Laoureux
A Practical Method for Violin
Part 1

REPORT OF PROFESSOR CÉSAR THOMSON

TO

M. F.-A. GEVAERT

DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL CONSERVATORY AT BRUSSELS

All Violin Methods hitherto published have the same fault: they proceed too rapidly, and do not explain with sufficient clearness.

Having examined the Method by M. Laoureux, I find that he has endeavored to correct these mistakes and has fully succeeded in doing so.

In his Preface, by means of a cleverly adapted series of movements, he teaches the pupil how to hold both bow and violin in a wholly correct manner. The first exercises with the bow are excellently graduated, and highly important to insure suppleness of the right arm and a fine quality of tone. For the left hand, M. Laoureux begins with the first finger and makes it practise a great variety of exercises; later he takes up the 2d, 3d and 4th fingers in the same way. Thus, while giving the pupil a thorough training, he avoids monotony in the exercises.

The same method is pursued throughout the course. New difficulties are always prepared by a series of practical exercises, and concluded by a Study containing a review of the technical points just practised. The various bowings are led up to by easy steps, and I am convinced that the pupil would understand the explanations even without the teacher's assistance.

Part II is devoted to the Positions. Beginners generally find them difficult to master, both on account of the different fingering and the changes of position. This difficulty, of which the other violin methods take no notice whatever, is forestalled by the author; from the first position he goes directly over to the third, and then comes back to the second, in which, lying as it does between the other two, the pupil soon feels at home. And in this way the author is enabled to introduce immediately a good number of studies in shifting, and to emphasize the special use of each finger in manifold positions. In a word, the few pages devoted to these studies in shifting afford the pupil a complete view of the positions and the art of shifting. The progressive exercises, with similar fingerings in the first five positions, present the same advantages, and at the same time train the pupil's ear.

Double-stops receive special treatment in the Second Part. All the intervals are prepared, and the two tones are not played together until they have been exhaustively practised as melodic (broken) intervals. By this method the beginner's ear is not led astray, and he more readily acquires perfect precision of pitch.

This Violin Method is, in my opinion, the only one which so skilfully prepares the study of one of the chief difficulties of our instrument. Taken as a whole, this Method advances by very carefully considered gradations, and is, I think, the best adapted for its purpose of all the methods with which I am familiar, and calculated to do most excellent service in the cause of violin-teaching.

(*Signed*) CÉSAR THOMSON.

Supported by the opinion of such a renowned virtuoso and expert, I can only concur in the praise which he bestows on the author of this Violin Method, and approve and recommend the use of this extremely interesting work for instruction on the violin at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels.

(*Signed*) F.-A. GEVAERT.

Fig. I

Fig. II

Fig. III

Fig. IV

Fig. V

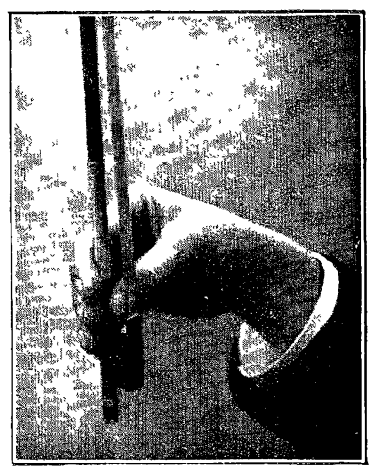


Fig. VI

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL ATTITUDE

How to Hold the Violin

Before allowing the pupil to set bow to string, he should be familiarized with every detail requisite for a correct attitude, and with a systematic regulation of all the movements.

In general, the correct posture of the violinist consists in throwing the weight of the body on to the left leg, which should form a straight line with the well-poised head. The right foot, slightly and easily advanced, maintains the equilibrium of the body.

Before setting the violin in position the pupil's left shoulder must be padded with a small cushion, so that he may not have to raise it, but can, on the contrary, draw it back a little while throwing out the chest. The above advice is of vital importance in the matter of the pupil's physical development. A chinrest is likewise indispensable.

We will now suppose the pupil to be standing easily with arms hanging down at either side.

First movement. The pupil takes the violin, with its back towards him, by the end of the neck next the scroll, between the first joint of the thumb and the third joint of the forefinger of the left hand.

Second movement. He raises the left forearm to the height of the shoulder.

Third movement. He throws the left elbow slightly forward, away from the body, so that the neck of the violin rests on the palm of the hand.

Fourth movement. He raises the violin with the help of the right hand, and sets it under the left side of the chin, without lowering his head or pressing on the tailpiece, so that the instrument is gripped between collarbone and jawbone; the position of the nose will be in line with the D- and A-strings.

The teacher will take care to press the palm of the hand away from the neck of the violin, so that it may form a straight line with the forearm; and to turn it to the left, so that the fingers may come over the strings. (Fig. 1.)

This position enables the player to hold the violin by the weight of his head alone, and without effort.

The pupil must take care not to thrust his head forward, as this would tend rather to lower the violin than to keep it steadily horizontal.

The body of the violin should slant downward to the right, so that when the pupil sets the bow, at the nut, on the G-string, the down-bow will describe a horizontal line from nut to point. (Fig. 2.)

How to Hold the Bow

Before taking up the bow, lay a pencil on a table, and pick it up with the thumb and middle finger. (Fig. 4.)

Now bring down the other three fingers gently upon the pencil.

The four fingers, at first curved naturally, are now advanced till nearly straight (the thumb retaining its position), with the forefinger further forward than the little finger; this throws the hand into a slightly oblique position, giving the precise shape for holding the bow properly. (Fig. 5.)

The teacher will hand the bow to the pupil so that the latter may grasp it as he held the pencil, between the thumb (which holds the stick at the nut) and middle finger. The pupil now brings the other fingers down upon the stick, without pressing too hard or stiffly; the forefinger is a trifle advanced, and he must take special care to keep the thumb slightly curved, so that it may not bend inward. (Fig. 6.)

The pupil has now to set his bow, at the nut, on the G-string. His right elbow should be close to his side; his wrist, gently curved upward, forms an

almost straight line with his forearm. The entire breadth of the hair should rest on the string, and the bow must not be tilted sideways. (Fig. 3.)

The pupil is warned against that very common fault of beginners, the tilting of the stick toward the fingerboard with the hair aslant on the string. This position permits only a small portion of the hair to touch the string, and the slanting pull hurts the quality of the tone. It will readily be seen that a bow set squarely on the string will bring all the hair into action, retain its balance, require less effort on the performer's part, and bring out a fuller, finer tone.

Our next move will be to get our first tone on the G-string. As we observed before, the pupil, in drawing his bow from nut to point, should describe a horizontal line, which is accomplished by letting the bow run deep in the waist (between the bouts), almost touching the edge of the violin.

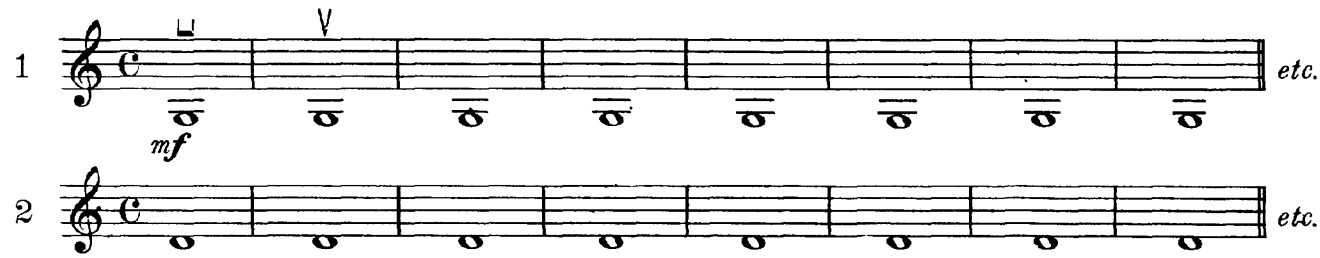
Practical Method for the Violin

BY NICOLAS LAOUREUX

PART I

⊔ Down-bow, ∨ Up-bow

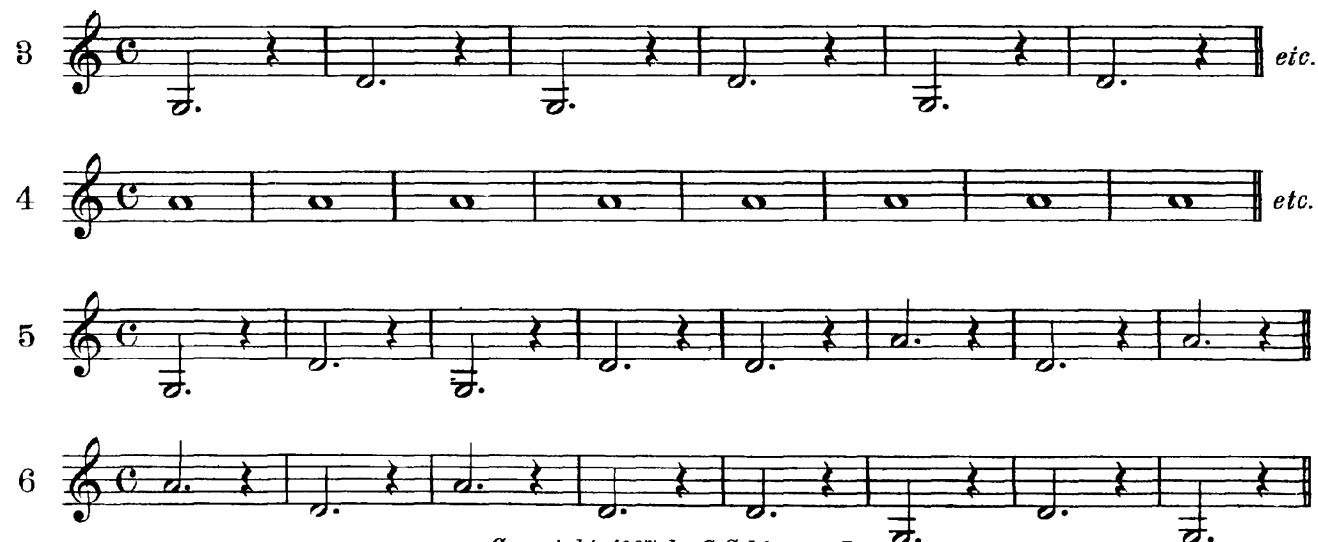
When the bow touches the string for the down-bow, at the nut, the wrist should be slightly raised, and gradually lowered as the bow travels towards the point; when the point is reached the wrist should be on a level with the forearm. (See Figs. III and II.)



The teacher will have noticed during this exercise that the pupil tries to describe a horizontal line, but finds it difficult to draw his bow straight, that is to say, parallel to the bridge. It would be dangerous to allow the pupil to guide his bow unaided at the outset The teacher should guide the bow by the screw, and lightly bear with his left hand upon the pupil's elbow, which will oblige the latter to play with his elbow close to his side, and to raise his wrist slightly on the up-bow.

Little by little, as the pupil allows the bow to be guided without stiffness, he may be left to play unassisted.

In passing from *G* to *D*, the pupil, during the rest, should slightly lower wrist. (For the *D*, *A* and *E* strings the elbow must be close to the side.)



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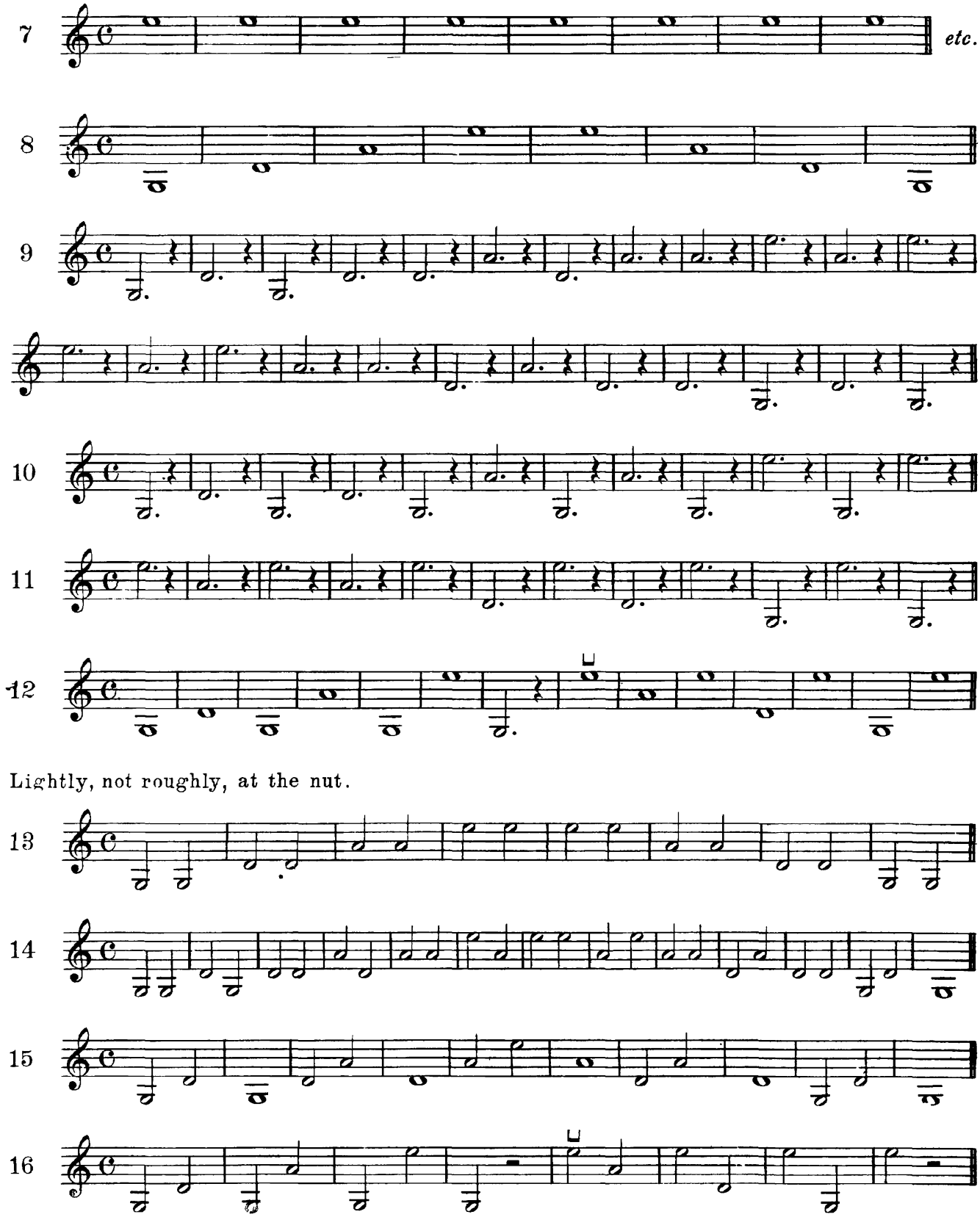
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etc.
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Lightly, not roughly, at the nut.
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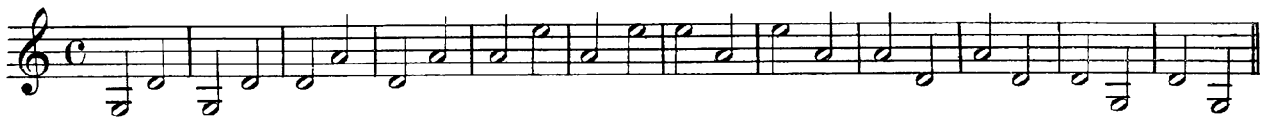

Lightly, with the whole length of the bow.

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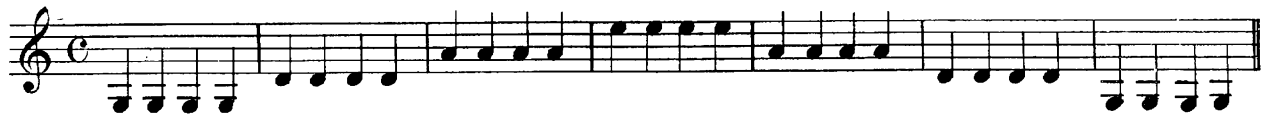

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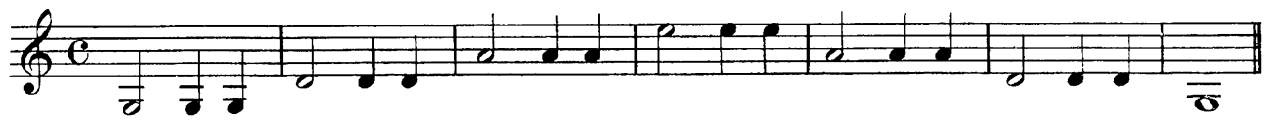

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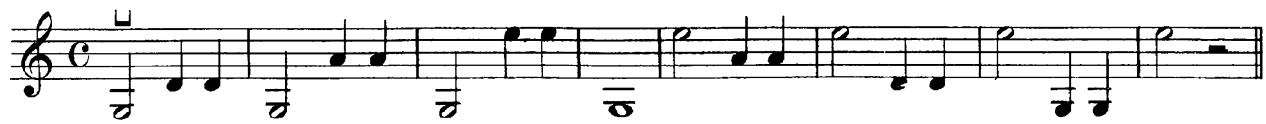

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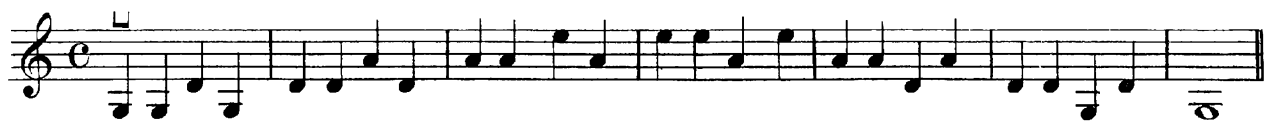

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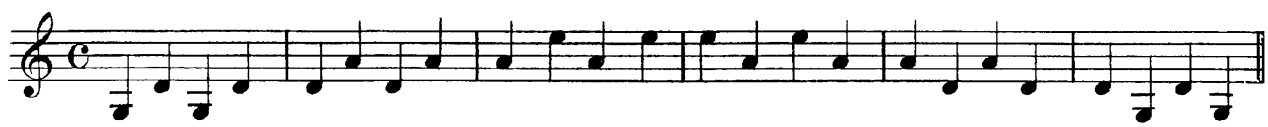

The eighth-note is to be played (1) from the middle to the point, slightly raising the wrist for the up-bow; reverse movement for the down-bow; (2) close to the nut, using very little bow, and solely with a wrist-movement, without moving the forearm.

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A whole bow to the quarter-notes; from point to middle on the eighth-notes.

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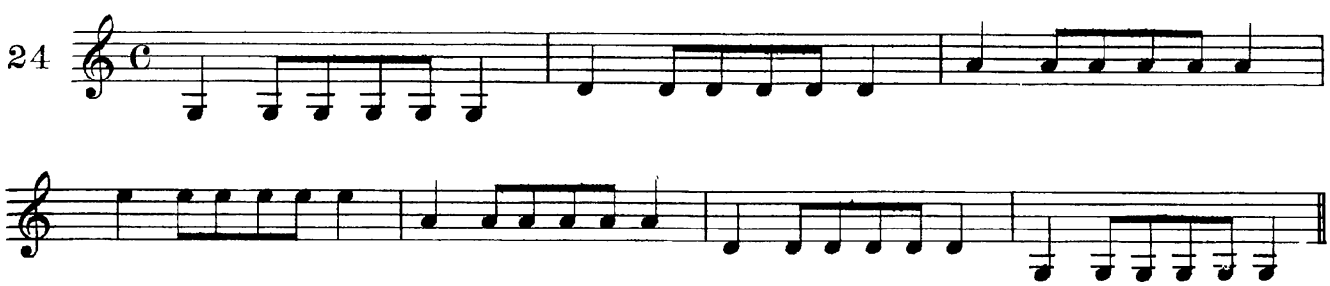

N.B. Fullness of tone depends upon its purity. Consequently, at the beginning, try to get a soft and pure tone; later, if you have flexibility, it will become large, and will remain beautiful.

The eighth notes, from nut to middle; a whole bow on the quarter-notes.

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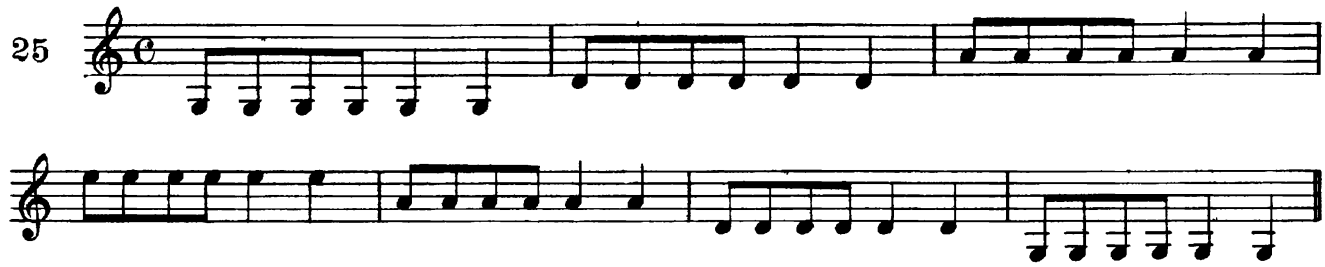

In the first measure take the eighths at the point; in the second, at the nut; and so forth.

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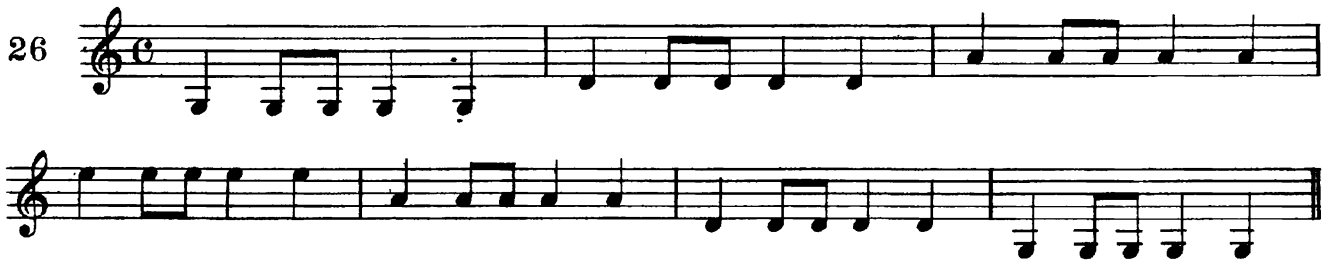

For a long time the pupil will find it very difficult to restrain the speed of his bow on the long notes, especially when they are preceded by short ones. The following exercises will accustom him to use the bow according to the length of the note.

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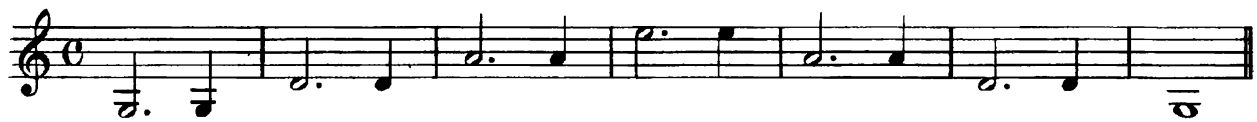

1st measure: Eighths at the point. 2d measure: Eighths at the nut.

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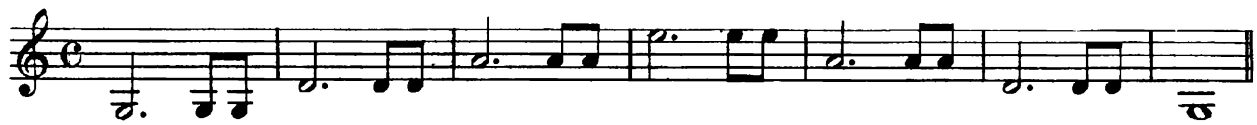

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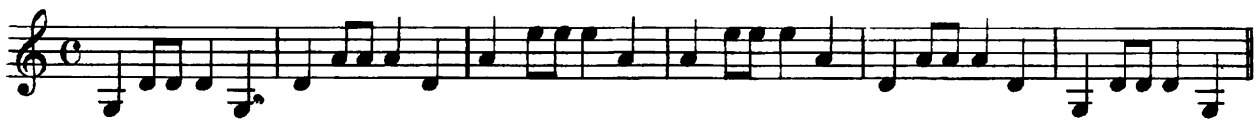

Take the eighth-notes at the point.

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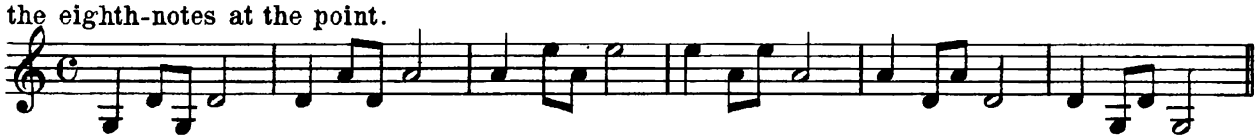

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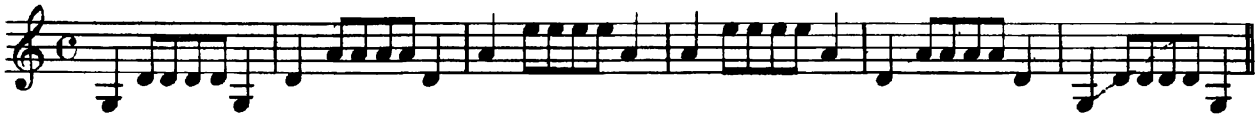

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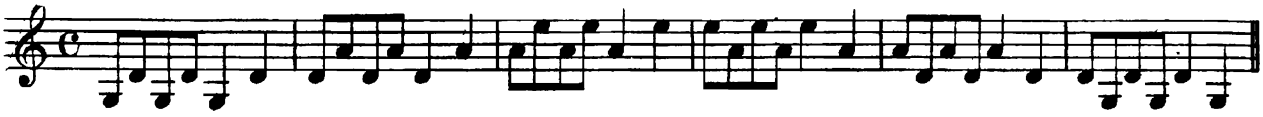

Take the eighth-notes at the nut.

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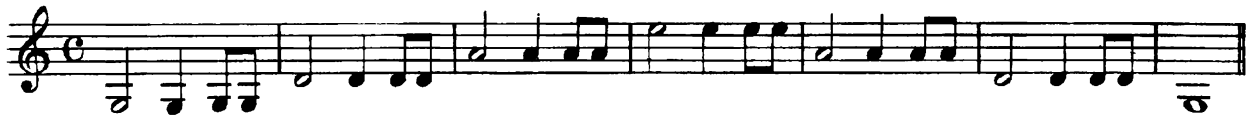

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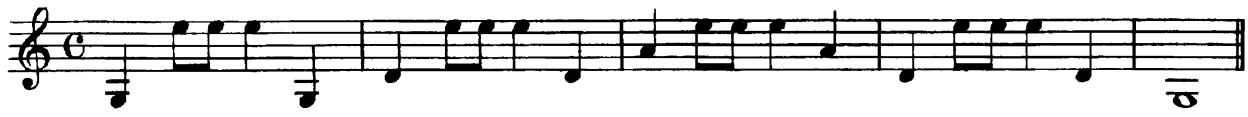

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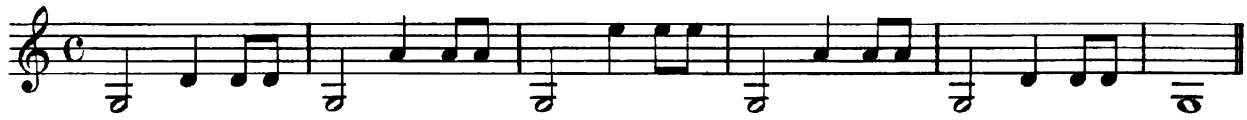

The Legato

In passing from one string to another adjacent string the pupil must lower or raise the hand by motion of the wrist only (lower it to reach a higher string, raise it for a lower string) without changing the elevation of the forearm.

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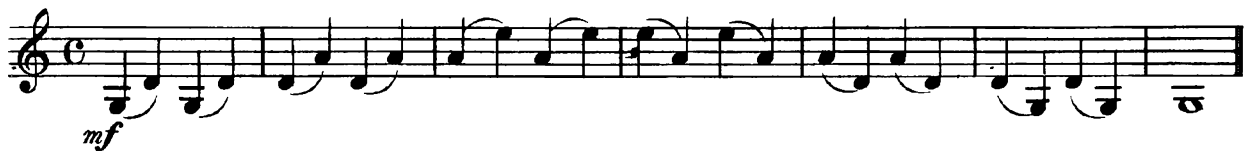

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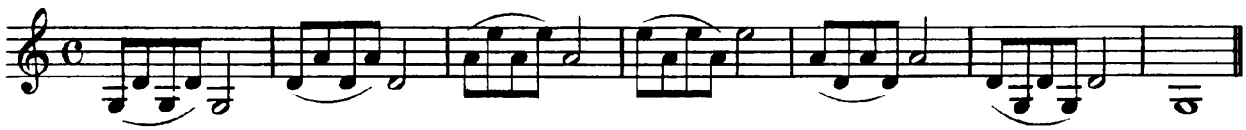

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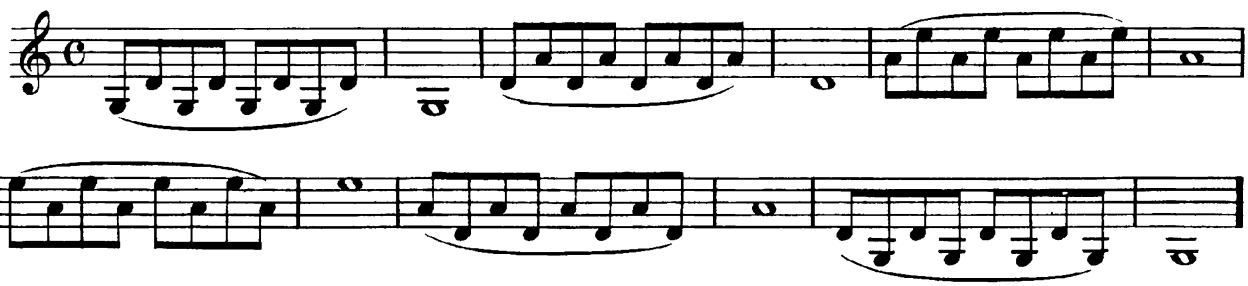

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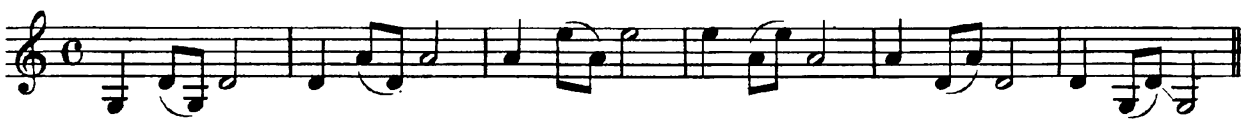

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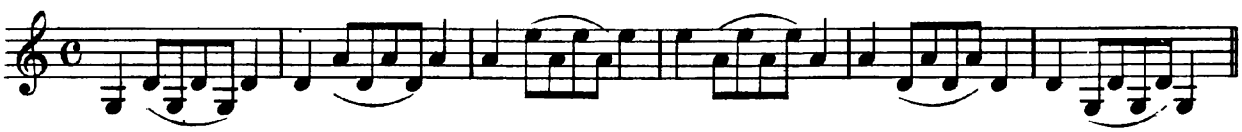

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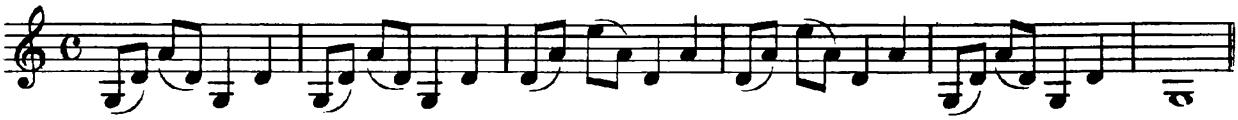
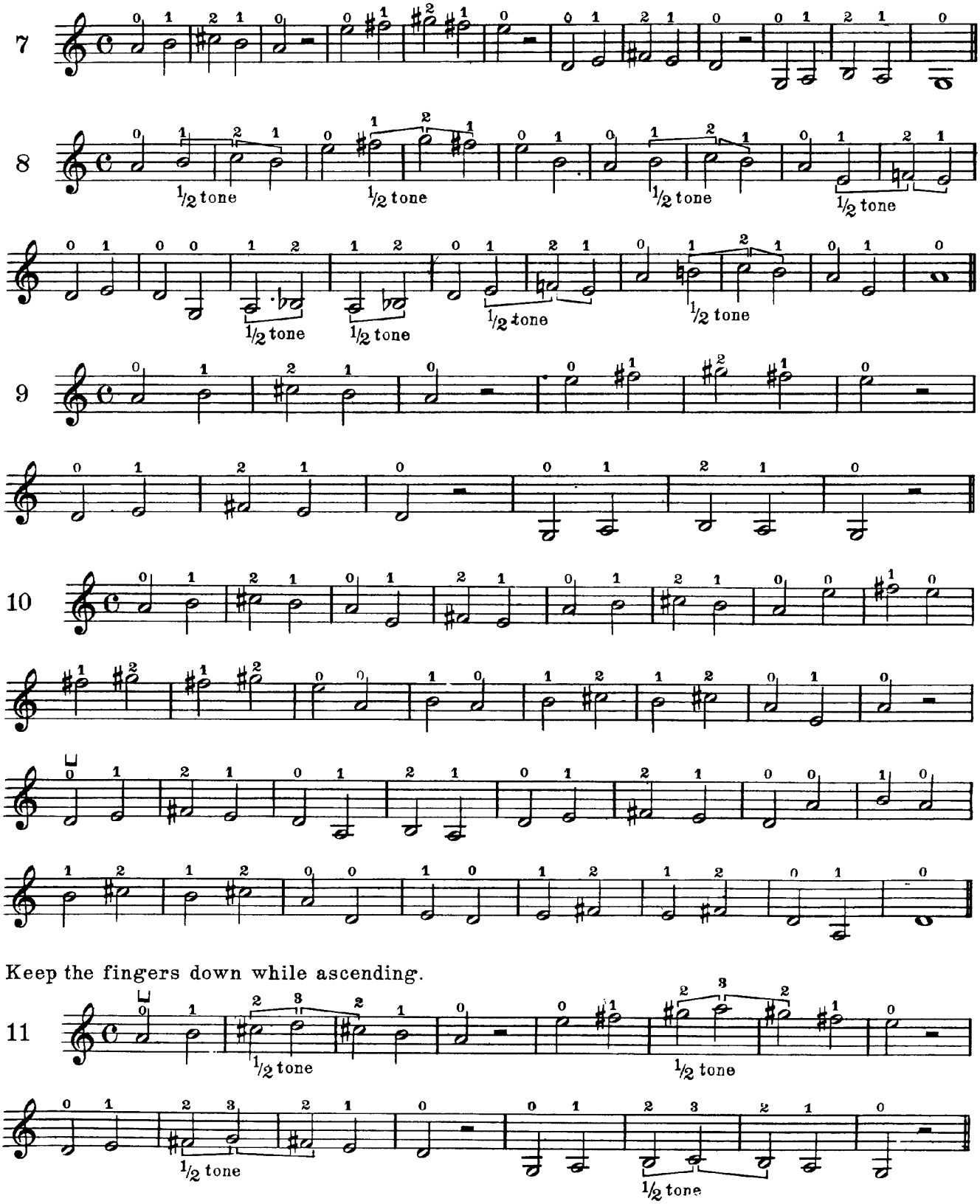


Take care that when the pupil puts down the second finger he does not raise the first, which he should find in place when descending.



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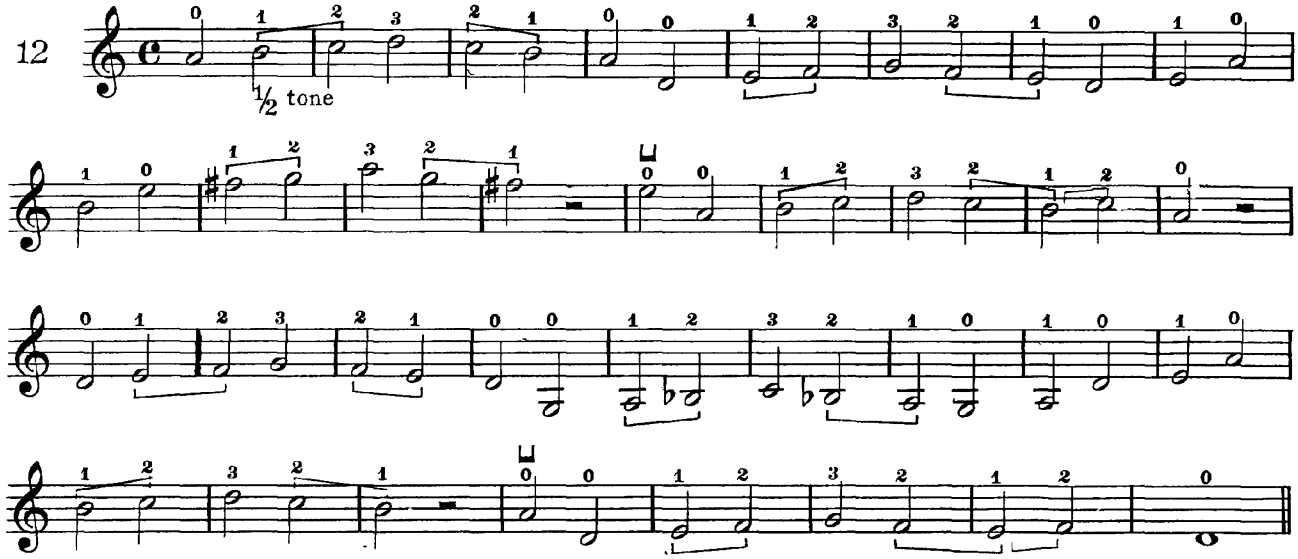

Keep the fingers down on the strings while ascending, so as to get the same notes coming down.

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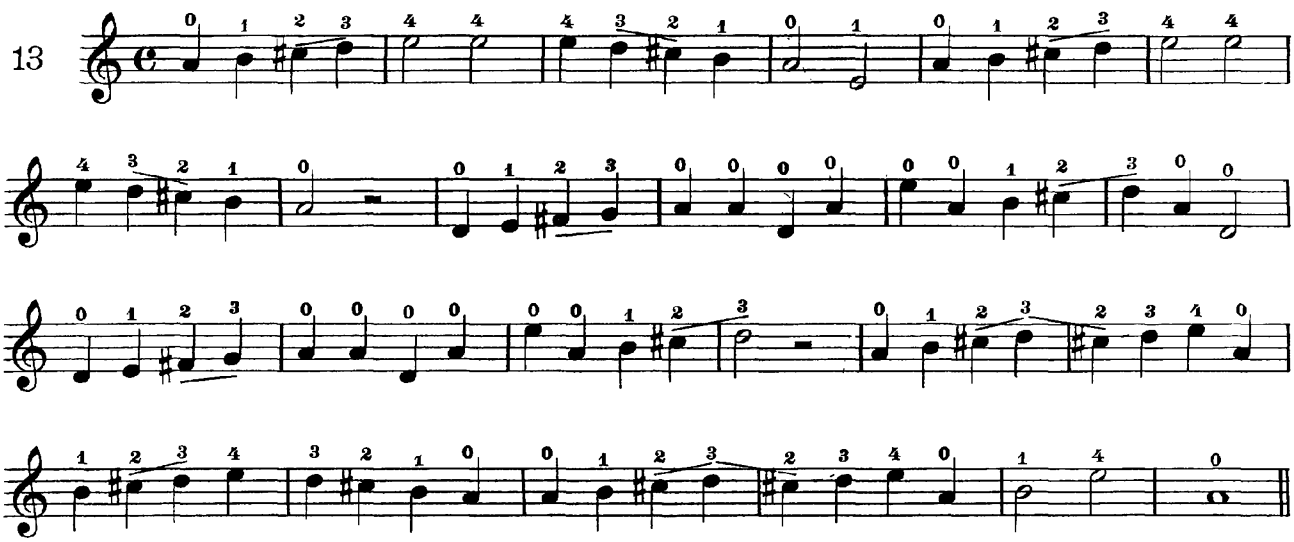

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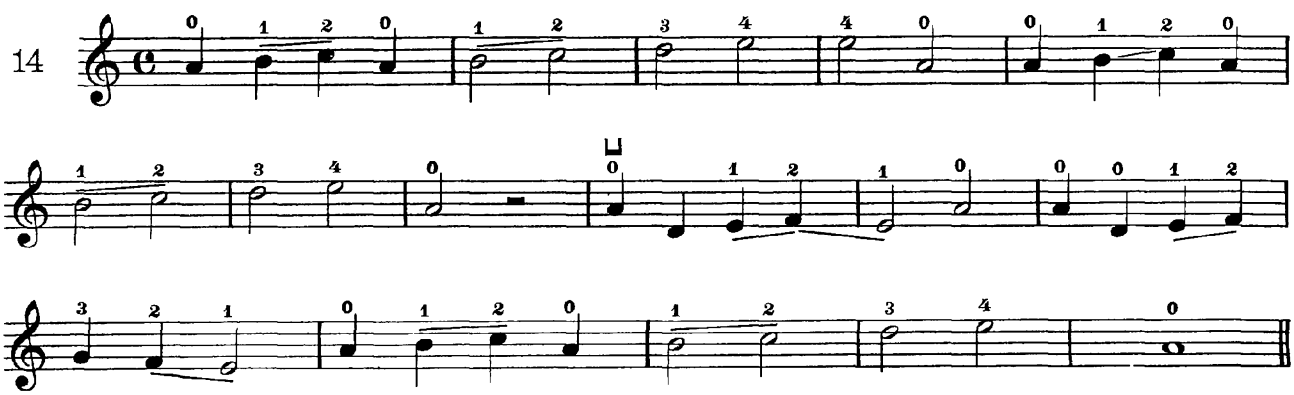
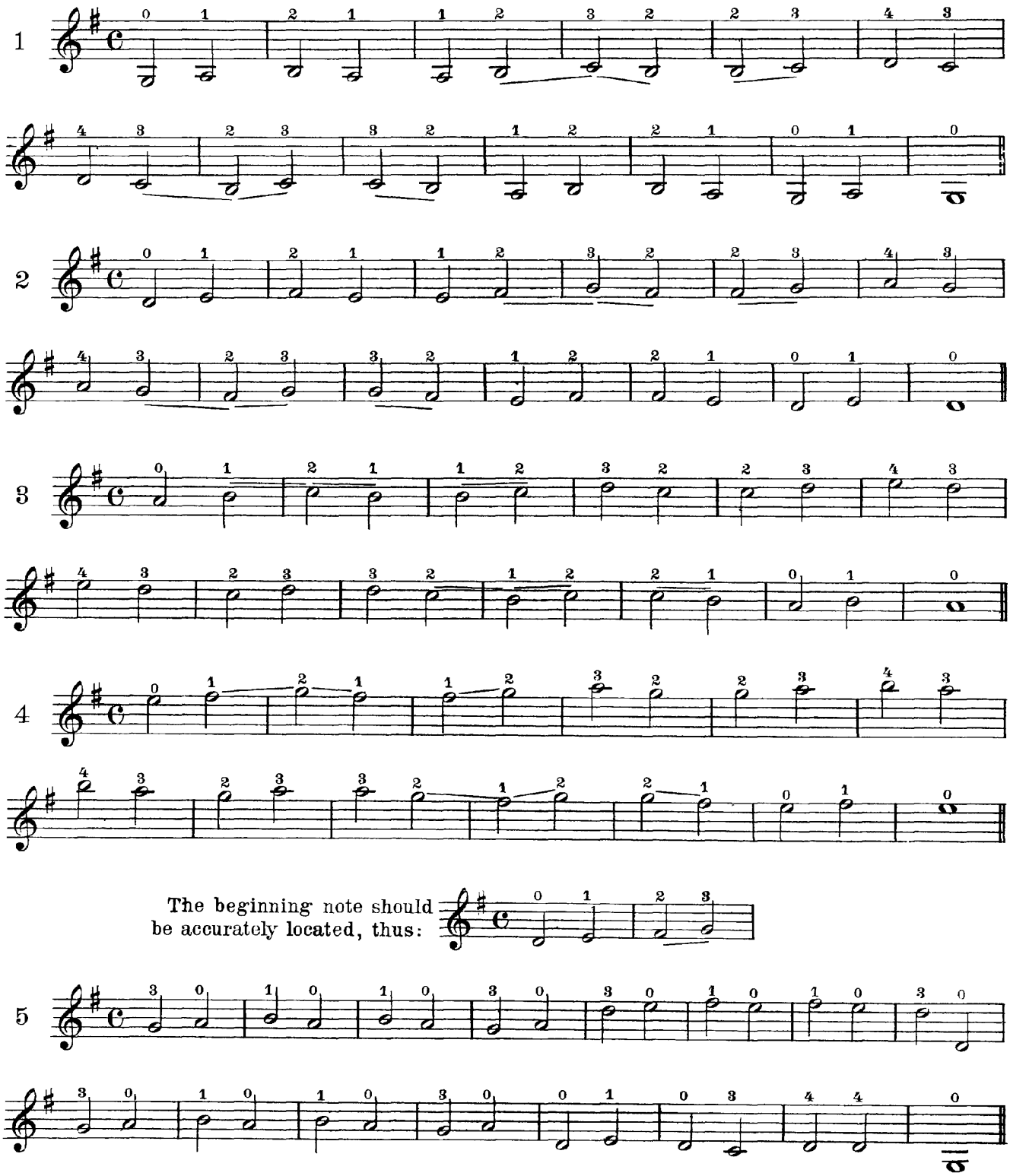


THE INTERVALS

The Second

Keep the fingers down, while ascending.



The beginning note should be accurately located, thus:

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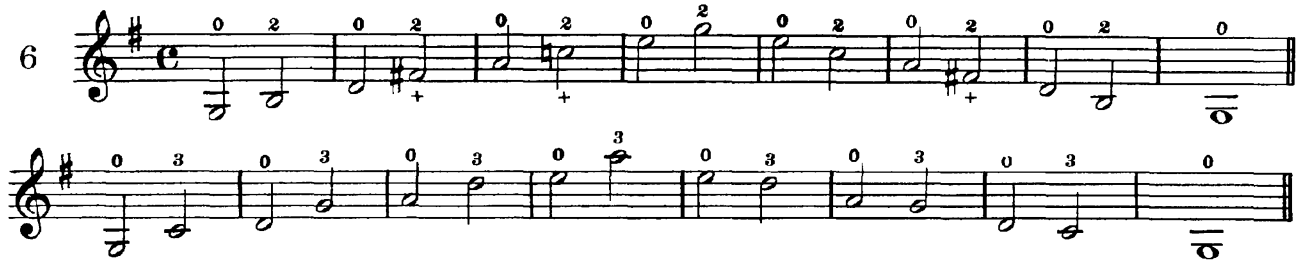

Scale of G major

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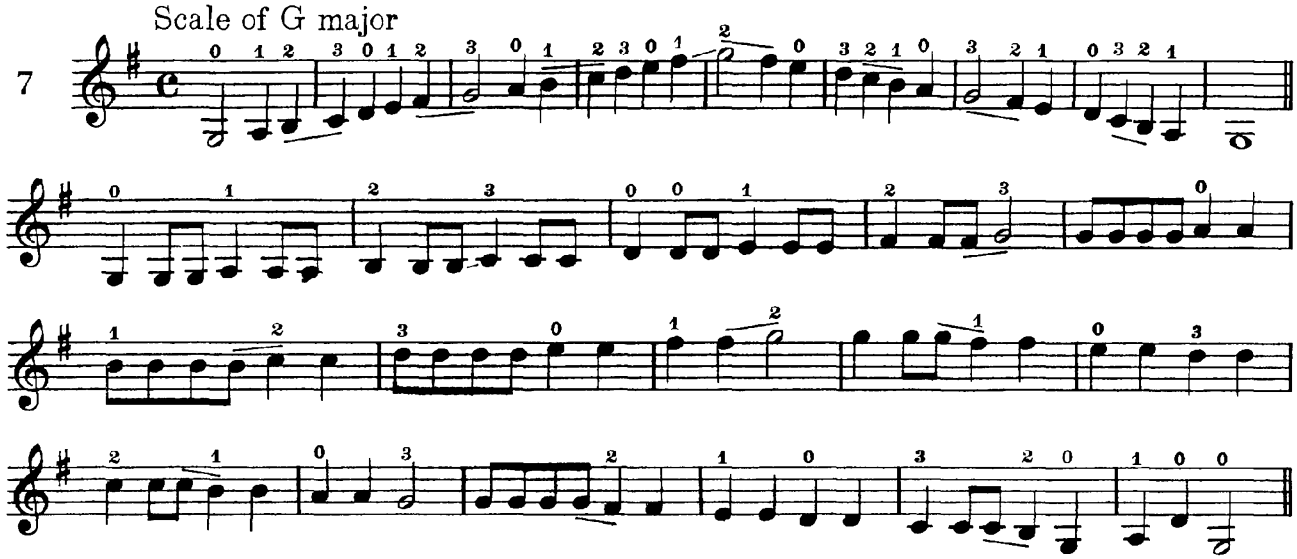

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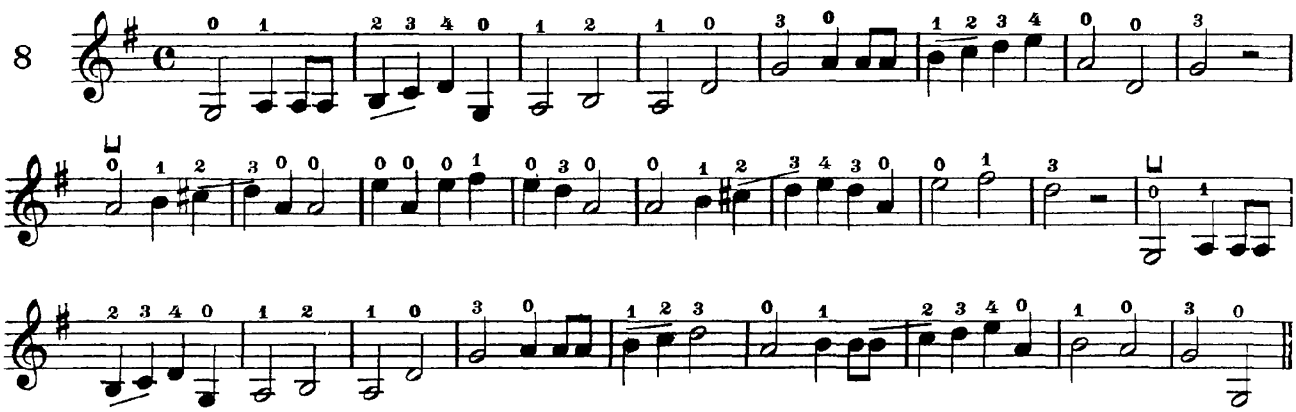

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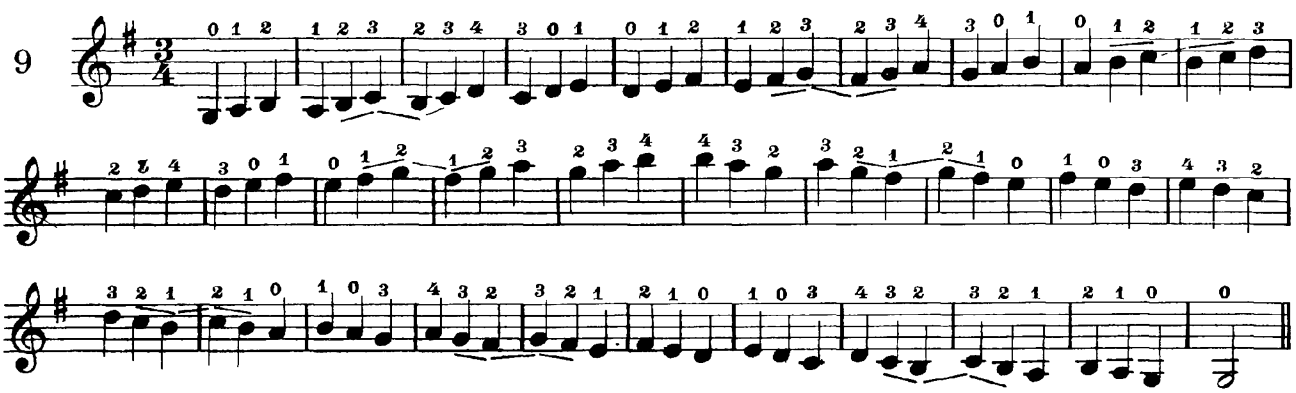

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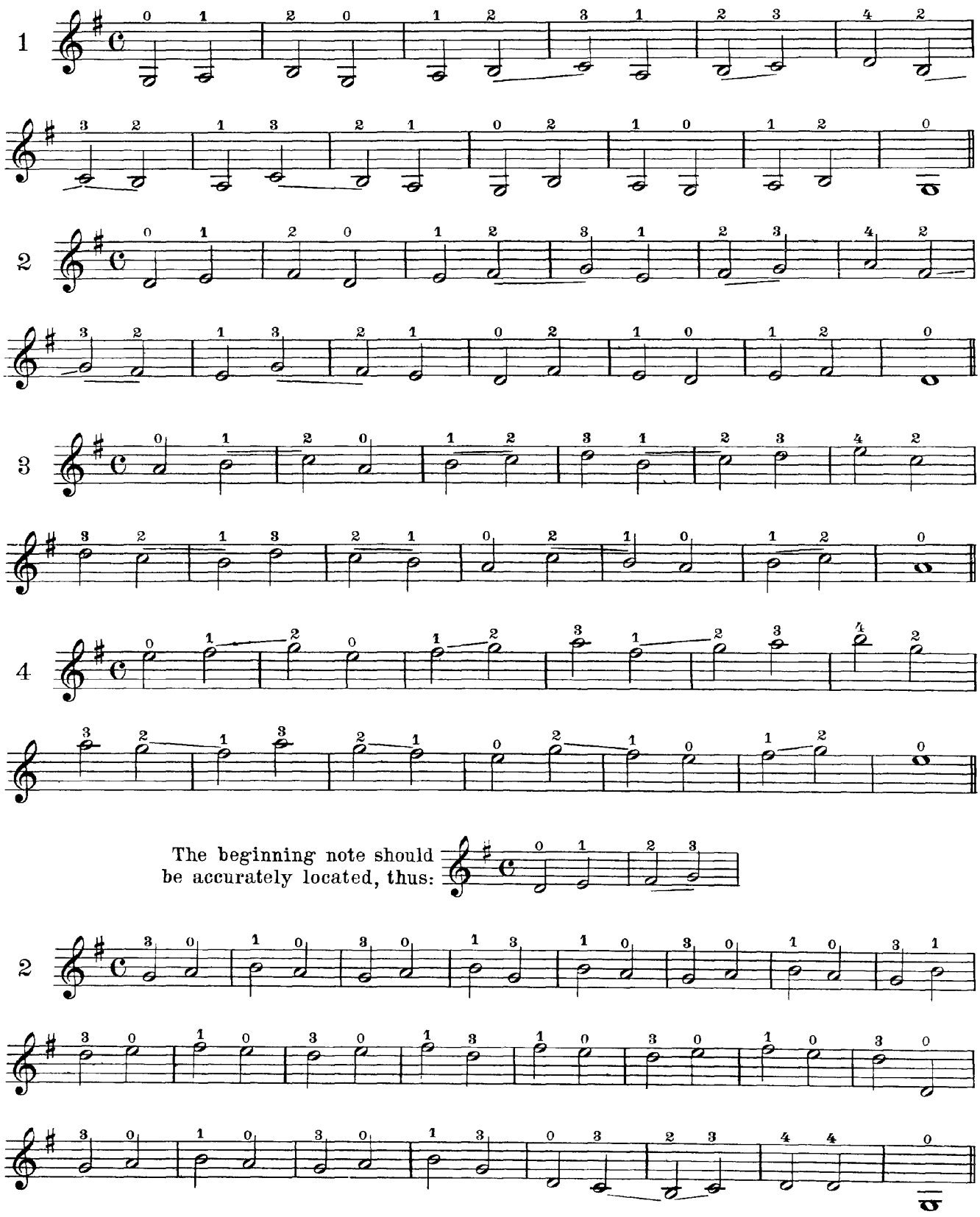
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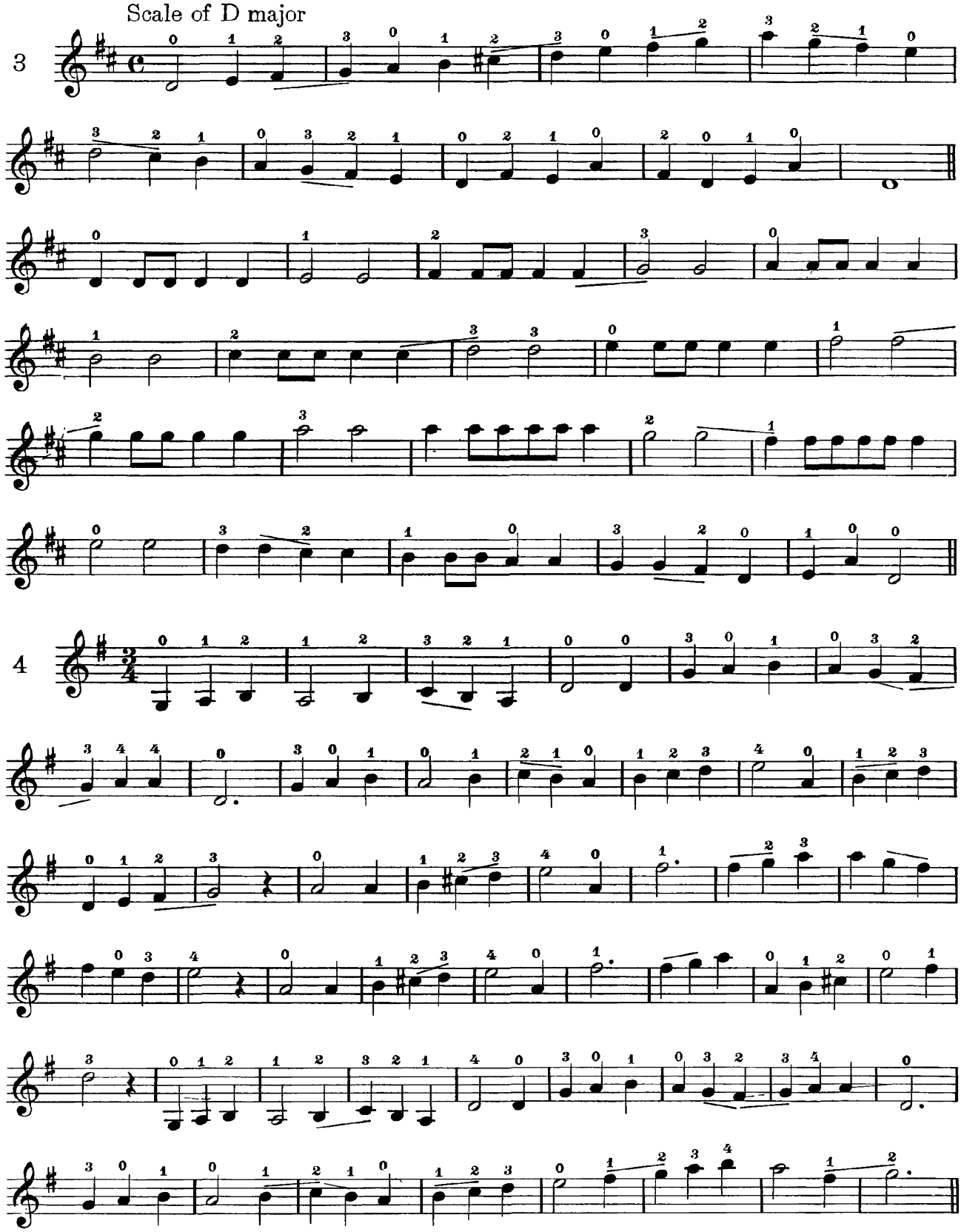
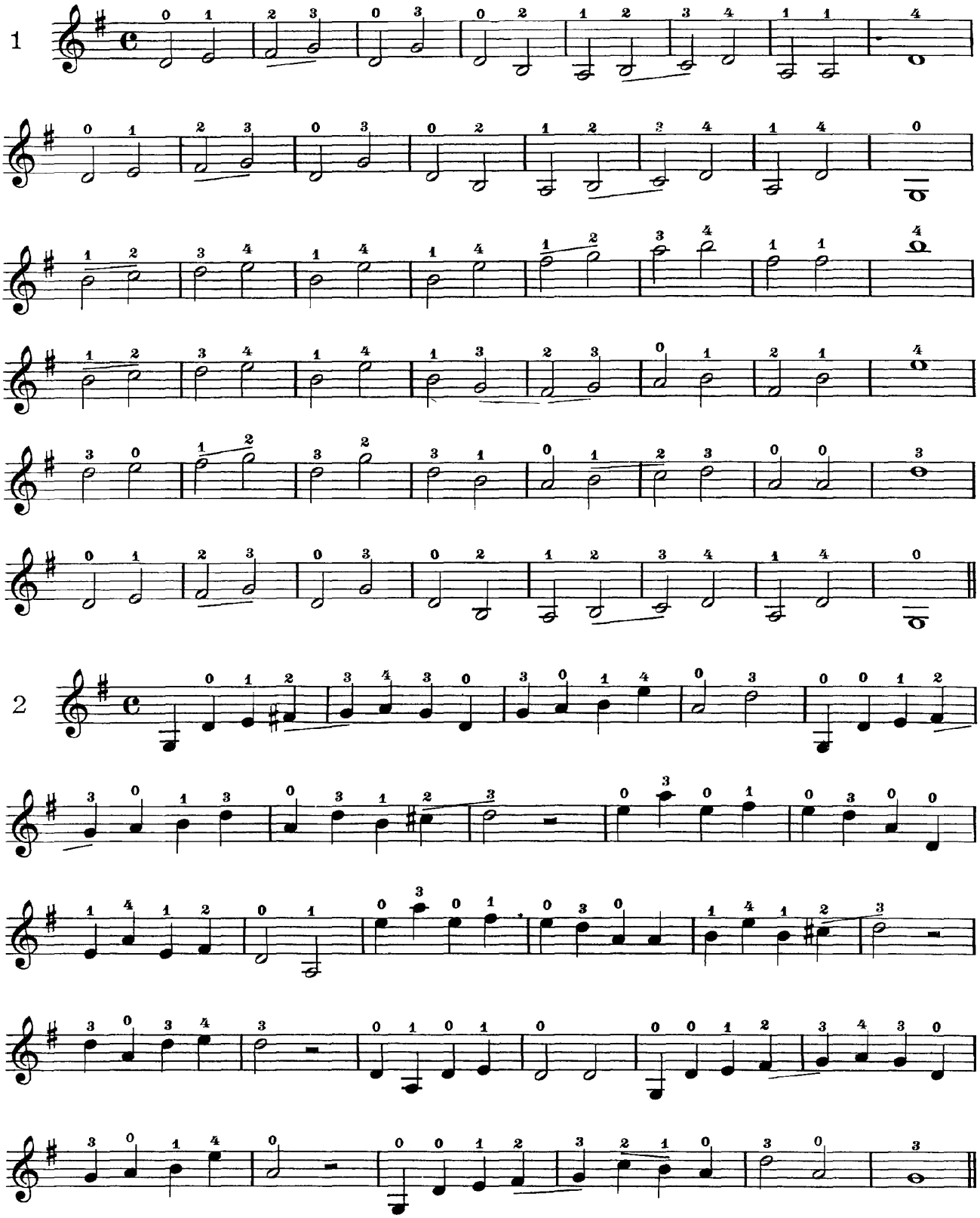
The beginning note should be accurately located, thus:
2

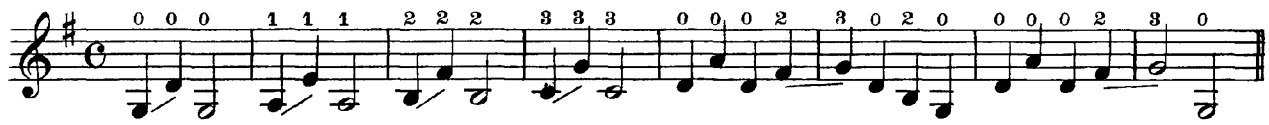

Scale of D major
3
4

The Fourth



The Fifth

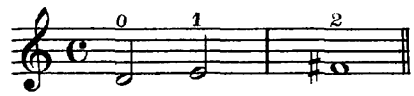
Place the finger squarely on both strings at once.



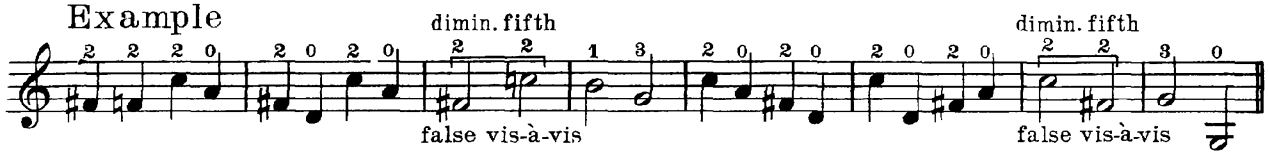
Diminished Fifth

The dimin. fifth, on account of the shifting of the finger, is made the subject of a special study. In all scales, in most passages, this shifting of the finger, which we shall call "false vis-à-vis," occurs; and if not done with precision, it affects the intonation.

Preparation



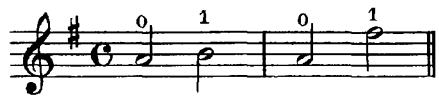
Example



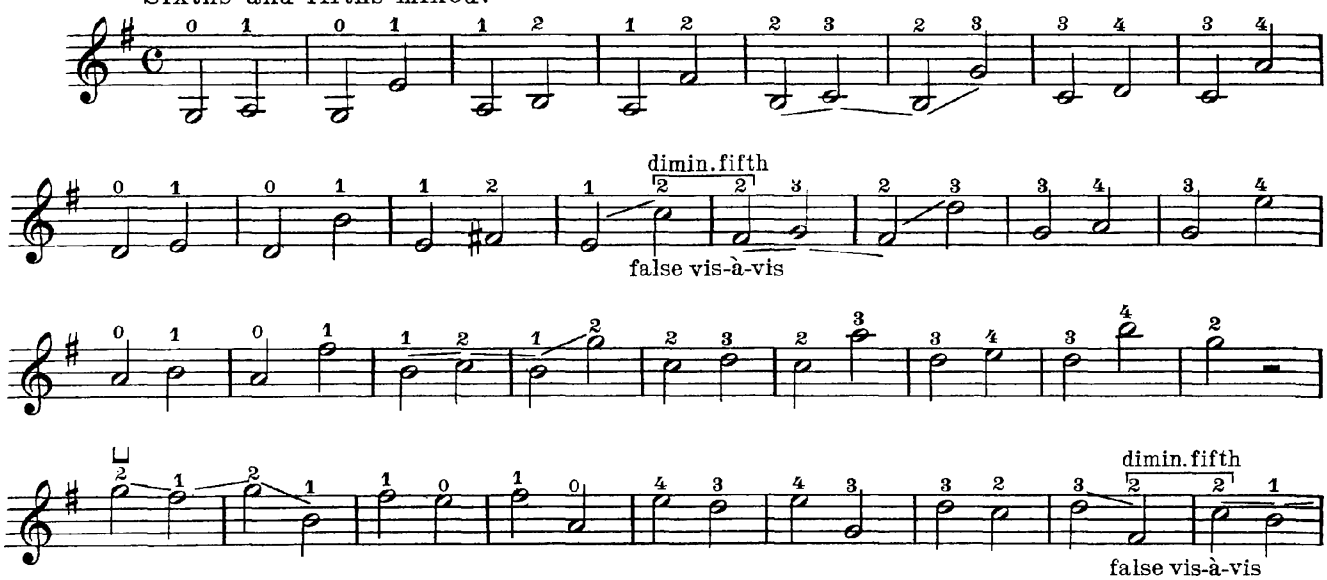
The Sixth

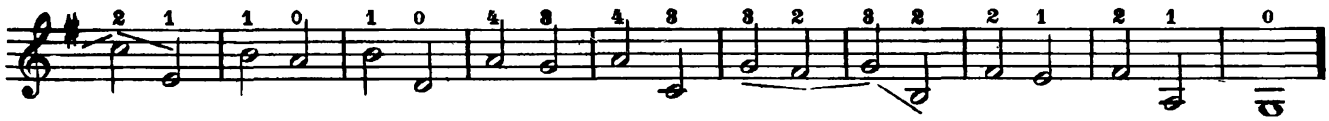
The sixth has a fingering on two strings corresponding to the fingering of the second on one string.

Example

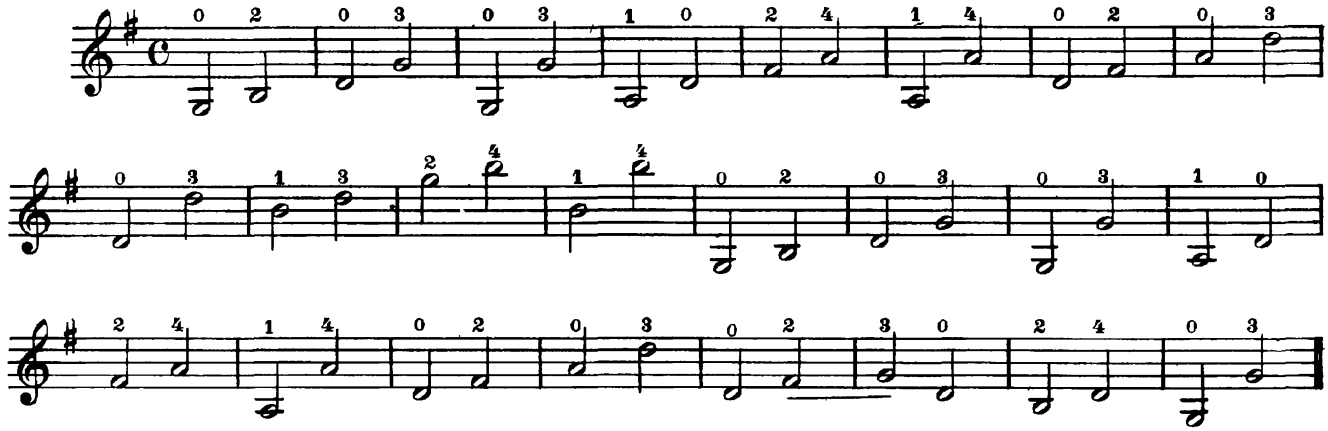


Sixths and fifths mixed.

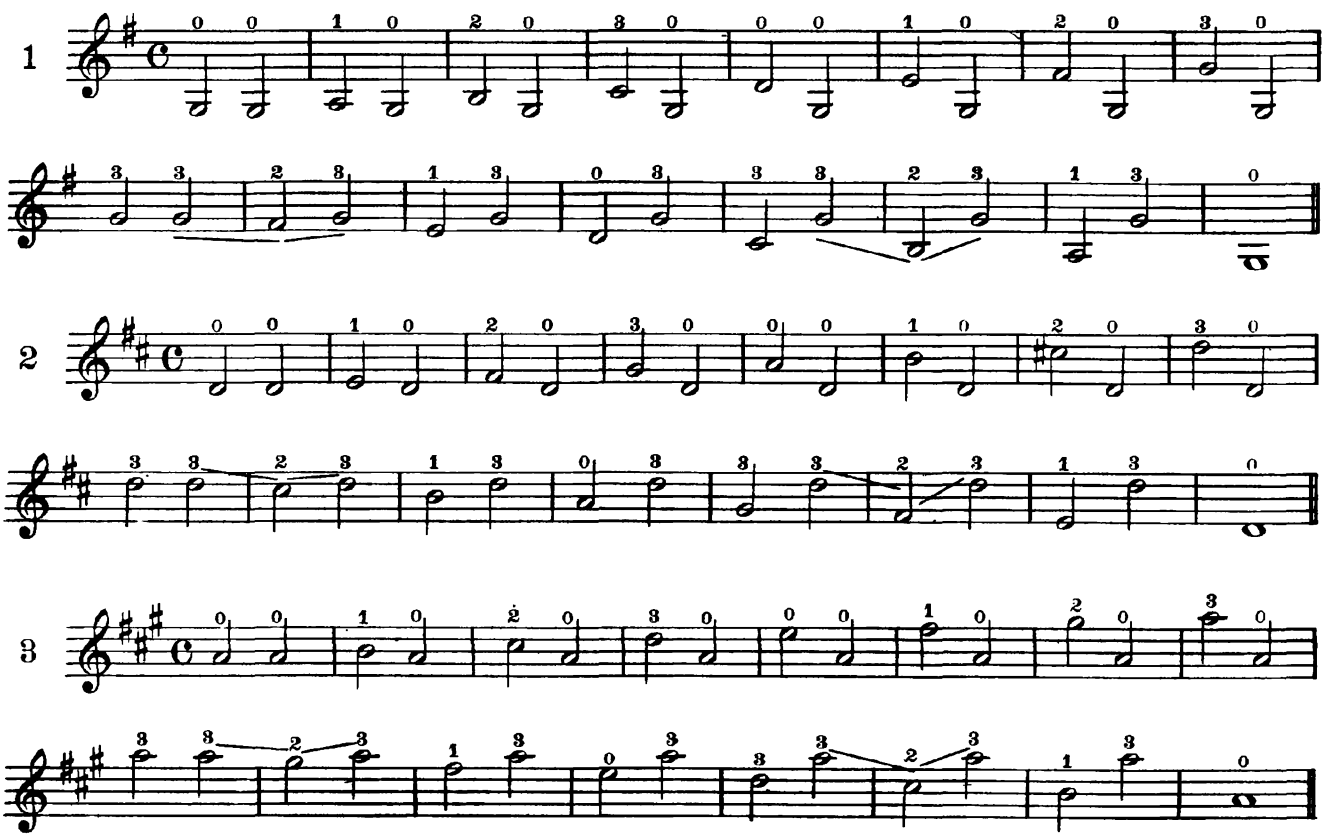




Seventh and Octave

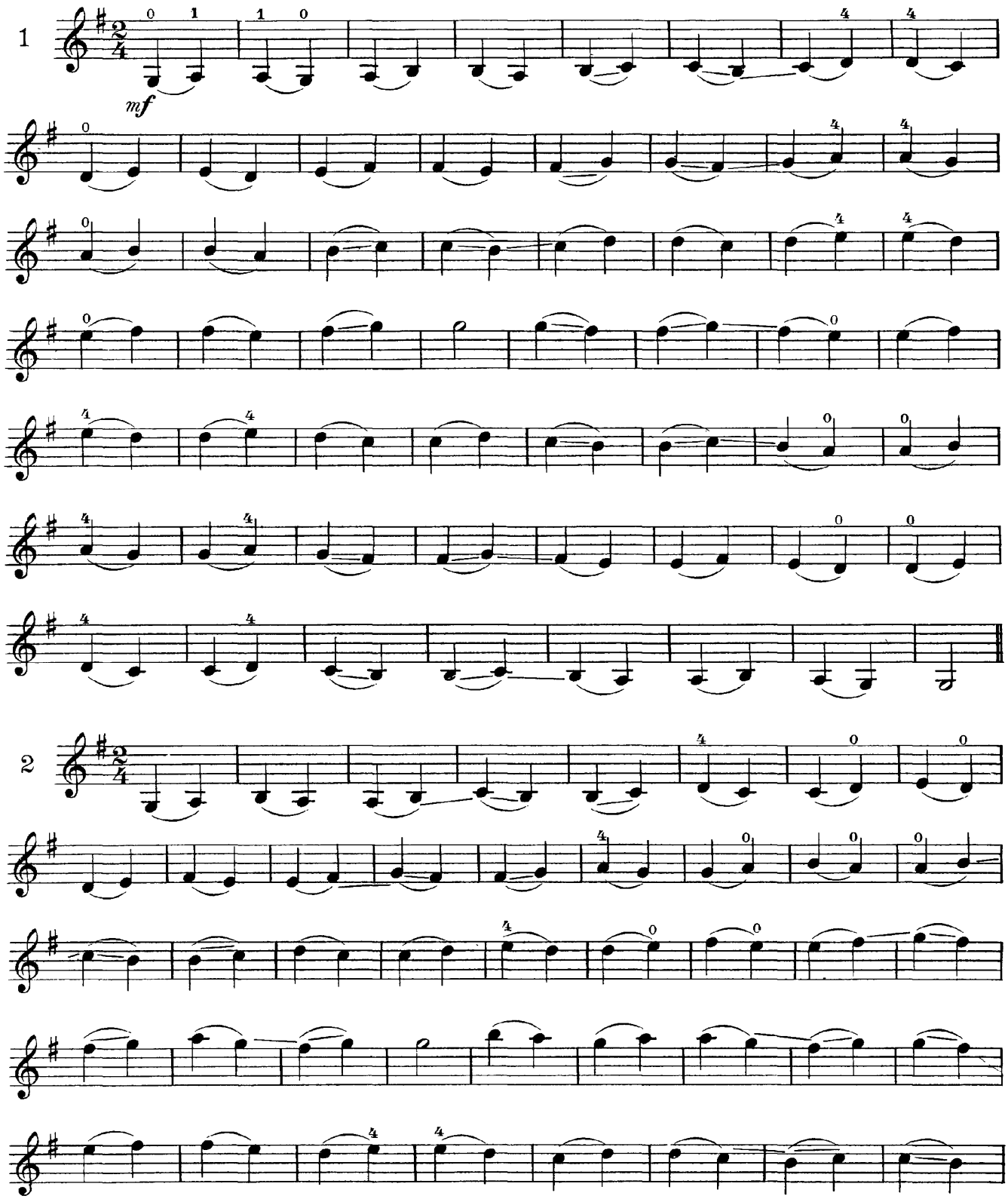


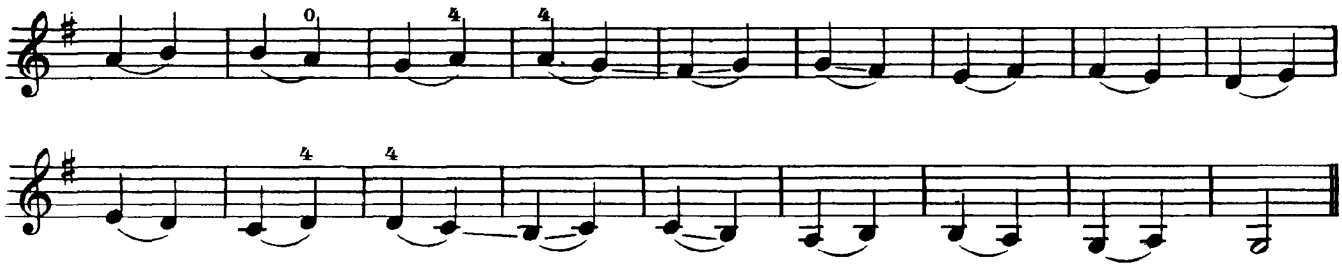
Review of the Intervals



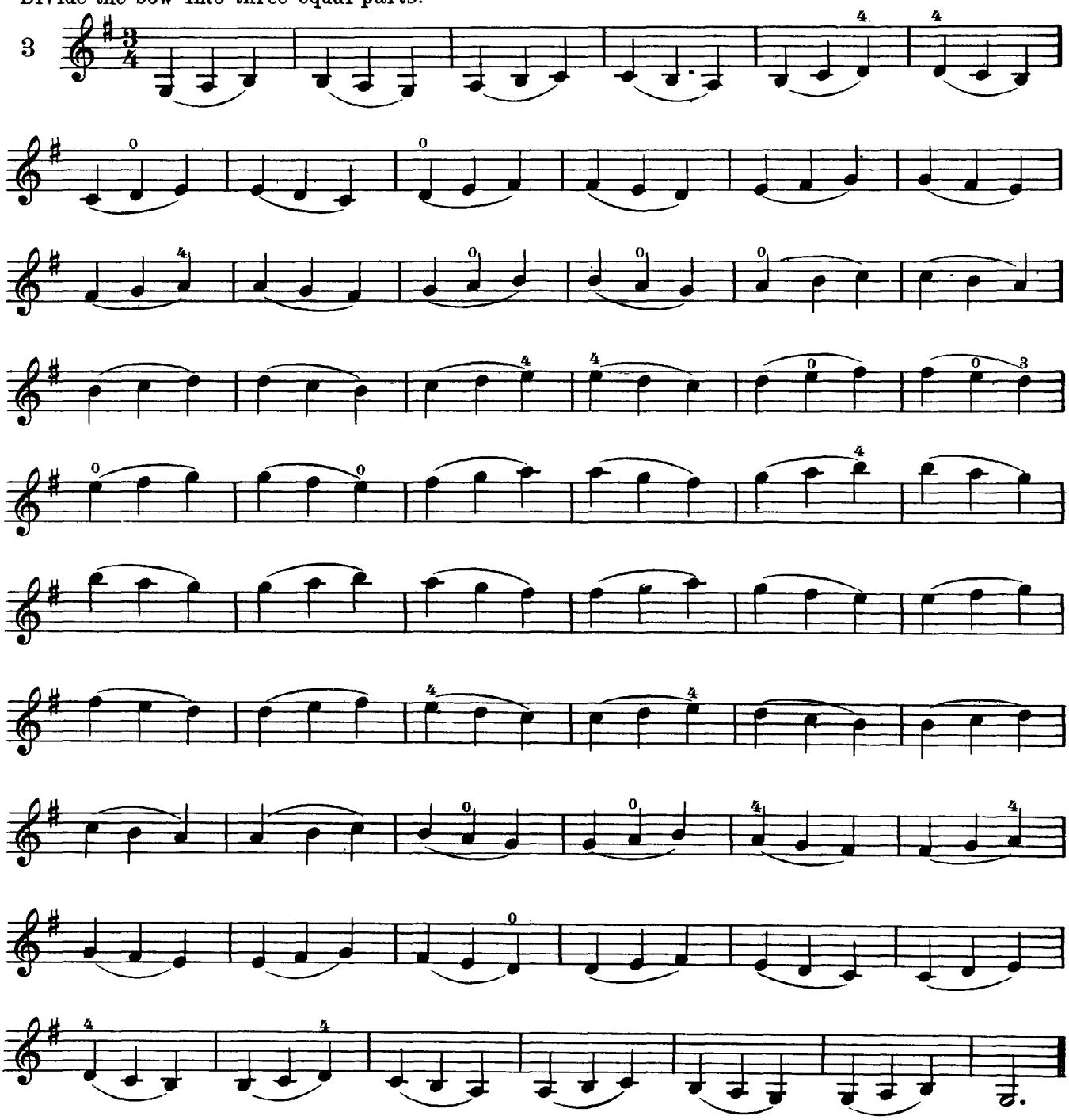
Legato Notes

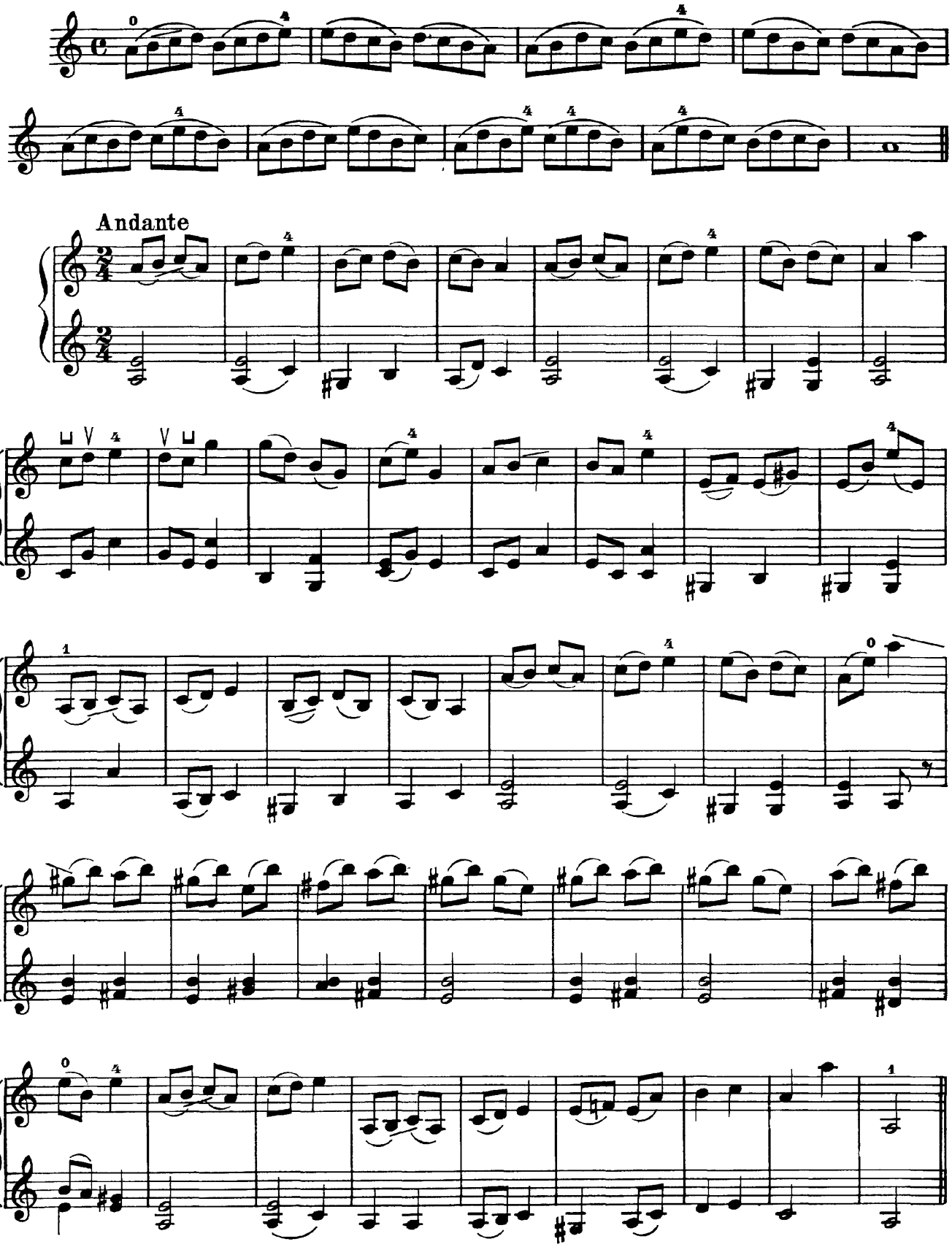
Use the whole bow, being careful to divide it into two equal parts, one for each note.



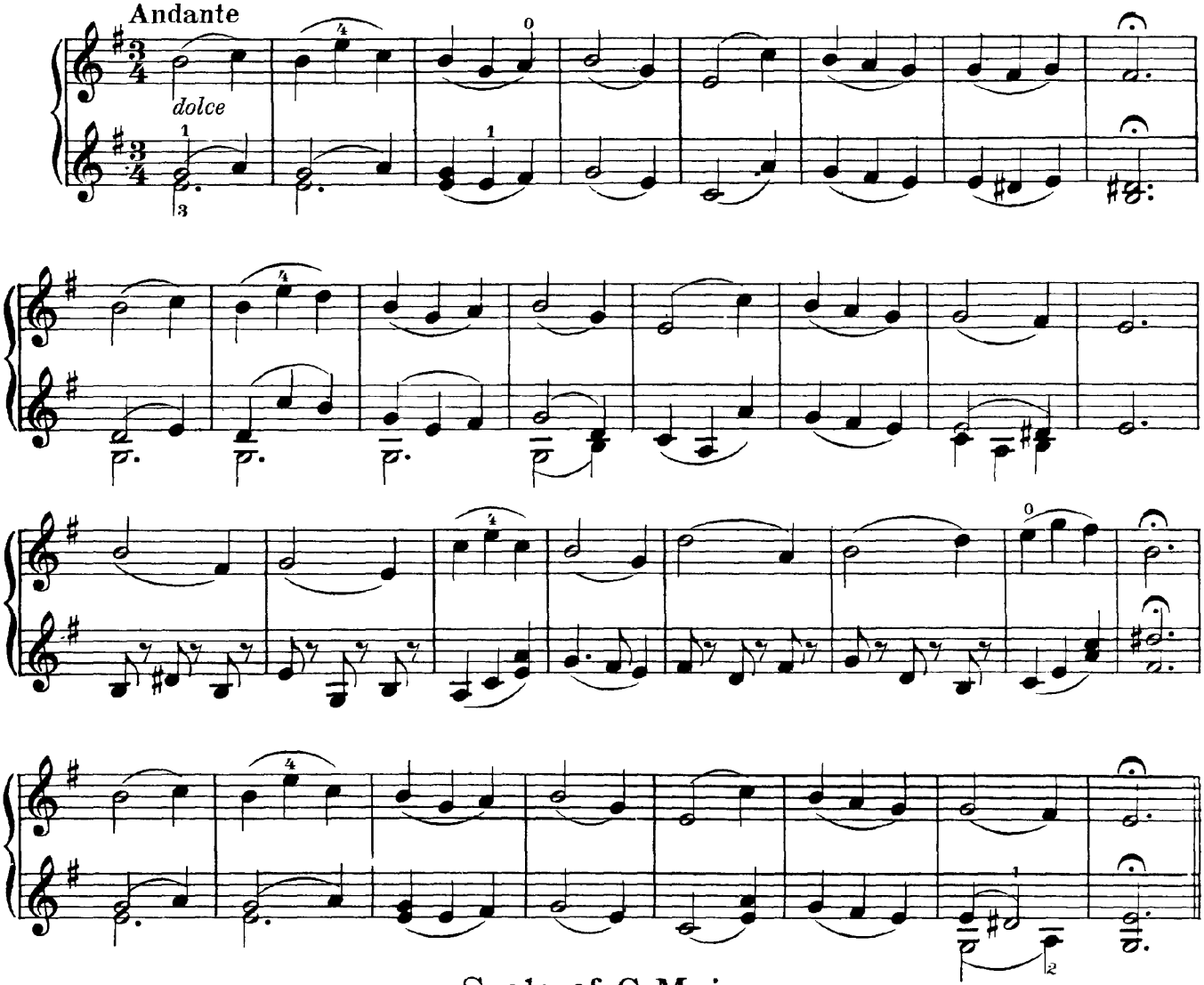


Divide the bow into three equal parts.



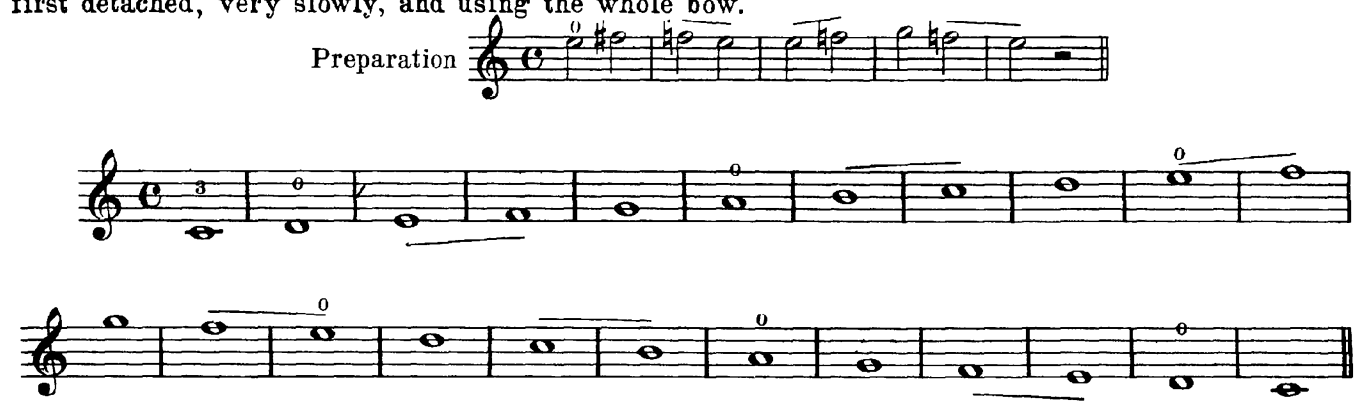

Andante

Melodie



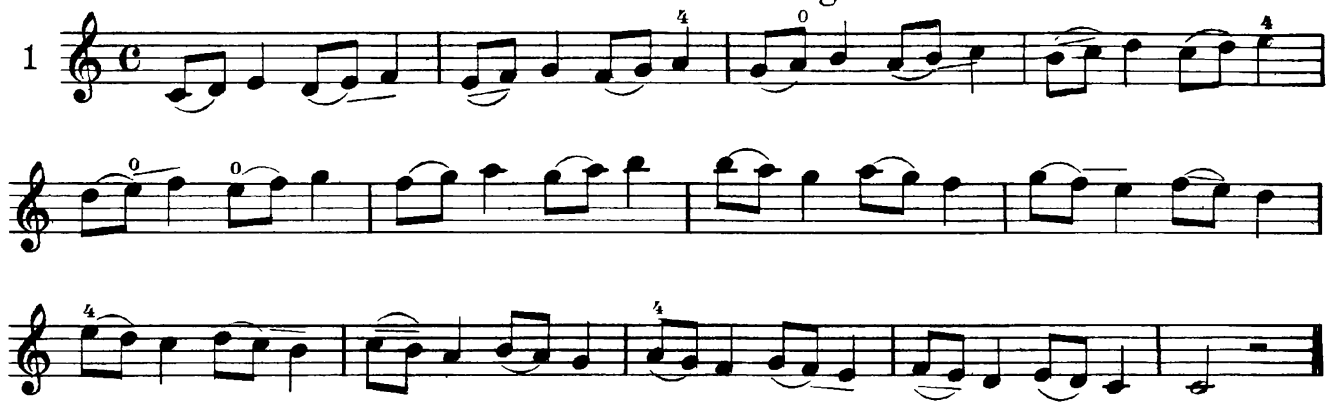
Scale of C Major

The following exercises in C major being rather difficult, it will be necessary to practise them at first detached, very slowly, and using the whole bow.



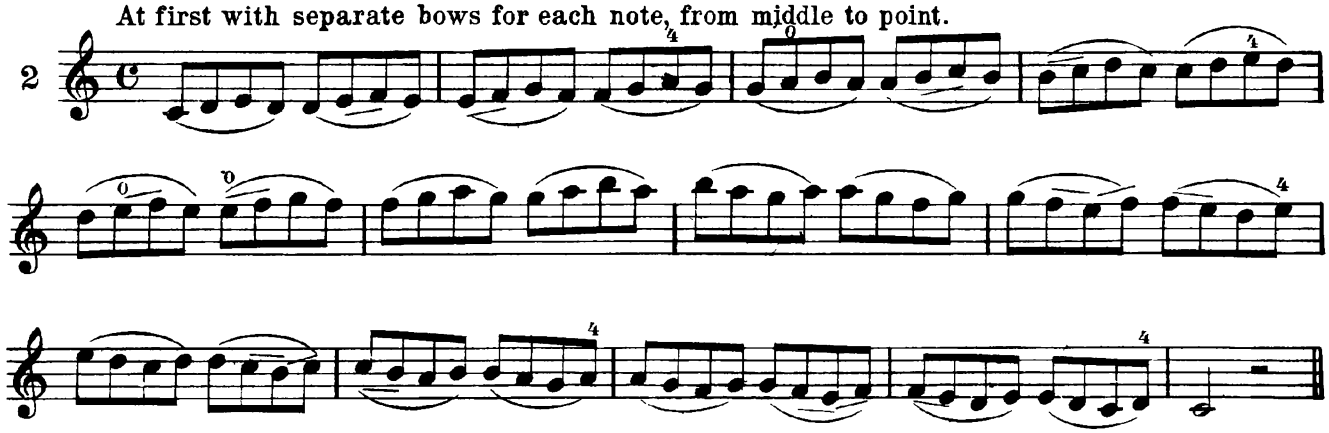
Exercises on intervals with various bowings

1



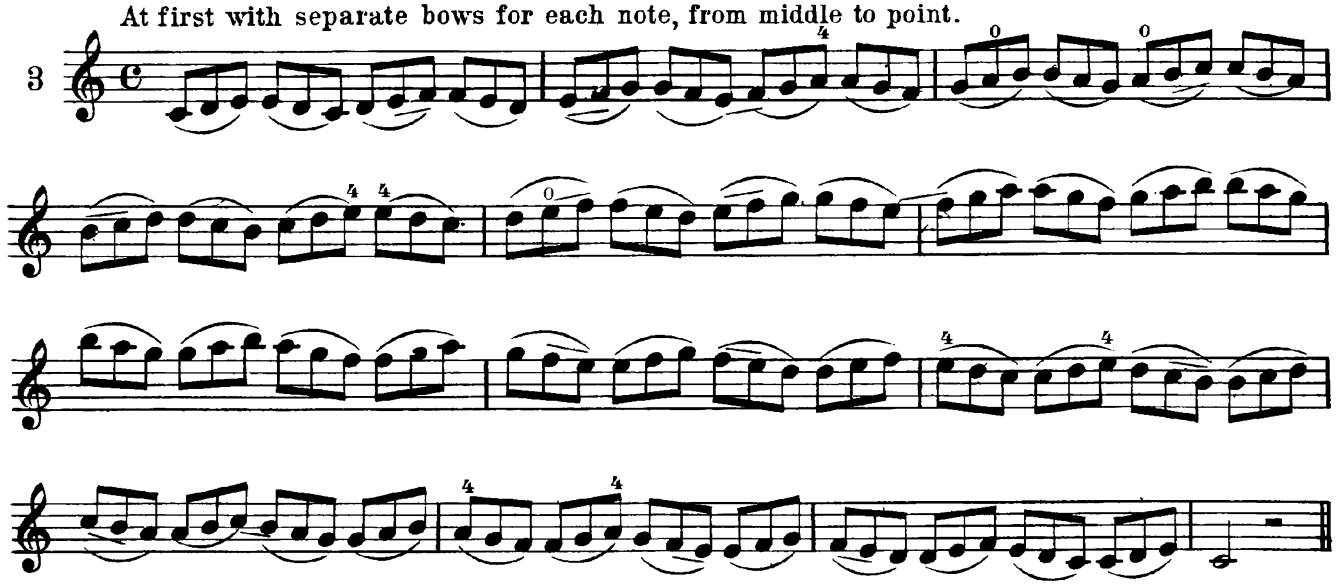
At first with separate bows for each note, from middle to point.

2



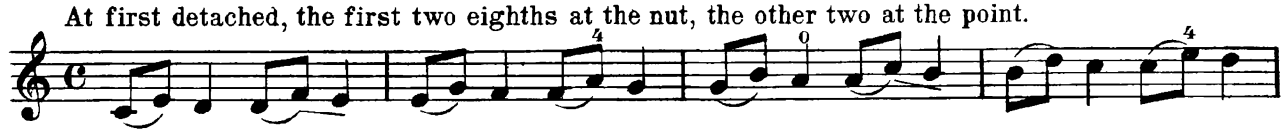
At first with separate bows for each note, from middle to point.

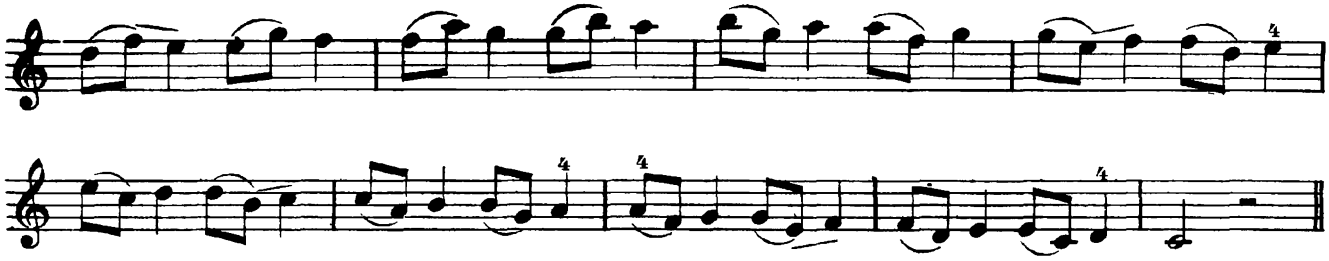
3



At first detached, the first two eighths at the nut, the other two at the point.

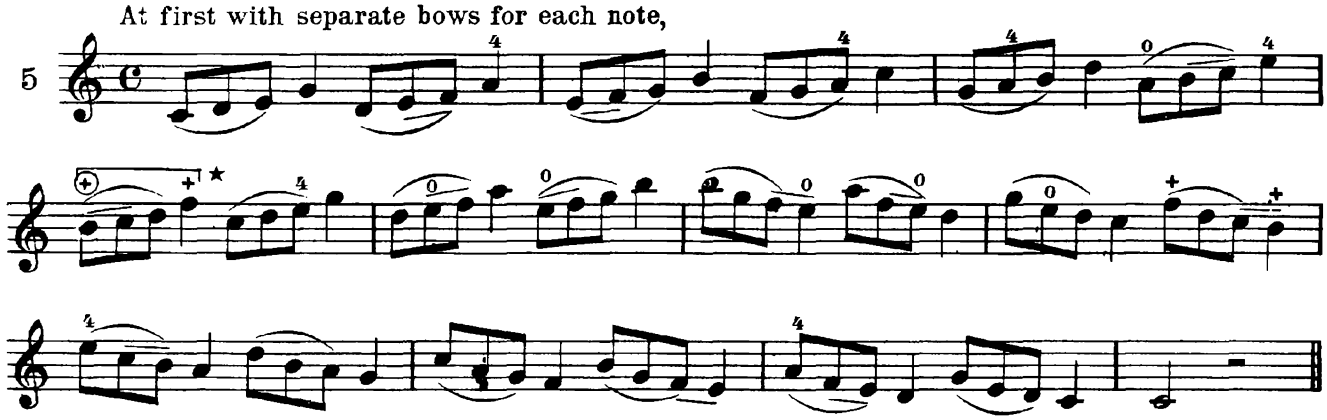
4





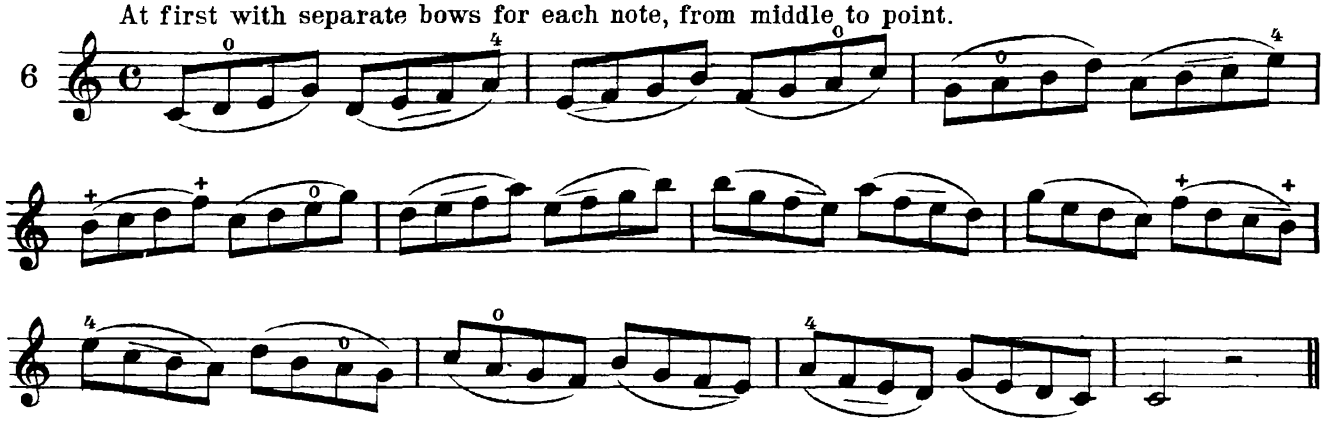
At first with separate bows for each note,

5



At first with separate bows for each note, from middle to point.

6



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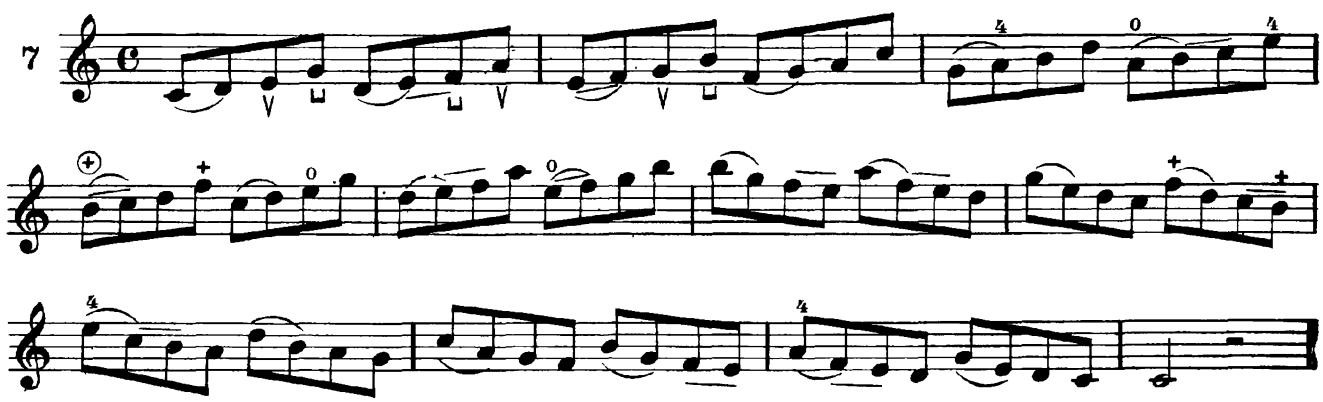
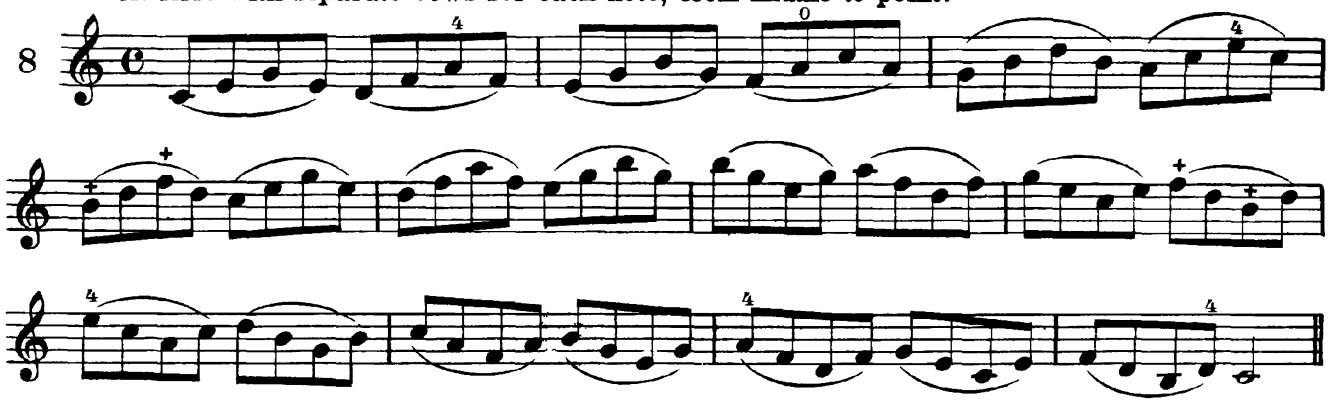


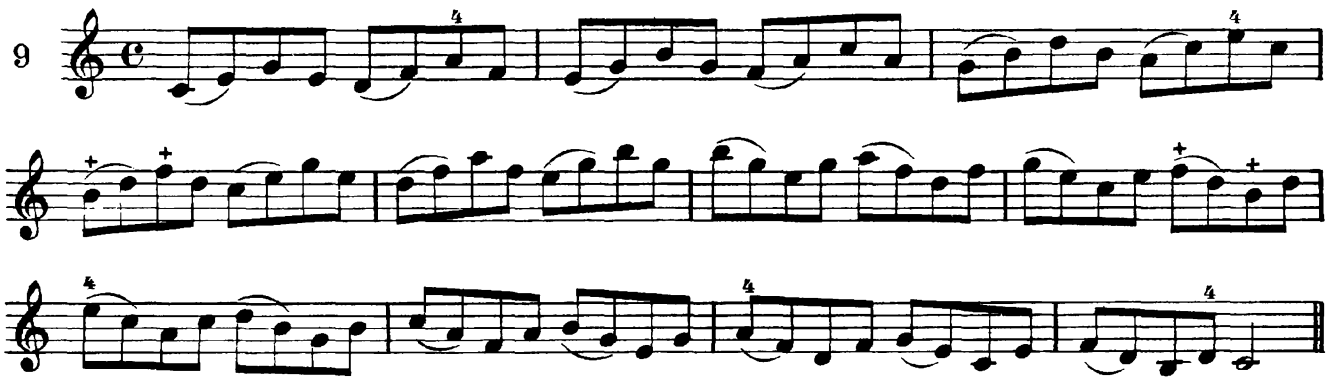
* Always dimin. Fifth.

At first with separate bows for each note, from middle to point.

8

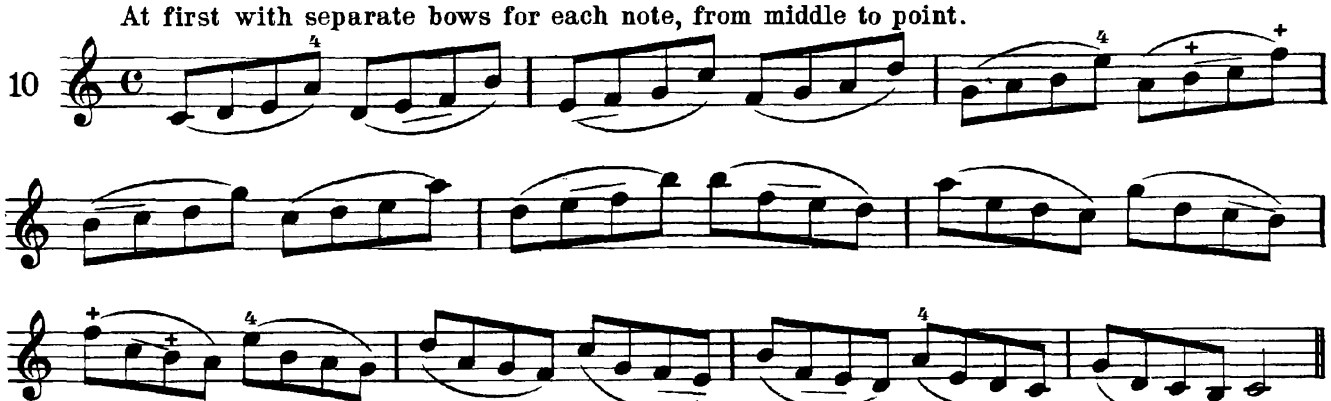


9

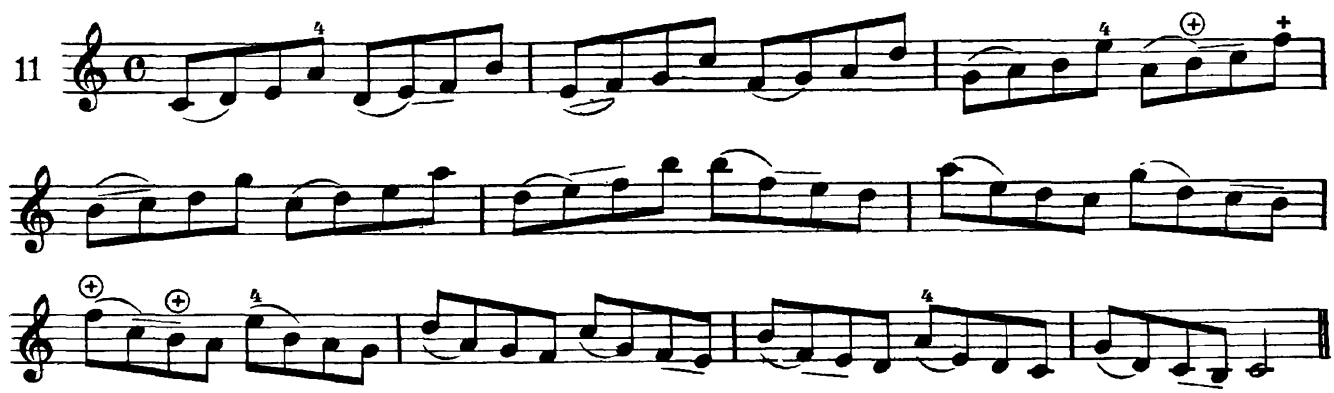


At first with separate bows for each note, from middle to point.

10

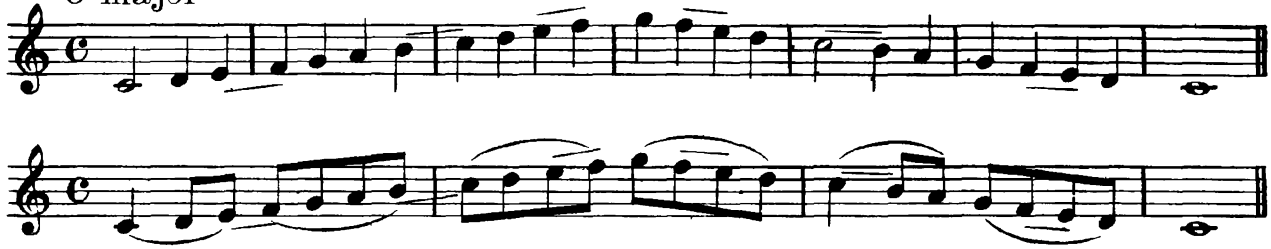


11

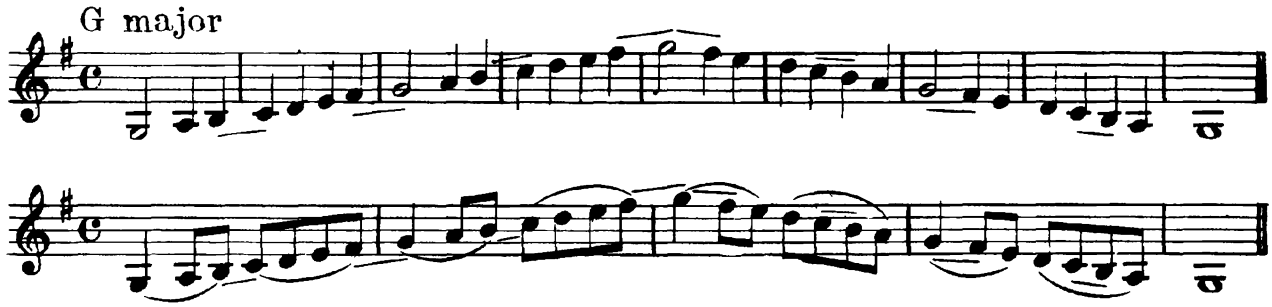


Scales

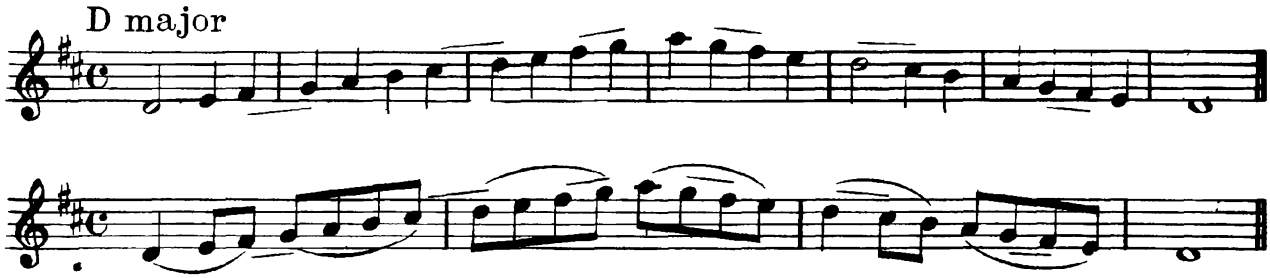
C major



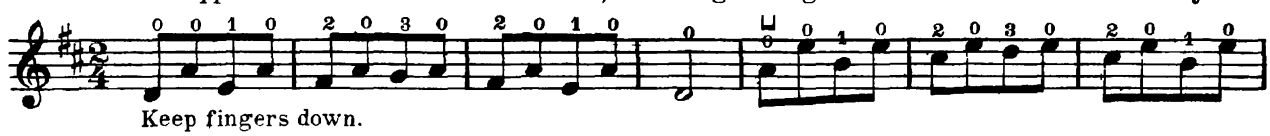
G major



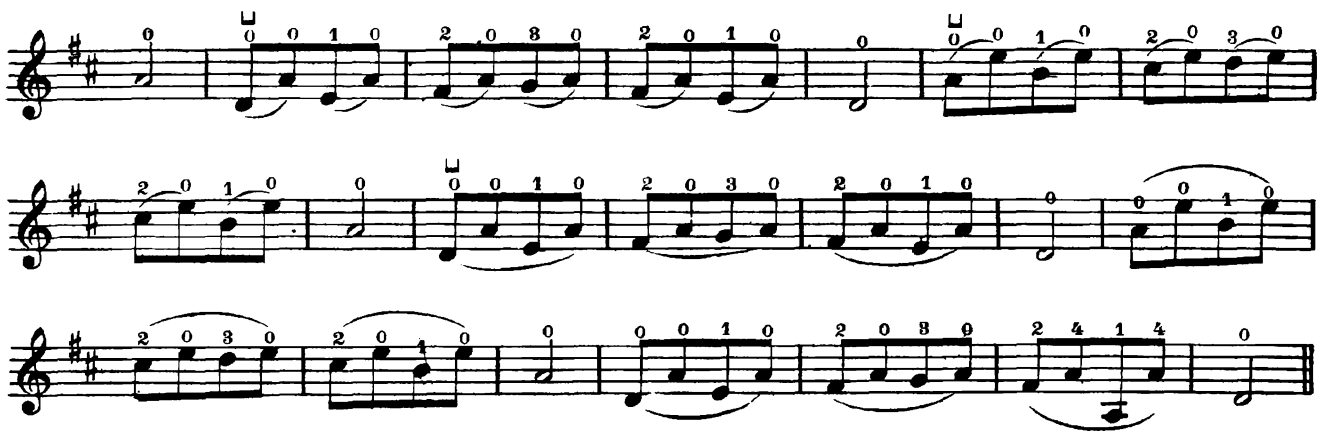
D major



Exercises for suppleness of the wrist. In the middle; and change strings with movement of the wrist only.



Keep fingers down.

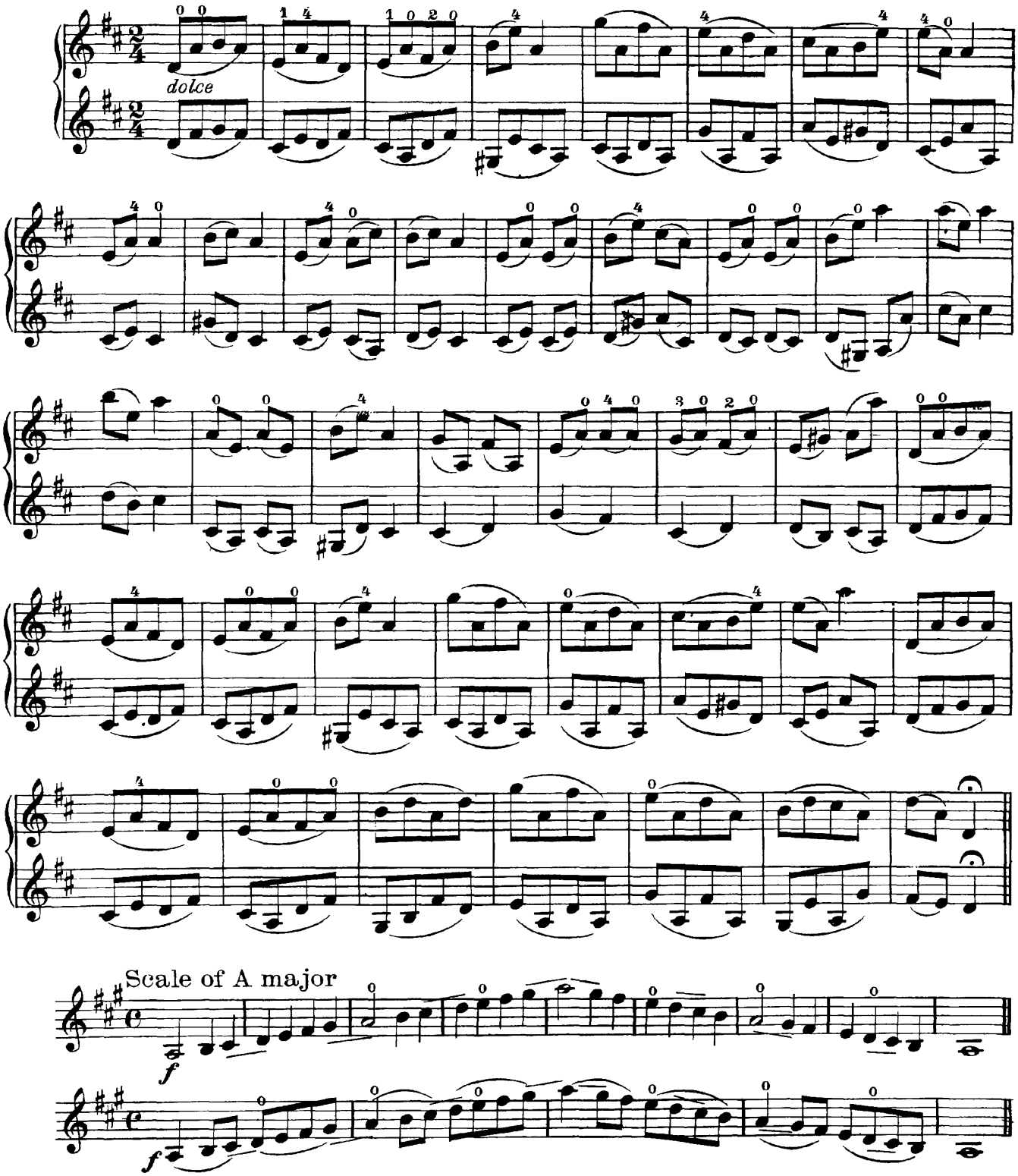


Étude 1

Change strings by a movement of the wrist, without raising the elbow.

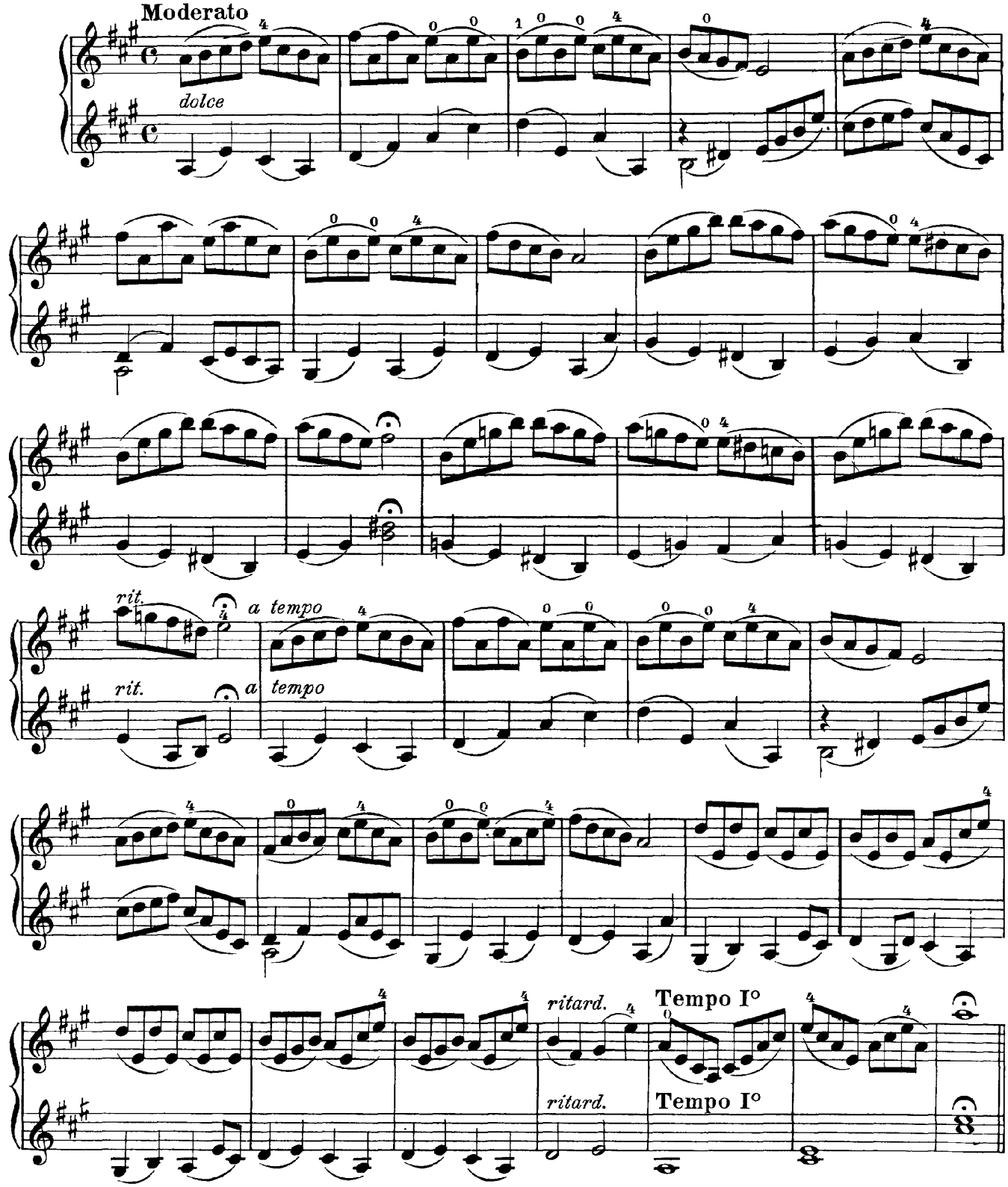
At first with separate bows for each note, from middle to point.

Andante

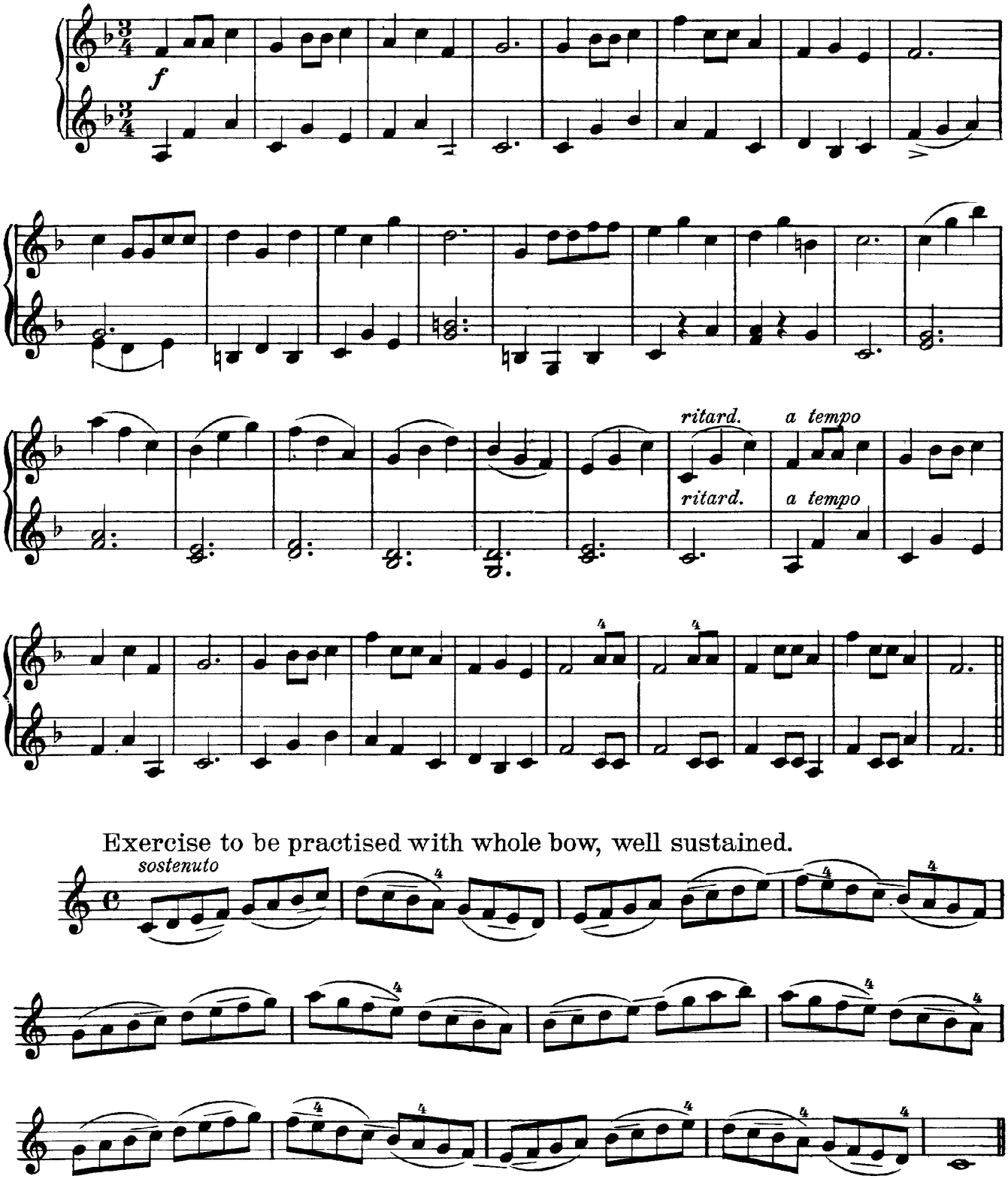


Étude 2

At first with separate bows for each note, from middle to point.

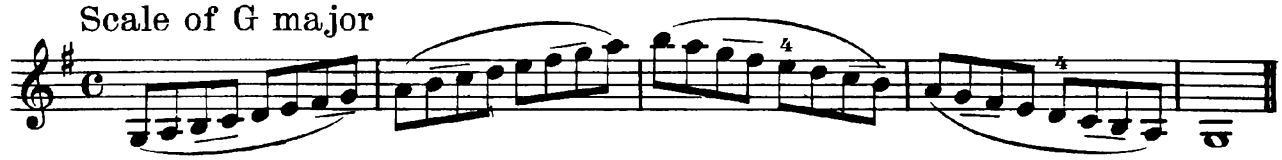


Andantino

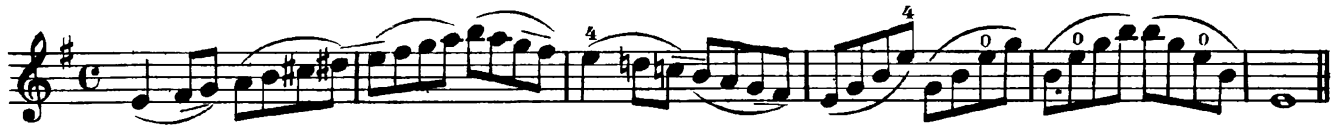


Exercise to be practised with whole bow, well sustained.

Scale of G major

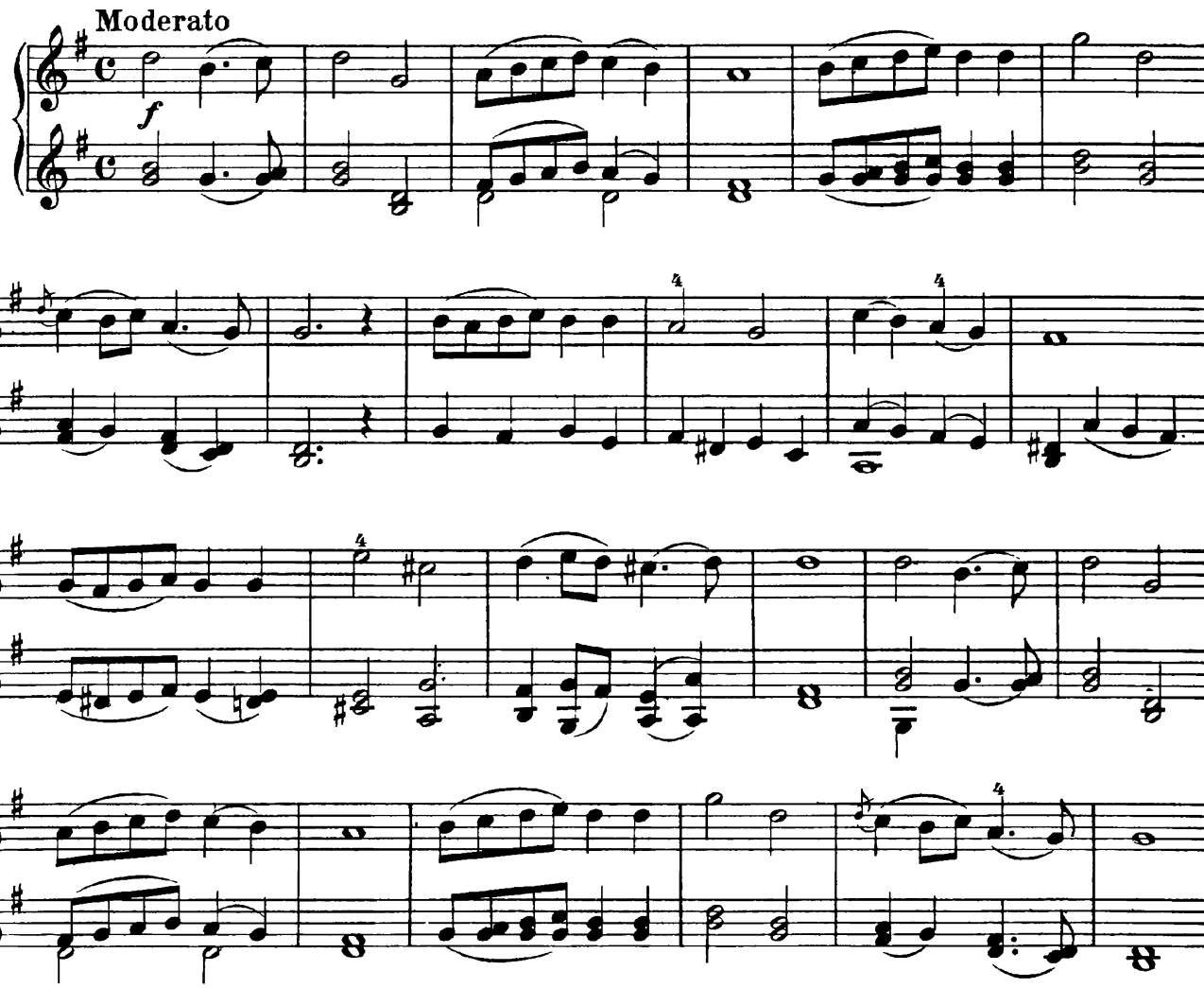


E minor

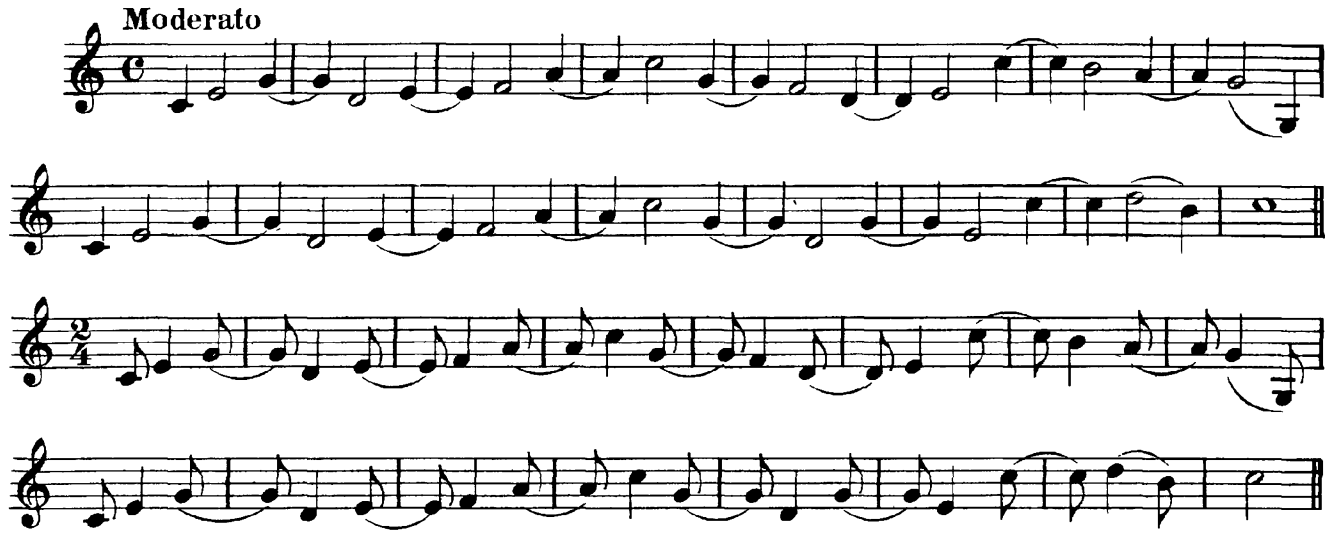


Air by Händel

Moderato

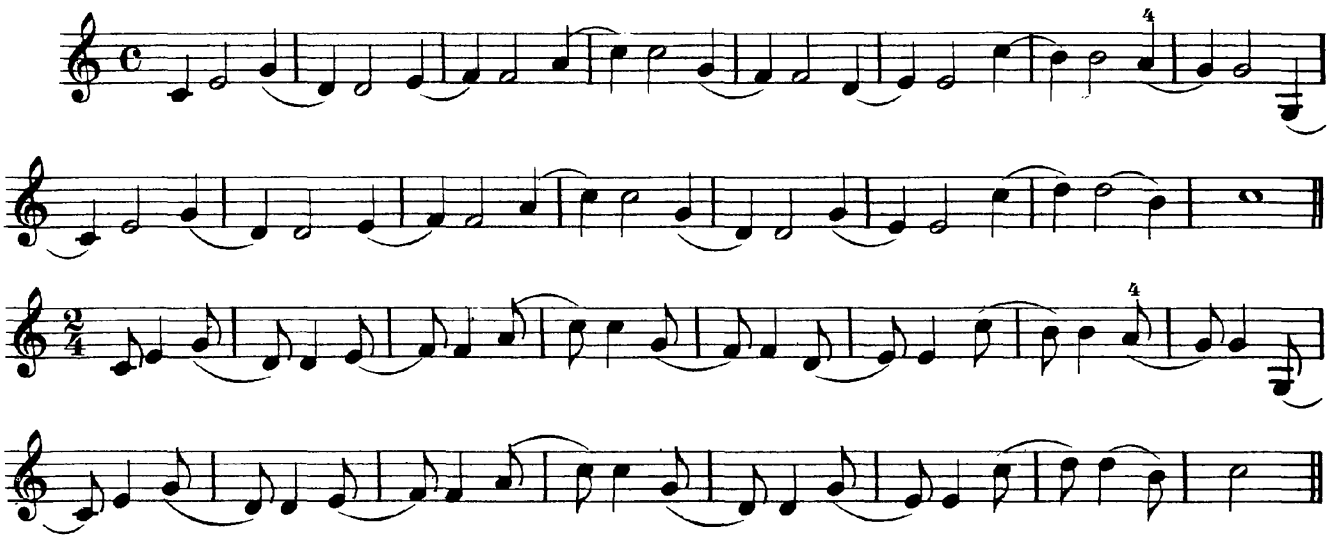


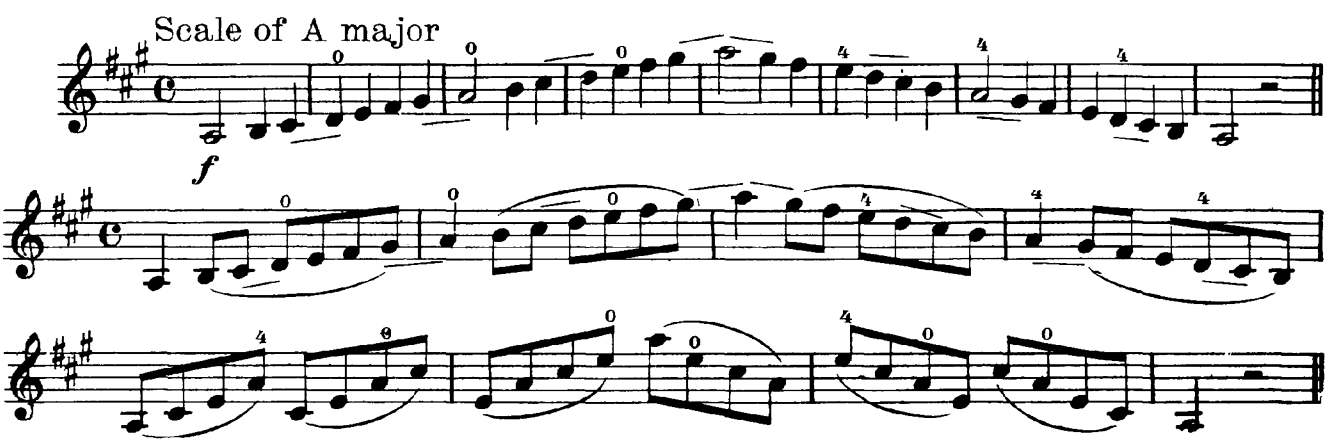
Syncopation *



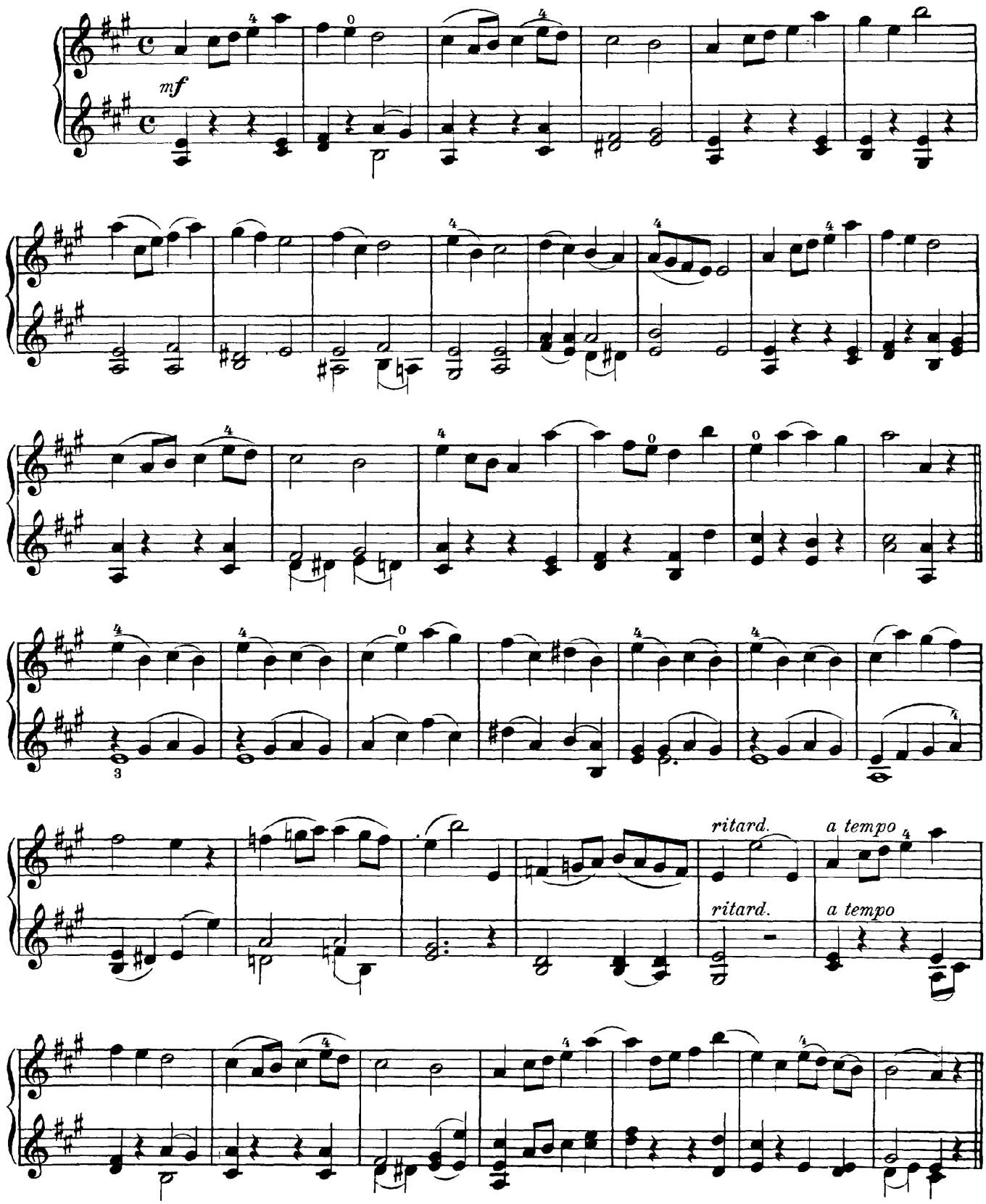
* (Syncopation is the tying of a weak beat to the following strong beat, effacing the accent naturally falling on the latter and usually shifting said accent to the naturally unaccented weak beat.)

Interrupted Syncopation





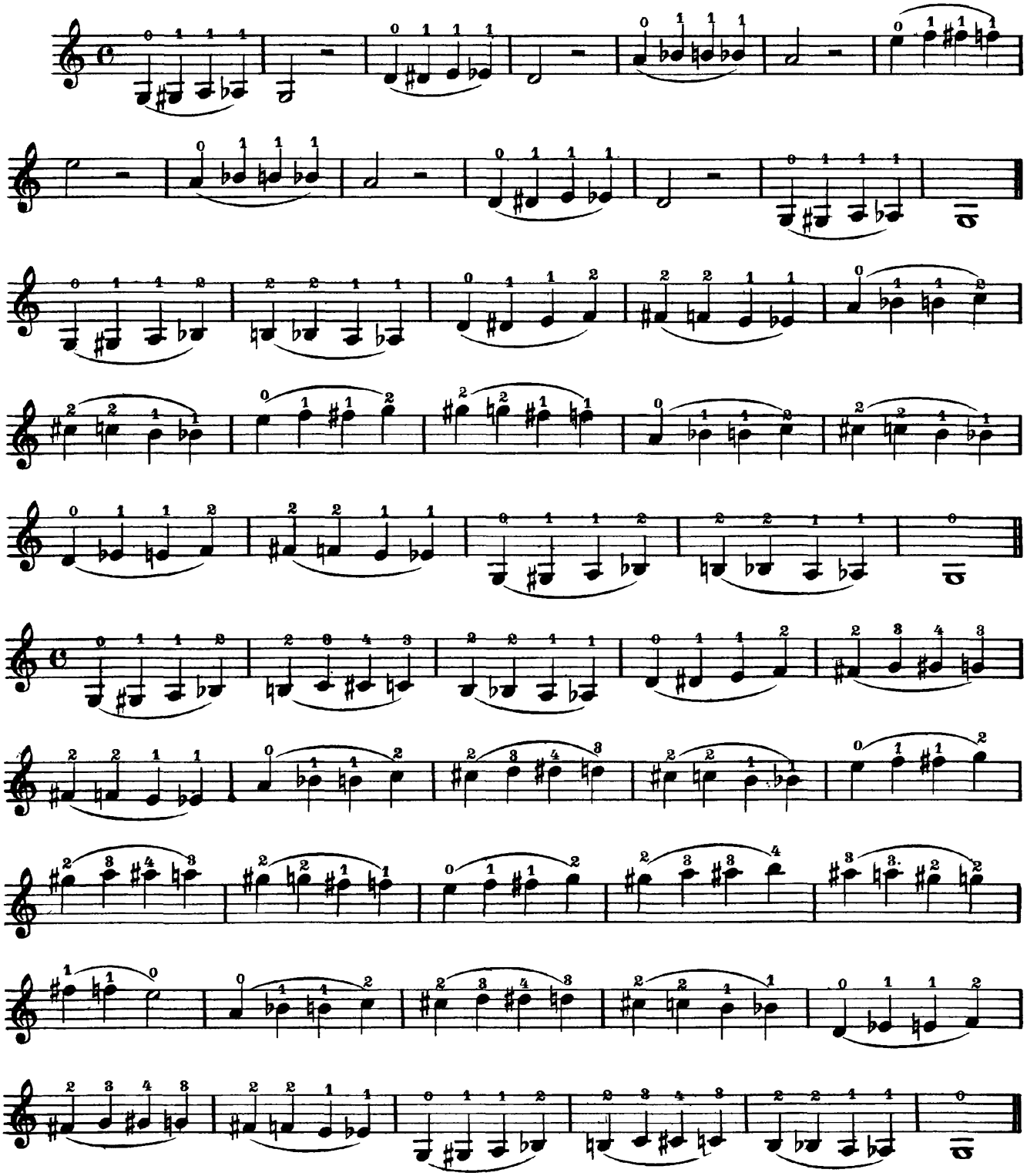
Andantino

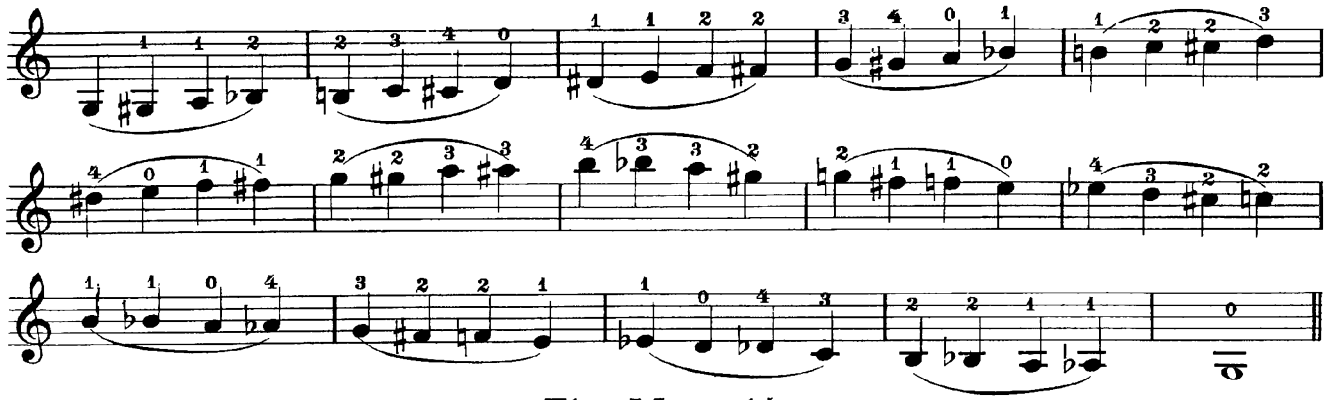


The Chromatic Scale

This scale is awkward to play on the violin, on account of the semitone to be played with the same finger. It is important that from the very beginning the pupil should pass rapidly from the first note to the second without dragging the finger.

There are several different fingerings for the chromatic scale. However, as long as we remain in the first position, one of them will do; therefore, not to complicate the performance, we shall adopt the following.





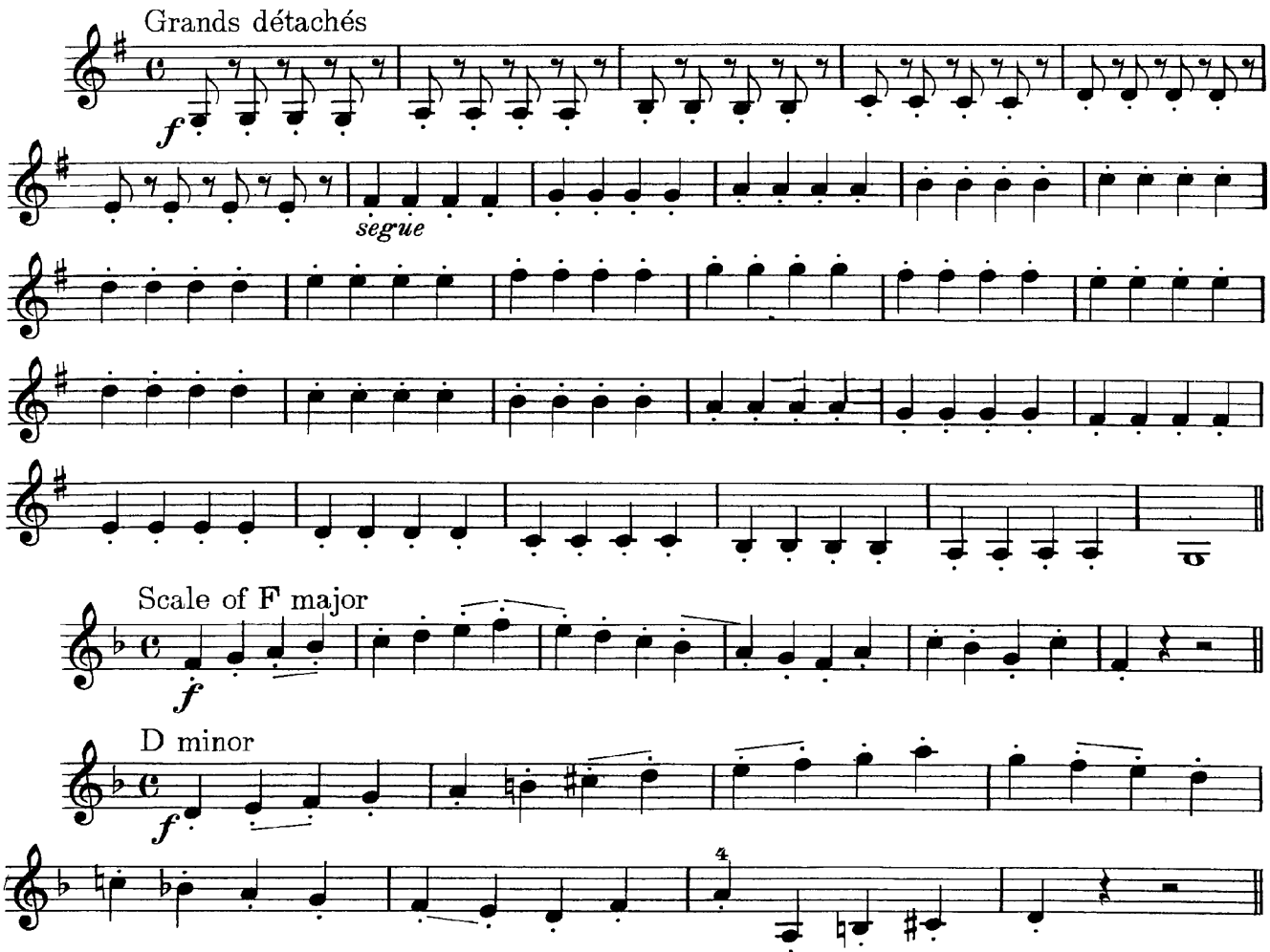
The Martelé

To prepare the pupil for this bowing we begin with the "grand détaché," which will enable him to attack each note properly and separate it from the next one.

Use the whole bow; attack at nut and point, with a rest after each note.

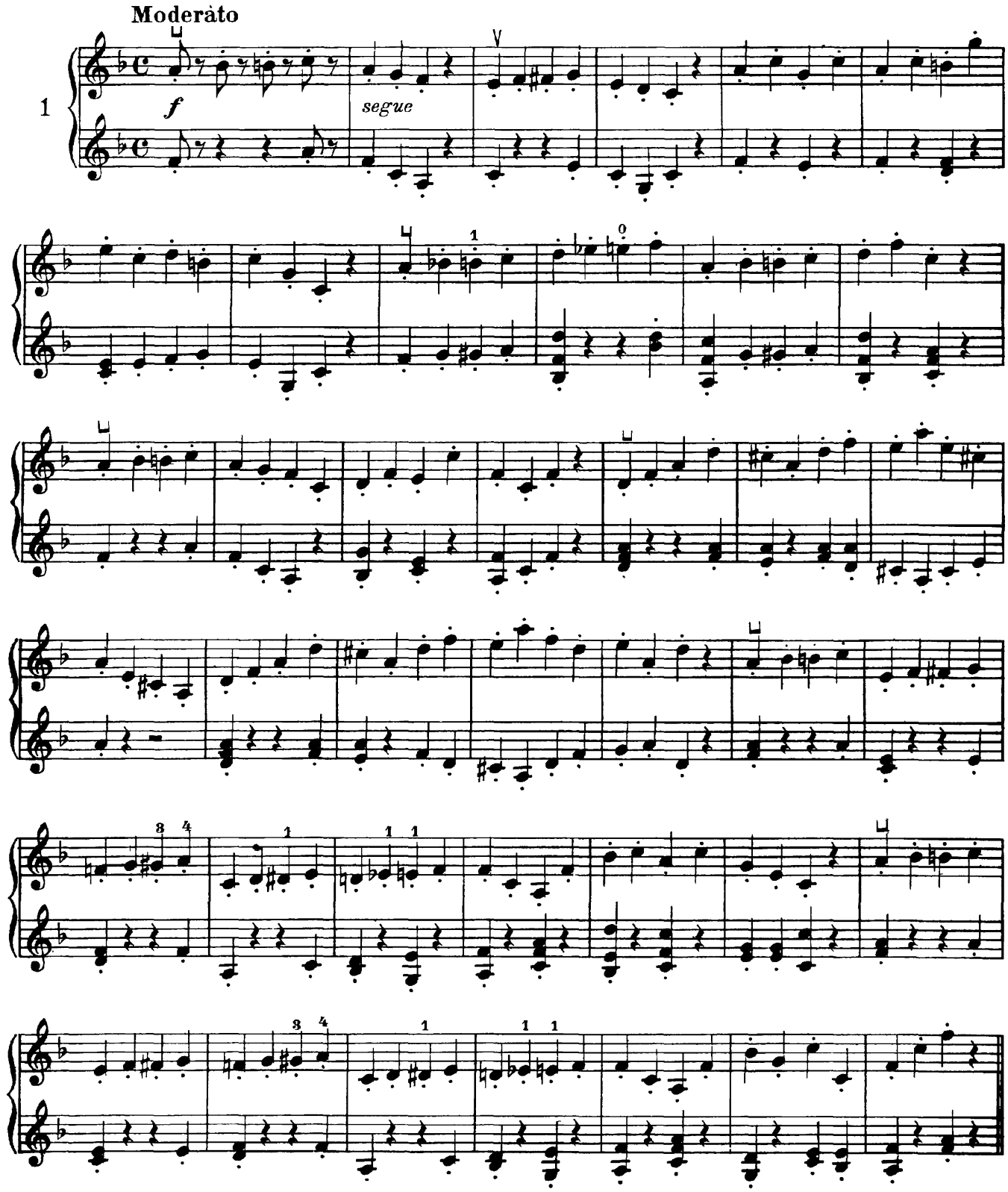
(This bowing consists of the following elements: First, a definite, though not heavy, pressure of the bow on the string without motion; second, a very rapid stroke of the whole bow, at the same time releasing the pressure; third, the bow comes to an absolute stop, without pressure, acting as a damper to the string.

N. B. A test of the proper setting of the bow on the string before the stroke is, that the string may be moved laterally an appreciable amount by the "bite" of the bow on the string, without sounding the note.)



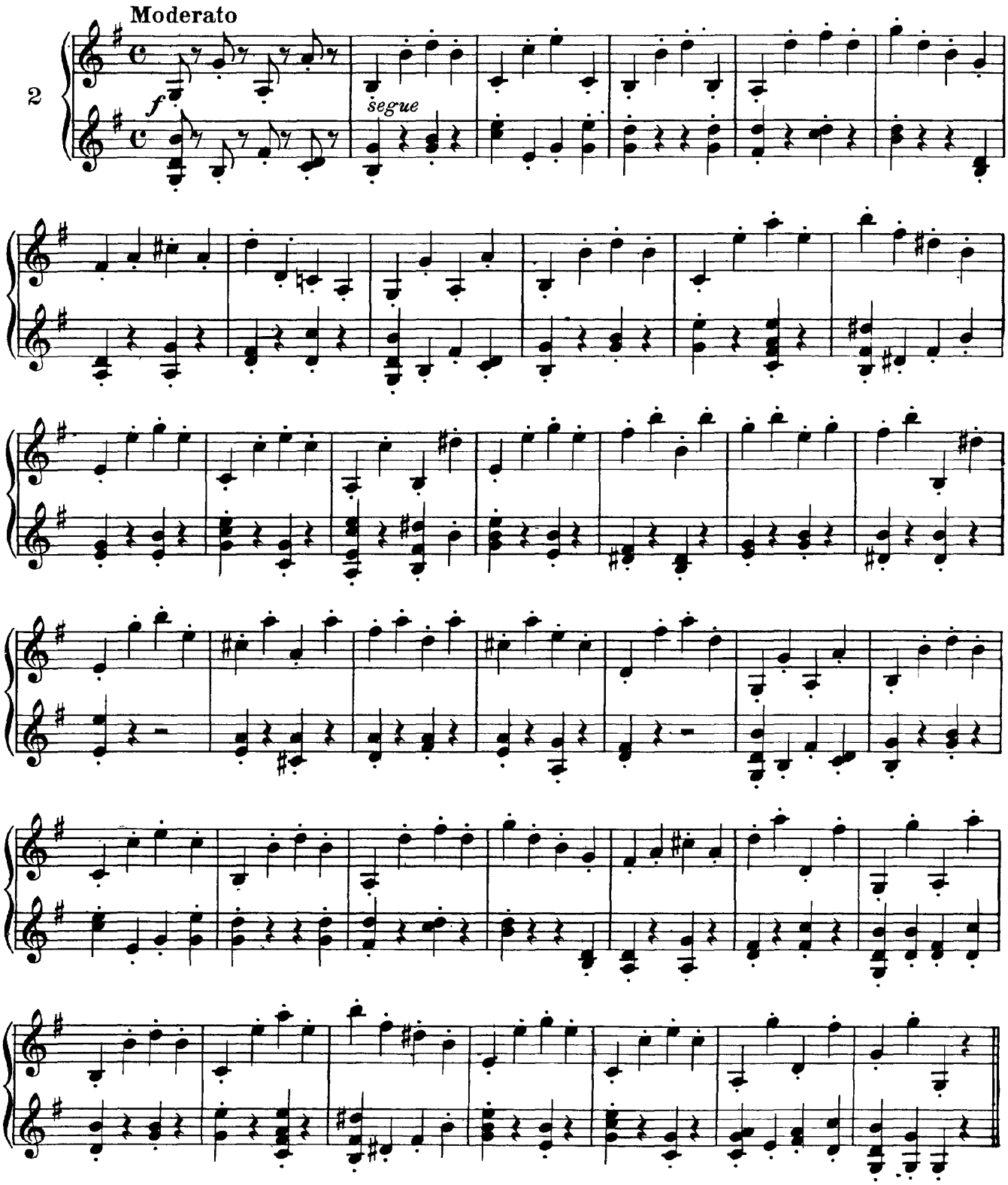
ÉTUDE ON THE GRAND DÉTACHÉ

Use the whole bow for each note; every note detached from the **next.**



GRANDS DÉTACHÉS

Every note detached, using the whole bow

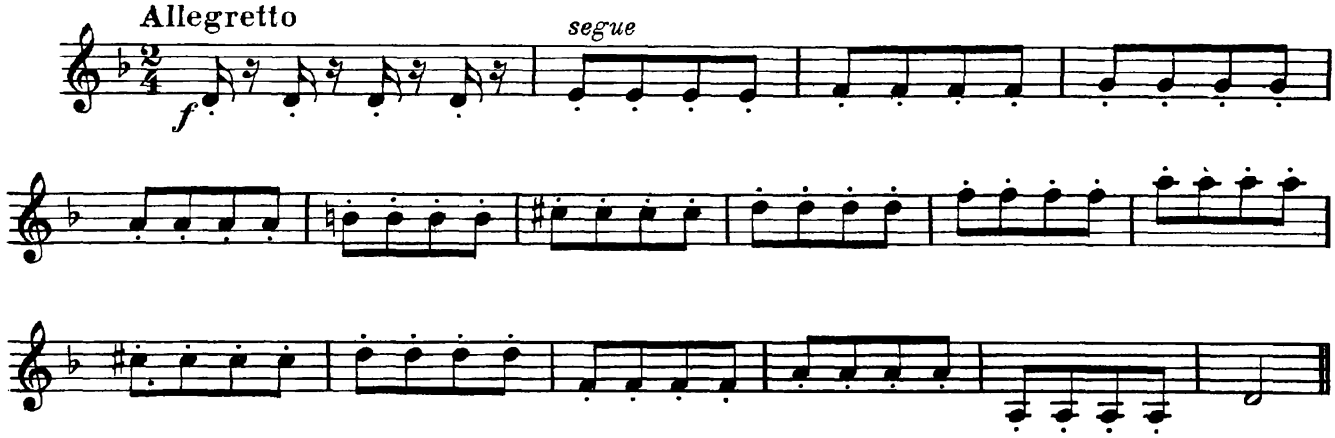


THE MARTELE

From middle to point, each note detached

Scale of D minor

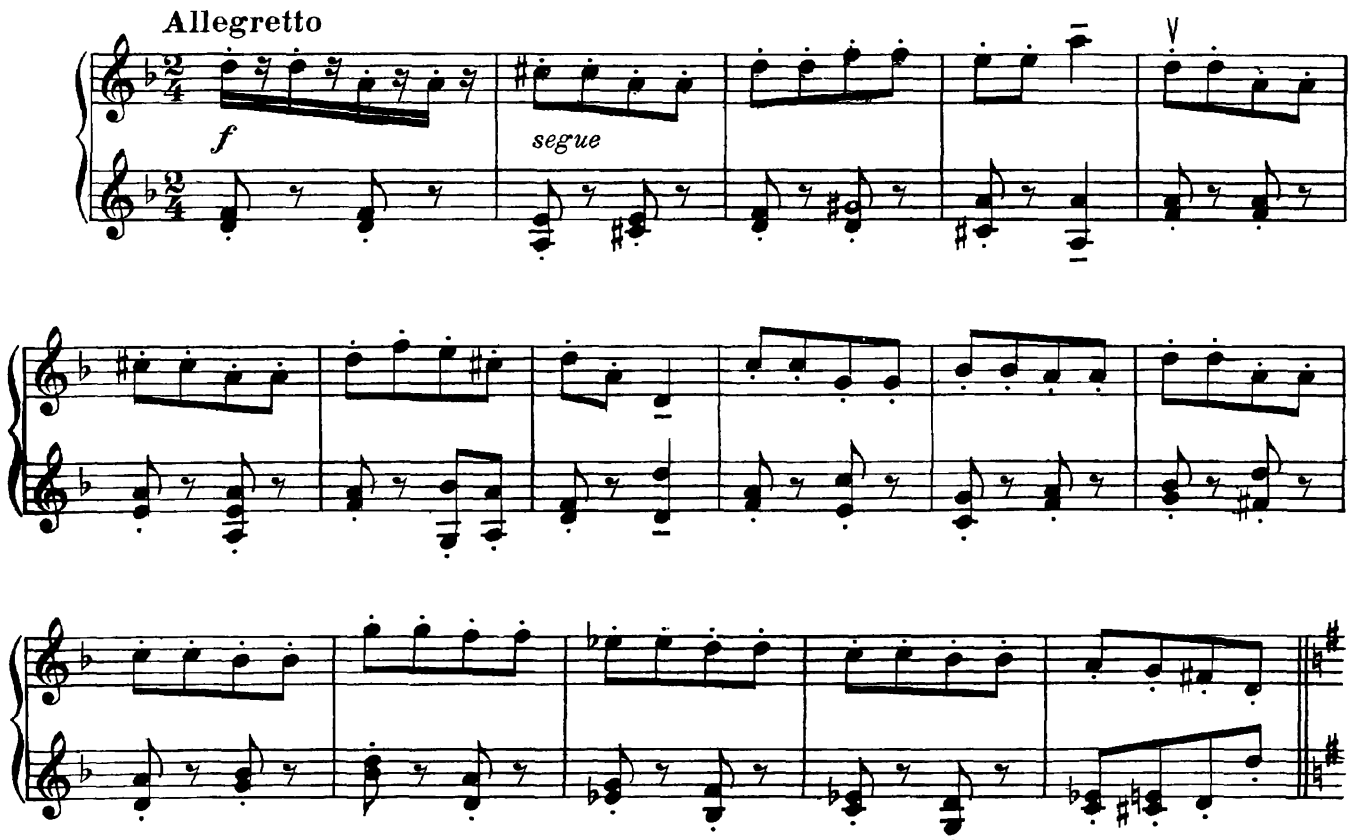
Allegretto

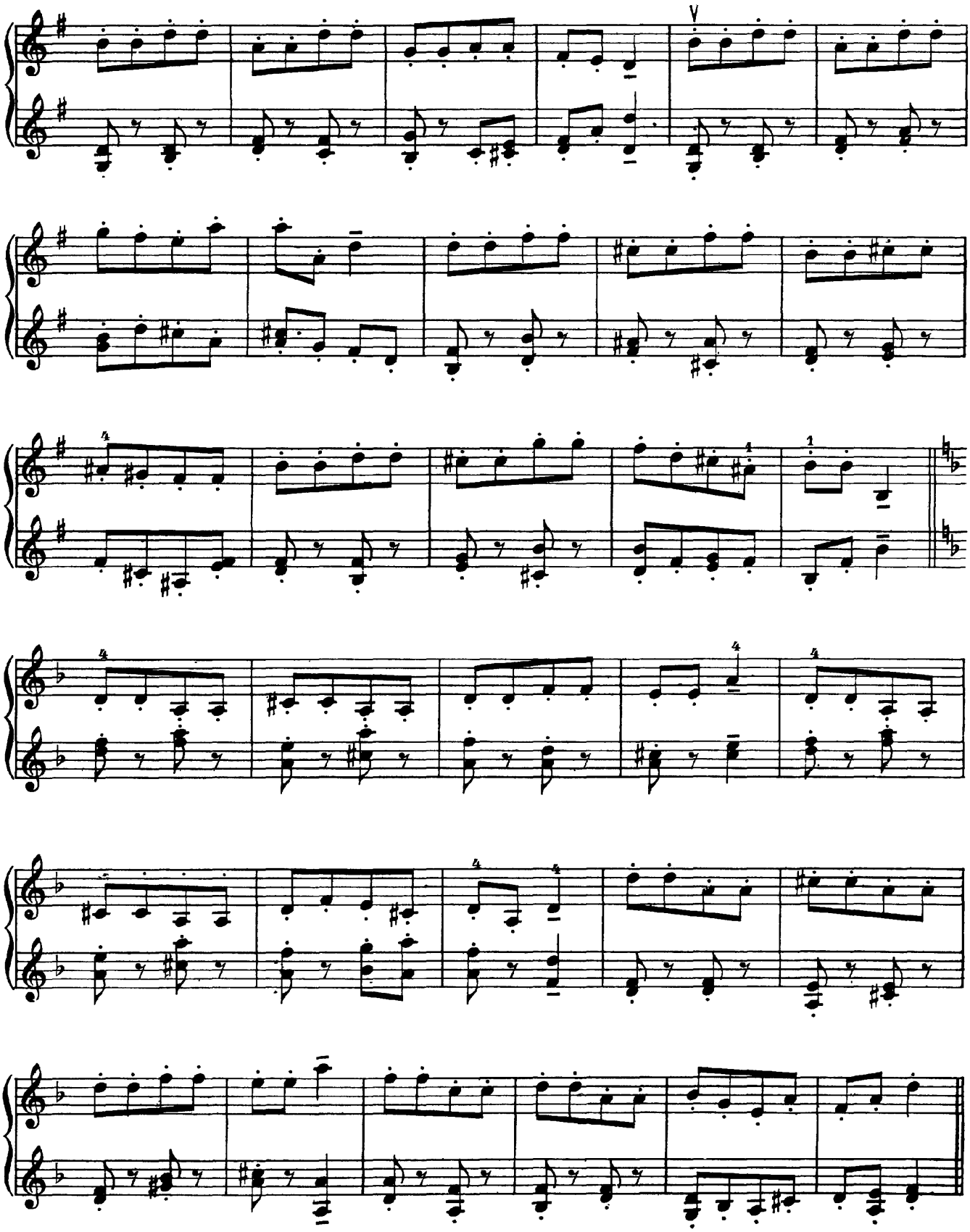


ÉTUDE

"Martelé" from Middle to Point

Allegretto

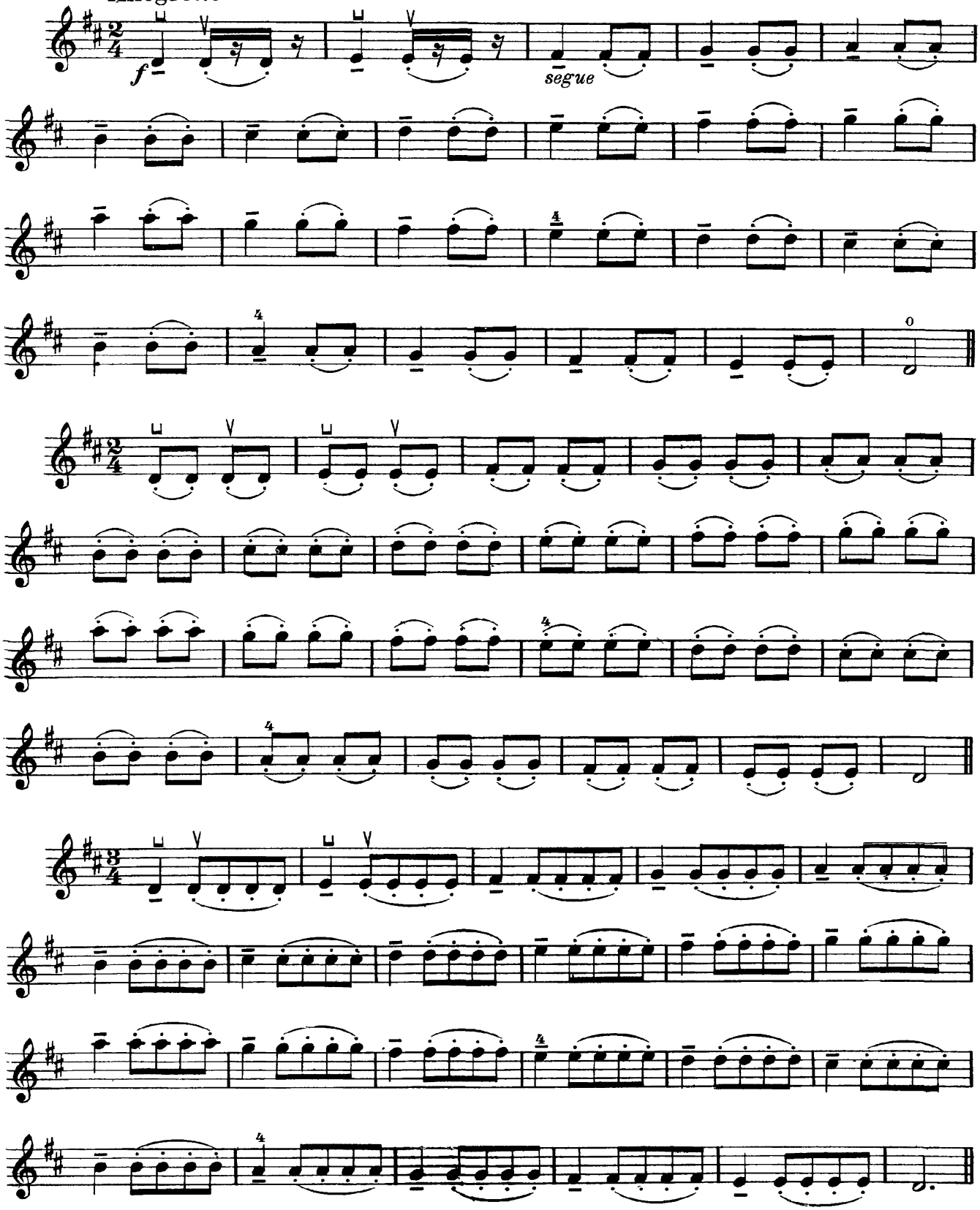




Staccato Notes in the Same Bow

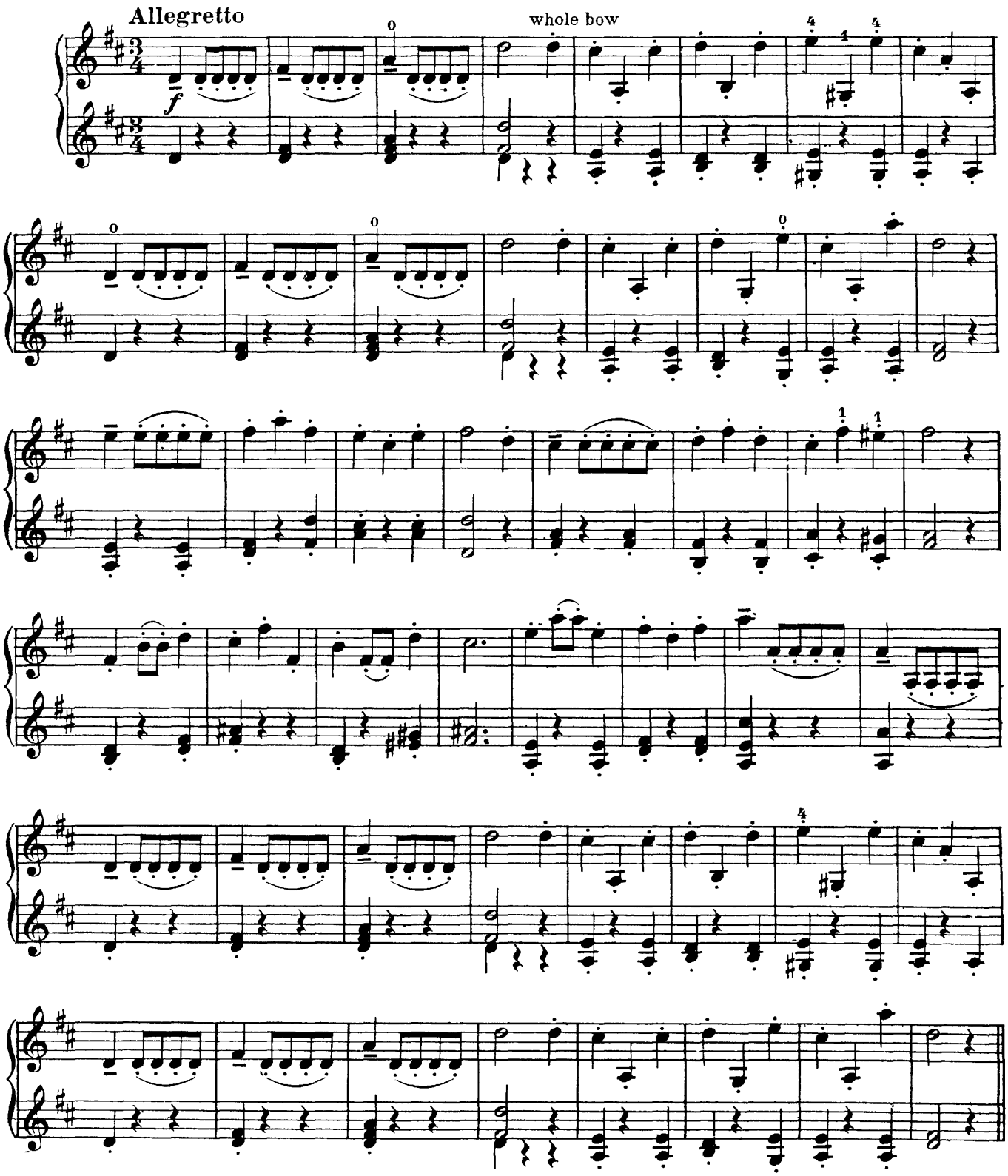
Each note detached, as in the martelé.

Allegretto

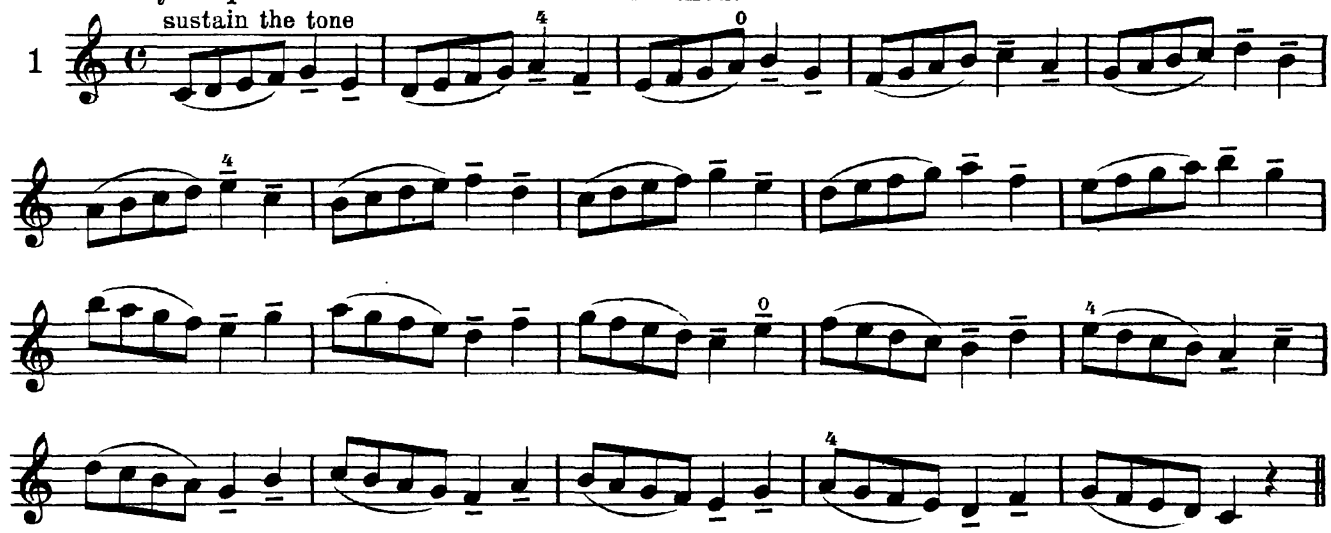


ÉTUDE

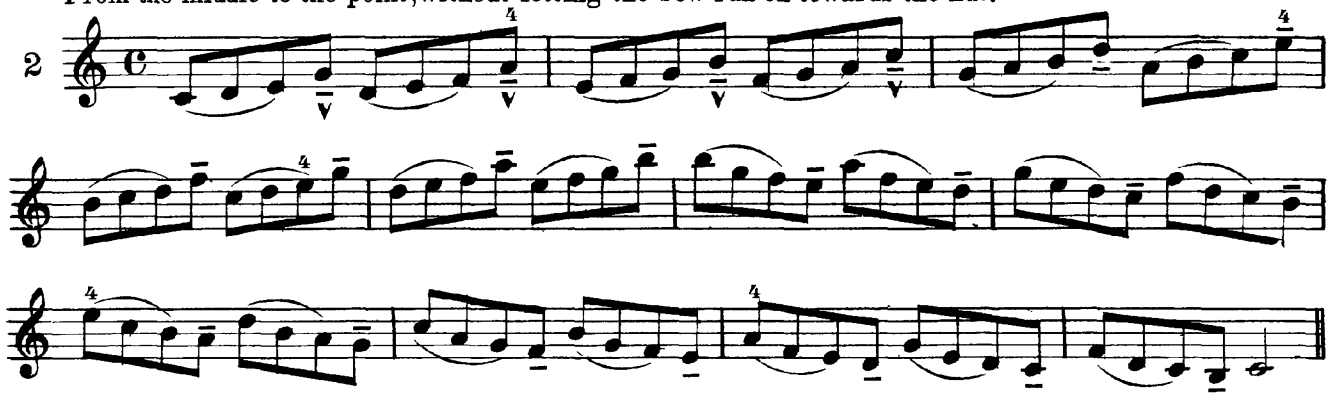
Staccato and Détaché

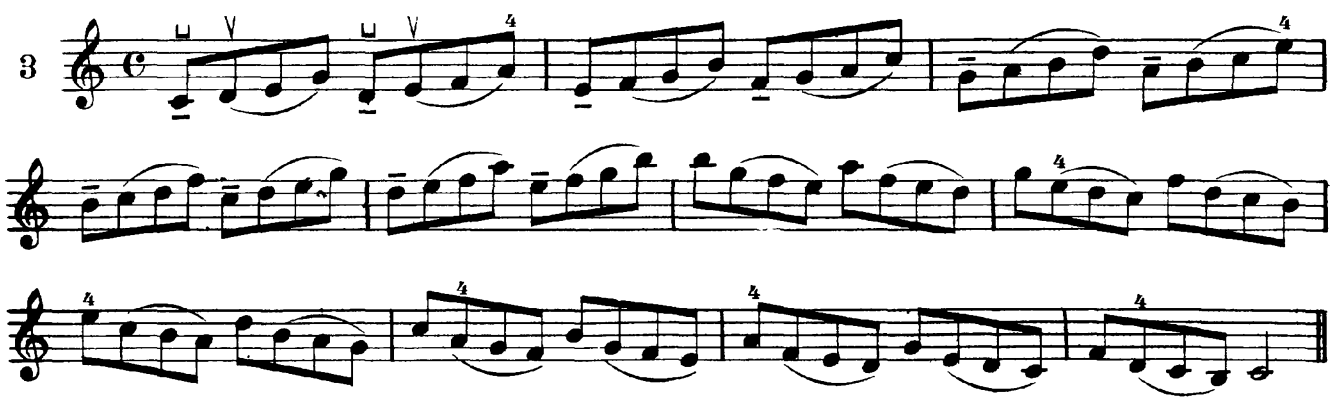


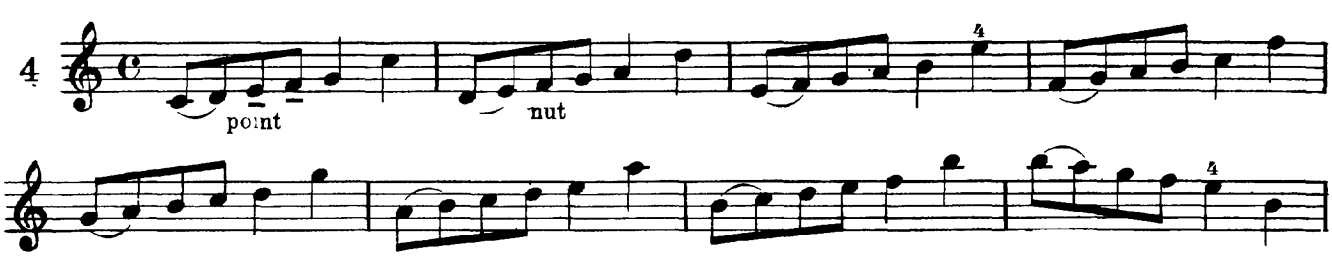
It happens very often that the pupil, when performing the "martelé," forces the tone and stiffens the right arm. The following exercises will help to overcome this tendency by affording a momentary respite in which the arm can be relaxed.

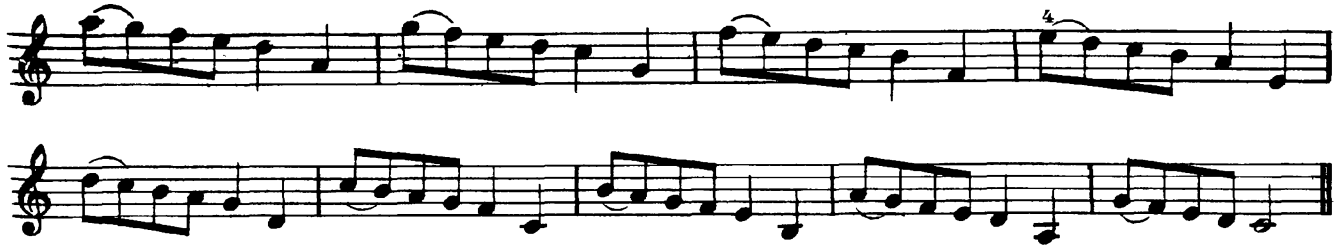


From the middle to the point, without letting the bow run on towards the nut.

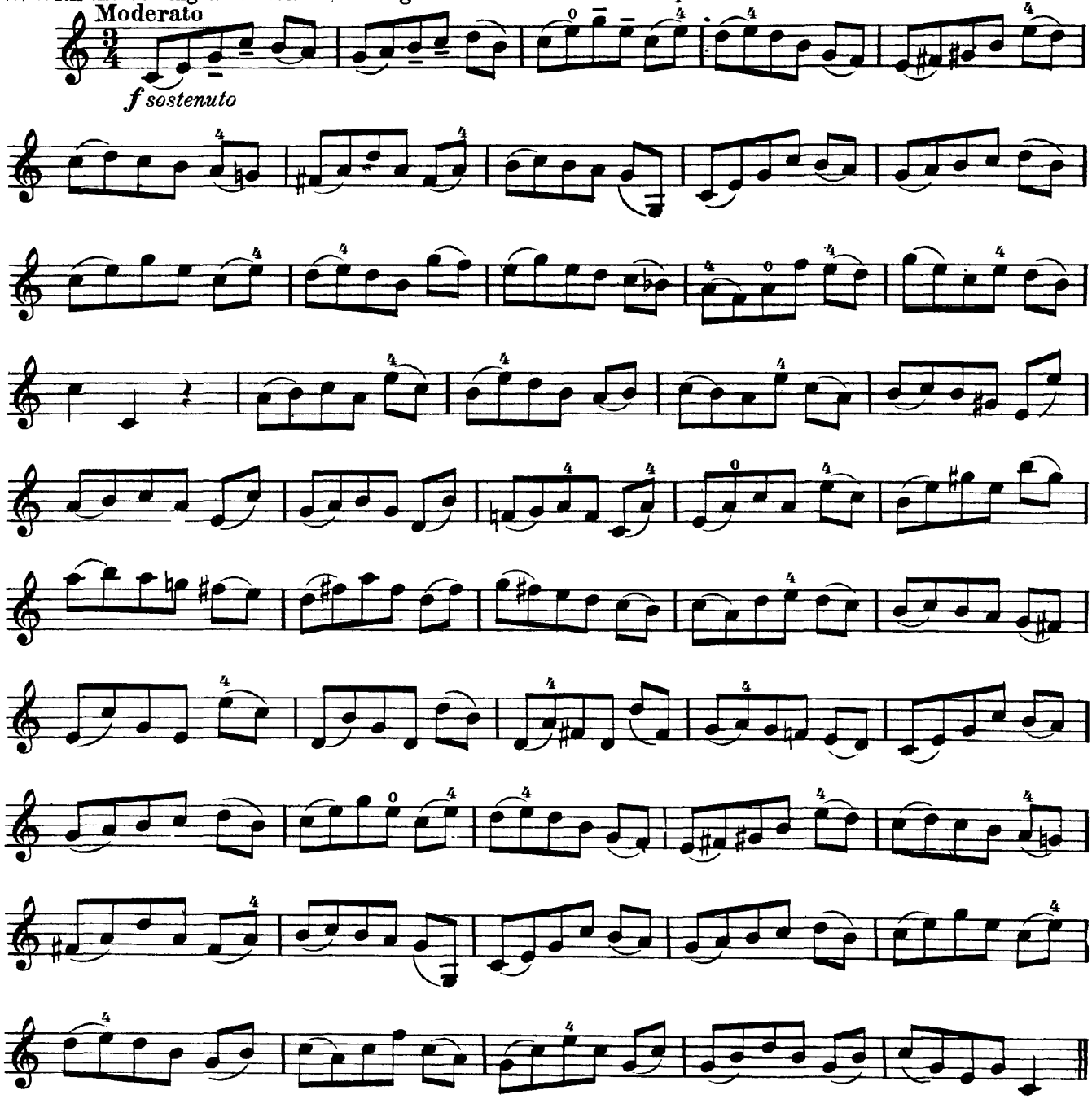




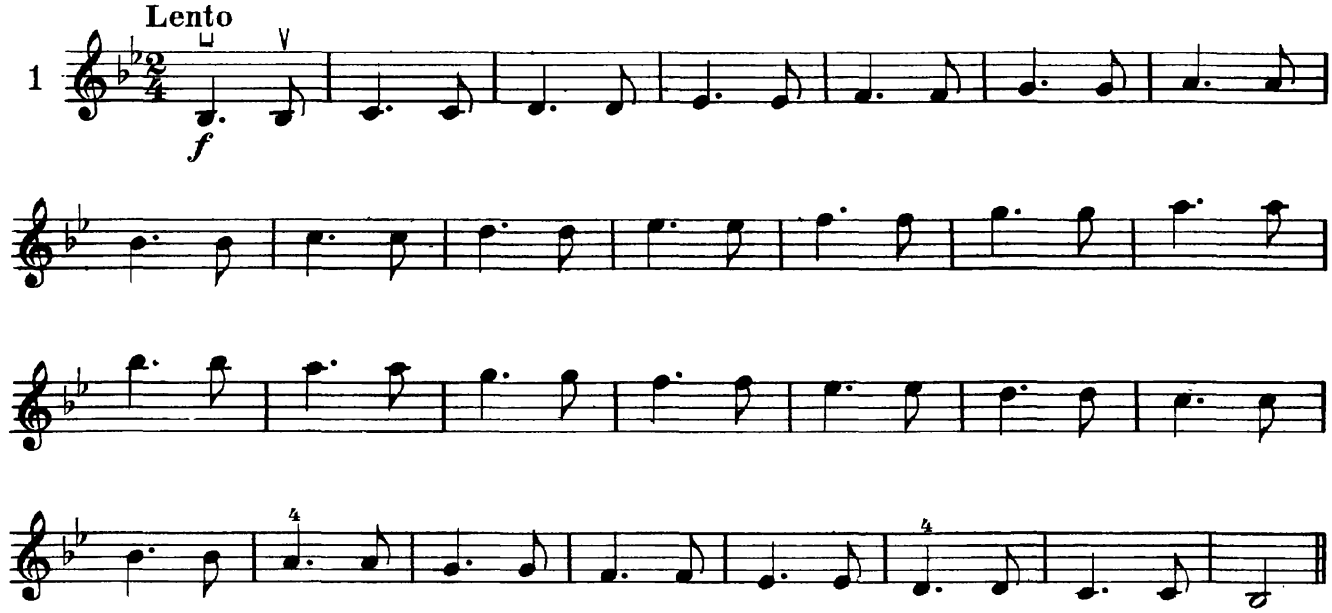




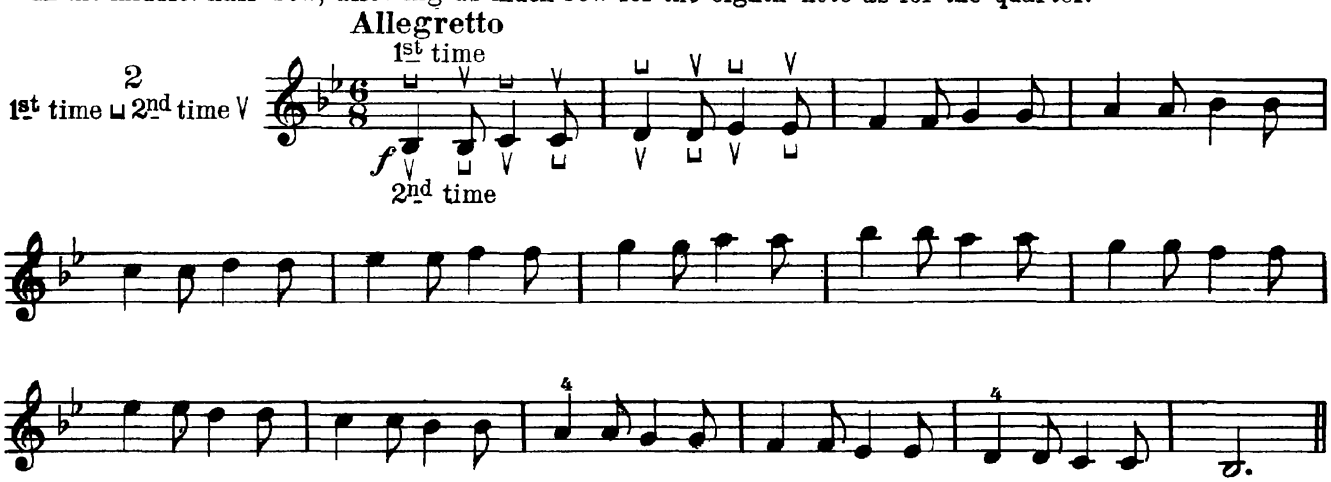
The following study may be practised in three different ways:.
(1) Slowly, using the whole bow for each note.
(2) Quicker, in the middle of the bow; all the notes detached, but sustained.
(3) With the bowing as indicated, the eighth-notes detached at the point.



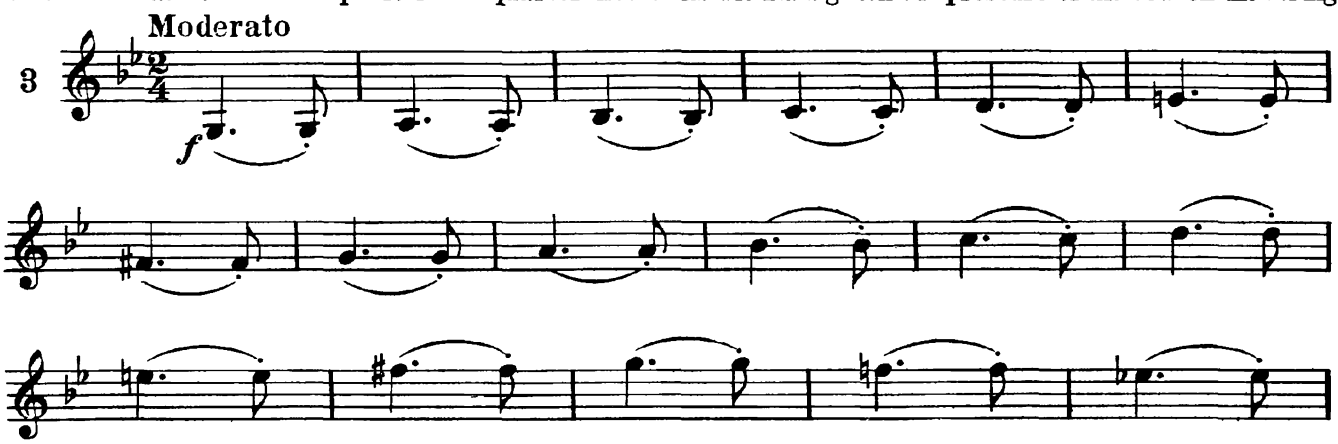
Use the whole bow on the eighth-note, but lightly and without accent.

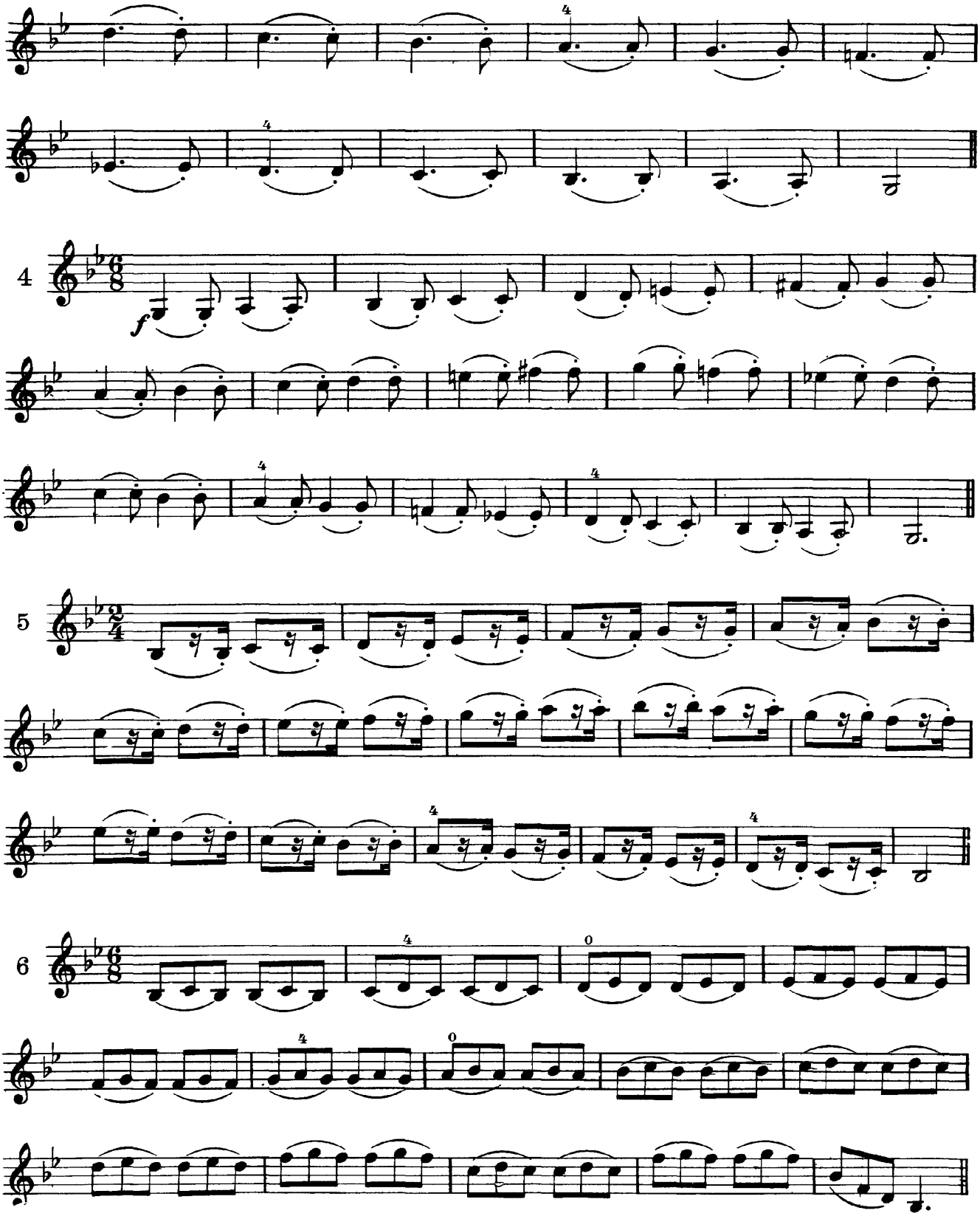


In the middle: half-bow, allowing as much bow for the eighth-note as for the quarter.

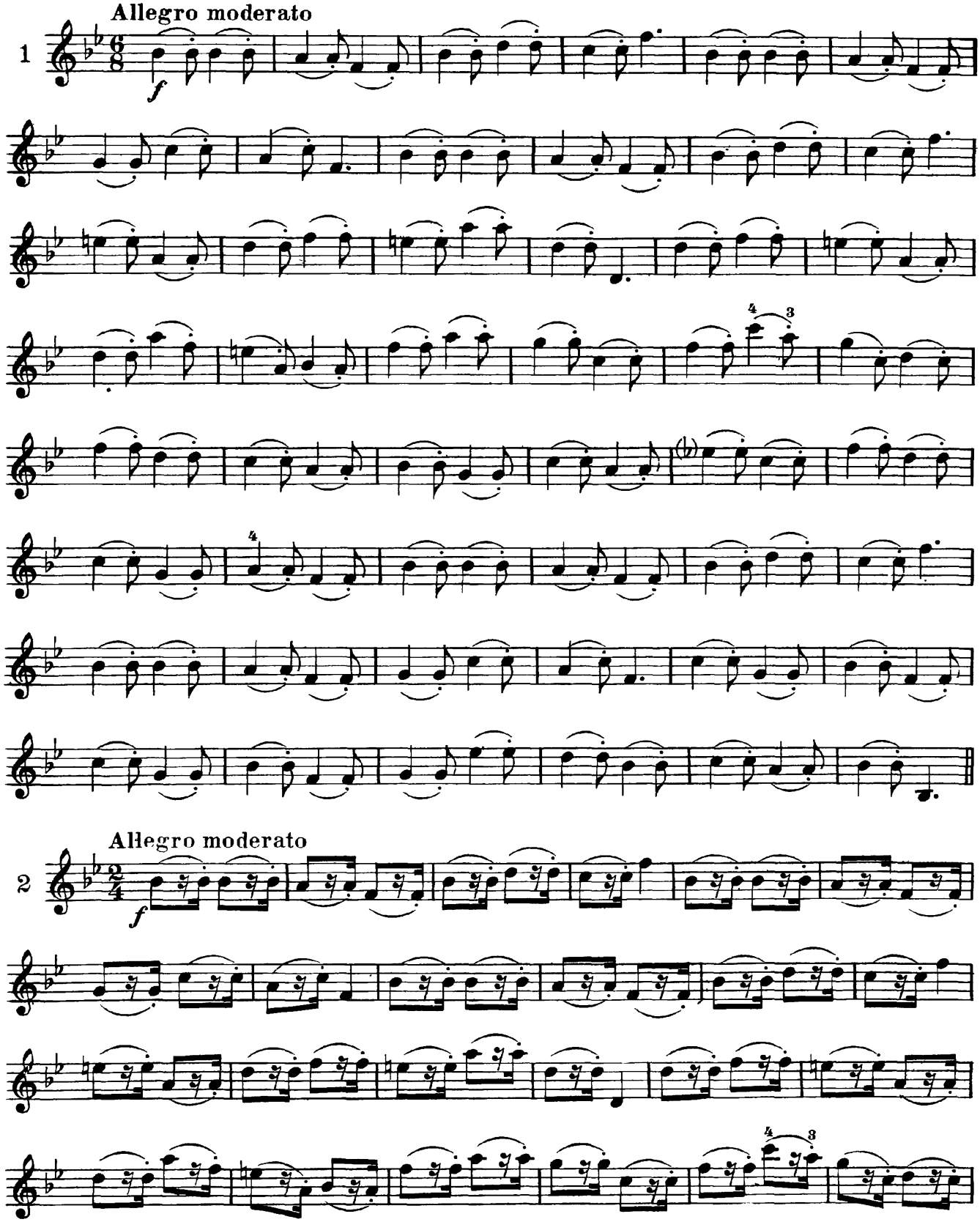


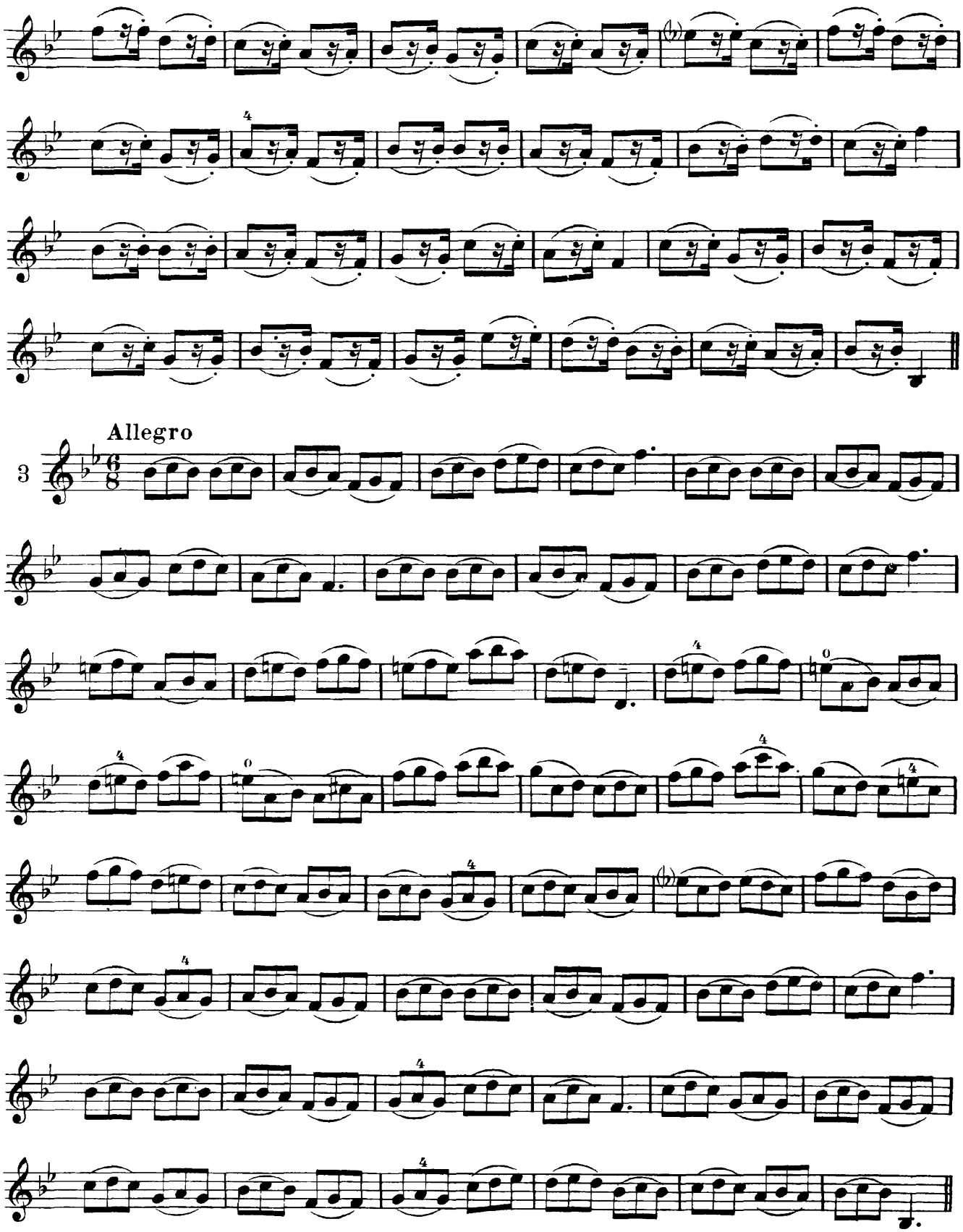
The staccato note short and well marked. Use about one inch of bow for the eighth-note, the bow to come to an absolute stop after the quarter-note. At the nut lighten the pressure of the bow on the string

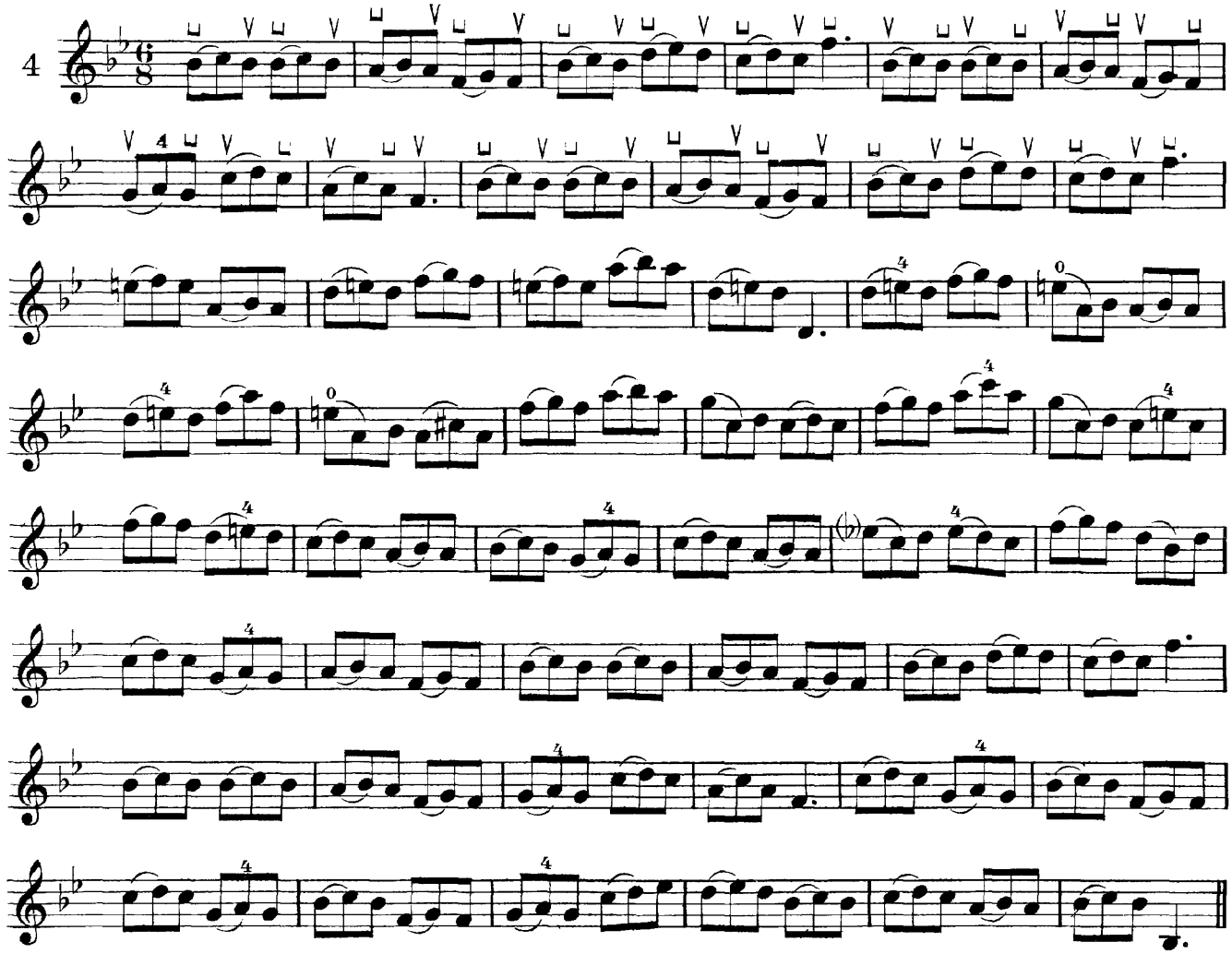




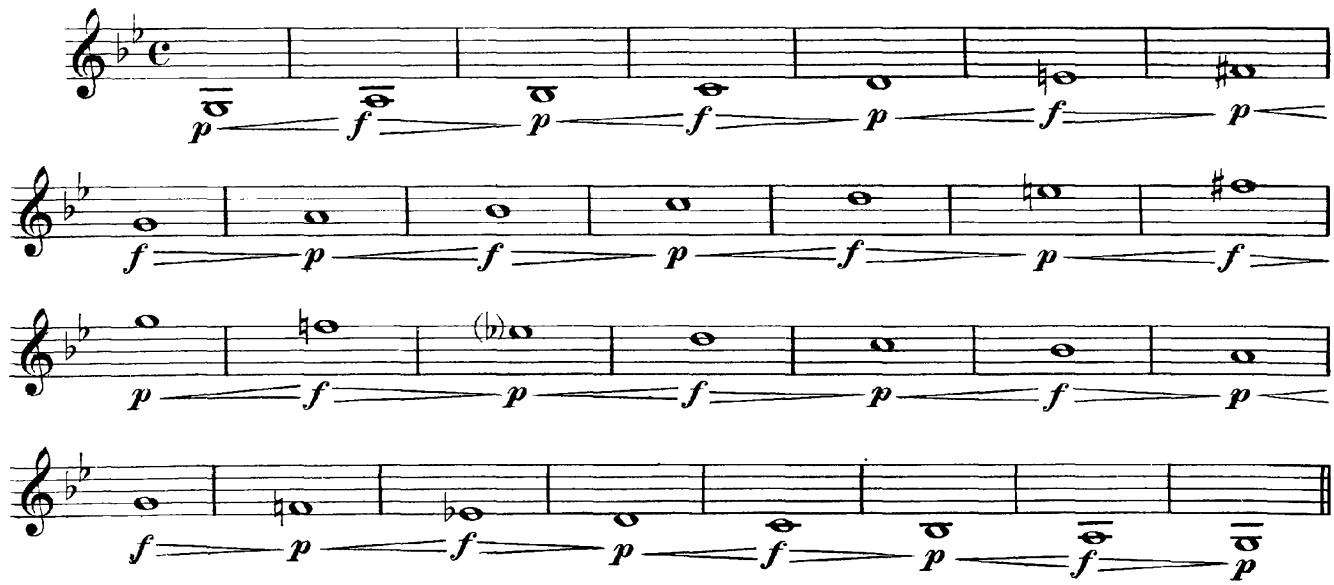
Étude

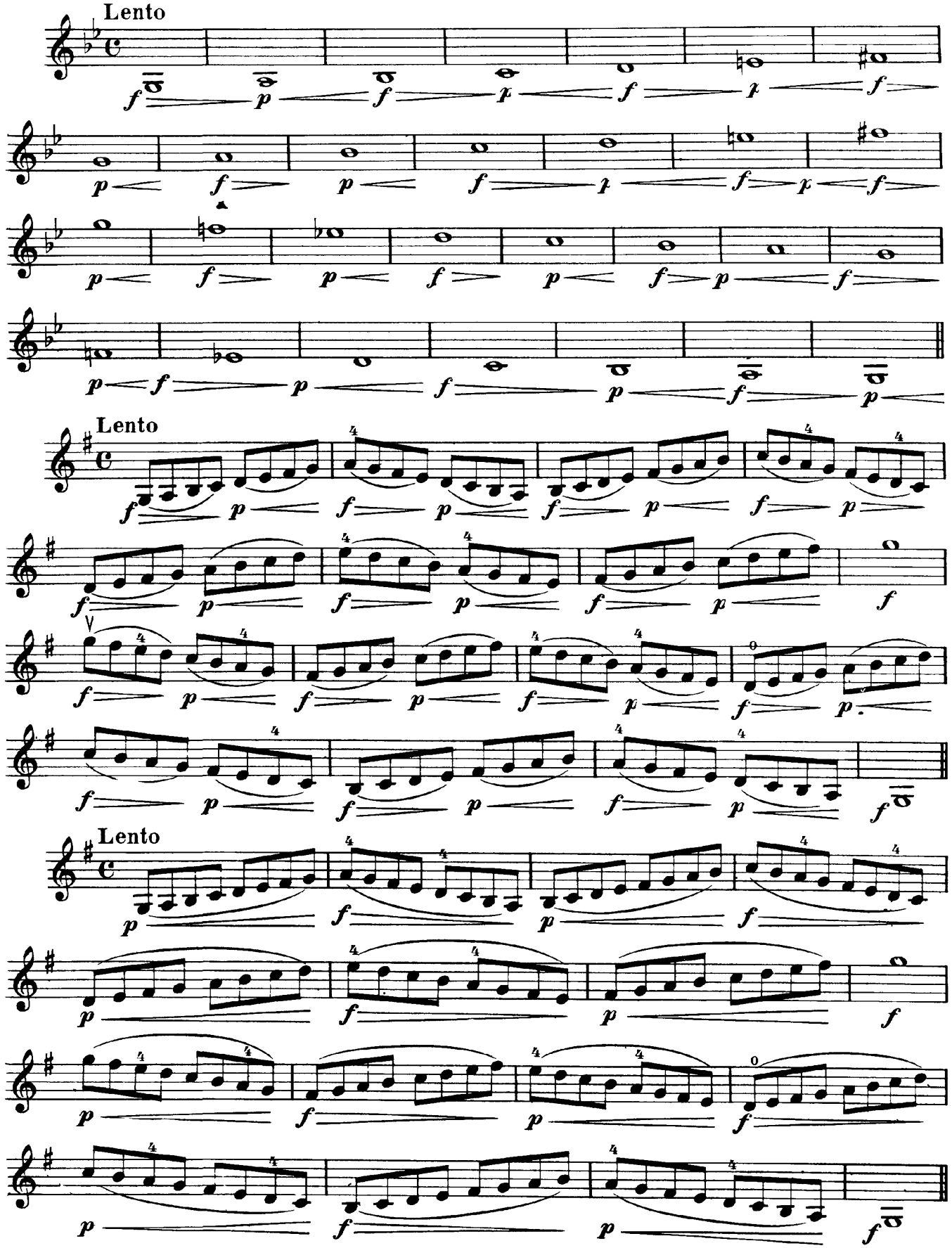



Allegro



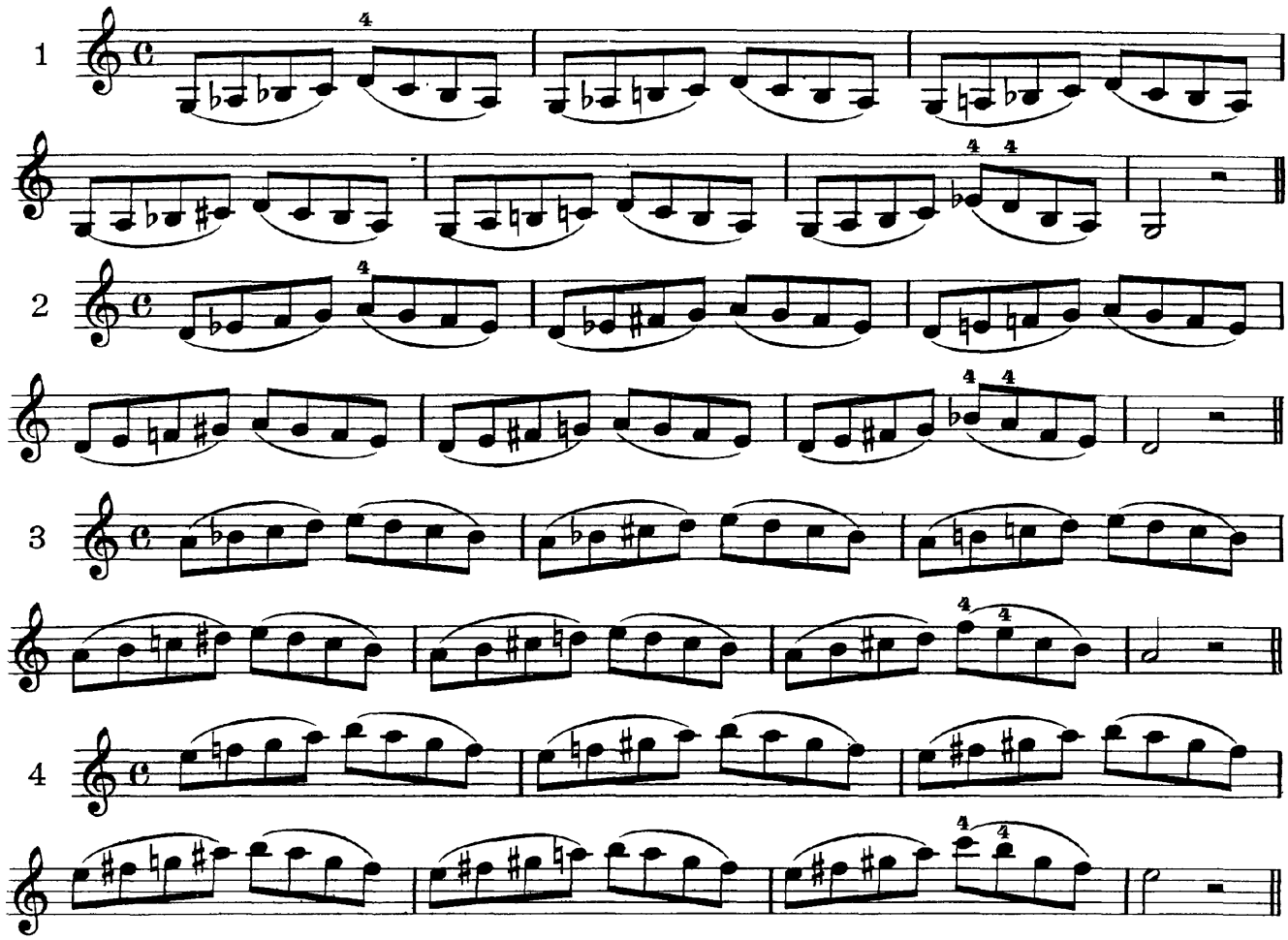
Till now we have made no mention of the shading of the tone, which requires of the pupil a certain amount of familiarity with the use of the bow. He should now practise the varying pressure and rate of motion of his bow in the crescendo and diminuendo from nut to point and from point to nut.



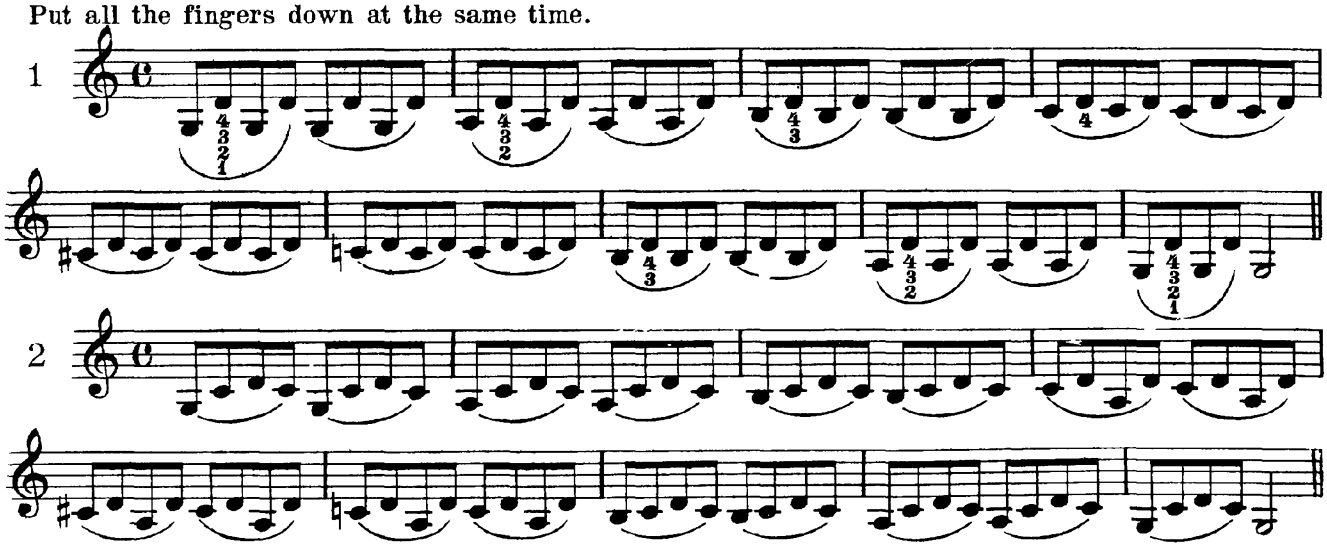

Lento
Lento
Lento

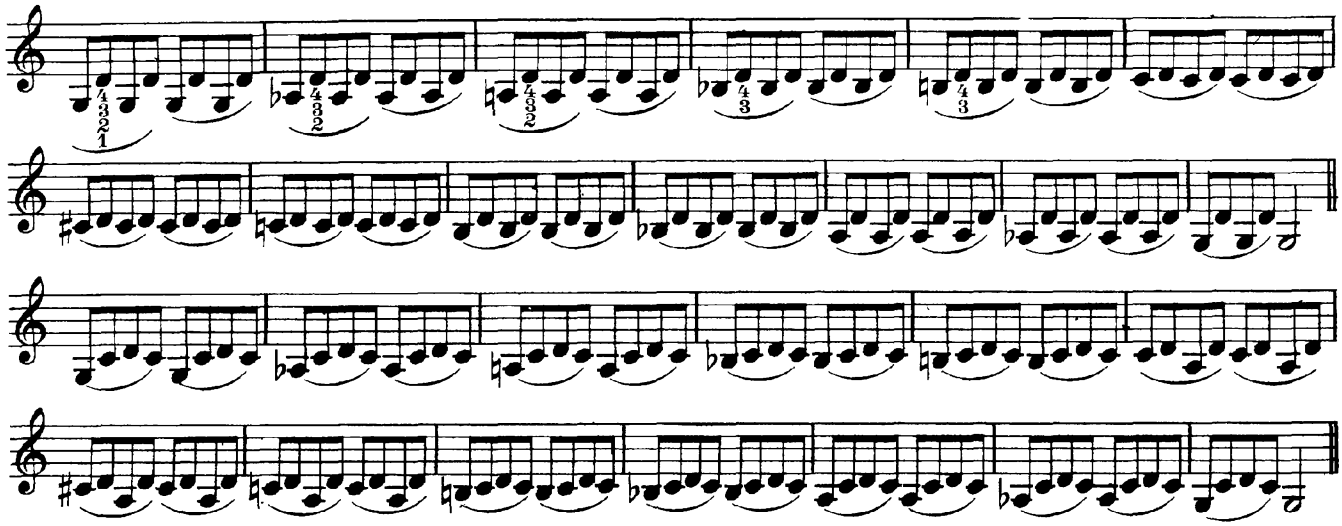
Various Exercises in Extension and on Intervals Difficult in Intonation

(Extension consists in reaching to a note lying outside of or beyond those normally found in the position in which the hand is playing, and is used only by the 4th and (less frequently) 1st fingers, the 4th finger reaching to notes above the normal position, the 1st to those below. The following exercises deal only with extensions for the 4th finger.)

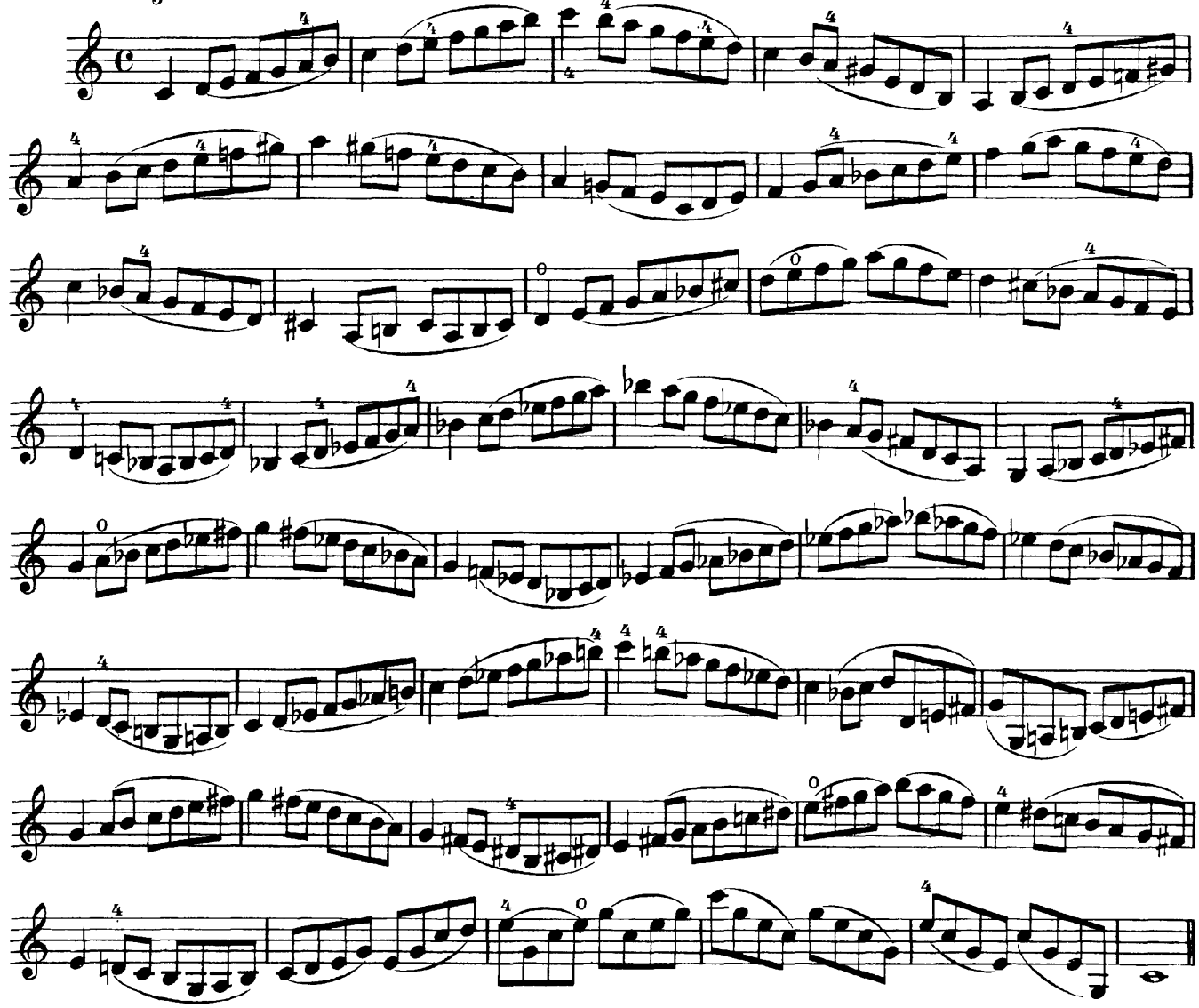


Put all the fingers down at the same time.

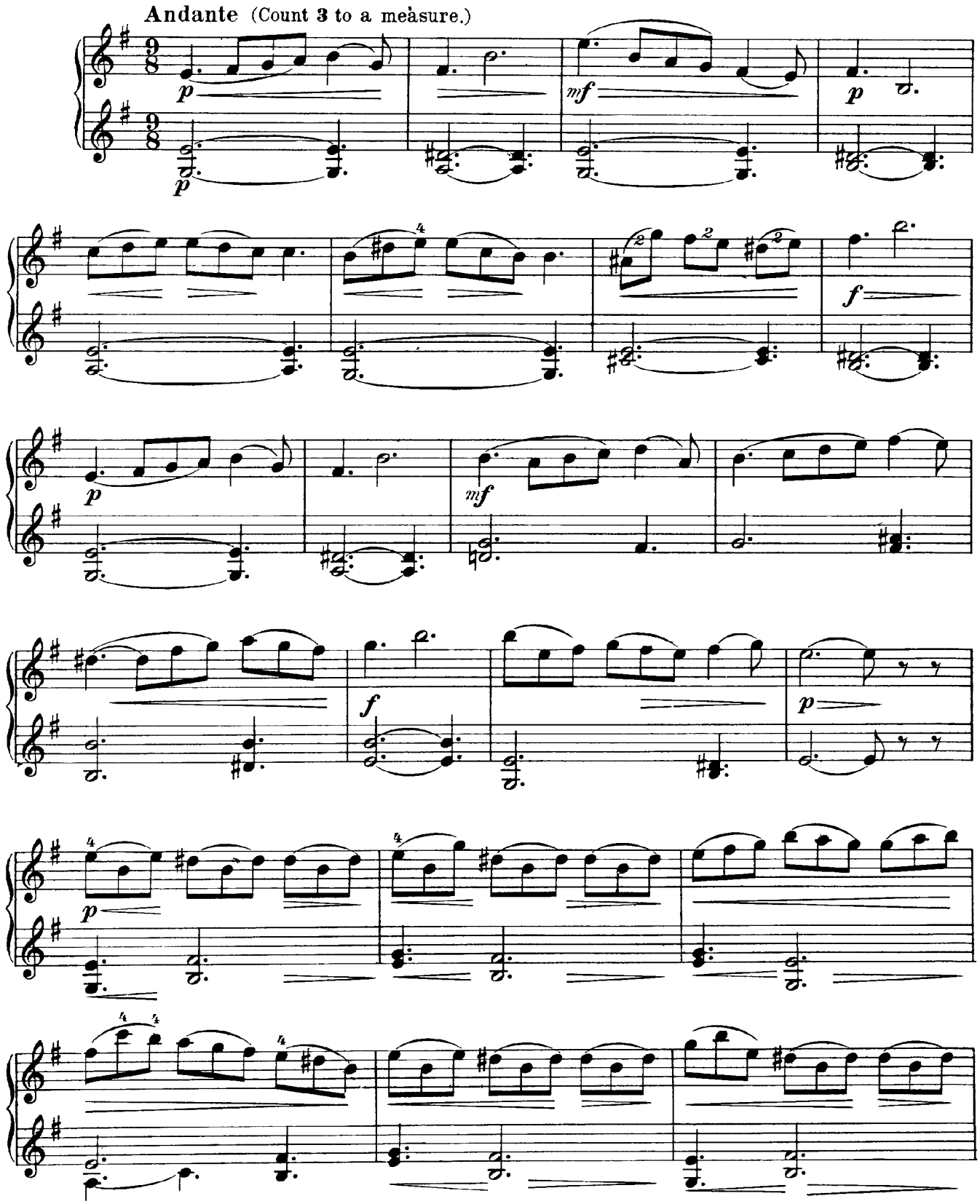


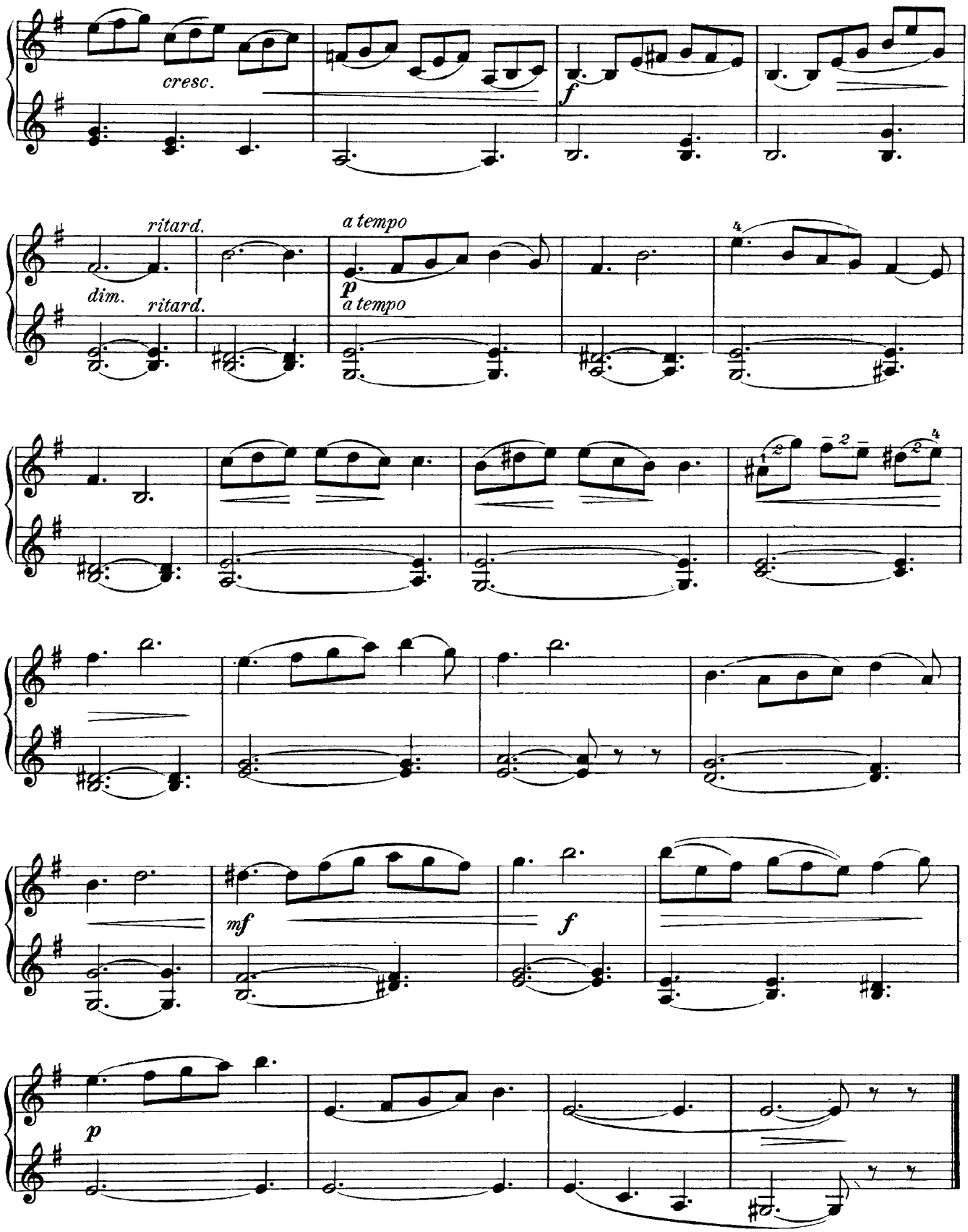


Major and Harmonic Minor Scales



MELODIE



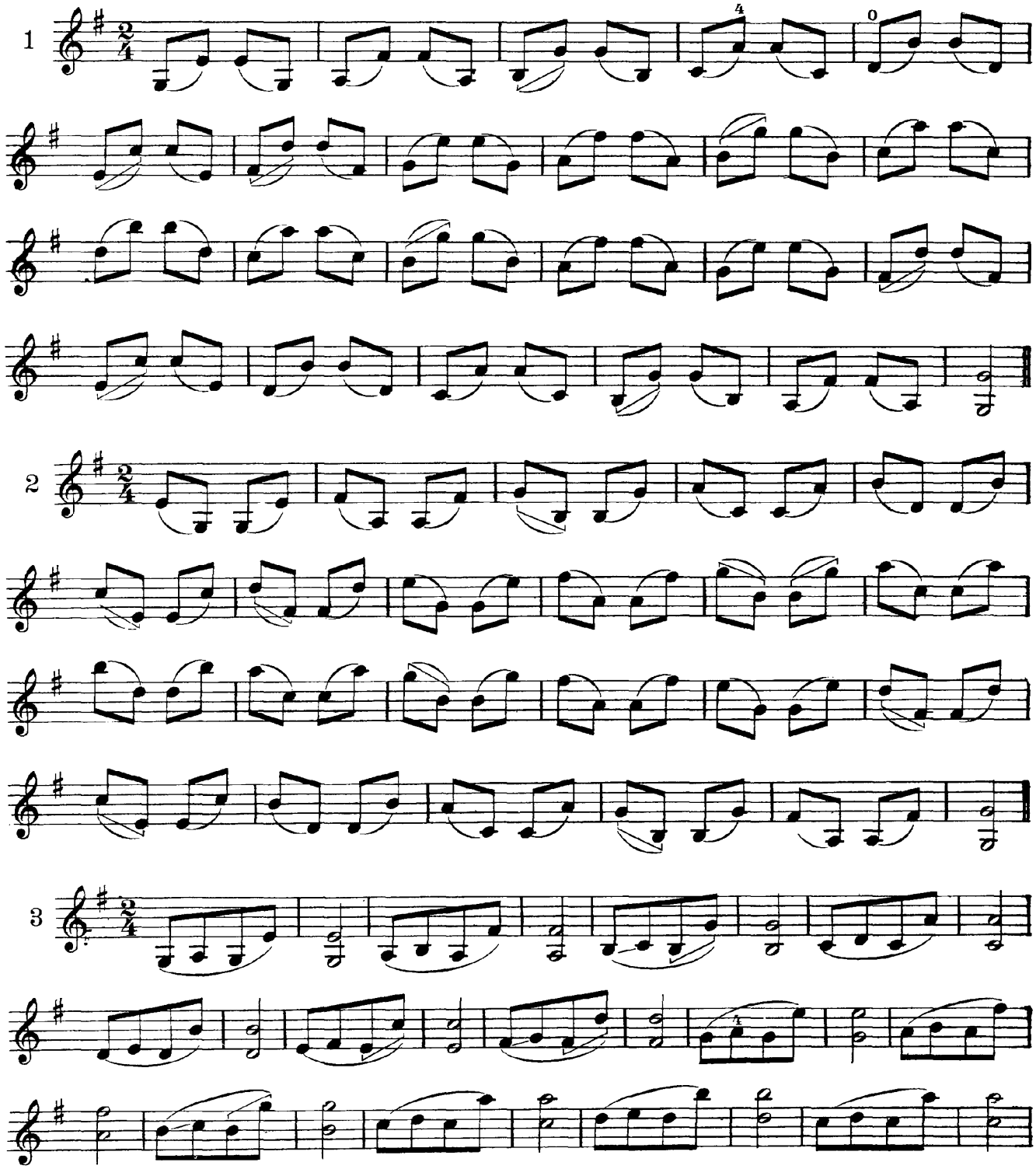

cresc.
f
ritard.
dim.
ritard.
a tempo
p
a tempo
mf
f
p

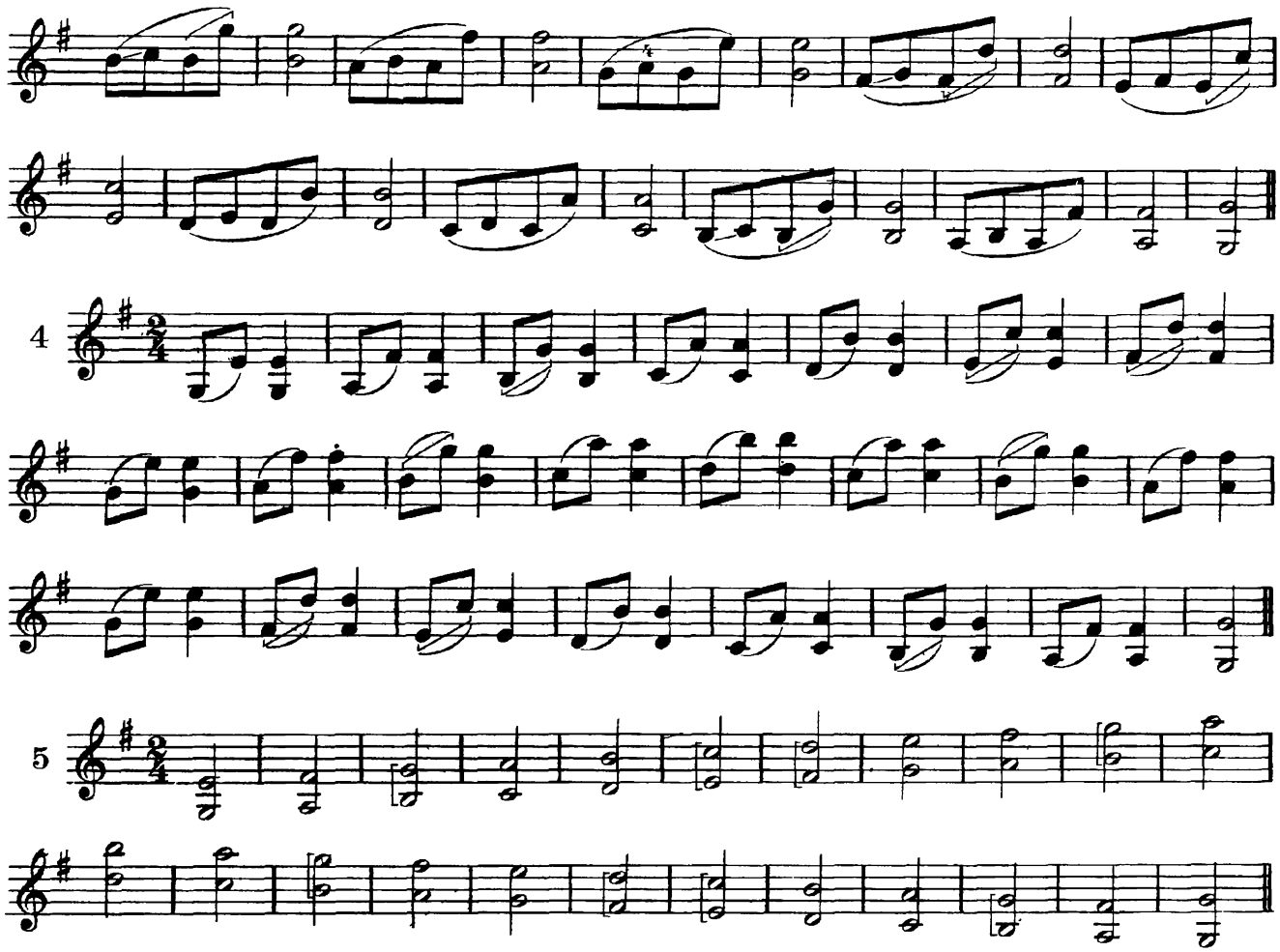
On the Study of Chords

(Preparing tnem by arpeggios comprising the same notes.)

Broken Sixths

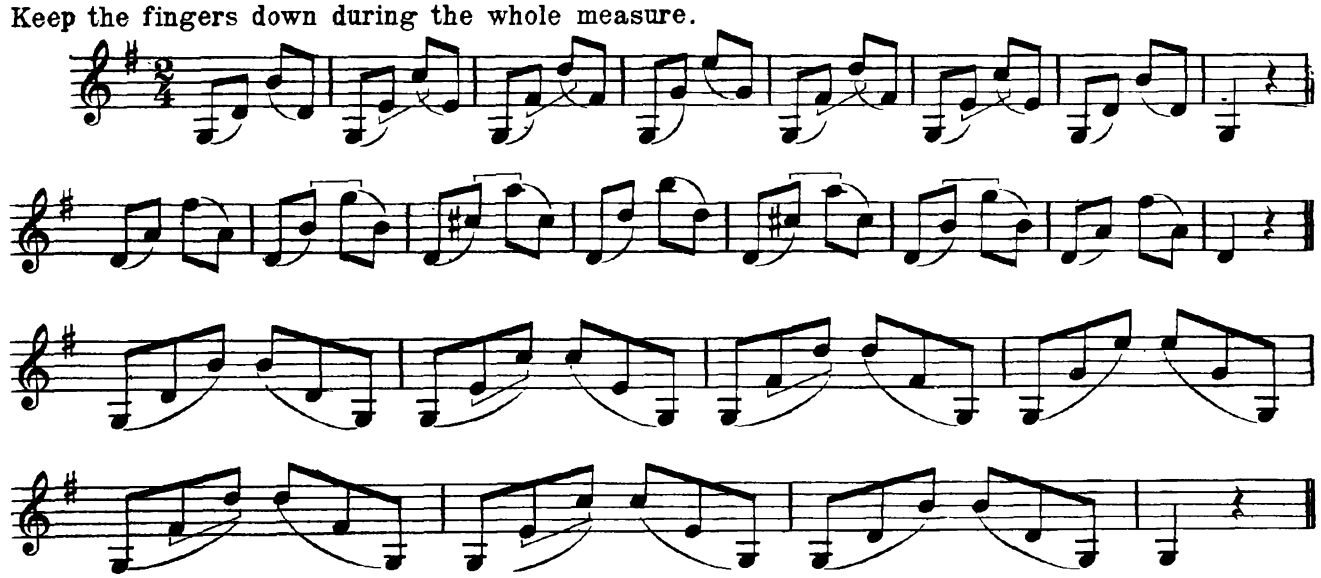
Keep the fingers down until the end of each measure.

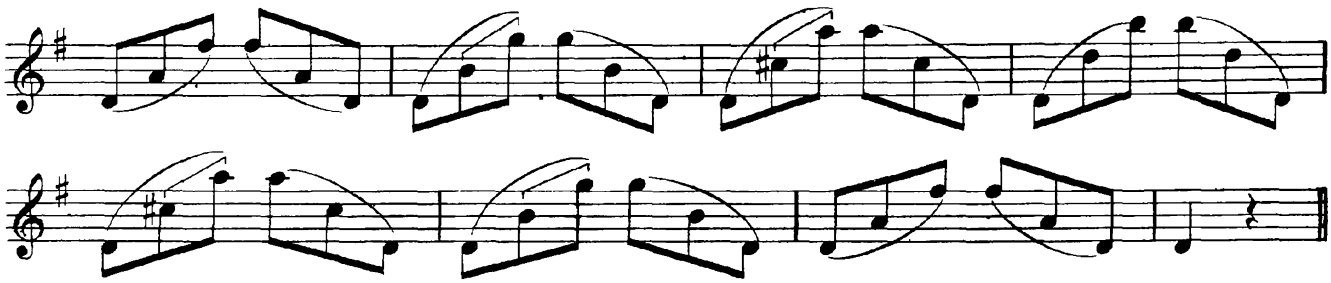




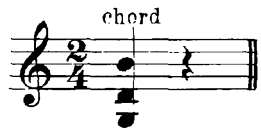
Arpeggios

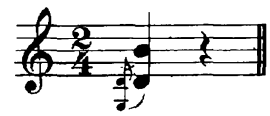
Change strings without accent or abrupt movement of the wrist.
Keep the fingers down during the whole measure.





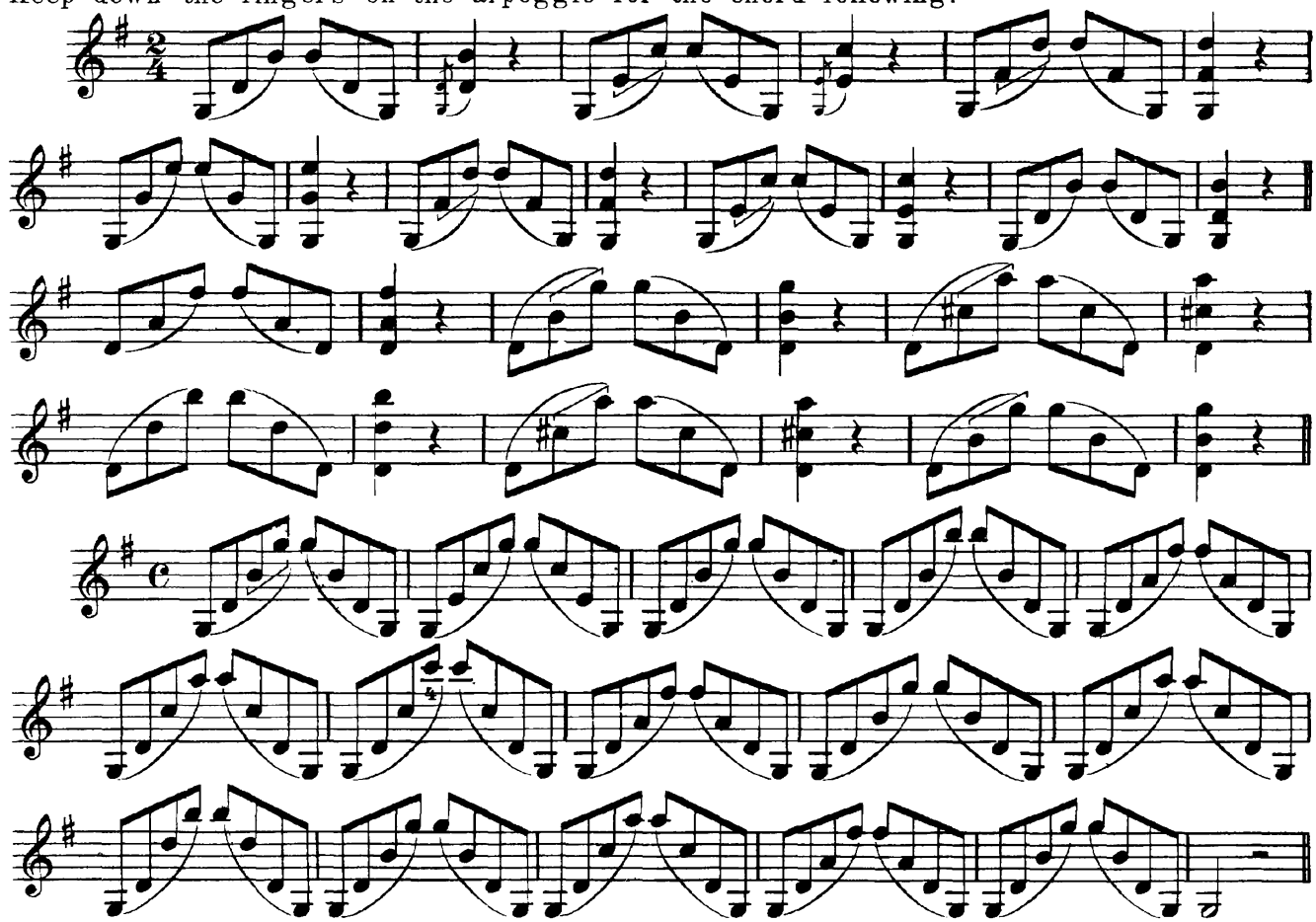
To execute a chord of three notes, first play the two lower ones together; then tilt the bow and play the two upper ones.

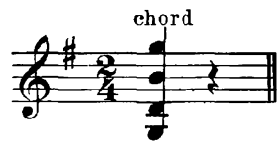
Example 

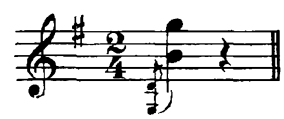
played thus 

It is obvious that this division must be done so rapidly as to pass almost unnoticed. Later, one may even play the three notes simultaneously; but at the beginning this would be too difficult for the pupil.

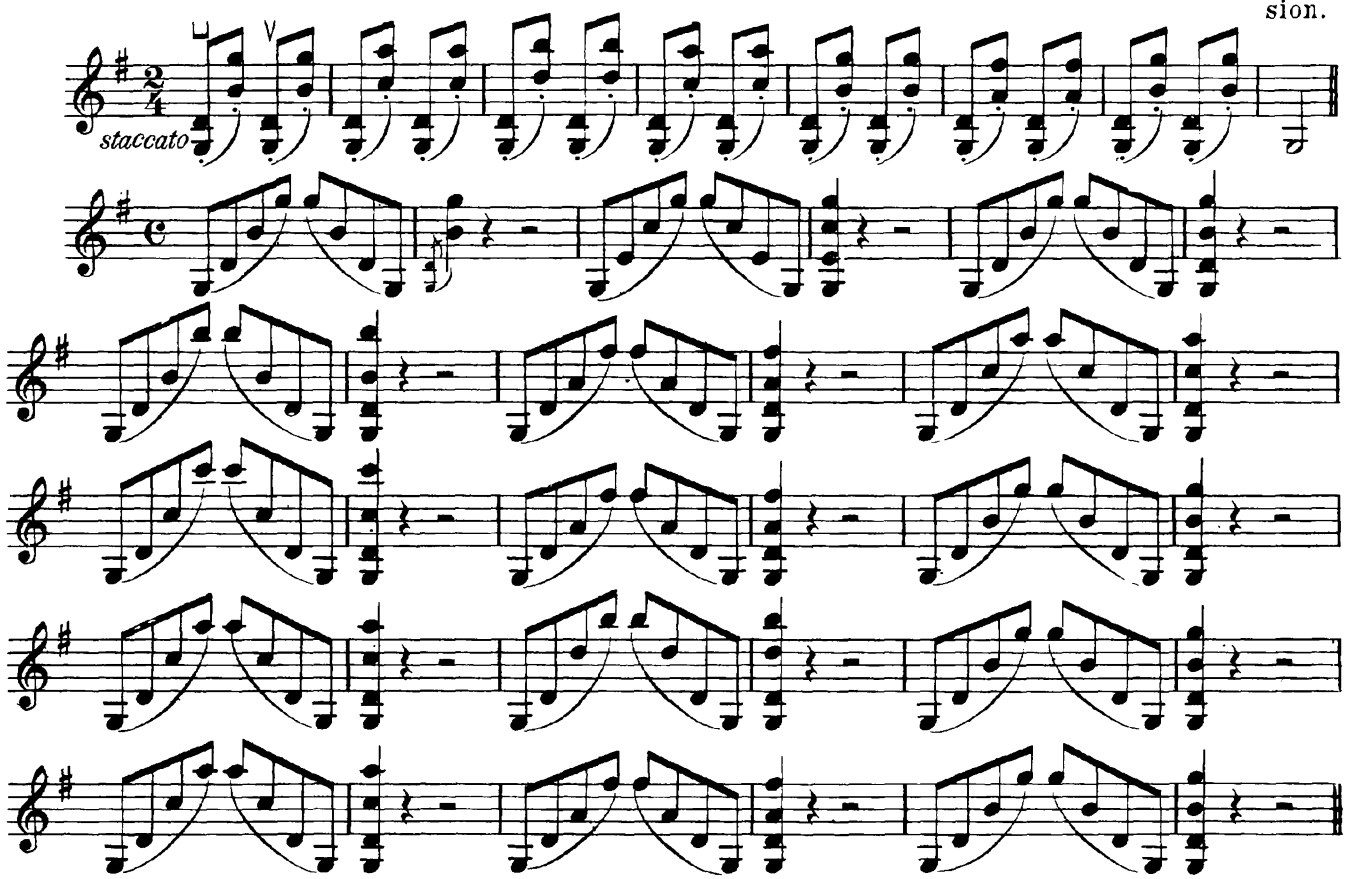
Keep down the fingers on the arpeggio for the chord following.



Chord of four notes 

played thus 

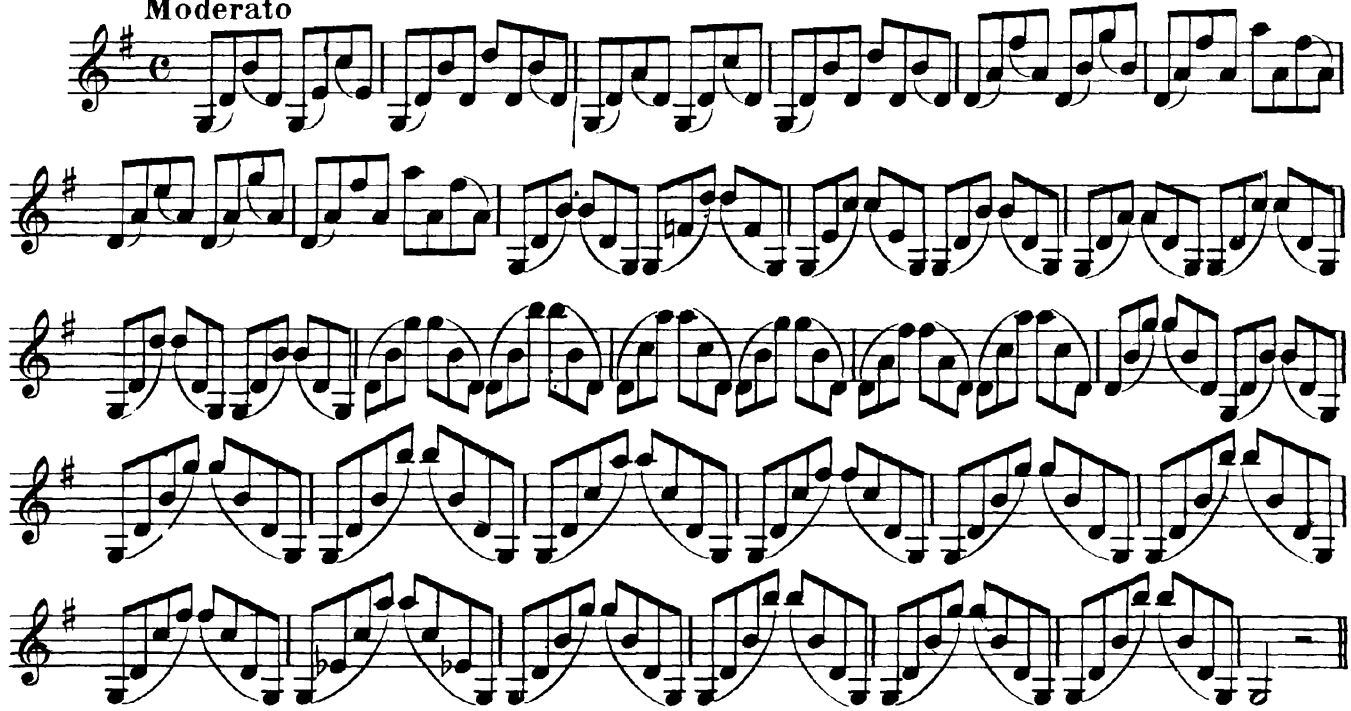
Preparatory exercise to accustom the bow to grip with precision two pairs of strings in rapid succession.

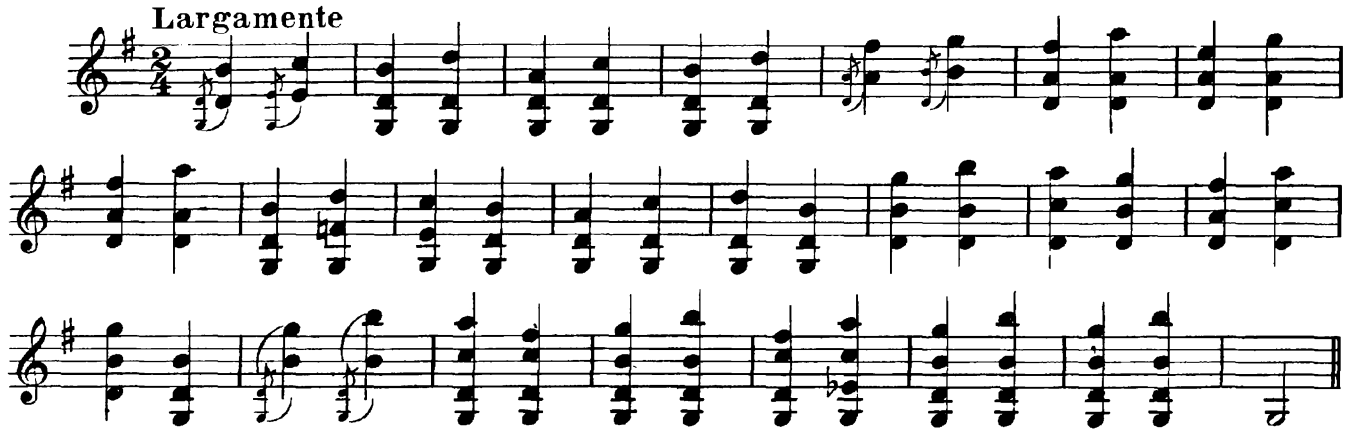


ÉTUDE

Review of the various arpeggios

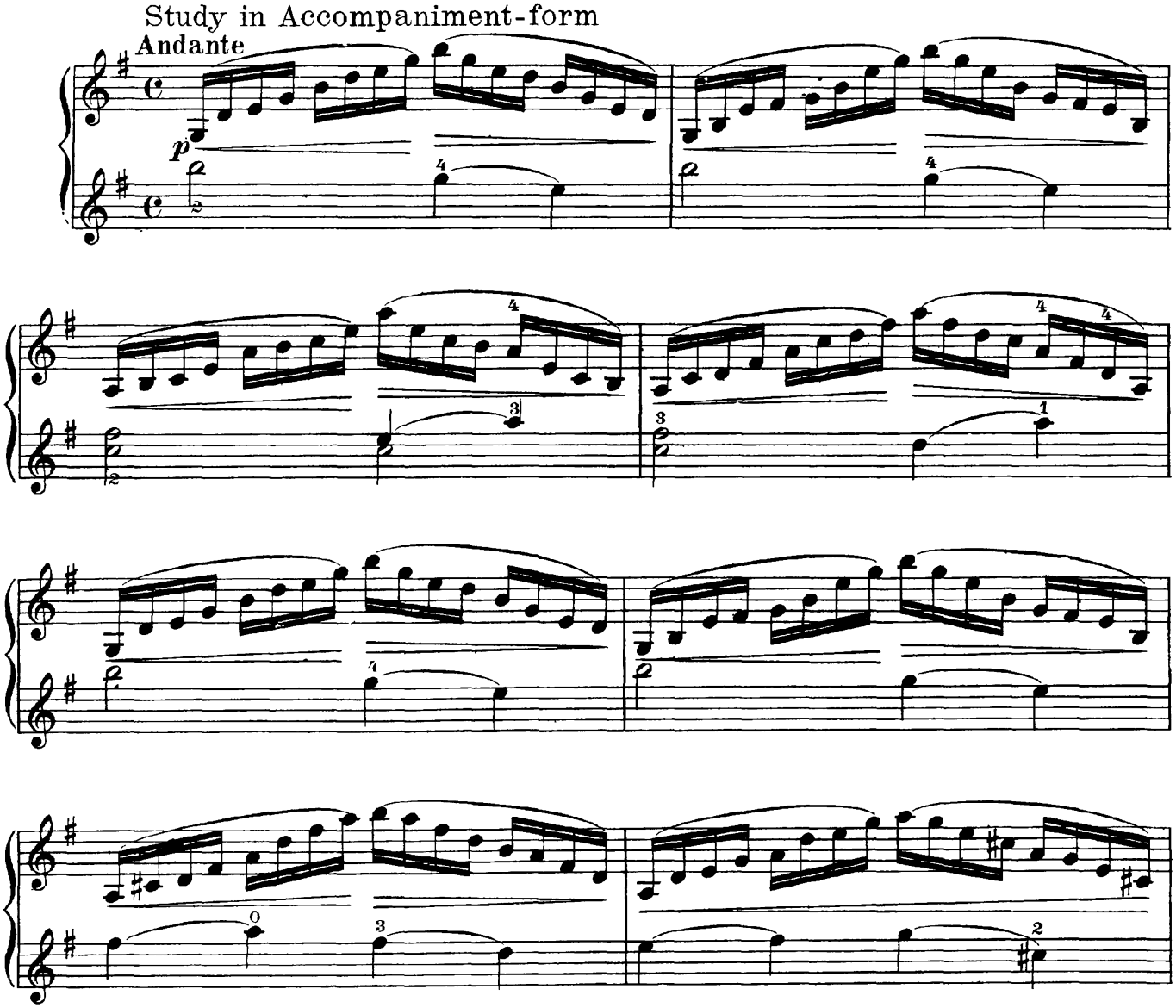
Moderato

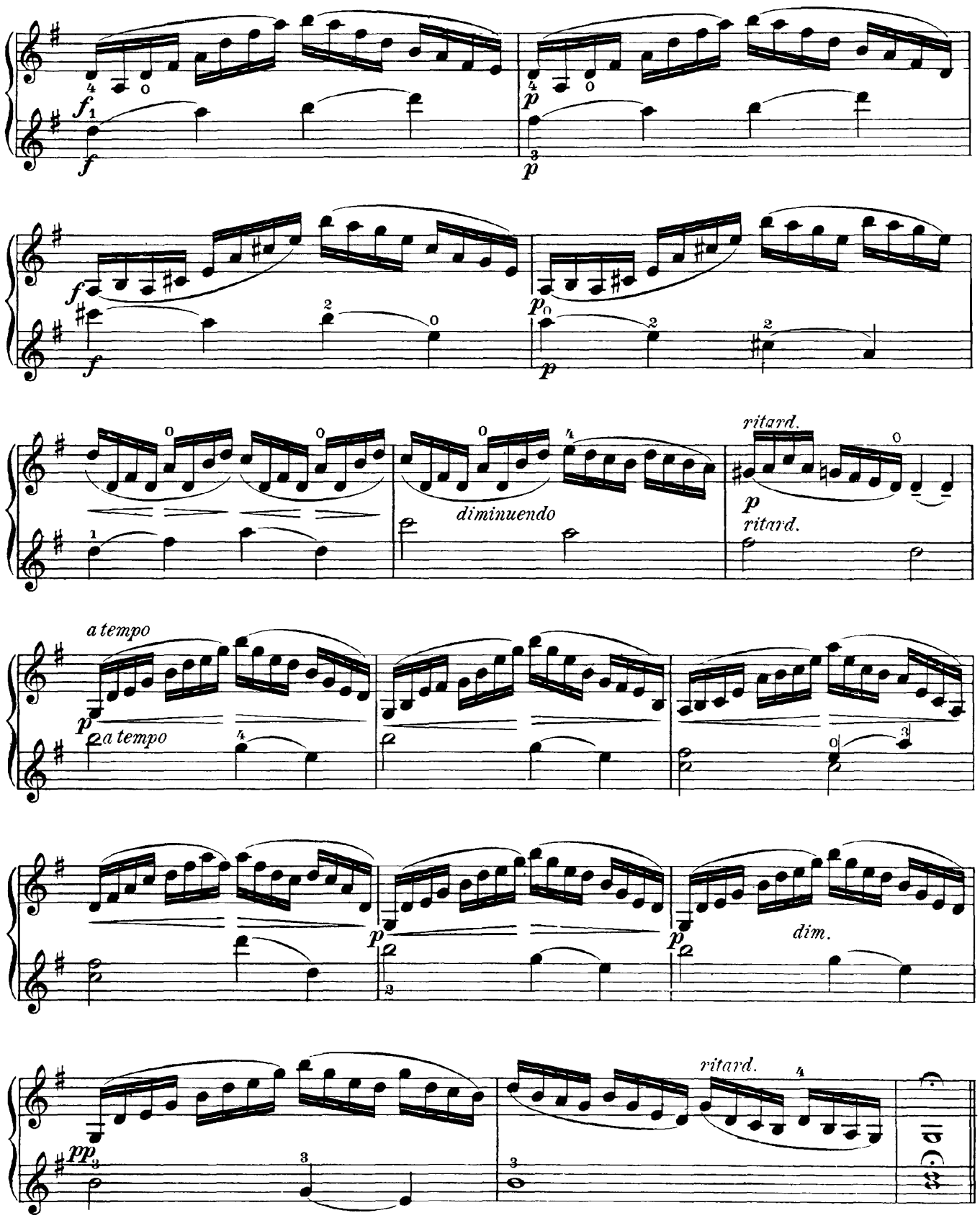




ÉTUDE

Study in Accompaniment-form




f
p
diminuendo
ritard.
a tempo
dim.
pp

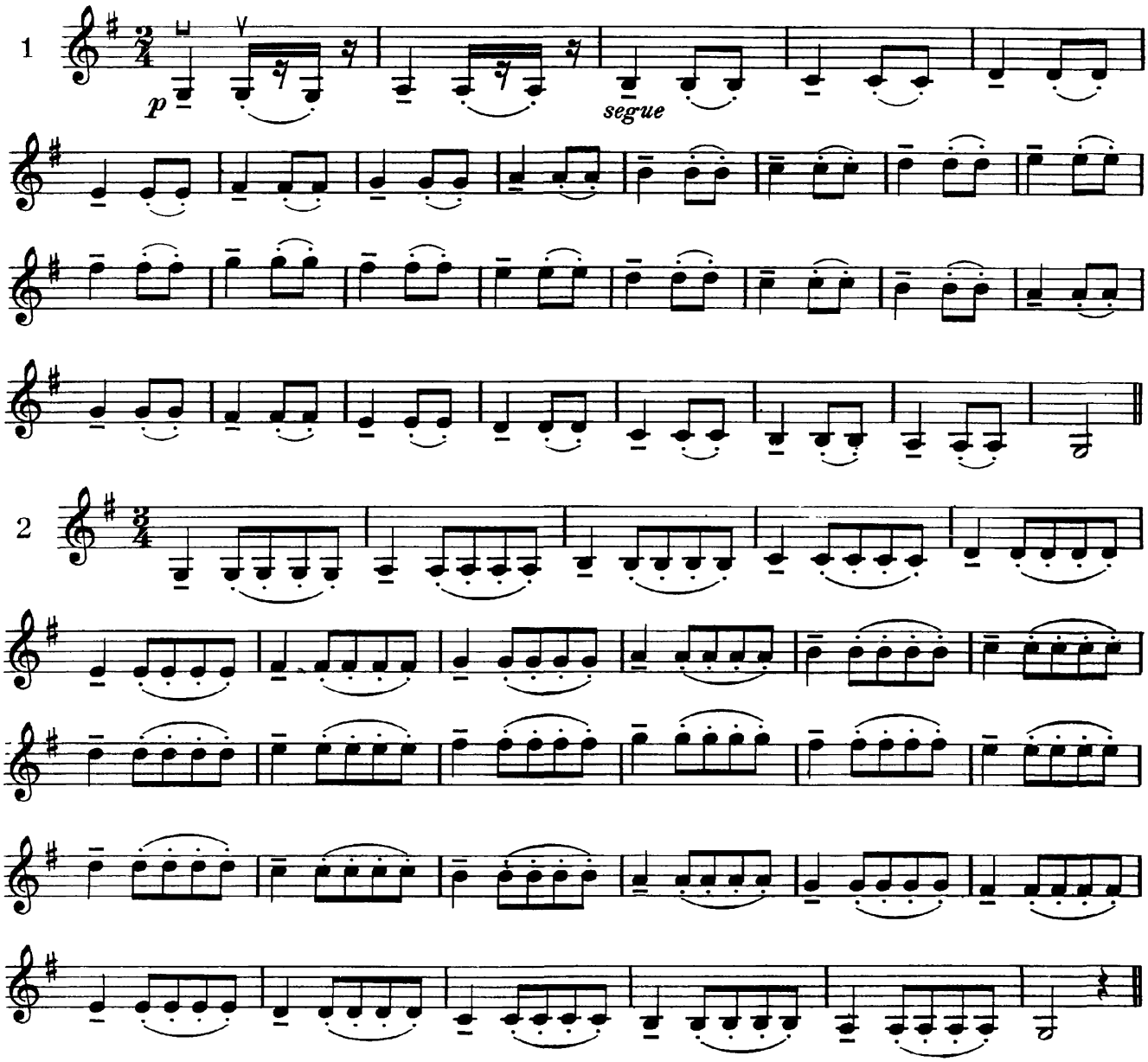
The Saltato

The Saltato, or light staccato on one spot, is derived from the Springing Bow.

Example

This bowing must be executed only with the wrist, at the lower third of the bow; lifting the stick as for the springing bow, keeping on the same spot without running on towards the nut.

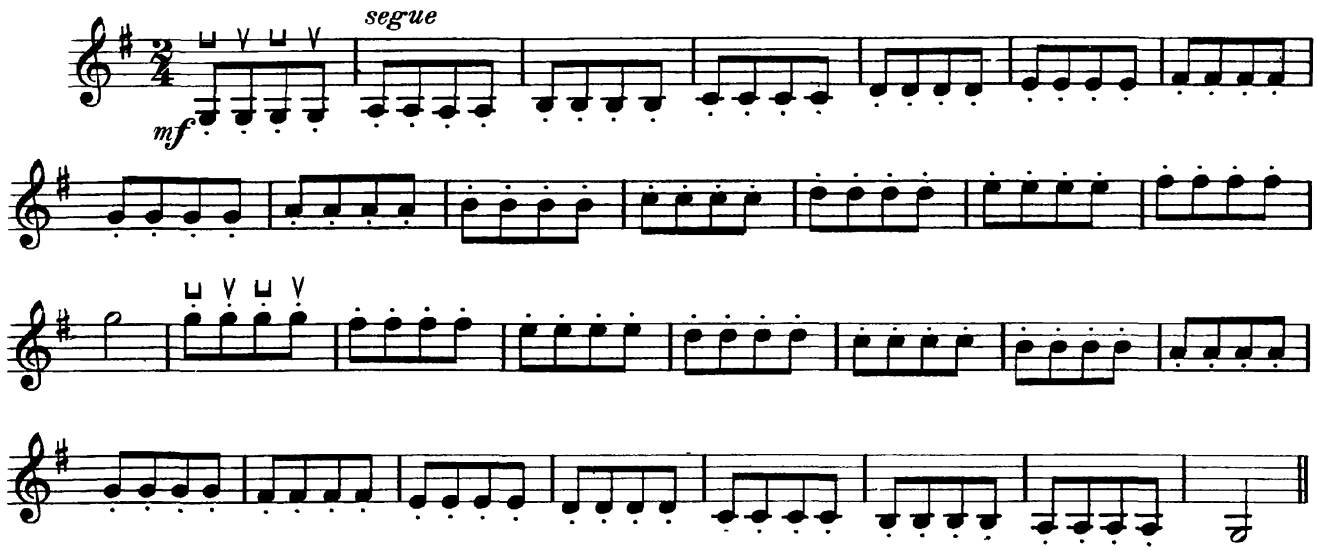
In order to keep the bow in the same place, the pupil is obliged to make almost the same movement of the wrist as is required for executing the springing bow; the only difference being that, on the down-stroke, the bow is lifted from the string. In the following exercise the quarter-note begins near the nut and uses about a third of the bow. This makes it necessary, after the last note of each measure (played with the up-stroke), to let the up-stroke continue after the bow has left the string, so as to attain the proper starting-point for beginning the quarter-note.



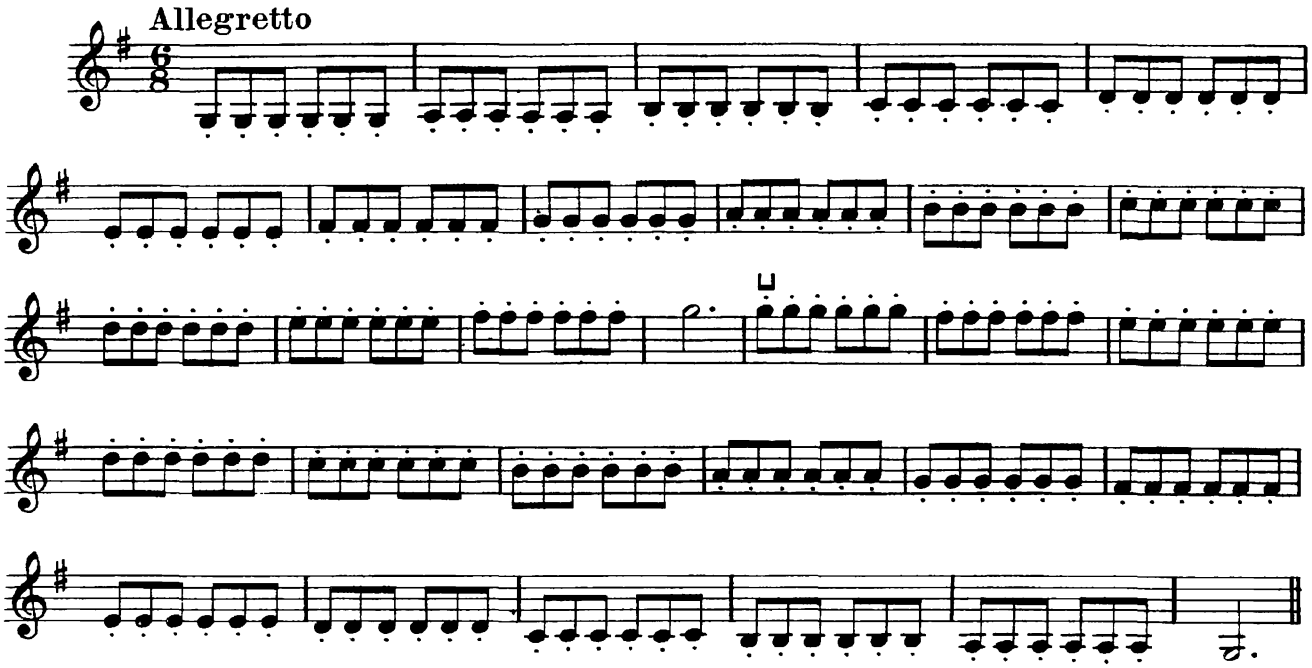
THE SPRINGING BOW

The part of the bow to be used for the springing bow is of great importance, as it is not sufficient for the pupil to execute this bowing from the wrist, but also necessary that the bow should rebound of its own accord. Whereas, in a slow tempo, such as the eighth-note in an Allegretto, the bow easily rebounds at the lower third, for the triplet-eighth in the same tempo you must let it descend a little towards the middle, and for the sixteenth, quite to the middle. It remains for the pupil to find the place at which he can most easily execute this bowing.

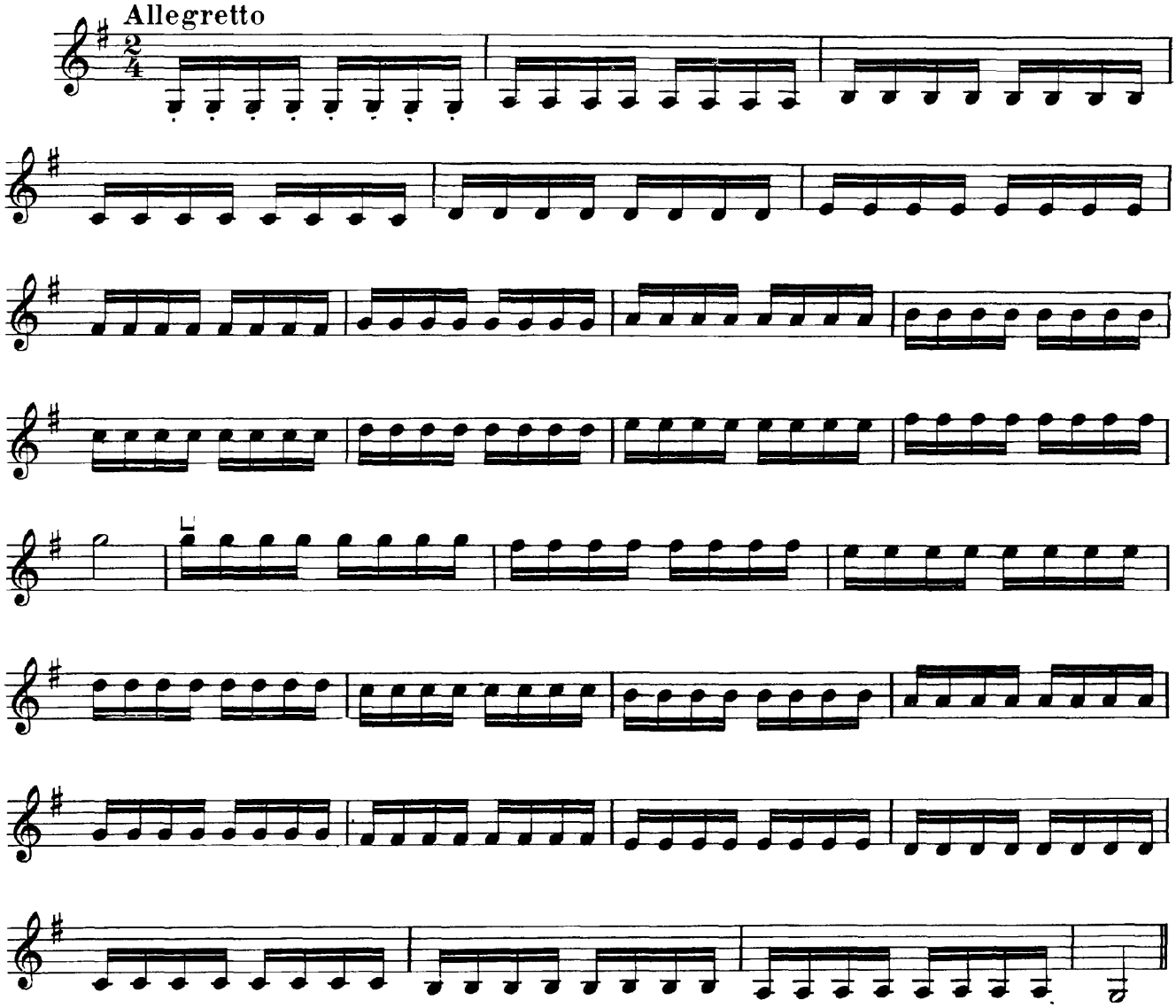
Lightly, lifting the stick from the string.



Advance the bow a little towards the middle.

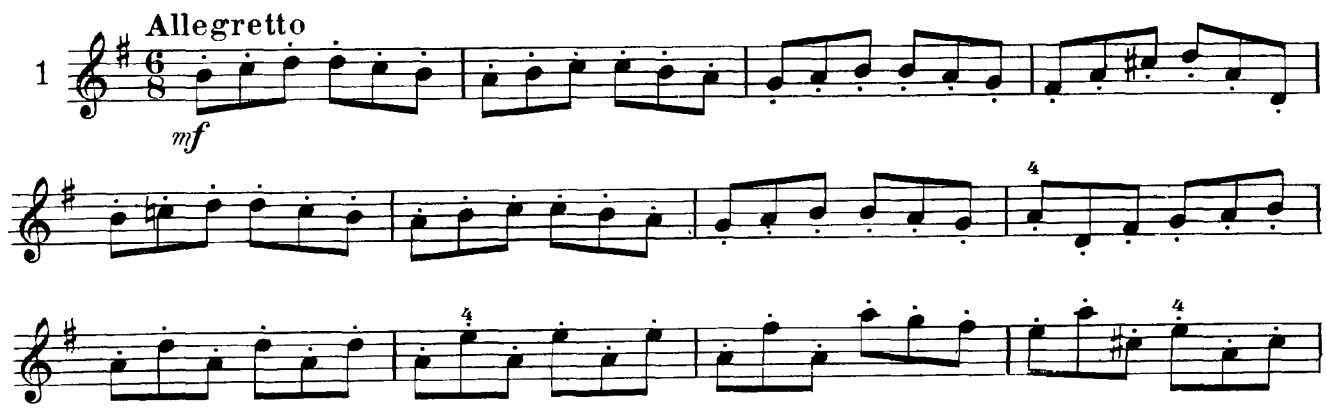


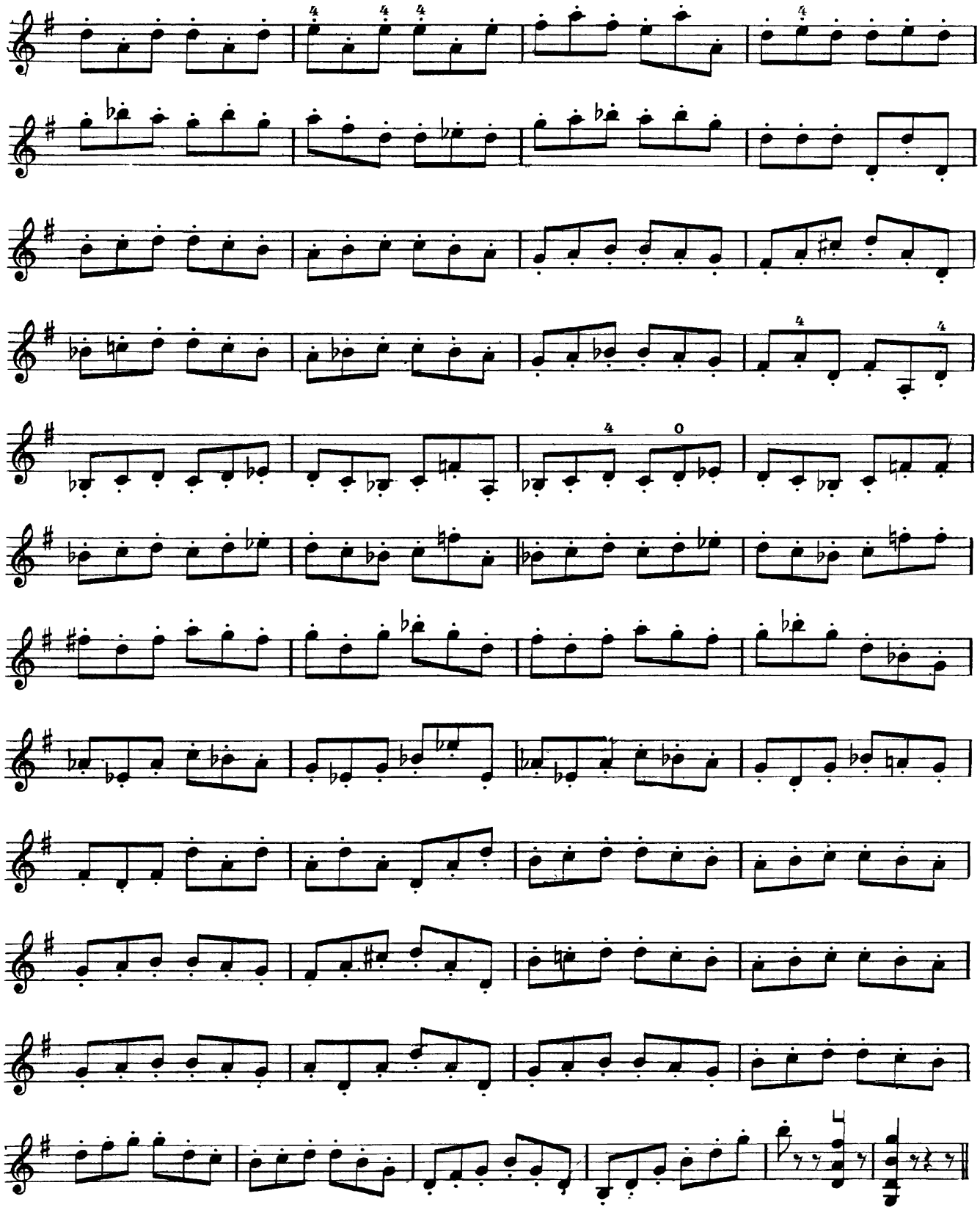
At the middle



Study on the Springing Bow

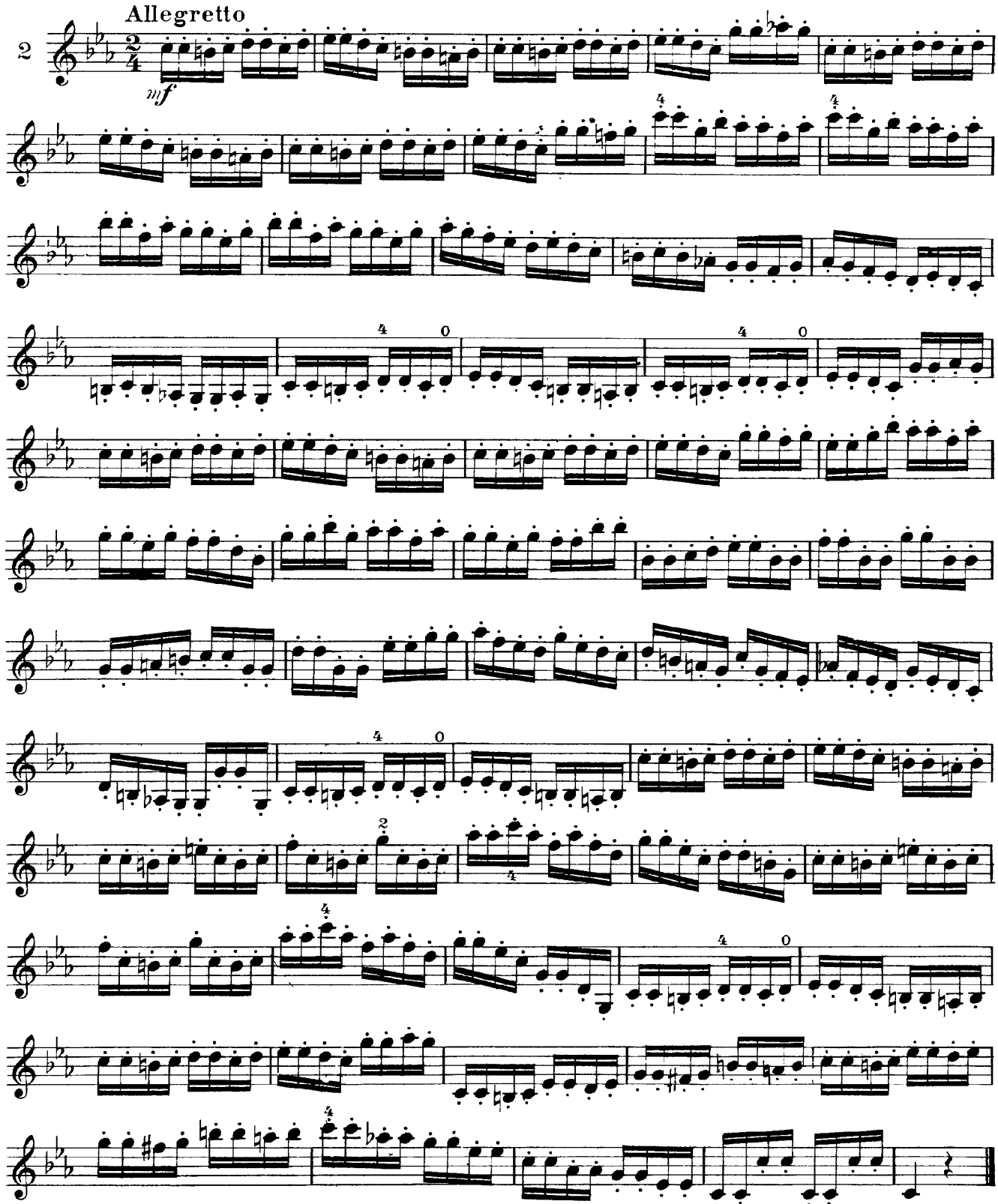
Lower third of bow.





Study on the Springing Bow

At the middle.



Laoureux

Practical Method for the Violin

Part 2

The Positions

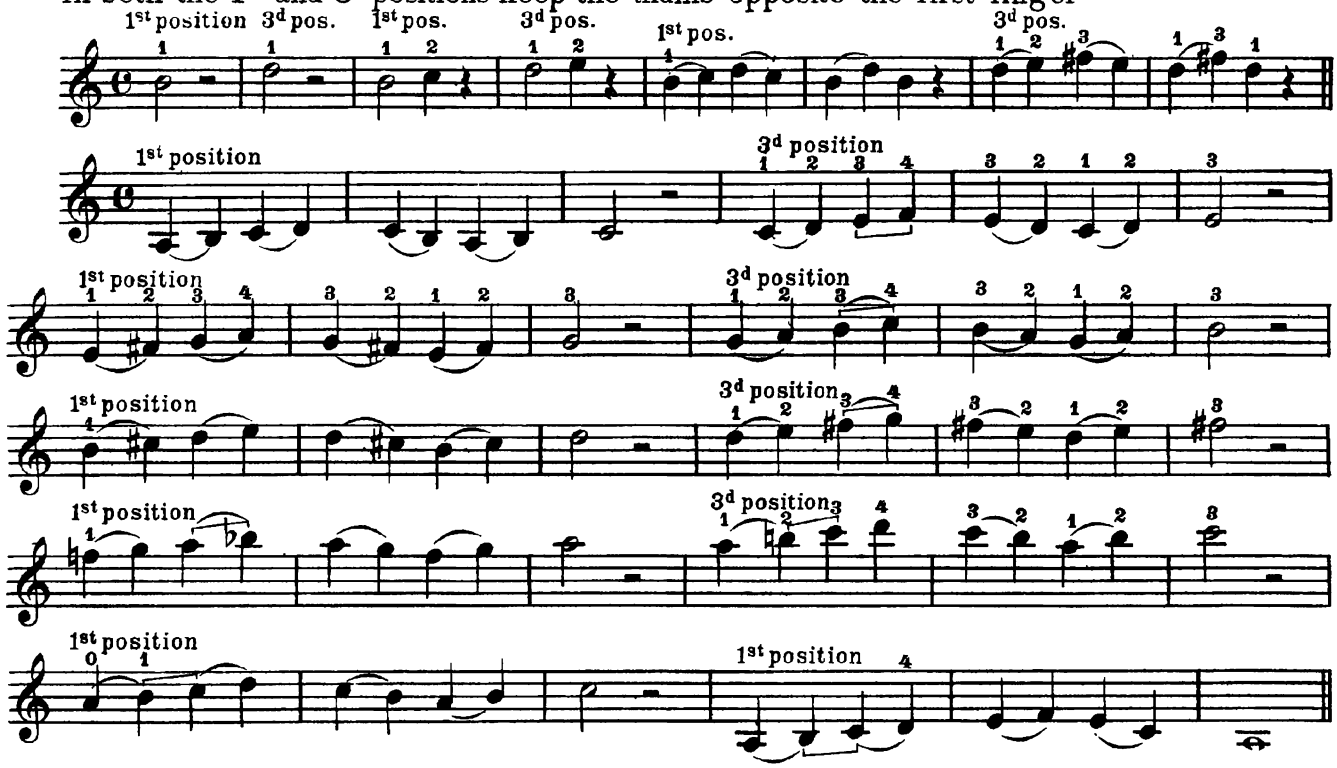
Violin "methods" generally pass from the first position to the second, from the second to the third, and so on in numerical order.

To go directly from the first to the third position seems simpler and easier. Later, the pupil will find his second position between the first and the third. Moreover, this manner of proceeding will allow us to begin, at the same time, the highly important study of the shifts. To learn the fingerings of the positions seems, at first, to be the difficult point. Yet this is only a matter of memorizing figures.

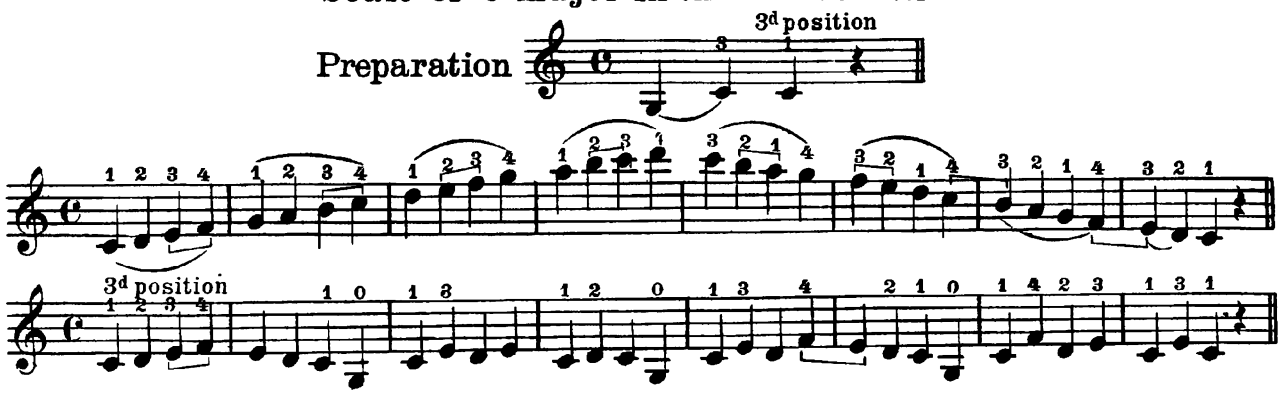
Take a pupil who already knows his positions, and give him a fairly rapid slurred passage going from one position to another. The difficulty which he will encounter in playing it will be precisely in the changes of position which we call "shifts."

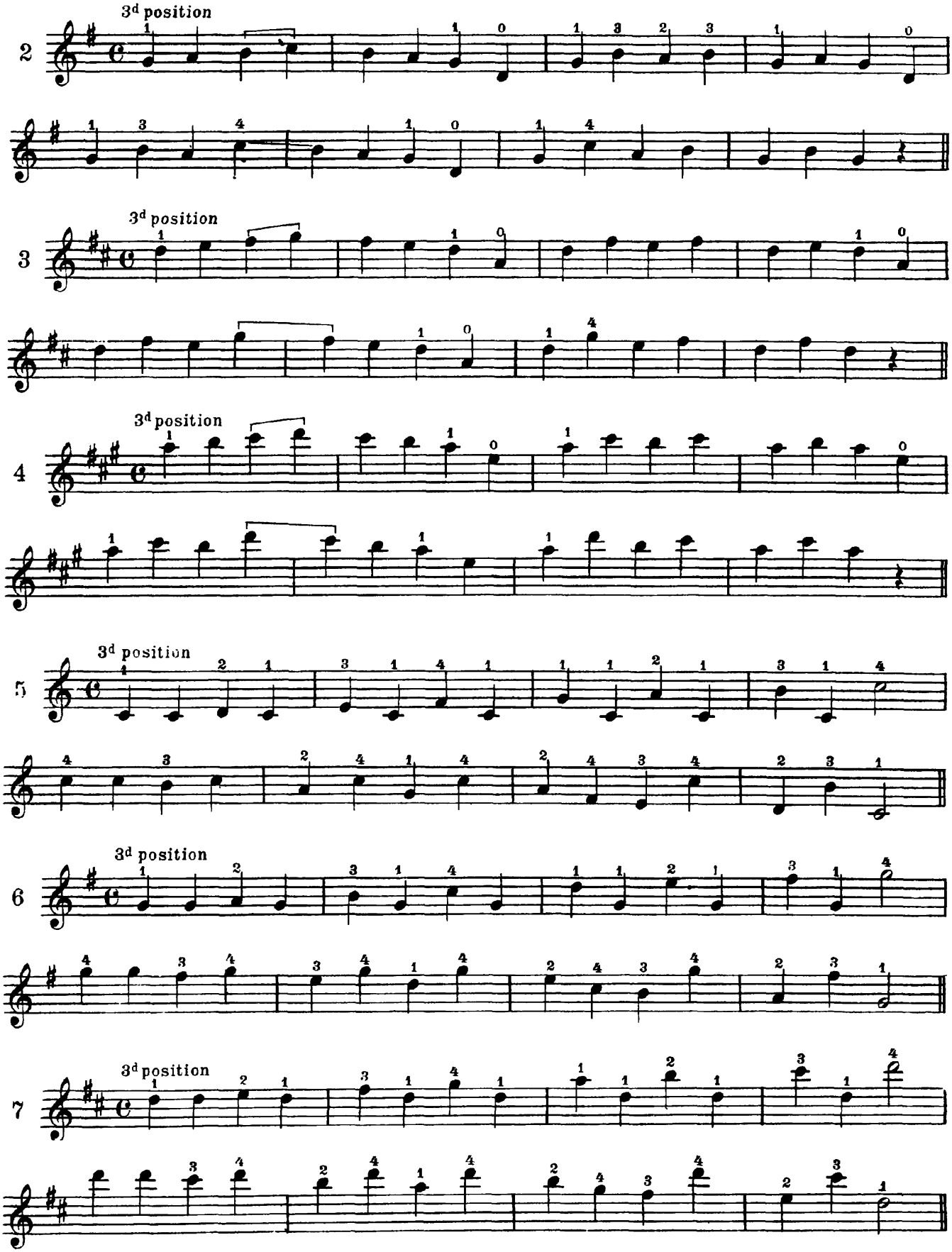
To forestall this difficulty at the outset by numerous exercises in shifting, is absolutely indispensable It is important, in order to shift easily, that the pupil should hold the palm of the hand well away from the neck of the instrument, and especially avoid resting the hand against the edge of the violin when arriving at the third position. The thumb should not be bent round the bottom of the neck. This would cause a displacement of the position of the hand, and would later render the shift from the third to the fifth position very awkward.

In both the 1st and 3d positions keep the thumb opposite the first finger



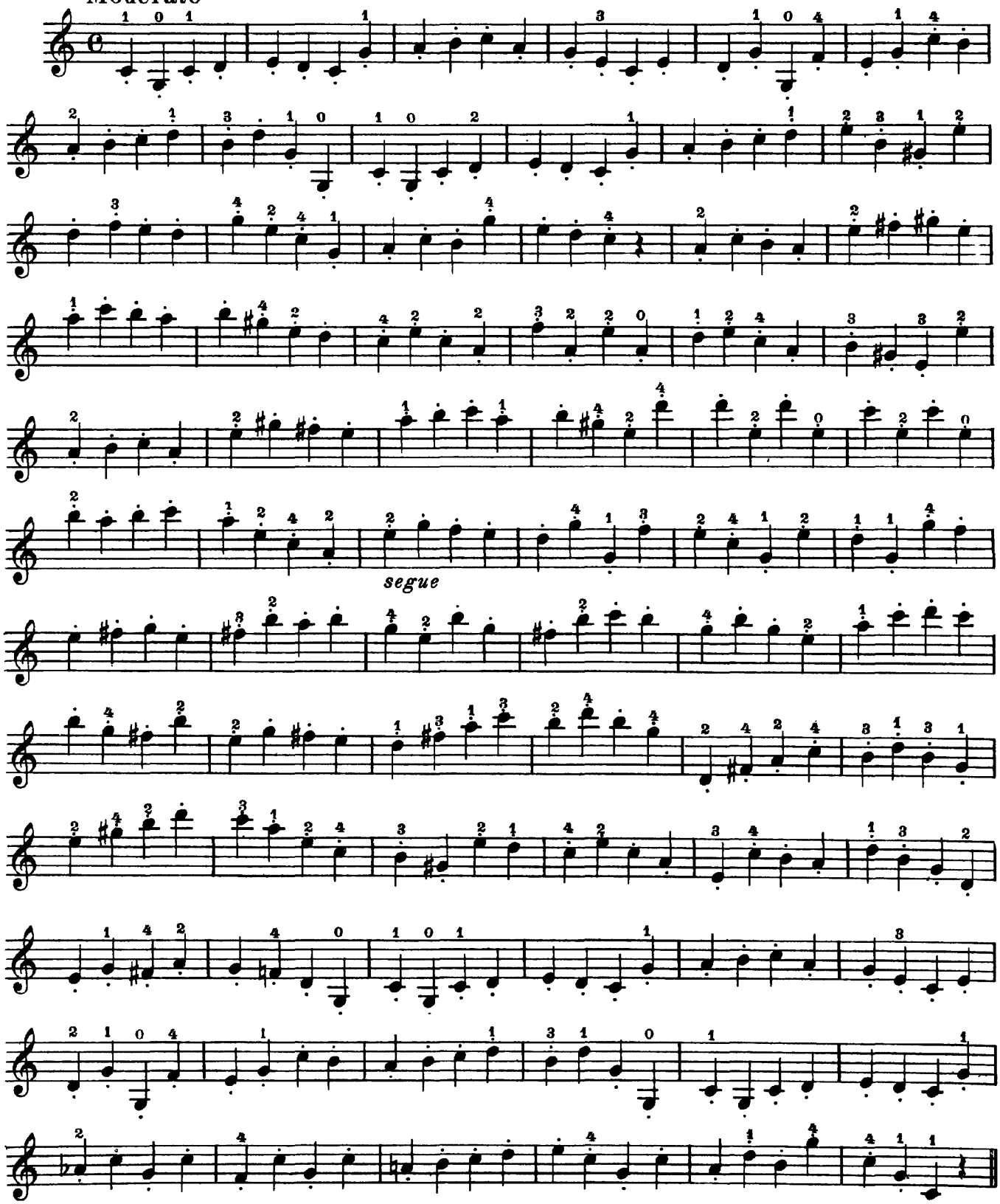
Scale of C major in the 3d Position




3d position
2
3d position
3
3d position
4
3d position
5
3d position
6
3d position
7

Étude in the 3ª Position

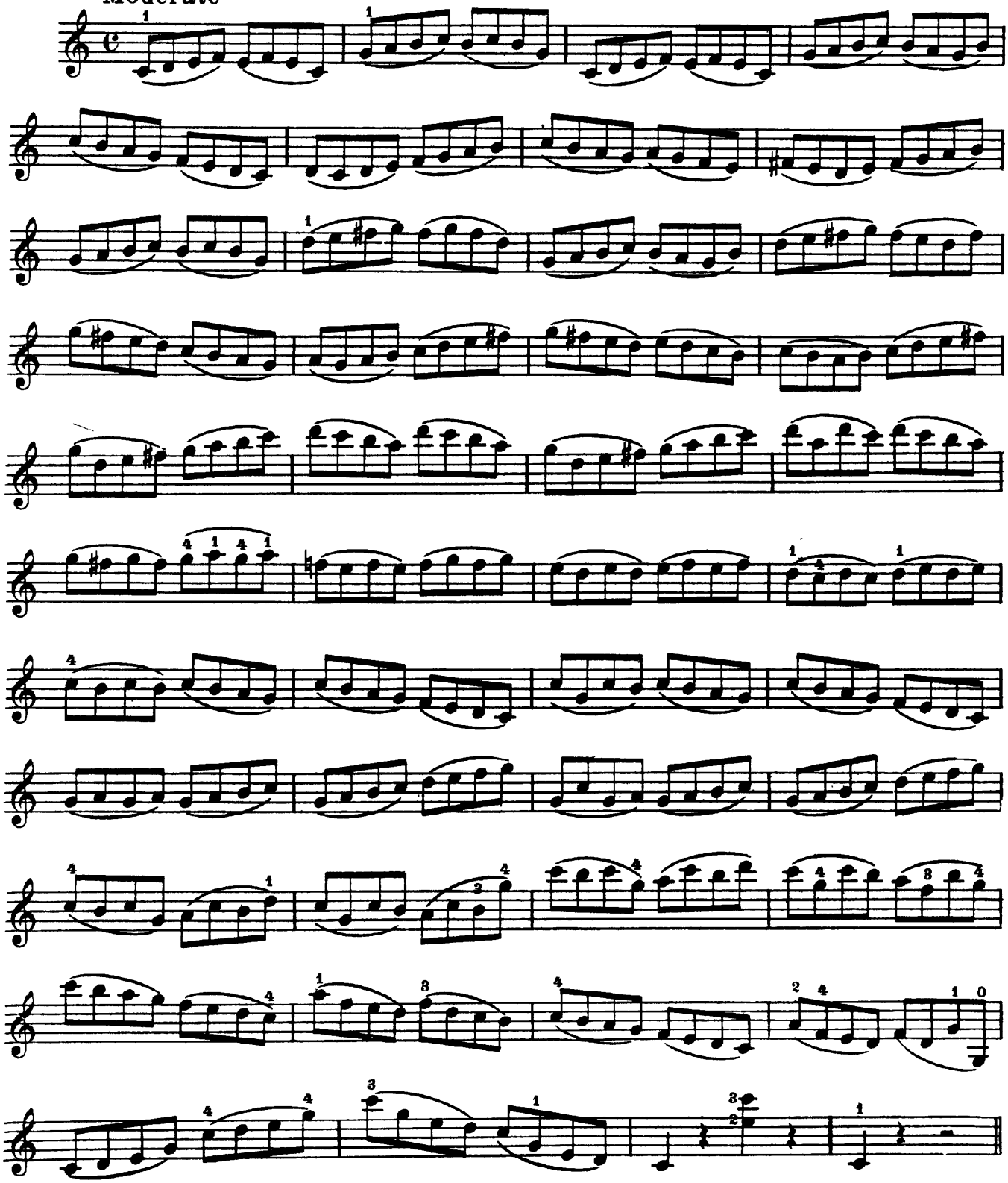
Grand détaché
Moderato



Exercise in the 3d Position

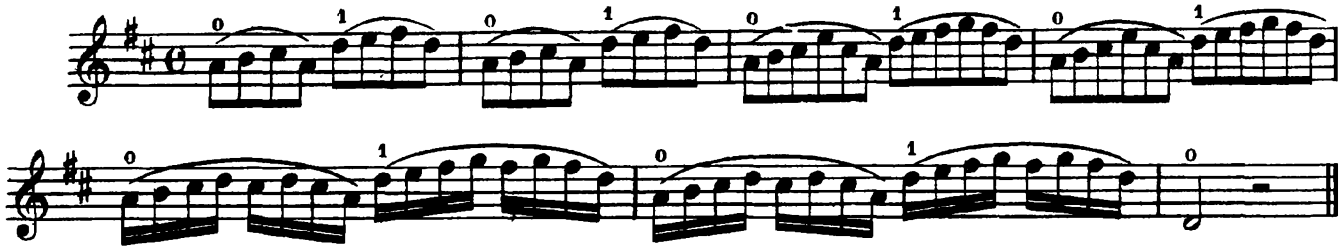
Use the whole bow, the fingers striking firmly.

Moderato



Exercise in Going from the 1st to the 3d Position

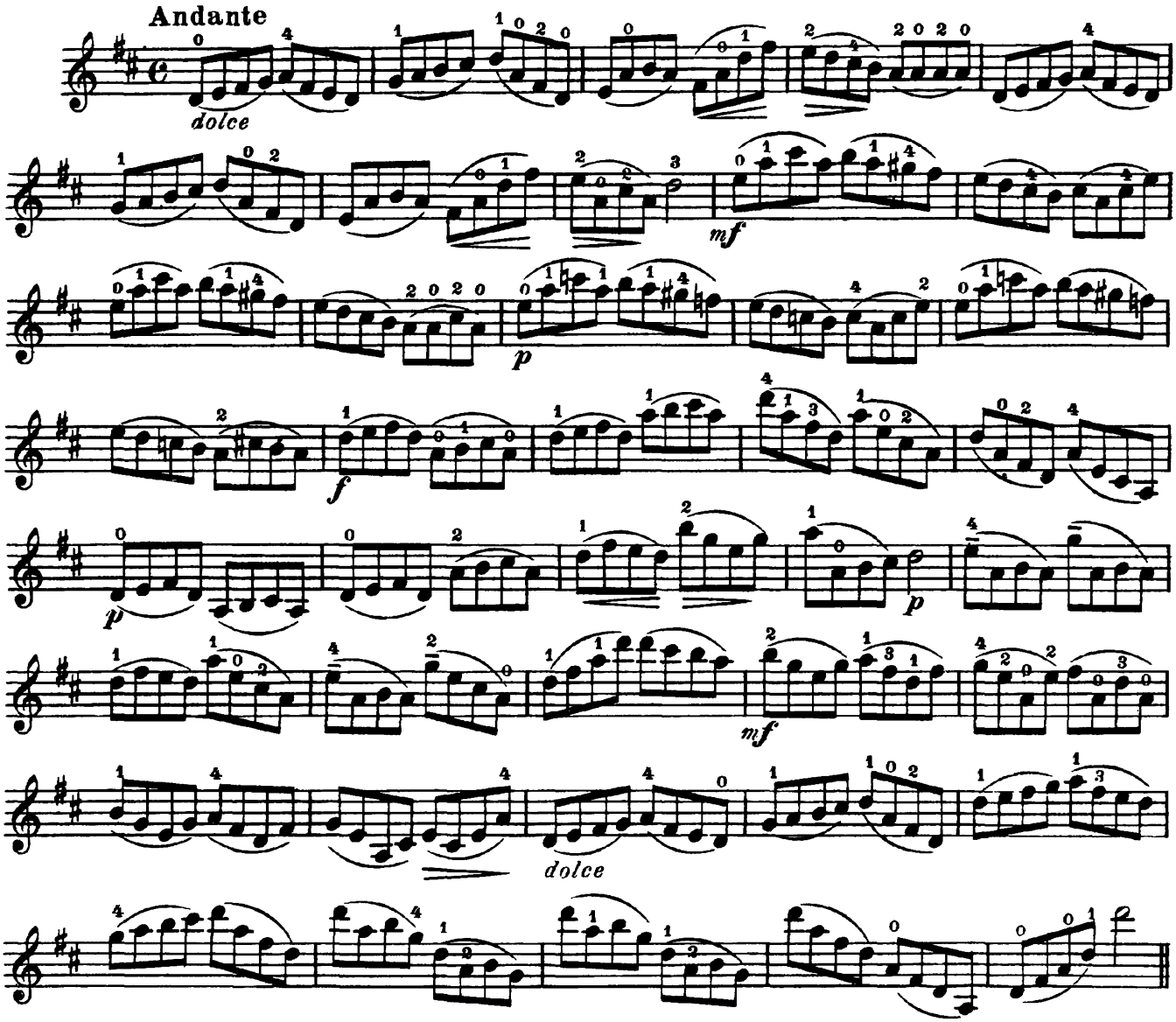
Shift with the open string. The thumb opposite the first ringer. When shifting, let the hand slide lightly without pressing the neck.



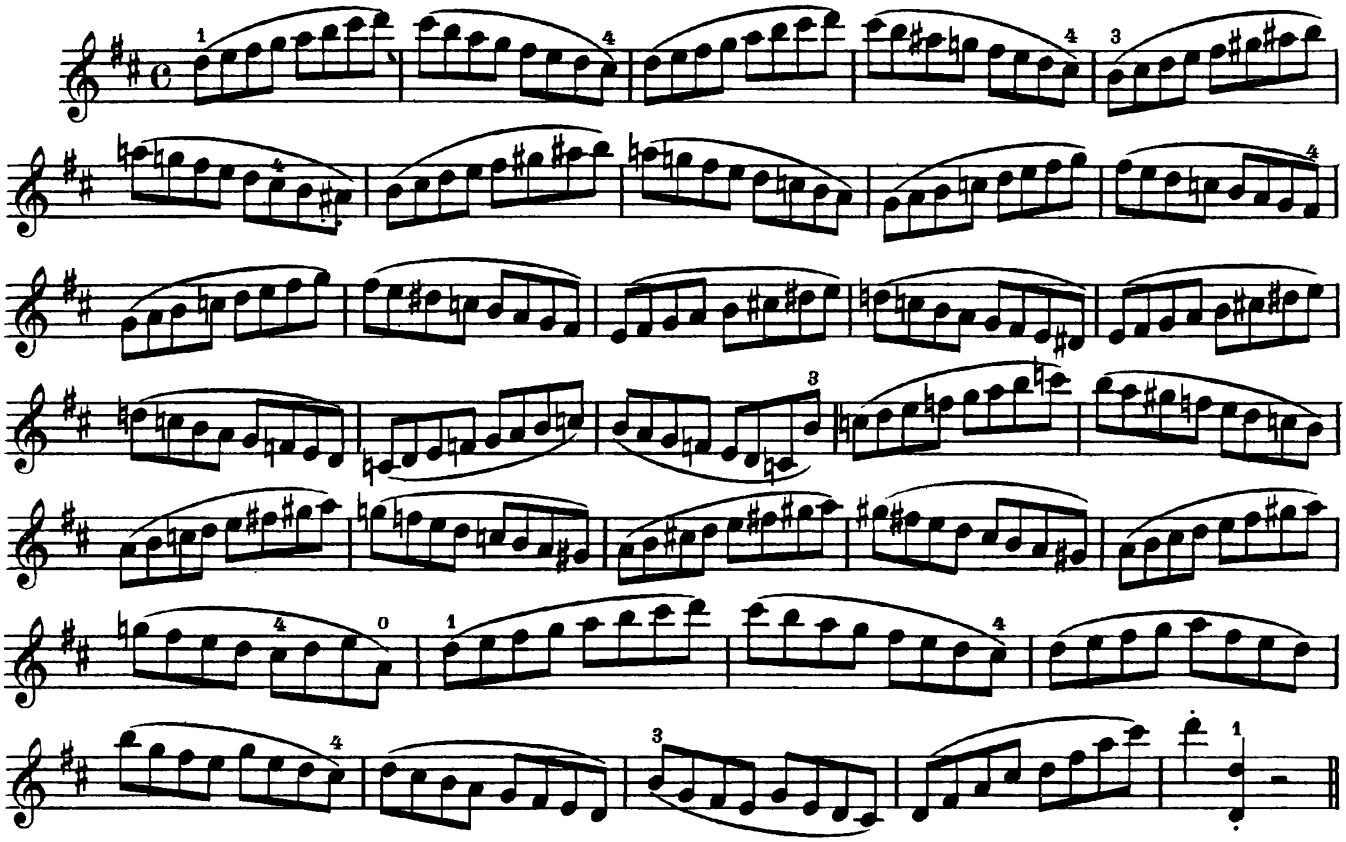
ÉTUDE

1st and 3d Positions

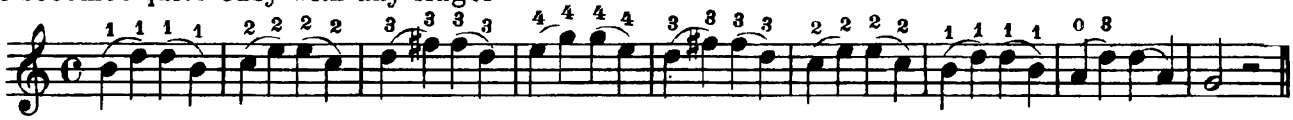
Andante



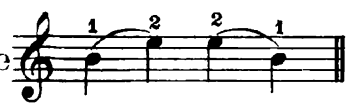
Scale-Study in the 3d Position



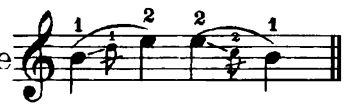
The pupil will have to practise the following exercises until the passage from the 1st to the 3d position becomes quite easy with any finger.



Changing the Position with Two Different Fingers

Example 

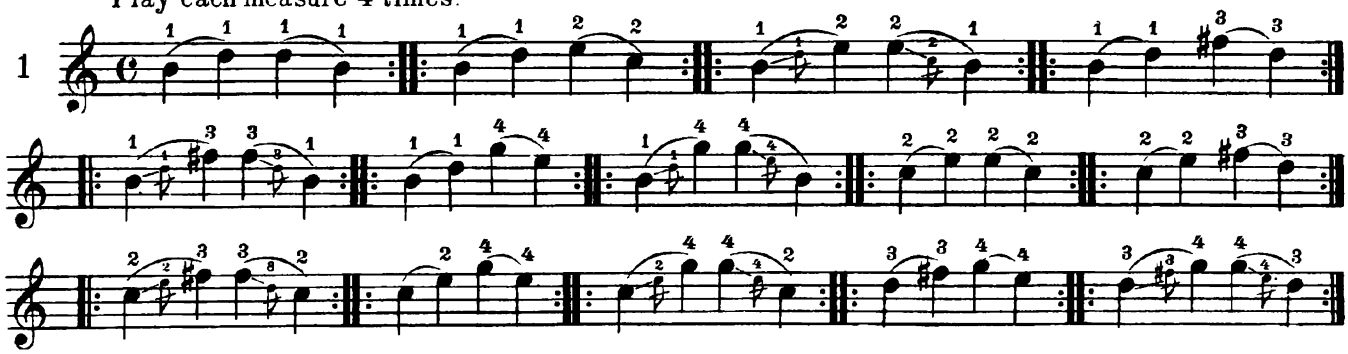
The portamento must start from the first note, i.e. the finger of that note must reach the higher position before the one of the second note touches the string.

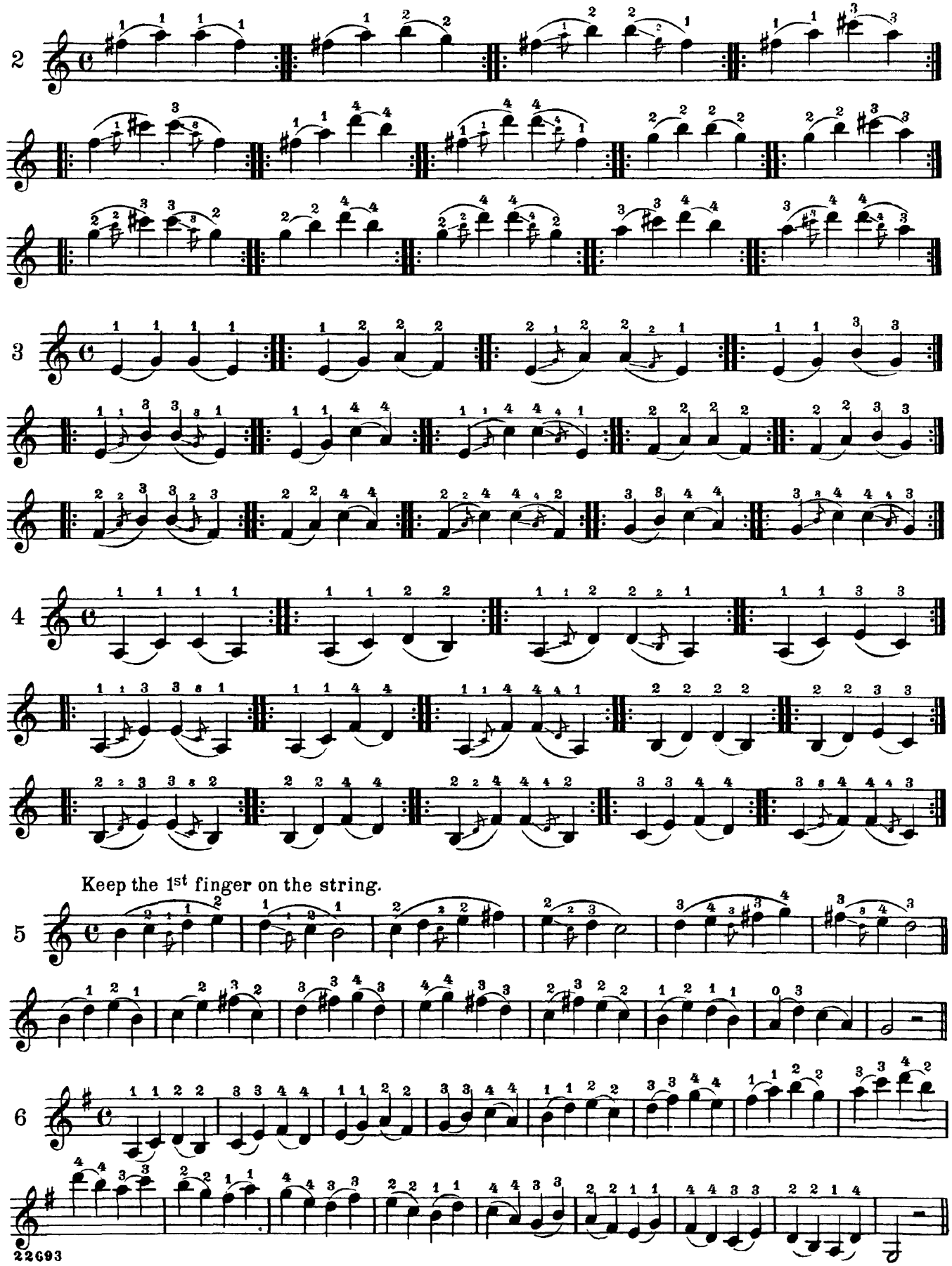
Example 

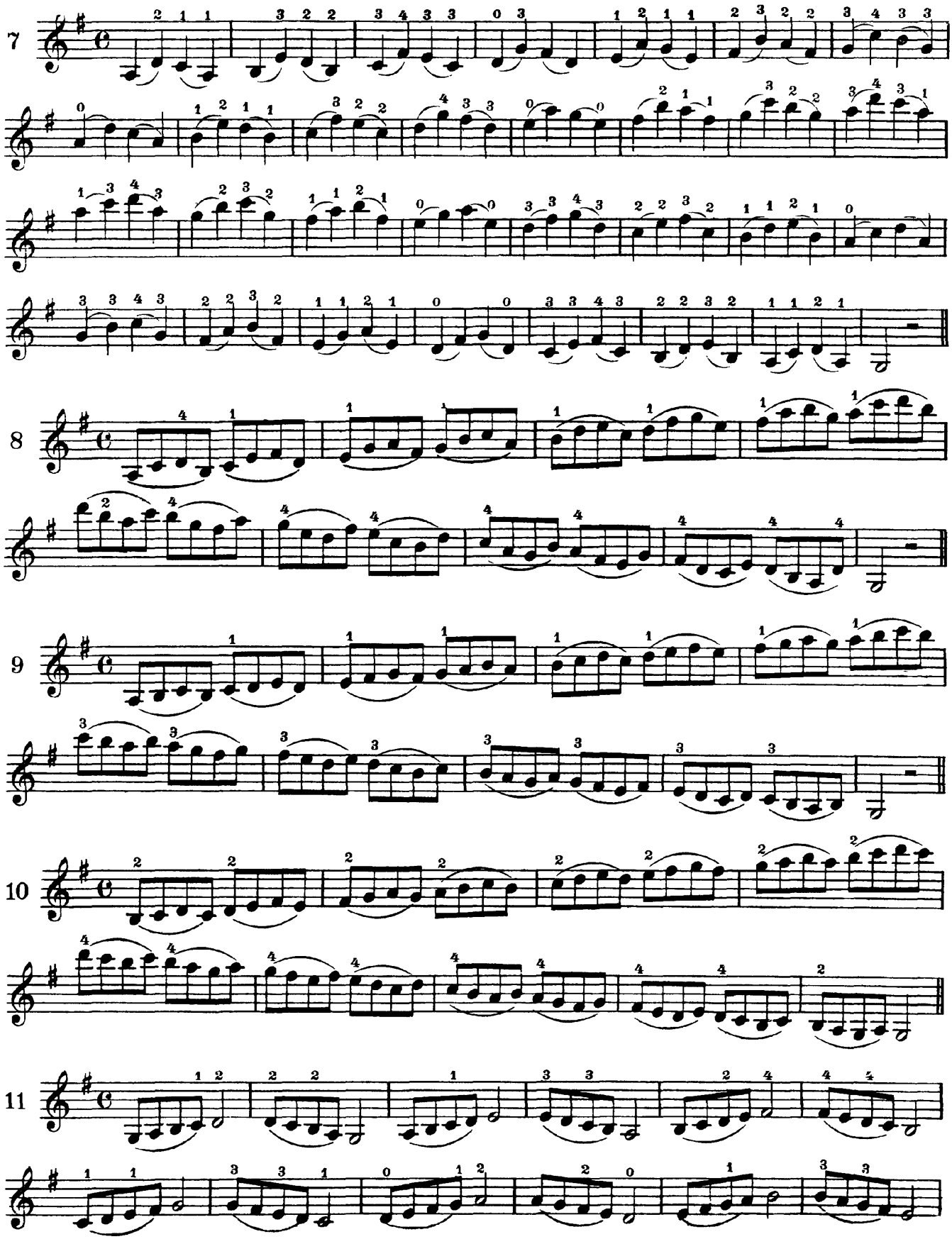
The teacher will perceive that the small note is meant only to indicate the movement of the finger which operates the change of position; analyzing the exercise as below, the pupil will see the utility of this system for obtaining a proper portamento.

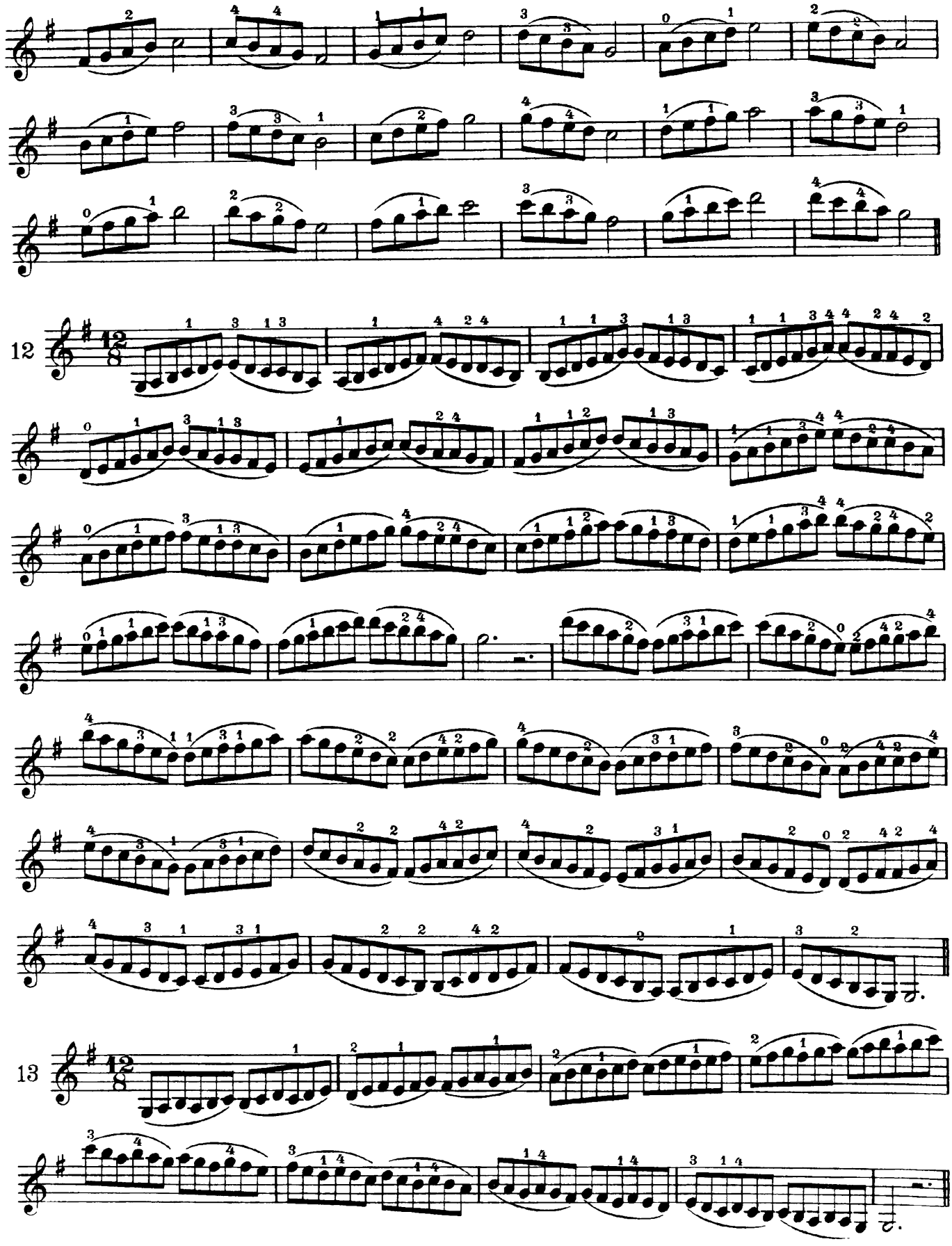
N. B. The small note should not be heard.

Play each measure 4 times.

1 


2
3
4
Keep the 1st finger on the string.
5
6

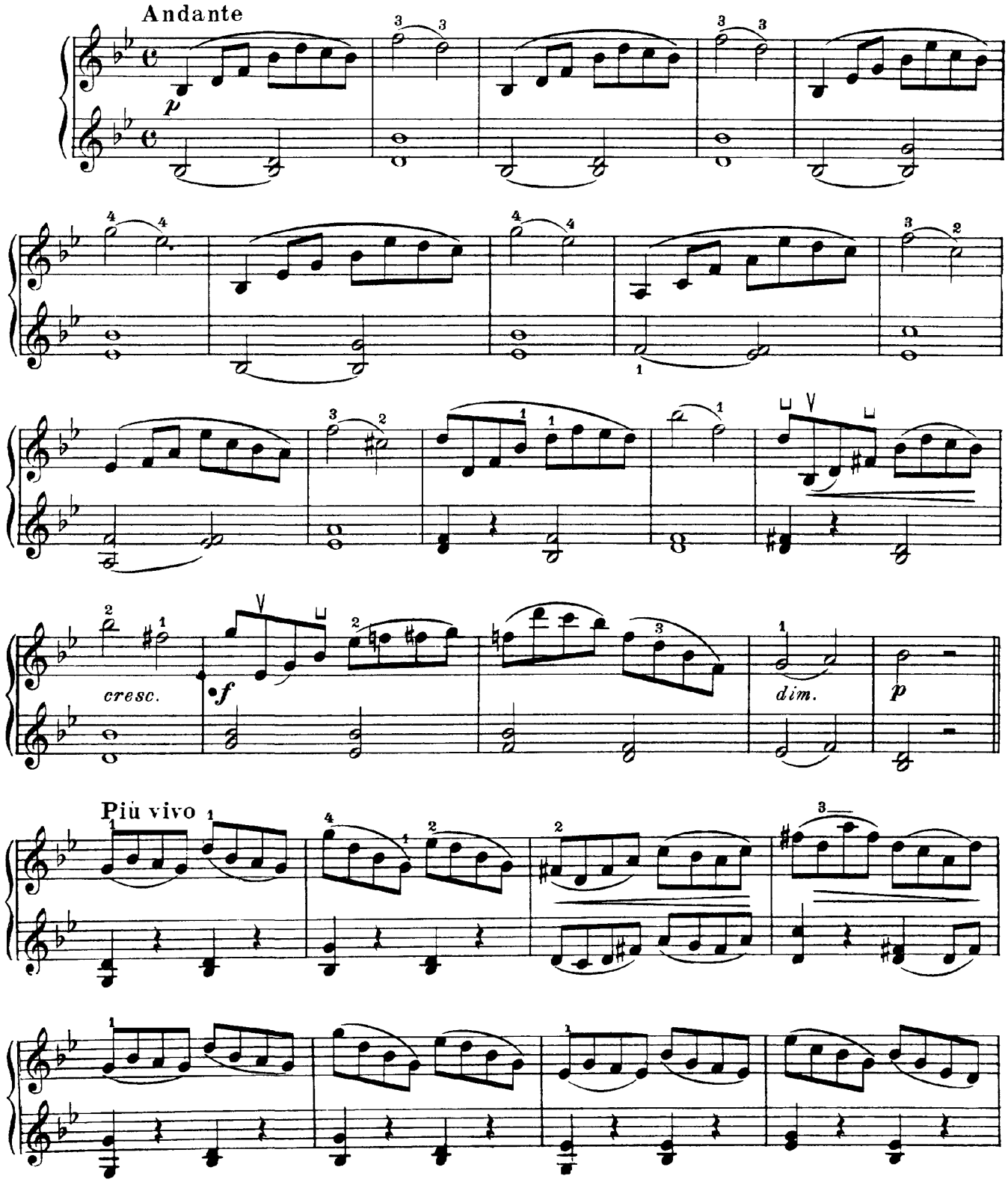

7
8
9
10
11

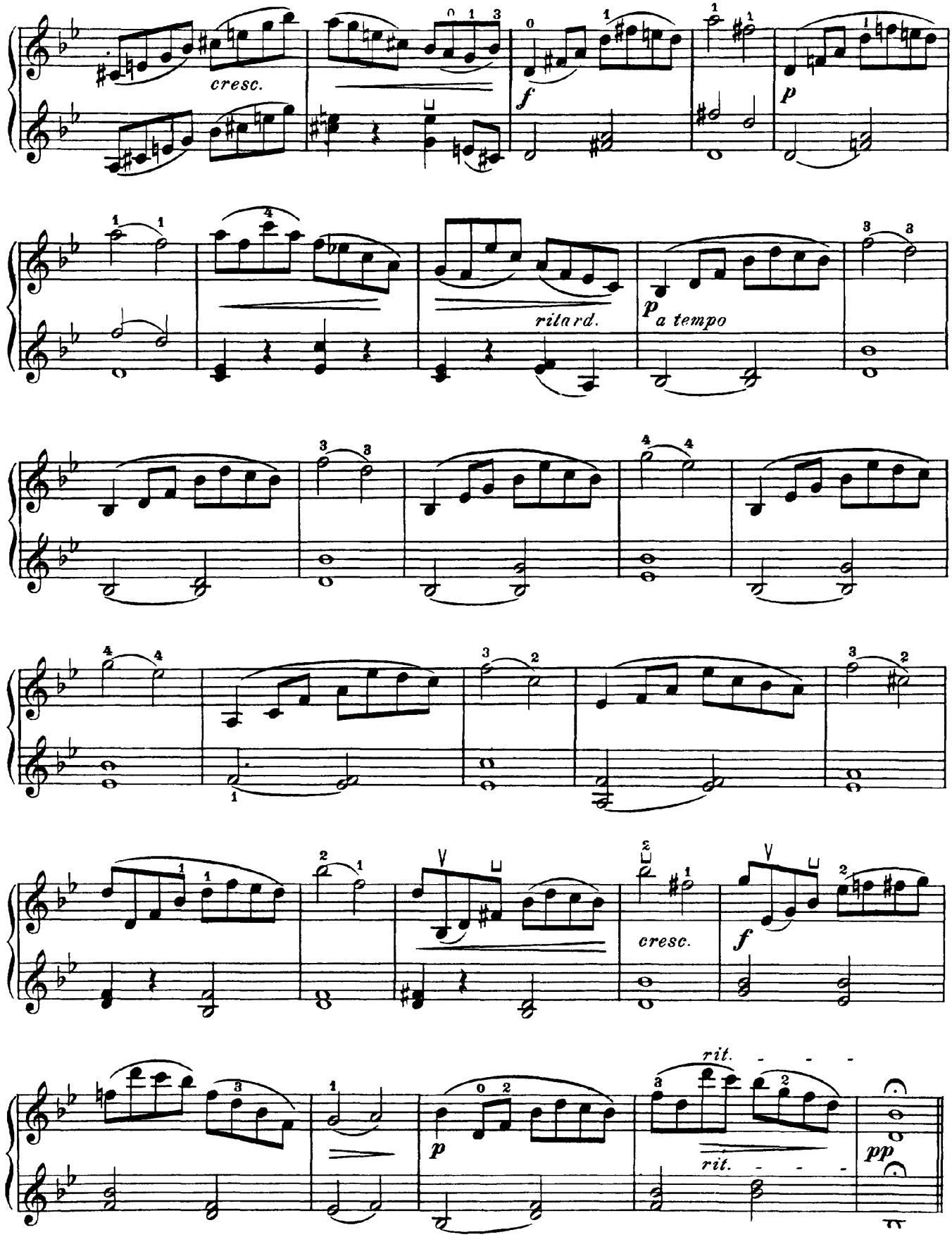

12
13

MELODIE

Exercise in Shifting

The shifting finger must move so rapidly that the slide from one note to the other is inaudible.

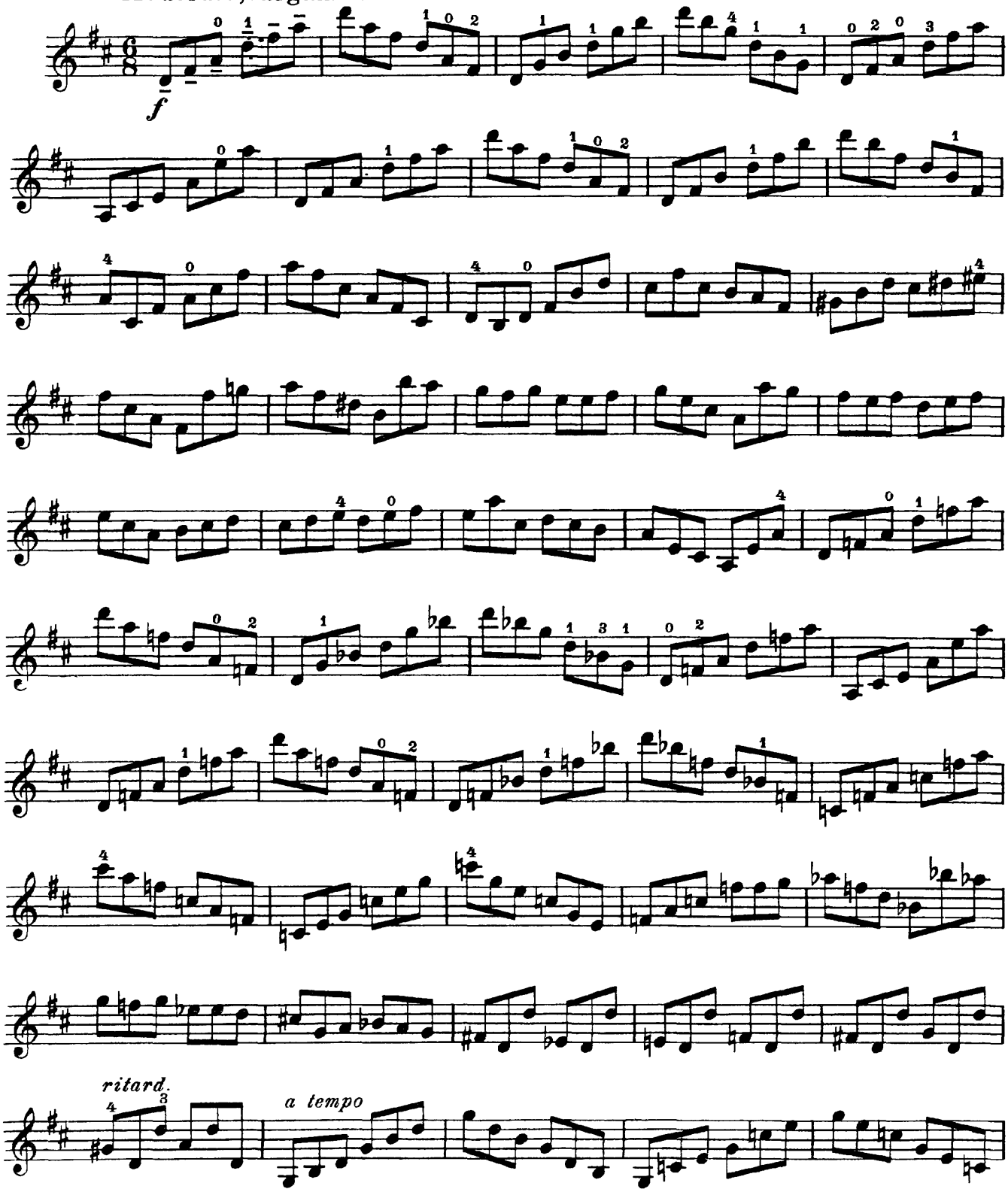


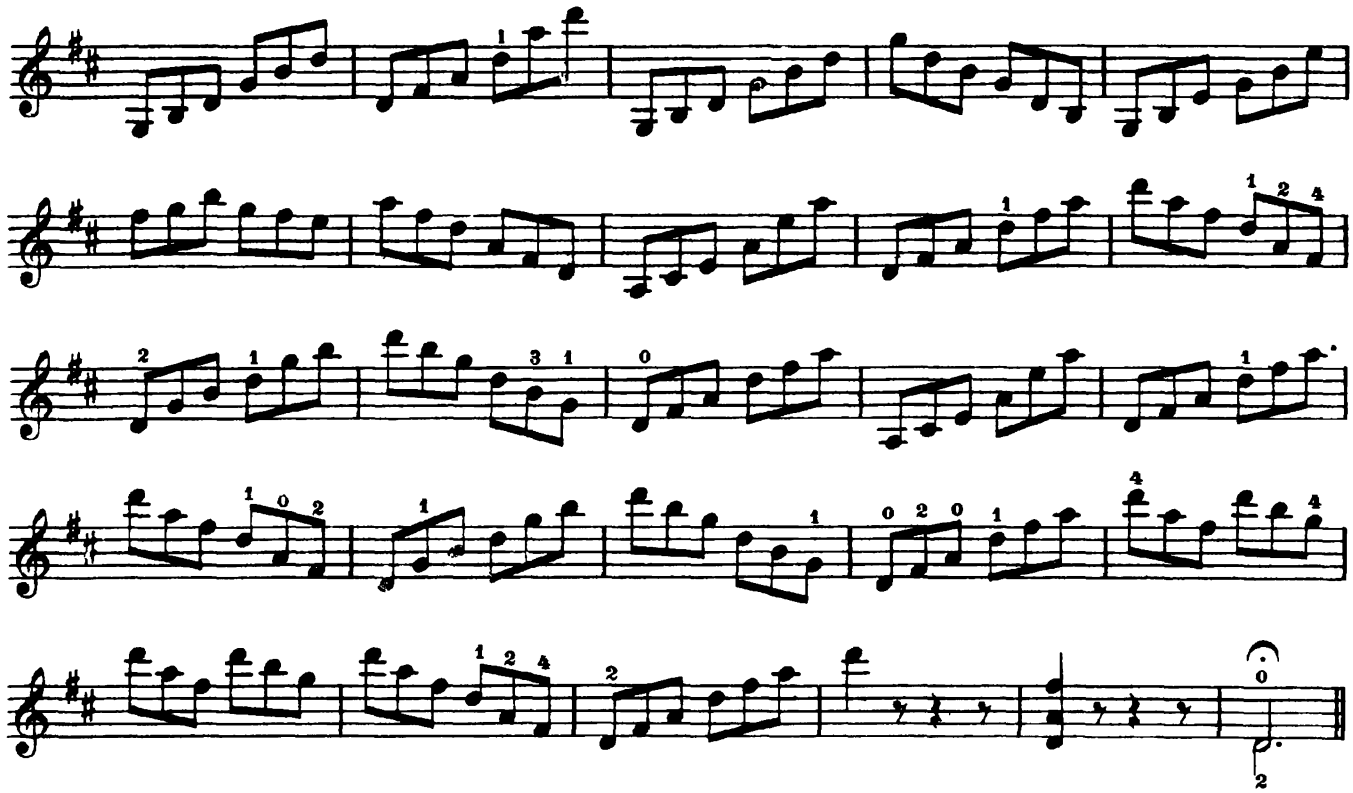

cresc.
f
p
ritard.
p
a tempo
cresc.
f
rit.
p
rit.
pp

ÉTUDE

1st and 3d Positions

Moderato, largamente



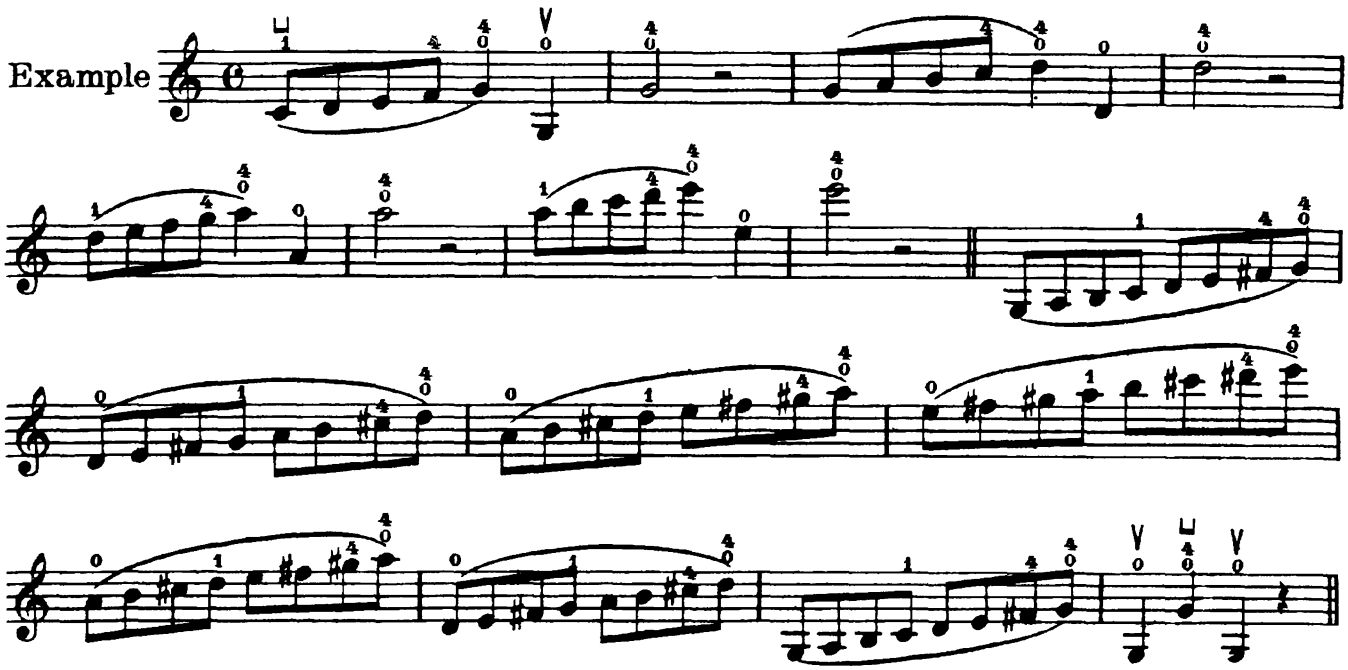


Extension of the 4th Finger in the 3d Position (Harmonics)

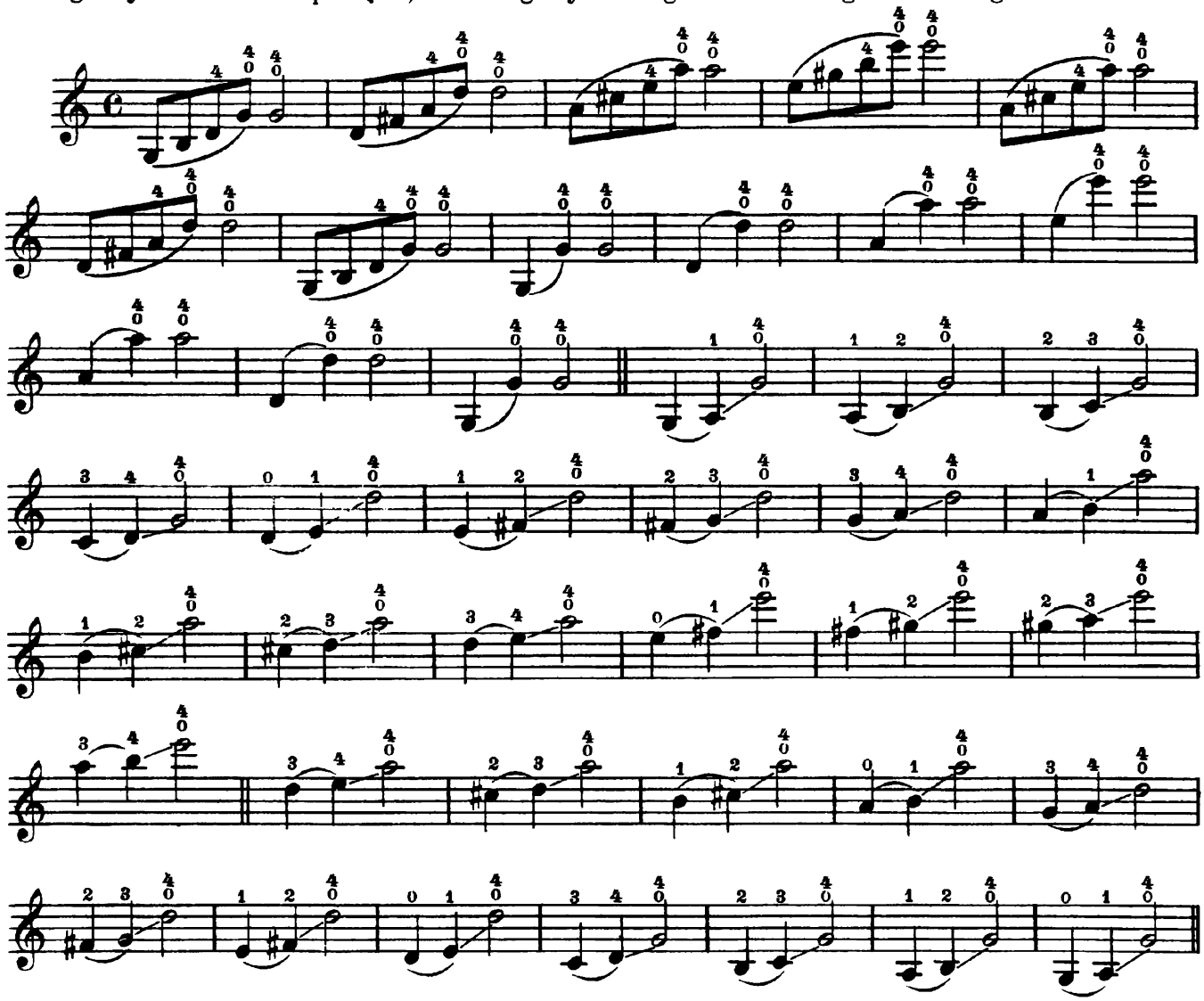
By extending the 4th finger in the 3d position one can get the harmonic tone an octave higher than the open string. It is marked $\frac{4}{0}$, which indicates that the finger must only lightly touch the string, without pressing it.

N. B. To let the harmonic sound, the other fingers must not touch the string.

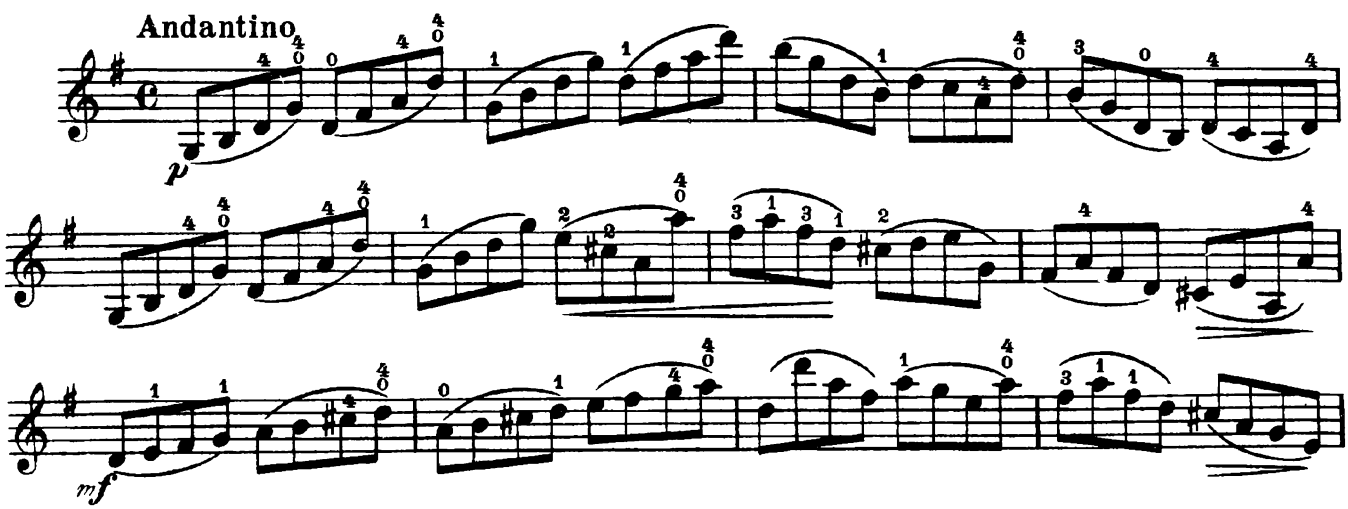
Example

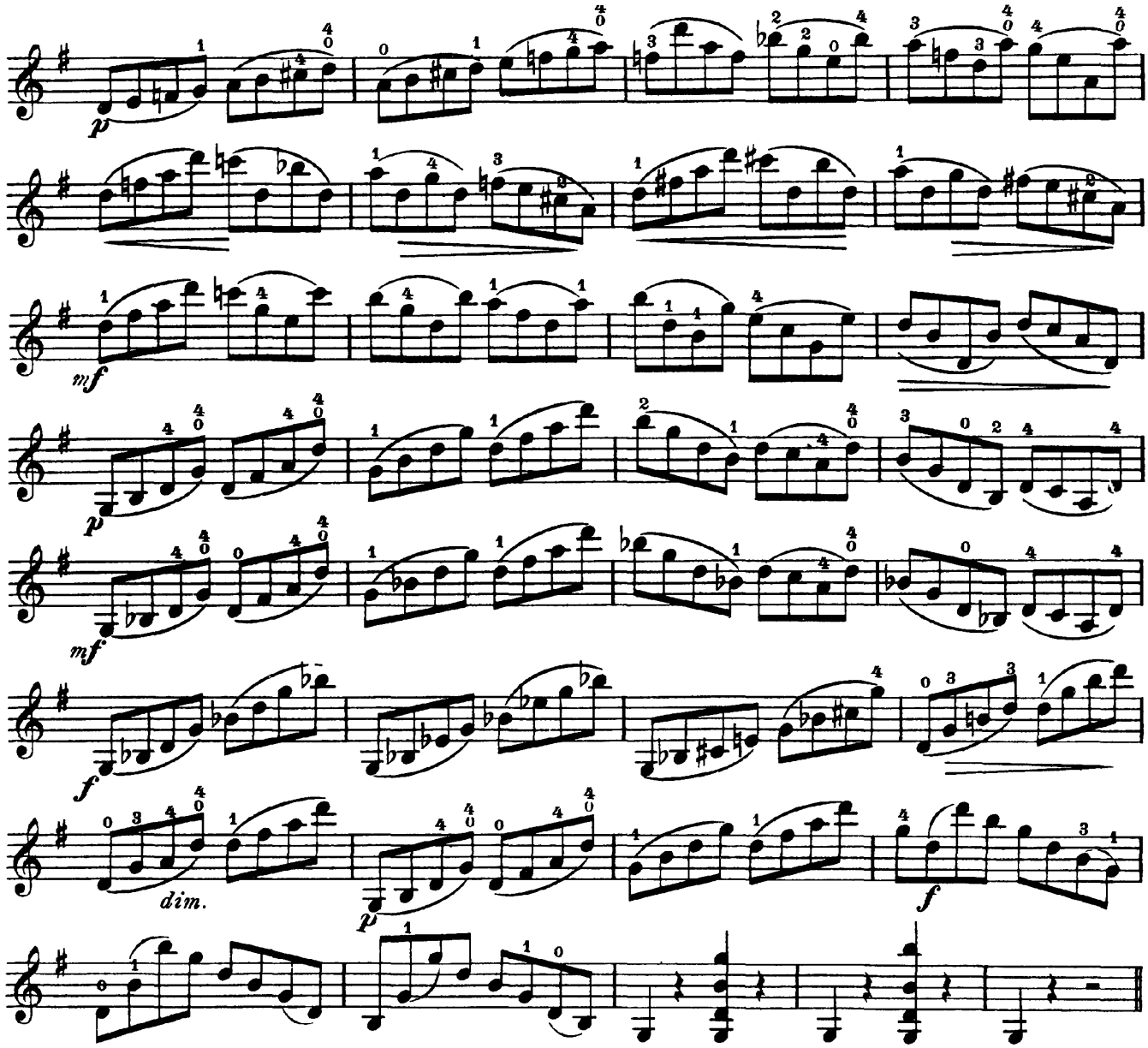


The harmonic may also be reached by starting with the 4th finger from the 1st position. Let the hand slide gently from 1st to 3d position, while slightly raising and extending the 4th finger.



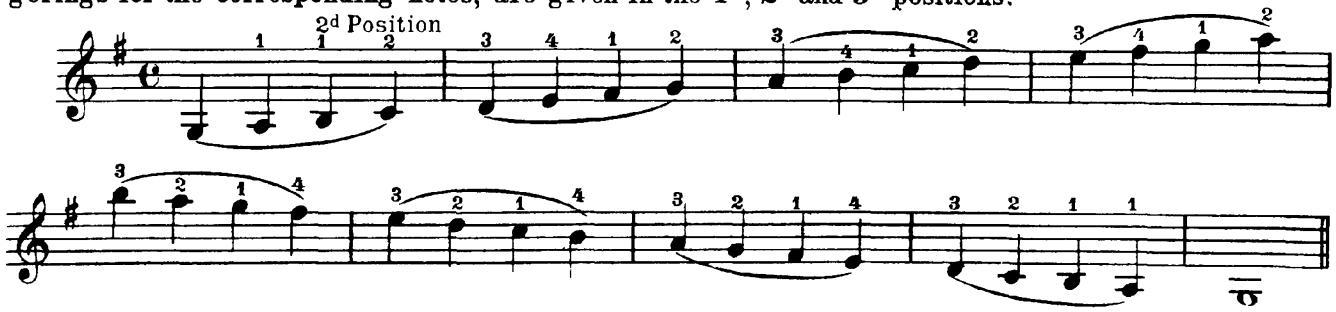
ÉTUDE

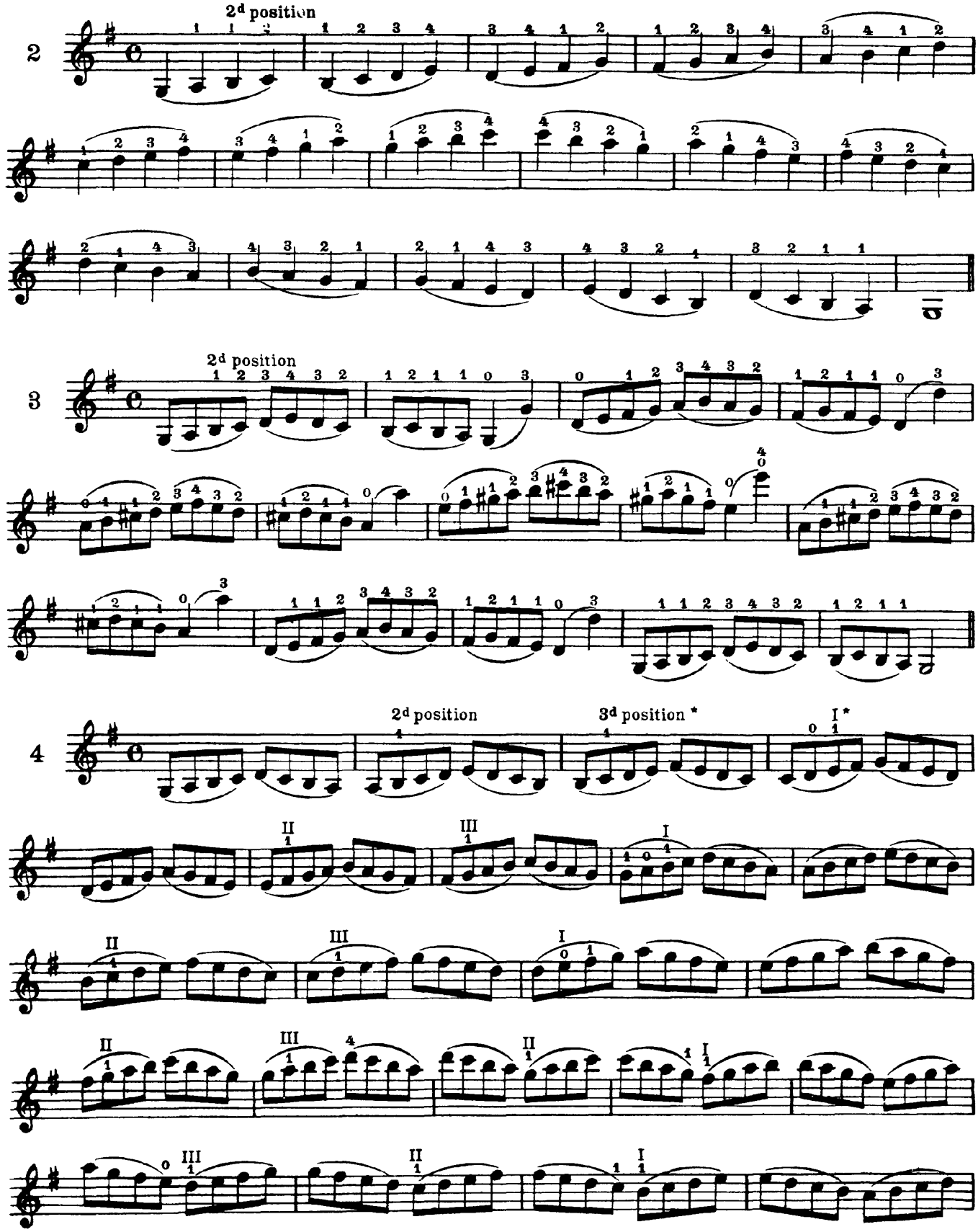




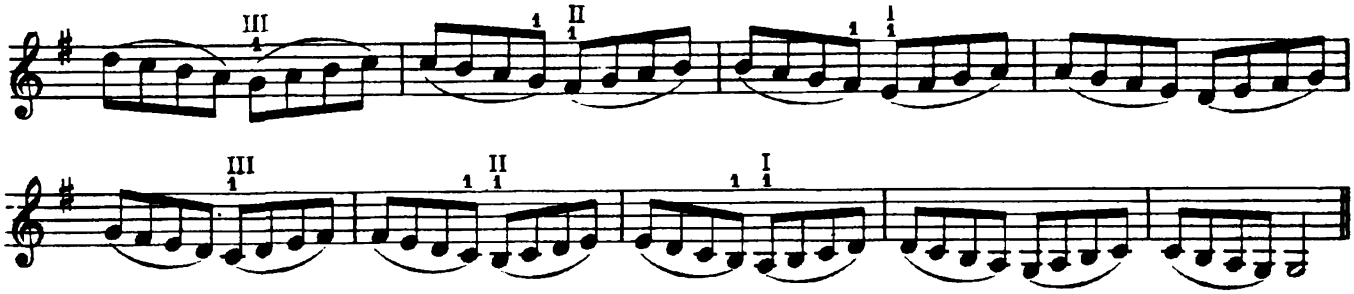
On the 2d Position, lying between the 1st and 3d

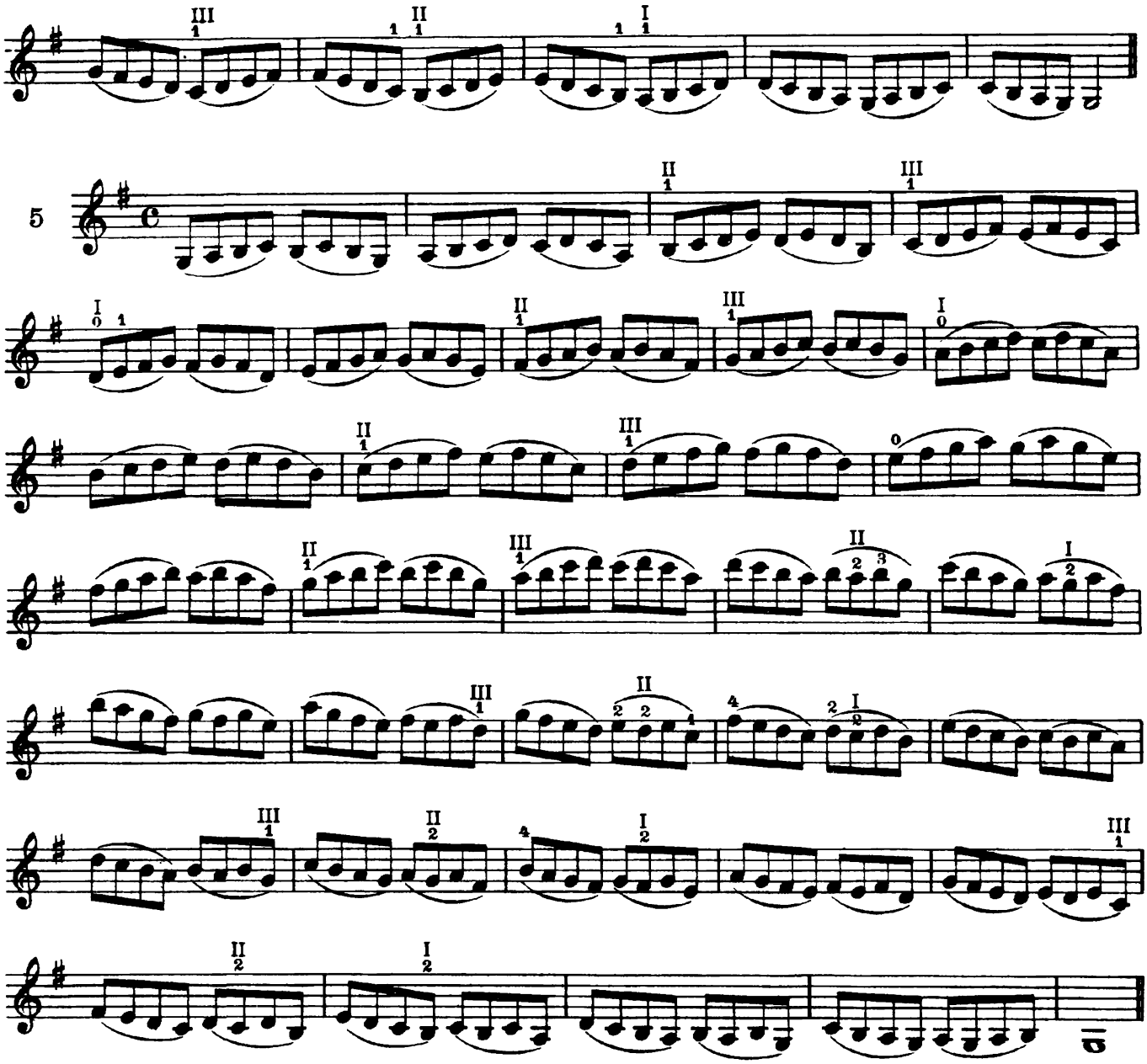
The preceding exercises in passing from the 1st to the 3d position, having given the pupil sufficient practice in shifting, it is well now to introduce the 2d position by progressive exercises. This manner of proceeding will have the advantage of showing the pupil in what cases that position is used; moreover, it will make it easier to reach, as similar or corresponding passages, with the same fingerings for the corresponding notes, are given in the 1st, 2d and 3d positions.



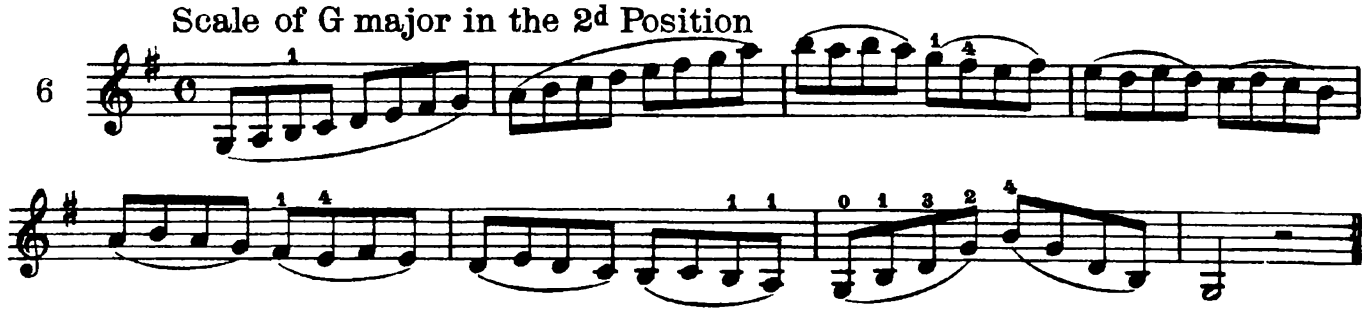


* For the sake of brevity, the position will hereafter be indicated by a simple Roman numeral (I, II, III, etc.)



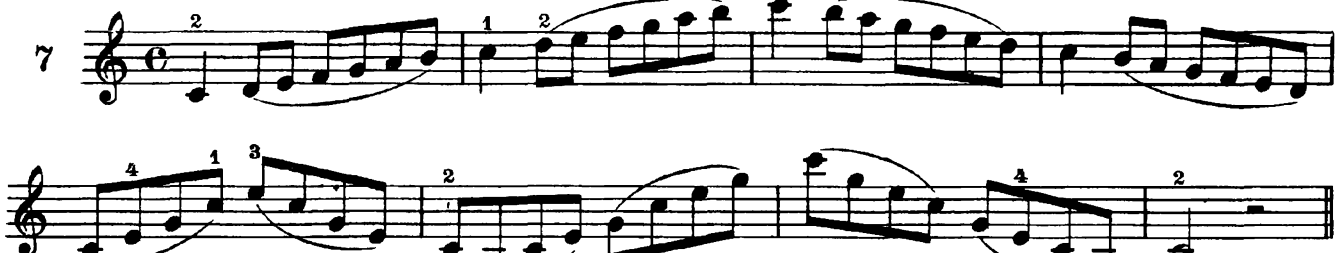


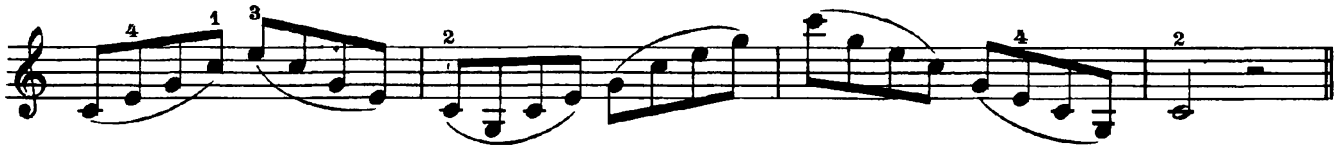
Scale of G major in the 2d Position



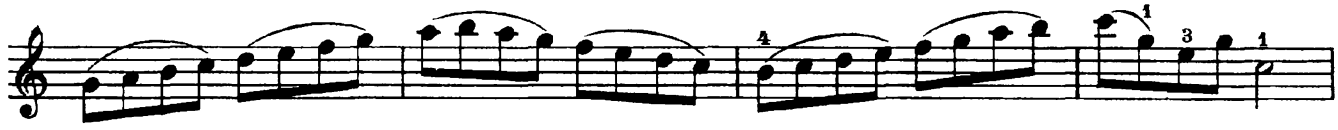
Scale of C major in the 2d Position

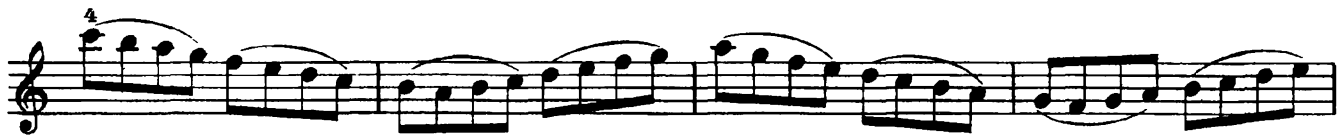
7





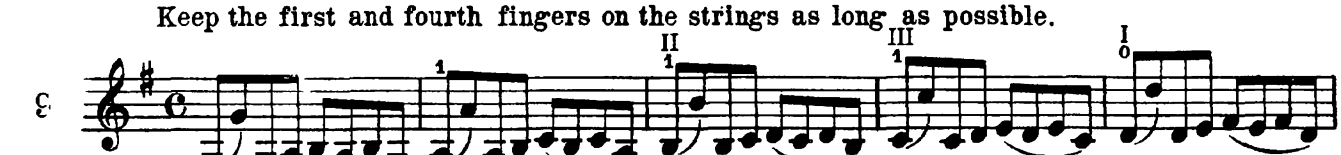
8

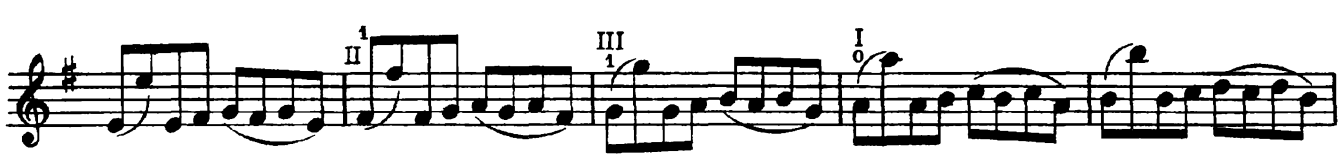


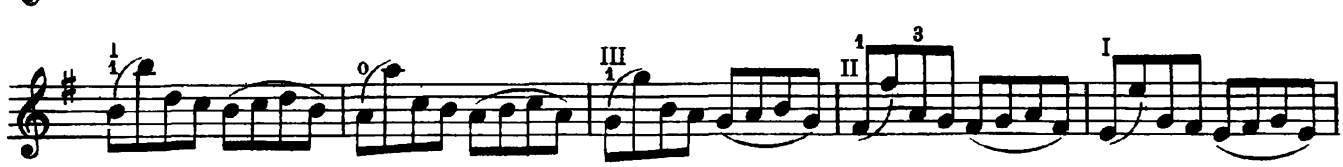


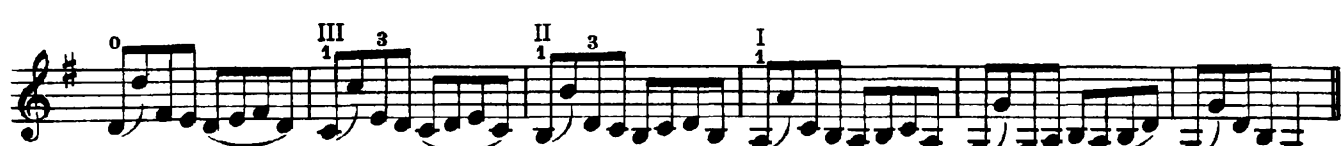
Keep the first and fourth fingers on the strings as long as possible.

9



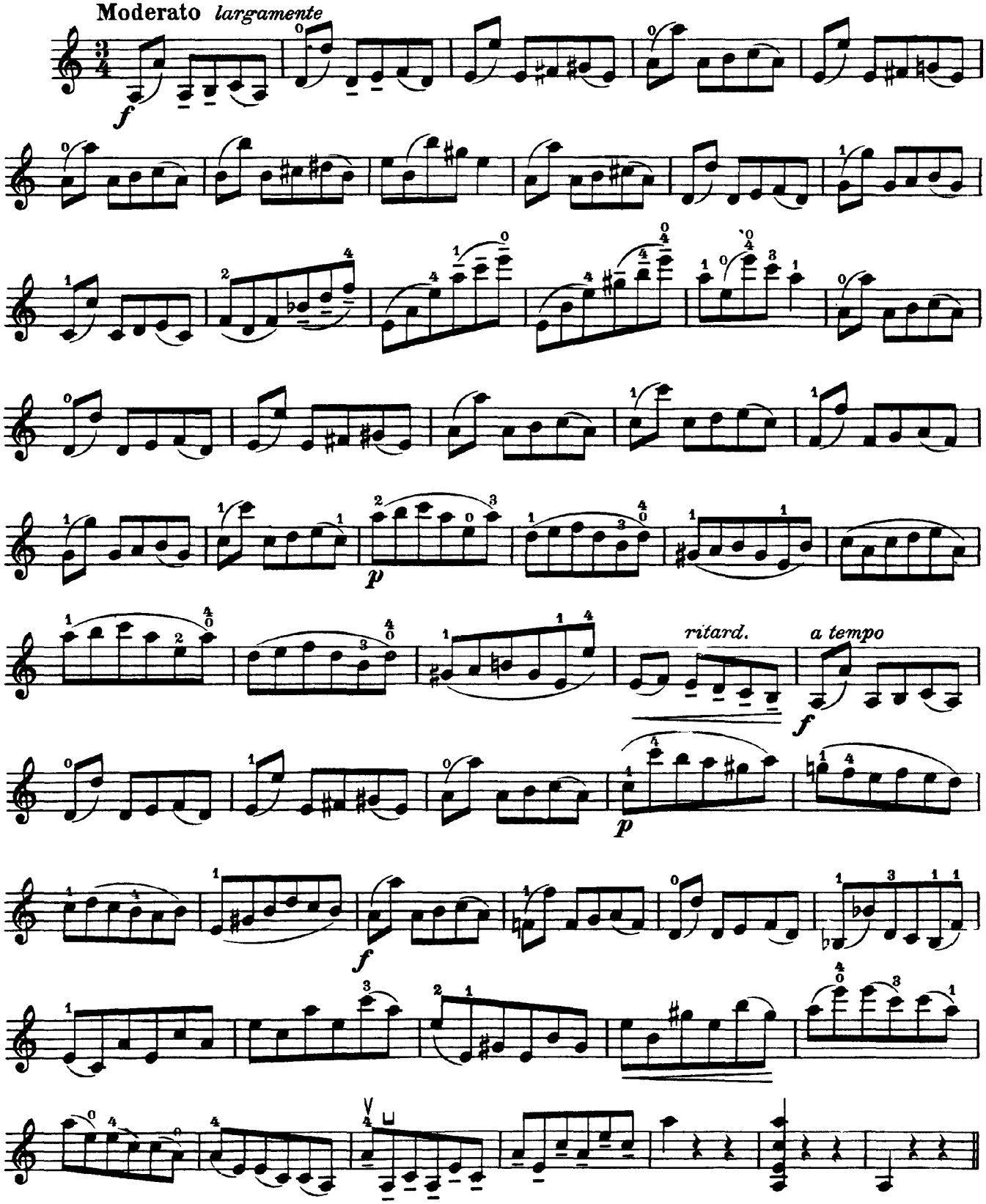






ÉTUDE

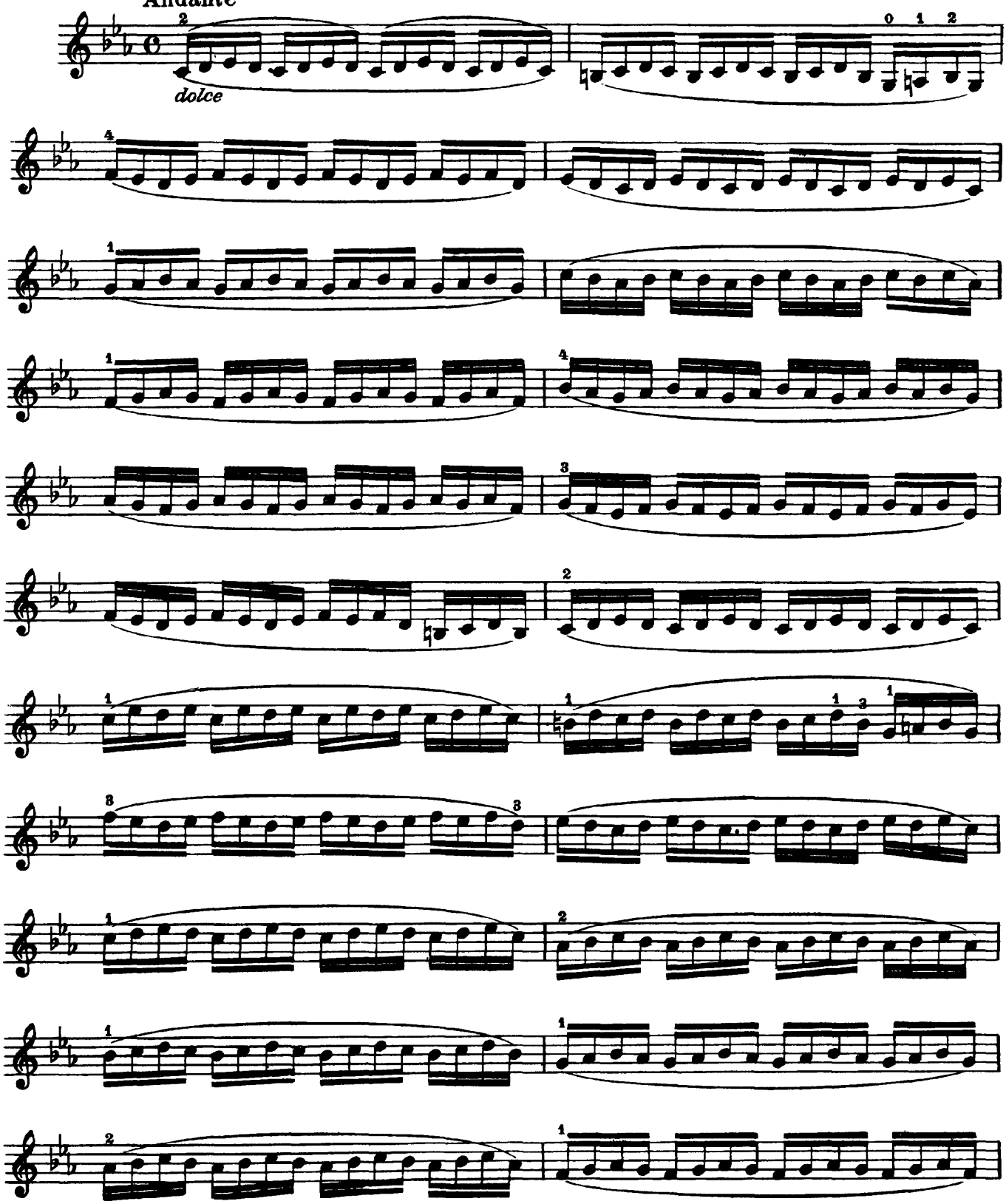
1st, 2d and 3d Positions

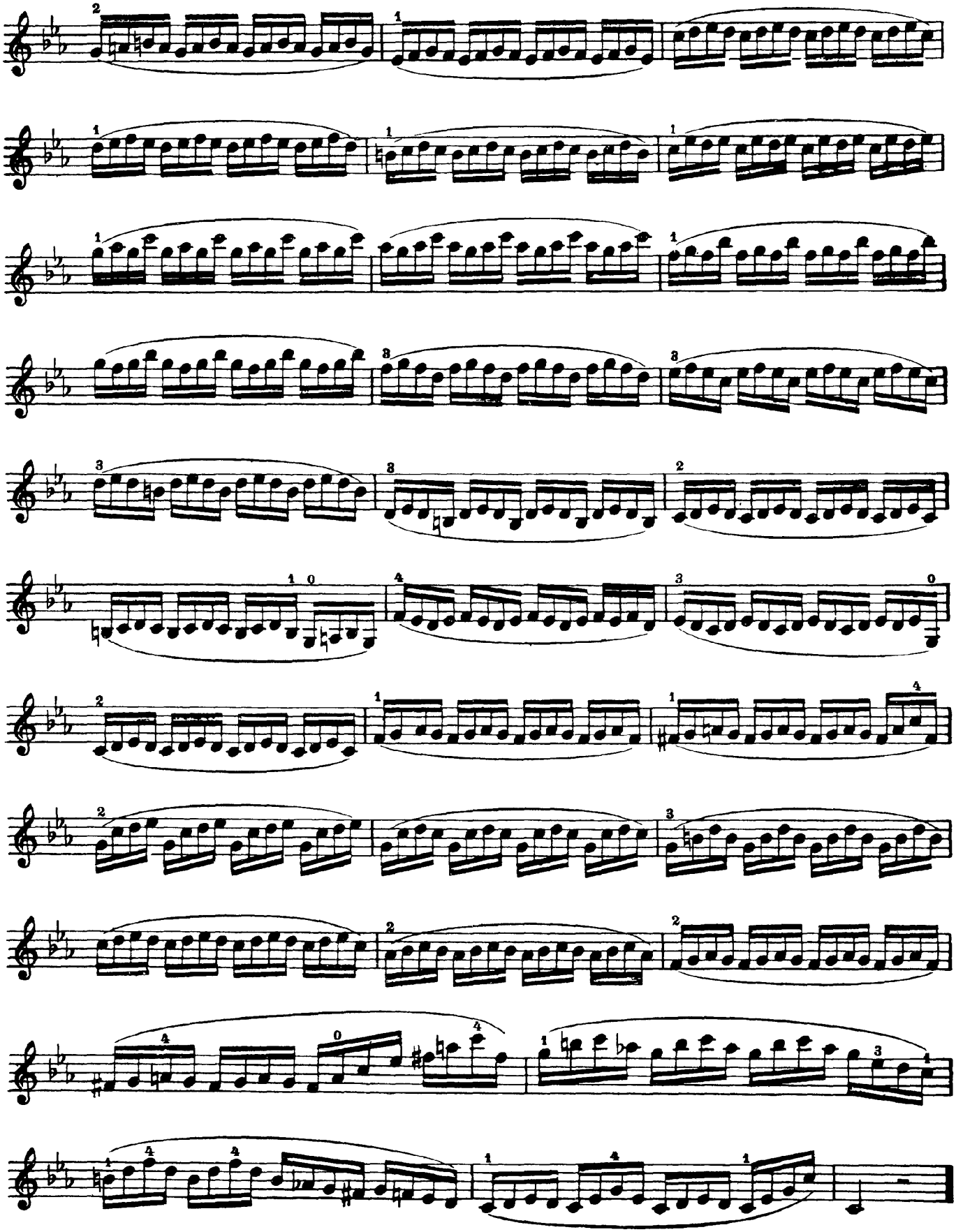


ETUDE

(1) Two bows to each measure, very slowly.

Andante

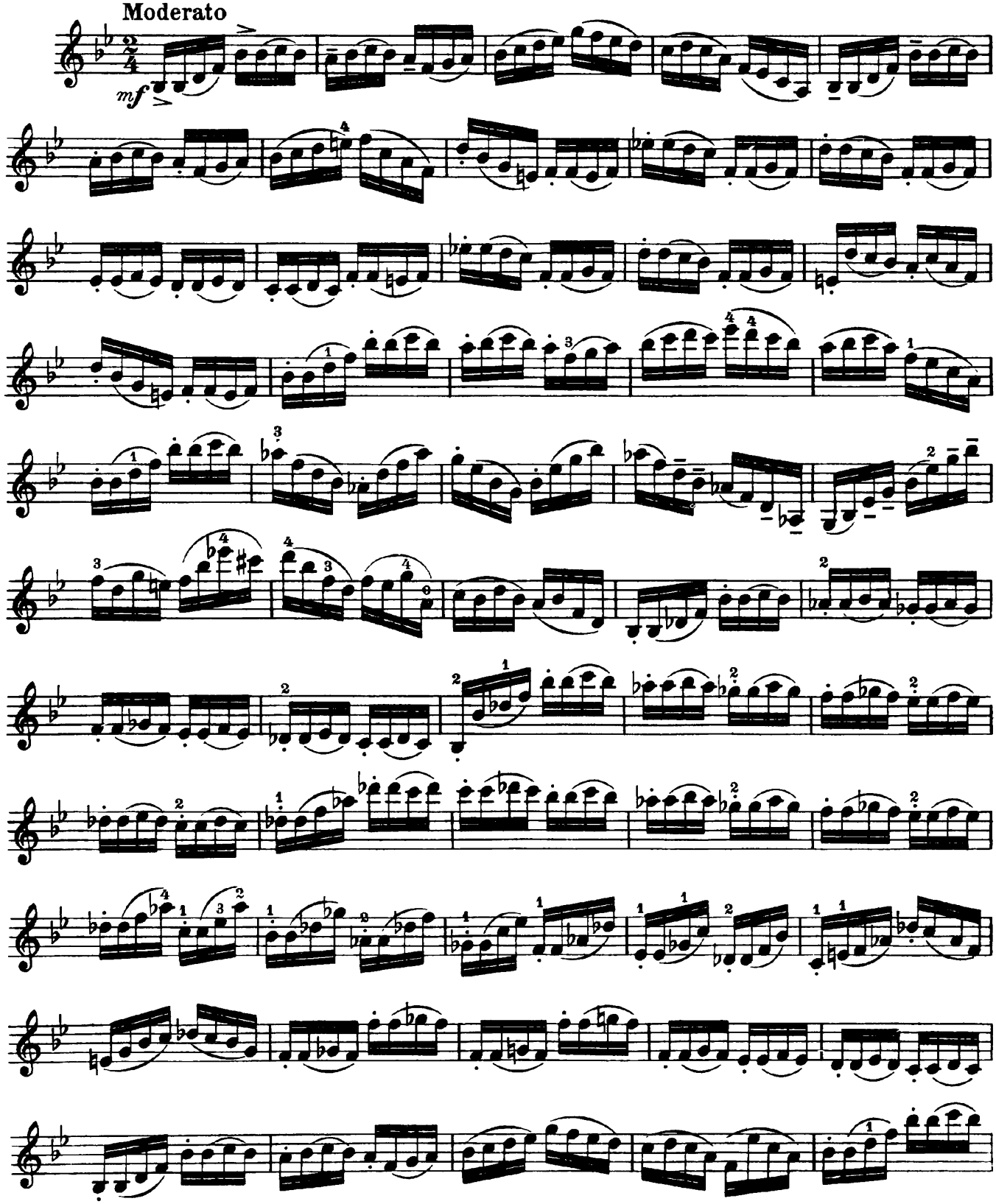


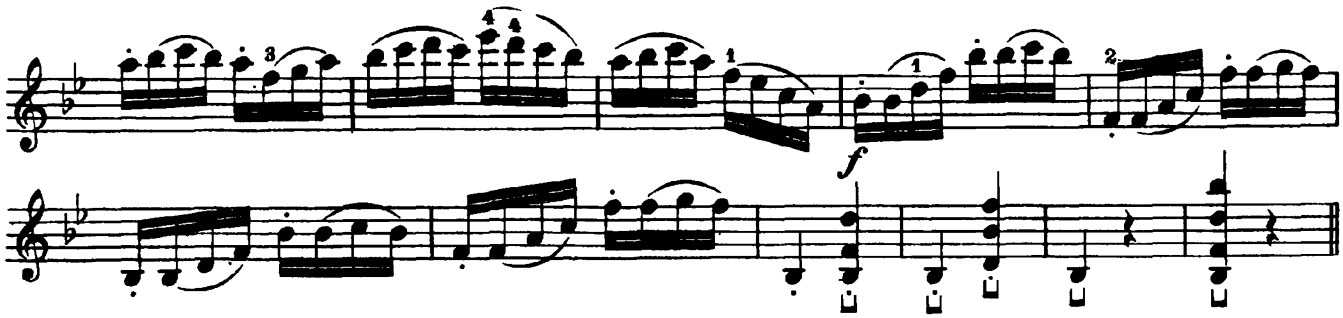


ÉTUDE

To be practised at first with broad detached strokes, from middle to point.

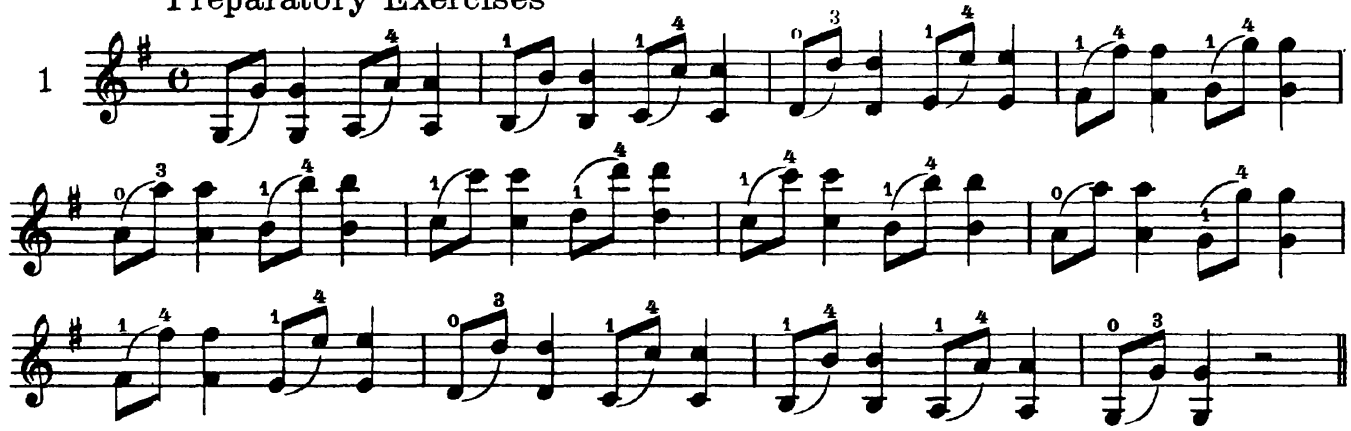
Moderato

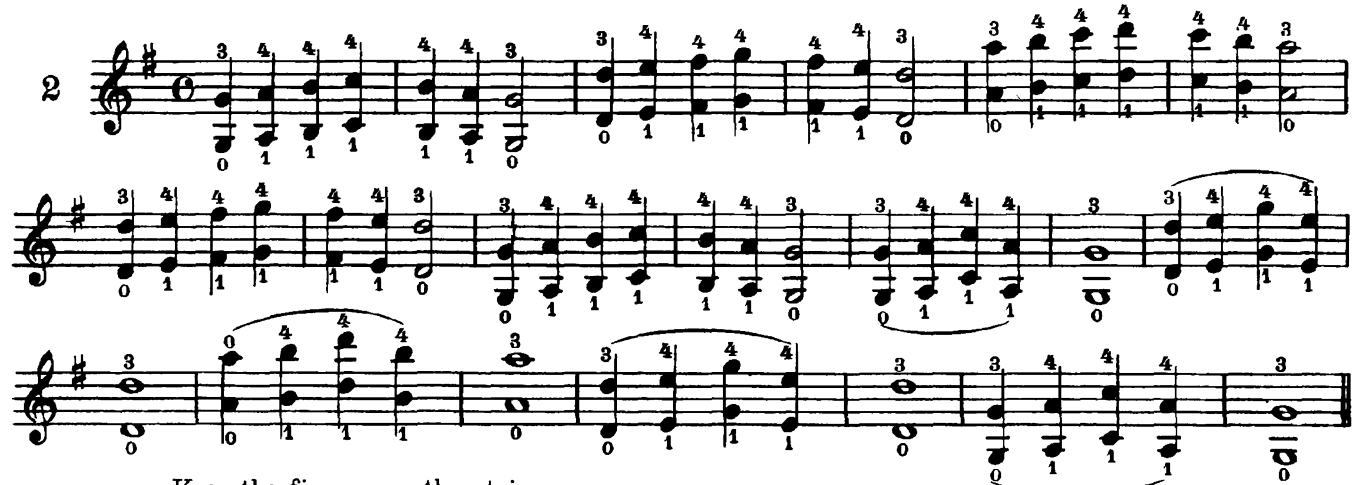




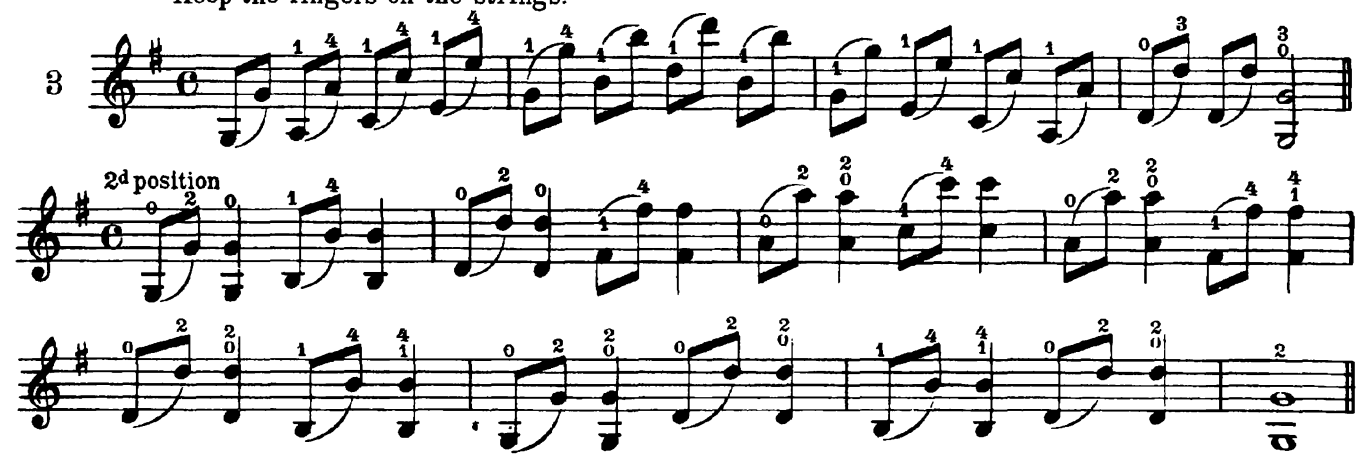
The Octave

Preparatory Exercises



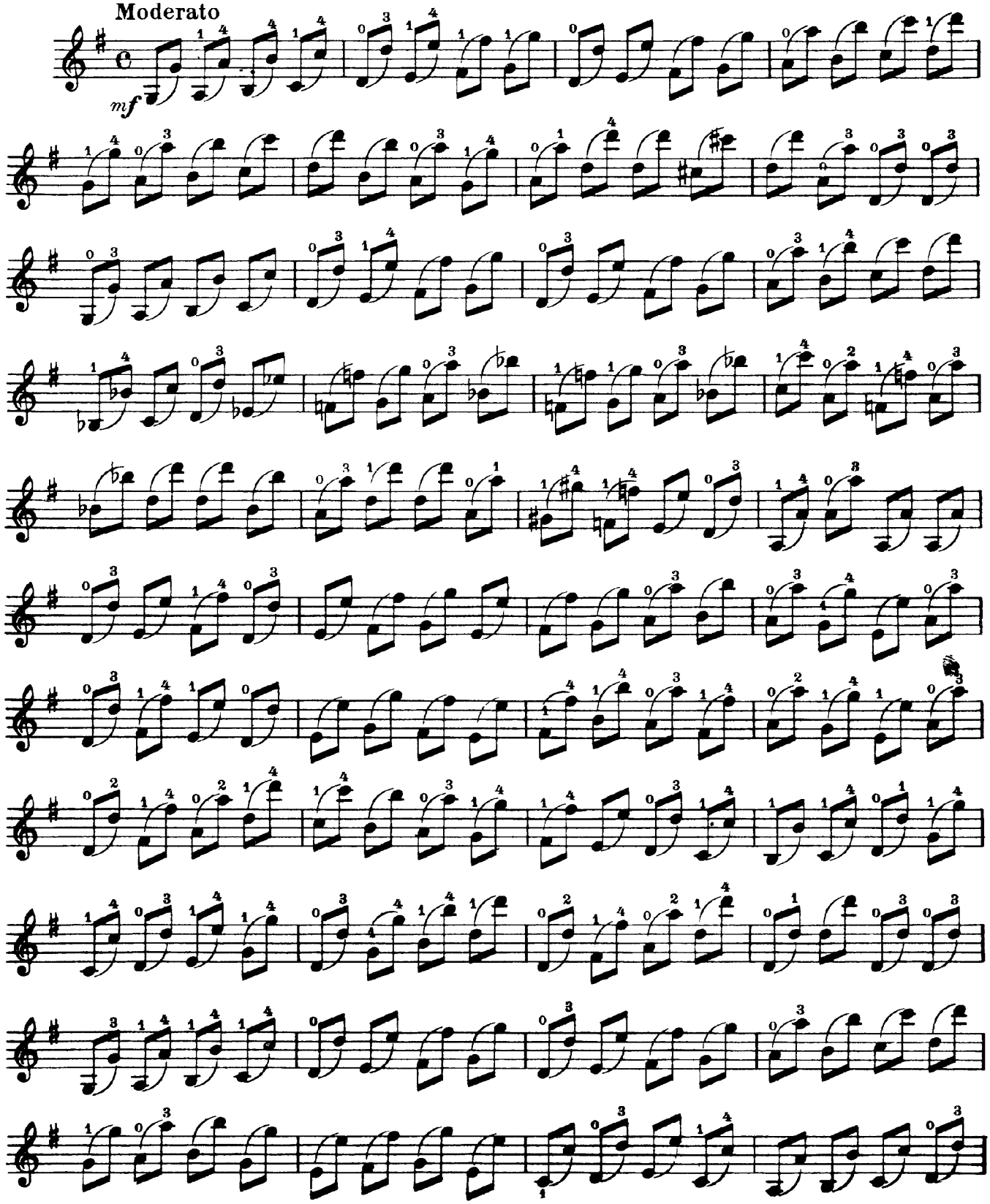


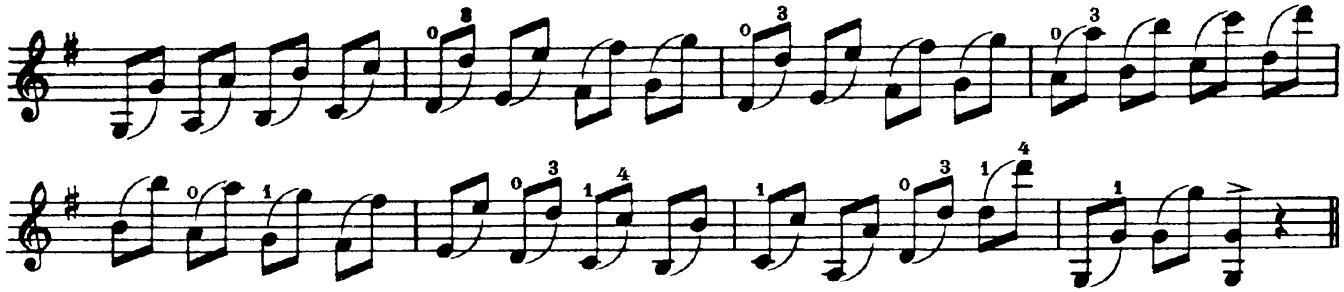
Keep the fingers on the strings.



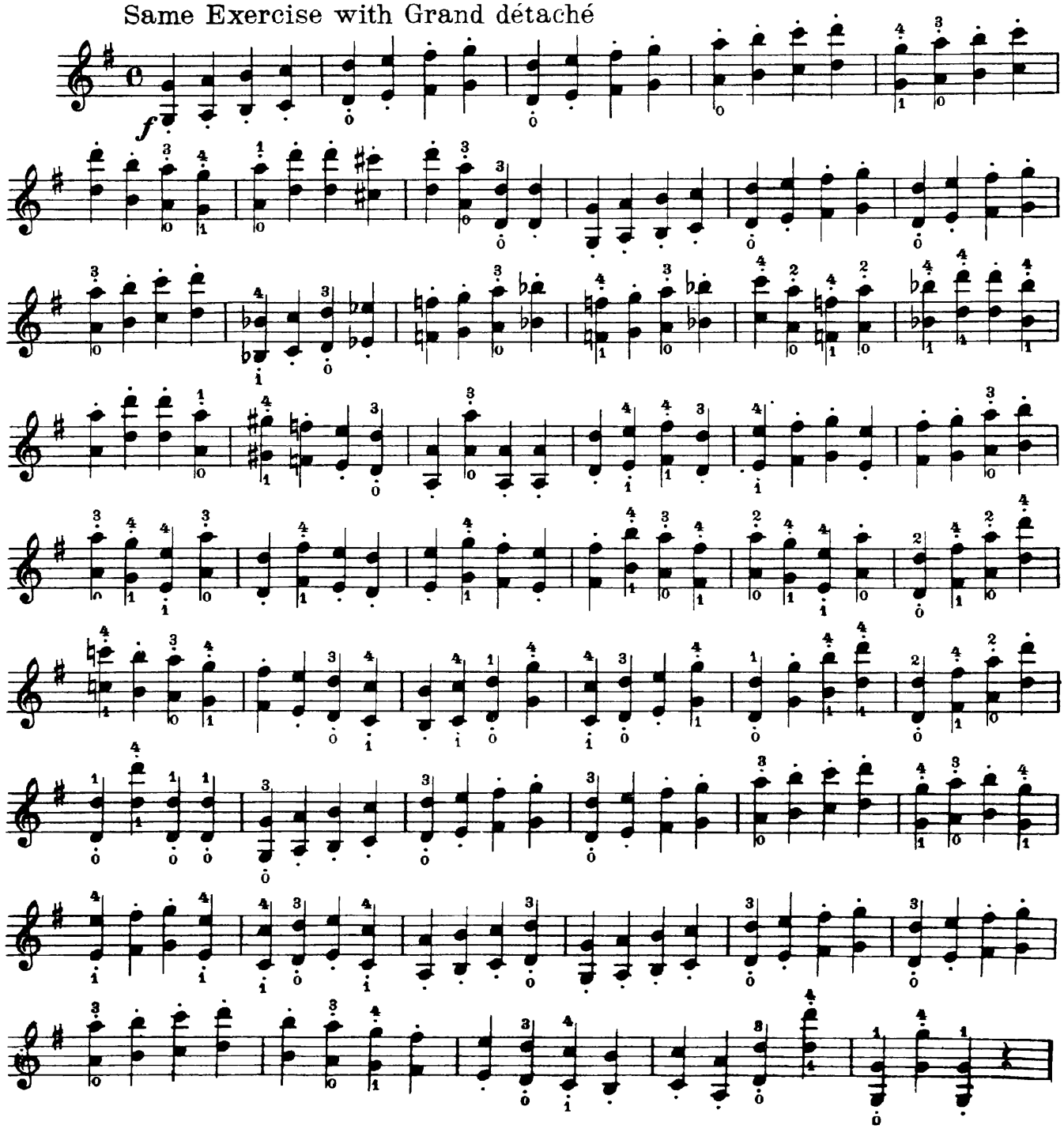
ÉTUDE

N. B. Keep the 1st and 4th fingers down; lift them only to change fingerings or strings.





Same Exercise with Grand détaché



DOUBLE-STOPPING

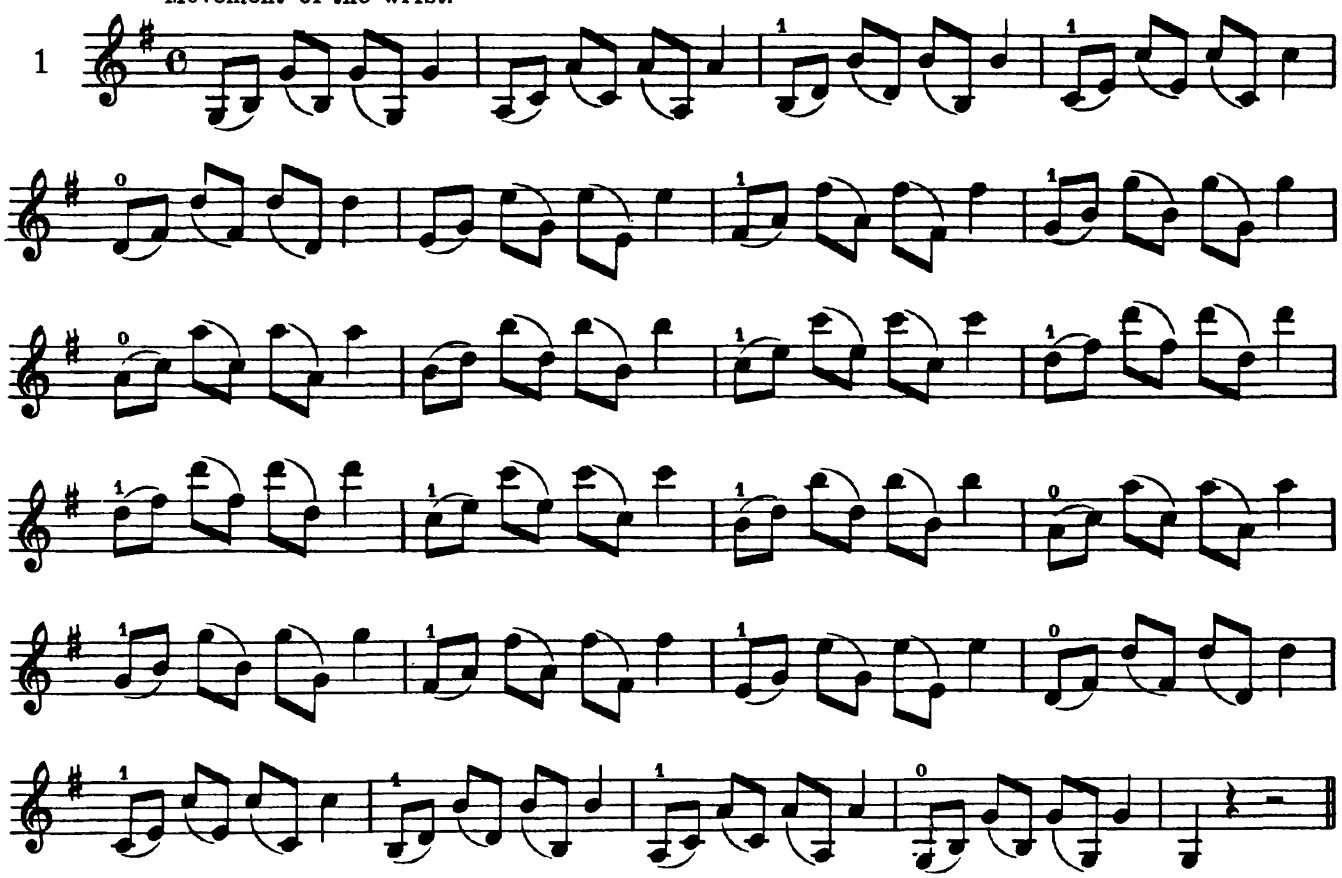
The pupil finds difficulty in distinguishing between major and minor intervals. Besides the fact that his ear is not trained to recognize two tones at once, he has no exact idea how near together or far apart are the tones forming these two intervals. In order to render the work clearer and easier we shall begin with broken intervals.

The Sixth, starting from the Octave

Without lifting the finger to pass from one octave to another.

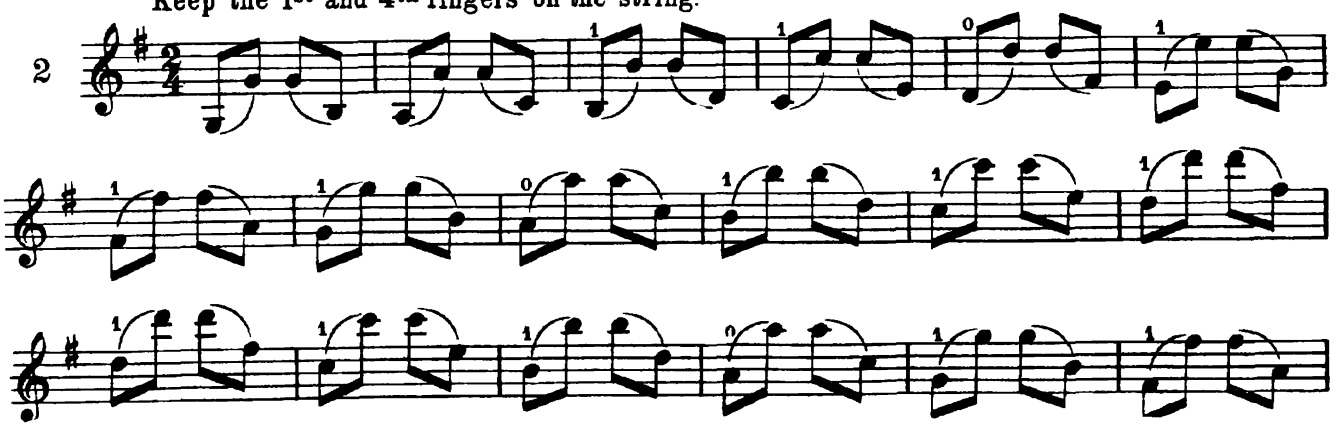
Movement of the wrist.

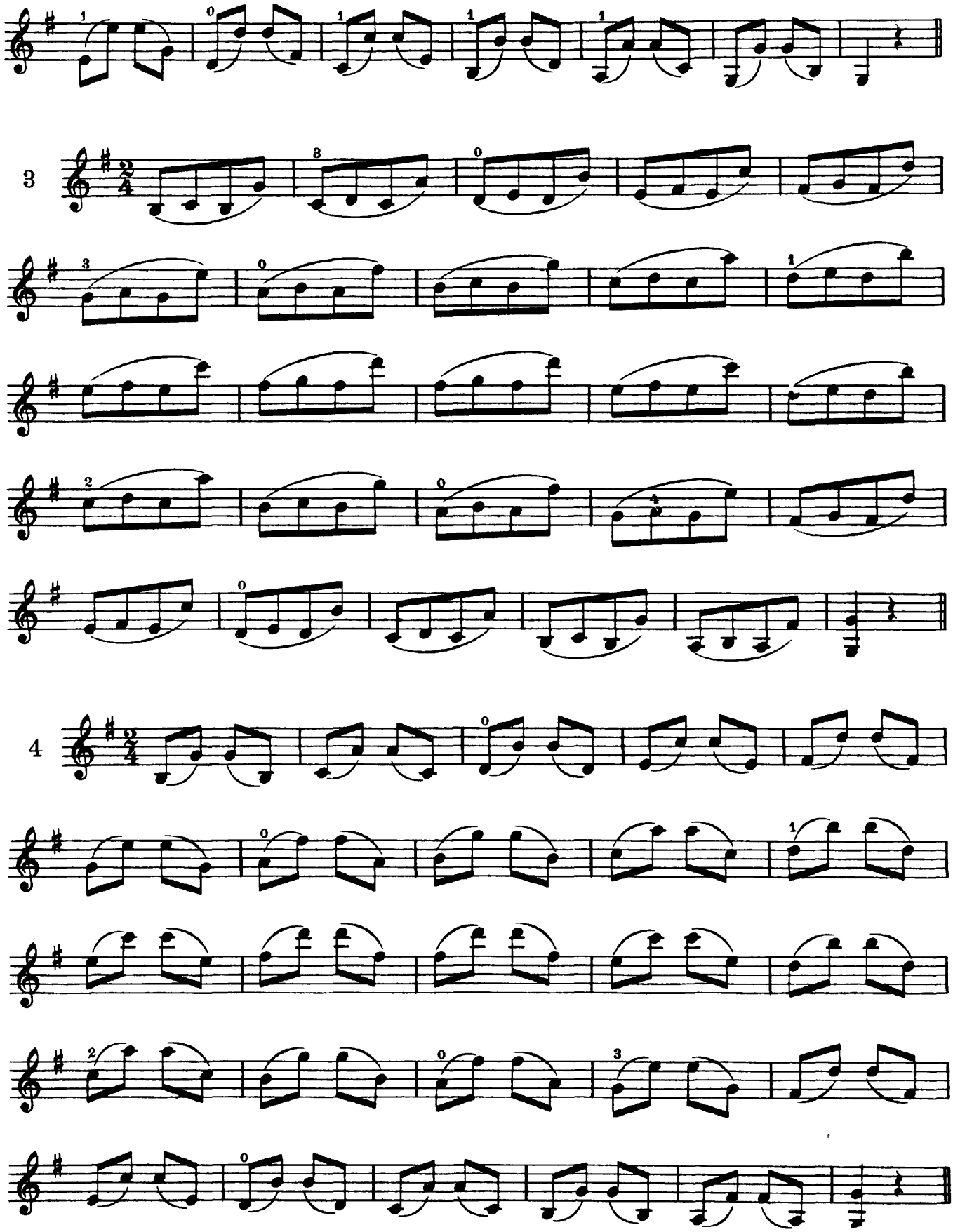
1



Keep the 1st and 4th fingers on the string.

2



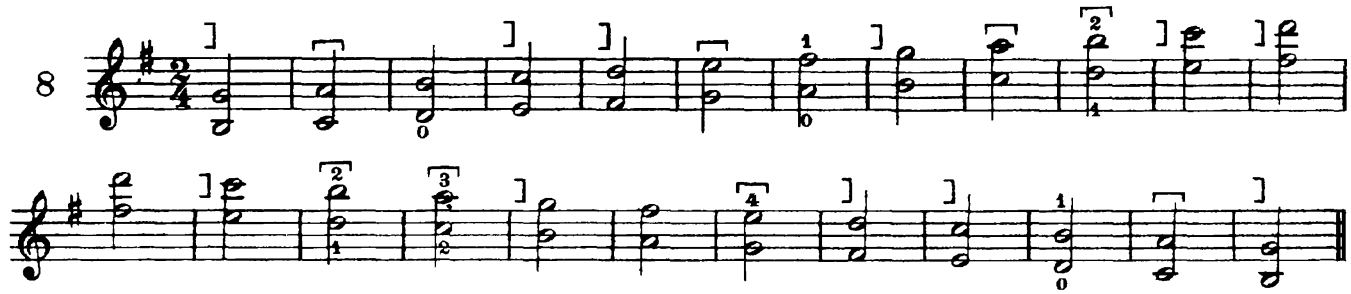


5

6

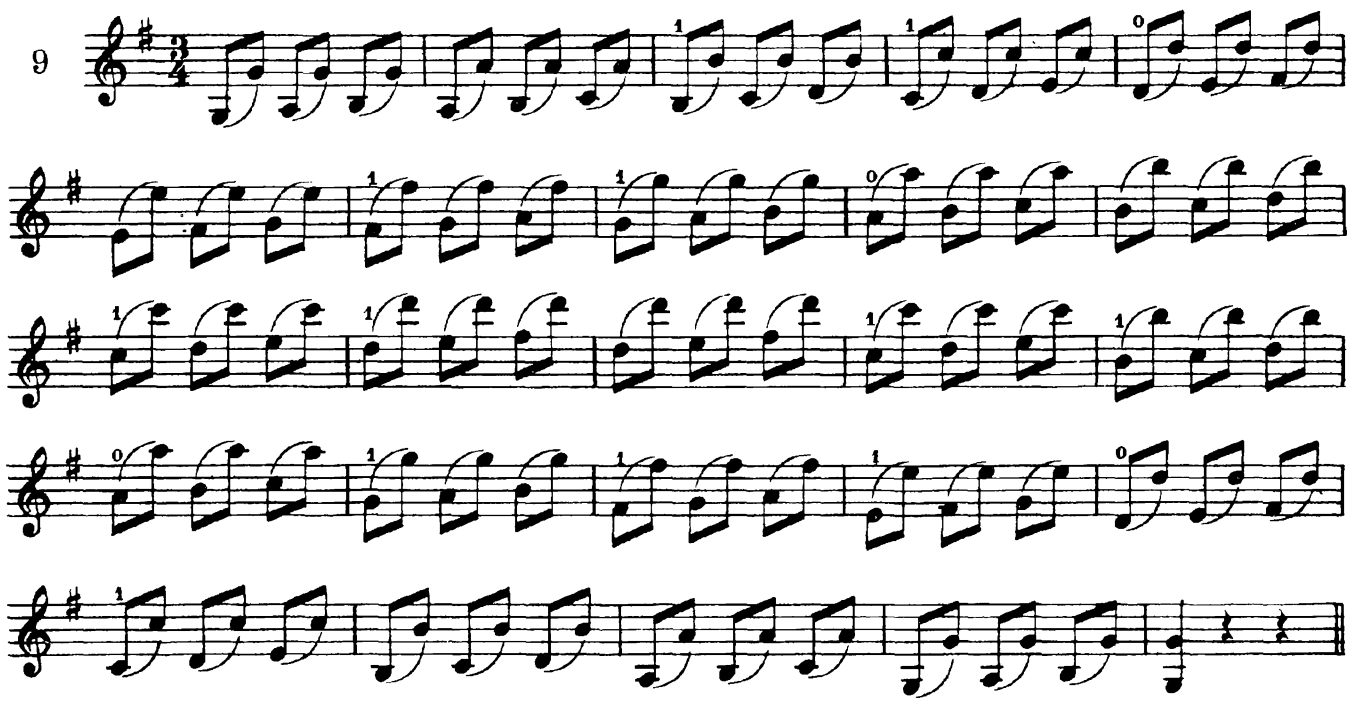
In playing sixths, the interval of separation between the fingers is either one or two half-steps, according to the key; in thirds the interval of separation (not of pitch) of the fingers is either three or four half-steps. In order that the pupil may not be in doubt when he has to play two notes at one time, we shall employ the following graphic signs: ⌐ indicates, in sixths, that the fingers are two half-steps apart; in thirds, that they are four half-steps apart;] indicates, in sixths, that the fingers are one half-step apart; in thirds, that they are three half-steps apart. To sum up, in either sixths or thirds, ⌐ indicates the larger interval of separation between the fingers.

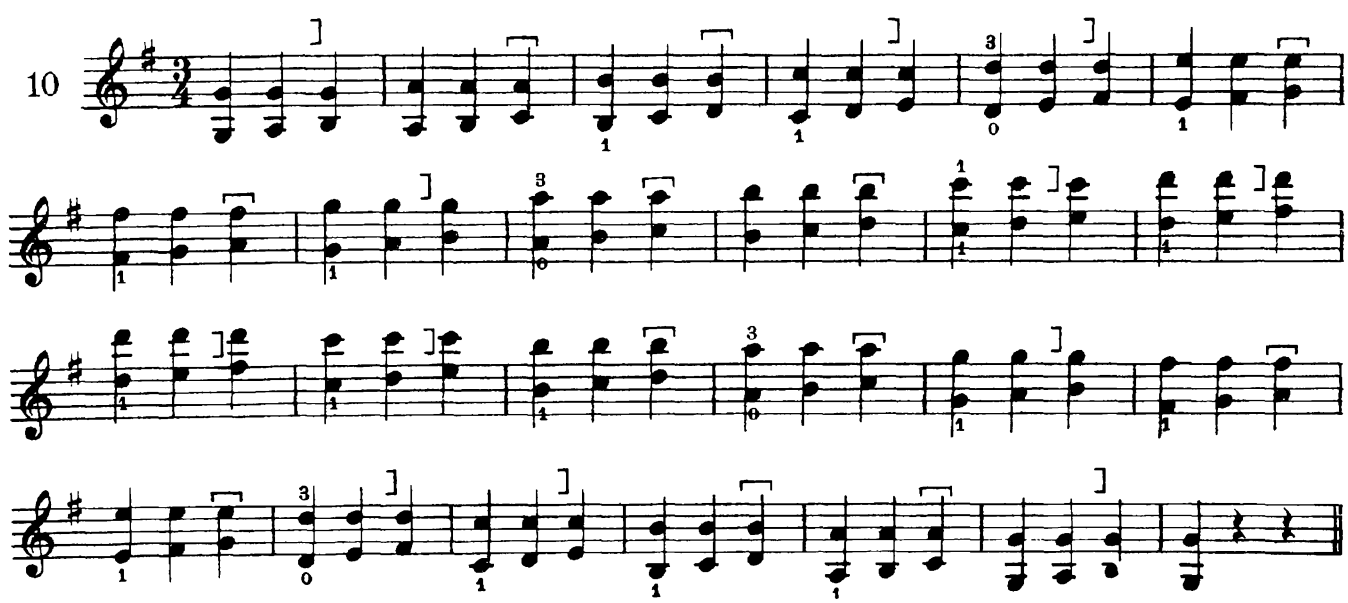
7



Octaves, Sevenths, Sixths

Keep down the fingers which take the octave.

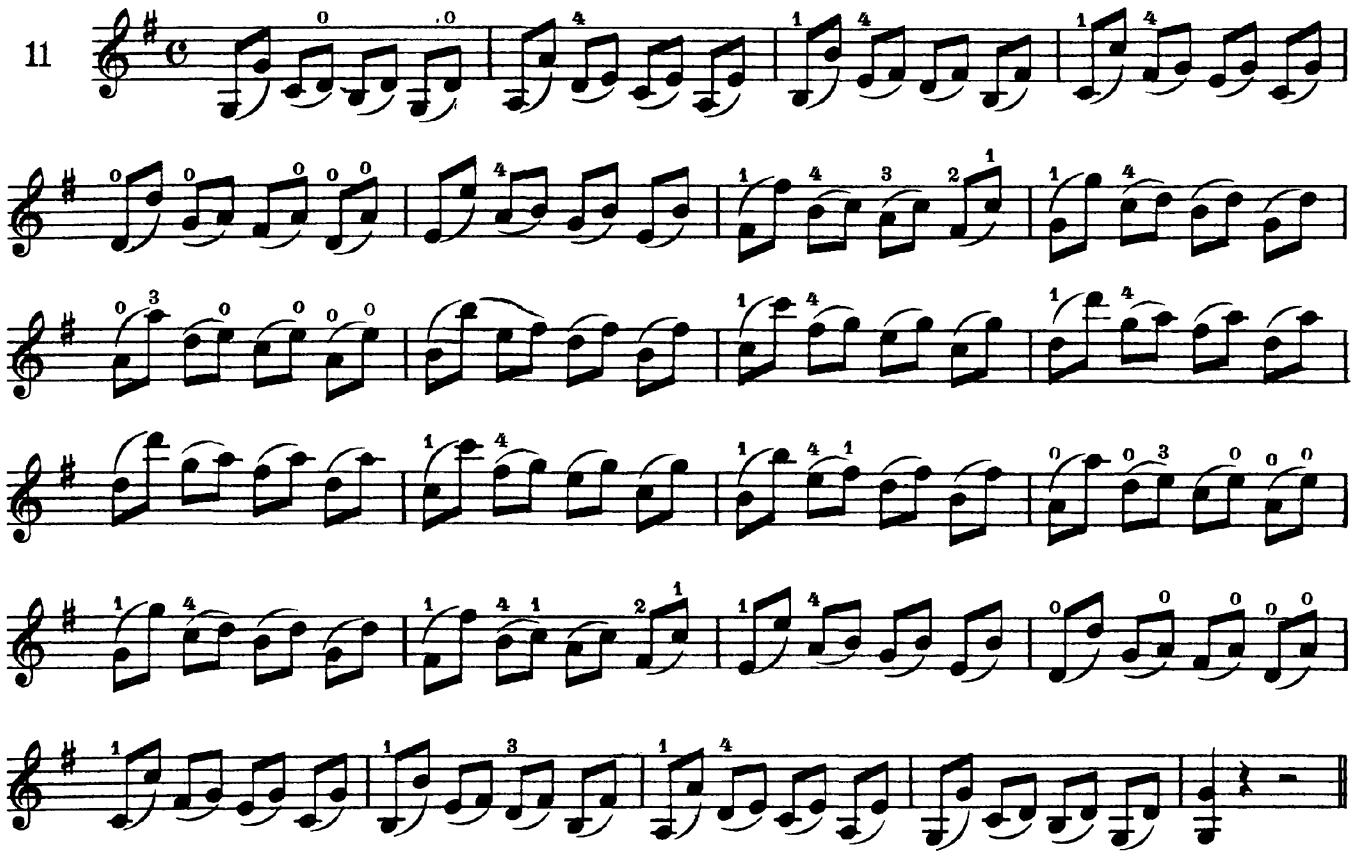




Octaves, Seconds, Thirds and Fifths

Set the 1st finger squarely upon the fifth at the beginning of the measure.

11



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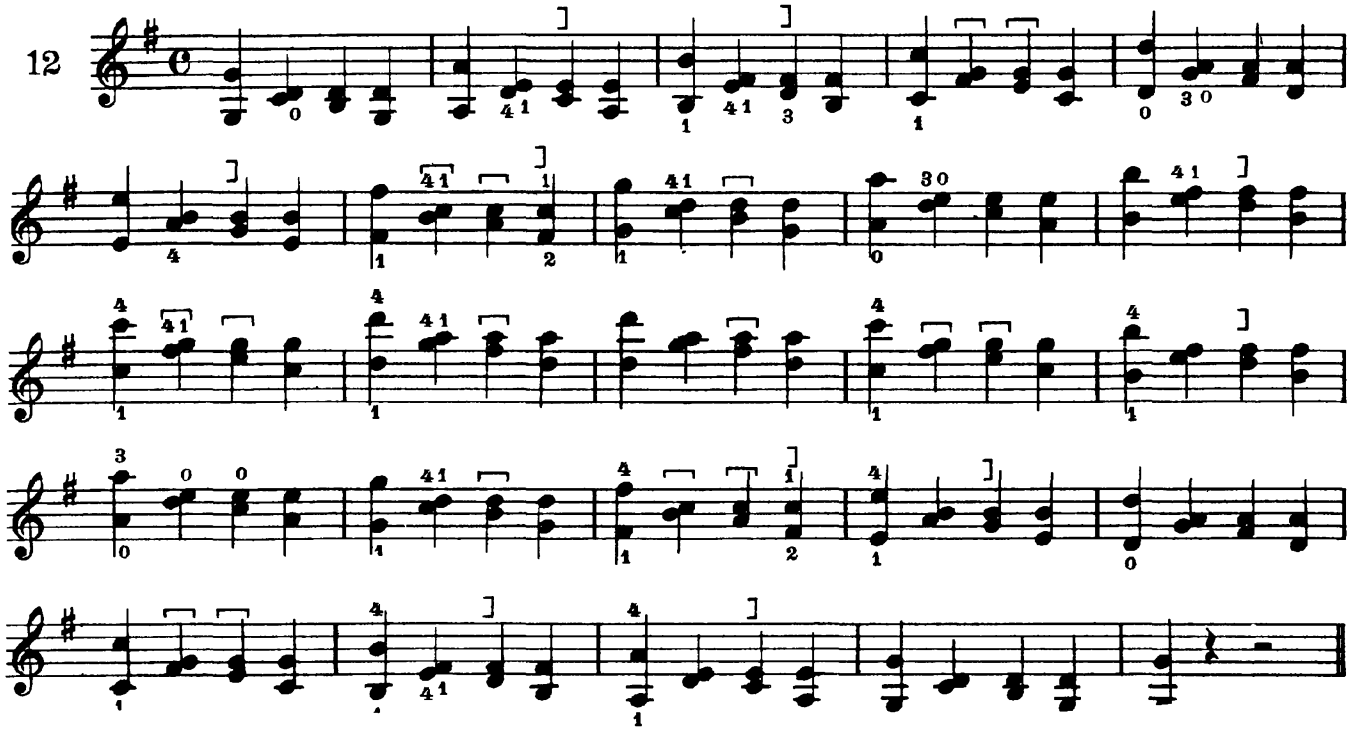
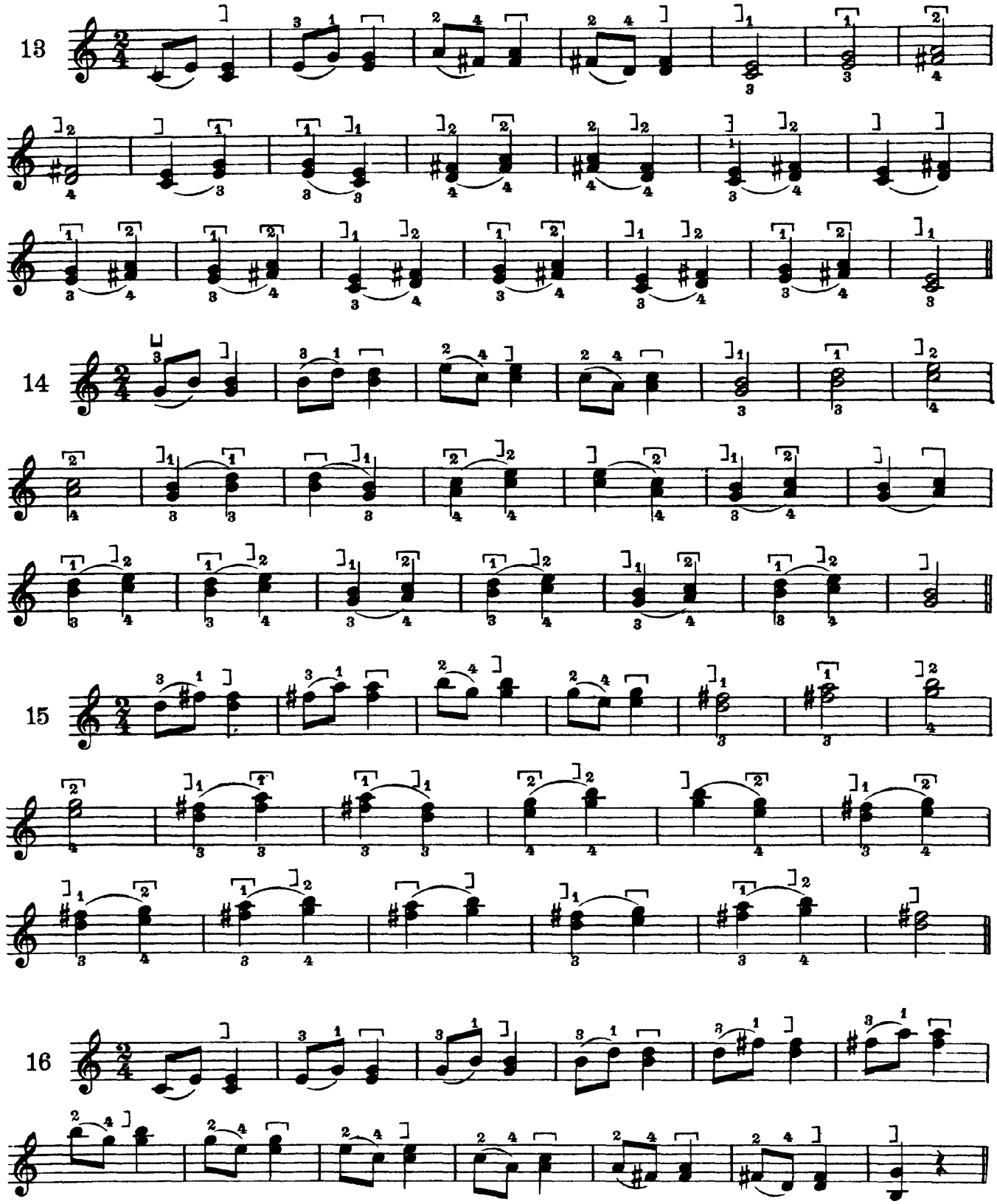


A Special Study on Thirds



17

18

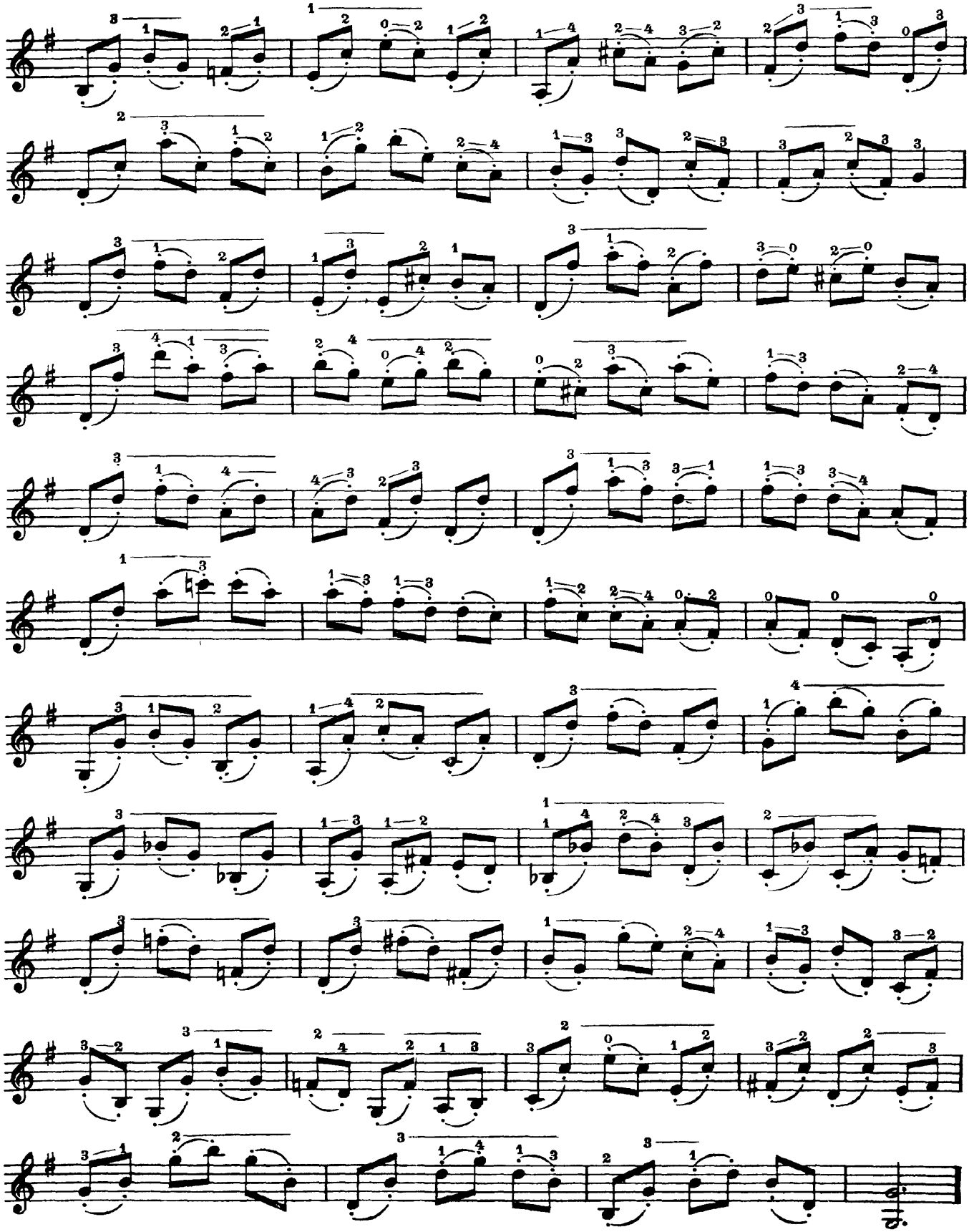
19

ÉTUDE

N.B. This study serves as a preparation to the following one in double-stops. The pupil will have to keep the first finger on the string throughout each measure; and the others, after being placed on the strings, must remain till the end of the measure.

Staccato secco

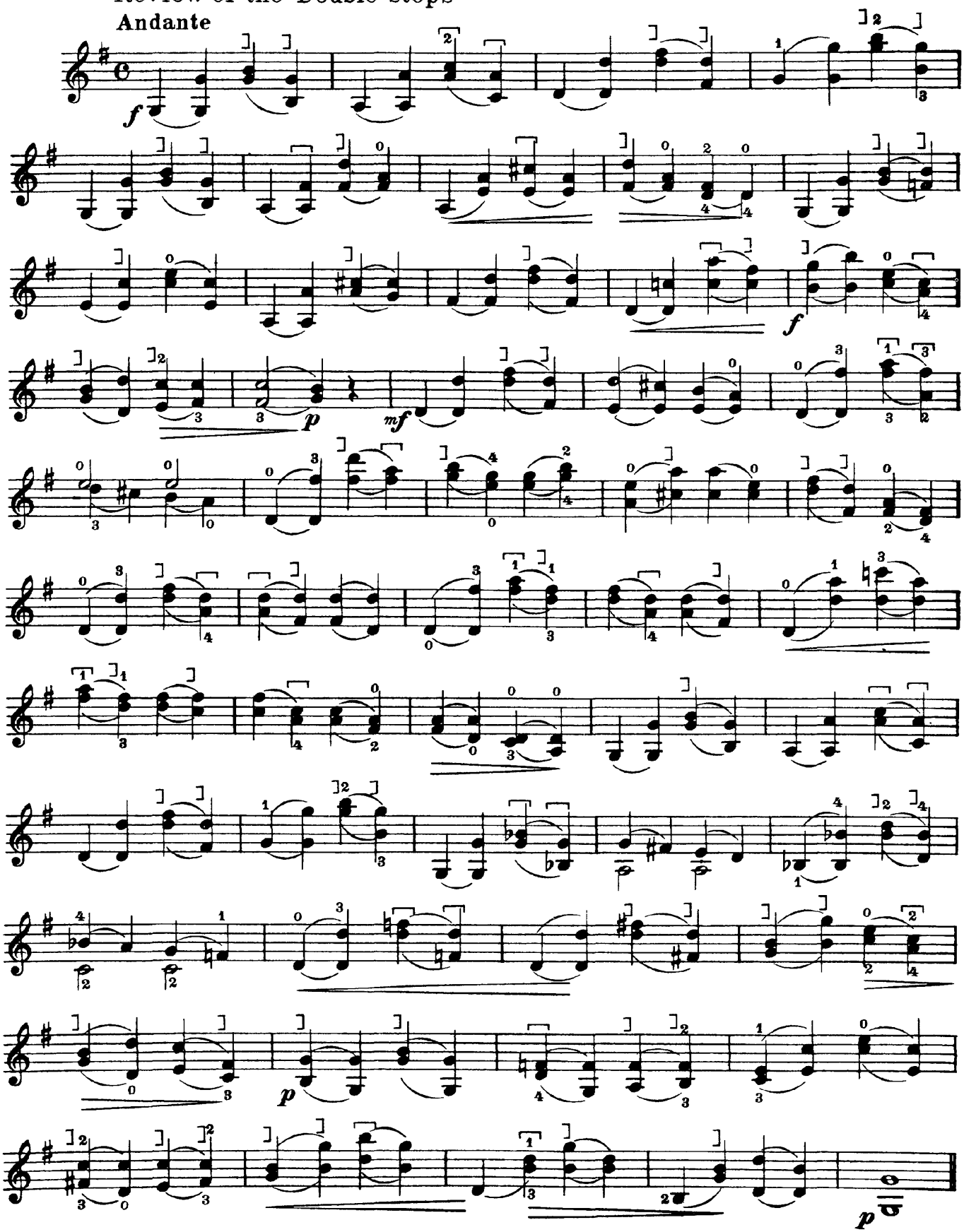
f



ÉTUDE

Review of the Double-stops

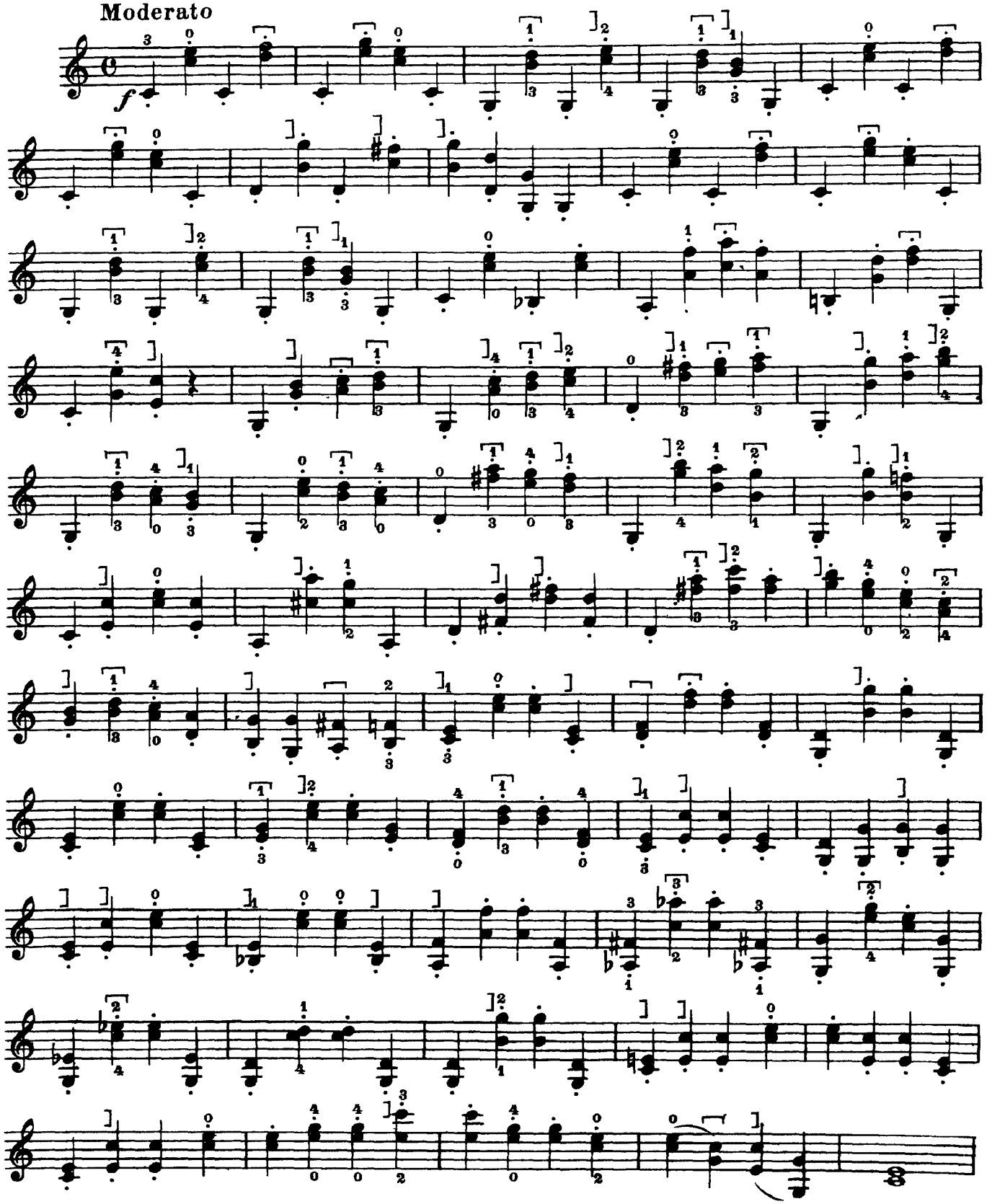
Andante



ÉTUDE

The Détaché. With the whole bow, separating the notes.

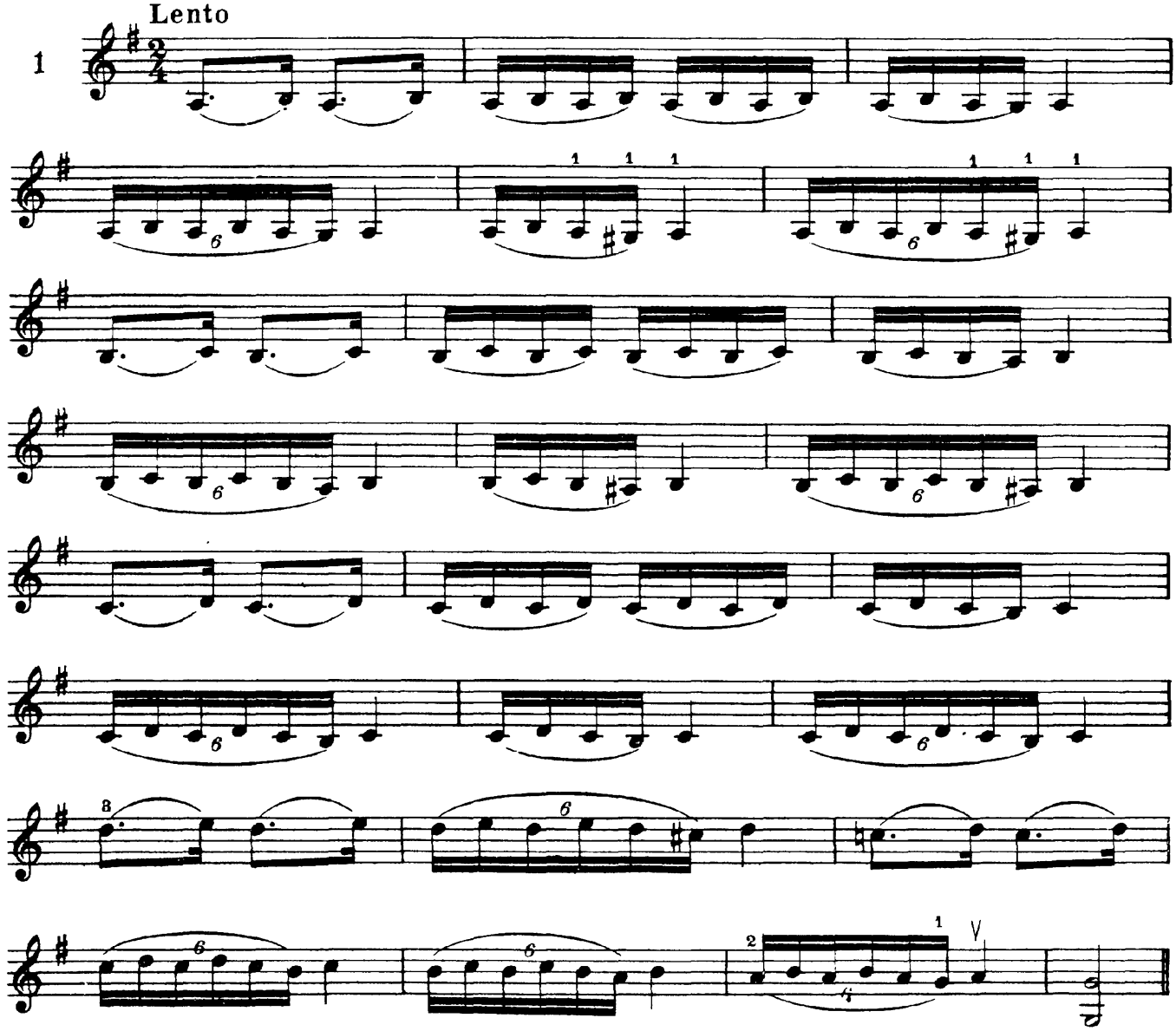
Moderato



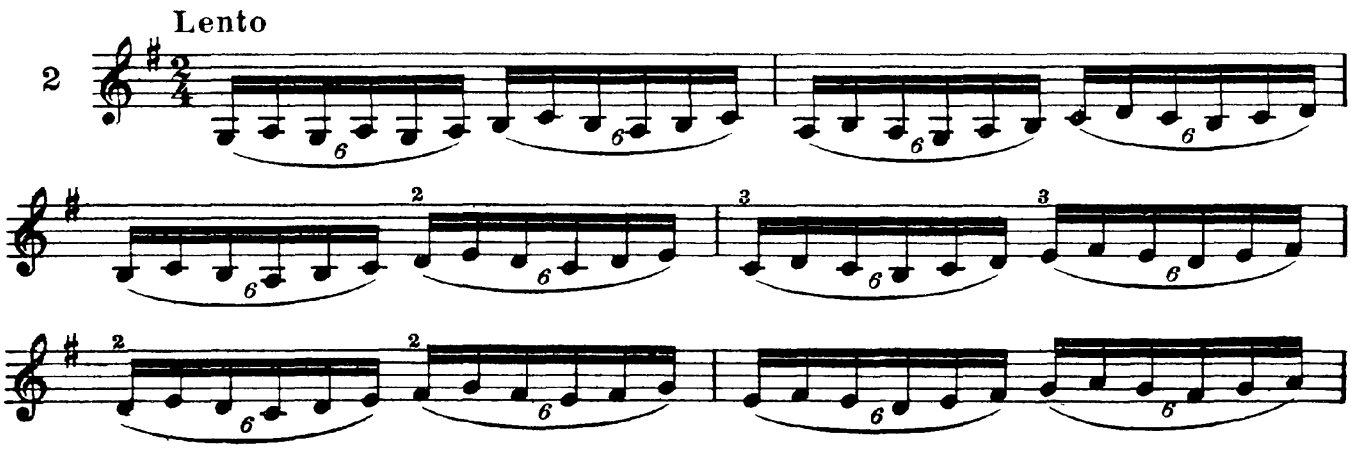
TRILLS

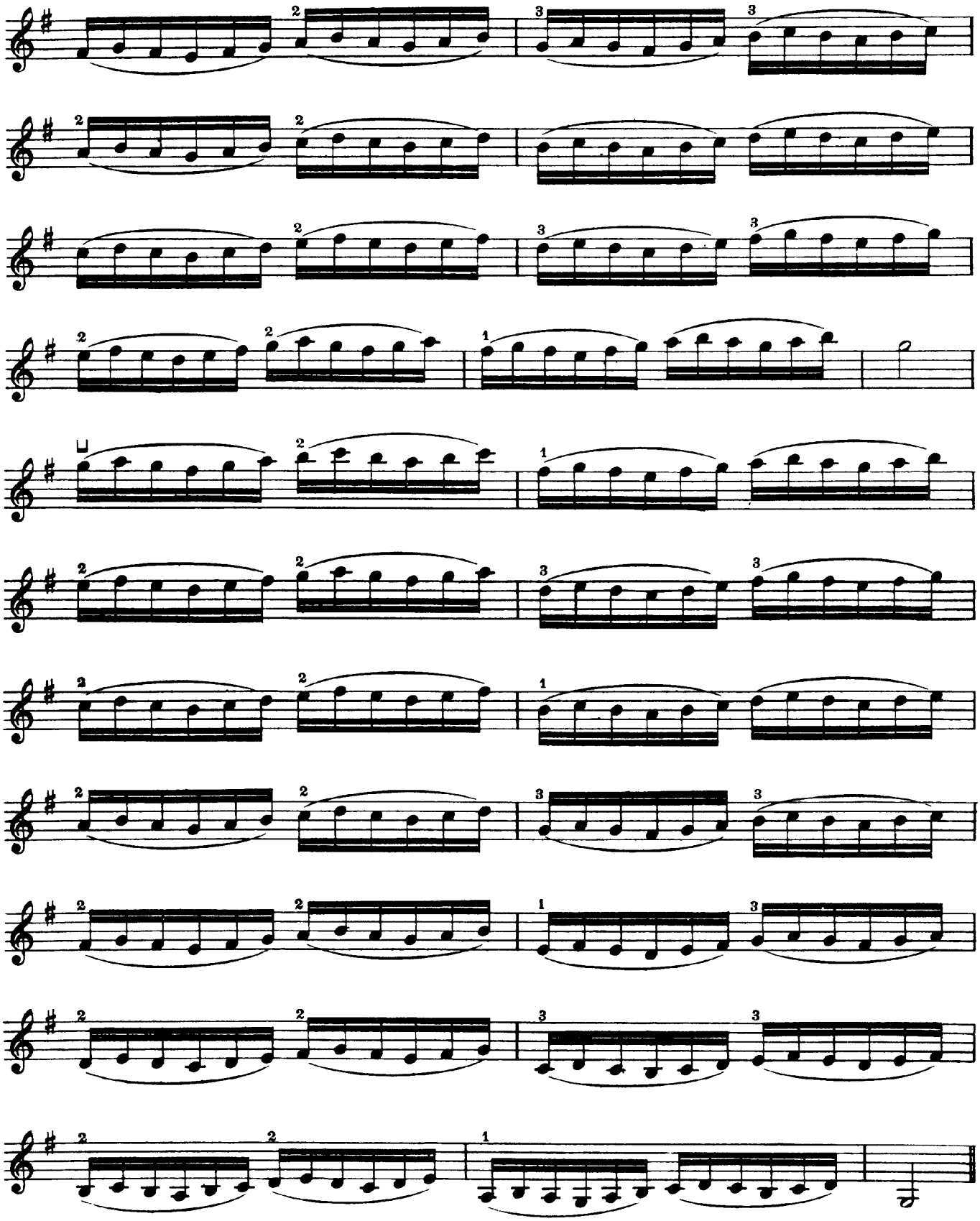
Their Divisions and Endings

1 Lento

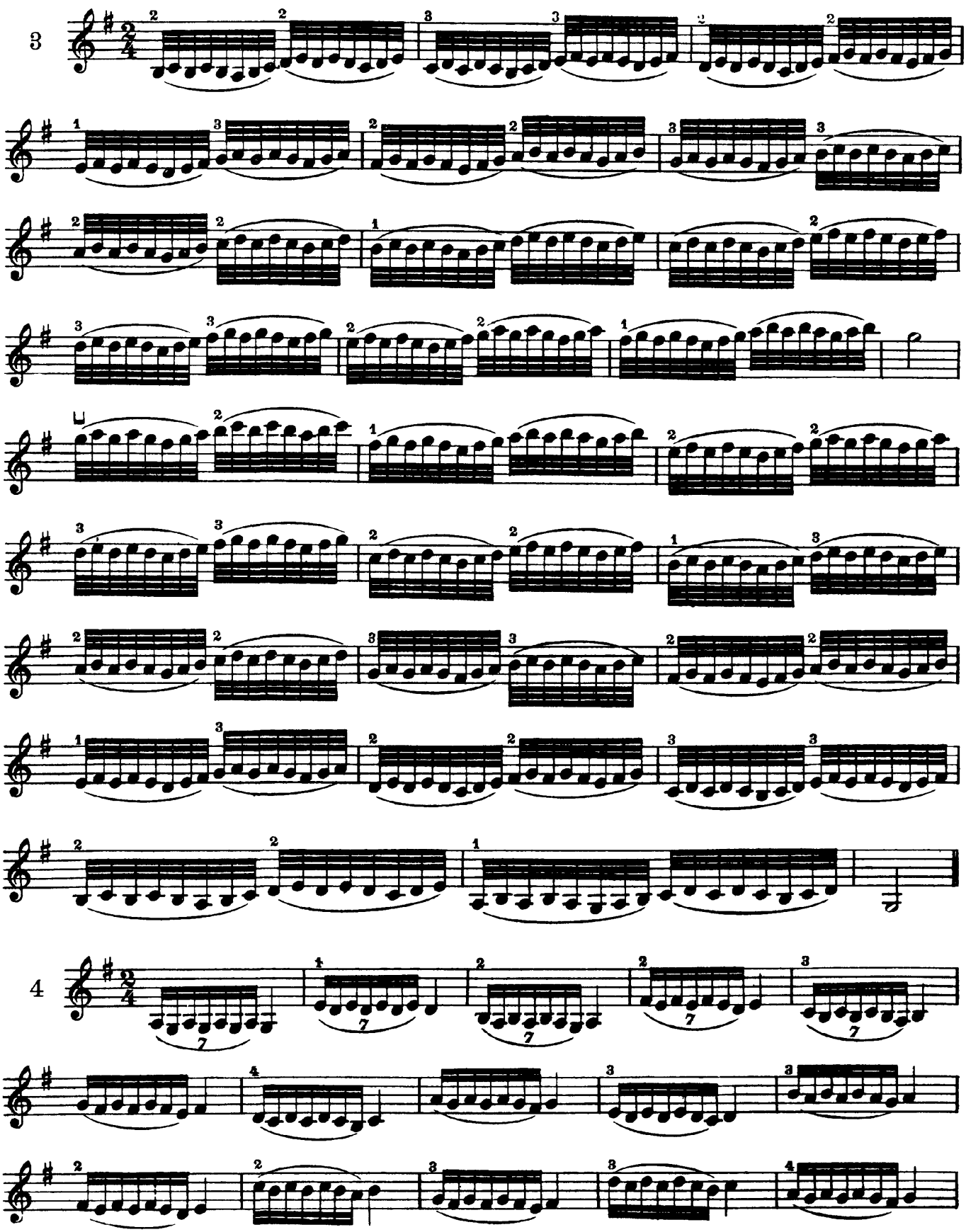


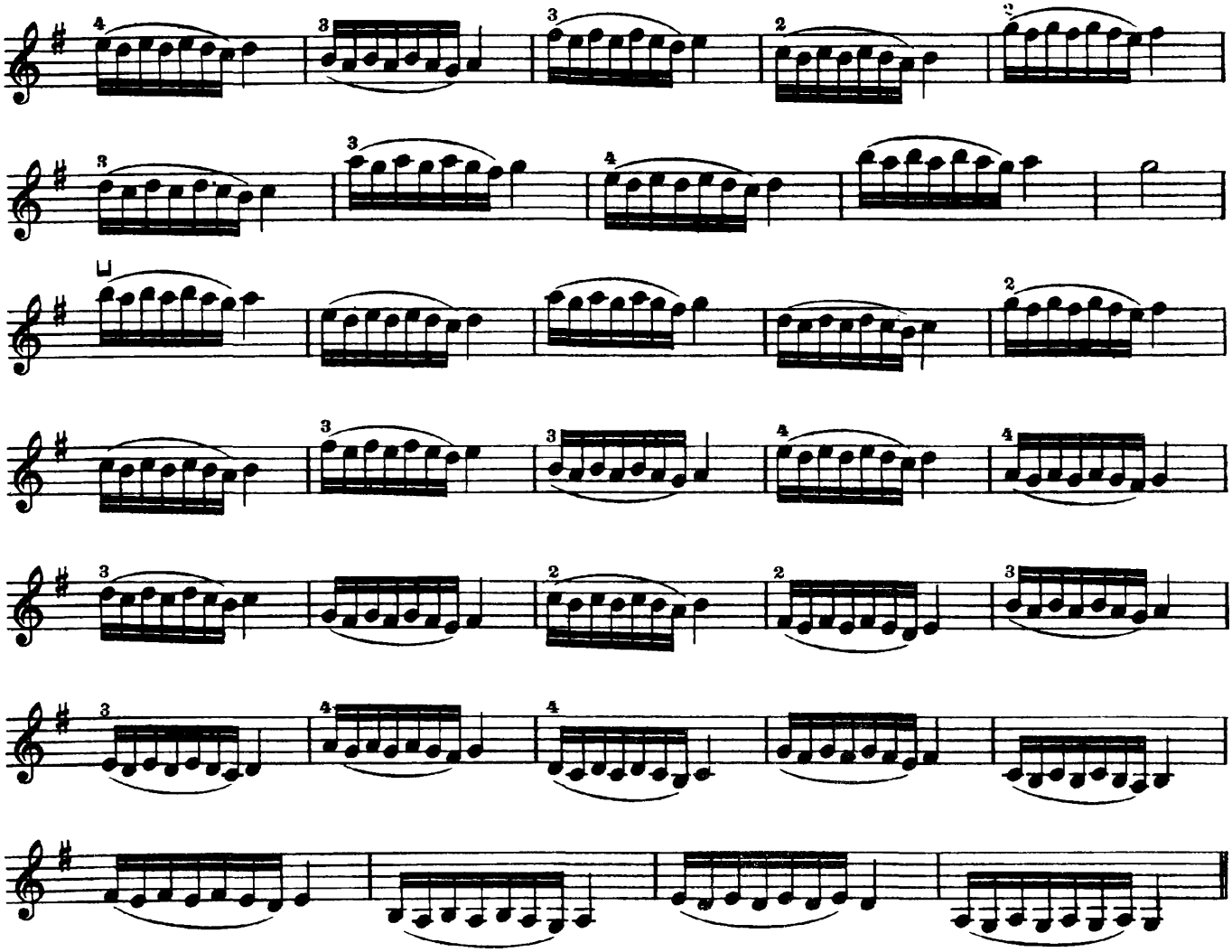
2 Lento



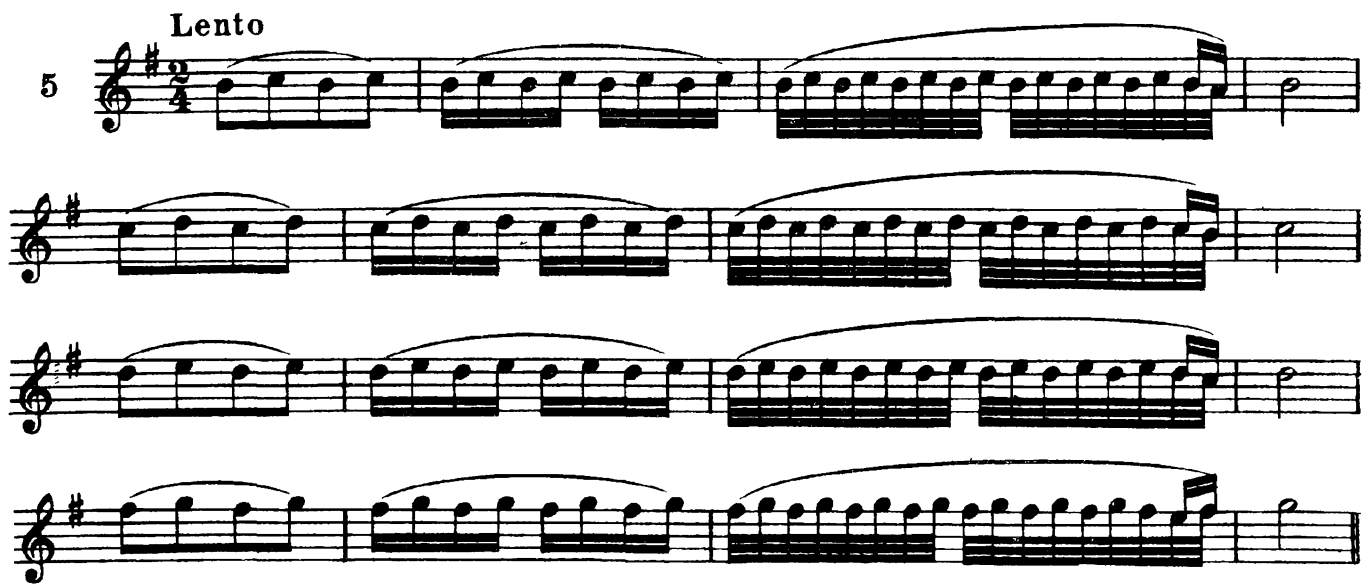


Lento



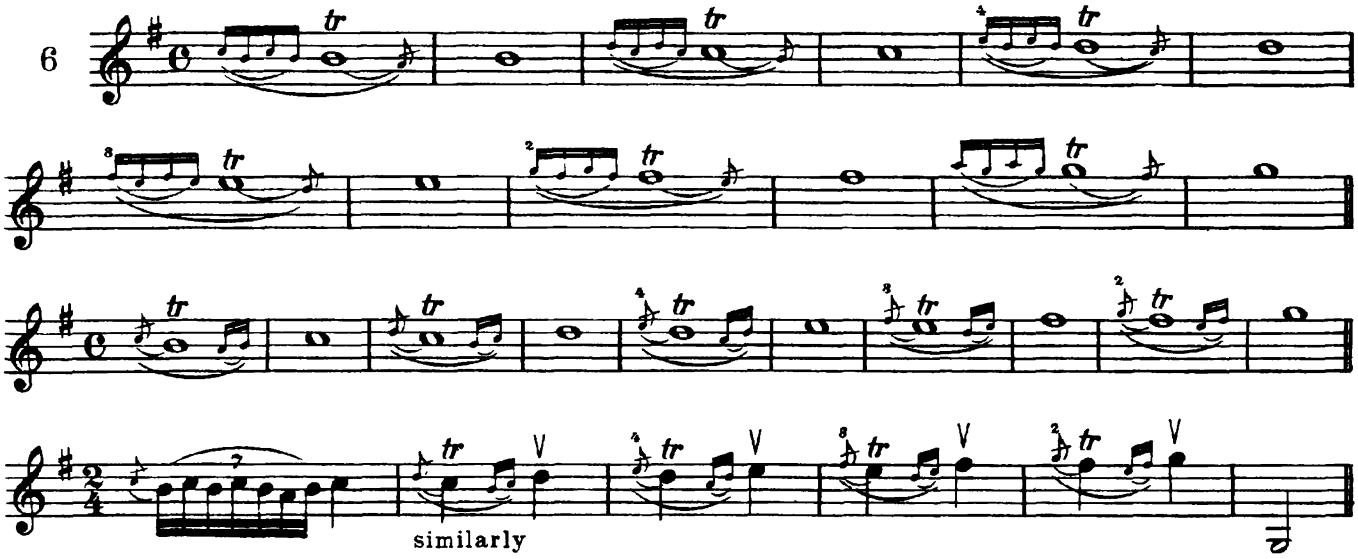


PREPARED TRILLS



Beginning the trills slowly, as in the preceding exercises.

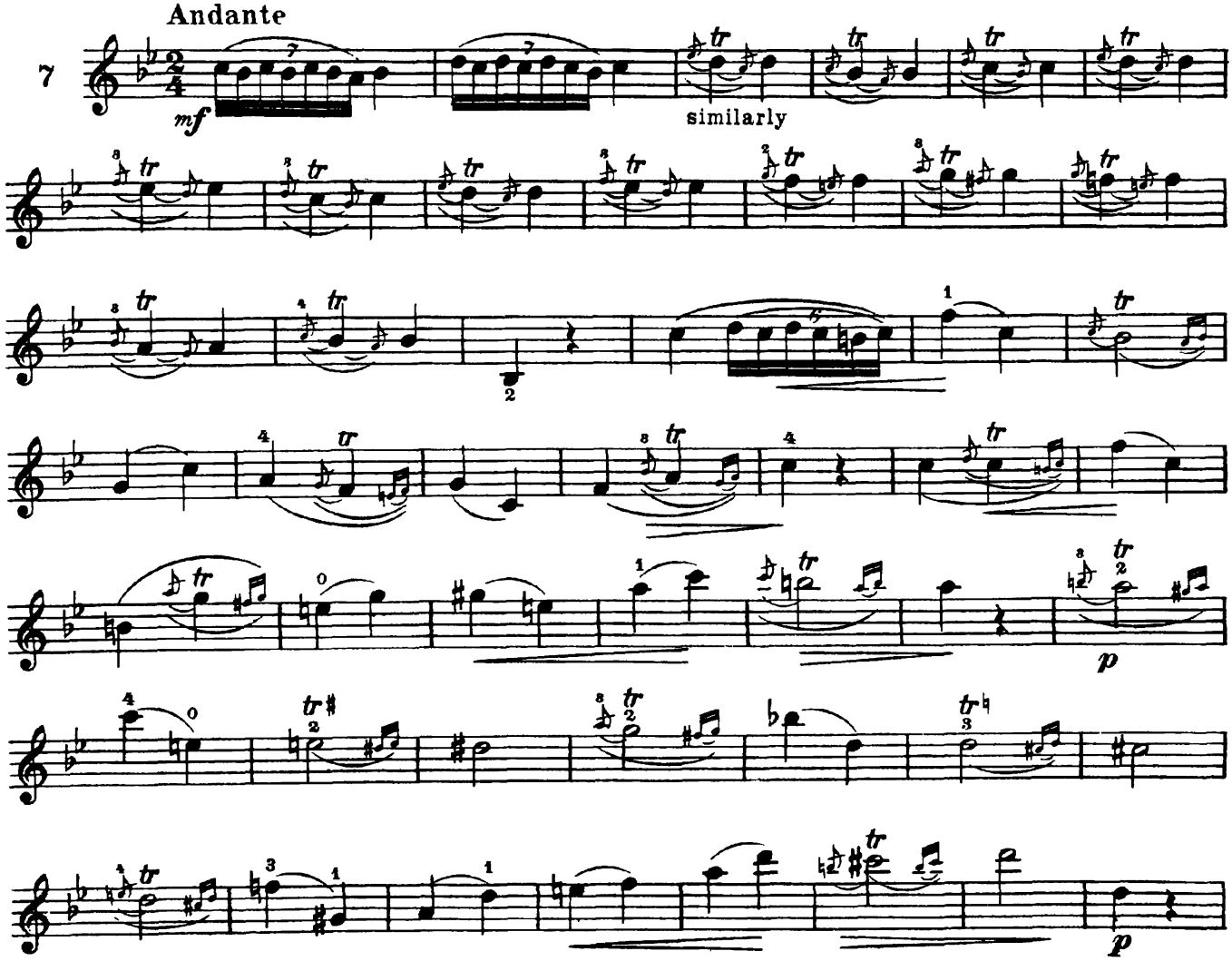
6

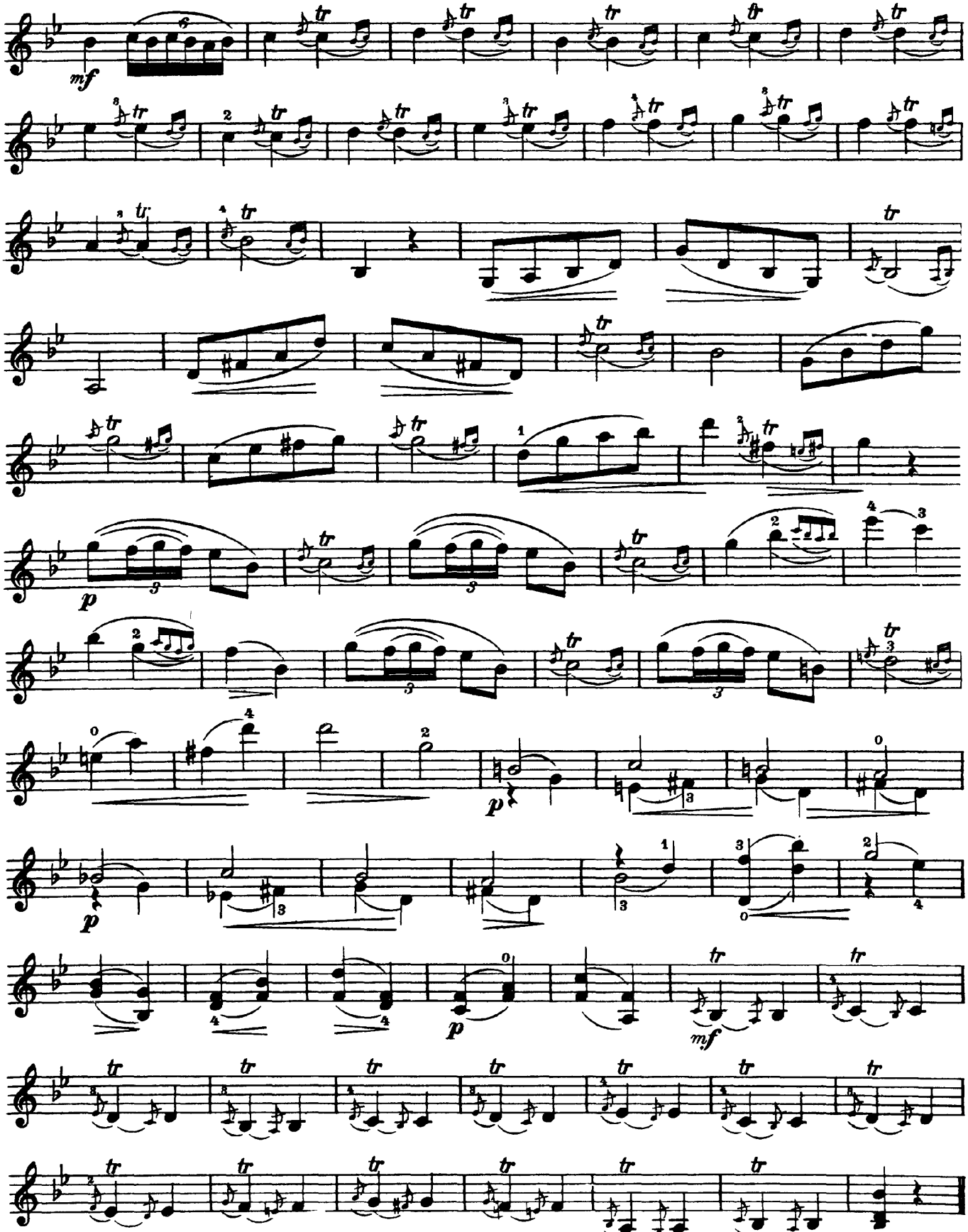


STUDY OF VARIOUS TRILLS

Andante

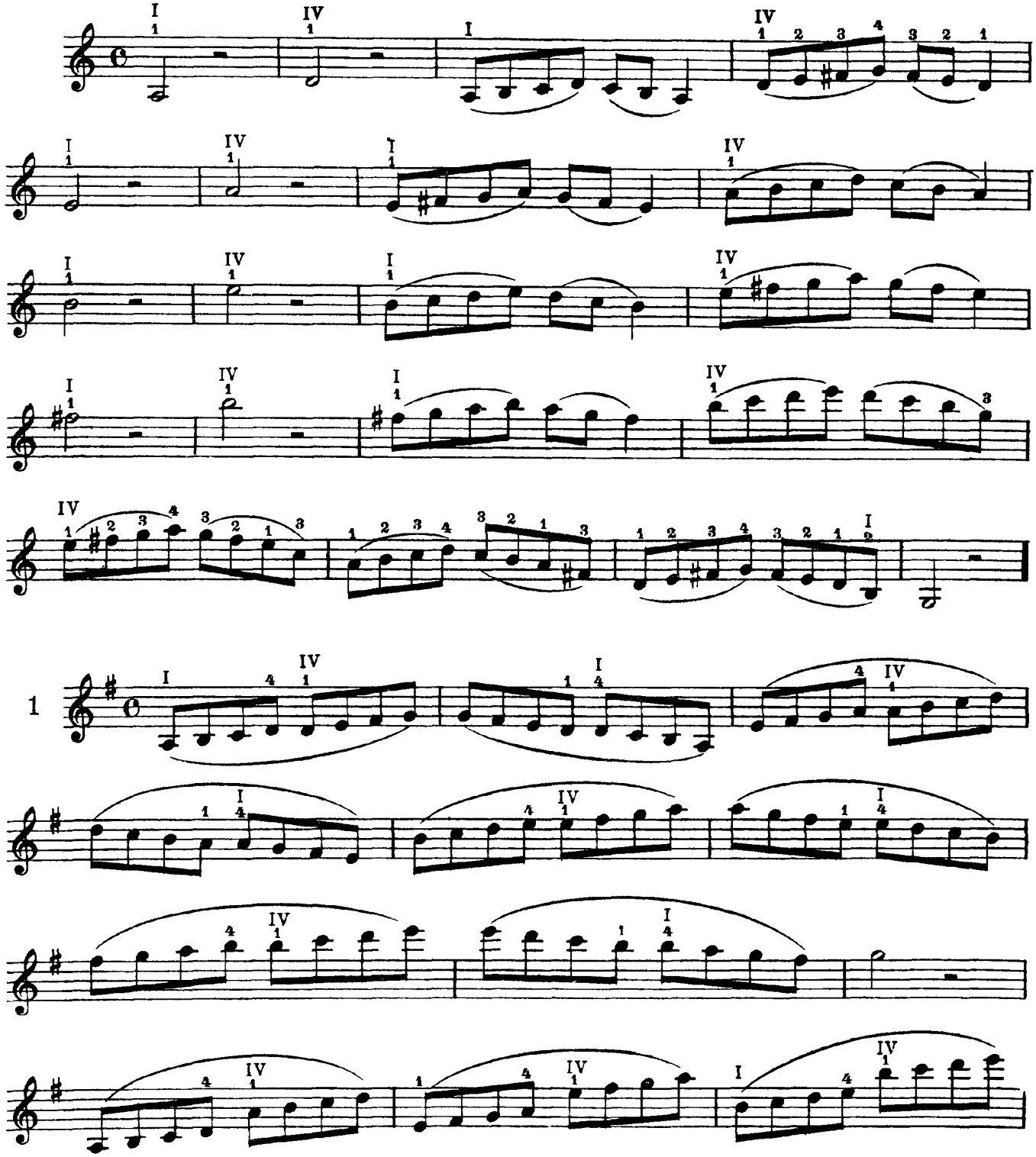
7

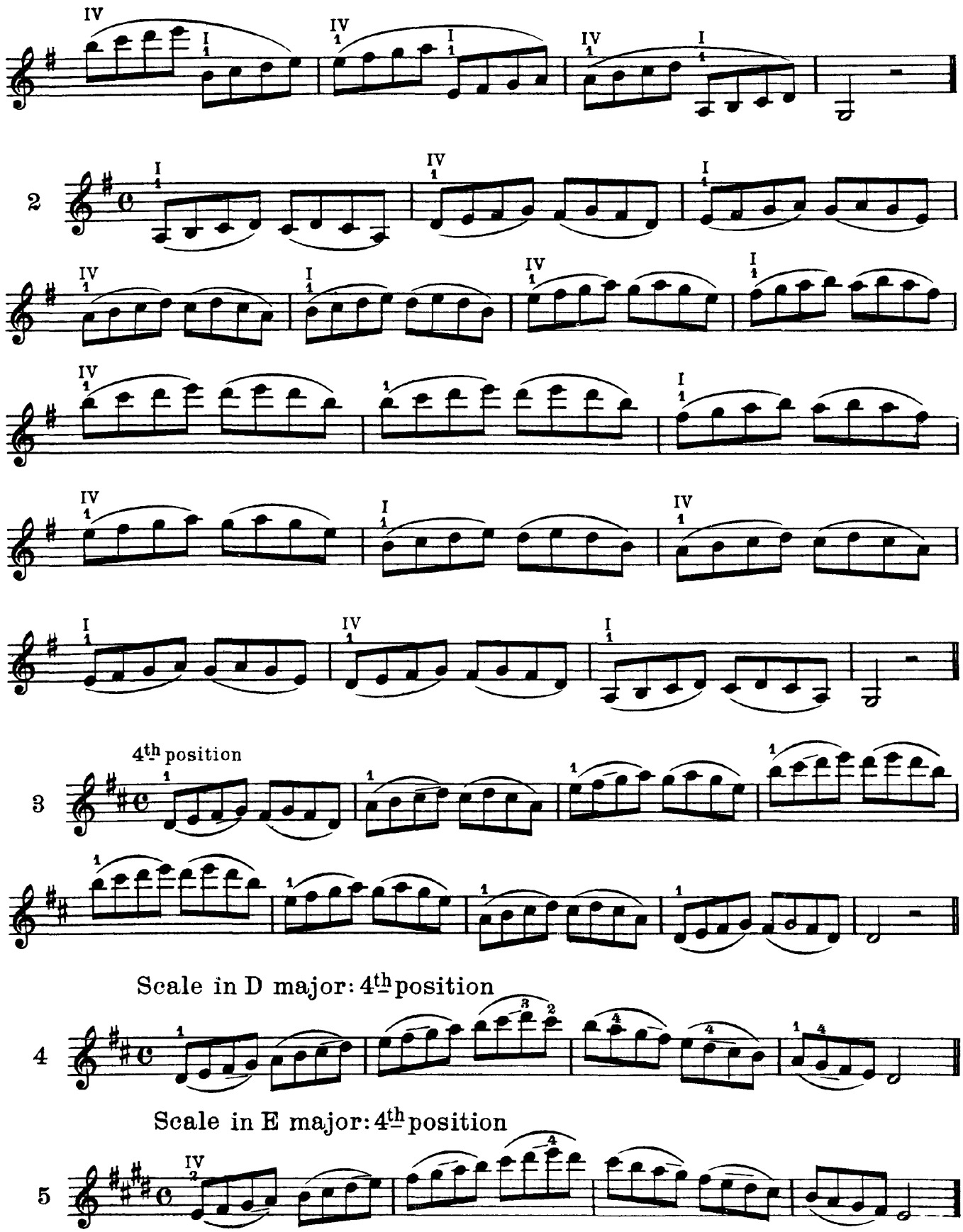


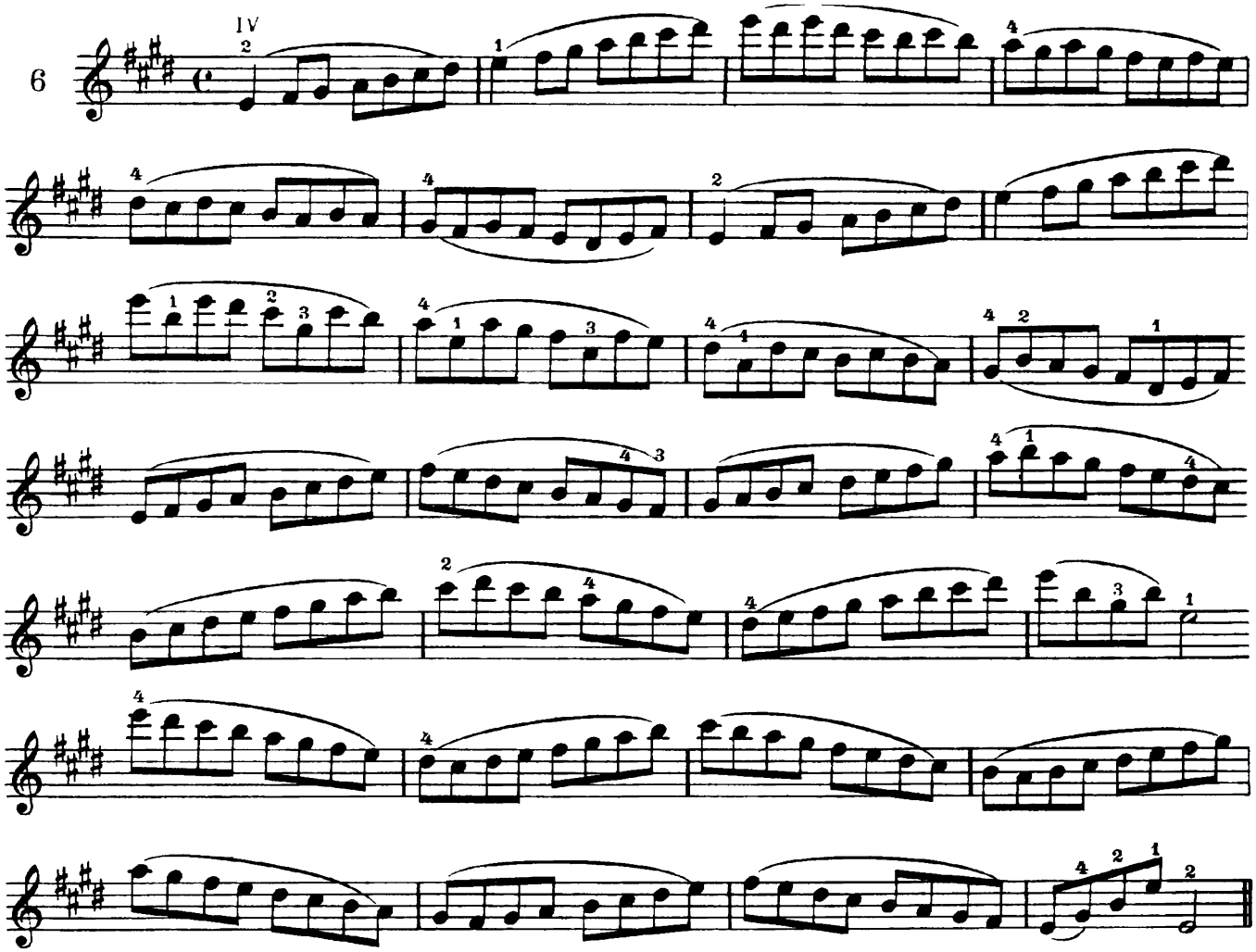


THE 4th AND 5th POSITIONS

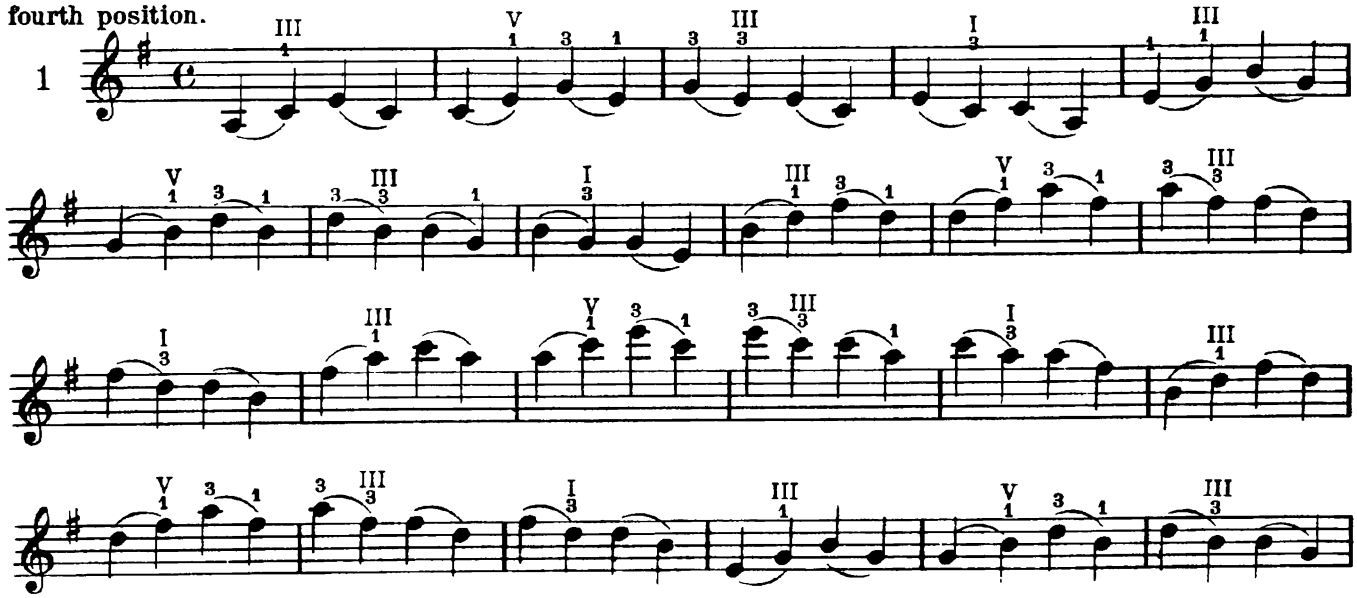
In order to pass easily from the first to the fourth and fifth positions, the pupil will have to bring the hand well away from the neck, and hold the neck between the first joint of the thumb and the third joint of the first finger, so that he need not alter the position of the hand, and will have the same freedom in moving and placing his fingers in the fourth and fifth positions, as in the first.

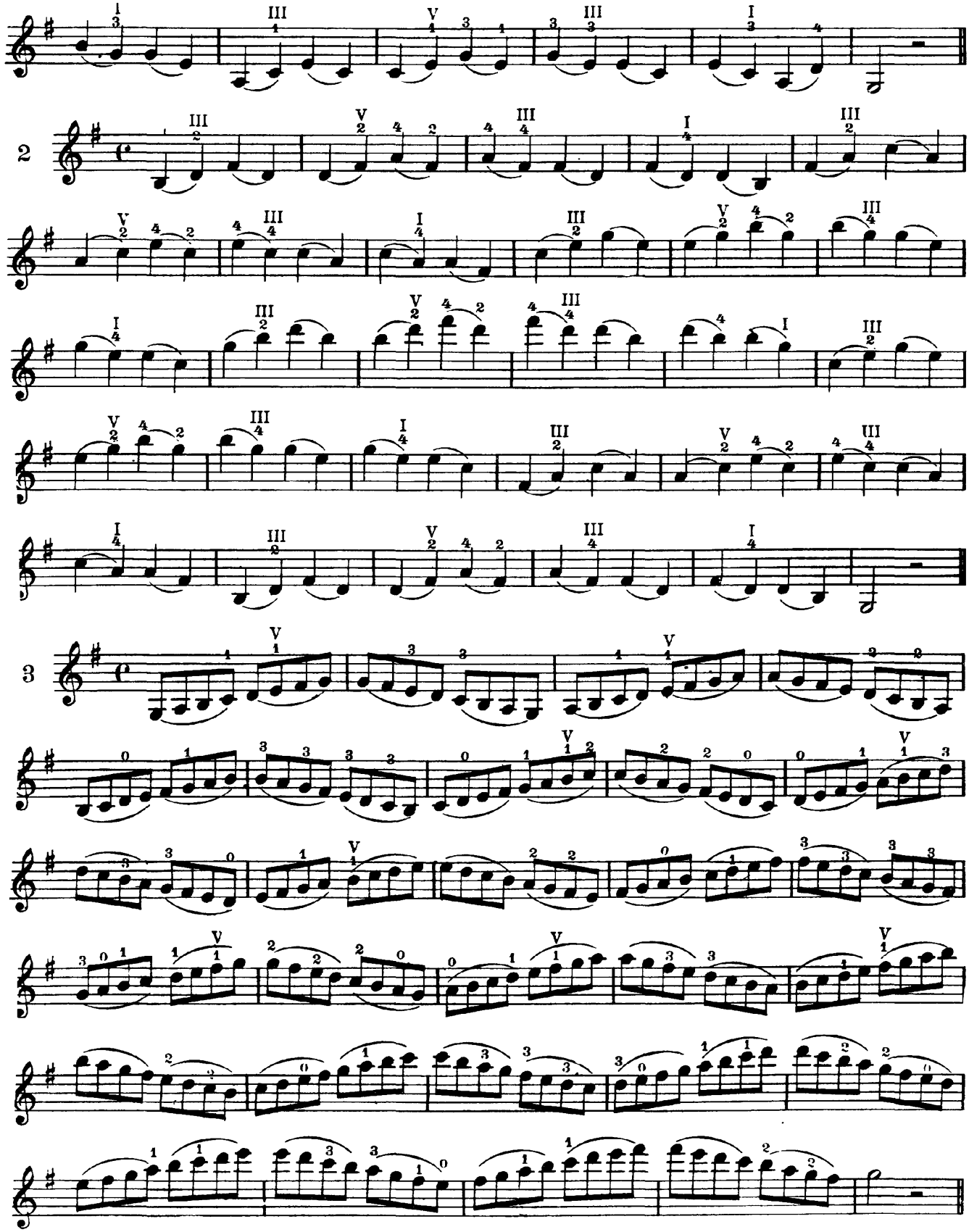



2
3
4th position
Scale in D major: 4th position
4
Scale in E major: 4th position
5



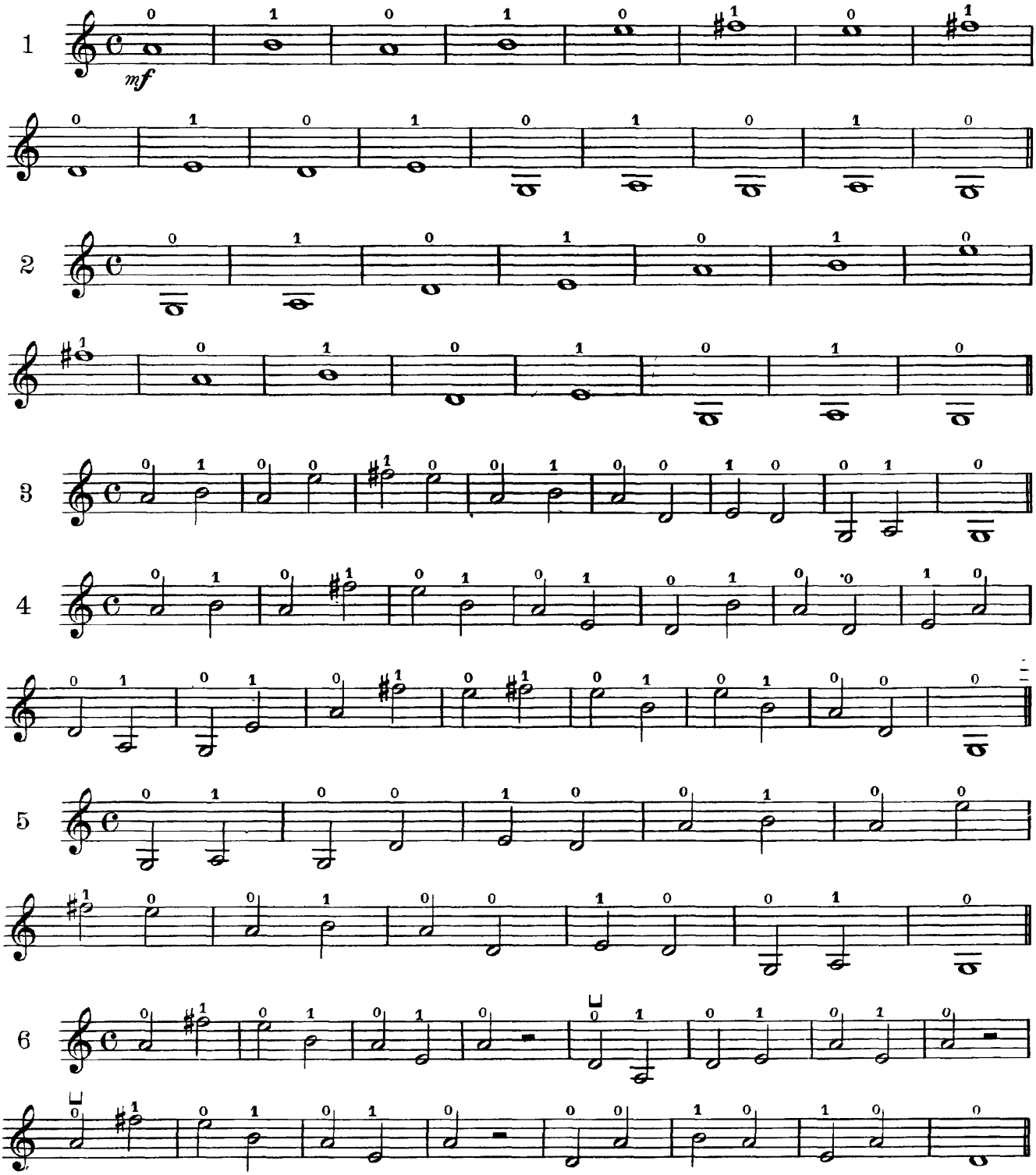
In shifting to the higher positions the thumb must move an equal distance with the hand until the thumb reaches the curve of the neck where the latter joins the body of the violin. This is about at the fourth position.

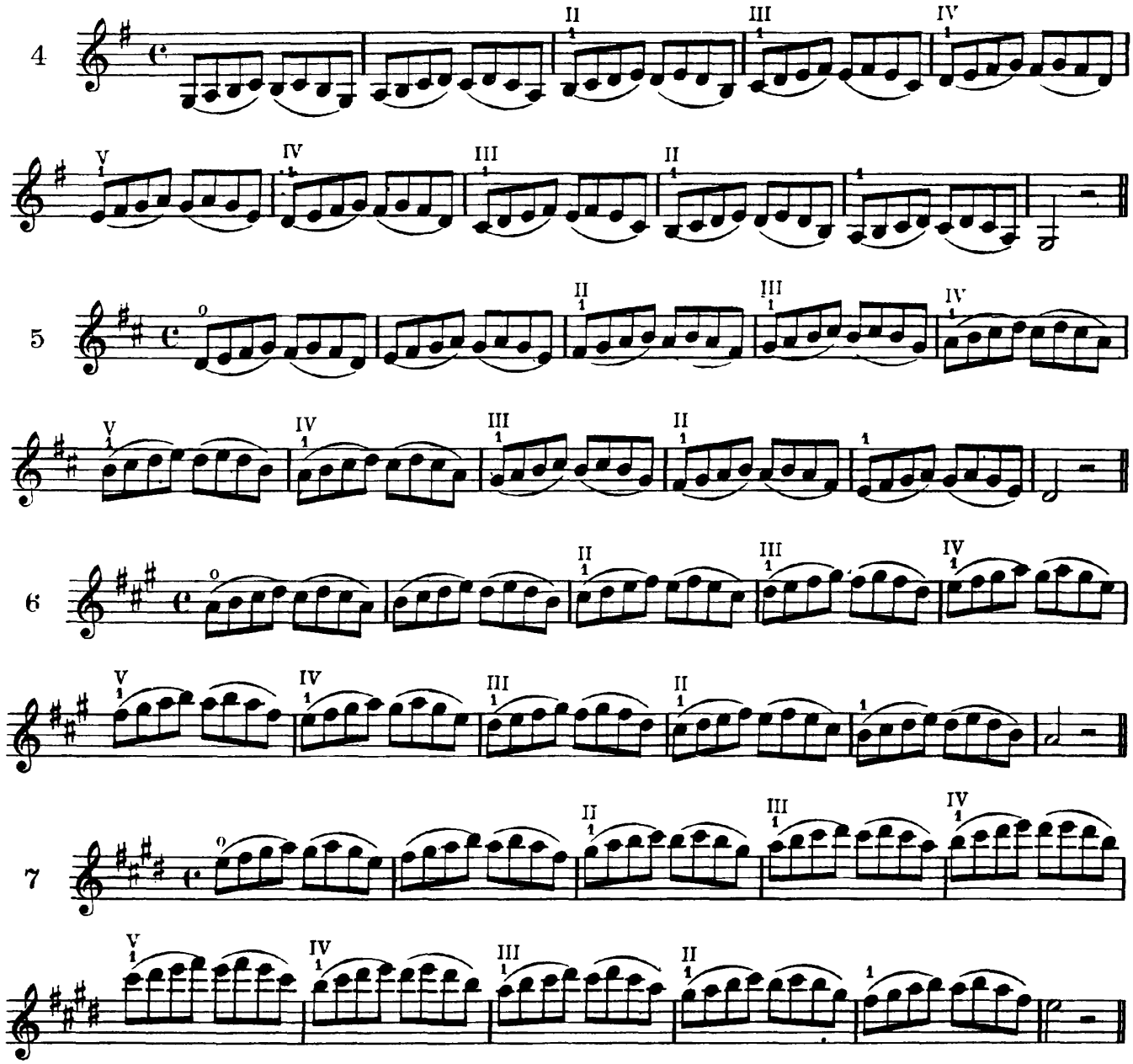




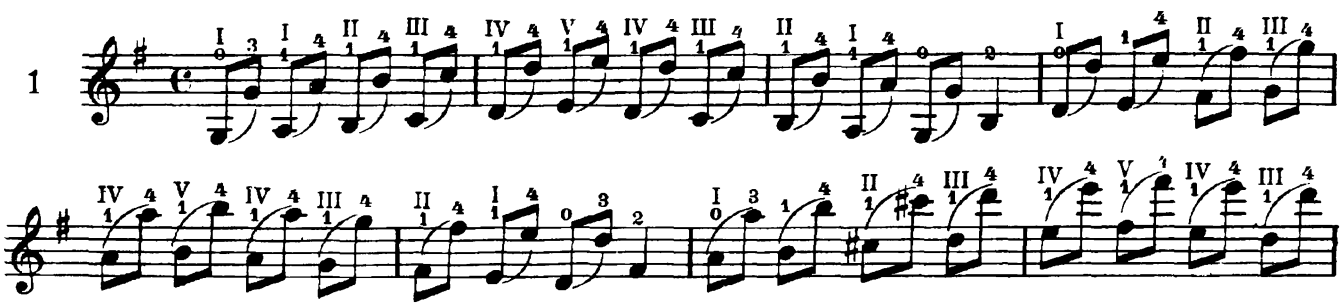
THE LEFT HAND

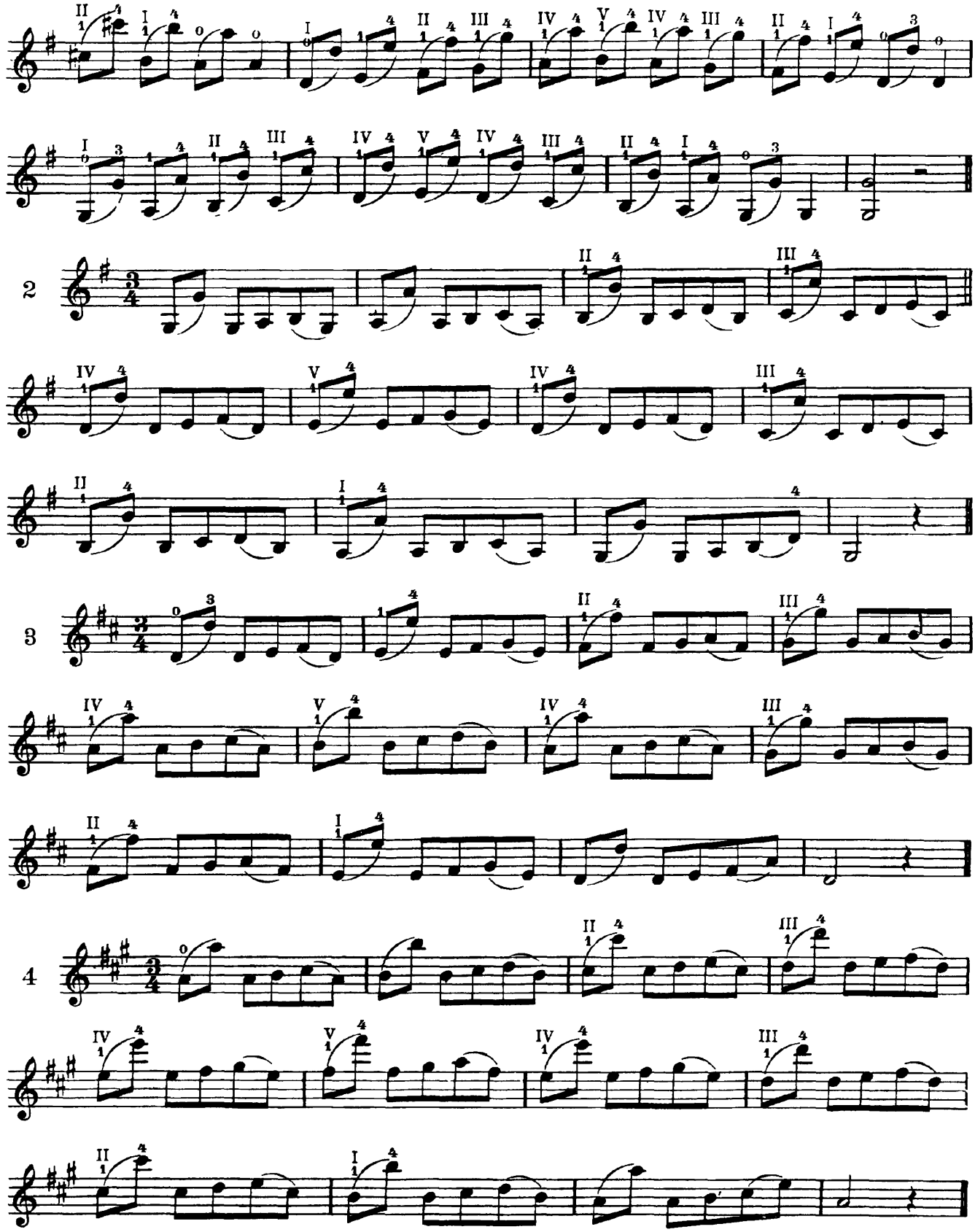
Hold the neck, close to the string-box, loosely between the first joint of the thumb and the third of the forefinger, with the fourth finger well to the left toward the neck of the instrument. Bring the fingers over to the strings with the thumb opposite the forefinger. The hand should be practically in a direct line with the forearm.



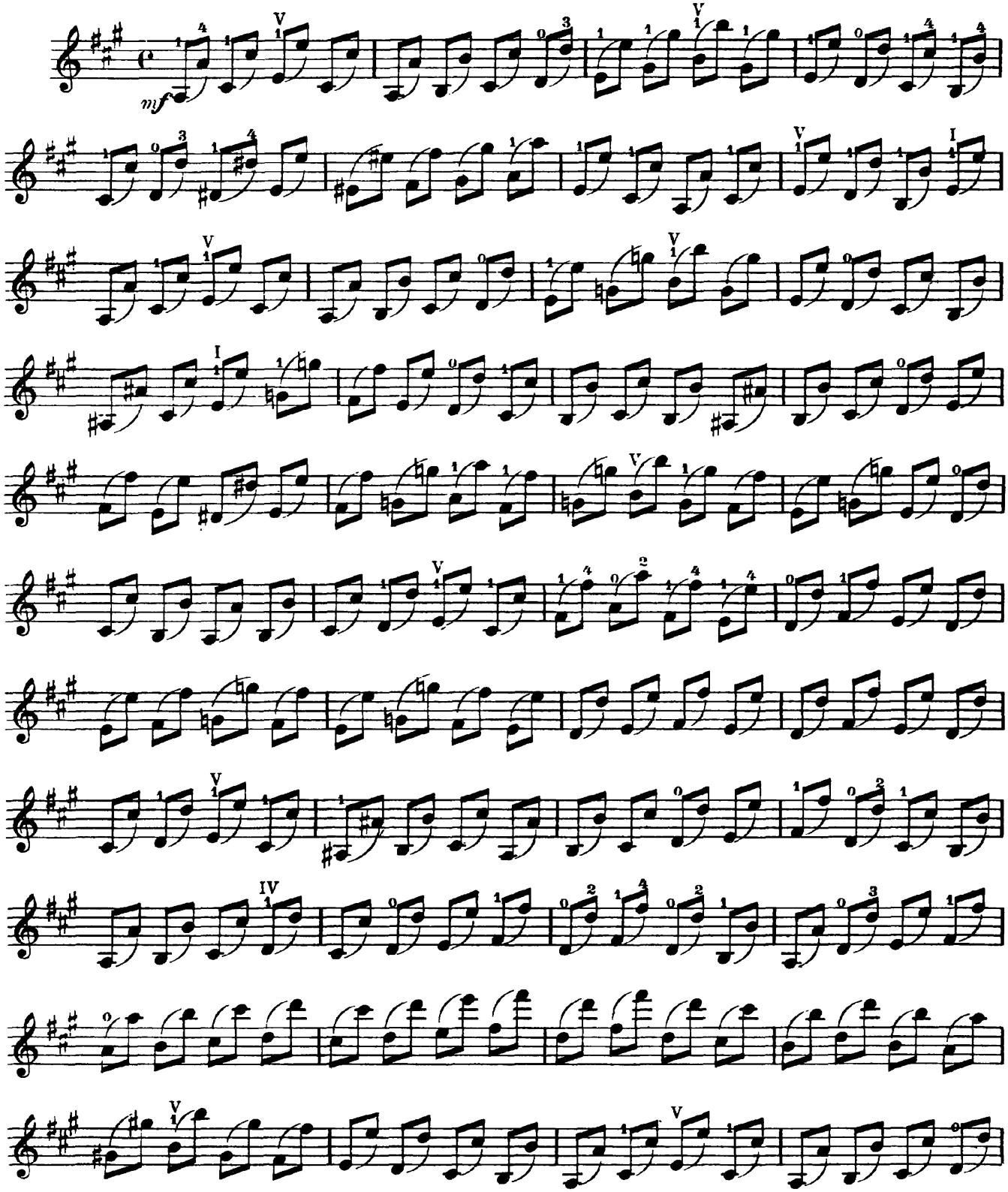


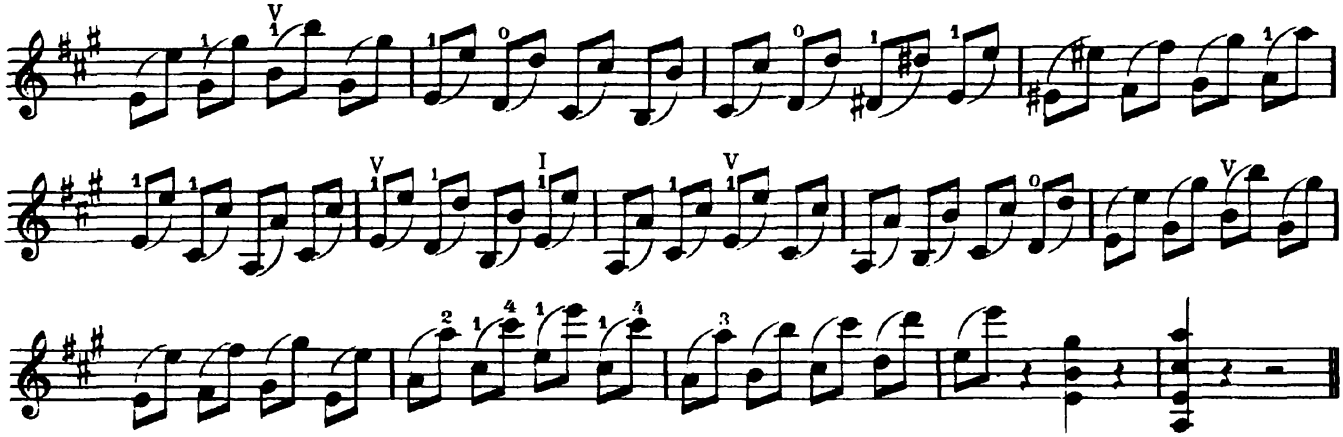
Octaves, in All Five Positions



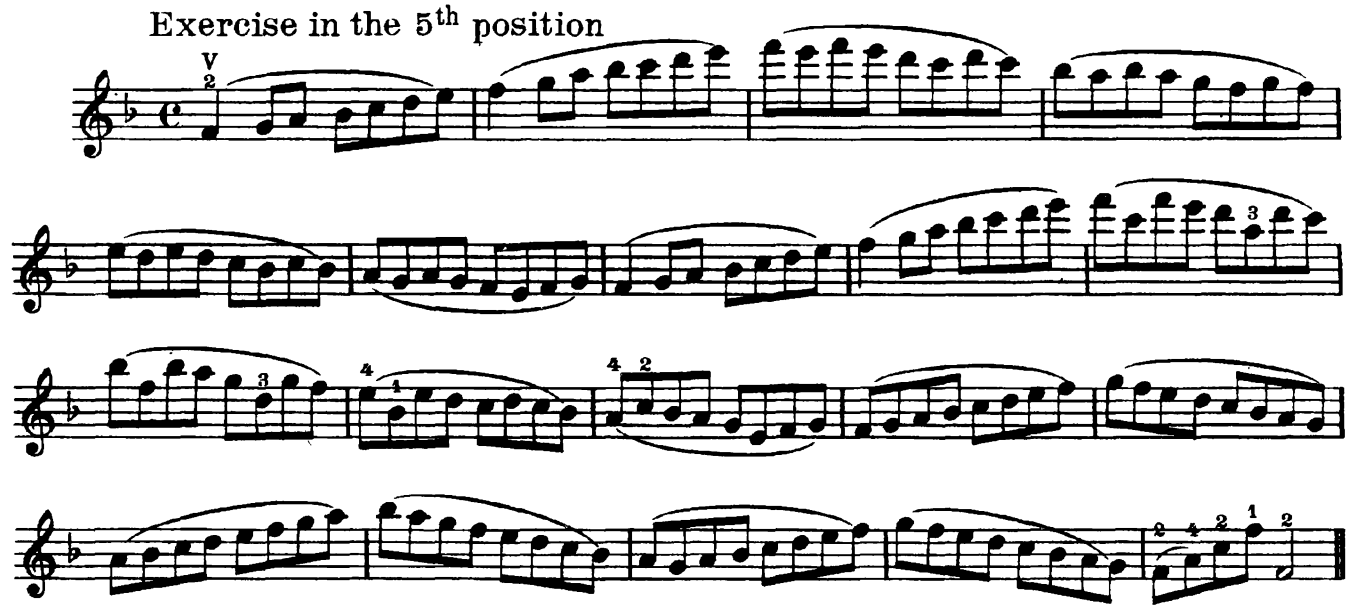


Study in Octaves in the Five Positions



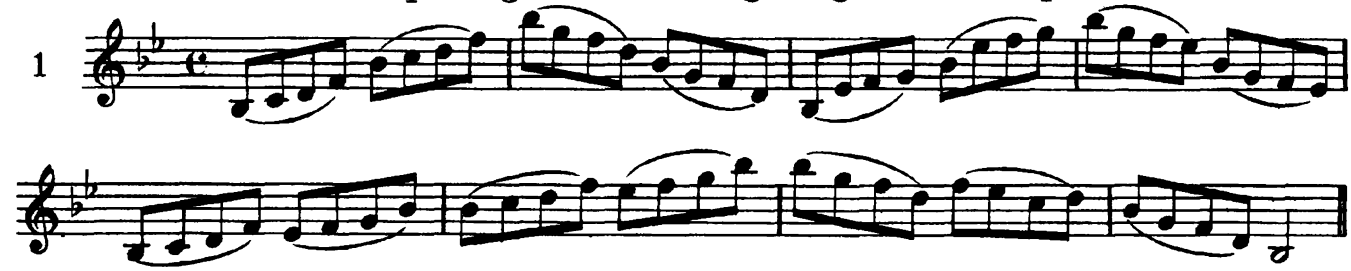


Exercise in the 5th position



Exercises requiring the same fingering in the five positions

1



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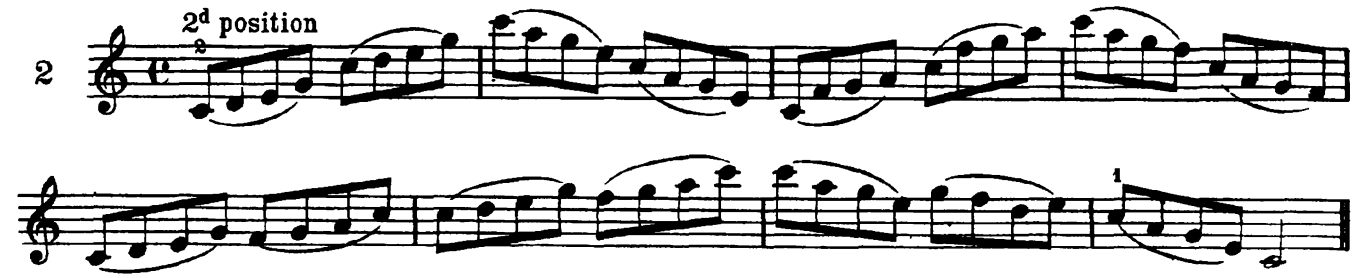
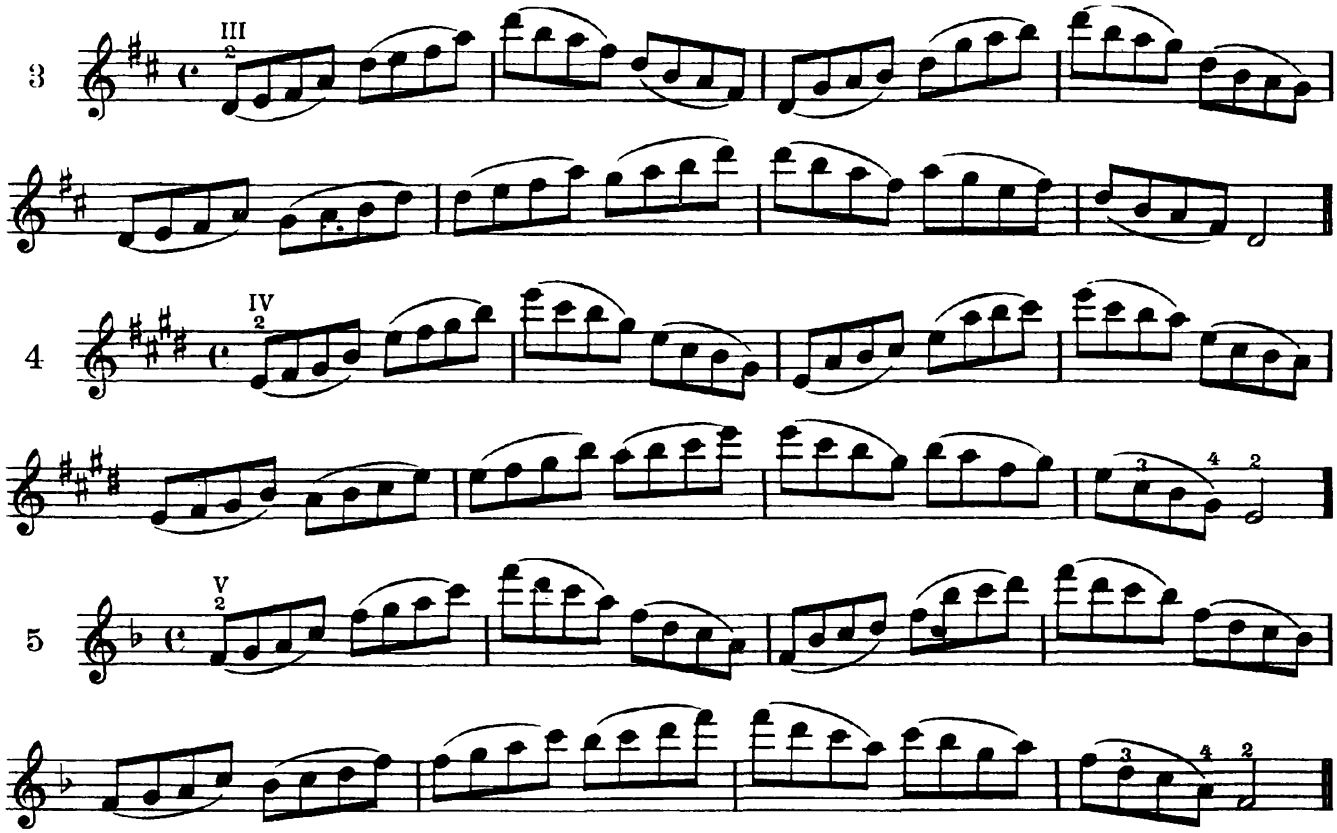
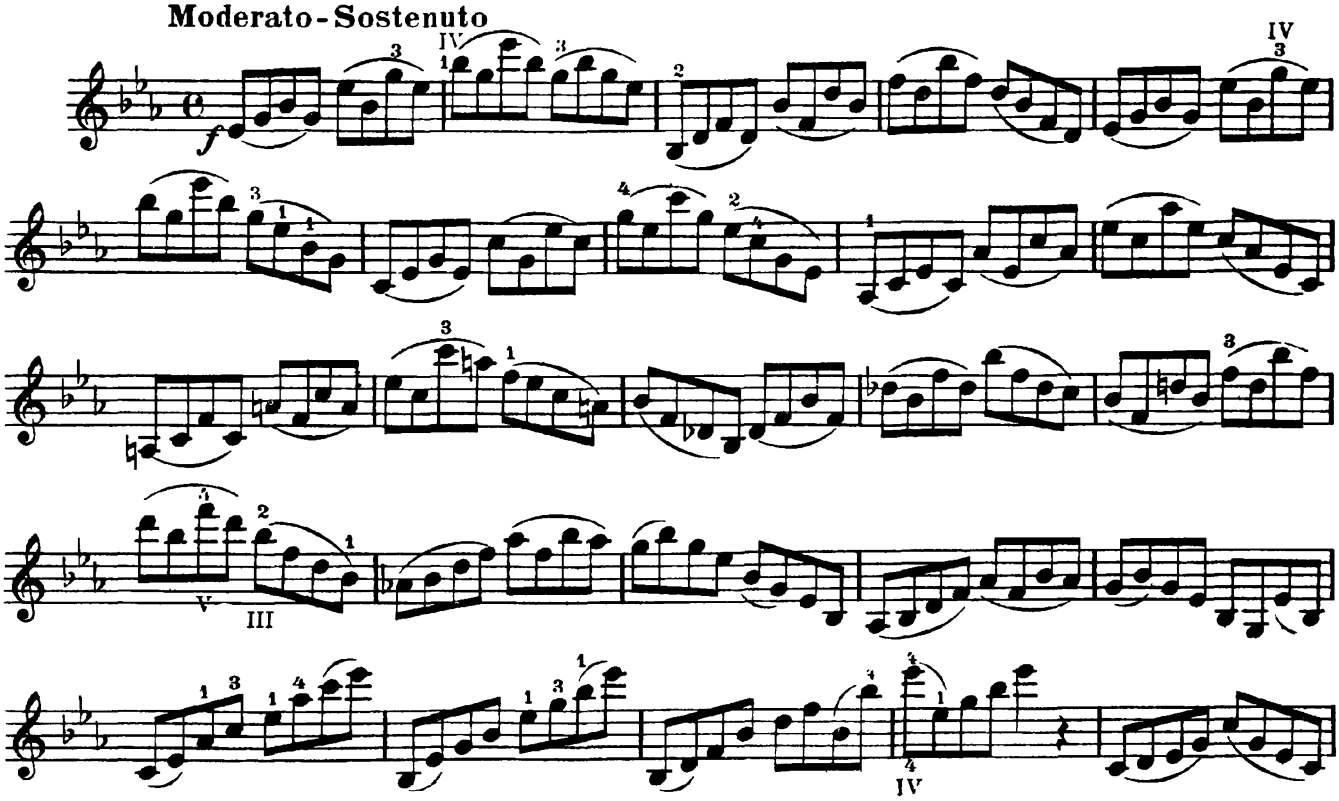
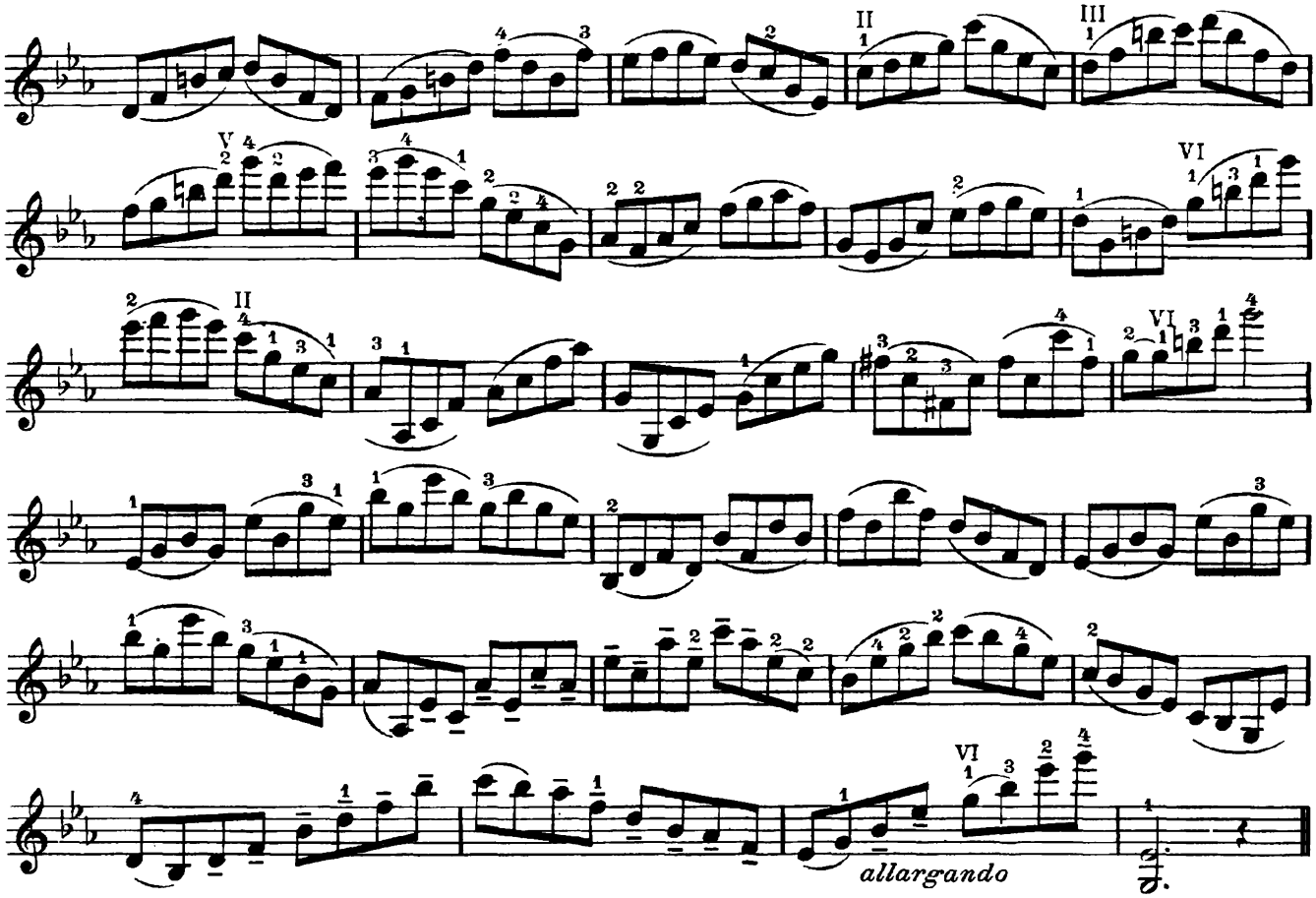




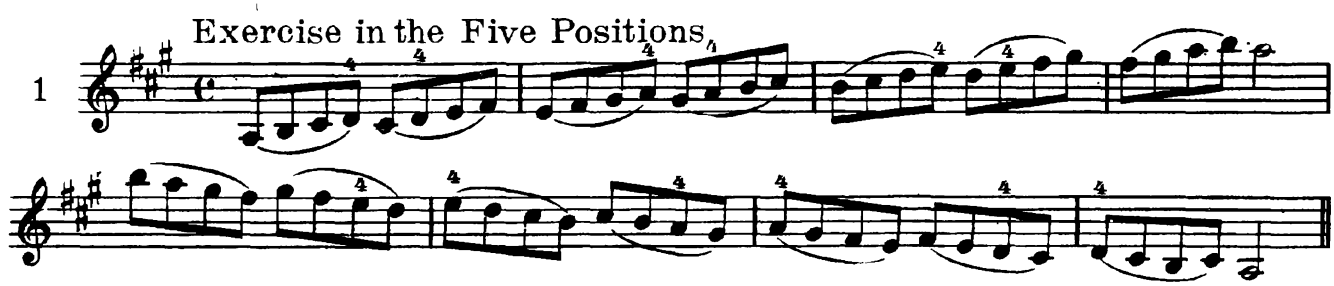
Study in the Five Positions

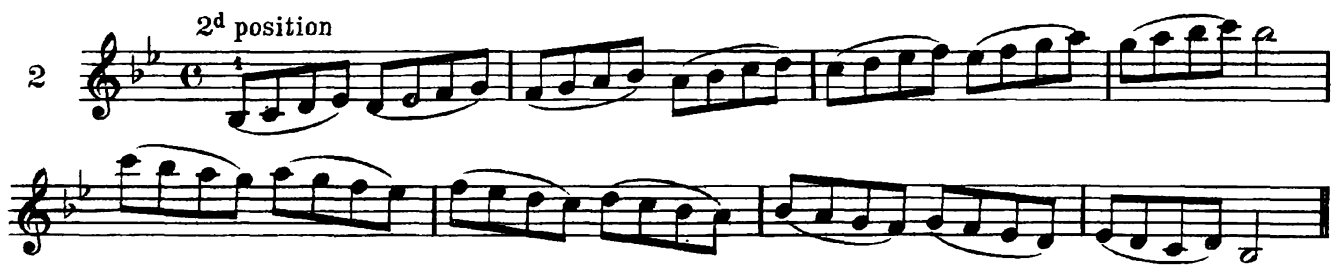
Moderato-Sostenuto

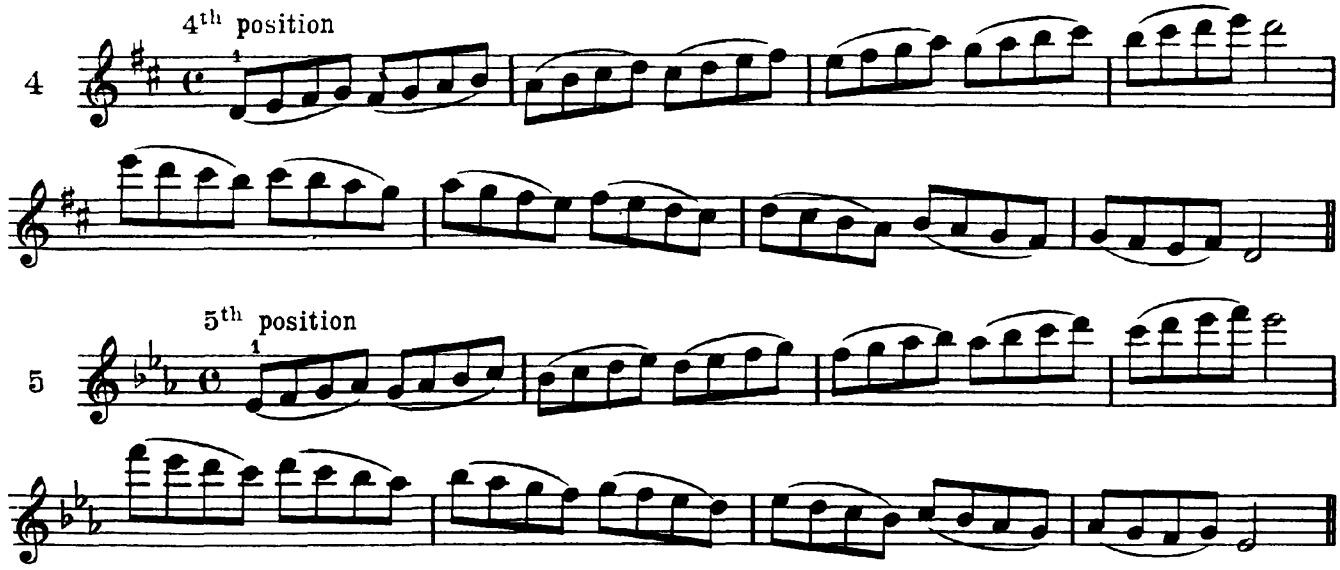




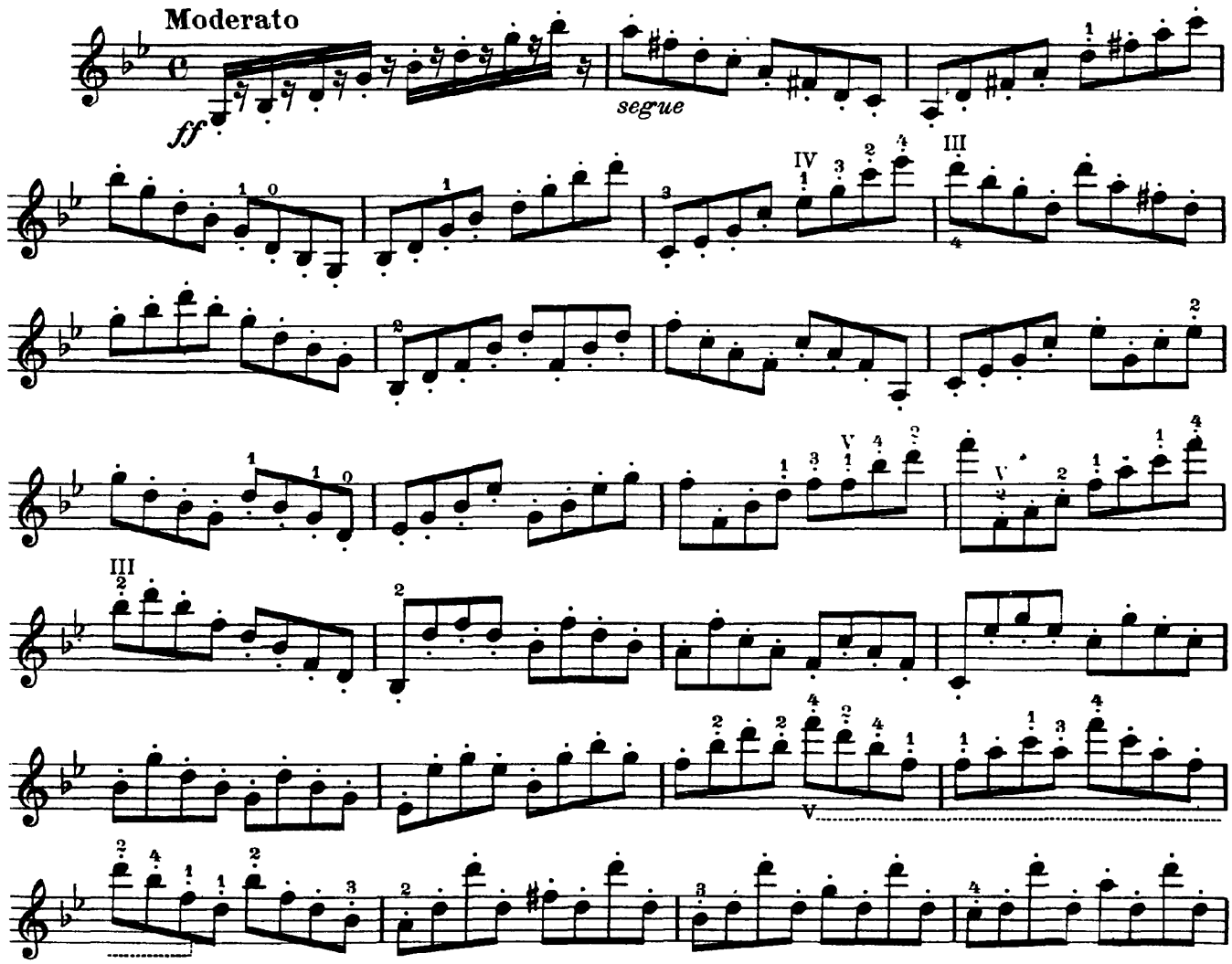
Exercise in the Five Positions.

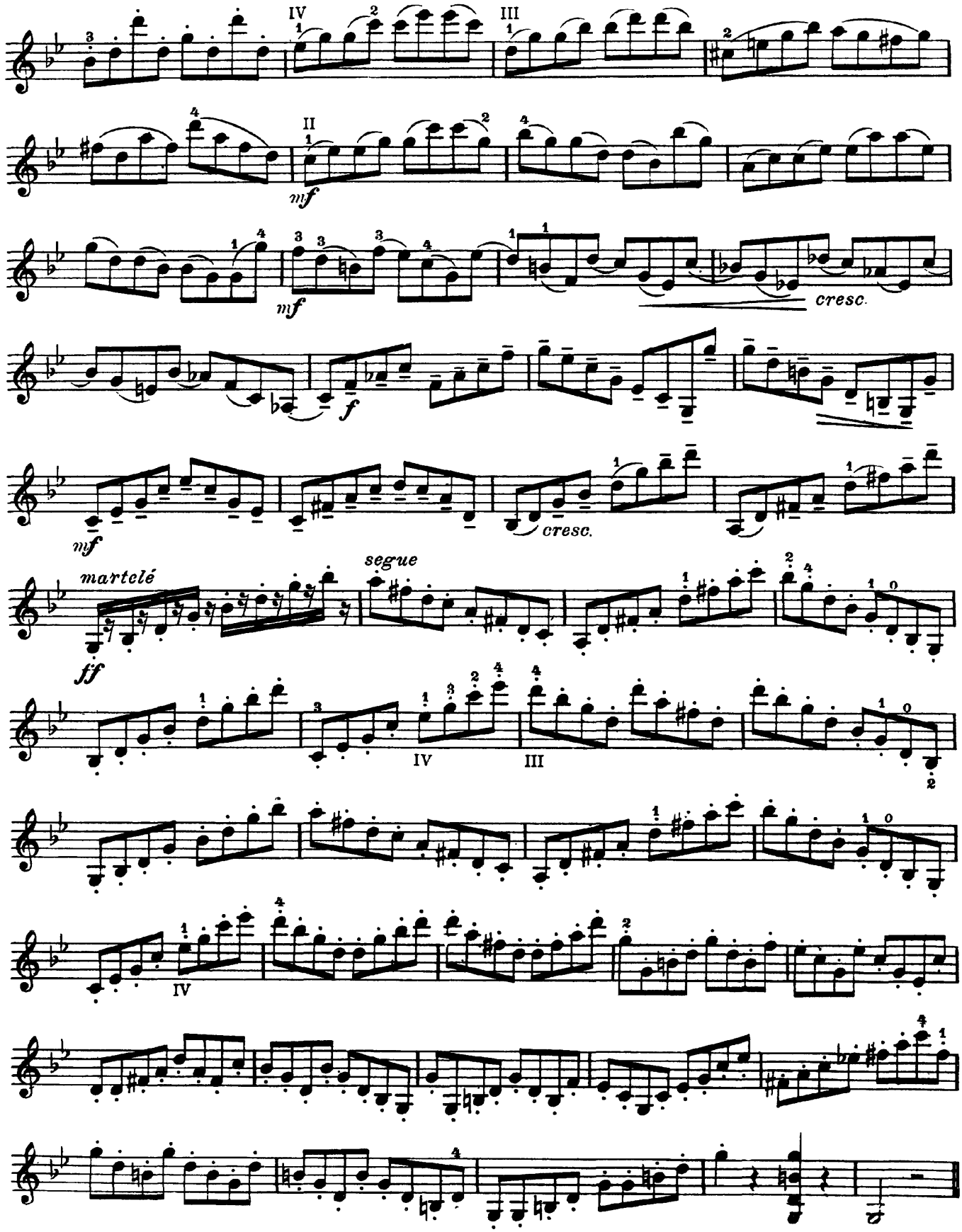




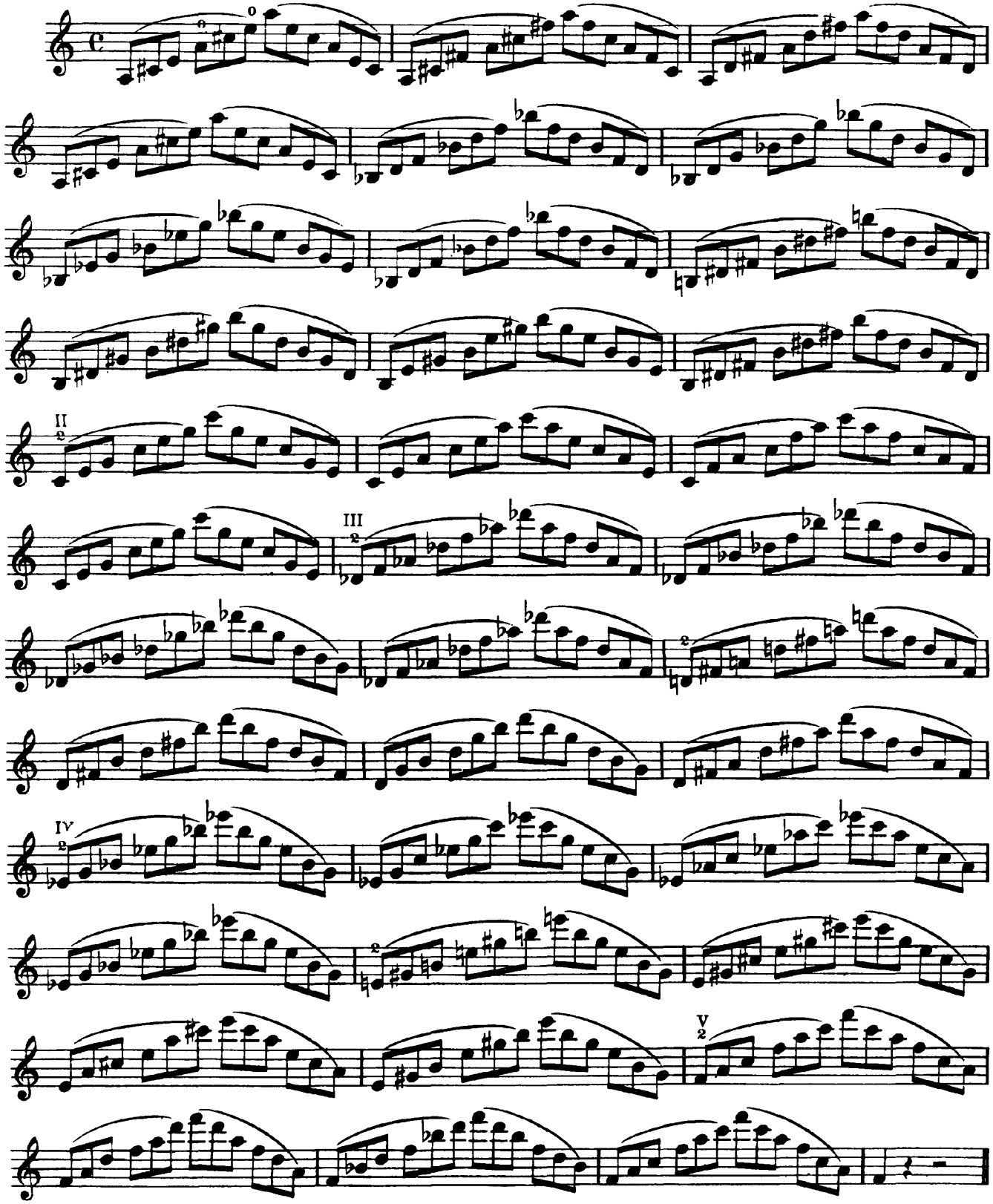


ÉTUDE ON THE MARTELÉ

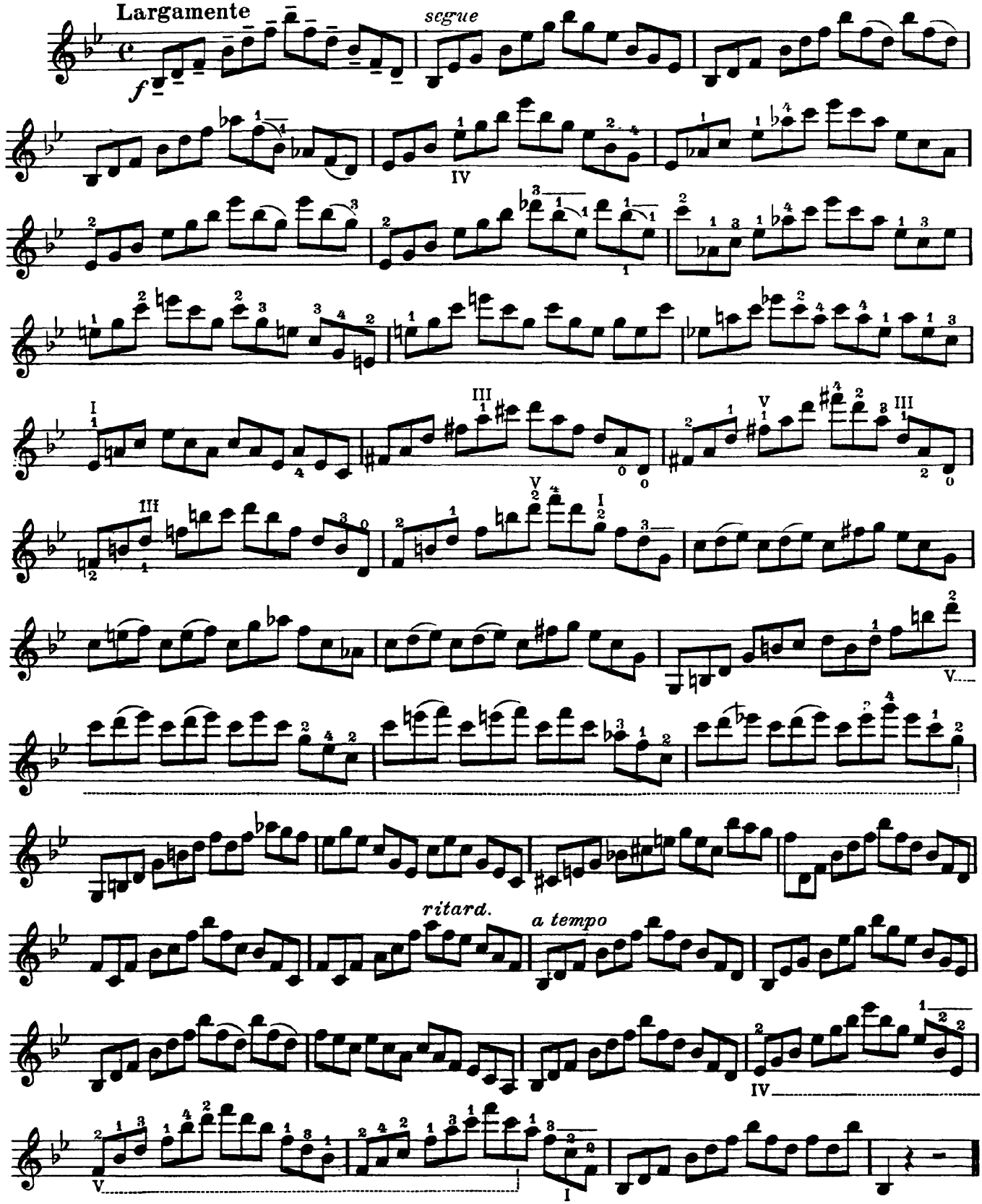
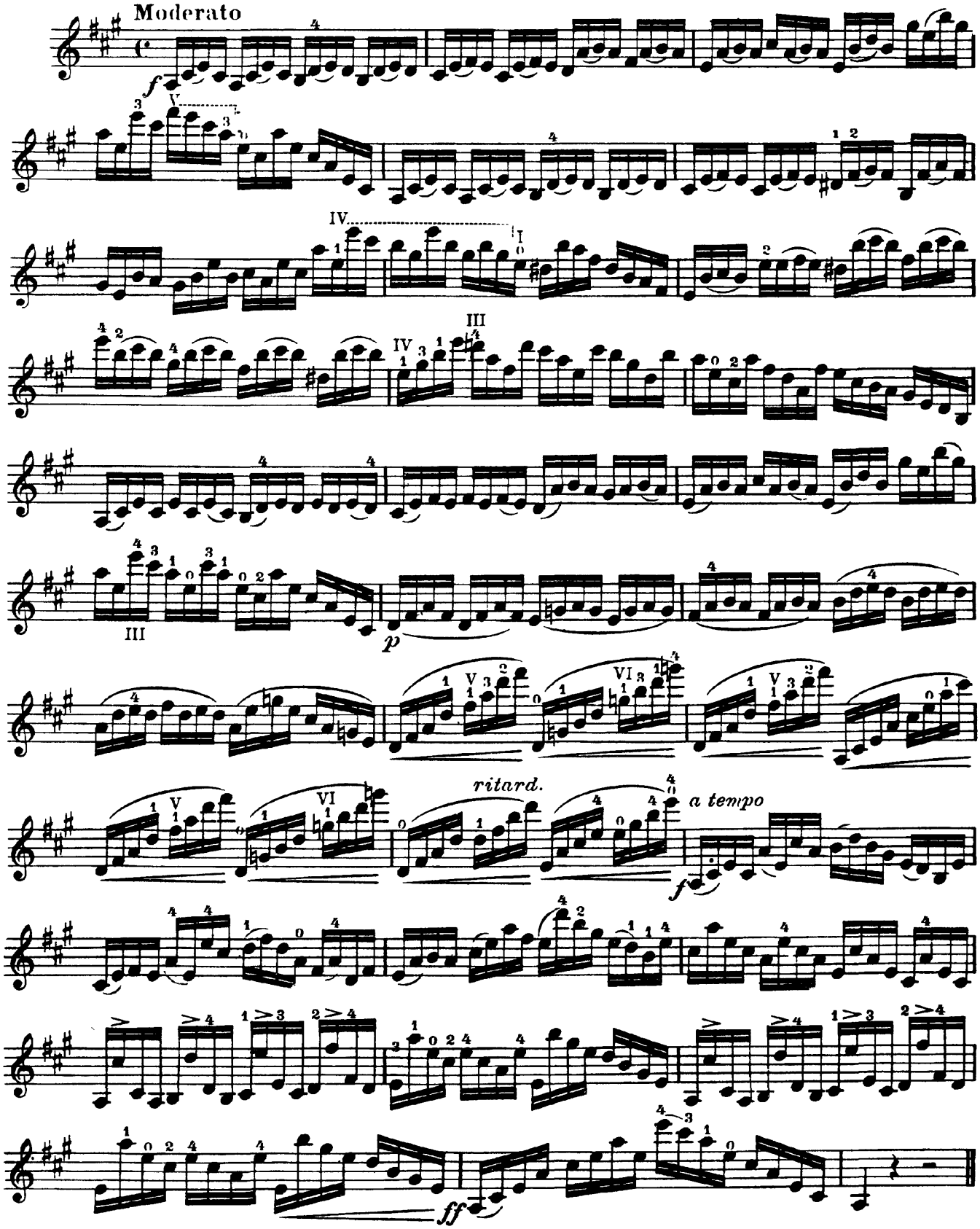



IV
III
II
mf
mf
cresc.
f
mf
cresc.
martelé
ff
segue
IV
III
IV

STUDY IN THE FIVE POSITIONS



STUDY IN THE FIVE POSITIONS



ETUDE