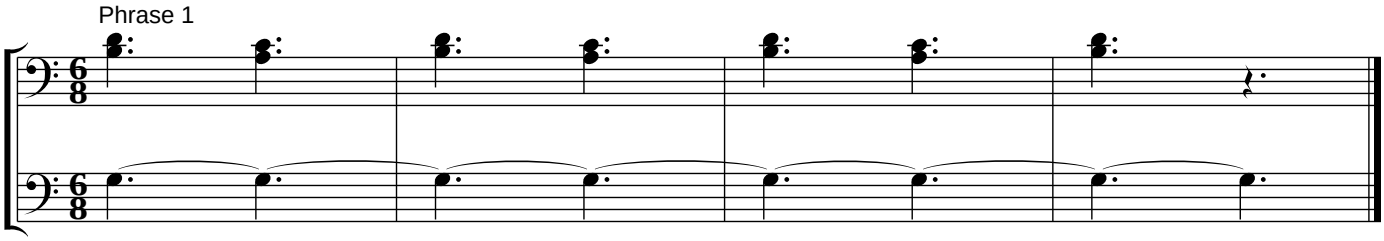
Recomposing Bartok's Mikrokosmos no. 41

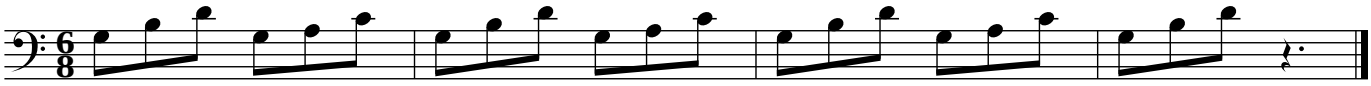
Objective: deriving melody (right hand) and accompaniment (left hand) from an easy progression of thirds.

Bartok's Mikrokosmos no. 41 can be seen as a varied repetition of the first 4−bar phrase.

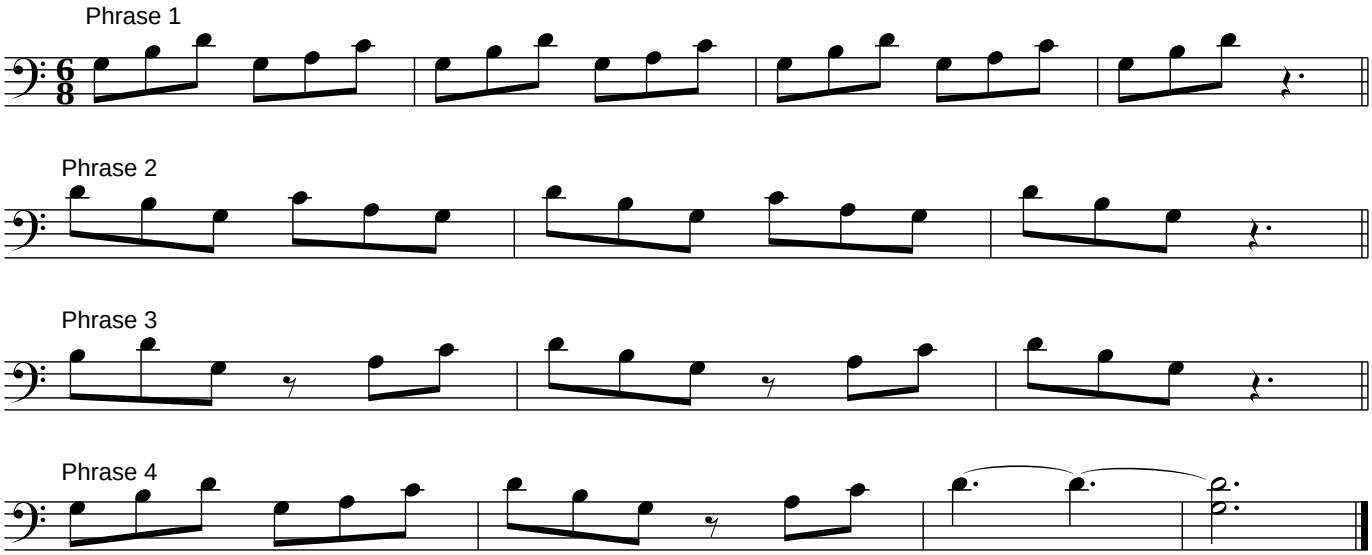
Step 1: the basic structure of the first 4−bar phrase (lower voice) is a sustained voice G and a third B−D which is repeated and elaborated by the lower third A−C



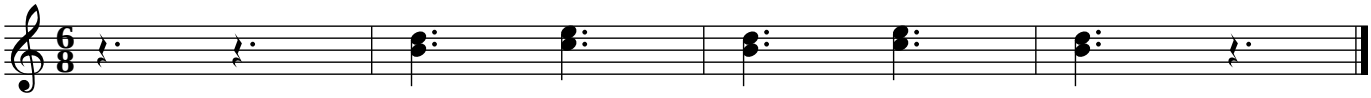
Step 2: phrase 1 with 'broken chords' as texture for the accompaniment



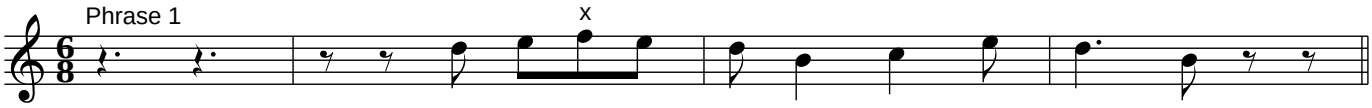
Step 3: phrase 2, 3 and 4 are built with permutations of the 'broken chords' from step 2
Condition: insert a rest in case of note repetition (cf. phrase 3 and 4)



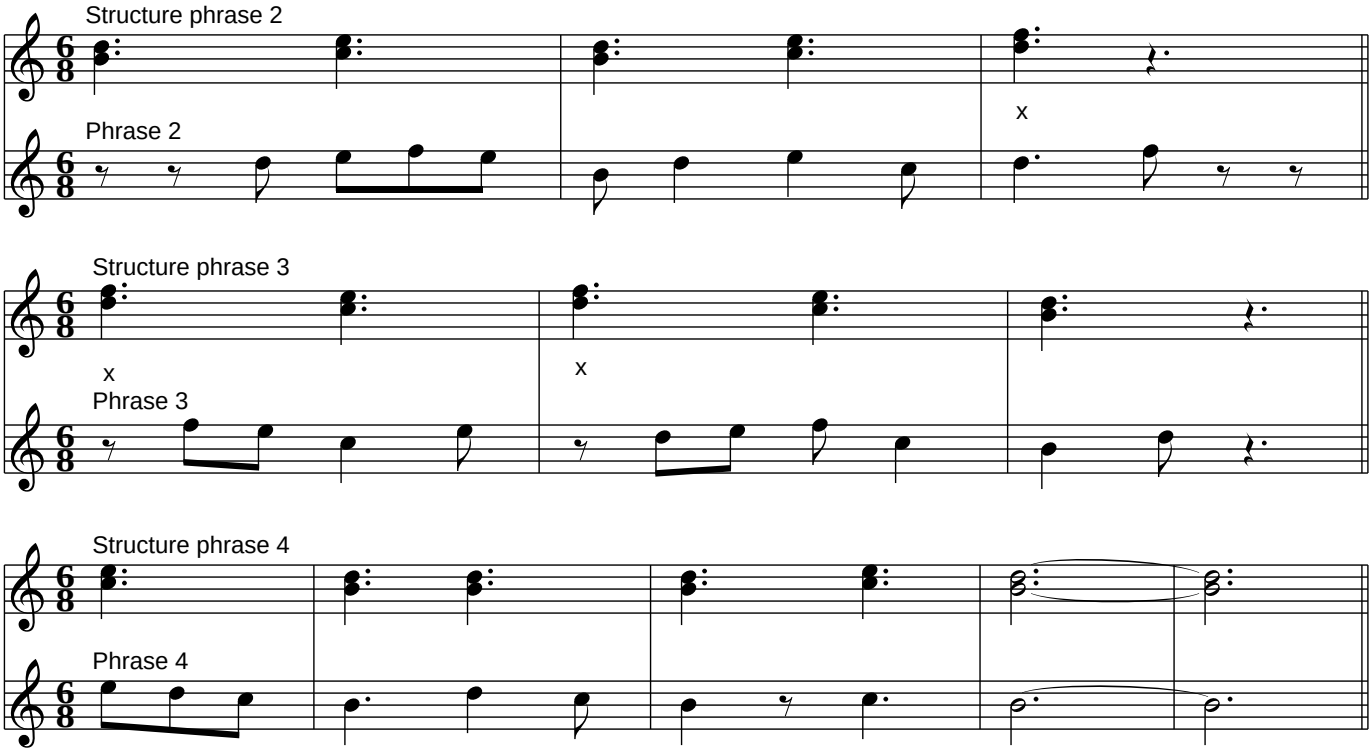
Step 4: the basic structure of the first 4−bar phrase (upper voice) is a third B−D which is repeated and elaborated by the upper third C−E



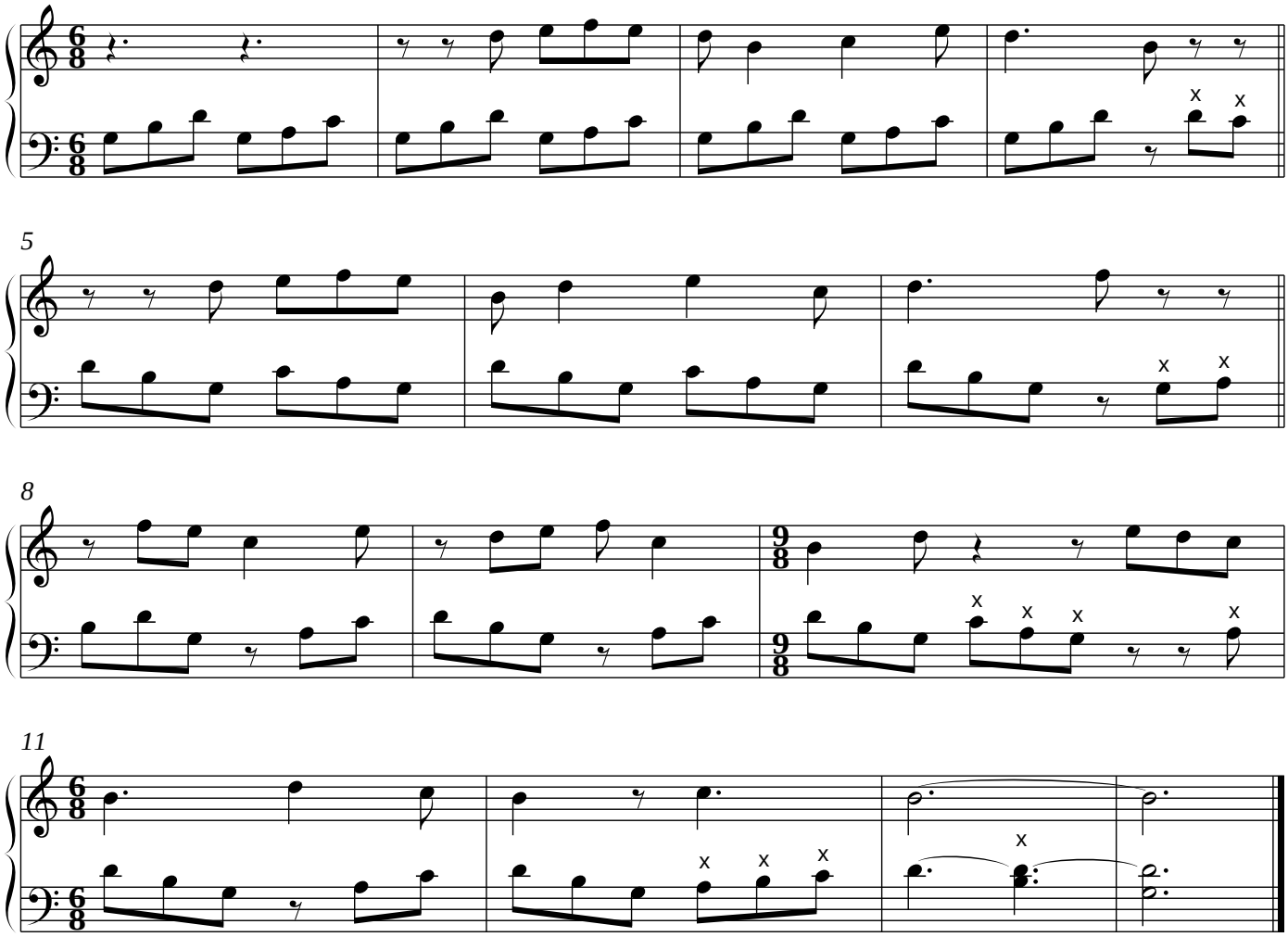
Step 5: a melody can be derived from this basic structure by switching from the upper interval tone to the lower interval tone and vice versa. Bartók's solution is as follows:



Step 6: the melody of phrases 2 and 3 can be seen as derived from an expanded basic structure (cf. x). The melody of phrase 4 is built in the same way as the melody of phrase 1. Again, the melodies are composed by switching from the upper interval tone to the lower interval tone and vice versa. Bartók's solution for the phrases 2, 3 and 4 is as follows:

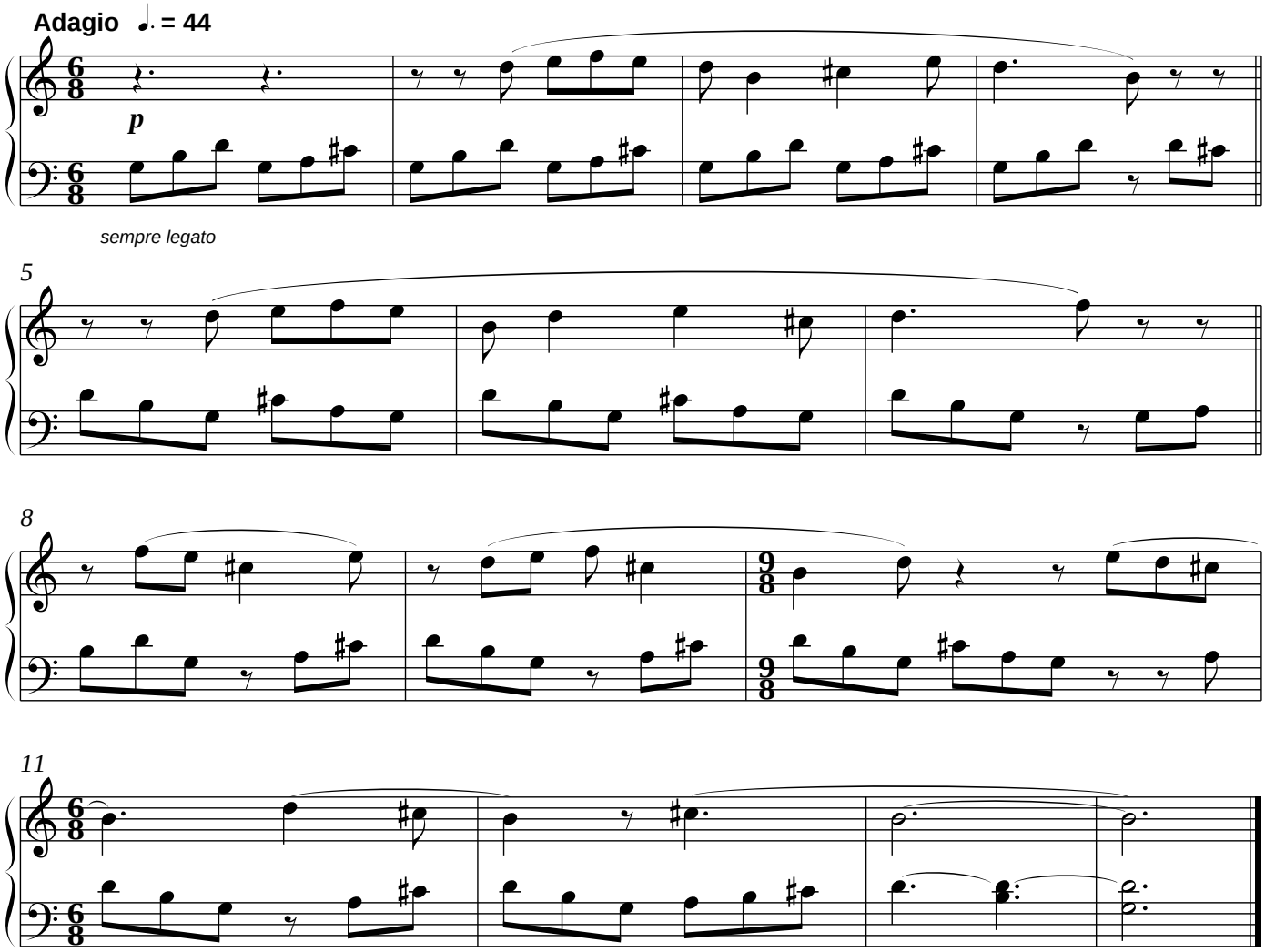


Step 7: combining all the above results in a composition that is more or less equivalent to Bartók's solution. The main difference relates to bar 10: a modification of a 6/8 bar into a 9/8 bar. Some accompaniment figures are modified, however in a slight way (cf. x).



Step 8: finishing touch (adding dynamics, tempo, phrasing and notes on performance)

The most unexpected modification of Bartók is the raise of the fourth note of the mixolydian scale from C to C−sharp. Similar modifications of church modes can be often found in Bartók's oeuvre.



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