ORCHESTRATION ONLINE

ALTO CLEF READING

100 SIGHT-SINGING DRILLS

ALTO CLEF READING
SIGHT-SINGING
BY THOMAS GOSS
UNIT 1: 1-20
IN-STAFF NOTES E3-A4

- Time signatures: 3/4 & 4/4
- Note values: whole, half, quarter (semibreve, minim, crotchet)
- All drills begin/end on same tonic pitch. 1-10 use intervals of 2nds & octaves only.
- Sing each drill only once. Go from one drill to the next in a series of ten or the full twenty drills. Don't dwell on errors. Allow some time to pass before repeating the unit.
- Syllables given for the first few drills in each unit. The sooner you remember each pitch's name on your own, the better.
- Sit or stand in a relaxed but upright position.
- Tap chest or knee with hand, or tap foot, in order to keep time as needed.
- Don't worry about the sound of your voice. Just attempt a more or less accurate pitch. Lower voices may transpose an octave lower as needed.
- Sing at a steady pace, not too fast.
- Give each note and rest their full rhythmic value.

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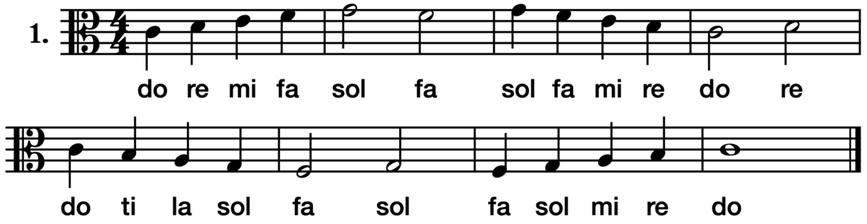

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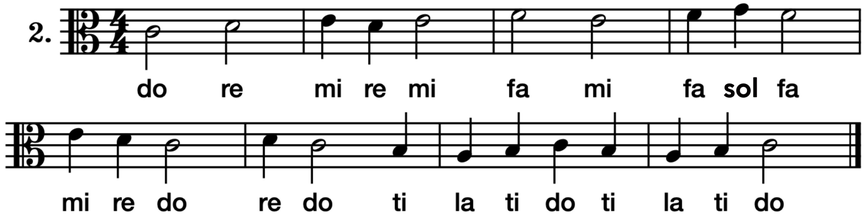

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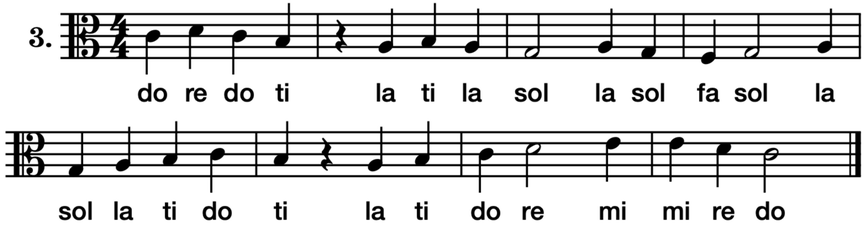

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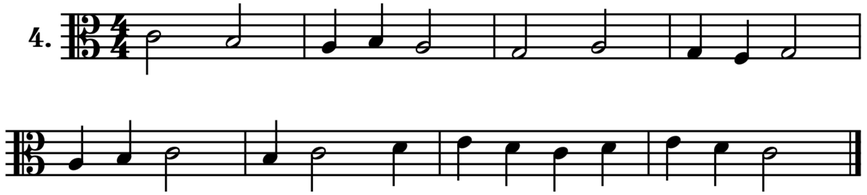

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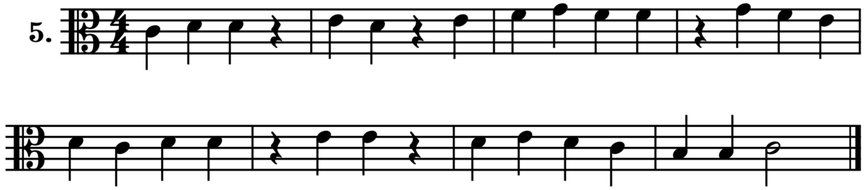

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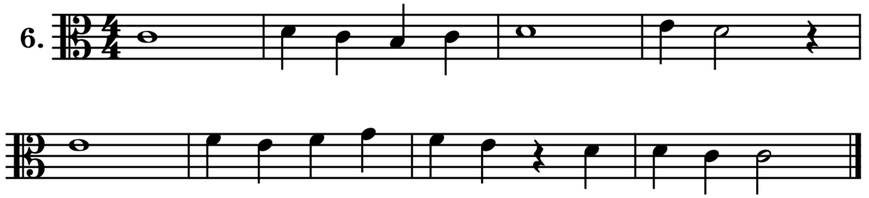

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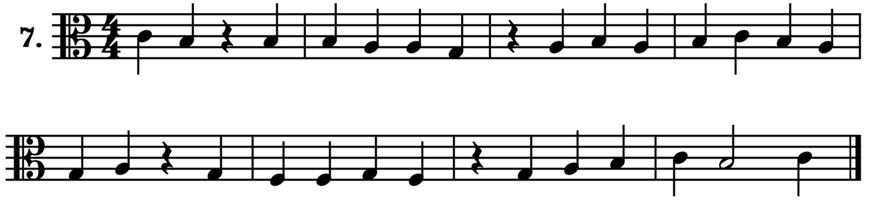

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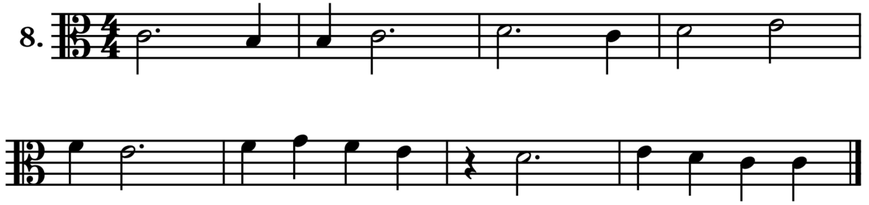

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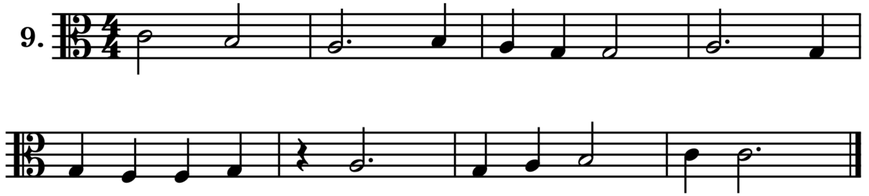

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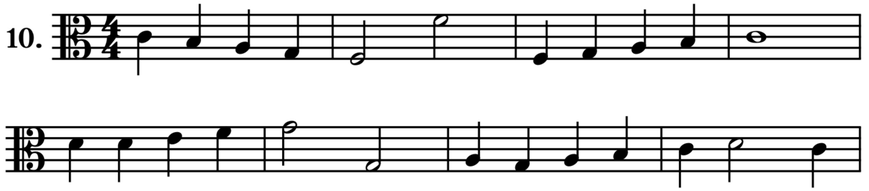

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• Drills 11-20 add intervals of 3rds and dotted half notes (dotted minims).

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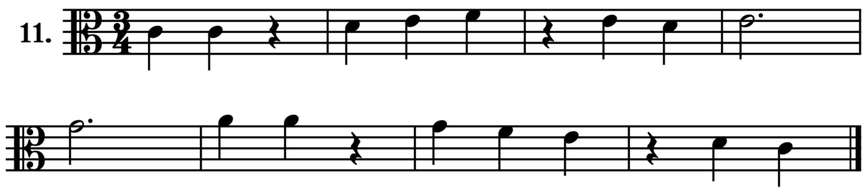

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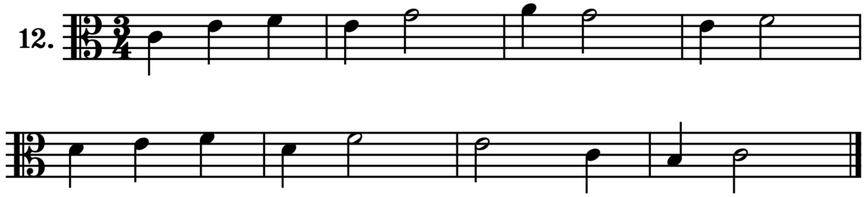

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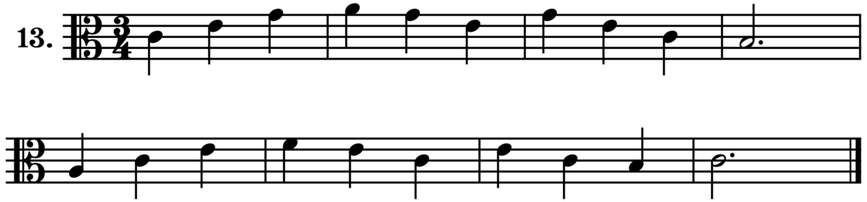

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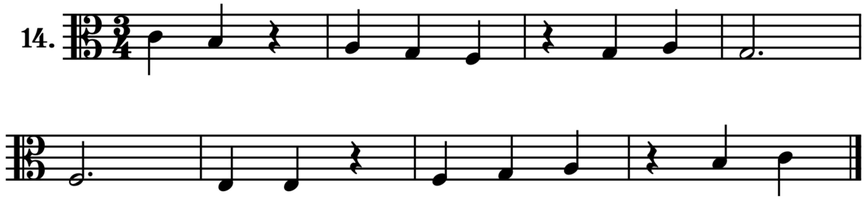

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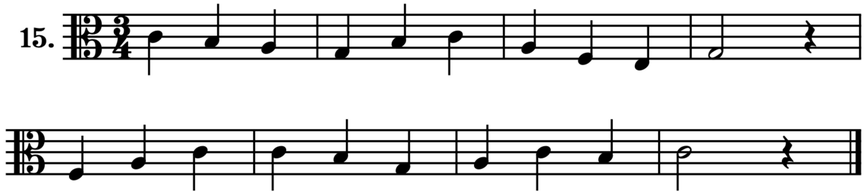

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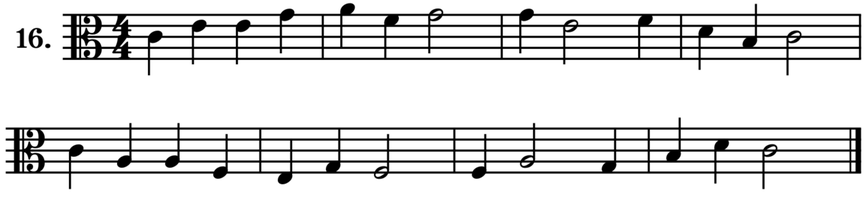

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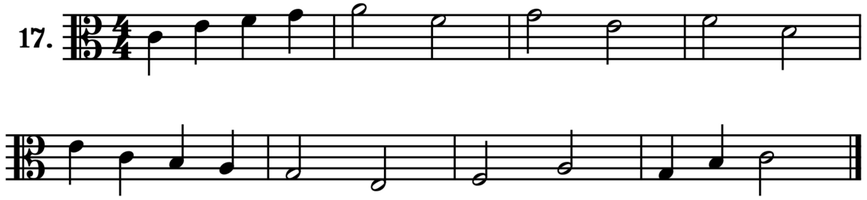

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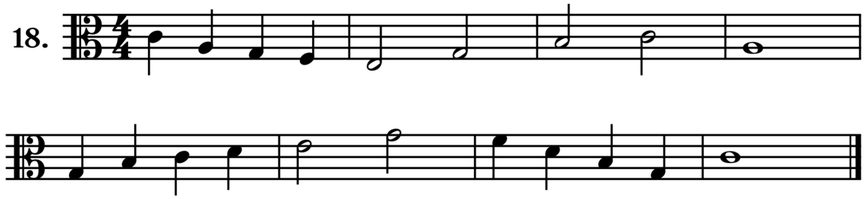

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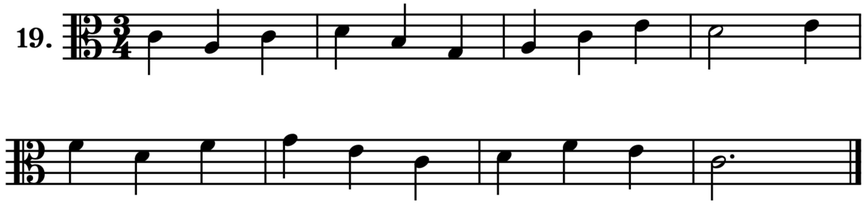

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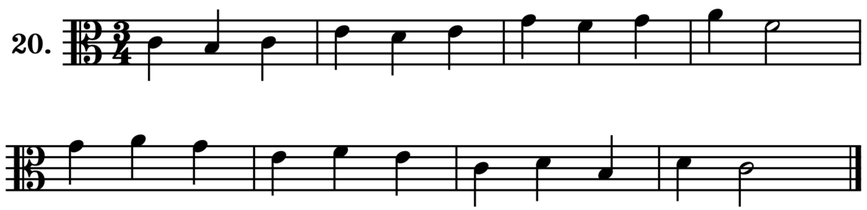

UNIT 2: 21-40

TWO FULL OCTAVES
C3-C5

- Pitches represent full C major scale ranges on either side of the alto clef's centrally located Middle C. Review note names/formulas as necessary.
- Adding intervals of perfect 4ths and 5ths.
- Maintain procedures as stated in Unit 1.
- Higher voices may need to transpose an octave higher on some lower notes and/or passages.

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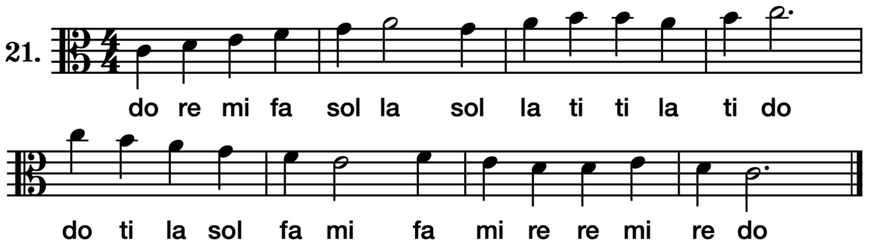

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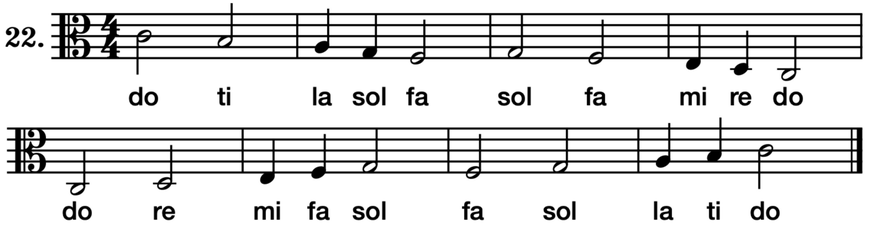

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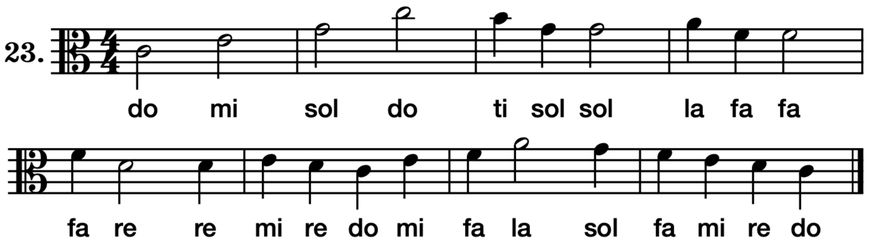

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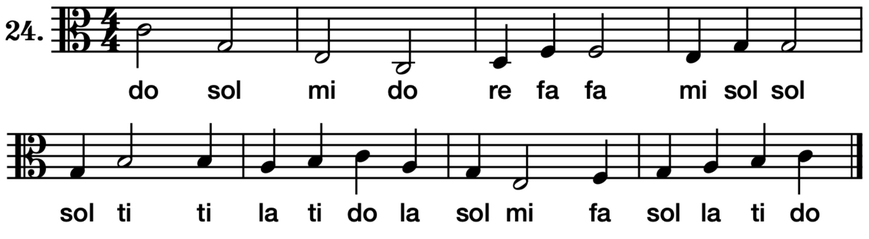

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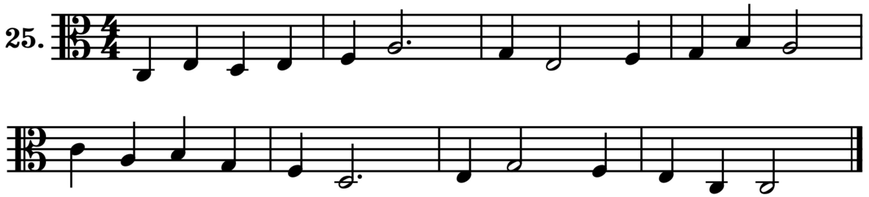

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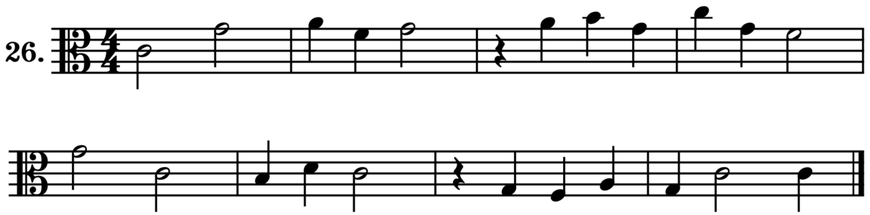

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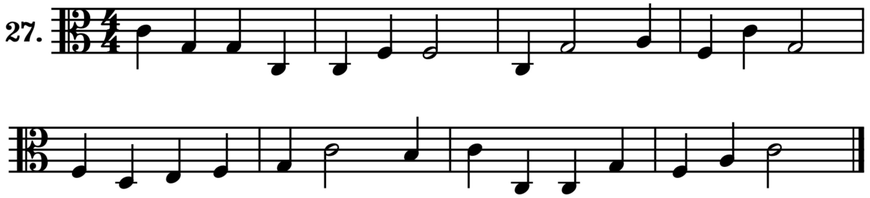

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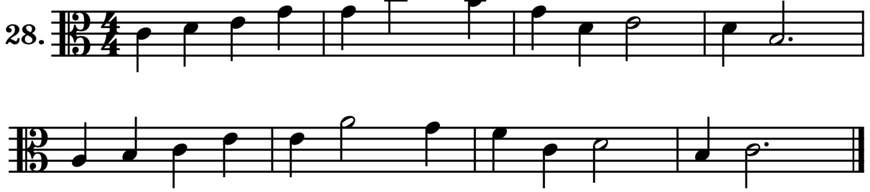

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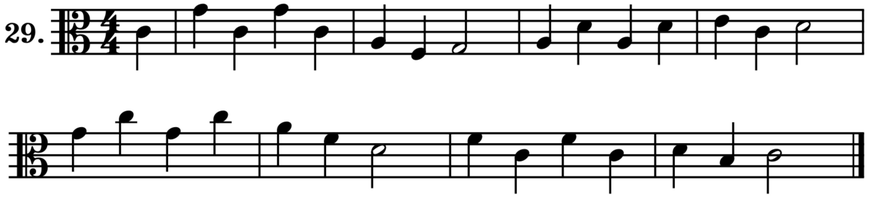

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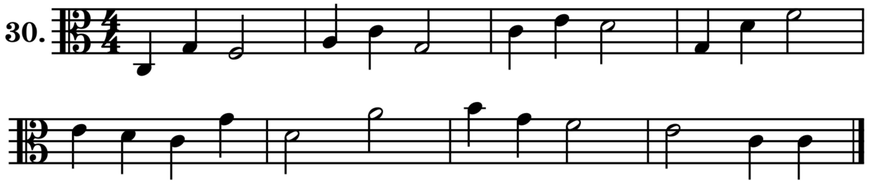

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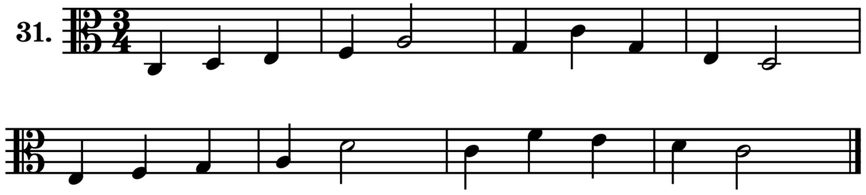

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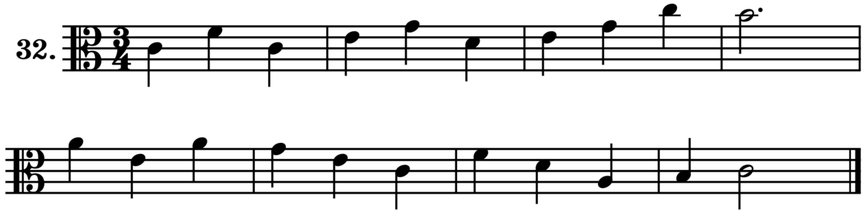

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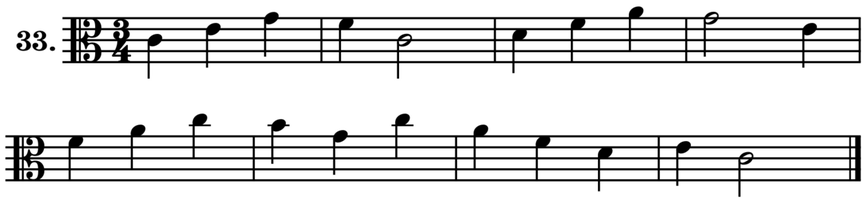

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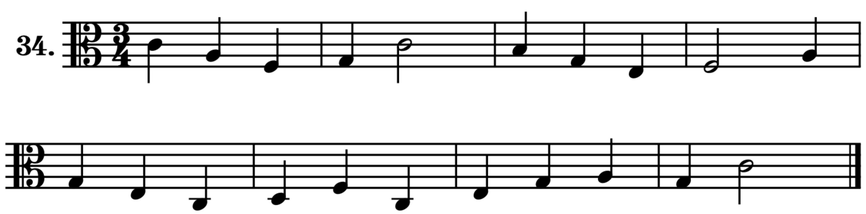

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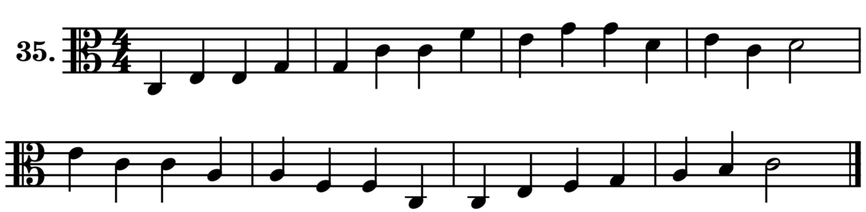

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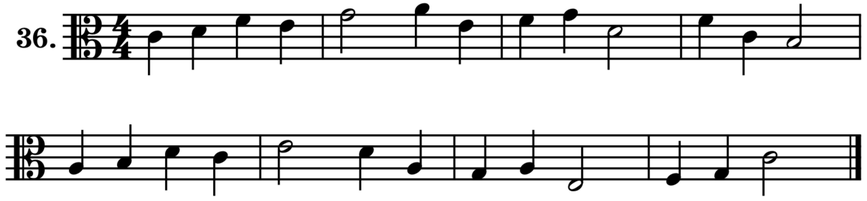

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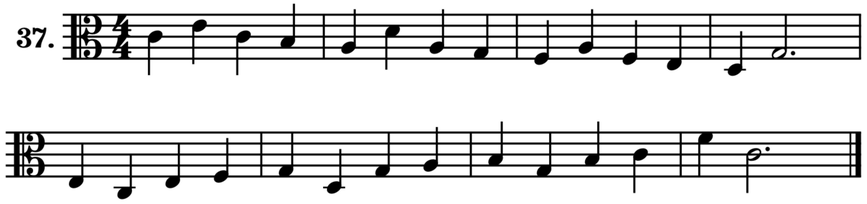

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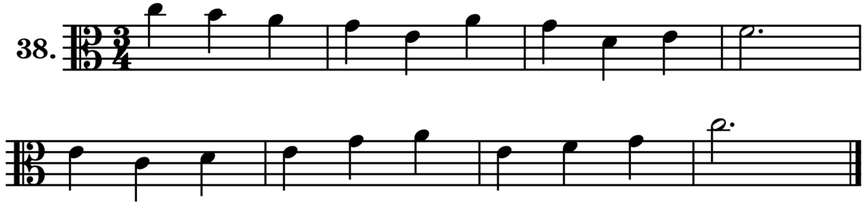

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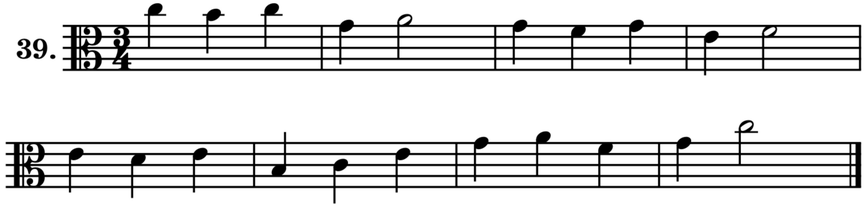

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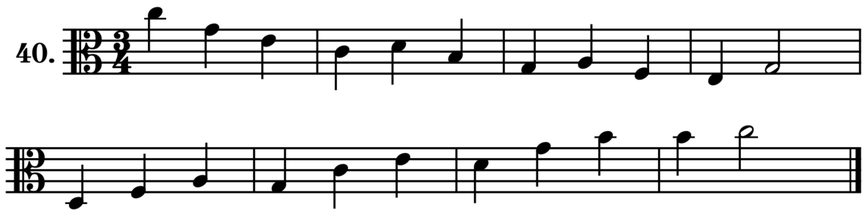

UNIT 3: 41-60

KEY OF G MAJOR

• The main purpose here is to absorb how the alto clef embodies the landscapes of different keys. The G Major scale covers the lowest in-staff space to the top line, with the leading tone of F-sharp on the highest space.

• The preferences of the student for moveable or fixed do are for them to decide. Note that syllables are given for either approach in the first few drills. For moveable do, the leading tone syllable of "ti" will now fall on F-sharp. For fixed do, the leading tone is sung as "fi" (pronounced "fee") on the same pitch.

• Adding 8th notes (quavers).

• Maintain procedures as stated in Unit 1. Perhaps slow down more than usual for any drill containing 8th notes.

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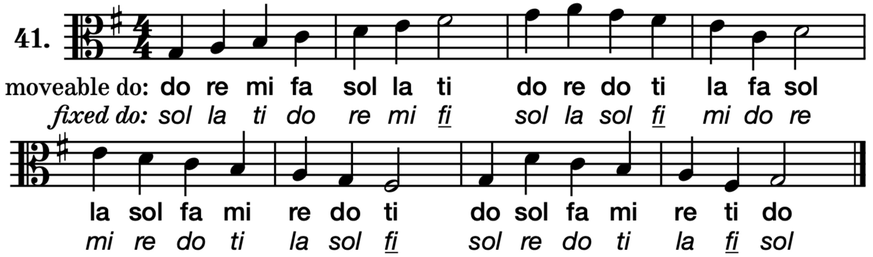

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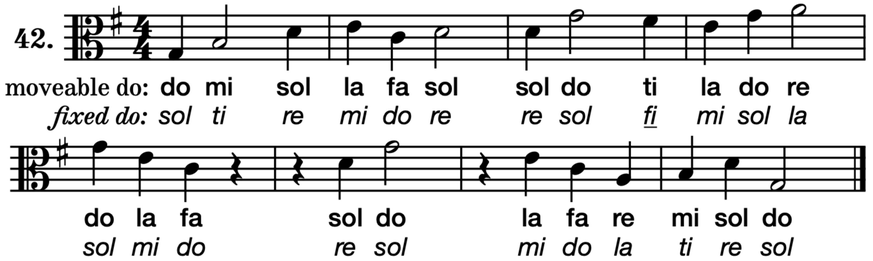

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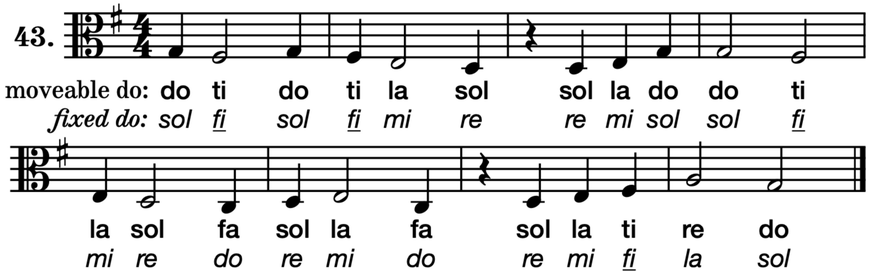

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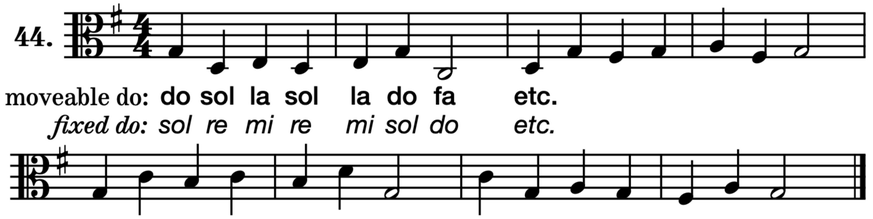

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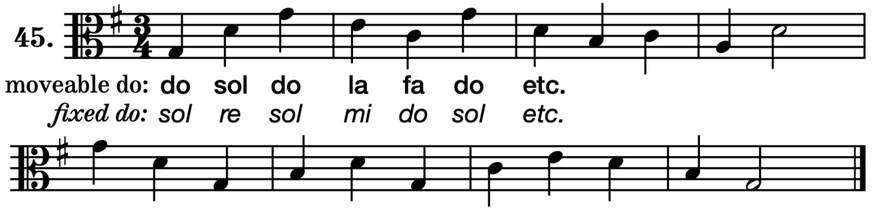

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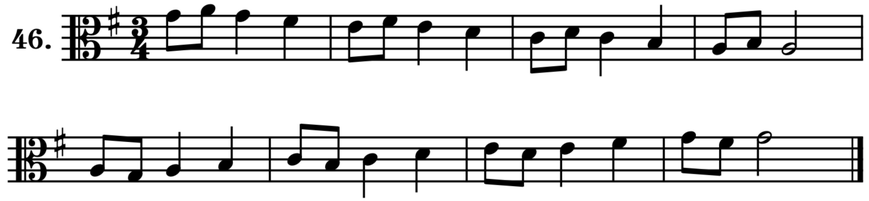

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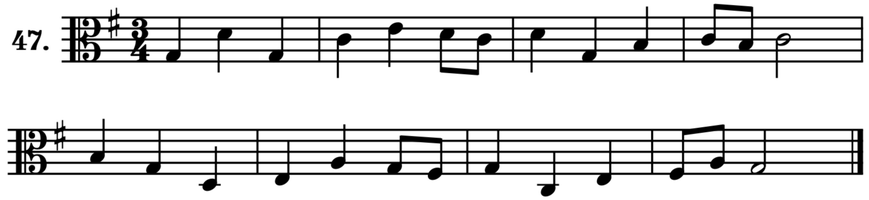

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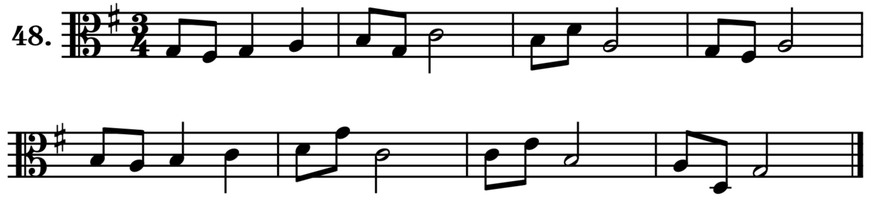

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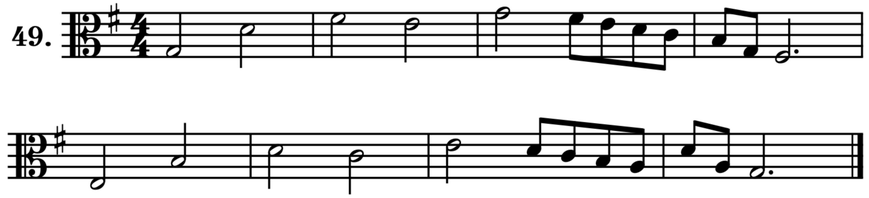

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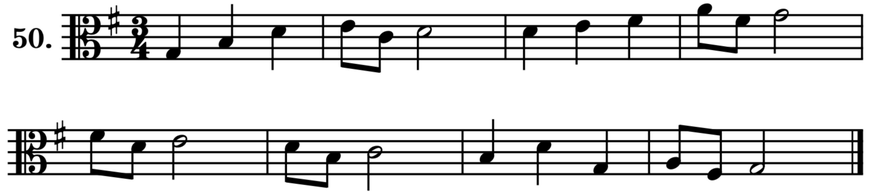

• Drills 59-60 add intervals of 6ths. Of particular significance in tonic music are intervals do-la (in fixed do G major: sol-mi), mi-do (ti-sol), and sol-mi (re-ti). Ti-sol (fi-re), or the reverse, is often used in setting up a perfect cadence.

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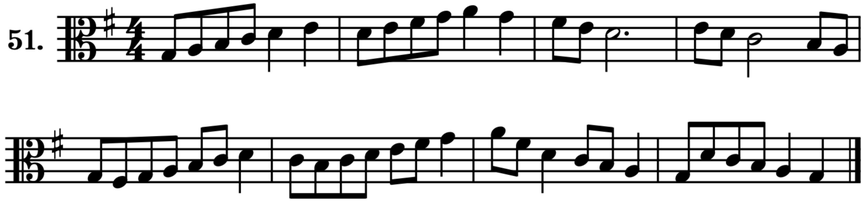

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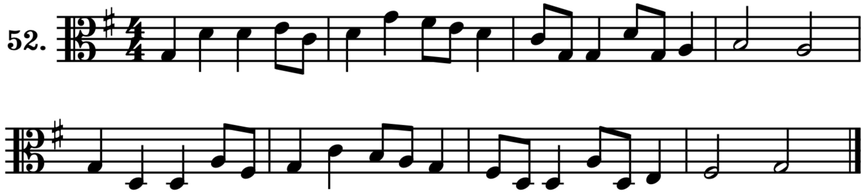

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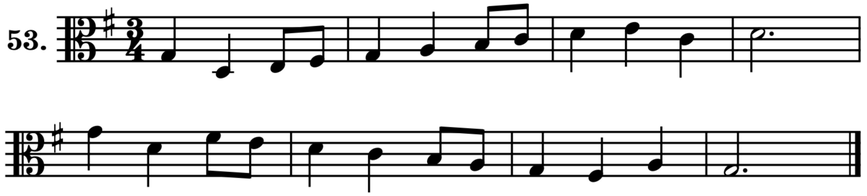

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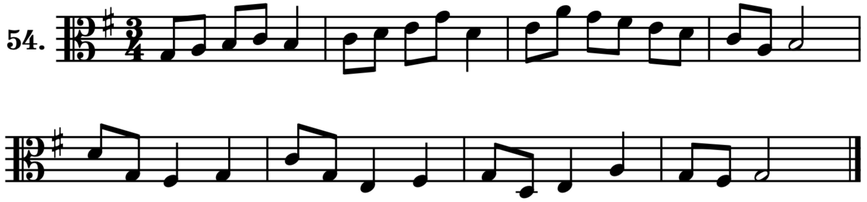

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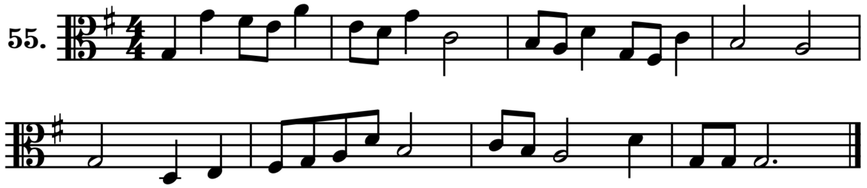

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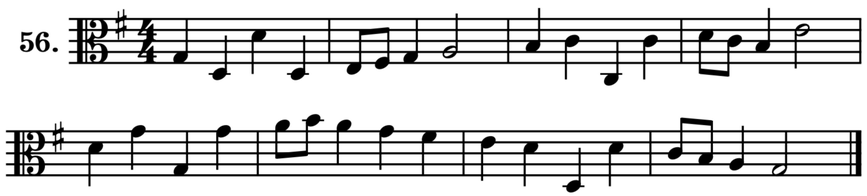

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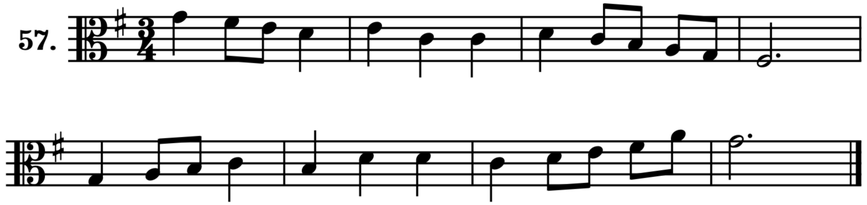

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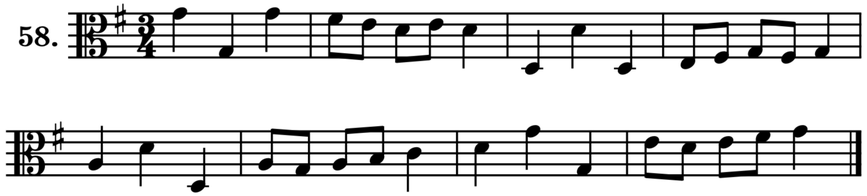

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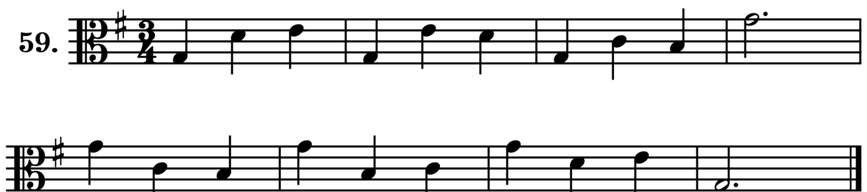

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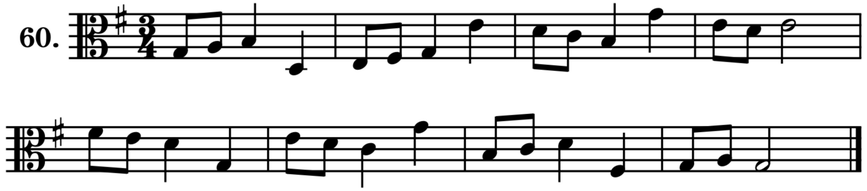


UNIT 4: 61-80

KEY OF F MAJOR

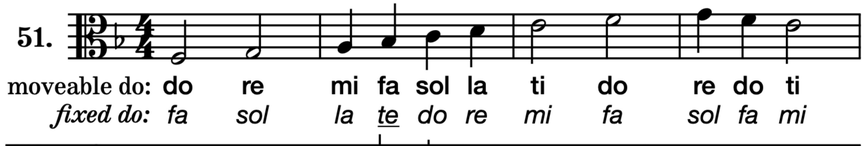
• The F Major scale covers nearly the same range as G major, but one step lower across the alto staff: from the the lowest staff line to the top space, with the leading tone of E on the upper-middle line. Note that the lowest dominant pitch now lines up with the lowest usual note of C below the staff.

• Once again, moveable or fixed do are for left to the student, with syllables given for either approach in the first few drills. For moveable do, the subdominant tone of "fa" now falls on B-flat. For fixed do, this same pitch is sung as "te" (pronounced "tay").

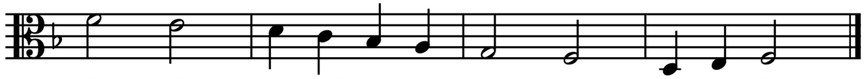
• Adding dotted quarter notes (dotted crotchets), 16th notes (semiquavers), and the time signature of 6/8.

• Maintain procedures as stated in Unit 1. Extra care and slowness of tempo may be required for drills containing 16th notes.

51.



moveable do: do re mi fa sol la ti do re do ti
fixed do: *fa sol la te do re mi fa sol fa mi*



do ti la sol fa mi re do la ti do
fa mi re do te la sol fa re mi fa

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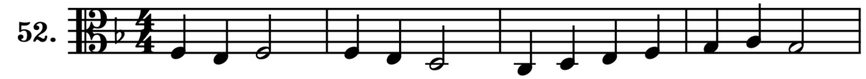
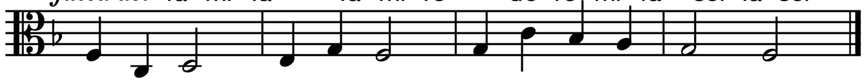


moveable do: do ti do do ti la sol la ti do re mi re
fixed do: *fa mi fa fa mi re do re mi fa sol la sol*



do sol la ti re do re sol fa mi re do
fa do re mi sol fa sol do te la sol fa

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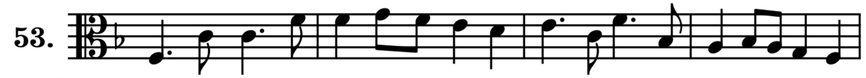
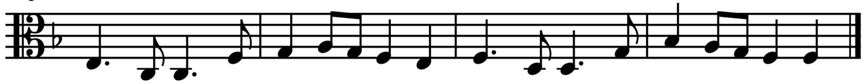


moveable do: do sol sol do do re do ti la etc.
fixed do: *fa do do fa fa sol fa mi re etc.*



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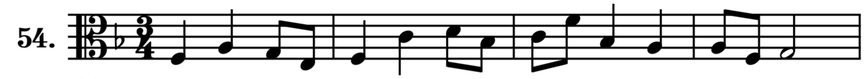
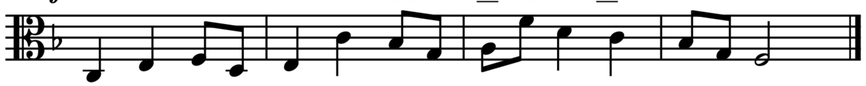
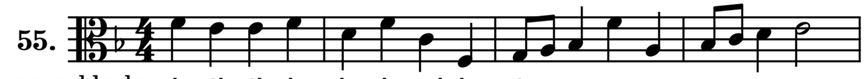


moveable do: do mi re ti do sol la fa sol do fa mi mi do re
fixed do: *fa la sol mi fa do re te do fa te la la fa sol*

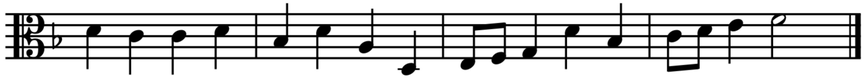


sol ti do la ti sol fa re mi do la sol fa re do
do mi fa re mi do te sol la fa re do te sol fa

55.



moveable do: do ti ti do la do sol do etc.
fixed do: *fa mi mi fa re fa do fa etc.*



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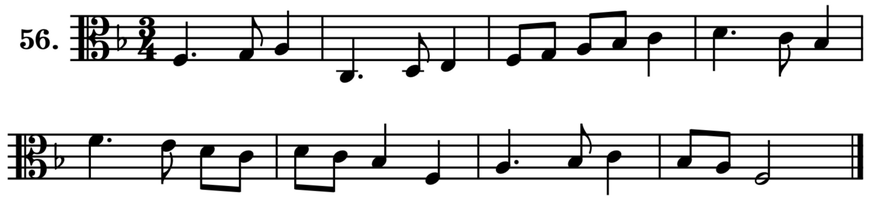

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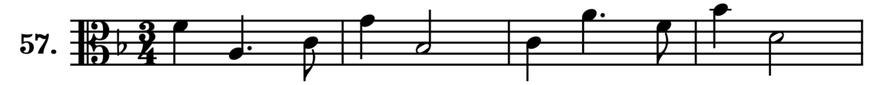

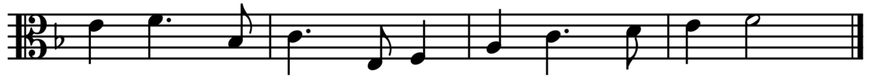

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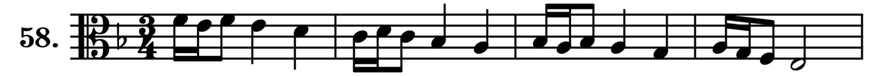

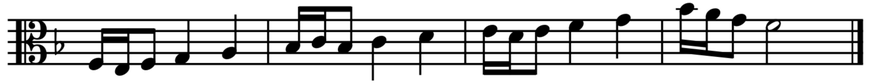

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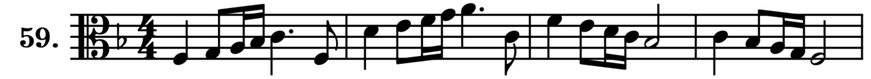

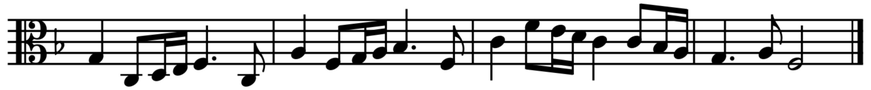

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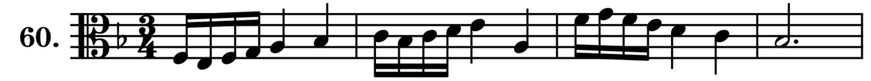

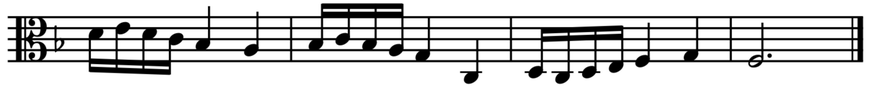

• Drill 75 adds dotted 8th notes (dotted quavers).

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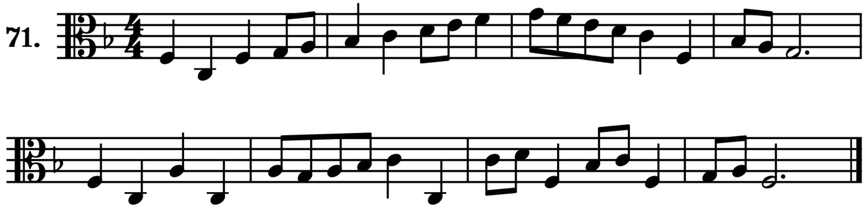

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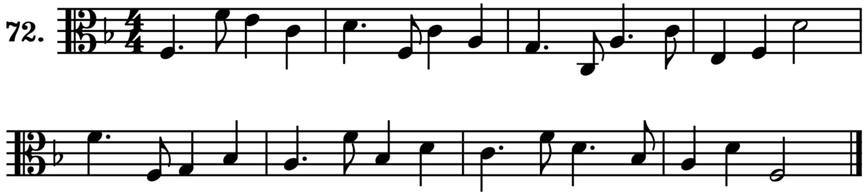

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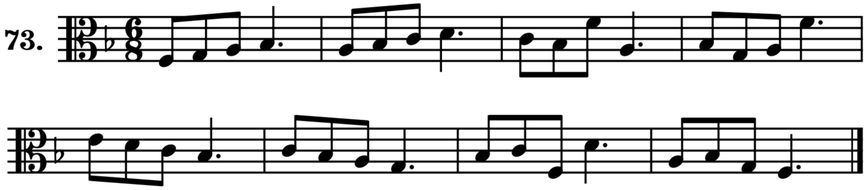

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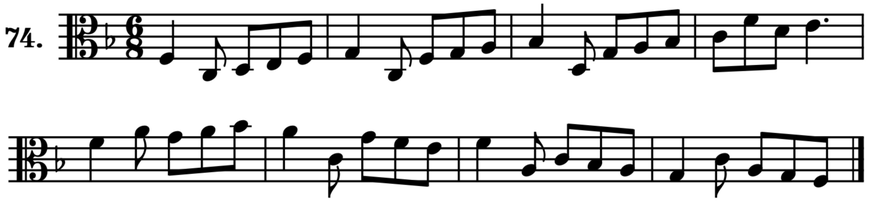

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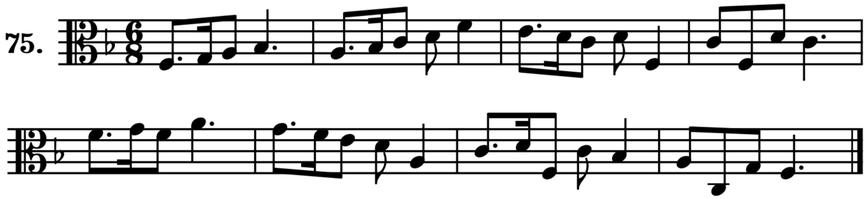

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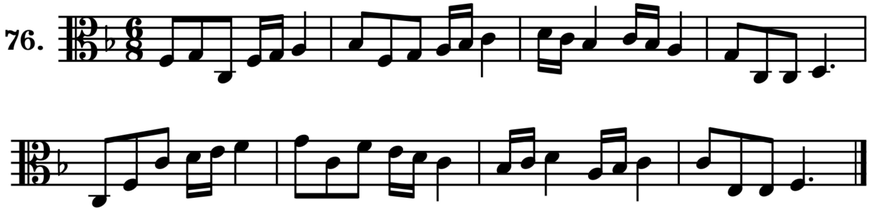

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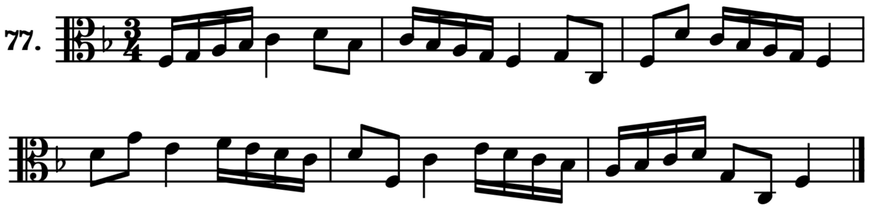

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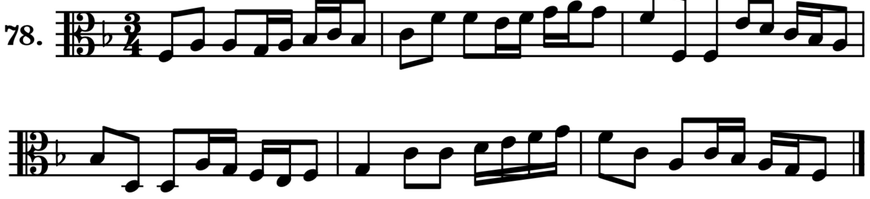

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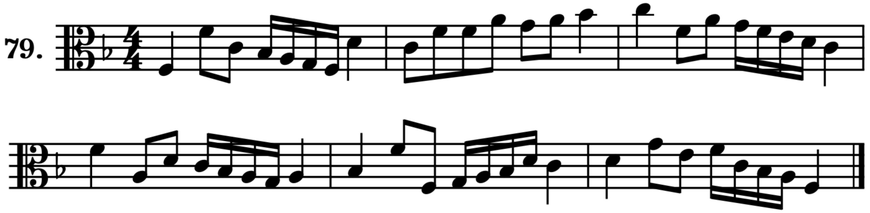

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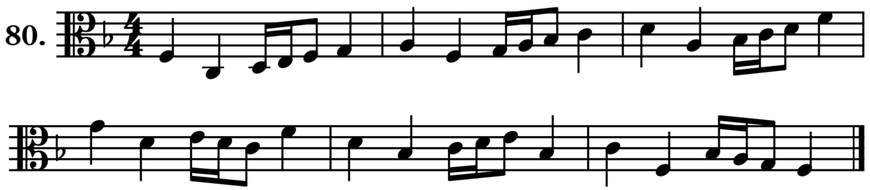


UNIT 5: 81-100

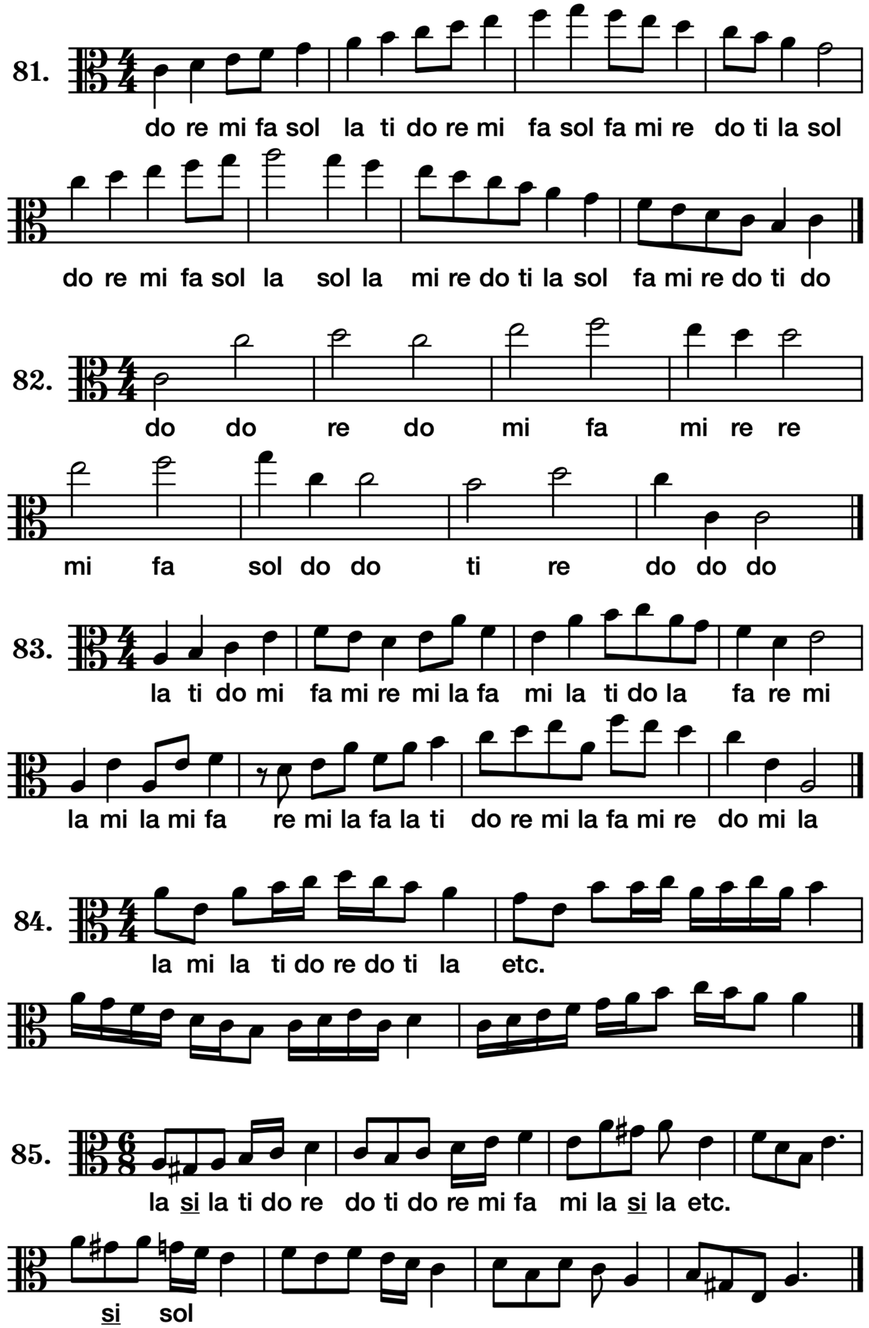
HIGH LEDGER LINES UP TO A5

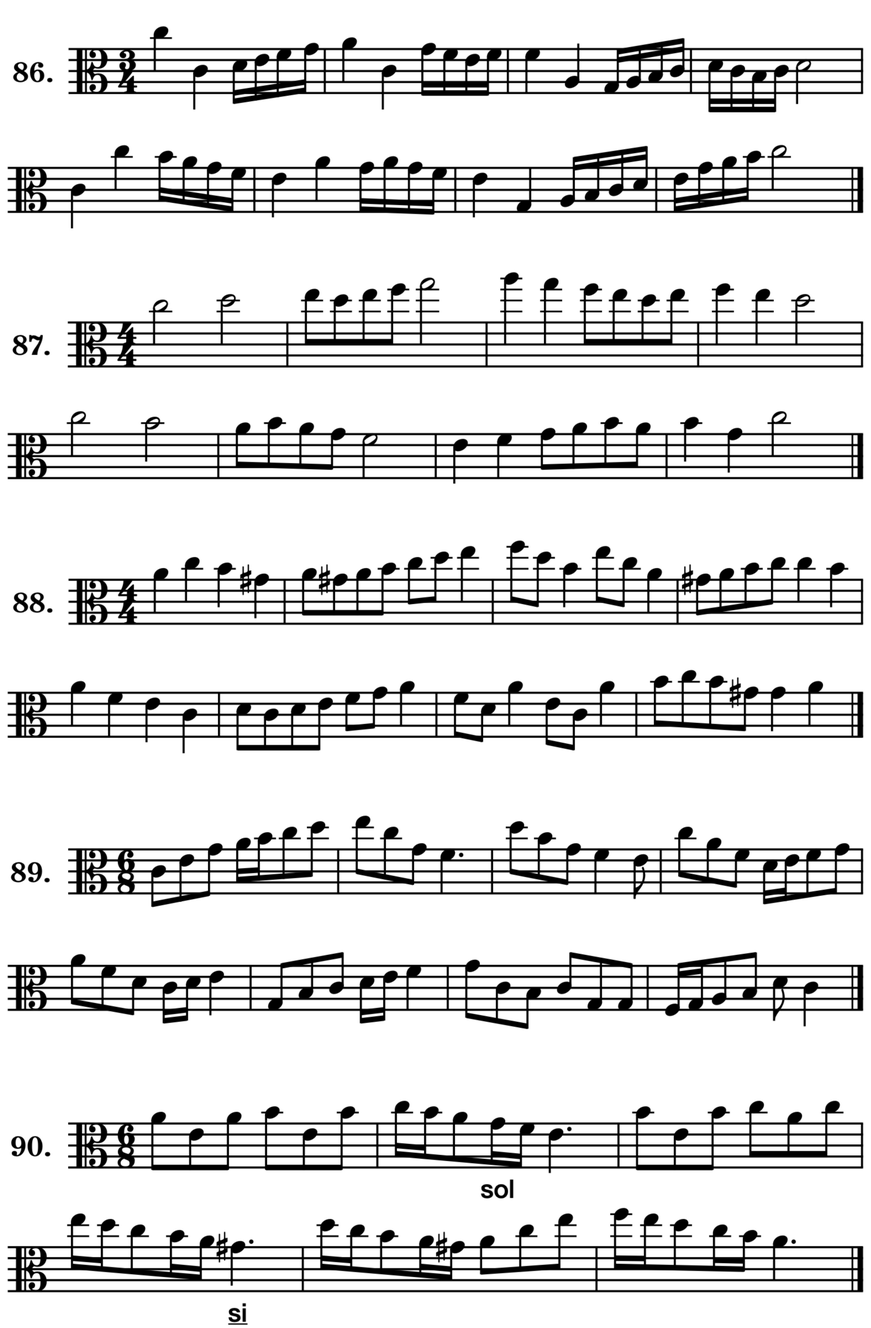
• Drills 83-85, 88, and 90 add the key signature of A minor. The lowest full scale spans from the lower middle alto clef line to the first space above the staff, A3-A4. While some drills are in natural minor, most use harmonic minor with the raised 7th on G-sharp, sung with the syllable "si." Some drills mix "si" and "sol" as the function or modality of the 7th step changes.

• The A minor scale (and minor scales in general for moveable do) start on the syllable "la." Resultant ambiguity and/or confusion (not to mention the issue of modulation) may lead the student toward a preference for fixed do.

• Adding the full range of melodic motion, with 7ths, augmented 2nds and so on.

• Maintain procedures as stated in Unit 1. High ledger line pitches will require a falsetto or head voice from all singers. Don't worry if this is not your favourite range, just try to be on pitch as much as you can.





• Drills 91 and 94 reintroduce the key of F major, taking the next octave higher up to F5 on the third ledger line, and adding a pitch or two higher in the melody where useful for study.

• Drills 92, 93, and 95 add the key of D minor. For the purposes of this set of drills, I've mostly used the range from D4 on the upper middle space up to D5 on the 2nd ledger line above the alto staff. In moveable do, this places the leading tone "si" on C-sharp. For fixed do, the student has to think of C-sharp as "di" (pronounced "dee"), as well as "te" on B-flat.'

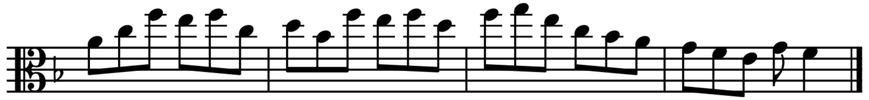
• Drills 96, 99, and 100 return to the key of G; taking the next highest octave of scale up to G5 on the third ledger space above the staff.

• Drills 97 and 98 add the key of E minor. In these drills, the basic span ranges E4 on the upper middle line up to E5 on the second ledger space. Moveable do's leading tone of "si" now sits on D-sharp. In fixed do, this corresponds to the syllable "ri" (pronounced "ree"). This must be added to "fi" on F-sharp.

• Once the student has tested themselves with this entire set of drills, wait a few days, and then try them again. Also seek out other sources of alto clef scoring like viola parts and drill those as well.

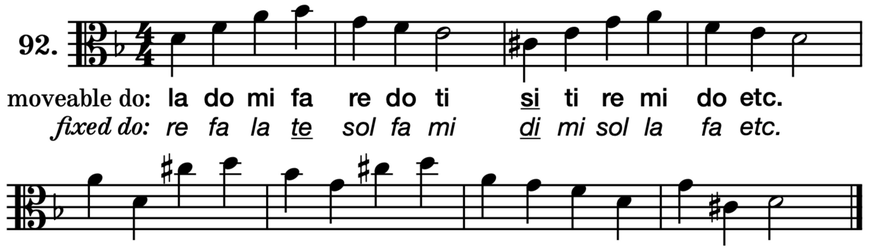
91.

moveable do: do ti do re mi fa sol do sol la sol do etc.
fixed do: fa mi fa sol la te do fa do re do fa etc.



92.

moveable do: la do mi fa re do ti si ti re mi do etc.
fixed do: re fa la te sol fa mi di mi sol la fa etc.



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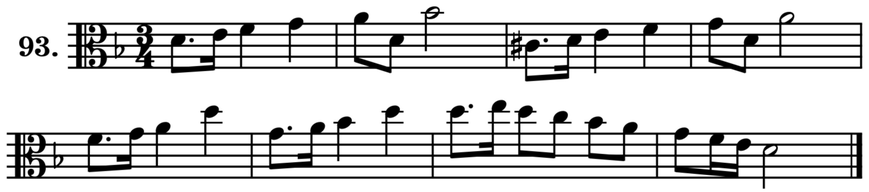

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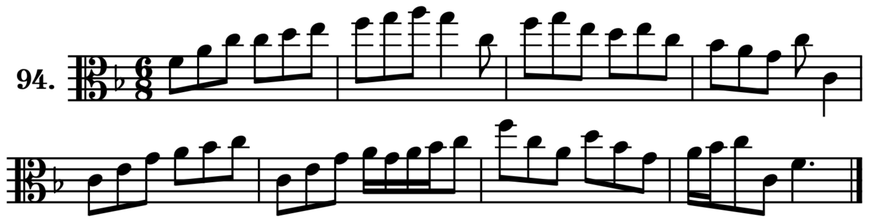
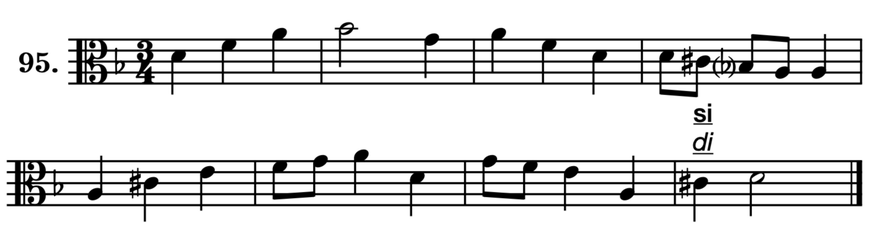


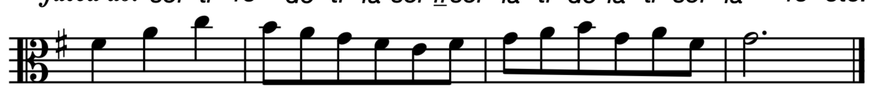
95.

si
di



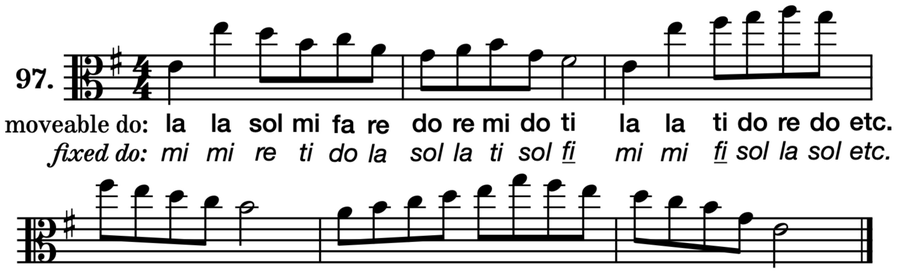
96.

moveable do: do mi sol fa mi re do ti do re mi fa re mi do re sol etc.
fixed do: sol ti re do ti la sol fi sol la ti do la ti sol la re etc.



97.

moveable do: la la sol mi fa re do re mi do ti la la ti do re do etc.
fixed do: mi mi re ti do la sol la ti sol fi mi mi fi sol la sol etc.



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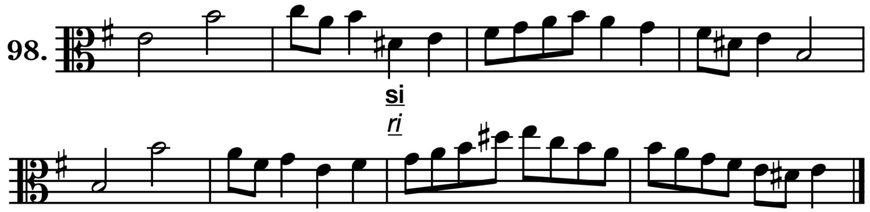

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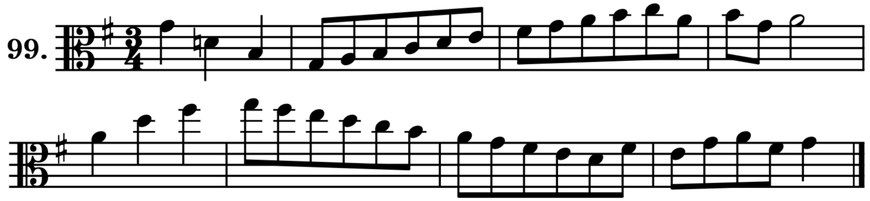
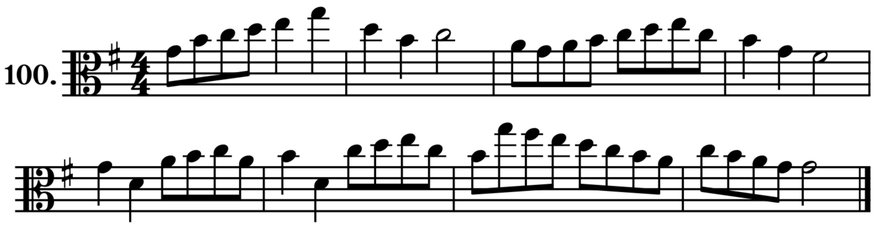
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