THUMB UNDER TECHNIQUE

Develop your thumb-under technique by first exploring its different forms within simple scales and arpeggios.

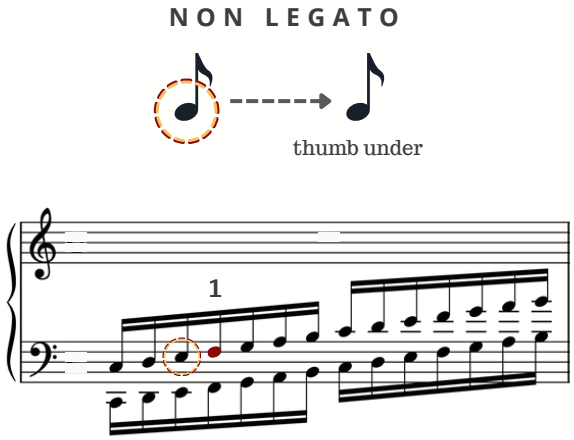
Begin by isolating and repeating each connecting interval that involves a thumb-under motion. Then, gradually incorporate these into slow, mindful practice of full scale and arpeggio patterns.

While the variety of movements may feel complex at first, consistent repetition allows the body to absorb them naturally. Over time, these motions become embedded in your muscle memory—so that when similar patterns appear in the music, your hand instinctively knows how to approach them with ease and clarity.

The green dashed circles indicate standard position-change connections that do not involve the thumb-under technique. These notes are selected according to the underlying downbeats one might naturally feel when playing scales. Rather than grouping the scale in traditional 4-note segments, I organize it by octaves and phrase it in three-beat groupings across spans of seven notes. This rhythmic structure helps determine the sense of pulse.
The reasoning behind organizing scales in seven-note phrases—rather than the conventional eight—and arpeggios in three-note segments instead of the standard four, involves a broader structural and expressive logic that will be explored in detail in Volume III.

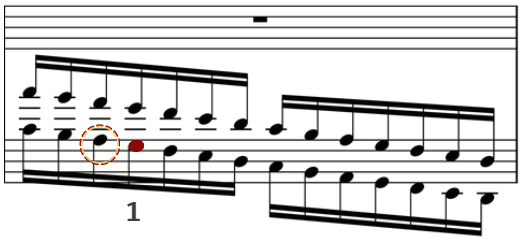
When practicing these exercises at moderate tempos, allow yourself to relax into the unevenness of sound and rhythm. These two elements are not corrected mechanically but are instead shaped by inner sensations: the imagination of sound, which reflects itself in your fingertips, and inner singing —intonation—which engages the subtle ligaments and tendons in the palm of your hand to guide finger control.
Both sound imagination and intonation will be studied in depth in the upcoming lessons.

When the Position-Change Note Leads to the **Next Note Played with the Thumb Under.**



Ascending 3D Motion in the Right Hand – Anti-clockwise “Rolls”

- Lightly touch the first note located at the 6 o’clock position.
- Immediately release the key as you allow your elbow to shift gently to the right. This movement guides your thumb toward the next note, also at 6 o’clock.
- Allow a rolling motion of your wrist to unfold naturally ***following*** the elbow shift.
- Let your thumb land softly on the next note at 6 o’clock.
- Throughout the entire motion, your fingertips should remain in gentle contact with the key surface.

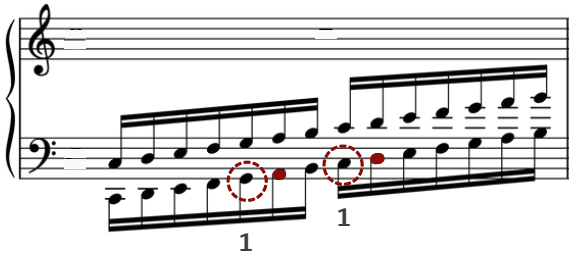


Descending 3D Motion in the Left Hand – Clockwise ‘Rolls’

- Lightly touch the first note located at the 6 o’clock position.
- Immediately release the key as you allow your elbow to shift gently to the left. This movement guides your thumb toward the next note, also at 6 o’clock.
- Allow a rolling motion of your wrist to unfold naturally ***following*** the elbow shift.
- Let your thumb land softly on the next note at 6 o’clock.
- Throughout the entire motion, your fingertips should remain in gentle contact with the key surface.

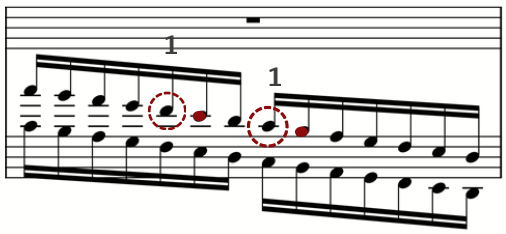
When the **Position-Change Note is Played with the Thumb Under** and Leads to the Next Note

NON LEGATO



Ascending 3D Motion in the Left Hand – Anti-clockwise “Rolls”

- Lightly touch the first note located at the 6 o’clock position.
- Immediately release the key as you allow your elbow to shift gently to the right. This movement guides your 3rd or 4th finger toward the next note, also at 6 o’clock.
- Allow a rolling motion of your wrist to unfold naturally ***following*** the elbow shift.
- Let your finger land gently on the next note at 6 o’clock.
- Throughout the entire motion, your fingertips should remain in gentle contact with the key surface.

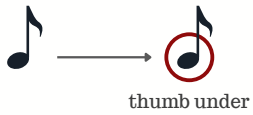


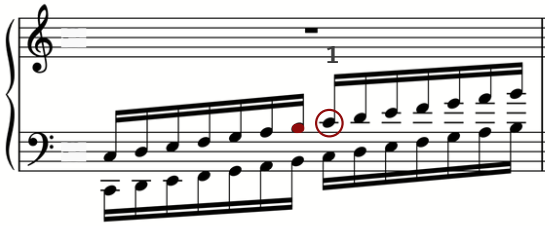
Descending 3D Motion in the Right Hand – Clockwise ‘Rolls’

- Lightly touch the first note located at the 6 o’clock position.
- Immediately release the key as you allow your elbow to shift gently to the left. This movement guides your 3rd or 4th finger toward the next note, also at 6 o’clock.
- Allow a rolling motion of your wrist to unfold naturally ***following*** the elbow shift.
- Let your finger land gently on the next note at 6 o’clock.
- Throughout the entire motion, your fingertips should remain in gentle contact with the key surface.

When the Note Leads to a **Position-Change Note Played with the Thumb Under**

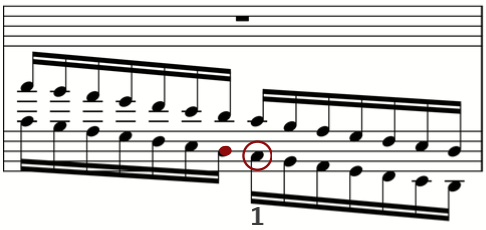
LEGATO





Ascending 3D Motion in the Right Hand – Anti-clockwise ‘Rolls’

- Begin with the arm aligned with the hand.
- Play the first note at 6 o’clock. As you hold the note, begin a gentle rolling motion without moving the elbow.
- During this ‘roll’, allow your thumb to rest passively inside the palm, aligned with the 4th finger and forearm.
- The roll itself brings the thumb toward the next note at 6 o’clock.
- If needed, let the thumb move under the palm—always as a continuation of the hand’s motion, never in isolation.
- As the thumb arrives at the next note at 6 o’clock, release the key promptly by gently moving the elbow to the right, to release any residual tension in the wrist.



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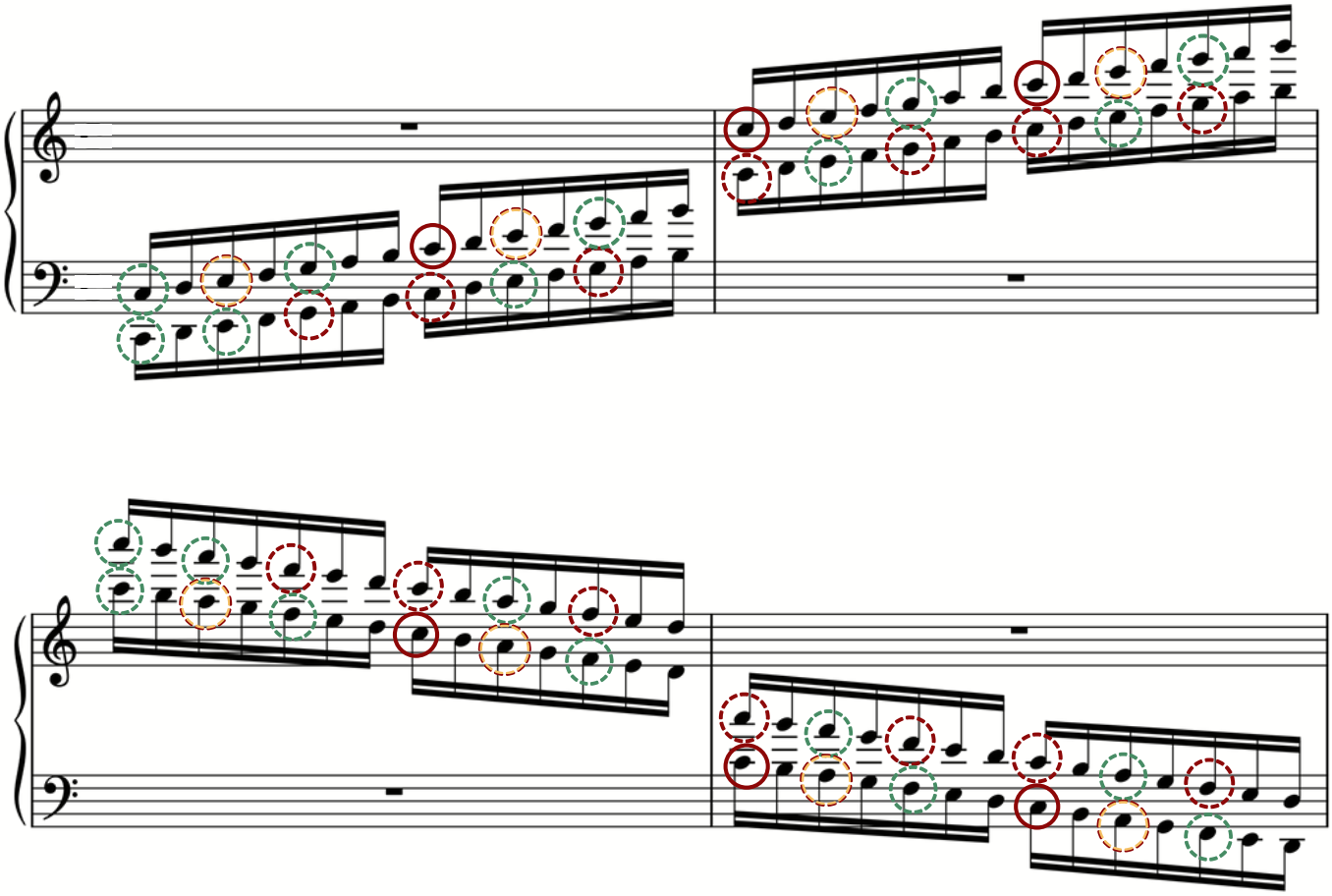
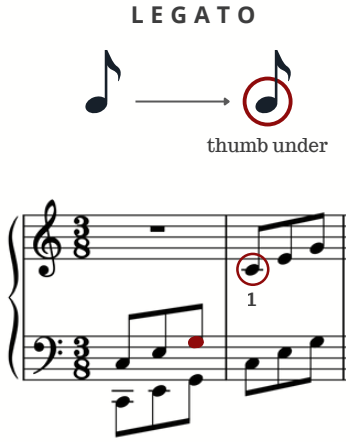
NON LEGATO
no thumb under
NON LEGATO
thumb under
NON LEGATO
thumb under
LEGATO
thumb under

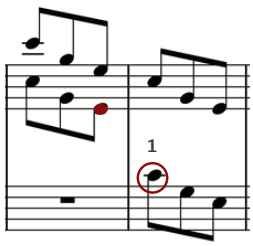


When the Note Leads to a **Position-Change Note Played with the Thumb Under**



Ascending 3D Motion in the Right Hand – Anti-clockwise ‘Rolls’

- Begin with the arm aligned with the hand.
- Play the first note at 6 o’clock. As you hold the note, begin a gentle rolling motion without moving the elbow.
- During this ‘roll’, allow your thumb to rest passively inside the palm, aligned with the 3rd finger and forearm.
- The roll itself brings the thumb toward the next note at 6 o’clock.
- If needed, let the thumb move under the palm—always as a continuation of the hand’s motion, never in isolation.
- As the thumb arrives at the next note at 6 o’clock, release the key promptly by gently moving the elbow to the right, to release any residual tension in the wrist.



Descending 3D motion in the Left Hand – Clockwise ‘Rolls’

- Begin with the arm aligned with the hand.
- Play the first note at 6 o’clock. As you hold the note, begin a gentle rolling motion without moving the elbow.
- During this ‘roll’, allow your thumb to rest passively inside the palm, aligned with the 4th or 3rd finger and forearm.
- The roll itself brings the thumb toward the next note at 6 o’clock.
- If needed, let the thumb move under the palm—always as a continuation of the hand’s motion, never in isolation.
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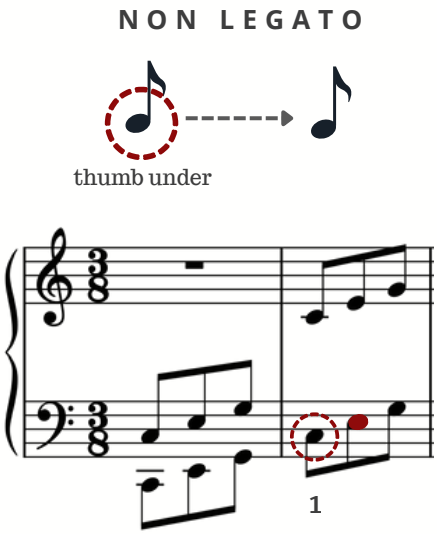
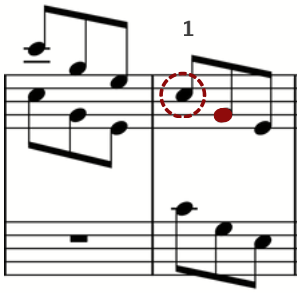
When the **Position-Change Note is Played with the Thumb Under** and Leads to the Next Note



Ascending 3D Motion in the Left Hand – Anti-clockwise “Rolls”

- Lightly touch the first note located at the 6 o’clock position.
- Immediately release the key as you allow your elbow to shift gently to the right. This movement guides your 4th or 3rd finger toward the next note, also at 6 o’clock.
- Allow a rolling motion of your wrist to unfold naturally ***following*** the elbow shift.
- Let your finger land gently on the next note at 6 o’clock.
- Throughout the entire motion, your fingertips should remain in gentle contact with the key surface.



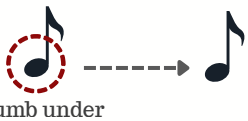
Descending 3D Motion in the Right Hand – Clockwise ‘Rolls’

- Lightly touch the first note located at the 6 o’clock position.
- Immediately release the key as you allow your elbow to shift gently to the left. This movement guides your 3rd finger toward the next note, also at 6 o’clock.
- Allow a rolling motion of your wrist to unfold naturally ***following*** the elbow shift.
- Let your finger land gently on the next note at 6 o’clock.
- Throughout the entire motion, your fingertips should remain in gentle contact with the key surface.

NON LEGATO

no thumb under

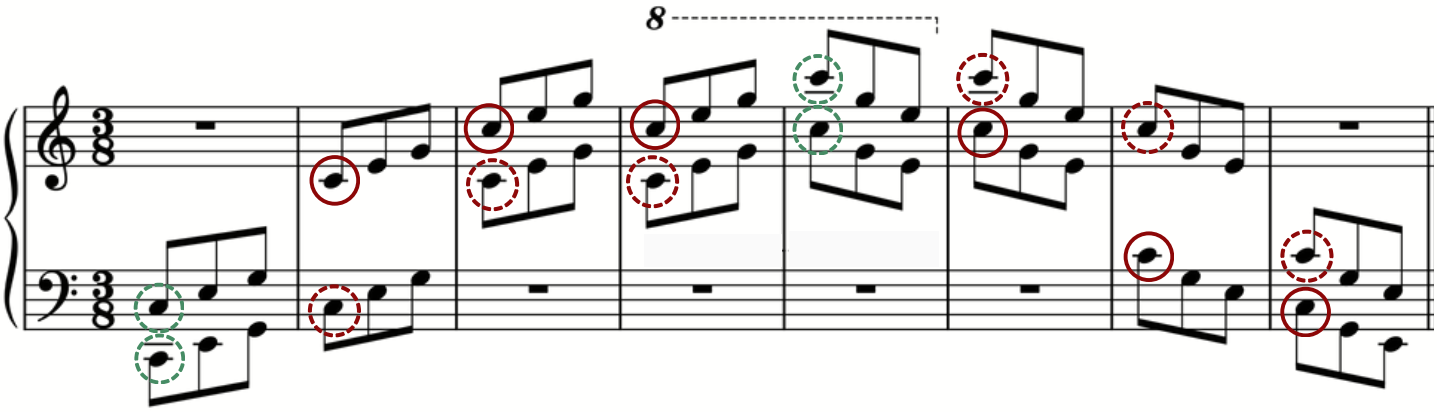
NON LEGATO

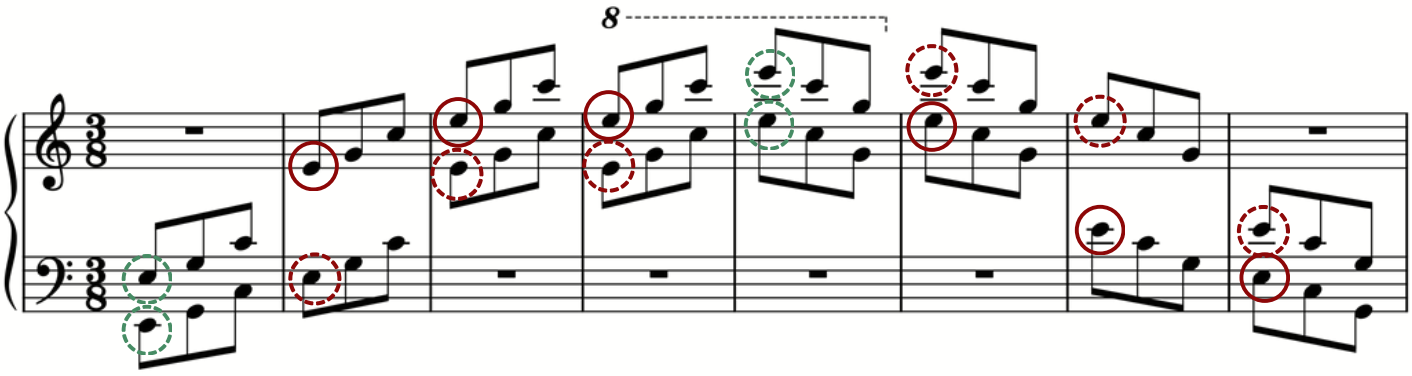


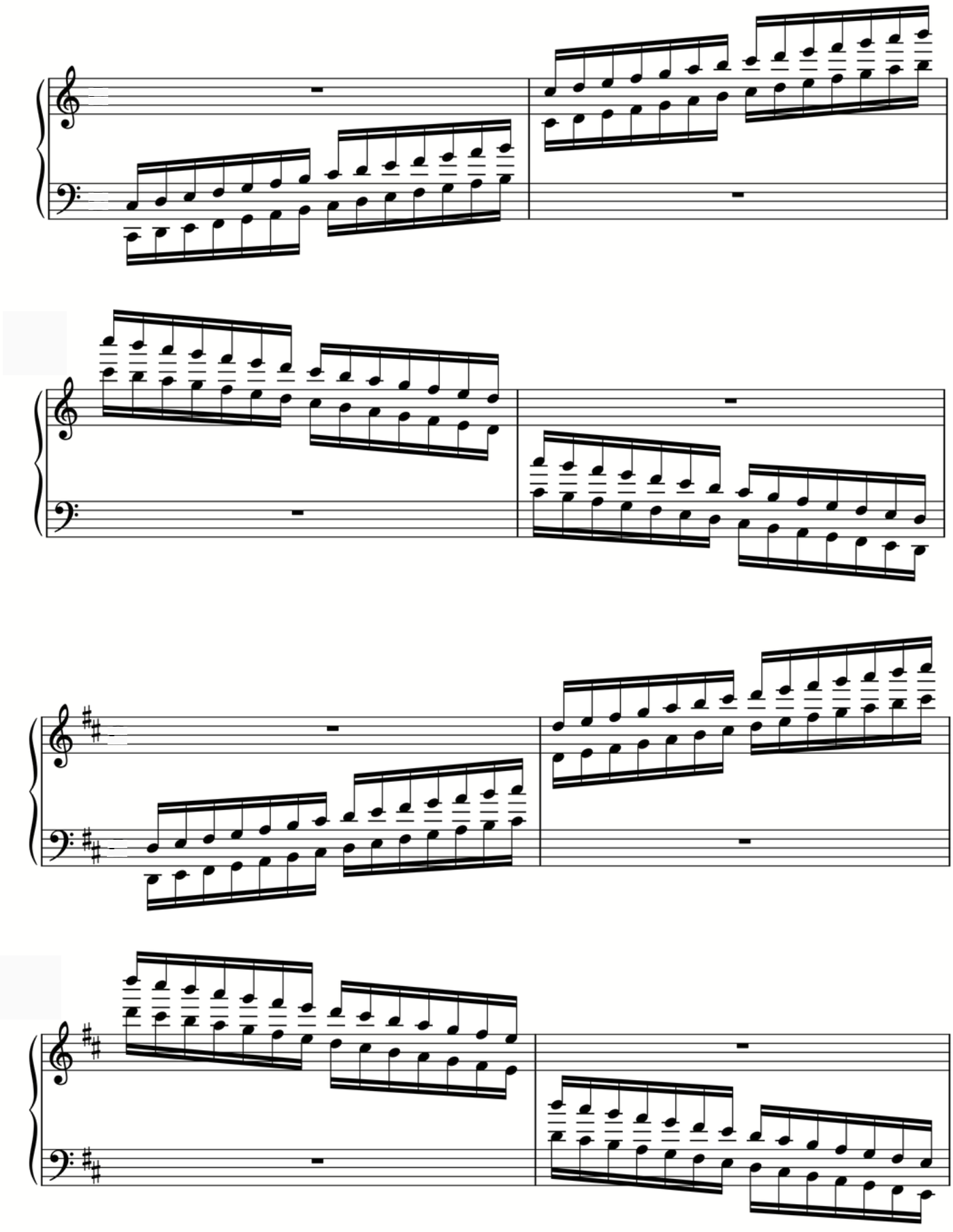
thumb under

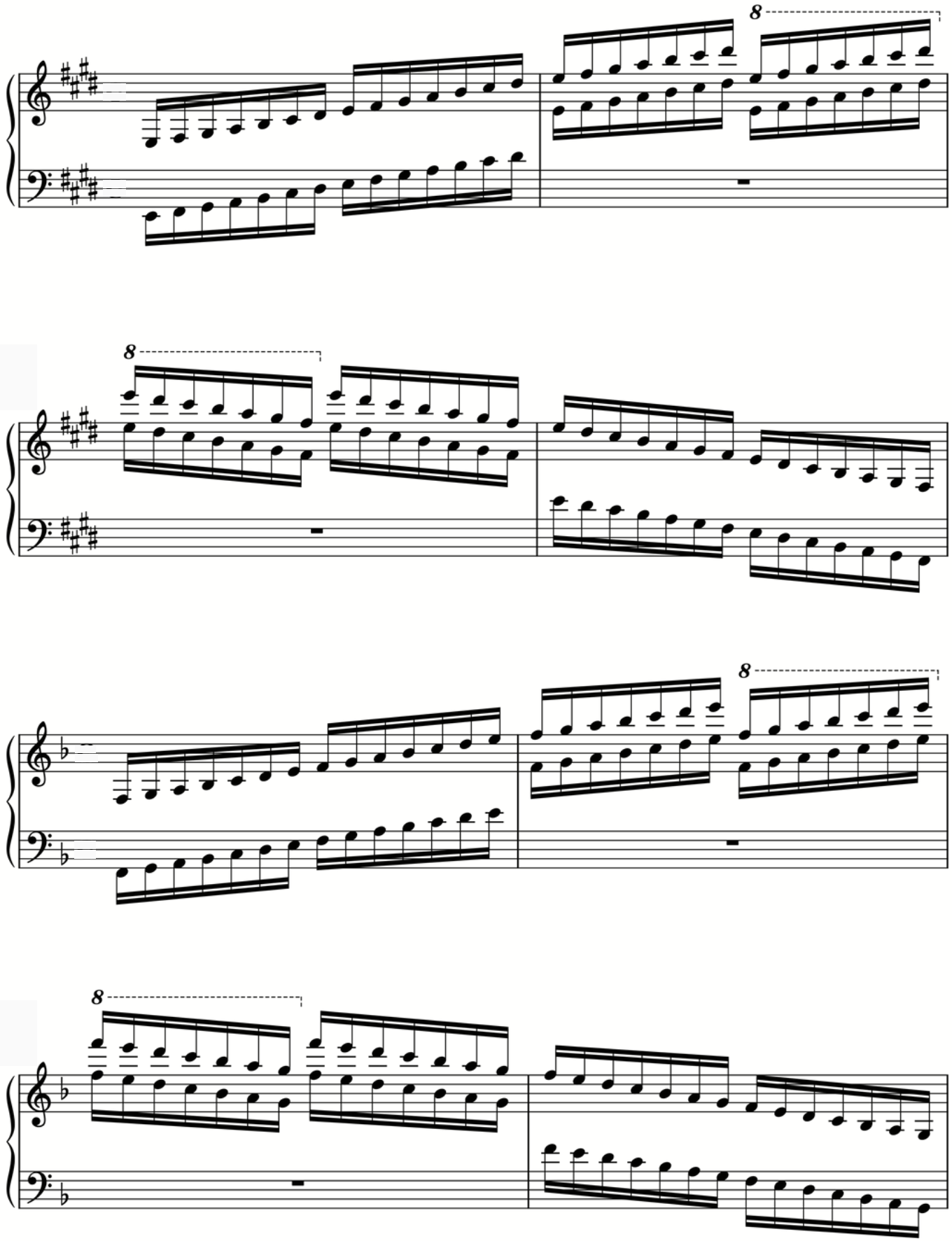
LEGATO

thumb under





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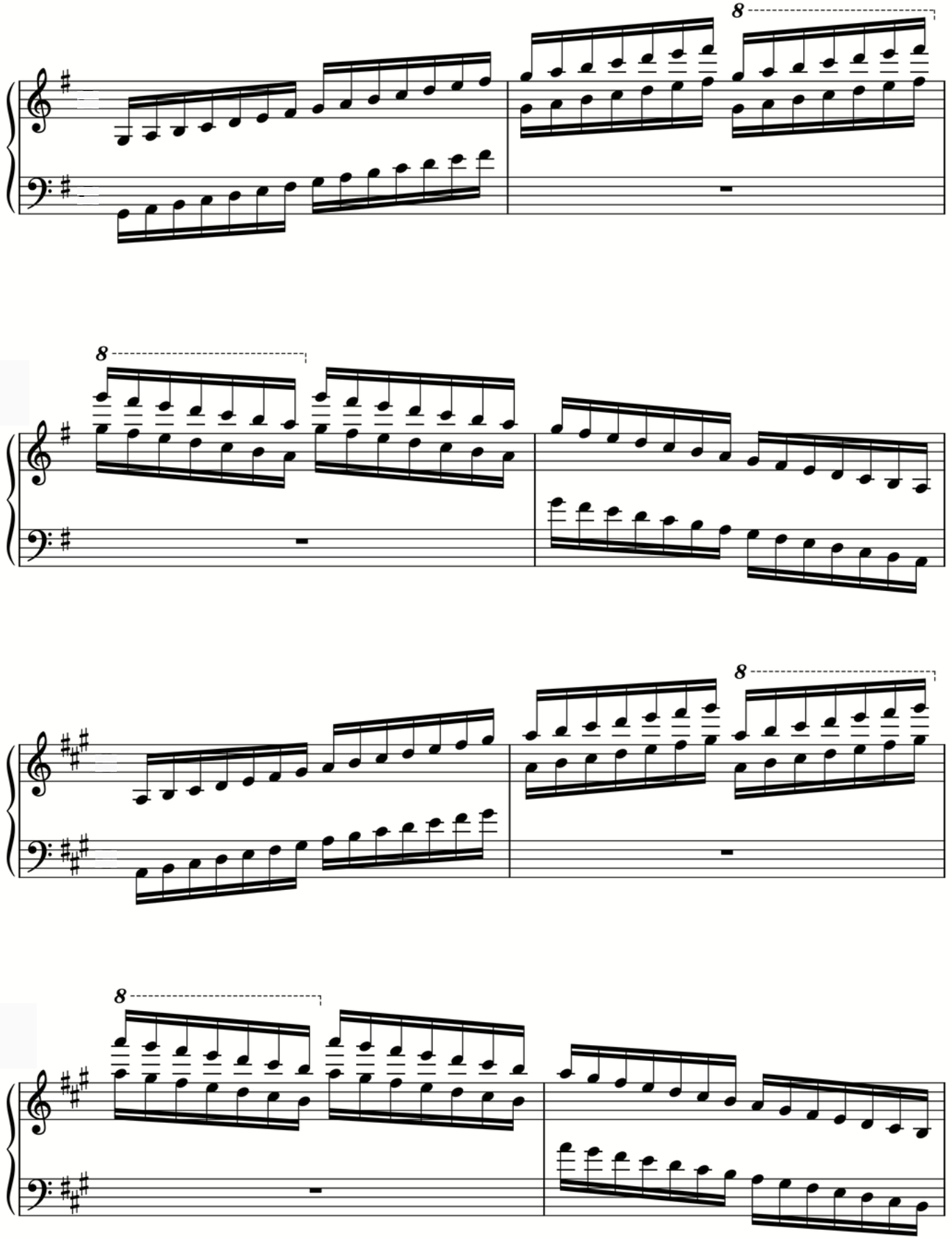
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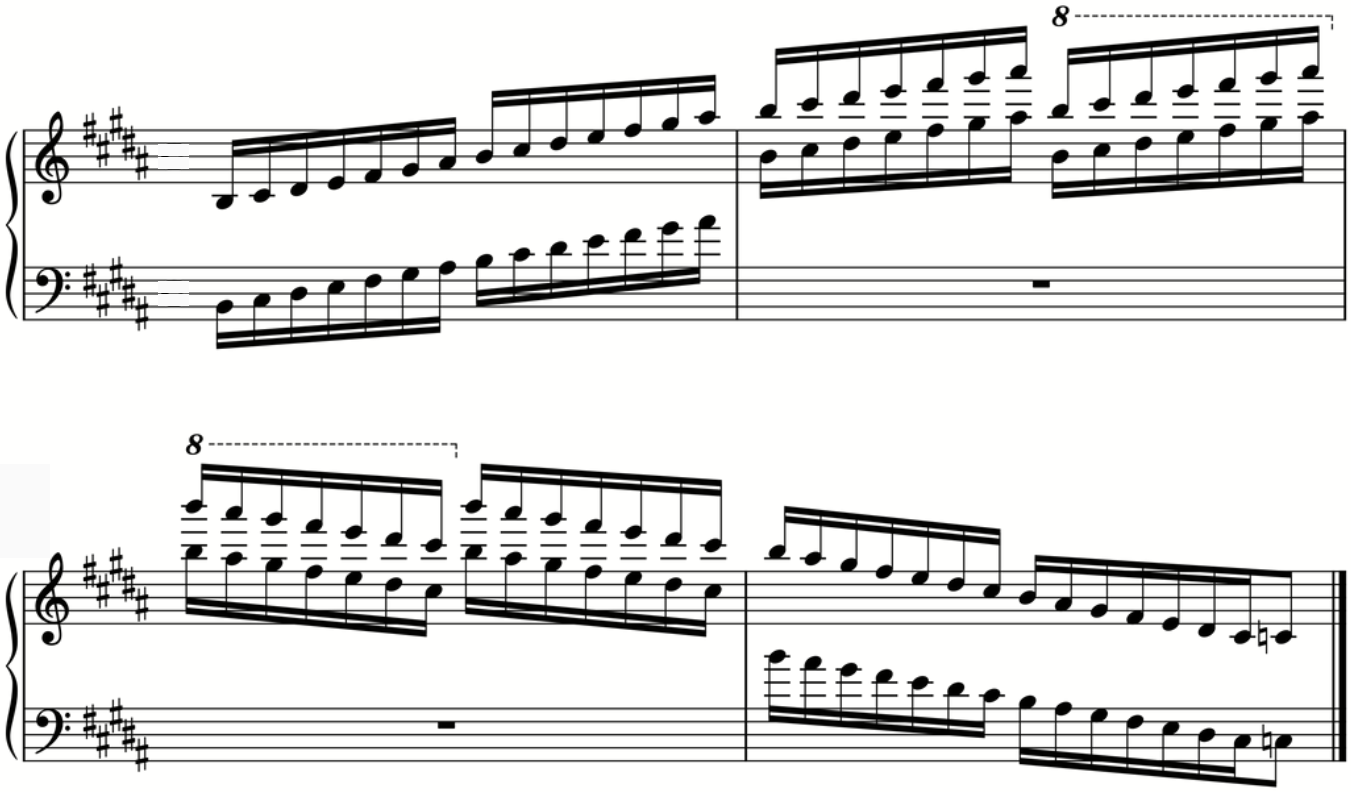
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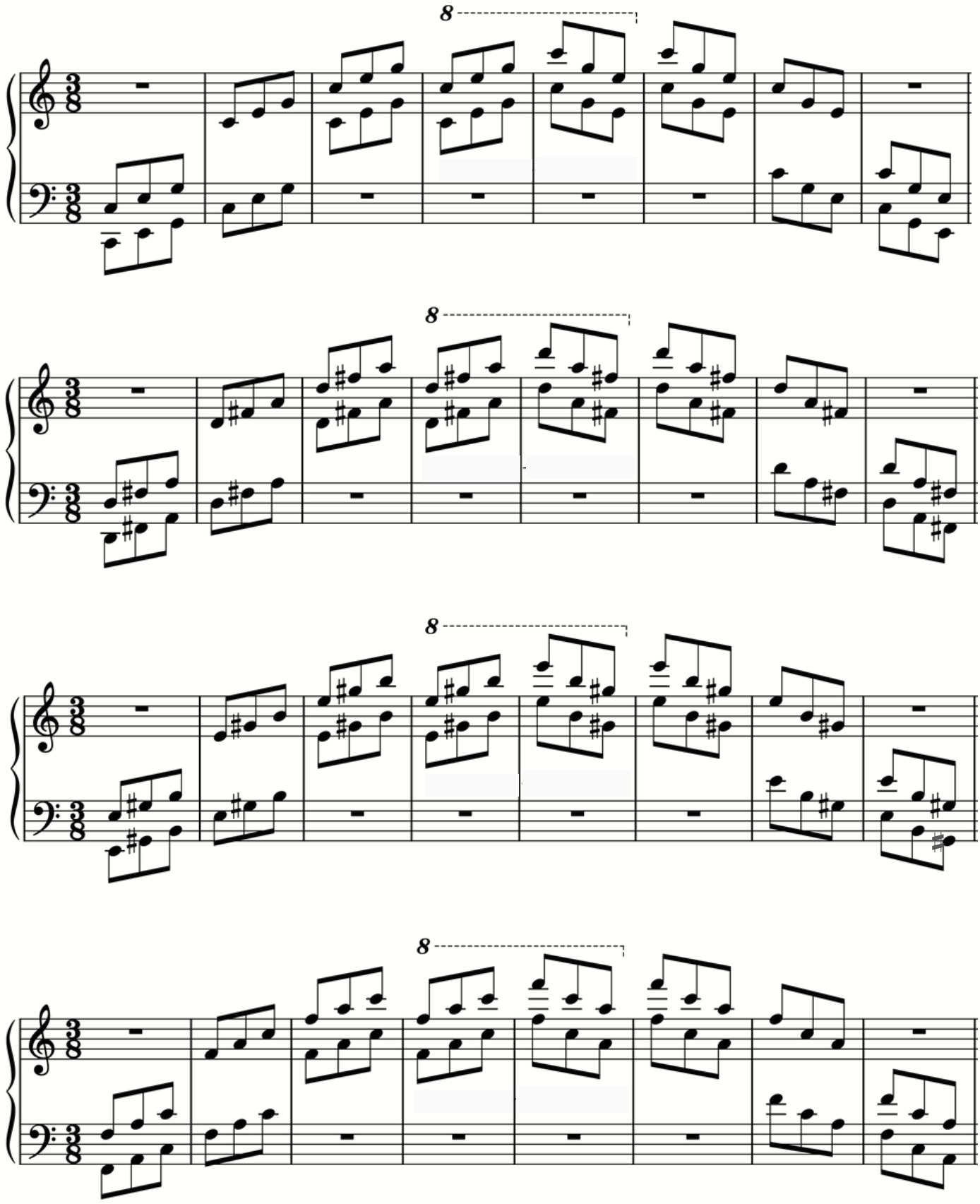
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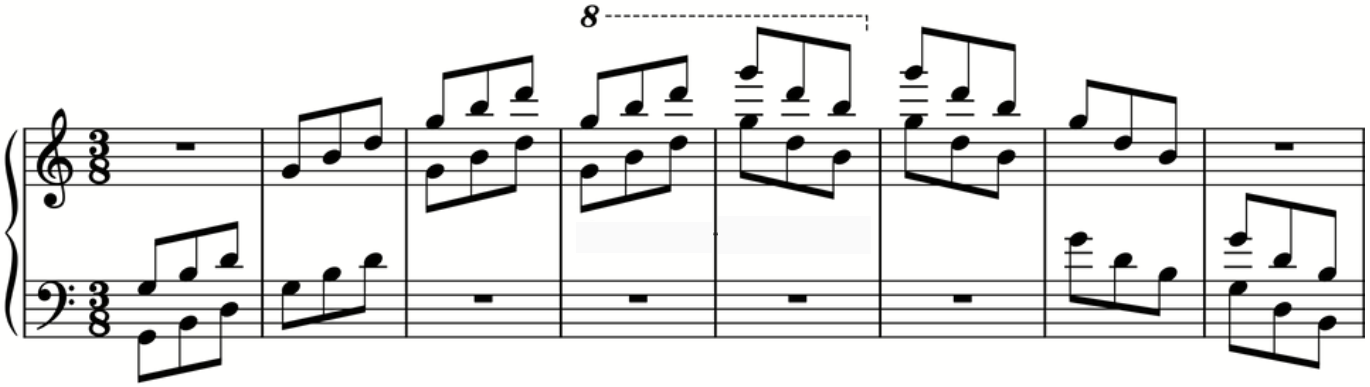
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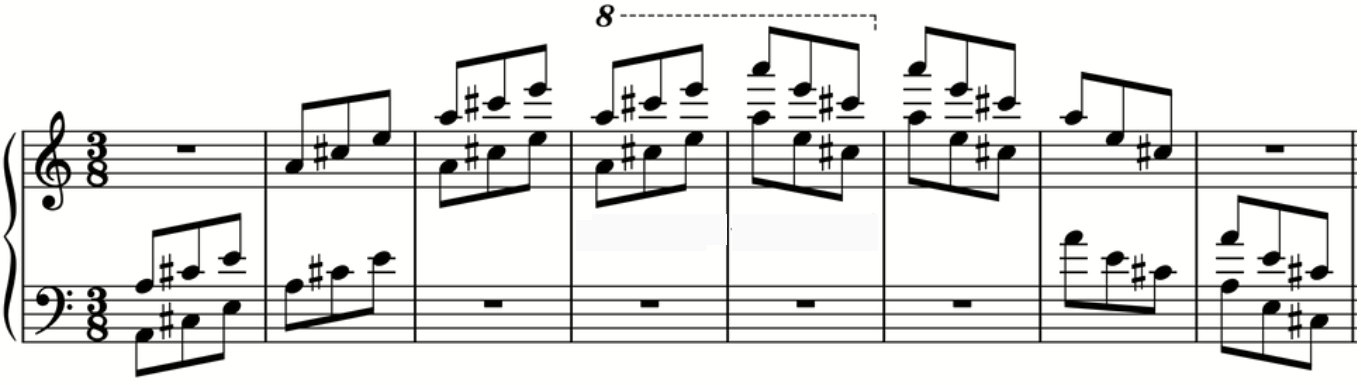
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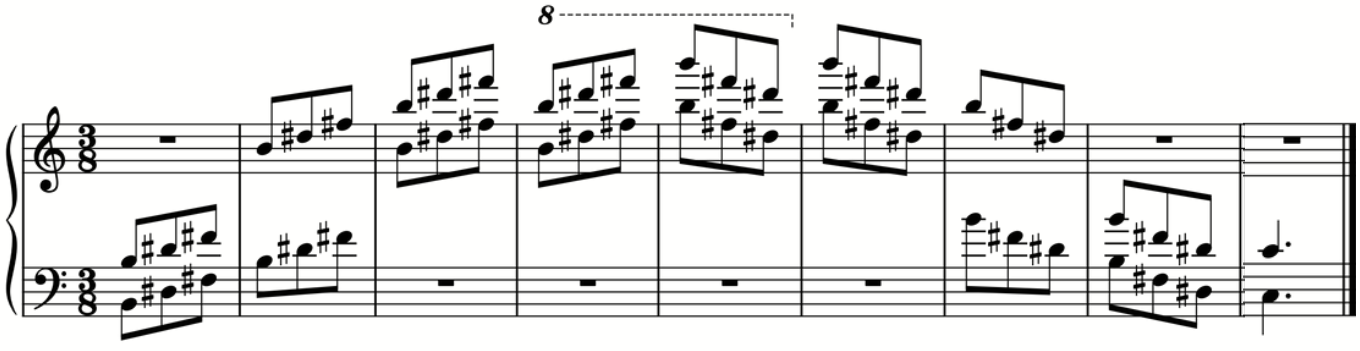
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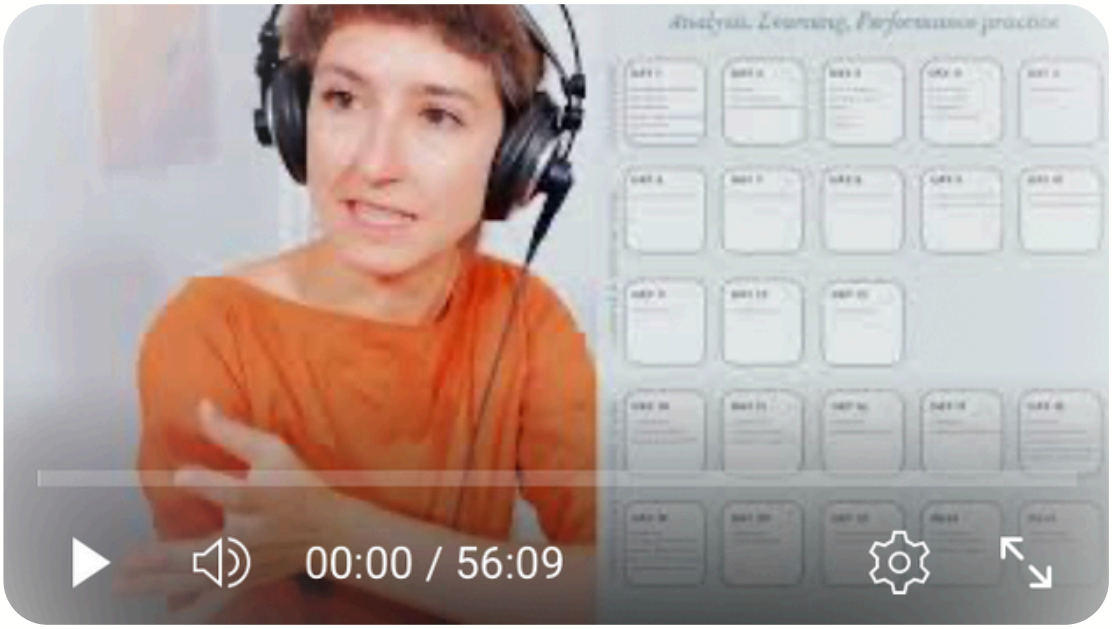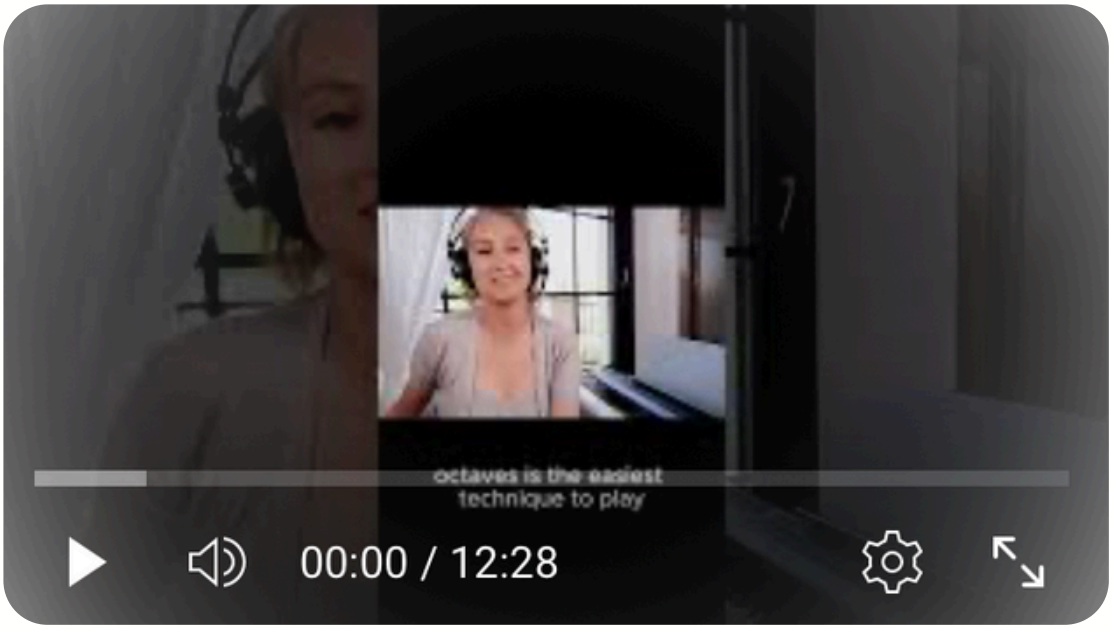
OPEN LESSONS