Mel Bay's Jazz Sax Studies

by Bill Bay

from MEL BAY'S WONDERFUL WORLD of MUSIC

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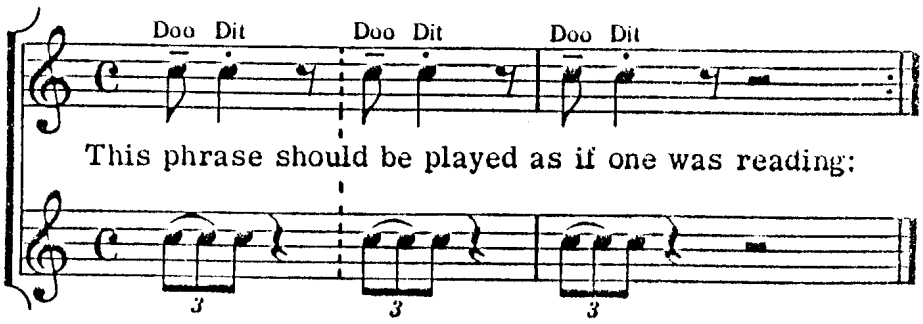
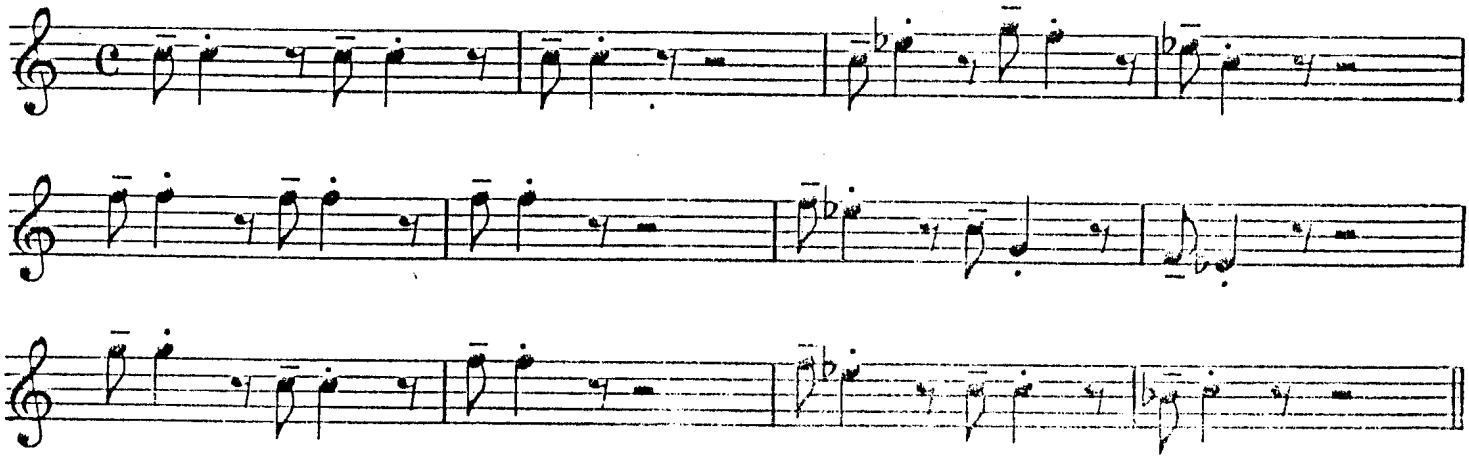
Phrase #1



Basic Rhythmic Concepts for Jazz and Contemporary Phrasing

Coral Riff



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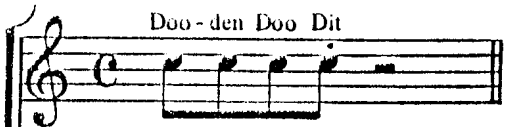
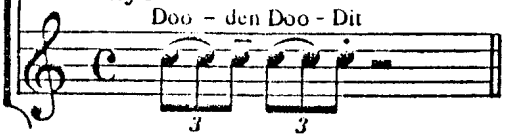


Played

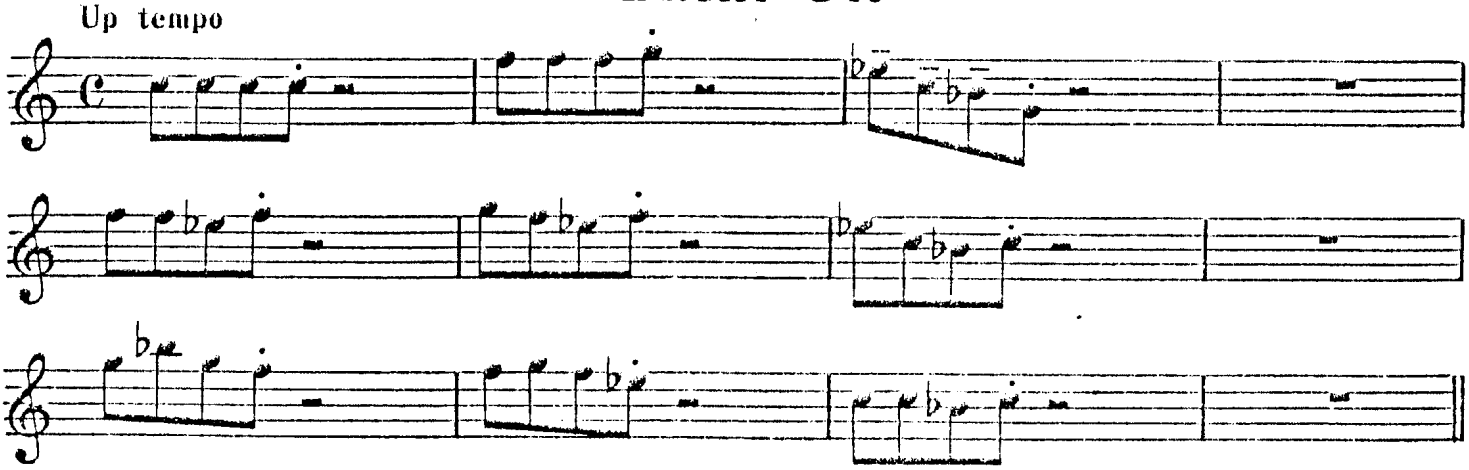


Jazz "Swing" style eight notes

Phrase #2

Easin' On

Up tempo



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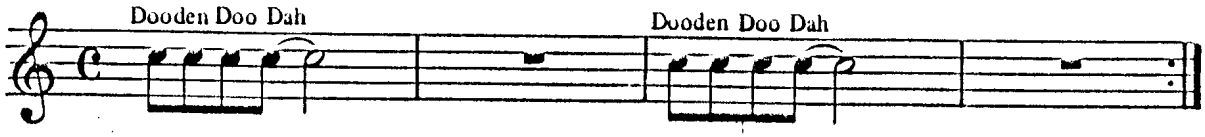
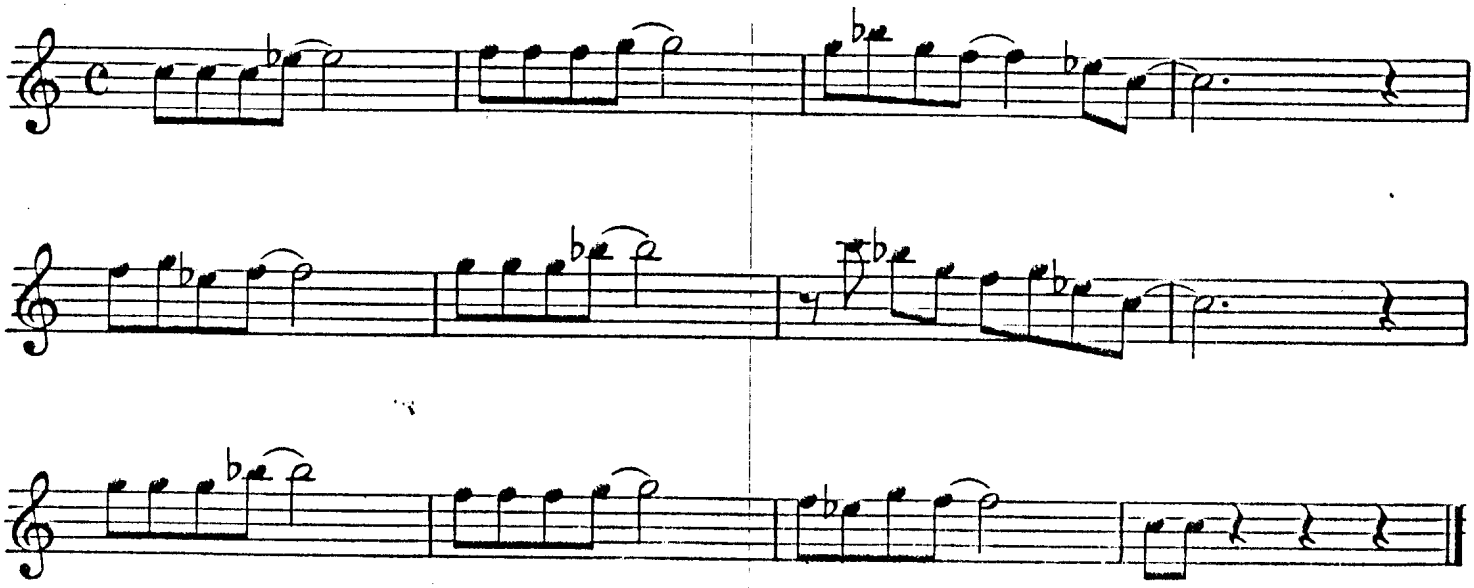
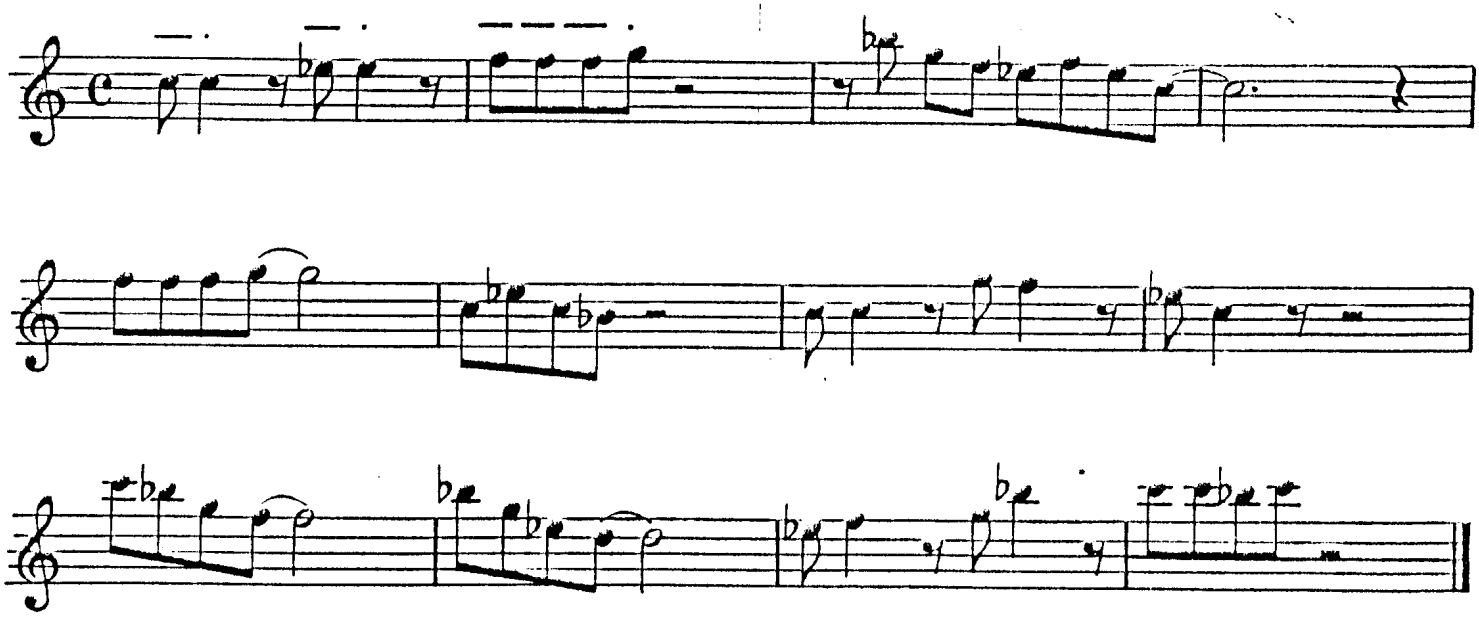


Jazz Study

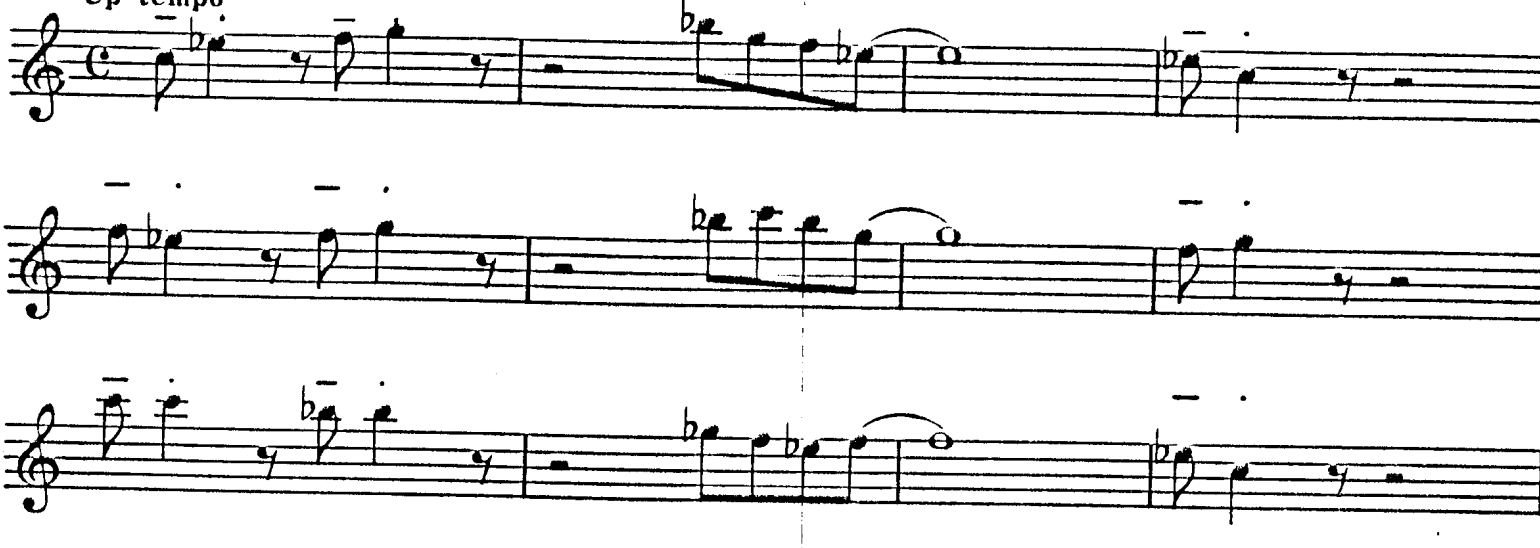


Easy Feelin'



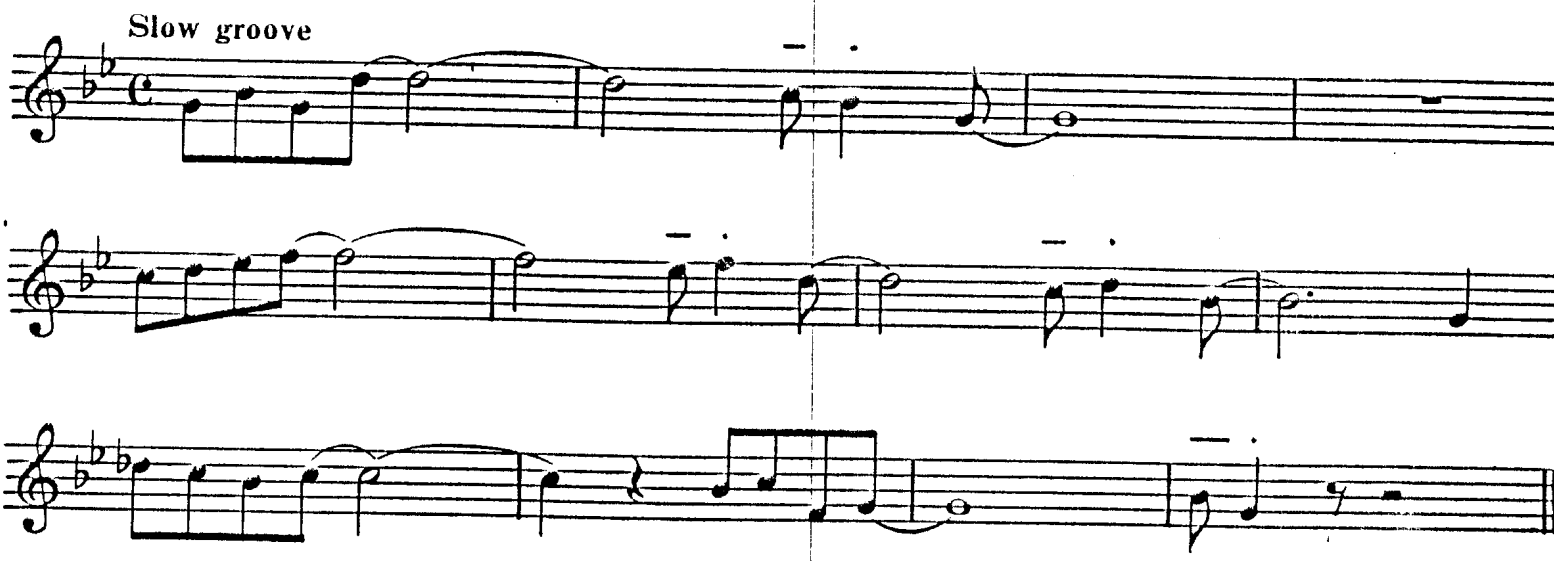
Mixed Bag

Up tempo



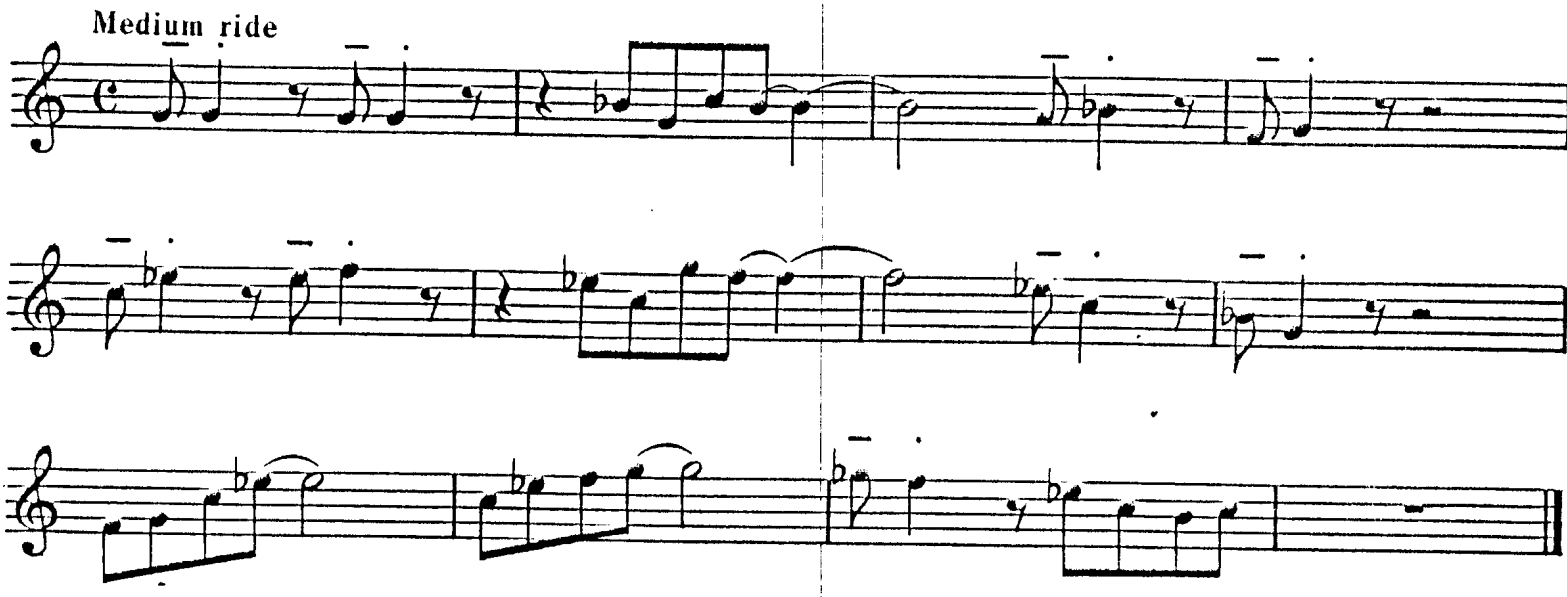
M.J.

Slow groove

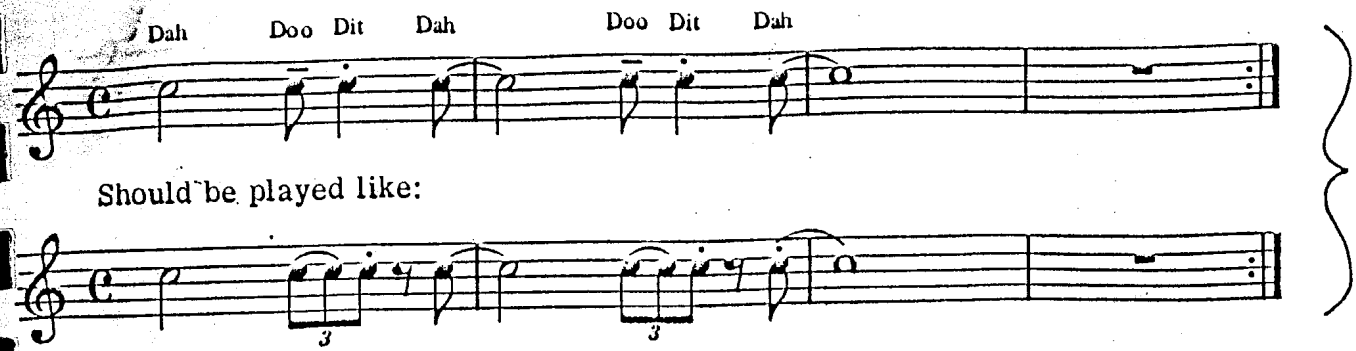


Go!

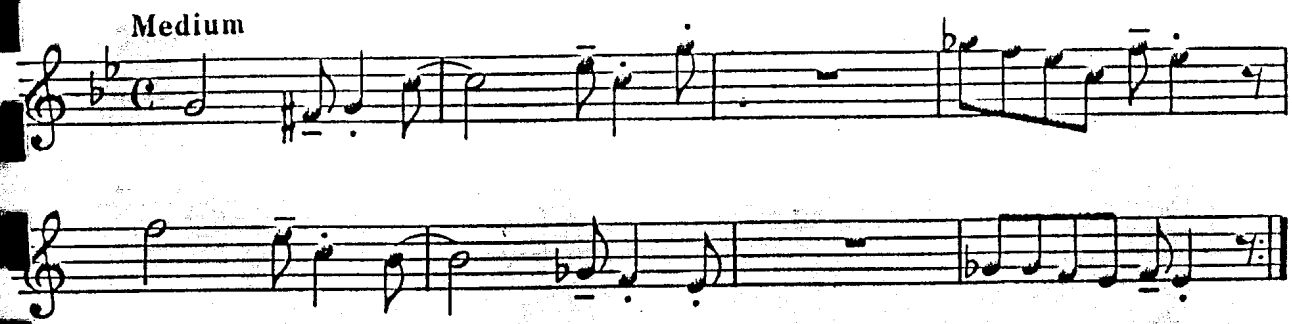
Medium ride



Phrase #3A



'Tis Diz



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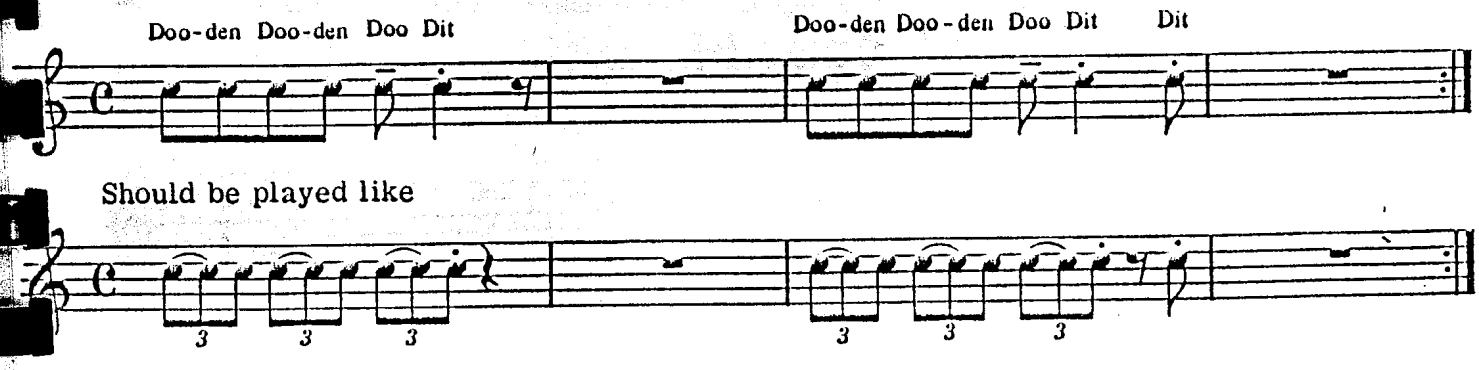
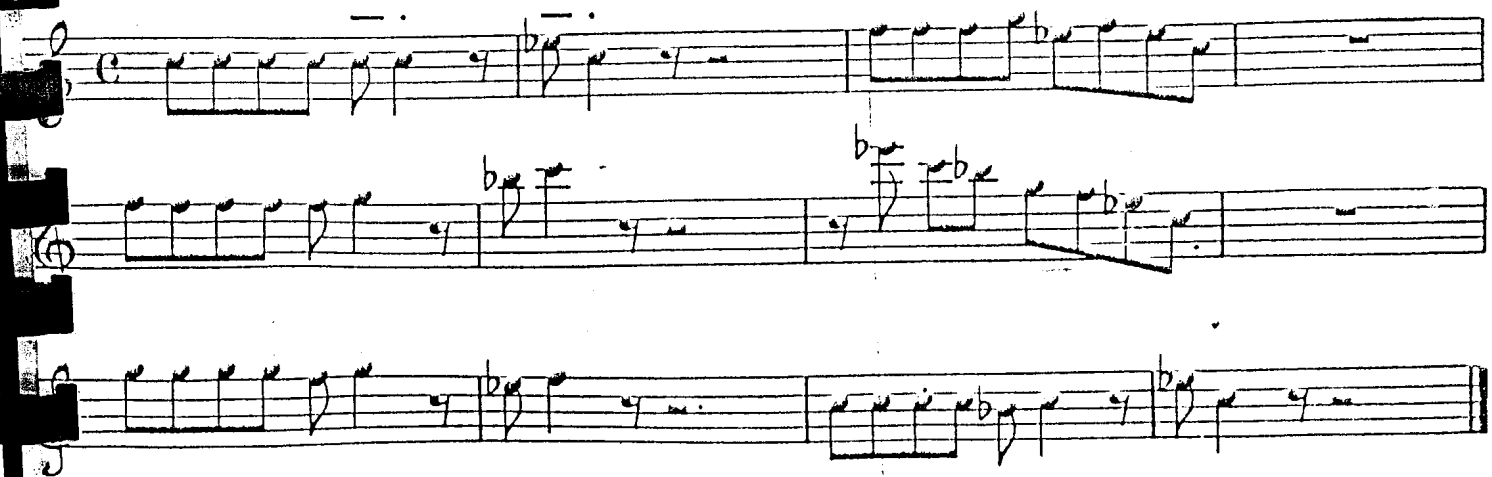


Flyin' High



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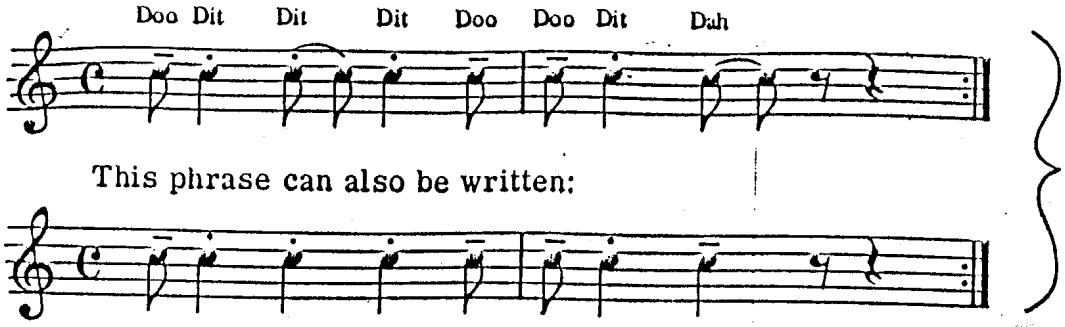
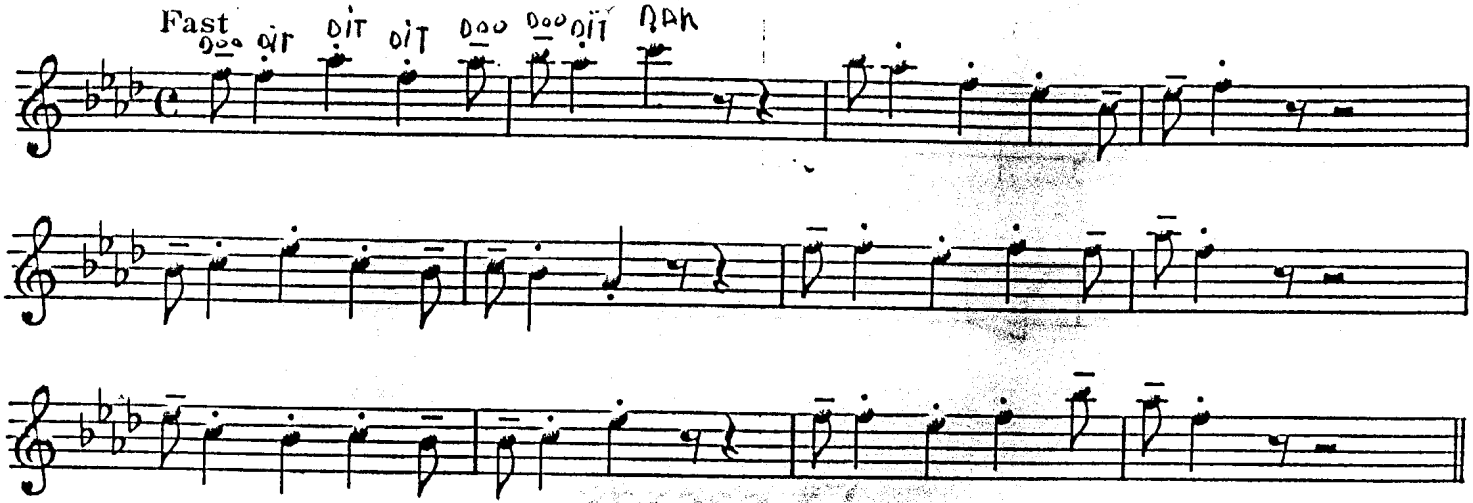


Blues Riff



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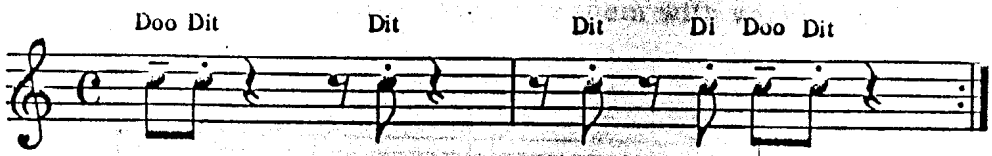
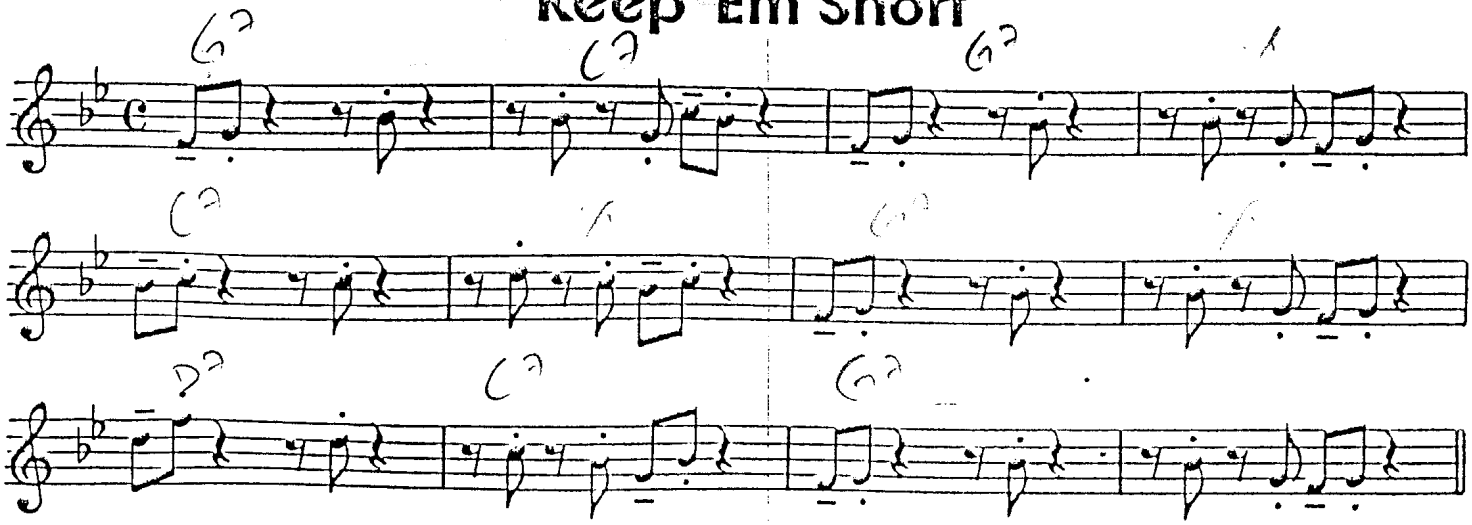


Keep' Em Short



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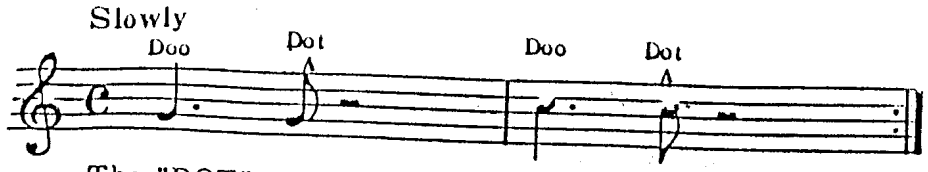
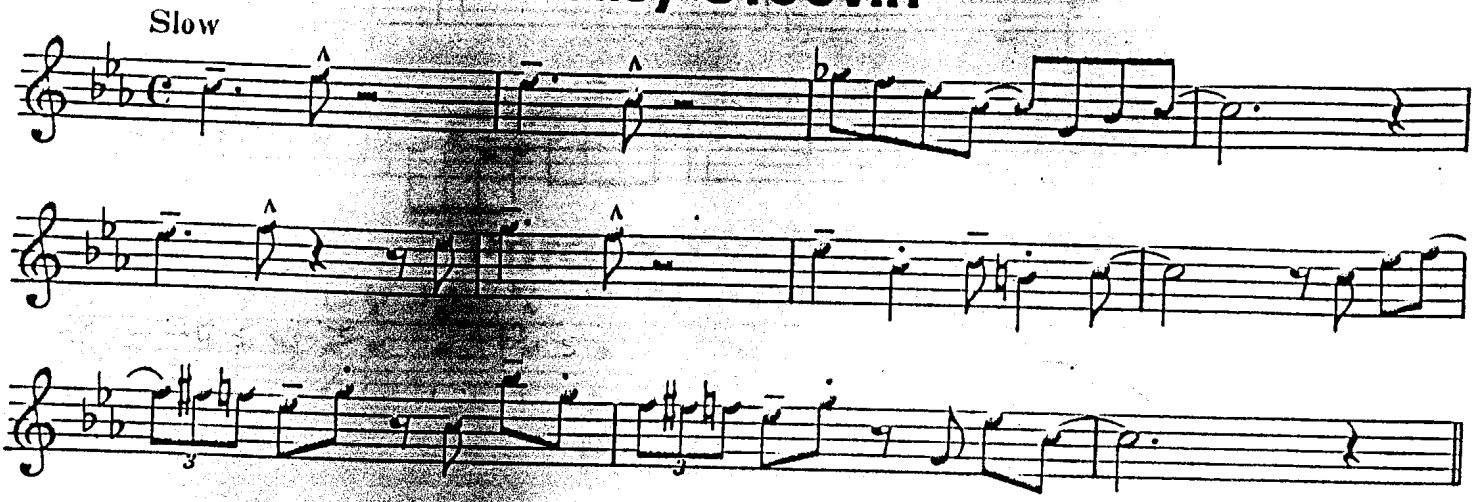


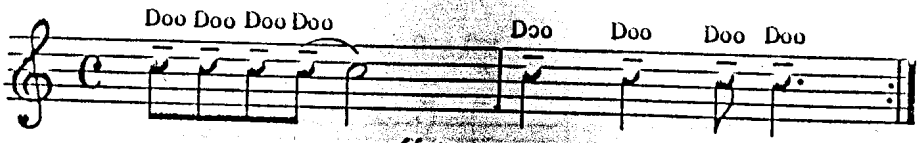
The "DOT" sound is a heavy accent, while the "DIT" is short, but not meant to be heavily accented.

Easy Groovin'

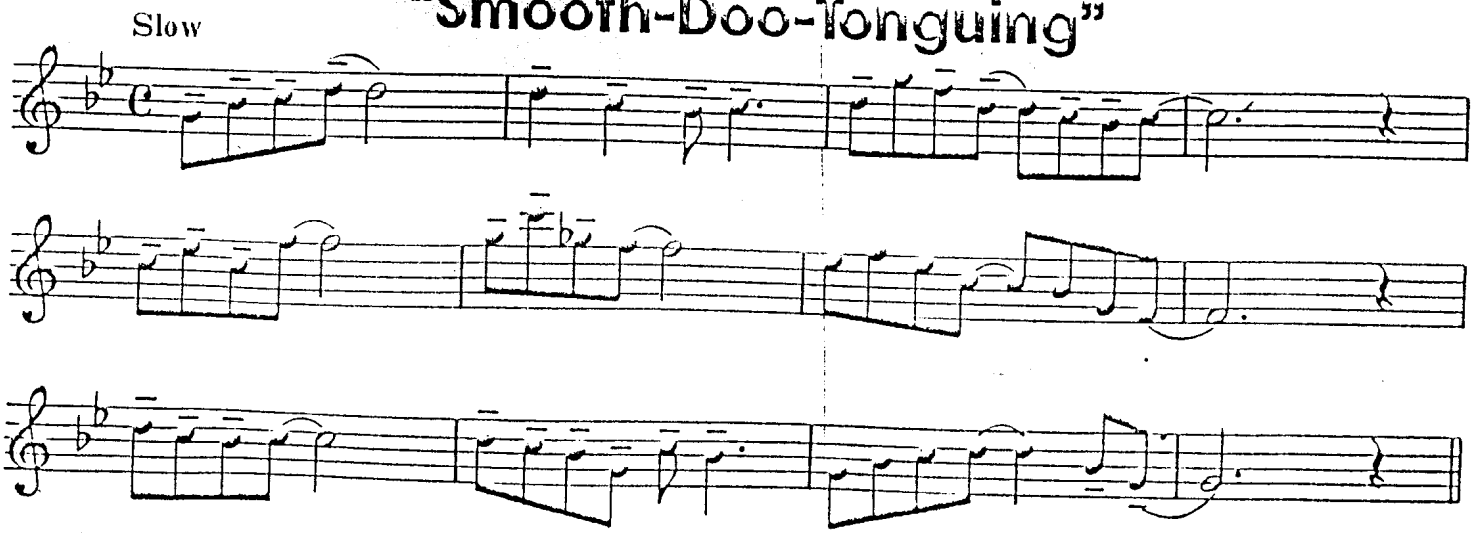


Phrase #7

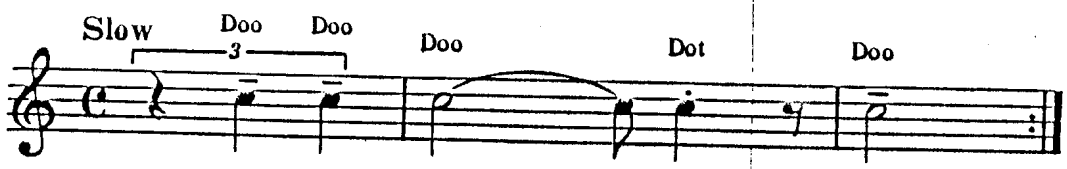
Smooth legato tonguing is essential for much of jazz music. Give all notes full value, separate them with very light tonguing, and keep them "Swinging."



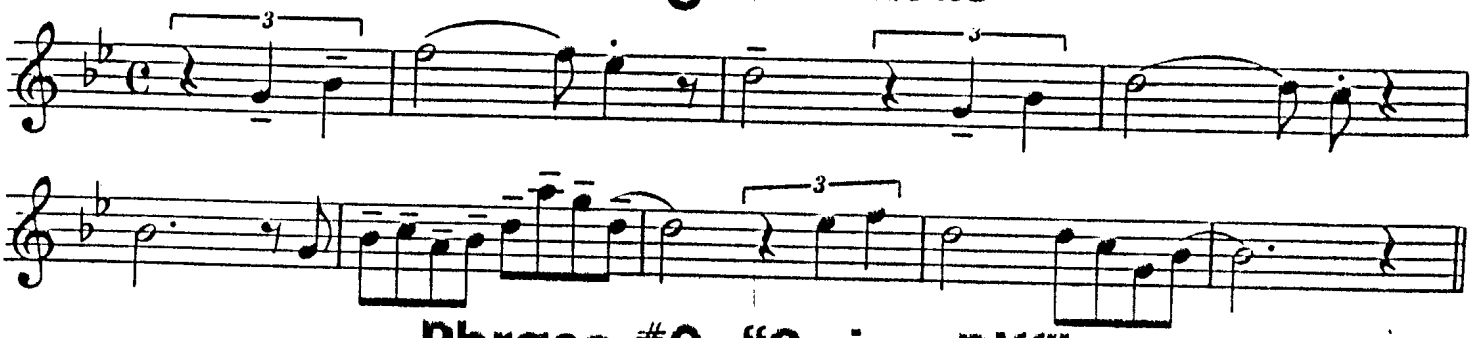
"Smooth-Doo-Tonguing"



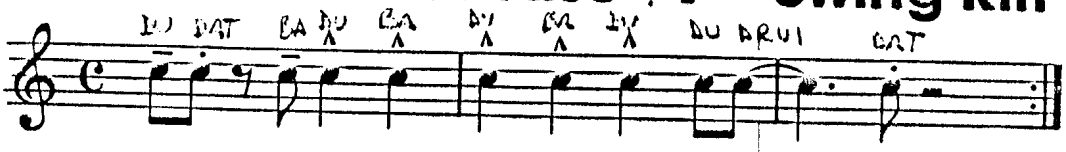
Phrase #8 "Slow-Doo-Dot"



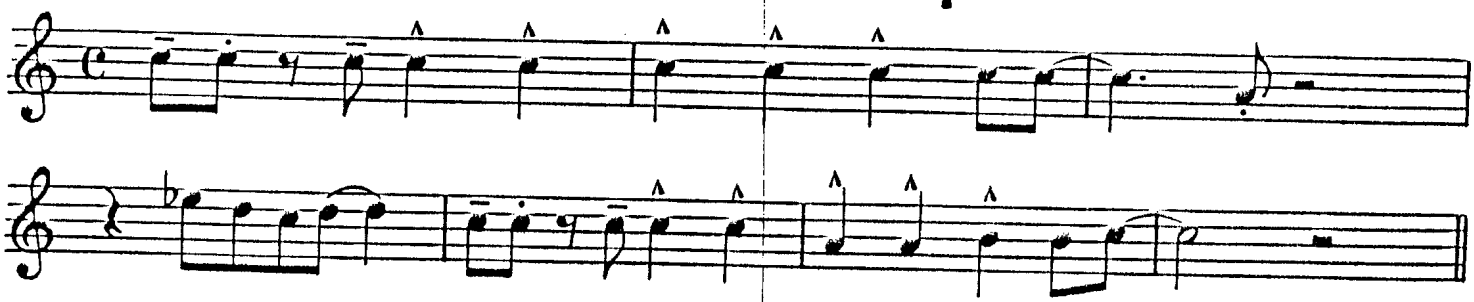
Starlight Sounds



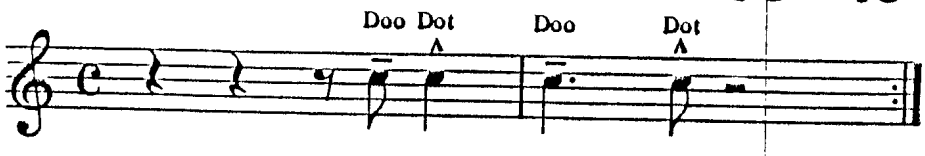
Phrase #9 "Swing Riff"



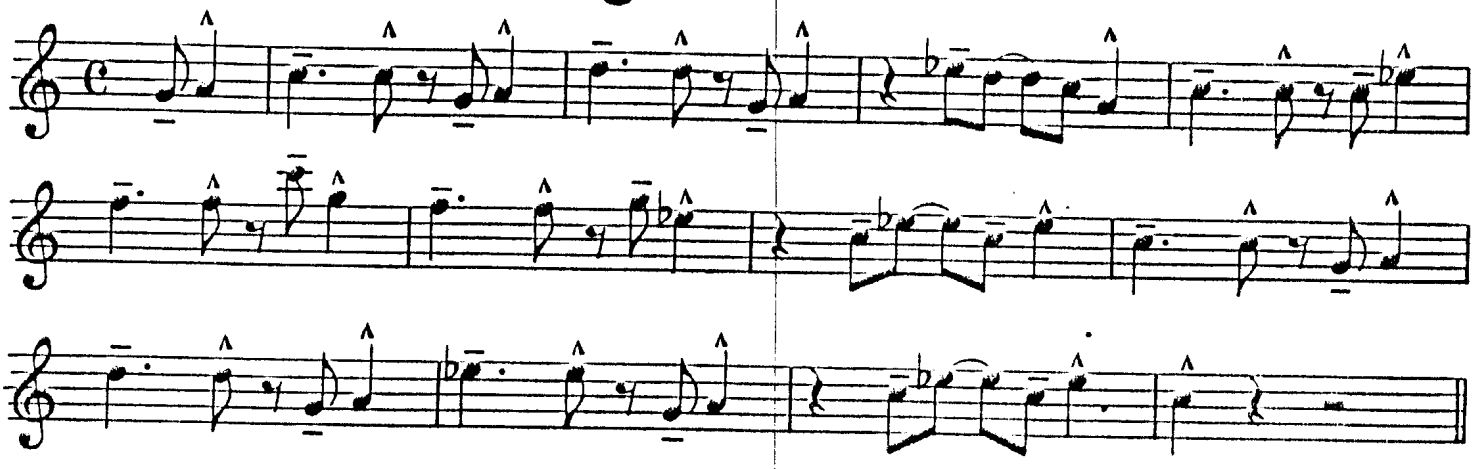
Freddie's Jump



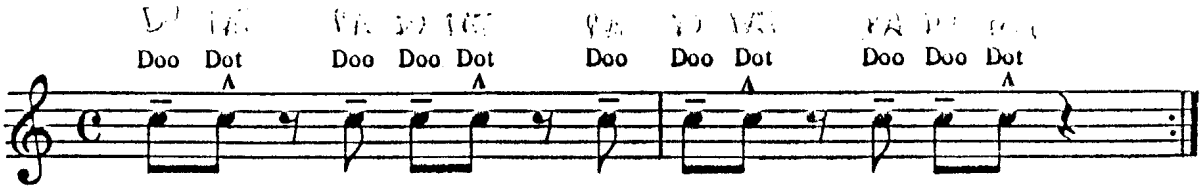
Phrase #10



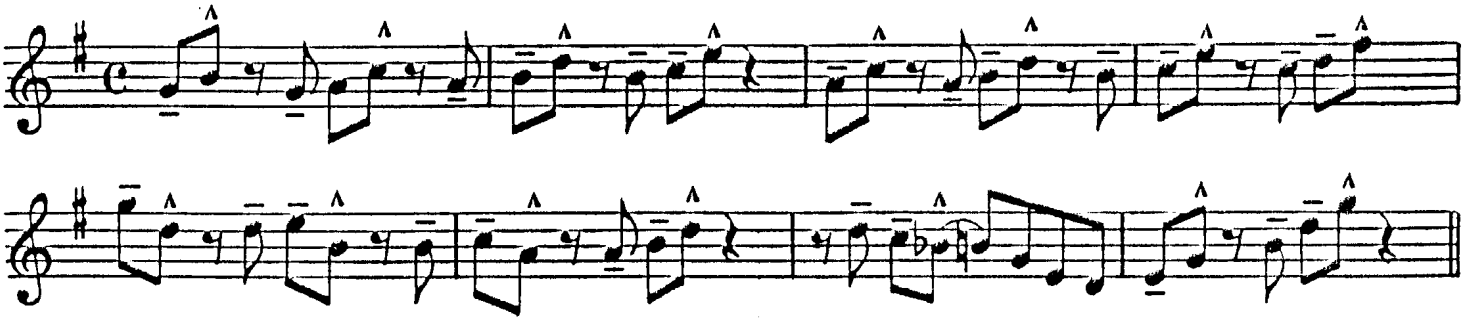
Big Band Bash



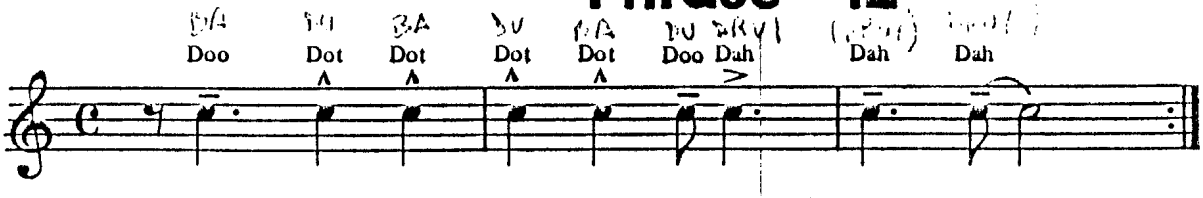
Phrase #11



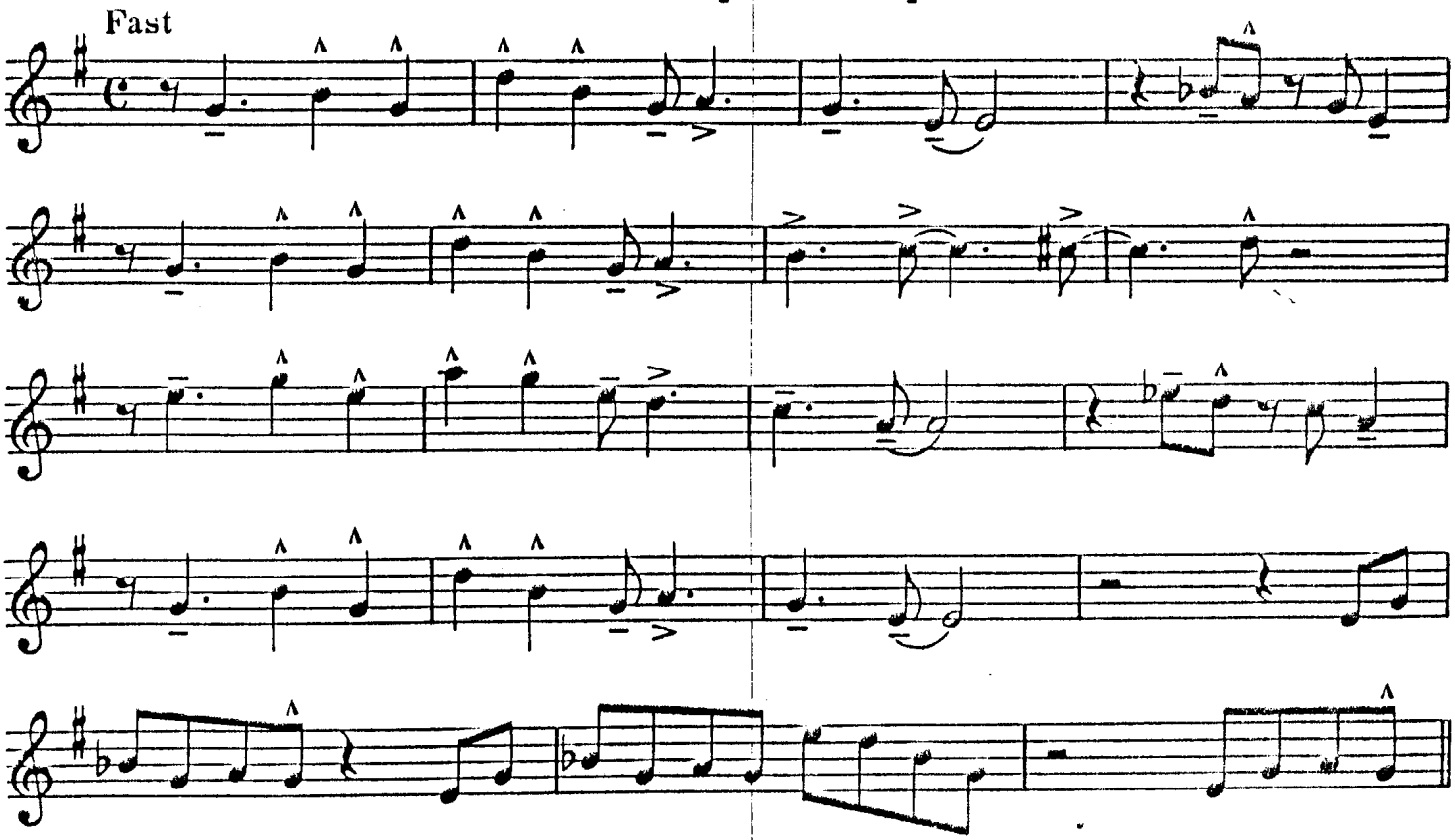
Opus 11



Phrase #12

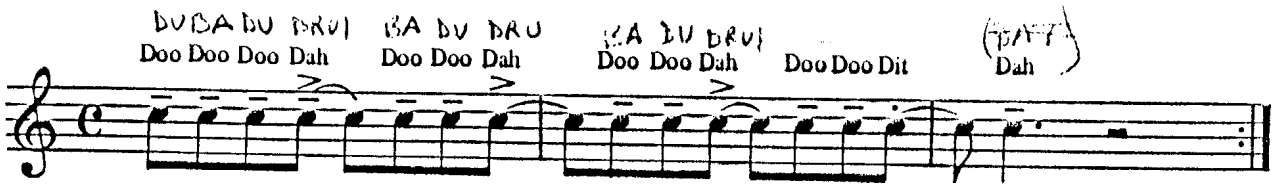


Jersey Stomp

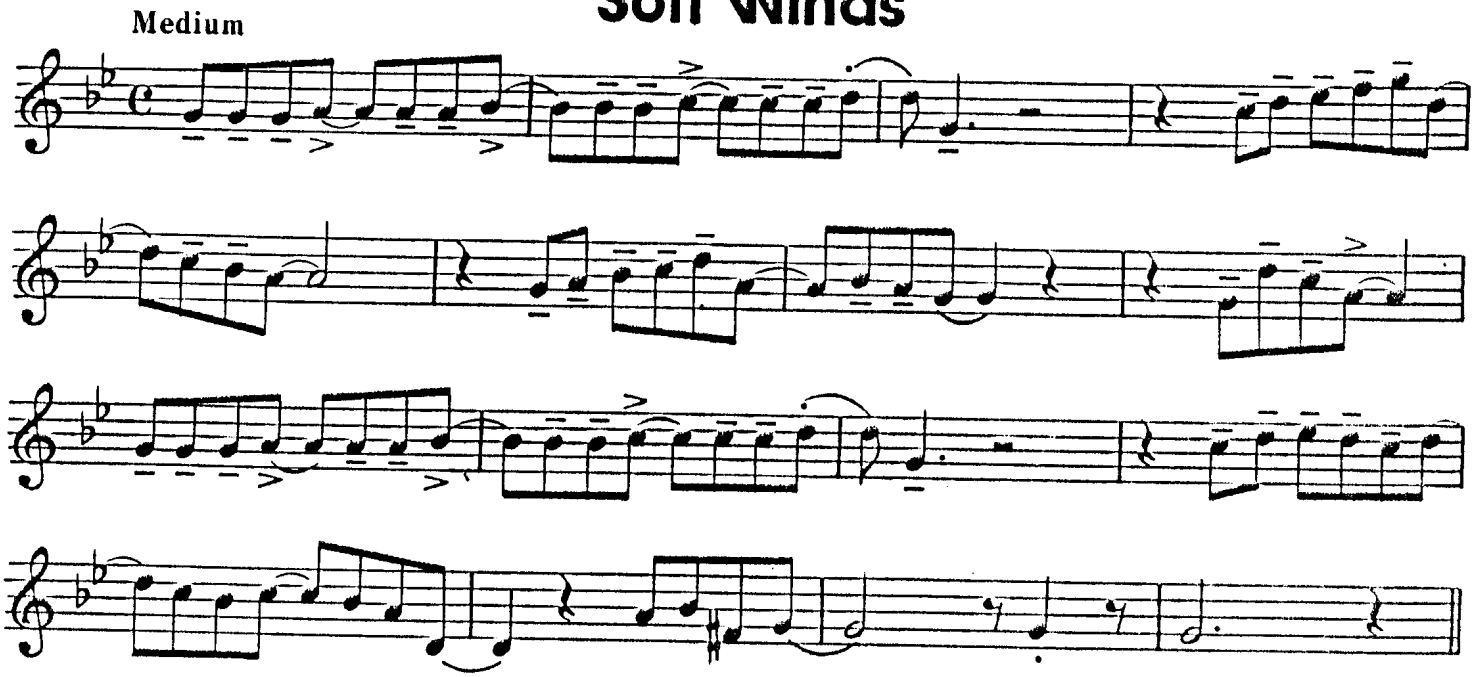


Use "Dood-en" tonguing on the eighth note phrases.

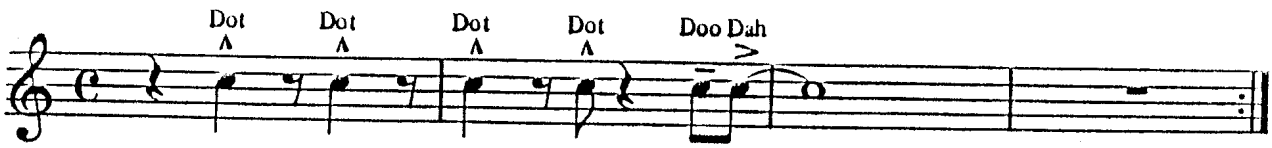
Phrase #12



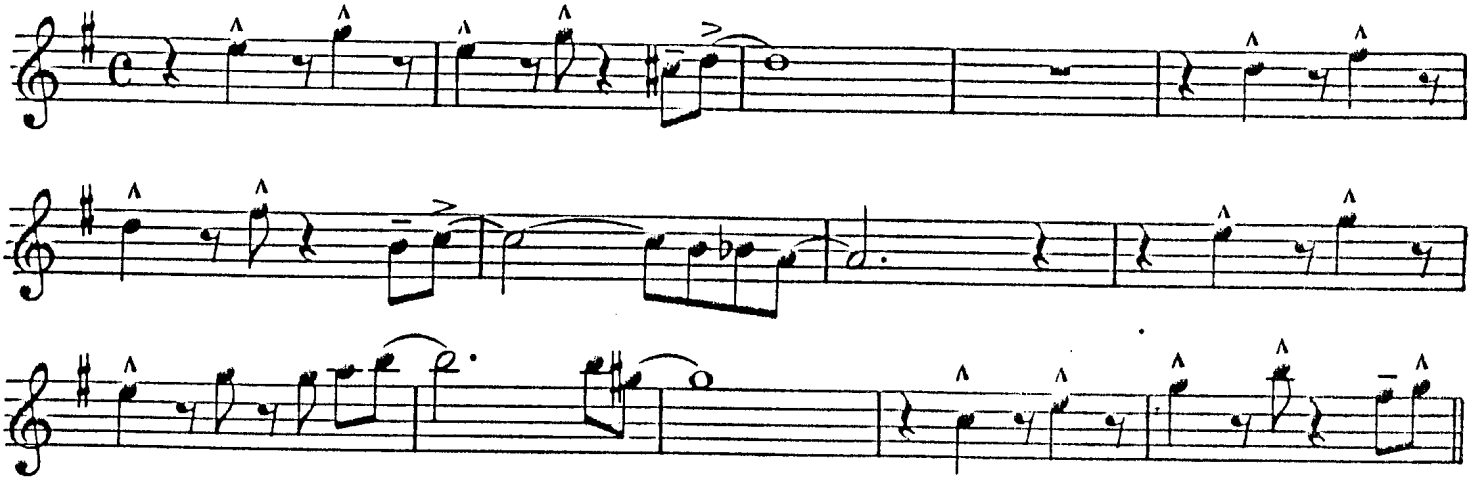
Soft Winds



Phrase #13

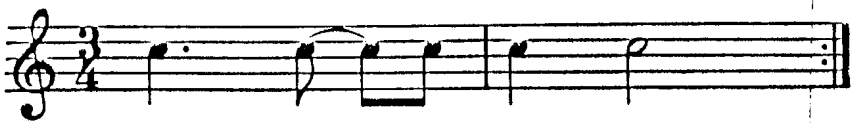


Happy Swing

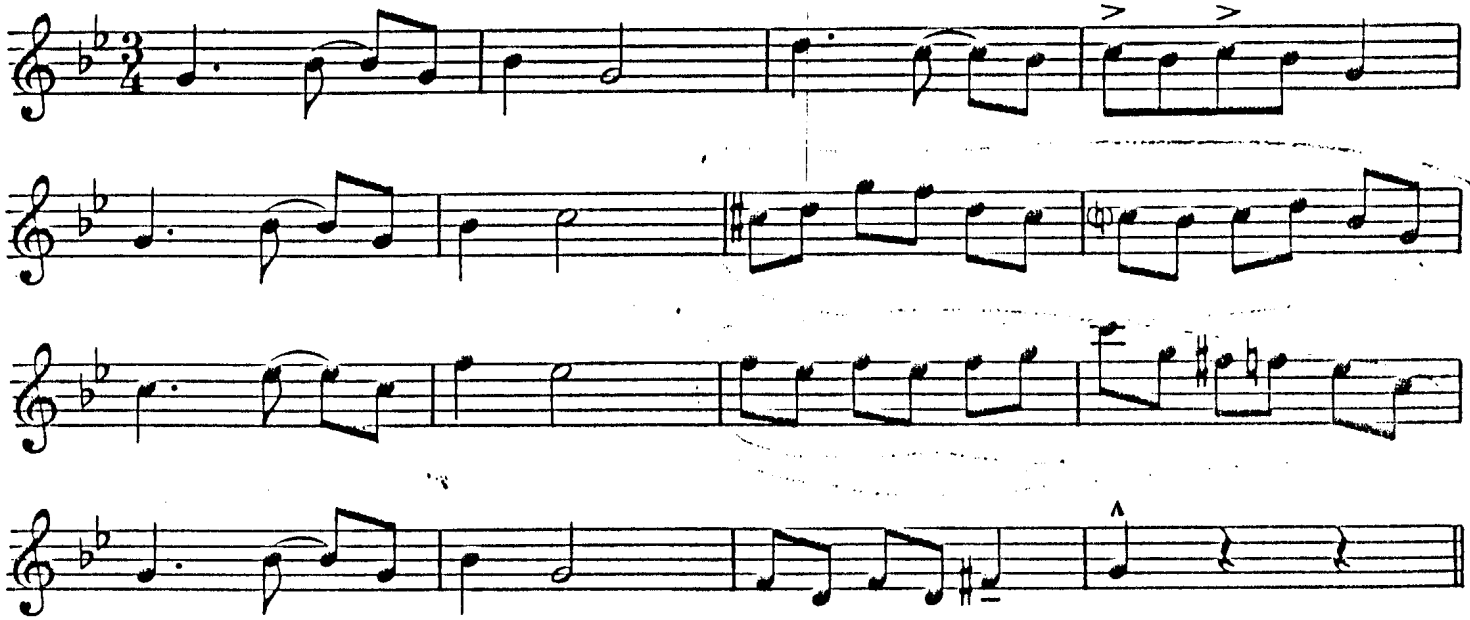


Phrase #14

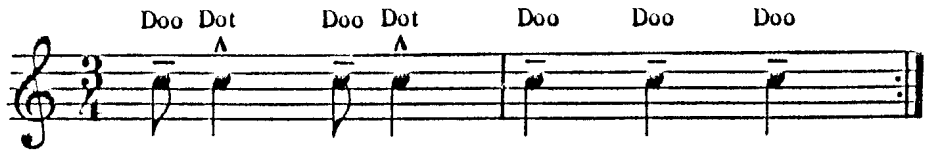
"3/4 Jazz"



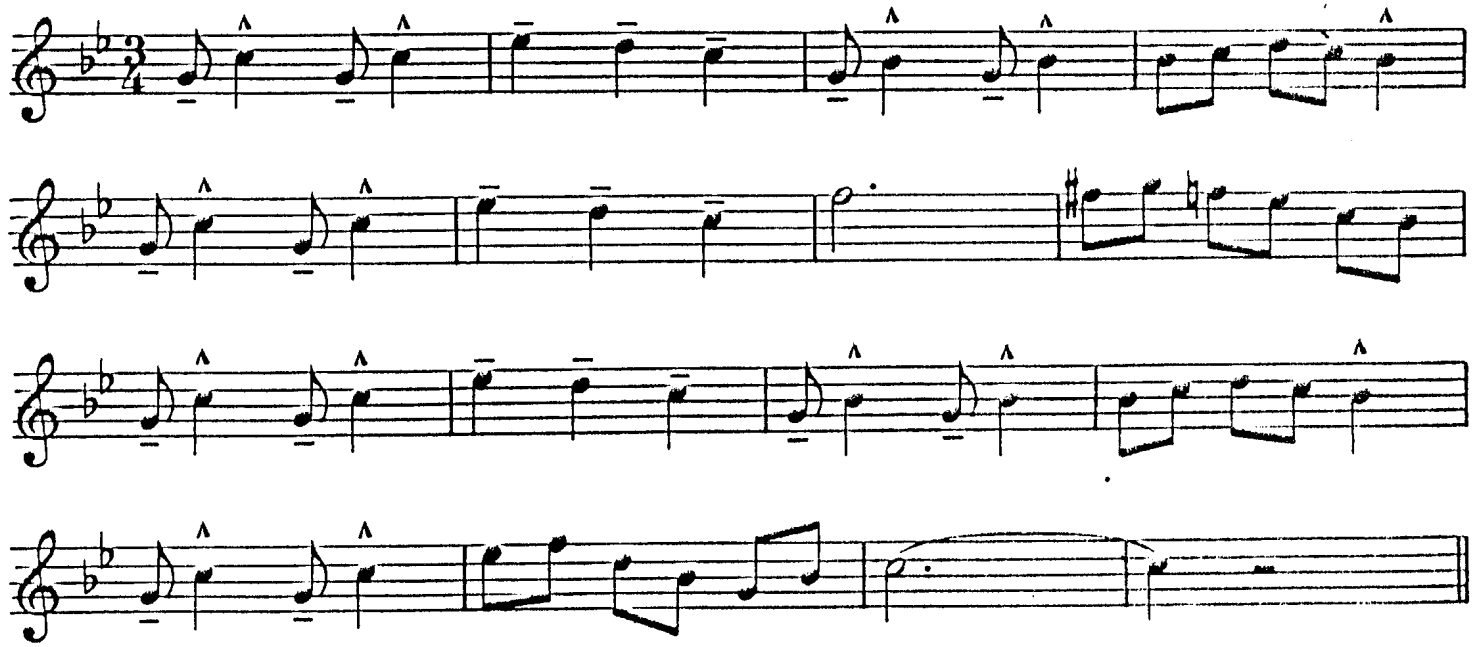
Walkin'



Phrase #15

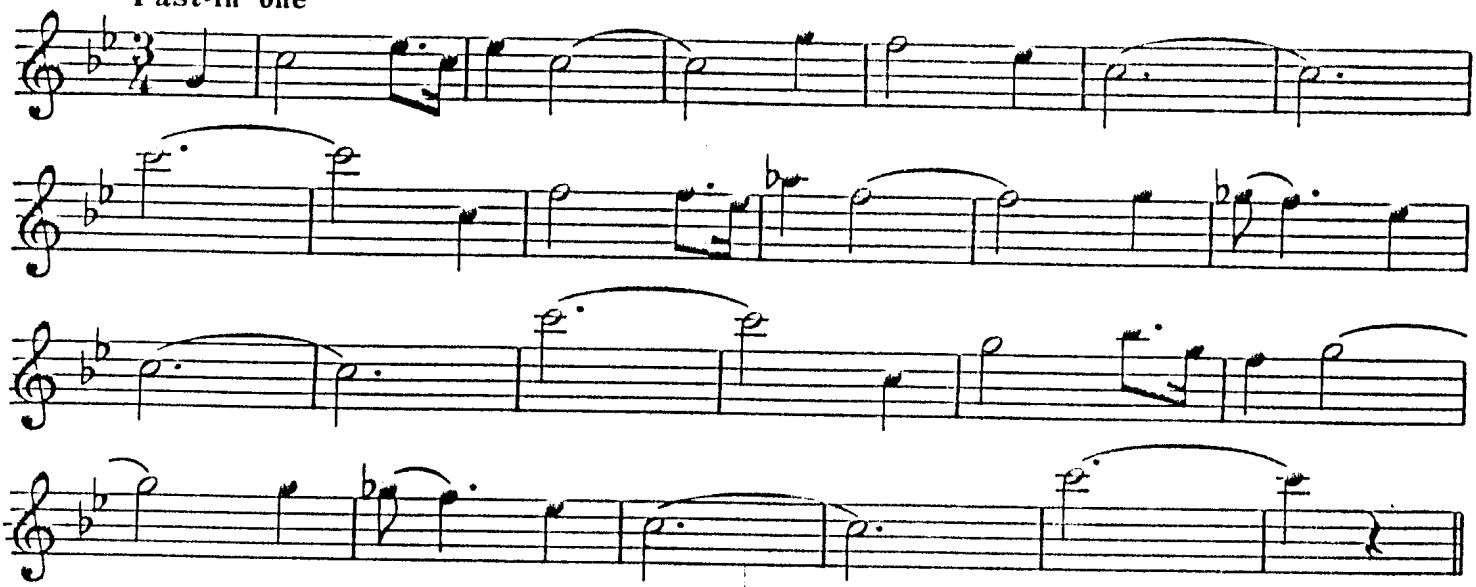


"Doo-Dot-Doo-Dot"



Revival Blues

Fast-in one

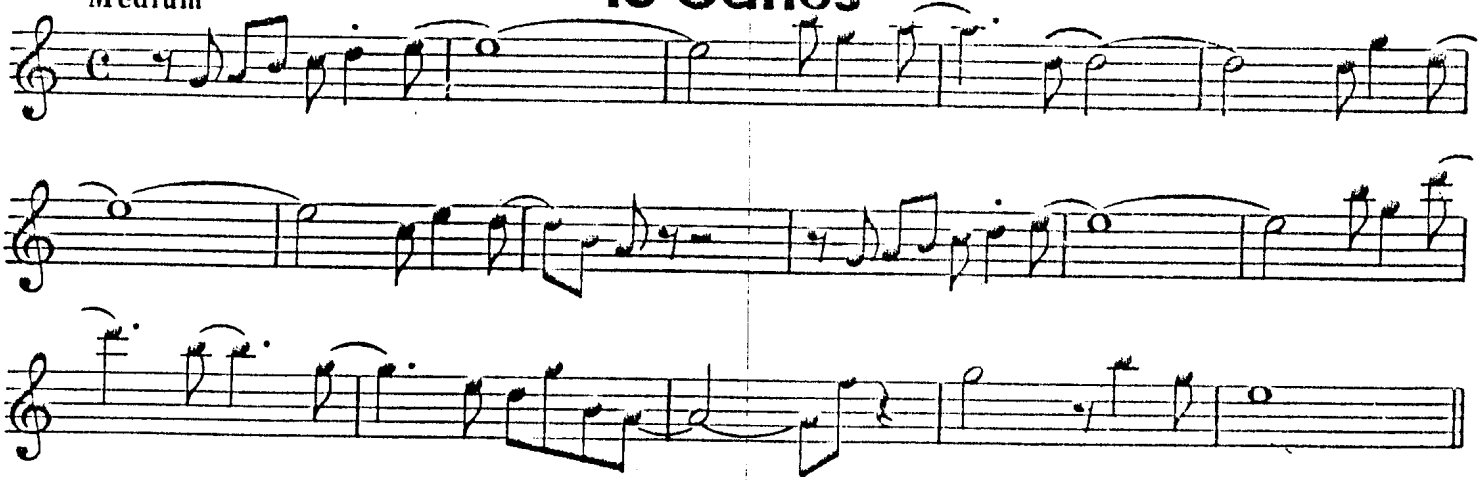


Bossa Nova Style

In this style, and all othes latin styles, the eighth notes are played "Straight", and not in the "Swing" style.

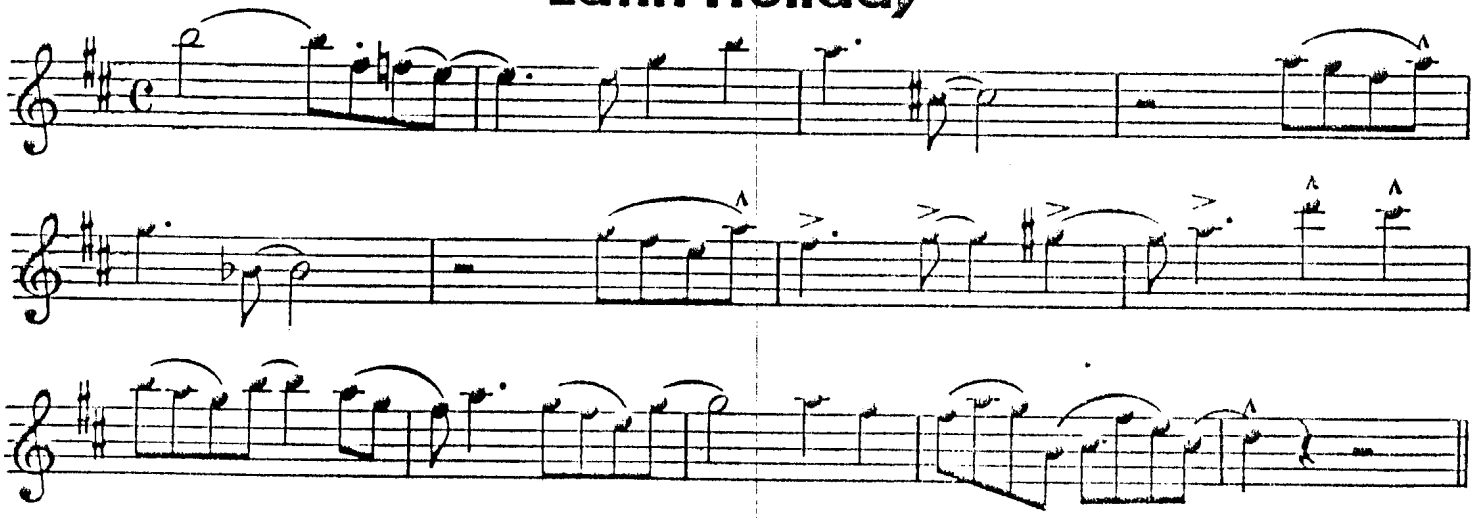
"To Carlos"

Medium



Latin Holiday

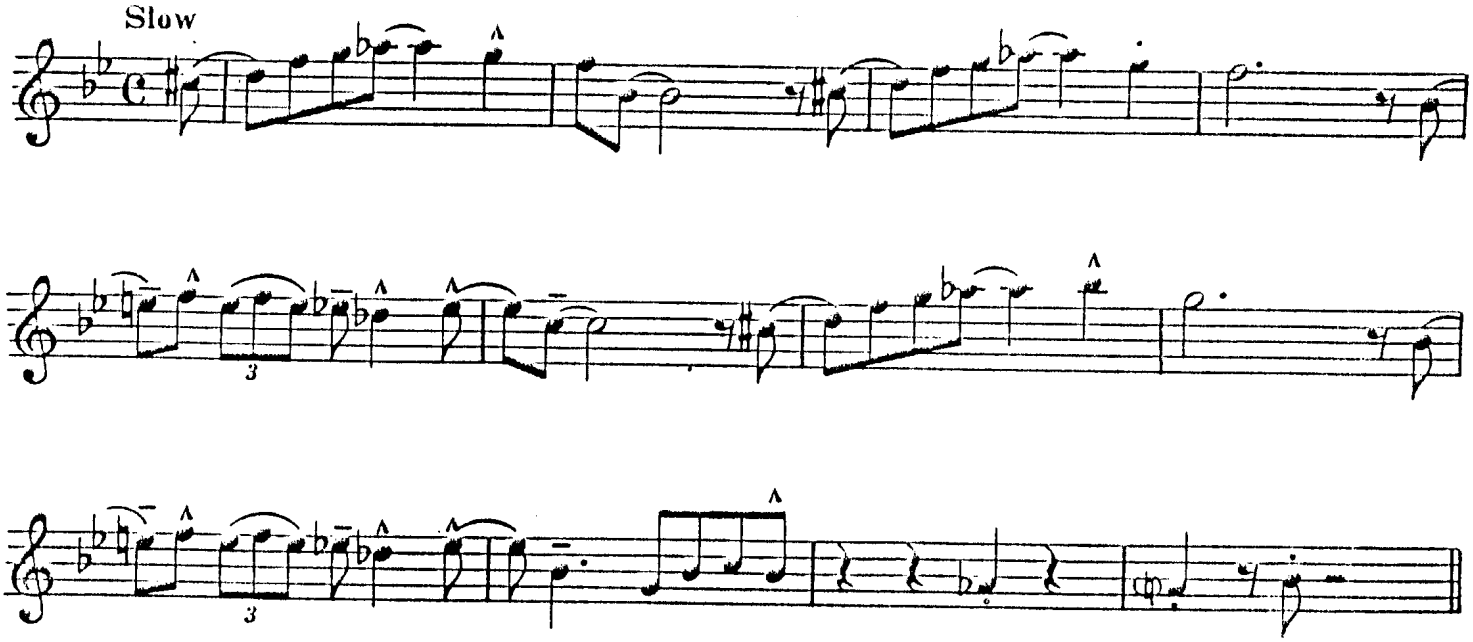
Light



Basie Style

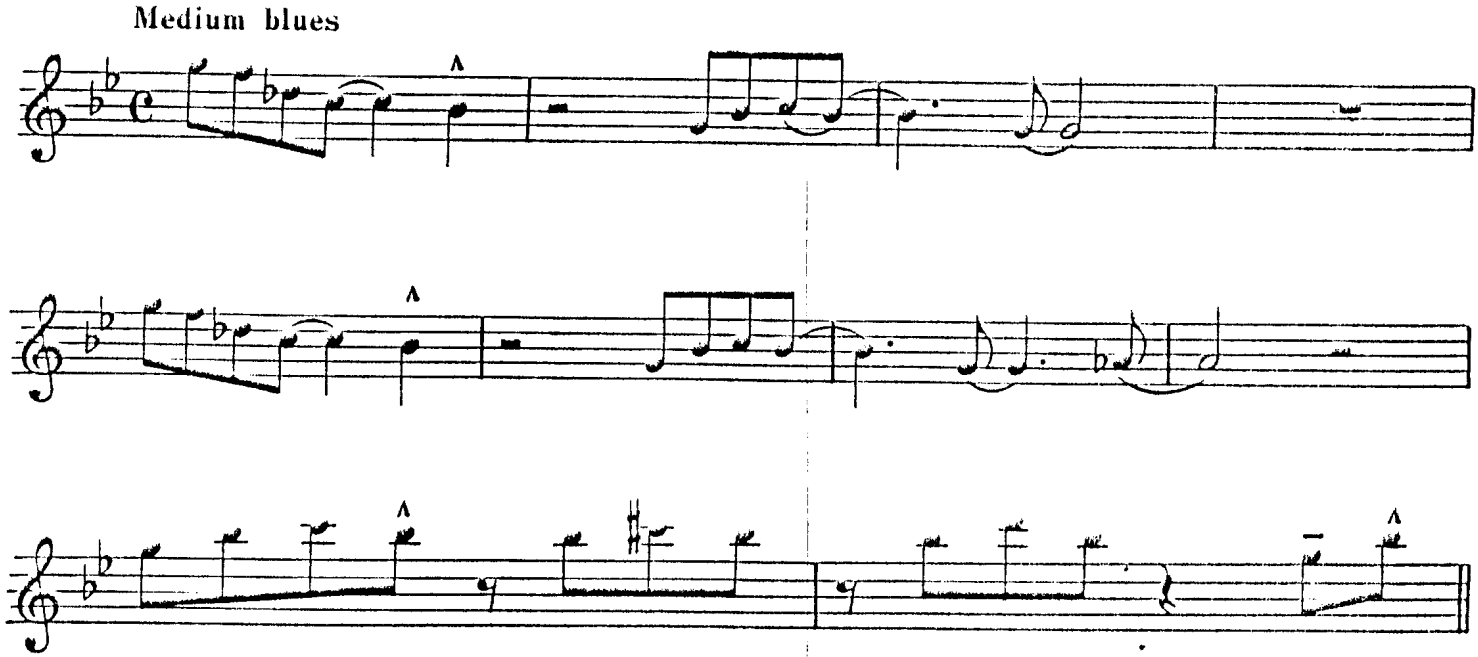
Easy Blowin'

Slow



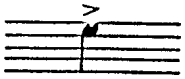
Whose Blues

Medium blues

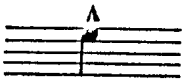


Special Effects

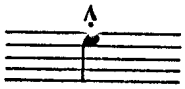
The Standardization of Stage Band Articulations



HEAVY ACCENT
Hold full value.
Atacada con todo su valor

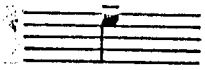


HEAVY ACCENT
Hold less than full value.
Atacado con poco valor

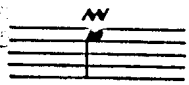


HEAVY ACCENT
Short as possible.
Atacada con el menor valor posible

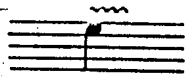
STACCATO
Short – not heavy.
corta - no atacada



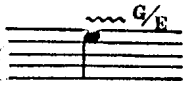
LEGATO TONGUE
Hold full value.
con todo su valor
y legato de lengua



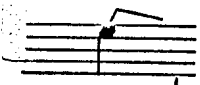
THE SHAKE
A variation of the tone upwards – much like a trill.
Una variacion de tono hacia arriba. muy semejante al trino



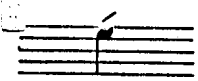
LIP TRILL Similar to shake but slower and with more lip control. Parecido al shake pero mas pesado y con mas control de labios



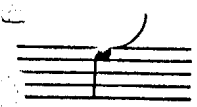
WIDE LIP TRILL Same as above except slower and with wider interval.
Parecido al anterior excepto en lo pesado y con un intervalo mayor



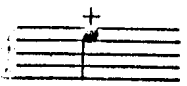
THE FLIP Sound note, raise pitch, drop into following note (done with lip on brass)
dos la nota sobre la afinación



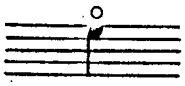
THE SMEAR Slide into note from below and reach correct pitch just before next note. Do not rob preceding note.



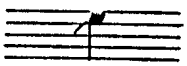
THE DOIT Sound note then gliss upwards from one to five steps.



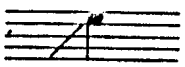
DU
False or muffled tone



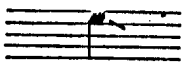
WAH
Full tone – not muffled.



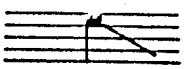
SHORT GLISS UP Slide into* note from below (usually one to three steps).



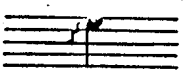
LONG GLISS UP
Same as above except longer entrance.



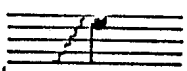
SHORT GLISS DOWN The reverse of the short gliss up.



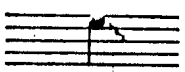
LONG GLISS DOWN Same as long gliss up in reverse.



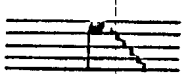
SHORT LIFT Enter note via chromatic or diatonic scale beginning about a third below.



LONG LIFT
Same as above except longer entrance.

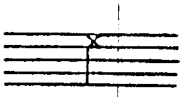


SHORT SPILL Rapid diatonic or chromatic drop. The reverse of the short lift.



LONG SPILL Same as above except longer exit.

THE PLOP A rapid slide down harmonic or diatonic scale before sounding note.



INDEFINITE SOUND
Deadened tone – indefinite pitch.

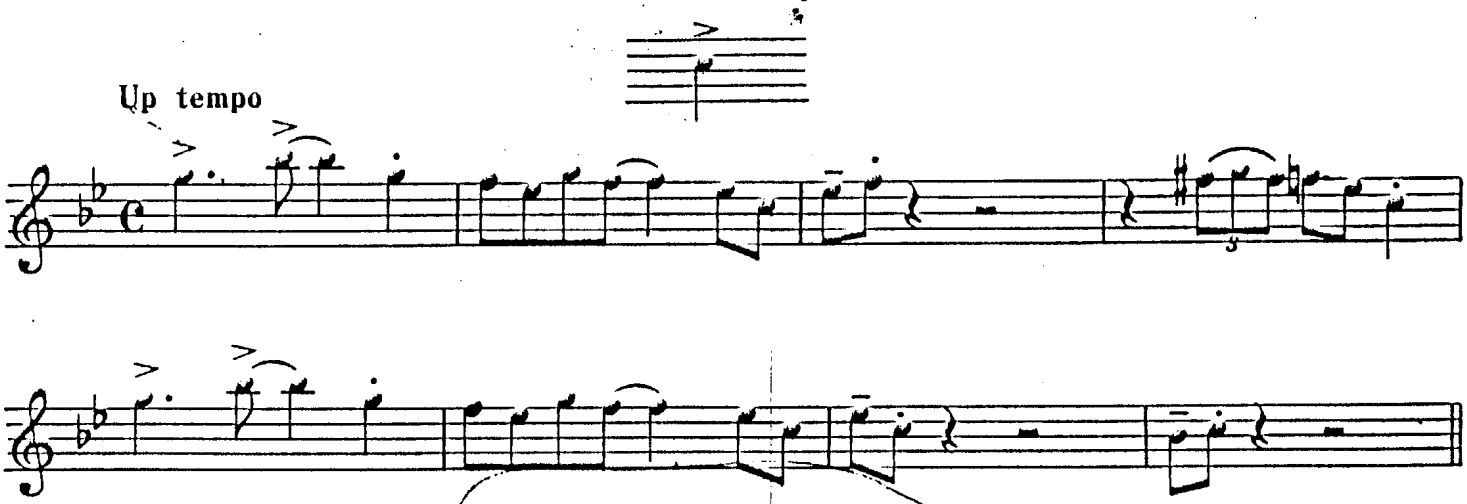
* NOTE: No individual notes are heard when executing a gliss.

Used by permission from the National Association of Jazz Educators

Articulations

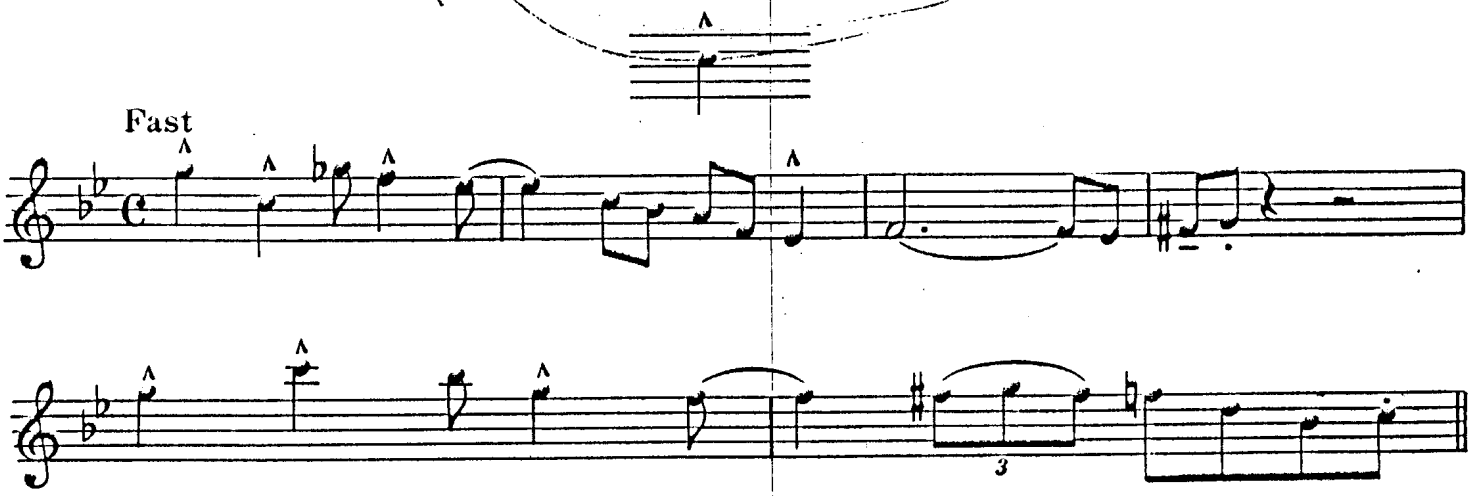
Heavy Accent #1

(Hold Full Value)



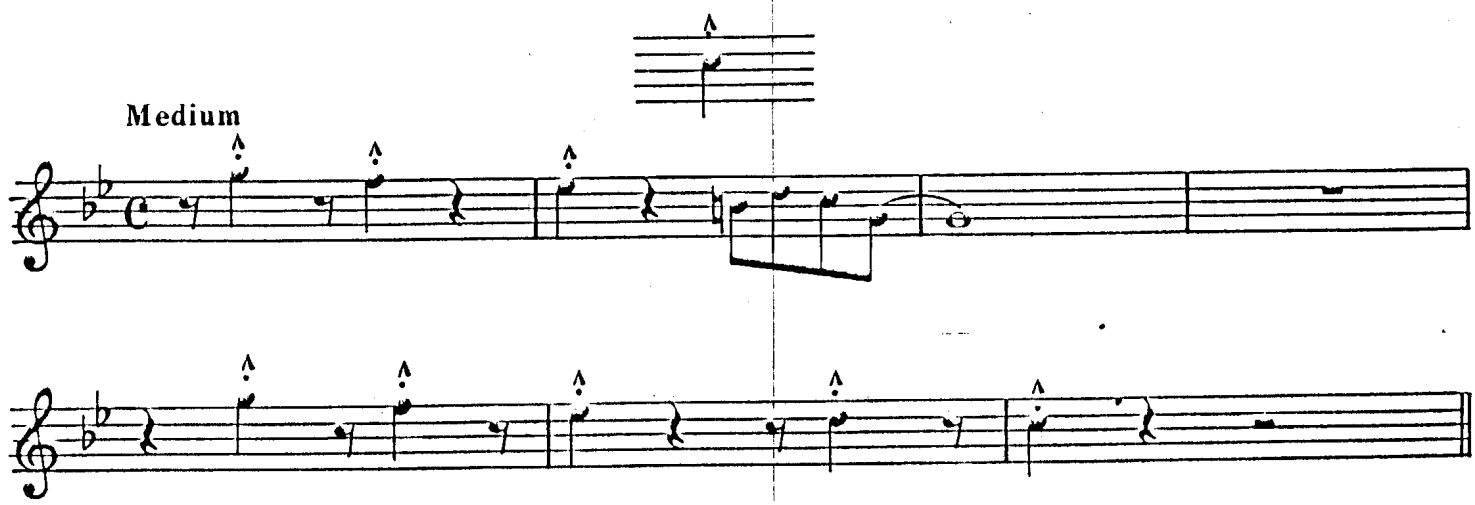
Heavy Accent #2

(Hold Less Than Full Value)



Heavy Accent #3

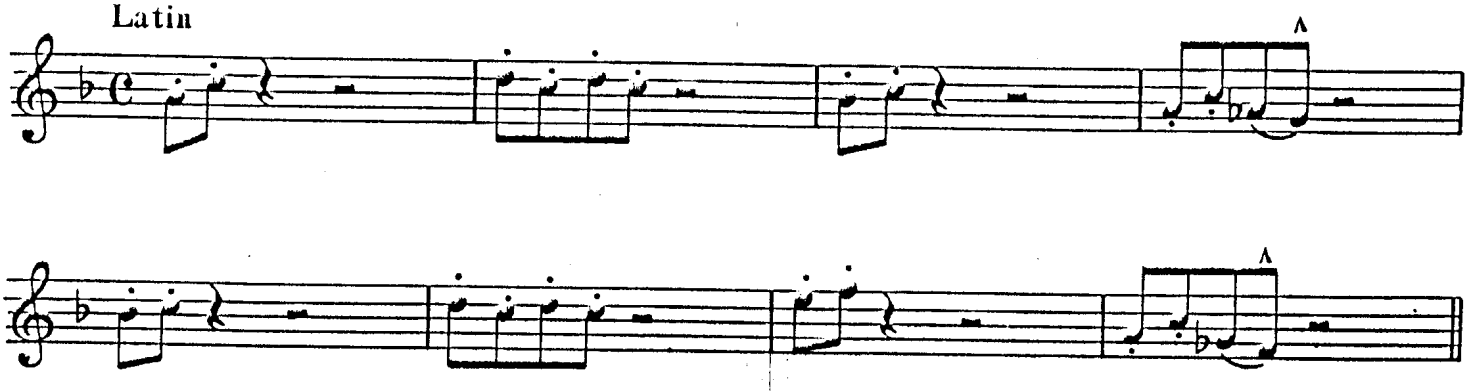
(Short As Possible)



Standard Staccato

In jazz and contemporary music, the staccato note is played short, but lightly, and not with a heavy tongue.

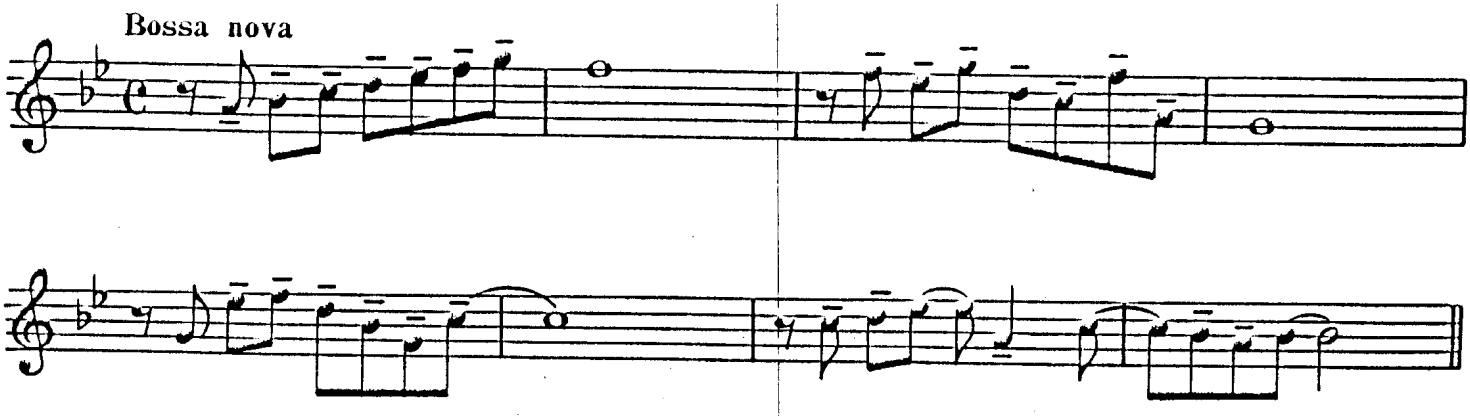
Latin



Standard Legato

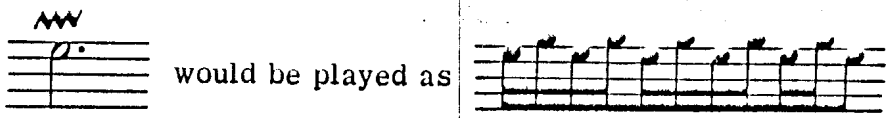
(Hold Full Value, Use Light Tongue)

Bossa nova

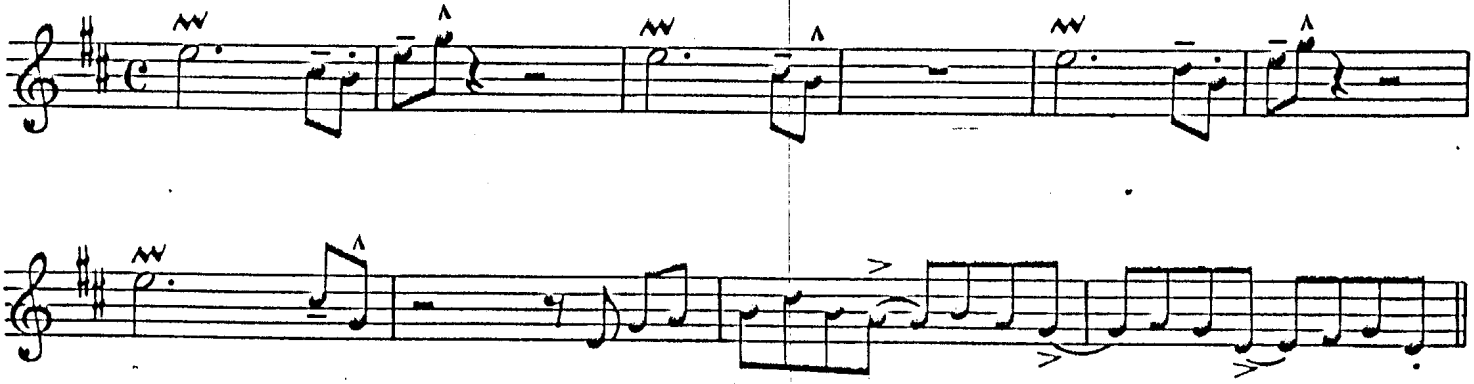


The Shake

Like a trill; usually done by trilling a minor third (three half steps) from the written note.

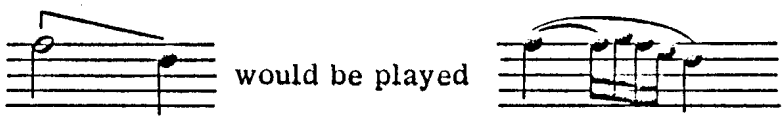


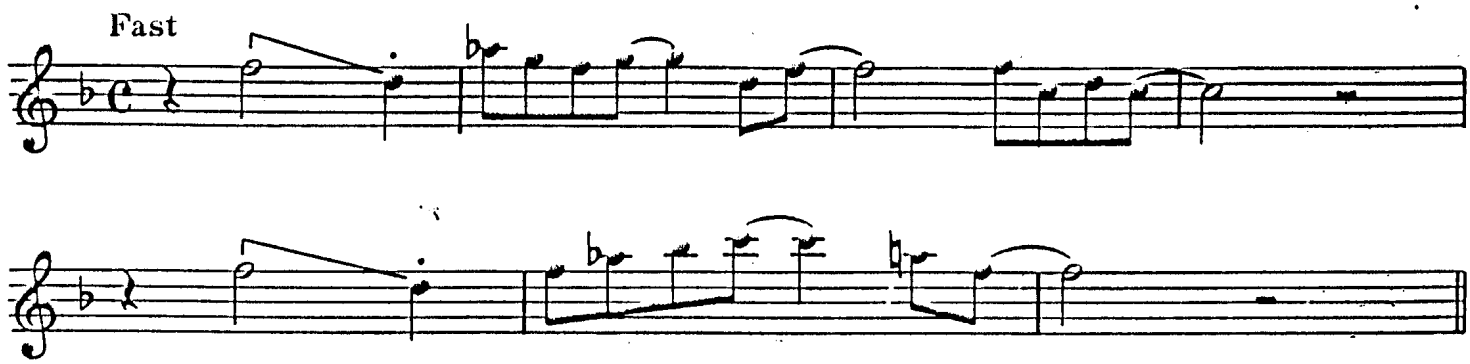
would be played as



The Flip

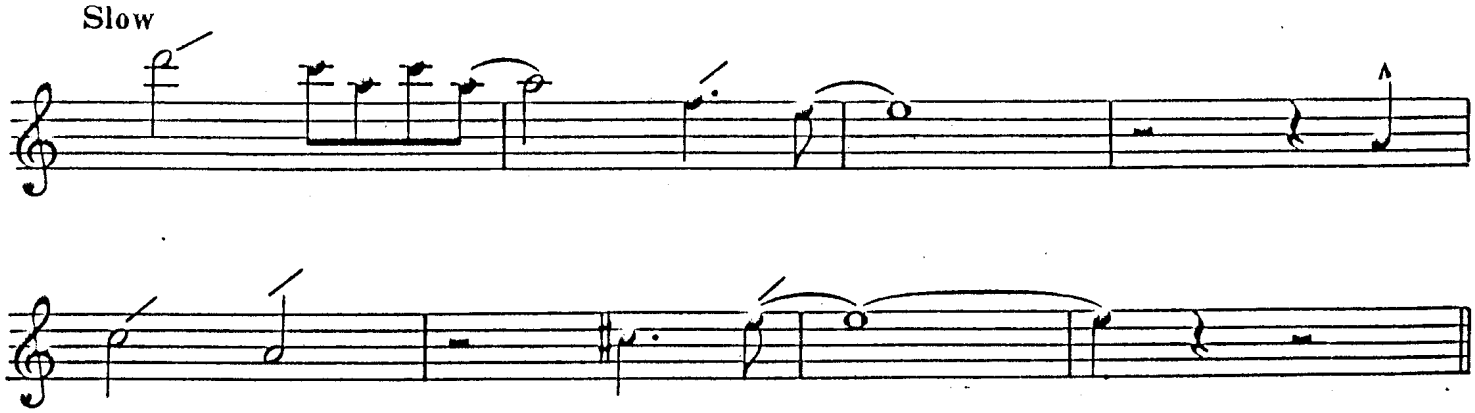
A type of "turn" involving notes abore and below the written note.





The Smear

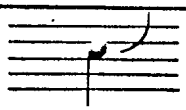
Sounding a note below pitch, then slowly bringing it up to pitch just before the next note. This is done by relaxing the embouchure and slightly dropping the jaw to flatten the note, and then bringing the note up to pitch close to the end of its duration. The smear may also be achieved by half-closing the key one-half step below the written note, while also fingering the actual note.



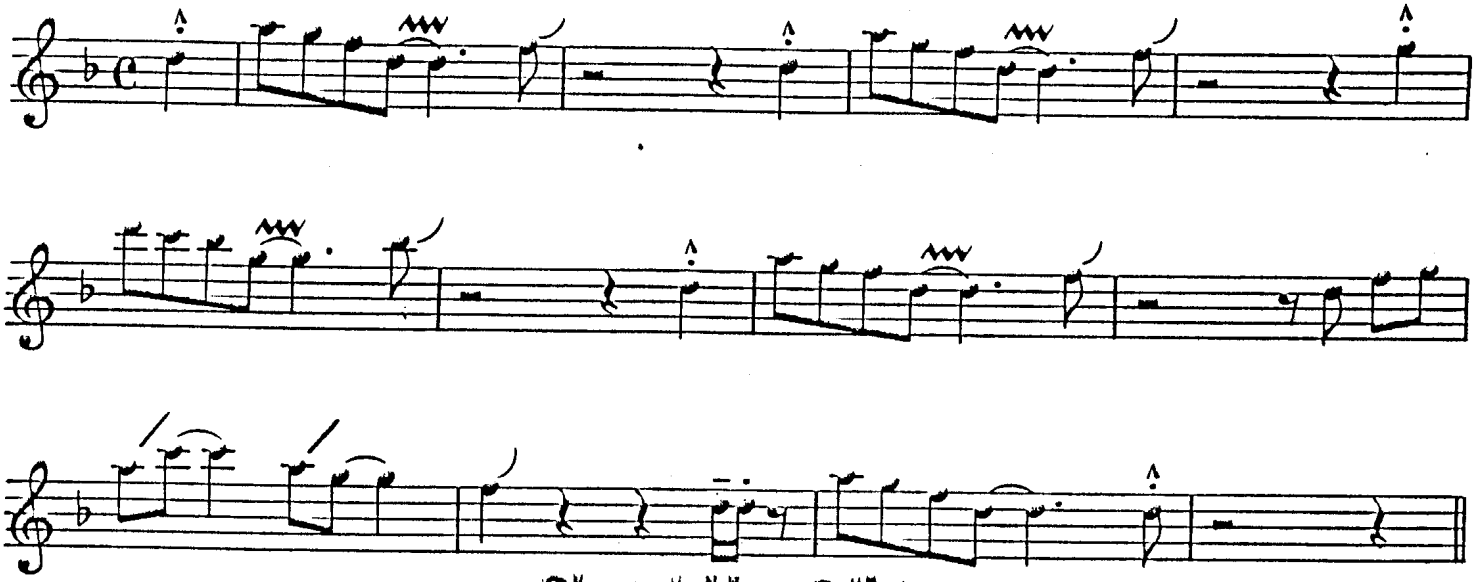
This techique is also called "bending", and is some times notated as:.

The Doit

Sound the written note, then "Slide" up one to five steps. The notes in the "Slide"(or gliss) should not sound individually.

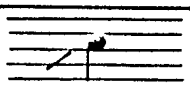


Slow blues



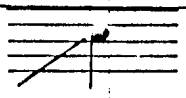
Short Up Gliss

"Sliding" into a note from one to three steps below its written pitch. This can be done with the embouchure and jaw with or without fingering the gliss notes.



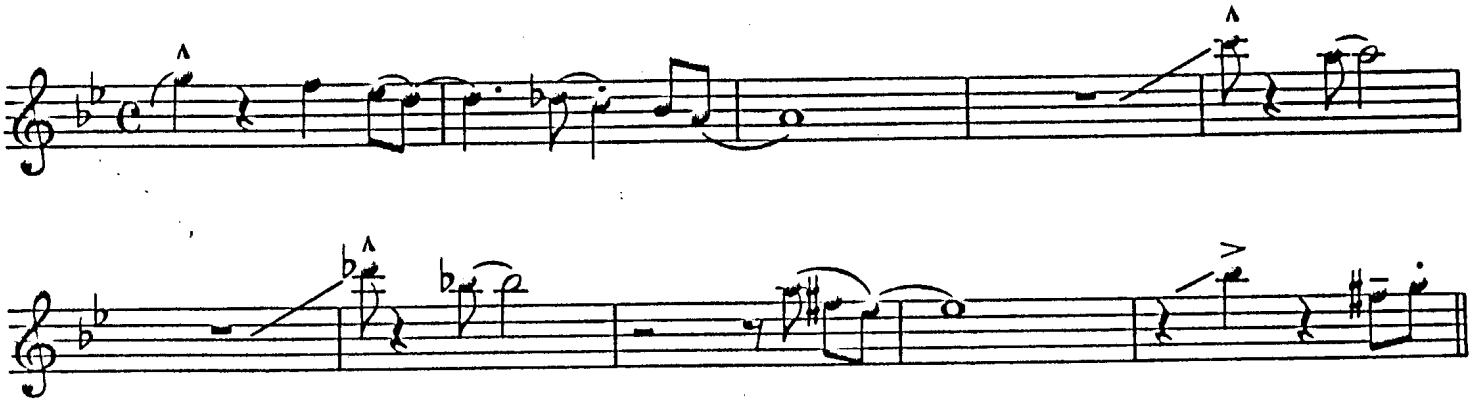
Long Up Gliss

Same as short gliss up, but from a greater distance below the written note. Fingering the notes would be neccessary. Start three steps to an octave below the written note.



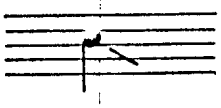
In both cases the actual pitch should be reached at the time that the note would be played if there was no gliss. In other words, the gliss must be played "before the beat".

Gliss Study



Short Down Gliss

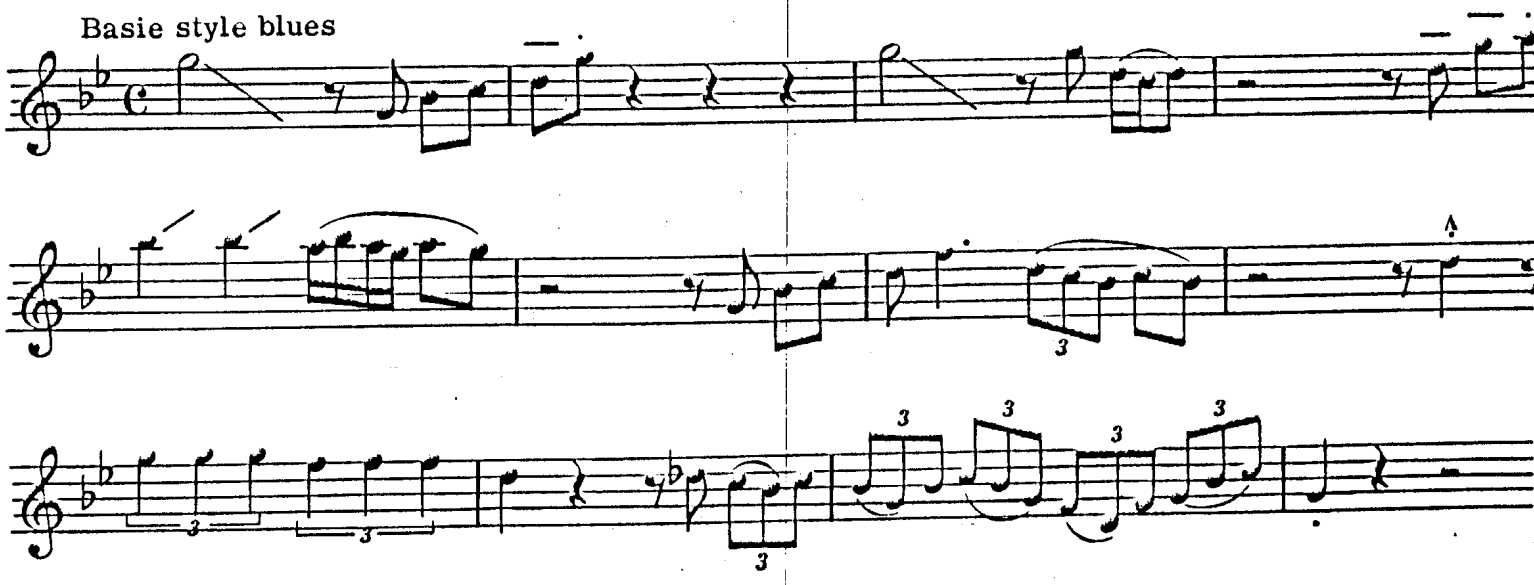
Also called short fall-off. Play the written note for about one-half of its value, them quickly "Slide" down chromatically.
The chromatic notes should not sound individually, and there should not be any particular pitch in evidence at the end of the gliss!



Long Down Gliss

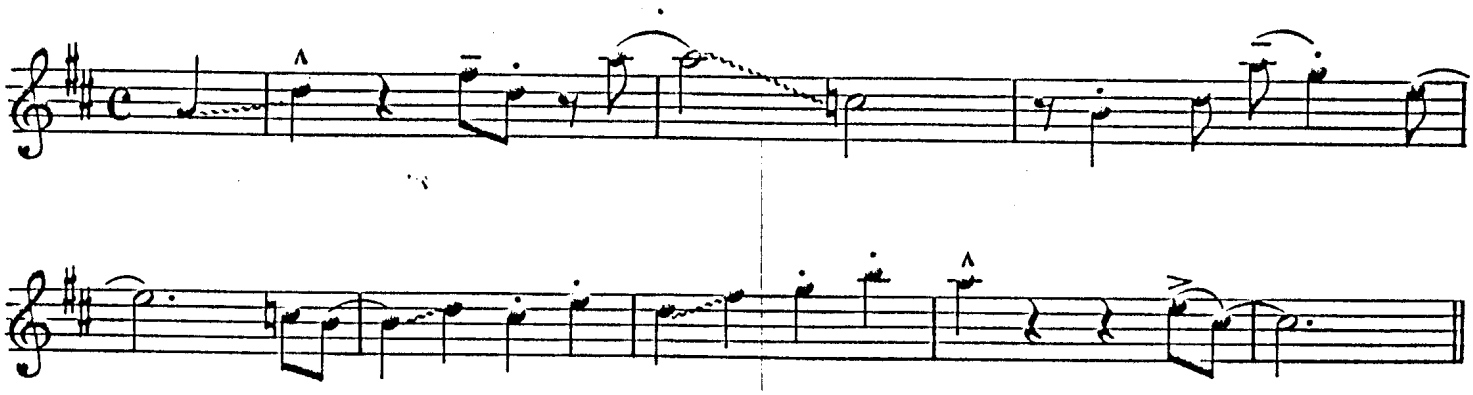
Also called long fall-off. Similar to short gliss down except that the written note is held a little longer and the gliss goes lower and slower.

Basie style blues



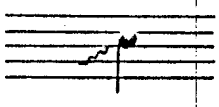
Connecting Gliss

A gliss between two notes. If the notes are no more than a third (two steps) apart, use the chromatic scale to connect them. If the notes are more than a third apart, use an applicable major or minor scale. Let the first note sound for at least half of its value before starting the gliss.



Short Lift

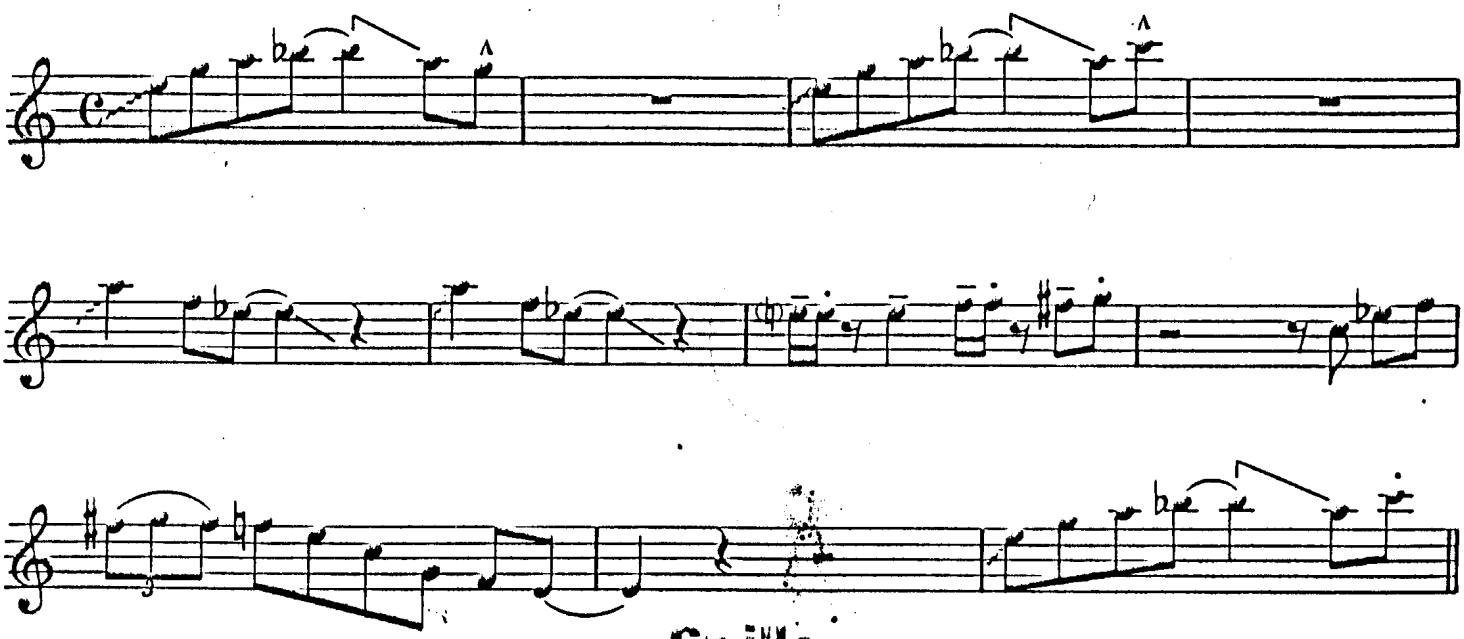
Start about three steps below the written note and "rip" into it using chromatic and/or diatonic movement.



Long Lift

Start about five or six steps below and use diatonic movement to "rip" into the note.

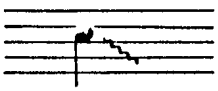
Lifts



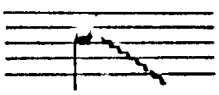
Spills

The reverse of the lift;keys should be heard moving after the air has stopped.

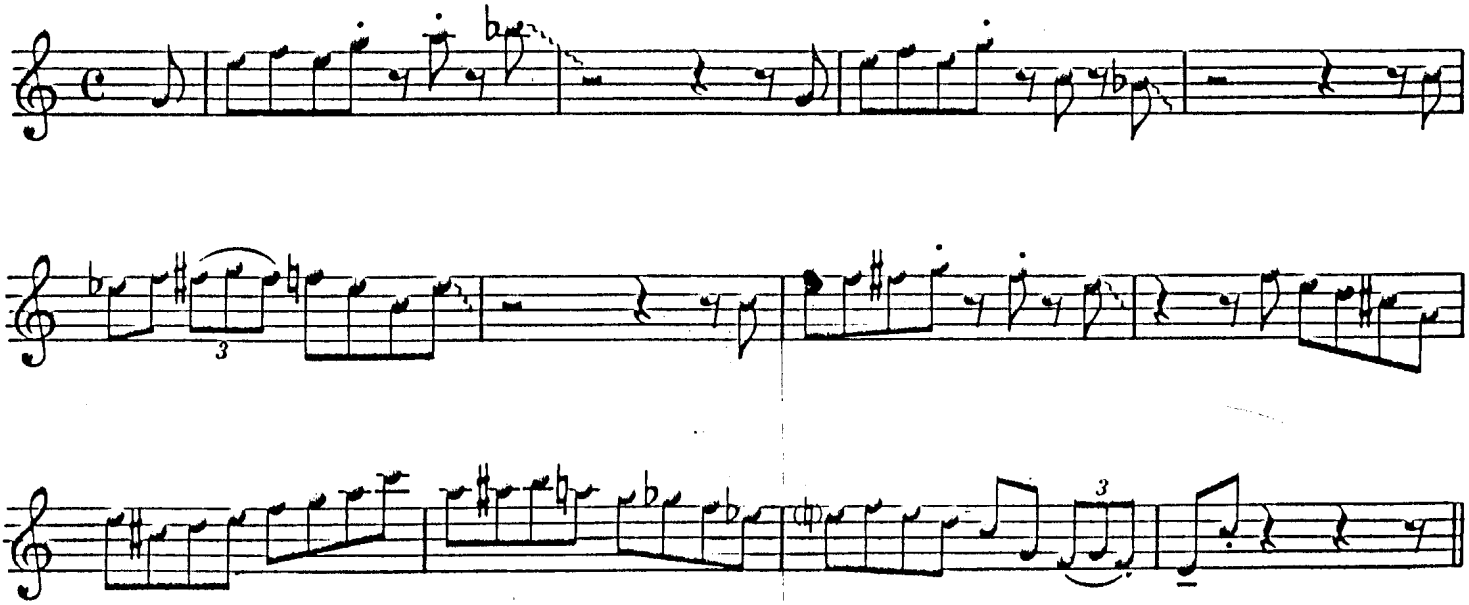
Short Spill



Long Spill



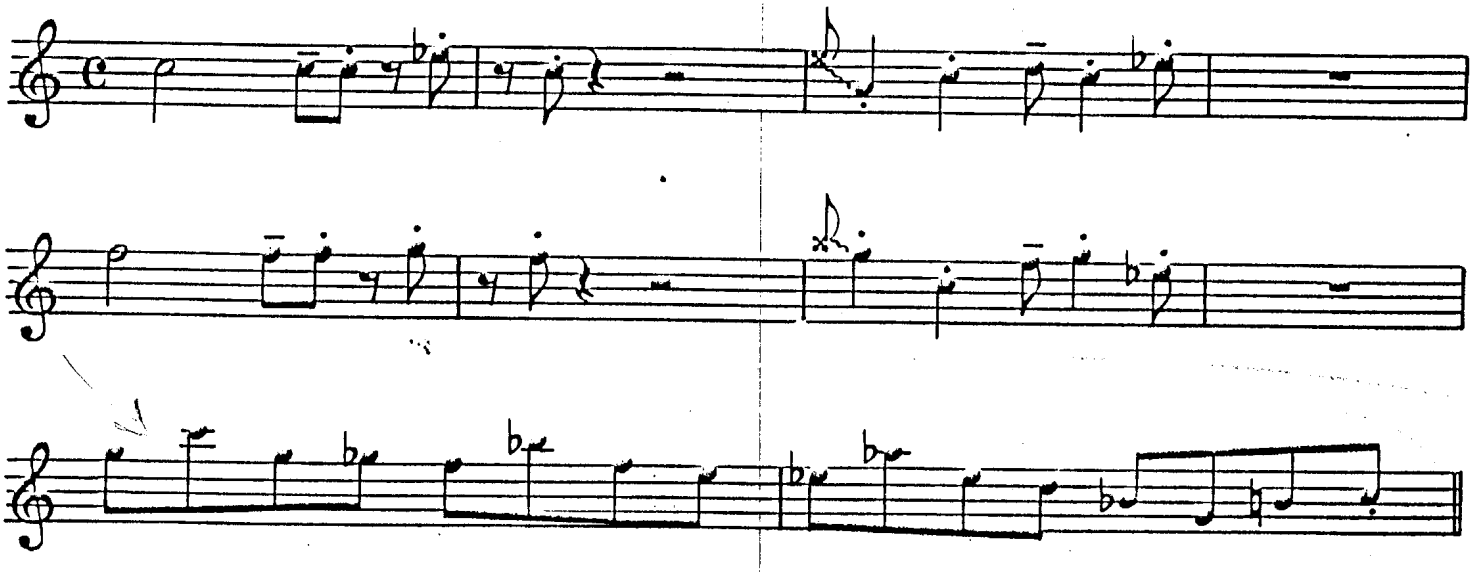
Spill Spell



Plop

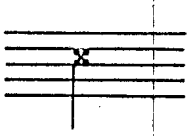
A type of spill, done from about a fifth above the written note. The scale is played very quickly and clarity of scale notes is not important.

Plopping Along

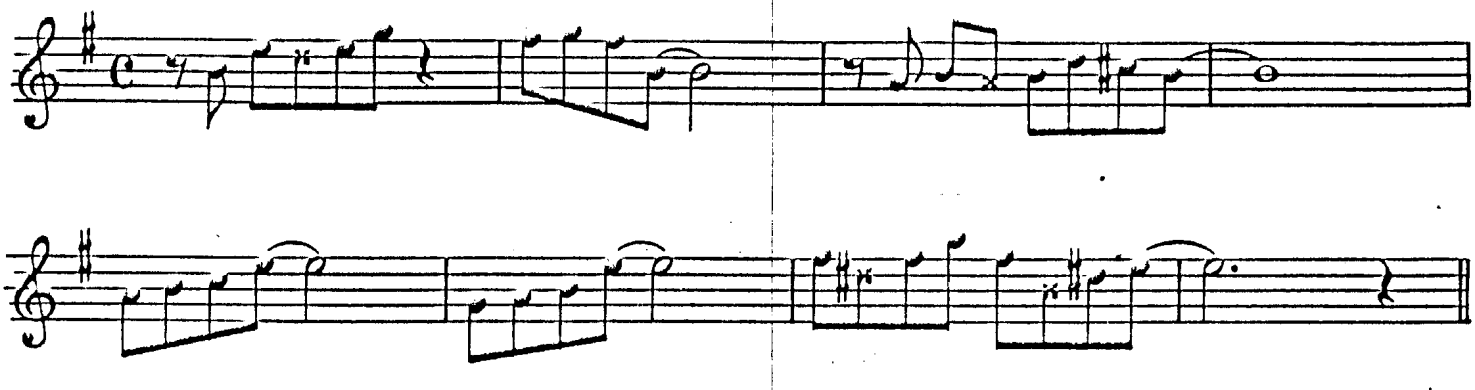


Indefinite Sound

Also called "ghosting". The note is played with a deadened tone, and is "inferred" rather than actually played out. The effect is produced by laying the top of the tongue against the reed, which mutes the tone. Do not press hard against the reed as this can close off the mouthpiece completely.



Indefinitely

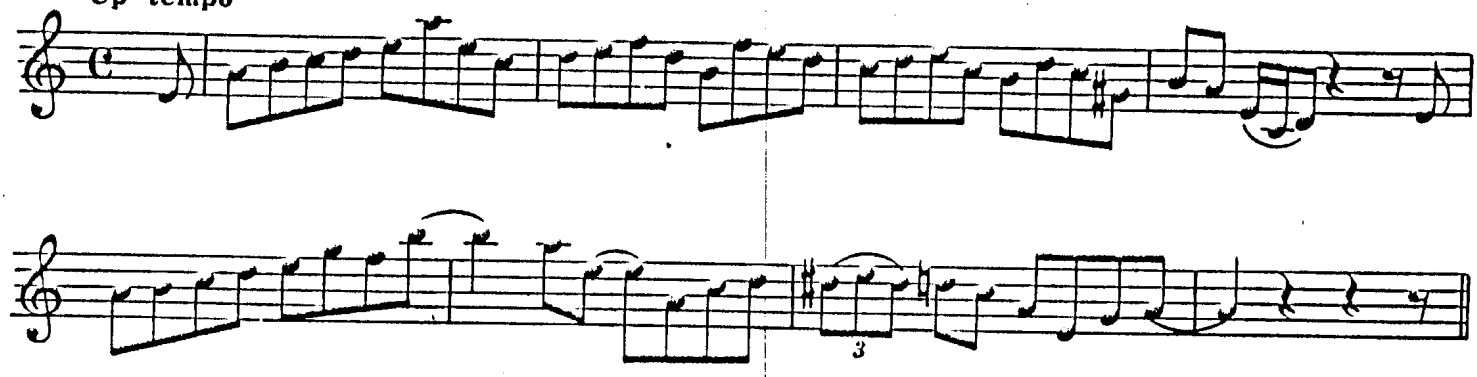


Be-Bop

Much of today's jazz remains under the influence of "be-bop" phrasing. All of the following studies should be played slowly at first. Keep the tonguing light. Remember- the studies should swing. They should not sound mechanical. Use breath accents for phrasing instead of a lot of tonguing.

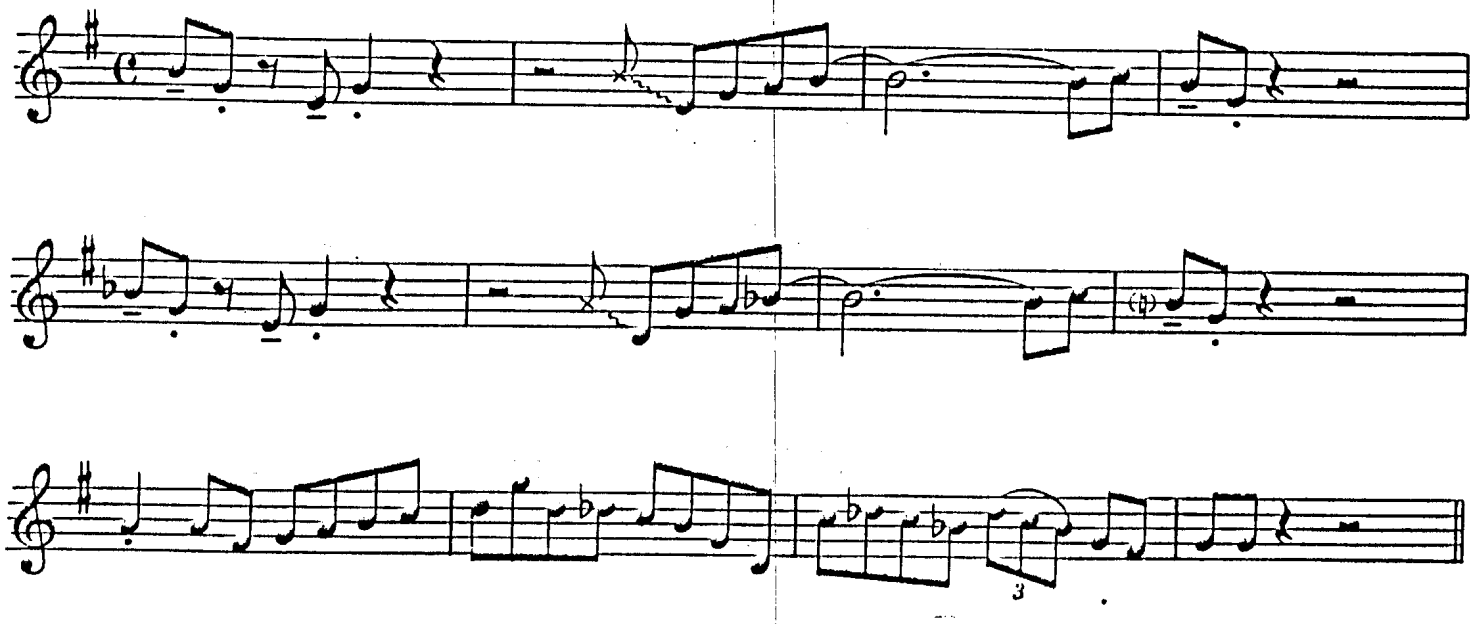
Changes

Up tempo

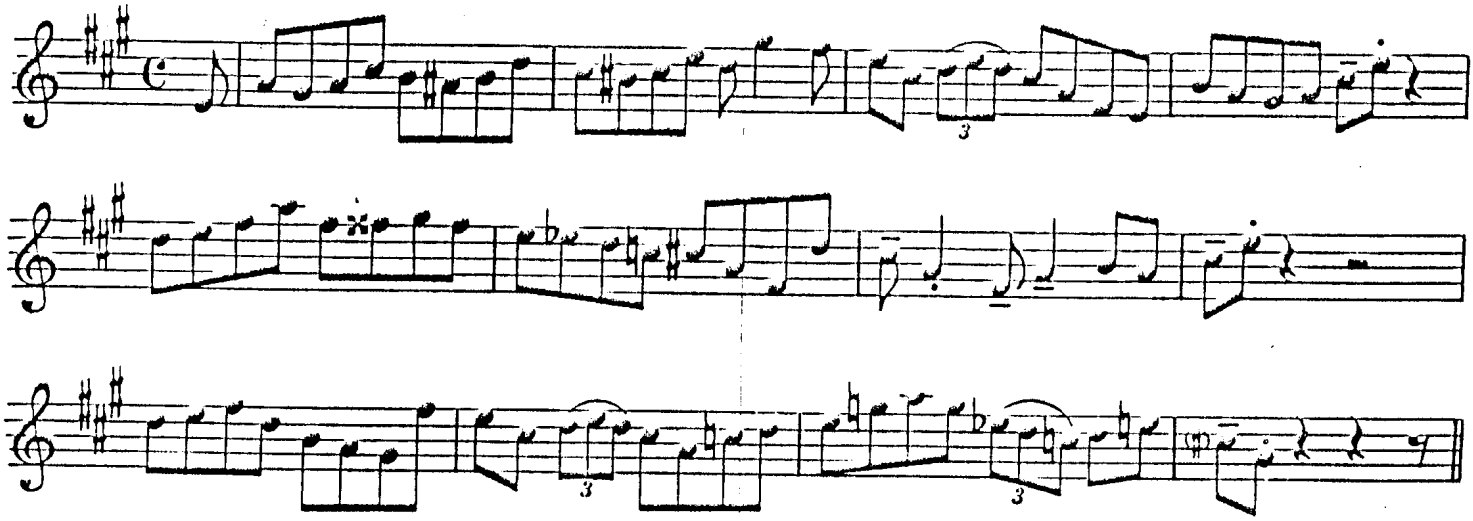


Riff For Clifford

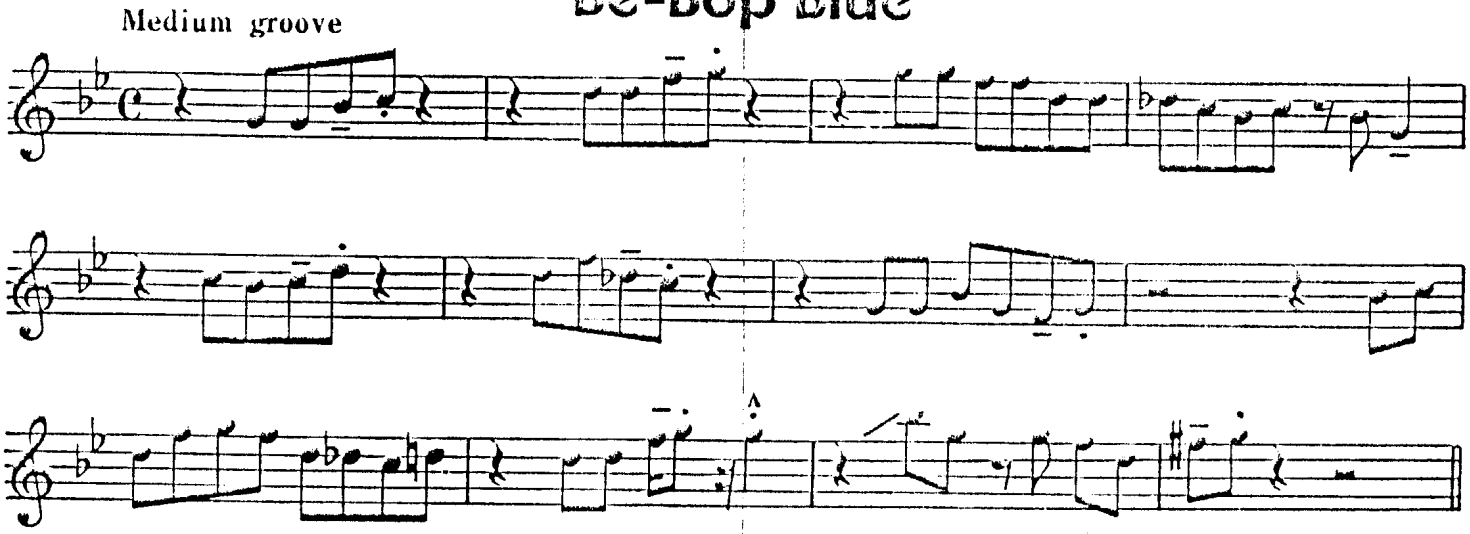
Very fast



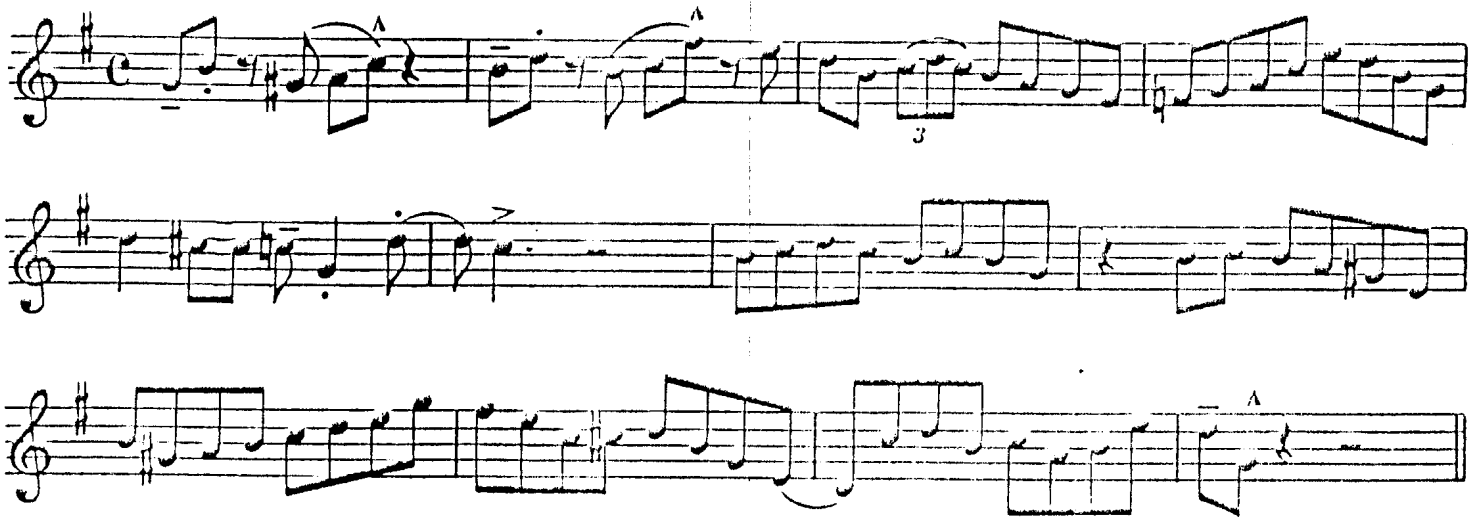
Breezin'



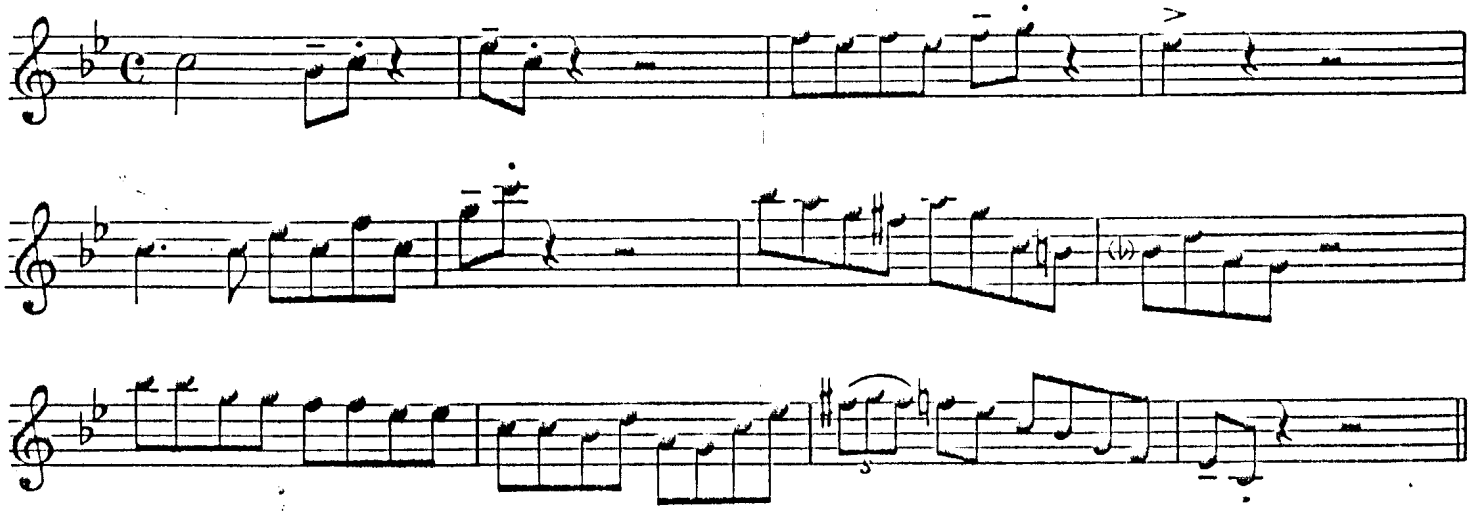
Be-Bop Blue



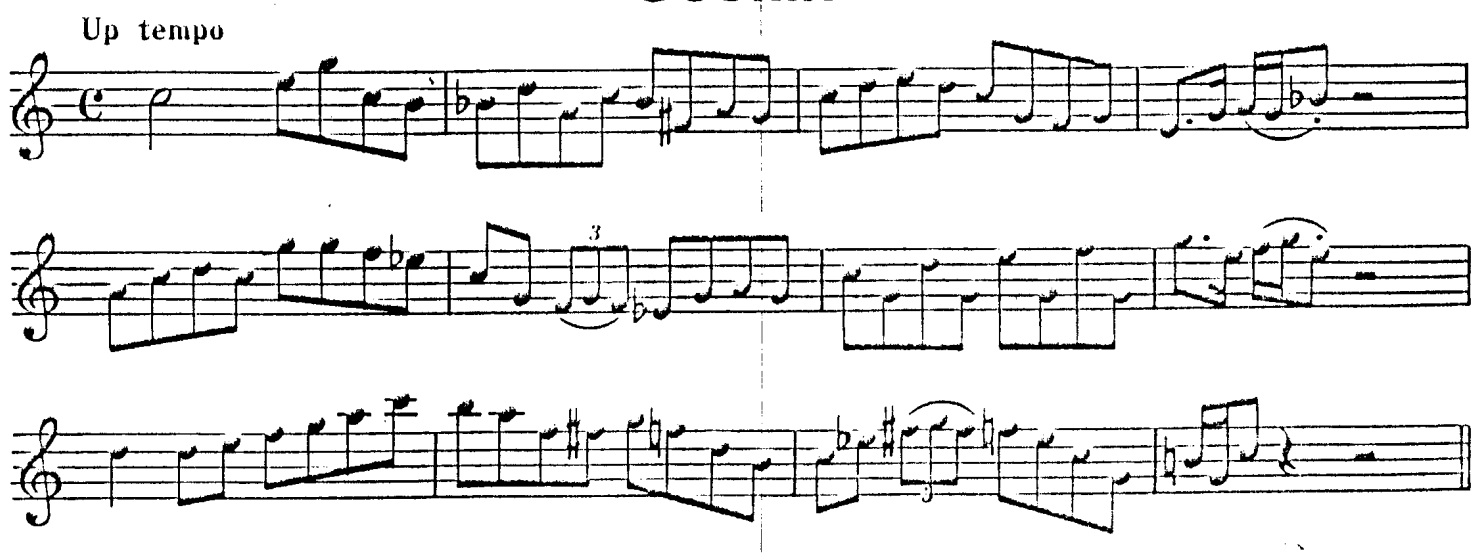
Theme For Bird



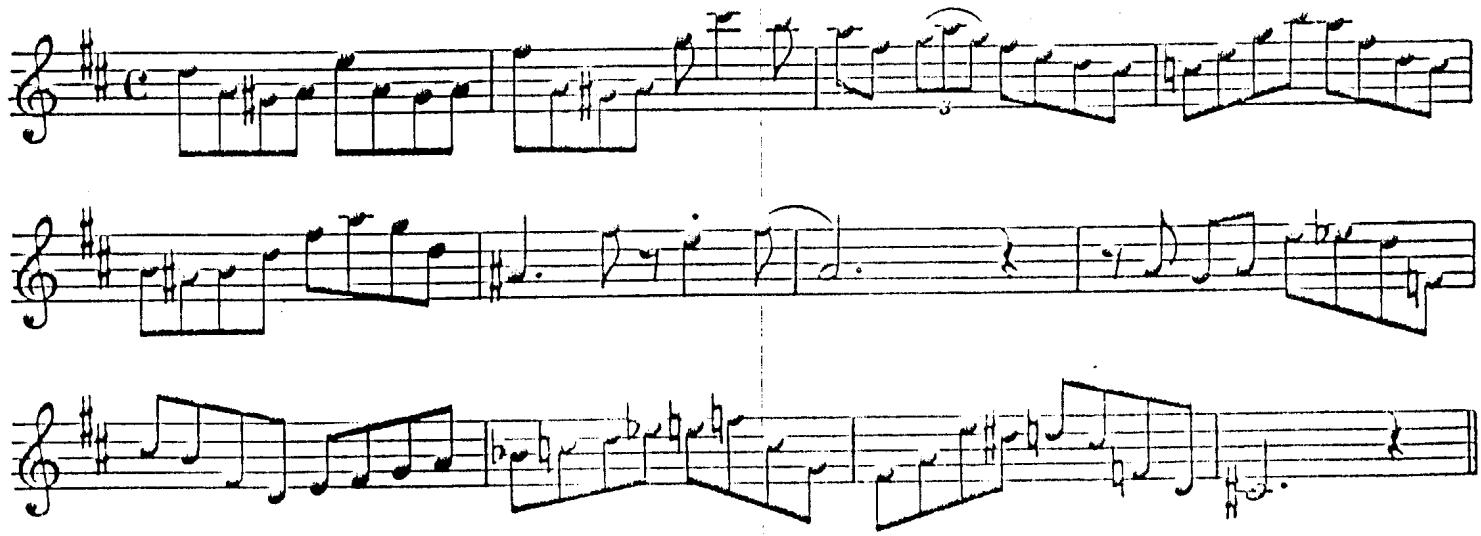
The Messenger



Cookin'

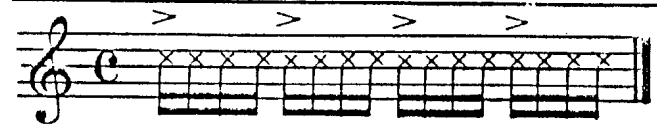


Cool Affair

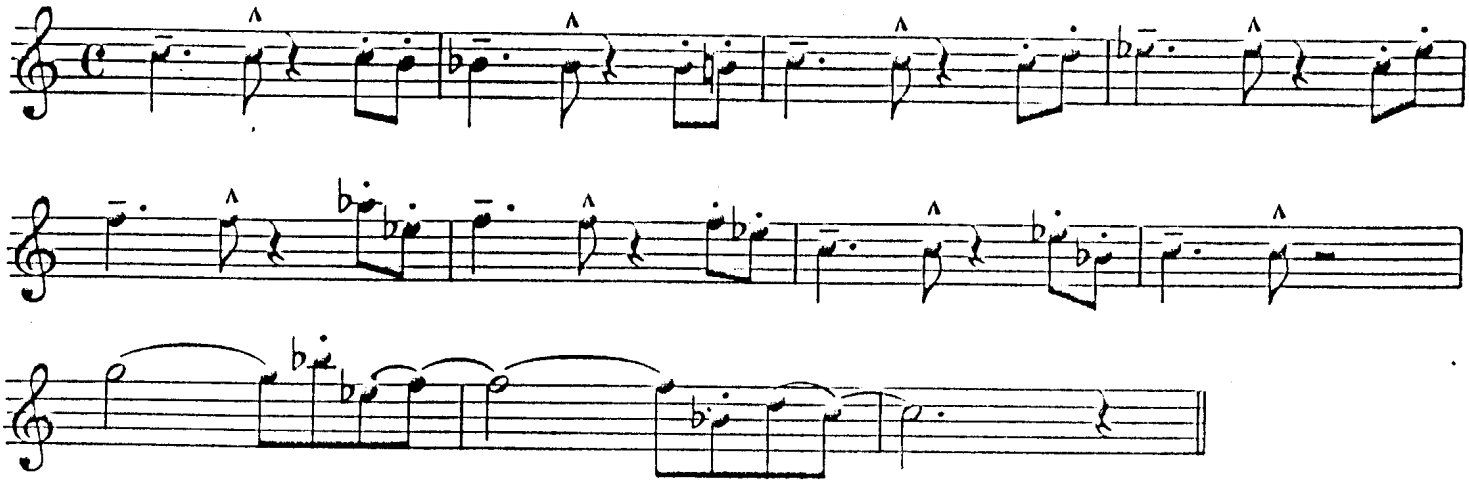


Rock

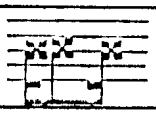
Rock music is characterised by hard-driving "even-eights" rhythms. The swing-style eighth note approach is not used in rock.



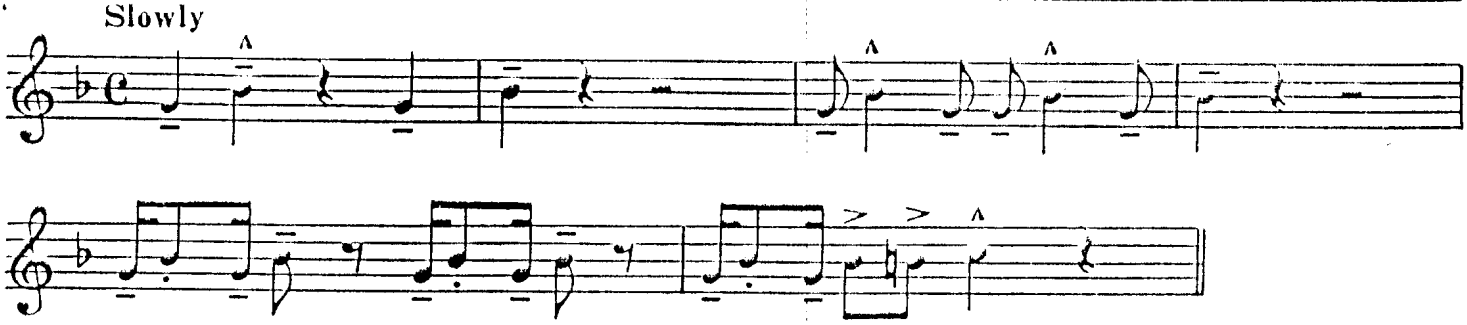
Study #1



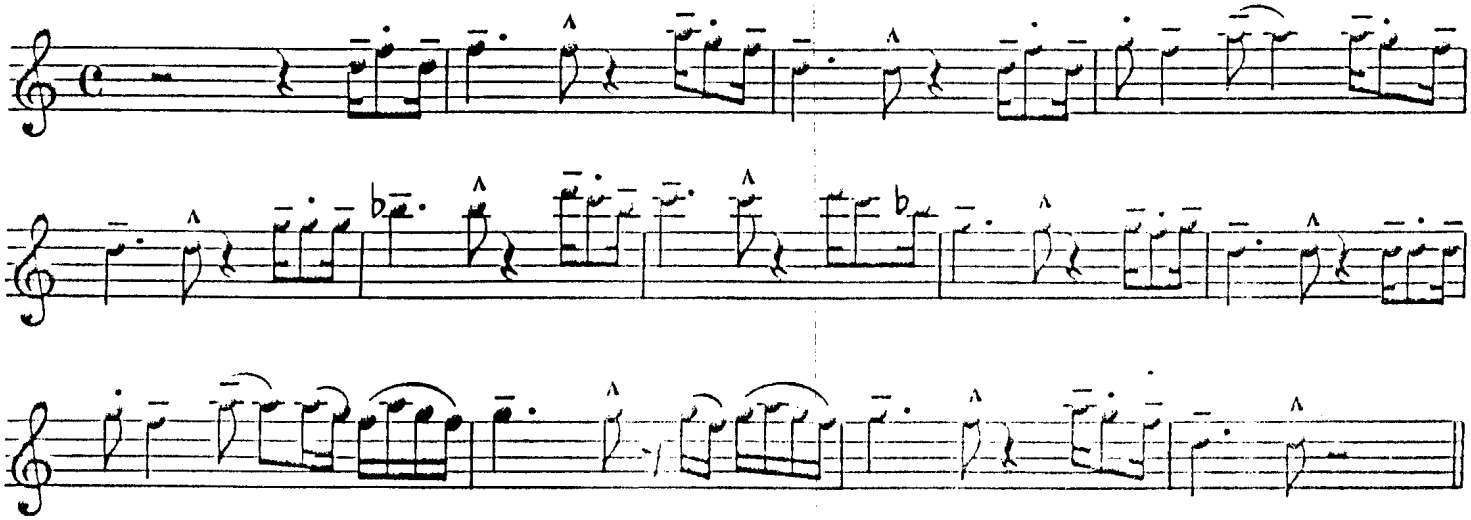
Rhythm Exercise

 is a rhythm pattern frequently found in rock. The following exercise should help in understanding the rhythm.

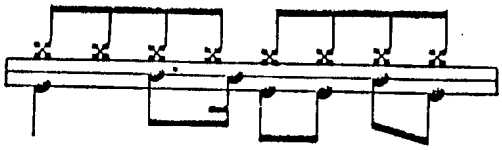
Slowly



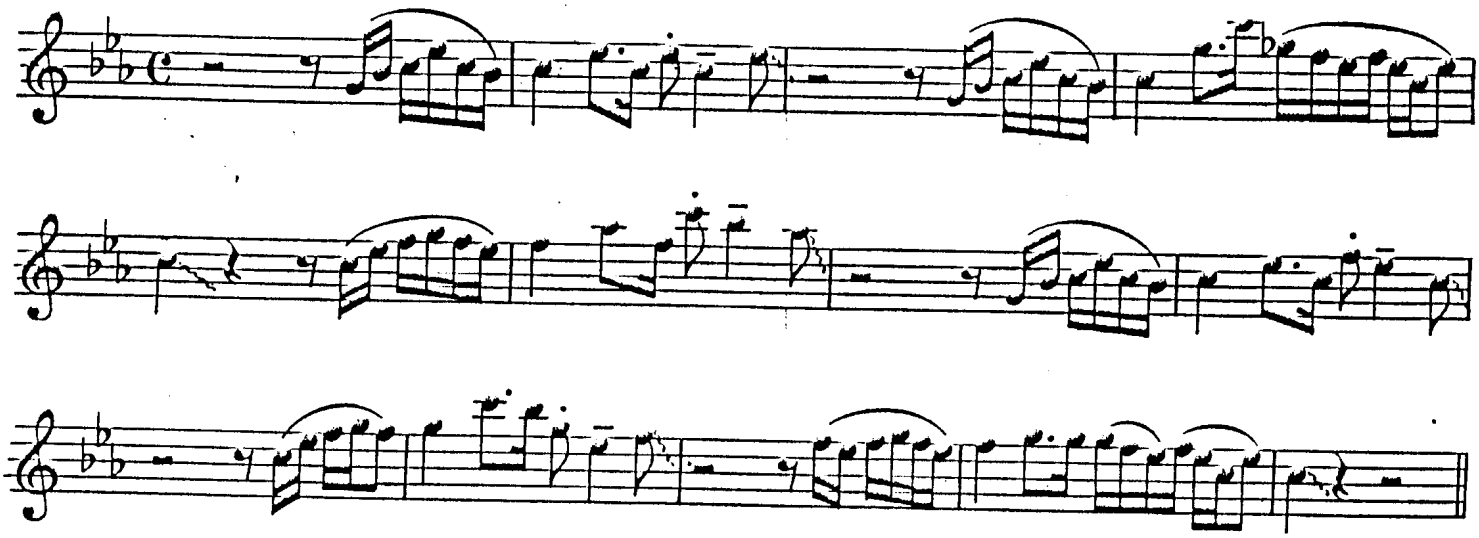
Study #2



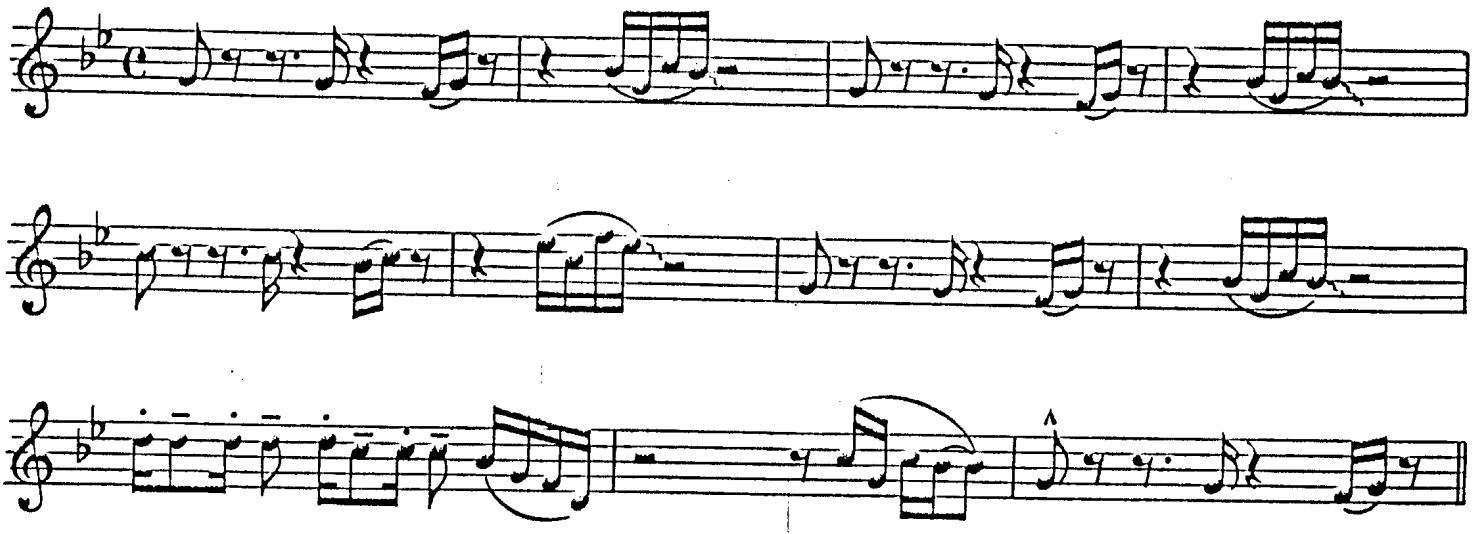
Rhythm



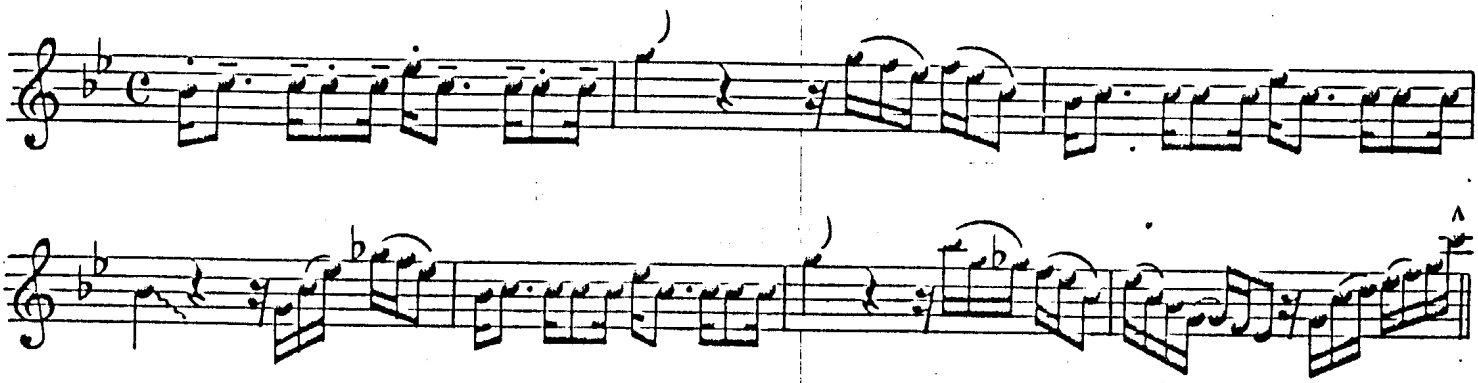
Study #3



Soul Riff

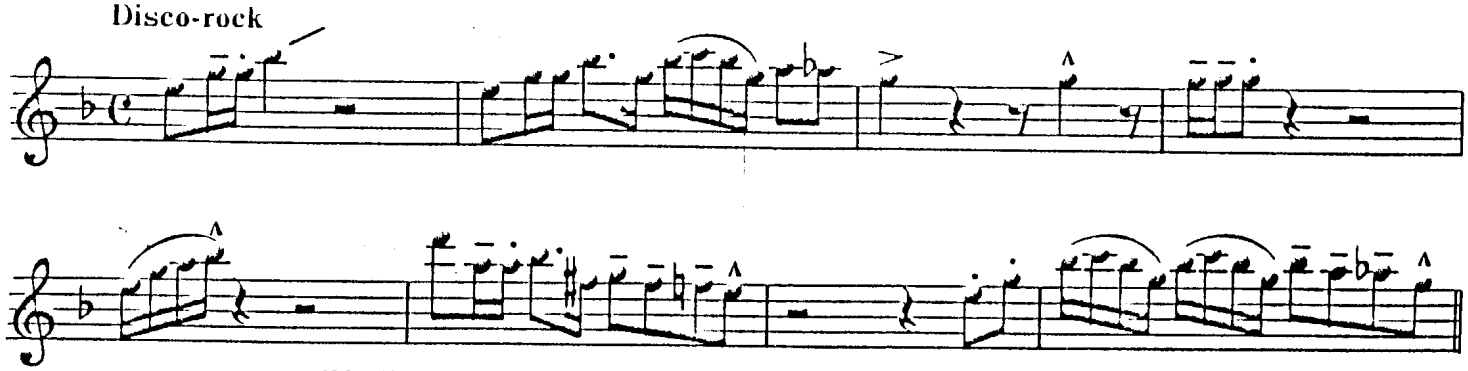


Soul Groove

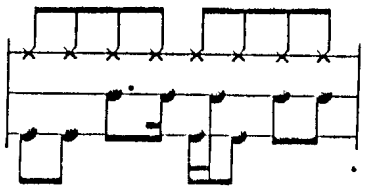


Detroit Dance

Disco-rock

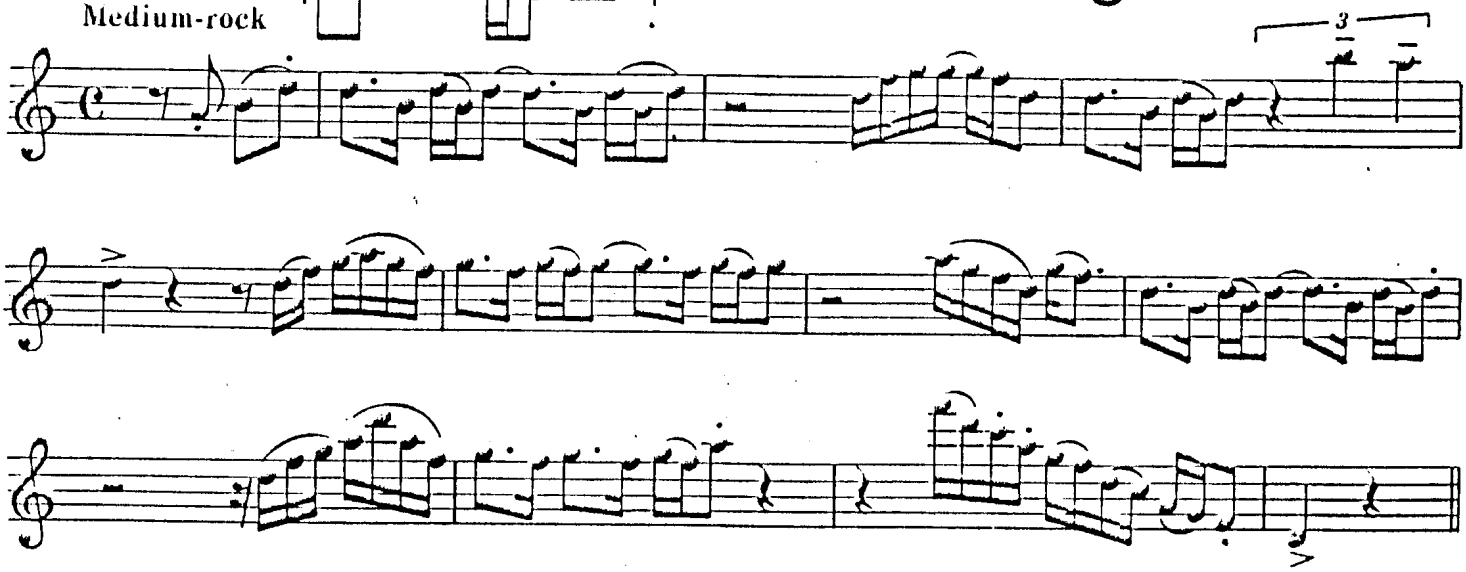


Rhythm

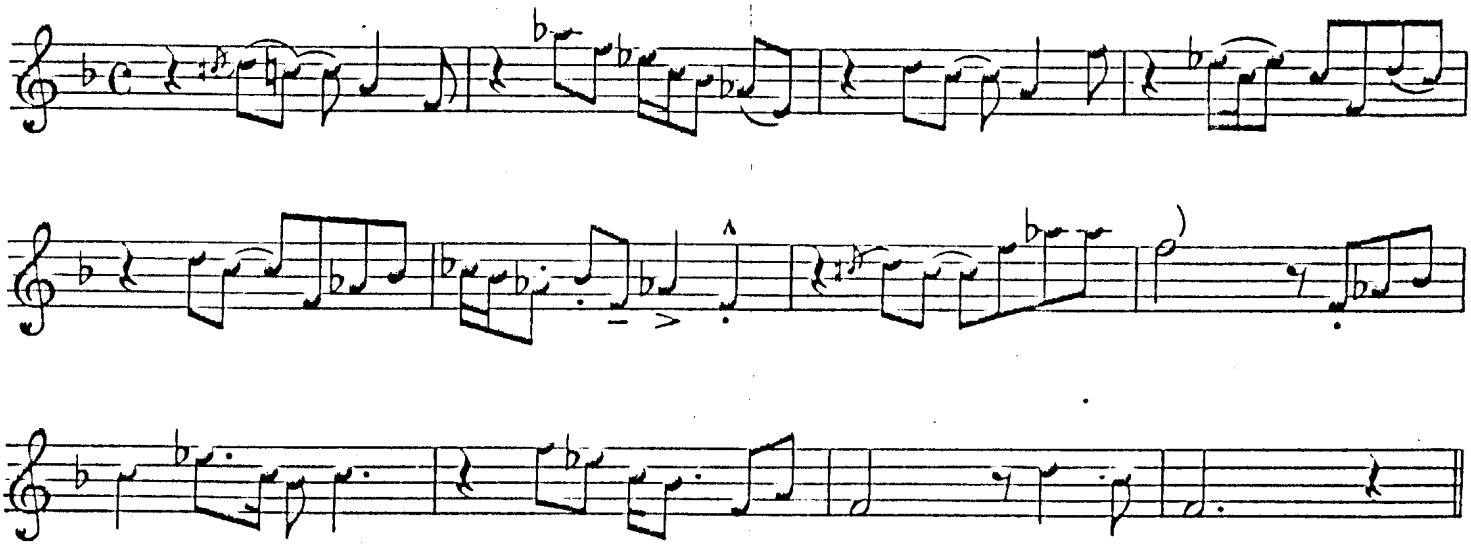


Choctaw Bridge

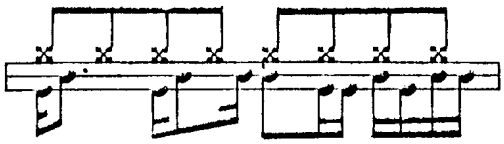
Medium-rock



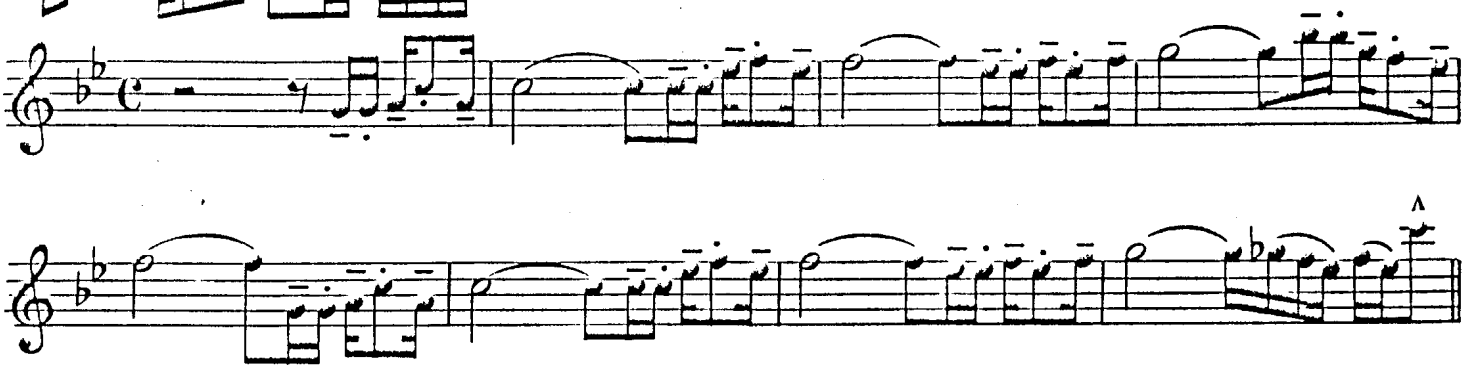
Aretha

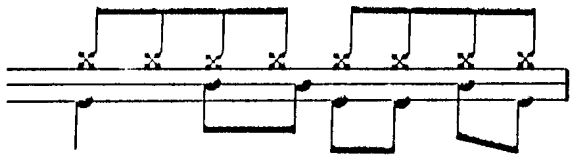


Rhythm

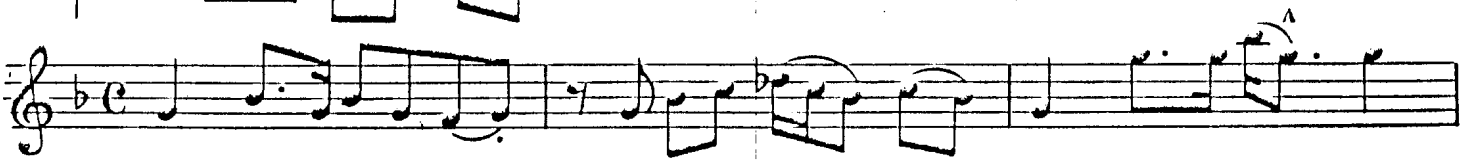


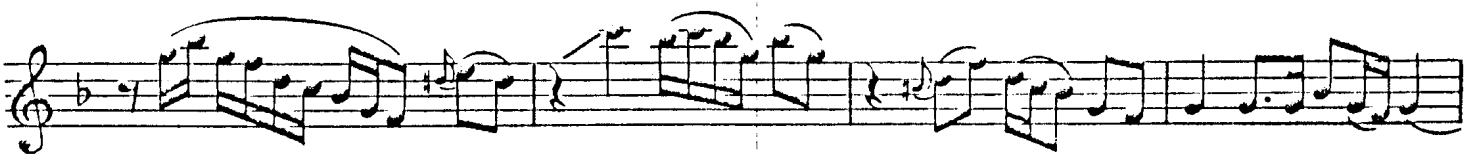
Midnight Ride

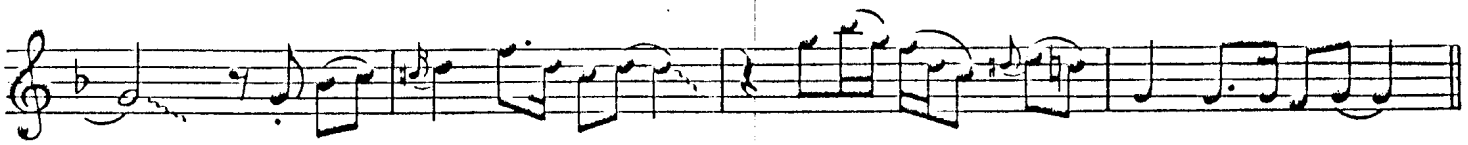


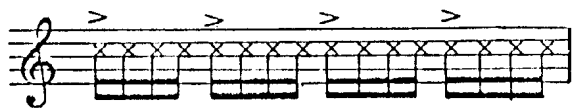


Hard Driver

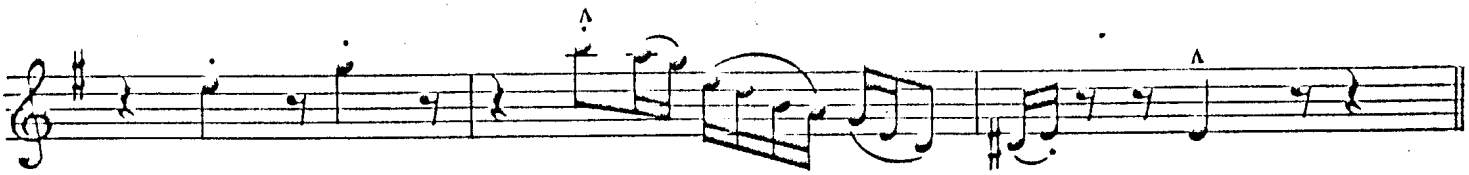




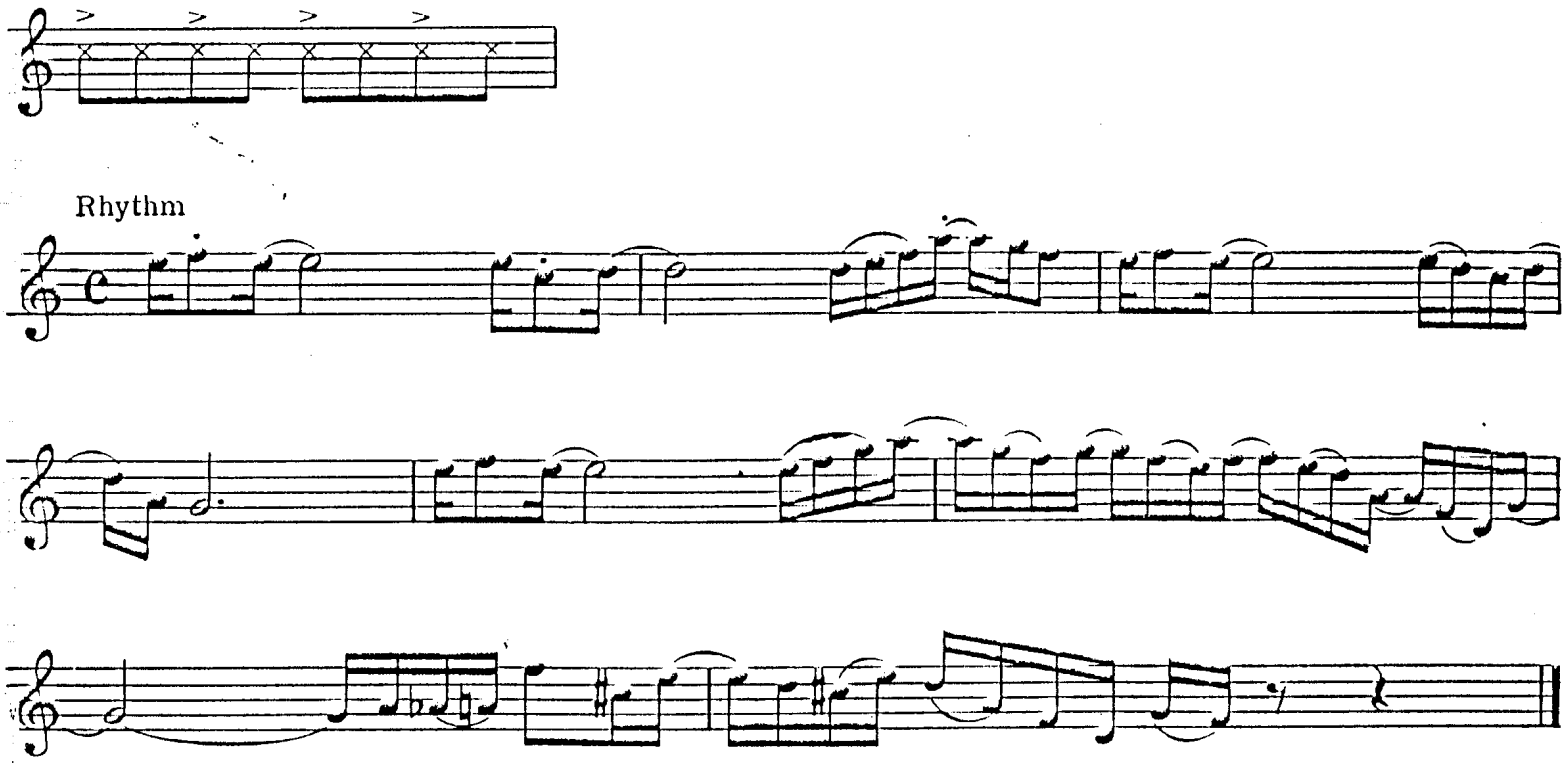




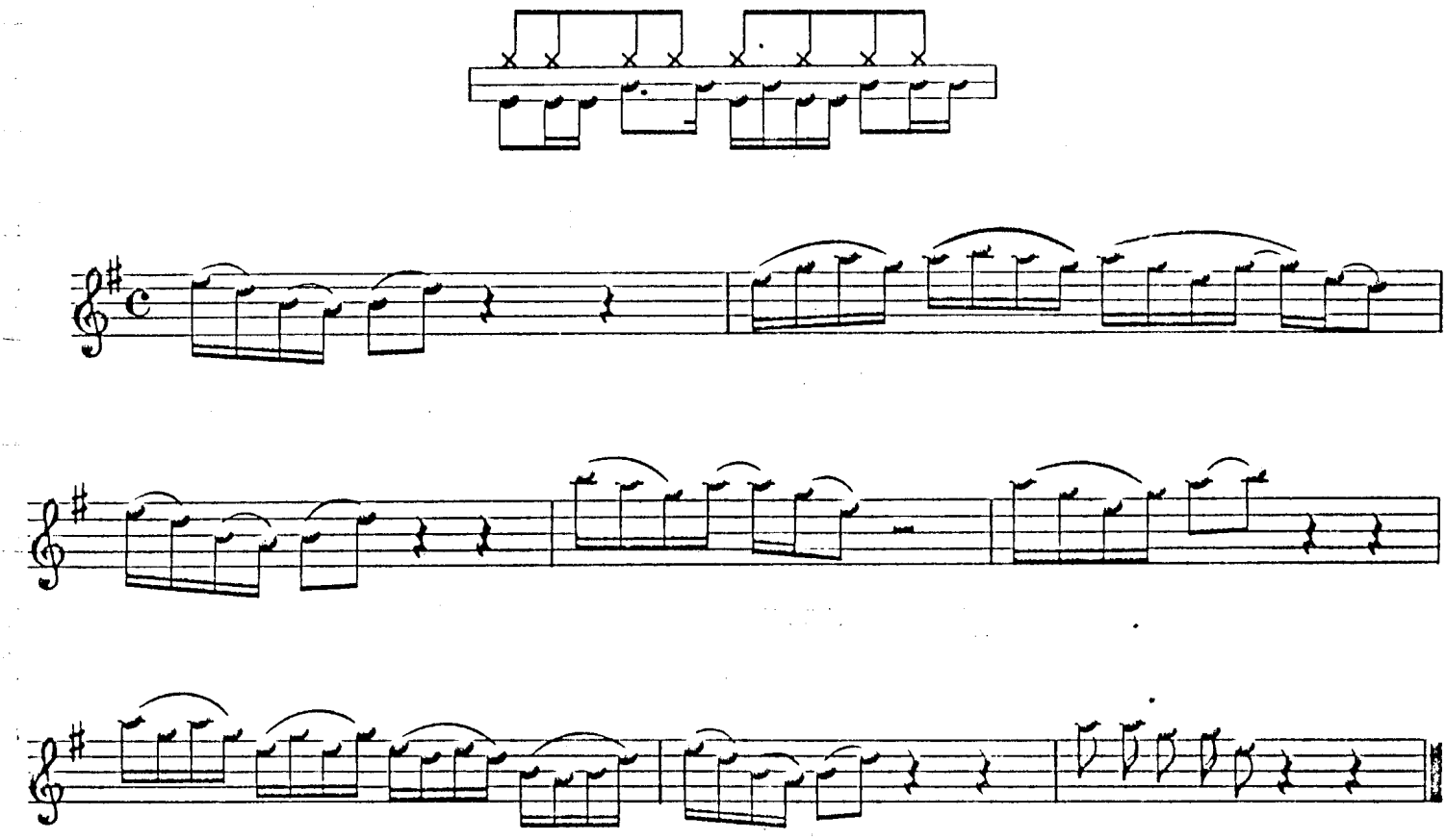
Blues Riff



Soul Prelude

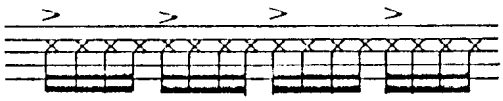


Motown Groove

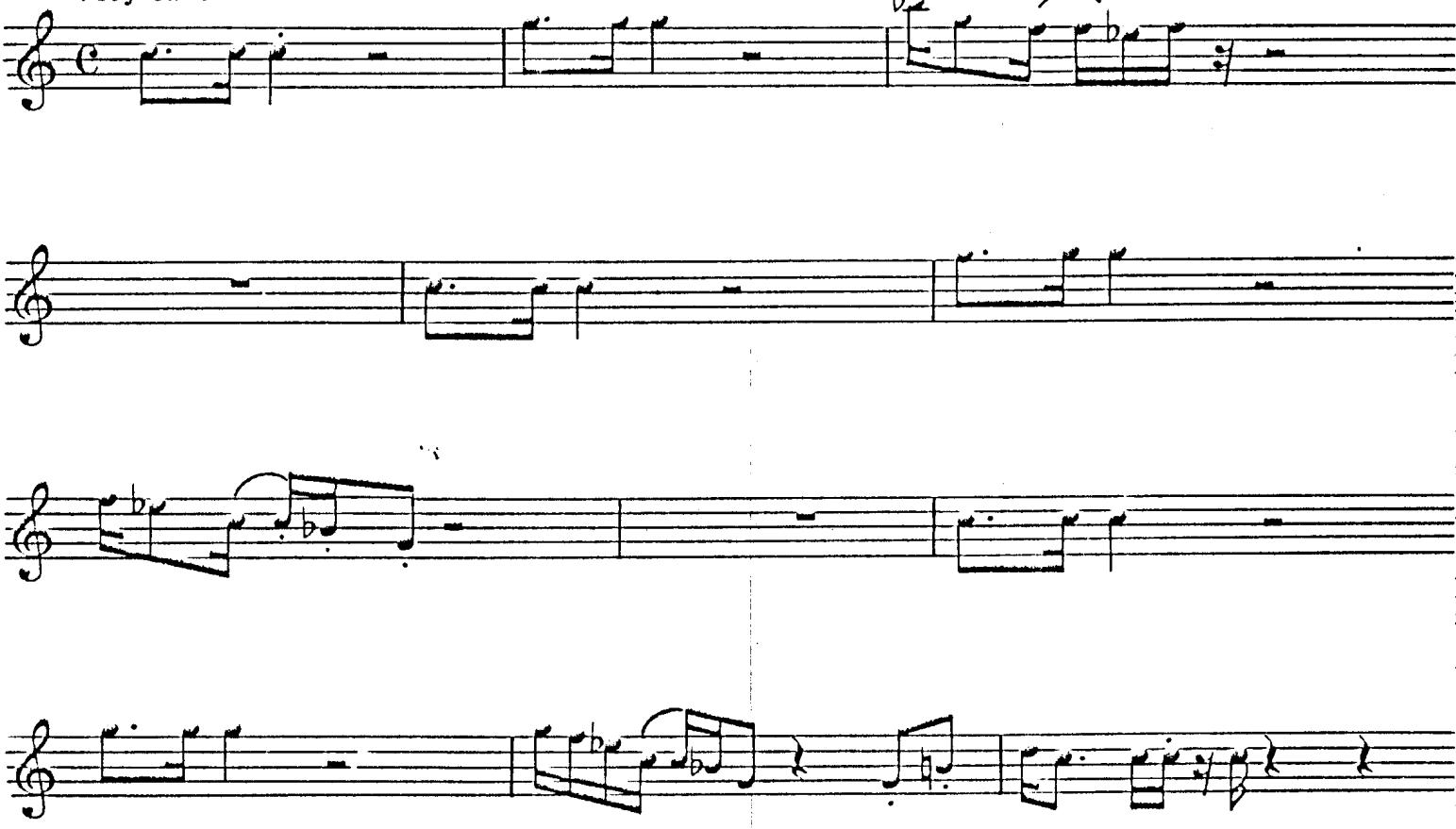


Basically Soul

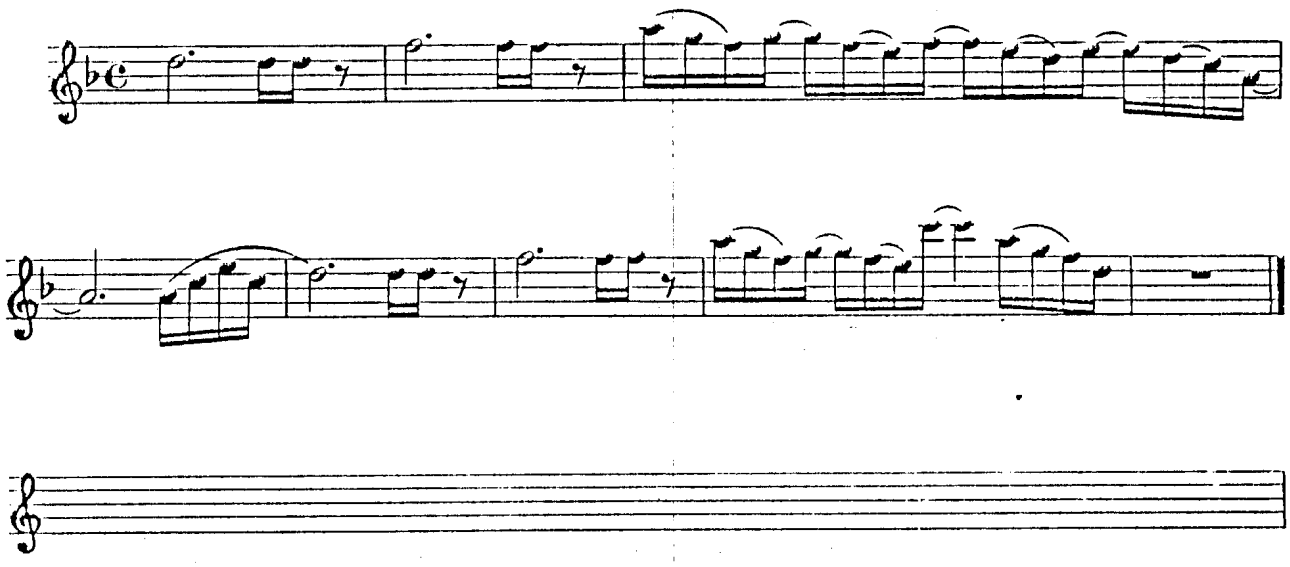
Rhythm



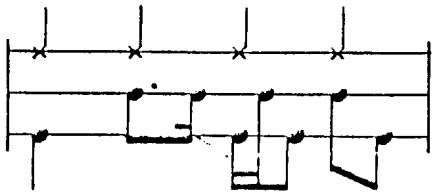
Very fast



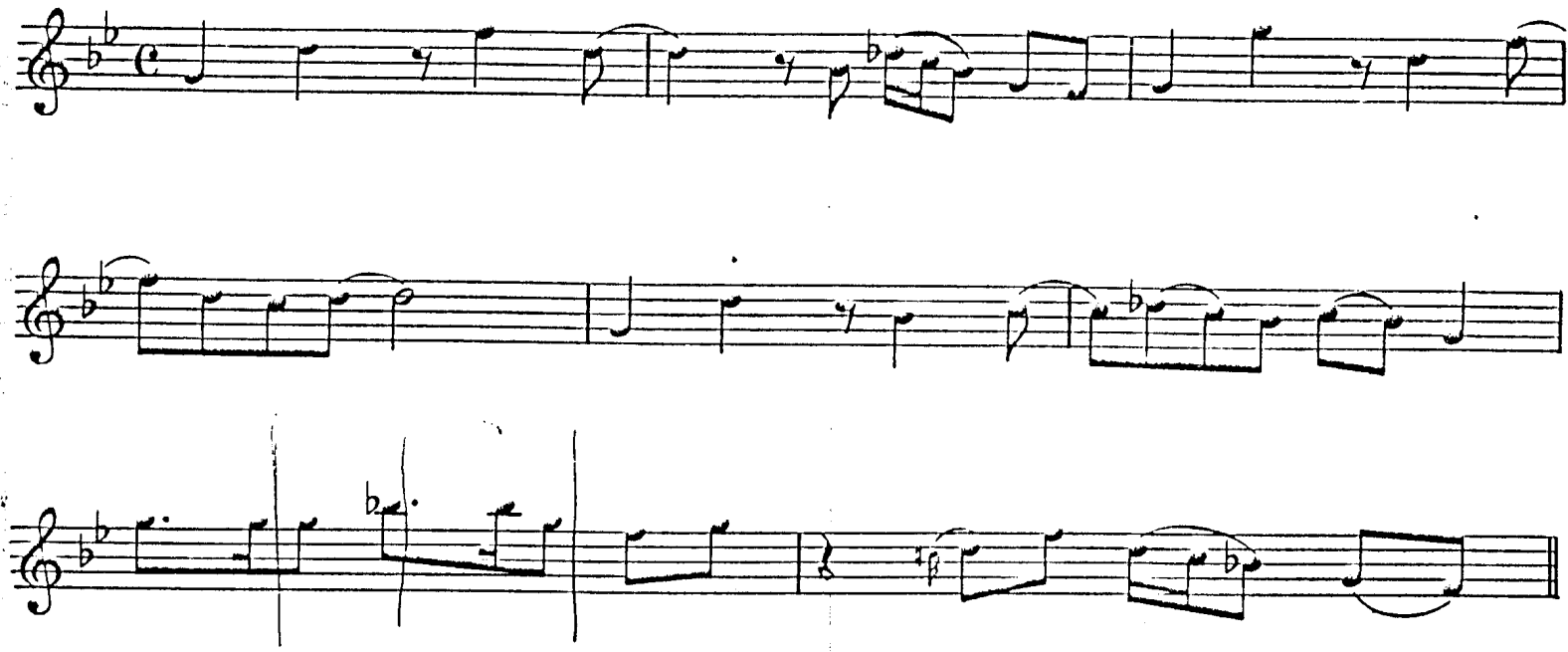
Chicago



Cow Bell

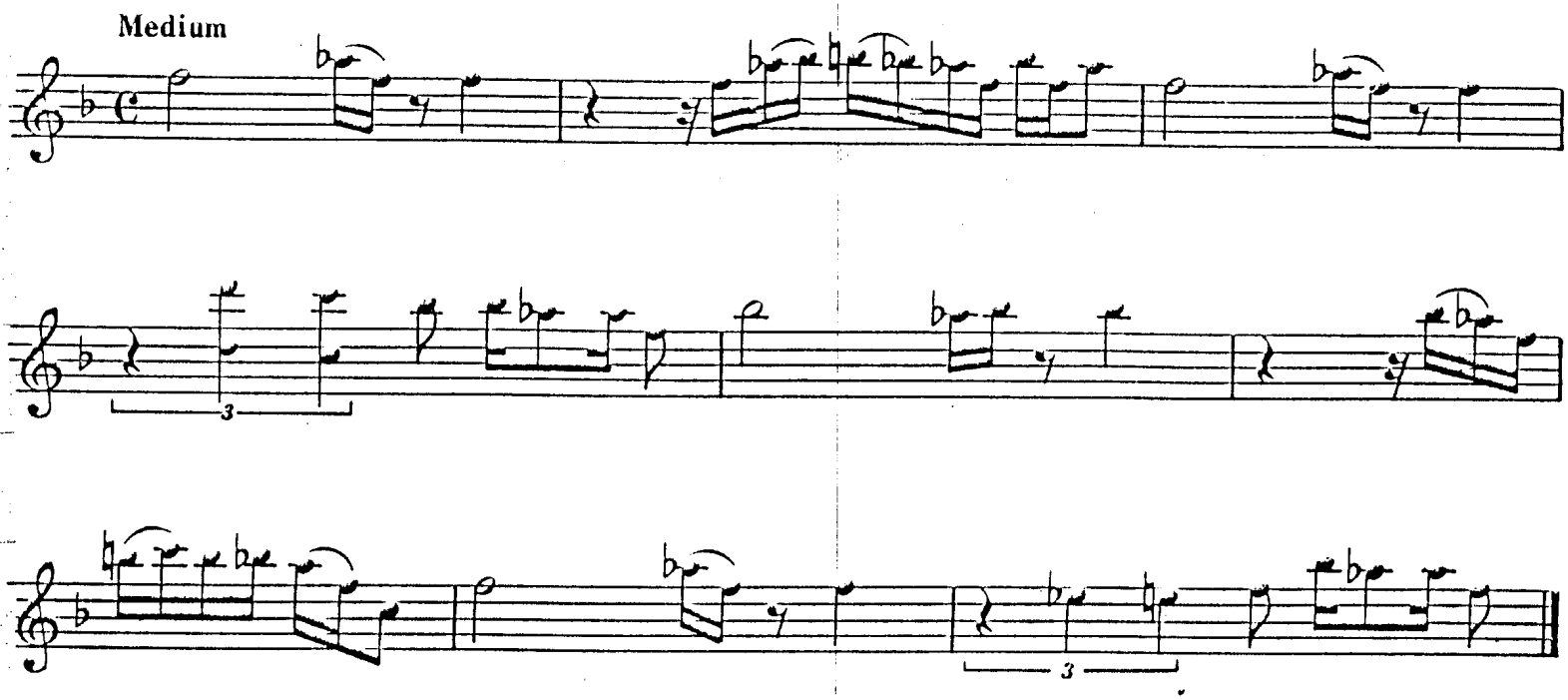


Latin Rock



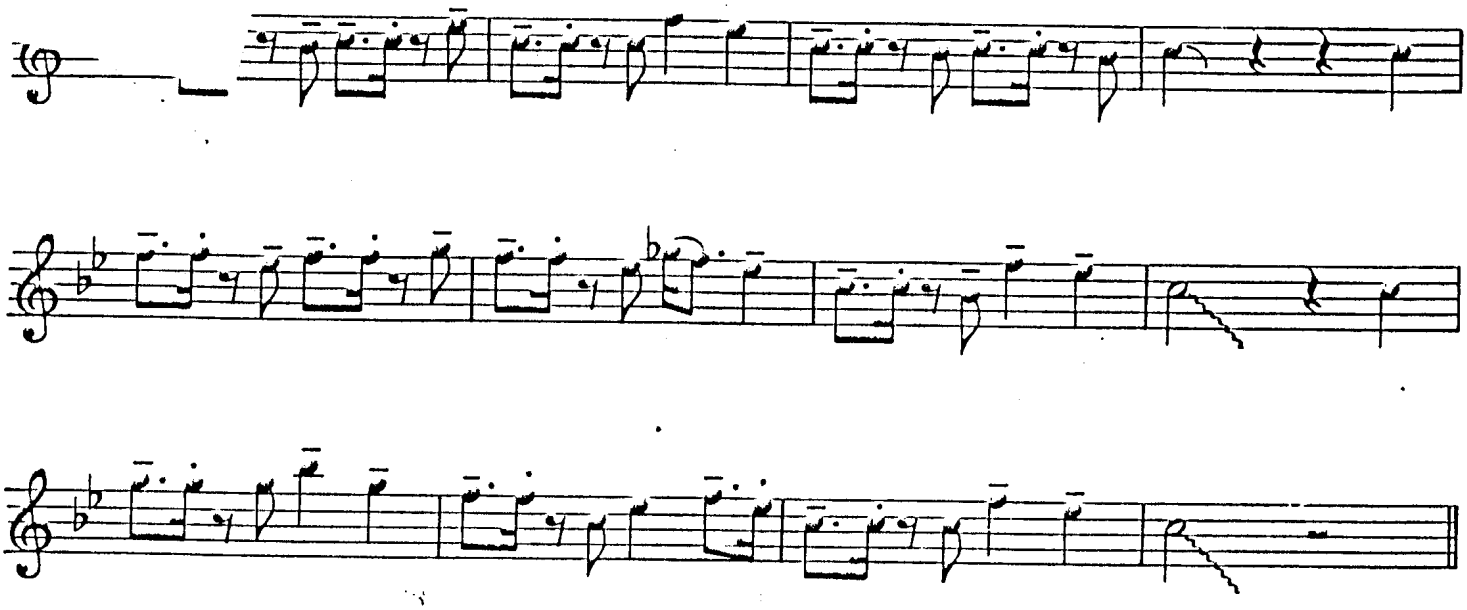
West Side Slide

Medium

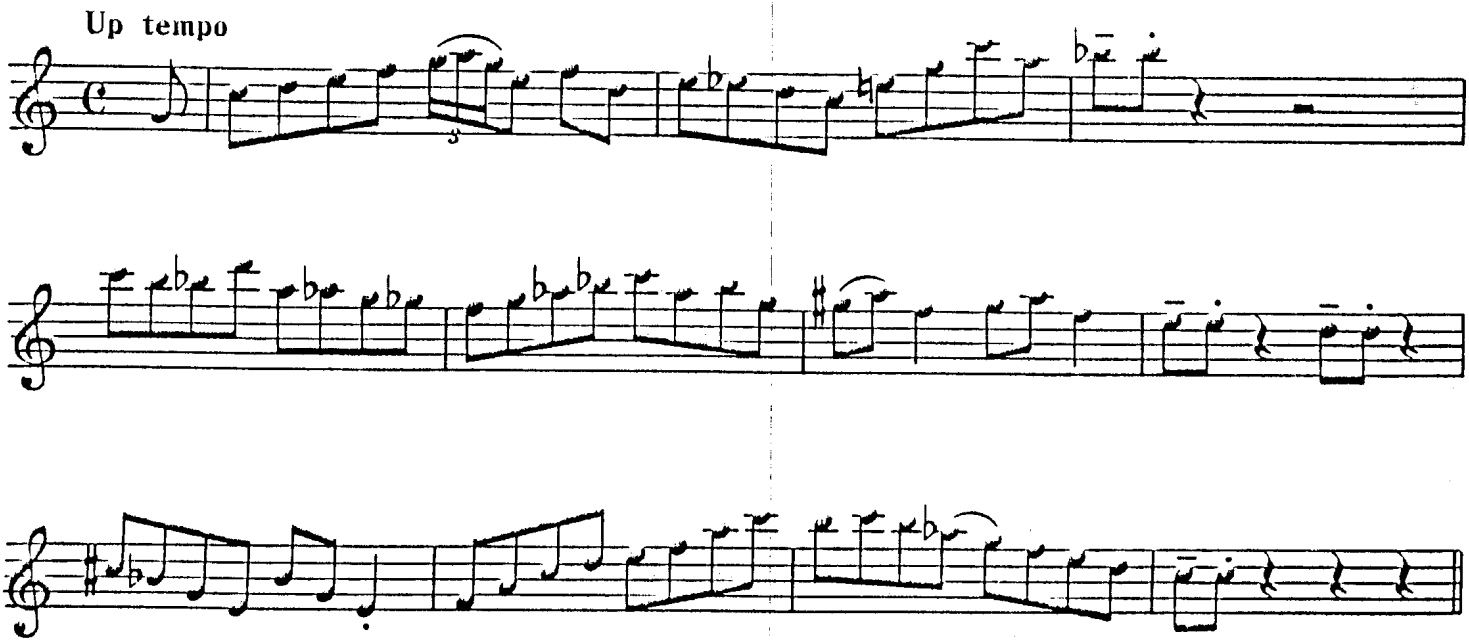


Blues

Boogie



Blues Bop



In a be-bop style blues like this, almost no tongue is used, and most phrasing is achieved by the use of breath accents.

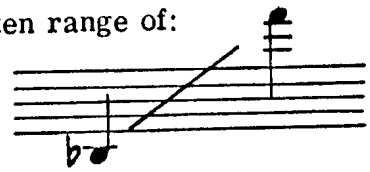
Jazz Techniques

Jazz and Contemporary Music requires certain techniques (especially in solo performance) which frequently are not perfected in studying traditional saxophone literature. There are two extremes to avoid. I have heard players with great ideas who simply did not have the technique to express themselves properly. Also, I have listened to players with great technique who played so cleanly and "legitimately" that they sounded dated and square. In studying the following pages, remember to achieve sharp and clean technique; but keep in mind that in applying technical facility—you must phrase properly so as to convey the feeling and beat of the music. Remember this—Great Technique is an incomparable asset to any style.

Technical Studies

It is important to have control and technical facility over the whole range of the saxophone.

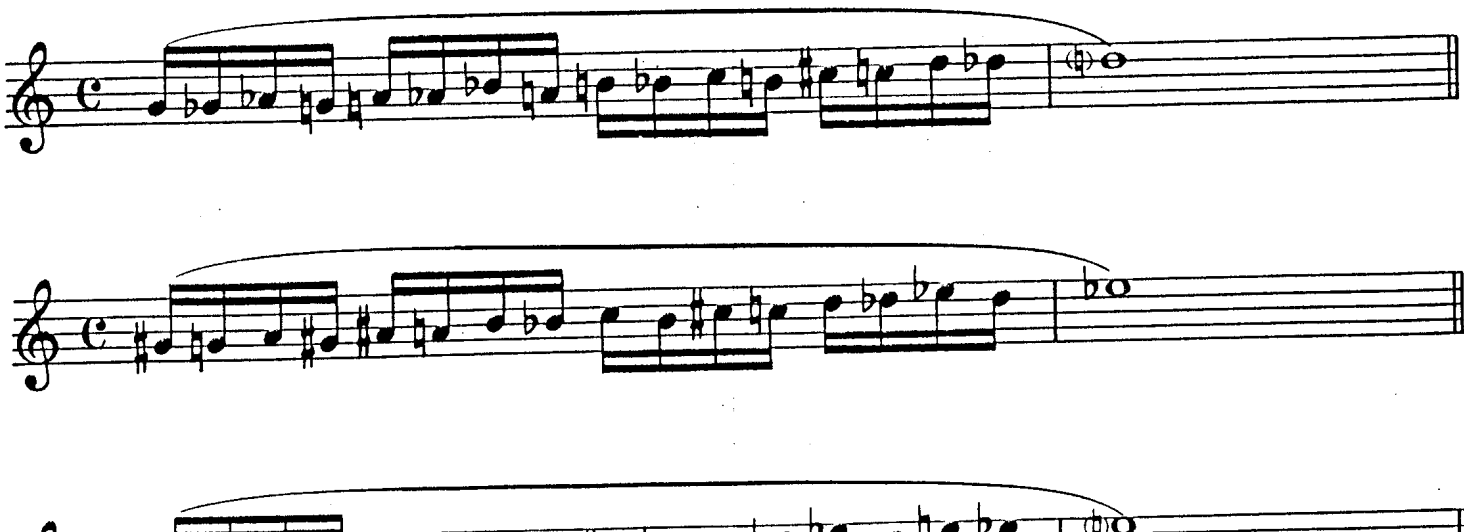
These studies will work within the basic written range of:



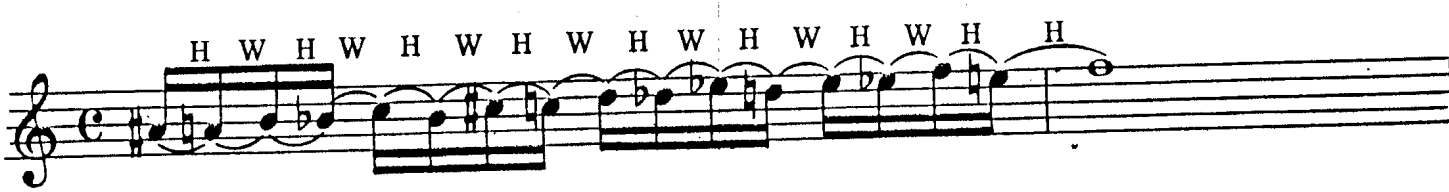
Notes above F, while possible, will not be dealt' with in this text.

Movable Patterns

Pattern #1

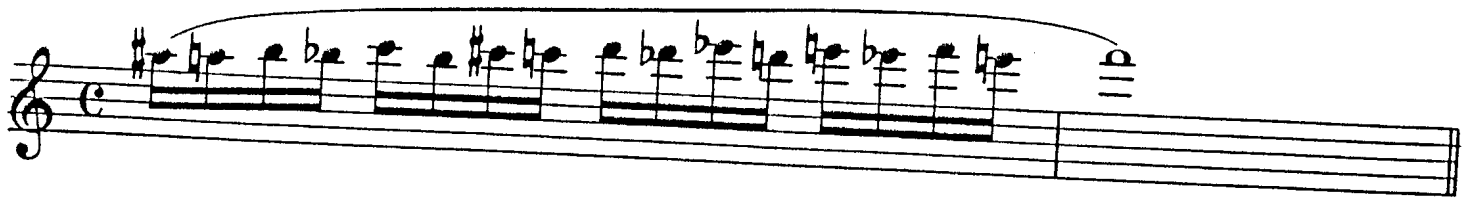


Notice the "formula" used to build this pattern:
From the starting note, a sequence of half step down-whole step up is used:

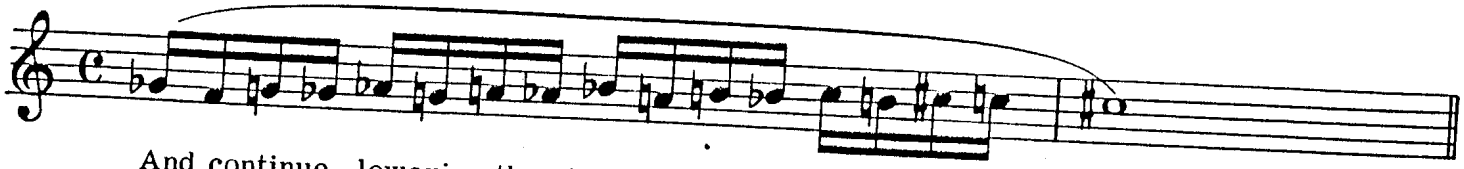


A half-step is used to resolve the pattern.

The student should continue this pattern, raising the starting note one-half step each time until reaching:

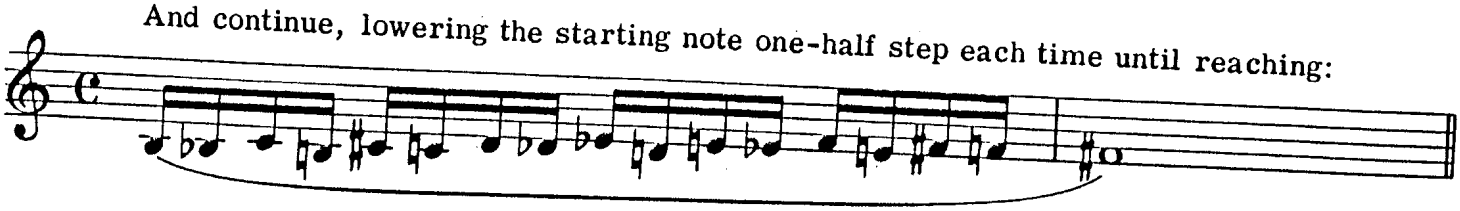


At this point - go to:



And continue, lowering the starting note one-half step each time until reaching:

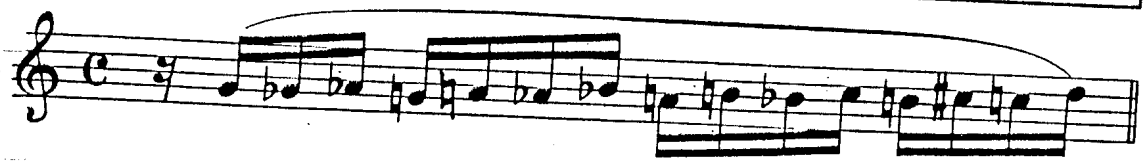
And continue, lowering the starting note one-half step each time until reaching:



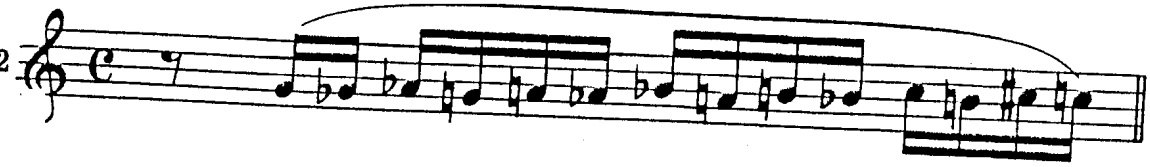
Rhythmic Variations on Pattern #1

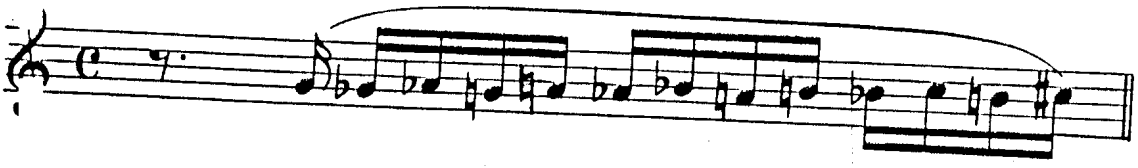
Learning to start each of these patterns on different parts of the beat will be of tremendous help when improvising. Each of the following variations should be practiced using all possible starting notes as described in the previous section.

1

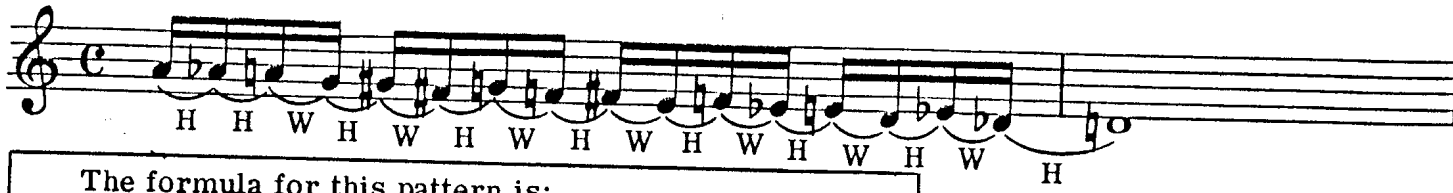


2



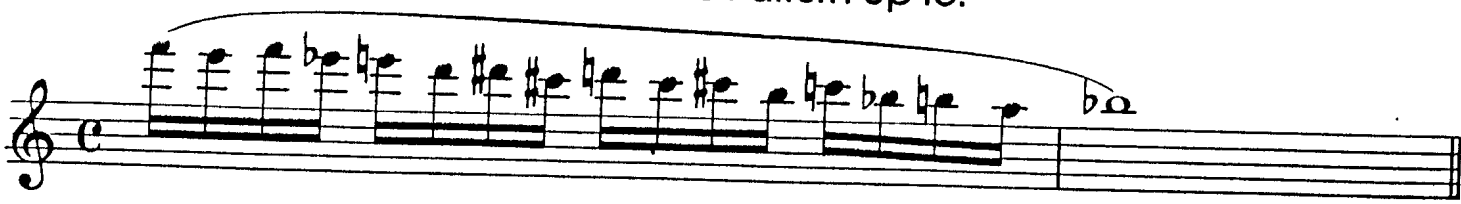


Movable Pattern #2

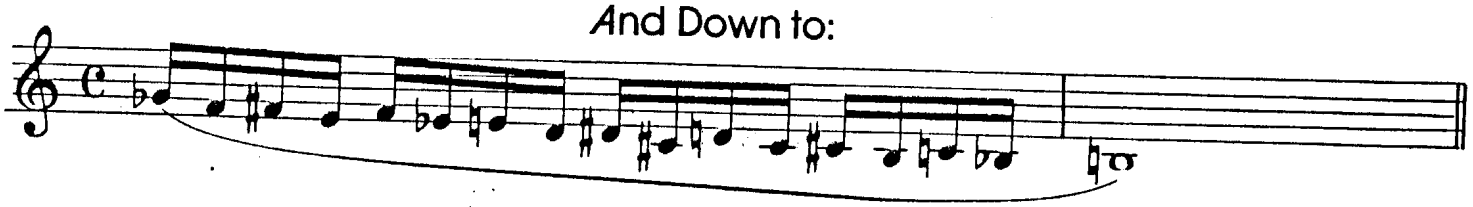


The formula for this pattern is:
1) Half step down from starting note
2) Then alternate half step up-whole step down

Continue the Pattern Up to:



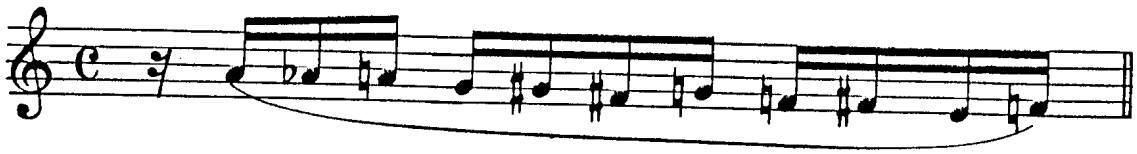
And Down to:



Variations on Pattern #2

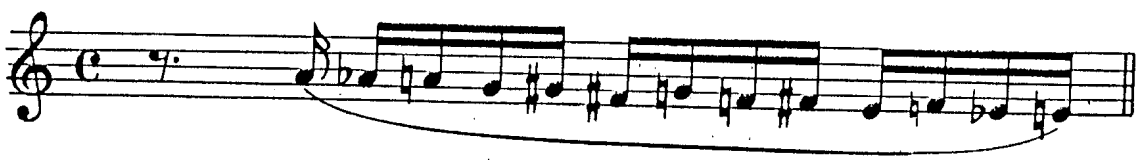
to be played from all starting notes

#1.



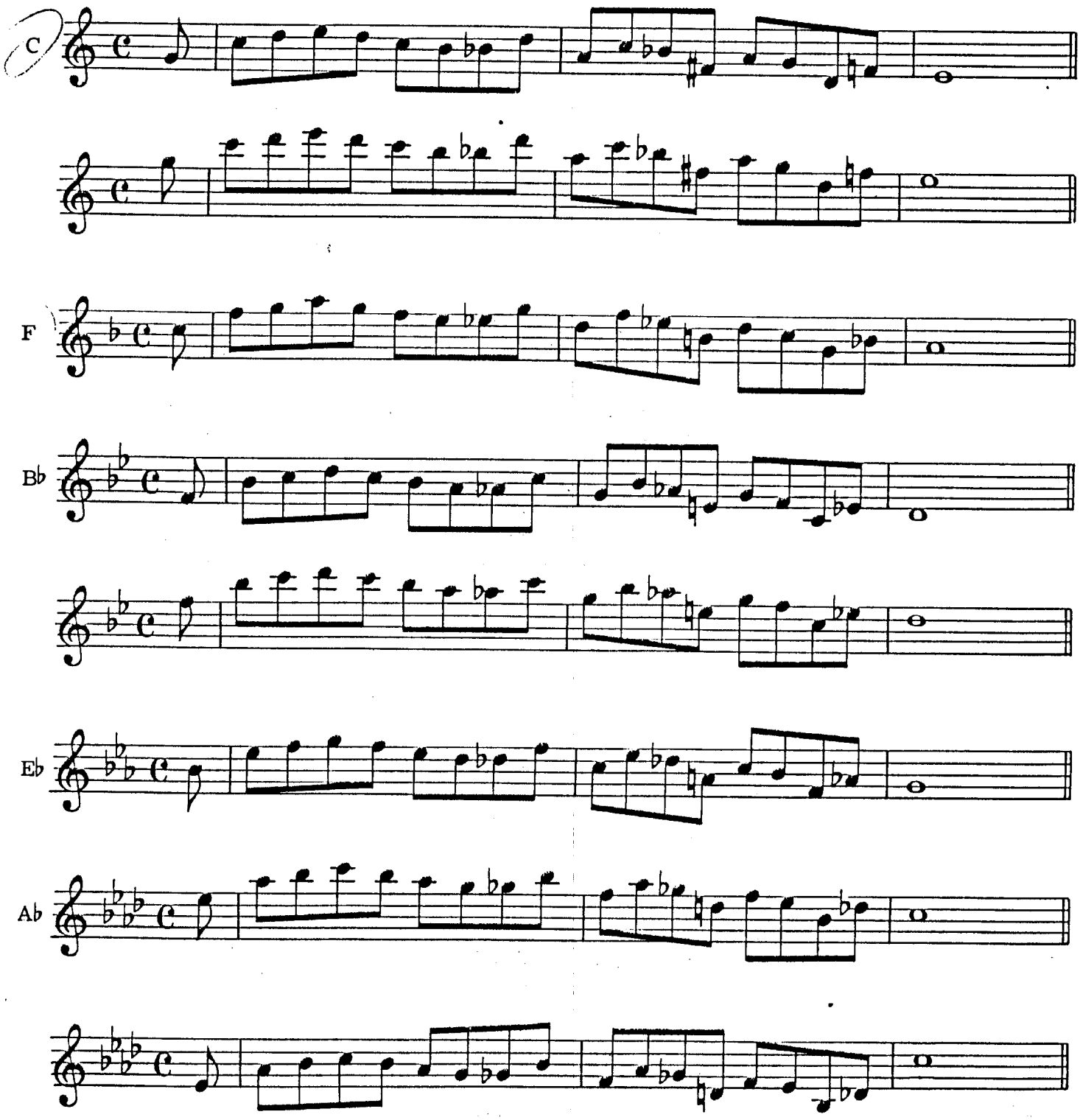
#2.

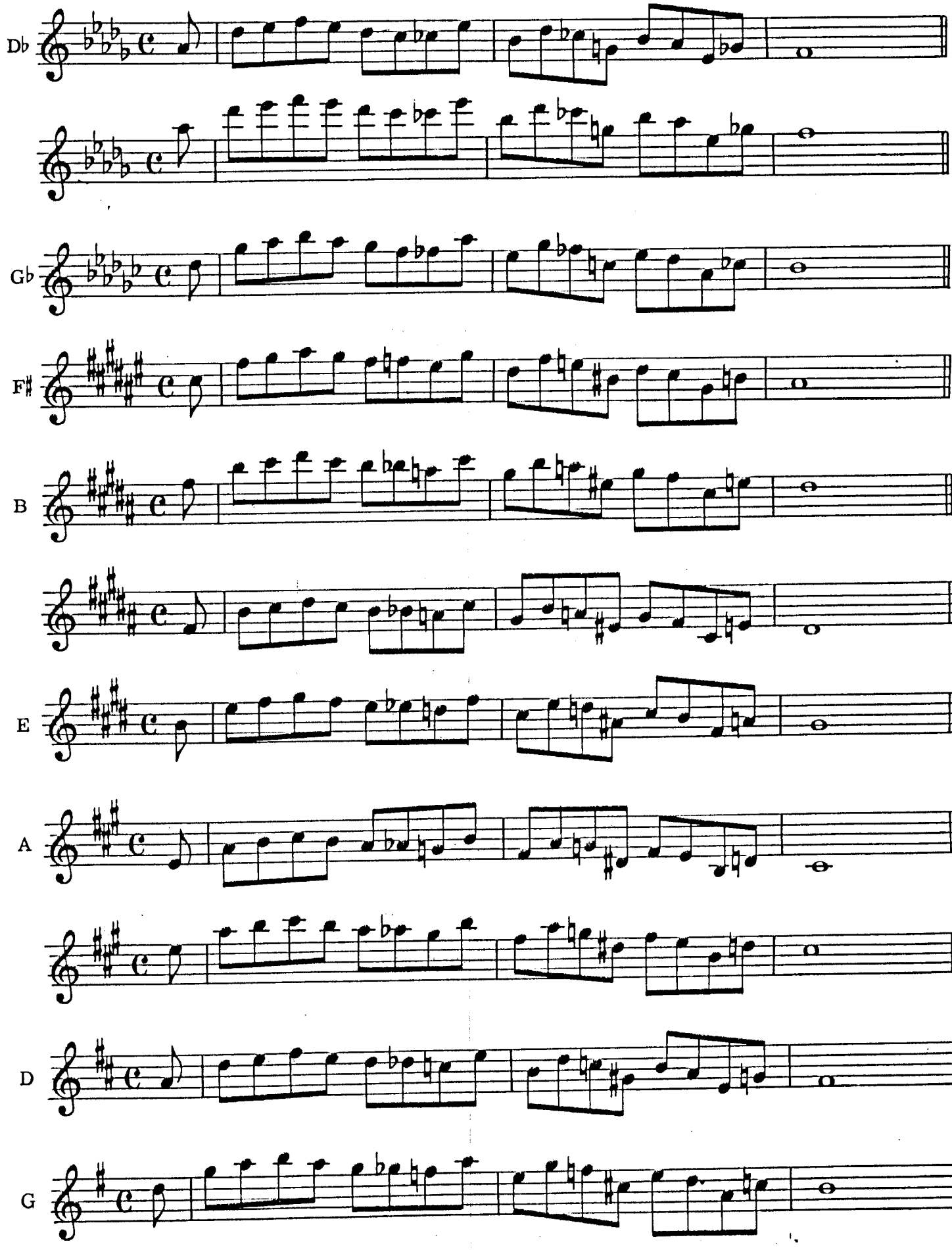
#3.



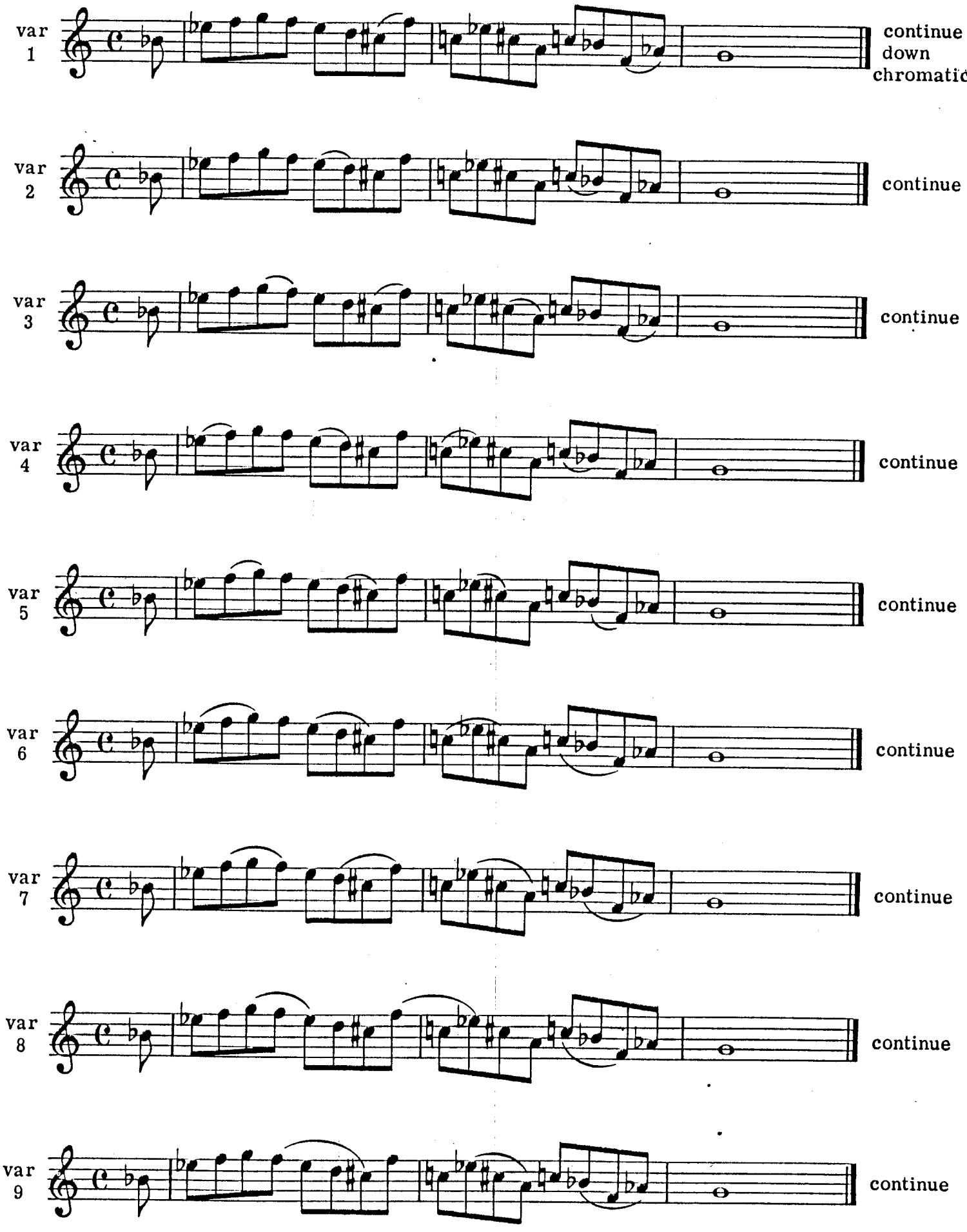
Articulation

The following patterns are valuable as articulation studies and as helpful phrases for playing through chord changes when improvising. First--learn the phrase and be able to "swing" on it. Second--memorize the phrase. Third--play the phrase down or up chromatically (Playing it up or down through the various keys by ear or memory is strongly recommended) Finally--play **in all keys by ear.**

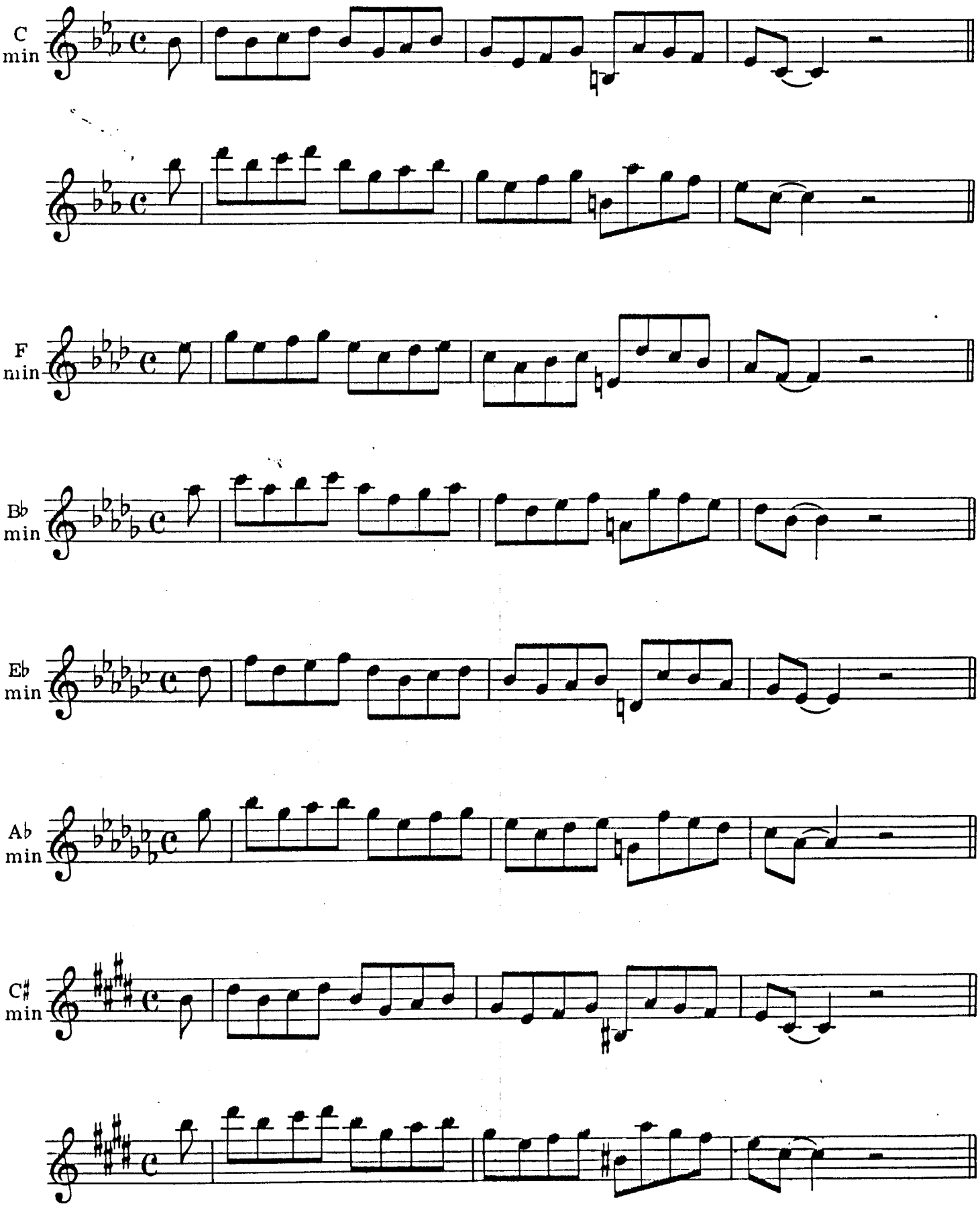


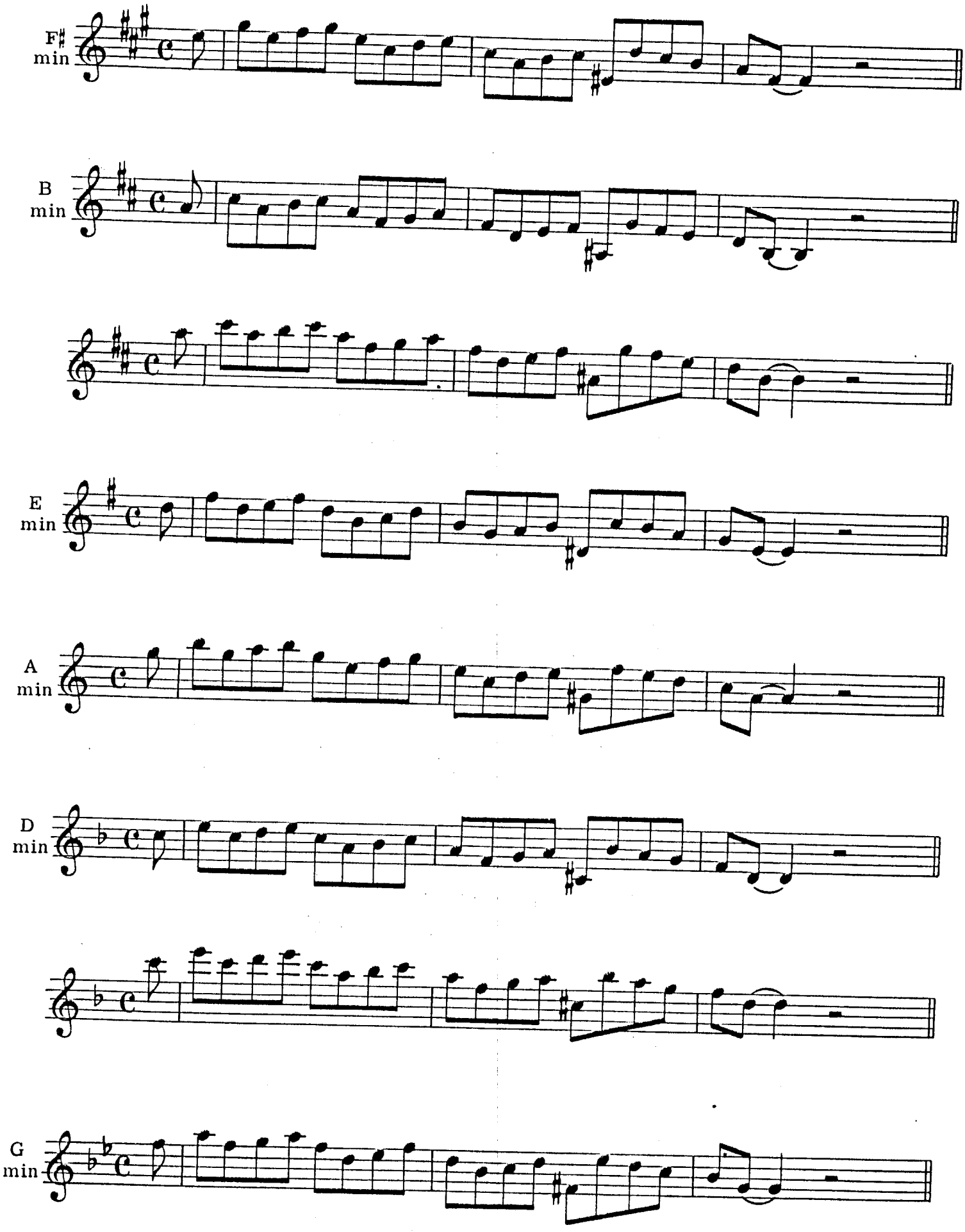

Db
Gb
F♯
B
E
A
D
G

Variations on Pattern #1

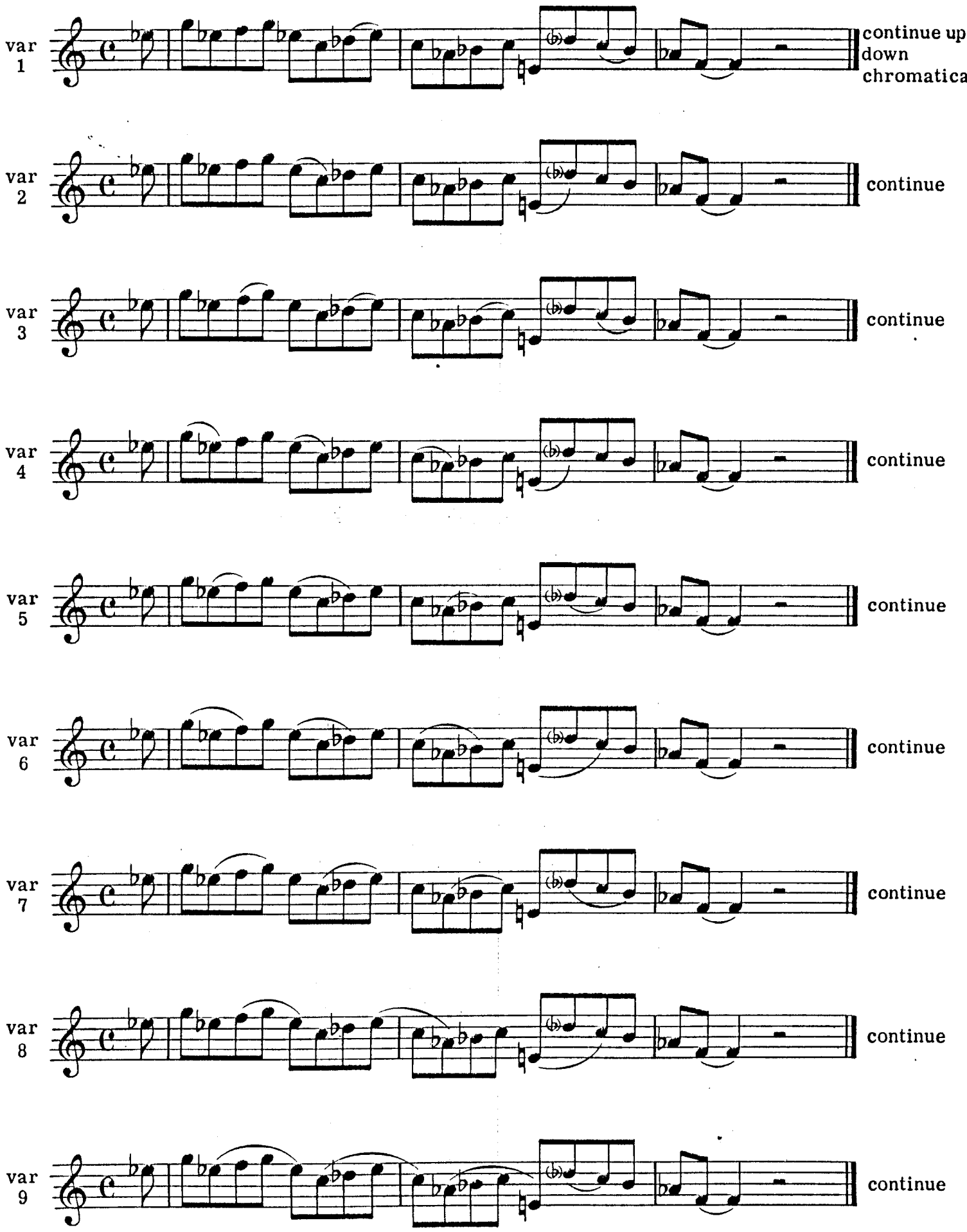


Pattern #2

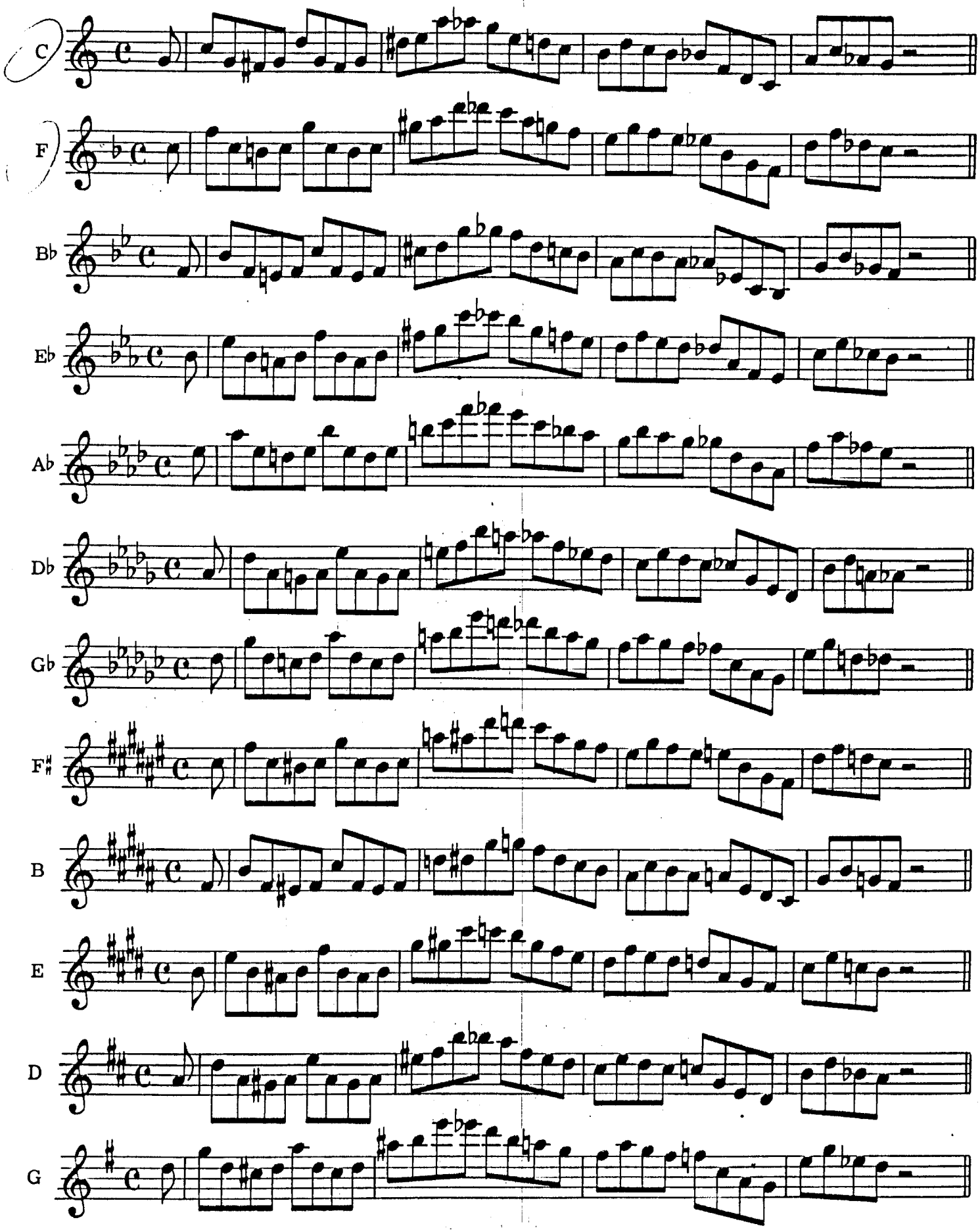



F♯
min
B
min
E
min
A
min
D
min
G
min

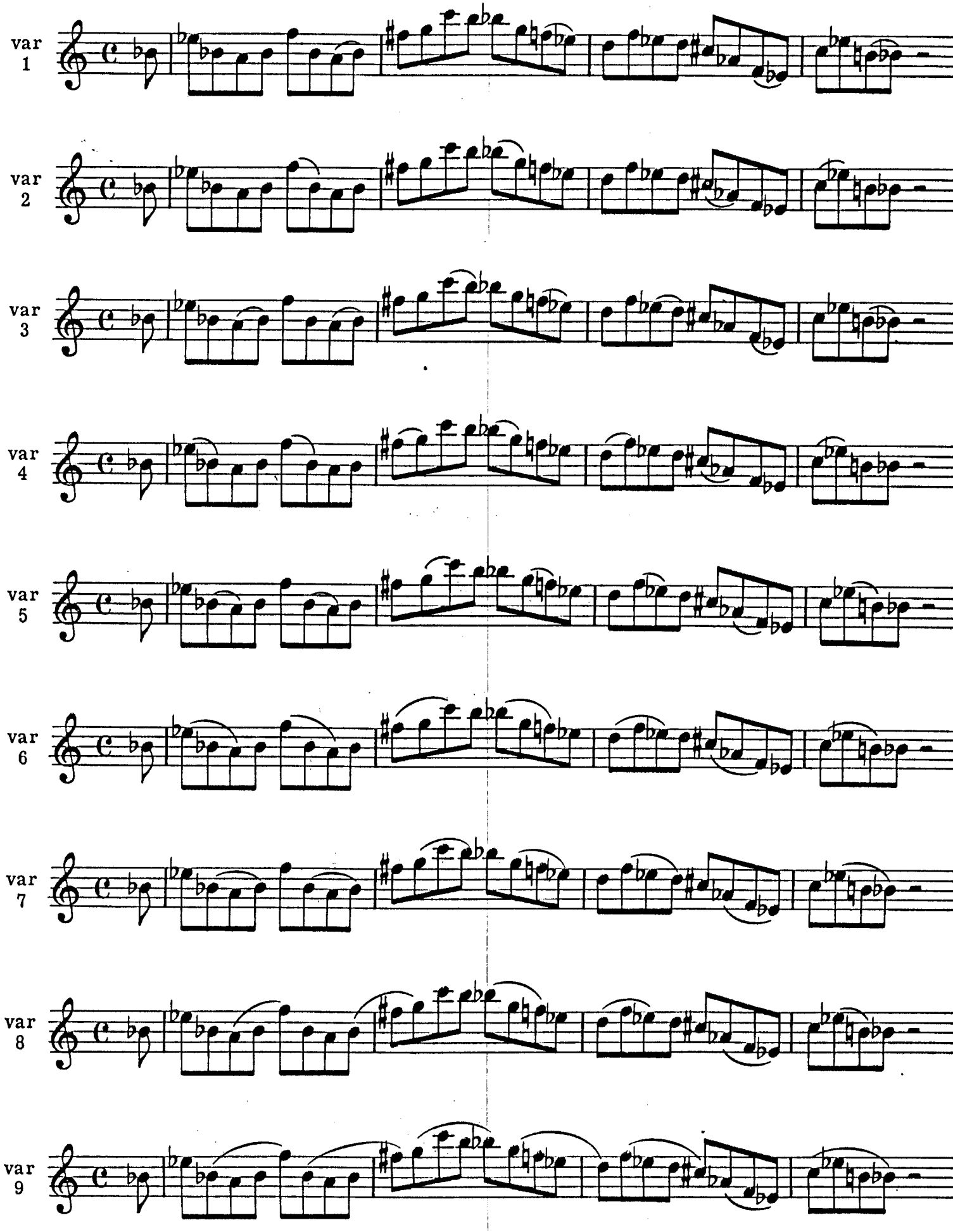
Articulation Variations on Pattern #2



Pattern #3



Articulation Variations on Pattern #3



Chord and Scale Studies

In this section, effort should be made to develop both technical and aural (hearing) skills.

Jazz musicians speak of players who have "good ears." This refers to players who have developed their aural skills to the point where they can instantly recognize and react to scales, chords, and intervals which are either played by someone else or that occur in a player's own mind as an "idea."

To help develop these skills, it is recommended that the student play **and sing** all of the exercises in this section. The singing is very important as it will help develop the aural skills internally.

Here is a procedure for practicing in this fashion:

1. Play the exercise until it sounds familiar. **Really listen** to what is being played. Don't ever practice with your "ears closed."
2. Sing the exercise using either syllables, letter names, or scale step numbers.
3. Play it again on the instrument and compare.

The development of these skills is not easy and will probably not come quickly, but serious effort will pay off; and the results are definitely worth the effort.

Chord Studies

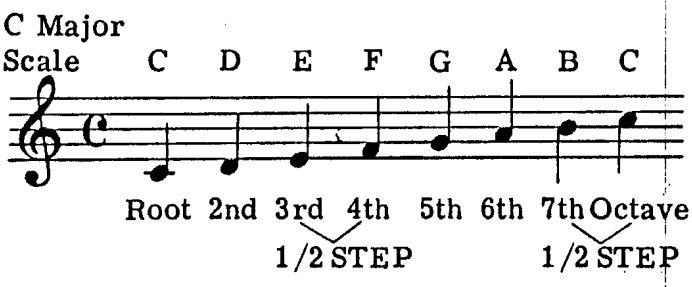
The important thing in studying chords is to learn to hear the relationship of invervals within a given chord. Training the ear by applying the following studies will help the Sax player begin to improvise with both technical and harmonic freedom.

Scale Building

Study the following section on scale building and constructing chords from scale degrees, so that you will understand the musical theory behind the studies that follow.

Major Scale

A MAJOR SCALE IS A SERIES OF EIGHT NOTES ARRANGED IN A PATTERN OF WHOLE STEPS AND HALF STEPS.



C to D = Whole Step
D to E = Whole Step
E to F = 1/2 Step
F to G = Whole Step
G to A = Whole Step
A to B = Whole Step
B to C = 1/2 Step

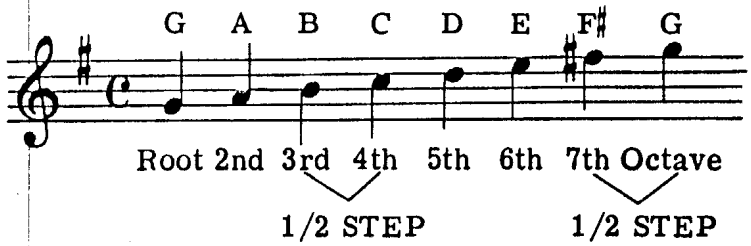
TO CONSTRUCT A MAJOR SCALE WE FIRST START WITH THE NAME OF THE SCALE (Frequently called the Root or Tonic). WITH THE C SCALE THIS WOULD BE THE NOTE "C". THE REST OF THE SCALE WOULD FALL IN LINE AS FOLLOWS:

SCALE TONES		DISTANCE FROM PRECEDING NOTE
ROOT	(C)	
2nd	(D)	WHOLE STEP
3rd	(E)	WHOLE STEP
4th	(F)	1/2 STEP
5th	(G)	WHOLE STEP
6th	(A)	WHOLE STEP
7th	(B)	WHOLE STEP
Octave	(C)	1/2 STEP

WITH THE ABOVE FORMULA YOU CAN CONSTRUCT ANY MAJOR SCALE!

G Major Scale

TO CONSTRUCT THE G MAJOR SCALE, START WITH THE NOTE G, CONSTRUCT IT AS FOLLOWS:



NOTICE THAT IN ORDER TO MAKE OUR FORMULA WORK WITH THE G SCALE WE MUST SHARP (♯) THE F. THERE MUST BE A WHOLE STEP BETWEEN THE 6th AND 7th TONES OF THE SCALE. IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A WHOLE STEP BETWEEN E AND F WE MUST SHARP THE F.

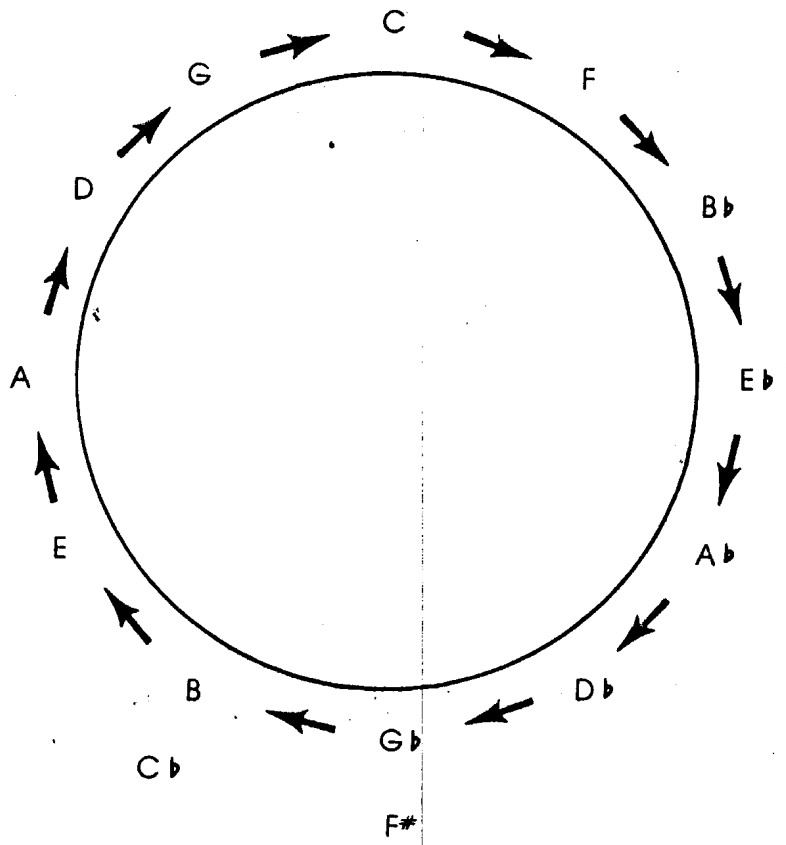
Note : The student's success in learning to hear chords in this section is entirely dependant upon his diligence in playing the chord study examples in all keys!

CHORD BUILDING CHART*

Chord Type	*Scale Degrees Used*	*Symbols*
Major	Root, 3rd, 5th	Maj
Minor	Root, ♭3rd, 5th	mi, –, m
Diminished	Root, ♭3rd, ♭5th, 𝄫7th	dim, °
Augmented	Root, 3rd, ♯5th	+, aug.
Dominant Seventh	Root, 3rd, 5th, ♭7th	dom. 7, 7
Minor Seventh	Root, ♭3rd, 5th, ♭7th	-7, min 7
Major Seventh	Root, 3rd, 5th, maj. 7th	M7, ma 7
Major Sixth	Root, 3rd, 5th, 6th	M6, M6, 6
Minor Sixth	Root, ♭3rd, 5th, 6th	mi 6, –6
Seventh ♯5th	Root, 3rd, ♯5th, ♭7th	$7^{\sharp 5}$, 7^{+5}
Seventh ♭5th	Root, 3rd, ♭5th, ♭7th	7^{-5}, $7^{\flat 5}$
Major 7th ♭3rd	Root, ♭3rd, 5th, maj. 7th	Ma 7^{-3}
Minor 7th ♭5th	Root, ♭3rd, ♭5th, ♭7th	mi 7^{-5}, $-7^{\flat 5}$
Seventh Suspended 4th	Root, 4th, 5th, ♭7th	7 sus 4
Ninth	Root, 3rd, 5th, ♭7th, 9th	9
Minor Ninth	Root, ♭3rd, 5th, ♭7th, 9th	mi 9, –9
Major Ninth	Root, 3rd, 5th, maj. 7th, 9th	Ma 9
Ninth Augmented 5th	Root, 3rd, ♯5th, ♭7th, 9th	9^{+5}, $9^{\sharp 5}$
Ninth Flatted 5th	Root, 3rd, ♭5th, ♭7th, 9th	9^{-5}, $9^{\flat 5}$
Seventh ♭9	Root, 3rd, 5th, ♭7th, ♭9th	7^{-9}, $7^{\flat 9}$
Augmented Ninth	Root, 3rd, 5th, ♭7th, ♯9th	9^{+}, $7^{\sharp 9}$
9/6	Root, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 9th	6 add 9
Eleventh	Root, 3rd, 5th, ♭7th, 9th, 11th	11
Augmented Eleventh	Root, 3rd, 5th, ♭7th, 9th, ♯11th	11^{+}, 7 aug 11
Thirteenth	Root, 3rd, 5th, ♭7th, 9th, 11th, 13th	13
Thirteenth ♭9	Root, 3rd, 5th, ♭7th, ♭9th, 11th, 13th	$13^{\flat 9}$
Thirteenth ♭9♭5	Root, 3rd, ♭5th, ♭7th, ♭9th, 11th, 13th	$13^{\flat 9\flat 5}$
Half Diminished	Root, ♭3rd, ♭5th, ♭7th	∅

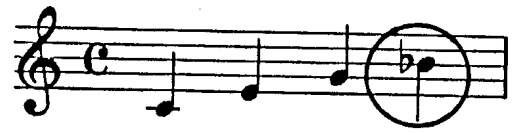
*Note—To arrive at scale degrees above 1 octave, (i.e. 9th, 11th, 13th) continue your scale up 2 octaves and keep numbering. The 2nd scale degree will be th 9th tone as you begin your second octave.

Order of Keys for Practicing

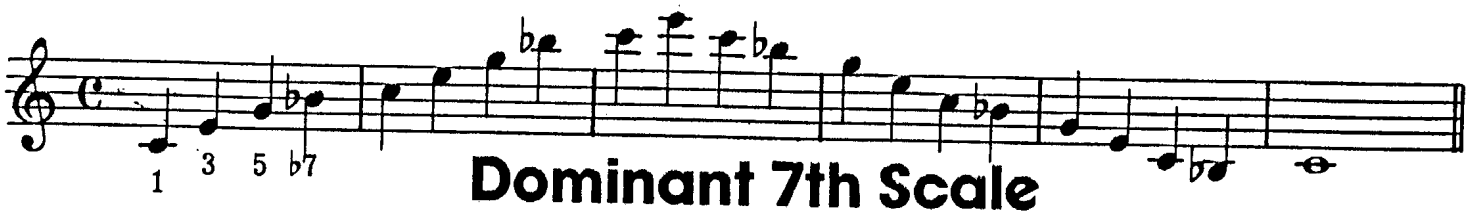


The circle is known as the "Circle of Fifths" because each tone is the interval of a perfect fifth lower than the tone preceeding it.

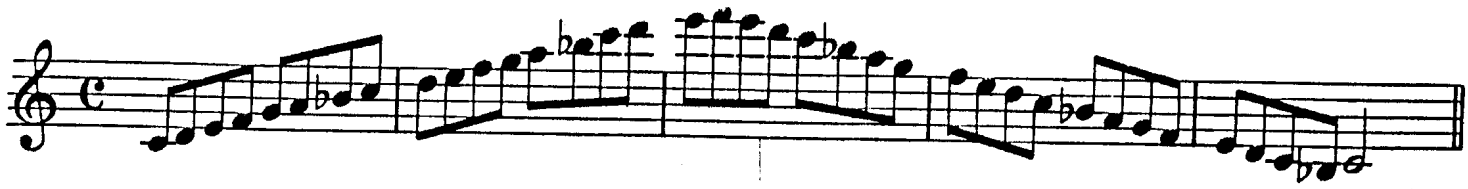
Dominant 7th Chord



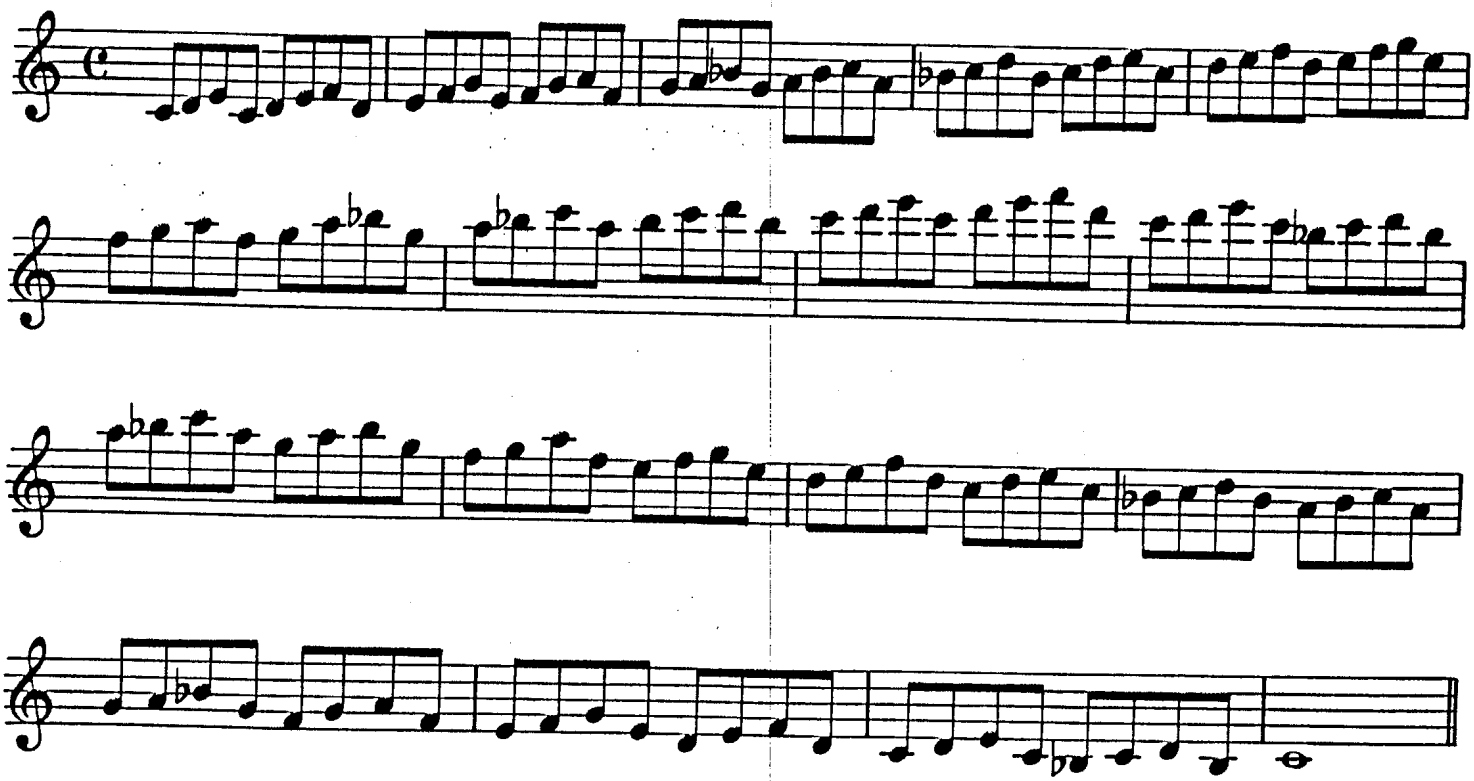
* The dominant seventh chord usually resolves to a fourth. (Play the arpeggio and then sing it. Singing is esential for ear training.)



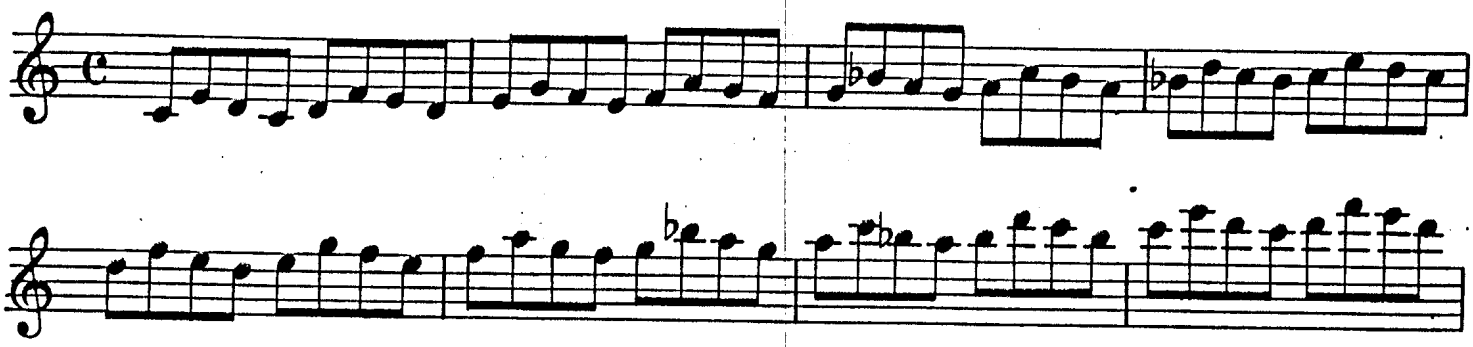
Dominant 7th Scale

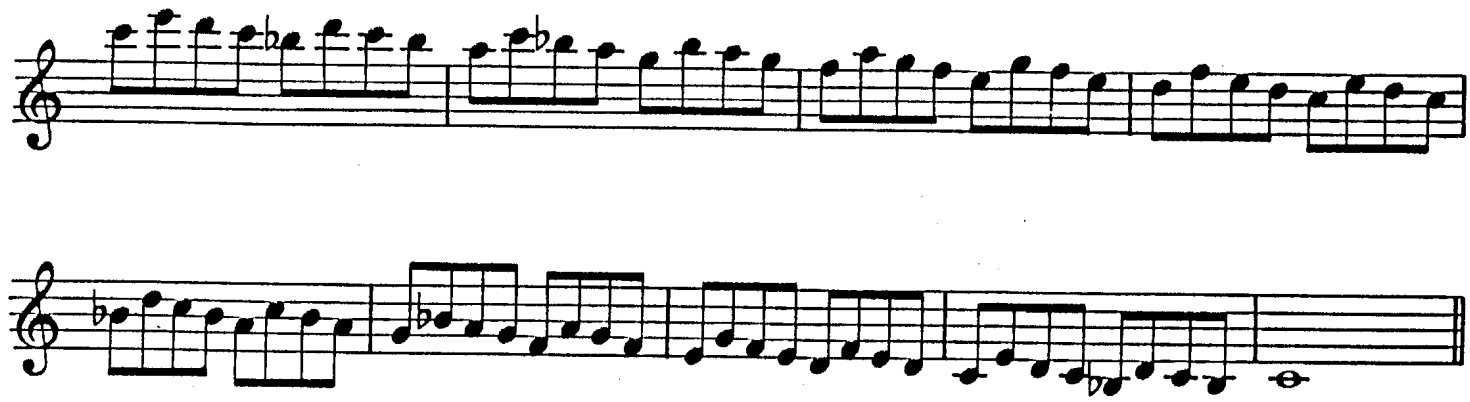


Study #1

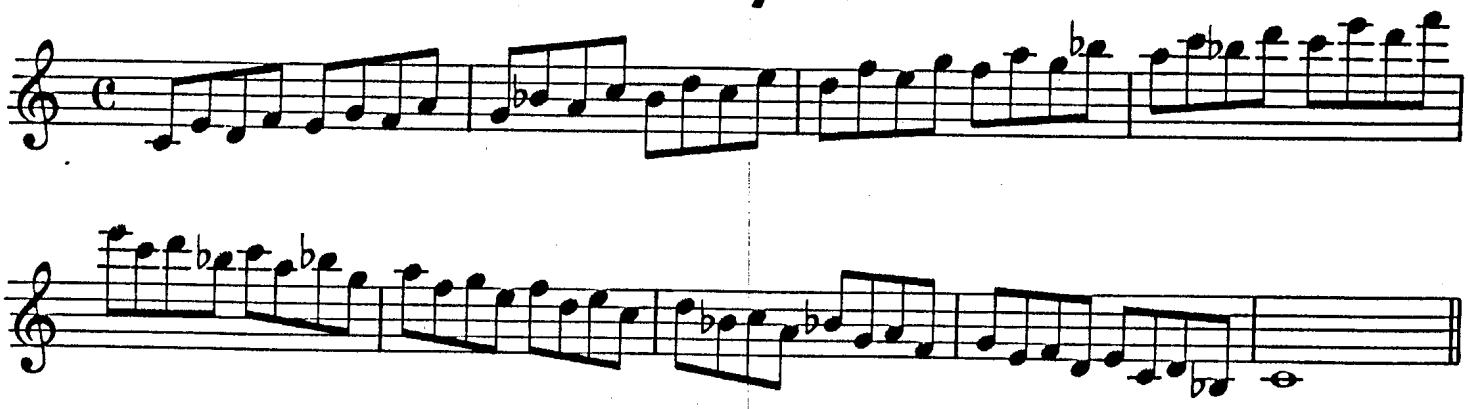


Study #2





Study #3



All chords, scales and studies should be played in all keys, using the following order and this procedure

1) Start on the lowest possible root:

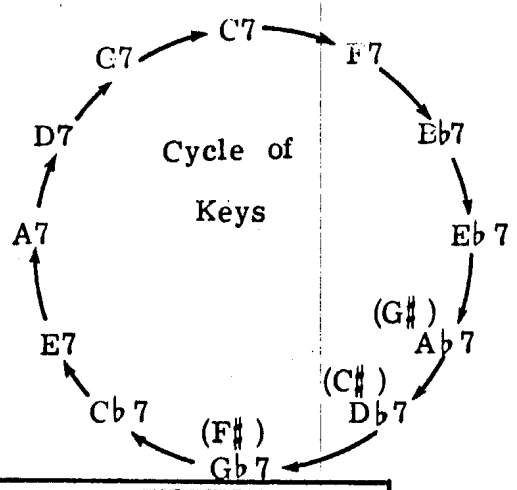
Example - in the key of F, start on not on

2) Play each as high as possible (up to and including high F) as determined by the notes in the particular chord, scale or study, and down as low as possible.
3) Play back up to finish on the starting note.

Resolution of Dominant 7th

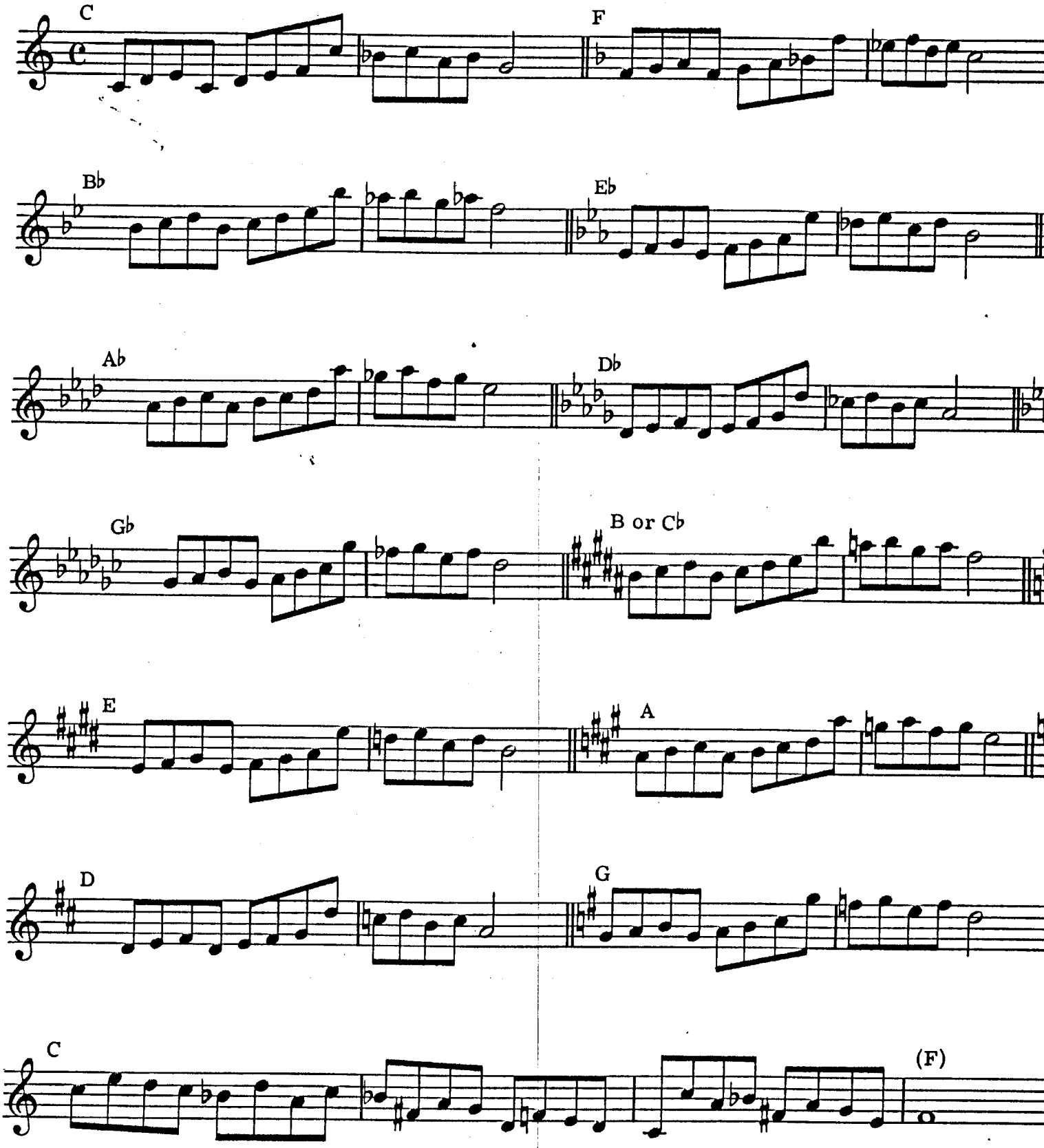
The dom. 7th usually resolves to a chord down a fifth (or up a fourth).

Thus:



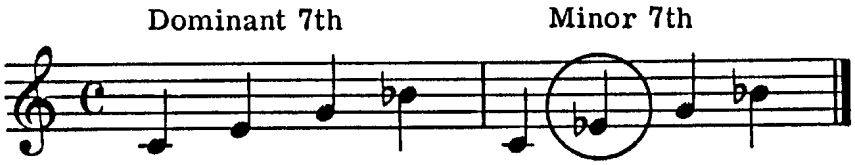
Note: Practice the above studies in all keys!

Blowin' Dom. 7th Through the Keys

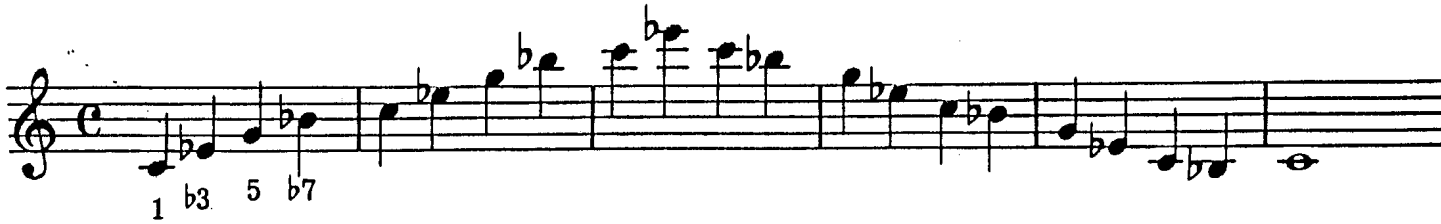


For a complete study into the technical and harmonic aspects of Jazz Improvising. See Bill Bay's Sax Improvising.

Minor 7th Chord

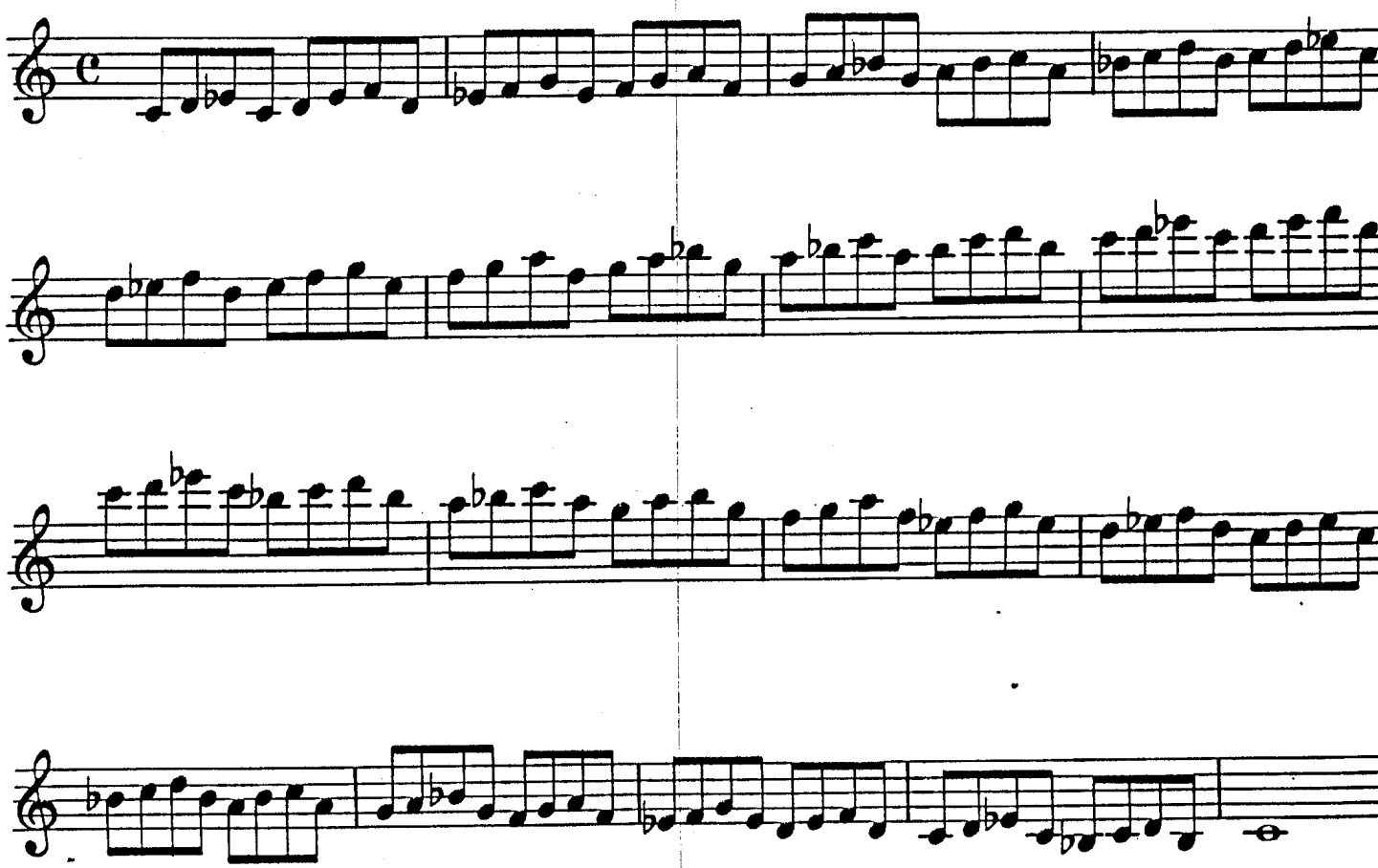


The basic resolution of a minor 7th chord is to IV7.
Thus, Cm7 ⟶ F7.

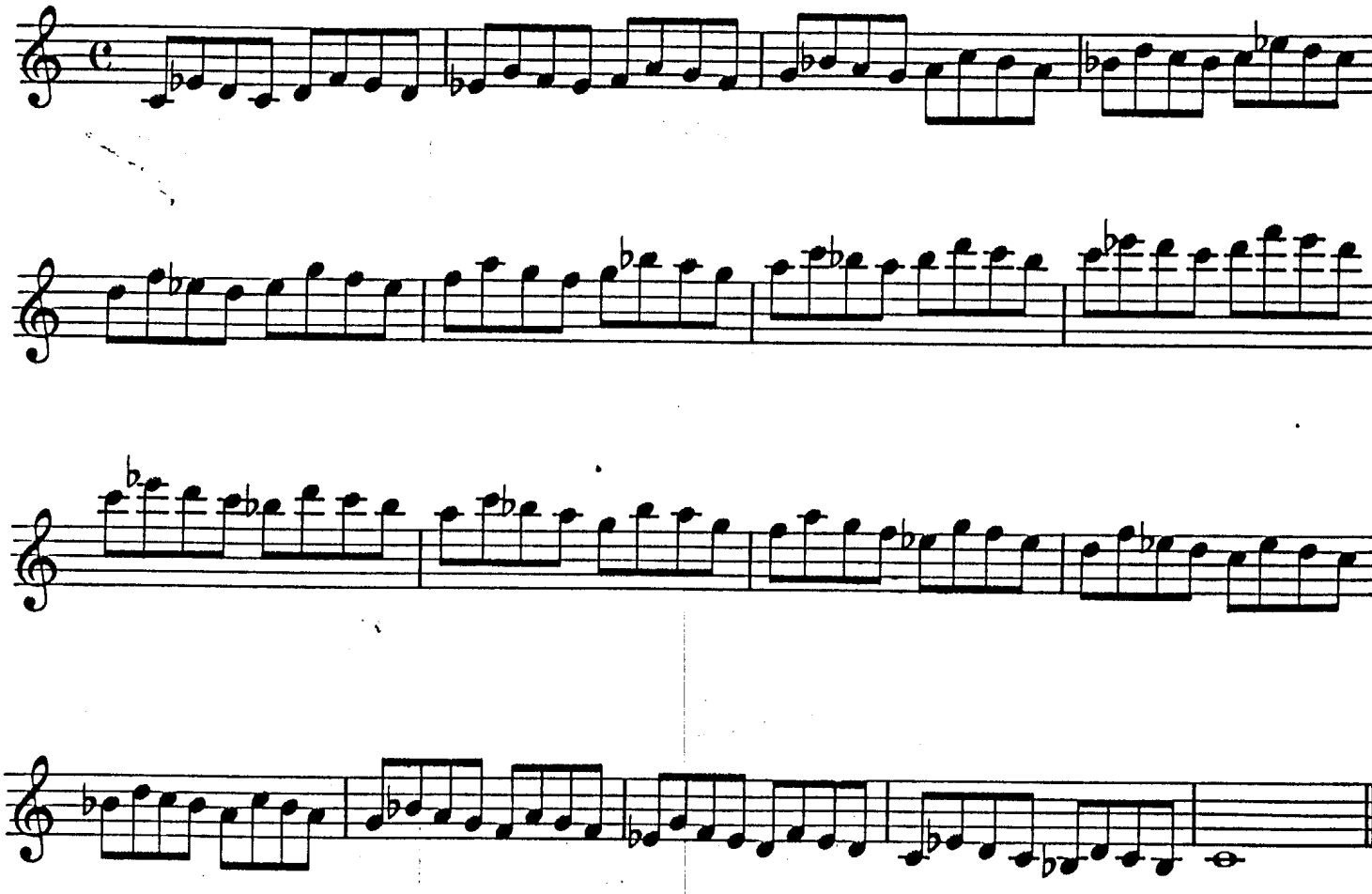


Minor 7th Scale

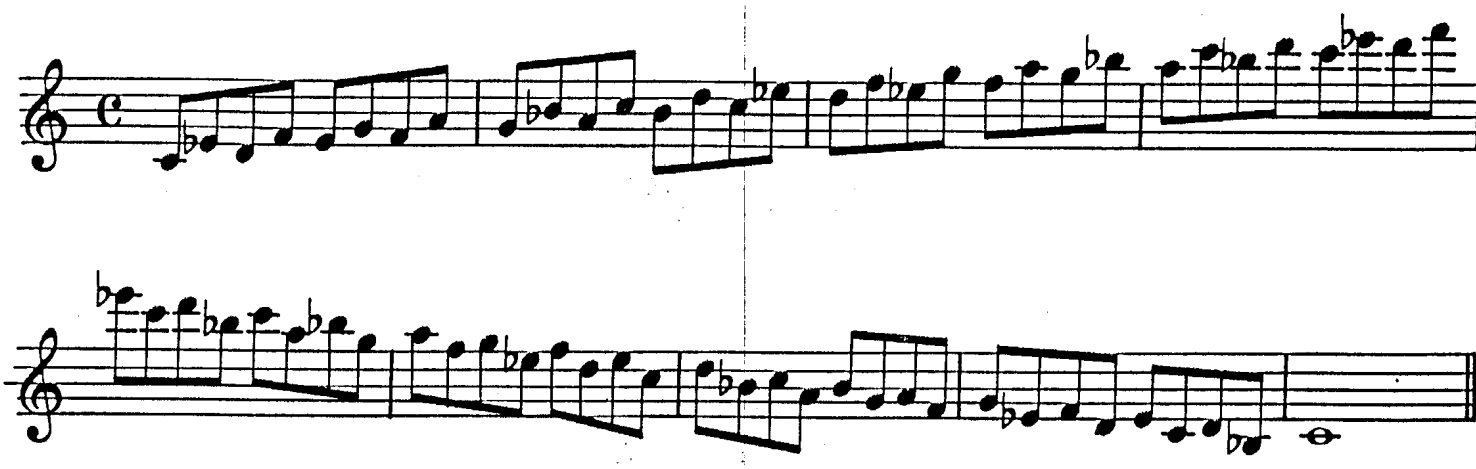
Study #1



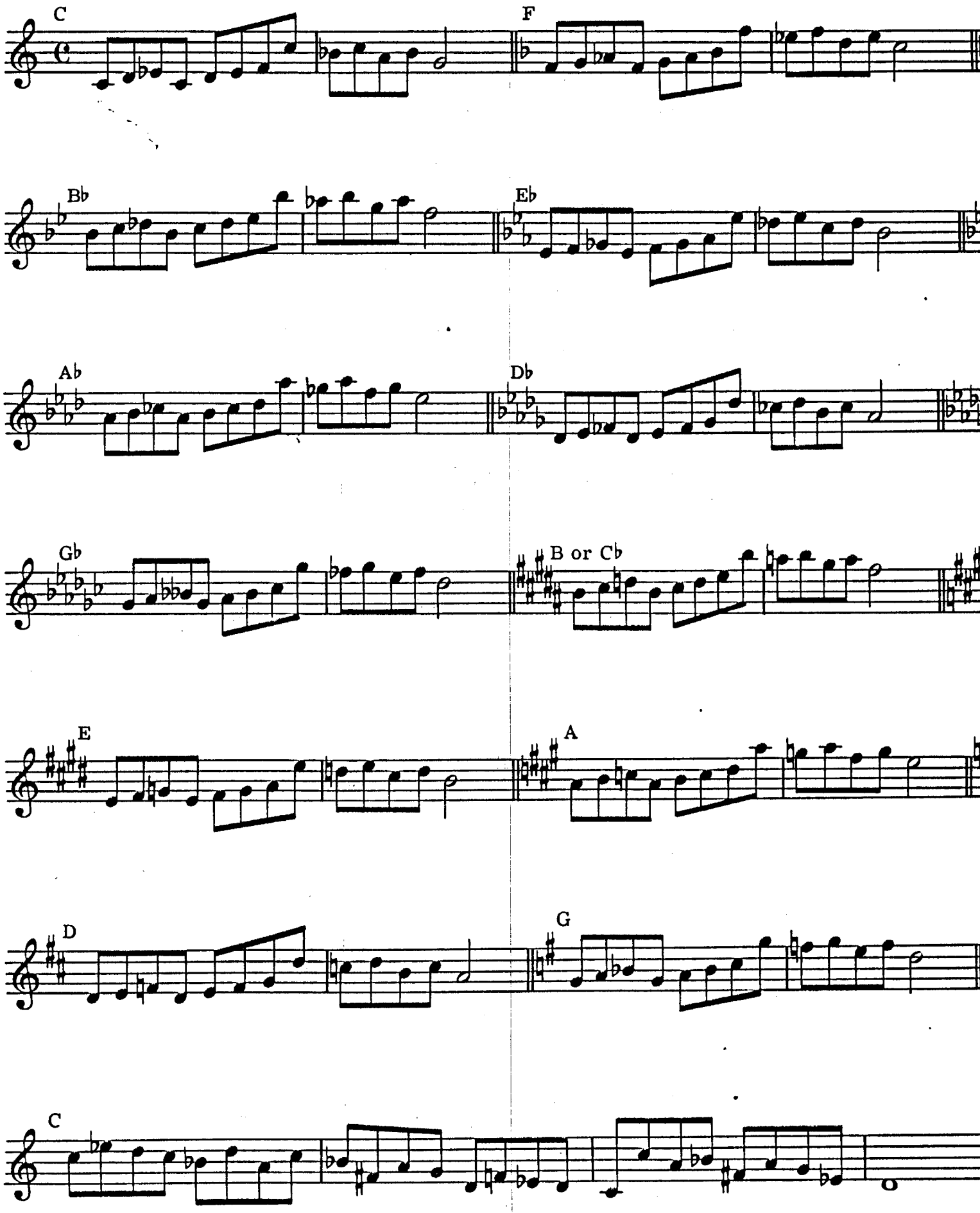
Study #2



Study #3

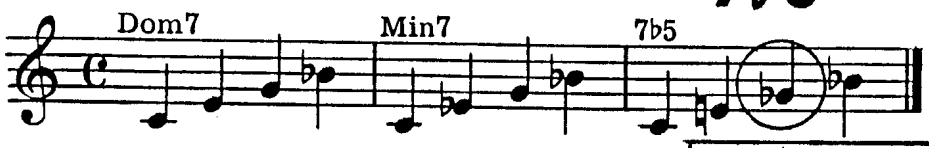


Blowin' Minor 7th Through the Keys



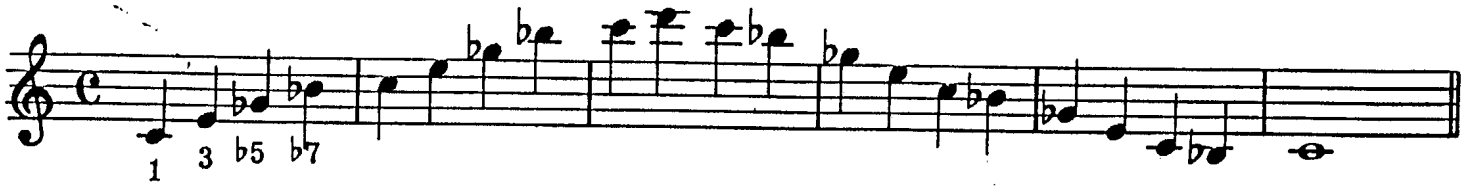
Play and sing!

7♭5

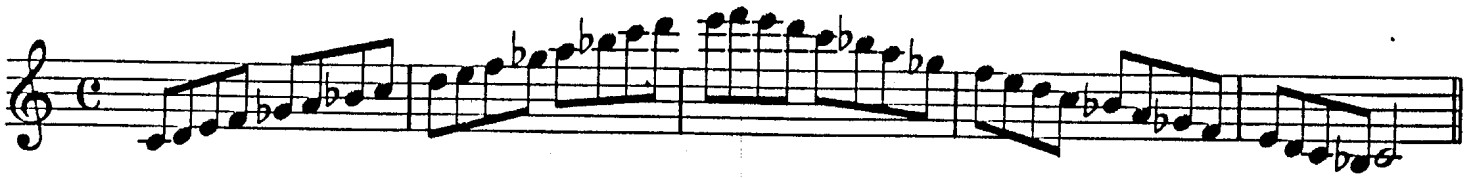


7♭5 Chord

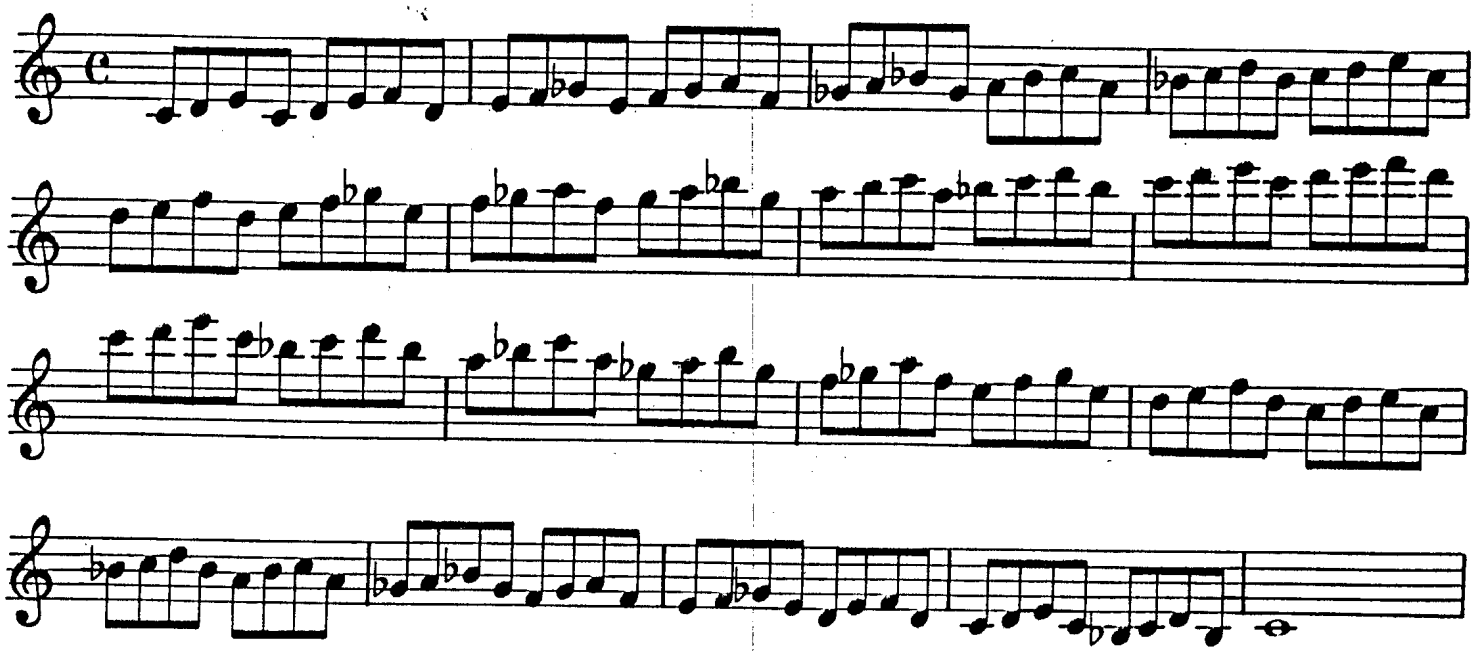
The 7♭5 chord resolves usually in 2 alternate ways.
1. To a 4th step thus: (C7♭5→) F
2. Or to a half step lower thus: (C7♭5→) B



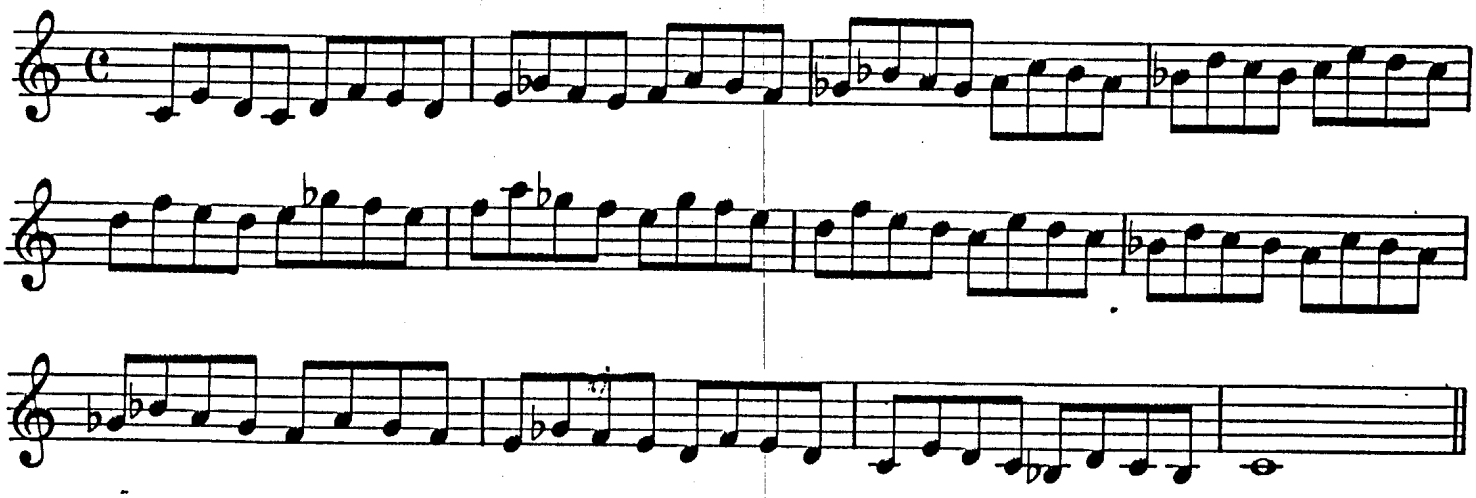
7♭5 Scale



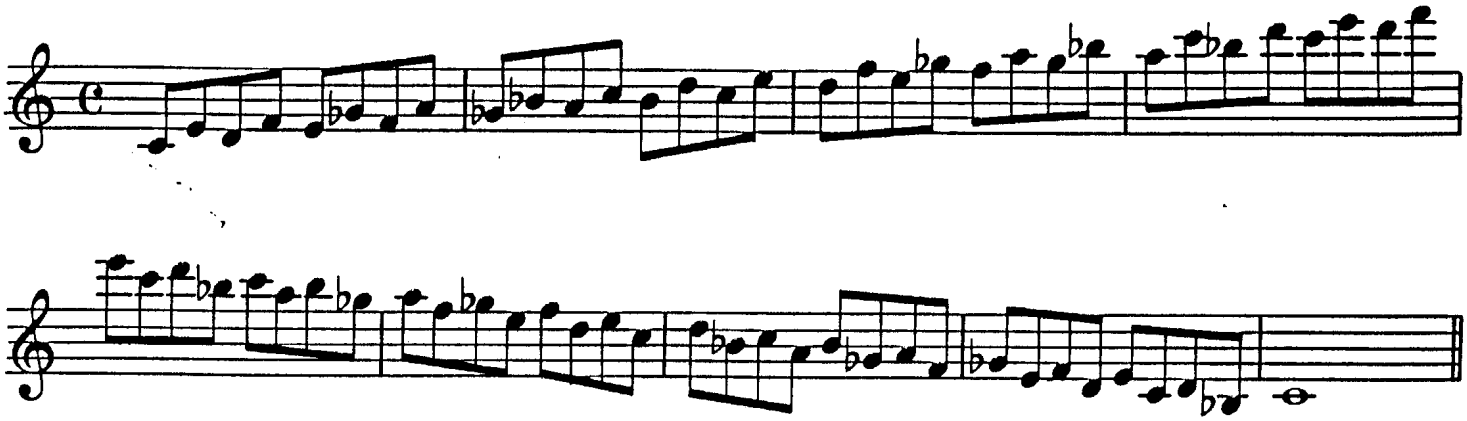
Study #1



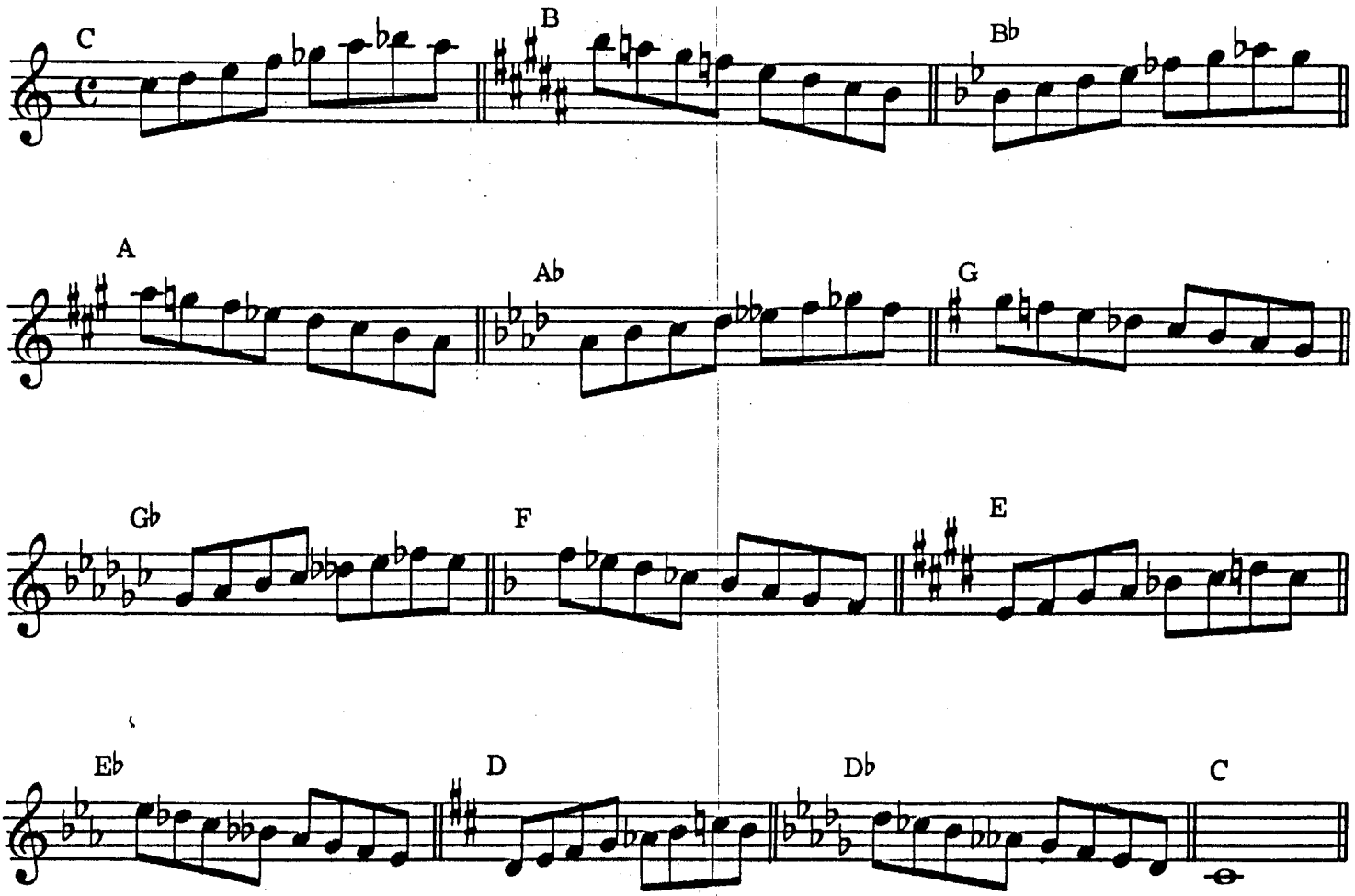
Study #2



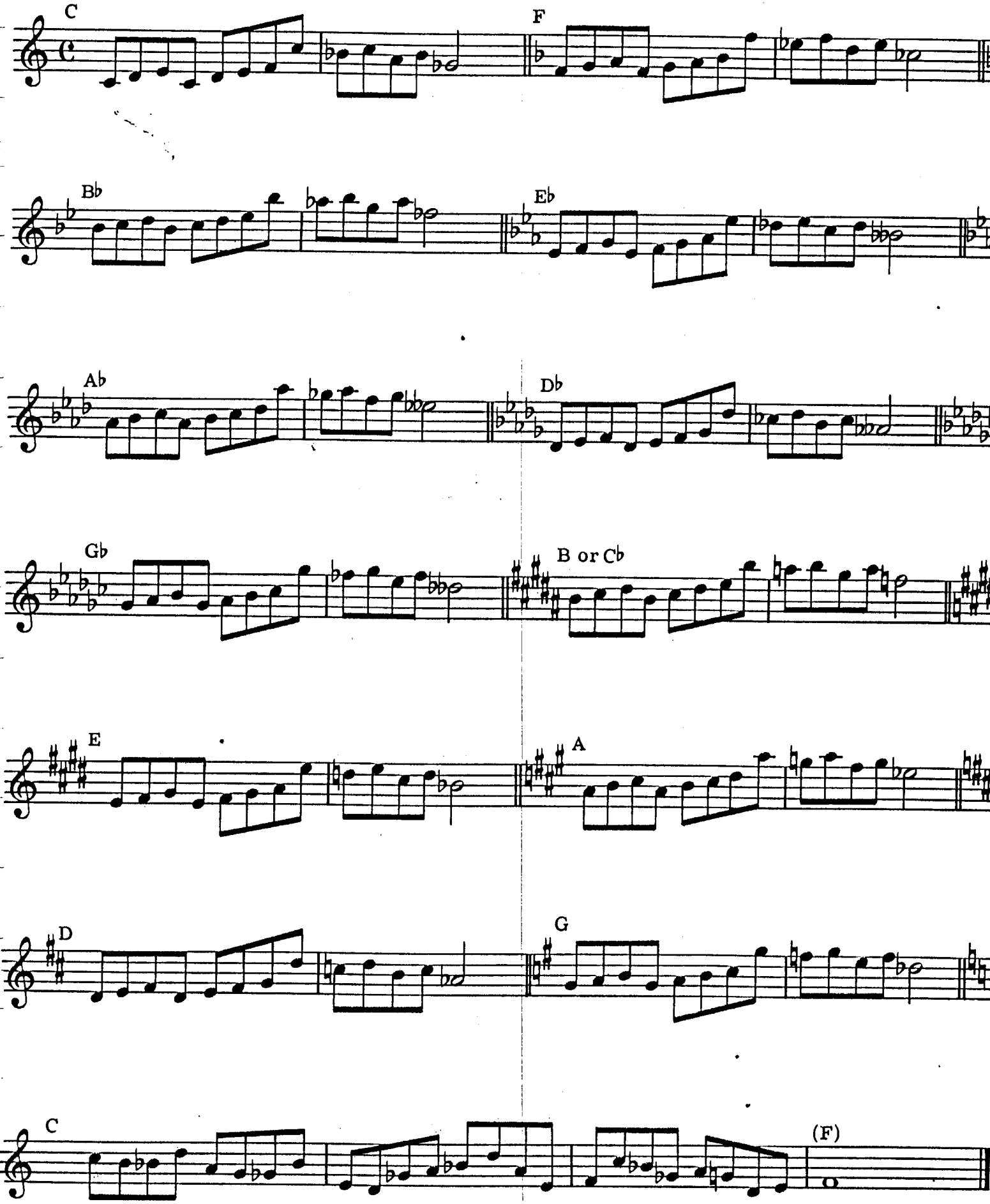
Study #3



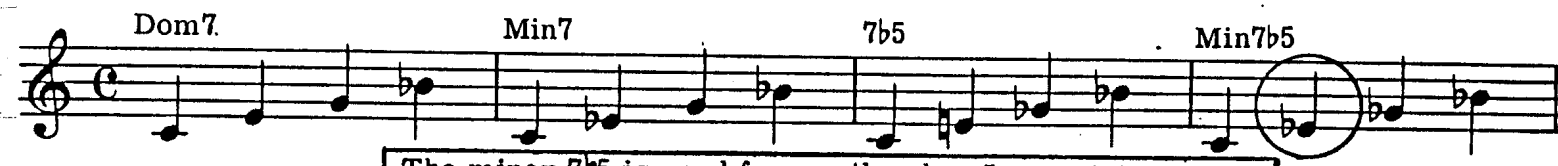
Modulating Down 1/2 Step



Blowin 7♭5 Through the Keys

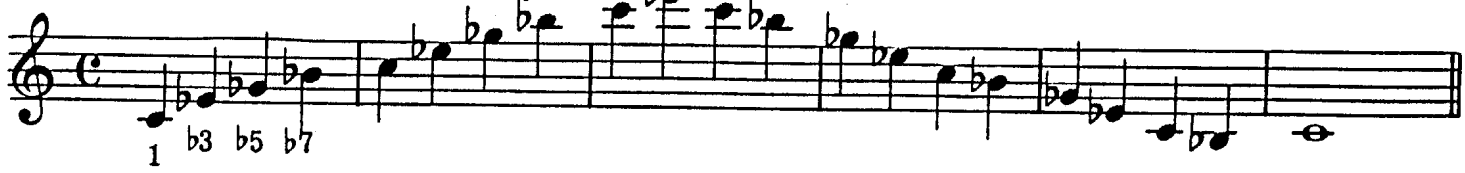


Minor 7♭5

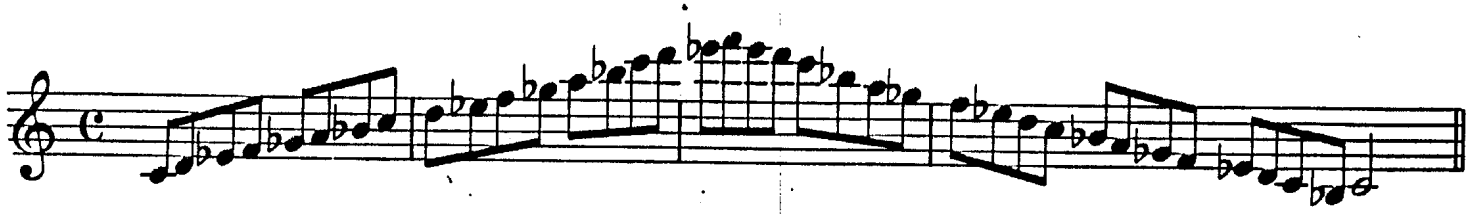


The minor 7♭5 is used frequently when Improvising.
It usually resolves to a dominant 7th chord a 4th above.
Thus: Cmi7♭5 ⟶ F7
Play the following studies in all keys.

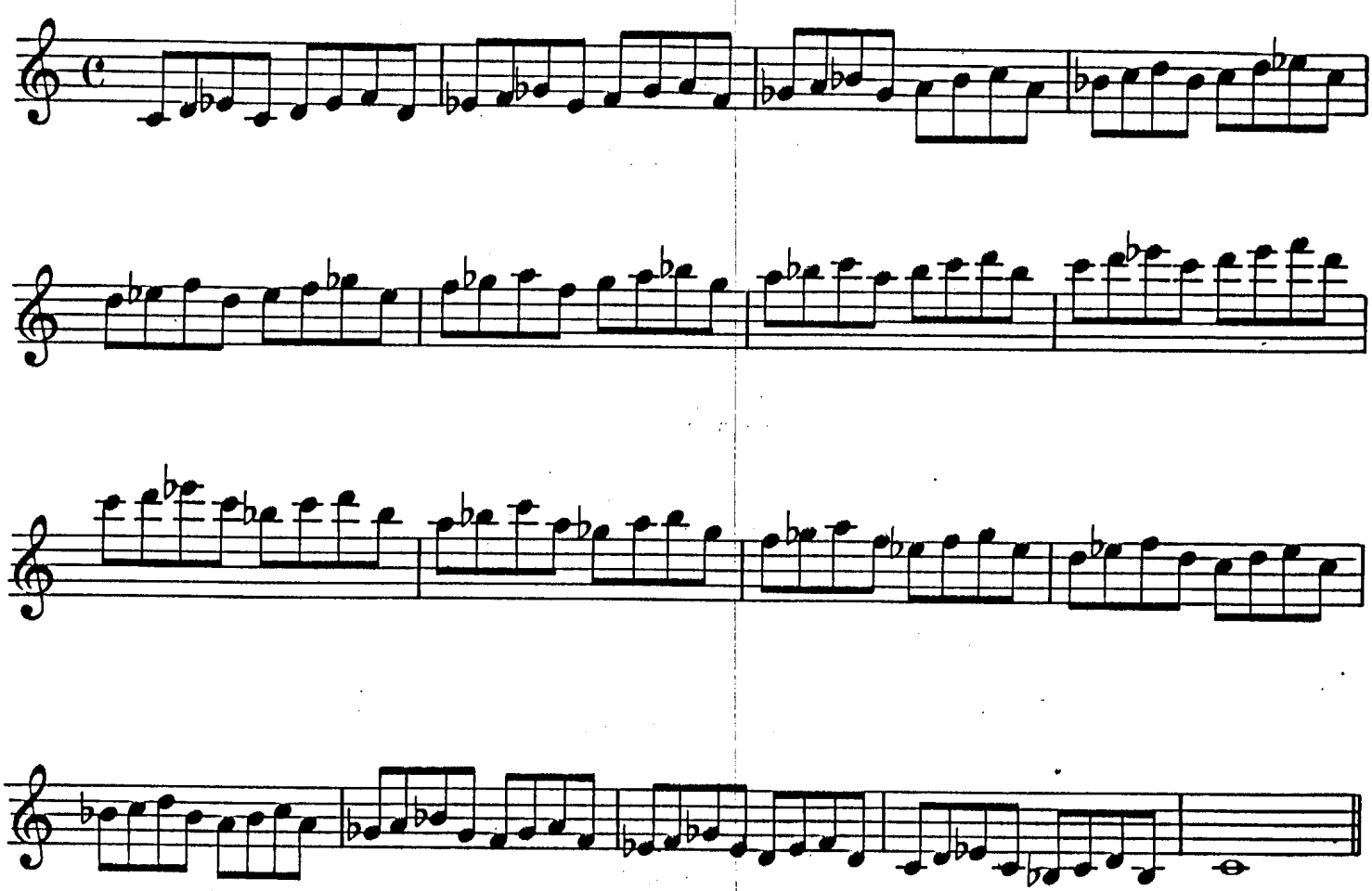
Remember-Play and sing in all keys



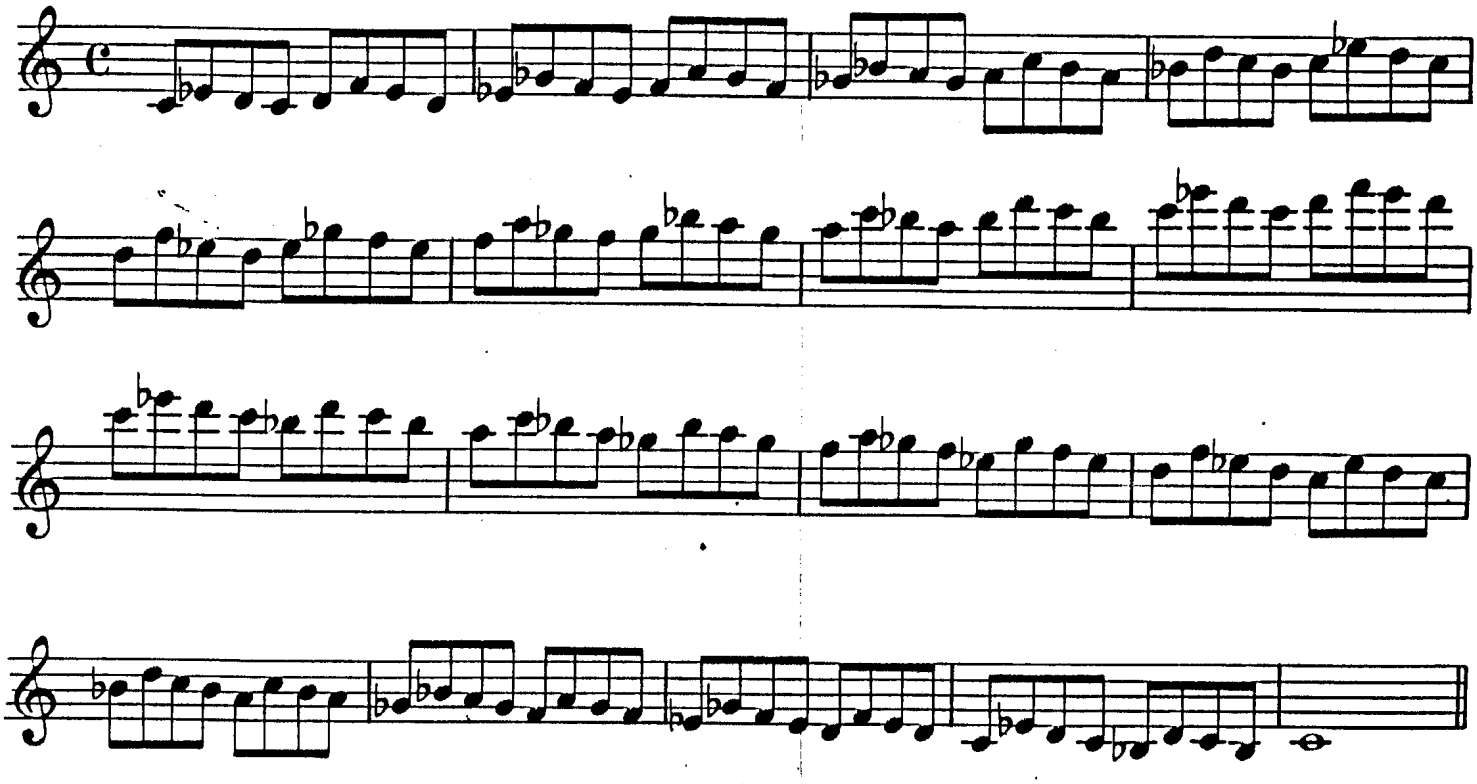
Minor 7♭5 Scale



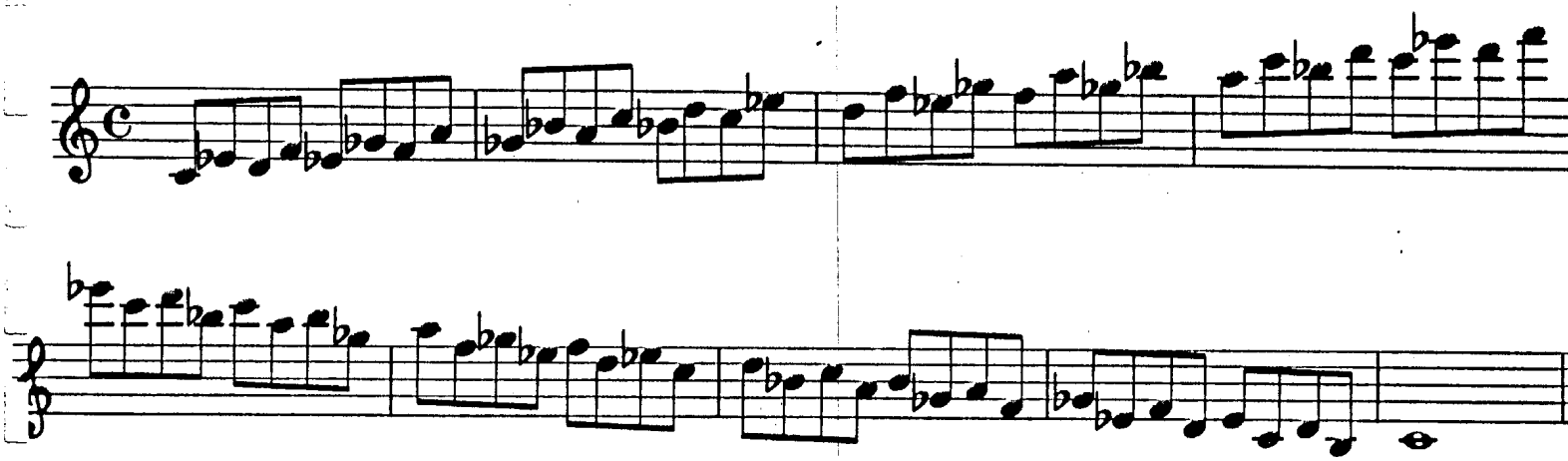
Study #1



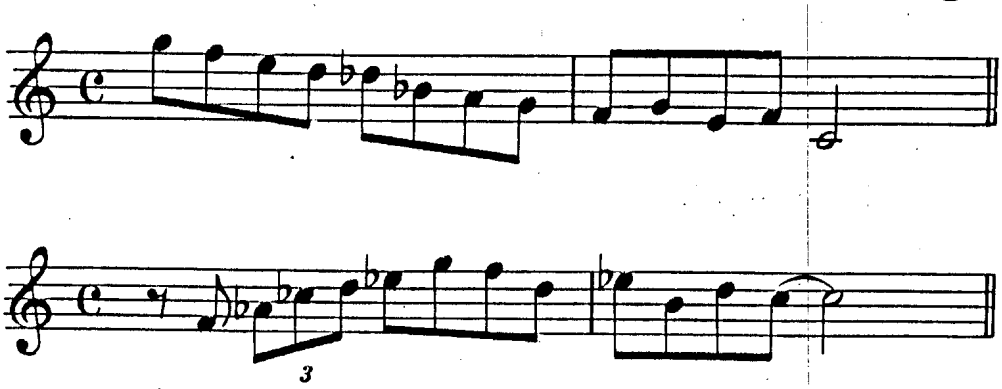
Study #2



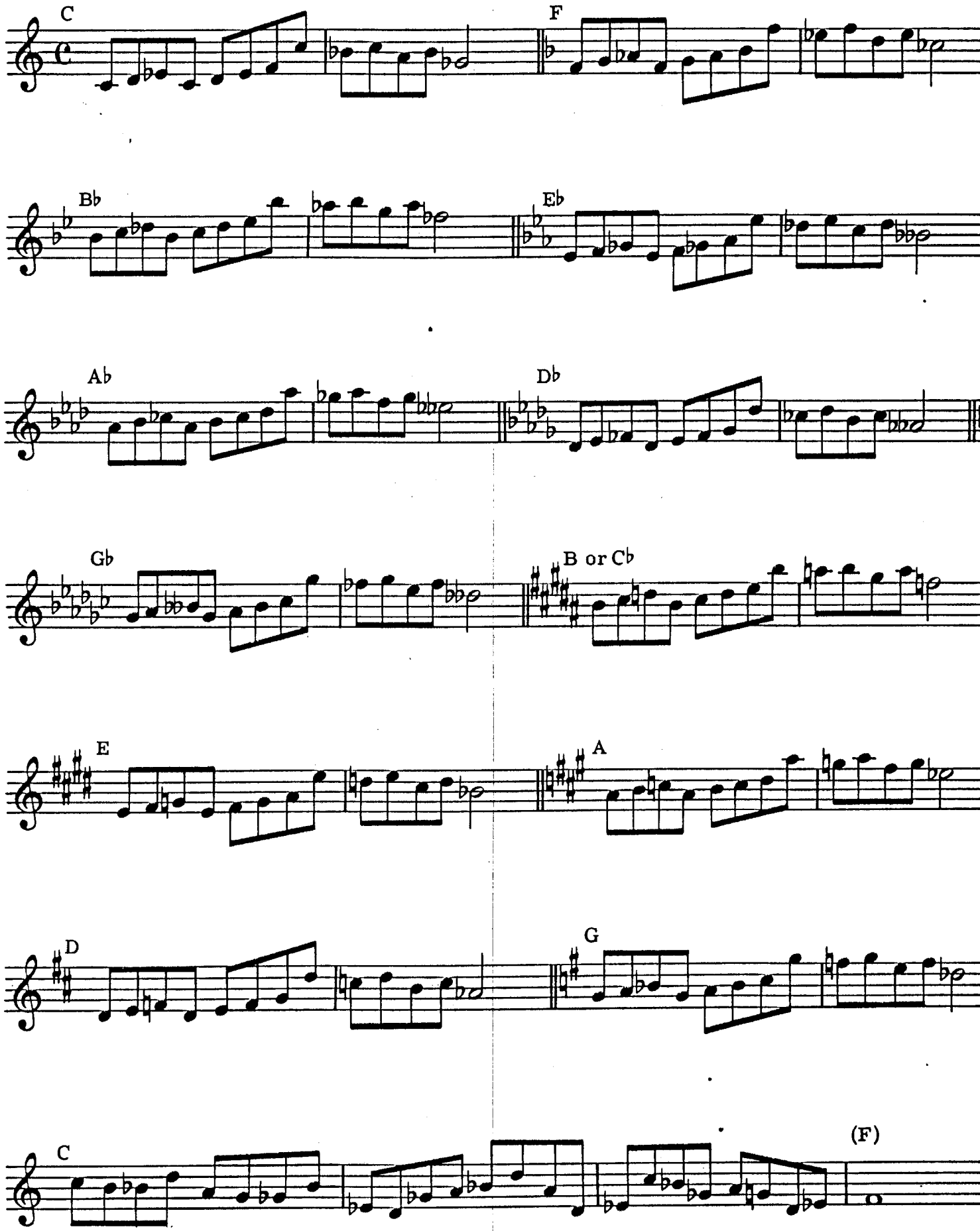
Study #3



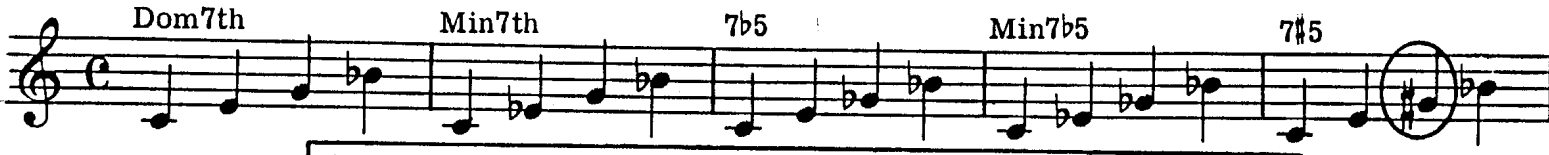
Common Phrase Using *Mi* 7 5



Blowin' *Mi* 7♭5 Through the Keys

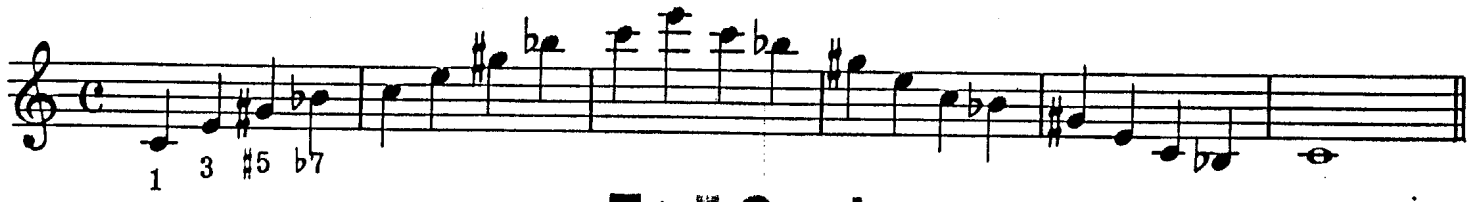


Augmented 7th

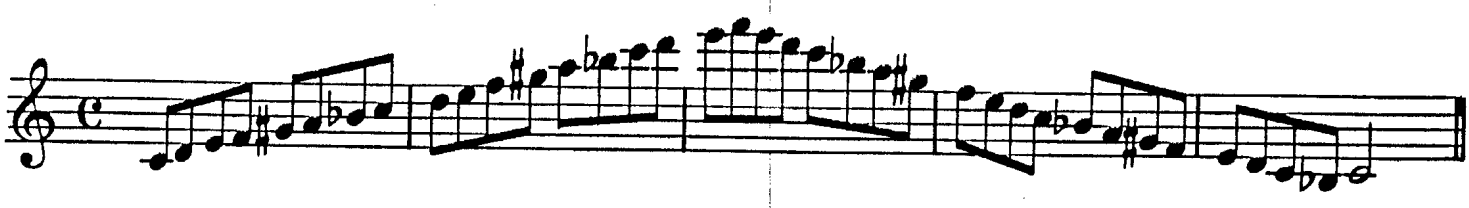


As with most 7th chords, the 7+5 chord resolves to a 4th above.
Thus: C7+5 → F

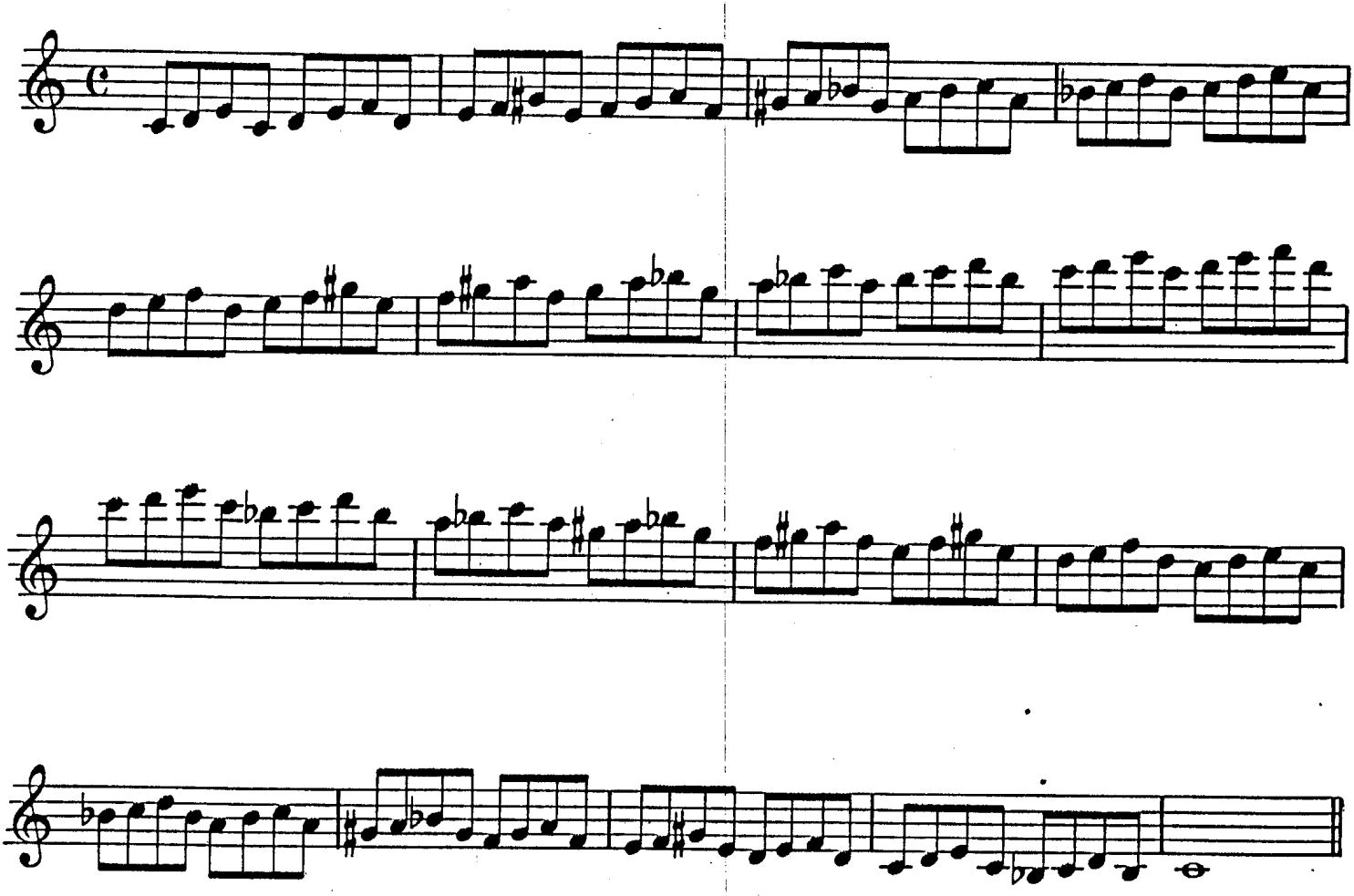
7+5



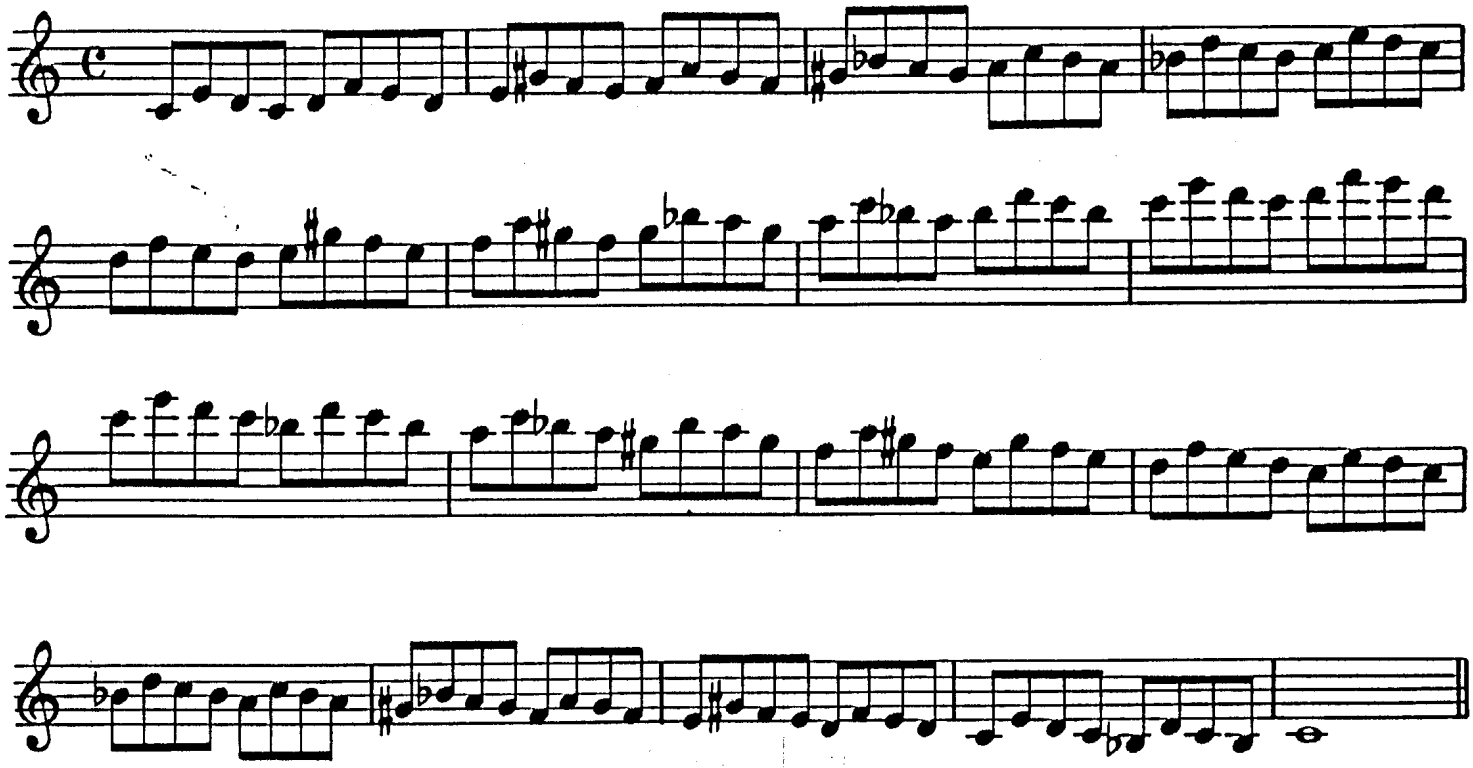
7+5 Scale



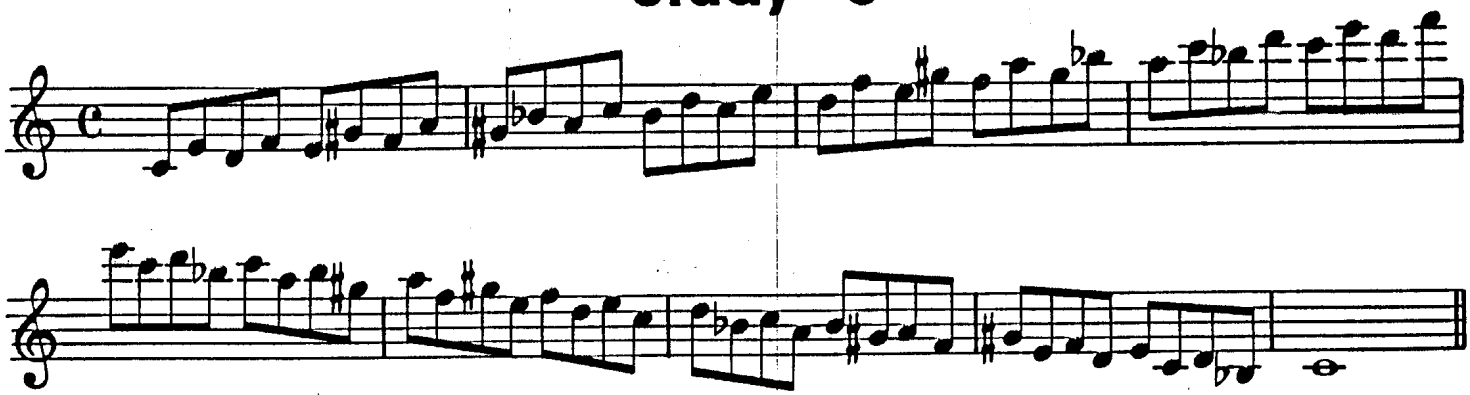
Study #1



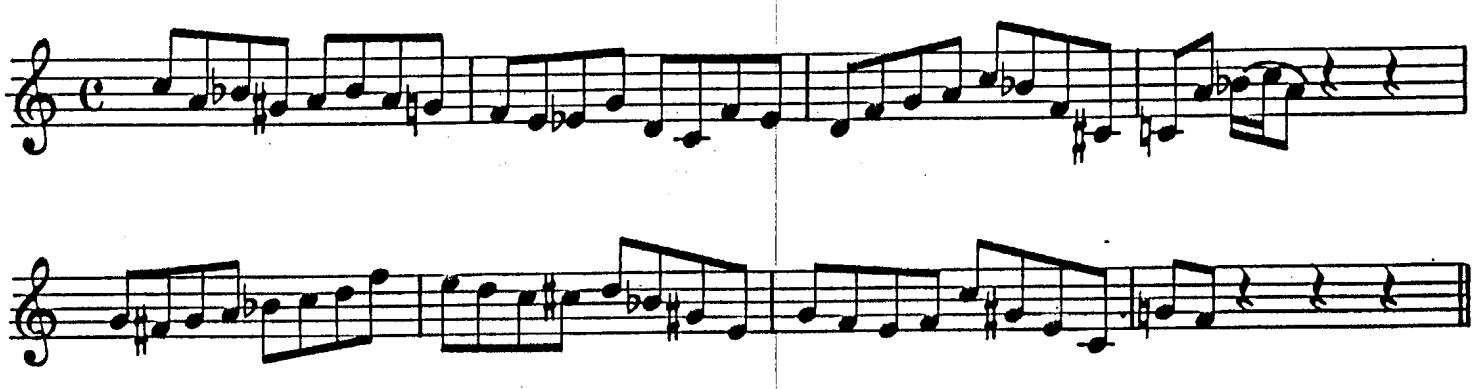
Study #2



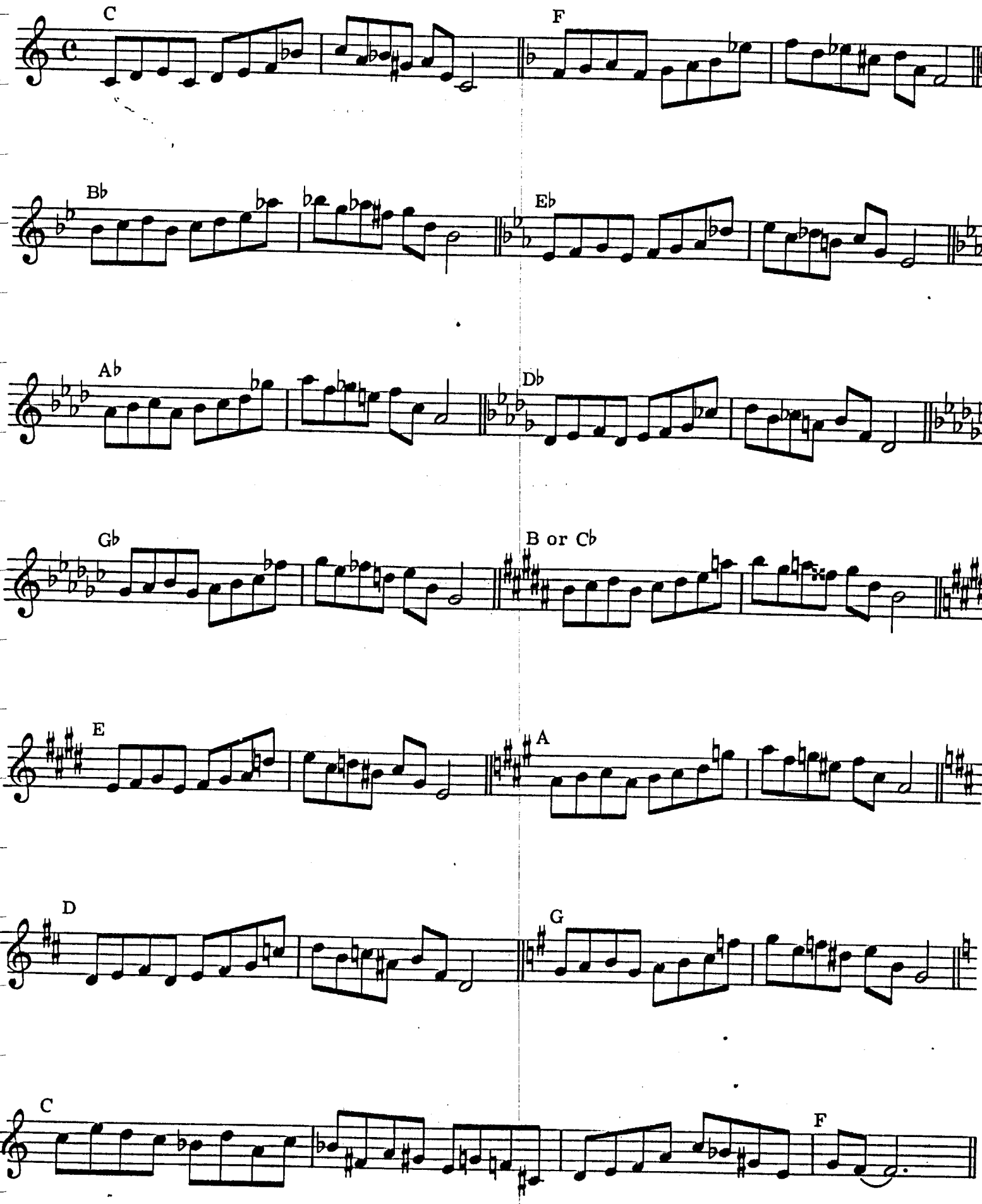
Study #3



Changes Using 7+5

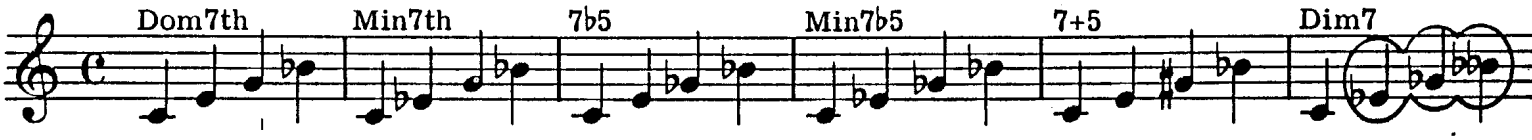


Blowin 7+5 Through the Keys



Diminished 7th Chord (dim 7, C°)

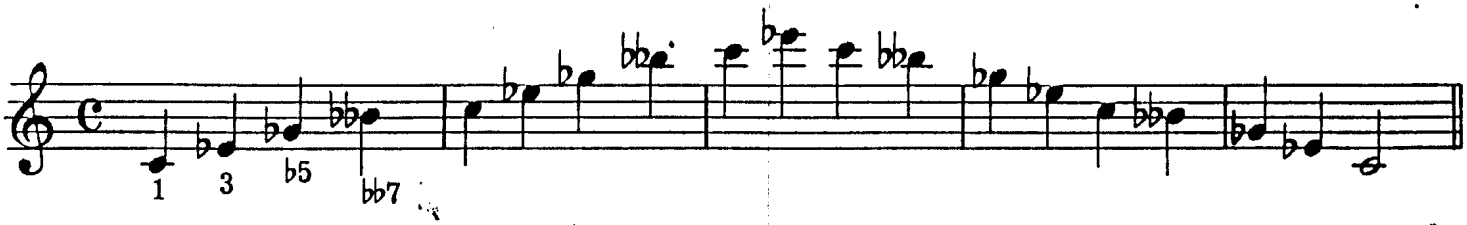
Play and sing!



The diminished 7th chord could be called a minor 6♭5. A minor 6♭5 tends, because of the ♭5, to resolve to a fourth above. A diminished chord, however, serves as a passing chord resolving 1/2 step up or down.

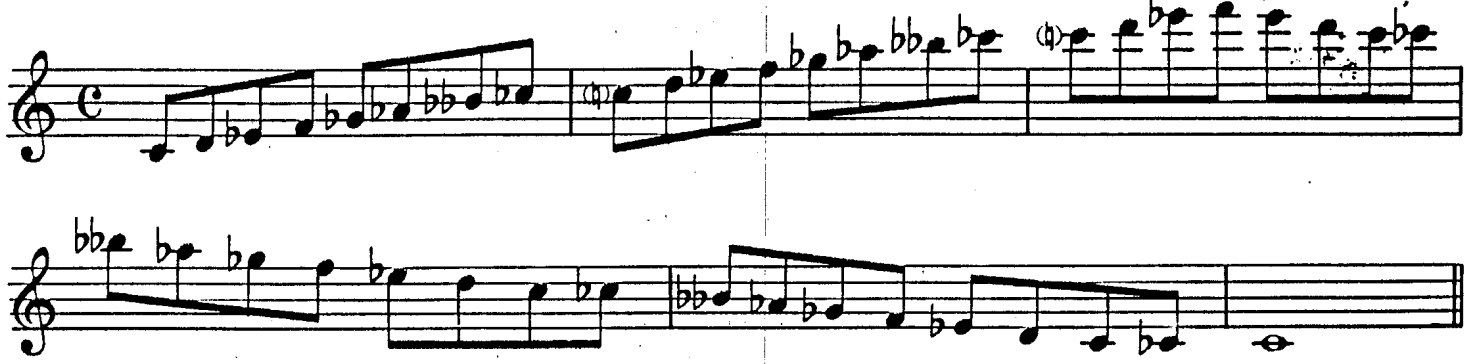
Thus: Cdim ⟶ C♯7
or
Cdim ⟶ B7

A diminished chord is constructed by using minor third intervals. In order to create a scale that will work with the diminished chord, we will construct the scale on a whole step—half basis.

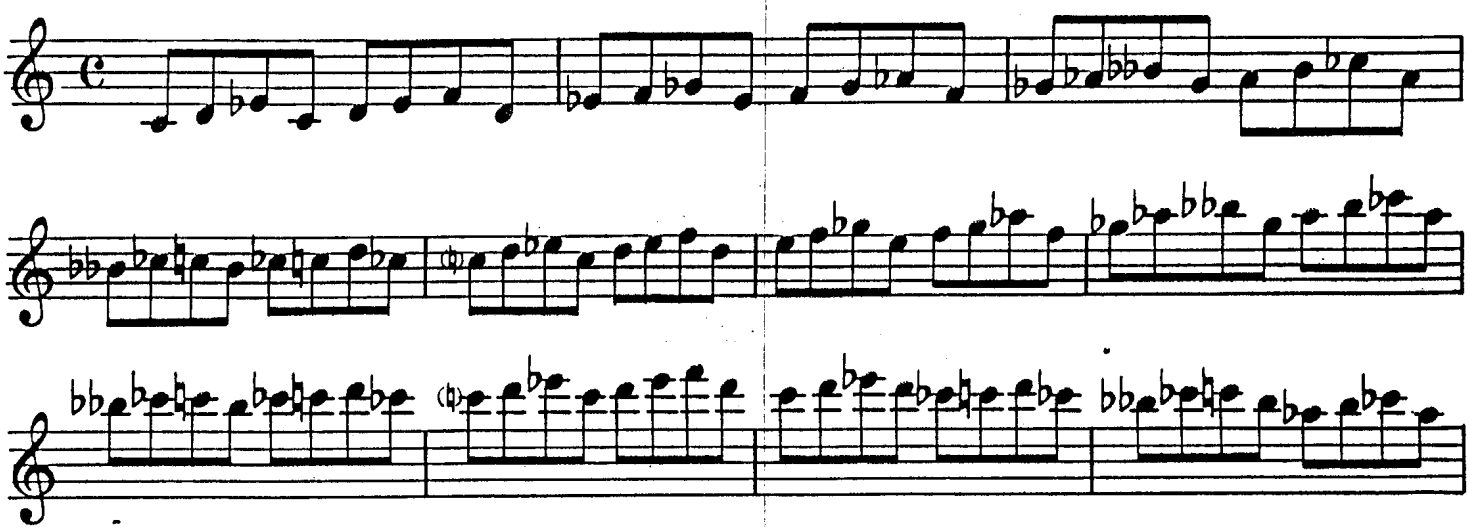


The diminished chord is constructed using minor third intervals. The scale uses alternating whole steps and half steps.

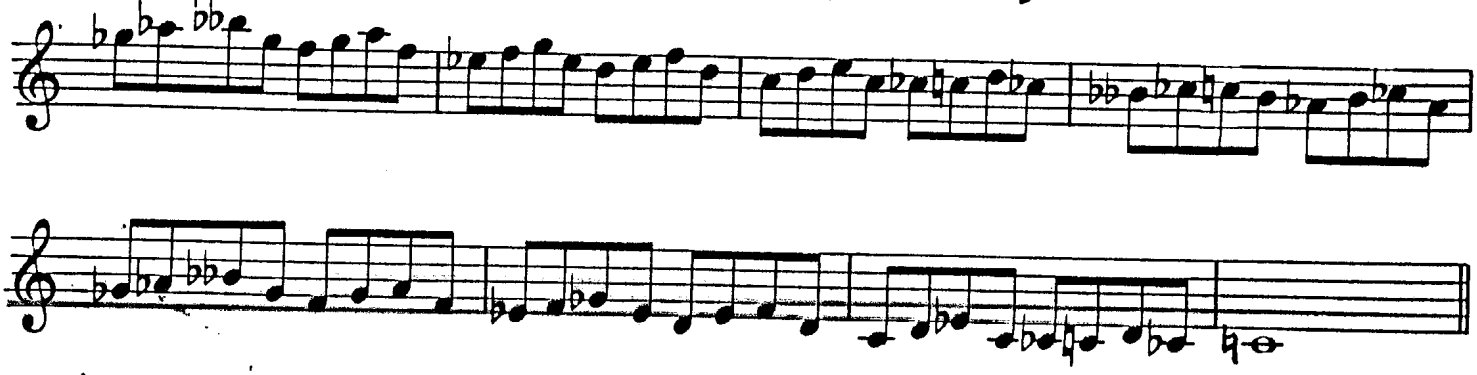
Diminished Scale #1



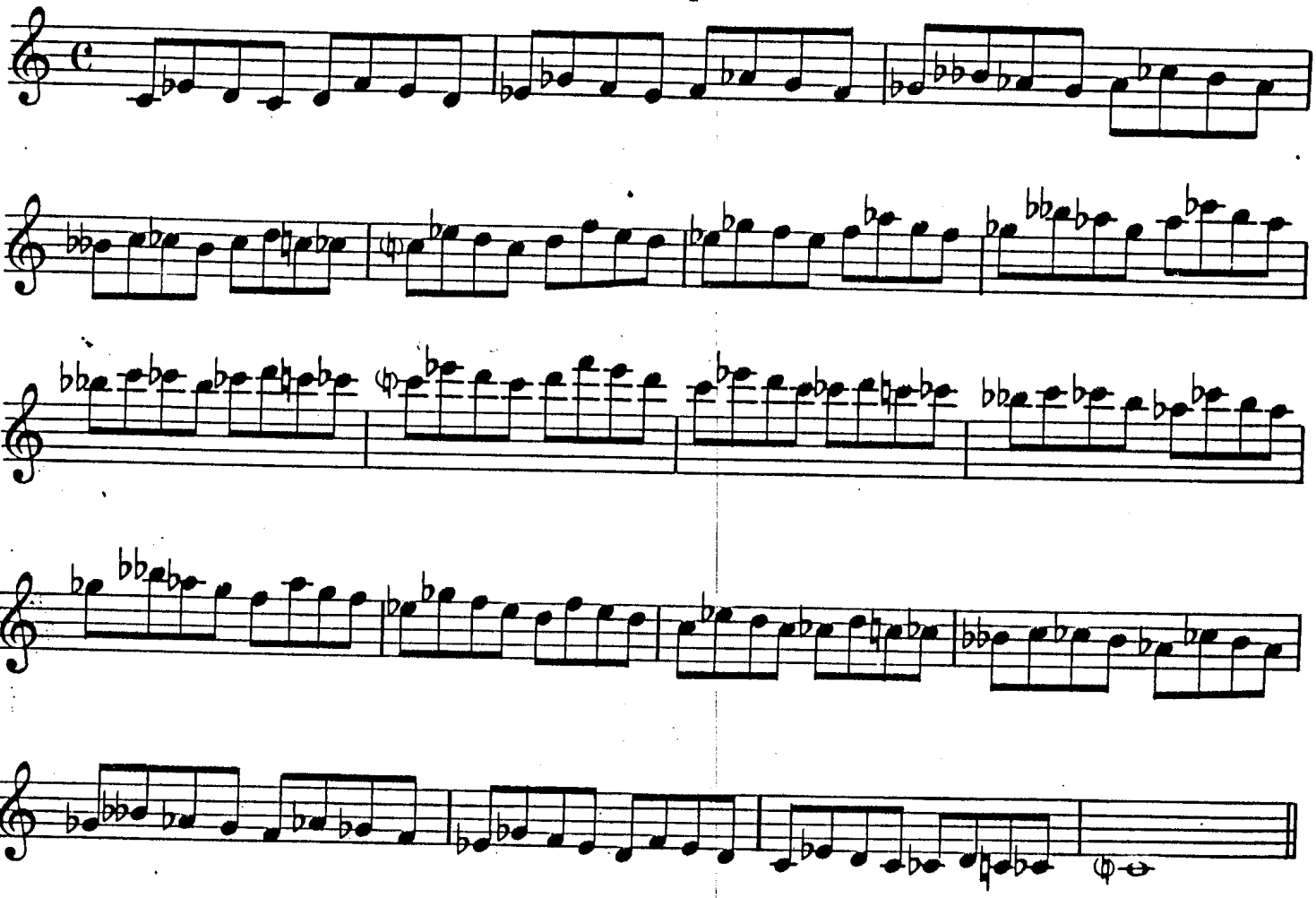
Study #1



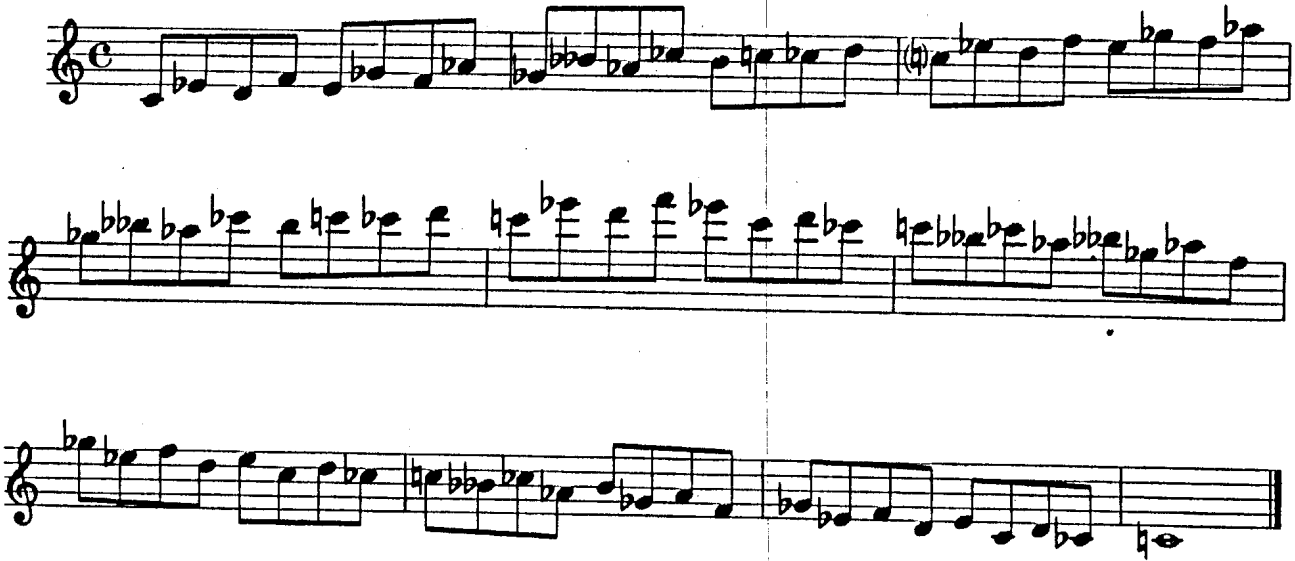
Study #1 (Cont.)



Study #2

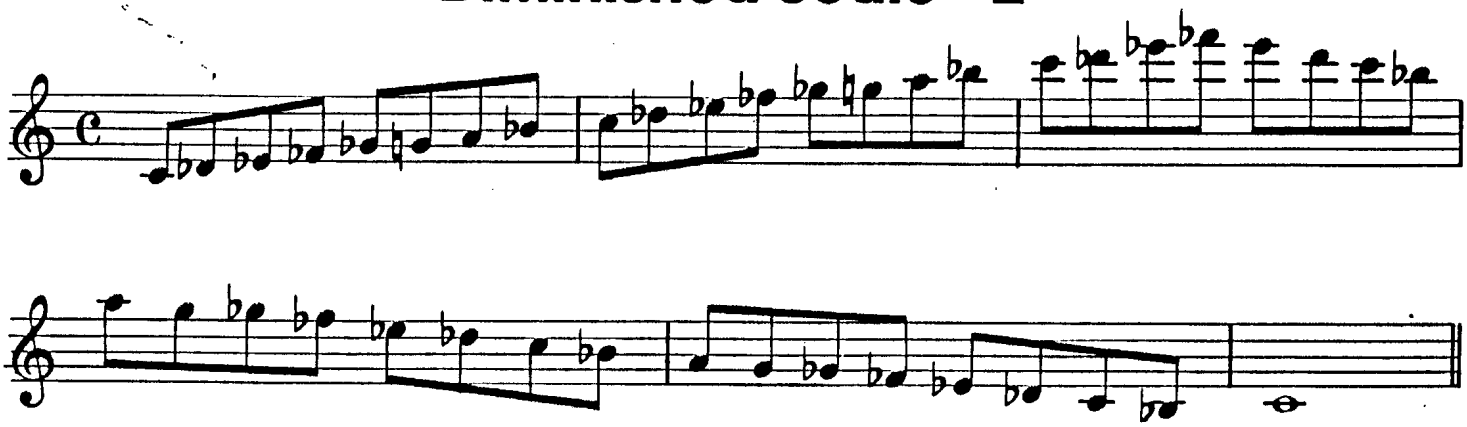


Study #3

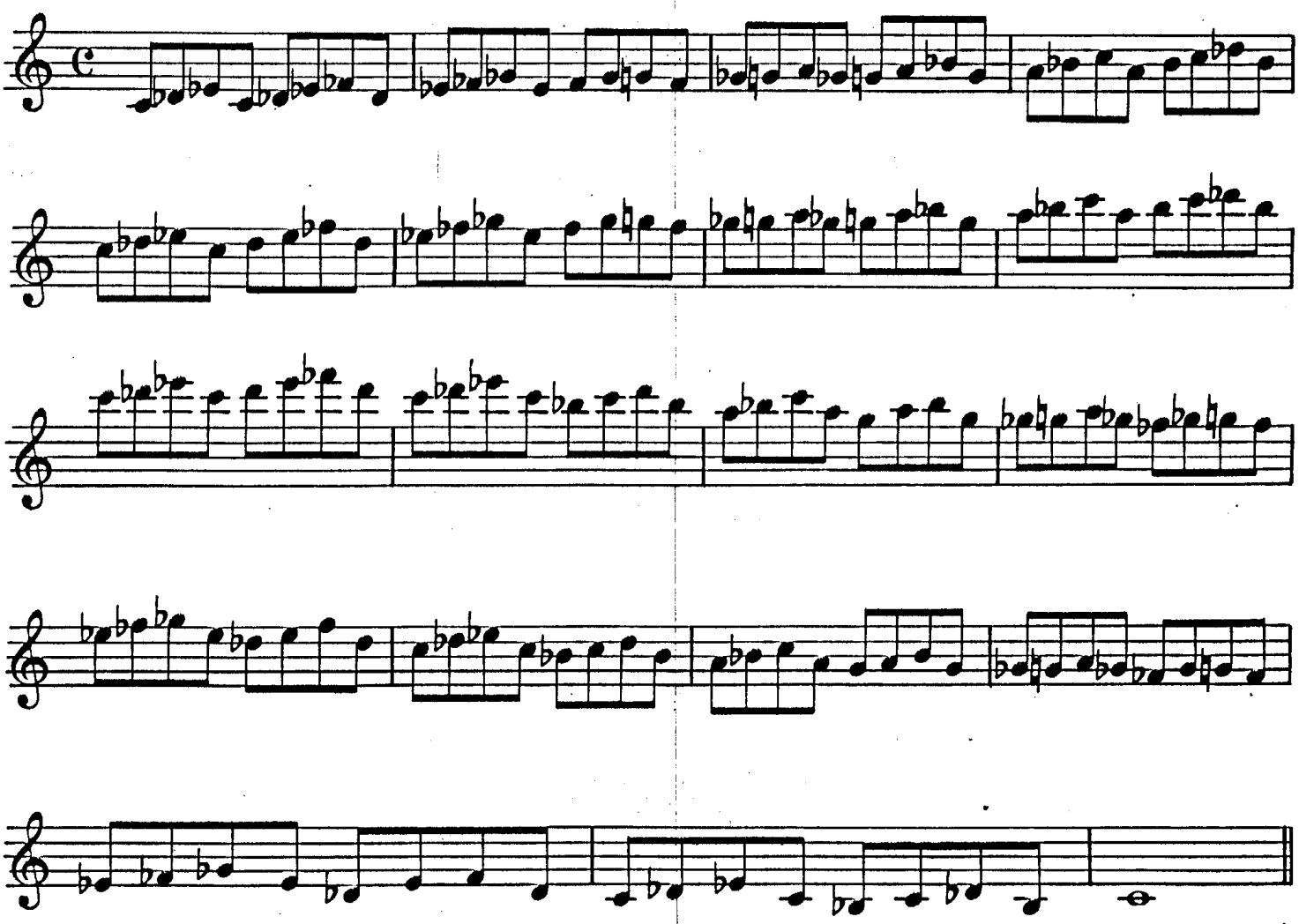


If we begin our diminished scale with a 1/2 step, we have a slightly different sounding scale which will work well when played against chords built on diminished type intervals. (ie 7♭9, 7♭9♯11, 7♯9, or 7♯9♯11, etc.)

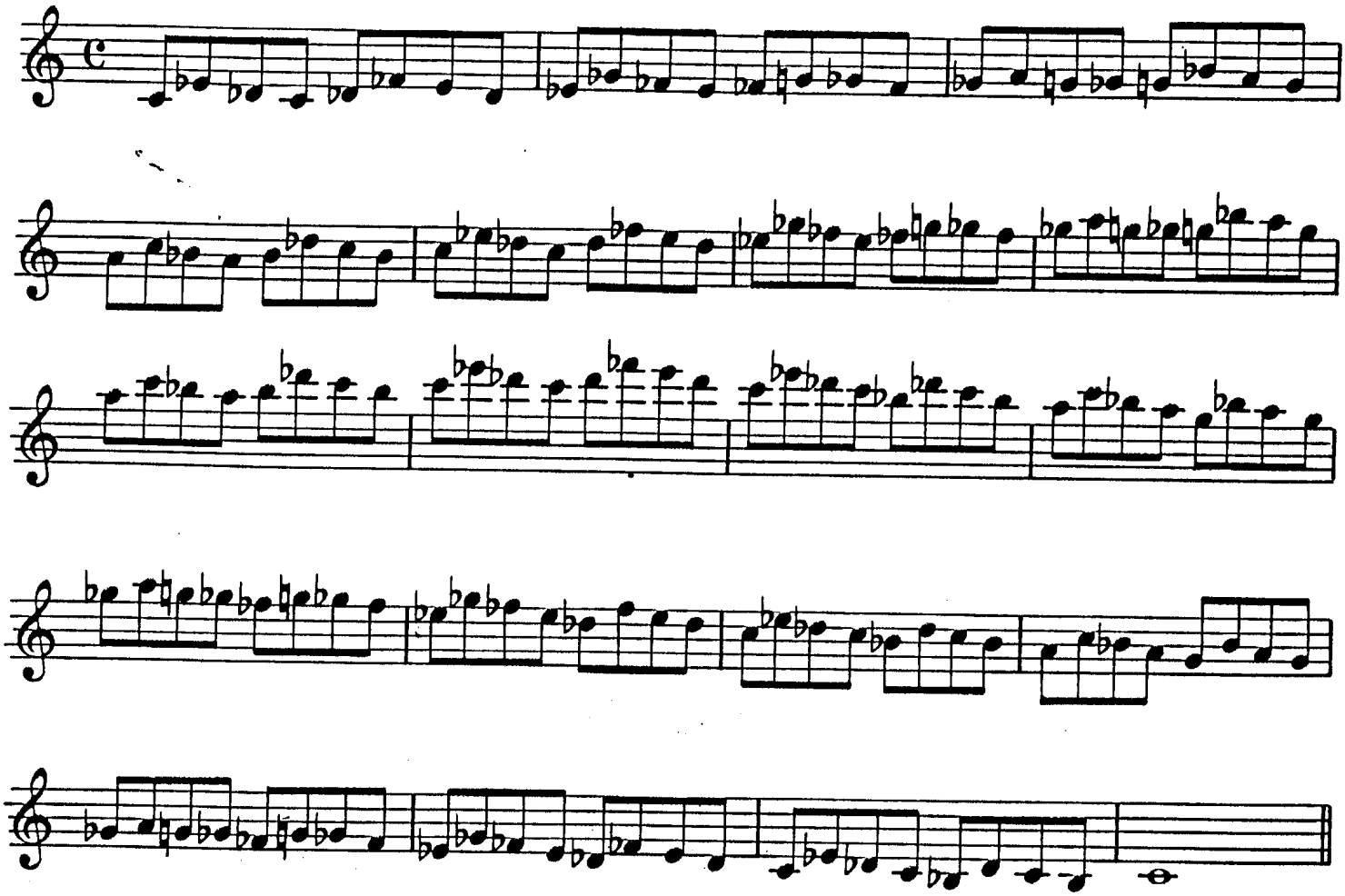
Diminished Scale #2



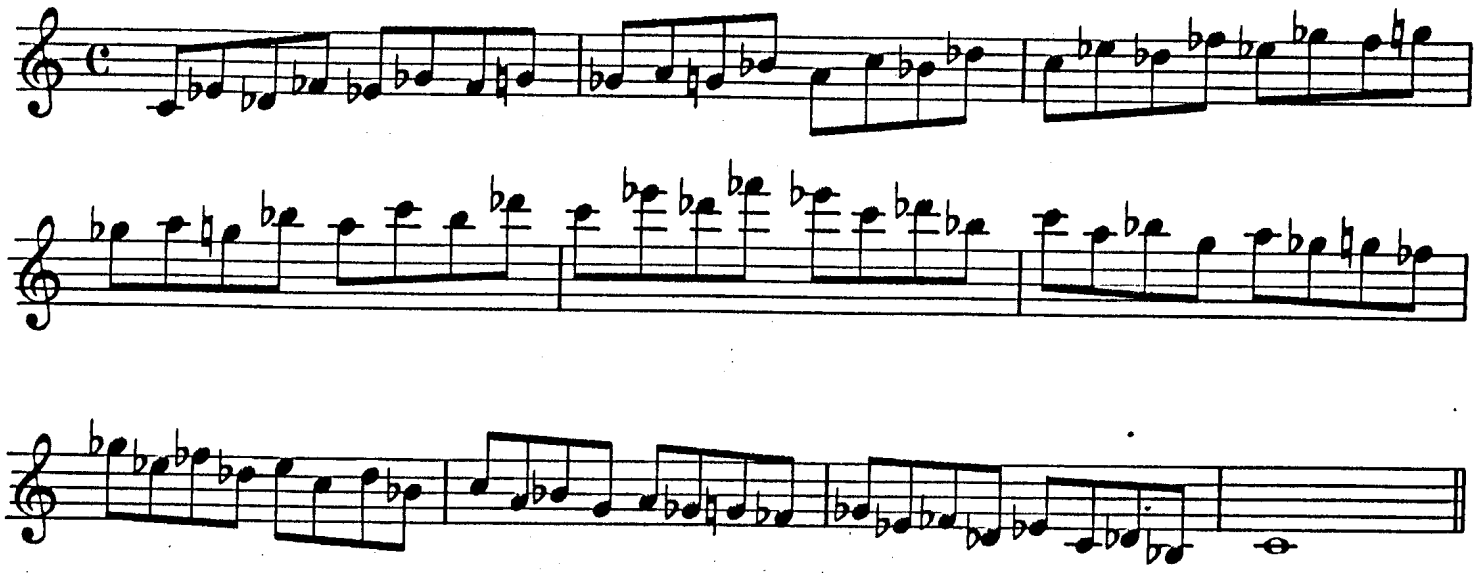
Study #1



Study #2



Study #3



Vibrato

Vibrato is an important part of saxophone playing. It is recommended that the student listen to both saxophonists **and vocalists** to gain a concept of how and when vibrato is used.

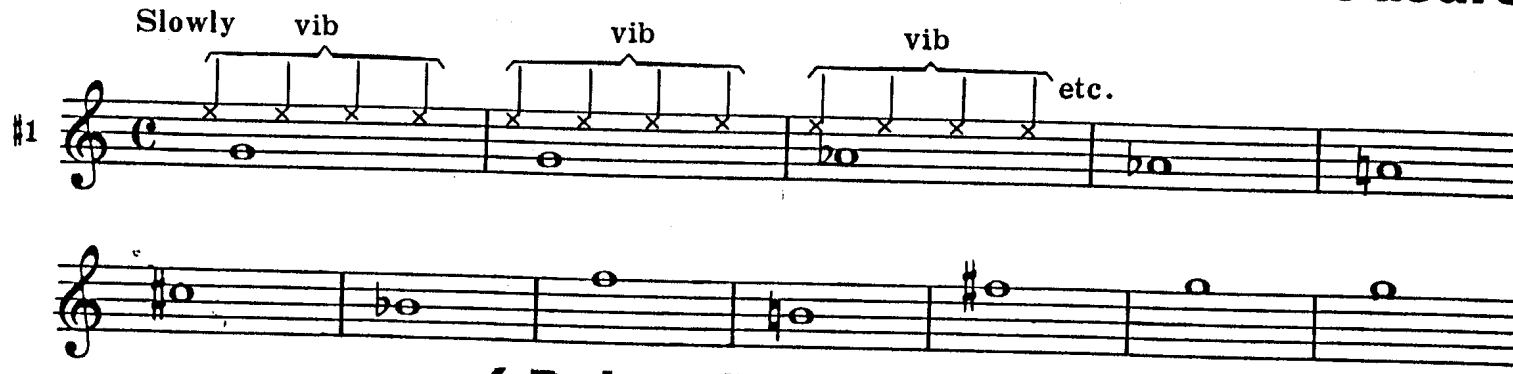
The vibrato is created by a slight movement of the jaw. The syllable "wah" produces a suitable jaw movement. Keep the support and the air stream steady.

The following exercises will help in the development of a smooth and even vibrato. Do not leave an exercise until the vibrato is under control.

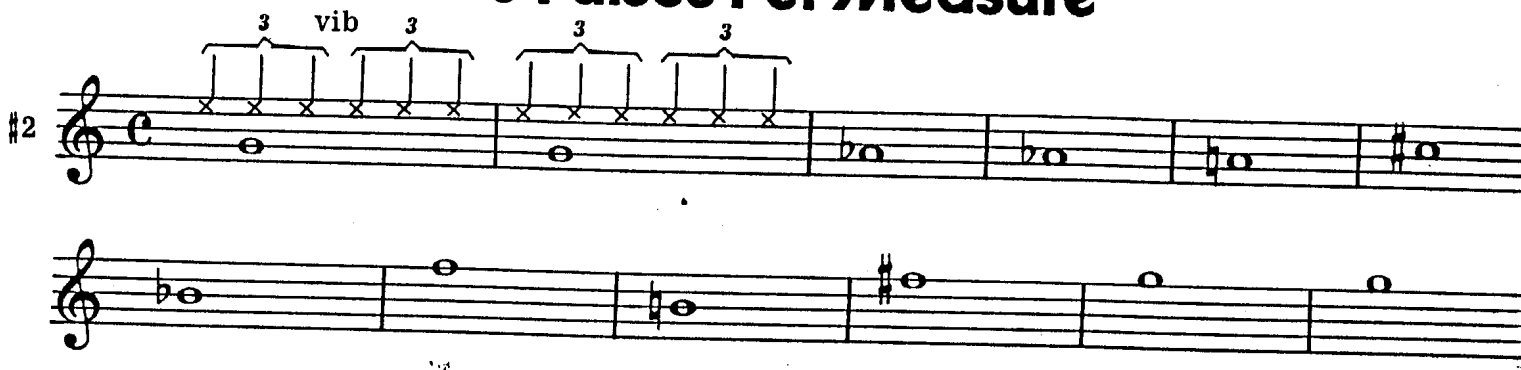
Development of vibrato is not an overnight task. It requires daily practice.

Vibrato Studies

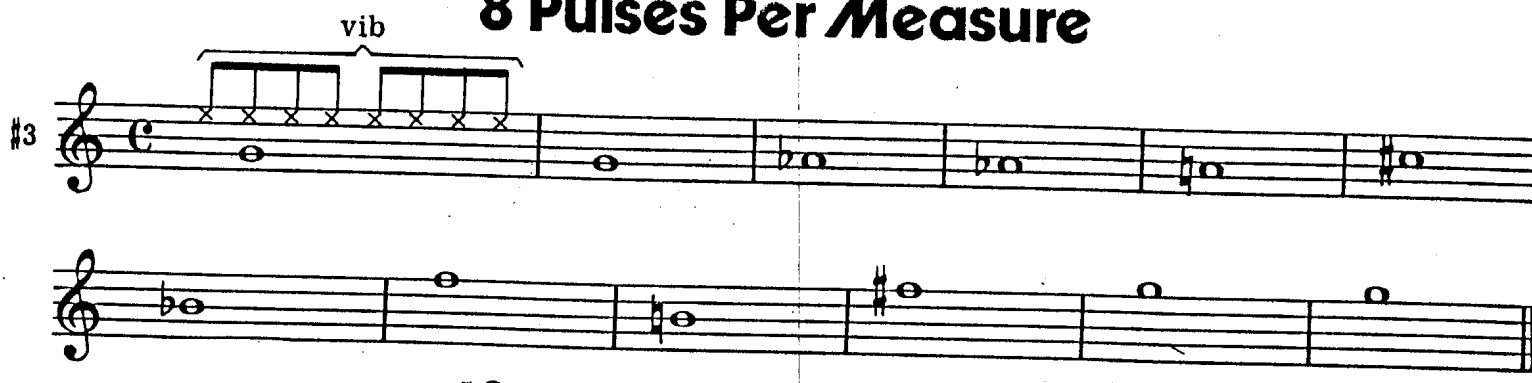
4 Pulses Per Measure



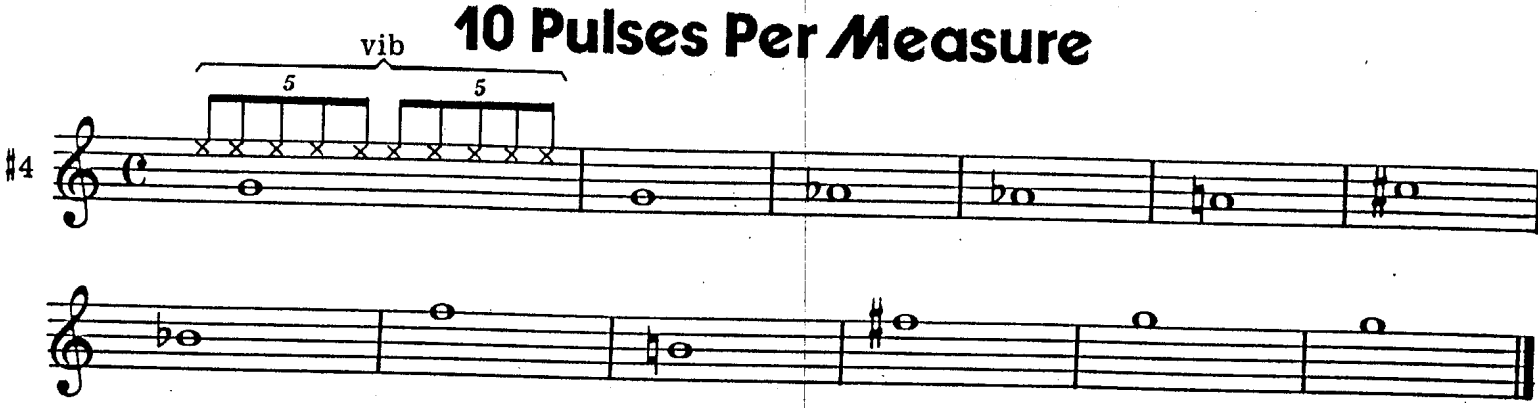
6 Pulses Per Measure



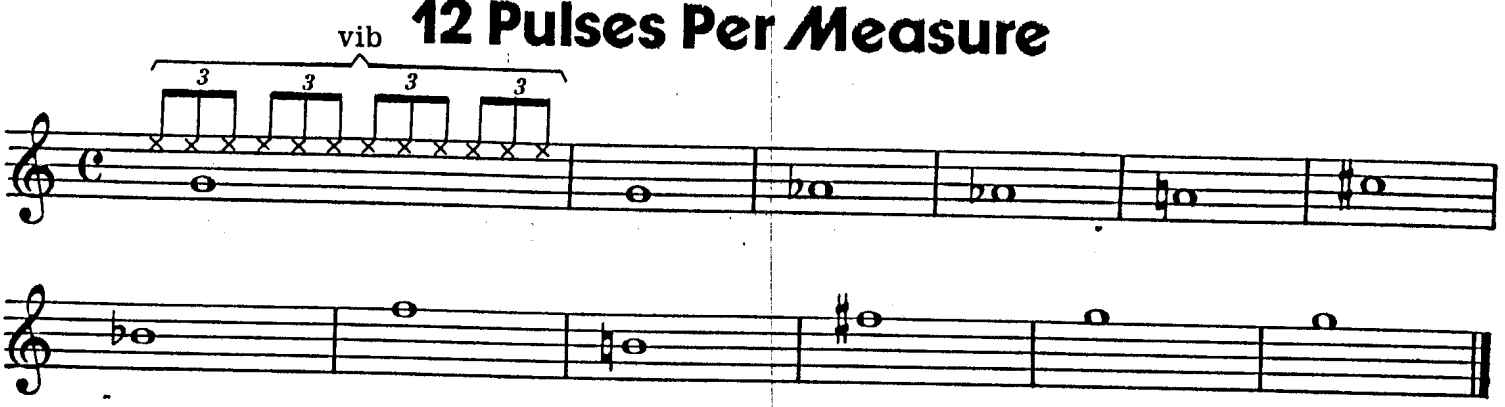
8 Pulses Per Measure



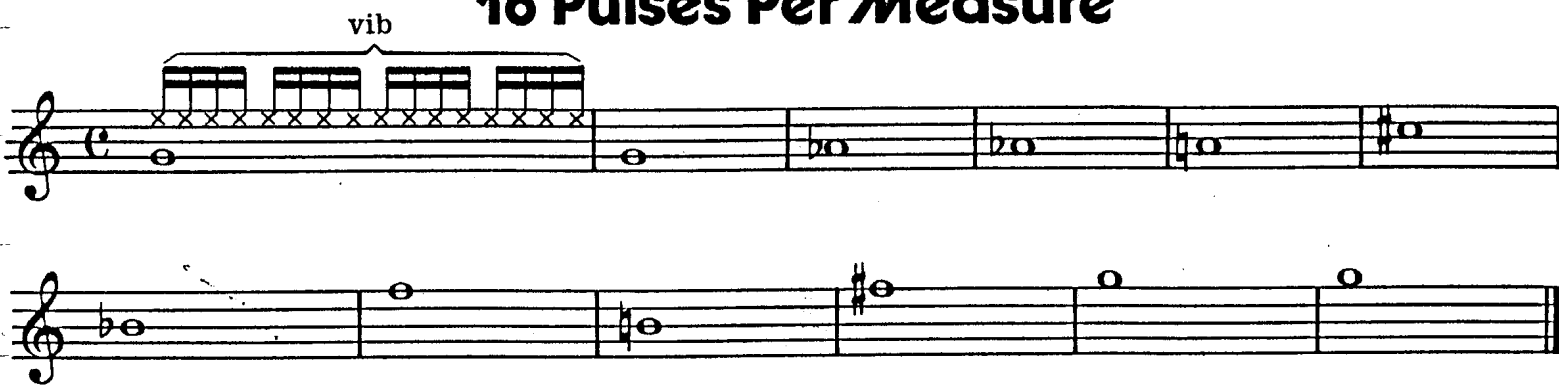
10 Pulses Per Measure



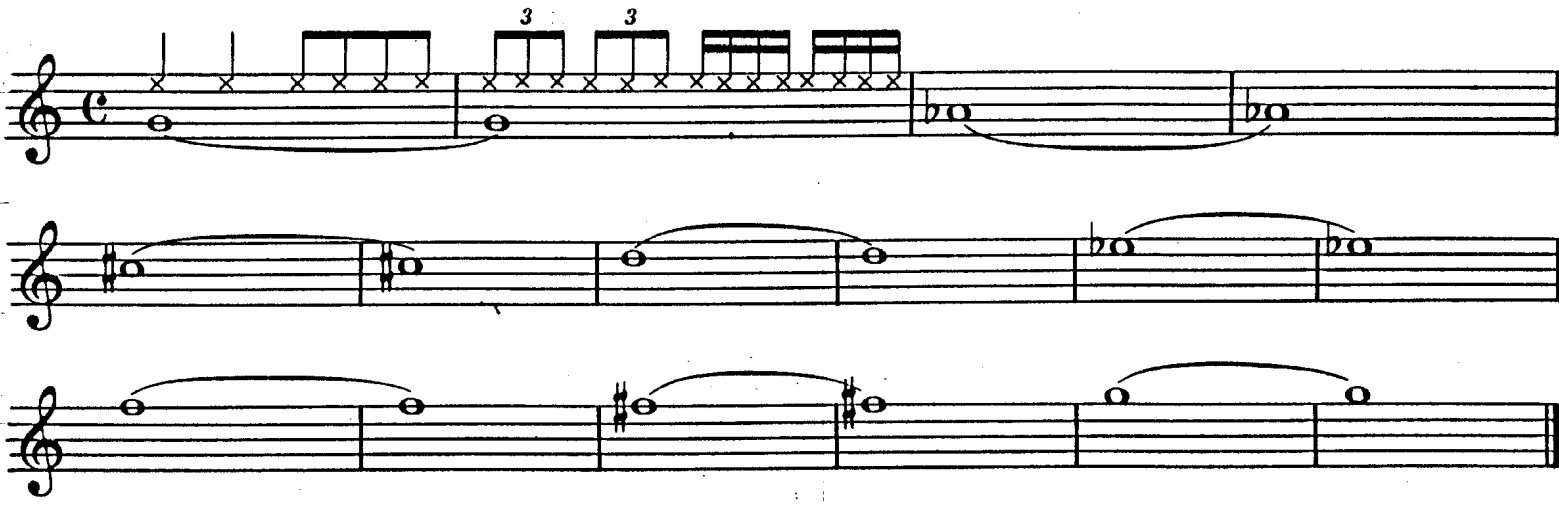
12 Pulses Per Measure



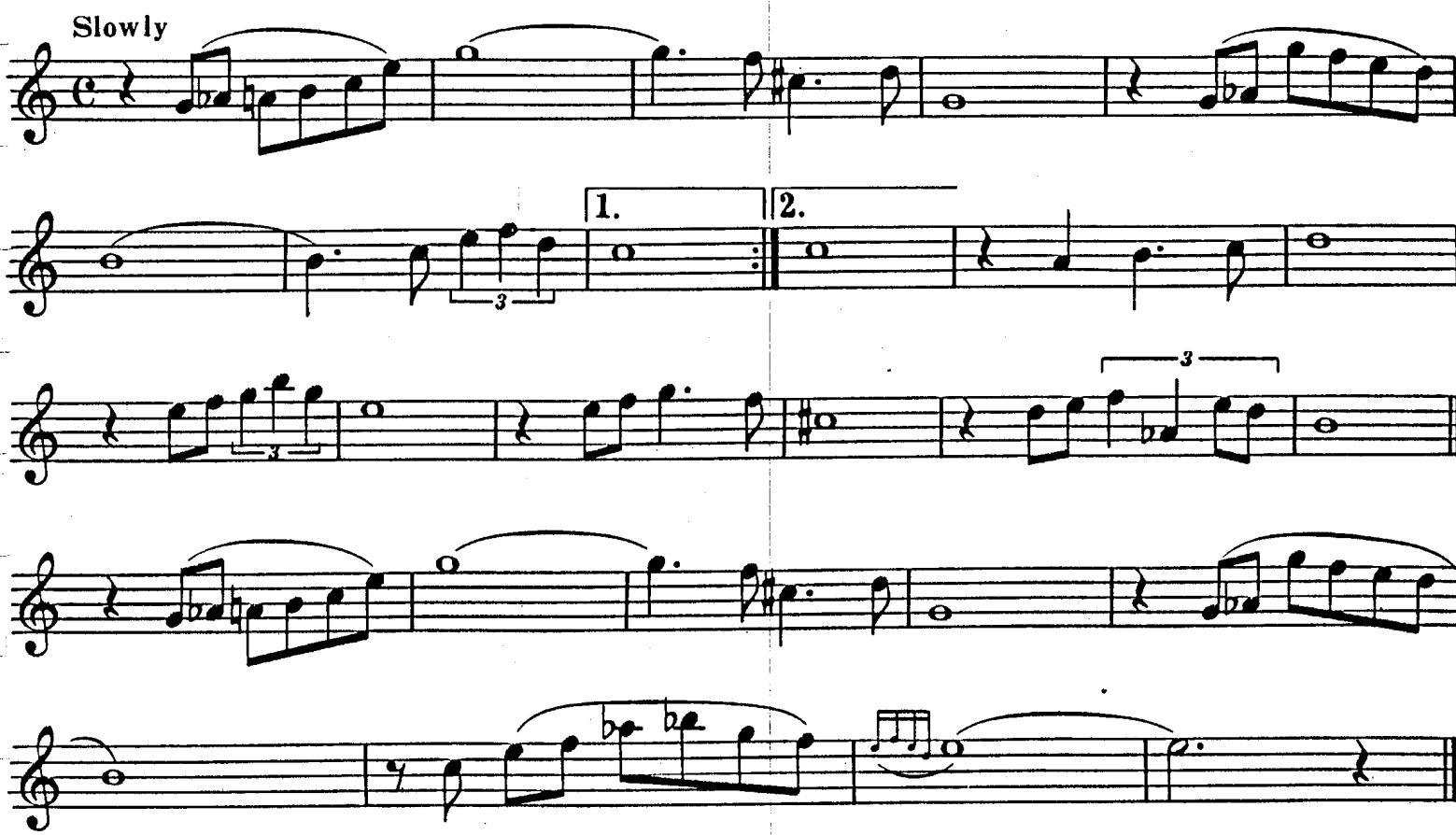
16 Pulses Per Measure



Accelerating Pulse

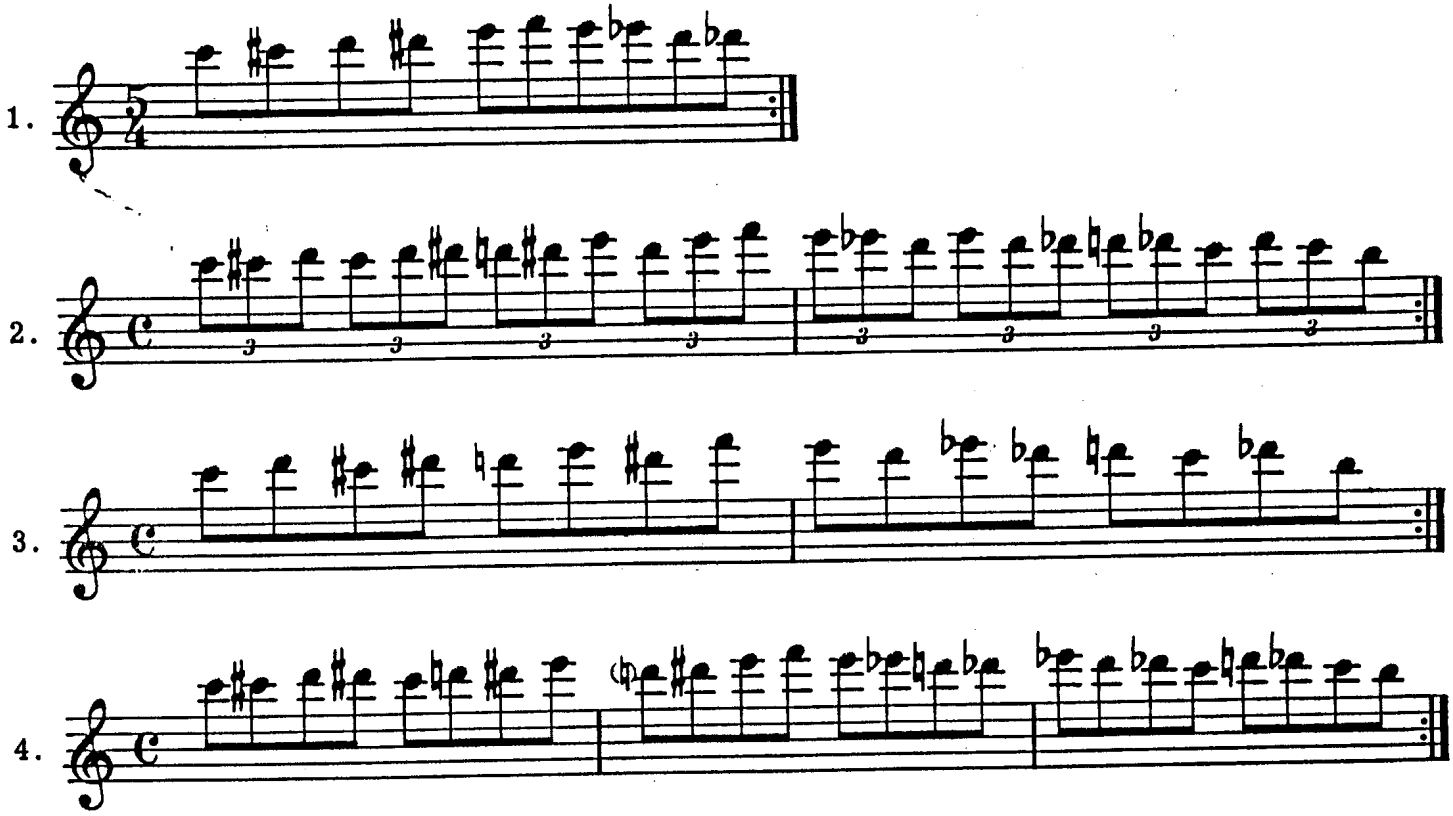
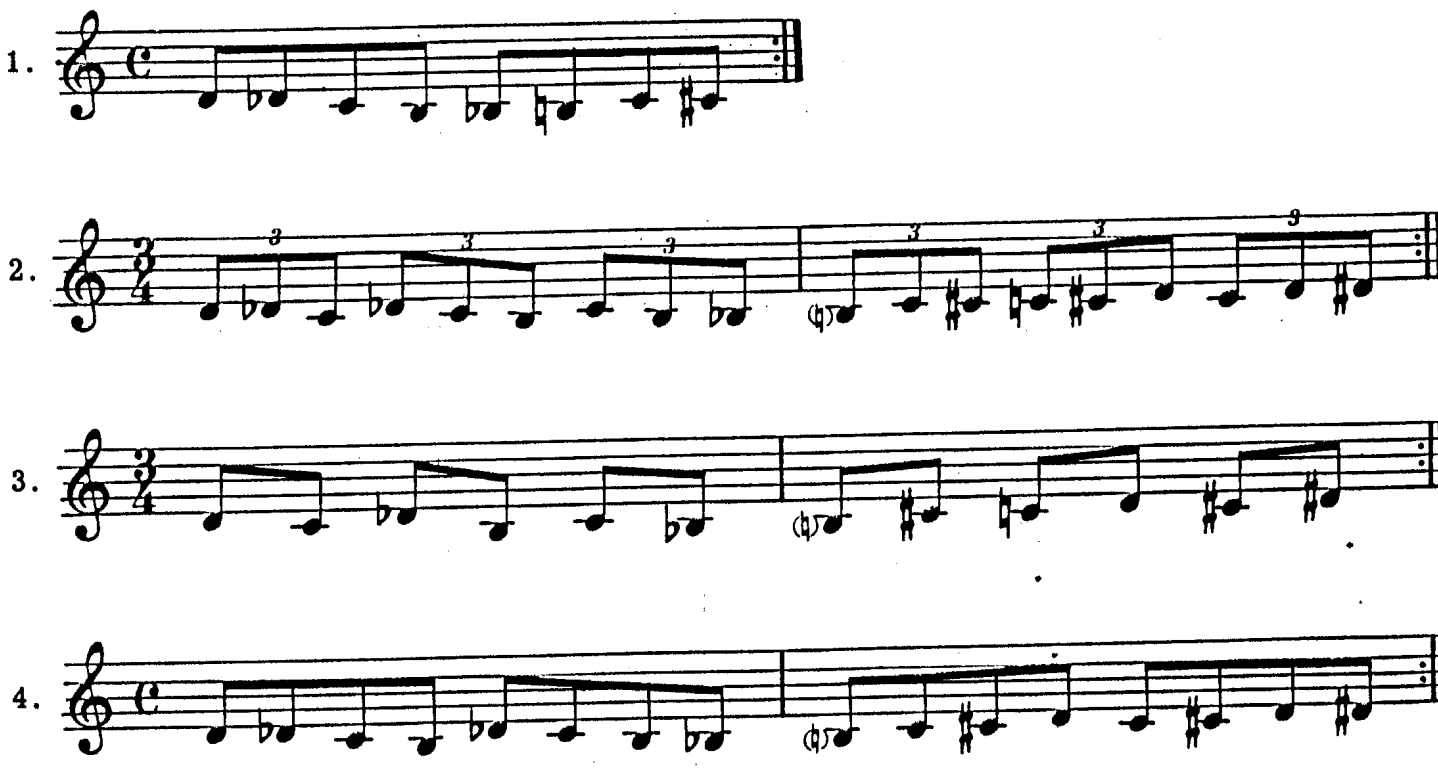


Lush Sounds



[illegible] MUSICAL ESPAÑOLA, S. A.

Flexibility Studies—High Register



Flexibility Studies—Low Register