VIOLA

HABITS OF A SUCCESSFUL STRING MUSICIAN

A Comprehensive Curriculum for Use During Fundamentals Time

CHRISTOPHER SELBY
SCOTT RUSH
RICH MOON

G-8625

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CHRISTOPHER SELBY, SCOTT RUSH, AND RICH MOON

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VIOLA	G-8625
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Welcome to *Habits of a Successful String Musician*. This method book was written to help string players establish effective daily routines that ultimately lead to great music making. While practicing the various components of playing, remember that improved technique only serves to increase the *artistry* of a musical performance.

This book begins with studies on tone production, bowing, and articulation (right hand), followed by finger patterns and shifting (left hand). Subsequent studies for scales, chorales, rhythm and sight-reading make this a complete method for the advancing string musician. Each exercise has a very specific purpose that leads logically to the performance of concert music. Turn your rehearsal room or practice room into a laboratory for making music, and let your musical journey begin!

This book is divided into eight parts:

I. Tone and Articulation 1
II. Lower Positions: Finger Patterns, Intonation and Velocity 5
III. Shifting Exercises 7
IV. Higher Positions and Alternate Clefs 11
V. Scales, Arpeggios and Thirds 14
VI. Chorales 40
VII. Rhythmic Study in a Musical Context 44
VIII. Sight-Reading by Level 54

Tips for Individual Practice:

- Listen to a recording of your favorite artist on your instrument; then imitate that artist's sound.
- Remind yourself why you are practicing. Set goals for each practice session and devise a logical order of things to learn. Strive to cover as many Components of Playing as possible, starting with tone production (bowing variations) and then finger pattern study and scales.
- Begin practice sessions with stretching. *Stay relaxed*—tension is a performer's worst enemy.
- Practice with a mirror. Review basic technique for standing or sitting well, and use left- and right-hand calisthenics to develop relaxed, healthy positions for holding the bow and instrument well.
- Stay focused and rest five minutes for every twenty minutes of practice; unfocused practice is a waste of time and energy and is detrimental to a performer's progress.
- When practicing the sight-reading exercises in the back of the book, use a metronome and establish a slow, reasonable tempo that will allow you to play the exercises with a steady pulse.
- Record yourself and use the recording to identify personal goals for improving your skills and performance.
- Finish your practice session by playing something fun. We practice so we can improve the performance skills needed to express the musical ideas that we find so enjoyable and deeply rewarding.

Habits of a Successful String Musician – Viola Edition
Christopher Selby, Scott Rush, and Rich Moon

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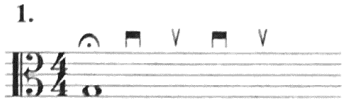
I Tone and Articulation

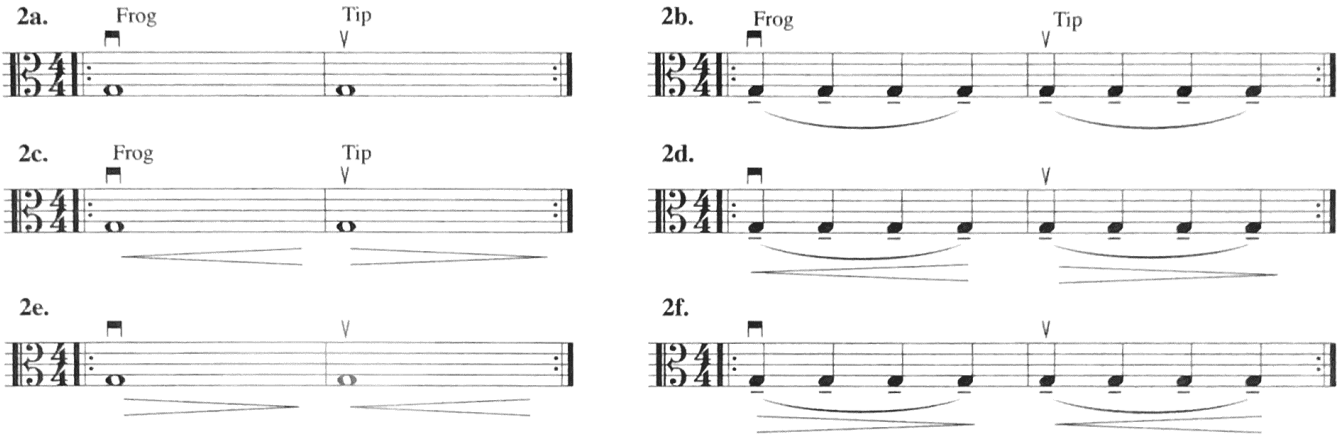
Open String Exercises

Even Tone - Frog to Tip

With a flawless bow hold, play the open string without counting or keeping time; pay attention to the bow's contact point, angle, weight, and speed.

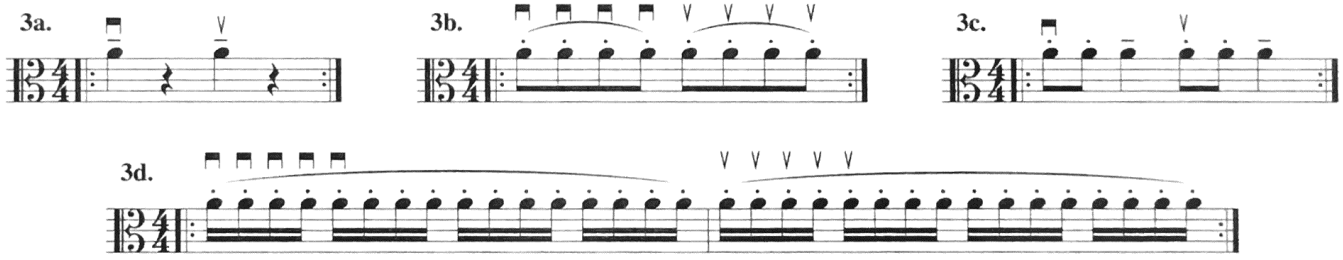


Even Bow Distribution

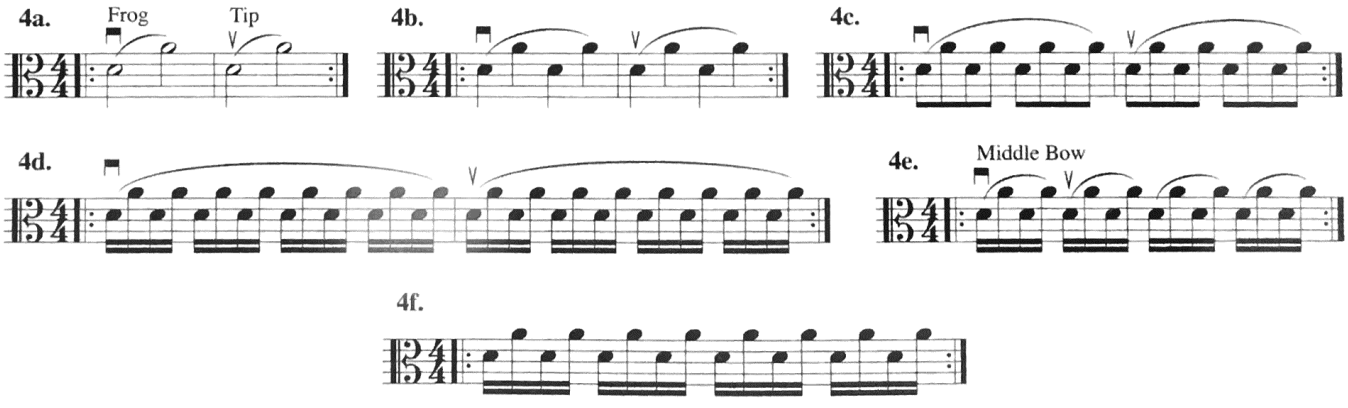


Grab and Release

Grab the string with the hair of the bow to begin each note with a crisp attack.

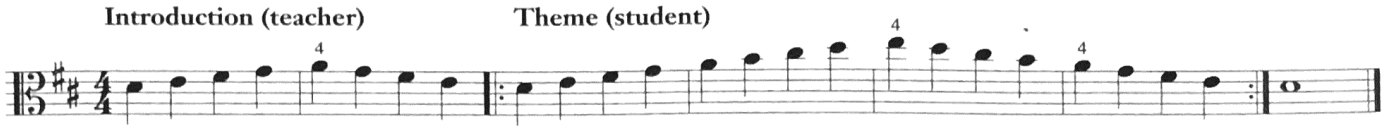


Crossing Strings

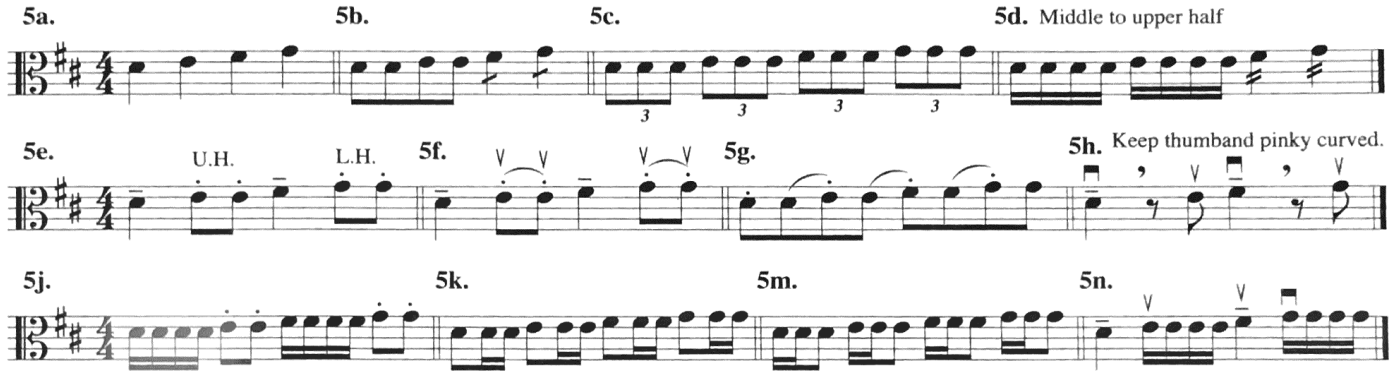


Bowing Variations

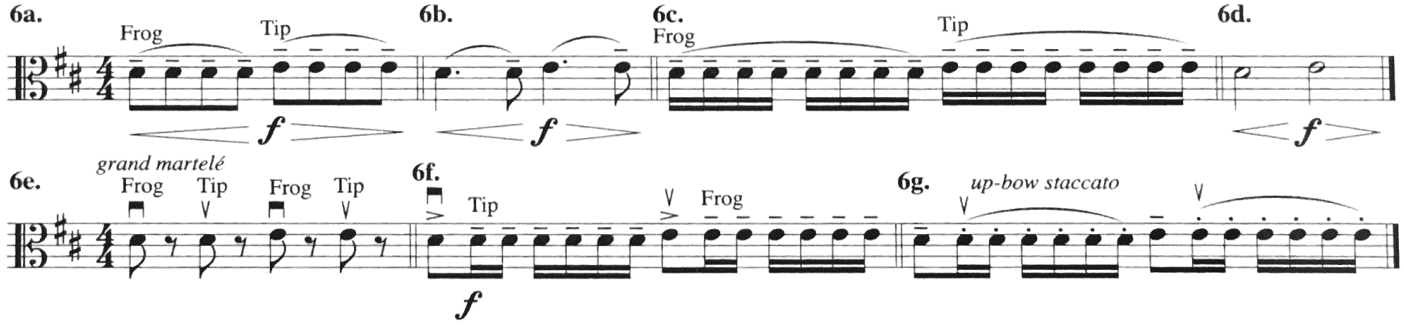
Perform the theme using one of the rhythm or articulations from the variations below.



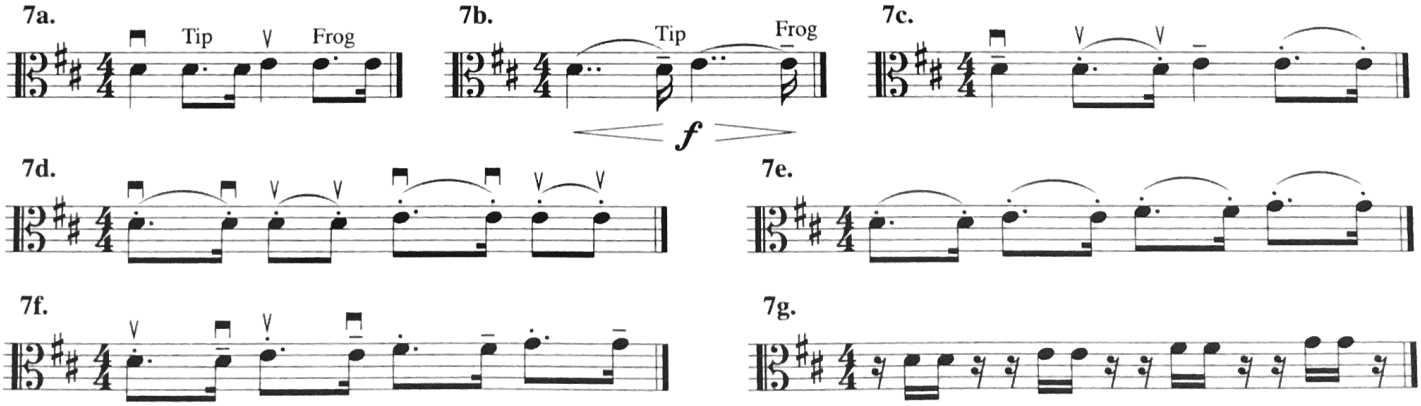
Basic Bow Strokes



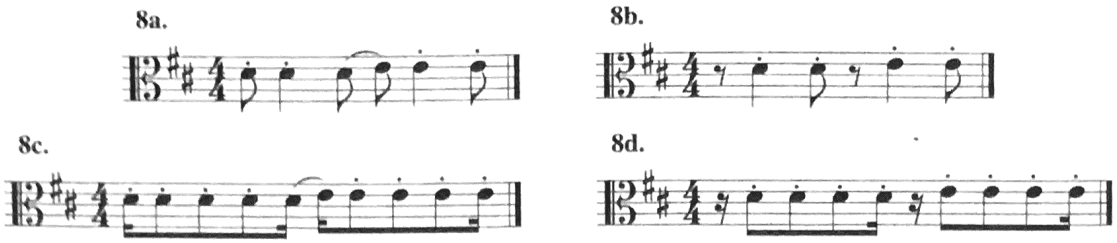
Full Bow Exercises



Dotted Rhythms and Hooked Bows

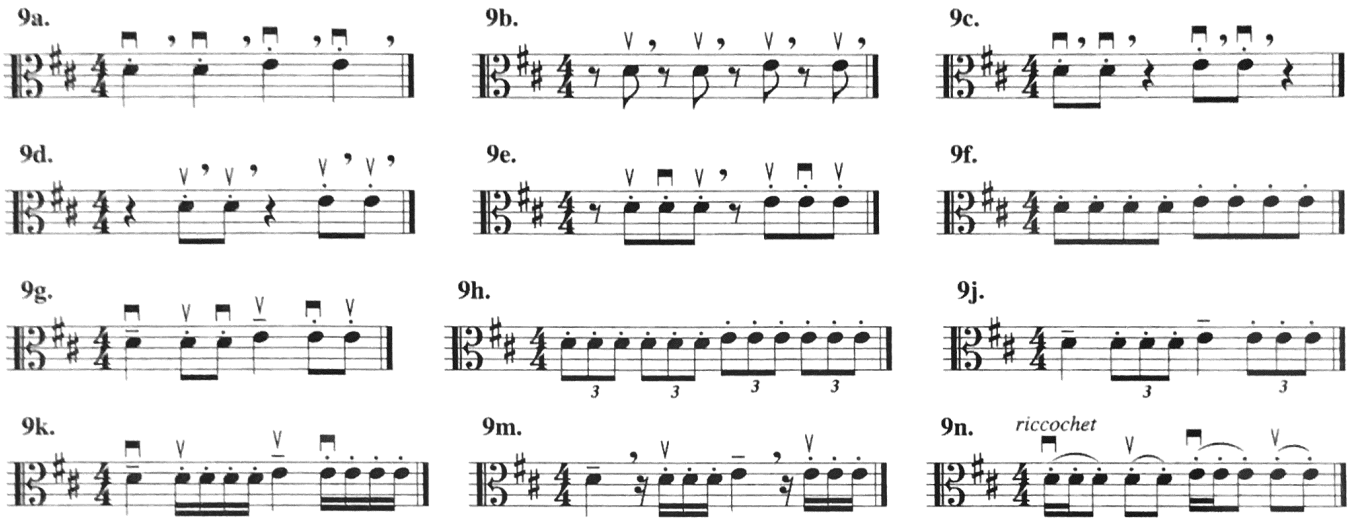


Syncopated Patterns

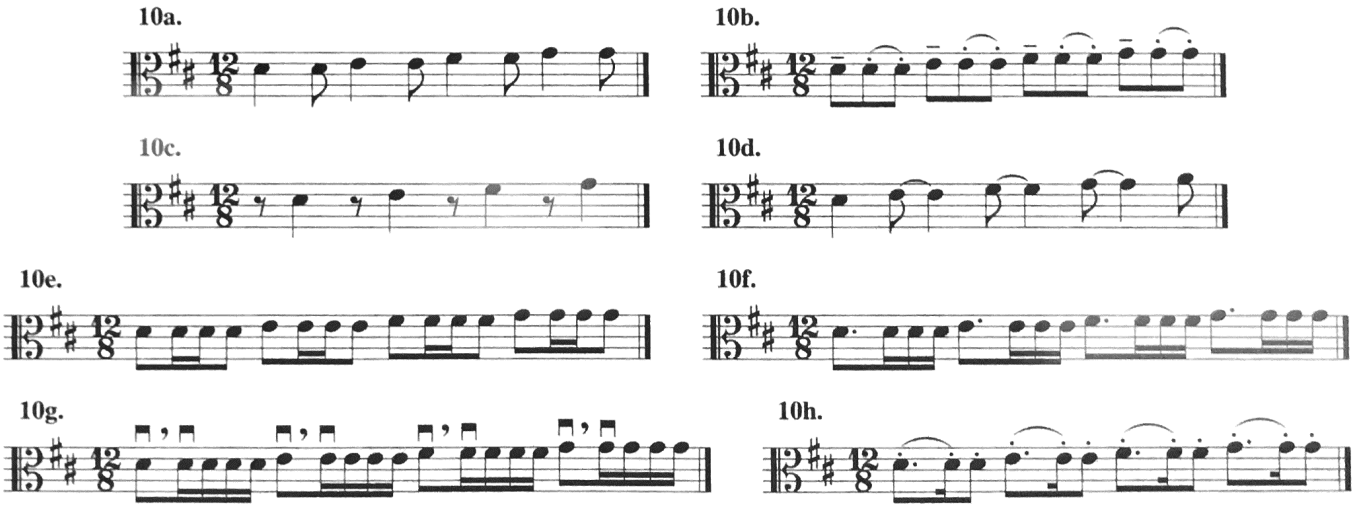


Spiccato Exercises

Perform the spiccato stroke at the balance point; keep the thumb and pinky curved and the knuckles soft and fluid.



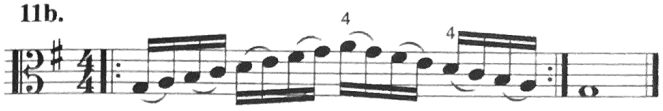
Triple Patterns



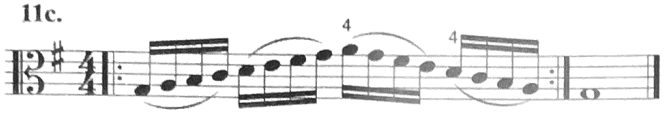
Slurs

11a.

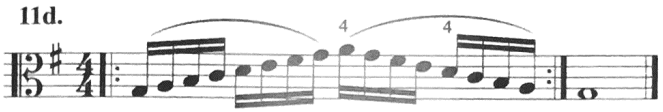
11b.



11c.



11d.

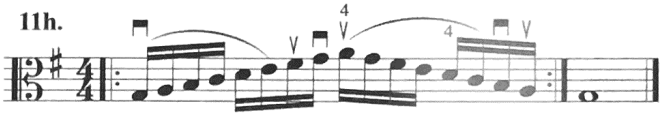


11e.

11f.

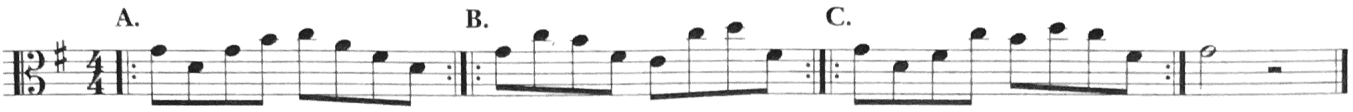
11g.

11h.

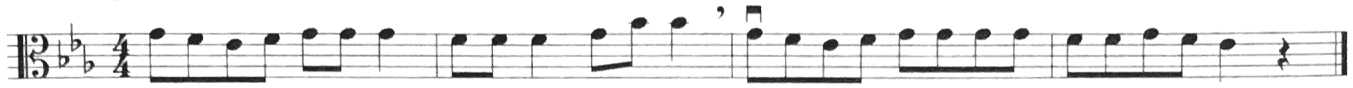


II Lower Positions: Finger Patterns, Intonation and Velocity

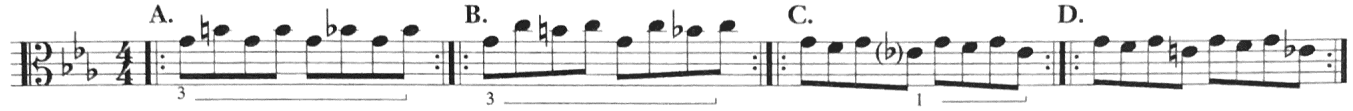
12. Natural & Sharp



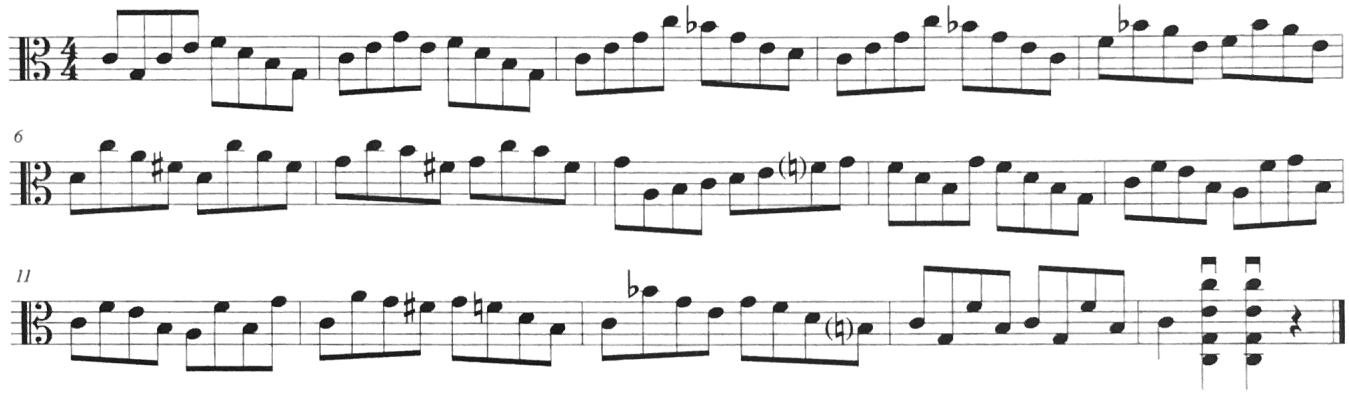
13. Mary Had a Little Lamb



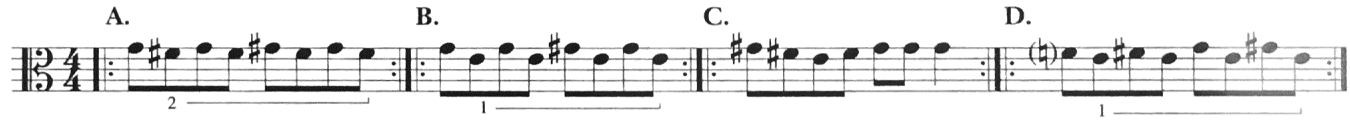
14. Flat Finger Pattern Exercises



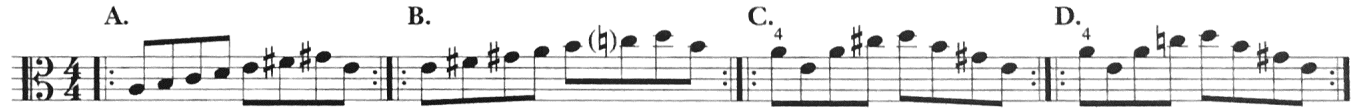
15. Dominant Etude



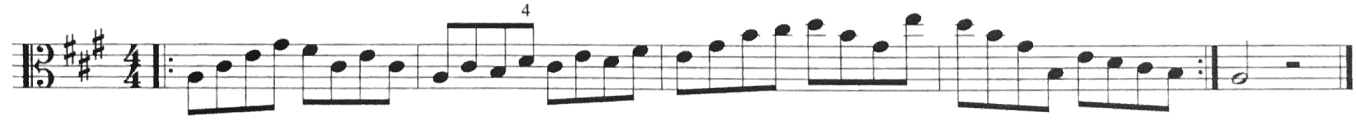
16. Sharp Finger Pattern Exercises



17. Changing Finger Patterns

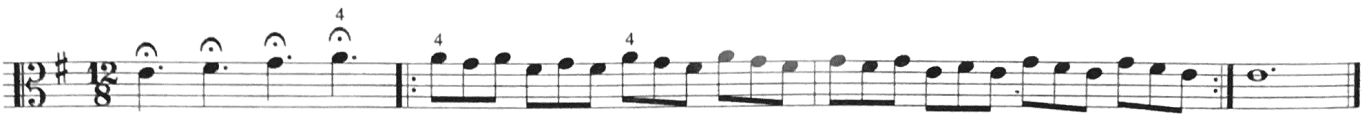


18. Etude X



19. Tetrachord Etude

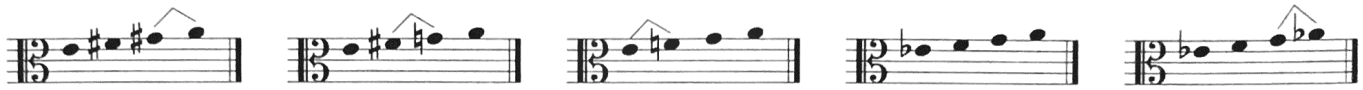
Tuning Notes (Dorian Tetrachord) Etude



After learning the etude with the Dorian tetrachord above, play it with one of the other tetrachords below.

Tetrachords:

Major Dorian Phrygian Lydian Major (half pos.)

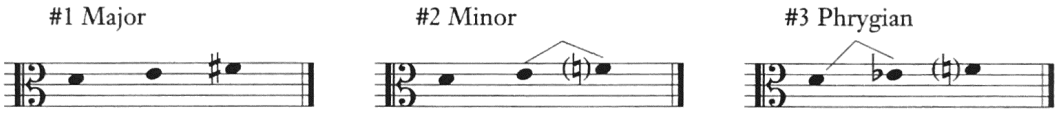


20. Velocity Etude

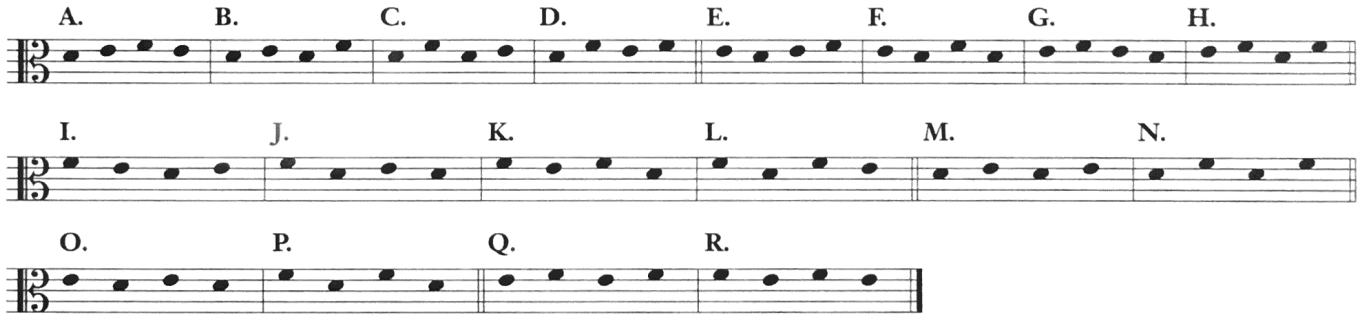
Perform the tude as written first, and then perform it with finger pattern #2 (F♮) and #3 (E♭) shown below.

Finger Patterns

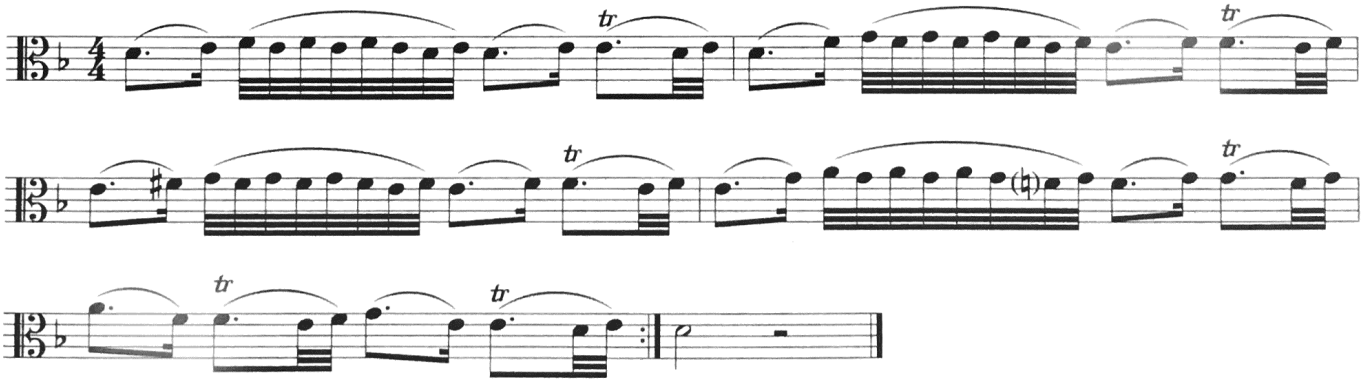
#1 Major #2 Minor #3 Phrygian



Velocity Etude Variations



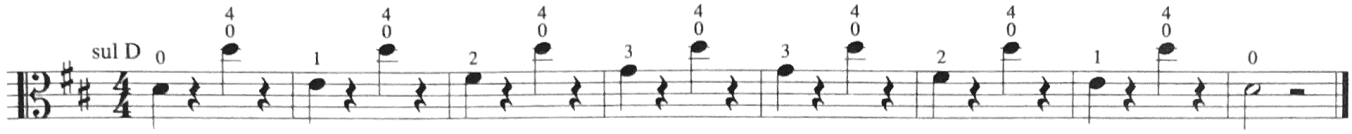
21. Trills The trills on beats 2 and 4 are performed the same way.



III Shifting Exercises

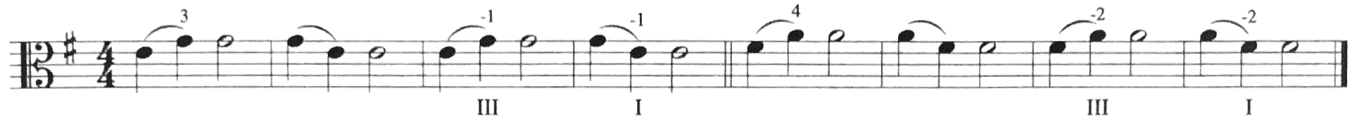
Shift with a light, smooth motion; always move the thumb with the second finger.

22. Shifting to the Harmonic

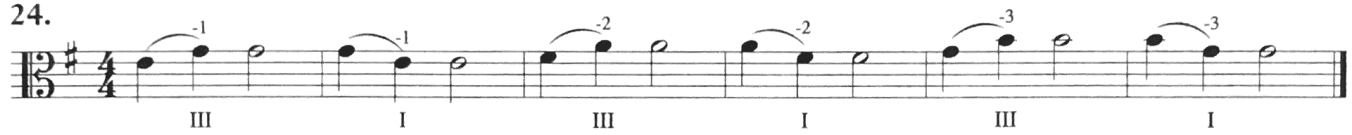


23. Shifting to the Same Finger

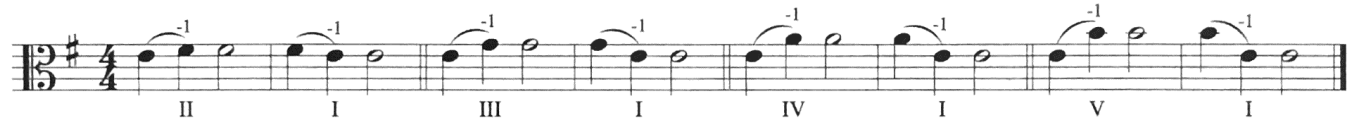
Perform all shifting exercises with and without slurs.



24.

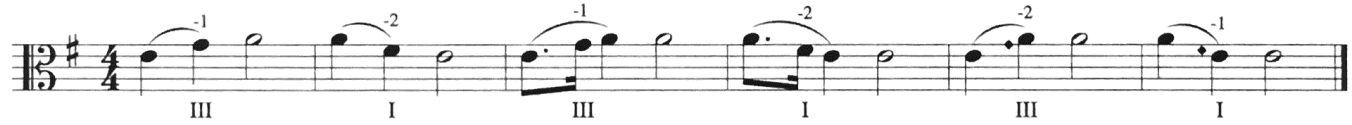


25. Shifting on the First Finger



26. Shifting to a Different Finger

♦ The diamond is the destination of the shifting finger; it is a silent shifting note that should be hidden, not heard.



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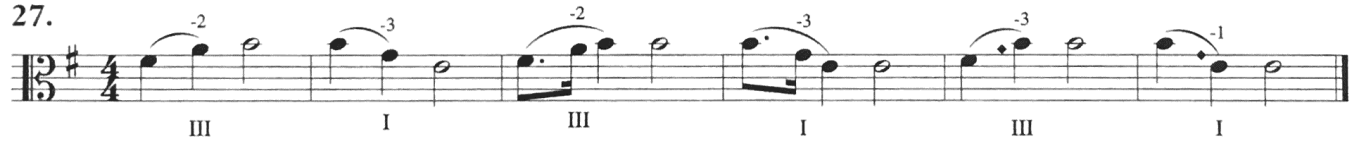

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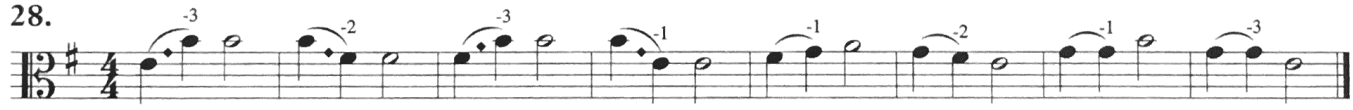
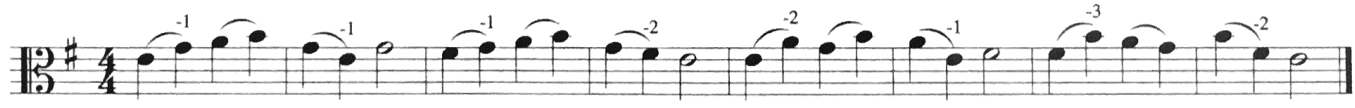
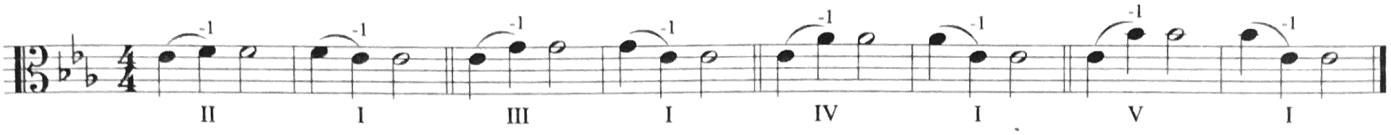


29. Etude in E Minor

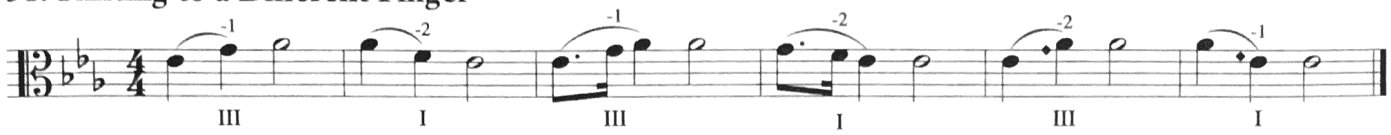
Mark the silent shifts with a dot or a diamond.



30. Changing Keys How does the key change the spacing of the shifts and finger patterns?



31. Shifting to a Different Finger



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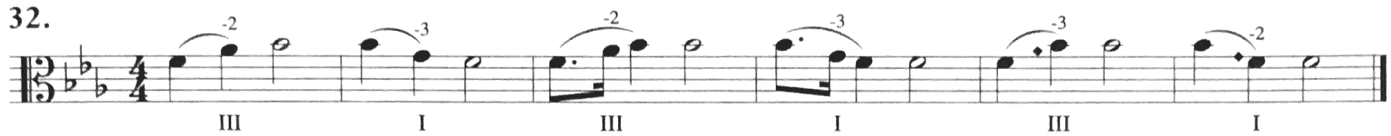

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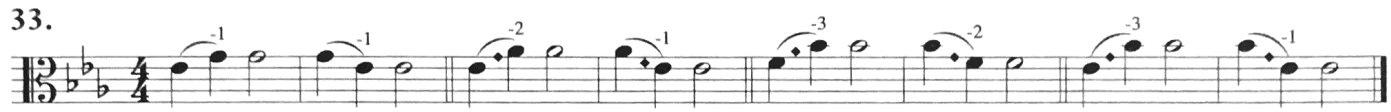
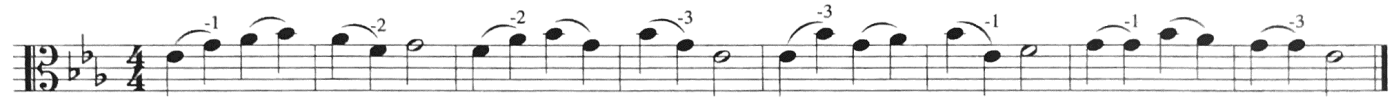
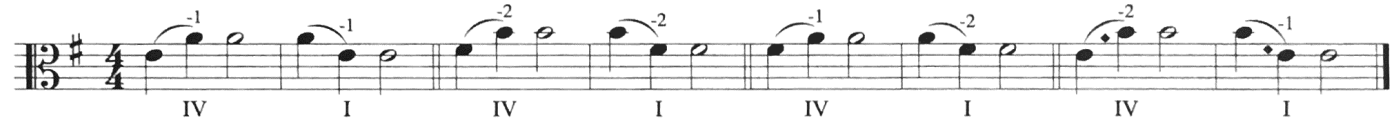


34. Etude in E♭ Major Mark the silent shifts with a dot or a diamond.



35. Focus on 4th Position



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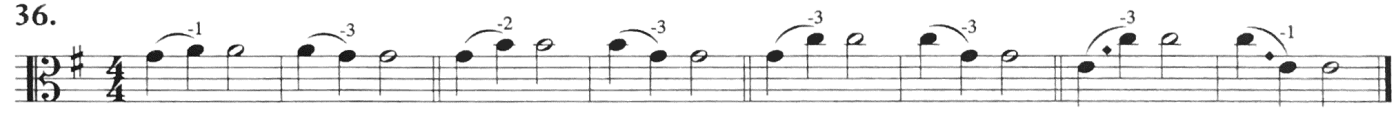
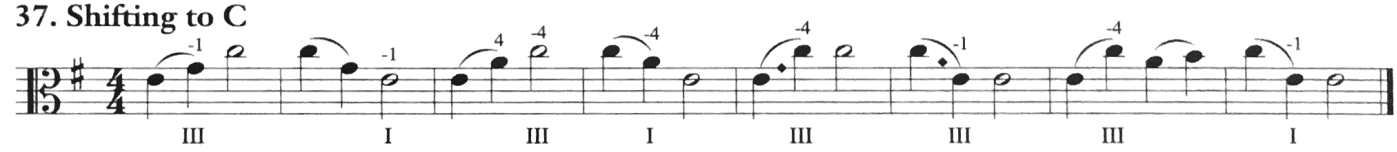
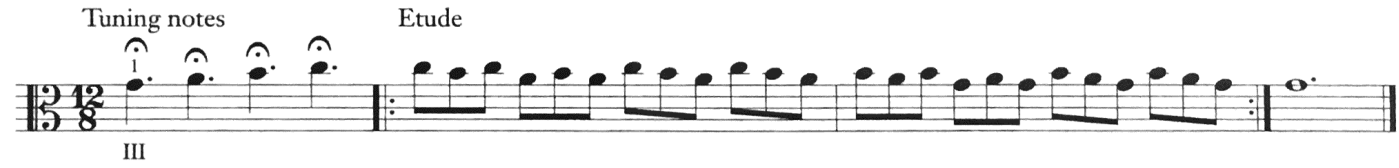


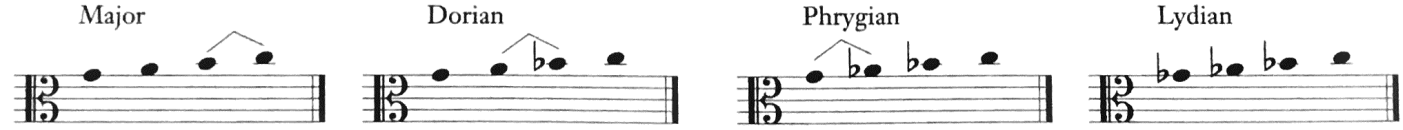
37. Shifting to C



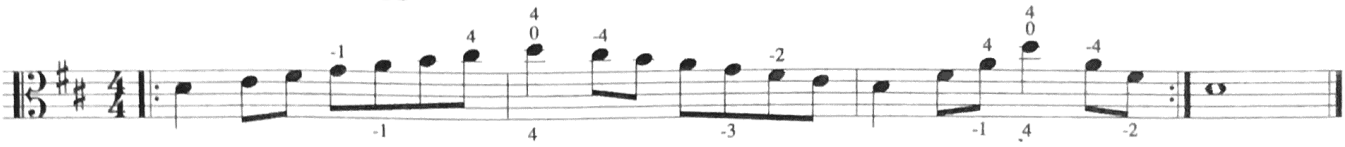
38. Tetrachord Etude - 3rd Position



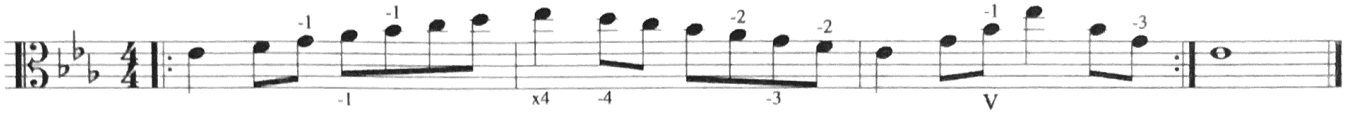
Tetrachords



39. D Major Scale and Arpeggio - on One String

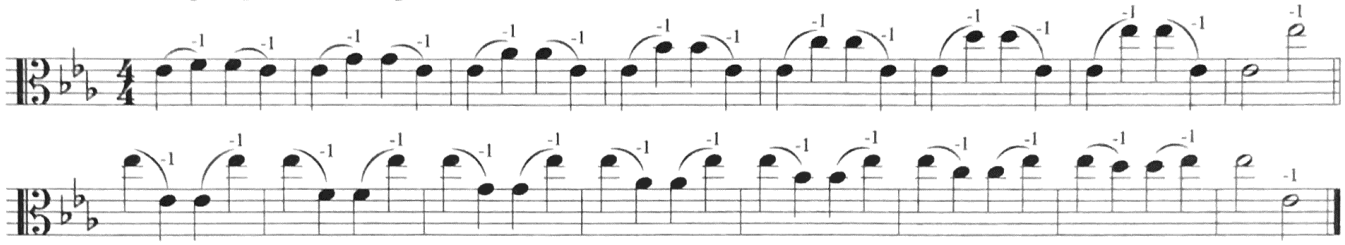


40. E♭ Major Scale and Arpeggio - on One String

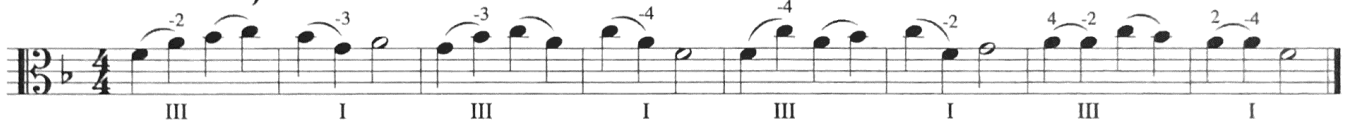


41. Up and Down the String

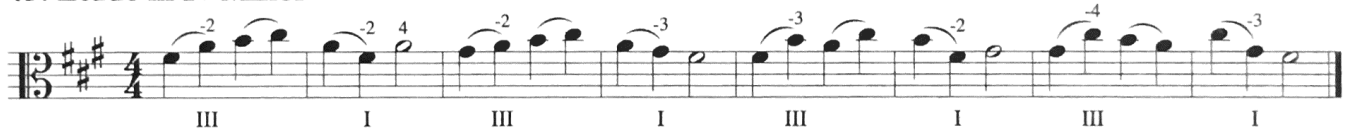
To reach higher positions, bring the elbow and arm around the instrument, and the thumb around the neck.



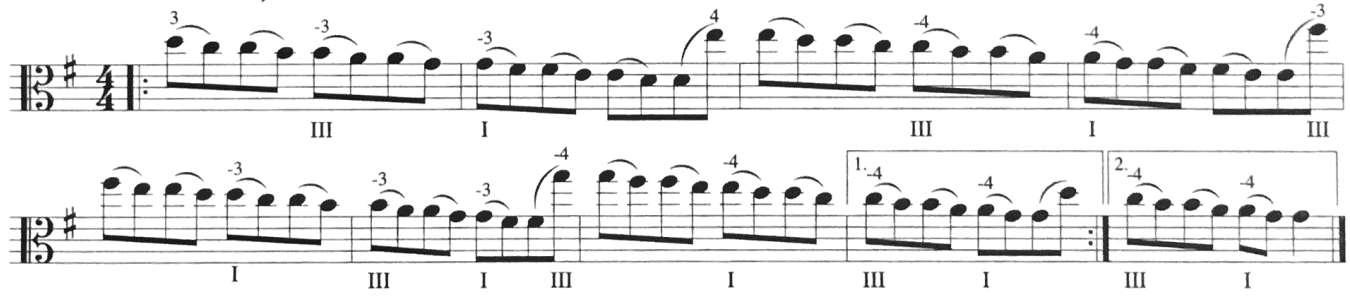
42. Etude in F Major



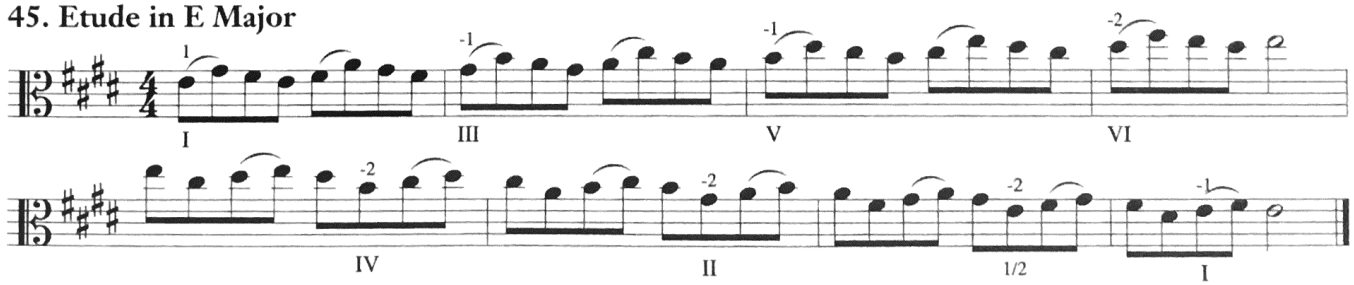
43. Etude in F♯ Minor



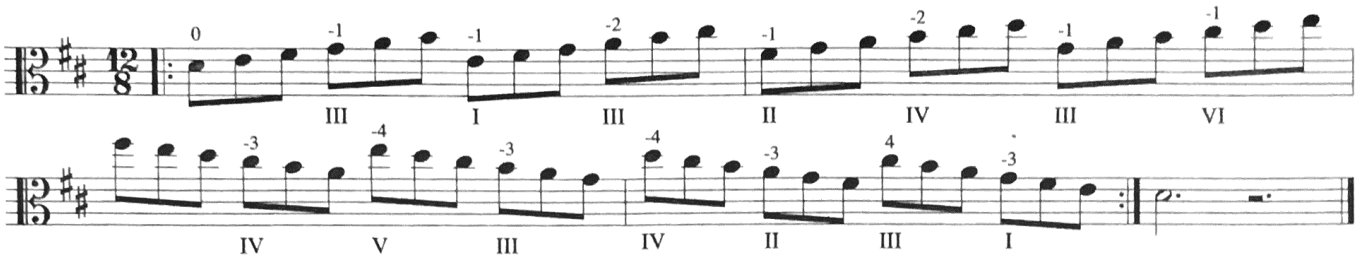
44. Etude in G Major



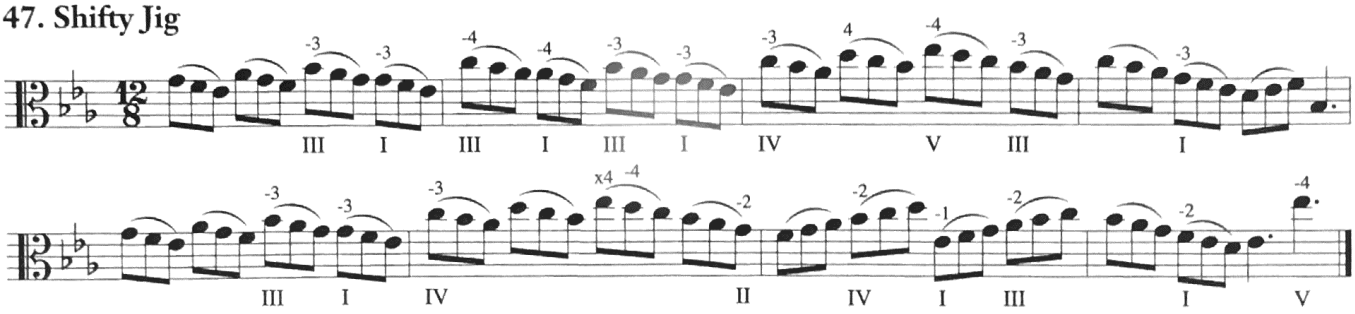
45. Etude in E Major



46. Etude in D Major Perform as written and with three- or six-note slurs.



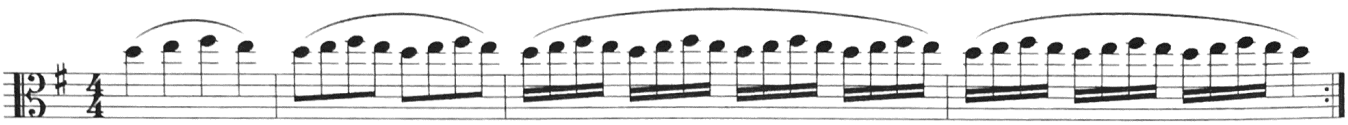
47. Shifty Jig



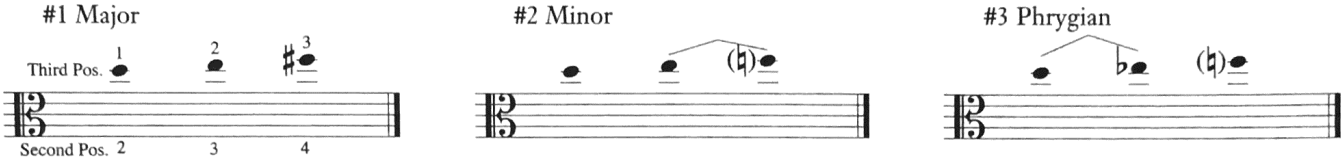
IV Higher Positions and Alternate Clefs

48. Velocity Etude in Higher Positions

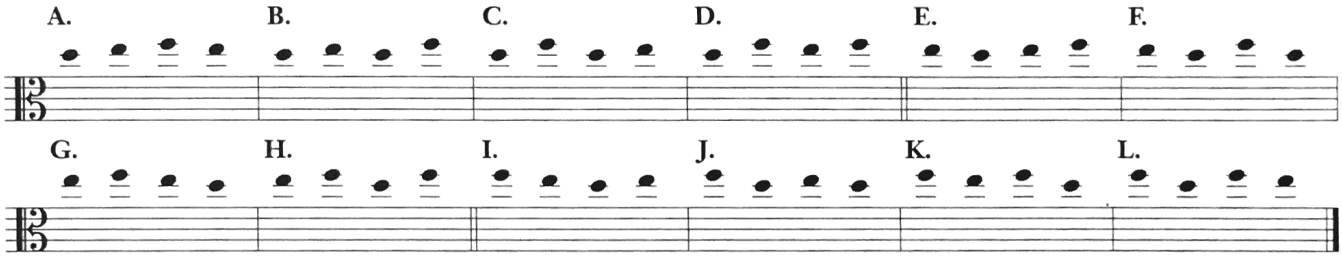
Perform the etude as written first, and then perform it with finger pattern #2 (F♮) and #3 (E♭) shown below.



Finger Patterns

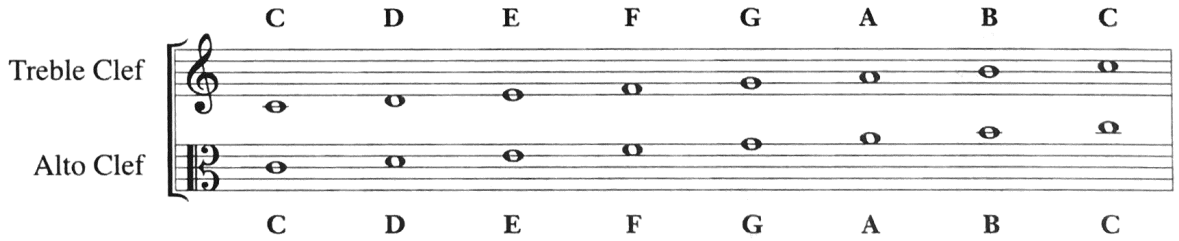


Velocity Etude Variations

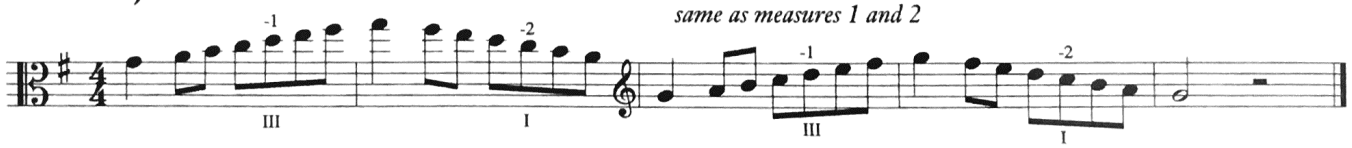


Alternate Clefs

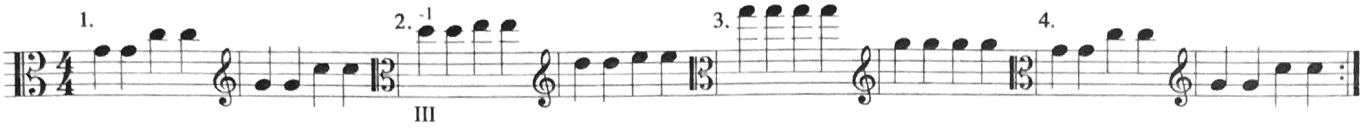
Violinists use ottava (8va) and lower string players use alternate clefs to reduce the number of leger lines the performer reads when the music moves into higher registers. Viola players must learn to read treble clef. Cello and double bass players must learn to read tenor and treble clefs. Advanced violinists should also learn alto clef, so they can double on viola if needed.



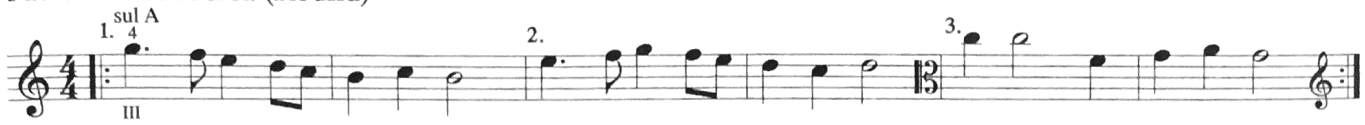
49. G Major Scale with Alternate Clef



50. Scotland's Burning (Round)



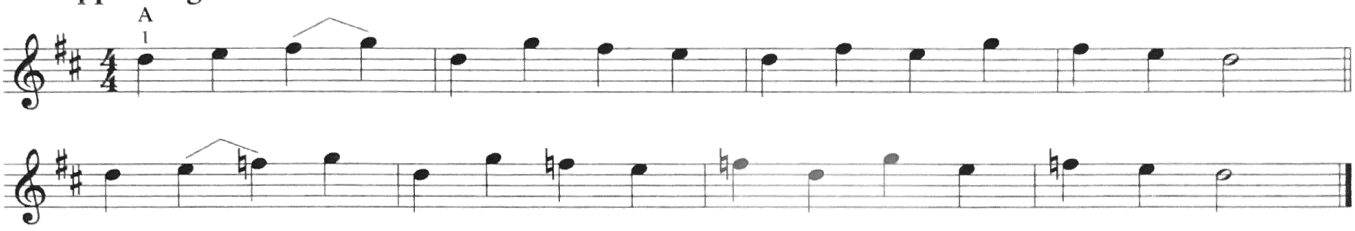
51. Viva la Musica (Round)



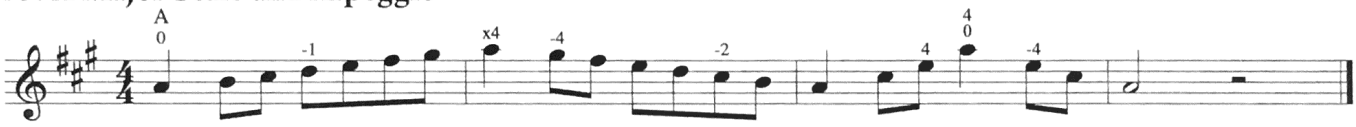
Upper Register and Thumb Position

To reach higher positions, bring the elbow and arm around the instrument, and the thumb around the neck.

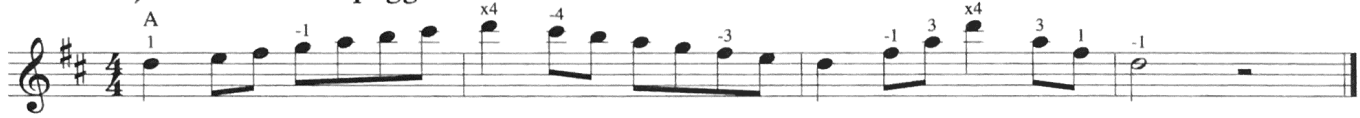
52. Upper Register Patterns



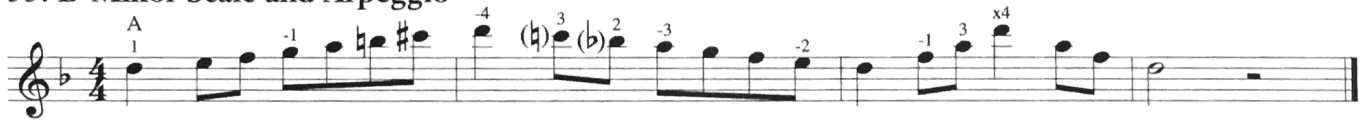
53. A Major Scale and Arpeggio



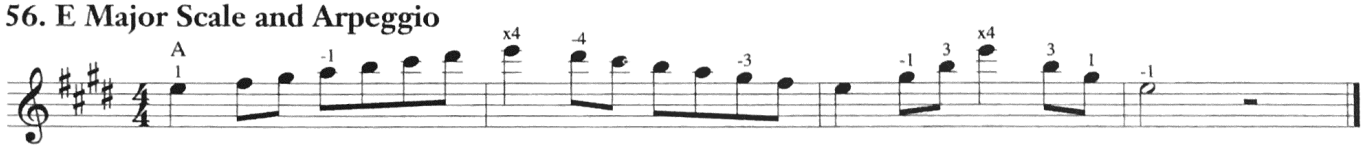
54. D Major Scale and Arpeggio



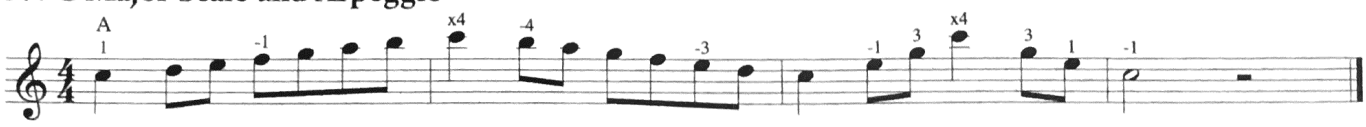
55. D Minor Scale and Arpeggio



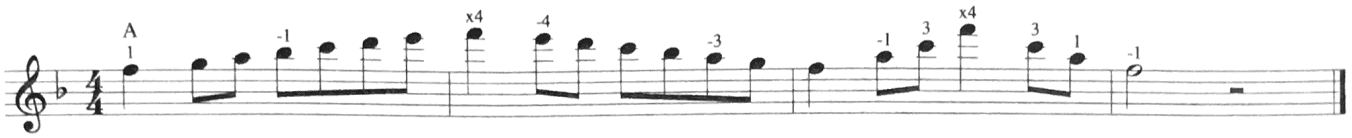
56. E Major Scale and Arpeggio



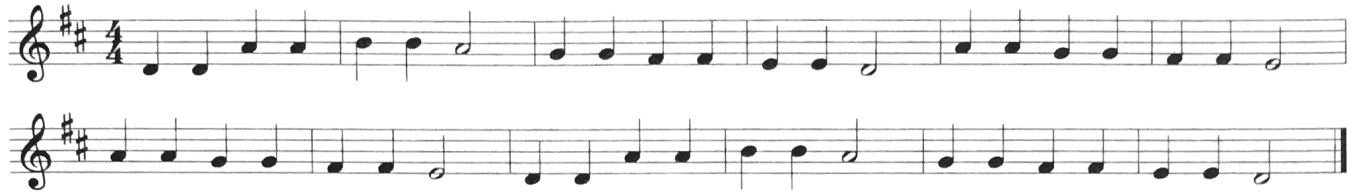
57. C Major Scale and Arpeggio



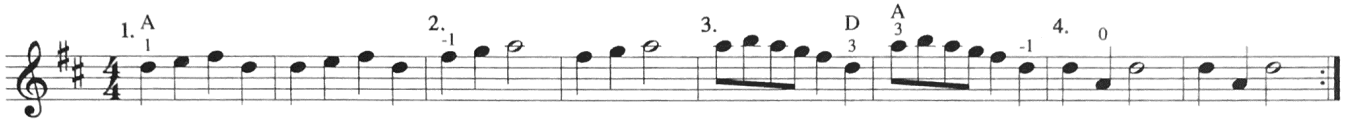
58. F Major Scale and Arpeggio



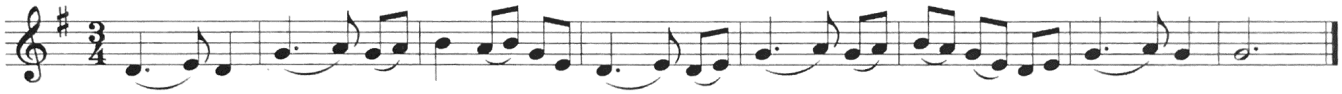
59. Twinkle



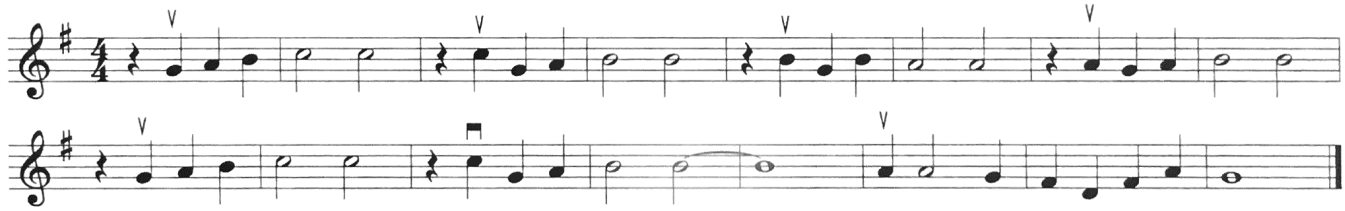
60. Frere Jacques (Round)



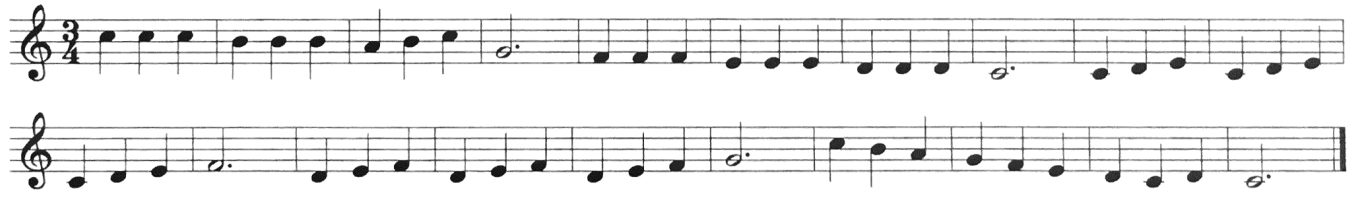
61. Arirang



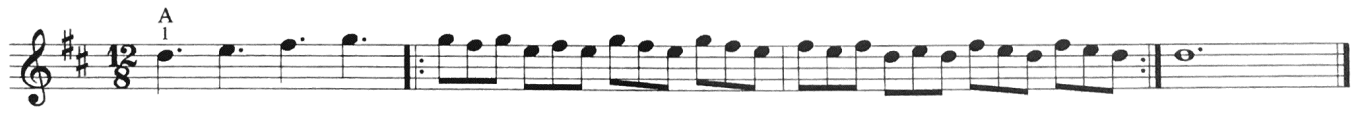
62. This Land Is Your Land



63. French Folk Song

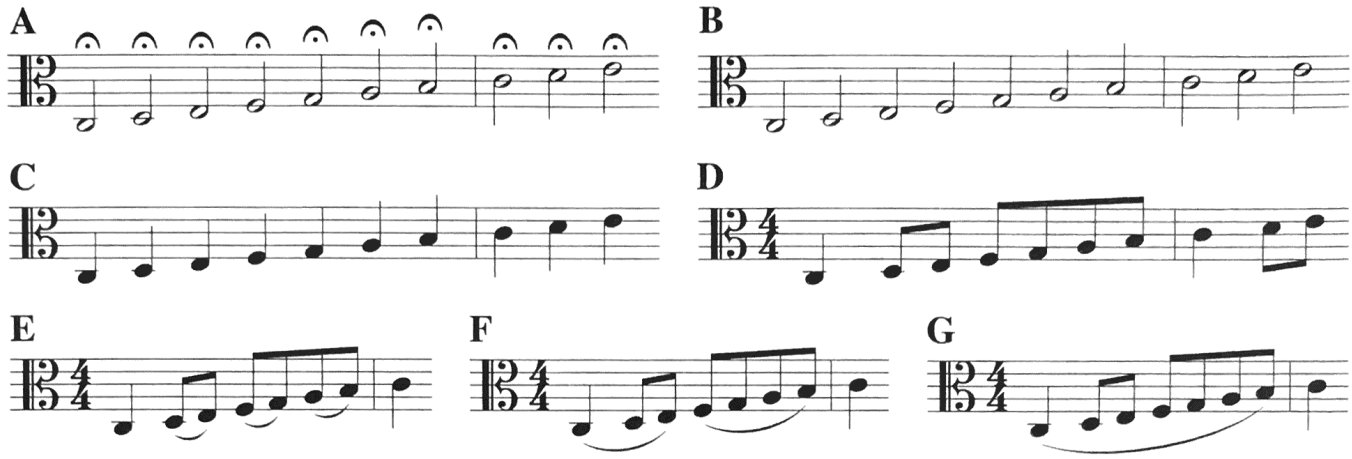


64. Tetrachord Etude in Upper Positions



V Scales, Arpeggios and Thirds

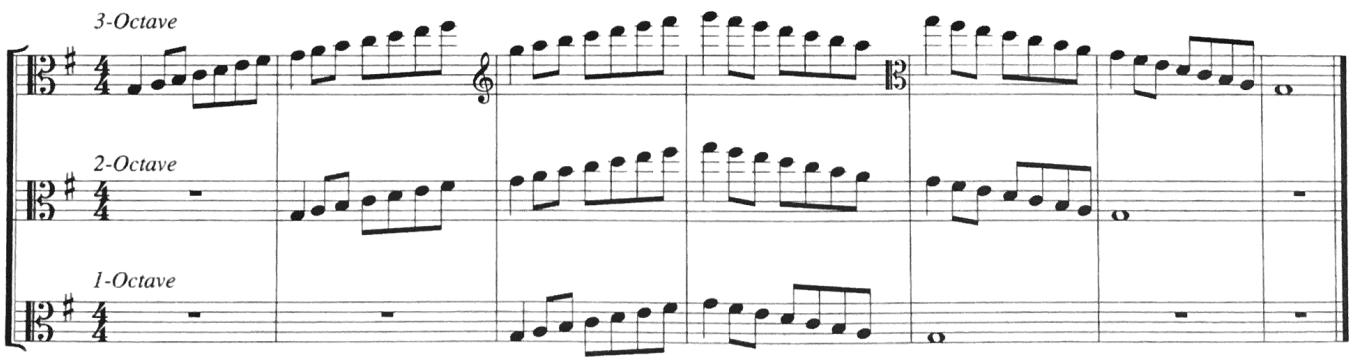
Students should focus on the skills and octaves that are appropriate for their level of ability and experience. Begin learning a scale by playing each note without a pulse; listen and adjust fingertips to fine tune each pitch before moving to the next note. Then, add a pulse and learn half and quarter notes, the printed rhythm, and finally add slurs, as shown below.



Use the following checklist to guide your practice:

Tone	☐ Sound **projects well** with an excellent tone quality. ☐ **Contact point** is the correct distance between bridge and fingerboard. ☐ The **bow angle** is perpendicular to the string and rotated correctly. ☐ **Part of the bow** is correct. ☐ **Bow weight and speed** are balanced and produce an excellent tone that projects well.
Intonation	☐ **Notes are consistently correct and in tune**, especially fourth and seventh scale degrees. ☐ **Hand placement** is correct on fingerboard, not sharp or flat. ☐ **Finger pattern** (half-step placement) is correct; half- and whole-step distances are correct. ☐ **Shifts** are clean and well-executed; **fingerings** are correct. ☐ **Fingertips adjust quickly**, refining the pitch after finger placement.
Tempo and Rhythm	☐ **Tempos** are consistent; no stopping, stumbling, rushing, or dragging. ☐ **Rhythm** is correct. ☐ Exercise is **memorized** when appropriate.

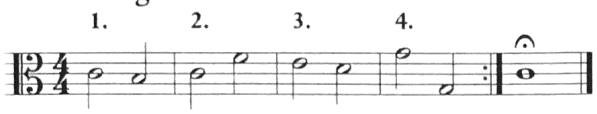
Students of different levels can learn and perform scales at the same time. Those performing more octaves should begin their scale first, as shown below.



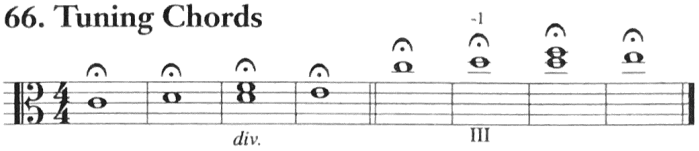
Major Scales, Arpeggios, and Thirds

C Major

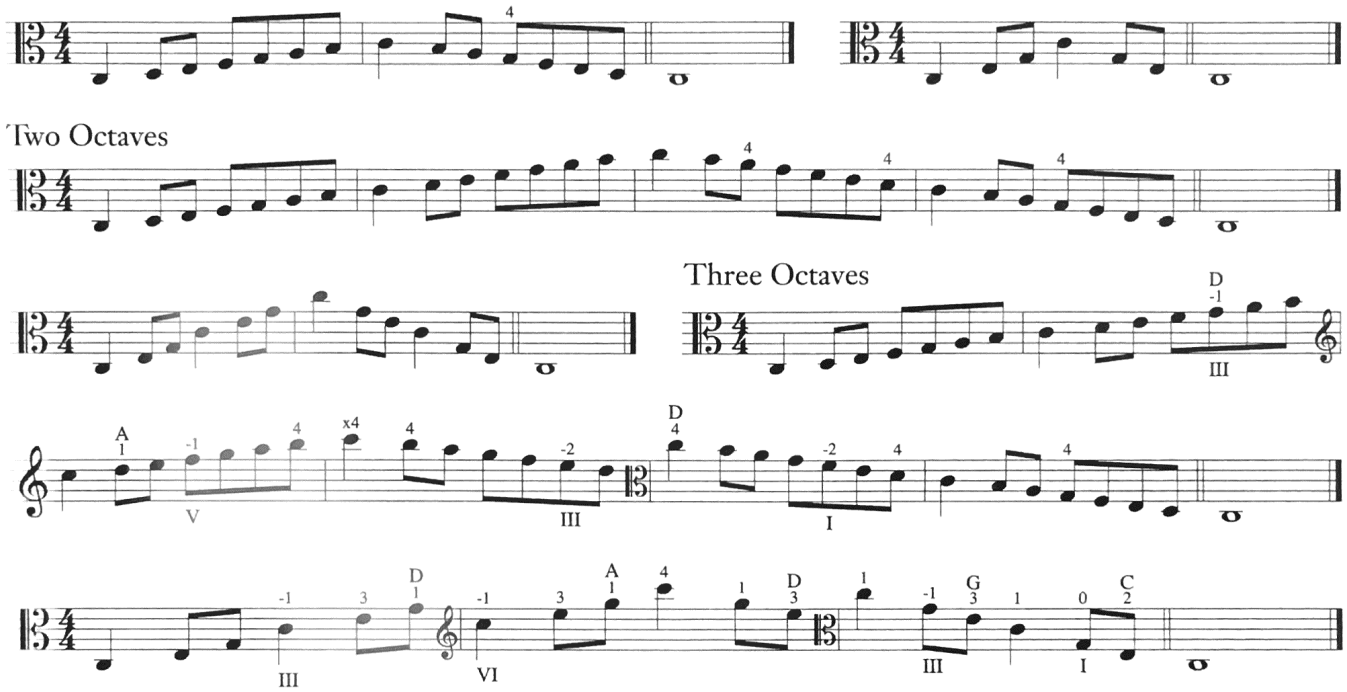
65. Tuning Canon



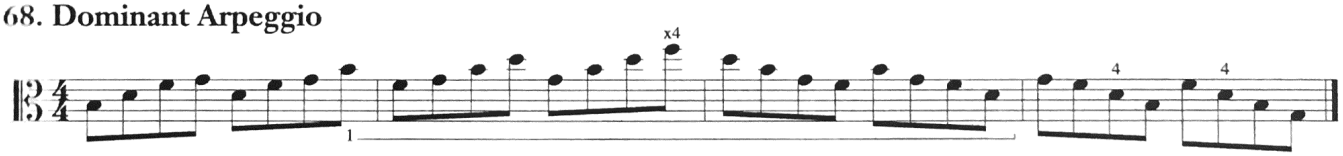
66. Tuning Chords



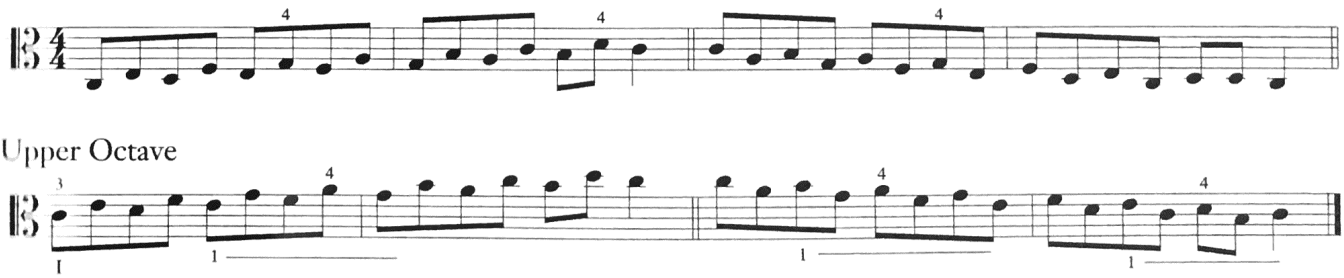
67. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



68. Dominant Arpeggio

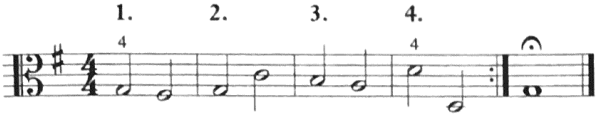


69. Thirds - Lower Octave

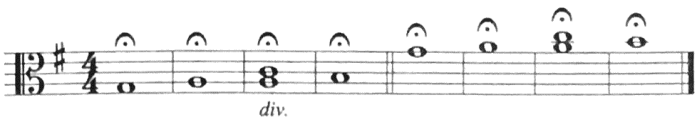


G Major

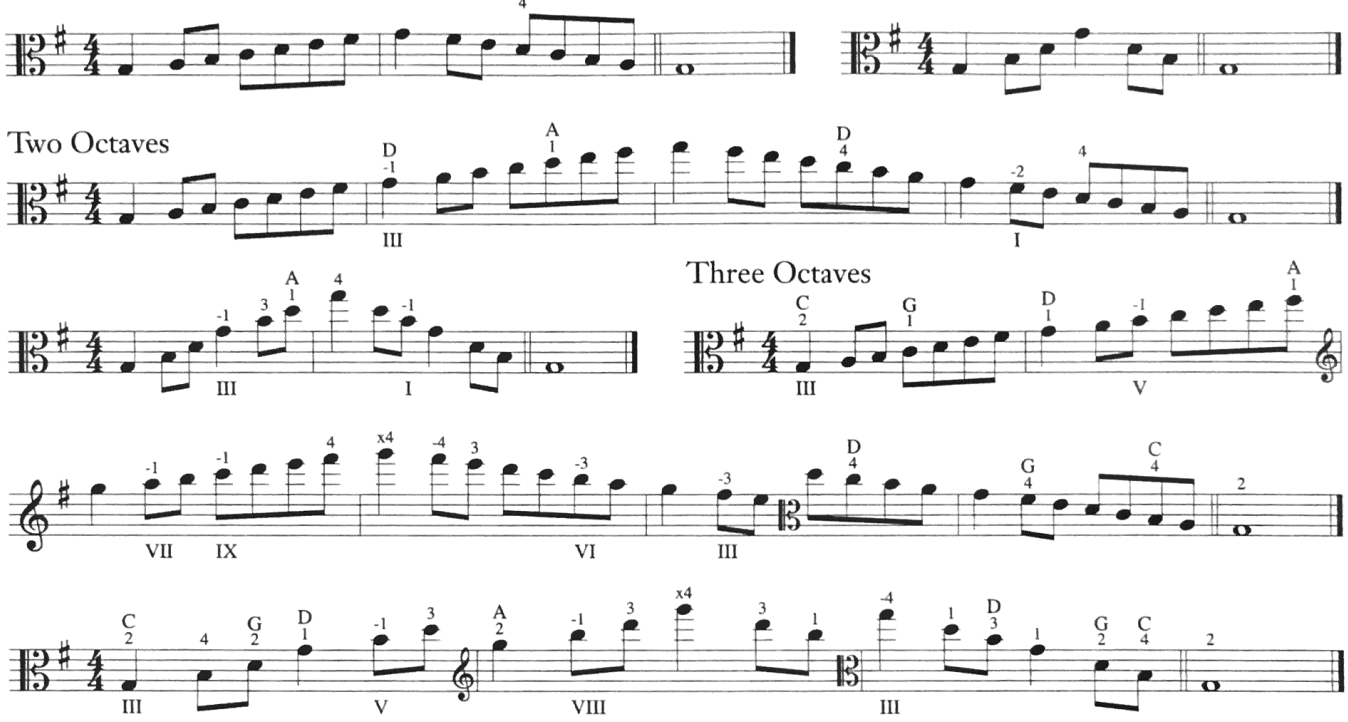
70. Tuning Canon



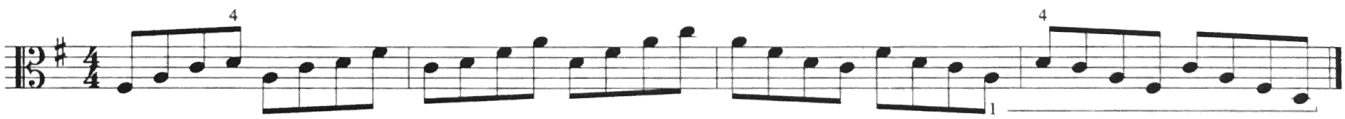
71. Tuning Chords



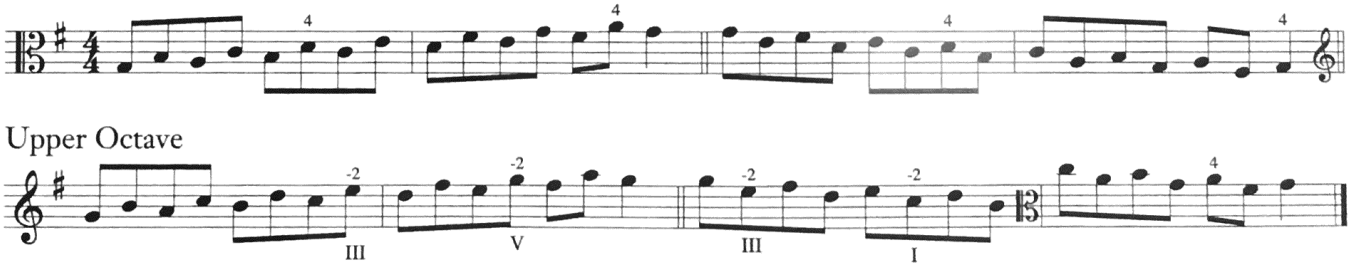
72. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



73. Dominant Arpeggio

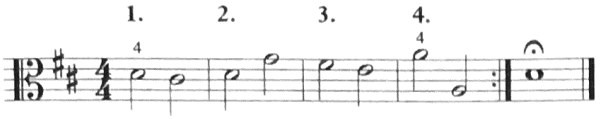


74. Thirds - Lower Octave

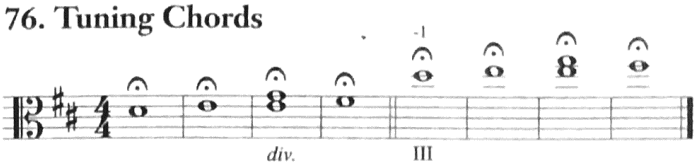


D Major

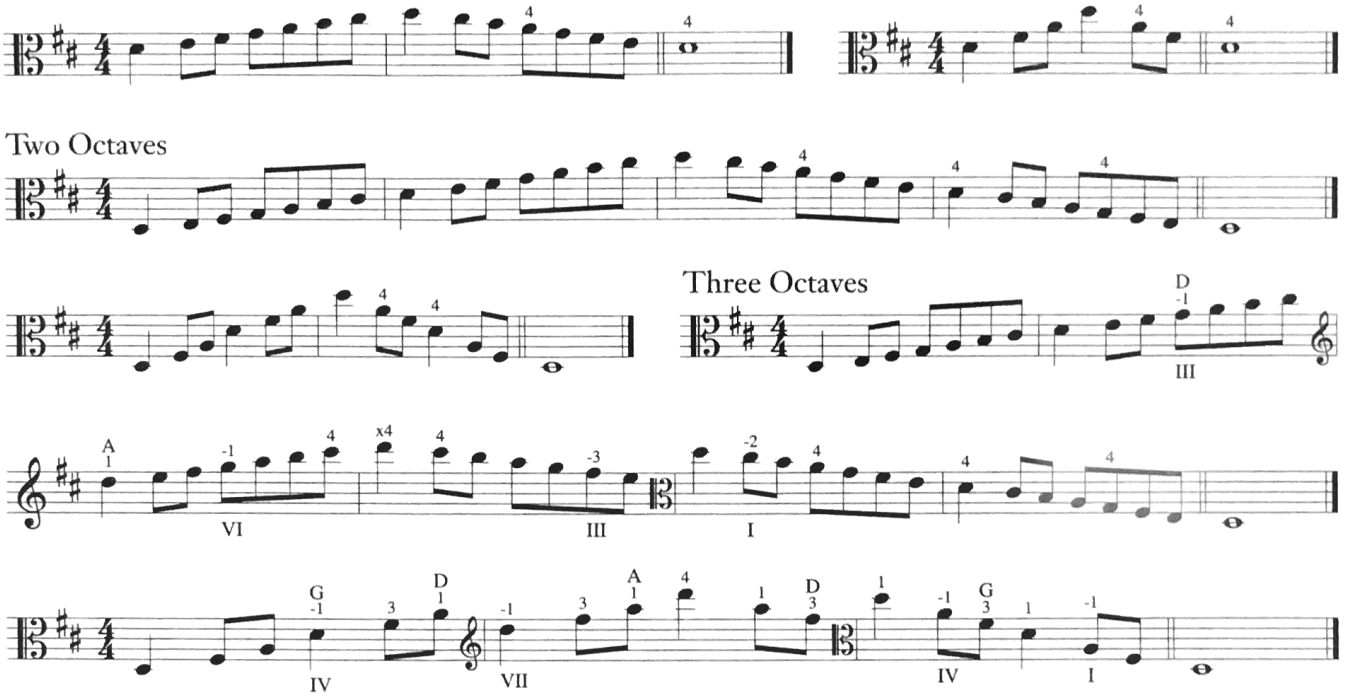
75. Tuning Canon



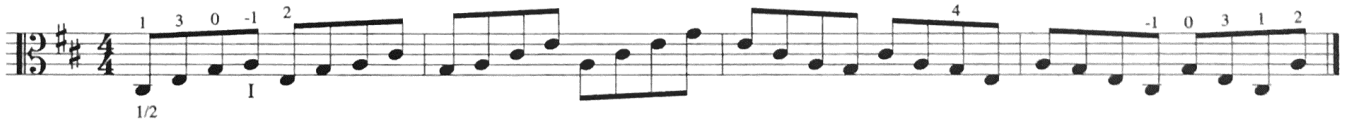
76. Tuning Chords



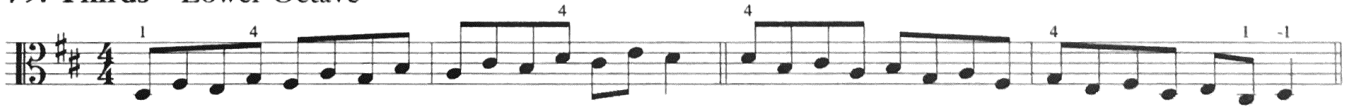
77. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



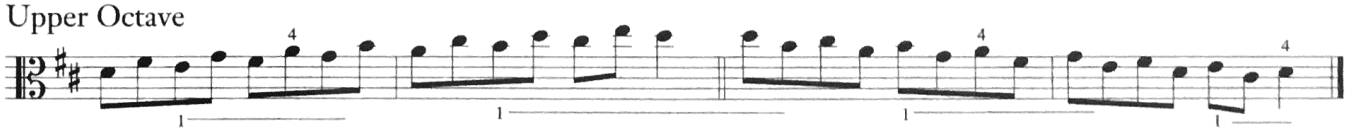
78. Dominant Arpeggio



79. Thirds - Lower Octave

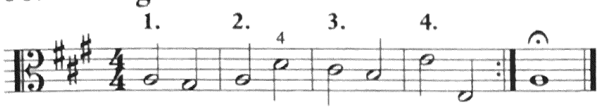


Upper Octave

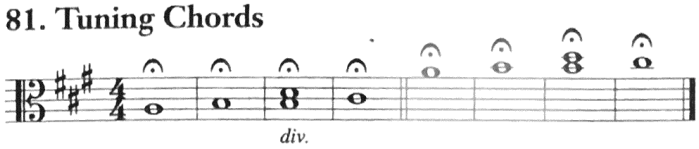


A Major

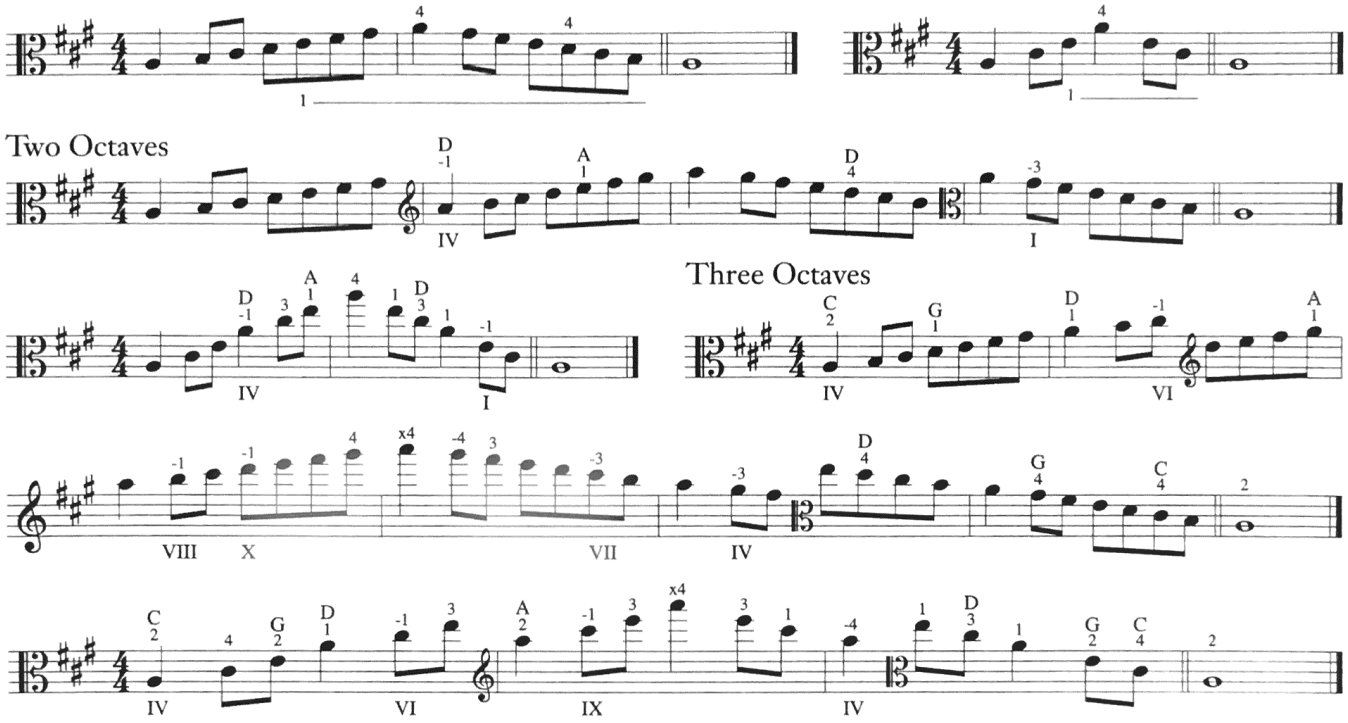
80. Tuning Canon



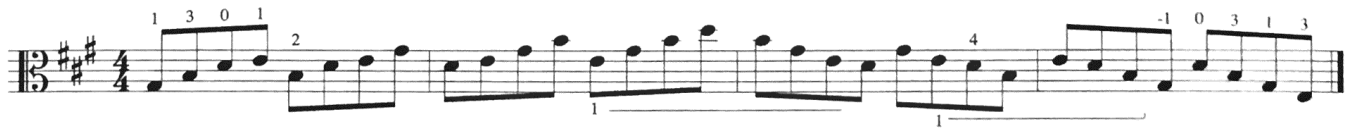
81. Tuning Chords



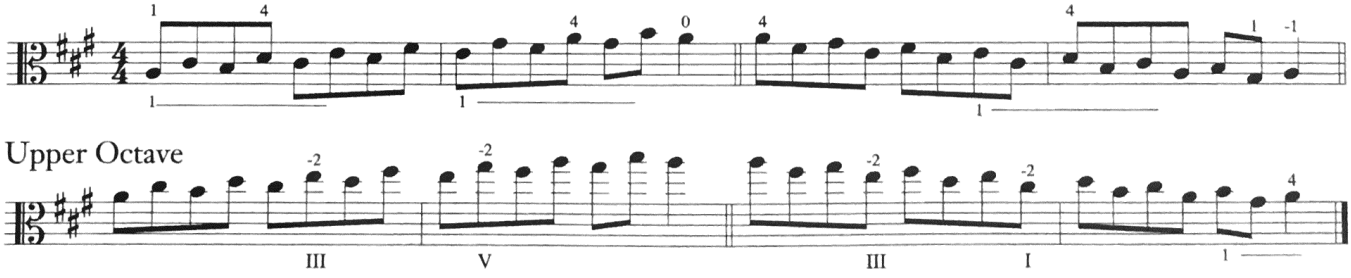
82. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



83. Dominant Arpeggio

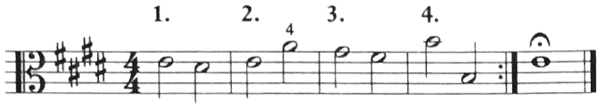


84. Thirds - Lower Octave

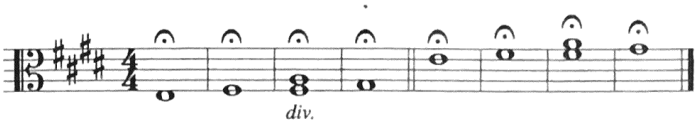


E Major

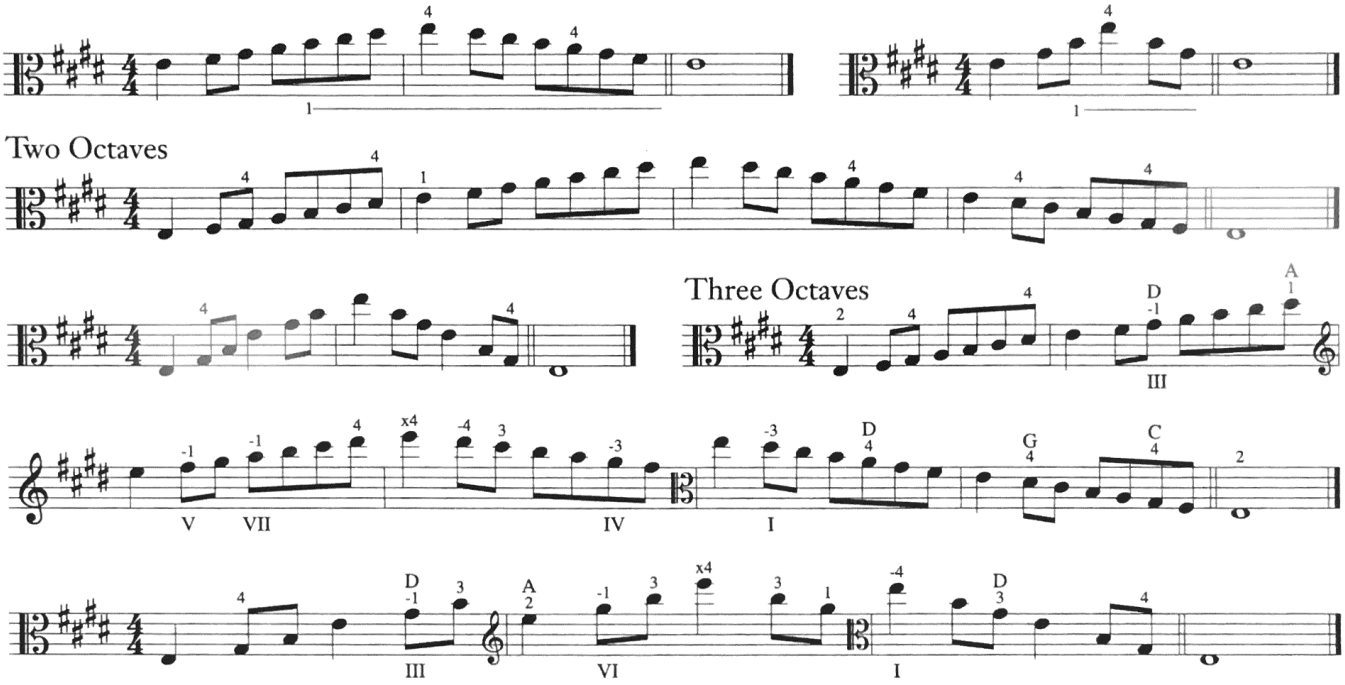
85. Tuning Canon



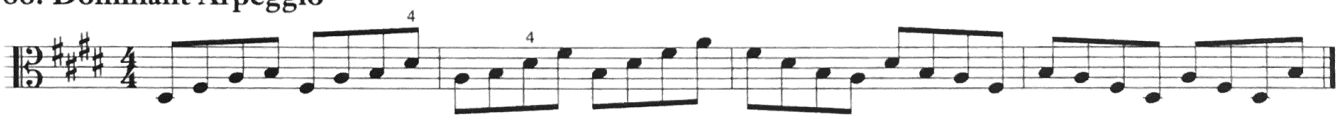
86. Tuning Chords



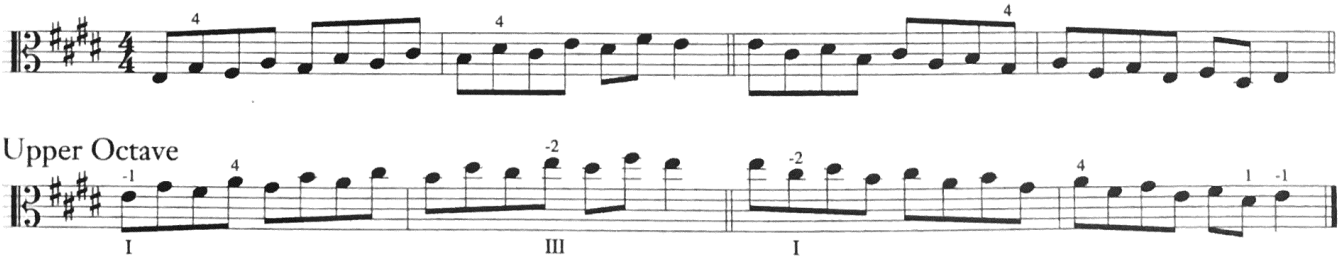
87. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



88. Dominant Arpeggio

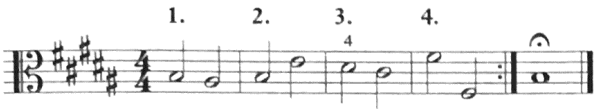


89. Thirds - Lower Octave

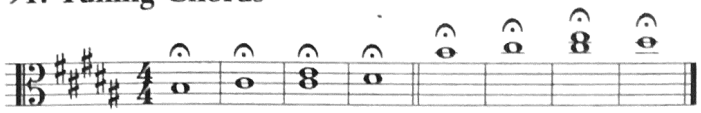


B Major

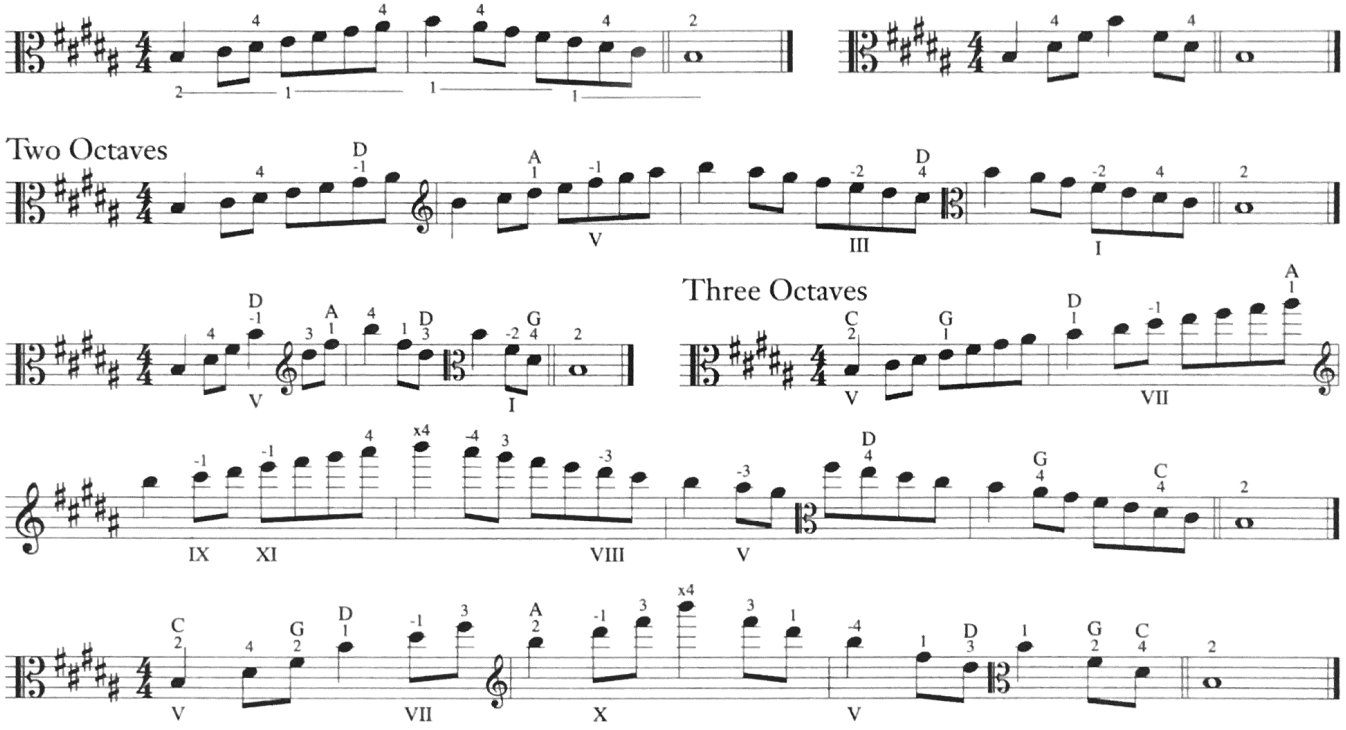
90. Tuning Canon



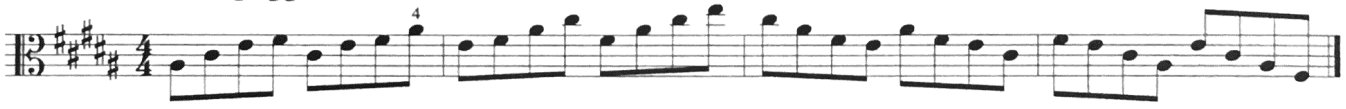
91. Tuning Chords



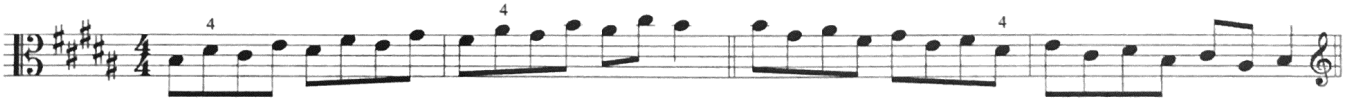
92. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



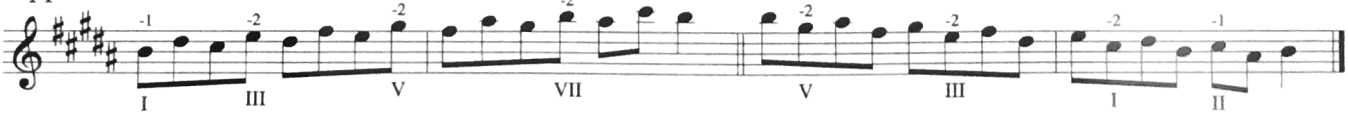
93. Dominant Arpeggio



94. Thirds - Lower Octave

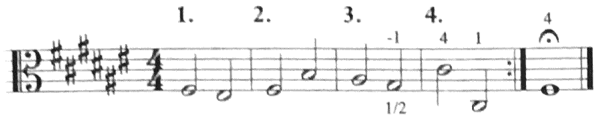


Upper Octave

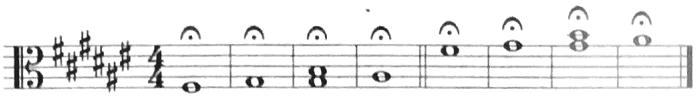


F♯ Major

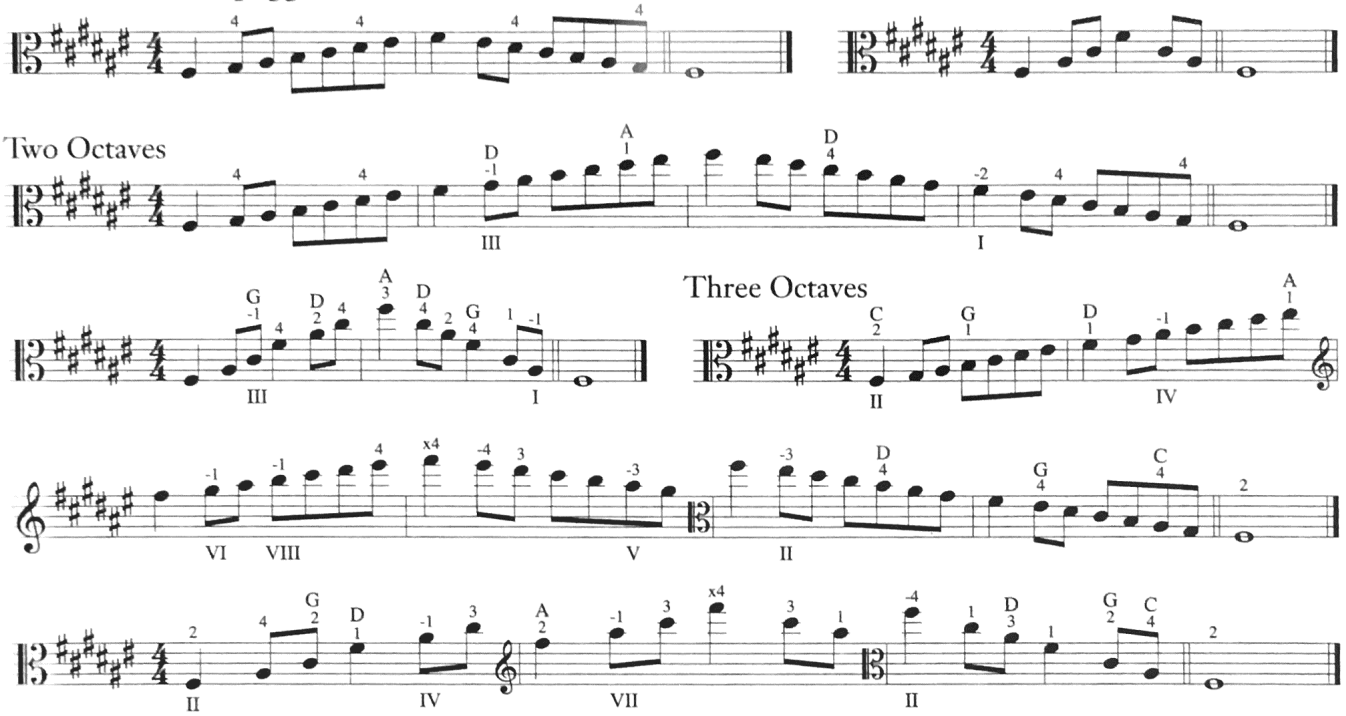
95. Tuning Canon



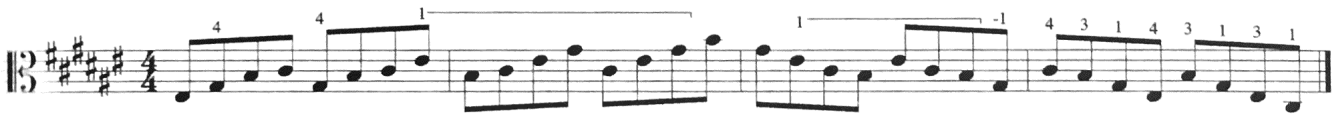
96. Tuning Chords



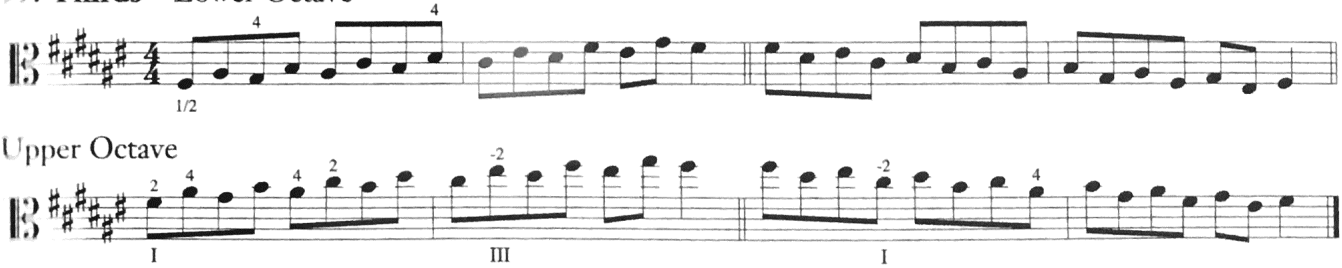
97. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



98. Dominant Arpeggio

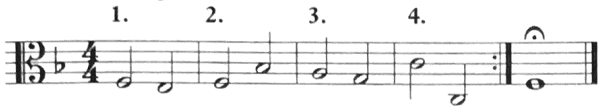


99. Thirds - Lower Octave

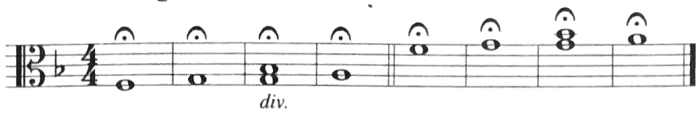


F Major

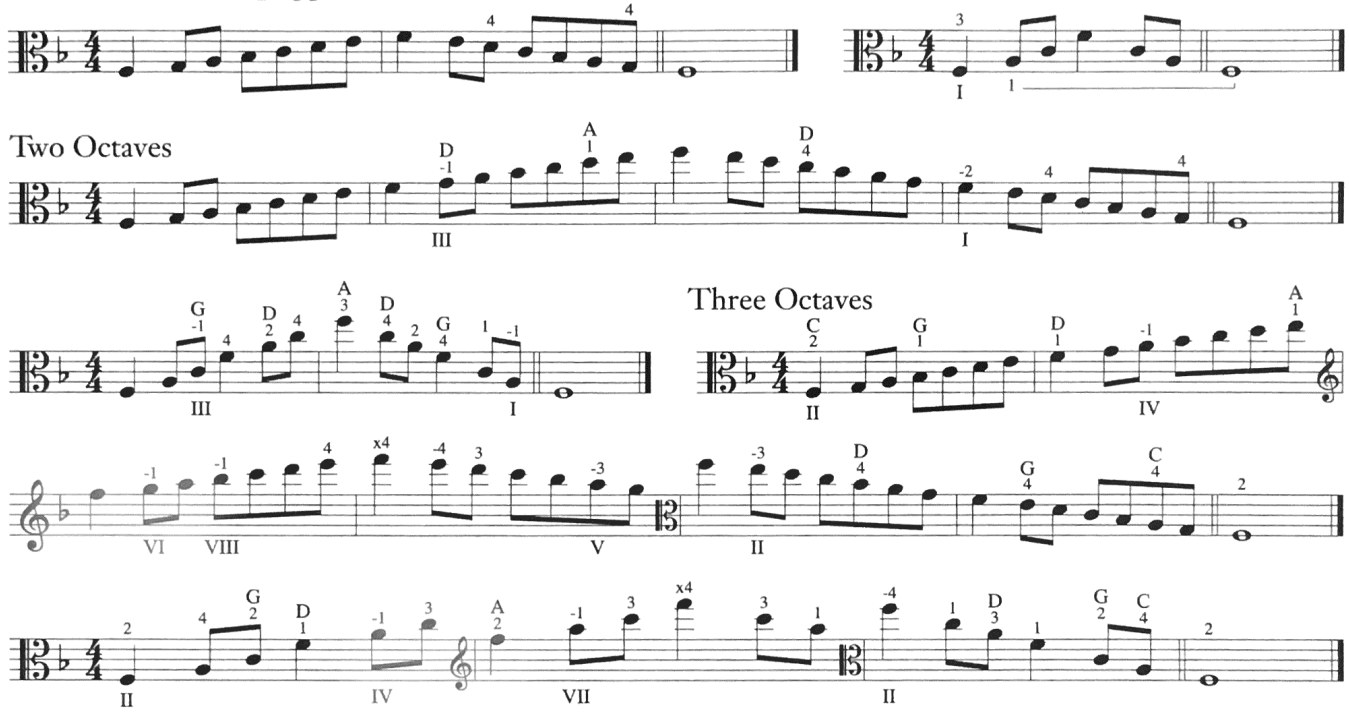
100. Tuning Canon



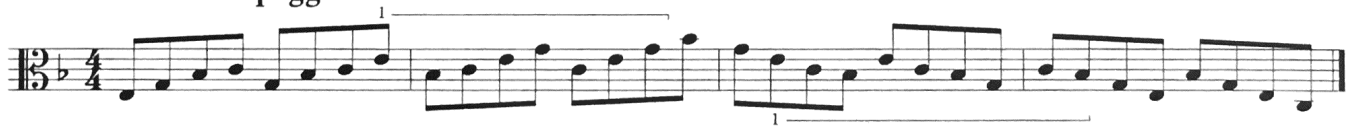
101. Tuning Chords



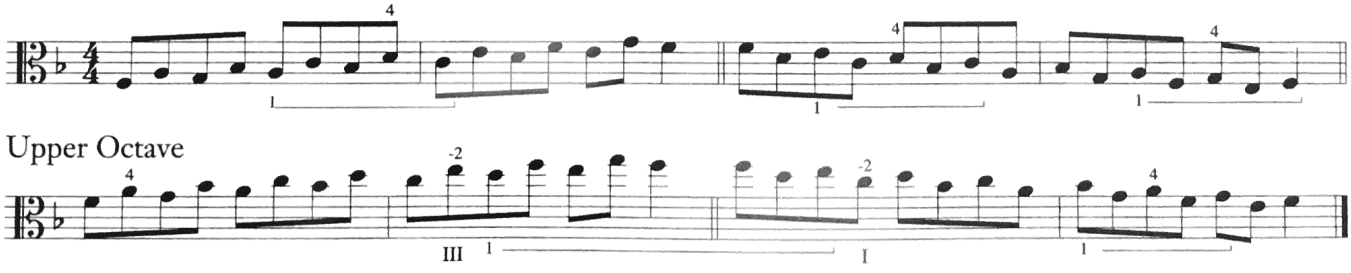
102. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



103. Dominant Arpeggio

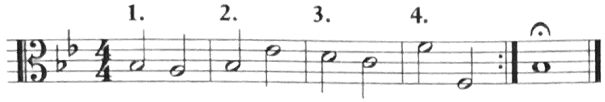


104. Thirds - Lower Octave

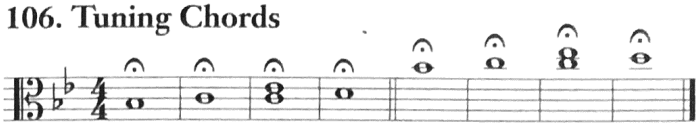


B♭ Major

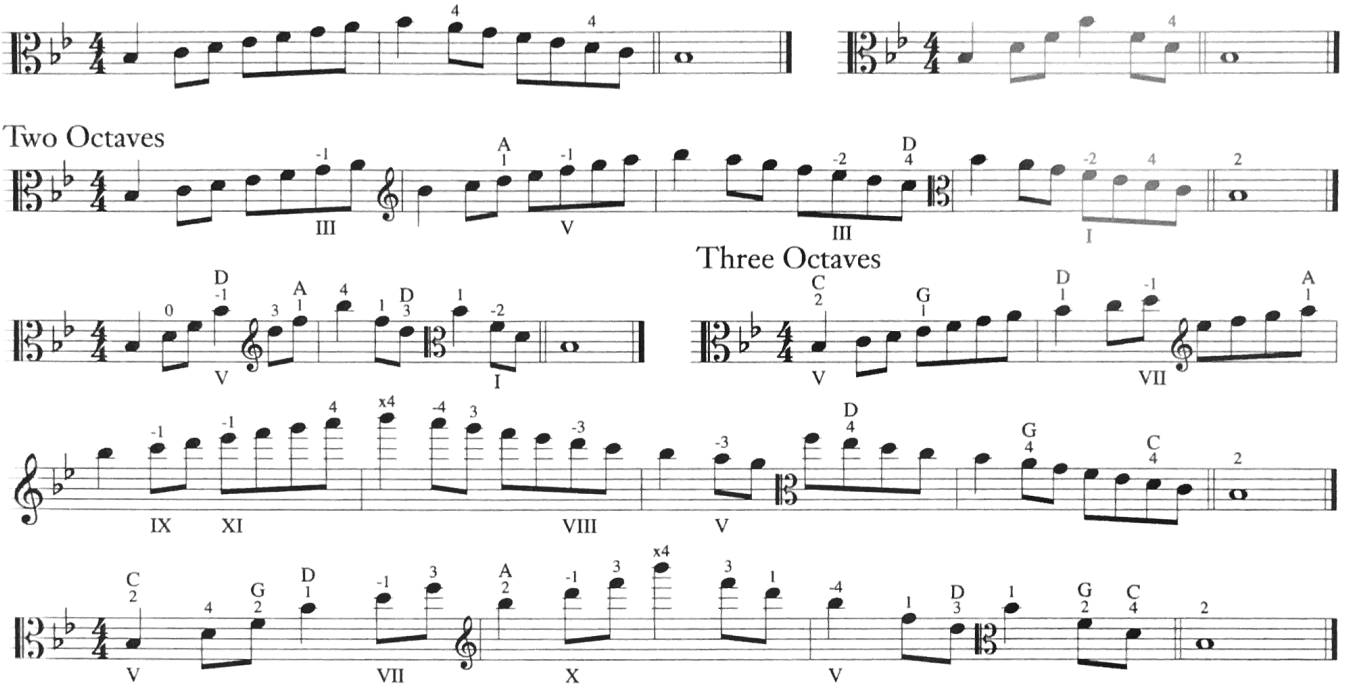
105. Tuning Canon



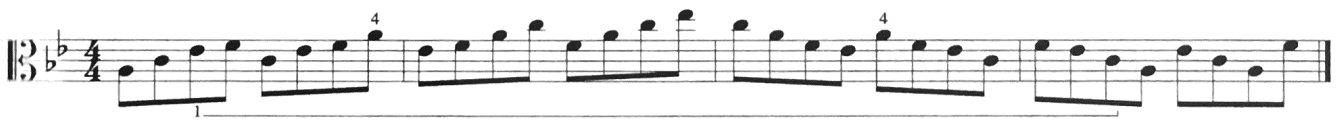
106. Tuning Chords



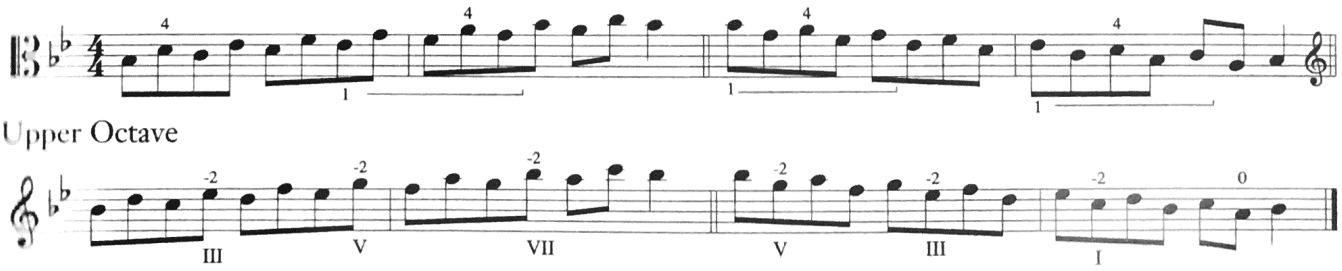
107. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



108. Dominant Arpeggio

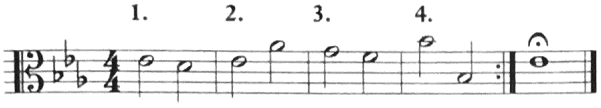


109. Thirds - Lower Octave

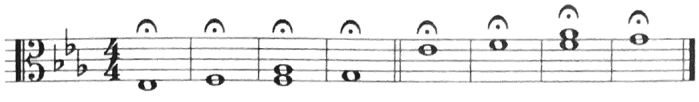


E♭ Major

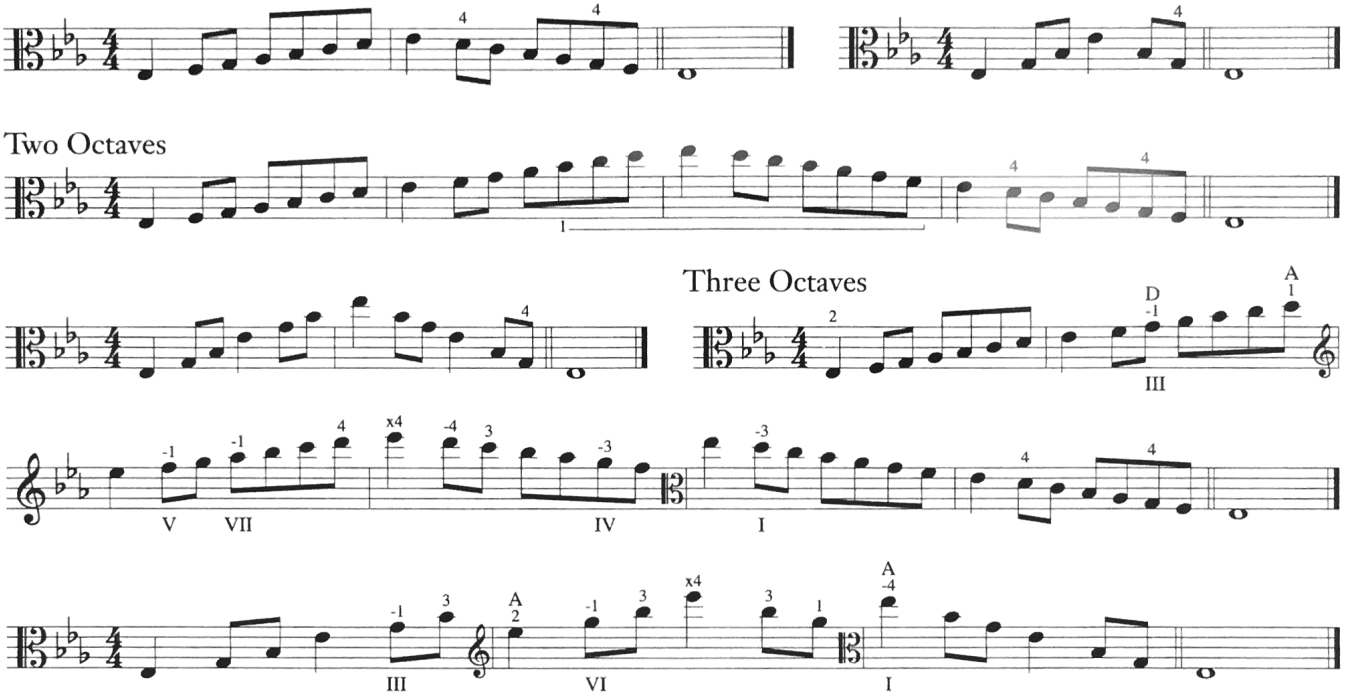
110. Tuning Canon



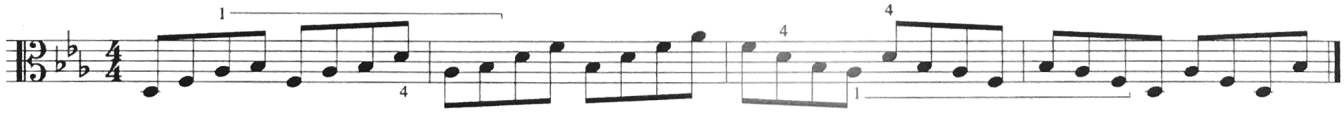
111. Tuning Chords



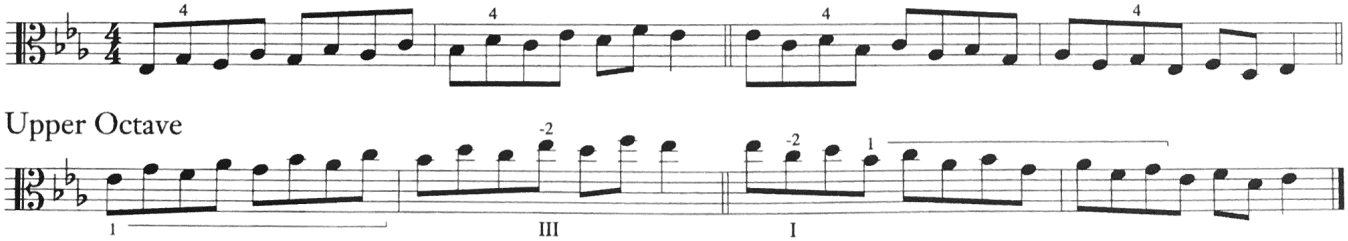
112. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



113. Dominant Arpeggio

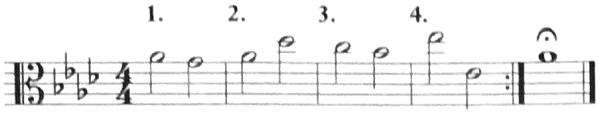


114. Thirds - Lower Octave

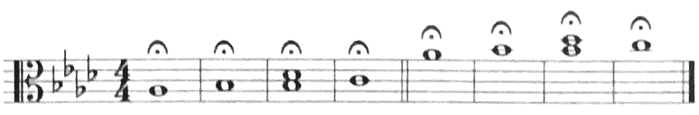


A♭ Major

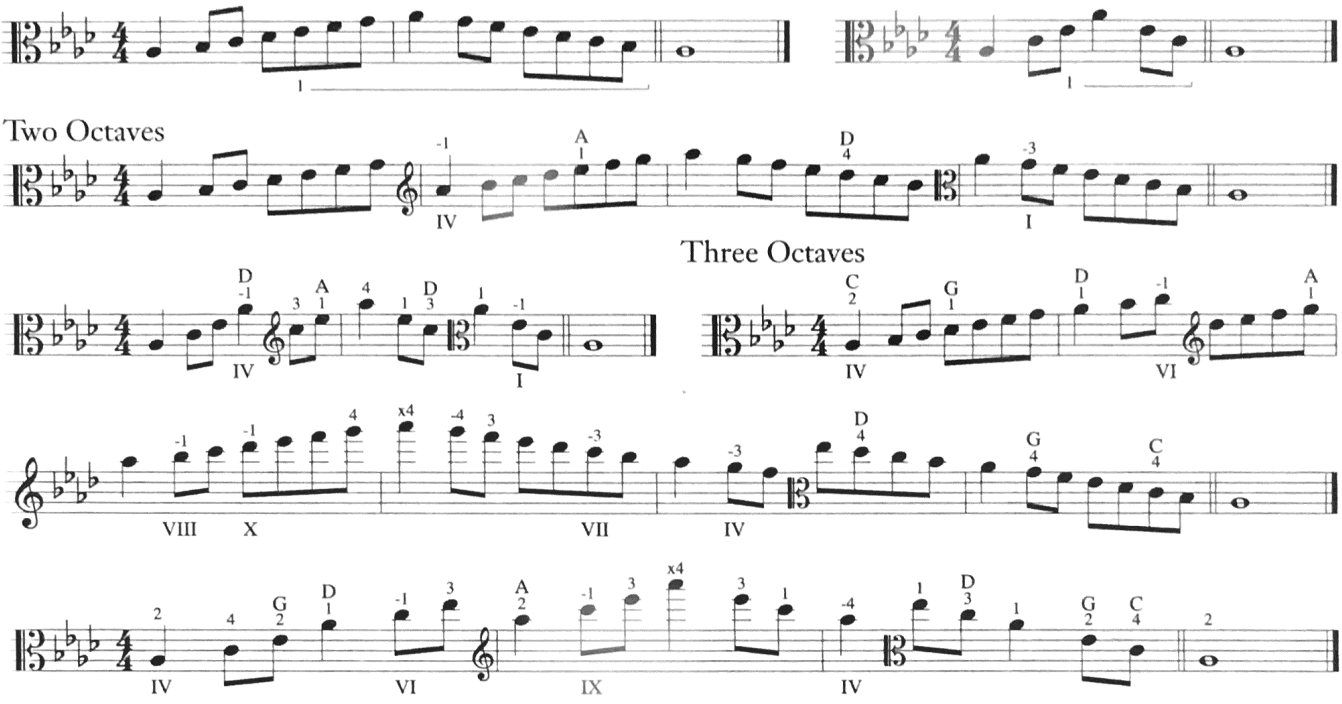
115. Tuning Canon



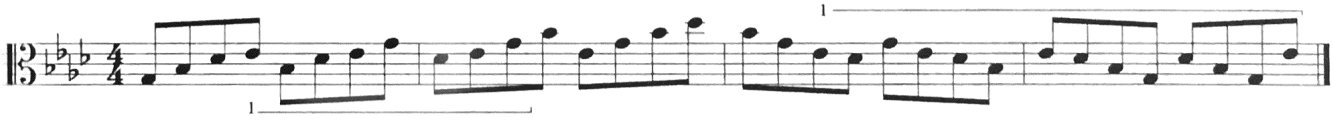
116. Tuning Chords



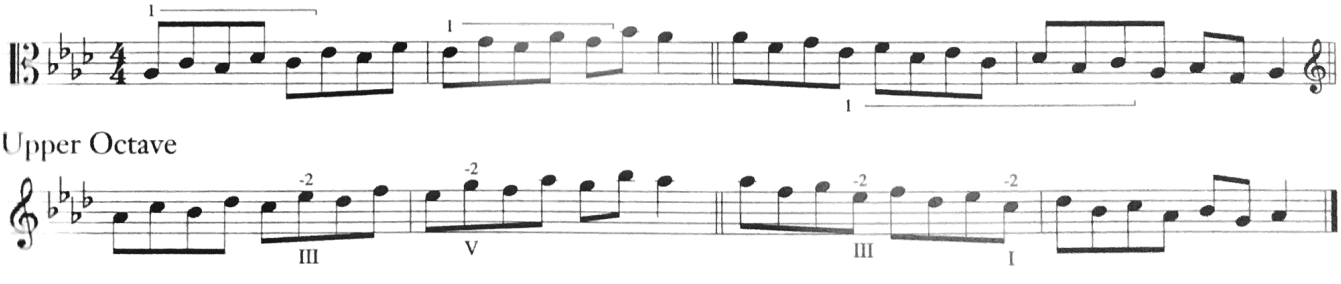
117. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



118. Dominant Arpeggio

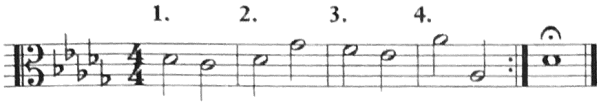


119. Thirds - Lower Octave

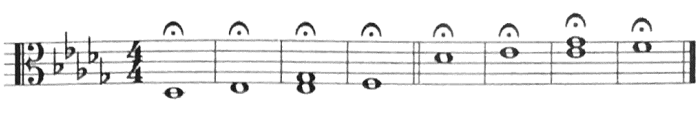


D♭ Major

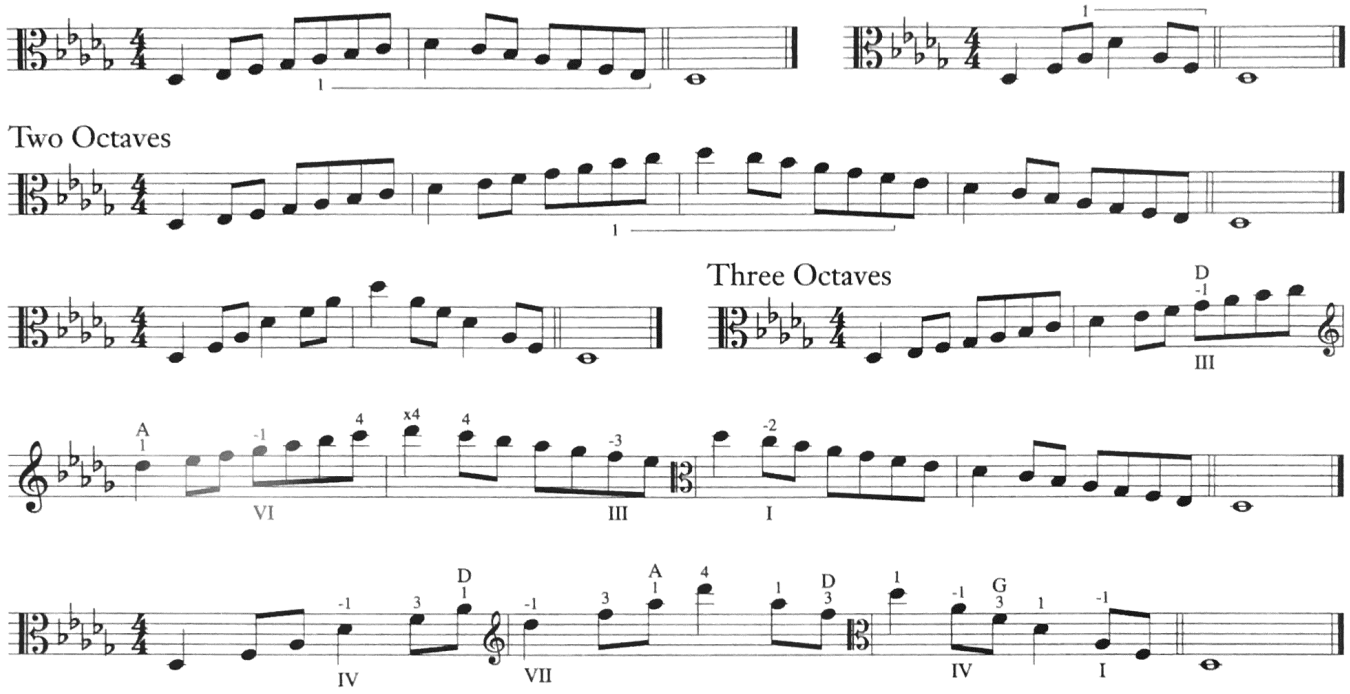
120. Tuning Canon



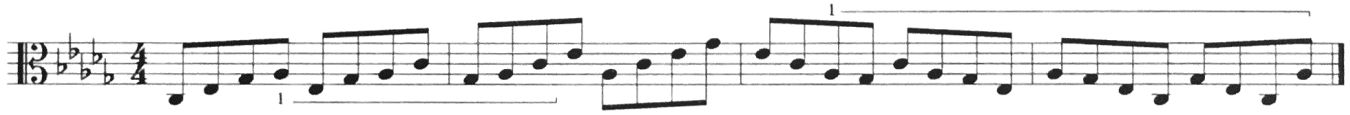
121. Tuning Chords



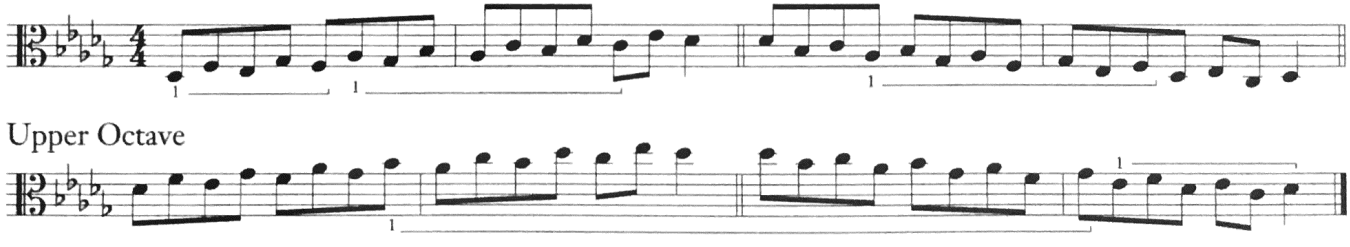
122. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



123. Dominant Arpeggio



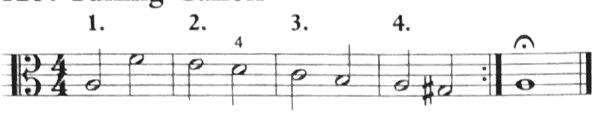
124. Thirds - Lower Octave



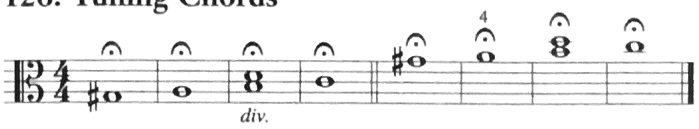
Melodic Minor Scales, Arpeggios, and Thirds

A Melodic Minor

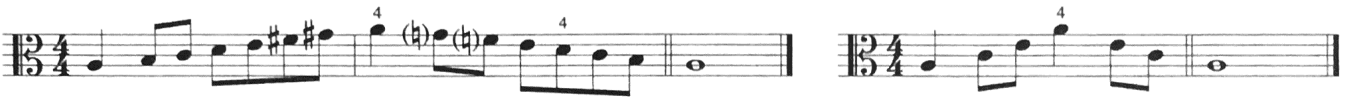
125. Tuning Canon



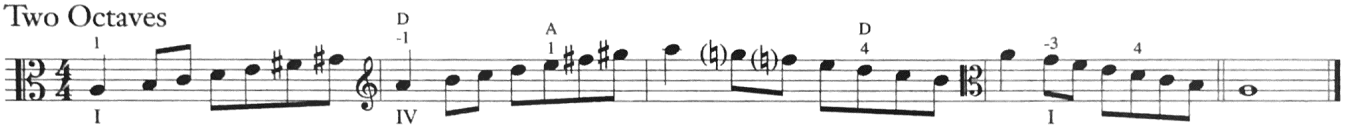
126. Tuning Chords

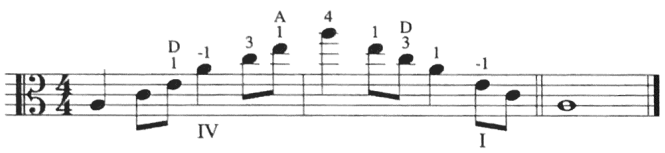


127. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave

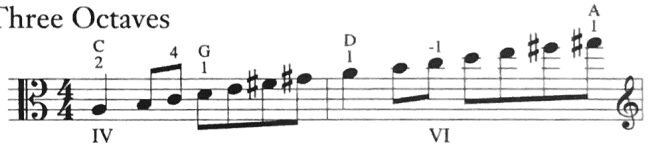


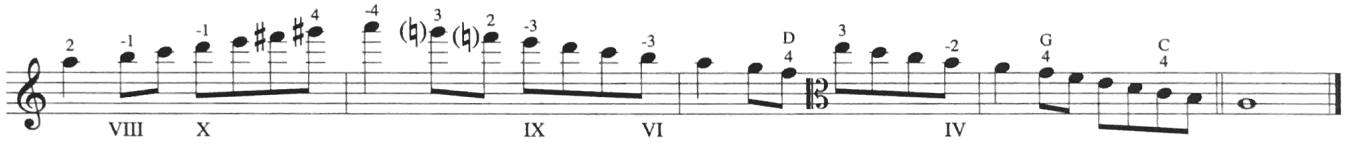
Two Octaves

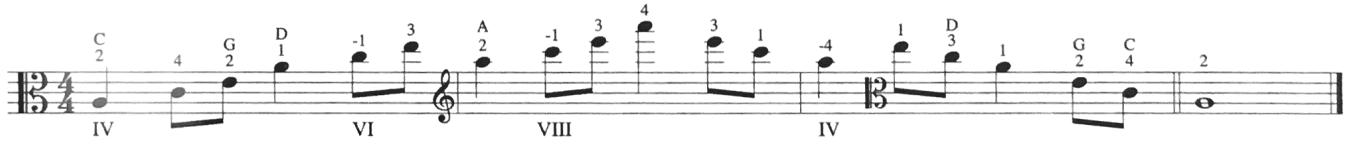




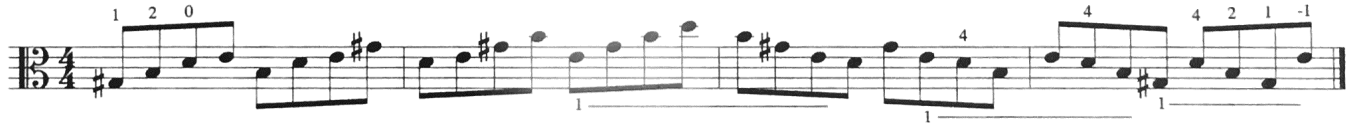
Three Octaves



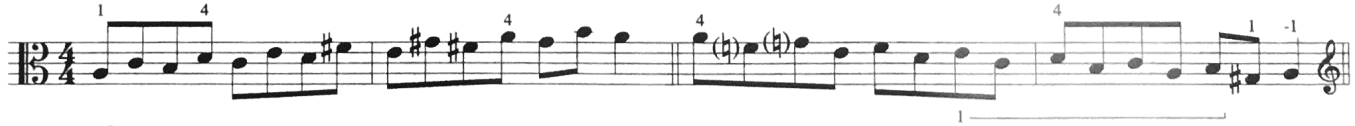




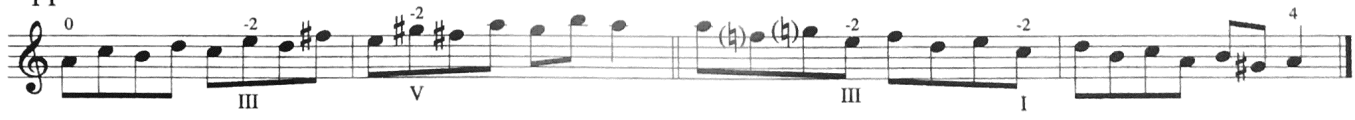
128. Dominant Arpeggio



129. Thirds - Lower Octave

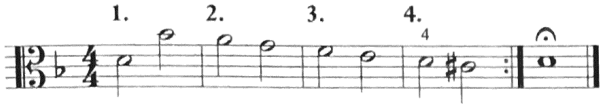


Upper Octave

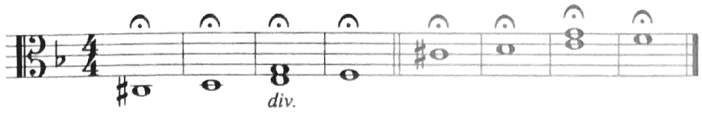


D Melodic Minor

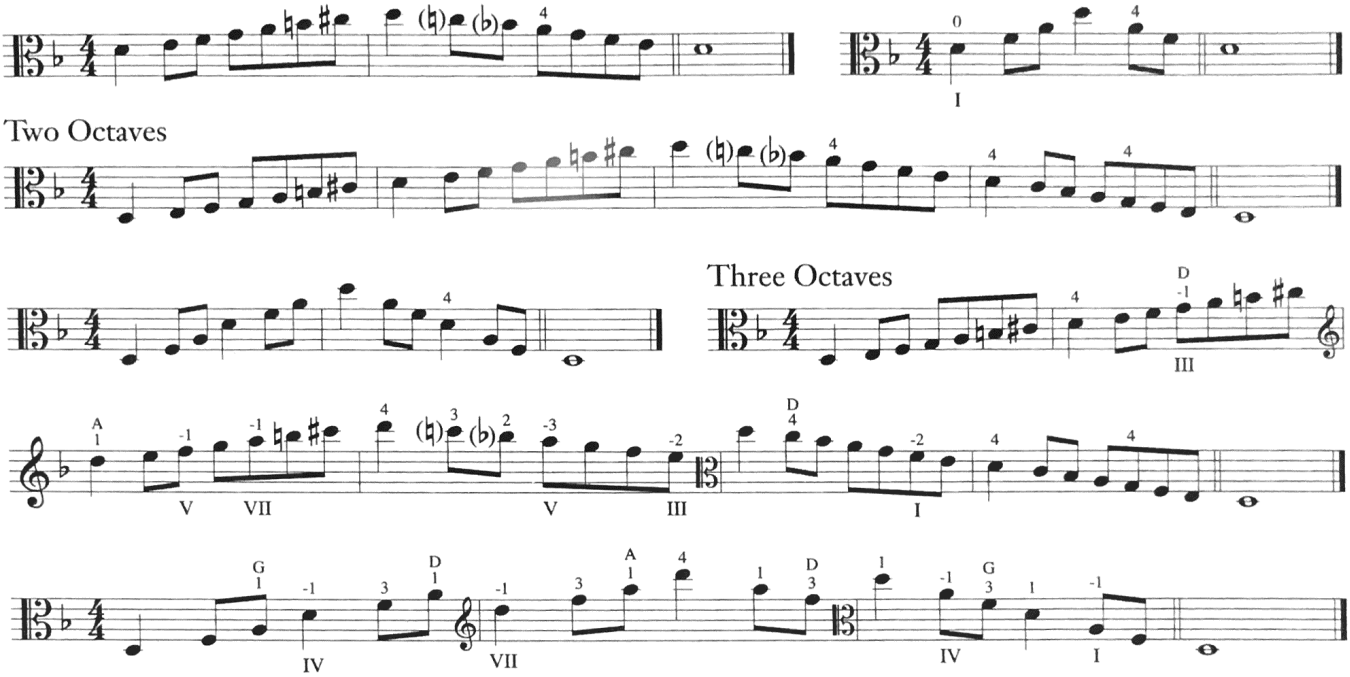
130. Tuning Canon



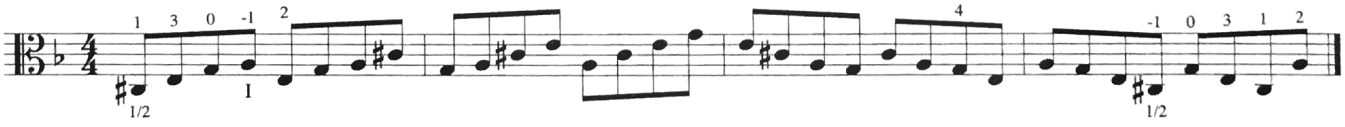
131. Tuning Chords



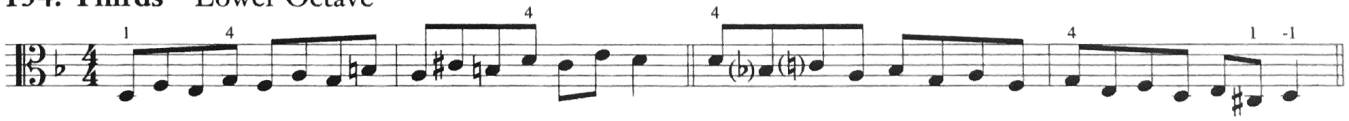
132. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



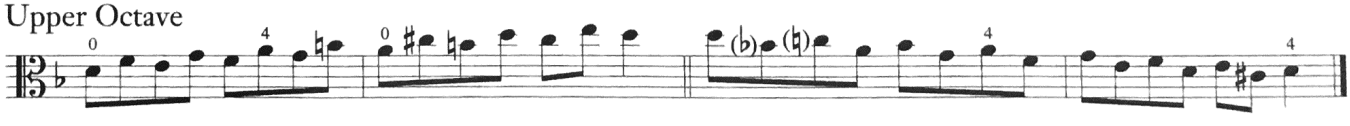
133. Dominant Arpeggio



134. Thirds - Lower Octave

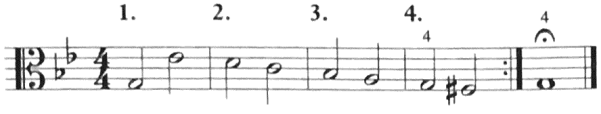


Upper Octave

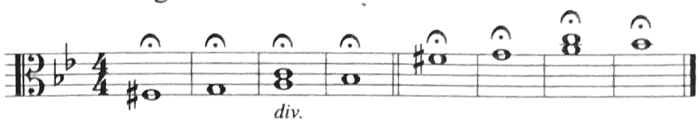


G Melodic Minor

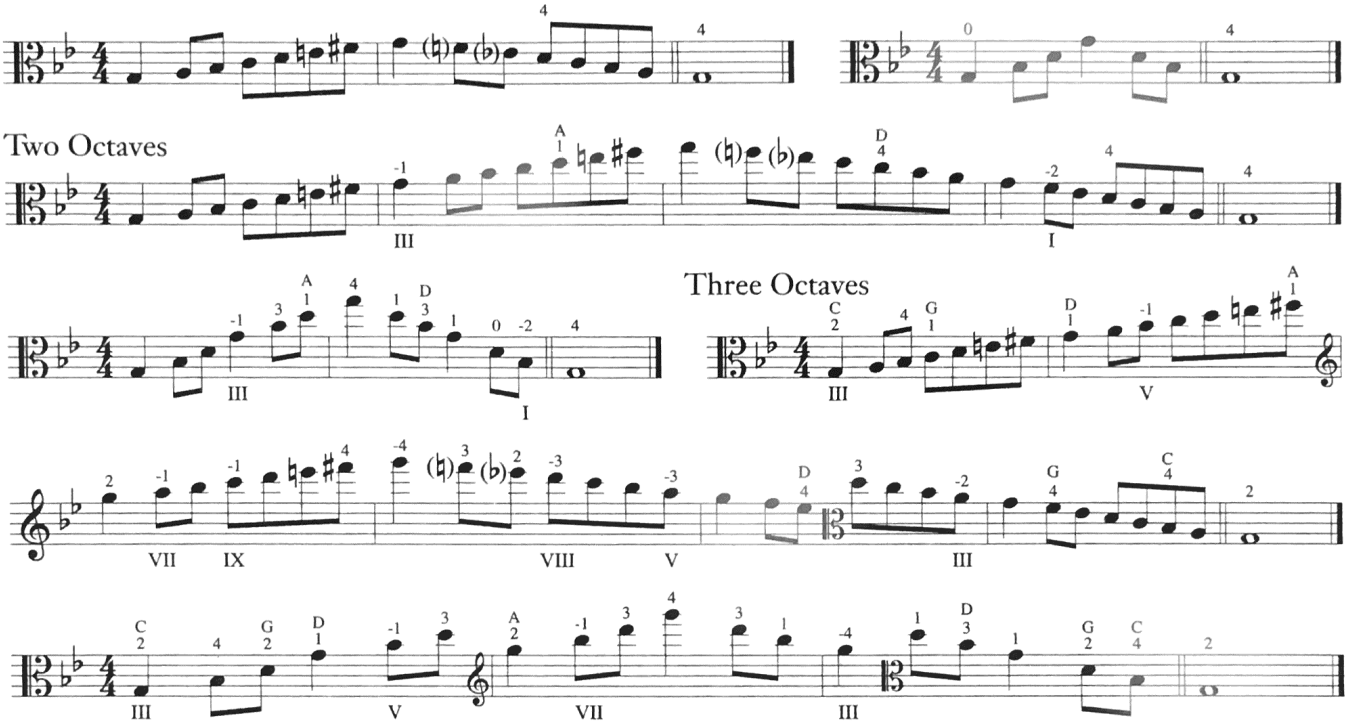
135. Tuning Canon



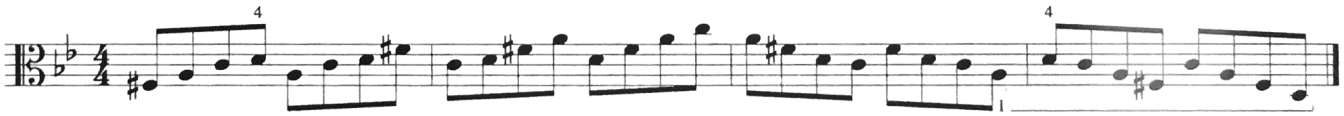
136. Tuning Chords



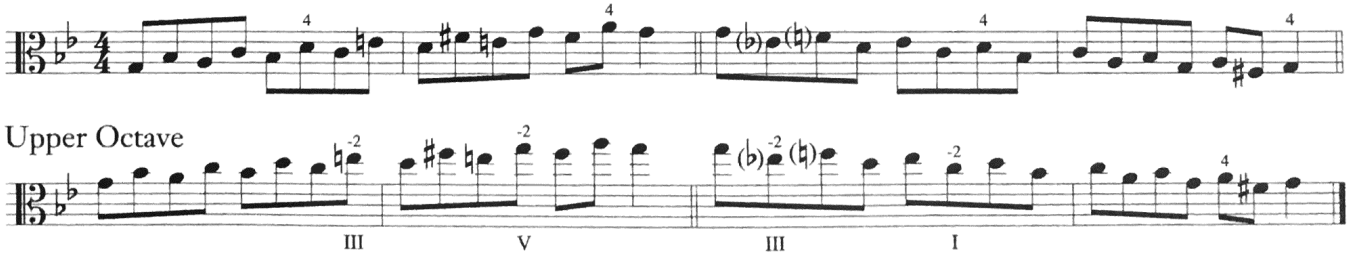
137. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



138. Dominant Arpeggio

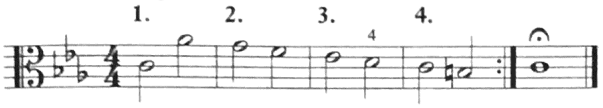


139. Thirds - Lower Octave

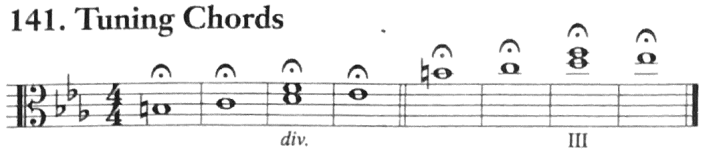


C Melodic Minor

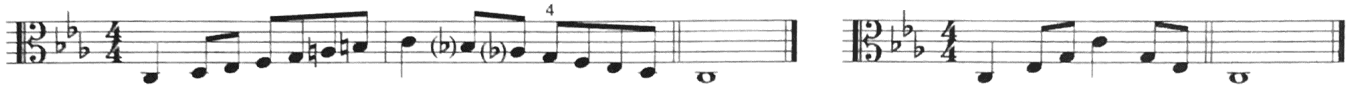
140. Tuning Canon



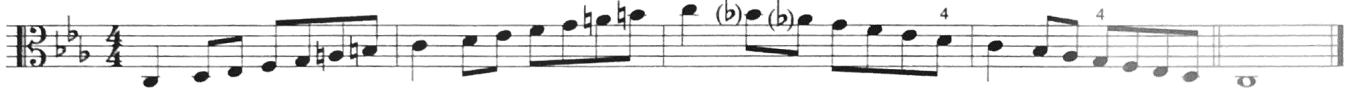
141. Tuning Chords

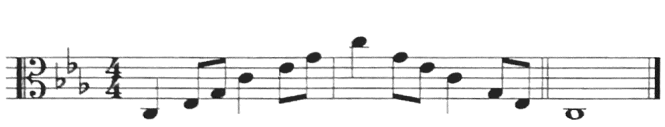


142. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave

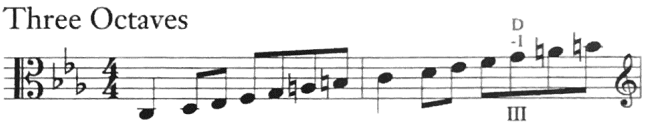


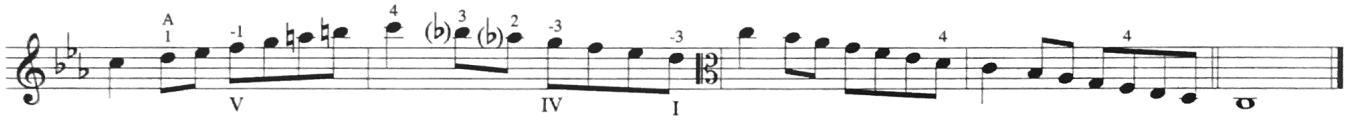
Two Octaves

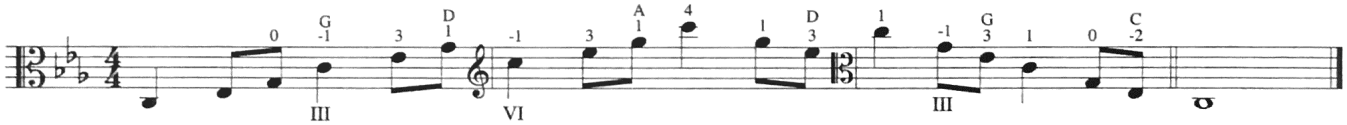




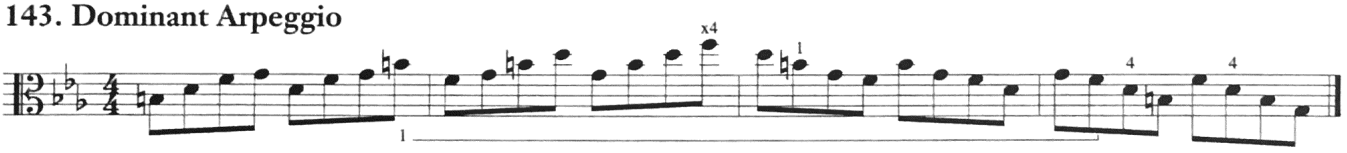
Three Octaves



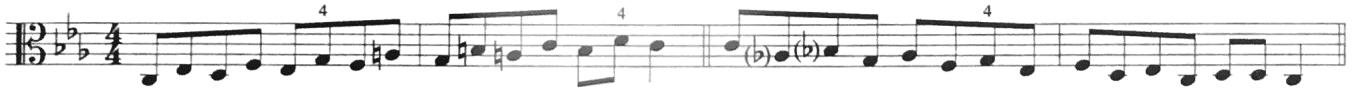




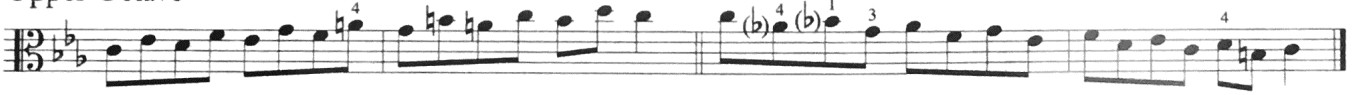
143. Dominant Arpeggio



144. Thirds - Lower Octave

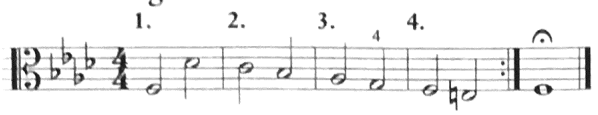


Upper Octave

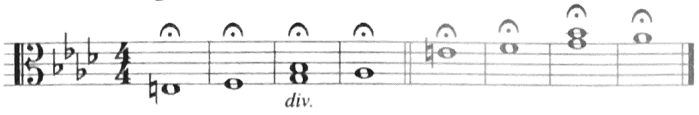


F Melodic Minor

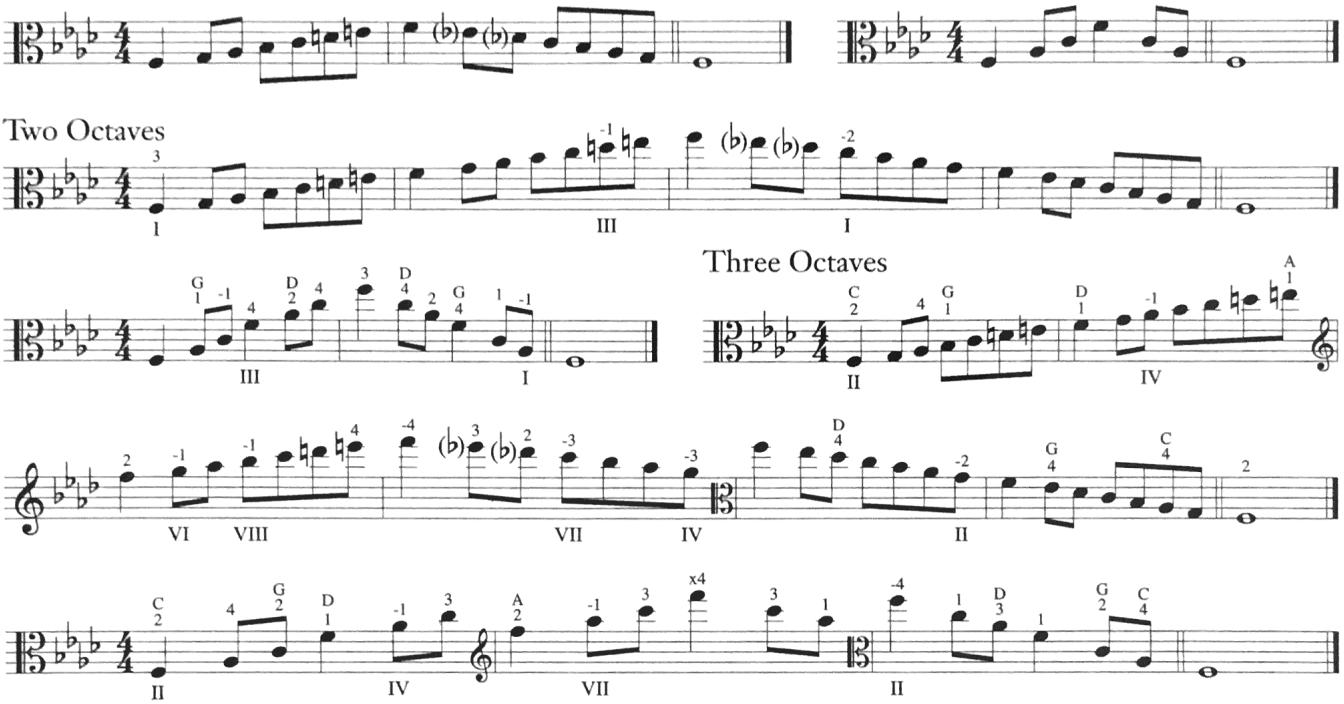
145. Tuning Canon



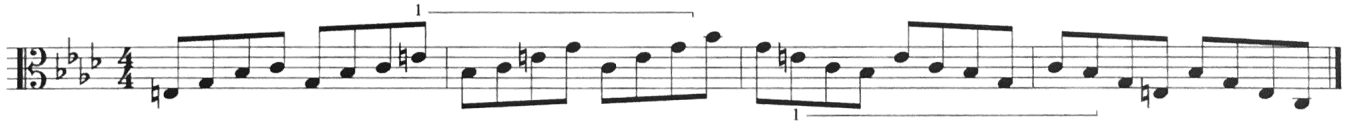
146. Tuning Chords



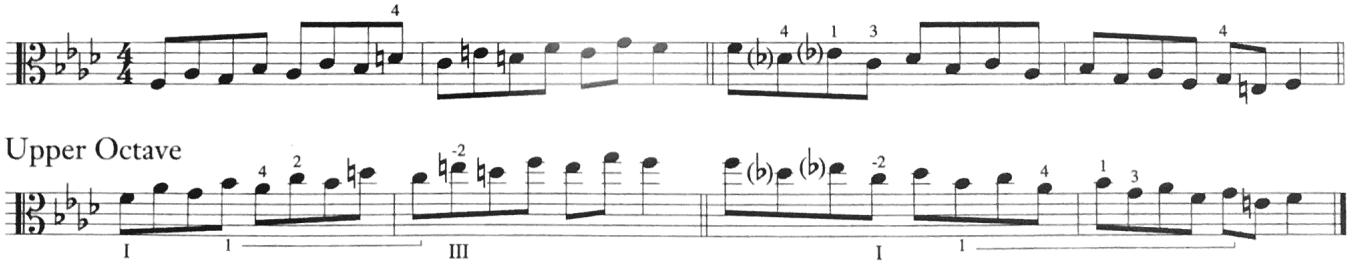
147. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



148. Dominant Arpeggio

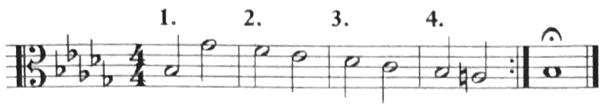


149. Thirds - Lower Octave

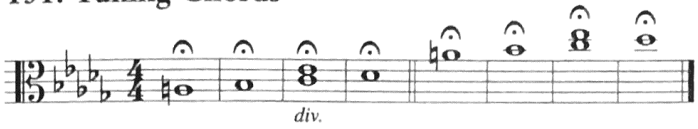


B♭ Melodic Minor

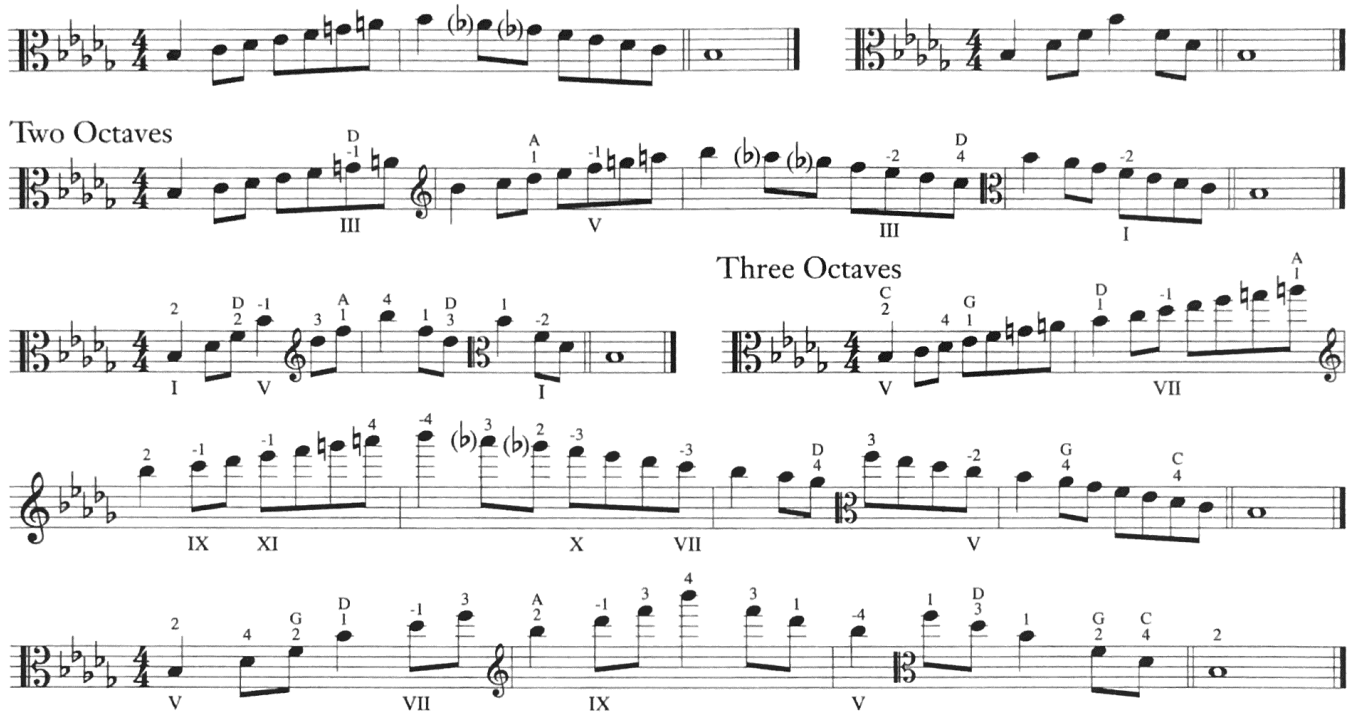
150. Tuning Canon



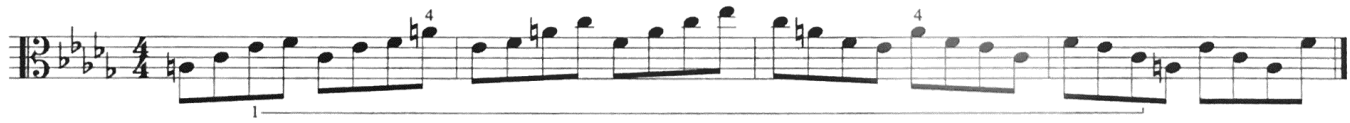
151. Tuning Chords



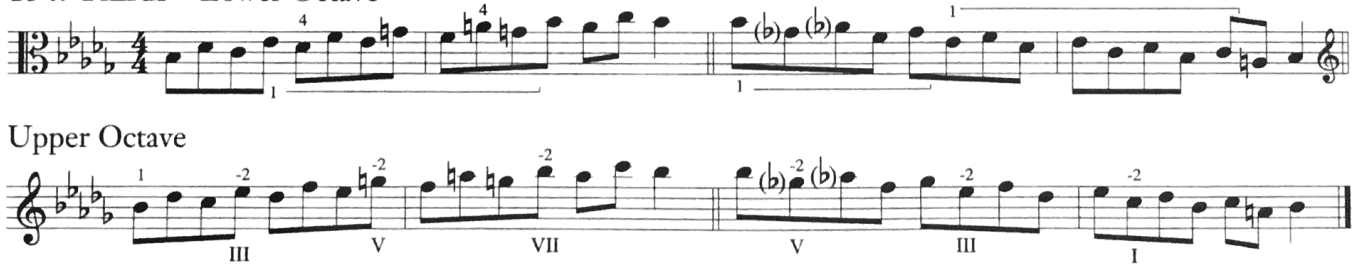
152. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



153. Dominant Arpeggio

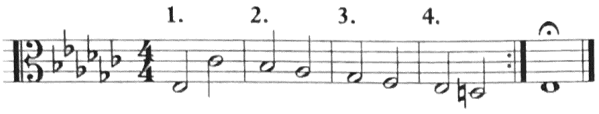


154. Thirds - Lower Octave

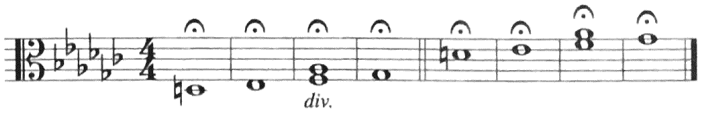


E♭ Melodic Minor

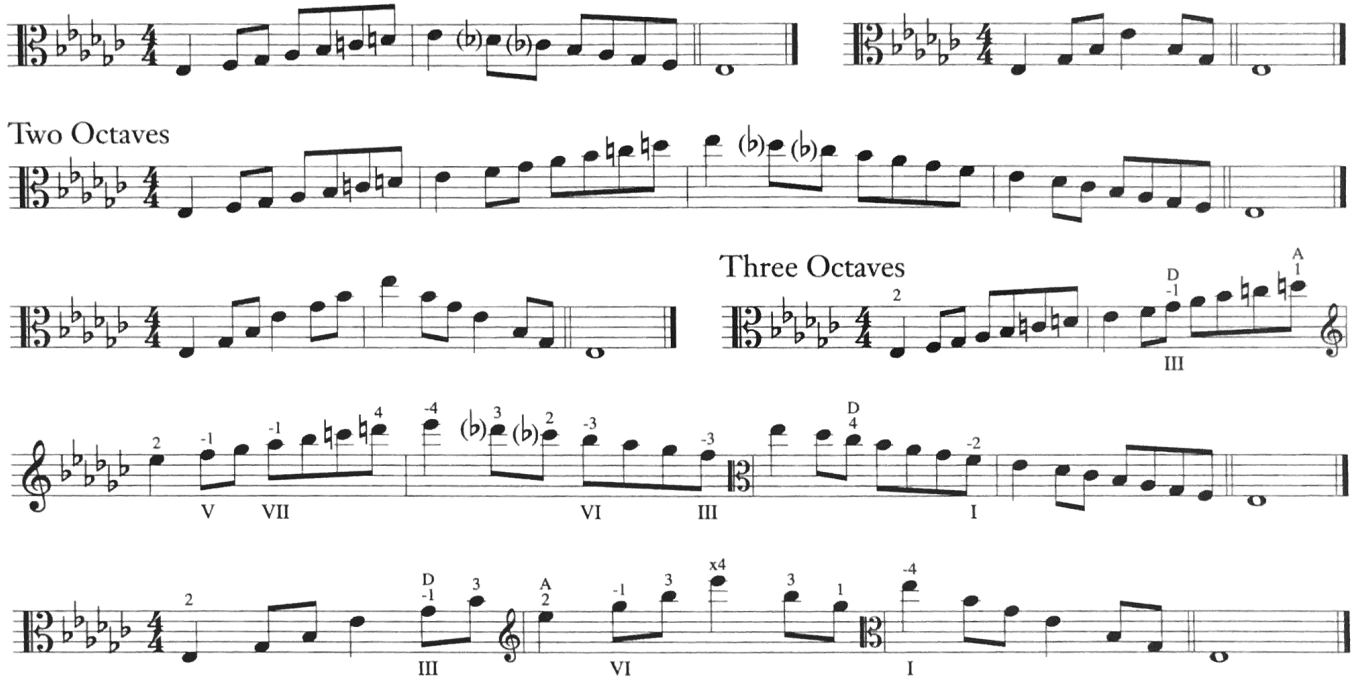
155. Tuning Canon



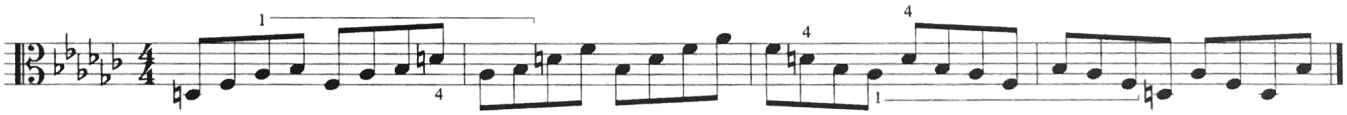
156. Tuning Chords



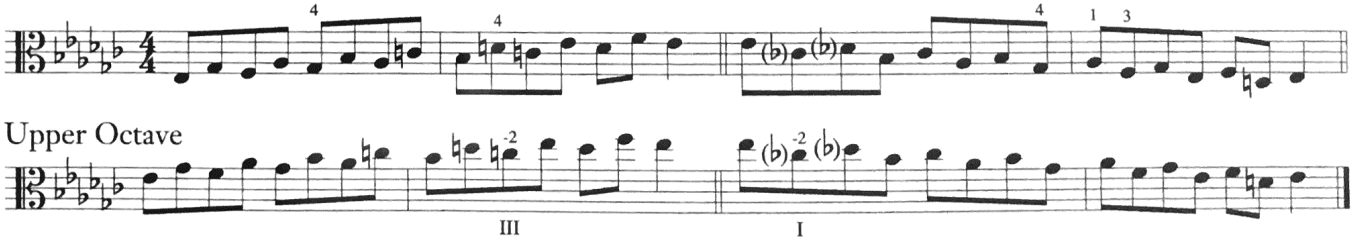
157. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



158. Dominant Arpeggio

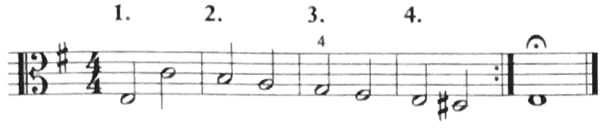


159. Thirds - Lower Octave

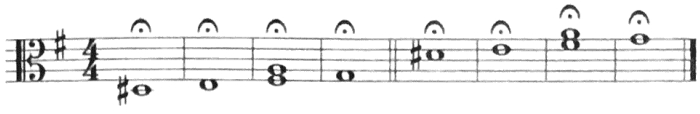


E Melodic Minor

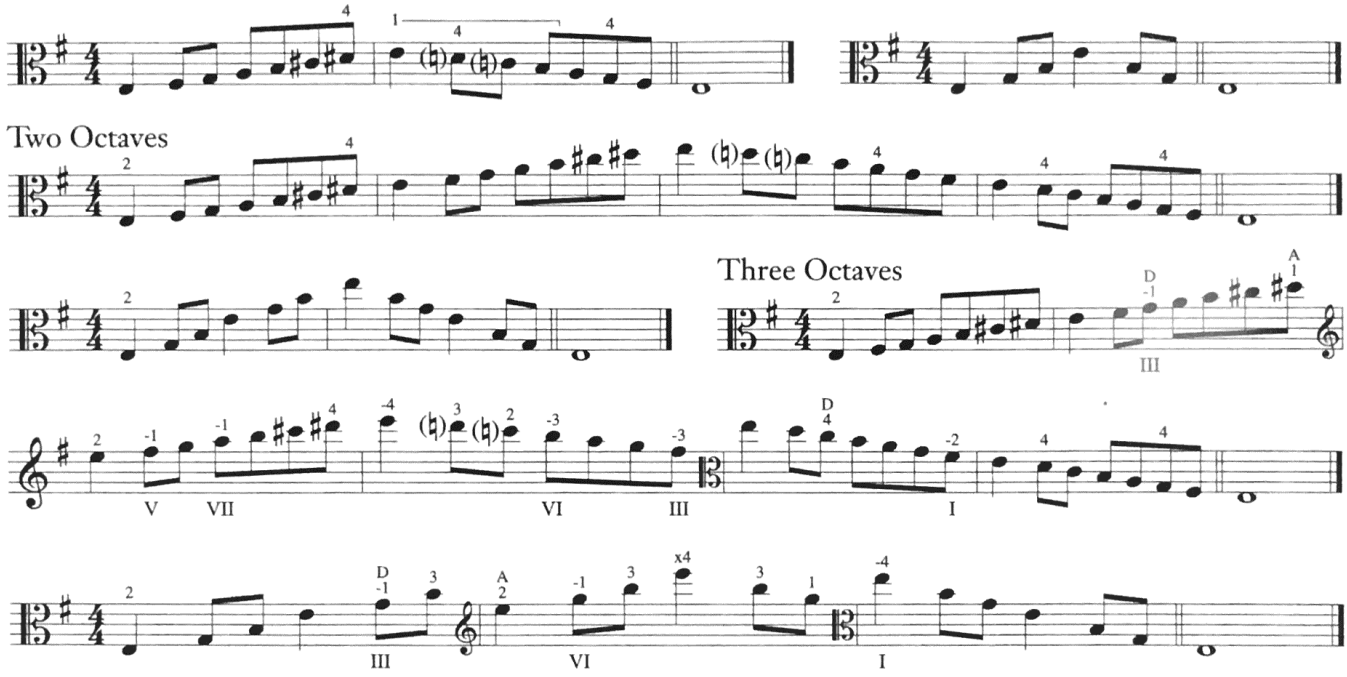
160. Tuning Canon



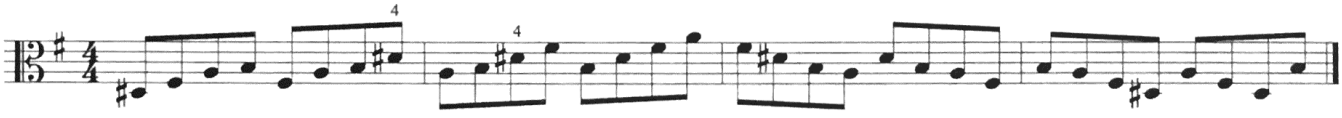
161. Tuning Chords



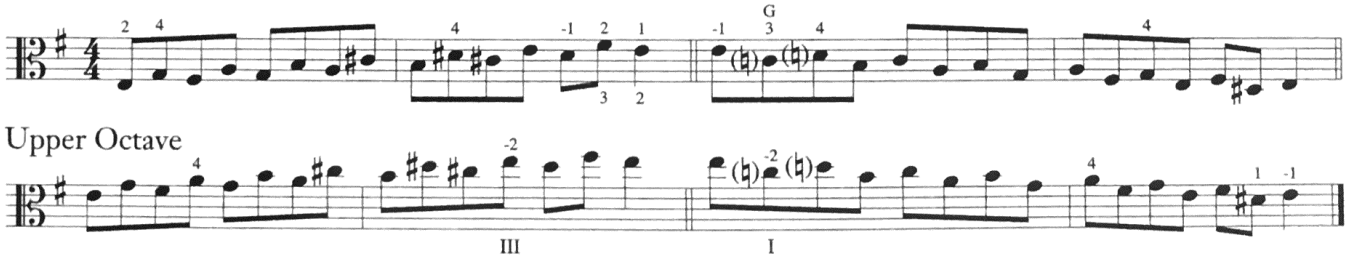
162. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



163. Dominant Arpeggio

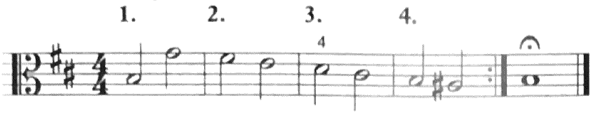


164. Thirds - Lower Octave

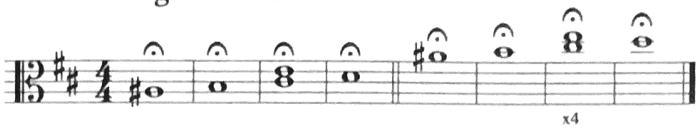


B Melodic Minor

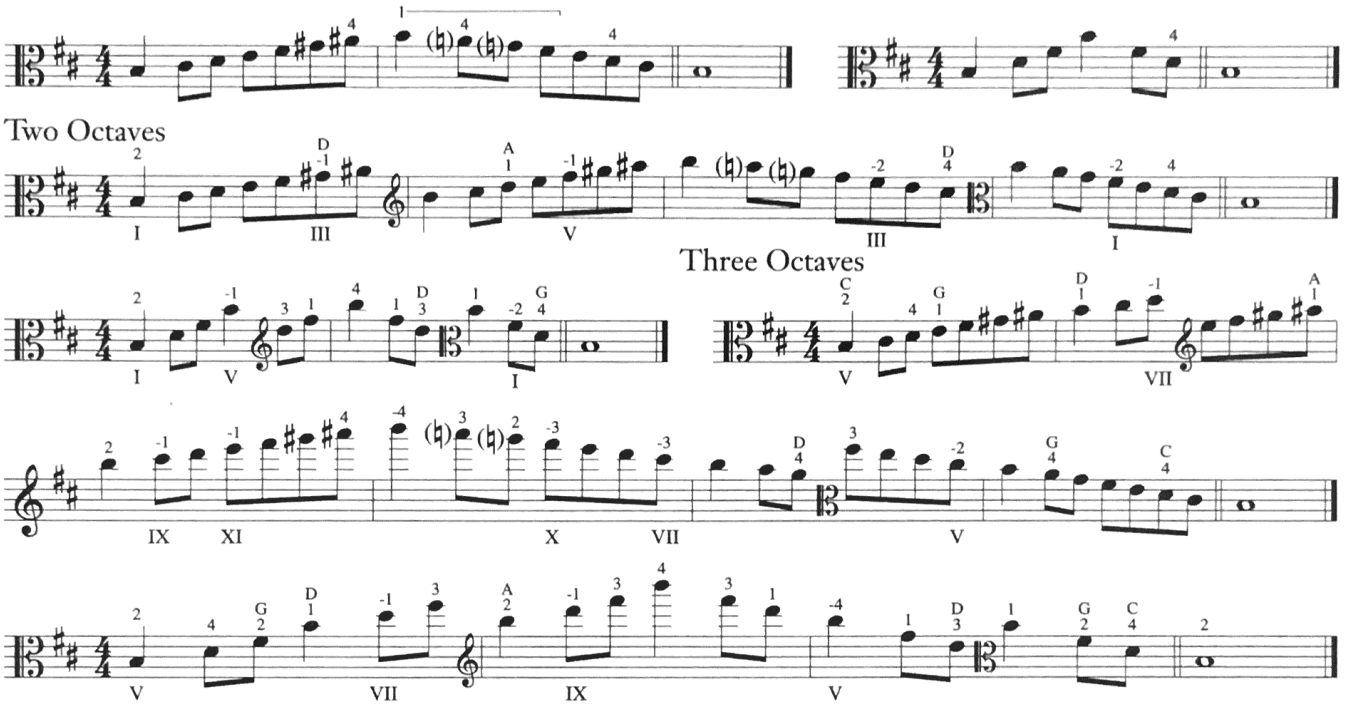
165. Tuning Canon



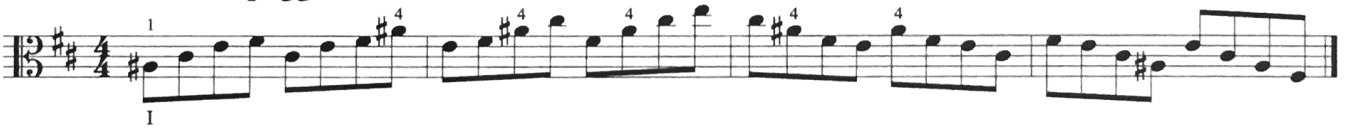
166. Tuning Chords



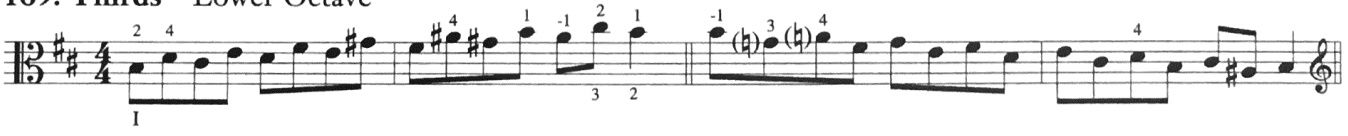
167. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



168. Dominant Arpeggio

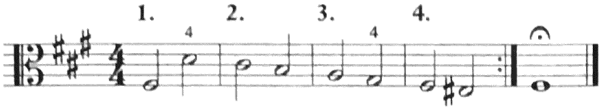


169. Thirds - Lower Octave

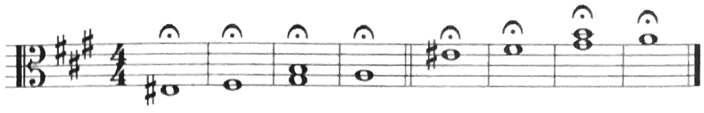


F♯ Melodic Minor

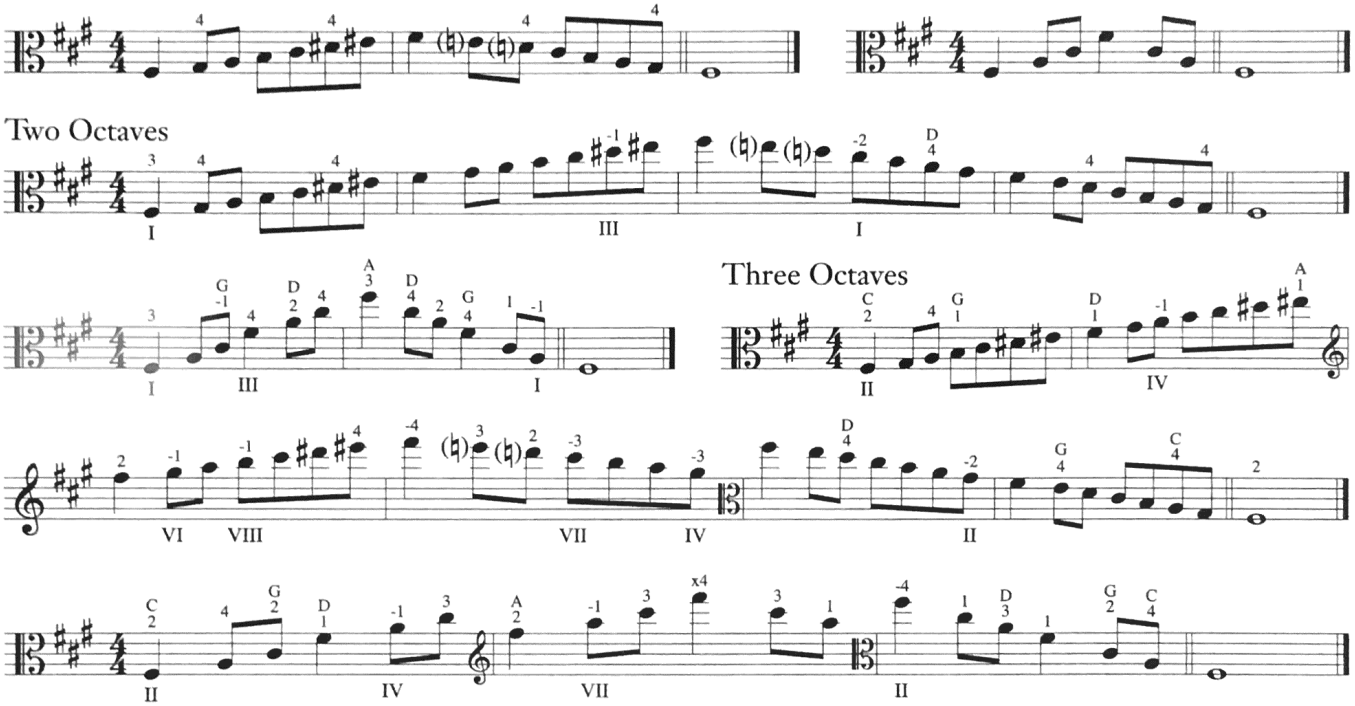
170. Tuning Canon



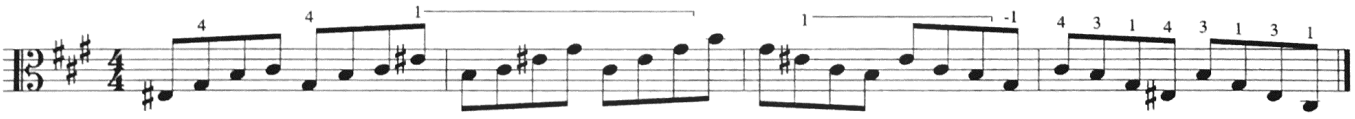
171. Tuning Chords



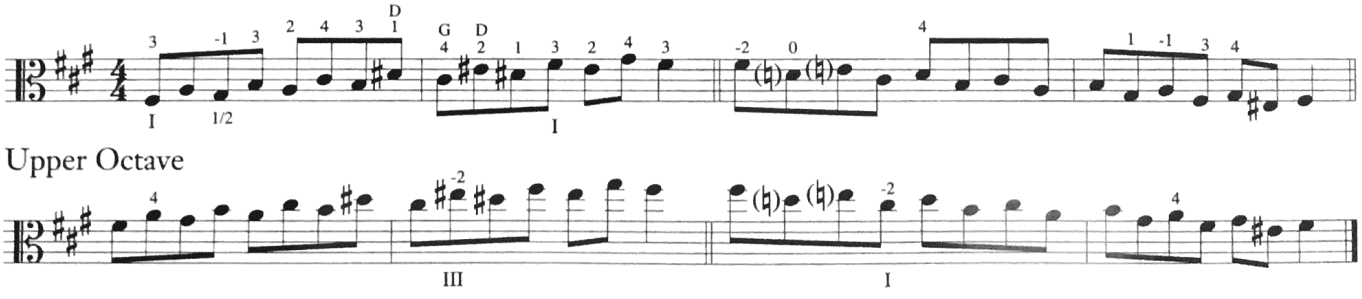
172. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



173. Dominant Arpeggio

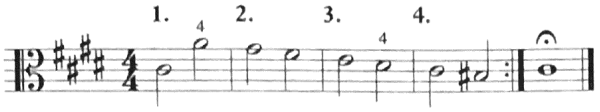


174. Thirds - Lower Octave

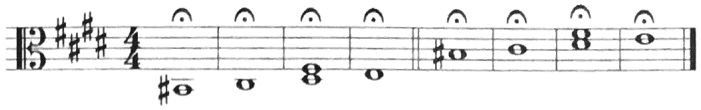


C♯ Melodic Minor

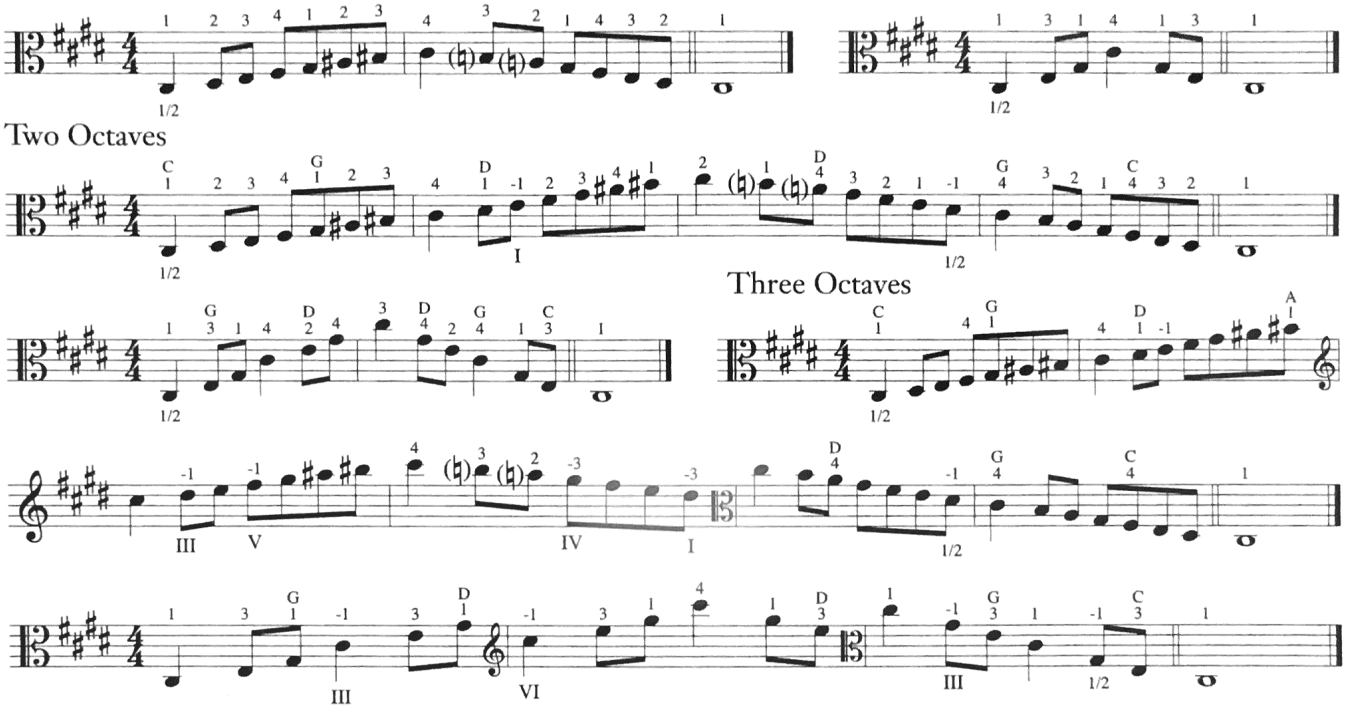
175. Tuning Canon



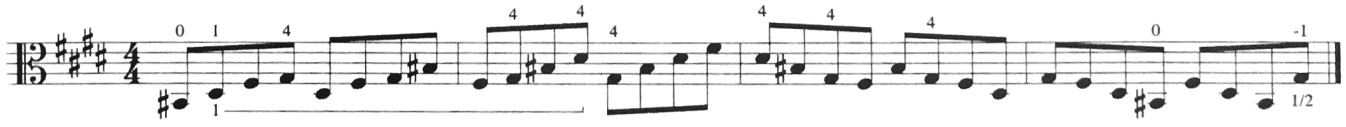
176. Tuning Chords



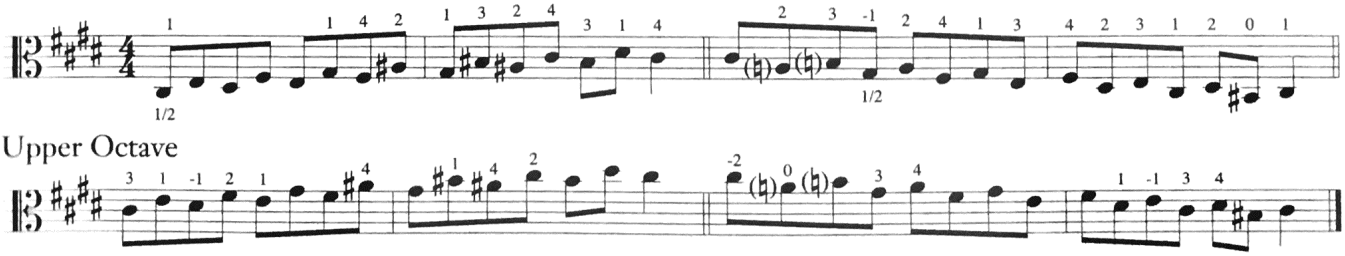
177. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



178. Dominant Arpeggio

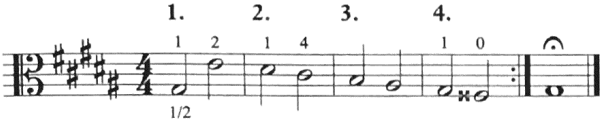


179. Thirds - Lower Octave

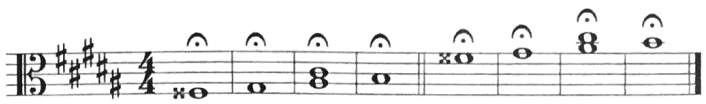


G♯ Melodic Minor

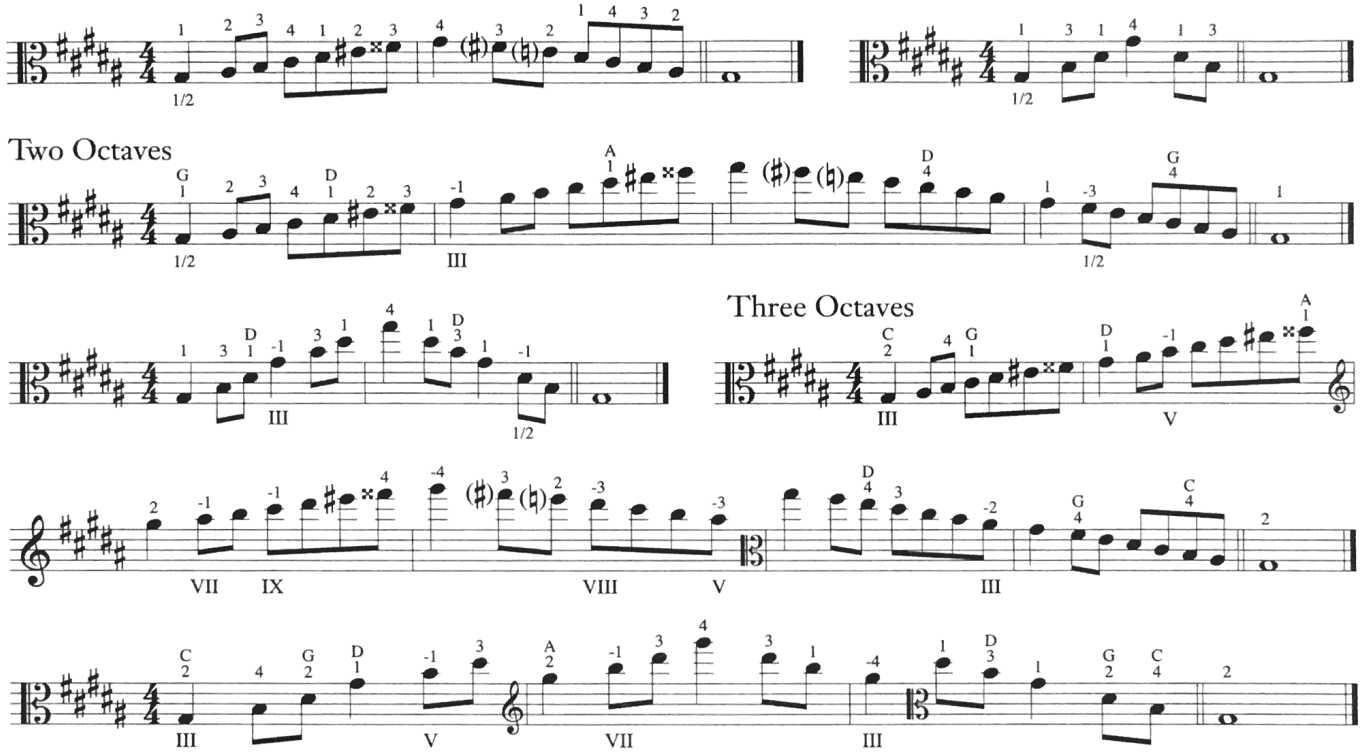
180. Tuning Canon



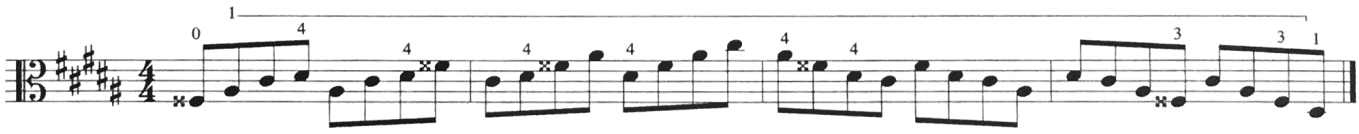
181. Tuning Chords



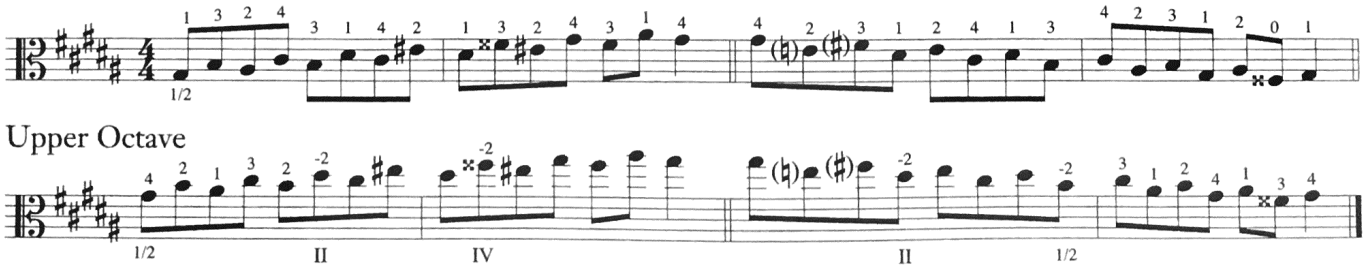
182. Scales and Arpeggios - One Octave



183. Dominant Arpeggio



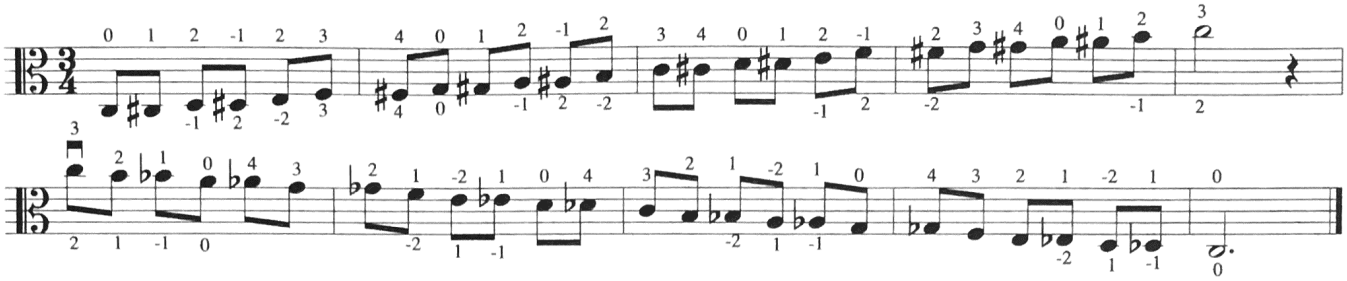
184. Thirds - Lower Octave



Chromatic, Mixolydian and Blues Scales

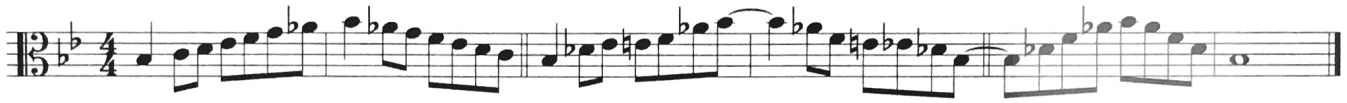
A *chromatic* scale is made entirely of half steps.

185. Two Octave Chromatic C Scale

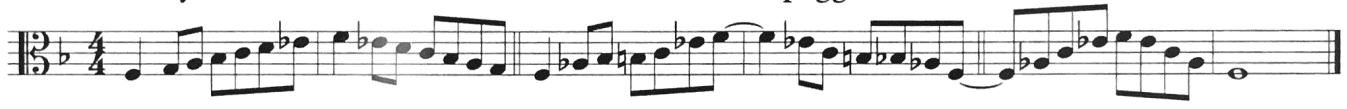


Mixolydian and Blues Scales

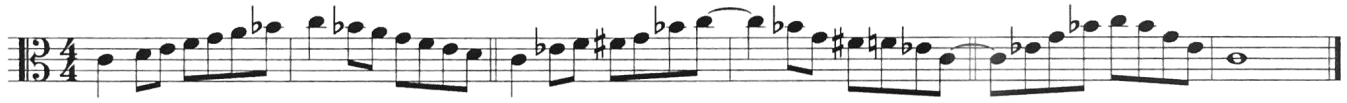
186. B♭ Mixolydian **Blues Scale and Arpeggio**



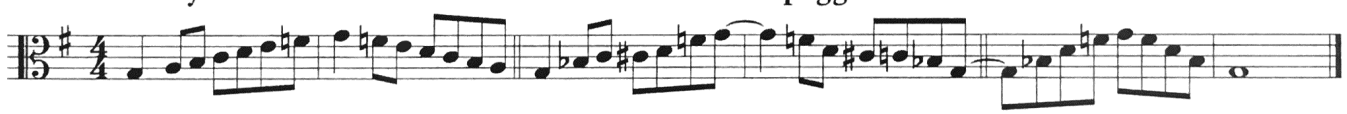
187. F Mixolydian **Blues Scale and Arpeggio**



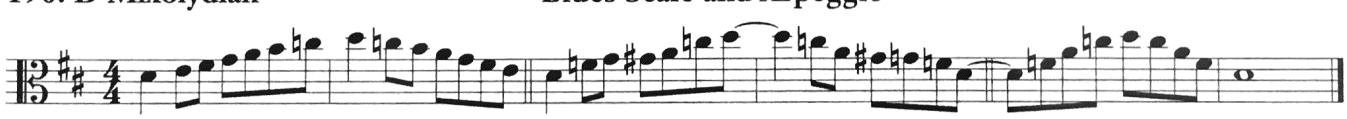
188. C Mixolydian **Blues Scale and Arpeggio**



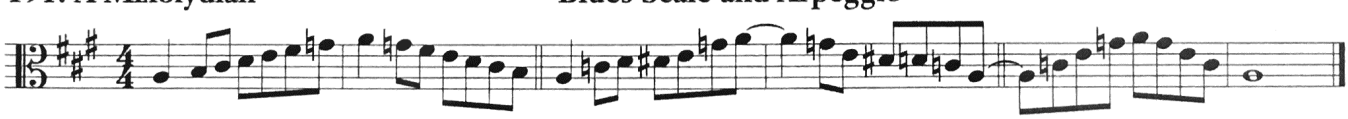
189. G Mixolydian **Blues Scale and Arpeggio**



190. D Mixolydian **Blues Scale and Arpeggio**

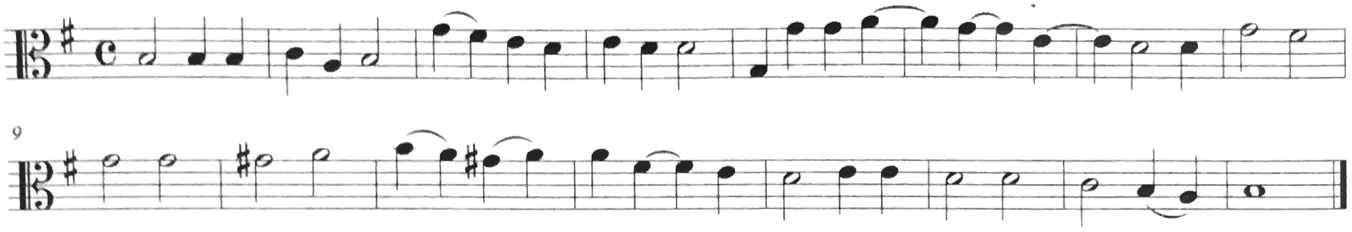


191. A Mixolydian **Blues Scale and Arpeggio**

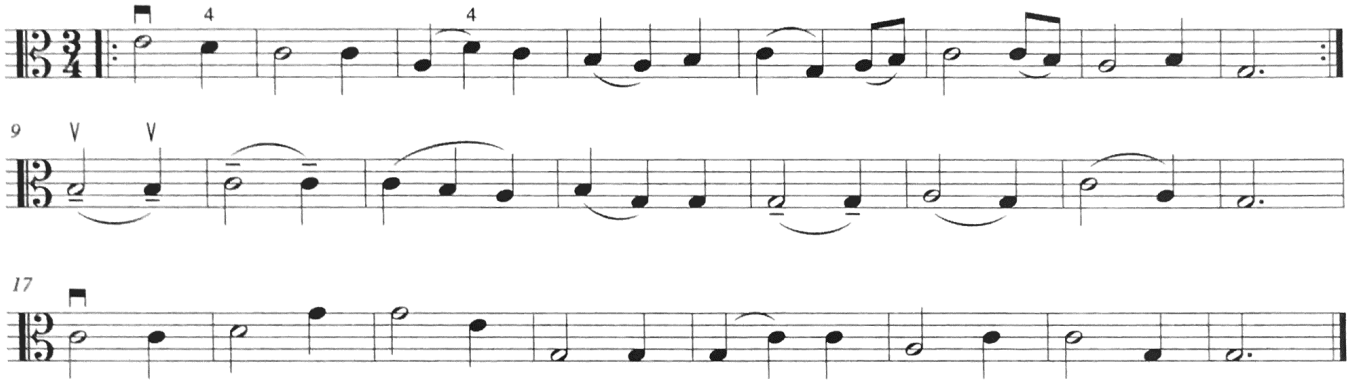


VI Chorales

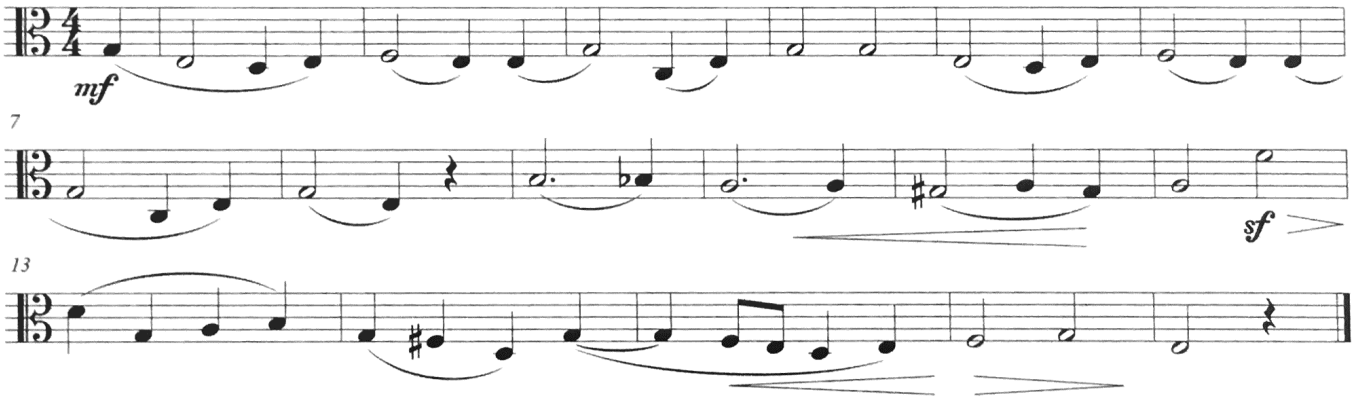
192. Chorale #1



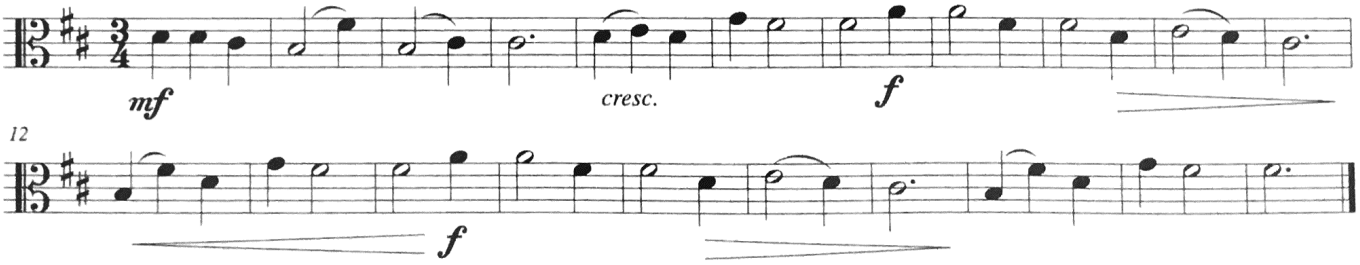
193. Chorale #2



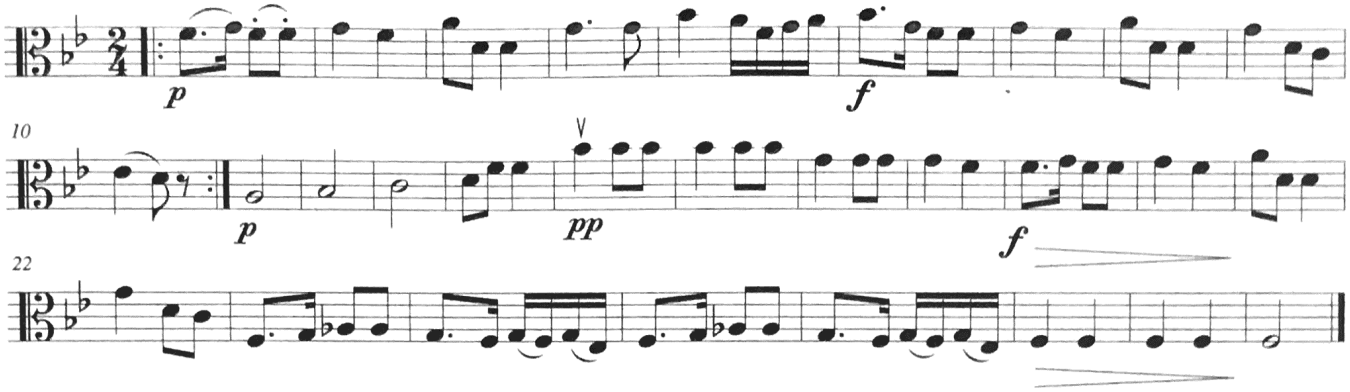
194. Chorale #3



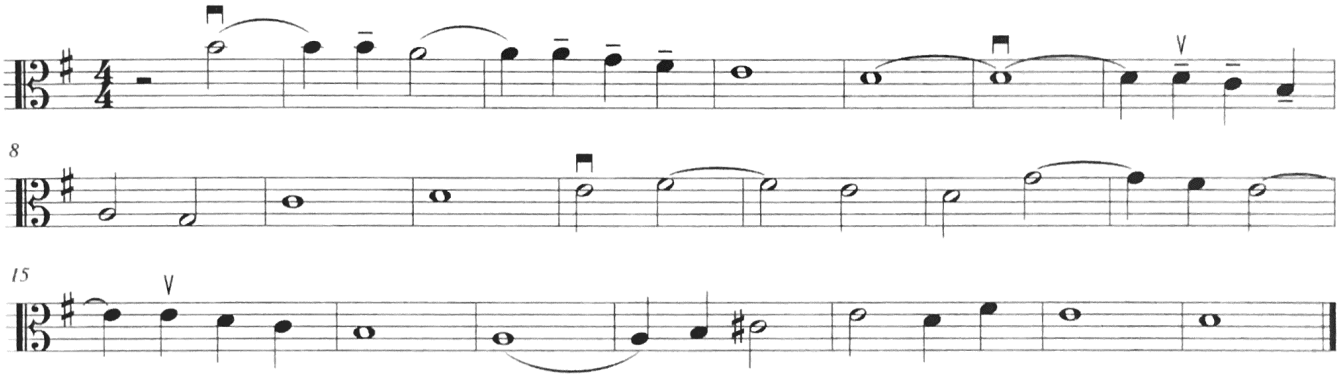
195. Chorale #4



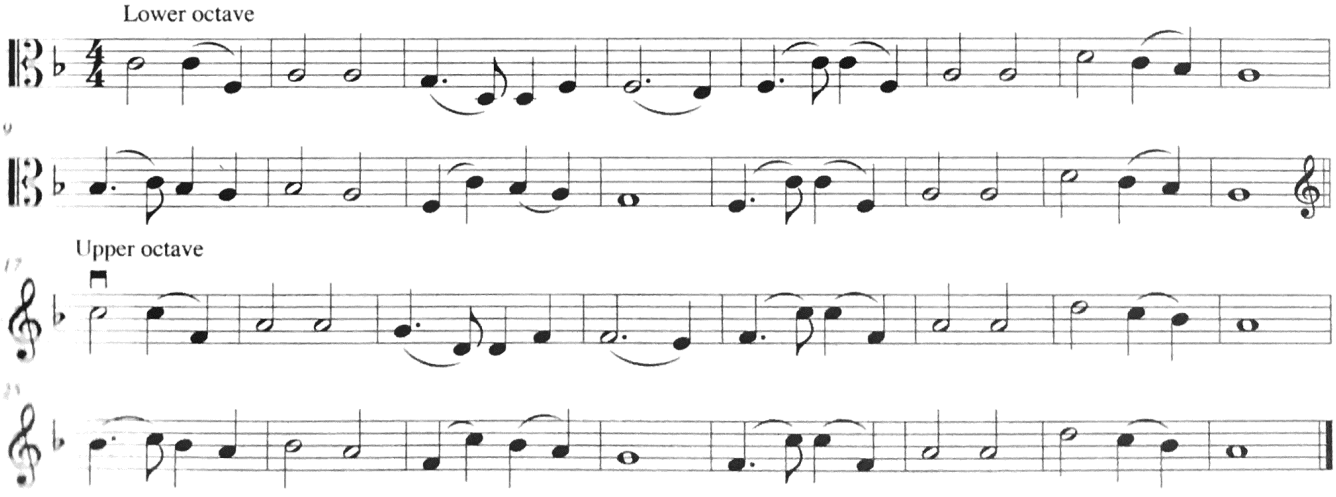
196. Chorale #5



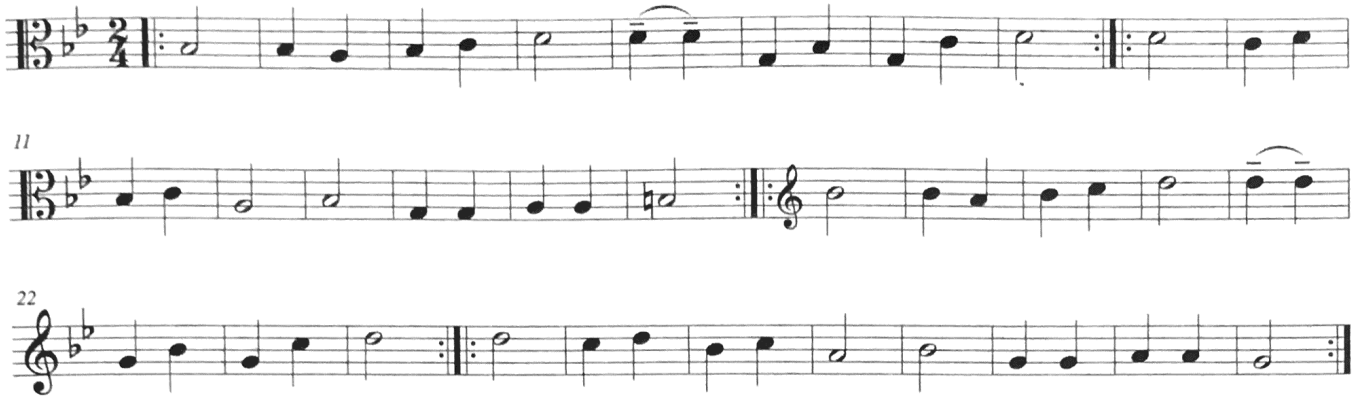
197. Chorale #6



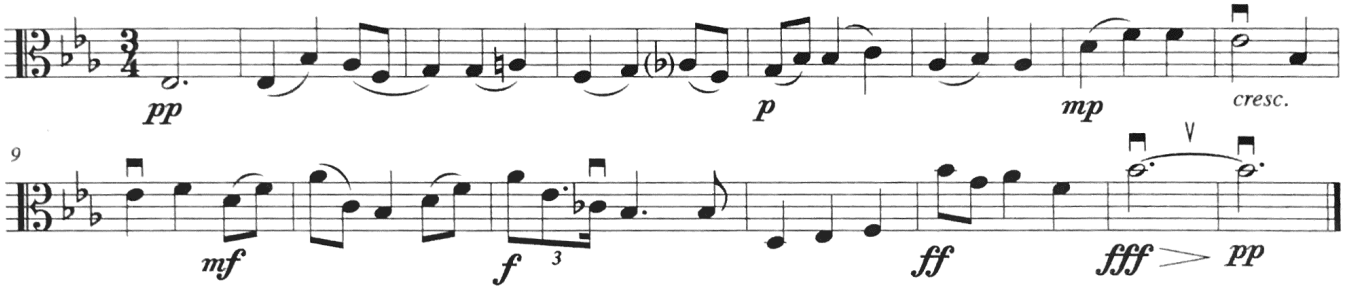
198. Chorale #7



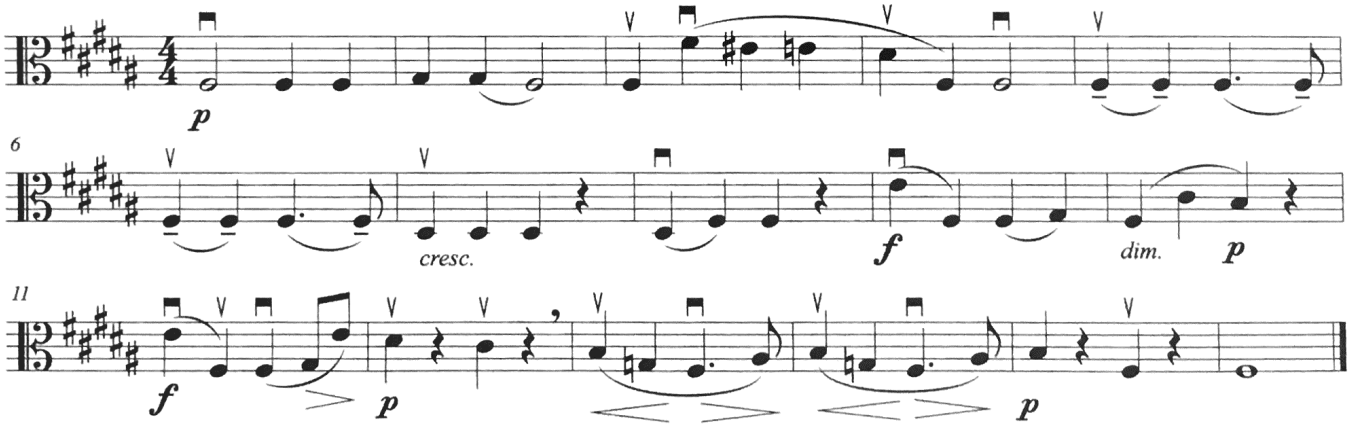
199. Chorale #8



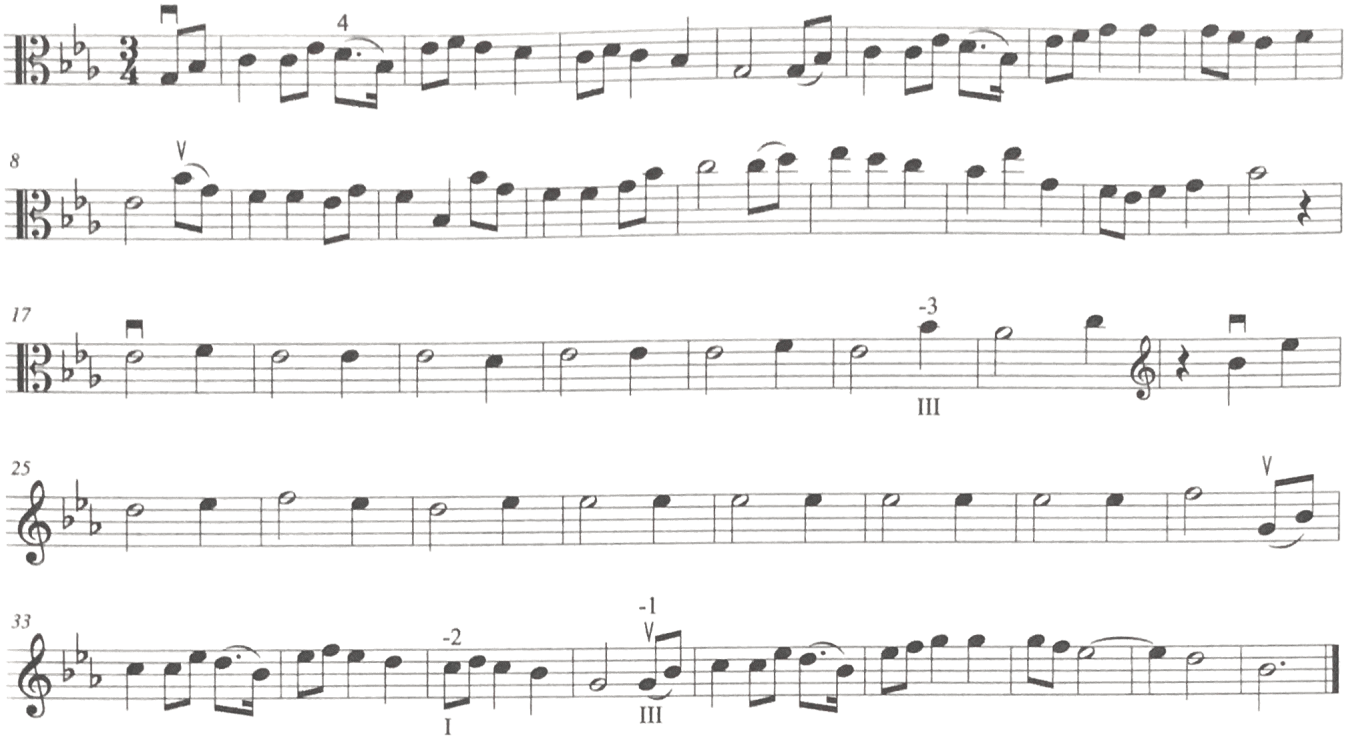
200. Chorale #9



201. Chorale #10



202. Chorale #11

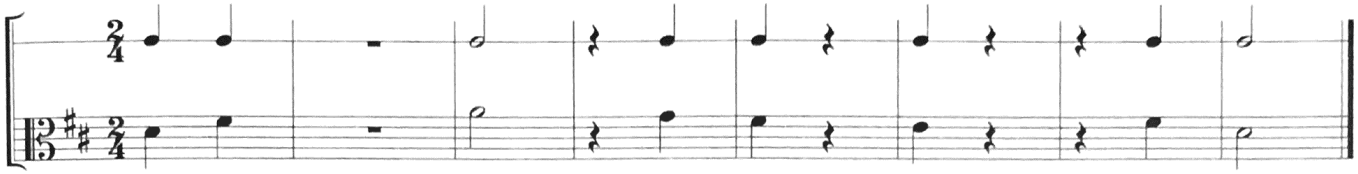


VII Rhythm Charts in a Musical Context

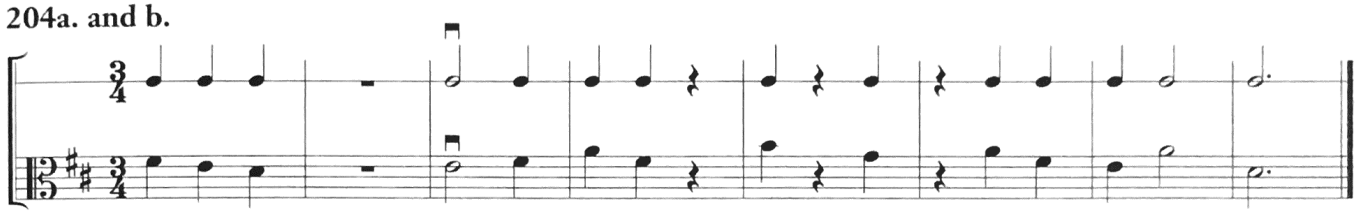
A. Quarter Notes and Rests; Eighth Notes

All rhythm has two components: the pulse and the rhythm that goes over the pulse. To genuinely understand a rhythm pattern, students must perform the rhythm while simultaneously keeping a consistent pulse somewhere else in their body. Students MUST count while performing a rhythm with their body or instrument.

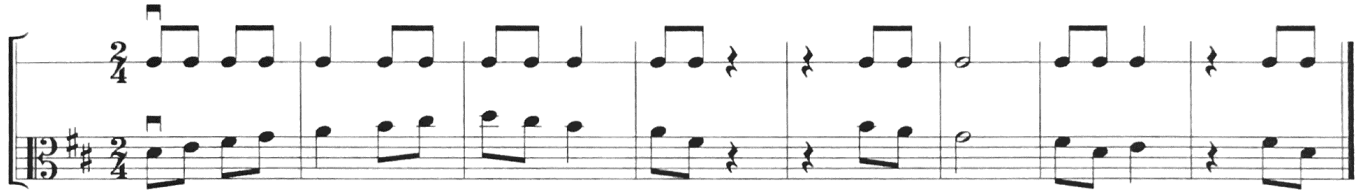
203a. and b.



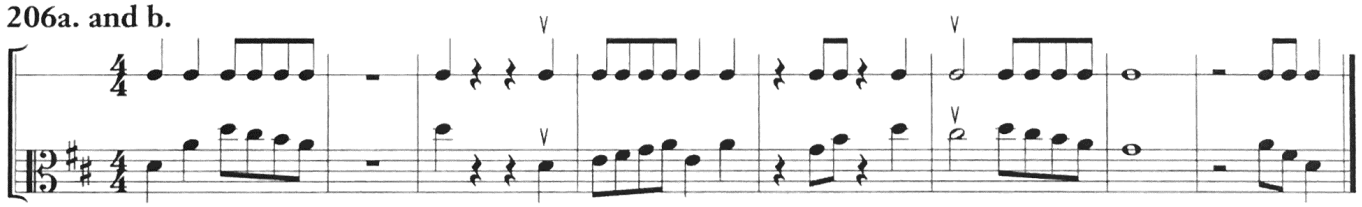
204a. and b.



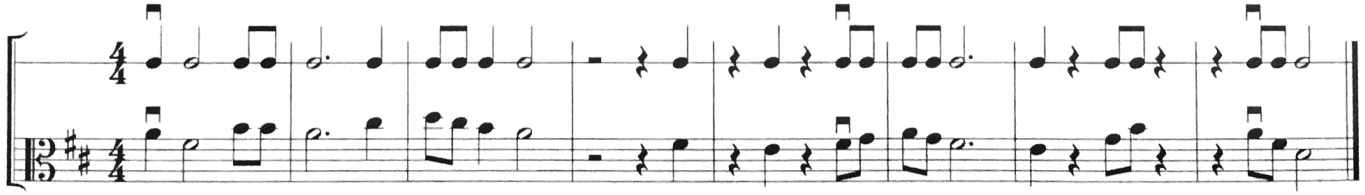
205a. and b.



206a. and b.



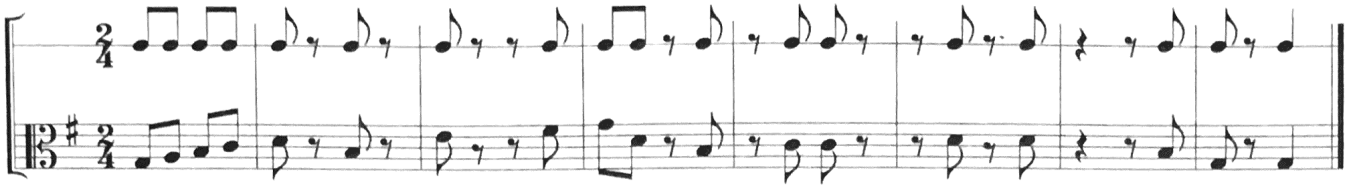
207a. and b.



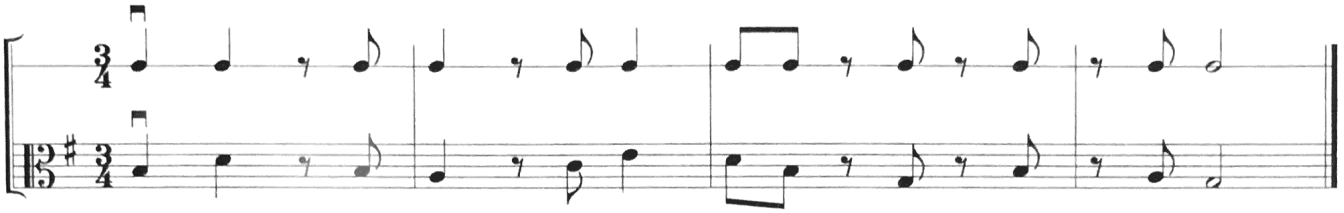
For additional practice with quarter- and eighth-note patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 260–269.

B. Ties, Dotted Quarter Notes and Eighth Rests

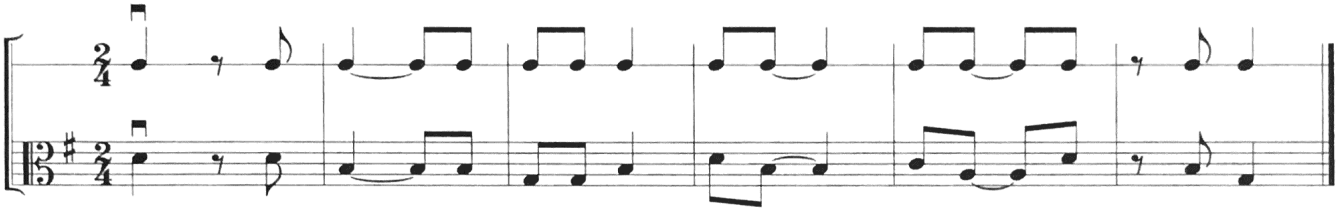
208a. and b.



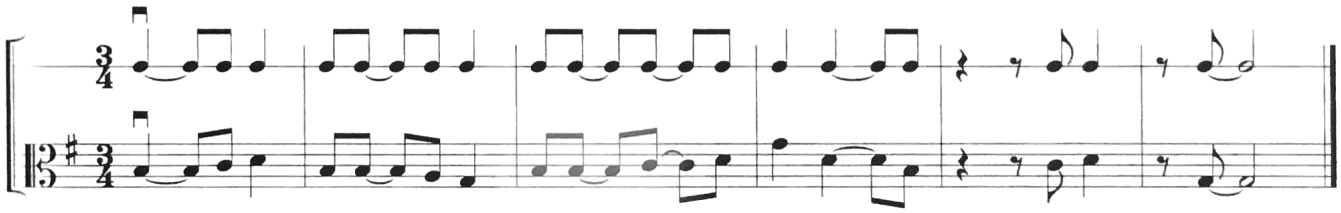
209a. and b.



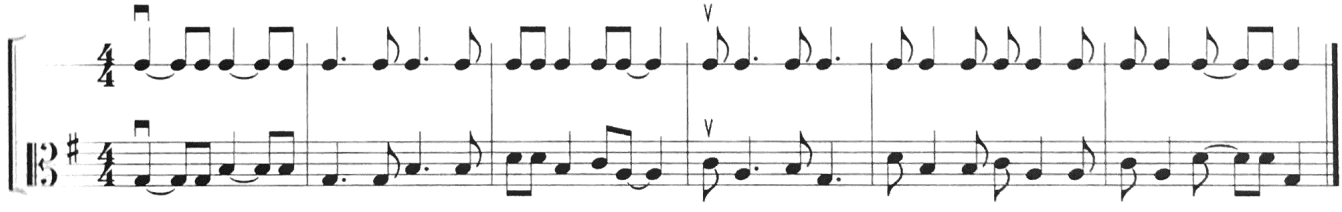
210a. and b.



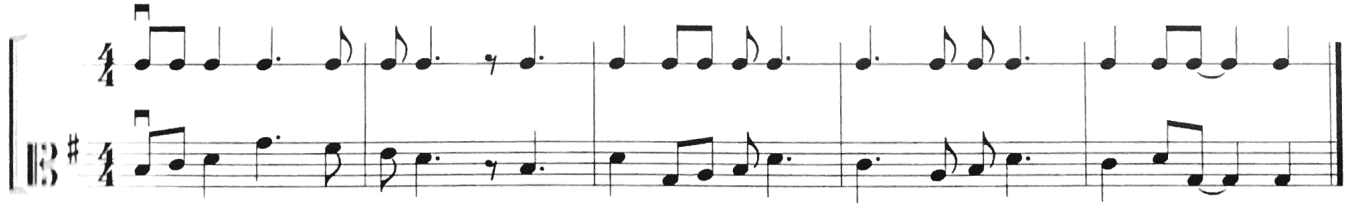
211a. and b.



212a. and b.



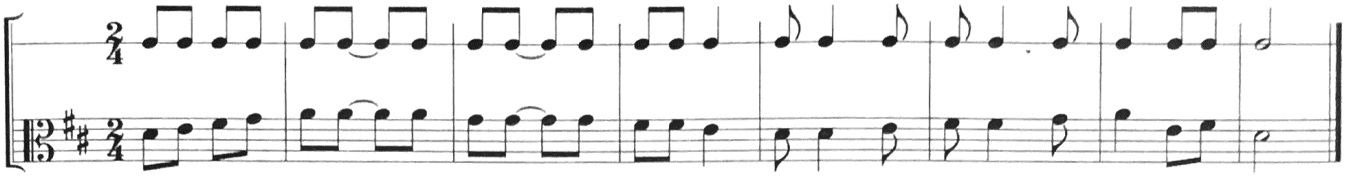
213a. and b.



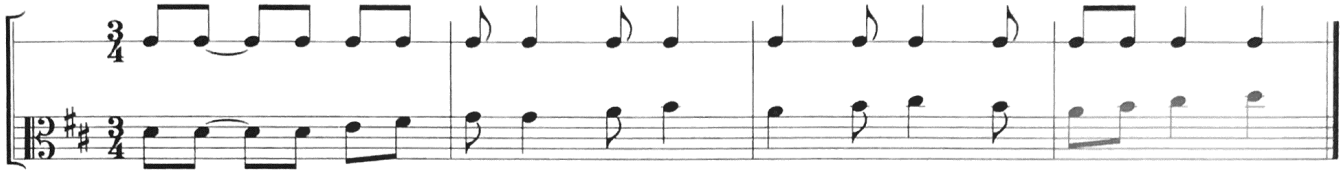
For additional practice with ties, dotted quarter notes and eighth rest patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 270–283.

C. Syncopation

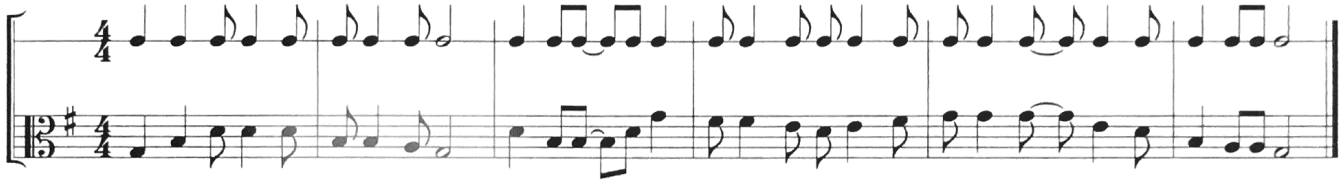
214a. and b.



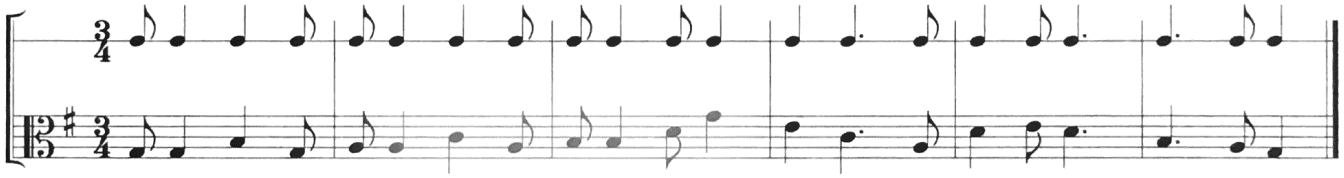
215a. and b.



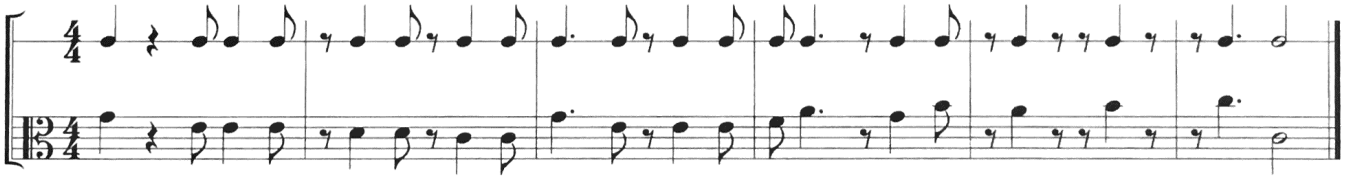
216a. and b.



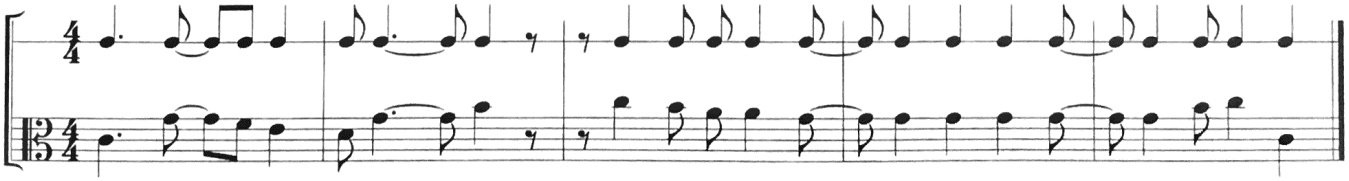
217a. and b.



218a. and b.



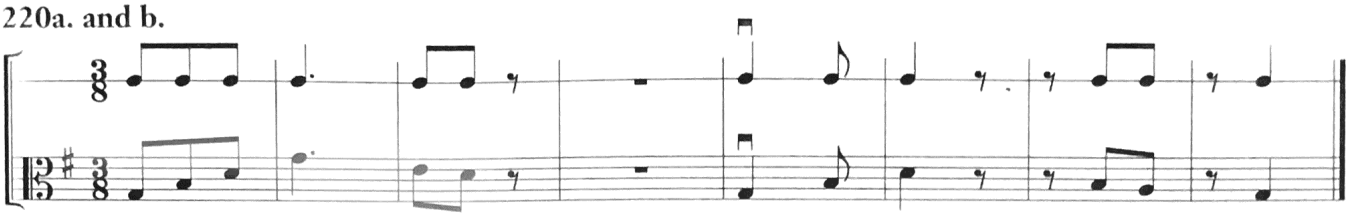
219a. and b.



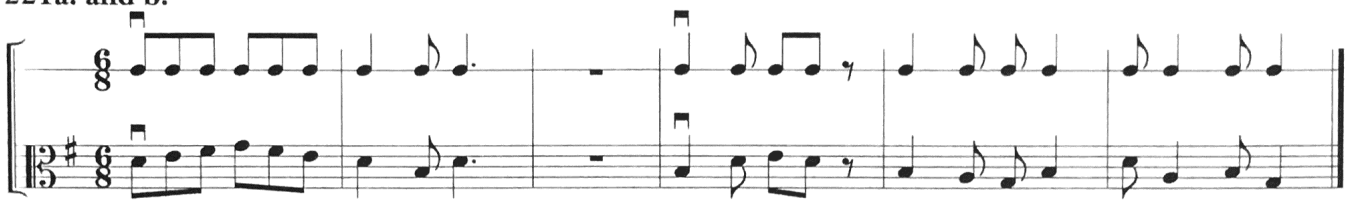
For additional practice with syncopated patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 284–297.

D. Intermediate Triple Meter

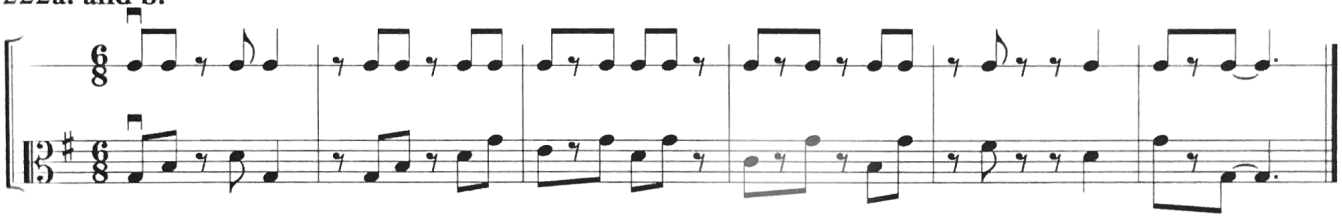
220a. and b.



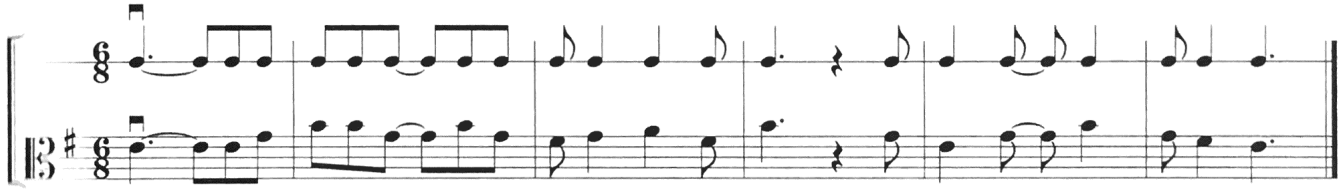
221a. and b.



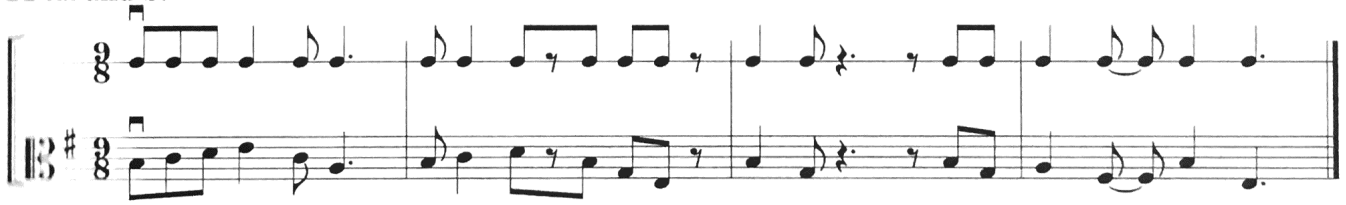
222a. and b.



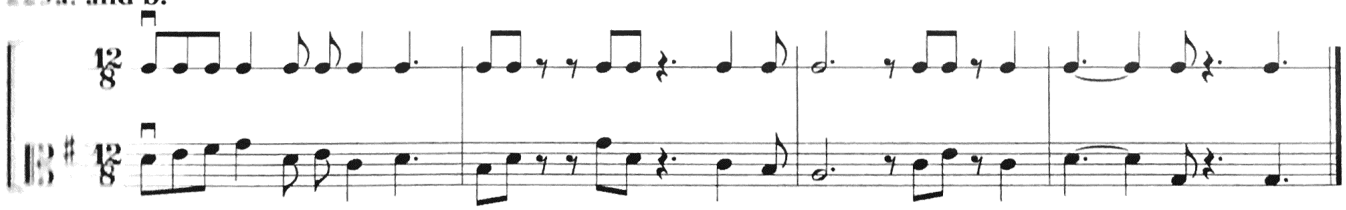
223a. and b.



224a. and b.



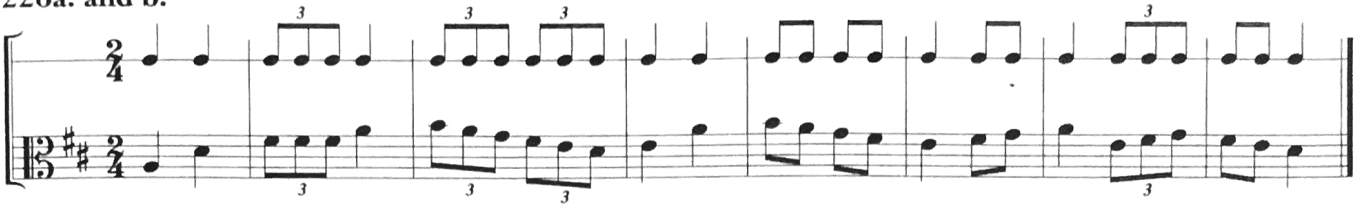
225a. and b.



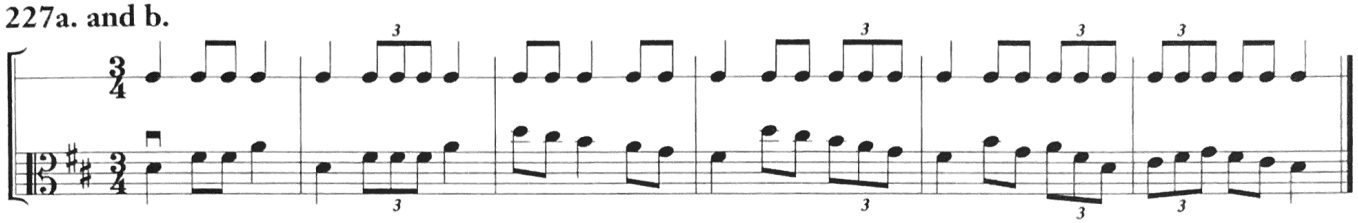
For additional practice with intermediate triple meter patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 298–308.

E. Triplets

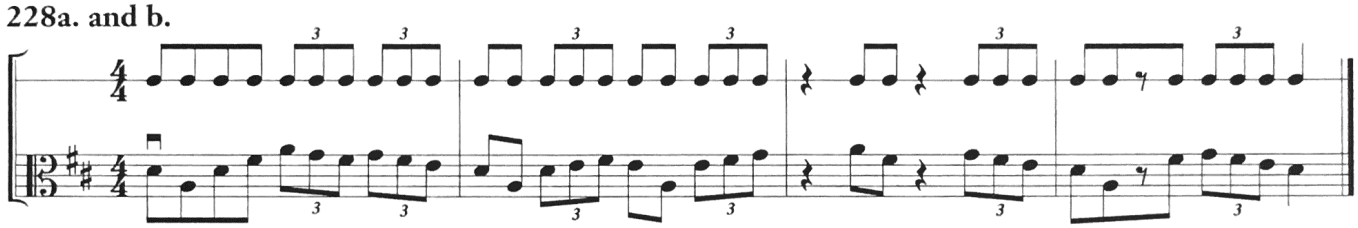
226a. and b.



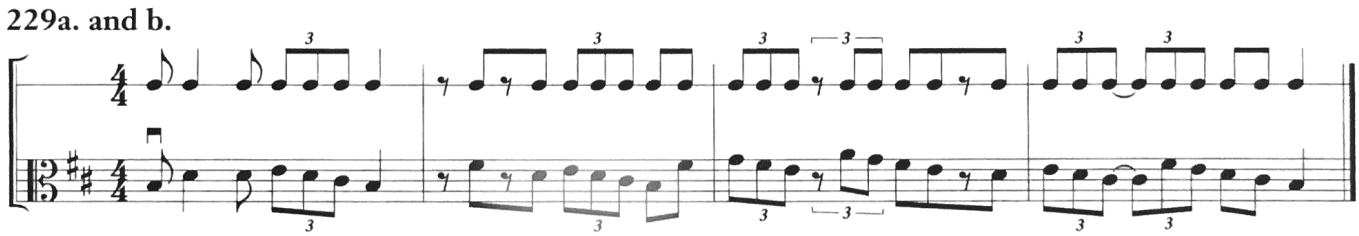
227a. and b.



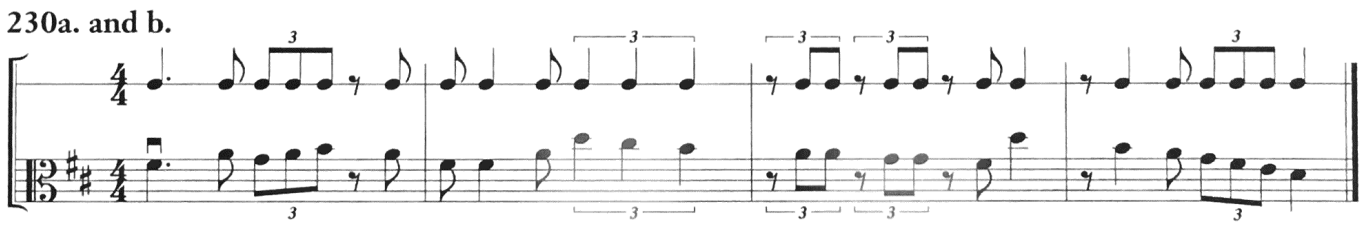
228a. and b.



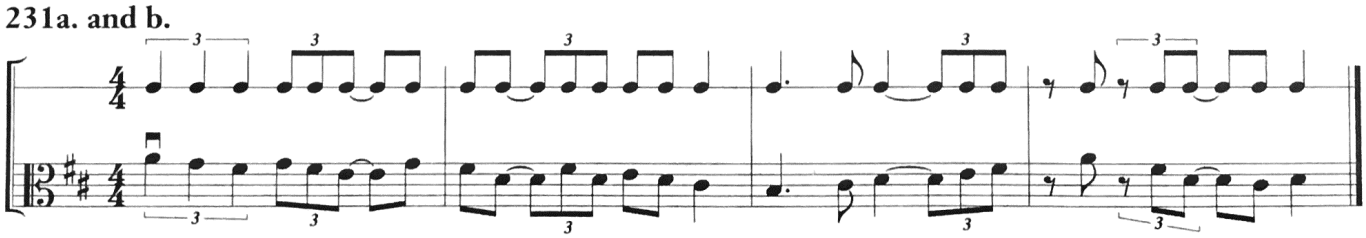
229a. and b.



230a. and b.



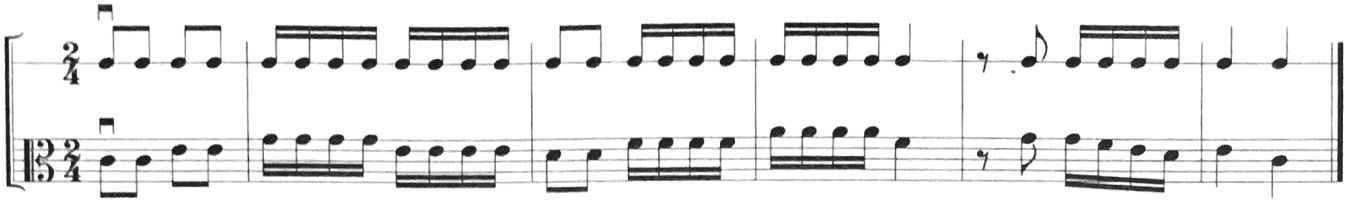
231a. and b.



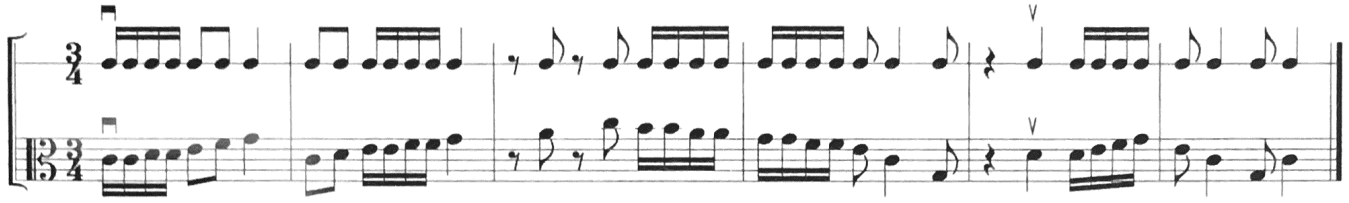
For additional practice with triplet eighth-note patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 309–312.

F. Simple Sixteenth Notes

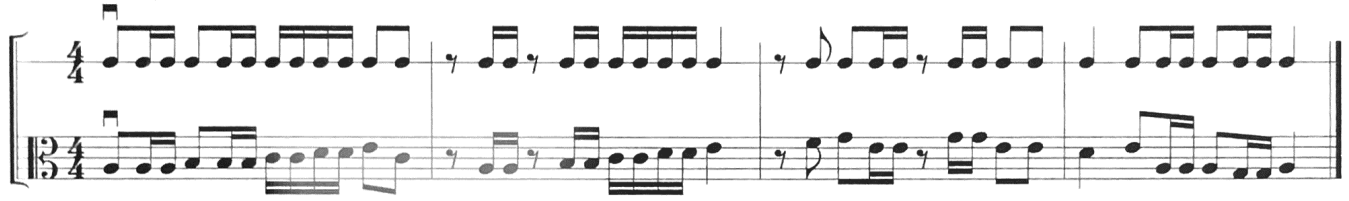
232a. and b.



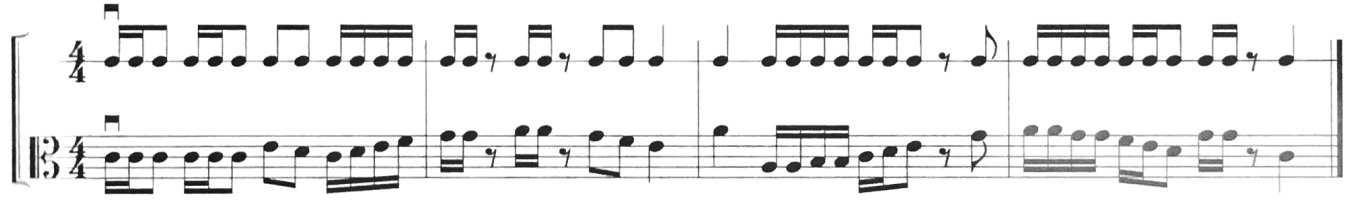
233a. and b.



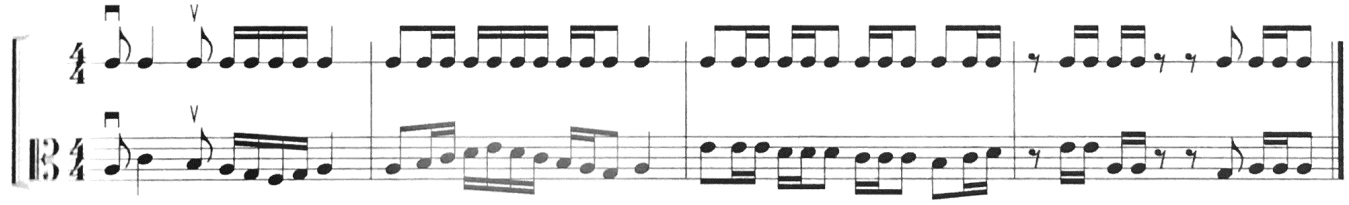
234a. and b.



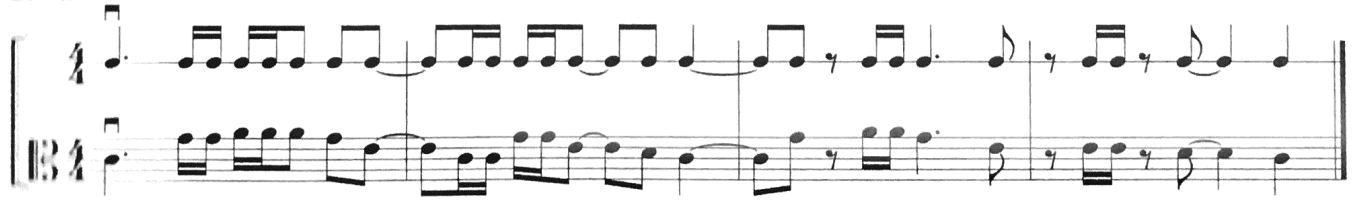
235a. and b.



236a. and b.



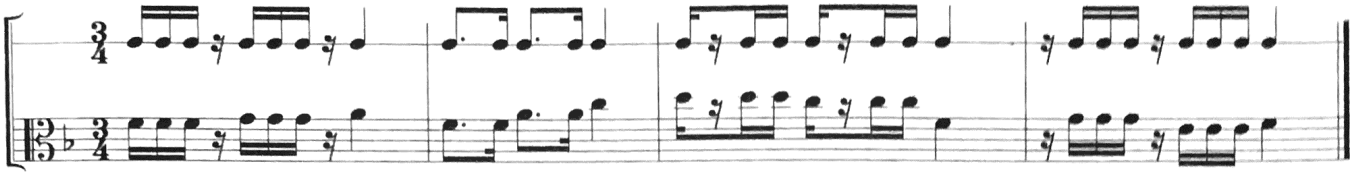
237a. and b.



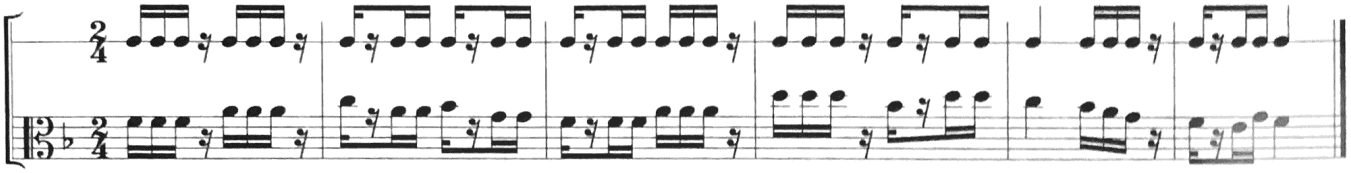
For additional practice with simple sixteenth-note patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 313–324.

G. Dotted Eighth Notes and Sixteenth Rests

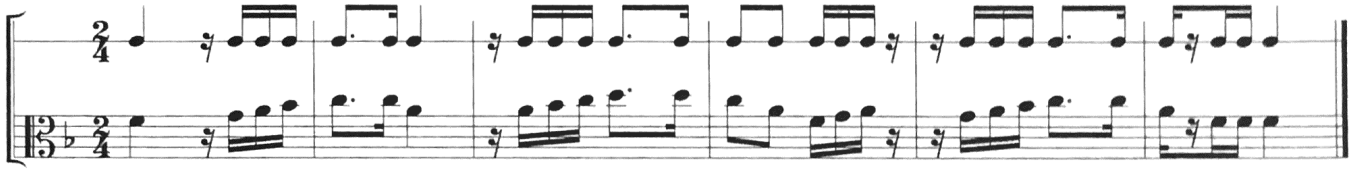
238a. and b.



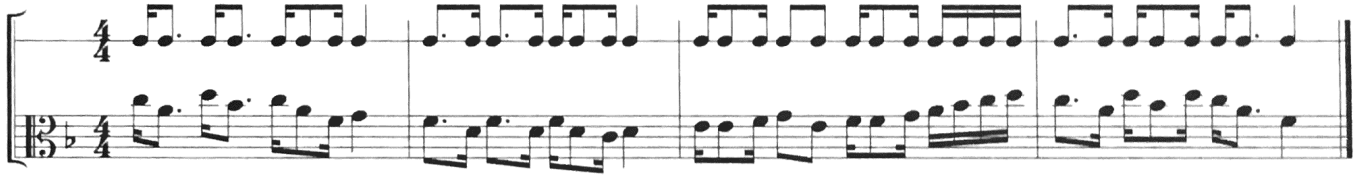
239a. and b.



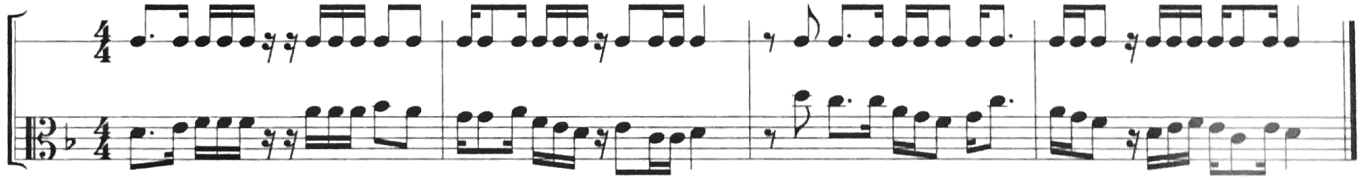
240a. and b.



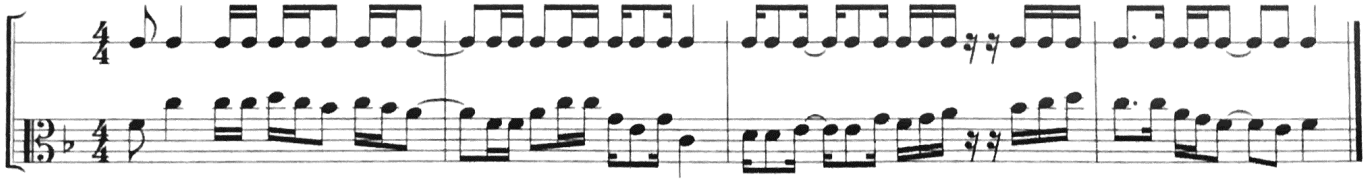
241a. and b.



242a. and b.



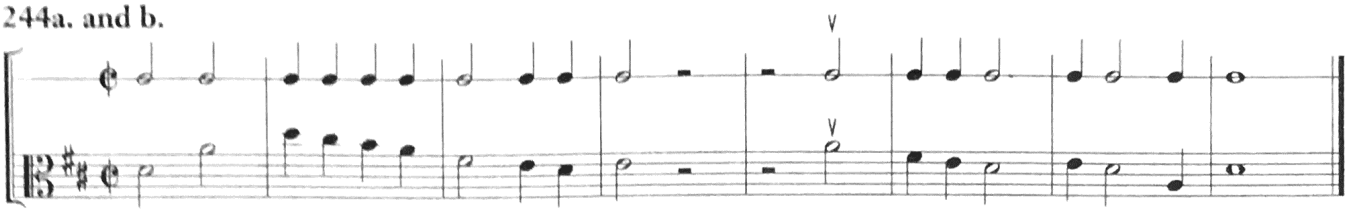
243a. and b.



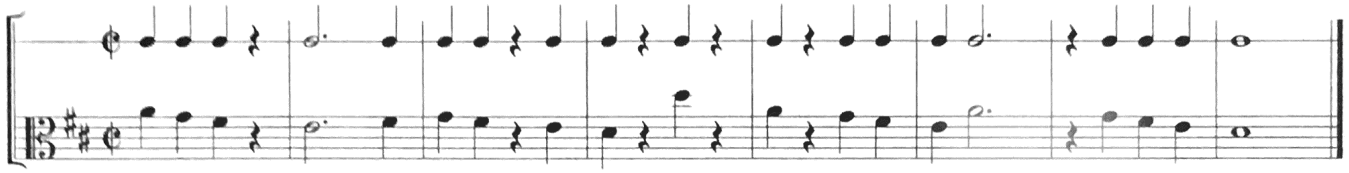
For additional practice with dotted-eighth-note and sixteenth-rest patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 325–334.

H. Cut Time (𝄵)

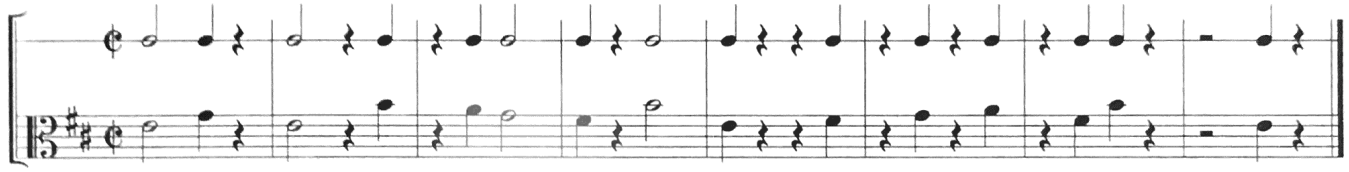
244a. and b.



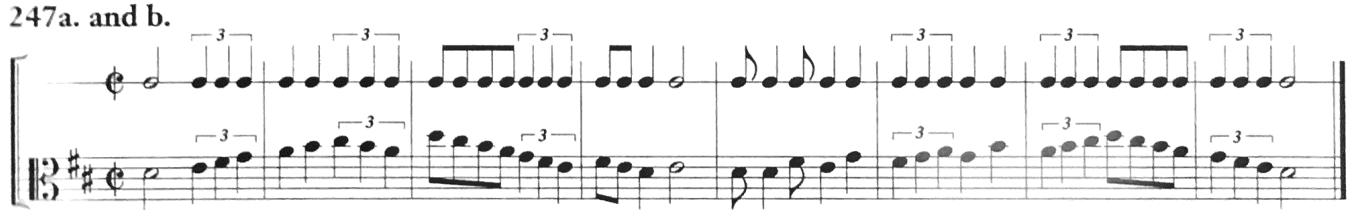
245a. and b.



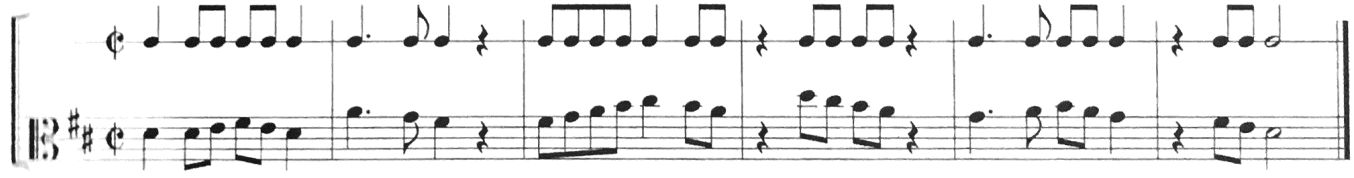
246a. and b.



247a. and b.



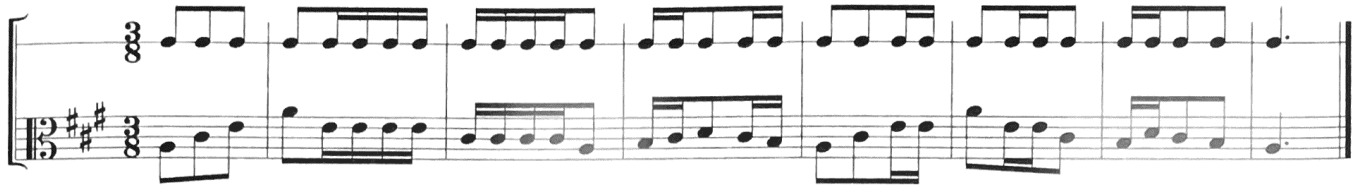
248a. and b.



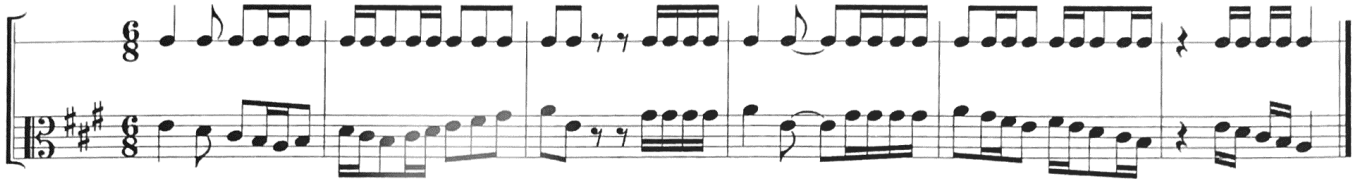
For additional practice with cut time patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 335–347.

J. Advanced Triple Meter

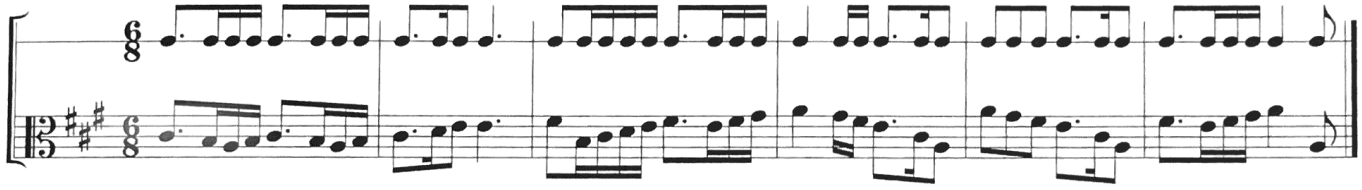
249a. and b.



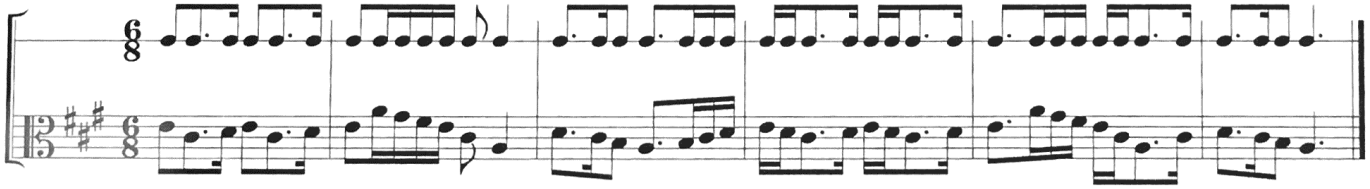
250a. and b.



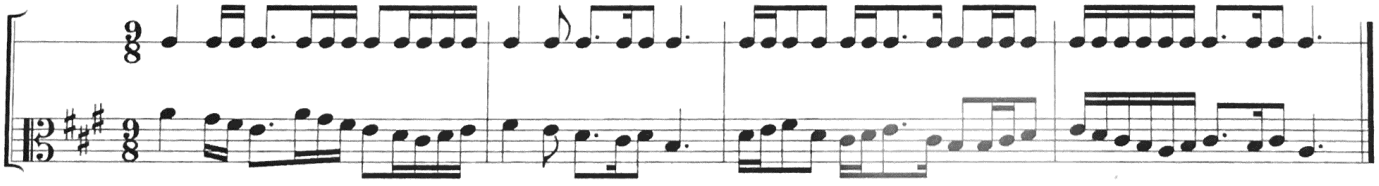
251a. and b.



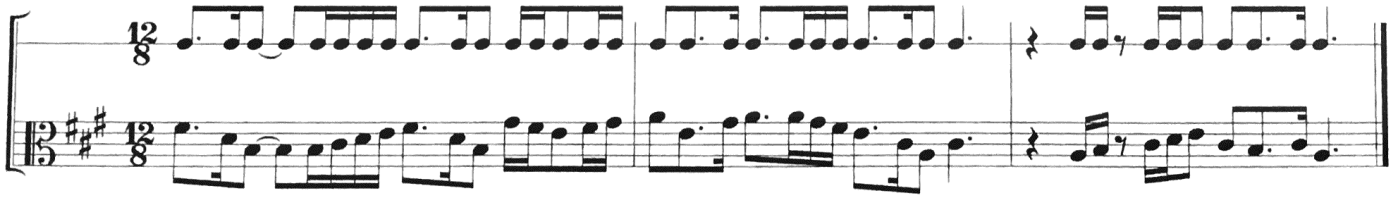
252a. and b.



253a. and b.



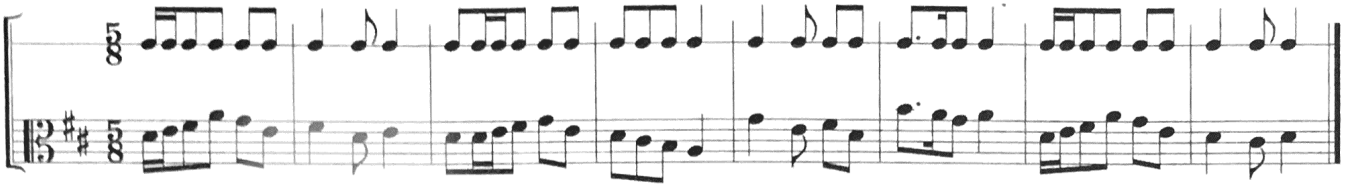
254a. and b.



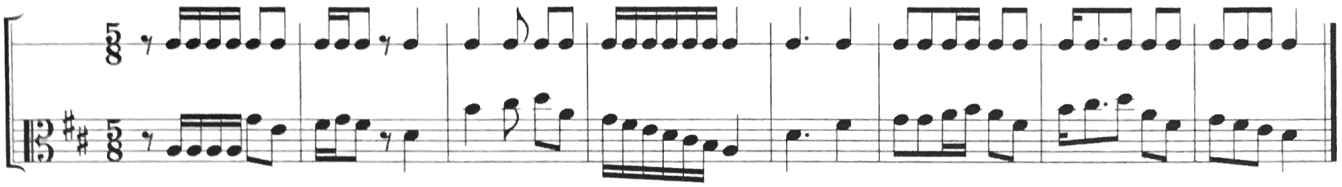
For additional practice with advanced triple meter patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 352–369.

K. Irregular Meter

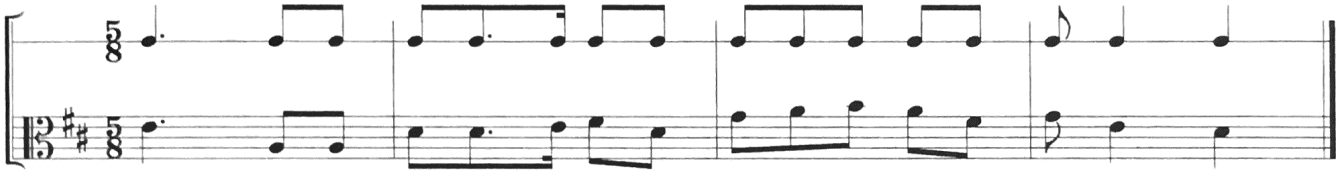
255a. and b.



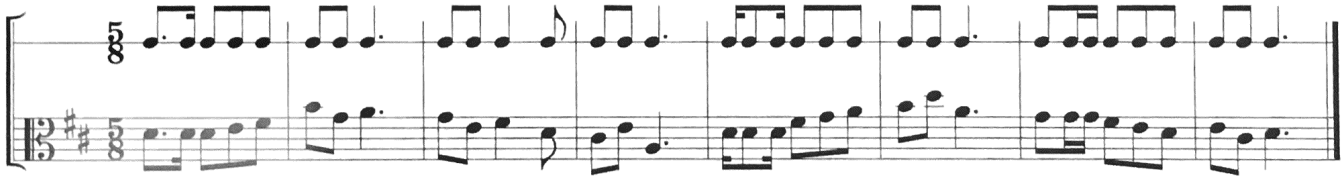
256a. and b.



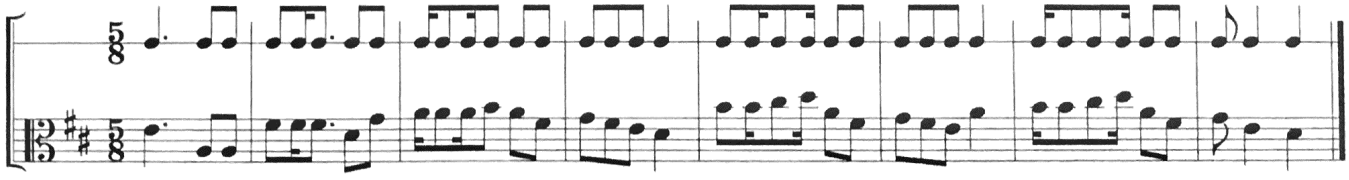
257a. and b.



258a. and b.



259a. and b.

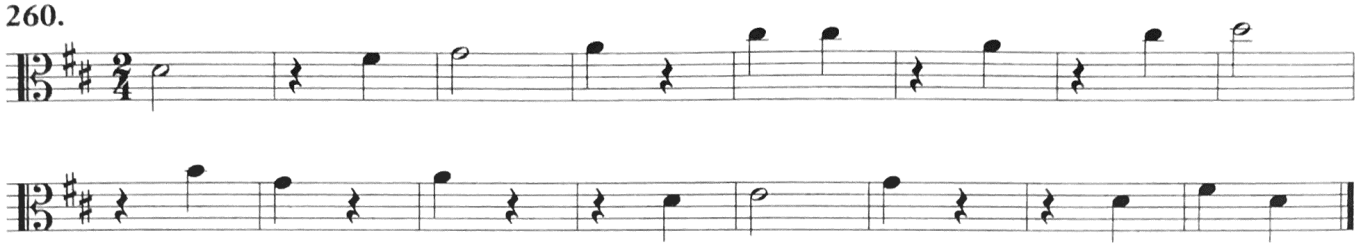


For additional practice with irregular meter patterns, go to Part VIII Sight Reading Exercises 370–379.

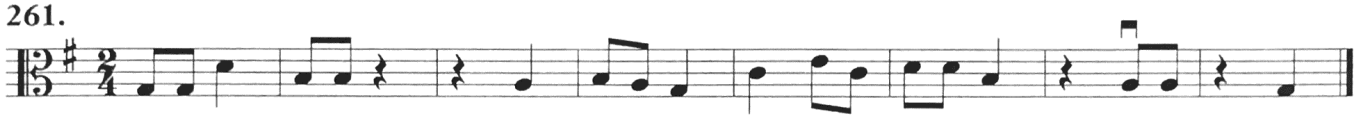
VIII Sight-Reading by Level

A. Quarter Notes and Rests; Eighth Notes

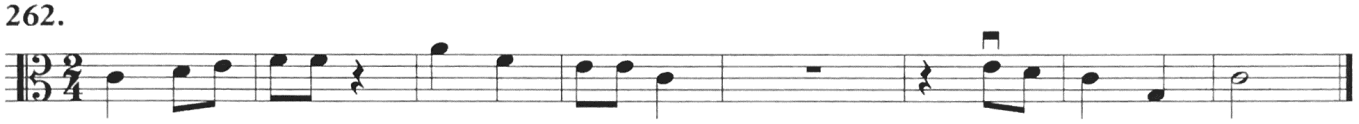
260.



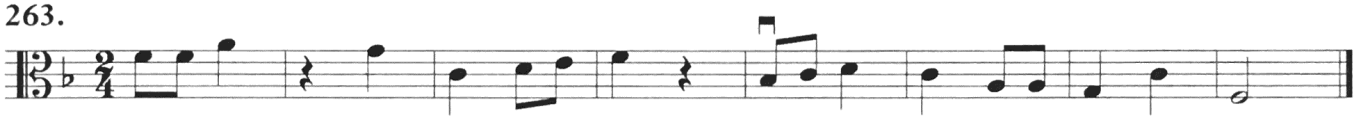
261.



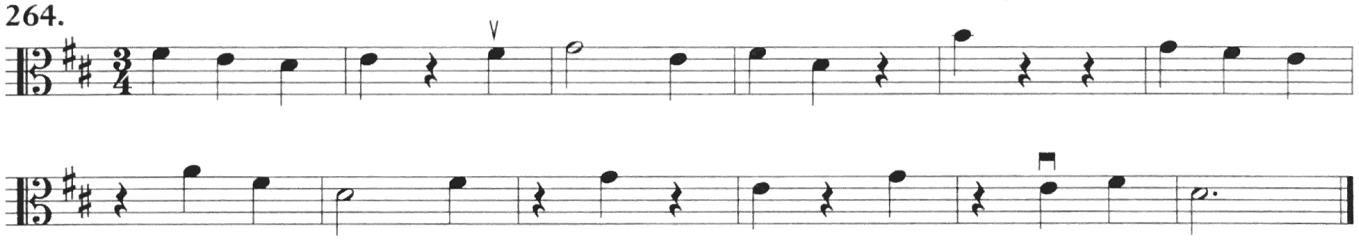
262.



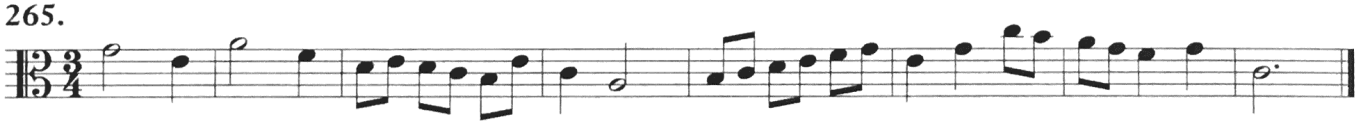
263.



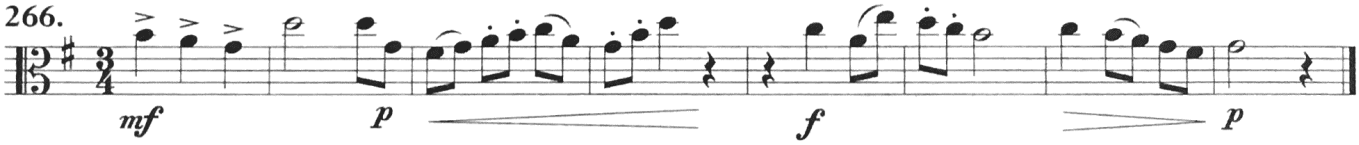
264.



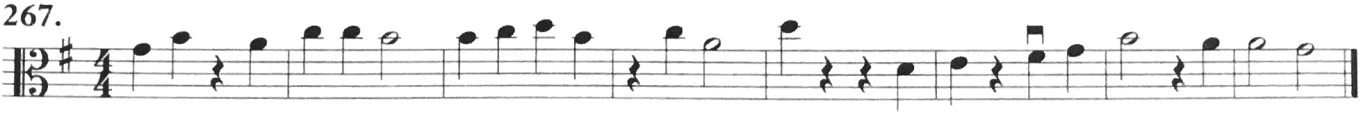
265.

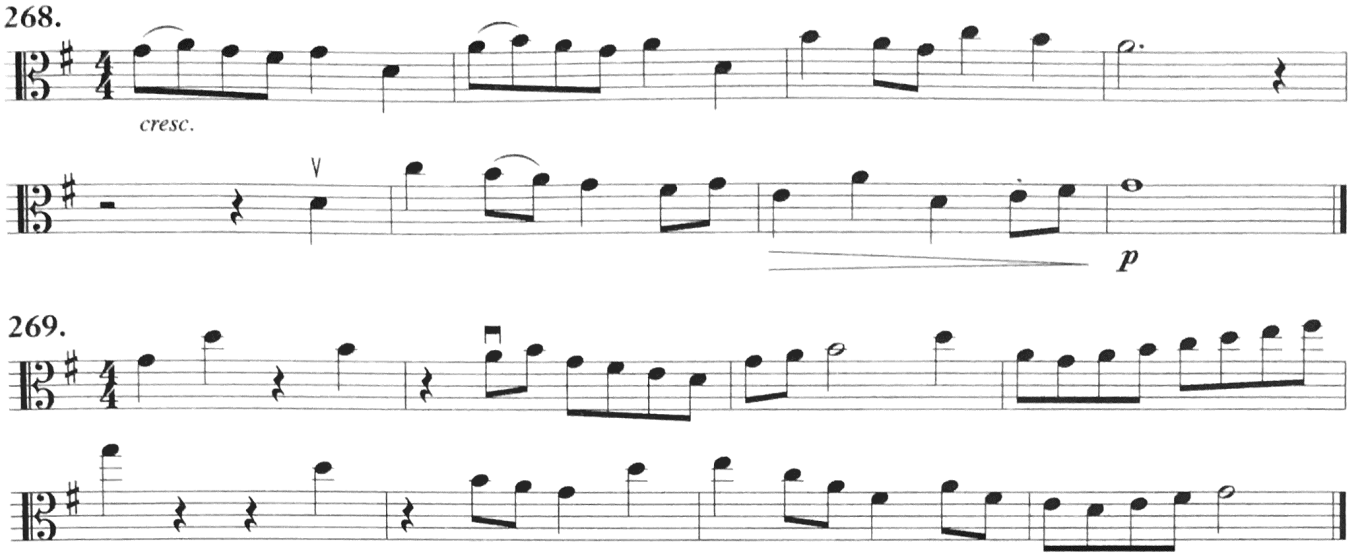


266.

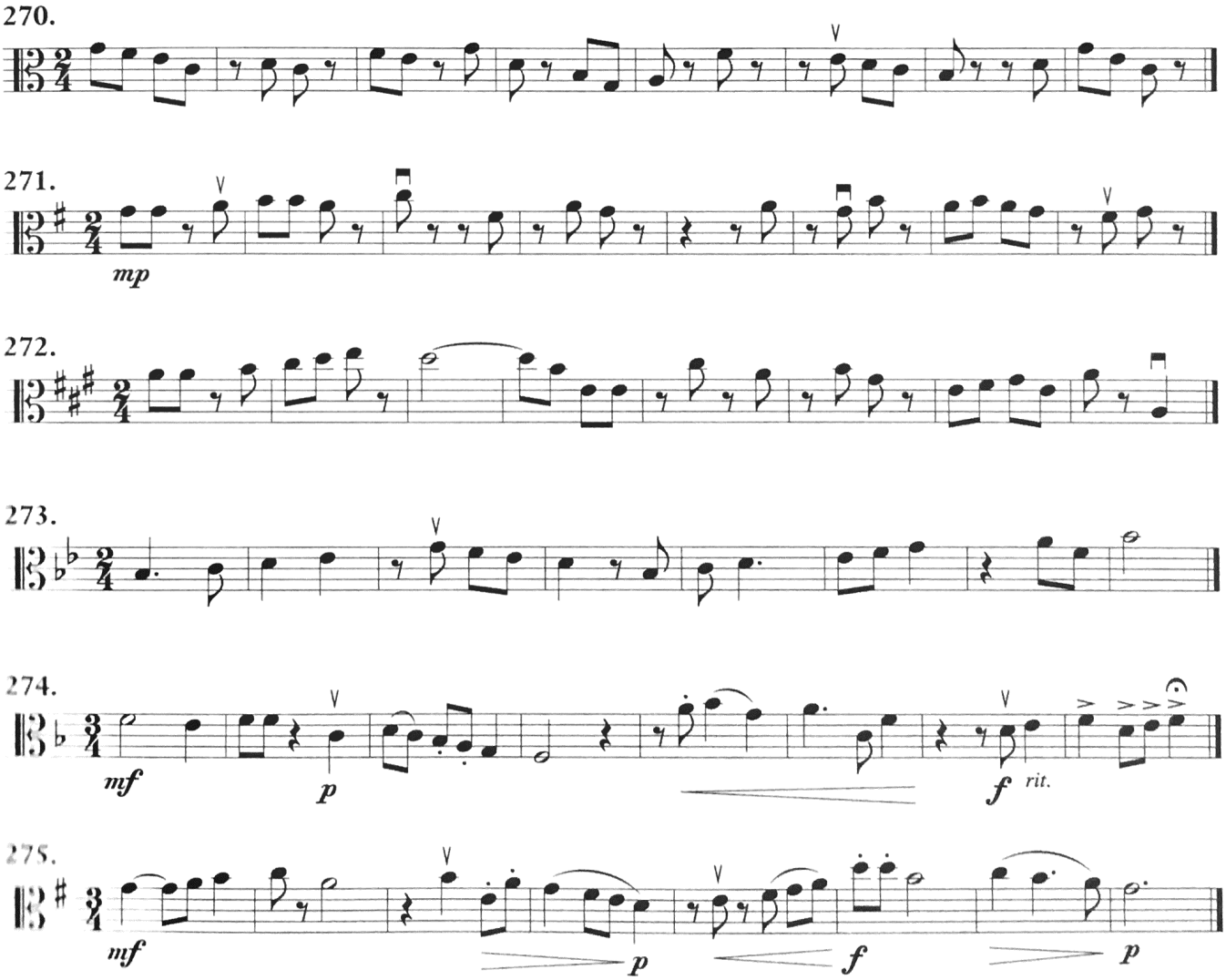


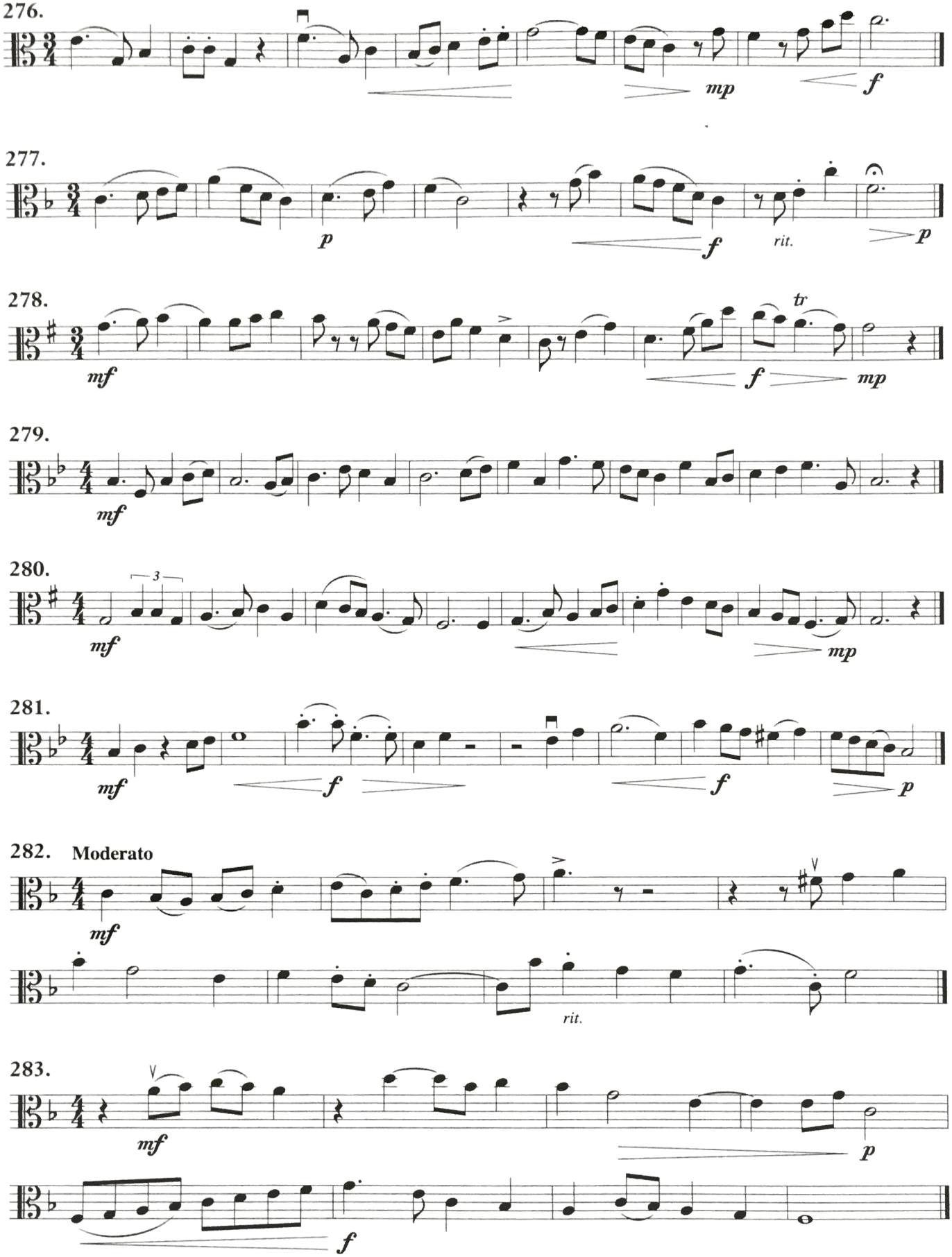
267.





B. Ties, Dotted Quarter Notes and Eighth Rests




276.
mp
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278.
tr
mf
f
mp
279.
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280.
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mf
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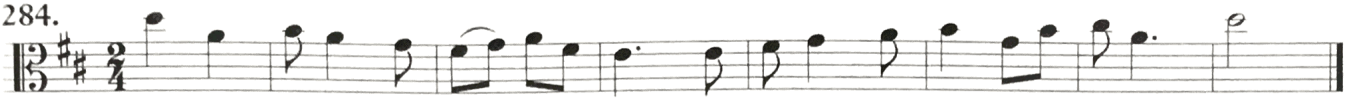
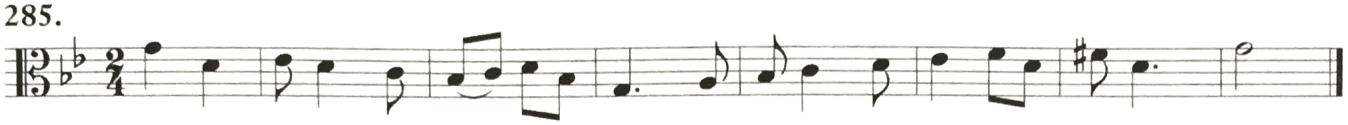
281.
mf
f
f
p
282. Moderato
mf
rit.
283.
mf
p
f

C. Syncopation

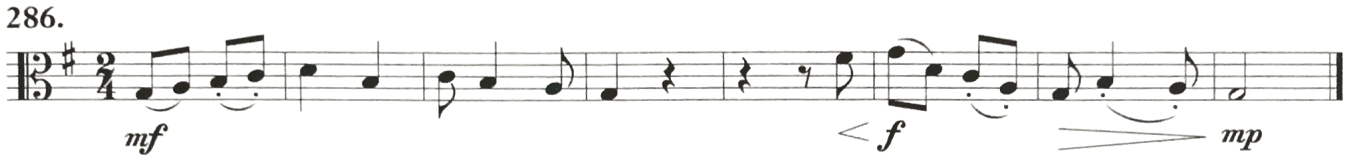
284.



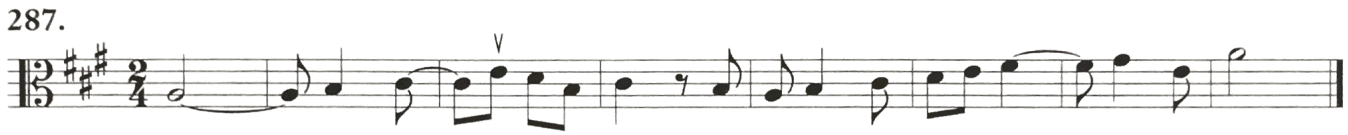
285.



286.



287.



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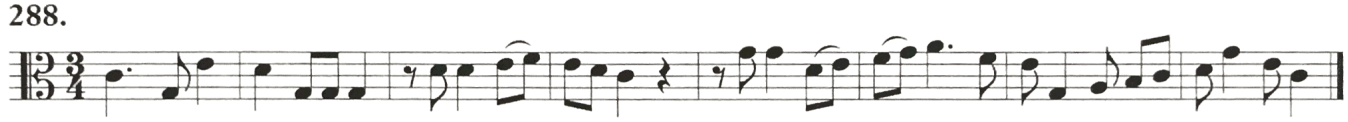

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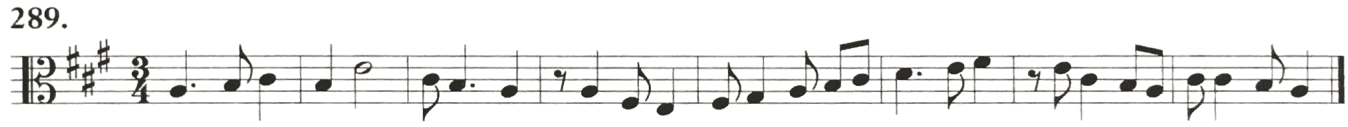

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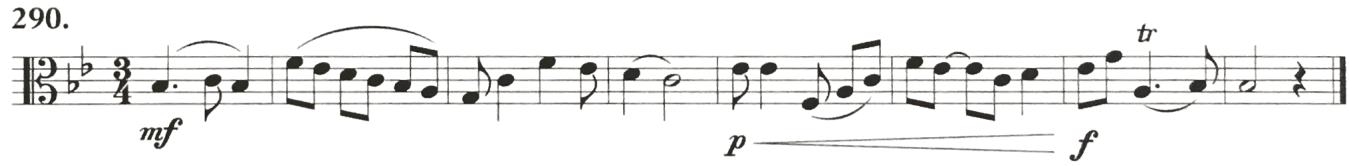

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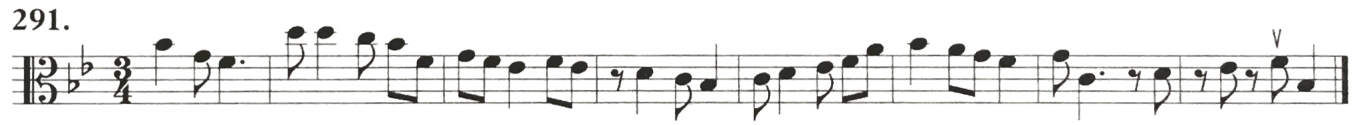

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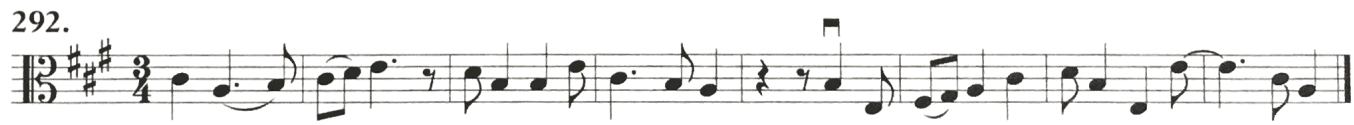

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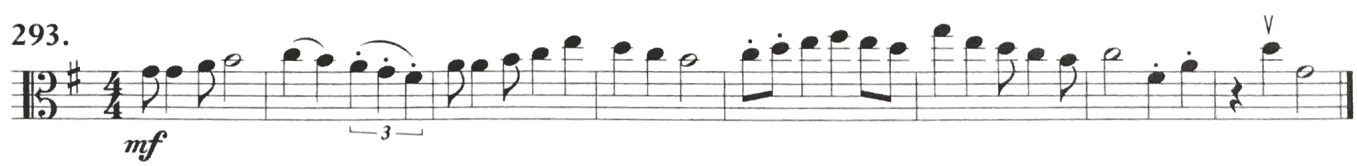

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D. Intermediate Triple Meter

298.

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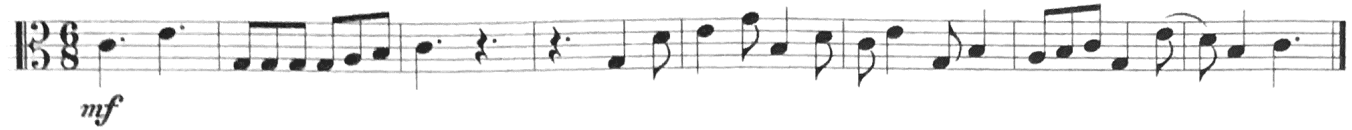

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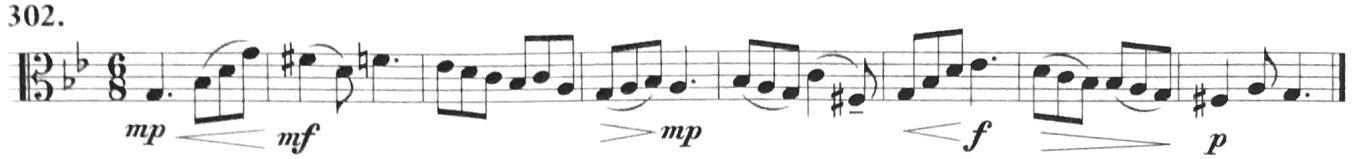

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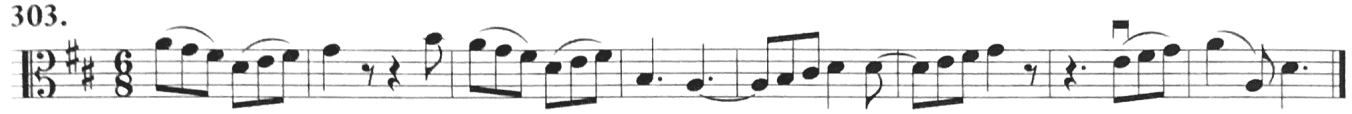

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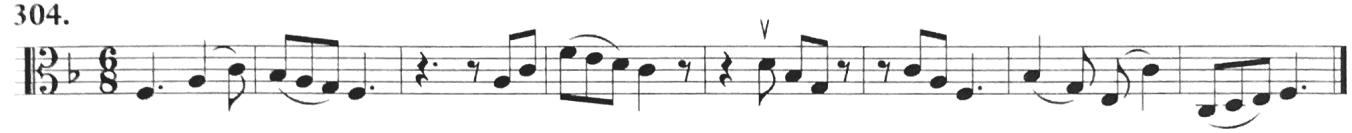

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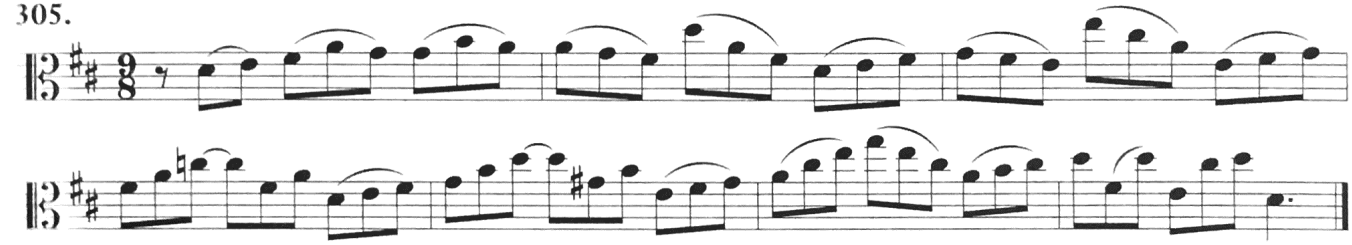

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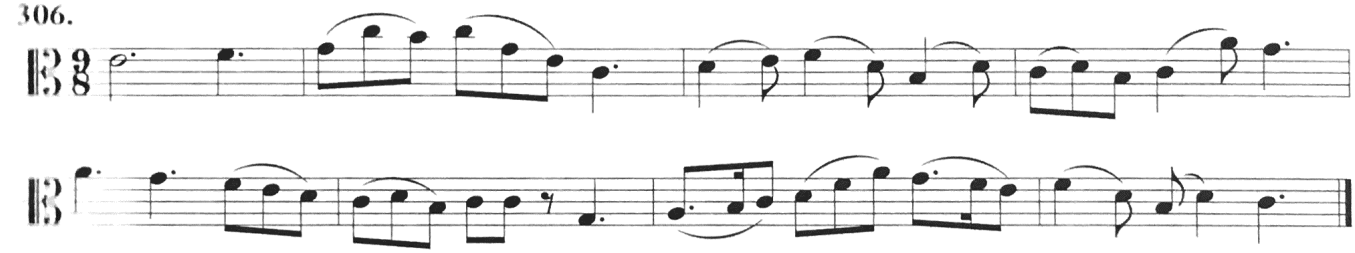

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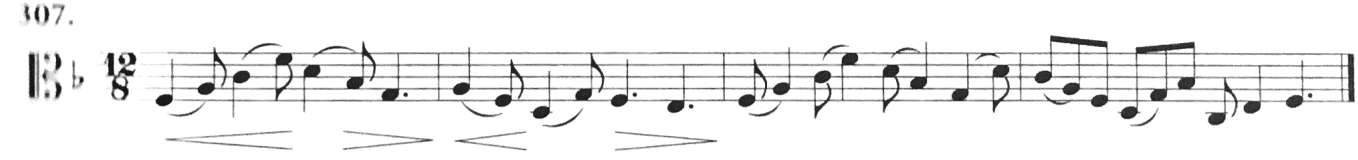

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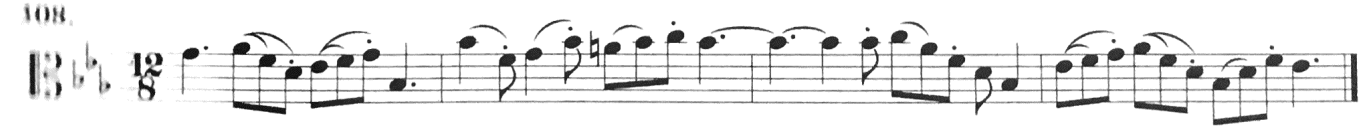

E. Triplets

309.

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312.

F. Simple Sixteenth Notes

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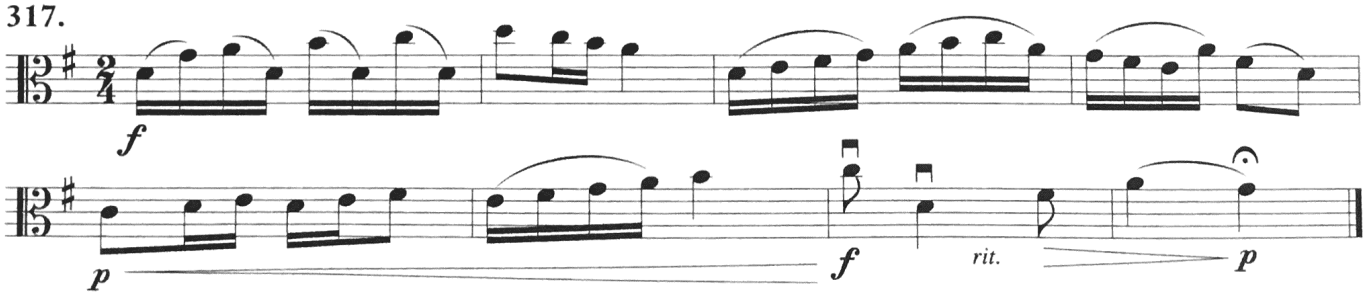
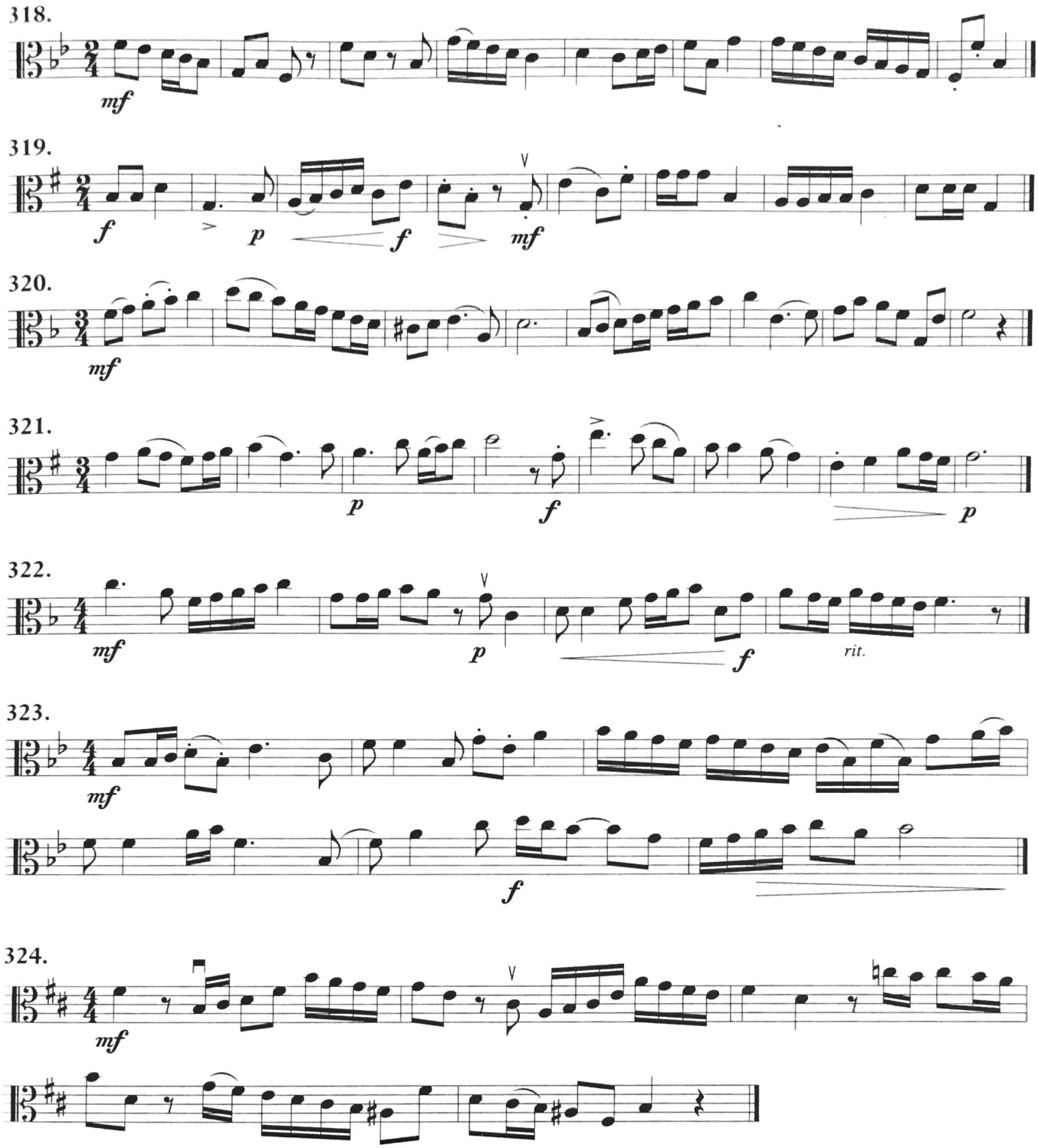
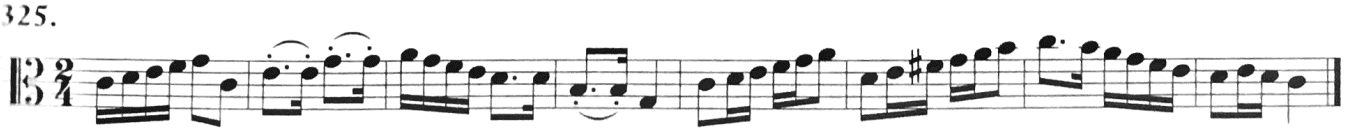
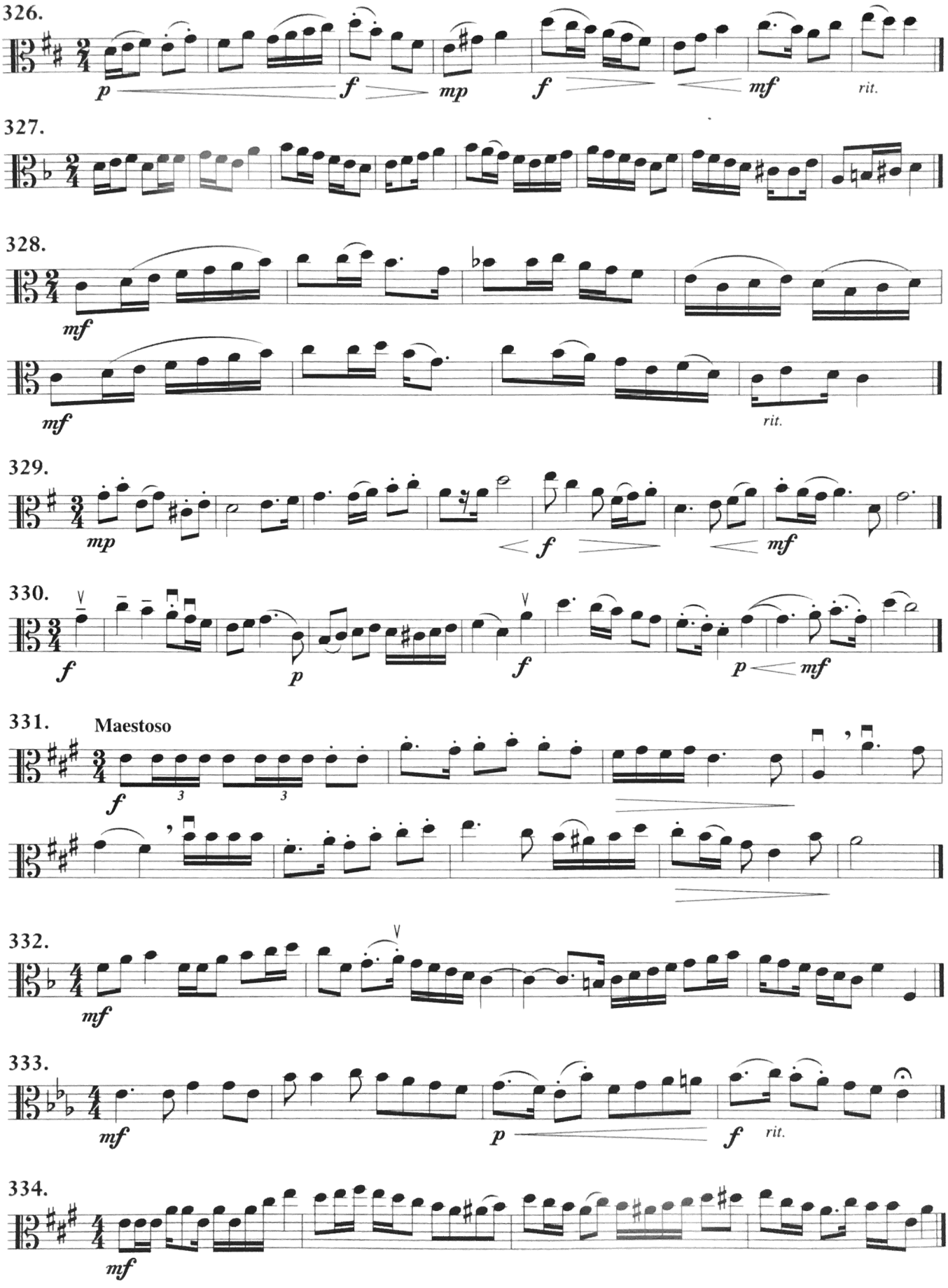
317.





G. Dotted Eighth Notes and Sixteenth Rests

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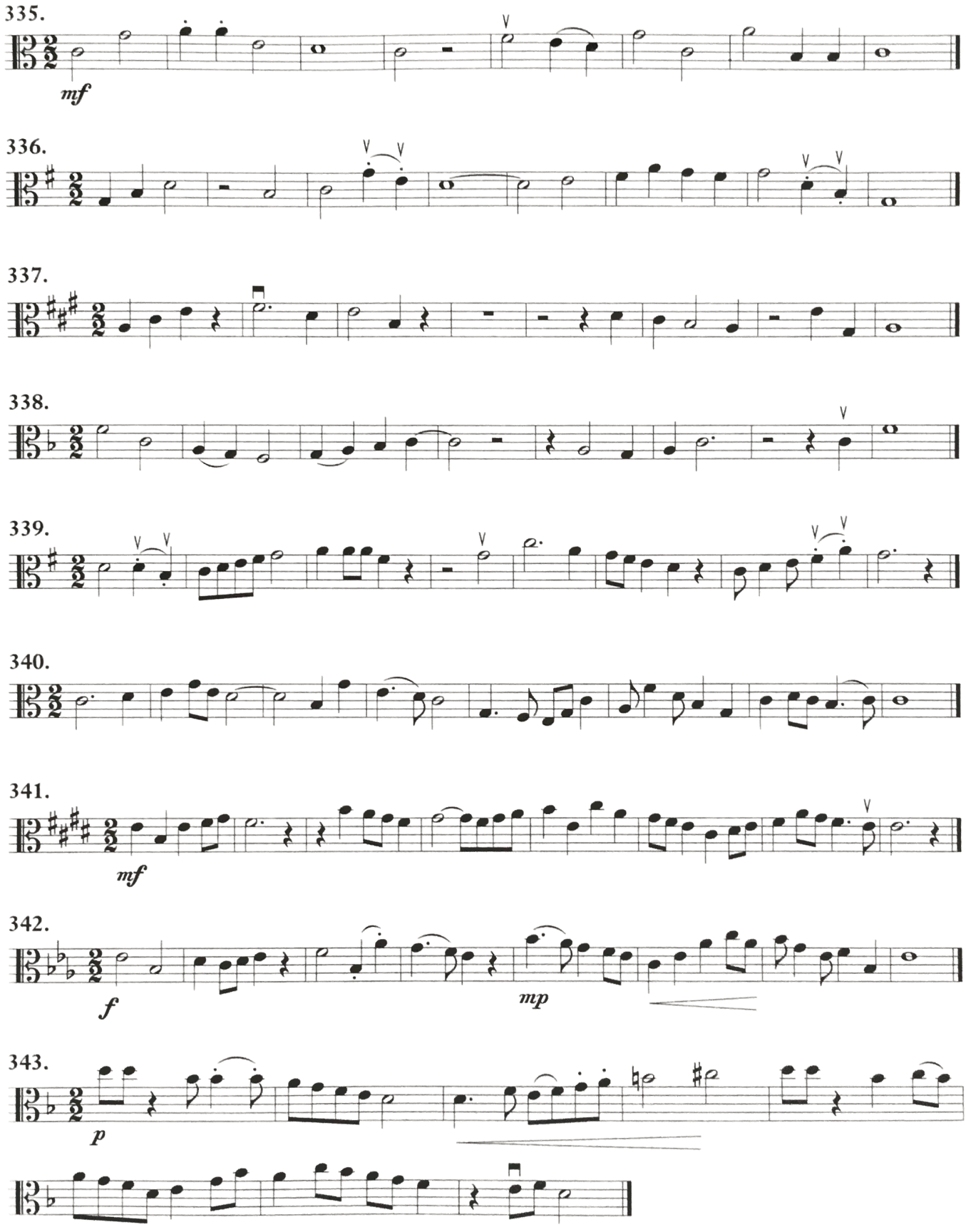
334.
mf

H. Cut Time and $\frac{3}{2}$



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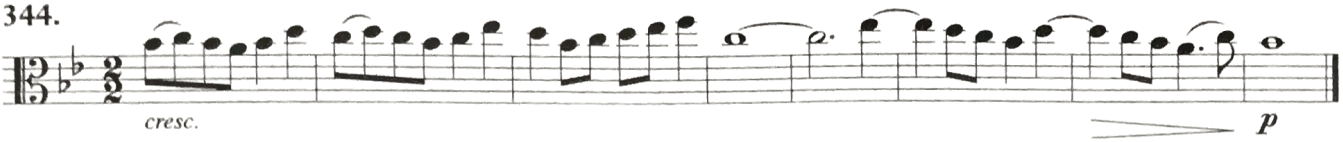

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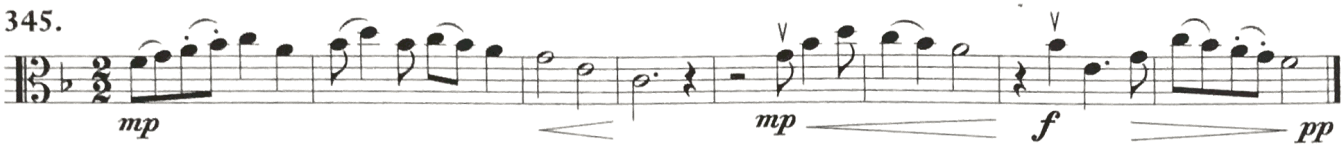

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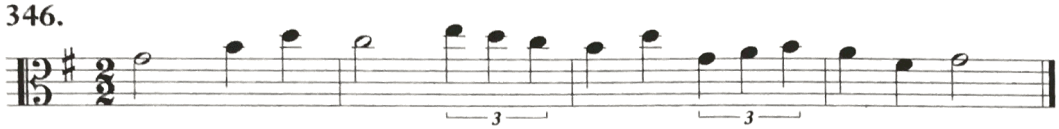

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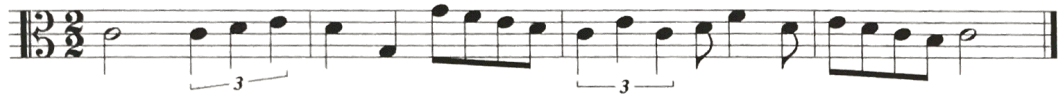

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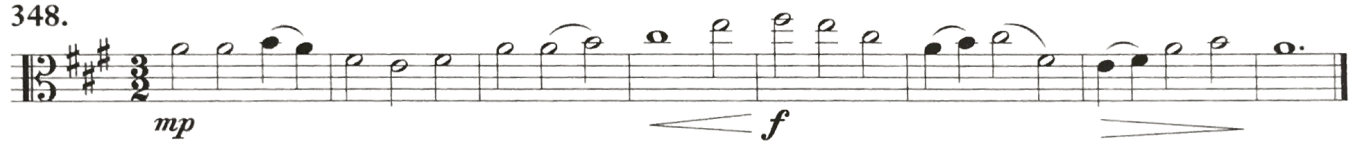

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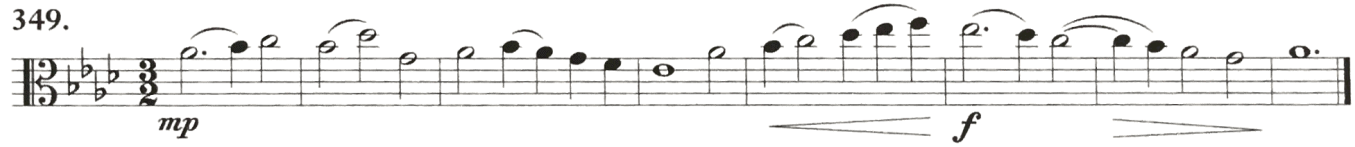

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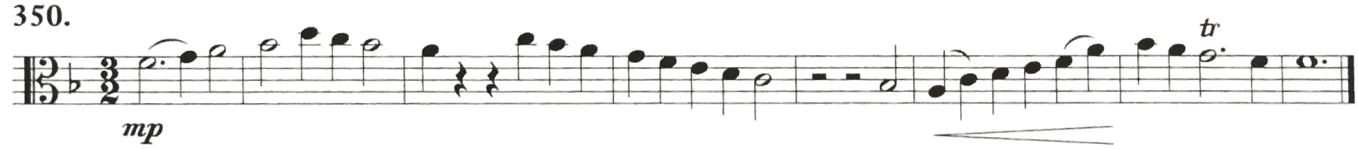

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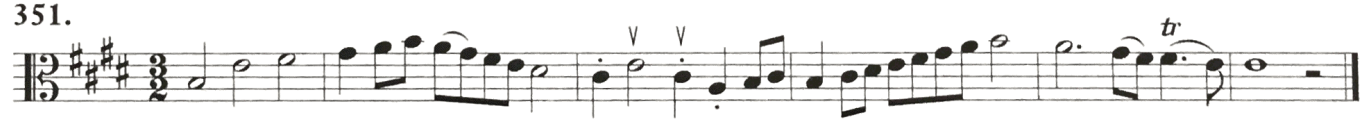

J. Advanced Triple Meter

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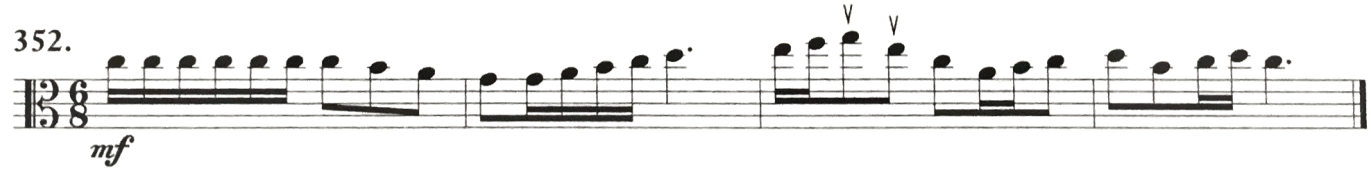

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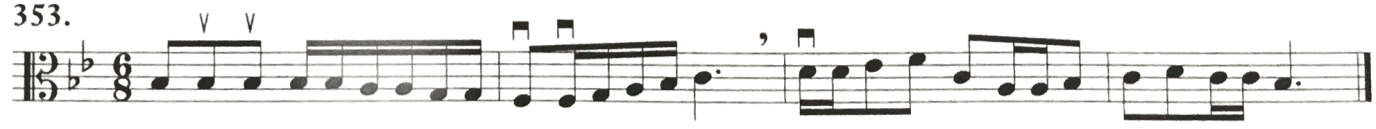

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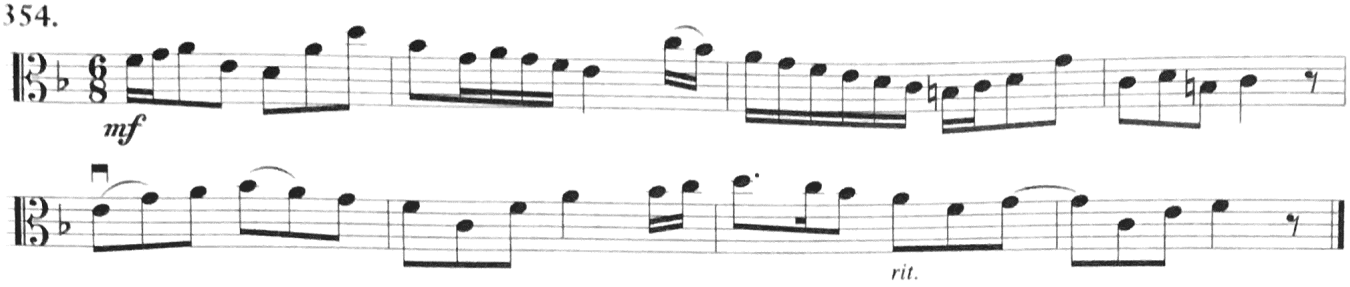

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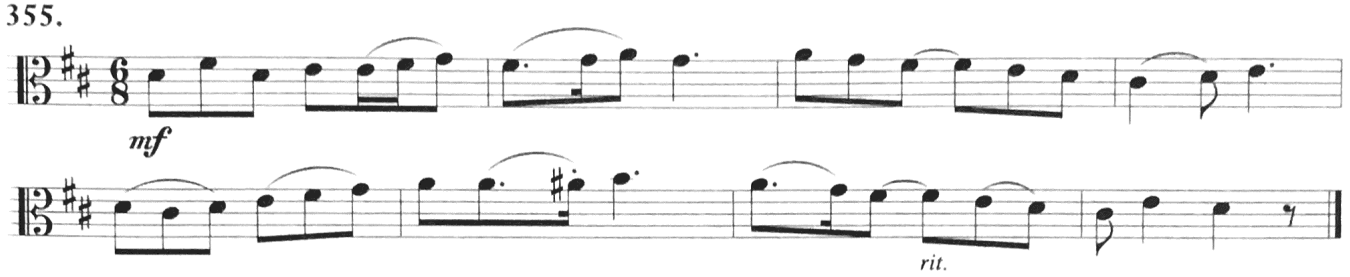

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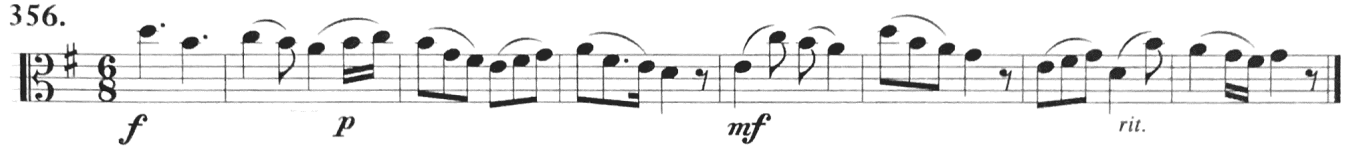

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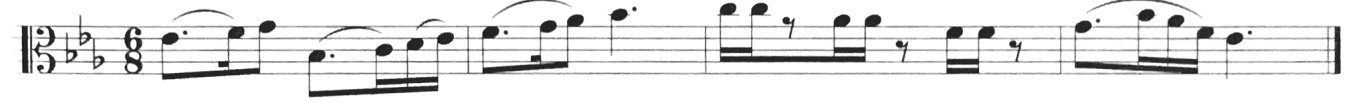

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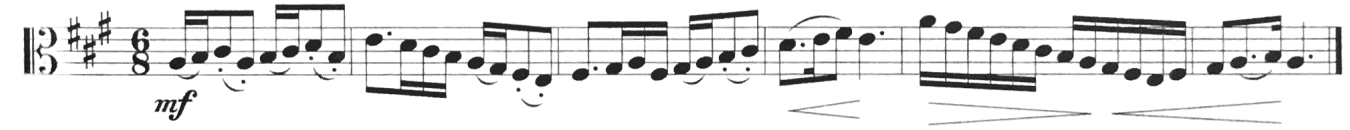

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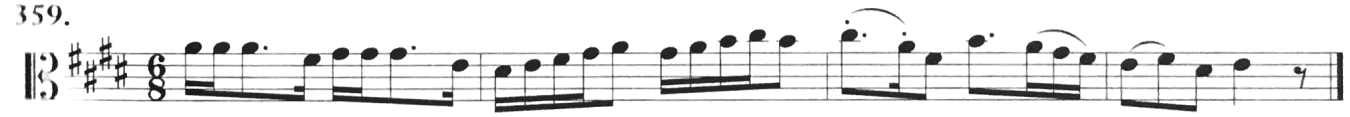

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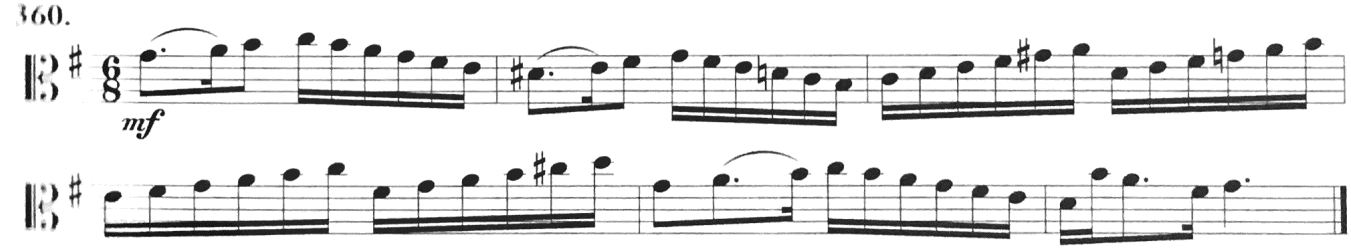

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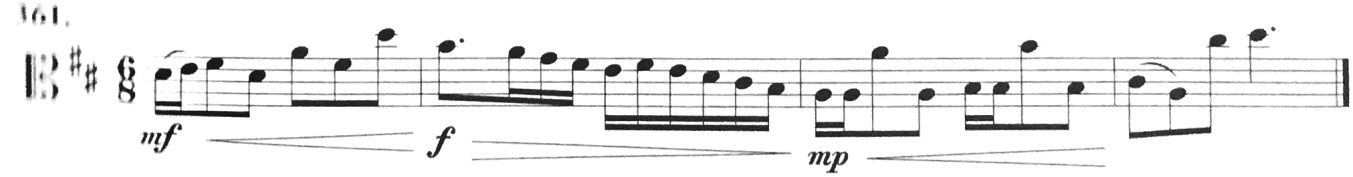

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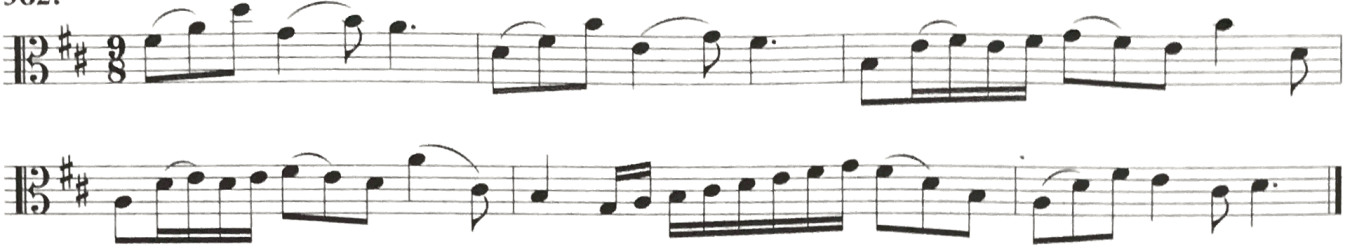

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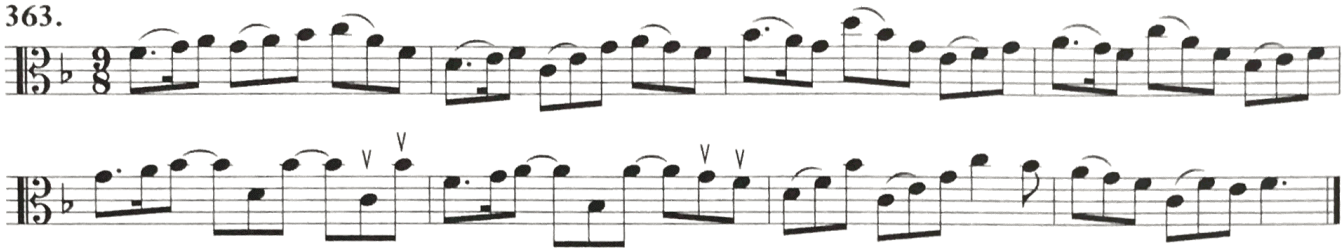

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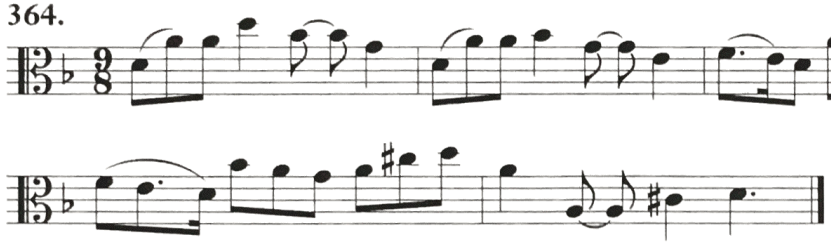

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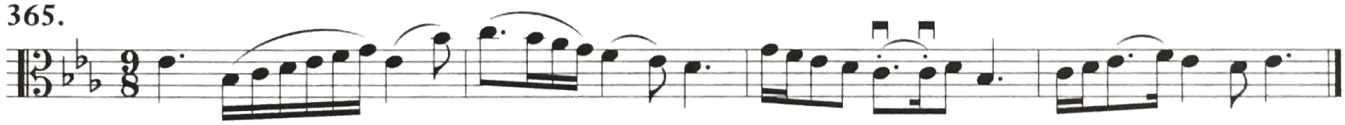

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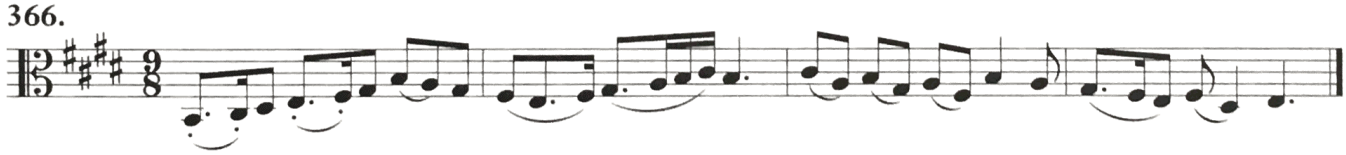

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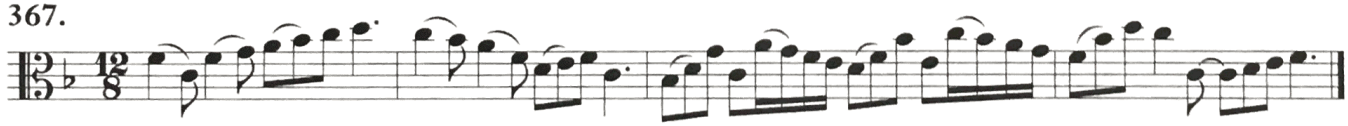

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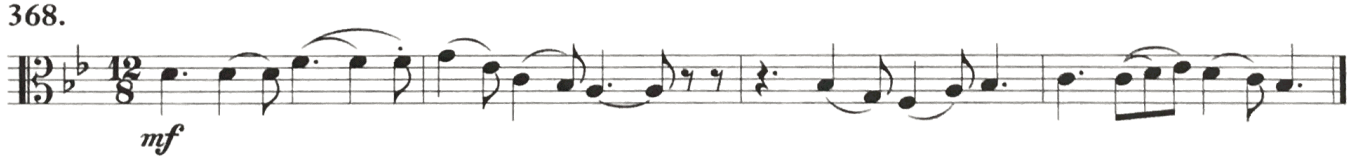

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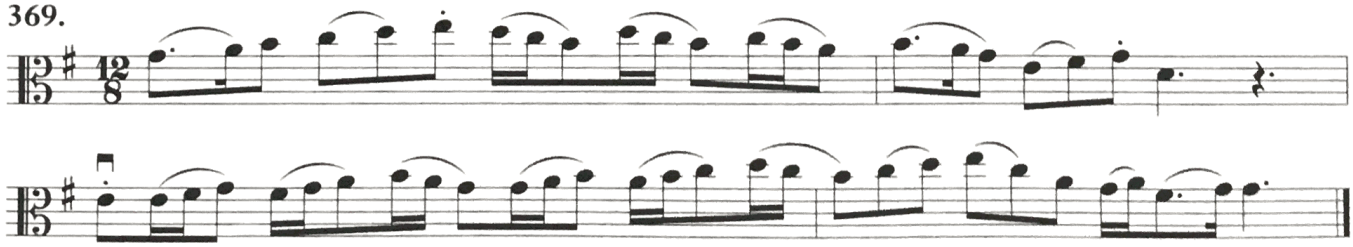

K. Irregular Meter

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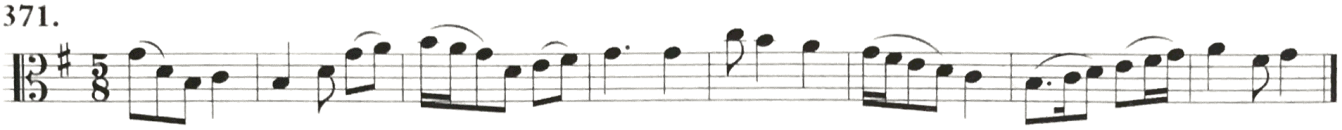

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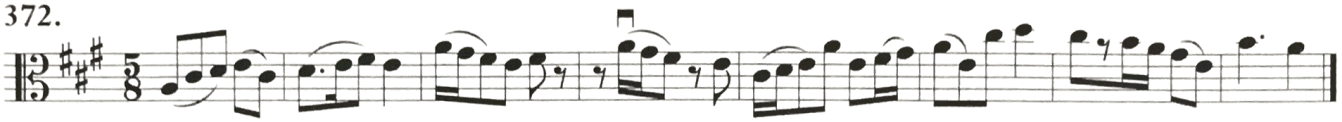

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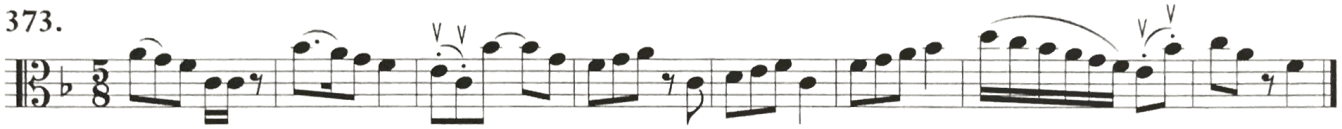

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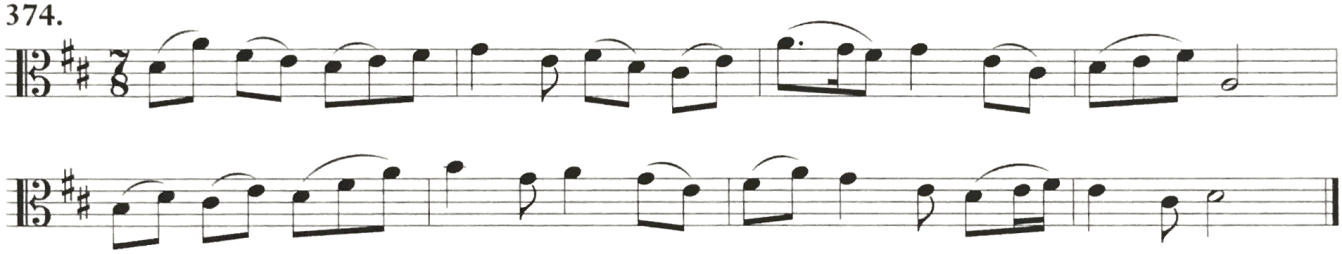

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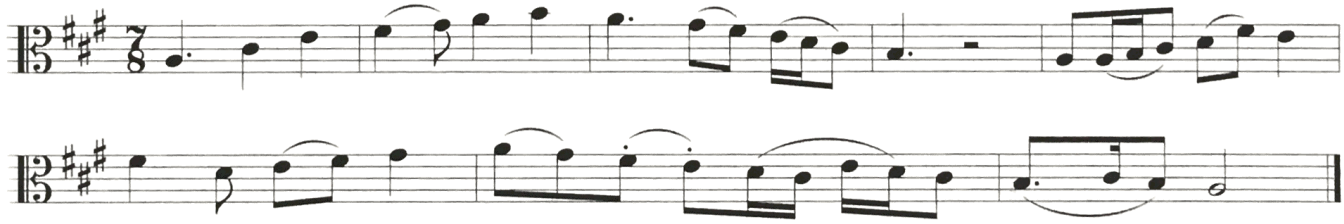

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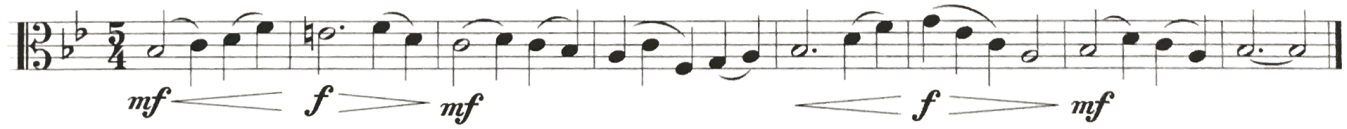

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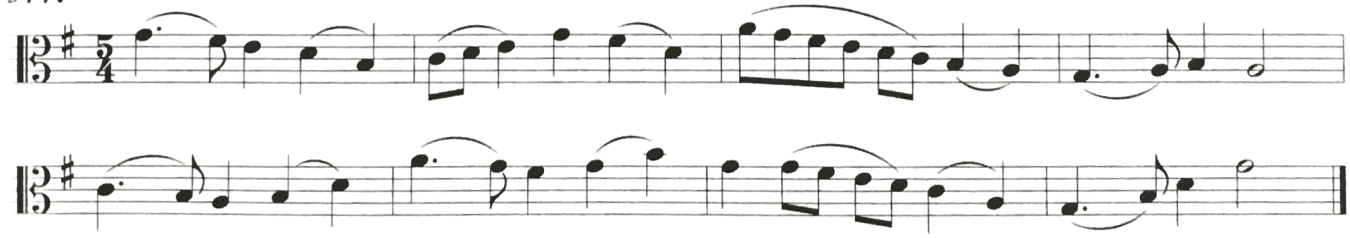

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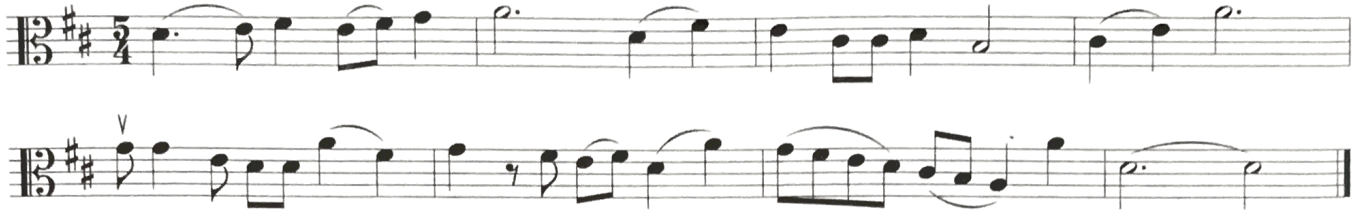

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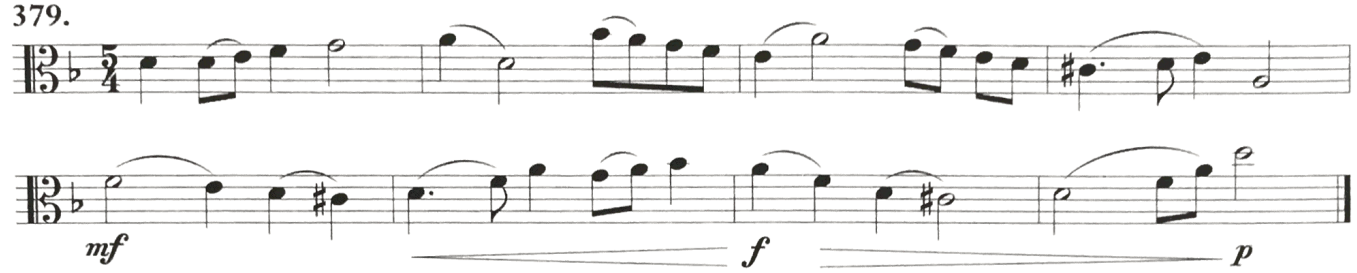

M. Mixed Meter

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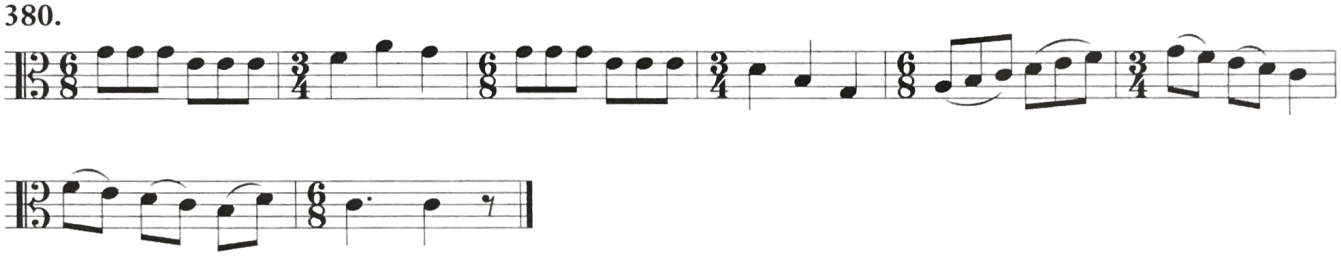

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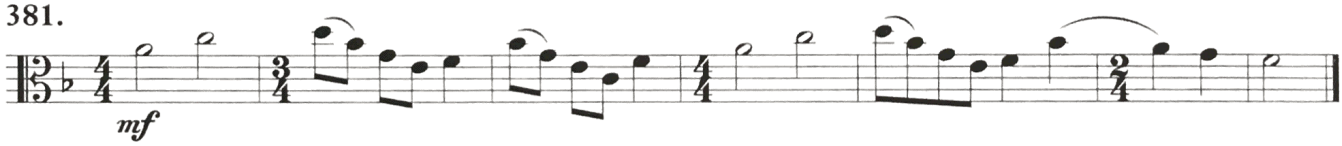

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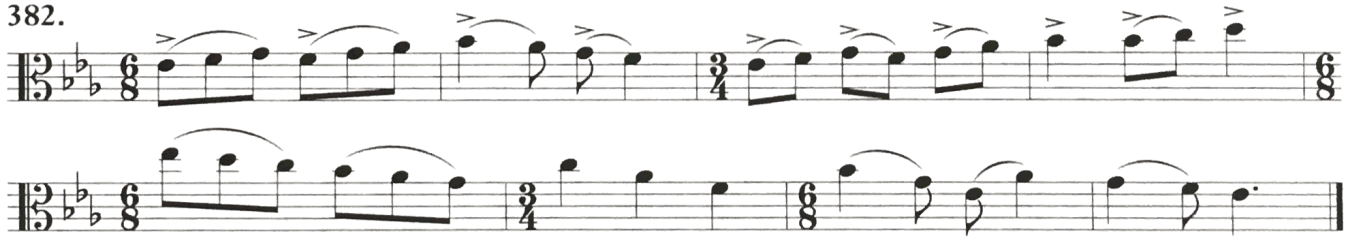

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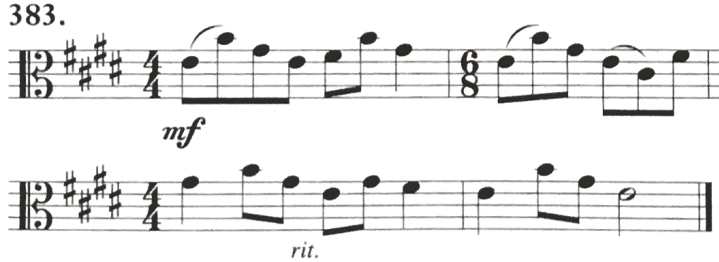

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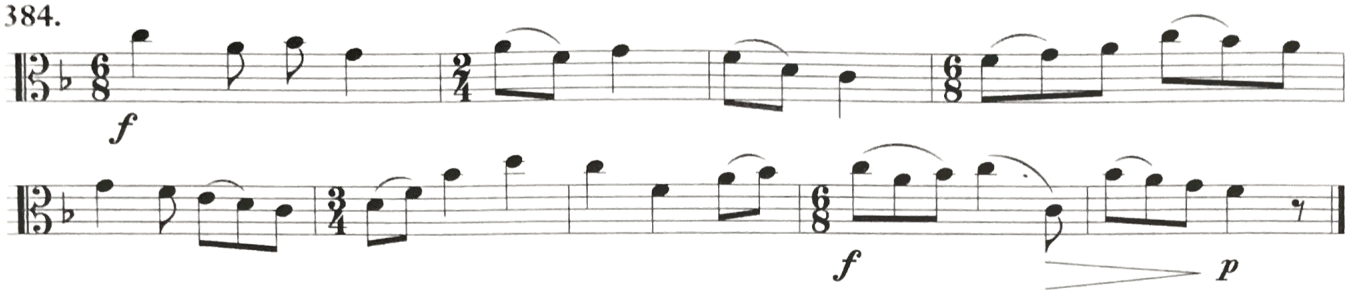

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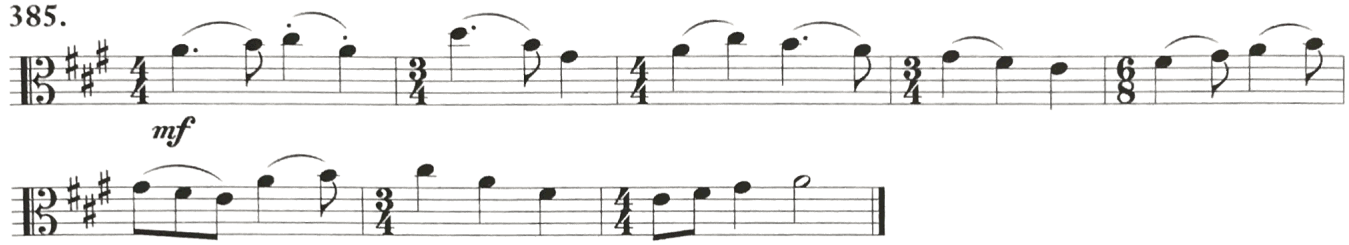

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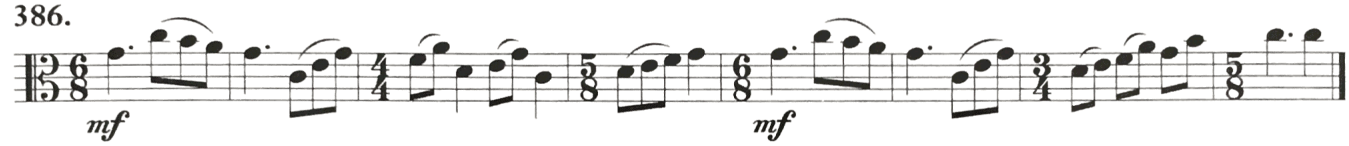

N. Alternate Clefs

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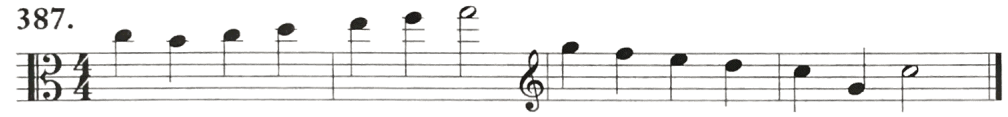

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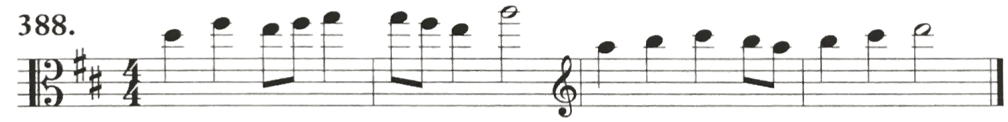

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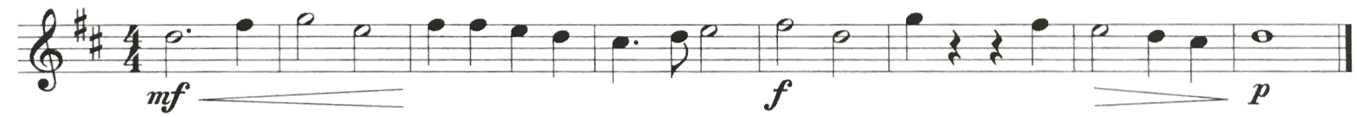

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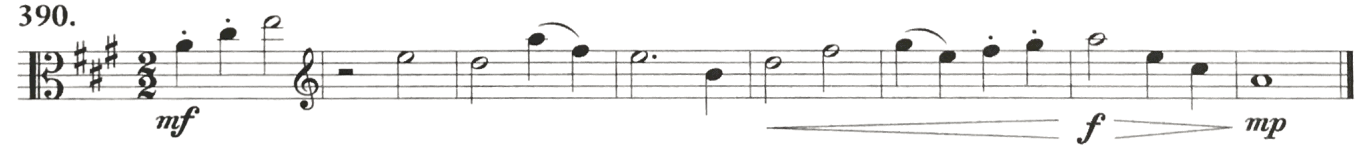

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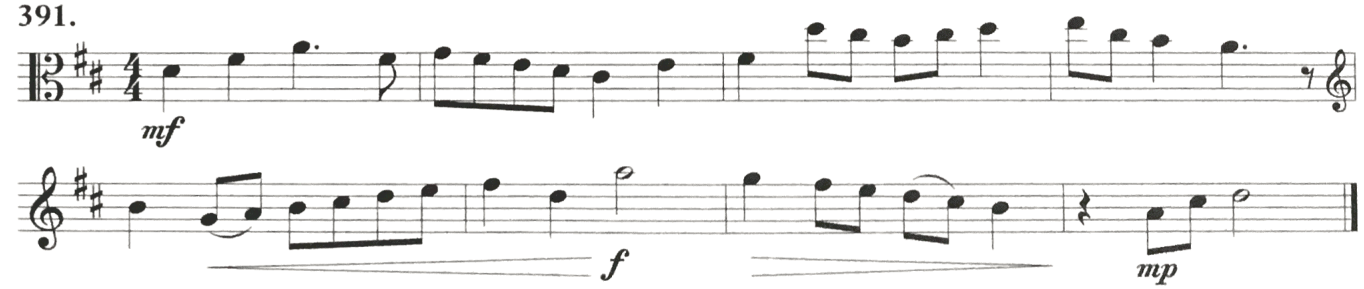

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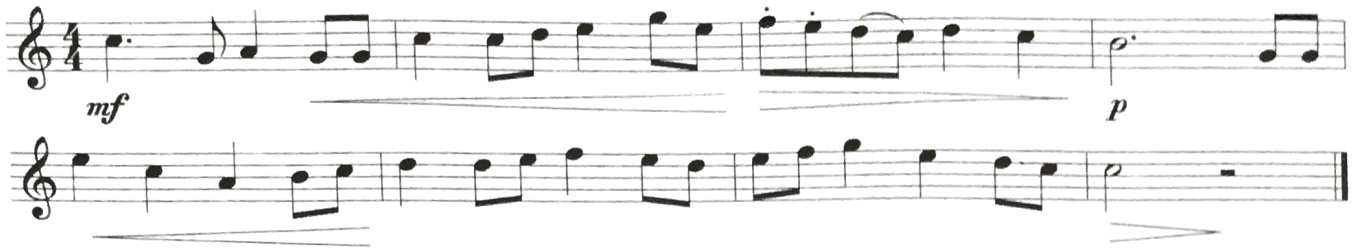

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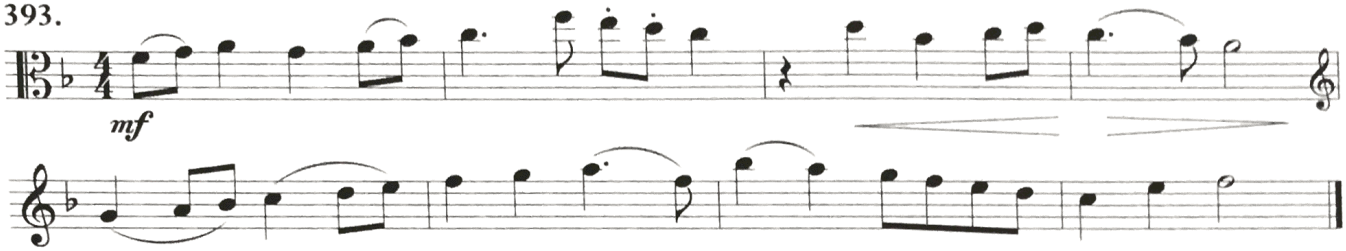

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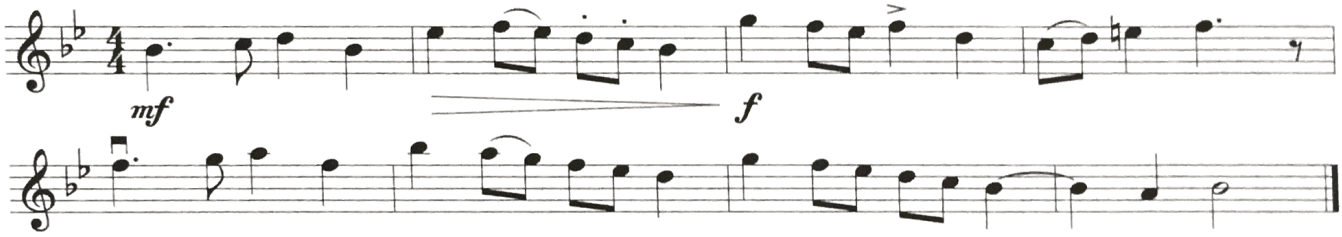

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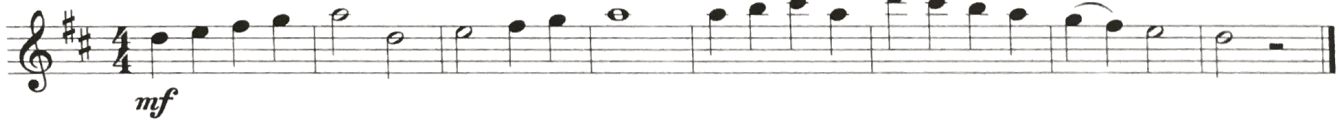

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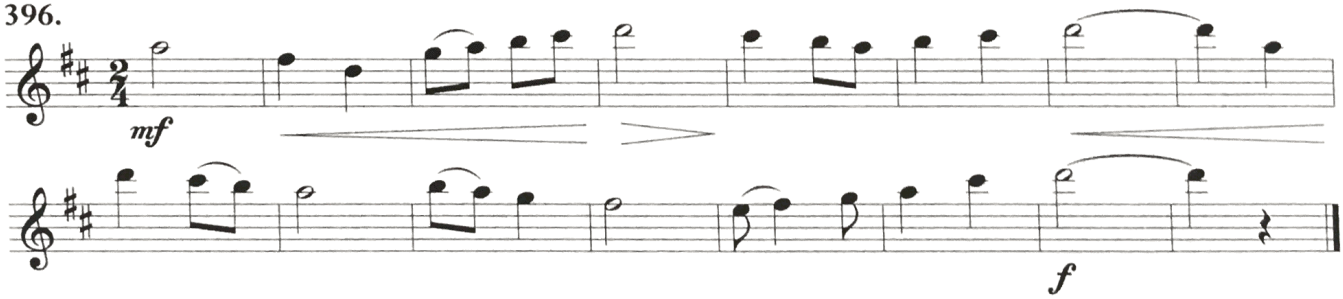

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- Promotes the idea that students should cross the threshold from the "technical components of playing" to music making.

Habits of a Successful String Musician is the answer to the very simple question, "What should I be learning during fundamentals time?"

Christopher Selby is the Director of High School Orchestras at the Charleston School of the Arts in Charleston, South Carolina. Dr. Selby is a twenty-year veteran teacher, an active conductor, clinician and adjudicator and a leader in both NAfME and ASTA. He holds degrees from The Hartt School and the University of South Carolina.

Scott Rush is Director of Bands at Wando High School in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music and the University of South Carolina, Mr. Rush is active as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the United States.

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