

Blank A4 Manuscript Paper

Having stopped purchasing printed manuscript paper well over a decade ago and although one can transfer music to digital software faster (and neater) than handwriting, it can still be very productive to compose with pen on paper (especially when weather allows work to be 'taken outside'). It is by far the most tactile (and enjoyable) way of sketching initial thoughts and developing skeletal ideas.

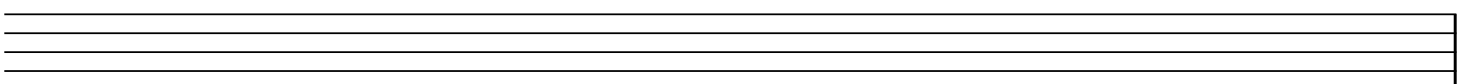
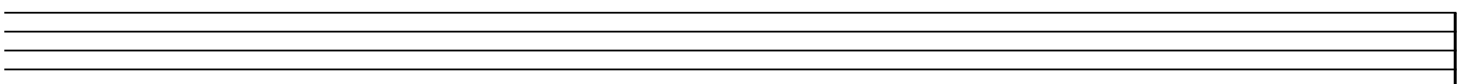
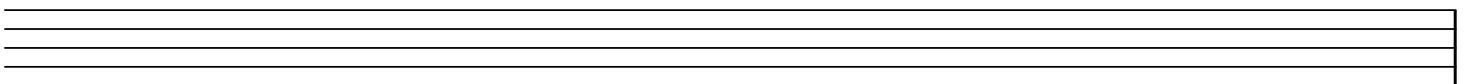
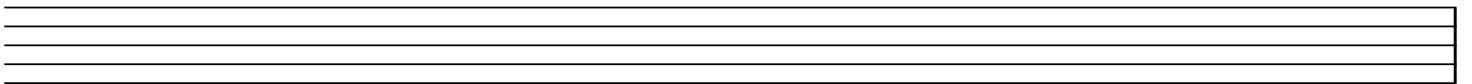
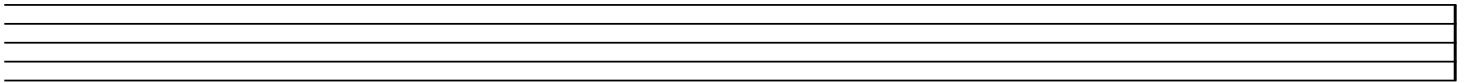
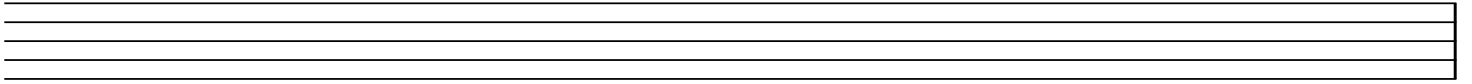
One does not have to possess 'the perfect ear' to compose in this manner. Music has many strata and composition has many stages; work with phrase contours and harmonic approximations instead of specific pitch: Does the note move up or down? Is it a close interval or a wide interval? Consider elements of texture, pacing, rhythm, dynamic and articulation. Predetermined elements of pitch organisation (perhaps a specific chord, mode, key or pitch class cell), can inform the ear and help to internalise an aural approximation of the soundworld. Through reflective analysis and theory, one can begin to develop vertical relationships, micro units and macro forms. It is amazing how far the parameters of 'what one can compose with one's ear, instinct and imagination' stretch with just a little practice.

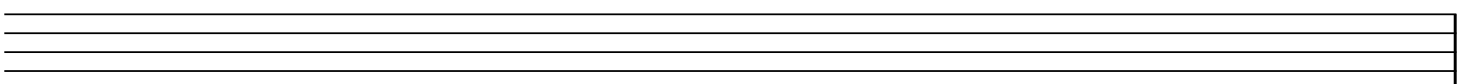
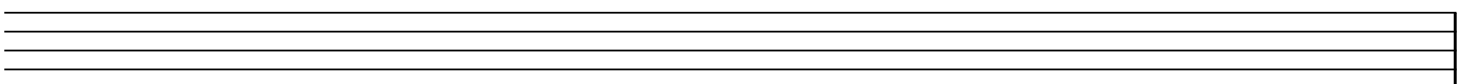
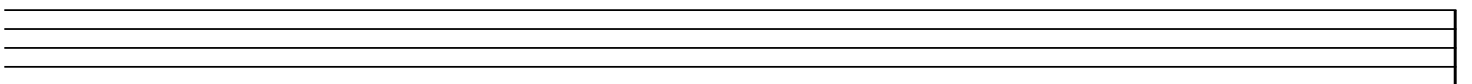
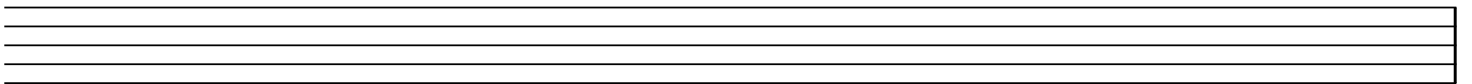
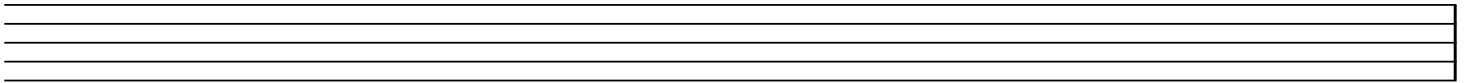
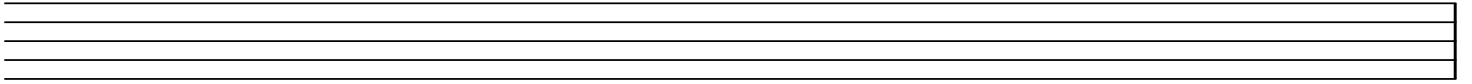
Try working through pre-compositional plans and theoretical problems of progression, counterpoint and harmony in this way, using elements of graphic and traditional notation alongside written comments. Sketches do not always have to revolve around musical notation, but you should always have sheets of blank manuscript paper (and of course the obligatory Wi-Fi devices) at hand.

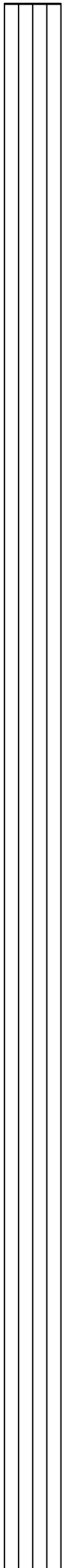
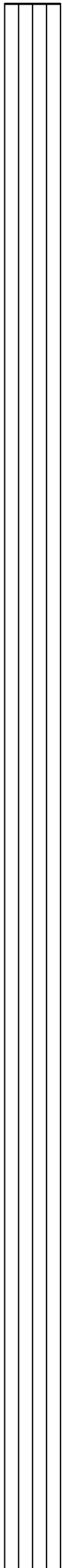
Print a handful of these sheets off and head out into the great outdoors (or at least away from the writing desk) next time you have an idea for composition. Try the analogue tactile method, you never know, you just might like it ...

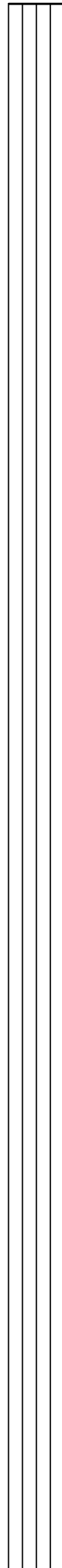
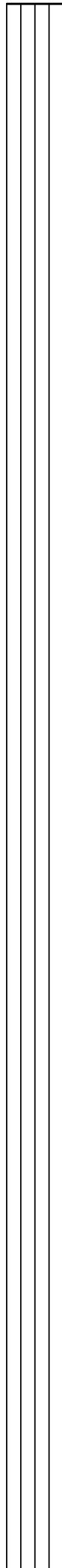
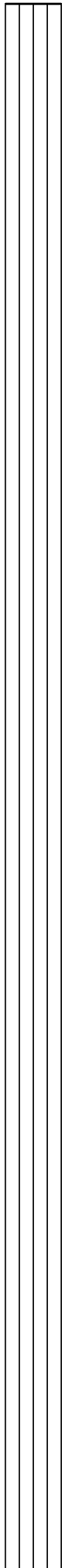
Dr Ian Percy

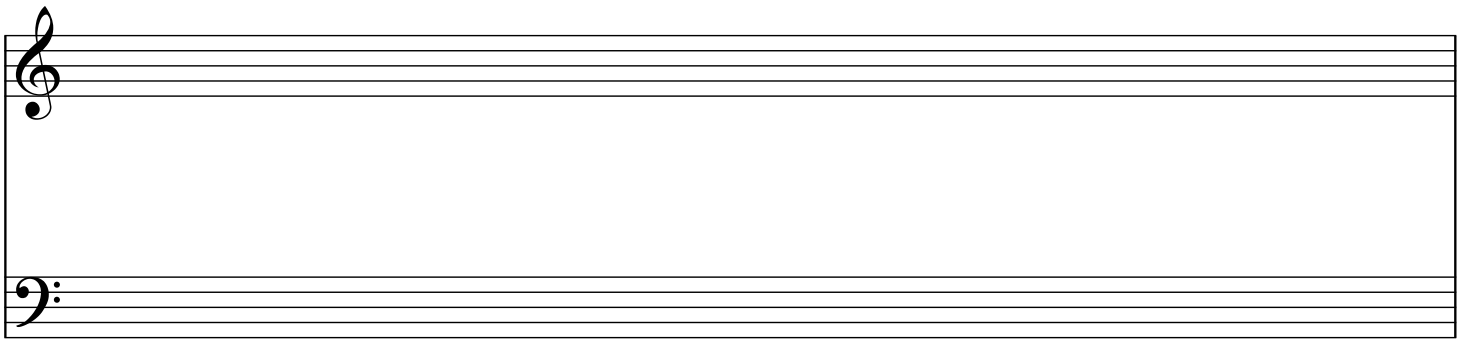
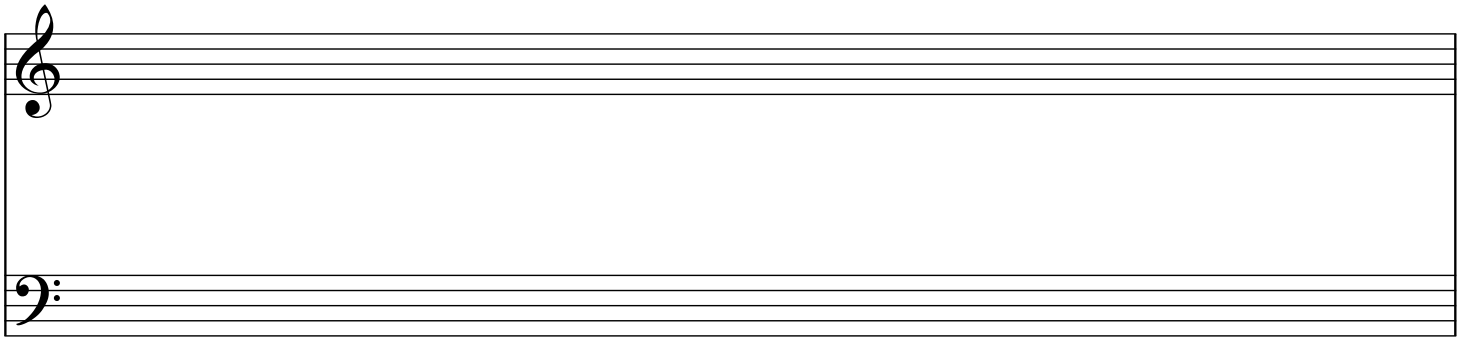
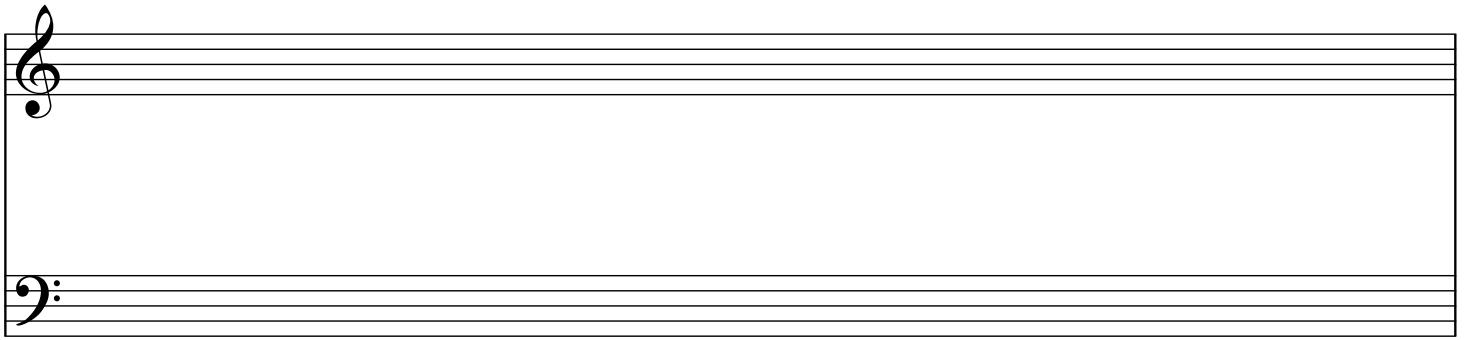
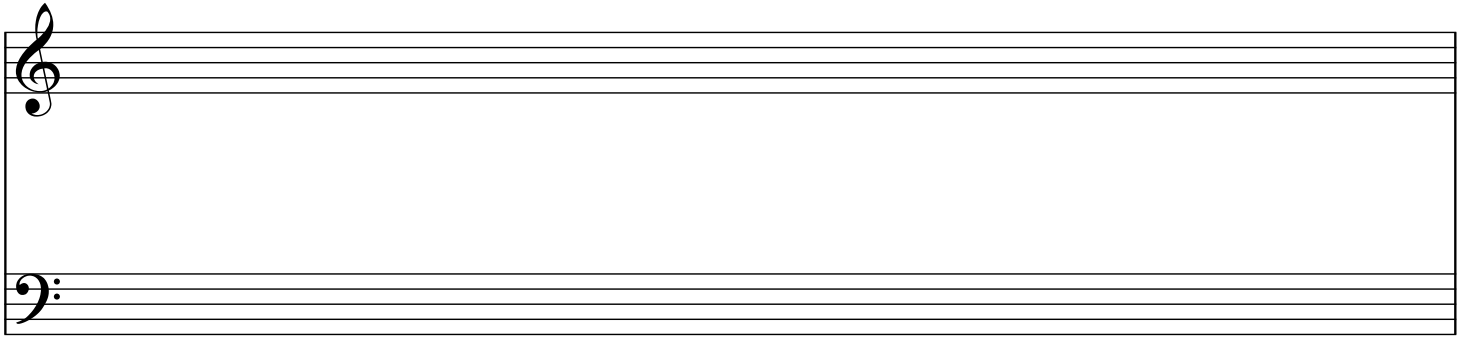
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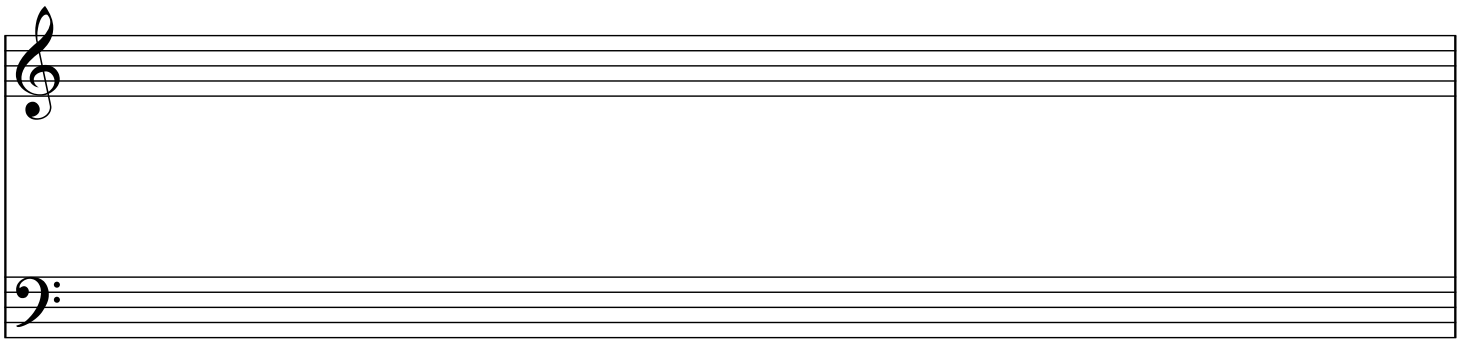
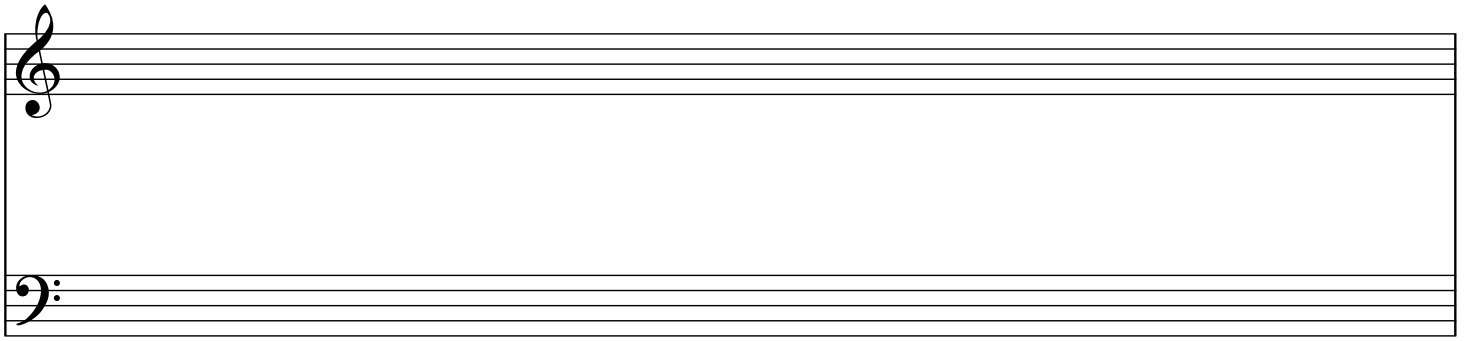
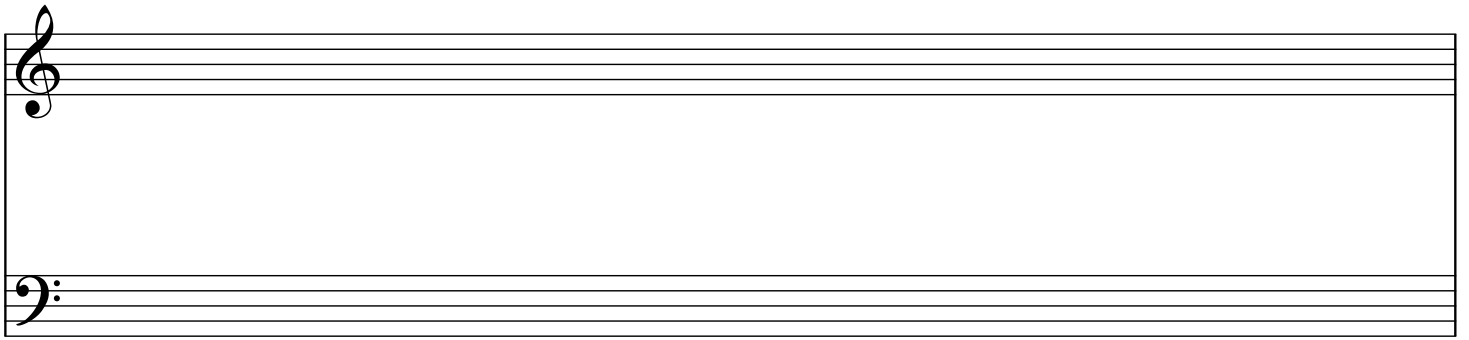
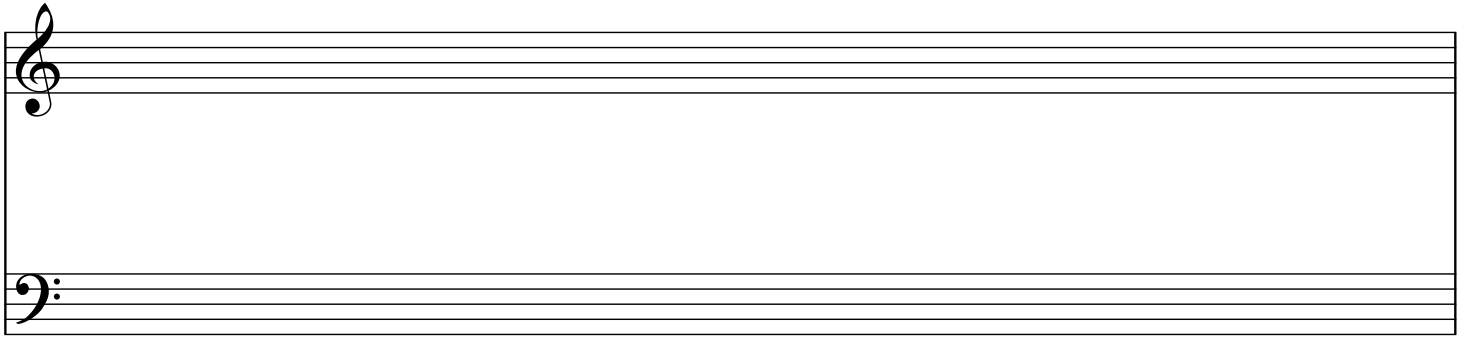












A musical staff system consisting of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef (G-clef) and the bottom staff is a bass clef (F-clef). Both staves are currently empty.

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