ADVANCED SIGHTSINGING AND EAR TRAINING

Strategies & Applications

BRUCE BENWARD

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University of Wisconsin, Madison

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PREFACE TO THE STUDENT

An Overview

This text is designed as the basis of a second-year college or university course in both sight-singing and ear training. It is an abridgment of the author's *Sightsinging Complete* but contains the complete text, *Advanced Ear Training.* Volume 2 is intended as a more convenient and appropriate text where time constraints prevent coverage of the more abundant material found in the advanced portion of *Sightsinging Complete.*

Helpful Strategies for Sightsinging and Ear Training

1. **Syllables or Numbers.** By now you know the value of syllables or scale numbers. Continue to practice whatever syllable or numbering system your instructor recommends. This takes the guesswork out of sightsinging and ear training. Every chapter, except chapter 8, of Volume 2 contains tonal melodies (Sections C and E) for which the application of syllables or numbers are essential.
2. **Interval Singing.** Volume 1 (usually Section G of each chapter) has prepared you well for the later chapters of this text. Since the early twentieth century, music has become less and less tonally oriented. Melodies are more difficult to sing, and the application of syllables or numbers is no longer helpful. Concurrent with the use of syllables or numbers for Sections C and E, spend time improving your competence in **interval singing.** The final chapter (Chapter 8) contains melodies that are exclusively free-tonal or atonal. Your final achievement will be to sing a twelve-tone set without error.
3. **Mind Singing.** This somewhat contradictory term refers to musicians' ability to scan a melody and **think** (imagine), rather than **sing** (out loud) each individual note. In ear training try to visualize the sounds you hear, placing them on an imaginary staff. The sooner you can do this, the closer you are to the most important goal of musicianship—aural imagery.
4. **Steady Tempo.** Avoid continual starts and stops in sightsinging. Doing so indicates that the tempo you selected is too fast—your voice gets ahead of your mind.
5. **Gestalt.** This German word meaning "unified whole," in music, refers to the effect created by listening to a melody or harmony as a complete unit (gestalt) rather than as a series of isolated individual notes. In ear training, always listen to the complete melody as it is dictated. Memorize the whole melody before setting any notes to paper. Observing this practice will make ear training considerably easier.

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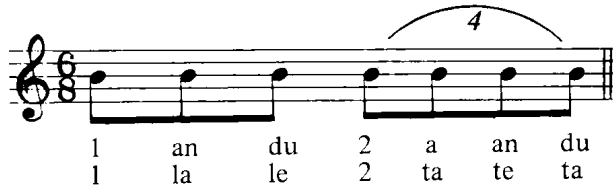
1

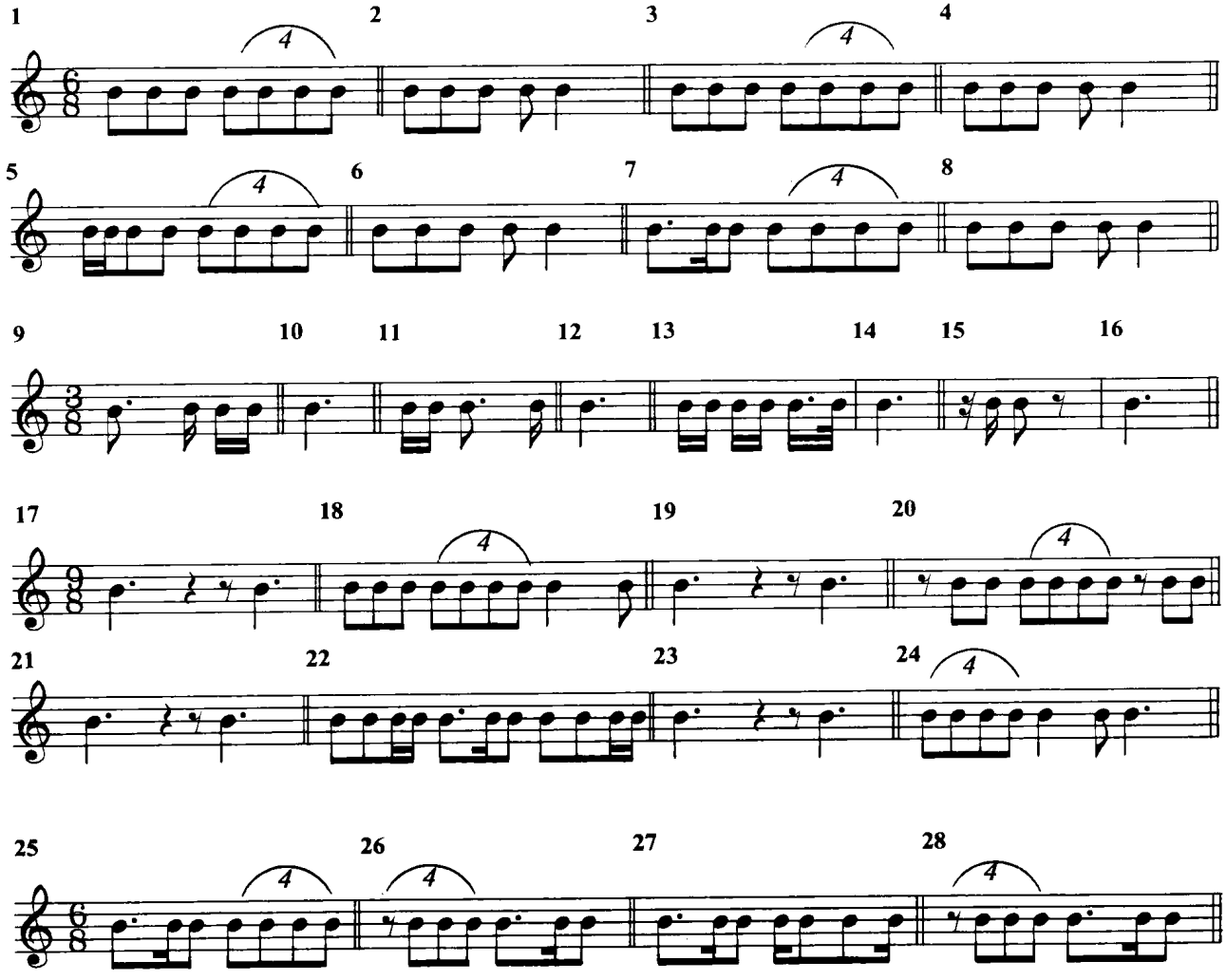
A. Rhythm: The Quartolet in Compound Meter

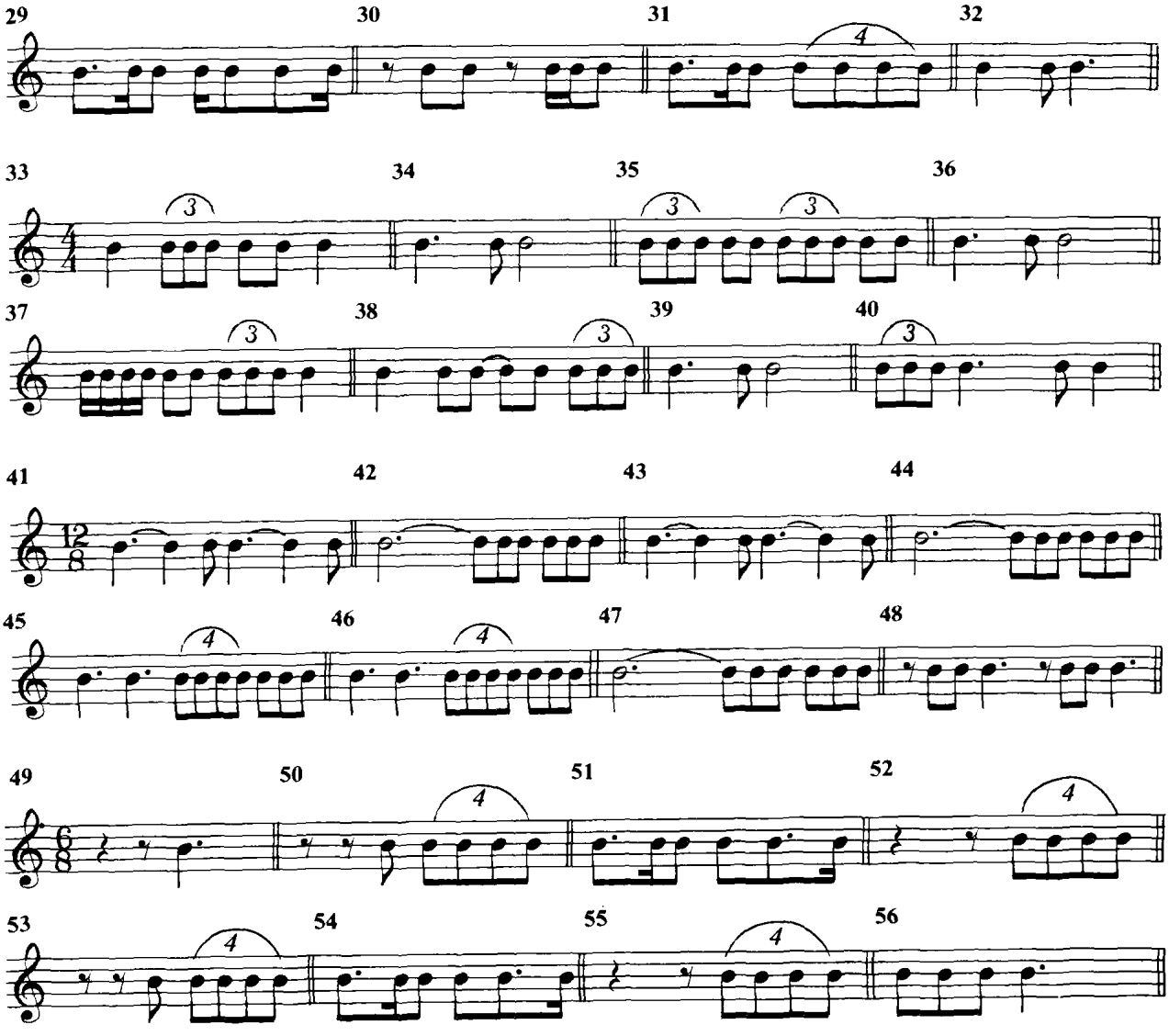
Procedure

1. Consider each measure as a module to be practiced separately or as part of a series requested by your instructor.
2. Follow procedures given in Unit 2, Section F, page 34. Work continually for both accuracy and speed—with accuracy taking precedence.

Rhythmic syllables:







B. Rhythmic Syllables: Review Interval Speed Drill—Ascending Intervals

In Class

In each exercise the instructor will play a succession of five intervals, all beginning on the same note (printed below). Listen to each carefully, and when the designated interval is heard:

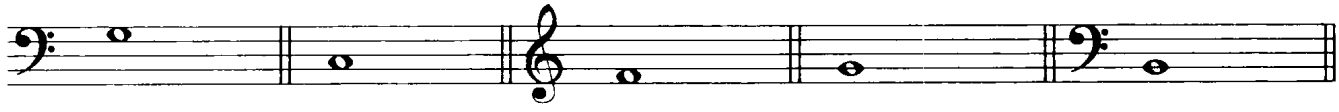
1. Write the number (1–5) in the blank above the staff.
2. Then, write the missing note on the staff.

On the Computer (Disk 1, U1A)

In each exercise the computer will play a succession of five intervals, all beginning on the same note (printed below). Listen to each carefully, and when the designated interval is heard:

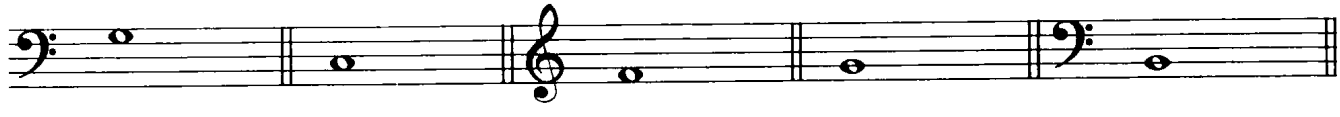
1. Press the <space bar> while the flashing sign is still on the screen.
2. Then, write the missing note on the staff below.
3. If your score is 80 percent, the computer will start to speed up. If your score is below 60 percent, it will slow down.

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____

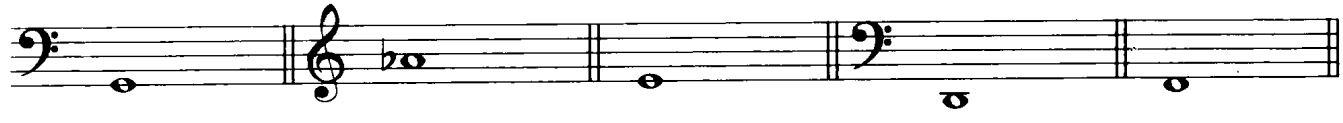


6. ____ 7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____ 10. ____

11. ____ 12. ____ 13. ____ 14. ____ 15. ____



16. ____ 17. ____ 18. ____ 19. ____ 20. ____

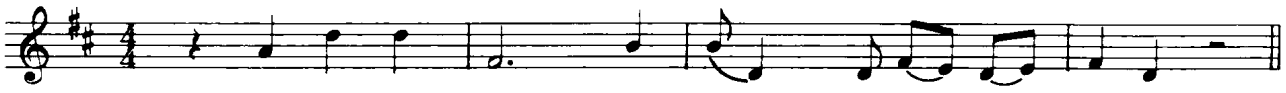


C. Very Short Excerpts to Encourage Fluency and Accuracy

Procedure for Completing Each Melody

1. All excerpts are by Schubert.
2. The goal of this section is to sing each melody with accuracy and speed on the *first* attempt.
3. Before singing, scan each melody silently trying to imagine the sound of every note.

1



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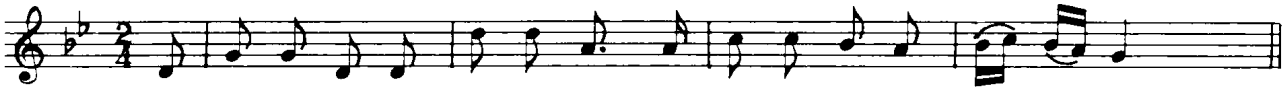

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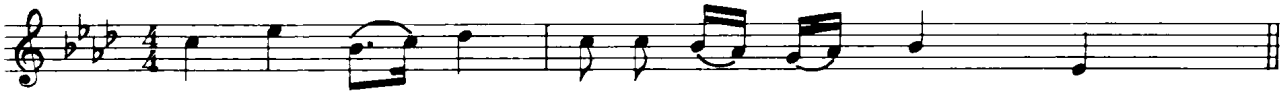

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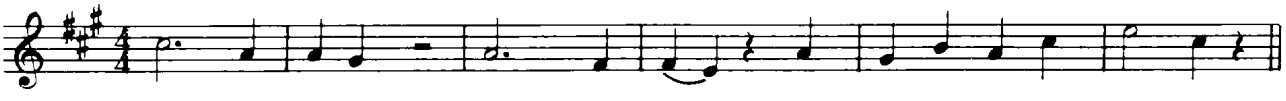

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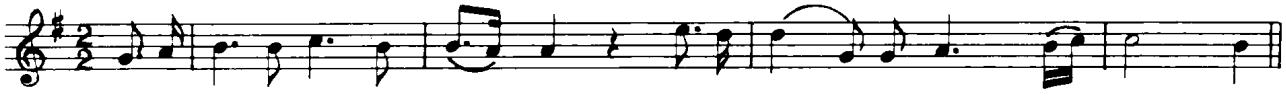

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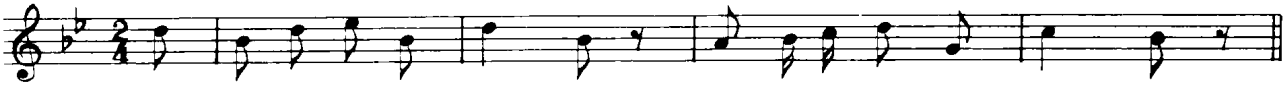

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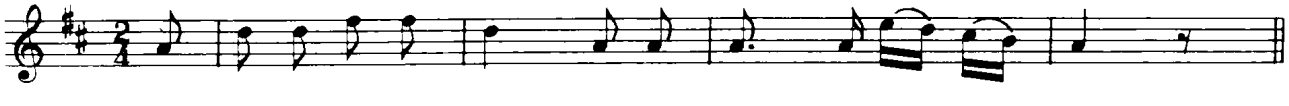

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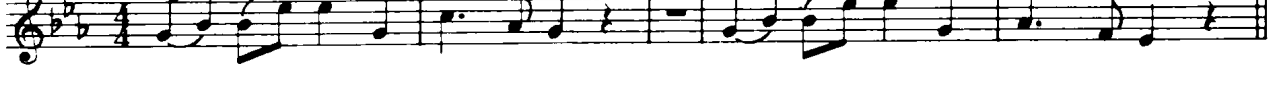

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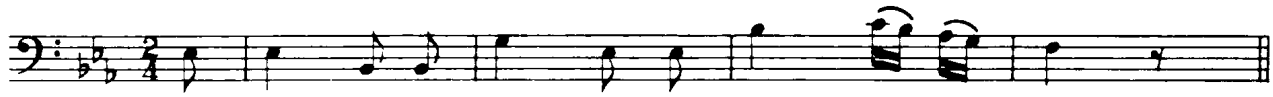


10

D. Review Melodic Dictation

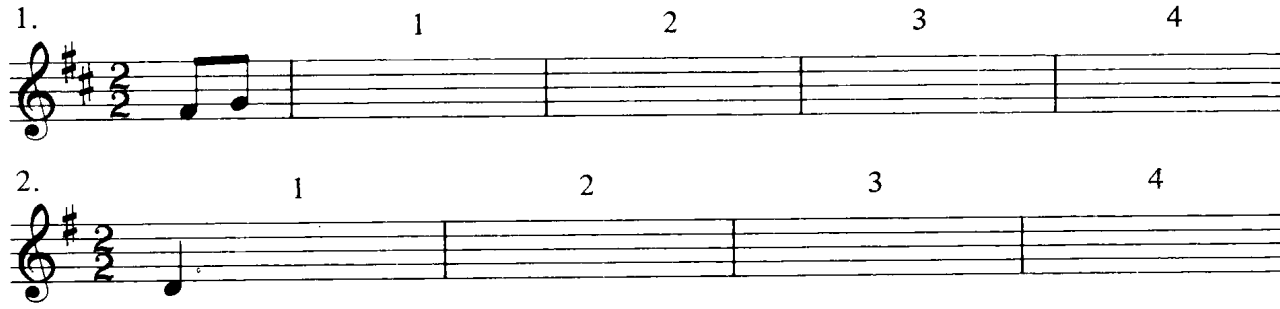
In each exercise the instructor will play a short melodic excerpt from a composition by Bach.

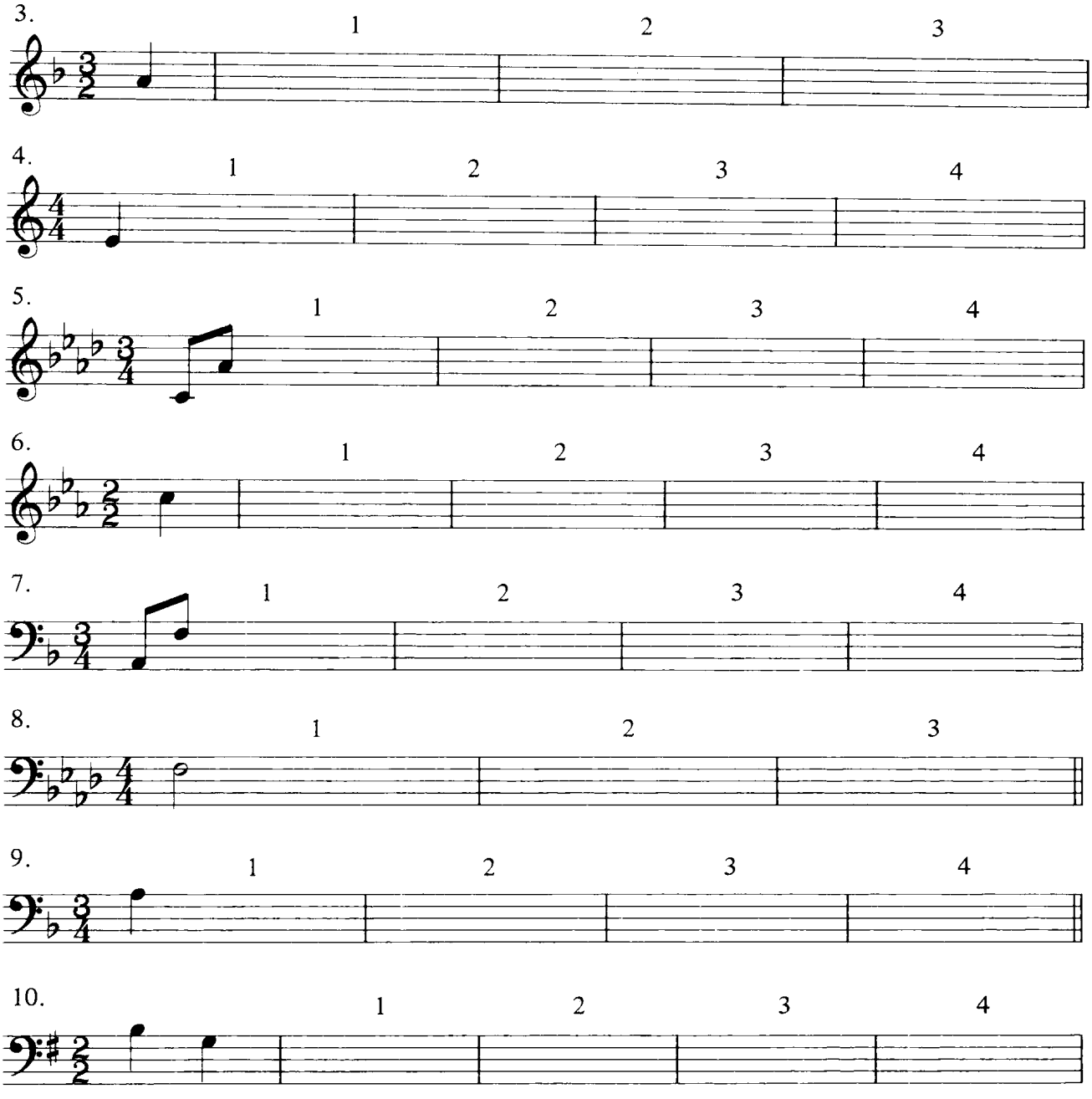
In Class

1. The meter signature, key signature, and first note of each melody are given below. When the excerpt does not begin on the first beat of a measure, a bar line or other indication is given to help you get started.
2. Listen as the instructor plays the melody.
3. Try to sing the entire dictated section in your mind (or out loud if the instructor requests it) before writing anything on paper.
4. Then write the melody on paper.

On the Computer (Disk 1, U1B)

1. The computer screen will show the key signature, meter signature, and first note of the excerpt.
2. You can hear the melodic excerpt as many times as needed, but try to sing back the entire unit in your mind (or out loud if you have trouble) until it is thoroughly memorized. Using solfeggio syllables or scale degree numbers will be a considerable help.
3. Another good suggestion is to write the entire melody on paper before trying to enter the notes on the computer.
4. Avoid writing the melody one note at a time after each hearing. This habit will cause considerable problems on tests when the excerpt will be played only a limited number of times.
5. On the computer you can check your choices against the correct melody simply by playing one and then the other.
6. To enter notes on the screen, select the pitch first. You will note that the flat and sharp signs follow along with the cursor. Remember that the flat sign is always to the LEFT of the letter and the sharp is always to the RIGHT. After you have selected the pitch you will be directed to choose a rhythmic value.
7. You can also change a note you have already entered if you make a mistake.
8. Finally, when you have completed your entry of the melody, you will get to compare it with the correct answer.





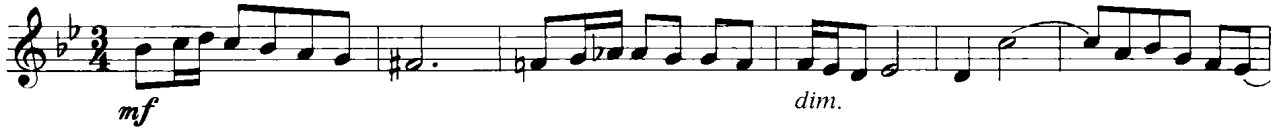
E. Melodies Containing Modulations or Chromatic Alterations—For Careful Study

1. Nearly all melodies include chromatic alterations due to the presence of one or another of the following:
   a. Melody tones are influenced by secondary dominant or leading-tone accompaniments.
   b. Melody tones are influenced by other altered chords such as borrowed, augmented 6th, or Neapolitan 6th chords.
   c. Fully established modulations.
   d. Chromatic nonharmonic tones.
2. Your instructor will provide directions for the use of syllables or numbers.

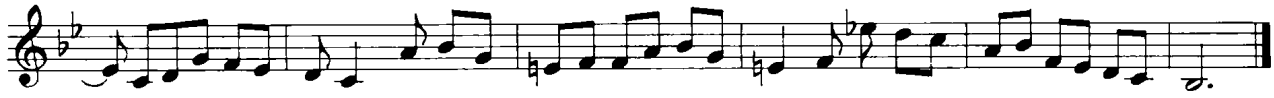
Part 1

1. Andante

Bach

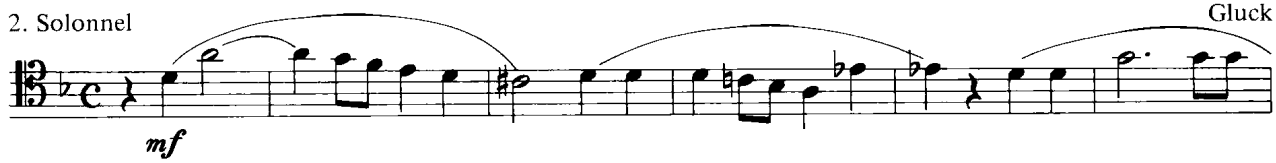


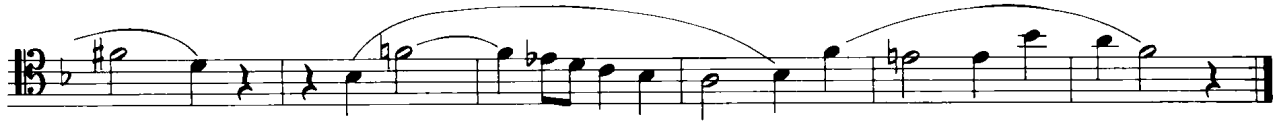
Gluck



2. Solonnel

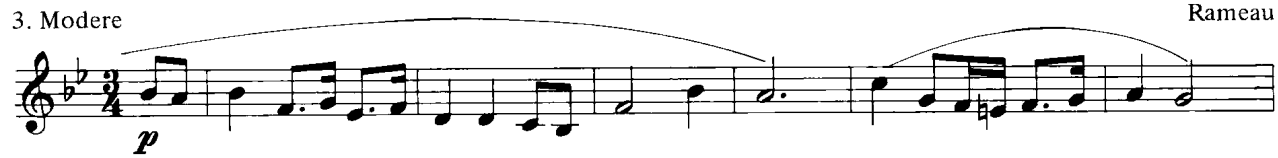
Gluck

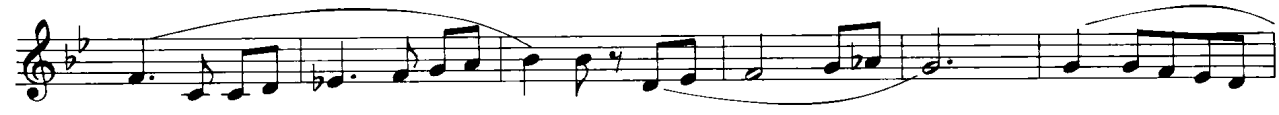


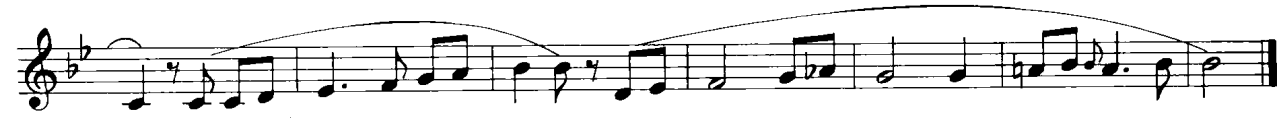


3. Modere

Rameau

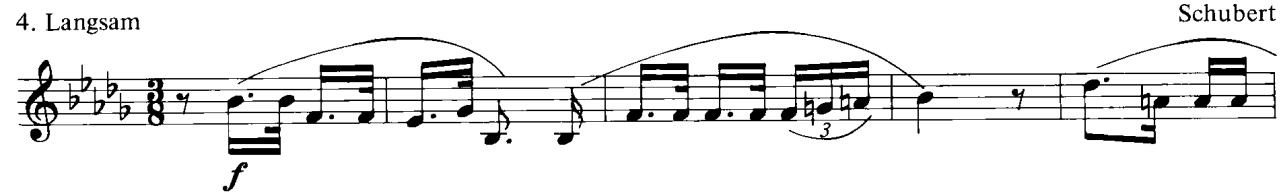


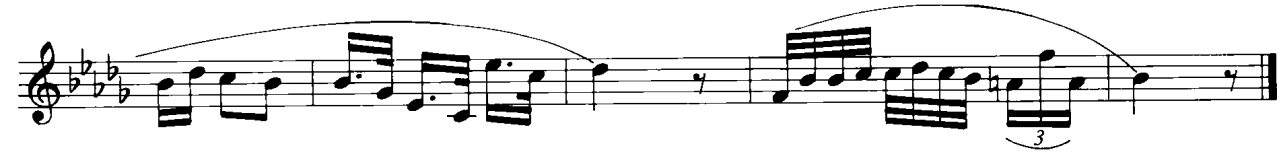




4. Langsam

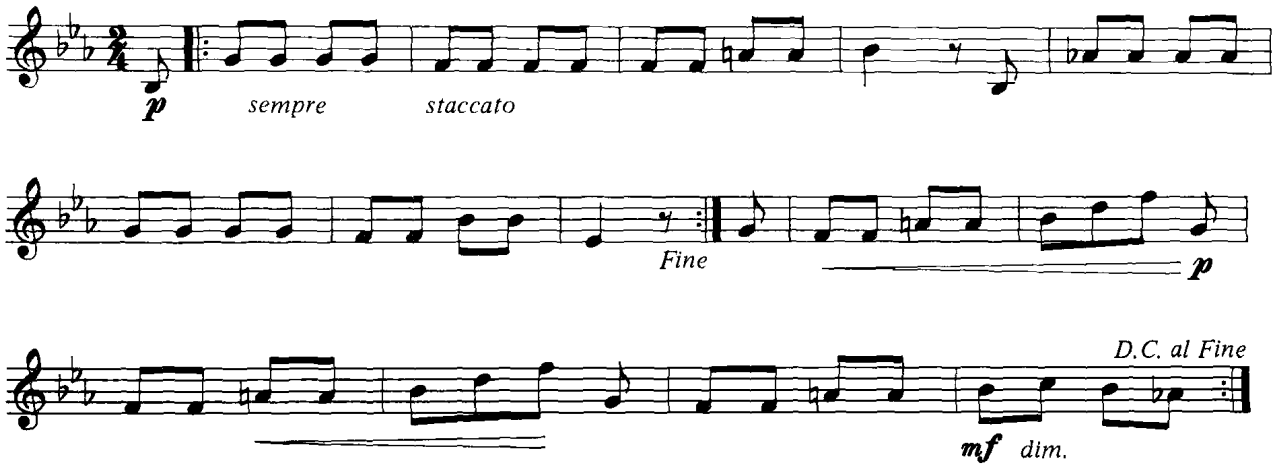
Schubert





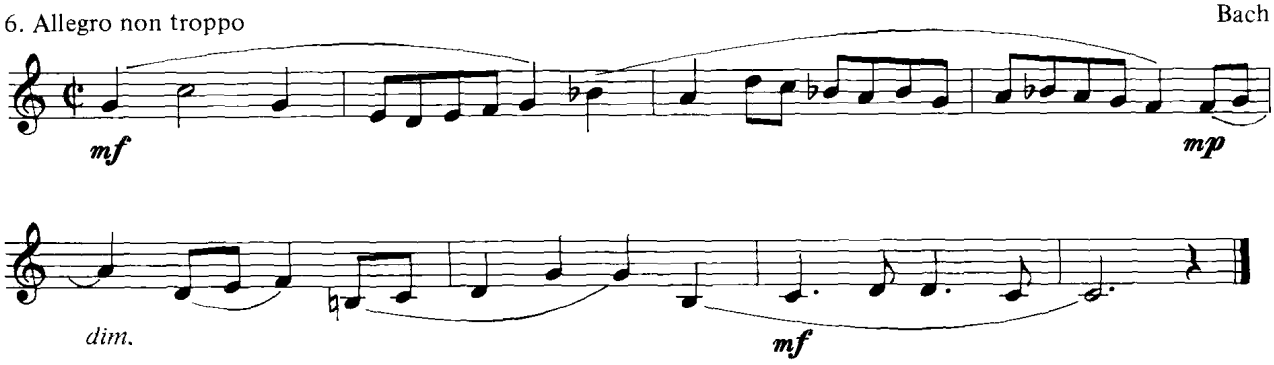
5. Allegro molto

Beethoven



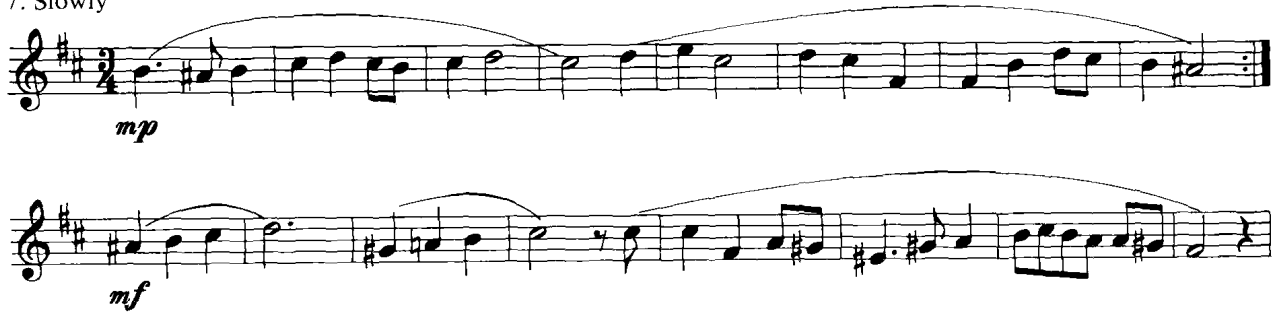
6. Allegro non troppo

Bach



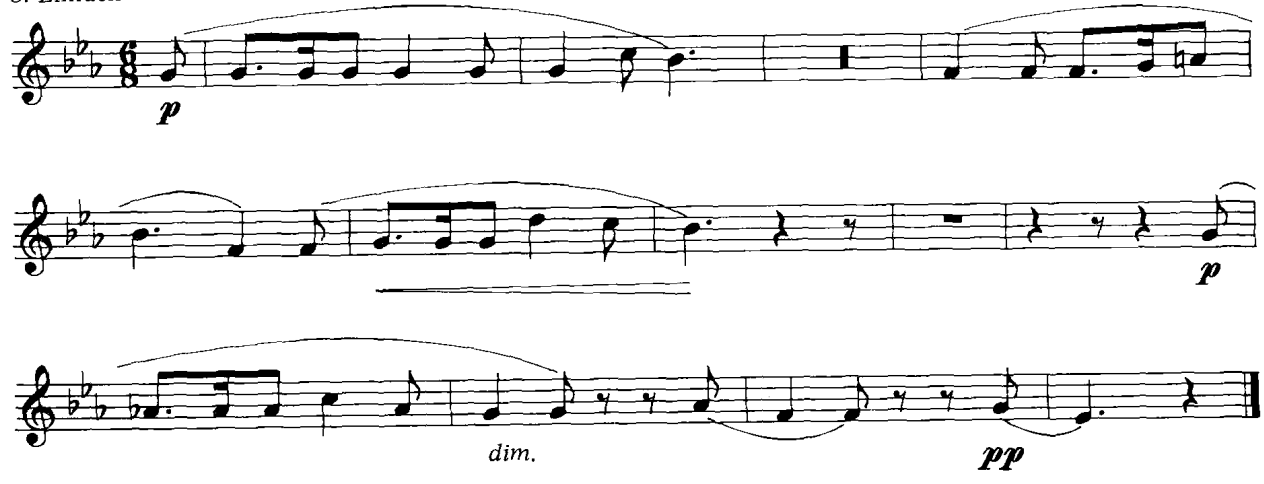
7. Slowly

Purcell



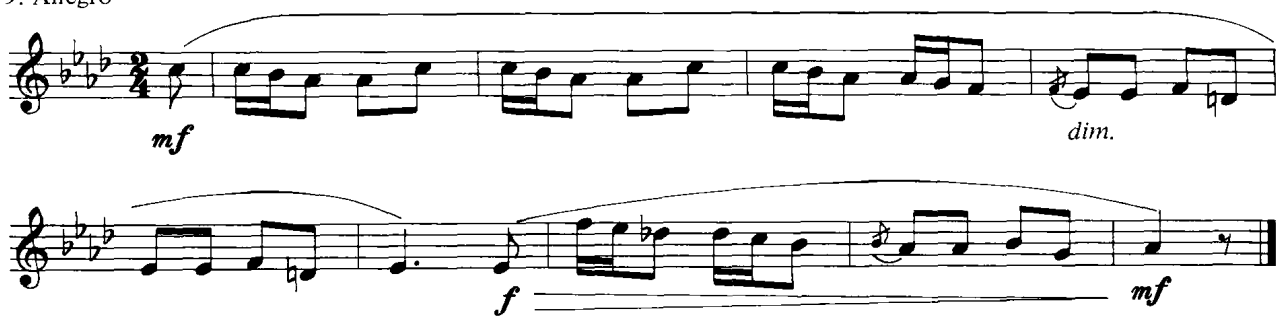
8. Einfach

Schumann



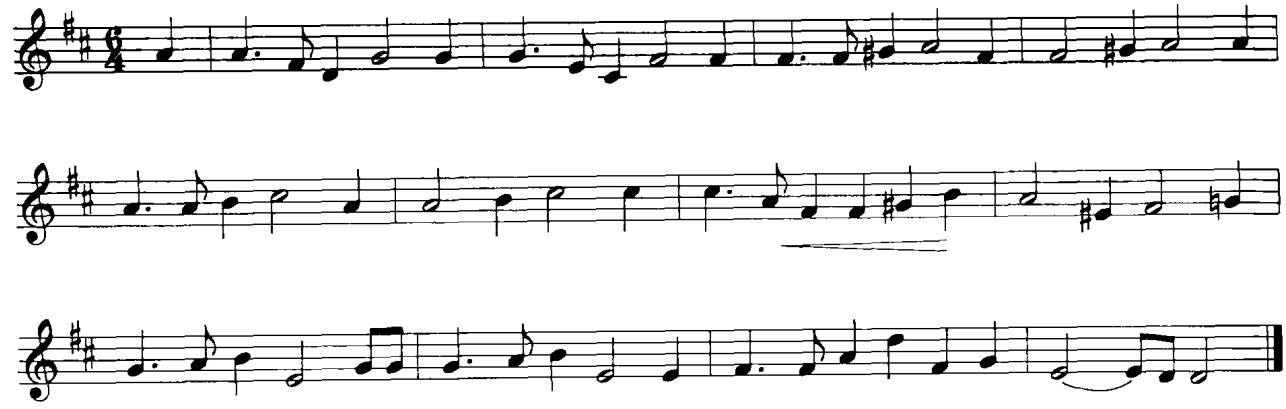
9. Allegro

Beethoven



10. Langsam

Schumann

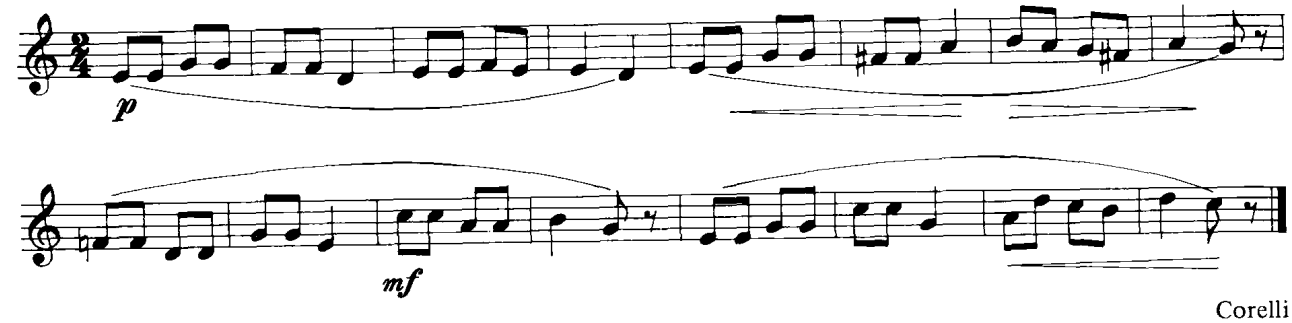


Part 2

These are melodies from the 18th or 19th century. Each contains a modulation.

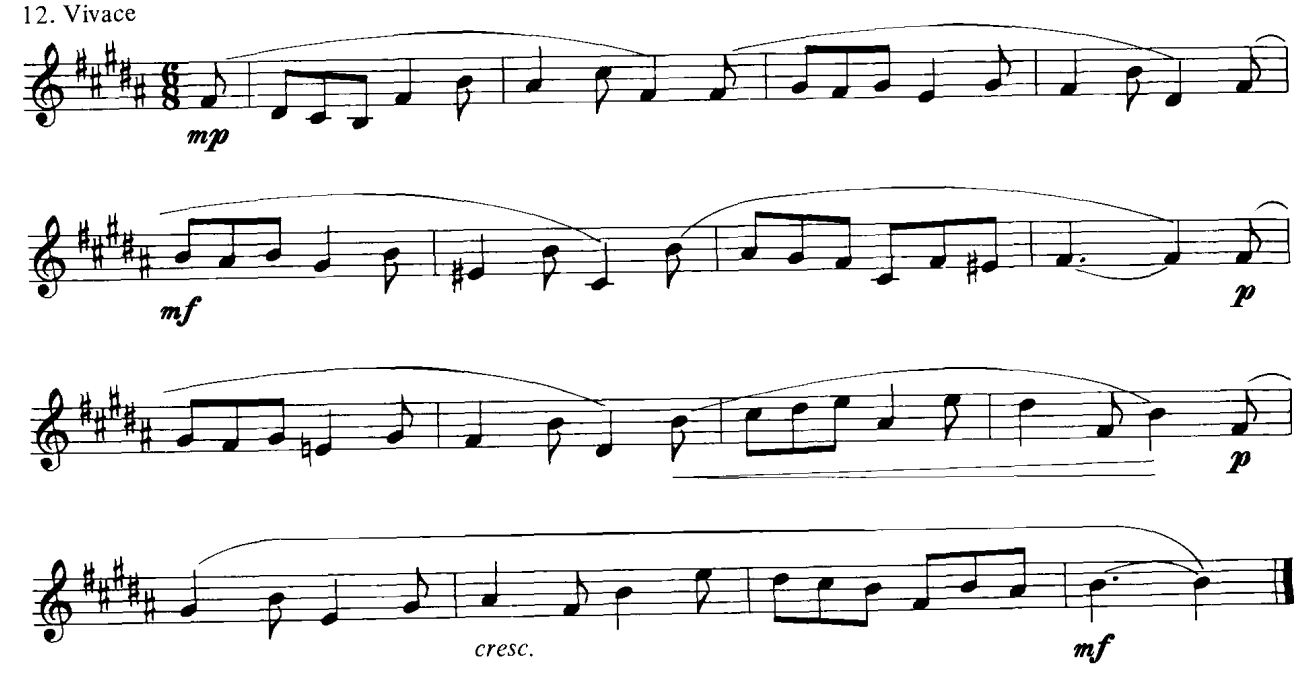
11. Allegretto

Haydn

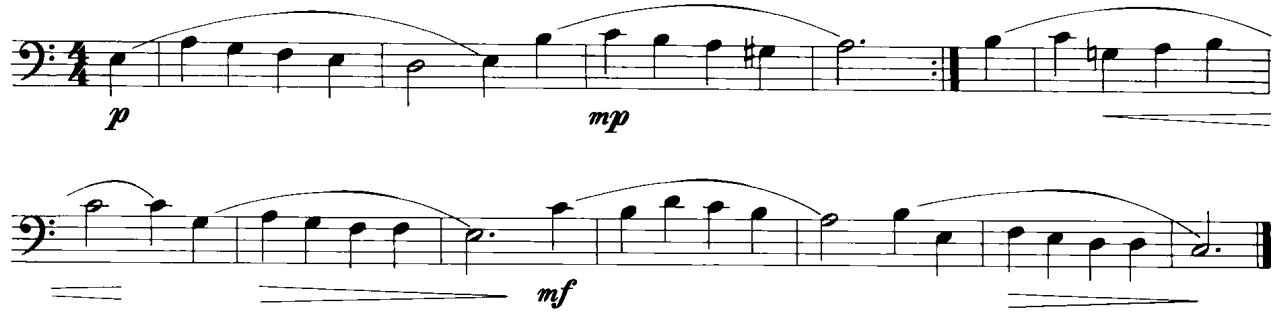


12. Vivace

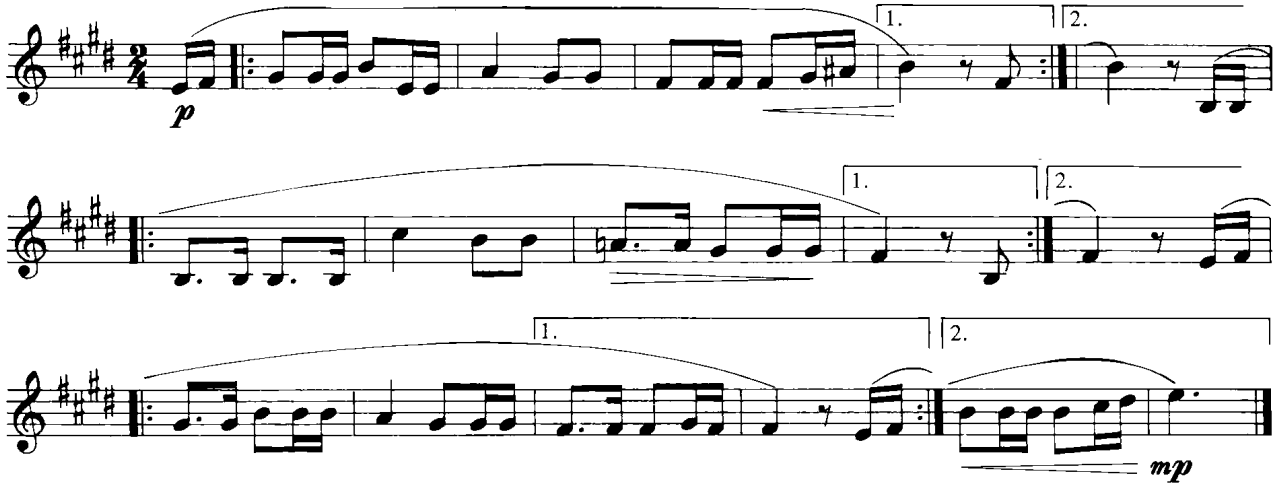
Corelli



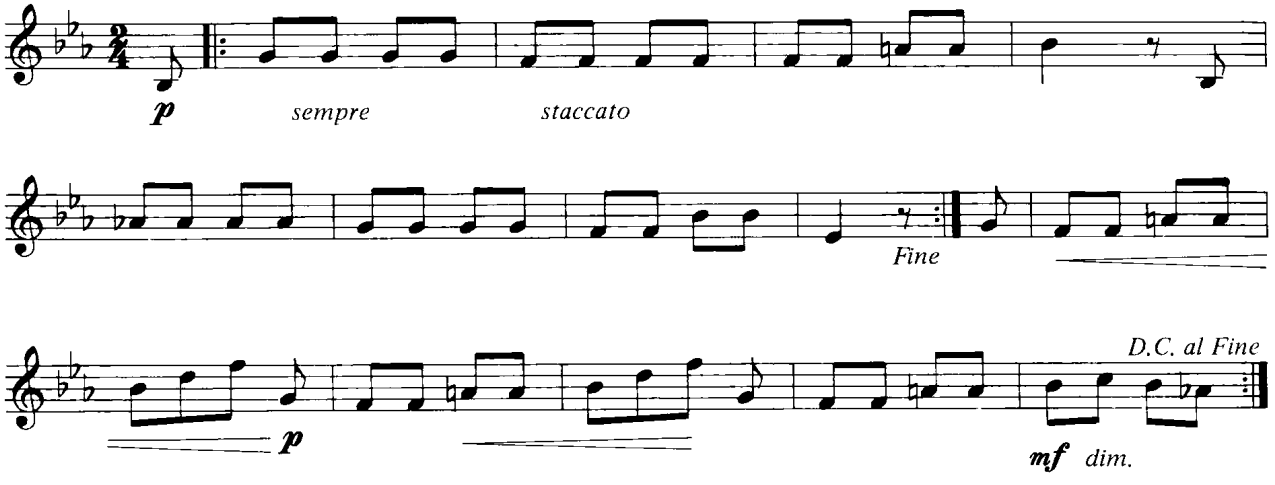
13. Zart — Hassler



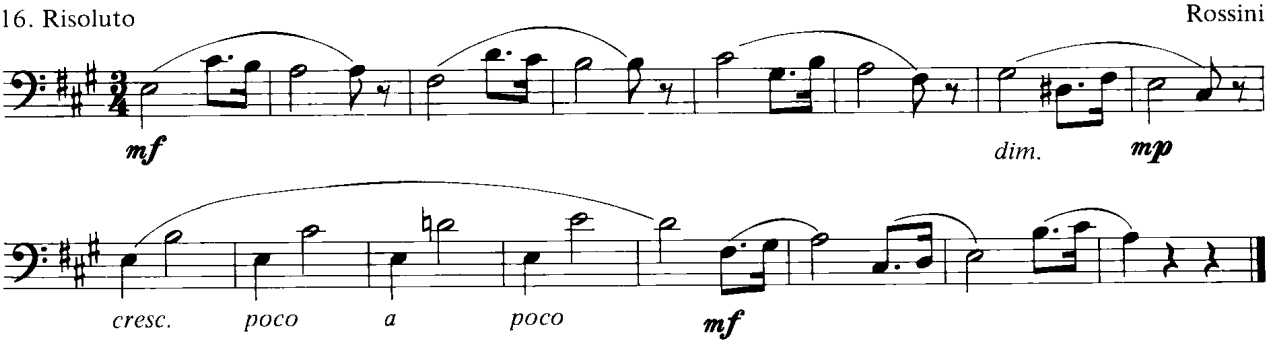
14. Leggiero — Schumann



15. Allegro molto — Beethoven



16. Risoluto — Rossini



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