JAZZ PATTERNS For Ear

by

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C edition

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About This Book

This is a pattern book. A different kind of pattern book.

Pattern books typically show you lots of notes to play. These materials are great for practicing sight-reading and for building solid phrase technique.

Music is an aural medium, however, and I've been wondering for a while how pattern books full of notes can improve one's ability to improvise–if improvising means real-time composing through the instrument.

The point of this book is to help you compose better and more easily by building the connection between your mind's ear and your instrument. You have music inside you. You occasionally get excited imagining great melodies and rhythms, but you are frustrated over your difficulty to get that music out of your instrument. If that feels familiar, this book is for you. If you use it well it can help you reduce and maybe even remove that nasty filter living between your musical mind and your instrument.

When you hear D can you sing F below it simply by knowing the sound of a major sixth below? How about a major third above that D? This is an important musical skill, especially for an improviser.

Intervals are the building blocks of music, but hearing and instinctively feeling wider intervals on your instrument is difficult. Getting good at hearing and playing those intervals will make you a better musician and a much better improviser. This is precisely the skill this book teaches you.

Your improvised lines mirror the intervocalic range you hear. Listen to the lines of your own improvisation. How wide or narrow are most of your adjacent notes? Lots of basic scales?

Listen also for your melodic ideas. Are they flights of compositional exploration or the safe zone of memorized scales and patterns?

By stretching your harmonic ear in the way this book will guide you, your instrument will more easily reflect the music trying to make its way out of your creative imagination.

Singing, whistling, or humming is more connected to that creative imagination than your instrument. For that reason, this is book uses singing, whistling, or humming (we'll just call it singing) to expand your ear and your connection to your instrument. So be brave and prepare to sing. The only quality that will matter is that you find the pitch.

You occasionally get excited imagining great melodies and rhythms, but you are frustrated over your difficulty to get that music out of your instrument.

If you're like me and the musicians I've worked with, you've learned to academically *think* about notes. I heard once that the bass player from Joni Mitchell's band sat at the piano with her and asked if she wanted to understand some of the theory behind her music. I don't know what she took from that experience, but Joni Mitchell songs would have been radically different had she intellectualizing her musical process rather than just hearing and feeling it.

There's value to improvisers knowing the theoretical fundamentals of jazz, but only up to the point it replaces the natural projection of one's musical mind.

If you hear middle C and want to play a fourth above that, is your initial reaction to think, "A fourth above C is F." or do you simply hear the interval and play the F?

If you tend to think more than listen, this book is for you. *Jazz Patterns for Ear* contains 60 patterns in all 12 keys. Each pattern begins with the first three phrases completely written out just like other pattern books. But after those first few phrases, you are given only the first note of each phrase as your ear takes over to guide your playing. The rhythm notation of the rest of the phrase follows that first note in order to guide you rhythmically.

Each of the 60 patterns modulates through a sequence of keys. Some follow a more predictable course, and some less so. The one consistency is that there is no consistency in the arrangement of keys throughout the book. This book is not meant to test your memorization, reasoning skills, or muscle memory for the circle of fifths or descending seconds. It is intended to make your ear more acute which will translate to you playing more satisfying and original jazz.

The Point of These Exercises

As you go through this book, remind yourself that this is a book for your ear, not your eyes. Think about that for a moment. It may seem simplistic, but I promise you that your central challenge with this book will be to abandon your temptation to play these patterns by *thinking* instead of simply *listening*.

Don't underestimate the pull your logical mind has toward thinking about notes, intervals, and chords. That part of your mind demands to be right. It has a very difficult time letting go by relying on its much less certain faculty of hearing. But that is exactly how you will gain the most from this book–by listening to your playing and to the rhythm track–not by developing a quicker mind for "what is a minor third below G?"

You'll get so much more from this book once you resist the temptation to look back over the pattern's first three written phrases in order to calculate the intervals of these patterns.

Don't think "*The second note is a major third above the first note. E is a major third above C.*" Instead, list to the pattern and react to the rhythm track.

The relationship between the chord changes in the rhythm tracks are identical for each key or phrase. For example, once you hear the last note of the phrase land on the major third of a major chord, you'll know that each phrase of that pattern will resolve into the major third in the exact same way, just in all the other keys.

Singing is an important aspect of this book but you don't need to be a good singer. This is a fact I amply demonstrate throughout the book within the 20 guide tracks I recorded and sang to introduce each interval. The point is not to strive for good vocal tone, but instead for getting close to the pitch of the notes you hear in the rhythm tracks. If you prefer to hum, whistle, or buzz a mouthpiece, feel free.

The main point of this book therefore is to release that mechanical analytical process, and instead, tap into your musical flow, wherever that may lead you as an improviser. It might be interesting to find out where that takes you!

However you use this book, just use it!

Use it any way you wish. I just really want you to play through a bunch of it. It will probably be easier if you follow my instructions to the right, but if you just want to freely poke around, great. Just give your ear something different.

While I do suggest that this be a focused part of your normal practice routine, if you just want to use this to warm-up your ear for improvising, that'll still be a good use of this book.

The Steps for Playing These Exercises

A specific process exists for more quickly getting the most value from this book. Eventually explore your own ways to use the patterns and backing tracks, but follow this process in the beginning and as the patterns become harder for you. The audio tracks to which these steps refer are described on the following page.

01 **Listen to my guide track at the start of each interval.** This commentary will introduce the interval and give you a chance to sing and hear the interval. You'll be played guide tones with which to sing the interval yourself and to slowly sing through the patterns that will follow using that interval.

02 **Sing the pattern over the Single Note Start Track.** Use your ear to guide your singing, and playing if you wish, through the entire pattern. If you can sing the pattern after being given only the first note, you should move to step 3.

03 **Play the pattern on your instrument over the Demonstration Track.** Hearing the pattern played as you play it will help guide your ear to find the notes and to correct mistakes.

04 **Play the pattern over the Rhythm Track.** Play the pattern over the rhythm track without any guide tones or other instrument playing along. If you get mixed up or lost, simply start the track from the beginning.

05 **Listen and play over the track again.** Your ear needs to warm up just like your chops. Hearing the rhythm track a second time will make it more familiar and probably easier. Do it again.

The Audio Files

Four audio files accompany the patterns within this book and they all stream from Dropbox. Play the files in your browser by tapping the icon. Pause, stop, play, repeat and download each file as you wish from Dropbox.

I recorded one chorus of a "Cool Jazz" style track of Autumn Leaves as some inspiration for building your ear for the patterns within this book.

My chorus of Autumn Leaves on alto trombone

The Coaching Track introduces each interval with a short recording of Mike talking about the interval. In kind of a virtual coaching role, after talking a bit about the interval, Michael sings a couple example intervals, and plays guide tones on the keyboard with which you can sing and play.

The Single Note Singing Track provides you with the first note of a pattern's phrase so that you can sing that phrase starting on beat three after hearing that first note. Look for these on 47 of the patterns.

The Demonstration Track is a recording of the full pattern played one time though the 12 keys of the rhythm track.

The Rhythm Track consists of the rhythm section without the pattern played. This track plays one time through the 12 keys.

Focus on your playing and on the rhythm track, not by developing a quicker mind for, "What is a minor third below G?"

Listen to three things as you play the patterns:

1. Pitch. For wind players, how solidly do you play the correct pitch of the notes? Off pitch is a sign that you not completely clear on the notes and intervals.

2. Time. If you play these patterns with the time of a slinky (slowing down and speeding up to catch up) it is a sign that you are not hearing the intervals well enough. Like pitch, keep your time consistent.

3. Musicality. If you play the patterns mechanically, it could be a sign that you are thinking about the intervals. Did you read above about *not* thinking about the placement of intervals? You have mastered the pattern only once you can play them musically with a musical style.

How More Quickly and More Deeply Learn This Material to Improve Your Playing.

Increasing the acuity of your ear and strengthening the relationship between your musical mind and your instrument is not an overnight task. It is a lifelong endeavor. But you don't have to wait years to hear progress. Not at all.

Since starting this book, composing the patterns, recording them, and practicing along with them, my harmonic connection with both the trombone and keyboard has increased. It's been exciting. My harmonic vocabulary has increased as has my improvisational flexibility. I am no jazz genius, so I am convinced that a transformation can occur for you as well through the proper and regular use of this book.

In order to stimulate your own musical transformation as quickly as possible it's important to know how best to learn.

Your brain has a particular nature that has evolved over hundreds of thousands of years. It is hungry to learn, but you must feed it the right stuff and do so the right way. The following are some principles for learning that you should apply to your work within this book to help you accelerate your progress.

Your central challenge with this book will be to abandon your temptation to play these patterns by thinking instead of simply listening.

1. Have fun

Remember high school? If you're like me, boredom prevented you from deeper engagement and better grades. The exception for me was music. Easiest A's I got, and with what seemed like very little to no work. The reason was that I was having fun. Unlike like Spanish 101, it didn't feel like work!

Within this book is a variety of fresh rhythm tracks over which you'll play the 60 patterns in this book. You'll hear latin, traditional jazz, modern jazz, funk, and R&B styles throughout the tracks. These grooves make the playing fun, and feel like you are playing songs, and not exercises.

Playing with music is more fun than playing exercises and etudes in silence. Play the rhythm tracks either in headphones or on a quality sound system so that you feel the full impact of the tracks.

Making your time with this book fun will not only make your learning quicker, but it will make it easier to do the important repetition of the material. If things are fun, you'll do them more often.

2. Make meaning for yourself out of playing through this book

Back to my high school Spanish class. I did poorly because for the life of me, I couldn't understand why I needed to learn Spanish, other than it was a graduation requirement. That didn't provide enough meaning for me to do well.

As you go through this book, remind yourself why you are doing this work. To be a better musician, you must develop a closer connection to your instrument. To be a better improviser, that connection must be that much stronger so that your instrument is almost not there and instead, serves simply an amplifier of your inner musical voice.

How will you feel becoming a noticeably better musician and improviser? Remind yourself that the work you are doing will lead you to a more satisfying and pleasurable result of playing your instrument and playing jazz. You may even find that it comes easier to you that you imagined now that you're working on the right things.

3. Play within the right level of difficulty for you

Musicians are often confused when judging how easy or hard something they practice should be in order to improve as quickly as possible.

The range of difficulty throughout these patterns is extremely wide, and that gives you lots of options. A good rule of thumb is to play things that are 10% to 15% more difficult than what you can do without much difficulty. Slightly challenging.

For example, if you can play through all the minor third up patterns using the rhythm-only track but you stumble on three or four of the minor third down patterns, work on these minor third down patterns until they become as intuitive as the minor third up.

You may be tempted to start with wider patterns like major sixths because you like a challenge, you want to explore deeper into the book, or you want to prove you can do it. But if you stumble on all of them determined as you might be to get one or two of them right, you will not learn that interval. In fact, you will ingrain bad playing habits into your brain as you struggle with something too hard for you at the moment.

The opposite is equally unproductive: playing only those things that come easy to you. You need to challenge yourself but at the level at which you enjoy the challenge rather than becoming frustrated by the impossibility.

There's nothing wrong with exploring deeper or earlier into the book from time to time, but focus your regular practice on that which is just a bit above your proficiency. Your brain needs the dopamine squirt of frequent success in order to build brain connections for new skills and keep you motivated.

4. Practice regularly

Perhaps the worst thing you can do is to practice long and hard periodically instead of moderately every day. Once you first open this book, it will be exciting to start the audio files and begin playing through random patterns. You might settle on a pattern or rhythm track that is cool or on one you think is a good place to start. And you'll go through it for several minutes.

The next day when that initial excitement has worn down a bit, you will find yourself too busy to work with the book that day. Maybe a couple days go by before opening it up again and start playing. You find yourself playing with them every several days when you feel like it.

After a month or so you may ask yourself why you don't hear a difference in your improvisation. That may signal the end of your enthusiasm for the book and the ideas within it. Hey, I've felt the same, which is why I am clear on the scenario!

Dedicate at least ten minutes each day for a month. 15 minutes would be better yet. Practice at the slightly challenging level of difficulty as described above. Feel free to explore other parts of the book but don't lose your focus on your current level of playing that determines which patterns and tracks you should work on.

Strengthening the connection between your musical mind and your instrument doesn't occur overnight. Becoming a better improviser is not a quick process.

Becoming a better musician is a life-long process, but doing these things I am encouraging will speed up the process for you. I promise. It takes vision and dedication to master an instrument, and those two things are available to you right now.

To be a better improviser, your connection between mind and body must be that much stronger so that your instrument feels not even there.

5. Record yourself

We all sound better to ourselves live than listing to a recording of that playing. I continue to be shocked at the dramatic difference for myself. But that's how our brain works. We want to believe we are doing as well as we imagine. But the audio and video recorders don't lie. In fact, they are damn cruel bastards! That's why so many people hate hearing a recording of themselves.

To know exactly how you sound, you must record yourself and listen back to the recording. Record yourself on your phone as you play through the patterns. Listen for the things listed on page four of this book, namely pitch, time, and musicality. It is doubtful you will accurately hear those attributes in your playing as you think to yourself, "What is the major third down from Ab" or "Have I played all 12 keys yet?" or "My God, there are 37 patterns to go!?".

Recording yourself may not be a feel-good process for you. Hearing your instrument played in your bedroom on an iPhone is not exactly an example of high-fidelity. But listening back to your playing is crucial to your progress, It will help you hear the more subtle aspects of your playing of which you may not be aware.

This book could be one of the most powerful and productive tools you own for improving your improvisation and for getting more satisfaction from your playing.

What to expect from your work with this book

With typical pattern books, you memorize the patterns in order to put them into your improvisation. The patterns within this book are not meant for that purpose.

Instead, these patterns are built as tools to strengthen your ability to more easily project out your instrument the music within your imagination. The first sign of this book's effects on your playing is to begin experiencing a broadening of your harmonic range.

Harmonic range refers to improvising within a wider span of melodic ideas. In other words, your phrases are longer, the notes you find yourself playing are outside your normal comfort zone, and your agility in moving from one chord or harmonic center to another is quicker and easier.

You may find new notes entering into your improvisation - notes you don't normally go to. You may also start to play longer and more interesting melodic phrases. You are becoming a better musician and improviser.

It makes sense that by singing and then playing on your instrument phrases you hear in your mind, that you will get better at finding on your instrument the notes and phrases you hear in your mind.

I know of no better way to reduce the friction between your musical mind and your instrument than playing by ear the intervals and patterns within this book.

Going beyond this book on your own

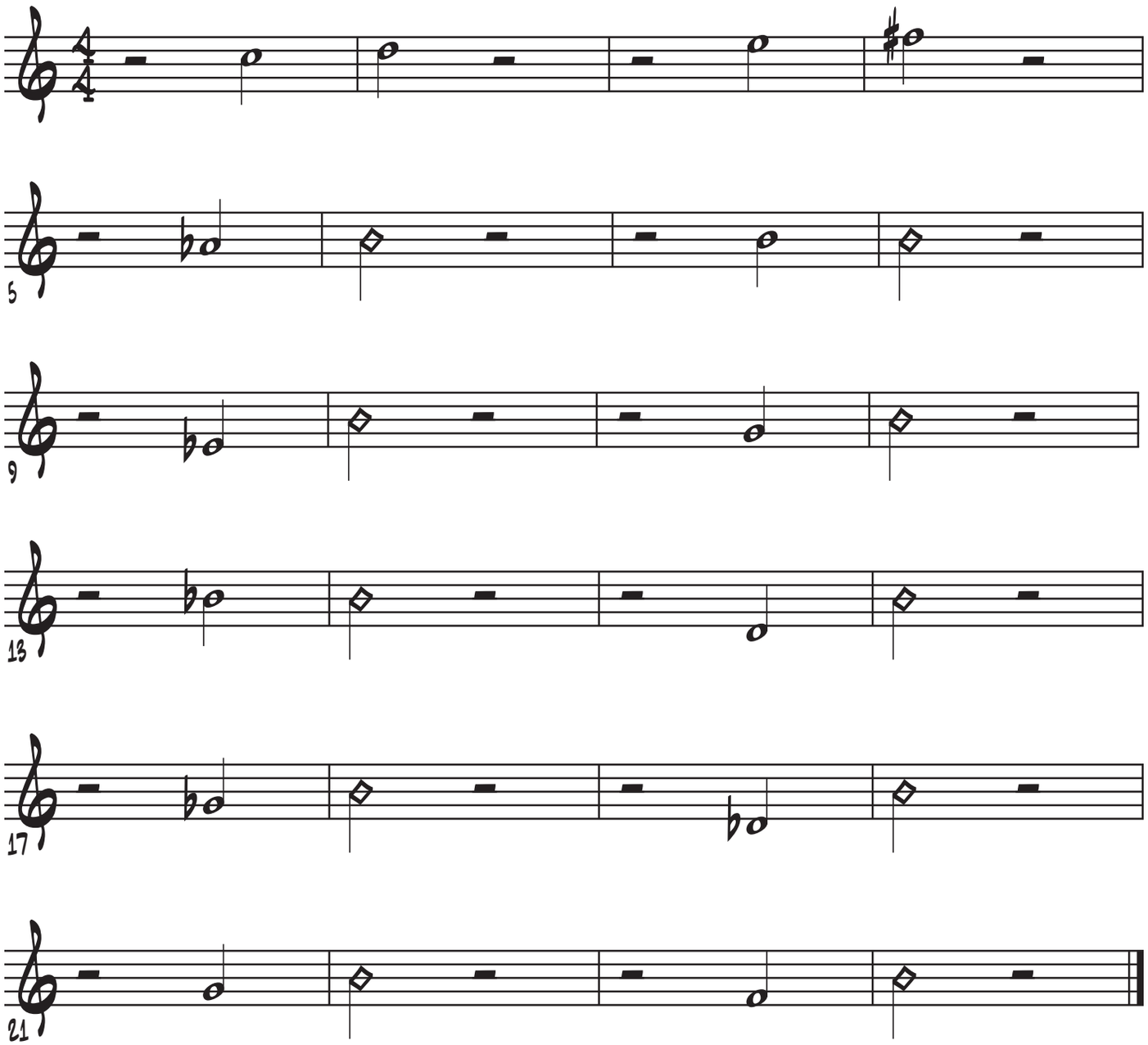
You can create similar exercises on your own. Create a simple pattern of two and five notes - something easy. Perhaps the top four notes of the major scale going down C-B-A-G in the key of C. Put a simple rhythm to it.

Now do the same thing starting on F using that same rhythm. Next begin on A. Then G, B, Ab, Gb and so on. If that was easy, expand the intervals. Play C-G-A-E. With a bit of rhythm to the pattern, start on other random notes. It won't take much before things get really hard. Find the degree of difficulty that is just a bit above what is easy for you.

Play an etude in one of your exercise books that you have memorized. Start a phrase in a different key. Do it again in another key. If you stumble, sing it. If you can't sing it, you don't yet know it. Perhaps you've memorized the fingerings, but you don't yet hear it. That exercise could be eye-opening for you as you explore your musical mind and its connection with your instrument.

Now let's play some patterns...

Pattern #1 - Major Second up #1

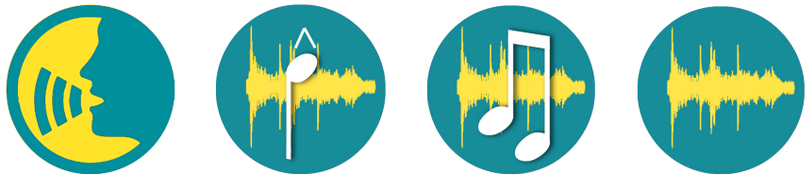


The major second is the smallest interval in this book and probably the easiest for most musicians to play by ear. After all, it is the starting interval in both major and minor scales so it is likely ingrained in your musical mind.

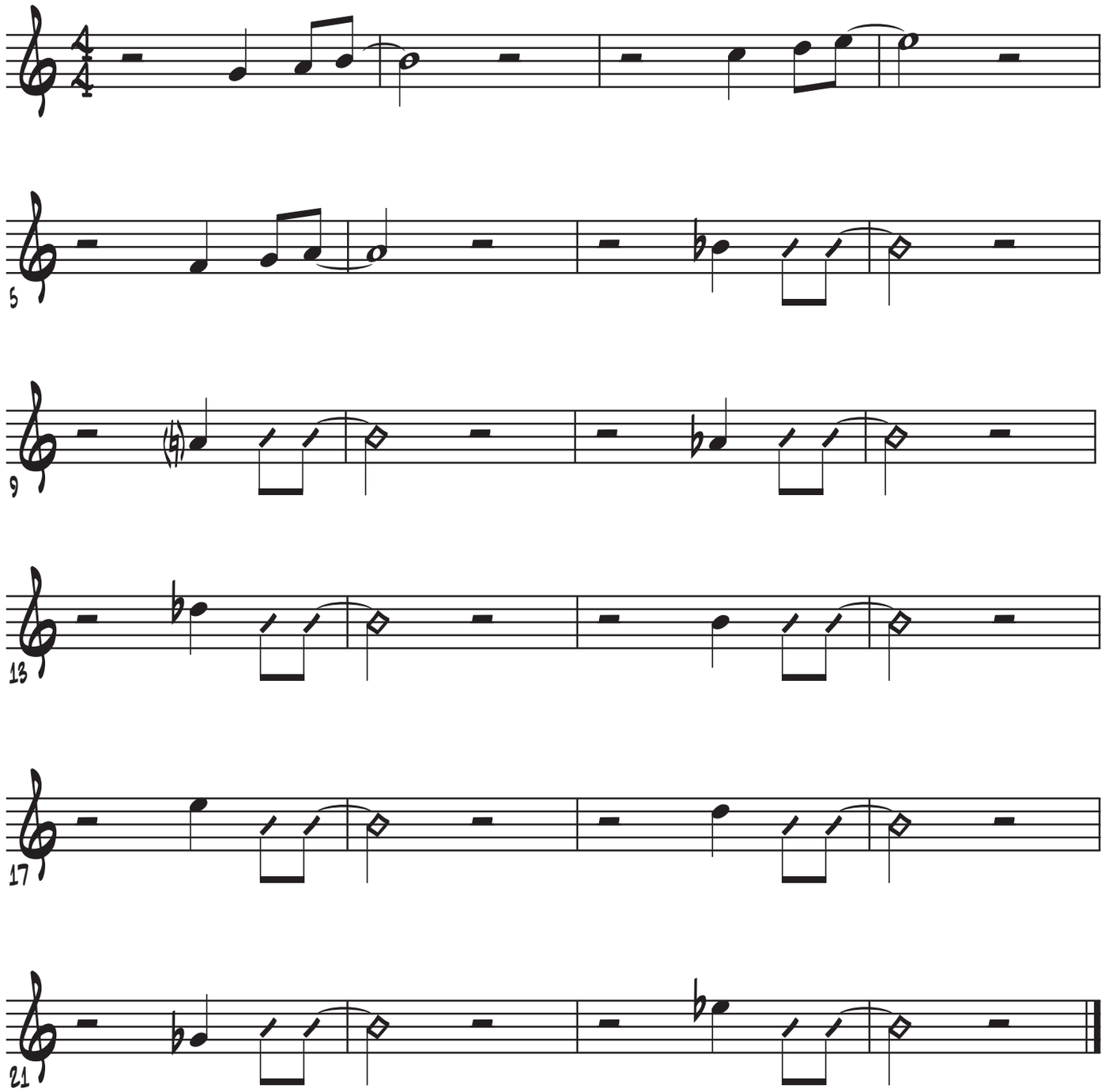
Even though this major second up pattern may be very easy for you, go through the next few patterns on this interval to confirm that you have it firmly in your ear.

Notice that the following patterns utilize the minor second interval as well, so listen well to your playing to make sure that you play both the major and minor intervals correctly.

Tap to play the audio files:



Pattern #2: Major Second up #2



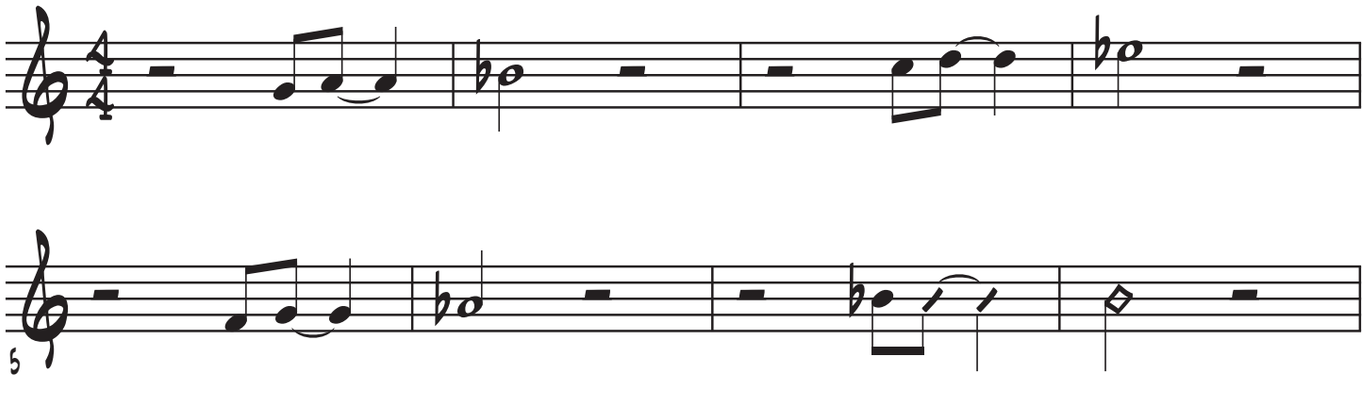
Pattern 2 is simple, consisting of only two whole steps. These are the first three notes in a major scale, so the sound of the pattern should be familiar.

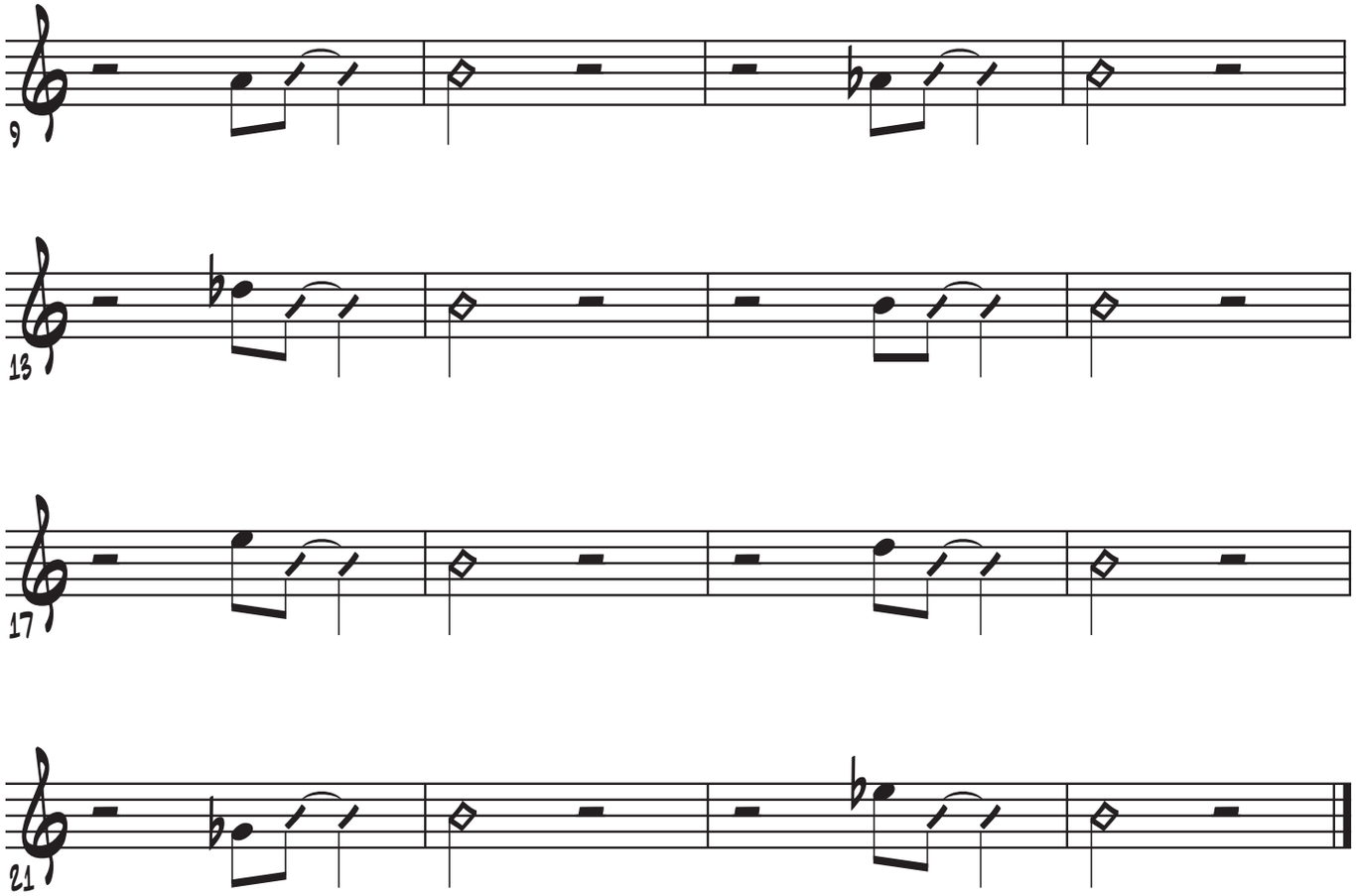
Can you identify the last note of the pattern by ear? What part of the chord is that note? Listen as you land on it and hold it each time.

For each pattern, the more you can identify of the relationships between the notes of the pattern and the chords, the more value you will get out of this book.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #3: Major Second up #3





Pattern 3 consists of the first three notes of a minor scale. This is the first use of the minor second interval.

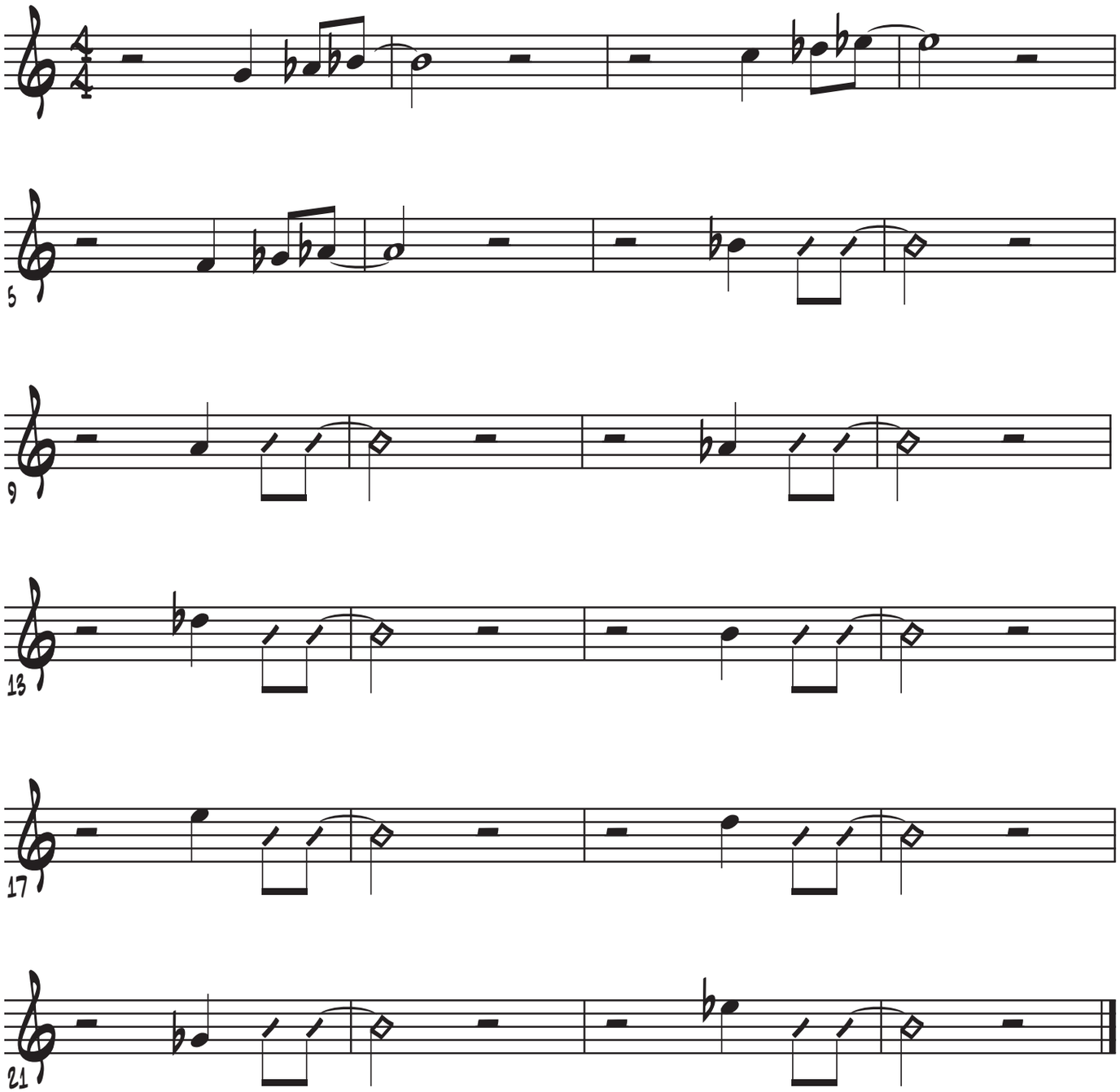
As with each of these patterns, make sure that you do not slip into diatonic mode. Diatonic patterns would start on different notes, but would remain within the same key. By listening to the rhythm track you will immediately sense a problem.

An example of slipping into diatonic mode would be, without the rhythm track and after playing the first three phrases, to play the fourth phrase with a C and then a D natural. That D natural would sound okay if you were "hearing" the pattern in Eb major.

This is why the rhythm tracks are an important part of this book. The rhythm track should tell your ear that the Db is needed as the seventh of the Eb minor chord.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #4: Major Second up #4



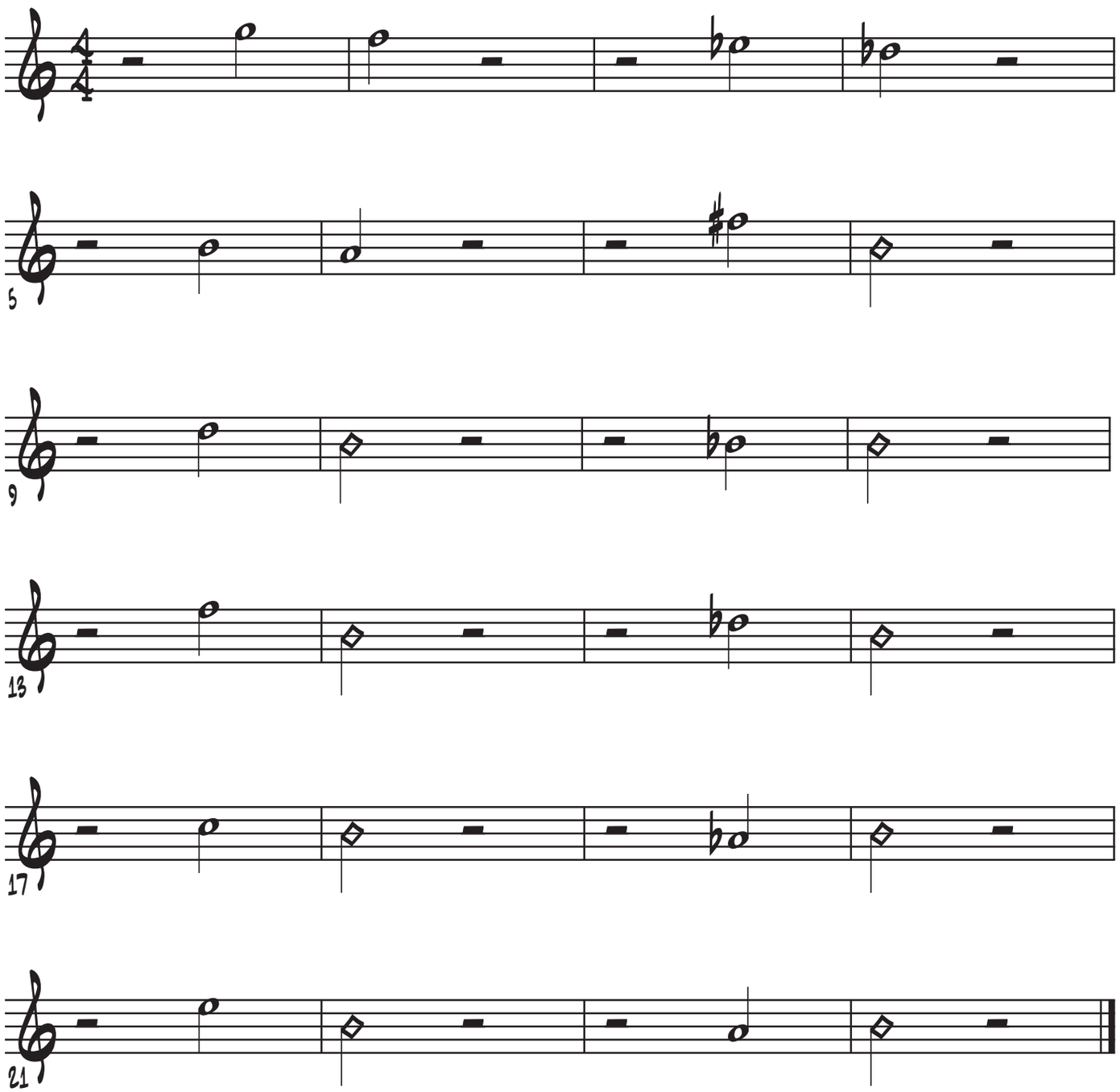
In this pattern, the major second interval is moved up between the first and second note. These are the first three notes of the locrian mode. Think the scale starting on B within the key of C major.

Even though each phrase starts on the same notes as pattern #3, the chords and their relationships to the notes are completely different.

This is likely to be the first pattern that you'll be tempted to think rather than hear. For example, do you find yourself thinking, "A half step above A is Bb."? Be sure to sing the pattern first, if you find yourself doing that.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #5: Major Second down #1



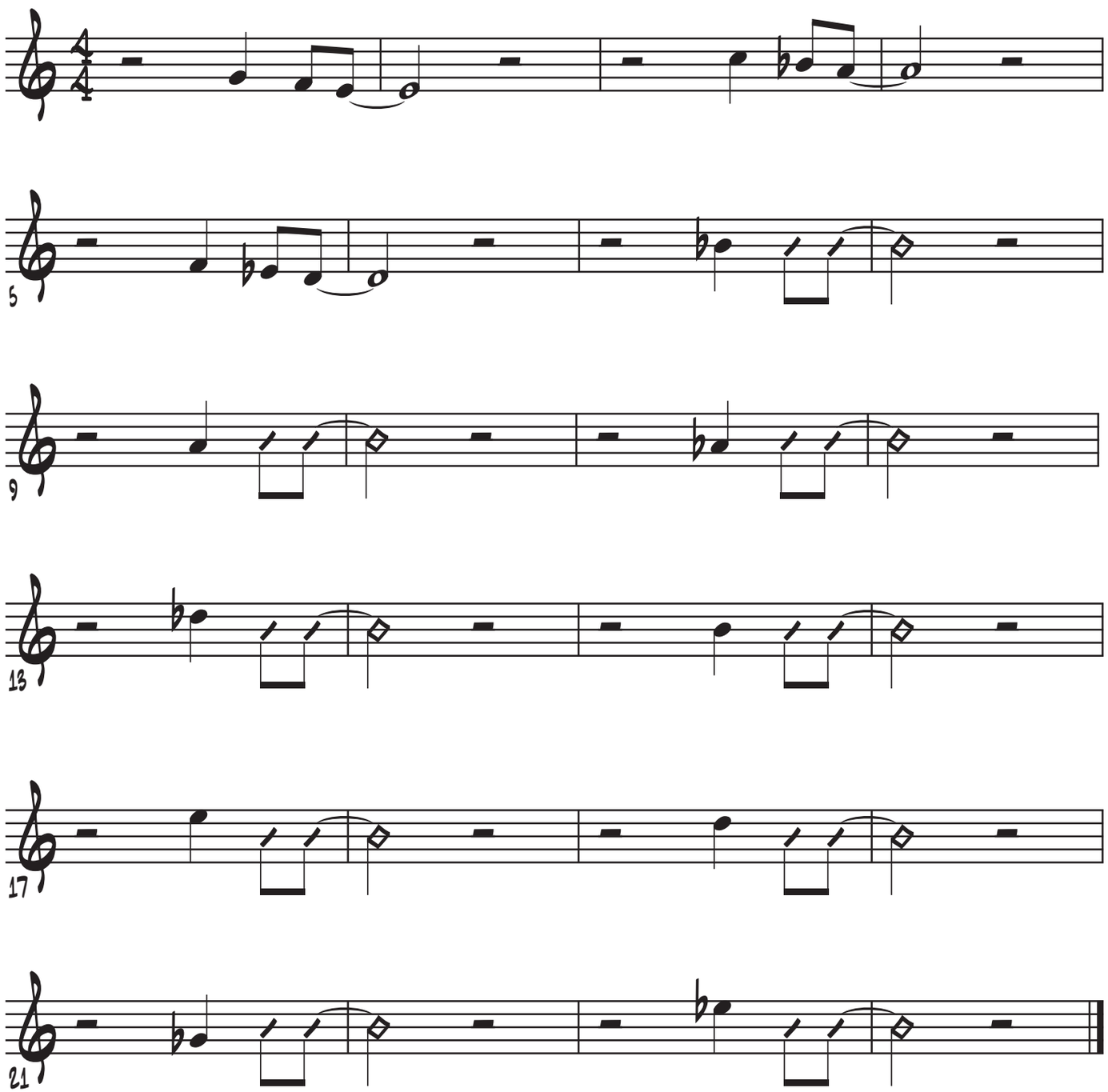
After playing all three possibilities for three note patterns using whole and half steps up, Pattern #5 reverses the direction of the major second interval.

As you will discover, possibly starting with this pattern, intervals down are much more difficult that intervals up. This interval is the same as the first two notes of Mary Had a Little Lamb.

If you're starting to wonder if this book is too easy for you, keep in mind that you are only on Pattern #5 out of 60. Soon enough, they will become much more difficult! Enjoy these easier ones for the mom

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #6: Major Second down #2



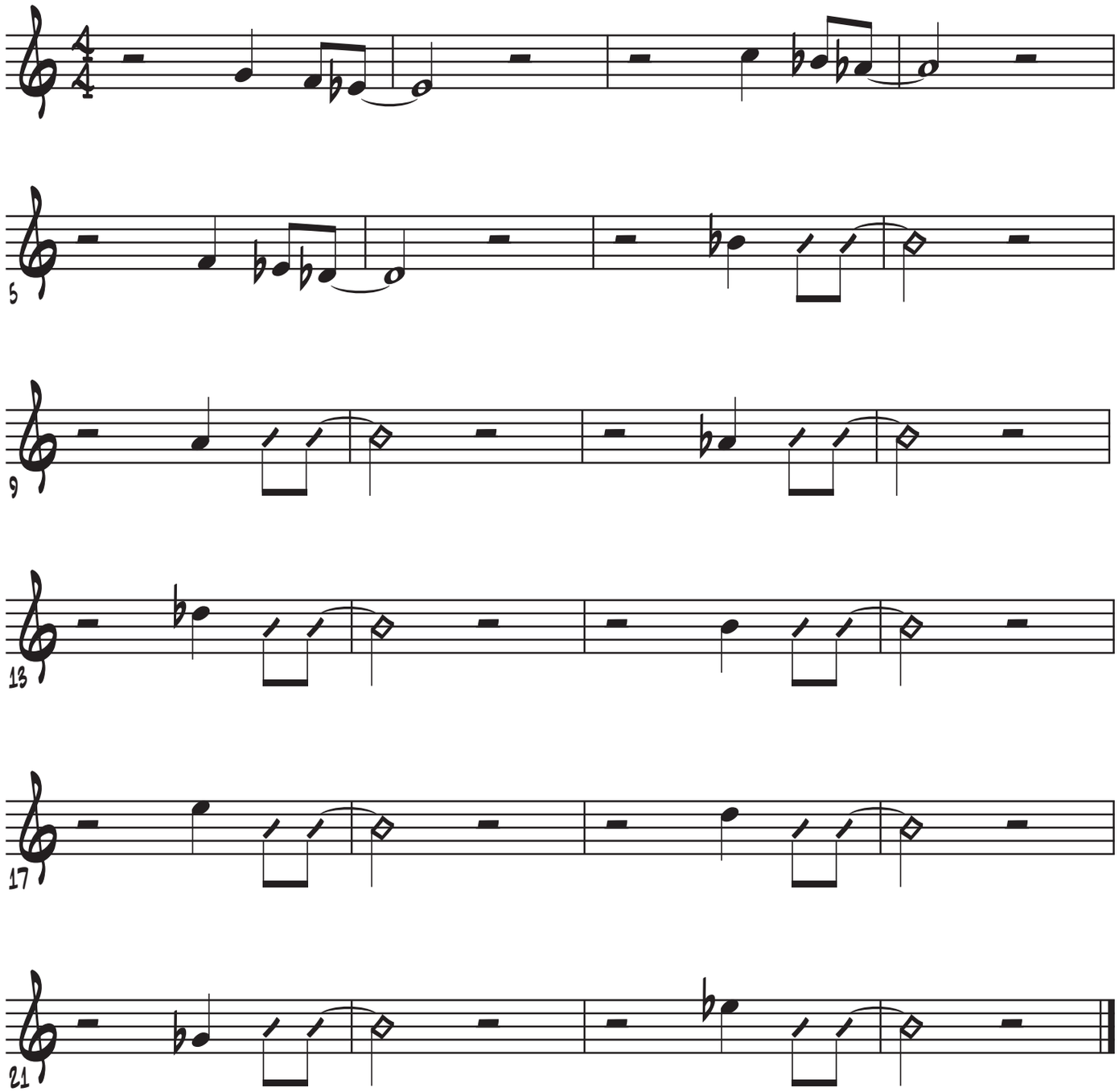
Like most of the patterns in this book, Pattern #6 begins with a half note rest. The purpose of these beginning rests is to orient your ear to the first chord.

The first note of each phrase in this pattern is the 11th (4th) of the minor nine chord. It resolves to the third of the major sixth. Can you hear that?

This pattern is the second ph rase of *Three Blind Mice* with its harmonic resolution to the third of the major chord.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #7: Major Second down #3

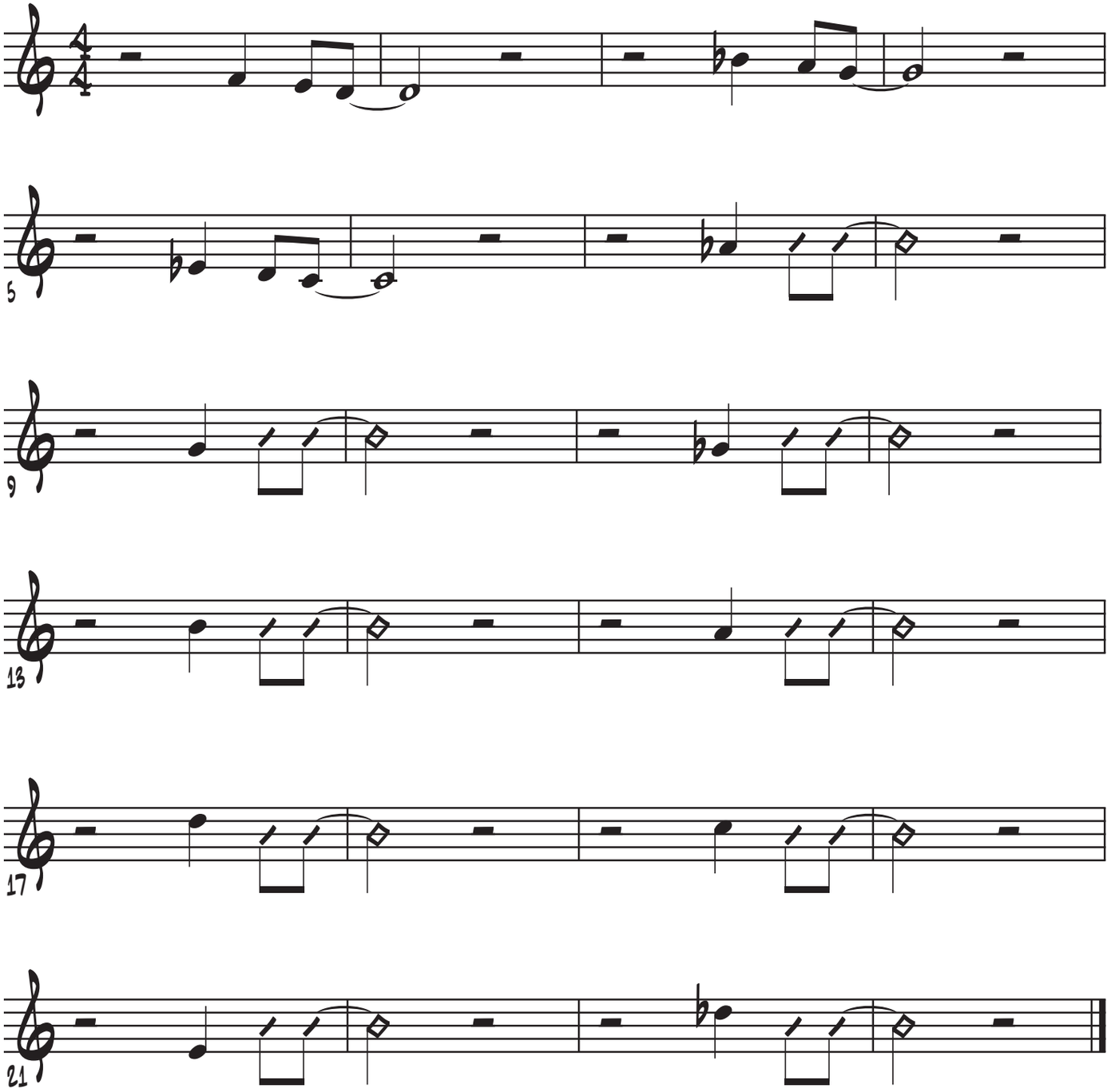


Pattern # 7 starts with the three note interval pattern as Mary Had a Little Lamb and the first phrase of Three Blind Mice. Again, the half note rest at the beginning of each phrase will orient your ear to hear the minor chord starting each phrase.

Unlike many of the patterns in this book, the phrase resolution is a suspended sound rather than a more solid resolution to a root, third or fifth. Can you hear to which part of the chord each phrase resolves?

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #8: Major Second down #4

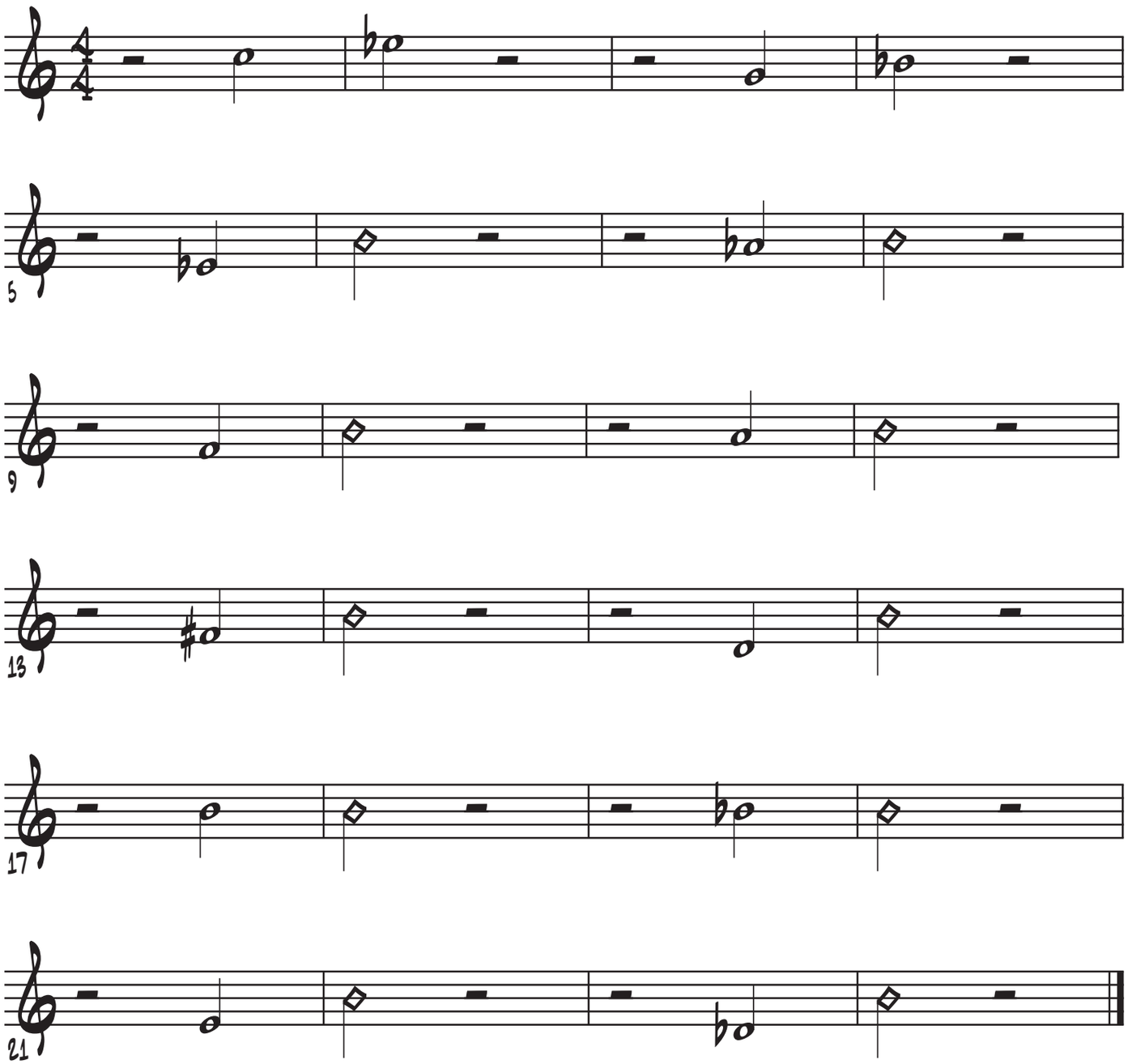


This pattern is a variation of Pattern #6, with the reversal of major and minor seconds. Can you hear on to which chord tone the last note falls?

As with any pattern in this book, feel free to transpose up of down an octave. The pattern falling within your more comfortable range will be easiest, so challenge yourself to switch octave, wither up or down.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #9: Minor Third up #1

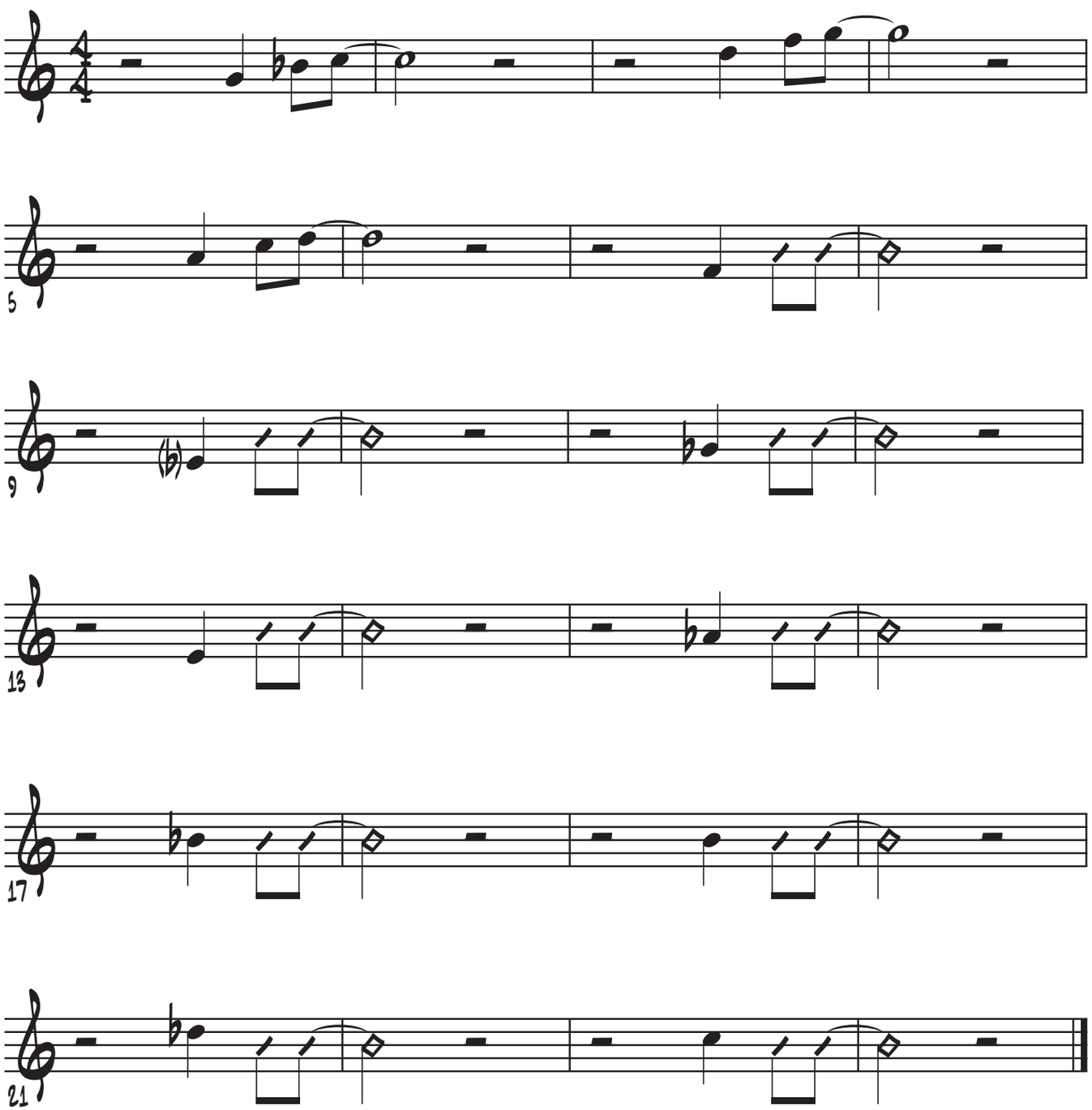


With this minor third pattern, you are now entering the slightly wider and more difficult intervals. It's very important that you do not think about the note a minor third up, but instead hear it. Hear the first two notes in the song *Hello Dolly*?

What part of the chord is the first note and the last? Can you hear the type of chord each two-chord harmony consists of?

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #10: Minor Third up #2

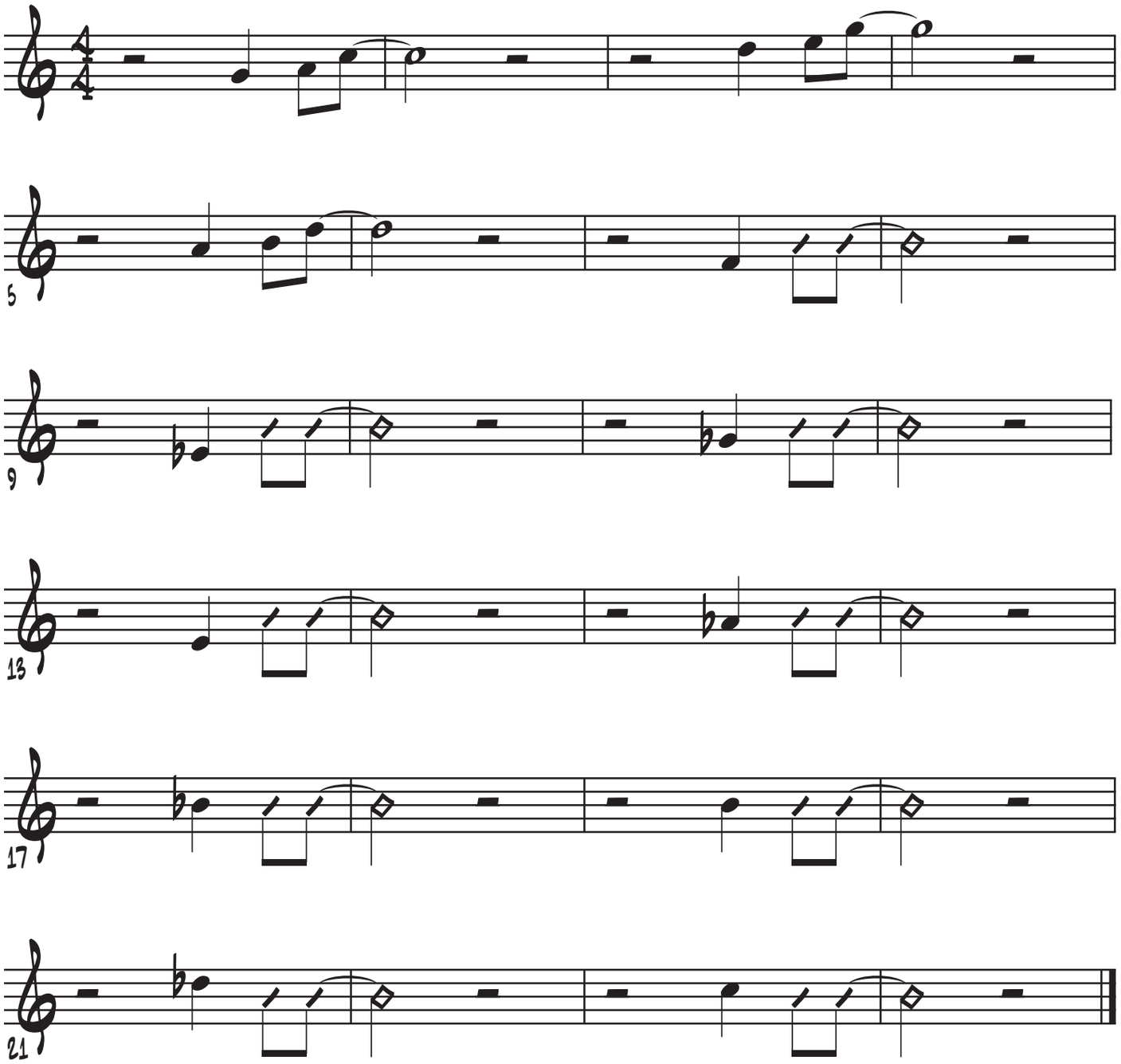


Unlike the previous patterns, Pattern #10 begins and continues with a less predictable modulations. Rather than rely on your muscle memory for the circle of fifths or major seconds, the keys are more randomly dispersed.

Can you identify on which chord tone the last note lands? Is that chord major, minor or something else? Striving to answer these questions will focus your ear more on the rhythm track than on your analytical skills at thinking what note is a major third above E.

Tap to play the audio files:

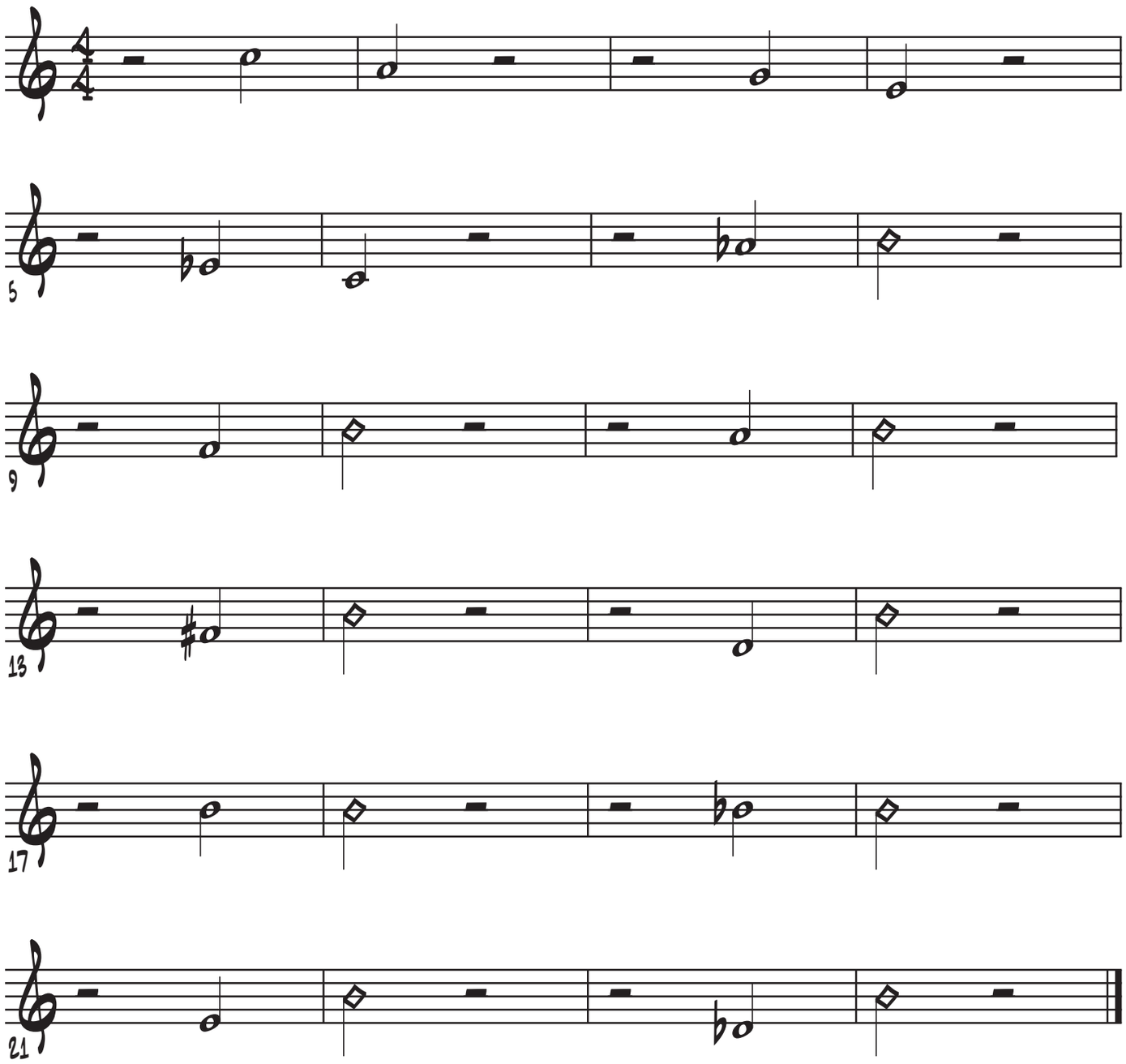
Pattern #11: Minor Third up #3



The minor third is delayed in this pattern. Can you hear the first three notes in "*She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain When She Comes*"? In that song, the third note goes to the tonic, while on this pattern, the third note feels like it is a transitional note. Is that what it sounds like to you?

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #12: Minor Third down #1

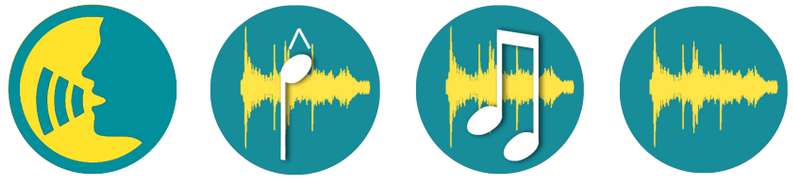


As you progress through this book, you'll be reminded that intervals down are more difficult that intervals going up. This is a great example.

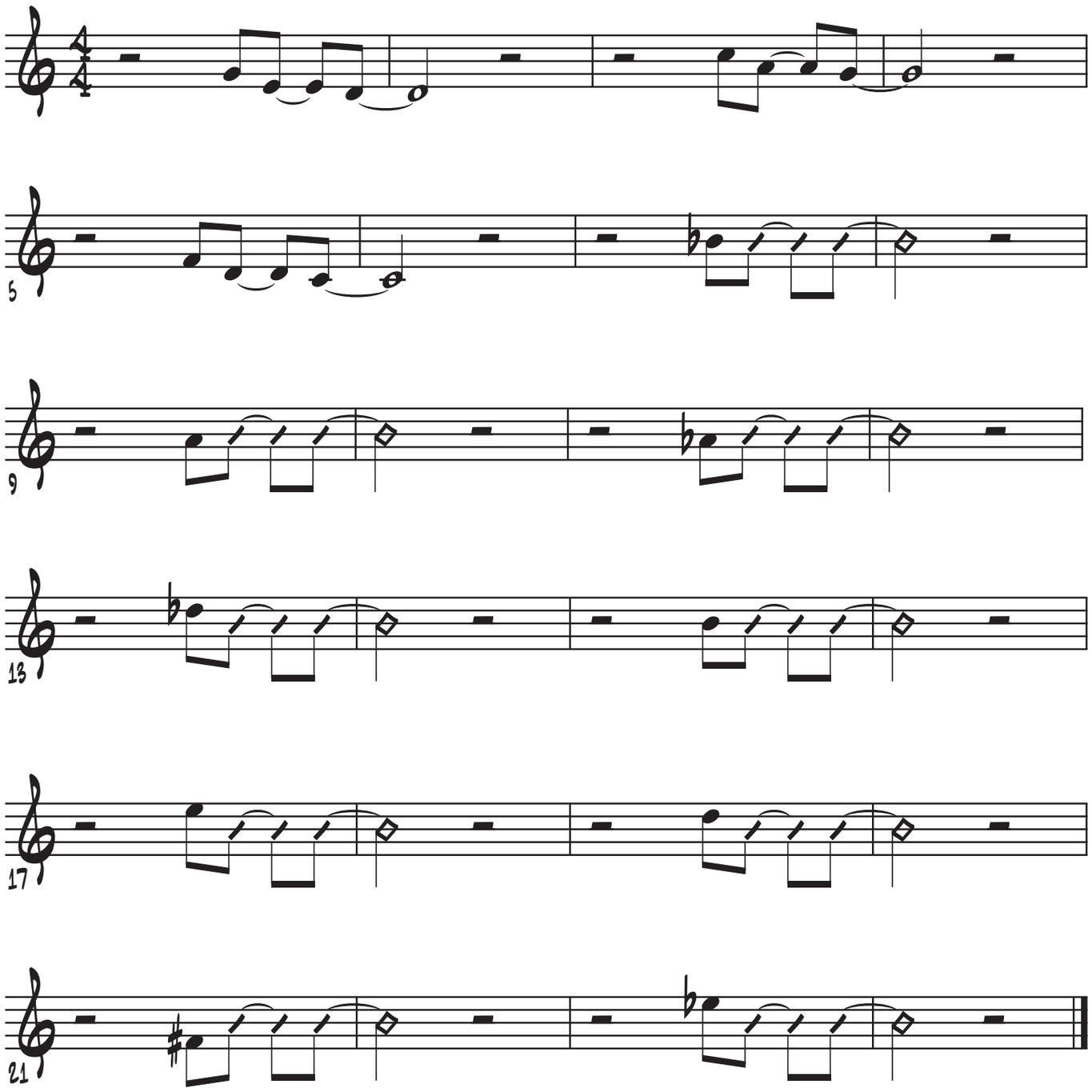
Your model for this pattern is the second phrase of *Beethoven's Fifth Symphony* main motif. Da Da Da Daaa. You'll hear the first phrase of that motif in Pattern #20 (major third down).

You might also hear the first two notes of the Beatles' song, *Hey Jude.*

Tap to play the audio files:



Pattern #13: Minor Third down #2

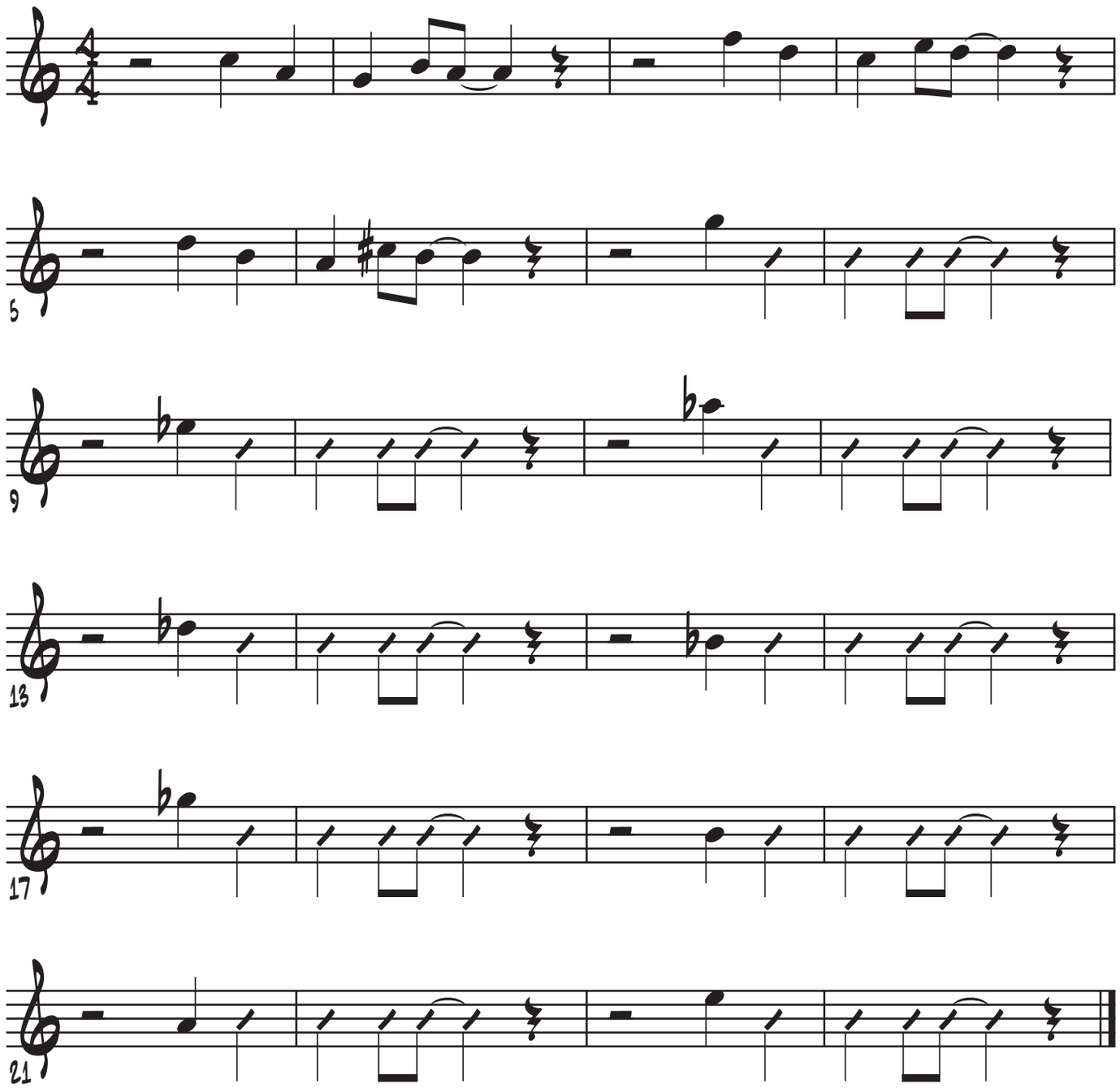


We add a little syncopation in this pattern. It's also been written to test your sense for the minor third down by playing them as eight notes. That's a little less time to think, demanding that you react. The tempo, however, is a bit slower.

In order to help get you started, the first four phrases go counterclockwise through the circle of fifths. After that it's not so predictable.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #14: Minor Third down #3



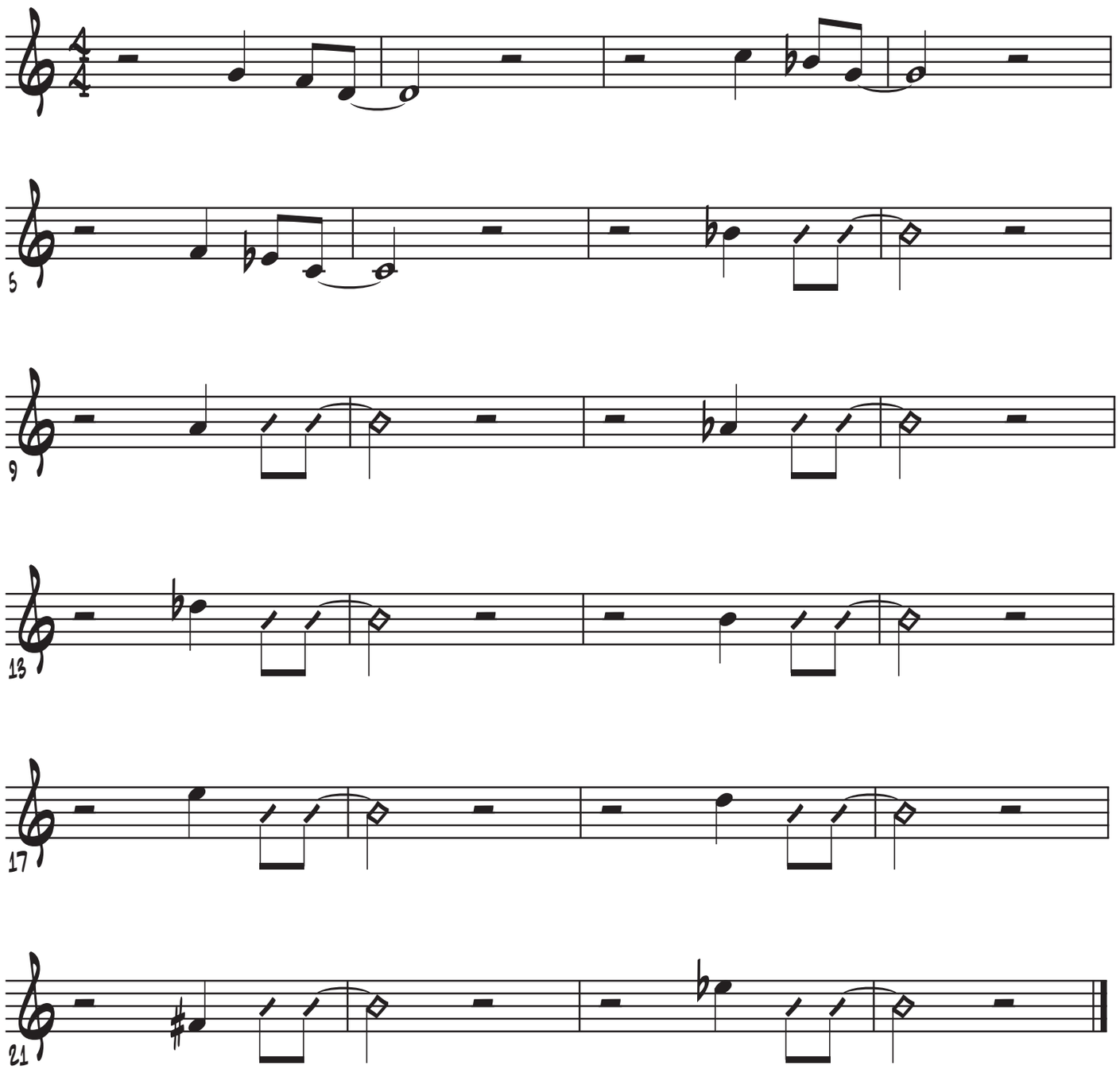
This pattern is a little longer. A few more notes. That in itself makes it bit more challenging.

Contributing to the challenge is that the phrases do not start with a rest that allow you to hear the first chord as with the previous patterns. To compensate a bit, the dominant V is placed on beat four leading into the next key.

Notice that the first six phrases are pairs, each a fourth apart. Hear if that makes the second phrase of each pair a bit more intuitive for you.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #15: Minor Third down #4

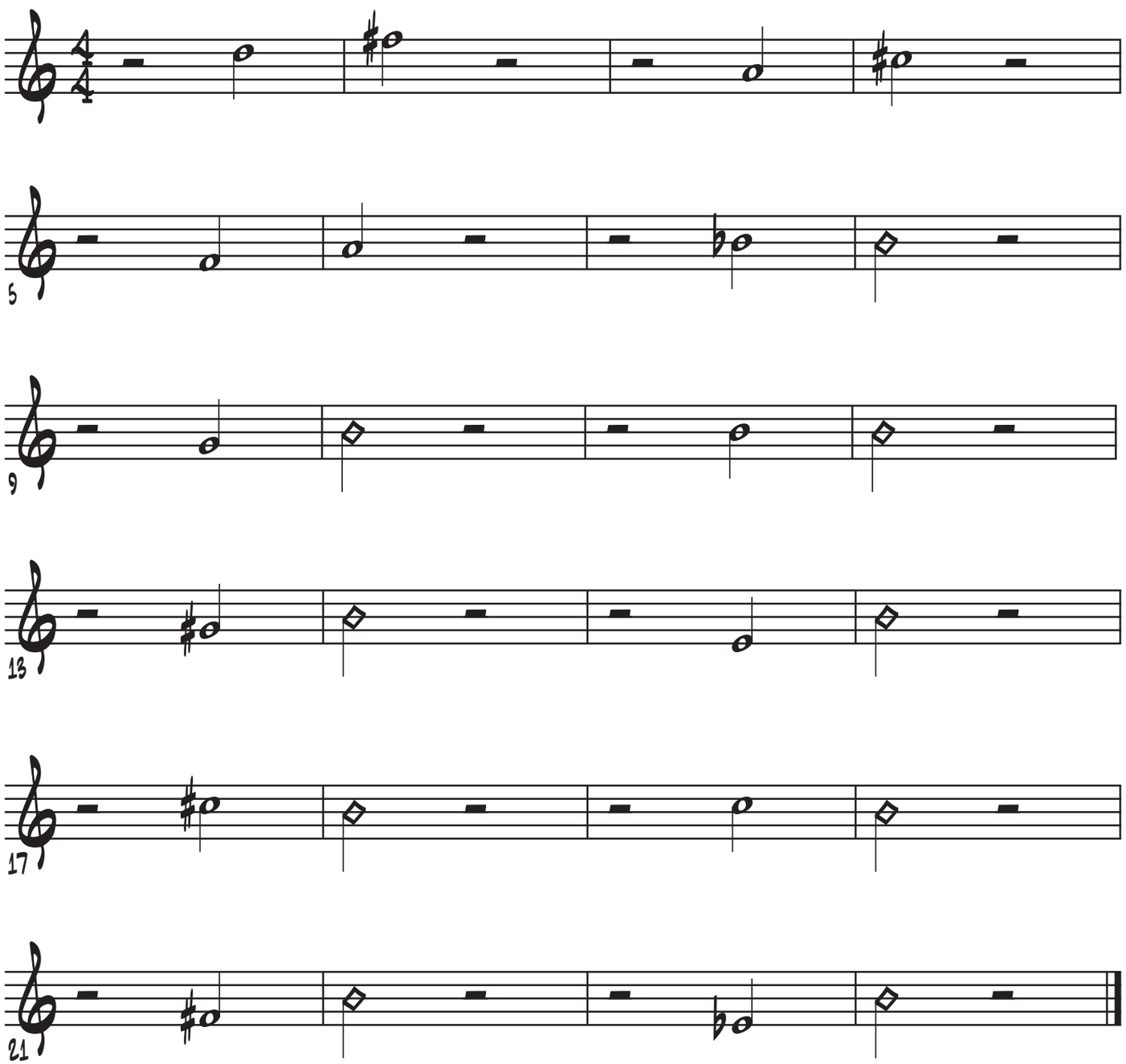


The minor third is delayed in this pattern and the eight notes make it more difficult to think about where to land at the bottom of the minor third. Again, to make things a little more intuitive, the first four phrases modulate up a fourth.

Can you hear on which chord tone the third note falls? Continue to challenge yourself with hearing the place notes fall within chords. Each chord tone has a particular color, and one of the benefits of these pattern exercises is to better familiarize your improvising ear with those colors.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #16: Major Third up #1



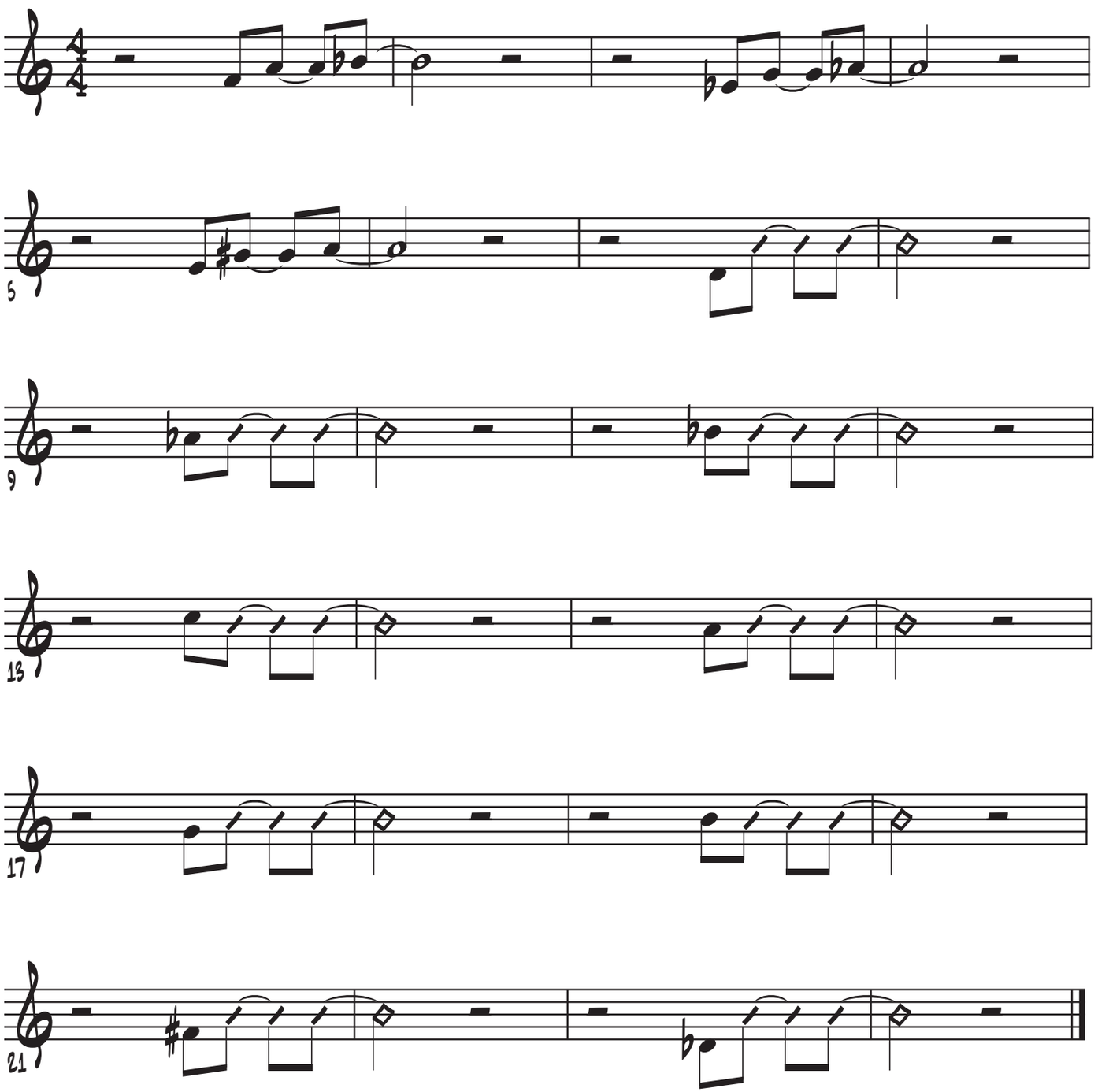
We now go back up an interval. This time a major third, and you get a little help at the beginning from the circle of fifths.

The model for this interval is the first two notes of *When The Saints Go Marching In*. This should be a pretty intuitive interval, at least compared to Pattern #20 going down a major third!

Something you can do with this pattern/interval that you can do with any of the interval introductions is to embellish the two notes in order to make something more interesting out of it. The trick is to repeat that same embellishment for each of the keys. If the interval is easy as is, try that.

Tap to play the audio files:

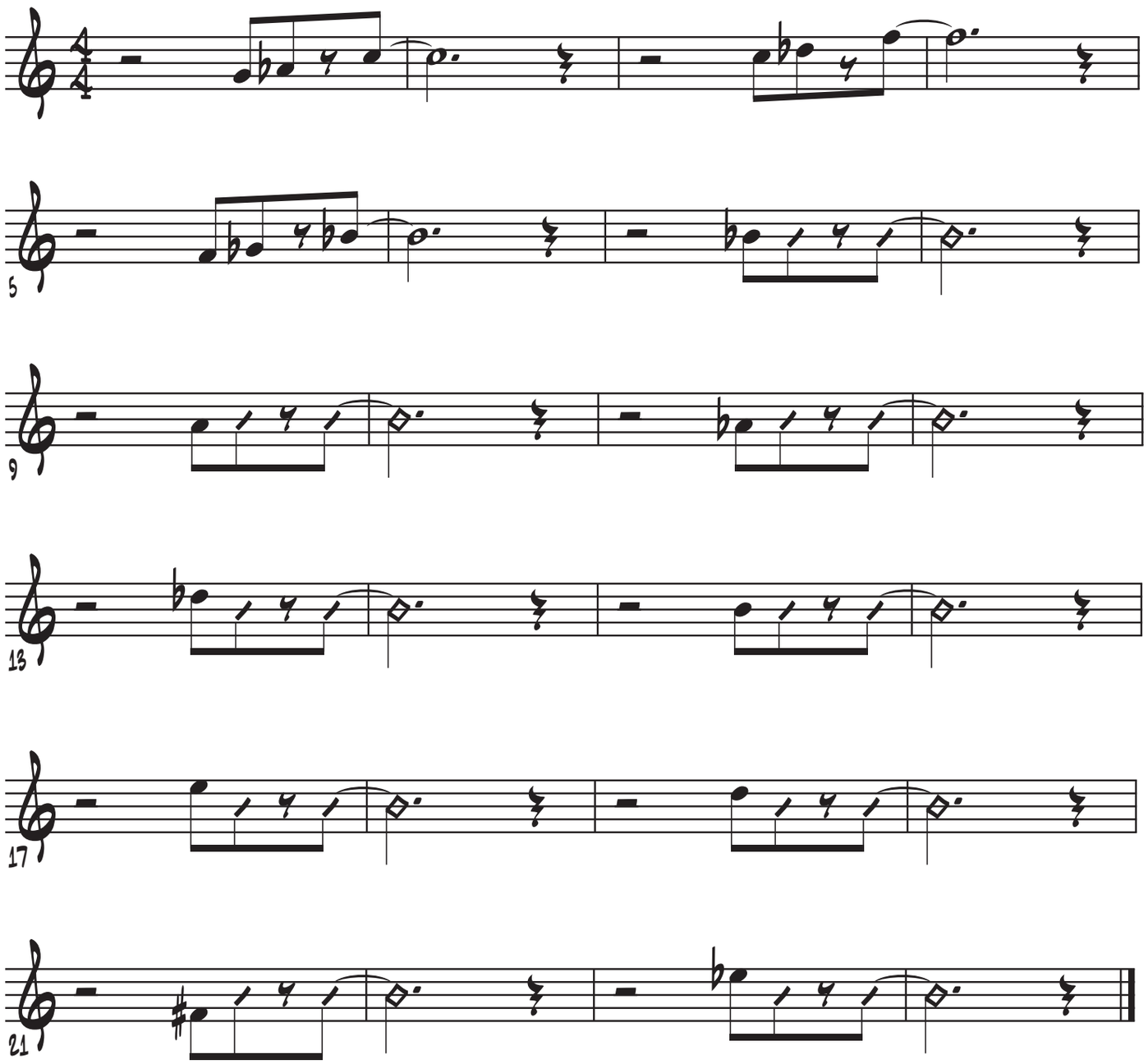
Pattern #17: Major Third up #2



This pattern is fairly intuitive, made so by the fact that it starts and ends on notes within the triad of the two chords. As you'll see throughout this book, the further up in the chord (ninths, elevenths, thirteenths) the less intuitive the pattern.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #18: Major Third up #3

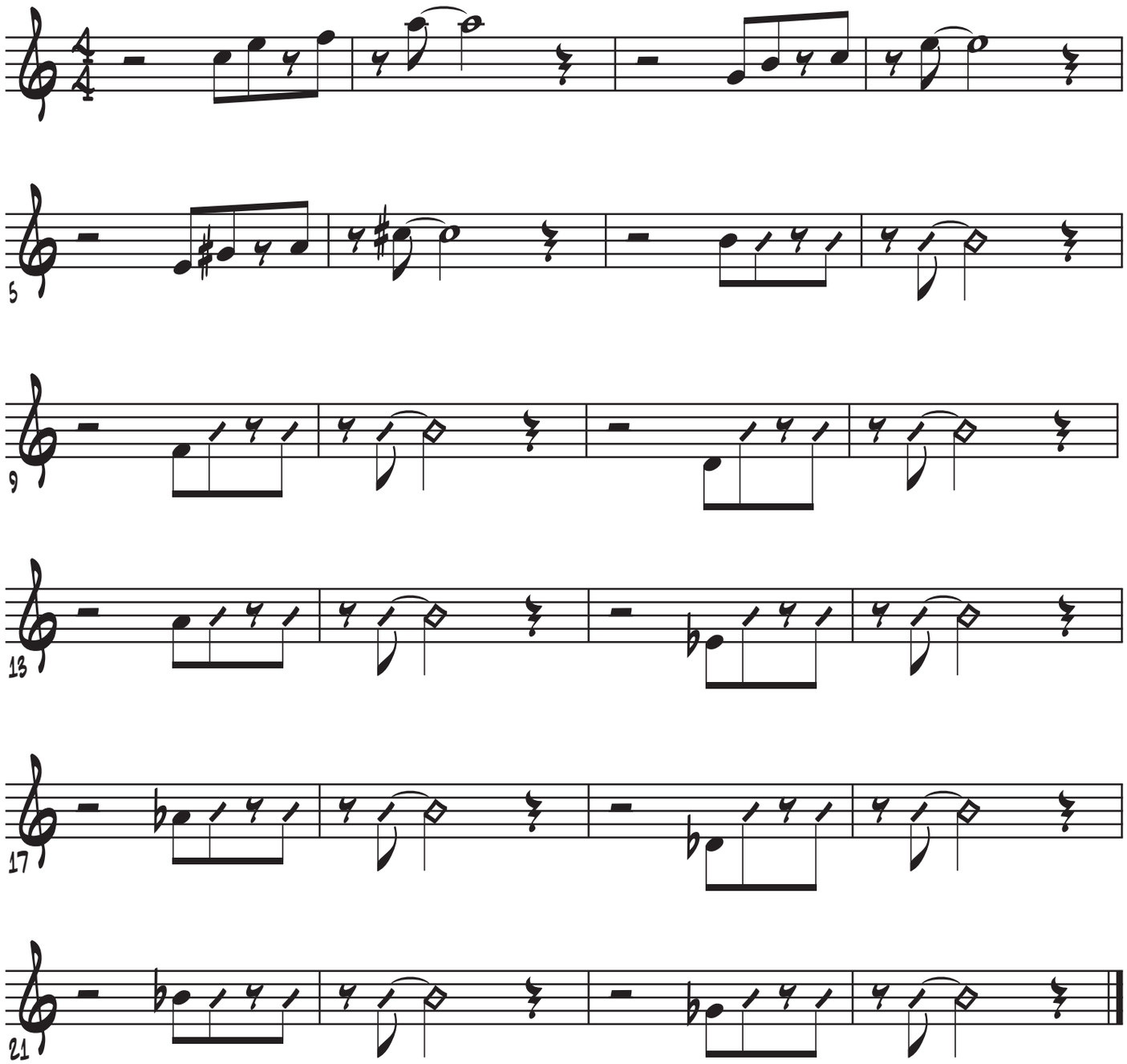


This pattern is in contrast to Pattern #17 where the first and last notes were within the basic triad of the chords. Here, those notes are higher up in the extended chord. As you'll hear, it makes for a very pleasant melody.

Notice also that the first four phrases go around the circle of fifths.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #19: Major Third up #4

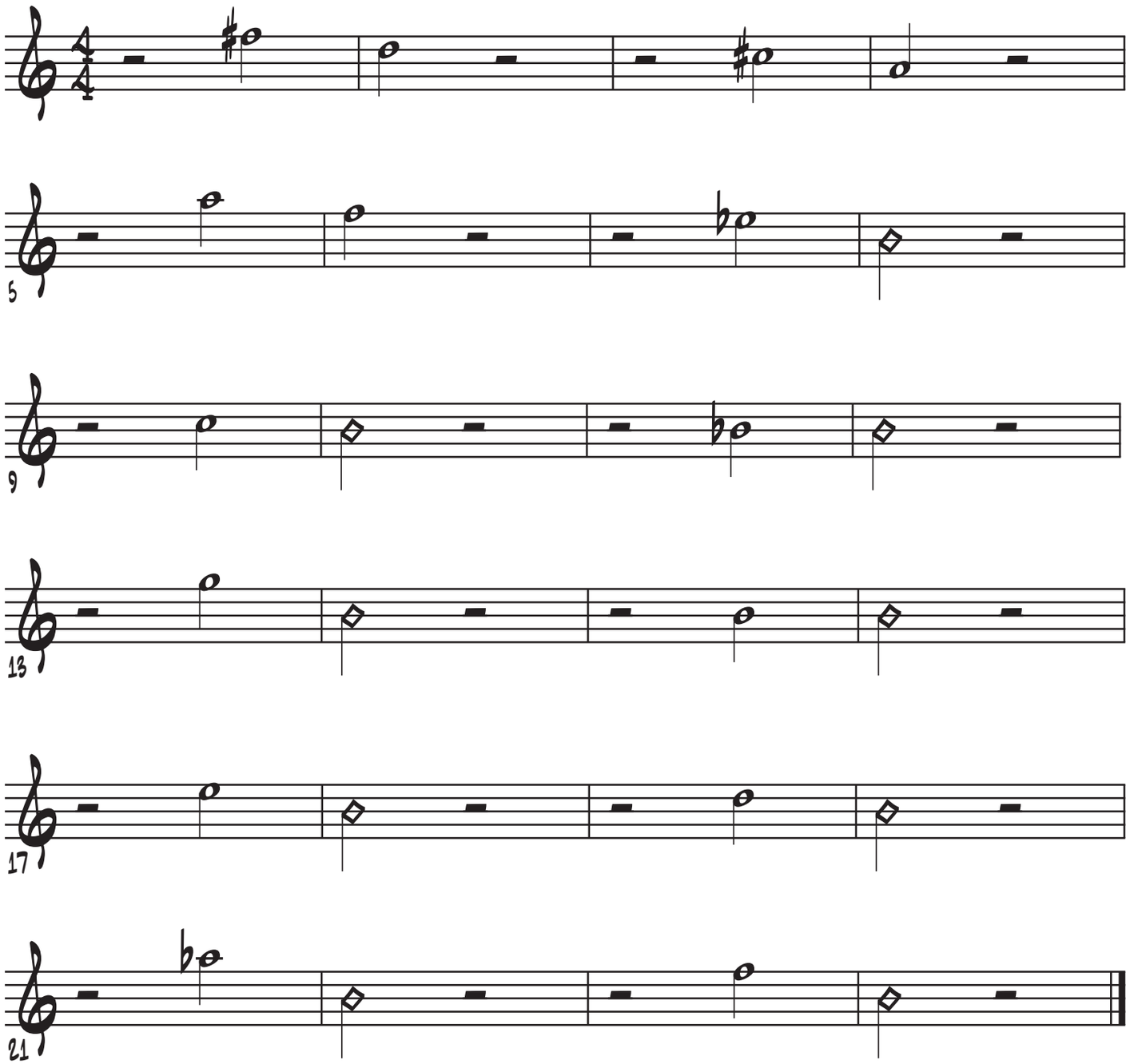


Here is a pattern that contains two major thirds going up. If you have difficulty with this pattern, it is likely that you should review earlier major third patterns to make sure you're hearing them.

Like all the patterns in this book, make sure you can sing the pitches before player them.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #20: Major Third down #1



Your model for this pattern is the first phrase in the *Beethoven Fifth Symphony*. (Da Da Da Daaa). You can also use the first two notes in Gershwin's *Summertime*.

Don't cut corners on the singing of this interval since it not the easiest, especially when you play the next few patterns. Consider recording yourself singing the intervals to confirm that you are truly hearing the notes.

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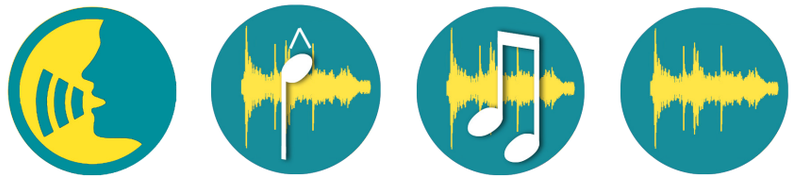
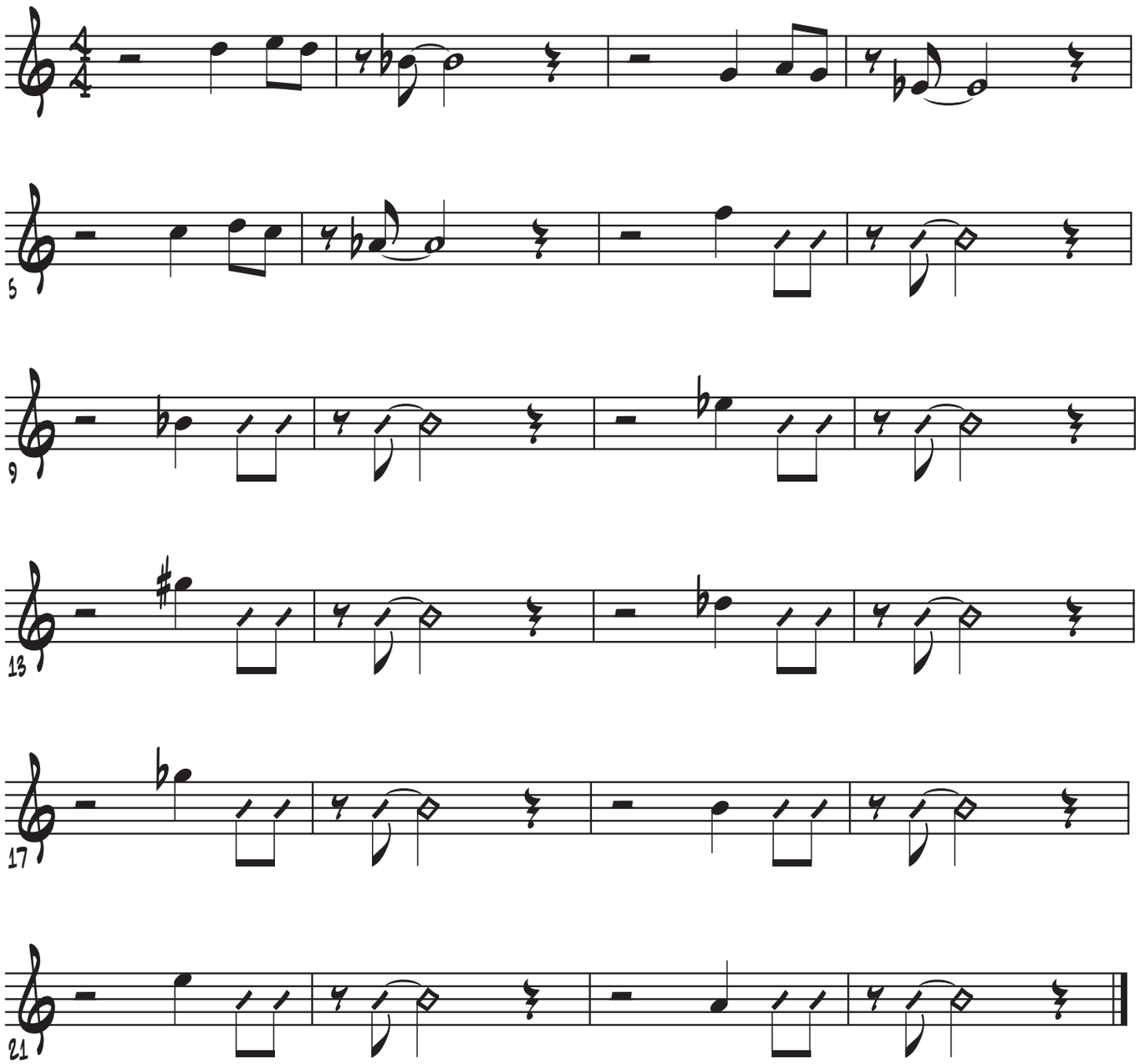


Pattern #21: Major Third down #2

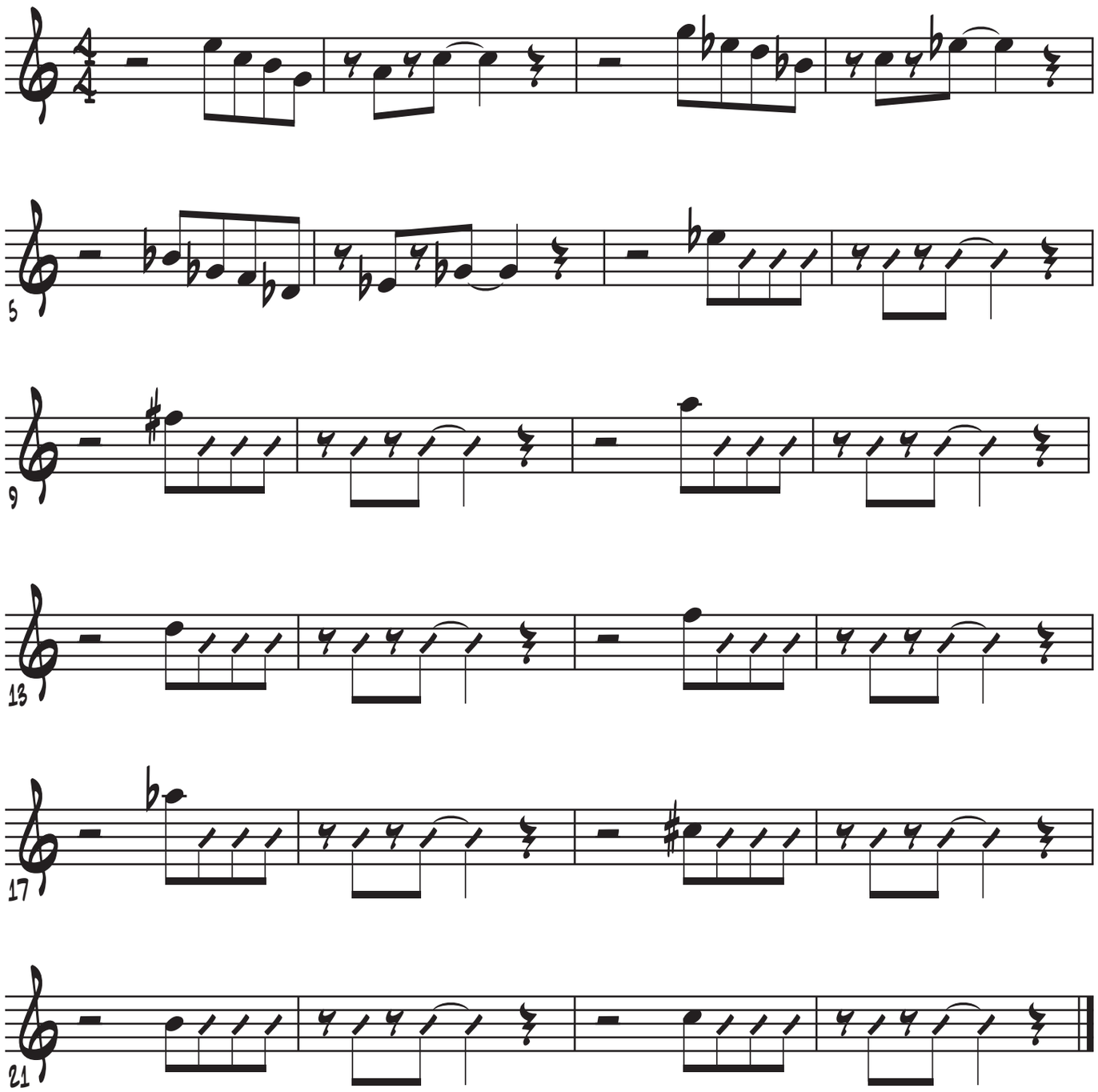


One challenge with this pattern is the pause between the upper note of the interval and the lower. Given the degree of difficulty, I've run the circle of fifths throughout the entire 12 keys.

Of course, you can always embellish the pattern by holding the third note through the bar or by starting the first part of the pattern earlier.

Tap to play the audio files:

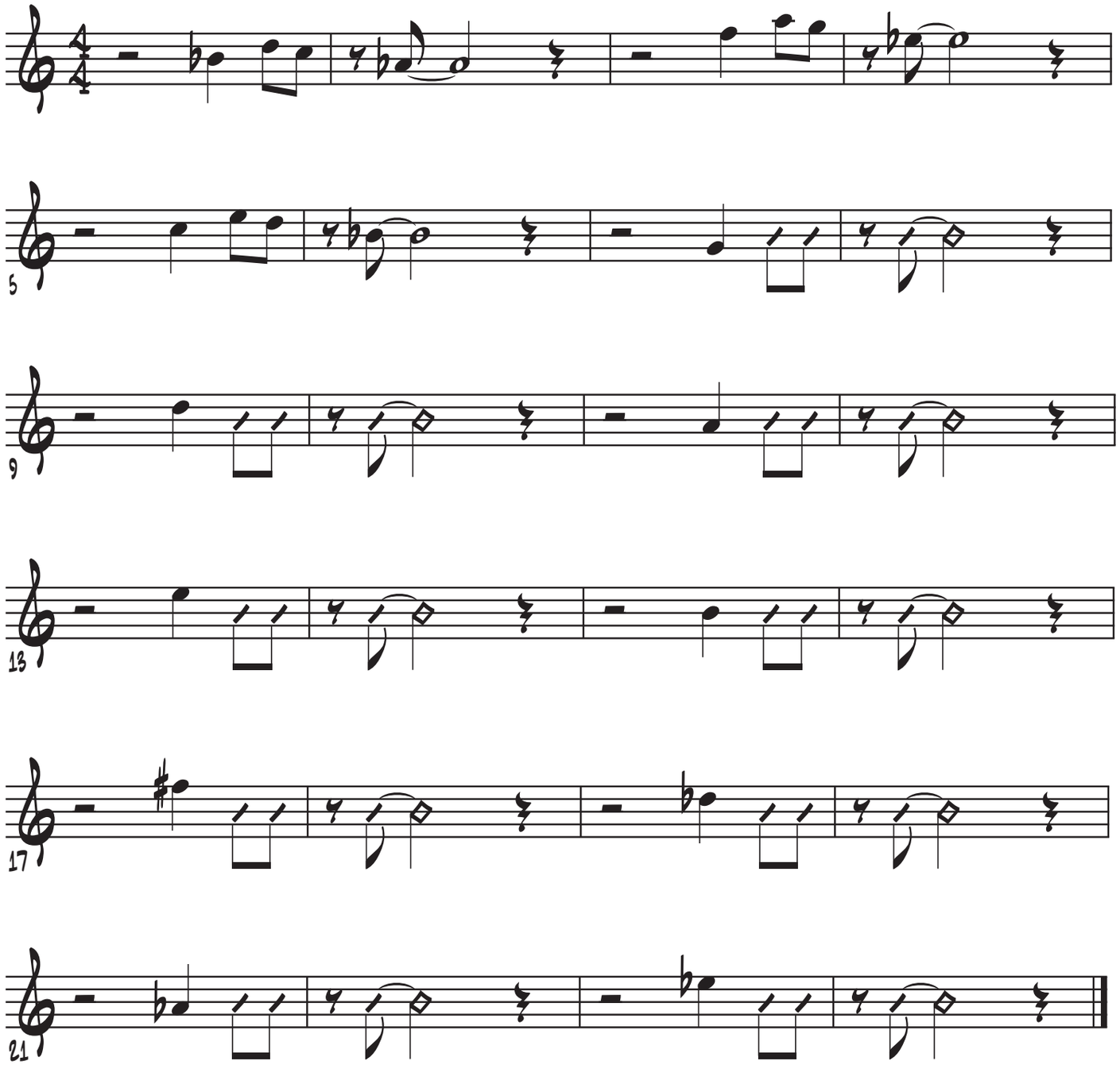
Pattern #22: Major Third down #3



This pattern highlighting major thirds down contains two of them. It is a somewhat longer pattern which challenges you to keep the entire melodic phrase in memory. That makes it much harder to think about the interval and which notes to play. Sing the pattern before playing it.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #23: Major Third Down #4

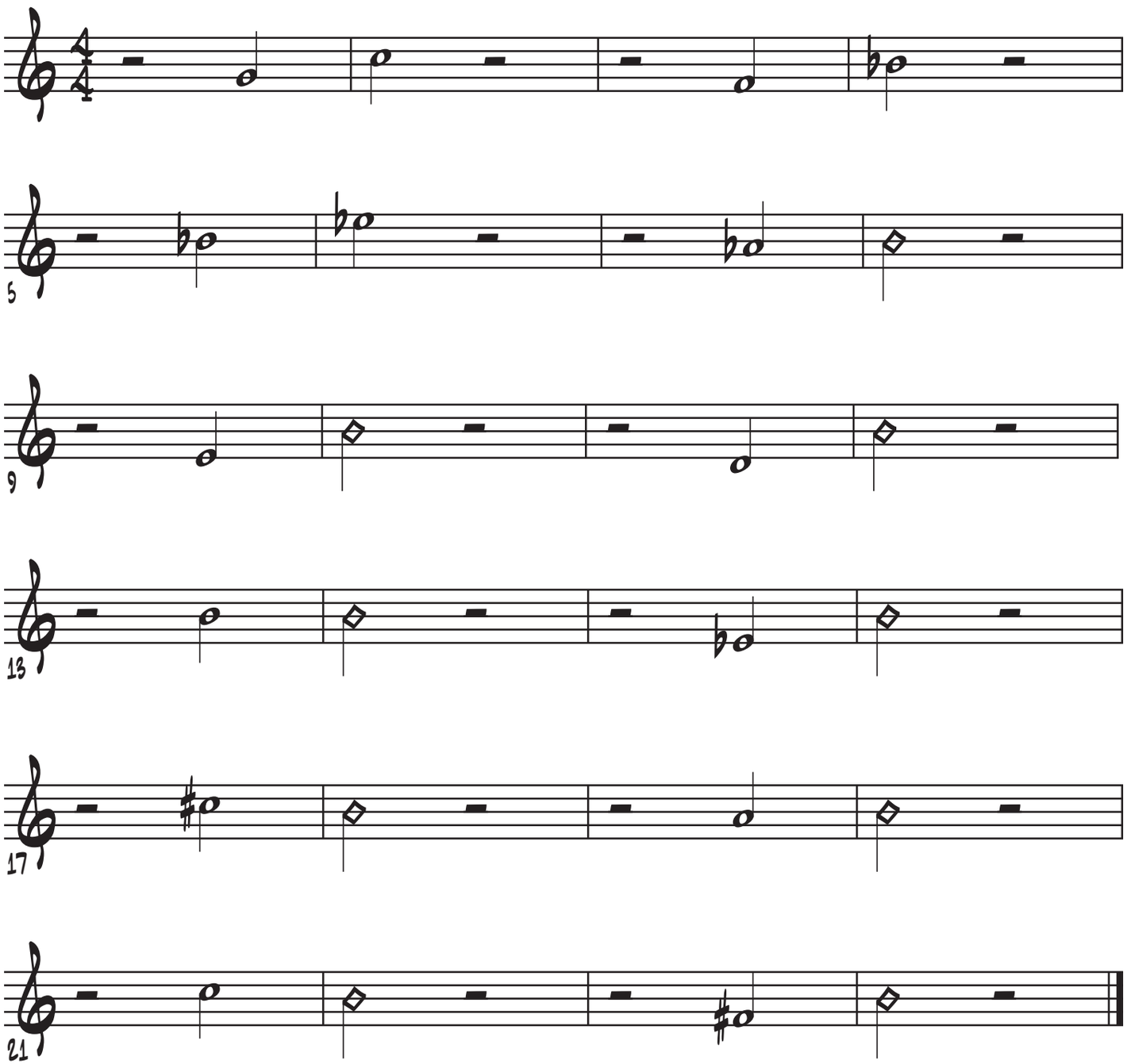


This pattern gives you the opportunity to play the major third up and down. If you hear these intervals well enough to easily play through this, you official know your major thirds!

Can you hear the sequence of keys that run consistently through this pattern?

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #24: Perfect Fourth up #1



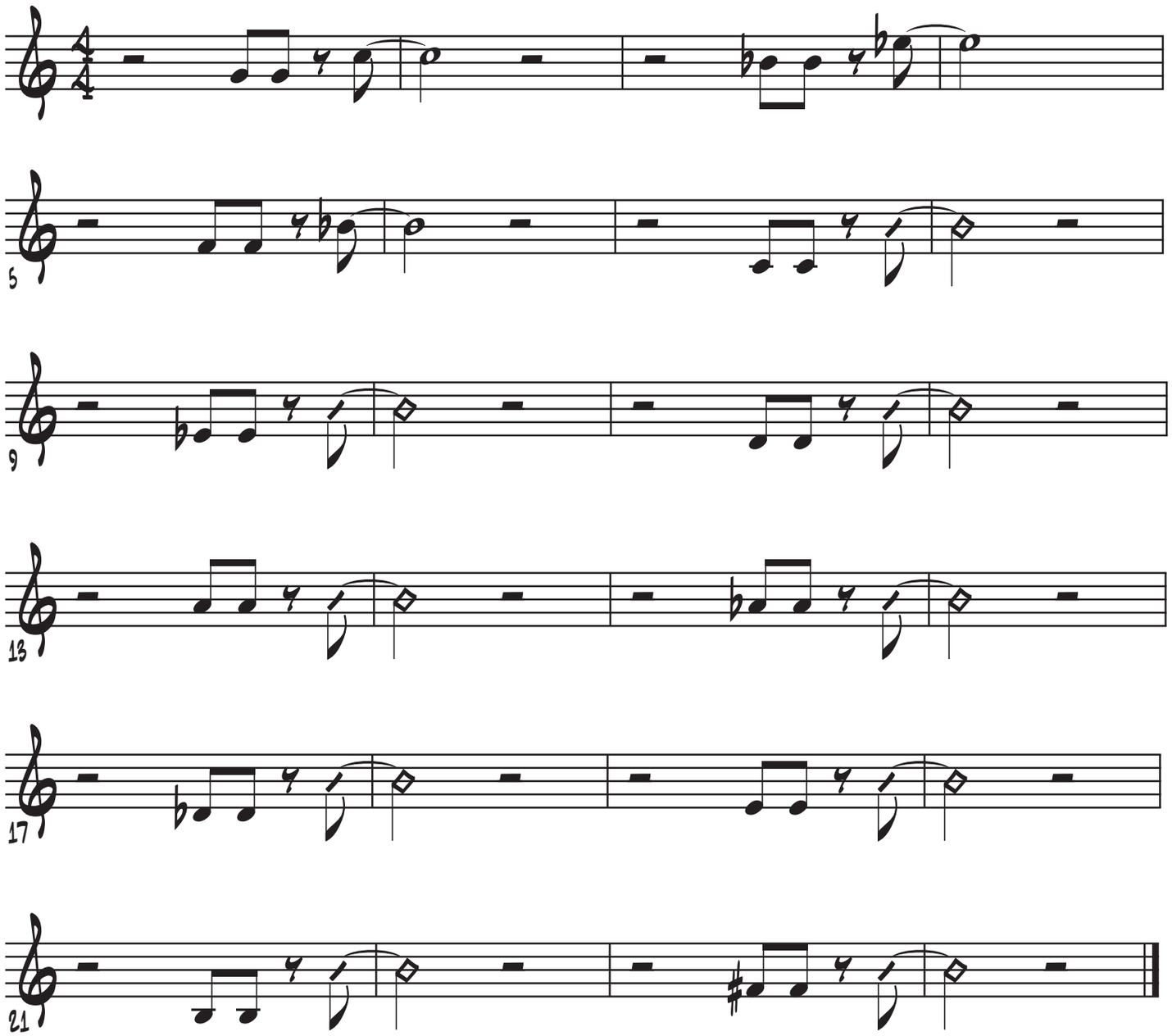
As a jazz player, the perfect fourth is an important interval to have in your sonic toolkit. The interval allows us to break away from strict tertiary harmony to float around more static chord changes.

An effective practice exercise is to play sequences of stacked fourths to build your facility with moving around the circle of fifths.

A good model for this interval is *We Wish You A Merry Christmas.* Remember the Mennen aftershave commercial jingle: *Buy Mennen*. The interval has a solid resolution to it. You can't help sing the fourth up without feeling the resolution of the top note. The beauty of that Mennon jingle is that the third and final note is the octave down from the that upper fourth.

Tap to play the audio files:

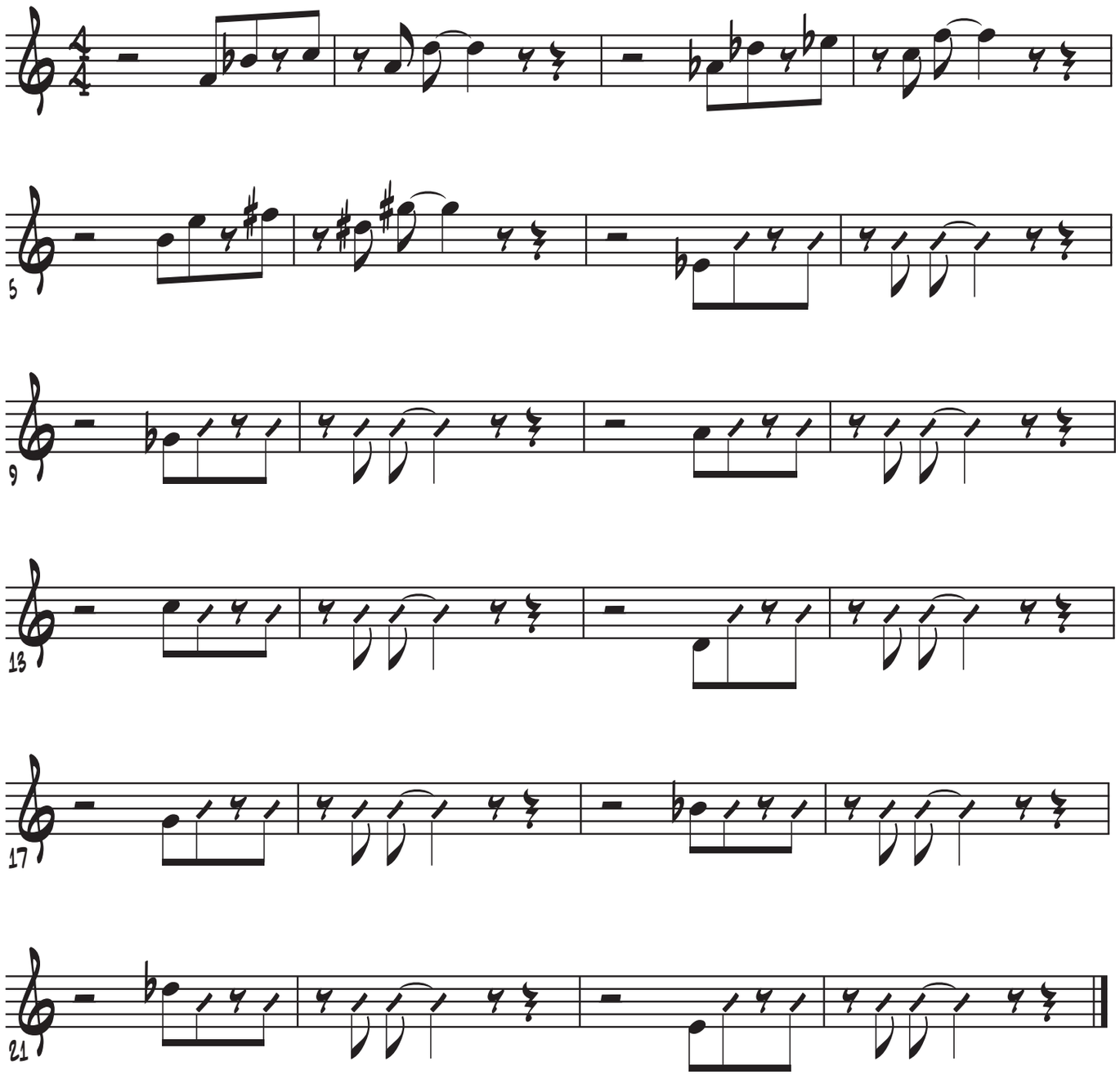
Pattern #25: Perfect Fourth up #2



This pattern is a rhythmic variation on the preceding interval exercise. Can you hear which chord tone is the last note of the pattern?

Tap to play the audio files:

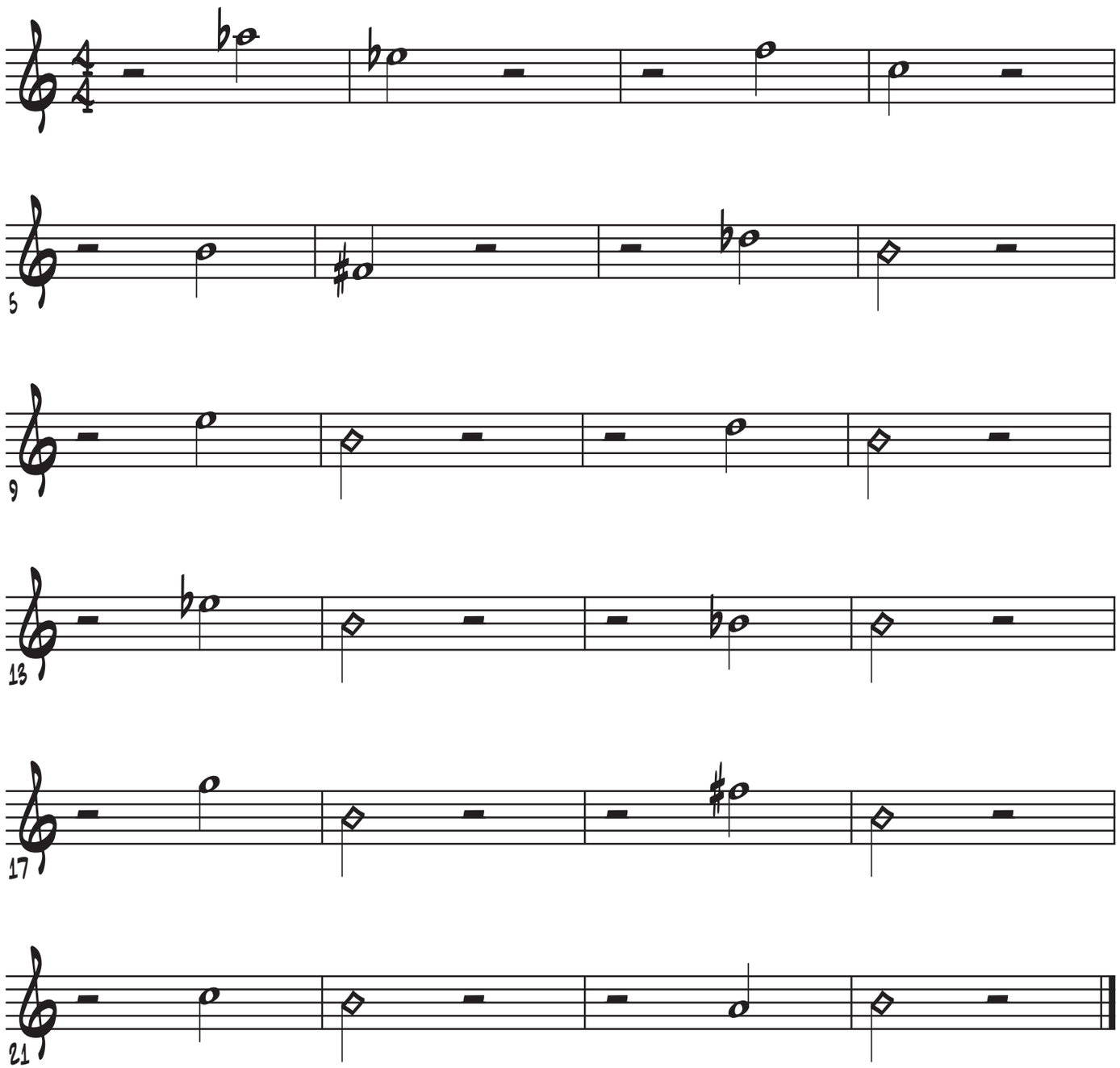
Pattern #26: Perfect Fourth up #3



This last ascending fourth pattern provides you with two perfect fourth intervals. The key modulations are somewhat random, making this a beneficial exercise.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #27: Perfect Fourth down #1



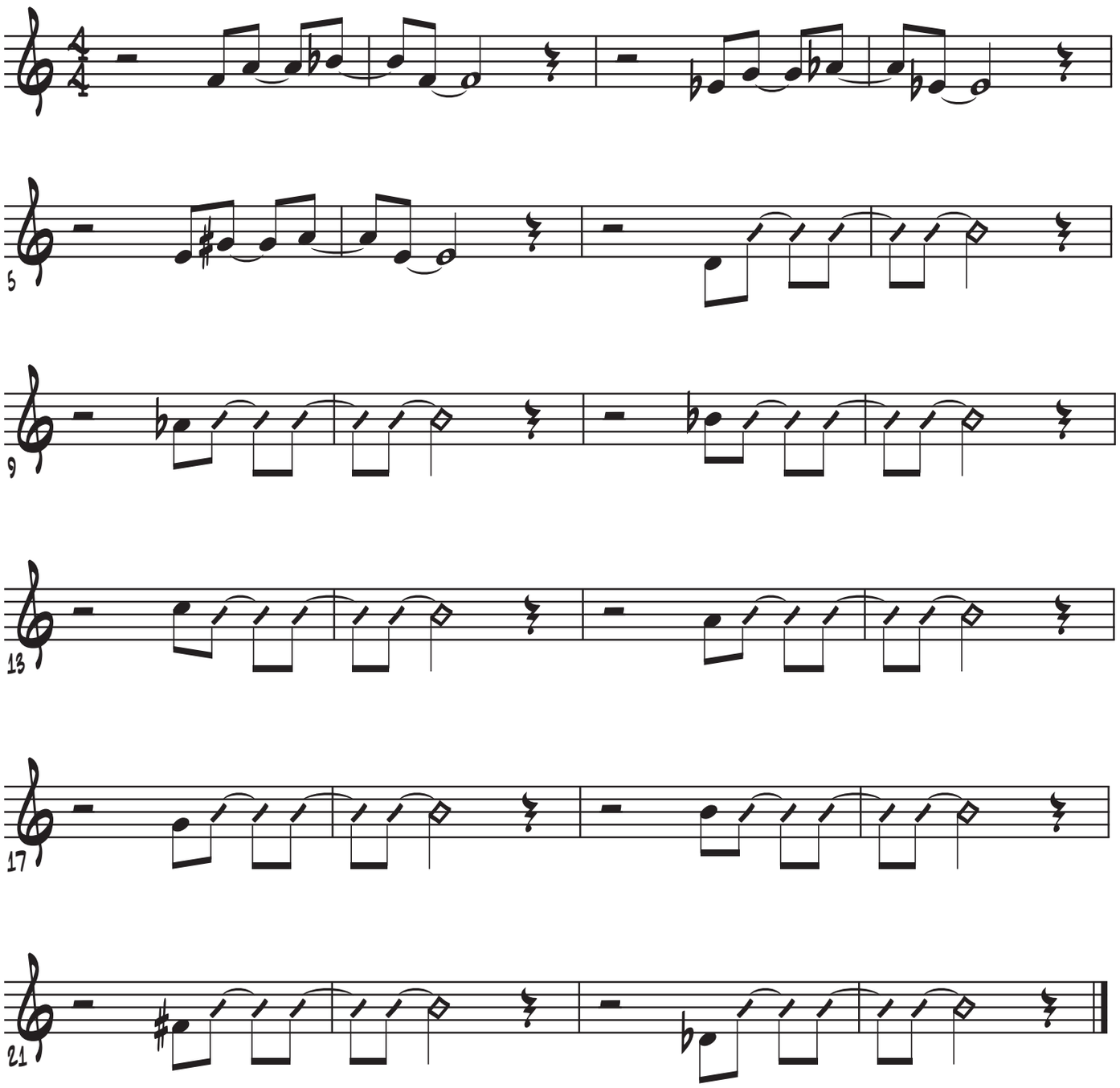
While playing the perfect fourth up is an important interval for jazz, playing it down is a more unique sound.

Similar to the suggestion made in Pattern #24, practice playing a series of fourths down. For most wind instruments, that should comprise four of five intervals before going beyond the instrument's range.

Spend time singing this interval to hold it firmly in your ear.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #28: Perfect Fourth down #2

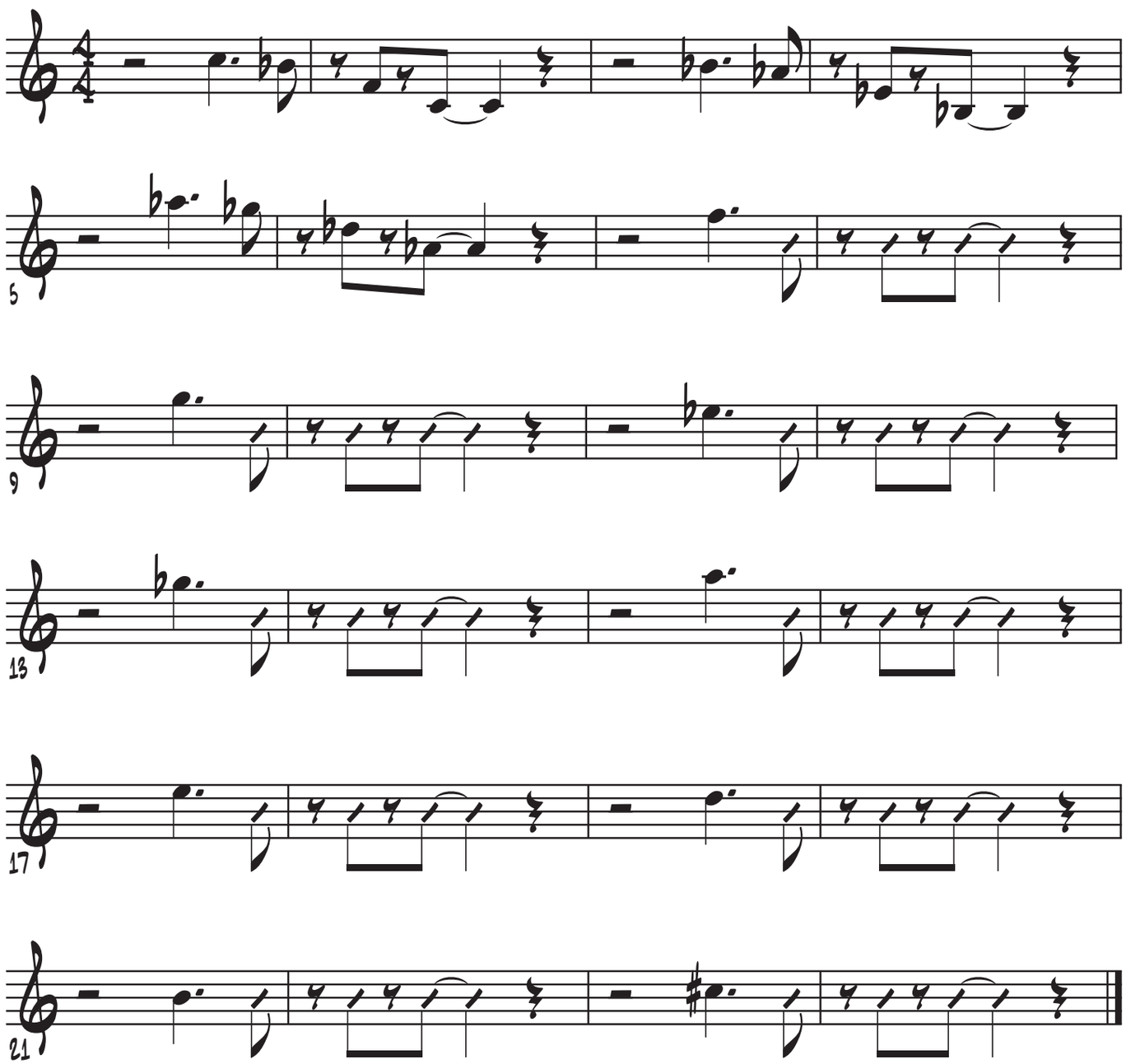


Beyond the perfect fourth down, this pattern provides you with review and practice on your major thirds up.

Because this pattern stays within a fairly narrow range, try playing it up and down an octave depending on your instrument's range.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #29: Perfect Fourth down #3

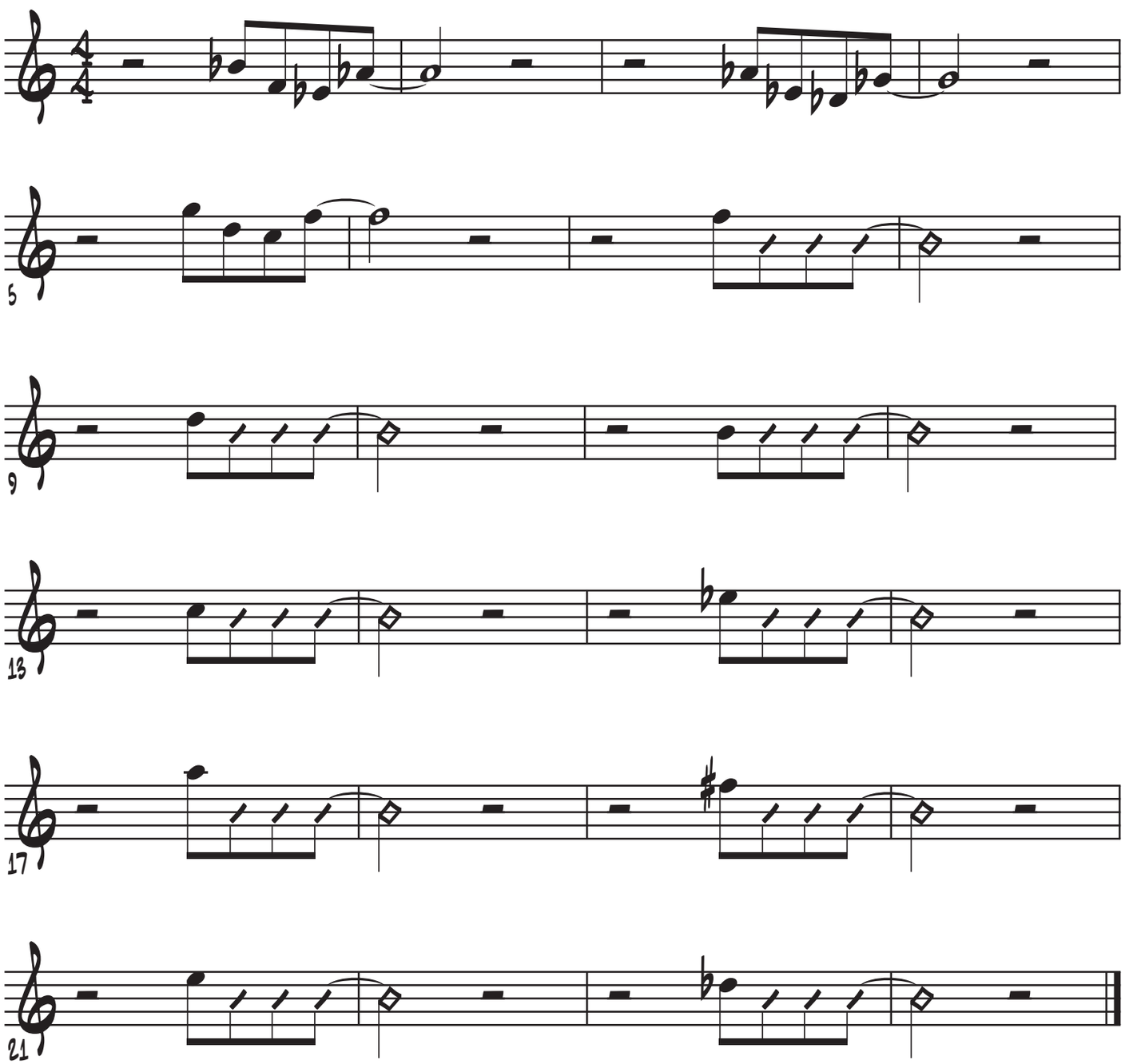


The benefits of stacking perfect fourths was mentioned earlier and here is an opportunity to practice that. Once this pattern becomes easy, you can add one more fourth below the last written note. In the first pattern, that note would be the G below concert middle C

Can you hear the chord tone into which the pattern ends?

Tap to play the audio files:

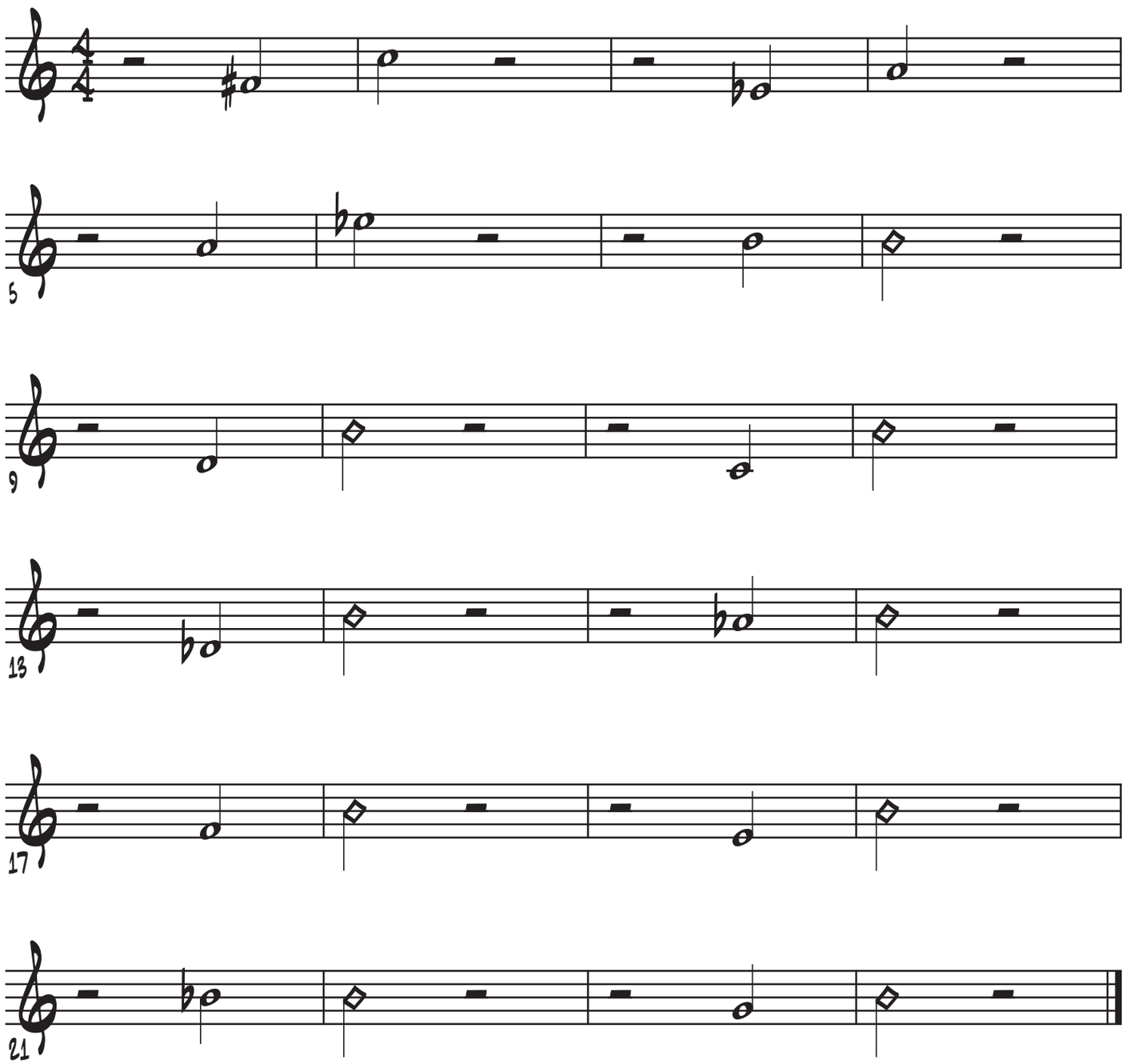
Pattern #30: Perfect Fourth up and down



Before moving on to the next interval, this pattern provides you with the ability to play the perfect fourth both down and up.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #31: Augmented Fourth (Tritone) up #1



The augmented fourth, or tritone, is an odd but important interval. Called the Devil's Interval because early musical modes couldn't account for it, it serves many purposes in jazz and other harmony.

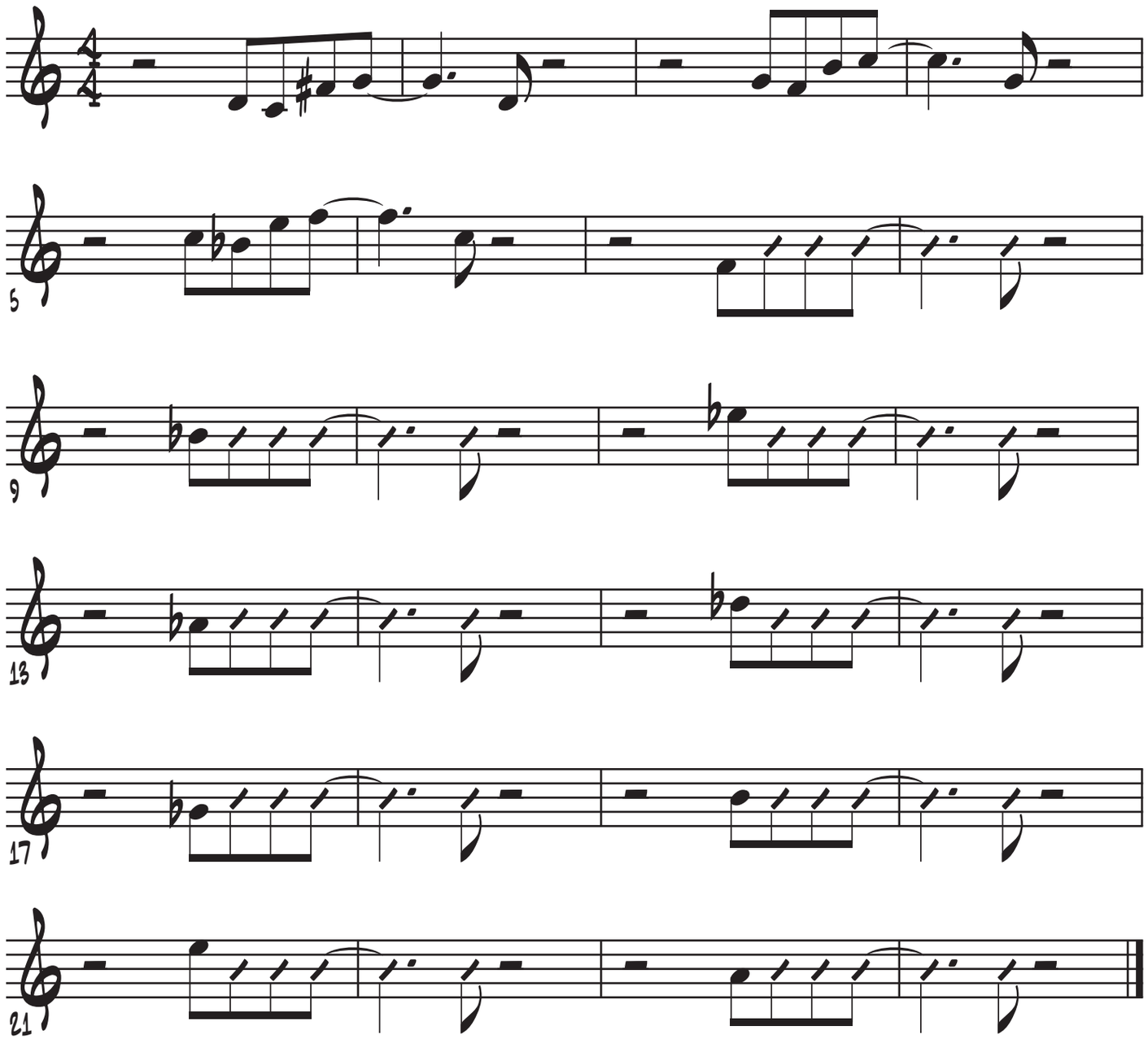
Play the tritone on the piano and you'll hear the pull to half steps up from the top note to down from the bottom note. The interval C up to F# implies dominant D7 and the half step resolution to B and G implies the tonic G major.

A model for this interval up is the first notes of the *West Side Story* song *Maria*.

Be sure to practice singing this interval before diving in to the next three patterns.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #32: Augmented Fourth (Tritone) up #2

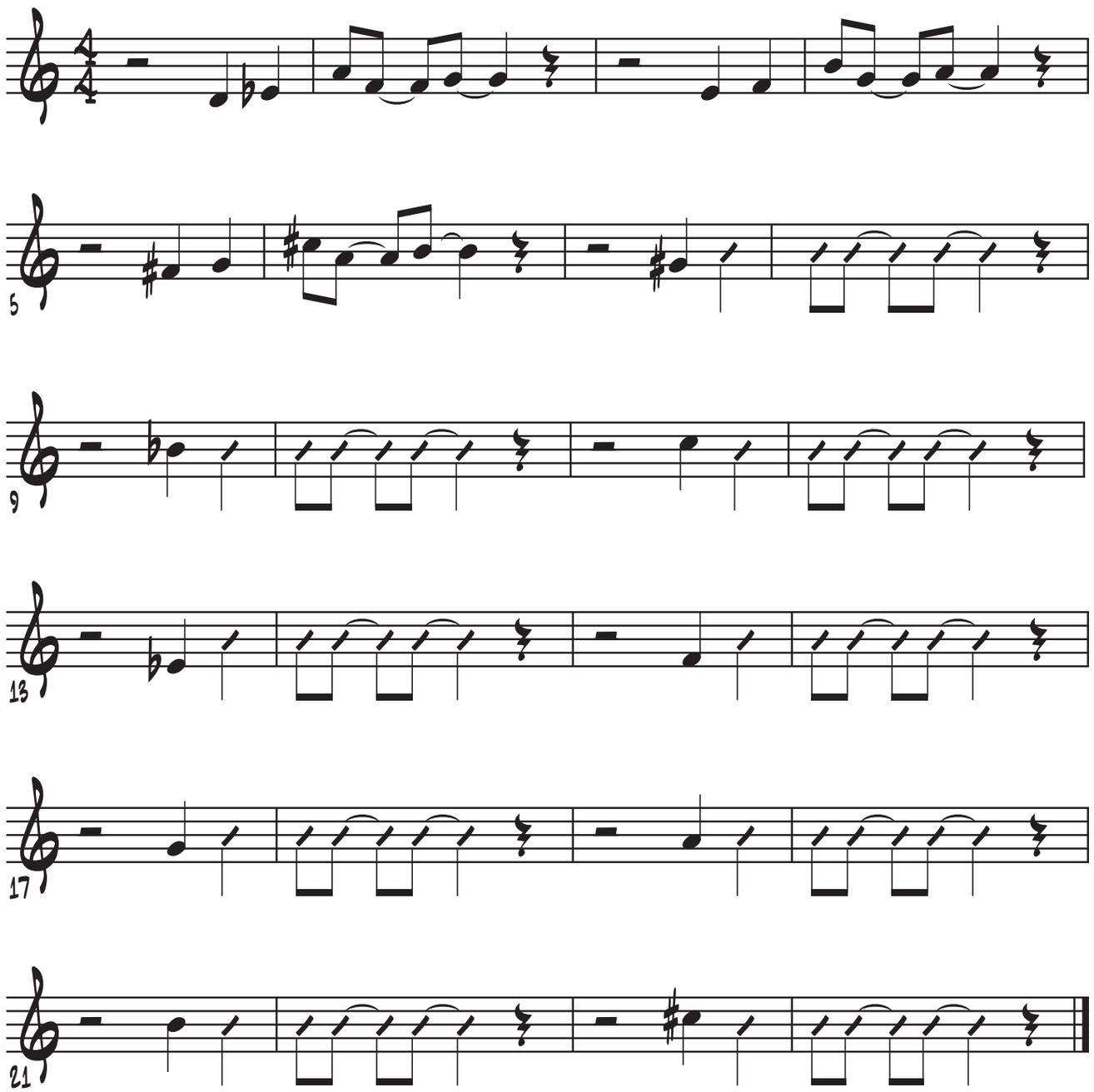


Because of the tritone's strong harmonic pull, this pattern should sound somewhat intuitive even without the rhythm track. Play it on your instrument without the track to hear for yourself. Can you hear how the first eighth note leads naturally to the second eighth note?

Notice the harmonic progression of this pattern? Does that make it easier for you?

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #33: Augmented Fourth (Tritone) up #3

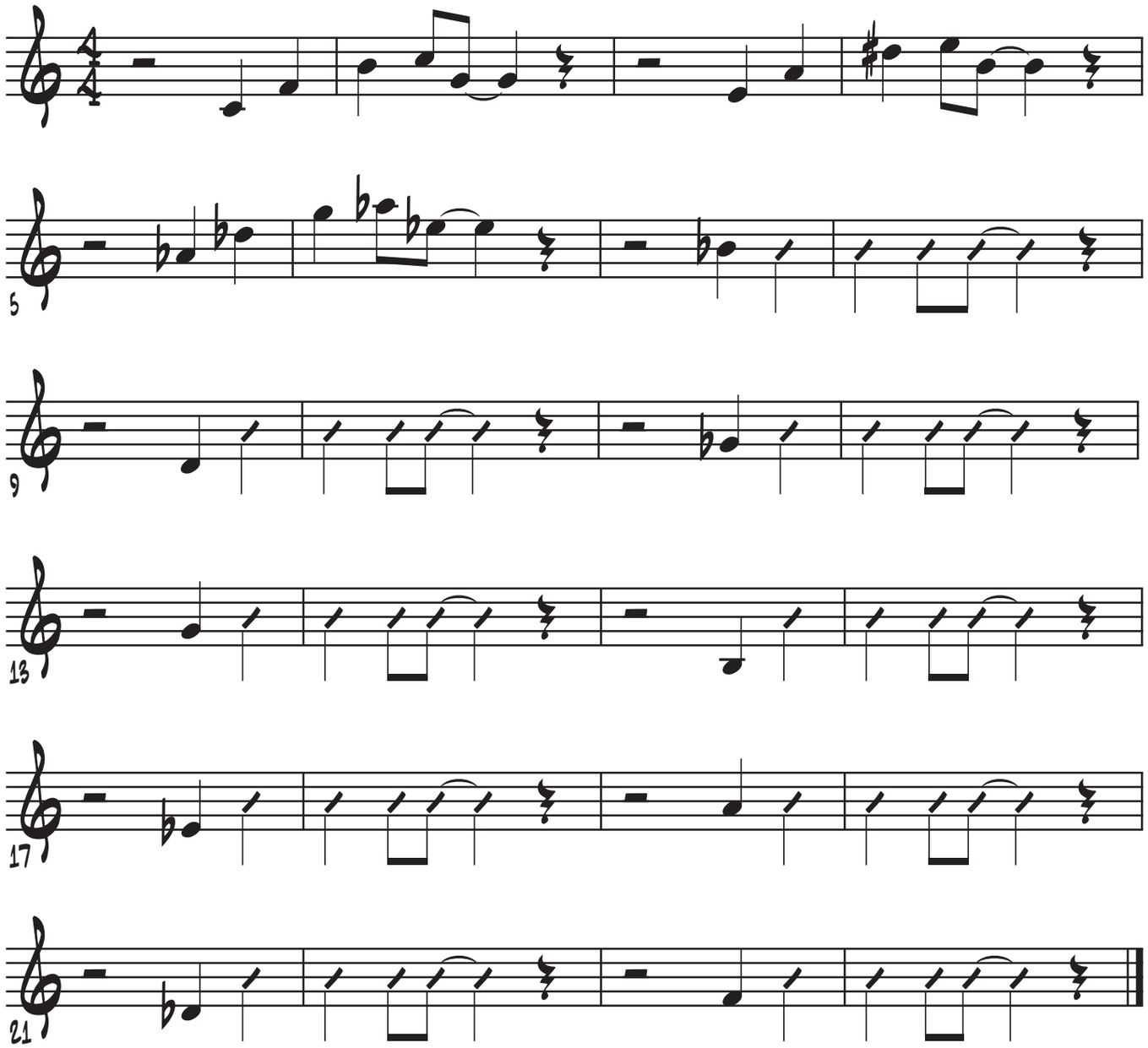


This pattern is a little less intuitive that the previous one. The tritone interval is not the resolution of the phrase but instead, it occurs mid-phrase.

The phrases are also harmonically arranged somewhat randomly and not in a predictable sequence like Pattern #32. A major third down interval is thrown in there for good measure. Do you remember the sound of that one from earlier patterns?

Tap to play the audio files:

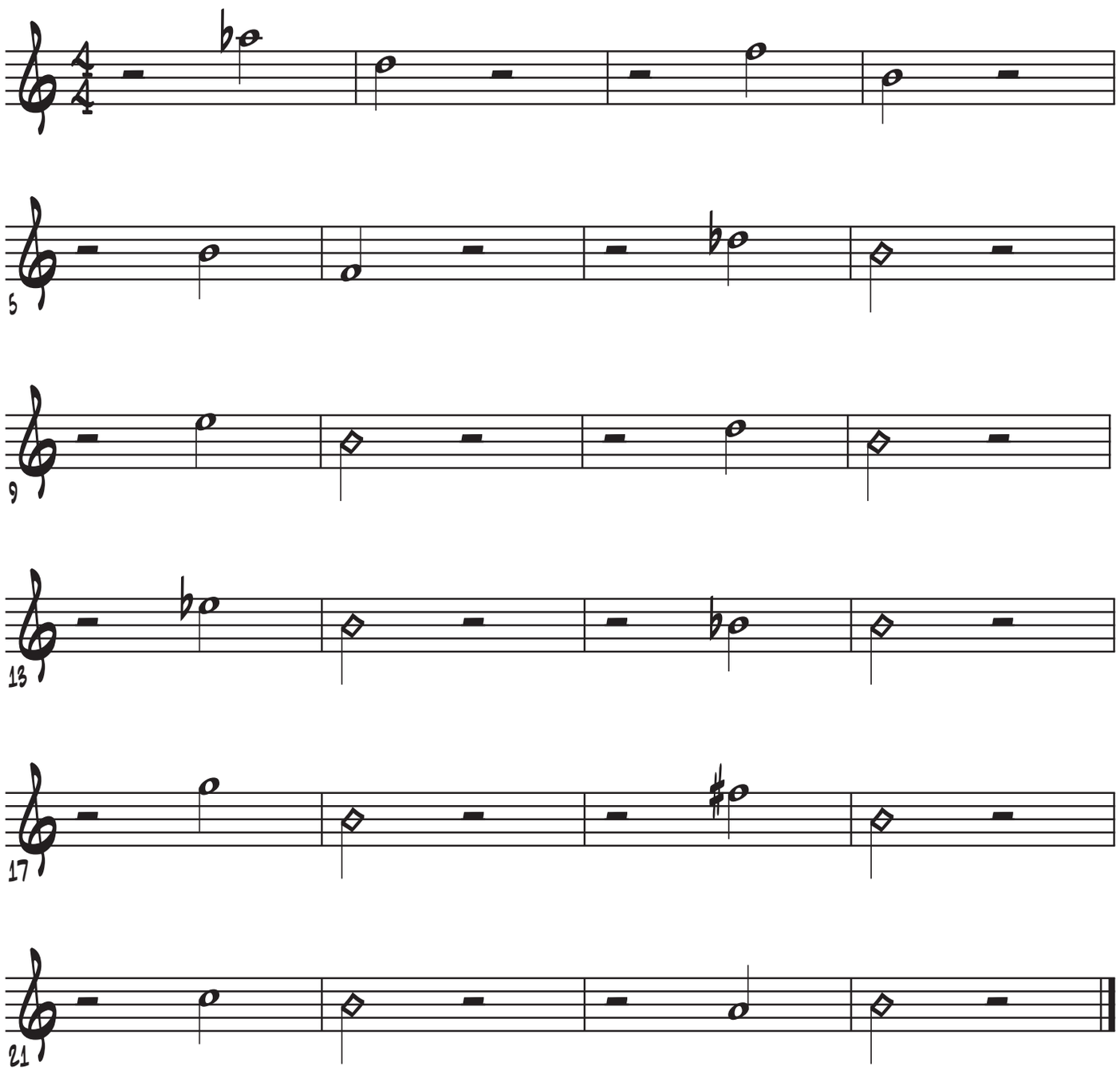
Pattern #34: Augmented Fourth (Tritone) up #4



Here's a chance to hear a fourth and a triton up. Again that upper note of the tritone resolves into the have step above. The somewhat random relationship between the phrases will ensure that you hear those large intervals and how they flow into each other.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #35: Augmented Fourth (Tritone) down #1



This is a tricky interval to hear if you're not used to its odd sound. If it is easier for you, try playing two consecutive minor thirds down. It's also a tricky interval to harmonize, so don't become distracted by the somewhat obtuse chord progression.

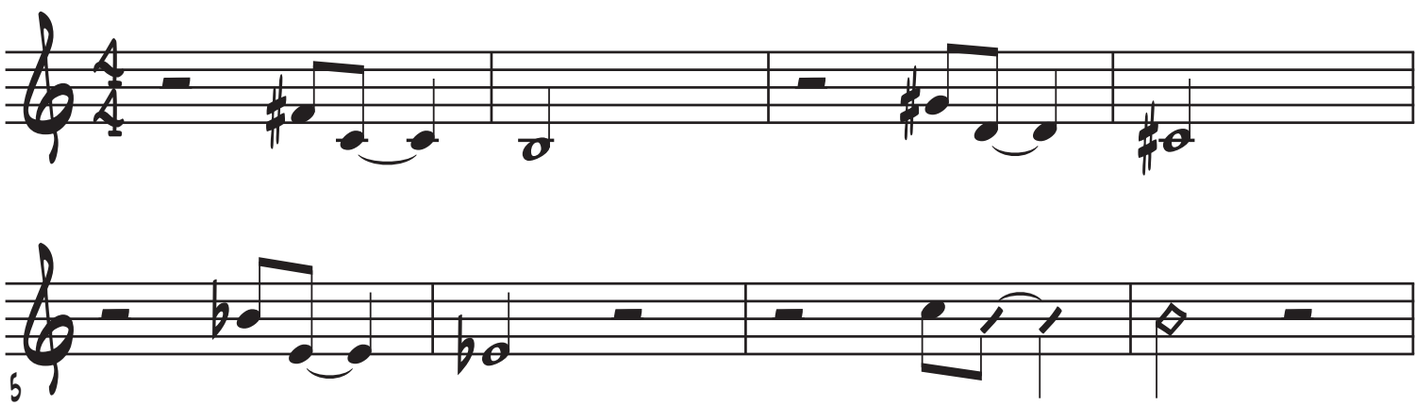
Like Pattern #31 the gravity of this interval pulls by a half step either :

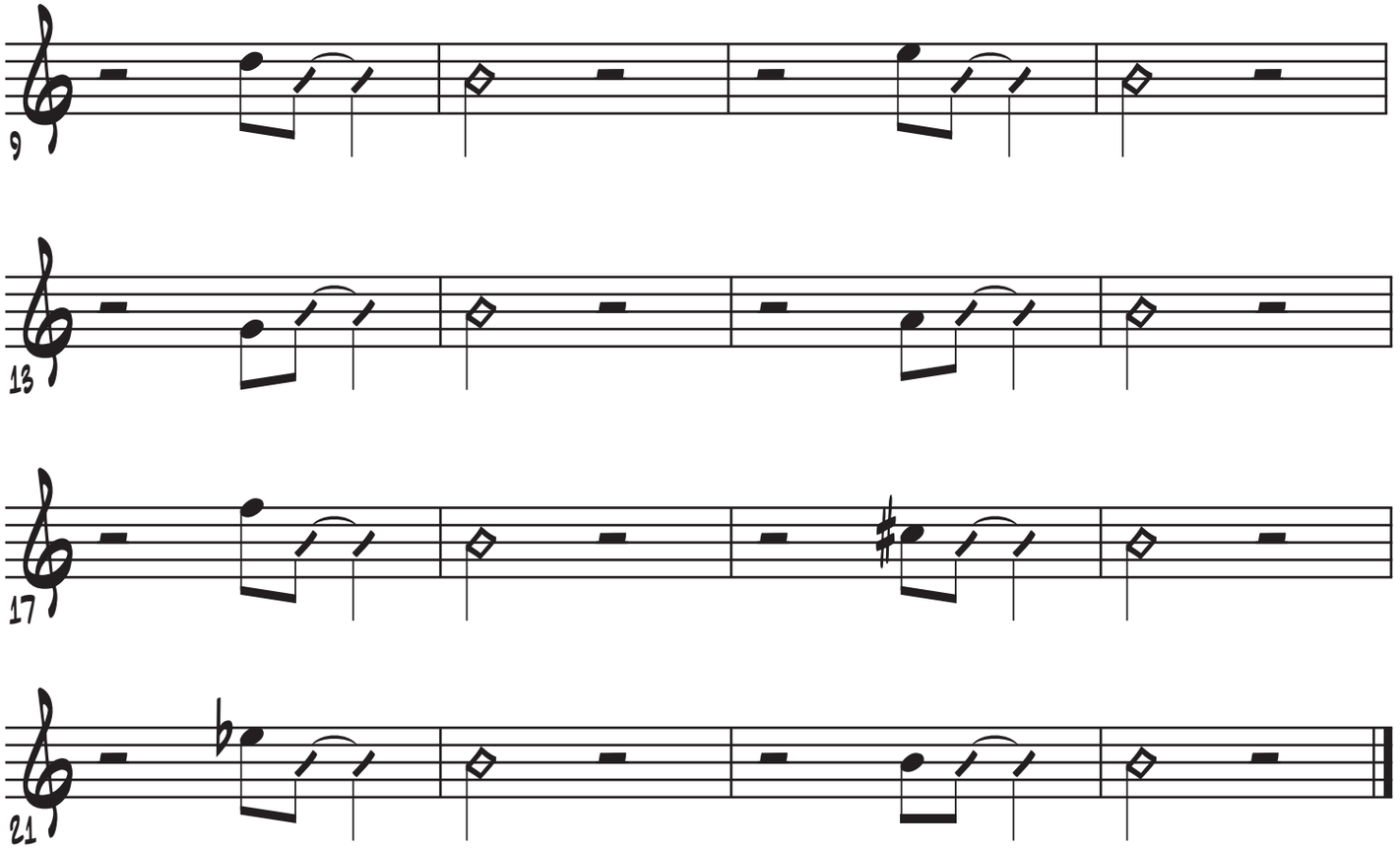
1. the top note up and bottom note down, or
2. the top note down and the bottom note up.

Using the first phrase in this pattern, the first resolution implies E7 (G# on the top) to A major. The second resolution implies Bb7 to Eb major.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #36: Augmented Fourth (Tritone) down #2



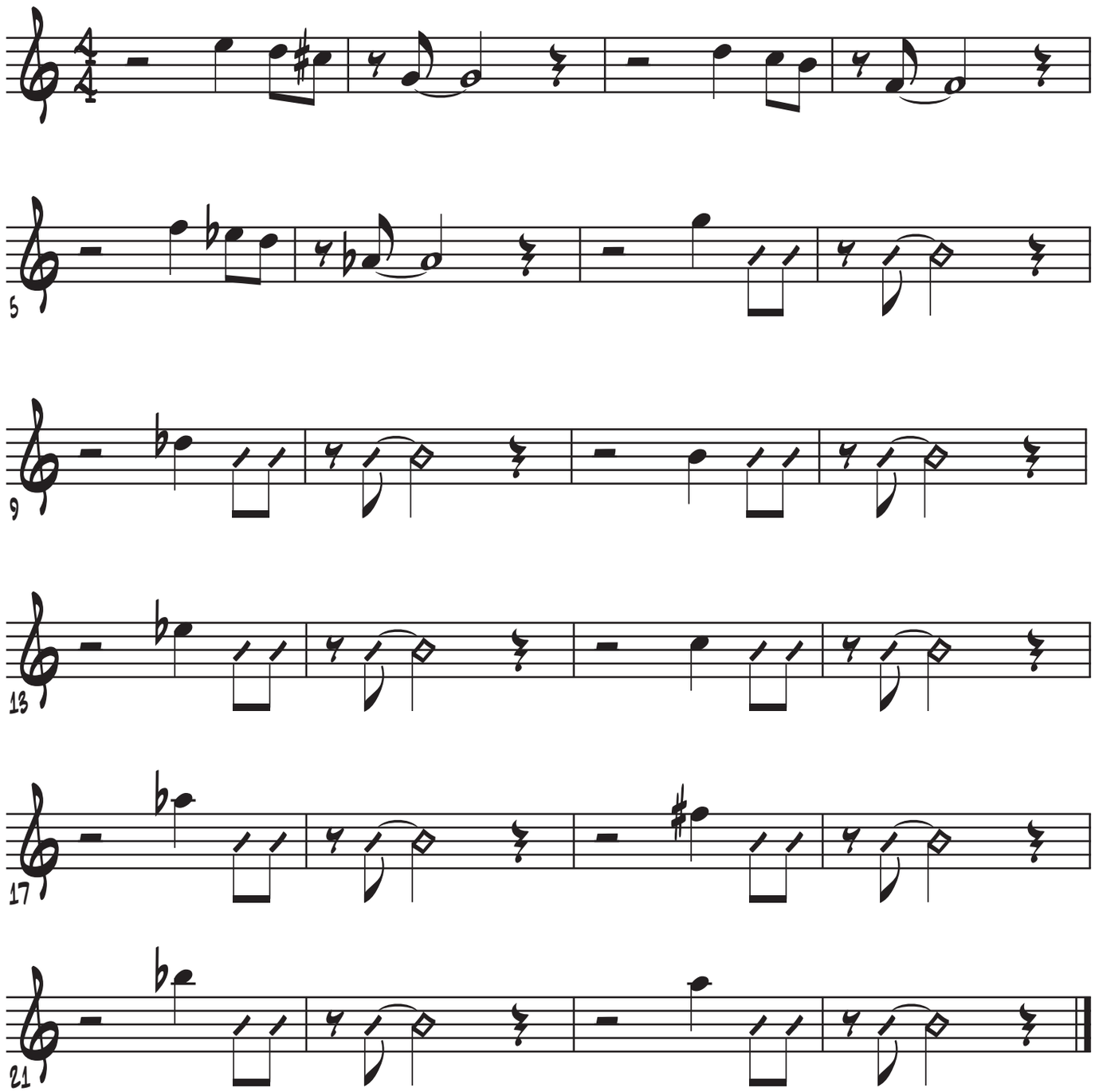


This pattern resolves the triton interval in a very intuitive manner. Can you hear which chord tone the half note represents? Can you hear which chord tone the first note is?

A reoccurring sequence is built into the first four pairs of phrases. Can you hear what that is?

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #37: Augmented Fourth (Tritone) down #3



The tritone is an important interval in jazz, and this pattern really brings that home. Instead of a two-bar phrase, this pattern consists of 24 one-bar phrases.

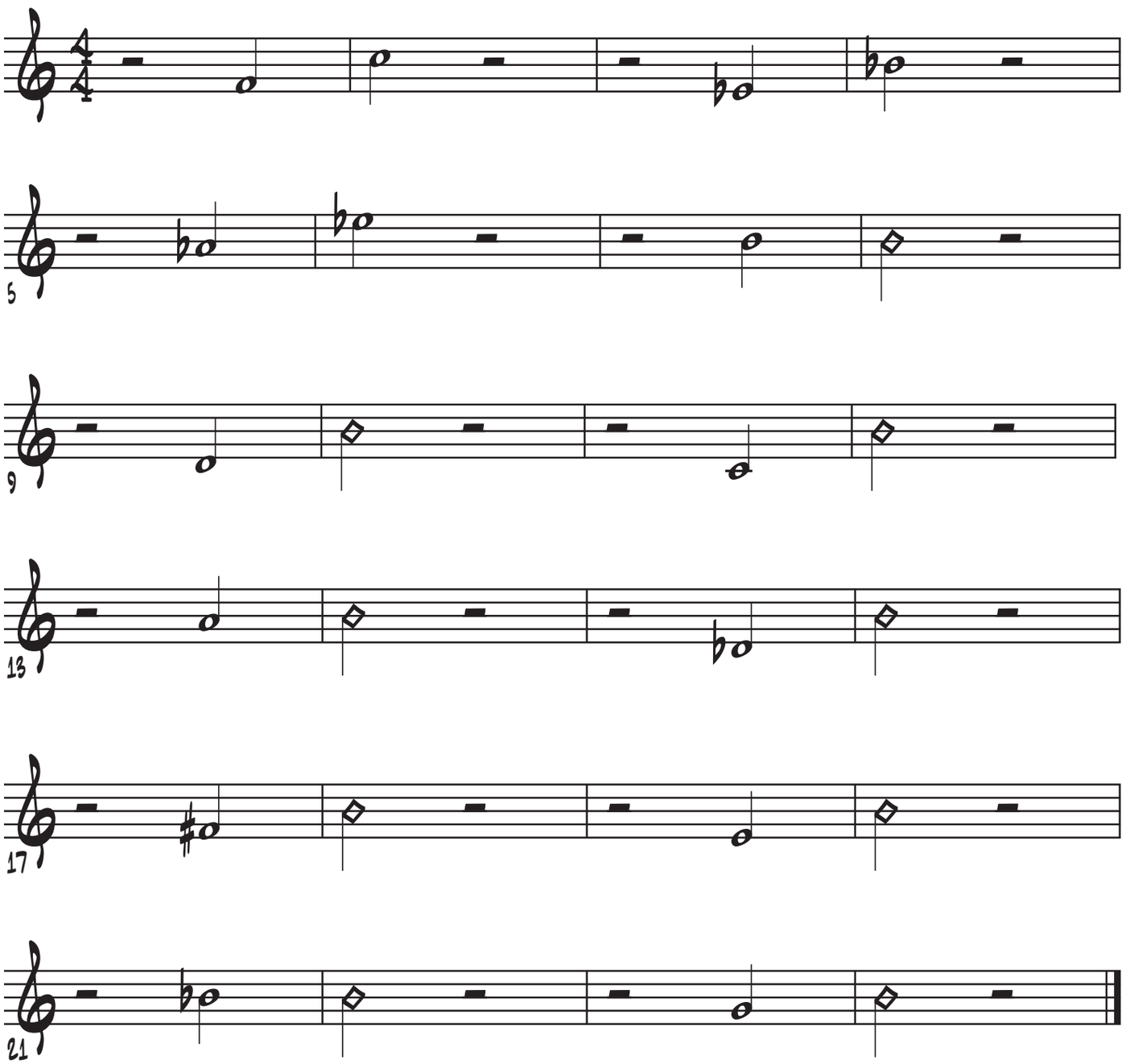
A predictable sequence is built into the first eight phrases and after that, the phrase relationships become more difficult.

As with all these tritone patterns, the harmonies at times sound a bit harsh, partly because of the rapid key modulations, partly because of subtle embellishments in the rhythm track, and partly because the tritone repeated in this descending way is less musical that other more harmonious patterns.

The benefit is that all this demands that you to have that interval firmly and clearly in your ear in order to make this pattern as musical as possible.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #38: Perfect Fifth up #1



We now go from what was once known as a dissonant interval to one of the so-called perfect intervals.

As you travel through the circle of fifths, this interval should be firmly ingrained in your musical mind. Play a major or minor third in between this interval to spell out a major or minor triad.

Remember back to the movie Wizard of Oz? The Munchkins had their *Guard Song* O-Wee-O. That is a good model for this interval. So is the *Theme to Star Wars*. Serious and regal music use this interval often.

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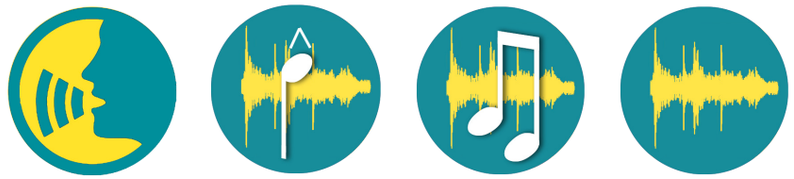
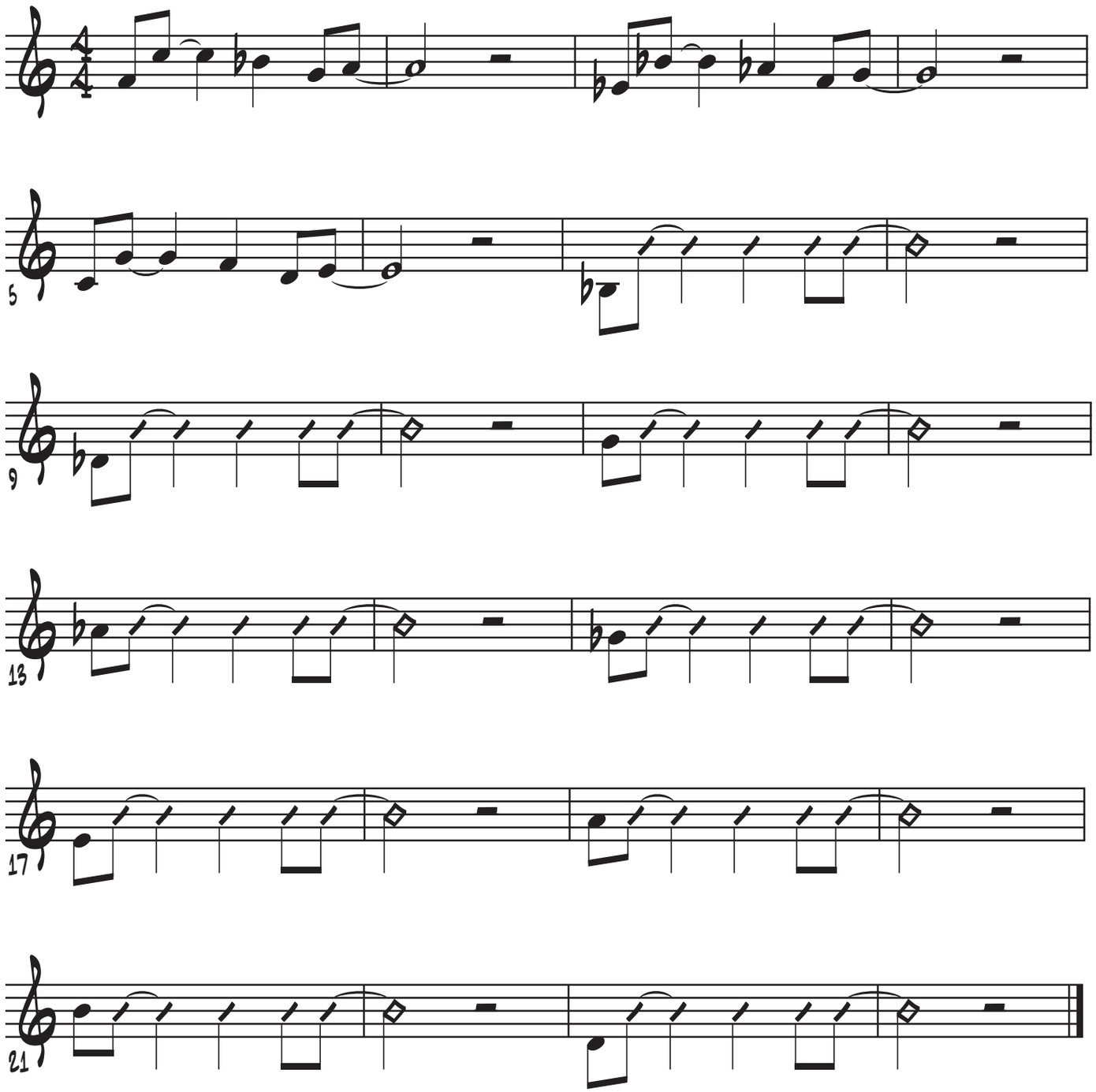


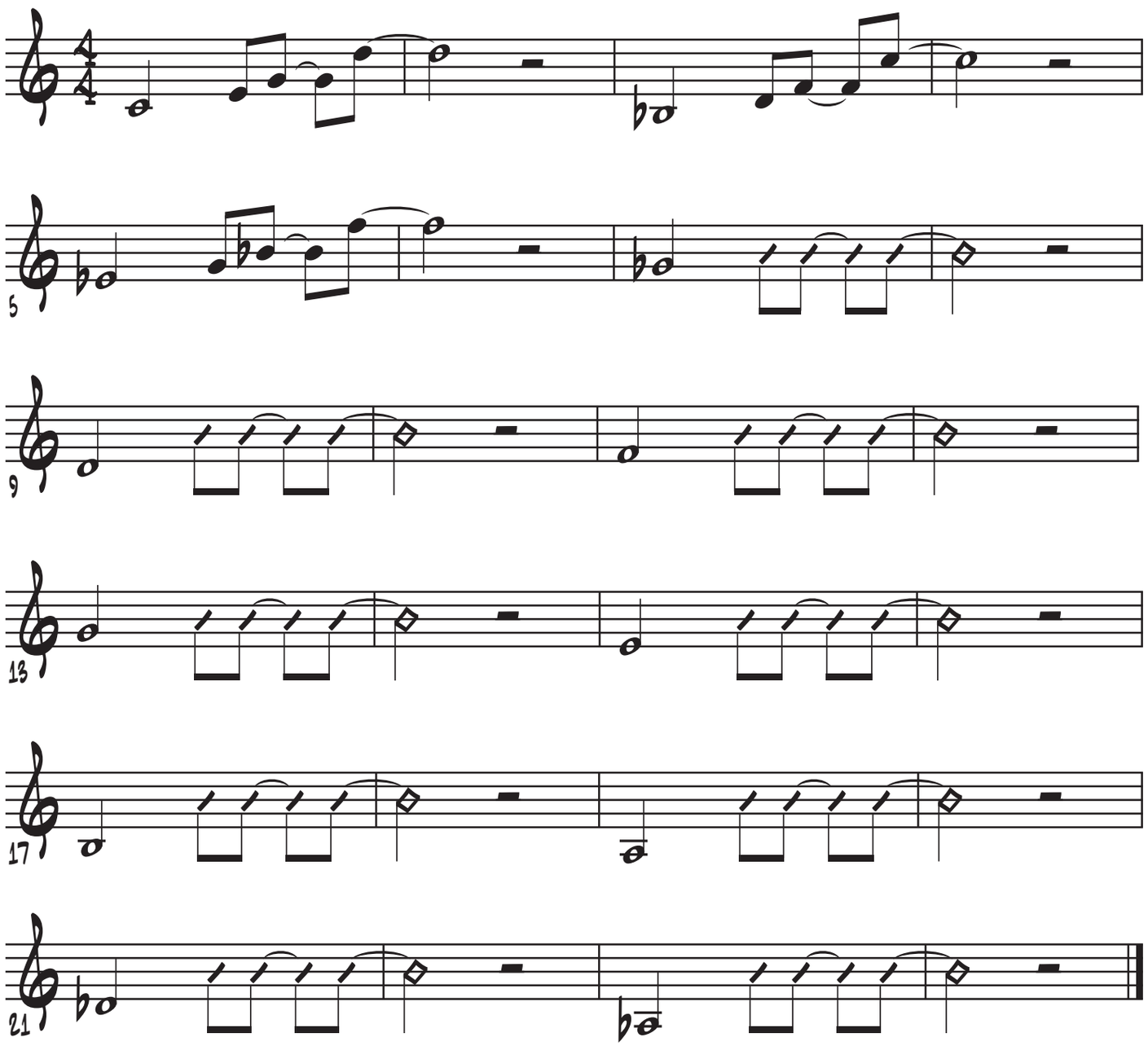
Pattern #39: Perfect Fifth up #2



This pattern begins with the perfect fifth interval and should be pretty intuitive if you've made it this far through all these patterns and various intervals.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #40: Perfect Fifth up #2

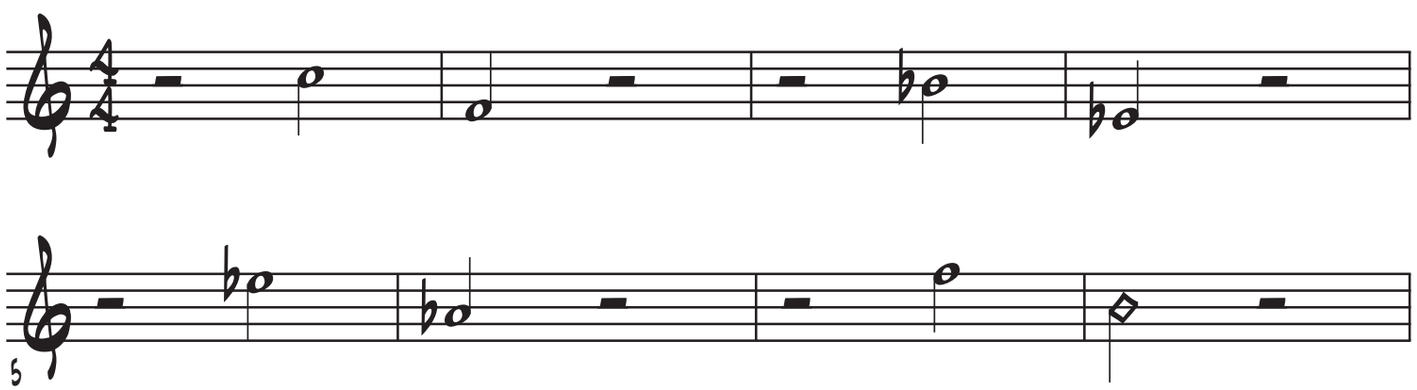


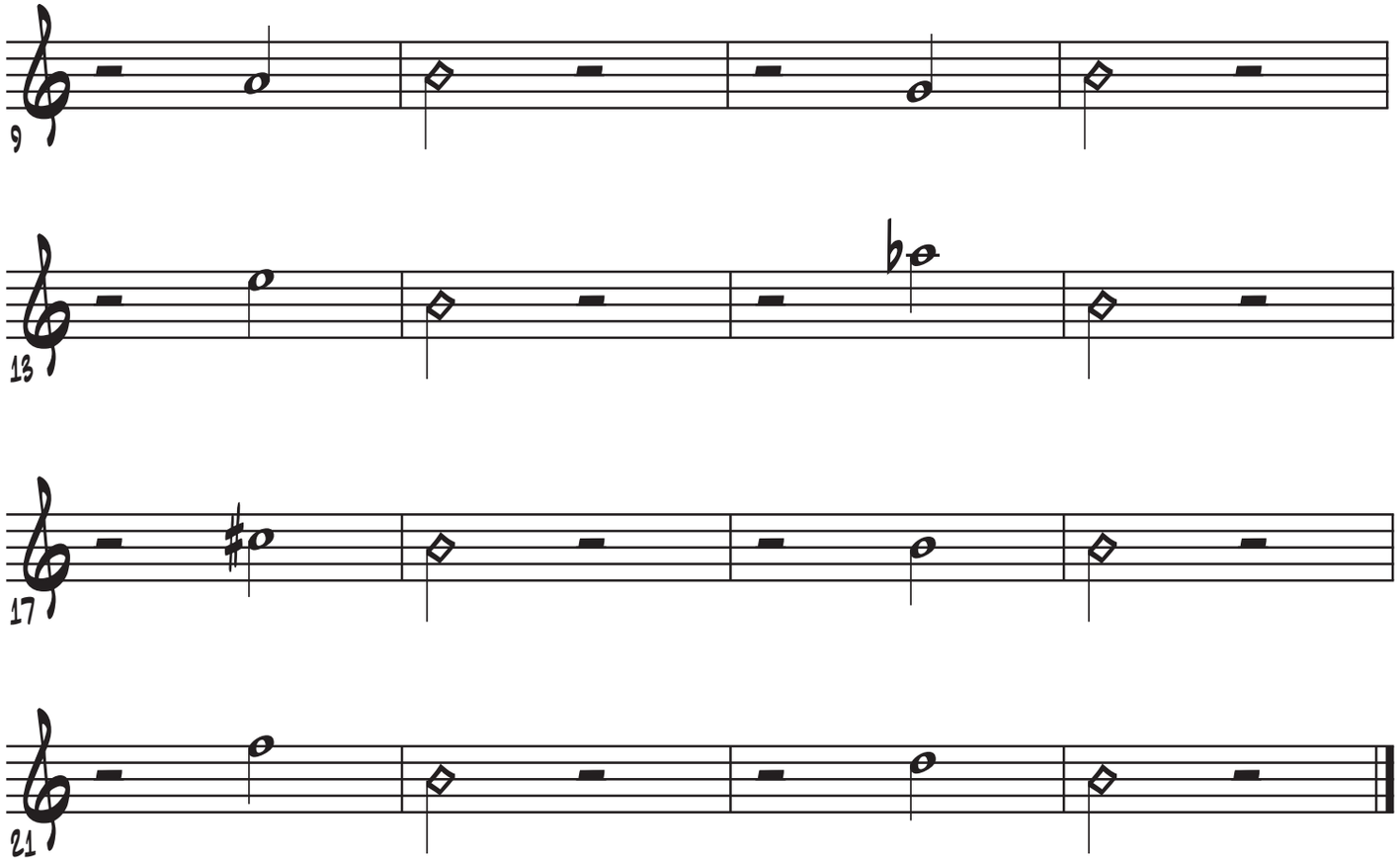
A few different intervals combine with the perfect fifth to produce this wide ranging pattern. The grooving latin funk rhythm track provide a fun and intuitive harmony to help you hear this challenging pattern.

Sing this pattern before playing it and make sure you hit that top note in pitch. That will prove that you hear the perfect fifth interval.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #41: Perfect Fifth down #1



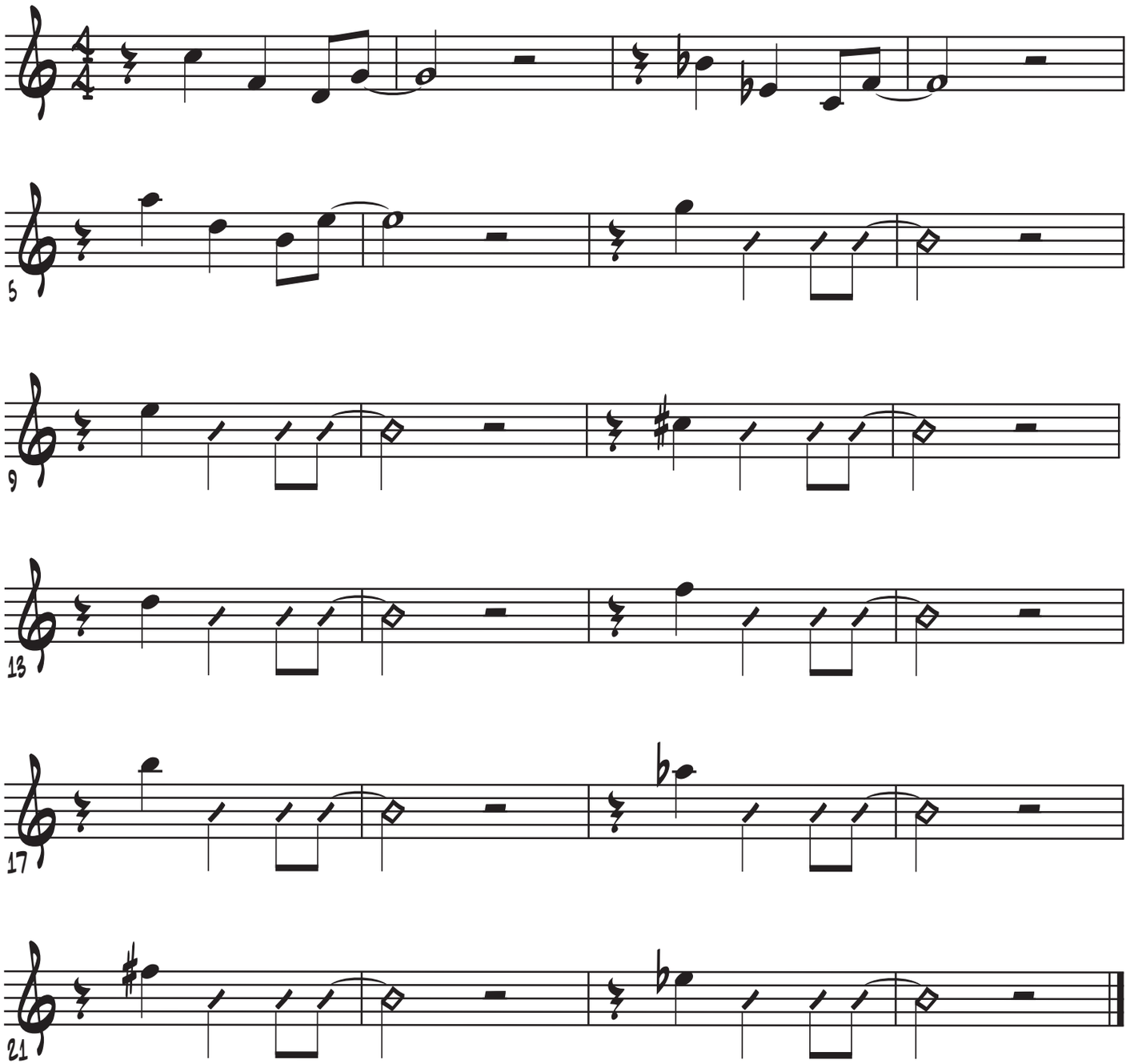


Like every interval, the fifth is harder to hear going down. Remember back to Pattern #24, the perfect fourth up? That interval has the gravity to resolve at that upper note. It's counterpart, the perfect fifth, resolves at the bottom note. The V to the I.

A model for this interval is the song *Feelings*. A jazz tune model for this interval is *Seven Steps to Heaven*.

Tap to play the audio files:

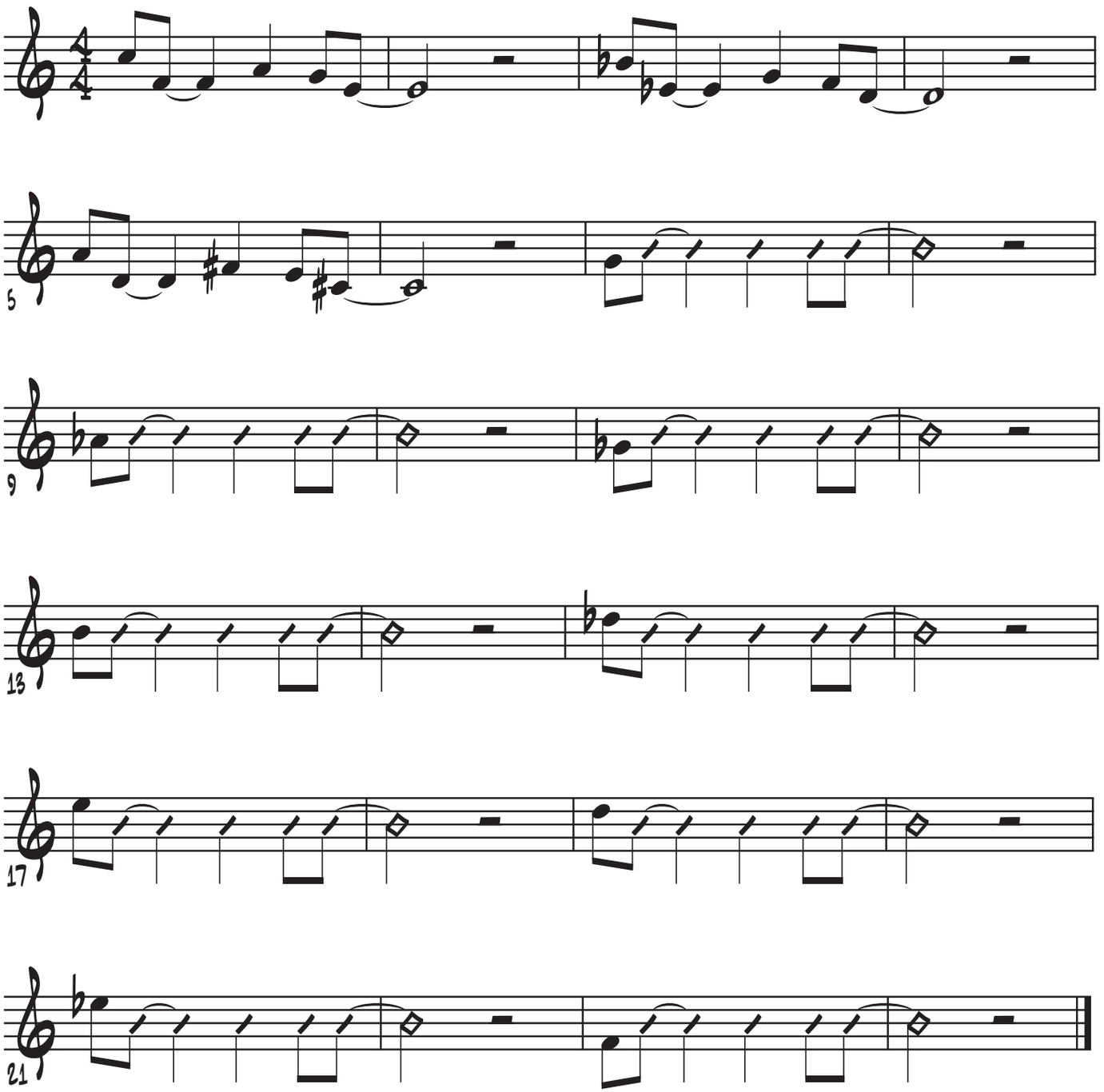
Pattern #42: Perfect Fifth down #2



You get to practice two important intervals in this pattern beside the perfect fifth. Again, it's very important to sing this pattern before diving into it on your instrument.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #43: Perfect Fifth down #3

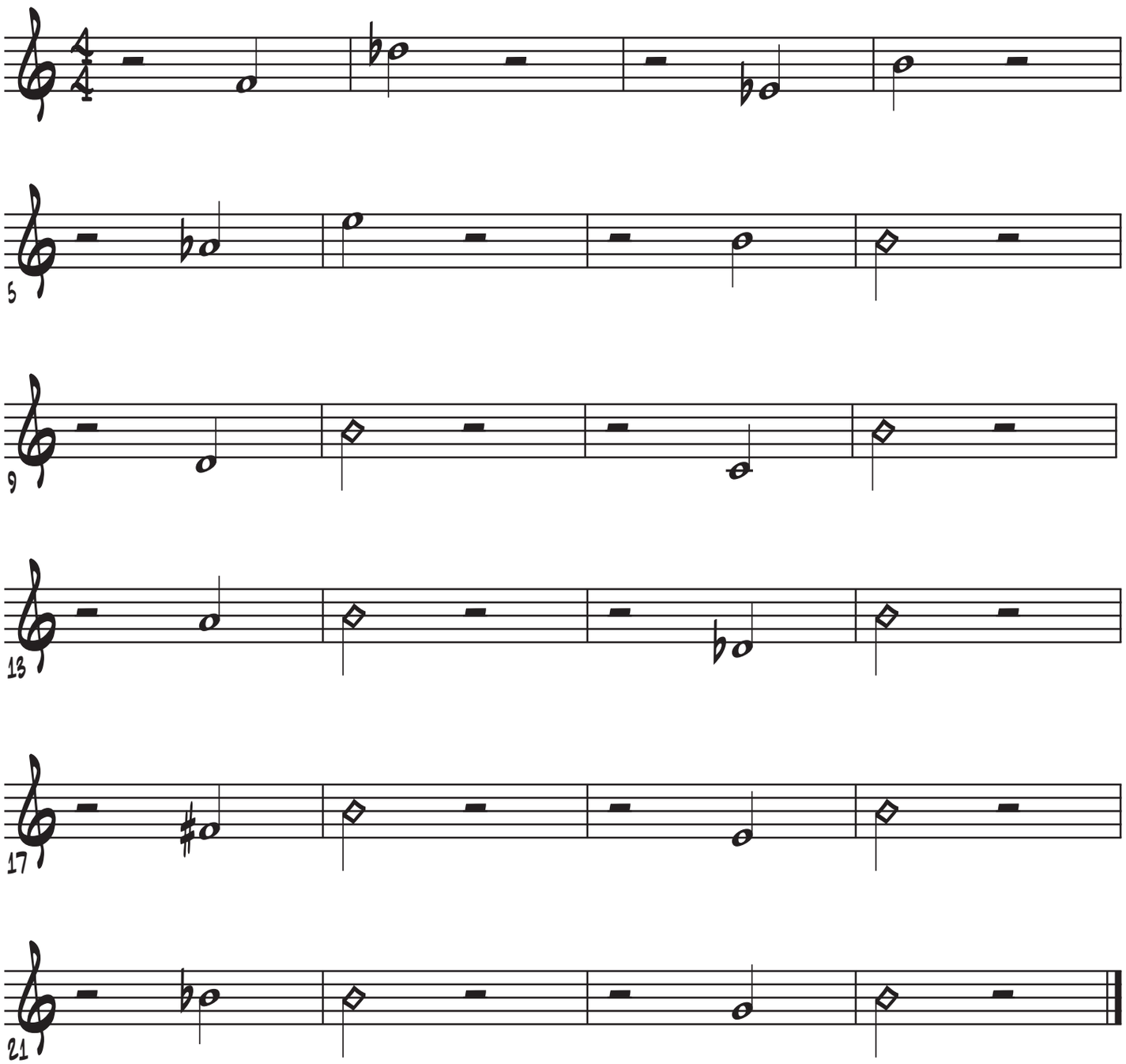


This is an interesting and fun pattern. It allows you to put a few different intervals together to test your sense of major and minor, intervals up and down.

Notice the dominant five chord on beat four leading to the next modulation. If you don't release the last note of the phrase early enough, it might sound somewhat dissonant bleeding into that V chord on beat four.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #44: Minor Sixth up #1



Starting with this interval, we are getting into some wider and less intuitive intervals. Be sure to go through my guide track for coaching on hearing and then singing this interval.

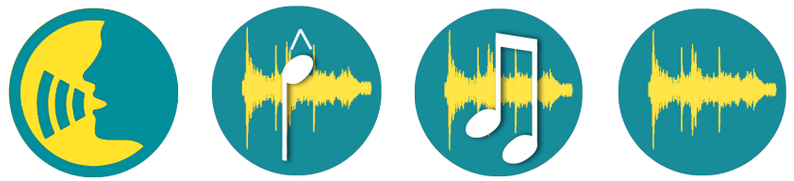
It's worth reminding you of the benefit of working on intervals this wide. It isn't necessarily so that you can play strings of minor sixth intervals in your improvisation.

Instead, getting good at hearing these types of intervals will further train your ear to direct your instrument to places outside of your normal safe narrow intervals like major and minor seconds.

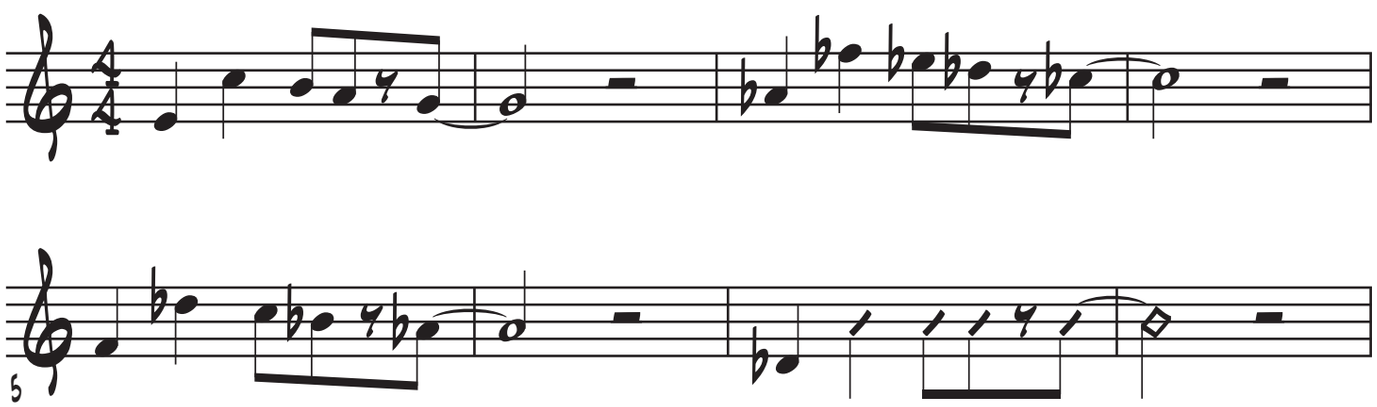
Remember, you're not simply building your muscle memory for wide intervals. You're developing a more acute sense of where notes are on your instrument so you have an easier time reaching for them when you hear them in your mind.

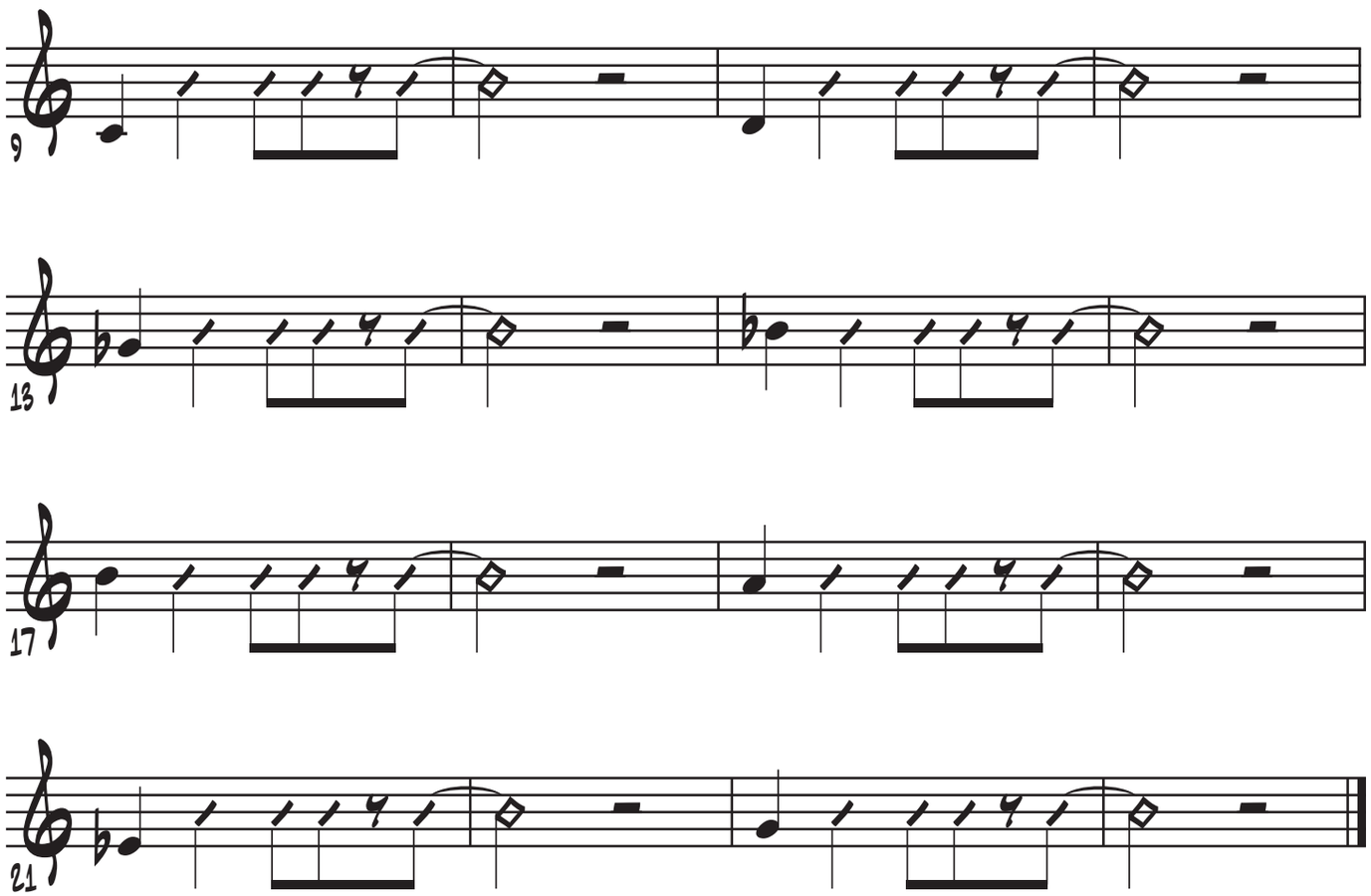
A good model for this interval is *Black Orpheus*.

Tap to play the audio files:



Pattern #45: Minor Sixth up #2



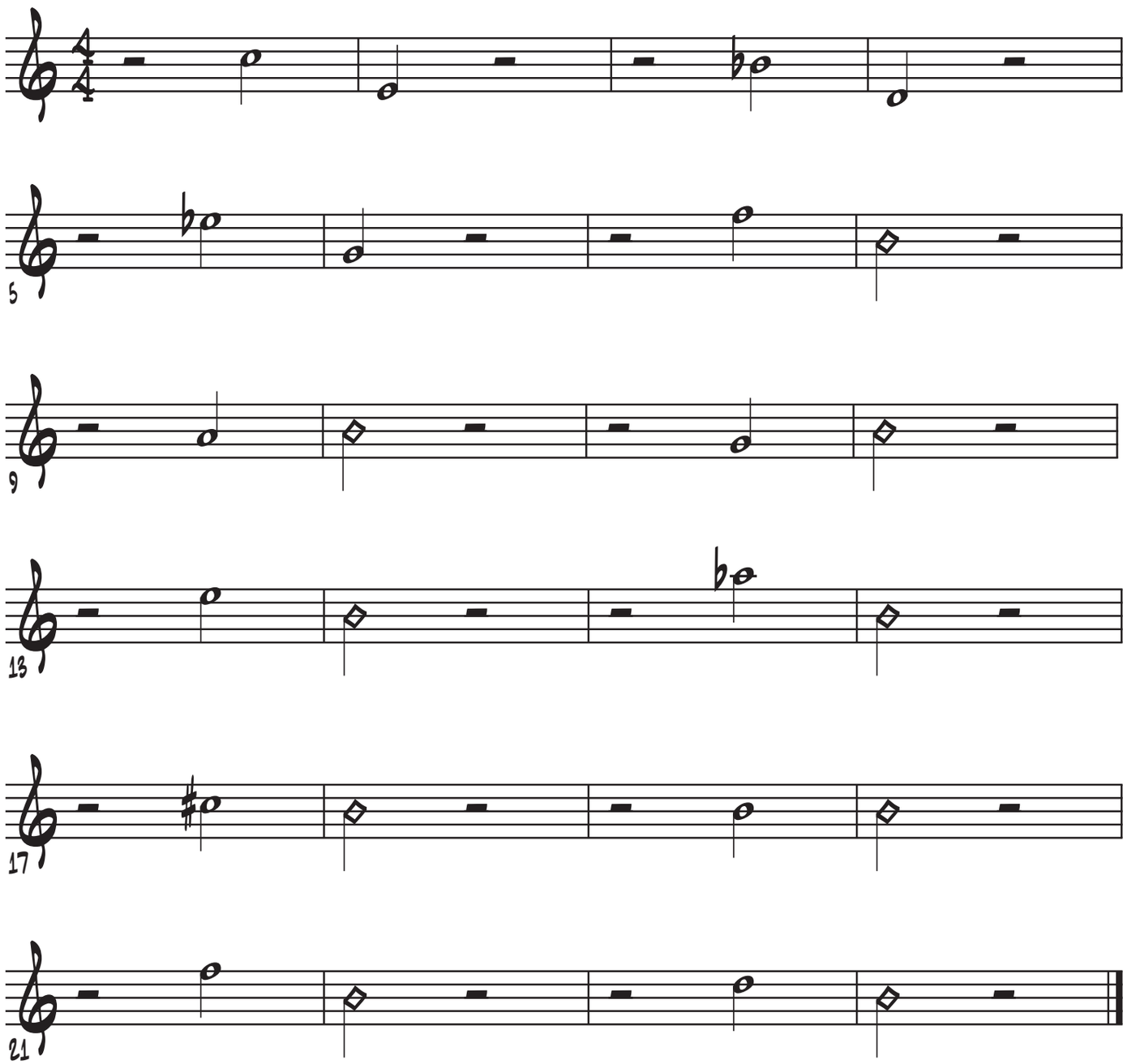


Some Bossa and Montuno rhythms make for a fun rhythm track for hearing the minor sixth up. As always, if you hear yourself struggling with those first two notes, go back to the guide track in Pattern #44 to implant the minor sixth interval firmly in your ear.

Also, sing the pattern over the rhythm track with the recorded pattern.

Tap to play the audio files:

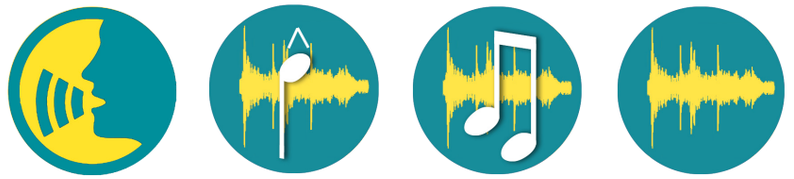
Pattern #46: Minor Sixth down #1



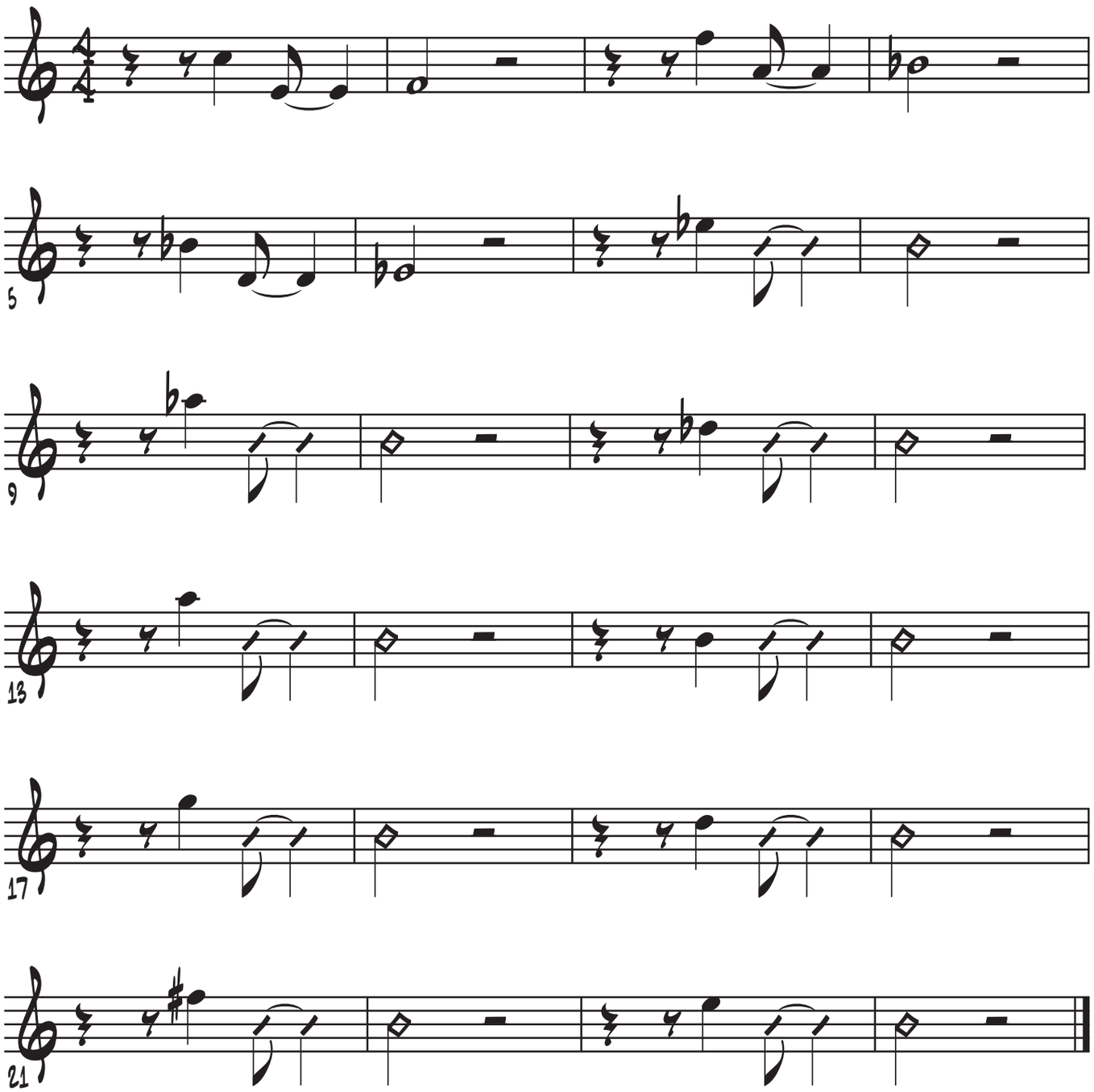
This interval may take some time to hear and sing. The Jobim tune, *No More Blues* is a good model for this challenging interval. So is thinking about the reverse of *Black Orpheus*.

One good way to practice this interval is to play two consecutive major thirds down. That in itself is challenging but worth while for building your harmonic dexterity.

Tap to play the audio files:



Pattern #47: Minor Sixth down #2

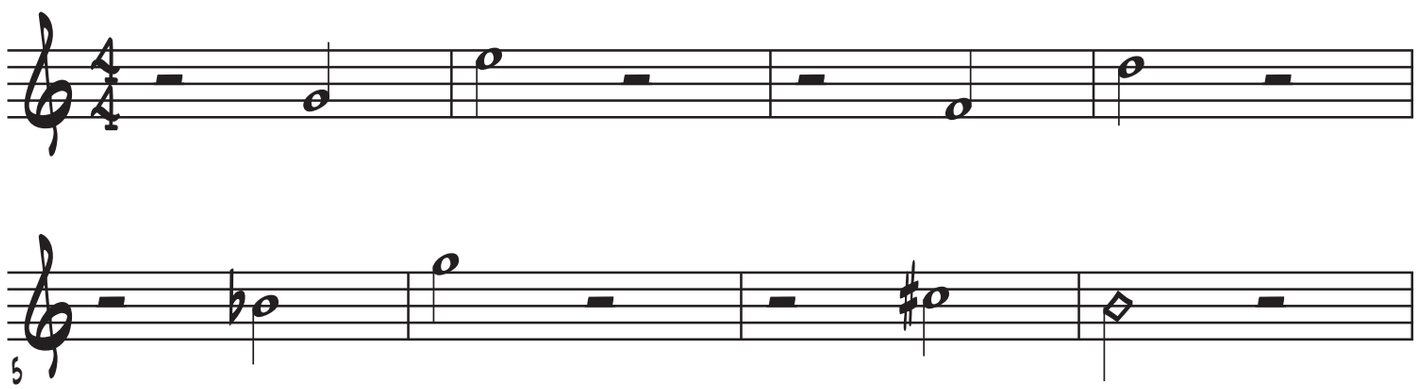


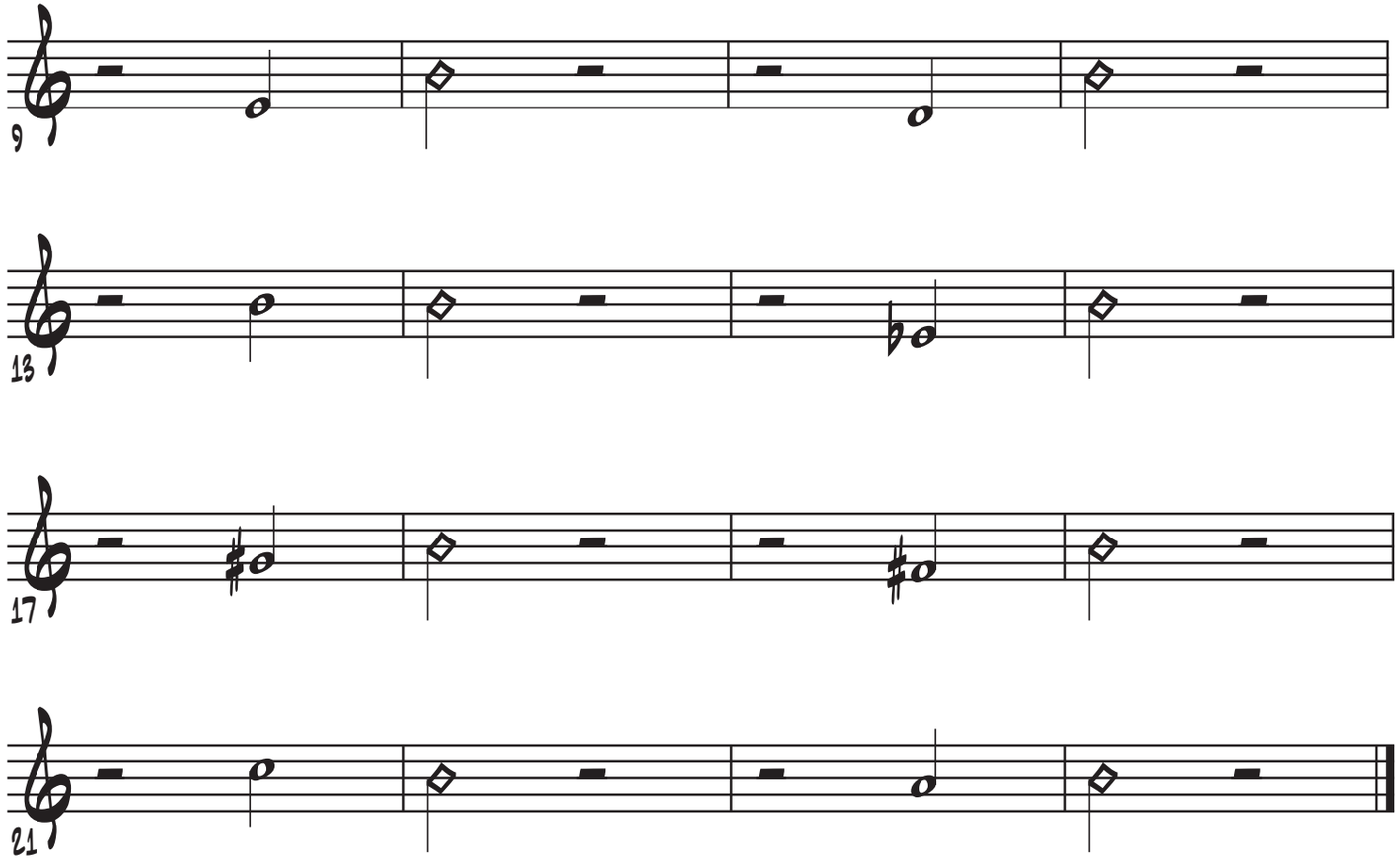
This rhythm track is a good example of how the right chord progression can make a challenging interval more intuitive. The dominant five chord on beat five leads to the modulated key.

Also meant to help you hear the interval is the series of keys each a fourth up from the previous. This occurs throughout the first six keys.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #48: Major Sixth up #1

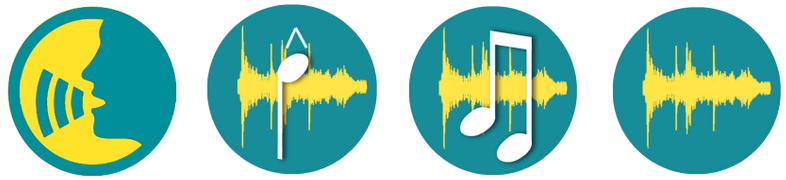




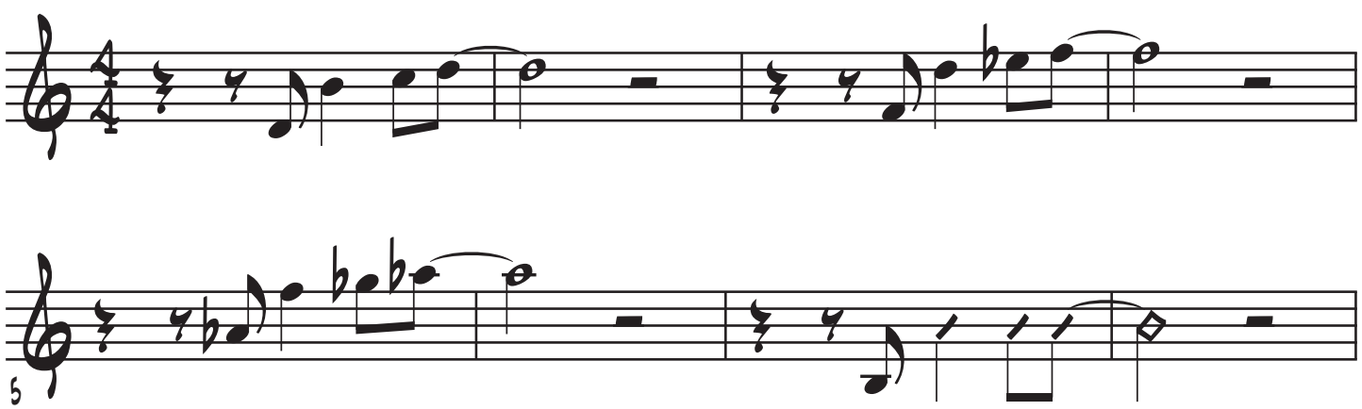
Back to an interval going up! Good model for this interval is *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean* and *For He's a Jolly Good Fellow*. Distinguishing the minor from the major sixth is more difficult that distinguishing the minor third from major third.

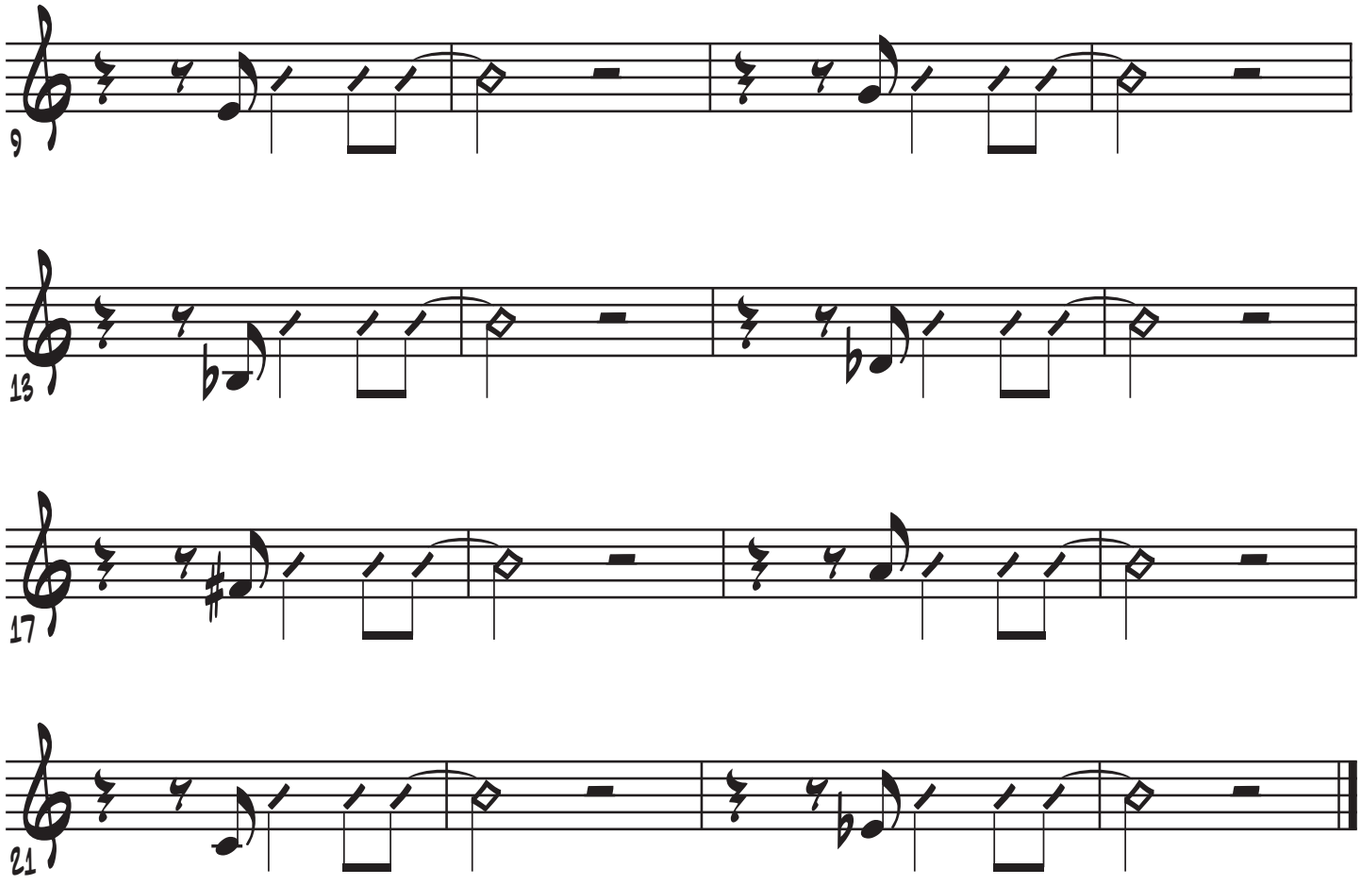
Try playing a note on your instrument and signing the minor sixth, then the major sixth. Can you hear them?

Tap to play the audio files:



Pattern #49: Major Sixth up #2



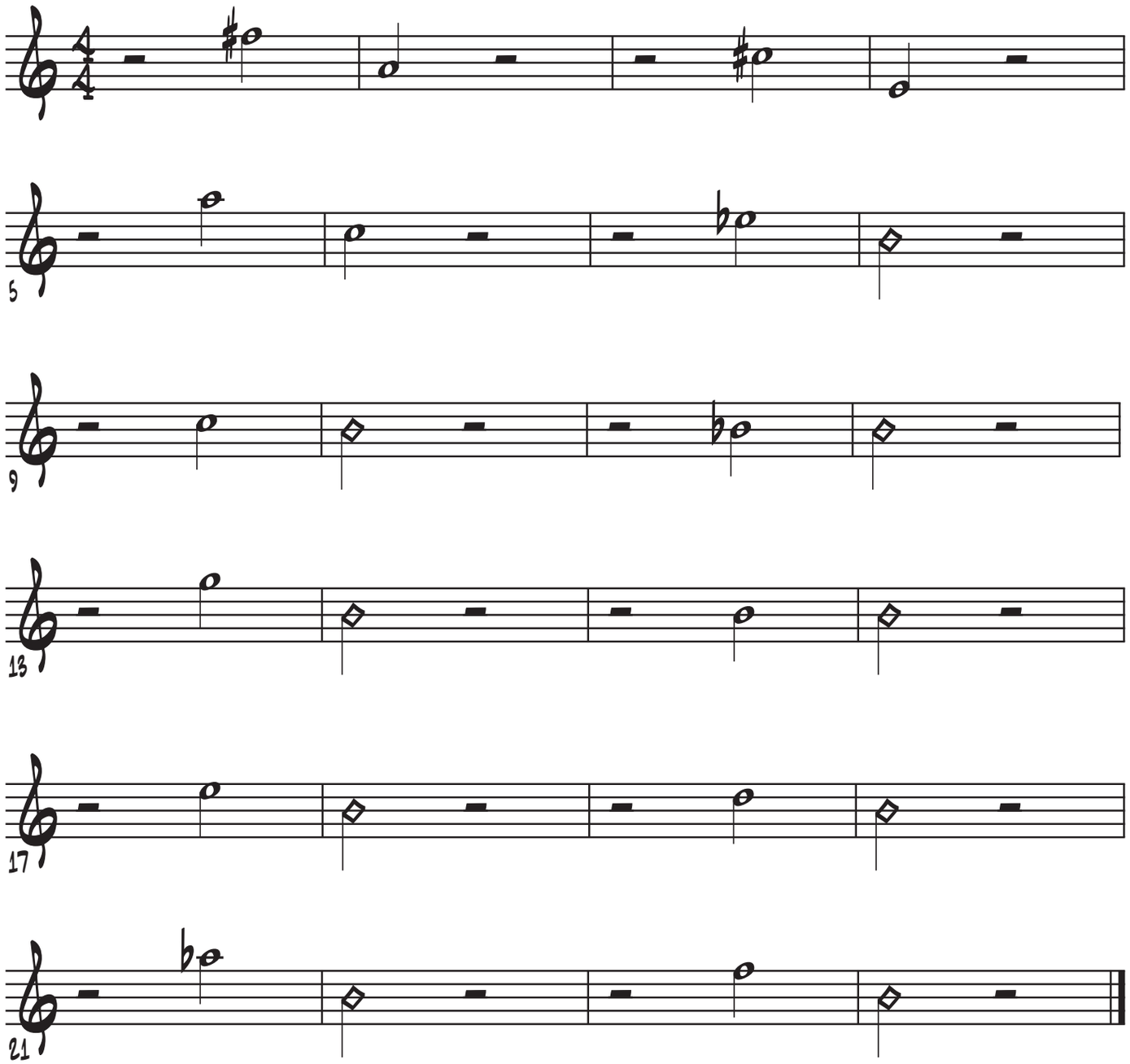


Again, this rhythm track is an example of a chord progression that makes a challenging interval a little more intuitive.

Can you hear which notes of the chord is the last note of the phrase? Hint: it's an upper extension

Tap to play the audio files:

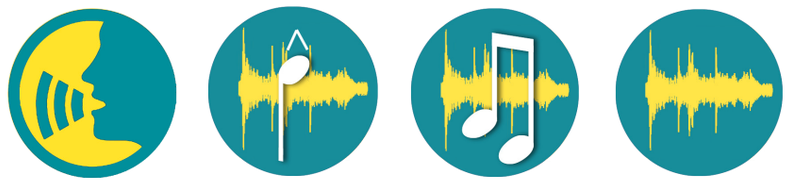
Pattern #50: Major Sixth down #1



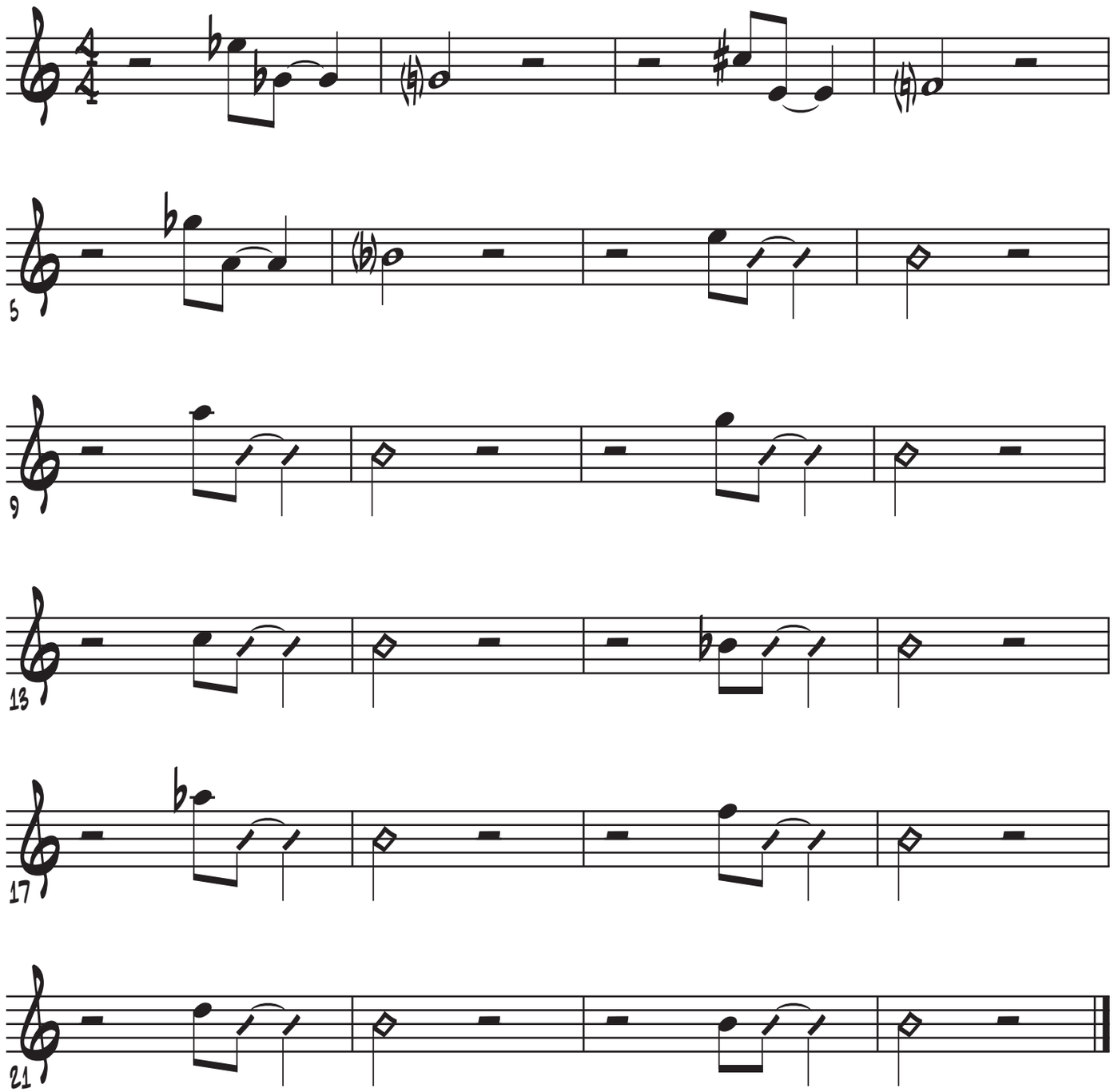
Perhaps a good way to think of this interval is to hear it as the reverse of a minor third up. As I coach you in the guide track, sing the minor third up and transpose that note down an octave. With a little practice you'll no longer need that work-around.

Good models for this interval include *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen* and the chorus from Michael Jackson's *Man In the Mirror*.

Tap to play the audio files:



Pattern #51: Major Sixth down #2

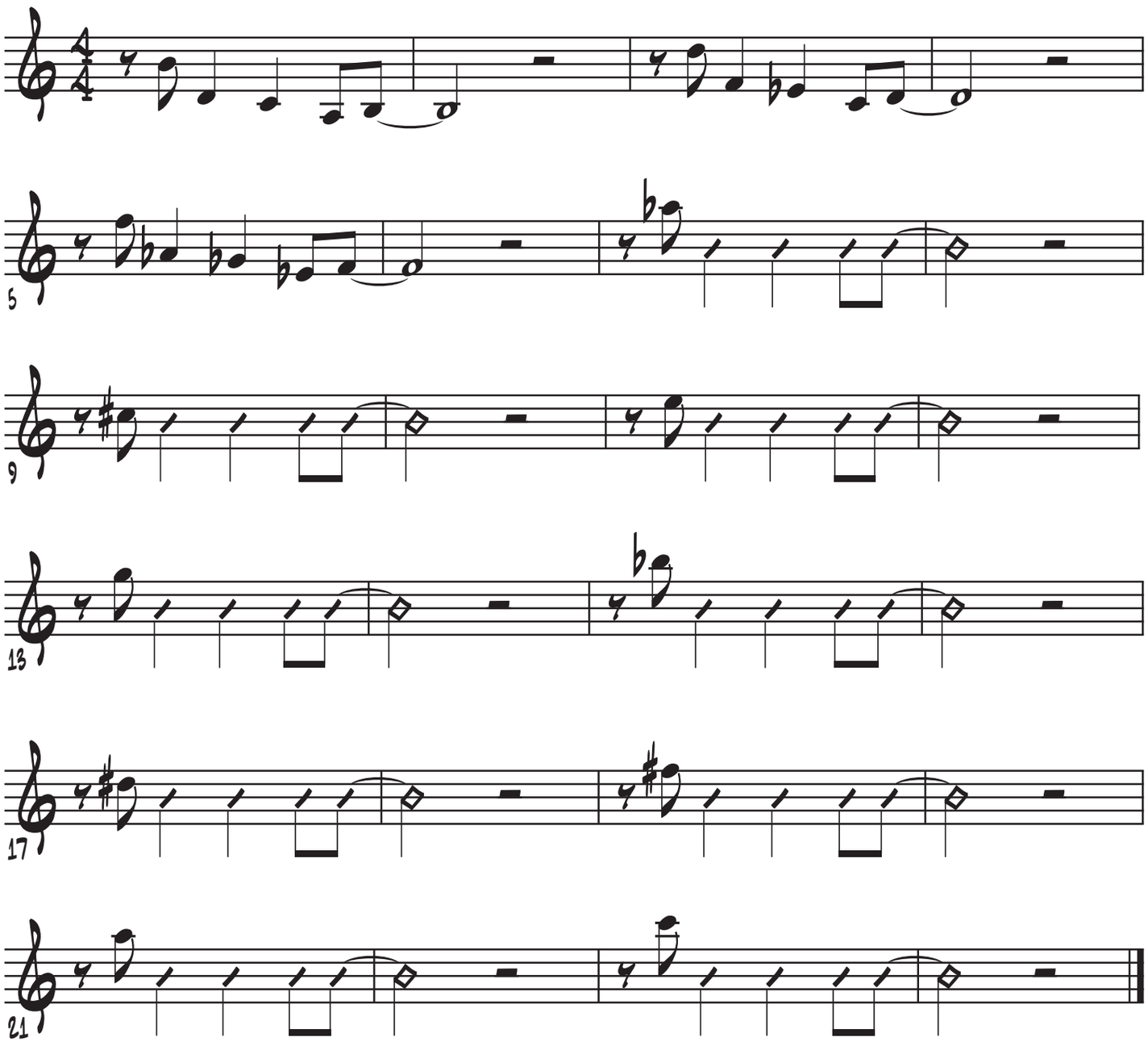


To truly hear these wider intervals, it will require more singing. If you struggle with this pattern, go back to Pattern #50 and sing the basic interval. Also, sing over the track to this interval that contains the recording of the played pattern.

Also play a note on your instrument and sing the major sixth down. If this interval is taking you a while to hear, don't get discouraged. This is perhaps the toughest interval within the span of an octave to hear.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #52: Major Sixth down #3

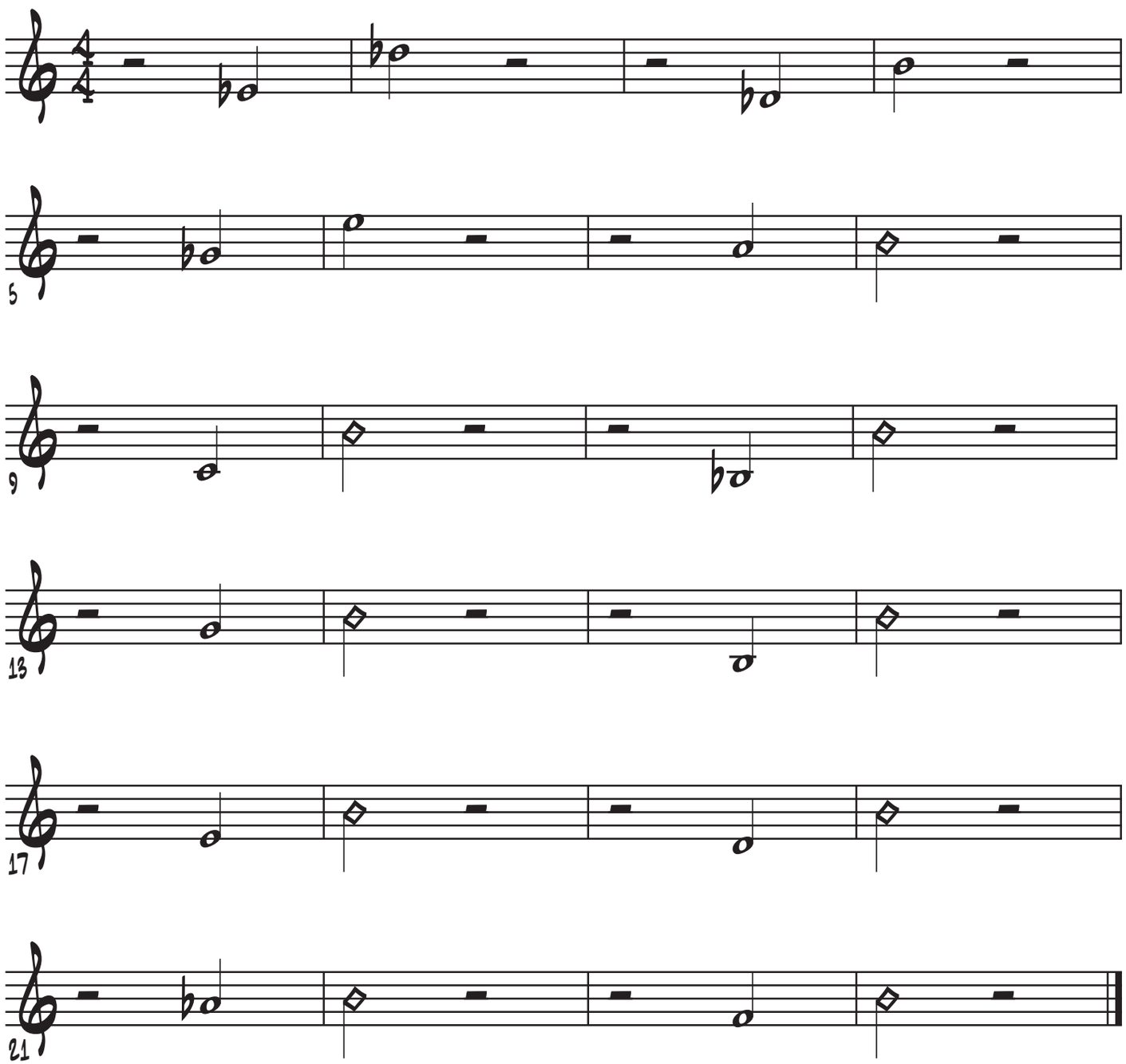


Now we add a few more descending notes to this major sixth down. The keys are separated by a minor third which should make it a little easier rather than random starting notes.

Which chord tone is the last note of each phrase? Challenging your ear on various notes like this will provide you with value as you play each of these patterns.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #53: Minor Seventh up #1

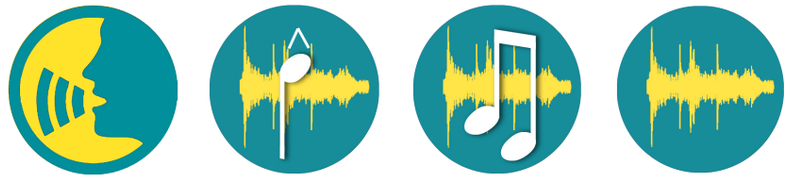


As suggested in the intro to Pattern #50, it might help to hear the minor seventh up interval as a whole step down transposed up an octave.

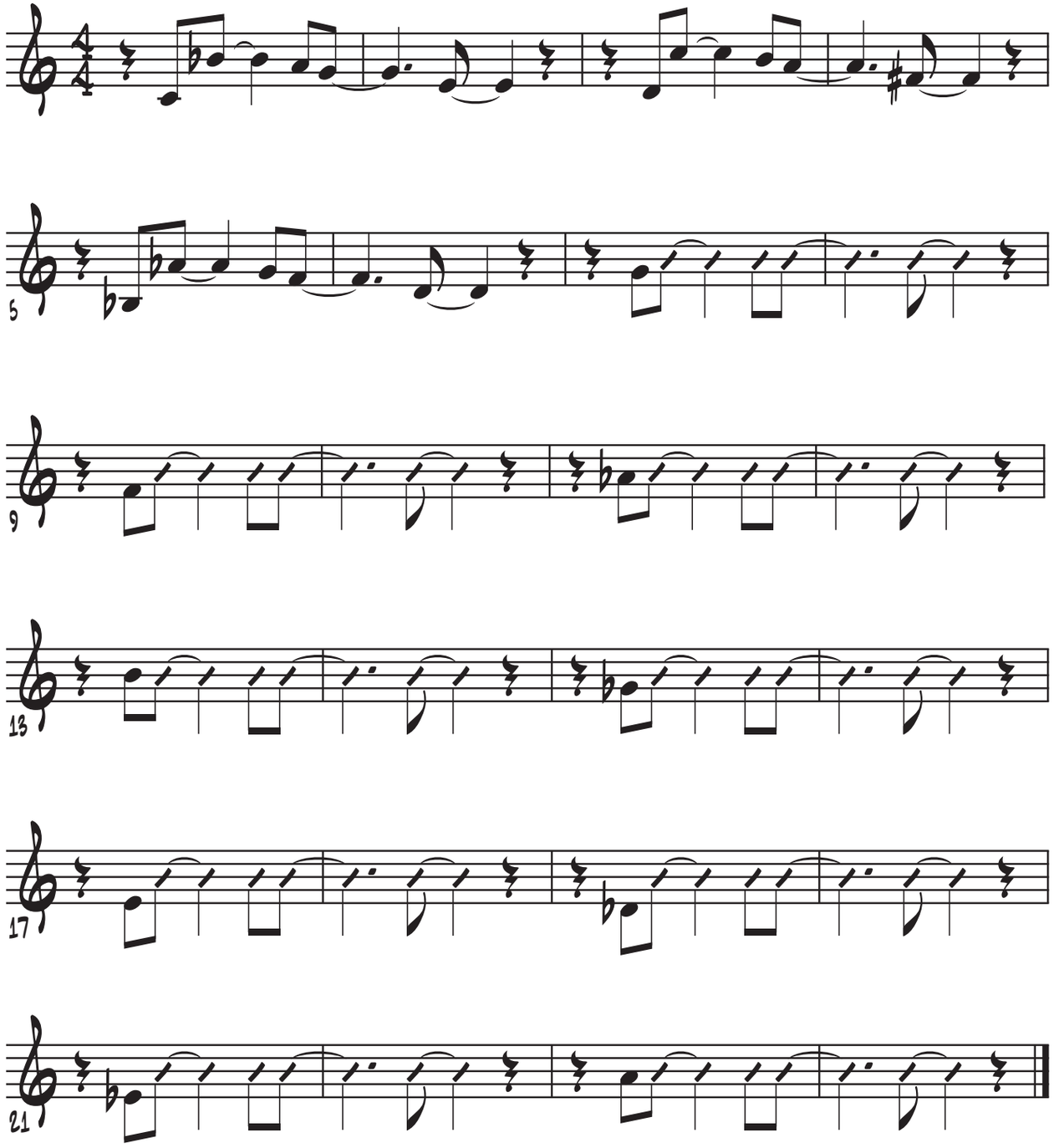
Good models for this include the theme from *Star Trek* and Somewhere from *West Side Story*.

This is not the first time a song from West Side Story has been mentioned as a model for an interval. Apparently Leonard Bernstein used wider intervals to give character to his great music. Something tells me he would have had little difficulty with breezing through this book!

Tap to play the audio files:



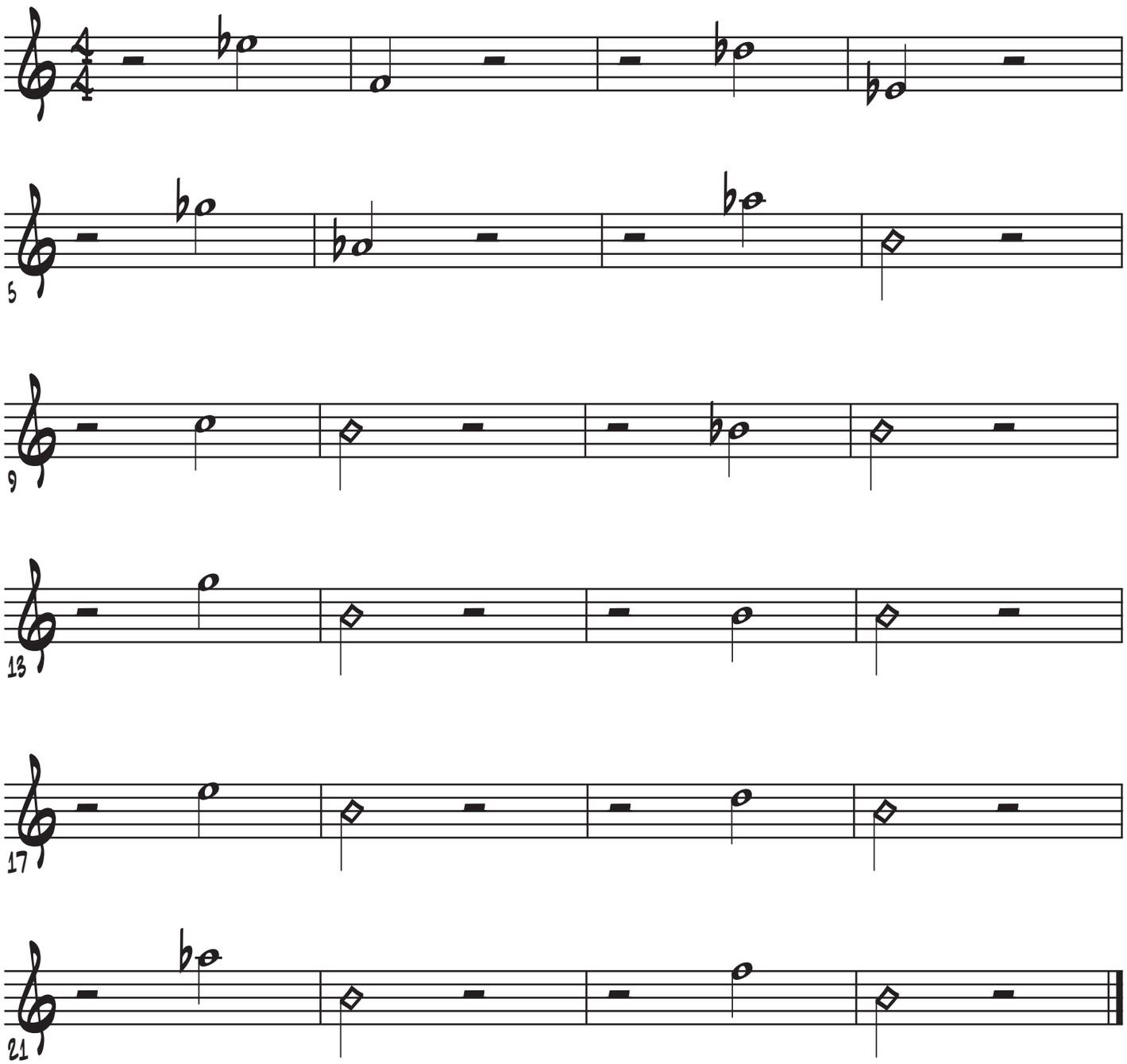
Pattern #54: Minor Seventh up #2



Again, the harmonic progression of this rhythm track makes this wide interval pattern easier. An interesting experiment with this and other patterns throughout this book might be to play the patterns without any rhythm track and see how much harder it becomes over playing them with the rhythm track.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #55: Minor Seventh down #1

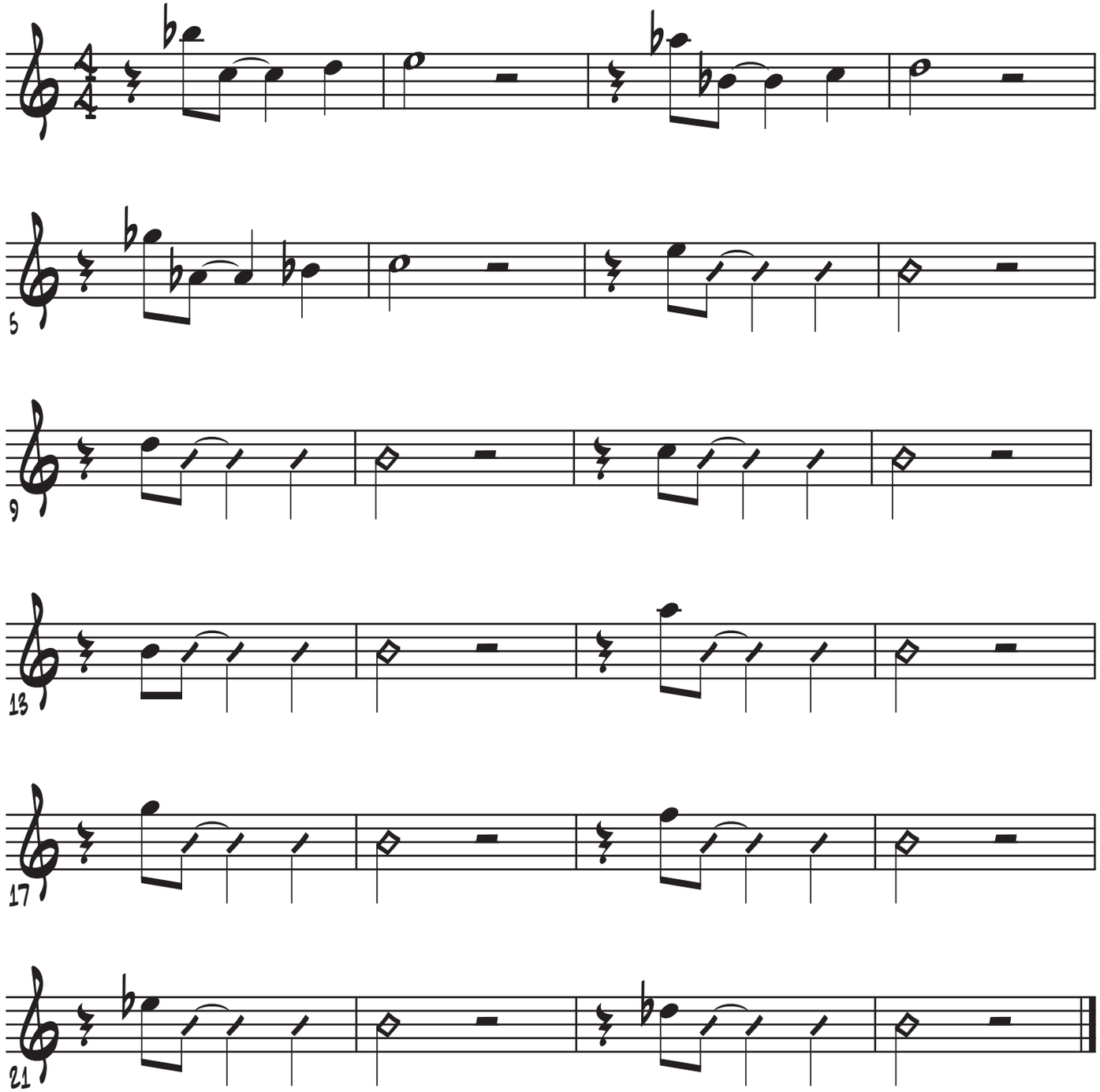


We're really getting into the challenging intervals. For this, think a whole note above the top note, and then down an octave.

A good model for this is Tchaikovsky's *None But the Lonely Heart*. You may not know it by name, so listen to the beginning of the melody to get the sound in your ear.

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #56: Minor Seventh down #2

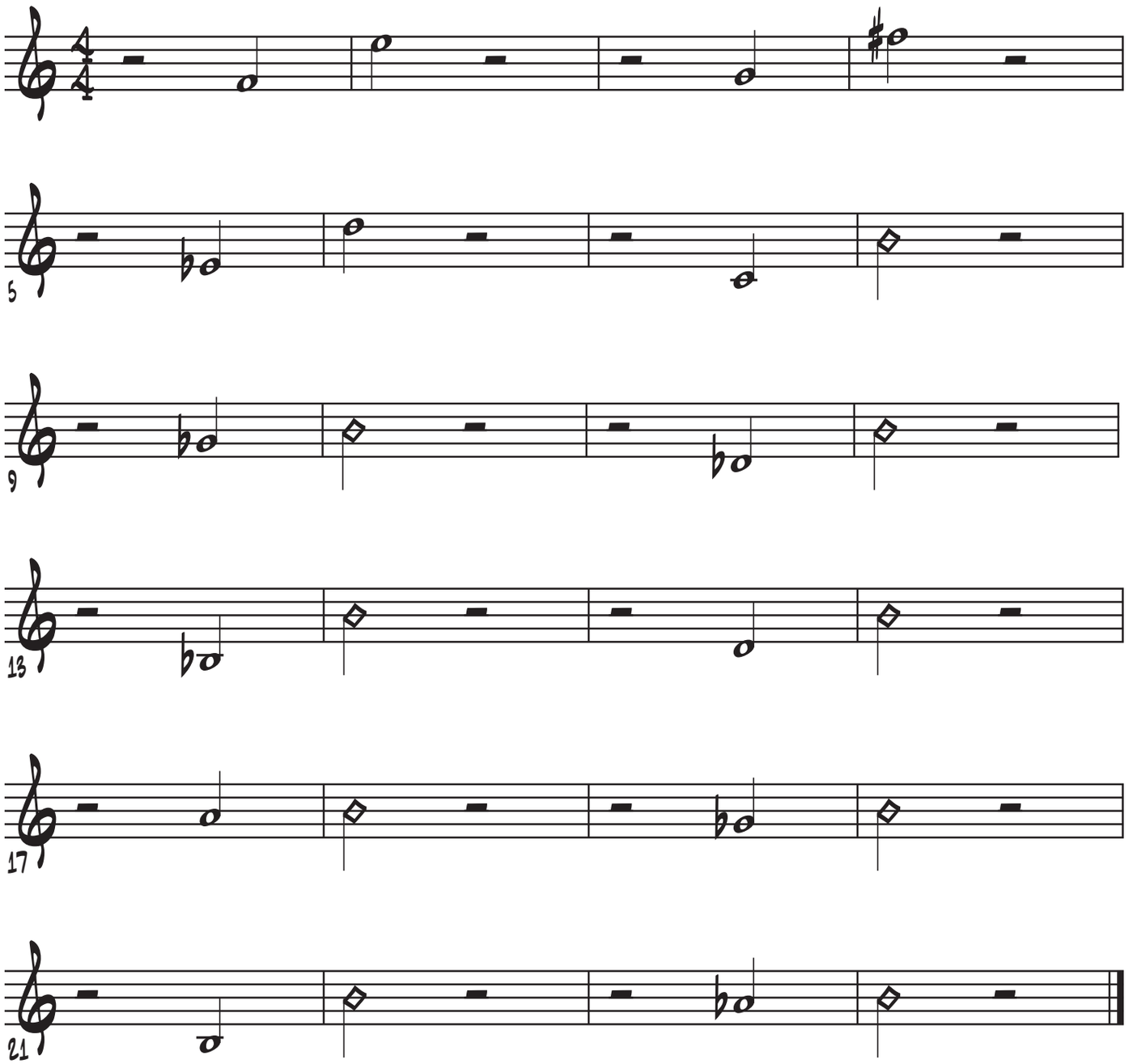


This pattern will be easier if you have a sense of the chord tone of the first note and of the last. Can you tell what they are?

Again, this pattern is structured around a predictable series of keys. Can you hear what that series is?

Tap to play the audio files:

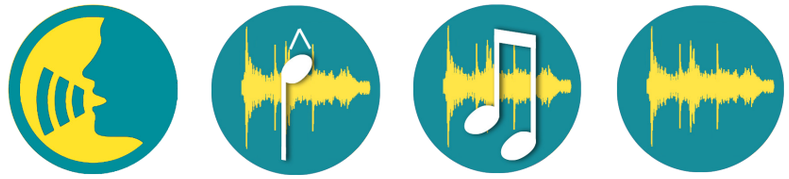
Pattern #57: Major Seventh up #1



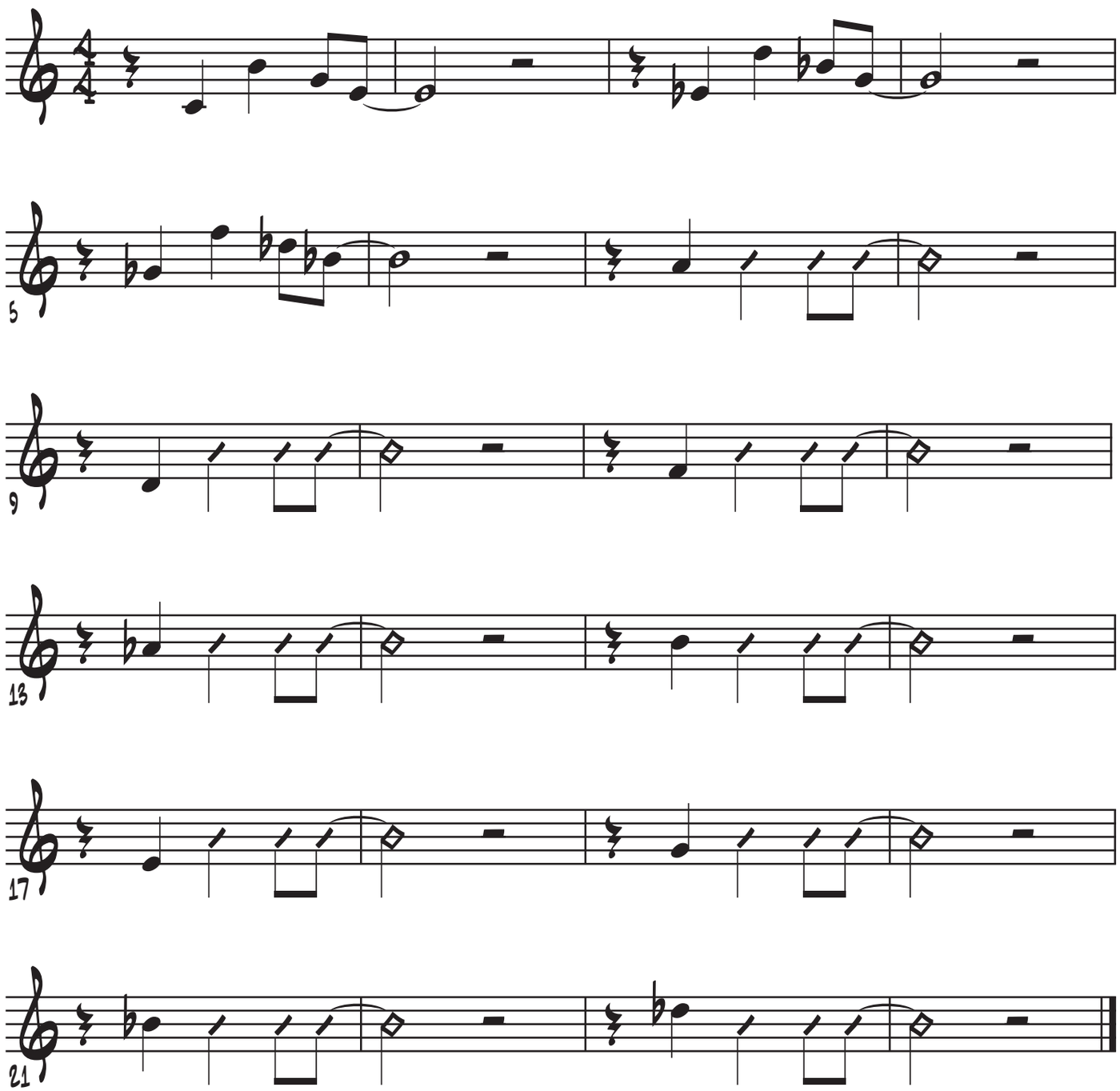
We've arrived at the last interval going up. Congratulations having made it this far!

A great model for this is Norah Jones' song *Don't Know Why*. This interval may not be as hard as other wide spans due to the top note being only a minor second lower. Sing it until you hear it.

Tap to play the audio files:



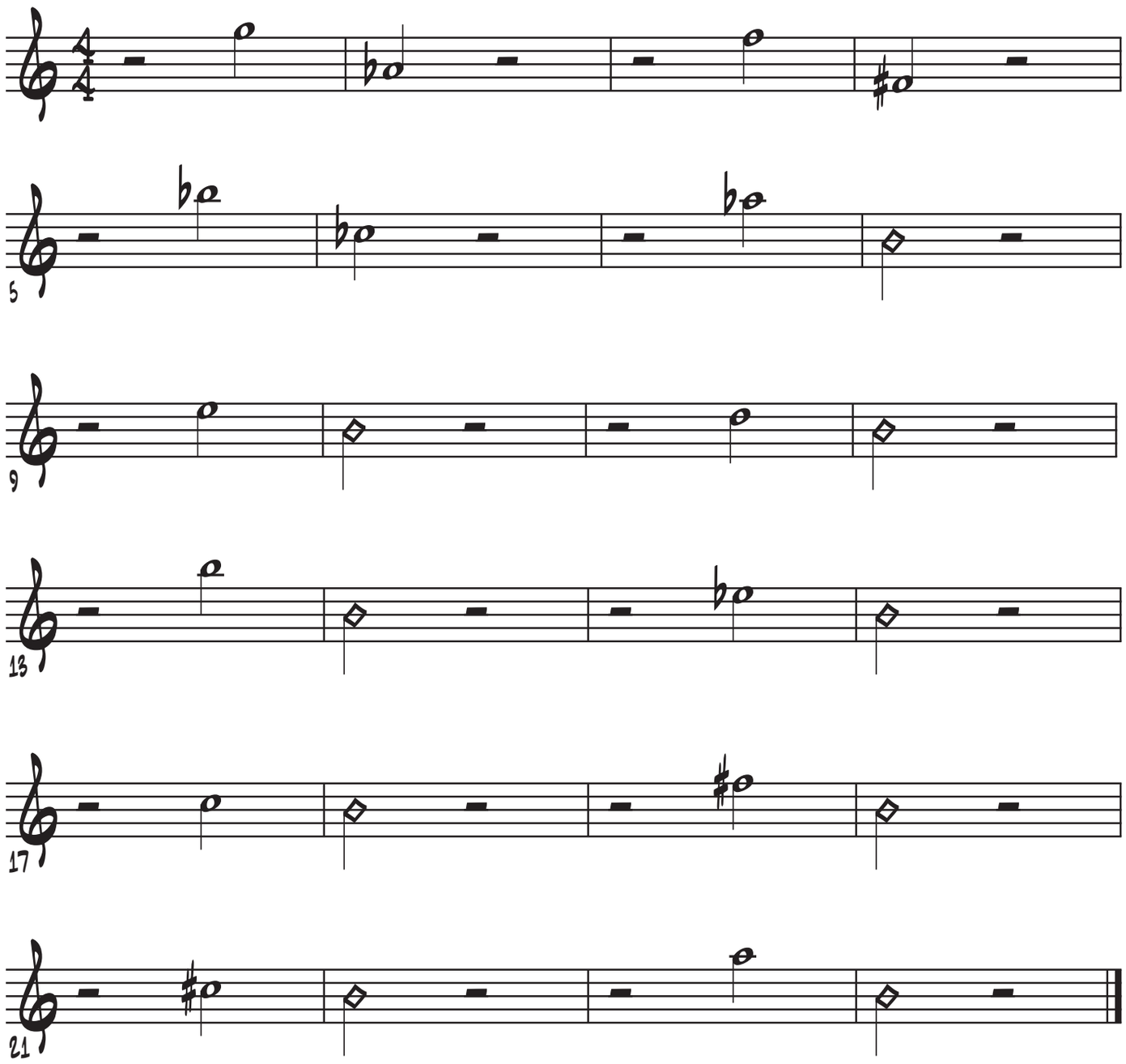
Pattern #58: Major Seventh up #2



In order to make this pattern a bit more intuitive, all four notes spell out a major seventh chord. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, we are all so accustomed to arpeggiating chords from the bottom down, this is great practice for playing them top-down.

Tap to play the audio files:

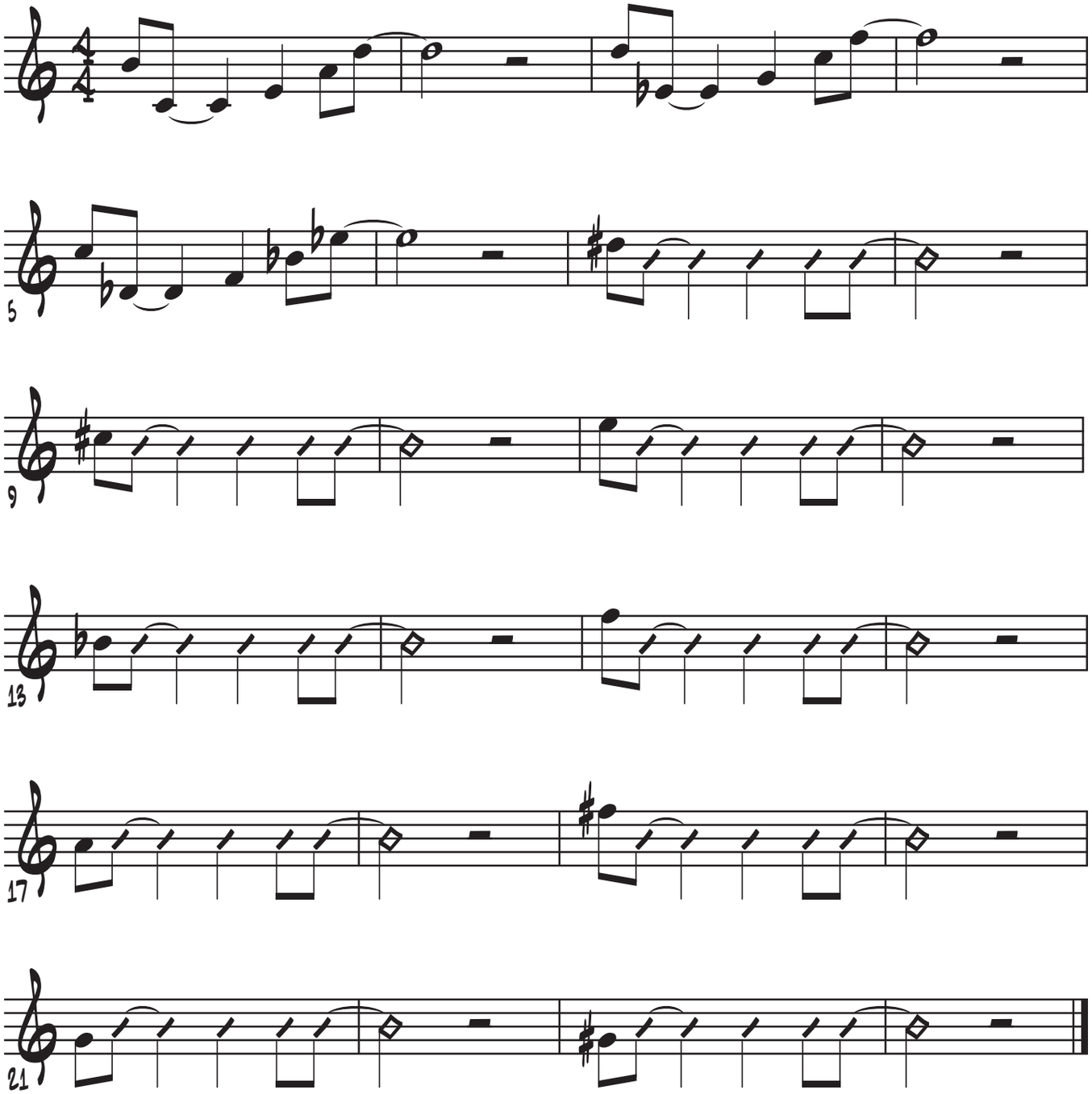
Pattern #59: Major Seventh down #1



The final interval is the major seventh down! A great model for this is the Cole Porter jazz standard *I Love You.* Notice how Porter give special emphasis to the word "You" by using the major seventh down?

Tap to play the audio files:

Pattern #60: Major Seventh down #2



Let's put into practice a few other intervals you've learned. Namely, the major third and the perfect fourth up. Sing this pattern to plant it into your ear before launching it on your instrument.

Tap to play the audio files: