

100 SYNCRATED BREAKS

FOR
PIANO

BY
BILLY MAYERL *
THE FAMOUS PIANIST

2/-
NET

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100 SYNCOATED BREAKS

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BY

BILLY MAYERL

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

The following extract from "The Keith Prowse Courier" for December, 1925, is of interest :

" Billy Mayerl, as he is popularly known, is the talented solo pianist of the Savoy Havana Band. Born in London in 1902, he, at a very early age, showed signs of unusual musical talent. At the remarkably tender age of six-and-a-half he made his first public appearance at the Queen's Hall, playing a Grieg Piano Concerto, and also a little Suite of his own composition. At seven he passed the Trinity College preparatory examination, and then his studies began in real earnest. At twelve our young musician wrote an Eastern Suite of such merit that it was considered worthy of publication, and, in fact, is still selling.

" In 1920 Billy Mayerl joined the famous Savoy Havana Band as solo pianist, and all the success and popularity of this famous combination has been shared by him. Although at the present time Mr. Mayerl is perhaps the foremost syncopated pianist in this country, it must not be supposed that he confines his talents exclusively to this style of playing ; he is an all-round brilliant pianist and in performing the classics of the great composers his execution and technique are just as wonderful as when he is rendering the popular syncopated music.

" At the Savoy Orpheans' Concert held at the Queen's Hall on October 28, 1925, Mr. Mayerl rendered from memory, in marvellous style, Gershwin's " Rhapsody in Blue "—which has been called a syncopated classic, and is without doubt the most scintillating example of modern syncopated music—it is certainly the composer's most brilliant effort. Mr. Mayerl was the first pianist in this country to play this celebrated composition in public, and it is admitted that he did it full justice and interpreted the composer's ideas in truly masterly fashion, his execution being nothing short of marvellous.

" At the same concert Mr. Mayerl also played three of his own syncopated compositions These are in great demand everywhere, in fact, copies have even been sent to America, the home of syncopated music . . . "

Keith Prowse Courier.

Early in 1926, acting on medical advice, Mr. Mayerl abandoned orchestral work with its attendant strain, and resigned his post at the Savoy Hotel.

It was not many weeks before he was appearing in prominent positions on the bills of leading West End vaudeville houses. A few months later he joined forces with Miss Gwen Farrar, the well-known revue actress, and this powerful double act has met with great enthusiasm wherever it has been seen.

Billy Mayerl's pianoforte compositions are well-known, as are also his solo records issued by the " H.M.V. " Company and the " Columbia " Co. The " Vocalion " Co. issue the popular Farrar and Mayerl records, together with many of the latest dance numbers recorded by Billy Mayerl and his Vocalion Orchestra.

Early in 1926, the Billy Mayerl School of Modern Syncopation was brought into being. This enterprise, for the training of pianists in syncopated playing by correspondence, met with instantaneous approval, and before the first year had elapsed many hundreds of students, both amateur and professional, had passed through the School.

This book of breaks is published by arrangement with the Billy Mayerl School of Modern Syncopation, who own all rights in all educational work from the pen of Billy Mayerl.

FOREWORD.

The student of these breaks should note very carefully the remarks which appear beneath them from time to time. He is also asked to read this short foreword before proceeding with his study of the book itself.

Judgment must be used in the use of breaks: most breaks are not suitable to every tune. The type of break to be employed depends upon the type of tune you are playing.

It is important that the start and finish of a break should be in the correct register in relation to the preceding or following chords in the tune, so as to avoid awkward intervals.

Do not transpose the breaks in this book: they have been carefully chosen as most suitable to the keys in which they now appear.

Before every series of breaks in this book is given the chord in which the break is built: but this chord is merely to be considered as a guide to the harmony on which the break is to be played.

Remember that the ability to perform a few more or less brilliant breaks does not make a syncopated performer: a break is actually one of the least important things in syncopated work.

All breaks contained in this book should be played exactly as written, note for note—accent for accent. Use only the fingering as marked; this has been most carefully thought out to give the best results.

Continental fingering is used throughout the book.

The ability to memorise, by the way, is not essential: but it is a decided help if you possess it.

It will be noticed that each section of breaks increases in difficulty from the first to the last in that section. Many of the easier ones are not those I actually use myself, but have been put in by way of exercises. Nevertheless they are very effective breaks and must not be despised on account of their simplicity. Do not forget that simple effects are very often the best.

There are seven keys in which most dance tunes are written, viz.: C, D, E \flat , F, G, A \flat and B \flat ; and there are 32 bars (or multiples or sub-divisions of 32 bars) to the average chorus. A break must therefore fall in either the 15th and 16th bars or the 23rd and 24th. And it will generally be found that the chord on which the break is played is the dominant 7th of the key in which the tune is written. In view of this, the breaks in this book are based on the dominant 7th of the key stated. Of course, a break or embellishment may fall in any chord; but this raises a very large question and if the student is interested, he should take a course of tuition in syncopation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Billy Mayerl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

SYNCOPATED BREAKS

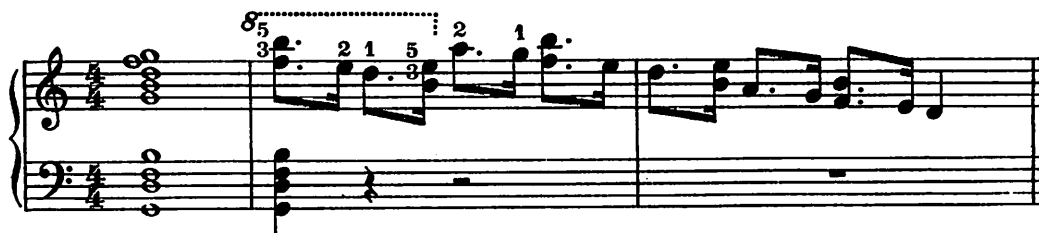
for PIANO

by
BILLY MAYERL

Key C

1

This break is composed of dotted quavers, the accent falling at odd places throughout.



2

A combination of triplets and dotted quavers, also accented in the same form.



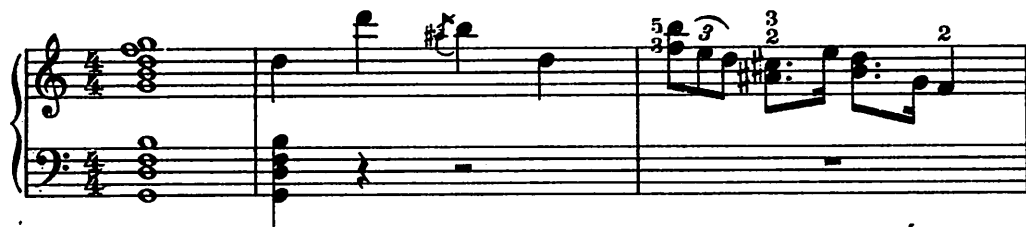
3

A Blues Break.



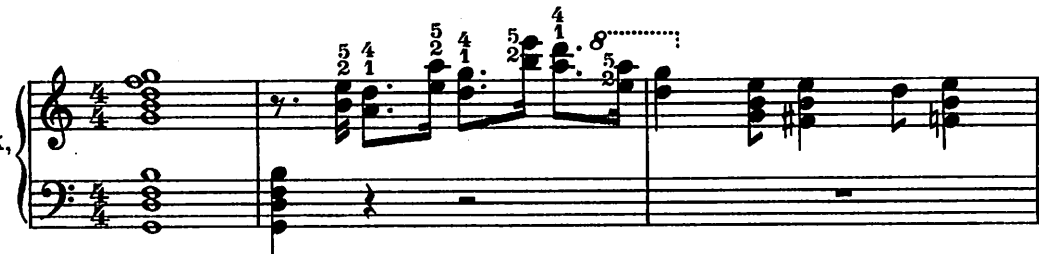
4

A Blues Break.



5

A fourth figuration break, with adaptable ending.



6

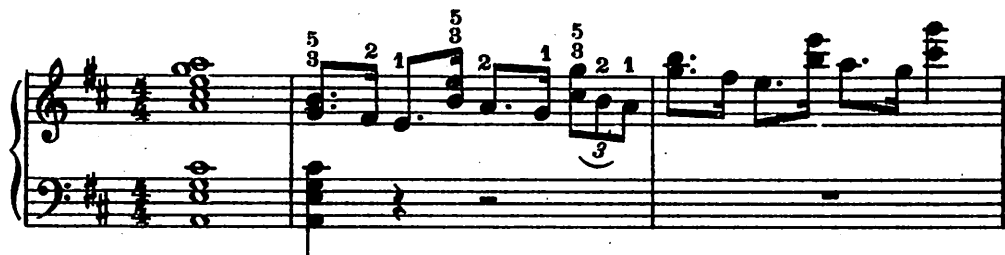
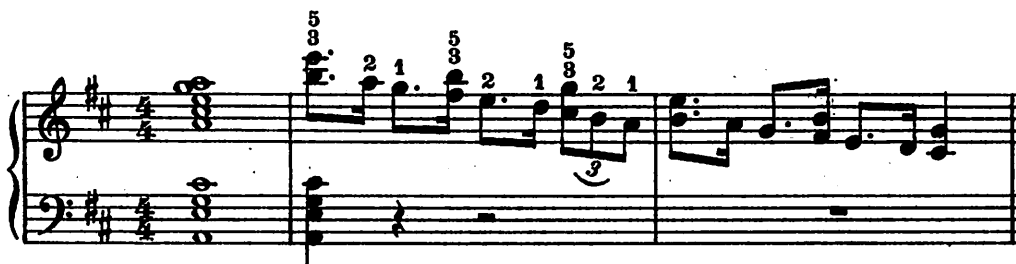
Break suggesting three-four movement.



Key D

11

A combination of dotted quavers broken by the application of a triplet depicting the odd style of syncopated music.

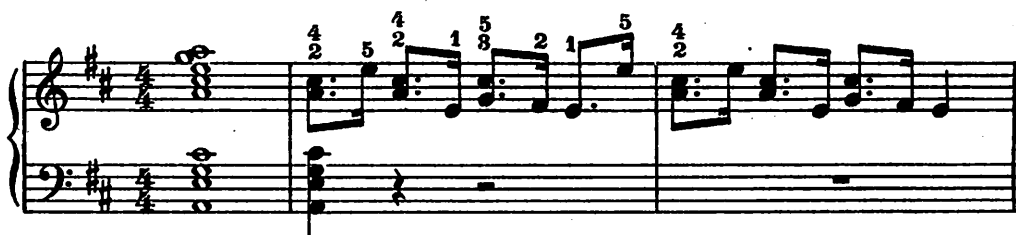


12

Another treatment in the same style.

13

Dotted quaver break built on 3rds and 4ths.

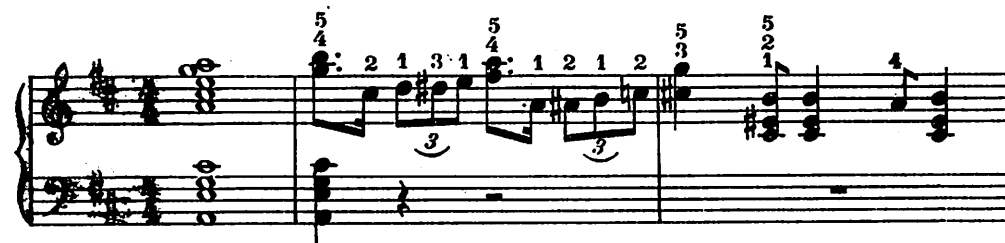
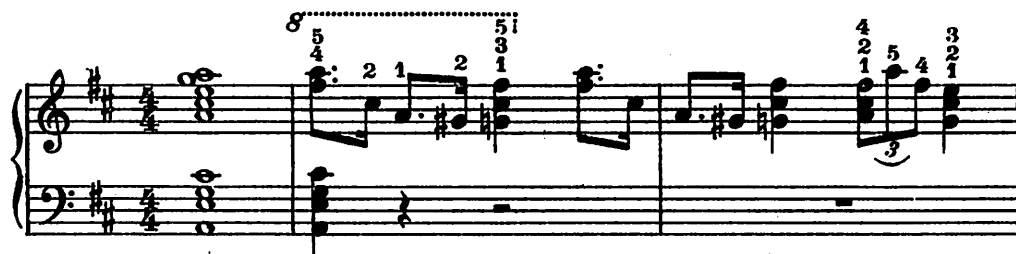


14

A combination of examples 11, 12 and 13 showing how by combining harmony and metre together with movement very effective results can be obtained.

15

$\frac{3}{4}$ break suggesting Waltz time metre with adaptable ending leading back to the tune.



16

A two-bar leading-in phrase combining dotted quavers and triplets with Charleston beat ending.

TWO-HANDED BREAKS

17

This break is identical
with No 7.

18

Descending.

19

Harmonic progression break
using tonal scale in synco-
pated rhythm.

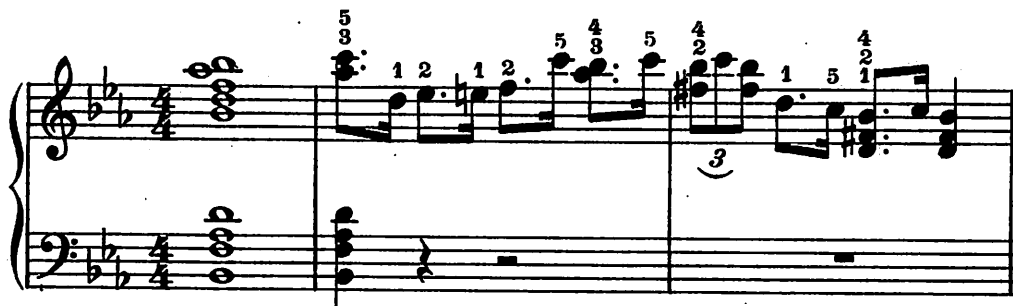
20

Syncopated break using
triplet to commence. Very
effective in fast moving
numbers.

Key E \flat

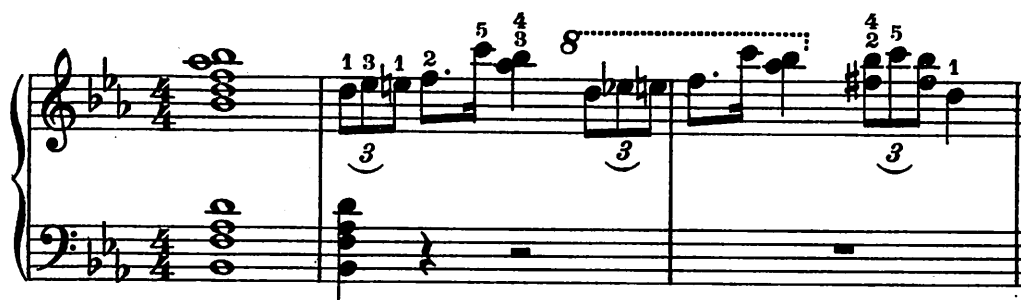
21

Dotted quaver break with triplet falling on 1st beat of the 2nd bar. Another style of mixing the metre.



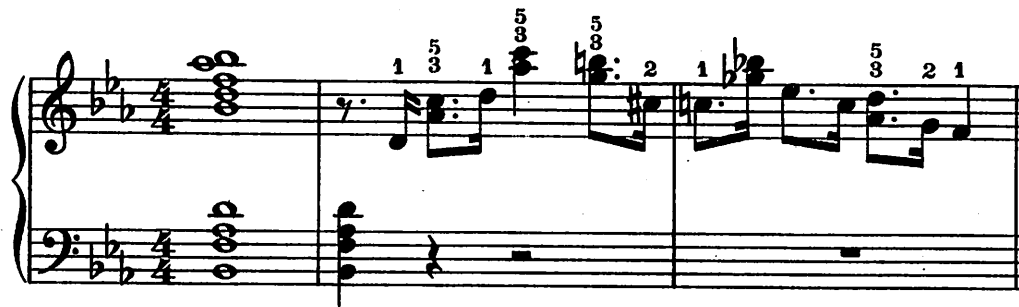
22

Suggesting the $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm as before and at the same time covering quite a large range of the keyboard, finishing with modulating triplet back to common chord of E \flat .



23

A chromatic type break reverting back to chord of E \flat very abruptly.



24

$\frac{3}{4}$ break based on dominant 7th chord of E \flat augmented on third beat of second bar.



29

Another strange movement which is very effective.

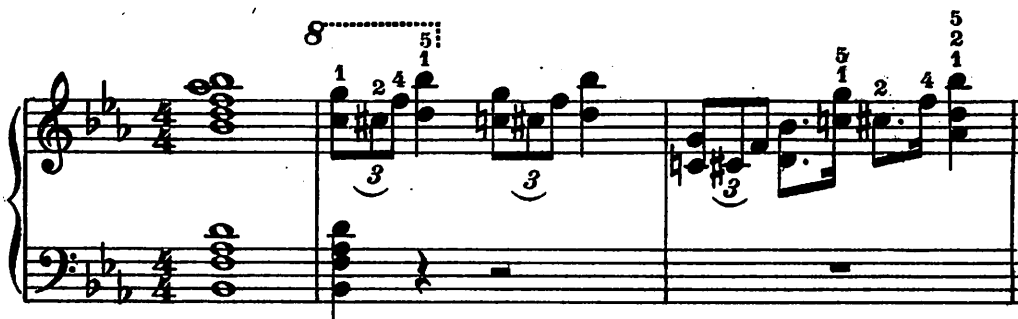


30

An ascending passage built up on the same principle as No 28.

31

A similar type of harmonic construction made to sound totally different by addition of the triplet on the 1st and 3rd beats of the 1st bar and 1st beat of the 2nd bar.



TWO-HANDED BREAKS

32

This break is similar in construction to No 17.

33

A similar construction descending.

34

A very effective break passing through distinct harmonic changes. Suitable for the Blues type of numbers.

35

A metre break with figurations in the left hand, merely an effect.

Key F

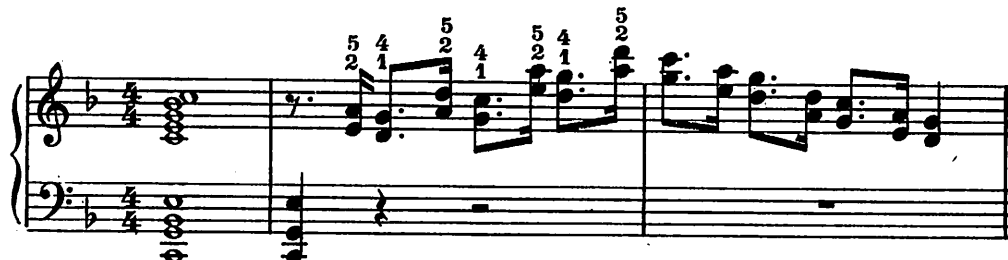
36

A combination of dotted quavers descending with the addition of a triplet on the 1st beat of the bar.



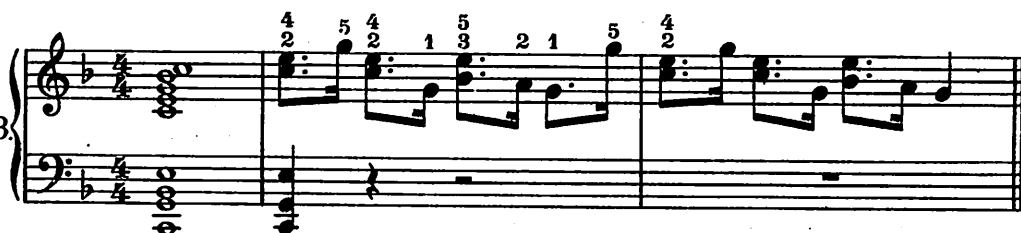
37

A straightforward fourth figuration break.



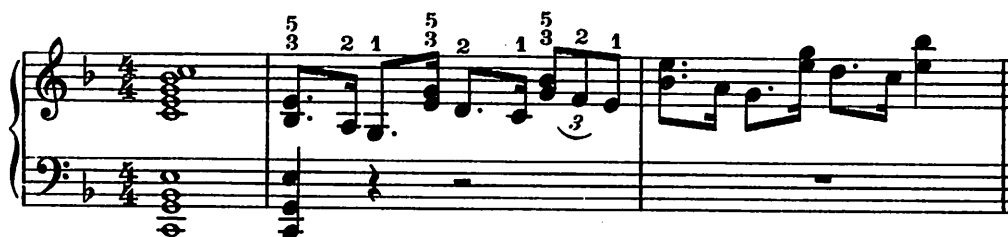
38

Same construction as N° 13.



39

Another way in which the triplet may be introduced at an odd place ascending.



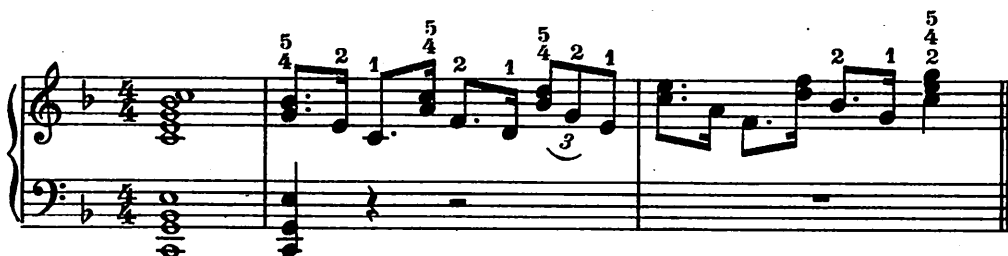
40

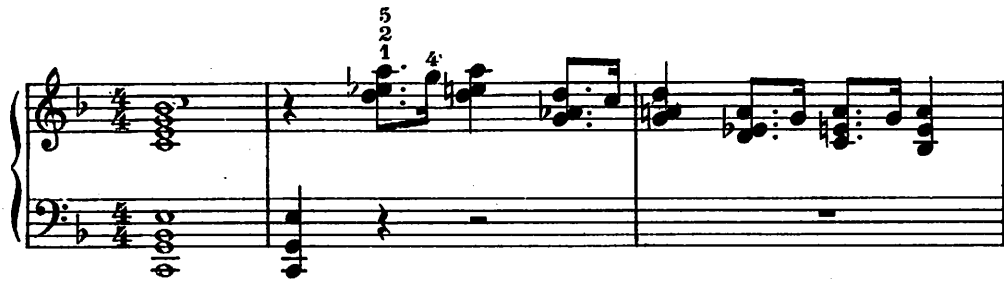
A smooth movement commencing with the diminished chord at the 1st beat of each bar



41

A very effective way of filling in a two-bar wait, the harmony of which may be sustained throughout.



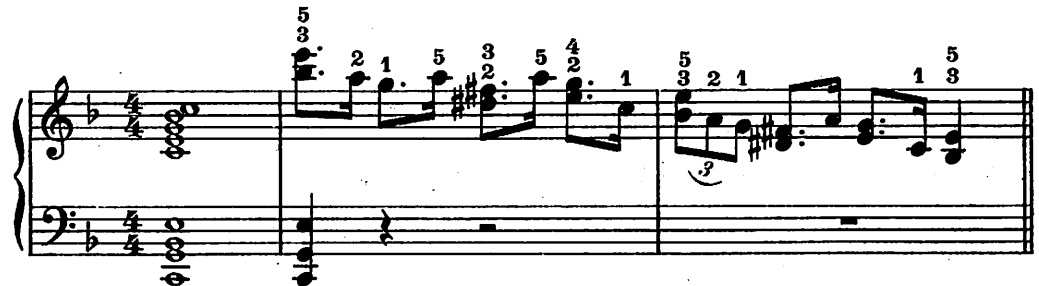


42

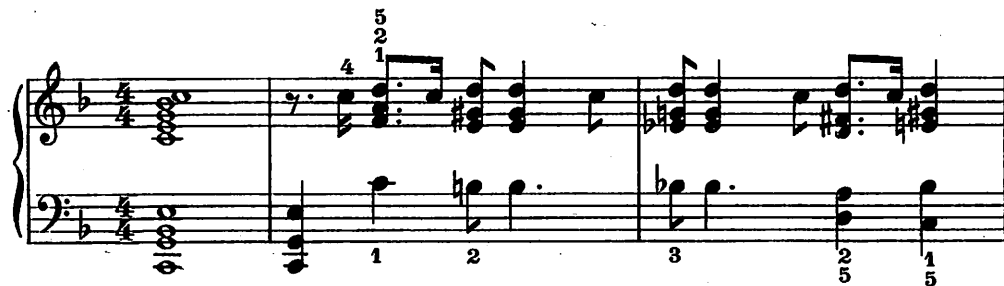
A Blues break.

43

Another effective way of employing a diminished chord at odd places



TWO-HANDED BREAKS

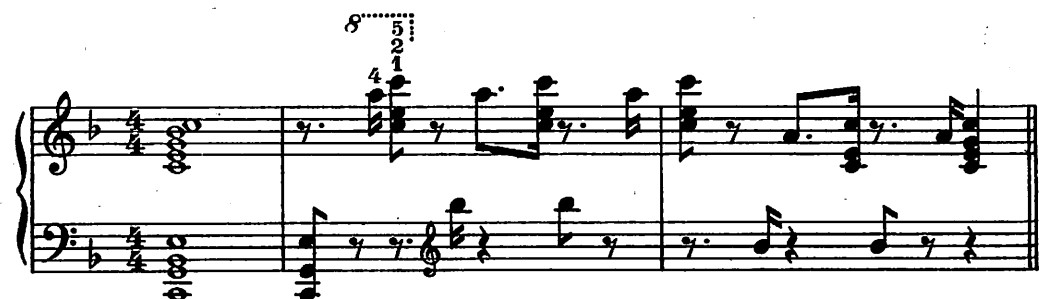


44

A modulating break passing through several harmonic changes.

45

Hesitating break, so named because there is a tendency to hesitate on the chord before continuing with the movement.



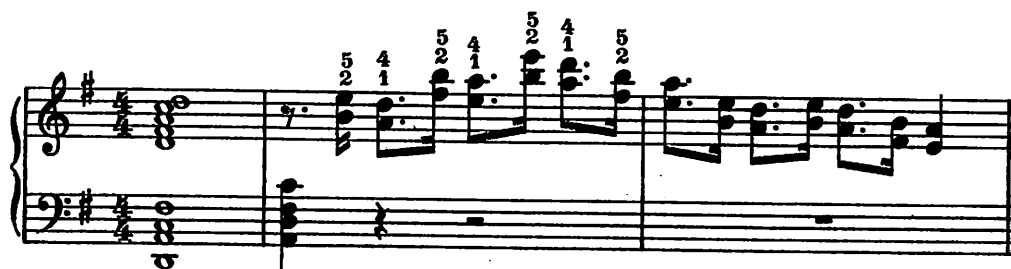
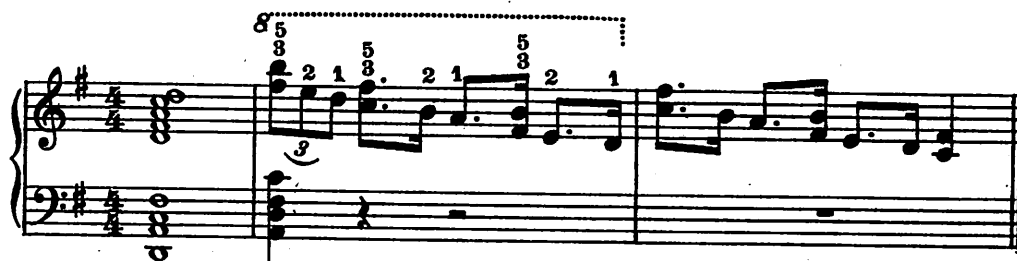
46

A very interesting combination of harmony and metre played in a bright register of the keyboard.

Key G

47

A combination of dotted quavers commencing with a triplet.



48

A fourth figuration break hesitating in movement.

49

A crawling break broken by the insertion of a triplet at an odd place.

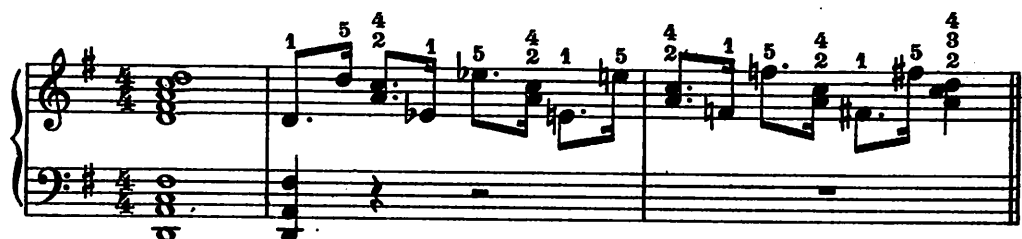


50

A similar treatment with augmented harmony of the triplet.

51

Another type of $\frac{3}{4}$ break.



52

A chromatic break with accents falling at odd places.



53

Suggesting $\frac{3}{4}$ movement at the beginning but resolving into straightforward break on the second bar.

54
A hesitating break
based on fourth figuration.



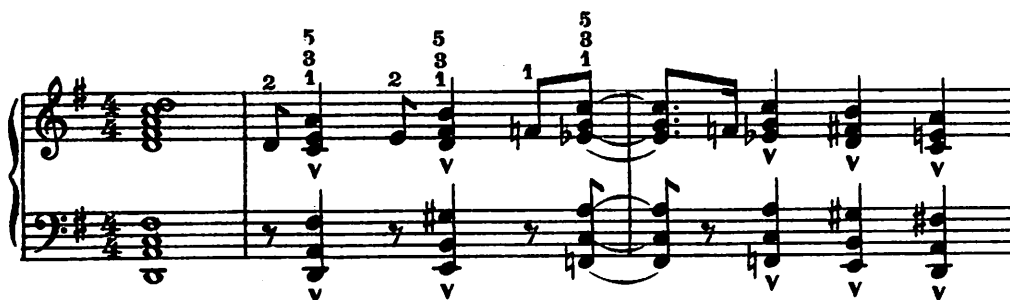
TWO-HANDED BREAKS



55

A similar kind of break
to No 17.

56
A similar kind of break
to No 46.

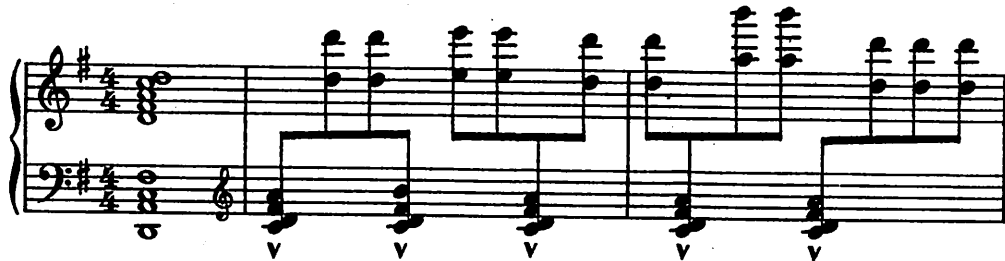


57

A harmonic progression
suggesting tonal scale.

58

A fourth figuration break with syncopated movement in the 2nd bar. A unique combination of harmony and metre.

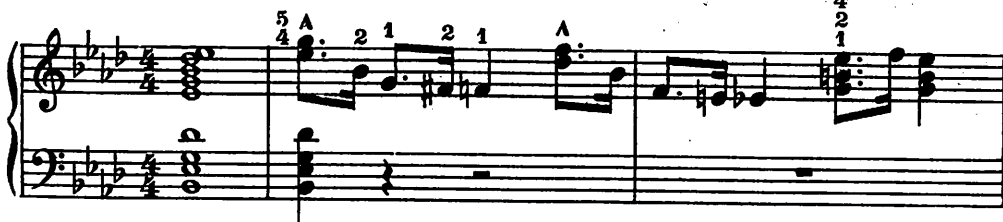


59

A straightforward quaver break made very effective by allowing the accents in the left hand to fall at odd intervals.

60

Simple in Construction this break is most suitable in cases where the melody stops in the low register and continues in the high.

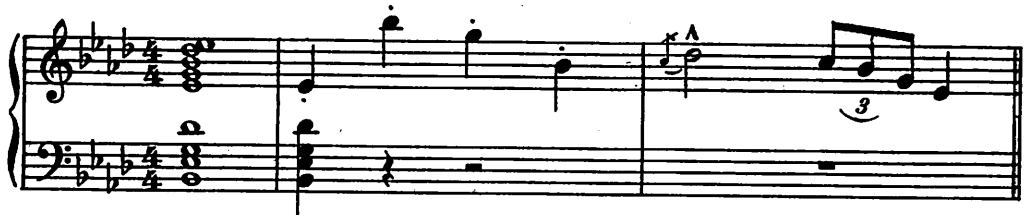
Key A^b

61

Of simple Construction this break is based on the $\frac{3}{4}$ movement. Pay attention to accents

62

Very effective blues break for fast, snappy type of number. First bar should be played very staccato.



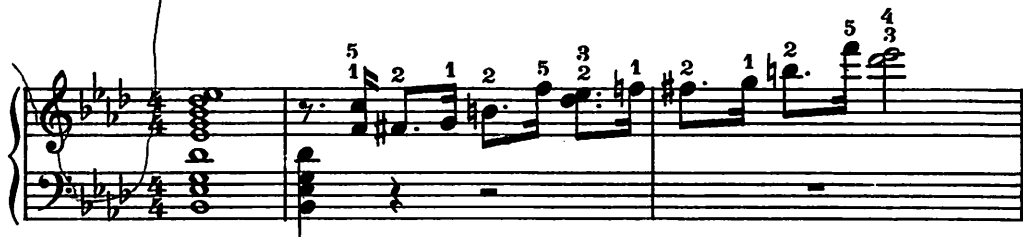
63

Another type of crawling break with adaptable ending.



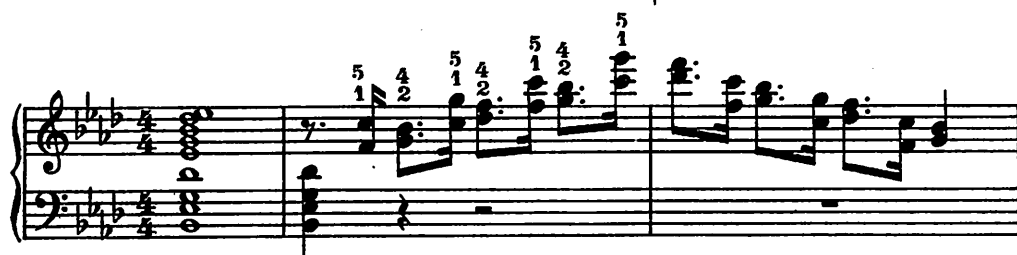
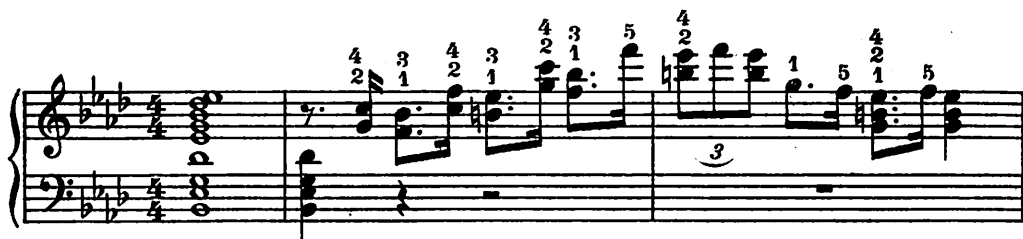
A similar type of break to N° 16 but having a different style of ending. Discretion should be used as to which is the better break as this naturally depends upon the tune into which it is inserted.

65
Another type of Blues
break with odd harmony.



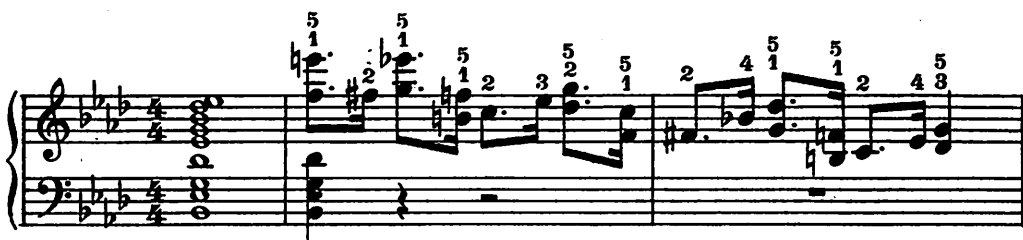
66
A triplet with dotted
quaver descending passage
covering quite a large
portion of the upper
register of the keyboard.

67
A discordant fourth
figuration break. Very
effective.



68
A common 4th figuration
break.

69
Another type of Blues
break employing a strange
harmonic movement.



70
Triplet break with
adaptable ending.

71

A syncopated break very adaptable to the snappy type of number.



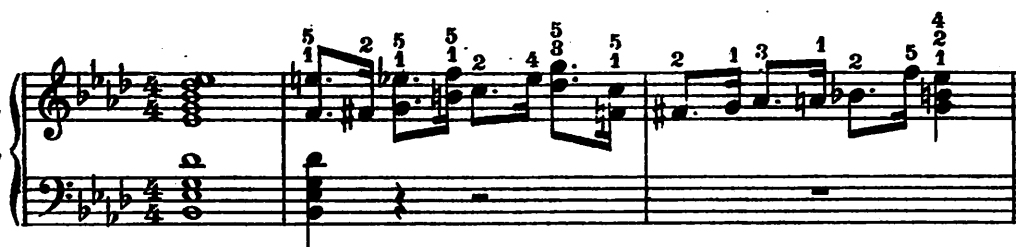
72

A similar type to No 71 descending instead of ascending.



73

Another Blues type of break employing discords, but very effective.



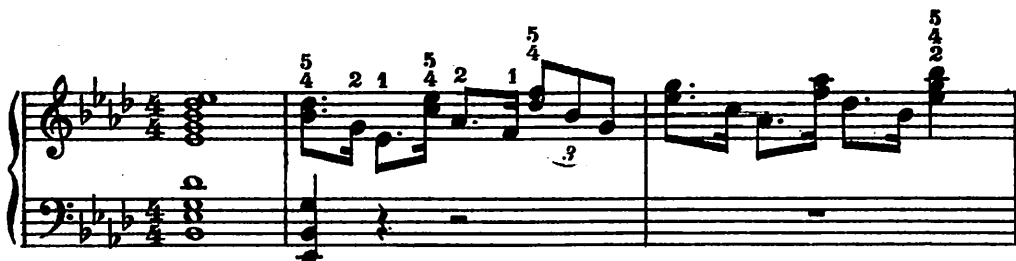
74

Dotted quaver and triplet break suggesting Charleston rhythm.



75

The crawling break with triplet on 4th beat of 1st bar producing a very odd movement.



76

Dotted quaver break suitable for covering a good register of the Keyboard.



TWO-HANDED BREAKS



77

A combination of 3rds and 5ths arranged in syncopated style with support from the left hand at odd places.



78

A similar type of break in another inversion.



79

A very effective metre break, very suitable to the snappy type of tune. In fact, applicable to any number where the tune recommences in the middle register of the keyboard.



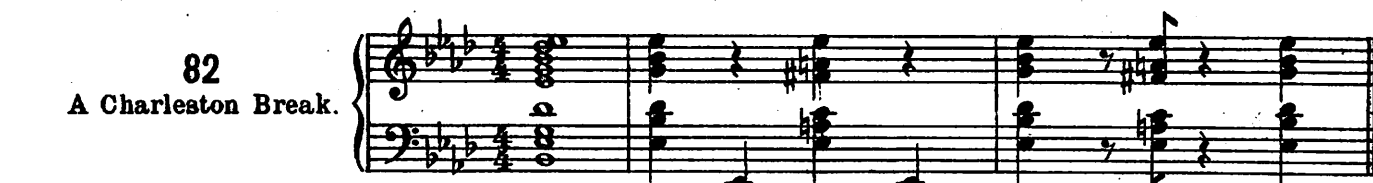
80

Syncopated Break most suitable for fast moving numbers.



81

Another effective double-handed break built up with very full harmony. Quite easy to manipulate.



82

A Charleston Break.

Key B \flat

83

A combination of dotted quavers employing triplet on the 1st beat of the bar.



84

Very similar to 83, but different in metre and movement.

85

A very quick method of covering two octaves without any large gap, employing the dotted quaver and triplet movement.



86

A similar type to No 85.

87

Another version of the same break as 85 merely put into different rhythmic form.



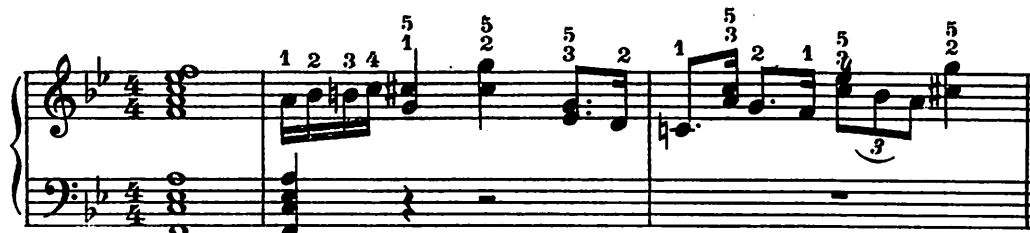
88

A Blues Break.



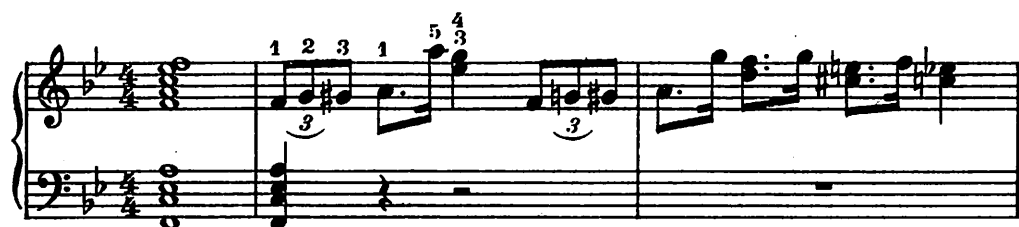
89
Another type of Blues
break employing strange
harmonies.

90
An odd type of a
straightforward break
employing figuration on
the first beat, merely
for effect.



91
A Charleston Break.

92
Another example of the
 $\frac{3}{4}$ movement resolving
into a straightforward
break on the second bar.



93
 $\frac{3}{4}$ movement with
Chromatic Harmony.

94
Straightforward dotted
quaver and triplet break.



95
A Blues Break.



96
Another type of Blues Break.

TWO HANDED BREAKS

97
A similar type of break
to No 77 with suggested
odd harmony notes for
the left hand.



98
Same kind of break in
another inversion.

99
Simple type metre break.



100
Graceful type of Break
suitable for melodious tunes.

A WORD ON SYNCOPATED PLAYING.

The ability to play showy breaks, or even the possession of a brilliant right-hand execution does not make a syncopated pianist. On the contrary the secret of syncopation lies in the all-important left hand ; and the good syncopated pianist is he who knows how successfully to blend the two.

The difference between syncopated music and other types is one of personal interpretation. "Straight" music follows the printed copy, and is played as written, whereas syncopated music is altered from the published copy according to the skill of the performer.

You can learn to be a brilliant syncopated pianist and to play with all the rhythm and "pep" you have so often admired in others. It is only a matter of a little fascinating practice coupled with *correct* tuition.

The Billy Mayerl School of Modern Syncopation at 29, Oxford Street, London, W.1, by the original and only proved successful method, will give you correct and full tuition in all branches of syncopated piano playing. Hundreds of successful and satisfied students, both professional and amateur, testify to the benefit they have received from it.

The tuition is by post, in your own home and in your own spare time, and has been described by one student as "a triumph of modern correspondence tuition," whereas another has said, "It is just as if Billy Mayerl were at your elbow."

The School issues free upon request a most interesting little-book, "Lightning Fingers," which describes fully its work and the course of tuition, and tells you how *you* may become a brilliant syncopated pianist.