Vincent LaMonica

Scale Studies

Volume 1:
Approaching Scales

Scales and scales in thirds in all twenty-four major/minor keys, with notated variation in rhythm and articulation, to be used individually or with an ensemble of same or different instruments.

C Treble Clef: Higher Range
(Flute, Oboe)

www.VincentLaMonica.com/publications

Acknowledgements

Several people have helped me create this book, knowingly and unknowingly. First and foremost, I must thank the incredible teachers whose brilliant instruction have given me the ideas and understanding to compile these resources. David McGill, for his methodic, effective approaches to wind playing and creating music out of anything; Nancy Goeres, whose powerful, pristine, and beautiful playing inspires me to strive to reach her level of mastery and musicianship; Ronald Haroutunian, for his attention to detail and for being the first teacher to show me how to systematically practice scales; Margaret Phillips, for proving that there is beauty in everything, and that powerful and effective performances come from control of sound and nuance; Rebecca Eldredge, for inspiring me to find musical phrasing in everything; Janet Polk, for introducing me to the pedagogic value of scales; Nic Orovich, for stressing the importance of even scalework; and to James Nardine and Amy Dotson, for being my musical foundation and giving me my earliest opportunities to teach.

Additionally, I must thank two of my students for their help in creating, editing, and revising the Scale Studies – Peggy Church and Sutton Fransen. Sutton's hard work in and out lessons and Peggy's dedication and brilliant insight inspire me strive to be the best teacher I can be, and to create the best possible resources to advance wind pedagogy.

This series was first created in 2015, and then was revised and expanded during the summer of 2018. My hope is that this series, in partnership with my new Arpeggio Studies and Public Domain Editions, will begin to change the way we teach music and wind playing, with emphases on precision and musical phrasing – everything is music when played musically.

Introduction to the Scale Studies

Many musicians believe that scales are merely collections of notes, to be practiced for the purpose of enhanced fingerwork. To the contrary, scales are a gateway to nearly every teachable concept of technique and musicality. The goal with my three-volume *Scale Studies* is to provide the materials through which musicians can learn as many concepts as possible. Volume 1 covers scales and scales in thirds within a single octave, provides notated variation in rhythm and articulation, and is usable in any ensemble configuration. Volume 2 is instrument-specific, covering the full standard range of each instrument, and adds compound meter, arpeggios and arpeggio progressions, and chromaticism. Volume 3 covers non-tonal scales and patterns, including chromatic, whole tone, and octatonic scales.

Volume 1: Approaching Scales

This book is designed for musicians of all ages, whether you've just started working on scales or have been playing them for decades. Each page presents the same scale seventeen times, but no two versions are the same. Playing through each page covers dotted and cross rhythms, triplets, and various articulation combinations. In addition to developing fingerwork and scale recognition, the focus while working through this book should be developing a smooth sound with the precise rhythmic integrity and proper articulation patterns.

This book sticks within one octave for each scale. Depending on your instrument and ability level, you may be able to play some pages in a second (or even third) octave – this will help you begin to develop the ability to sight-transpose. Read the page at the notated octave, but perform it in different octaves as you are able to.

Recommended Practice Approach

I recommend picking one scale a week, making it the first material you practice in each practice session. At first, you may need to spend time on each line to master it, but by the end of the week, you should be able to run through the page in just two to three minutes! If you complete one scale a week, you will finish this book within a year! Once this book becomes second nature in all key areas, try moving up to Volume 2, but don't be in a hurry – this book will serve as a timeless resource for you.

Good luck, and check out www.VincentLaMonica.com/publications for more materials!

Musical Concepts

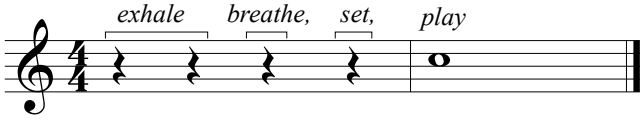
"Round, Forward Embouchure"

No matter what instrument you play, tightness and tension will only have a negative impact on your technique and sound. While many people believe that each instrument has its own embouchure setup, I truly believe that ALL wind and brass instruments have the same fundamental embouchure, which is modified to suit the reed or mouthpiece of the individual instrument. If you can whistle, your embouchure is ready. If you can't whistle, imagine blowing on a pinwheel or say "oooh." From here, make the minimal adjustment needed to suit your instrument. Visit www.VincentLaMonica.com/embouchure to read about how I would adjust the whistling embouchure to suit each wind and brass instrument.

When playing, if you remind yourself of the phrase "round, forward embouchure," you will find yourself with a more relaxed setup that will allow for better, more consistent sound production across the full range of the instrument. ***Never bring tension into your playing.***

"Breathe, Set, Play"

As wind players, our ability to perform at our own highest level is dependent on the air we take in before we play, and so we need to ingrain in ourselves better habits of better breathing. Especially during our own practice time, it's incredibly important to set ourselves up with a healthy breathing sequence. By breathing in ***slowly*** for a full beat and allowing our air to suspend for the beat before we play while we set our round, forward embouchure, we build up just enough backpressure to help the first note speak exactly when we want without a harsh articulation. Use this breathing sequence with your scale practice to make it your standard breathing approach.



"Less Tongue, More Air"

As wind players, we often begin to believe that the clarity of our sound comes from our tongue. IT DOESN'T. I promise you that if you use the gentlest tongue possible, you will achieve better results and a more beautiful tone. (On woodwind instruments, your tongue should just barely touch the reed. When you practice, it's okay if you miss the reed – that means you are finding the exact point your tongue needs to reach.) Keep in mind that the tongue does not end a note; it merely defines the beginning of the next note. Practicing the second line of "varying articulation" will help you develop this smooth tonguing.

Check out www.VincentLaMonica.com/tips for more tips and tricks for wind/brass players!

Section 1: One-Octave Scales

Note that these scales ascend to "scale degree 9" (one note past the name of the scale). The purpose of this is to break the tendency to mentally pause on each octave, and it makes the length of the scale exactly sixteen notes, which makes the "varying articulation" section flow much more smoothly.

This book uses "harmonic minor" scales, meaning that only "scale degree 7" (the note before the name of the scale) is raised. This is because the interval between "scale degrees 6 and 7" in a harmonic minor scale is wider than any other interval in the scale, and is not present in major scales. This means that our harmonic minor scales are allowing us to practice note combinations we wouldn't otherwise cover. Your teacher may ask you to adjust the scales to make them "natural minor" or "melodic minor" scales – another chance for musical development!

"Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch"

When you play your scales, aim for more than just correct notes. Use this version of the scale, comprised solely of half notes, to focus on a smooth, even sound without breaks between notes. Smooth fingerwork, more air, less tongue, and a round, forward embouchure will help. Don't forget to breathe, set, play.

"Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision"

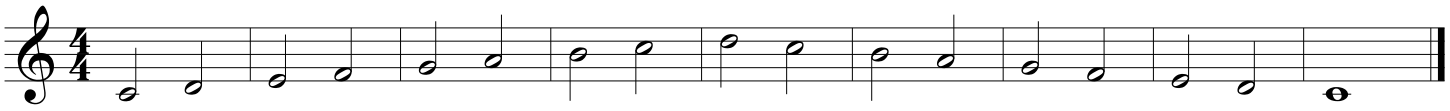
Same exact set of notes each time, but we are covering different rhythmic patterns. Remember to use more air and less tongue – you will still achieve a precise sound if you are counting with rhythmic integrity. Use a metronome, and ask your teacher if any of these rhythms, especially the "cross rhythms" in the third line, are tricky for you. View this as a chance to improve your inner metronome! Keep track of the subdivision to improve rhythm!

"Varying articulation, always smooth and connected"

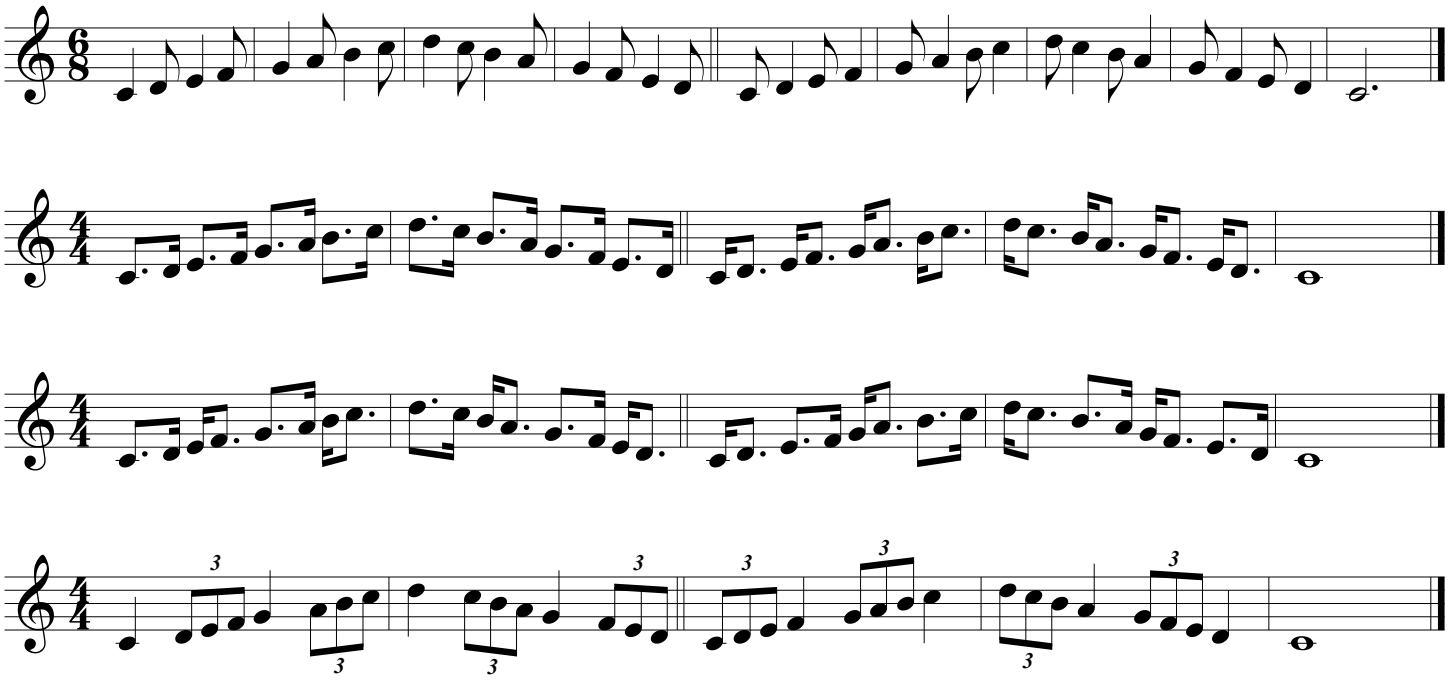
Now we are using a straight eighth note pattern, and just changing when we place our tongue. Ideally, you can play all four lines in one breath (a good long-term goal!), but for now, please feel free to add a half note and half rest at the end of each line. Note that this section is never staccato – more air, less tongue. The second line in particular, where the slurs are in pairs, is the most valuable for developing smooth tonguing.

1. C Major

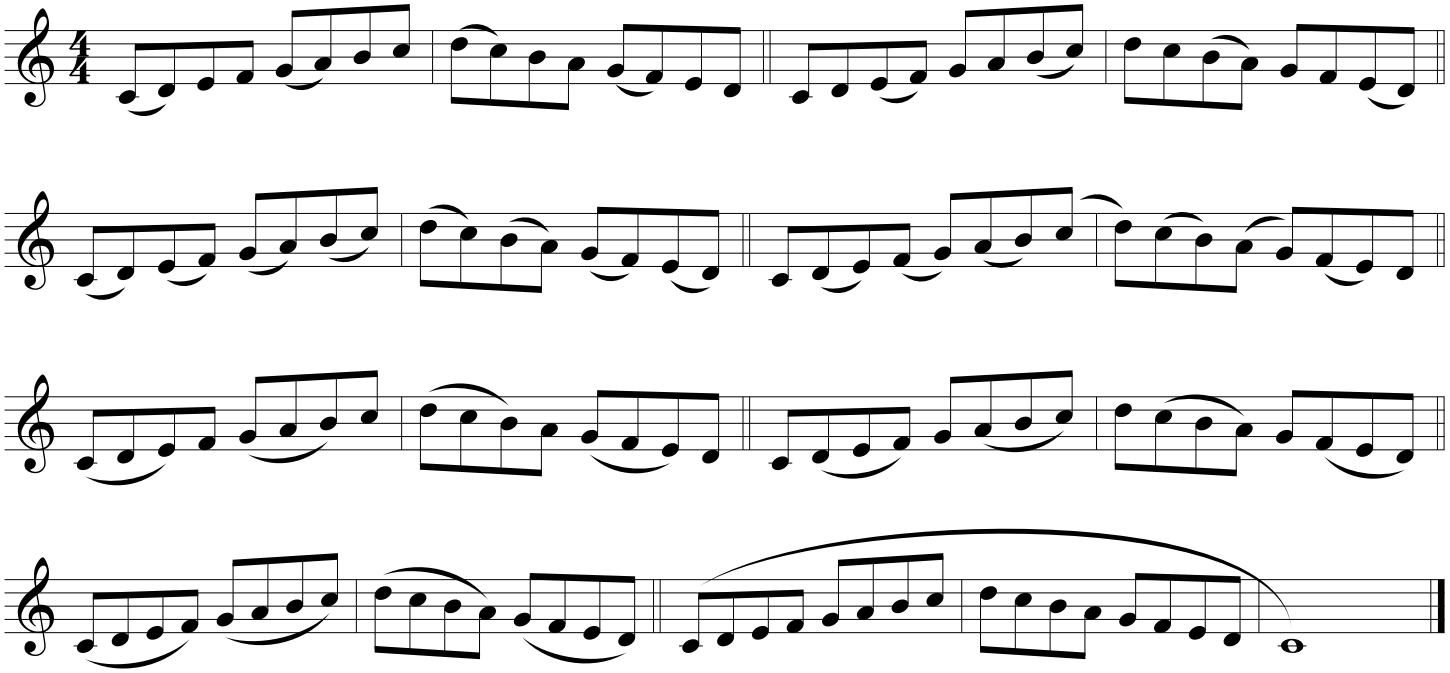
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Use more air and less tongue for a smoother, better sound.
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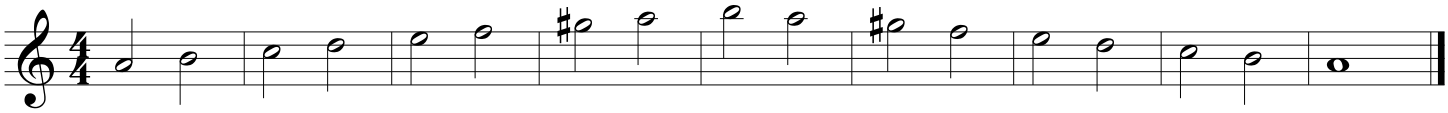
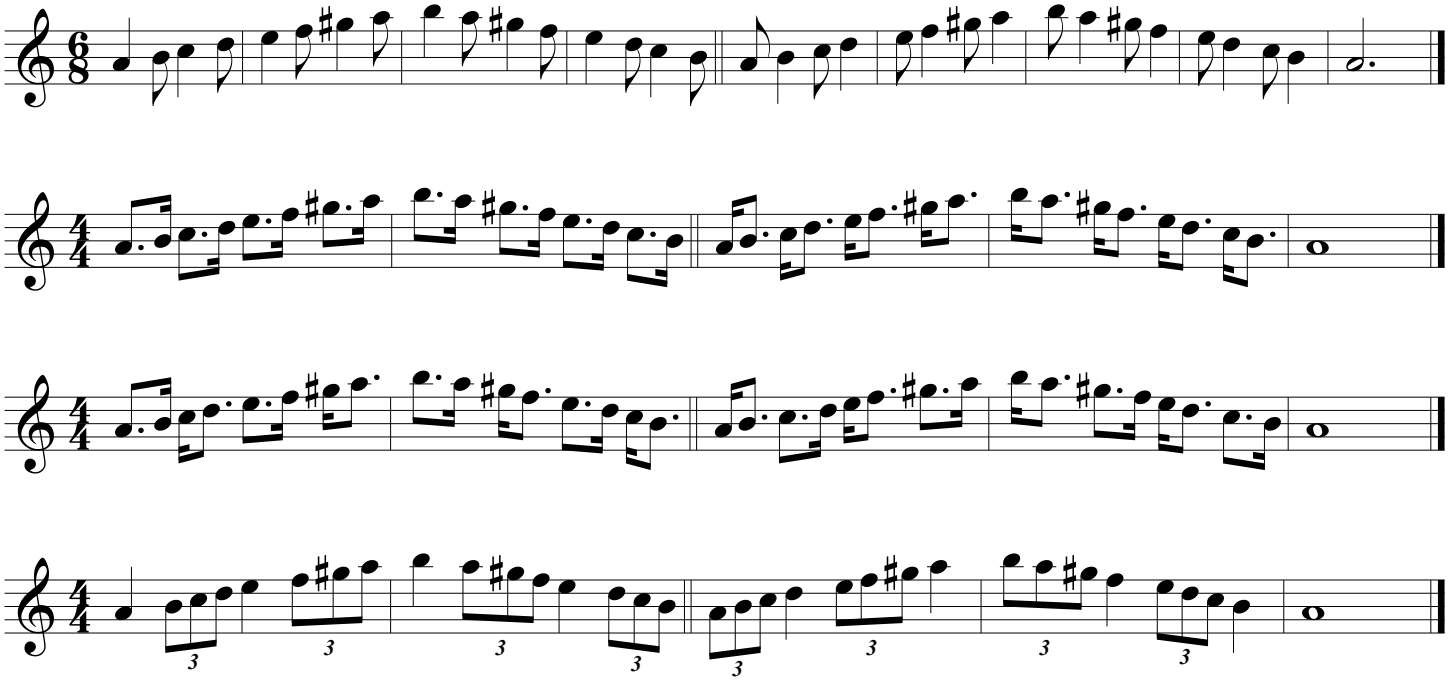
2. A Minor

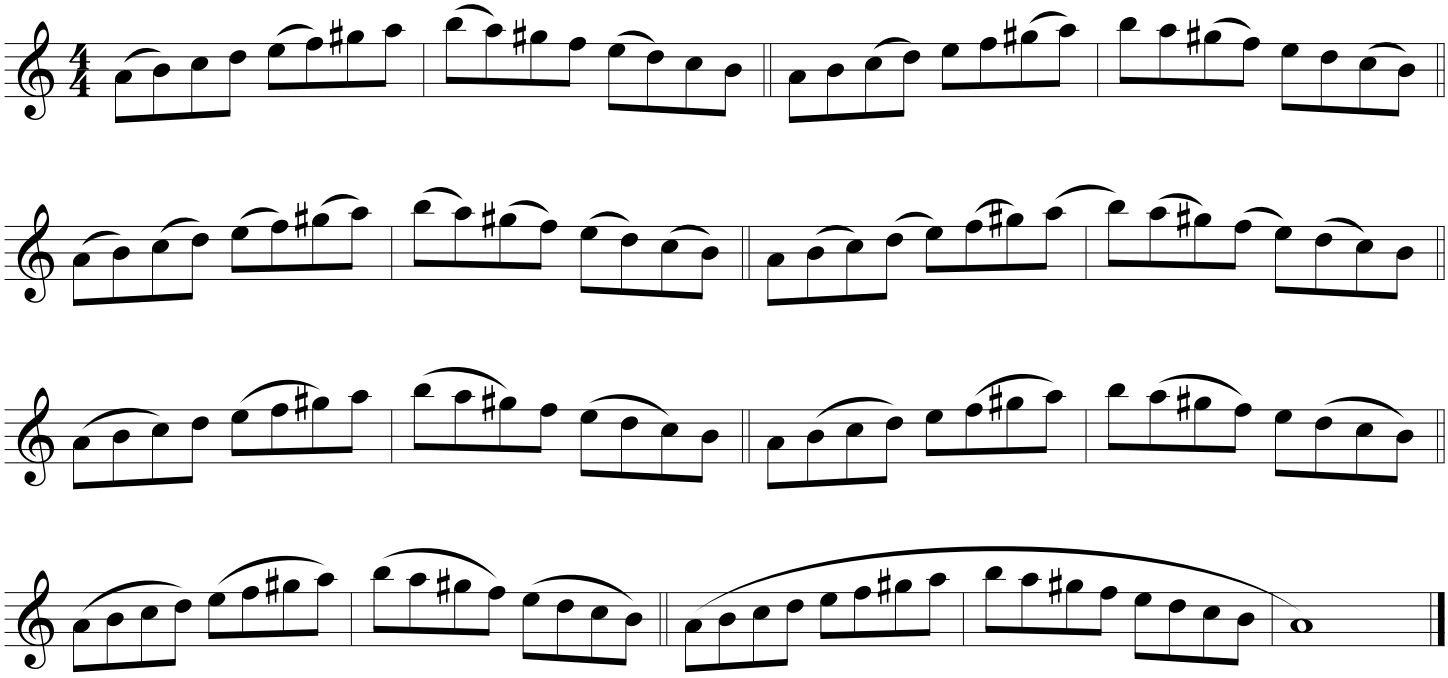
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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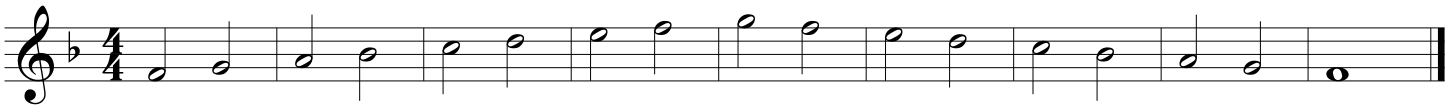
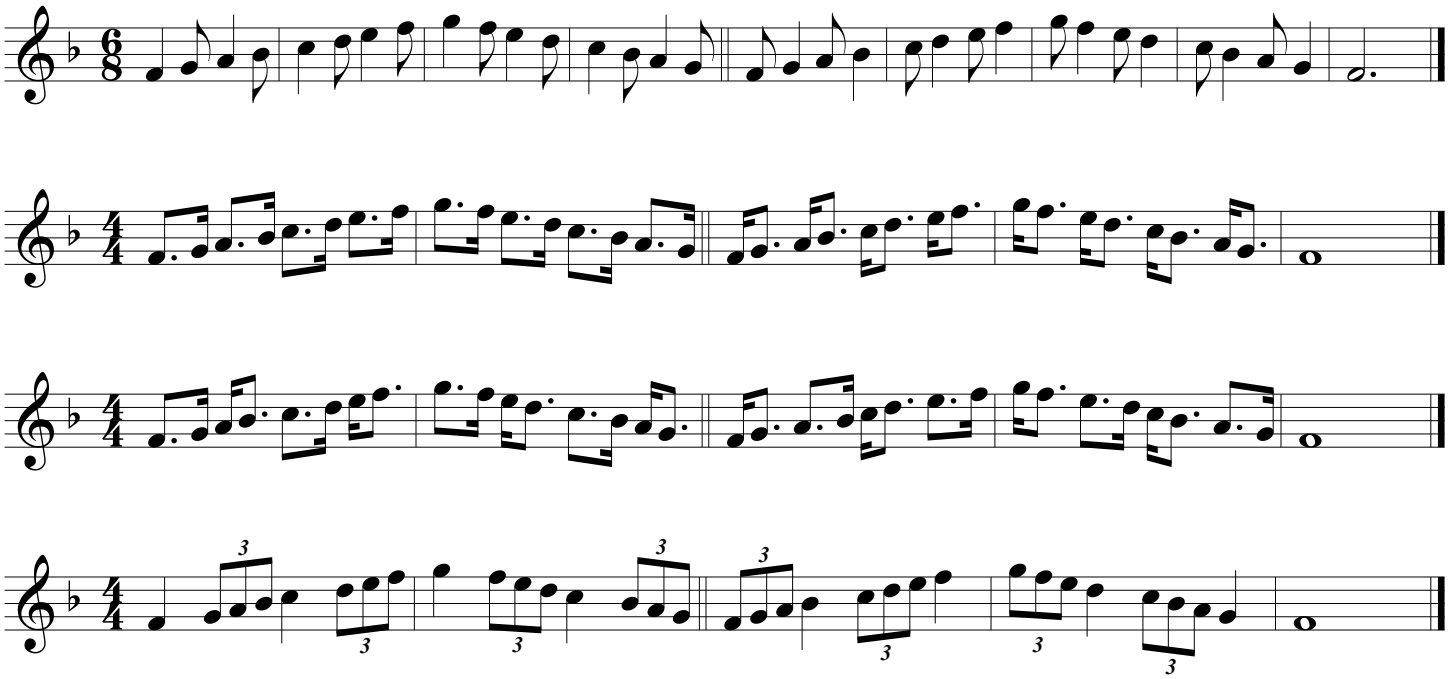
3. F Major

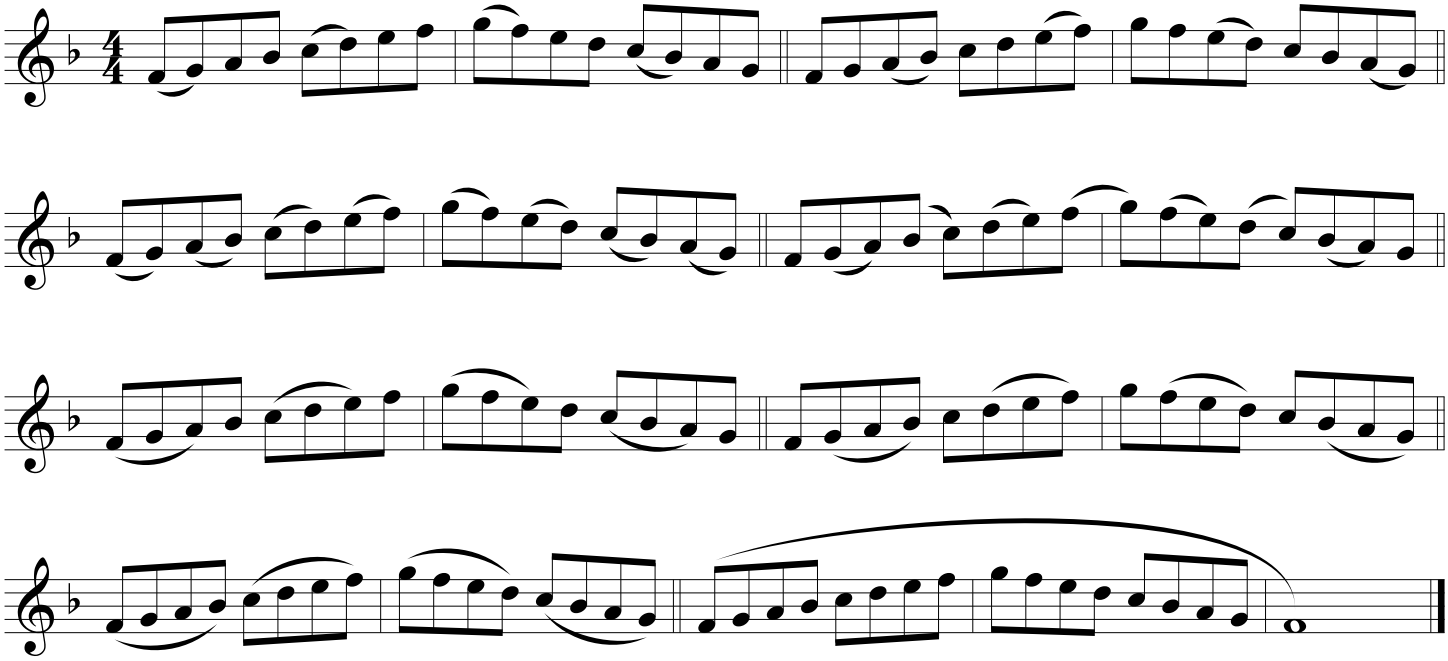
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Use more air and less tongue for a smoother, better sound.
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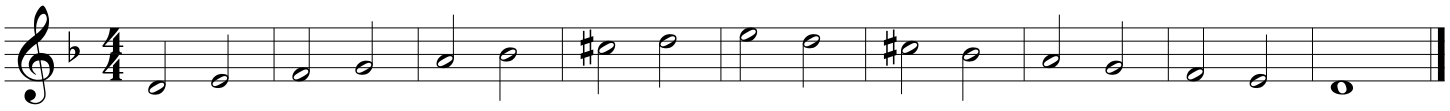
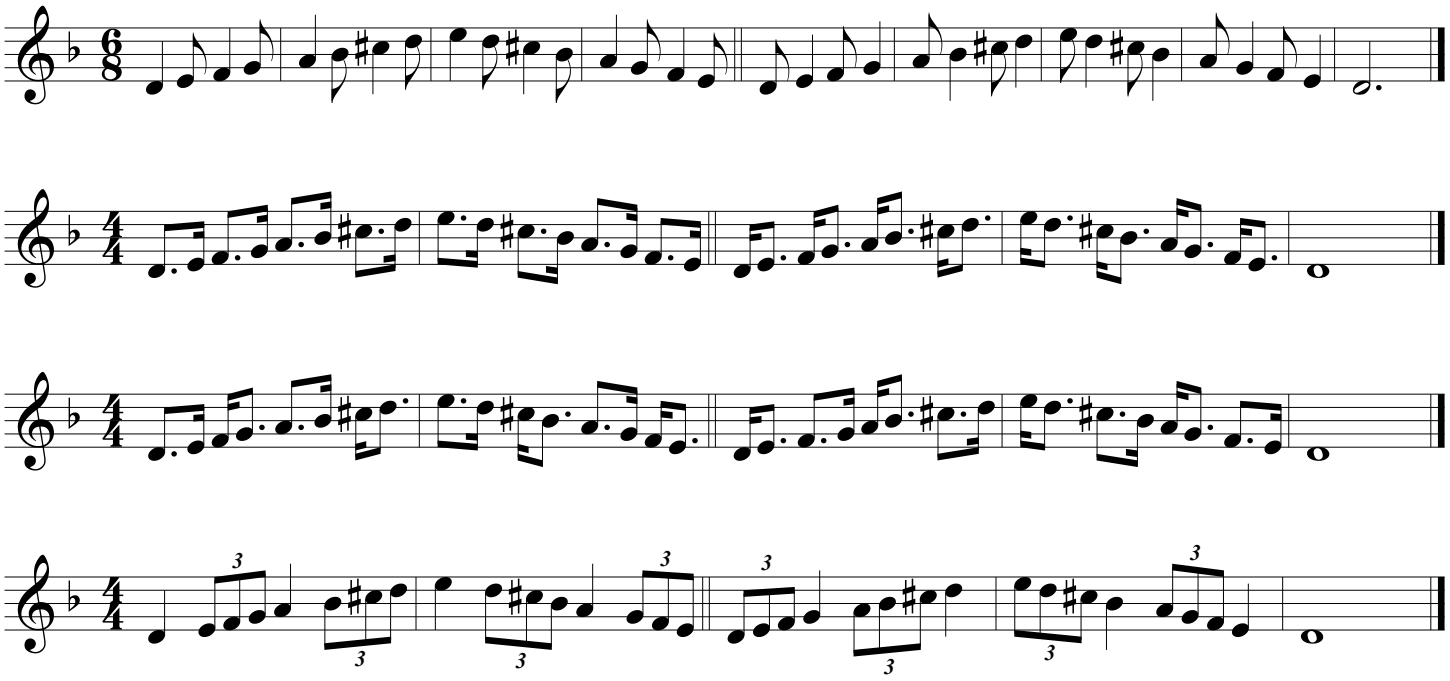
4. D Minor

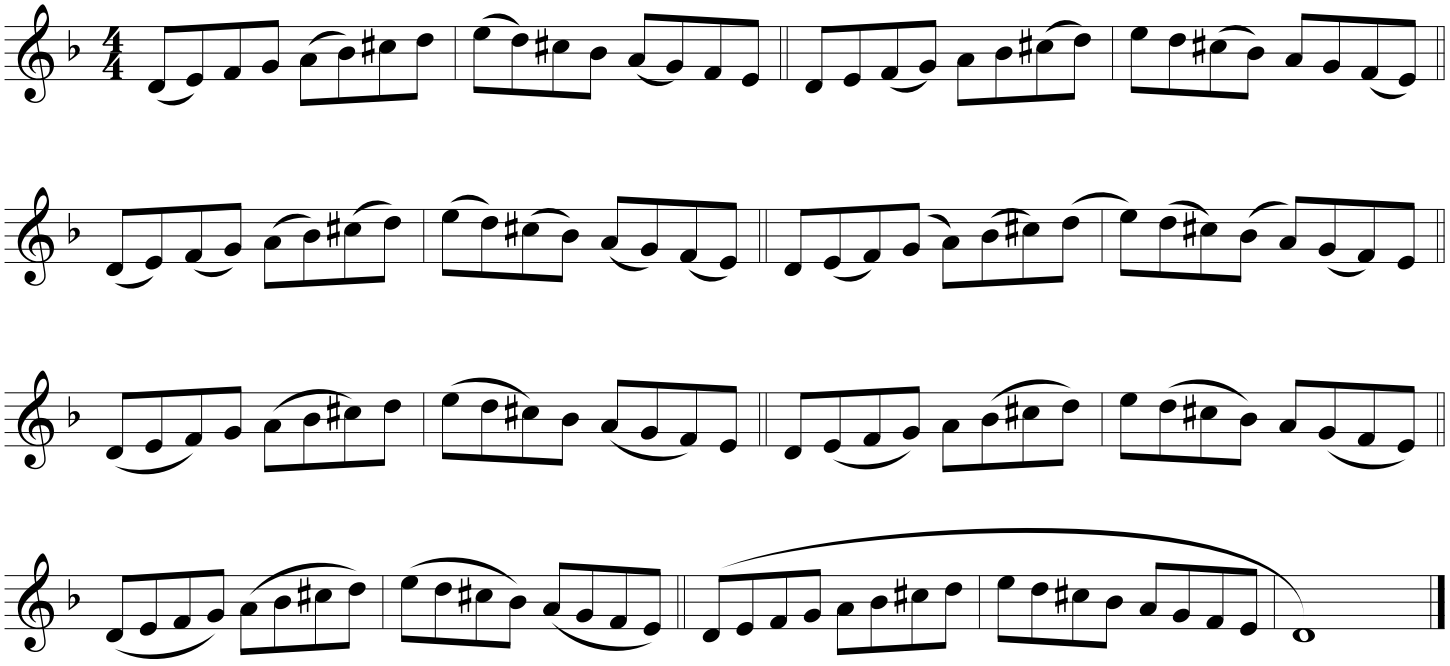
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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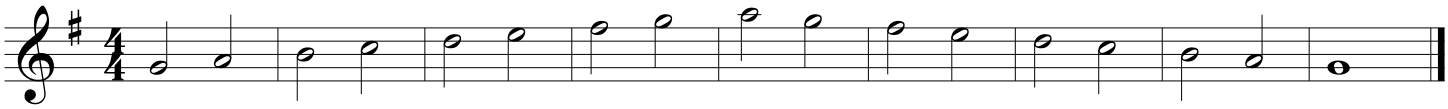
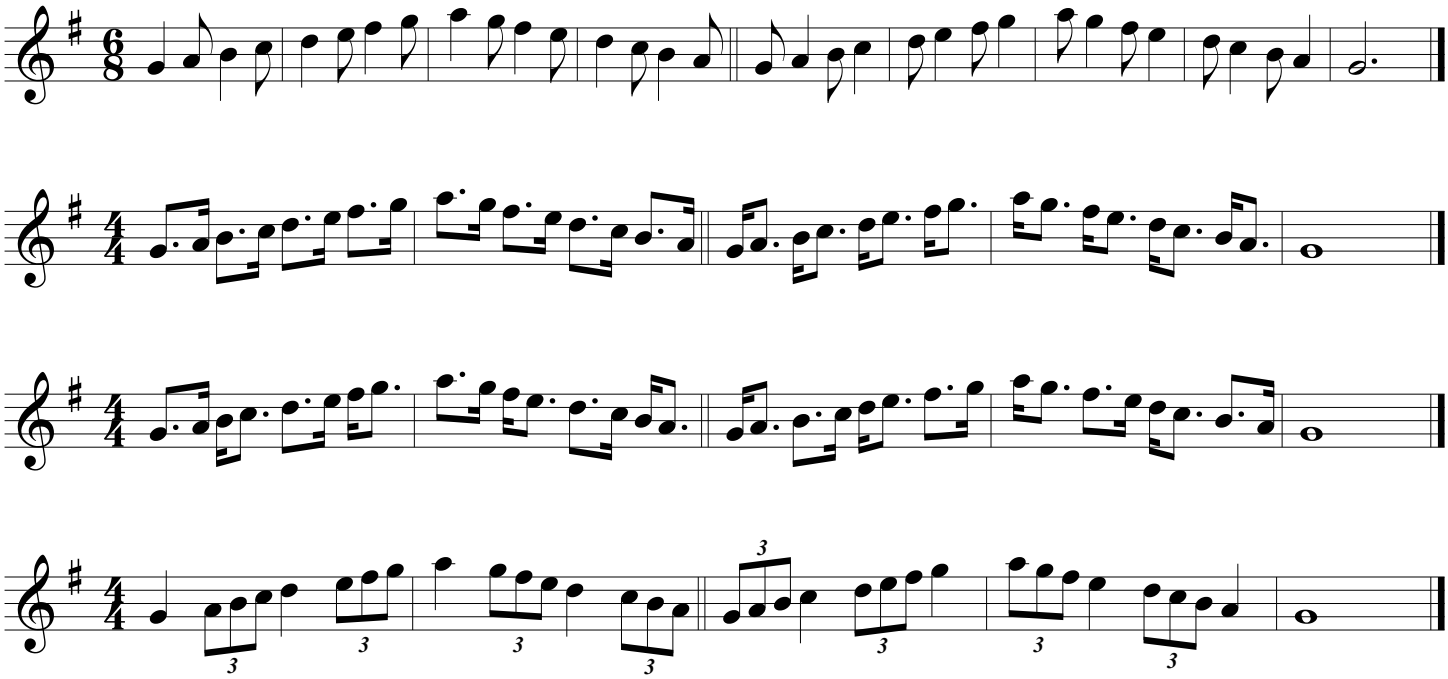
5. G Major

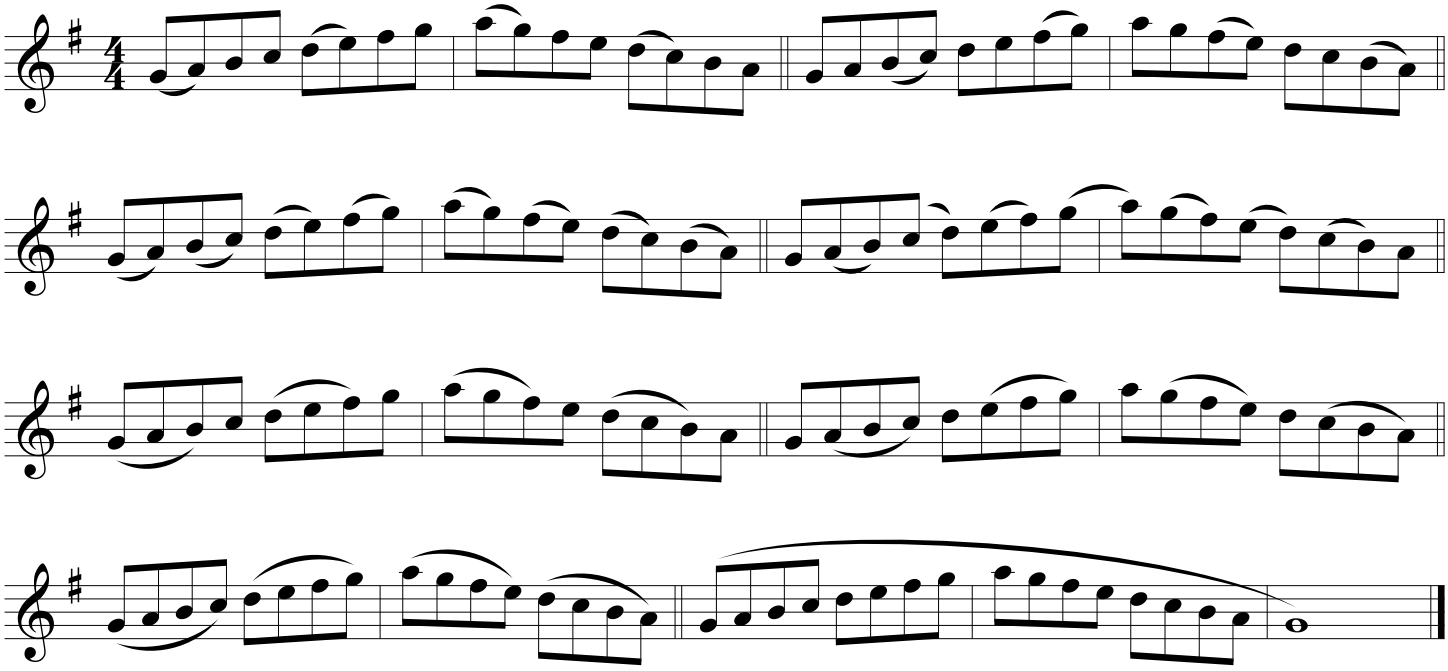
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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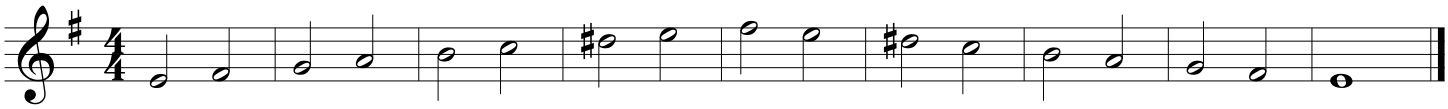
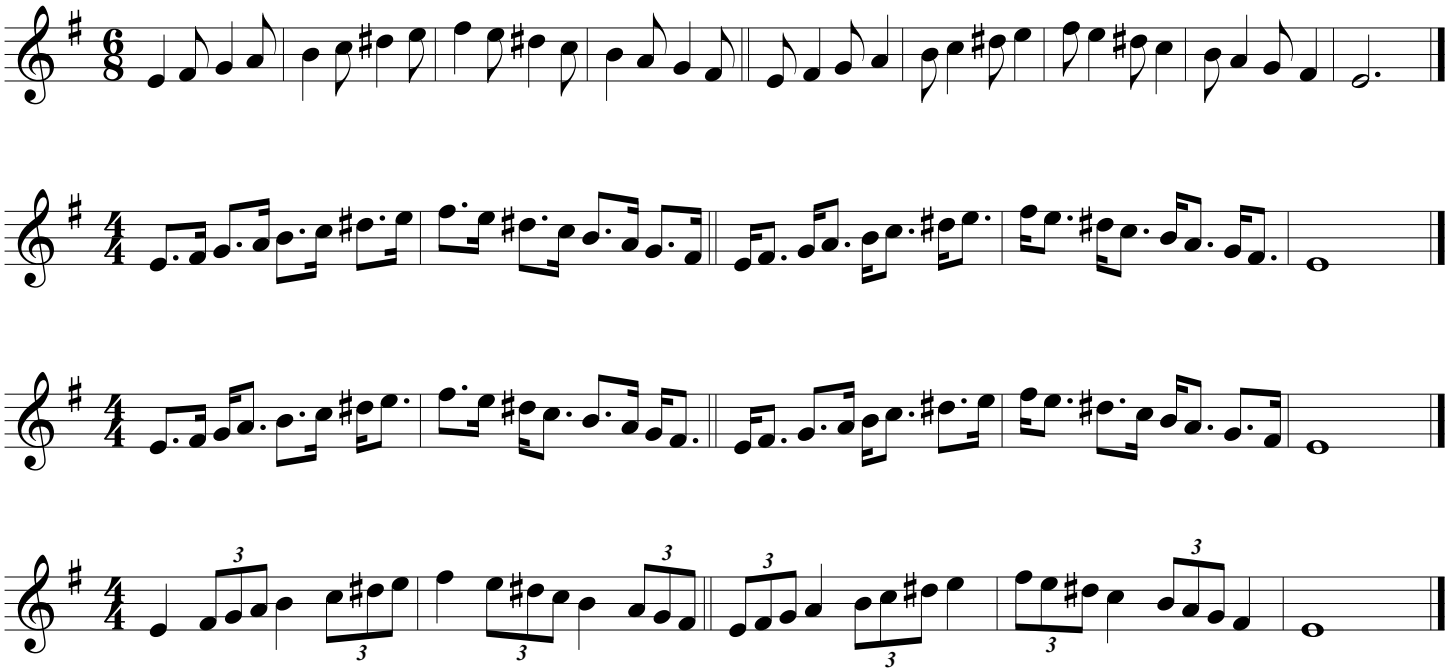
6. E Minor

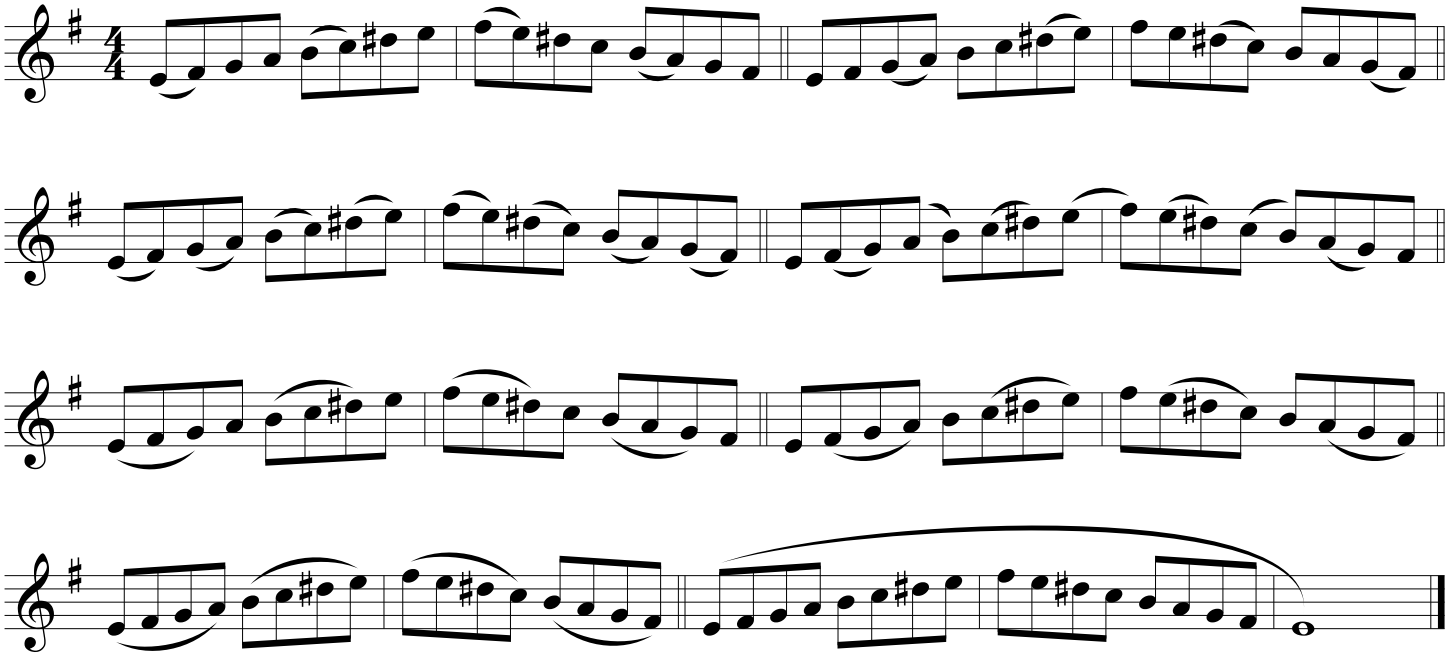
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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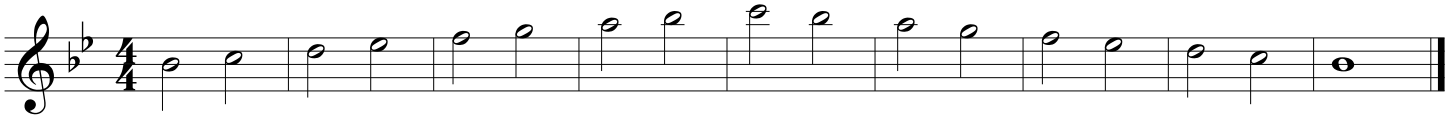
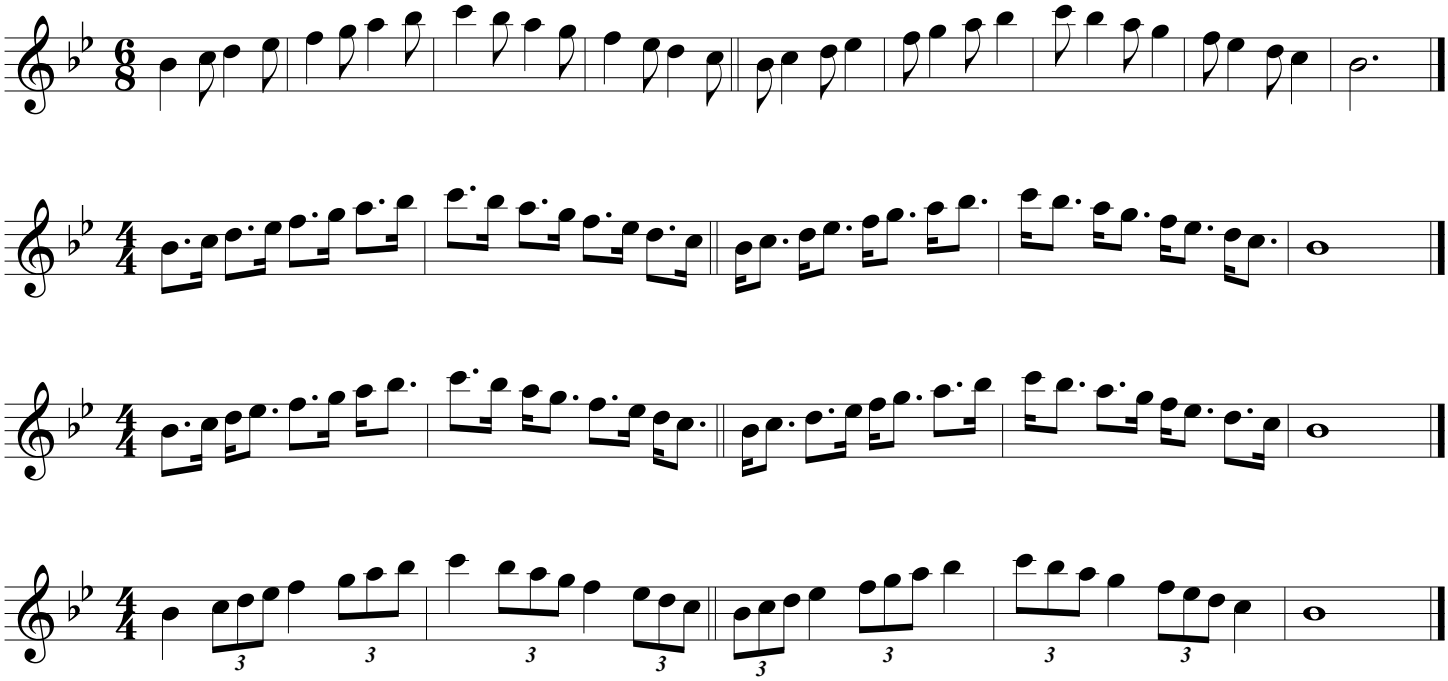
7. B♭ Major

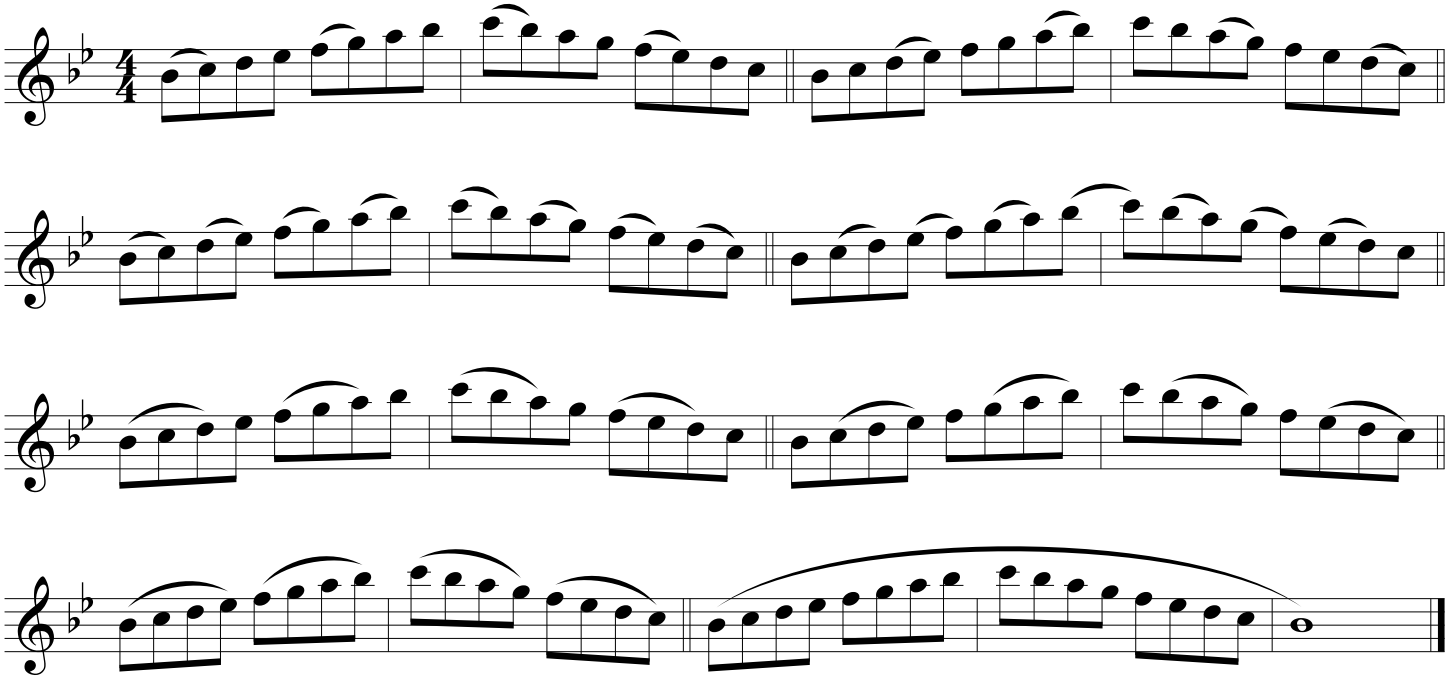
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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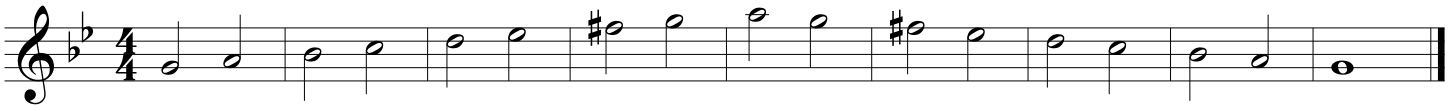
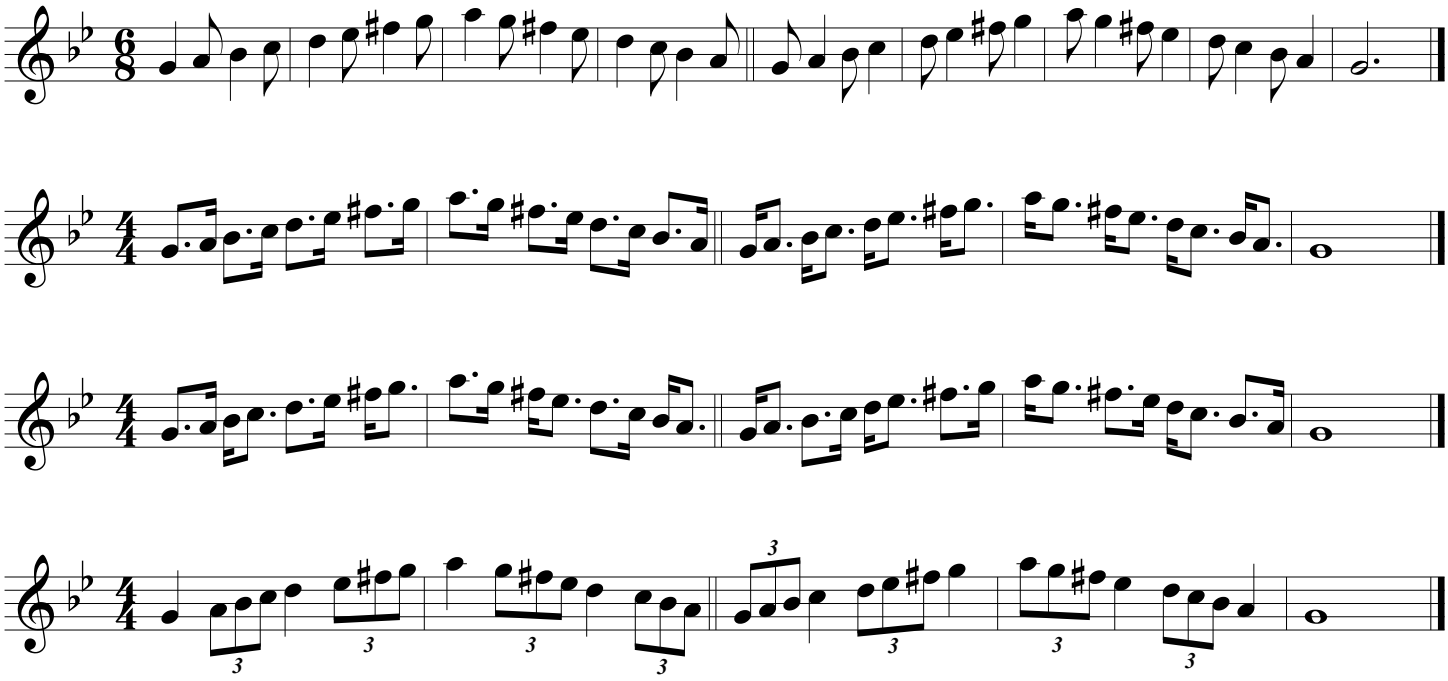
8. G Minor

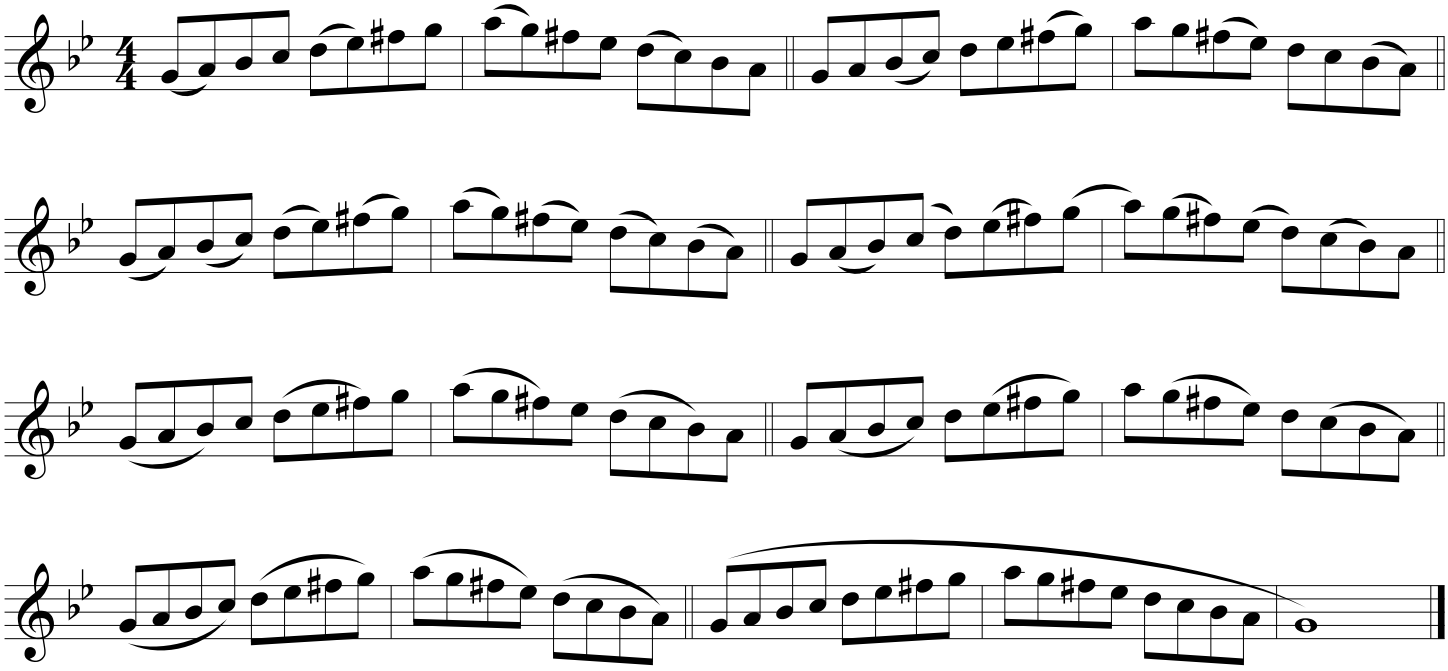
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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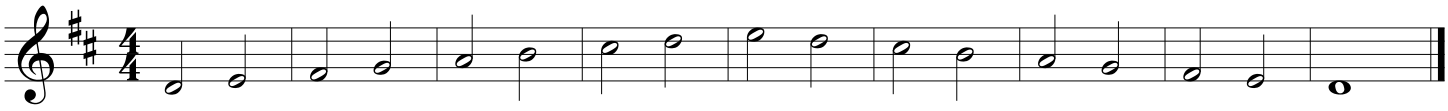
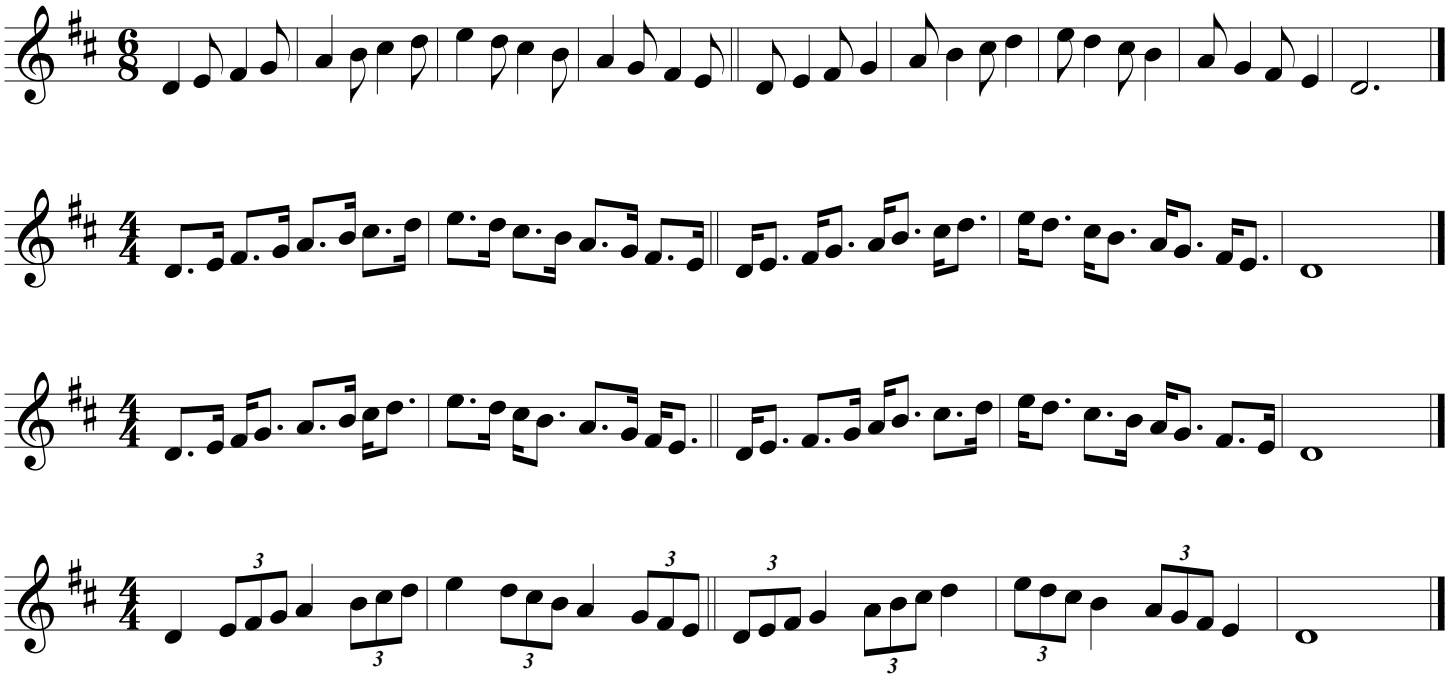
9. D Major

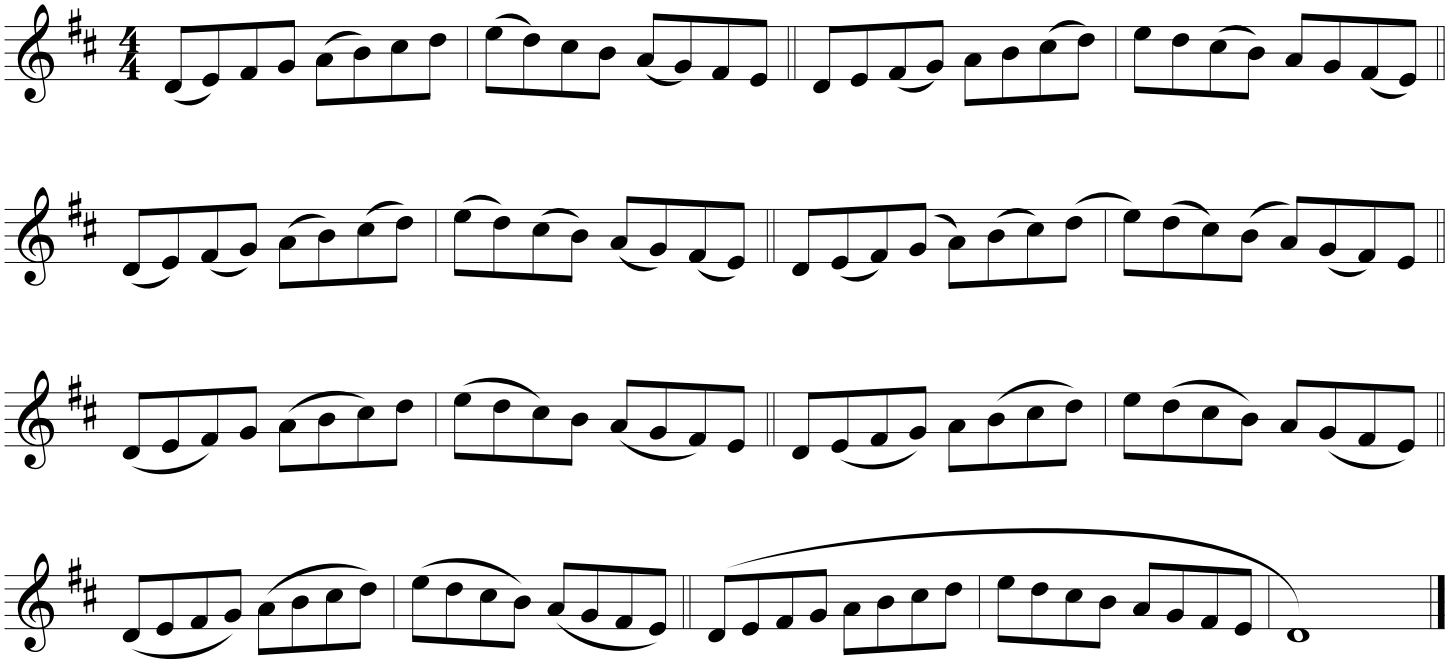
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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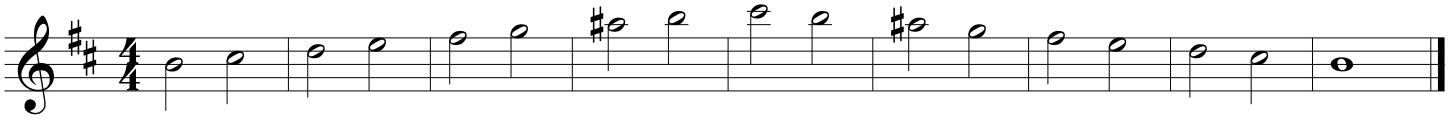
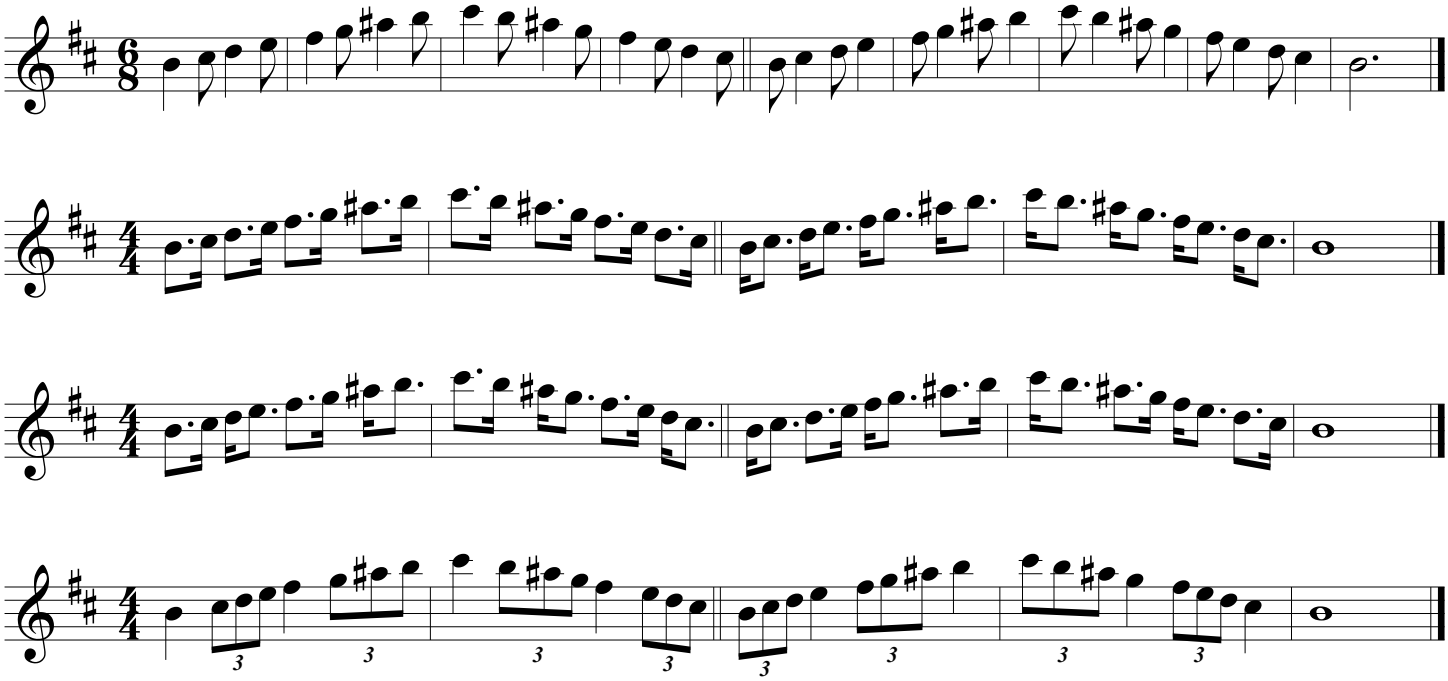
10. B Minor

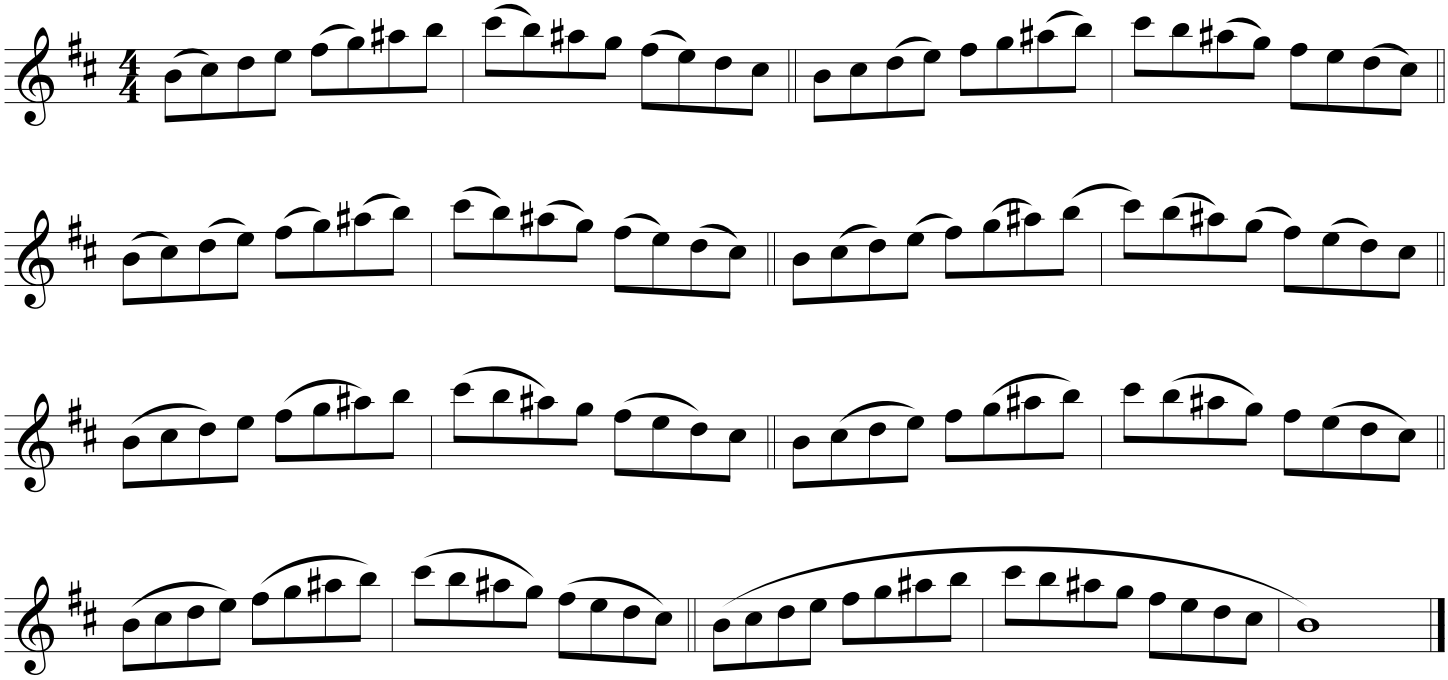
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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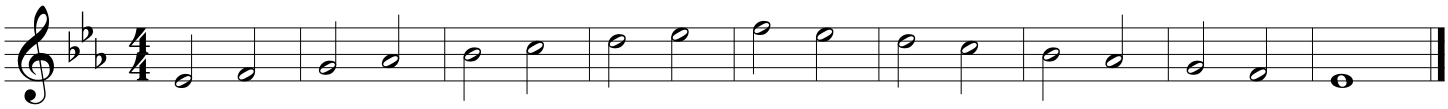
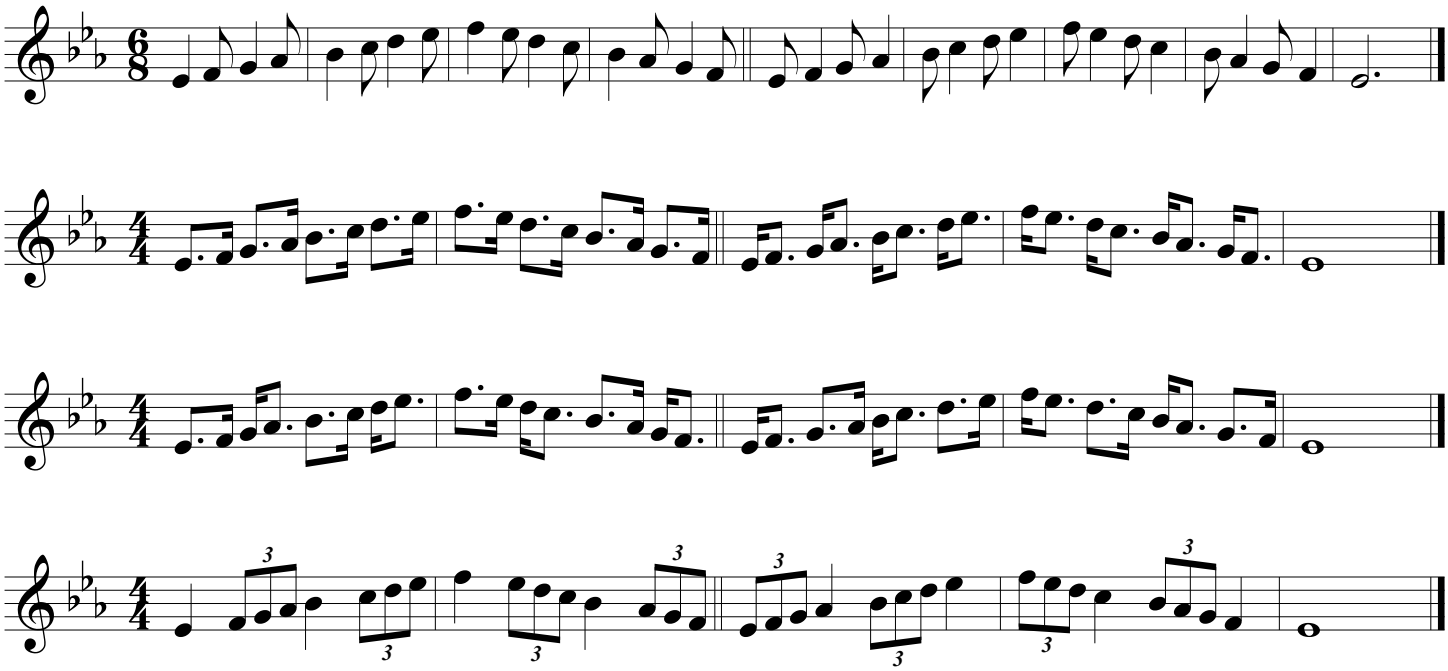
11. E♭ Major

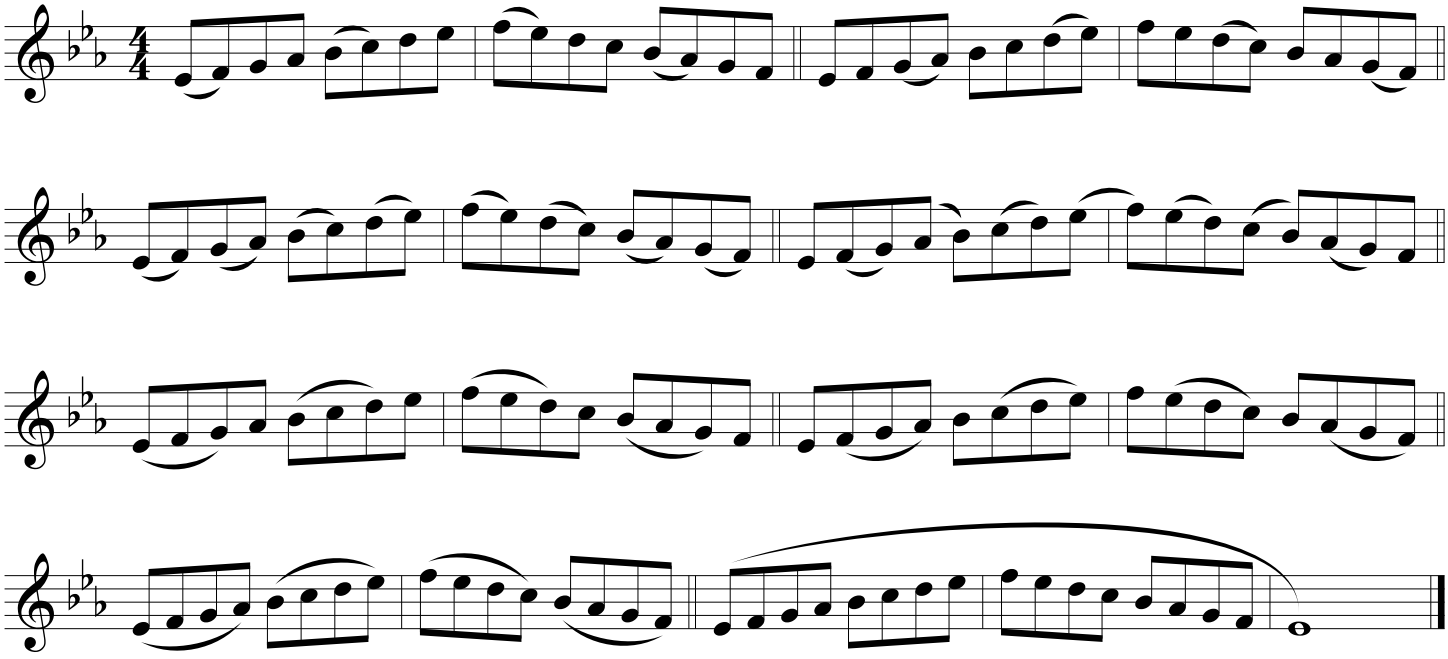
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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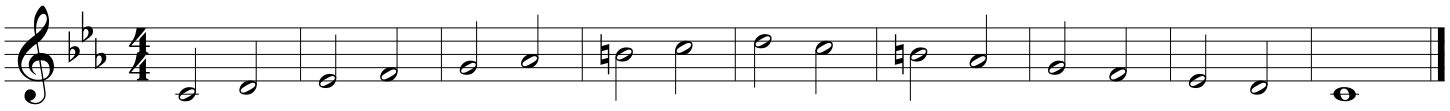
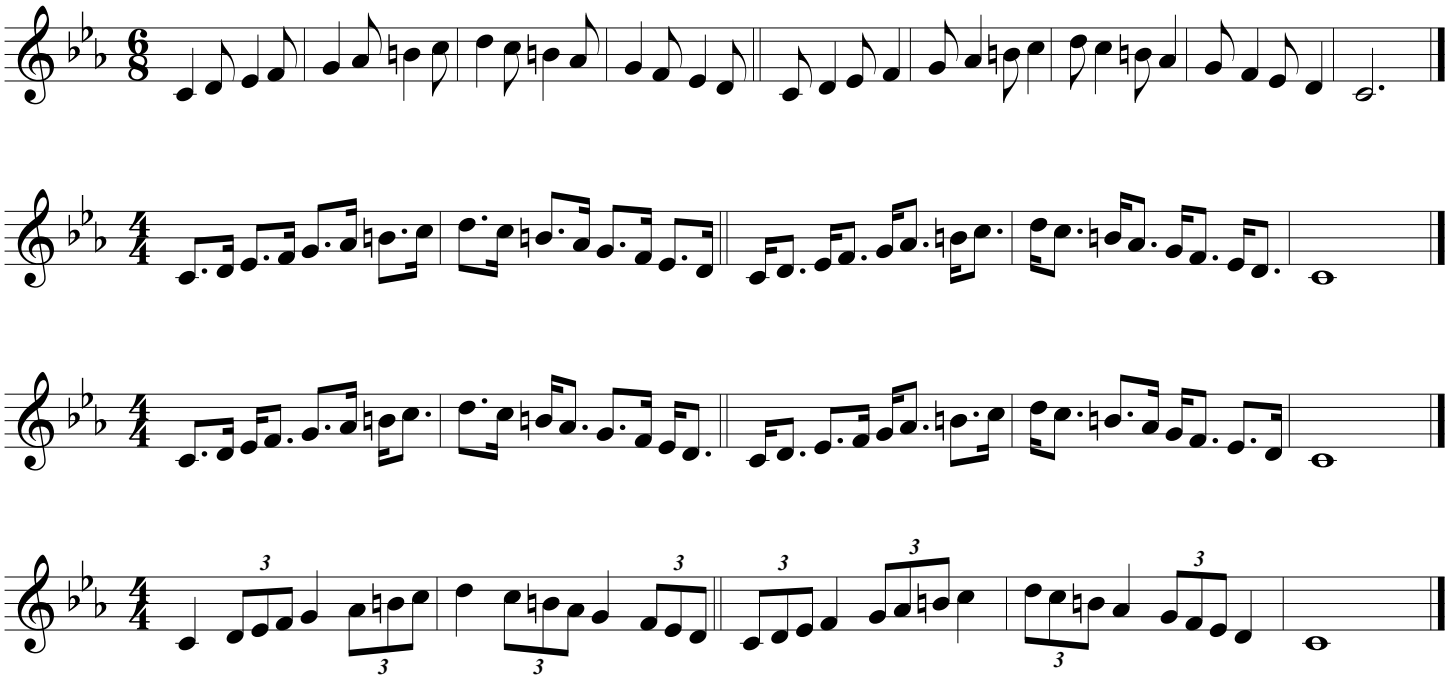
12. C Minor

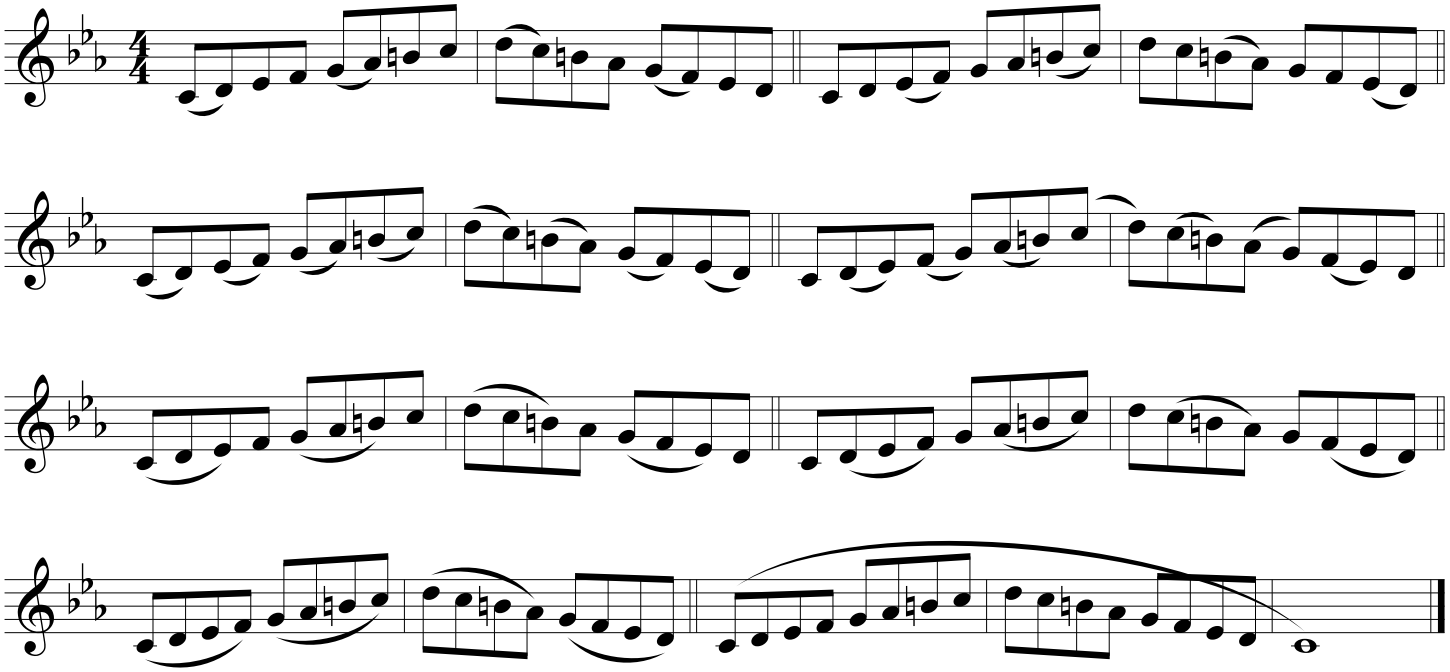
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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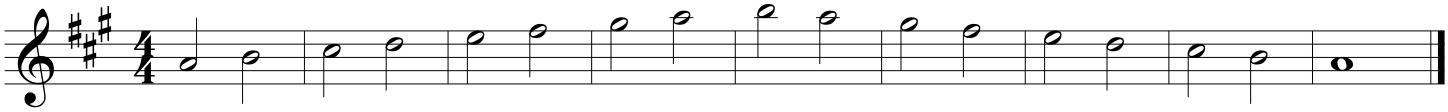
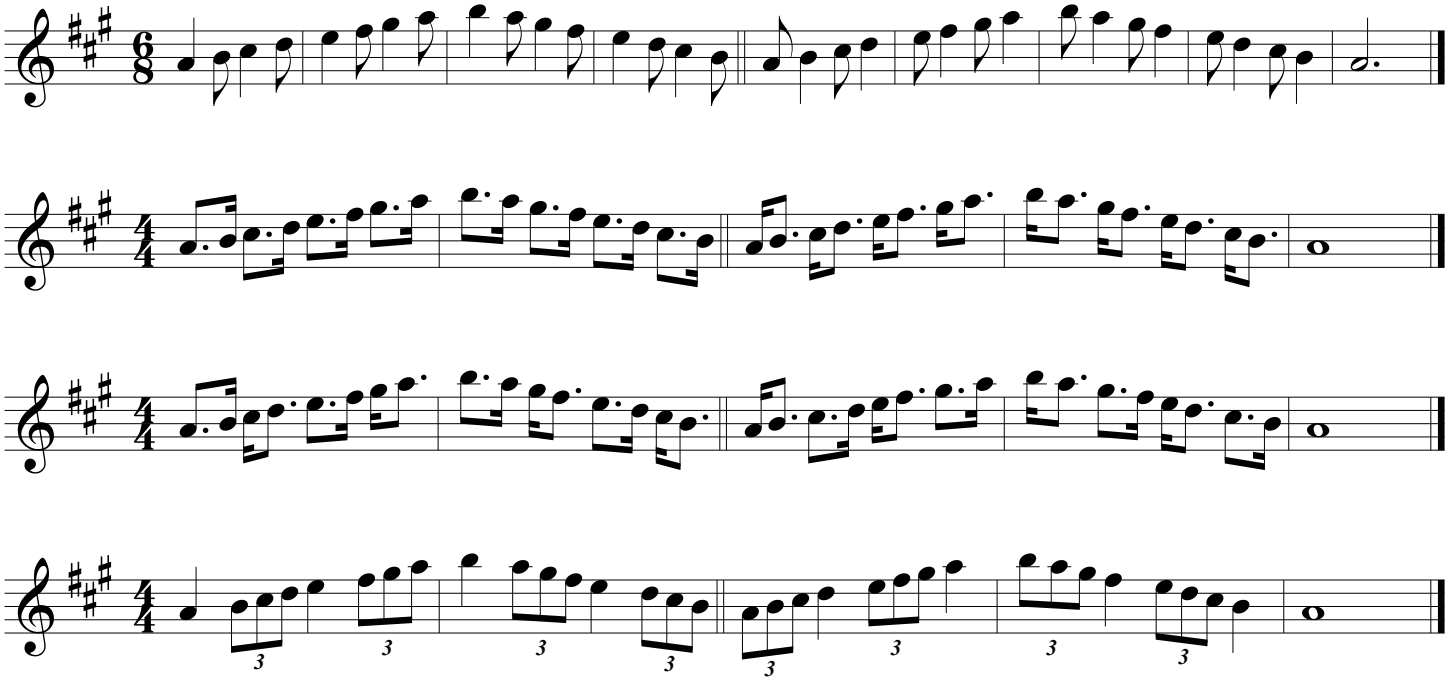
13. A Major

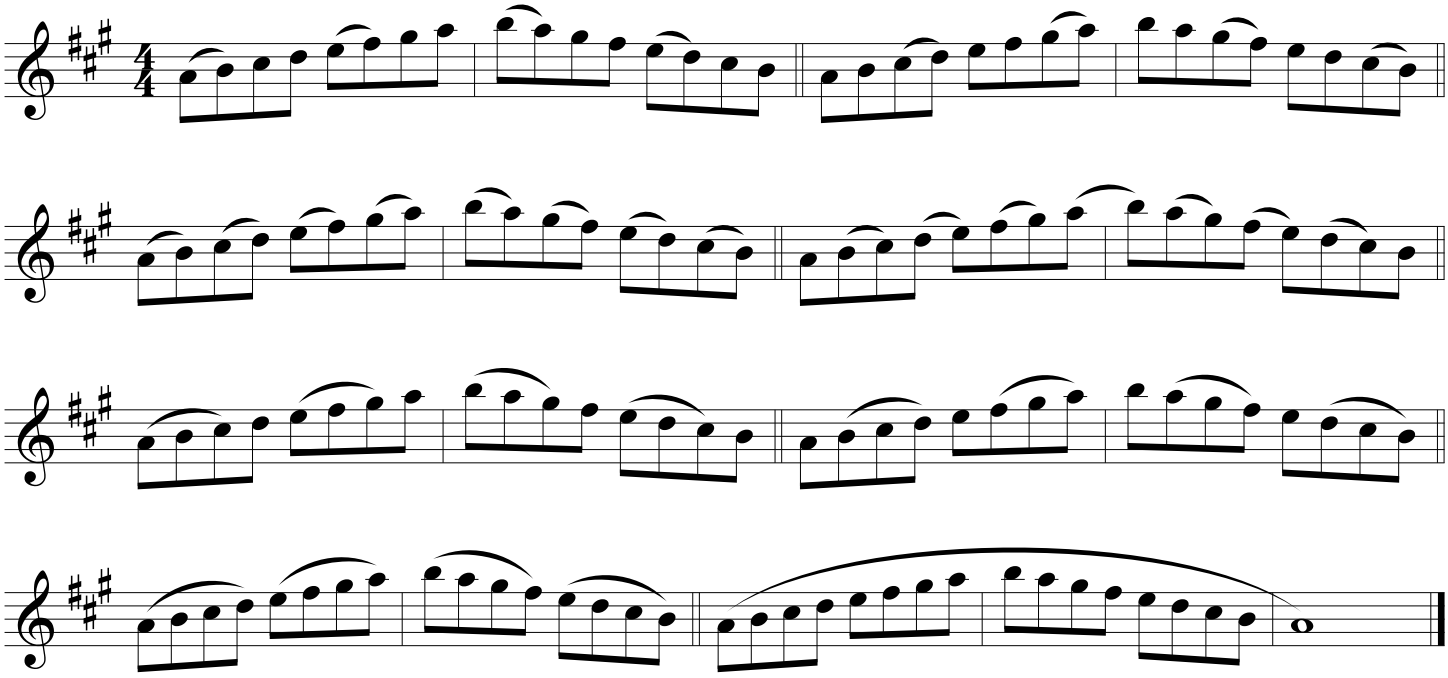
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Use more air and less tongue for a smoother, better sound.
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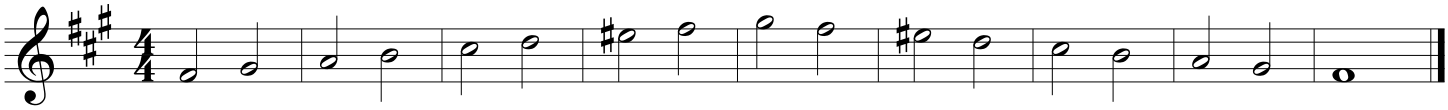
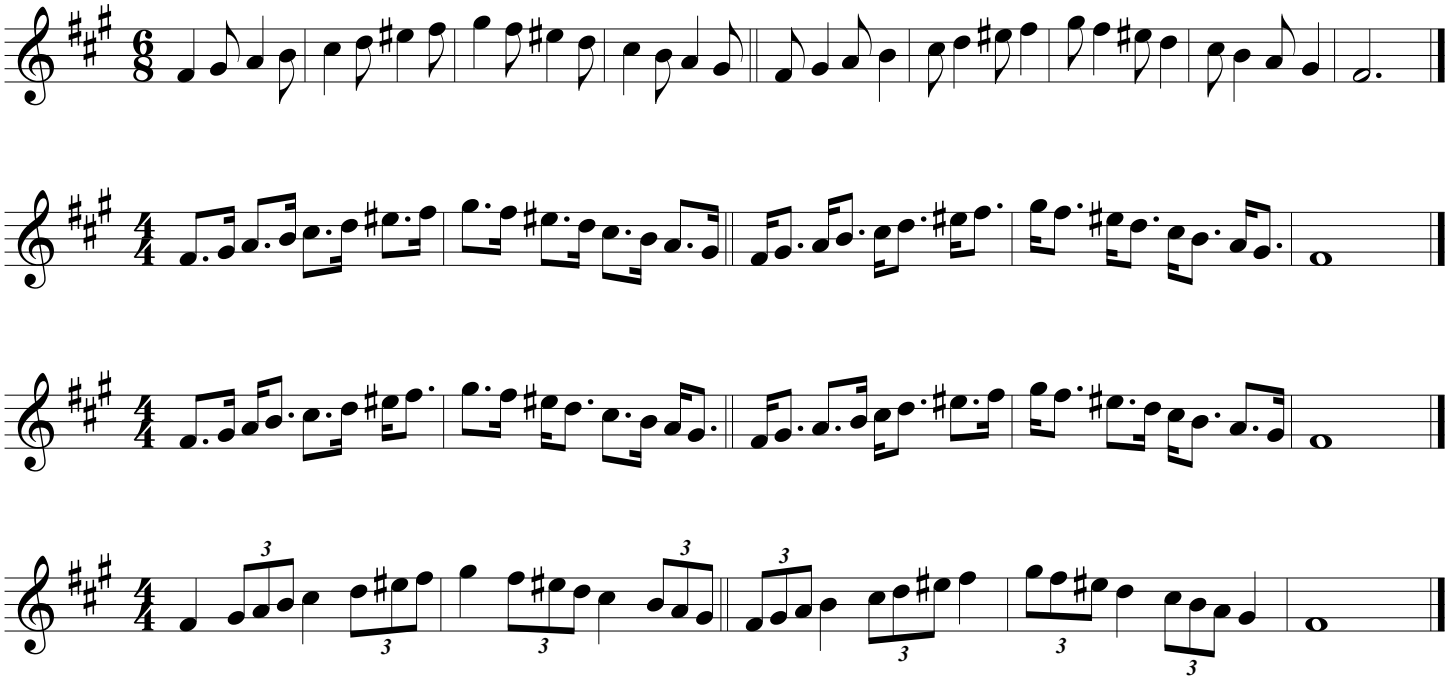
14. F♯ Minor

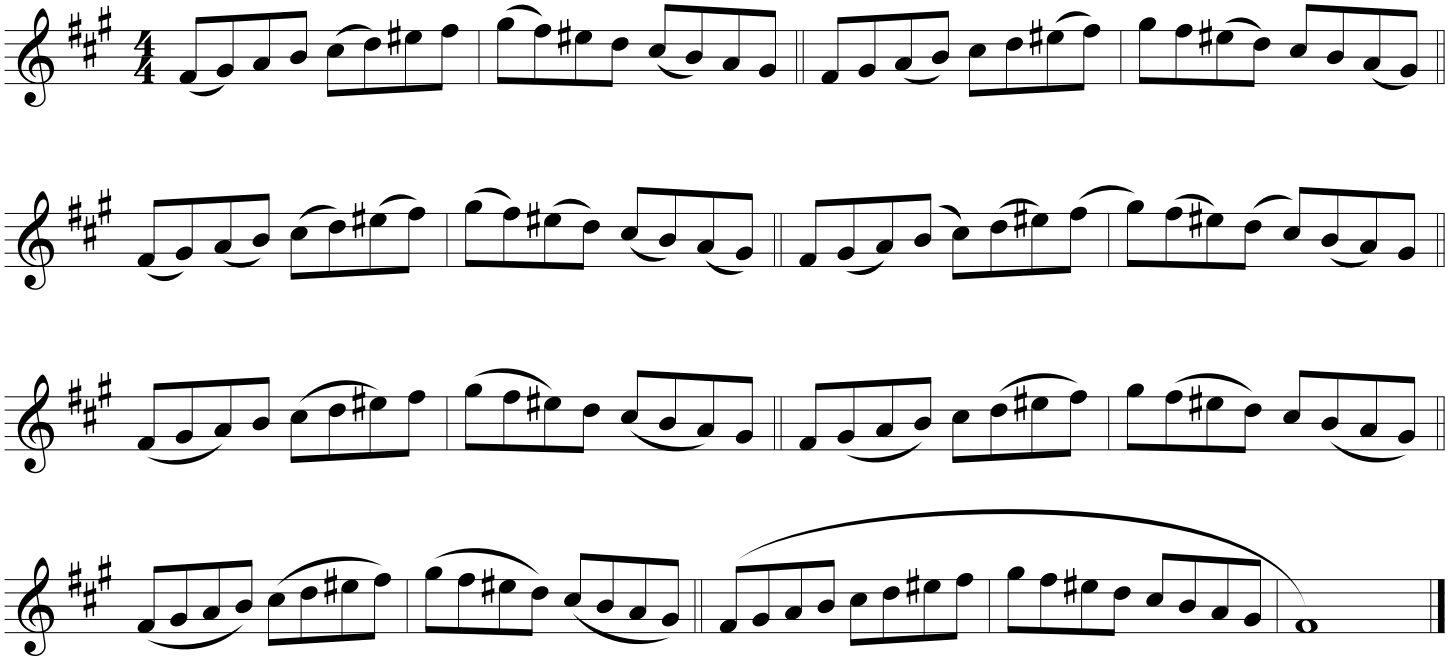
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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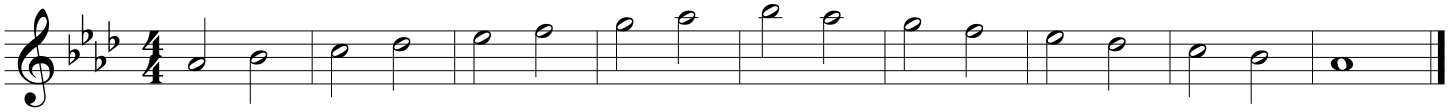
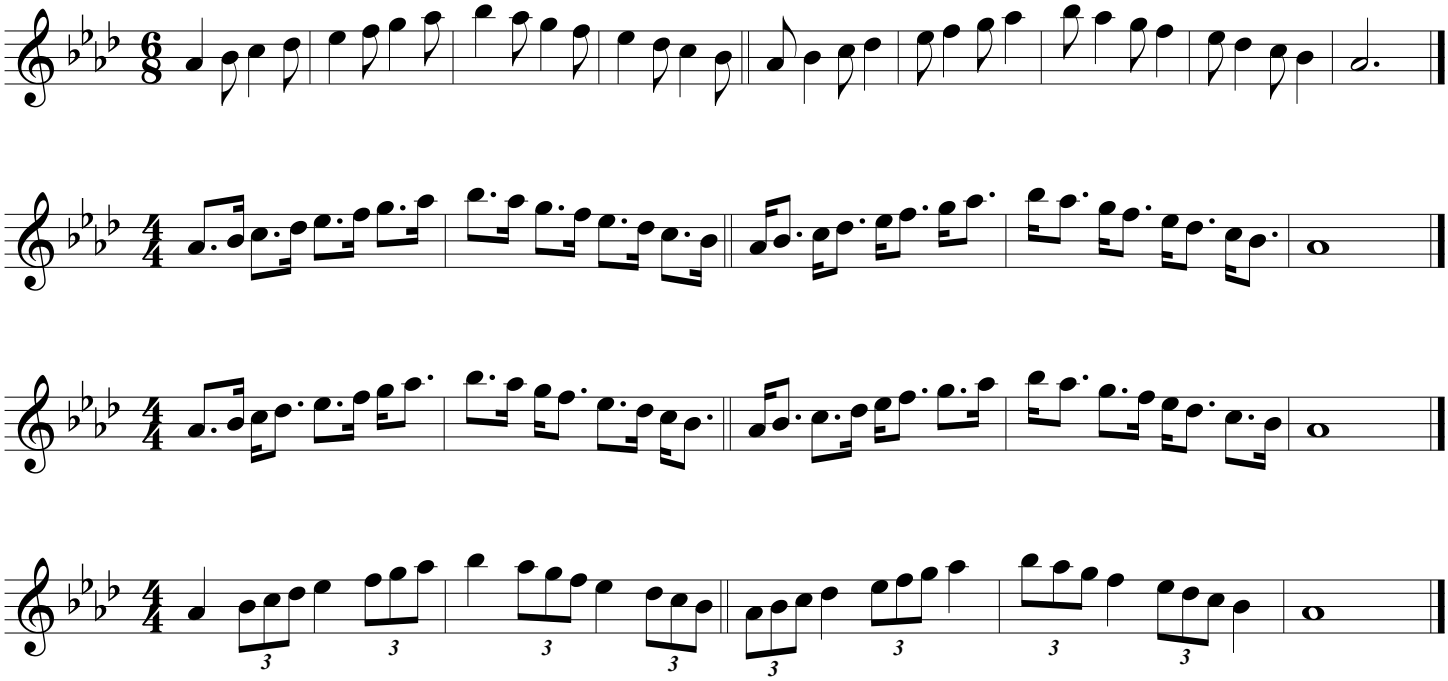
15. A♭ Major

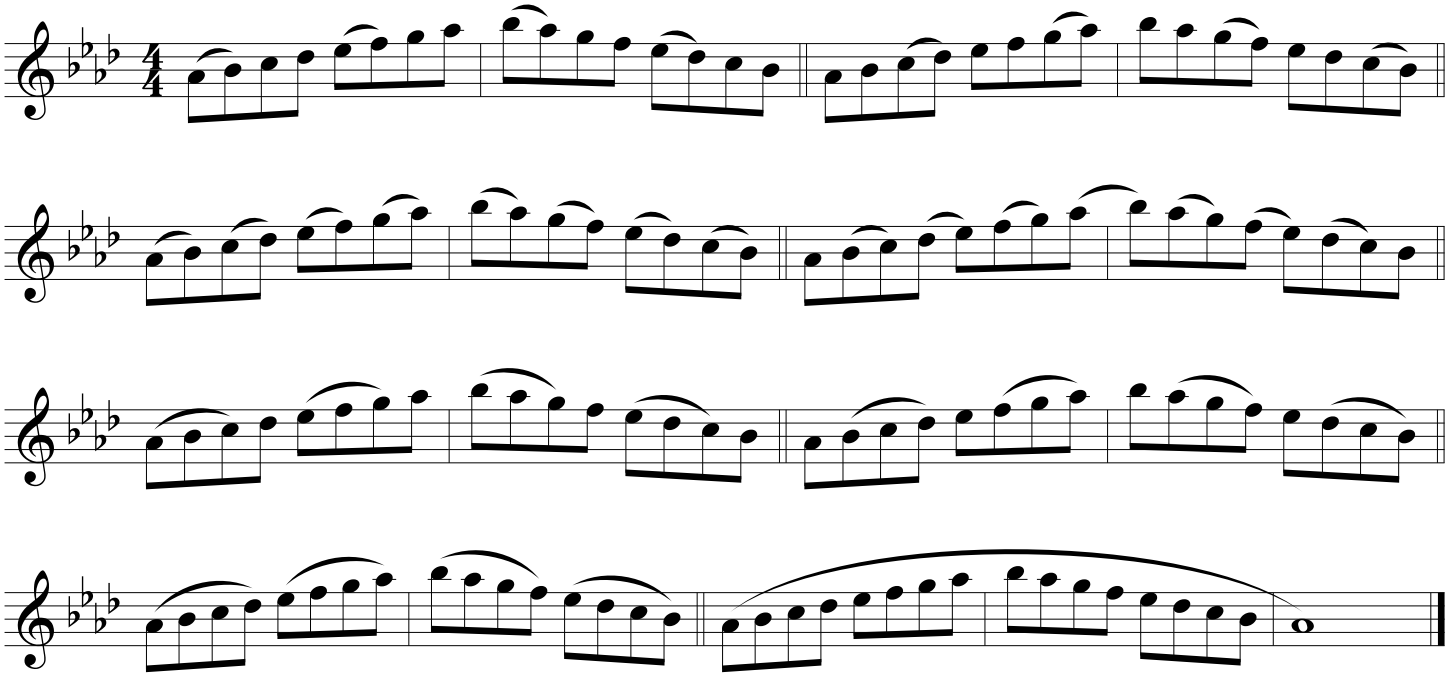
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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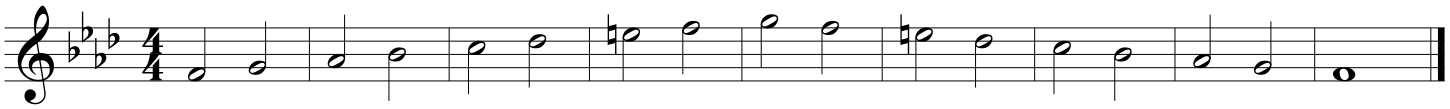
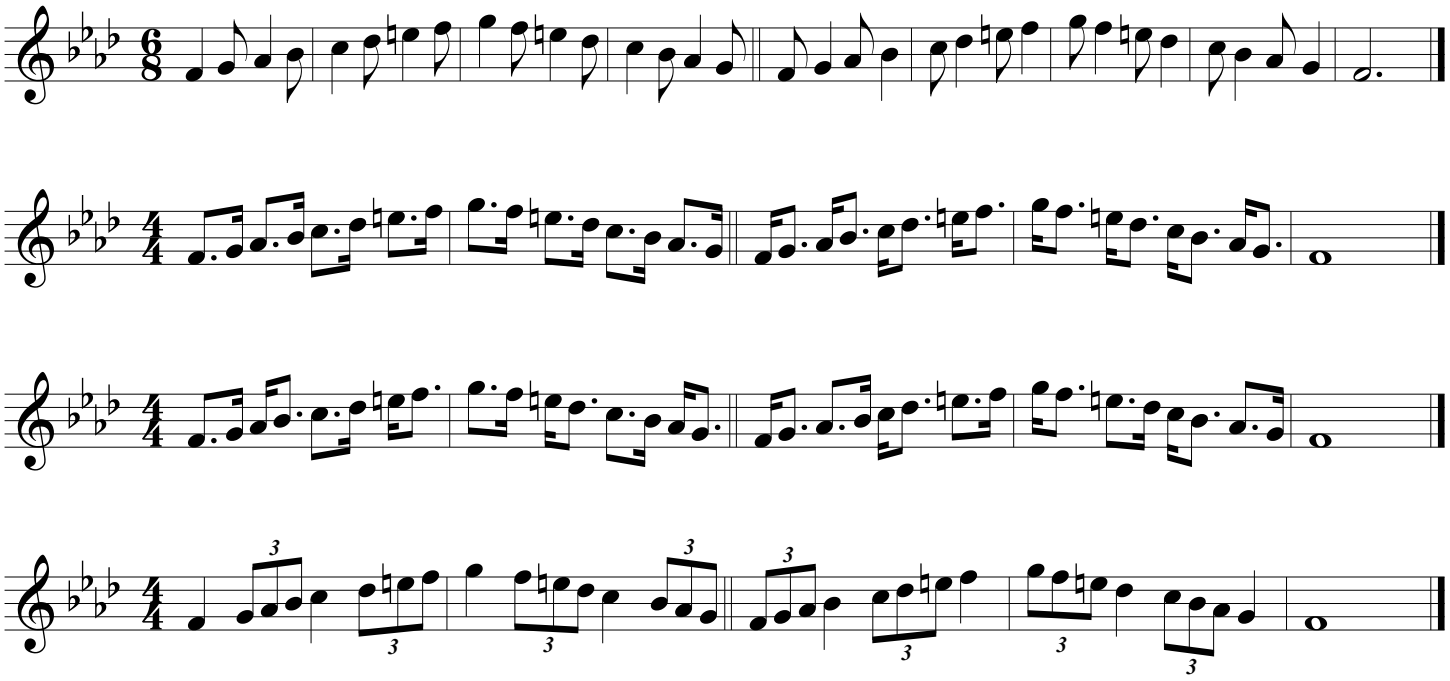
16. F Minor

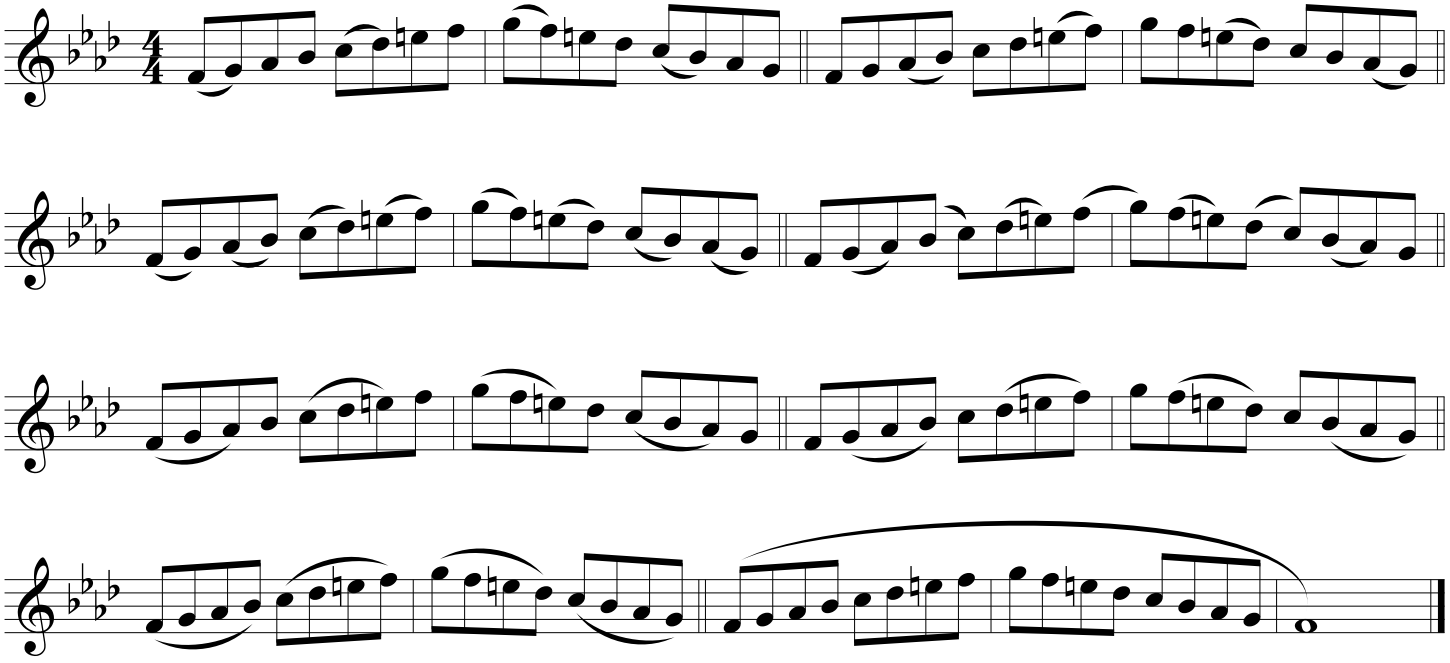
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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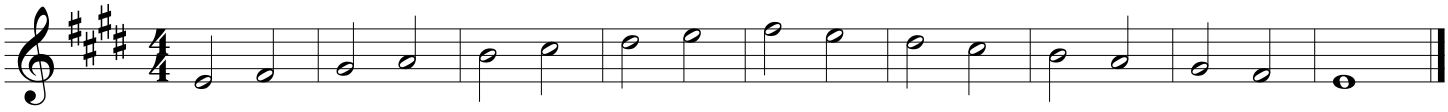
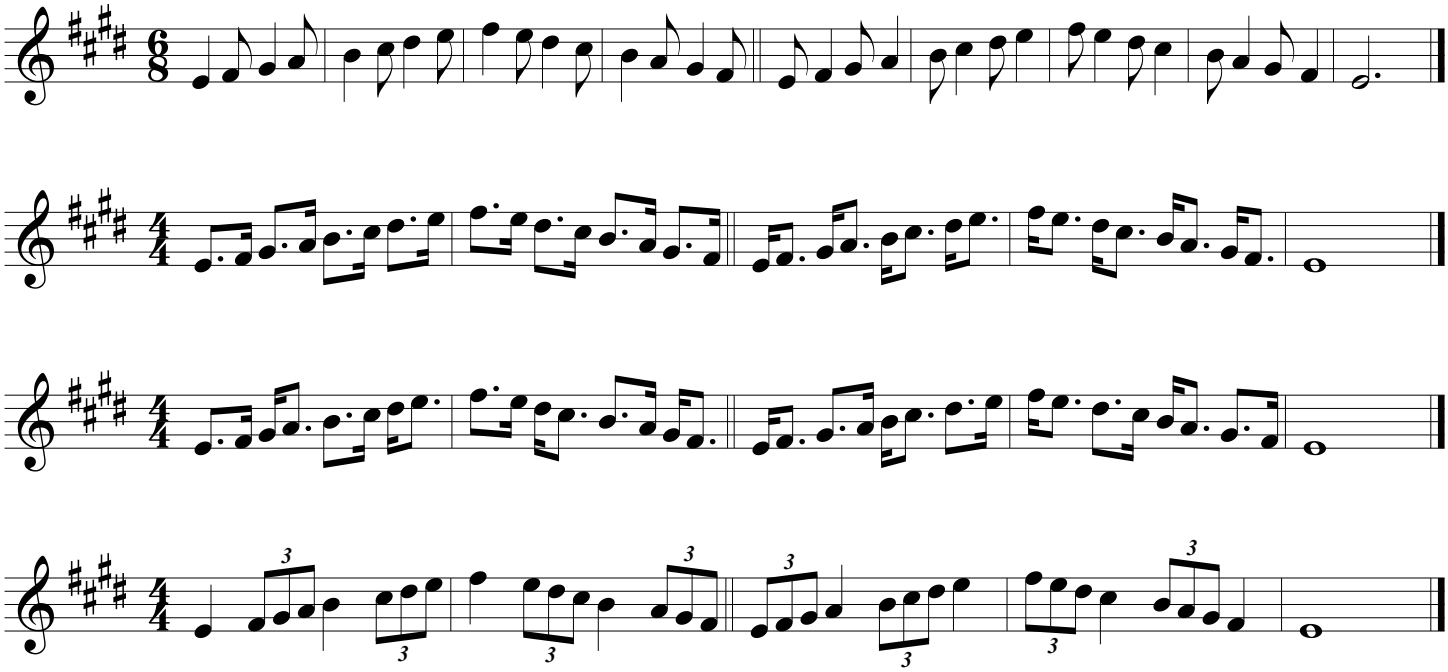
17. E Major

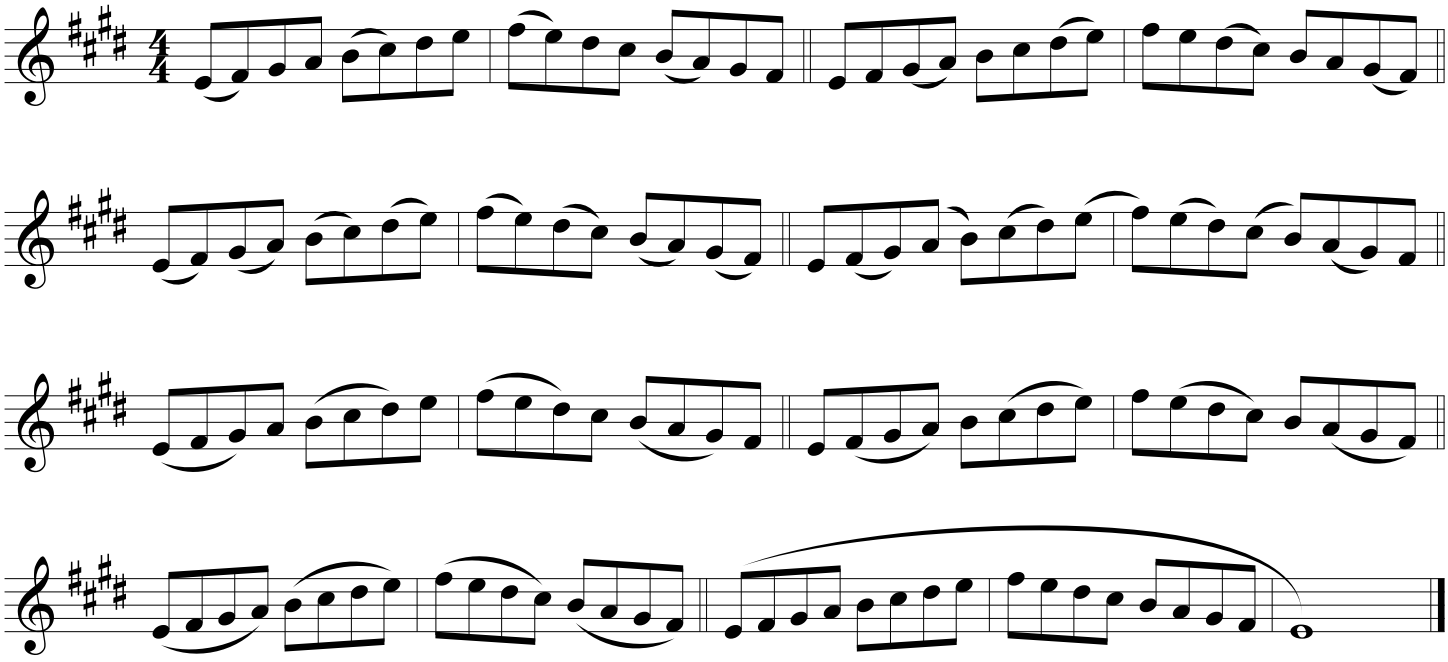
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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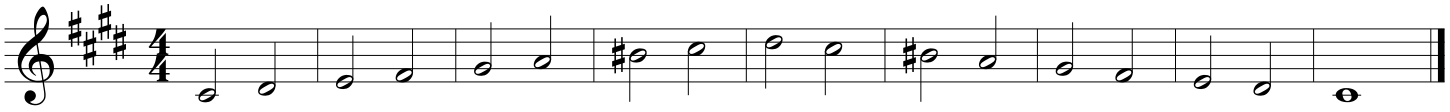
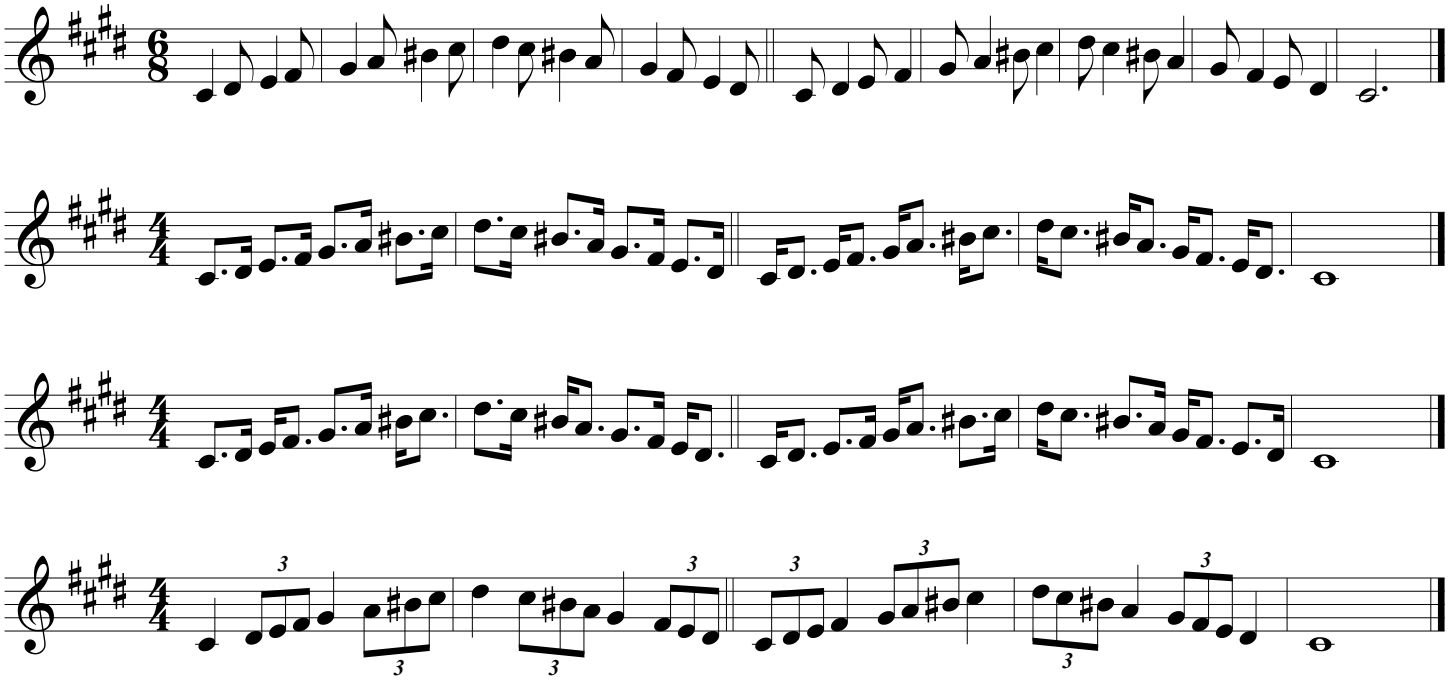
18. C♯ Minor

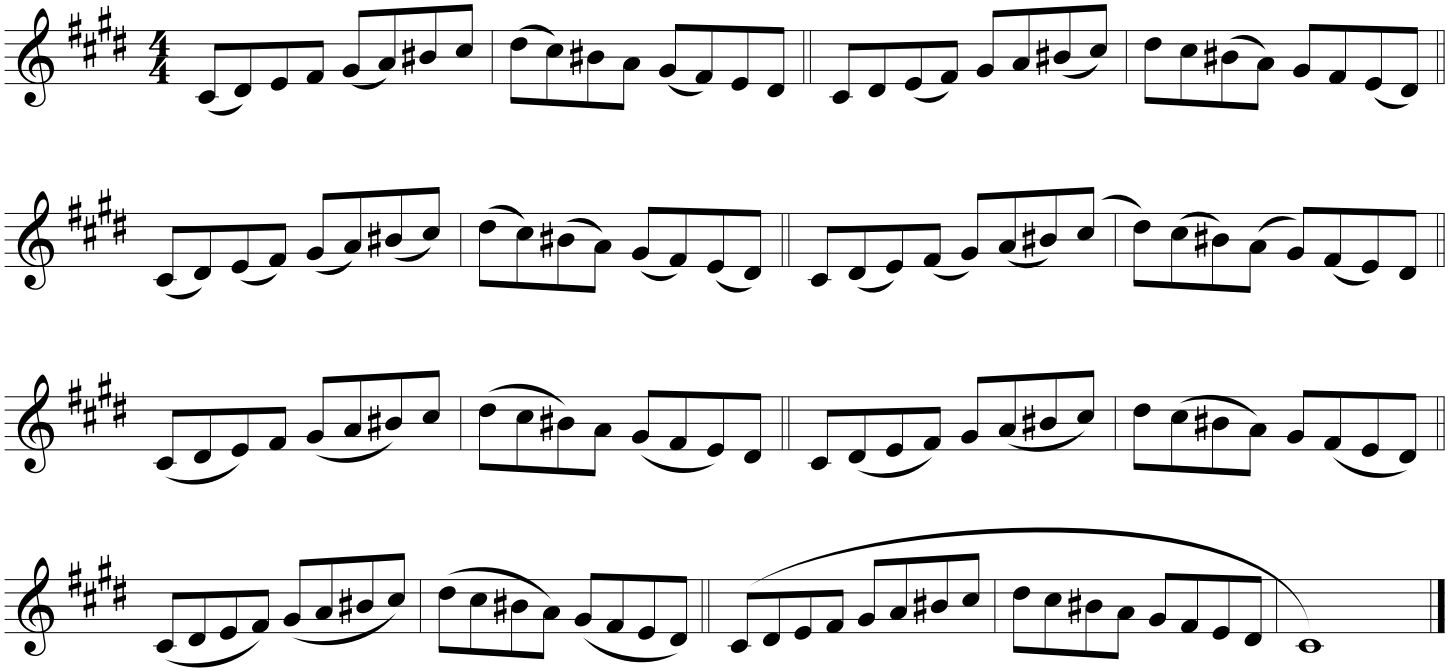
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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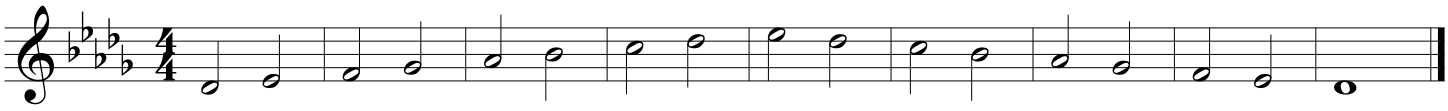
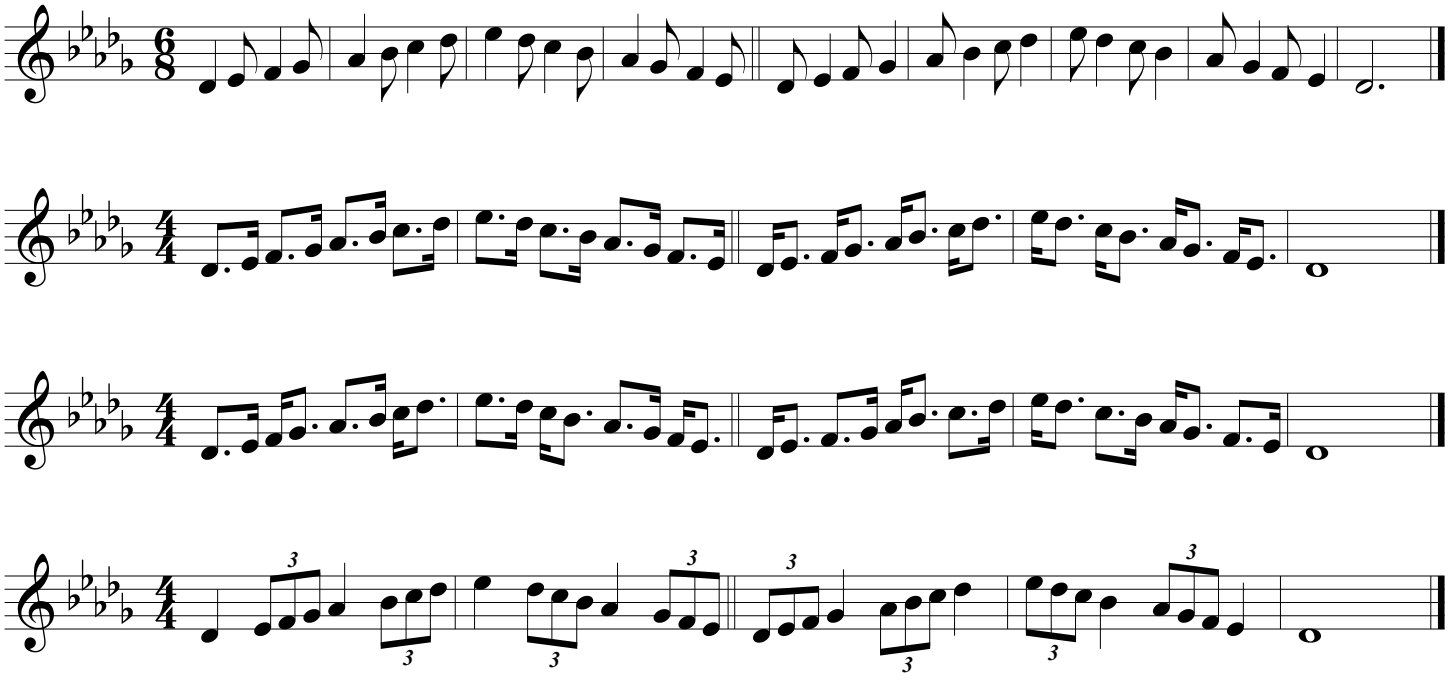
19. D♭ Major

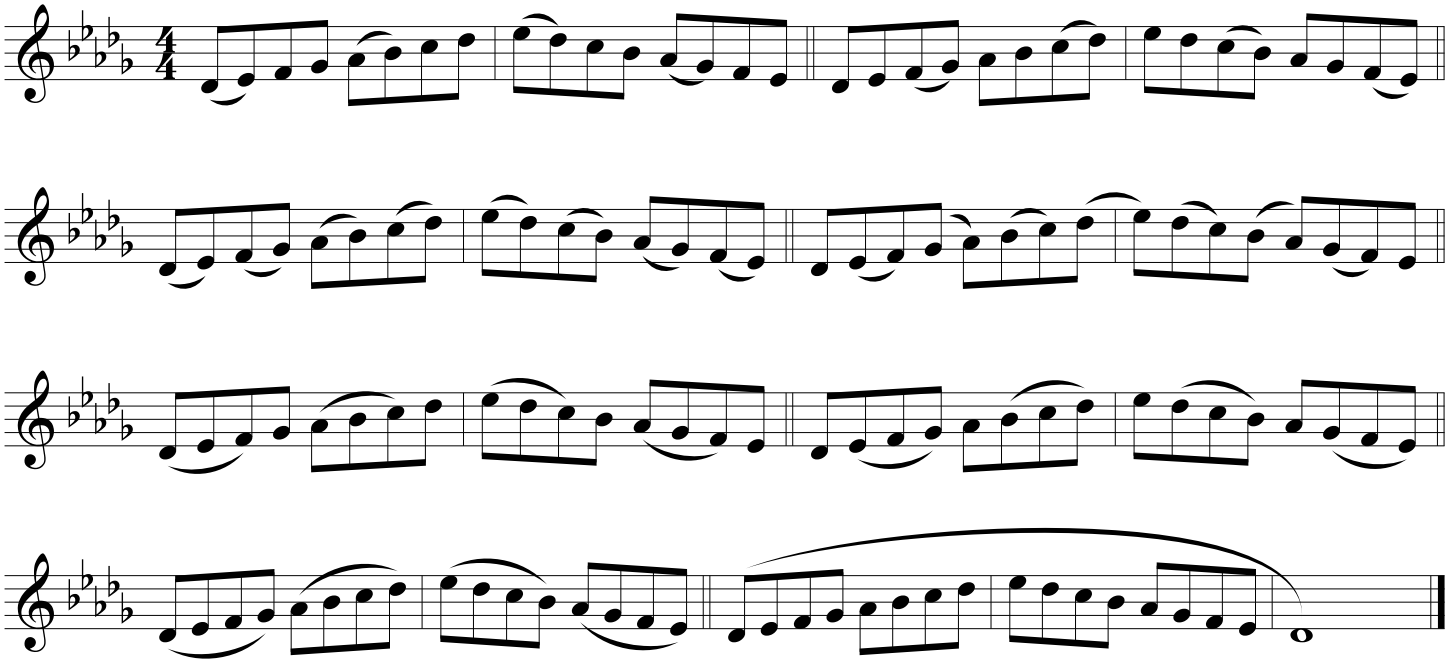
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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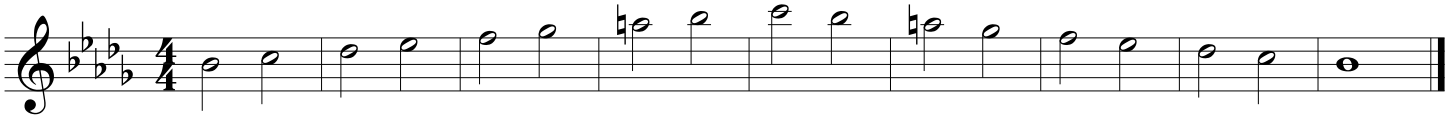
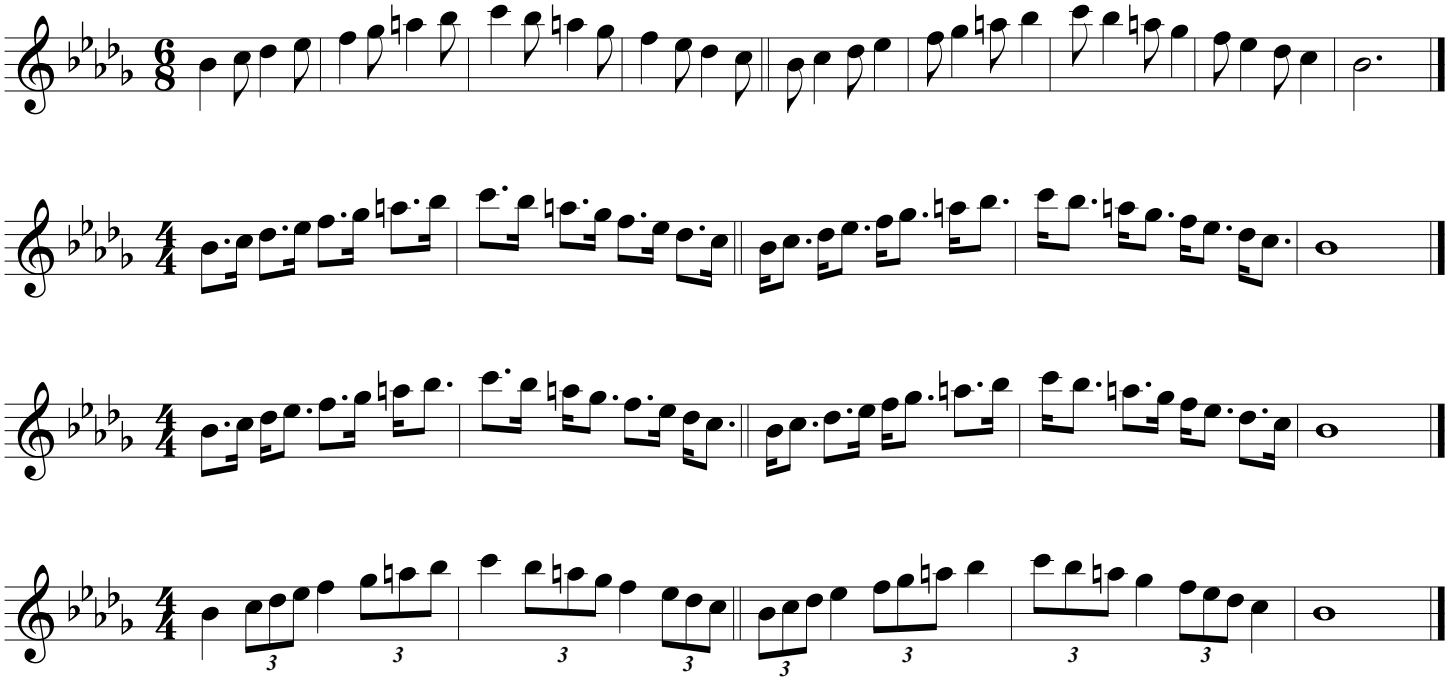
20. B♭ Minor

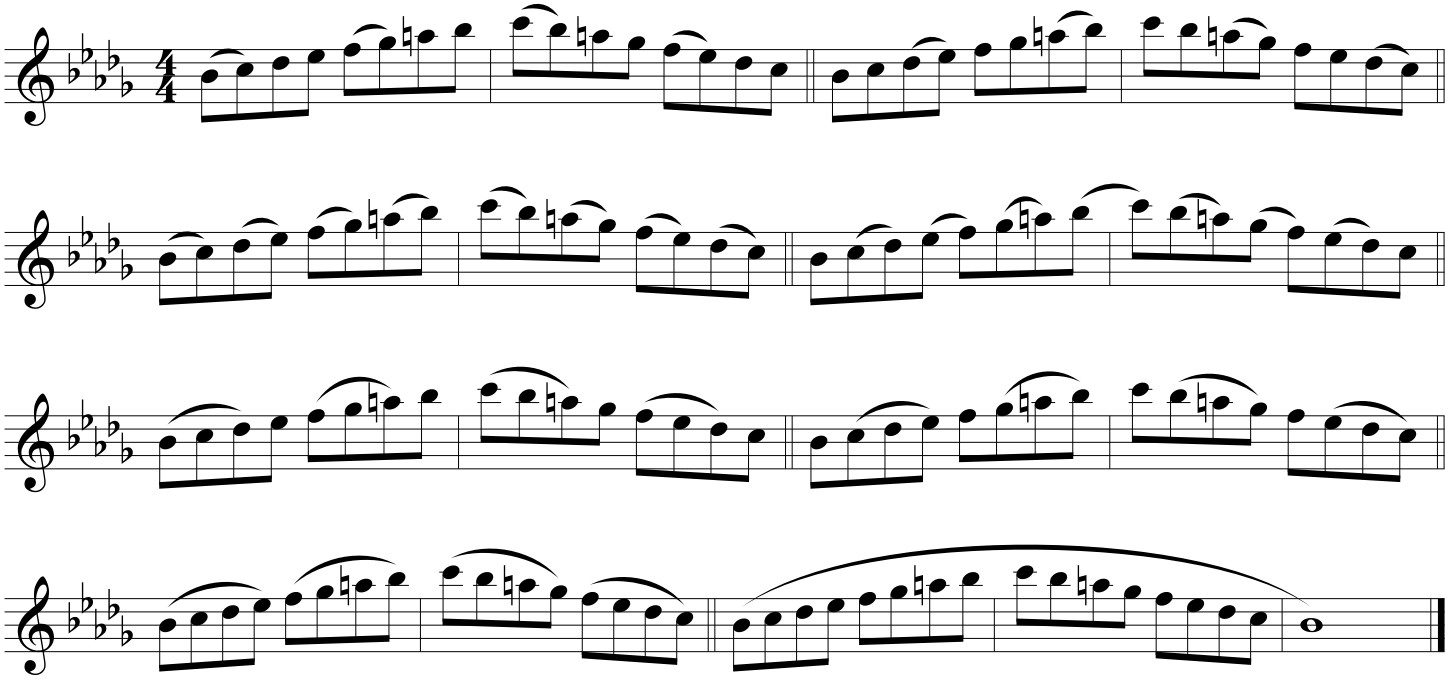
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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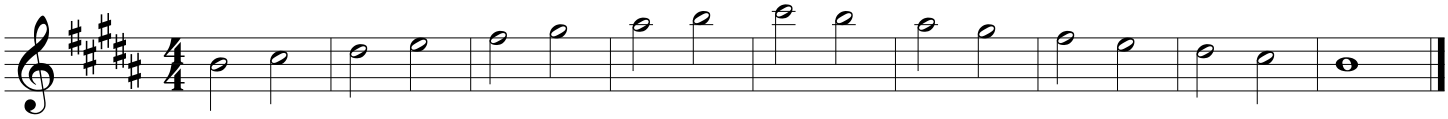
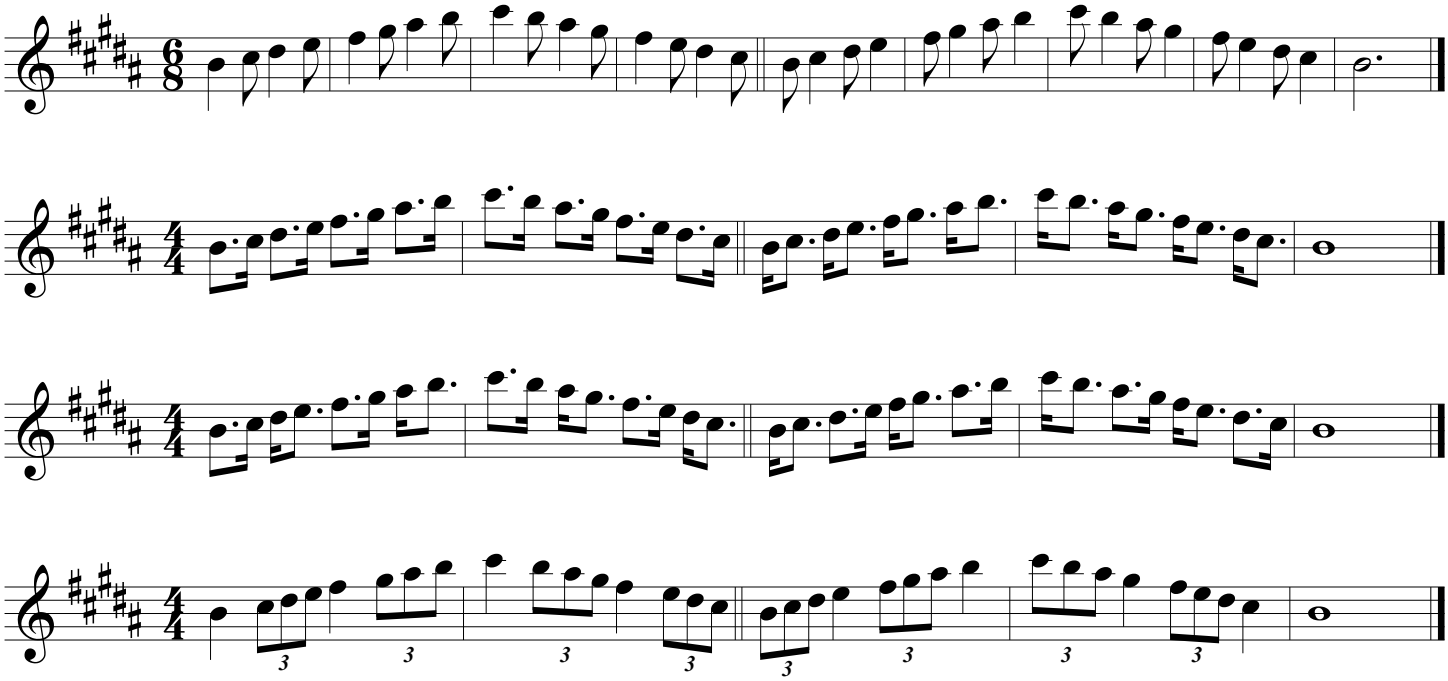
21. B Major

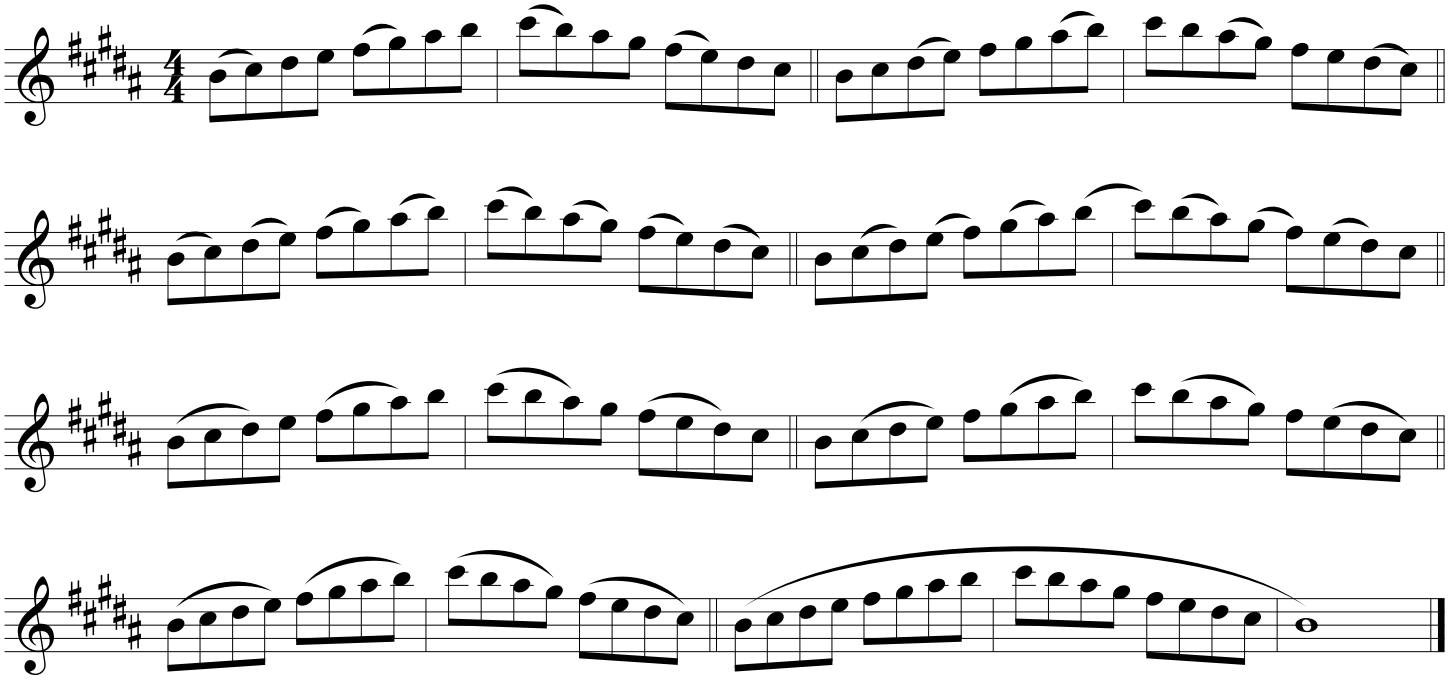
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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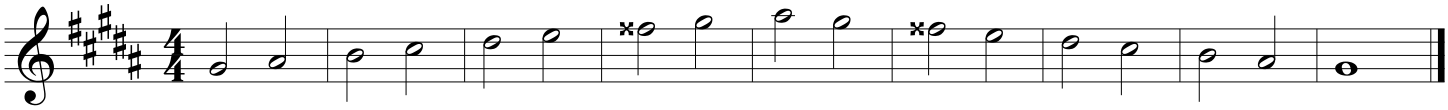
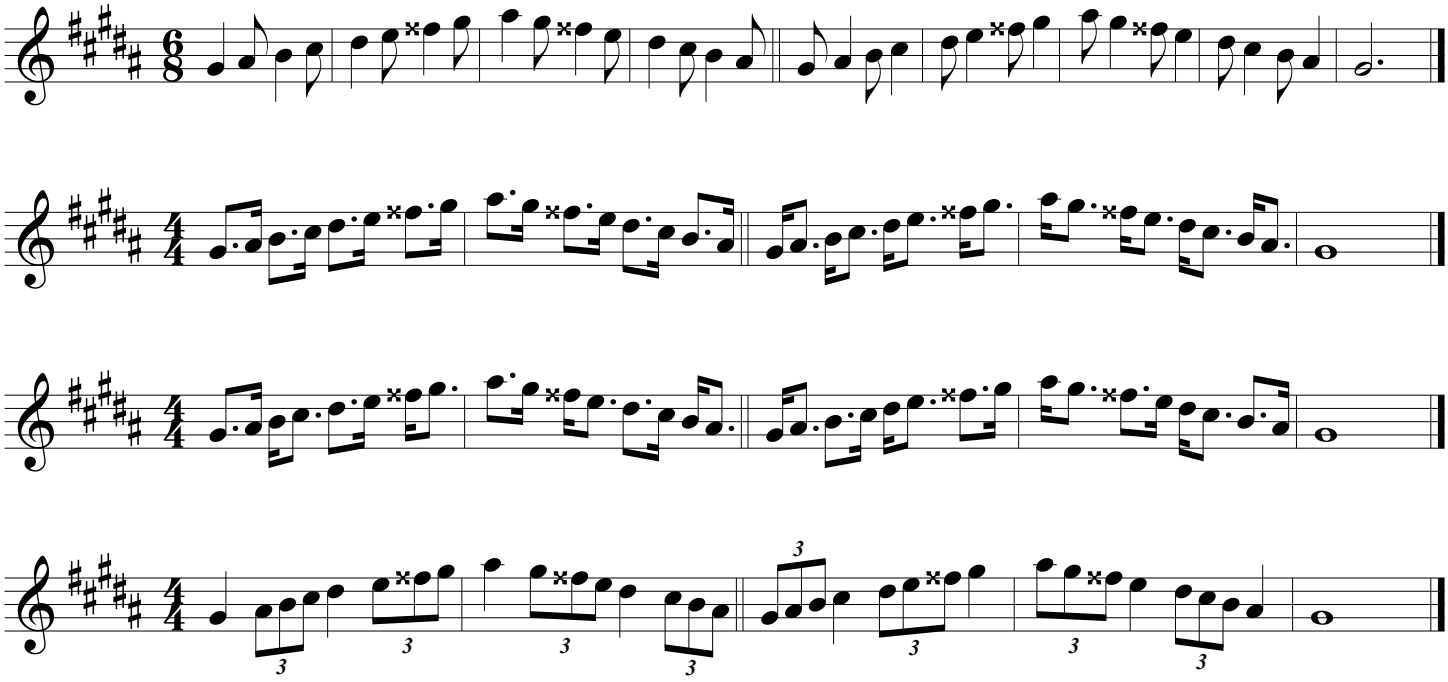
22. G♯ Minor

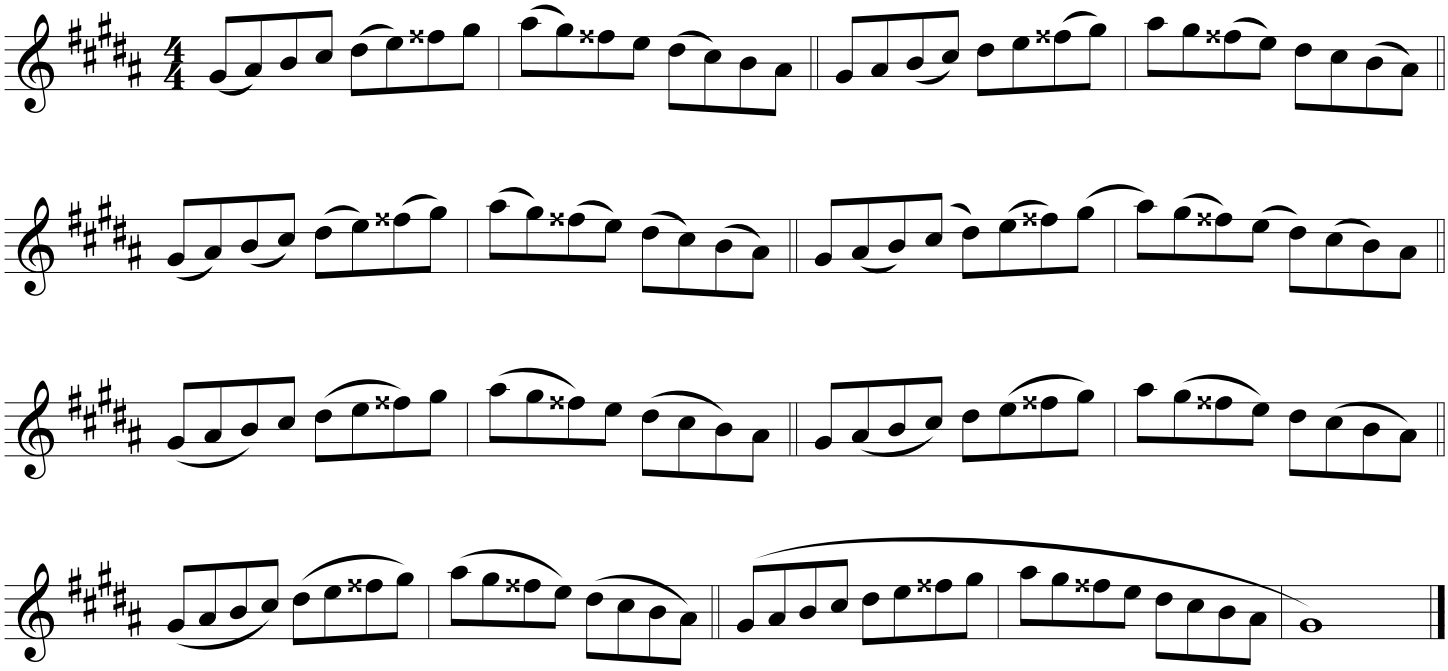
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



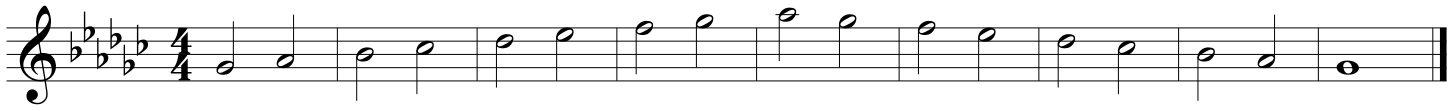
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



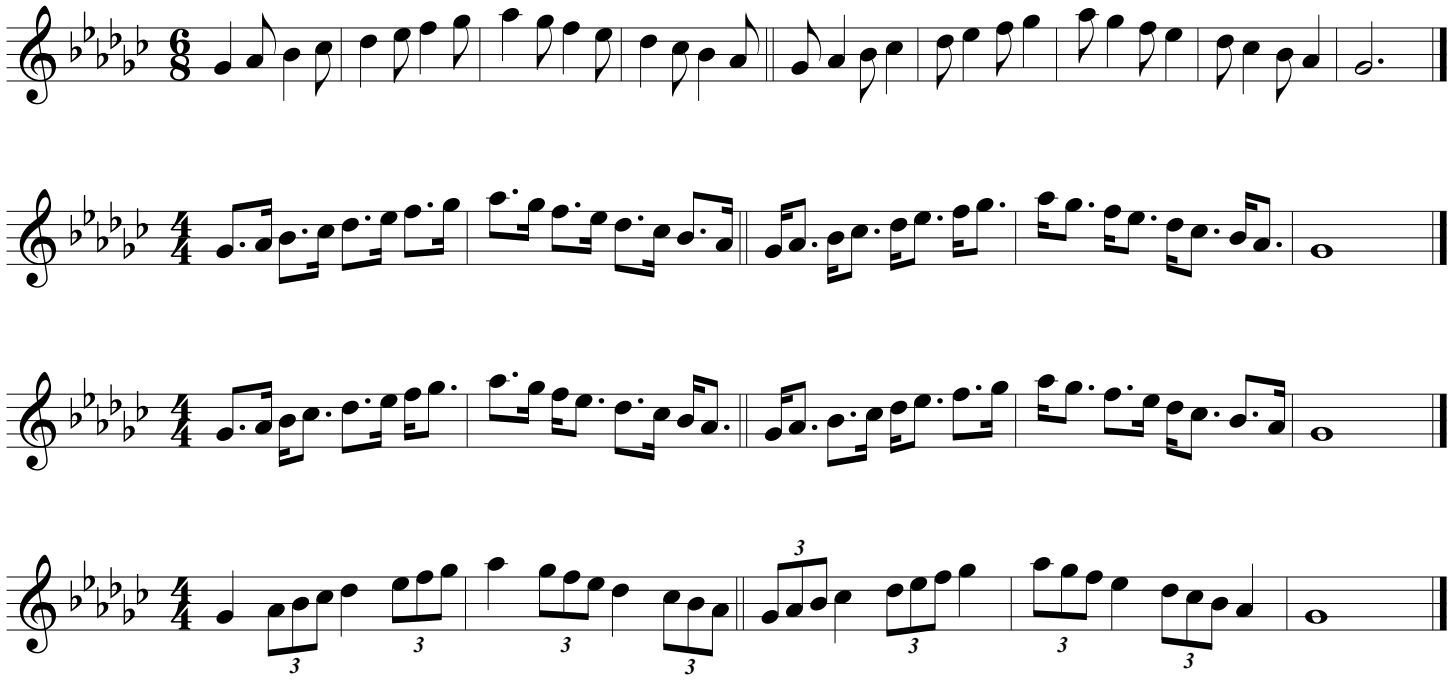
Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
Visit www.VincentLaMonica.com/tips for more tips and tricks!

23. G♭ Major

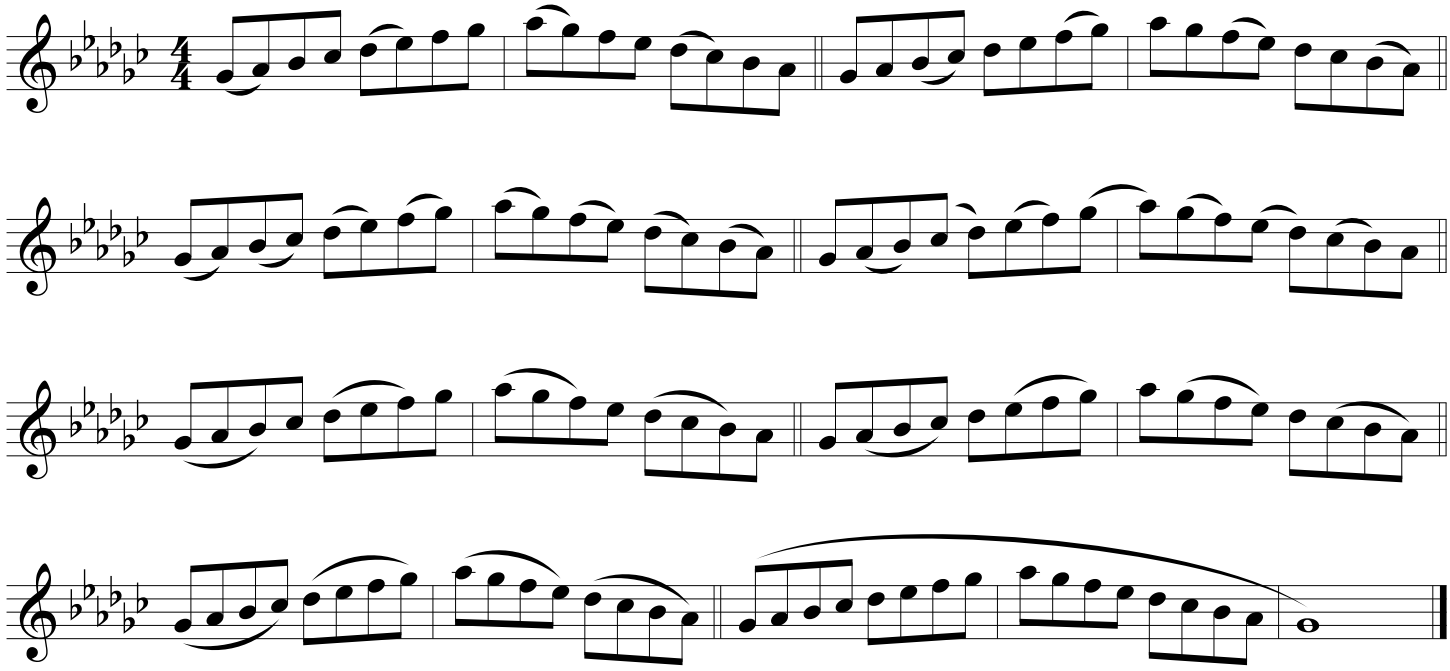
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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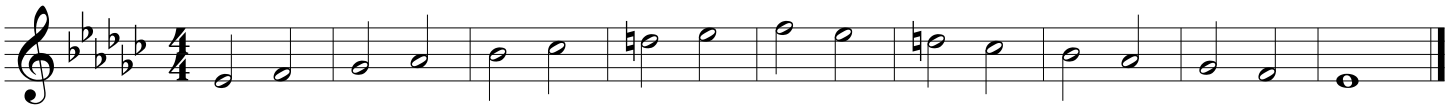
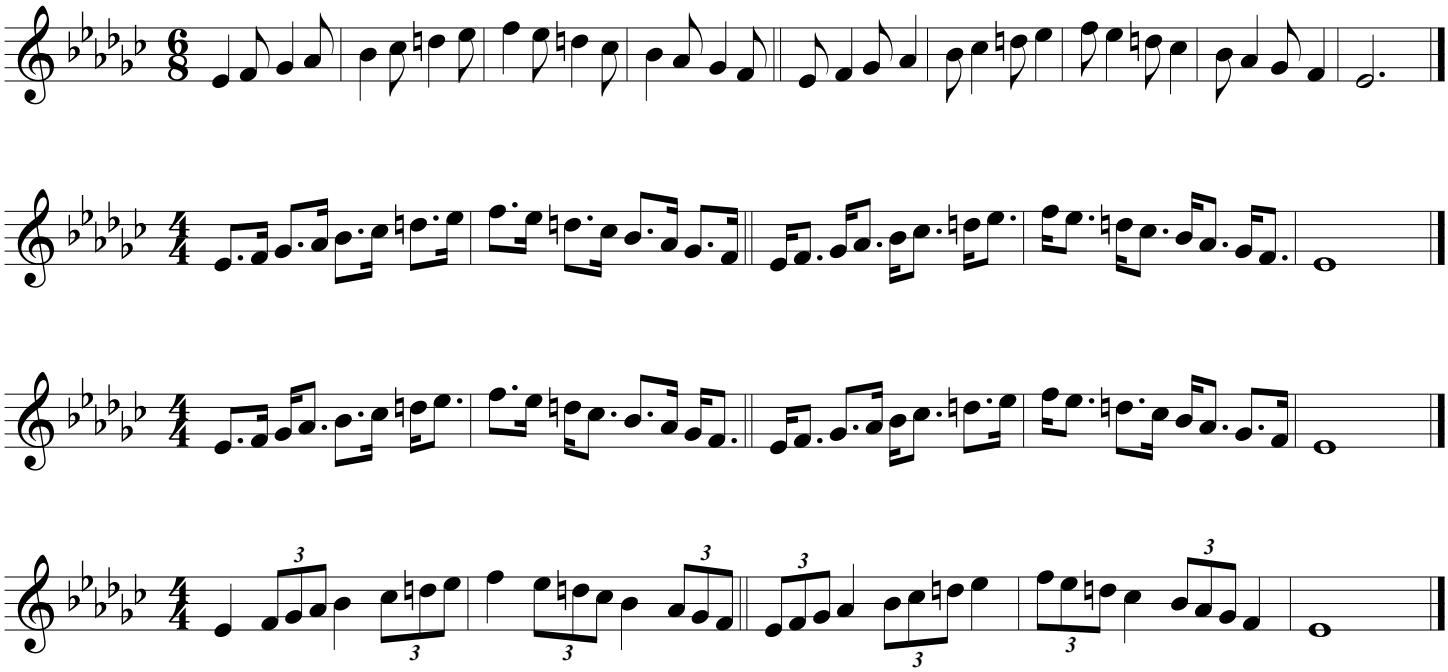
24. E♭ Minor

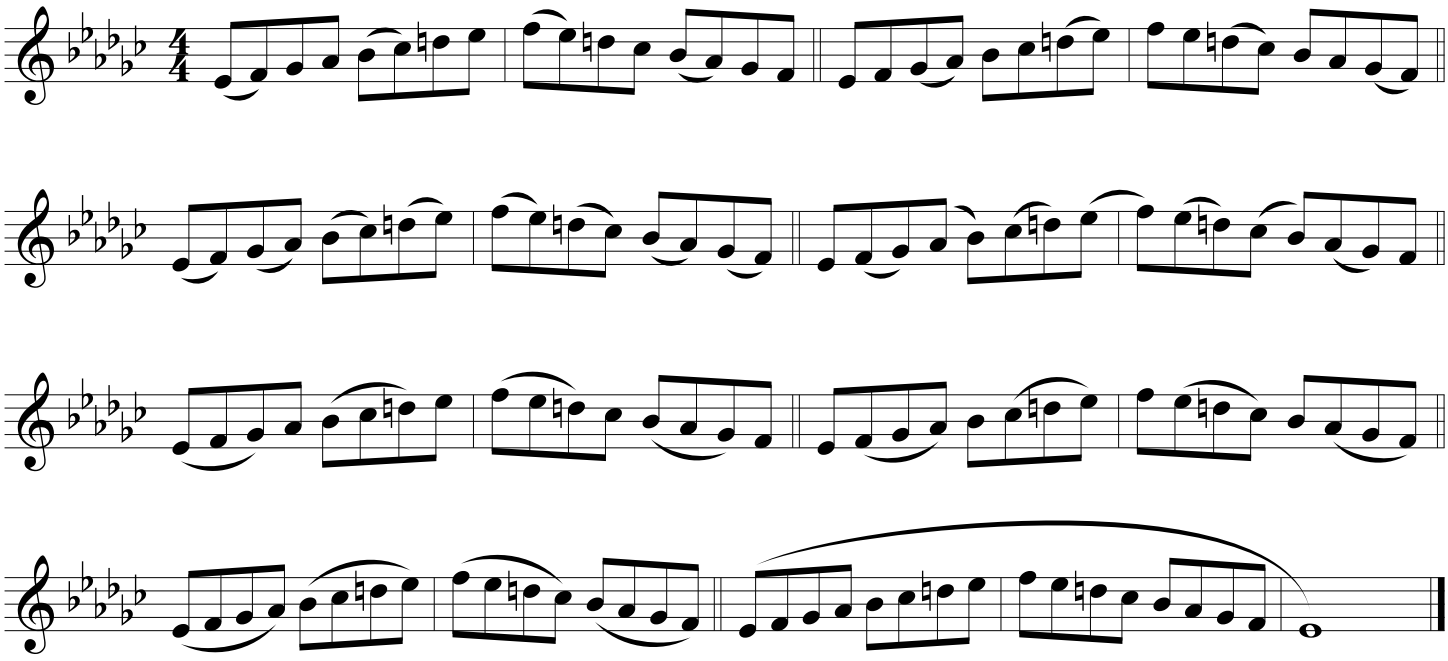
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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Section 1 Review: Modulating Scales

In these next three pages, we will cover every scale we have worked on so far. Note the order – it moves around the circle of fifths by descending two notes each time. C Major, a minor, F Major, d minor, Bb Major… until the circle is completed and we have landed back on Concert C.

There are two versions included. The first ascends to scale degree 9 using straight eighth notes (equal rhythm). The second, "Audition Format," follows the rhythmic ratio most commonly asked on auditions, where the first note and its upper octave repetition are twice as long as the other notes, and there is no scale degree 9. Additionally, I have added courtesy flats/sharps/naturals in parenthesis above the audition format minor scales to change them from "harmonic minor" to "melodic minor." Try them both ways!

My recommendation is to play the "Equal Rhythm" version fully-slurred, and the "Audition Format" version with a legato tongue. If you can play the Review pages from Sections 1 and 2, you are beyond ready to move to Volume 2: Mastering Scales! See if you can record yourself playing all the way through, and send me the video/audio via email at LaMonicaMusic@gmail.com if you'd like it posted on my website!

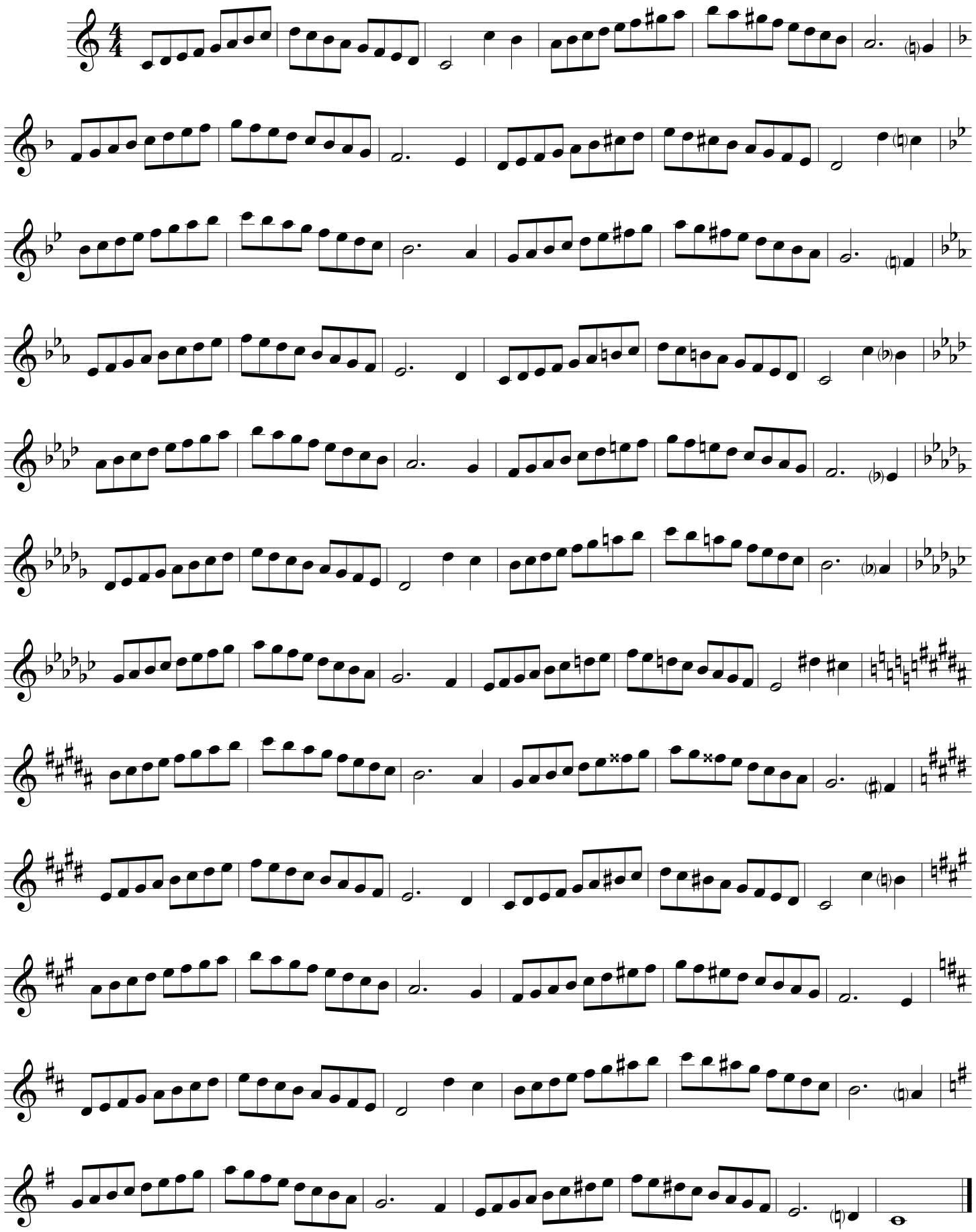
And don't forget…

"Round, forward embouchure"

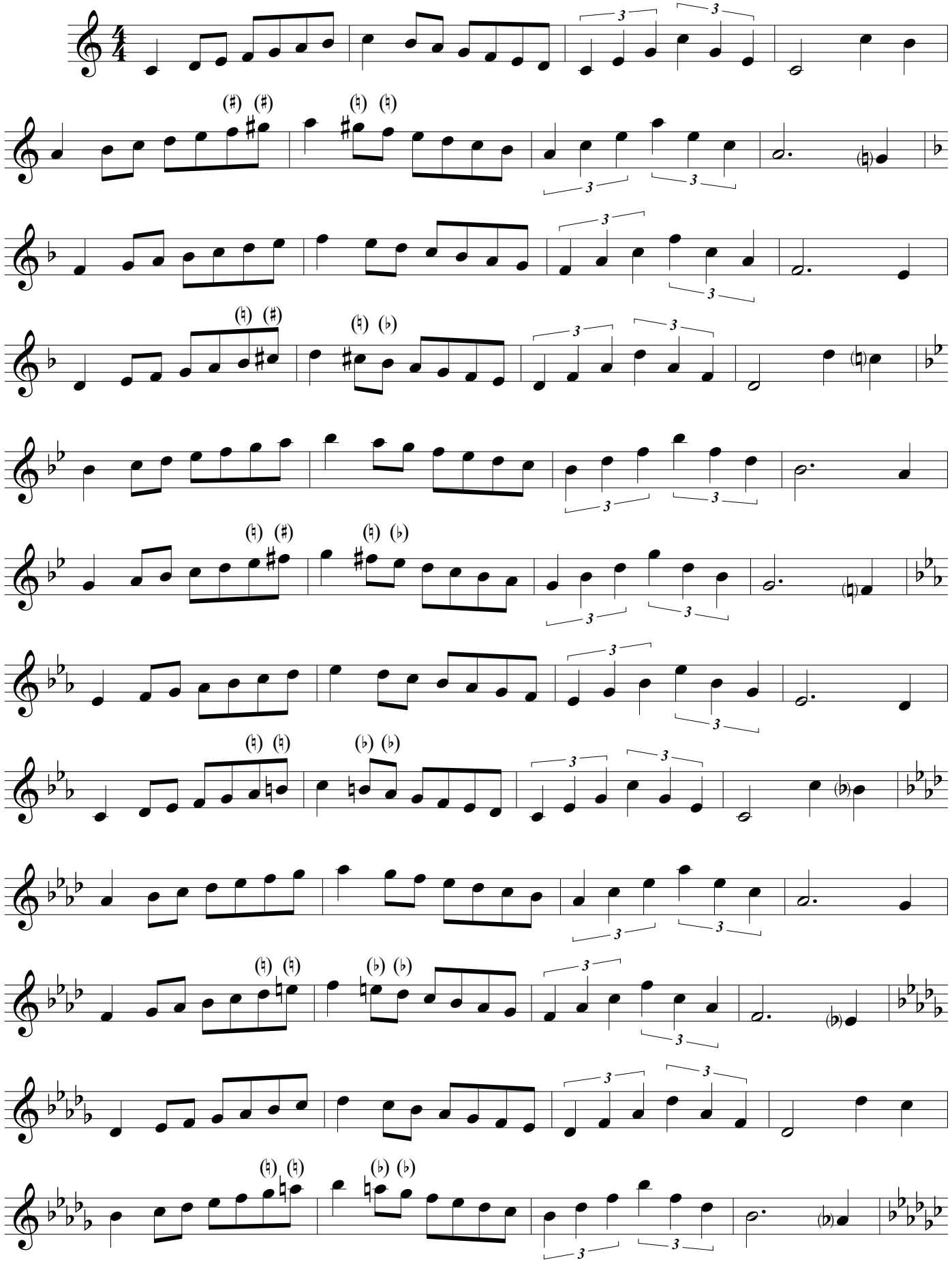
"Breathe, Set, Play"

"More air, less tongue"

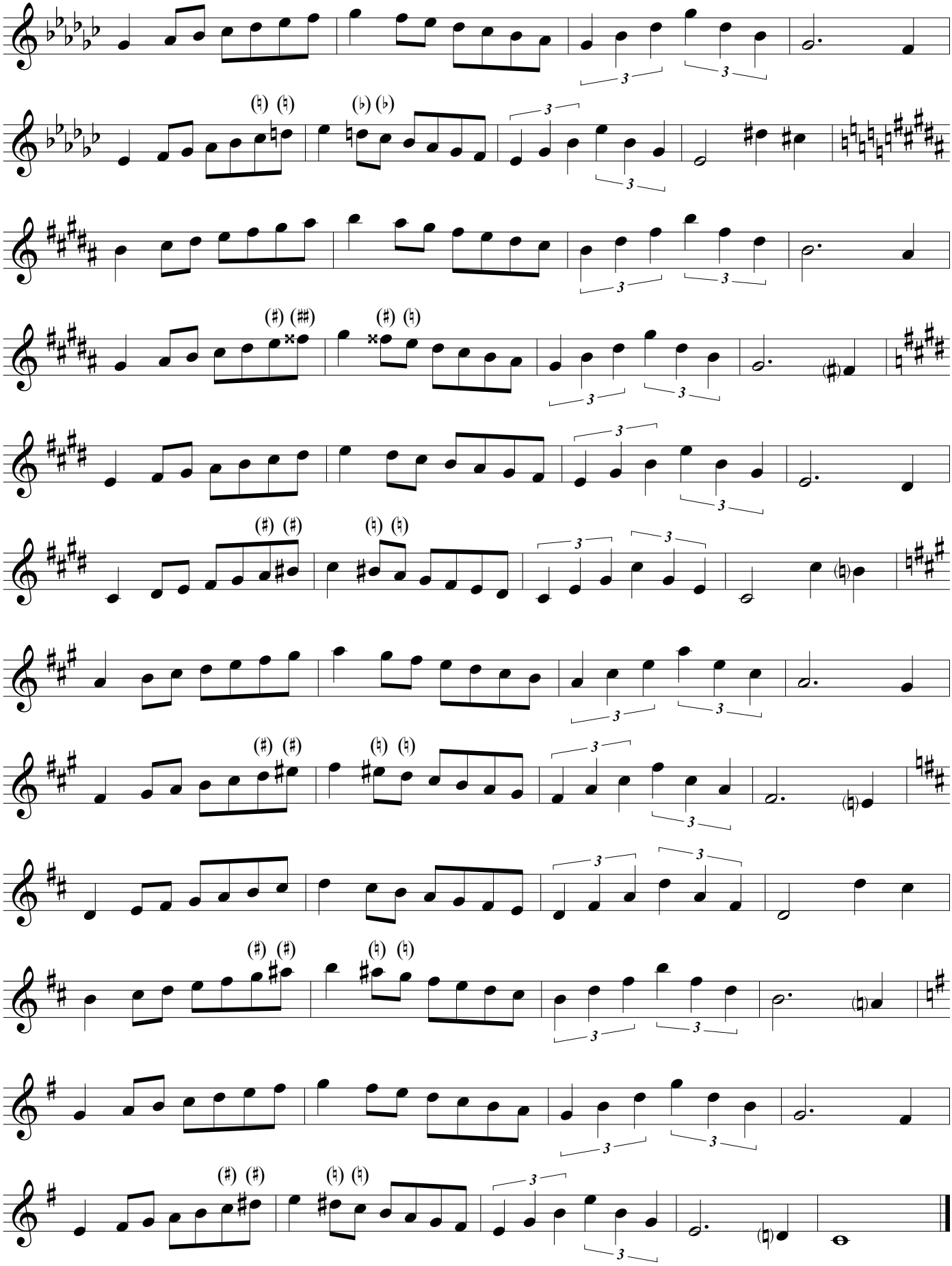
Complete Modulating Scales



Complete Modulating Scales in "Audition Format"



Complete Modulating Scales in "Audition Format"

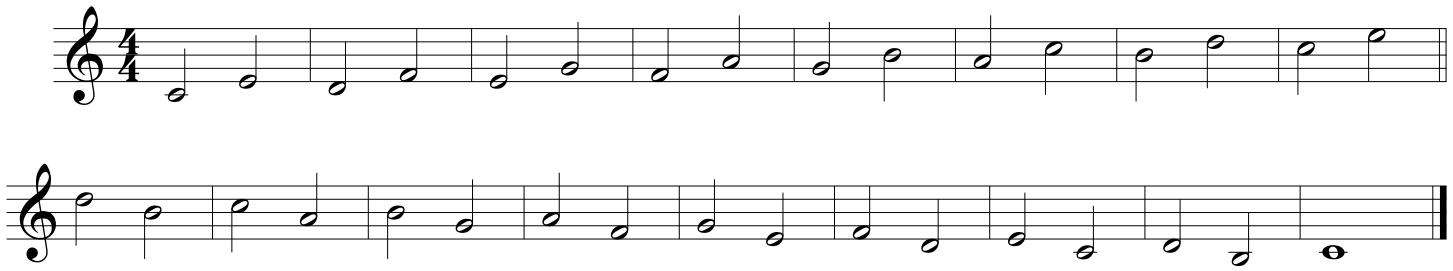


Section 2: Scales In Thirds

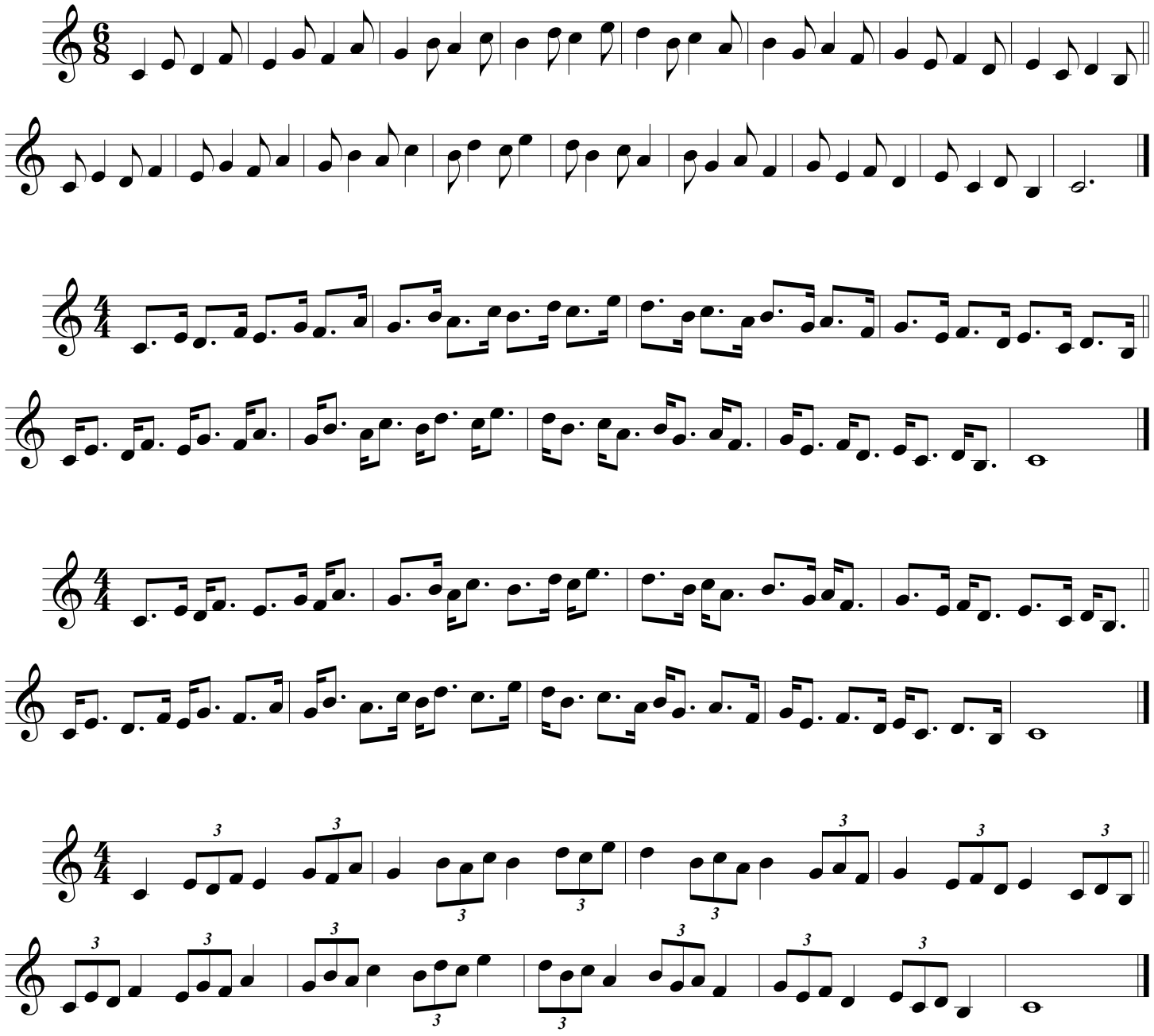
These scales in thirds outline the same structure as the scales did – the central note of each pattern is "scale degree 9" (one note past the name of the scale). However, because of the pattern of thirds, we actually go one note higher than that, "scale degree 10." This may seem strange at first, but again, the purpose is to break the tendency to mentally pause on each octave, and it smoothens the flow in the "varying articulation" section.

1. C Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



Use more air and less tongue for a smoother, better sound.
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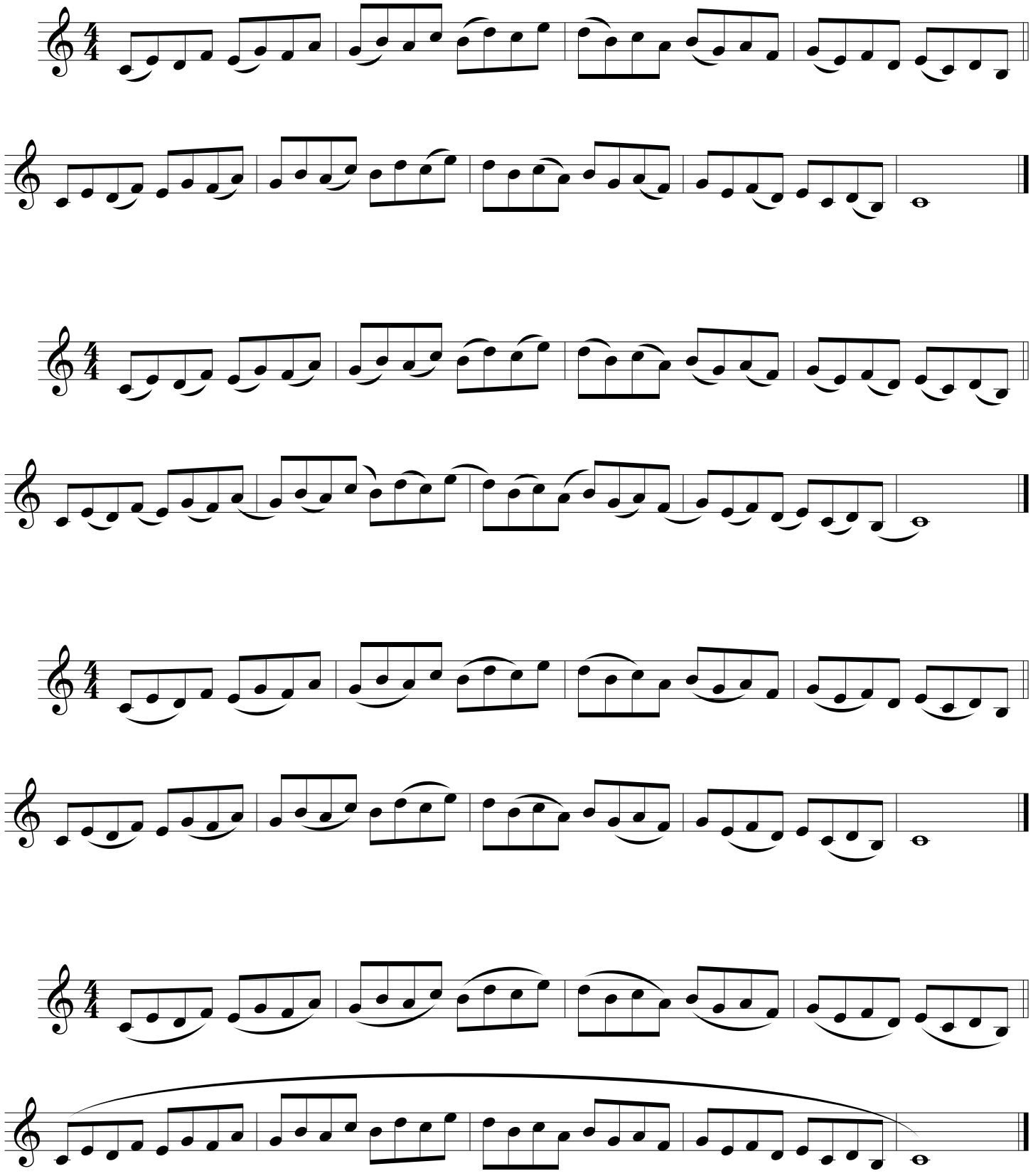
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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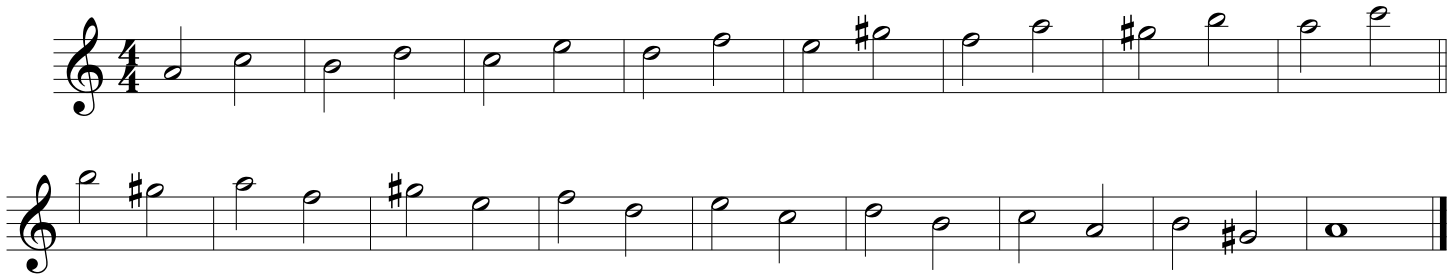
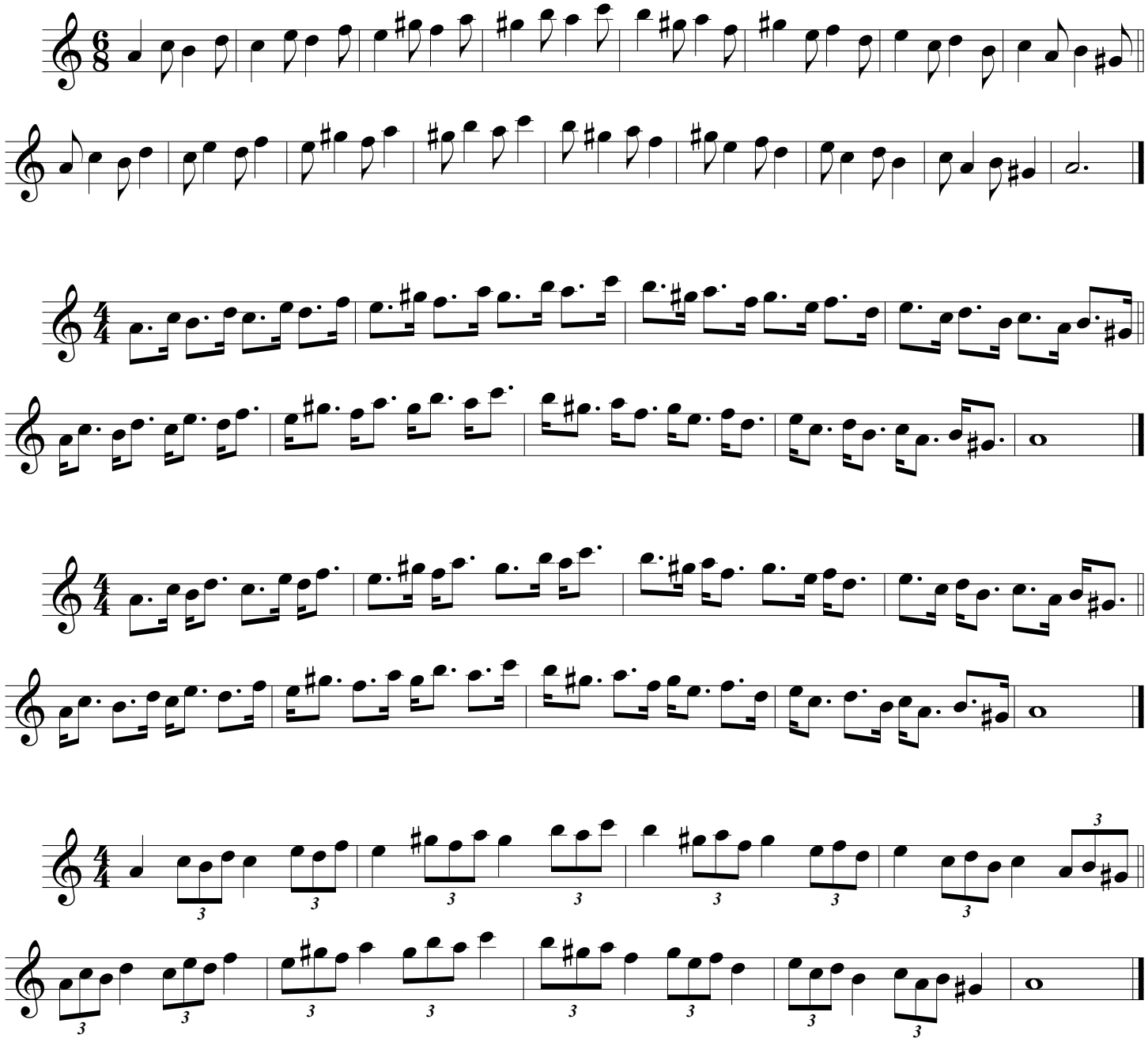
2. A Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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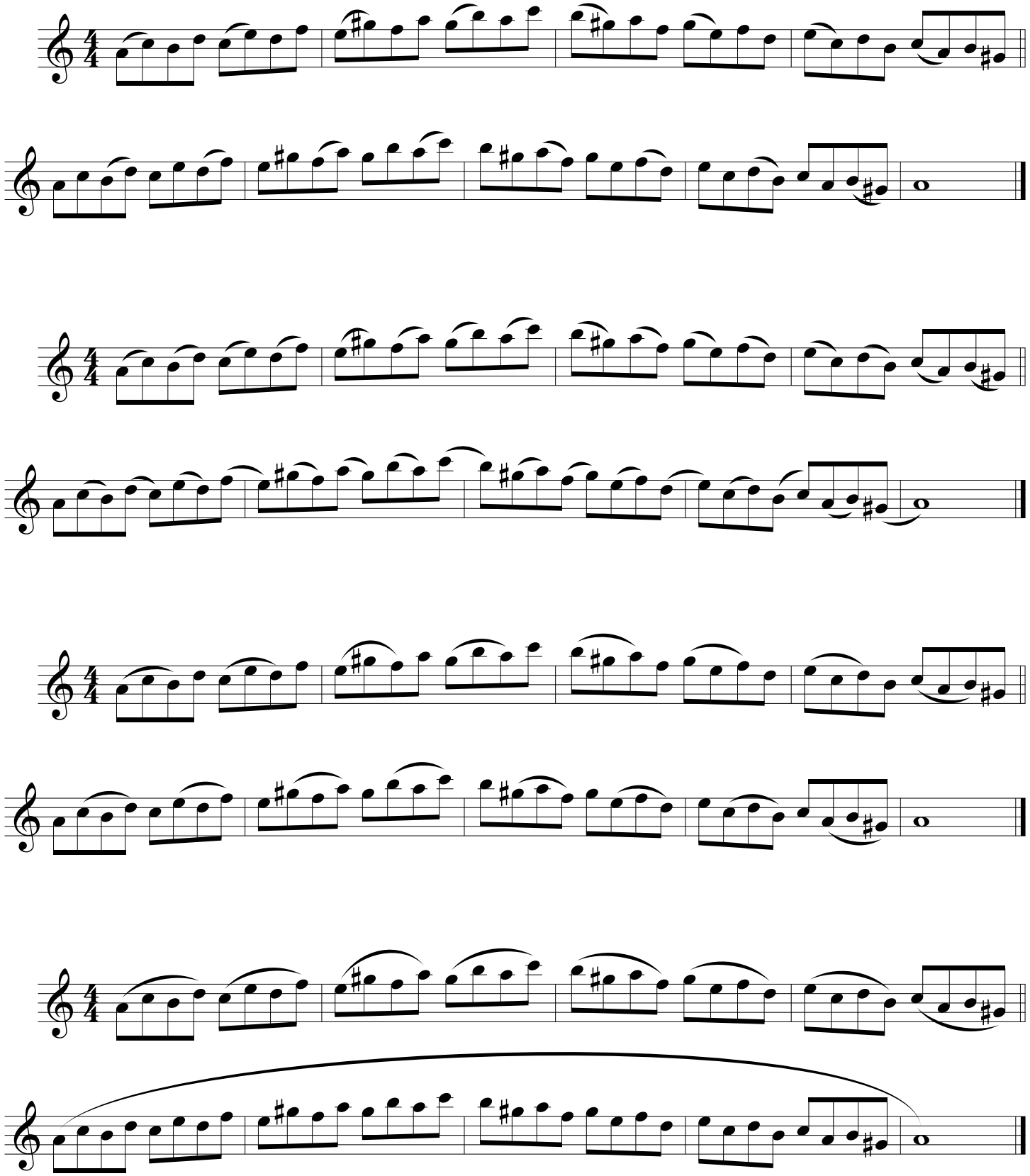
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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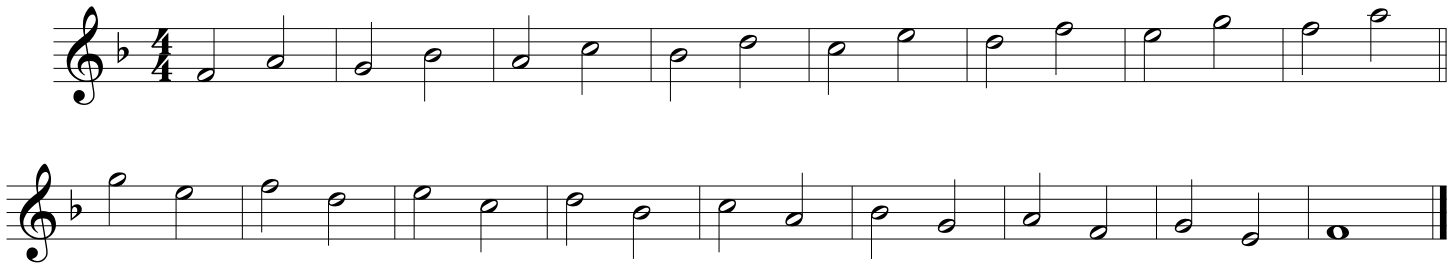
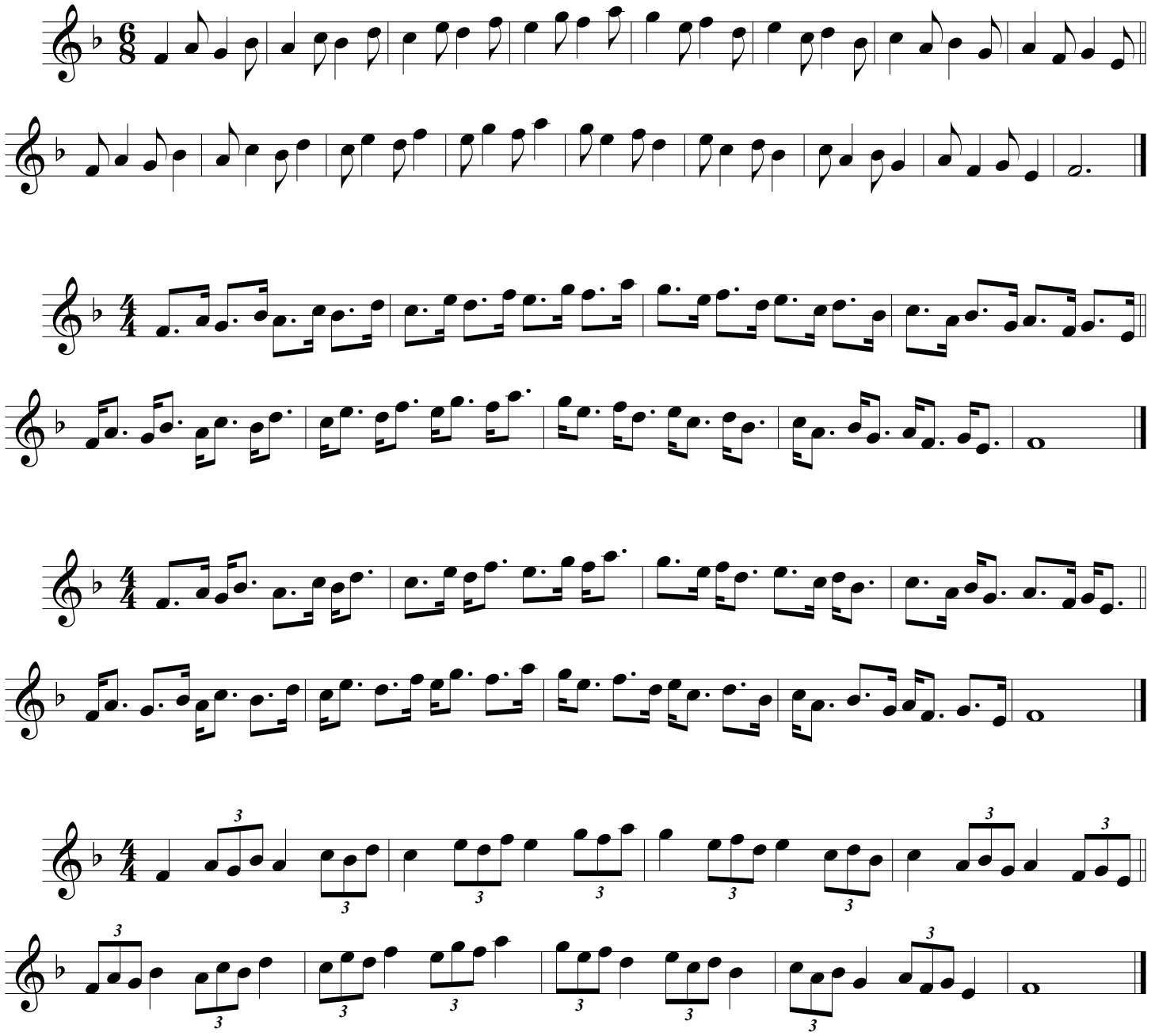
3. F Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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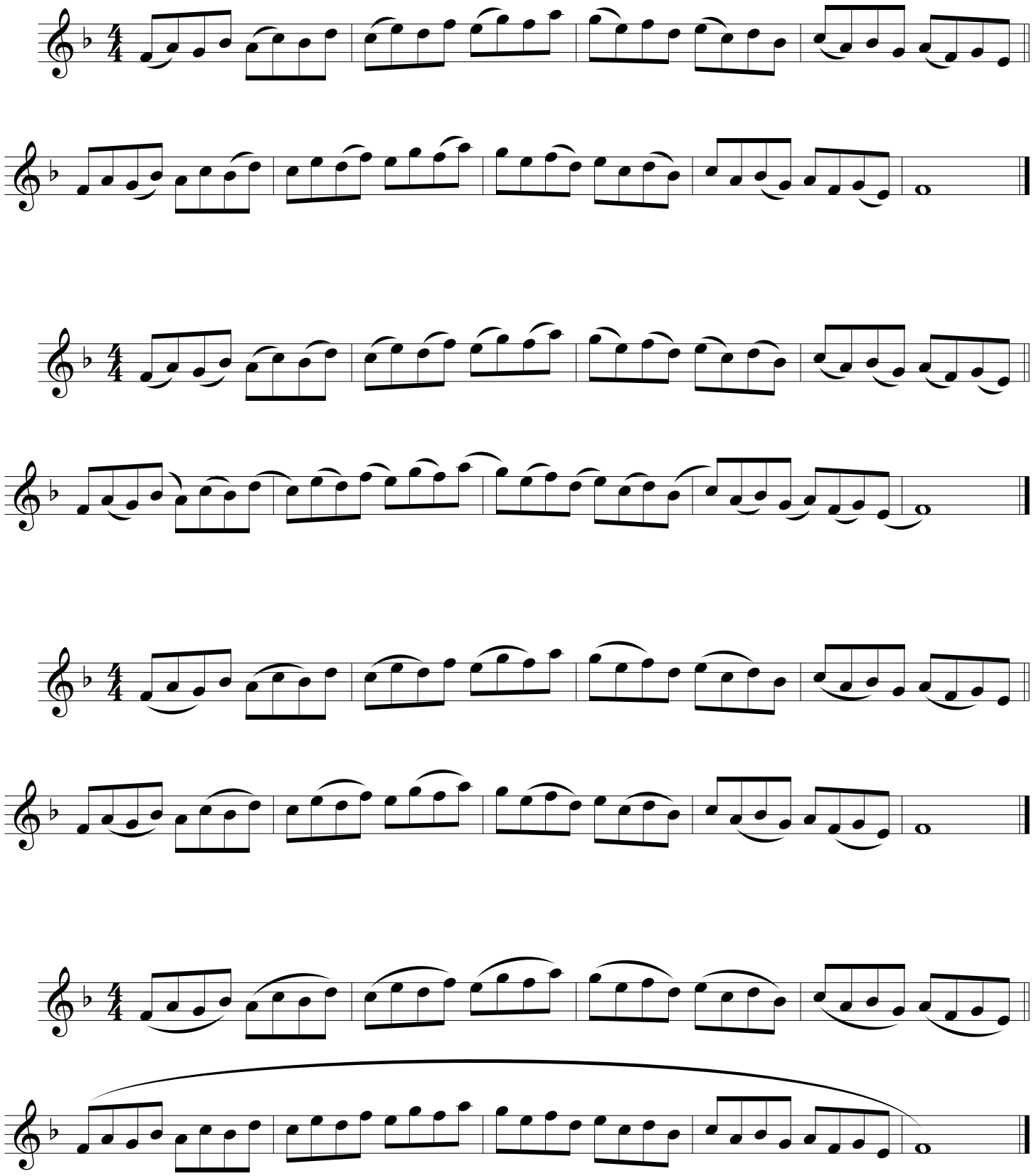
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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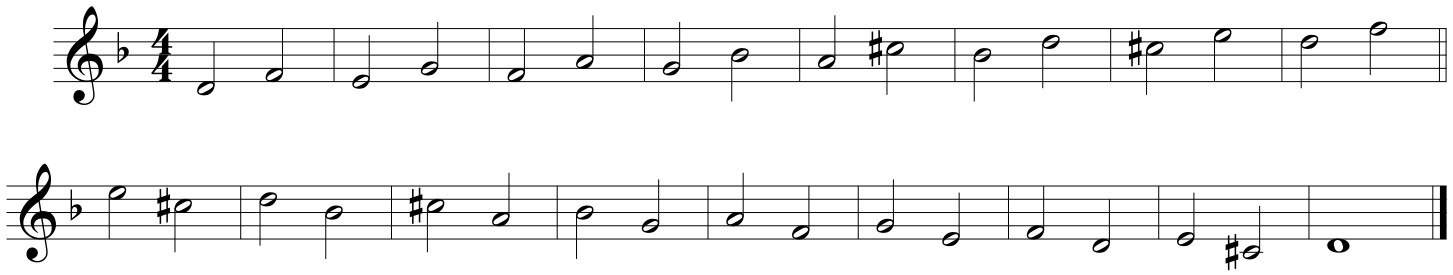
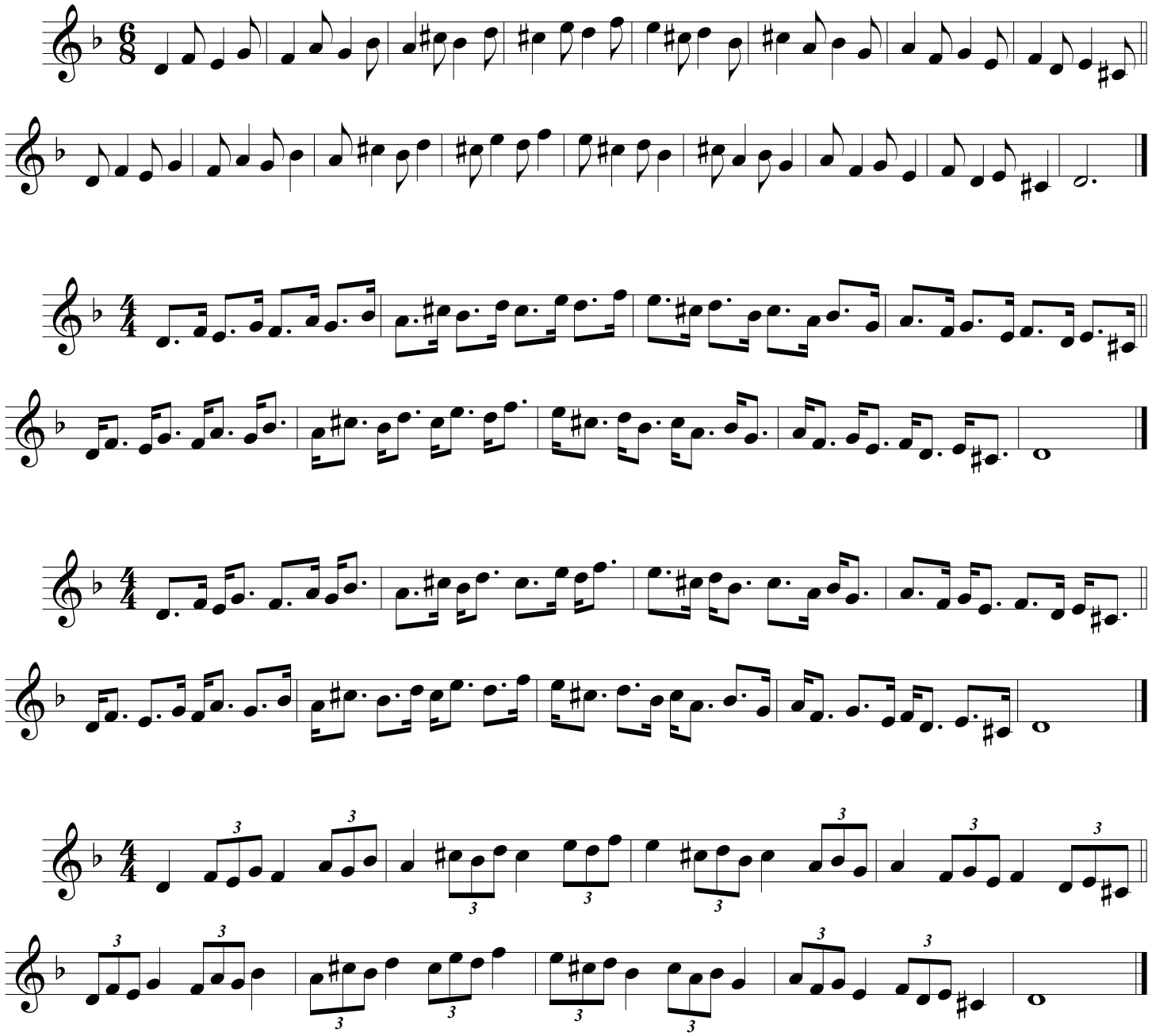
4. D Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



Use more air and less tongue for a smoother, better sound.
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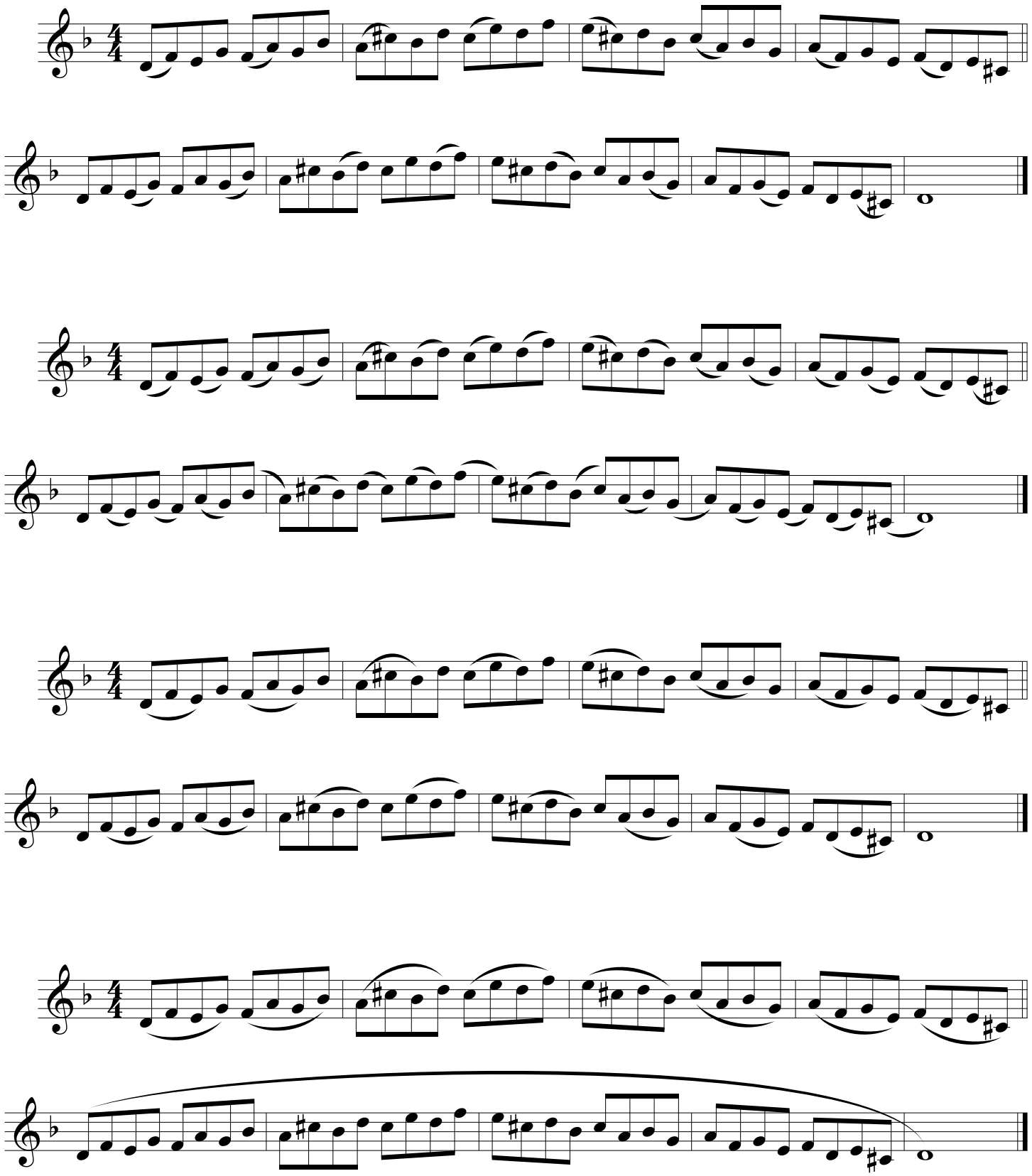
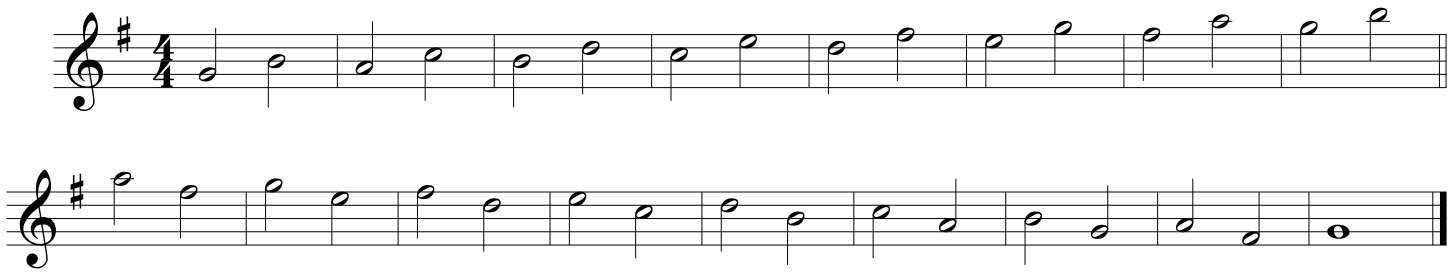
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



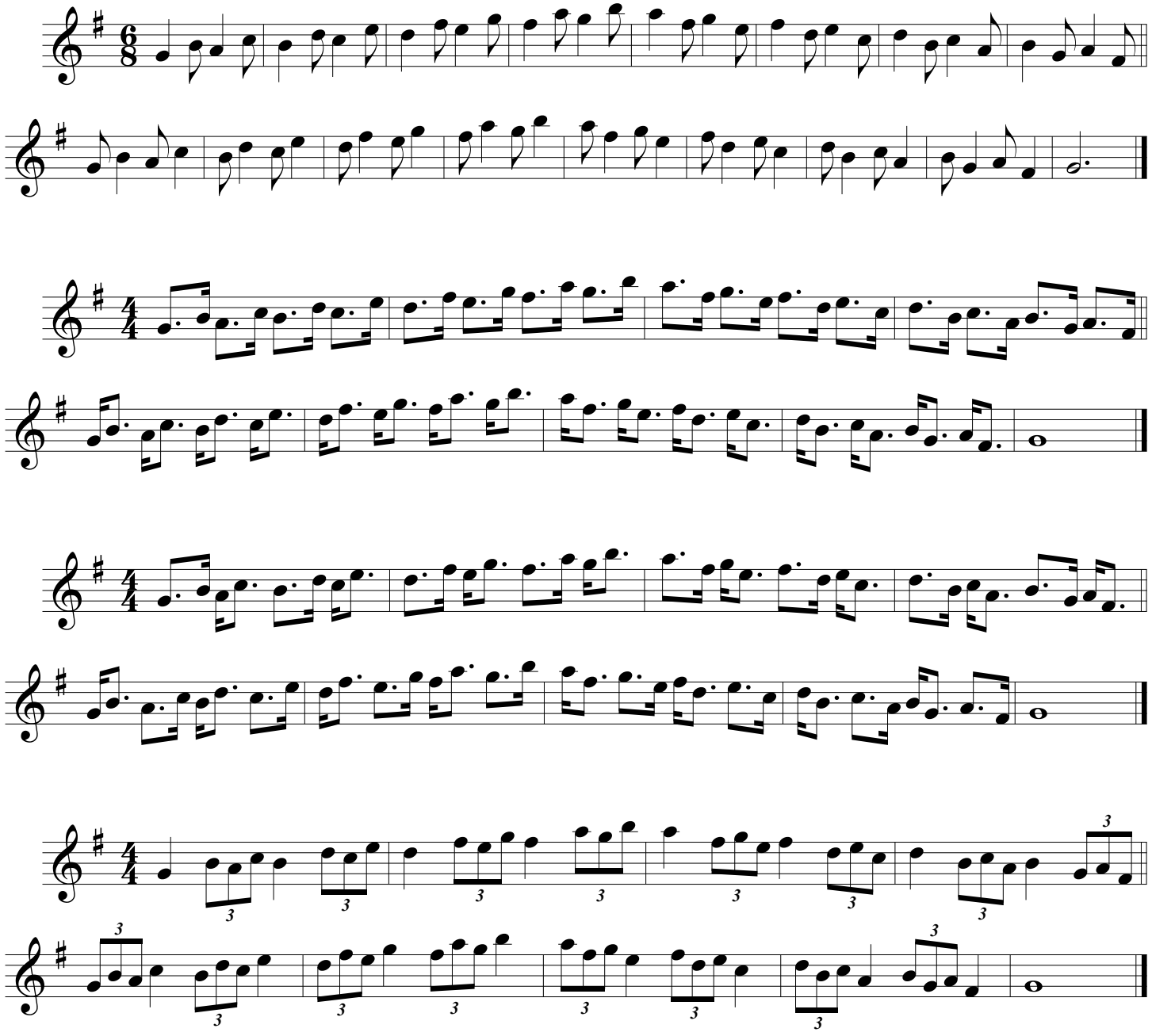
Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
Visit www.VincentLaMonica.com/tips for more tips and tricks!

5. G Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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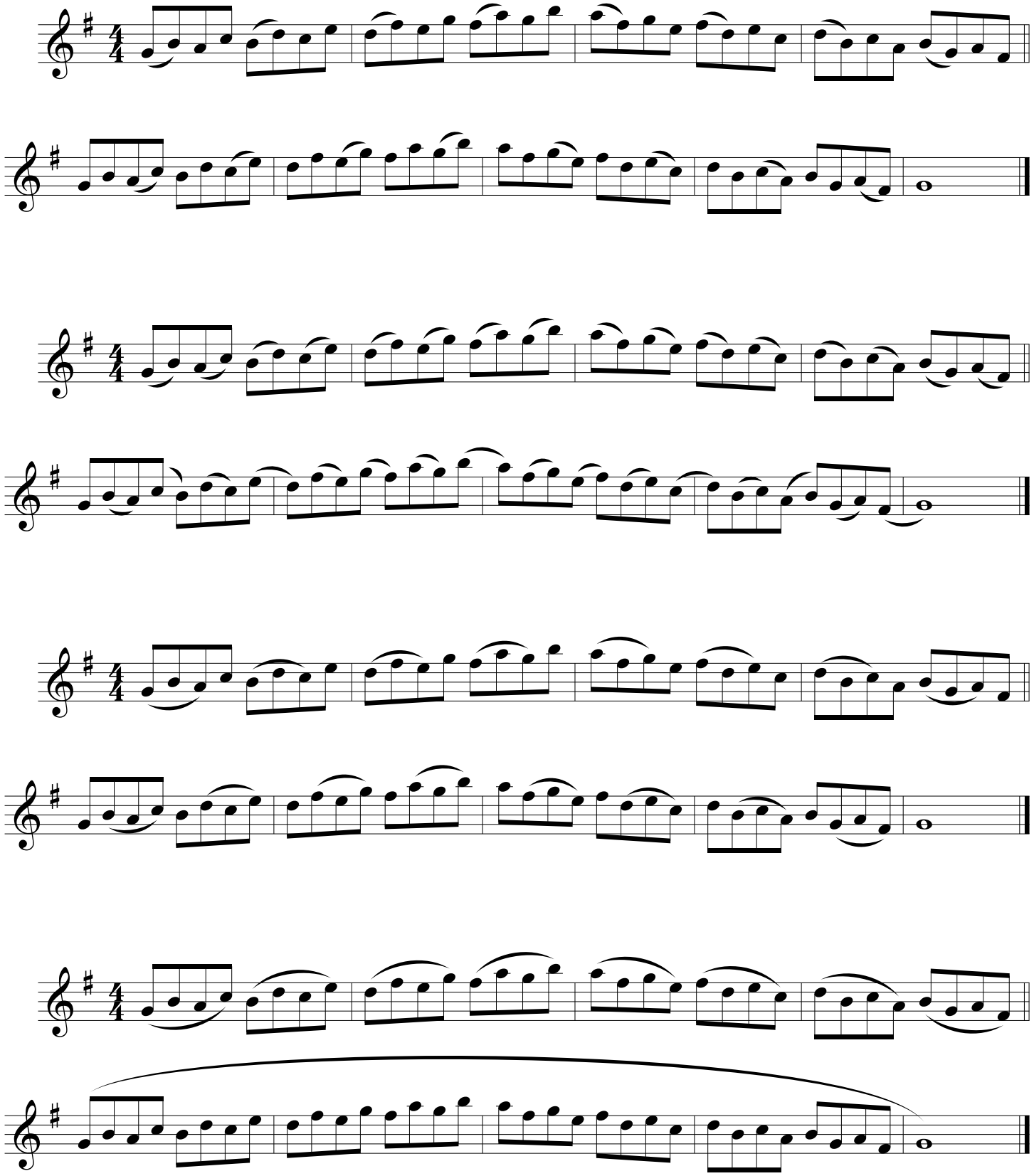
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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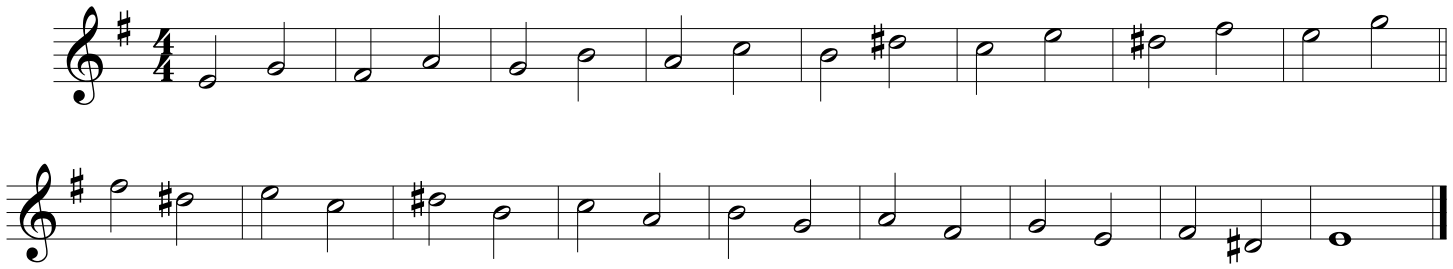
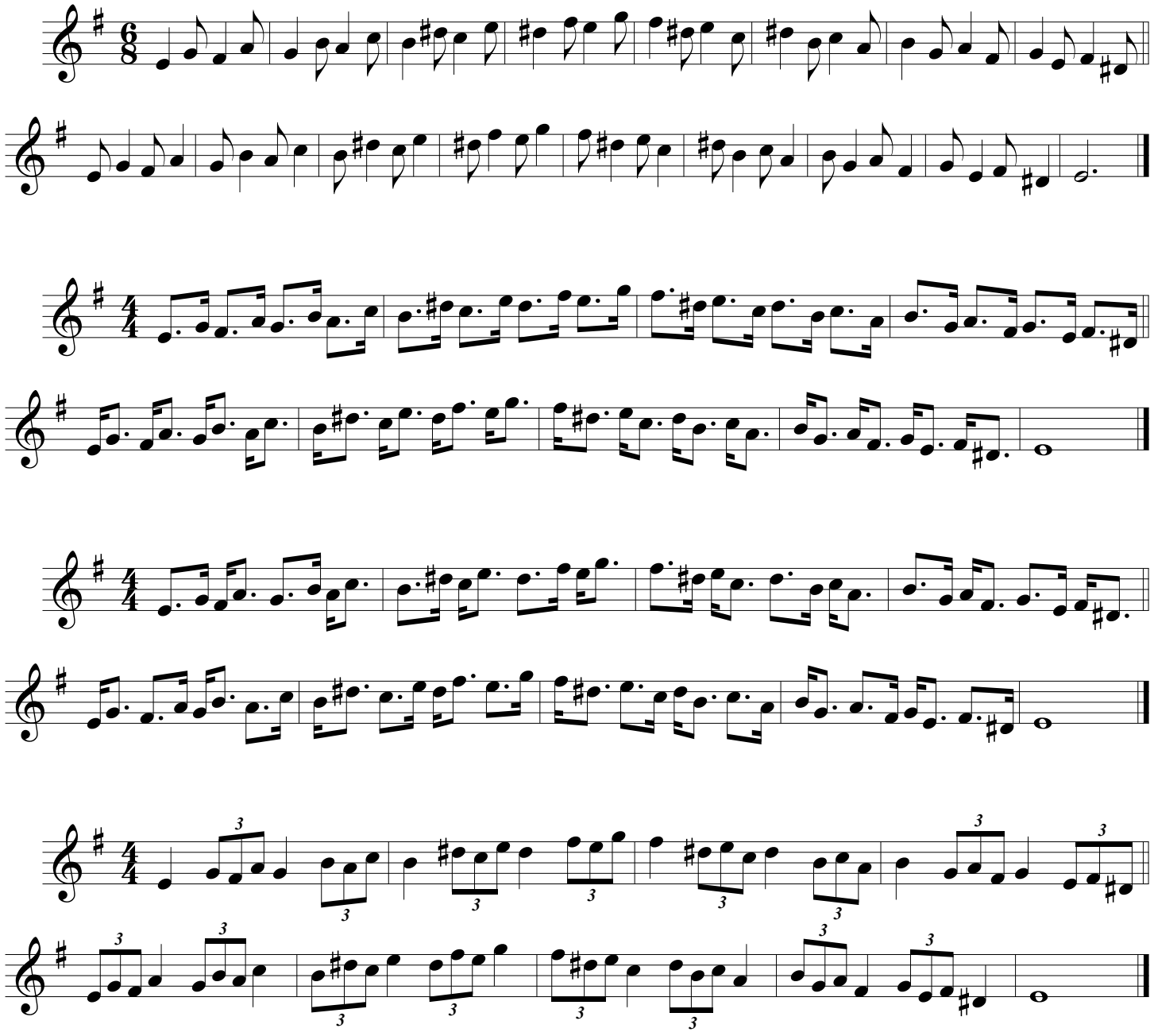
6. E Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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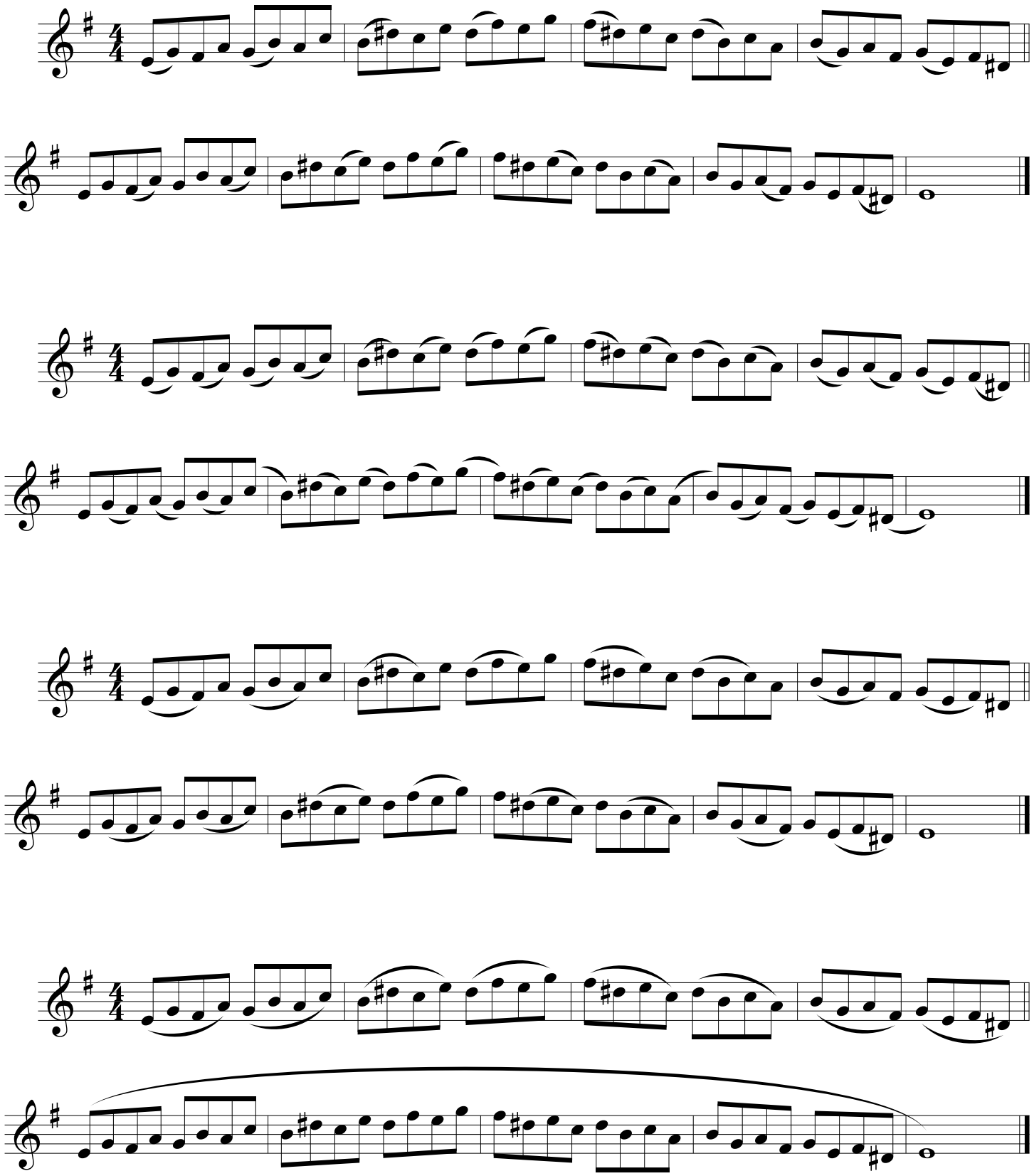
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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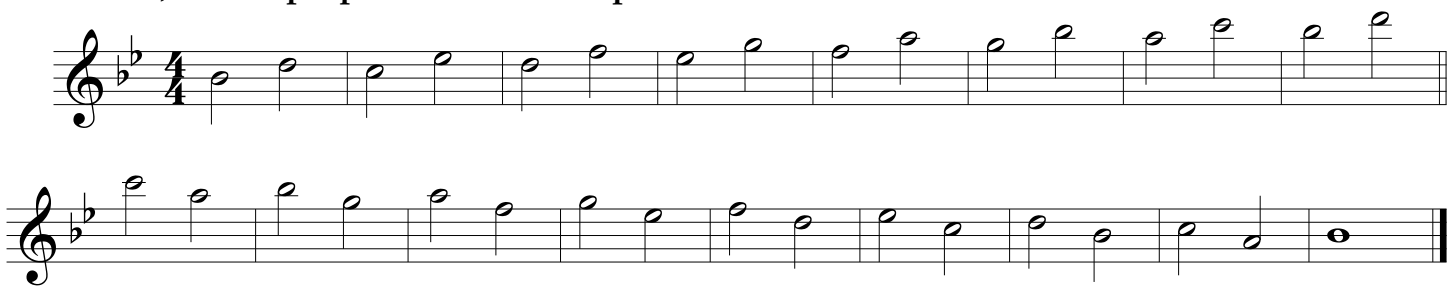
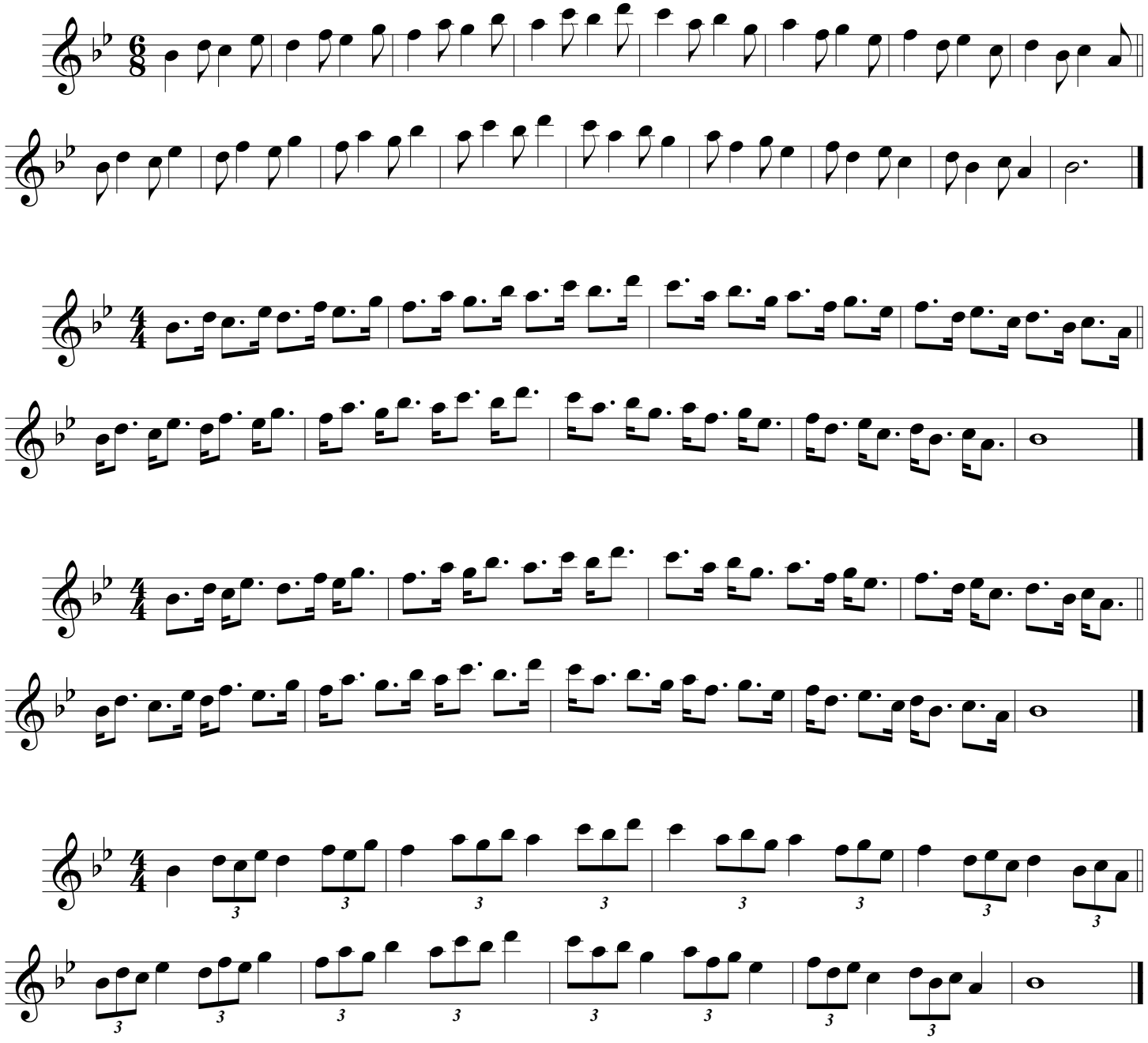
7. B♭ Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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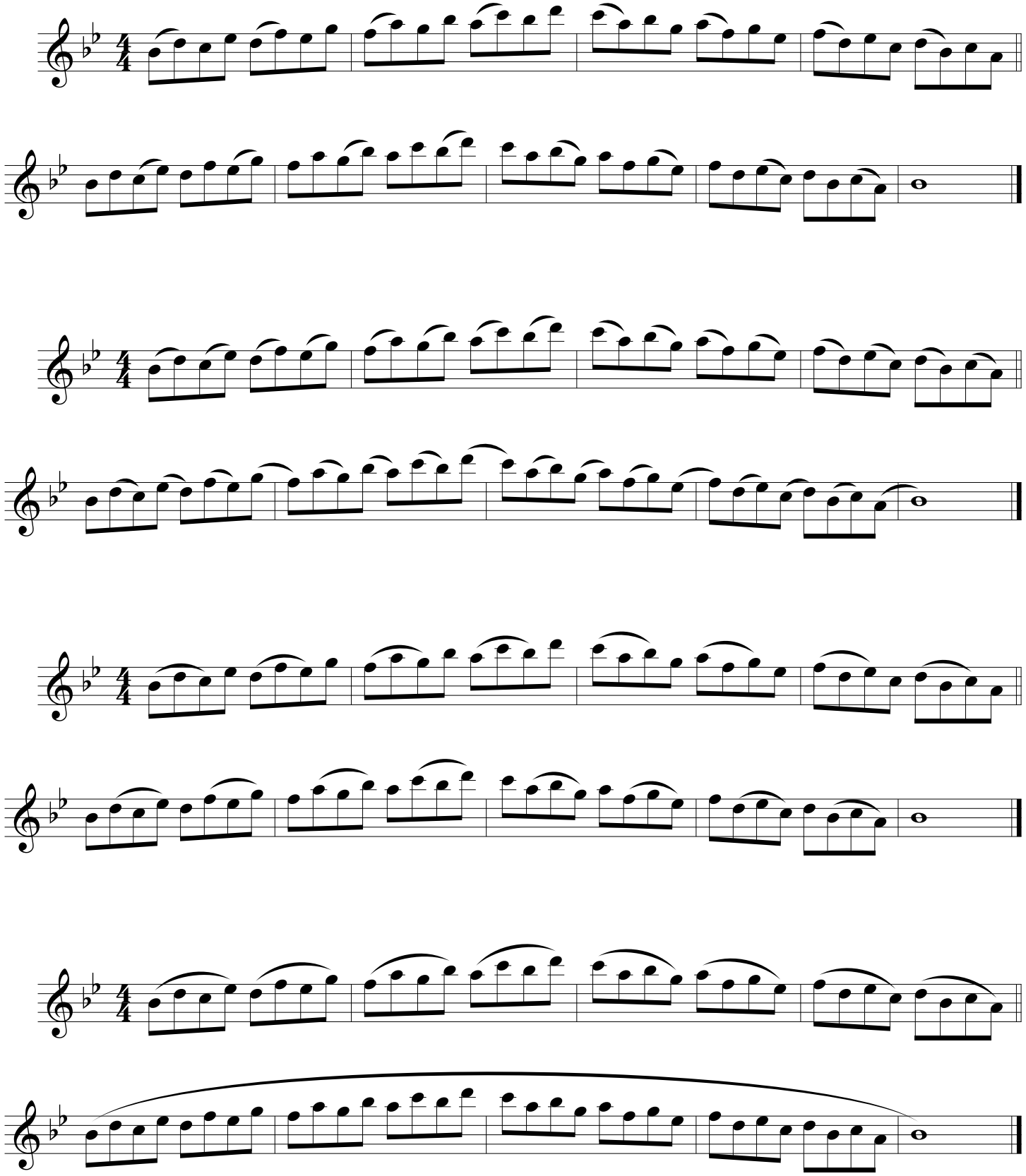
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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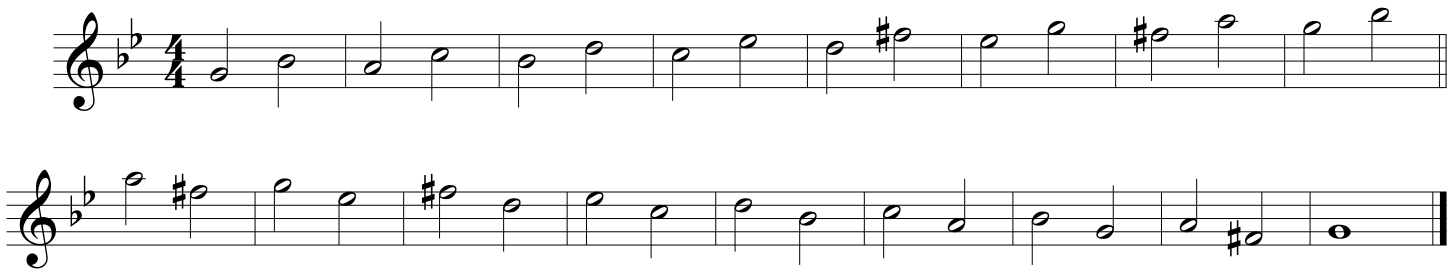
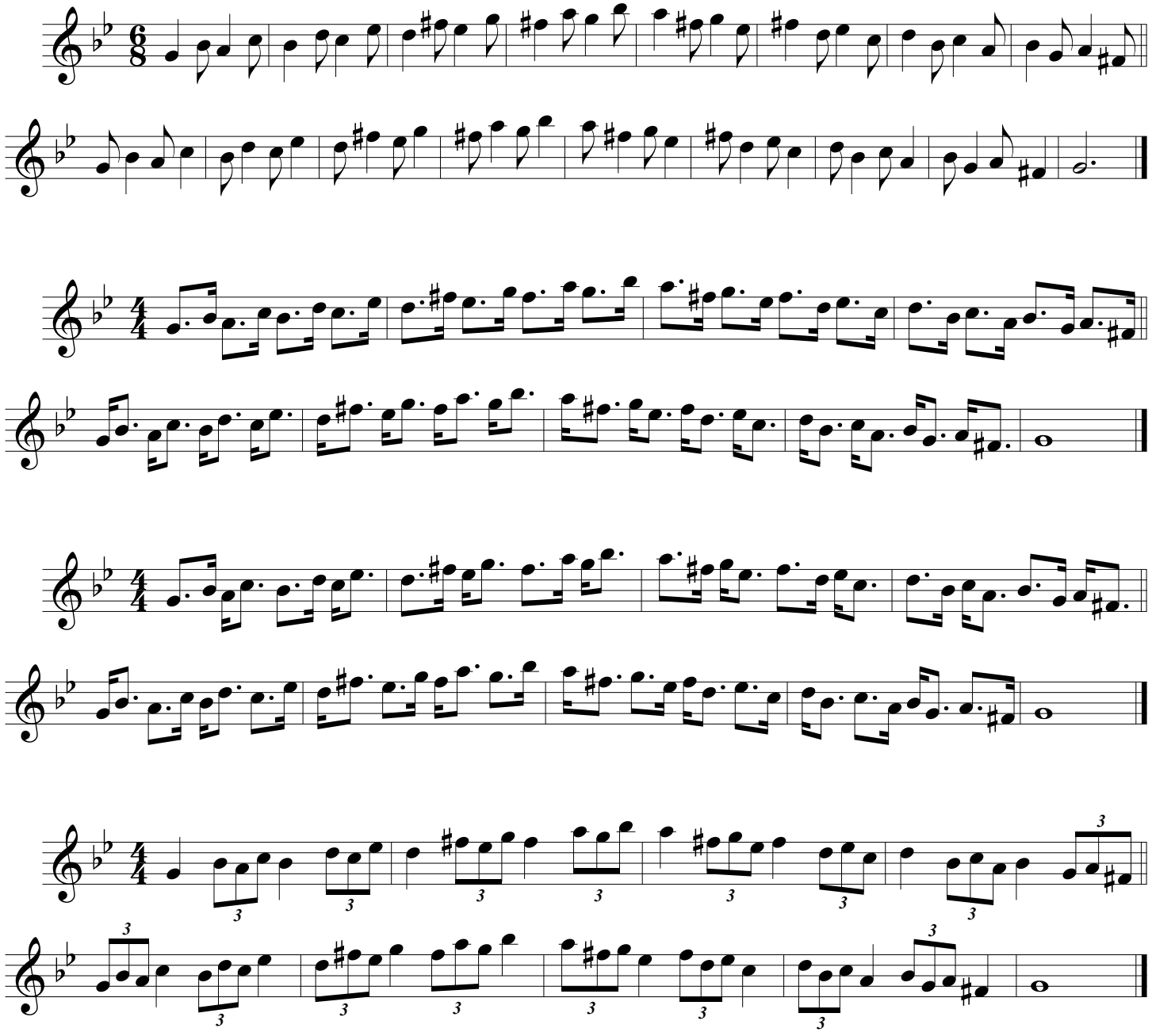
8. G Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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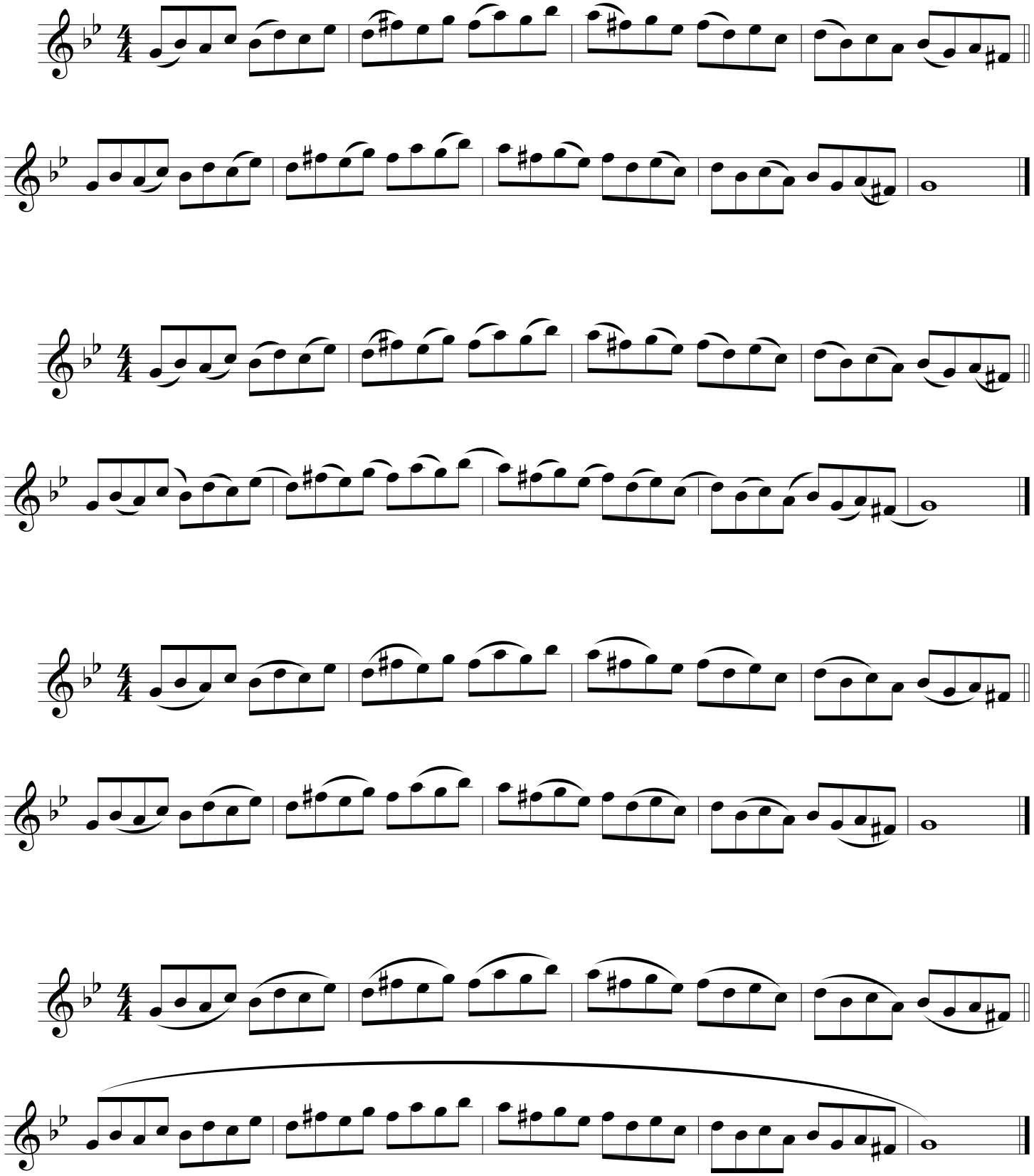
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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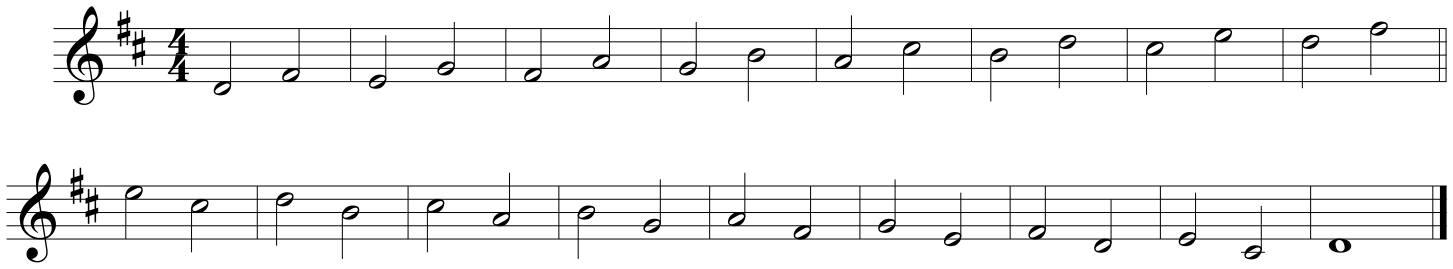
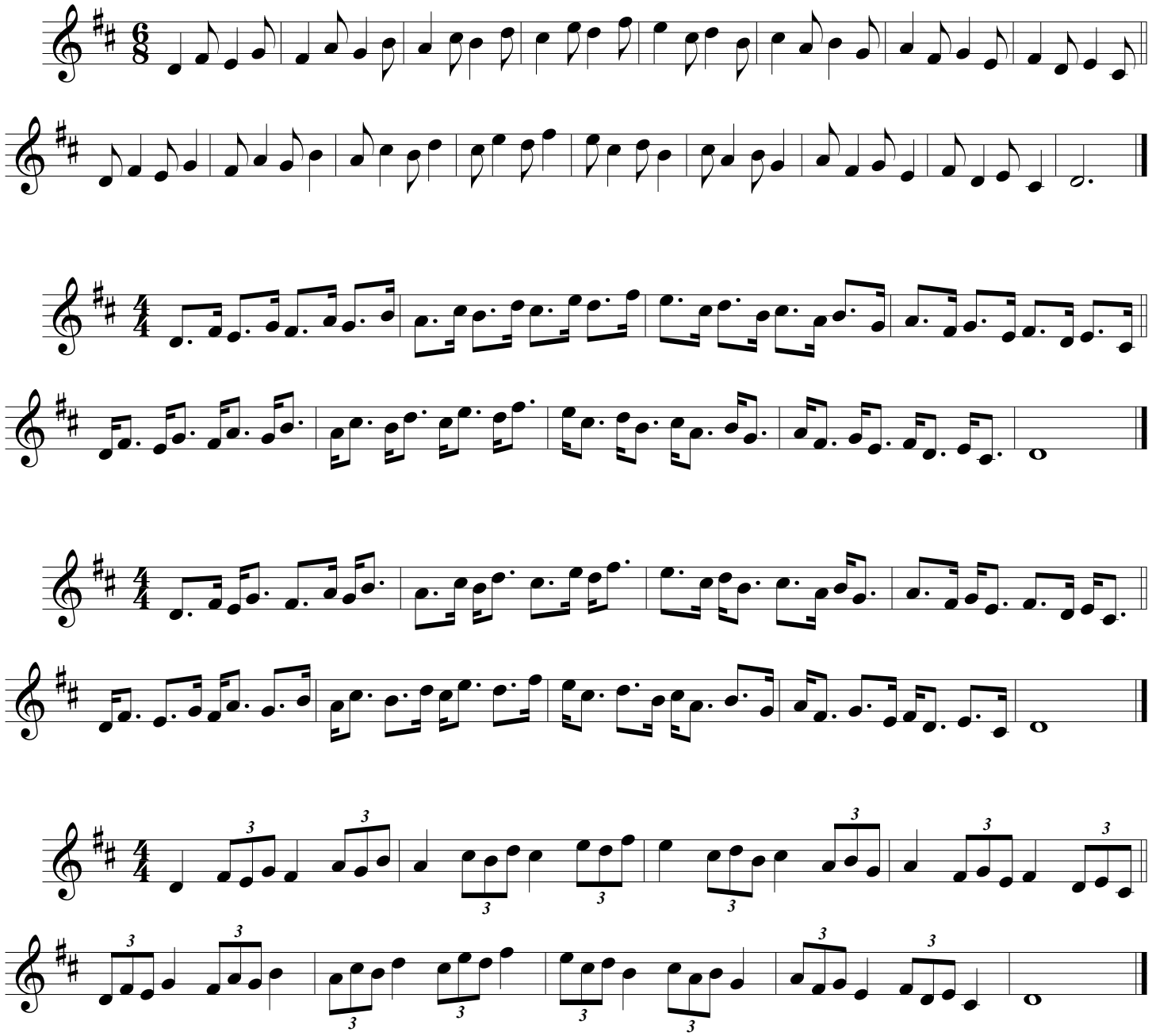
9. D Major

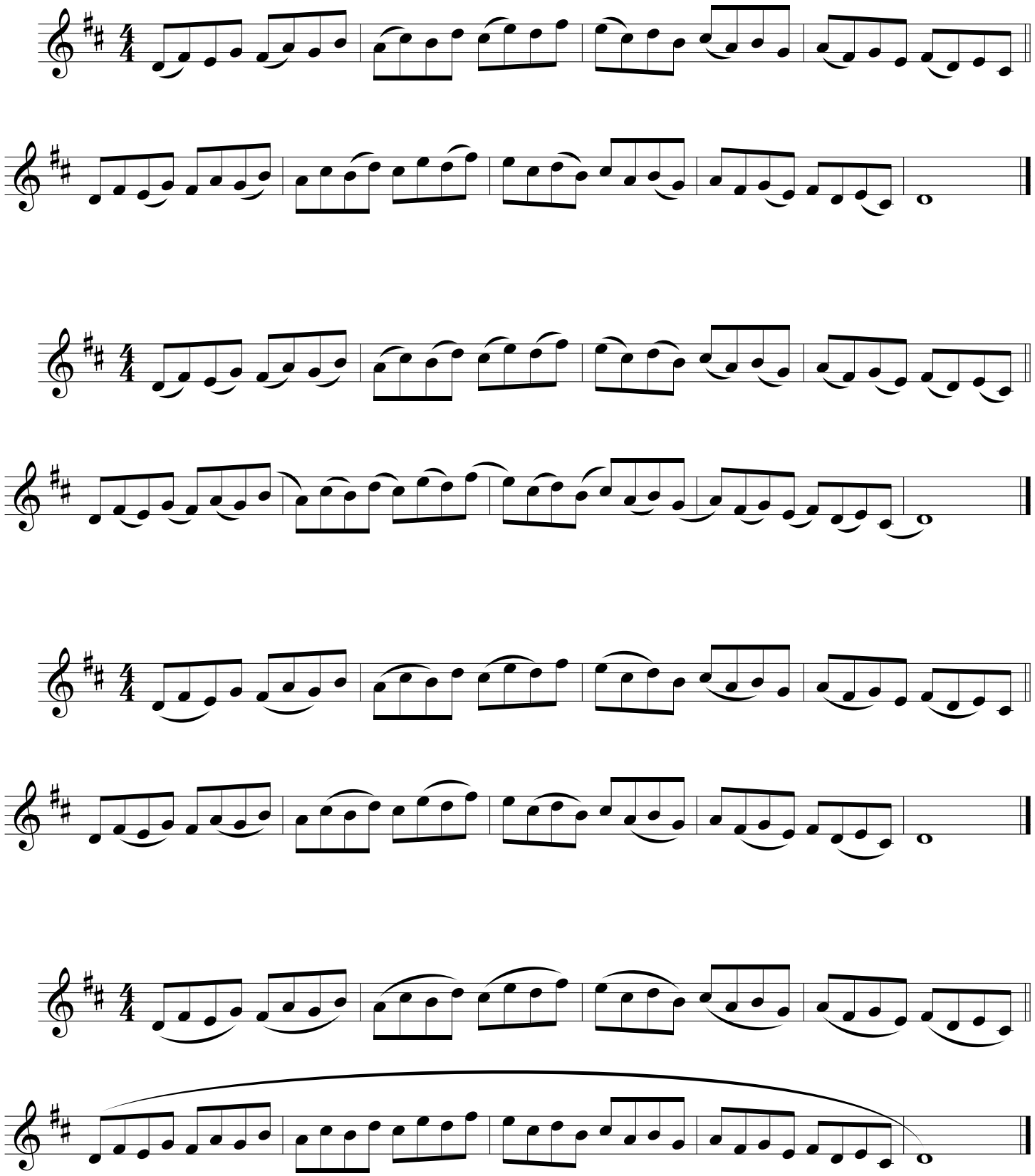
1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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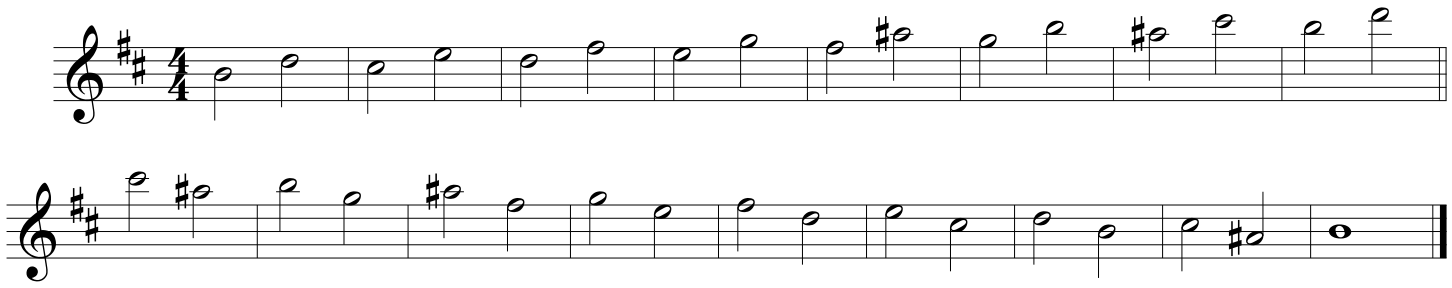
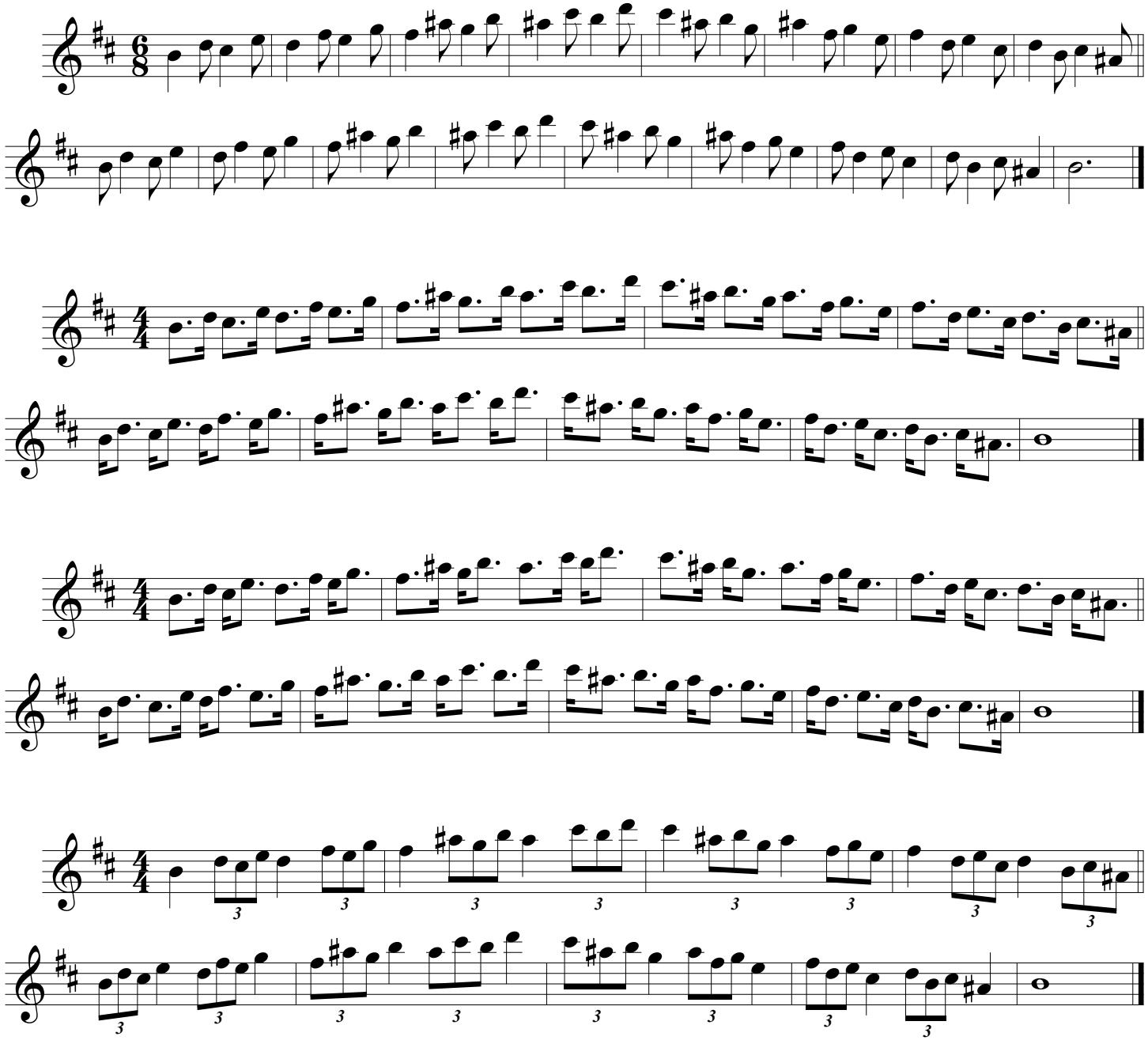
10. B Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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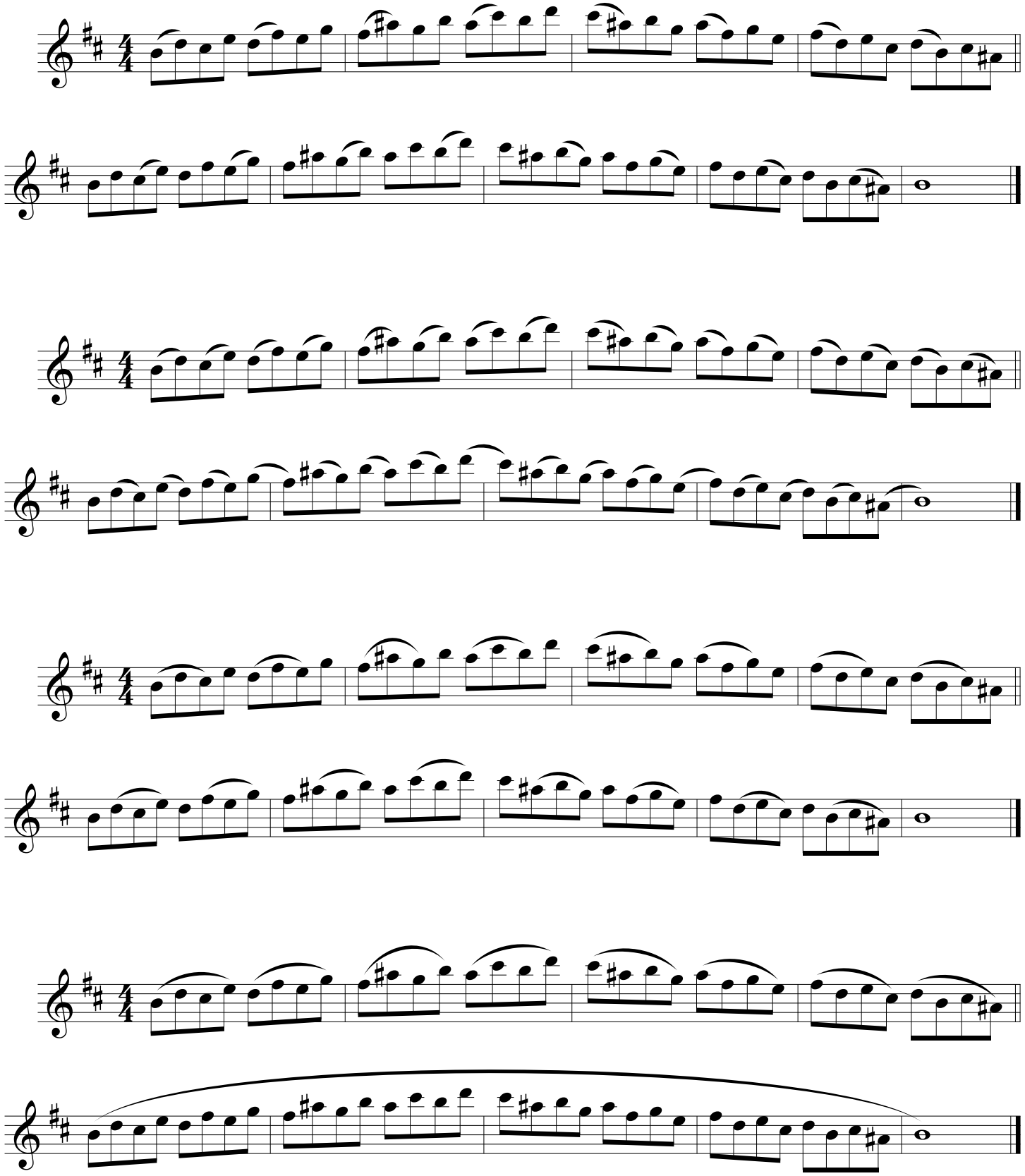
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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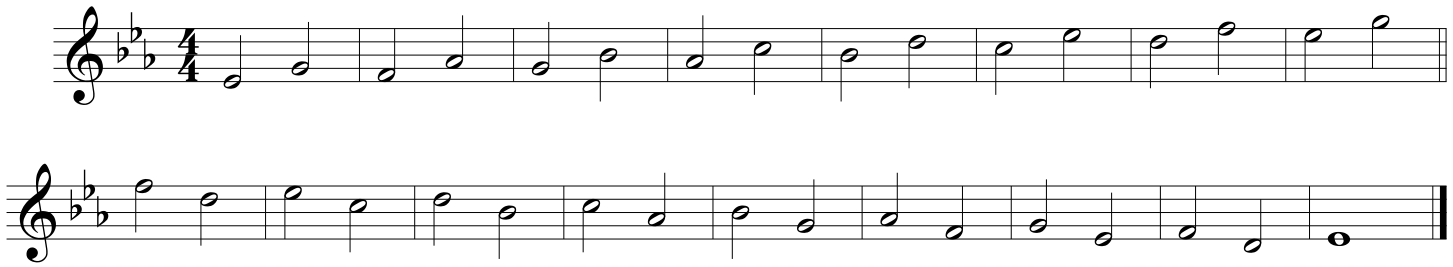
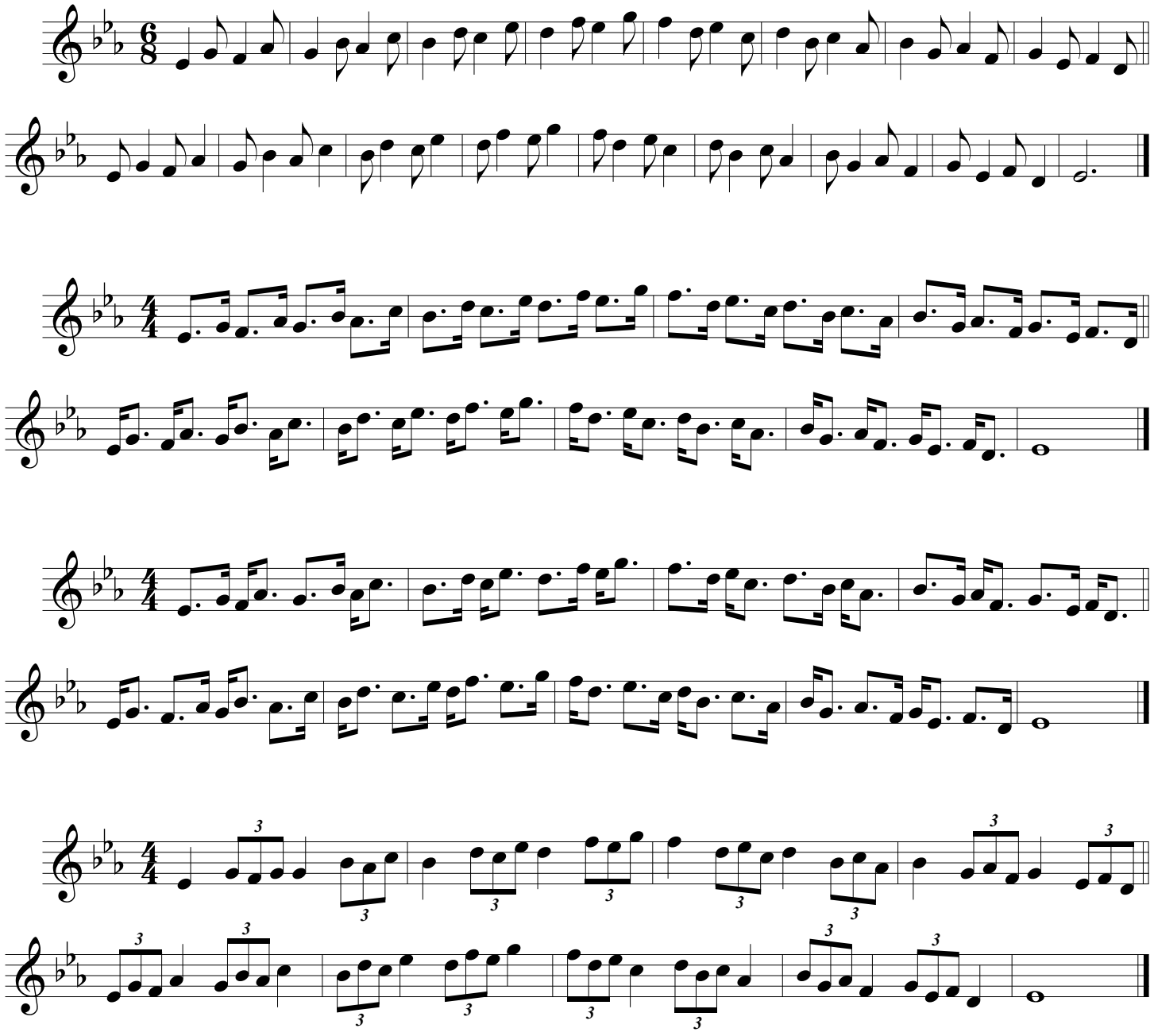
11. E♭ Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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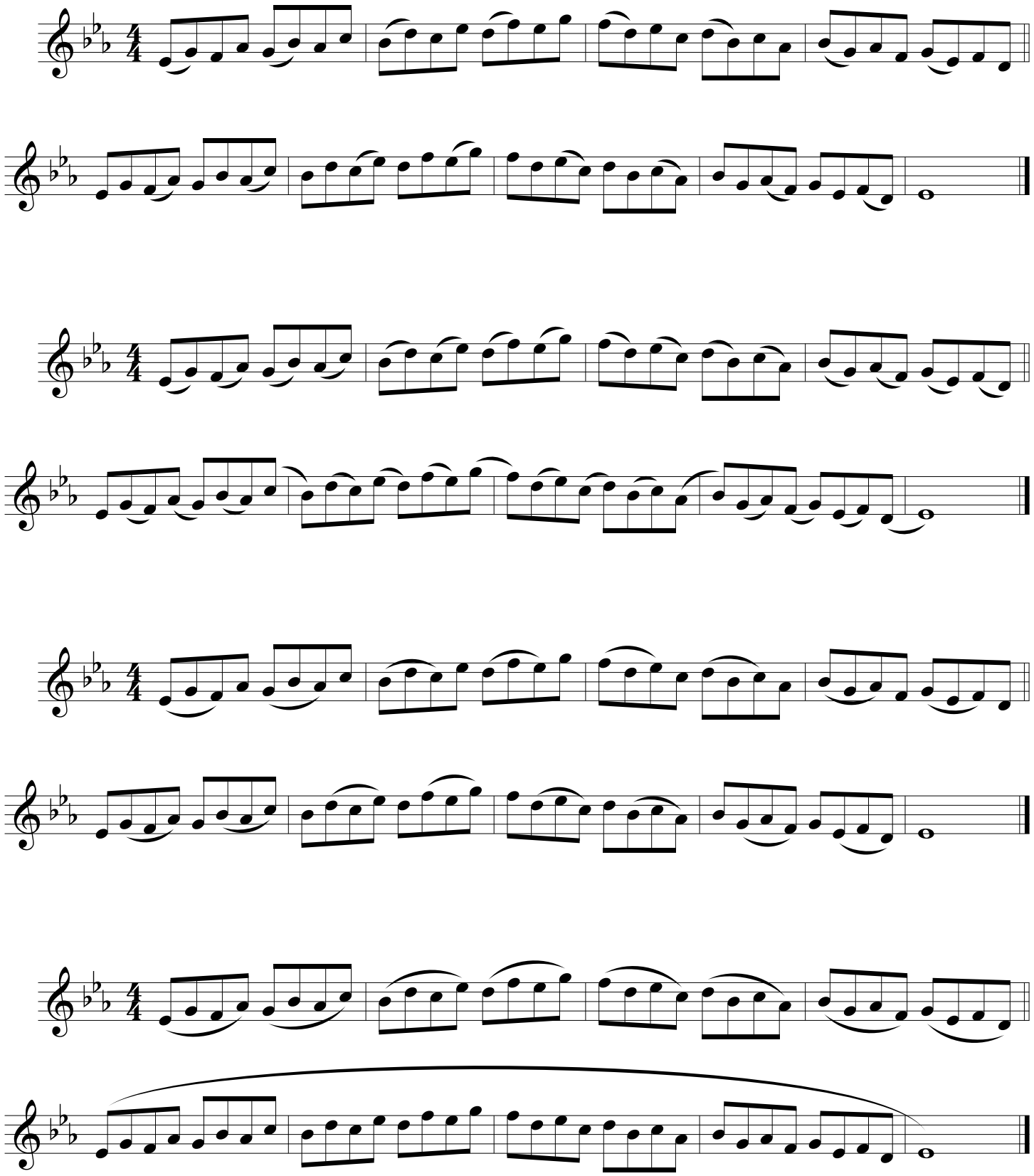
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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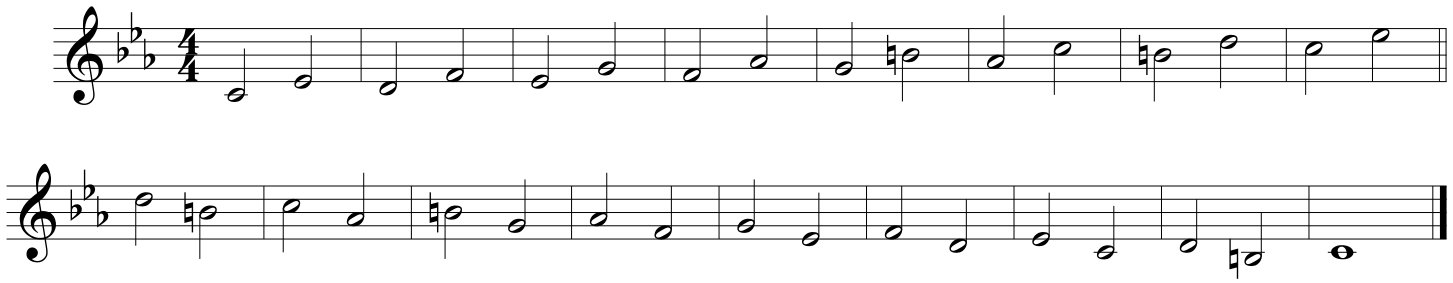
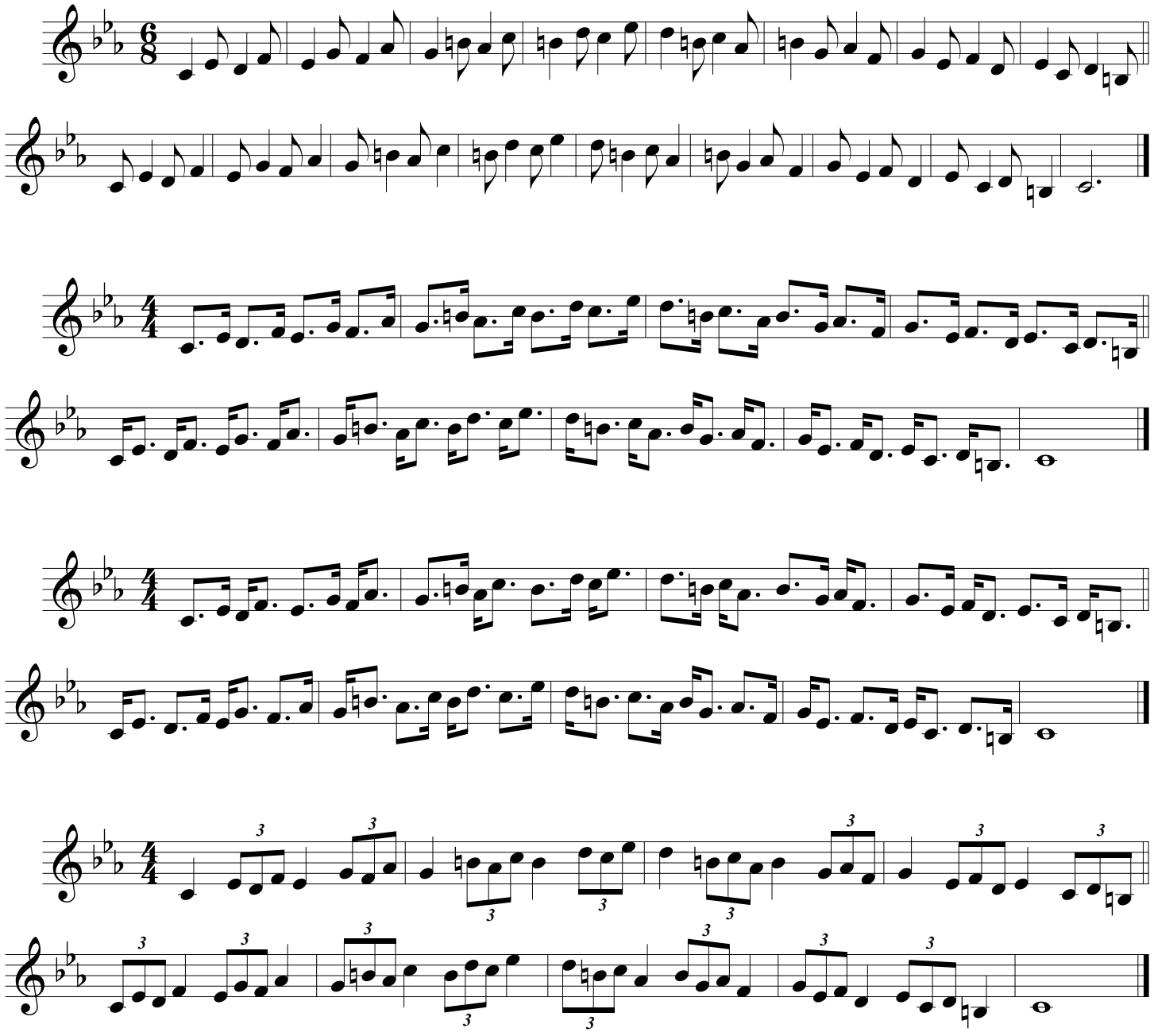
12. C Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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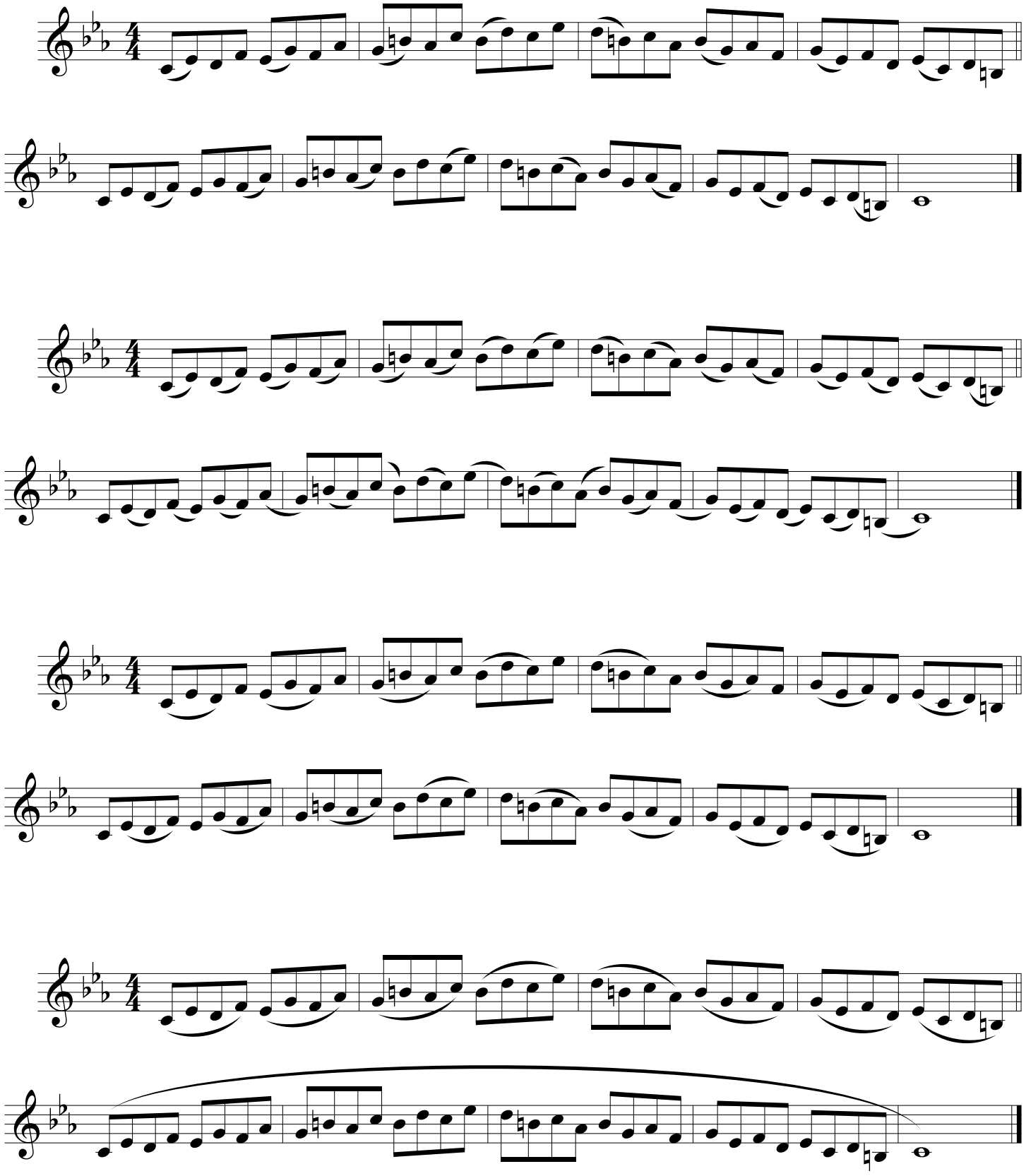
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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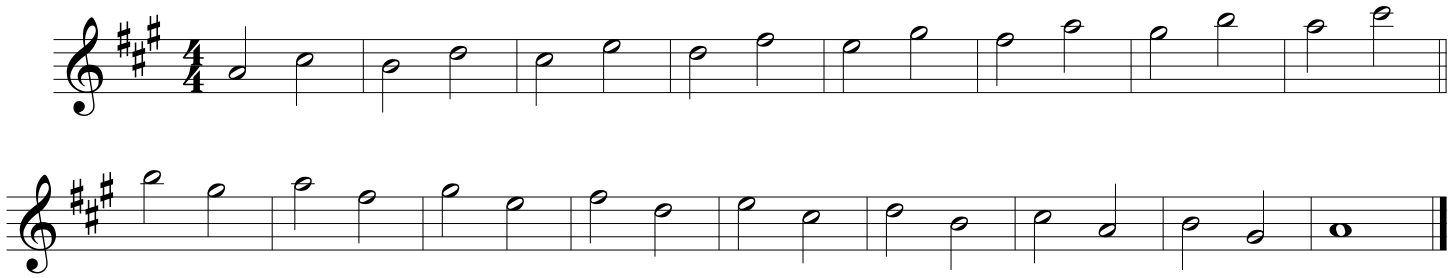
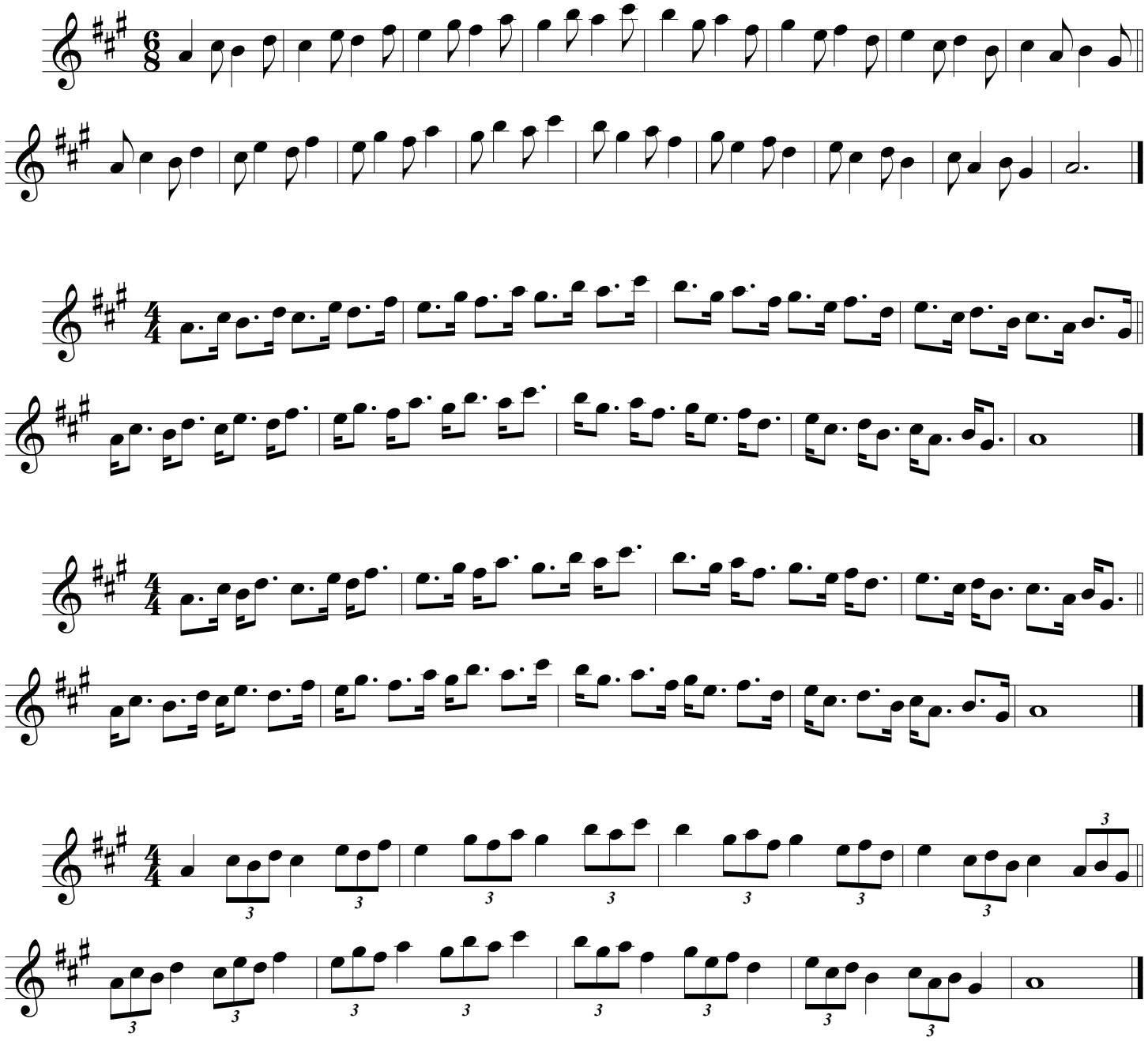
13. A Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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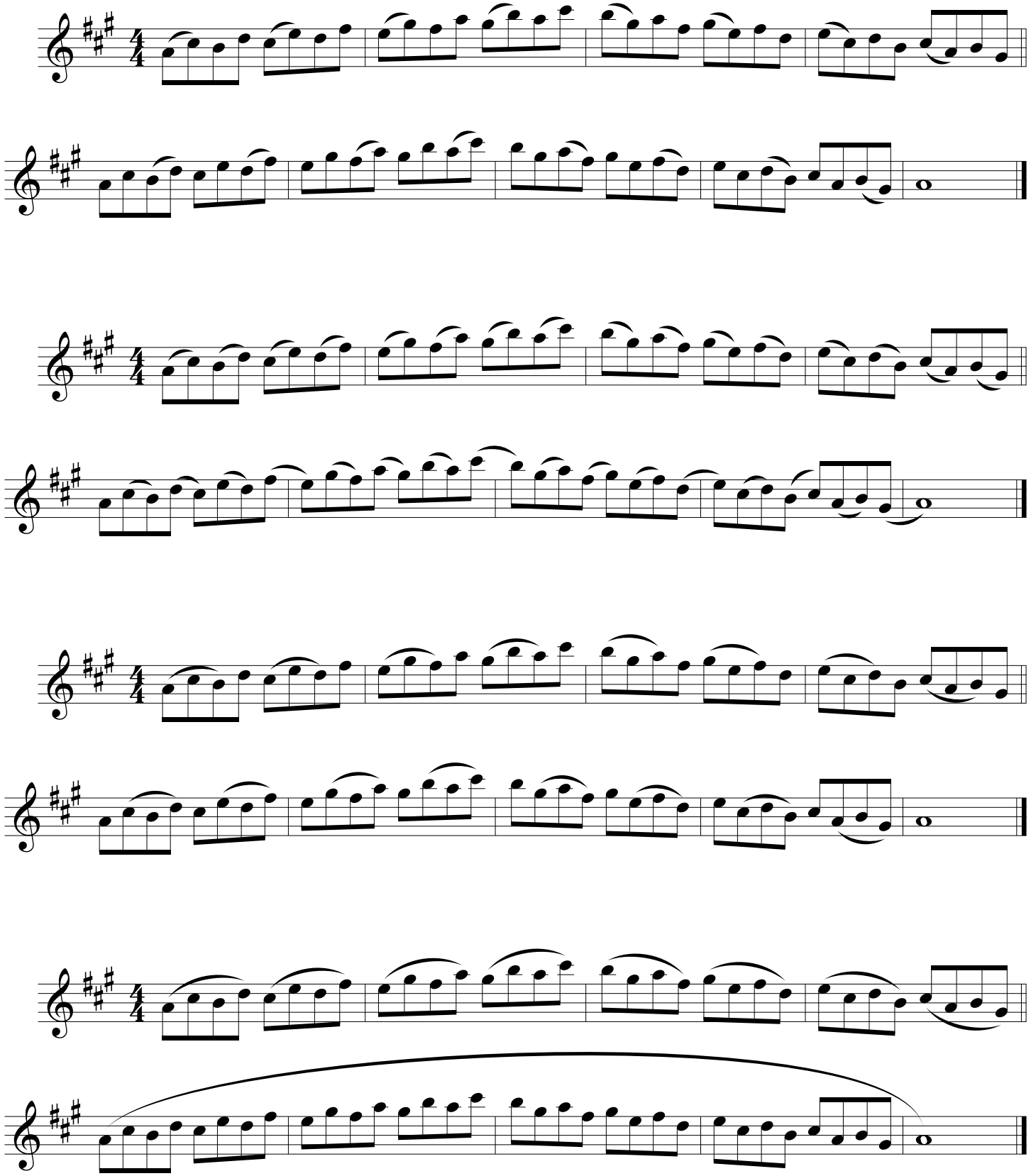
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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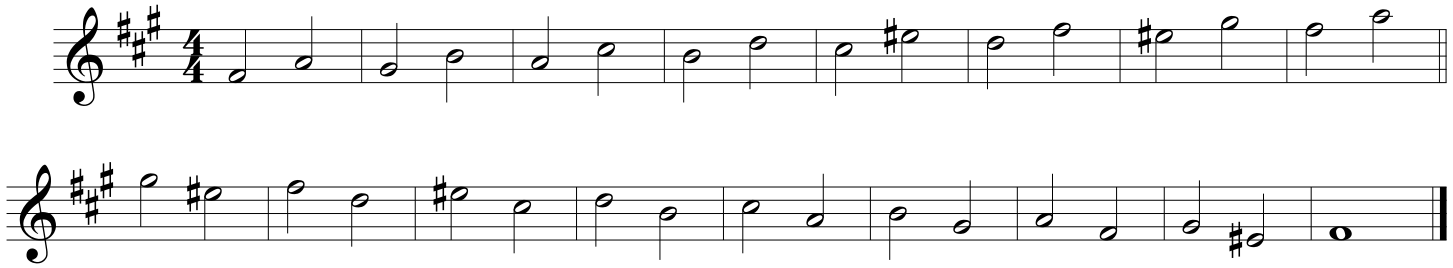
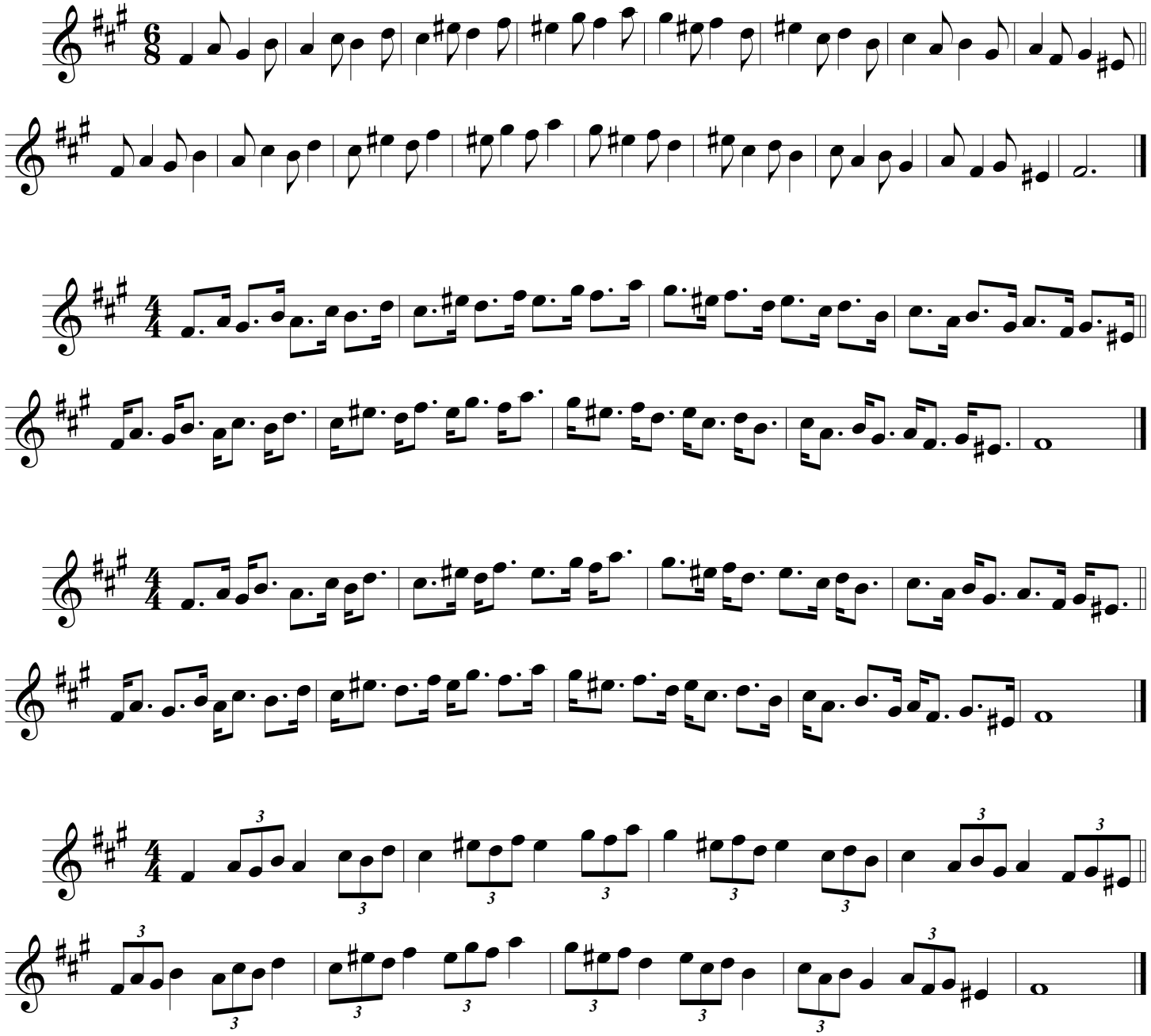
14. F♯ Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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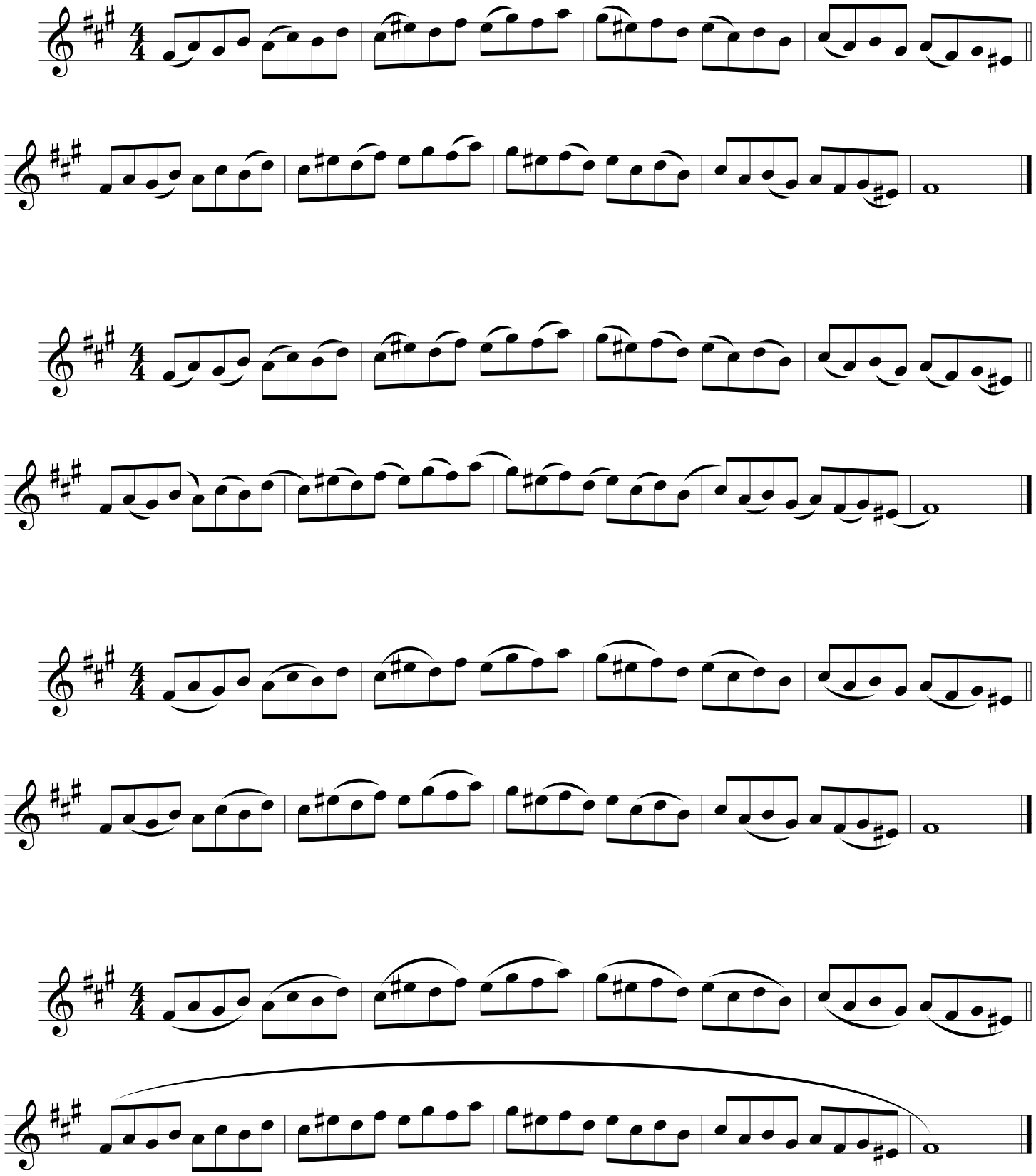
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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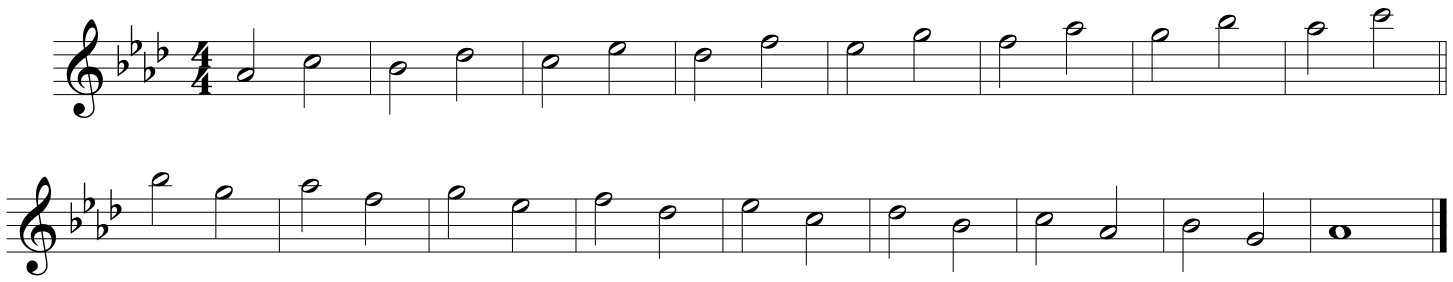
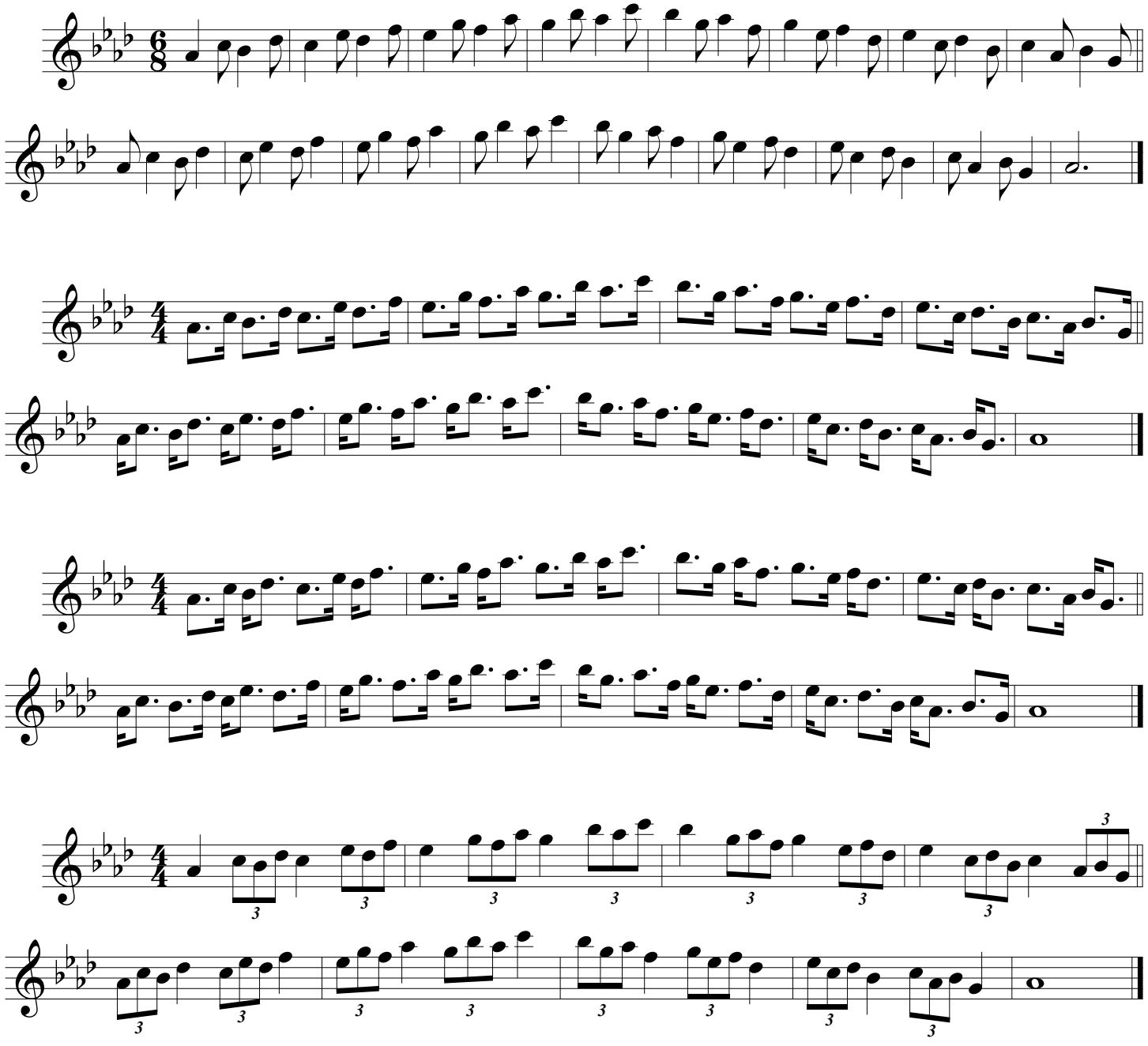
15. A♭ Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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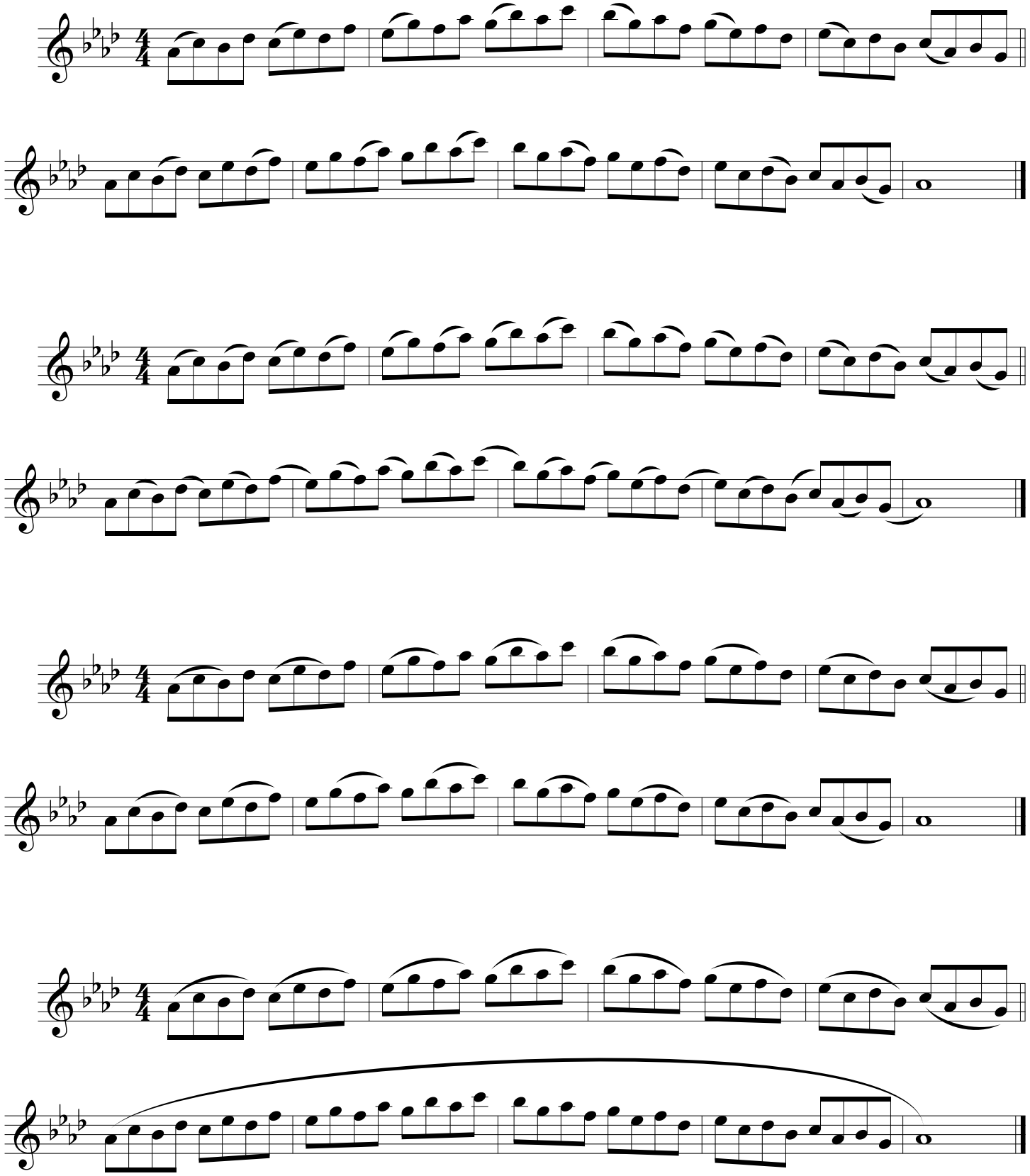
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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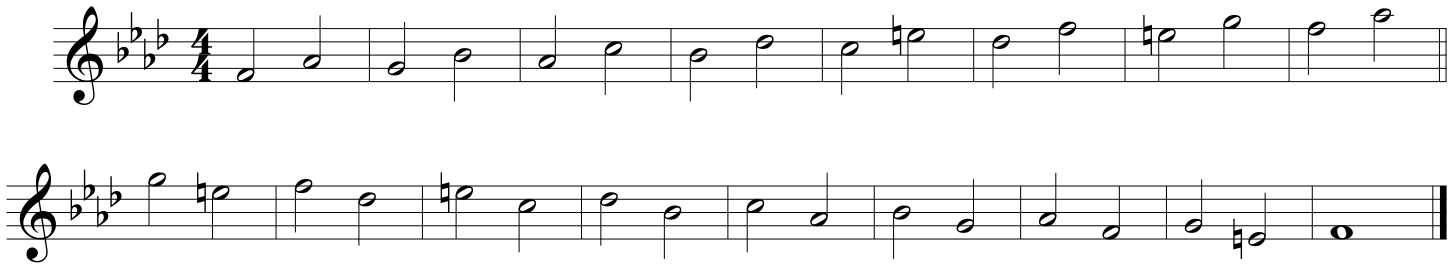
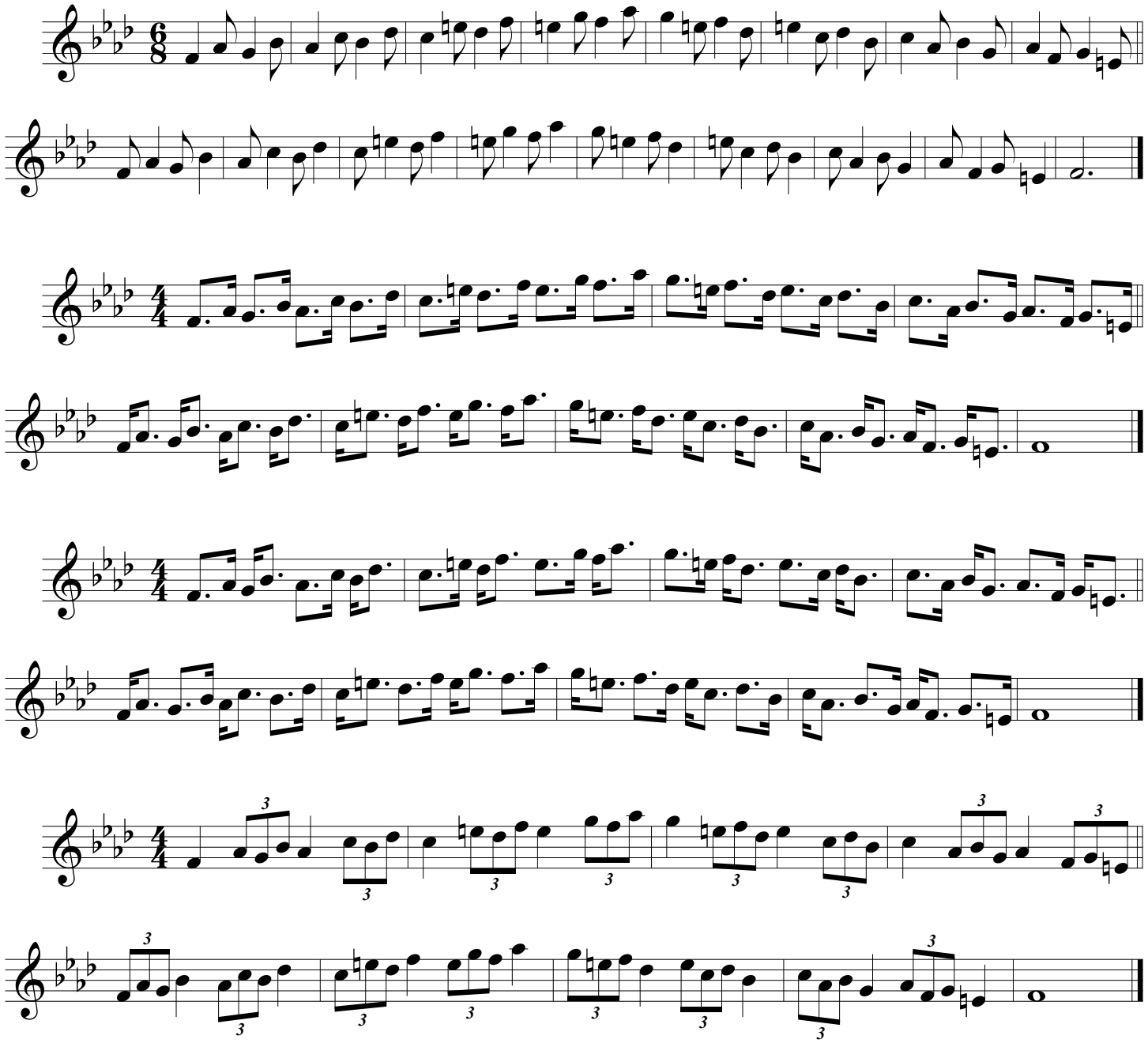
16. F Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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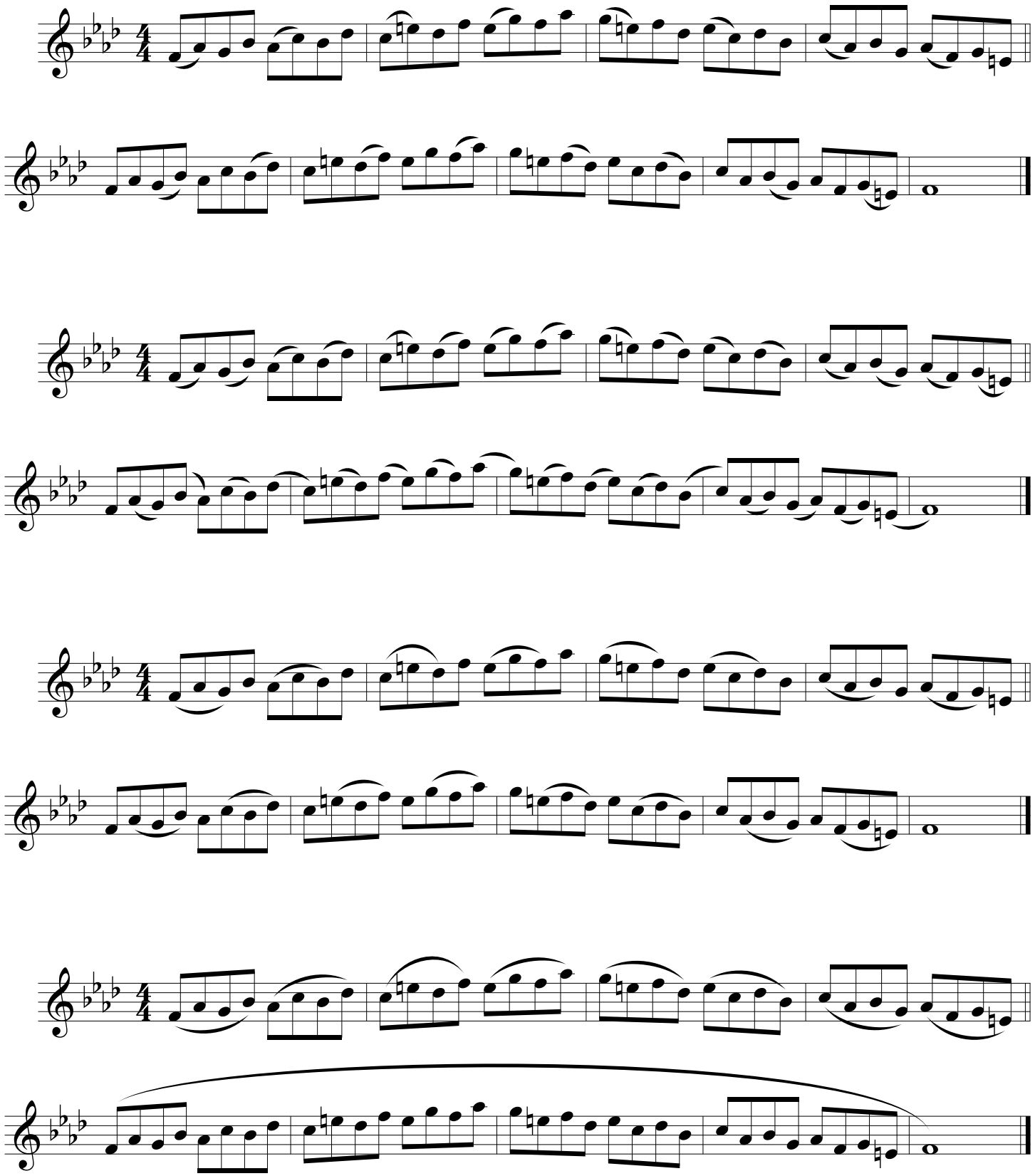
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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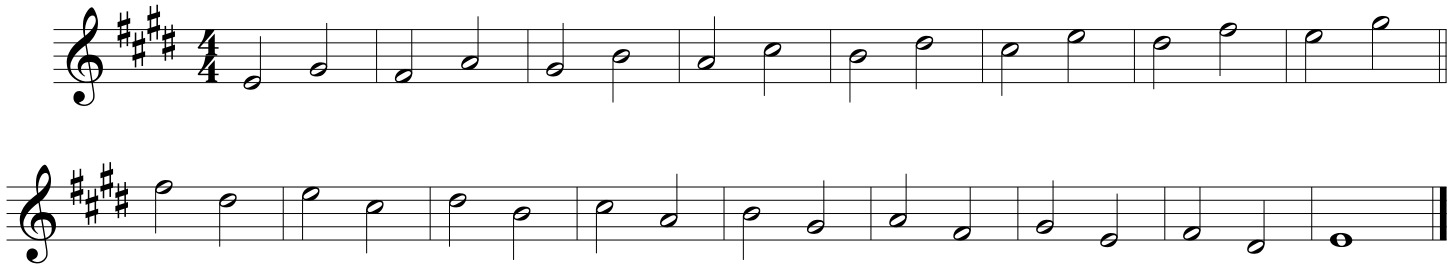
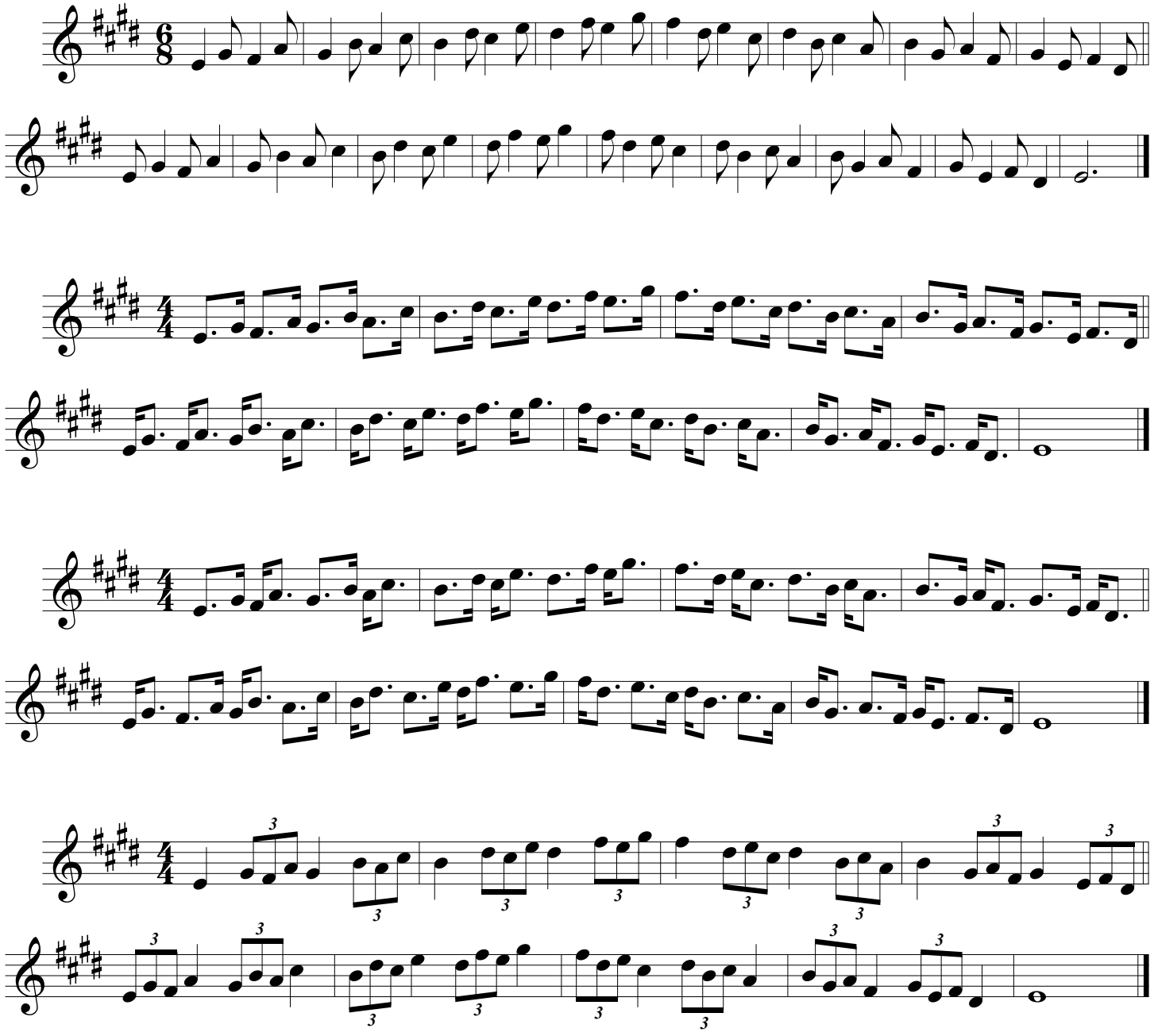
17. E Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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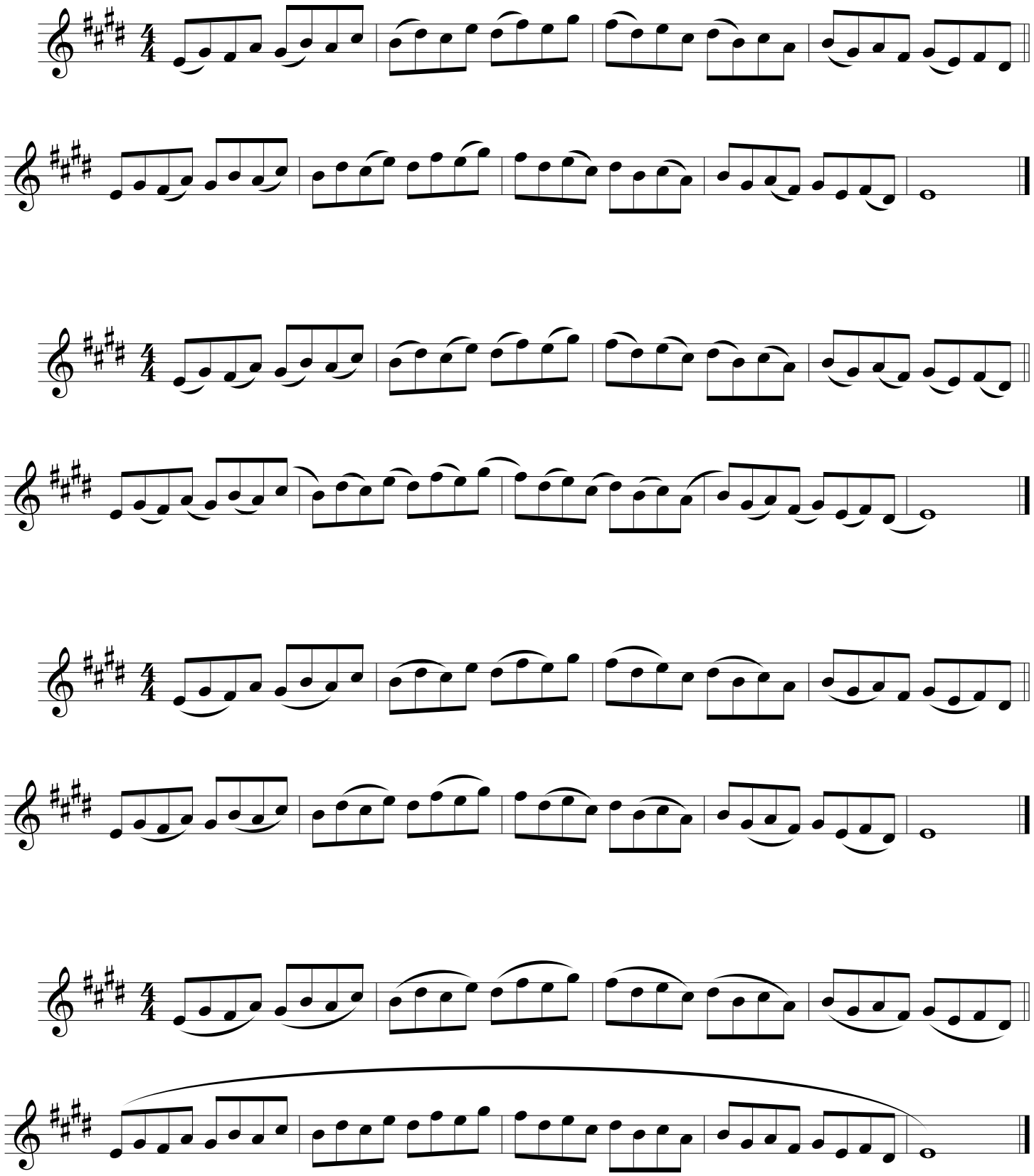
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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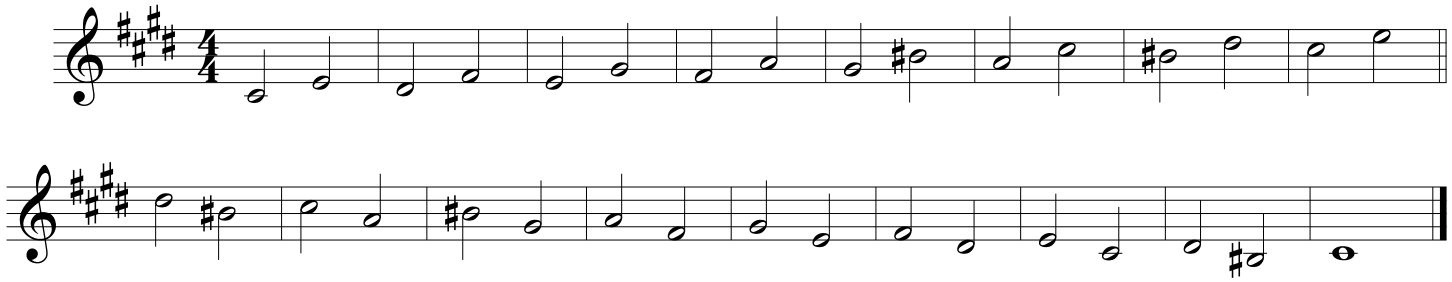
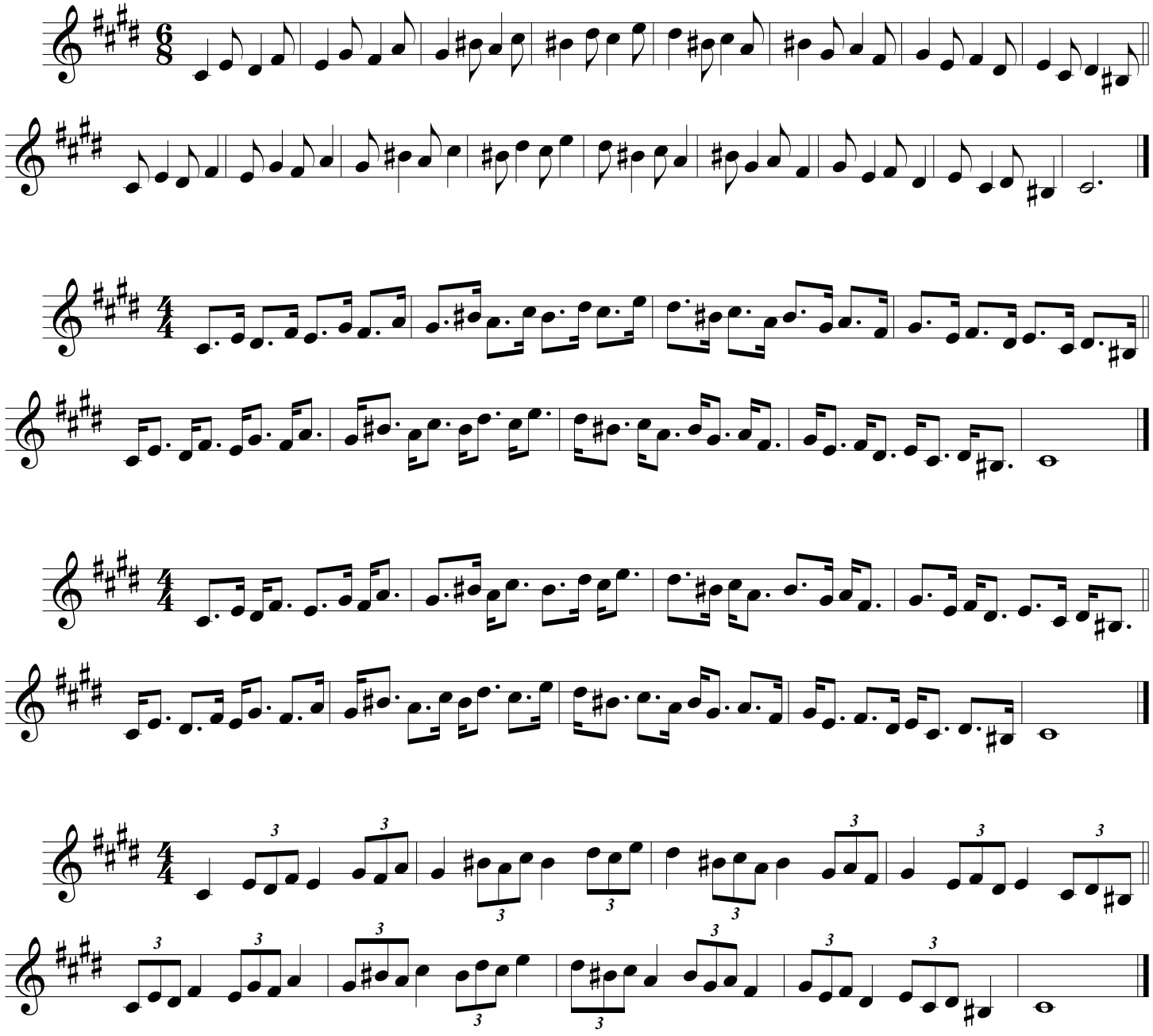
18. C♯ Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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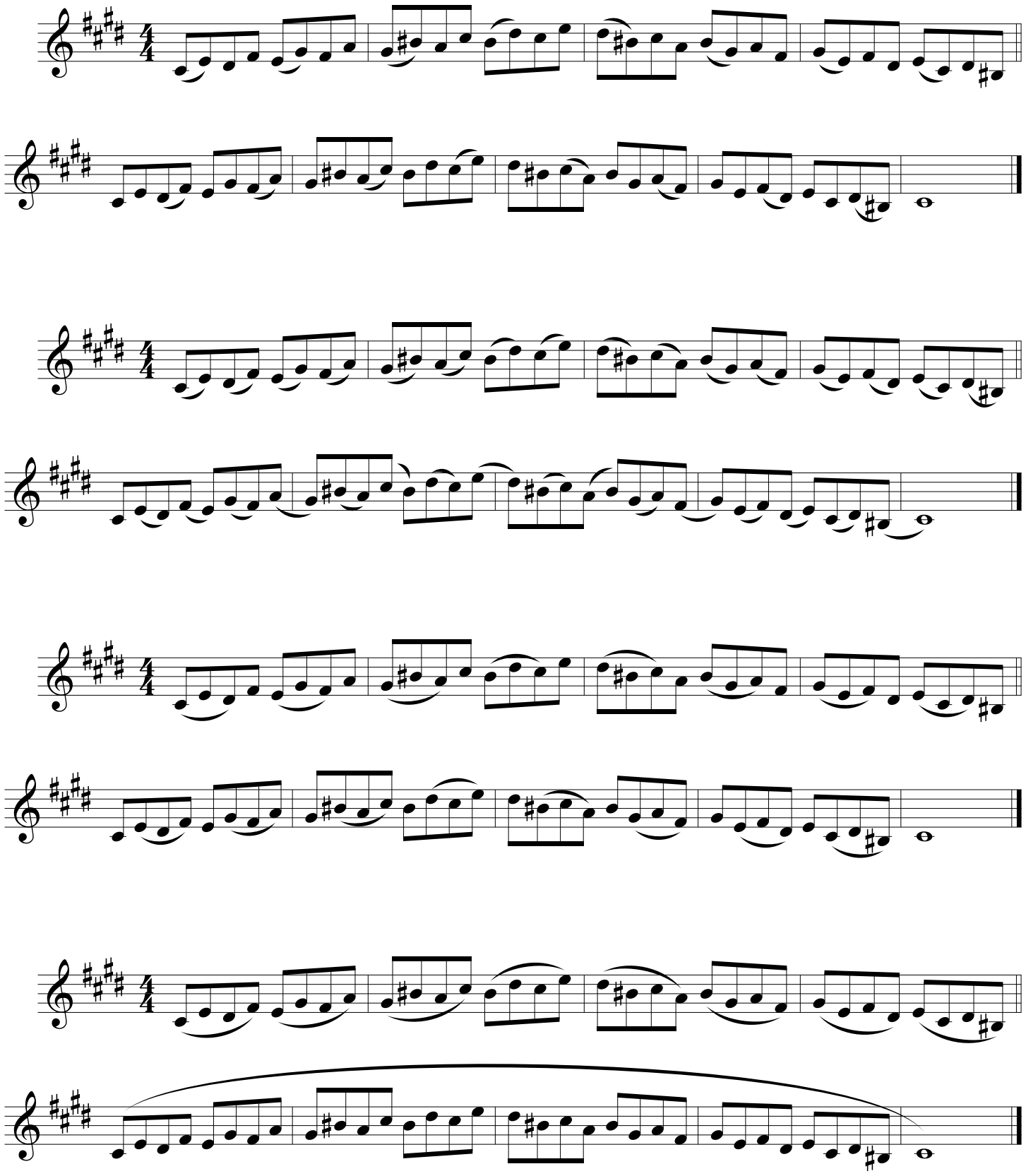
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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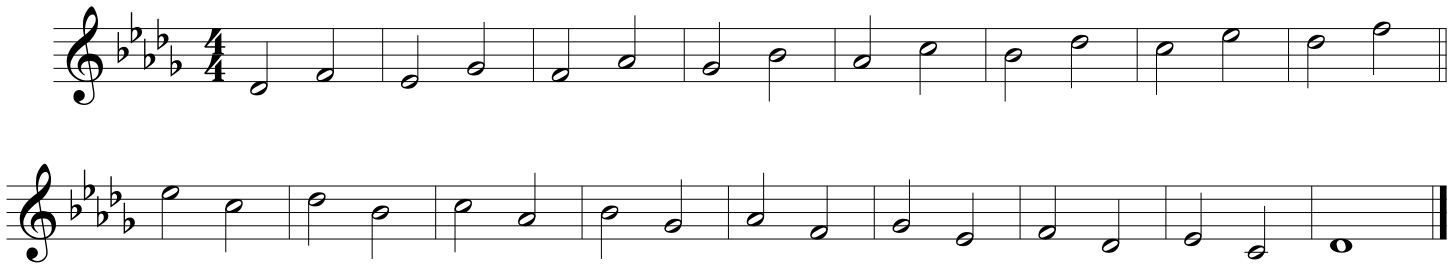
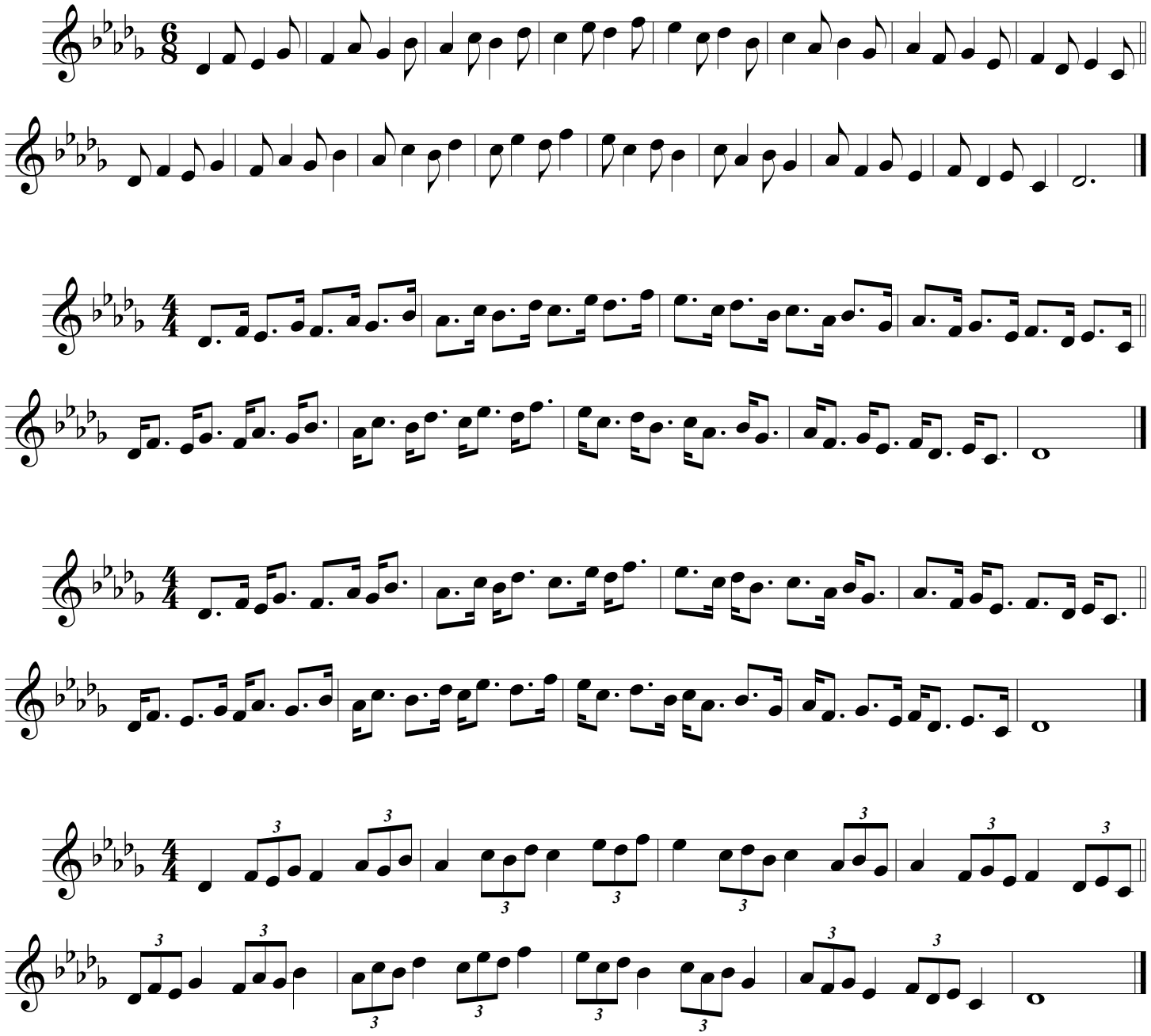
19. D♭ Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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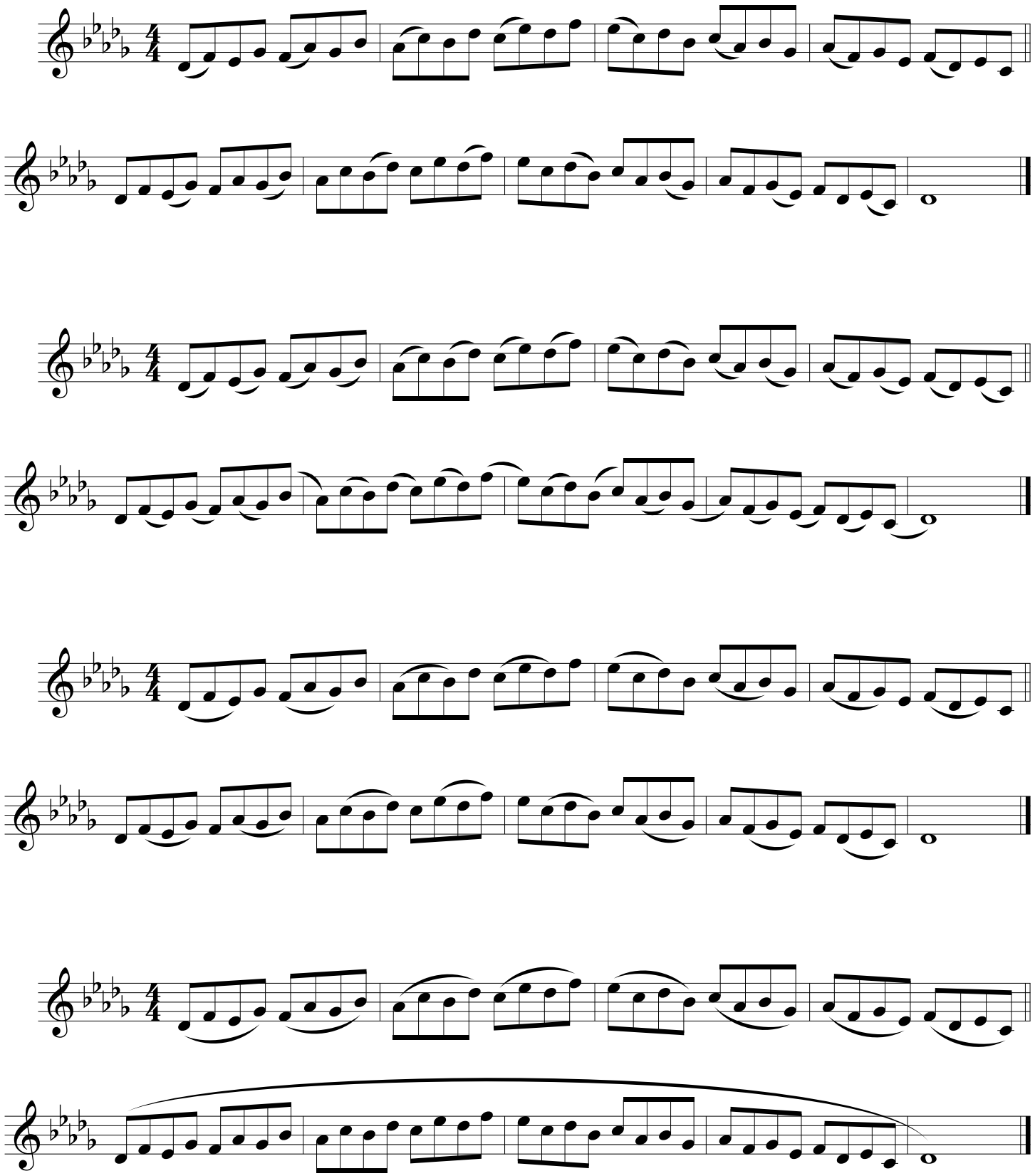
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



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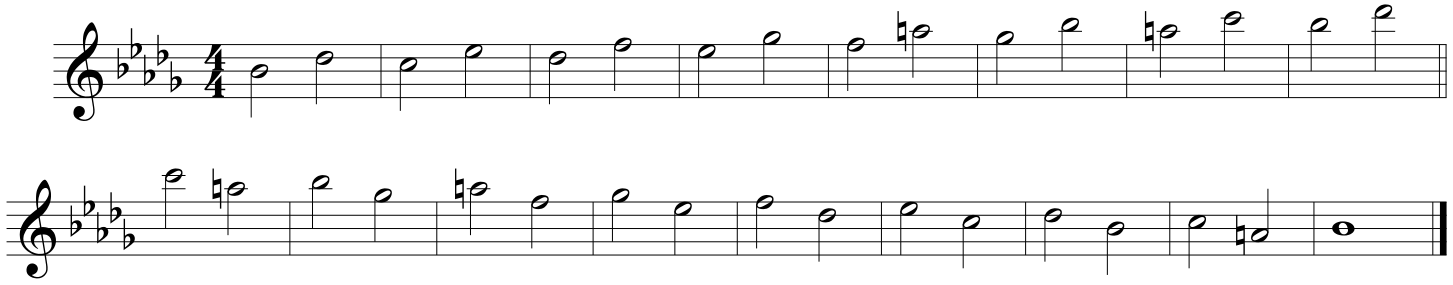
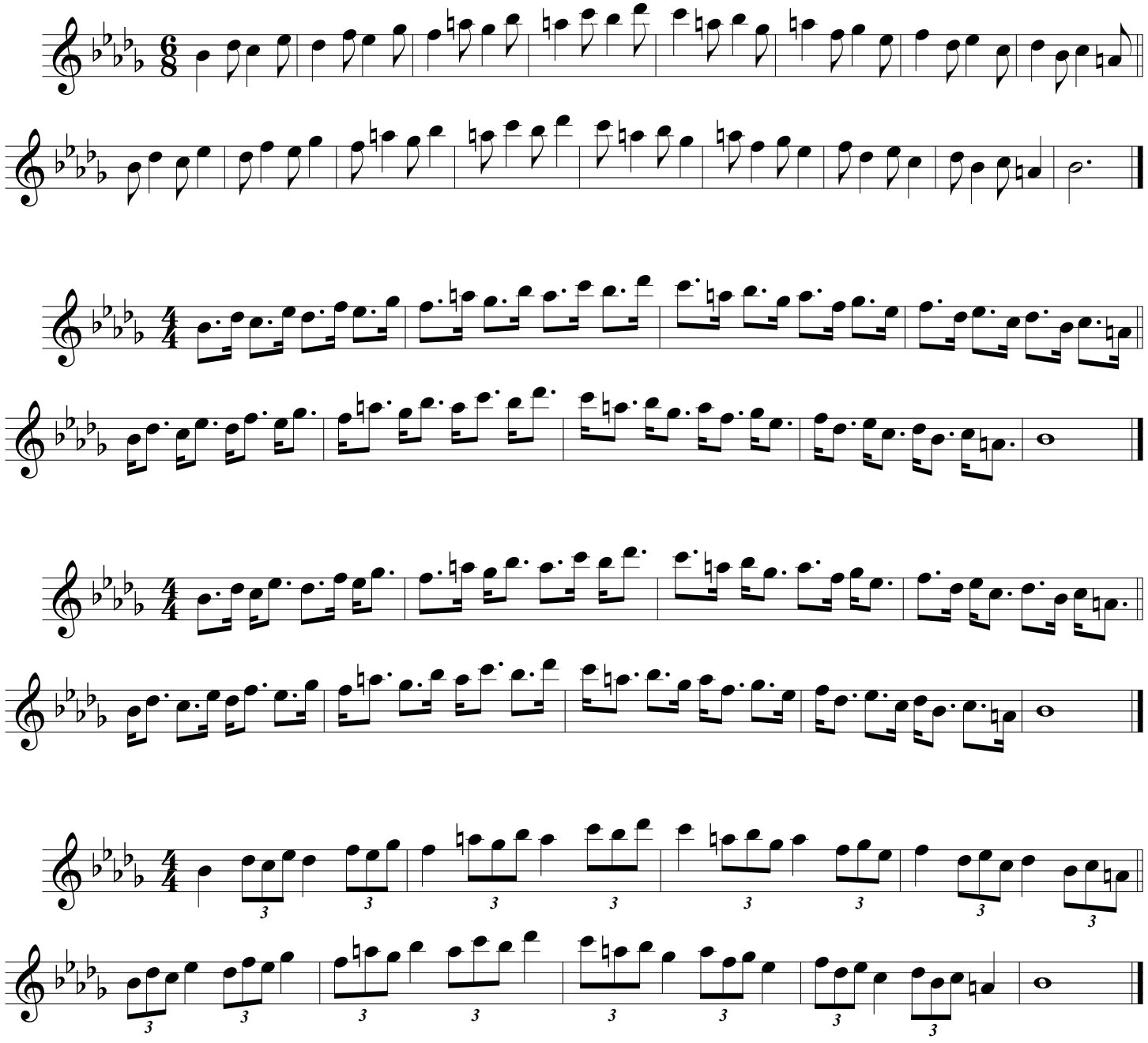
20. B♭ Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch

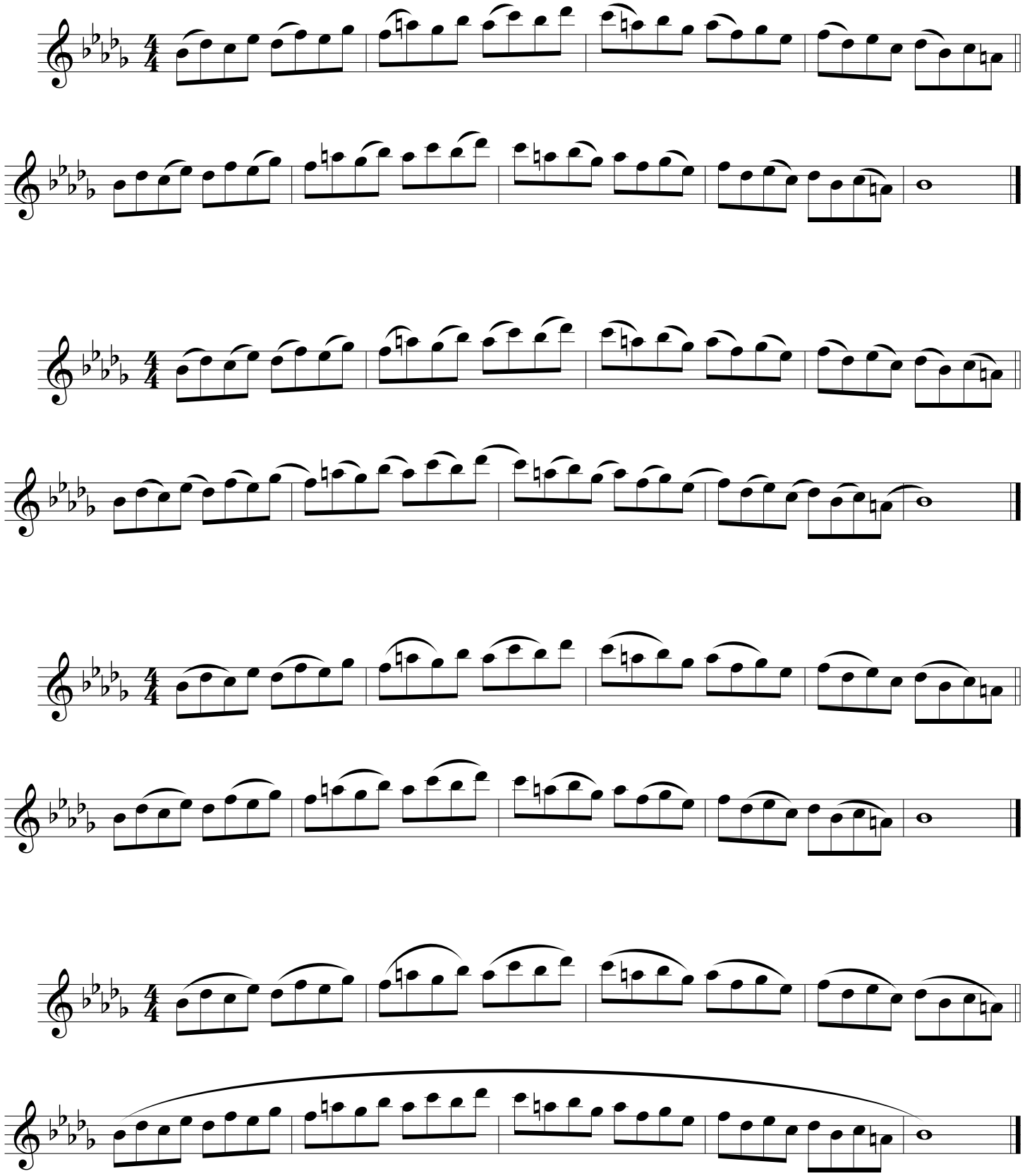


2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



Use more air and less tongue for a smoother, better sound.
Visit www.VincentLaMonica.com/publications for more!

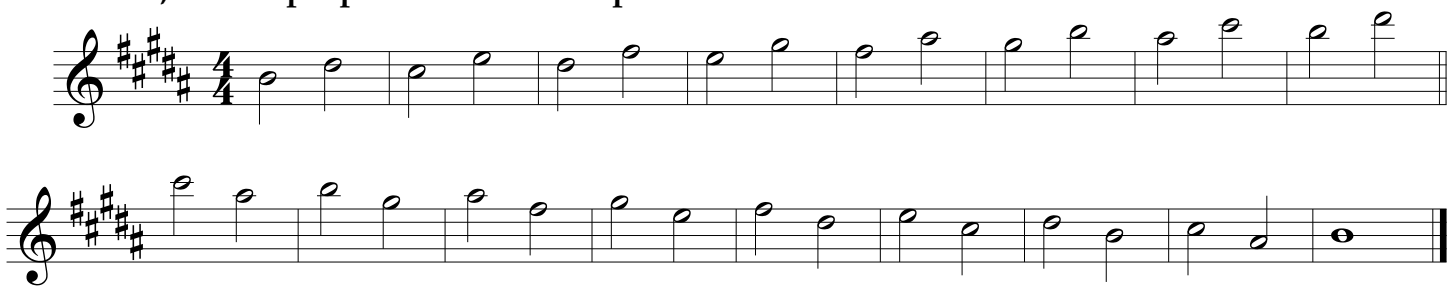
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



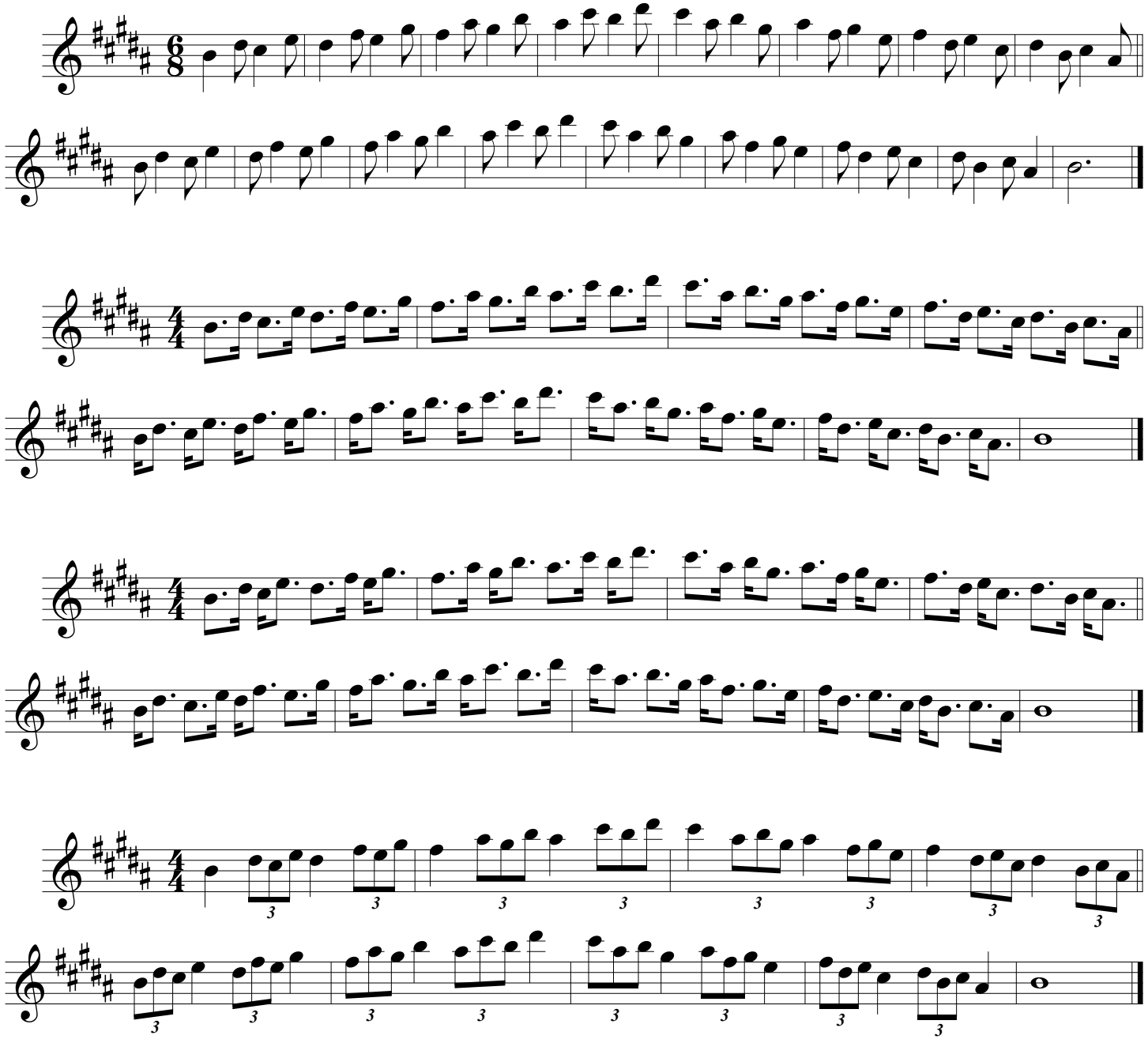
Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
Visit www.VincentLaMonica.com/tips for more tips and tricks!

21. B Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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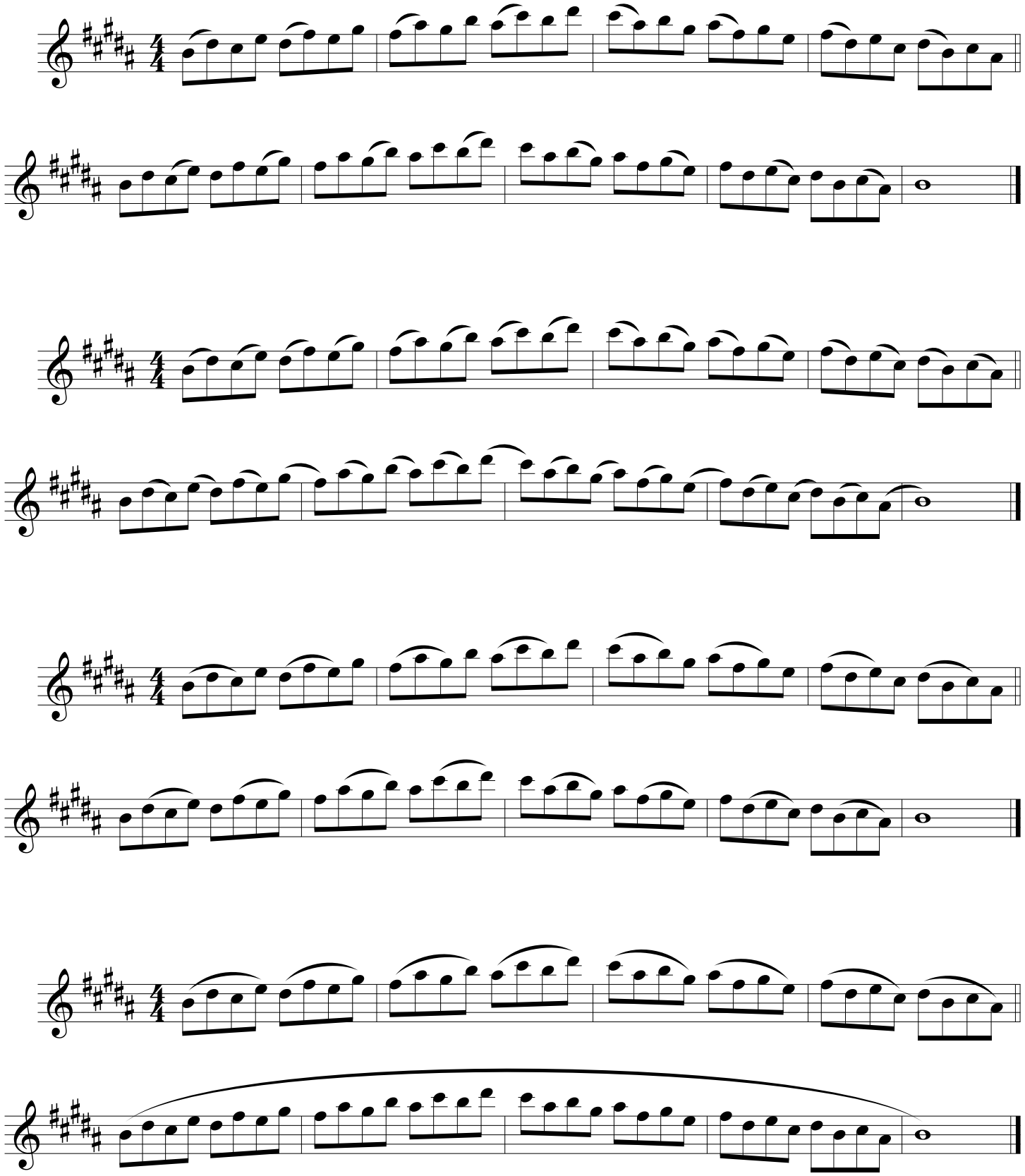
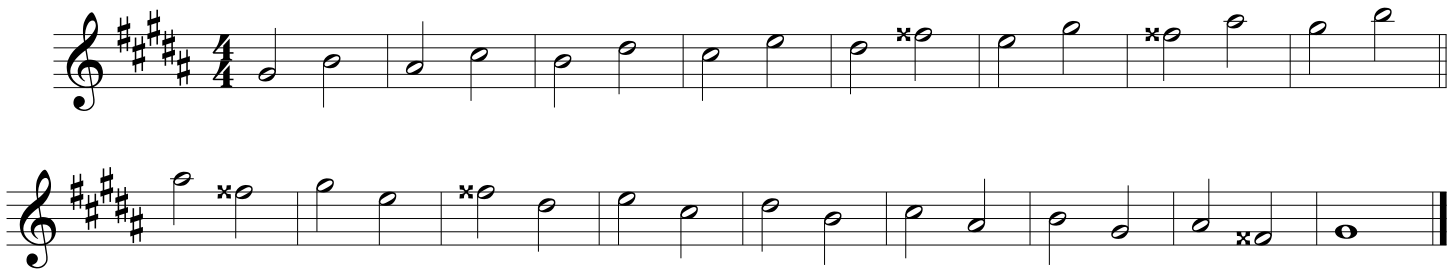
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



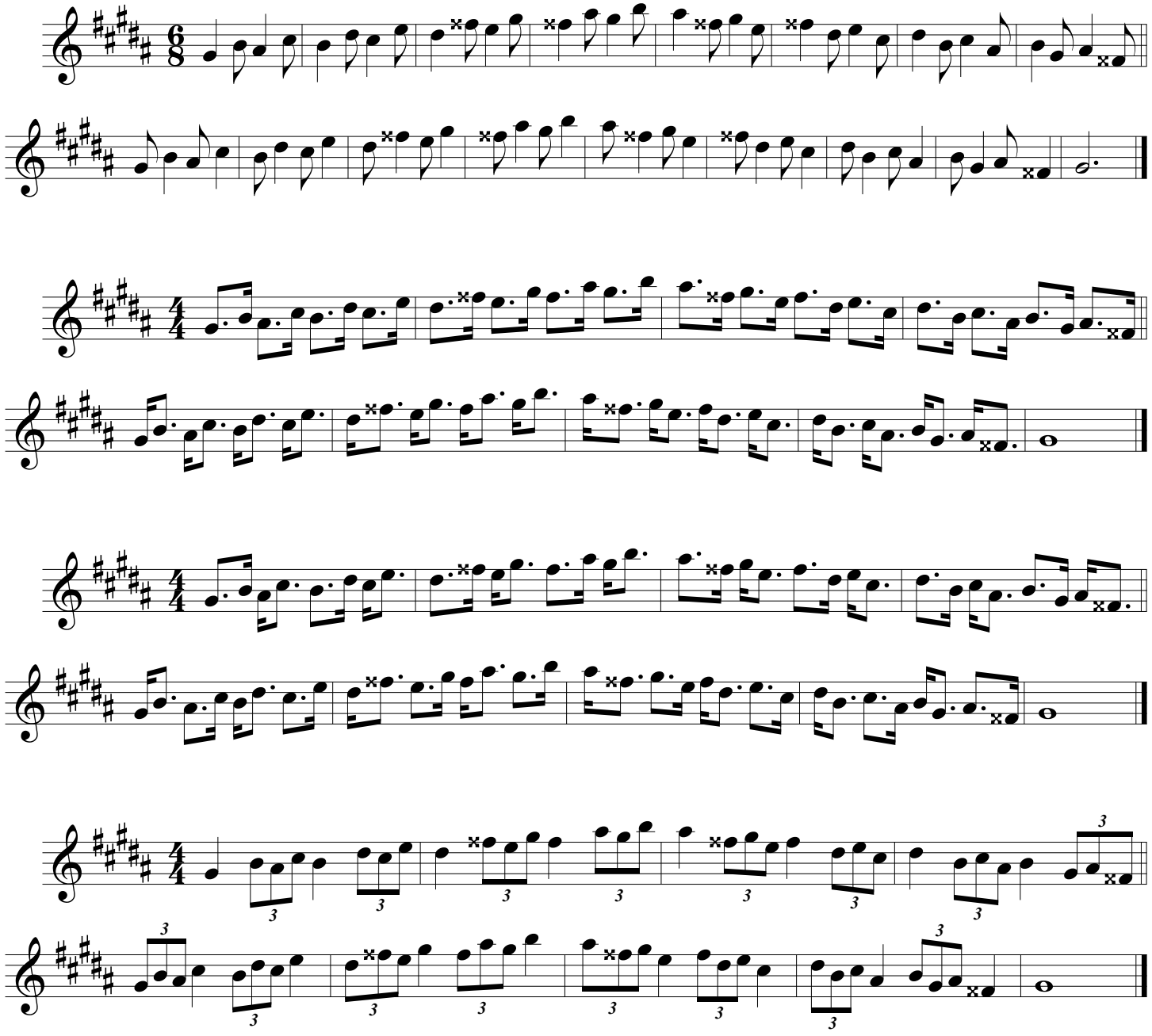
Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
Visit www.VincentLaMonica.com/tips for more tips and tricks!

22. G♯ Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



Use more air and less tongue for a smoother, better sound.
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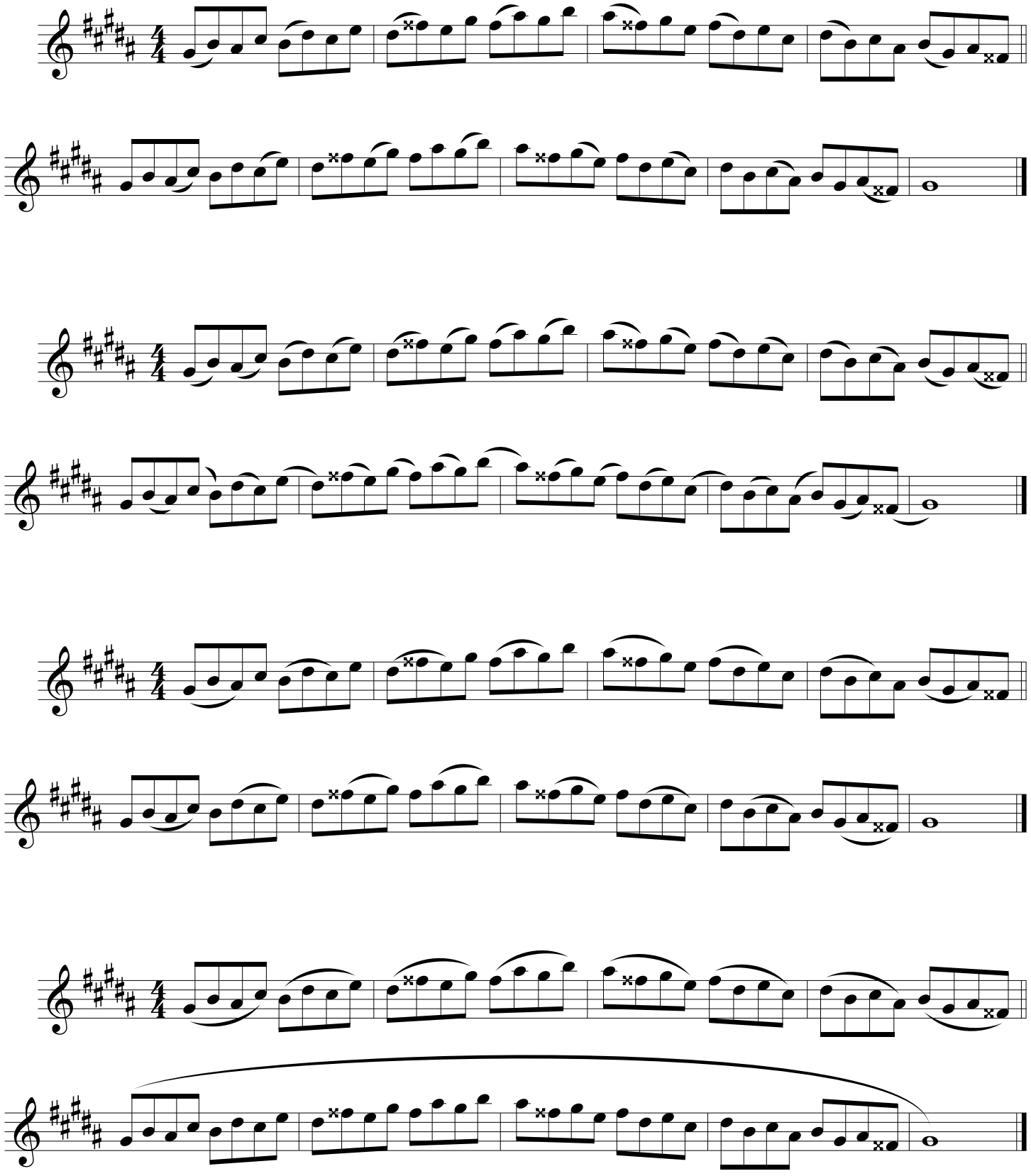
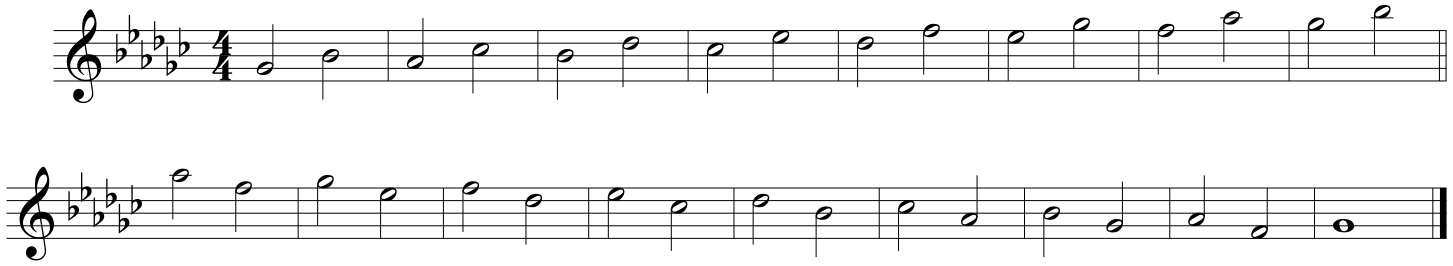
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



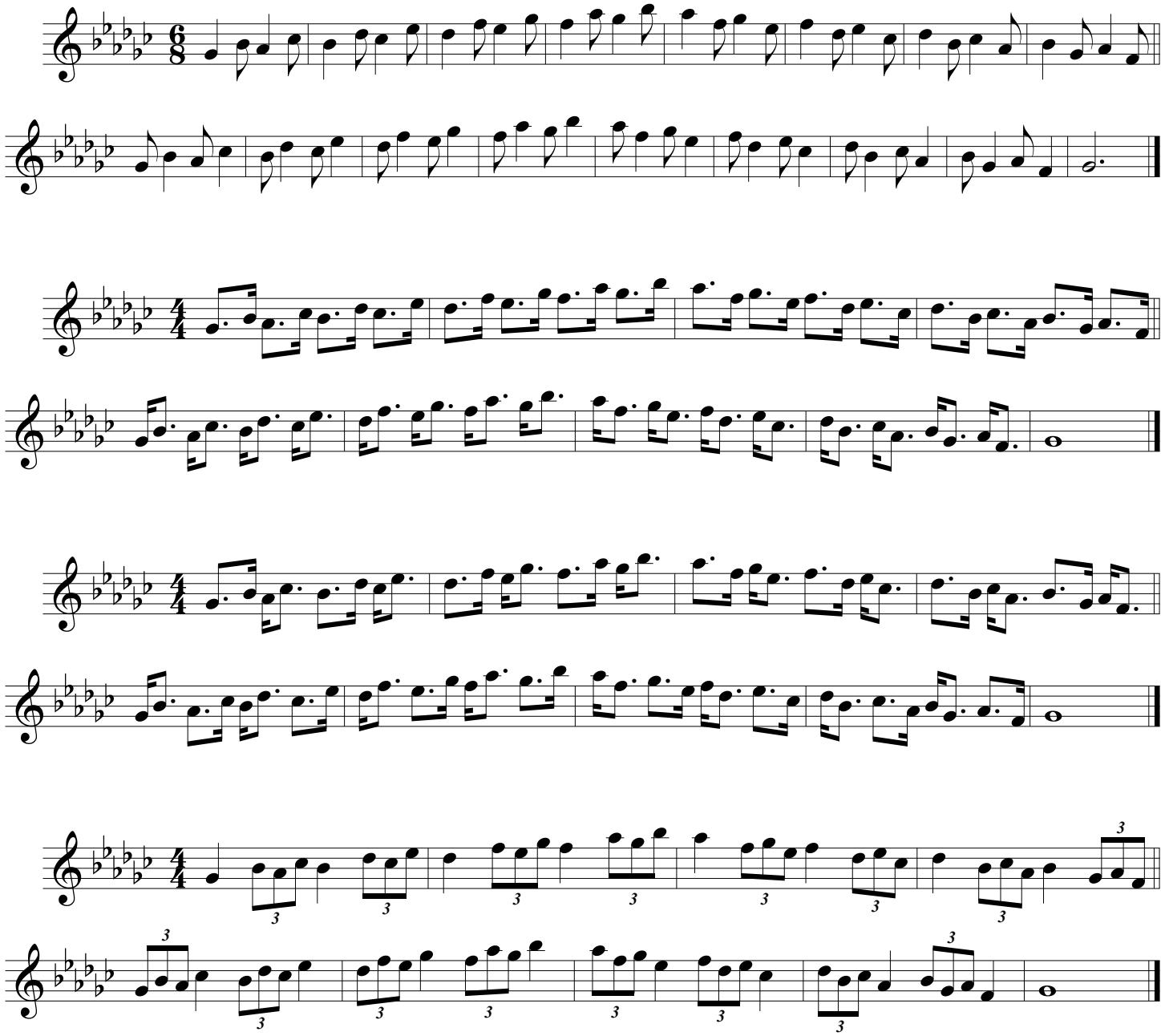
Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
Visit www.VincentLaMonica.com/tips for more tips and tricks!

23. G♭ Major

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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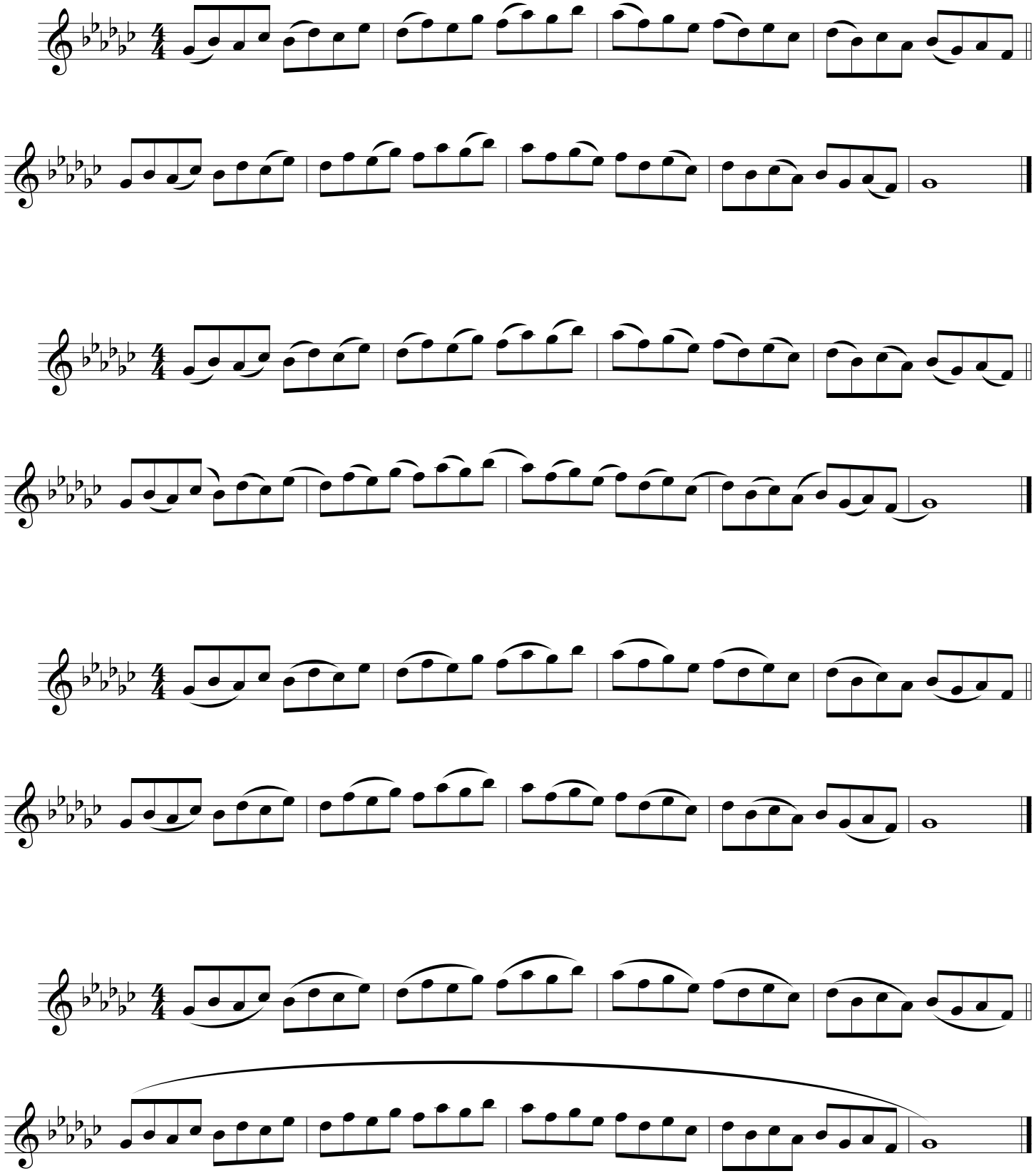
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
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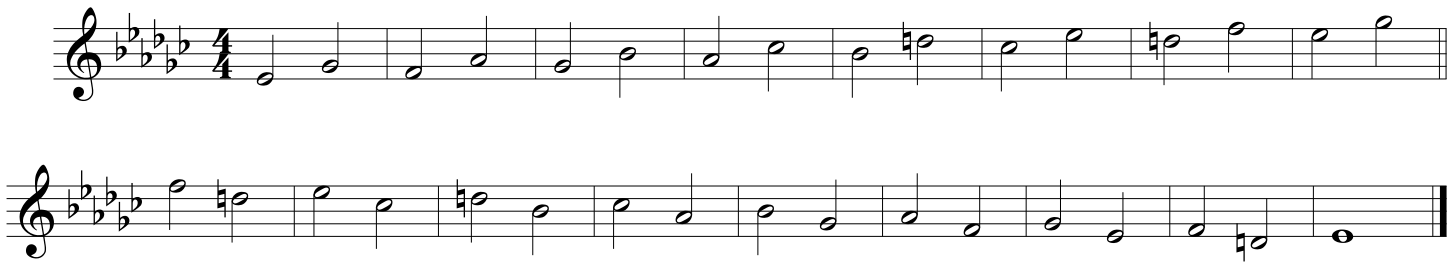
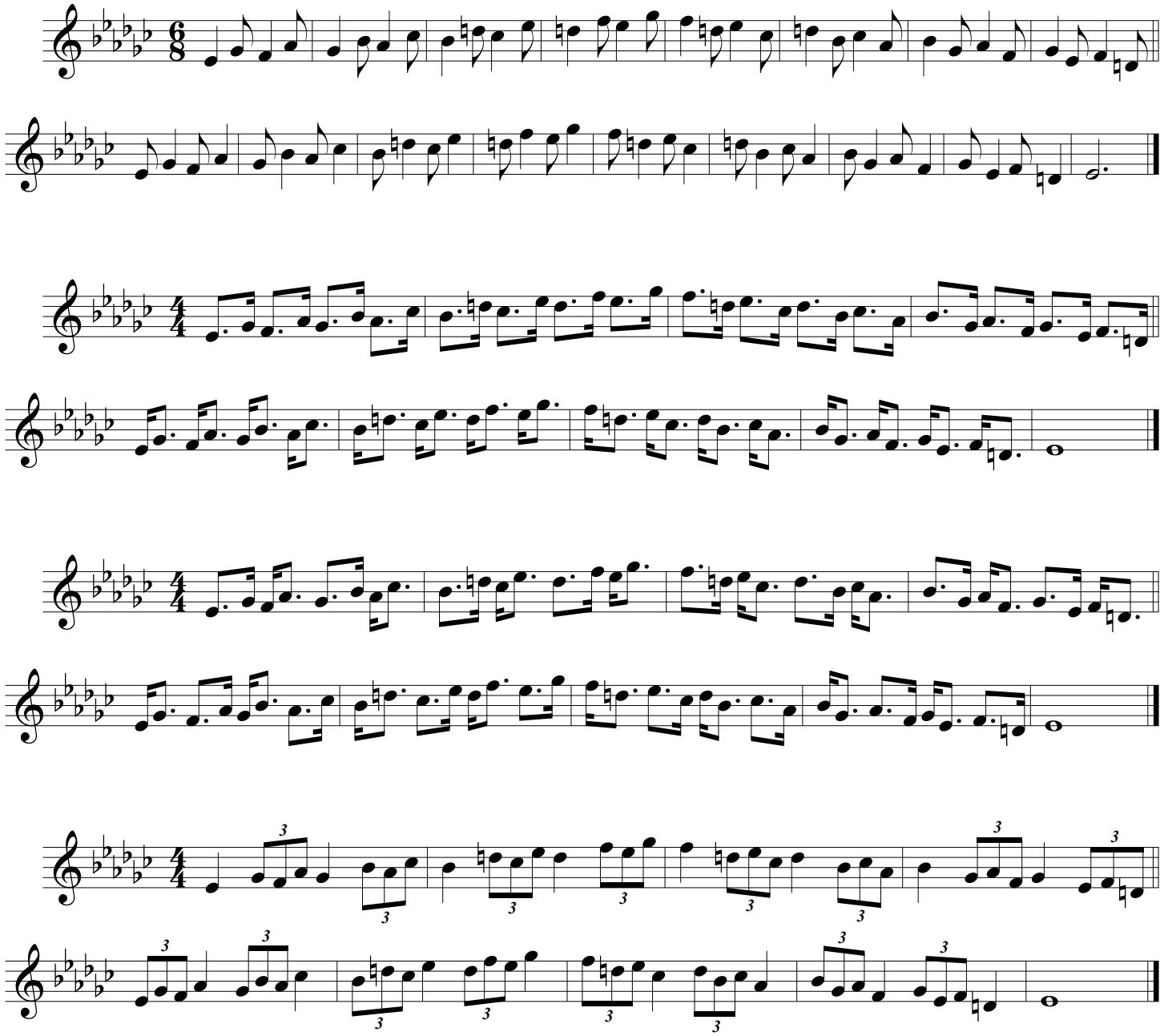
24. E♭ Minor

1. Slow, for the purposes of tone and pitch



2. Varying rhythm, with precision and constant subdivision



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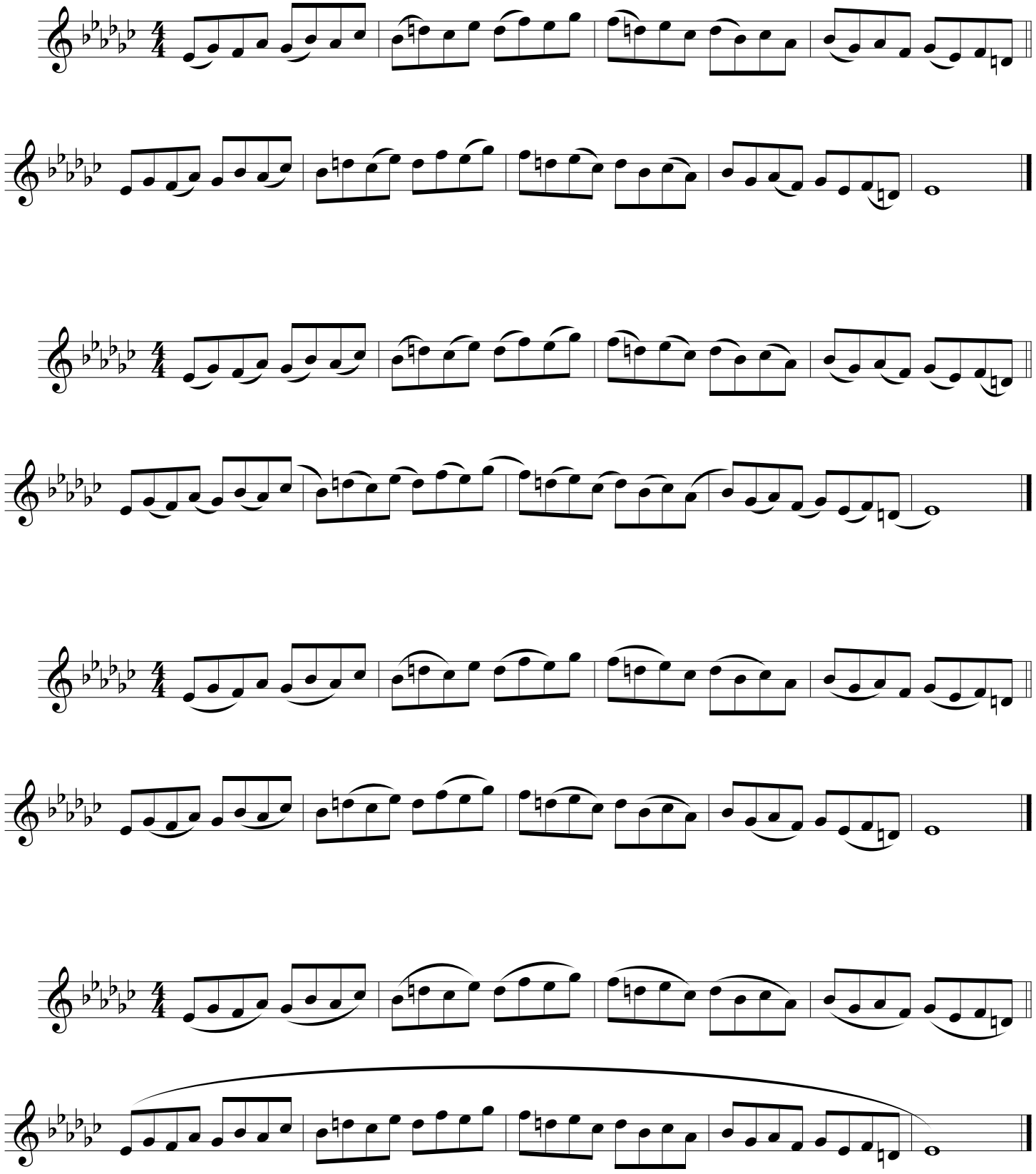
3. Varying articulation, always smooth and connected



Remember to "breathe, set, play" and keep a round, forward embouchure.
Visit www.VincentLaMonica.com/tips for more tips and tricks!

Section 2 Review:
Modulating Scales In Thirds

Just as we did after Section 1, we are going to cover every scale in thirds we've worked on so far, in the same order around the circle of fifths. My recommendation is to play this fully-slurred.

If you can play the Review pages from Sections 1 and 2, you are beyond ready to move to Volume 2: Mastering Scales! See if you can record yourself playing all the way through, and send me the video/audio via email at LaMonicaMusic@gmail.com if you'd like it posted on my website!

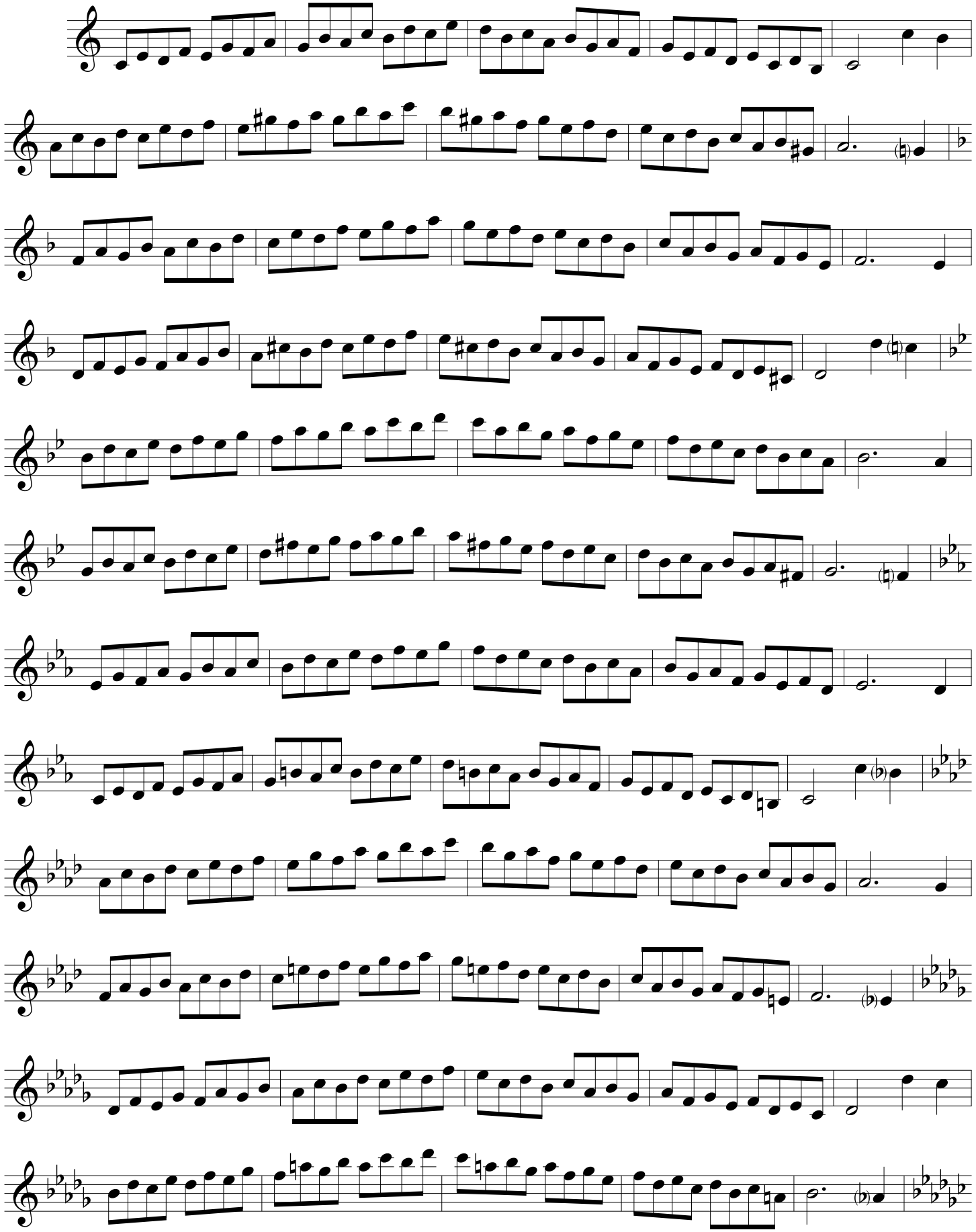
And don't forget…

"Round, forward embouchure"

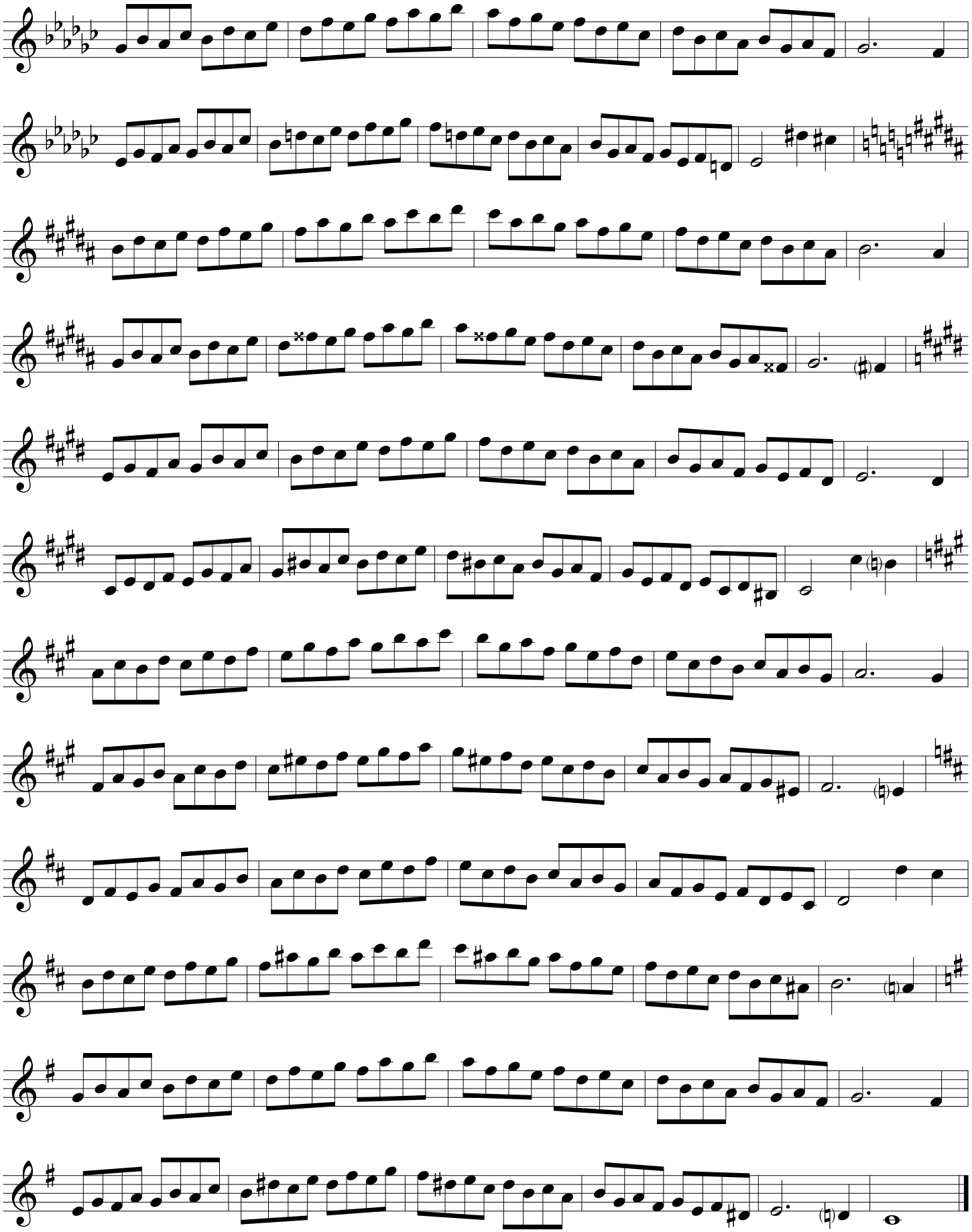
"Breathe, Set, Play"

"More air, less tongue"

Complete Modulating Scales In Thirds



Complete Modulating Scales In Thirds



CONGRATULATIONS!

You've made it to the end of Volume 1: Approaching Scales!

Check out www.VincentLaMonica.com/publications for more, including Volume 2: Mastering Scales!