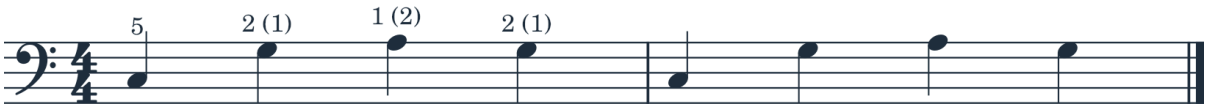
The Ostinato
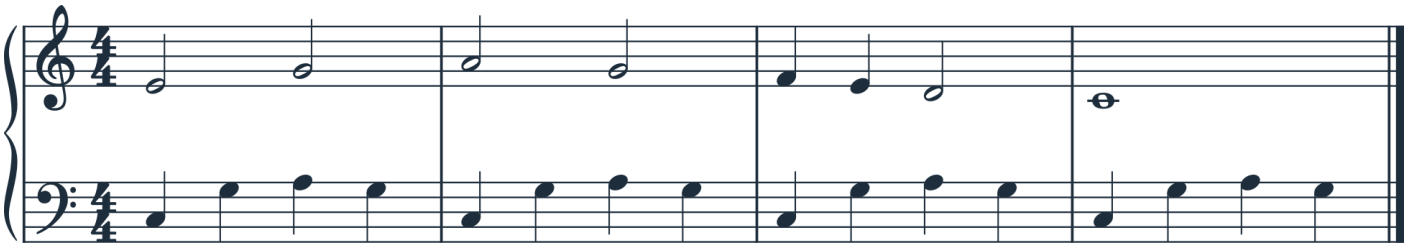
a stubborn little loop — one pattern, repeated under everything

***Ostinato* is Italian for "stubborn" — a short pattern that repeats and repeats while the music changes above it.** Ravel's *Boléro* rides one snare-drum ostinato for fifteen minutes; every looped bass line in pop music is an ostinato too. Your first one is four notes: **C–G–A–G**, fingers 5-2-1-2, round and round, with the hand perfectly still. The numbers in parentheses are an alternate for small hands, 5-1-2-1: the thumb stays on G and finger 2 crosses over it to reach A.

THE LOOP — LEARN IT UNTIL IT PLAYS ITSELF



A MELODY FLOATS ON TOP



The left hand repeats C–G–A–G every measure, no matter what the right hand sings.

Try it The ostinato test: can you play the loop while **talking to someone**? When yes, it has moved into your muscles — now improvise: keep the loop going and let your right hand wander anywhere in C position. Whatever you play will sound good, because the stubborn loop holds the ground. That is the oldest accompaniment trick on Earth. Practice: Exercise 87.

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