Brad Edwards

Sample Pages from

Trombone Craft

A Musical Approach to Building Tone and Technique

Volume Two

Tenor Trombone (with F-attachment)

Trombone Craft, Vol. 2

We all need to build tone and technique. Why not do it in a musical way? Volume Two picks up where Volume One left off, presenting technical challenges in a musical way. Unlike other technique books, this book was designed for trombone from the ground up.

Quick summary:

- ***Motivation through musical interest***
  If students like a piece musically, they are more likely to spend extra time polishing it.
- ***Ideas are linked and reinforced***
  After a page building skill with eighth-note syncopations, a page of "two-line tunes" is given to reinforce the skill.
- ***Pieces of reasonable length***
  In a lesson, time is precious. These exercises get to the point quickly using short exercises and half-page etudes.
- ***A greater variety of key signatures***
  Doesn't get stuck in that B-flat / E-flat rut.
- ***Help with rhythm***
  Some pages focus in on common rhythm trouble spots, such as the quarter note triplet.
- ***Cross-referencing to other books***
  A big time-saver in lessons! Quick, where can you find etudes that help build the D major scale? After the two that appear in this book, you'll find a cross-reference to Bleger's 31 Studies #11, Bordogni's Melodious Etudes, Bk.1, #45; Tyrell's 40 Progressive Studies, #23 and Voxman's Selected Studies p.35.
- ***Patterns to be memorized***
  Scale and arpeggio patterns with musical shape.
- ***Length: 59 pages***
- ***Special appendices to help with special areas including:***
  - ***Improving the double tongue*** *{appendix one}*
  - ***Developing the triple tongue*** *{appendix two}*
  - ***Building accuracy with intervals*** *{appendix three}*
  - ***Scale Patterns*** *{appendix four}*
    OK, so you don't want to miss out on the traditional "grunt work" of scale patterns, don't worry.
  - ***Long Tones and Tuning*** *{appendix five}*
    Includes exercises to be played over a tuning drone
  - ***Flow Exercises (sing, buzz, play)*** *{appendix six}*
    Good for warming up, warming down, improving tone, reducing tension.

How to Order Trombone Craft, Volume Two

Volume Two is available for $15. For now, this book can be ordered using PayPal through the BoneZone.org website. Questions? Email me: brad@bonezone.org

About This Book:

Why write another technique book? I've seen many books of technical studies but have yet to encounter one that builds technique in a way that is both methodical and musically satisfying. Technique only has value in serving a musical goal. Another concern with many of the existing technical studies, such as the revered Arban's Method, is that they were originally written for other instruments and don't always address the specifics of our instrument, such as alternate positions or optimal tessitura.

My goal:
Create musically satisfying material specifically designed to build trombone technique.

There are three volumes in the *Trombone Craft* series. They are designed as a progressive method targeted to high school or college trombone students but can also be useful for others.

The *Trombone Craft* series represents the conclusion of a 'trilogy' of sorts:

1. Lip Slurs
2. Simply Singing for Winds
3. Trombone Craft

These books are meant to complement each other in helping trombonists build a solid, well-rounded technical and musical foundation.

How to Use this Book:

Here are some general guidelines:

1. Technique serves the musical goal. With any of these studies, make a *musical* statement. Be a performer, not a machine.
2. Tension is the enemy. Don't just play fast and tense; be very aware of your tension level. Seek to play effortlessly.
3. Be Patient. Start slowly and build up. Don't choose a tempo that leads to a sloppy outcome. It takes as long as takes.

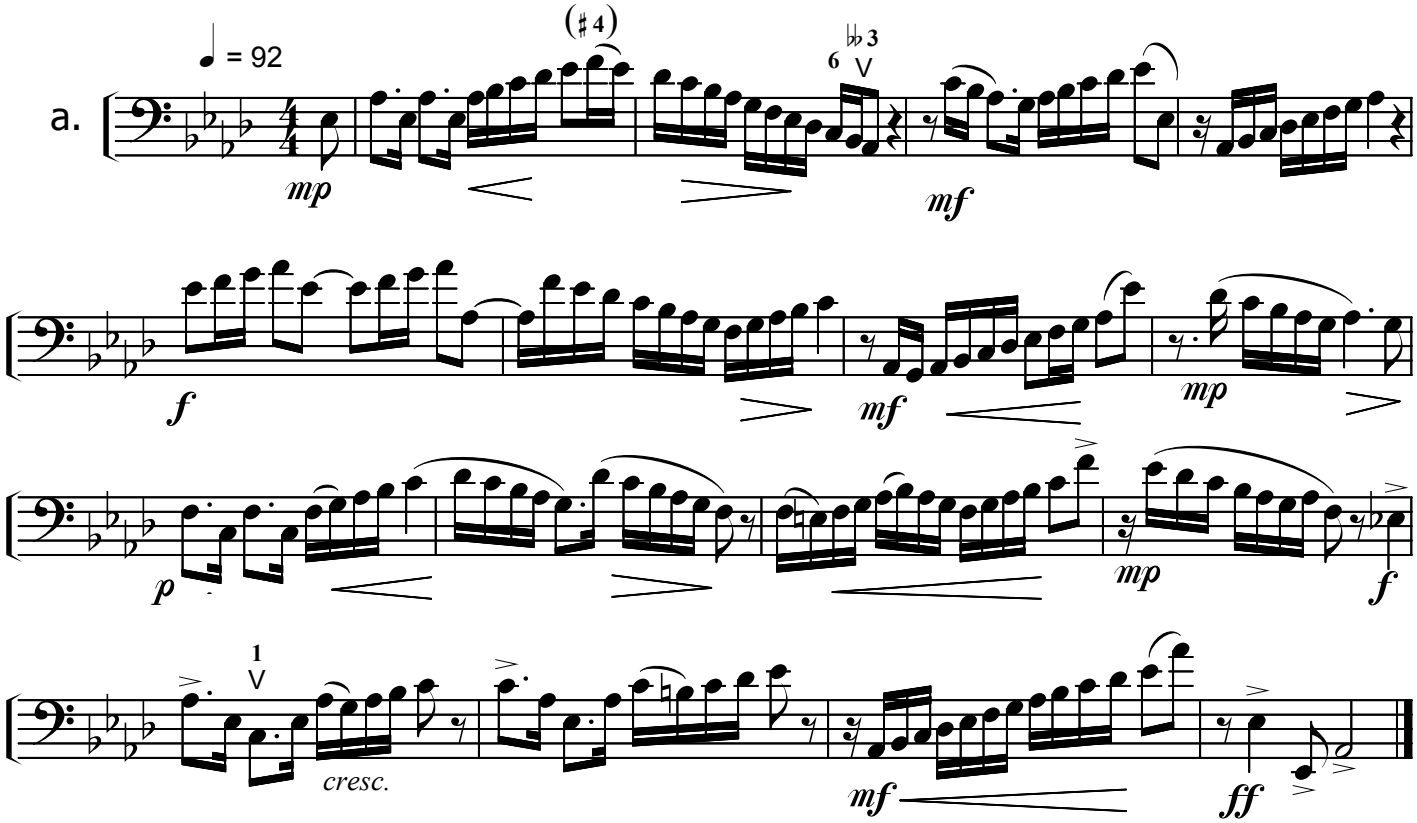
Table of Contents:

Table of Contents (continued):

#3 A Piece in Two Keys: A-flat and A major

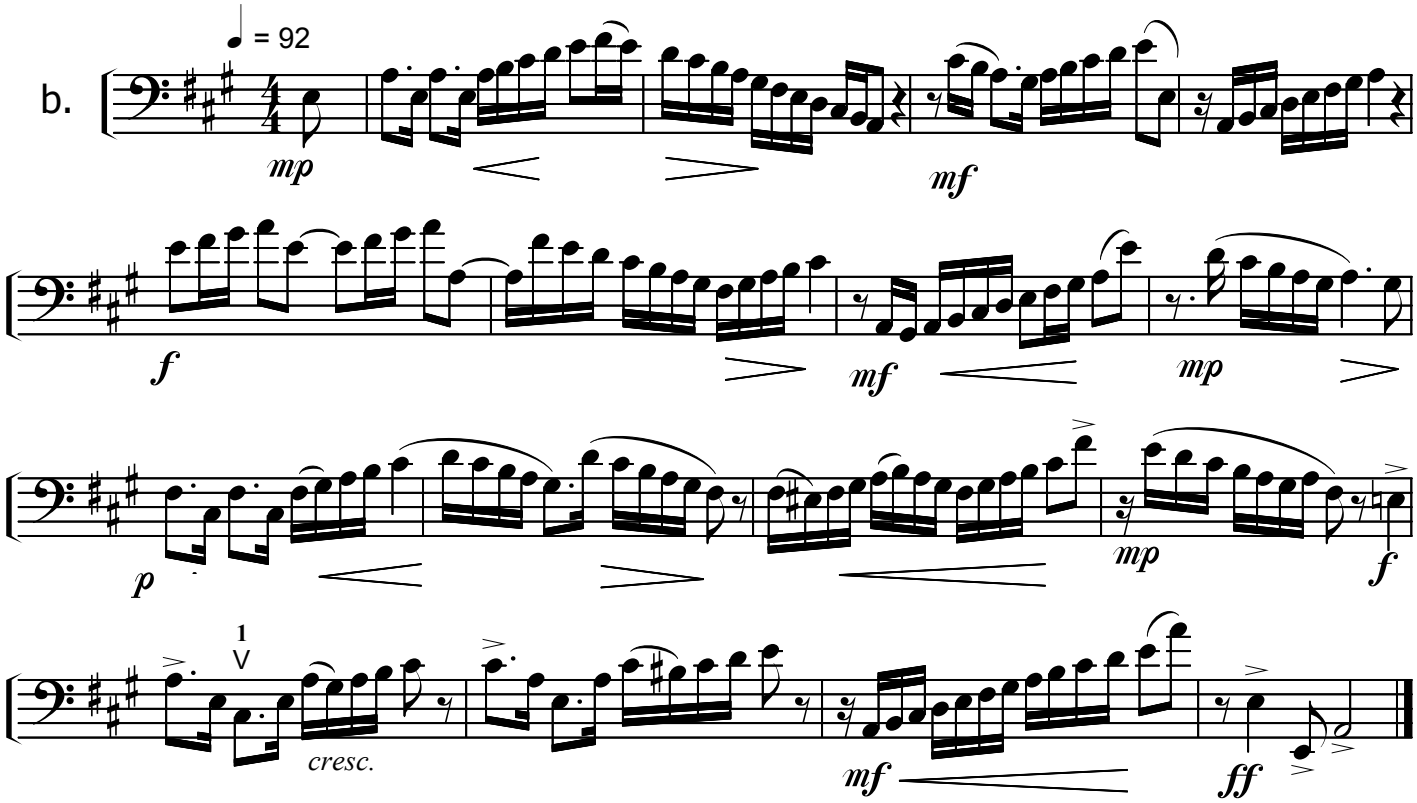
Can you play this just as well in the sharp key?

a.



See also: Tyrell 40 Progressive Studies #14

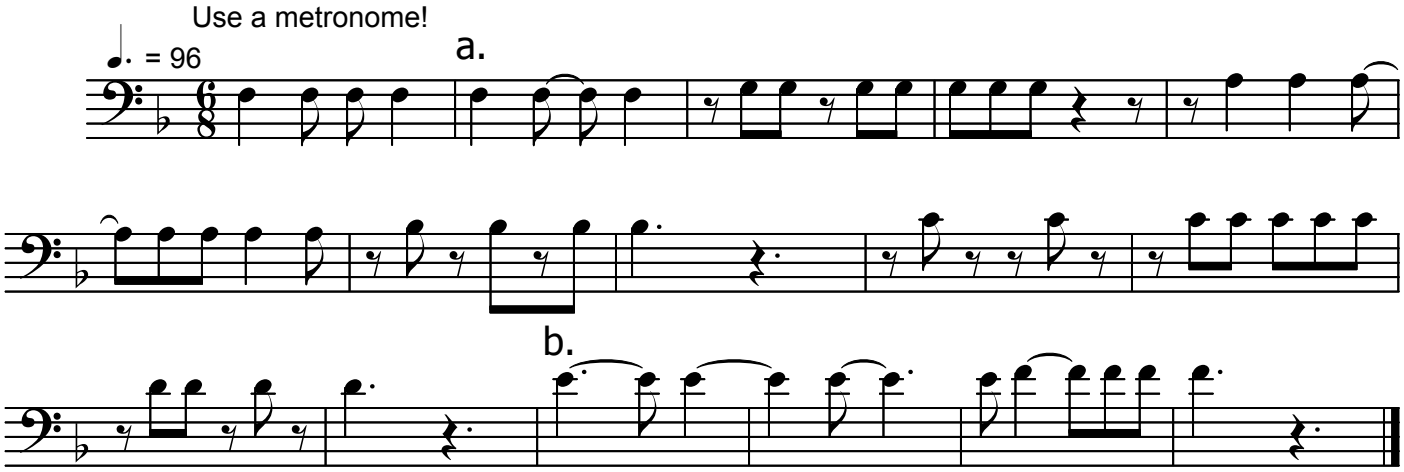
b.



See also: Bordogni Melodious Etudes, Bk.1, #33 #50 #56; Tyrell 40 Progressive Studies, #25; Voxman Selected Studies p.42;

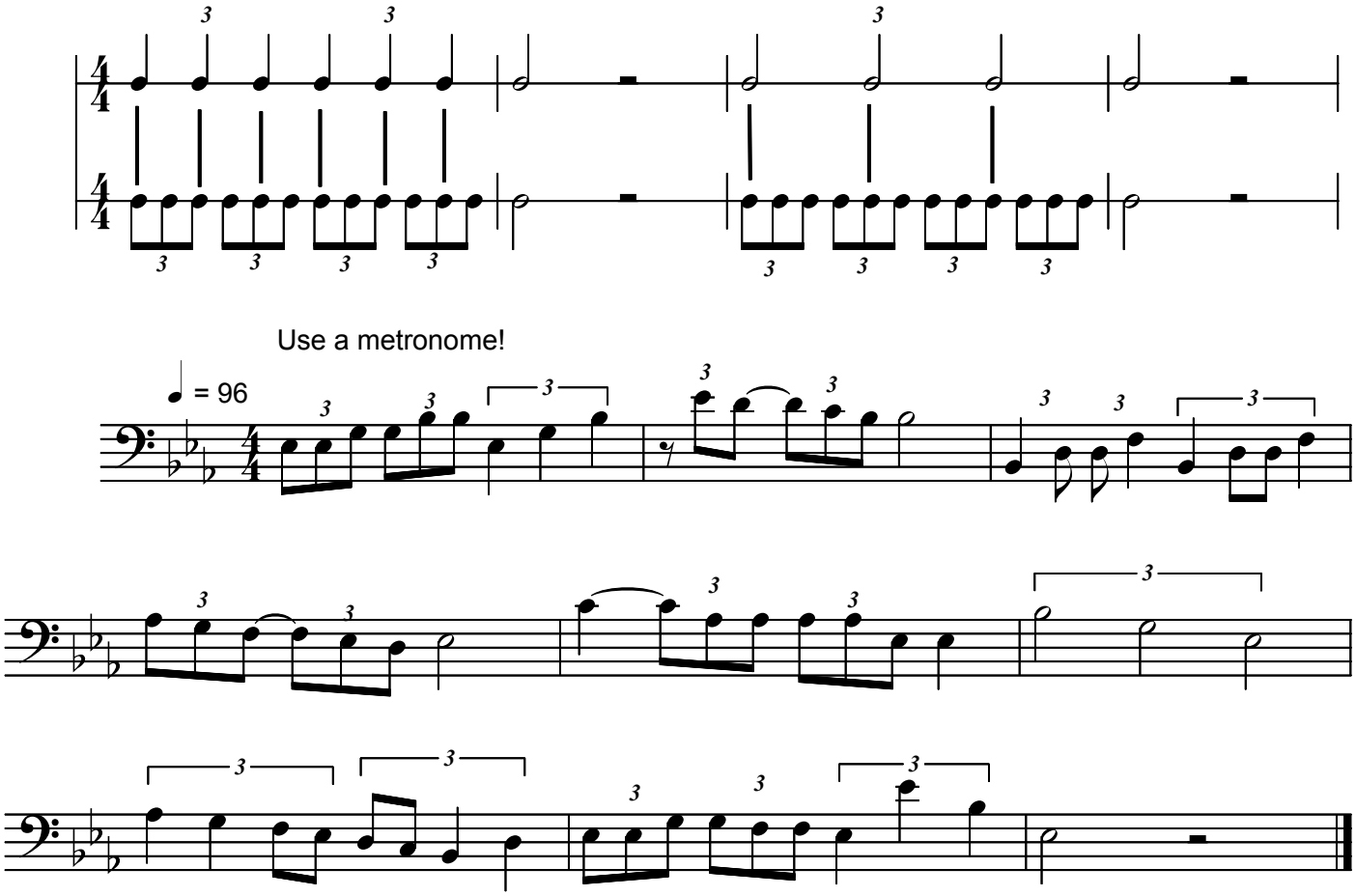
#7 Rhythm Builder: Syncopations in 6/8, Quarter Note Triplets, Half Note Triplets

Basic Rhythm Exercise

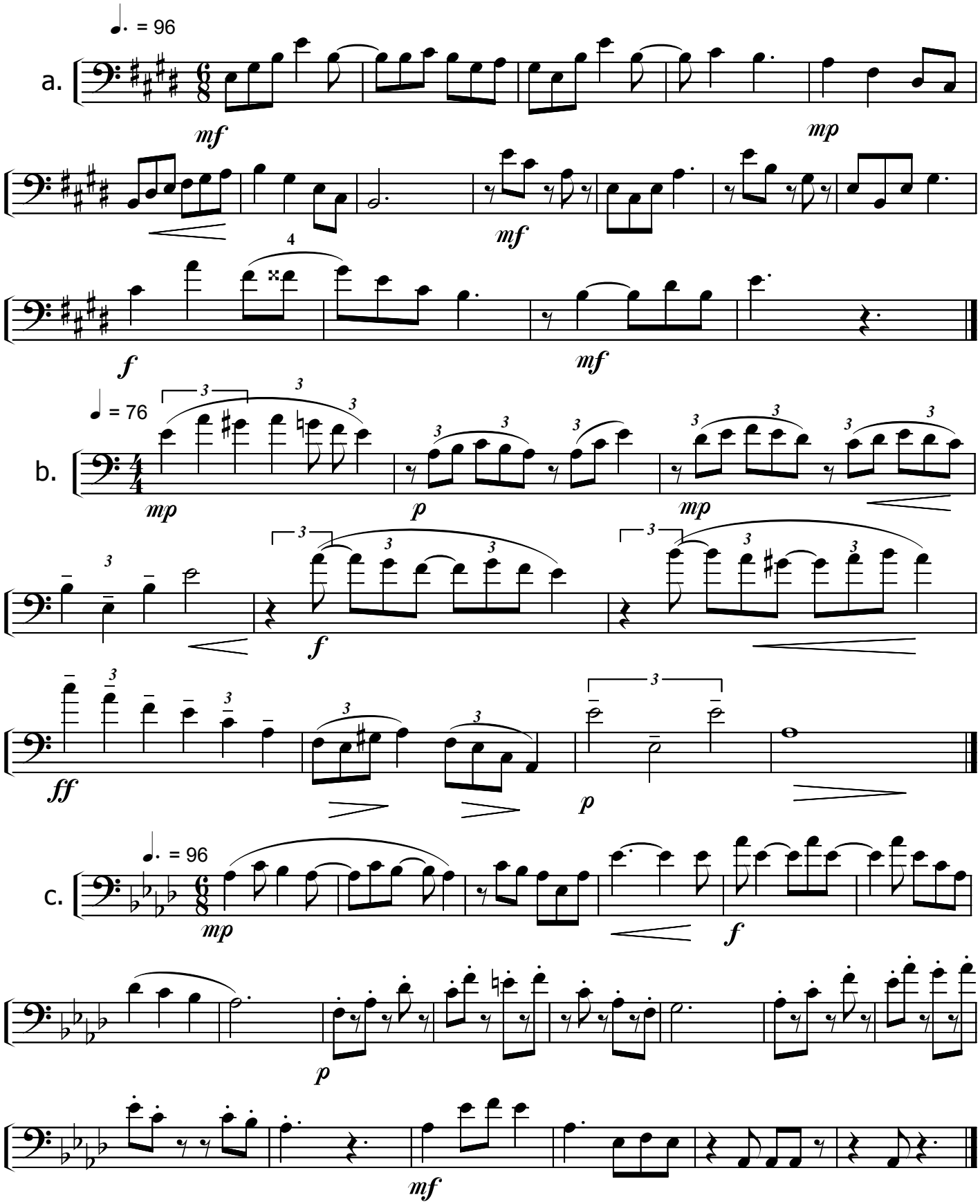


Developing the Quarter Note and Half Note Triplets

The trick to placing the second and third notes of these longer triplets is simply to know where each note falls in relation to the beat. Some fall as triplet pick-ups to a downbeat ("ba-oom") and others fall as the triplet after the downbeat ("oom-ba"). Notice in the Basic Rhythm Exercise above that letter "a" is the same as a quarter note triplet and letter "b" is the same as a half note triplet.



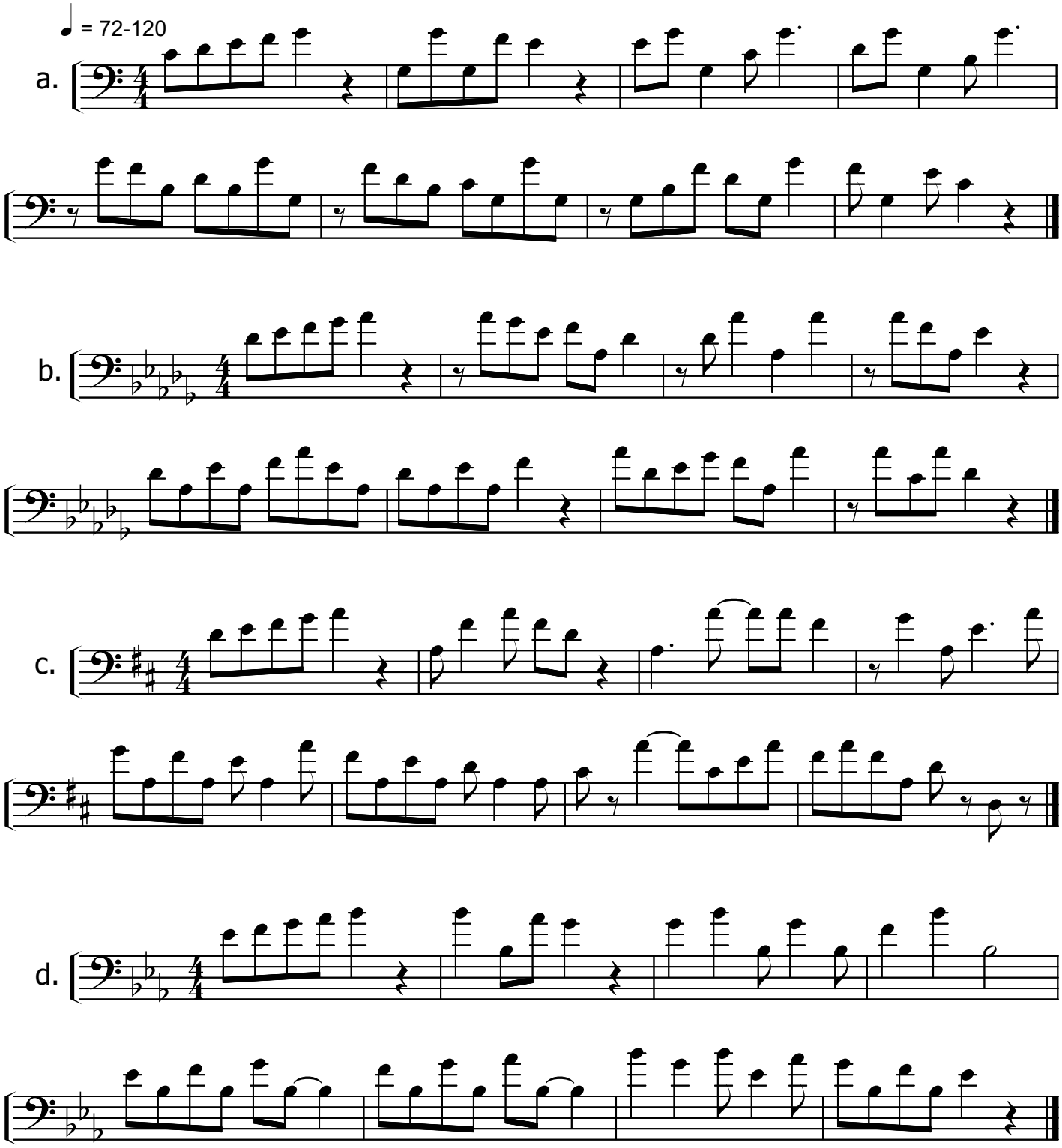
#8 "Two Line" Tunes: Syncopations Using Triplets



See also: Bordogni Melodious Etudes #39; Voxman Selected Studies, pp. 18, 51

#11 Tech Builder: Accuracy with Higher Notes

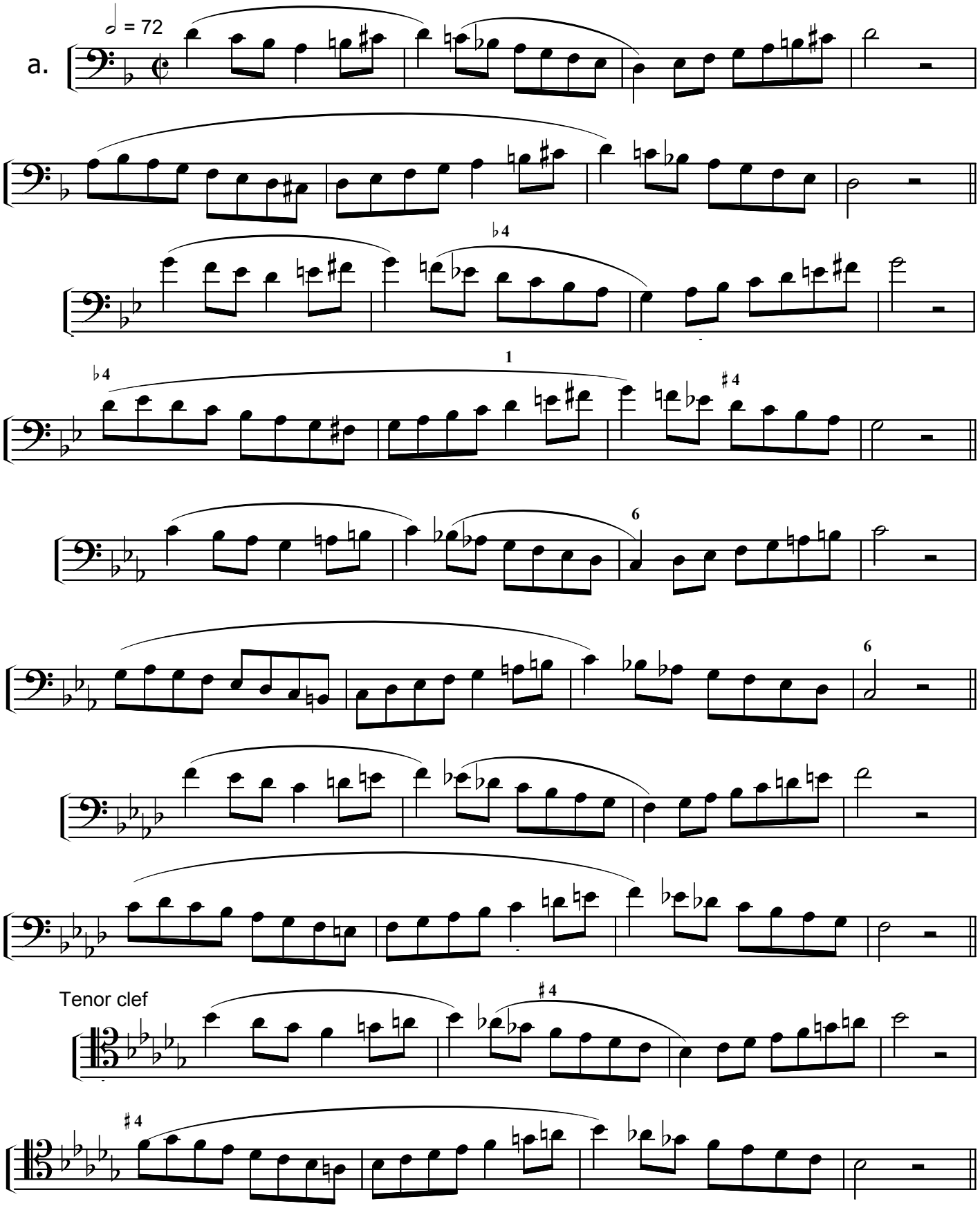
Yes, speed is nice but you'll learn more from playing slow enough to achieve real accuracy. Simple rule: if you miss a note, you must slow down. For additional challenge, try playing these without tonguing (resulting in either natural slurs or glissandi).



For additional practice, look at the exercises in Appendix #3, "Interval Accuracy."

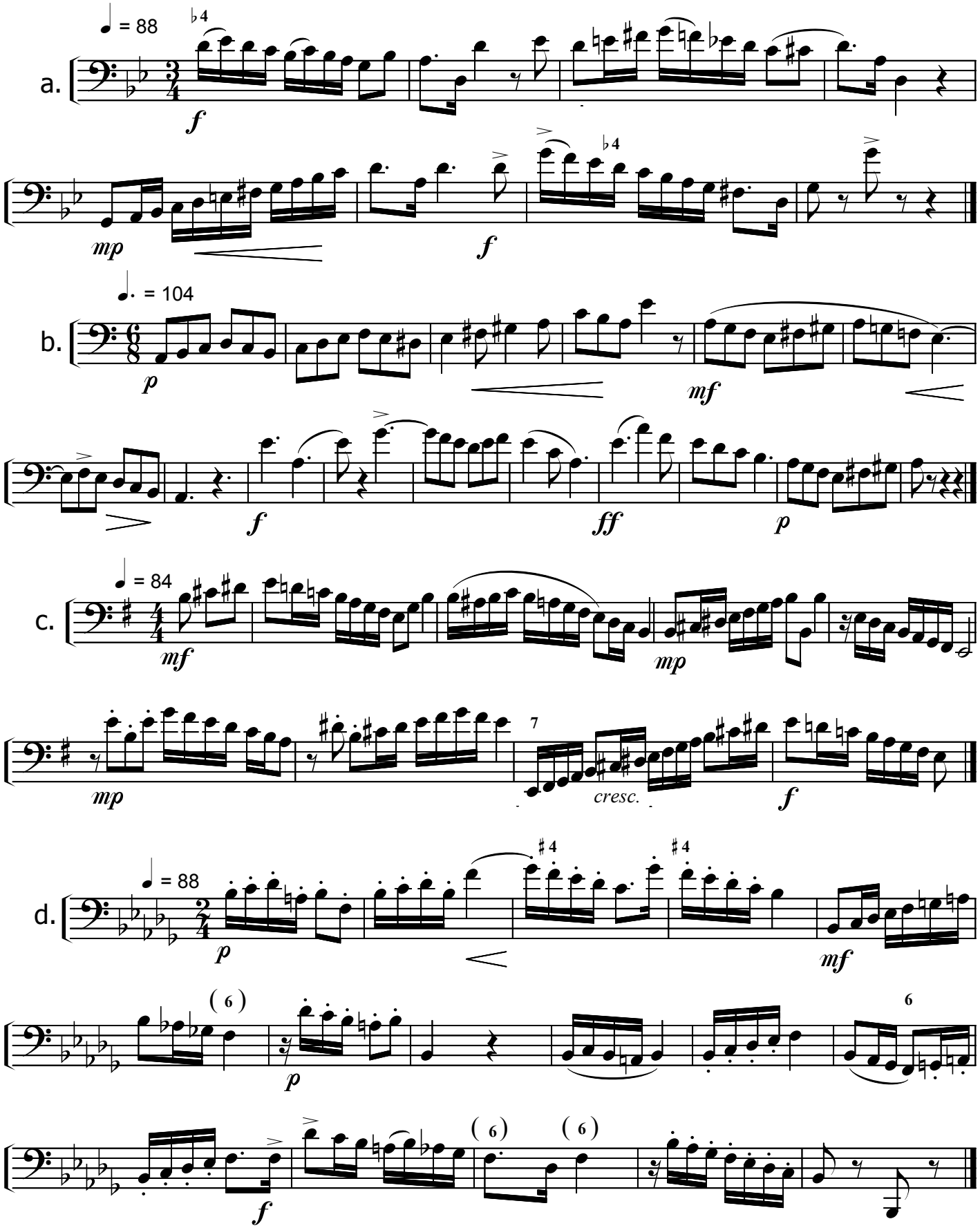
#14 Memorize This: Melodic Minor

From here on out, you will begin to see some tenor clef on higher examples.



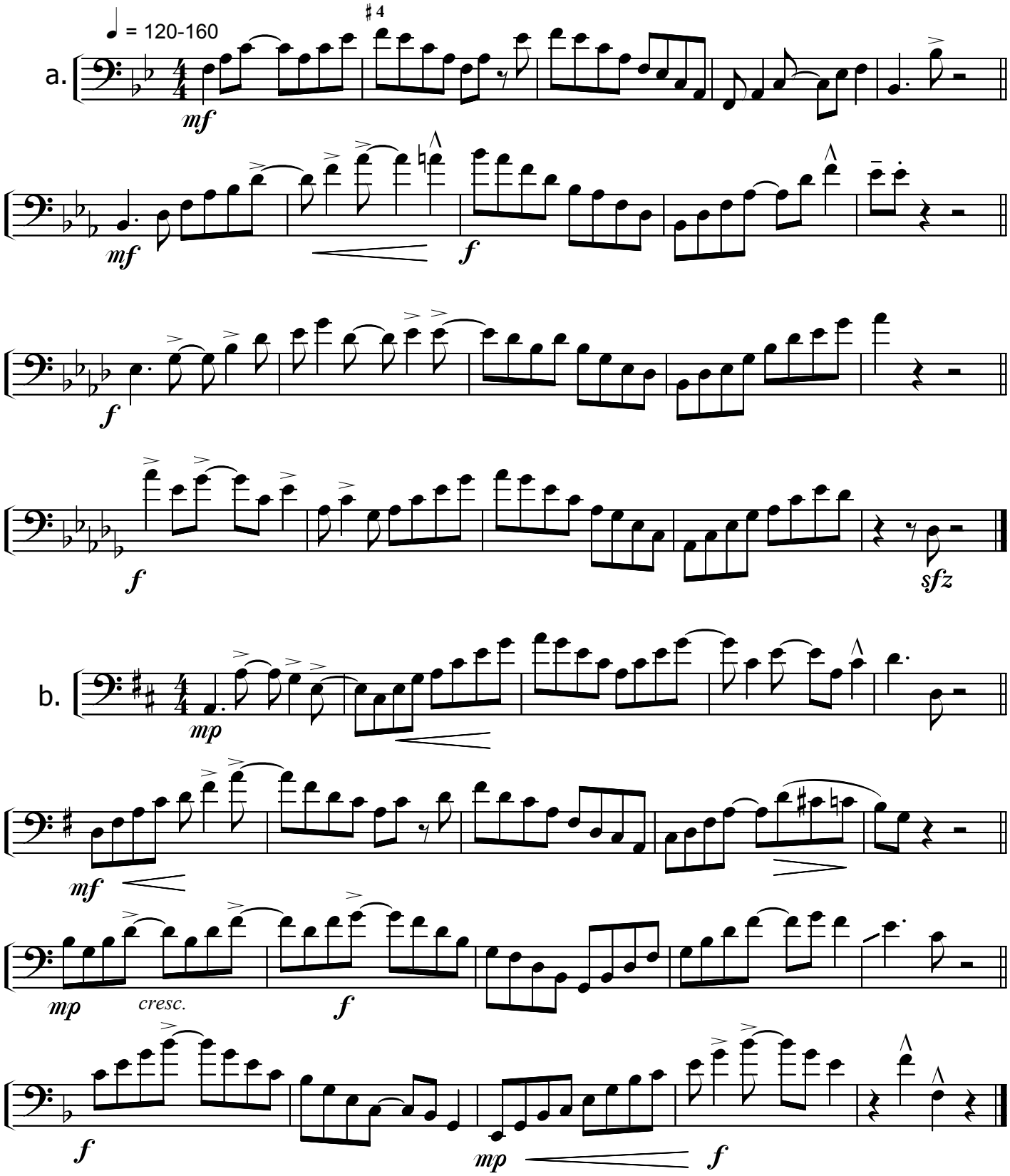
Continues on next page (not in sample)...

#15 "Two-Line" Tunes: Melodic Minor



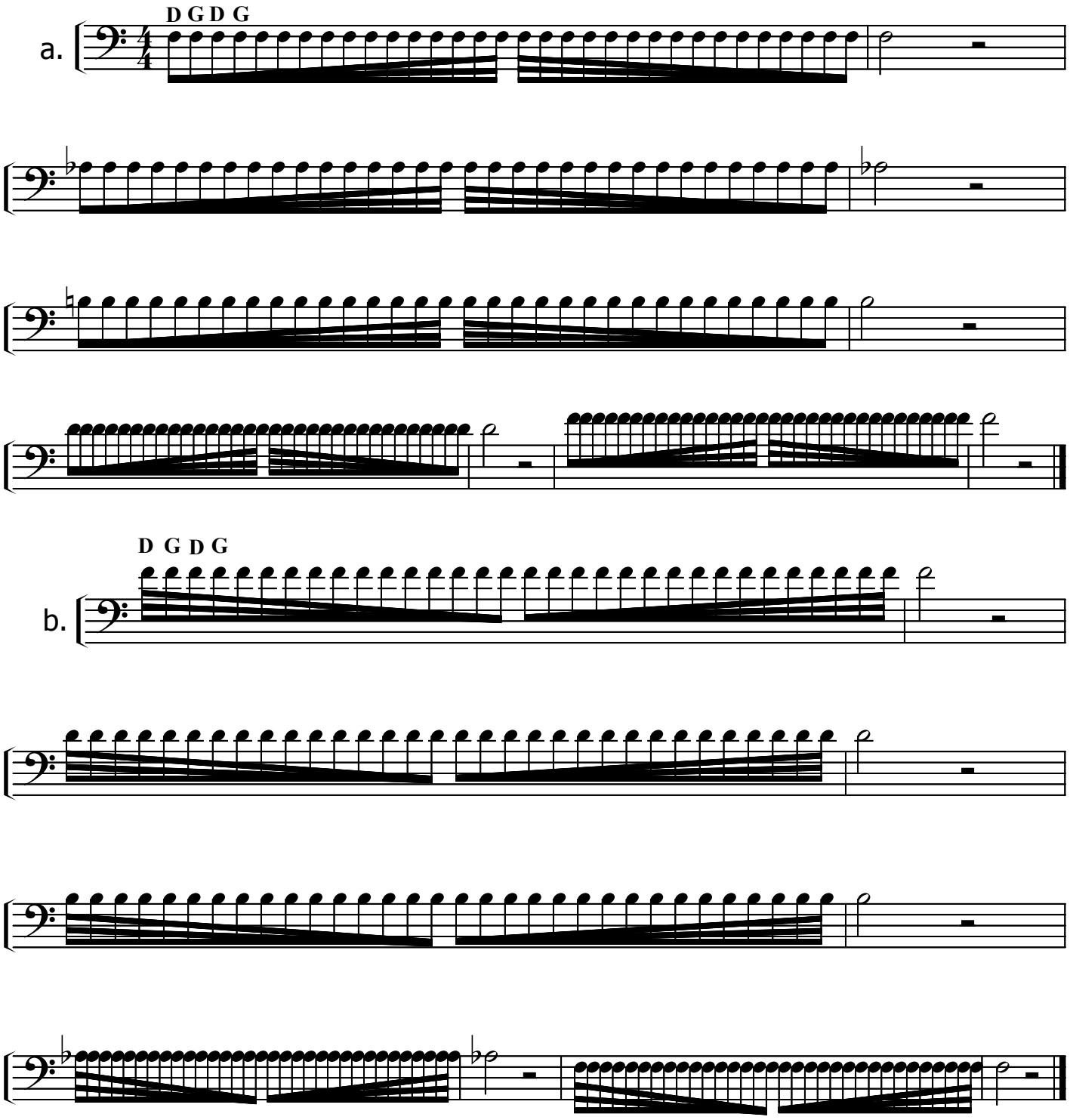
#23 One-Line Tunes: Dominant Seventh Chords with Syncopation

These lend themselves well to swung eighth notes and semi-legato tonguing. You can also substitute key signatures for extra practice (for example, line 2 in E instead of E-flat)



Appendix #1: Double Tonguing, pt. 2
#1-1: Speeding Up and Slowing Down

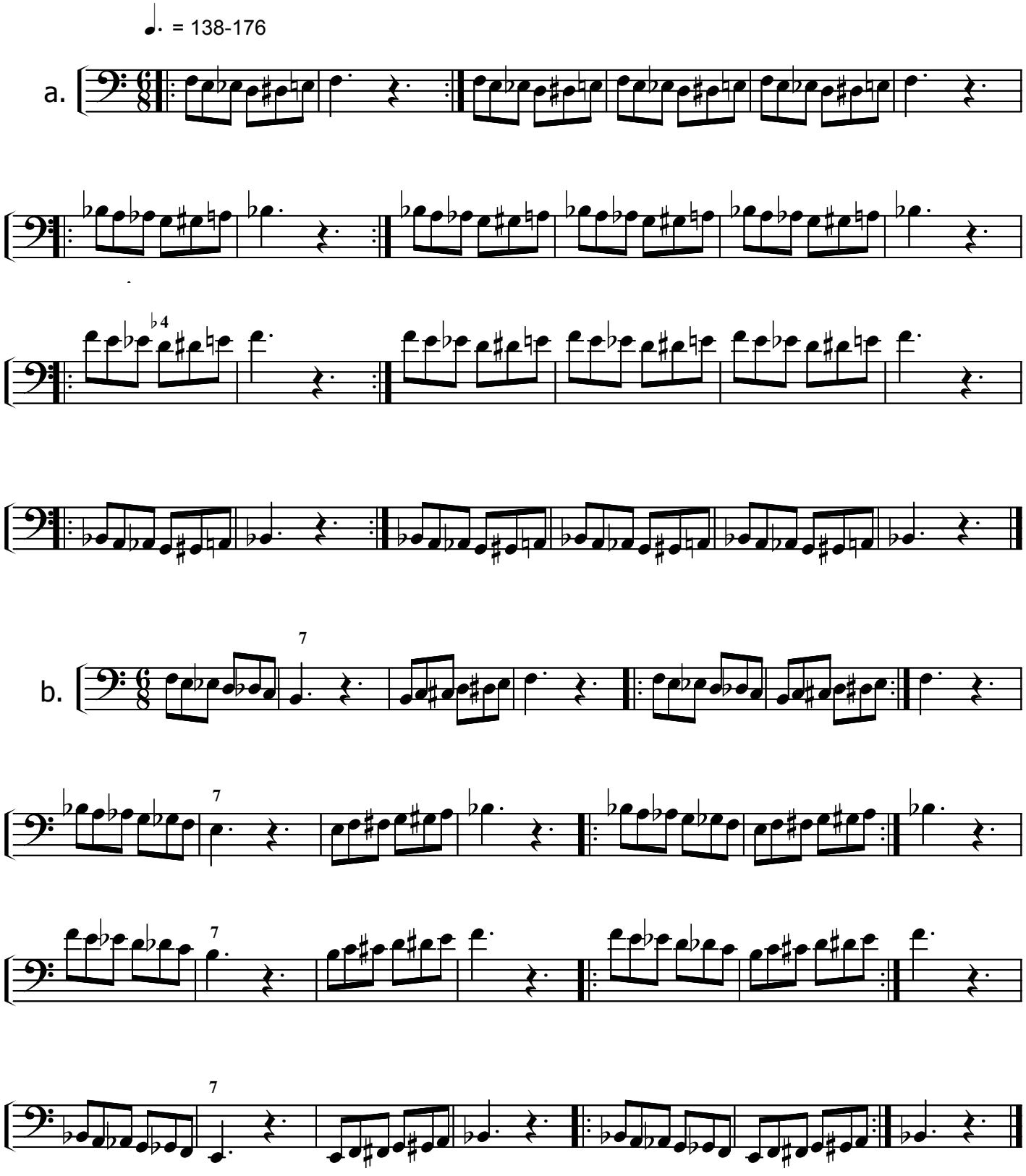
The slowest notes should be slower than your fastest single tongue. The exact number of notes isn't important. The main thing is to achieve a smooth change of tempo. Slowing down is trickier than speeding up. Keep the speed change smooth.



Introductory studies in double tonguing can be found in Volume One, Appendix #3.

Appendix #2: Triple Tonguing
#2-2: Gliding Through Positions

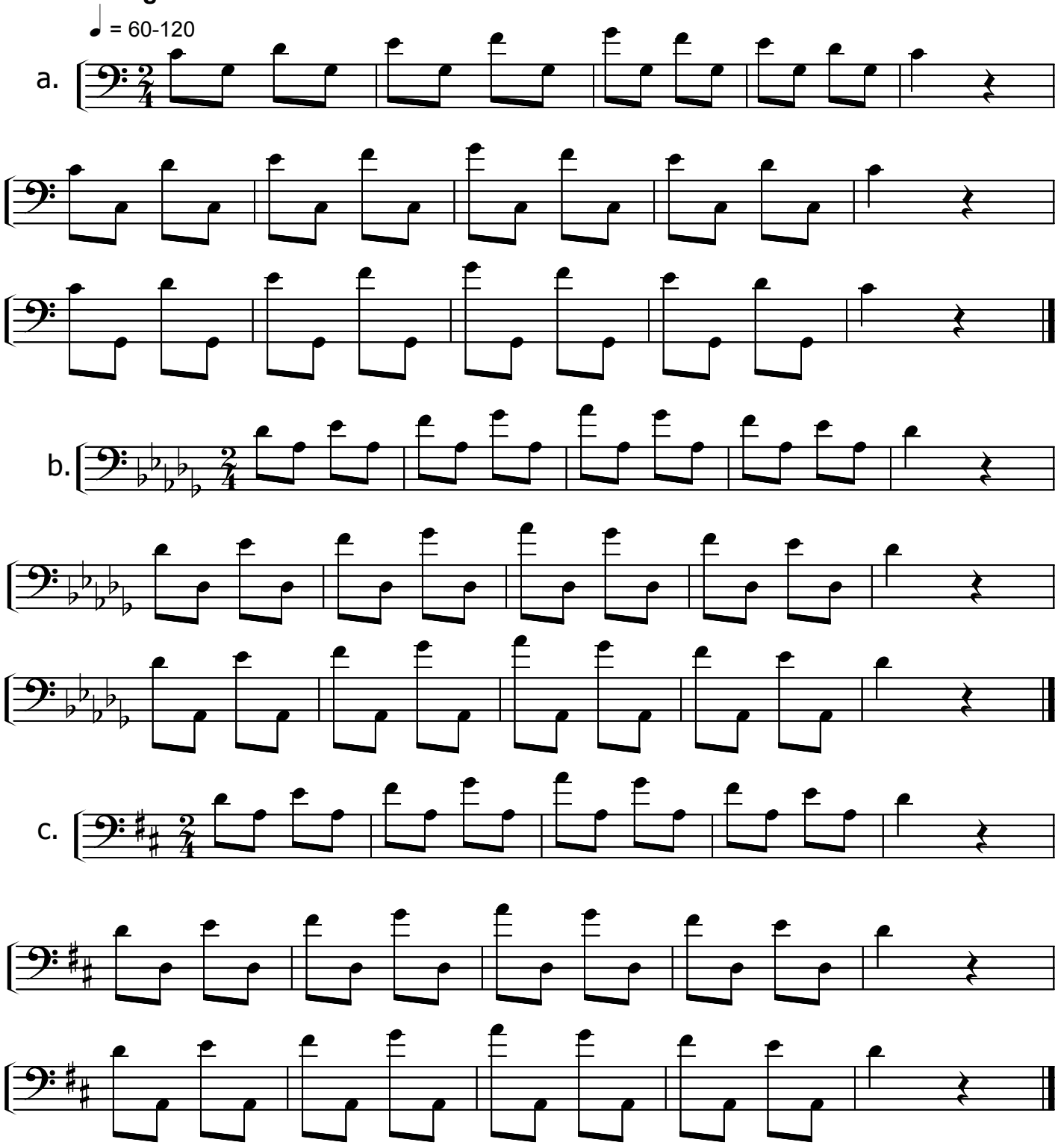
At faster speeds, don't try to stop the slide on each position. Move your slide smoothly. As you go faster it is best to switch from the "ta-ta-kah" syllables to the smoother "da-da-gah." Keep it effortless.



Appendix #3: Interval Accuracy
#3-3: Expanding Scales

If the notes aren't well-centered, slow down. Don't teach yourself to play sloppy.

Ascending



See also: Kopprasch Sixty Selected Studies, Bk 1 #29; Bk 2 #50

Appendix 5: Developing the High Range

For any brass player, a strong high range can be a great confidence booster. Conversely, a weak high range can be terribly frustrating. Many players, especially younger players, tend to obsess over high range. The best advice is to be patient. It takes time and diligence to correctly build a strong high range.

Watch Out for Shortcuts

Shortcut #1: Increased Mouthpiece Pressure

Muscles need blood. Less pressure allows more blood to get to those lip muscles, increasing endurance and avoiding injury. Zero pressure in the high range isn't a practical goal. You need some pressure BUT see if you can achieve the same (or better) results by using a little less. Remember this saying, **"Every day, a little less pressure."**

Try this: "The Wall Trick"

Stand with your back to a wall. Gently place the back of your trombone against the wall and stand normally as if to play. If done correctly, the wall resists your tendency to push the mouthpiece in against your embouchure. Play slow ascending lip slurs to get the feeling of playing higher without pushing in so hard. Now, step away from the wall and play the same slur. Is the pressure the same?

Shortcut #2: A "Smiling" Embouchure.

If the embouchure corners turn up when you ascend, this spreads the upper lip thin, leading to a weaker tone quality. Remember these tips about embouchure formation:

- The lips should be gently touching in the center.
- The corners of the mouth should be held firm and turn slightly downwards, as if the player has a determined look.
- The skin just below the lower lip and above the tip of the chin should tend to flatten out and become smoother. A bunched-up chin (dimpled, resembling a peach pit) results from mashing the lips together vertically and should be avoided.

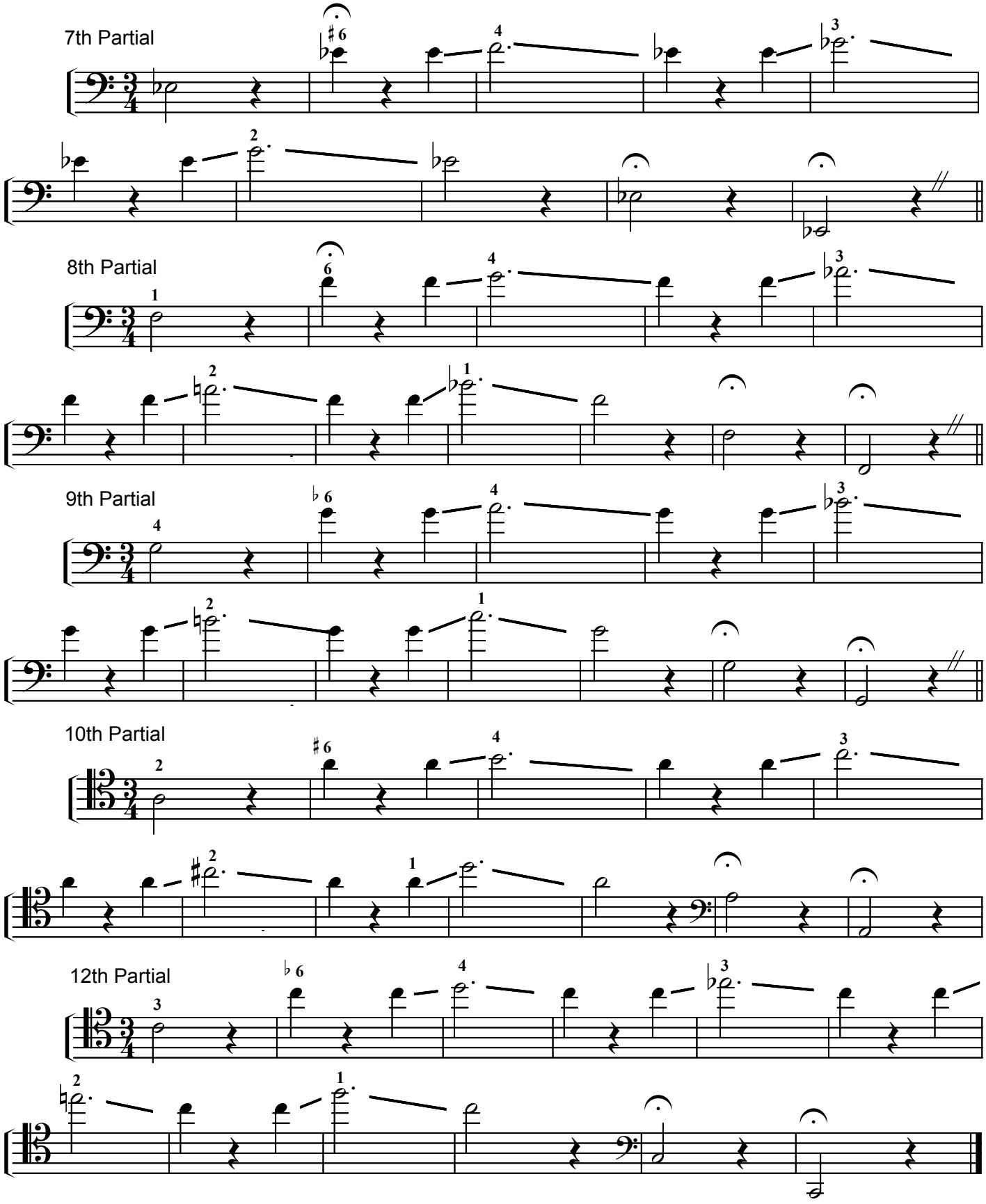
Try This: Feeling the Air Angle

Get a mouthpiece rim or a buzzing visualizer. Buzz glisses from low to high. As you buzz, move your hand up or down to find where the air hits it. For most players ("downstream players") the air will angle down slightly for mid-range notes. As you ascend and slightly roll in the lower lip, the air stream will point down more. (Conversely, low notes are aided by the lower lip rolling out, causing the air stream to point up.)

Appendix #5: Developing the High Range

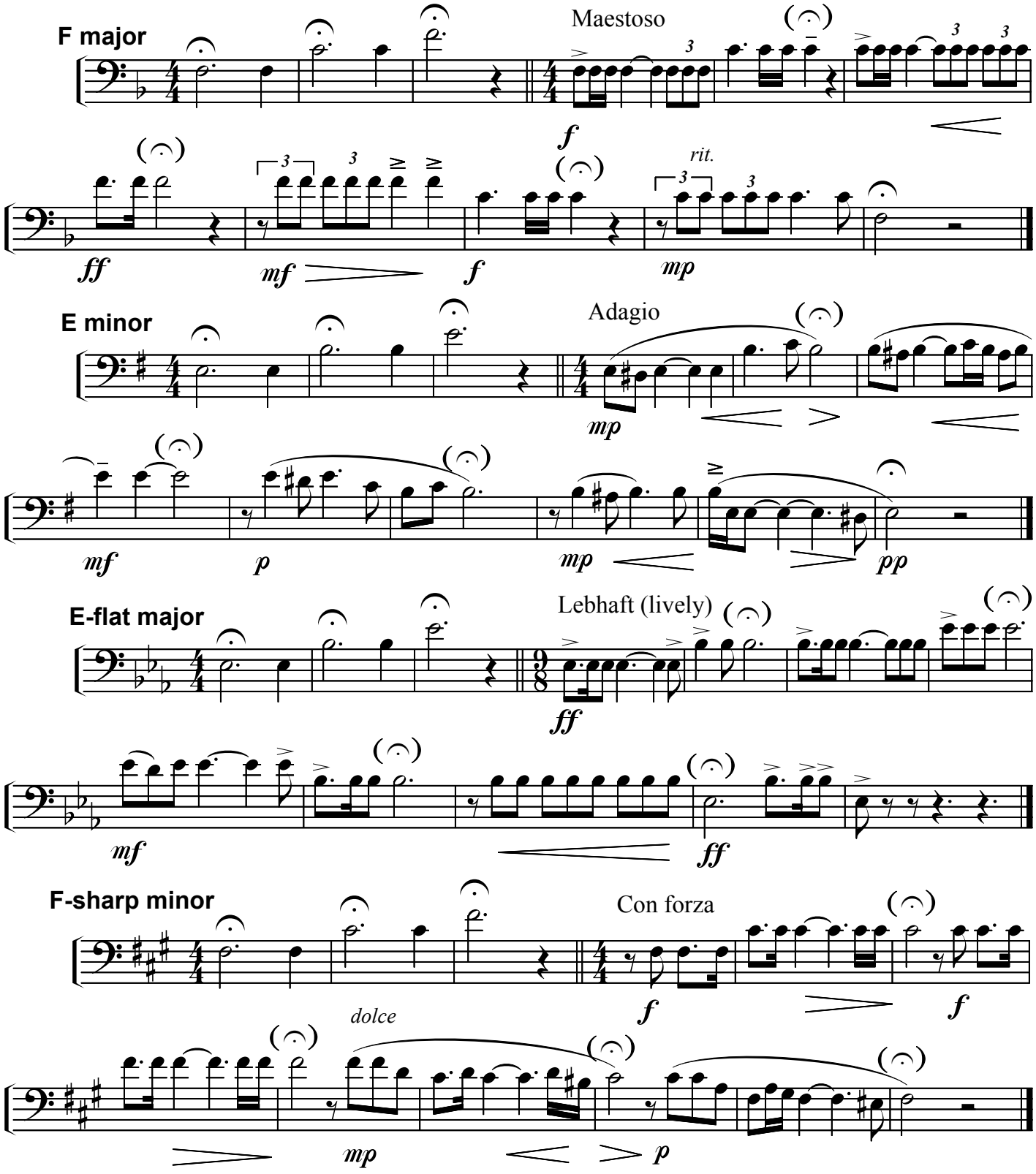
#5-1: Using Glisses

This requires time and patience. Make sure you are breathing well. Circle the highest note you can reach and work for gradual progress over time. I left out the intonation corrections in the glisses.



Appendix #6: Tone and Tuning
#6-2: Tonic-Dominant Patterns In Different Musical Contexts

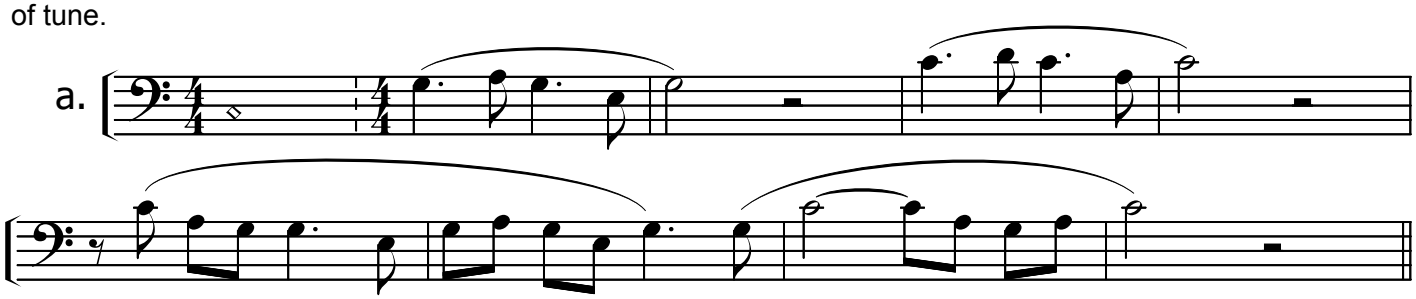
Each example presents a simple tuning exercise followed by a musical passage stressing the same structural notes. Be expressive and mindful of solid intonation.



Appendix #6: Tone and Tuning
#6-3: Tuning Fifths and Octaves Over a Drone

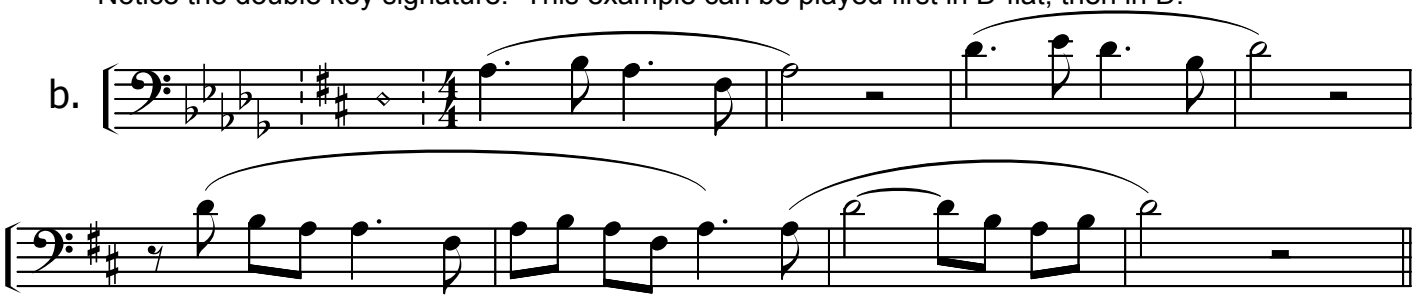
The diamond-shaped note is to be sustained as the melody is played. If you have a partner, you can take turns sustaining the drone note. It also possible to generate tuning drones electronically. Make the perfect intervals "lock in" with the drone. Especially with fifths and octaves, you should be able to hear "beats" when you're out of tune.

a.

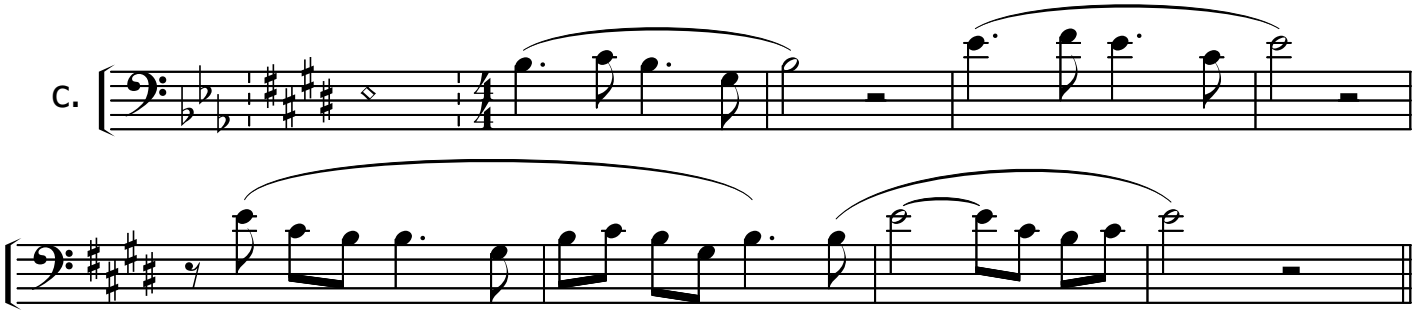


Notice the double key signature. This example can be played first in D-flat, then in D.

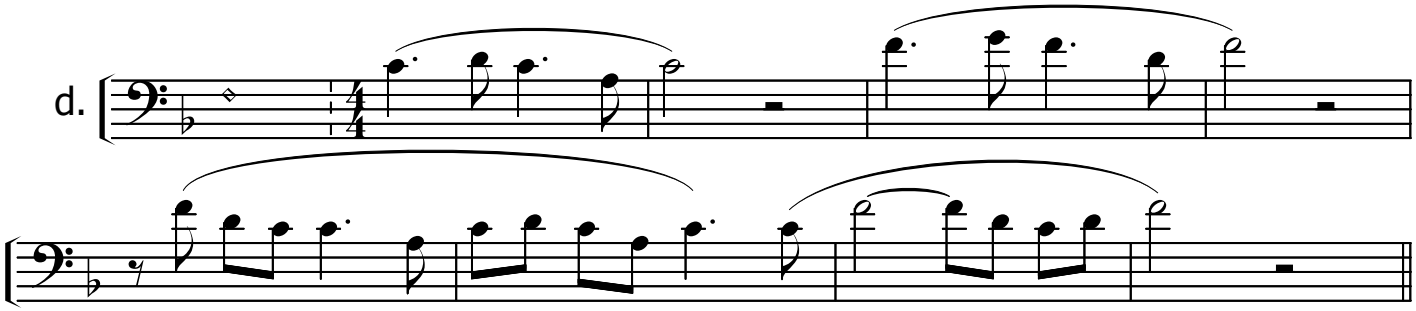
b.



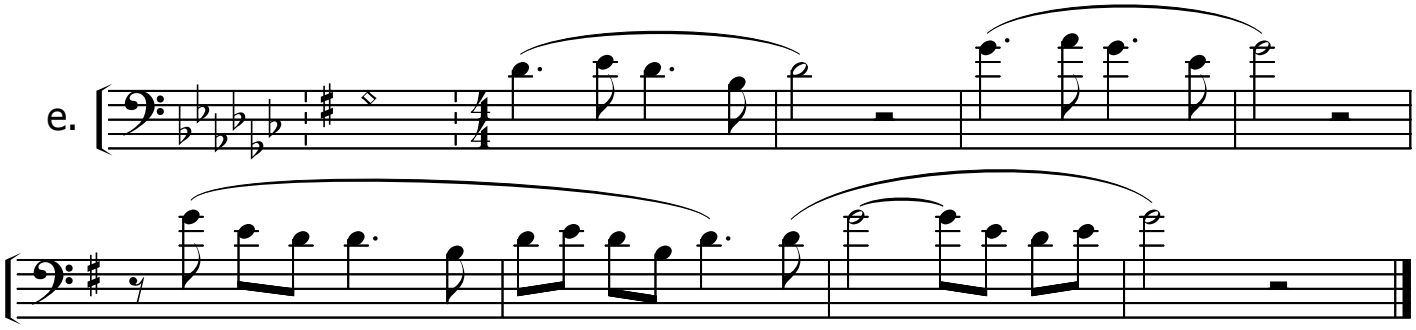
c.



d.



e.



You can also play these in tenor clef, thus transposing them up a fifth.

59.

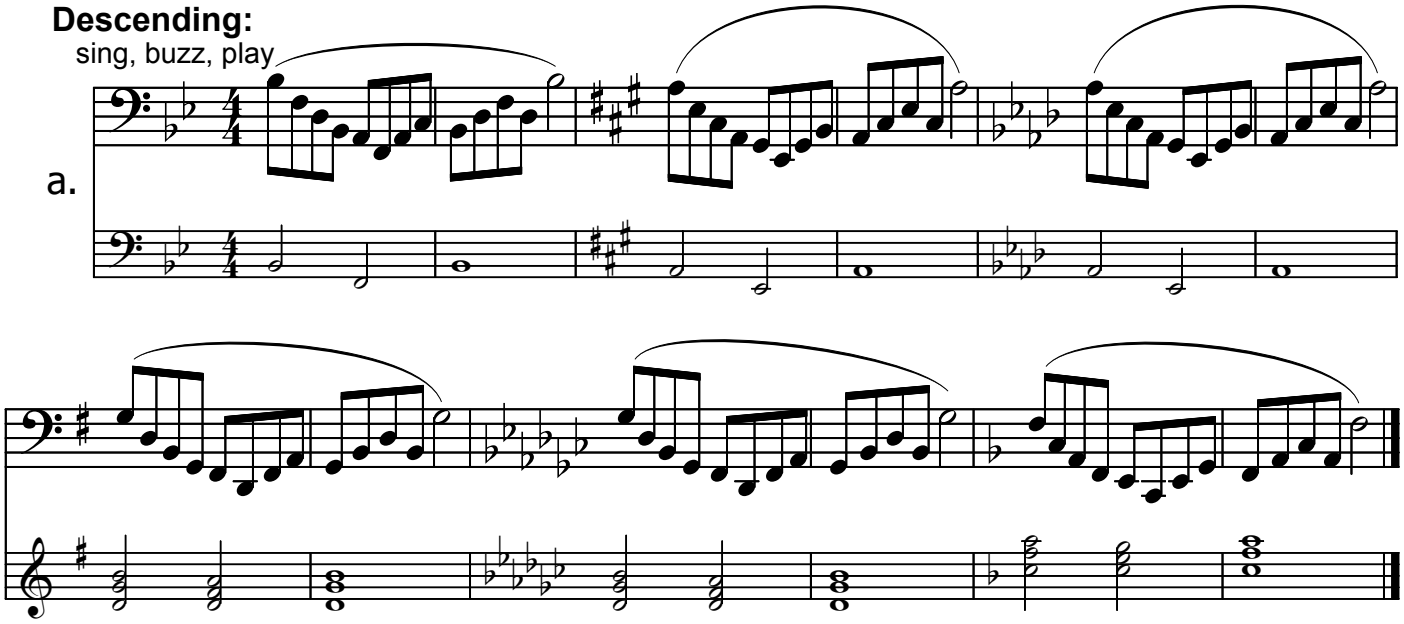
Appendix 7: Flow Exercises (sing, buzz, play)
#7-2: Arpeggiating a Tonic-Dominant Progression

Don't forget to buzz these on your mouthpiece! You can play them in minor keys if you like.

Descending:

sing, buzz, play

a.



Ascending:

I'm not a big fan of mouthpiece buzzing in the high range. You may, however, wish to buzz/sing these patterns down an octave.

b.