Daily Concepts and Fundamentals of Trombone Playing

AIR makes BUZZ makes SOUND

Jonathan Whitaker
University of Alabama
http://www.rollslide.com
jwhitaker@as.ua.edu

The purpose of this packet is not for the trombonist to play every note of every exercise each day. These exercises are to serve as a means to develop the concepts presented in each section. Always look for ways to improve and come up with a routine that works for you.

The majority of the exercises in this packet are adaptations of exercises given to me by my teachers. My thanks to Peter Ellefson, Joe Alessi, Patrick Sheridan, Charlie Vernon, Tom Ashworth and Ray Conklin for their continued inspiration.

Step 1 - AIR
Stretch and Breathe
(Adapted from The Breathing Gym – Sheridan/Pilafian)

Stretches
- Tension Release
- Trunk Twists
- Arm Across
- Wrist Pull
- Wrist Grab
- Elbow Grab
- 2 way stretch

Breathing Form
- Shape – "O"
  - "EEE" to "O"
  - Breathing Tube
- Even
- Constant
- Smooth Change of Direction

Flow Studies
- 6-7-8-9-10 with arms

Flow Studies with Monitor
- 4-4
- 3-5
- 2-6
- 1-7

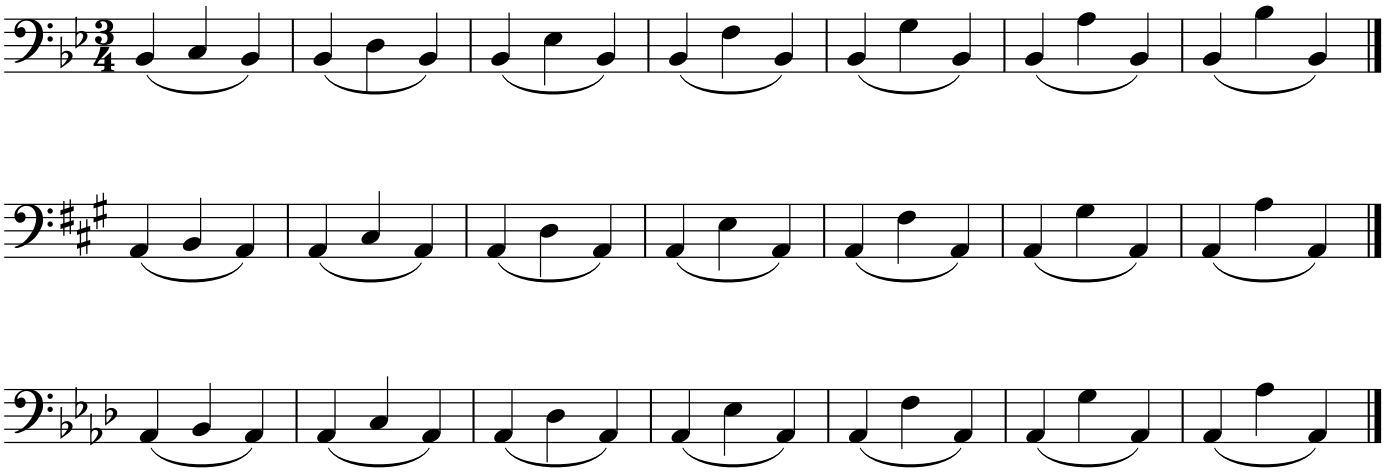
Therapies
- Fight for Air
- Leak for Air
- Stretch Out
  - In 5 beats of 8^{th} notes
  - Sip and Stretch
  - 2 Chunks
  - Hiss
  - Sigh

Awareness
- *f - fff*
- *mp – mf*
- *pp - p*

Power Breathing

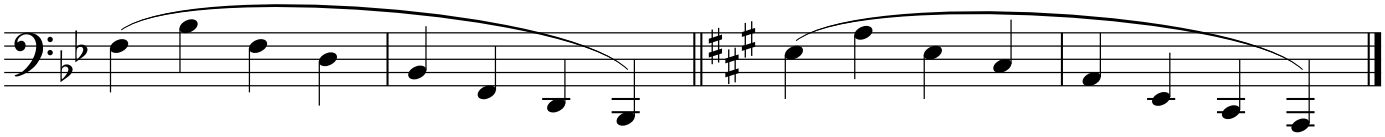
Step 2 - BUZZ

Option 1 (Sheridan/Pilafian)
Buzz each measure slowly with a glissando connecting each note.



Option 2 (Sheridan/Pilafian)
Buzz each pattern slowly with a glissando connecting each note.
Continue expanding outward.

Option 3 (Alessi)
Buzz each pattern slowly with a glissando connecting each note.
Continue down chromatically.



Option 4
Buzz any familar tune. Choose different tunes each day and try to cover a wide range of keys.

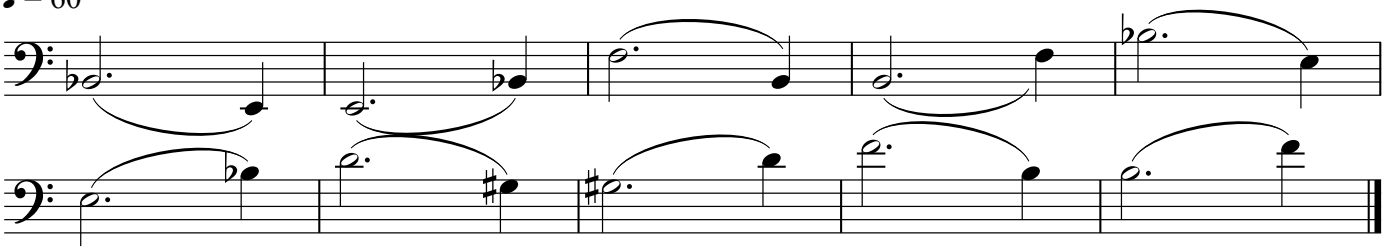
Step 3 - SOUND

Sound is the single most important aspect of trombone technique. Spend the majority of your warm up in this area. It is important to have a concept of sound in your head before you play a note on the instrument.

GLISSES

Play each measure slowly focusing on a even, smooth and constant stream of air.

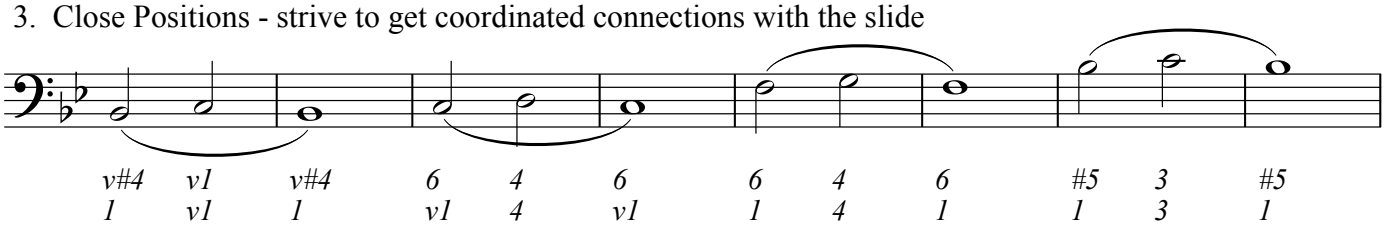
♩ = 60



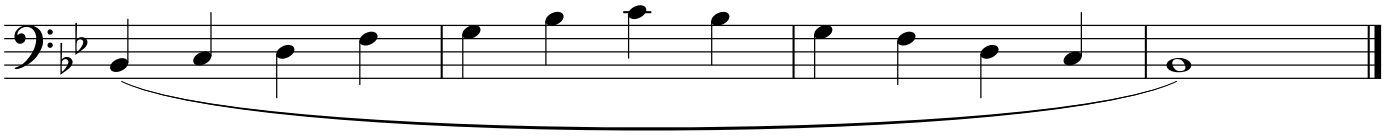
BREAKS (Ashworth)

This exercise is designed to get the air, chops and slide synced up from the beginning of the day.
Each measure is to be played 3 different ways.

1. Buzz - use slow glisses to connect each pitch - keep the lips vibrating
2. Alternate Positions - use outer alternate positions (or the valve) to create glisses on the horn
3. Close Positions - strive to get coordinated connections with the slide

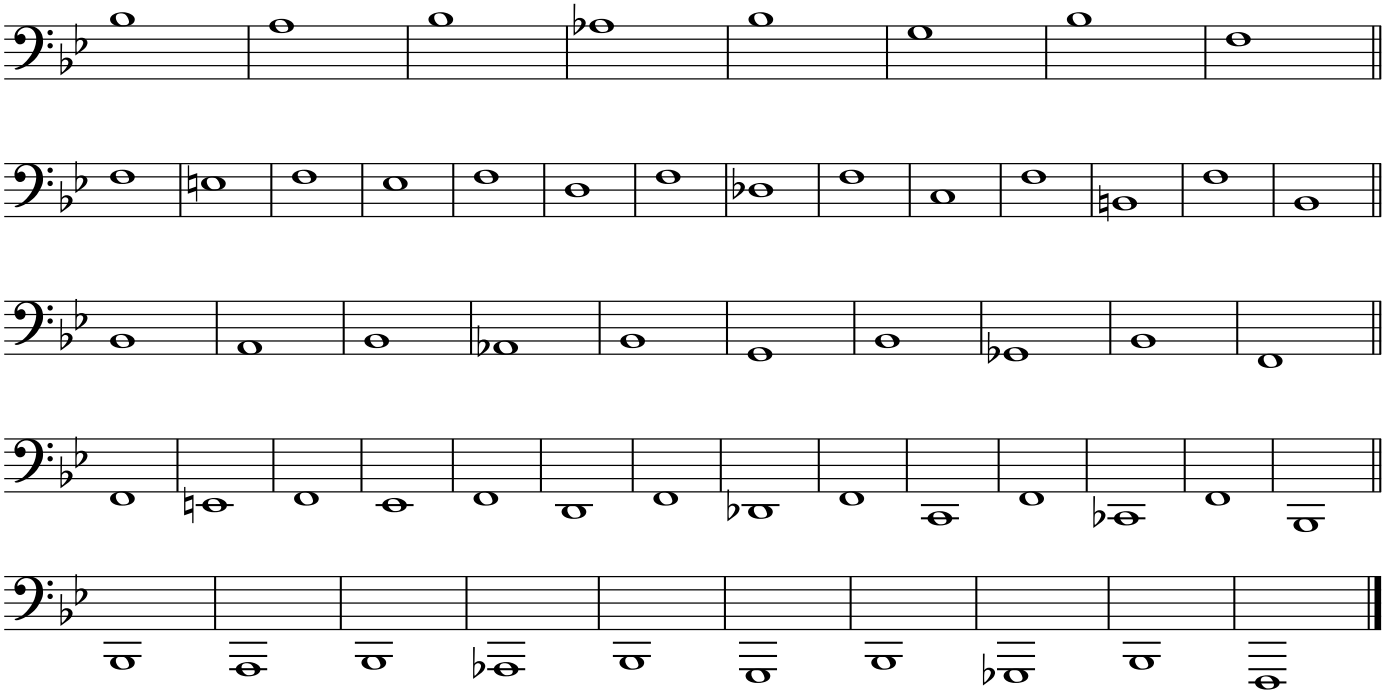


This portion of the exercise should be played from the beginning adding one note each time.



LONG TONES (Remington)

♩ = 60



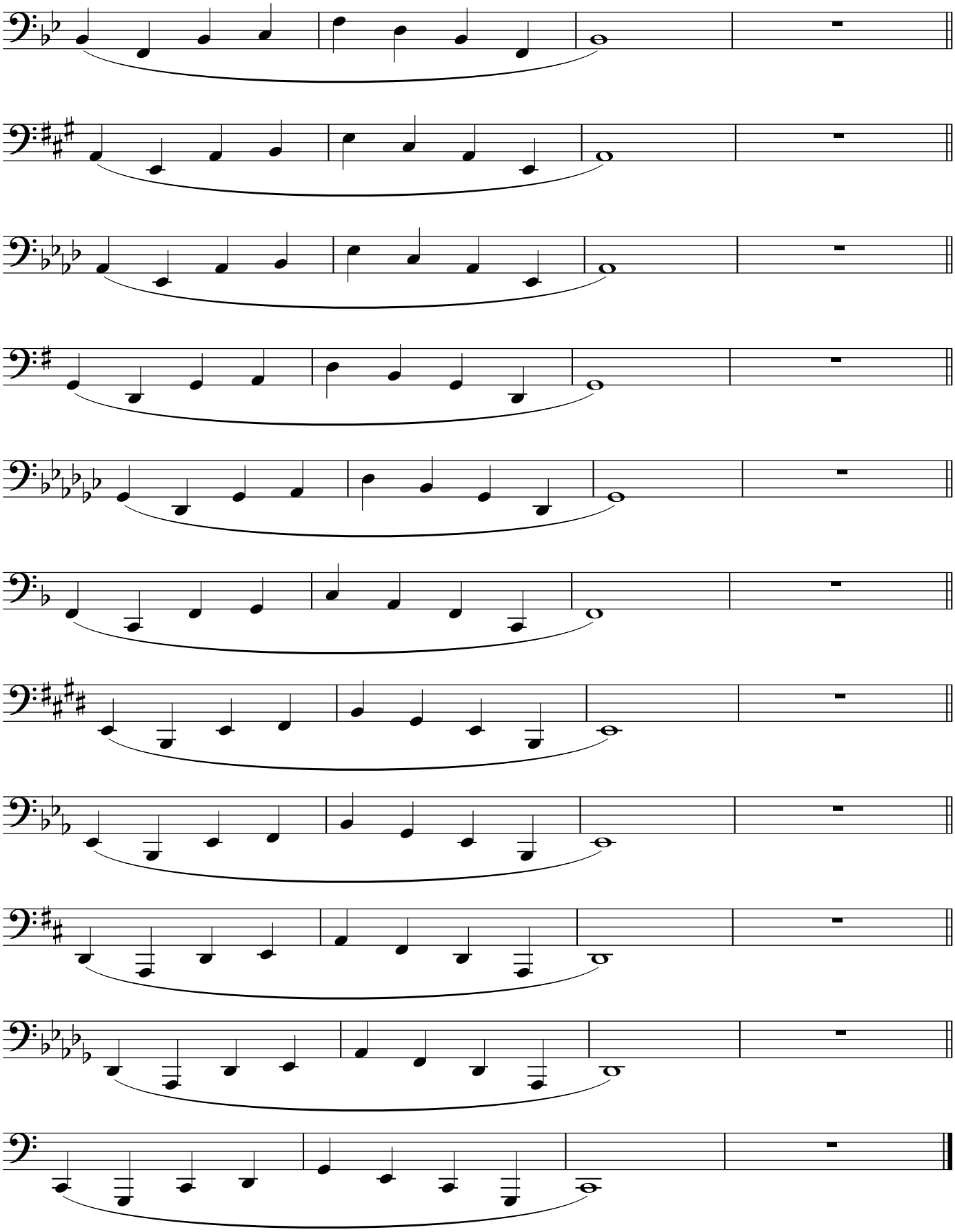
Flow Studies

SMOOTH AIR MOVEMENT (Sheridan/Pilafian)

Strive for an effortless delivery of air and even sound through entire phrase.

♩ = 72 - 92

in 4 or 2

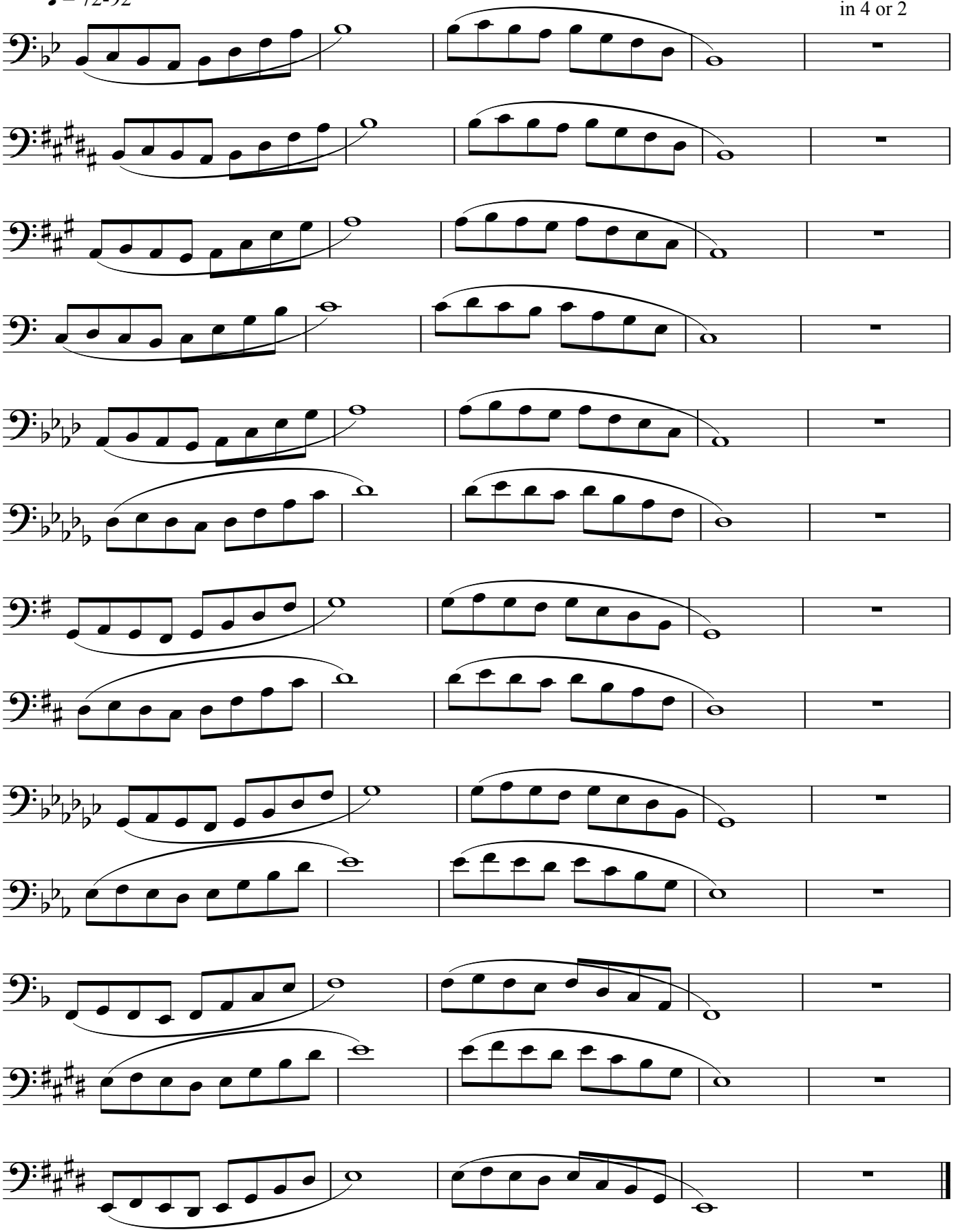


BEAUTIFUL SOUNDS (Sheridan/Pilafian)

Strive for an effortless delivery of air and even sound through entire phrase.

♩ = 72-92

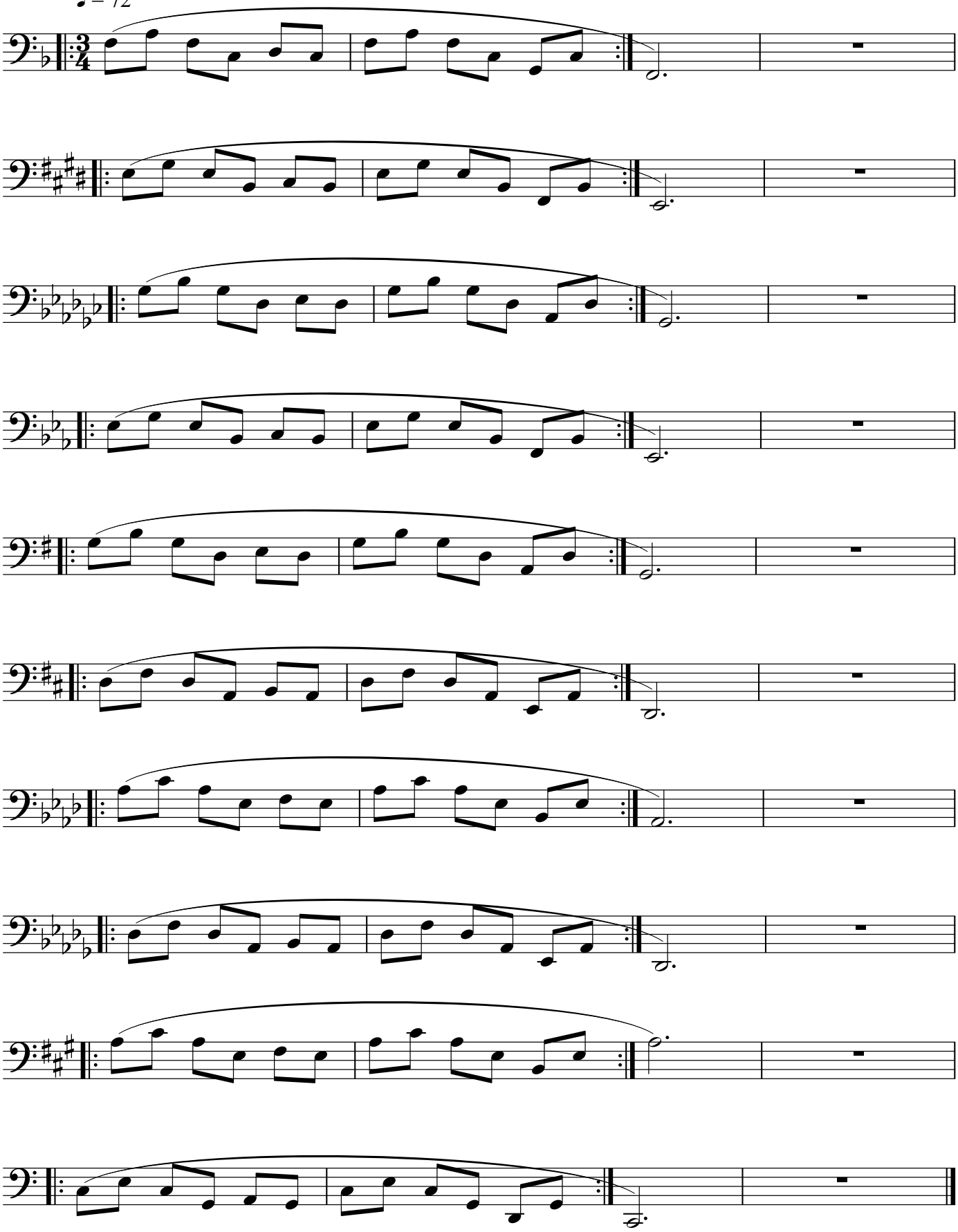
in 4 or 2



FLOW STUDY (Vernon)

Strive for an effortless delivery of air and even sound through entire phrase.

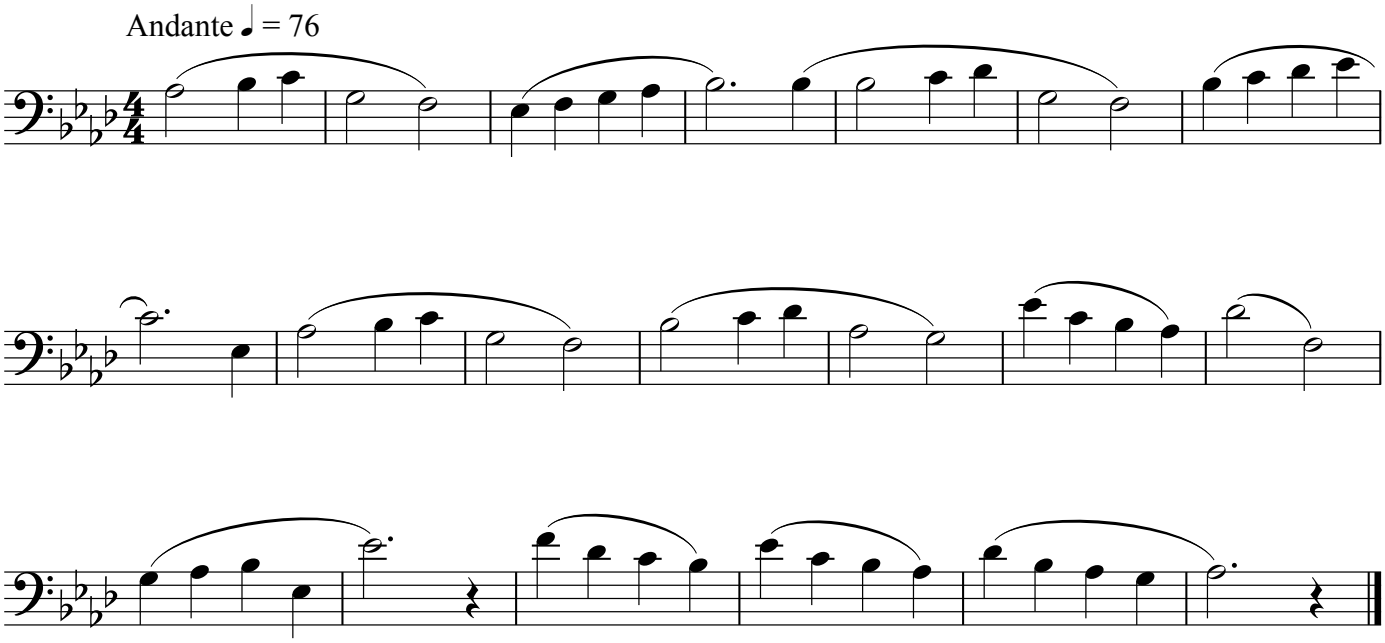
♩ = 72

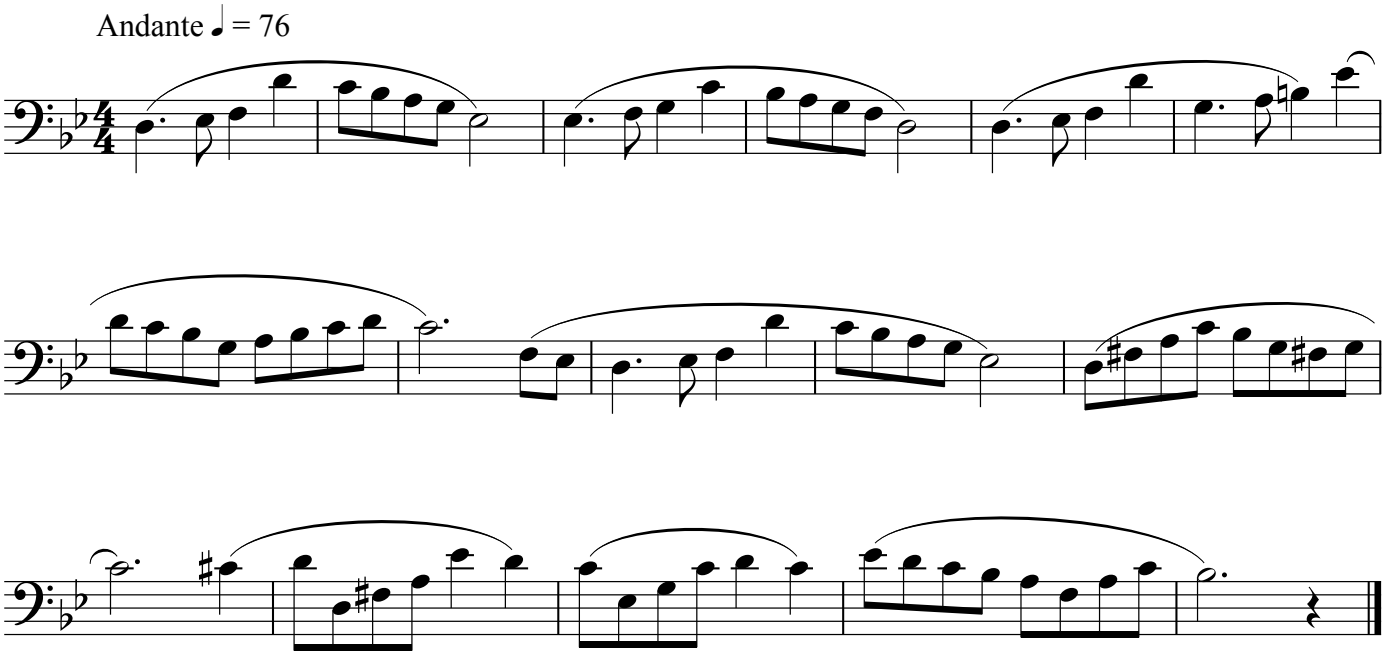


The Artform

Song and Wind

These are two etudes from Jaroslav Cimera's 55 Phrasing Studies for Trombone.
It is important to make music as early in the playing day as possible.
Perform short lyrical phrases as is, down an octave and tenor clef down an octave.

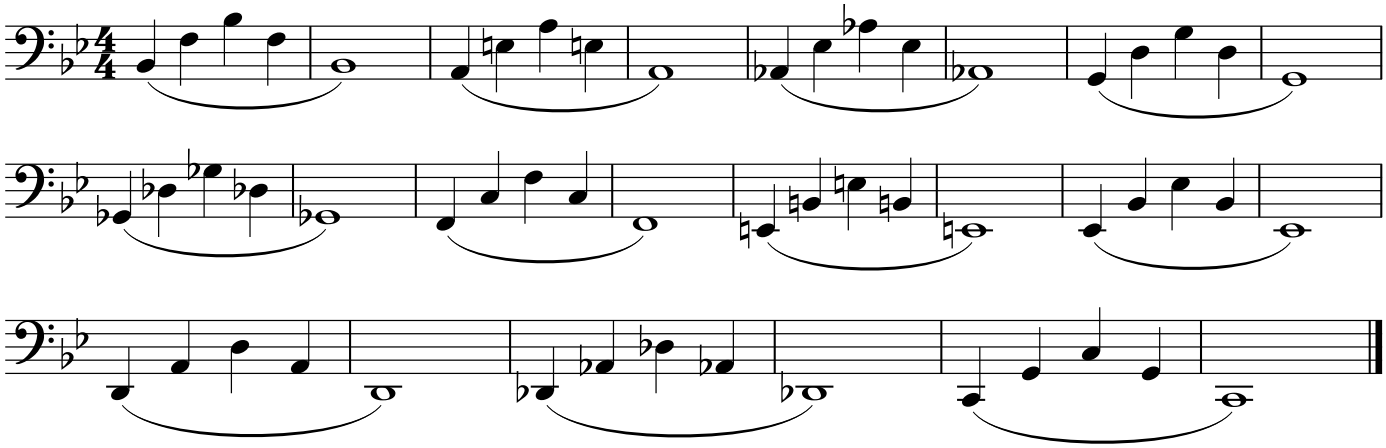




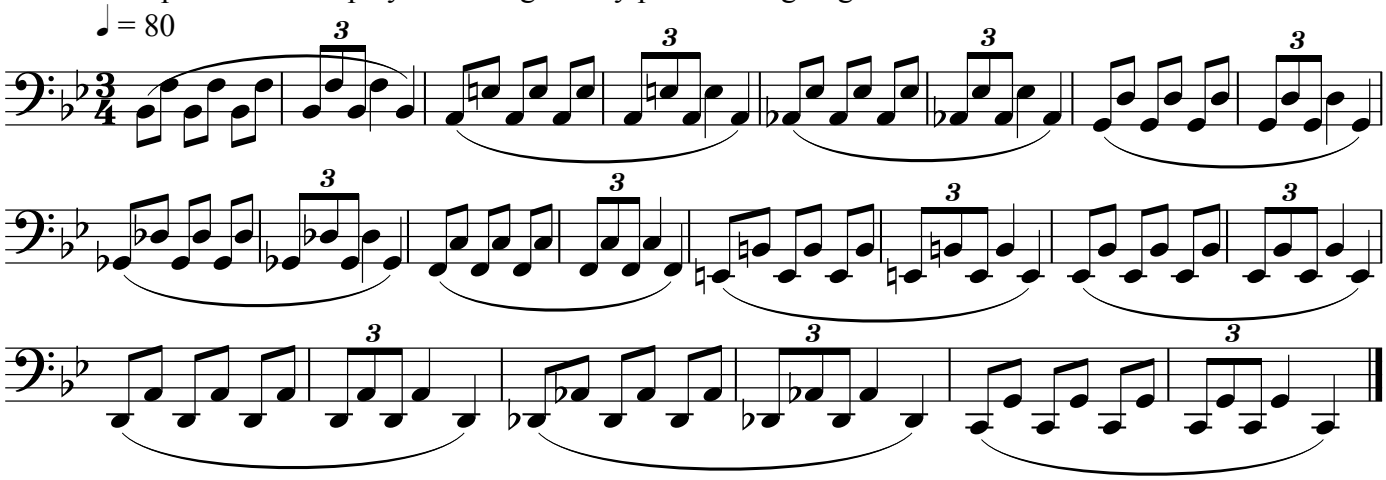
Flexibility

Lip Slurs are very important to sound and embouchure development. While playing these and other lip slurs, remember the sound that you established in the earlier section and apply it to these exercises.

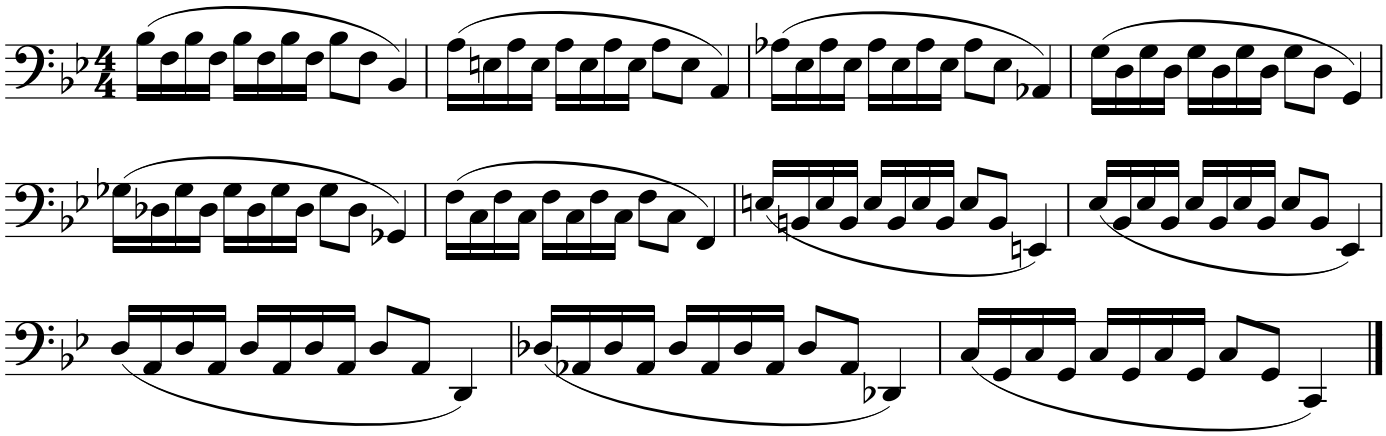
3 NOTE SLUR (Remington)
Play slowly to focus on seamless connections. Keep the lips vibrating.
♩ = 40



2 NOTE FLEXIBILITY (Blokker)
This pattern can be played starting on any partial and going either direction.
♩ = 80

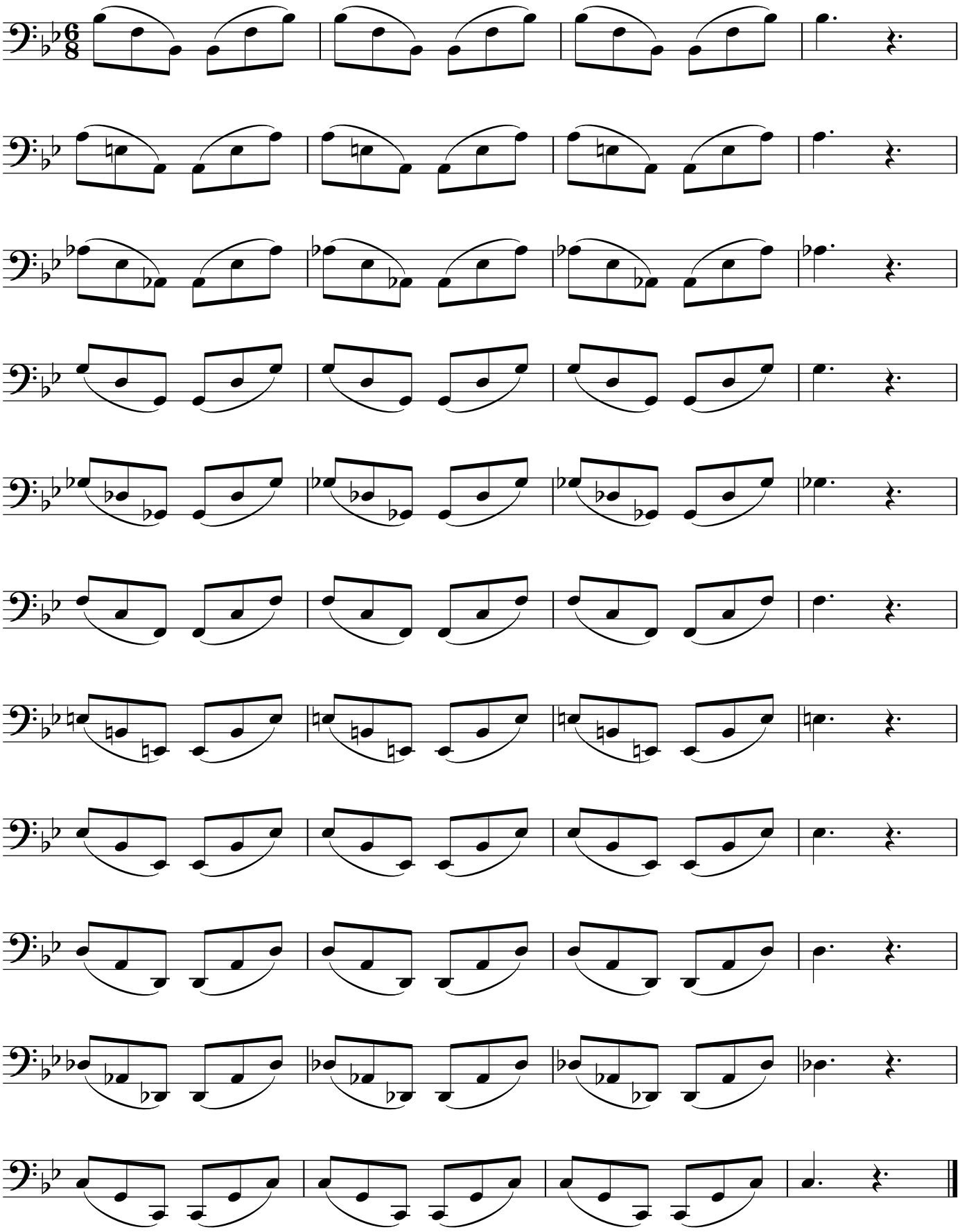


3 NOTE FLEXIBILITY (Remington)
♩ = 96



SLUR AND TONGUE COORDINATION (Marsteller)

♩. = 112

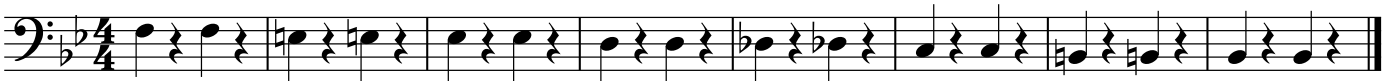


Articulation

The thing to remember when practicing articulation is that the tongue has nothing to do with the actual production of the note...it does not vibrate. Focus on the air flow.

ATTACKS AND RELEASES (Conklin)

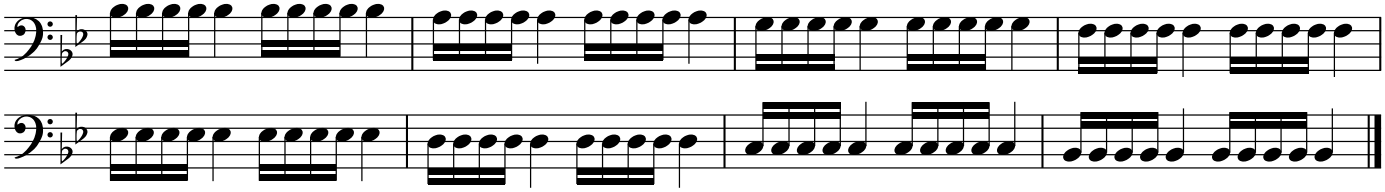
♩ = 72



REPEATED TONGUING (Remington)

Play this exercise in all different keys/modes and articulation styles.

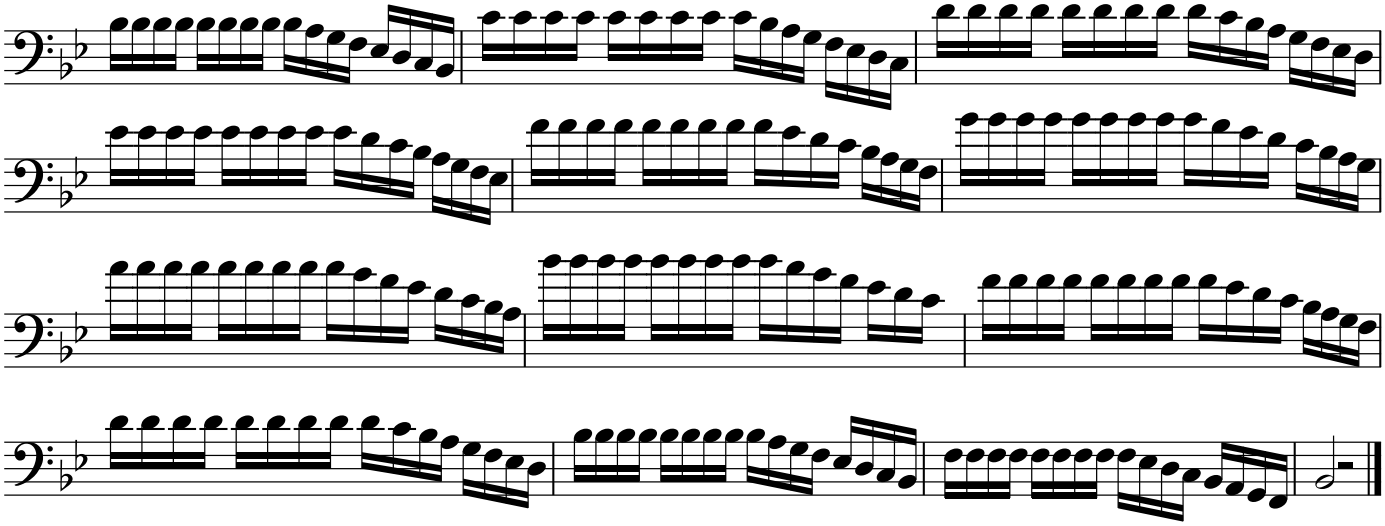
♩ = 80



TONGUE SLIDE COORDINATION (Schlossberg)

Play this exercise in all different keys/modes and articulation styles.

♩ = 88



TONGUE COORDINATION (Sheridan/Pilafian)

Breathe only after eight notes. Keep air moving through beats 3 and 4.

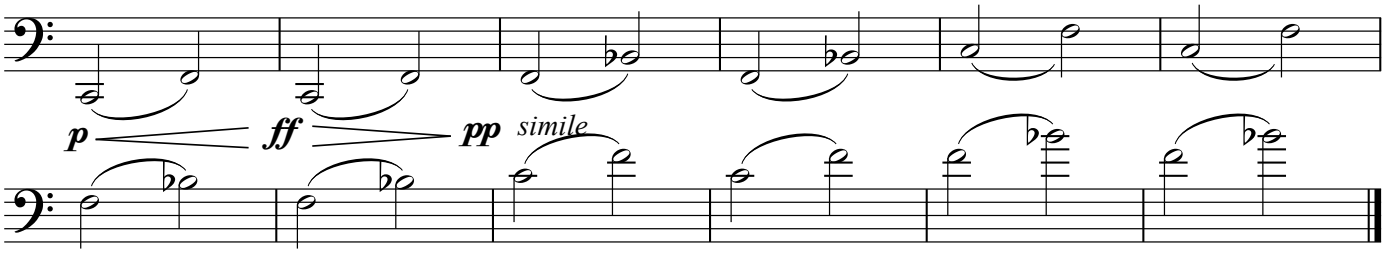
♩ = 88 - 132

Range

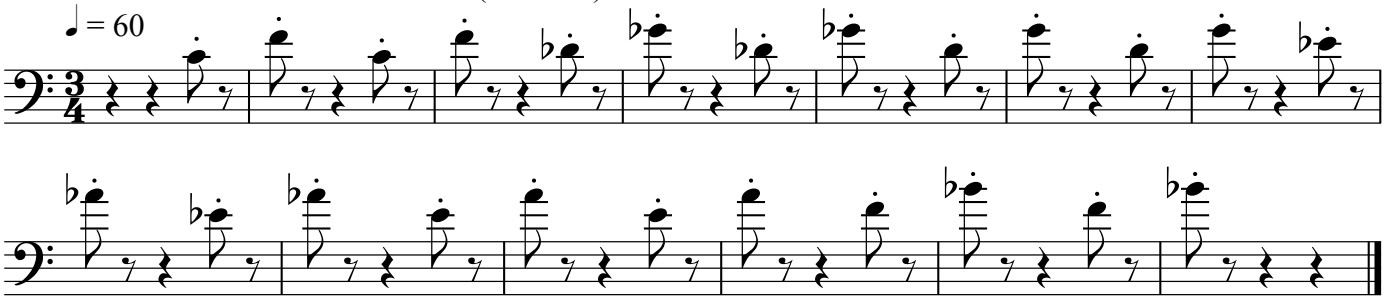
The following exercises are designed to expand the upper register and link the lower and middle register to the upper register. Take breaks in between each exercise and always play as much in the low register as you do in the high register. Follow these exercises with a phrase of a lyrical etude in several different keys and registers. Remember....SOUND is the most important aspect of trombone technique.

HIGH REGISTER GLISSES (Ashworth)

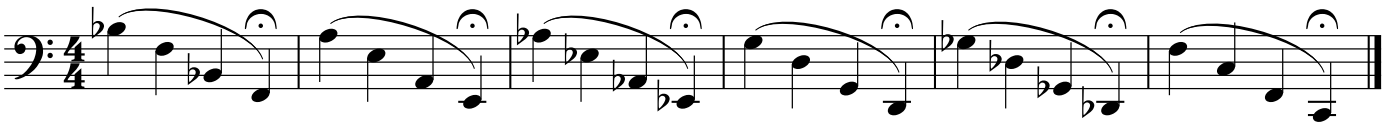
Keep the air moving forward and keep chops still.



HIGH REGISTER SECURITY (Ellefson)

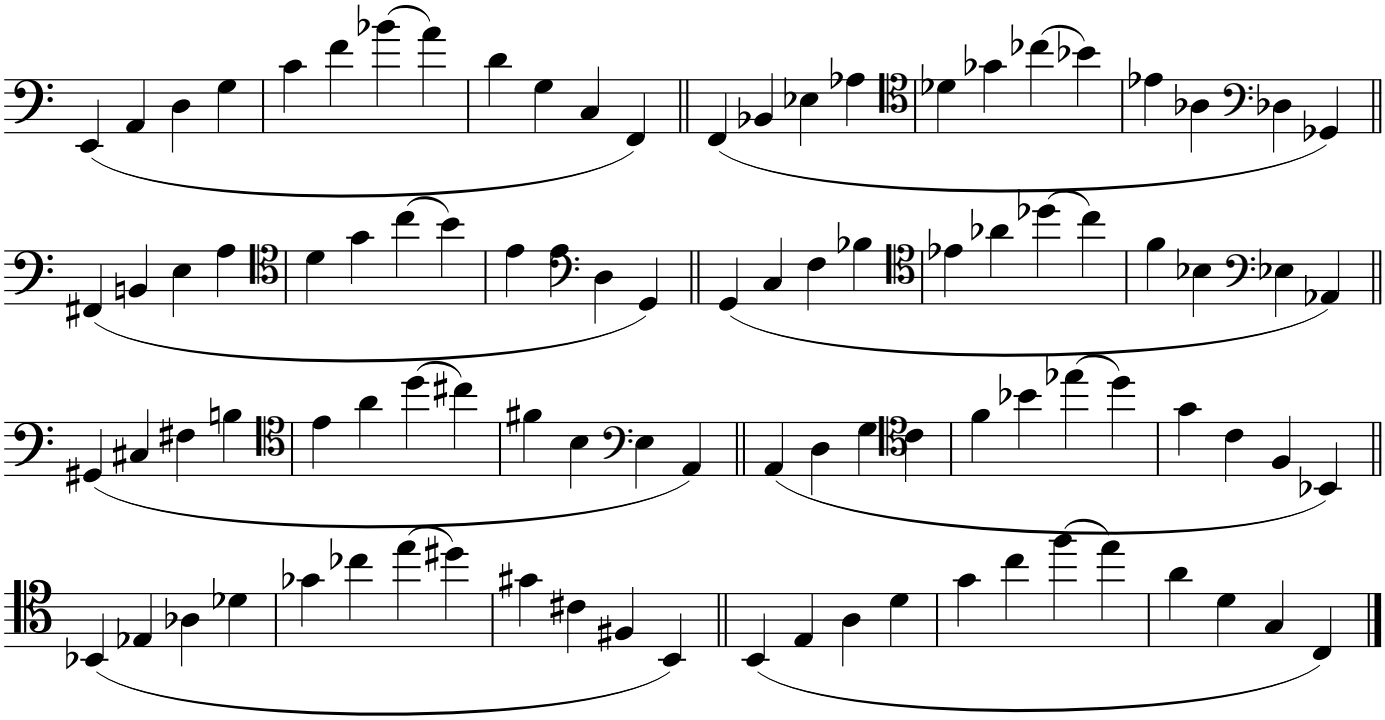


COOL DOWN



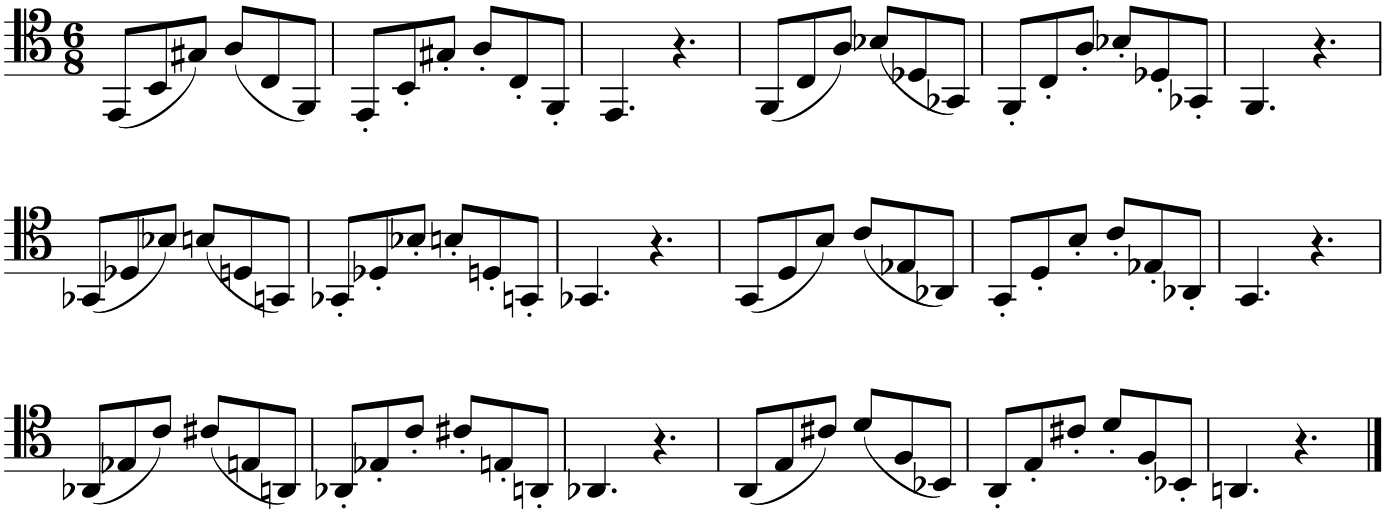
LINKING REGISTERS (Vernon)

Tongue only the 1st note and play each phrase in 1 breath.



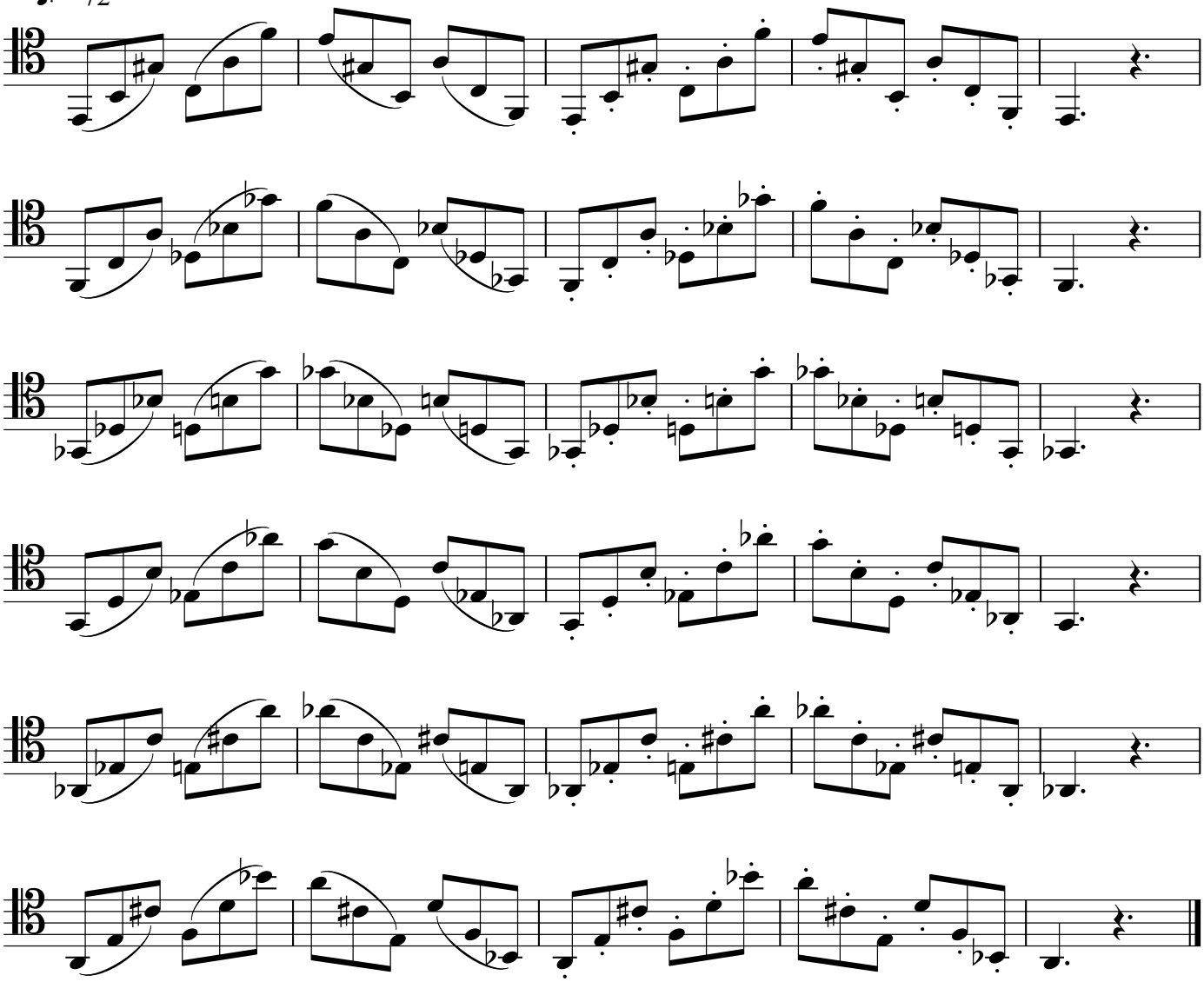
LINKING REGISTERS (Marsteller)

♩. = 60



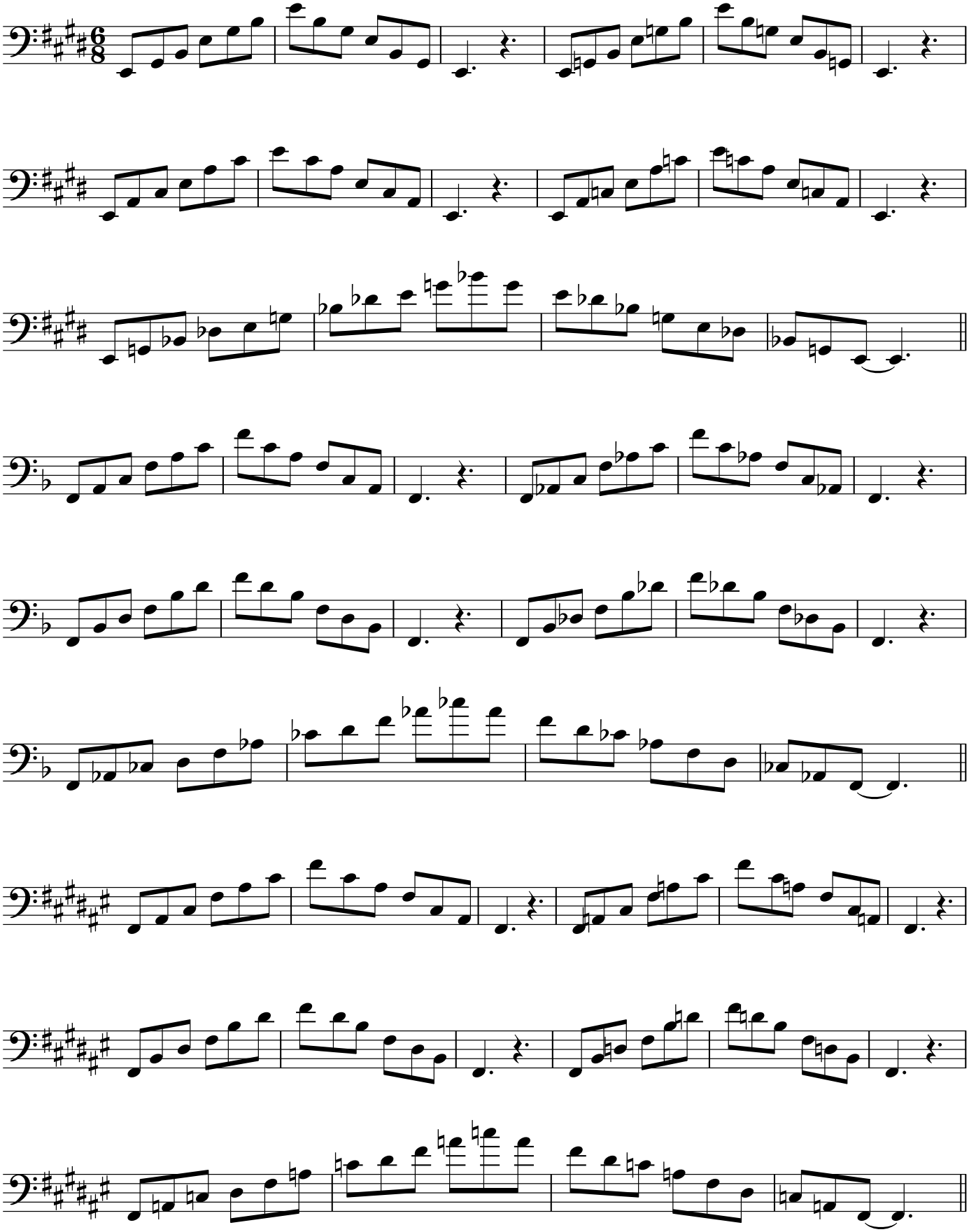
LINKING REGISTERS (Marsteller)

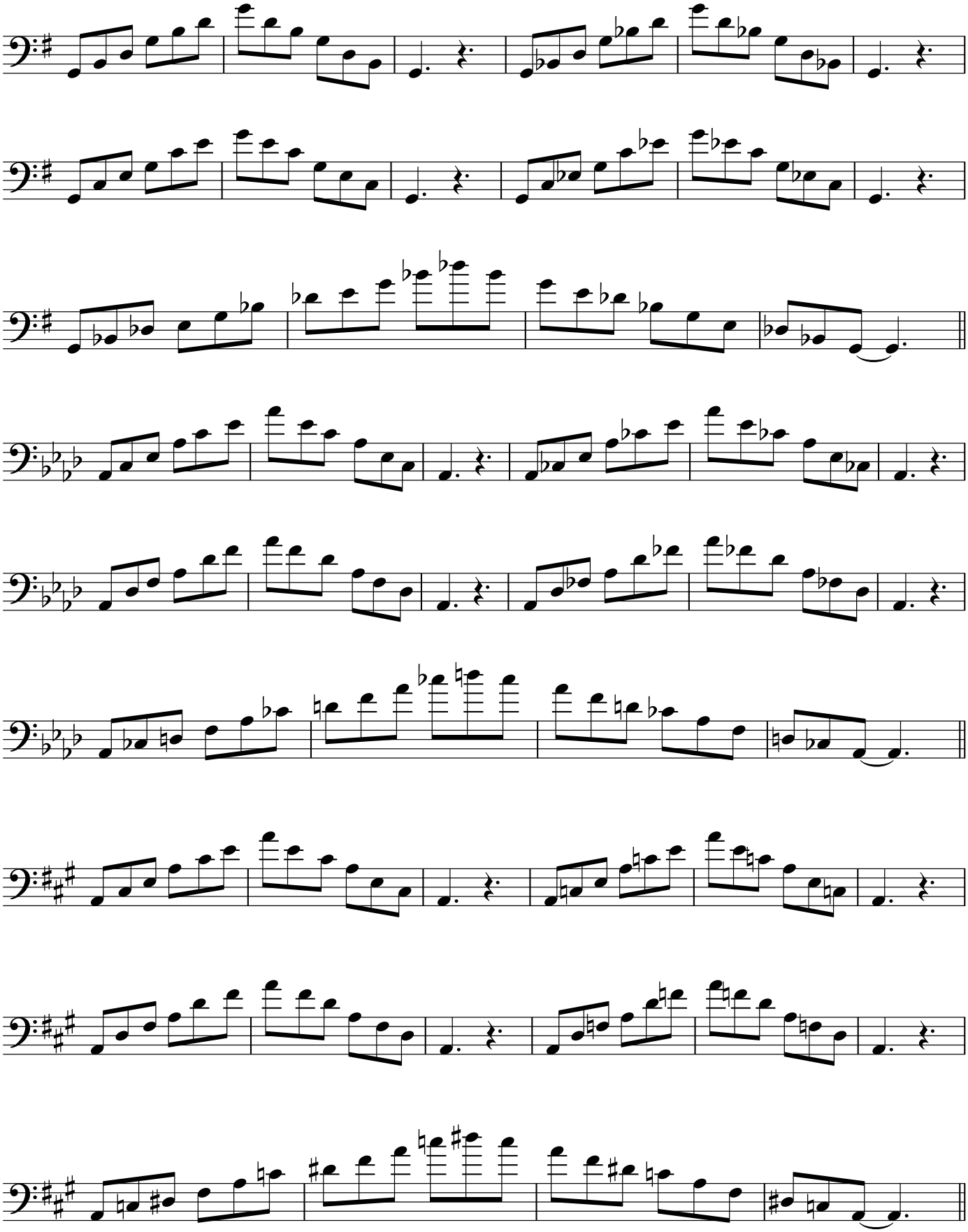
♩. = 72

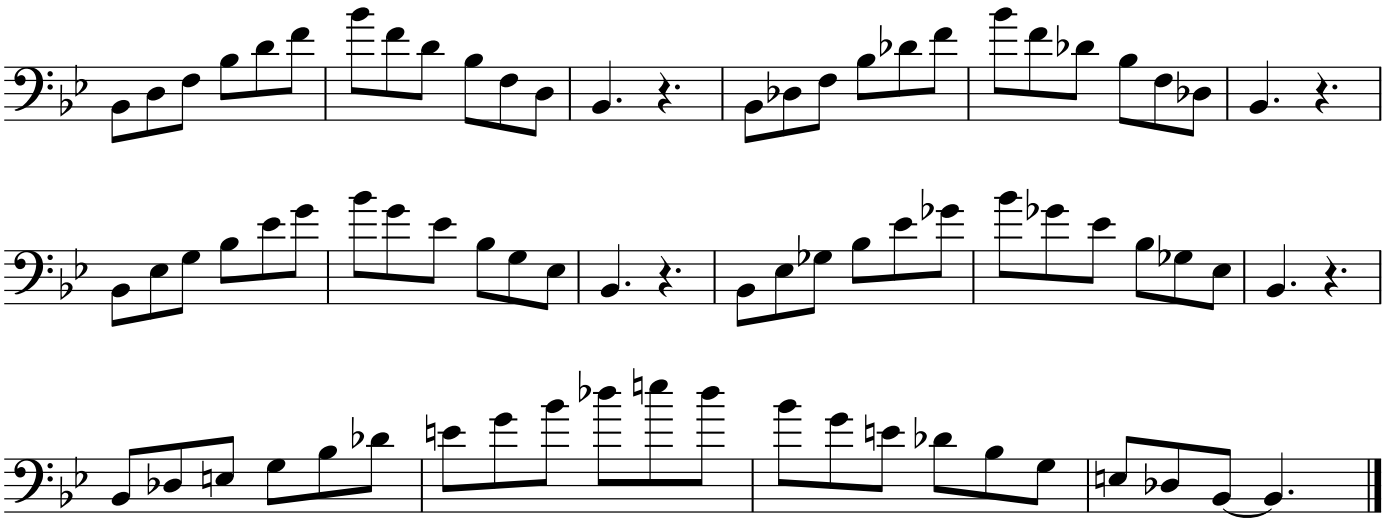


Arpeggio Drill

Alessi







EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PRACTICE HABITS

*Your teacher should supply you with the **What**, **How** and **Why**.
The student is to take the **What**, **How** and **Why** and add the **When**.

*An ideal practice day should consit of 7 sessions of 40 minutes each.
It is not healthy to do all of you practice in one 2-3 hour session.

***TAPE YOURSELF DAILY!**

*Sing - Buzz - Play.

*Listening and attending concerts is a big part of any musicians development
and should be treated like daily practice.

*When you are in the practice room...PRACTICE!

"World class players do not just happen...their talents are forged in the dual furnaces of determination and dilligence."
-Edward Kleinhammer - Chicago Symphony (1940-1985)