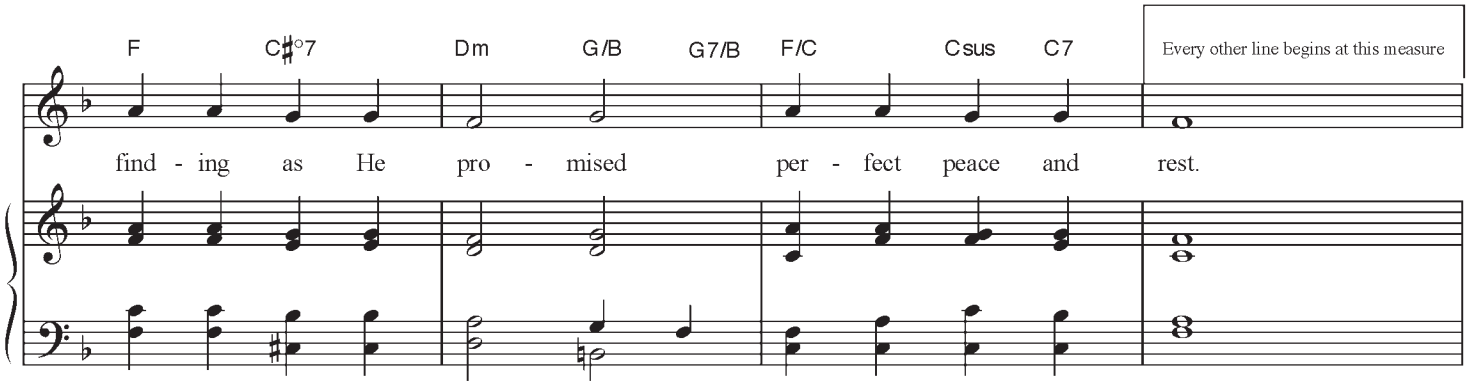
Like A River Glorious

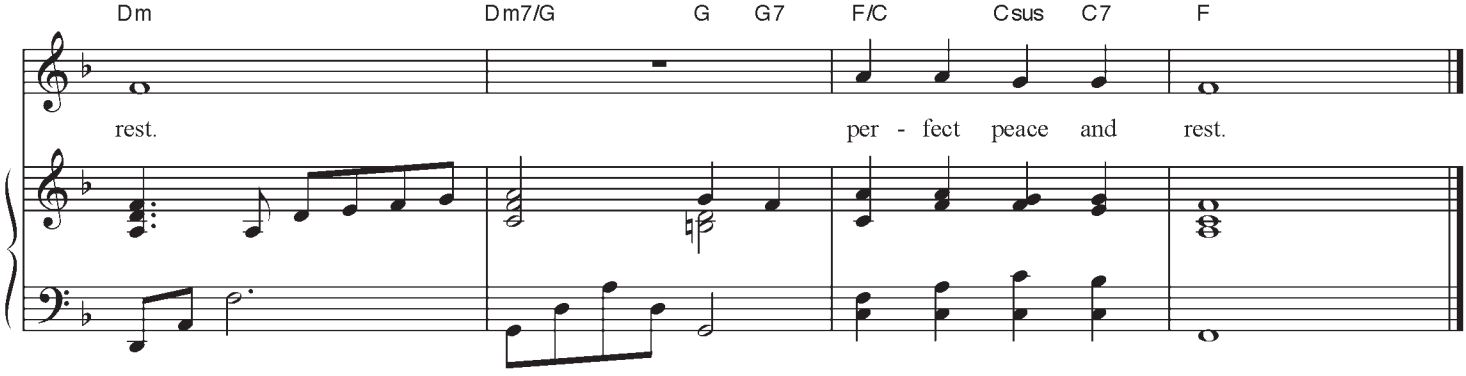
Exercise in Arranging New Endings

This is an excercise in arranging new endings for songs, whether you are improvising or composing your own arrangements. I am using the last line of the old hymn, "Like A River Glorious," as an example. The first line you see below is the original last line of the hymn. Each of the following "Ending" examples begins with the last measure of this line. So after playing the first three bars, you would jump to any of the following endings to consider a few of the many possibilities. Try to understand what is happening within the key on each of these. If you can break it down in your mind what is happening with the numbers, then you can apply these concepts to any other key.



Ending #1

In the example below you will see one of the most frequent types of endings. Here, instead of going to the I chord "F," you go instead to the vi "Dm." This is commonly referred to as a deceptive cadence because you are expecting to go to the "F," but are "deceived" and surprised by going to a different chord. The vi then goes to a form of the II7 and then conveniently repeats the last two measures of the song. Every player should master this ending.



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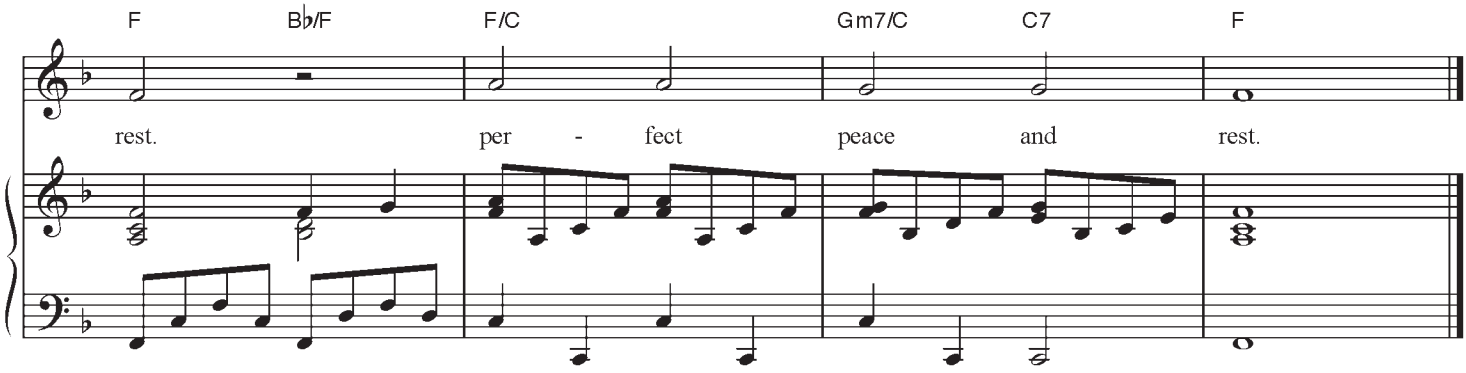
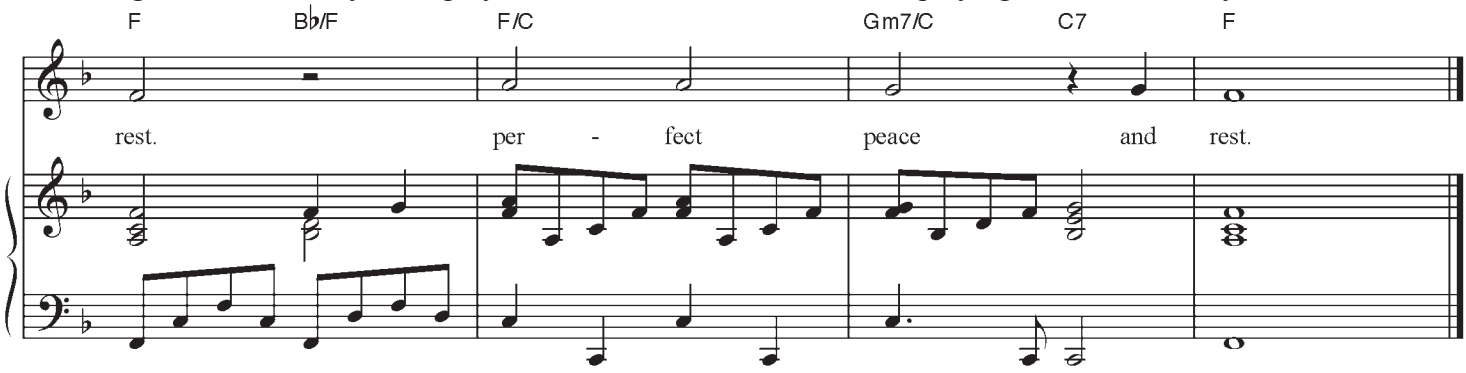
Ending #2

This is a very simple ending in which you simply repeat the last phrase of the song and elongate it or "stretch" it out by doubling the value of the notes in the melody and the length of the chords.



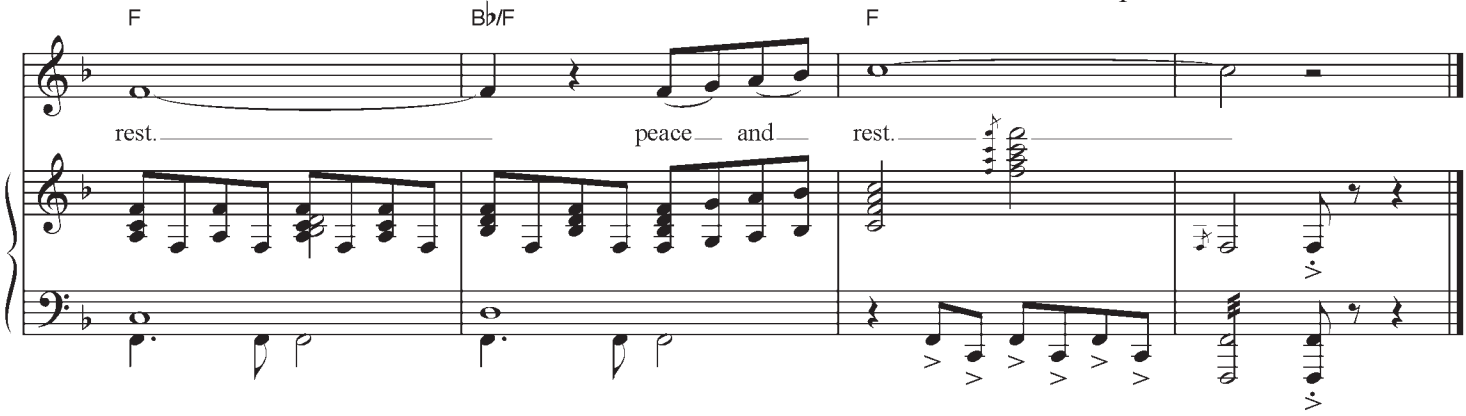
Ending #3

This is the same as the notes in "Ending #2" except that here you are taking a breath before singing or playing the last two notes. Sometimes on long phrases singers need a breath to give a strong final breath. Keyboard players should also "breathe" in their playing to add musicality to the music.



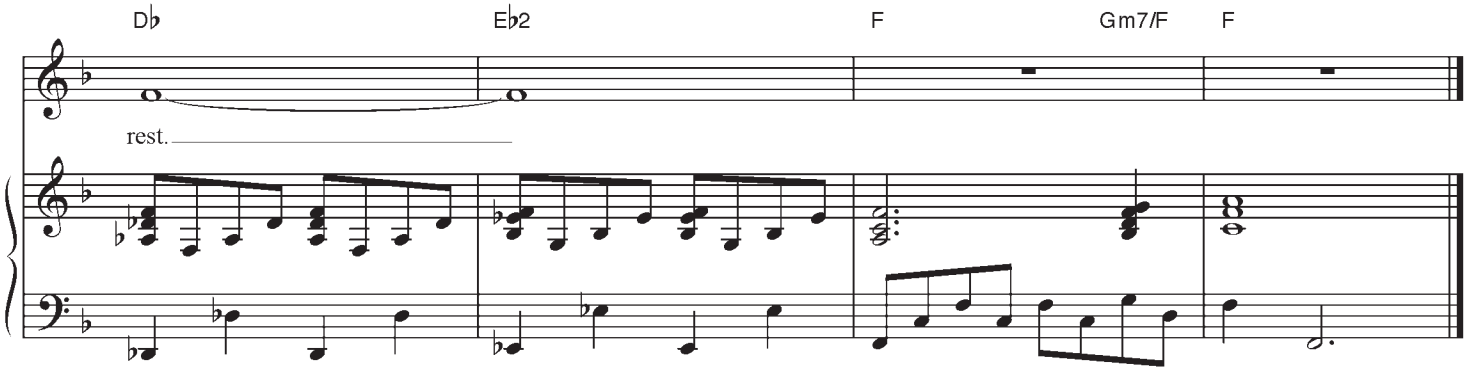
Ending #4

Sometimes you might want to create a bigger sound. Notice here how the notes in the melody simply walks up the scale to a higher and more heroic note. Big concerto type chords are thrown in at the end and notice how the bass clef of the last two measures imitates the timpani.



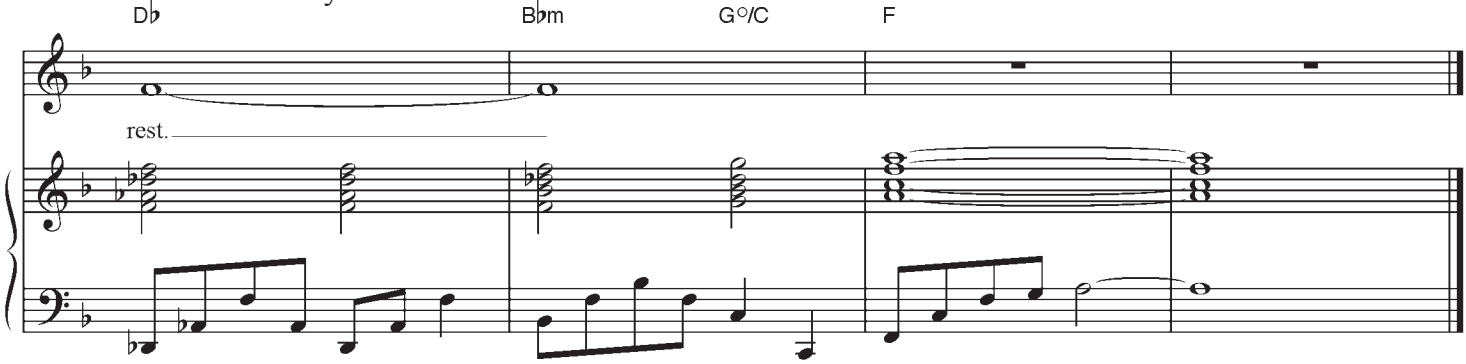
Ending #5

The next three examples are another type of deceptive cadence which each of these going to flatted VI chord. In other words, you go to the sixth note of the scale and then lower it one half step and play the Major chord on that note. This first example hits the flat VI and the flat VII before arriving back to the tonic, "F." *A very good trick to add to your bag!*



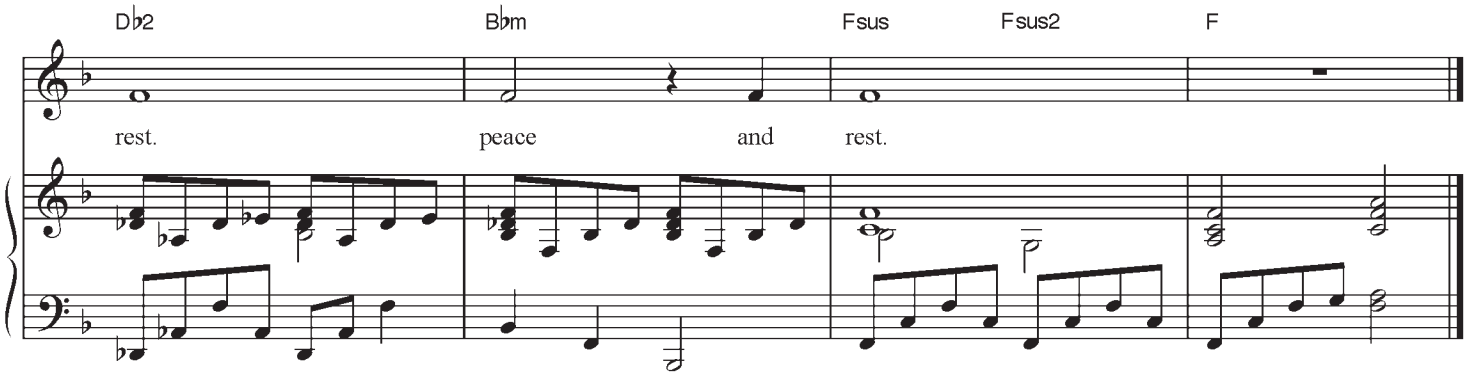
Ending #6

This is similar to #5 except that after going to the flat VI, you go to the iv minor. This always works and is easy to do. Notice how "F" is shared by Db, Bbm, and F. Using chords that share common notes always makes the sound smoother!

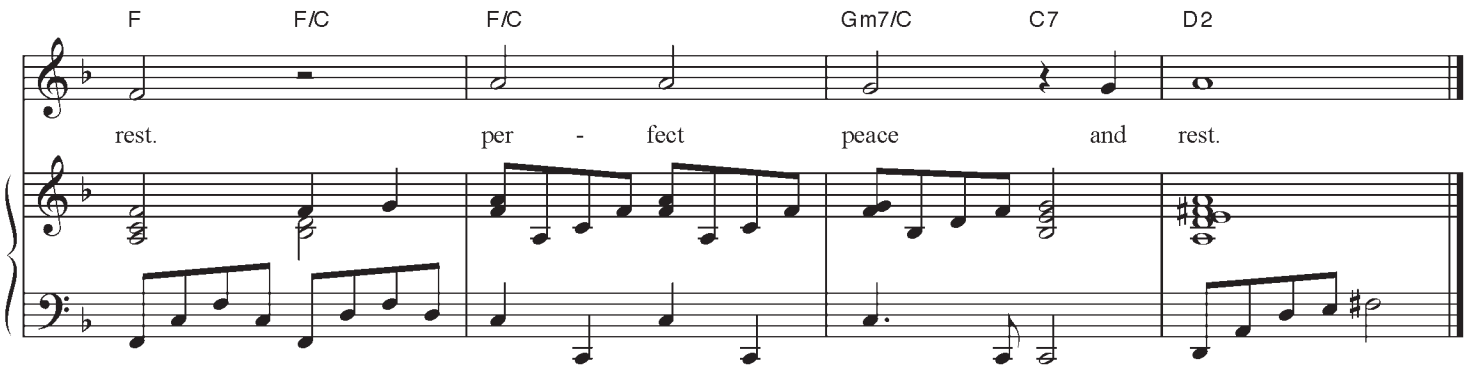


Ending #7

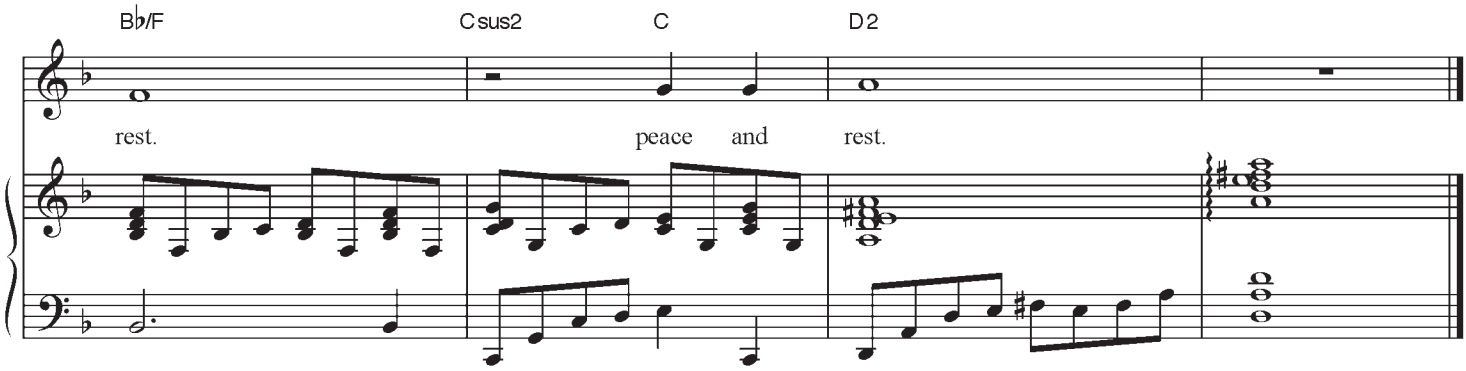
Just like #6, this goes from the flat VI to the iv, however, the F chord is suspended to add a little spice and delay the final resolution to the I chord. Keeping the listener in suspense and delaying is a good thing as long as it is not overused. Of course, same is true for any improv trick!



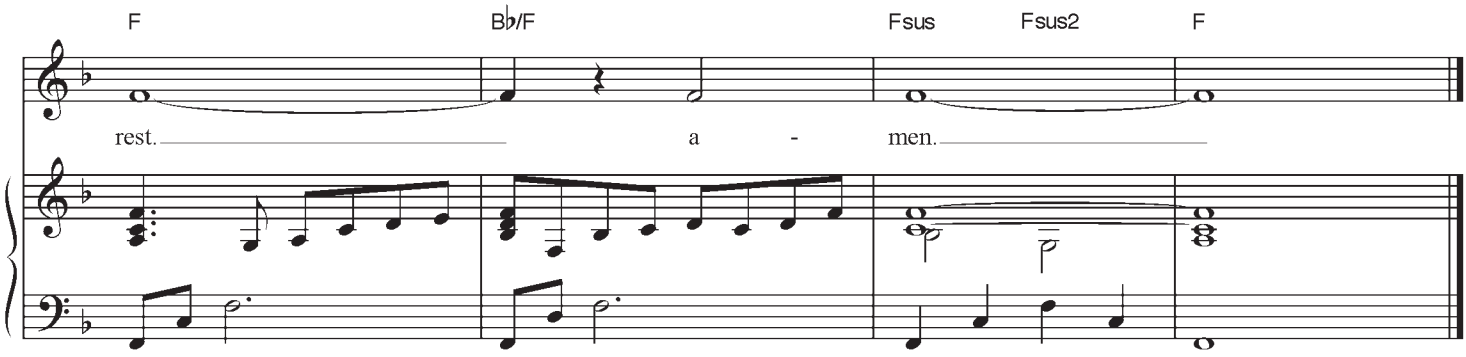
Ending #8 This is a great ending to add a sophisticated "pop" sound. Here you go on your last chord to the VI or the Major 6 chord. To make this work, you have to alter your melody to go to the 3rd note of the scale instead of ending on the tonic.



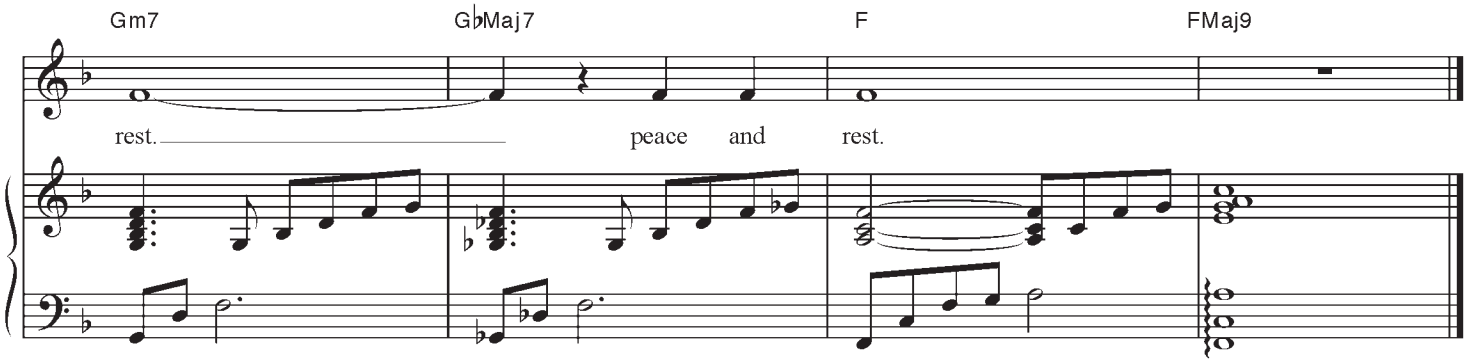
Ending #9 This is another variation of the one above. Here you go to the IV chord, the V chord, and then move on up to the VI. *Remember to adjust the note of the melody.*



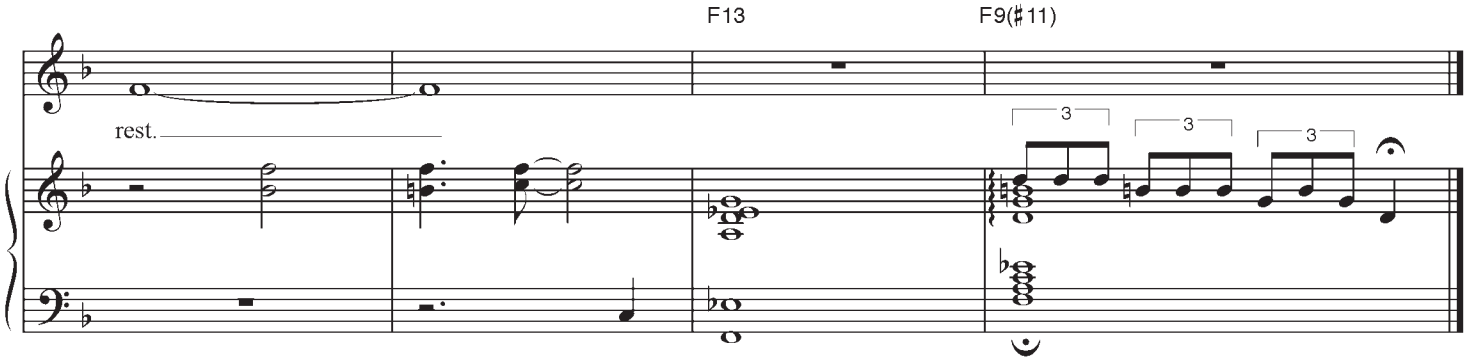
Ending #10 This is a type of the familiar "Amen" ending which usually involves the I, IV/I, and back to the I. In this ending I use a suspension at the end to emphasize the "Amen" effect.

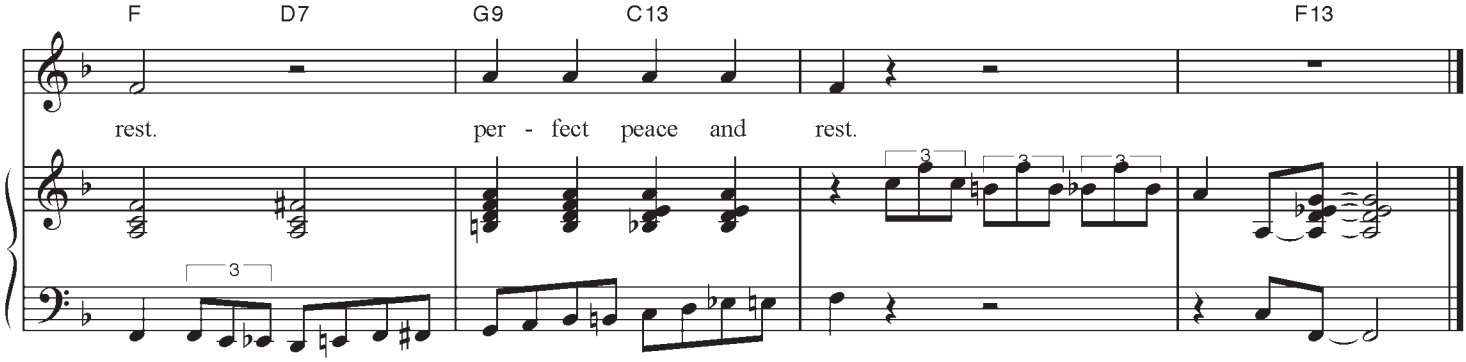


Ending #11 Just for fun, I've added some "Jazz" type of endings to try. On this first one, on the last note you go to the ii7, flat II Maj 7, and then to the tonic. Notice the "F" is in every chord as a common tone.



Ending #12 How about a Count Basie lick? This one is fun. While holding the tonic note on top in the piano part of the first measure, you play the 4, the sharp 4, and the 5 underneath and then come in with some thick and rich chord at the end.



Ending #13 Finally, this example shows a secondary dominant type of progression at the end and a walking bass followed by another "Basie" type of lick at the end.

Hope this has been helpful and fun for you!