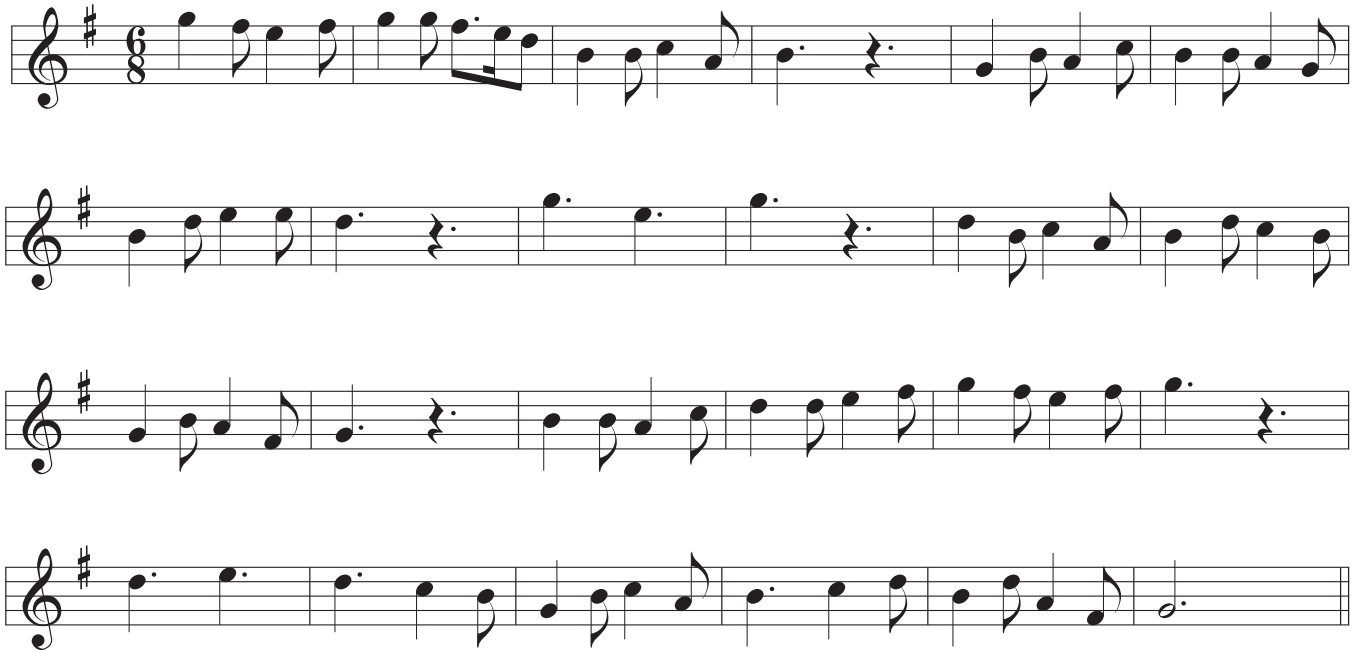
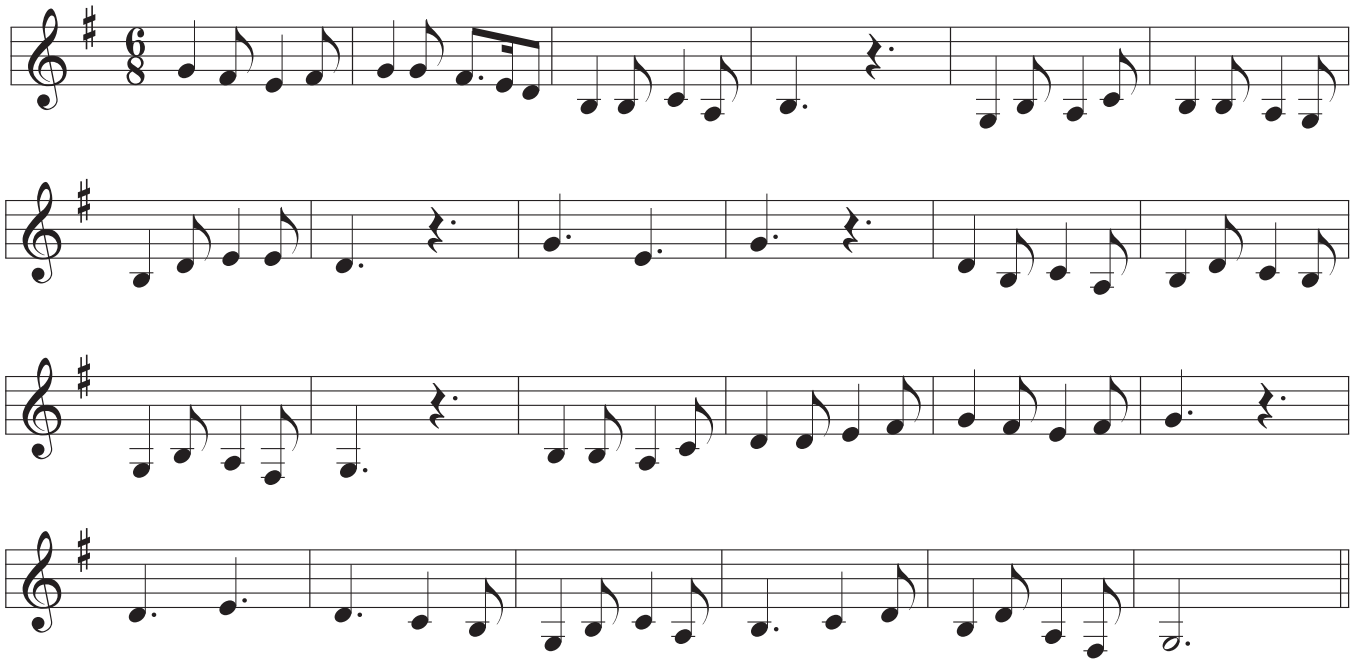
Sumer Is Icumen In

A Study in Counterpoint

Melody (in upper voice)



Melody (in lower voice)



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Sumer Is Icumen In is a popular song from the 13th century that celebrates the arrival of summer. It was composed in England around 1260.

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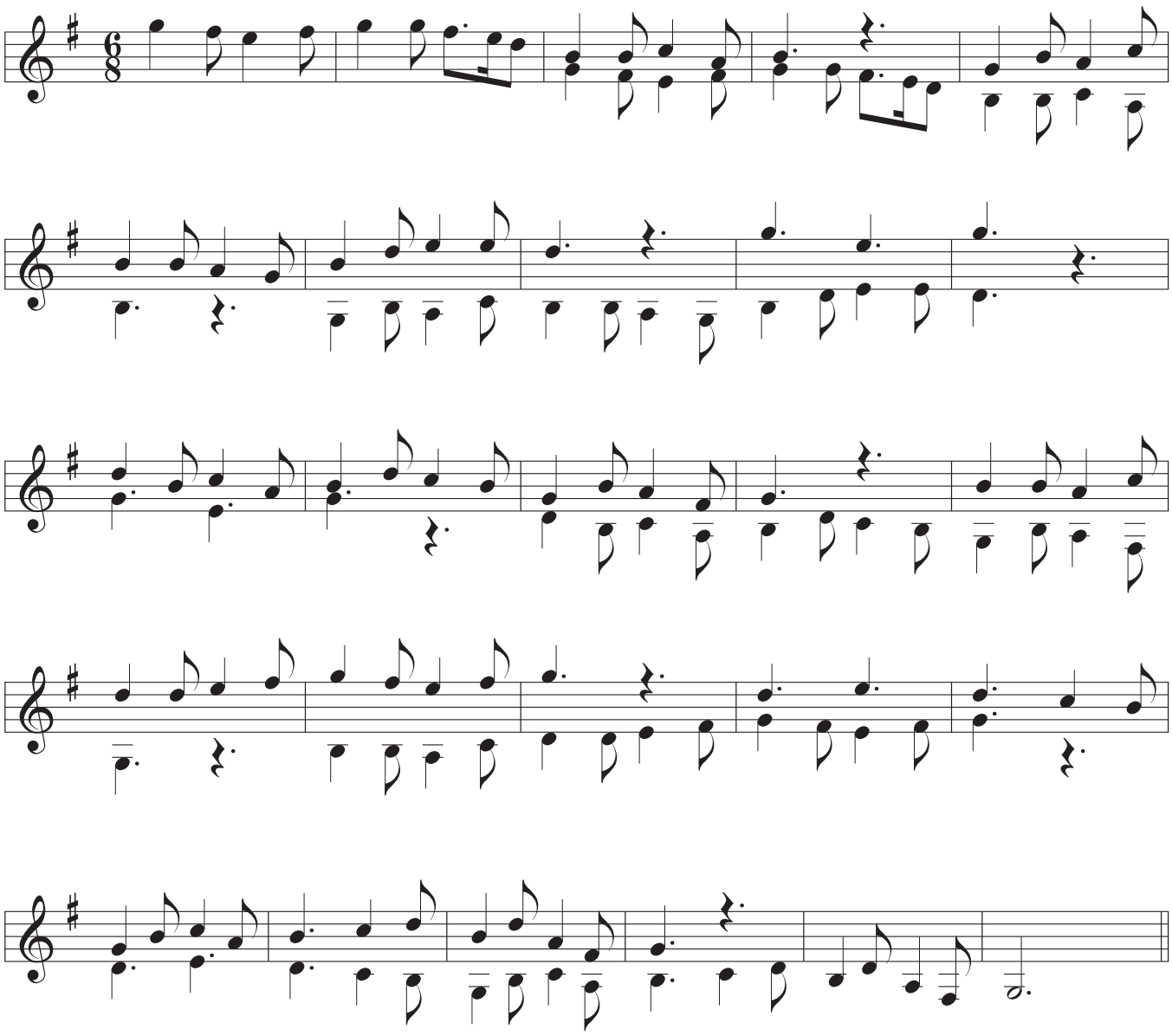

Sumer Is Icumen In is also an early example of a ***rota*** (round or canon). It can be sung as a two-part, three-part, or four-part round. Above is an example of a two-part round with the melody beginning in the upper voice, followed two measures later by the melody in the lower voice.

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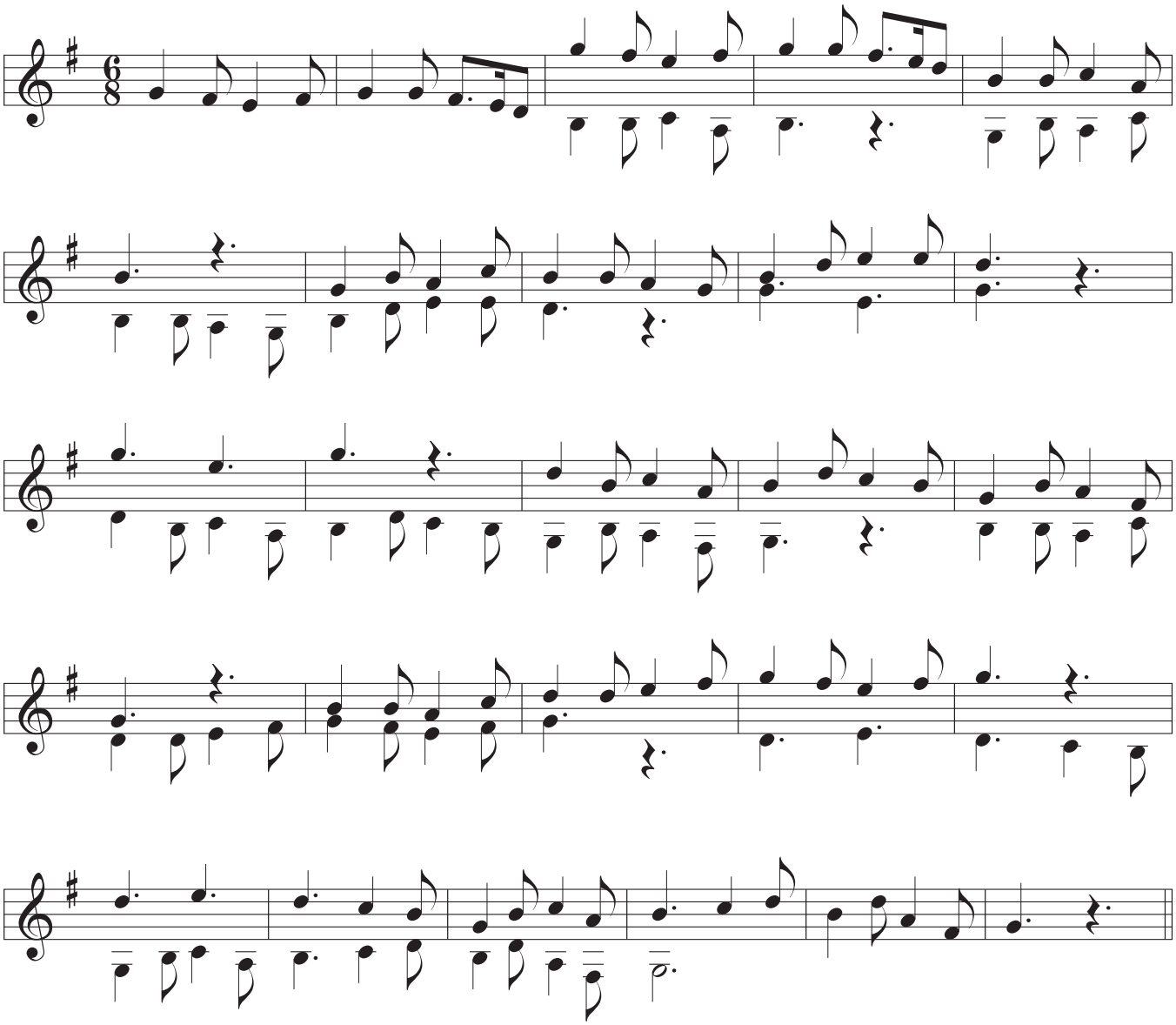

This is the same two-part round but with the melody beginning in the lower voice, followed two measures later by the melody in the upper voice.

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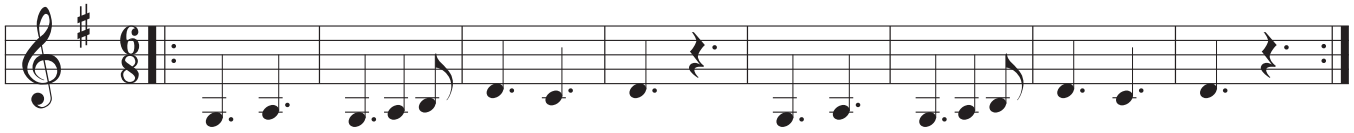
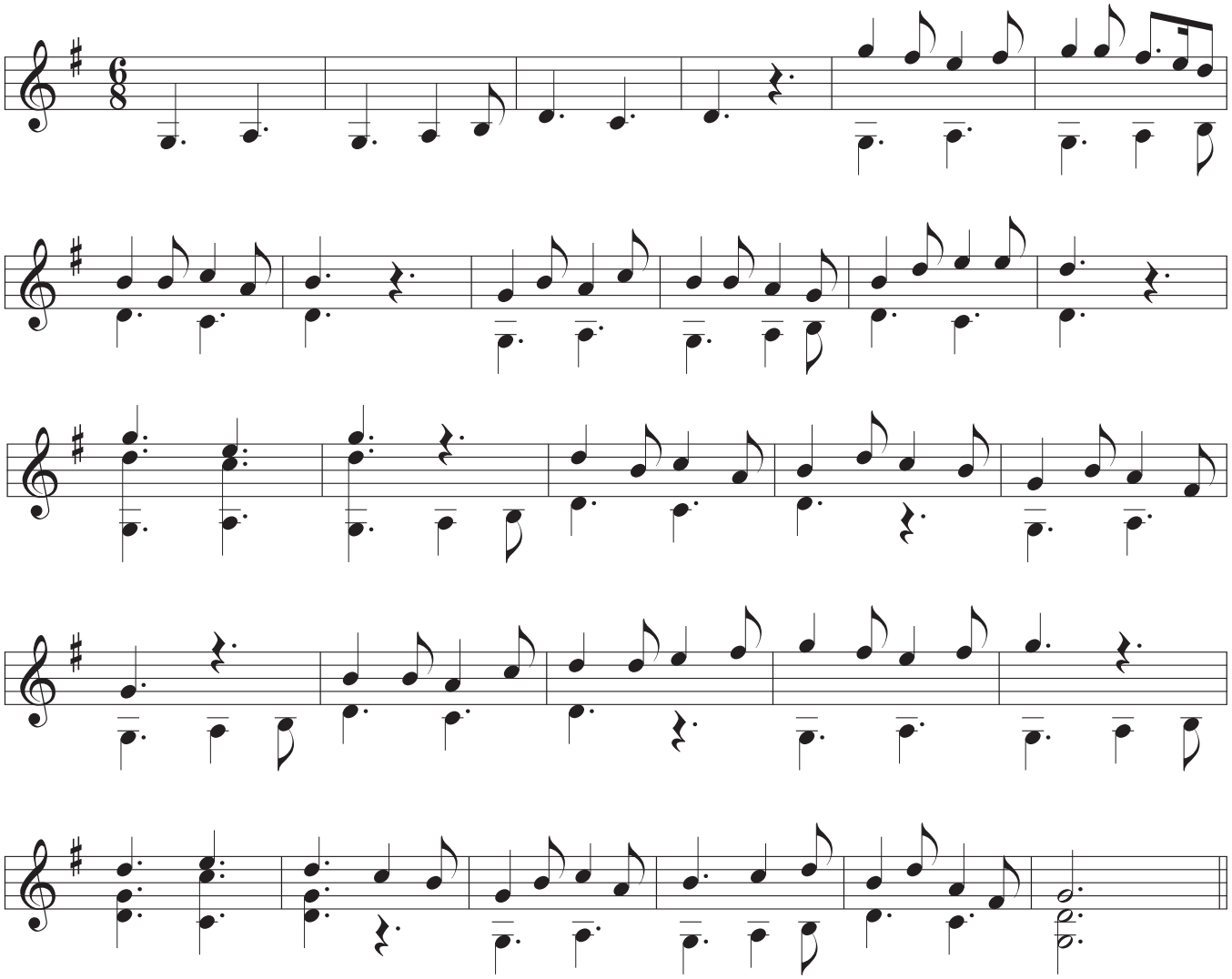
The music for *Sumer Is Icumen In* includes a repeating bass line (that also can be sung as a two-part canon).

Bass



Below is the four-measure bass line with the melody begining on the first measure.



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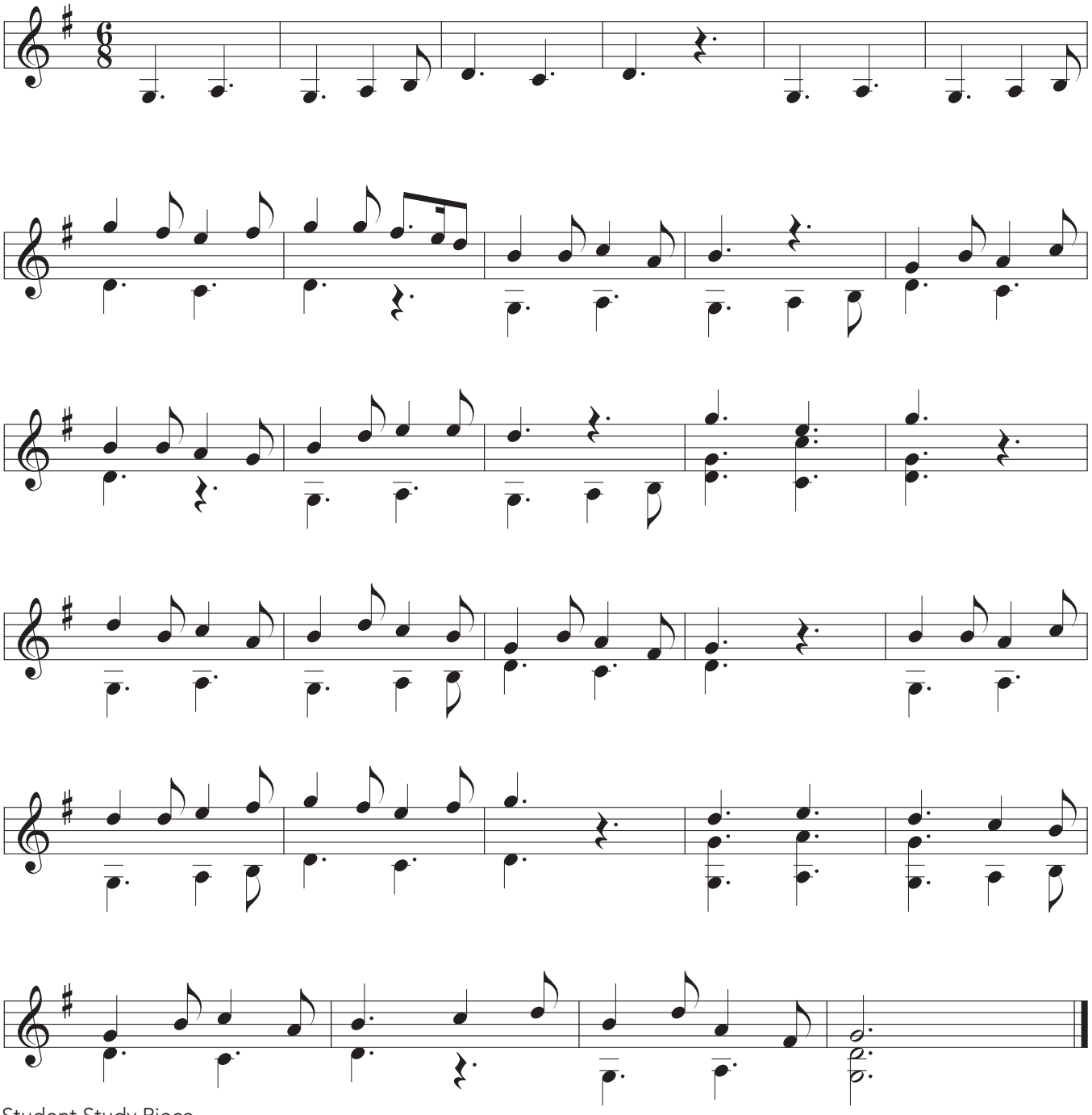
This is a second version of bass and melody with the melody beginning on the third measure of the repeating bass line.



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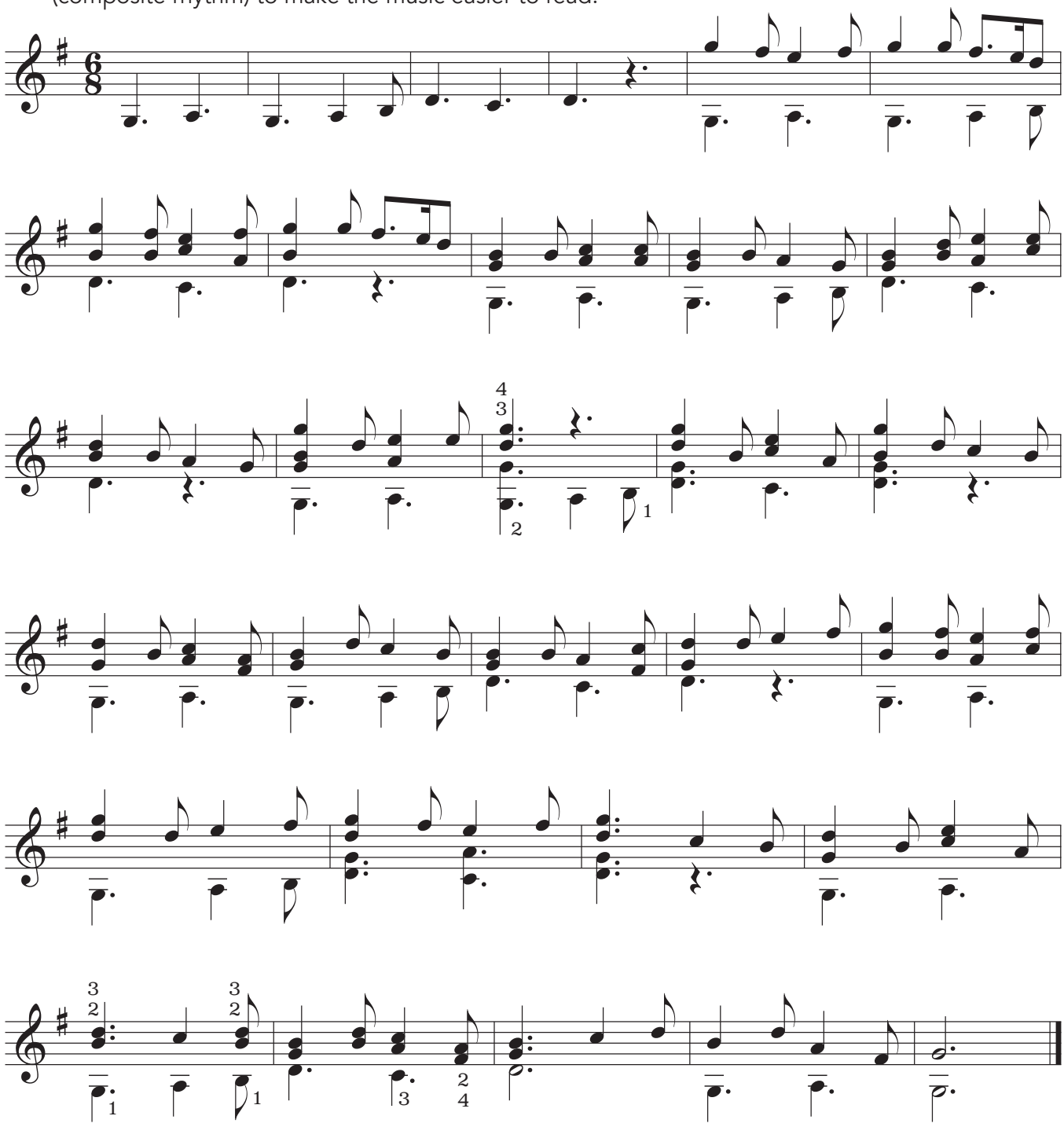
This is a three-part version of *Sumer Is Icumen In.* The rota (two-voice canon) is in the upper two voices and the bass is in the lower voice. The notation combines the rhythm of the upper voices (composite rhythm) to make the music easier to read.



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