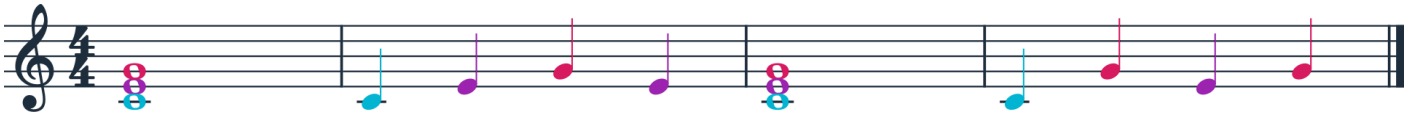Block & Broken Chords

one chord, two deliveries — the pillar and the ripple

Every chord can arrive two ways. Played **blocked**, all notes sound at once — solid as a pillar, the sound of hymns and grand endings. Played **broken**, the notes come one at a time in any order — a ripple, the sound of lullabies and ballads. Below, the same C major chord alternates: block, broken up-and-back, block, broken in a new order. Colors mark the chord tones: root cyan, third purple, fifth magenta.



Any order counts as broken — up, down, or zig-zag. (Two famous broken orders have their own sheets: the arpeggio and the Alberti bass.)
A piece built from one broken-chord pattern: Bach's Prelude in C (Handout 377).

Try it Take the C, F and G7 shapes from your chord-pattern sheet and play each one **blocked** then **broken**. Then listen test: play Hot Cross Buns with blocked left-hand chords (a church organ!) and again broken (a music box!). Same song, same chords — the delivery IS the style. Practice: Exercise 87.

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