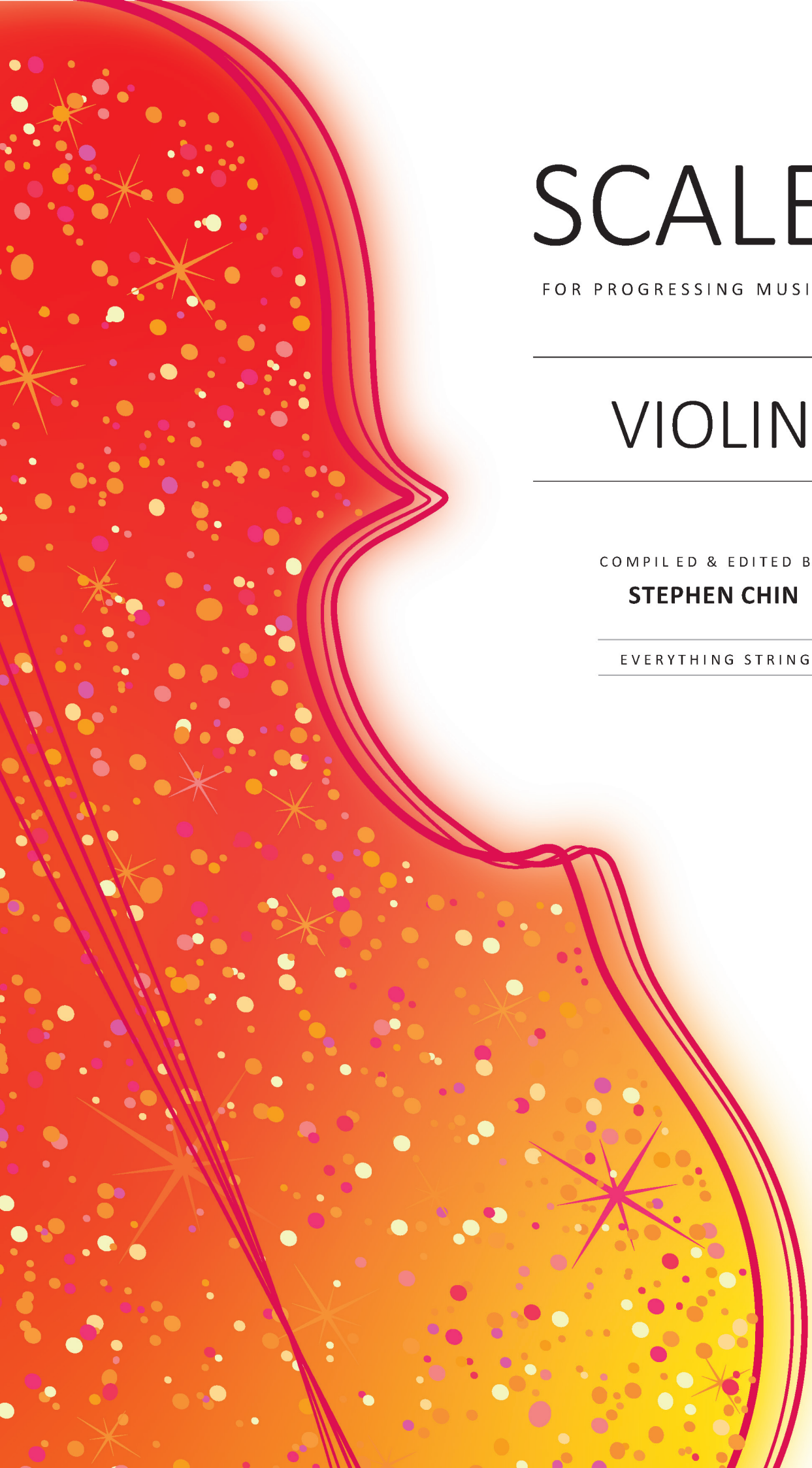

SCALES

FOR PROGRESSING MUSICIANS

VIOLIN

COMPILED & EDITED BY

STEPHEN CHIN

EVERYTHING STRING

SCALES

FOR PROGRESSING MUSICIANS

VIOLIN

COMPILED AND EDITED BY STEPHEN CHIN

I have always loved scales and enjoy looking for them in all kinds of music. As you play and refine them, scales can also allow you to concentrate on how various parts of your body work with your instrument. It is well known that scales form the foundation of most Western music and the patterns that emerge from the careful study of them are often helpful when understanding new studies or pieces. Using scales with a variety of bowing styles, rhythms, speeds and dynamics is also a great way to develop reliability and confidence with your instrument. Once this is attained, greater opportunities for expression and musical insight are possible. It is important to remember that whilst building your repertoire of scales, it is also good to focus on the ones that are evident in your current musical works. In addition to this, a solid grounding in music theory and music history is likely to make your journey in music even more engaging and enjoyable.

After the content pages, there are brief descriptions of some basic bowing styles, a number of rhythmic suggestions that players may find useful when learning new repertoire, and a brief overview of each scale genre presented in the book.

Stephen Chin

Brisbane, 2025

SAMPLE ONLY

Stephen Chin

M Mus, B Mus, Dip Mus Comp

As a founding member of the Sydney Youth Orchestra, Stephen's interest and enthusiasm for music led him to undertake formal training at Sydney University in both violin and composition with John Harding and Peter Sculthorpe respectively. Stephen also attained a Master of Music from Queensland Conservatorium of Music Griffith University, under the tutelage of Michele Walsh, specialising in violin performance and pedagogy.

Stephen has been invited to perform with such groups as The ABC Sinfonia, The Badinerie Players, The Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, The Queensland Symphony Orchestra, The Queensland Pops Orchestra and a number of professional chamber ensembles. He is also an examiner for the Australian Music Examination Board (AMEB).

Under the banner of Everything String, Stephen publishes a number of string compositions and arrangements which have been used as test pieces for a number of competitions throughout Australia. Notably, in both 2015 and 2016, Stephen was commissioned by the NSW Arts Education Unit to write works for several Sydney Opera House performances involving eight thousand primary age musicians throughout NSW. Additionally, as a gesture of good will and to promote strong international relations, Everything String has also donated music to a number of international organisations such as Serendip (Sri Lanka), the Ghana String Project and the Yew Chung International School (Hong Kong).

Stephen's compositions and arrangements are also presented as examination pieces in the in the AMEB books for violin, viola, cello and double bass. He has been invited many times to adjudicate various eisteddfods and competitions throughout Australia. Stephen is also in demand as a string and orchestral clinician, regularly conducting a number of workshops and festivals both nationally and internationally.

From 2013 – 2015, Stephen lectured in String Pedagogy and Practicum at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University and was the conductor of the BEL faculty Chamber Orchestra 2008 – 2013 at the University of Queensland. He has also written articles for journals such as The Strad and Stringendo.

Stephen was the Queensland State President of The Australian Strings Association (AUSTA) 2011 – 13 and National President for AUSTA 2014 – 2016. As a Past National President of AUSTA, Stephen continues to be involved in the Consultation Committee and is the International Tour Organiser.

In 2022, Stephen was awarded the National Award by the Australian Strings Association (AUSTA) in recognition for an outstanding contribution to the string community throughout Australia. This award is given only once every three years.

Presently, he is Principal String Teacher and Director of Orchestras at Brisbane Grammar School.

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C# MINOR 77

B MAJOR 78

G# MINOR 79

F# MAJOR 80

D# MINOR 81

C# MAJOR 82

A# MINOR 83

F MAJOR 84

D MINOR 85

Bb MAJOR 86

G MINOR 87

Eb MAJOR 88

C MINOR 89

Ab MAJOR 90

F MINOR 91

Db MAJOR 92

Bb MINOR 93

Gb MAJOR 94

Eb MINOR 95

Cb MAJOR 96

Ab MINOR 97

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ONE OCTAVE ONE STRING SCALE SYSTEMS

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A 104
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B 108
C 110
C# 112
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Eb 116
E 118
F 120
F# 122

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Ab 128
A 130
Bb 132
B 134
C 136
Db / C# 138
D 140
Eb 142
E 144
F 146
F# 148

DOUBLE STOPPED SCALES

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G MINOR 153
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Ab MINOR 155
A MAJOR 156
A MINOR 157
Bb MAJOR 158
Bb MINOR 159
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B MINOR 161

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A MAJOR & A MINOR 179
Bb MAJOR & Bb MINOR 179
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G MAJOR & G MINOR 182
Ab MAJOR & Ab MINOR 182
A MAJOR & A MINOR 183
Bb MAJOR & Bb MINOR 183
B MAJOR & B MINOR 184
C MAJOR & C MINOR 184
Db MAJOR & C# MINOR 185
D MAJOR & D MINOR 185
Eb MAJOR & Eb MINOR 186
E MAJOR & E MINOR 186
F MAJOR & F MINOR 187
F# MAJOR & F# MINOR 187

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BASIC BOWING STYLES

It is a good idea to learn and refine each bowing style on open strings before applying them to scales and arpeggios. Importantly, aim to keep your body and in particular your neck, shoulders, wrists, hand and fingers, relaxed and flexible at all times. The brief descriptions are only suggestions, and your teacher may be able to provide further instructions for each bowing style. Setting up the bow hold by balancing the bow between thumb and little finger then adding the other fingers may also help.

Smooth bows at the frog - ① Raise hand and bend fingers just before down-bow ② Drop hand and slightly straighten fingers just before upbow.

Detaché - practise smooth separate strokes at all areas of the bow. Use slow bows initially then faster strokes.

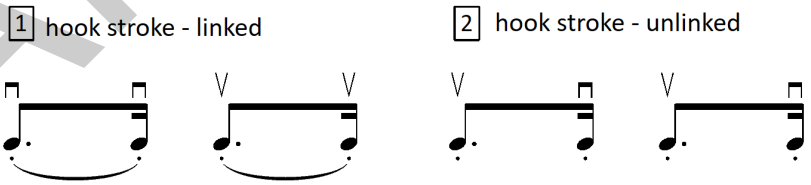
Son filé - means “spun tone”. Practise using very long bows with a variety of dynamics.

Legato - practise any number of notes slurred in one stroke.

Collé - is the basis of a number of other strokes. To establish good contact between the bow hair and string, slightly wriggling the string with the bow beforehand, using the thumb, fingers and hand, is recommended. These simple steps may help: *contact → tiny bow (fingers & thumb move very quickly making a "clicking" sound) → lift.*

Martelé - related to collé with the bow staying on the string. Remember to wriggle the string slightly beforehand using the thumb, fingers, and hand to set up good contact with the string. These simple steps may help: *contact → fast bow → rest bow lightly on string, allowing the note to ring*.

Hook stroke - related to martelé. Remember to wriggle the string slightly beforehand using the thumb, fingers, and hand to set up good contact with the string. Typical bowings are given below.



Spiccato – contact style; related to collé. It is bouncing yet more incisive. Practise both duplets and triplets at the balance point of the bow and a little further up the bow for faster speeds.

Spiccato – brush style; related to detaché - bouncing yet more broad (horizontal). Practise both duplets and triplets at the balance point of the bow and a little further up the bow for faster speeds.

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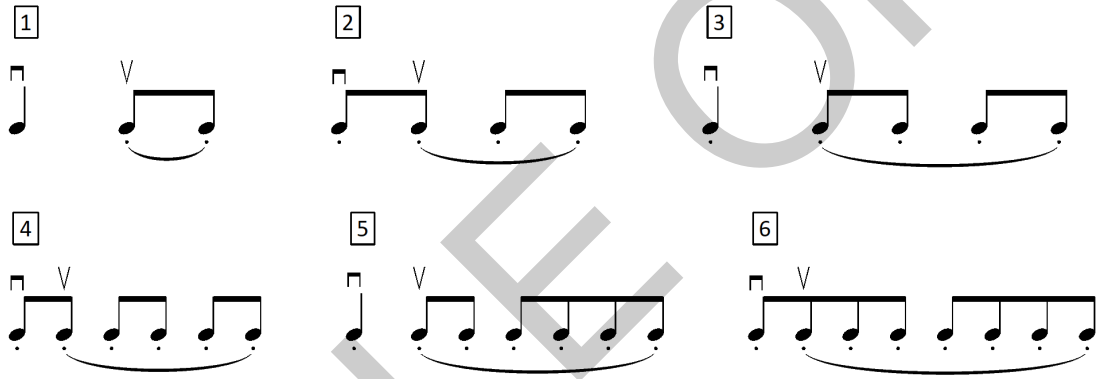
Firm Staccato - related to martelé. Wriggle the string slightly beforehand using thumb, fingers and hand to set up good contact with the string. Typical bowings are given below. Practise slowly at first near the balance point then higher up the bow as speed increases. The bow stays on the string for each note. Arm may need to stiffen slightly as the speed increases.

Flying Staccato – related to contact style spiccato. Wriggle the string slightly beforehand using thumb, fingers and hand to set up good contact with the string. Typical bowings are given below. Practise slowly at first near the balance point then higher up the bow as speed increases. The bow leaves the string slightly for each note.

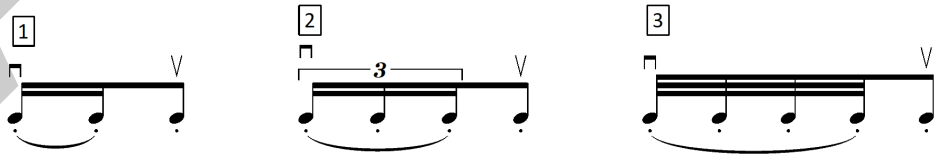
Flying Spiccato) – related to detaché. Typical bowings are given below. Practise slowly at first near the balance point then higher up the bow as speed increases. The bow leaves the string slightly for each note.

Use for firm staccato, flying staccato & flying spiccato.



Sautillé - wriggle the string slightly beforehand using thumb, fingers and hand to set up good contact with the string. Use a tapping action with the right hand, keeping the bow hair quite flat on the string. Initially, practise semiquavers at 126 - 132 BPM with multiple strokes on open strings. After this play 4, 3, then 2 strokes per note. Single strokes for each note will require more precise coordination between the hands.

Ricochet – practise using a flatter bow hair in the upper two thirds of the bow. Faster speeds will be further up the bow. Typical bowings are given below.



String crossings – practise over 2, 3, then 4 strings with separate or slurred bowings. Initially, use open strings then double stops and chords as required.

Springing arpeggios - practise over 3 or 4 strings using a flatter bow hair. Applying alternating legato bowing with springing arpeggios for better control may be helpful.

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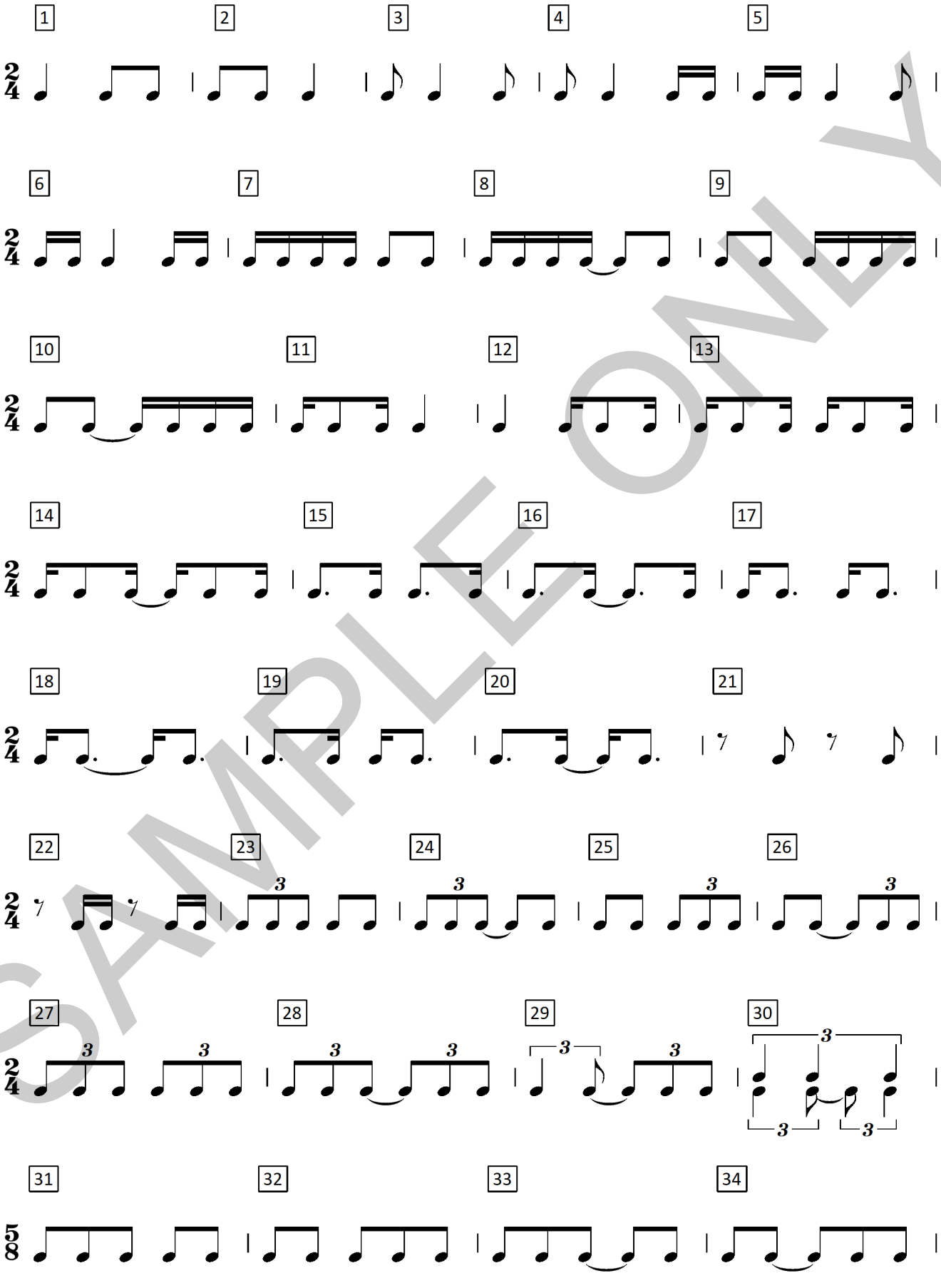
SOME USEFUL RHYTHMIC GROUPS



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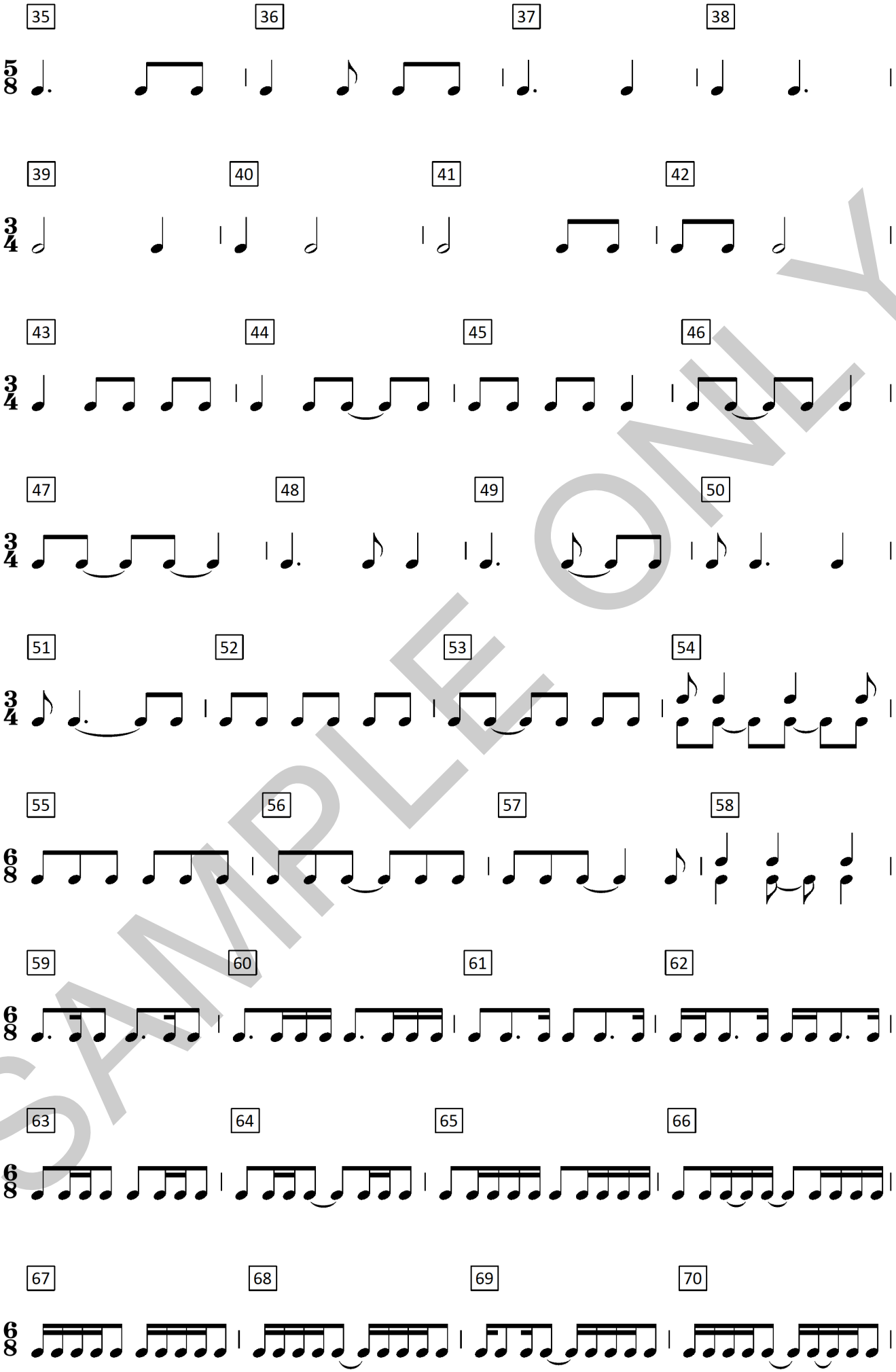

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BRIEF OVERVIEWS OF EACH SCALE GENRE

TUNING USING PERFECT INTERVALS
Perfect intervals are the only intervals that are common to Pythagorean and Just tuning systems. These have been devised to provide the player with reference points in a variety of positions. They should be practised daily even by advanced players.

FIRST POSITION SCALES
These scales are essential learning for the beginner violinist. A scale map shows precisely where the fingers need to go for each key. The light grey dots indicate the optional use of the 4th finger. In addition to the one octave scales, the other notes on the other strings are introduced. Both major and minor keys up to four sharps and four flats have been presented.

TWO OCTAVE SCALE SYSTEMS
These scales are useful in gaining greater awareness of notes across the strings. Maps of each scale type are given. Only Ab harmonic and melodic minor scales need to be slightly adapted. It is suggested that these scales be learned extensively before studying the three octave systems.

ONE POSITION SCALES
These are excellent in developing a strong sense of tonality throughout a variety of positions. The repeated note at the top of each position helps to remember the fingering when descending.

ONE OCTAVE ONE STRING SCALE SYSTEMS
These are great for acquiring a good sense of geography up and down each string. They are also useful in acquiring smooth shifts and fostering the correct elevation of the instrument.

THREE OCTAVE SCALE SYSTEMS
These scales are important in developing greater facility in all regions of the instrument. The 48-note system for the scales lends itself to groupings of 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 16, and 24 notes.

DOUBLE STOPPED SCALES
Practise slurring from the bottom note to the top note as shown below. Slurring from the top note for fingered octaves and tenths may be a little easier on your hand. Once this step is secure, try playing them as written.

Use for fingered octaves and tenths.

SELECTED TWO OCTAVE SCALES IN HARMONICS
The left-hand finger pressure needs to be very light. Bow nearer the bridge for clarity.

LEFT HAND PIZZICATO SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS
Try to get a little of the skin from the plucking fingertip slightly under the string. These scales and arpeggios are great for developing stronger fingers and a clearer tone for descending passages.

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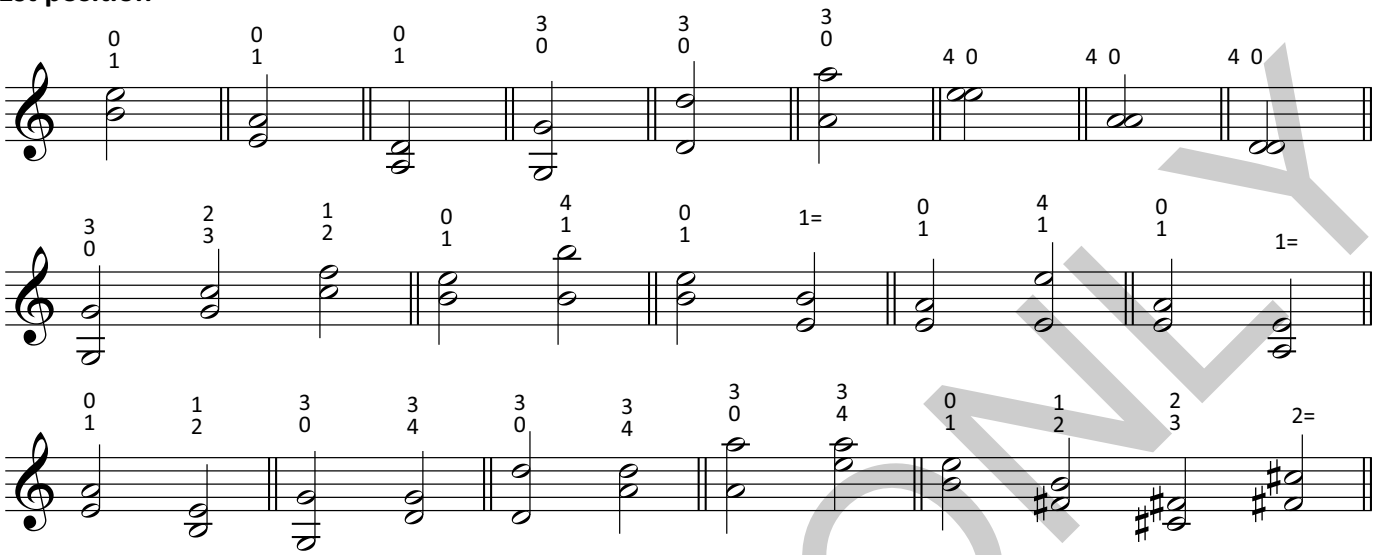
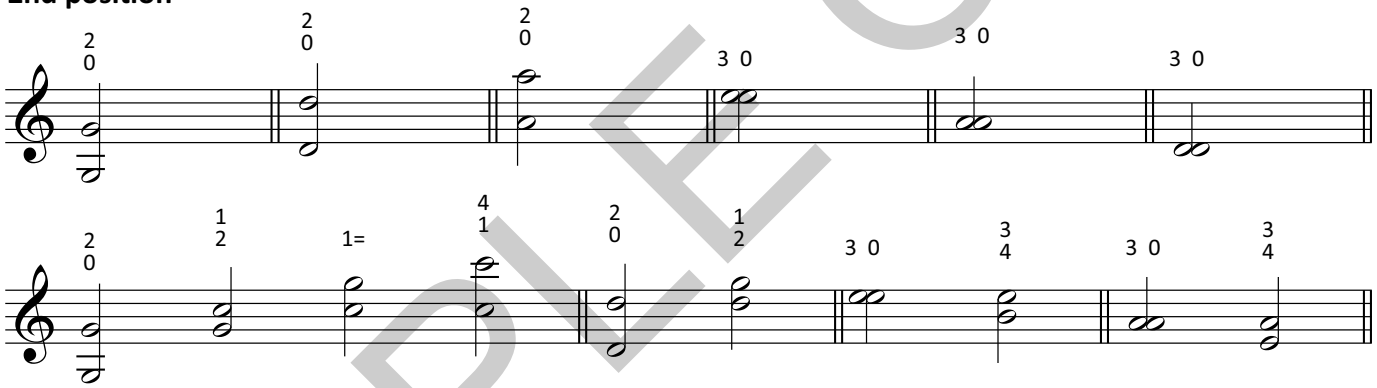
Tuning Using Perfect Intervals

- Aim to listen for difference tones for 4ths and 5ths.
- Repeat each section between the double barlines as you feel you need to.
- Timing may be free initially.

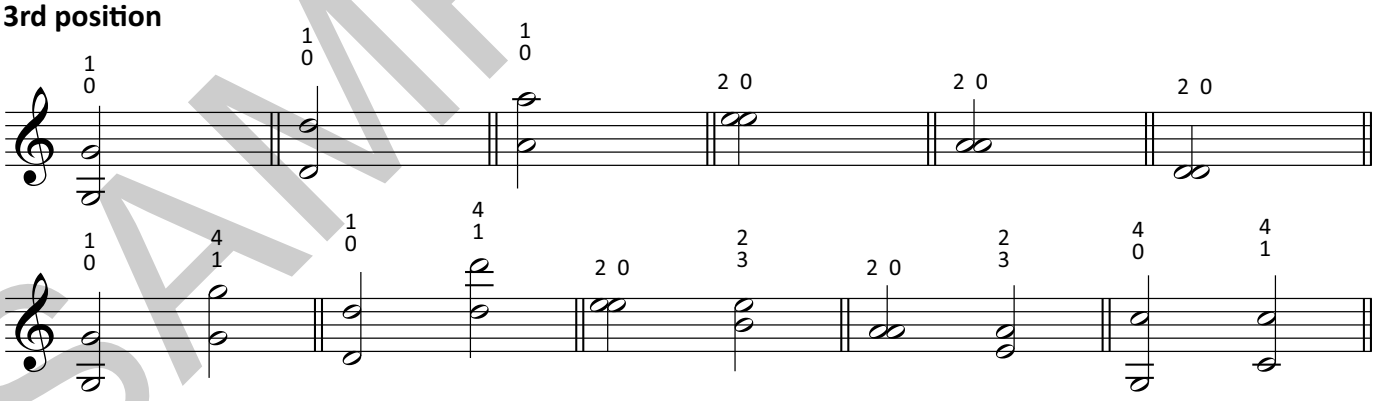
1st position



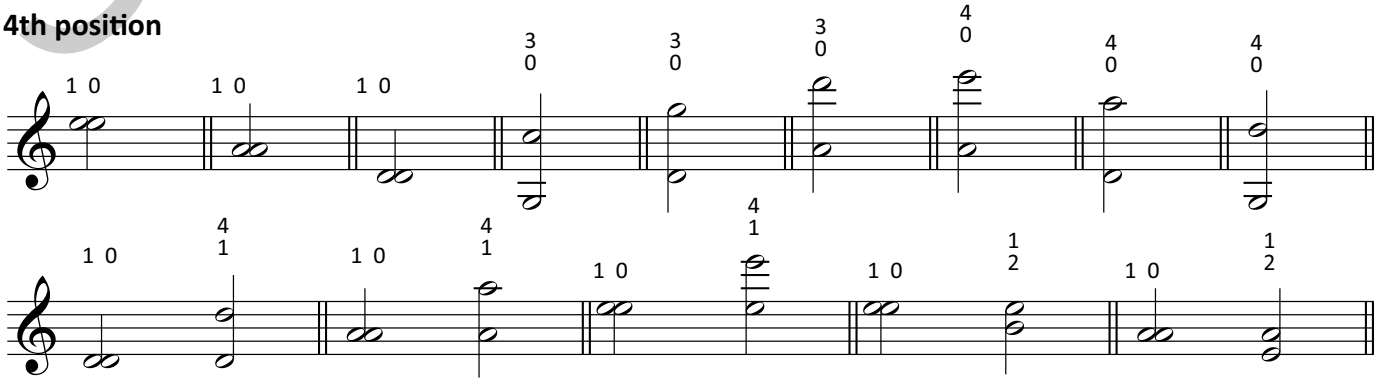
2nd position



3rd position



4th position



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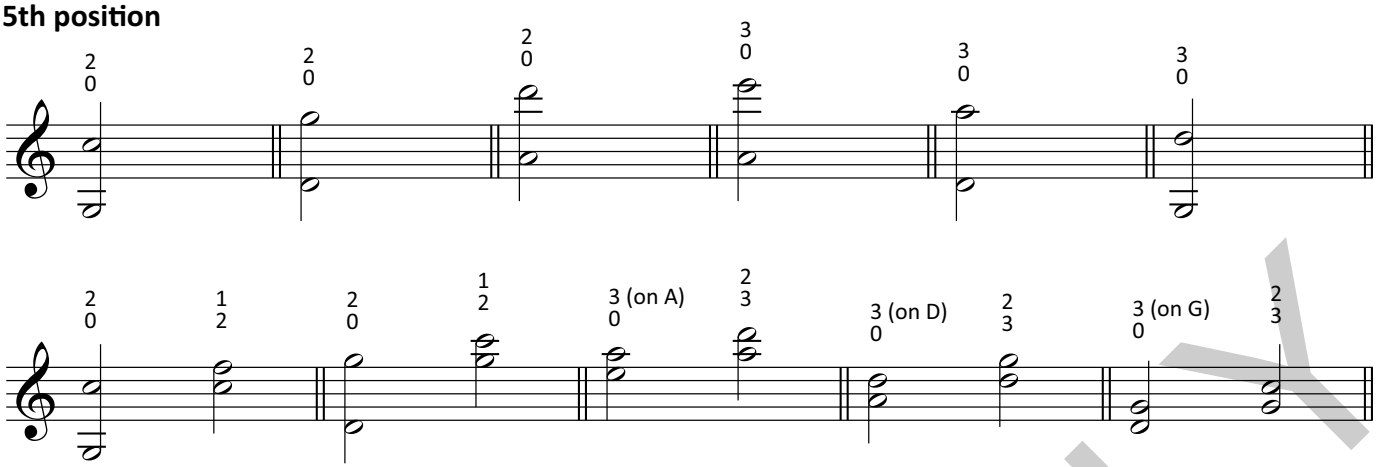
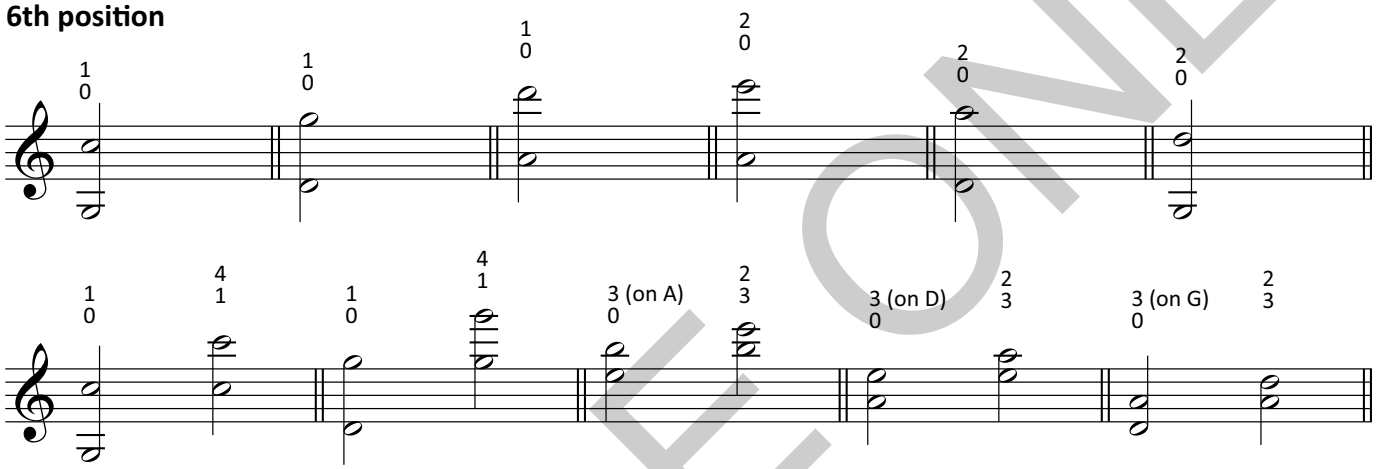
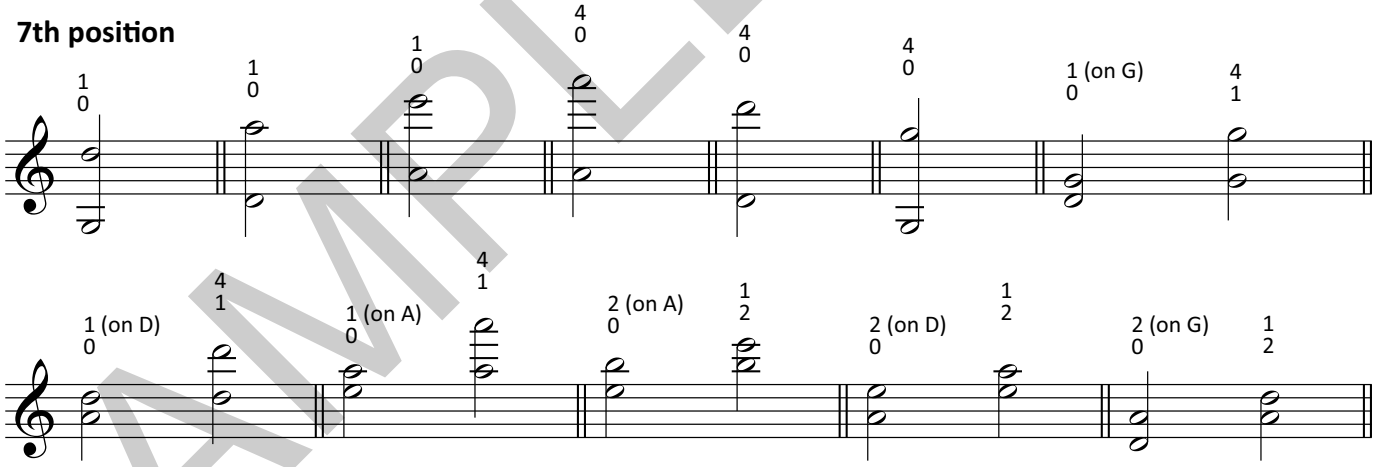
5th position



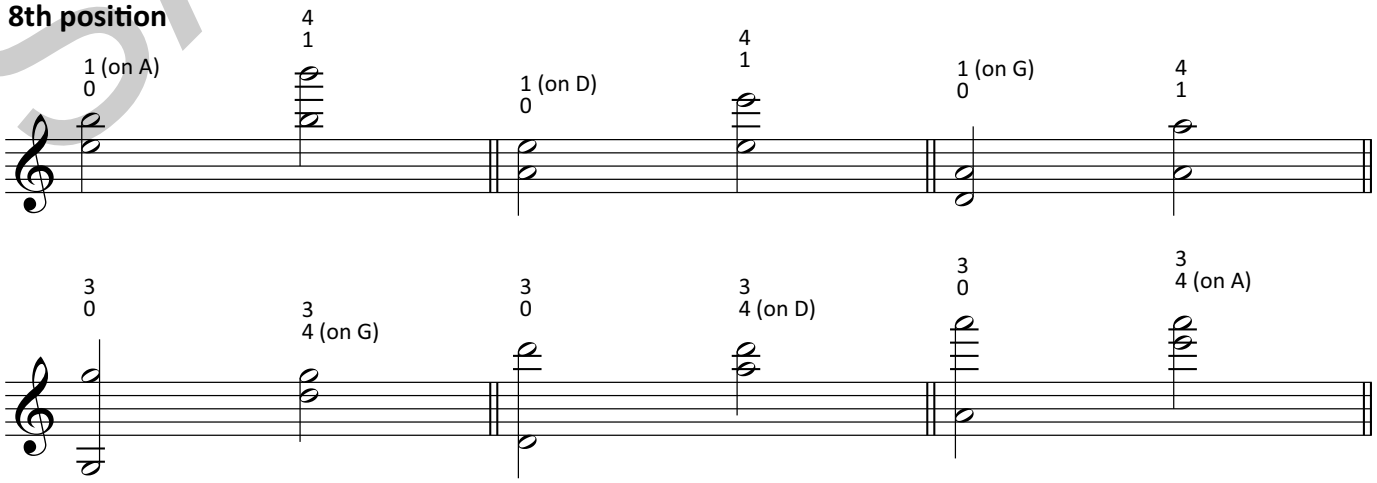
6th position



7th position



8th position



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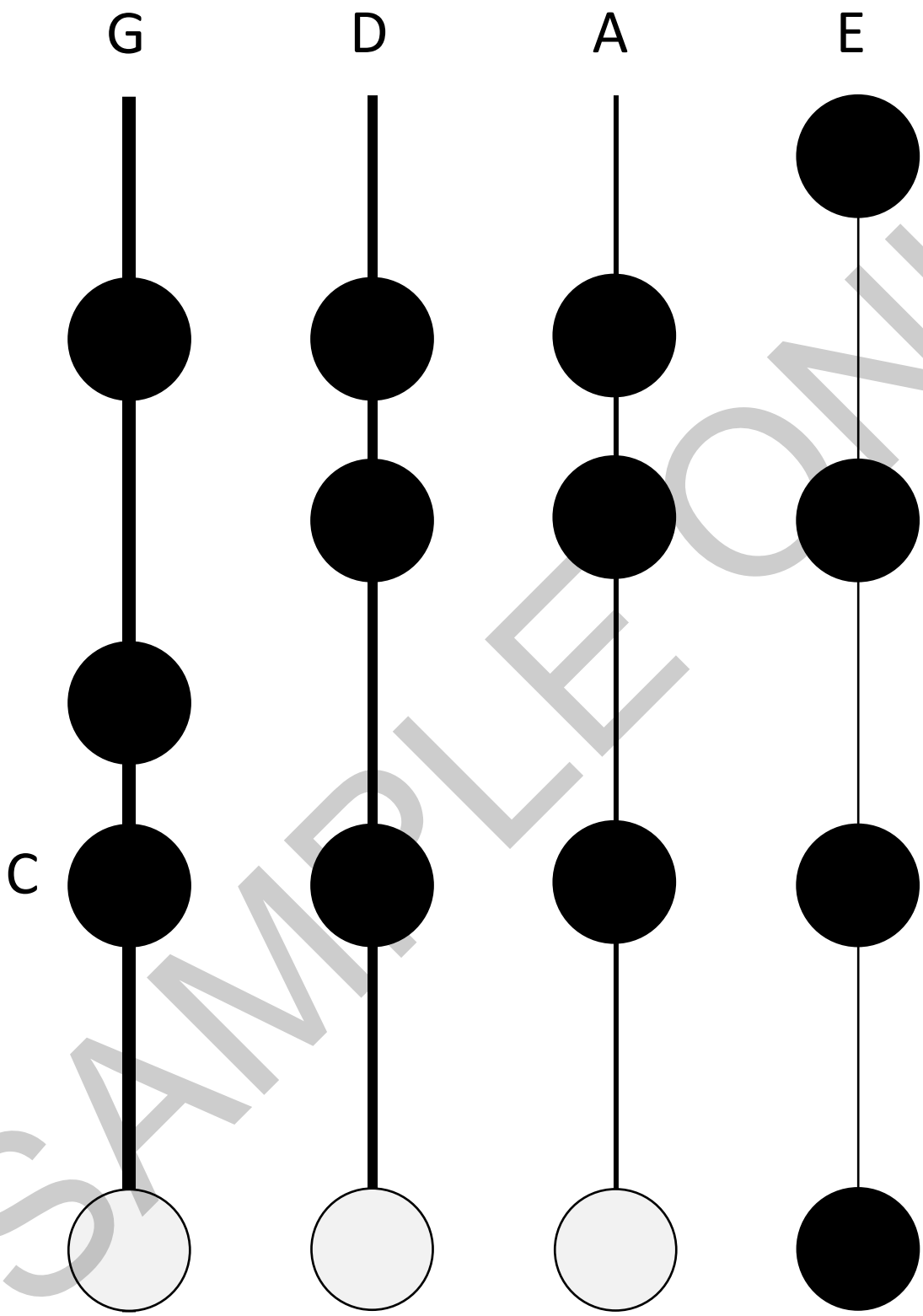
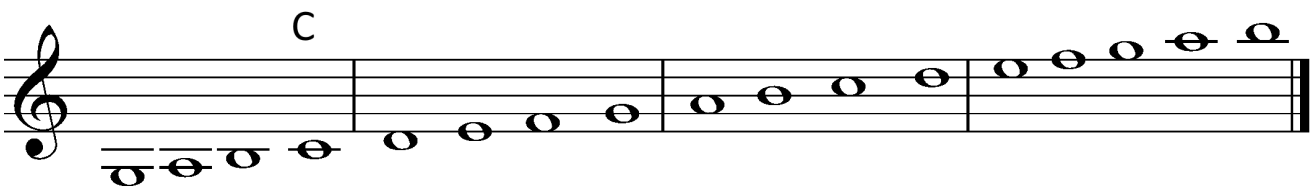
First Position Scales

C major

No flats, no sharps





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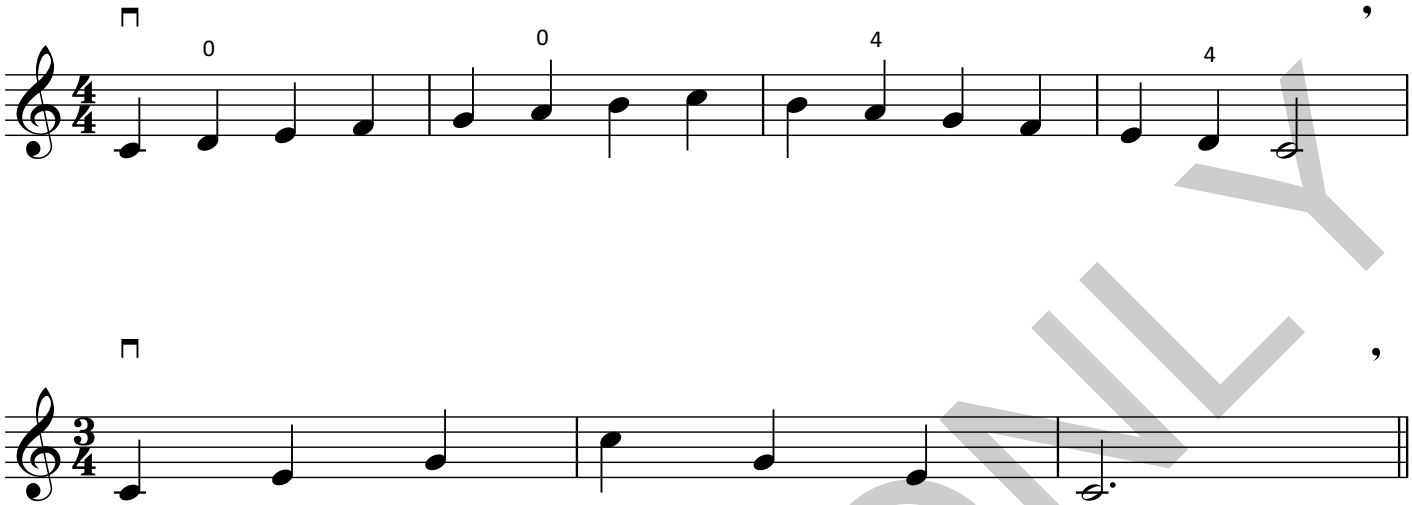
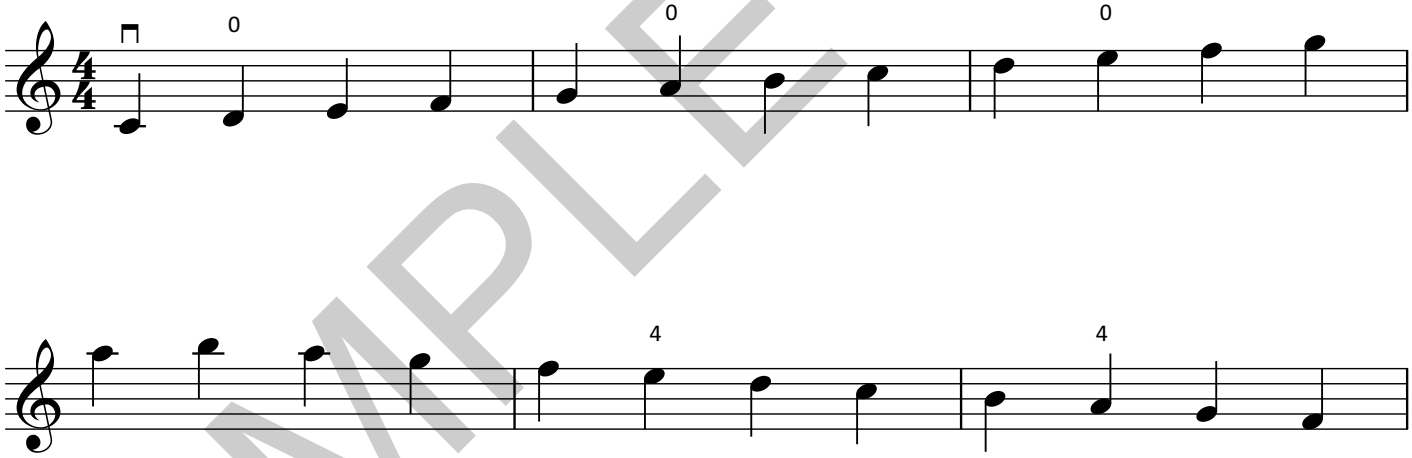
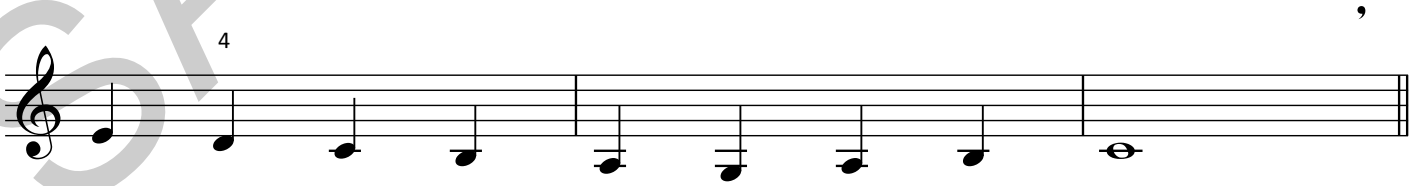
C major

major scale with arpeggio

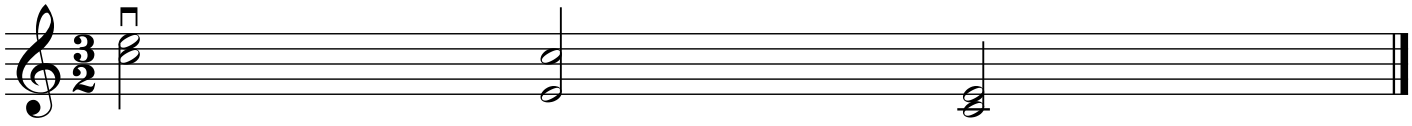


all major scale notes in first position





some double stops



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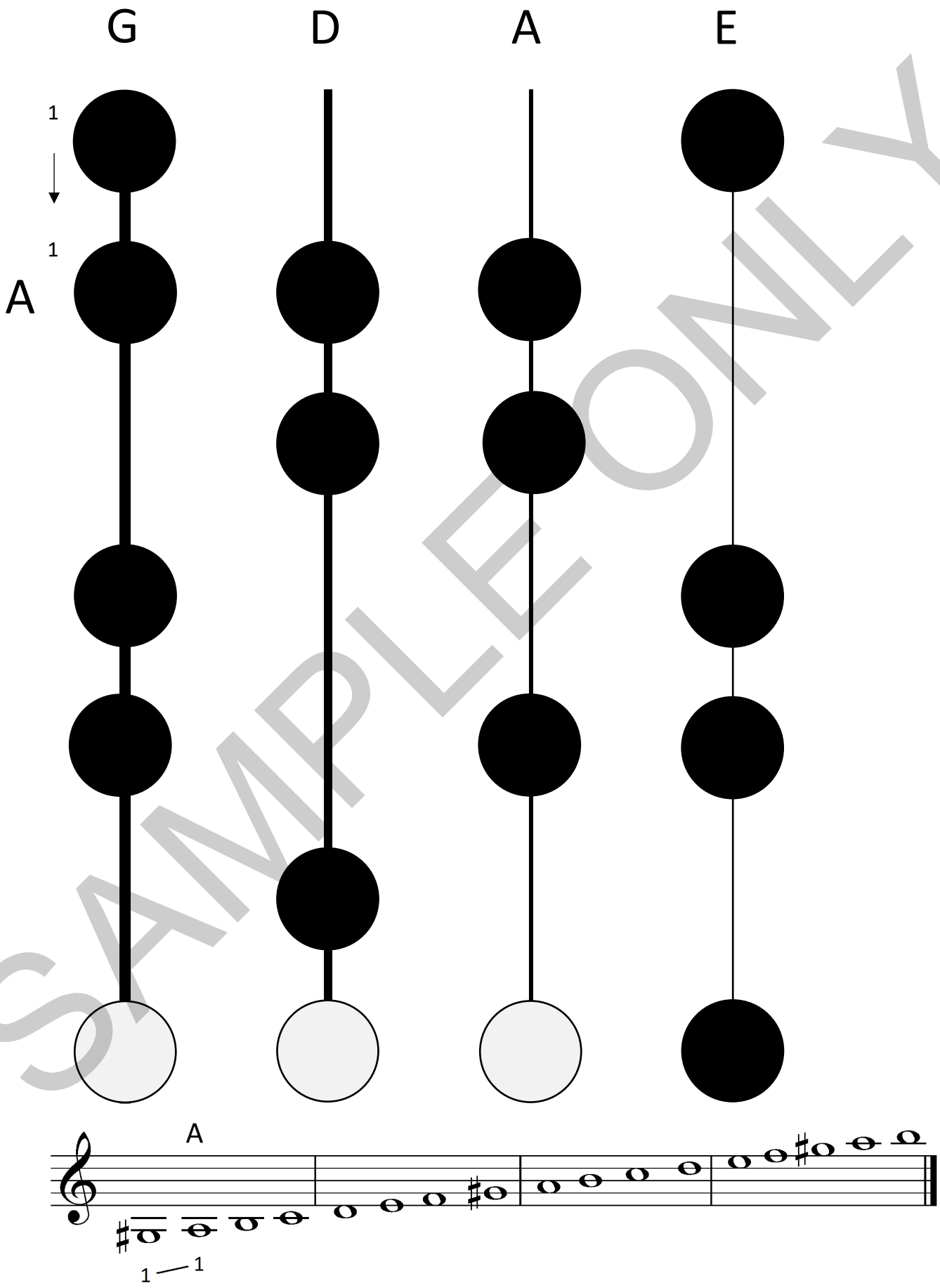
A harmonic minor

No flats, no sharps; leading note G#



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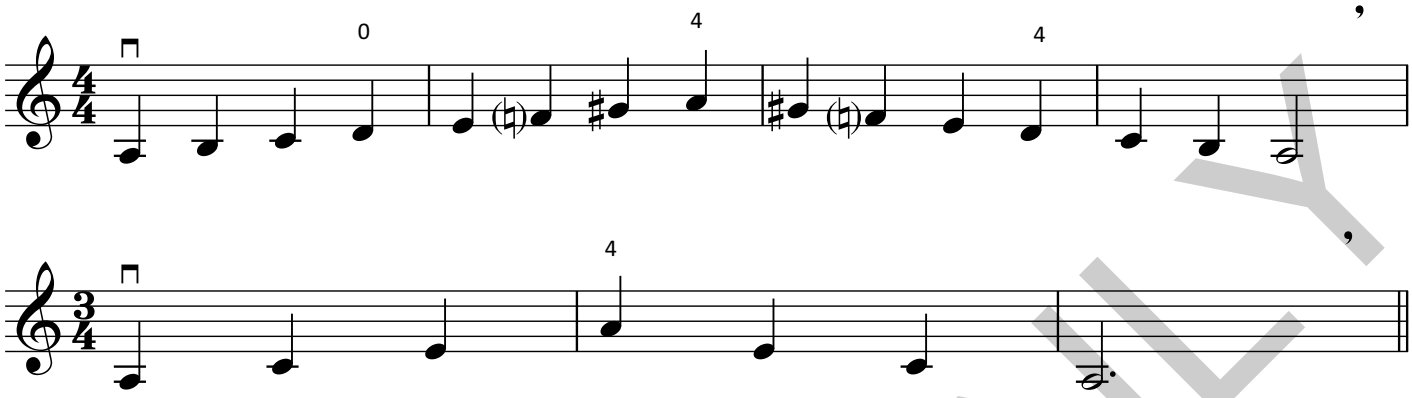
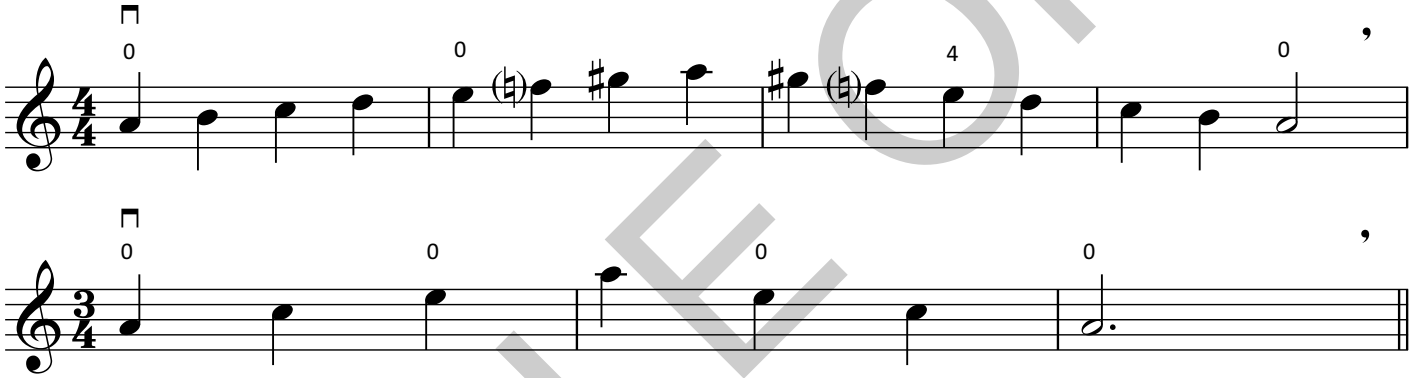
A harmonic minor

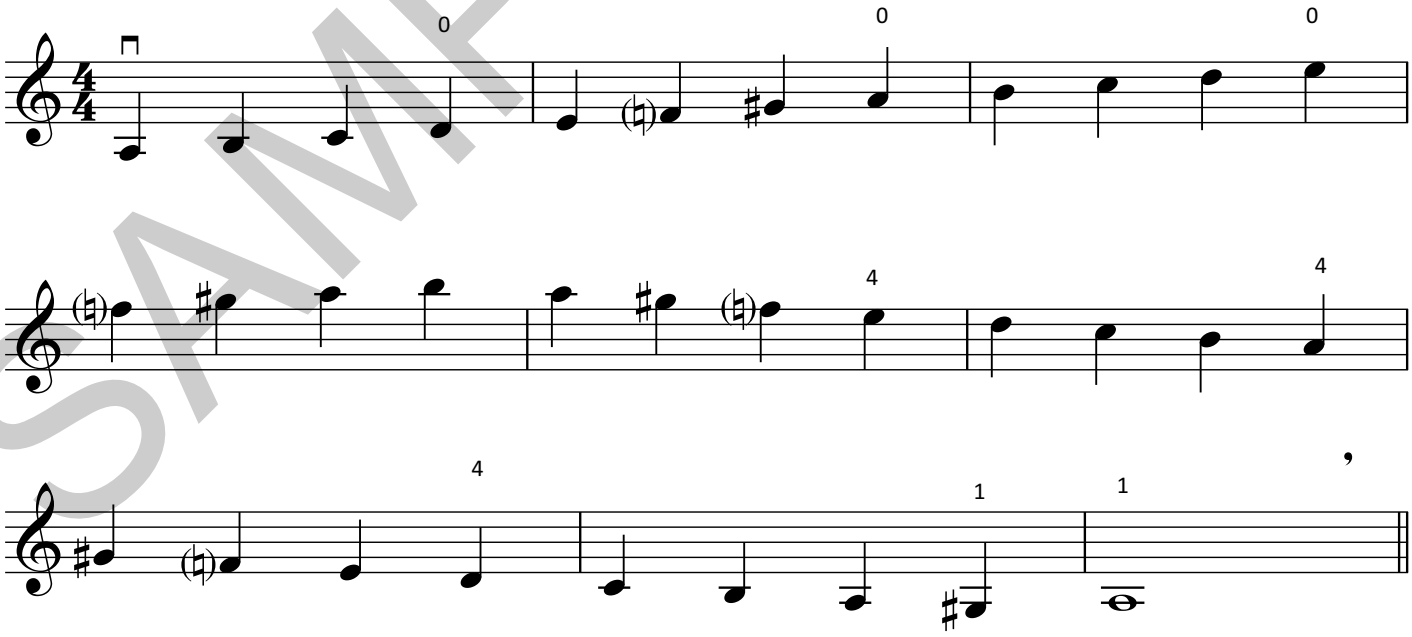
harmonic minor scale with arpeggio (lower octave)



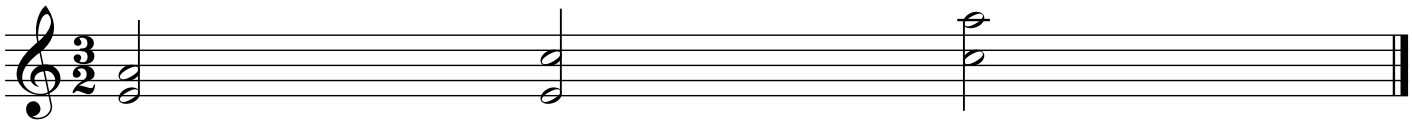
harmonic minor scale with arpeggio (upper octave)



all harmonic minor scale notes in first position



some double stops



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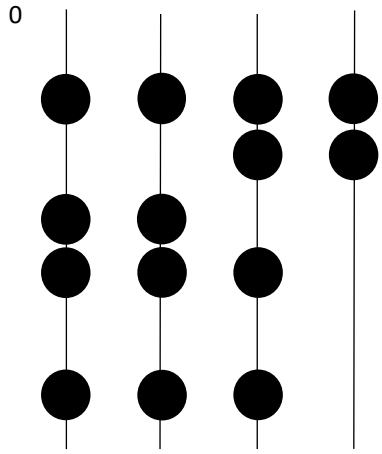
TWO OCTAVE SCALE MAPS

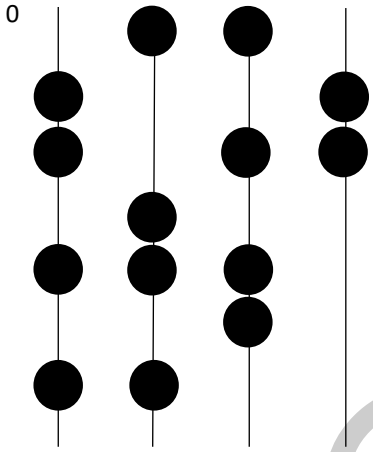
For melodic minor scales, use the black dots only ascending. When descending, the finger is placed where the white dot is shown.

OPEN STRING START

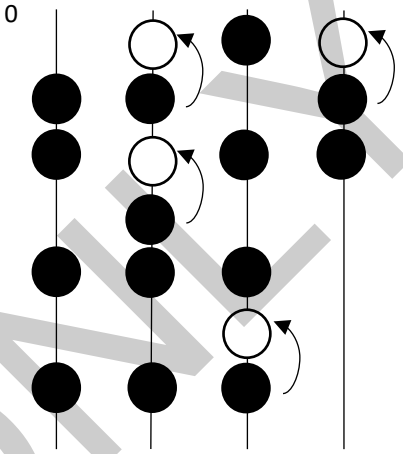
MAJOR



HARMONIC MINOR

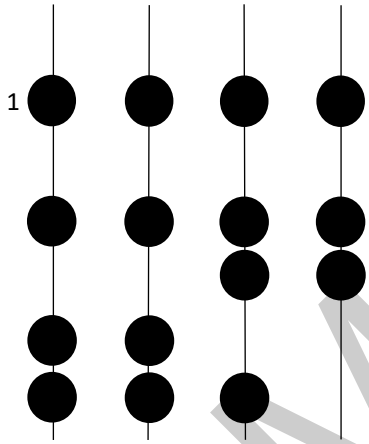


MELODIC MINOR

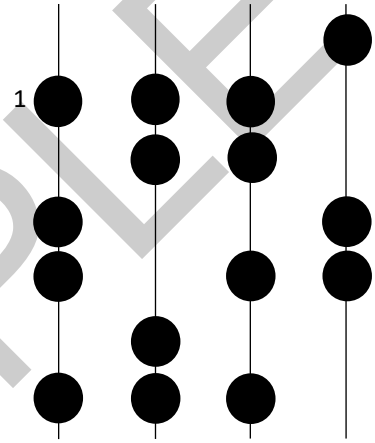


1st FINGER START

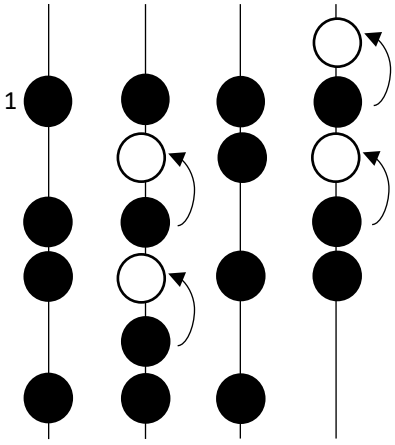
MAJOR



HARMONIC MINOR

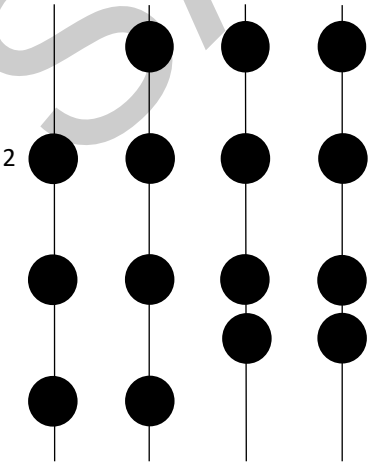


MELODIC MINOR



2nd FINGER START

MAJOR



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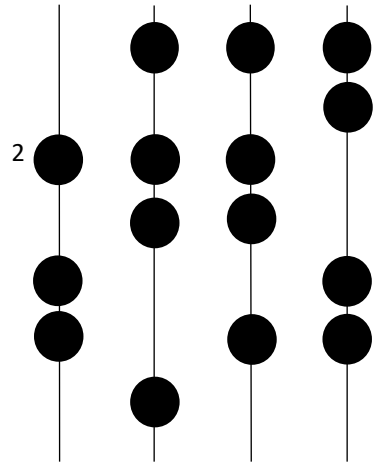
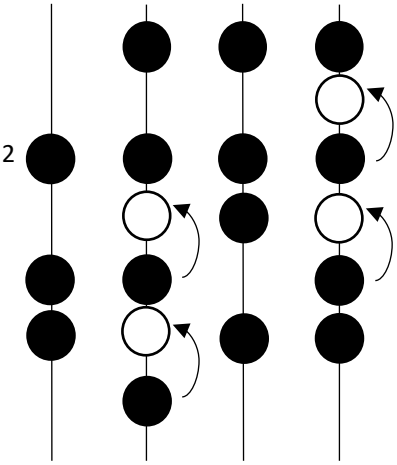


MELODIC MINOR



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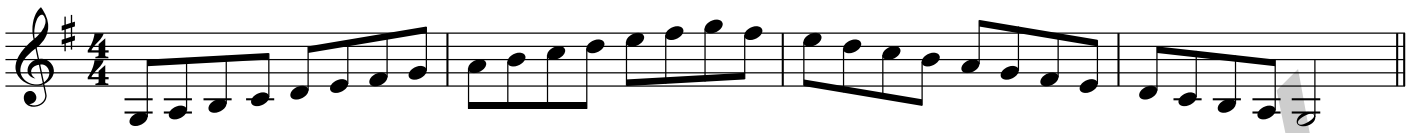
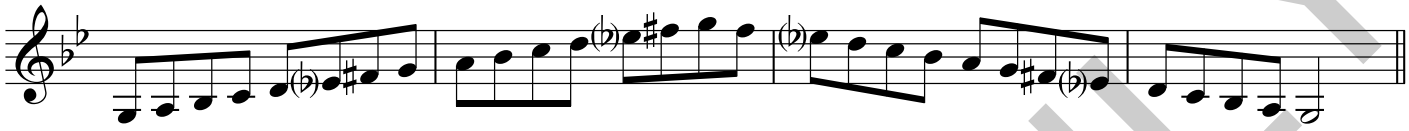
G

SCALES

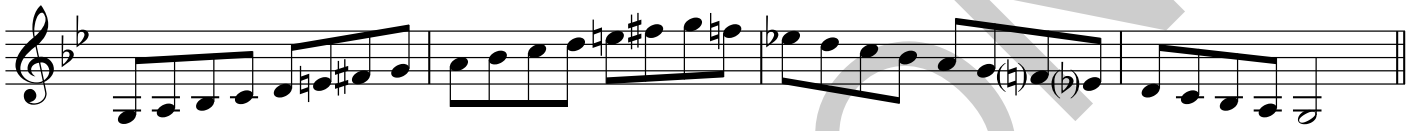
major



harmonic minor



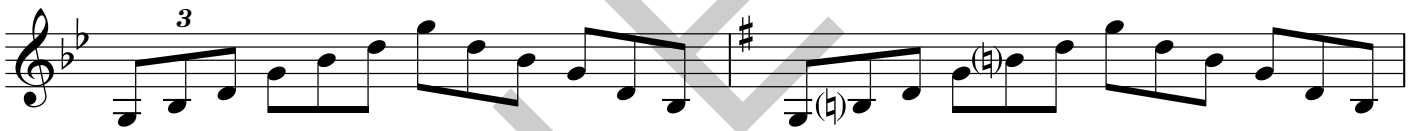
melodic minor



ARPEGGIOS

minor

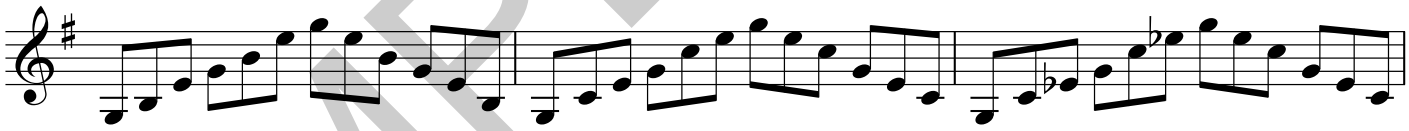
major



submediant (minor)

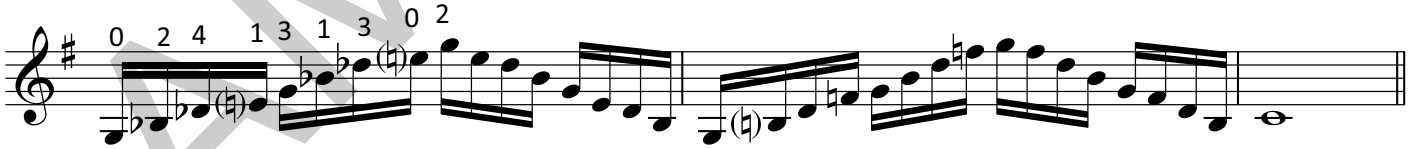
subdominant (major)

subdominant (minor)

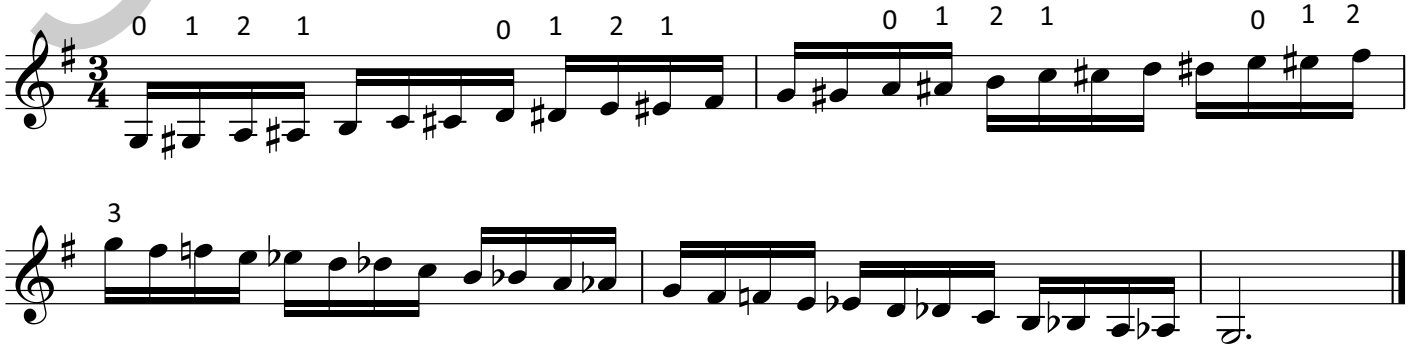


diminished 7th

dominant 7th



CHROMATIC SCALE



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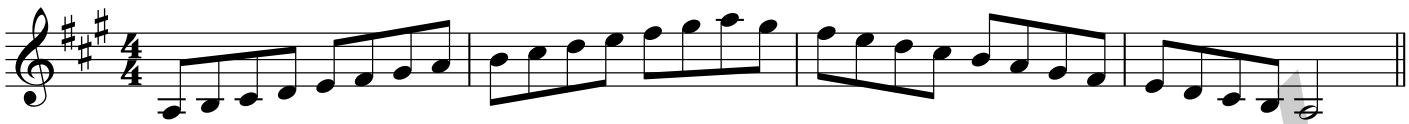
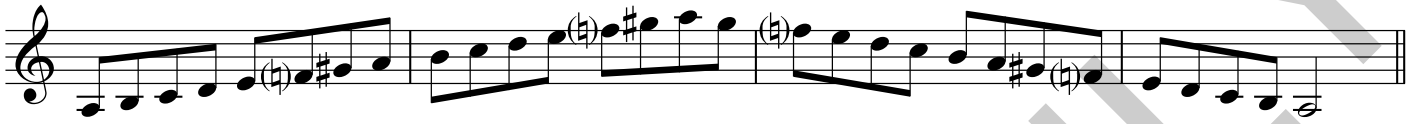
A

SCALES

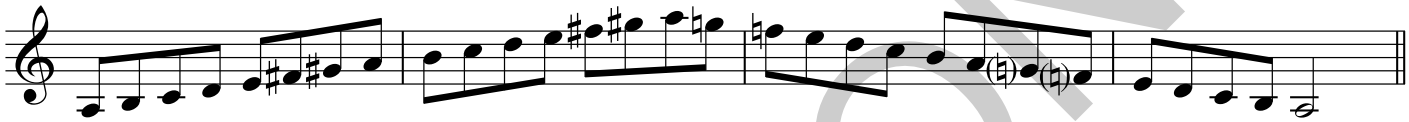
major



harmonic minor

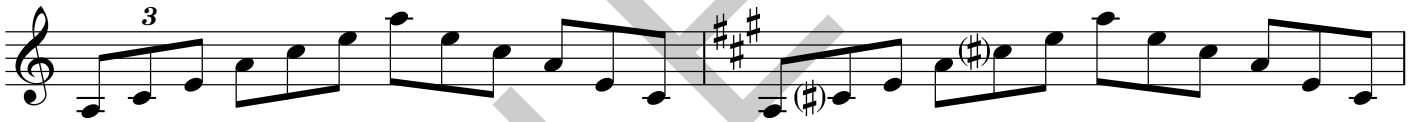


melodic minor



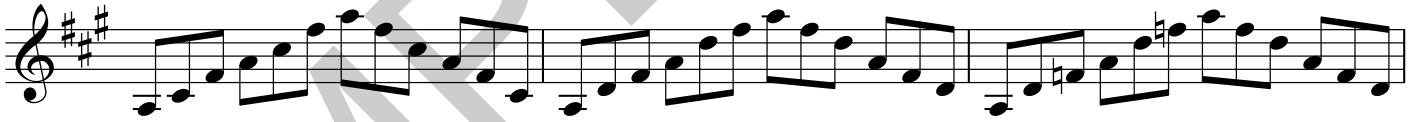
ARPEGGIOS

minor



major

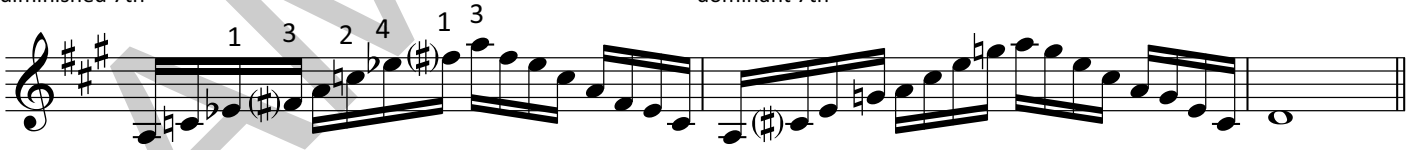
submediant (minor)



subdominant (major)

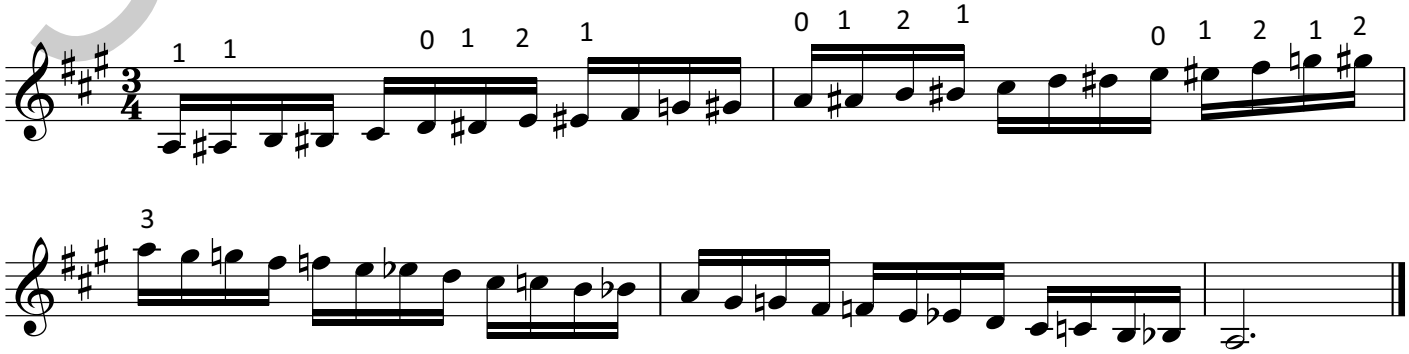
subdominant (minor)

diminished 7th



dominant 7th

CHROMATIC SCALE



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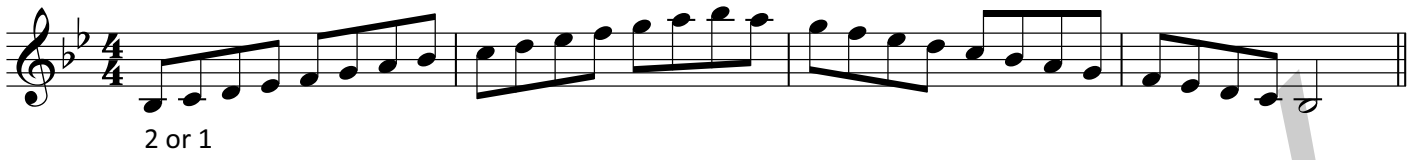
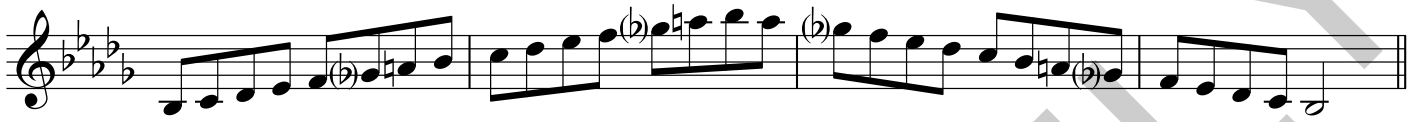
Bb

SCALES

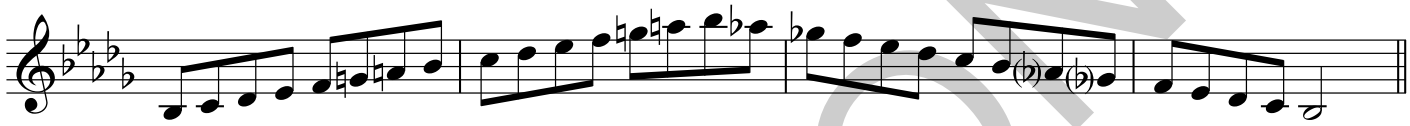
major



harmonic minor



melodic minor

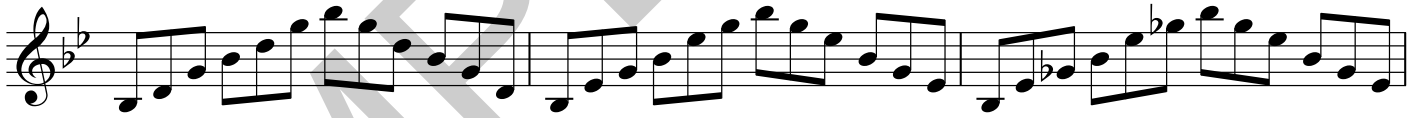


ARPEGGIOS

minor

major

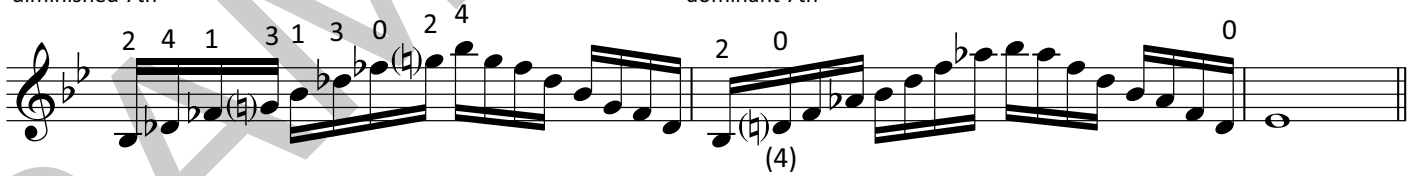
submediant (minor)



subdominant (major)

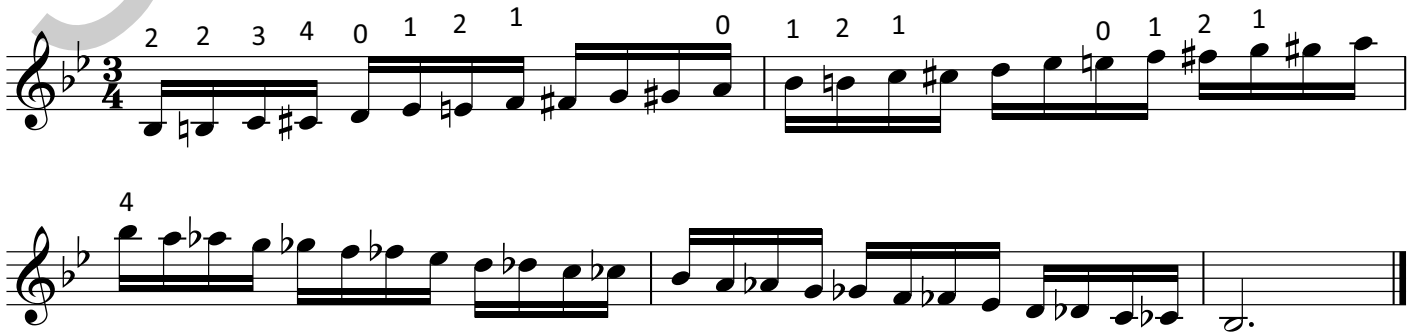
subdominant (minor)

diminished 7th



dominant 7th

CHROMATIC SCALE



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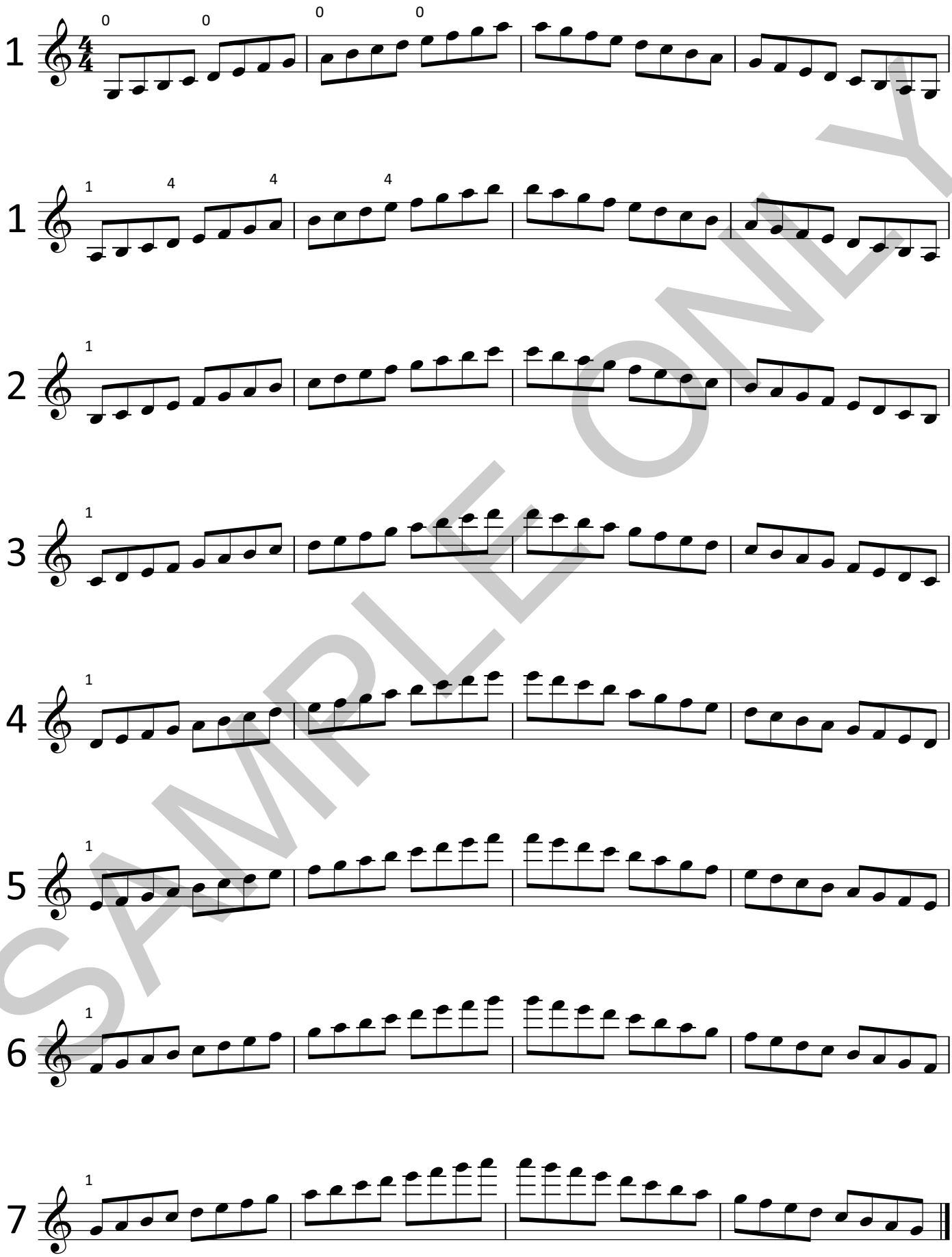
C major

POSITION



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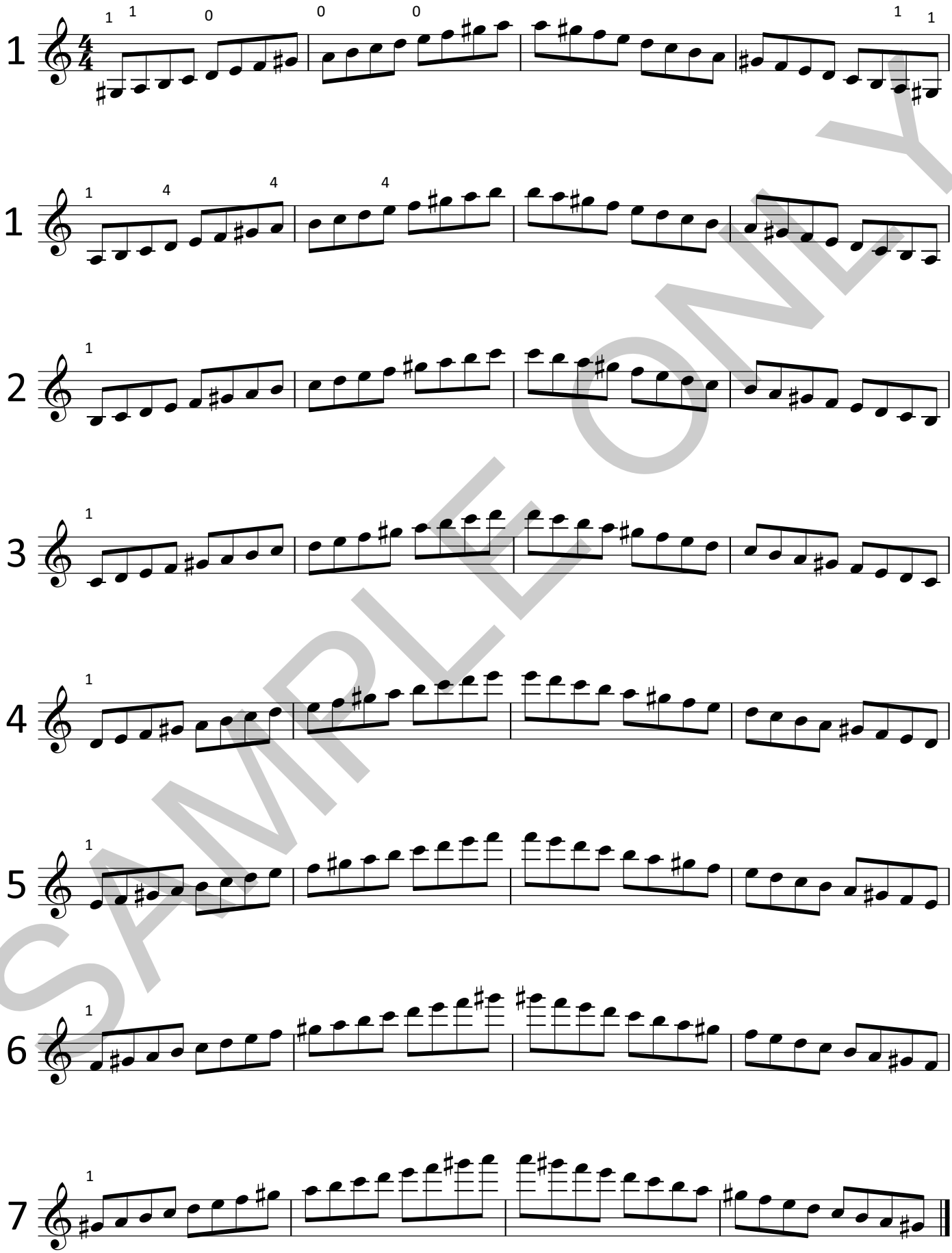
A harmonic minor

POSITION



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One Octave One String Scale Systems

G

IV

major

harmonic minor

melodic minor

tonic minor

tonic major

submediant (minor)

subdominant (major)

subdominant (minor)

diminished seventh

dominant seventh

broken thirds (major)

broken thirds (minor)

chromatic

III

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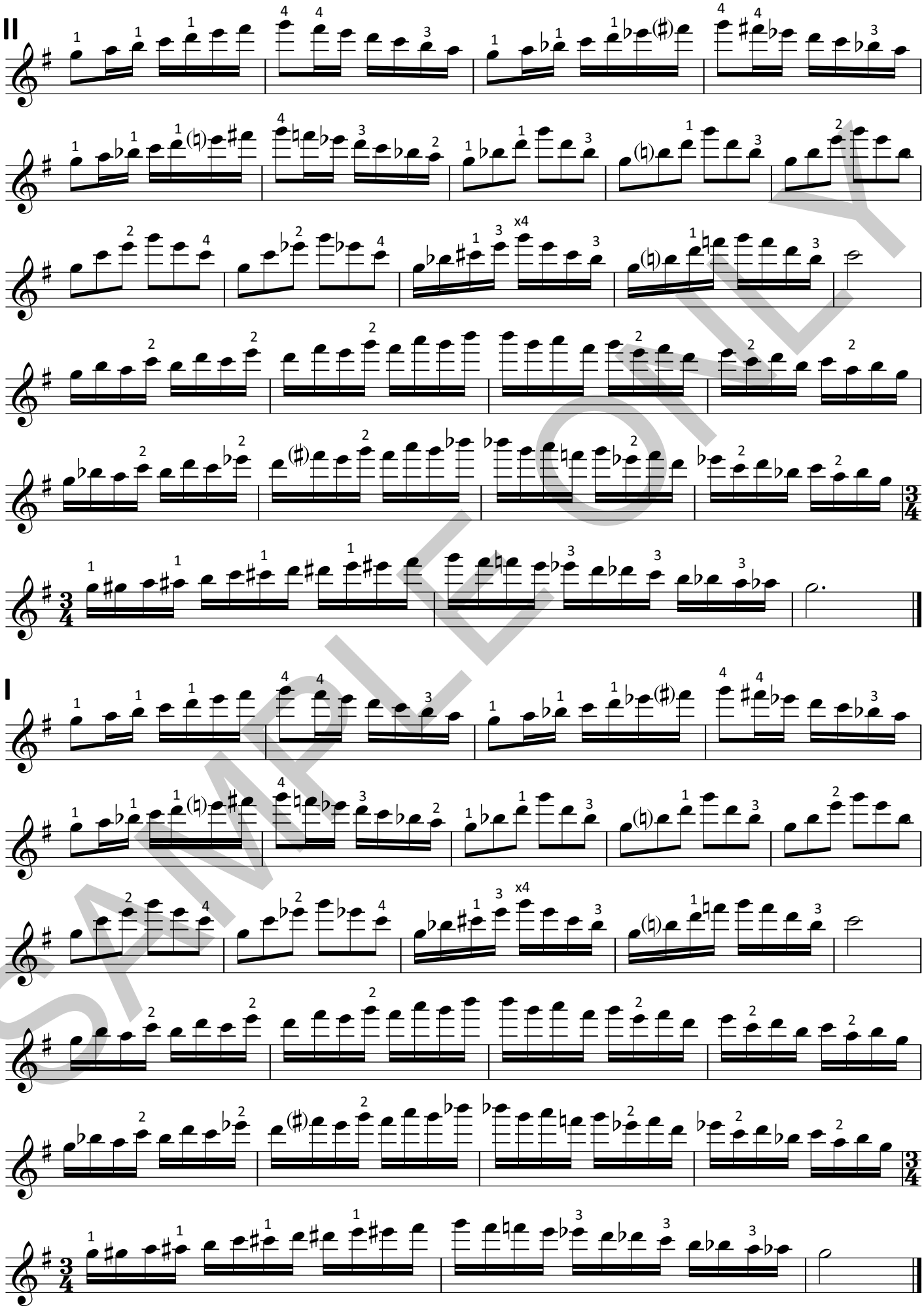
G



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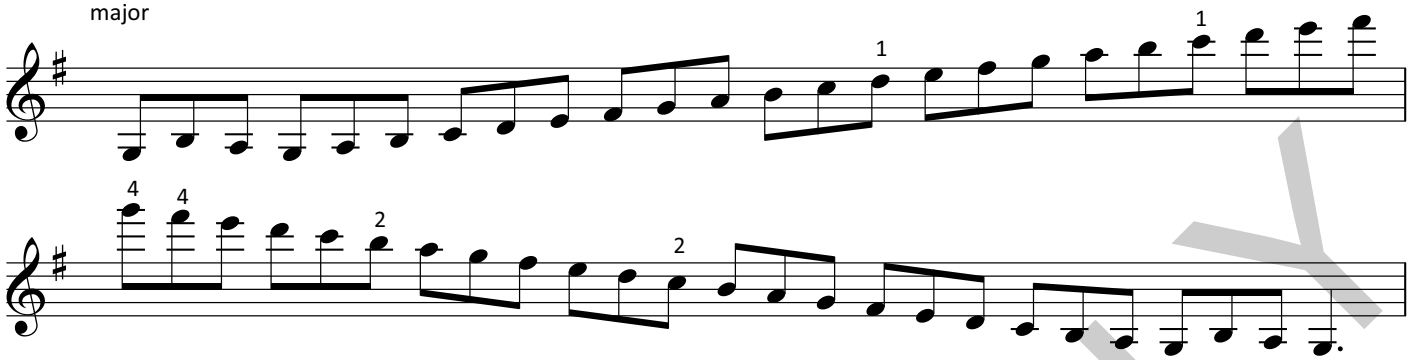
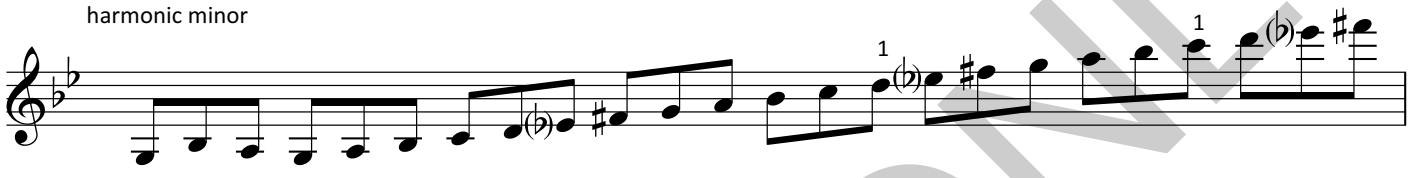
G

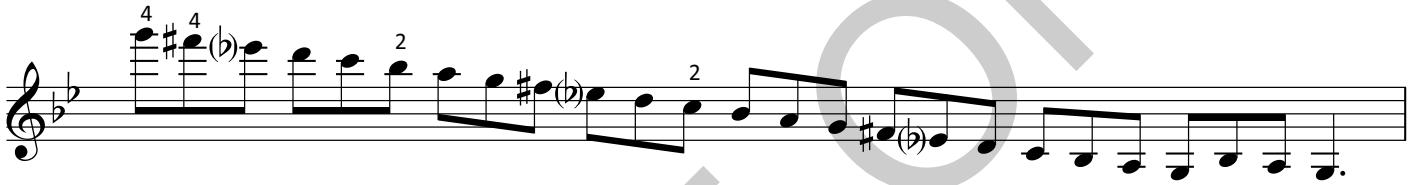
SCALES

major

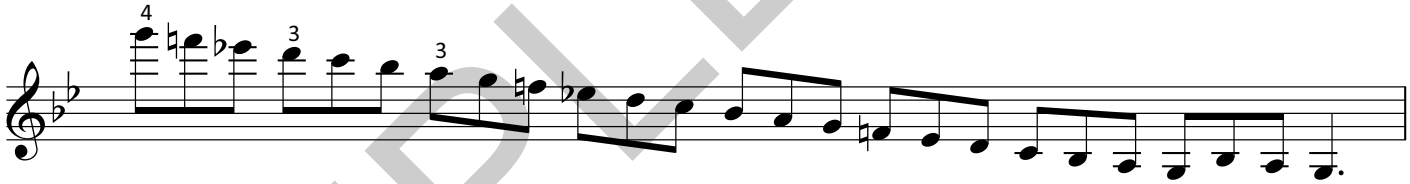


harmonic minor



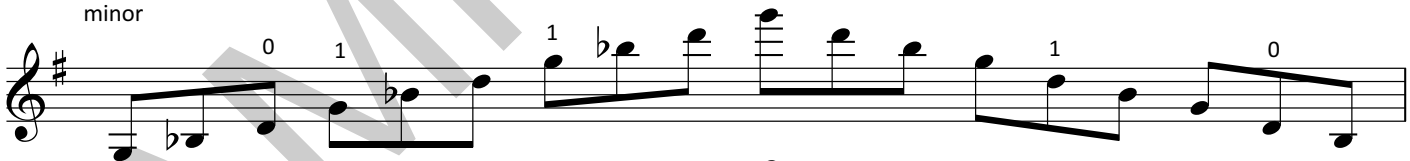


melodic minor

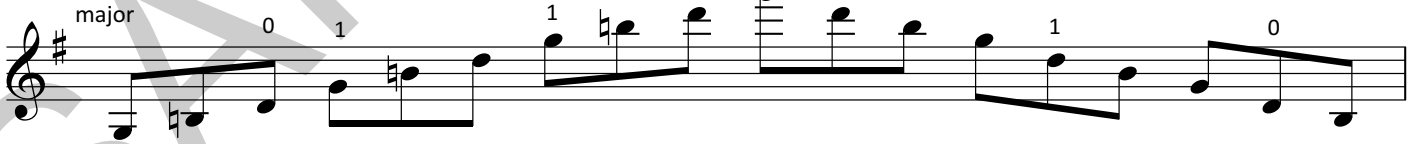


ARPEGGIOS

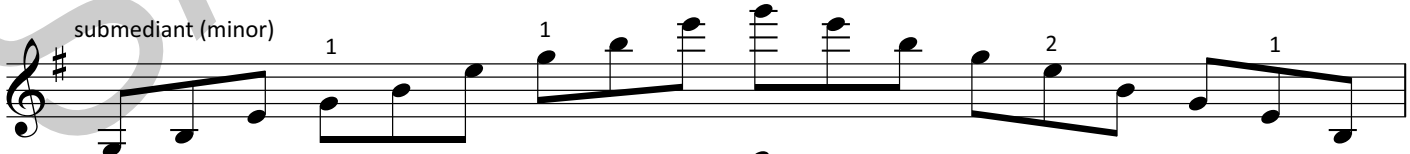
minor



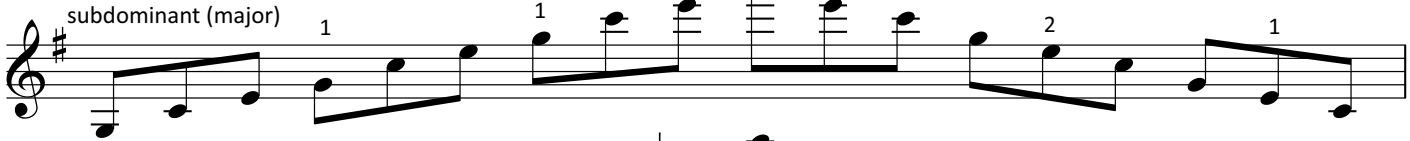
major



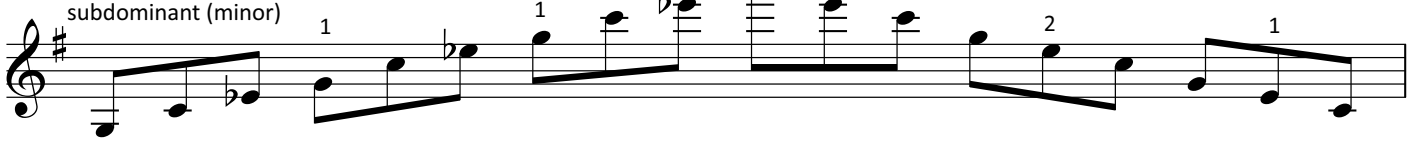
submediant (minor)



subdominant (major)



subdominant (minor)



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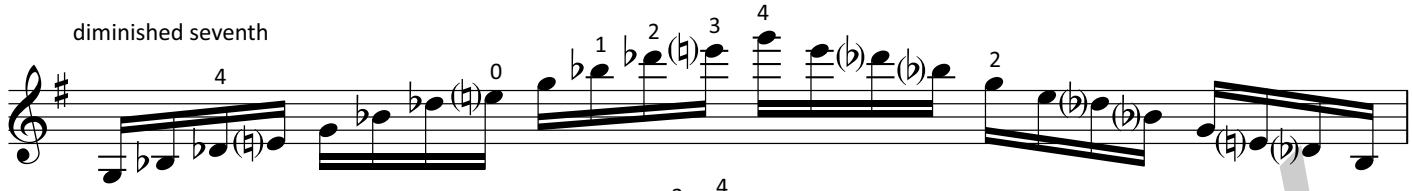
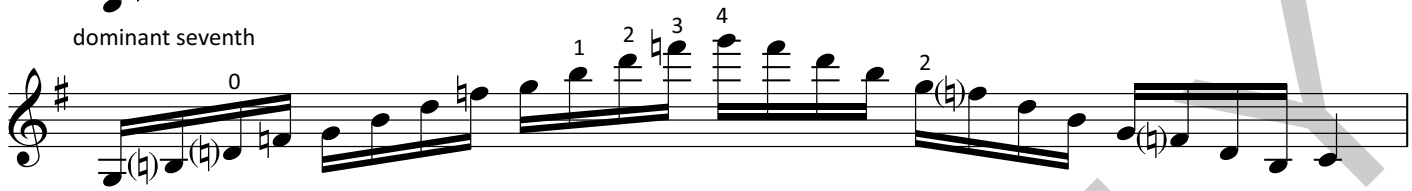
G

diminished seventh

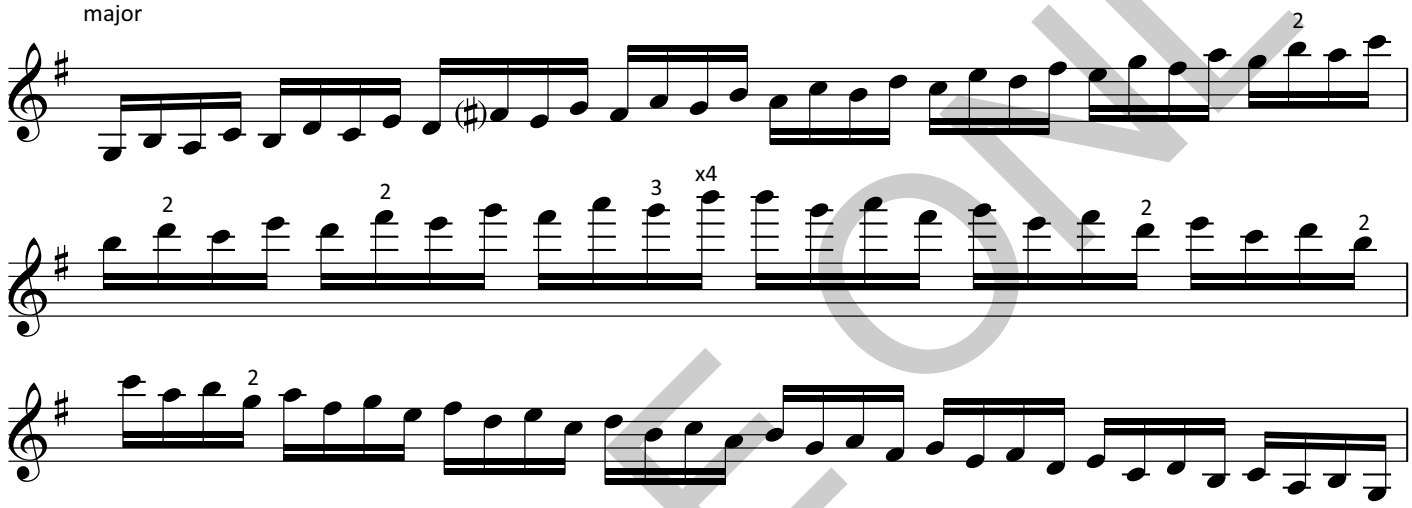


dominant seventh

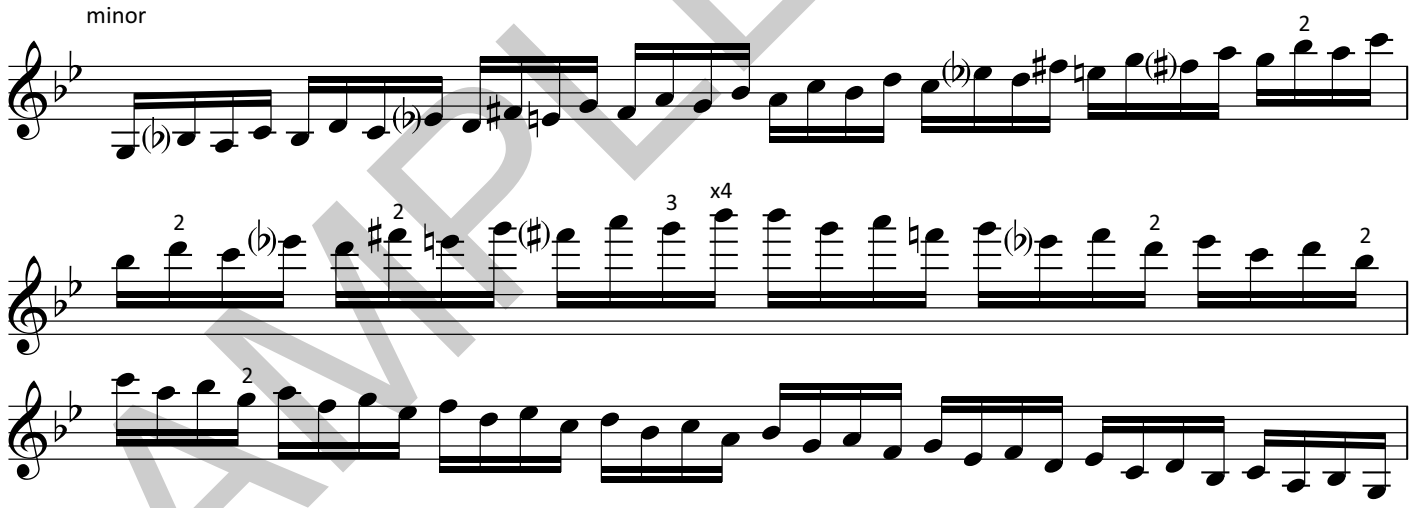


BROKEN THIRDS

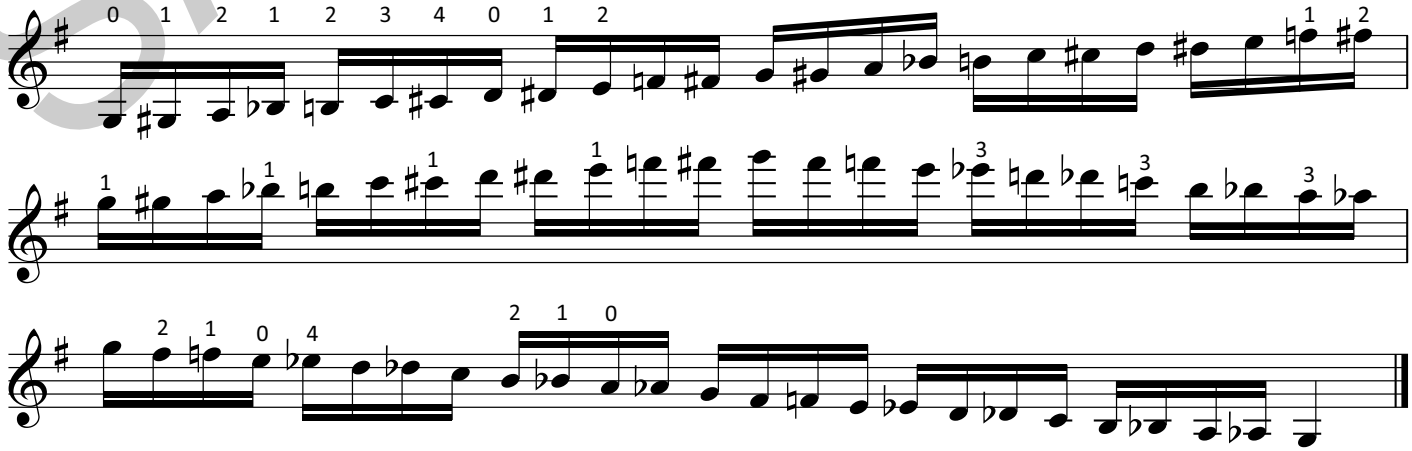
major



minor



CHROMATIC SCALE



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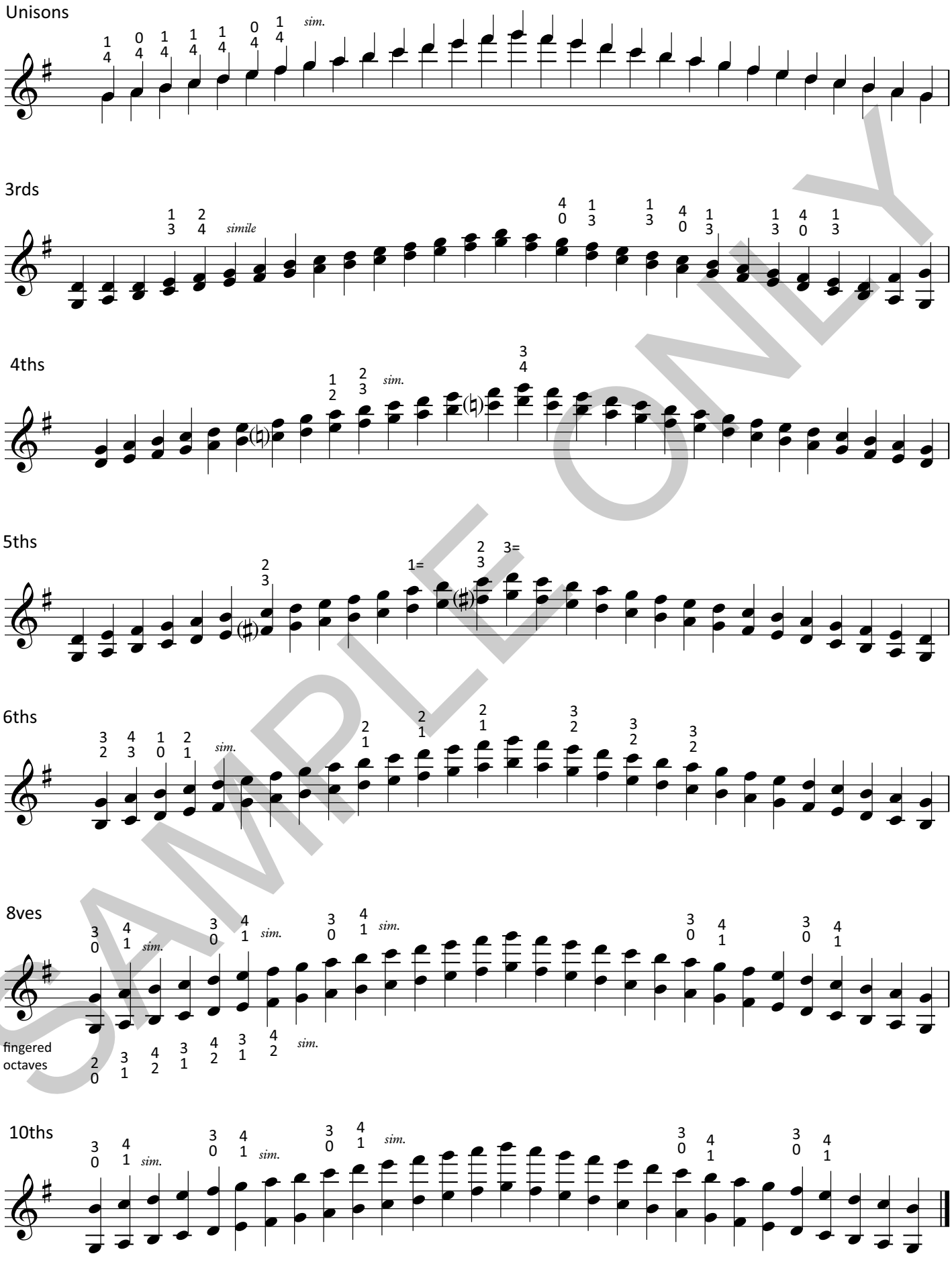
G major



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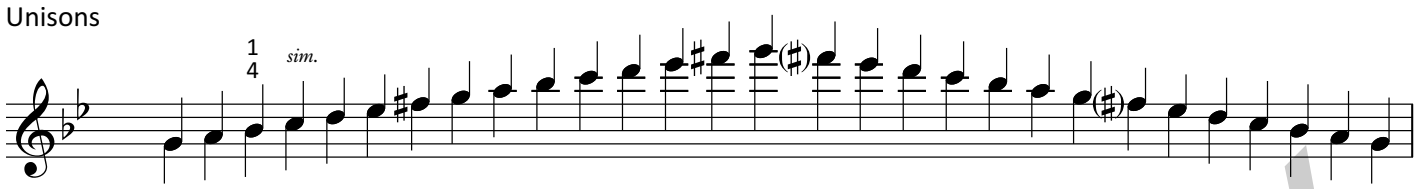
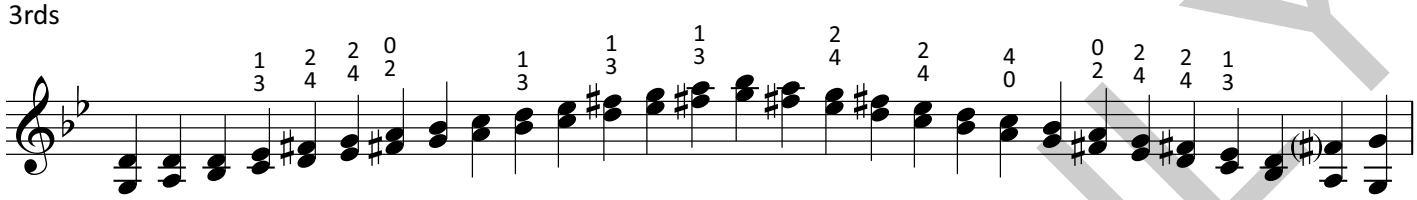
G harmonic minor

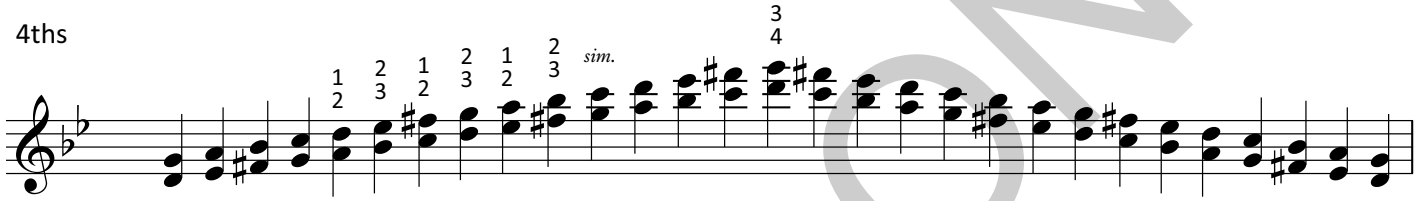
Unisons



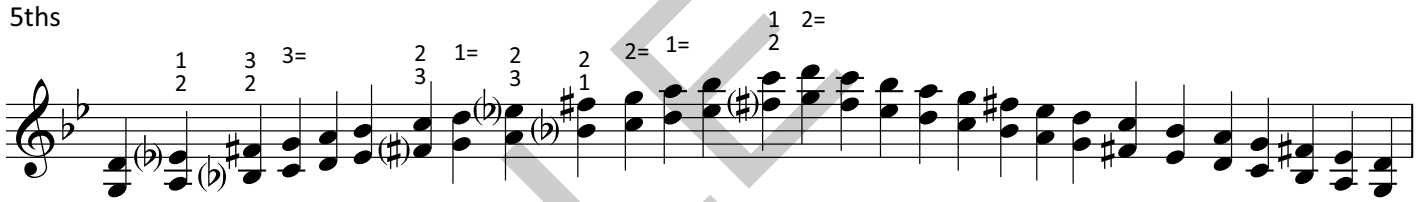
3rds



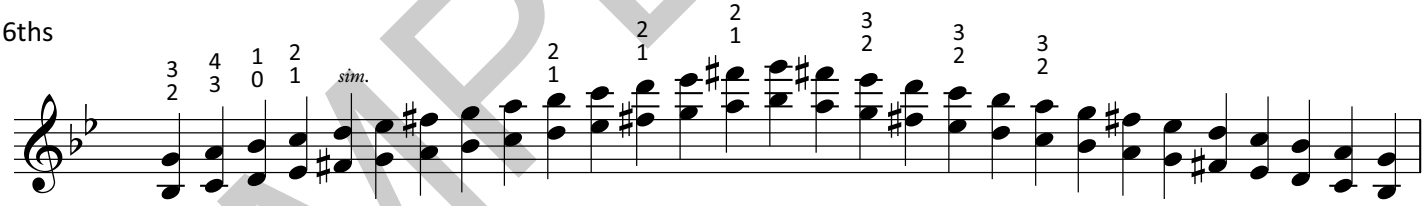
4ths



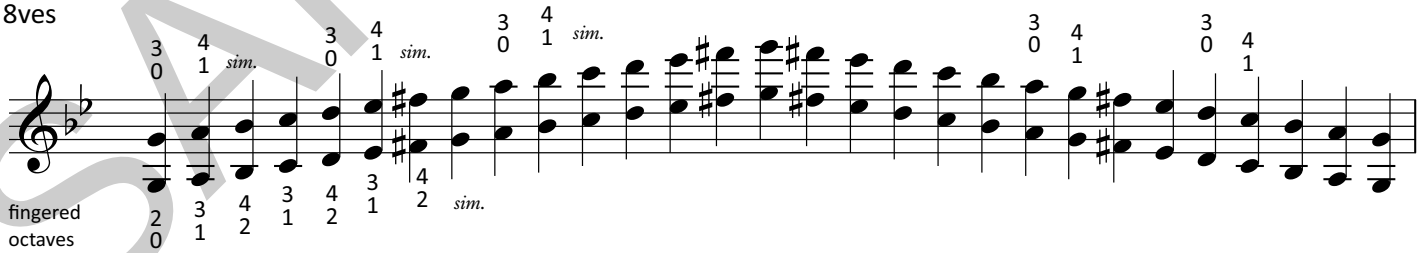
5ths



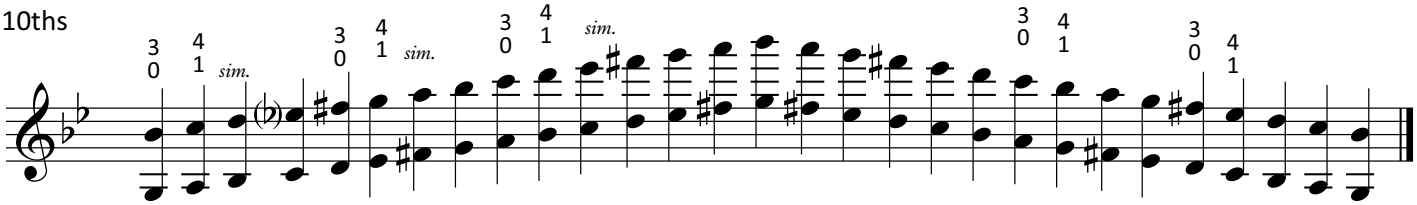
6ths



8ves



10ths



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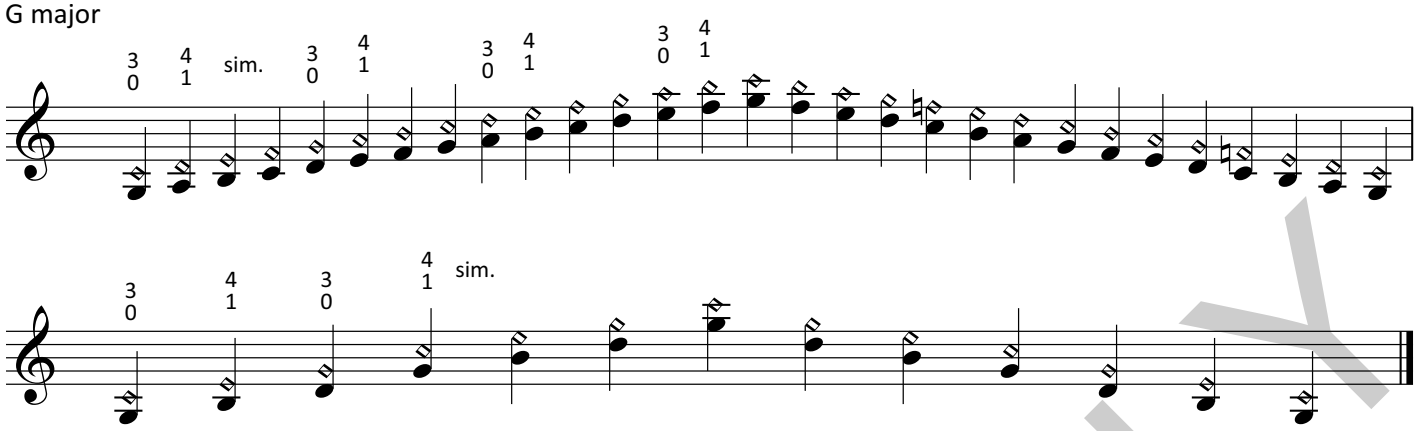
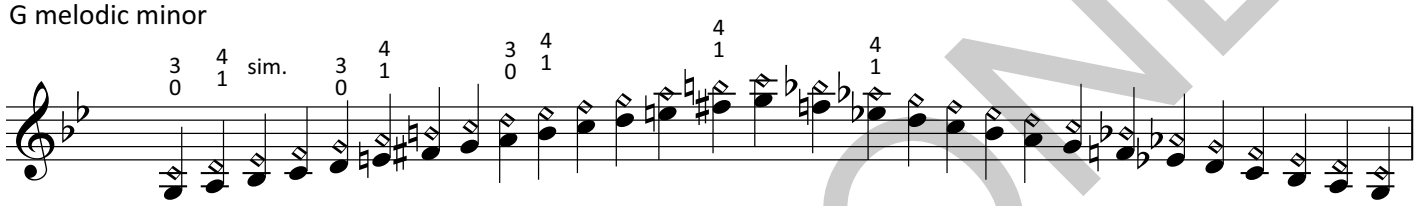
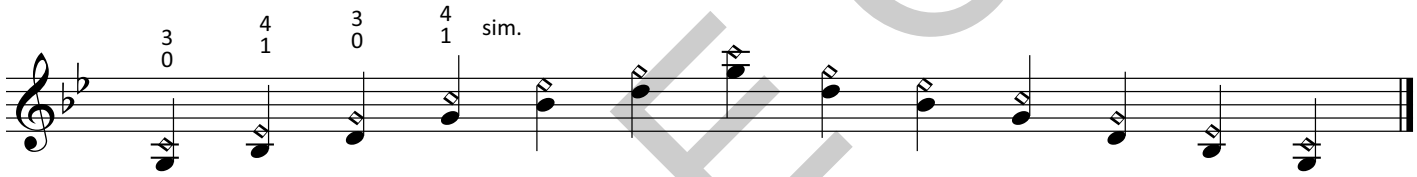
Selected Two Octave Scales and Arpeggios in Harmonics

G major



G melodic minor





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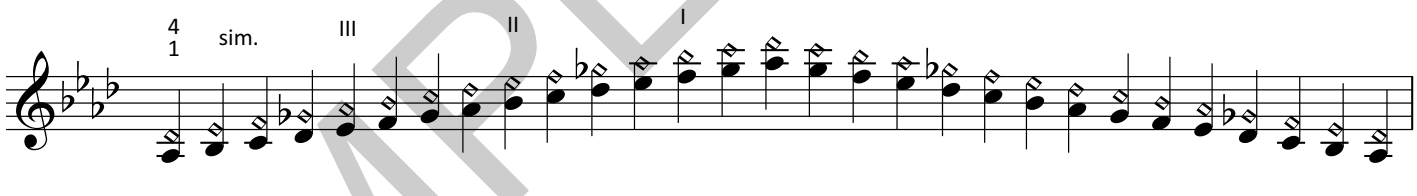

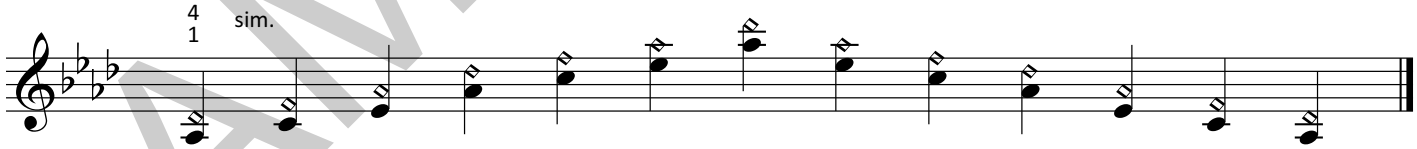

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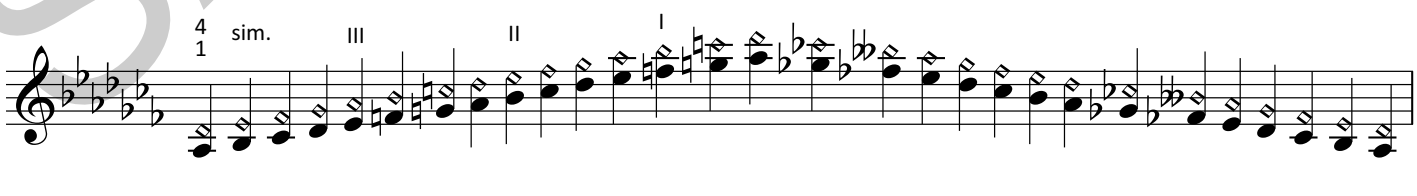

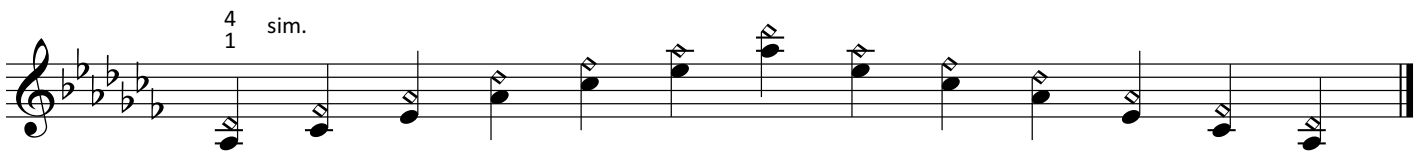

SAMPLE ONLY

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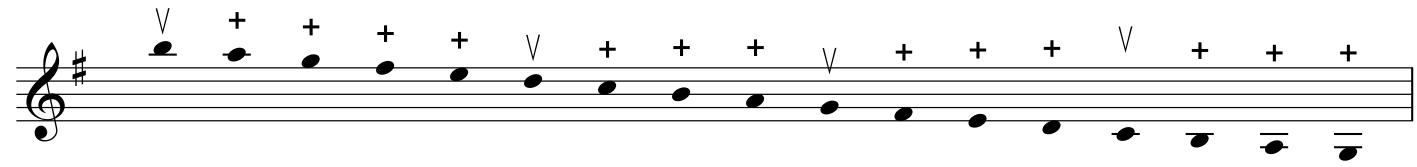
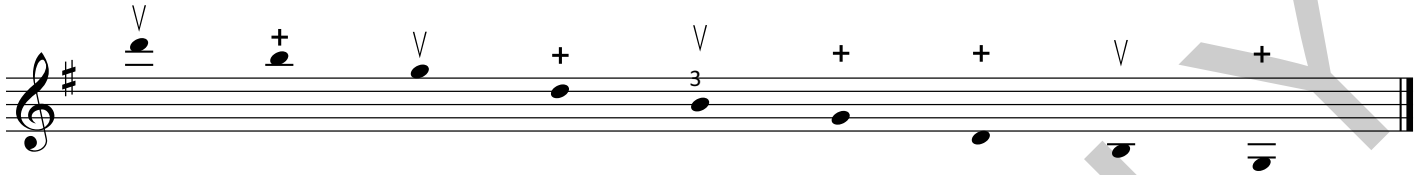
Left-Hand Pizzicato Scales and Arpeggios

(Bowing directions may be altered or replaced by right hand pizzicato)

G major





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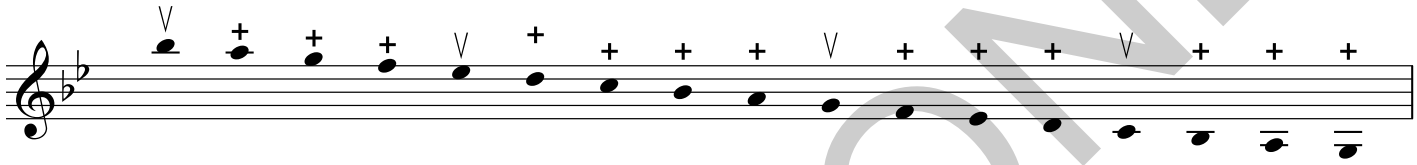

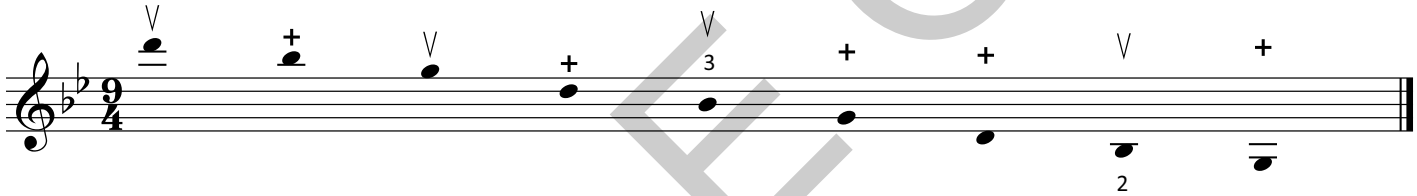

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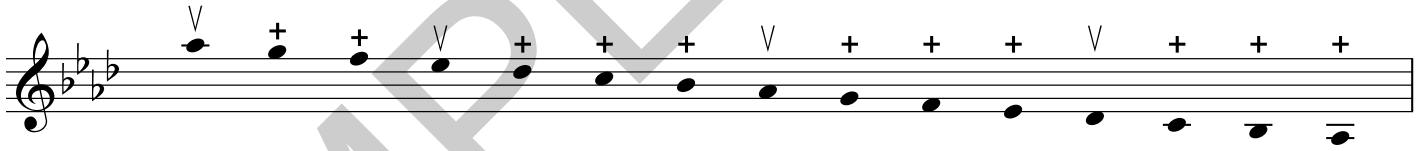

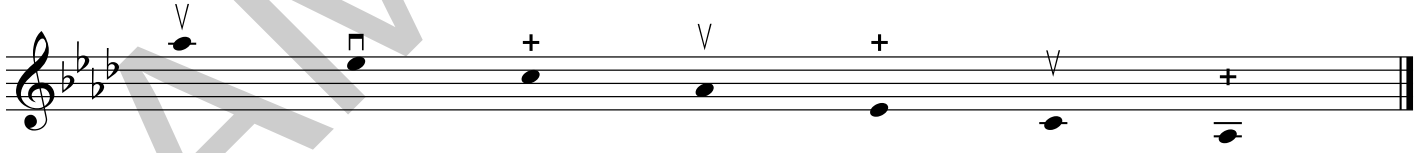

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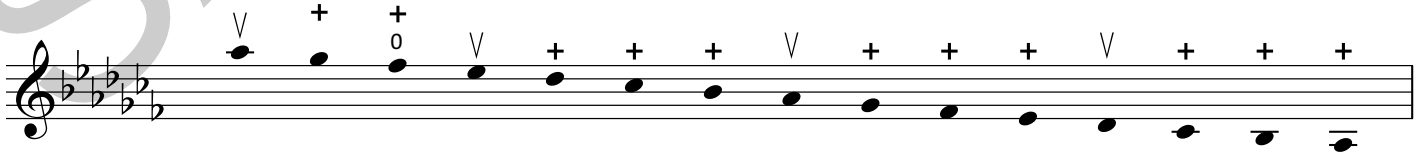

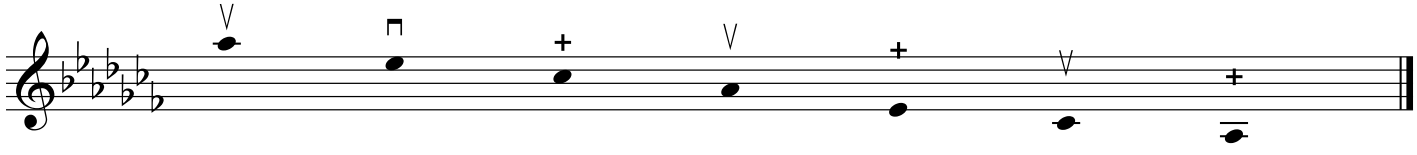

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