A "SINGING" APPROACH TO THE TROMBONE (and other Brass)

1995 Revised Edition

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BREATHING

As for breathing, always remember *two* basic things: (1) SIT TALL and (2) SUCK AIR from the mouth, *not* the body. This will help to realize and use the full lung capacity. Several exercises designed to loosen and relax the breathing apparatus can be found on page 35.

BUZZING THE MOUTHPIECE

Mouthpiece buzzing is a very important part of playing the trombone, or any other brass instrument. It allows the player to produce music with the lips (singing with the lips as if they were vocal cords) without having to deal with any of the technical problems associated with the trombone itself. After practicing the mouthpiece enough so that buzzing is fairly easy, it is important that the player spend most of his mouthpiece time buzzing the actual music to be played — Rochut etudes, ballads, etc., as well as nursery rhyme tunes that can be played (sung) off the top of the head.

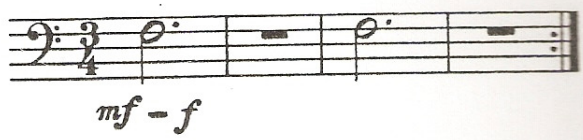
To begin mouthpiece practice, buzz first in the middle range, and extend in both directions. Make the high and low registers sound as free and easy as the middle range. Remember that the buzz is resonant like the human voice. Do not force the lips to buzz too high or loud -- control the buzz with the speed of the air. Always strive for a focused, centered, free sounding buzz in all registers. Using a lip vibrato helps to focus the sound. As soon as the mouthpiece is put into the horn, the resistance of the buzz will change. This is not of major concern and certainly not enough to *not* buzz the mouthpiece. Remember -- it is the approach that is important.

CONCEPT OF SOUND

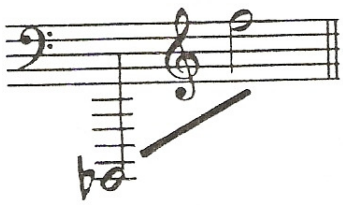
Imagine, in the depths of your mind, what you think the greatest trombone sound in the world would be like. Use adjectives to describe this sound -- beautiful, singing, fat, clear, rich, full, smooth, round, dark, centered, warm, etc.

Play the following exercise:

1

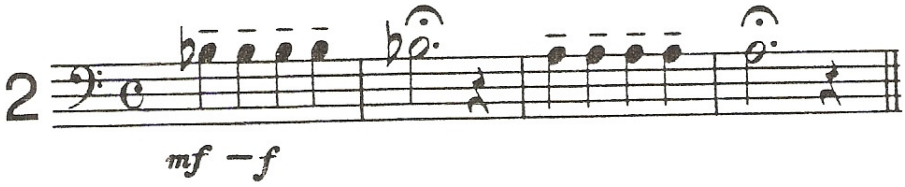


Starting with the middle F, try to hear your "imaginary sound" playing that note. Then, recreate on the trombone the sound you hear in your head. While playing the note, do not try to listen and change the sound of the note as it is being produced. Simply concentrate on the sound you hear in your head. Then, during the rest, recall what the note you played sounded like, and repeat the note, trying to make it sound closer to the sound in your head. Continue with an E, the G♭ , alternating up and down by half steps until the entire range of the instrument is covered.



Remember -- while working on this and all of the following exercises, that the END PRODUCT (beautiful sound and music) is to be the predominant thought while playing. CONCENTRATE ON EVERY NOTE!

2



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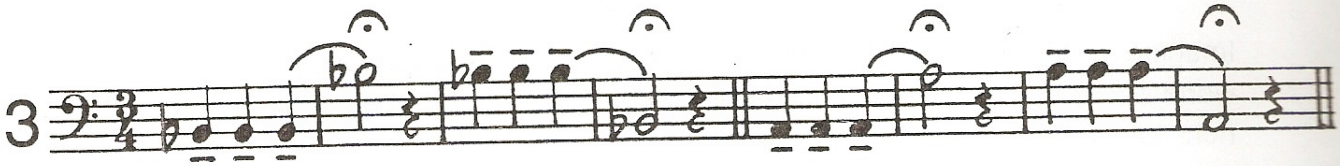
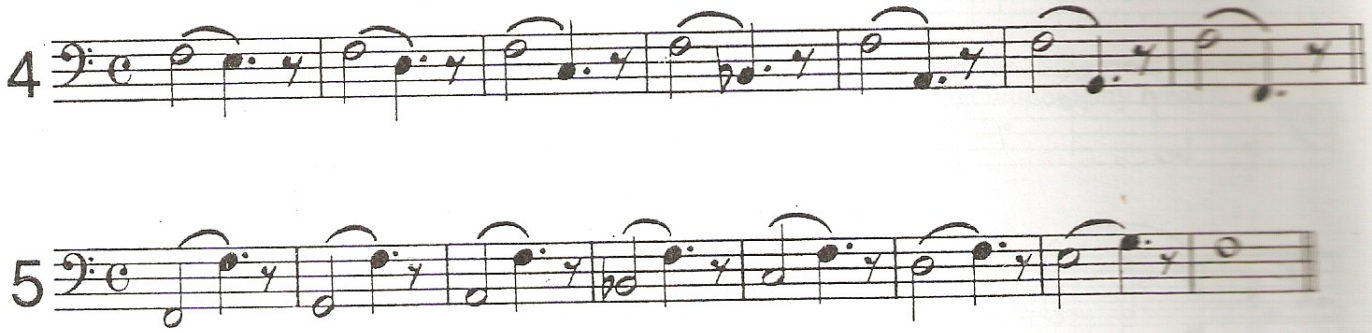


Cover the entire range of the instrument.

The breathing tube may be used in the rest to aid in keeping the throat as open as possible. Use the air as fuel to continue the sound. Make each note smoother and richer than the last. Articulate these with a "dah" or "doo" syllable, when the tongue is needed. Repeat the exercise until the sound produced is the same as the imaginary sound in your head.

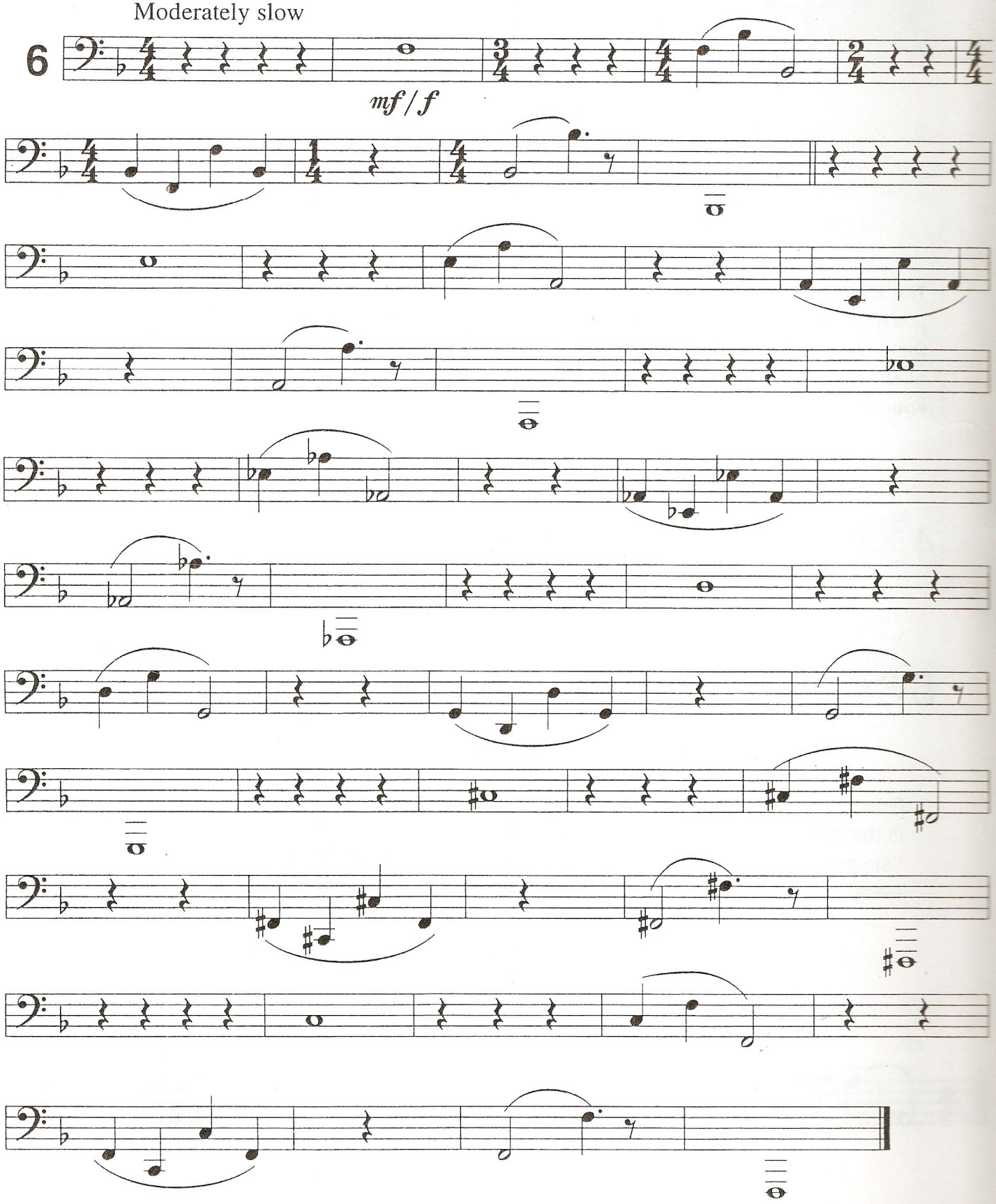


Once again, use the imaginary ''greatest trombone sound'' as a goal to aim for. Smoothness in the change of note is of importance here. Try to hear the trombone sound in your head ''singing'' the exercises as you play them. Remember to CONCENTRATE on each and every note! Repeat the exercises in all keys (major and minor) and in all octaves.

Moderately slow

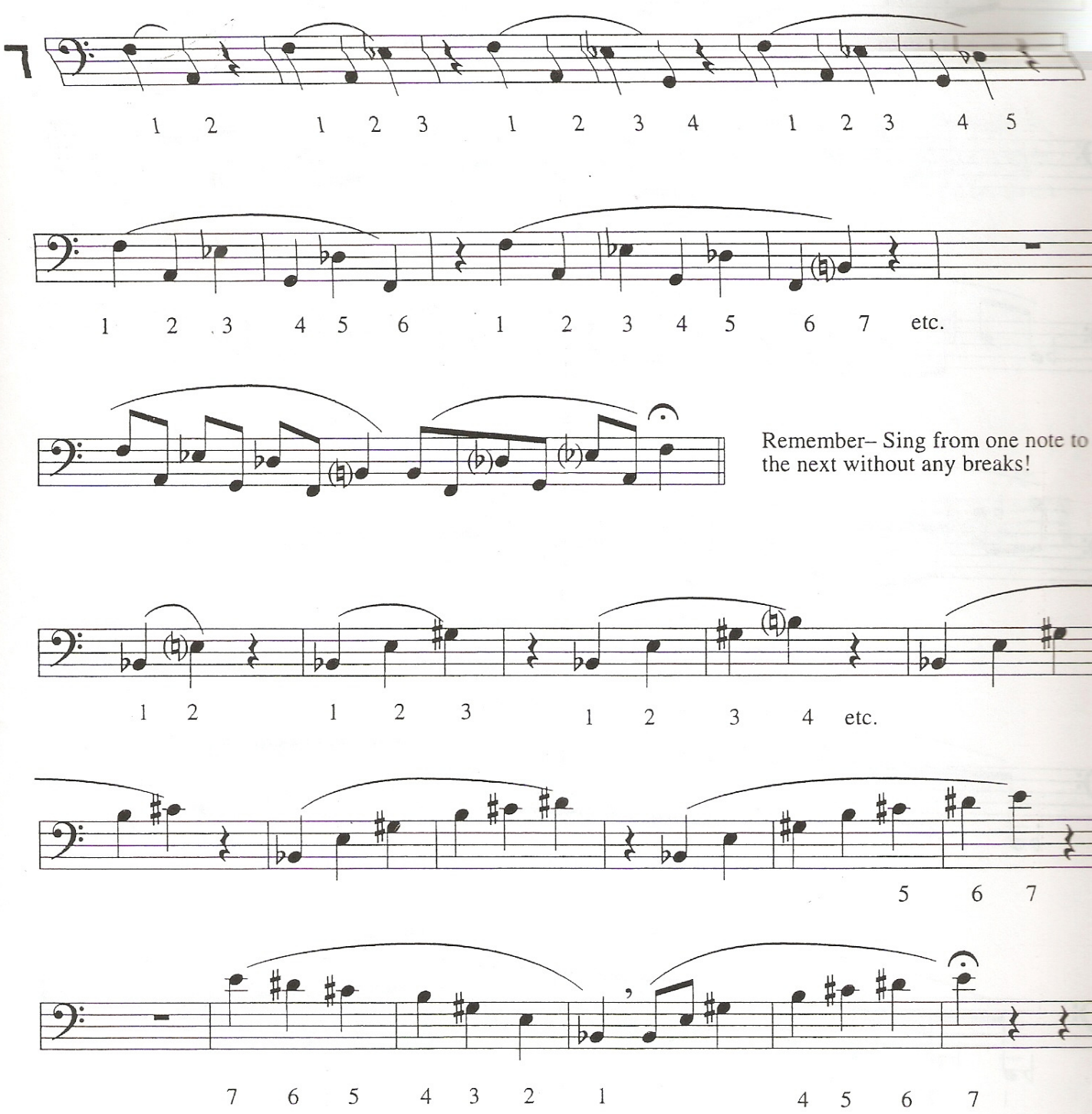
6

mf / f

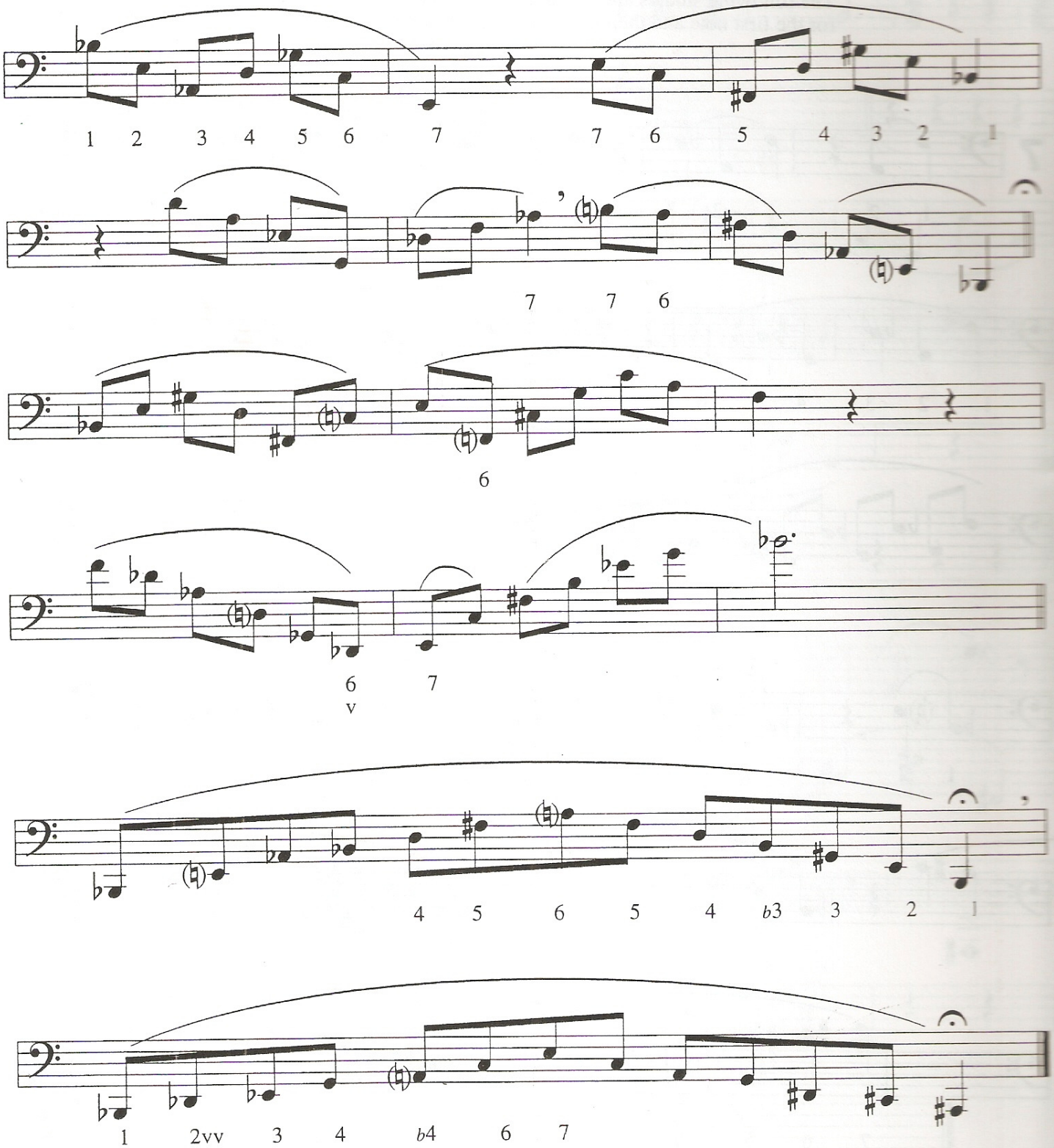


The key to this one is to always suck in the same amount of air during the silences, i.e. fill up over the length of 4 beats, over 3, over 2, and over 1.

The following studies are a continuation of singing one note at a time. Use tc
for the first note and then move down all positions as needed.

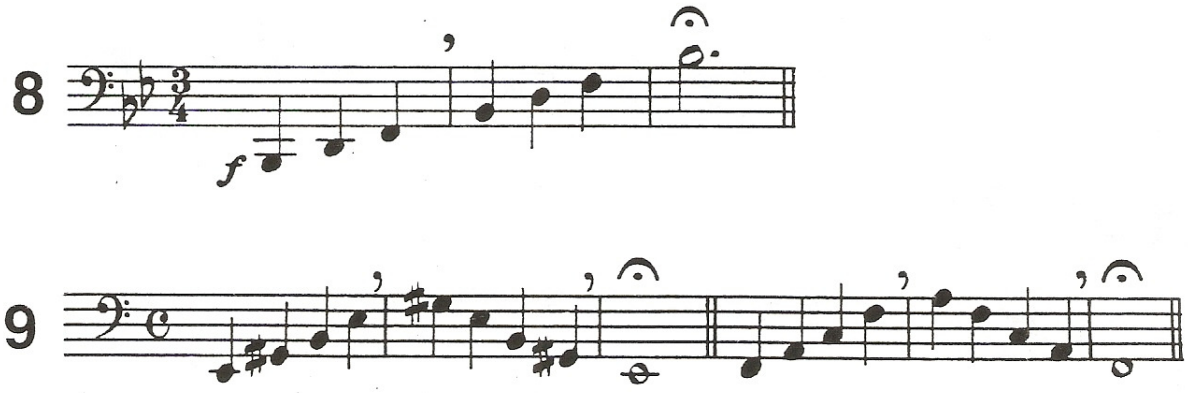


Remember– Sing from one note to the next without any breaks!



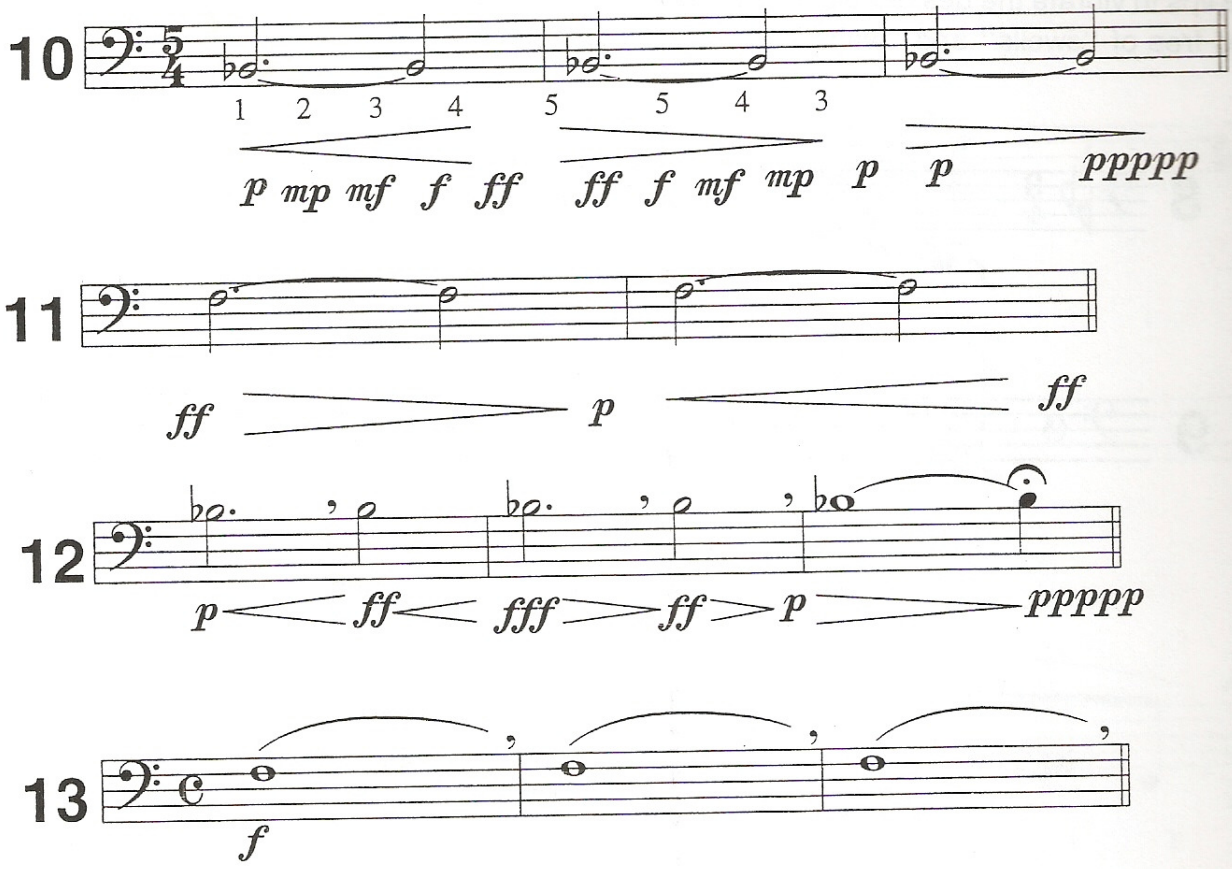
Note:
Many possibilities exist. Try starting on different partials and positions, always slurring with a GREAT sound.

This exercise should be played without the aid of the tongue. Use a "ho" syllable to articulate each note. Breathe through the tube to keep the throat open. This exercise aids the lips to vibrate the desired pitch more readily. When playing, the sound should be even and free of "swells" and "wahs". Buzz the mouthpiece when necessary.



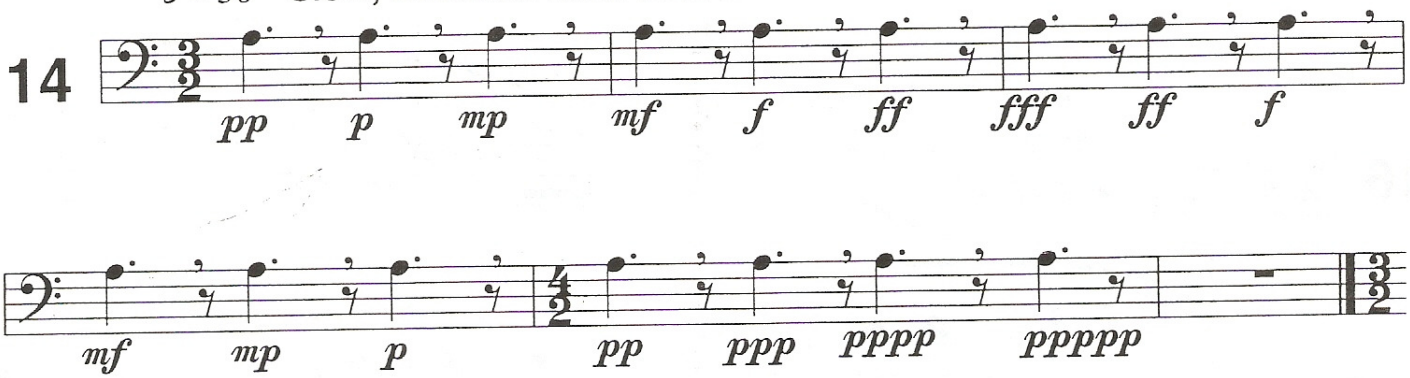
Cover the entire range of the instrument.

While playing these exercises, strive to maintain the same basic embouchure setting. All that changes during a or should be the *speed* of the air. To play louder. simply speed up the airstream. If, for example, the air for a ***pp*** note travels at 5 mph., the air for a ***ff*** note might travel at 60 mph. The airstream must, however, remain very intense at the lower speeds. When playing these exercises, try to achieve the effect of a stereo's volume being slowly turned up and down. Play each of these over the entire range of the trombone.

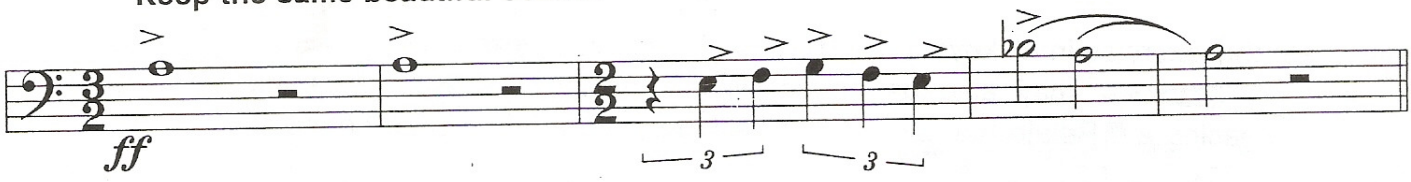


Strive to take as quick and relaxed a breath as possible.

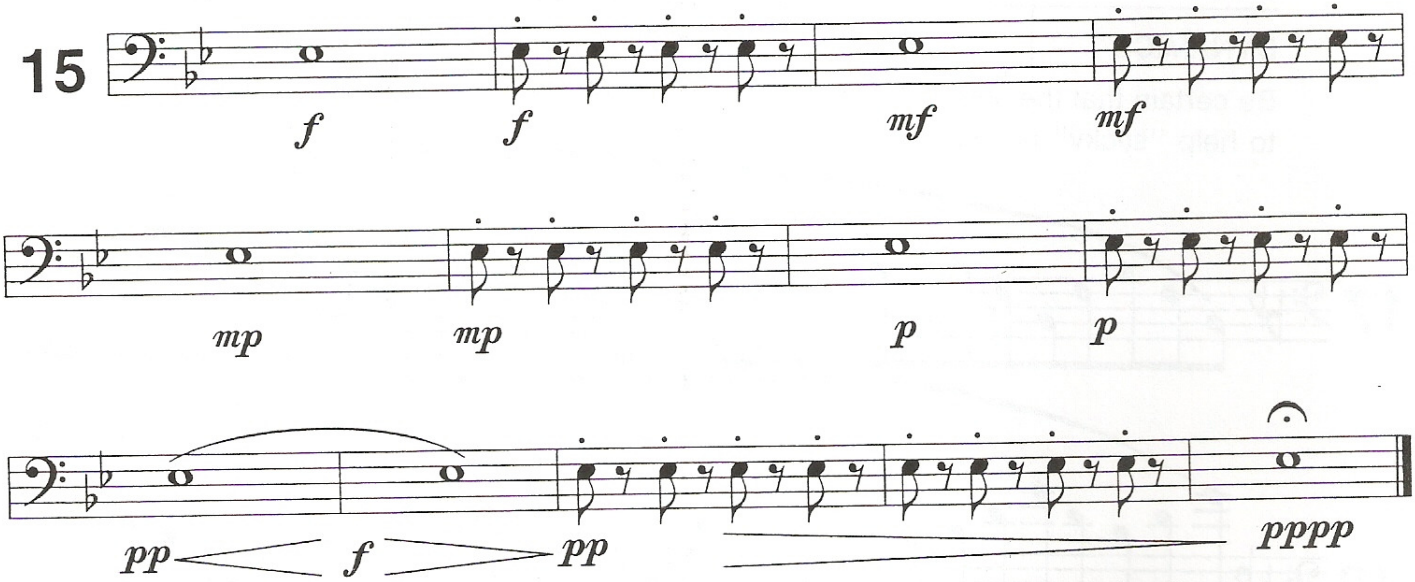
14 ♩ = 50 **Slow, beautiful even sounds**



Keep the same beautiful sound!



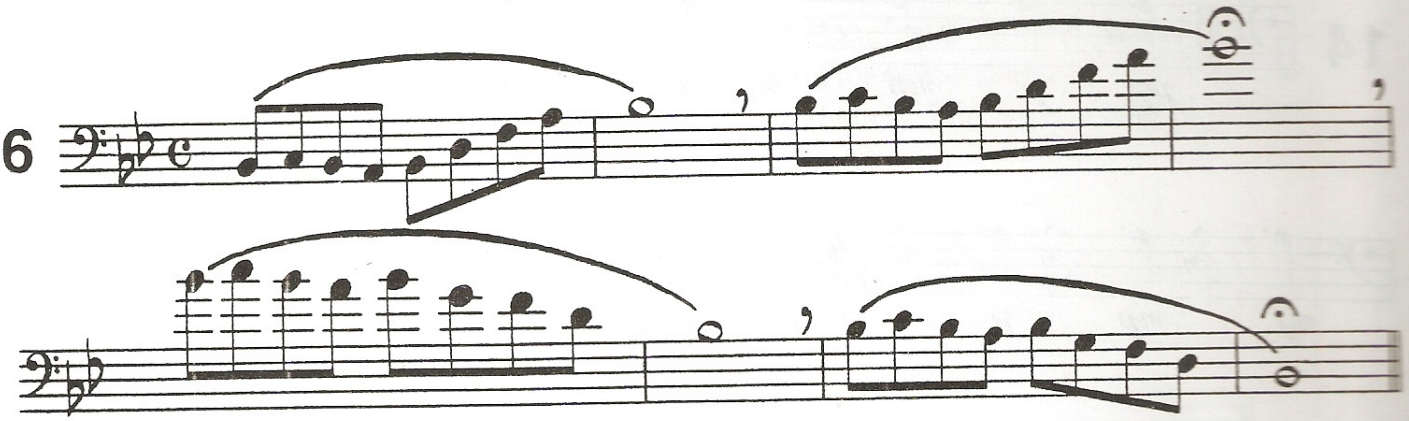
15 **Slow tempo with a beautiful sound**



Do these on many different notes in all registers

This exercise should be thought of as being one beautiful sound followed by another, glued cleanly together, and riding on top of a stream of steadily flowing air.

16



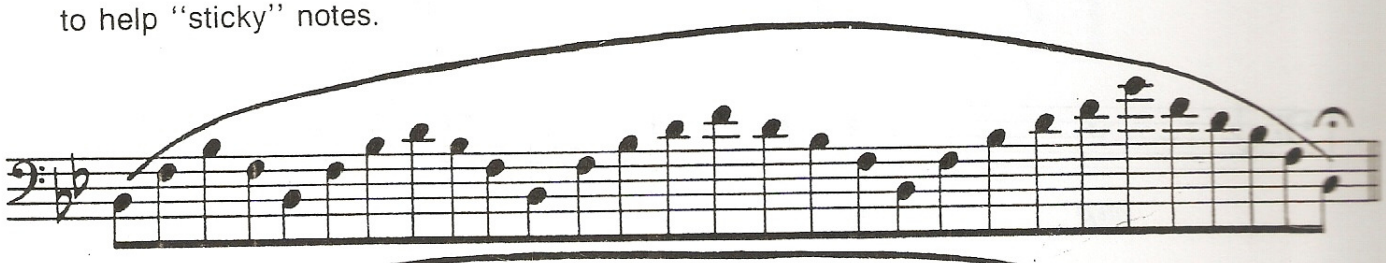
Do this exercise in all keys and octaves, all dynamics (*pp* – *ff*). and may also be added. When making a crescendo, think of steadily increasing air. Relate the speed of the air to mph., as mentioned before.

Play the following exercises as indicated below. Use different variations if desired.

	1	2	3	4
ARTICULATION	tongued	slurred	slurred	slurred
DIRECTION	**17**	**17**	**18**	**18**
DYNAMICS	*ff*	*mf*	*f*	*p*

Be certain that the sound is even, smooth and relaxed throughout. Buzz the mouthpiece to help "sticky" notes.

17



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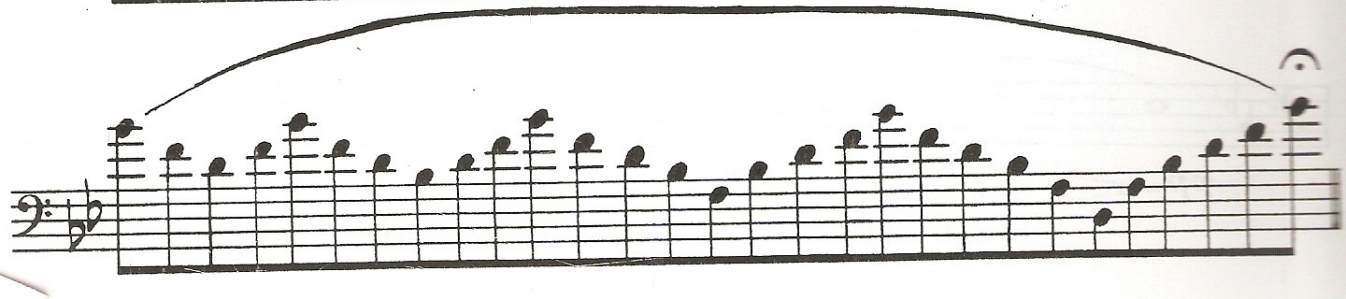
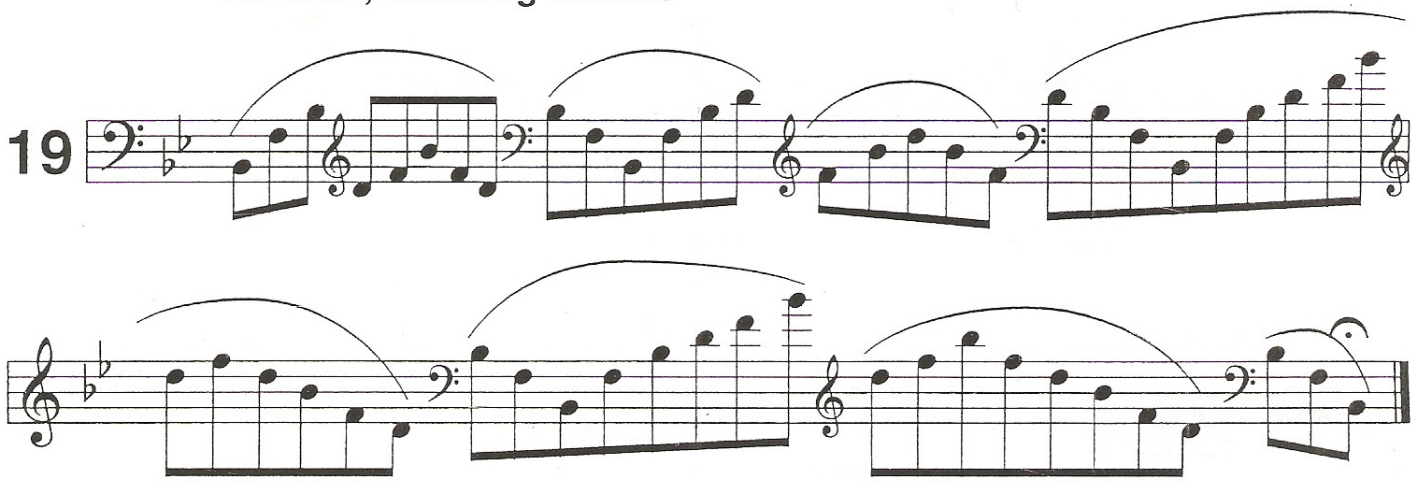


All Even, Matching Sounds

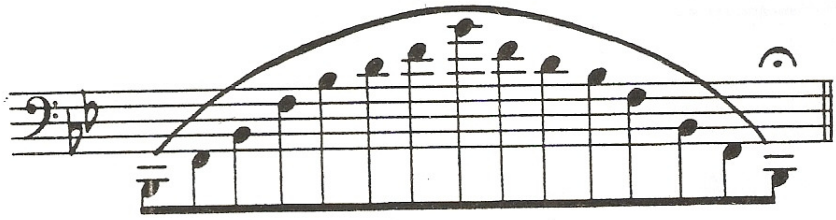
19



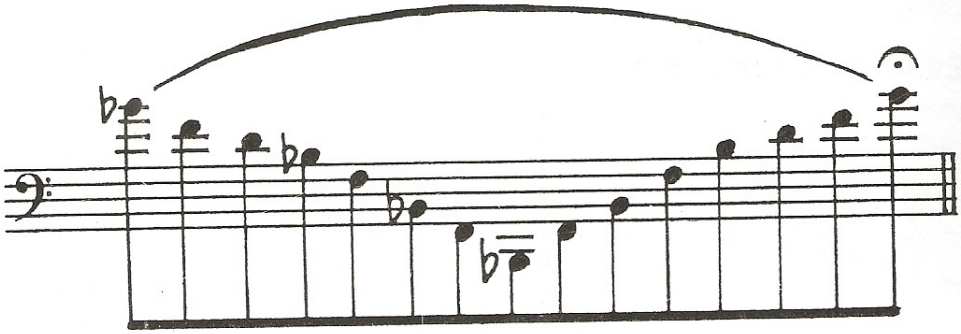
In all 7 postions

Play in all seven positions. Vary the articulation from liquid slur to very detached. Remember to buzz the mouthpiece when necessary.

20



20A



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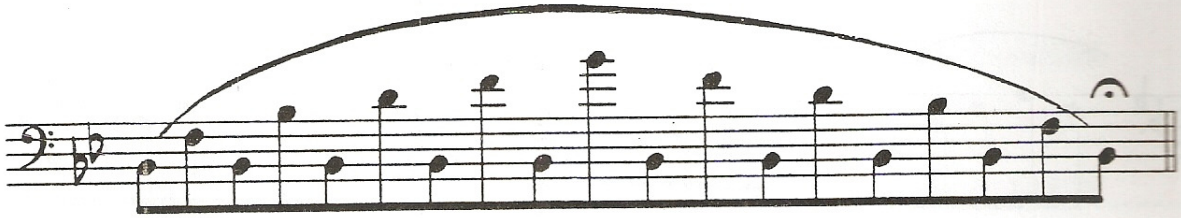
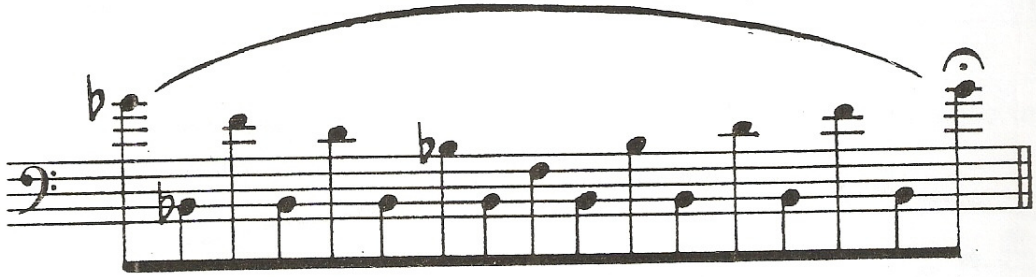
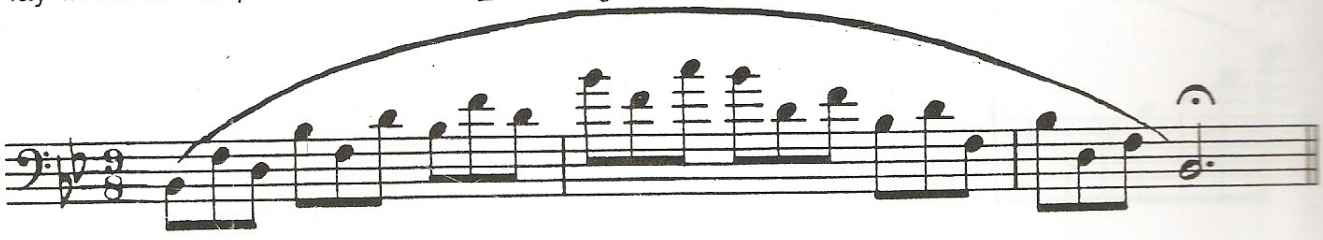


21A



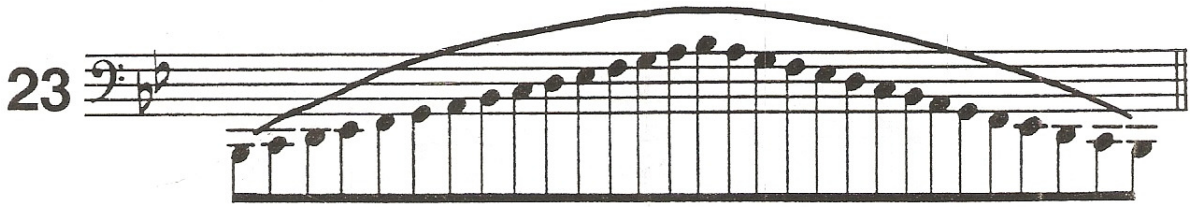
Play in all seven positions -- both *p* and *f*.

22

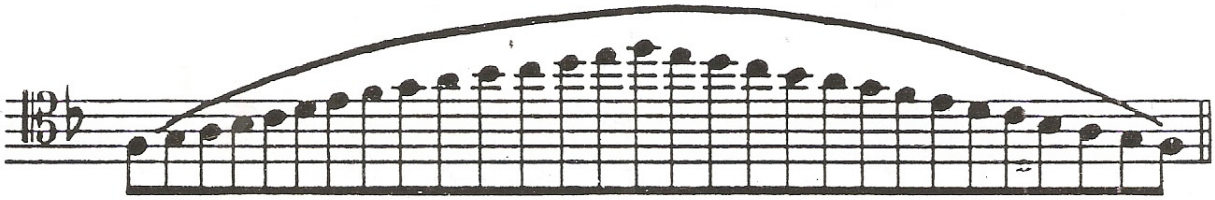


Play this exercise without the use of the tongue (glissando), starting with a "ho" syllable. Play softly and gently.

23

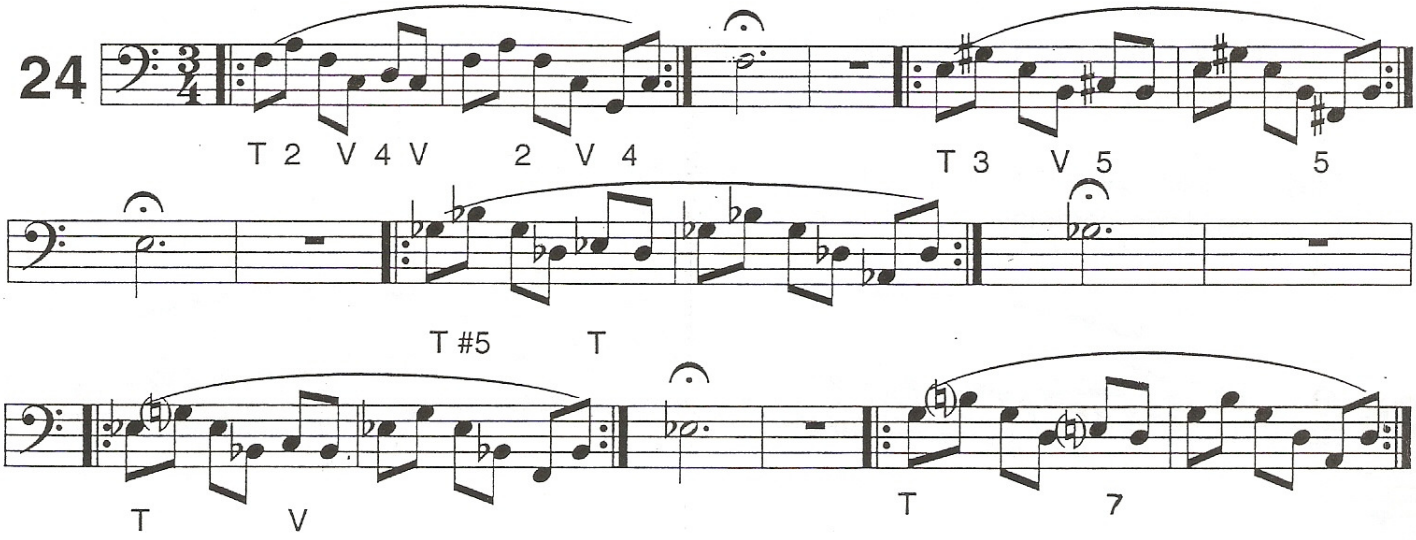


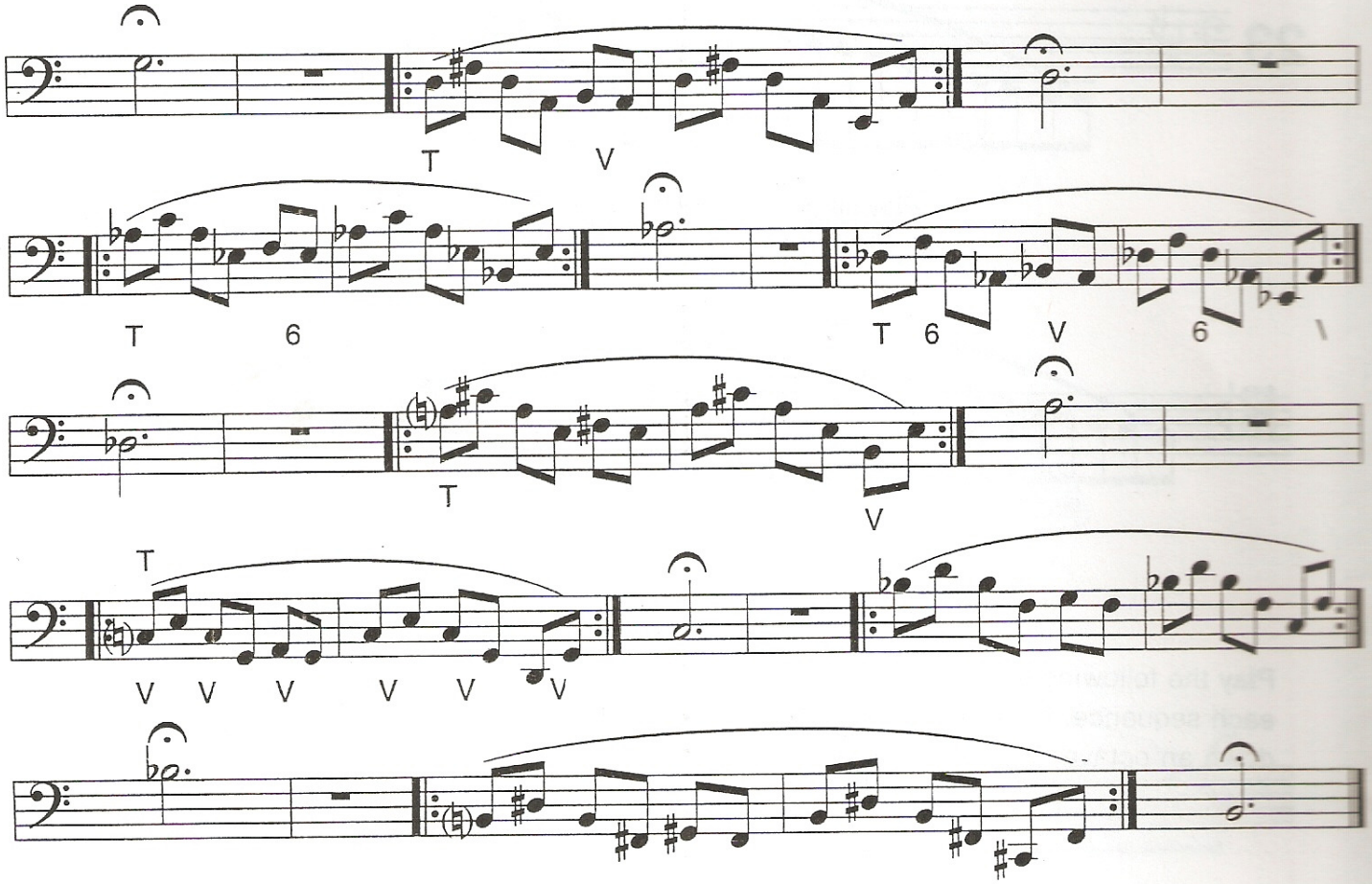
Play up chromatically at least to:



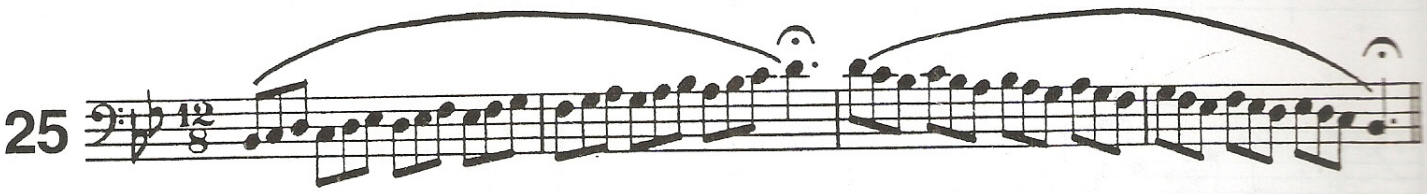
Play the following exercises (with the indicated positions), tonguing only the first note of each sequence. Play each one smoothly, evenly and slowly. These may also be played down an octave. Vary the speed of the air.

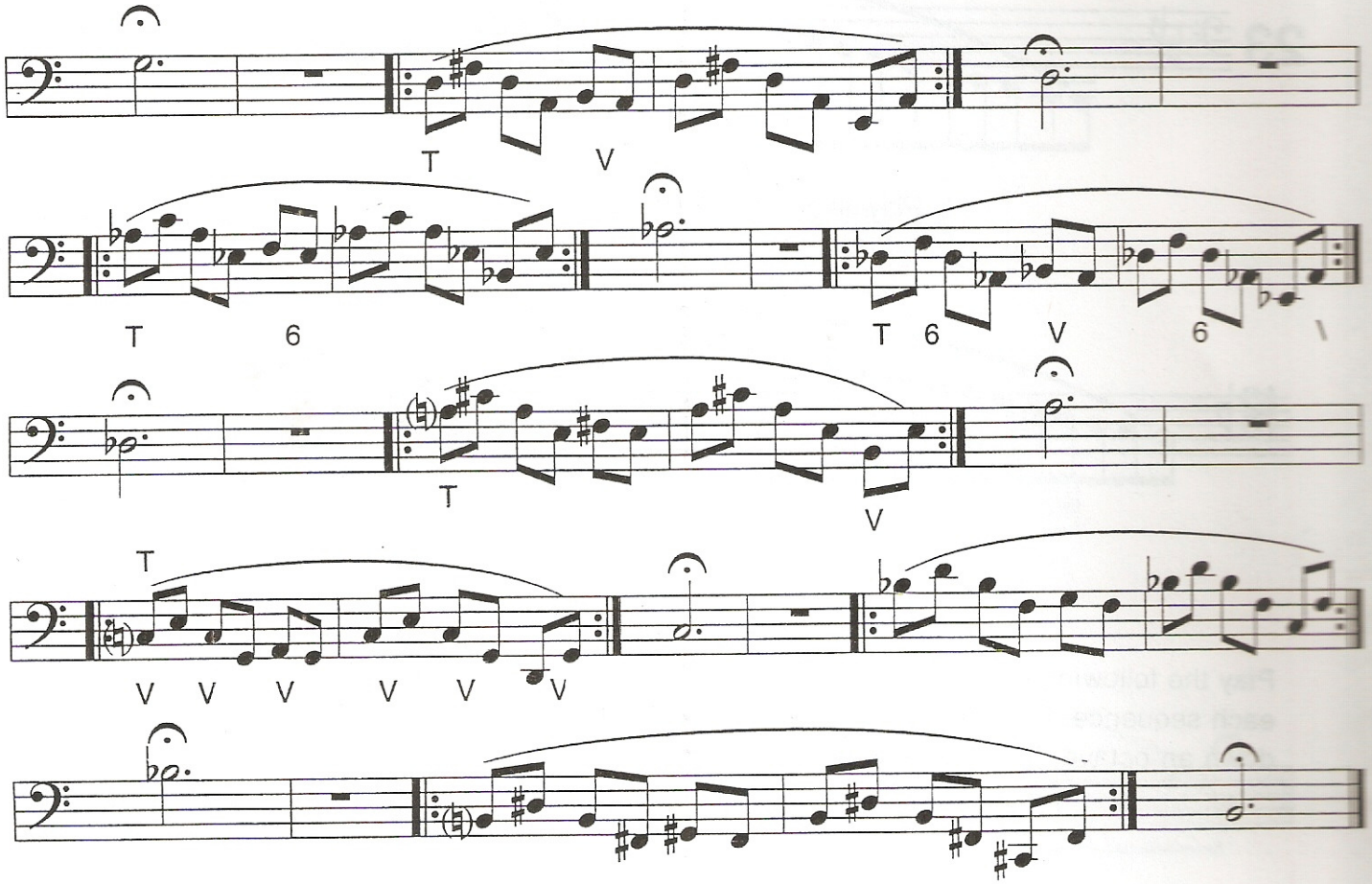
24



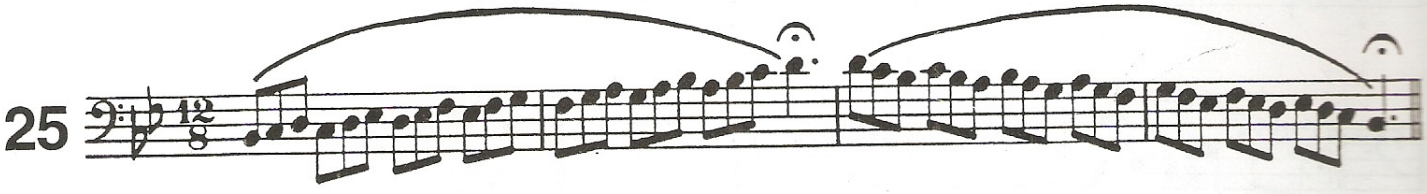


Play this exercise both smeared (glissando) and slurred, but very loudly rather than softly. Continue down chromatically as far as possible.



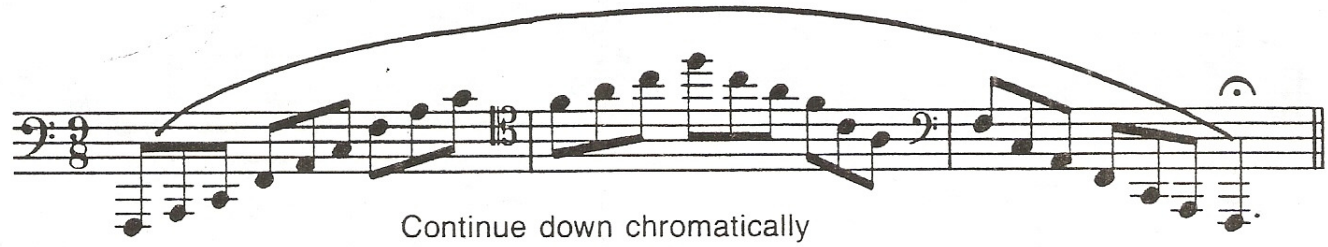


Play this exercise both smeared (glissando) and slurred, but very loudly rather than softly. Continue down chromatically as far as possible.



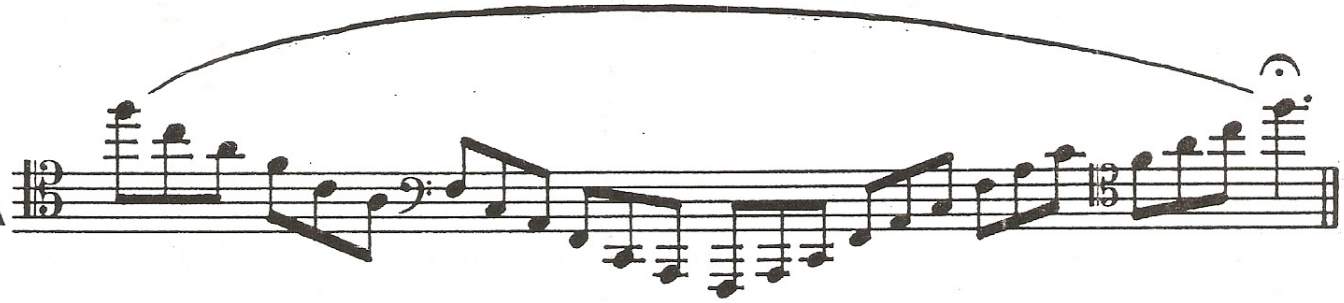
Play this exercise both slurred and detached, *p* and *f*. Make the slurred version sound liquid smooth. The detached version should sound like a long string of identical sounding notes -- small bricks of sound.

26



Continue down chromatically

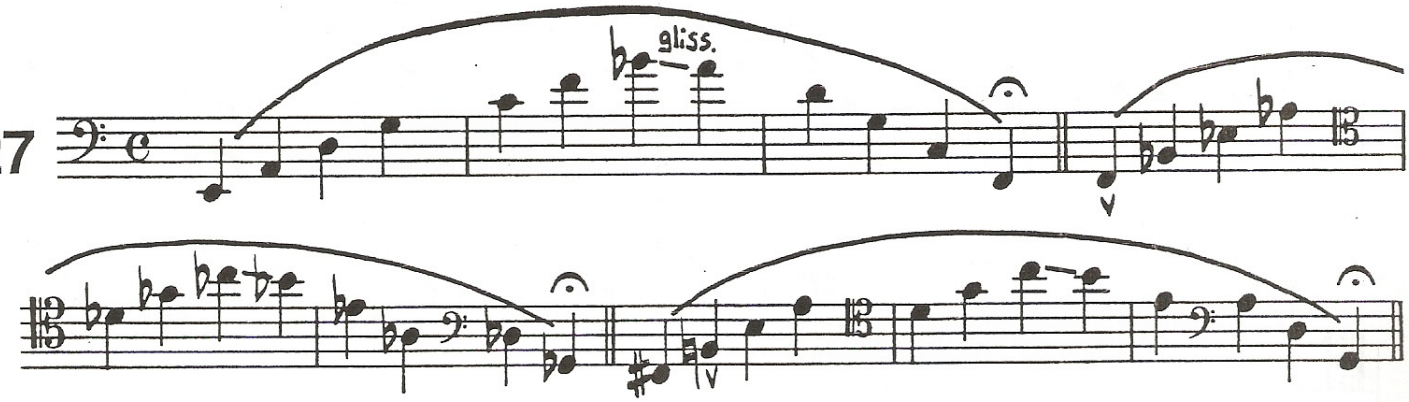
26A

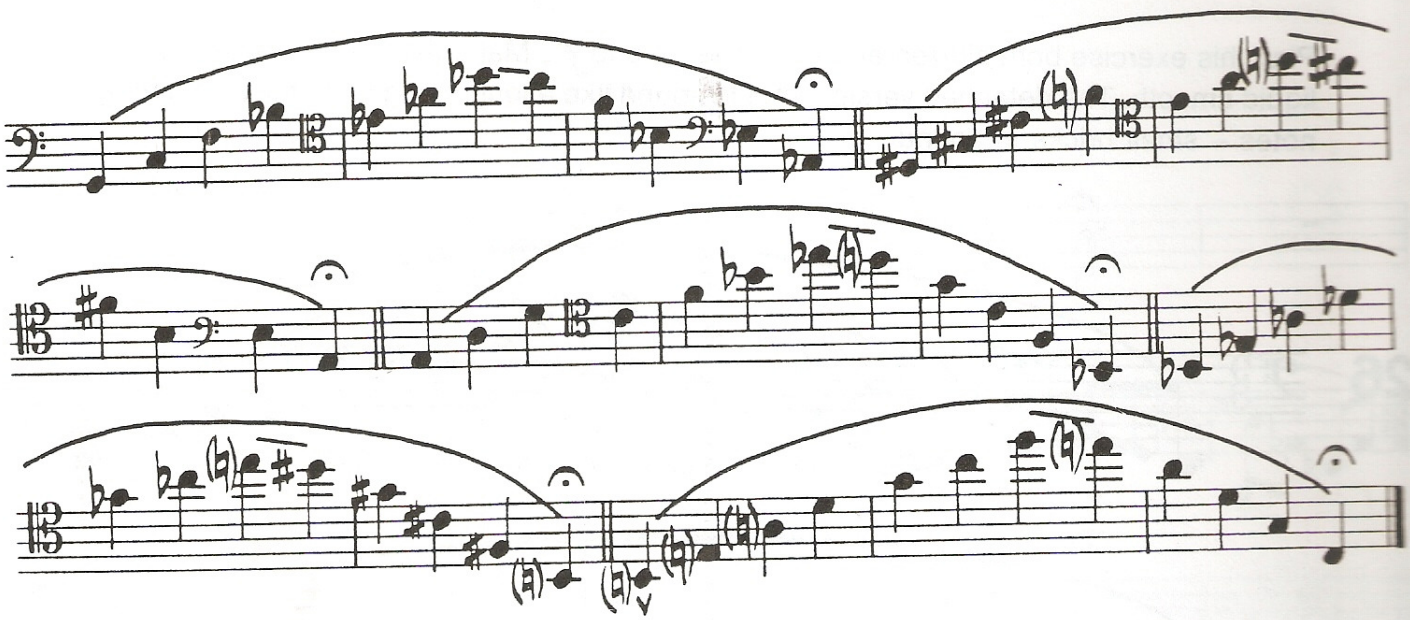


Cover the entire range of the instrument.

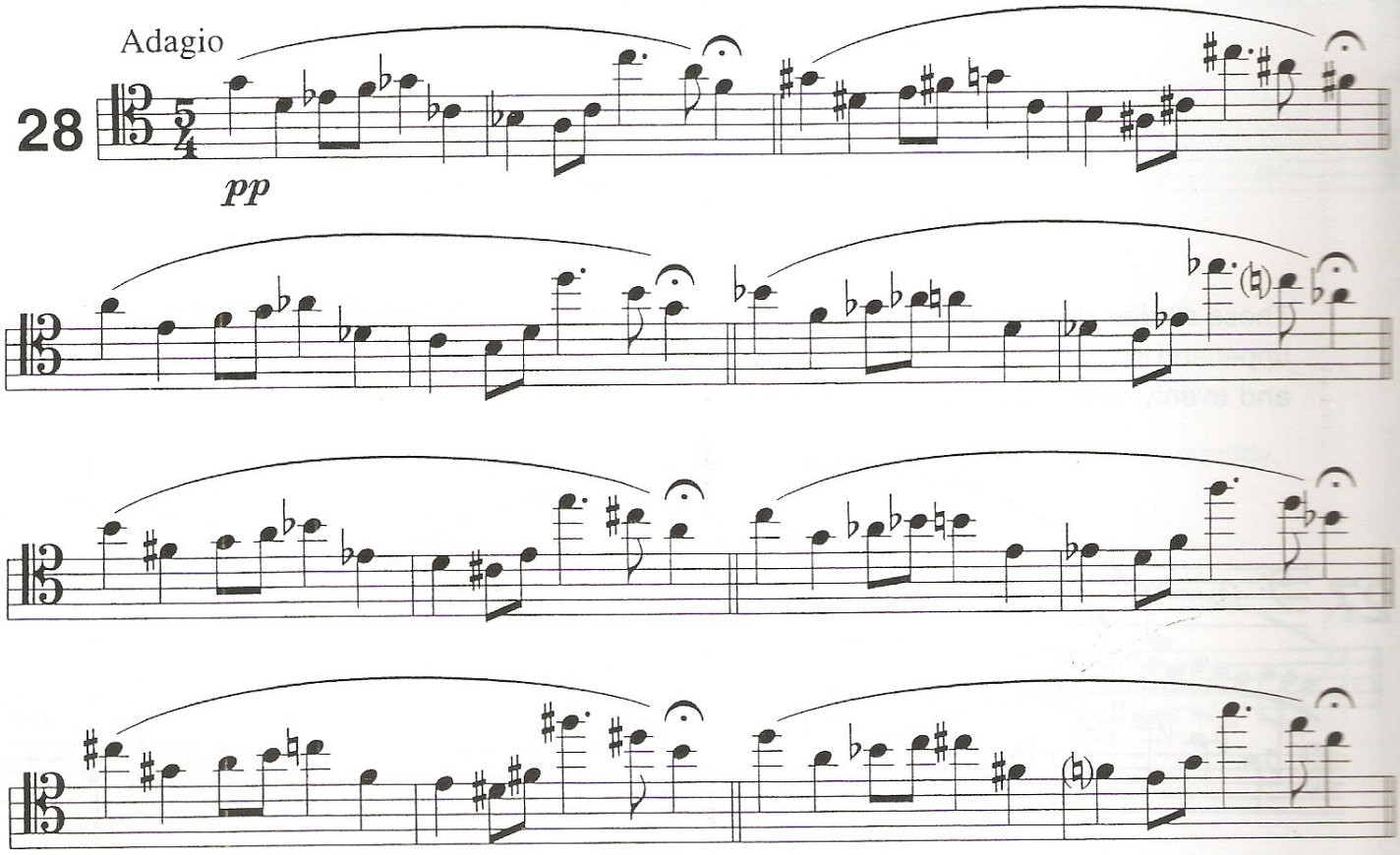
These studies of intervals of a perfect fourth are invaluable for matching the sound of the upper and lower registers, as well as strengthening the upper range. Play them very smoothly and evenly. Make the upper notes sound easy and relaxed. Play both *p* and *f*.

27

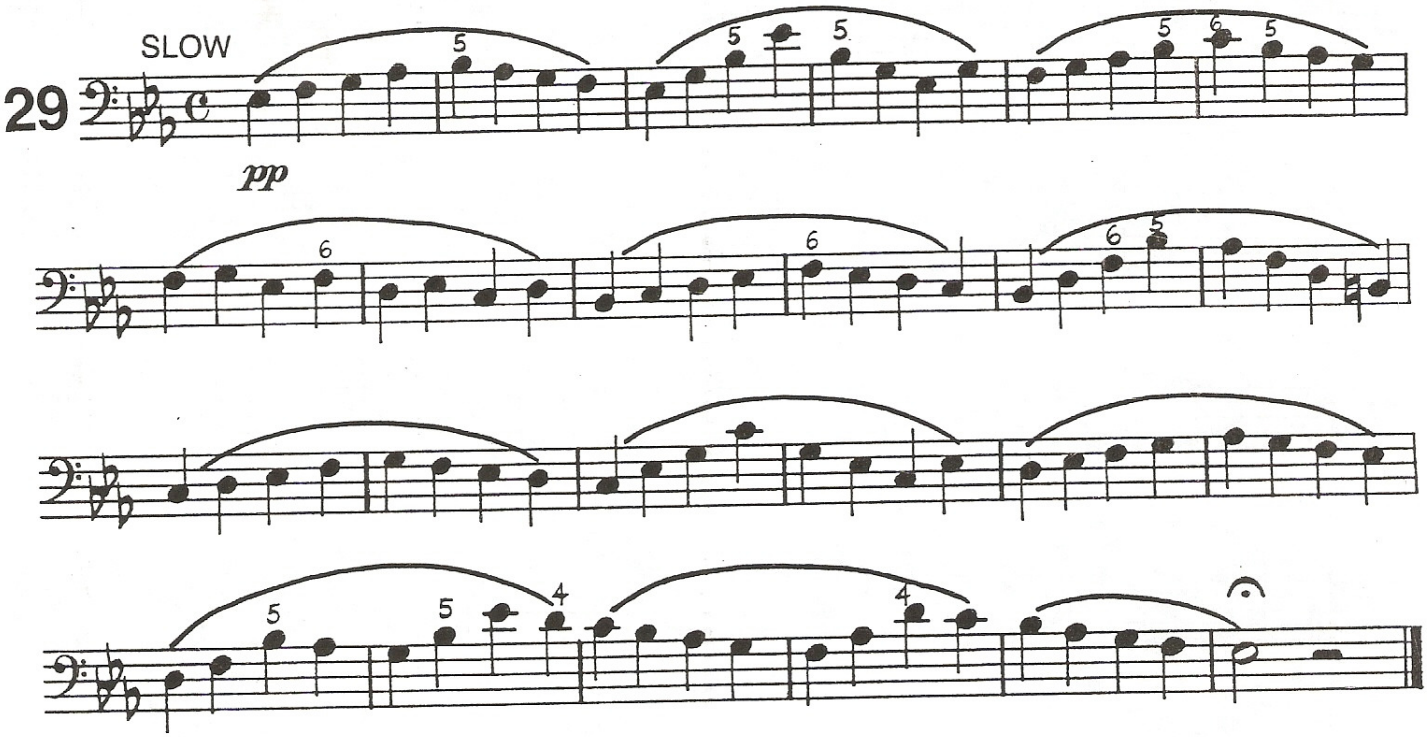




This one should be slow and soft, making a beautifully effortless, floating sound.

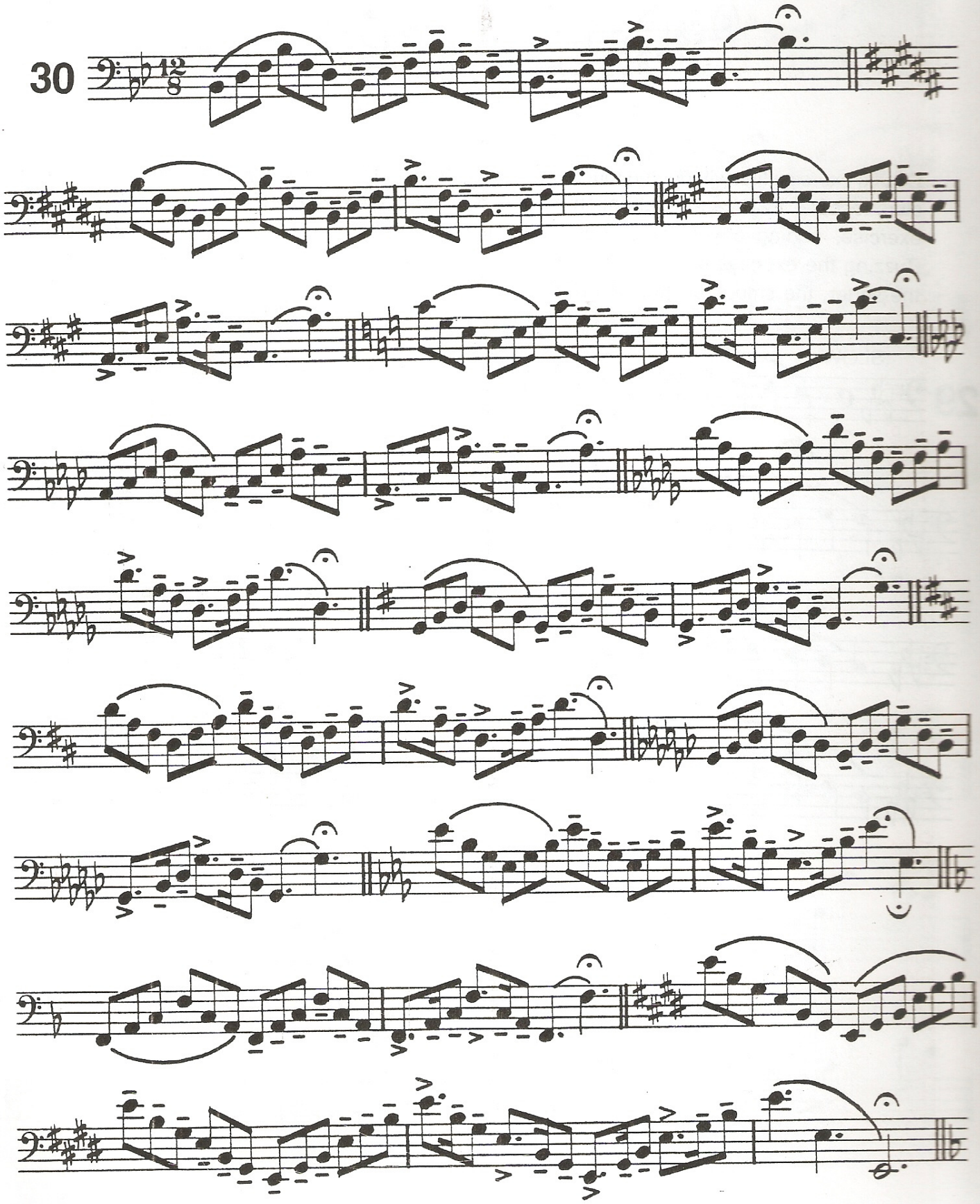


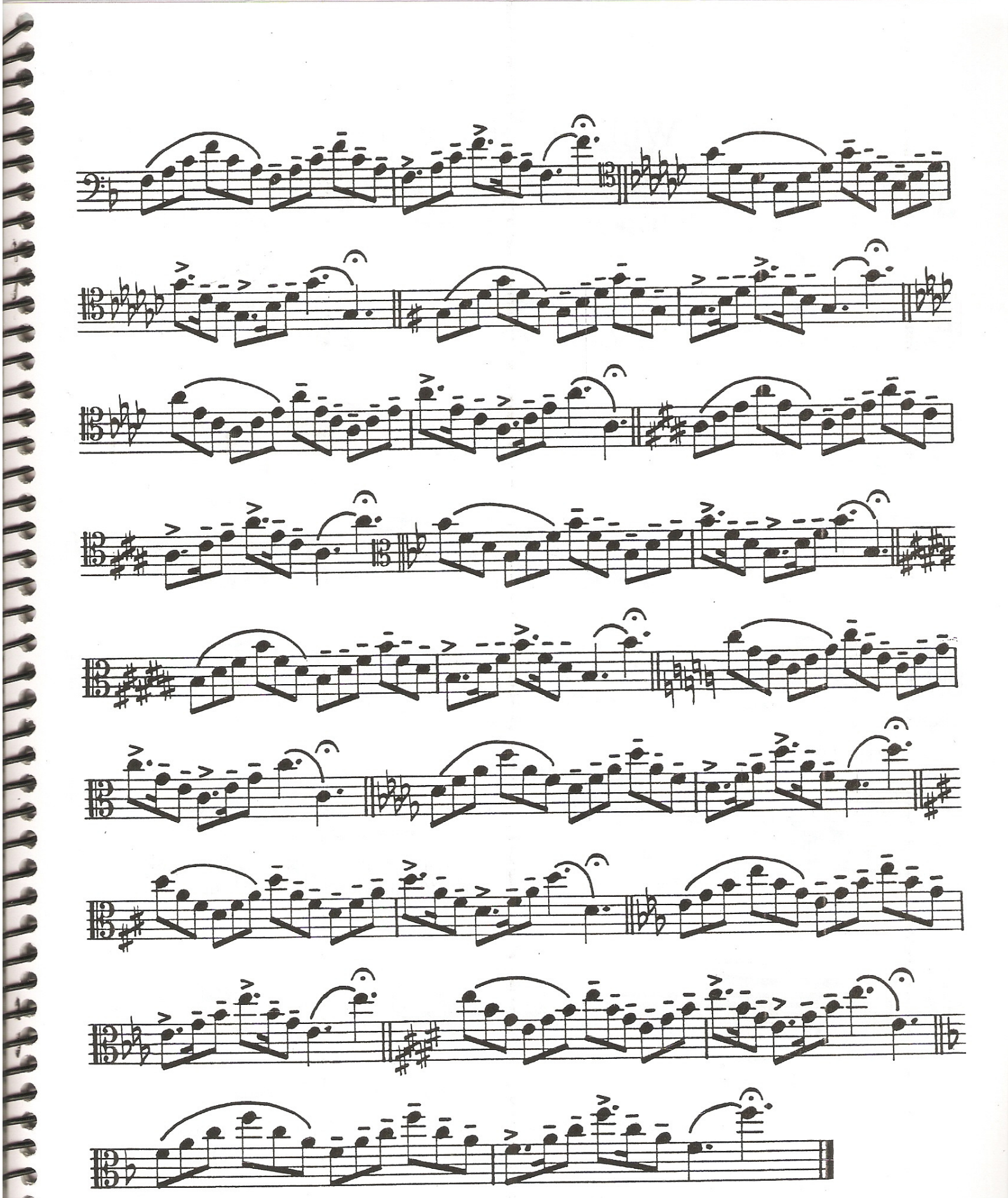
Do this exercise first without the tongue, smearing between each note (except where natural slurs occur.) Pay careful attention to the indicated alternate positions. Repeat the exercise, adding a very soft ''doo'' articulation where the smears were previously. Buzzing the exercise on the mouthpiece will help eliminate ''sticky'' notes. The slower, the softer, the smoother, the BETTER!



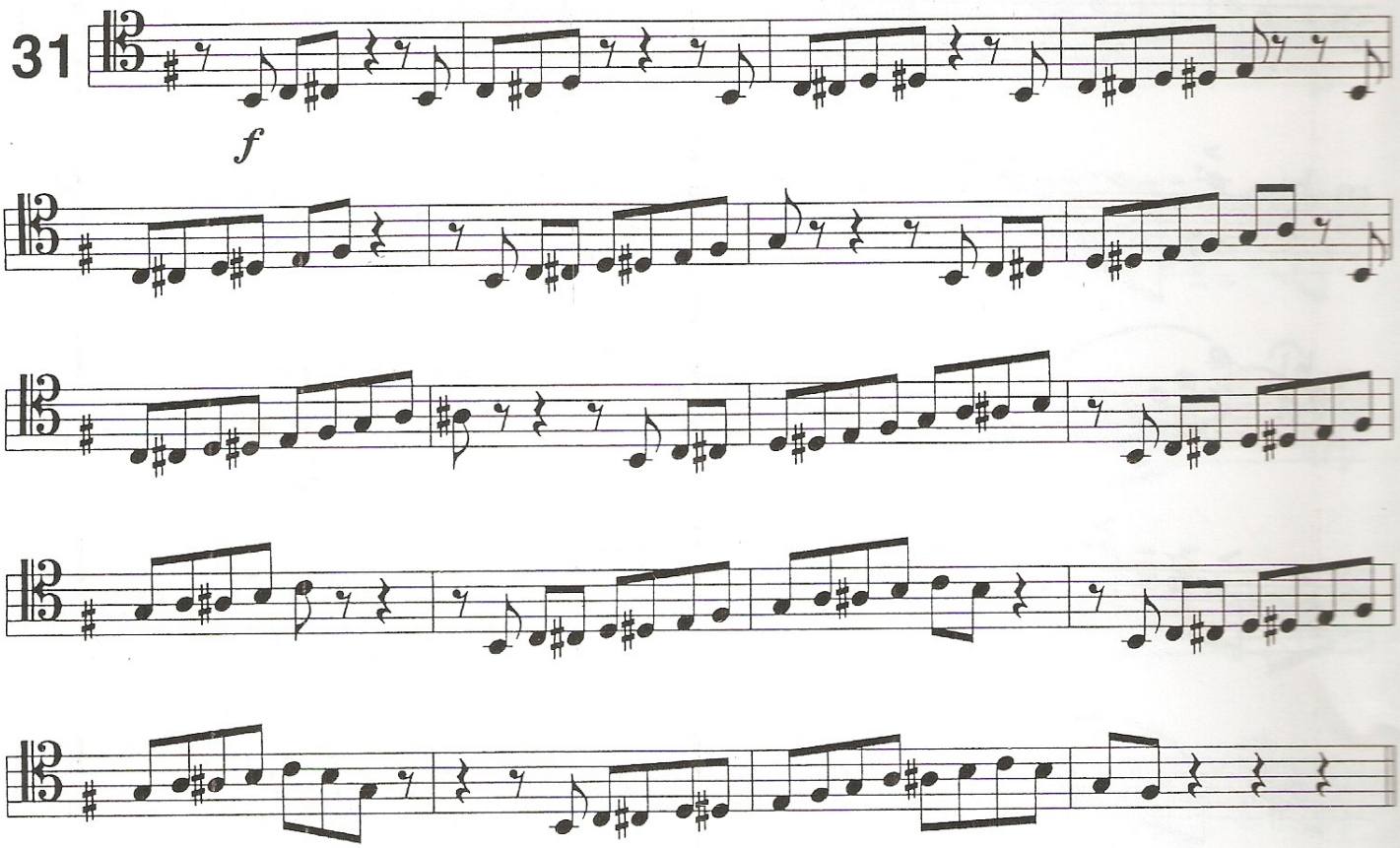
Pay careful attention to each and every articulation in the next exercise; make sure they are consistent. Think "beautiful sound" throughout. Vary the dynamics and tempo.

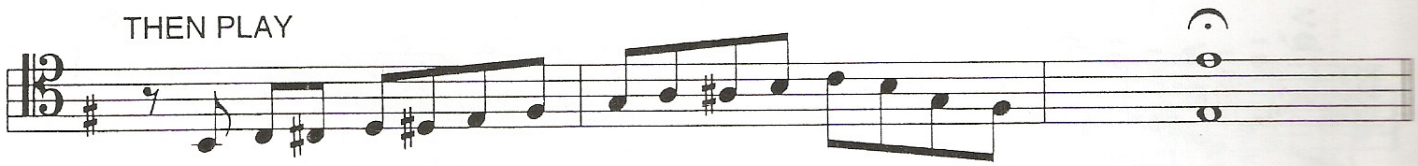
30



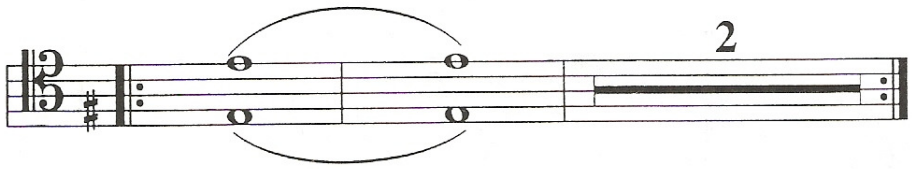


William Tell Studies



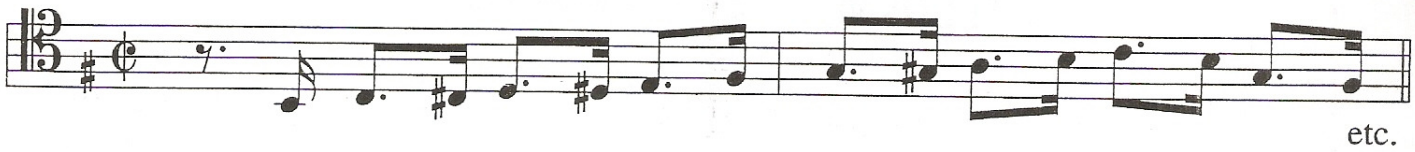


Do each two measures of moving notes like this. Also do variations I, II and III.

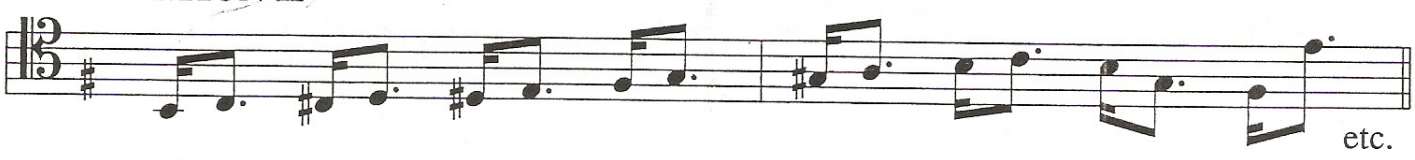


MAKE BEAUTIFUL SOUNDS

VARIATION 1

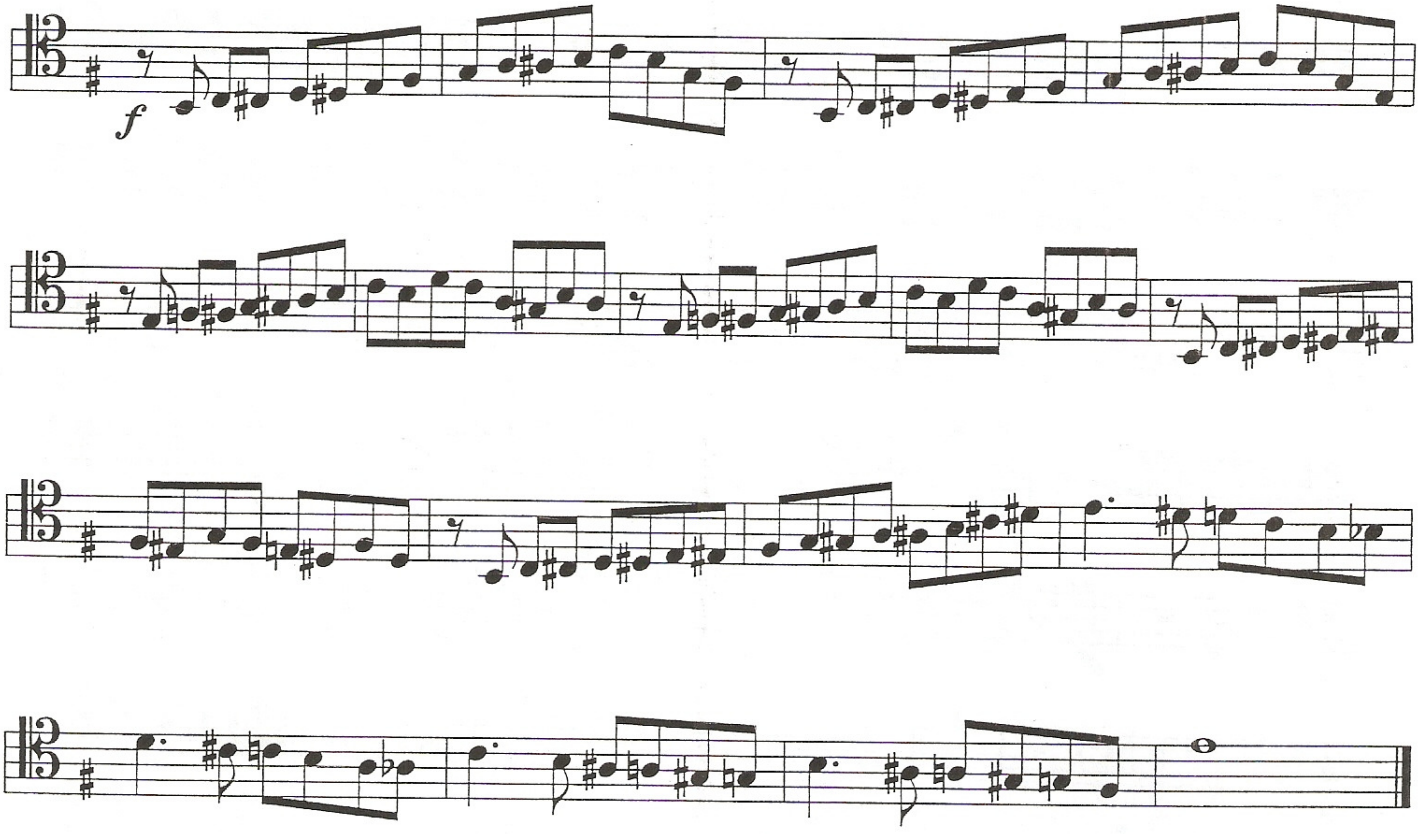


VARIATION II



To play these variations correctly, you **must** put the slide in the right place!

VARIATION III



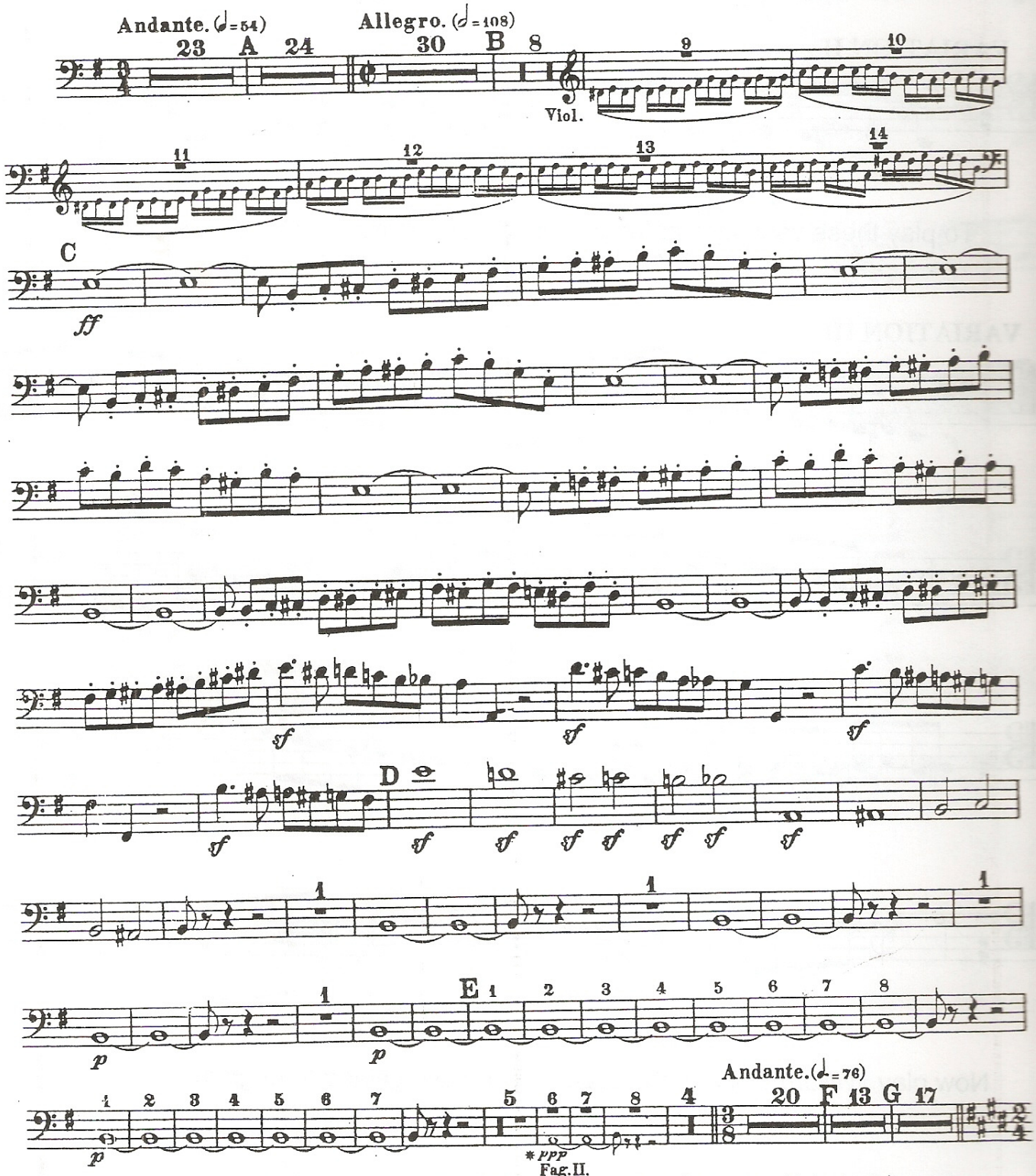
Now play *William Tell* with the security you have gained through these studies.

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ORCHESTRA HALL
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604

WILLIAM TELL, OVERTURE

TROMBONE III

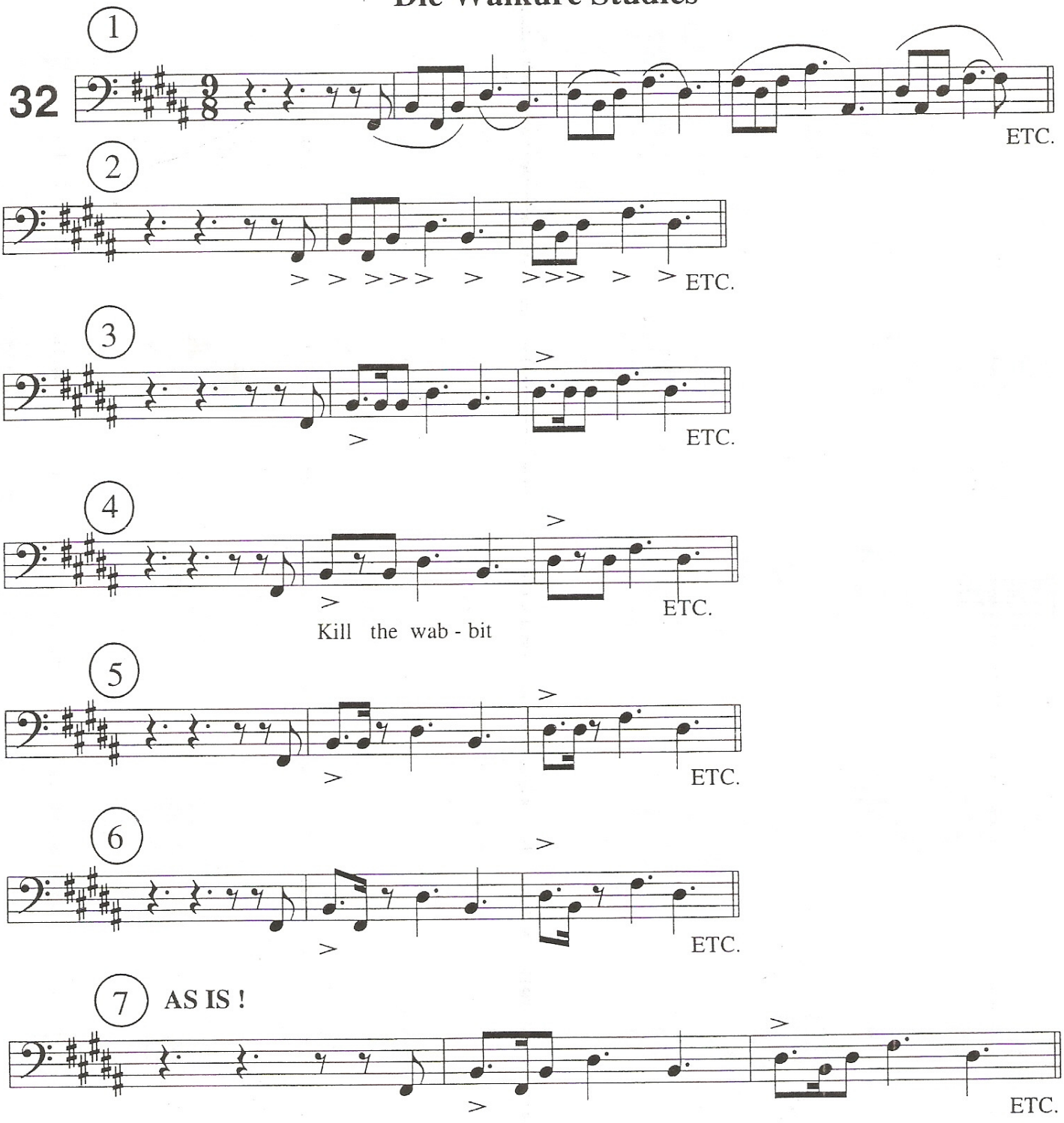
G. ROSSINI



Die mit * bezeichneten kleinen Noten werden nur dann mitgespielt, wenn die angegebenen Instrumente nicht besetzt sind.

LUCK'S MUSIC LIBRARY, 1744 SEMINOLE, DETROIT
Orch. B. 1079 a

Die Walküre Studies

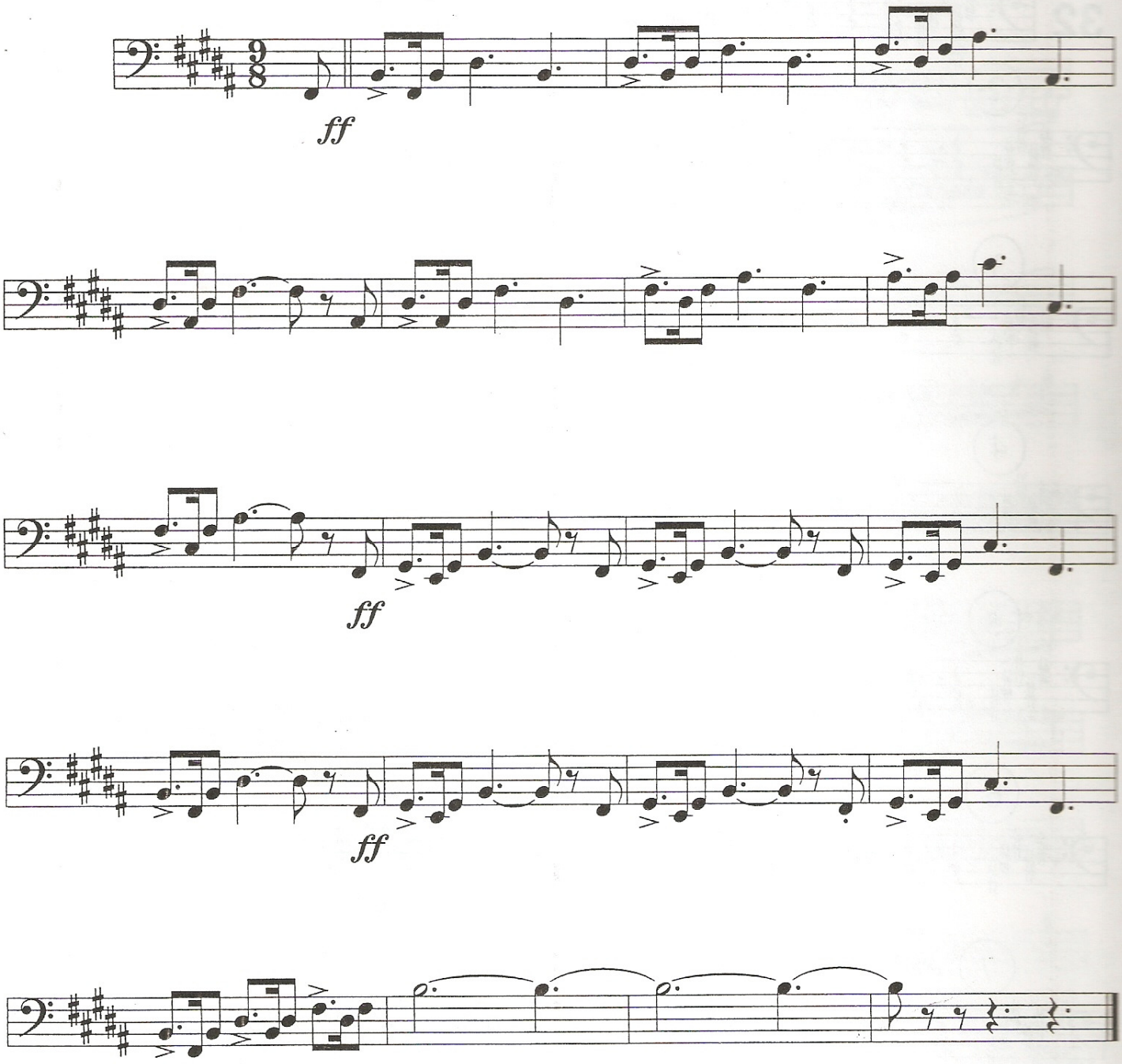


These (of course) should be done up an octave as well.

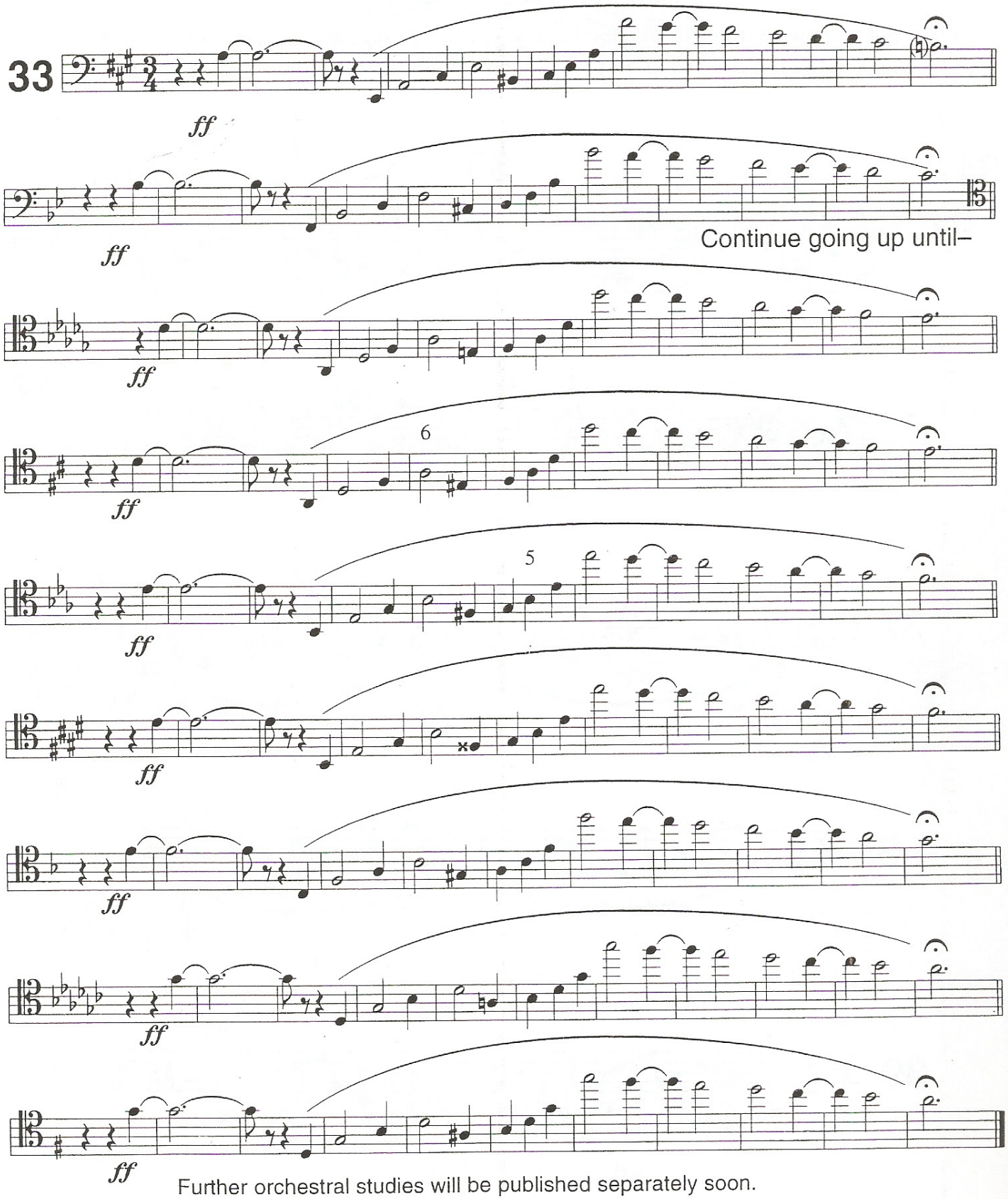
Play *pp* through *ff*

The Ride

Wagner



Zarathustra Study



Further orchestral studies will be published separately soon.