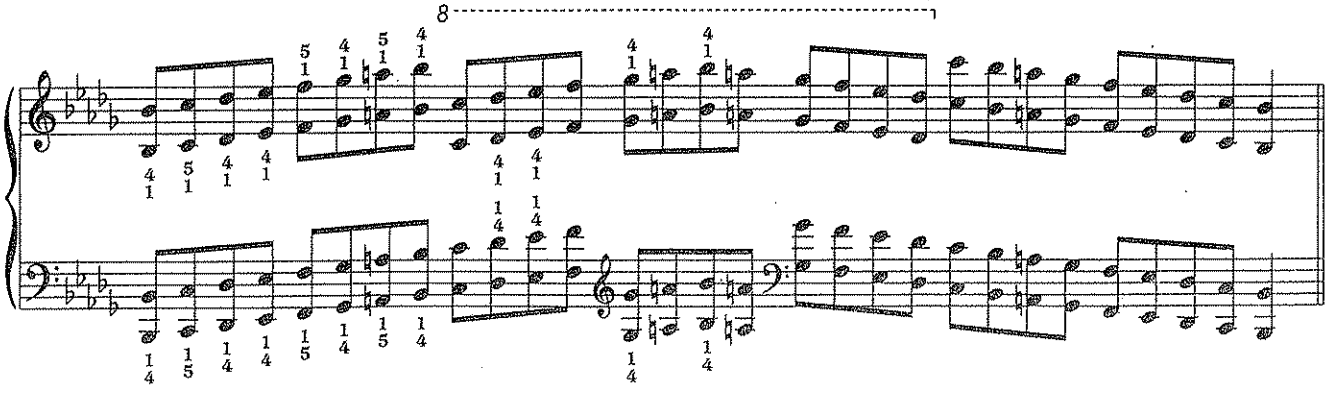


Double sixths

3 on RH D♭ / LH D♭ (upper part / lower part)



Double octaves

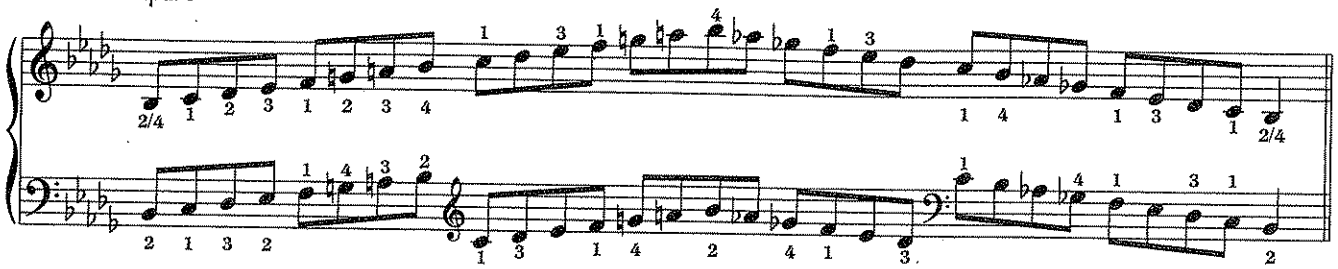


B♭ melodic minor

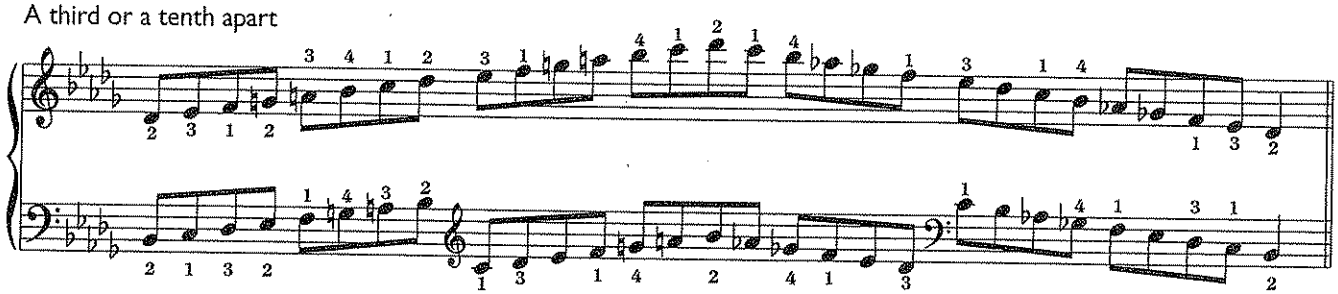
Similar motion

4 on RH B♭ / LH G♯↑/G♭↓

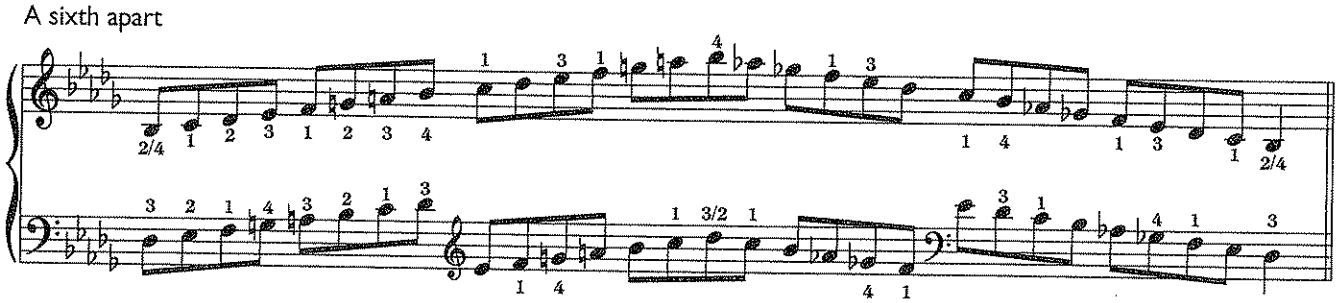
An octave apart



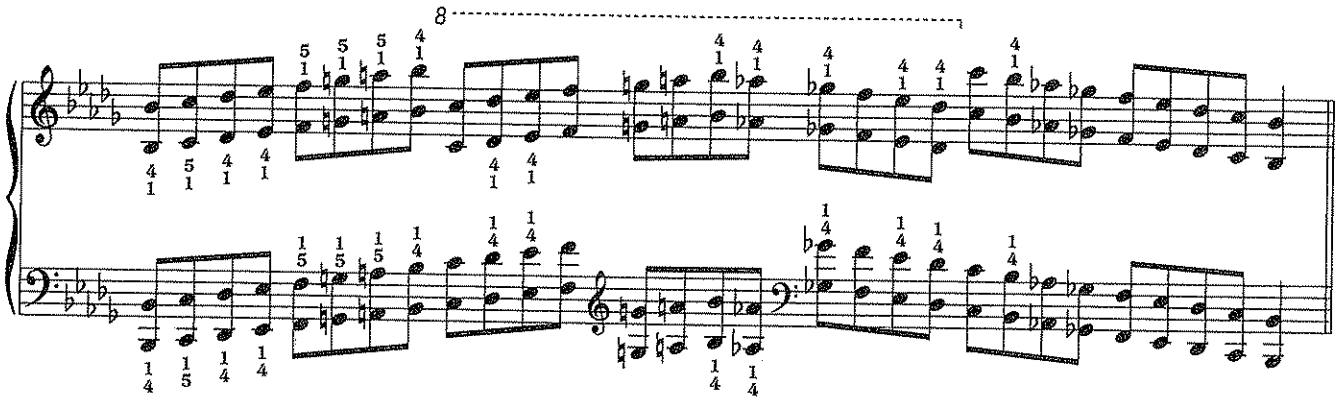
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves



4 on RH Bb / LH G and on the highest F

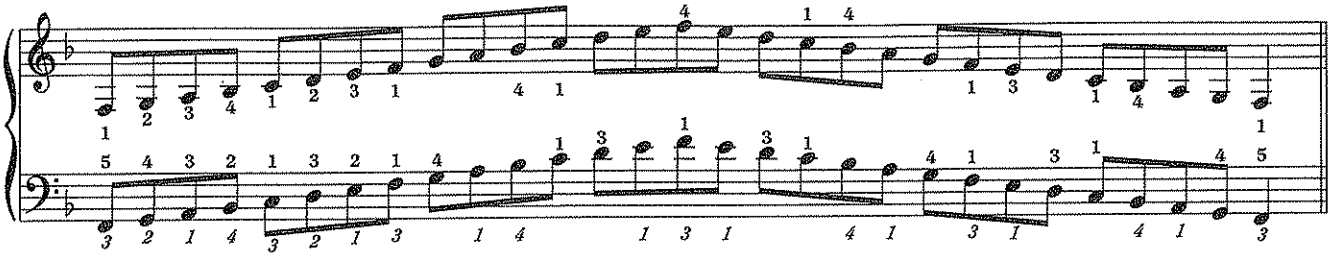
F major

Similar motion

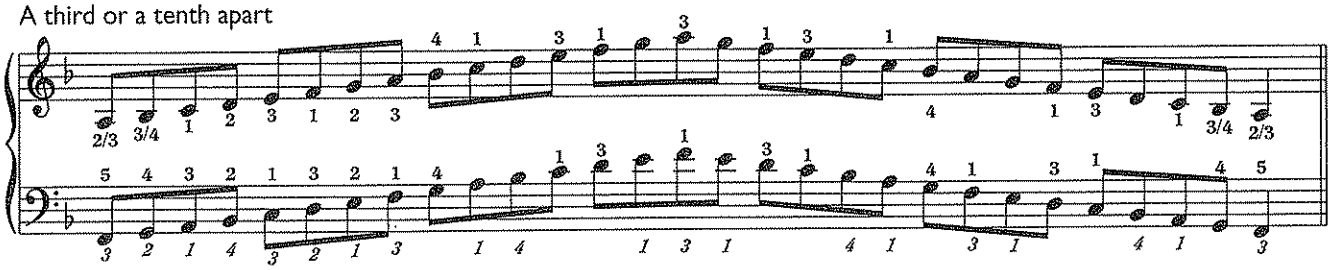
Alternative fingering

LH 4 on Bb

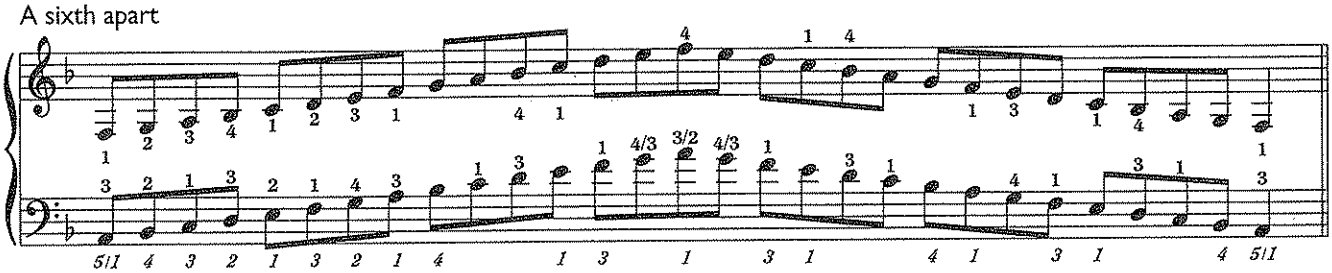
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

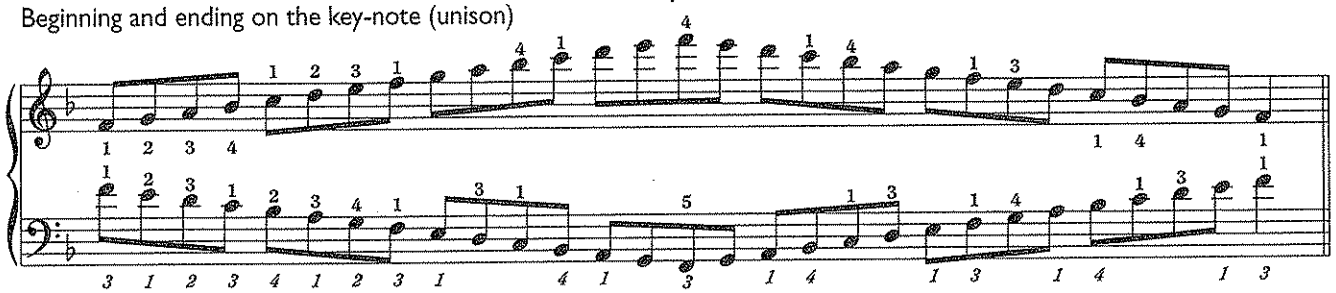


A sixth apart

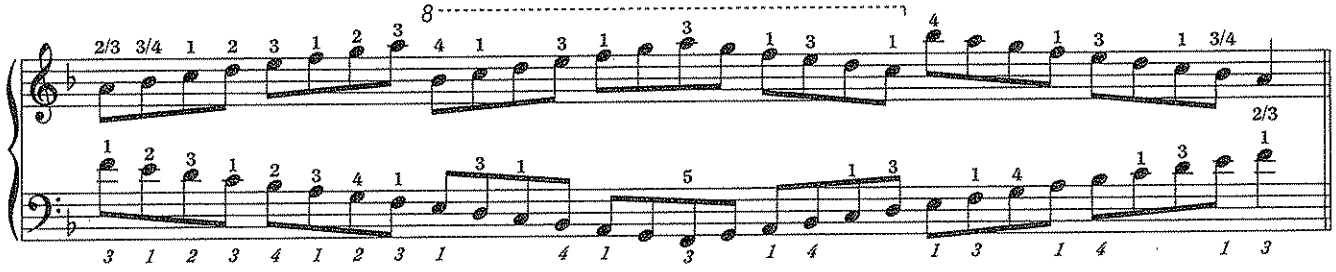


Contrary motion

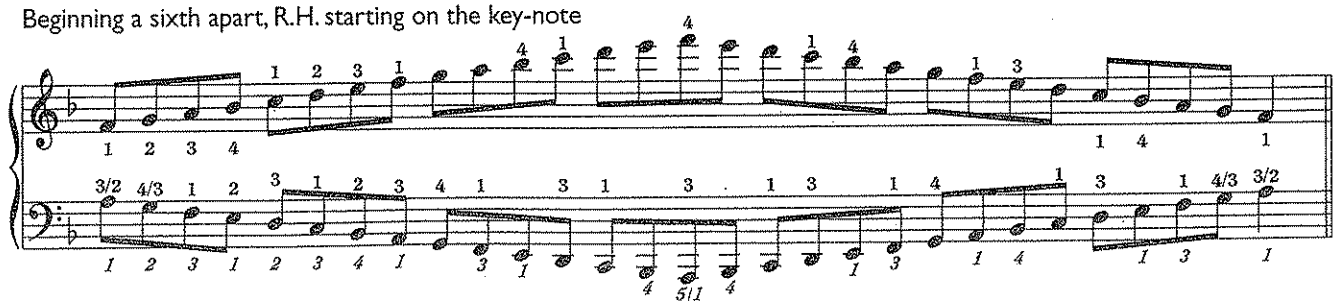
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



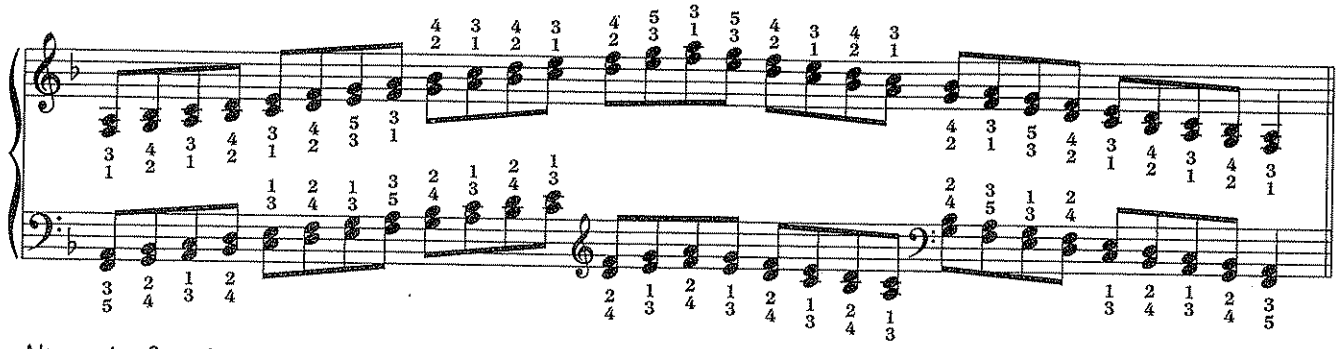
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

Standard fingering

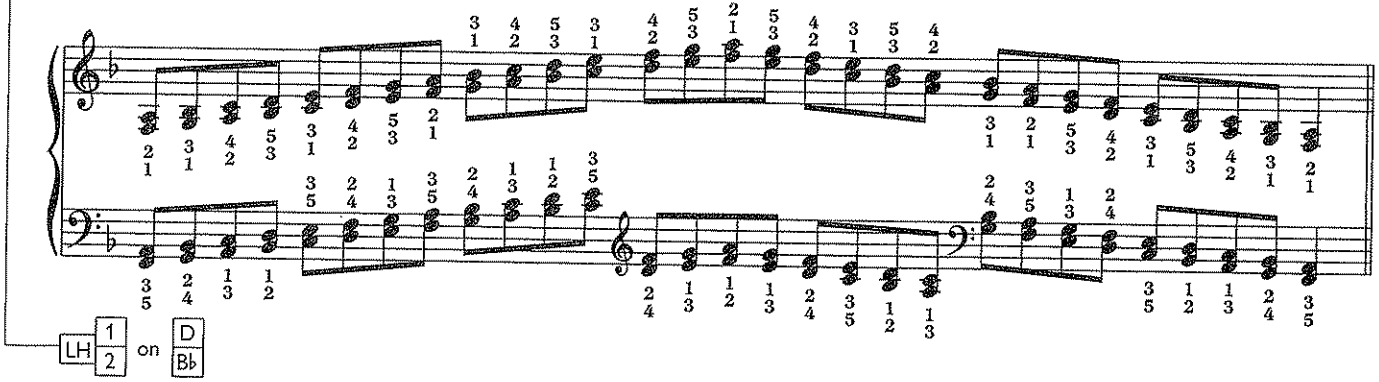
5 on RH G (upper part) / LH F (lower part)



Alternative fingering

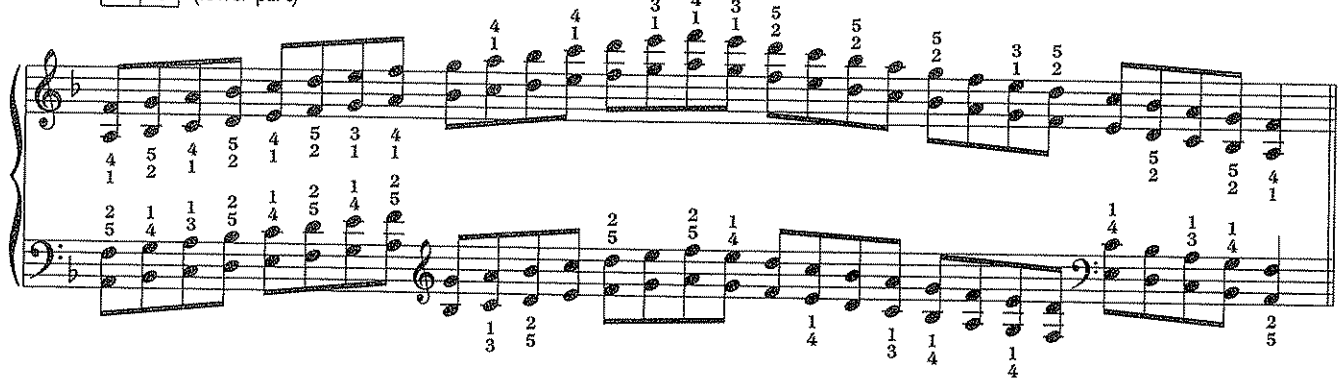
RH 2 1 on A F

LH 1 2 on D B♭

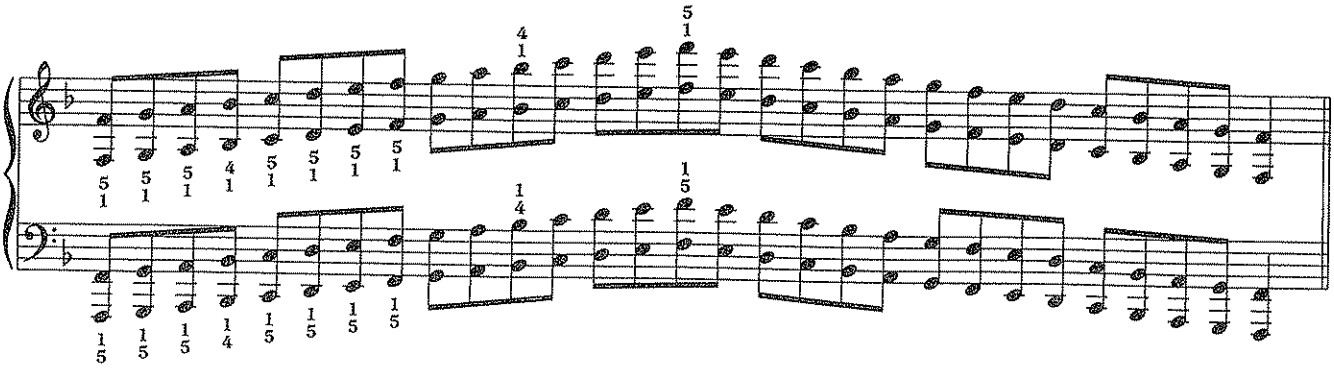


Double sixths

3 on RH E (upper part) / LH C (lower part)



Double octaves



F harmonic minor

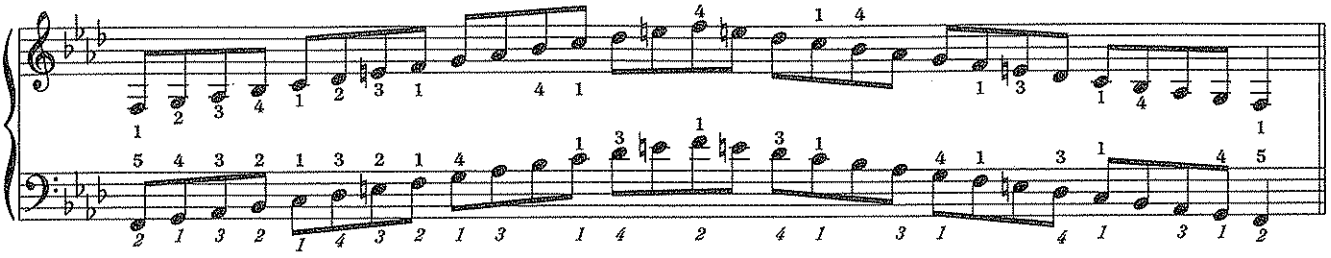
4 on RH B♭ / LH G and on the highest F

Similar motion

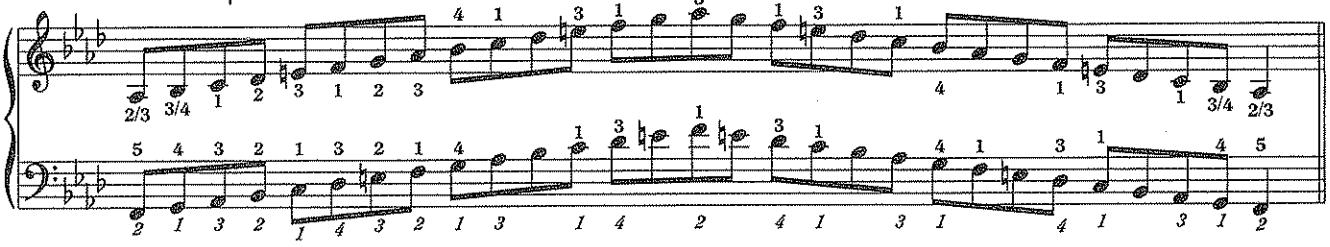
Alternative fingering

LH 4 on D♭

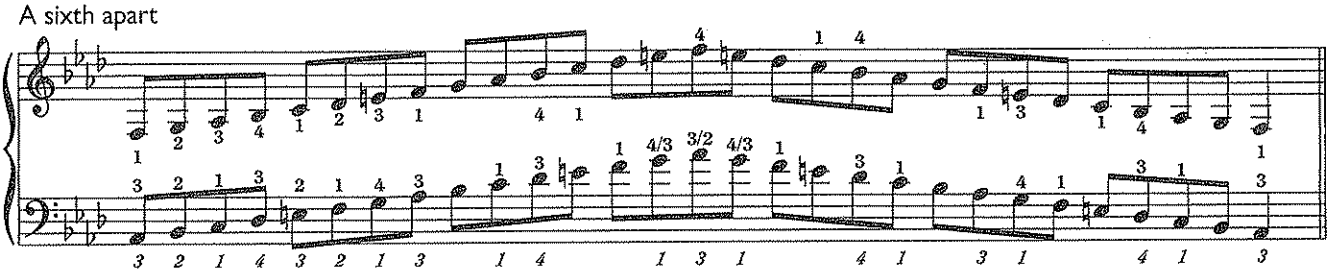
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

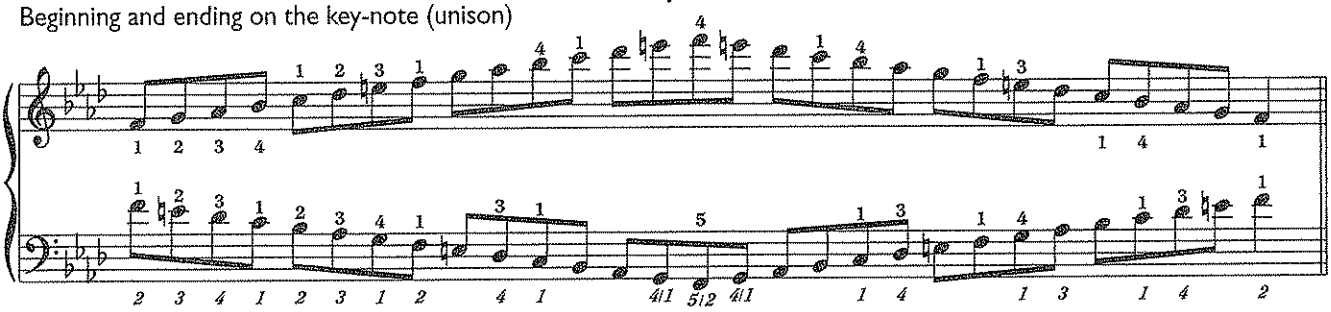


A sixth apart

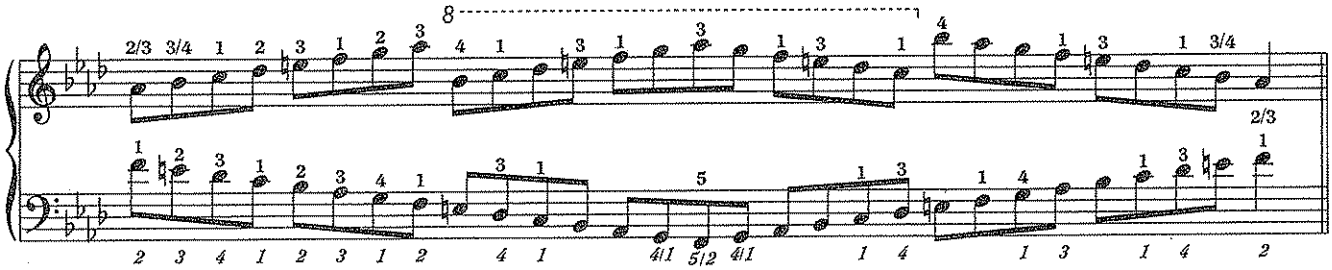


Contrary motion

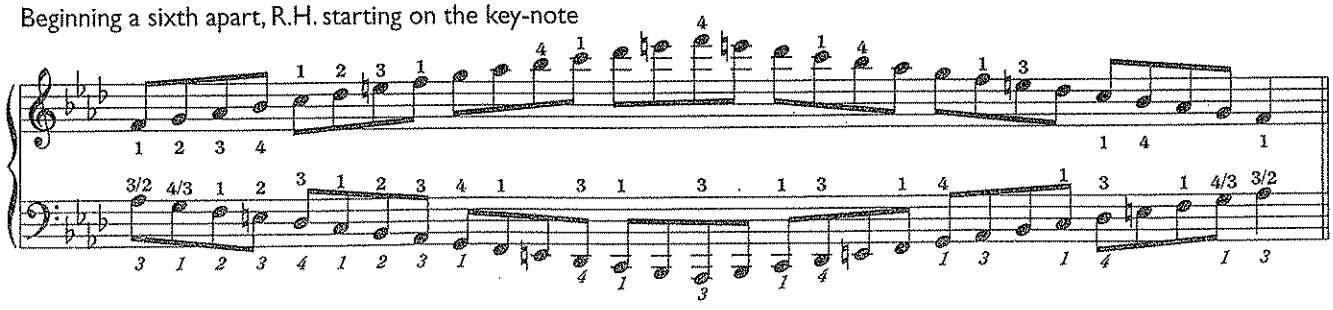
Beginning and ending on the key-note (unison)



Beginning a third apart, L.H. starting on the key-note



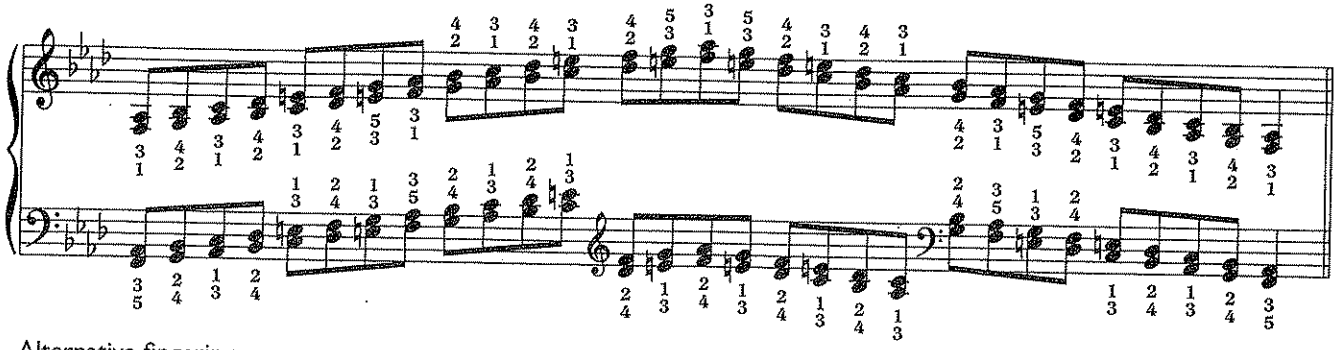
Beginning a sixth apart, R.H. starting on the key-note



Double thirds

Standard fingering

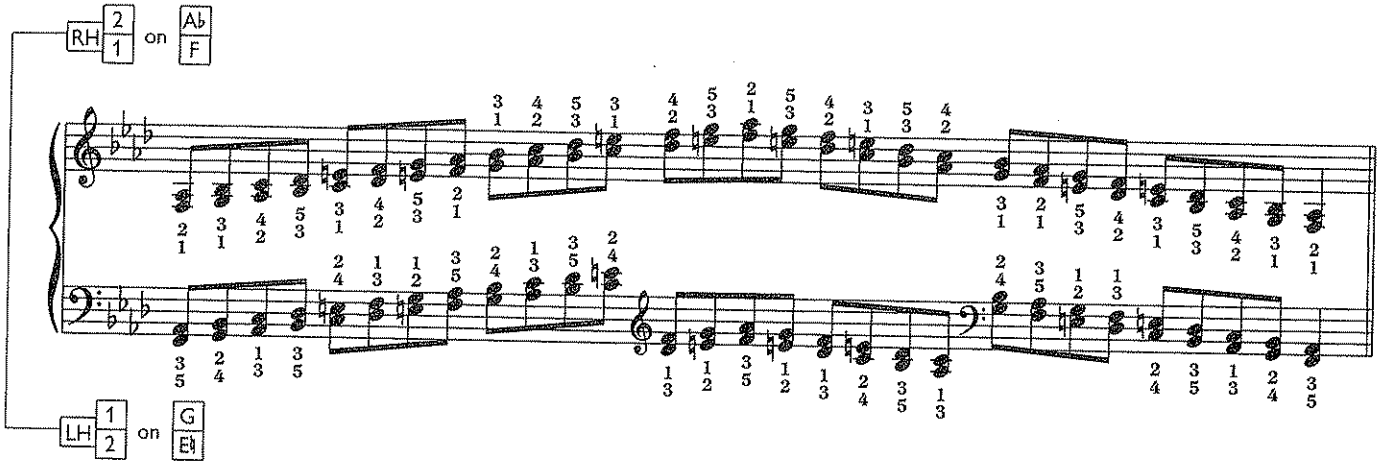
5 on RH G (upper part) / LH F (lower part)



Alternative fingering

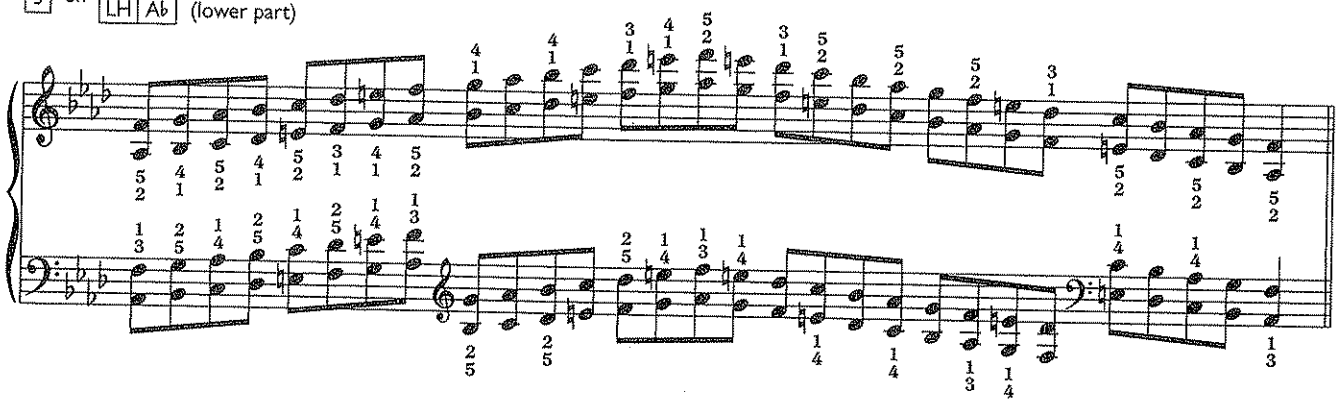
RH 2/1 on Ab/F

LH 1/2 on G/E♮

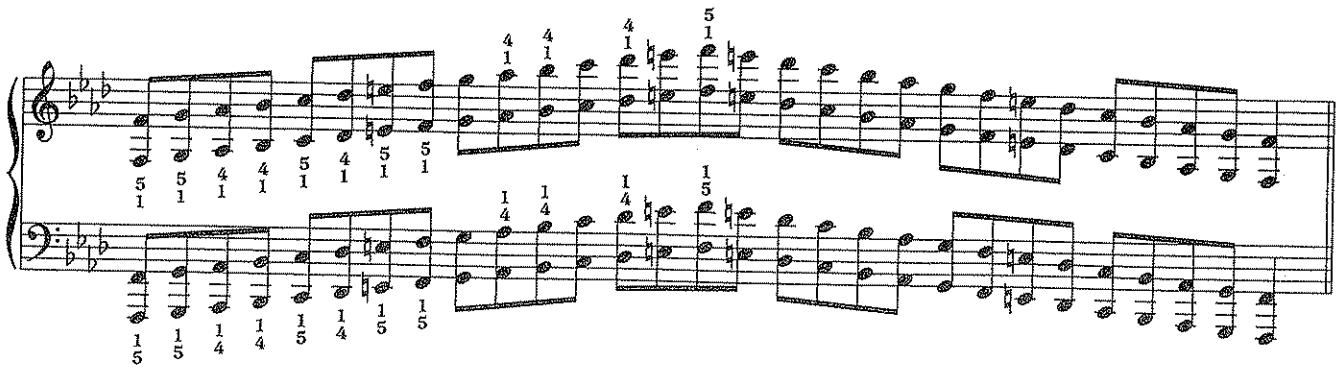


Double sixths

3 on RH Db (upper part) / LH Ab (lower part)



Double octaves



F melodic minor

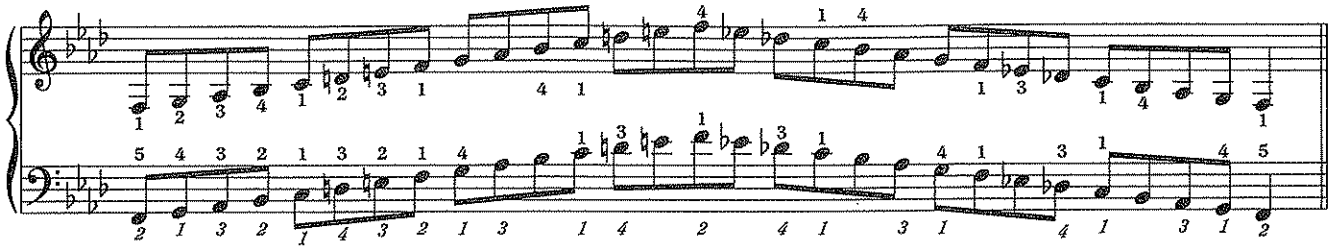
Similar motion

4 on RH B♭ / LH G and on the highest F

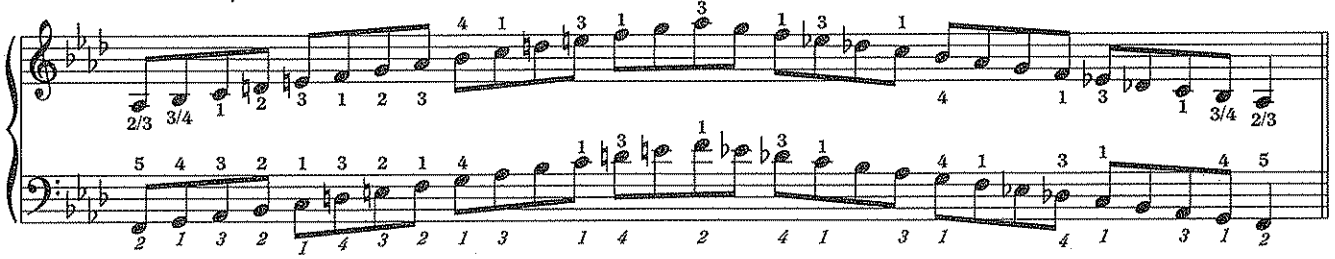
Alternative fingering

LH 4 on D♮↑/D♭↓

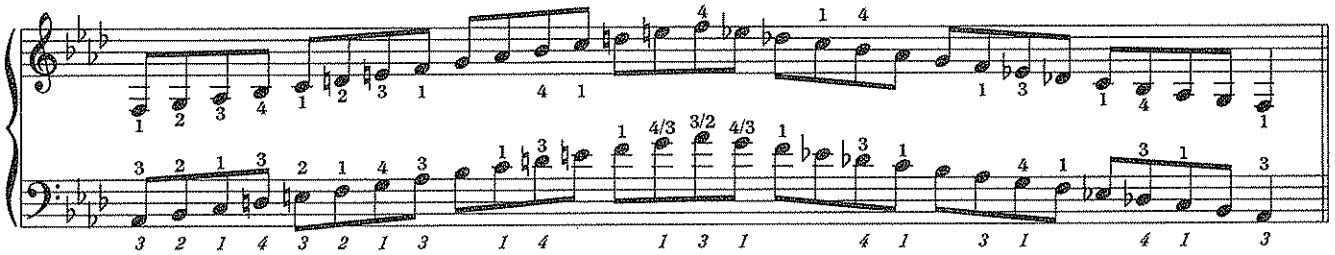
An octave apart



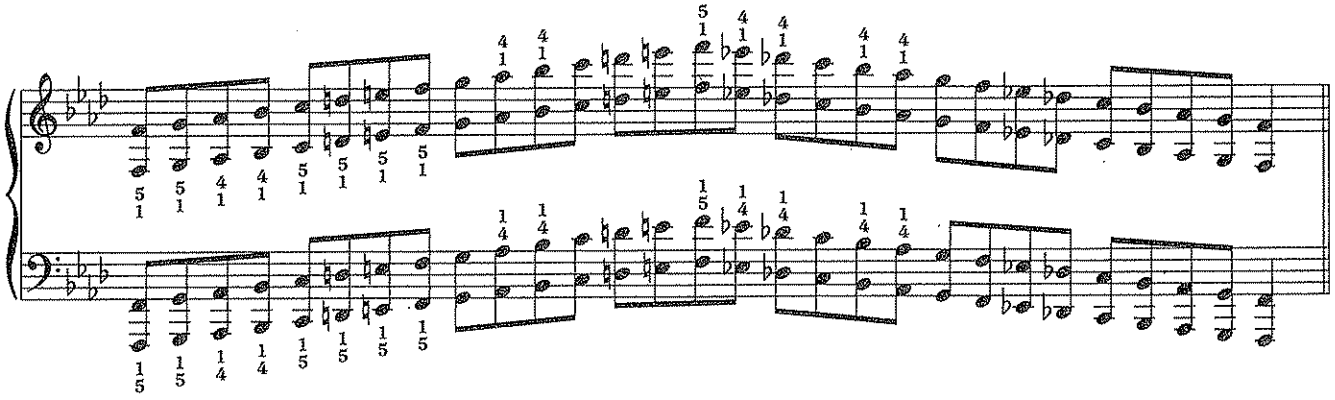
A third or a tenth apart



A sixth apart



Double octaves



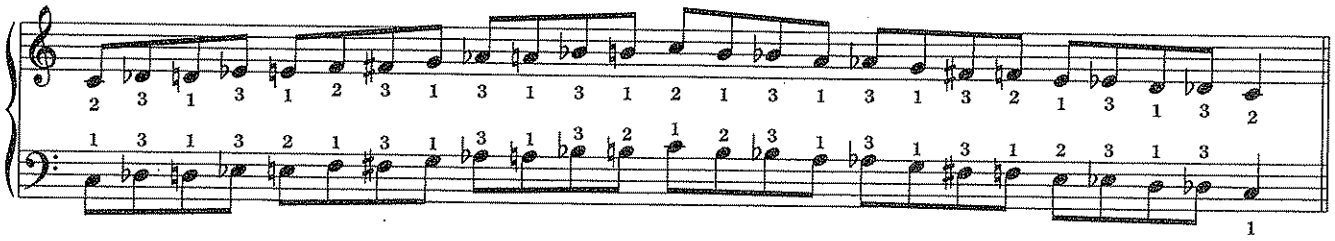
Chromatic scales

The chromatic scale should be practised starting on any note. The following examples are a sufficient guide as each note retains the same fingering regardless of the starting note.

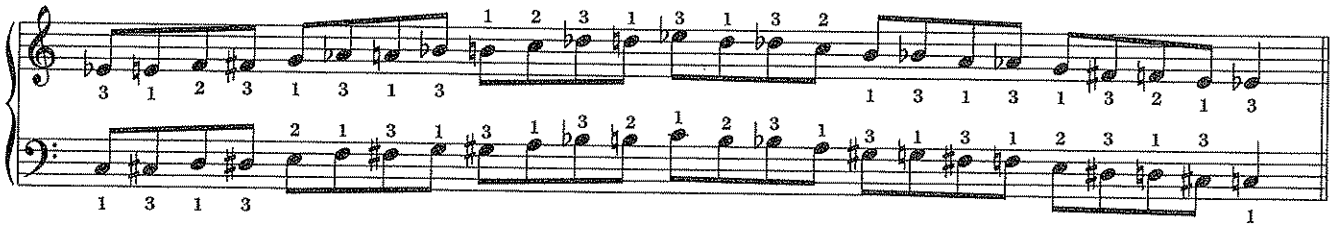
3rd finger on every black key

Similar motion

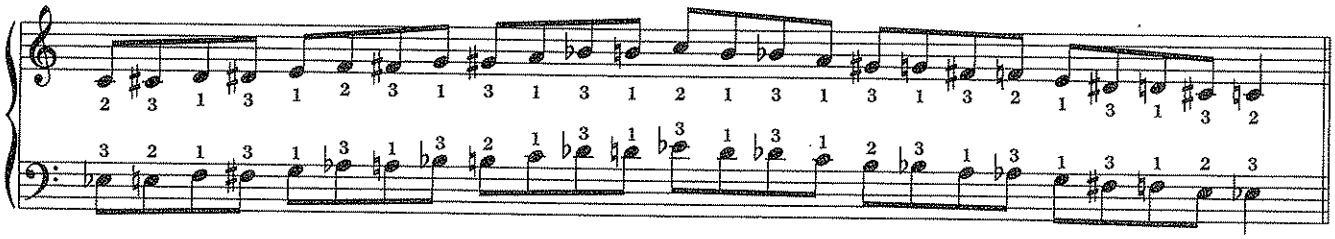
An octave apart



A minor third or a tenth apart

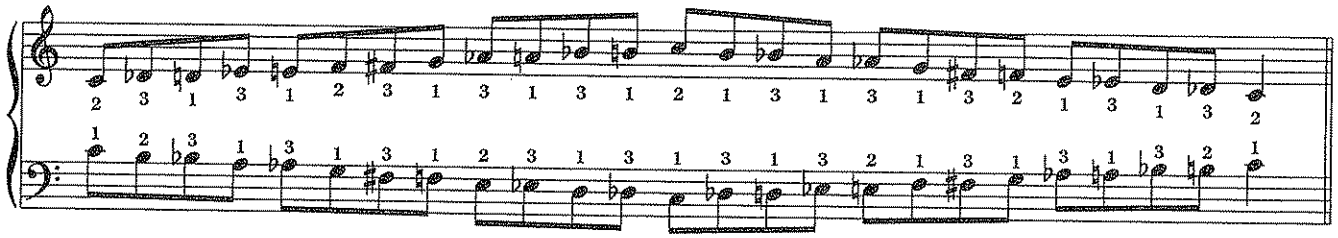


A major sixth apart

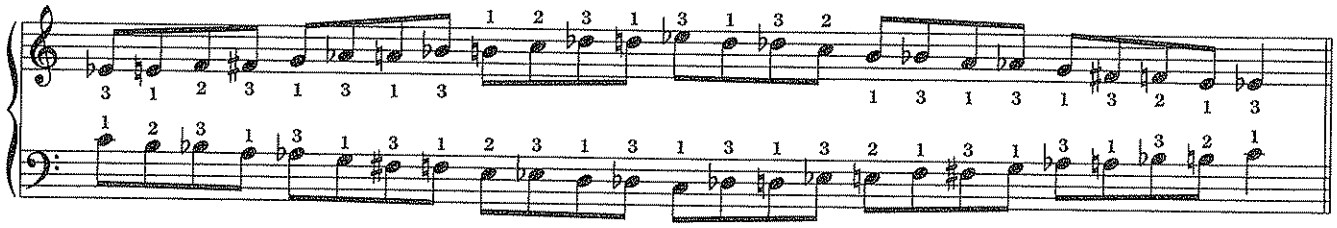


Contrary motion

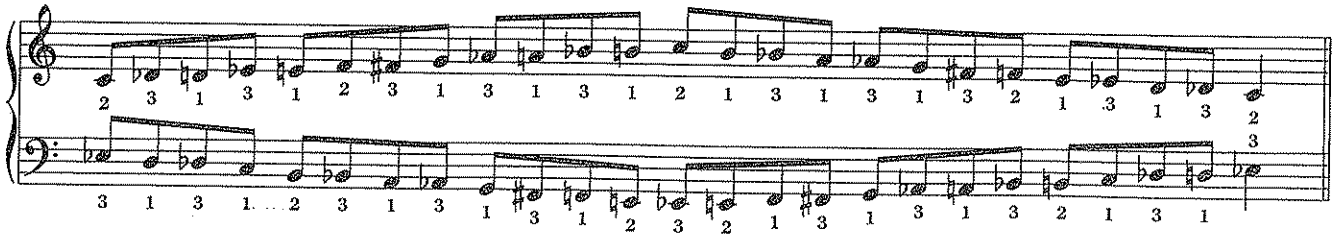
Beginning and ending on the same note



Beginning and ending a minor third apart

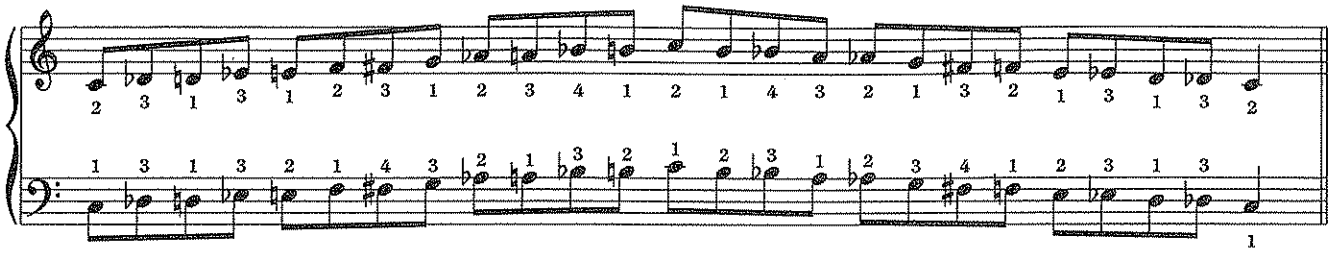


Beginning and ending a major sixth apart

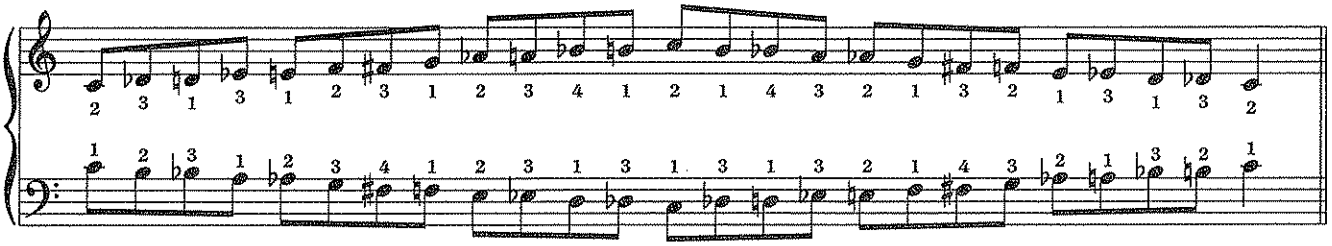


Alternative fingering: similar motion

4 on | RH | B♭ |
|---|---|
| LH | F♯ |

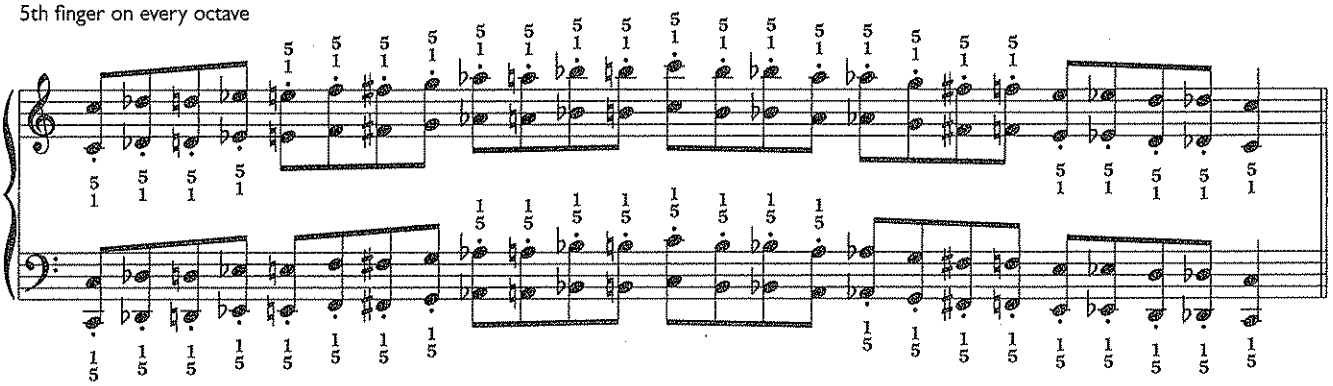


Alternative fingering: contrary motion

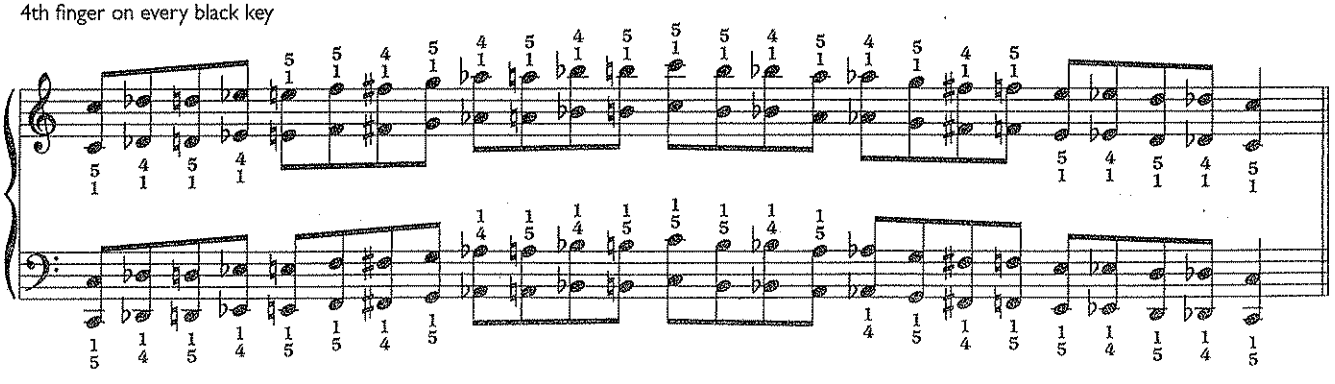


Double octaves

5th finger on every octave

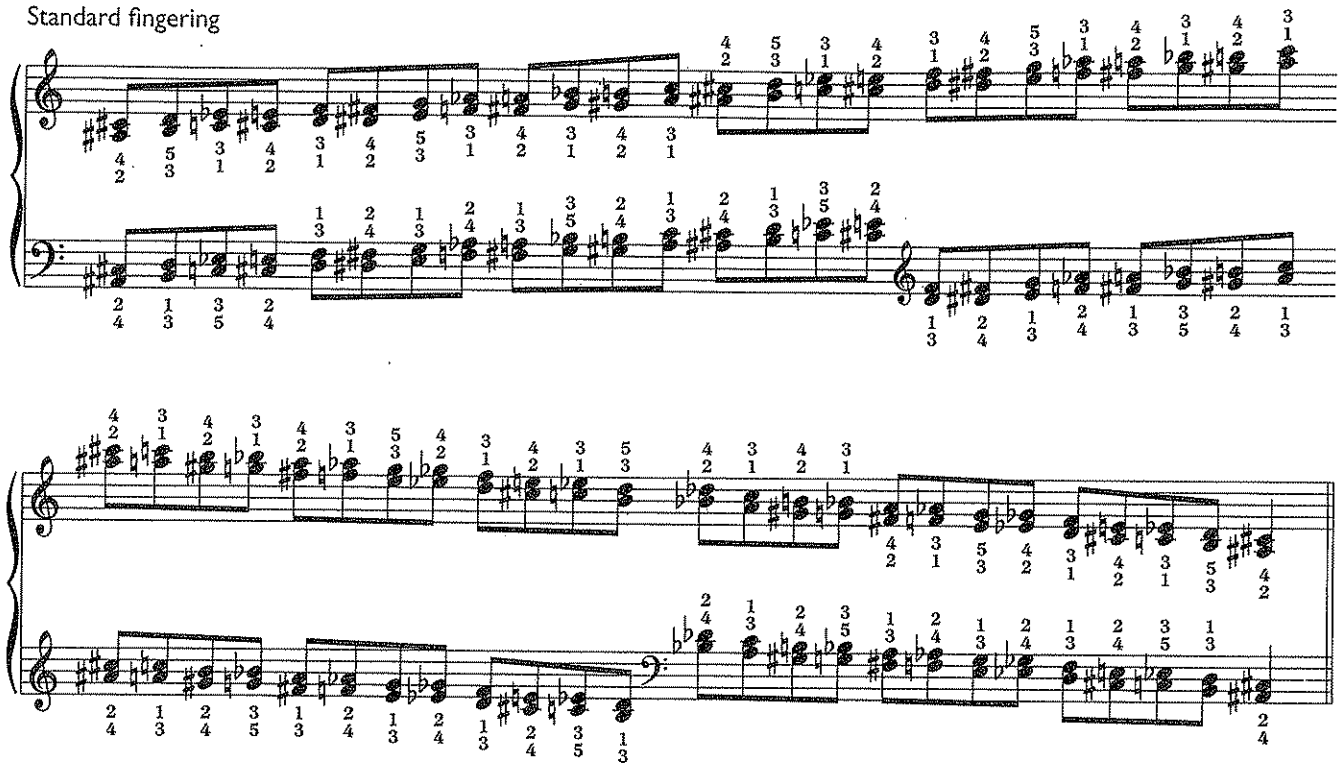


4th finger on every black key

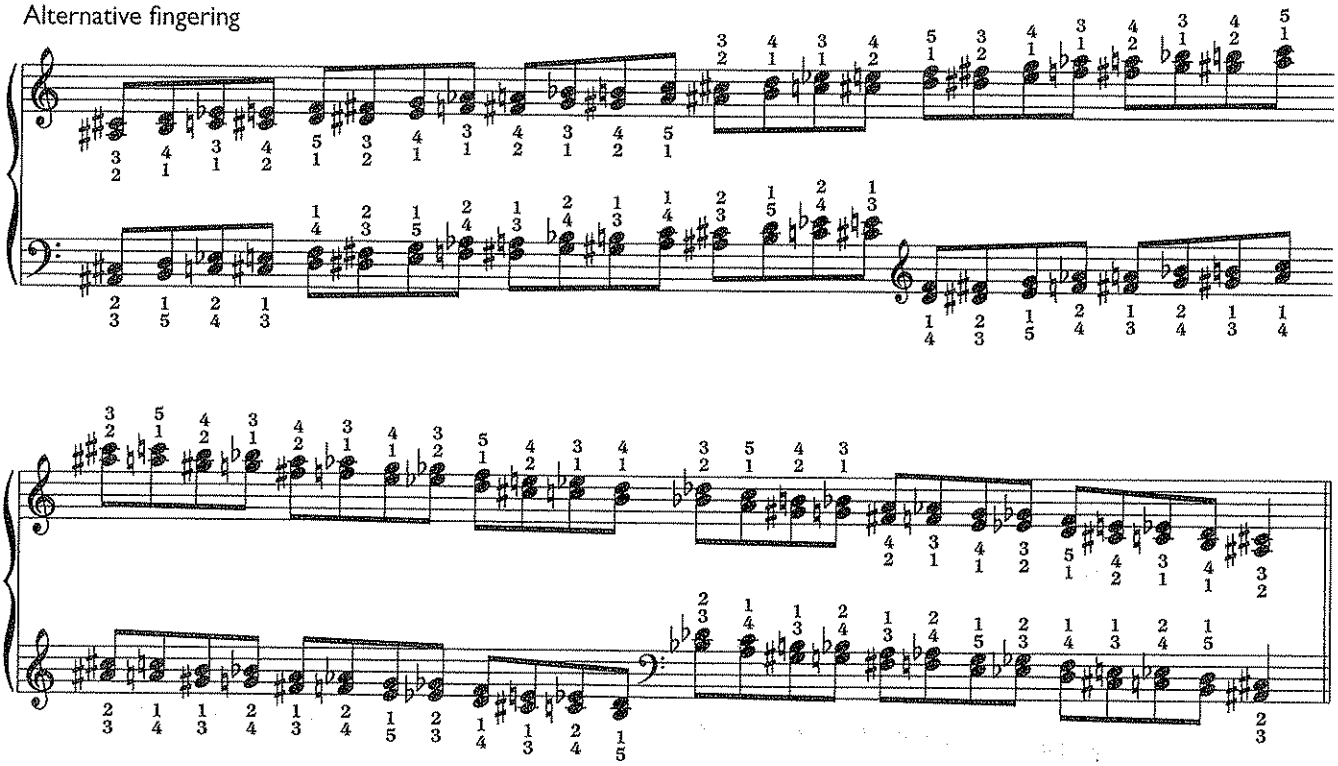


Double thirds

Standard fingering



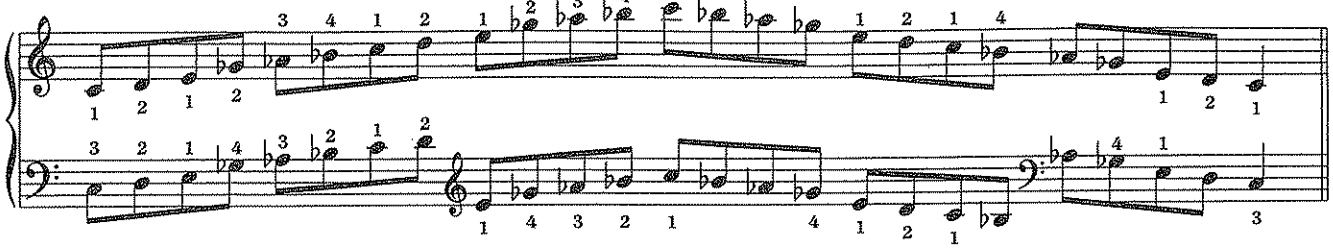
Alternative fingering



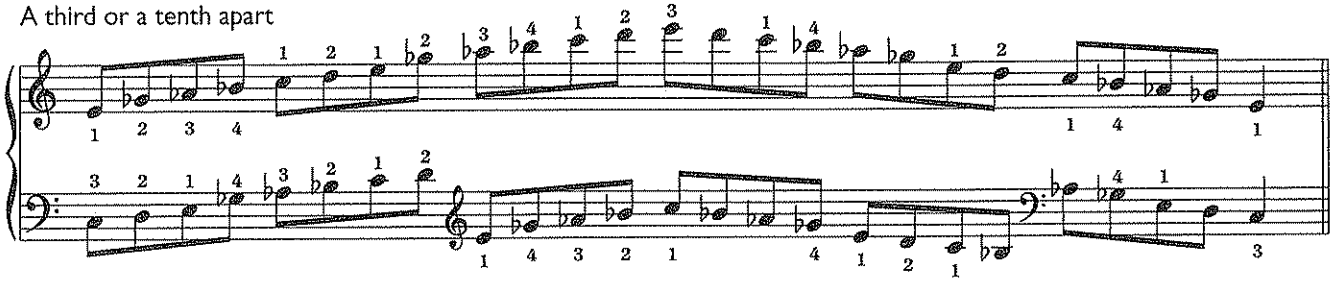
Whole-tone scales

Similar motion

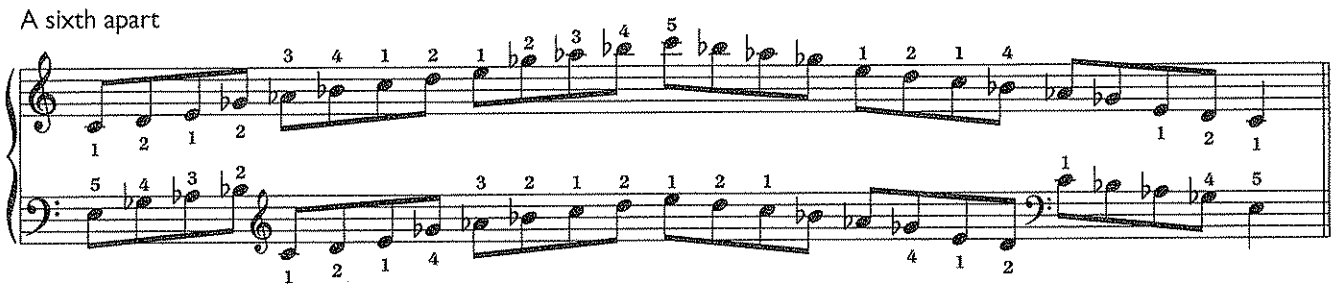
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

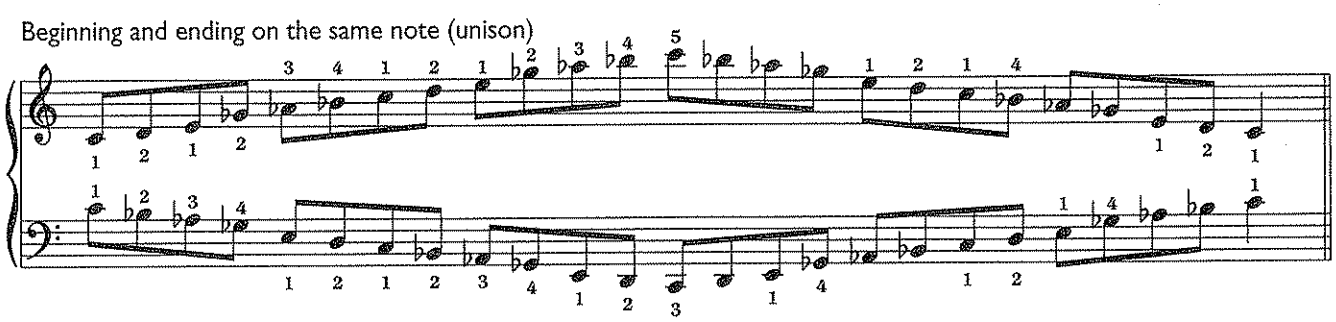


A sixth apart

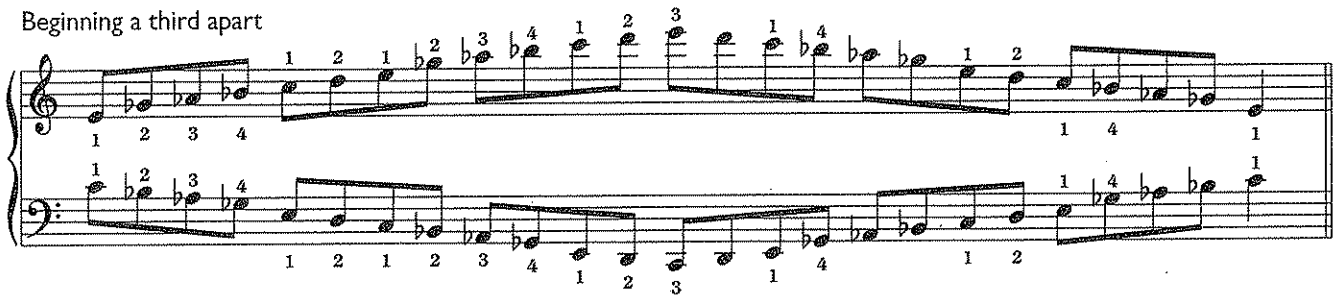


Contrary motion

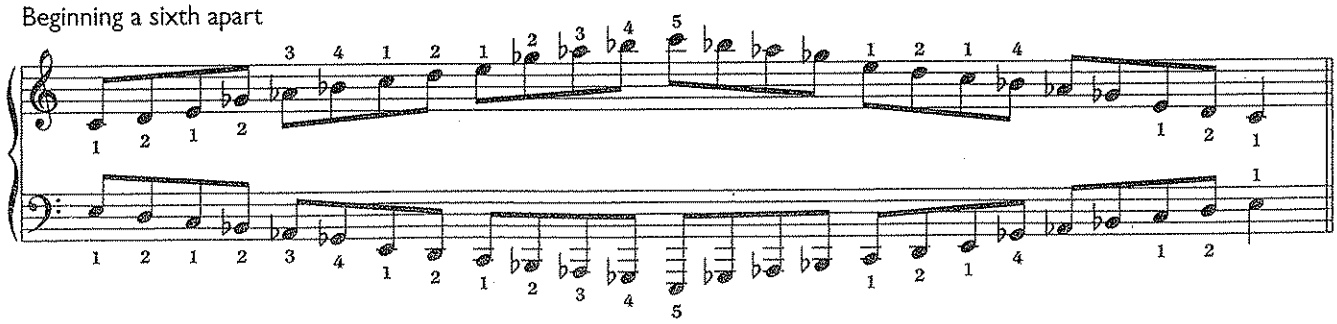
Beginning and ending on the same note (unison)



Beginning a third apart

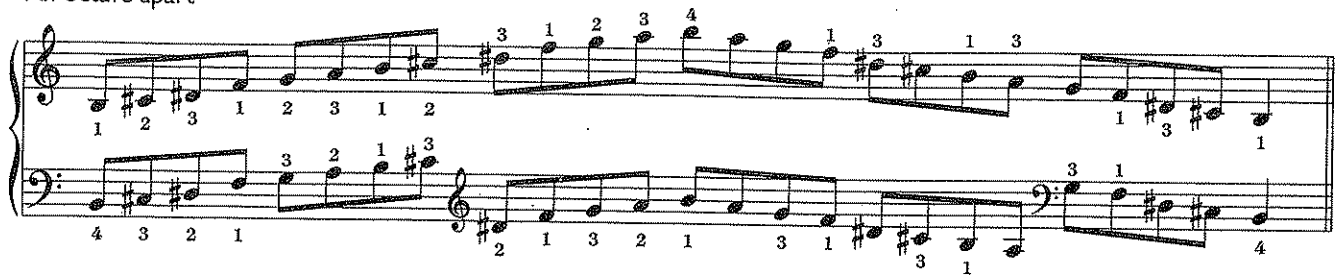


Beginning a sixth apart

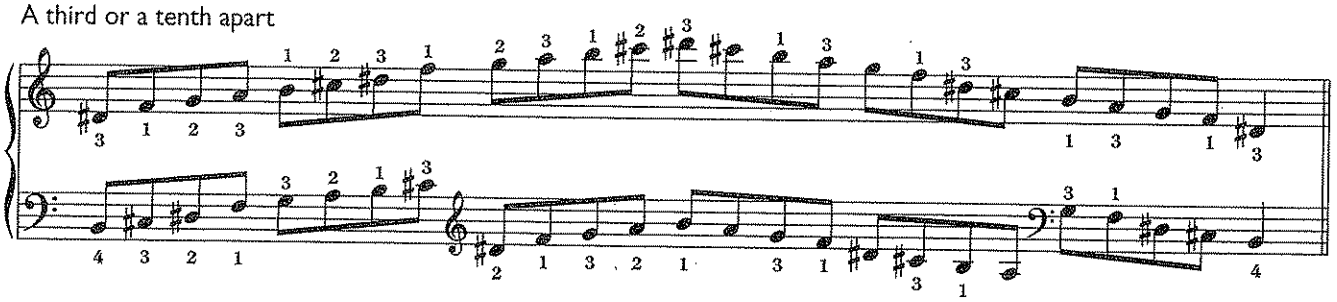


Similar motion

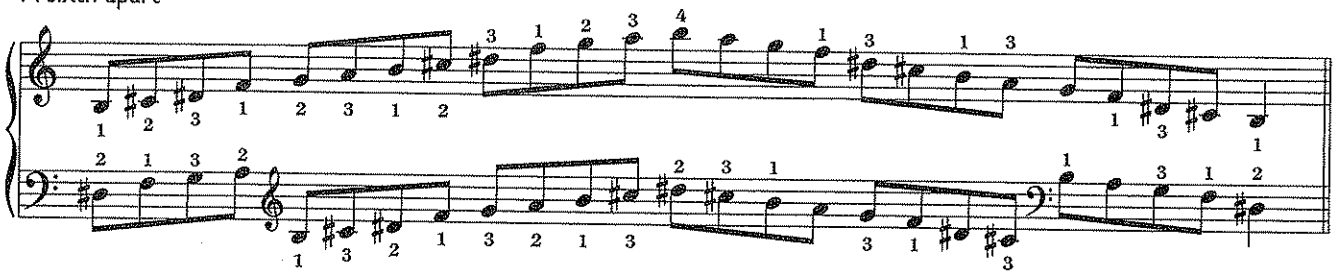
An octave apart



A third or a tenth apart

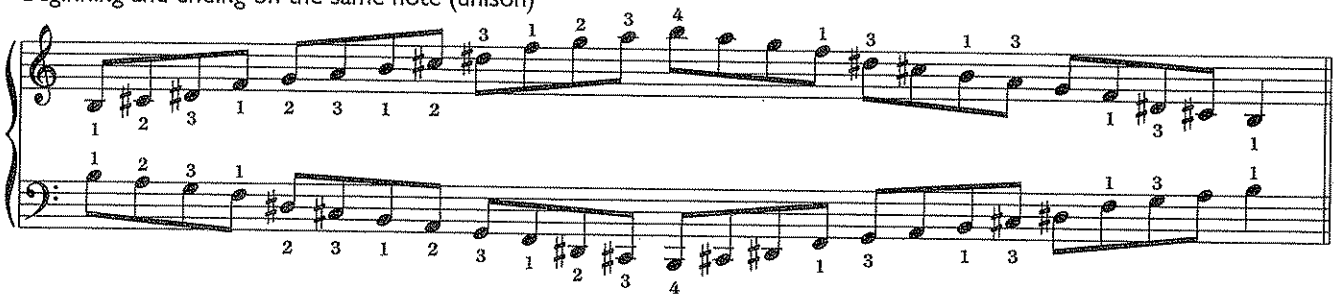


A sixth apart

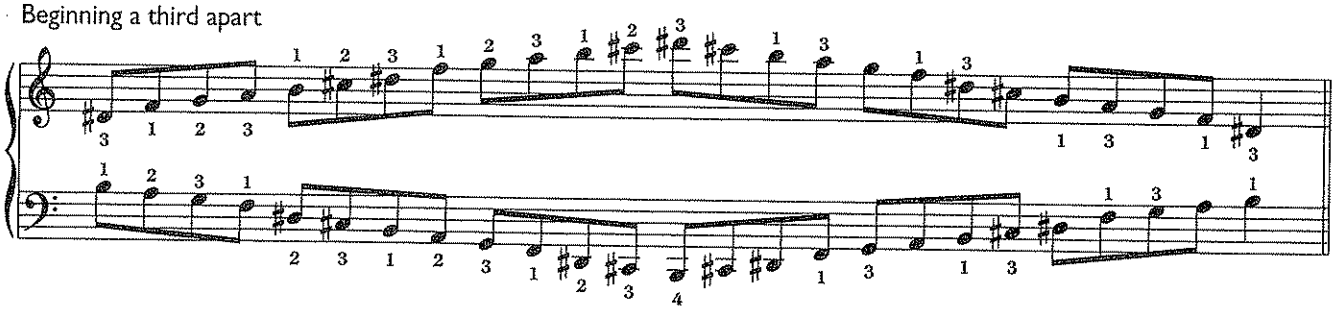


Contrary motion

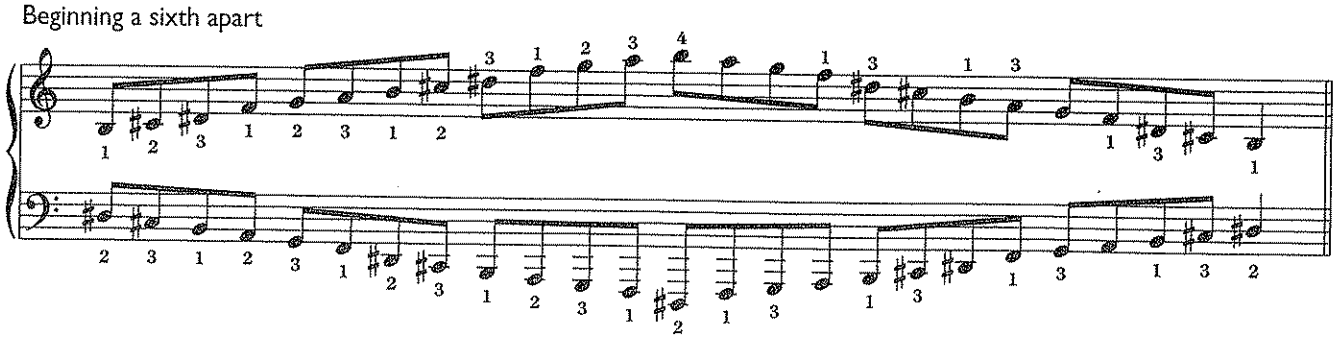
Beginning and ending on the same note (unison)



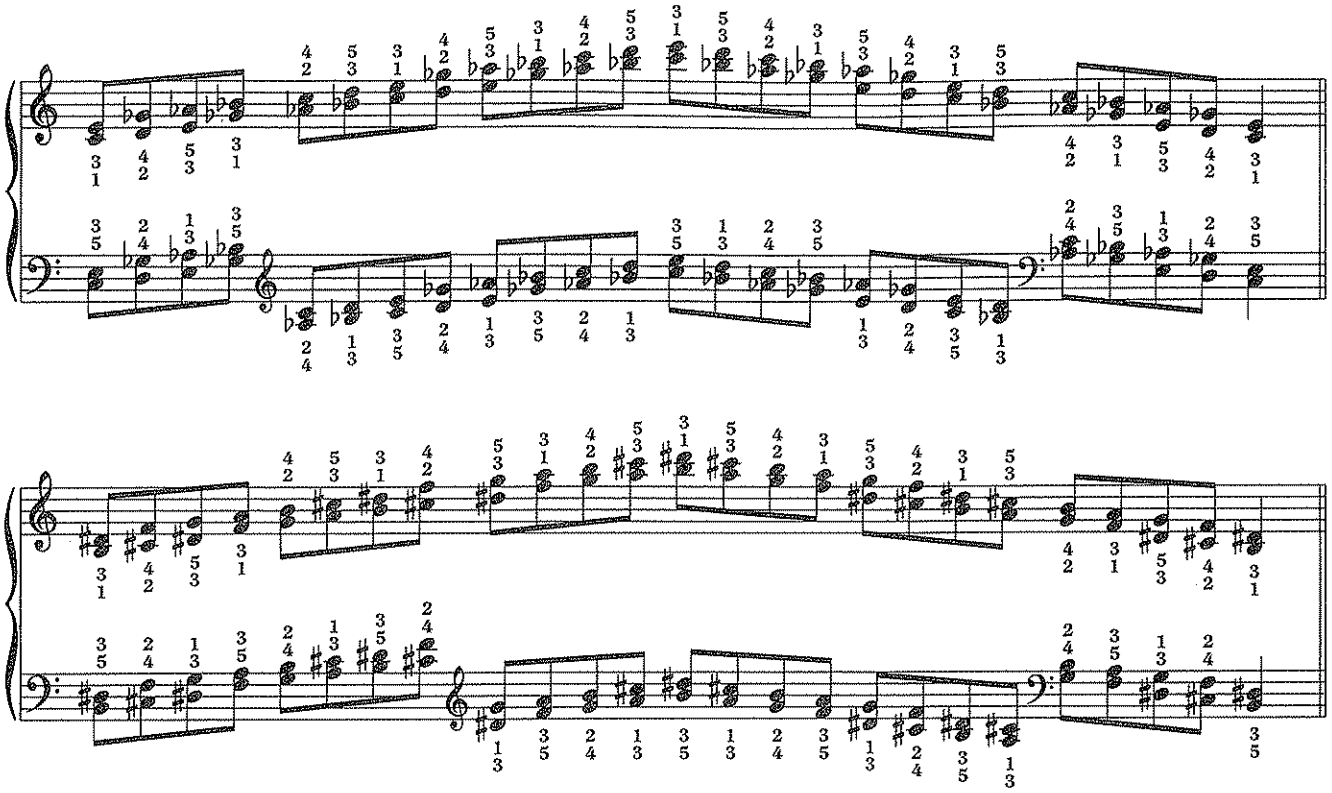
Beginning a third apart



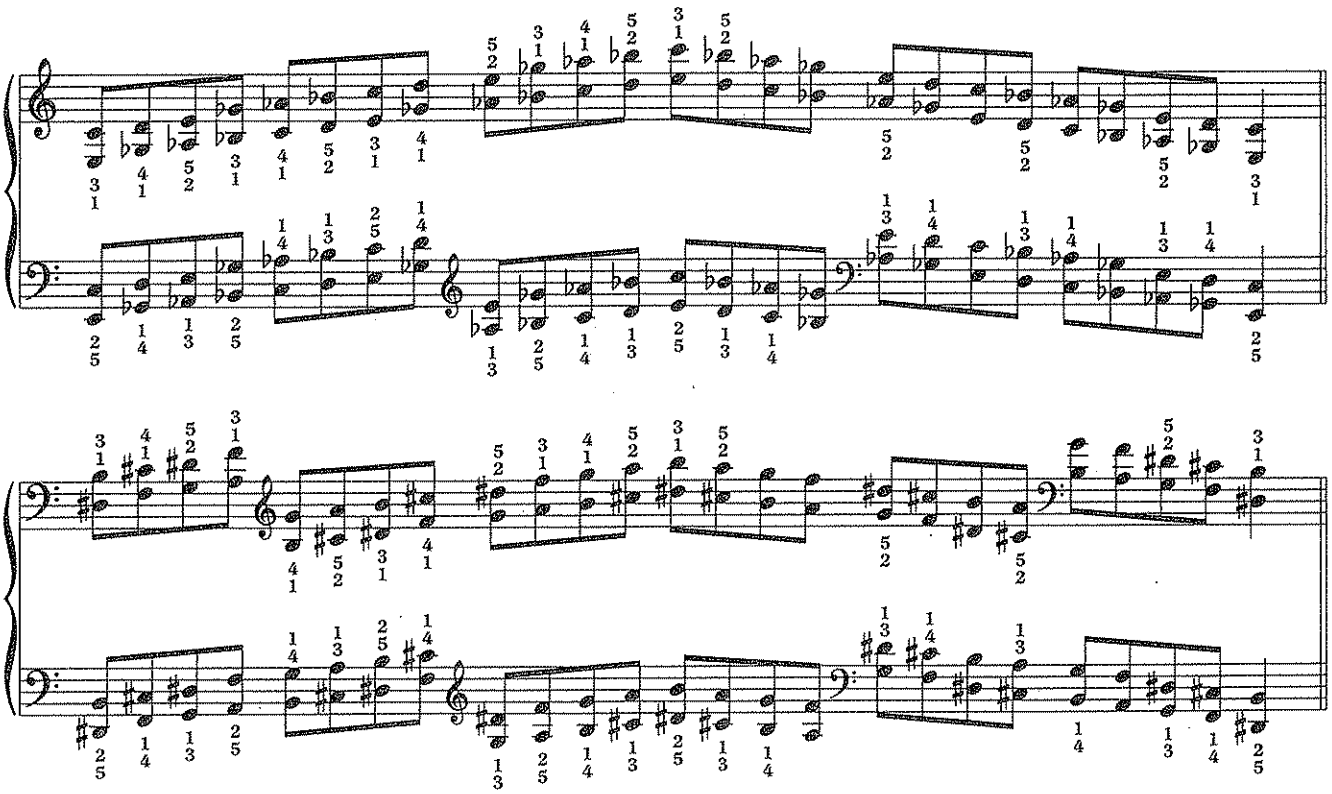
Beginning a sixth apart



Double thirds

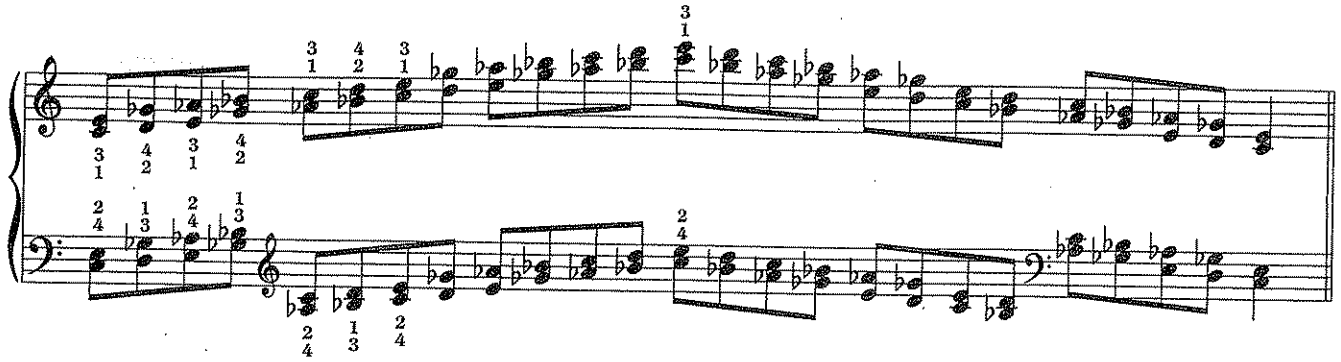


Double sixths

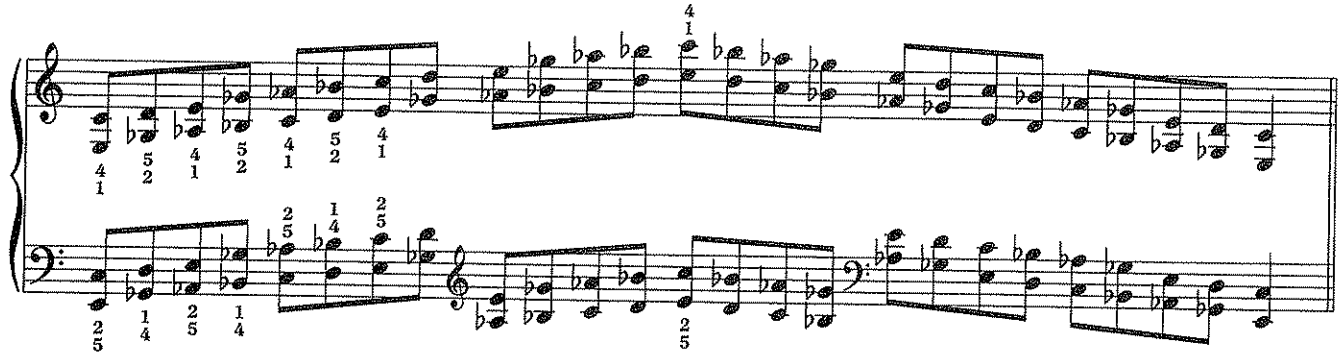


Some harmonic intervals on this page are not written as thirds or sixths respectively. This is so as to be consistent in the way upper and lower lines of the scales are notated.

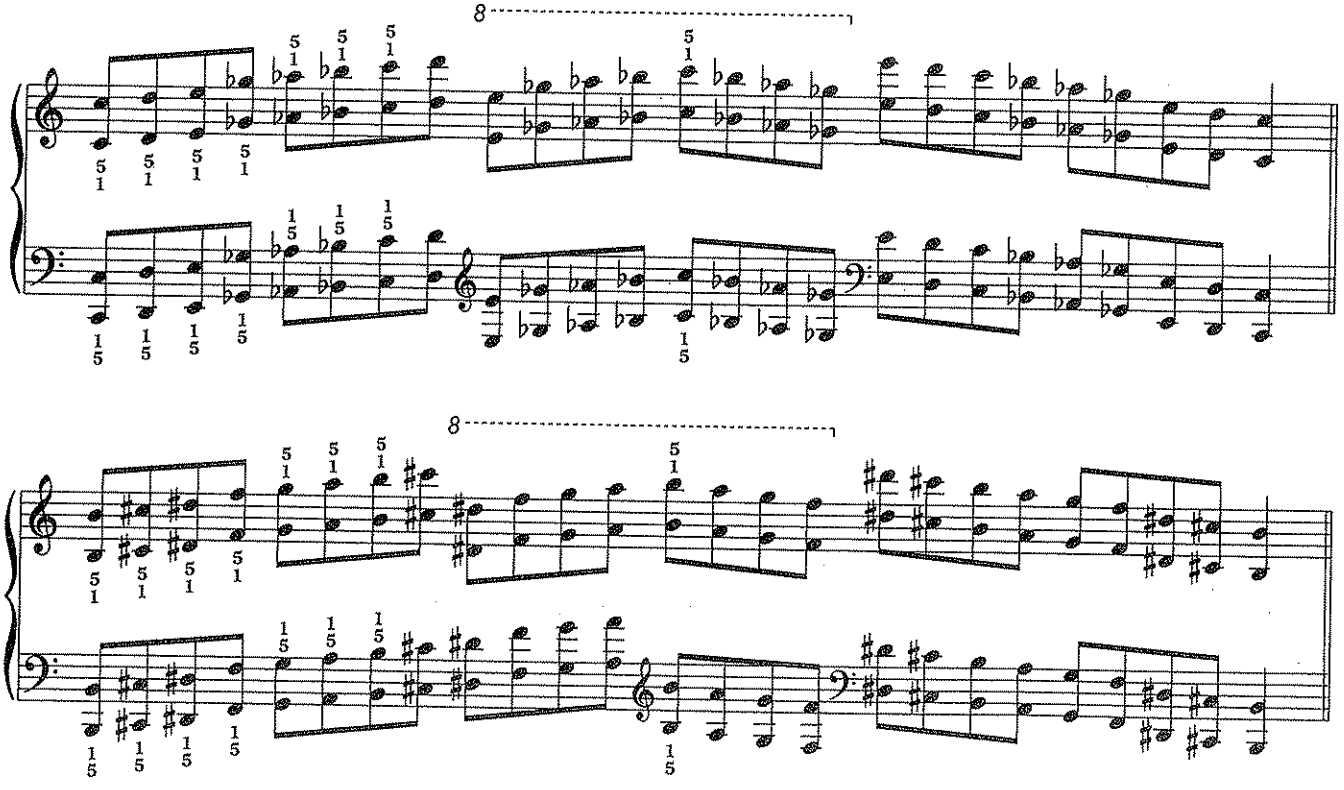
Alternative fingering: double thirds



Alternative fingering: double sixths



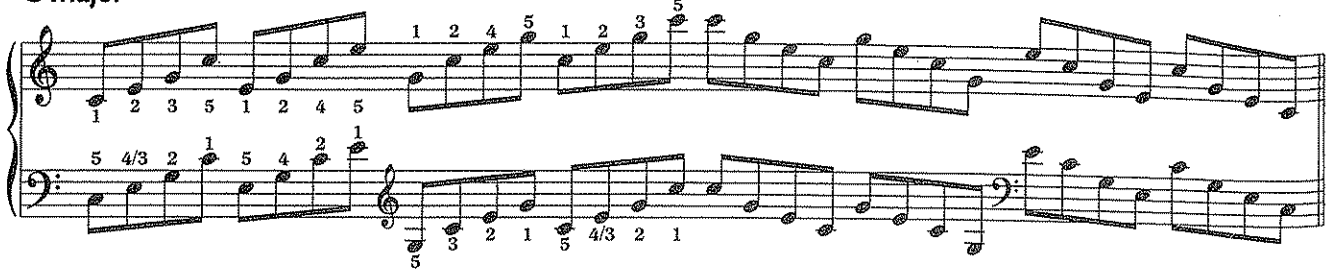
Double octaves



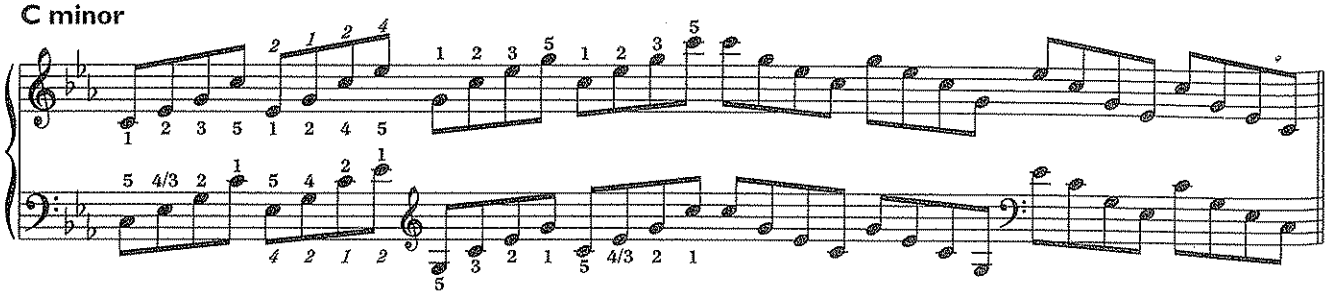
Broken chords

Standard pattern

C major

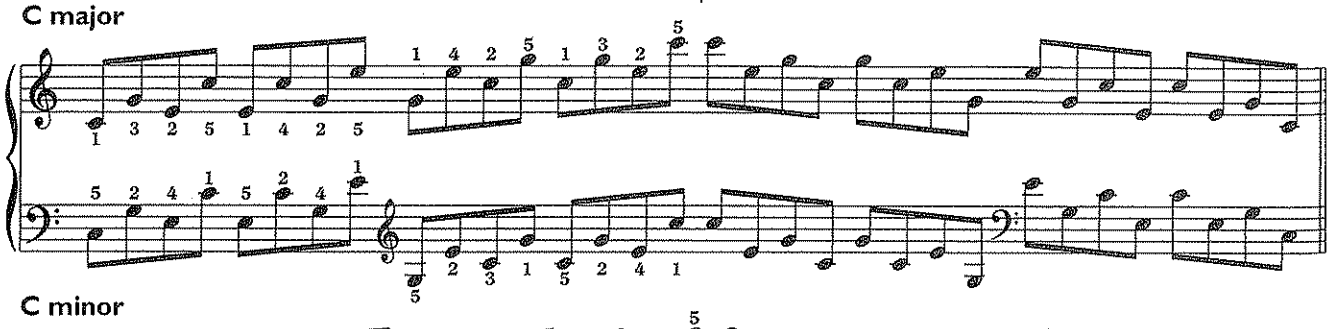


C minor

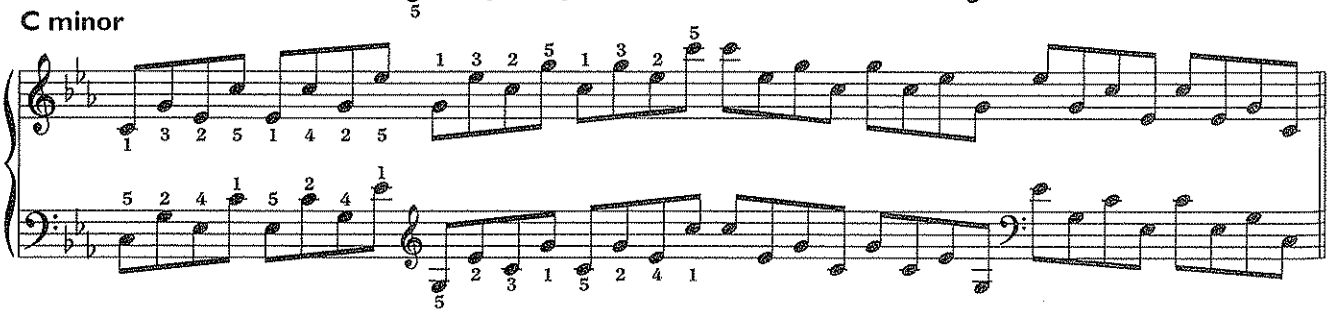


Alternative pattern

C major

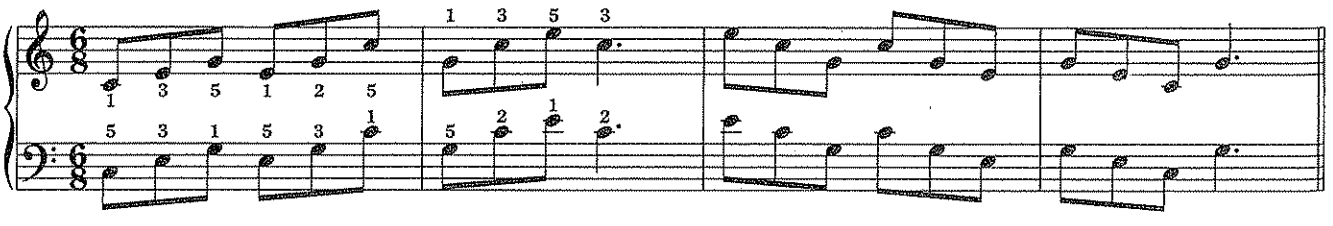


C minor

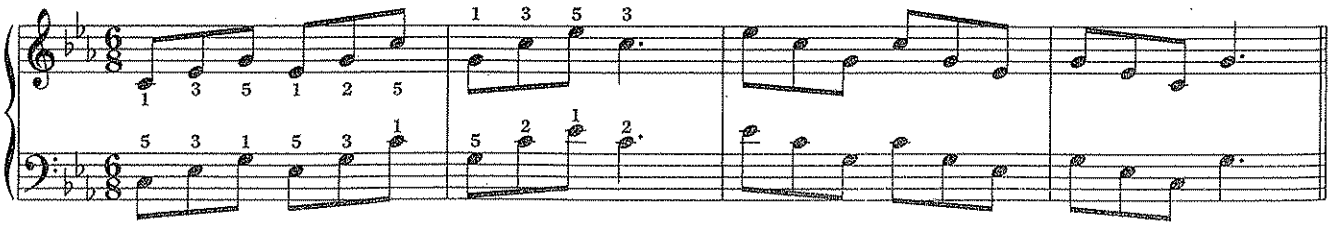


Alternative pattern (compound time)

C major

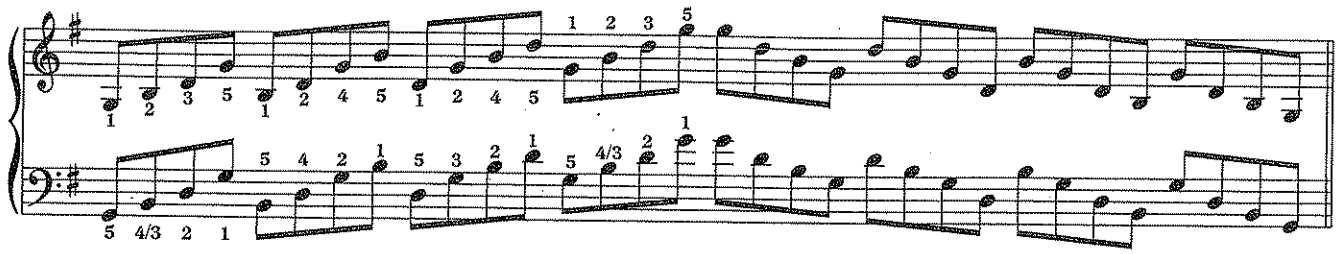


C minor

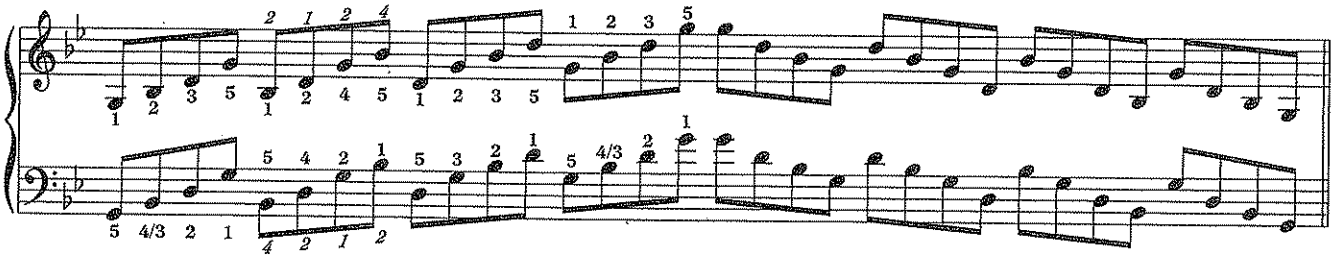


Standard pattern

G major

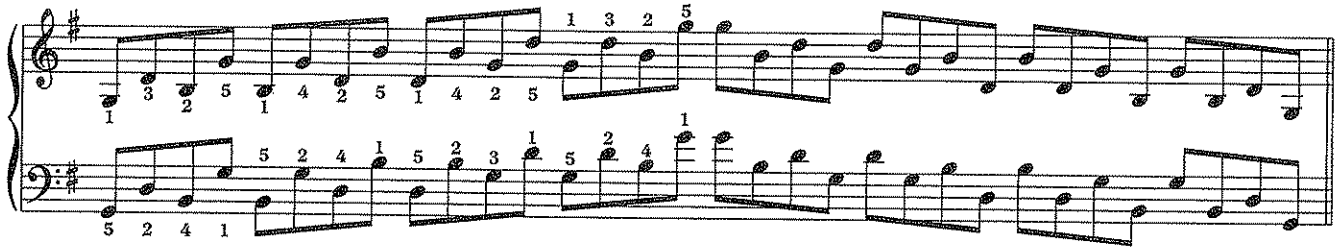


G minor

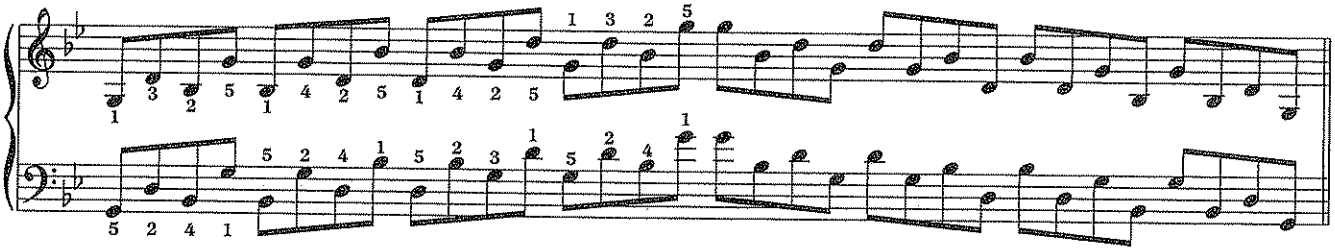


Alternative pattern

G major

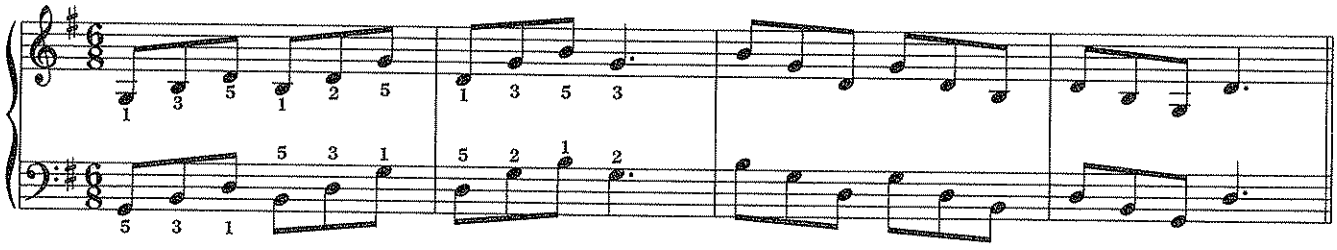


G minor

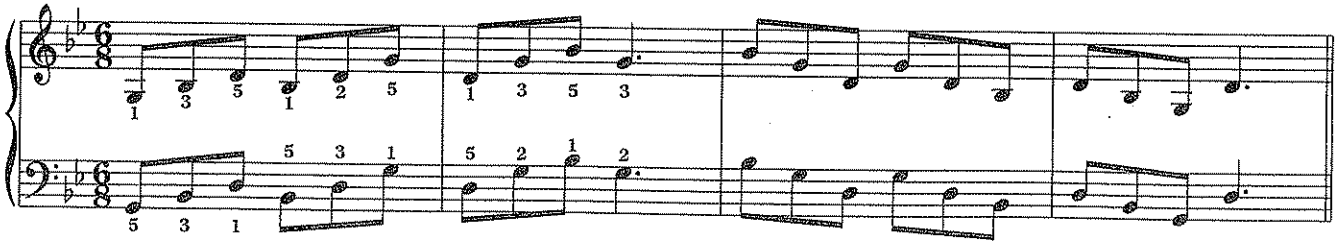


Alternative pattern (compound time)

G major

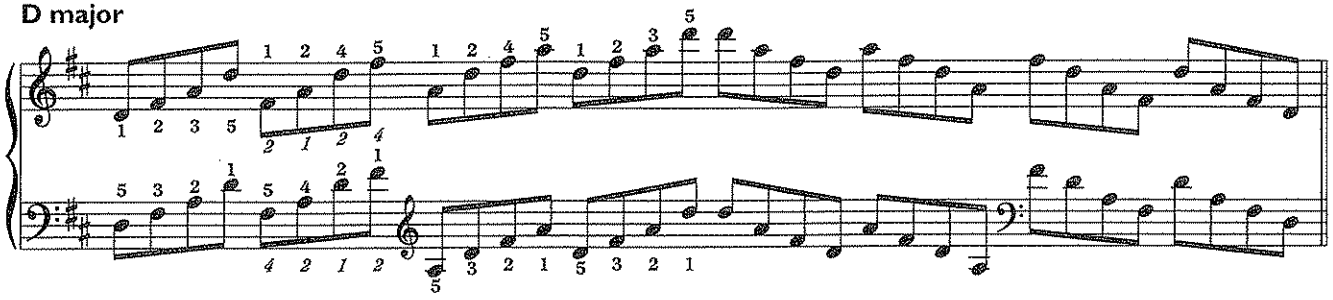


G minor

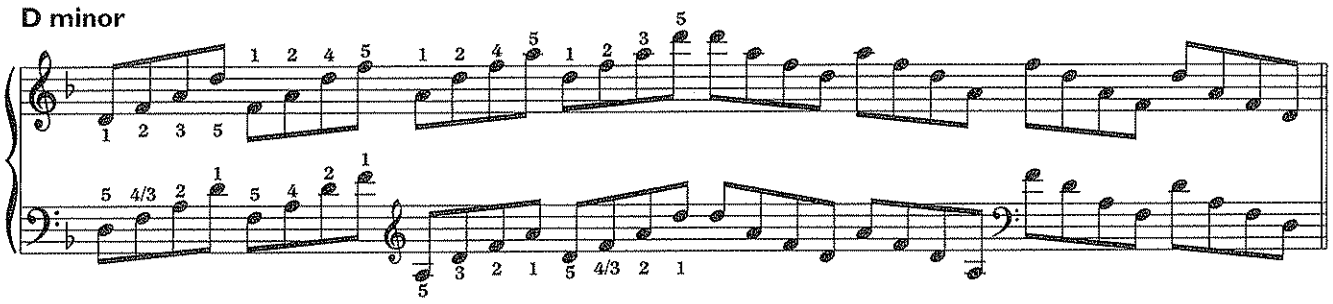


Standard pattern

D major

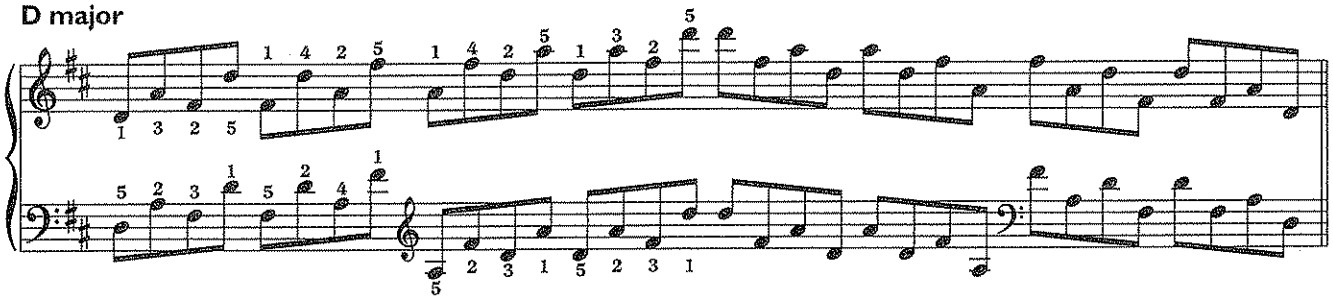


D minor

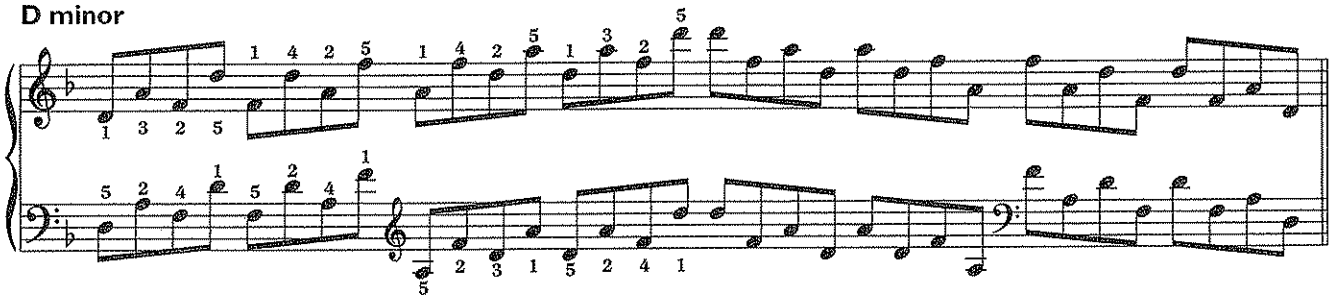


Alternative pattern

D major

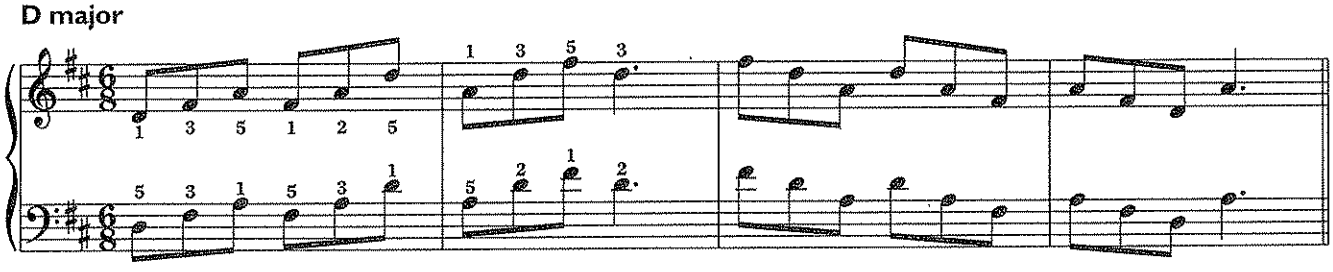


D minor

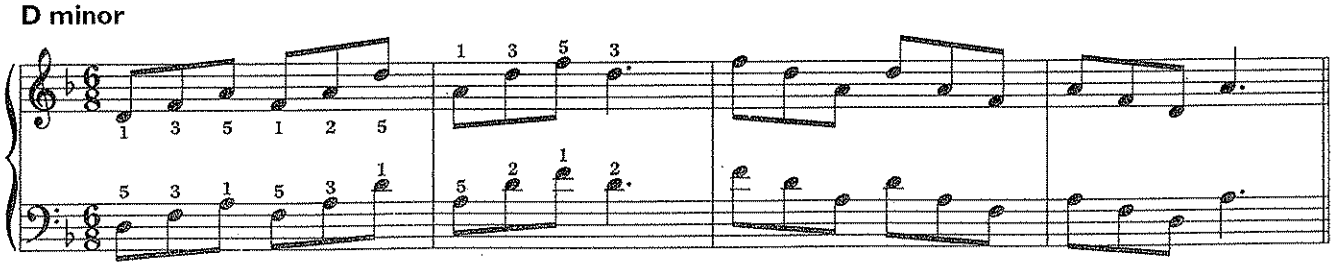


Alternative pattern (compound time)

D major

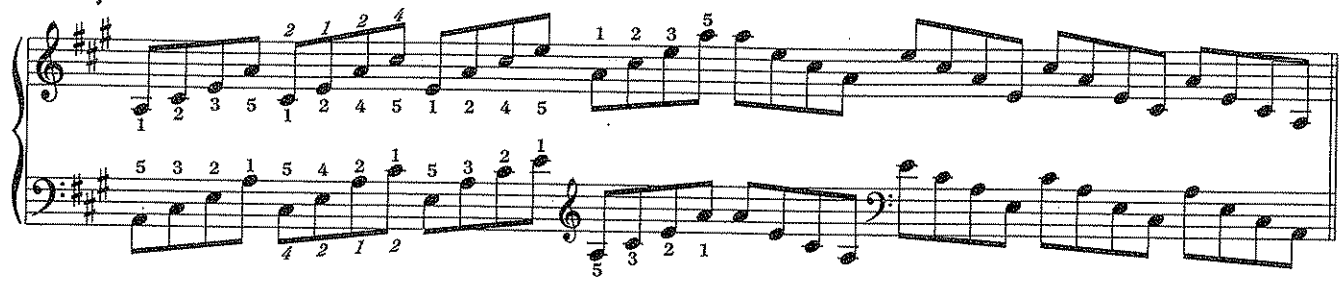


D minor

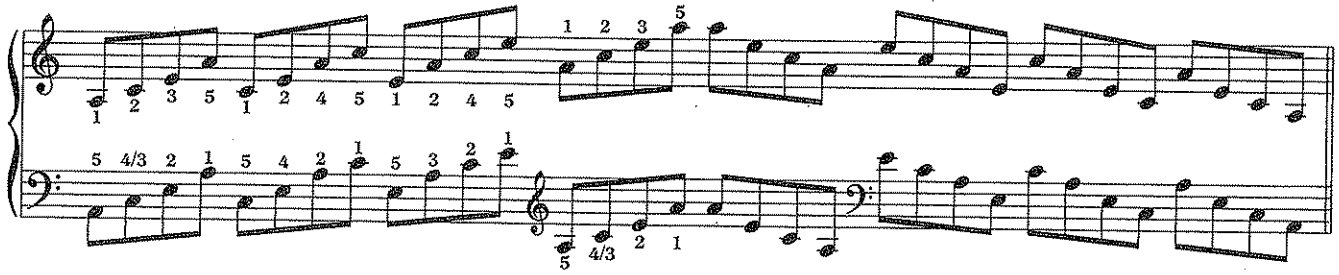


Standard pattern

A major

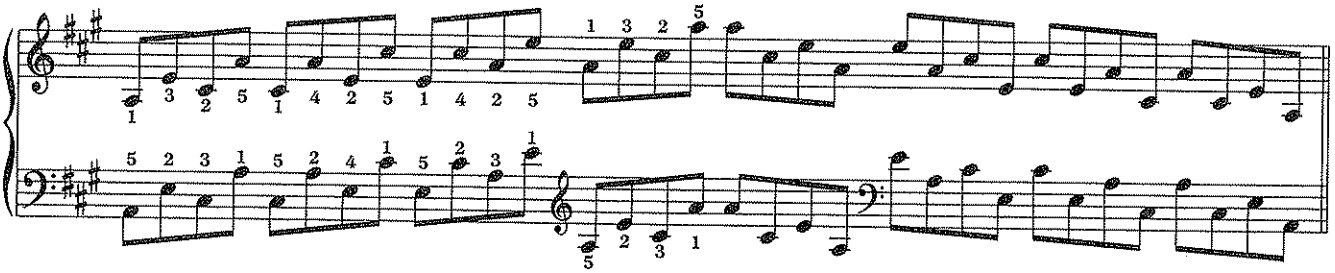


A minor

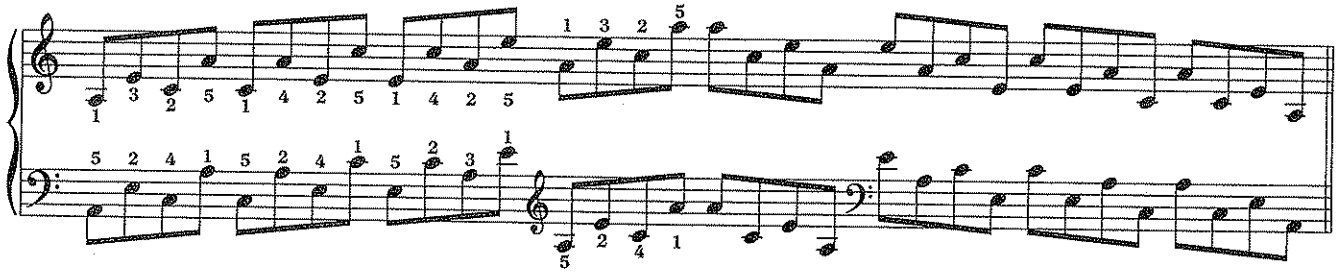


Alternative pattern

A major

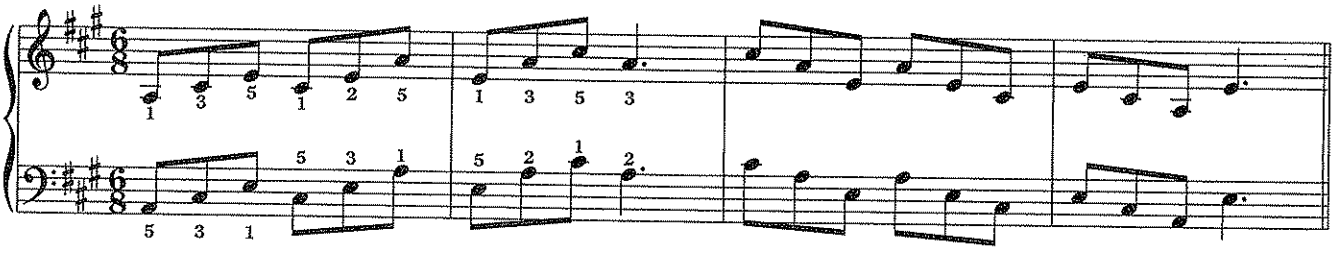


A minor

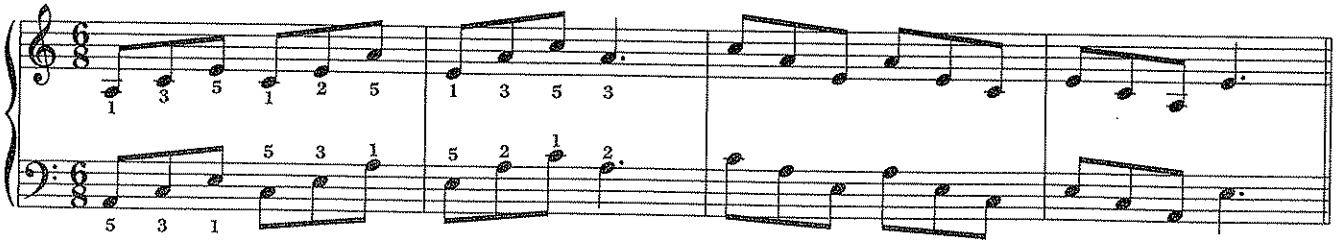


Alternative pattern (compound time)

A major

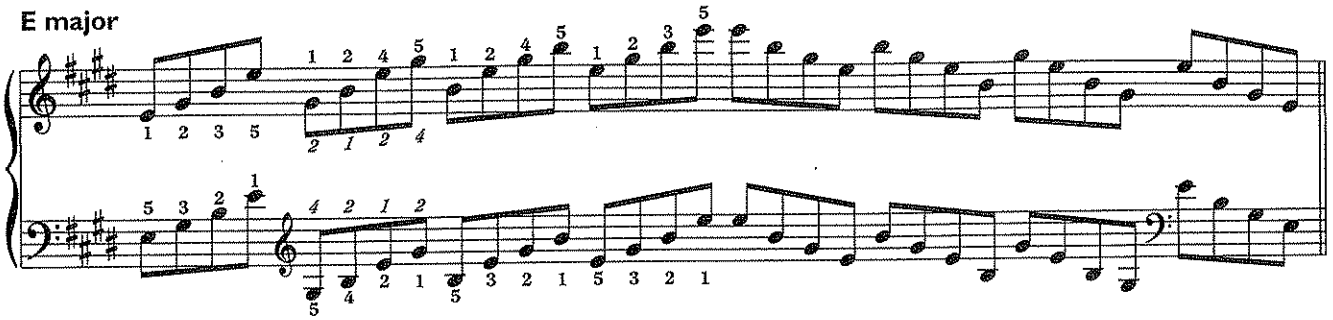


A minor

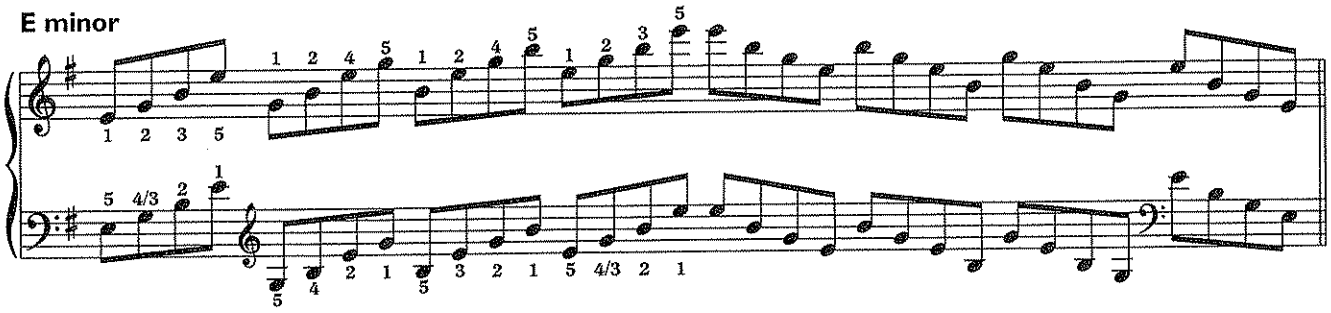


Standard pattern

E major

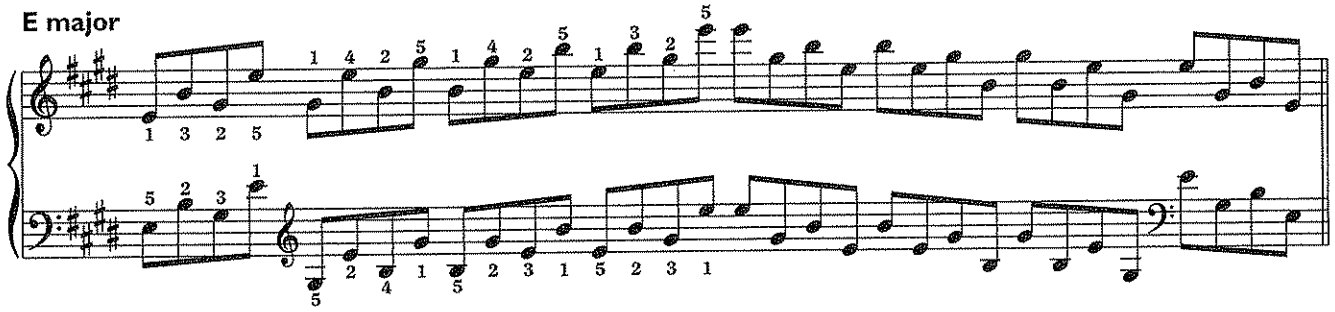


E minor

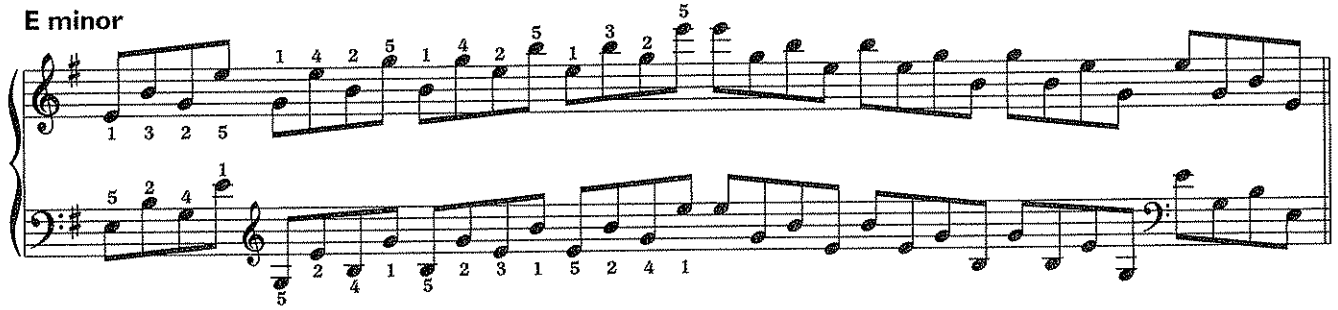


Alternative pattern

E major

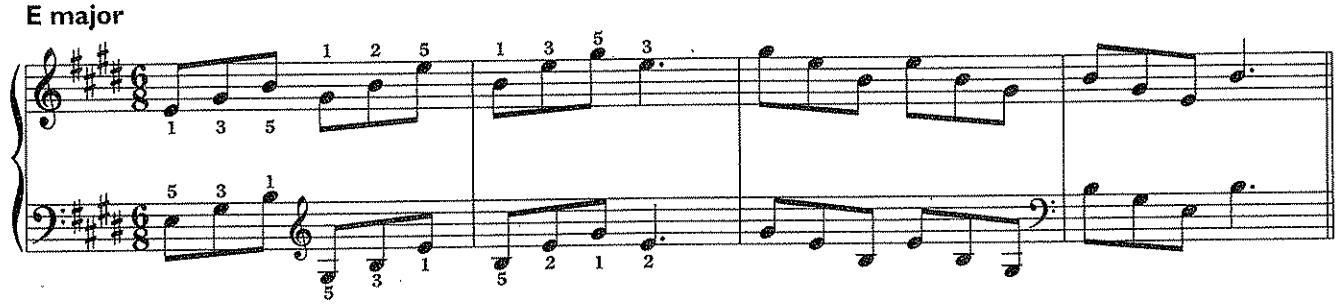


E minor

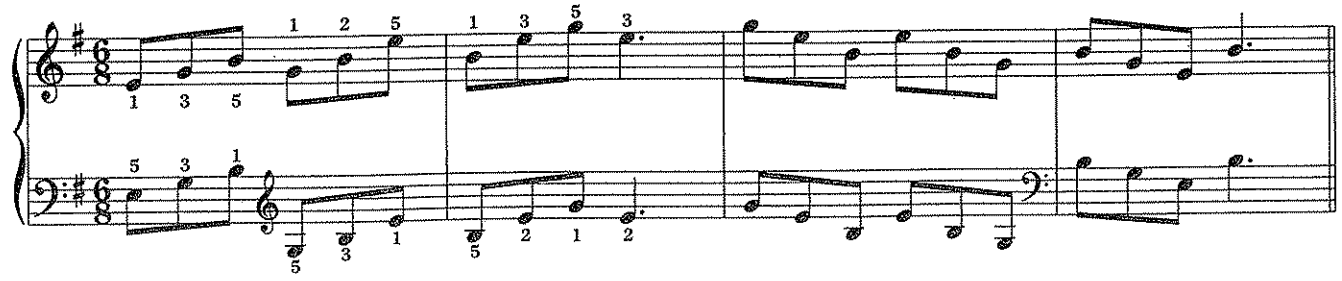


Alternative pattern (compound time)

E major

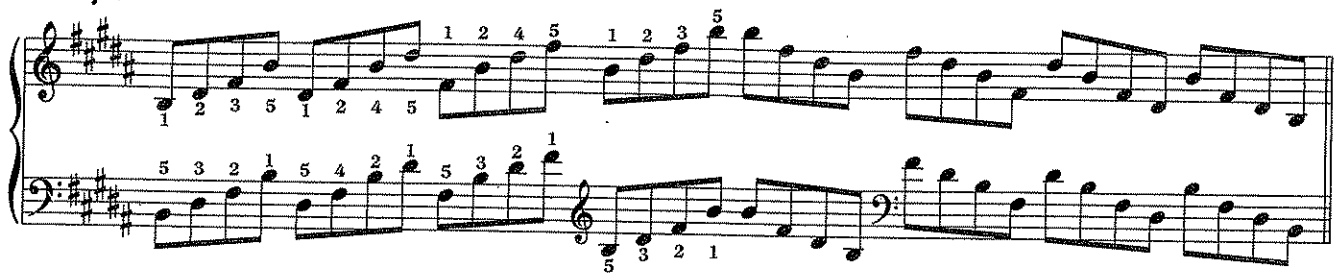


E minor

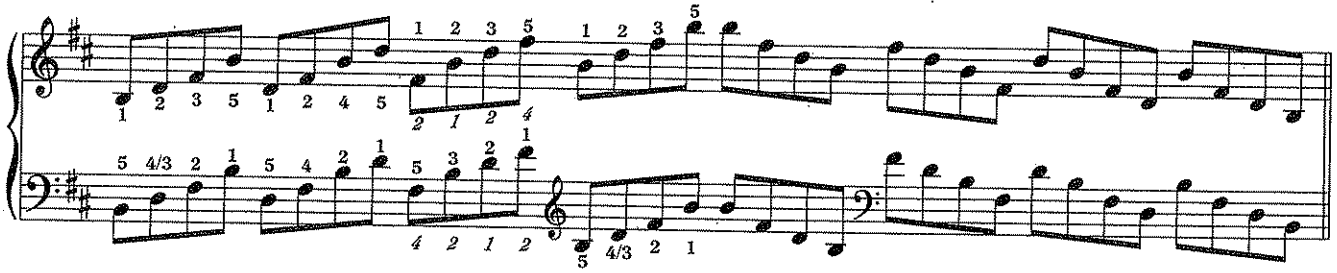


Standard pattern

B major

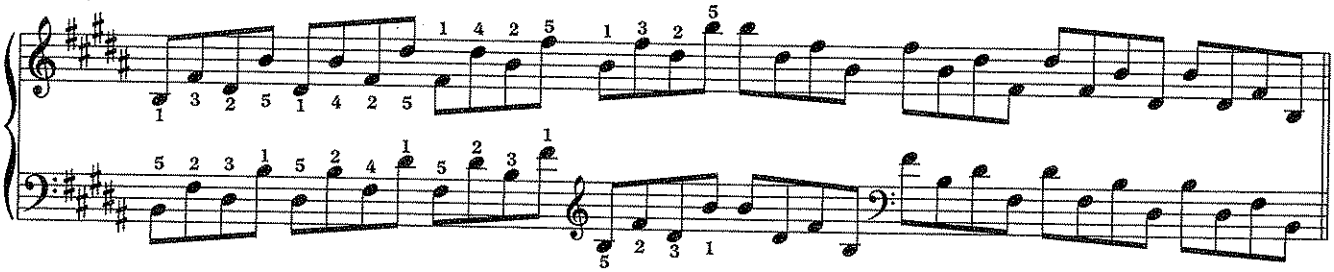


B minor

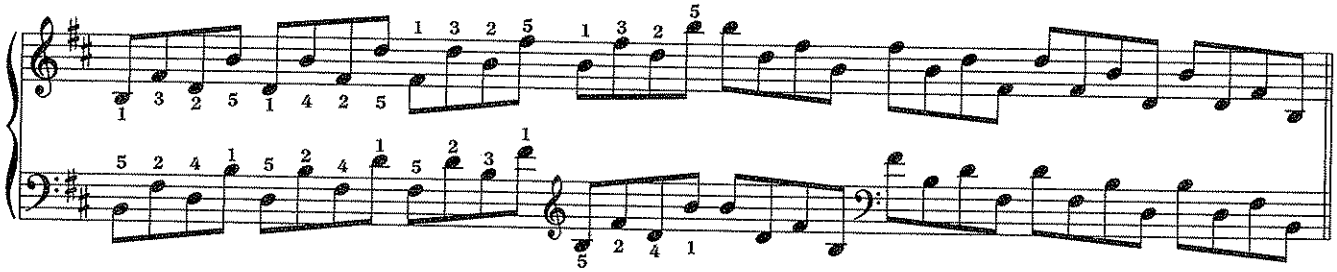


Alternative pattern

B major

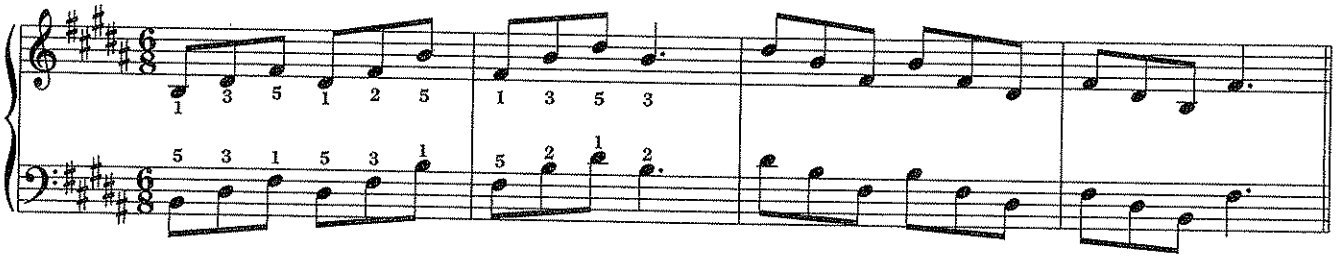


B minor

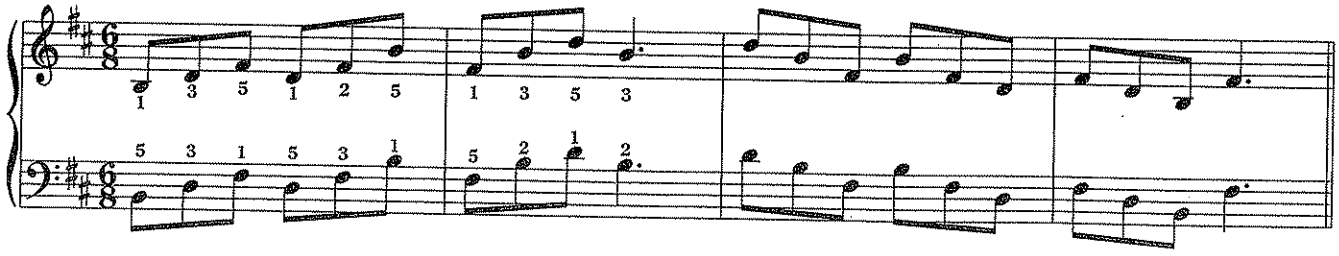


Alternative pattern (compound time)

B major

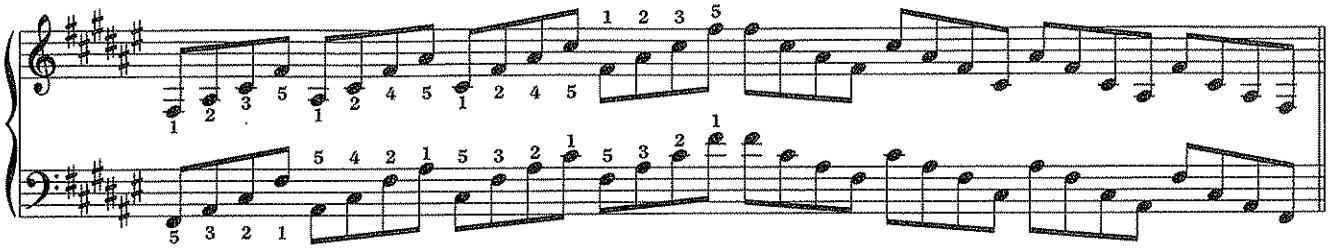


B minor

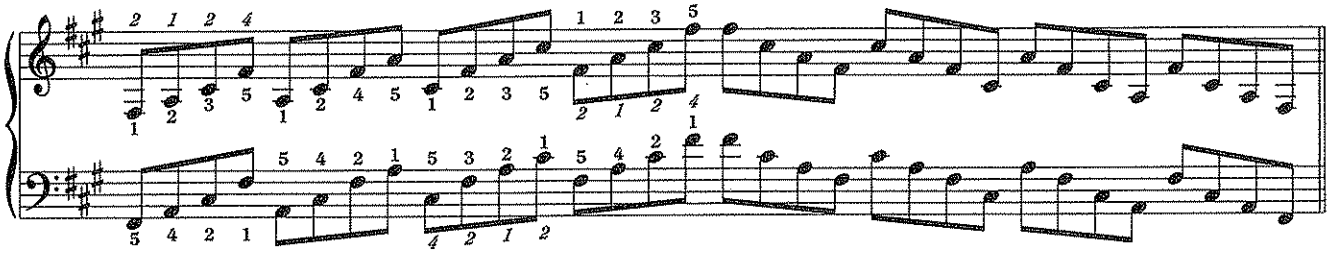


Standard pattern

F♯ major (enharmonic G♭)

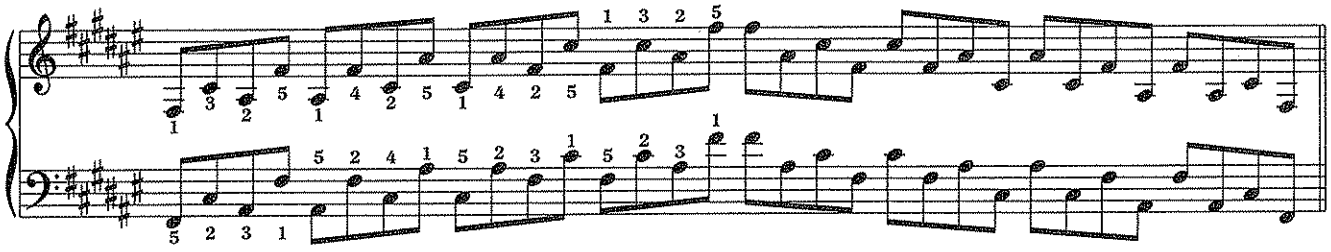


F♯ minor

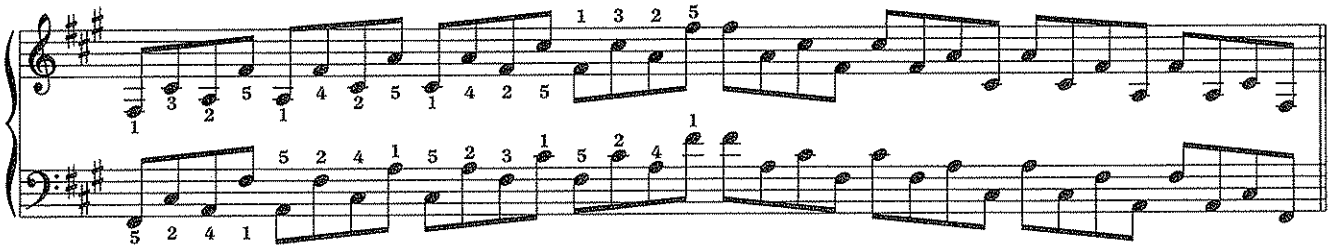


Alternative pattern

F♯ major (enharmonic G♭)

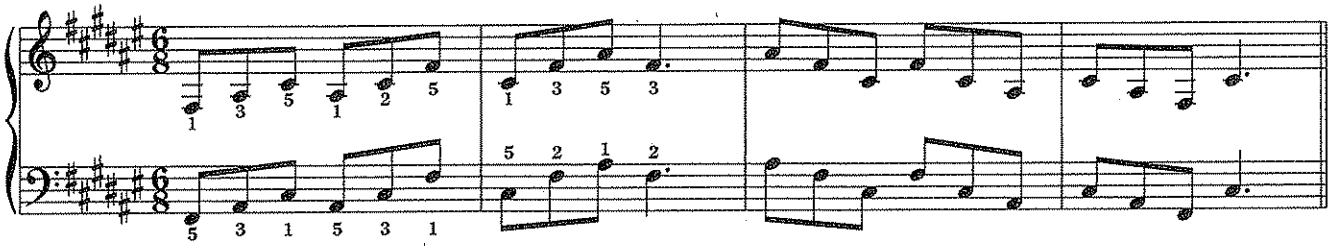


F♯ minor

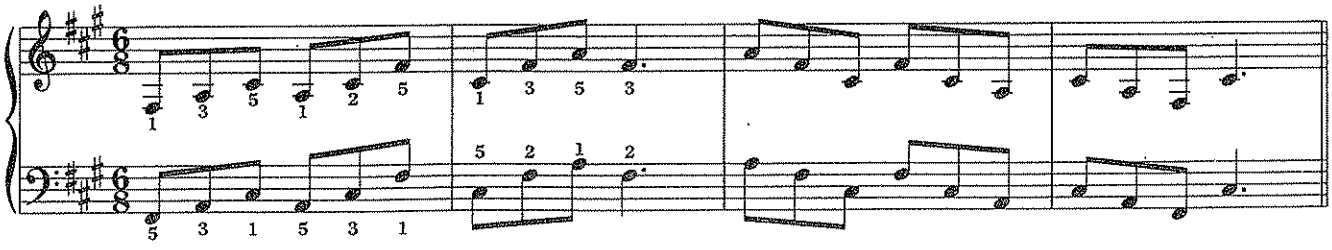


Alternative pattern (compound time)

F♯ major (enharmonic G♭)

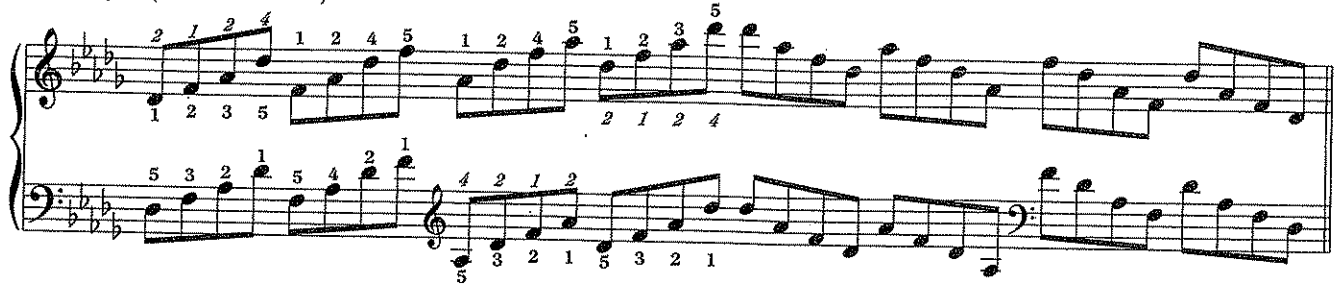


F♯ minor

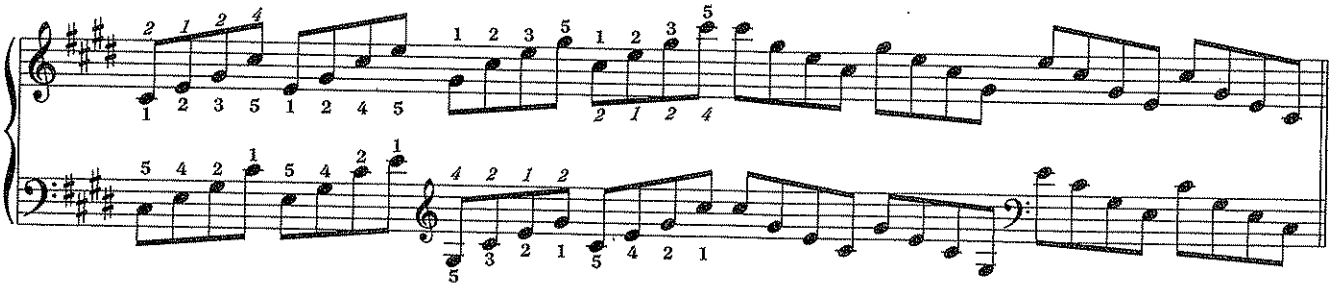


D♭ major (enharmonic C♯)

Standard pattern

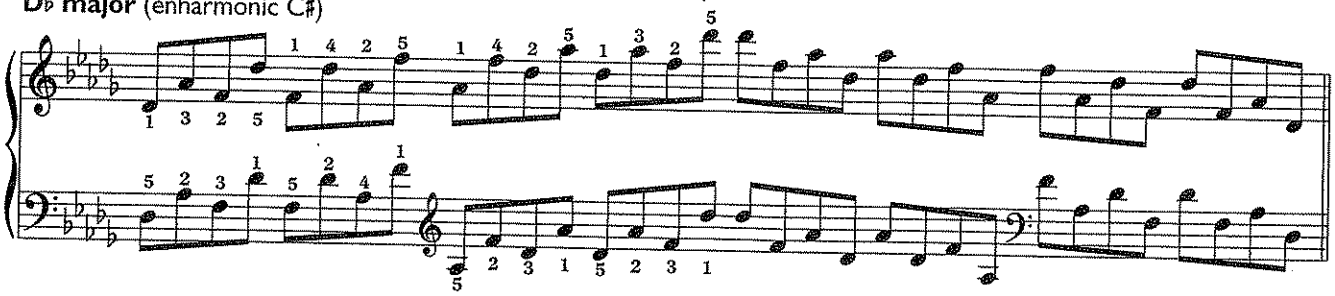


C♯ minor

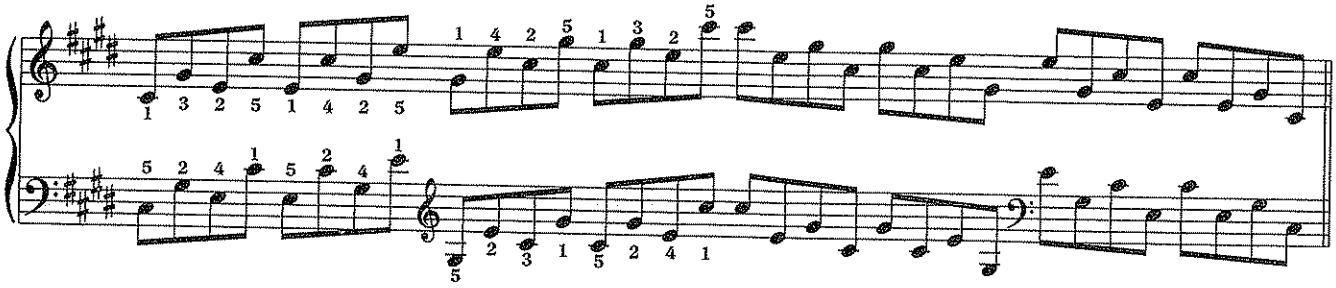


D♭ major (enharmonic C♯)

Alternative pattern

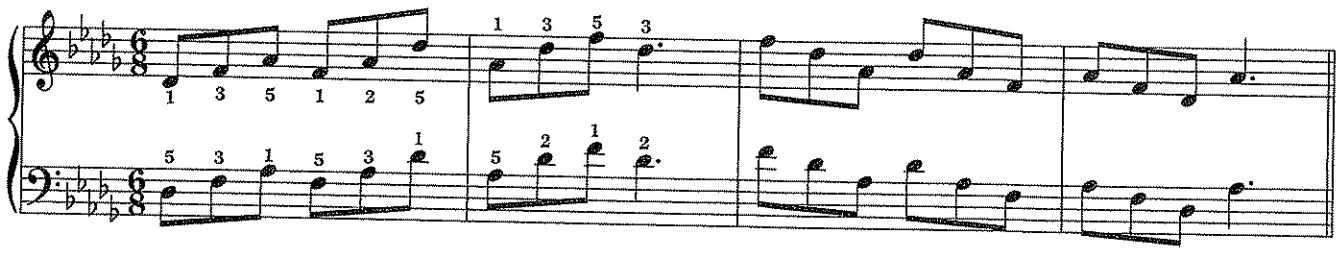


C♯ minor

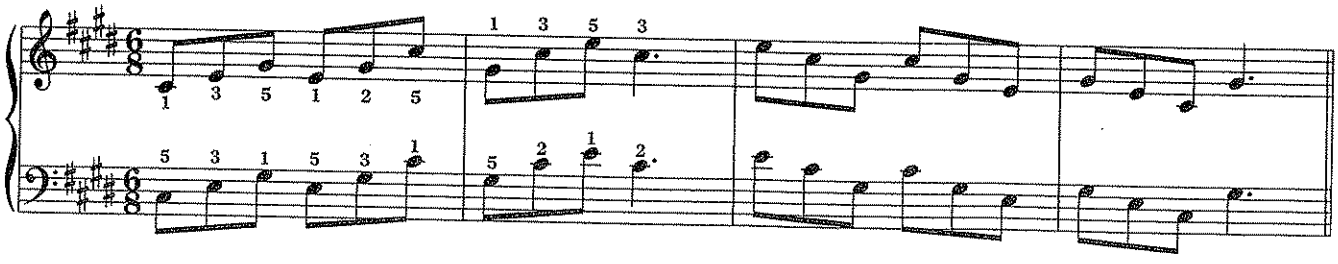


D♭ major (enharmonic C♯)

Alternative pattern (compound time)

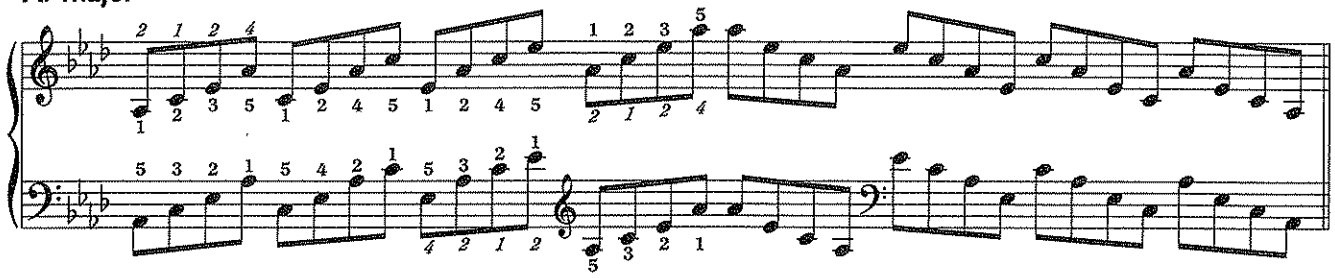


C♯ minor

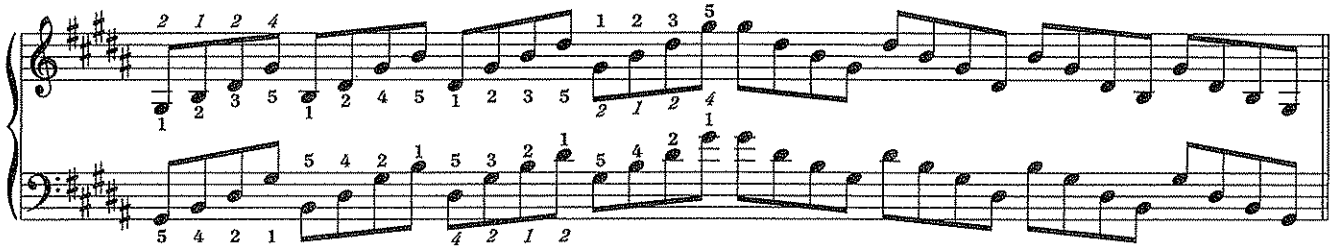


Standard pattern

A♭ major

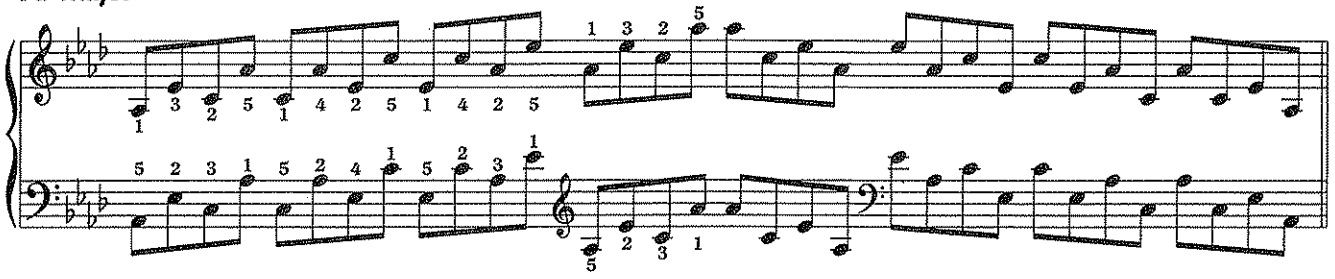


G♯ minor (enharmonic A♭)

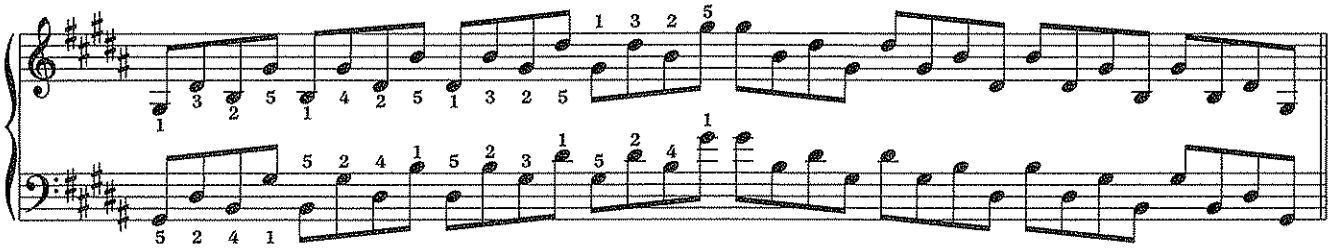


Alternative pattern

A♭ major

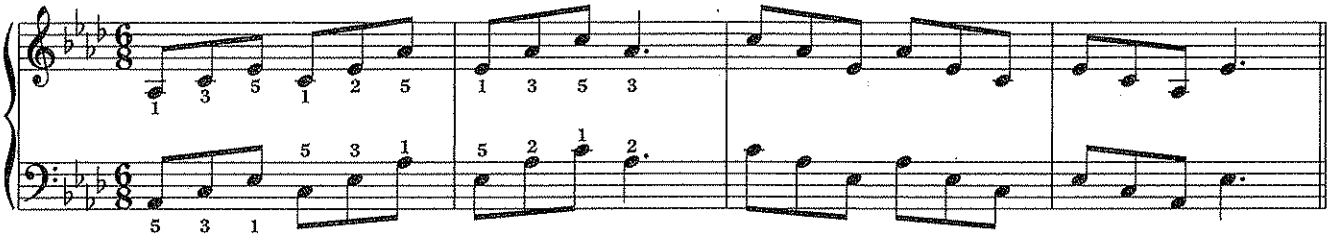


G♯ minor (enharmonic A♭)

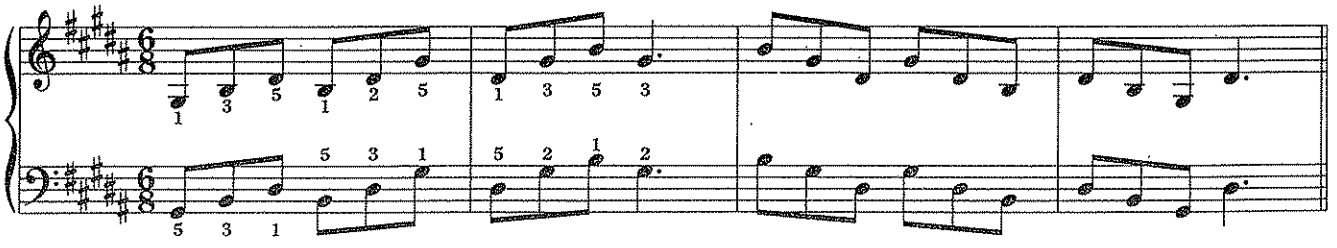


Alternative pattern (compound time)

A♭ major

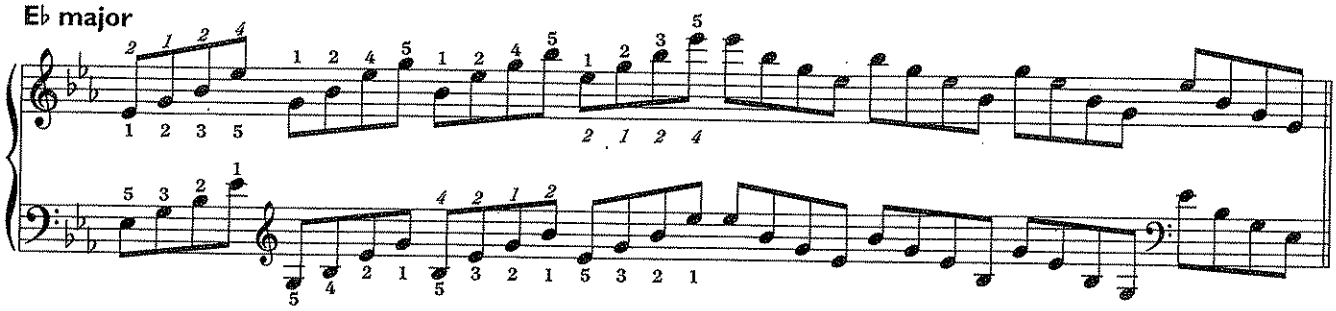


G♯ minor (enharmonic A♭)

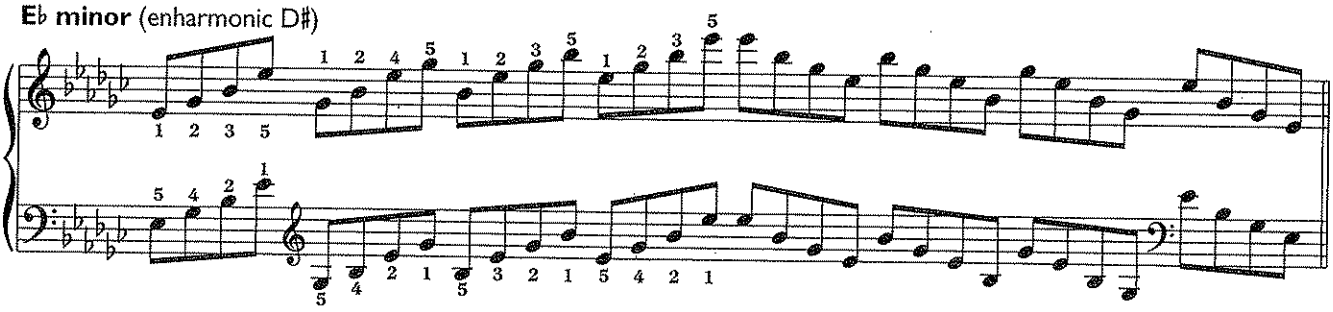


Standard pattern

E♭ major

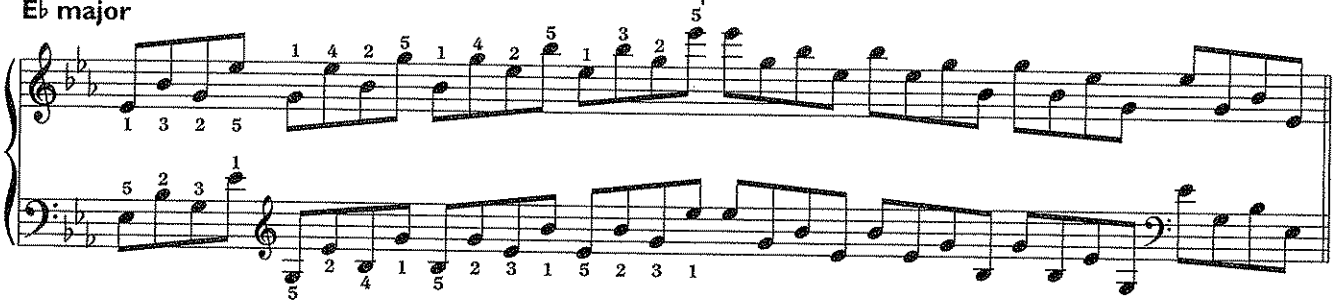


E♭ minor (enharmonic D♯)

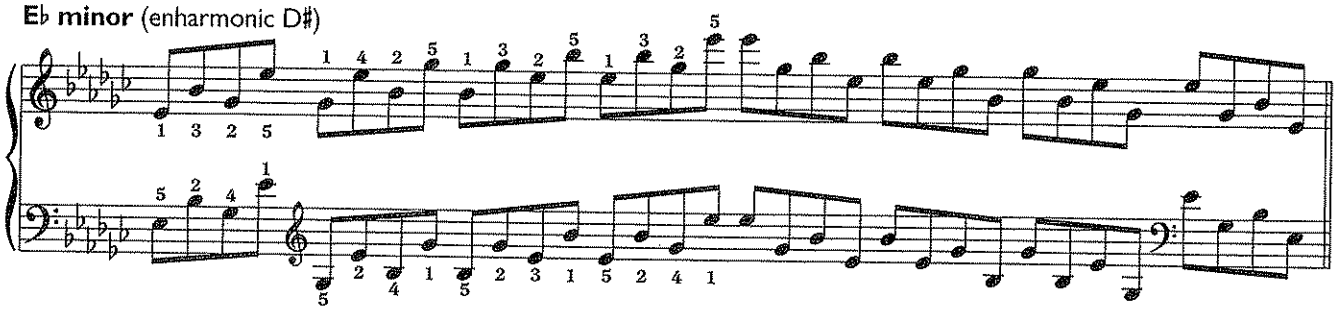


Alternative pattern

E♭ major

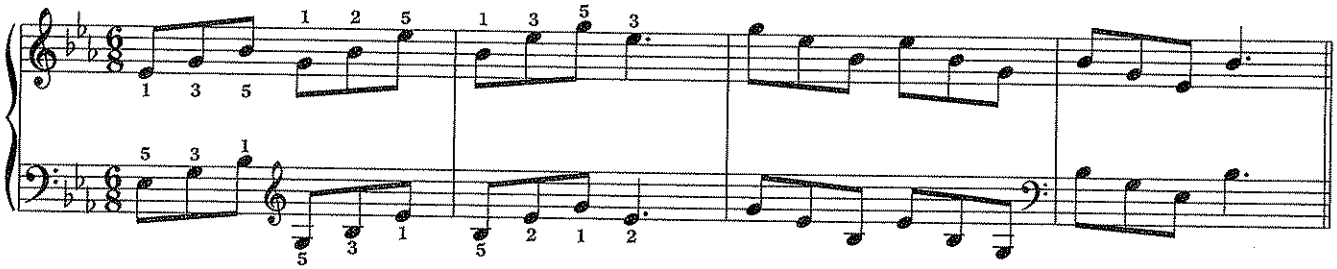


E♭ minor (enharmonic D♯)

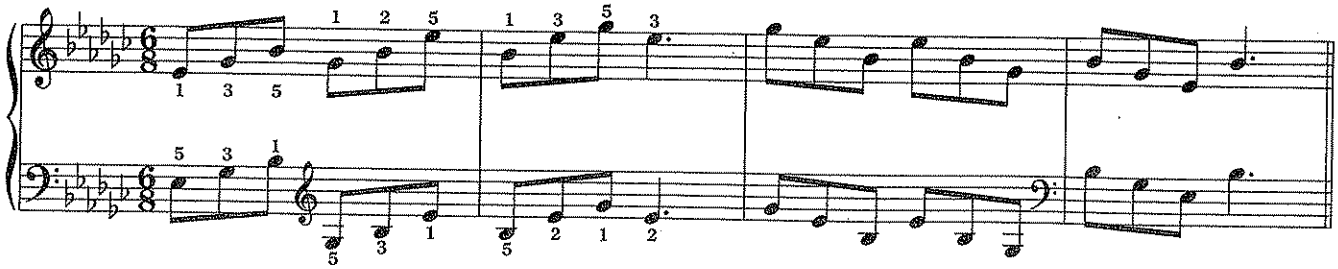


Alternative pattern (compound time)

E♭ major

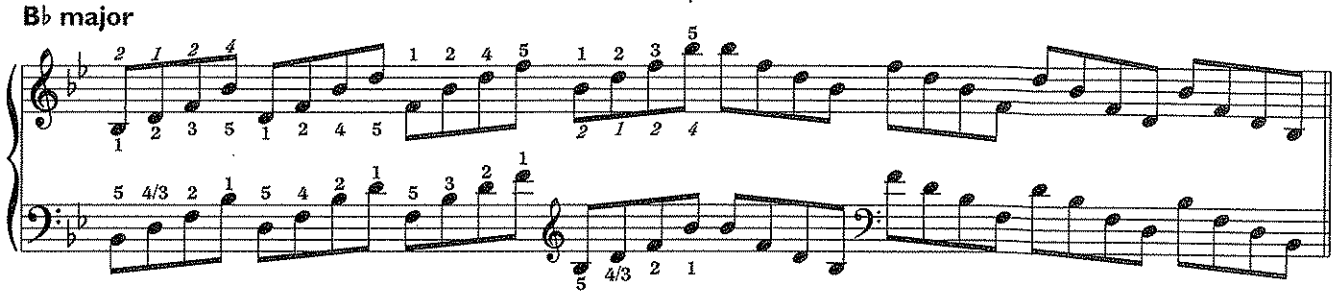


E♭ minor (enharmonic D♯)

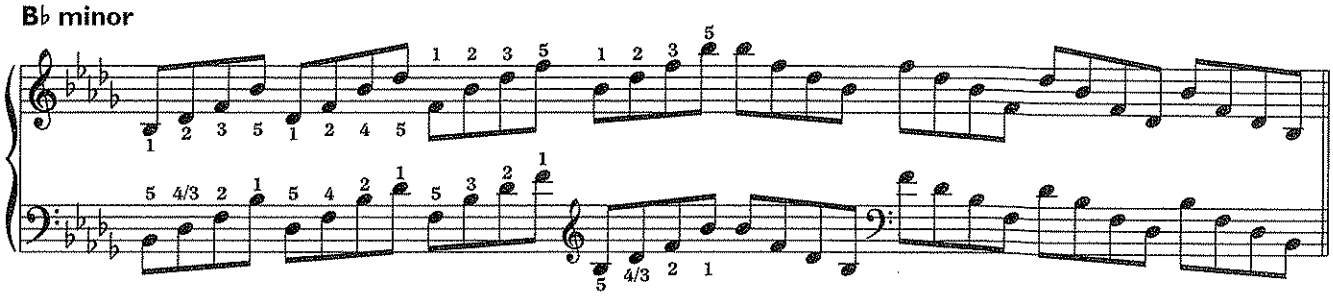


Standard pattern

B♭ major

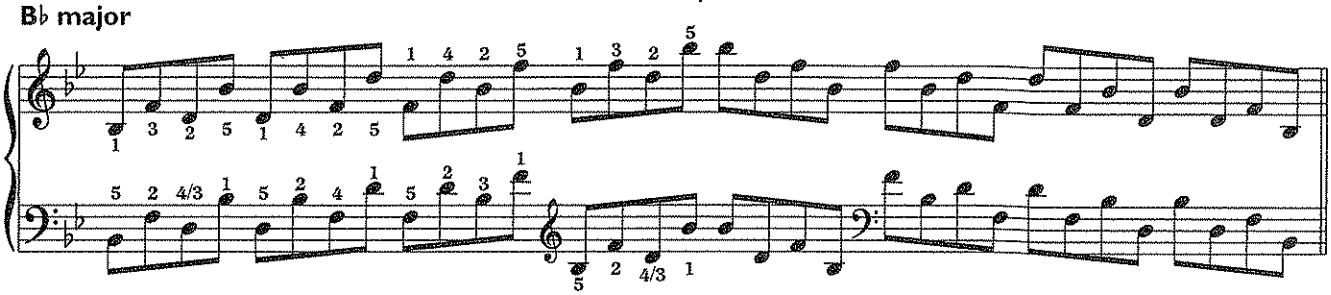


B♭ minor

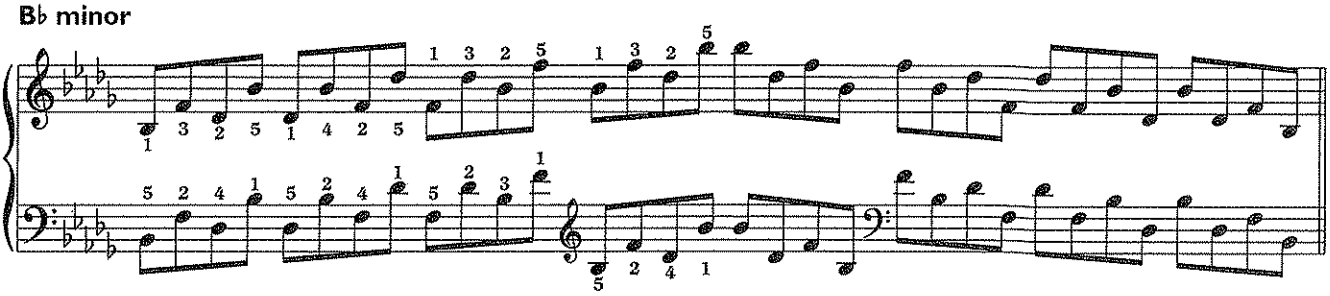


Alternative pattern

B♭ major

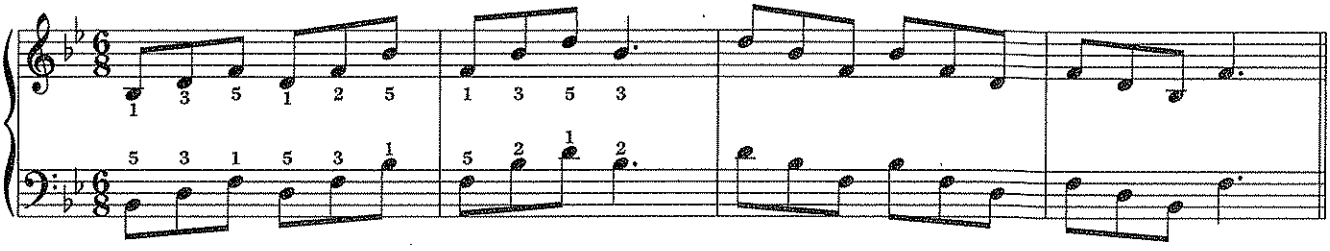


B♭ minor

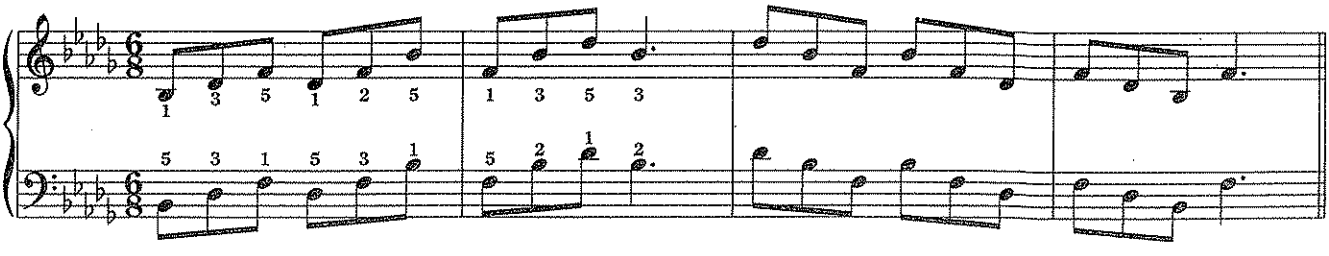


Alternative pattern (compound time)

B♭ major

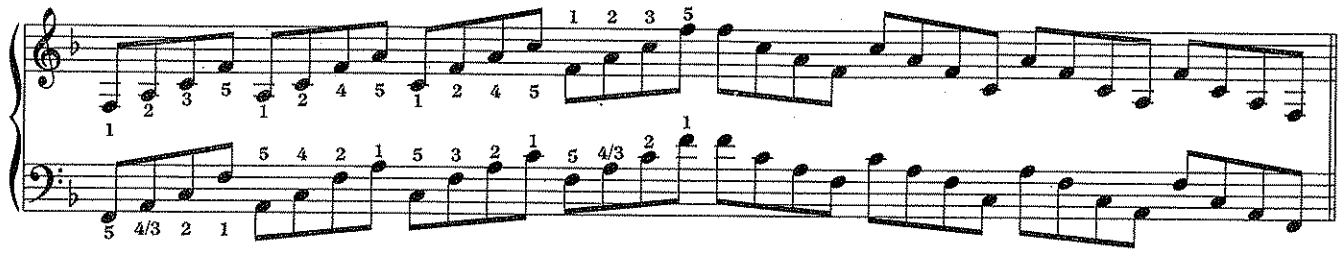


B♭ minor

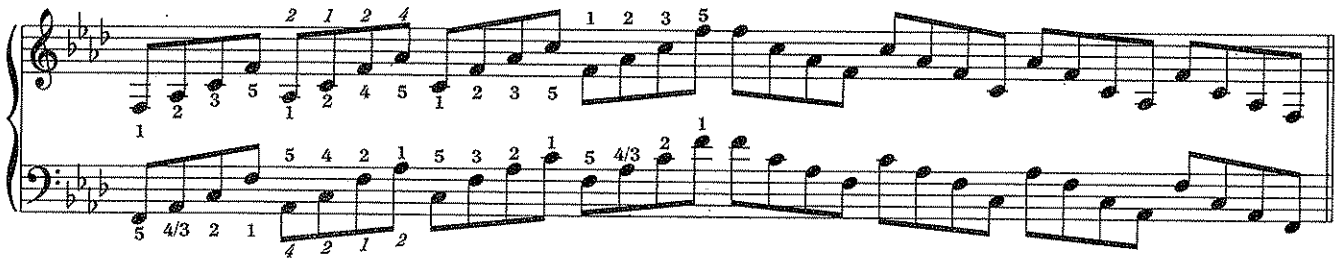


Standard pattern

F major

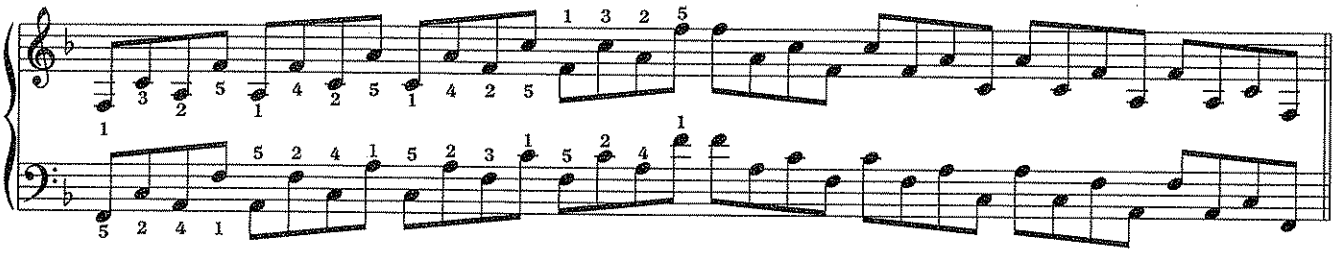


F minor

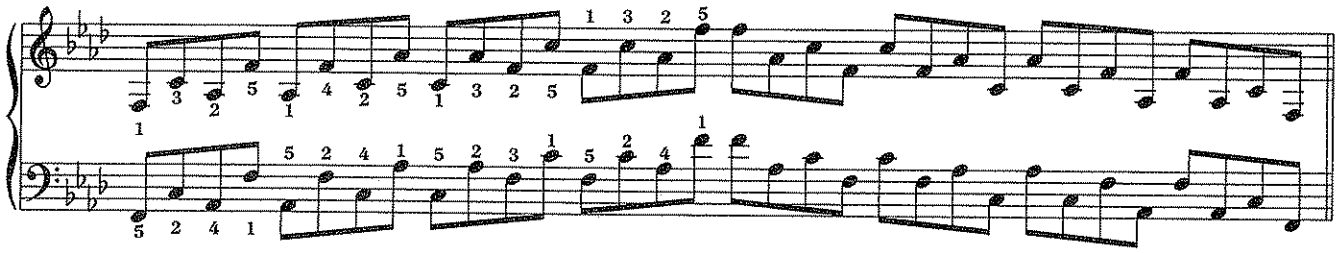


Alternative pattern

F major

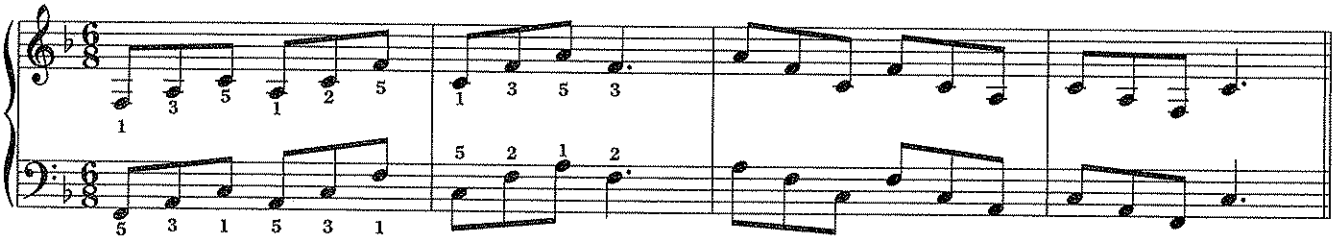


F minor

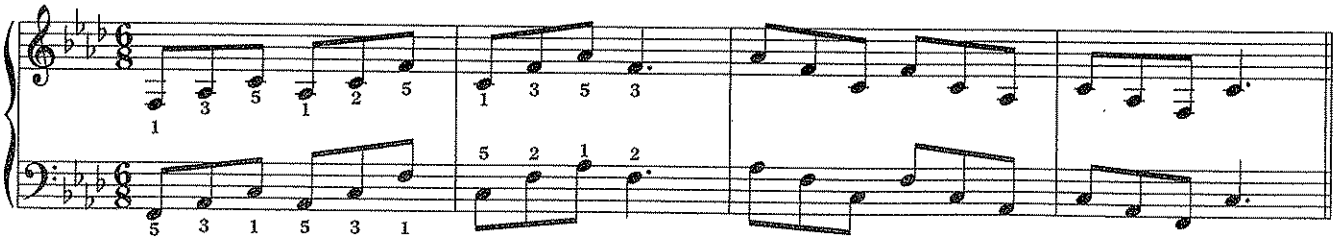


Alternative pattern (compound time)

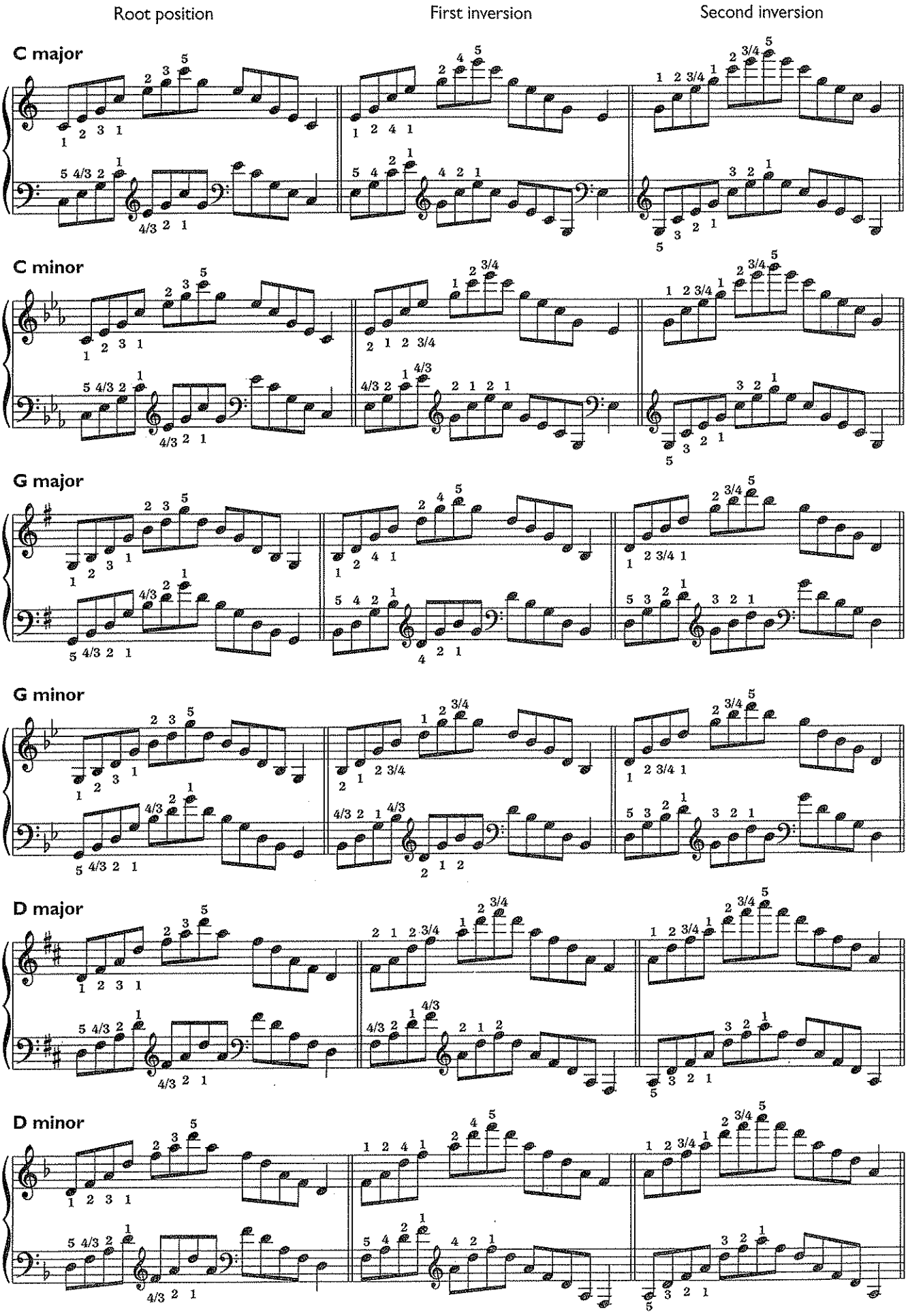
F major



F minor

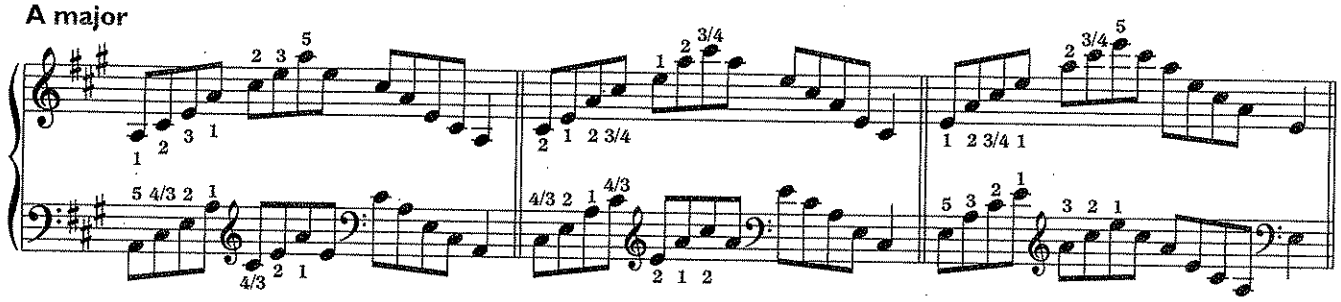


Arpeggios of major and minor common chords

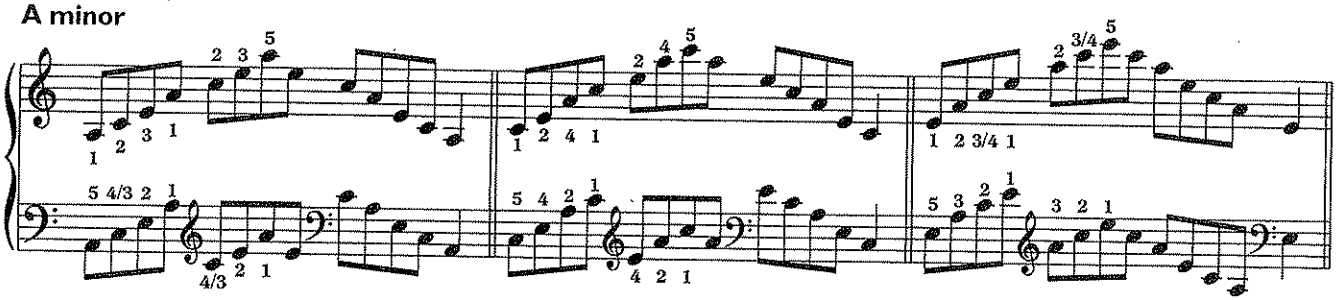


Root position First inversion Second inversion

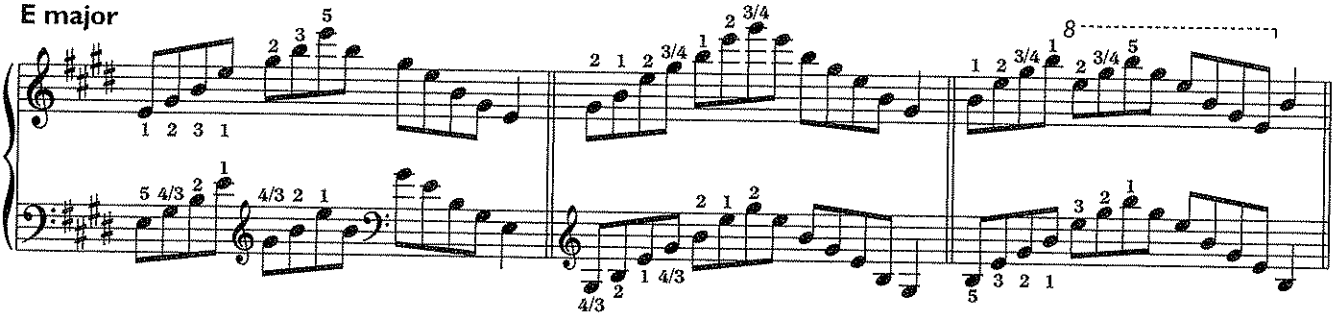
A major



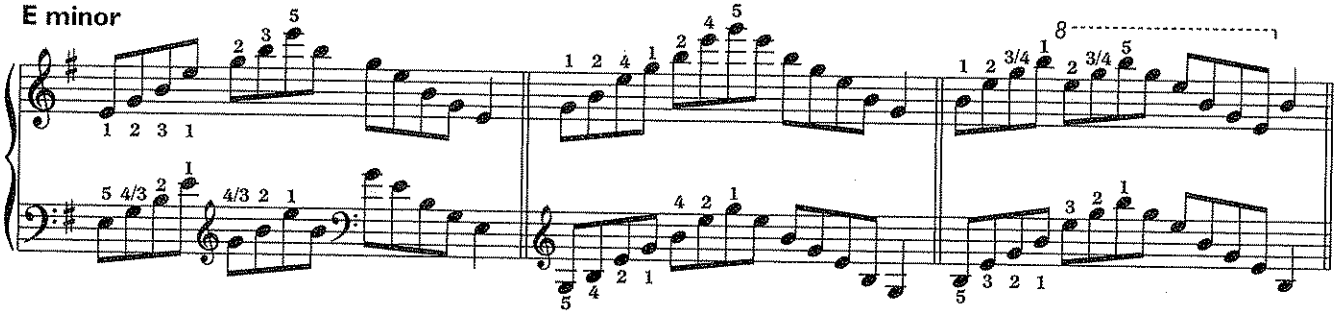
A minor



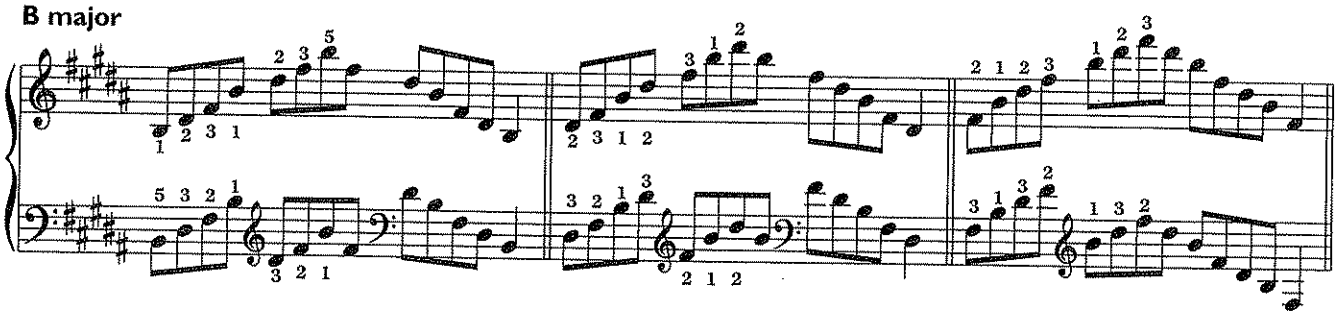
E major



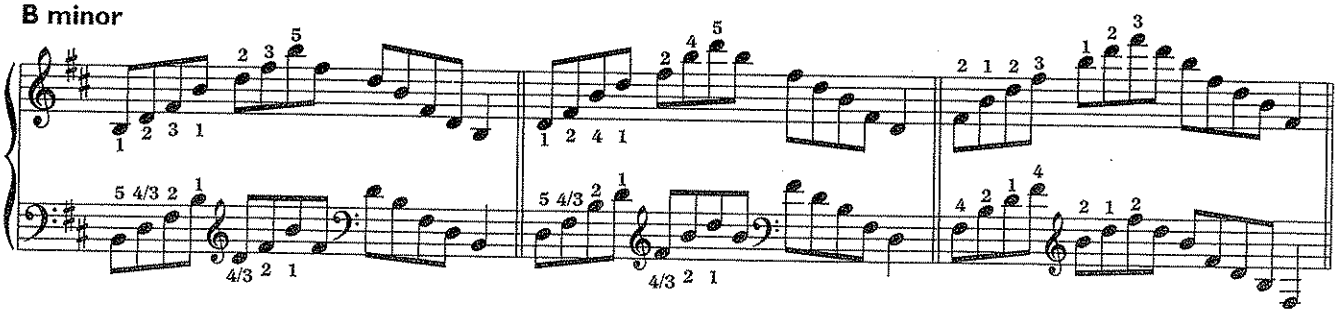
E minor



B major

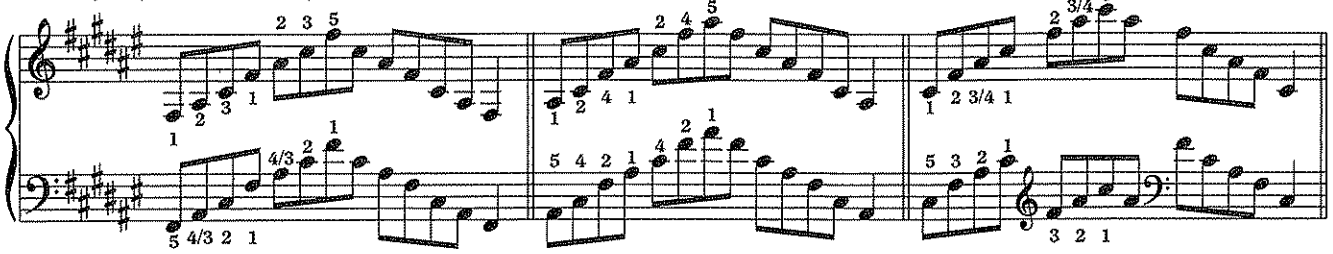


B minor

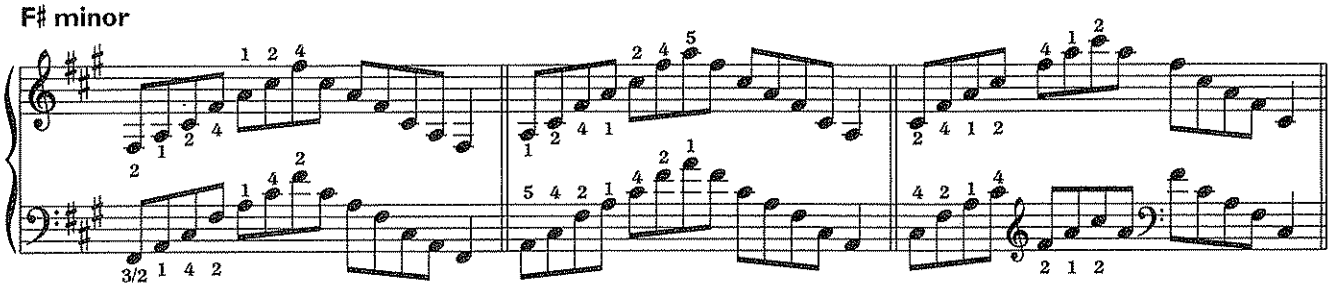


Root position | First inversion | Second inversion

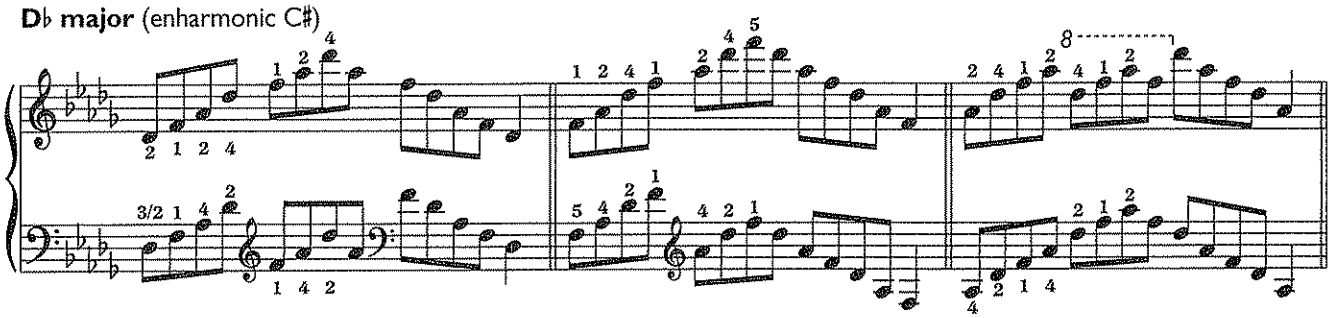
F♯ major (enharmonic G♭)



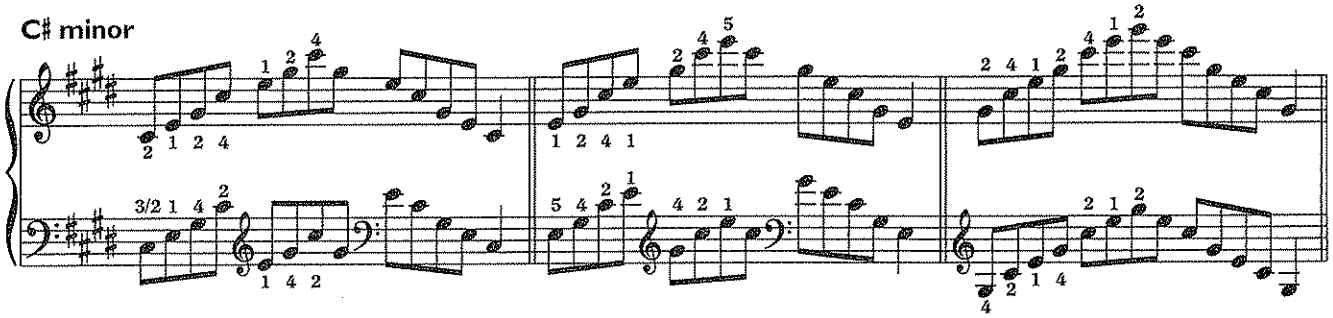
F♯ minor



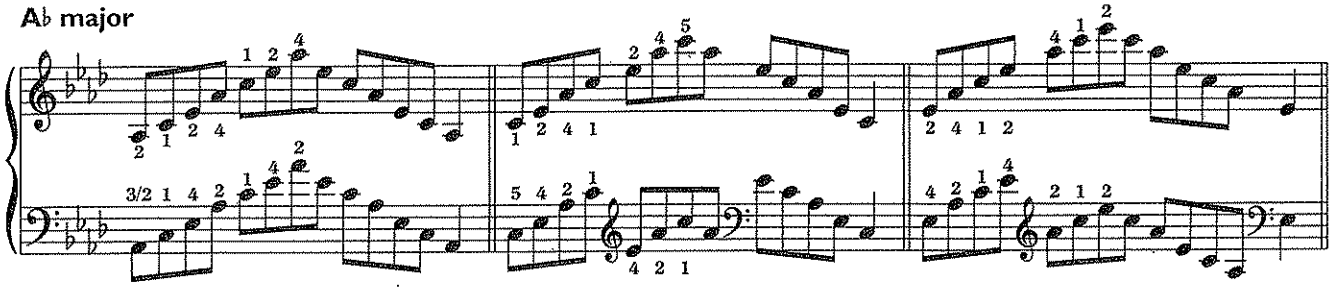
D♭ major (enharmonic C♯)



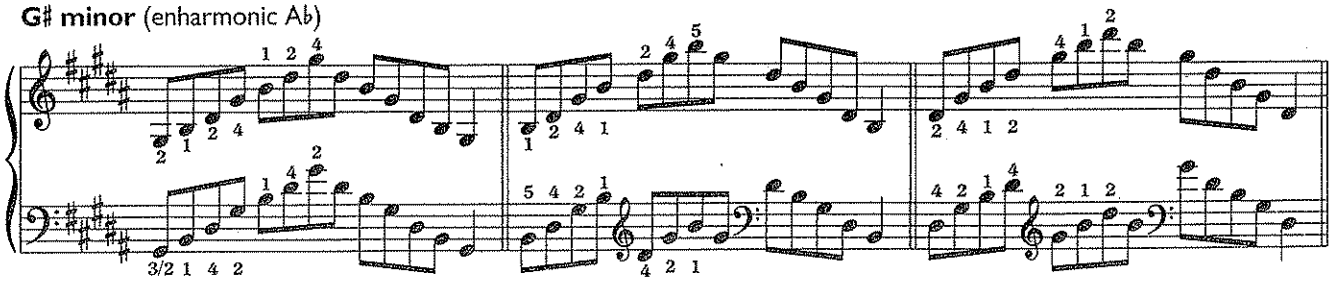
C♯ minor

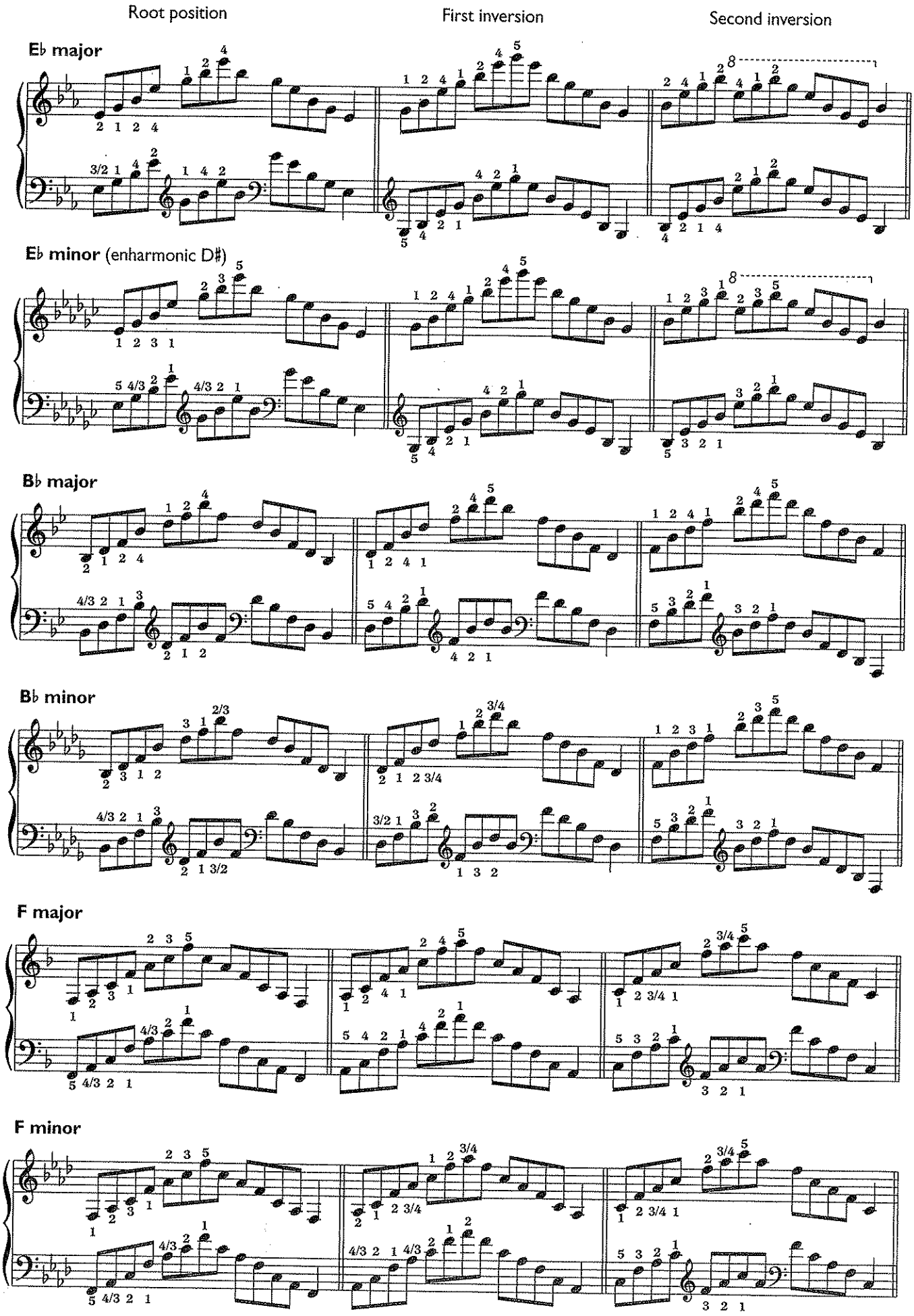


A♭ major



G♯ minor (enharmonic A♭)

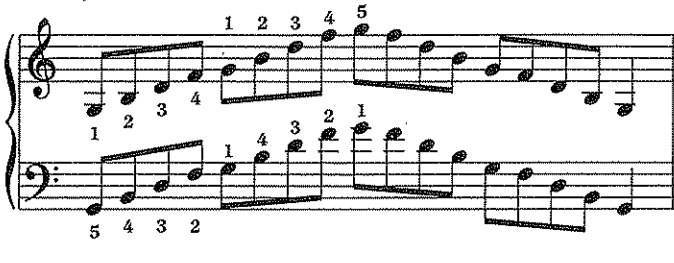



Root position
First inversion
Second inversion
E♭ major
E♭ minor (enharmonic D♯)
B♭ major
B♭ minor
F major
F minor

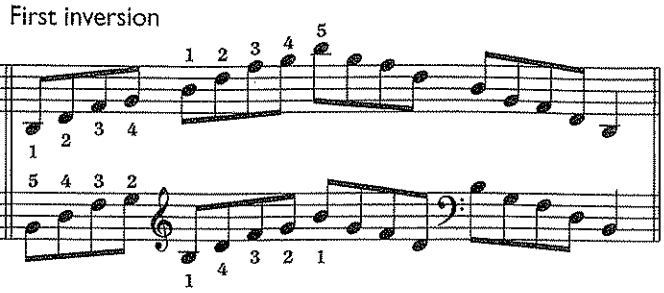
Arpeggios of the dominant seventh chord

Key of C

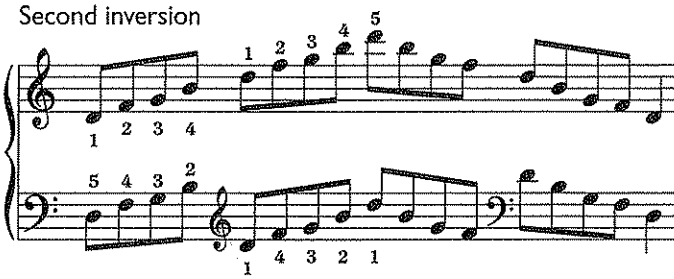
Root position



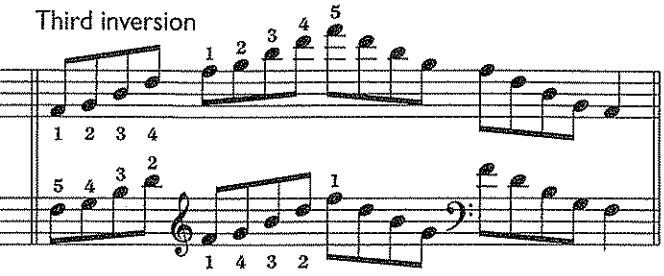
First inversion



Second inversion

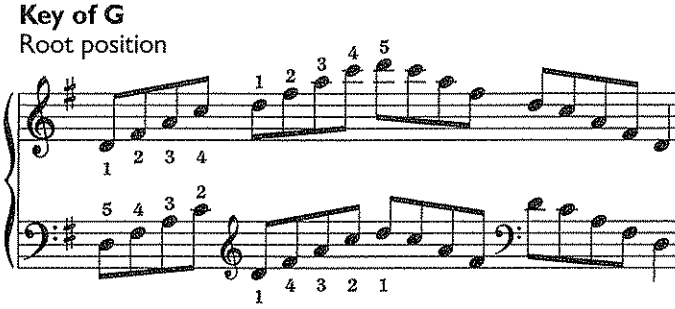


Third inversion

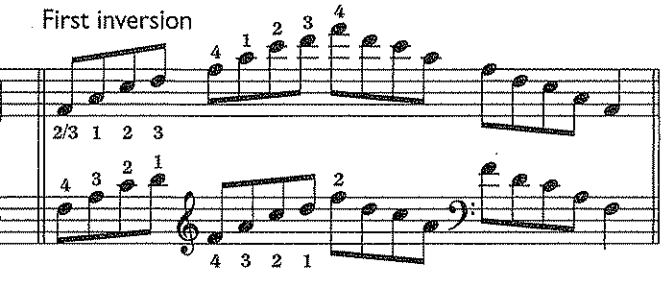


Key of G

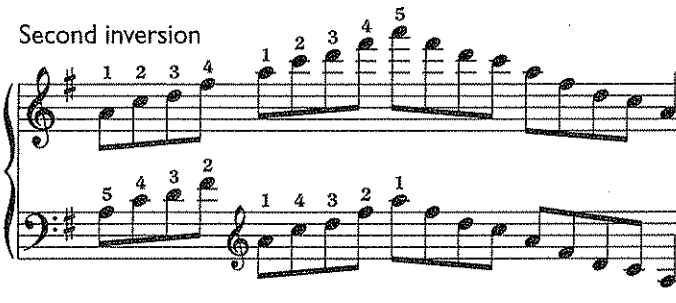
Root position



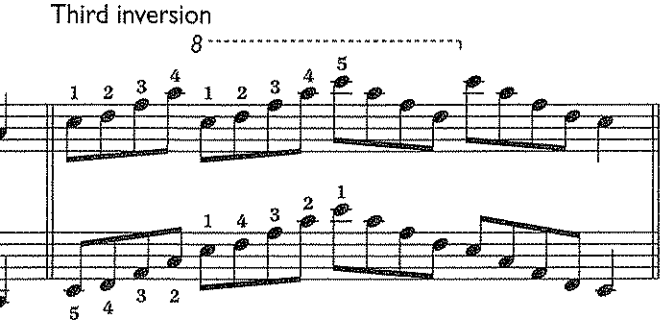
First inversion



Second inversion

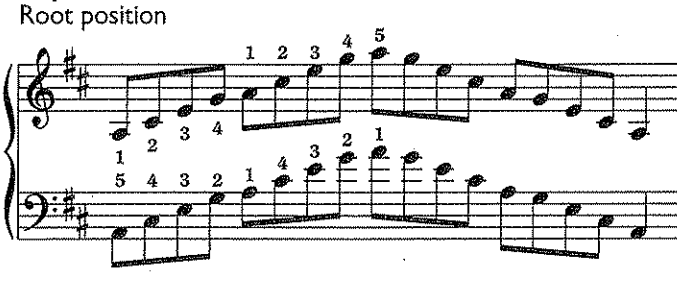


Third inversion

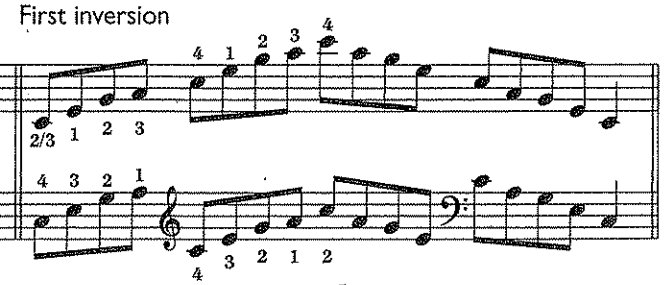


Key of D

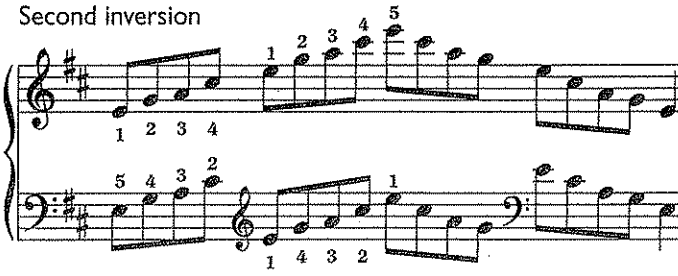
Root position



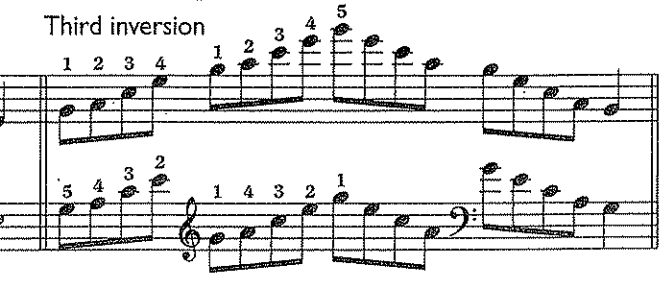
First inversion



Second inversion

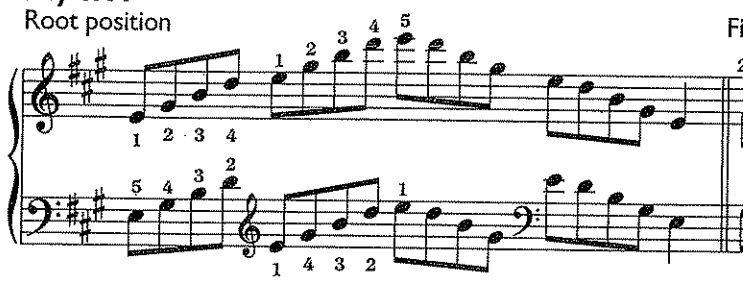


Third inversion

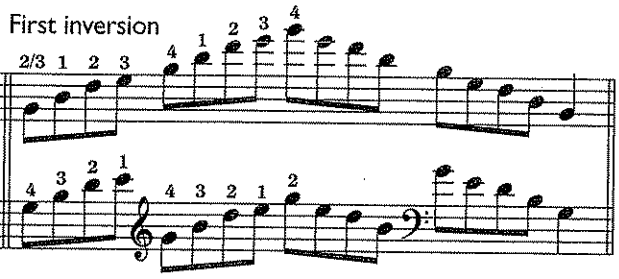


Key of A

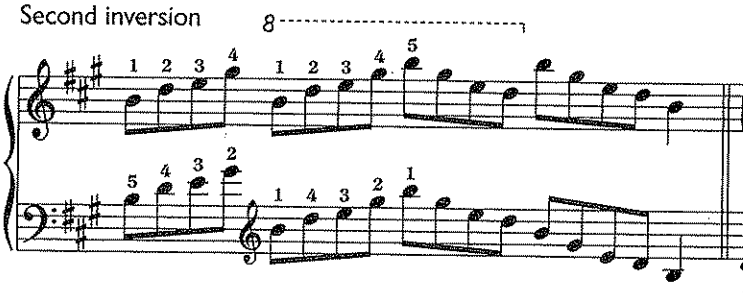
Root position



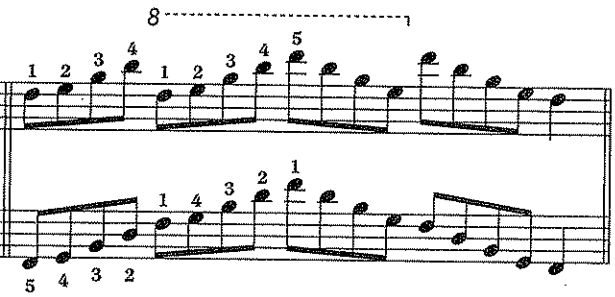
First inversion



Second inversion

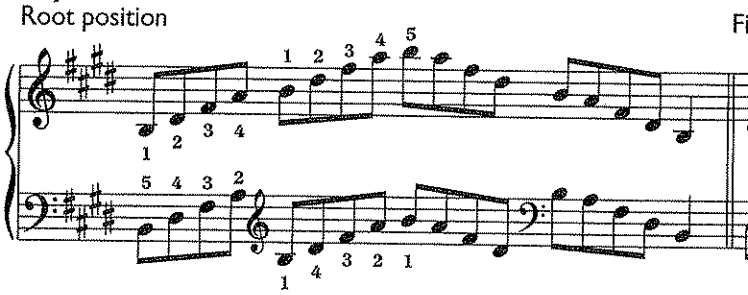


Third inversion

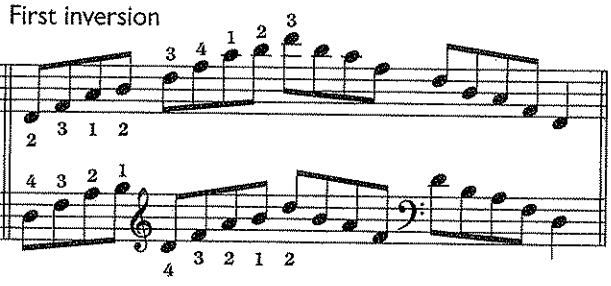


Key of E

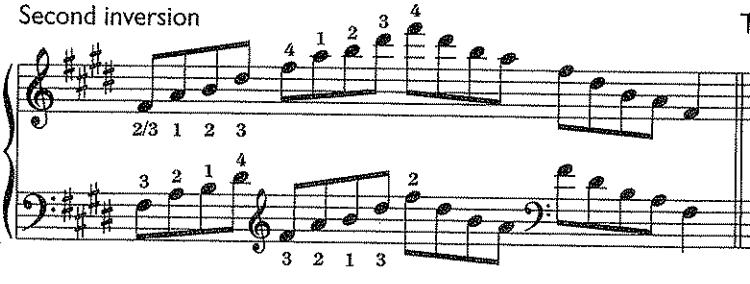
Root position



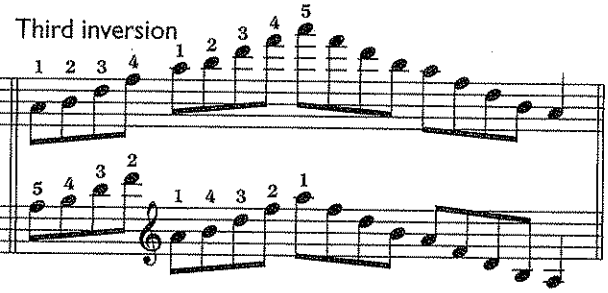
First inversion



Second inversion

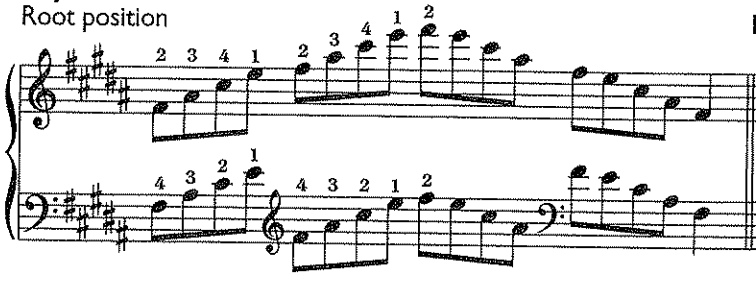


Third inversion

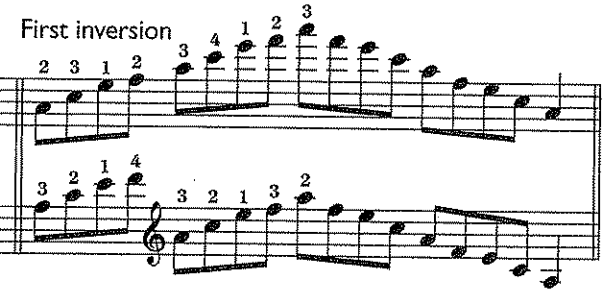


Key of B

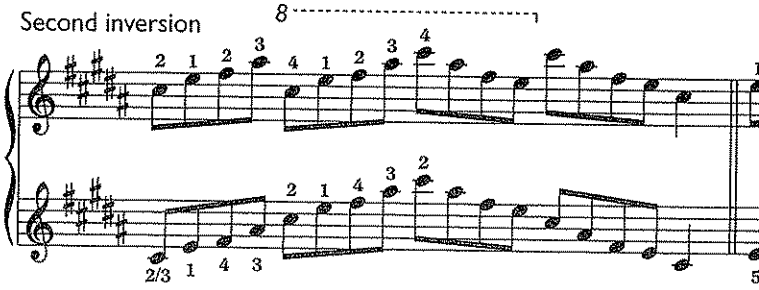
Root position



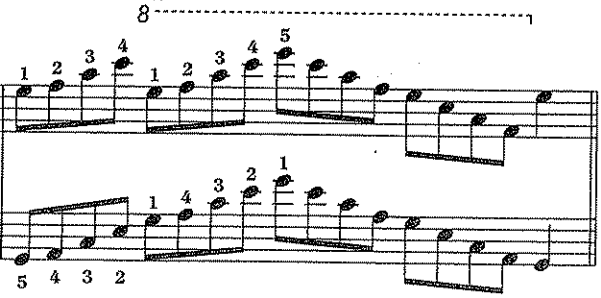
First inversion



Second inversion



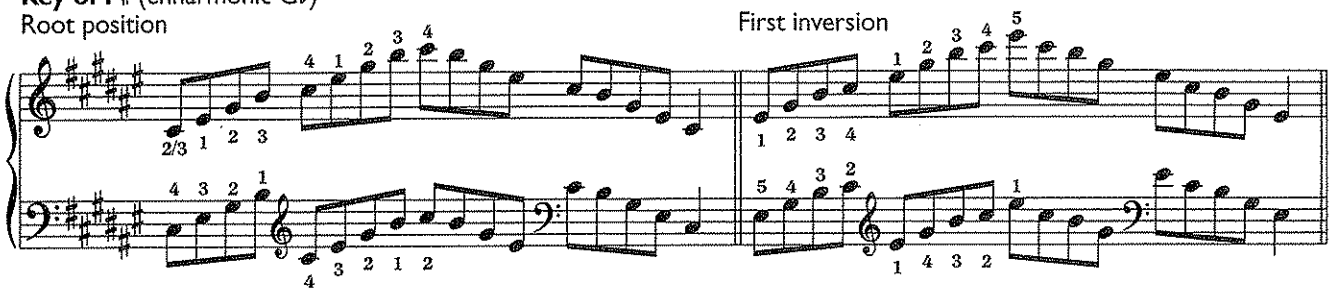
Third inversion



Key of F♯ (enharmonic G♭)

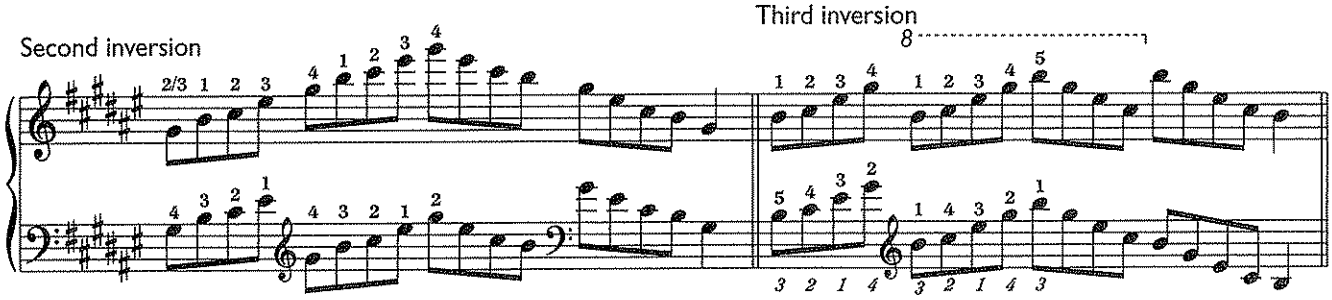
Root position

First inversion



Second inversion

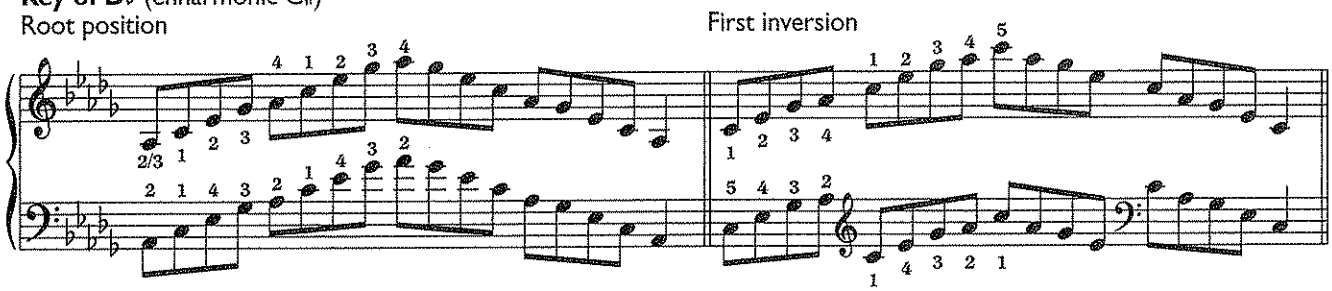
Third inversion



Key of D♭ (enharmonic C♯)

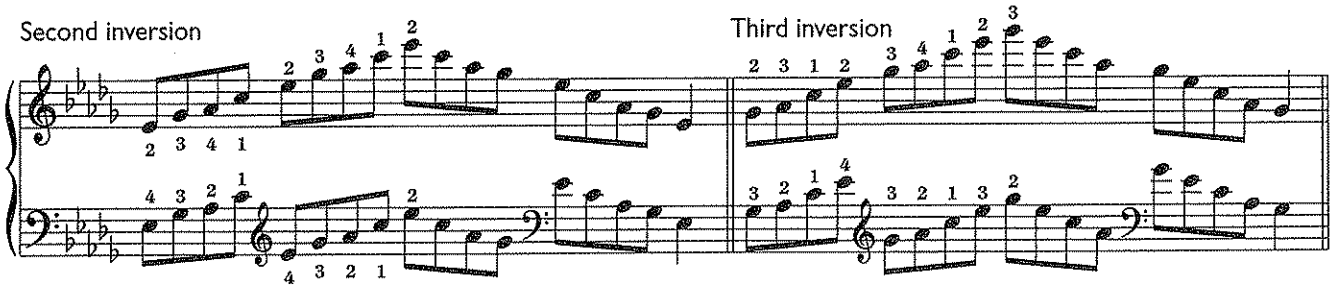
Root position

First inversion



Second inversion

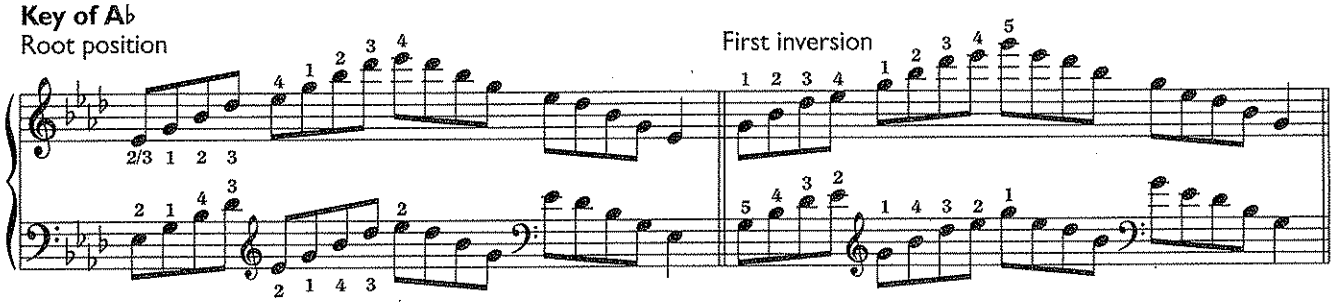
Third inversion



Key of A♭

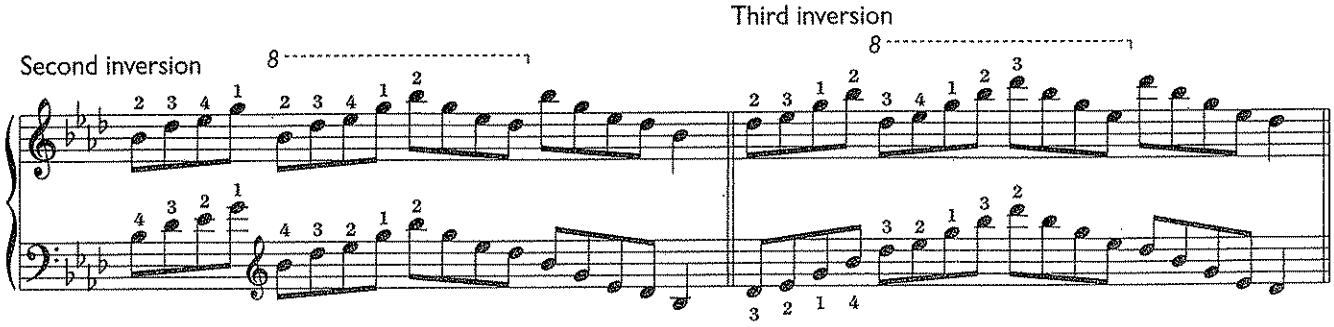
Root position

First inversion



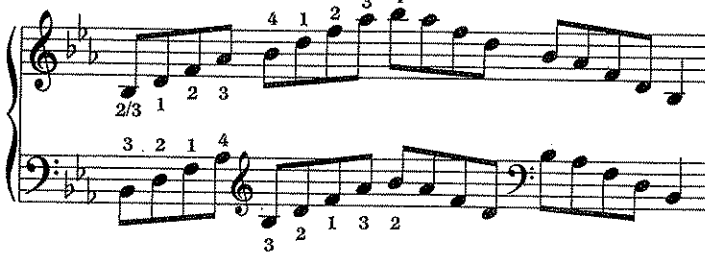
Second inversion

Third inversion

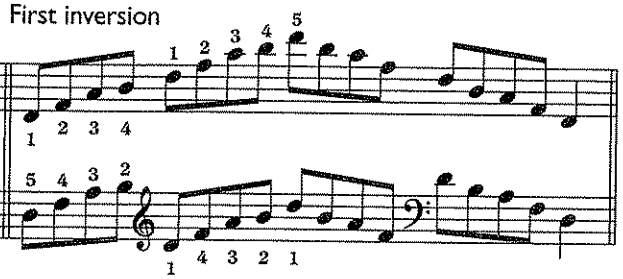


Key of E♭

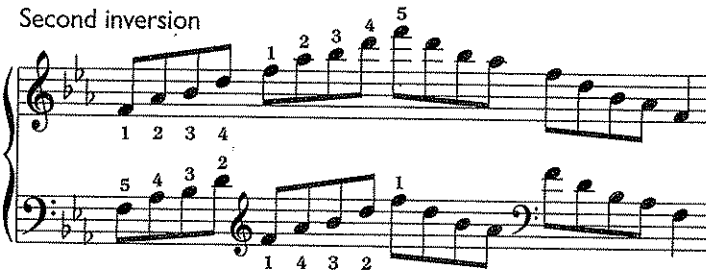
Root position



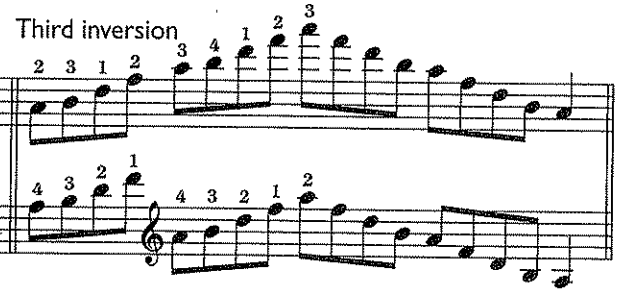
First inversion



Second inversion

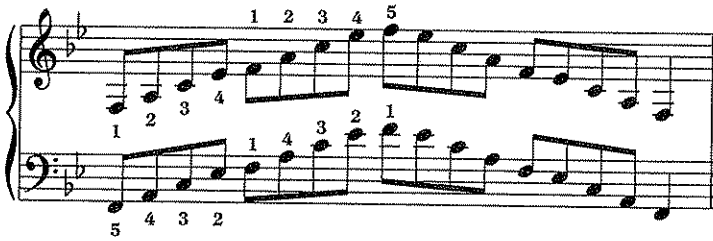


Third inversion

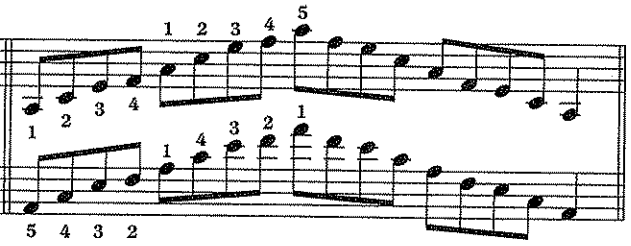


Key of B♭

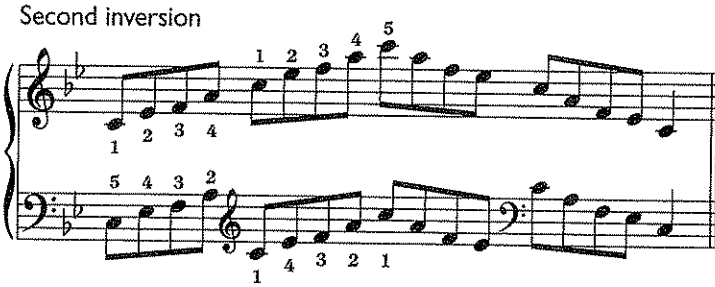
Root position



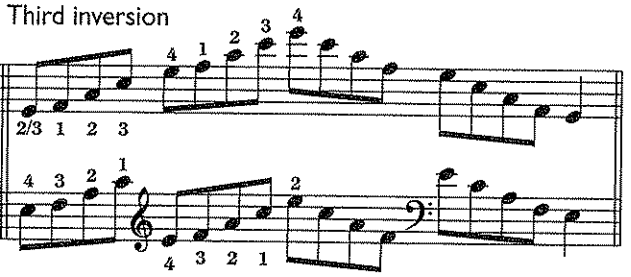
First inversion



Second inversion

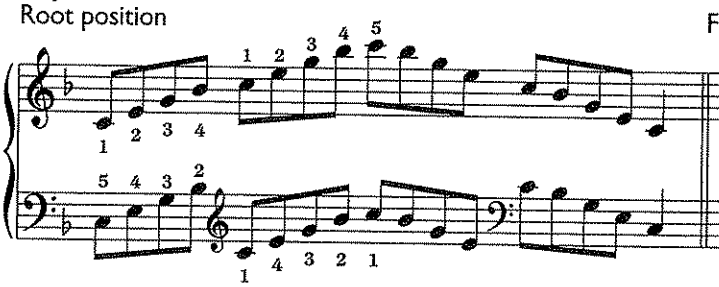


Third inversion

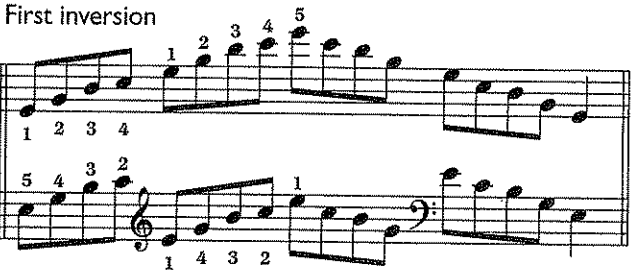


Key of F

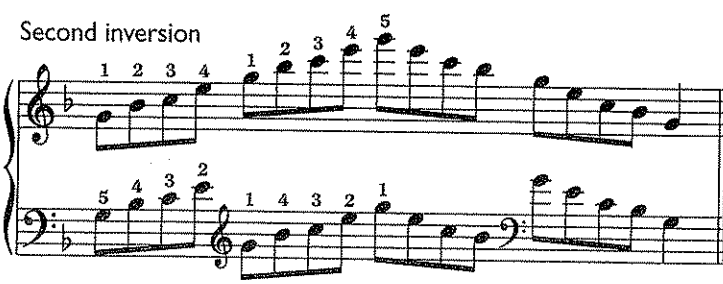
Root position



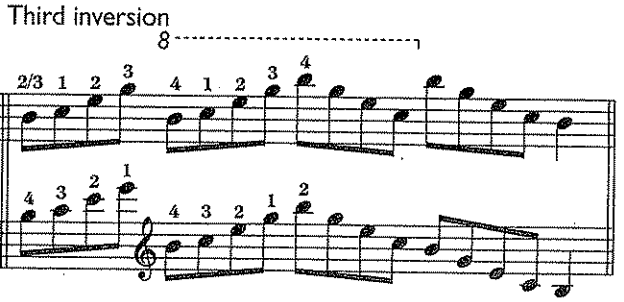
First inversion



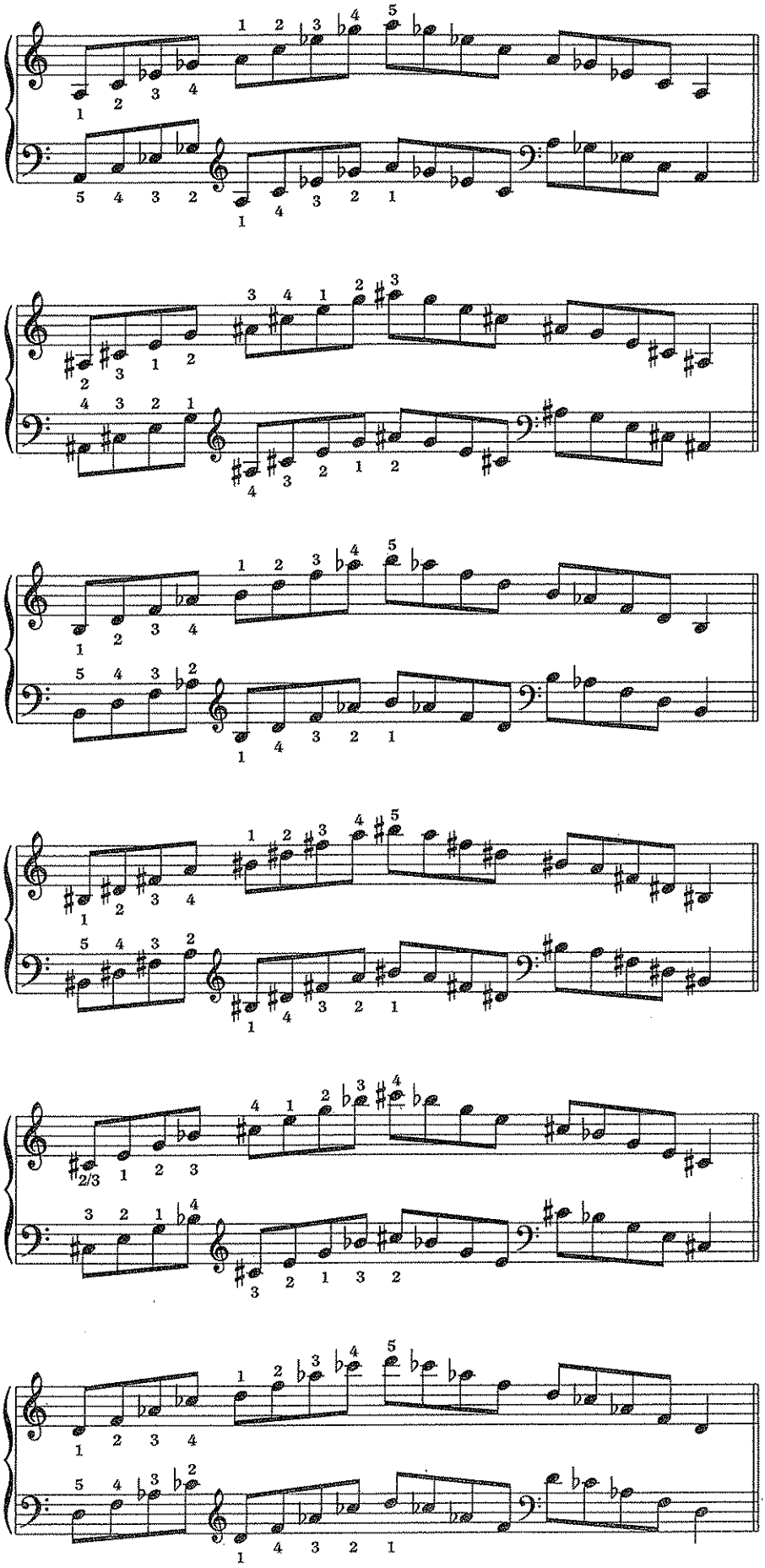
Second inversion

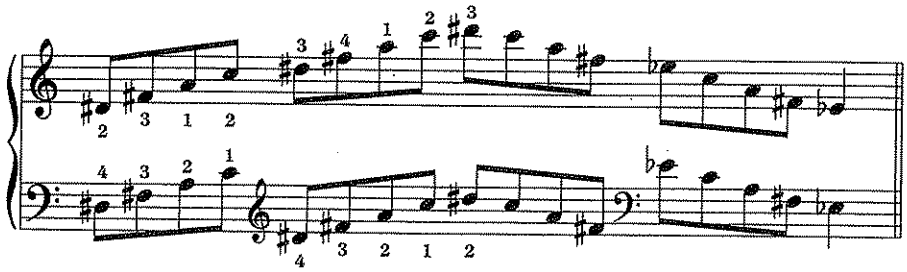


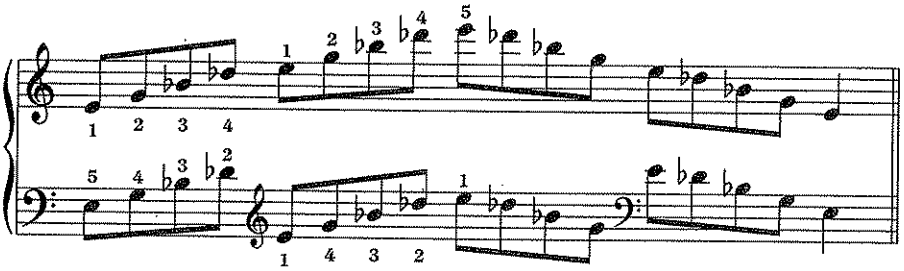
Third inversion

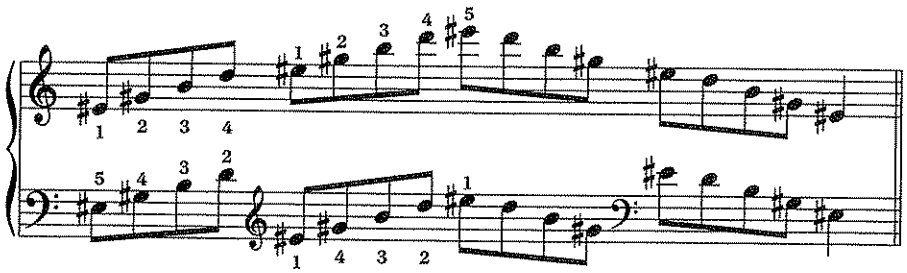


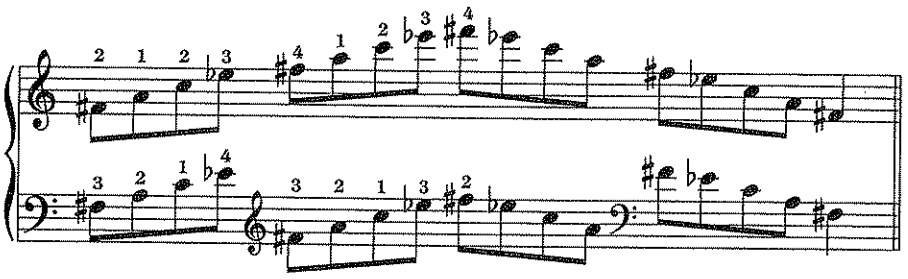
Arpeggios of the diminished seventh chord

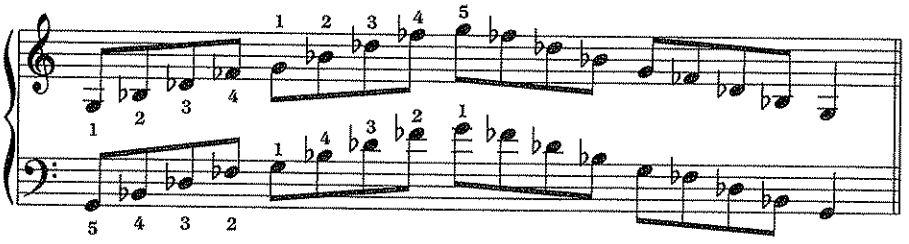


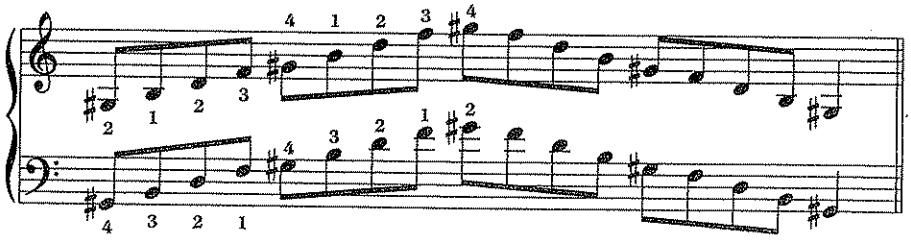




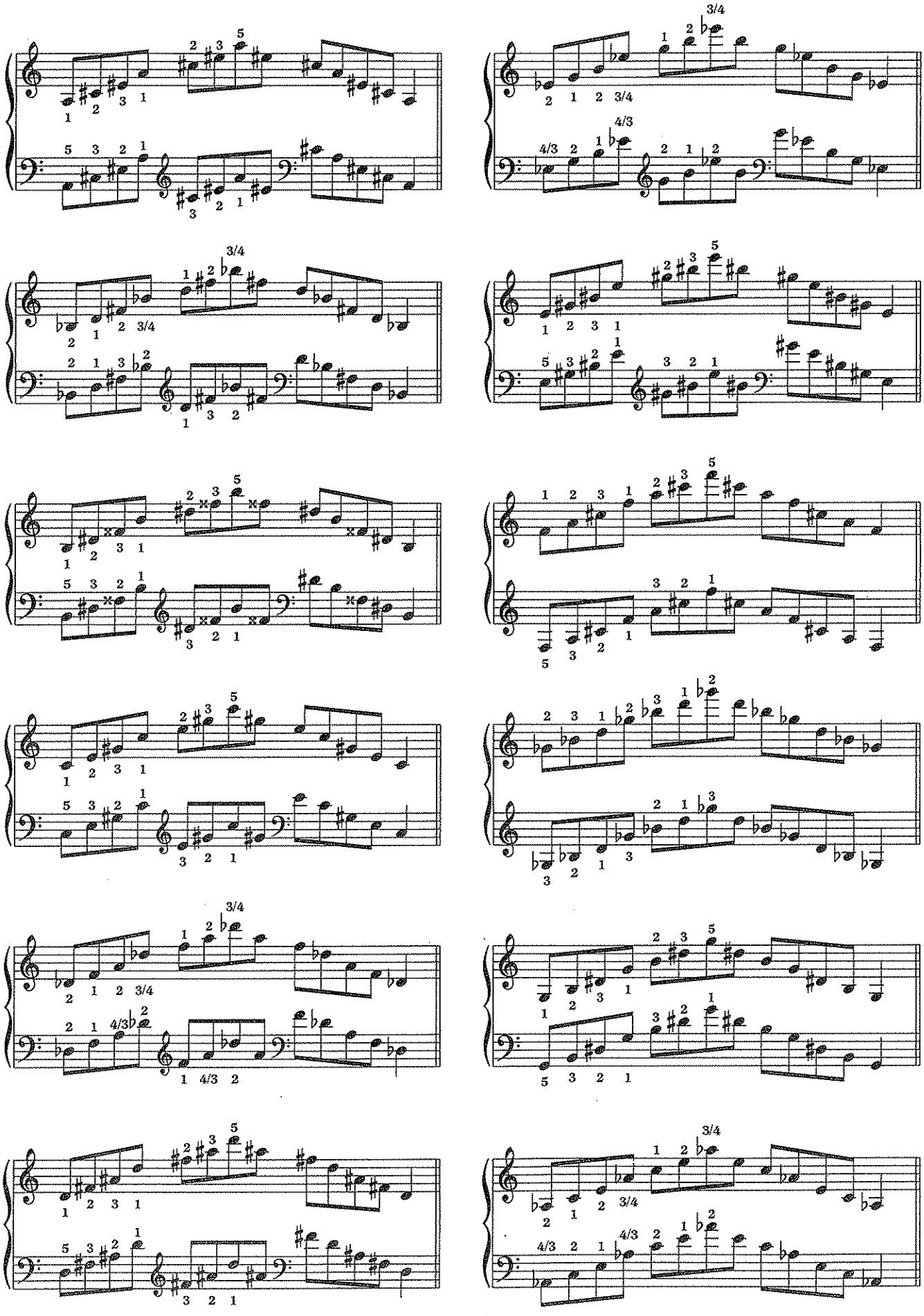








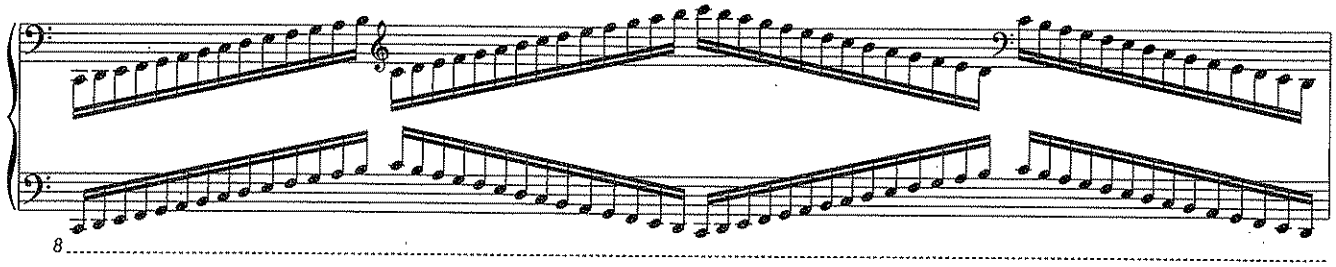
Arpeggios of the augmented triad



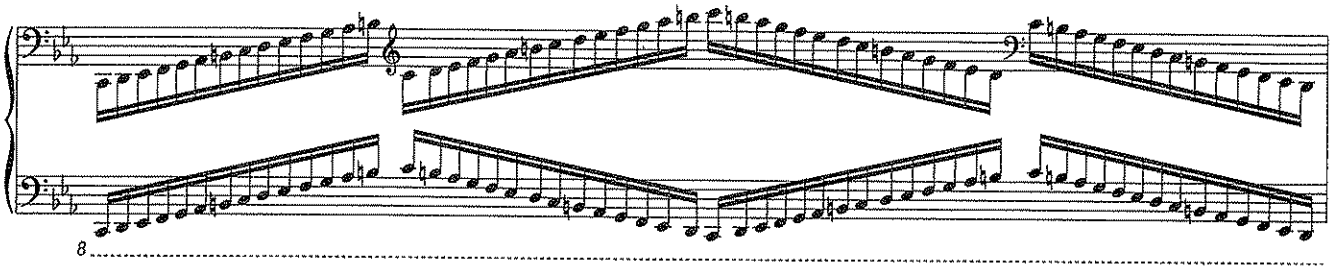
Appendix
Practice Scales

Leschetizky's 'Scale of Scales'

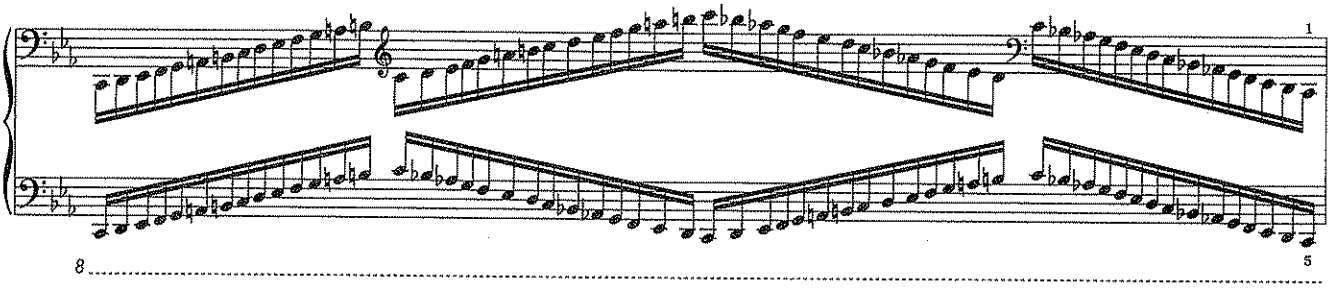
C major



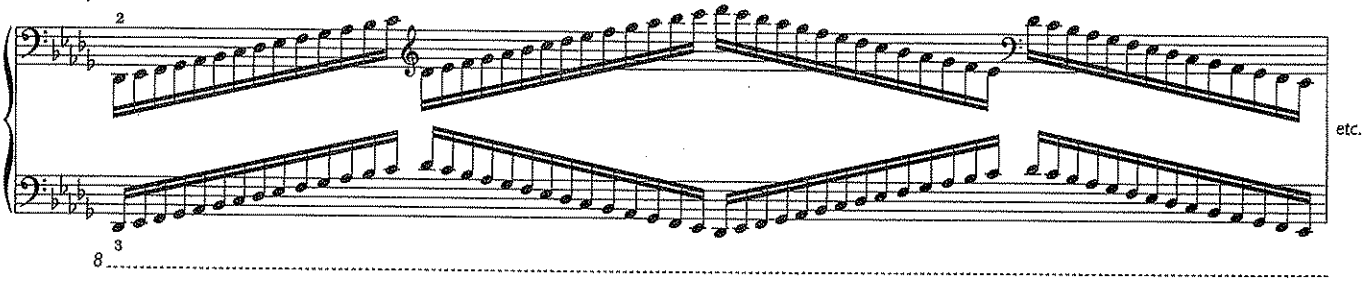
C harmonic minor



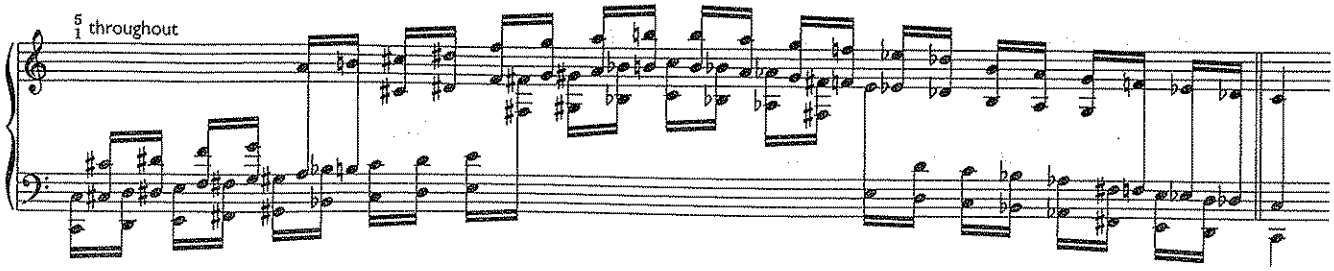
C melodic minor



D♭ major



Chromatic scale in octaves divided between the hands



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