Inside the Circle:

A Proven Method for a Successful Marching Band

By Matt and Ben Harloff

WOODWIND CHAPTER

Director's Score

2nd Edition

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WOODWIND CHAPTER

Mouthpiece Exercises

Exercise Objectives

- Focus on strengthening muscles to improve quality of sound.
- Work the approach to the method of articulation and quality of sound as students articulate.
- Students will work on matching tone quality as well as matching pitch.
- Students will work on flexibility within intonation.
- Focus on getting control of different dynamic levels.
- Students will work on starting and stopping the note at the same time.

Instruction Notes

- Every note that you see is concert pitch. It is recommended that you have a piano OR use some method of an electronic tone so students can work to match pitch.
- Each of the instruments, except bass clarinet, have different notes:
  - Flute Closed Head Joint: Low A (regular)-High E (over-blown)
  - Flute Open Head Joint: A above staff (regular)-High A (over-blown)
  - Clarinet: F# (with barrel)-C (without barrel)
  - Bass Clarinet: F (without neck)
  - Alto Sax: Ab (with neck)-A (without neck)
  - Tenor Sax: E (with neck)-G (without neck)
  - Baritone Sax: E (with neck)-Eb (without neck)
- This exercise should be played at a loud dynamic level.
- Because you are dealing with the same note, you have flexibility with the exercise. Repeat each phrase as many times as you like. Choose from a 9 count phrase, 8 count phrase or articulation exercise. Create your own exercise using rhythms of the show you are currently working on. Options are endless. What is important is working on matching quality of sound, pitch, method of articulation and starting and stopping the tone together.

QUICK COMMENTS FOR STUDENTS

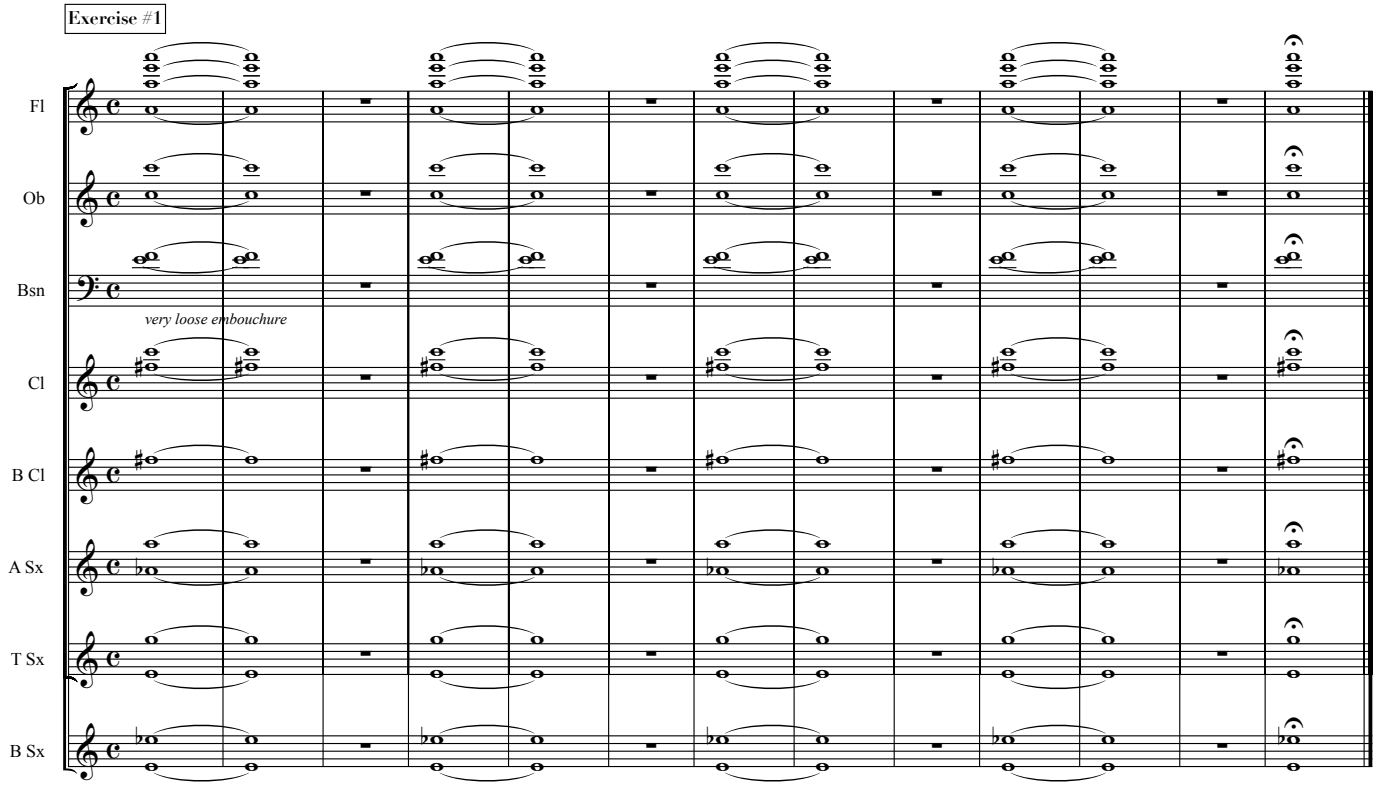
"More air"
"Keep lower lip steady-don't let anything bounce"
"Play loud but stay relaxed"
"Take a full count to breathe and release with a short breath in"
"Play within your trio"
"Keep 2/3 of the hole open" (Flute only)
"Focus aperture" (Flute only)
"Flat, hard-rubber like chin" (Clarinet only)
"Firm corners of the mouth" (Clarinet only)
"Keep corner of the mouth in" (Saxes and bass clarinets only)

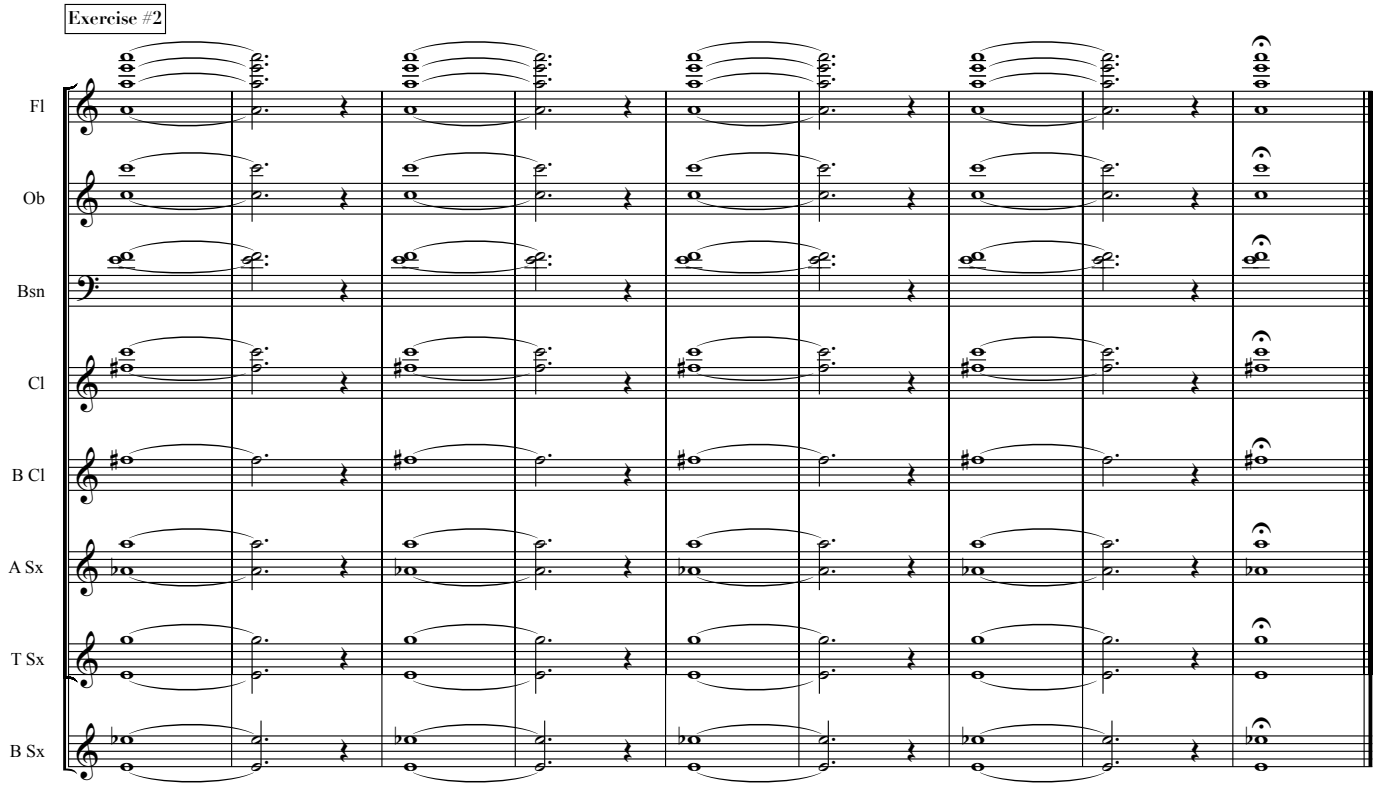
Visual Component

- The exercises in this chapter were not written to be put on the move. If students become comfortable enough with any of the exercises, adding the visual component would be a great idea. Do as much or as little as you can on the move.
- The more students play and move, the better they will become. Repetition is extremely important. Simply repeating exercises multiple times will give students ample opportunity to figure things out.
- The more instruction students receive, the better they will become. If you don't have a large staff or a staff at all, you can rely on the older members to help the younger members.
- It is very important to have a consistent approach to applying music fundamentals to visual fundamentals. They need to work together seamlessly. It is recommended that when you start breathing, you also start moving to take the first step. Think of the music and visual technique working together instead of against each other.
- Refer to the Visual Sheets at the back of the Full Ensemble Chapter. Keep in mind that you do not have to do complicated visual exercises. You could simply march across the football field, track, parking lot or sidewalk. Then maybe the next time go backwards.

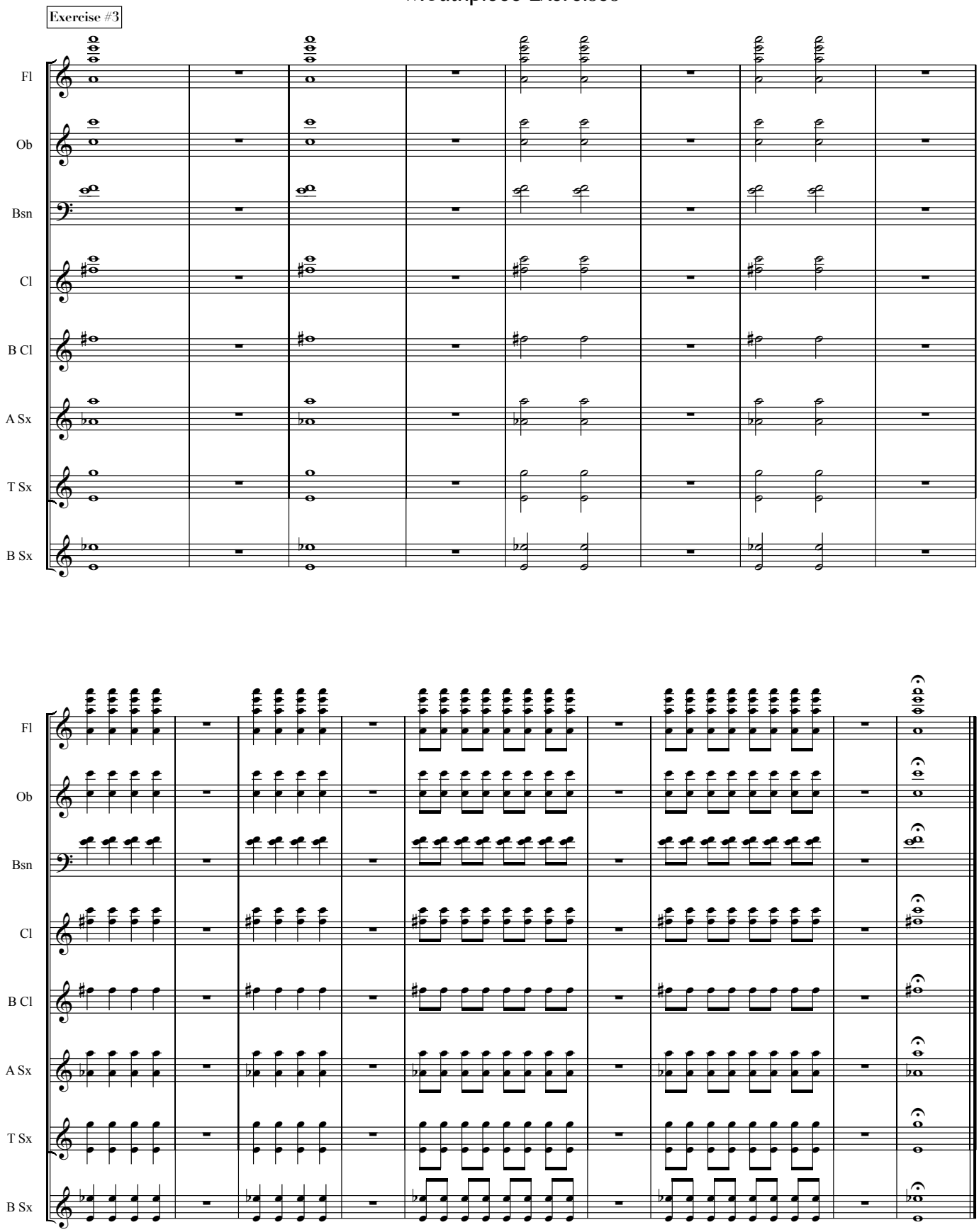
Mouthpiece Exercises

Student Page 3





Mouthpiece Exercises



WOODWIND CHAPTER

Embouchure Development

Exercise Objectives

- Focus on strengthening muscles to improve quality of sound.
- Students will work on embouchure control through range extensions.
- Students will work on matching tone quality.
- Students will work on matching and controlling pitch.
- Students will work on quality of air speed.

Instruction Notes

- Make sure students are taking a full count breath before they play. Also, remind students to use the full count rest to breathe.
- Flute low range should maintain volume. Remind students to pull lower jaw back (or in).
- Clarinet embouchure must remain the same with fast warm air.
- If you hear a gap in the sound it is a result of:
  - Weak/slow air
  - Fingers/pads not sealing
  - Movement of embouchure between notes

QUICK COMMENTS FOR STUDENTS

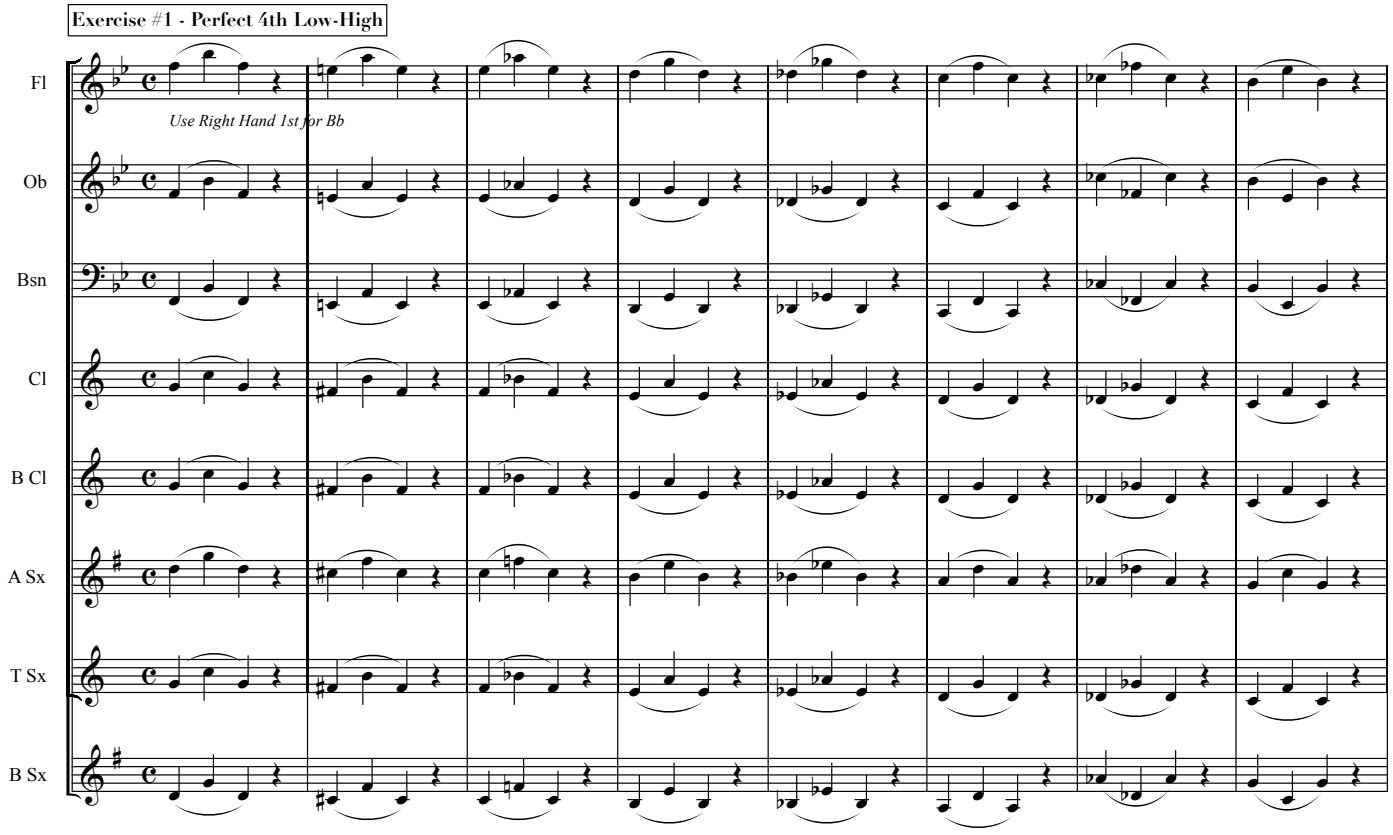
"More air"
"No space between notes"
"Move fingers quickly, but not fast"
"Keep embouchure steady"
"Blow through and between each note"
"Faster air"
"Keep air consistent, let fingers do the work"
"Take the full count to breathe and take in more air"
"Stay relaxed"

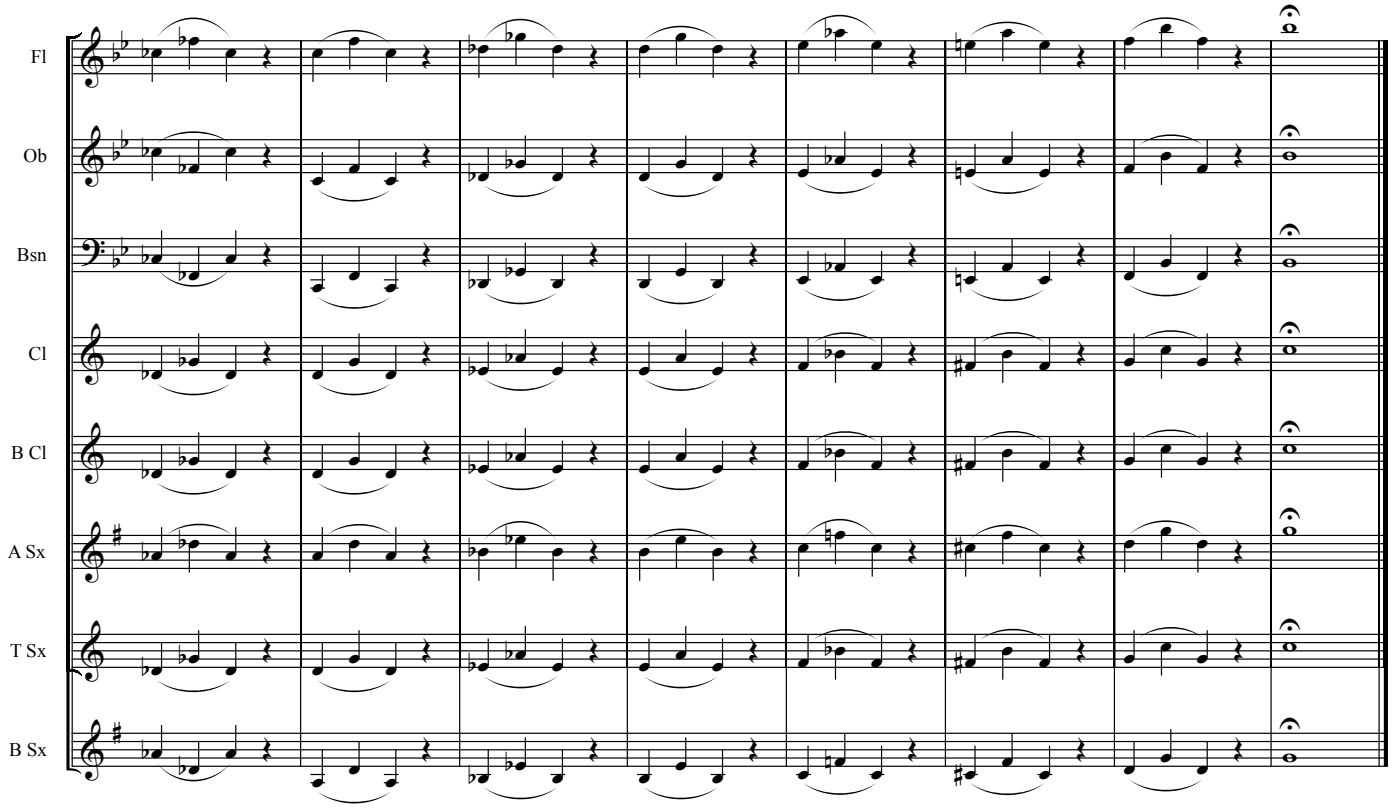
Visual Component

- The exercises in this chapter were not written to be put on the move. If students become comfortable enough with any of the exercises, adding the visual component would be a great idea. Feel free to do as much or as little as you can on the move.
- The more students play and move, the better they will become. Repetition is extremely important. Simply repeating exercises multiple times will give students ample opportunity to figure things out.
- The more instruction students receive, the better they will become. If you don't have a large staff or a staff at all, you can rely on the older members to help the younger members.
- It is very important to have a consistent approach to applying music fundamentals to visual fundamentals. They need to work together seamlessly. It is recommended that when you start breathing, you also start moving to take the first step. Think of the music and visual technique working together instead of against each other.
- Refer to the Visual Sheets at the back of the Full Ensemble Chapter. Keep in mind that you do not have to do complicated visual exercises. You could simply march across the football field, track, parking lot or sidewalk. Then maybe the next time go backwards.

Embouchure Development

Student Page 4





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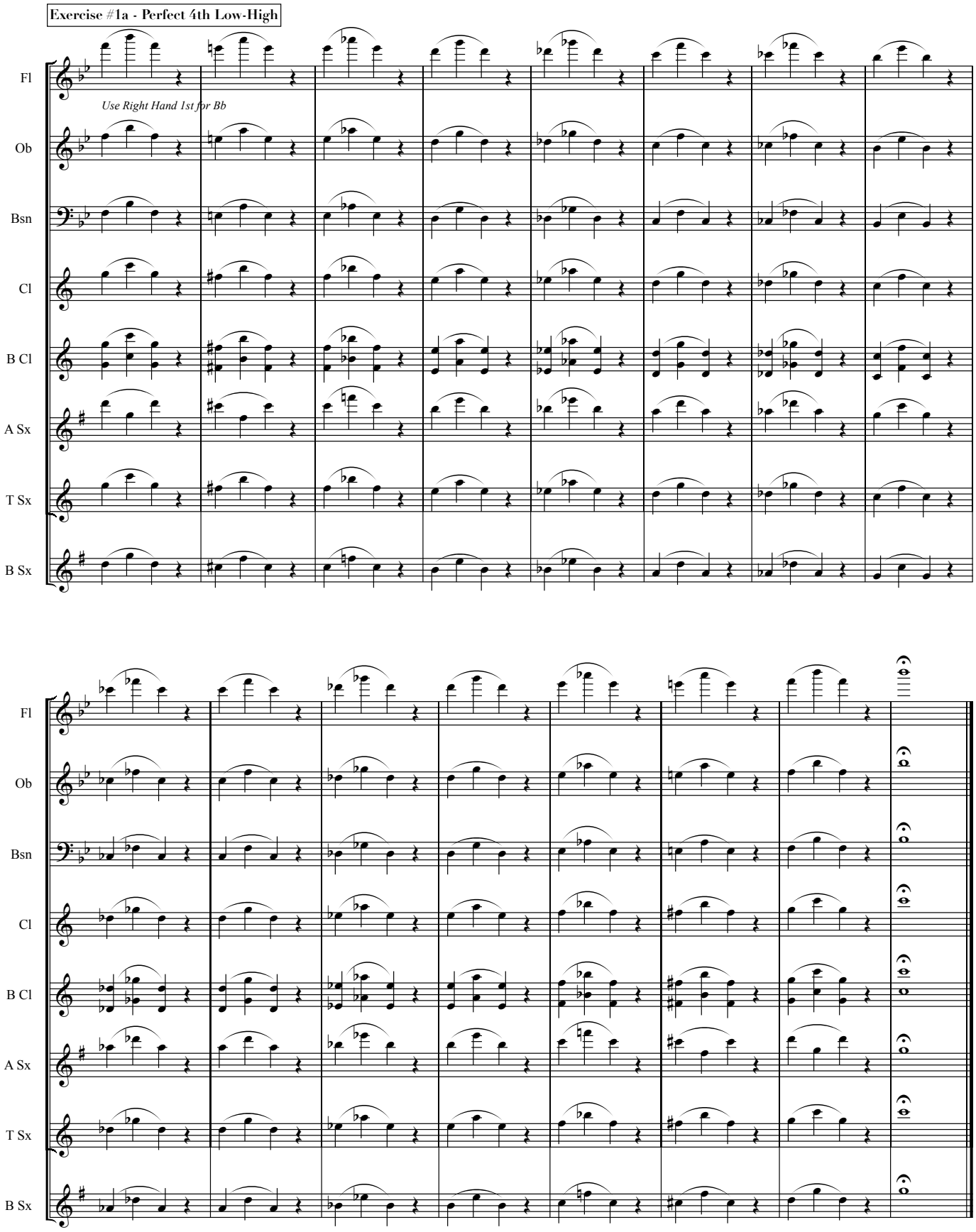

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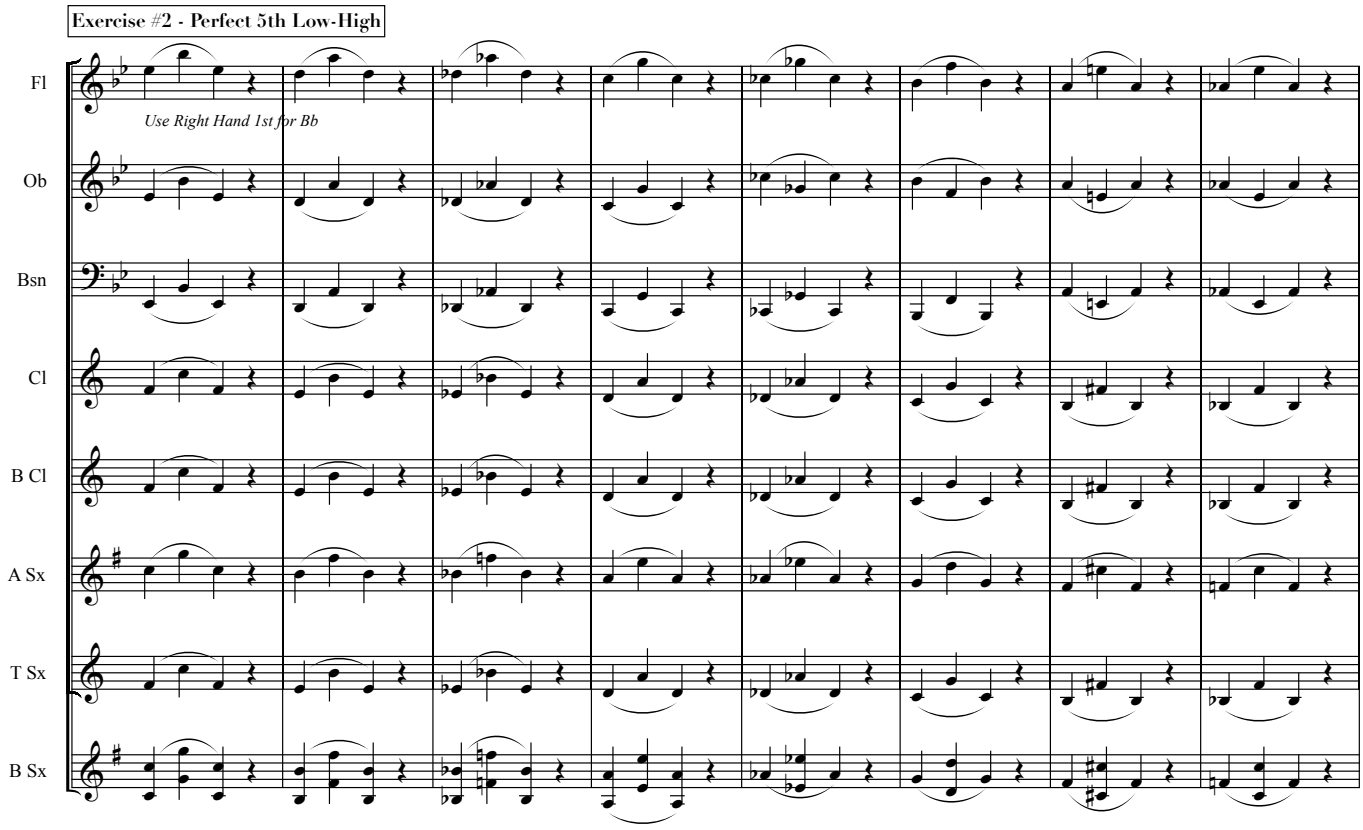

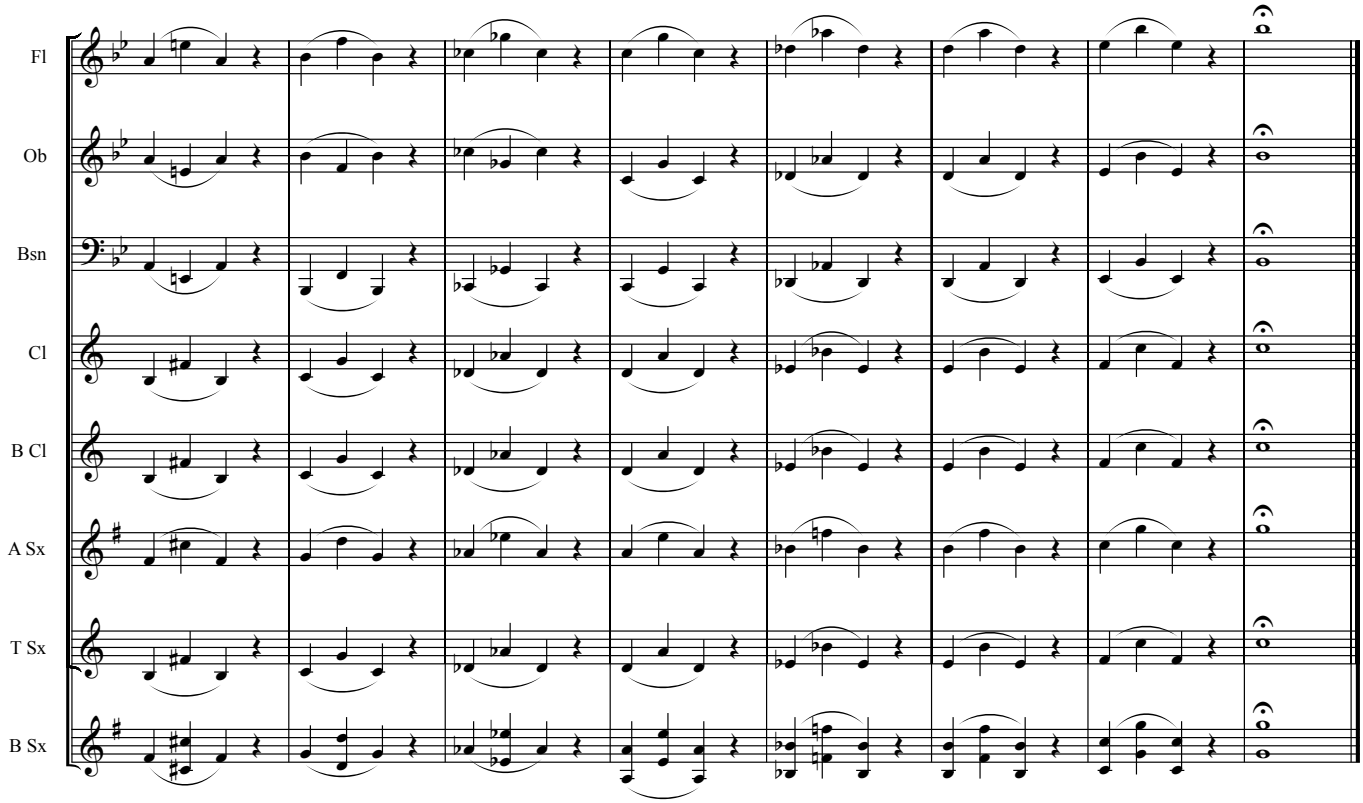

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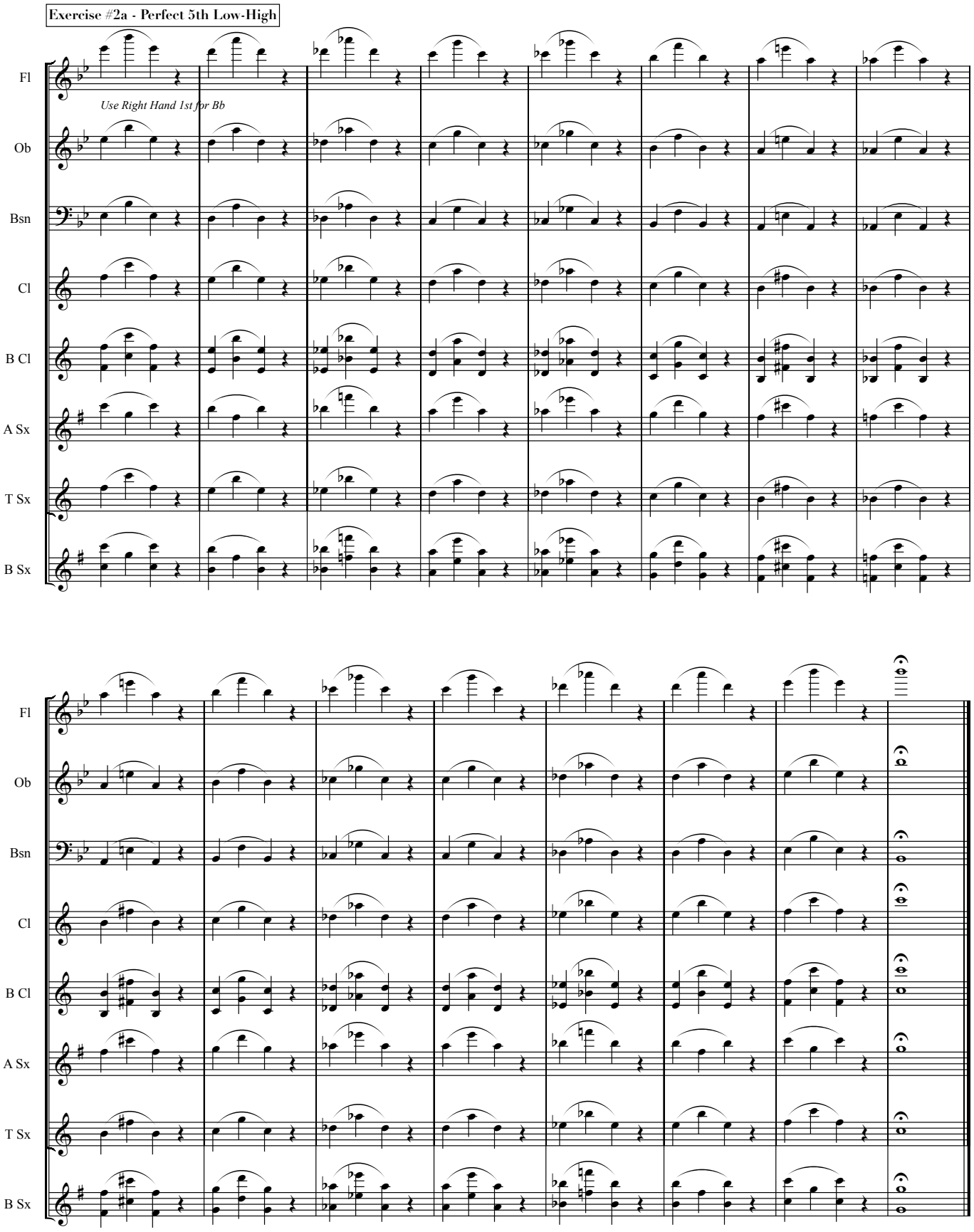

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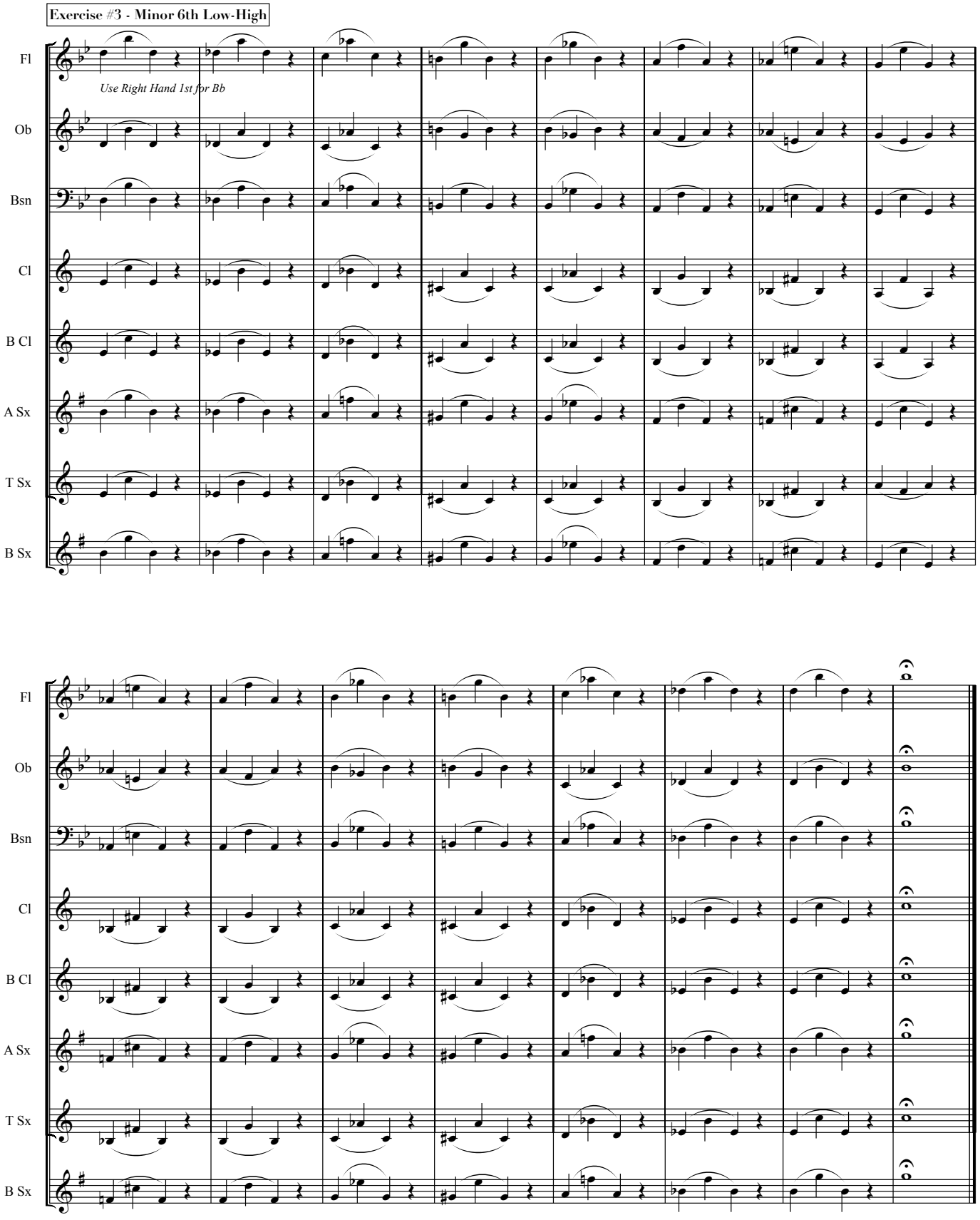

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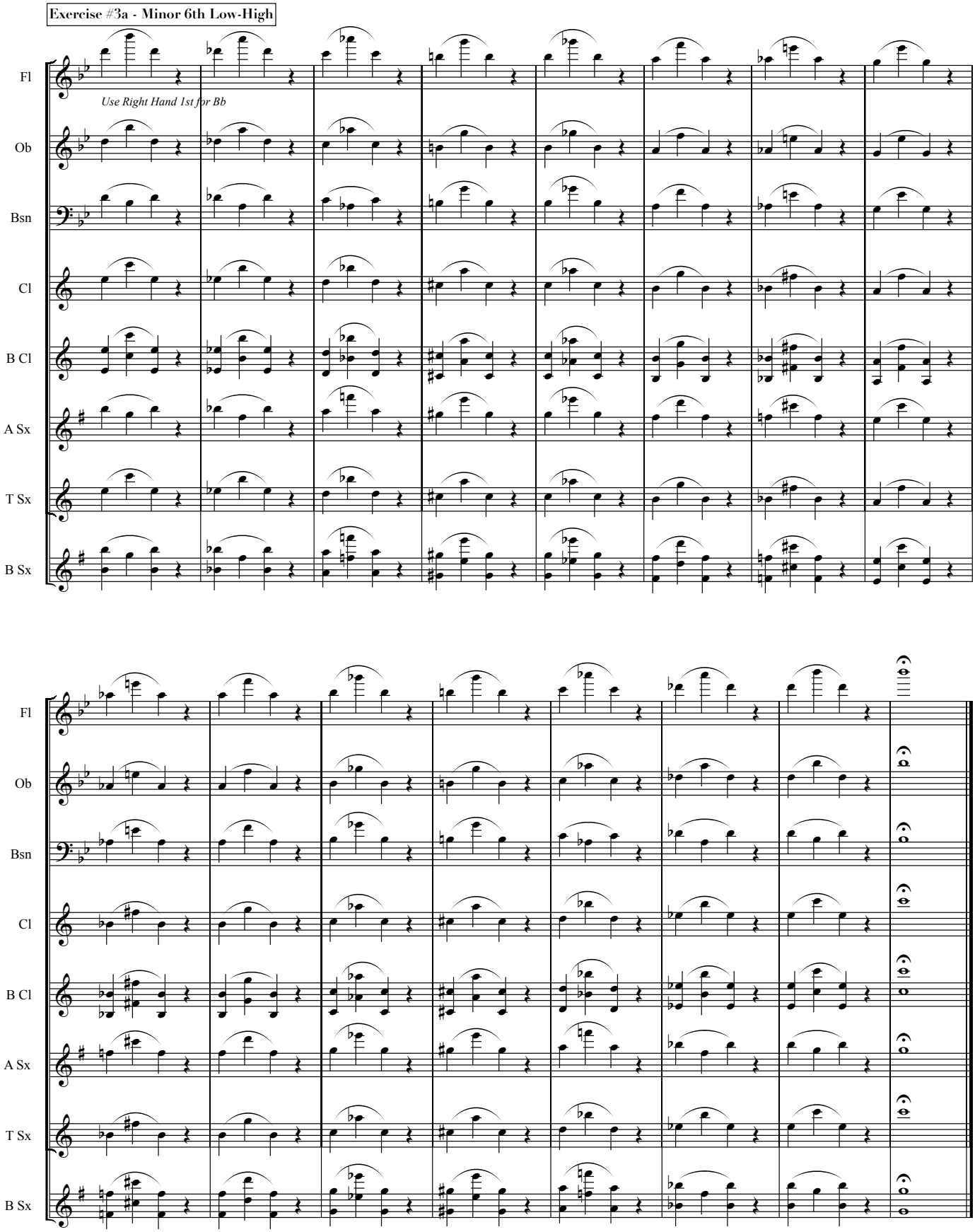

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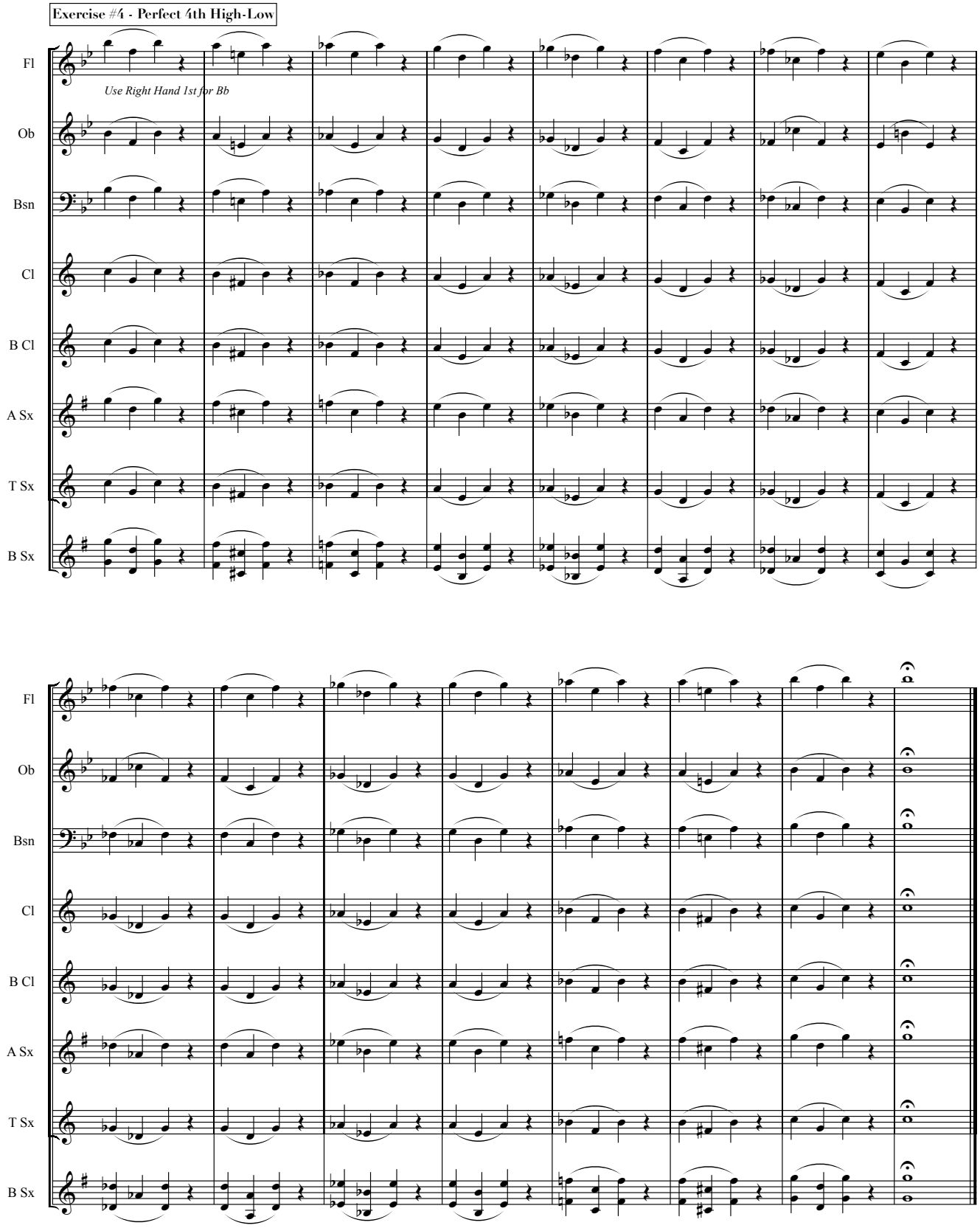

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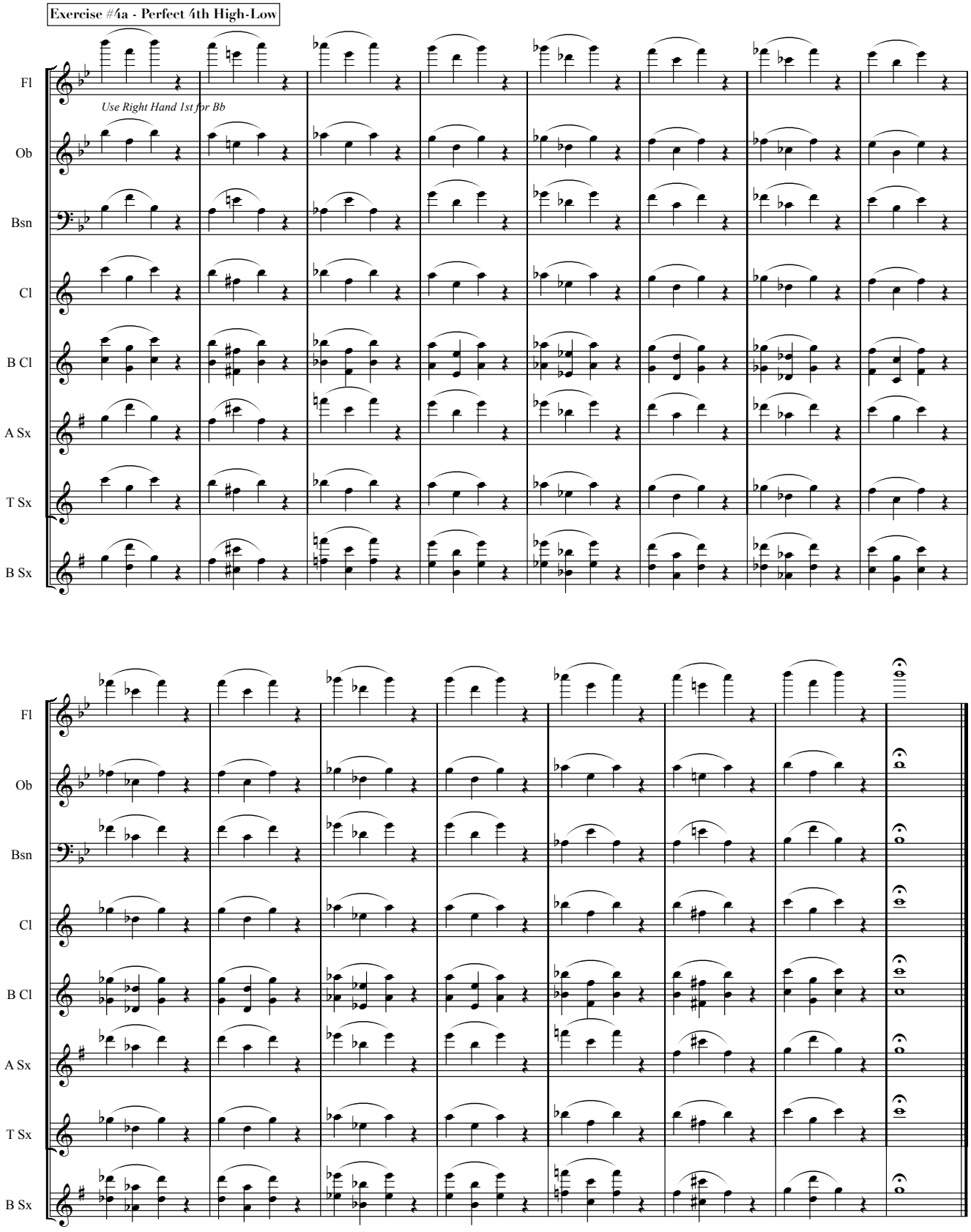

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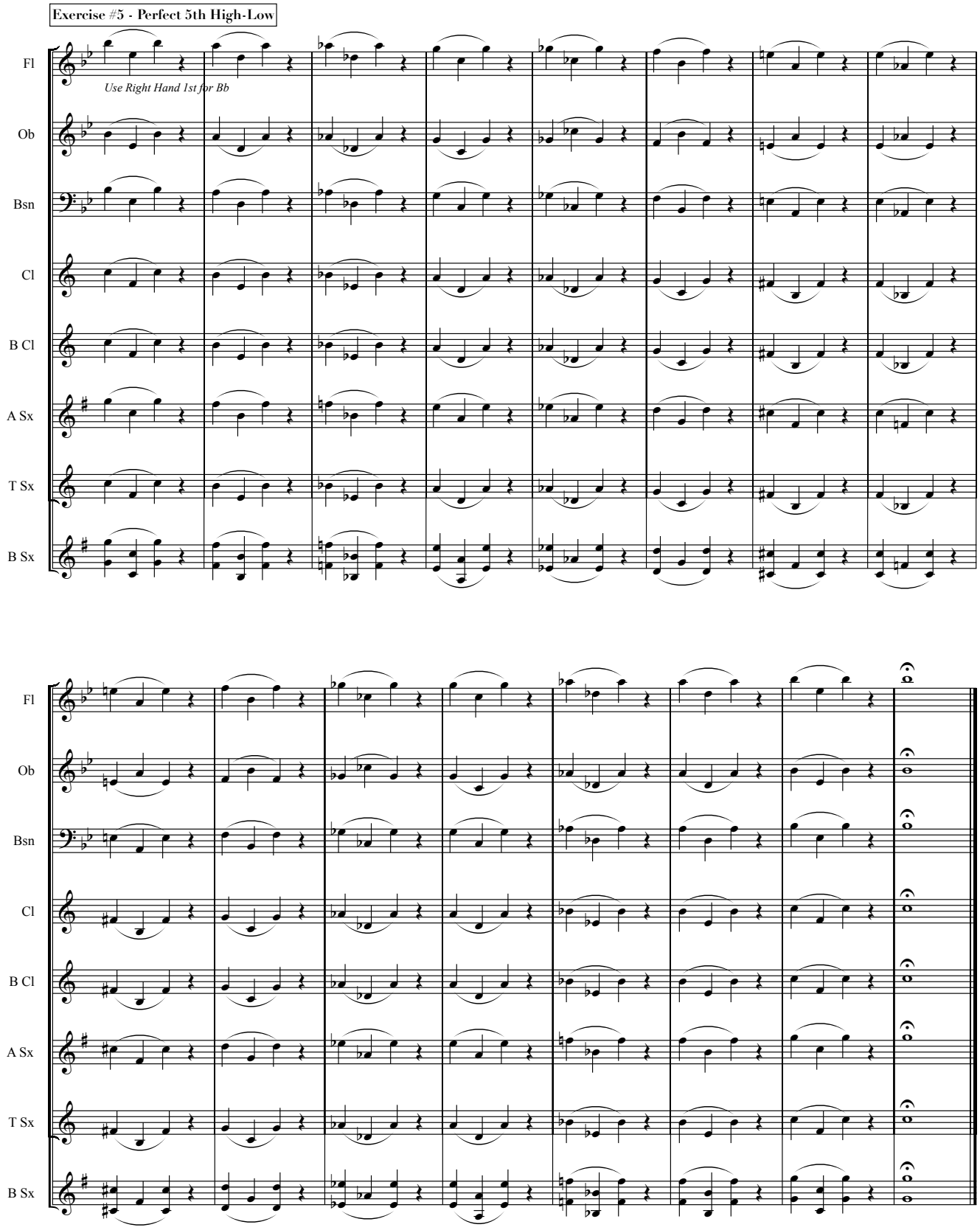

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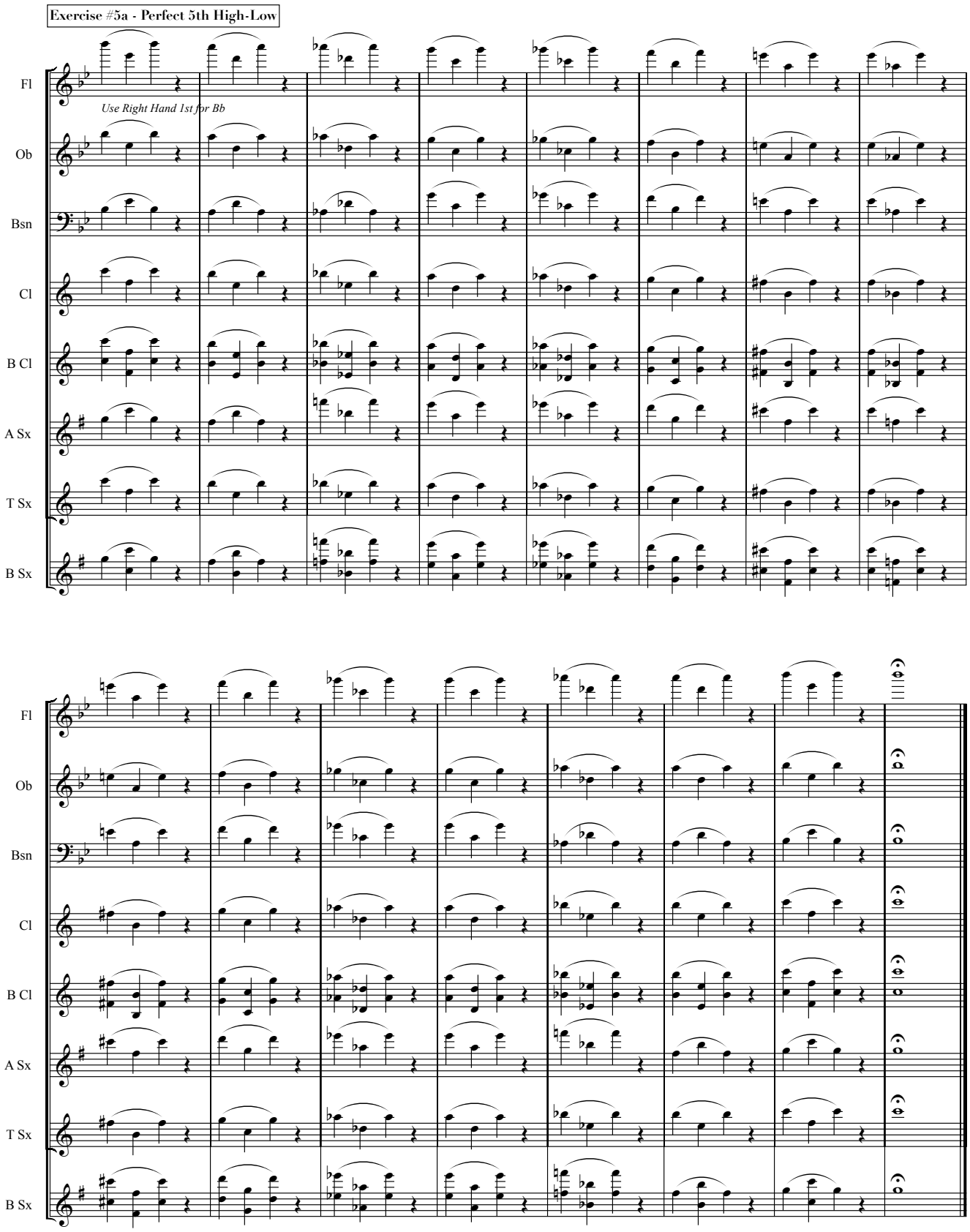

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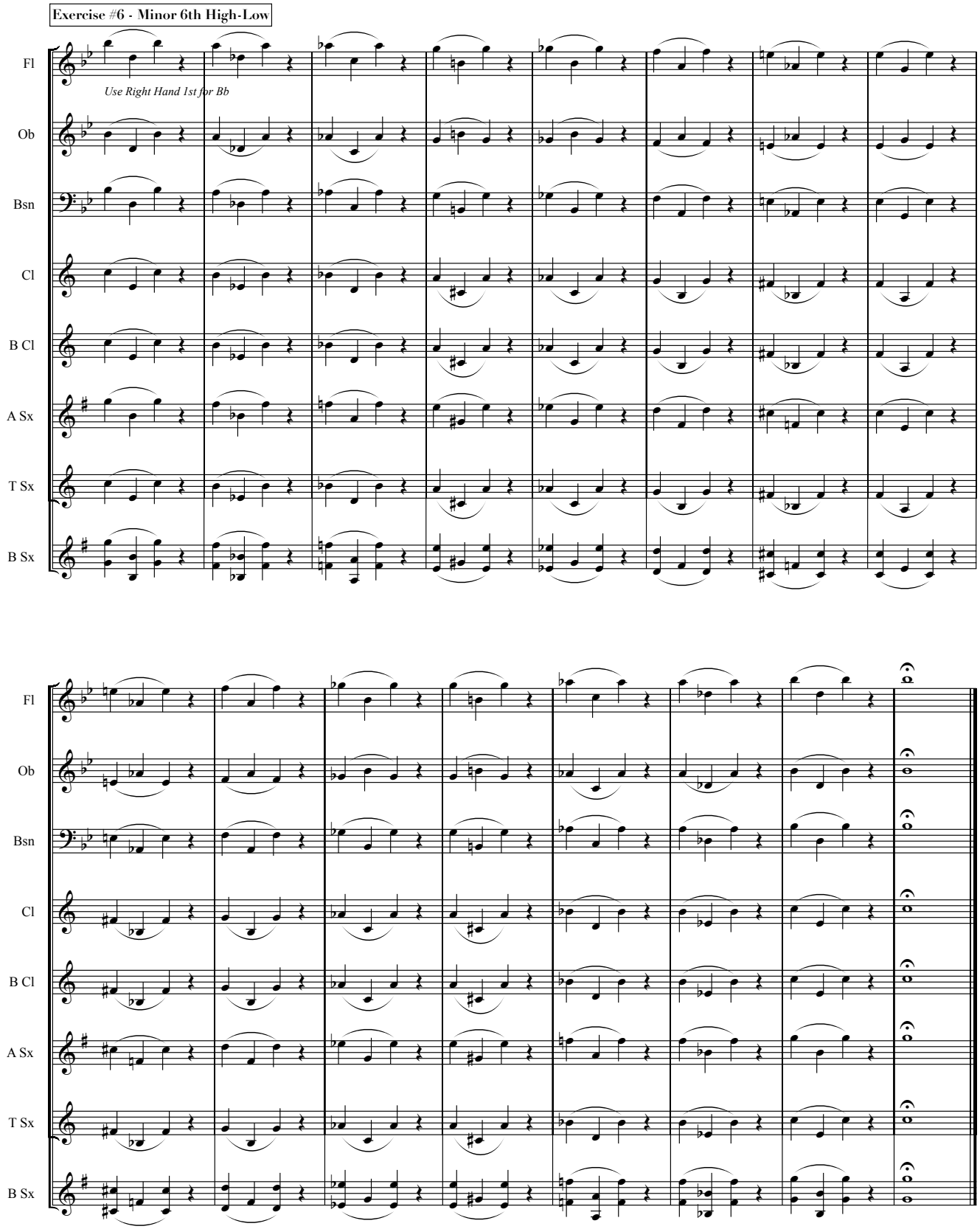

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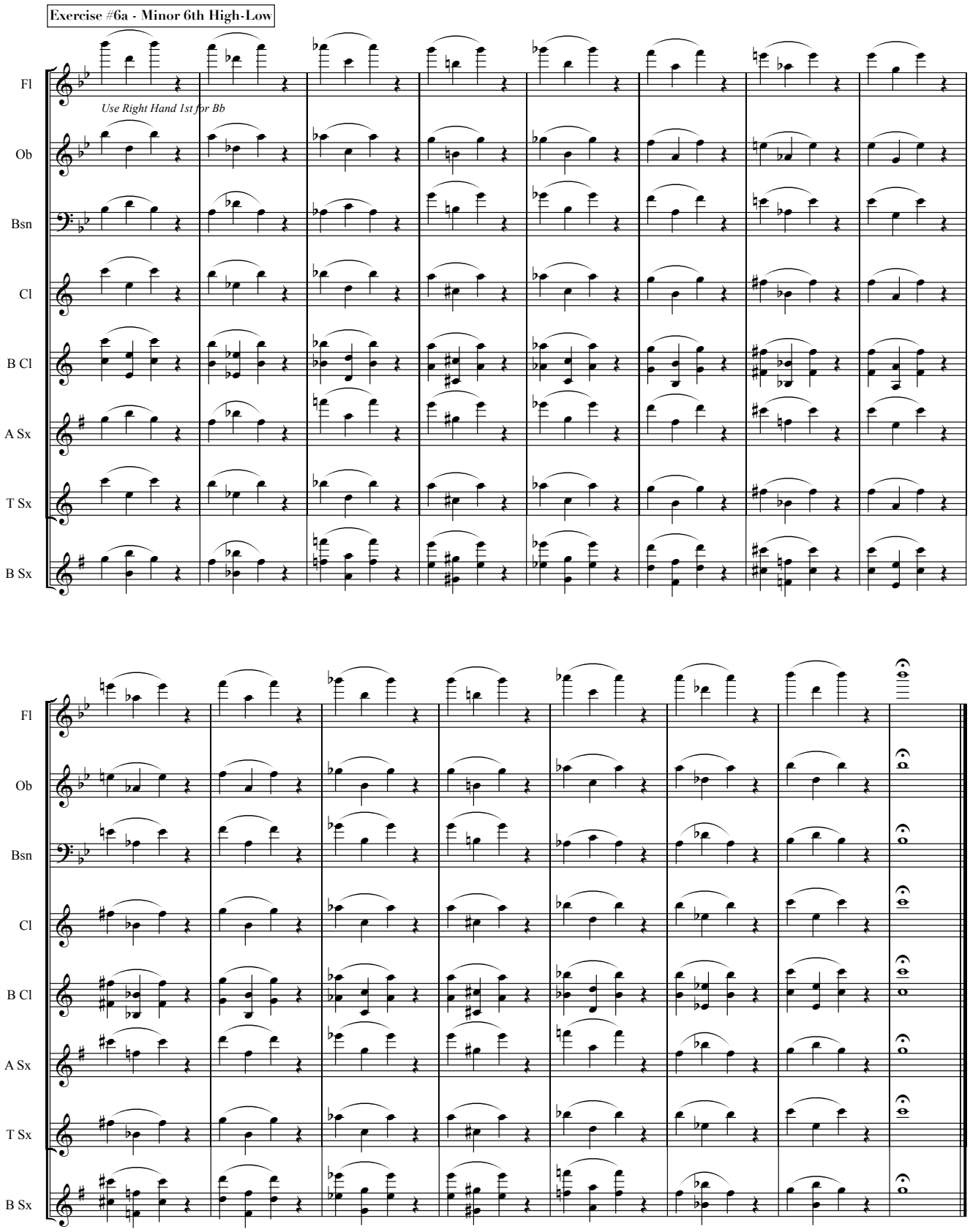

WOODWIND CHAPTER

Fingering Exercises

Exercise Objectives

- Focus on technical flexibility and evenness of finger technique.
- Students will work on challenging fingering patterns.
- Students will become more aware of the distance between keys.
- Focus on the quality of sound while playing the different fingering patterns.

Instruction Notes

- This exercise is set up so that you don't have to play each exercise at every rehearsal. Pick one pattern a week, or a pattern that will help play your music better. Repeat each pattern as needed. You can also vary the tempo. Work to go as fast as the students are able to.
- Clarinets should only use 1 pinky at a time. Lead with the right pinky when available.
- Flutes should be aware of right hand thumb position. Flute lays on side of thumb. Thumb should sit "under" the flute so that pads of fingers cover pads of keys.
- Flutes use thumb Bb unless otherwise noted.
- Patterns F - End are all customizable. You can add accidentals to notes to address individual technique concerns. Also, use different fingerings for the same note when possible.
- Play extremely slow to identify and eliminate issues.
- The possibilities of this exercise are endless. Feel free to experiment with the different cells OR add your own cell to help students handle difficult fingering passages.
- Another great exercise is to change the rhythm. There are endless rhythmic possibilities in both the 4-note and 6-note cells. Don't be afraid to switch the rhythm.

QUICK COMMENTS FOR STUDENTS

"More air"
"Keep embouchure still and even"
"Relax your hands"
"Move your fingers from the third knuckle"
"Keep air consistent, let fingers do the work"
"Take the full count to breathe and take in more air"
"Stay relaxed"

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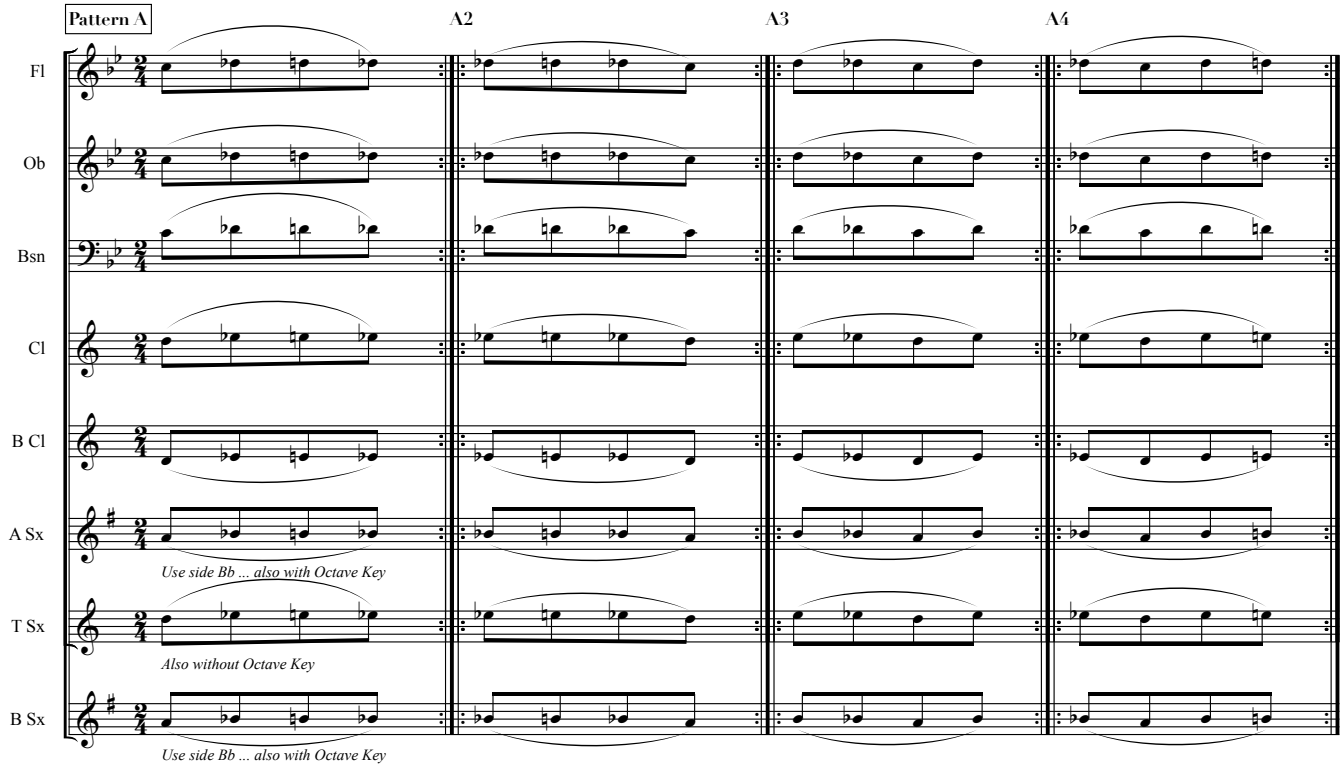
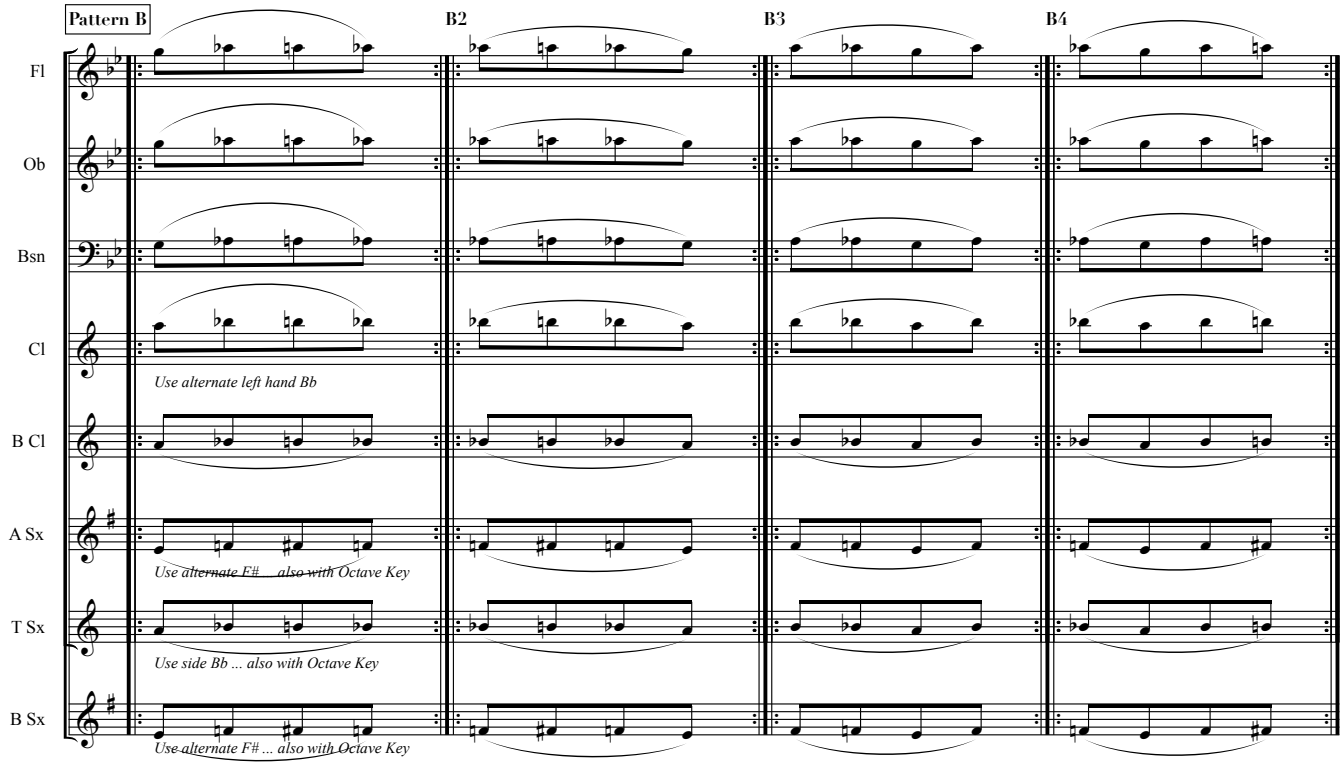
Fingering Exercises: 4 Note Cells

Student Page 8





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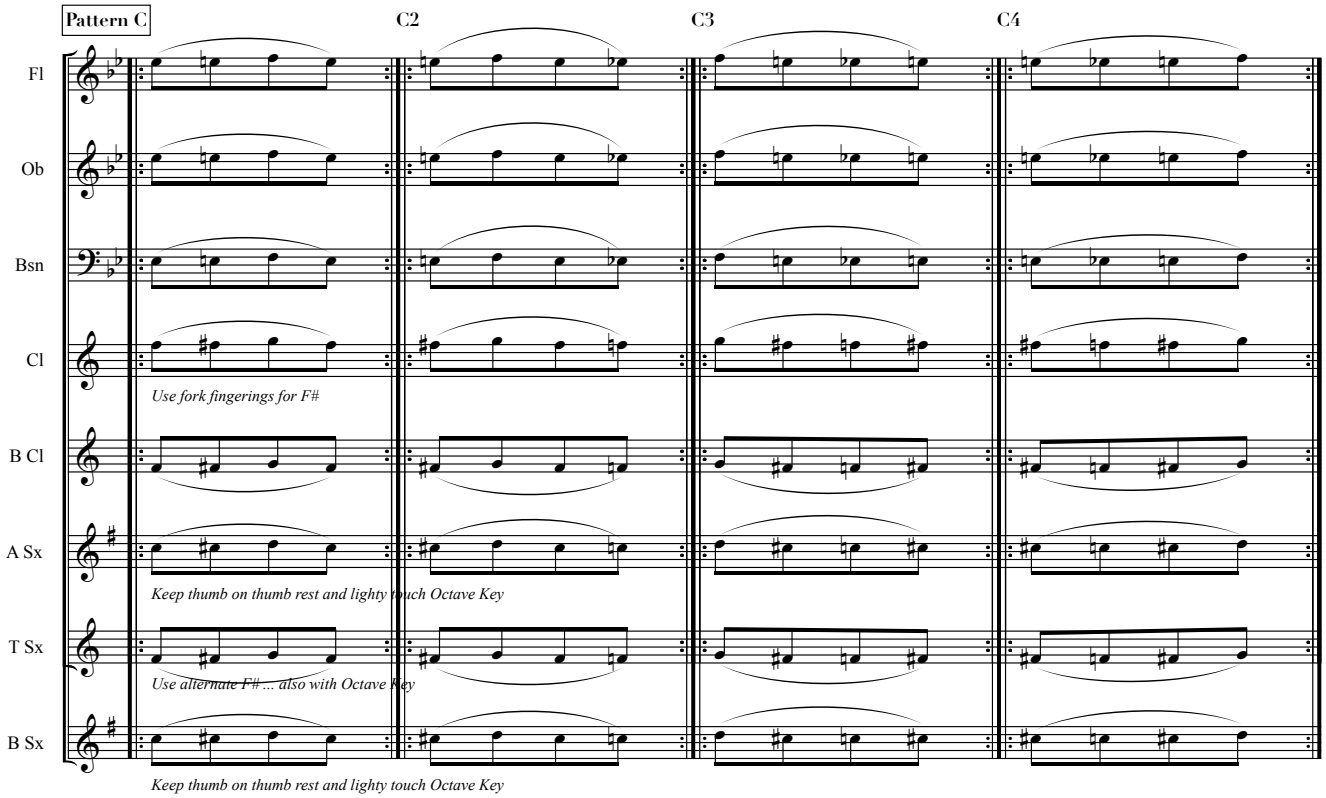

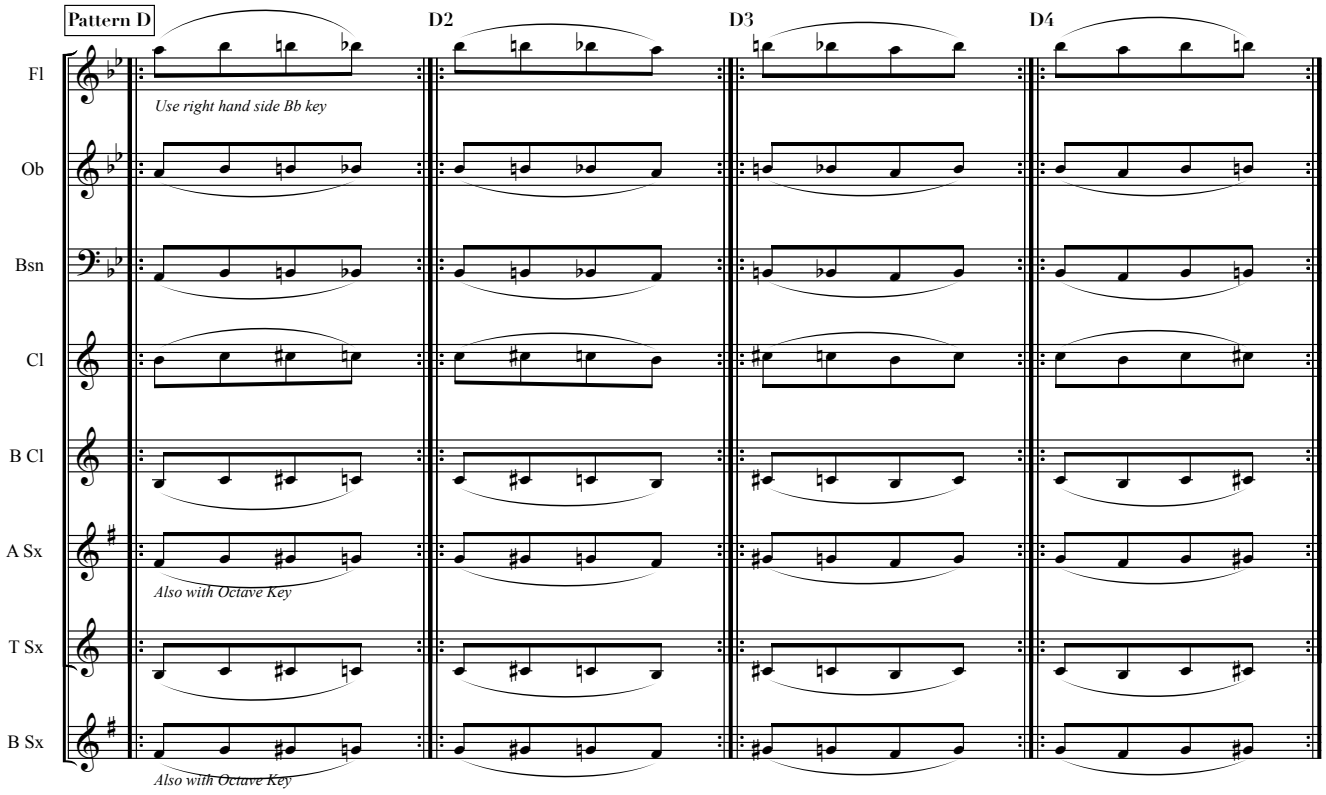

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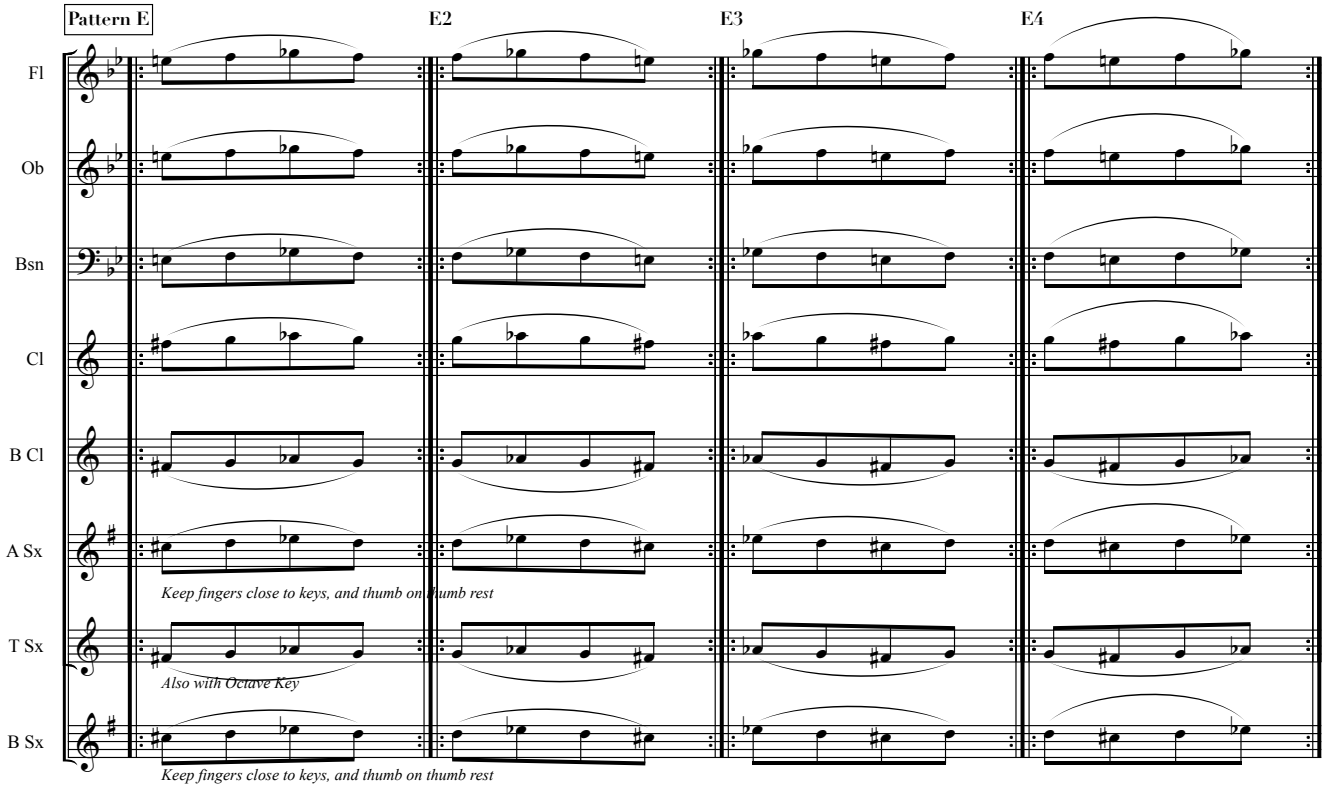

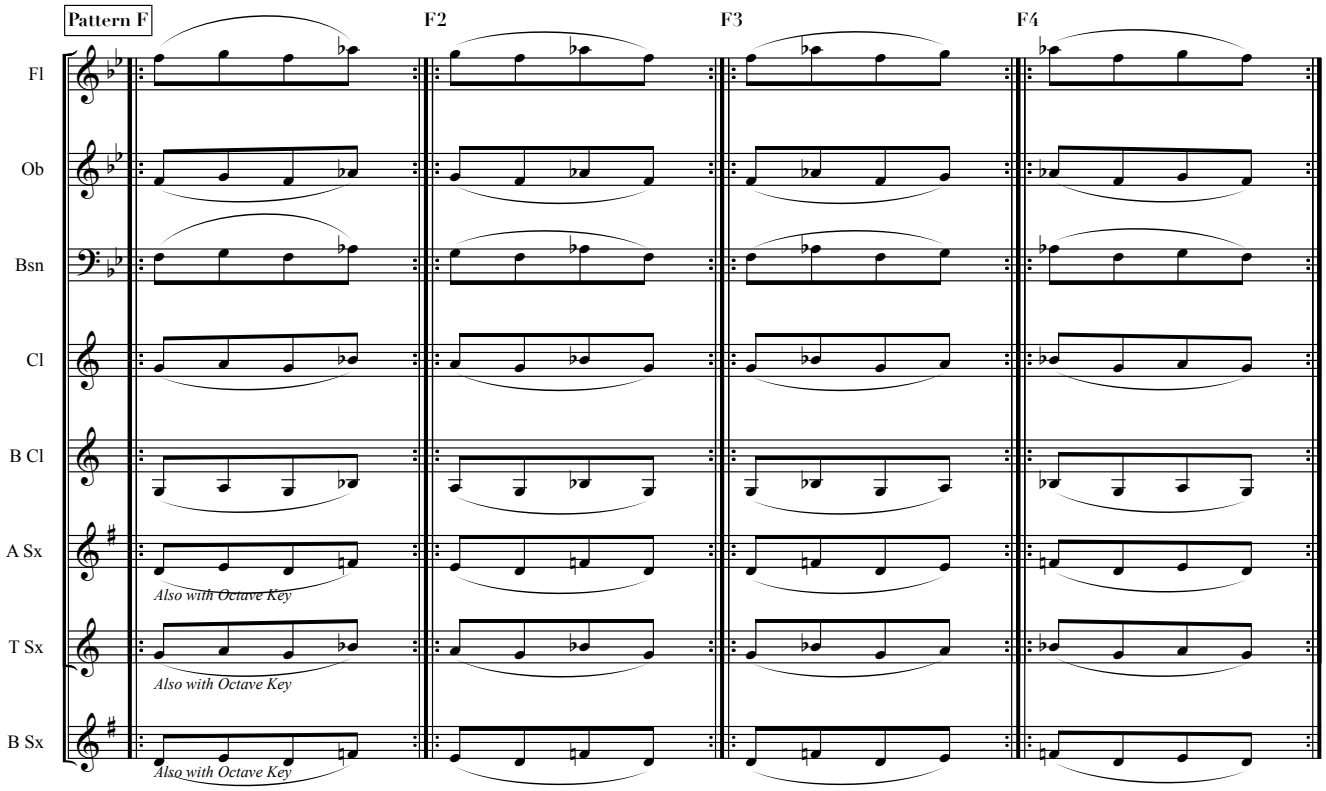

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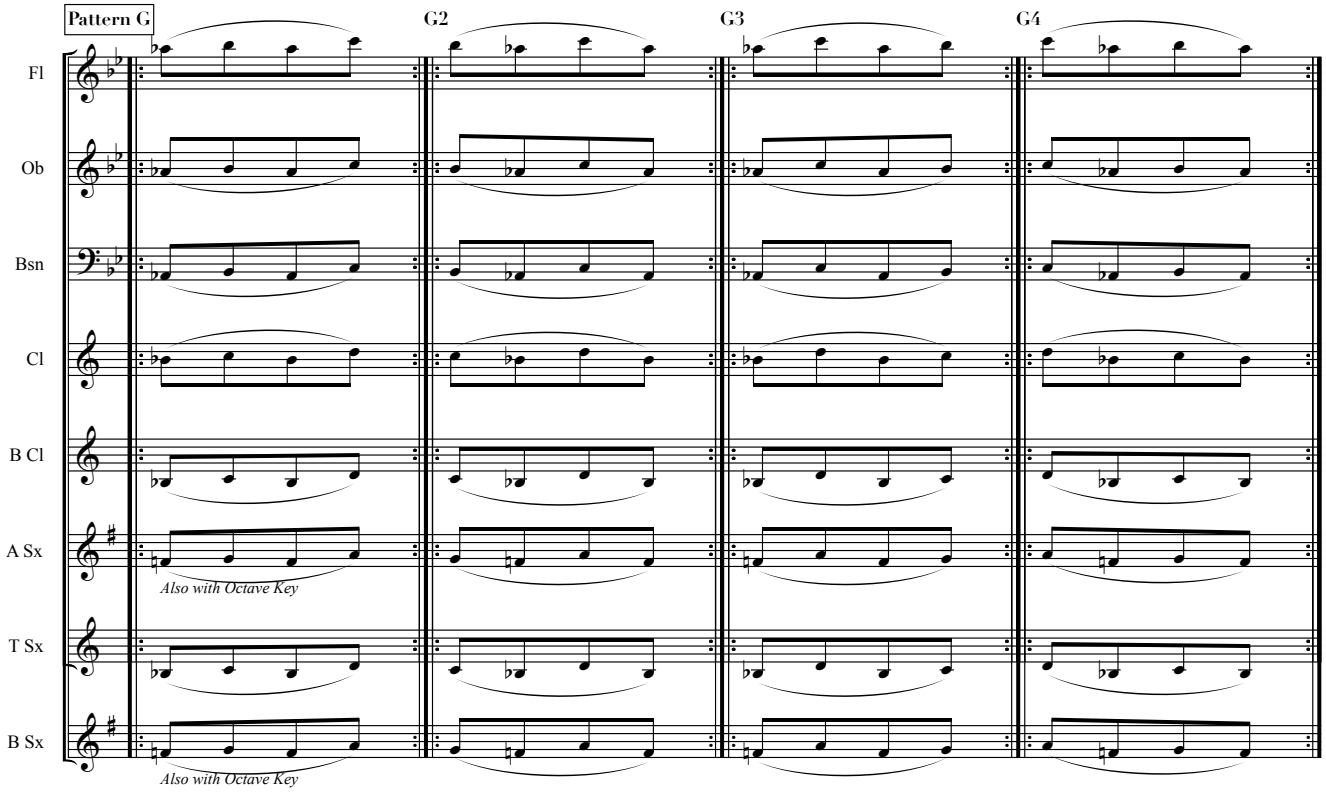

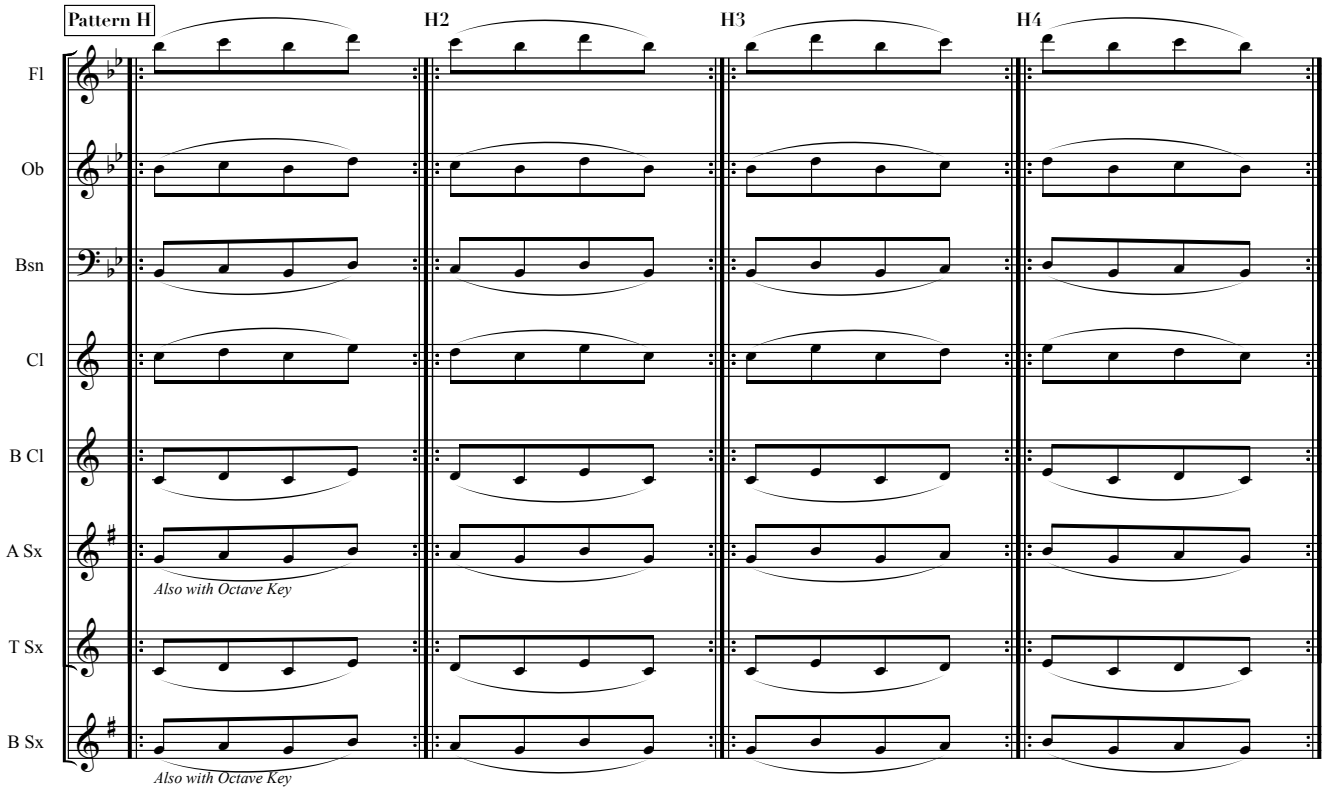

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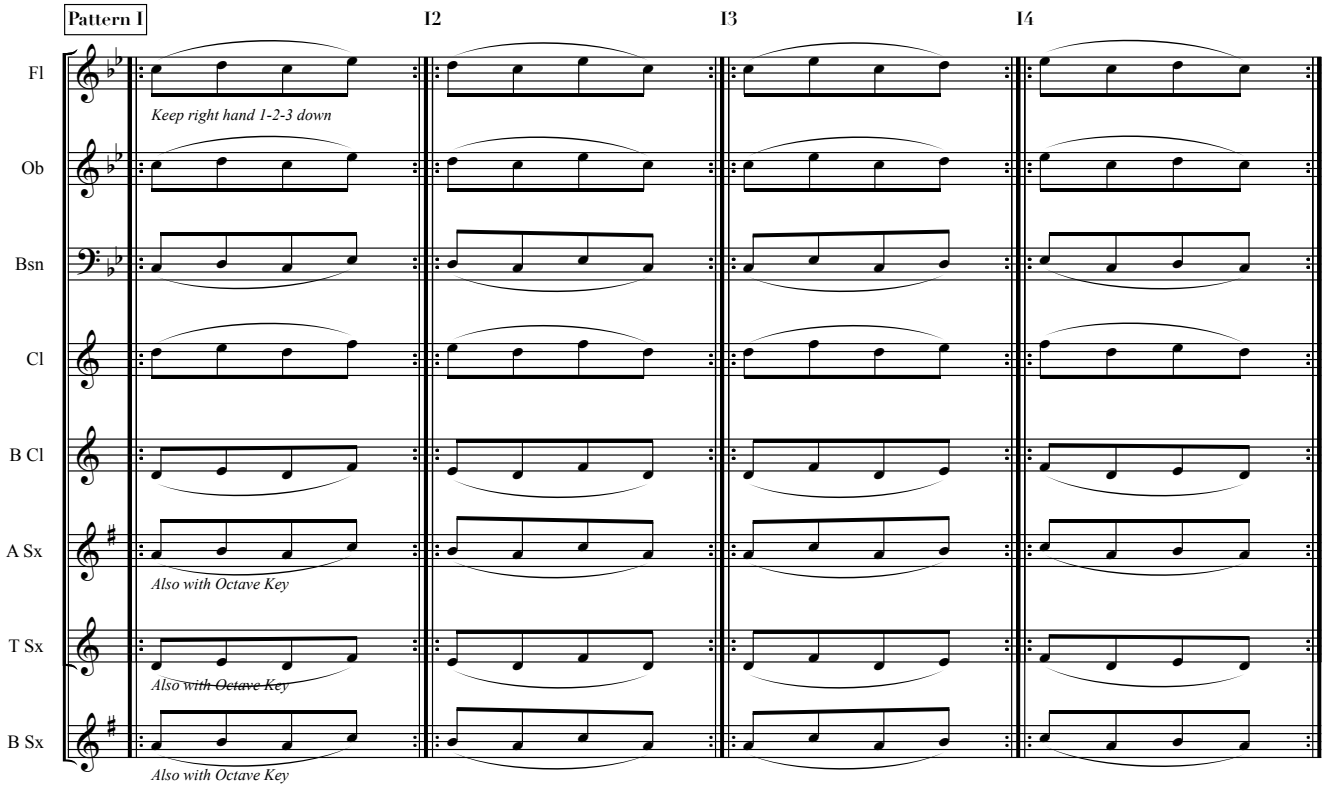

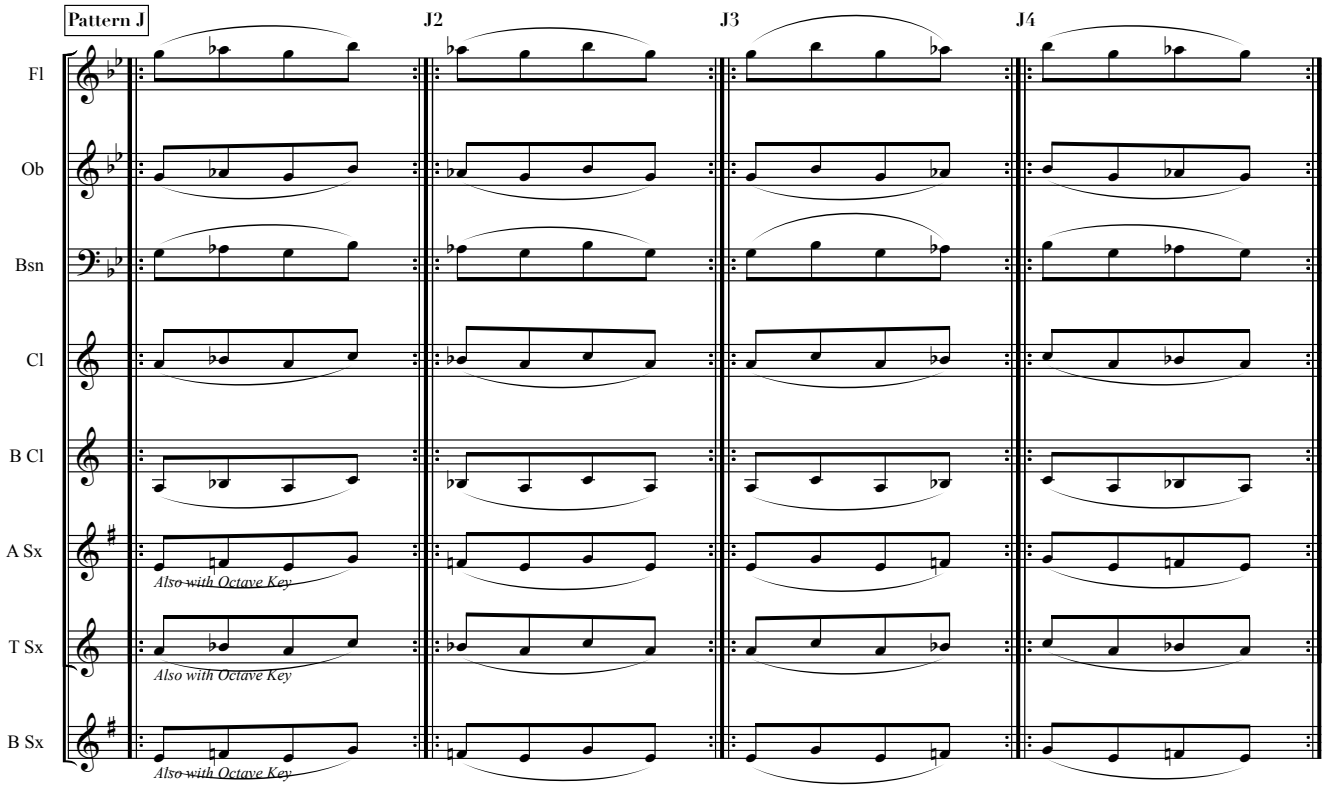

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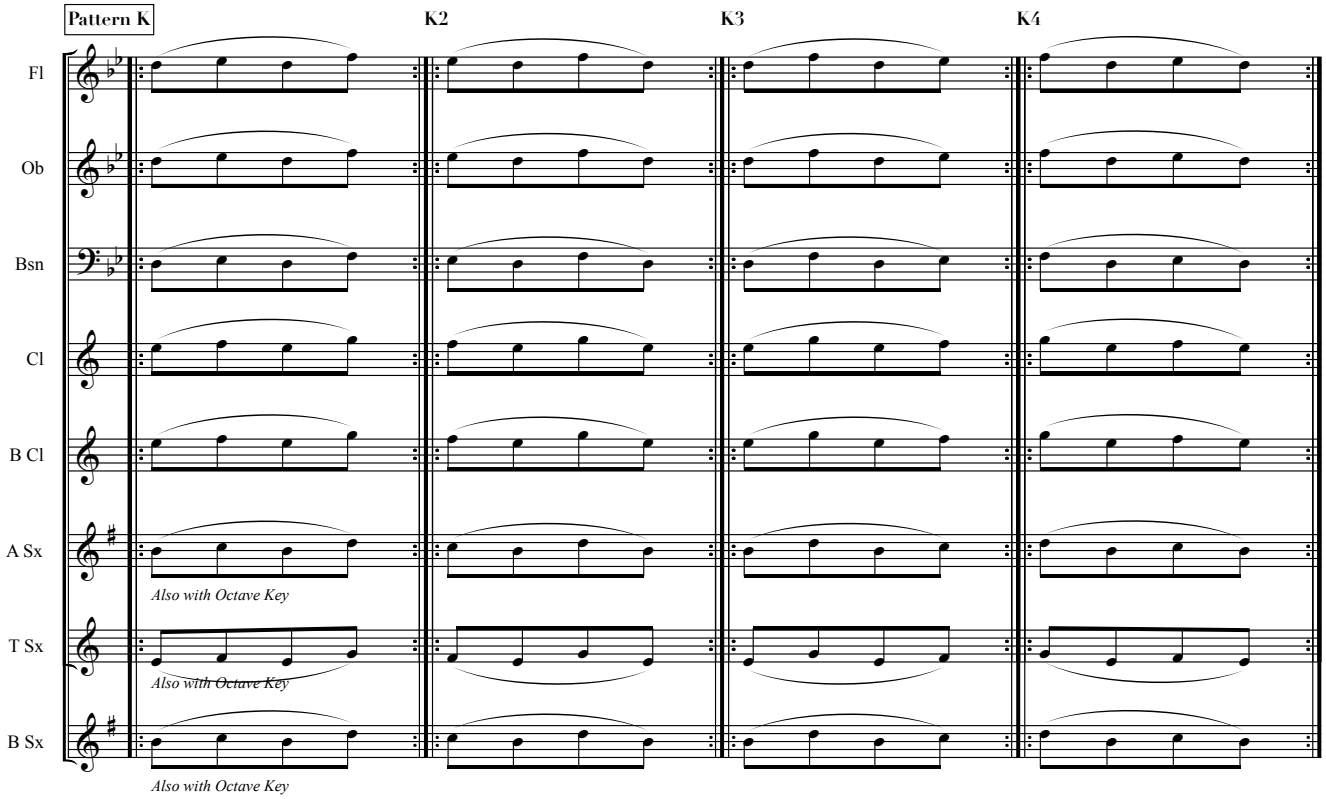

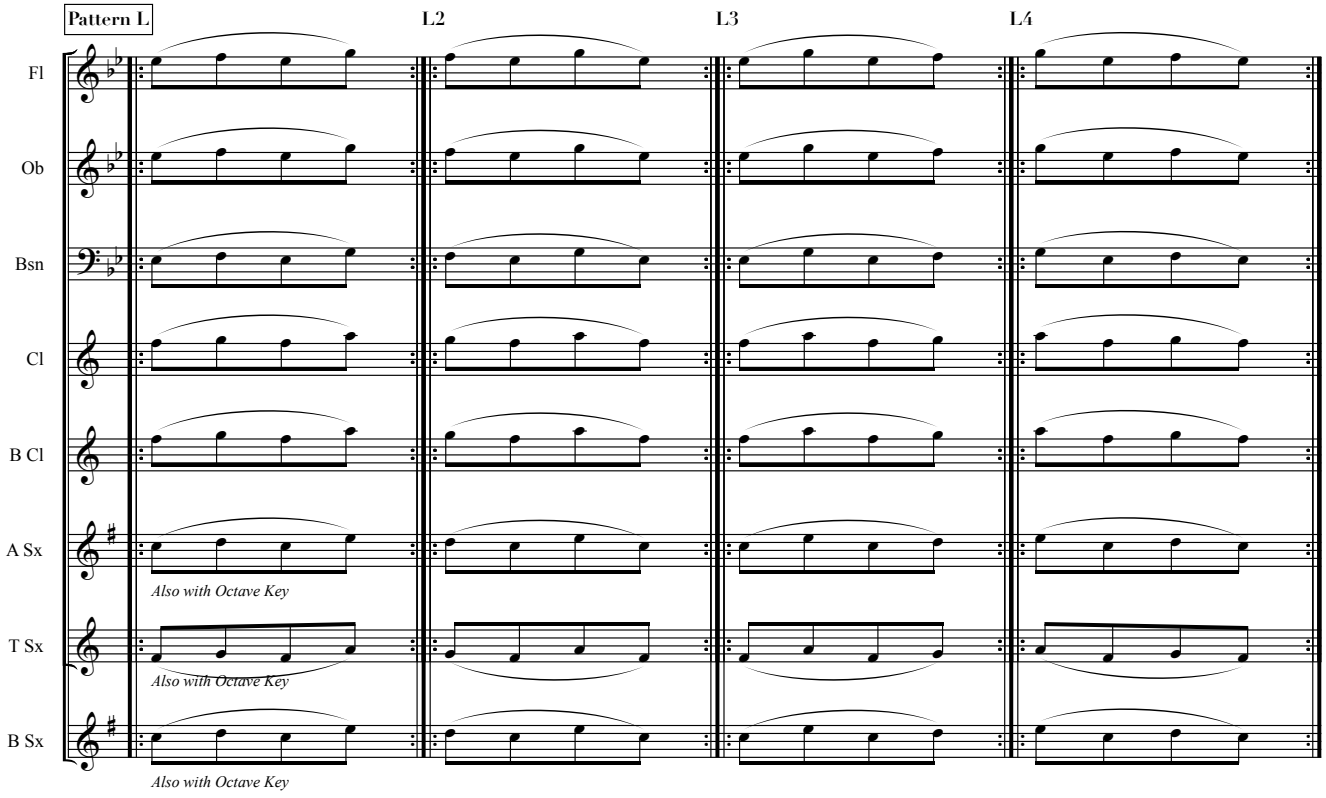

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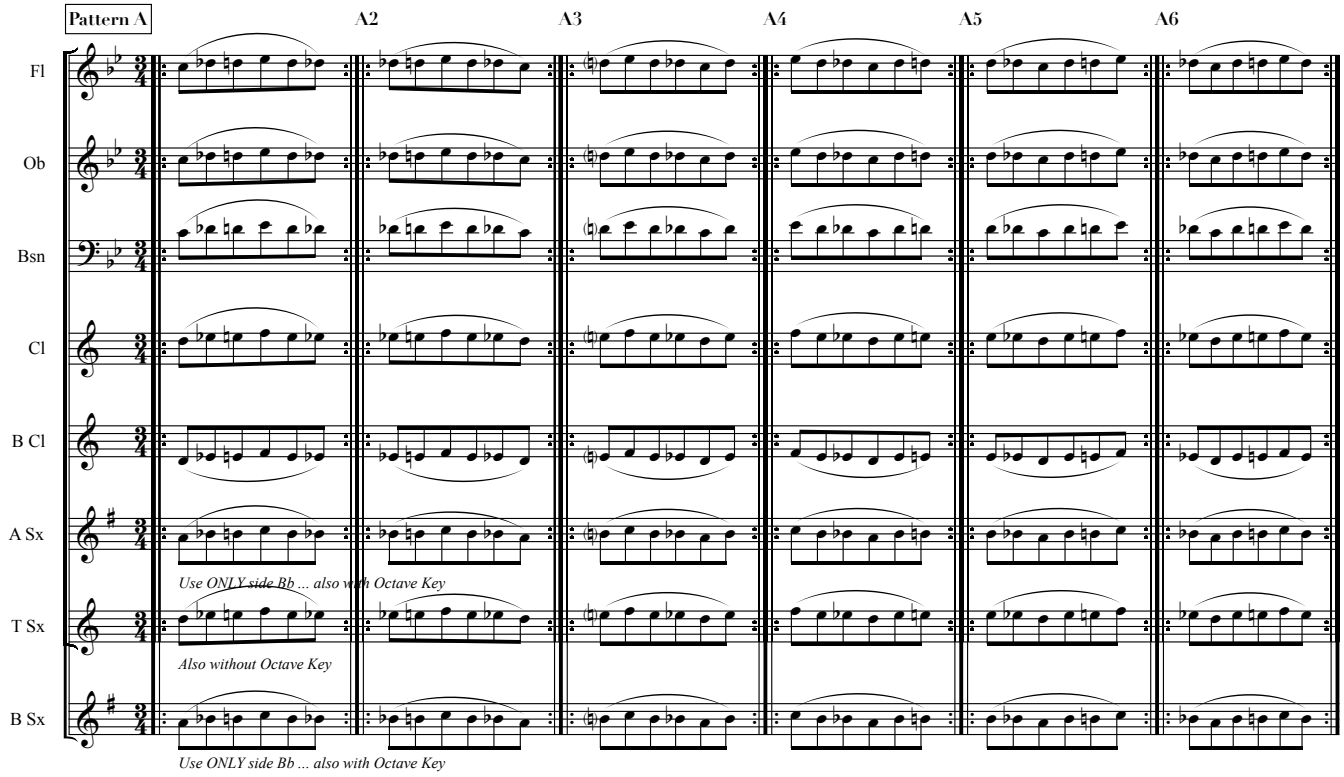

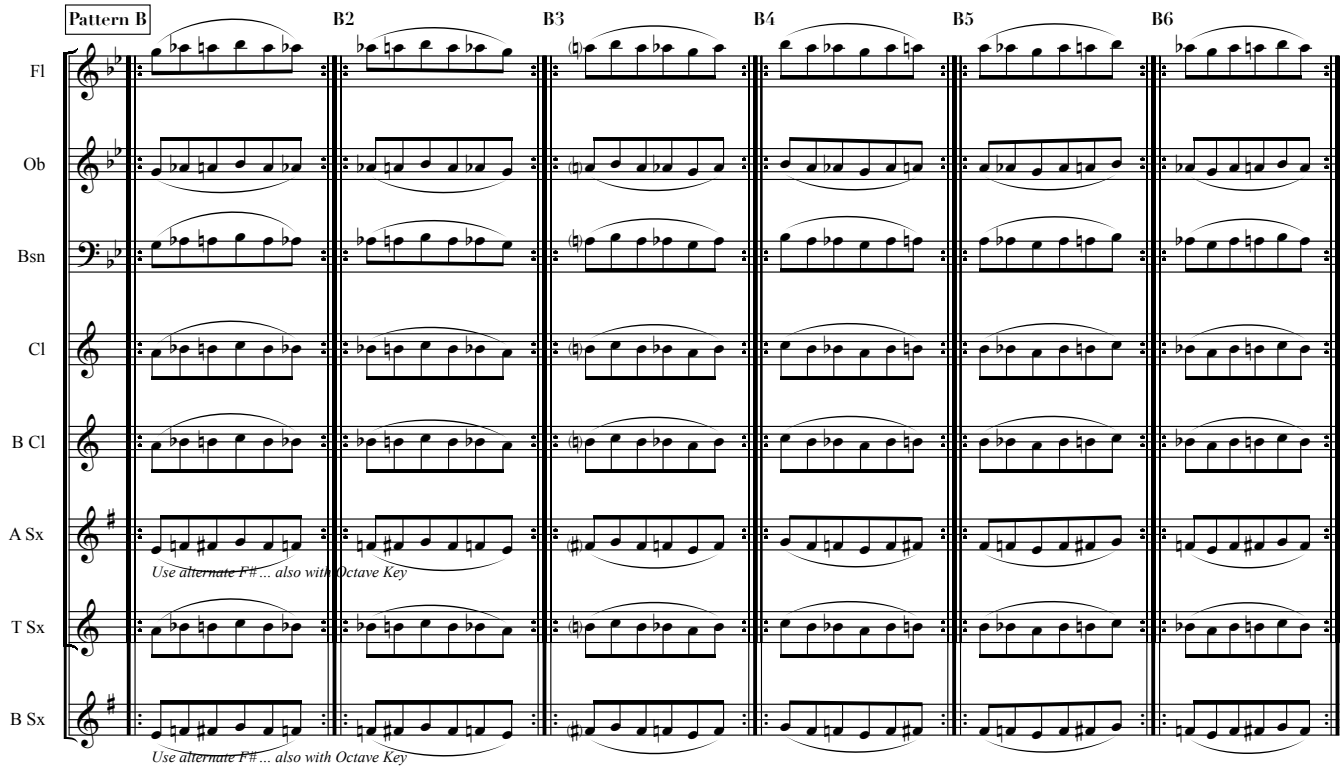

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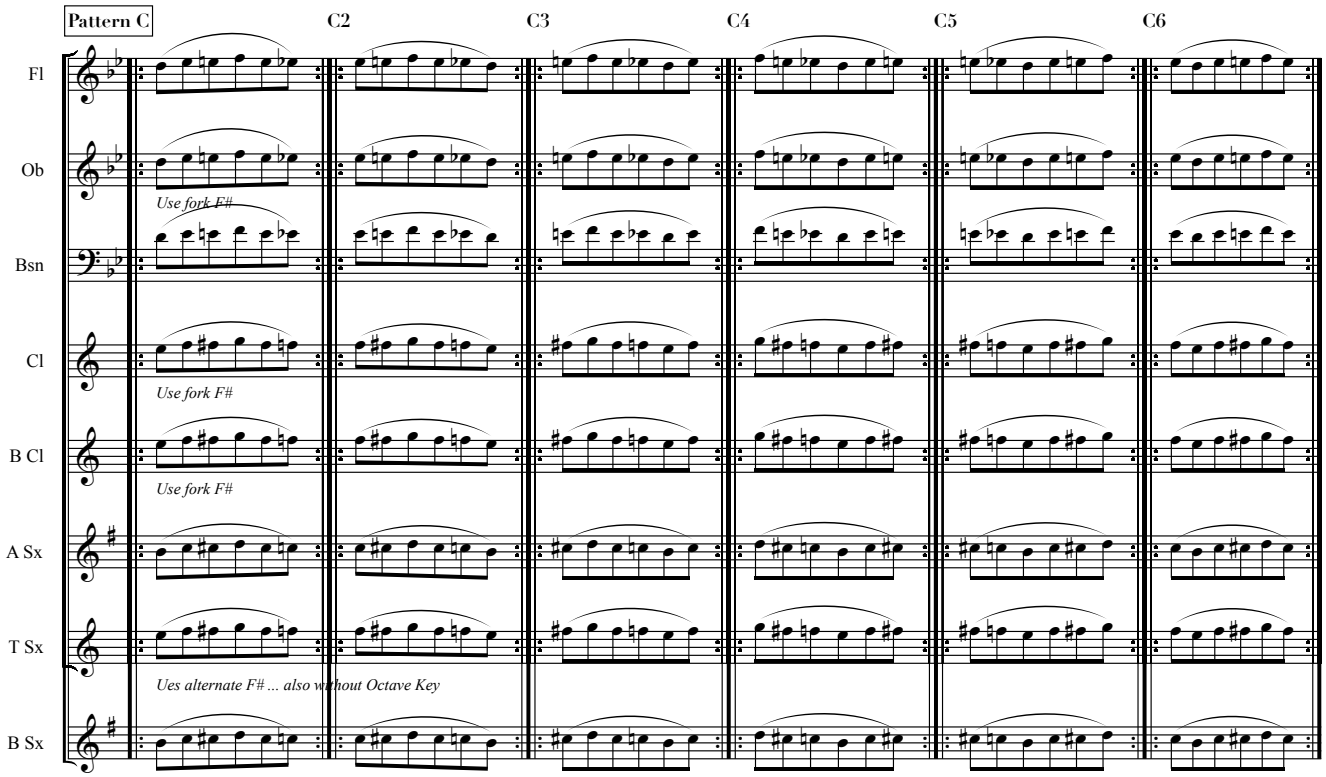

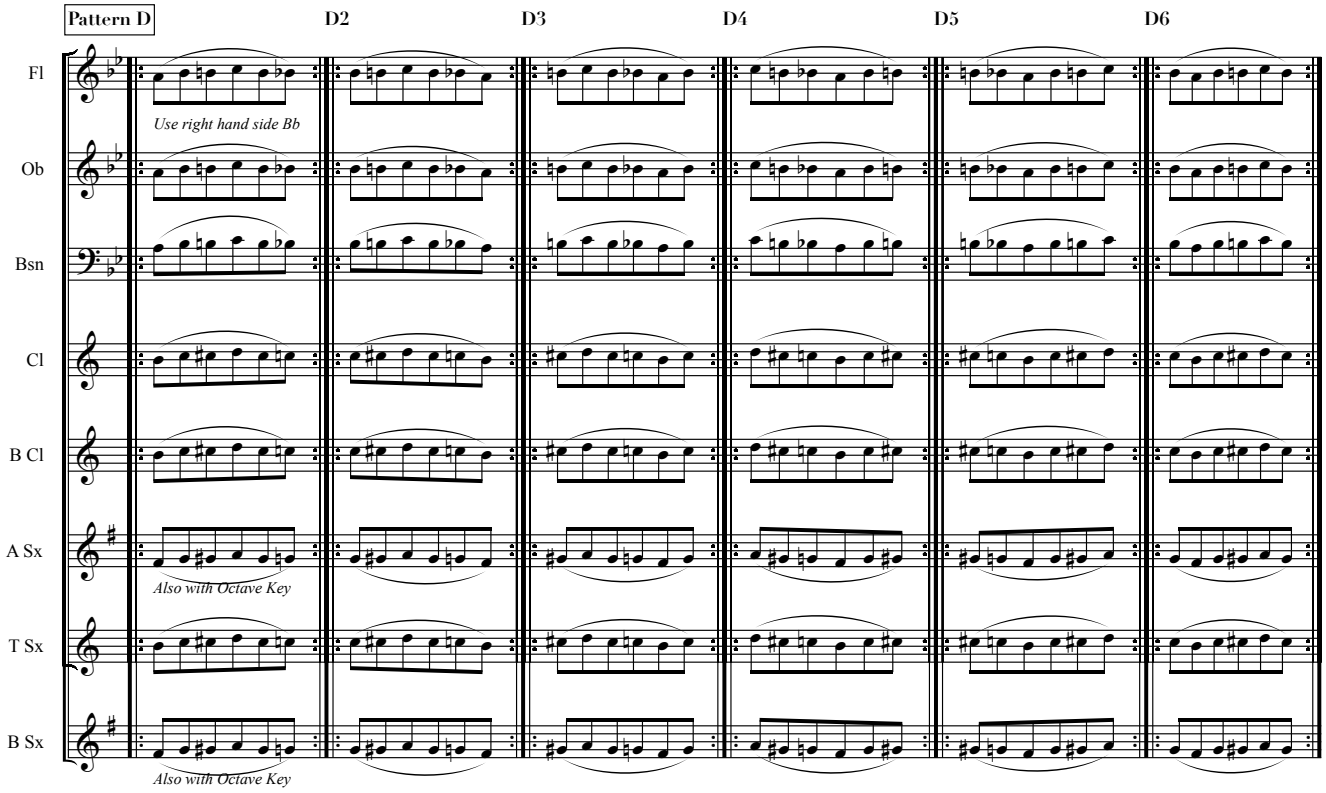

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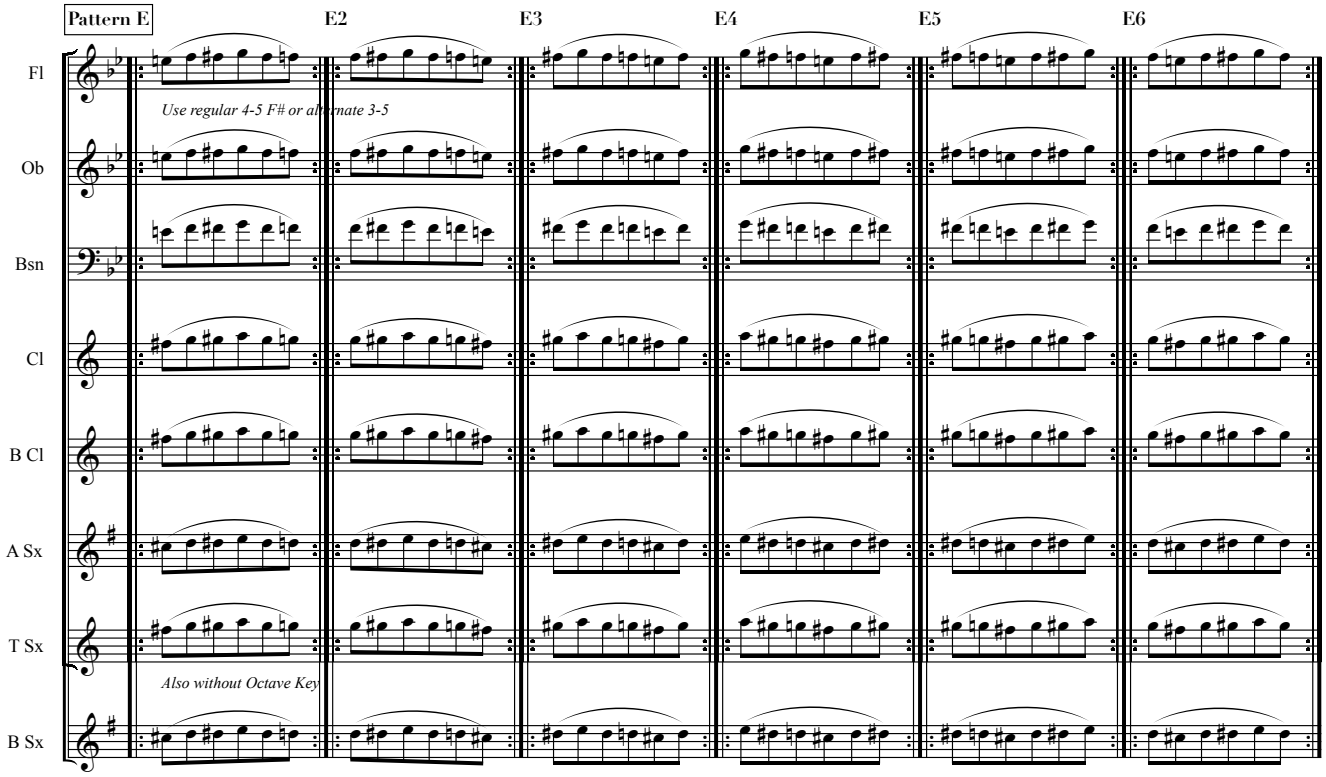

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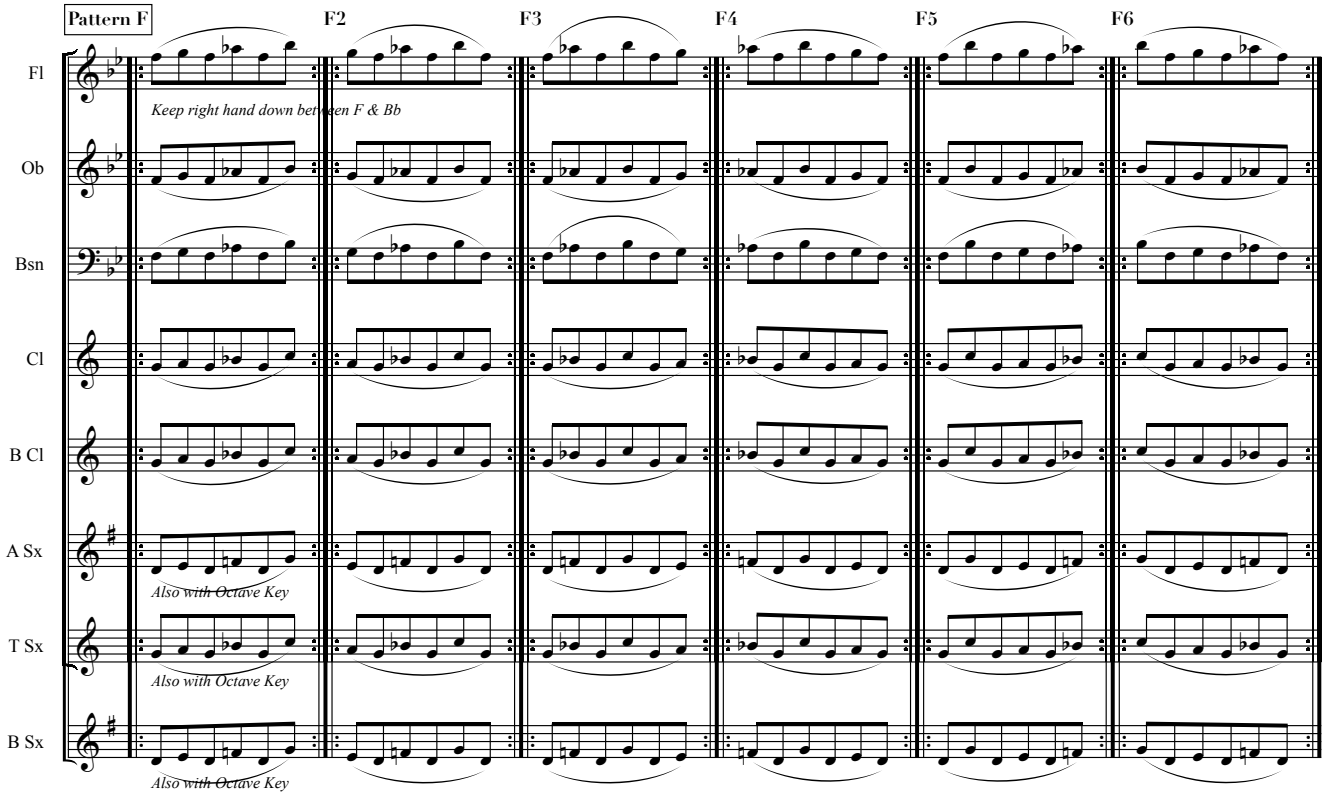

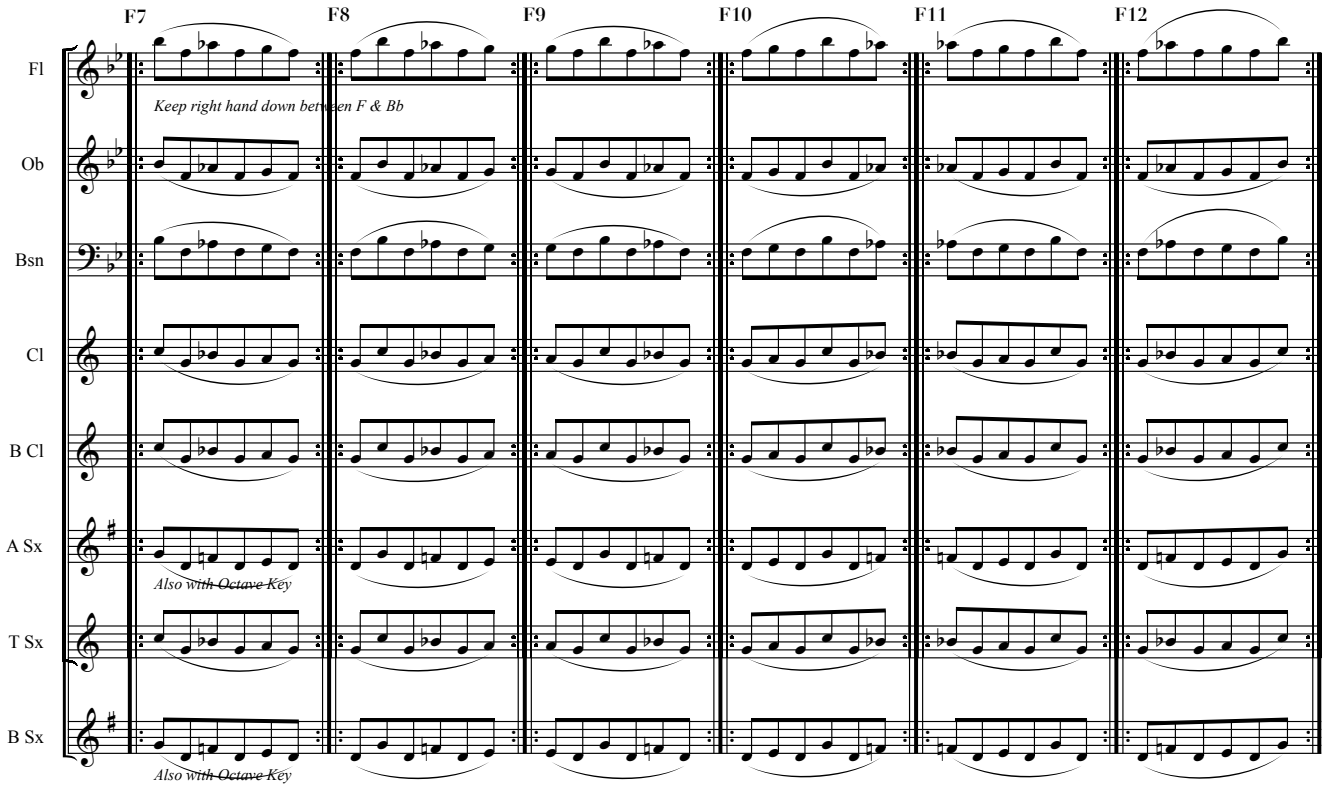

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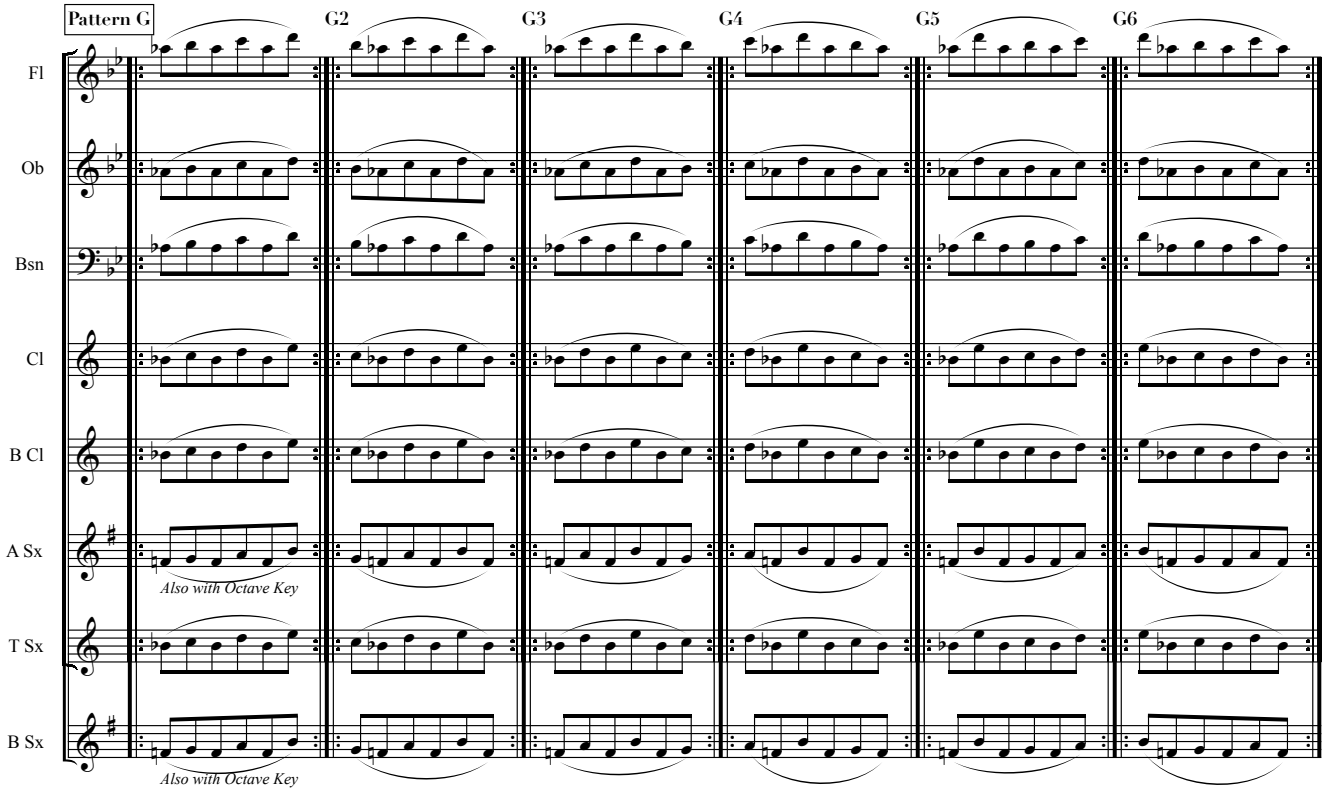

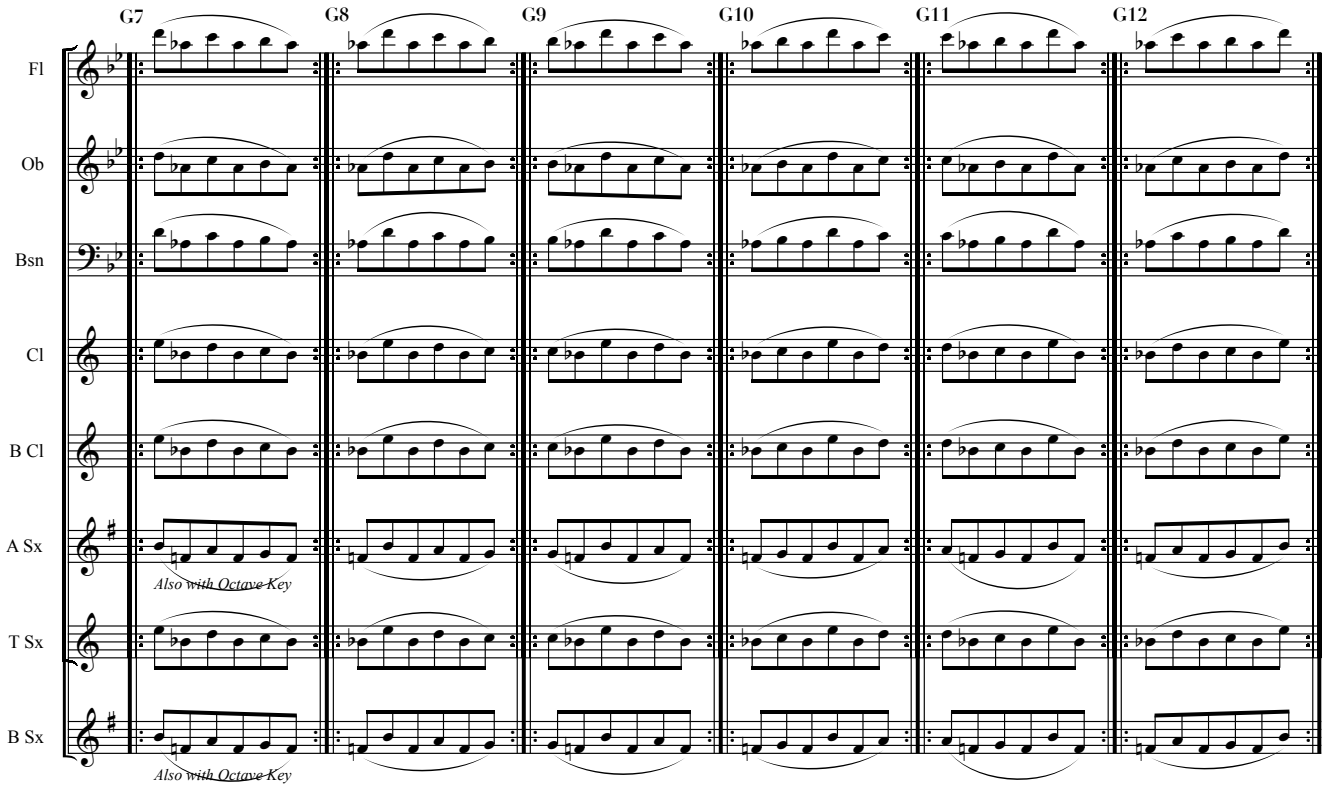

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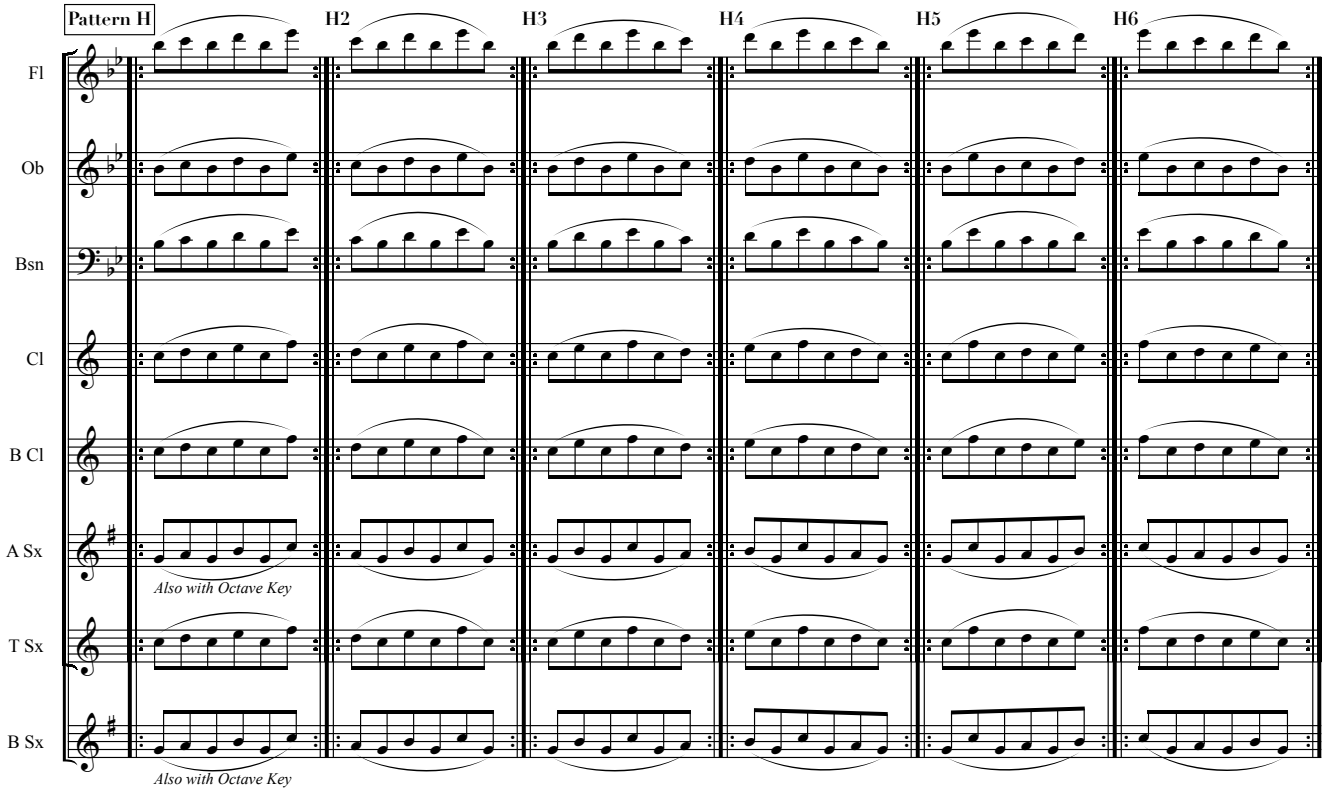

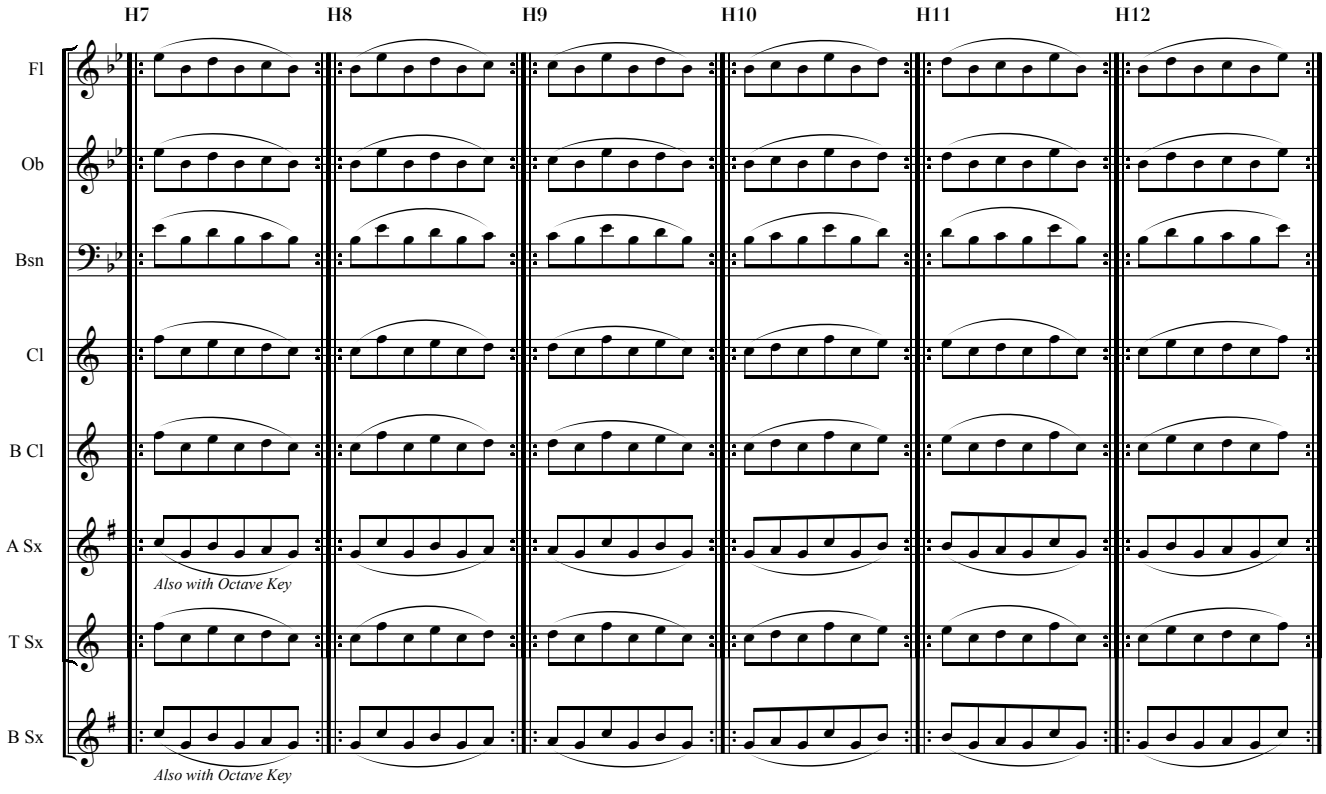

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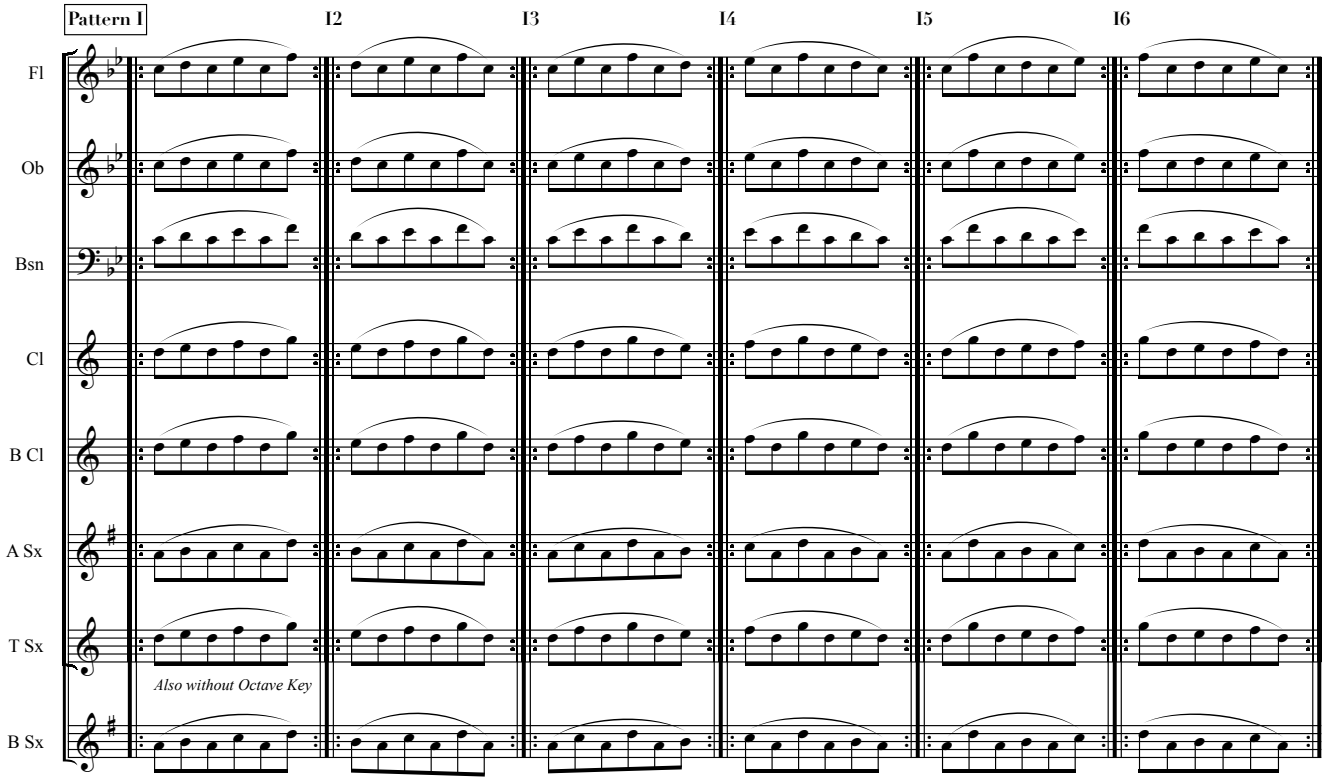

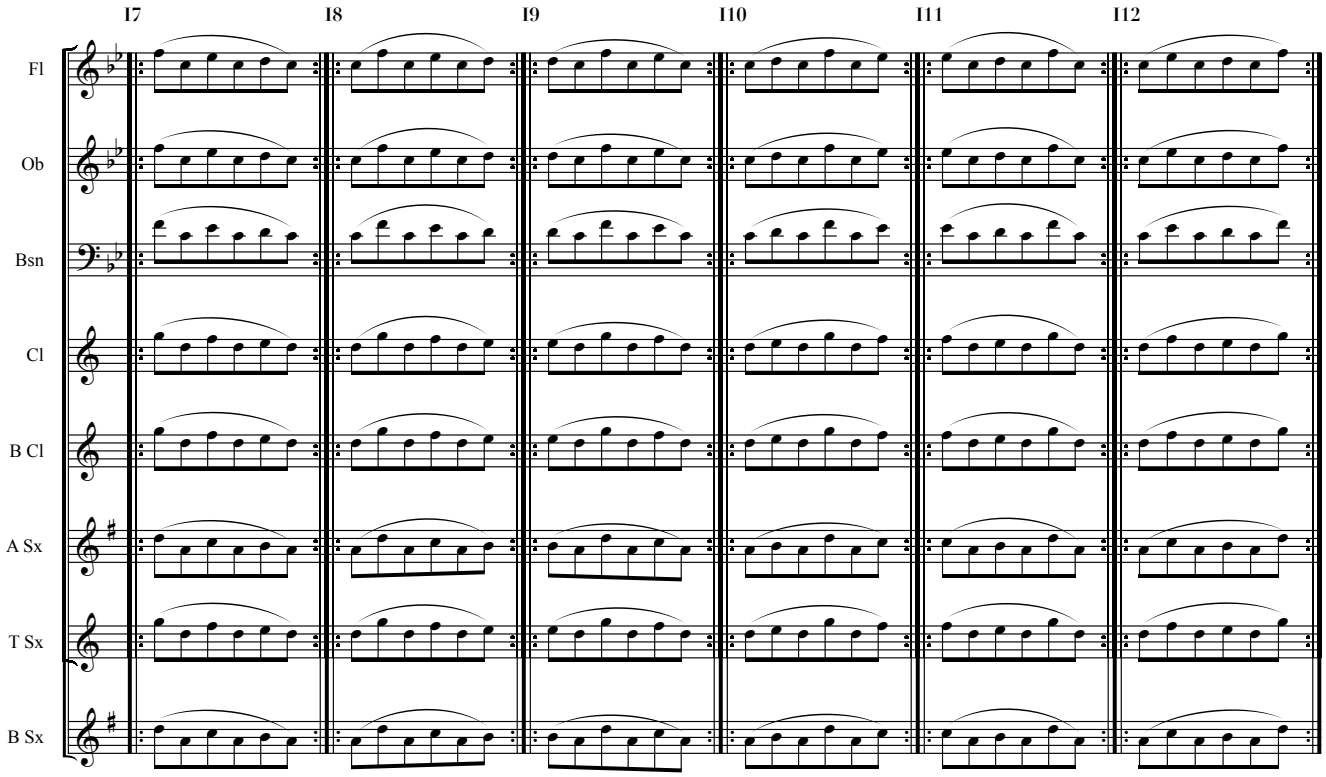

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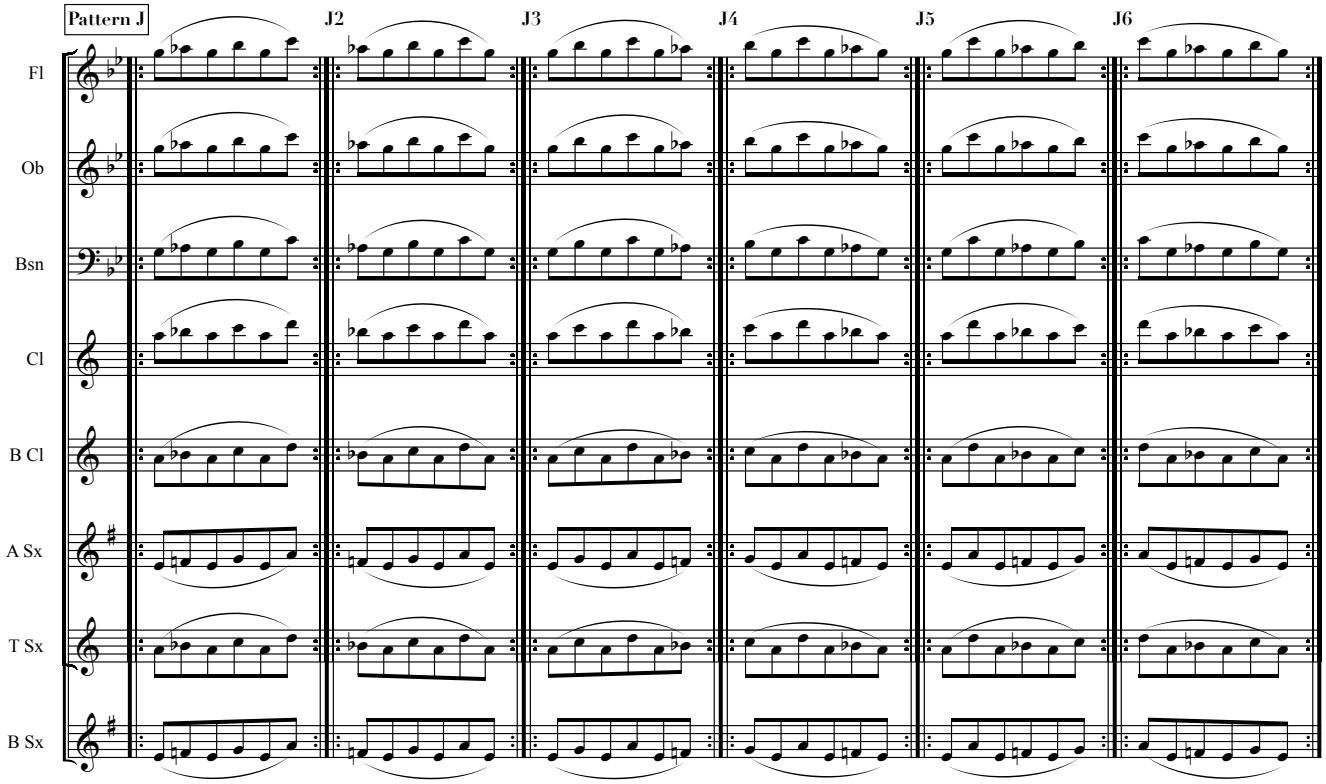

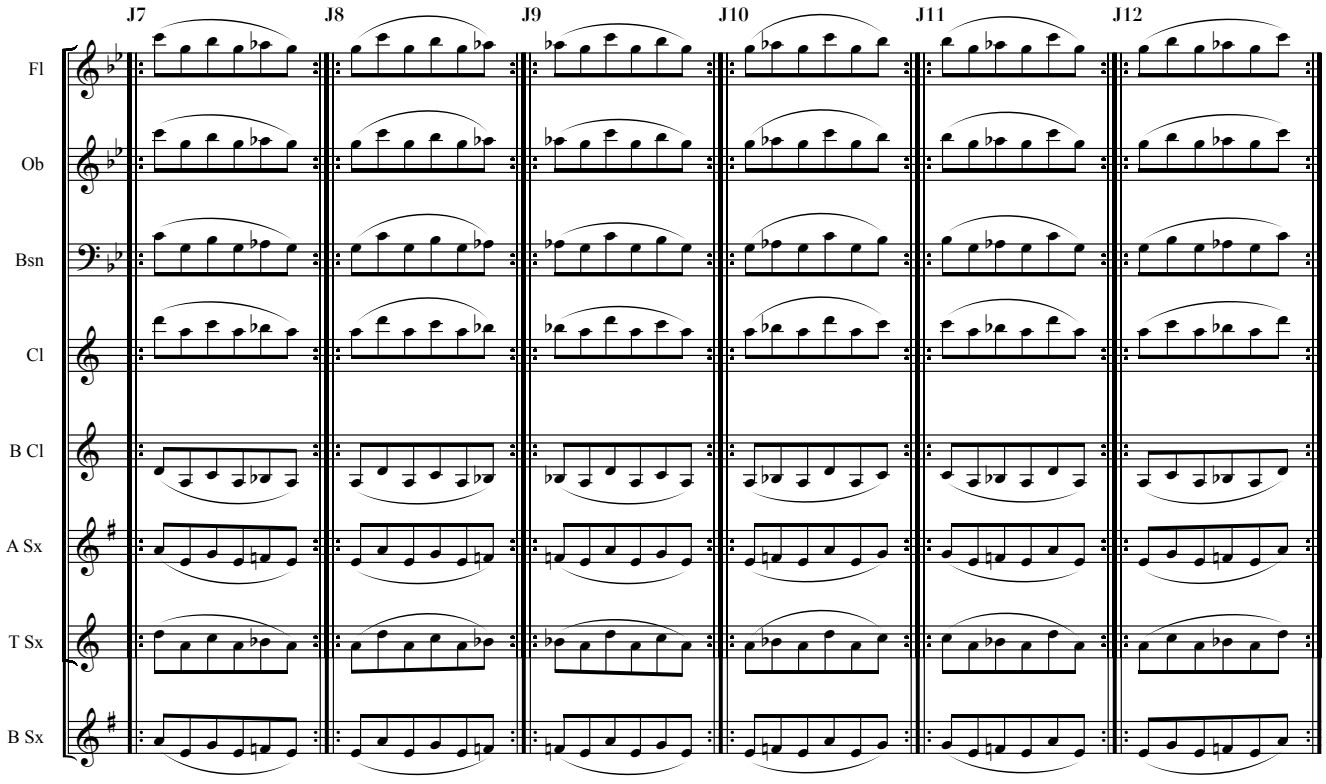

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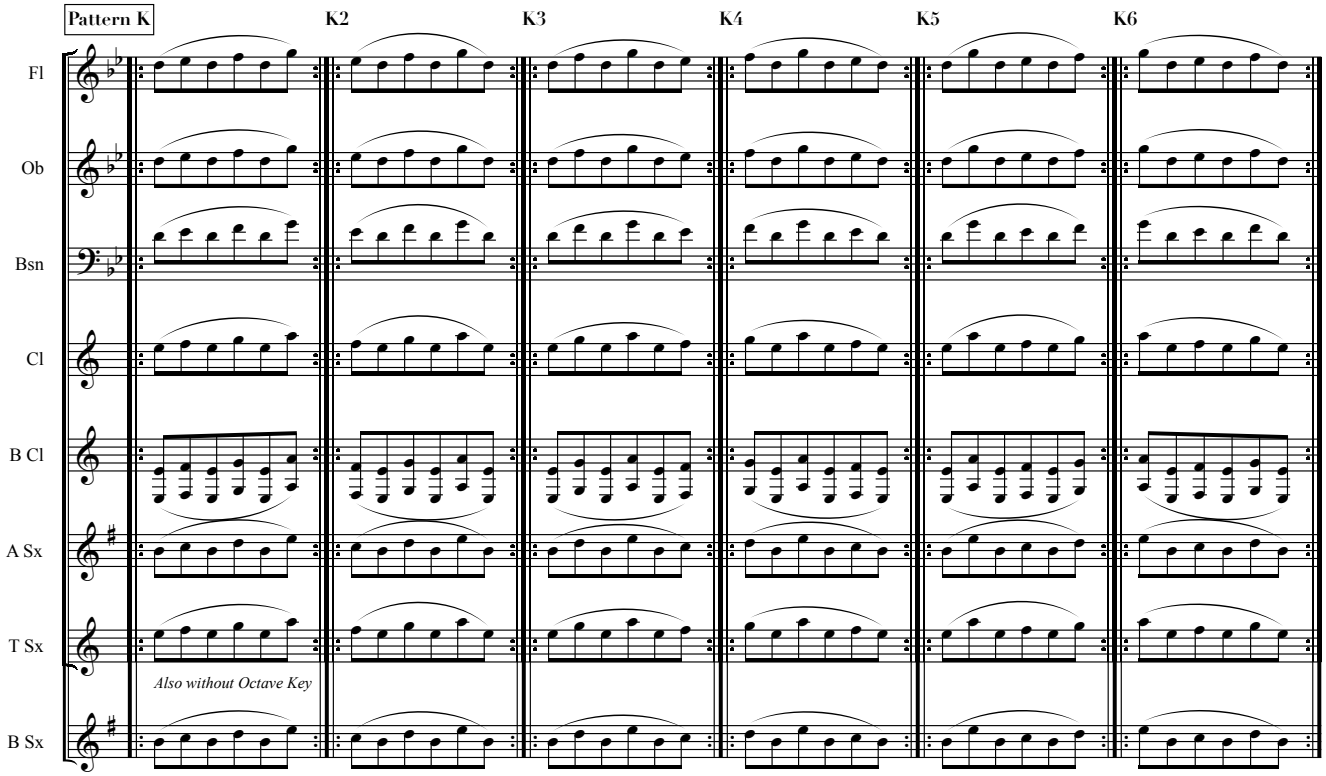

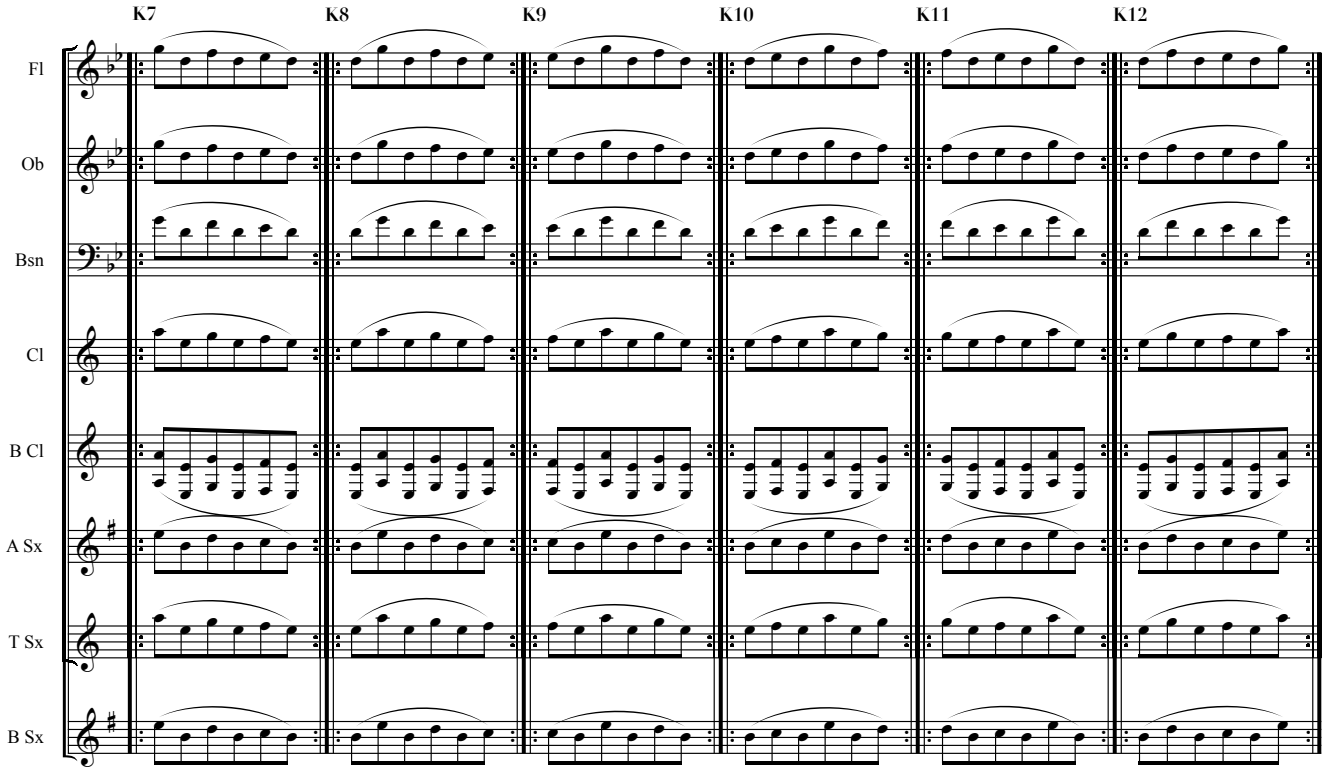

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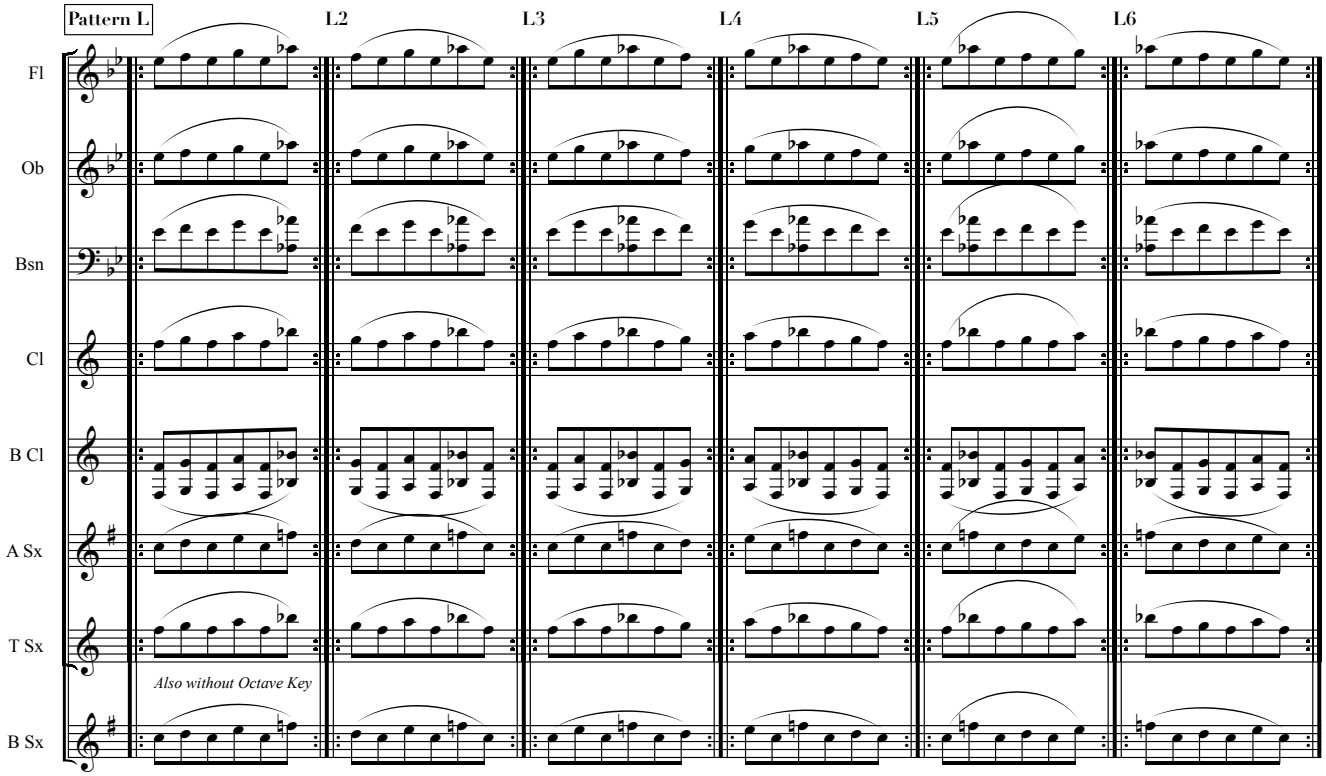
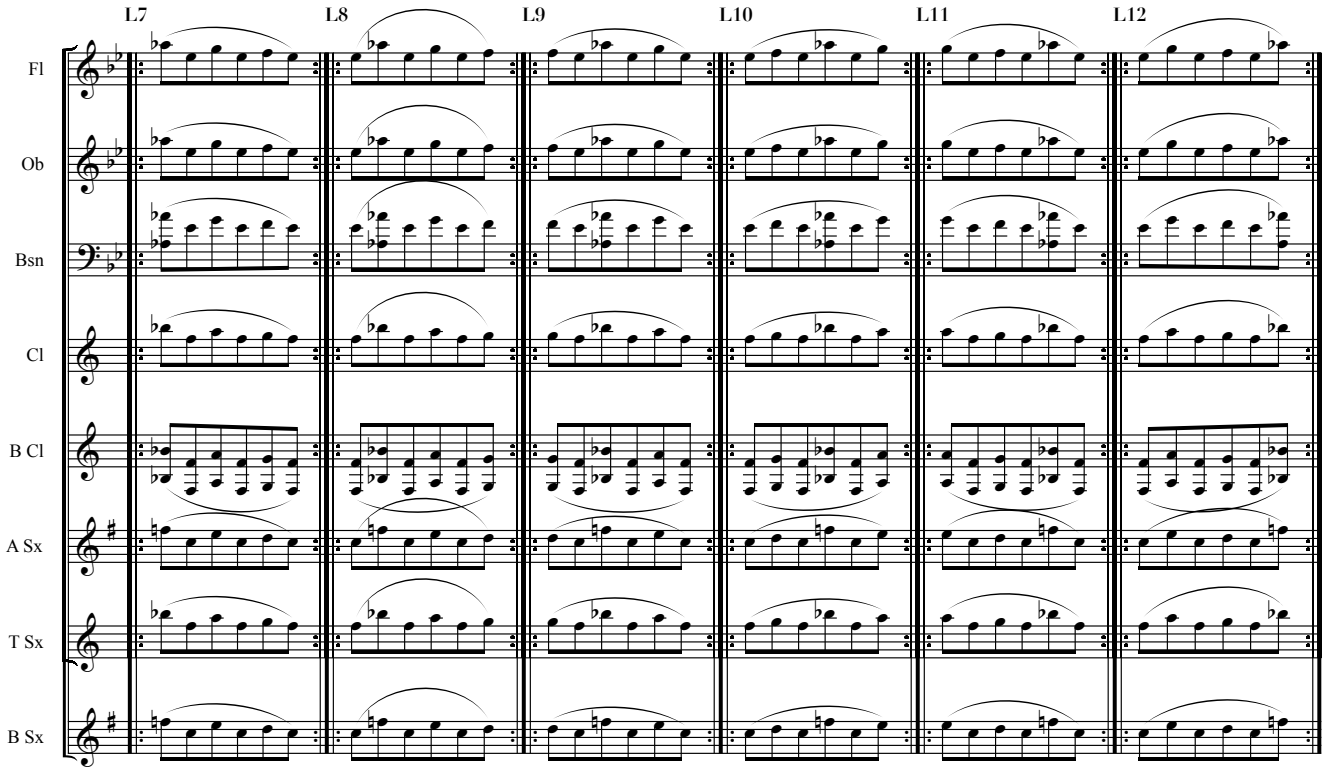




WOODWIND CHAPTER

Trill Exercises

Exercise Objectives

- Focus on even speed of the fingers.
- Students will focus on controlling the tone quality during the trill.
- Students will focus on intonation during the trill.

Instruction Notes

- The exercise is set up to break down both notes of the trill. Students will begin slowly and then rhythmically speed up. Try to stay with the correct rhythm and work to go as fast as students are able to.
- Make sure the approach of both breathing and supporting through the phrase stays consistent.
- You can practice these exercises, but make sure you also create exercises of the trills that are in your show. Use this exercise as a guide.
- Make sure the students are using the trill keys.

QUICK COMMENTS FOR STUDENTS

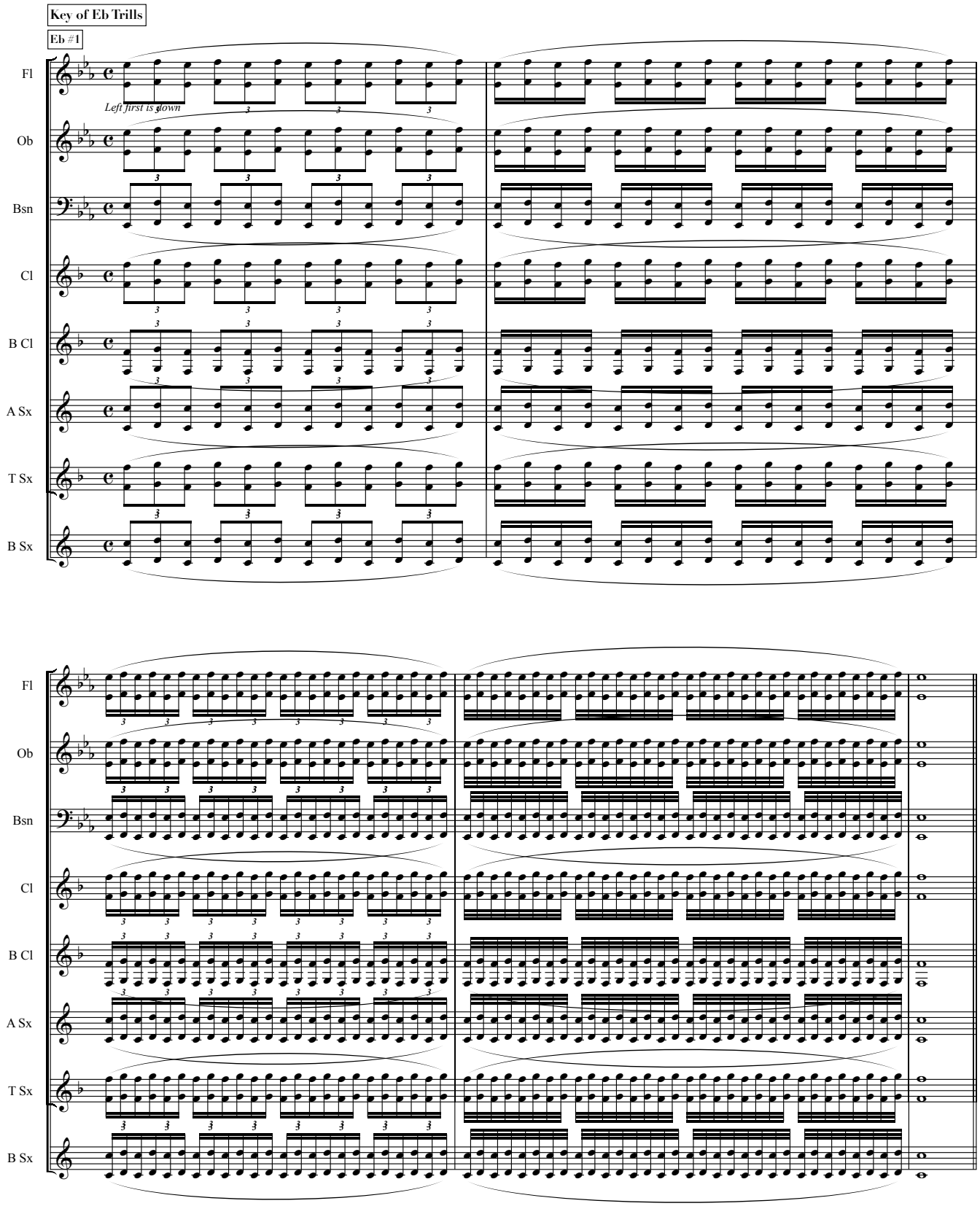
"More air"
"Keep embouchure still and even"
"Relax your hands"
"Keep fingers close to the keys"
"Keep fingers ON the keys" (Saxophones only)
"Don't bite as you play faster"
"Stay relaxed"

Visual Component

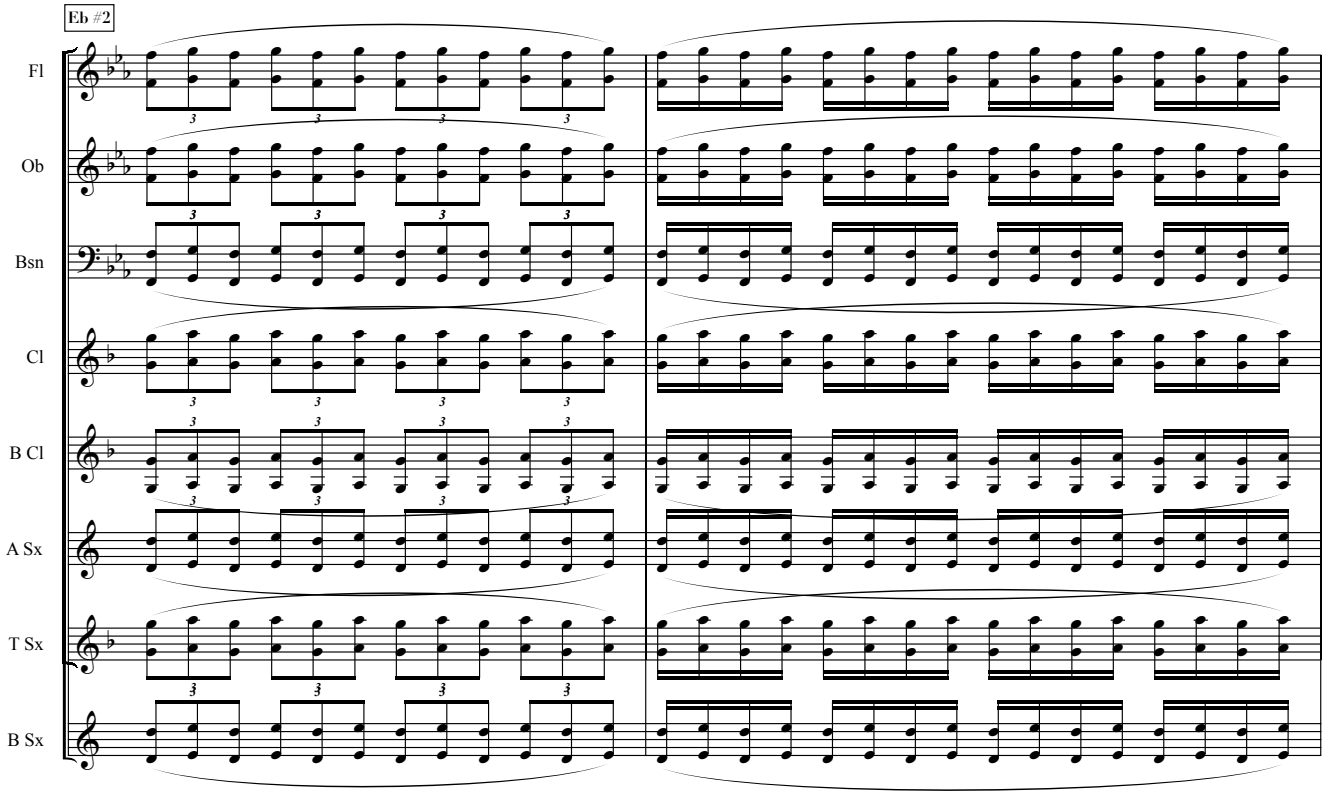
- The exercises in this chapter were not written to be put on the move. If students become comfortable enough with any of the exercises, adding the visual component would be a great idea. Do as much or as little as you can on the move.
- The more students play and move, the better they will become. Repetition is extremely important. Simply repeating exercises multiple times will give students ample opportunity to figure things out.
- The more instruction students receive, the better they will become. If you don't have a large staff or a staff at all, you can rely on the older members to help the younger members.
- It is very important to have a consistent approach to applying music fundamentals to visual fundamentals. They need to work together seamlessly. It is recommended that when you start breathing, you also start moving to take the first step. Think of the music and visual technique working together instead of against each other.
- Refer to the Visual Sheets at the back of the Full Ensemble Chapter. Keep in mind that you do not have to do complicated visual exercises. You could simply march across the football field, track, parking lot or sidewalk. Then maybe the next time go backwards.

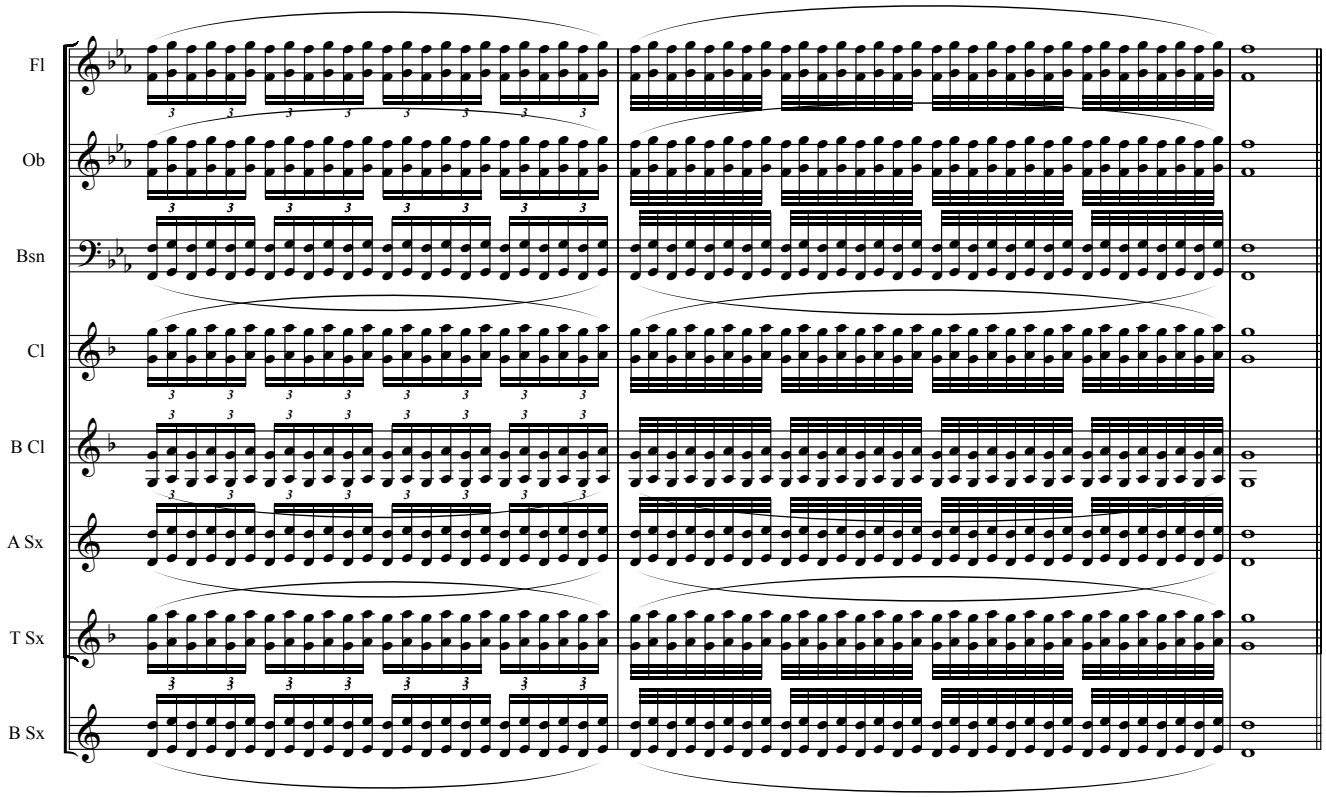
Trill Exercises

Student Page 14



Trill Exercises





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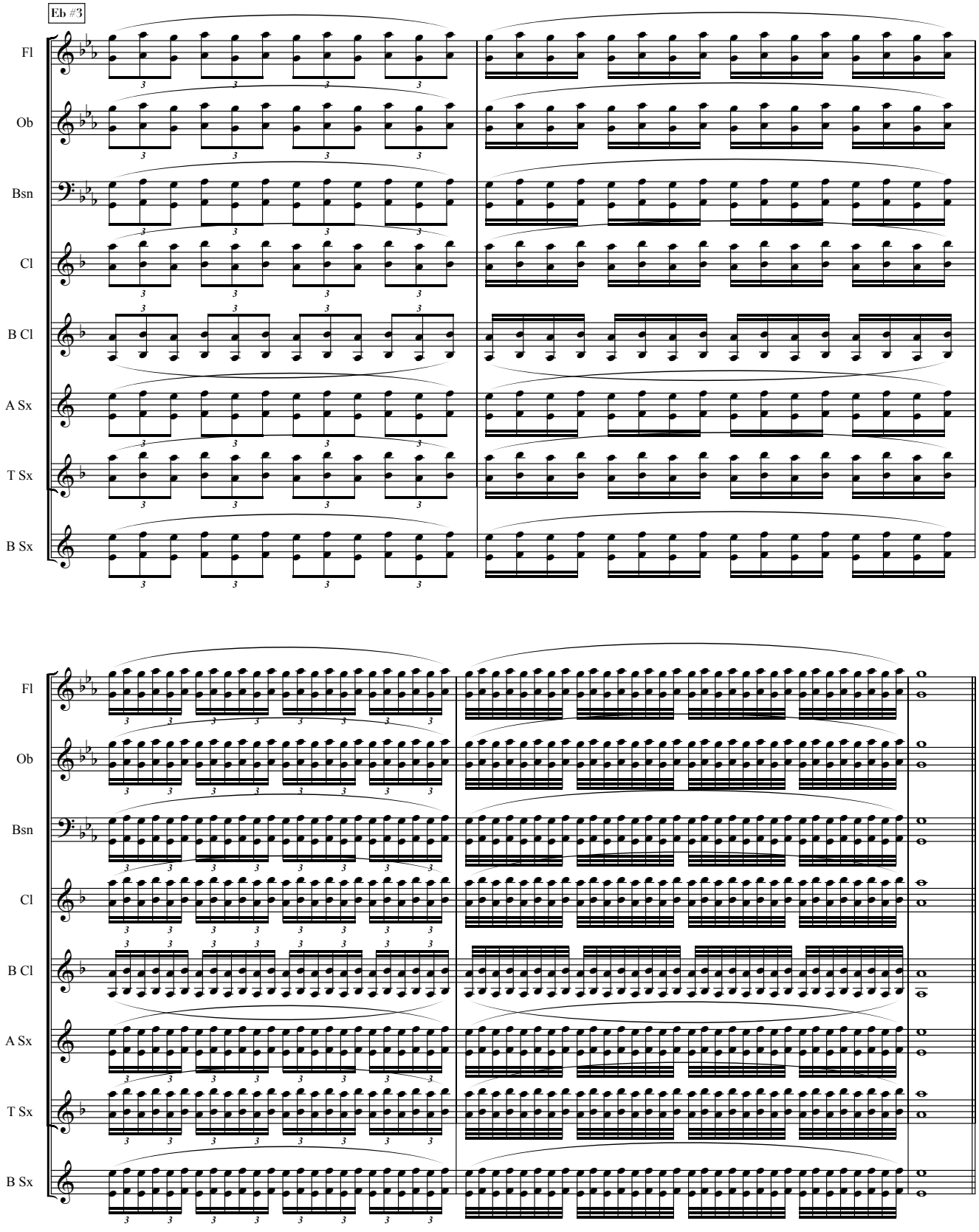

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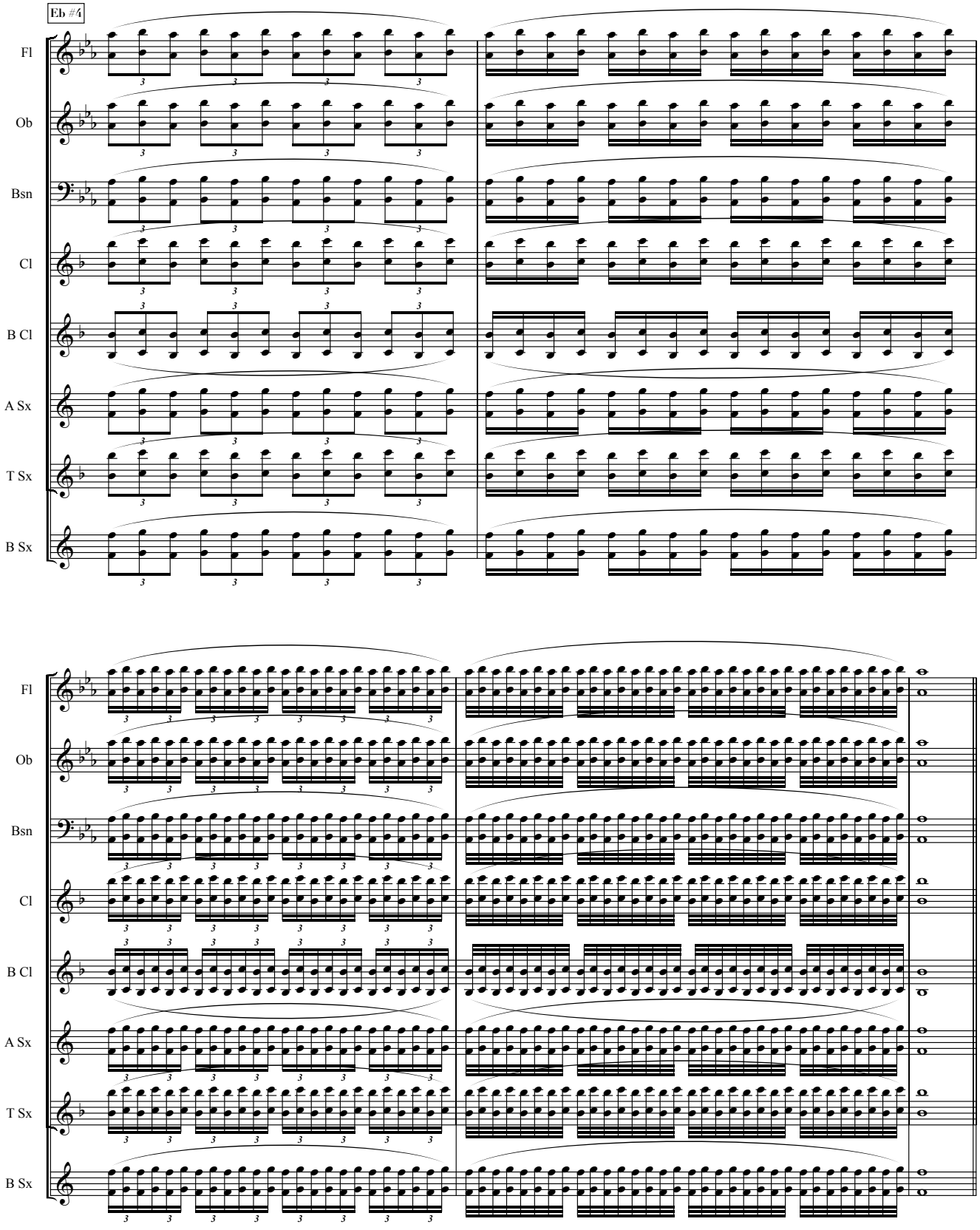

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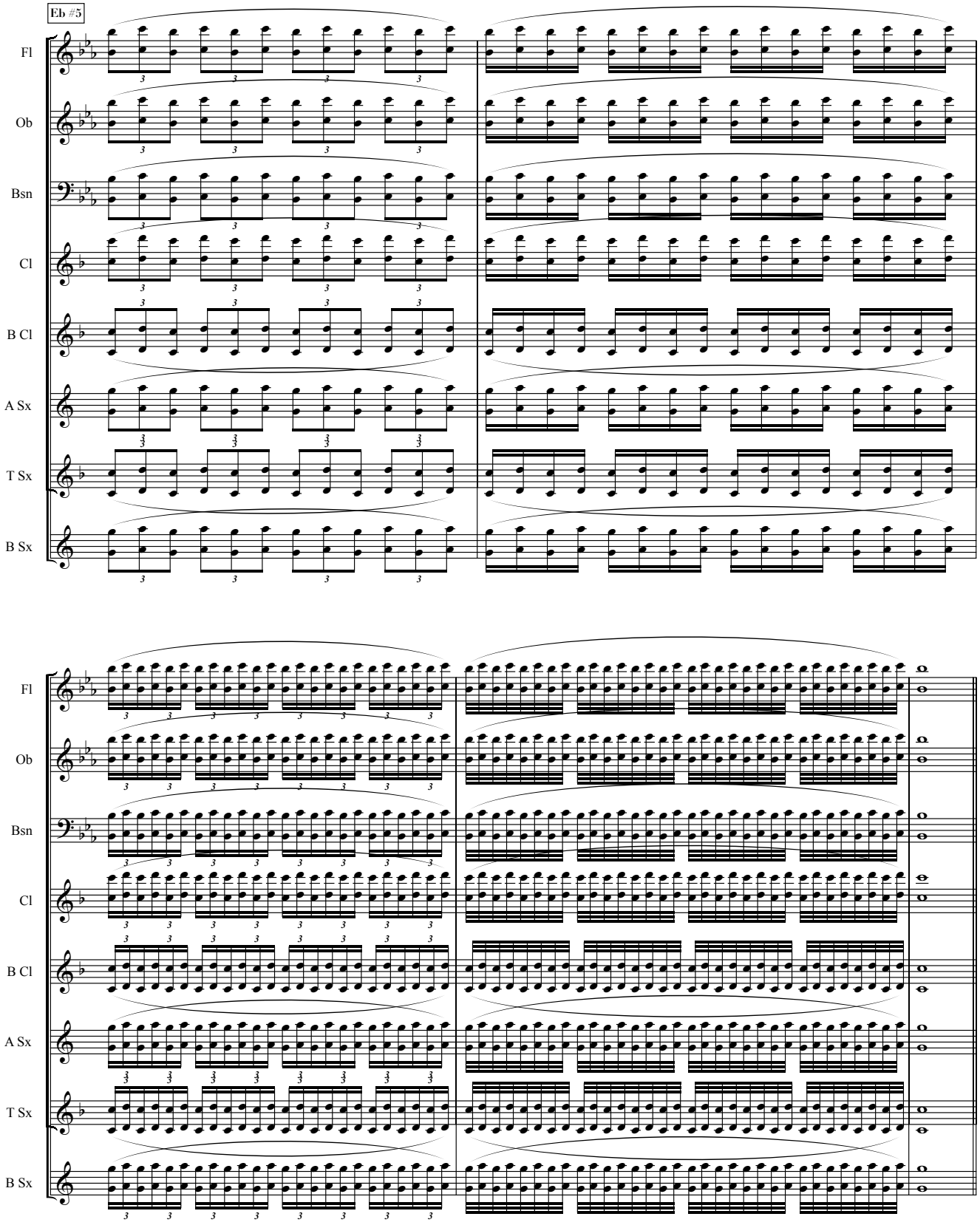

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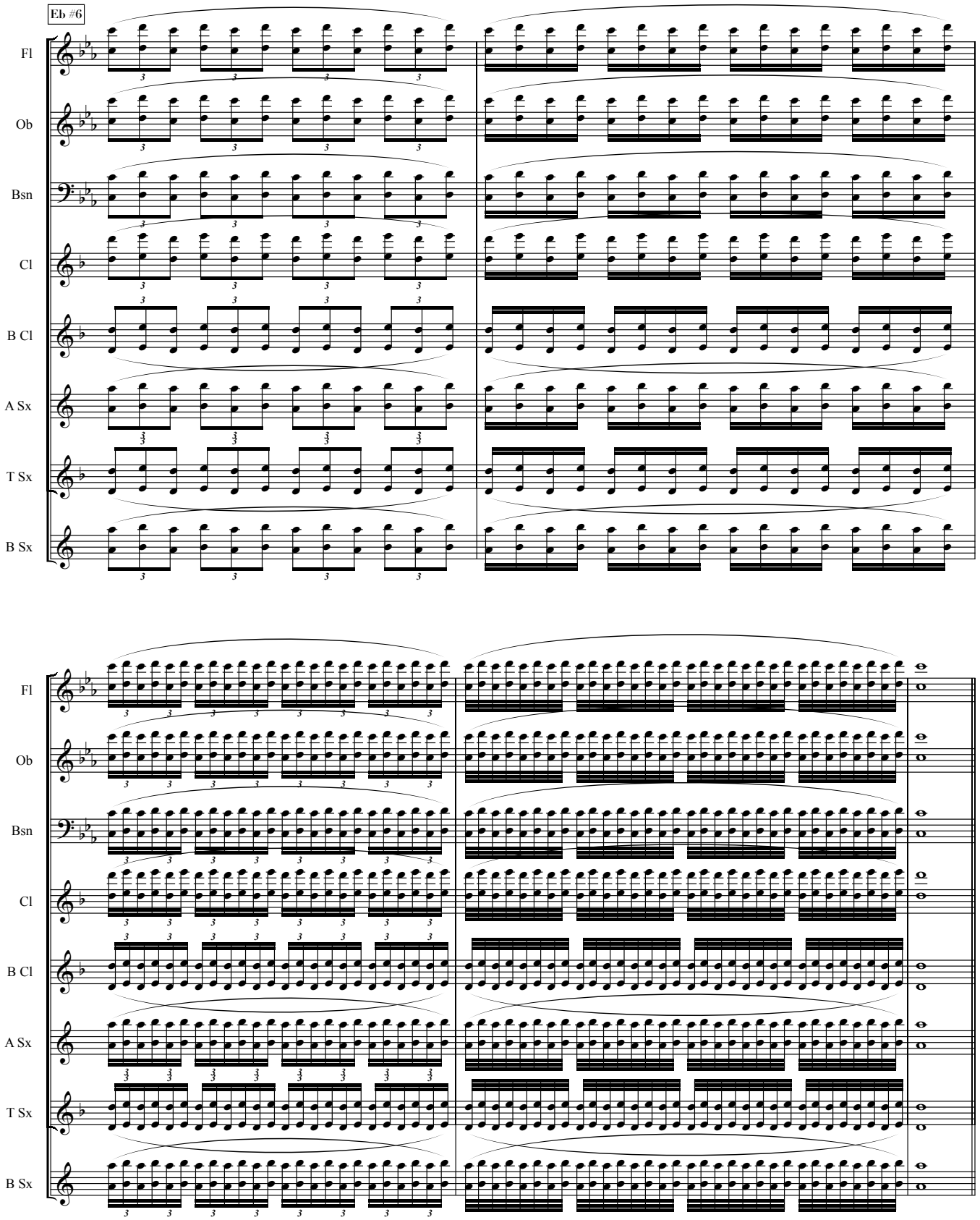

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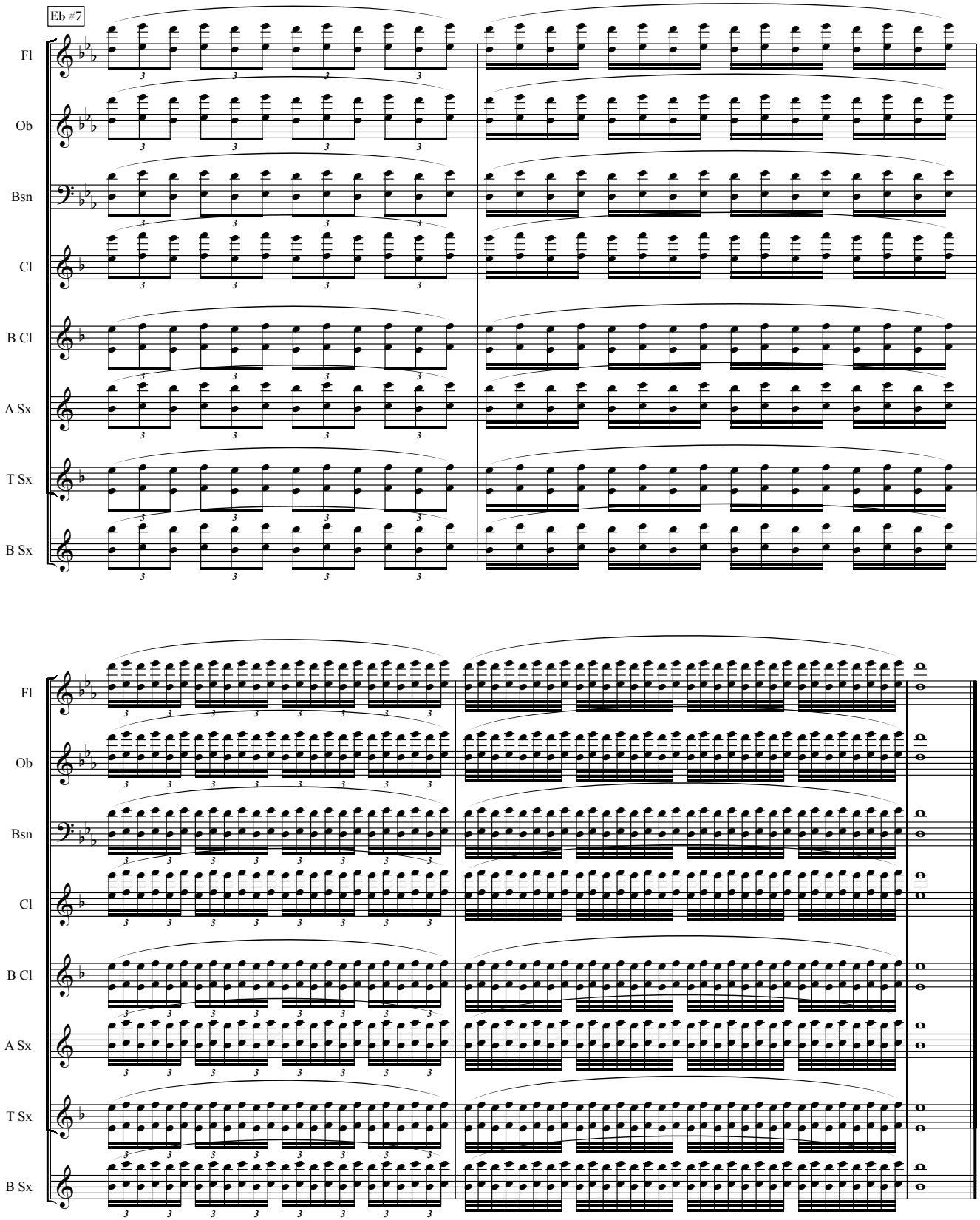

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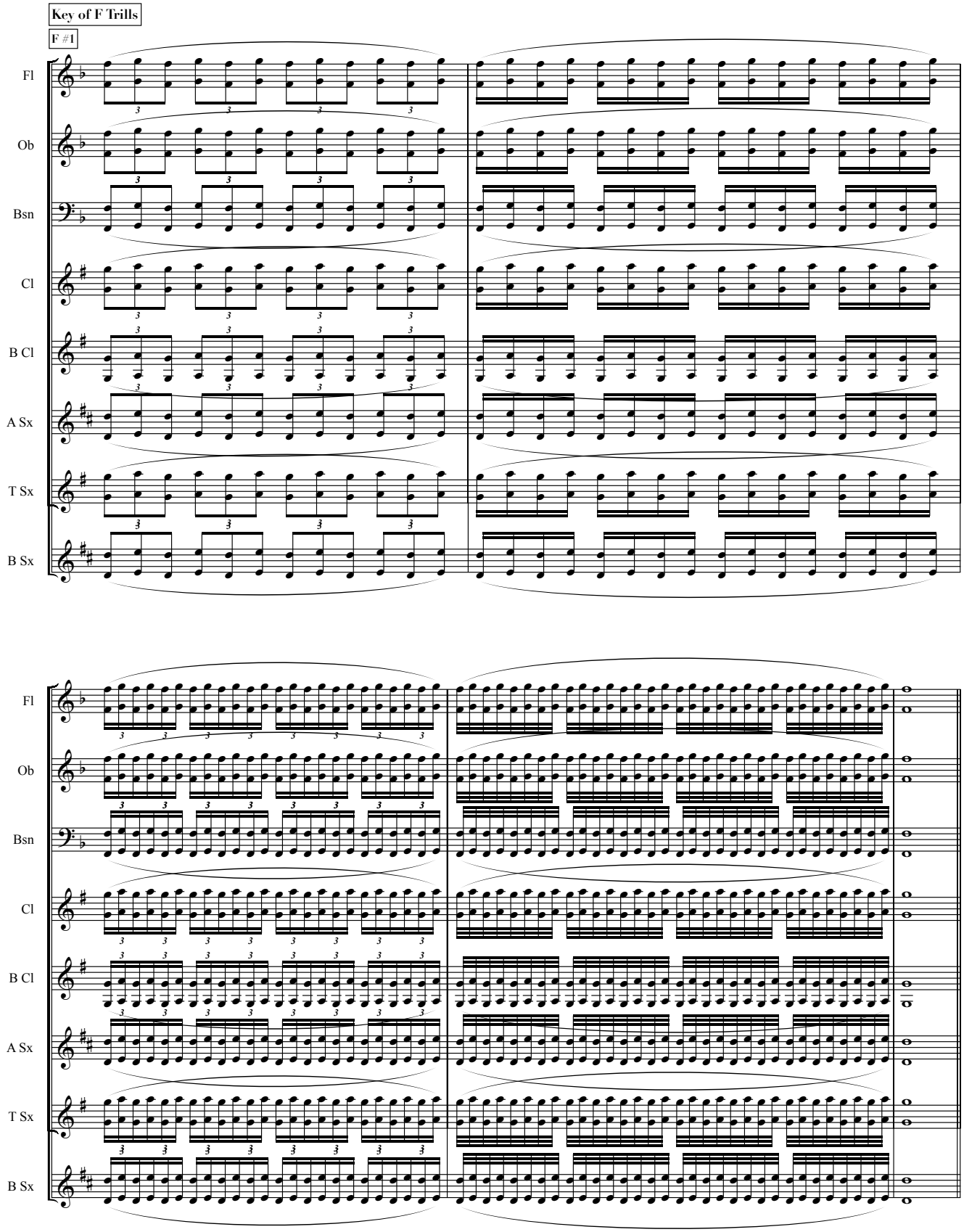

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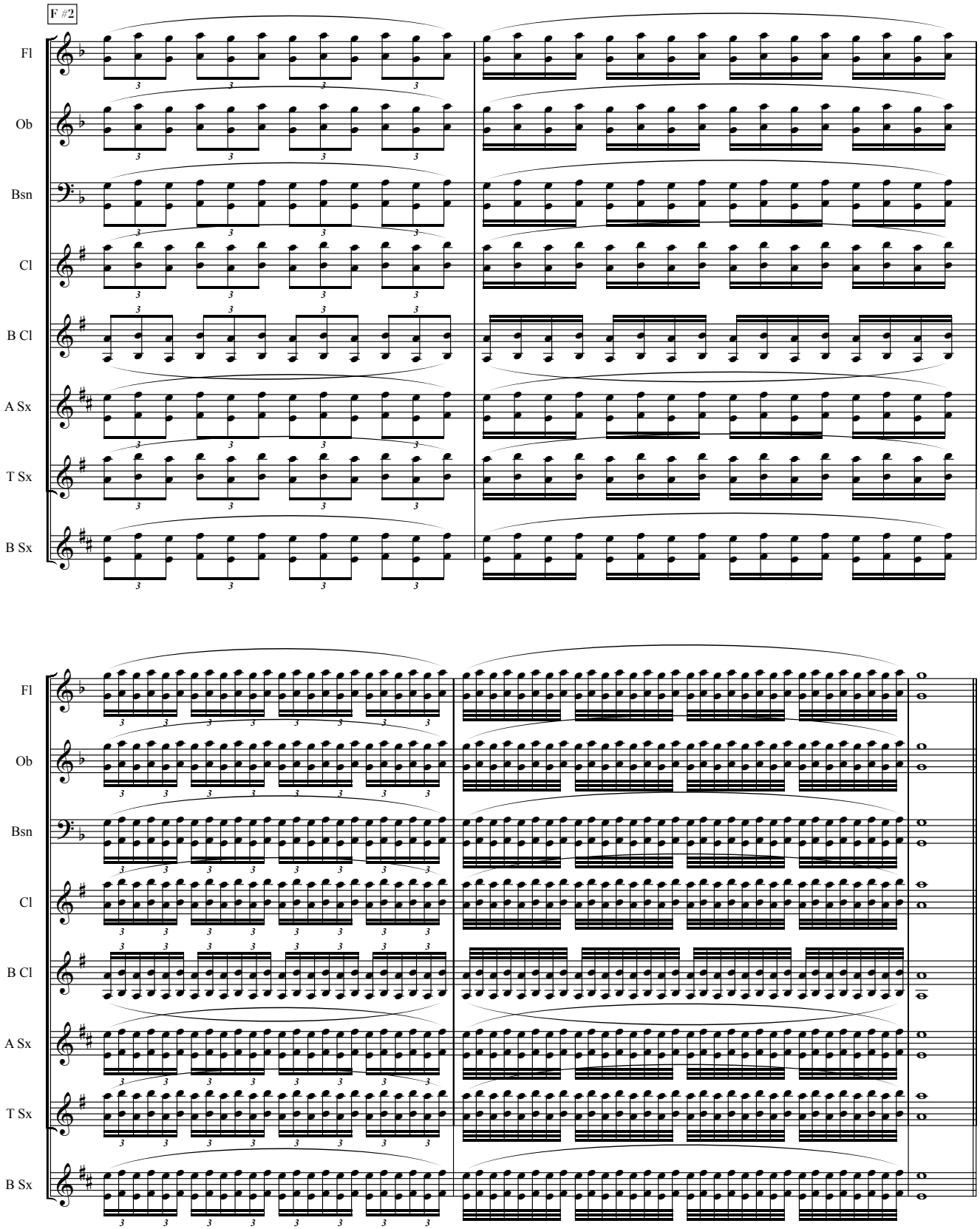

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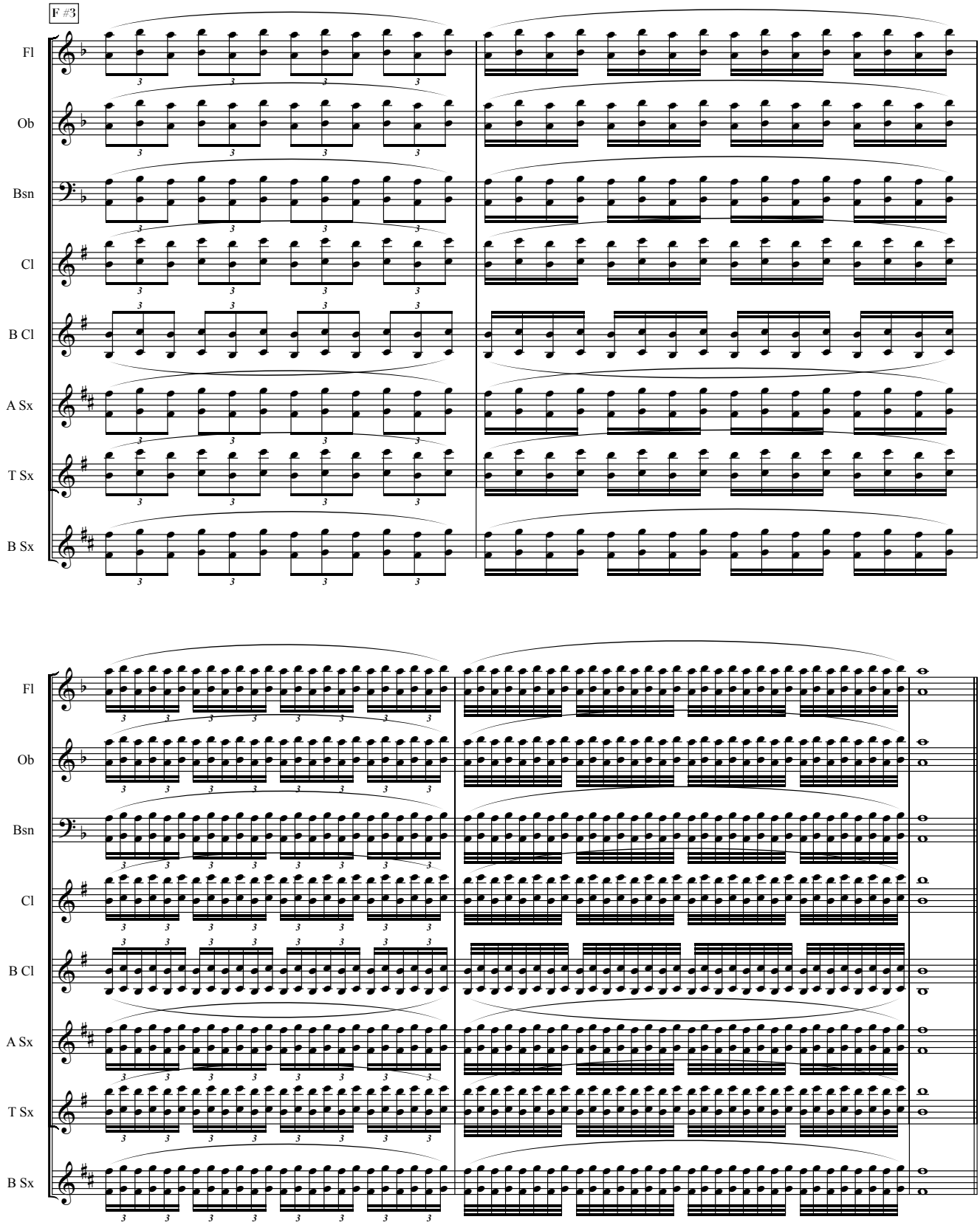

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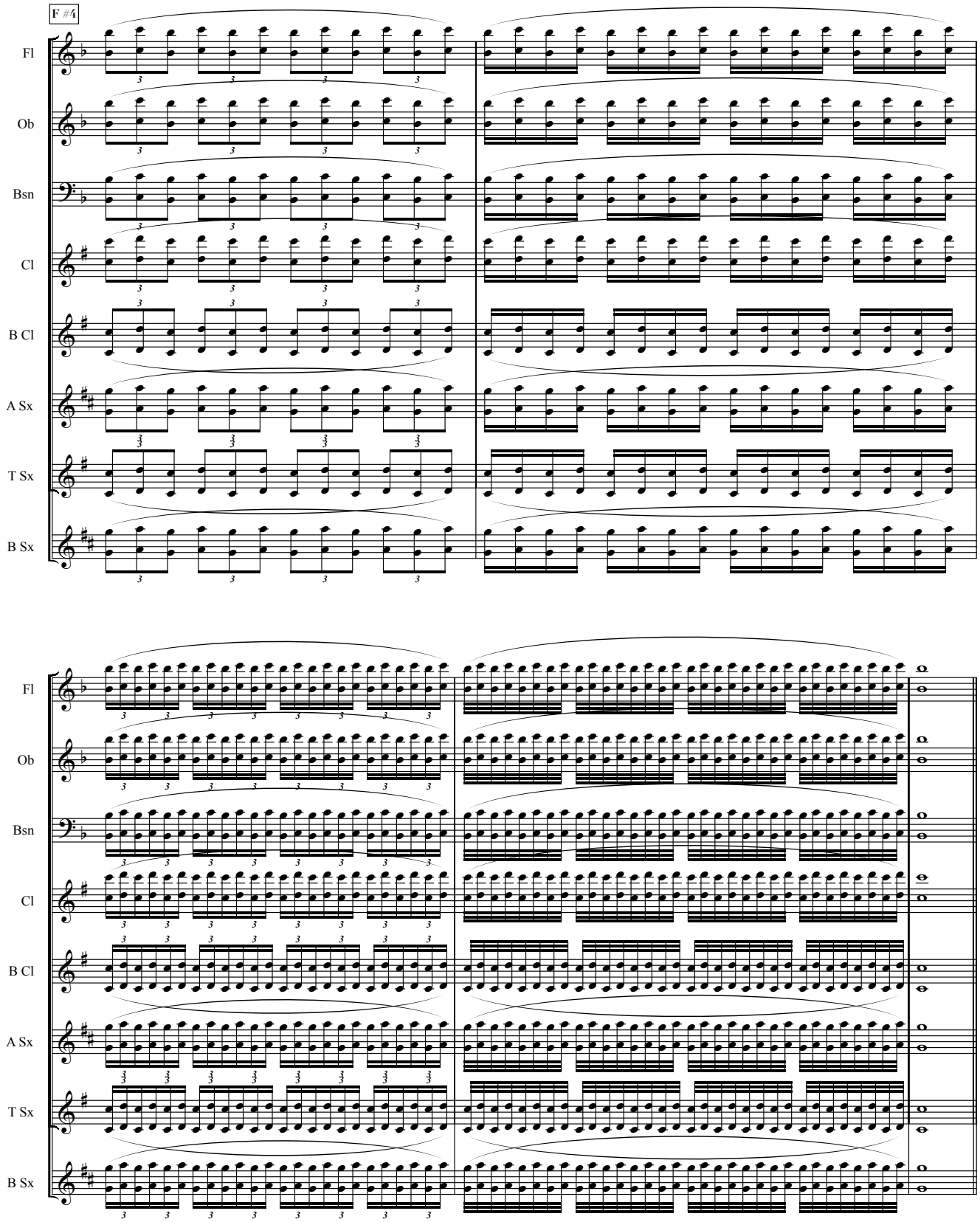

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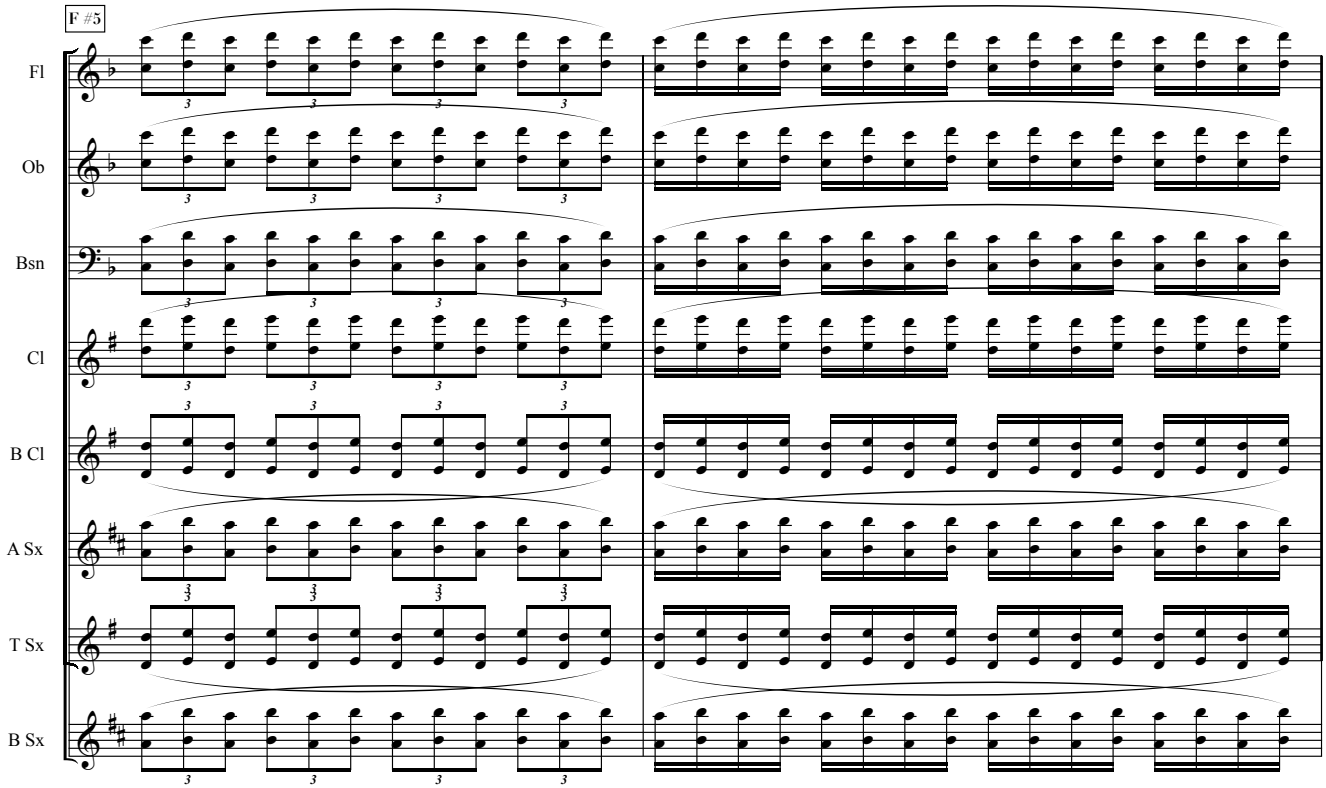

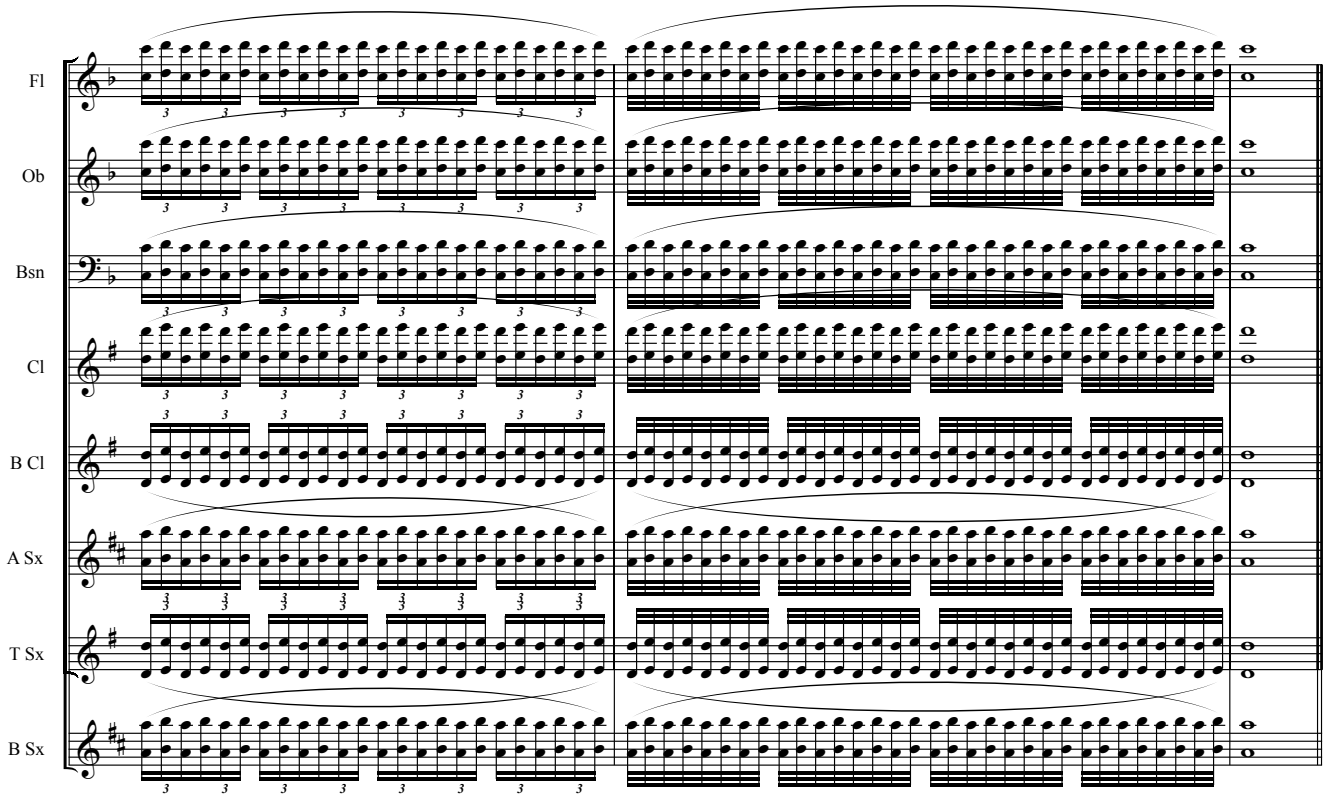

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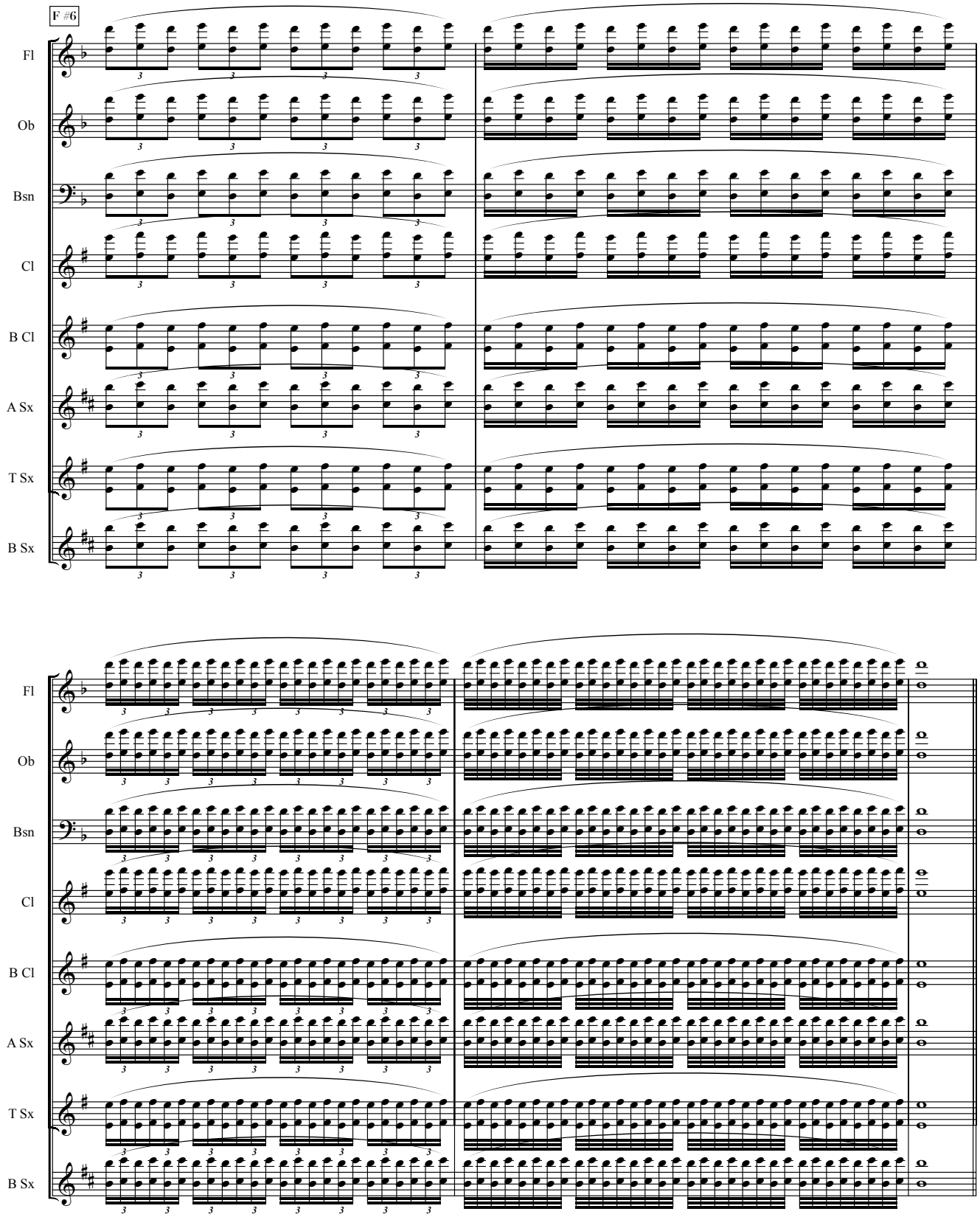

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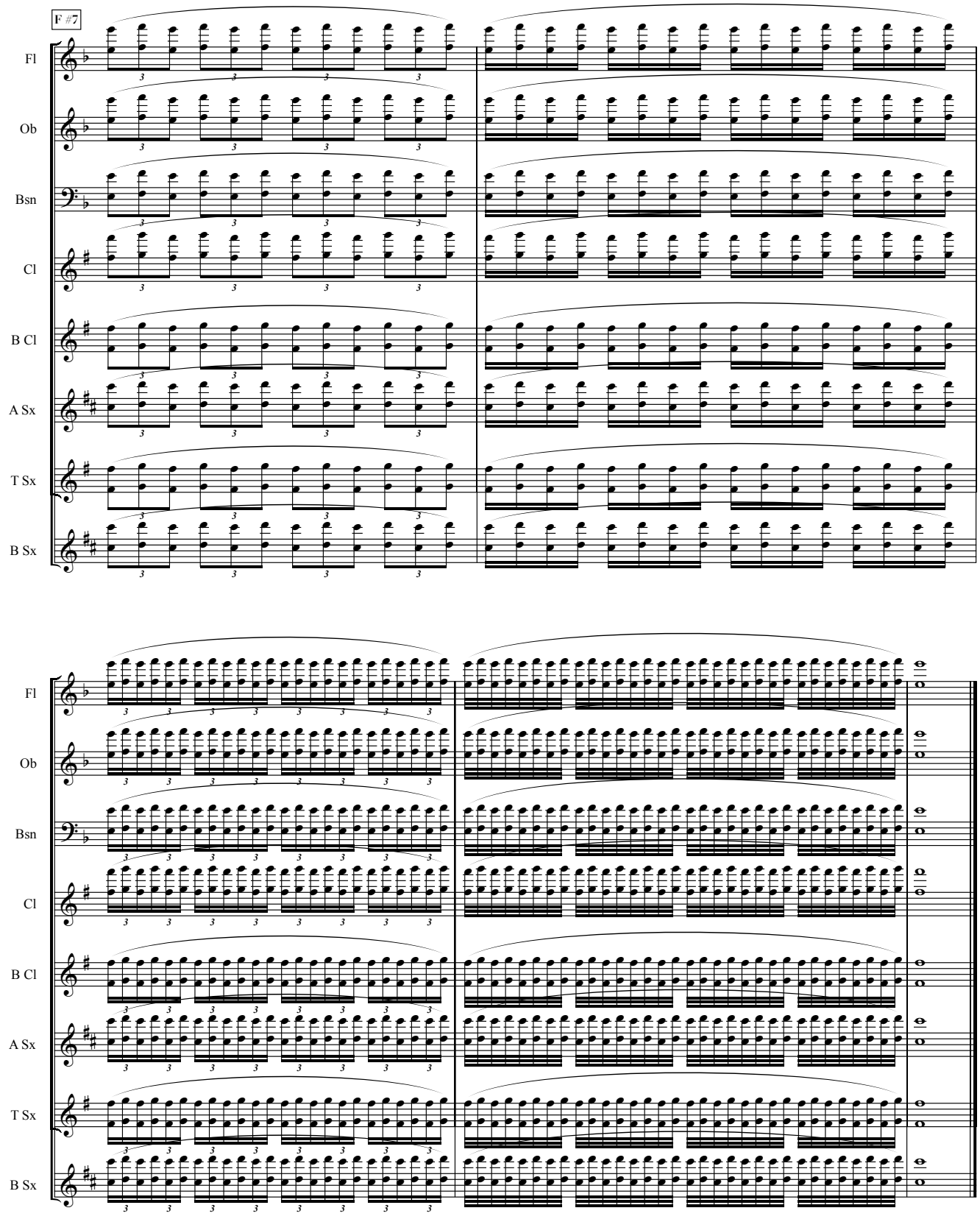

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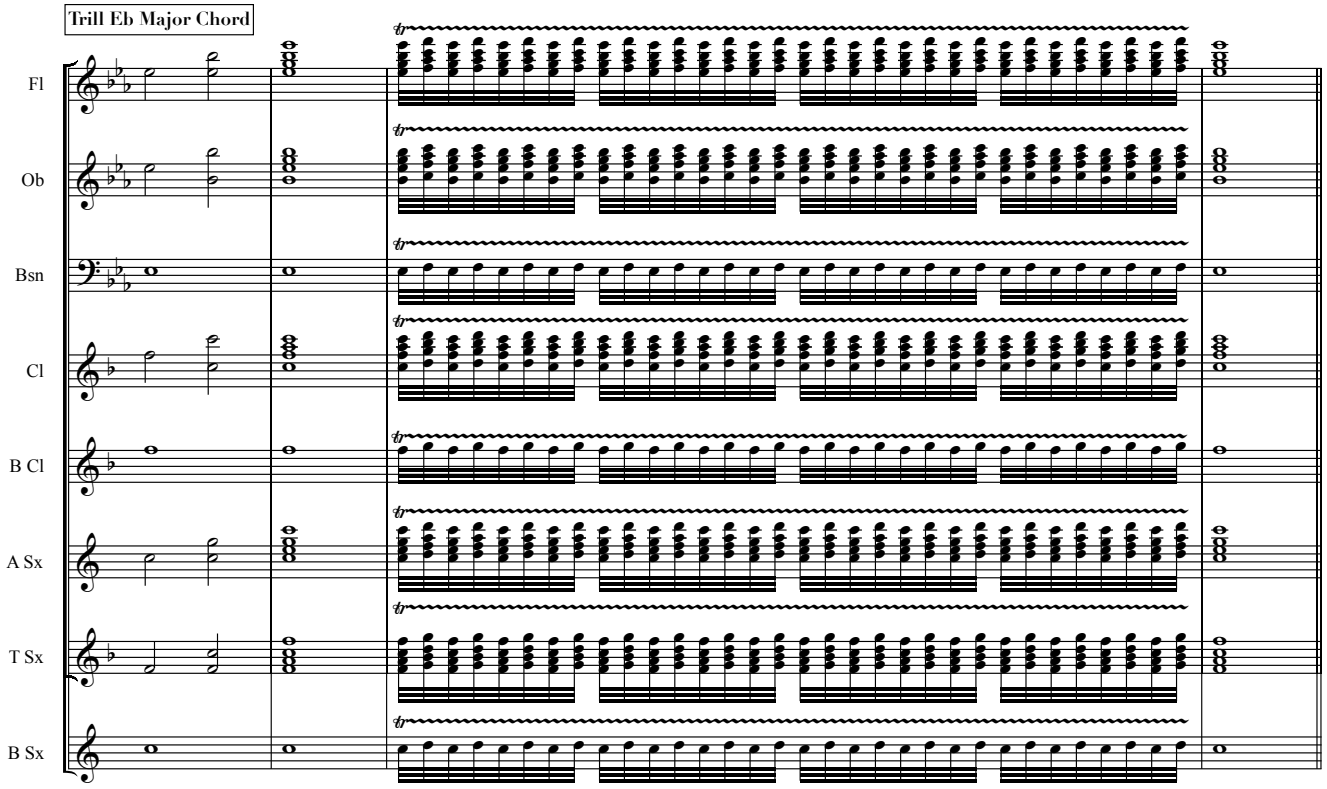

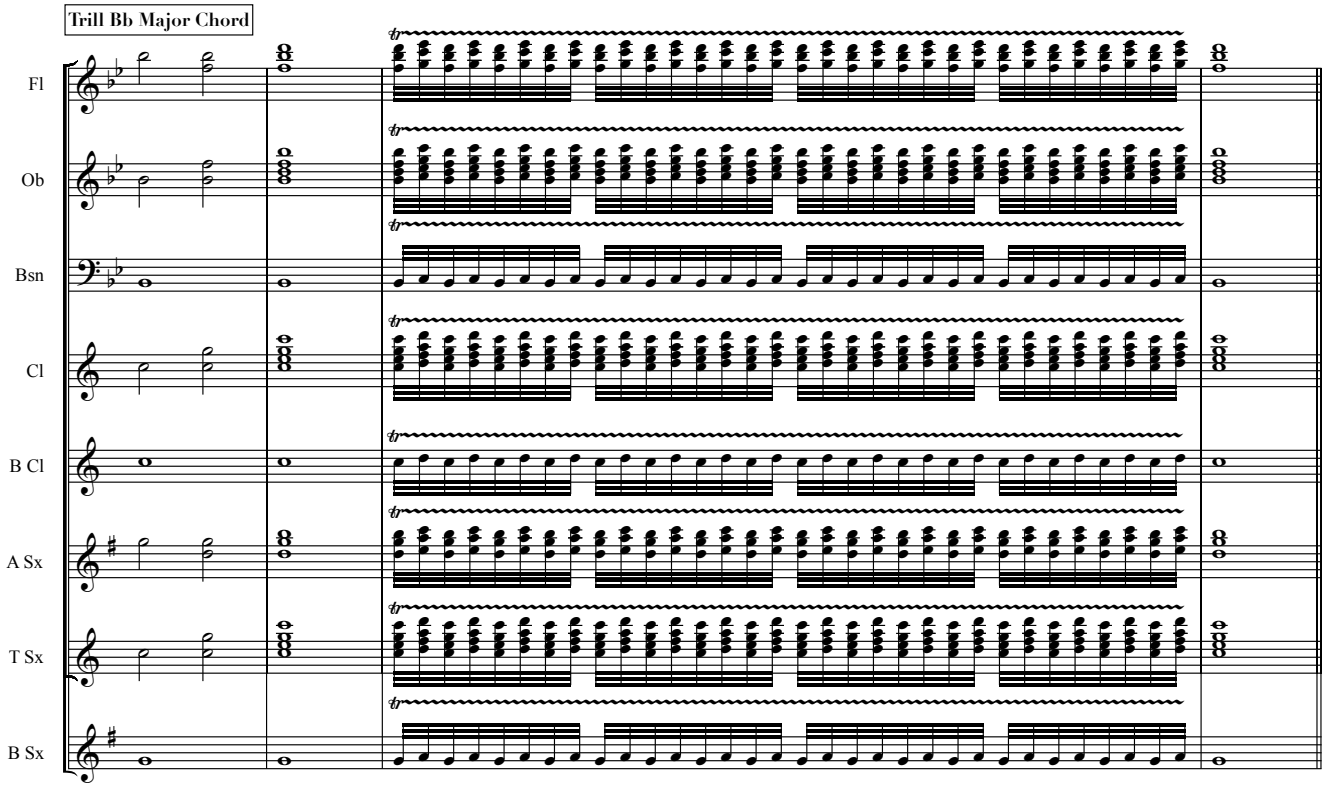

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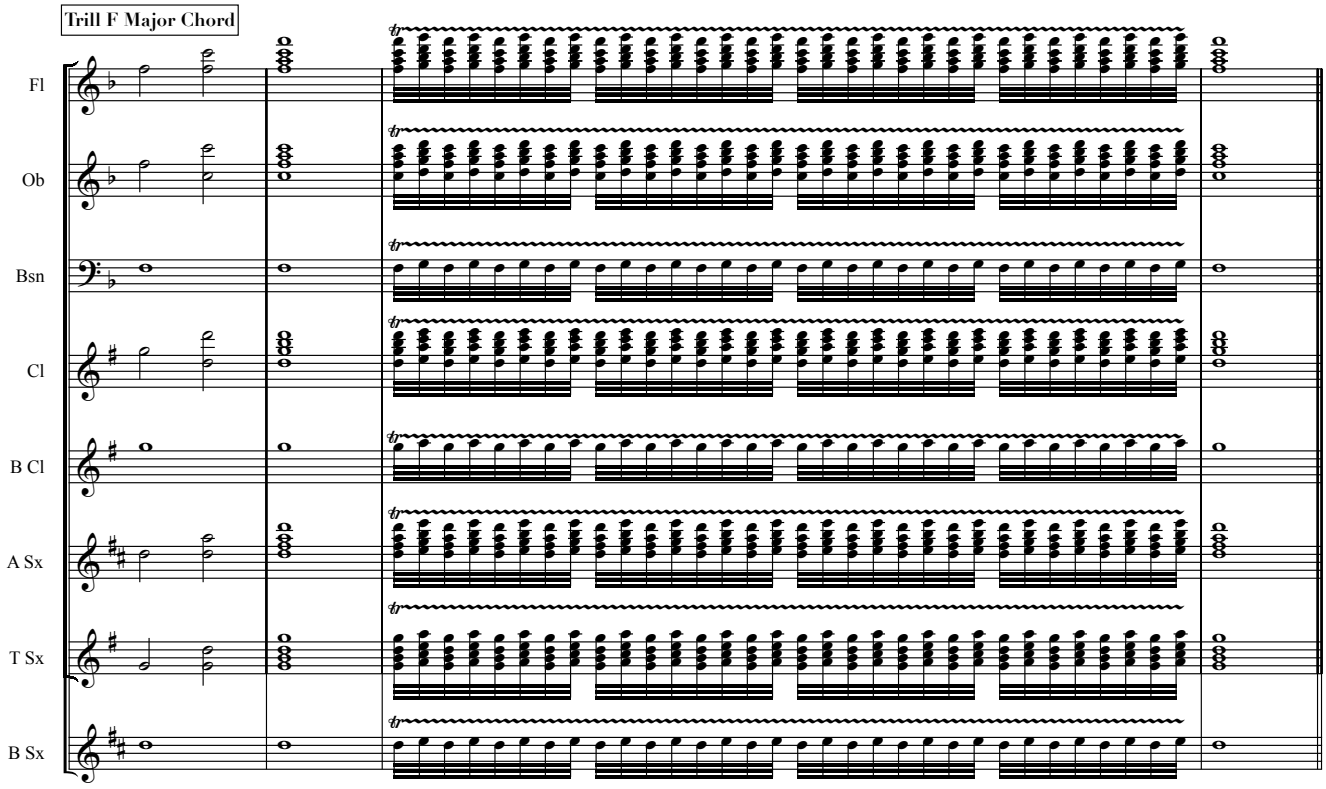

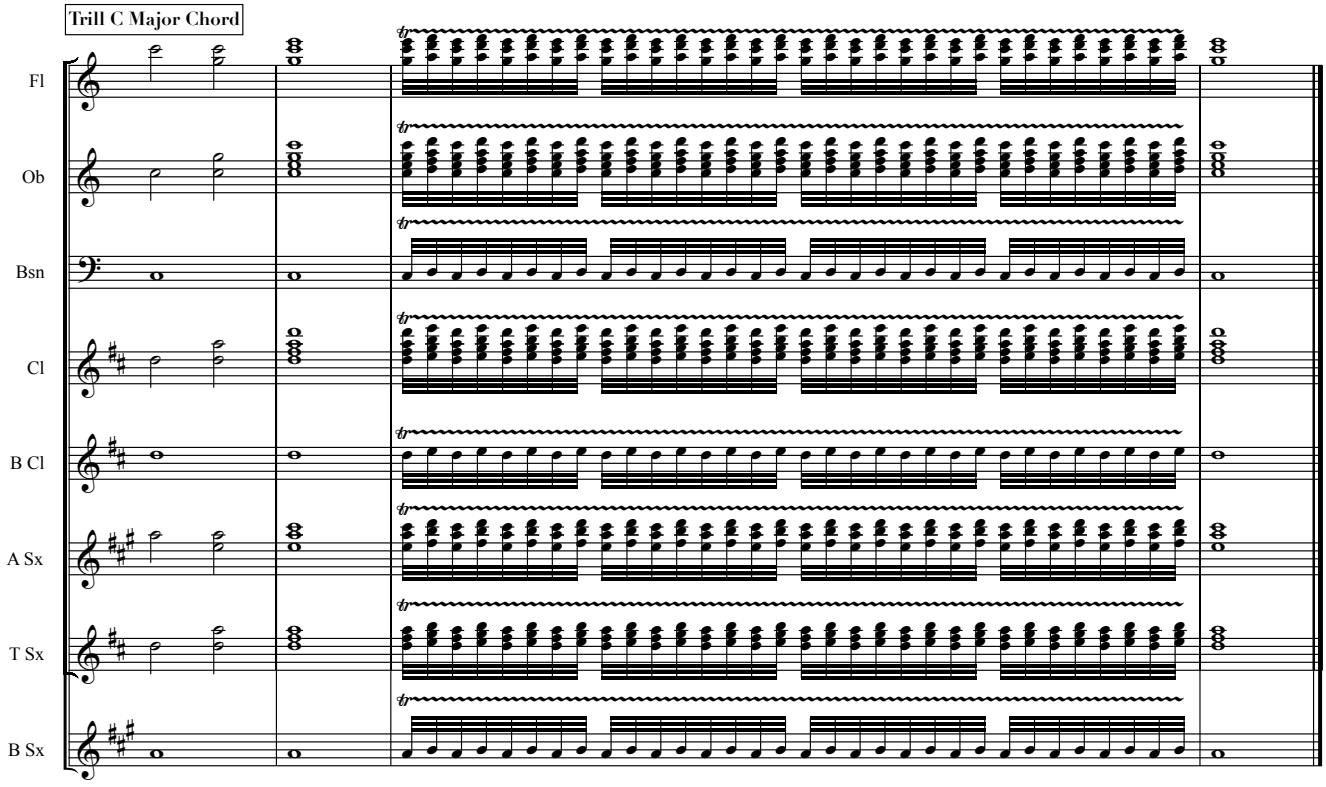

WOODWIND CHAPTER

Intonation Exercises

Exercise Objectives

- Students will focus on tuning their fundamental tuning notes.
- Students will work on tuning various notes in an equal temperament setting.
- Students will learn what their responsibilities are in adjusting notes so they can be played in tune.
- Students will work on tuning chords and having different responsibilities in the chord.
- Focus on great quality of sound in different parts of the register.

Instruction Notes

- Students need to get in the habit of making sure their fundamental tuning note(s) are in tune. The beginning of the exercise breaks down the fundamental note(s). Directors should encourage students to have their own tuner and spend time with that tuner.
- In tuning the fundamental pitches: set embouchure in the same spot as the Mouthpiece Exercises.
- There are examples of five different keys. Keep in mind that you can play this exercise in any key, especially if it applies to a key that you have in your show music. This is only a guide.
- Flutes: when possible, use a mirror to see 2/3 of the tone hole open when you are tuning the fundamental notes.
- The first part of each key breaks down each note of the major scale. Students need to work on getting each note in tune, and understanding what they need to do to the note to play it in tune.
- The second part of each key works on each interval of the major scale. Separate the students in two groups. Have group A play the upper note while group B sustains the root. Then switch.
- The final part is playing the major and minor chord of the key. Divide students so that each note is played; make sure to have students switch notes.
- Play these exercises at different dynamic levels. The pitch tendencies may be different with each dynamic.
- Finally, it is very important to teach and review the interval and chord tendencies with students.

QUICK COMMENTS FOR STUDENTS

"More air"
"Listen down"
"Know the tendencies of your instrument and how it relates to the intonation of the group"
"Stay relaxed"

Visual Component

- The exercises in this chapter were not written to be put on the move. If students become comfortable enough with any of the exercises, adding the visual component would be a great idea. Do as much or as little as you can on the move.
- The more students play and move, the better they will become. Repetition is extremely important. Simply repeating exercises multiple times will give students ample opportunity to figure things out.
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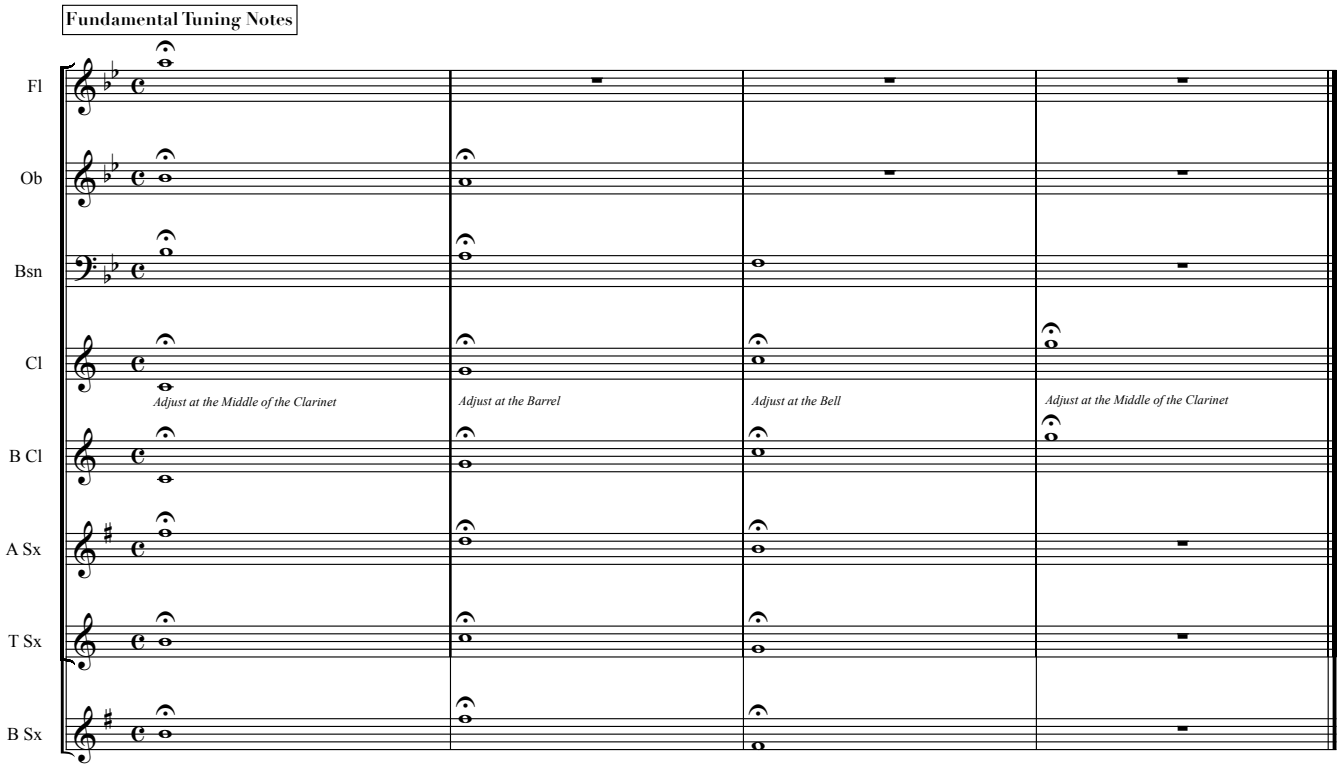
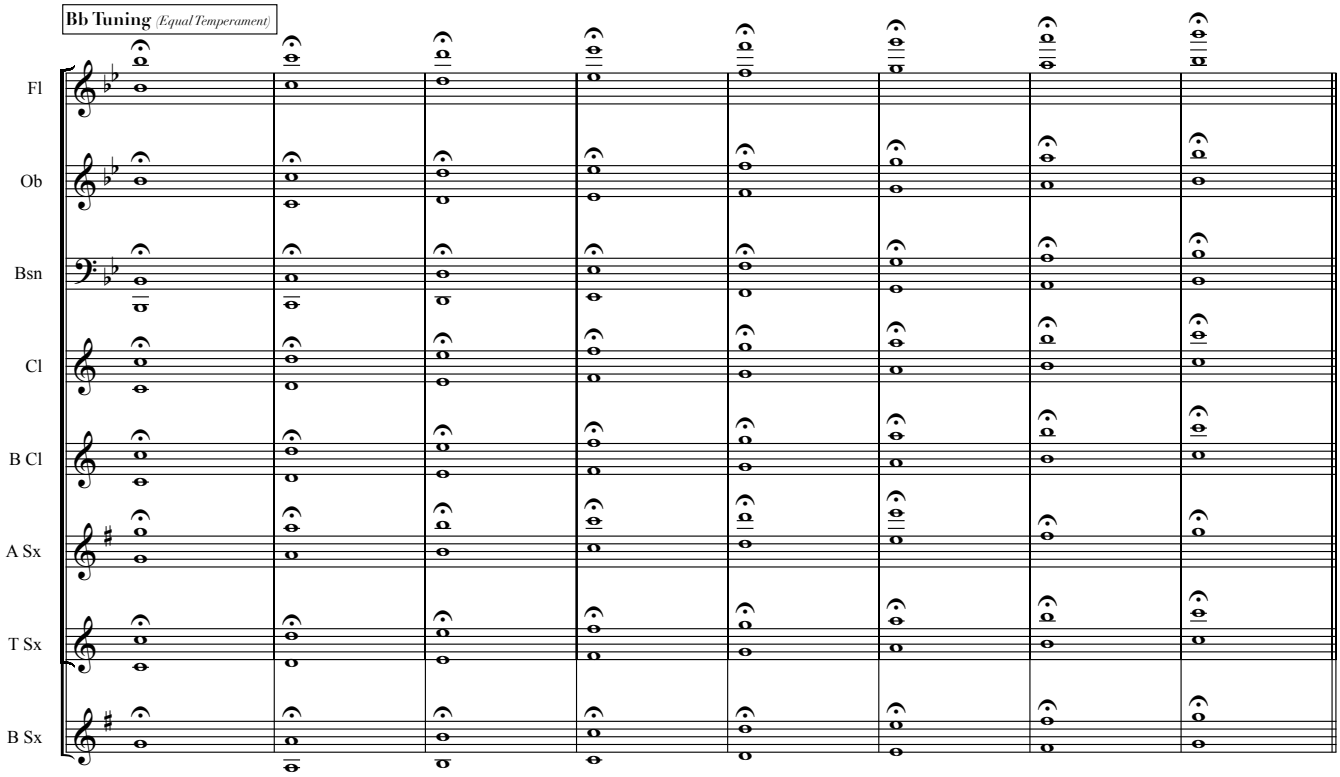
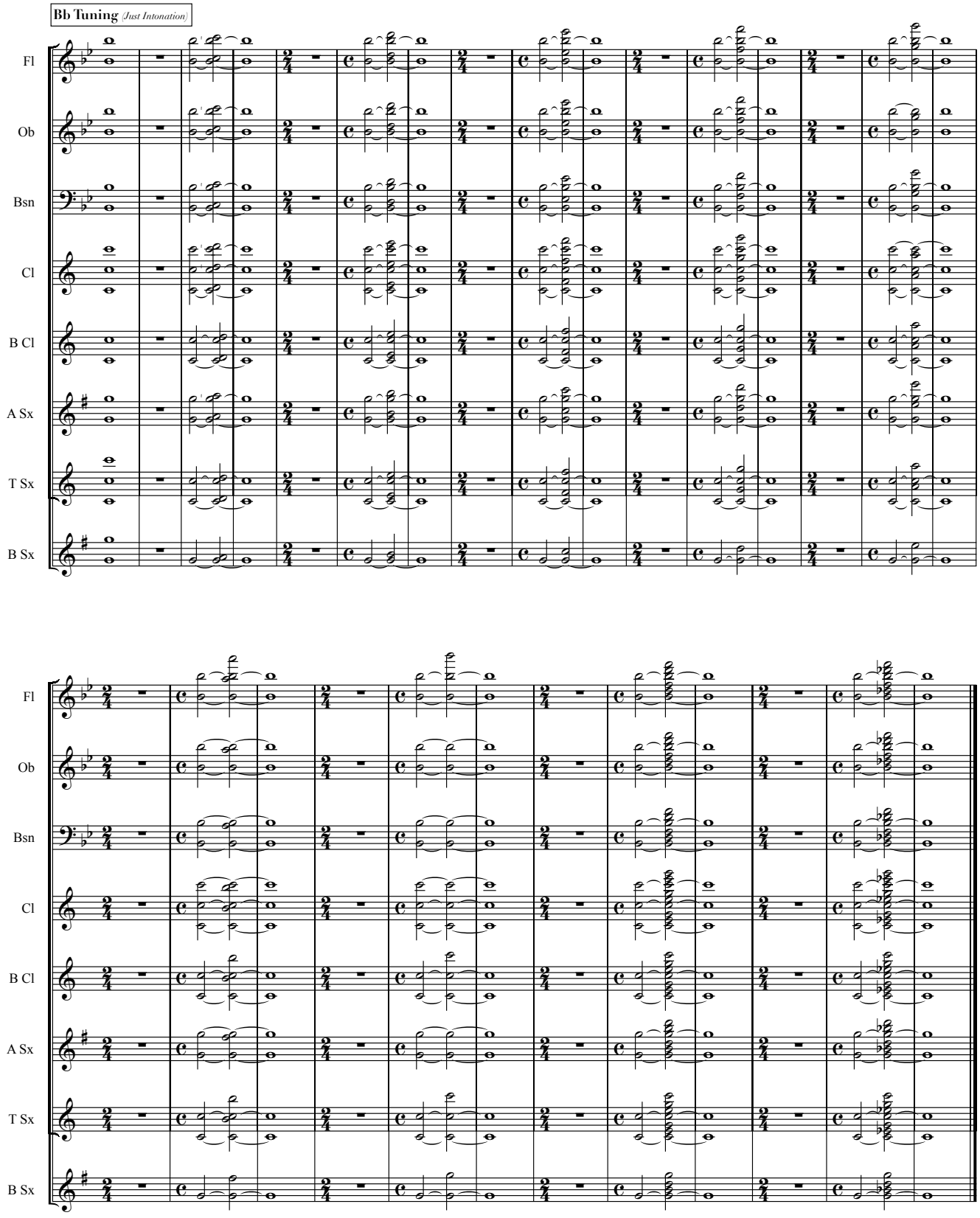
Intonation Exercises

Student Page 22





Intonation Exercises



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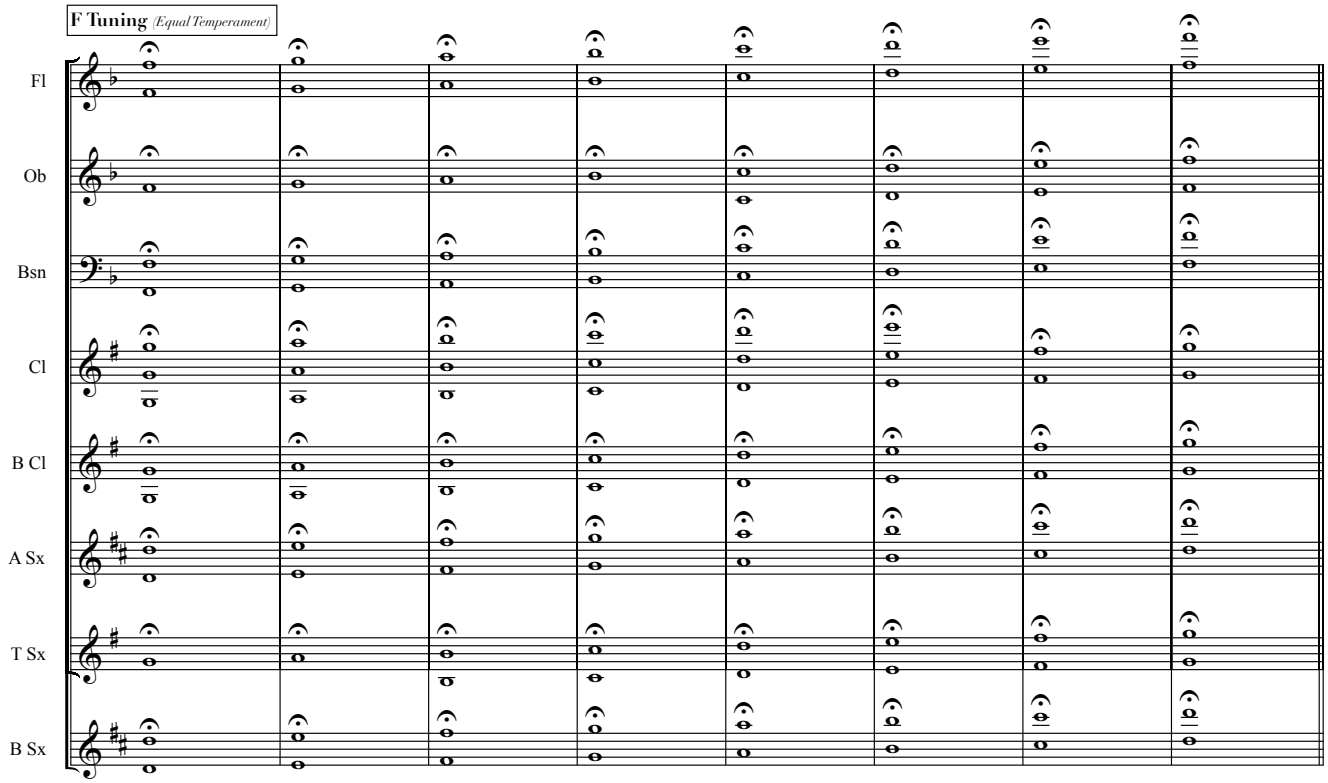

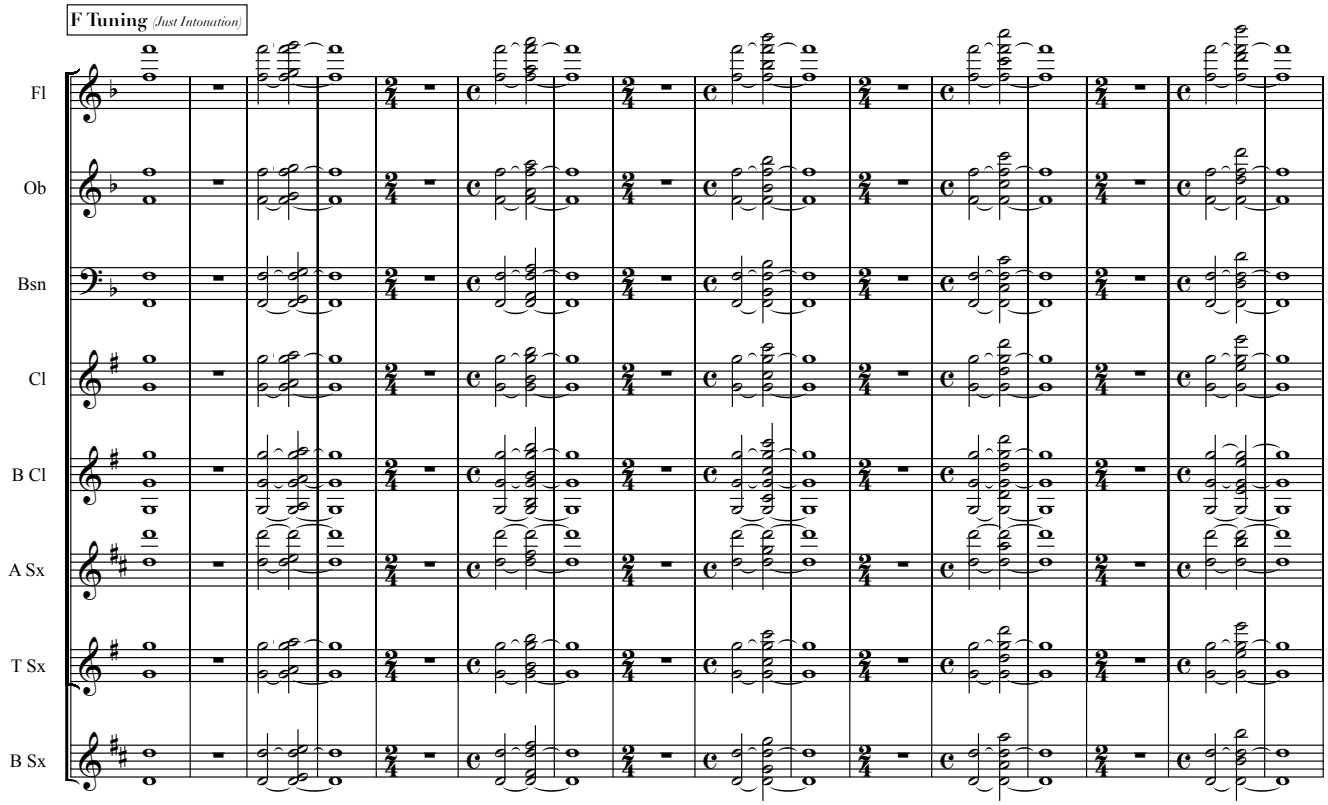

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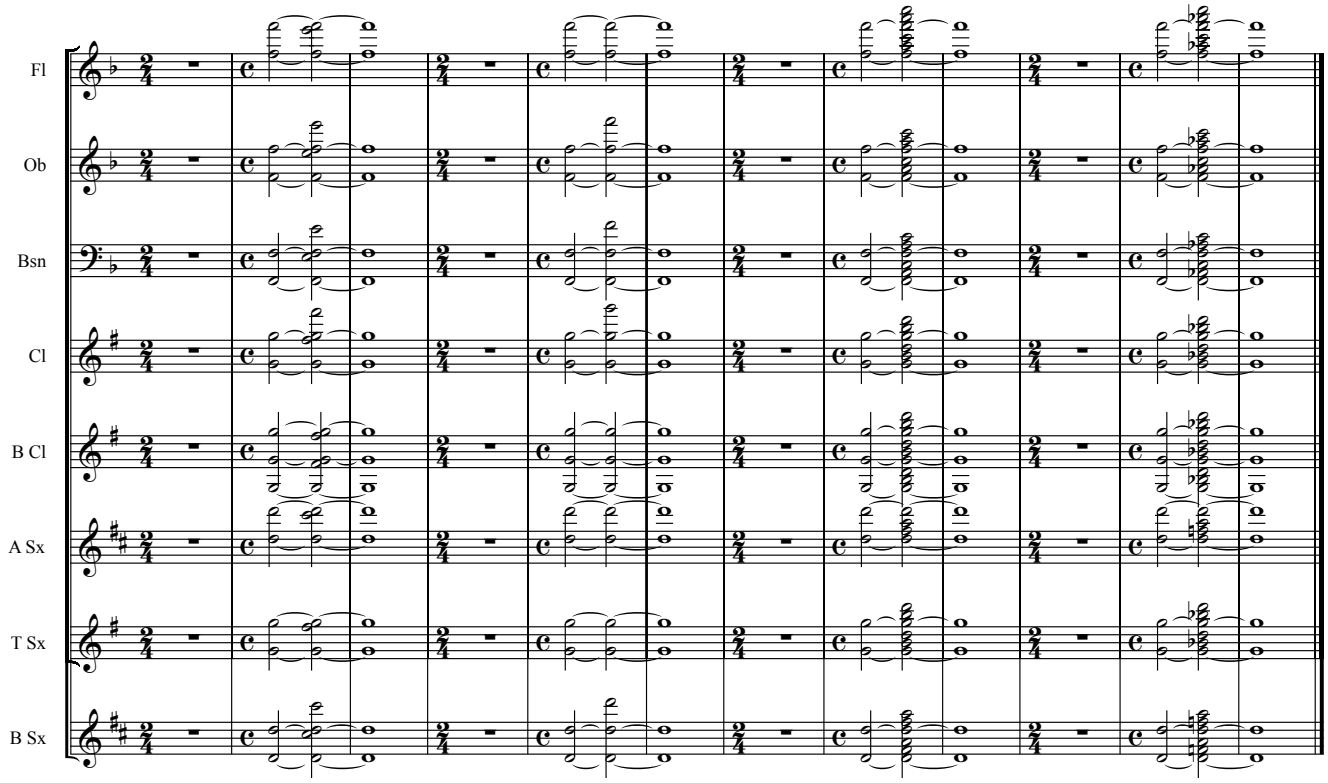

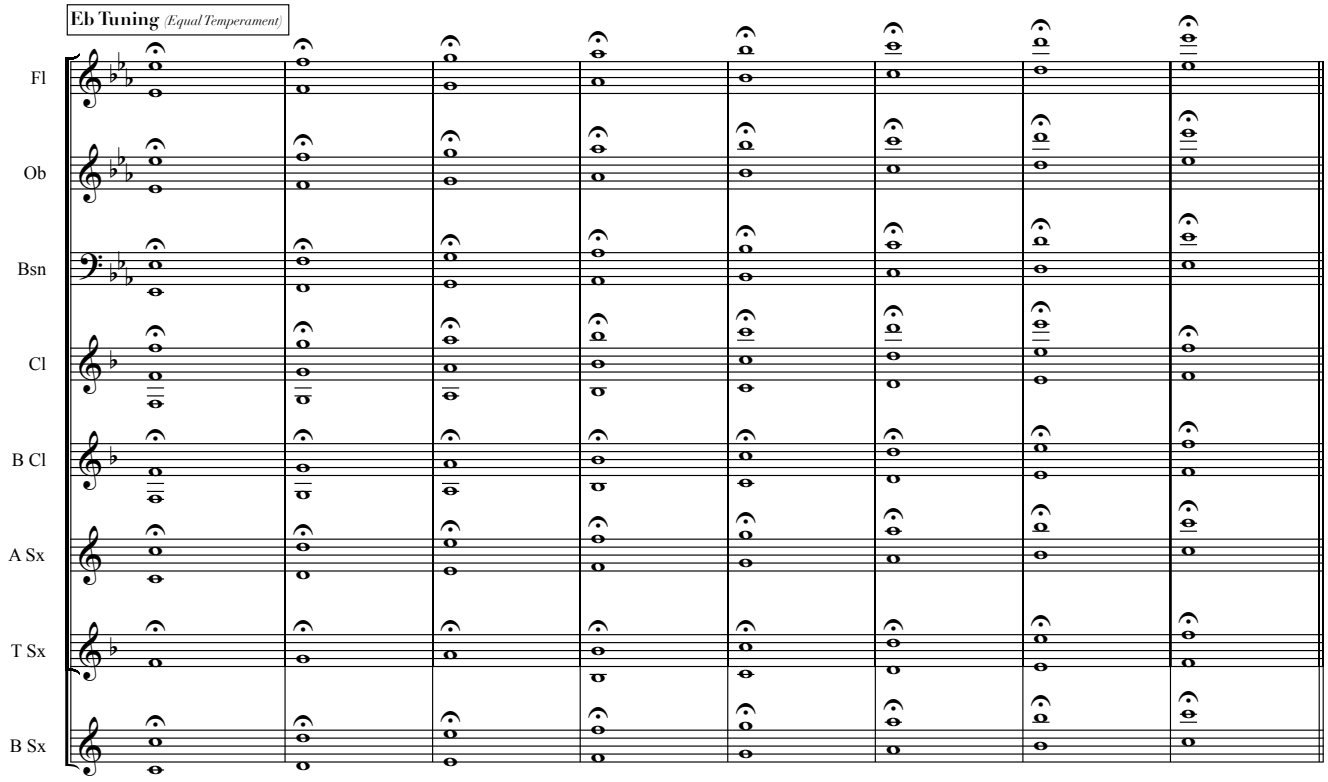

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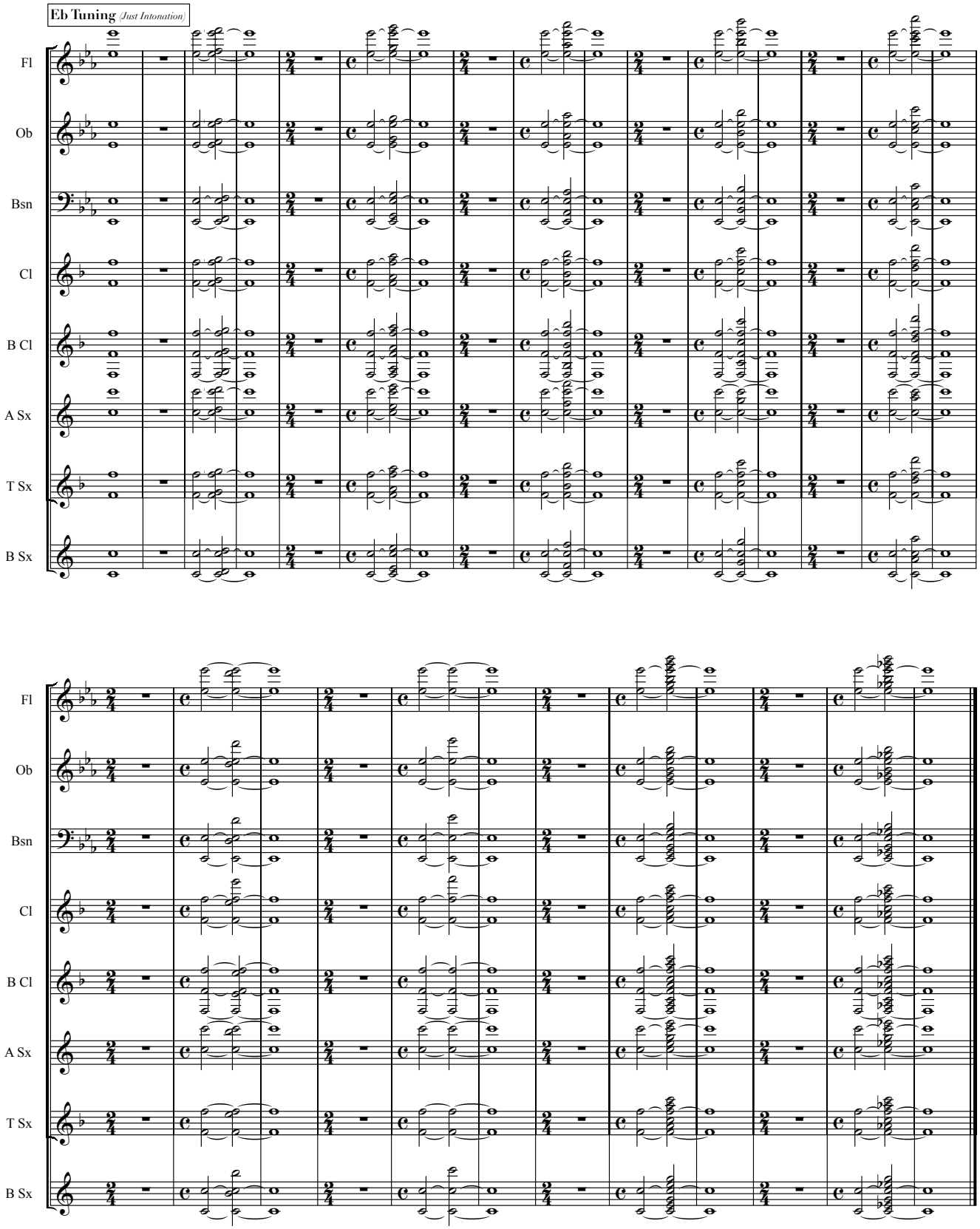

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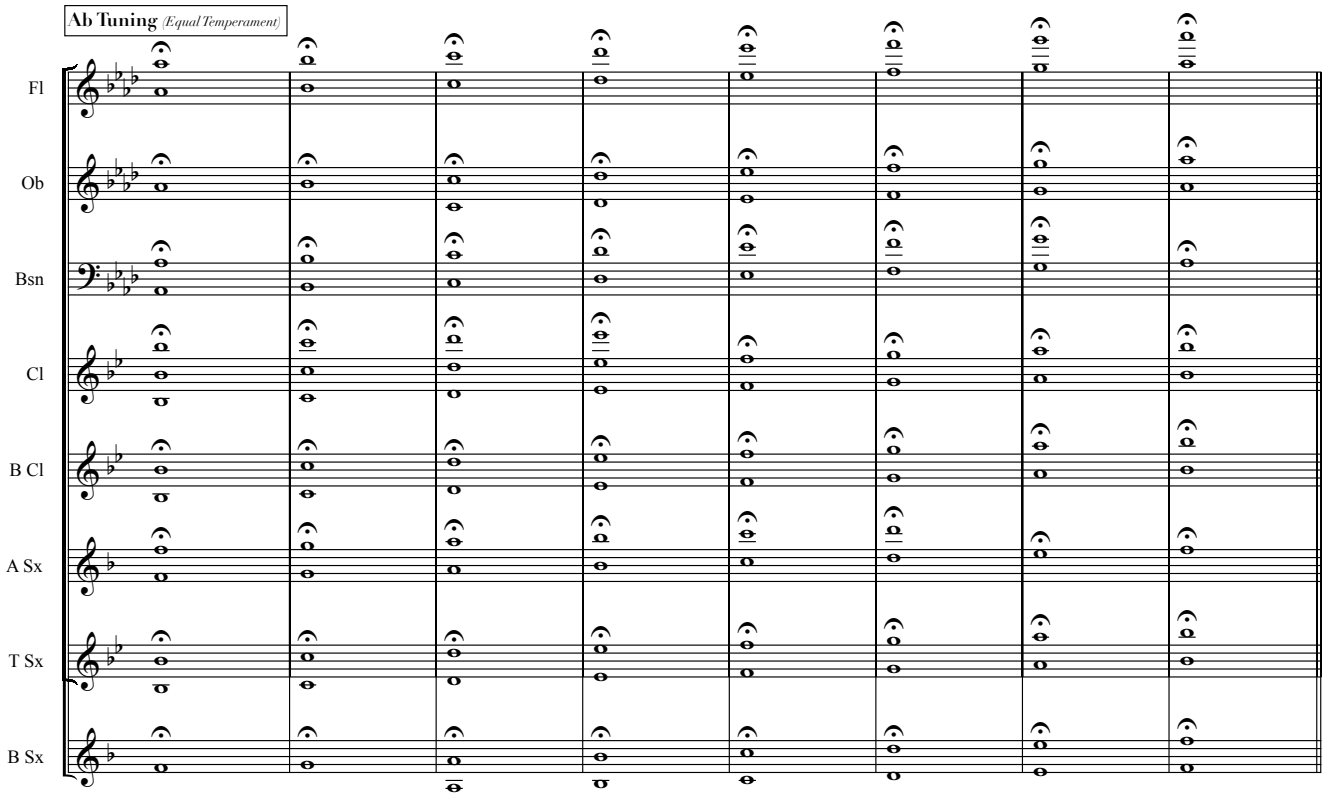

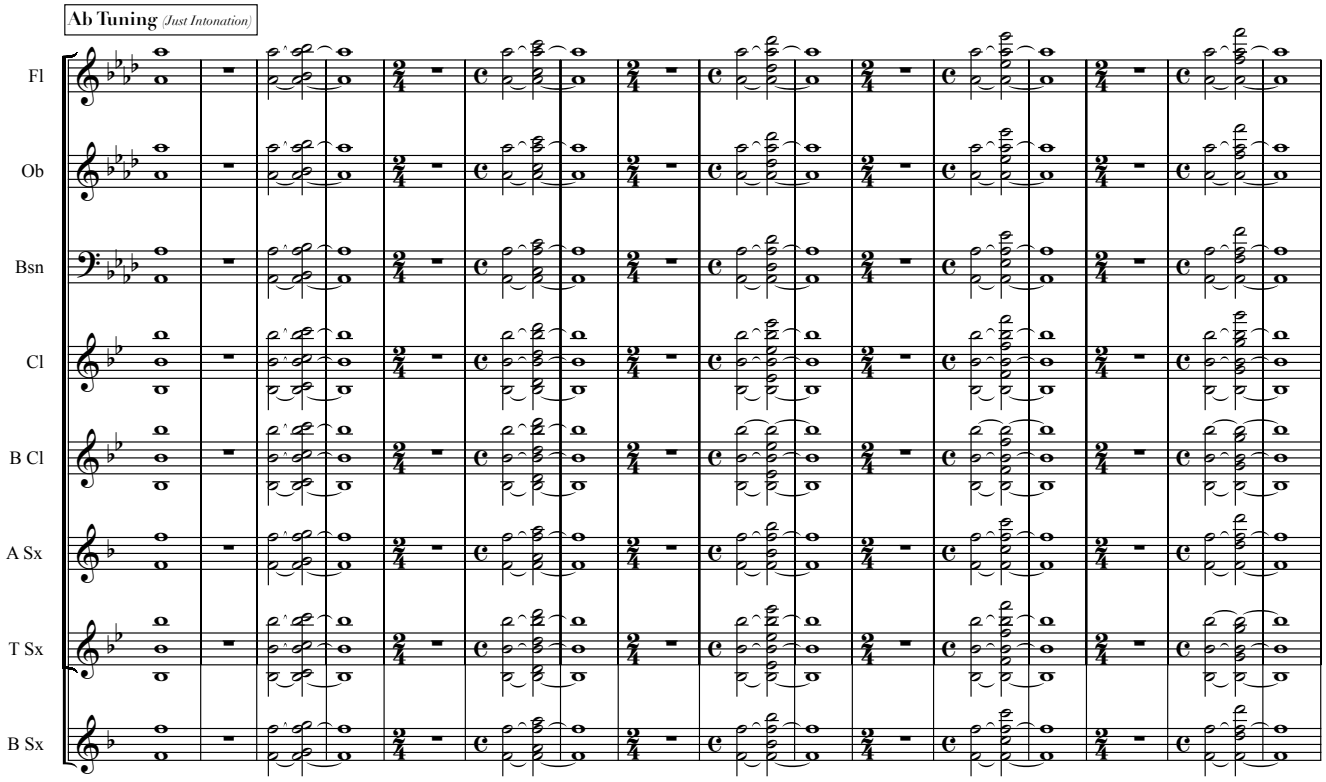

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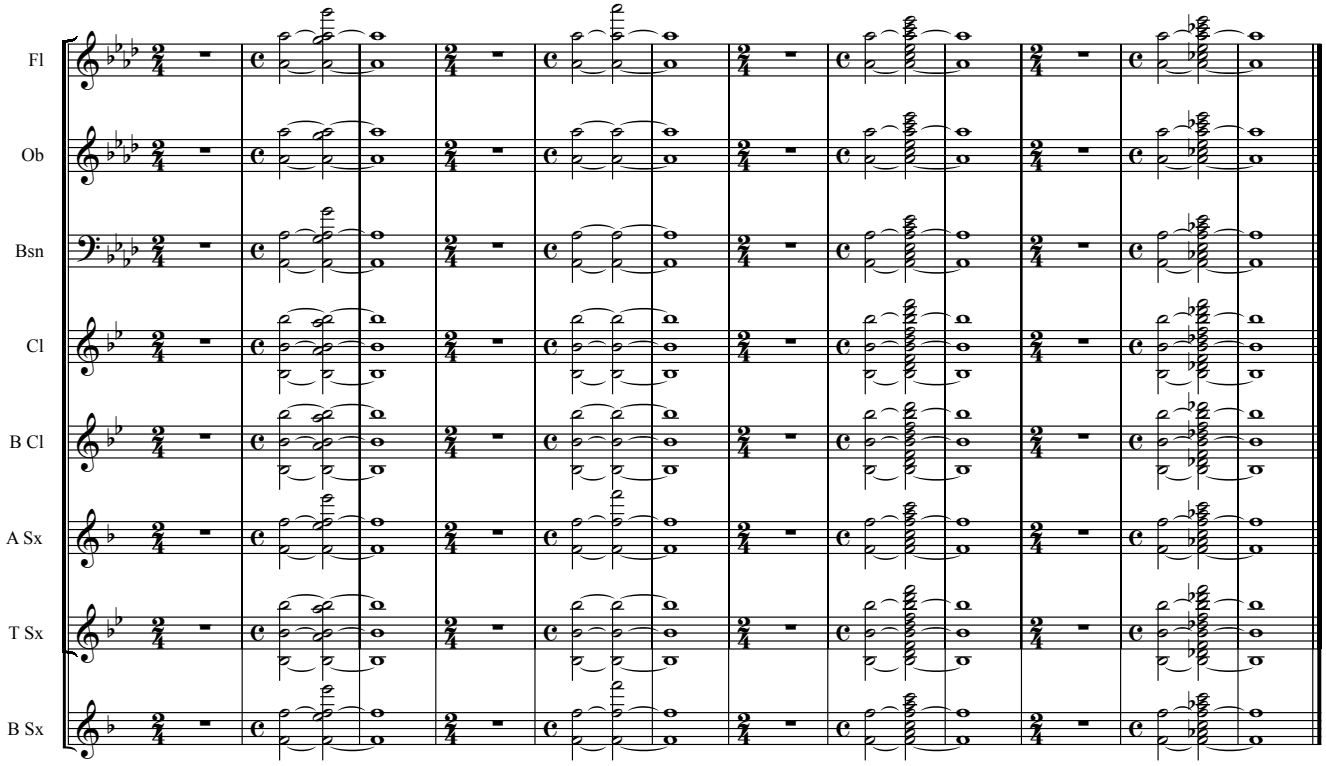

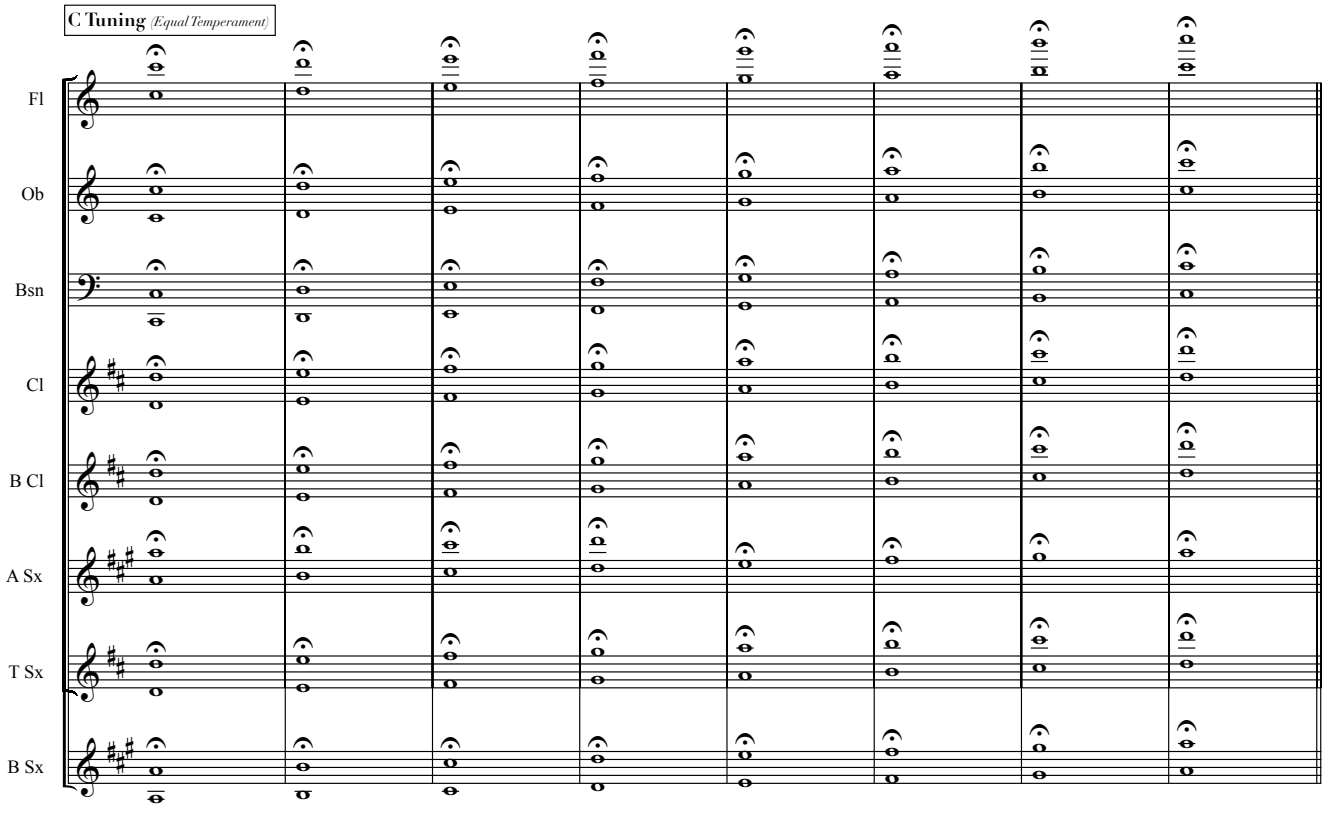

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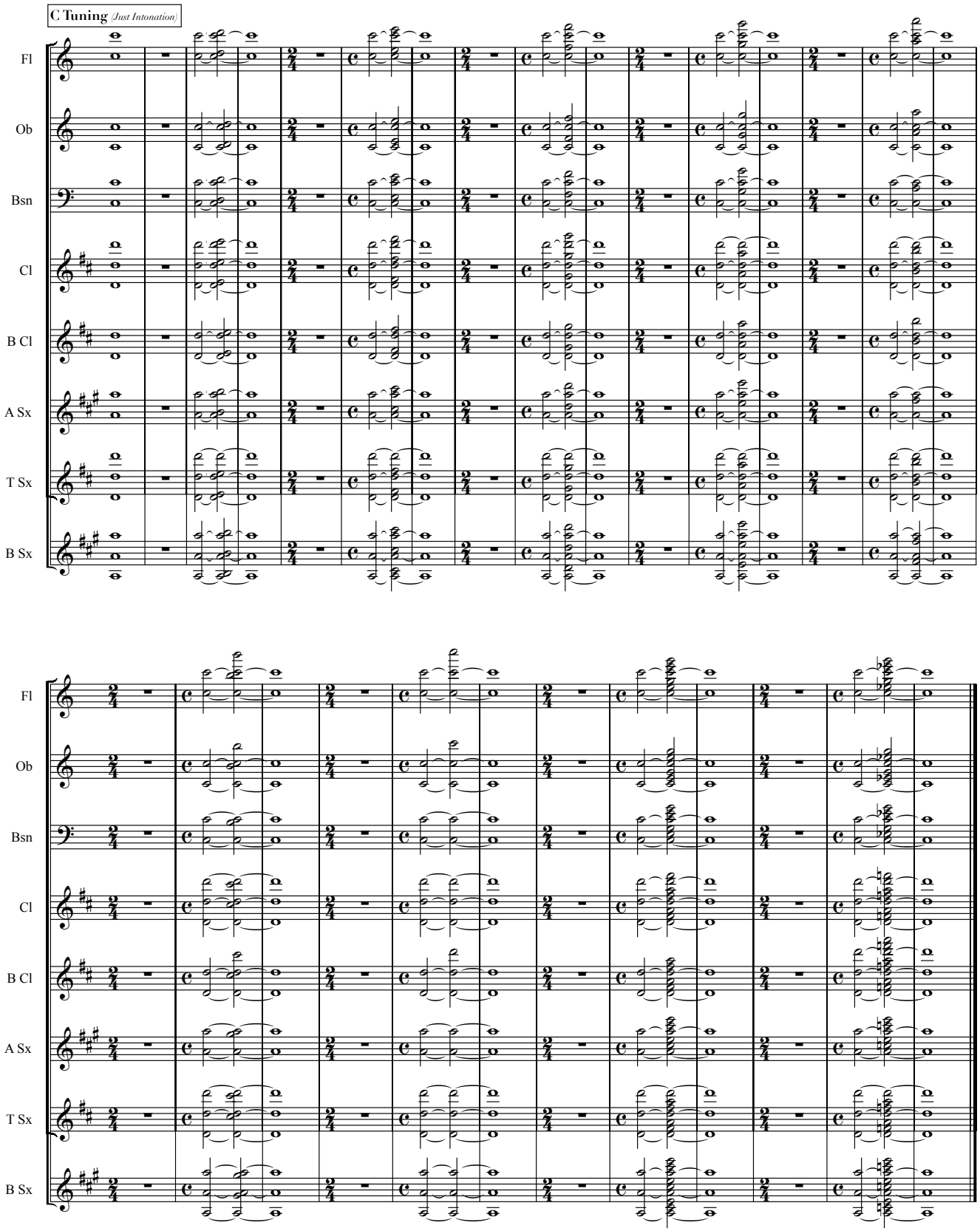

WOODWIND CHAPTER

Glossary

for "Quick Comments for Students"

"More air": Can be applied to the inhale and exhale. Take in "MORE AIR" on the inhale, or support the note by using "MORE AIR" on the exhale. Other related comments, "Move your air", "Take a full breath".

"Keep lower lip steady - don't let anything bounce": When articulating, many students will move their lower lip. This negatively affects tone, pitch and articulation. Watch the lower lip/jaw and make certain it remains in the same place.

"One-Motion Air": Defined as the inhale and exhale being connected. The air never stops moving, it is either going in or going out. Analogies are: when you see a violinist playing, the bow never stops moving, or just like a baby when they breathe. The air never stops moving. Other related comments: "Never stop your air - your air is either going in or out", "Take a full breath", "Don't stop the air between the inhale and exhale".

"Take a full count to breathe and release with a short breath in": The breathing technique always stays the same no matter what exercise. Take the full count(s) to breathe, give direction and crescendo to the short breath in for the release.

"Listen to your trios": In most cases students are in some sort of line, whether in warm-up arcs, Circle Drill, Box Drill, or the drill of the show, students are standing next to other students. What forms a trio is the student plus the player to their left and right. Try to establish a habit where each student is constantly listening to their trio.

"Keep 2/3 of the hole open": Flutes - 2/3 of the tone hole should be visible. Keeping this in check will help projection and production of tone. Use of a mirror is recommended.

"Focus aperture": If a flute sound or pitch is inconsistent across the span of the flute, the aperture may be too open and/or changing positions too drastically. While there are changes to air direction that might result in the aperture moving, the aperture hole should appear very similar throughout the exercise.

"Flat, hard-rubber like chin": Clarinets - when the lower lip and chin muscles are properly engaged, the result is a chin that feels similar to an inflated tire. Have students touch the skin between their lower lip and chin to feel this.

"Firm corners of the mouth": Clarinets - the clarinet embouchure requires that all "sides" of the embouchure remain engaged. If a tone is pinched or thin, this may be a sign of the lower lip putting too much pressure on the reed. Engaging the corners and the upper lip will help open up tone by balancing pressure.

"Keep corners of the mouth in": Saxophones - make sure the corners of the mouth are NOT drawn back, but are drawn forward, as if saying the word, "VOH".

"No space between the notes": Woodwind players have a tendency to decrease their air when they change fingerings. Within the exercises of 4th, 5th and 6th's, students must focus on keeping air constant throughout each note change.

"Move fingers quickly, but not fast": Quick motion of the fingers is important to precise technique. Each note should be a deliberate finger motion. Going from one whole note to the next requires quick motion.

"Blow through and between each note": Woodwind players have a tendency to decrease their air when they change fingerings. Within the exercises of 4th, 5th and 6th's, students must focus on keeping air constant throughout each note change.

"Faster air": When the clarinet crosses the break (2nd space A to 3rd line B), the instrument length jumps from about 6 inches (A) to the entire length of the instrument (B). The air must be fast enough on the (A) to get through the entirety of the clarinet.

"Keep air consistent, let fingers do the work": Do not change the air that goes into the instrument because the technique gets more difficult. Instead, think of air as playing whole notes, fully supported, while fingers do the work of the difficult technique.

"Stay relaxed": Experience no strain or tension. One of the most important parts of playing a musical instrument is to stay relaxed. The more this is reinforced, the better. For clarinets, this does not refer to functionality of embouchure formation. Clarinet lips need tension to create a thin lower lip, firm corners and pointed chin. You will hear clarinets relaxing incorrectly when the tone spreads, or uncharacteristic squeaks/squawks appear. If this becomes an issue, refer clarinets to the Mouthpiece Exercises and direct them to focus on relaxing their throats and oral cavities.

"Keep embouchure still and even": Embouchure and jaw should not move when articulating notes or changing registers.

"Relax your hands": There should be no tension in the hands. It takes little strength to close a key, and even less to open one. Fingers should have a gentle curve.

"Move your fingers from the third knuckle": Many woodwinds have extra motion in their 1st and 2nd knuckles, which forms bad habits. When the player focuses on moving from the third knuckle, they use the strongest possible muscle and gain consistency throughout their instrument at all speeds. (Count knuckles ascending from the fingertip).

"Keep fingers close to the keys": Clarinets and open holed flutes - fingers should only slightly raise above the keys when they are not being pressed (less than inch above). If fingers extend too far, this negatively affects consistency and speed of technique, as well as pitch.

"Keep fingers ON the keys": Sax - the best technique is to keep the fingers on the keys. Any time fingers leave the keys, it is wasted motion. Keep the left thumb on the thumb rest, and lightly touch the octave key. Keep the pinky fingers on the spatula keys.

"Don't bite as you play faster": Clarinet and sax - as finger speed increases, the weak embouchure may lose control of the mouthpiece and reed. The result is a lip that "grabs" to control the mouthpiece and reed. Students must keep their embouchure properly engaged throughout. Typically, the upper lip and right thumb need to engage more.

"Listen down": Listen to the lowest instrument in the woodwind family of your ensemble for proper balance of the entire woodwind section.

"Know the tendencies of your instrument and how it relates to the intonation of the group": Woodwind instruments are extremely inconsistent between brands and models. A group of 10 clarinets could have 10 different pitch tendencies.