University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Keyboard Reading and Playing

(See Chapter 5: V)

University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Contents

		page
I.	**Conventions used in Keyboard Reading and Playing**	*3*
II.	**Studies**	
Unit 1-2	Notes around middle C	*7*
Unit 3	Introducing leaps	*11*
Unit 4	Introducing chords	*13*
Unit 5	Bigger leaps	*15*
Unit 6-8	Shifting the five finger position to the C's 2 octaves apart	*17*
Unit 9	Extension and shifting of the five finger position	*23*
Unit 10	Extension and shifting of the five finger position in chord playing	*25*
Unit 11	Various keys and various localities:	
	G major	*27*
Unit 12	F major	*29*
Unit 13	e minor	*31*
Unit 14	c minor	*33*
Unit 15	d minor	*35*
Unit 16	D major	*37*
Unit 17	a minor	*39*
Unit 18-20	Traditional melodies	
	Various keys	*41*

University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Conventions used in Keyboard Reading and Playing

1. **Specific studies in a specific order:** The entire approach in this tutor can be described as a method for learning, in the shortest possible time, to read notes and also to utilize the keyboard as a chordal instrument. The tutor comprises specific short studies in their specific order, plus these accompanying recommendations. Several studies are derived from previous ones. Some obvious examples are no. 3 in unit 10 which is a more advanced version of no. 2, and no. 3 in unit 14 which requires the preparation of no. 5 in unit 5 as well as the experience of the studies in-between. For this reason all studies should be practised in the given order.

2. **Knowledge of note names:** Studies for this programme were drawn up with the intention of maximally speeding up the learning process. Thus, safe and quick associations need to be made between the specific keyboard note, its location on the stave and its name. Learners are advised to sing or to mention every note name, preferably aloud, when playing the first two pages. This also applies to all lines where the initial hand position shifts, as in unit 6. Eventually, every exercise should be repeated with eyes on the book, thus not looking on the keyboard.

3. **Technical development:** These reading studies are constructed, to serve at the same time as finger exercises. Once the reading of a line is secure, every bar, and afterwards two or more bars, should be repeated several times. This is done while attending to the correct hand position and finger movements as described in 'Conventions' of **Keyboard Harmony**. Every bar on these pages is essential for strengthening and for improving independence of fingers, for refining finger control and also for co-ordination of fingers and hands.

   Learners mostly prefer finger and locating exercises which form part of a musical entirety. They usually practise these bars more thoroughly and more purposefully than separate, short, dry exercises.

University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

4. **Ideal preparatory and accompanying studies:** As this primer serves the needs of any beginner, it appears as a separate booklet for independent use by all learners. Educators are, however, strongly recommended to follow the initial keyboard acquaintance programme, i.e. **Keyboard Harmony** in the ***Music Literacy*** series, concurrently for maximum results. Skill development in chord playing and reading and playing in all keys expedite progress. When, for example, learners with this background proceed with chord playing after playing unit 8, they experience it as quite natural and actually very rewarding. Without these preparatory and accompanying exercises some learners might need many more repetitions of every bar/study before continuing.

5. **A general tutor with special requirements for *Music Literacy*:** The specific needs regarding keyboard playing and aims in the ***Music Literacy*** programme are all addressed in this tutor. Studies cover the range on the keyboard and develop the skills which are needed for reading and playing basic chord progressions and for creating elementary keyboard accompaniments.

   This system serves ideally, and can be successfully utilized, as a general primer for any piano beginner, as mentioned above. Early chord playing and co-ordination of hands, almost from the start, promote listening to and perceiving music as a whole. In this way, general insight is much more easily obtained and 'music making' is experienced from the beginning. The holistic approach also enables learners to view music analytically, which promotes independence.

   This is contrary to tutors with priorities of perfecting some aspects of reading and of touching on various pianistic skills, using separate hands. It also differs from primers containing several explanatory sketches, diagrams and other pictures which divide the attention. These might hamper global reading, preventing beginners from initially experiencing music making and, eventually, delaying musical independence.

University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

6. **Studies in several keys:** Learning to read in various keys is dealt with from unit 11 onwards. These studies are often transpositions of the original studies which are for learning to read white notes, i.e. in C major. In such studies new matters are minimized, enabling learners to attend fully to the new key signature and to its key centre. However, slight changes occur in several transposed studies for the following reasons:

   - to avoid too many ledger lines,
   - for adaptation from the major to the minor key,
   - to make it interesting,
   - to keep learners observant, especially those who tend to play by ear, and
   - for adding slightly to the demands of a transposed version.

7. **Fingering indication:** This occurs in small numerals below the notes. As the five finger position is used throughout, only the specific location of the first beat of each study as well as any extension with its return to the initial position is figured. The normal numbers for fingers are applied here, i.e. 5 for the little finger and 1 for the thumb.

8. **Maintenance of a steady beat:** As in any music activity, steady beats are of utmost importance. Once the essence of a line has been mastered, learners are recommended to repeat this with attention to regular beats. It is only by continuously reading ahead that a basic steadiness can be obtained. The prerequisite here is the choice of a comfortable tempo. This eventually enables the player to develop a regular inner beat.

University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Additional advantages result from a habit of consistent attention to calm, steady pulses. Of one's own accord, one is compelled to recognize notes in time. Hence, speed in recognizing and reading, is gradually increased in a natural way. The player does not feel pressurized by someone or by a metronome.

An indirect positive influence on the player's personality is another advantage. In the long run a stable inner beat surely has a general stabilizing effect which contributes to a well balanced personality.

9. **Prospective educators/facilitators/leaders/guides:** Provision is made for a person who, on completion of this programme, needs to be able to play for learners various exercises for recognition and all kinds of examples as explanations.

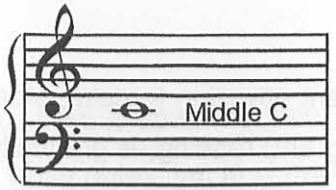
   Another intention of this primer, as part of the ***Music Literacy*** programme, is especially, to equip the choir leader, music guide, class music accompanist, etc. who need to be able to create an elementary accompaniment. Basic kinds of musical support are introduced, such as Alberti bass, common waltz or march backing, contrapuntal melodic bass lines, chordal accompaniment, etc.

10. **Notes in brackets:** These indicate optional notes in chords, e.g. in unit 10. The small or inexperienced hand which cannot stretch the octave may omit them. Another option is to roll the chord, by playing the notes one by one from the lowest upwards, beginning on the beat.

11. **Dual key signature:** In unit 20 there are two possible keys for playing nos. 1 to 3, i.e. E or E$^{\flat}$ major. This way of transposing a chromatic semitone higher or lower (i.e. same lettername) can be applied to certain keys. They are the major keys of C or C$^{\sharp}$ or C$^{\flat}$, D or D$^{\flat}$, E or E$^{\flat}$, F or F$^{\sharp}$, G or G$^{\flat}$, A or A$^{\flat}$, B or B$^{\flat}$ and the minor keys of c or c$^{\sharp}$, e or e$^{\flat}$, f or f$^{\sharp}$, g or g$^{\sharp}$, a or a$^{\sharp}$ or a$^{\flat}$ and b or b$^{\flat}$. It can also just be used to simplify reading, e.g. playing in D instead of D$^{\flat}$ major, in e instead of e$^{\flat}$ minor, etc. Naturally, accidentals also have to be changed in minor keys.

University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

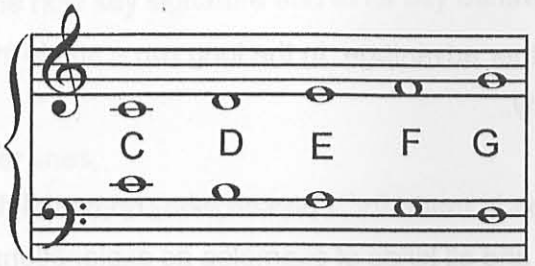
Unit 1: Notes around middle C



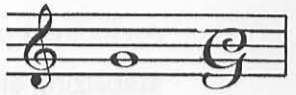
Clefs mark the relevant lines

The G-clef indicates G,
5 notes above middle C.

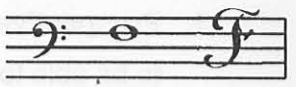
The F-clef indicates F,
5 notes below middle C.



The sign is derived from the letter G
and curls around the G-spot on the stave.

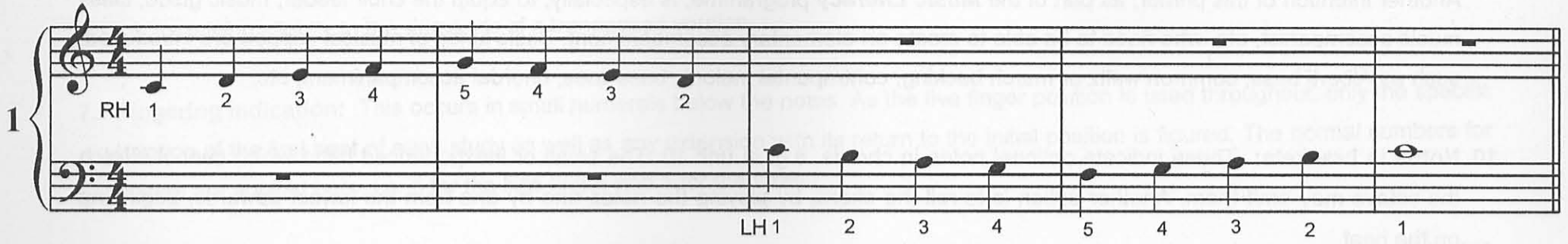


The sign is derived from the letter F
and emphasises the F-spot on the stave.

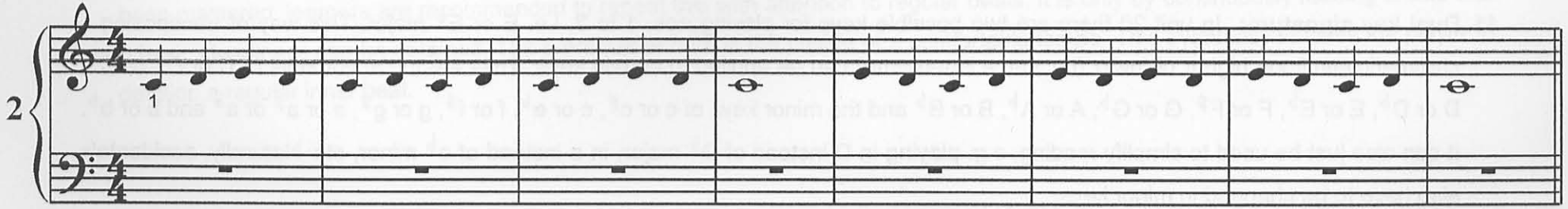


Fingering

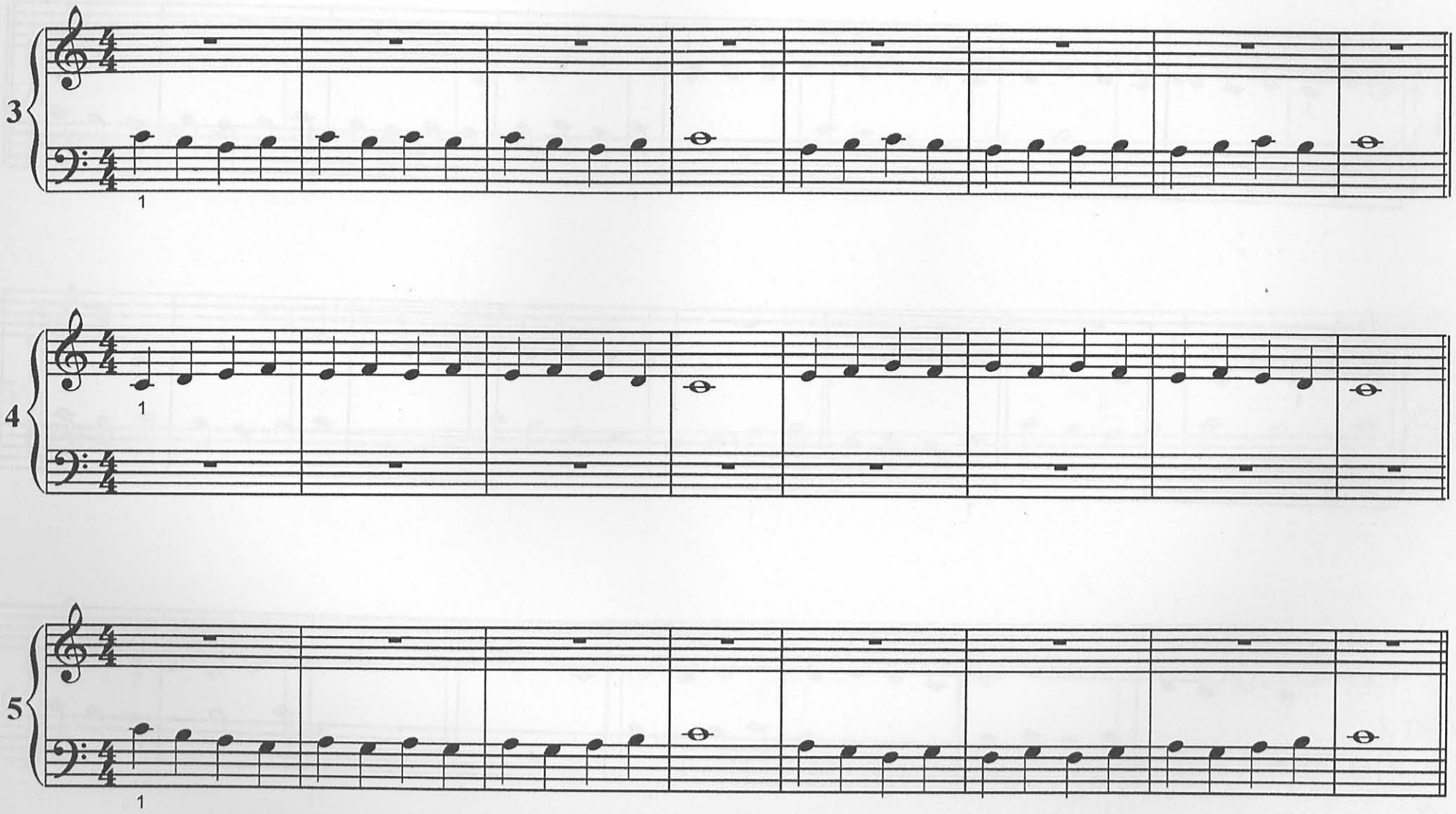
C B A G F



Stepwise movement

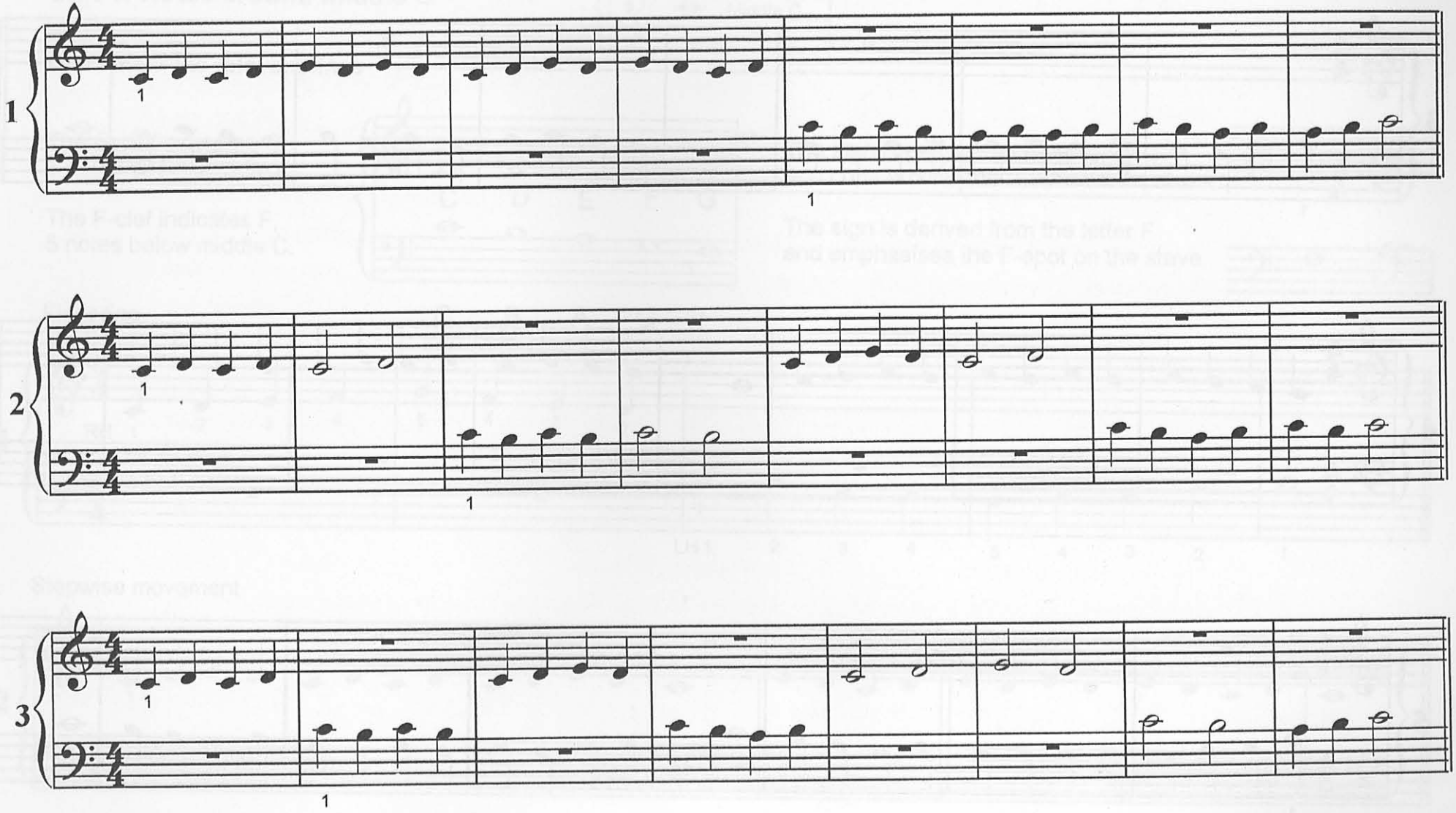


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

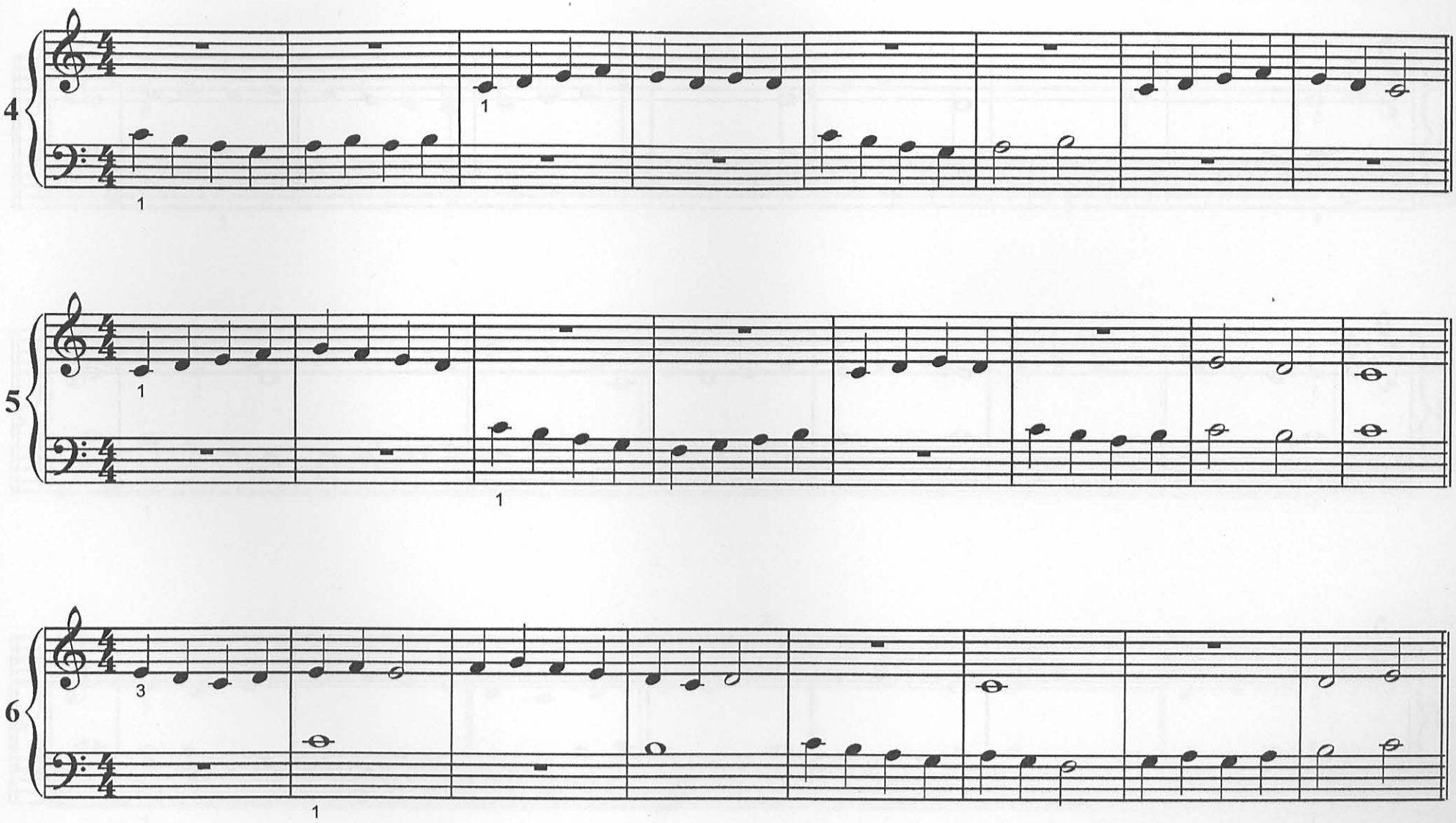


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 2

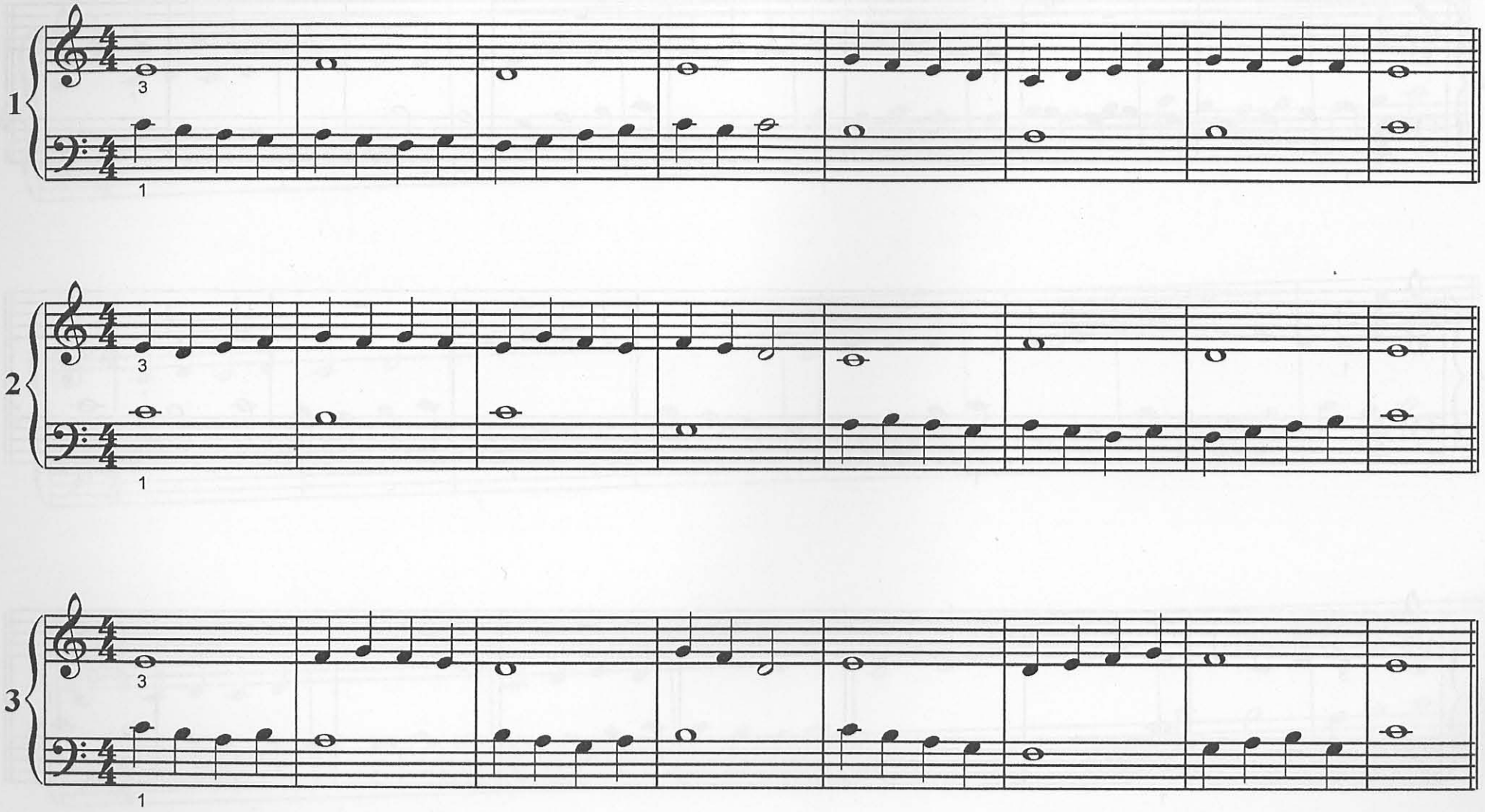


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

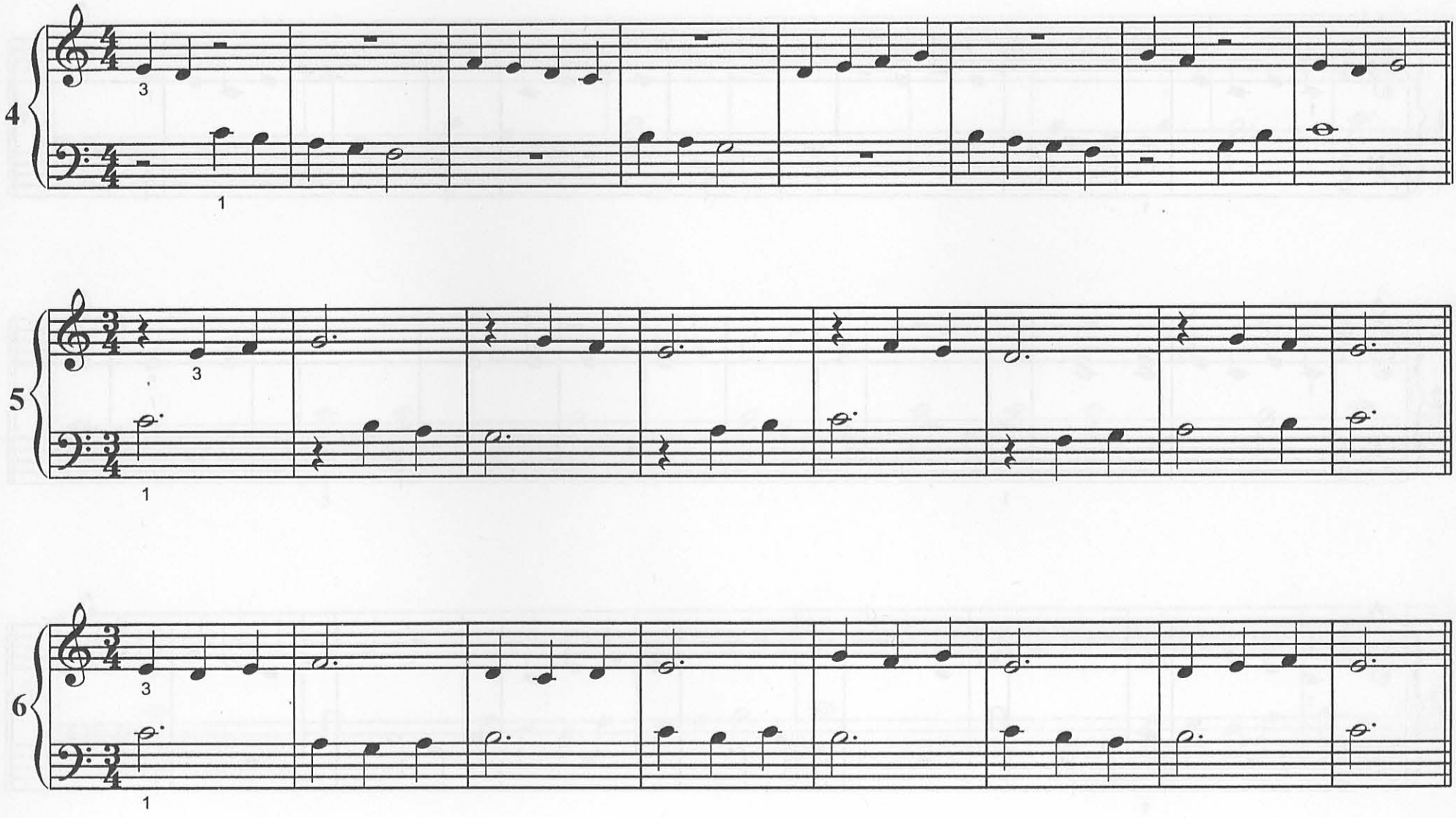


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 3: Introducing leaps

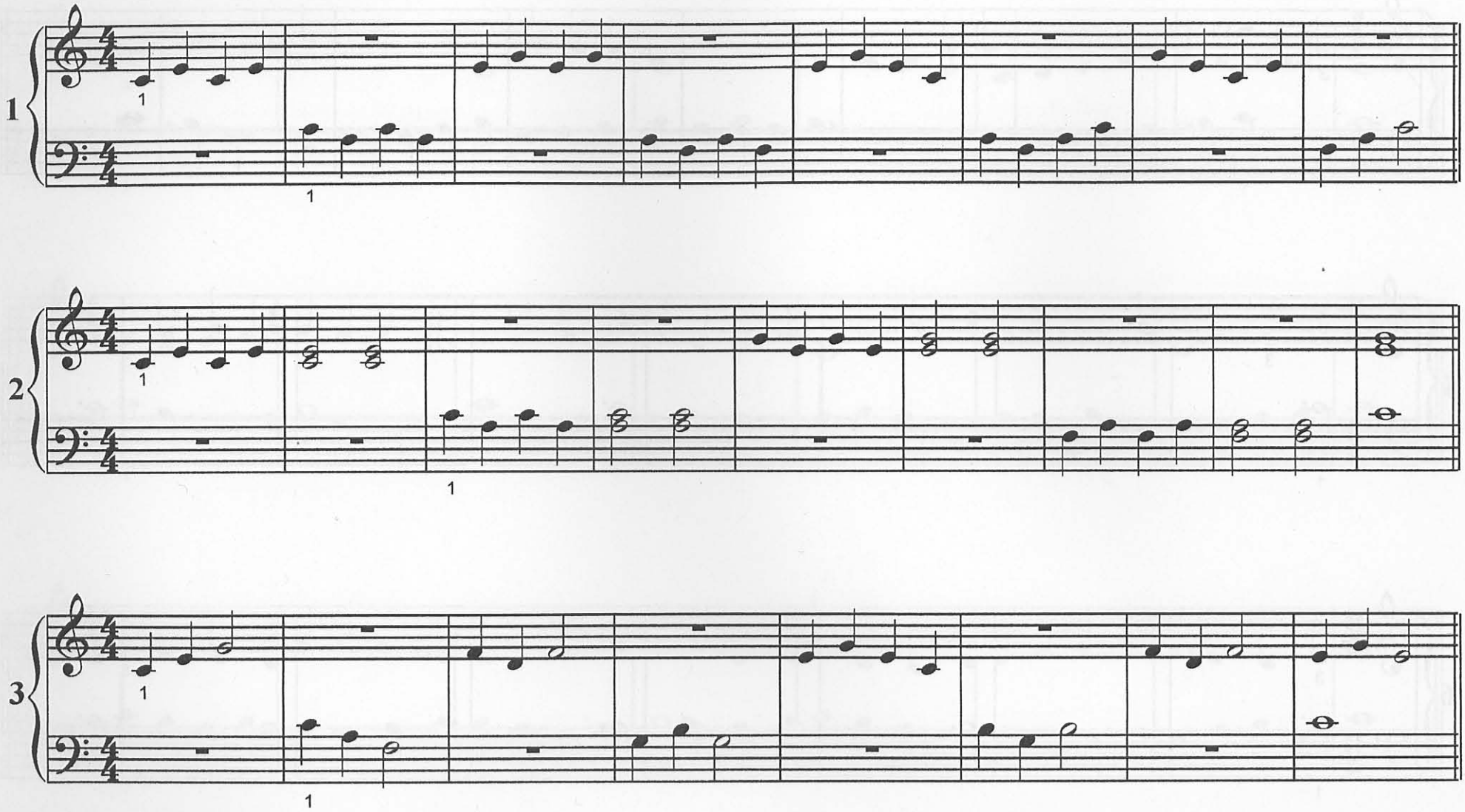


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

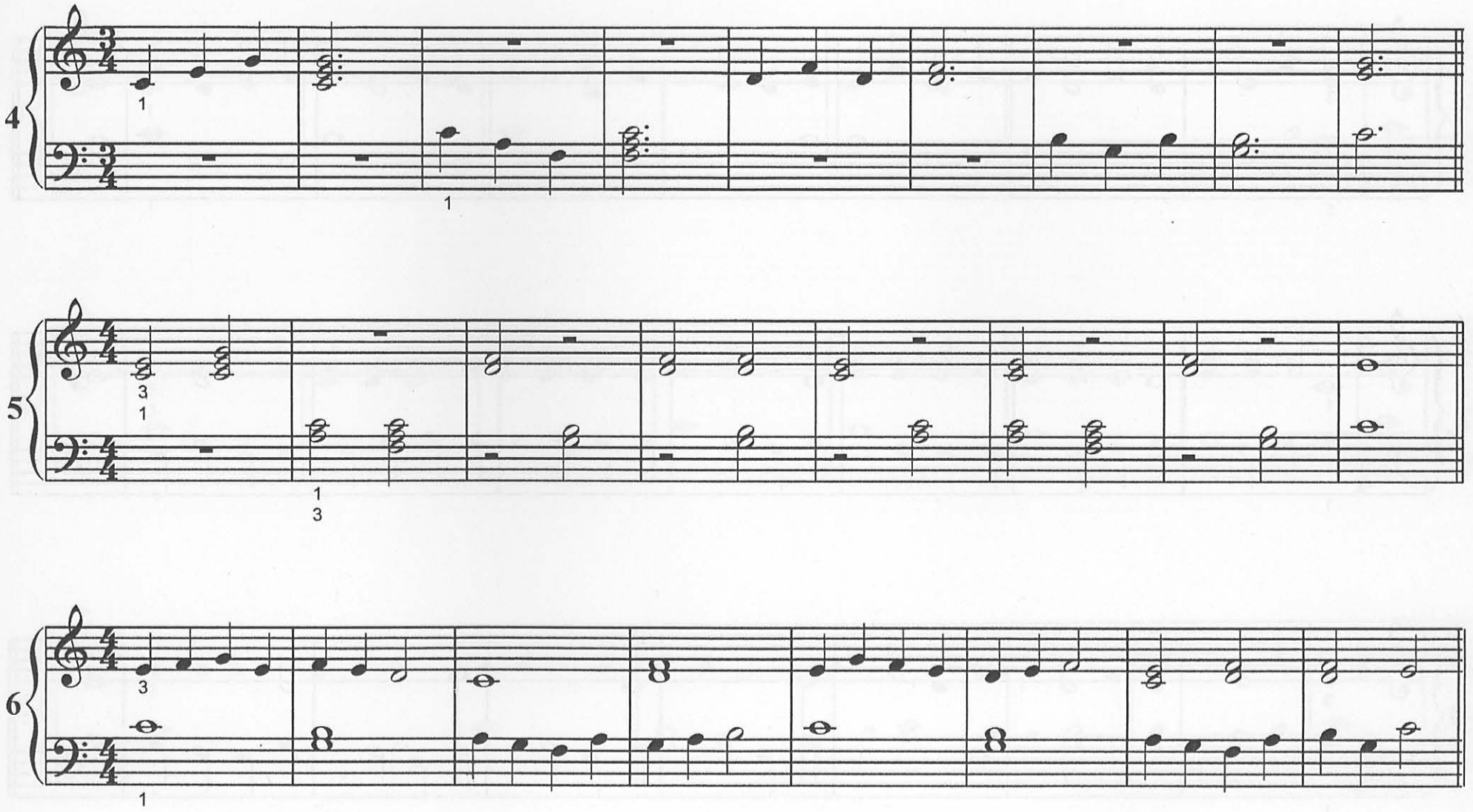


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 4: Introducing chords

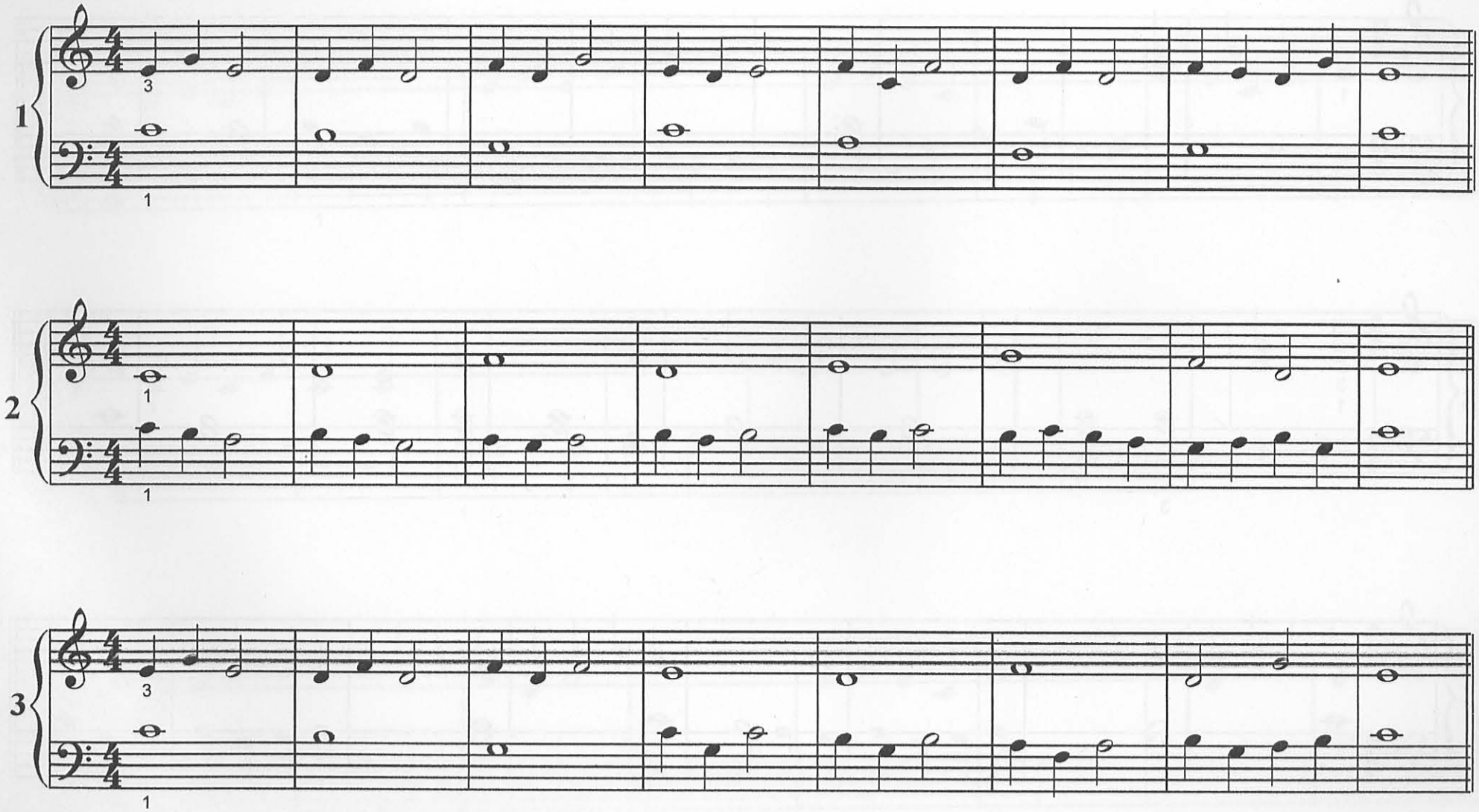


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

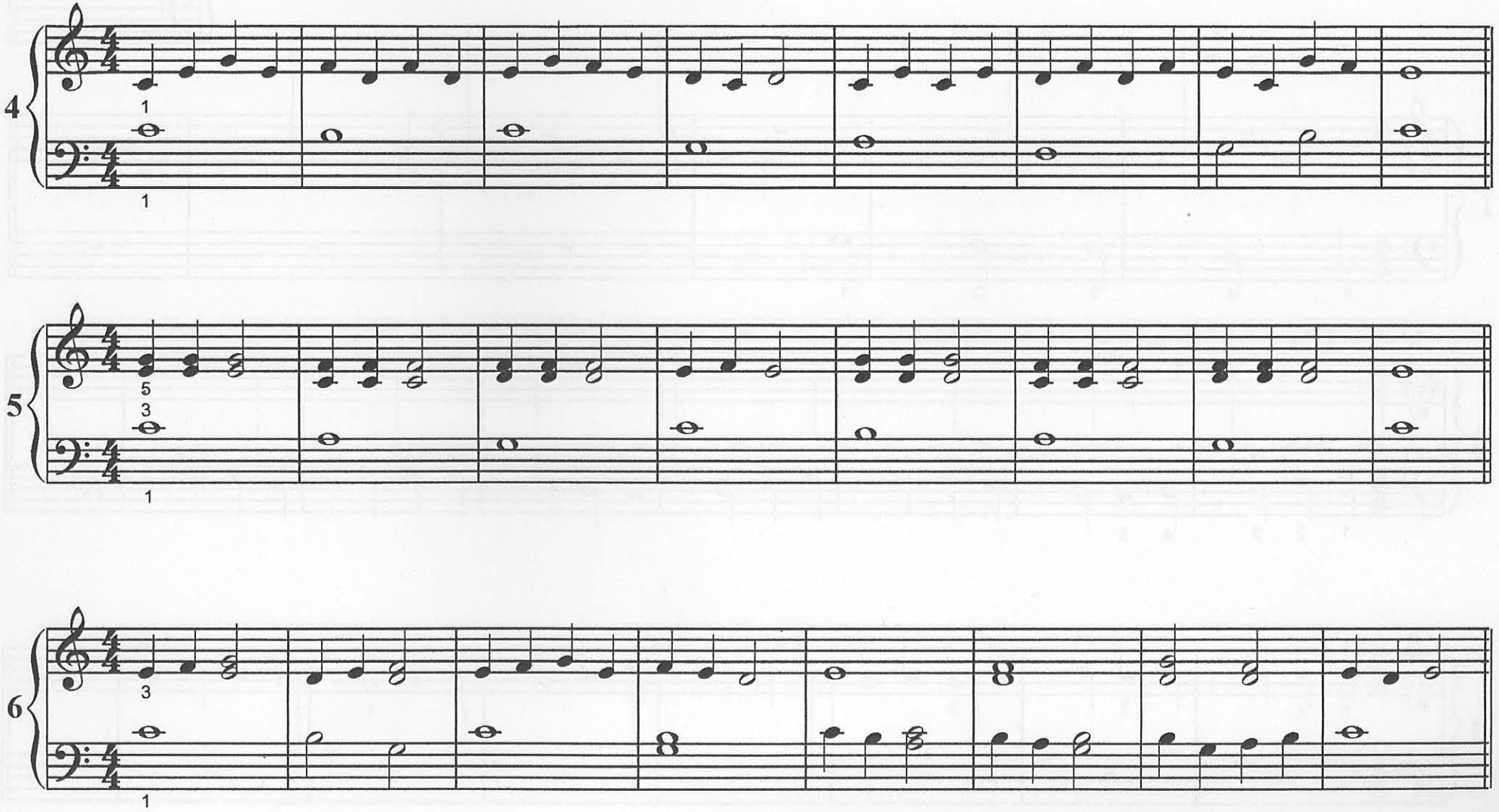


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 5: Bigger leaps



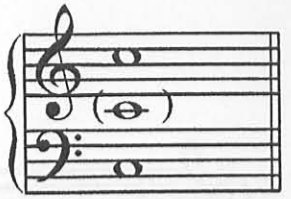
University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

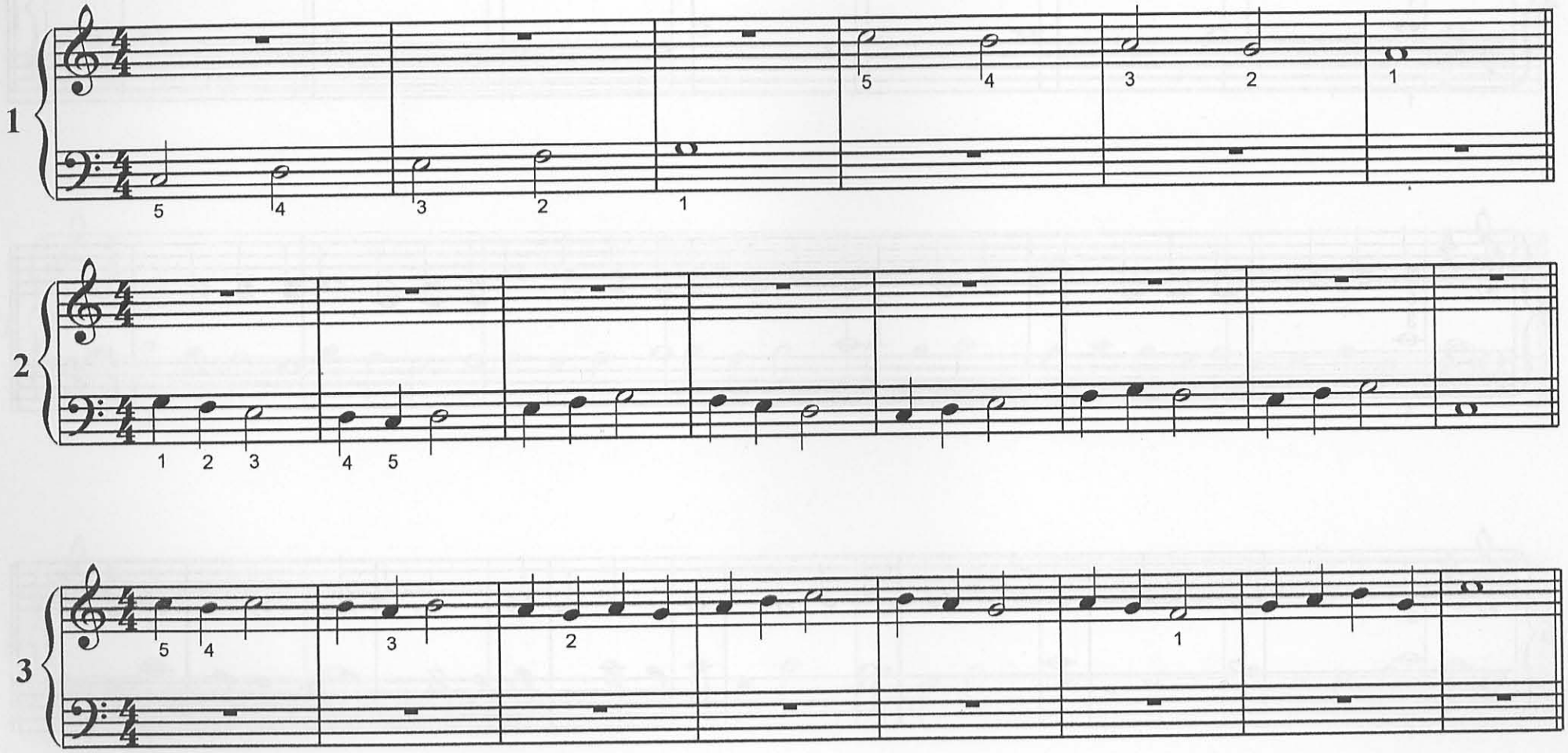


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

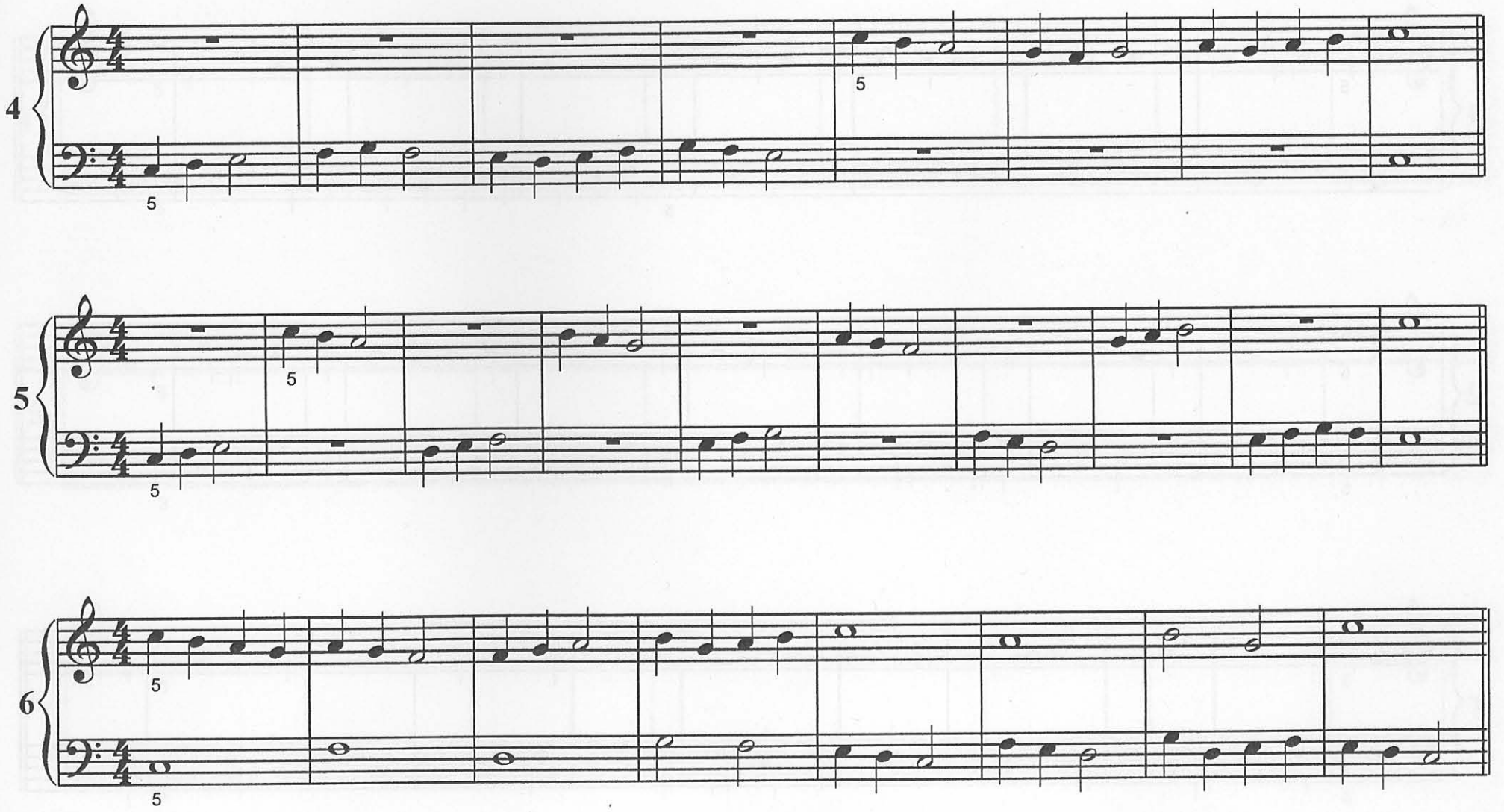
Unit 6: Shifting the five finger position to the C's 2 octaves apart

Range



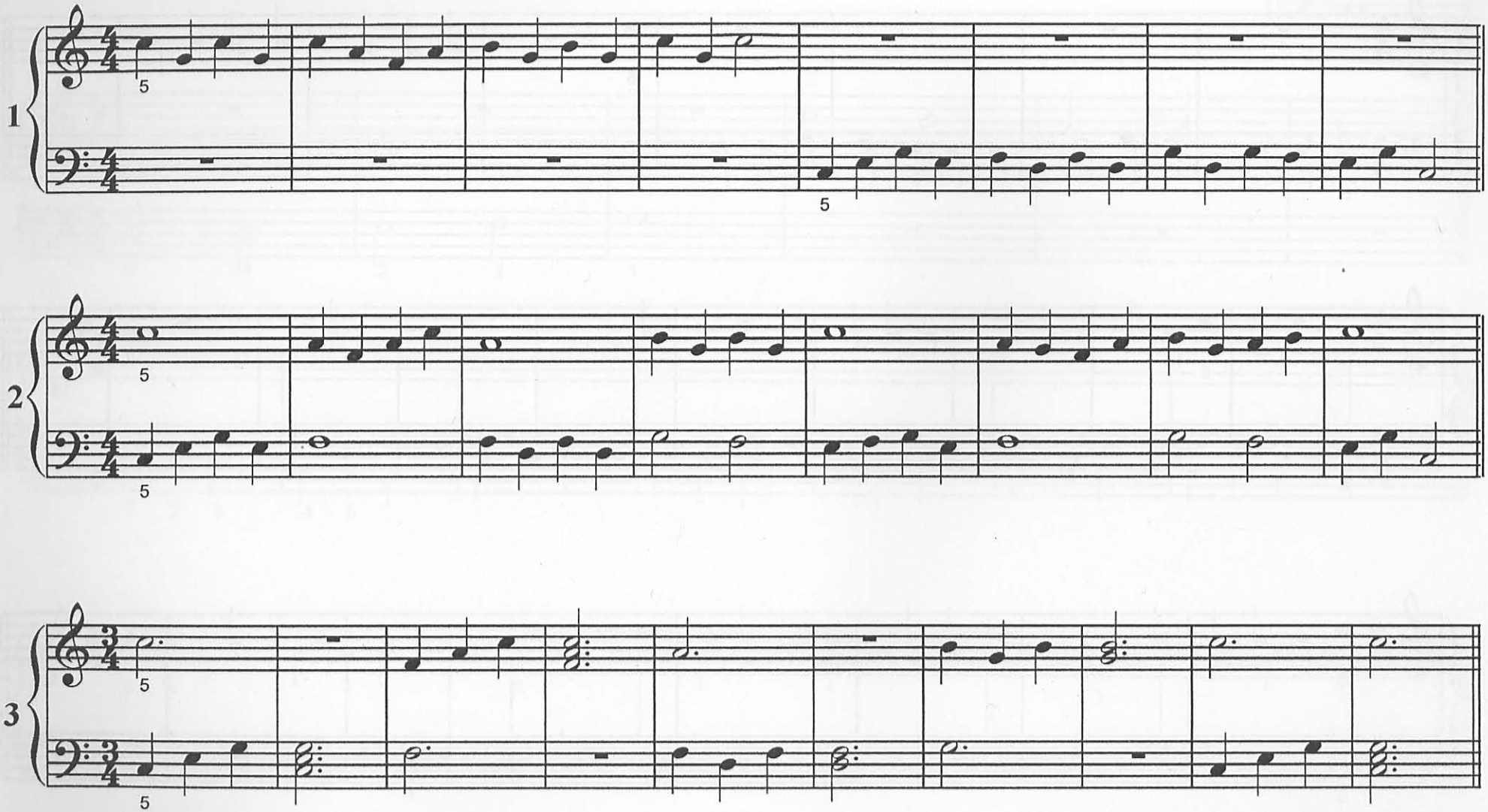


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

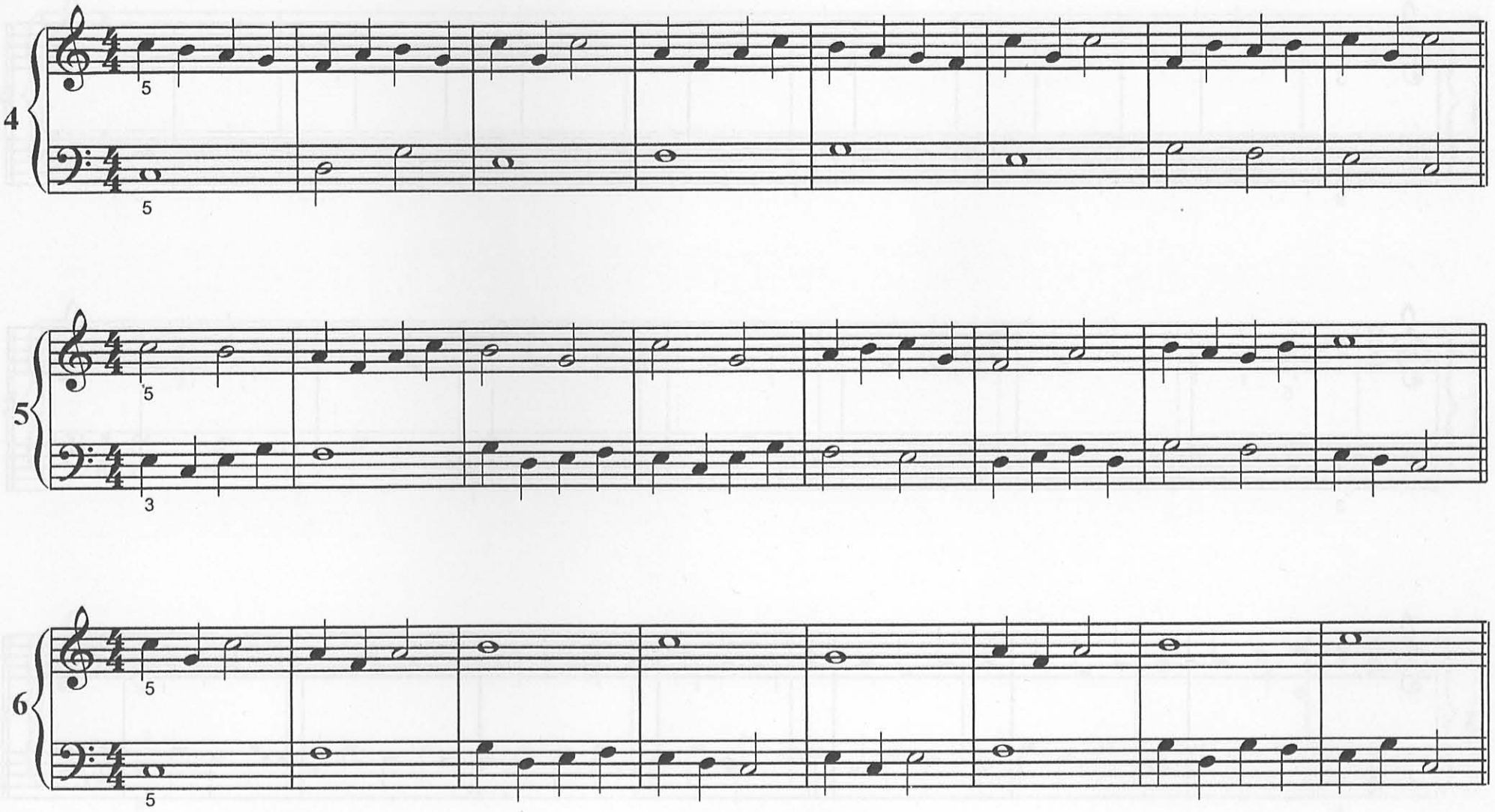


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 7:

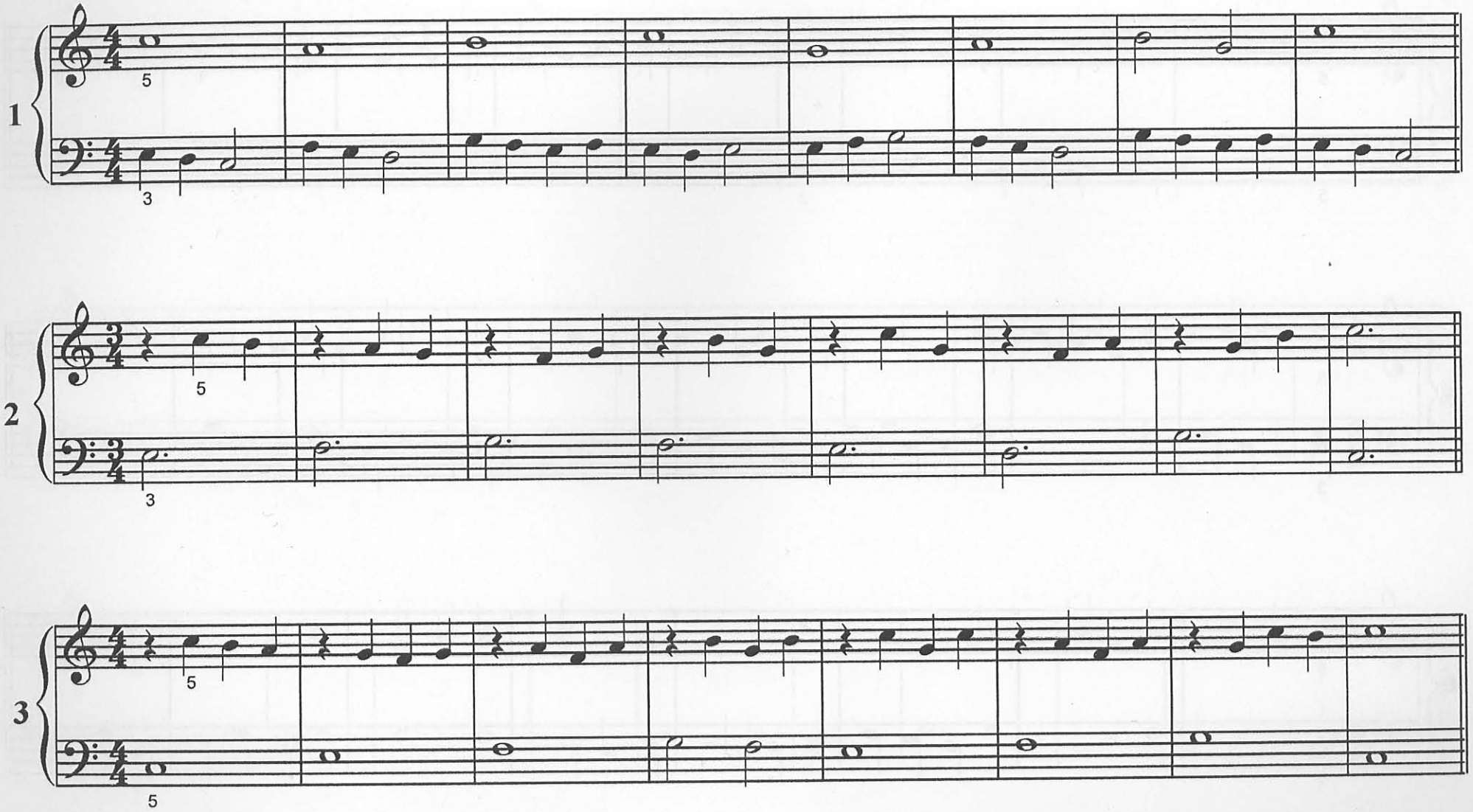


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

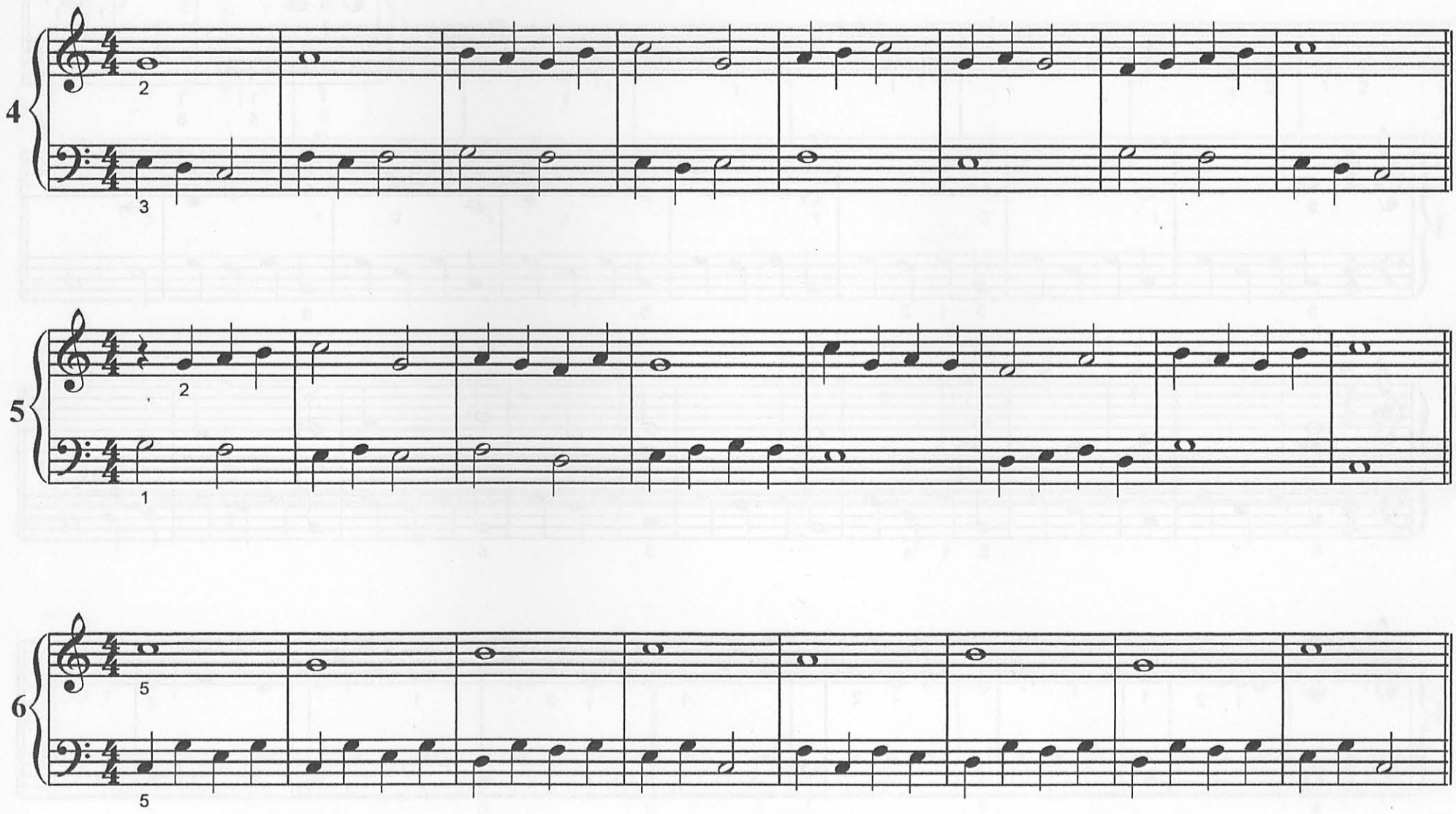


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 8:



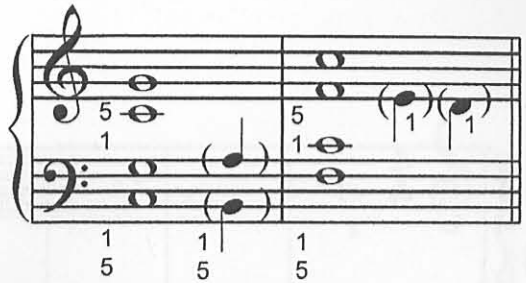
University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

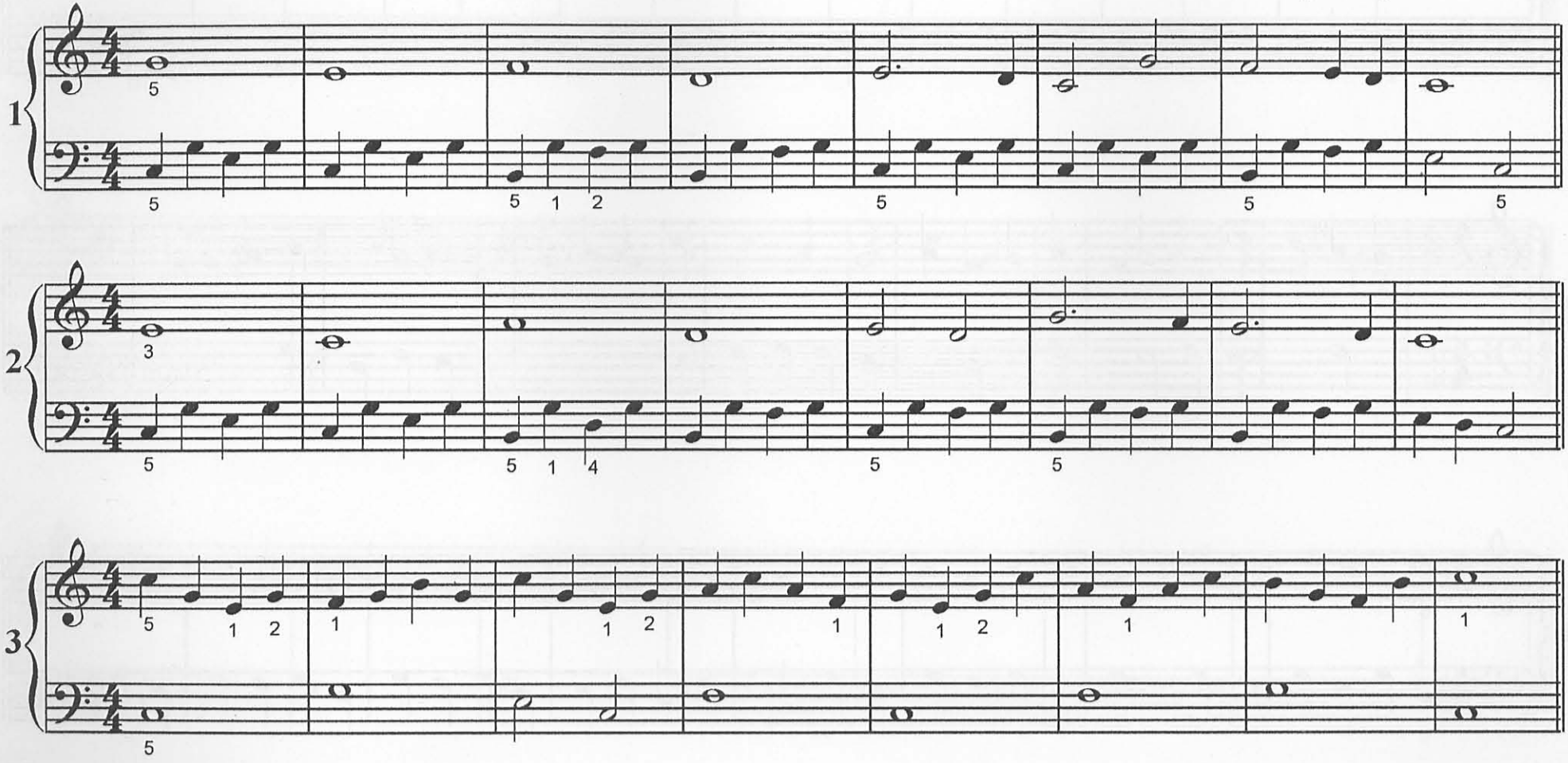


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

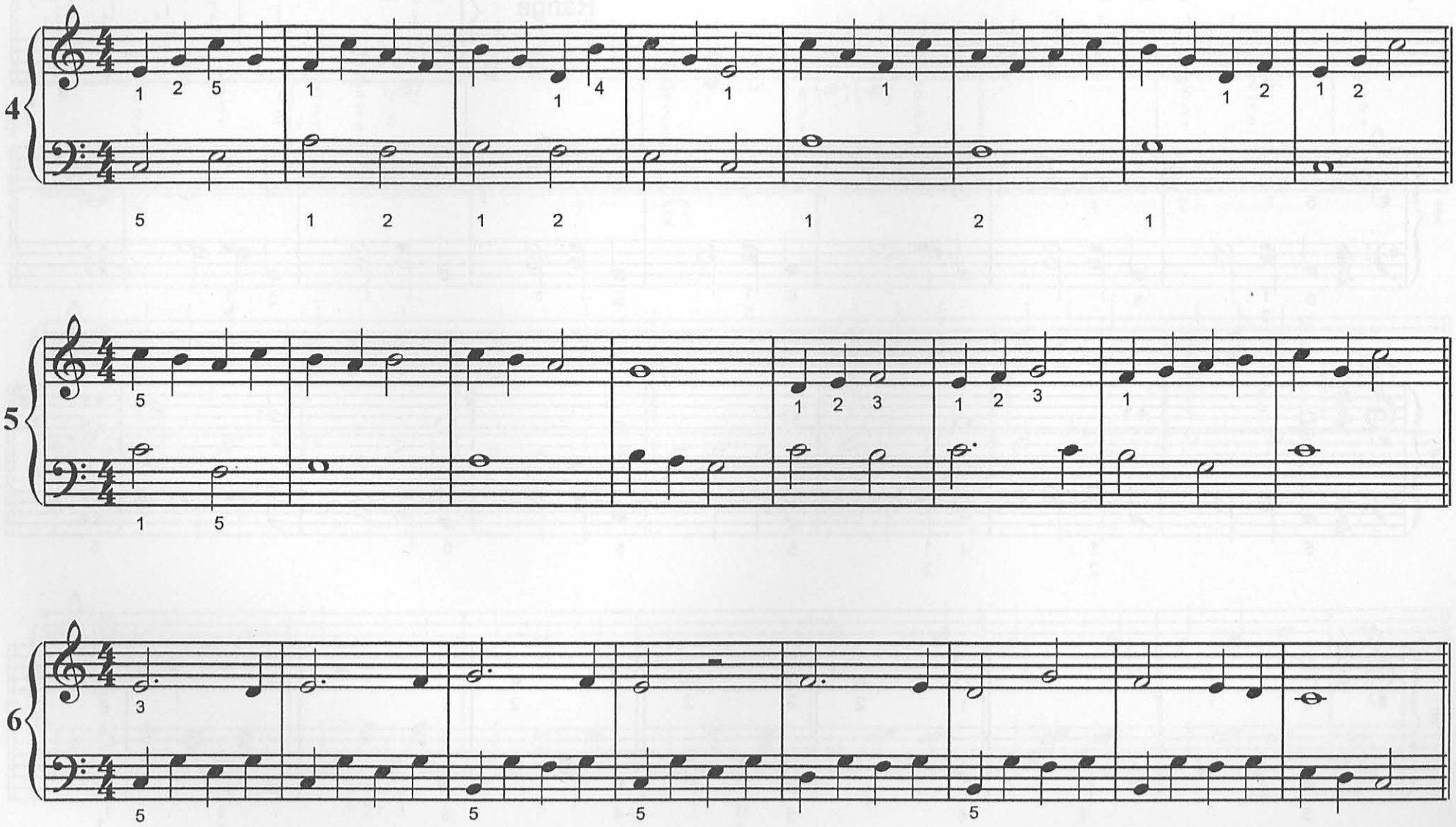
Unit 9: Extension and shifting of the five finger position

Range





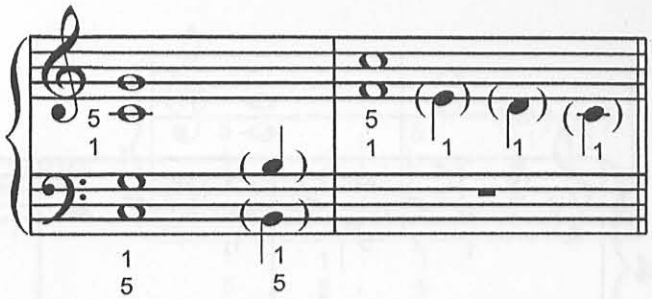
University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

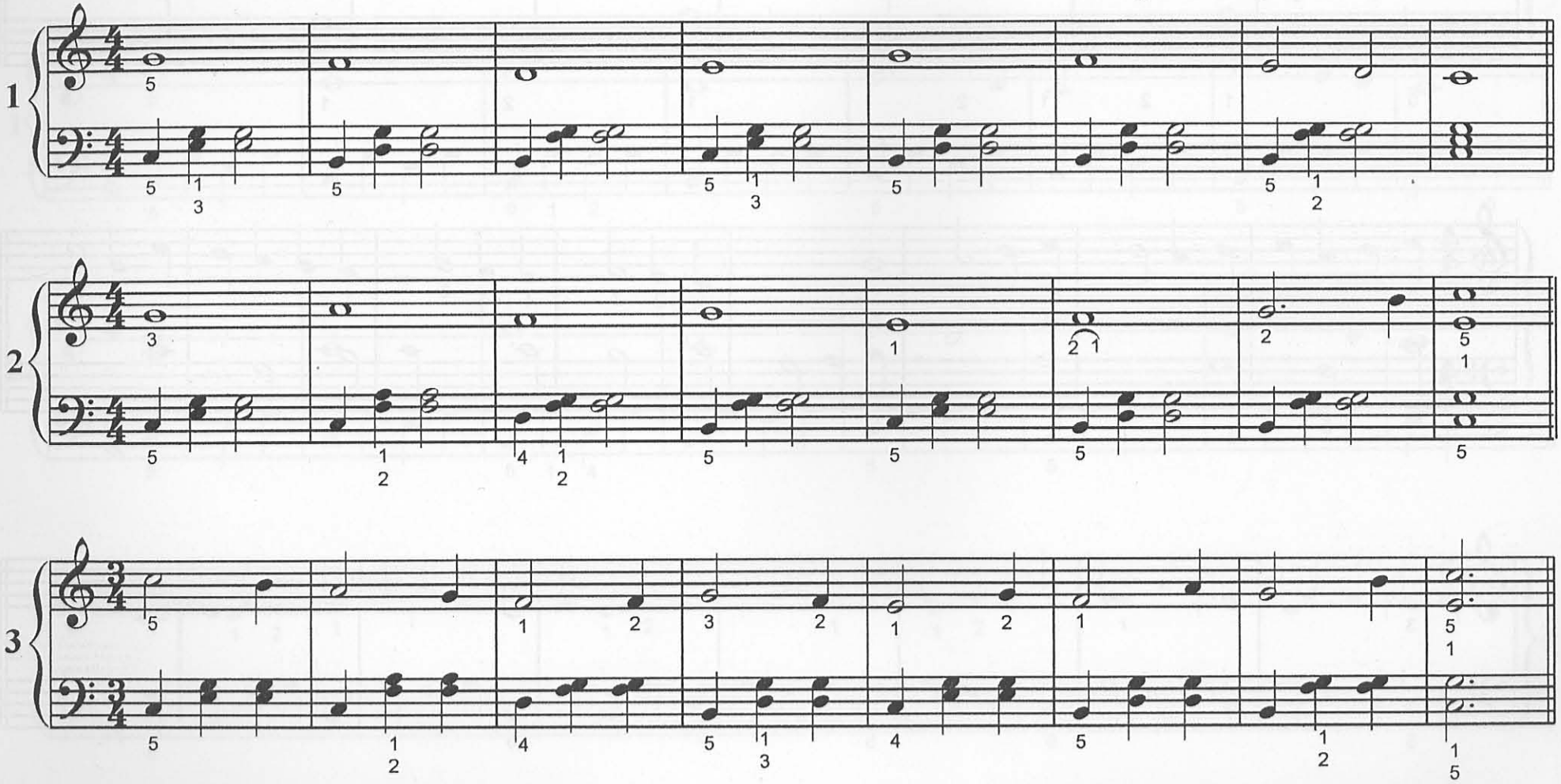


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

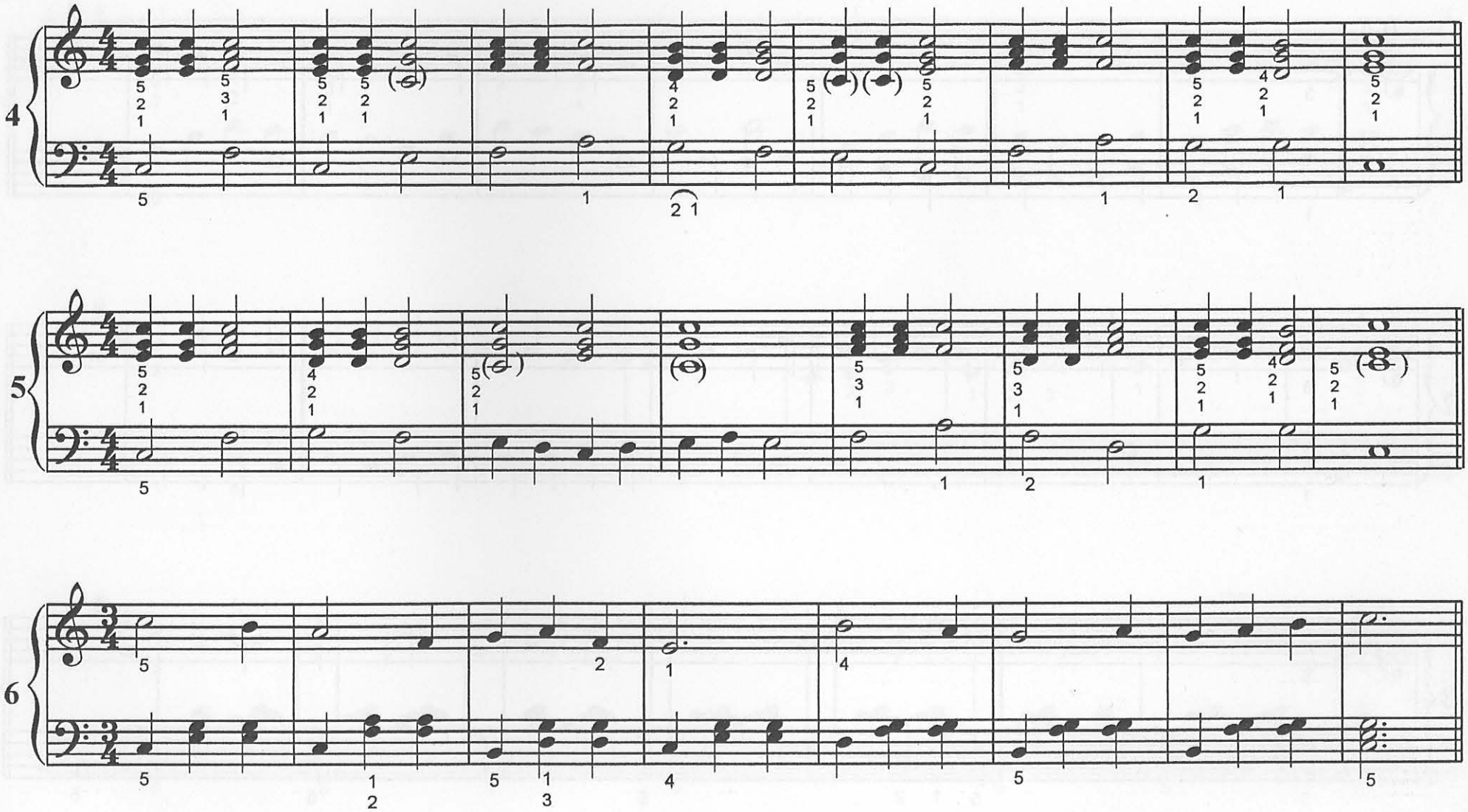
Unit 10: Extension and shifting of the five finger position in chord playing

Range





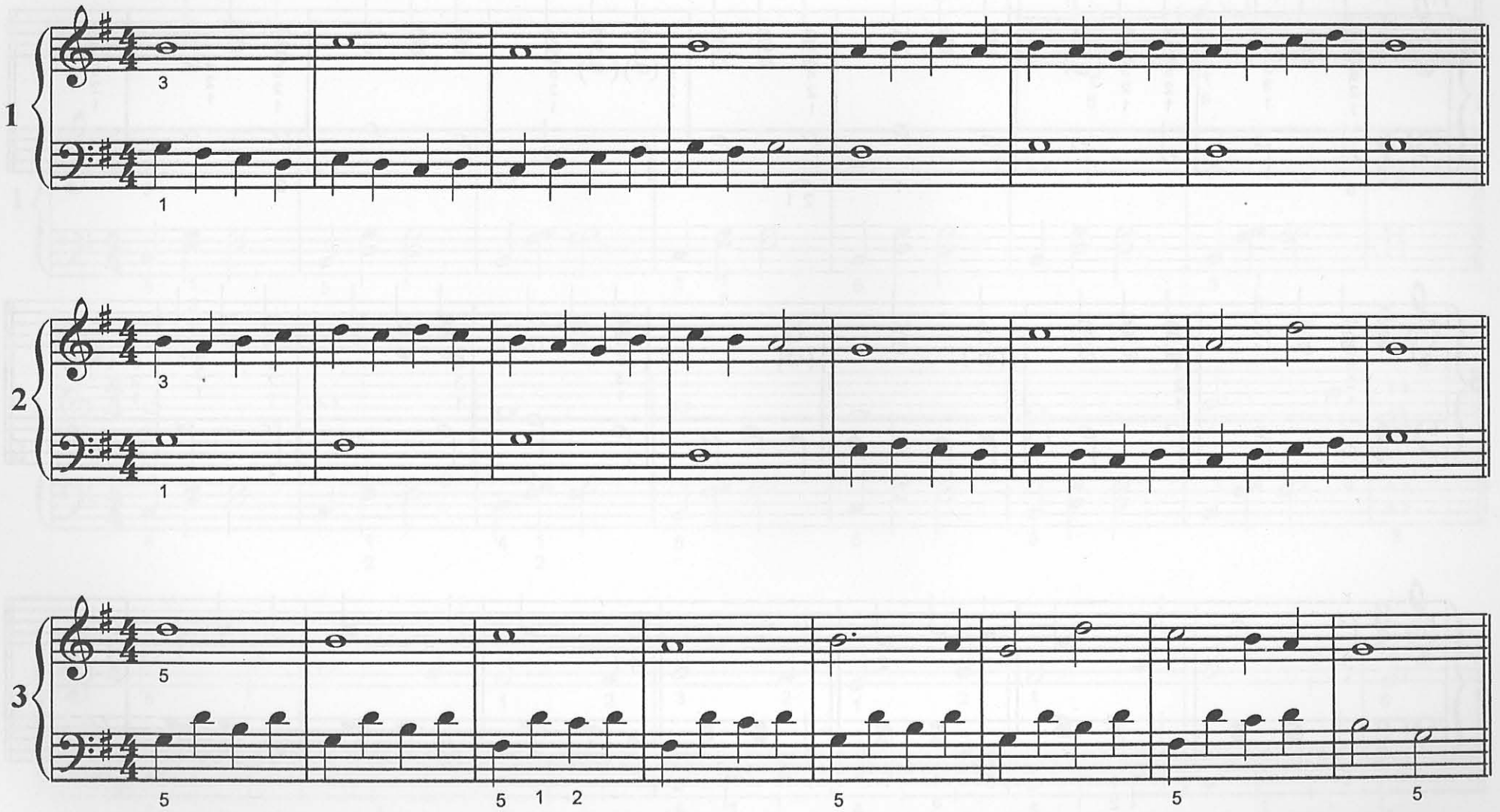
University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)



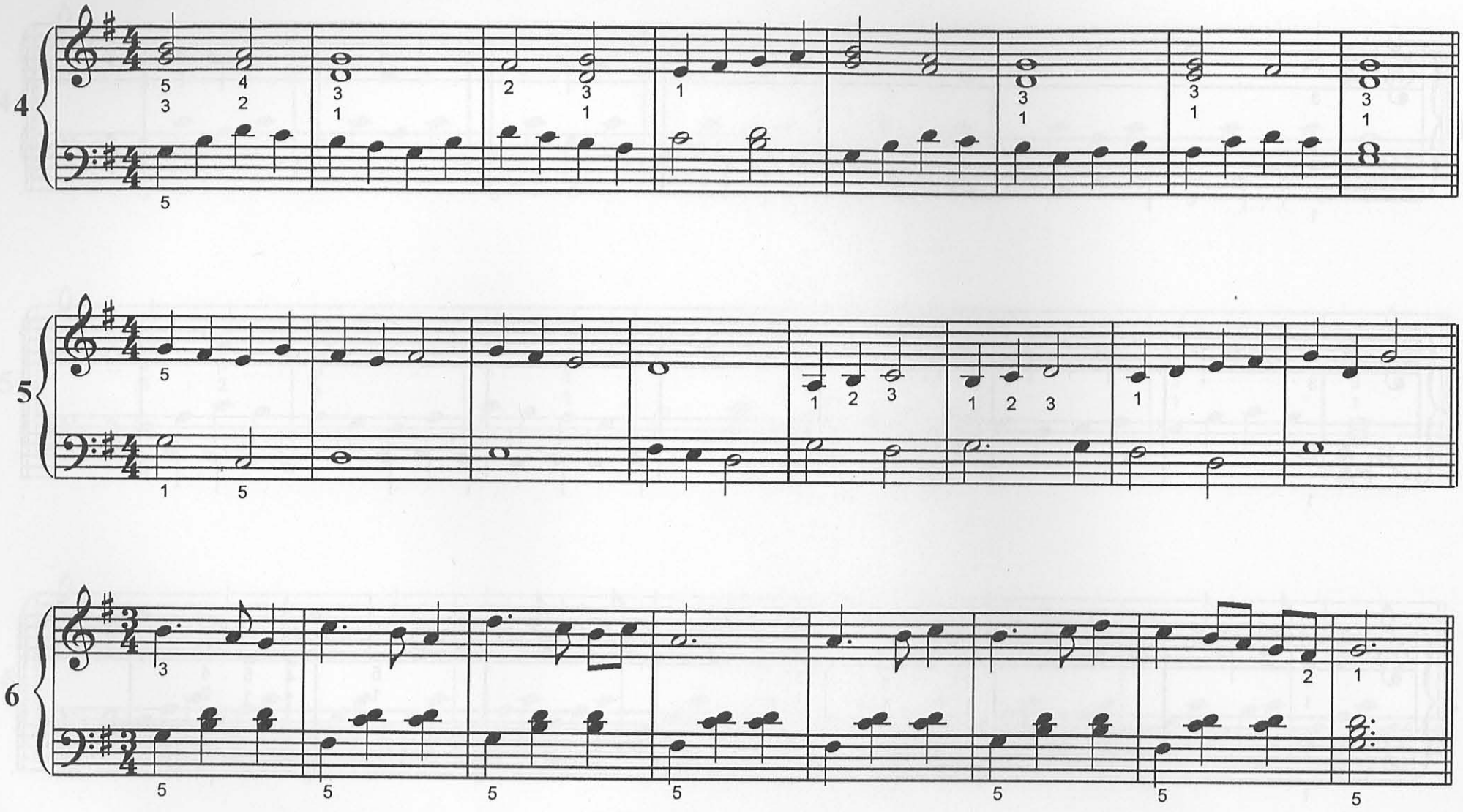
University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 11: Various keys and various localities

G major

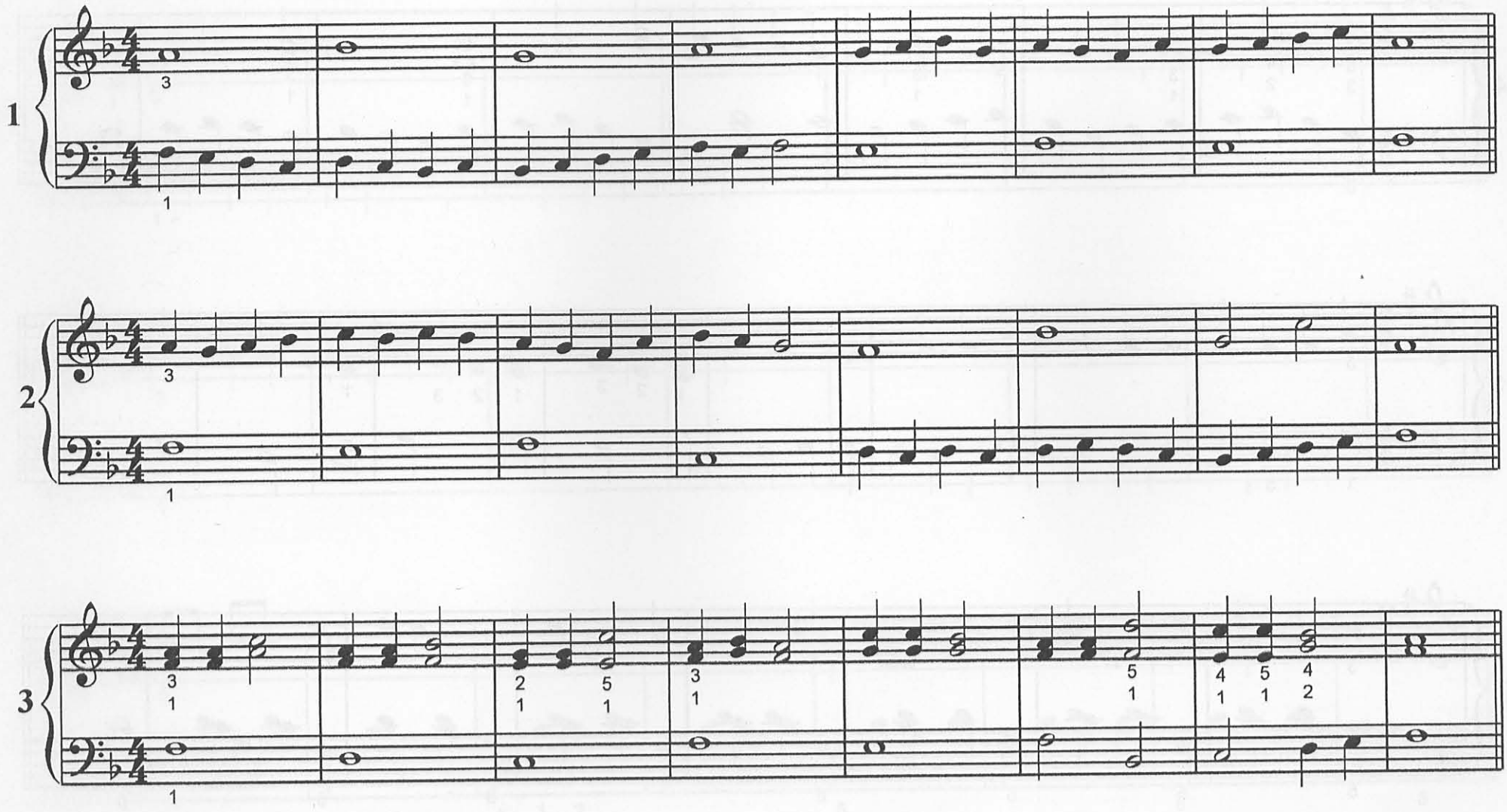


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

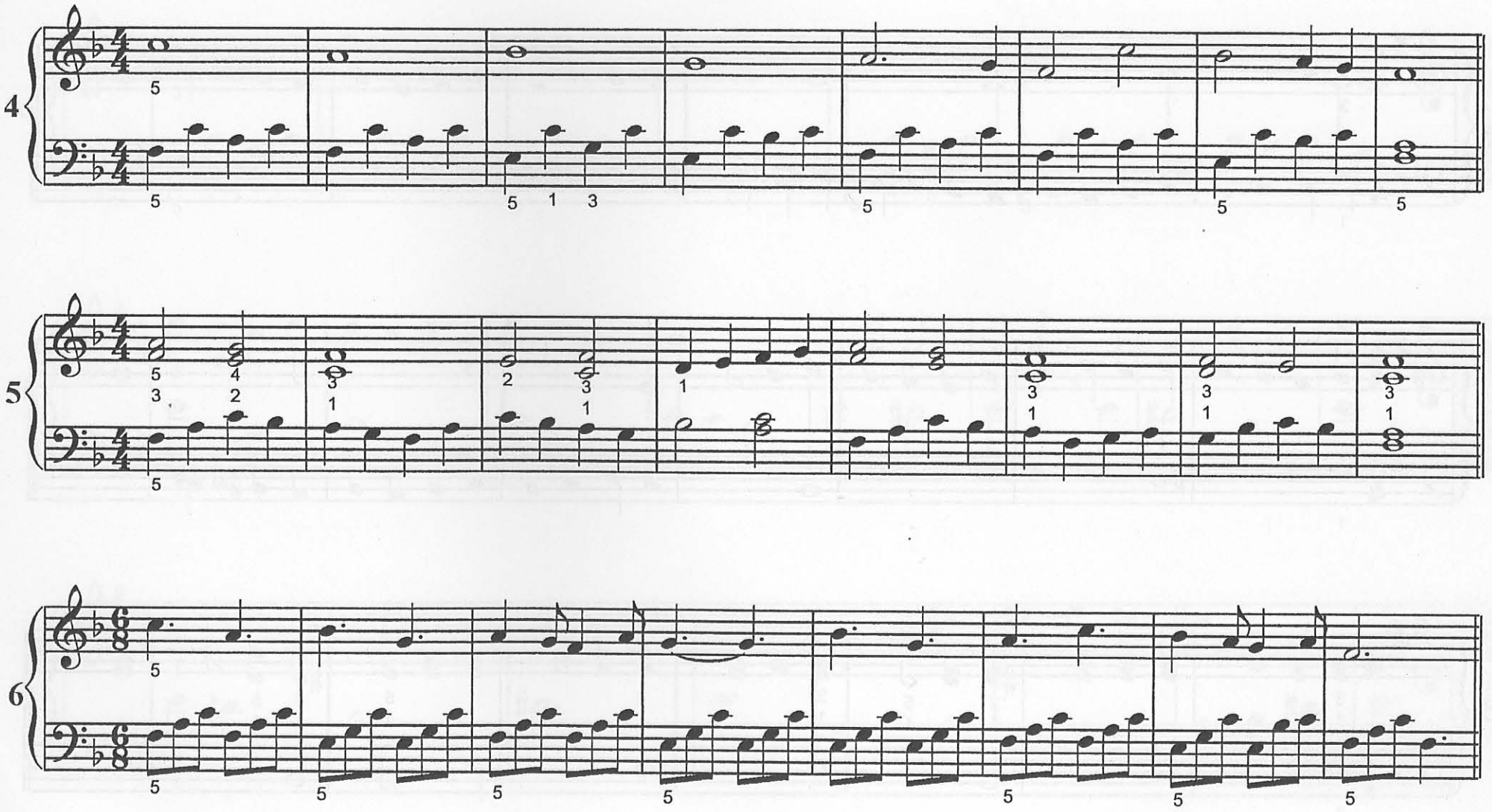


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 12: F major

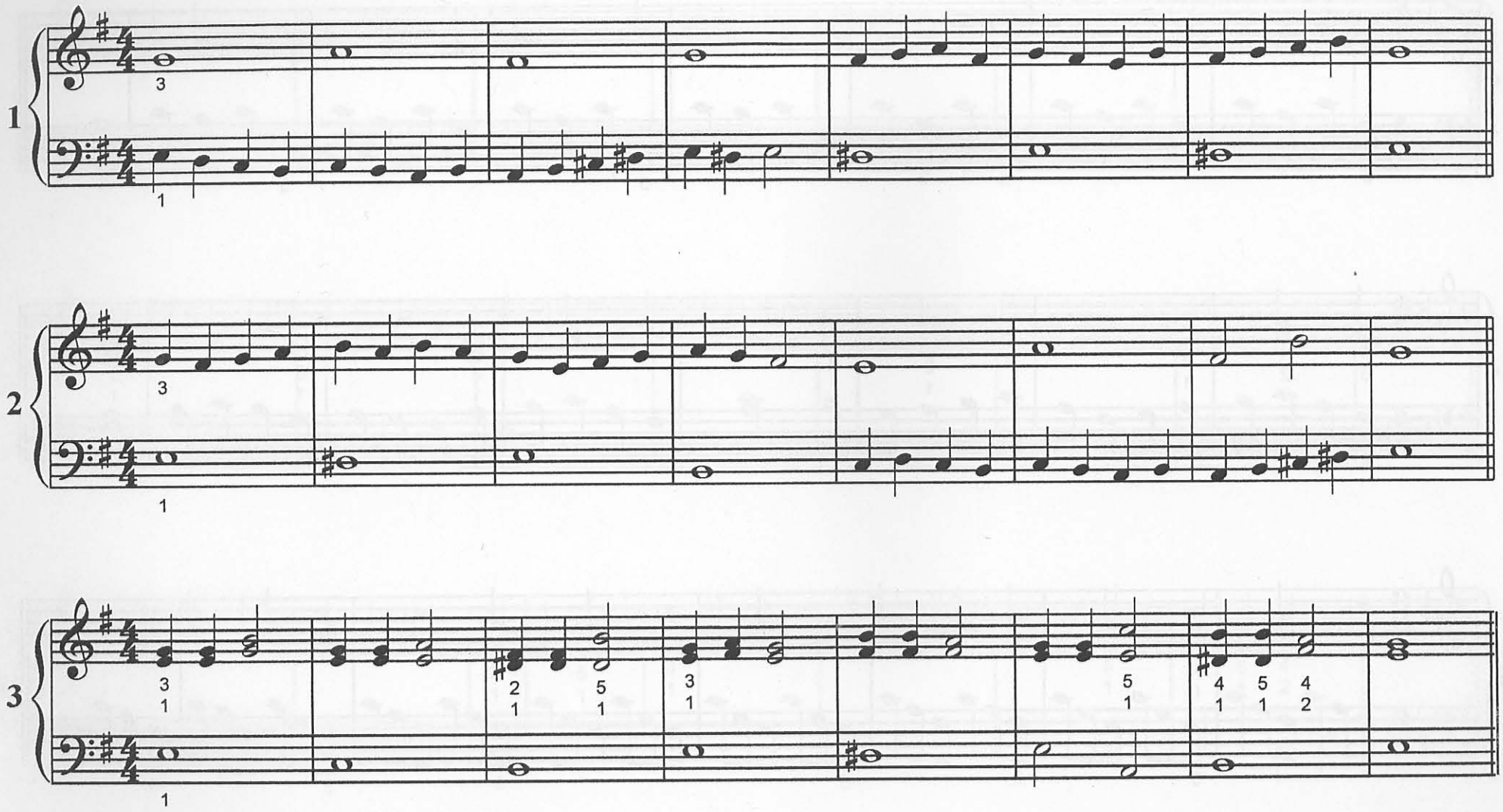


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

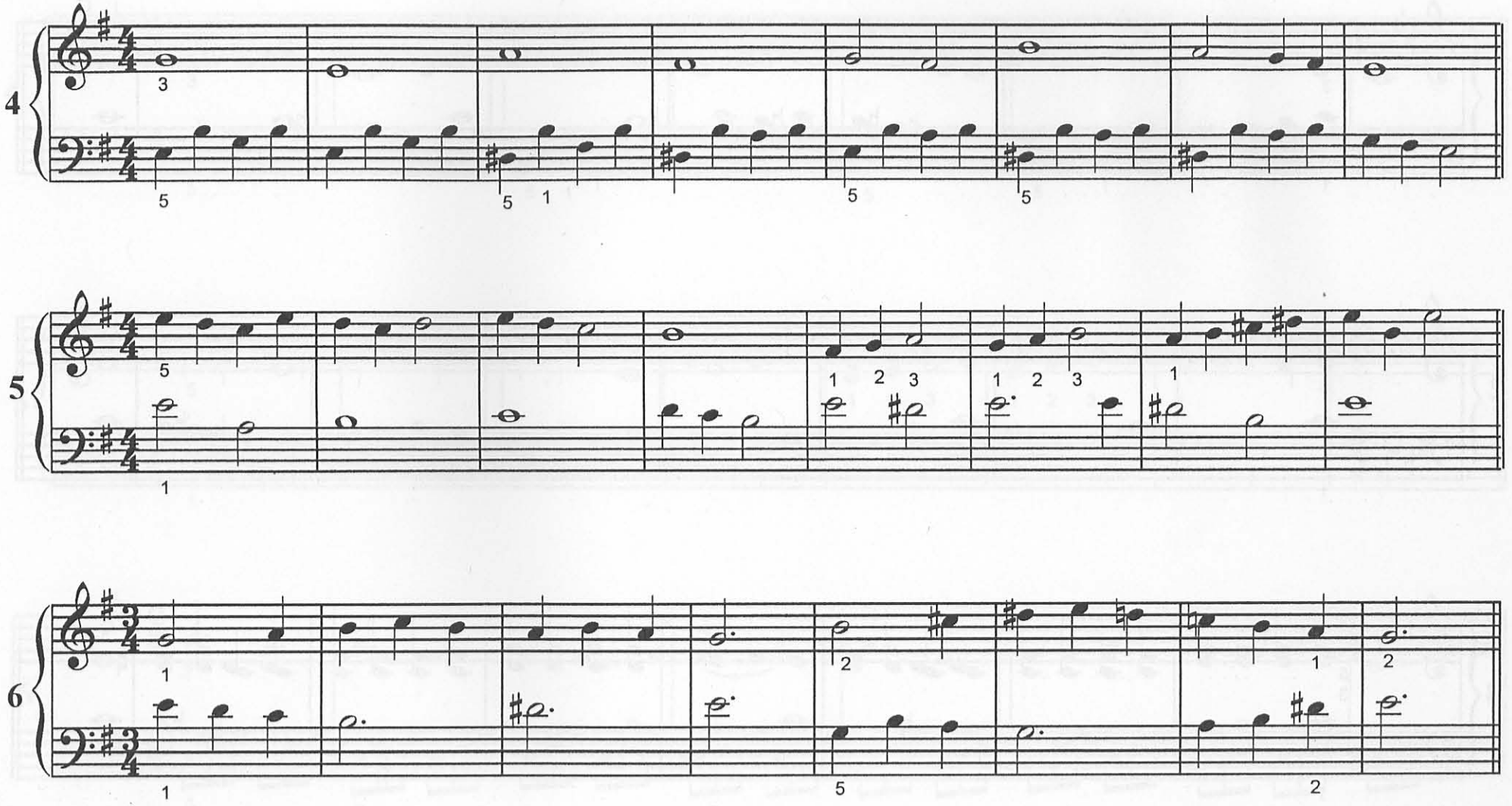


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 13: e minor

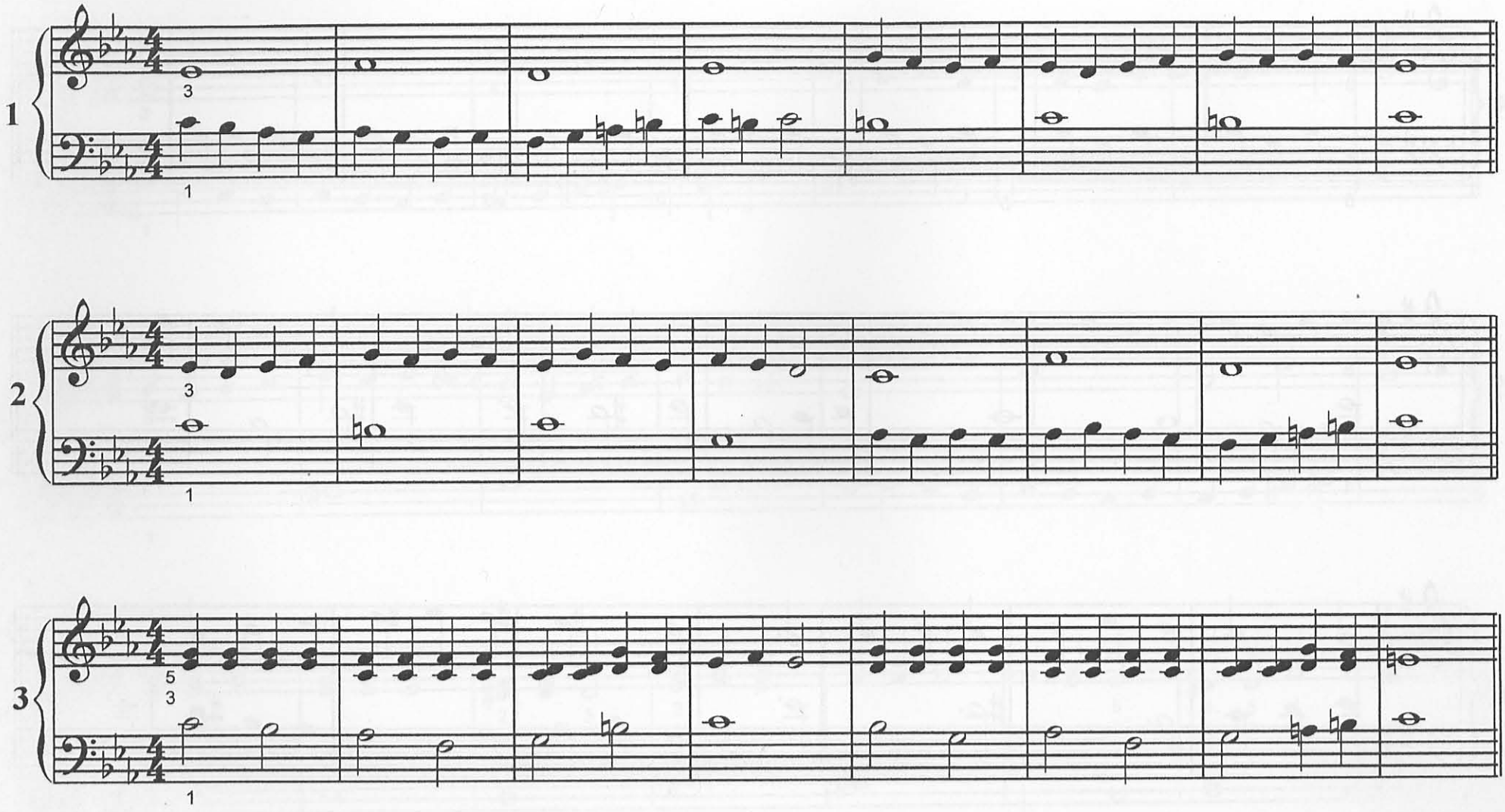


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

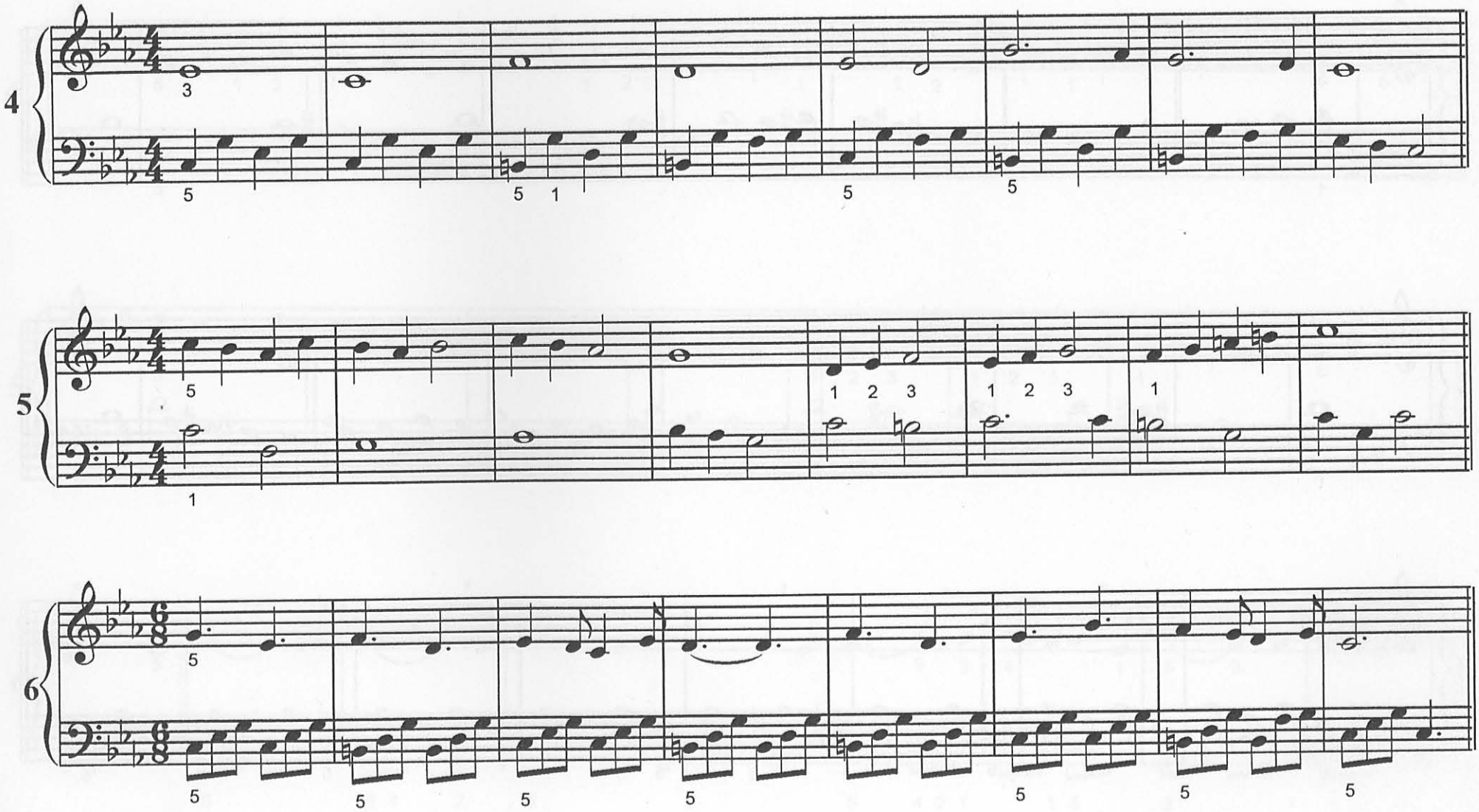


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 14: c minor

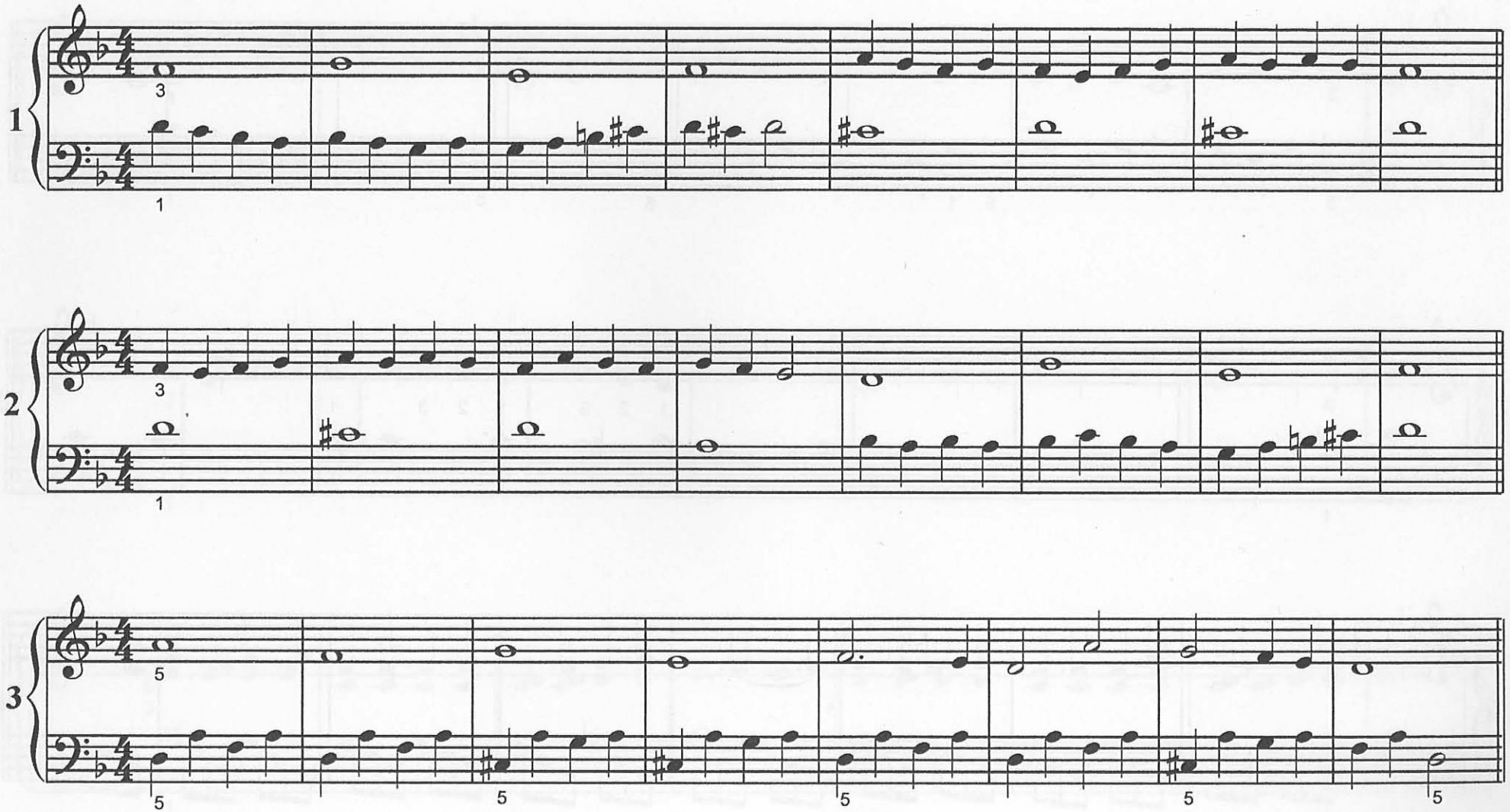


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

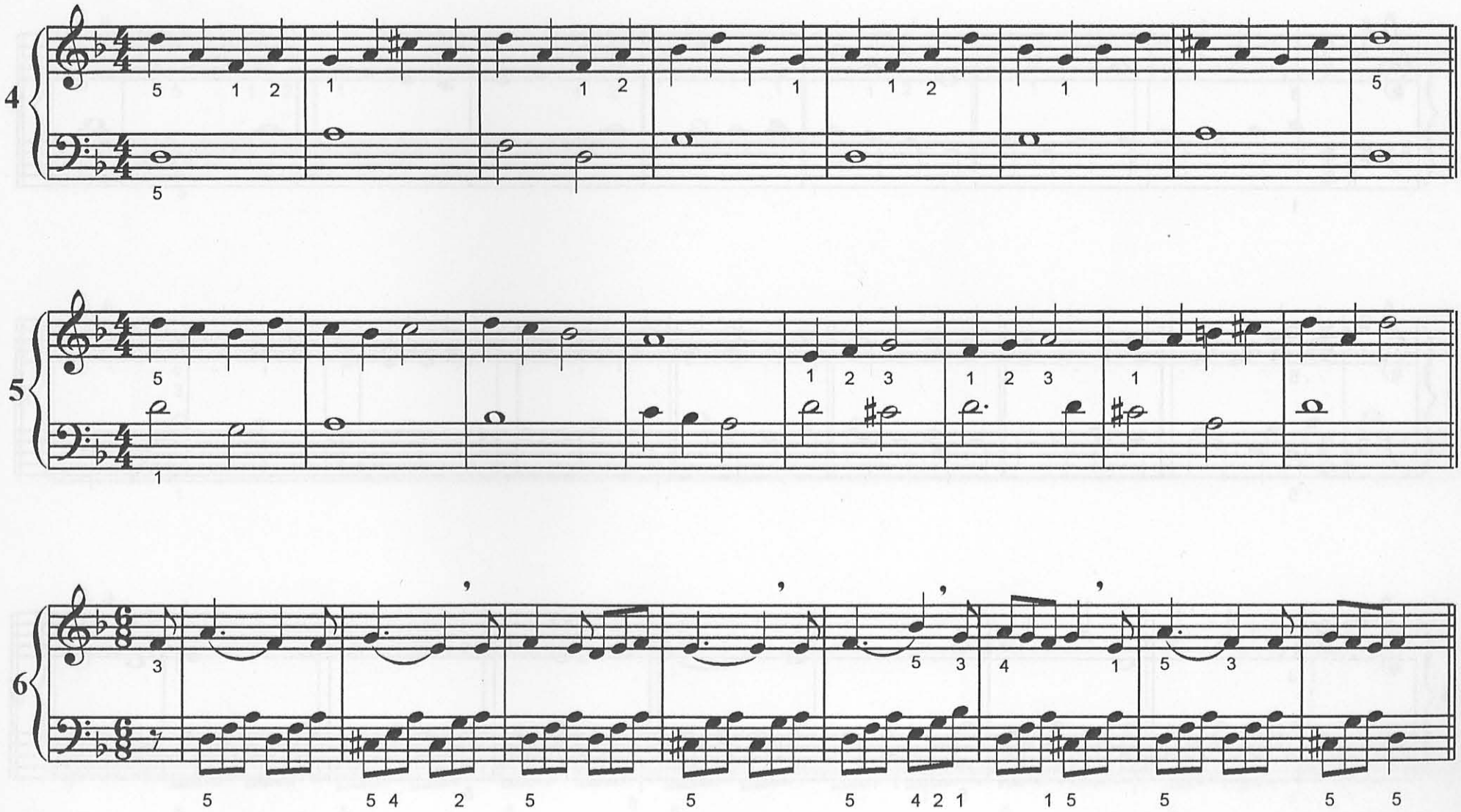


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 15: d minor

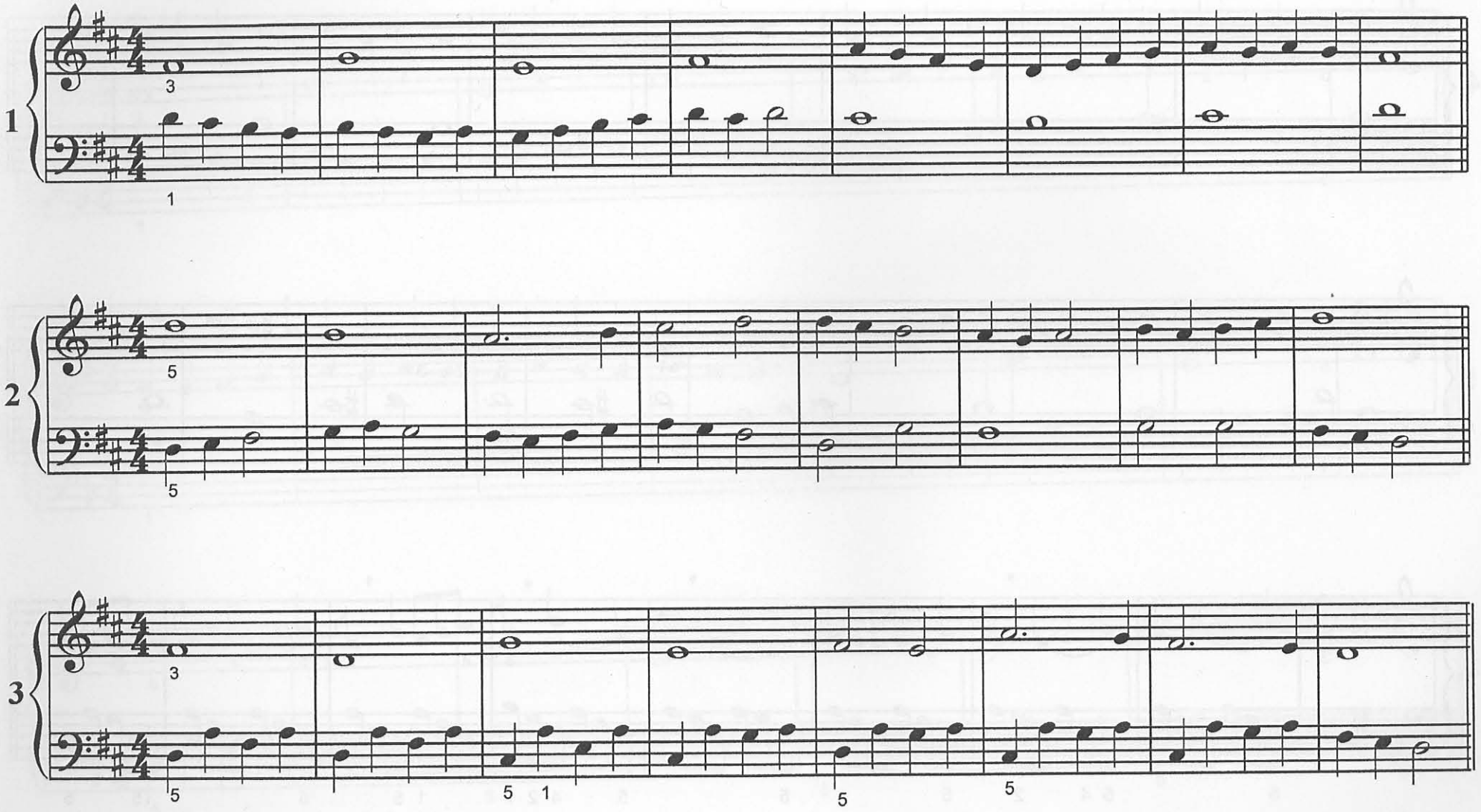


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

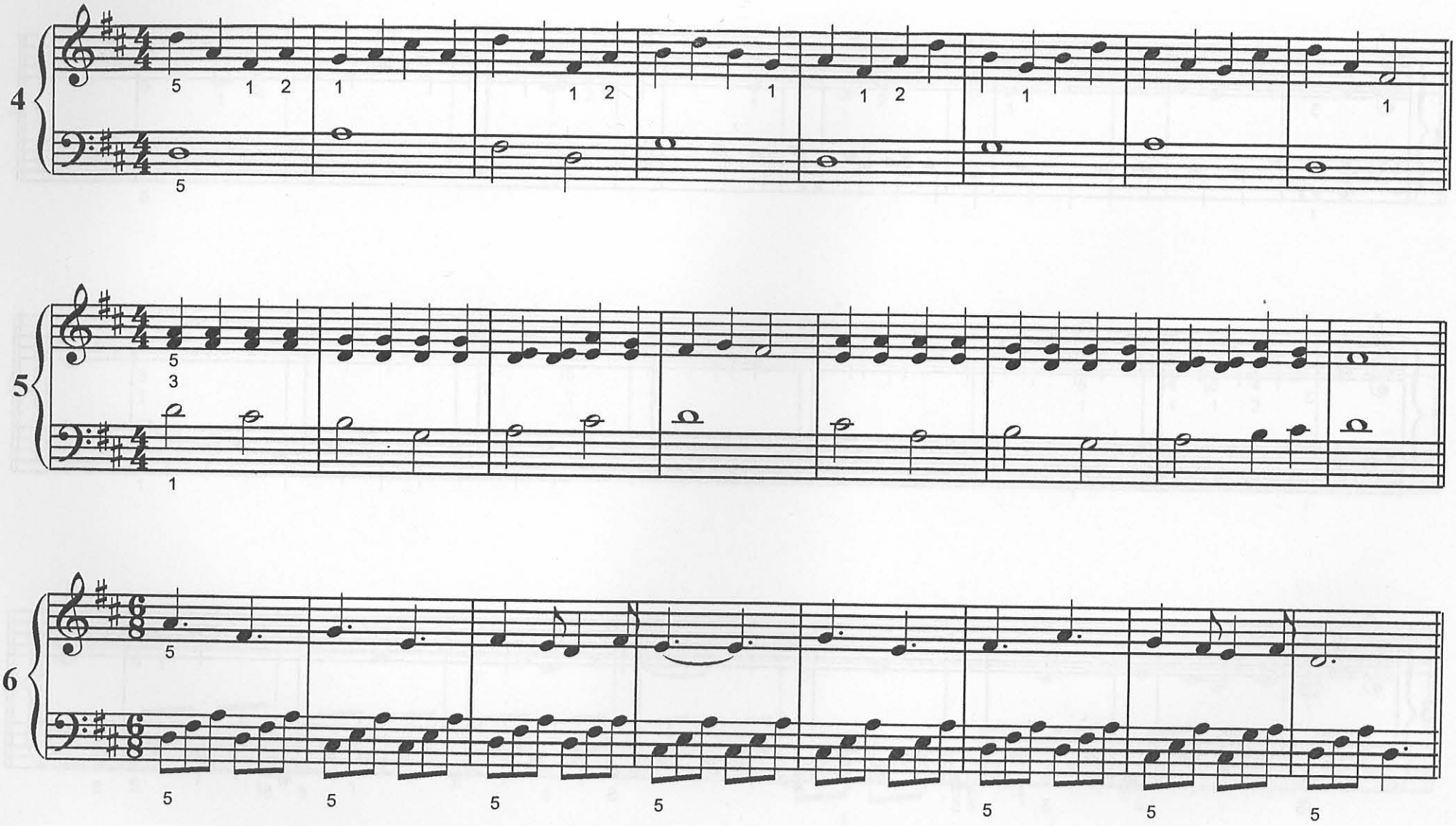


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 16: D major

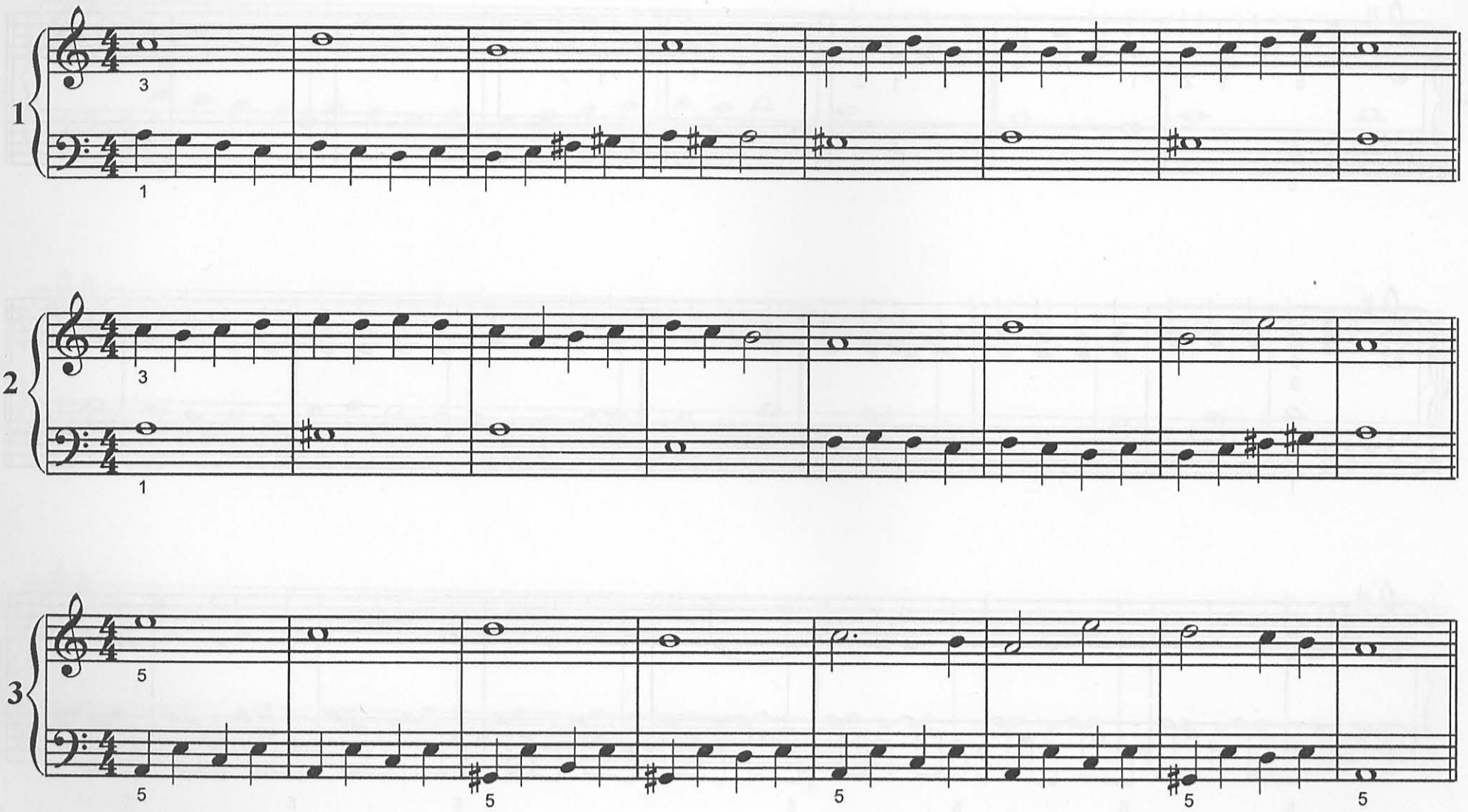


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

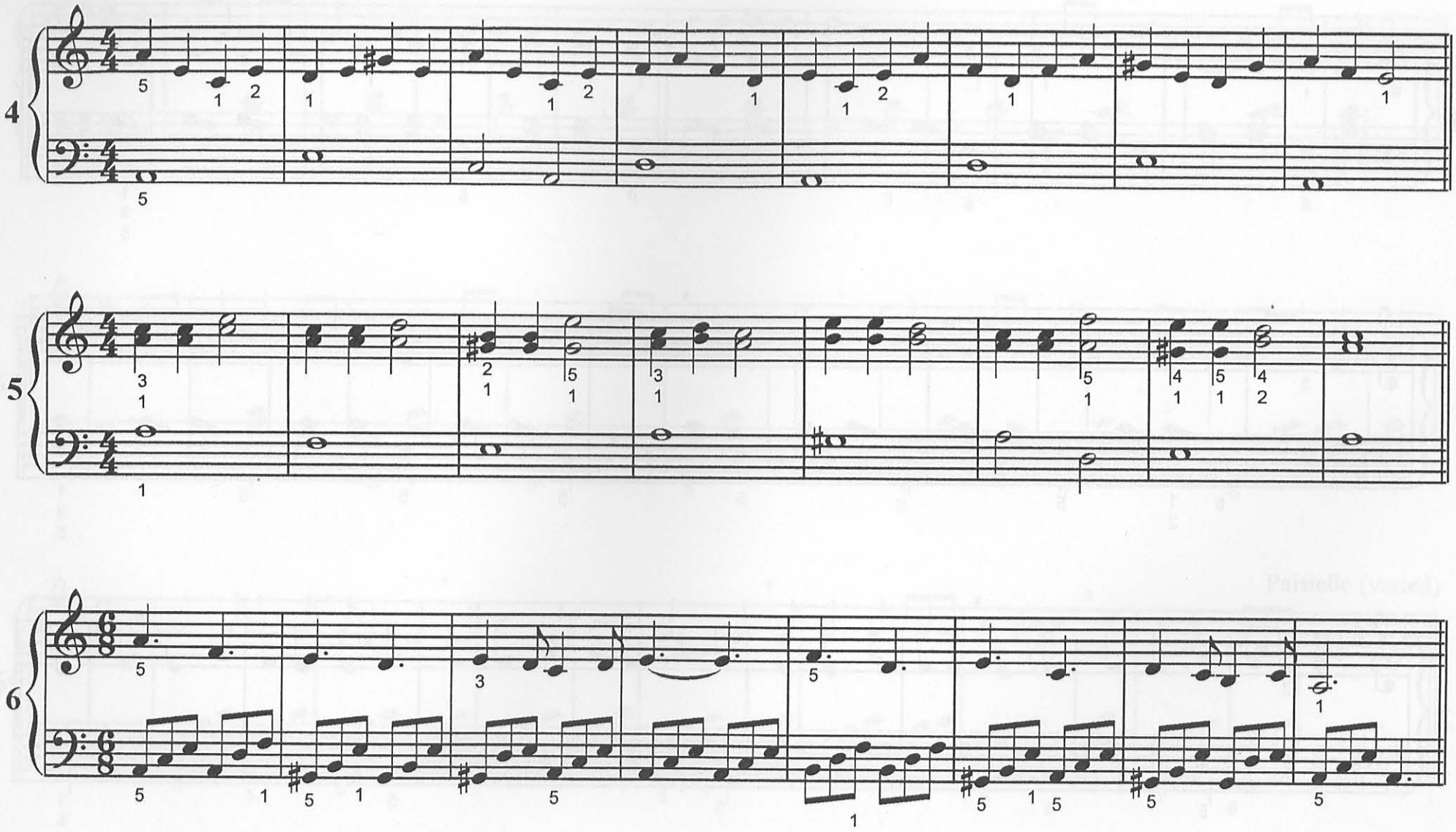


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 17: a minor

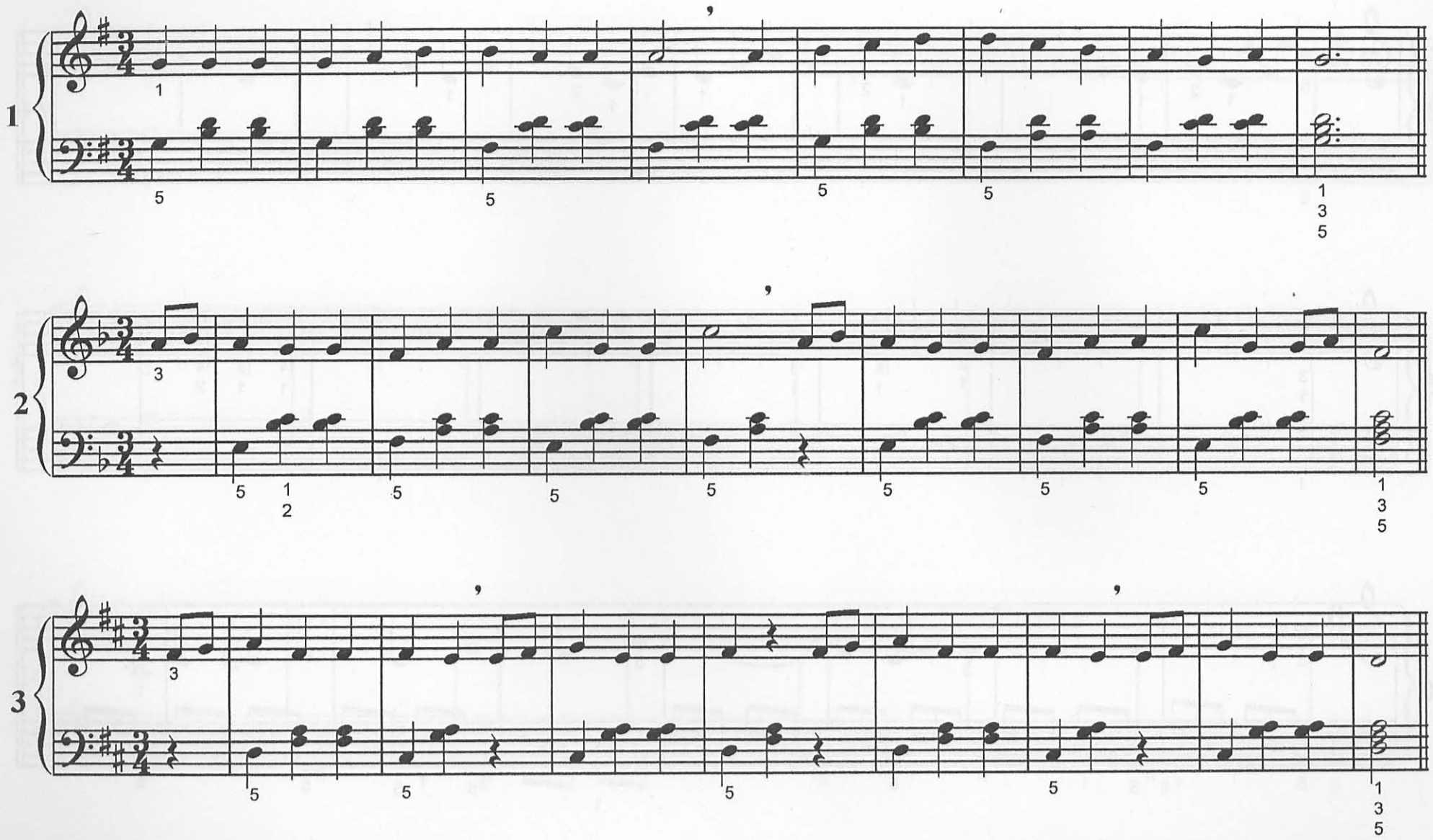


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

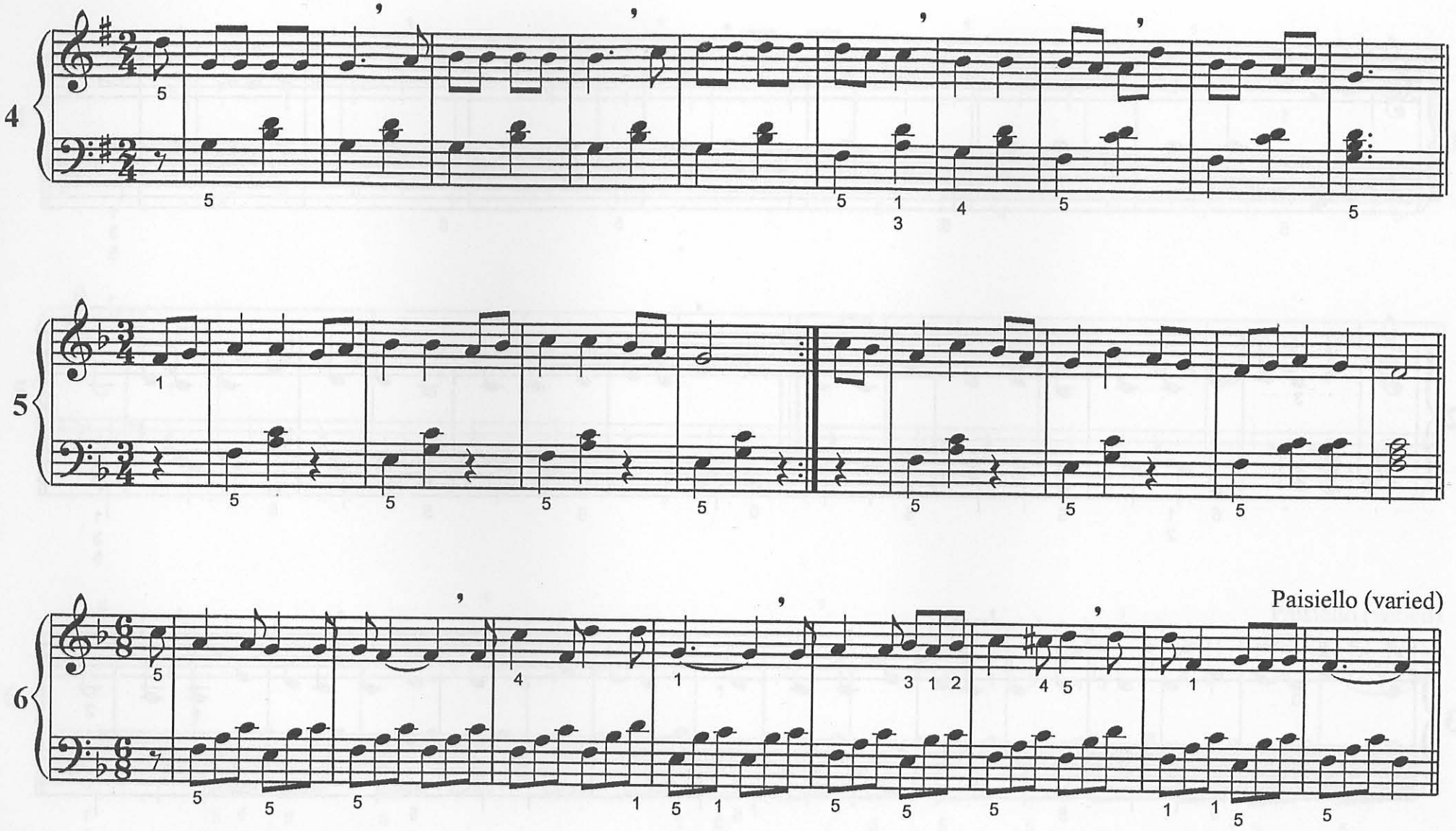


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 18: Traditional melodies

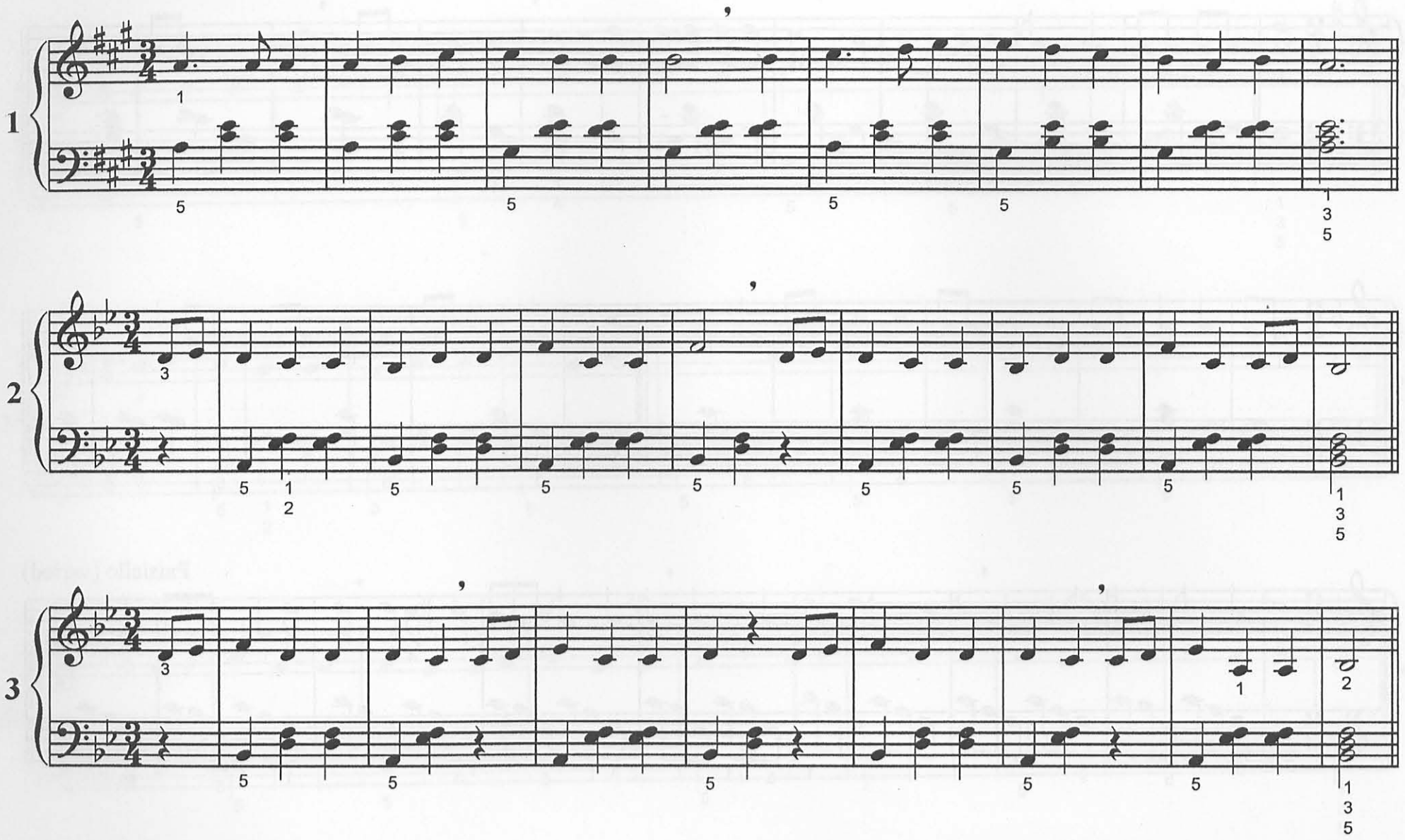


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

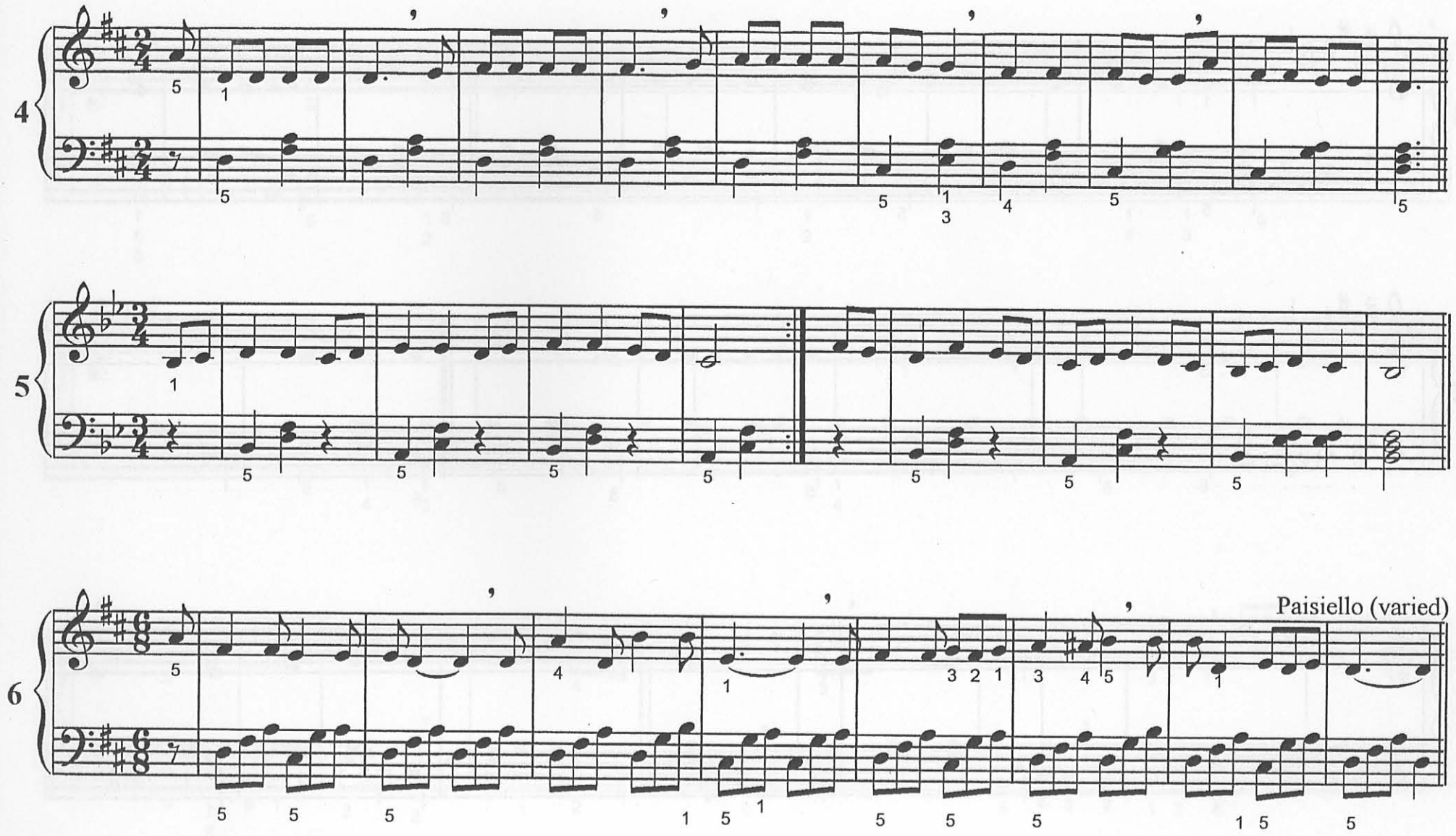


University of Pretoria etd – Aucamp, M M (2003)

Unit 19:

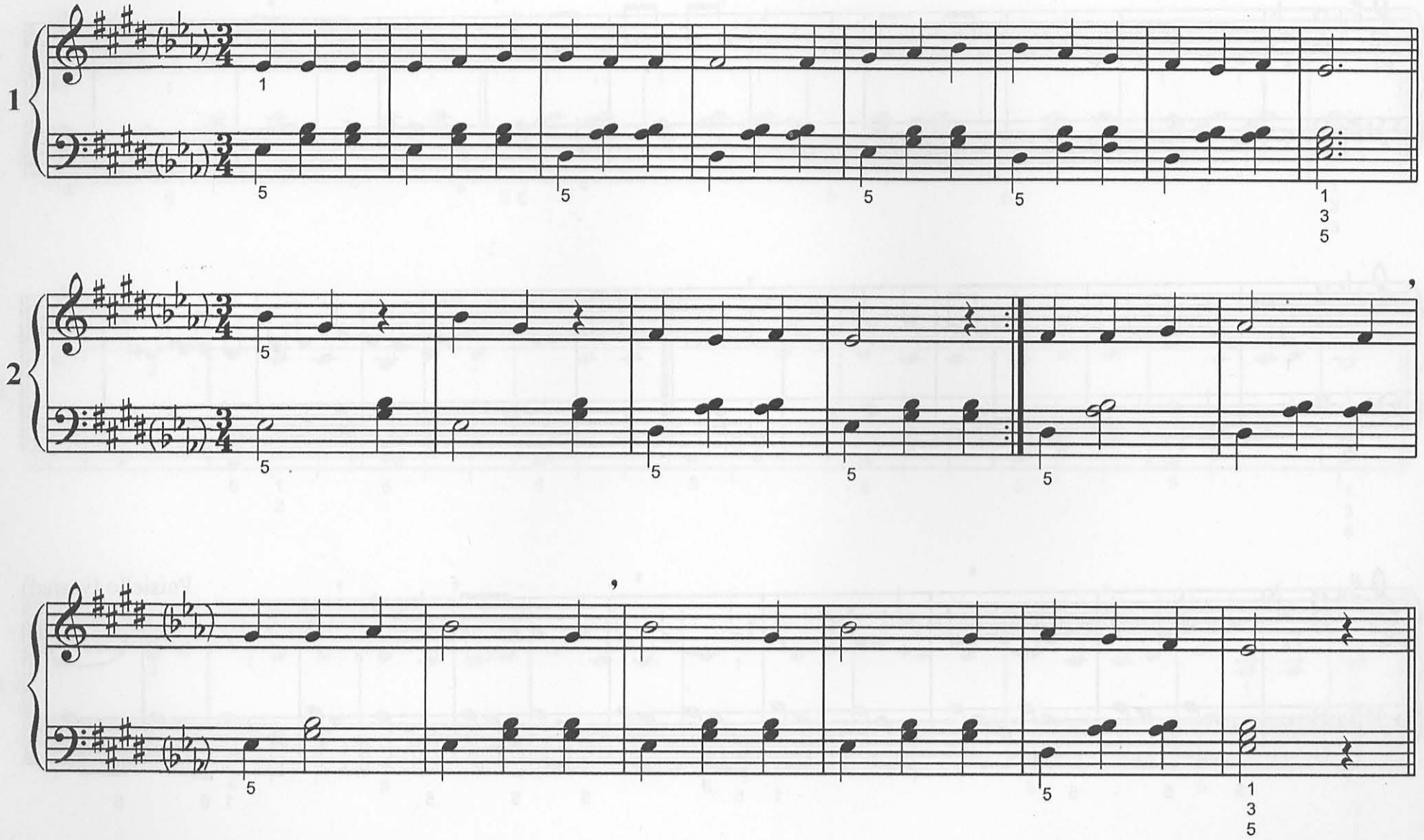
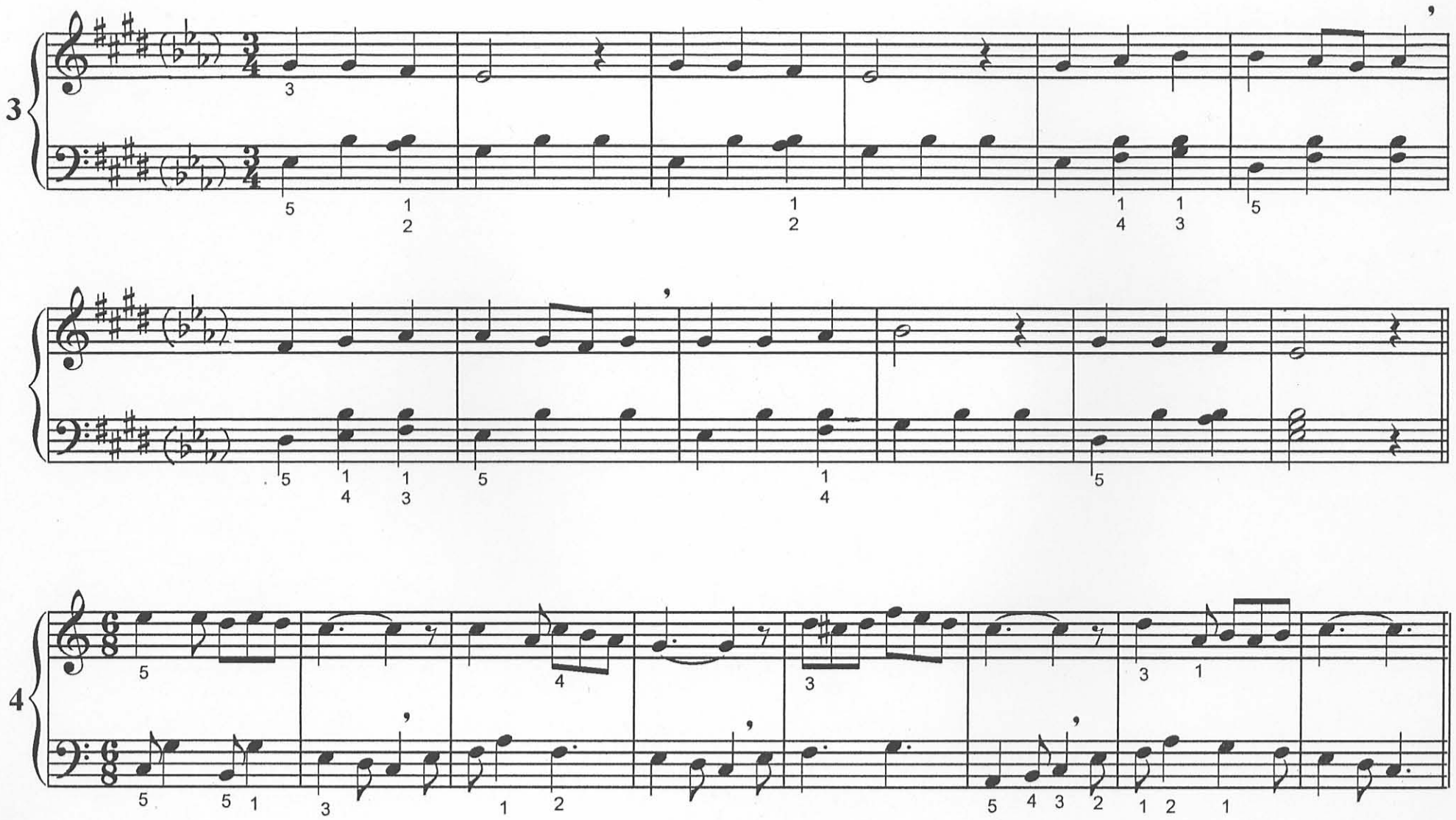


University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)



University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)

Unit 20:



University of Pretoria etd – McLachlan, M M (2003)