Self mastery

Empower yourself and set yourself free

Visualising a positive outcome can lift your performance to new levels says **Niall O'Riordan**

Self-awareness is vital for musical development. We are often unaware of what is happening in our bodies and this can lead to all sorts of problems. Equally, we can also be unaware of the thoughts that run through our heads. We can become stuck in habitual patterns that are unhelpful. It is easy to become preoccupied with everything that is happening externally but sometimes the challenges we face can be internal, ones that practice alone won't resolve. A pause and some inner reflection is needed.

By considering how we relate to our bodies and minds I believe much more progress in playing can be achieved. Awareness is the first step towards change. A heightened awareness of body and mind provide valuable feedback.

Let us look at the mind, for example. Have you ever considered what percentage of your thinking is nurturing and supportive? Most musicians run a very critical inner voice. We have somehow come to believe that scolding ourselves from the inside will motivate us to do better. If you think this is you, ask yourself: how has this approach served me so far? Does it make me feel good? Am I willing to try a different approach? Most musicians have experienced performance anxiety at some point in their life. We allow this anxiety to build days and even weeks before a performance. But where does it start?

Anxiety can originate from a simple thought. This can be related to a past experience, but may not. Catastrophic thinking can be defined as ruminating about irrational worst-case outcomes. Musicians are very good at scaring themselves, and this worst-case scenario can become ever more elaborate as we run it over and over again. It is known that when visualising, the brain confuses what is real and what is not. People who suffer from performance anxiety usually run a process like this but have little awareness of it and have not developed the skills to put a stop to it. Think about how the body reacts when you're watching a scary film – you can actually jump with fright. Your body is reacting to what you're seeing on-screen as if it were real. A similar process happens with visualisation: if you visualise a frightening outcome your body will begin to react as if it were true. We forget that what we are thinking is not real.

> ***"You are not a helpless victim of your own thoughts, but rather a master of your own mind." Louise Hay***

How do we change?

Breath awareness is a fantastic way to connect with the body and is also one of the finest methods there is to stabilise and calm the mind. Yogis have been using such techniques for centuries. The breath enters and leaves the body at a rate of approximately 15 times per minute. Of all vital functions in the human body, breathing is unique. It lies at the interface of the conscious and unconscious mind. Breathing normally functions unconsciously but we are also able to take conscious control of it. Other unconscious processes such as the heartbeat, body temperature and metabolic activity cannot be controlled by the average person.

Of all these vital functions the breath is also the easiest to become aware of. It provides a valuable insight into our mental and emotional state at any given time. For example, when we are happy the breath is normally rhythmic, deep and slow. In contrast when we are tense

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or unhappy the breath is gasping, shallow, fast and uneven. This valuable information, when observed, can provide a real turning point when dealing with performance preparation and performance anxiety. Regular and relaxed breathing induces relaxation in the whole system. When we are nervous or anxious our breathing always reflects this. It is usually shallow and quick. This type of breathing can also add to chaotic thinking patterns and these thoughts in turn generate even more anxiety and cycle continues.

Taking Control

How do we break the cycle? We need to cultivate awareness in two areas. We must learn to become aware of our breathing and we need to become aware of thought patterns and see them for what they really are: thoughts. The first step is to become consciously aware of your breathing.

As you are reading this now, notice your breath as you inhale and exhale. Become aware of its depth, speed and texture throughout the day and continually bring yourself back to this. Become a witness and cultivate awareness of how your breathing reflects your mood. The second step is to intervene by regulating the breath at times of stress and anxiety. Regular deep breathing calms the mind.

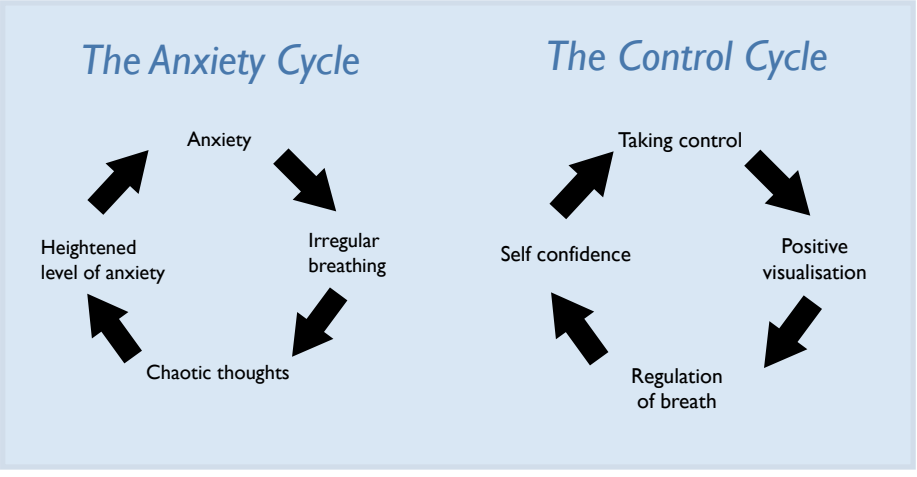
The second step is to stop scaring yourself by visualising worst-case scenarios. Remember it is only thought and a thought can be changed. From my experience many musicians find it very easy to visualise negative outcomes but find it much more difficult to visualise positive experiences.

Mental imagery and visualisation.

The sports profession has been using mental imagery and visualisation with huge success for decades. In one of the most well-known studies on creative visualisation in sports, Russian scientists compared four groups of Olympic athletes in terms of their training schedules:

Group 1 - 100% physical training;
Group 2 - 75% physical training with 25% mental training;
Group 3 - 50% physical training with 50% mental training;
Group 4 - 25% physical training with 75% mental training.

Group 4, with 75% of their time devoted to mental training, performed the best. They discovered that mental images can act as a prelude to muscular impulses.Visualisation techniques have become common practice with athletes and I believe that such an approach can equally benefit musicians. By using visualisation you can ease anxiety and bring your musical performance to the next level.



> *"Your mind is a tool you can choose to use any way you wish." Louise Hay*

How does this work?

The reason visualisation works lies in the fact that when you imagine yourself performing the way you want to, you are in turn physiologically creating neural patterns in your brain, just as if you had physically performed the action. Mental imagery is intended to train our minds and create the neural patterns in our brain to teach our muscles to do exactly what we want them to do.

Visualisation can be used in many ways by musicians, particularly in dealing with performance anxiety. I recommend at least two weeks before a performance using a daily visualisation to run the performance in your mind from beginning to end to exactly the outcome you would like to achieve. Some people are better than others at visualising but it is a skill that everyone can develop with practice.

I strongly believe our outer world reflects our inner world. If you can change your thoughts and the beliefs you hold about yourself you can change your outer reality. We are always in control, although sometimes it may not appear to be so. With practice and some patience we can develop self-mastery. To quote Moshe Feldenkrais, "Nothing is permanent about our behaviour patterns except our belief that they are so."

More from Niall at:
www.niallflute.com

Exercise

• Find yourself a quiet place where you will not be disturbed

• Take some time and become aware of your breathing

• Observe its depth and texture

• Scan through your body and release any tension that you're holding

• In your mind's eye see yourself performing a piece that you're just working on

• Visualise yourself playing how you would like to play - remember it is a visualisation and everything is possible

• Notice how it feels in your body when you're playing so well

• Build in as much detail as possible in your mental image - visualise your audience, the room you are playing in, the sounds that you can hear, even engage a sense of smell and taste

• Visualise how it feels in your body to perform standing tall and confidently

• Run through the performance again and again in your mind, each time building the picture of the outcome you wish to achieve; experiment by intensifying the colours and brightness in your visualisation

Niall O'Riordan *was awarded his MA and BMus from Cork School of Music, Ireland. During his early years and BMus Degree, he studied with Evelyn Grant, receiving consecutive scholarships to the Cork School of Music. Other significant mentors include Prof. Robert Winn, Dr Anders-Lungar Chapelon & Sir James Galway. Niall enjoys a varied career performing, teaching, and writing. Recent masterclass engagements include the Lisa Friend Summer School in London as well as giving workshops at William Bennett's Summer School in 2011. Niall was also a visiting lecturer at Lund University Sweden in 2009.*

Niall practices yoga and meditation. He is researching how flute players can use yoga techniques to enrich their practice and performance. He leads applied Flute Yoga workshops across Europe and the UK and has given workshops at the last two BFS International Conventions. Niall is now training as a certified Feldenkrais method teacher. His holistic approach draws inspiration from a variety of yoga practices and philosophy as well as Feldenkrais method, voice work and visualisation.

Flute Tone

By Niall O' Riordan MA BMus © June 2006

- Each human voice is unique, so is each flautist's tone. Find your voice on the instrument
- Le son naturel' or 'the natural sound' can be regarded as a foundation in the French style. Find your son naturel
- Remember Moyse's four criteria for good flute tone

  1) Pure sound
  2) Alive sound
  3) Exact intonation
  4) Colours

- Listen to recordings of great flautists especially Rampal & Galway and other master musicians. Let their artistry inspire you and try and emulate their playing.
- Use **De la Sonorite**, slow movements from solos, Improvisation and Arias for tone development.
- Consider the following quotes from important flautists:

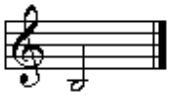
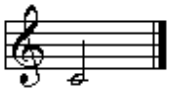
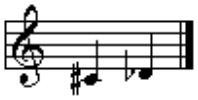
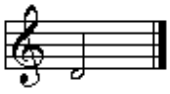
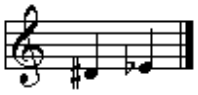
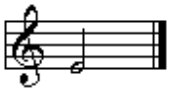
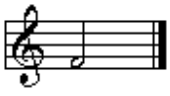
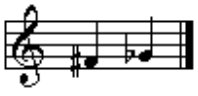
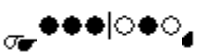
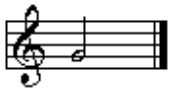
Marion: ……Blow to warm……
Lloyd: ……Work like a singer
Moyse: …find your best note and you must always start from this note.
Ljungar-Chapelon: ..The flute is your voice, therefore, always sing with the flute.
Boehm: ….When one has found the proper embouchure by which this tone can be clearly sounded in a delicate piano, one should gradually, without raising the pitch, swell it to a forte, and the bring it back again to the faintest piano.
Galway: (about exploring the instrument) …..Sometimes at home when I am practising I wander off on one of these "preludes"

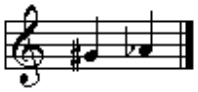
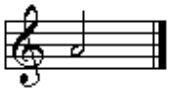
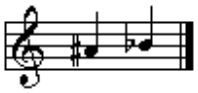
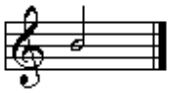
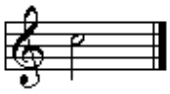
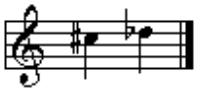
The flute sound can be compared to the ocean. There are many layers but the most important is the stillness that is found at the bottom.

Basic Fingering Chart for Flute and Piccolo

First Octave: B_3 to $C\sharp_5$

This fingering chart includes the primary fingerings learned by all flutists. These fingerings are the same on all sizes of flute and piccolo unless specified otherwise.

Note	Written	Fingering		Description
B_3 $C\flat_4$		T 123|123$_B$		Basic.
$B\sharp_3$ C_4		T 123|123$_C$		Basic.
$C\sharp_4$ $D\flat_4$		T 123|123$_{C\#}$		Basic.
D_4		T 123|123		Basic.
$D\sharp_4$ $E\flat_4$		T 123|123$_{Eb}$		Basic.
E_4 $F\flat_4$		T 123|12-$_{Eb}$		Basic.
$E\sharp_4$ F_4		T 123|1--$_{Eb}$		Basic.
$F\sharp_4$ $G\flat_4$		T 123|--3$_{Eb}$		Basic.
		T 123|-2-$_{Eb}$		Trill fingering with E_4.
G_4		T 123|---$_{Eb}$		Basic.

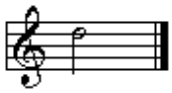
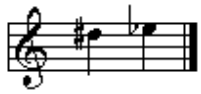
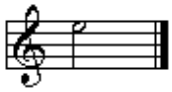
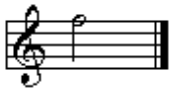
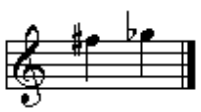
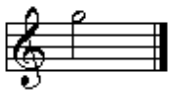
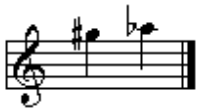
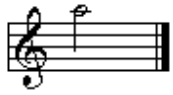
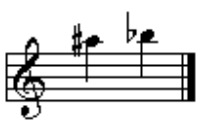
G♯4 A♭4		T 123$^{G\#}$|---$_{Eb}$		Basic.
A4		T 12-|---$_{Eb}$		Basic.
A♯4 B♭4		T 1--|1--$_{Eb}$		Basic.
		Bb 1--|---$_{Eb}$		Basic, use in passages without B_4 or B_5.
		T 1--|$_{Bb}$---$_{Eb}$		Trill fingering with B_4.
B4 C♭5		B 1--|---$_{Eb}$		Basic.
B♯4 C5		1--|---$_{Eb}$		Basic.
C♯5 D♭5		---|---$_{Eb}$		Basic.

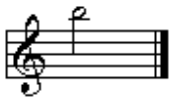
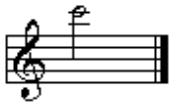
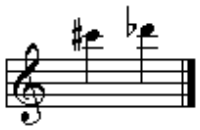
Basic Fingering Chart for Flute and Piccolo

Second Octave: D_5 to $C\sharp_6$

This fingering chart includes the primary fingerings learned by all flutists. These fingerings are the same on all sizes of flute and piccolo unless specified otherwise.

[<< Back to First Octave]

Note	Written	Fingering		Description
D_5		T -23|123		Basic.
$D\sharp_5$ $E\flat_5$		T -23|123 Eb		Basic.
E_5 $F\flat_5$		T 123|12- Eb		Basic.
$E\sharp_5$ F_5		T 123|1-- Eb		Basic.
$F\sharp_5$ $G\flat_5$		T 123|--3 Eb		Basic.
		T 123|-2- Eb		Trill fingering with E_5.
G_5		T 123|--- Eb		Basic.
$G\sharp_5$ $A\flat_5$		T 123 G# |--- Eb		Basic.
A_5		T 12-|--- Eb		Basic.
$A\sharp_5$ $B\flat_5$		T 1--|1-- Eb		Basic.
		Bb 1--|--- Eb		Basic, use in passages without B_4 or B_5.

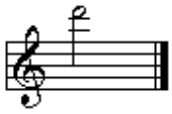
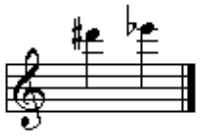
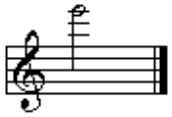
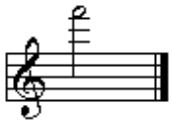
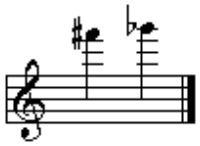
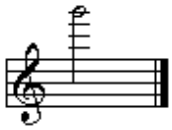
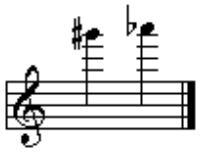
		T 1--|Bb---Eb		Trill fingering with B_5.
B_5 **$C\flat_6$**		B 1--|---Eb		Basic.
$B\sharp_5$ **C_6**		1--|---Eb		Basic.
$C\sharp_6$ **$D\flat_6$**		---|---Eb		Basic.

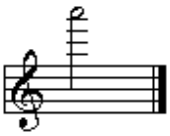
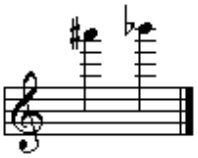
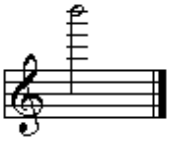
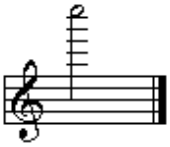
Basic Fingering Chart for Flute and Piccolo

Third Octave: D_6 to C_7

This fingering chart includes the primary fingerings learned by all flutists. These fingerings are the same on all sizes of flute and piccolo unless specified otherwise.

[<< Back to Second Octave]

Note	Written	Fingering		Description
D_6		T -23|---$_{Eb}$		Basic.
$D\sharp_6$ $E\flat_6$		T 123$^{G\#}$|123$_{Eb}$		Basic.
E_6 $F\flat_6$		T 12-|12-$_{Eb}$		Basic.
$E\sharp_6$ F_6		T 1-3|1--$_{Eb}$		Basic.
$F\sharp_6$ $G\flat_6$		B 1-3|--3$_{Eb}$		Basic.
G_6		123|---$_{Eb}$		Basic.
$G\sharp_6$ $A\flat_6$		-23$^{G\#}$|---$_{Eb}$		Basic.

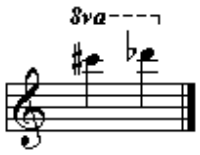
A6		T -2-|1--Eb		Basic.
A♯6 **B♭6**		T ---|1D--		Basic.
B6 **C♭7**		B 1-3|--D#-		Basic.
B♯6 **C7**		123G#|1--ß		Basic with B-foot.
		123G#|1--		Basic with C-foot.

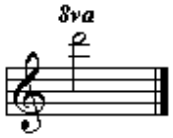
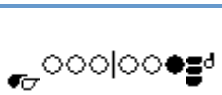
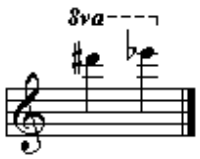
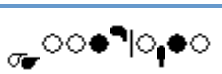
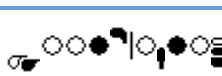
Alternate Fingering Chart for Flute

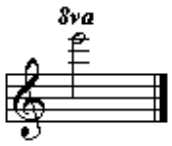
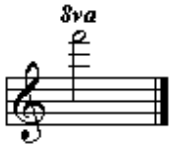
Fourth Octave: $C\sharp_7$ to C_8

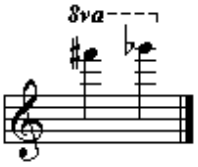
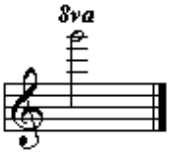
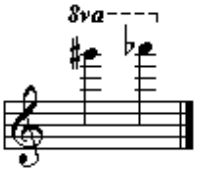
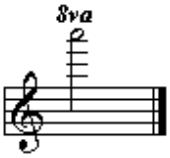
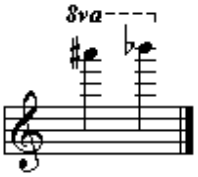
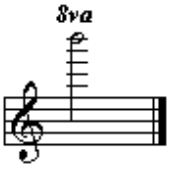
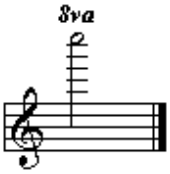
This fingering chart includes both basic fingerings and alternatives that are more appropriate in some passages. Some alternate fingerings are designed for fast passages, while others modify the tone, color, or pitch at normal and extreme dynamic levels. These fingerings are the same on all sizes of flute unless specified otherwise. There is a separate alternate fingering chart for piccolo.

[<< Back to Third Octave]

Note	Written	Fingering		Description	Src.
$C\sharp_7$ $D\flat_7$		-2-$^{G\#}$|1--	○●○◥|●○○		
		-2-$^{G\#}$|1--$_C$	○●○◥|●○○𝅘𝅥𝅯^{d}		
		-2-$^{G\#}$|1-3$_C$	○●○◥|●○●𝅘𝅥𝅯^{d}	Sharp.	
		-2-$^{G\#}$|123Eb	○●○◥|●●●𝅘𝅥		KJ
		-2-|123Eb	○●○|●●●𝅘𝅥		KJ
		-2-|1-3$_C$	○●○|●○●𝅘𝅥𝅯^{d}		
		-2-|1--$_C$	○●○|●○○𝅘𝅥𝅯^{d}		
		-2-|1--$_ß$	○●○|●○○𝅘𝅥𝅯$^{d\flat}$		DB RD2
		-2-|1--	○●○|●○○		DB RD2
		-23$^{G\#}$|1--	○●●◥|●○○	Flat.	
D_7		T --3|12-$_C$	𝅝○○●|●●○𝅘𝅥𝅯^{d}		
		T --3|12-$_{Eb}$	𝅝○○●|●●○𝅘𝅥		

		Bb ---|-23$_{Eb}$		Roll out.	
		Bb ---|--3$_{B}$		Good response. Useful in the first movement of the Prokofiev Sonata.	DB
		Bb ---|--3		Easy to finger, harder response than when foot keys are also depressed.	KJ
D♯$_7$ E♭$_7$		B --3$^{G\#}$|-$_{D}$2-			
		B --3|-$_{D}$2-		For B-footed instruments.	KJ
		B --3$^{G\#}$|-$_{D}$2-$_{C}$			
		T --3|1$_{D}$--C		Flat.	DB RD2
		T --3|1$_{D}$--$_{Eb}$			
		T --3|1$_{D}$2-$_{Eb}$		Flat.	
		B --3|-2-		Flat.	
		B --3|-2-$_{C}$			
		T -23|1$_{D}$--$_{Eb}$			DB
		T --3$^{G\#}$|1$_{D}$--$_{Eb}$			DB
		T 123$^{G\#}$|1$_{D}$-3$_{Eb}$			
		12¾|-2$_{D\#}$-			
		12-|-2$_{D\#}$-		Sharp.	DB
		12-$^{G\#}$|-2$_{D\#}$-		Sharp.	
		123$^{G\#}$|-$_{D}$-$_{D\#}$3$_{C}$		Flat.	
		12-|-$_{D}$2$_{D\#}$3$_{C}$		Difficult to finger on open-hole models.	
		T 123$^{G\#}$|0$_{D}$-$_{D\#}$3$_{Eb}$ C#		Awkward but in tune. Press both the rim of RH 1 key and the D trill key with RH 1.	KJ
		123|-$_{D}$2$_{D\#}$-$_{C}$			

E_7 $F\flat_7$		123|12$_{D\#}$-			
		123|-2$_{D\#}$3			DB RD2
		123|-2$_{D\#}$-			DB RD2
		120|-2$_{D\#}$-		Slightly sharp.	DB RD2
		12-|--$_{D\#}$3$_{Eb\ C\#}$		Sharp. Excellent response.	DB RD2
		123|12-		Sharp, requires very fast air stream.	AS
		12-|12-$_{C}$			
		12-|12$_{D\#}$-			
		12-|-$_{D}$23$_{C}$			
		12-|-$_{D}$-3$_{C}$		Good response.	
		12-|--3$_{Eb}$			
		12-$^{G\#}$|--$_{D\#}$3$_{Eb}$			
		12-|--$_{D\#}$3$_{Eb}$			DB
$E\sharp_7$ F_7		-2-|-2$_{D\#}$-			
		-20|-2$_{D\#}$-		Better response.	MK
		-2-|--$_{D\#}$3$_{Eb\ C\#}$			
		10-|--$_{D\#}$3$_{Eb\ C\#}$		Flat. Excellent response.	DB RD2
		-0-|--$_{D\#}$3$_{Eb\ C\#}$		Slightly sharp.	DB RD2
		T 1-3|1-3$_{Eb\ B}$		Sharp.	DB RD2
		123|1$_{D\#}$-			ET
		12-$^{G\#}$|1$_{D\#}$-$_{C}$			ET
		12-$^{G\#}$|-$_{D\#}$-$_{C}$			
		T -23$^{G\#}$|-23			
		T 1-3|1-$_{D\#}$3			

F♯7 G♭7					
		T 1-3|1-D#3Eb C#			
		T --3|1-D#3Eb B			DB RD2
		T 1-3|1-D#3C			ET
		T 1-3|1-3Eb C#		Excellent response.	IR
G7		T -23G#|-D2-		Article by Robert Dick about G4 from the Larry Krantz Flute Pages.	
		T -23G#|-D2-B			
		T -23G#|-23B			DB
G♯7 A♭7		T -23G#|-D23B			DB
A7				*Submit a fingering for this note.*	
A♯7 B♭7		T -23G#|½D23B		Very airy. Very difficult.	CP
B7 C8				*Submit a fingering for this note.*	
B♯7 C8		1–3G#|1–D#–Eb		Very difficult.	MG

Daily Exercise No 1

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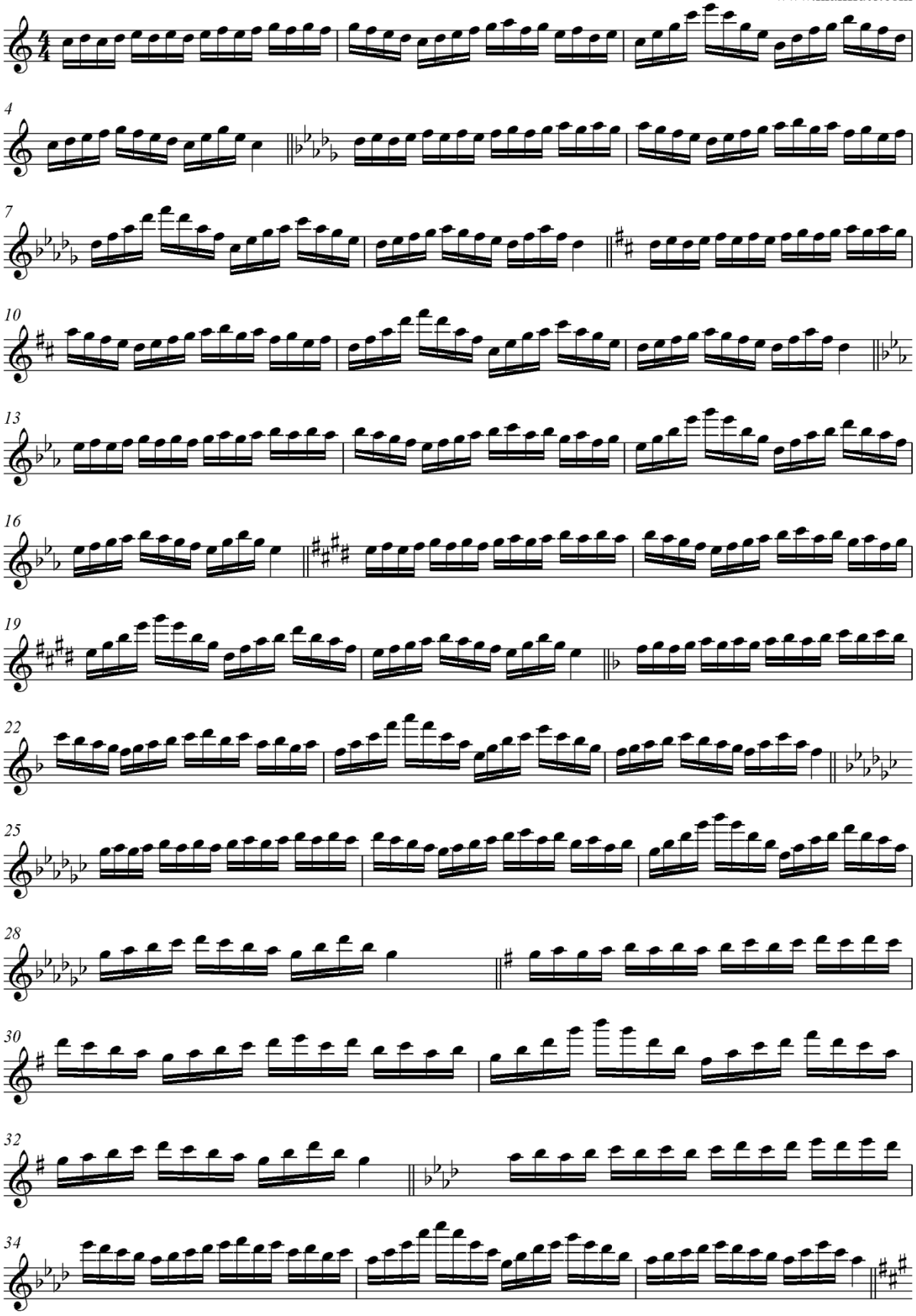

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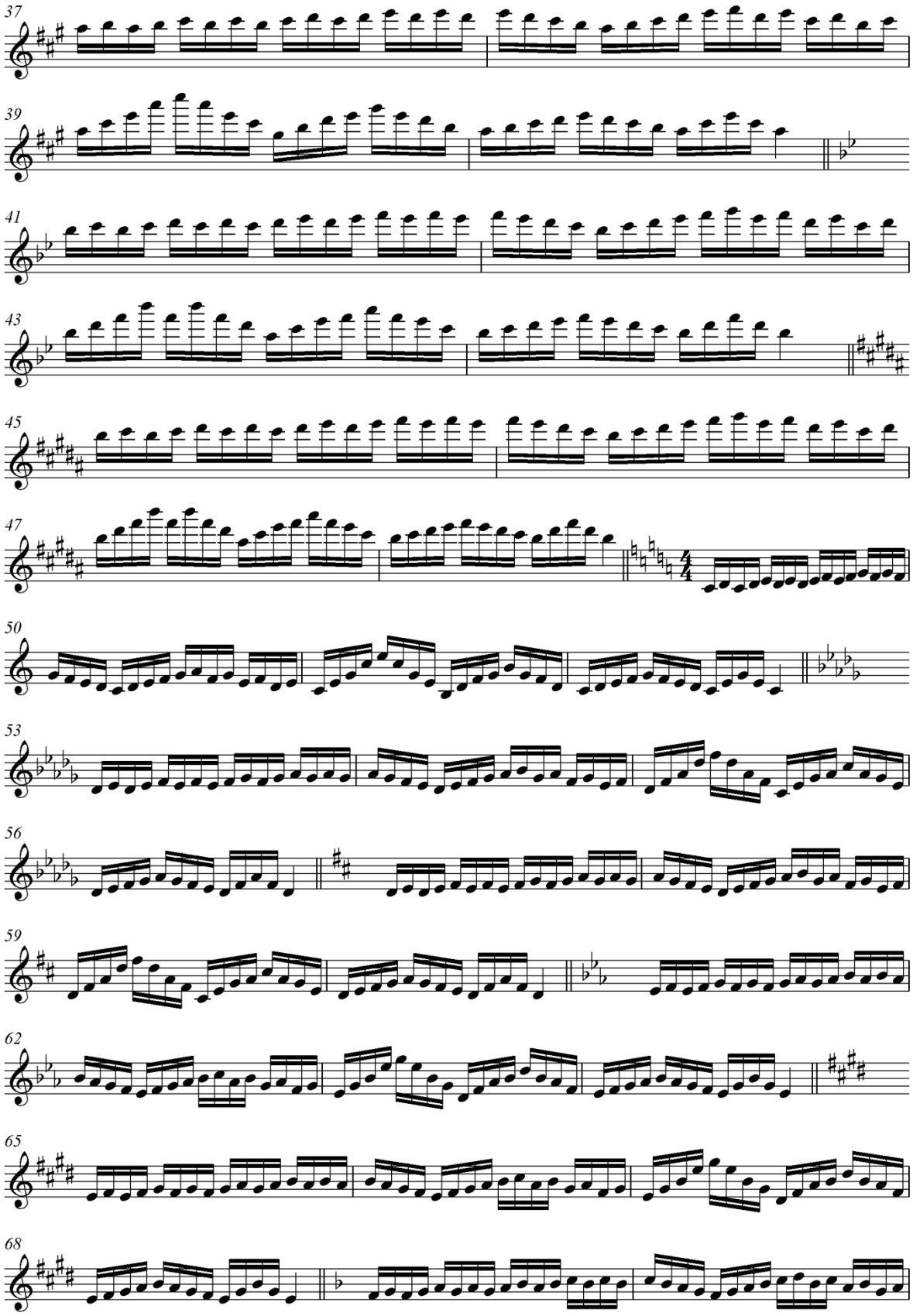

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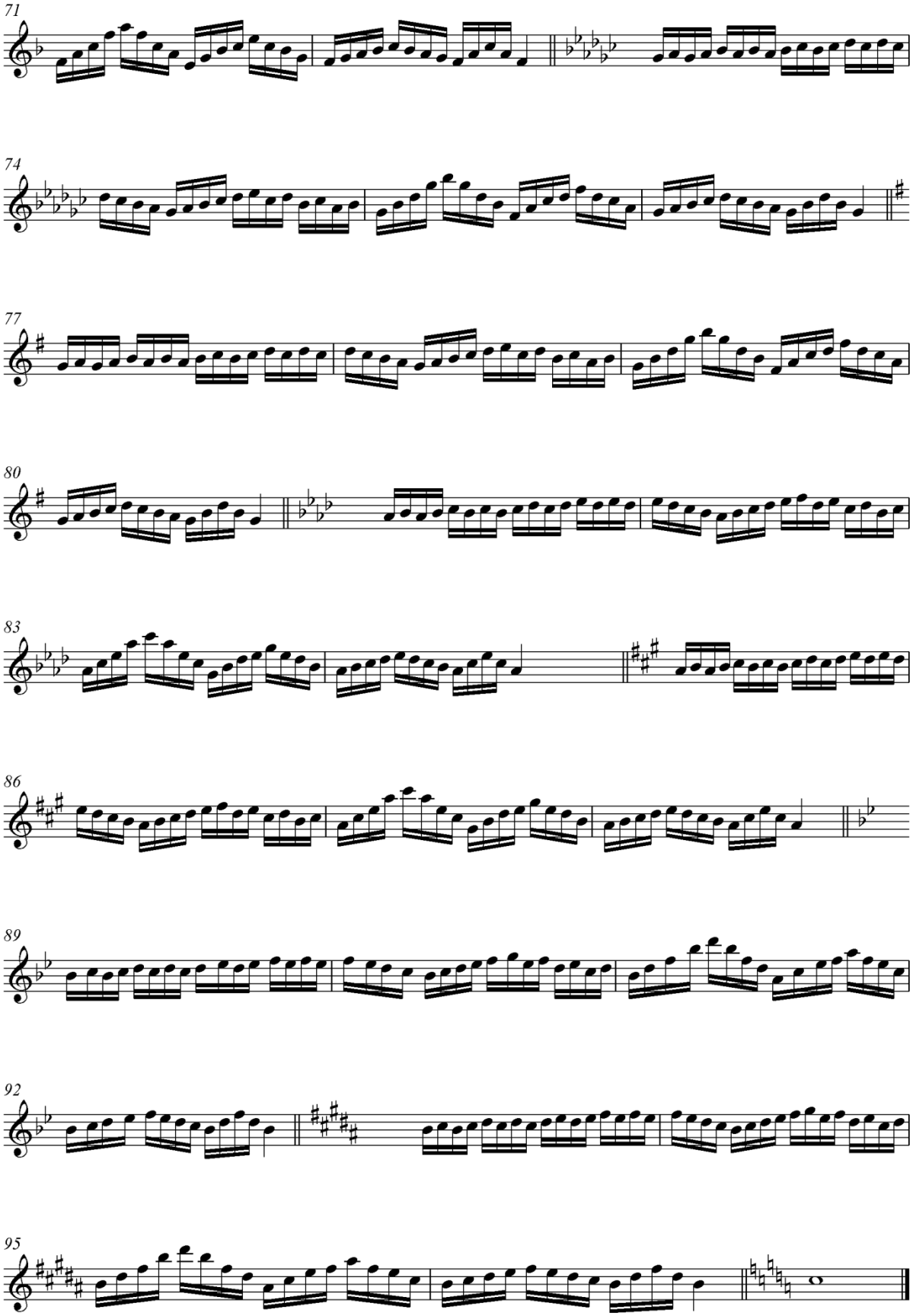

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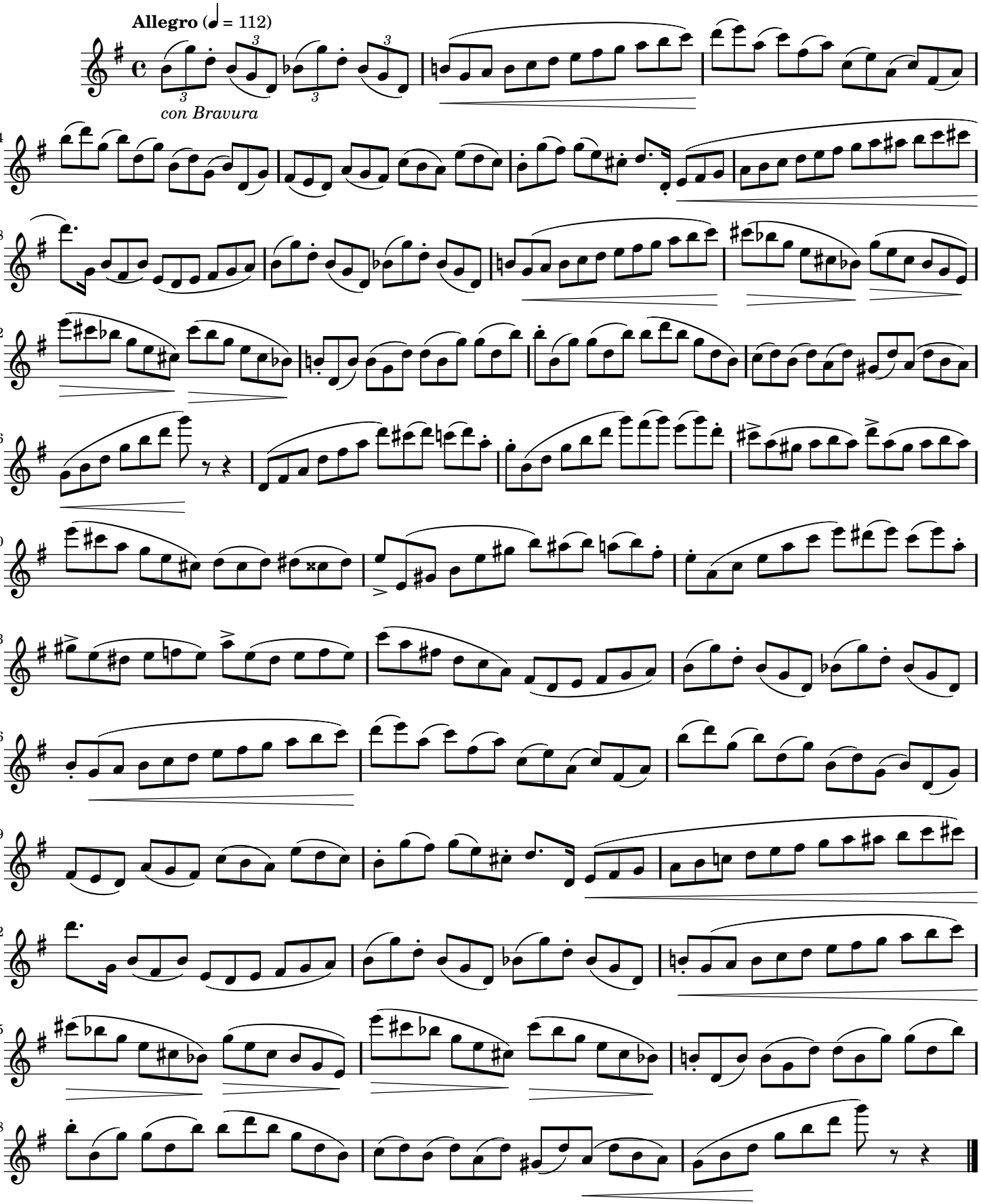
Finger Exercise

from *25 Romantic Studies*

Ernesto Köhler (1849–1907)
Op. 66, No. 5



Intervals, Legato Playing and Repeated Notes

Niall O'Riordan
MA BMus

www.niallflute.com

- Always play with an even tone
- Play with good intonation
- Vary the dynamics
- Play at a tempo that you can easily focus the tone on every note
- Play with soft 'legato fingers' i.e. don't slap the keys!
- Pay particular attention to the tone of the second and third notes in the groups of four. When playing legato we sometimes play with a well focused tone on the first and last notes and neglect the notes in between
- For convenience, I have written this study to cover the 2nd and 3rd registers. The last two, starting on B and Bb are very tiring on the embouchure, don't overdo it. Take care and stop when your lips feel tired. Also play the study down an octave.
- Sustain the flow of air between notes
- Each key has its own particular difficulties, it is best to just play a few a day, really practice them and work on the placement of the embouchure rather than just playing through the whole study
- Take care of the repeated notes.
- Strive for a sense of ease, never strain or force what you are doing
- When you become familiar with the study vary the articulations
- Take regular rests and most of all enjoy your playing!

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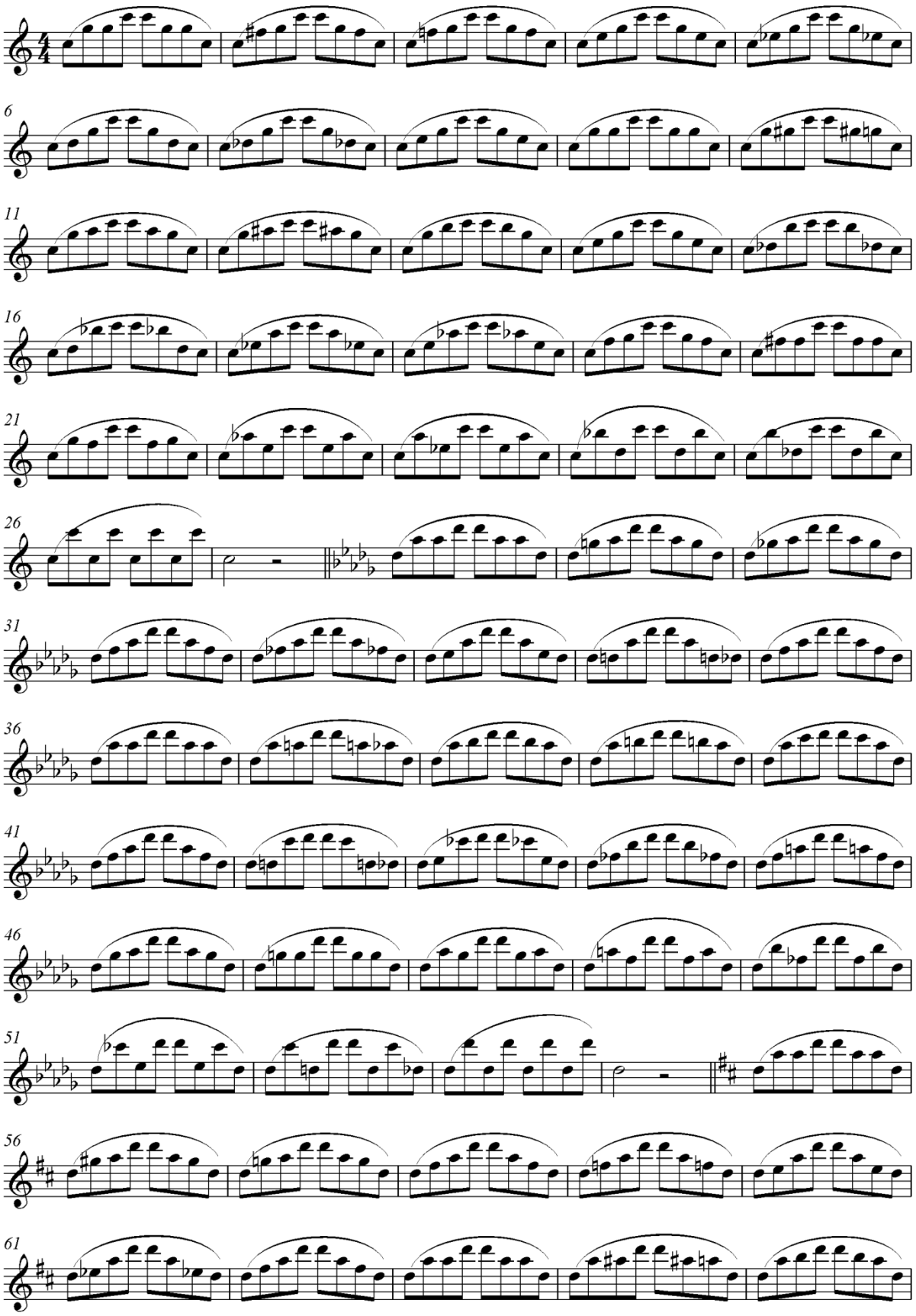
Intervals, Legato Playing & Repeated Notes

Always play with an even legato tone

N O'Riordan



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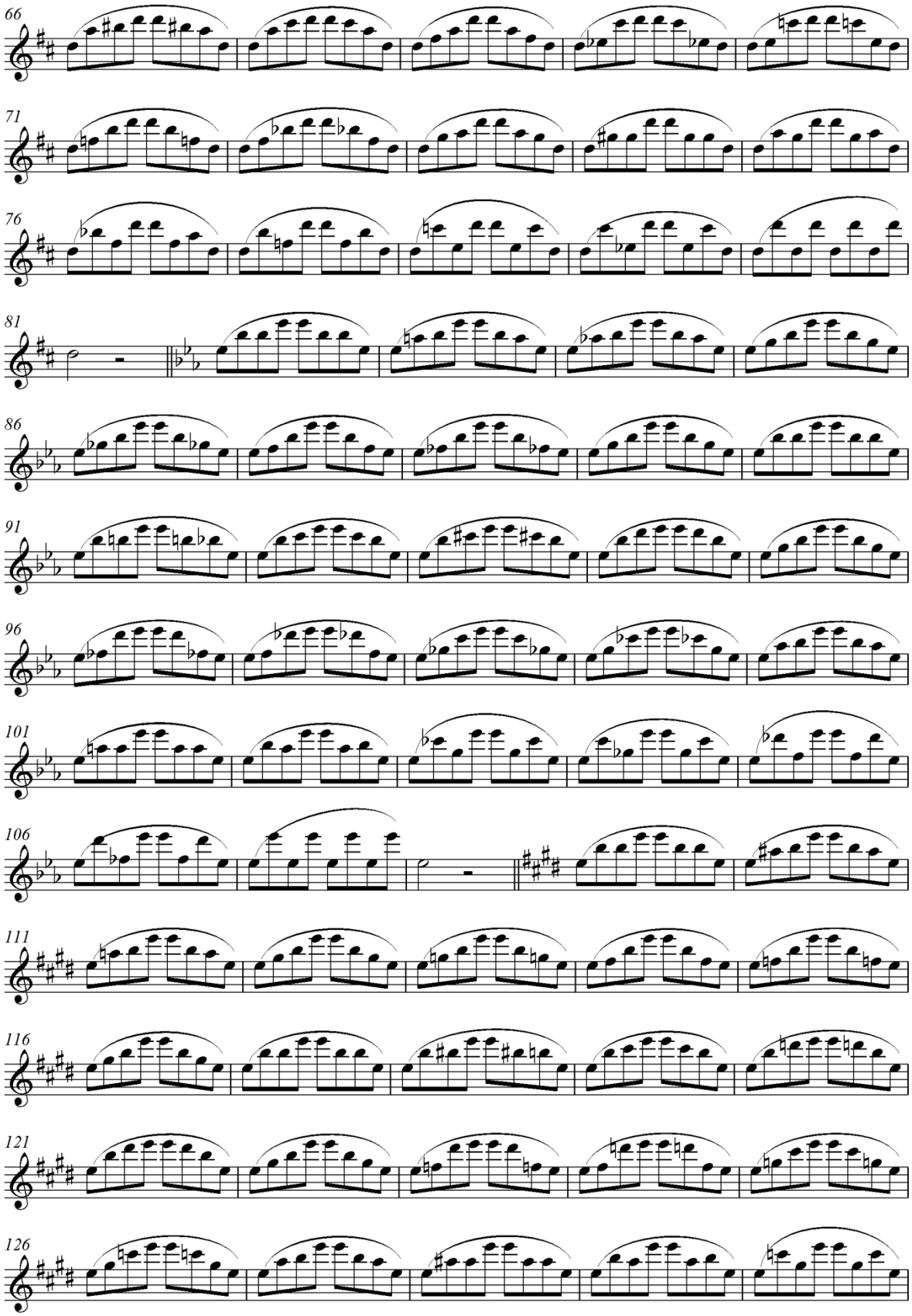

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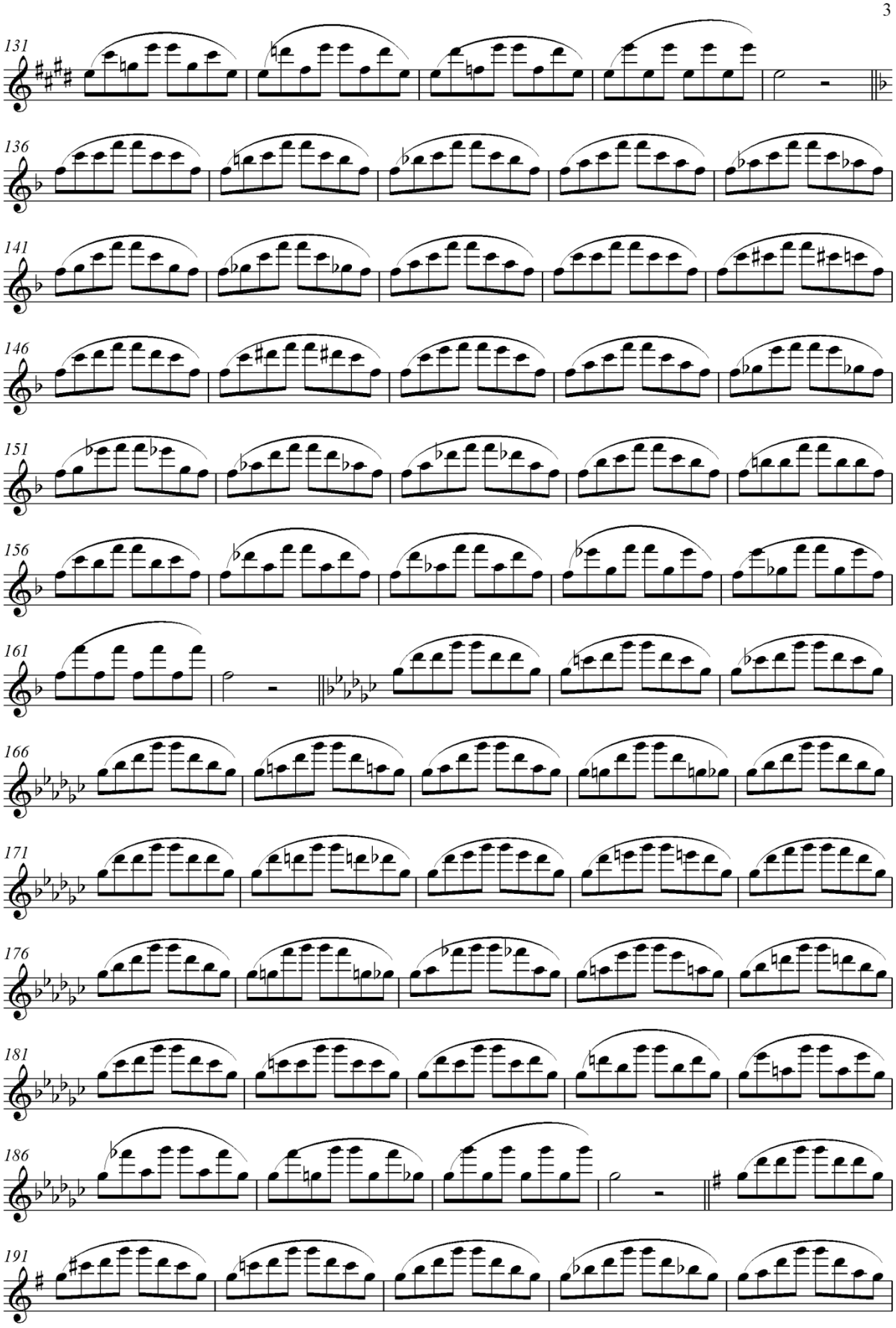

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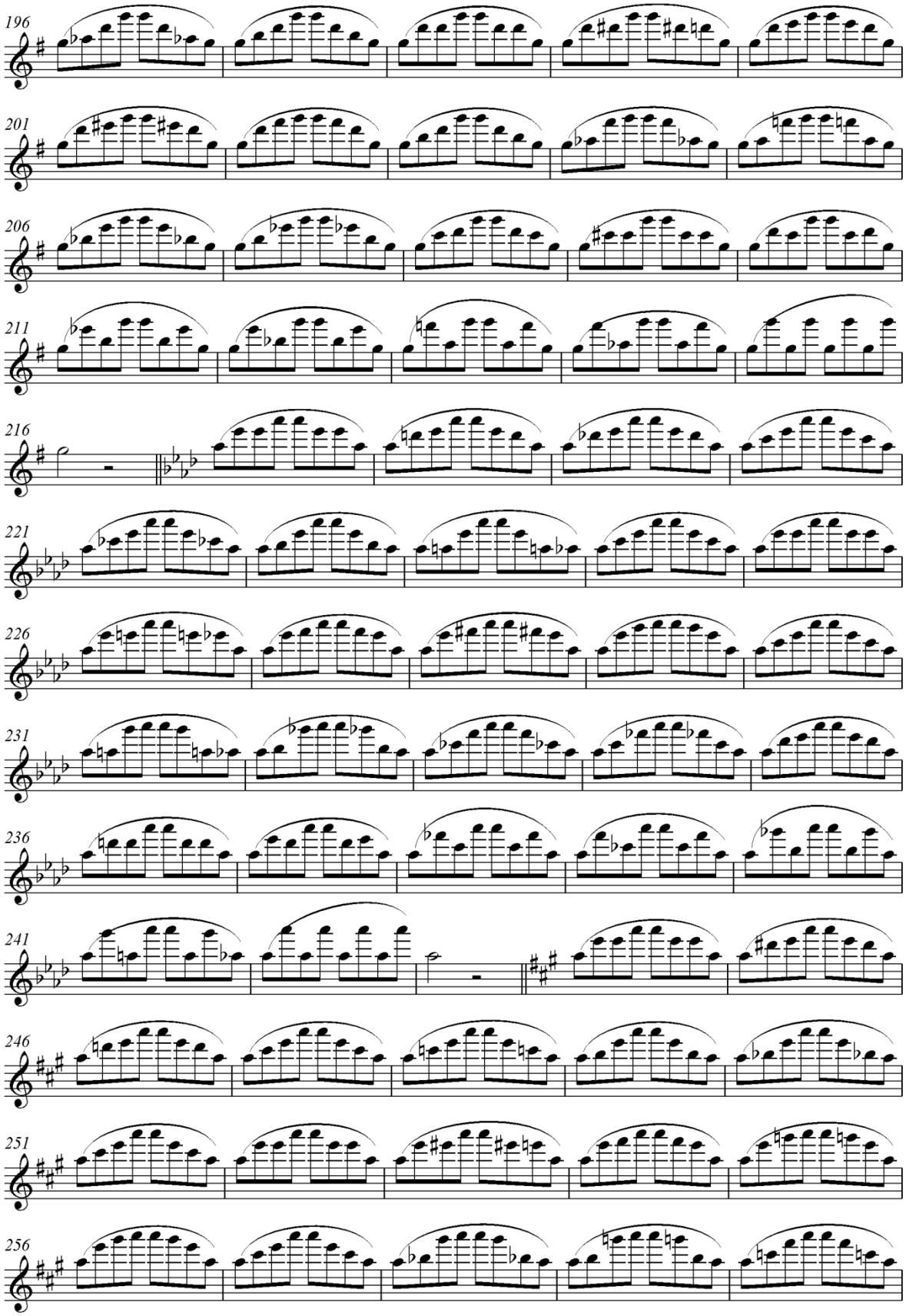

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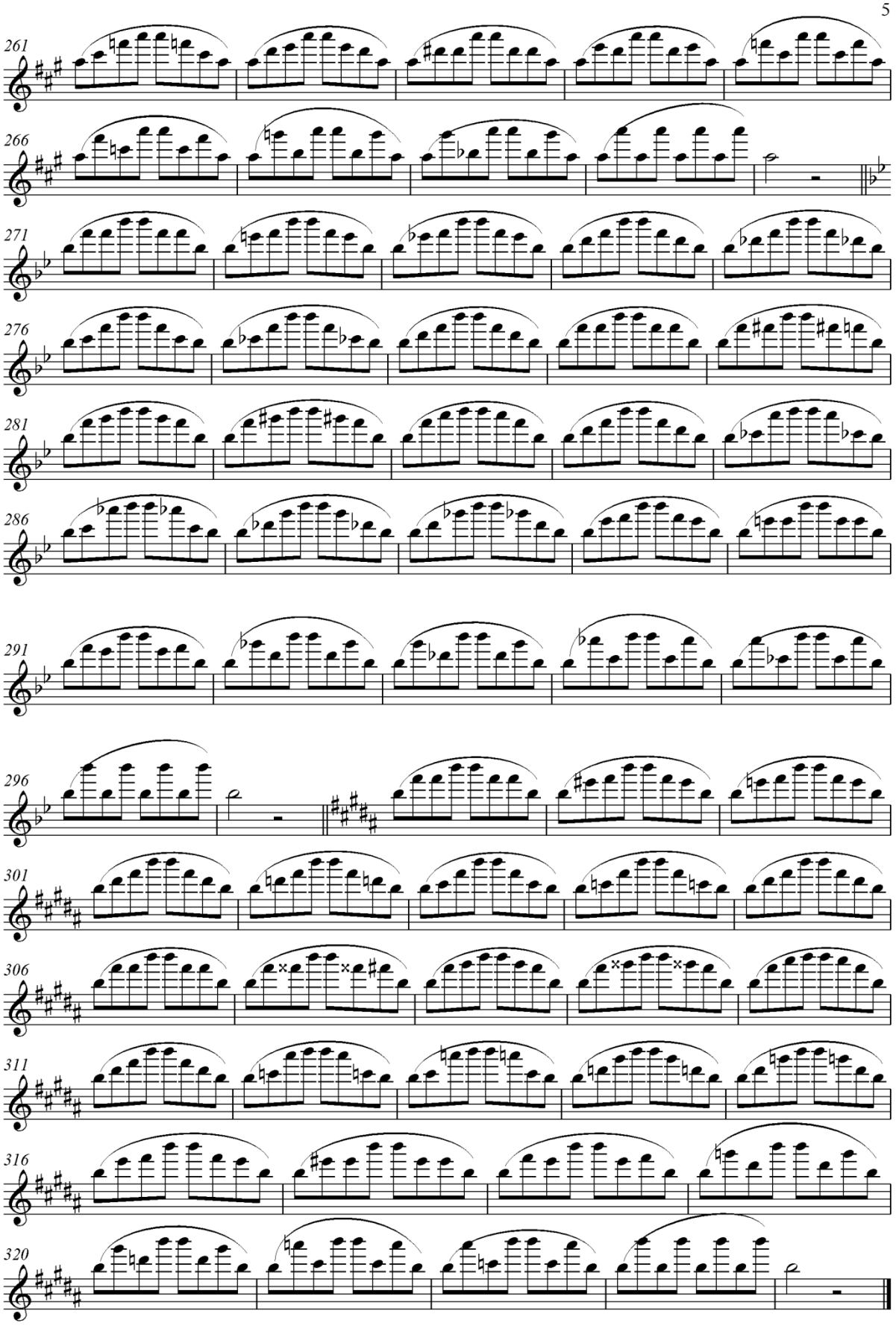

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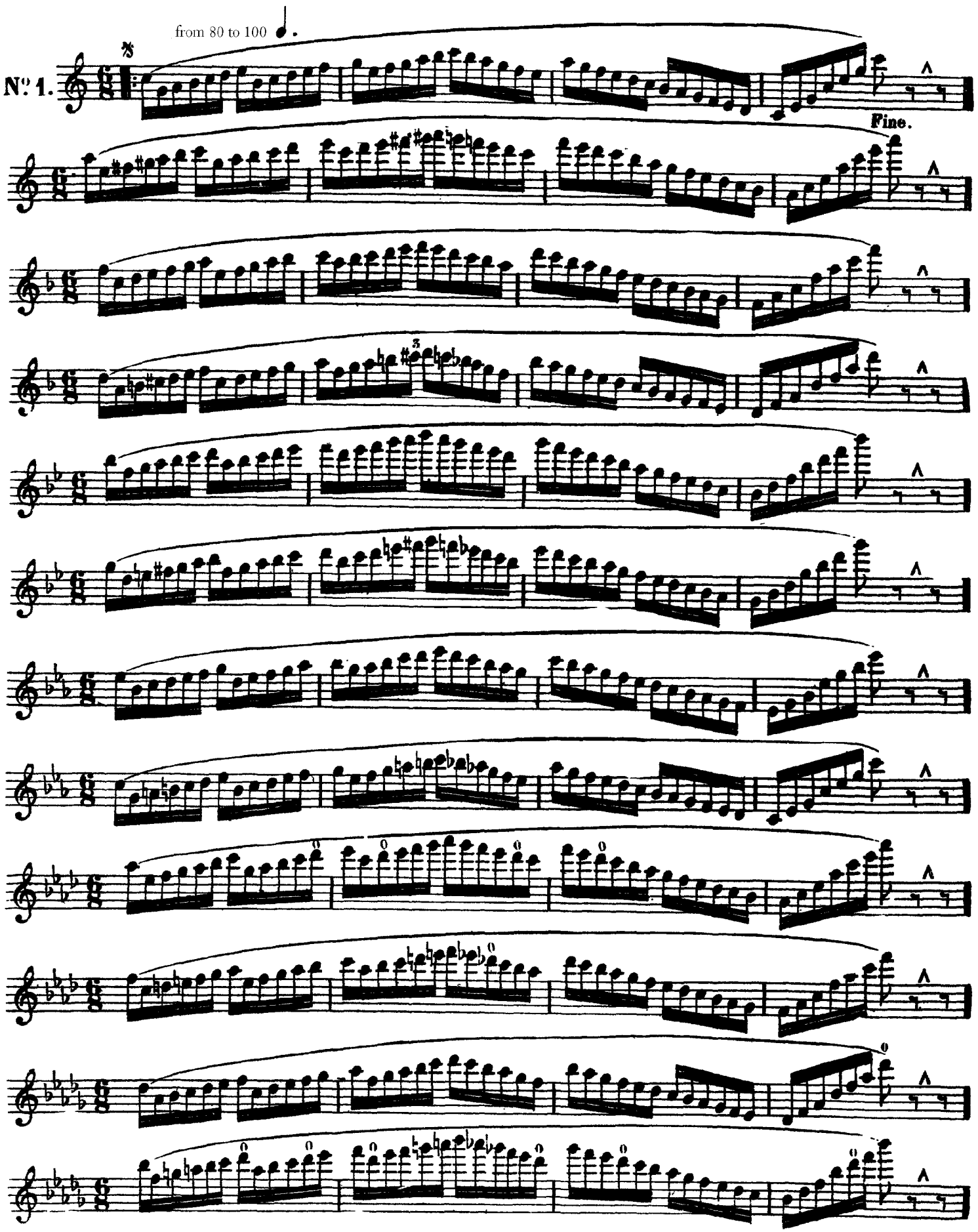
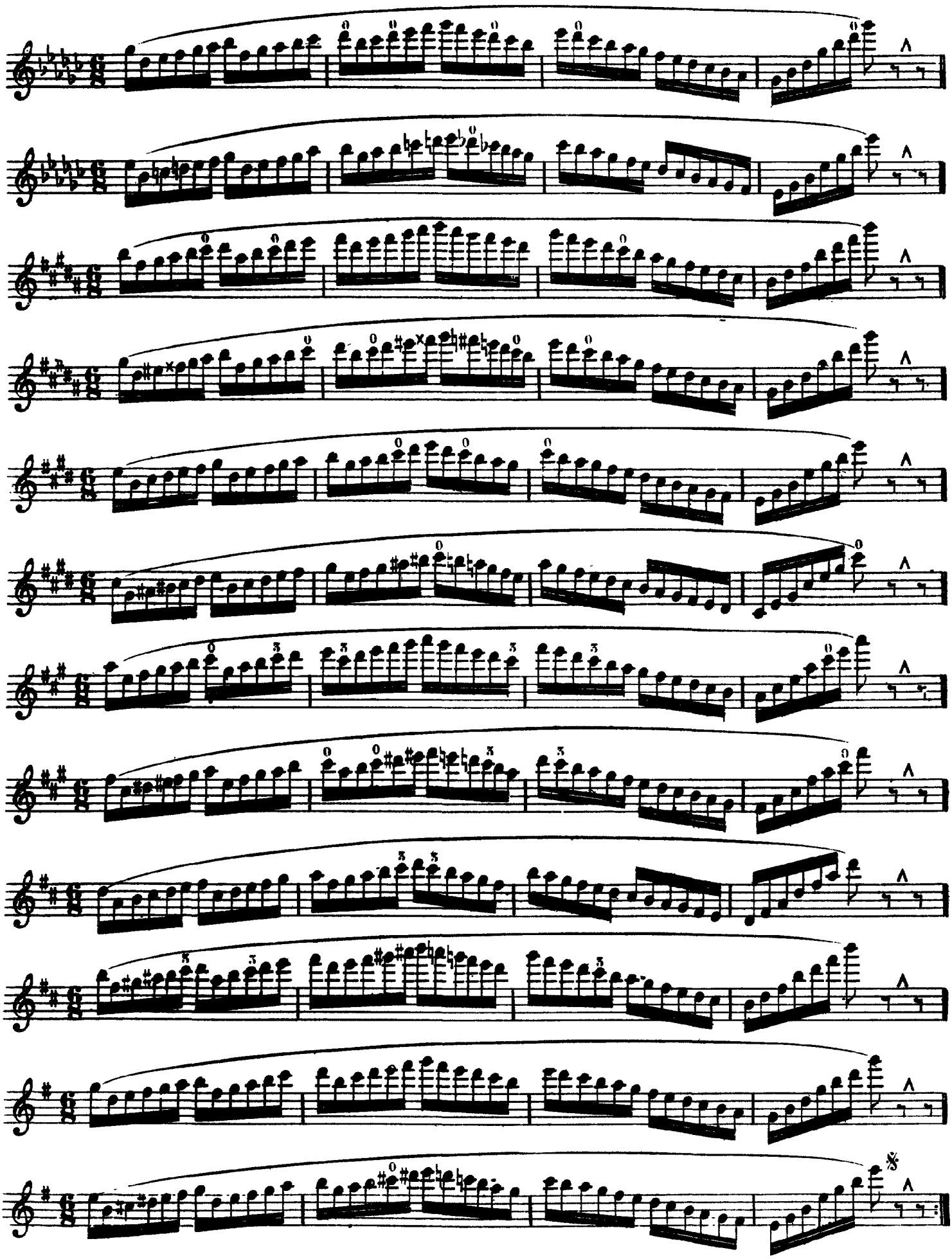
Reichert

Seven Daily Exercises, Op. 5

Flute





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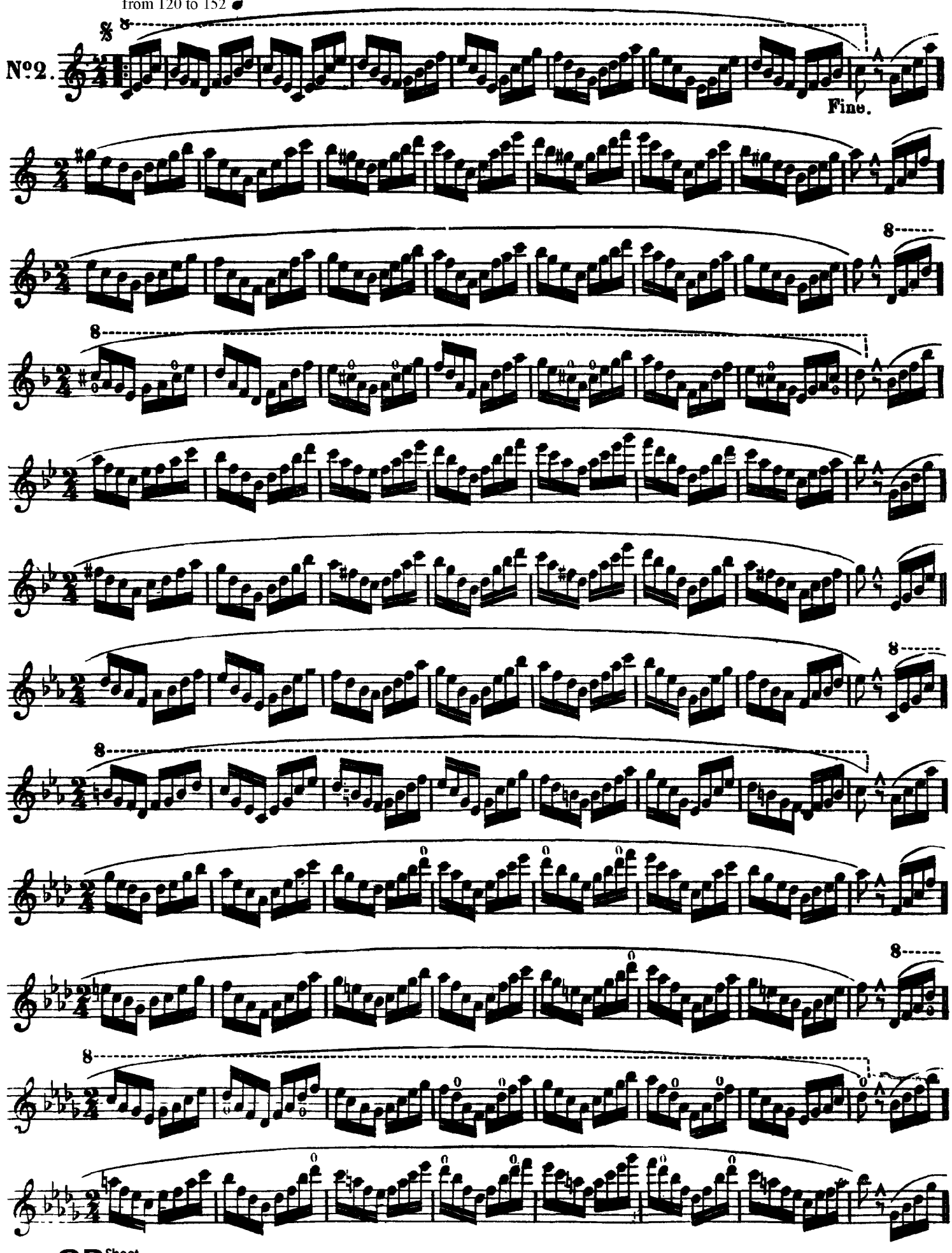
from 120 to 152 ♩



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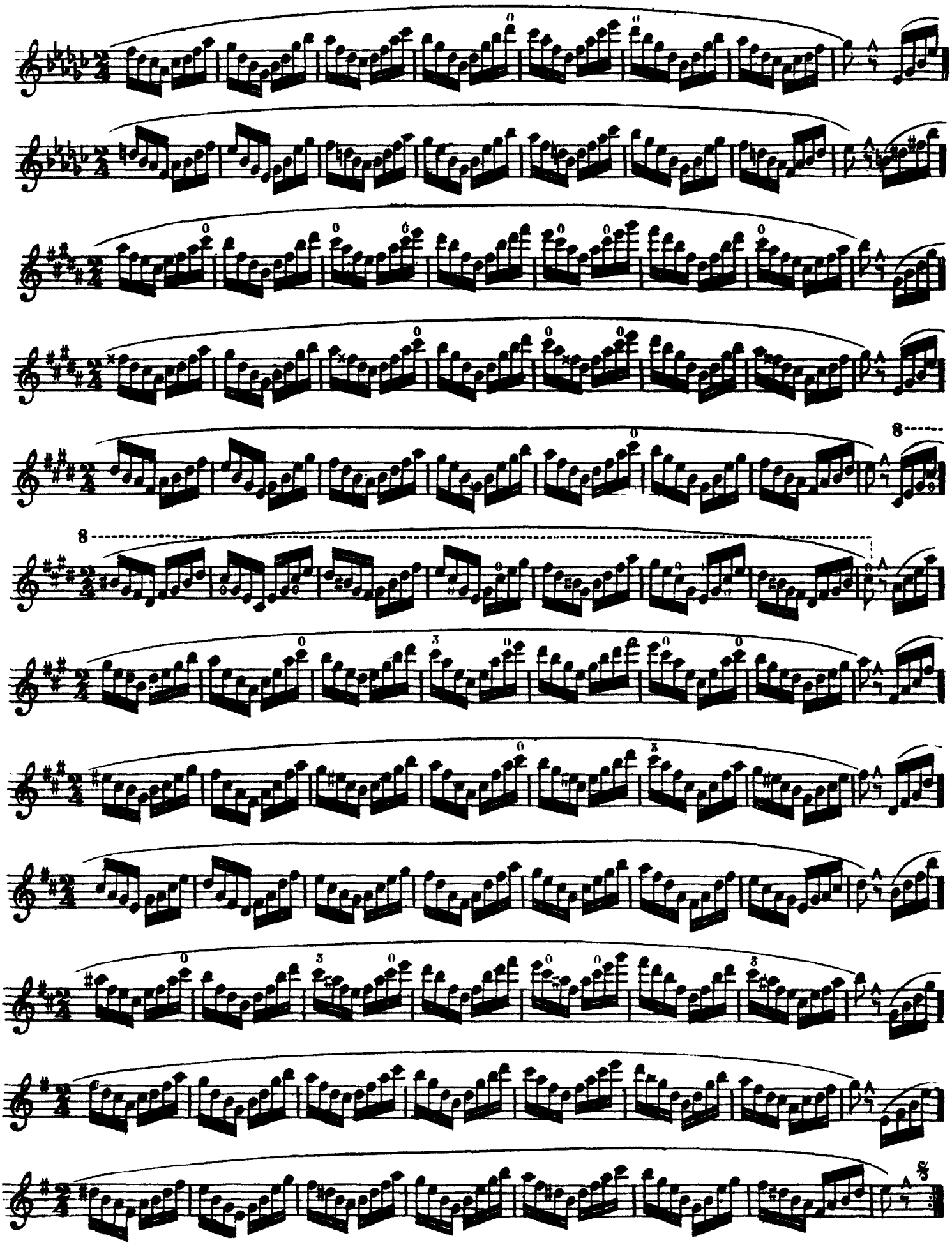

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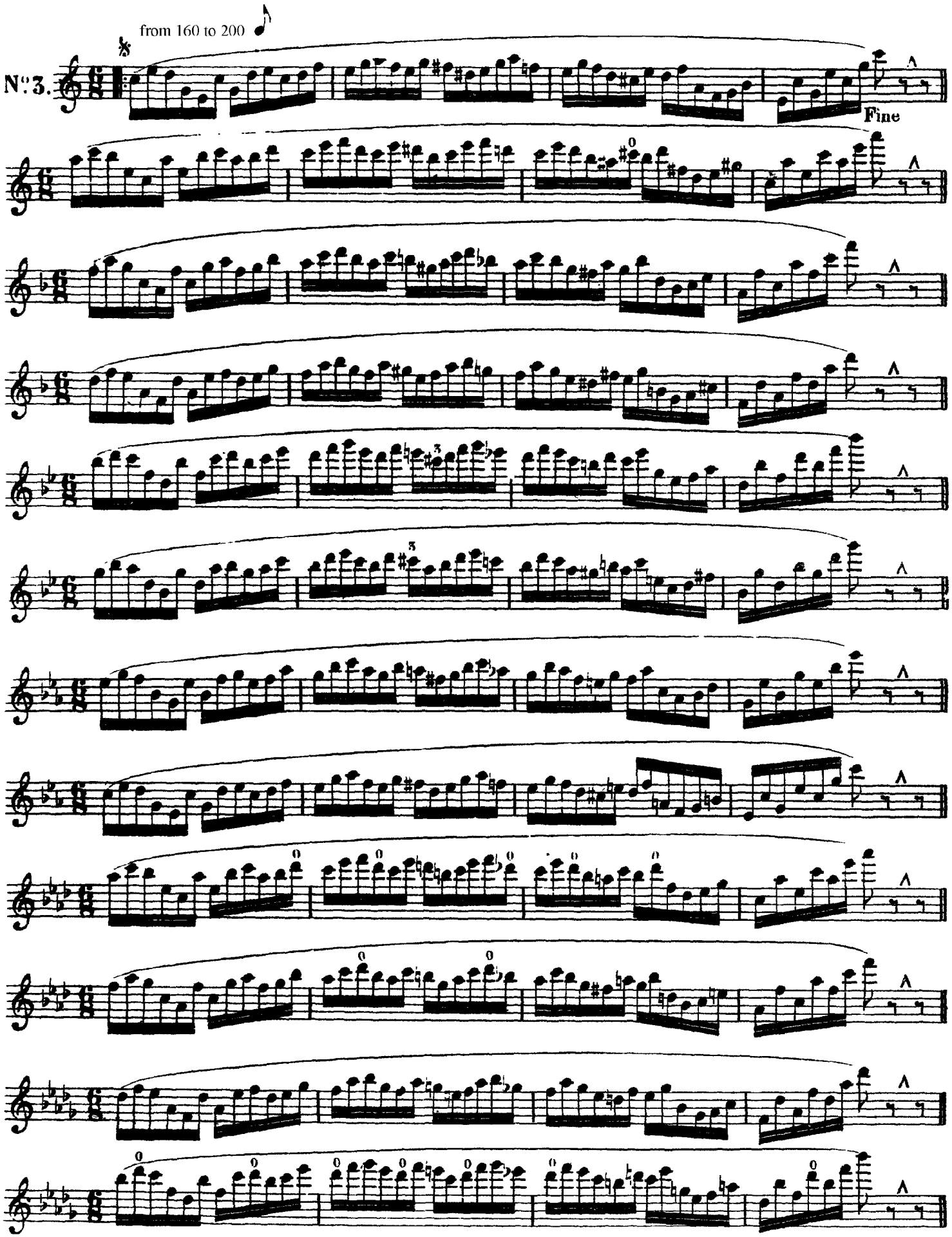

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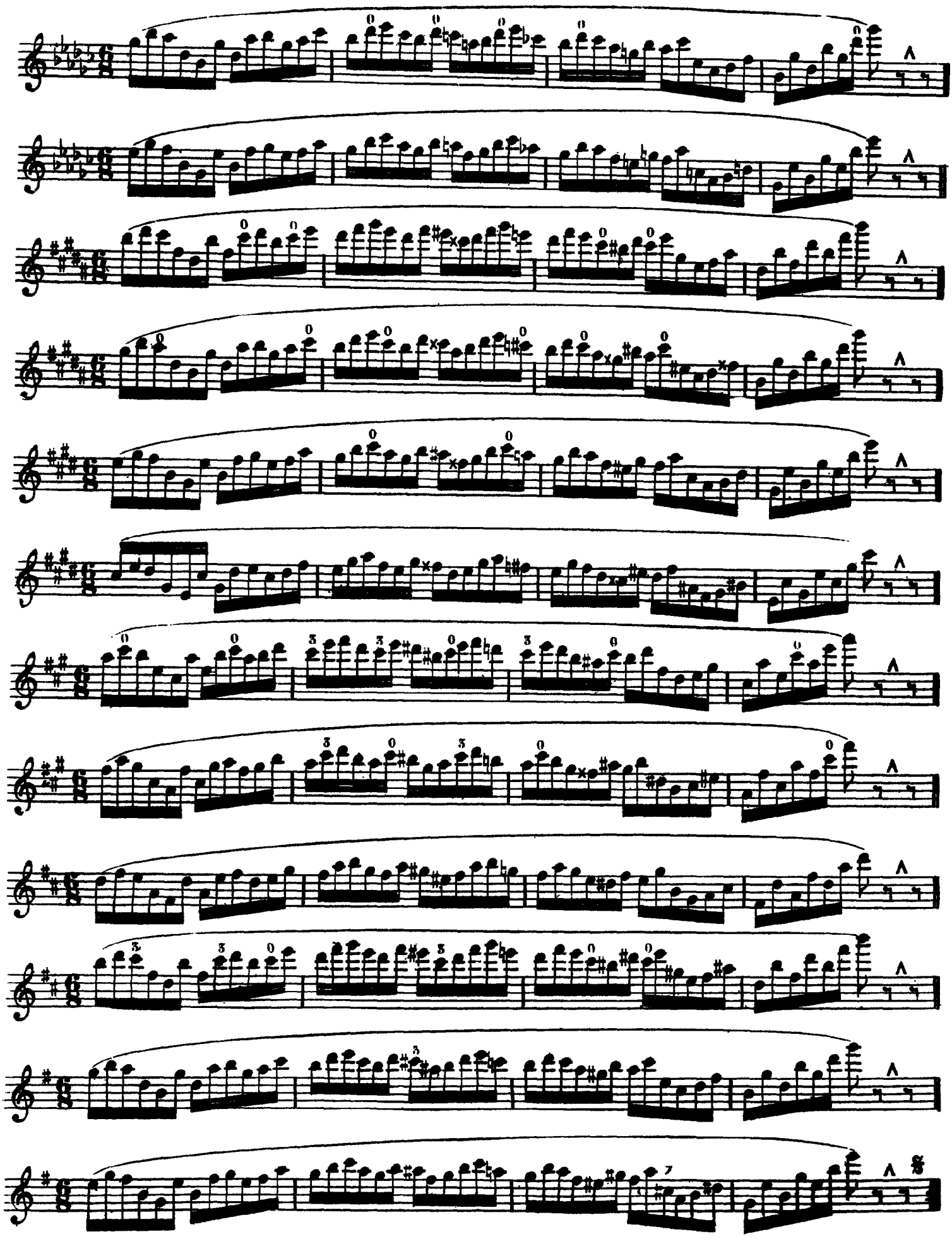
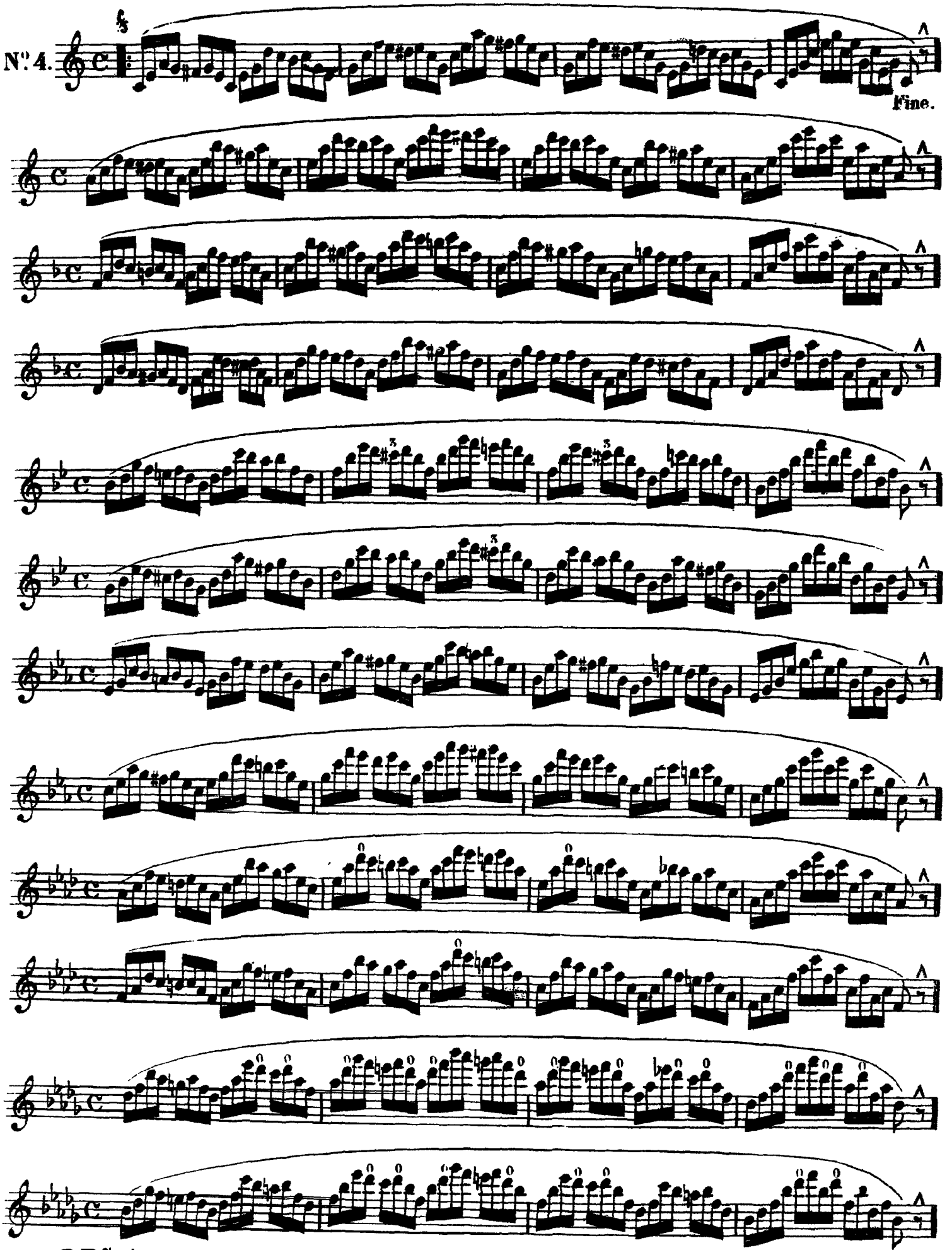
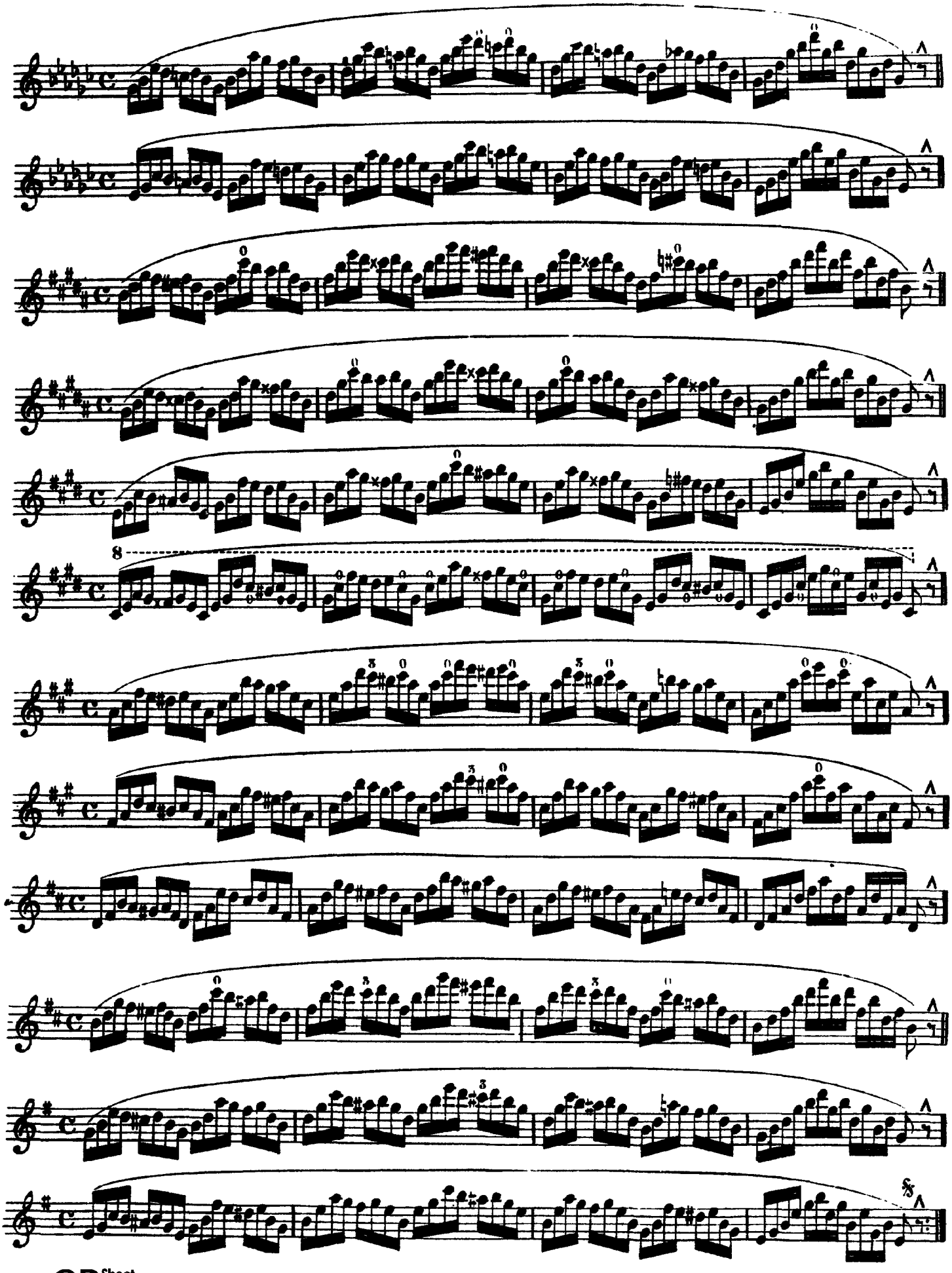


CD Sheet Music™

from 110 to 120

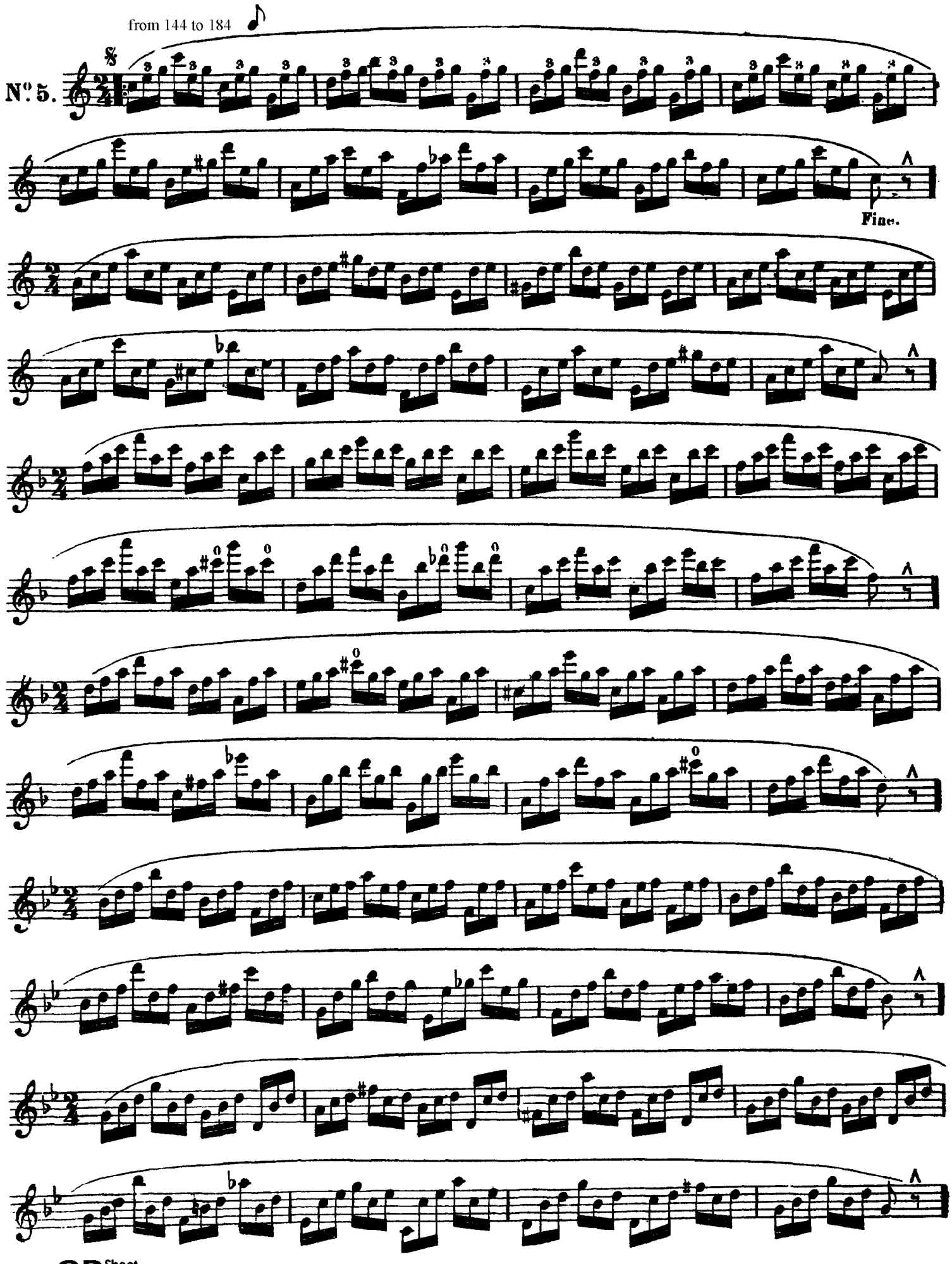


CD Sheet Music



CD Sheet Music

from 144 to 184



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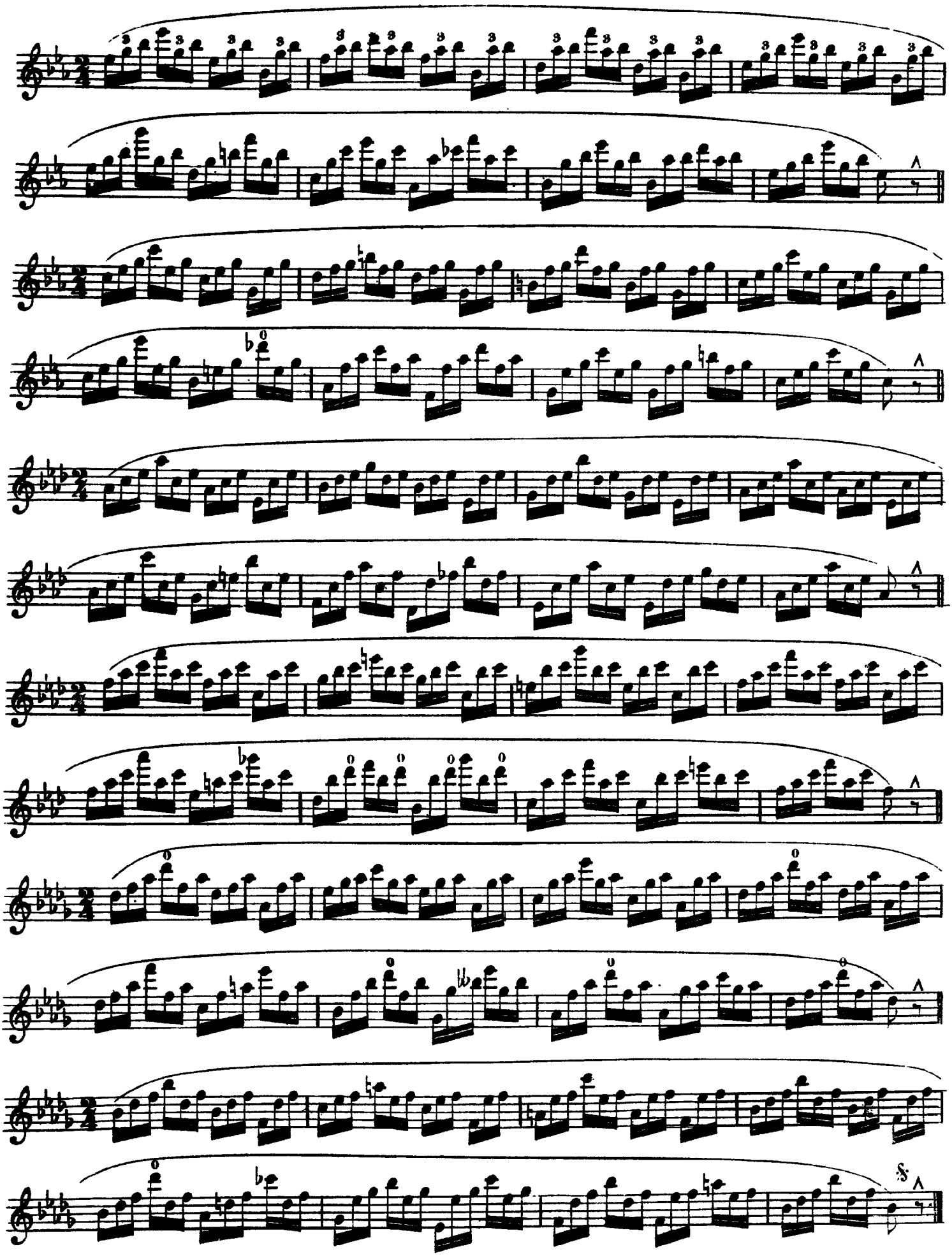

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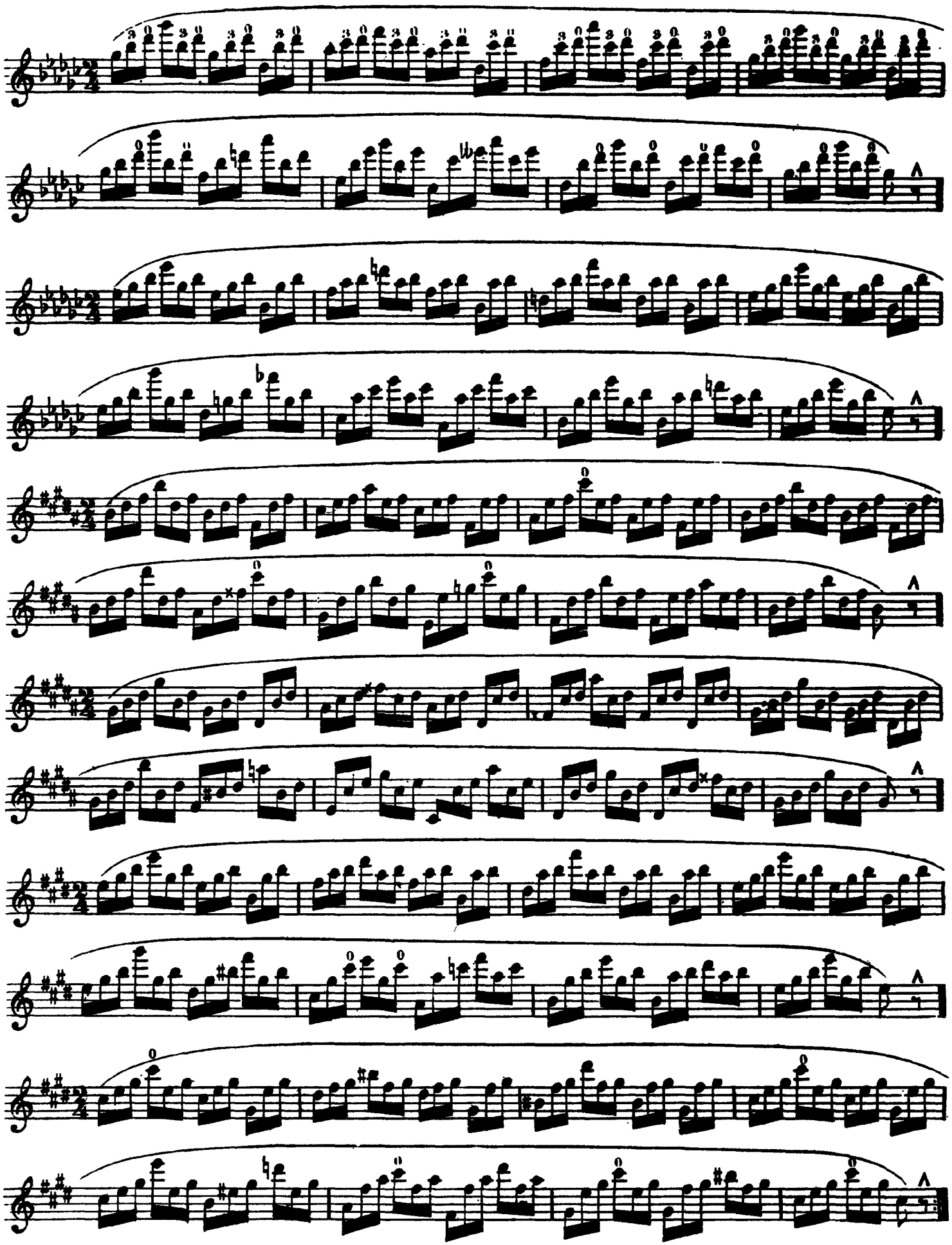

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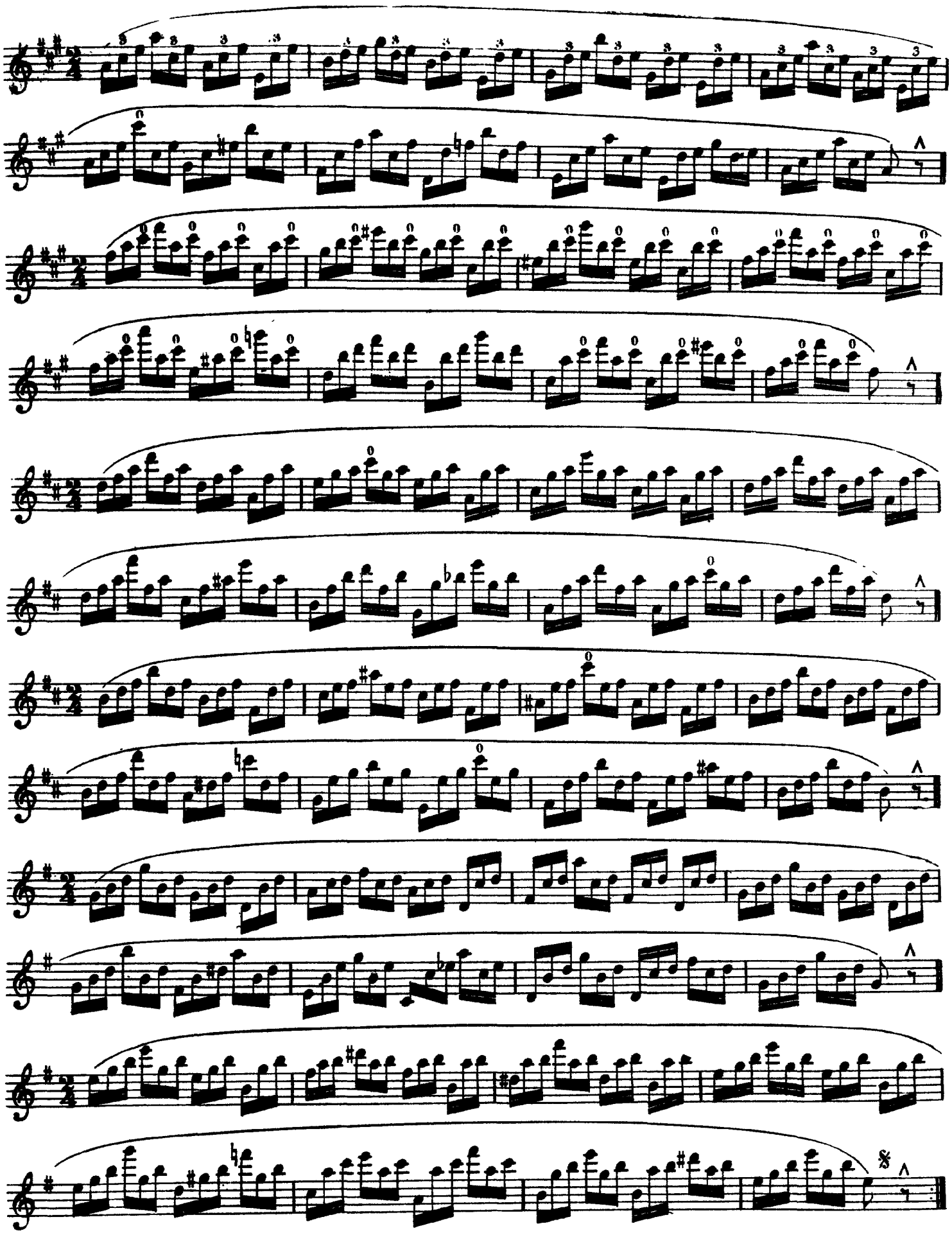
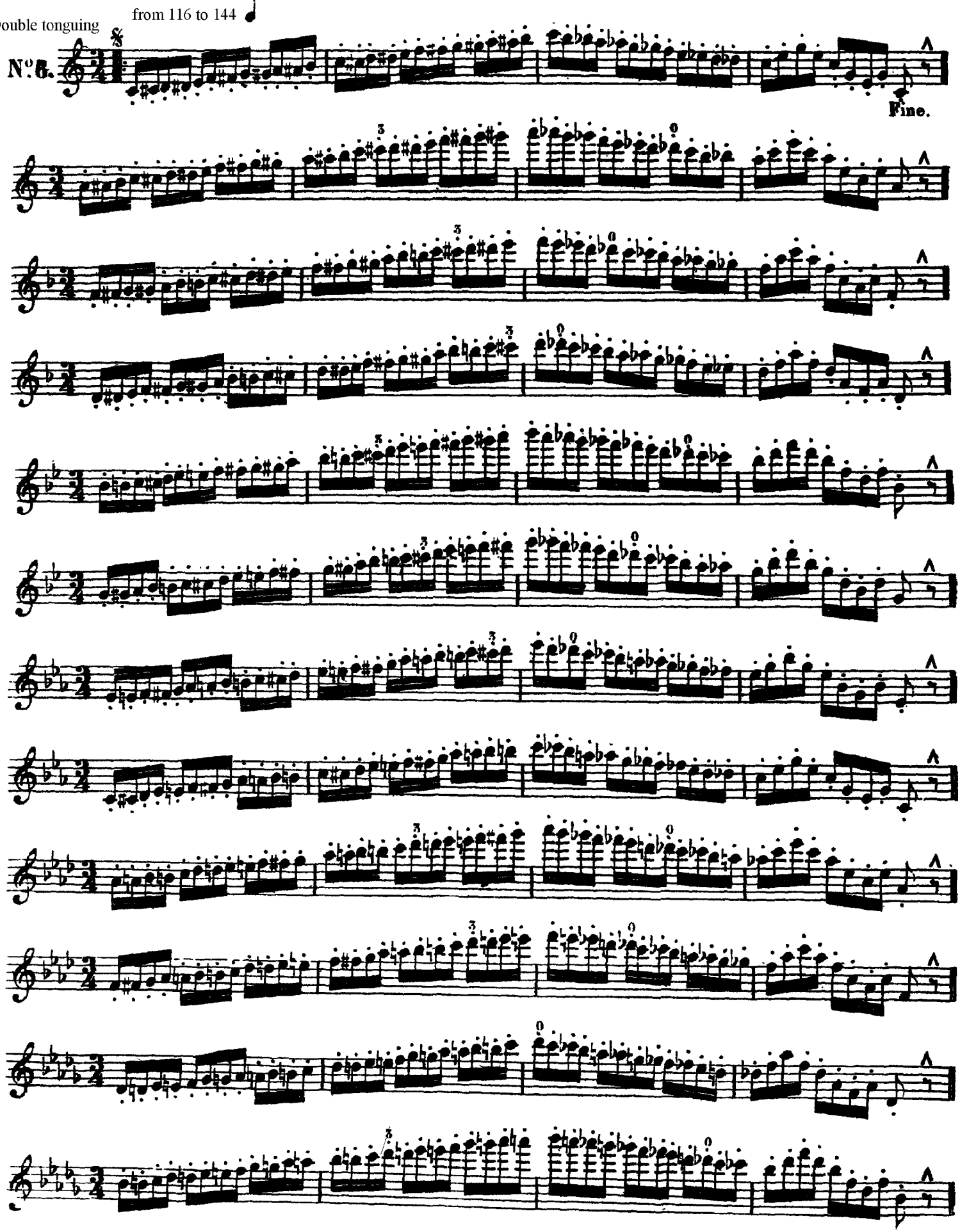


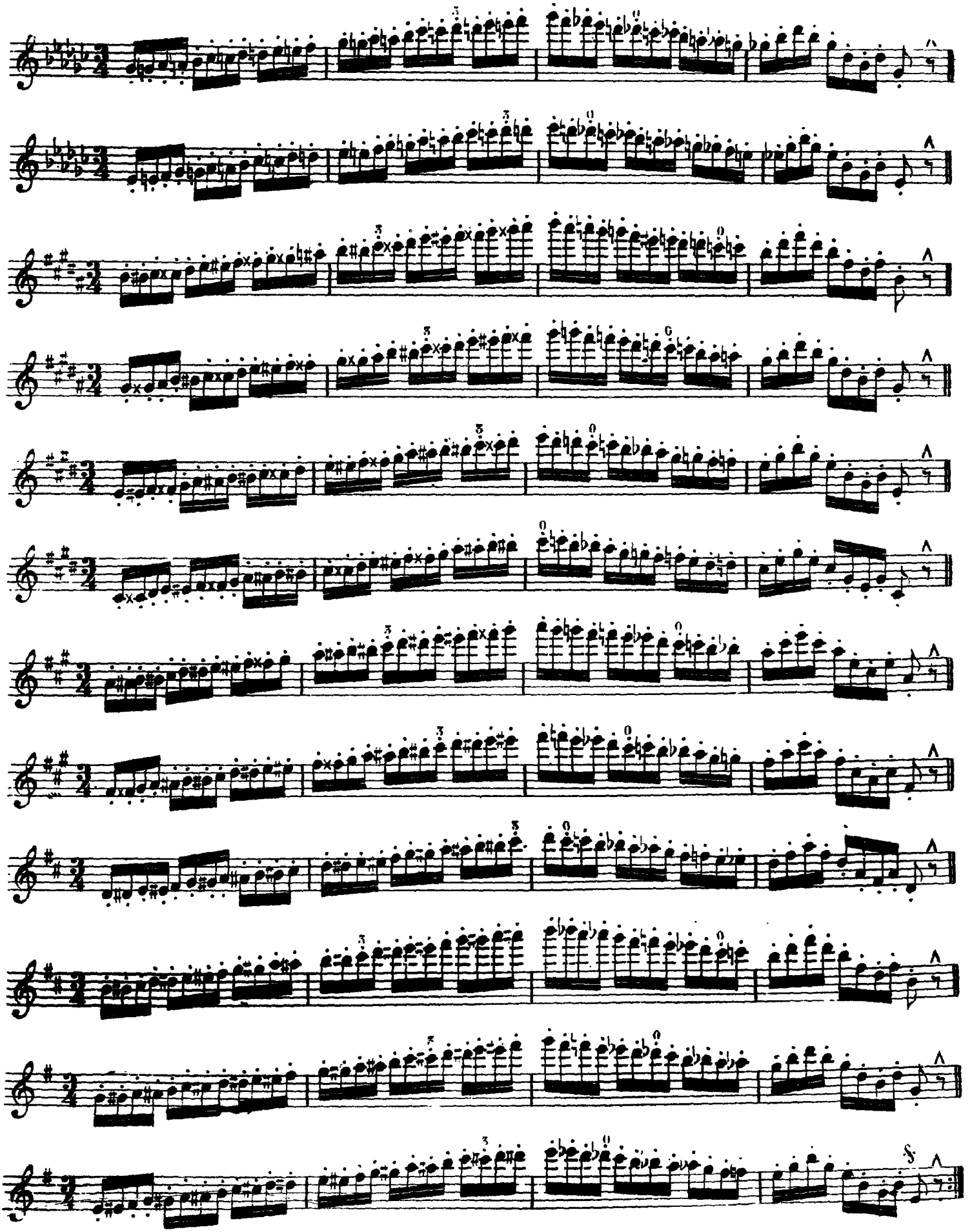
CD Sheet Music

Double tonguing

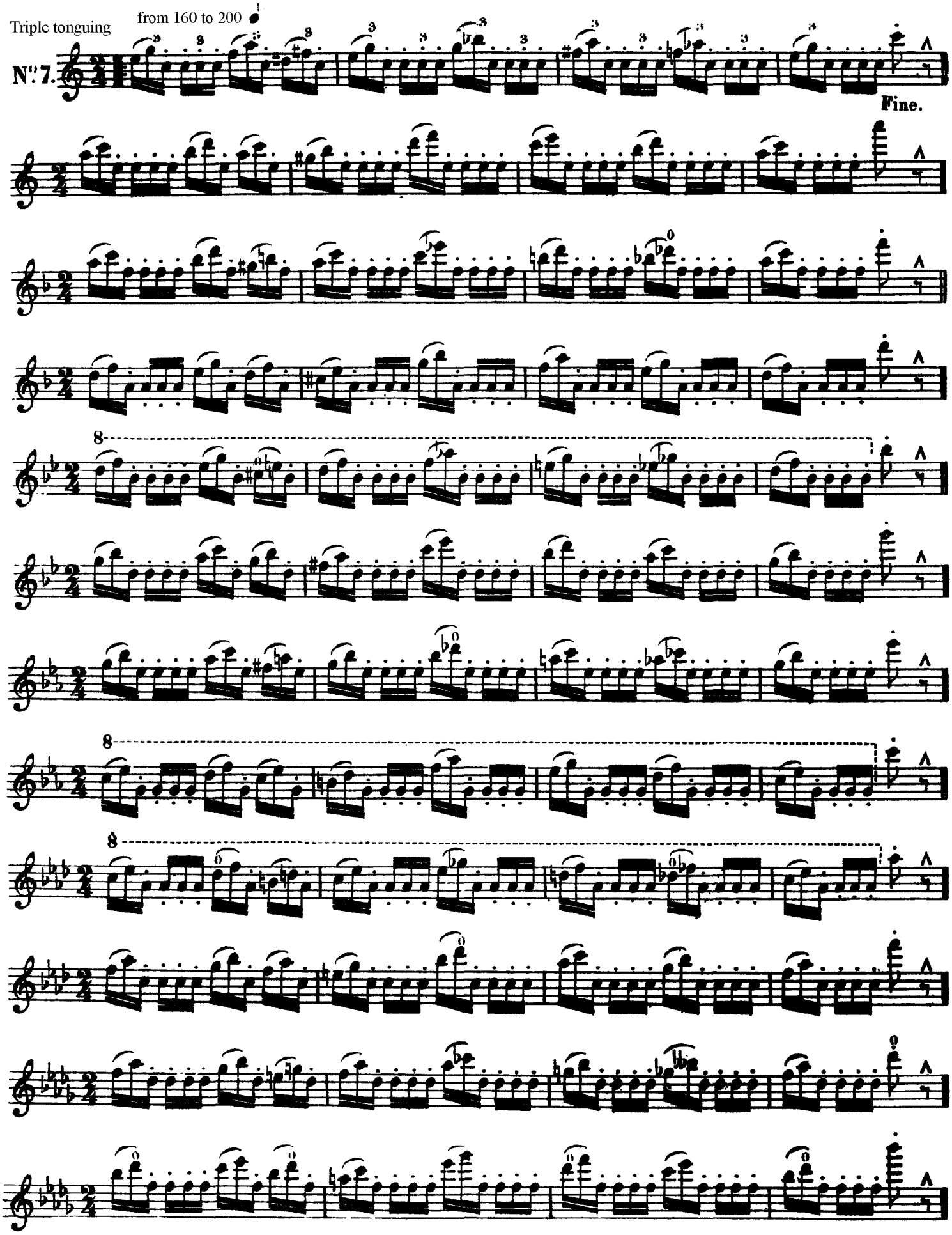
from 116 to 144 ♩



CD Sheet Music



CD Sheet Music



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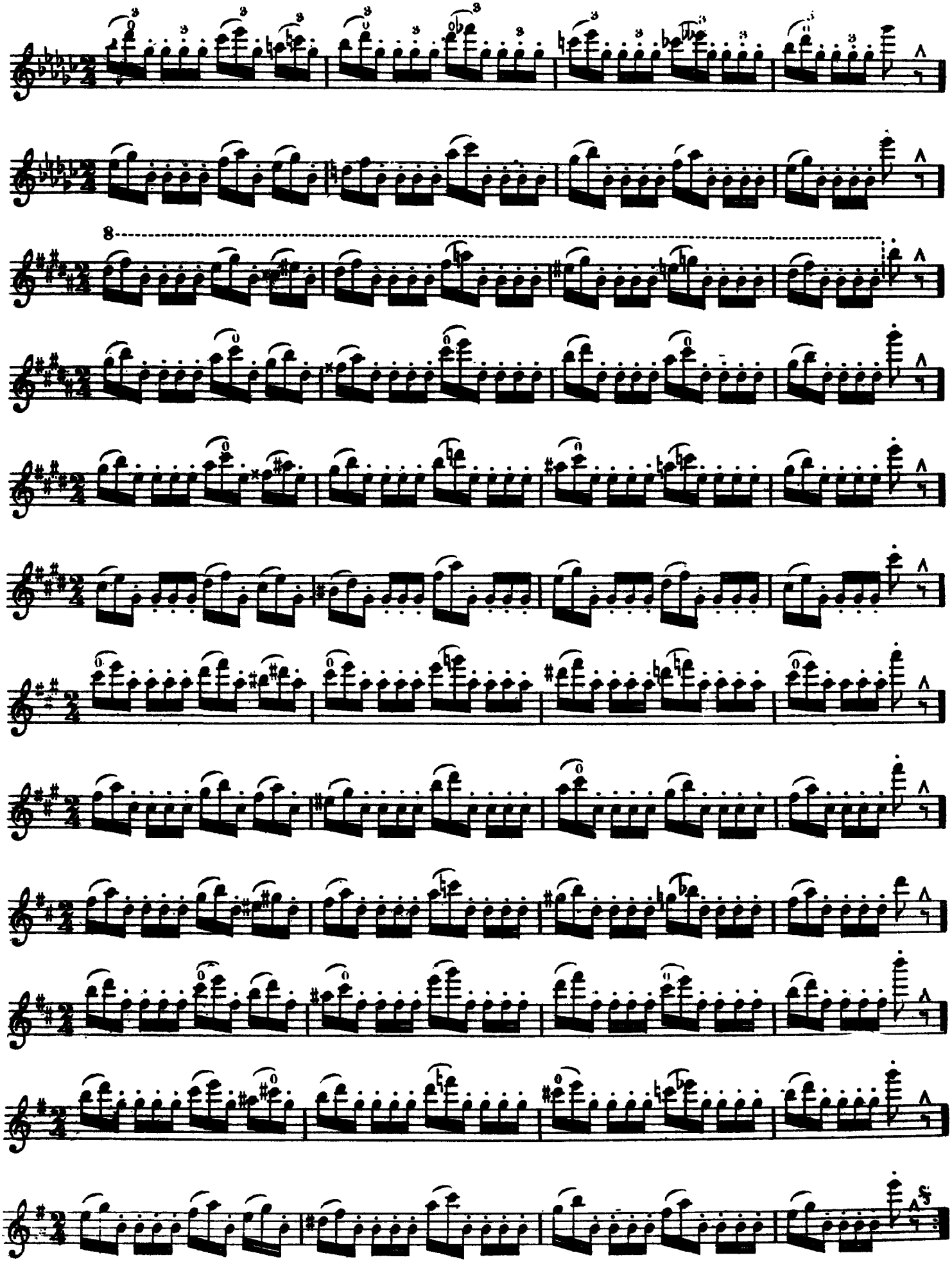

CD Sheet Music