



A *theme* is the main musical idea of a composition. The theme is usually a melody. *Theme and Variations* is a musical form where variations are based on a central theme. These variations can alter harmonies, rhythms, tempo, style and even the notes of the melody. Though it may be hidden, the theme must be present in each variation.

Composers often create variations based on a melody that someone else wrote. Melodies can have a cultural meaning or carry special memories. Remember lullabies from childhood? By writing variations, a composer can reawaken these memories for others.

## Theme and Variations on This Old Man

### THEME Lively

4  
1 3 5  
1 2 5  
1 3 5  
1 2 5

5  
1 3 5  
1 2

### VARIATION 1 Thoughtfully

5  
5

5  
rit.

**Compose Your Own Piece** Continue the variations on *This Old Man* by creating two of your own. Consider new rhythms and harmonies that will make your variations interesting. You may alter the melody in places if you choose.

1. Choose your tempos.
2. Add dynamics.

**Toolbox Tip**

Your compositions in this book will be 16 measures long. There may be times when you want to make your pieces longer. If so, your additional measures can be written on staff paper.

**Composer Connection**

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) used a French folk song (Ah! vous dirai-je, Maman) to inspire a set of variations. We know this famous melody as Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star!*



VARIATION 2:  
Tempo:

5

5

VARIATION 3  
Tempo:

5

5



Chords can be played in two ways: blocked and broken. In blocked chords, all notes are played at the same time. In *broken chords*, the notes are played separately. Broken chords can be played using different patterns, depending on the meter.

*Certain patterns have become popular over the centuries. The Alberti bass pattern (named for Domenico Alberti (1710-1740) who used the pattern often in his own music) was used by many classical composers. The waltz bass pattern can be found in almost every famous waltz!*



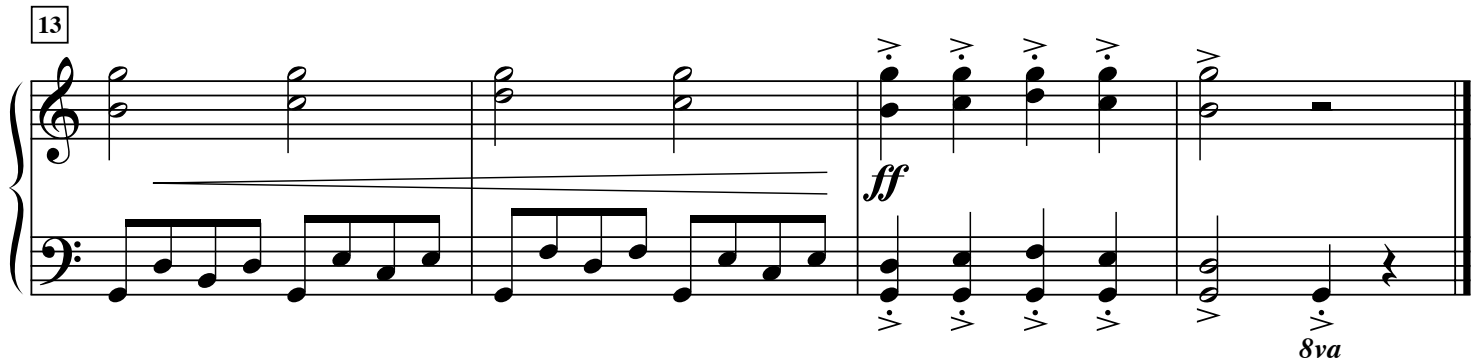
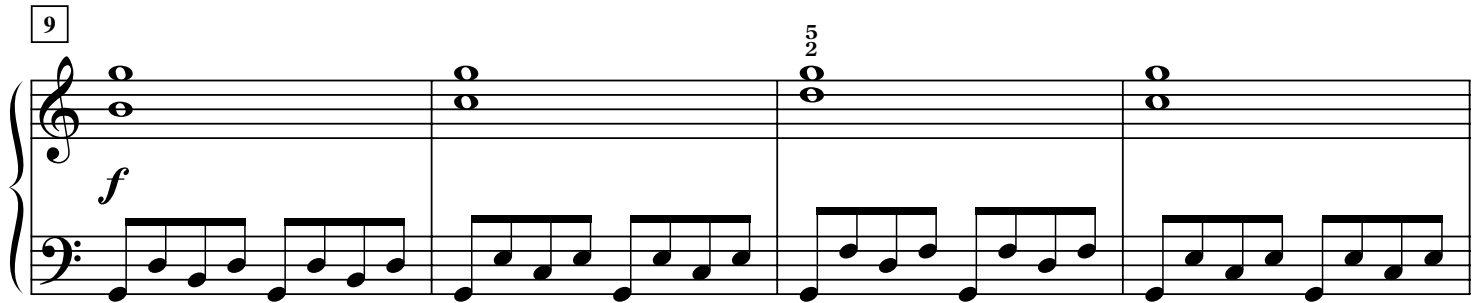
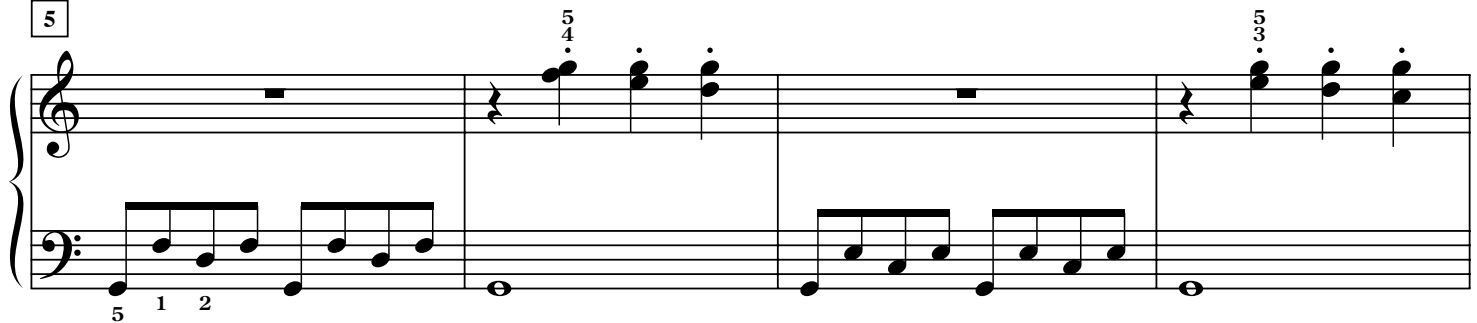
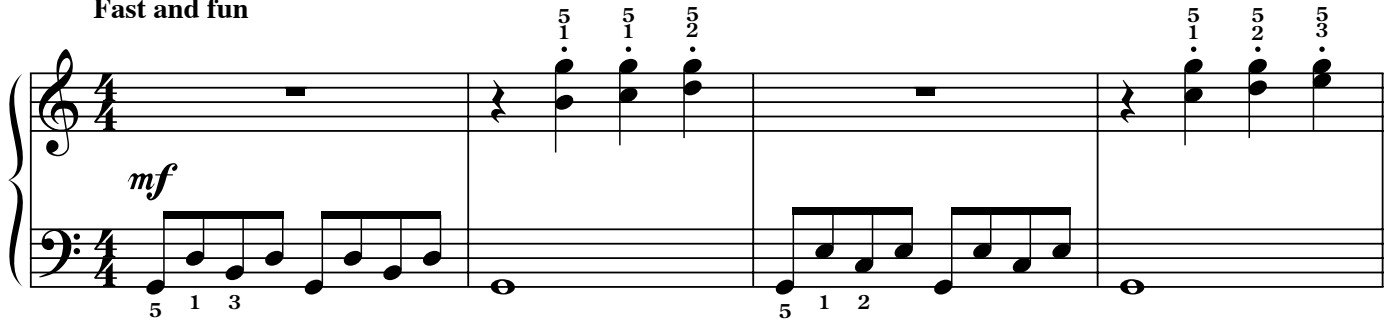
Alberti Bass Pattern



Waltz Bass Pattern

## Alberti Bass Bop

Fast and fun



**Compose Your Own Piece** Create a waltz using a waltz-bass accompaniment. In your composition, consider using pandiatonicism (introduced in Book 3). Pandiatonicism treats all chords equally. There are many choices for chords in the left hand!

- 1. Create a title. 2. Choose a tempo. 3. Add dynamics.

**Toolbox Tip**

A **MODE** is a pattern of half steps and whole steps arranged into a particular scale.

**Composer Connection**

*Johann Strauss, Jr. (1825-1899) was an Austrian composer who wrote dance pieces, including polkas and over 500 waltzes, earning himself the nickname of the “Waltz King.”*



(Title)

Tempo:

Musical notation for the first system, measures 1-4. The treble clef staff contains a melody starting with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4 and B4, and a quarter note C5. The bass clef staff contains a waltz-bass accompaniment with a quarter note G2, followed by eighth notes A2 and B2, and a quarter note C3. A '4' is written above the first measure of the treble staff. Measure numbers '5' are written below the first and second measures of the bass staff.

5

Blank musical notation for the second system, measures 5-8.

9

Blank musical notation for the third system, measures 9-12.

13

Blank musical notation for the fourth system, measures 13-16.