OLIVER NELSON

Improvisations- und Stilübungen für Saxophon

(PATTERNS FOR SAXOPHONE)

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

First of all, it will be necessary to clear up one important point before the student makes any attempt to play through these patterns: The approach to this book is based on a Jazz attitude and unless otherwise indicated, all examples are to be played with a melodic, legato, Jazz concept.

Ex. 1, if played by a classically trained performer, would be played staccato simply because of the absence of legato markings. As almost all of these examples are notated without these markings, please bear in mind that they are not to be played in a classical manner.

It is also assumed that the student has already mastered the Major and Minor Scales, the construction of simple chords and their inversions, plus an understanding of music forms, etc.

A sequence is a repetition of a pattern on different scale steps. As long as the original pattern is correct, any irregularities which might appear in its sequence are justified. --------

If the above statement is true, then the music of Bach, Beethoven, Bartok, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, even some of todays electronic music is constructed much in the same manner. The use of sequential musical devices is not by any means dry and mechanical, but can be a useful aid in the art of improvisation, with or without inspiration and immense natural talent.

Inspiration to a 20th Century Composer is nothing more than working with his materials until the pieces fit properly. Natural talent to John Coltrane is long and tedious hours of practice and a great insight and understanding of the materials of music. These materials are Musical Form and Construction, Chords, Combination Chords and their variants, the use of Modal Melodic approaches, and the ability to improvise with split second timing with ease and confidence.

A performer who improvises has two or more choices to select when called upon to play. One is to play the chords vertically as in the case of Coleman Hawkins. Another, to play melodically and horizontally as Lester Young did. Still another would be to play freely; that is to ignore the melody, chords, time, form, etc. One desirable approach is to construct a solo based upon the tune or piece you are playing. To select a motif and build upon it, expanding it until it becomes a new composition created from the old one.

Attitudes Concerning Time And Time Signatures In Music.

Time Signatures: In most older forms of music, plus a great deal of todays popular music, certain notes will melodically be more important than others. These more important notes appear to have more Accent than the lesser important ones and this accent generally occurs at some regular interval. This grouping of musical sounds by means of accent produces one of the more important elements in music - Time. Time and Tempo are not the same and must not be thought of as such. Tempo is the rate of speed at which a musical composition is to be performed, (slow, fast). These patterns of strong and weak accents are called Beats and the most common patterns produced, depending upon the recurrence of the strong accent, generally contain two, three and four beats. This is called Duple time, Triple and Quadruple time.

In order to indicate to a performer what time a piece of music is to be played in, we place a Time Signature at the beginning of the composition.

$$\frac{4}{4} \text{ or } \frac{6}{4}, \frac{3}{2}, \text{ etc.}$$

The upper figure indicates the number of beats in a measure. The lower figure indicates the kind of note to be used for each beat. The length of time a musical sound lasts is called Duration. When each beat of a measure is divisible by two, the time is called Simple Time. Therefore we have:

Simple Duple Time,			Simple Triple Time,			Simple Quadruple Time.		
$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{2}{4}$	$\frac{2}{8}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{3}{8}$	$\frac{4}{2}$	$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{4}{8}$

When the beats of a measure are dotted, the time is called Compound Time. We have:

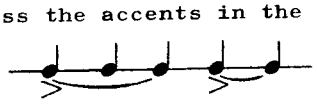
Compound Duple Time,			Compound Triple Time,			Compound Quadruple Time.		
$\frac{6}{4}$	$\frac{6}{8}$	$\frac{6}{16}$	$\frac{9}{4}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{9}{16}$	$\frac{12}{4}$	$\frac{12}{8}$	$\frac{12}{16}$

If the student has already looked over some of the pages in this book, he might have noticed a few time signatures which are not covered in the paragraphs concerning Duple and Triple time and their variants:

$$\frac{7}{4} \quad \frac{7}{16} \quad \frac{5}{4}$$

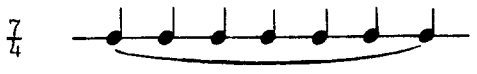
It is generally felt that $\frac{5}{4}$ time is a combination of $\frac{3}{4}$ plus $\frac{2}{4}$ or $\frac{2}{4}$ plus $\frac{3}{4}$.

This would stress the accents in the following manner:

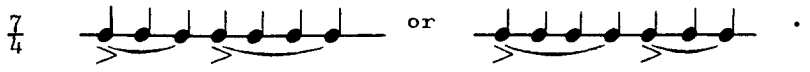
$\frac{5}{4}$  and $\frac{5}{4}$.

We should think in terms of Beats instead of placing so much emphasis on Accents (strong or weak), as the key to how a piece is to be played.

Ex. 43 - Page 28 is in $\frac{7}{4}$ and is to be thought of in the following manner:



It is not to be thought of as indicated below:

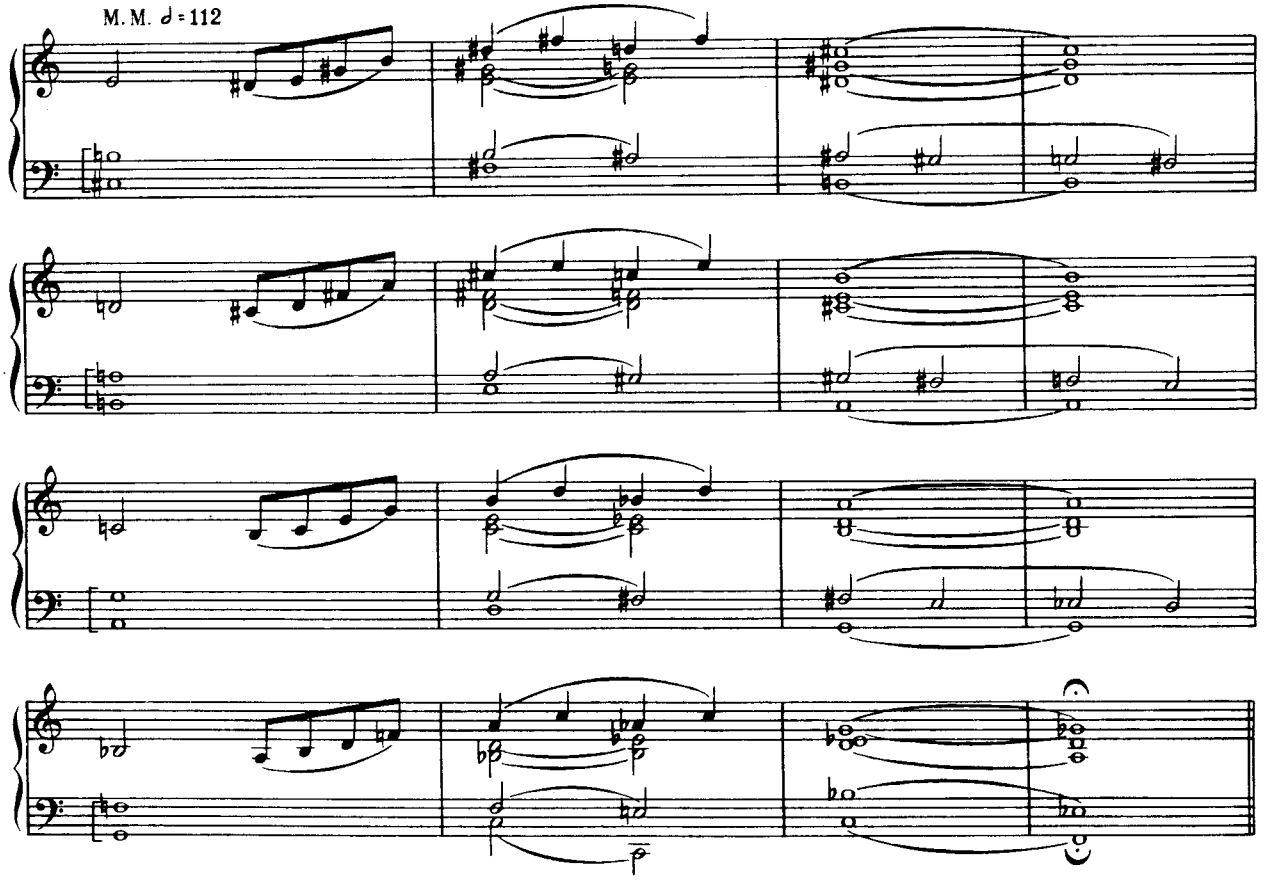


The same musical attitude shall apply to Ex. 44 - Page 29 and Ex. 45 - Page 30.

Most of the examples in this book have no tempo indications as I felt that many of the illustrations shown are flexible enough to allow for some freedom of expression. This means unless indicated, they may be played as fast or as slowly as the performer wishes. The only exceptions are Ex. 77, Ex. 80 and Ex. 81. They are to be played fast, but how fast is again left up to the ability and to the desires of the performer.

Nachstehend als praktisches Anwendungsbeispiel eine Improvisation des Mittelteils der bekannten Komposition "Cherokee":

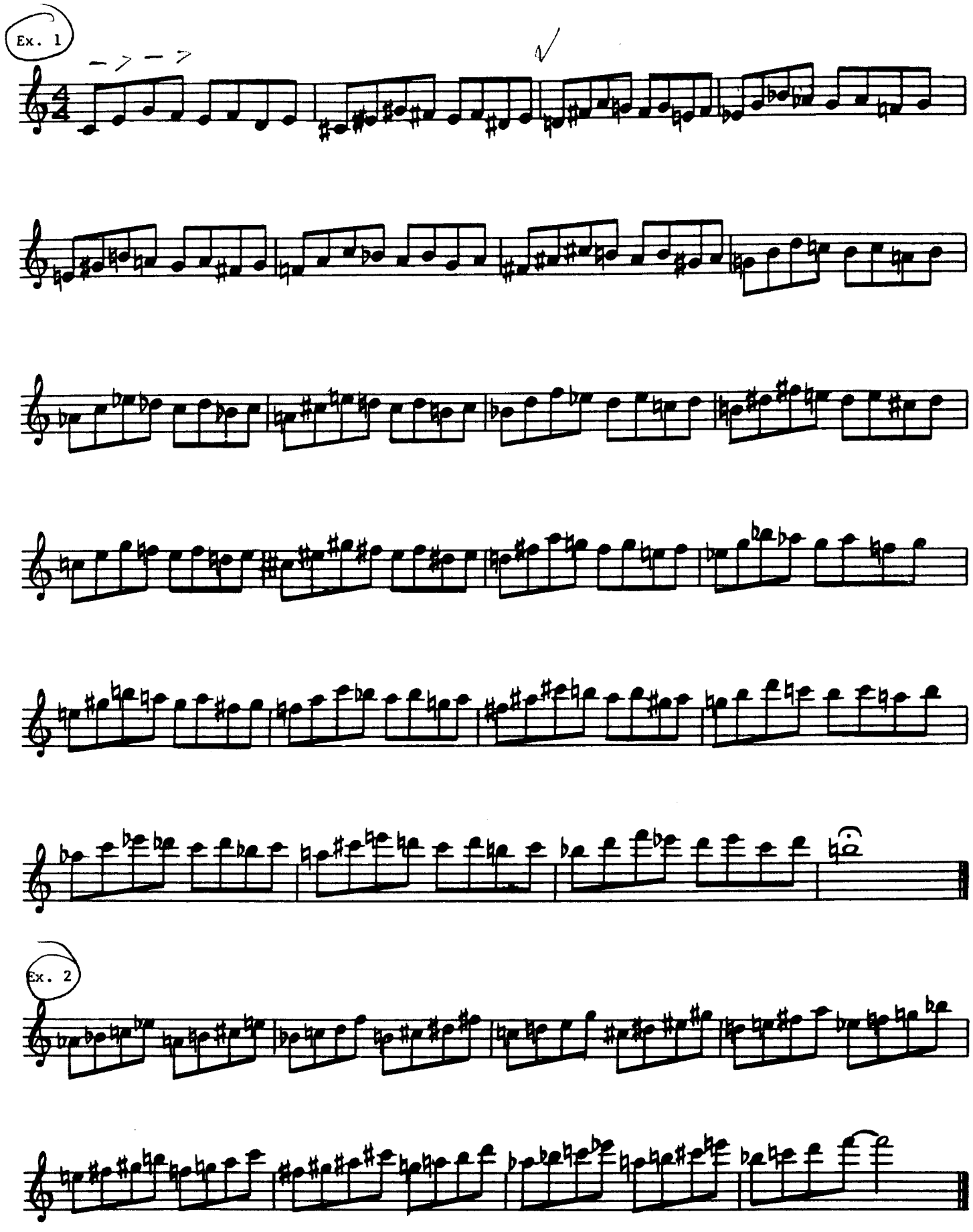
One use of a pattern is this example which utilizes the chords to the bridge of "Cherokee":



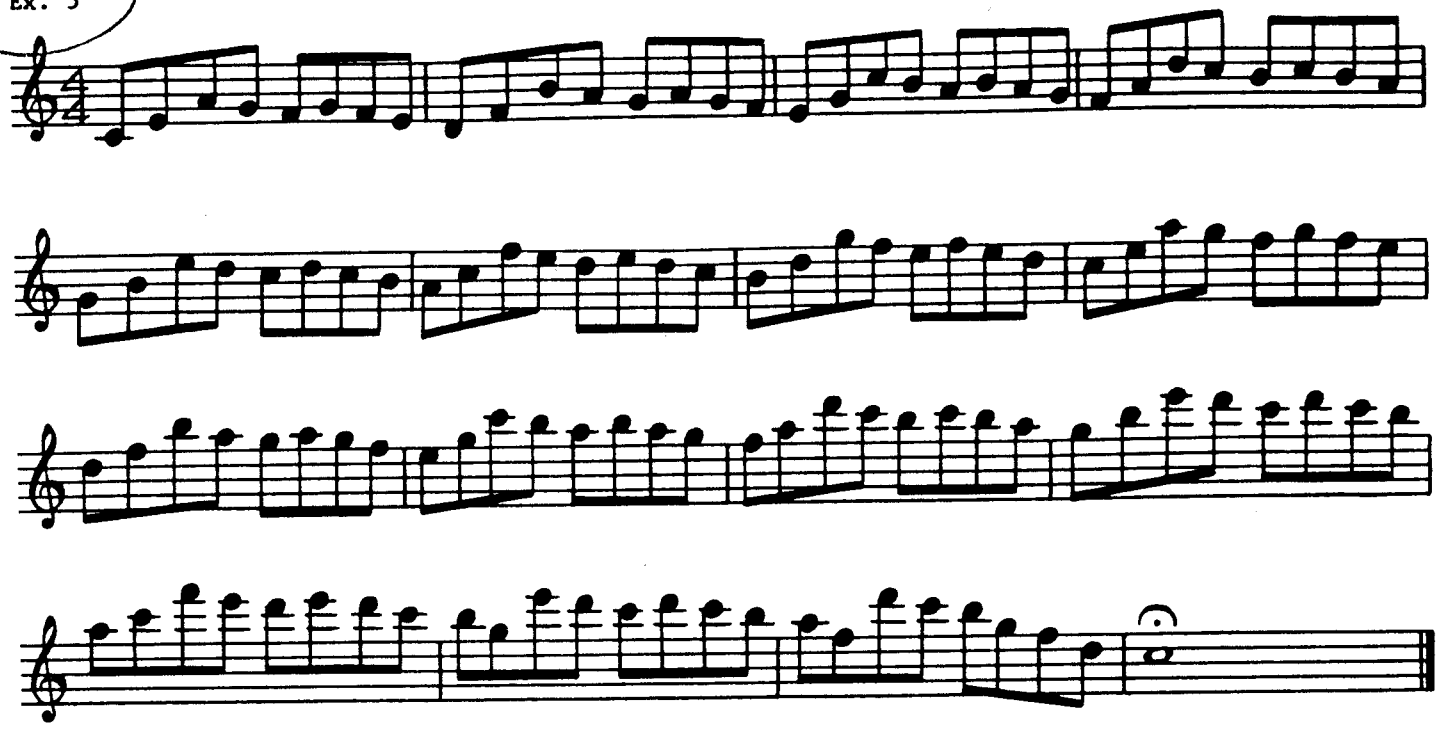
Natürlich passen die meisten Übungsbeispiele in diesem Heft nicht auf den Mittelteil von "Cherokee". Bei ernsthafter Durcharbeitung aller Übungen wird der Ausführende soviel Beweglichkeit und soviel Vertrauen in seinem Können erlangen, daß es ihm möglich ist, mit fast jeder musikalischen Situation fertig zu werden.

Please bear in mind that most of the patterns in this book will not fit the bridge to "Cherokee", but, they will give the player flexibility in all keys and the confidence to cope with almost any musical situation.

Oliver Nelson - July, 1966.


Ex. 1
Ex. 2

Ex. 5



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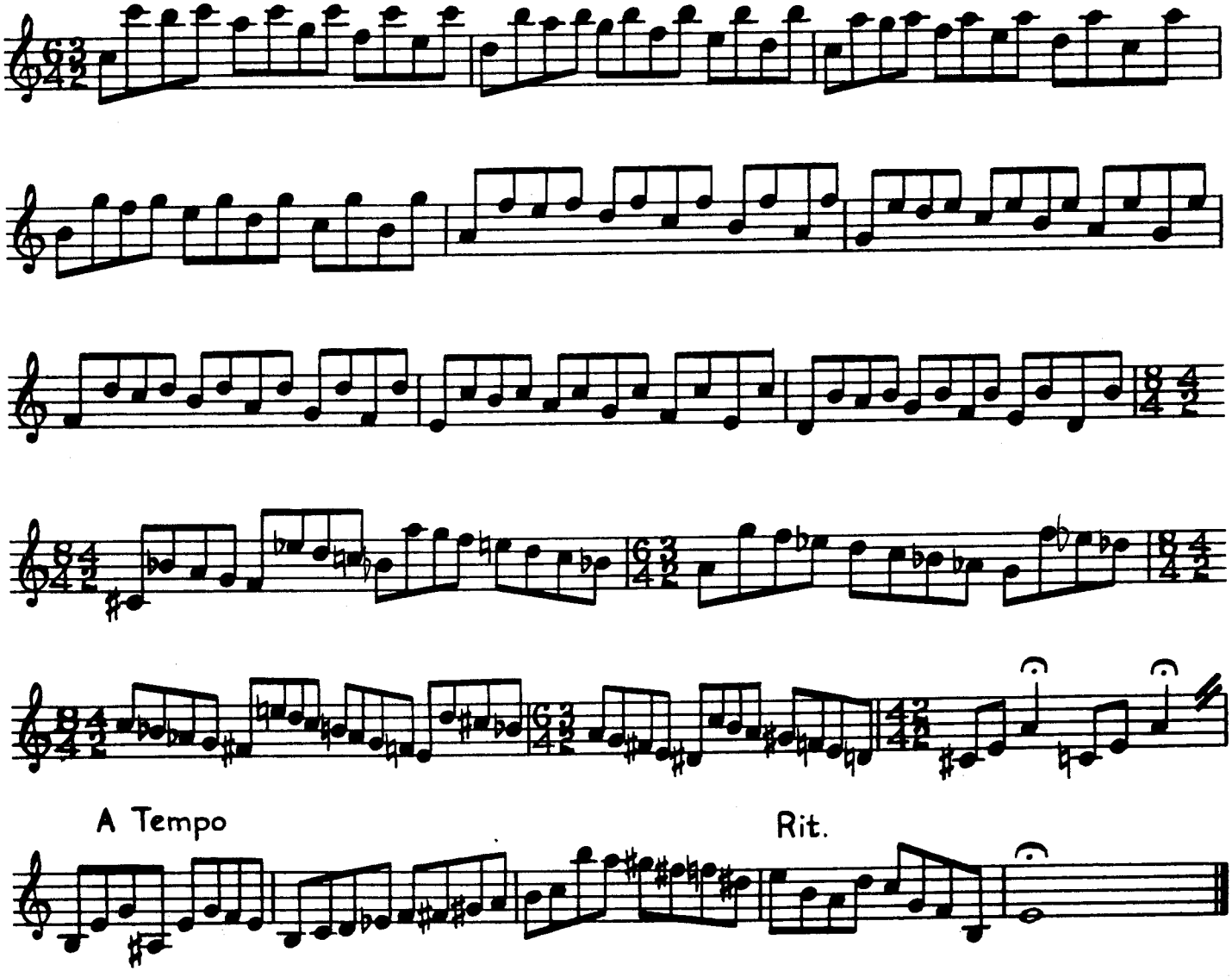

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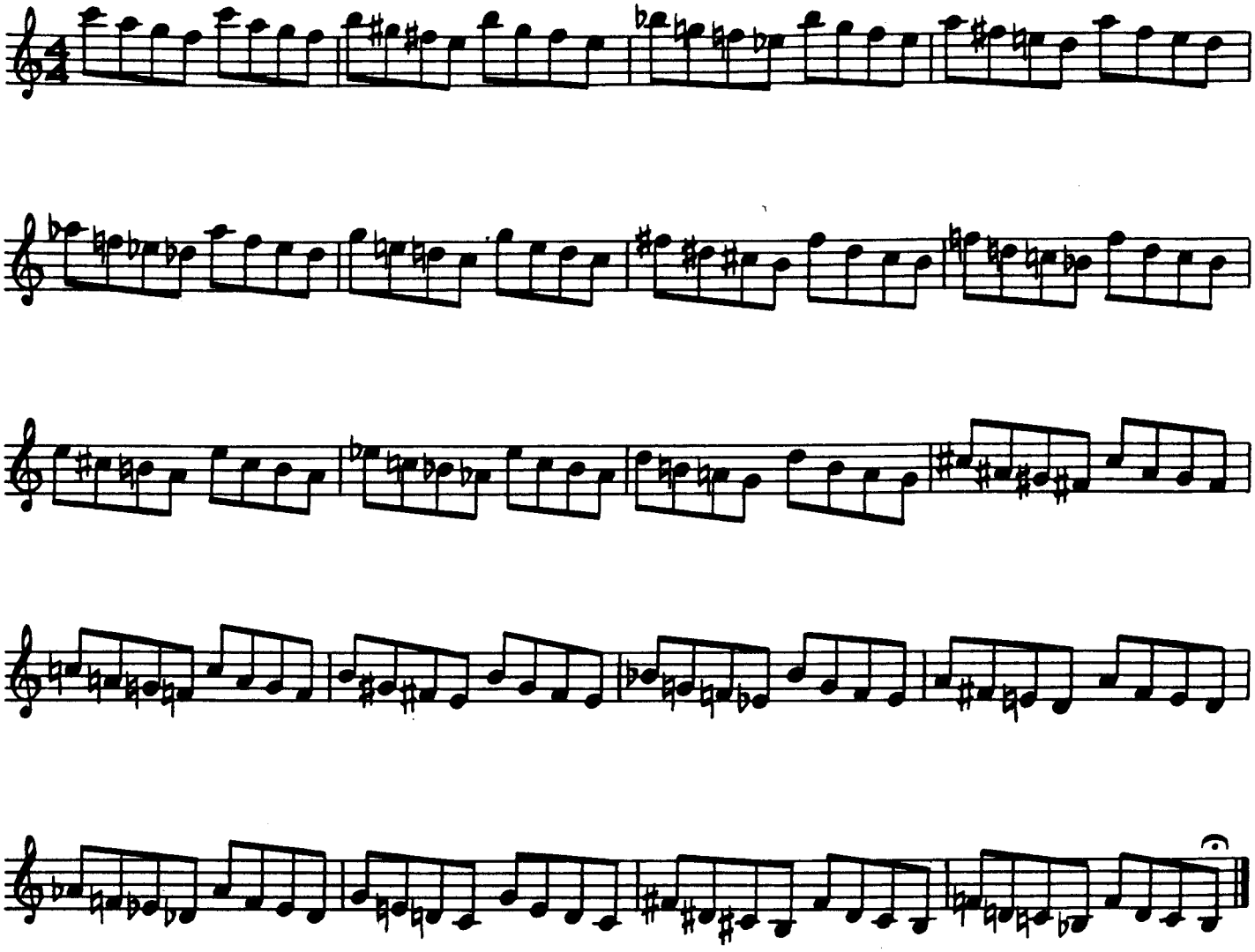

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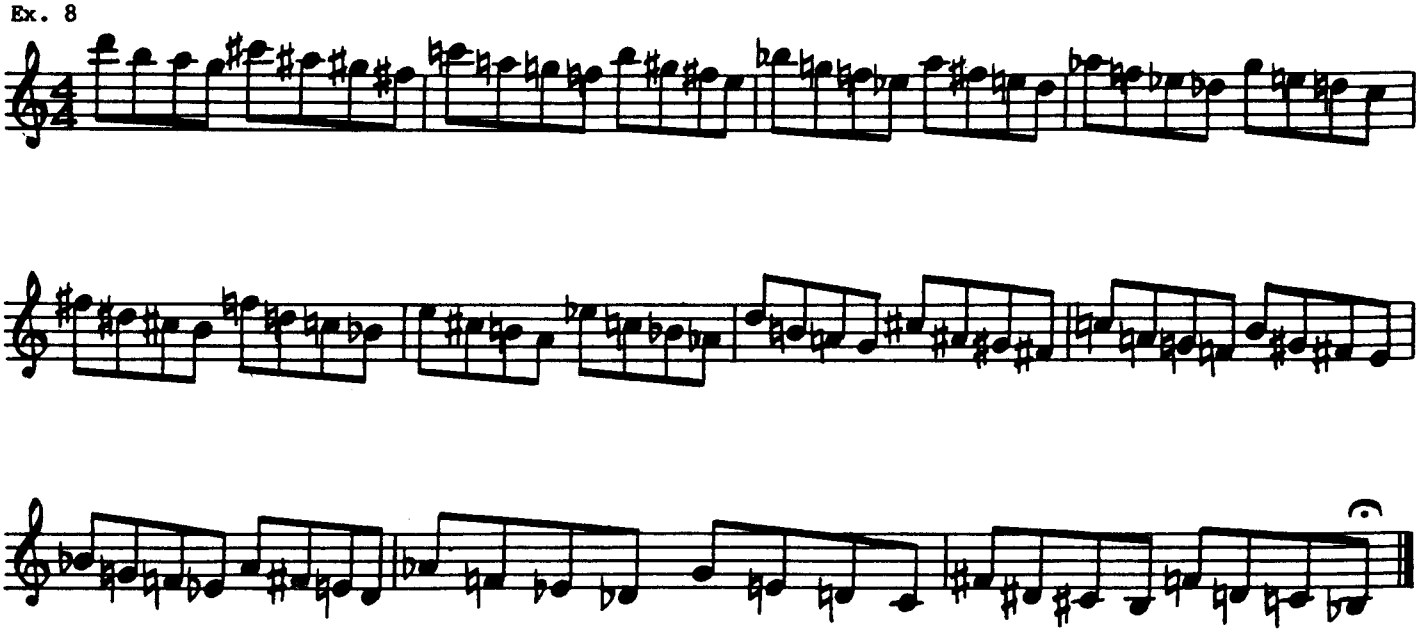

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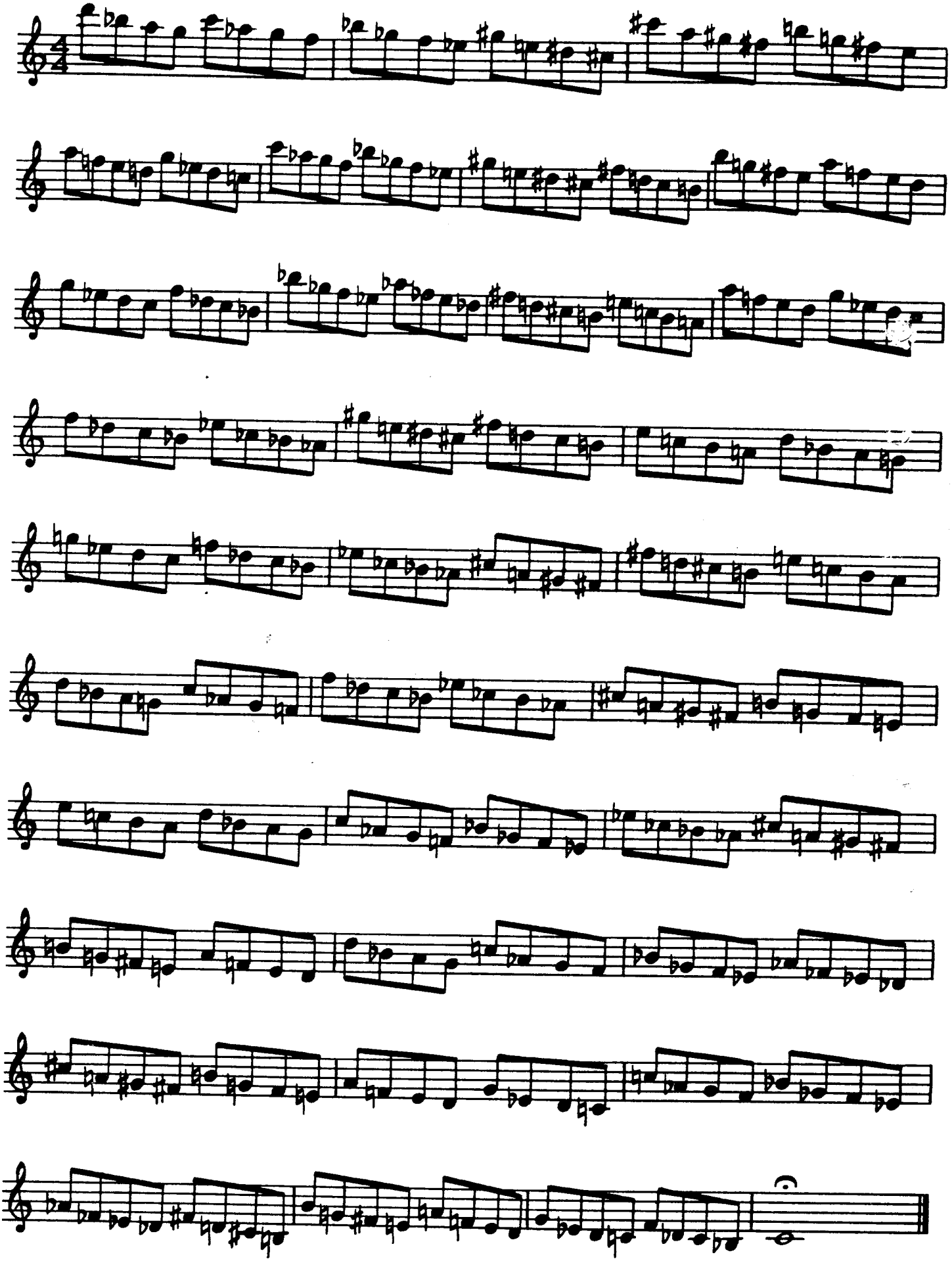

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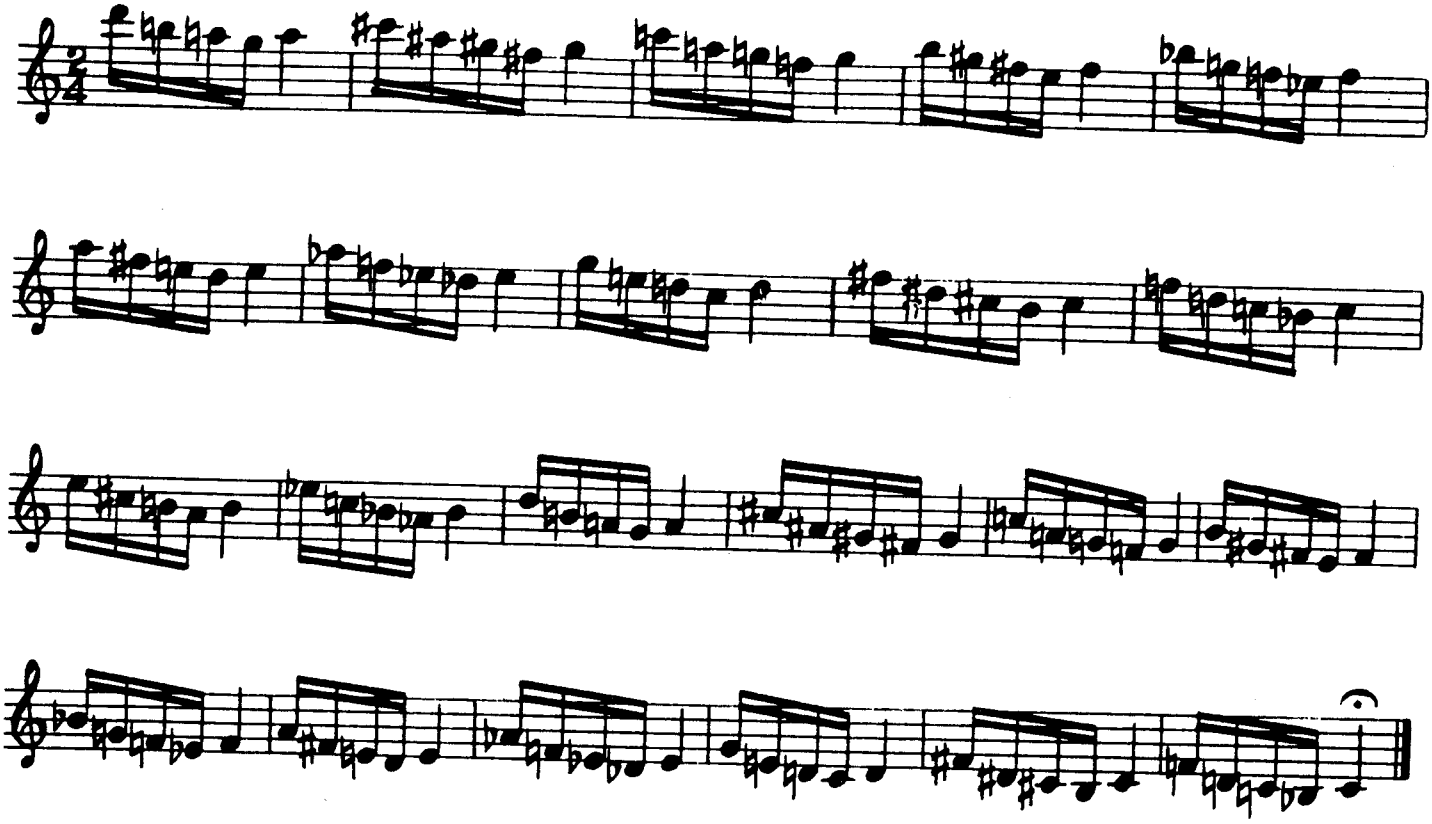

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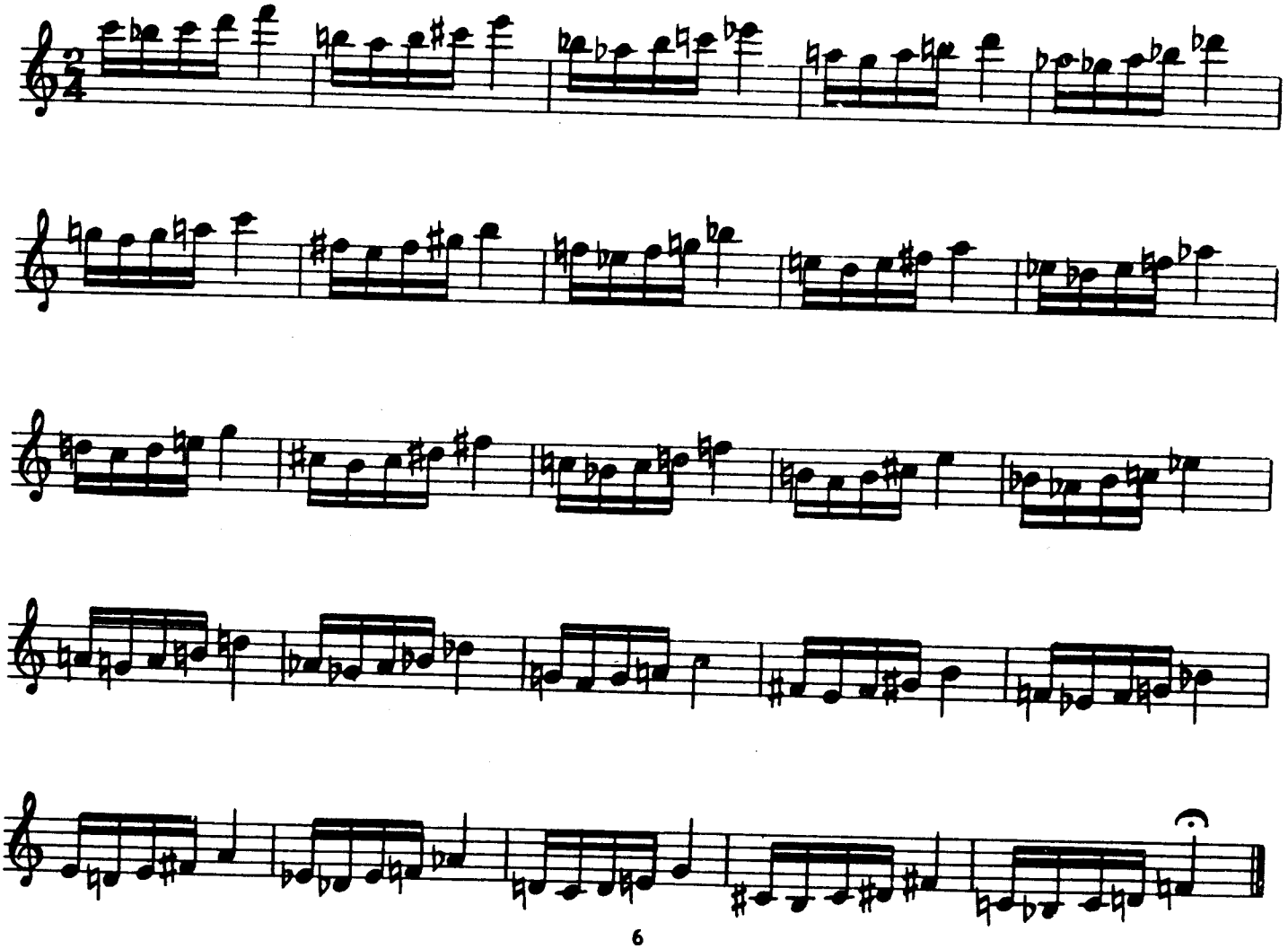

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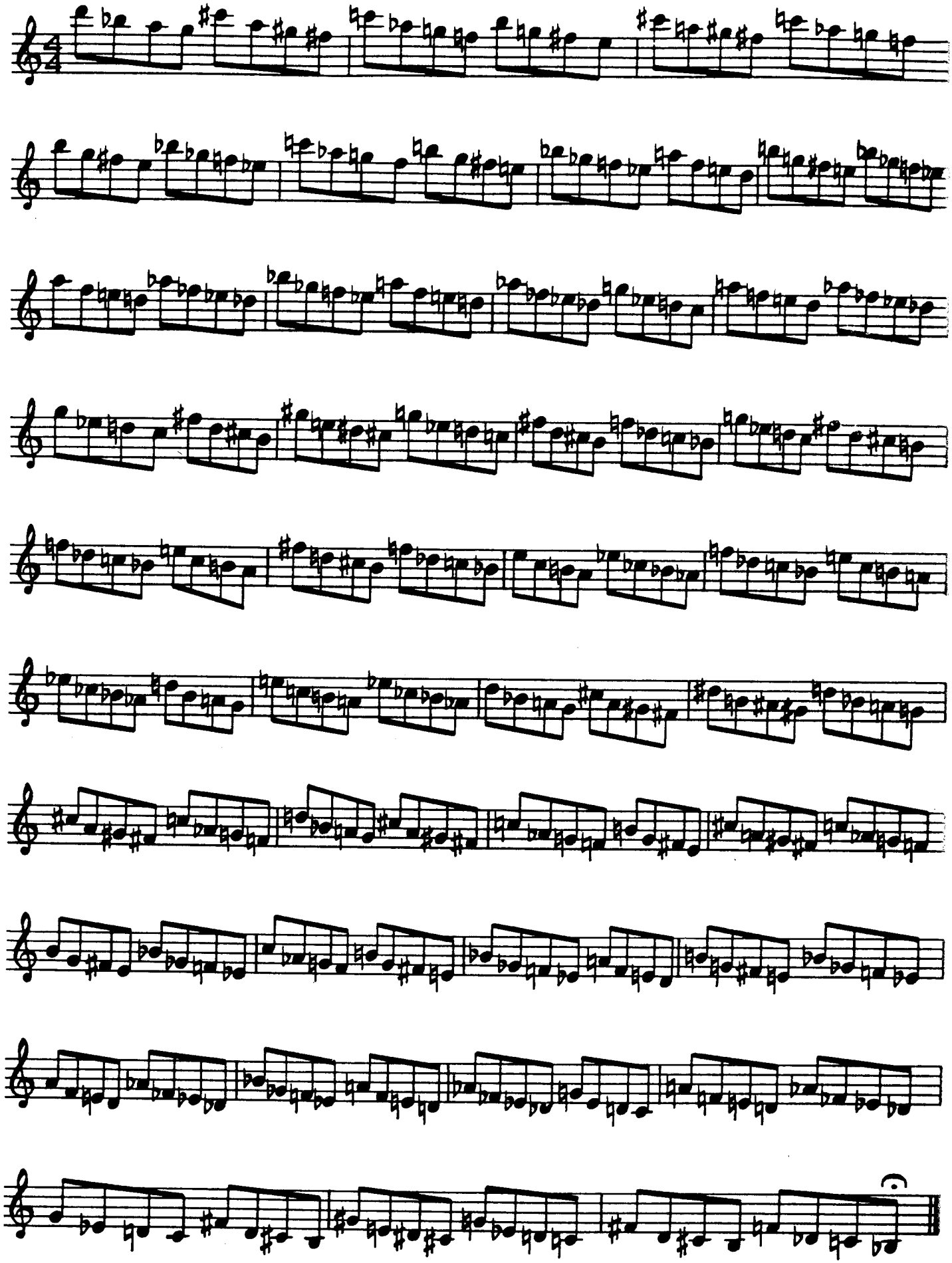

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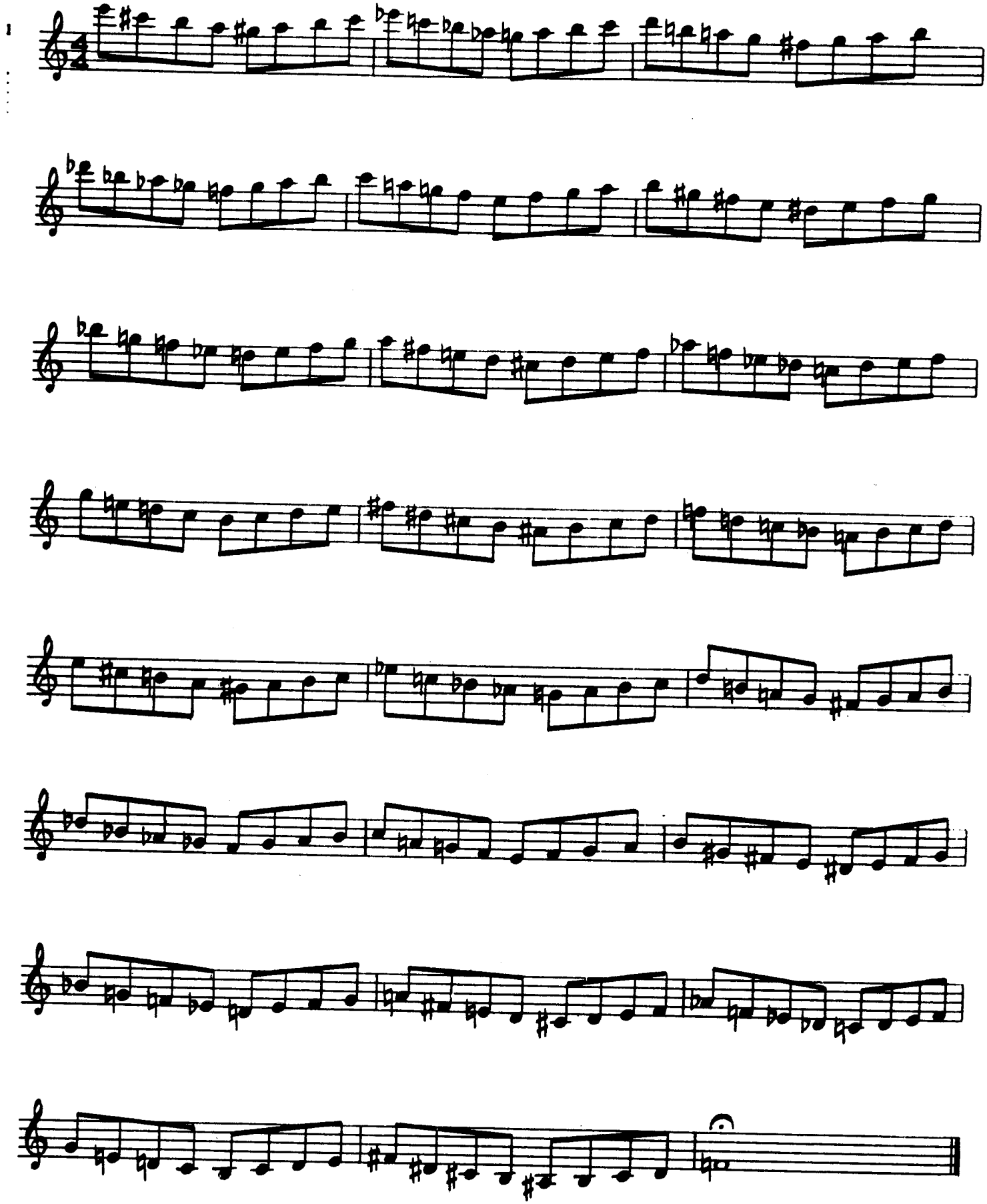

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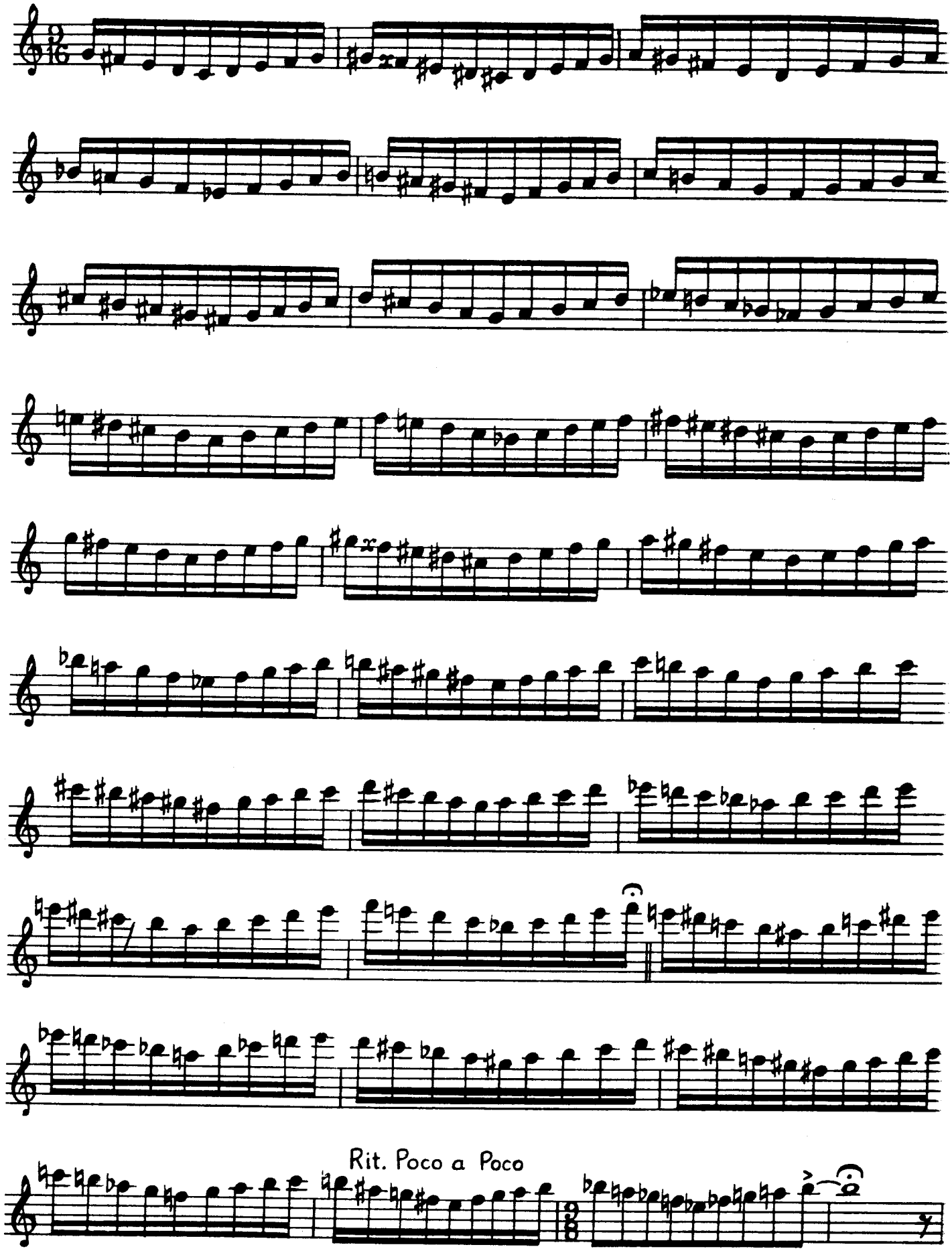

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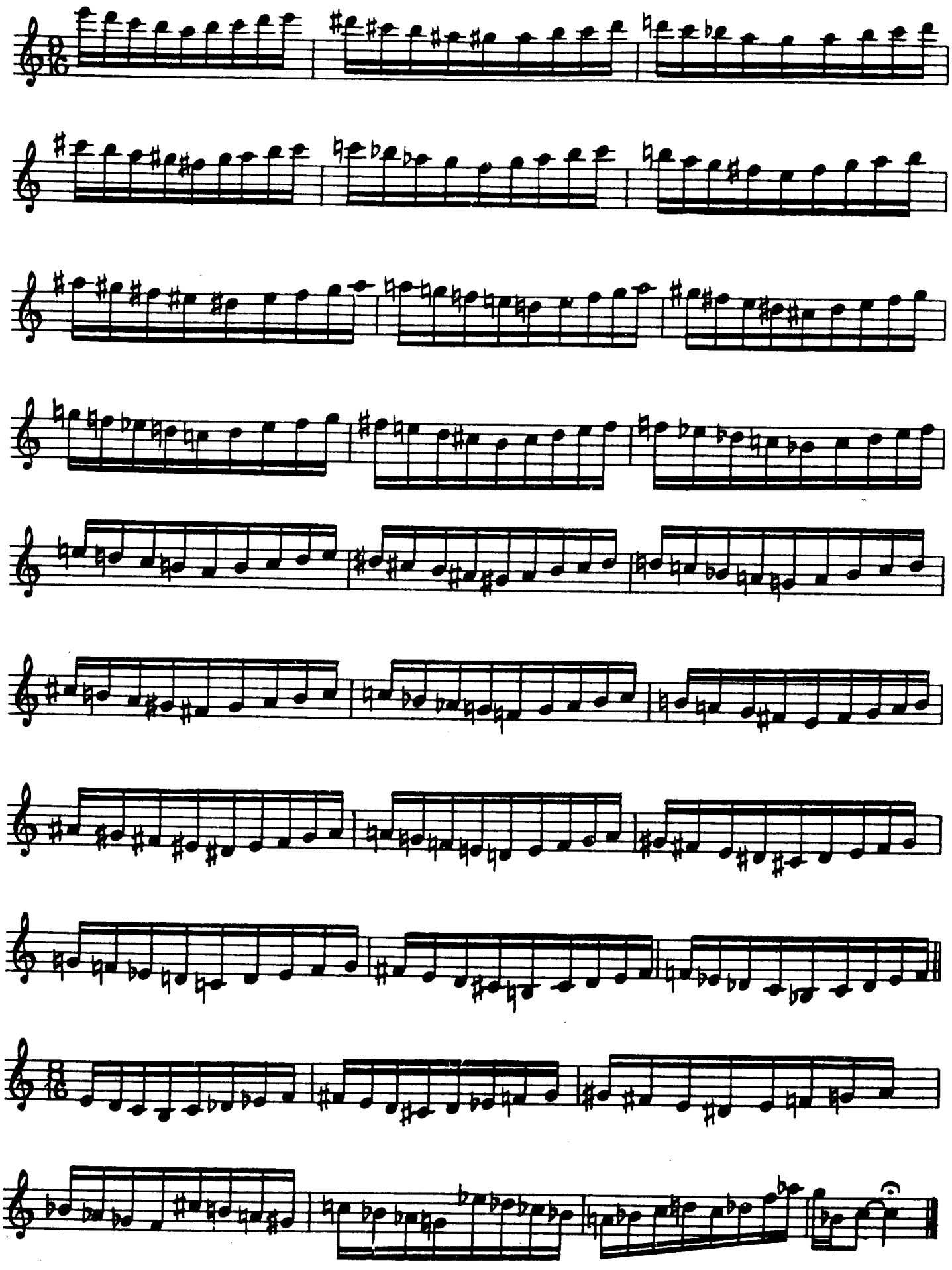

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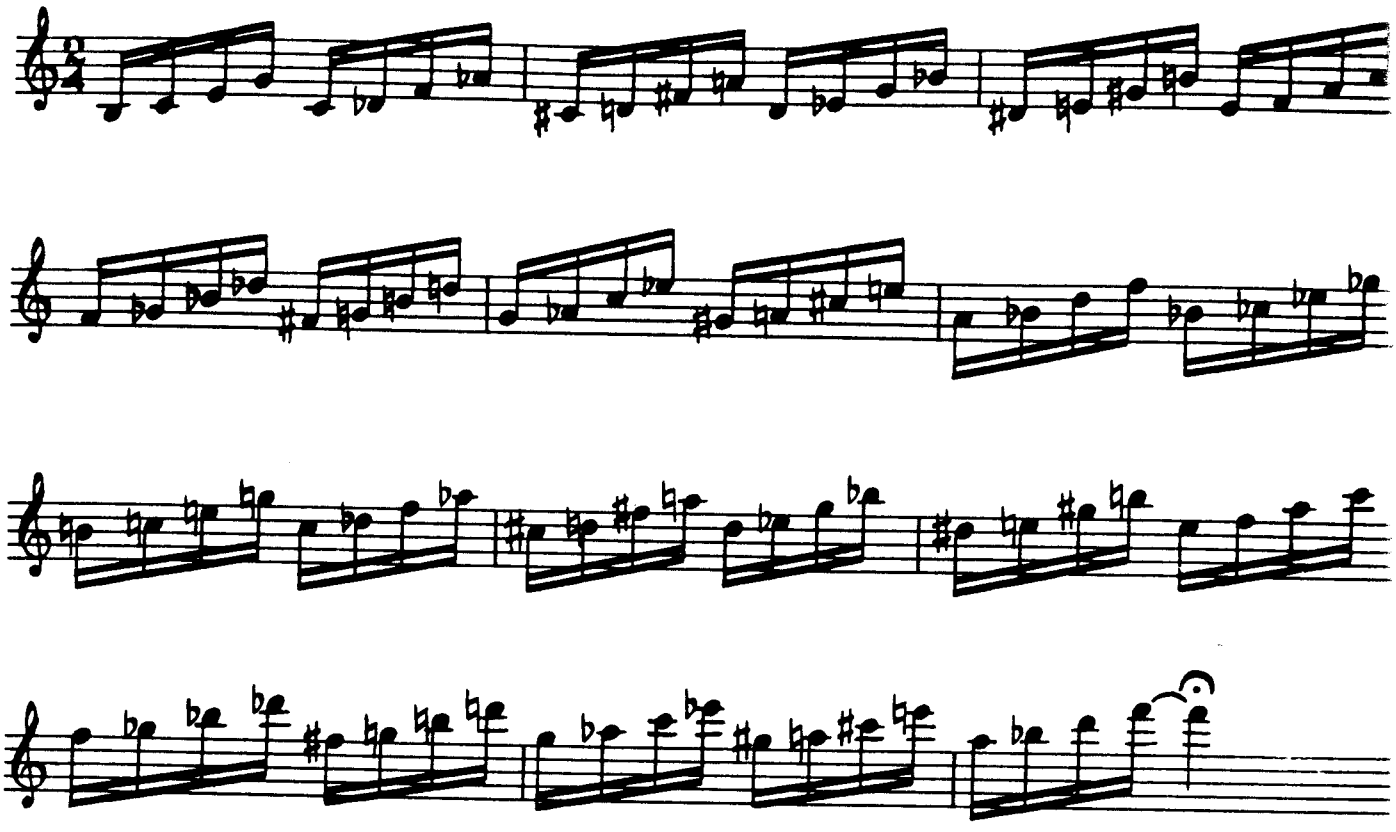

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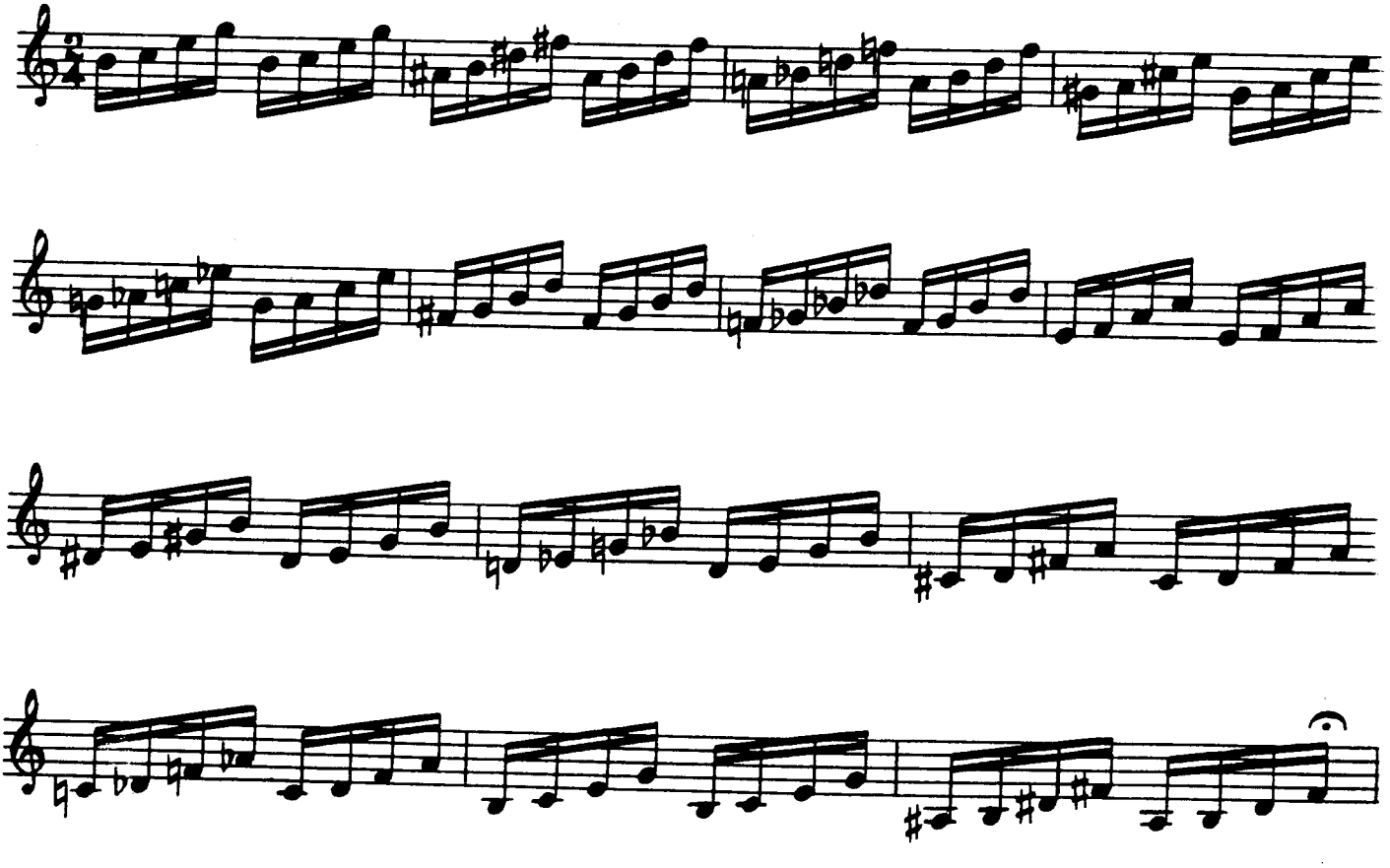

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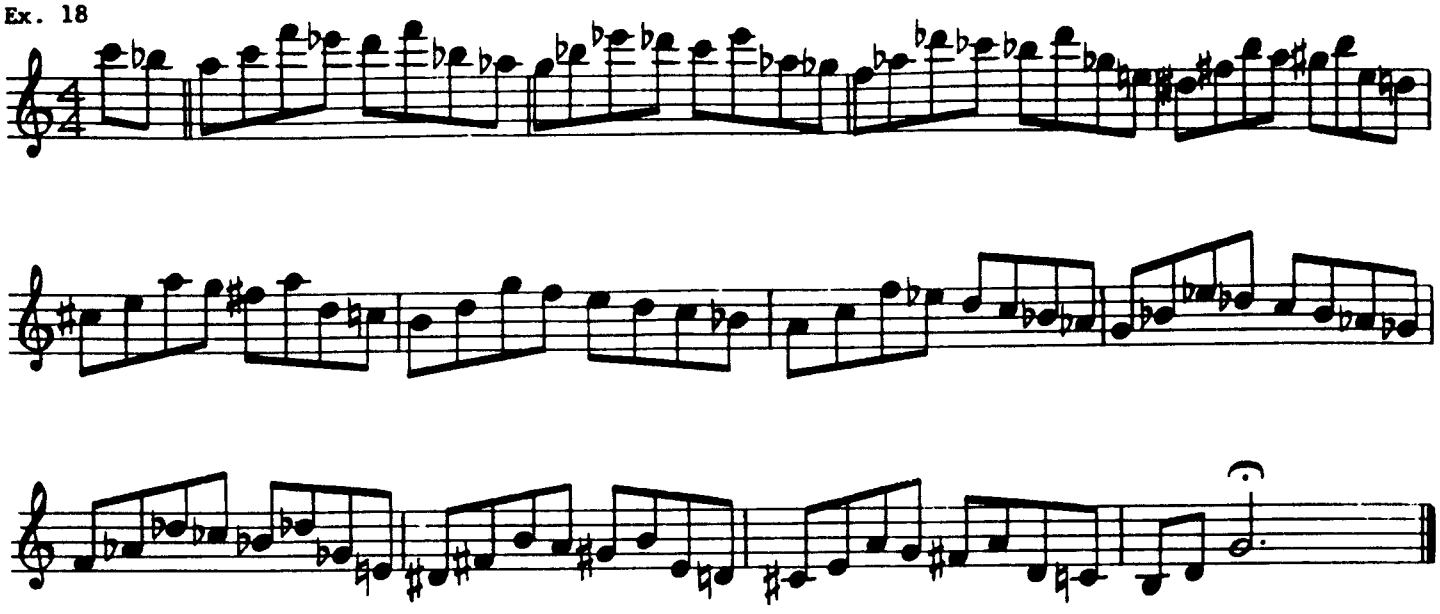

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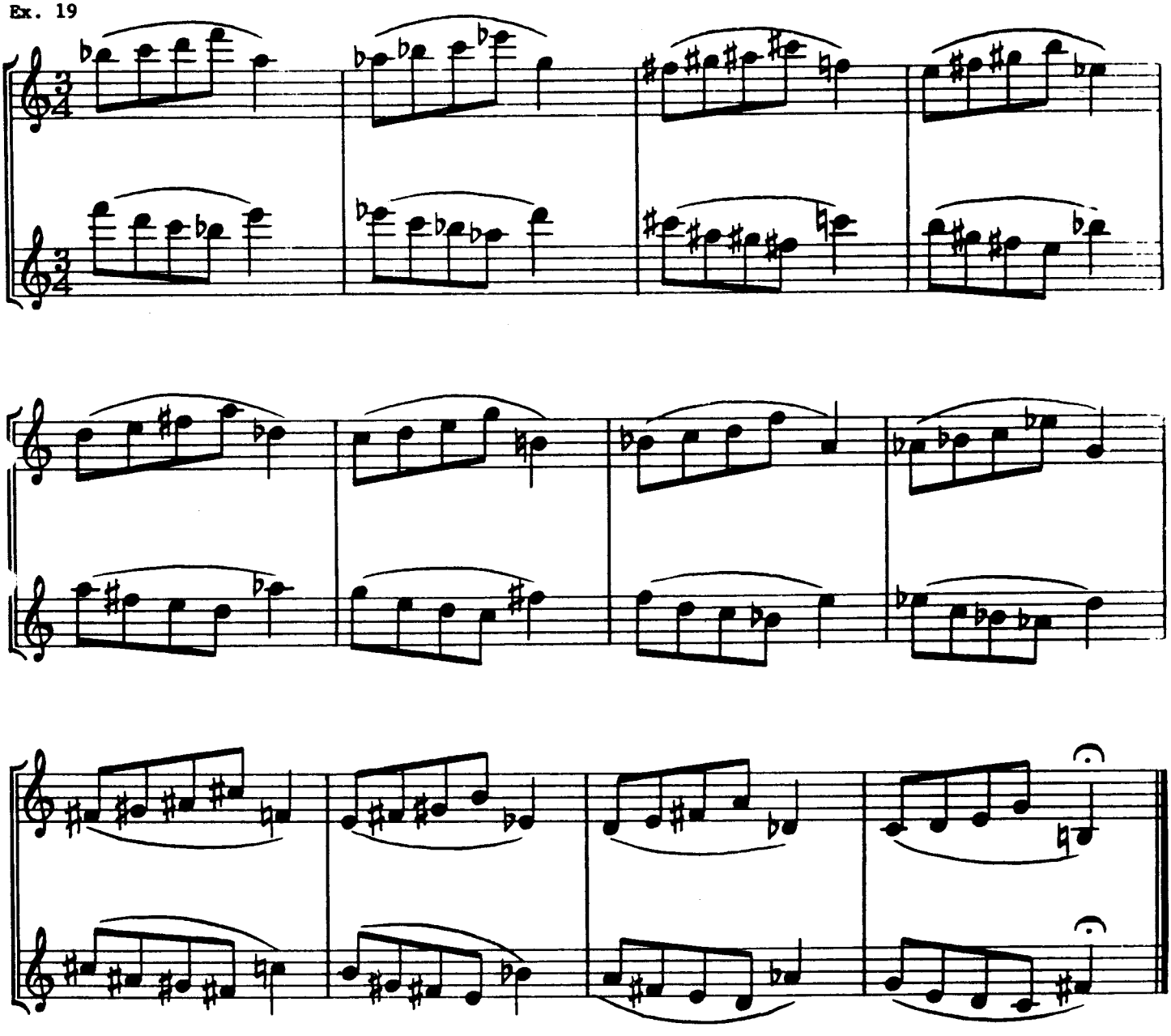

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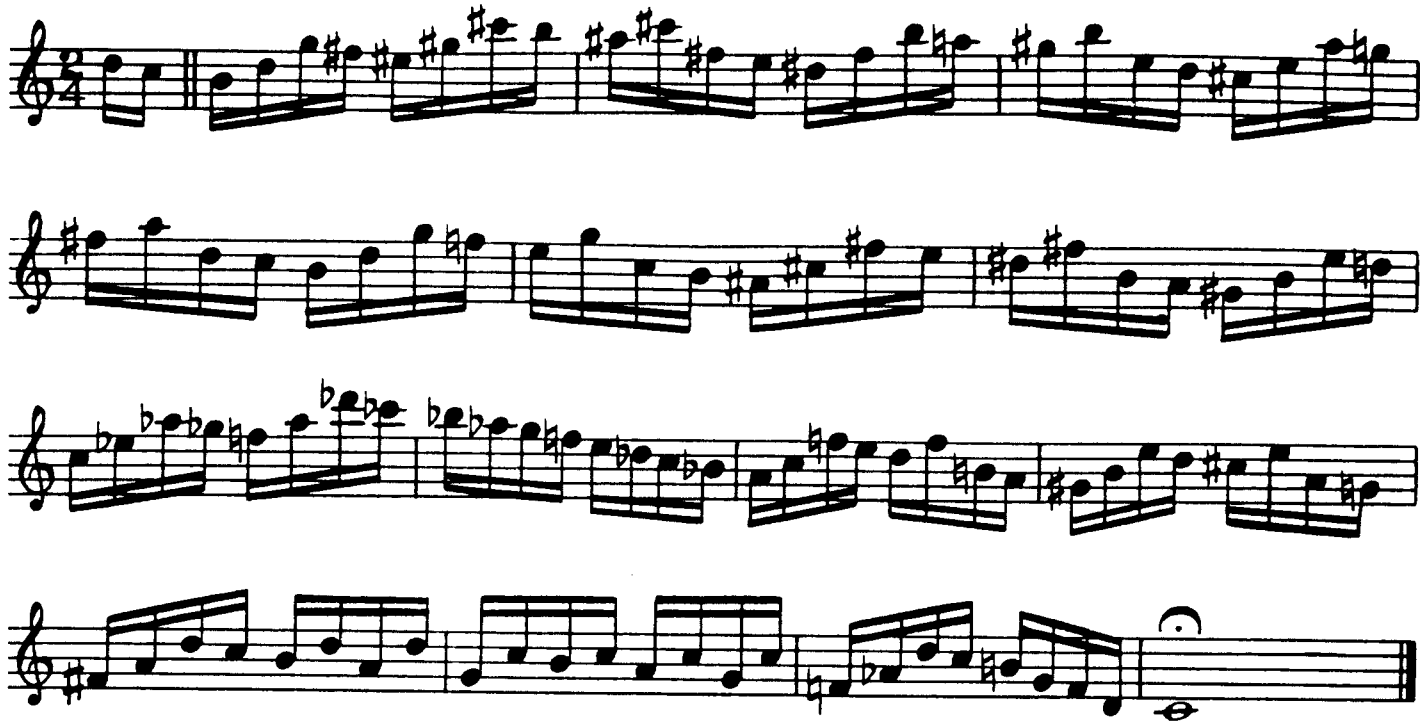

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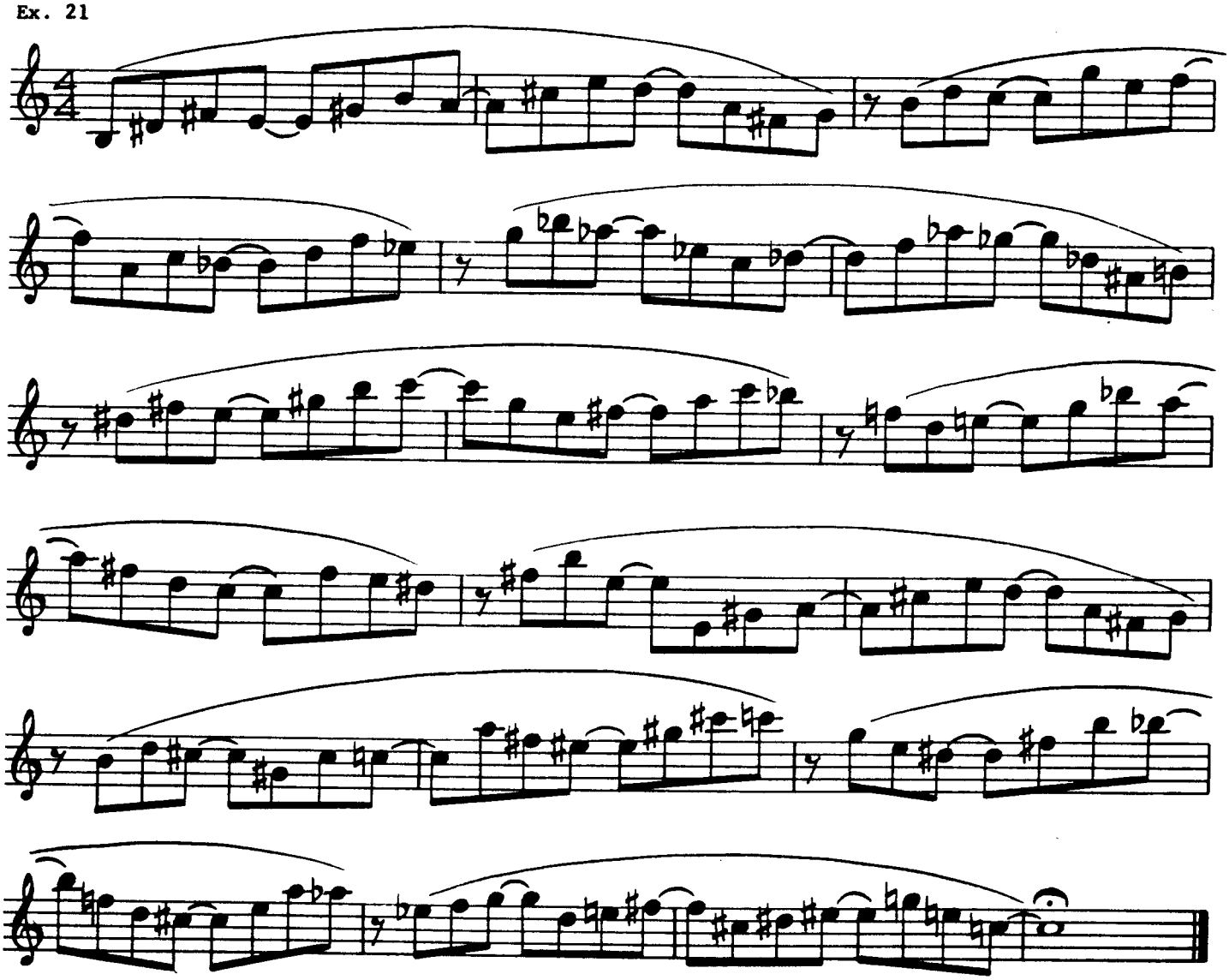

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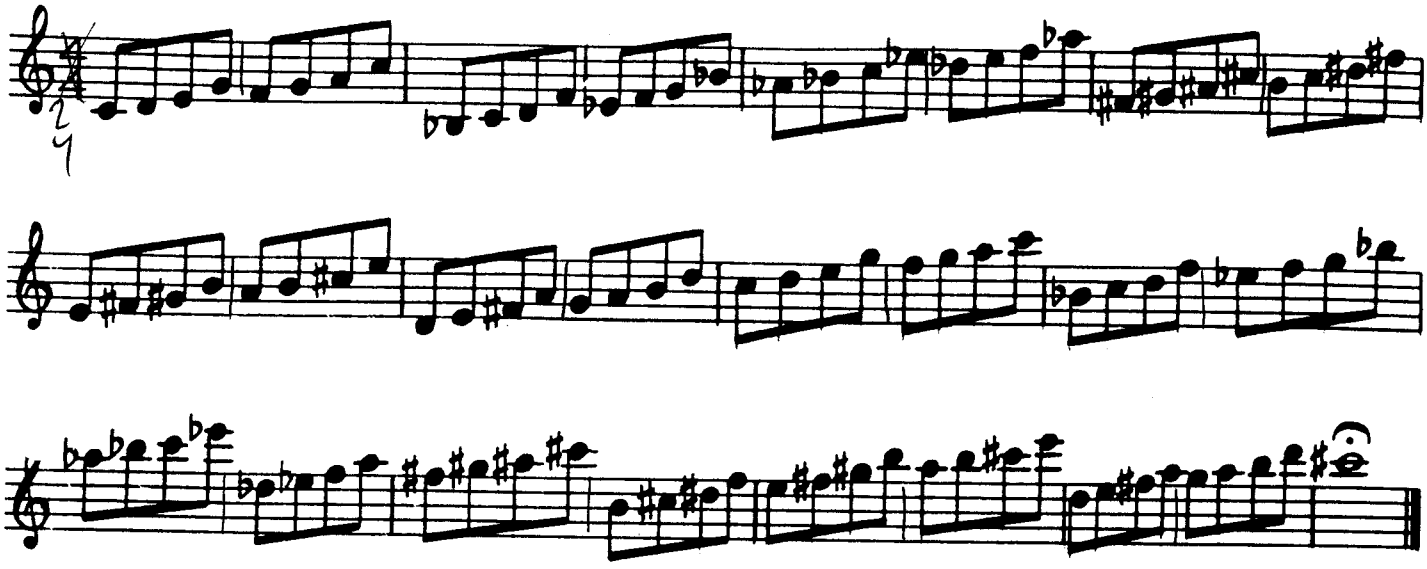

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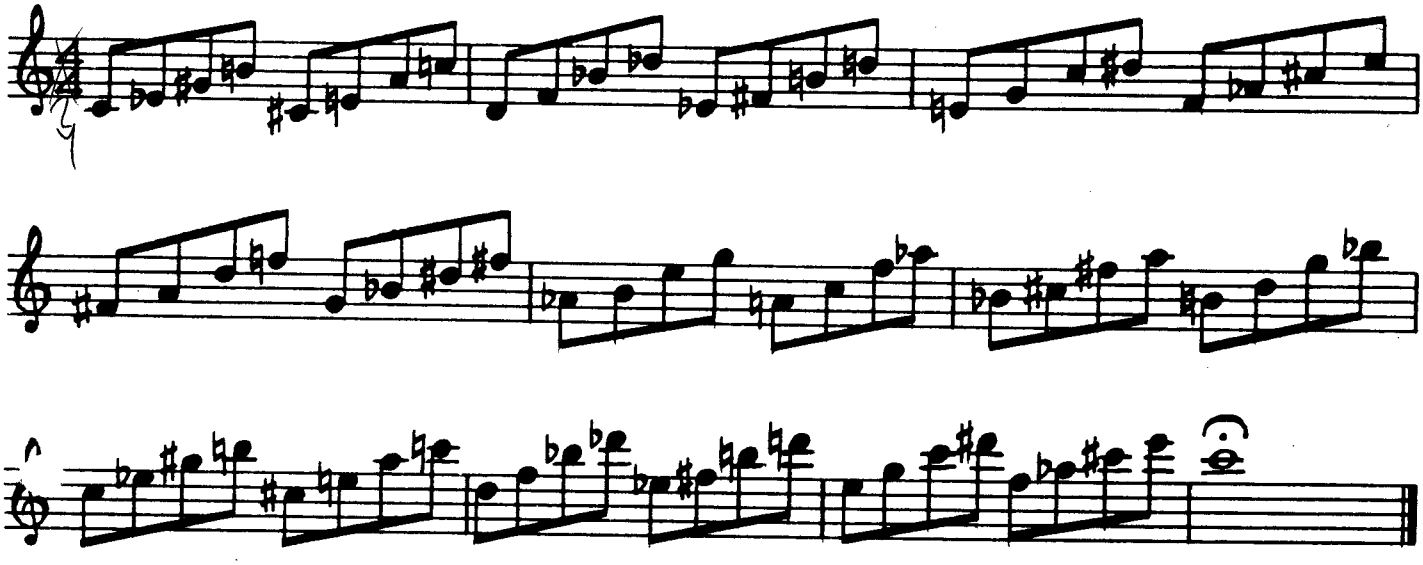

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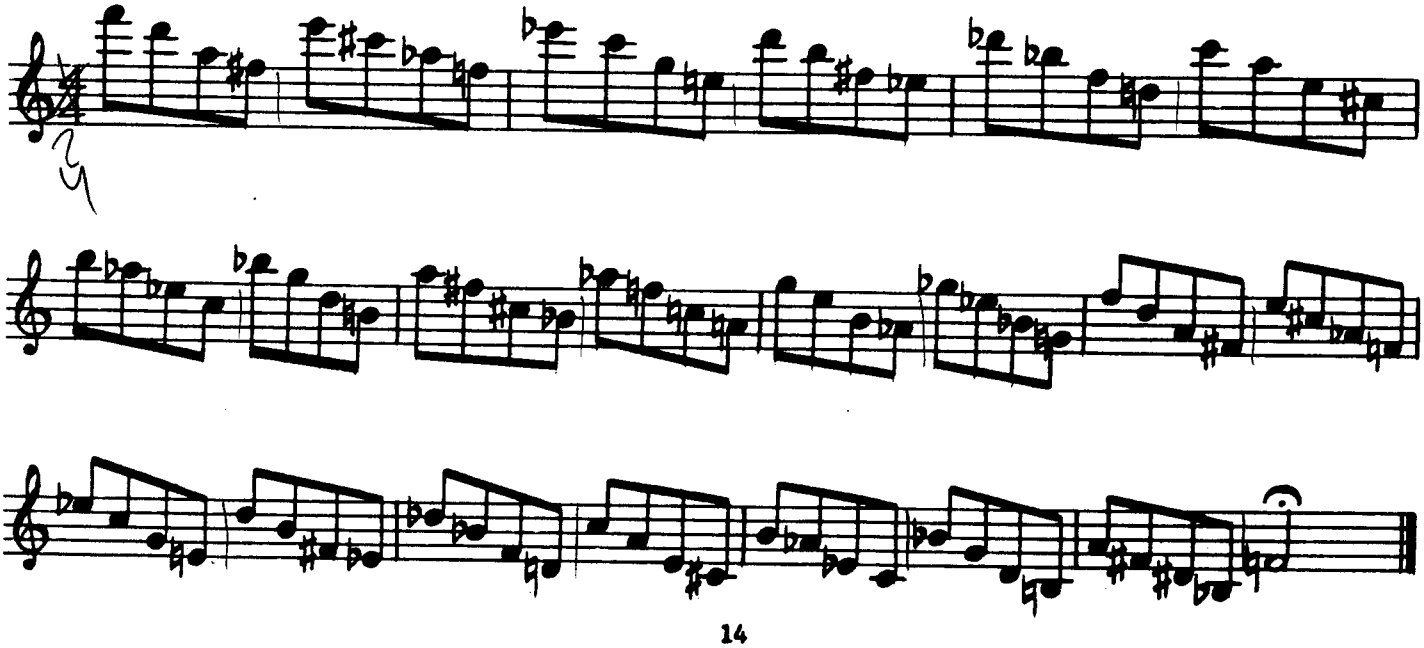

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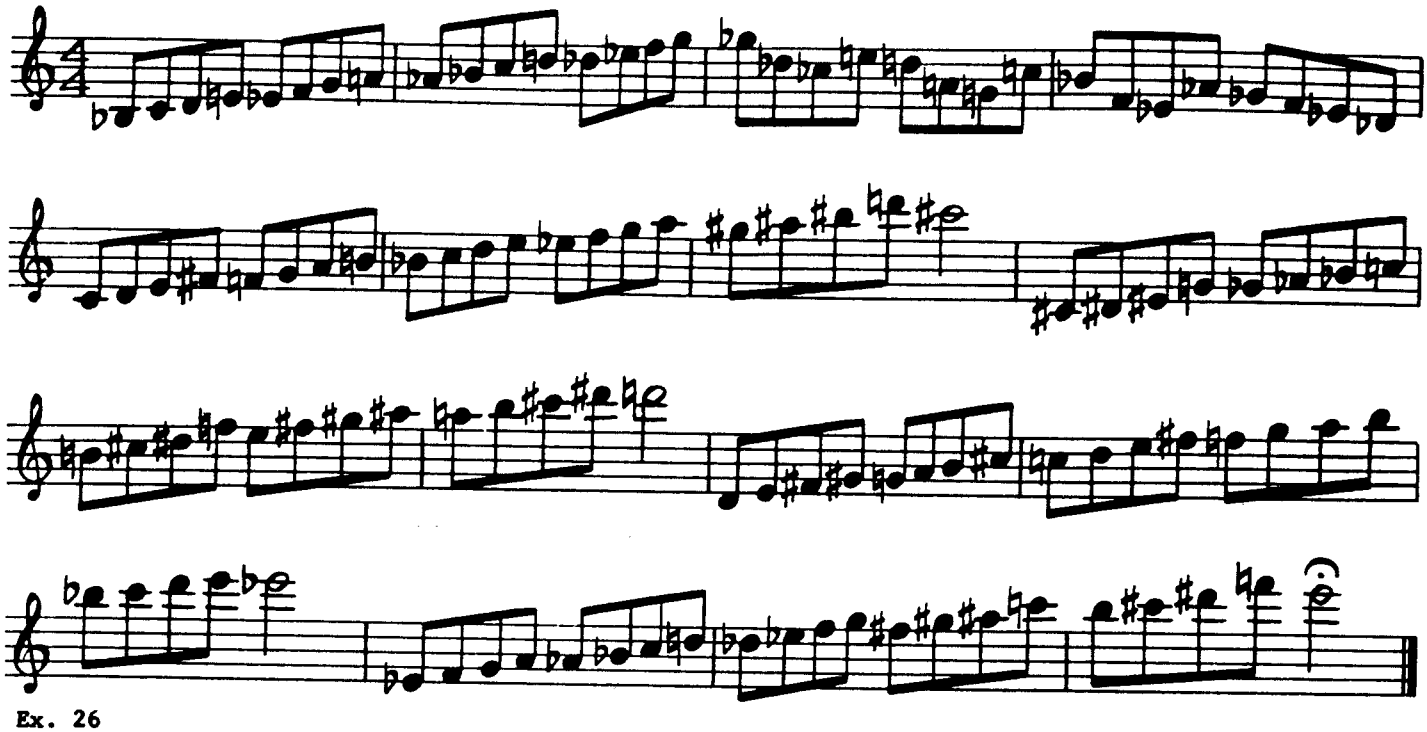

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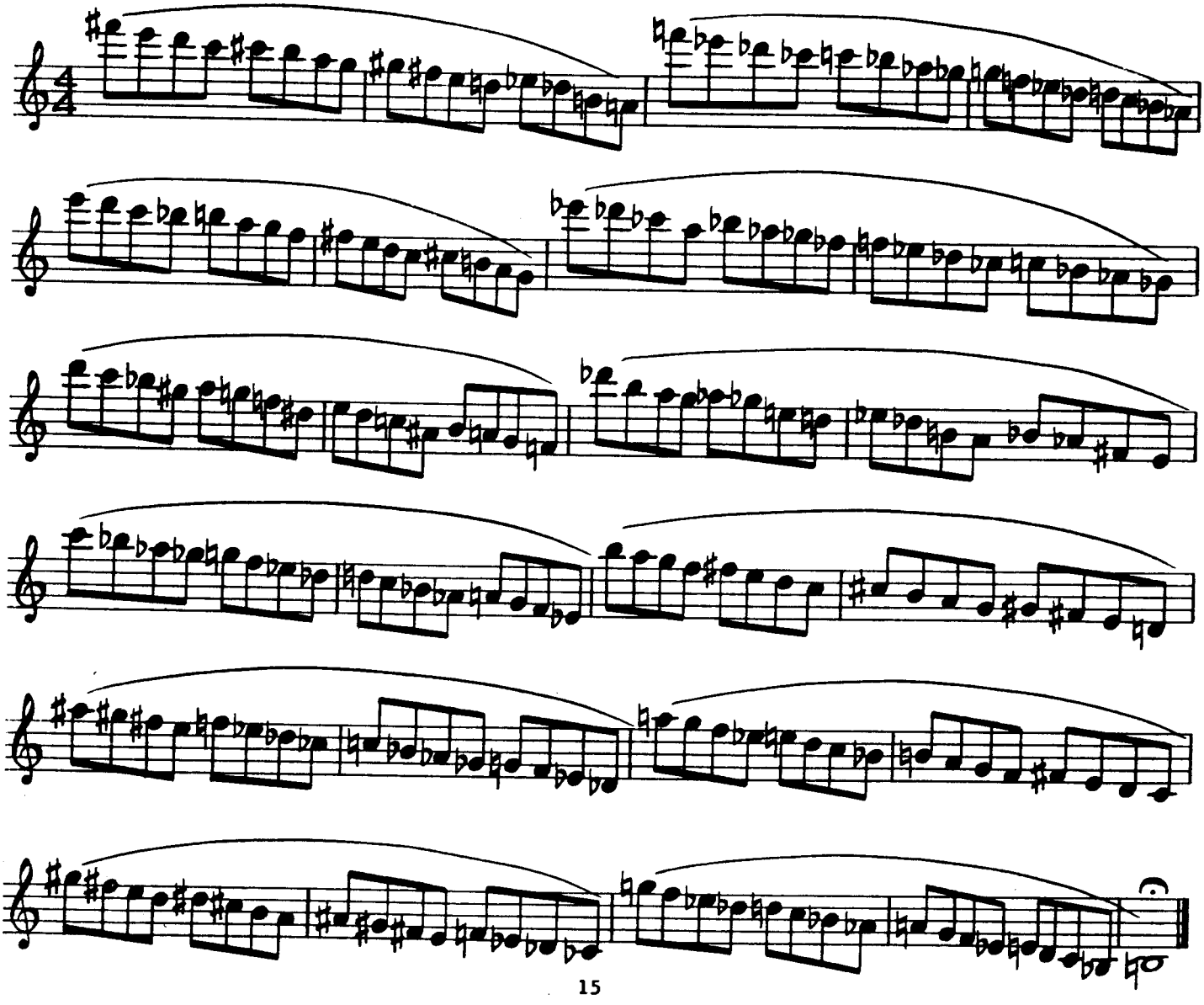

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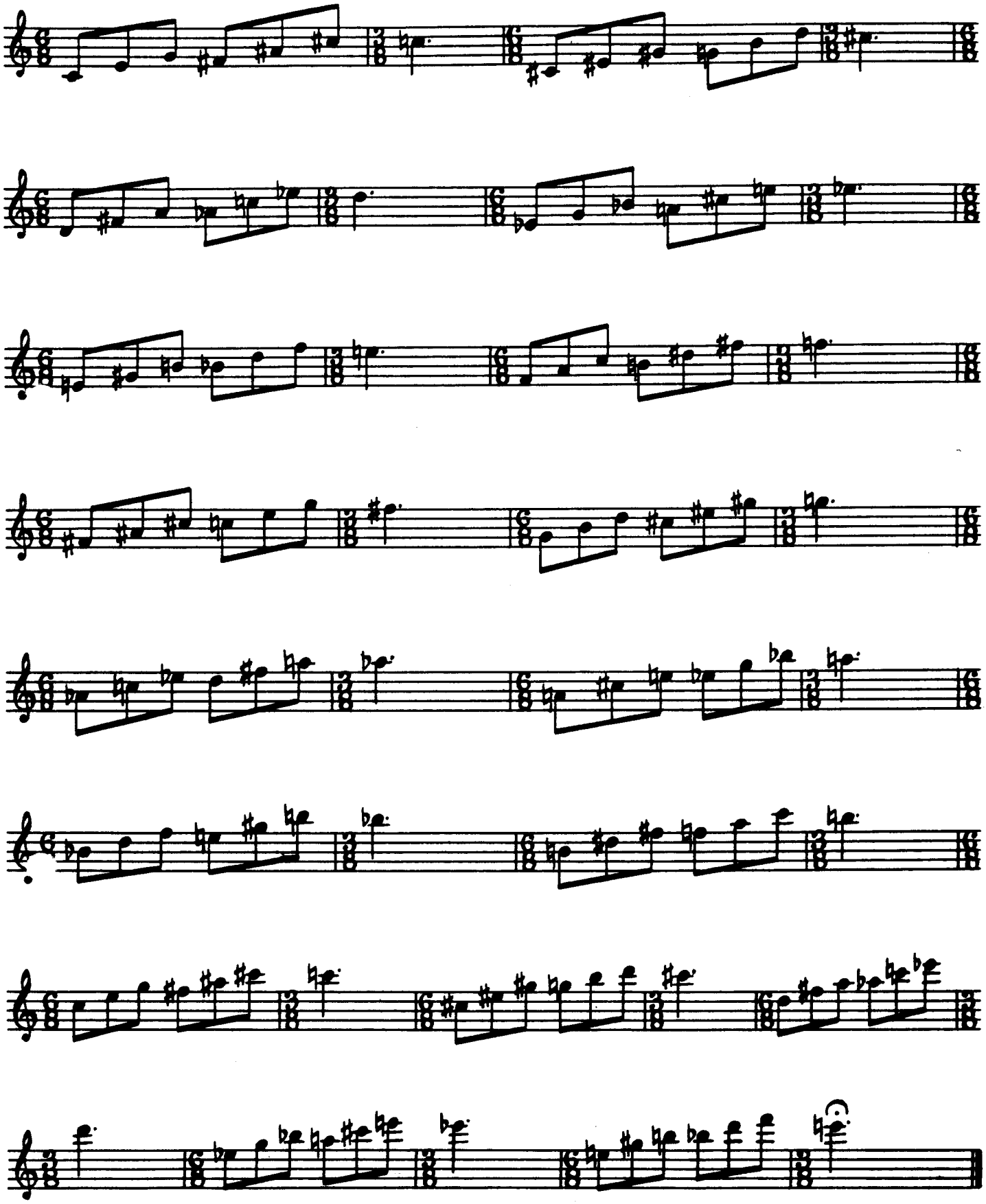

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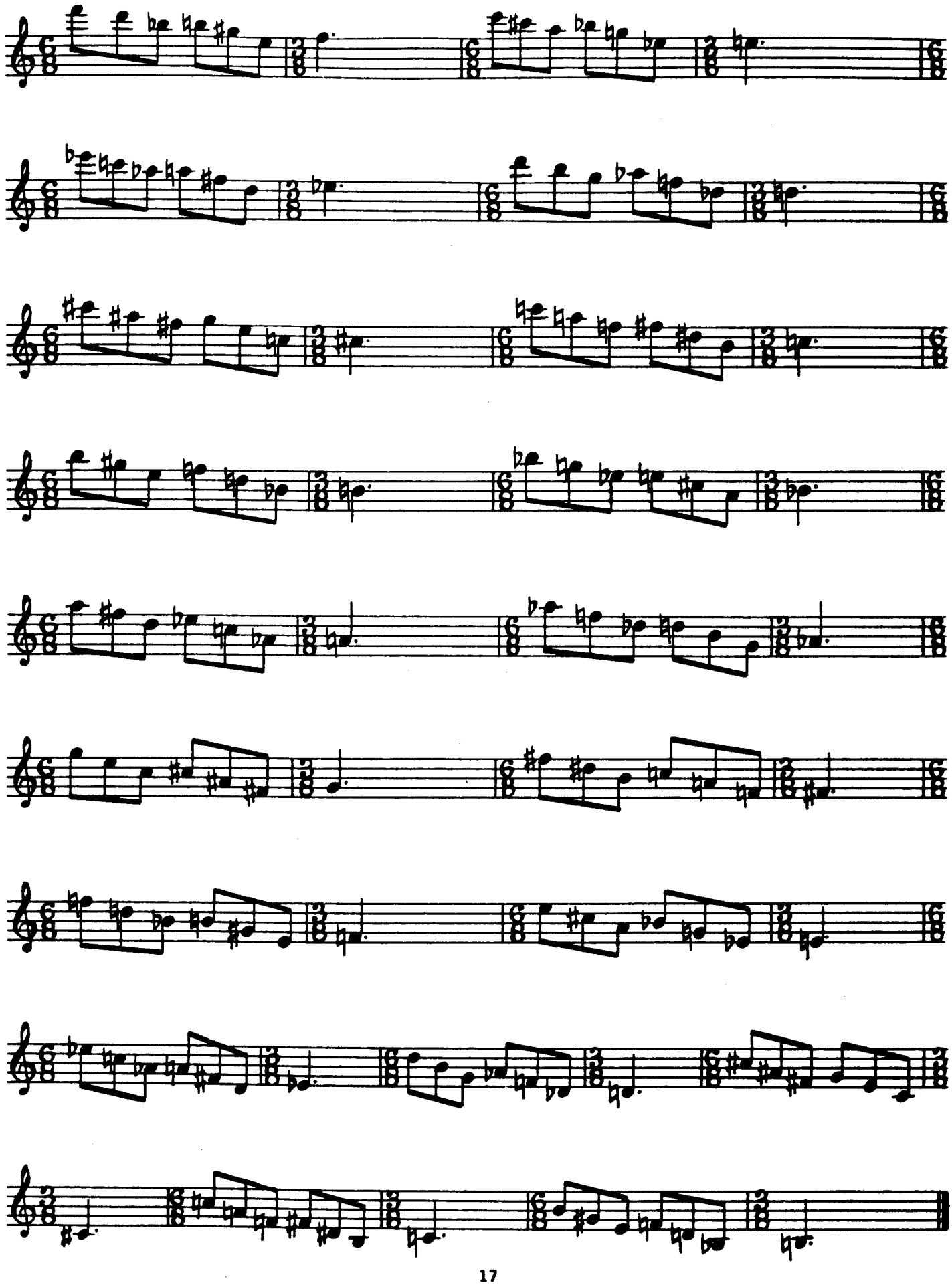

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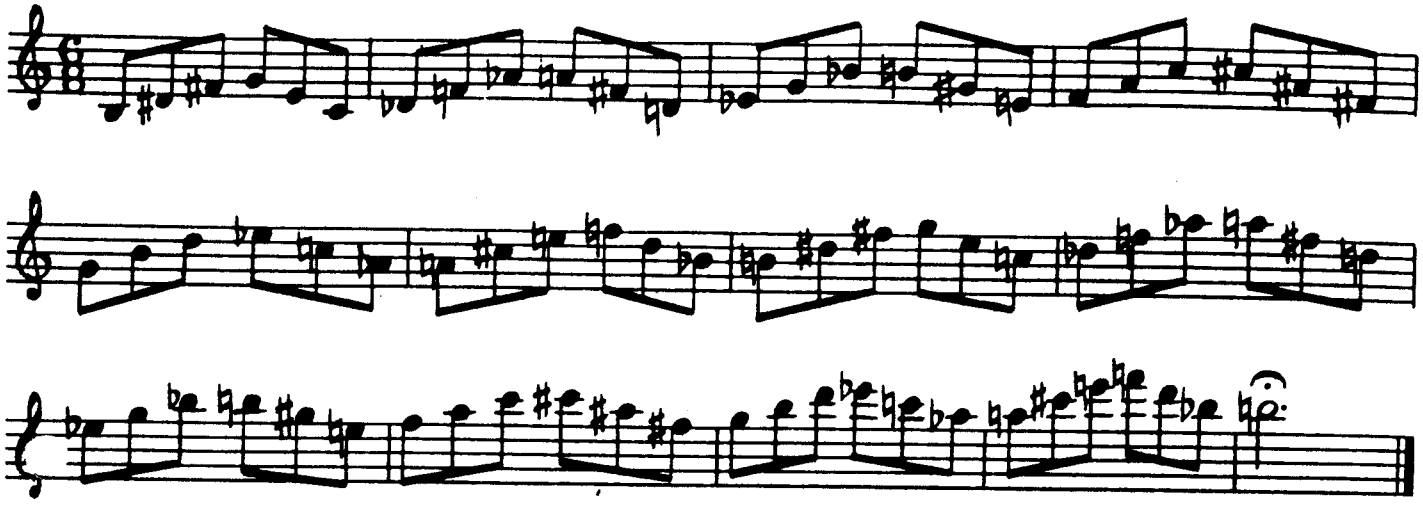

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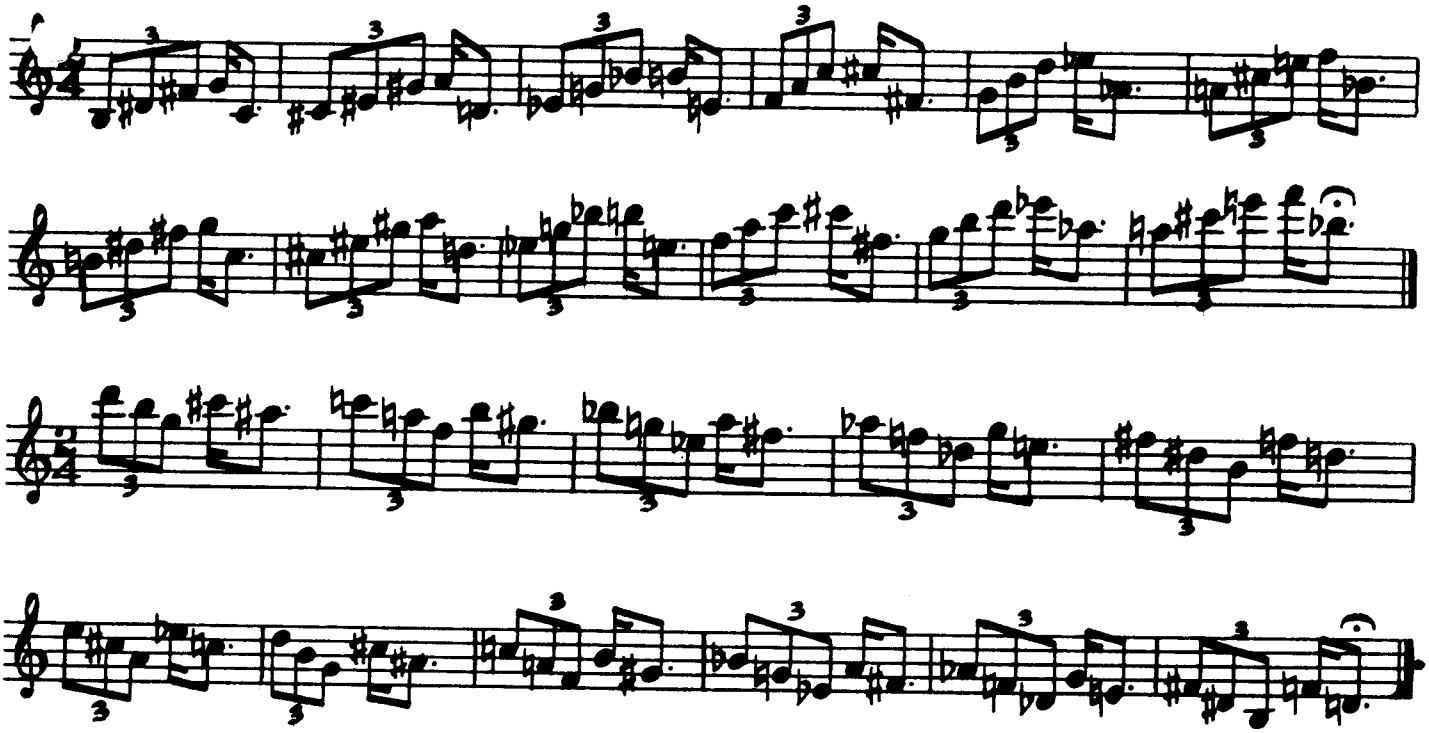

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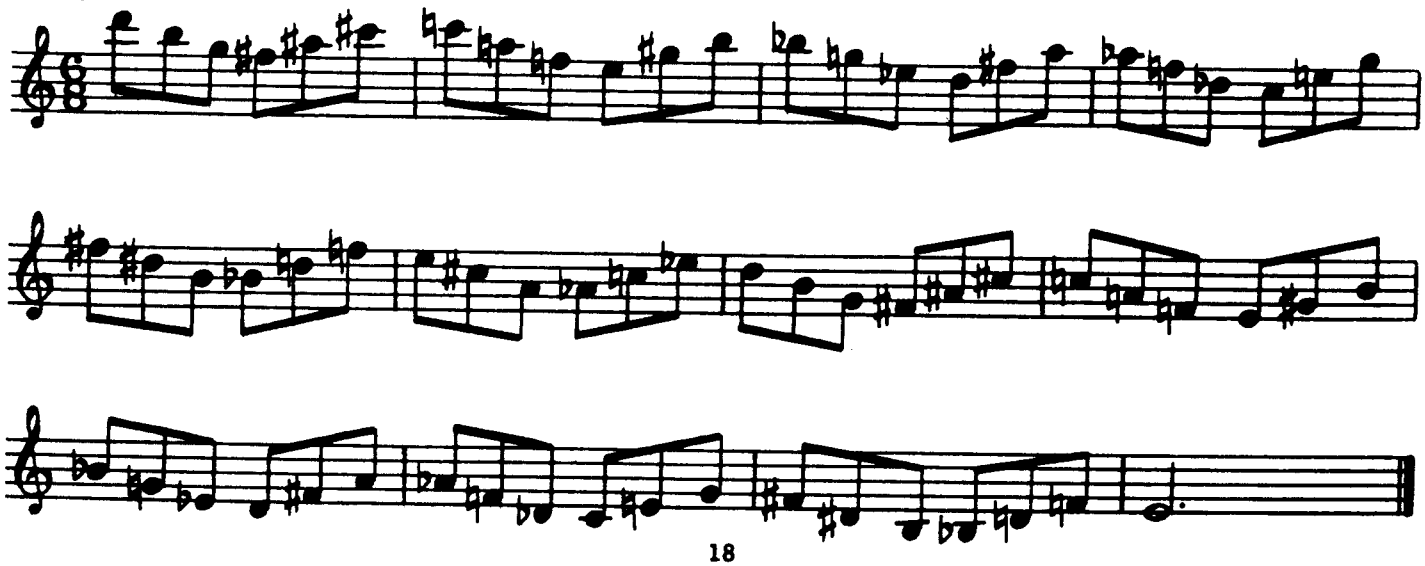

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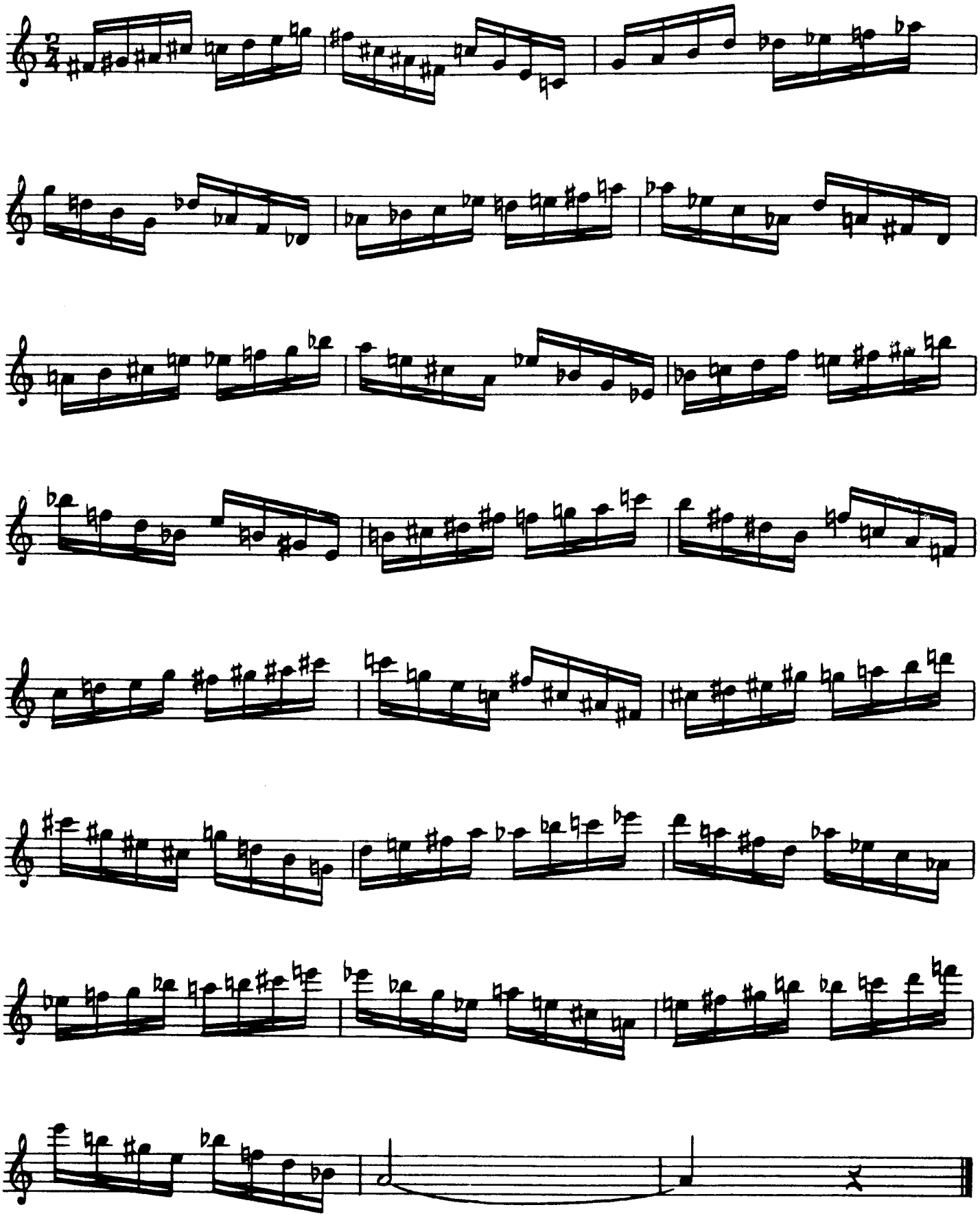

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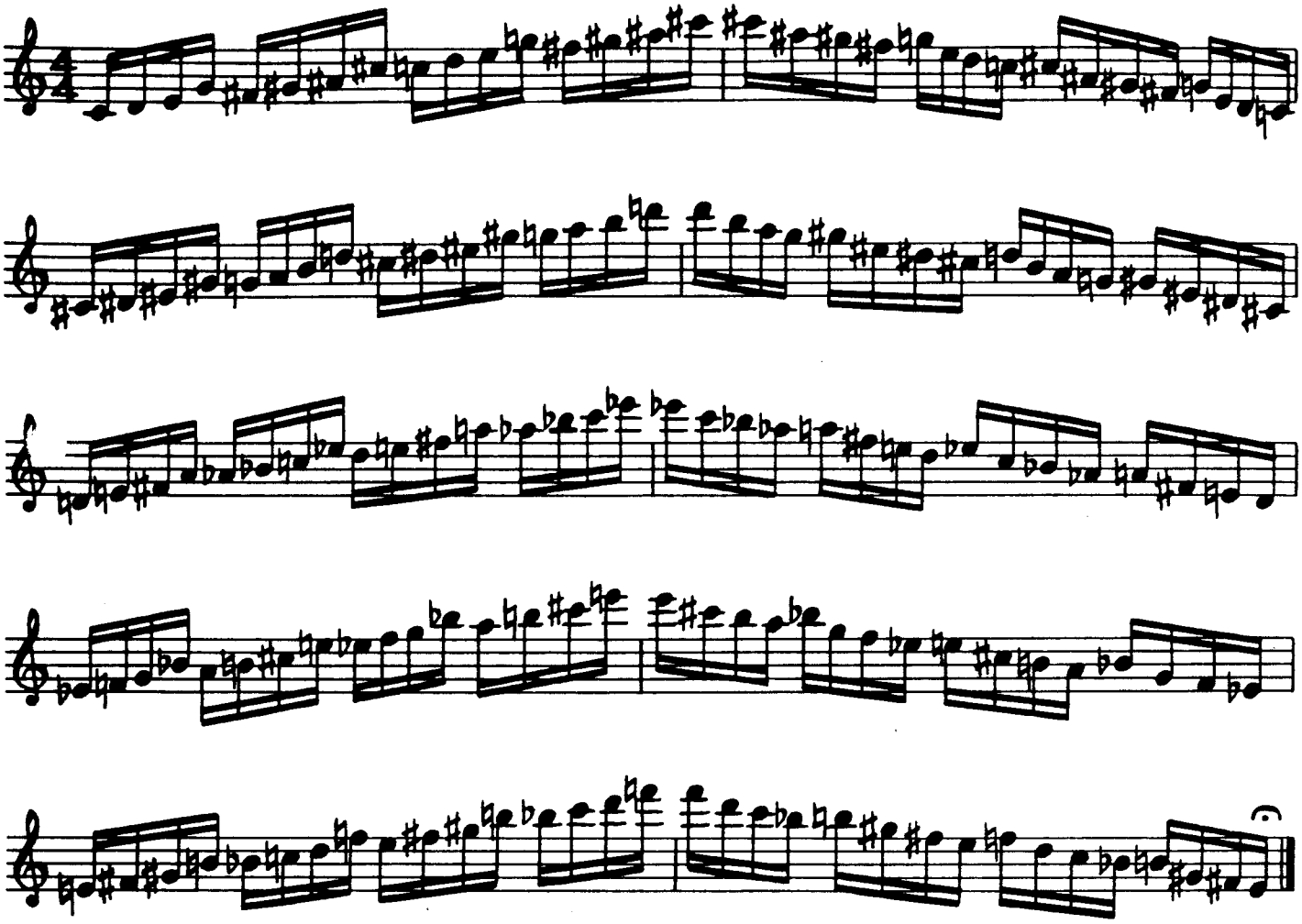

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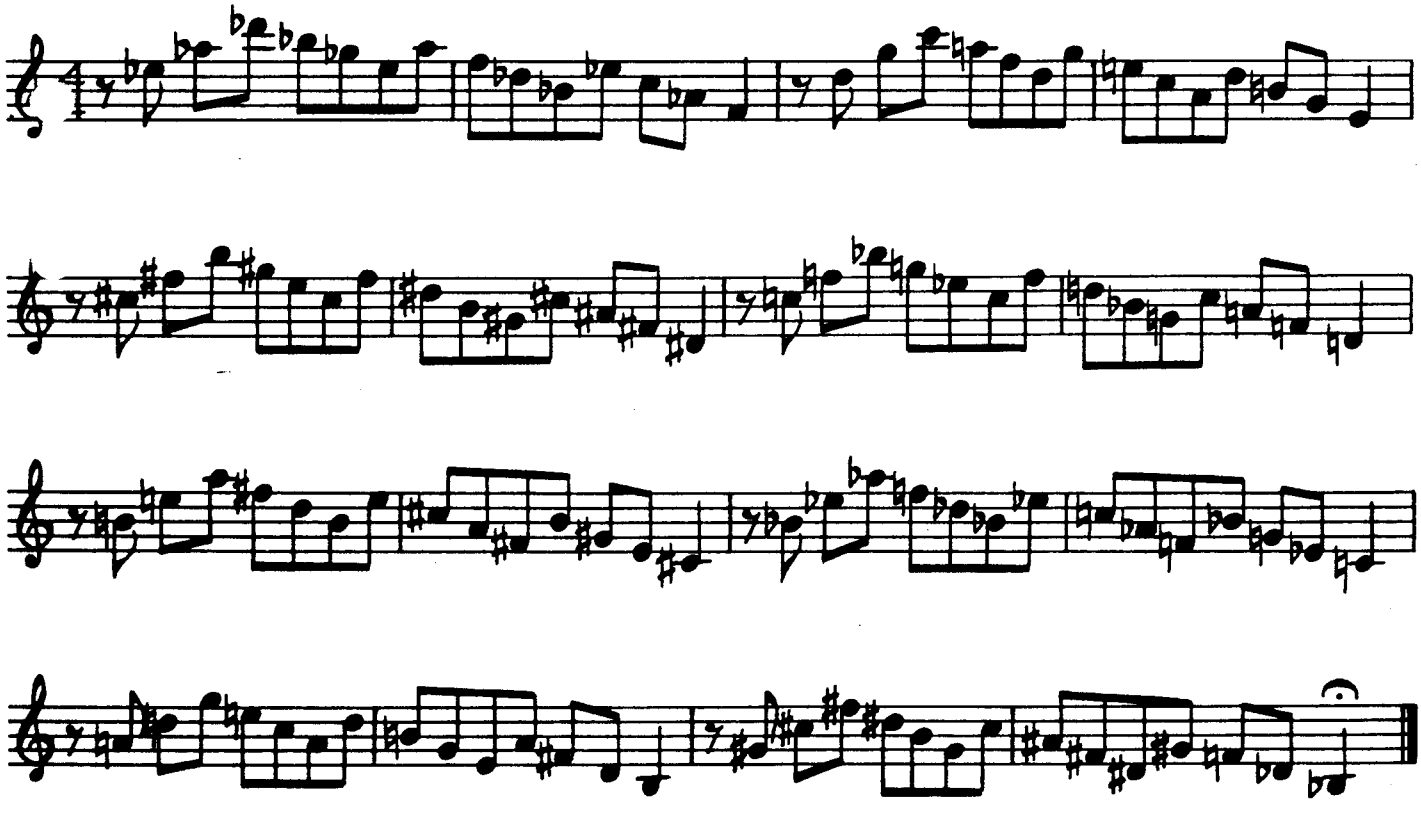

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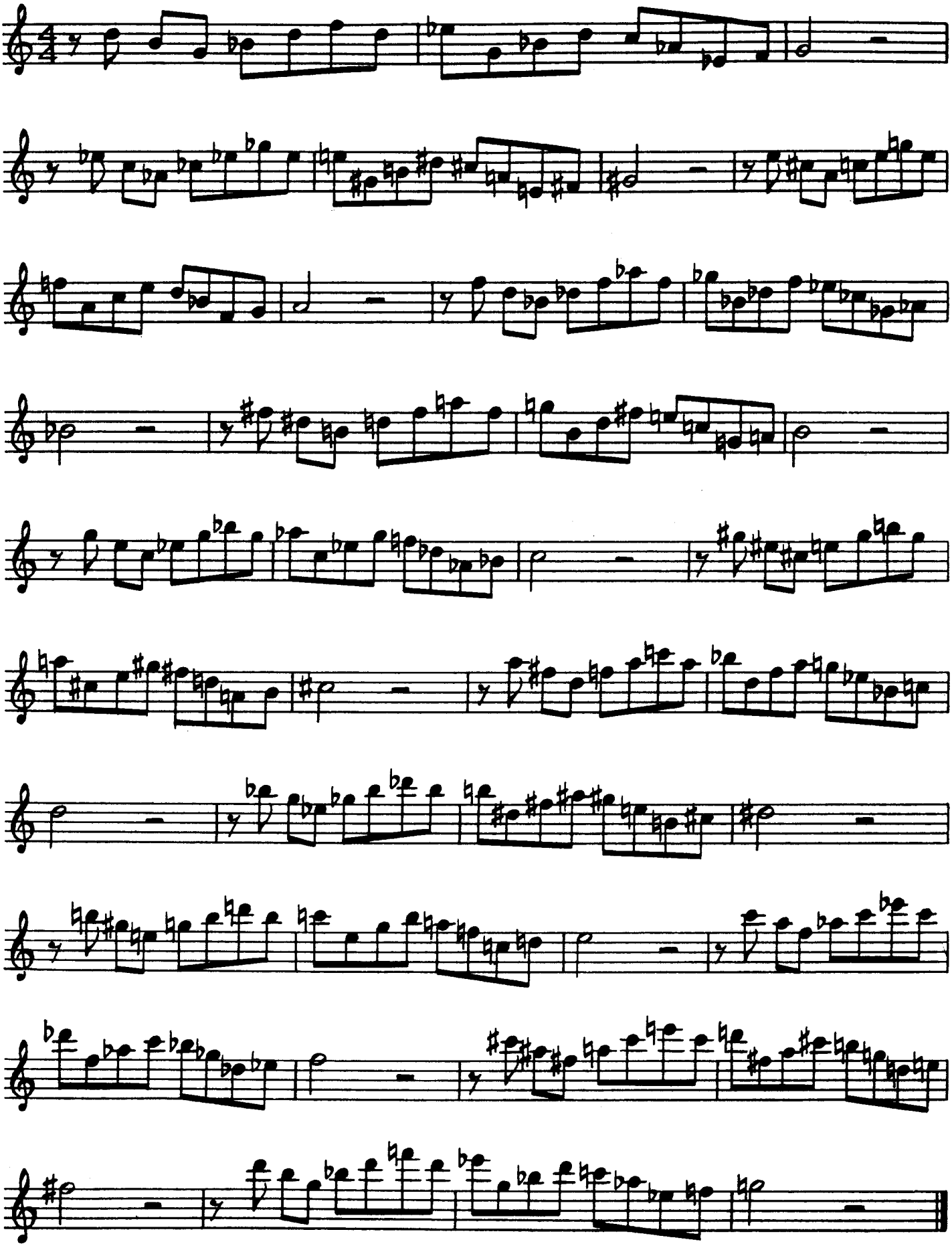

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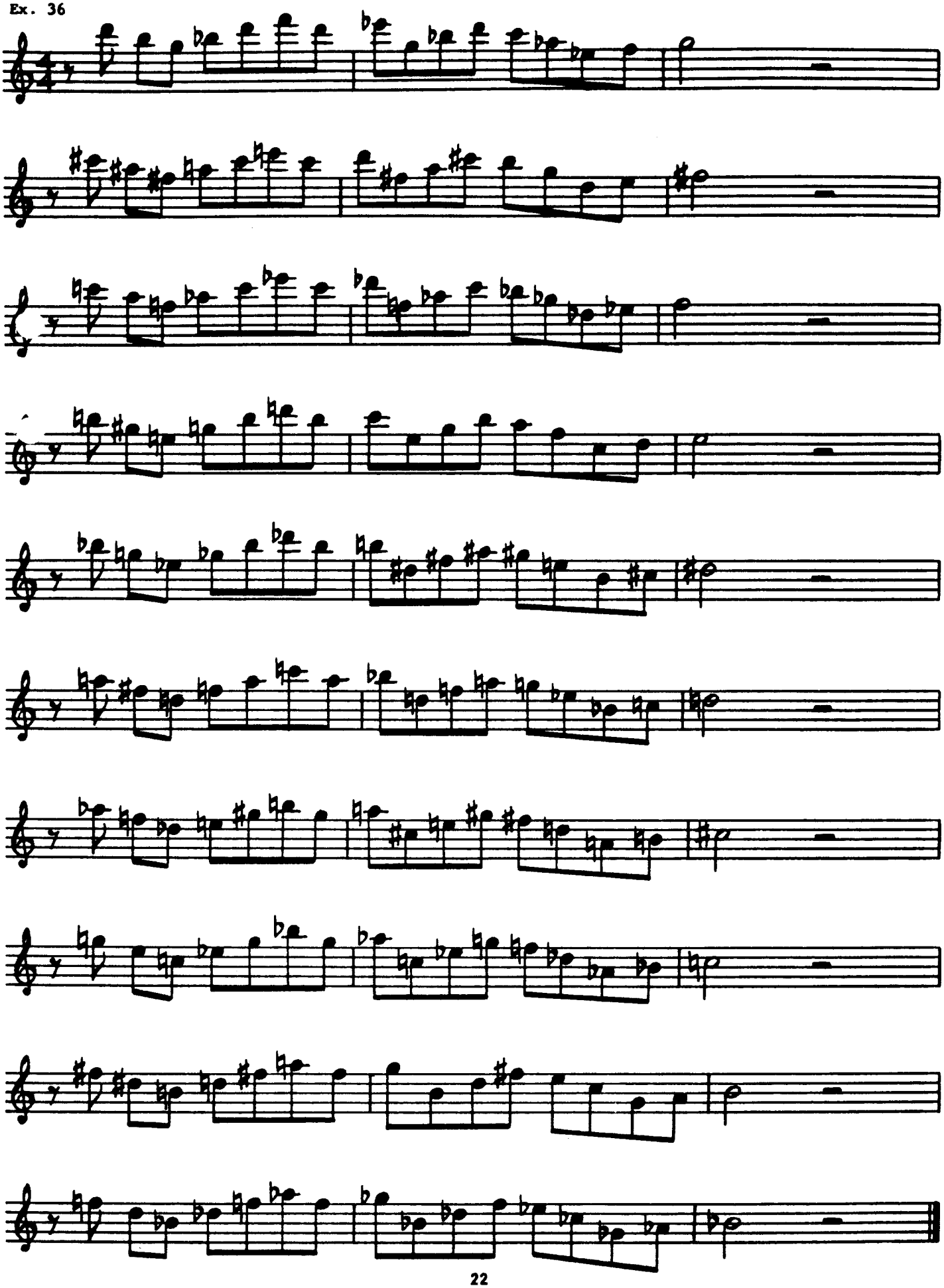

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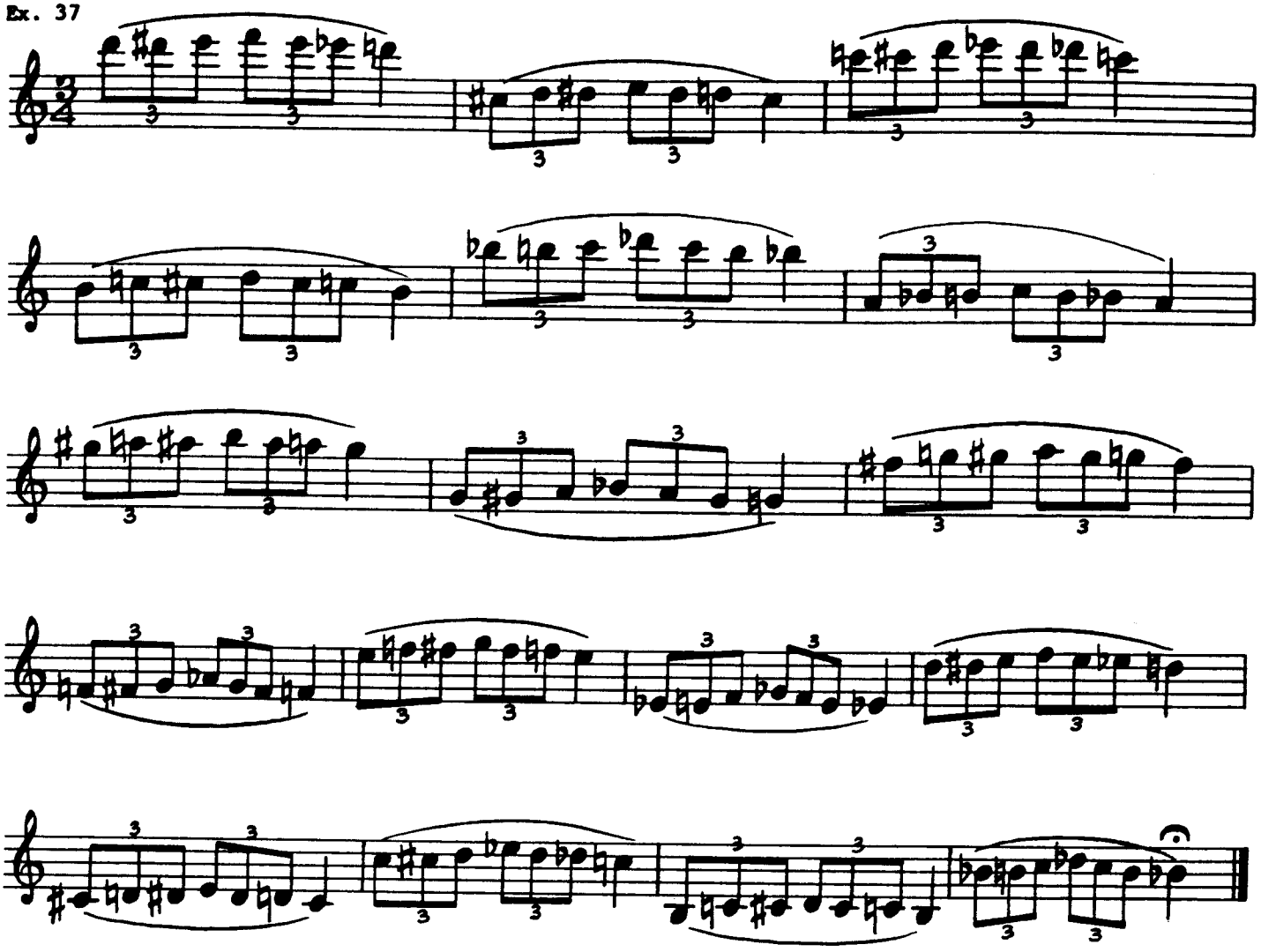

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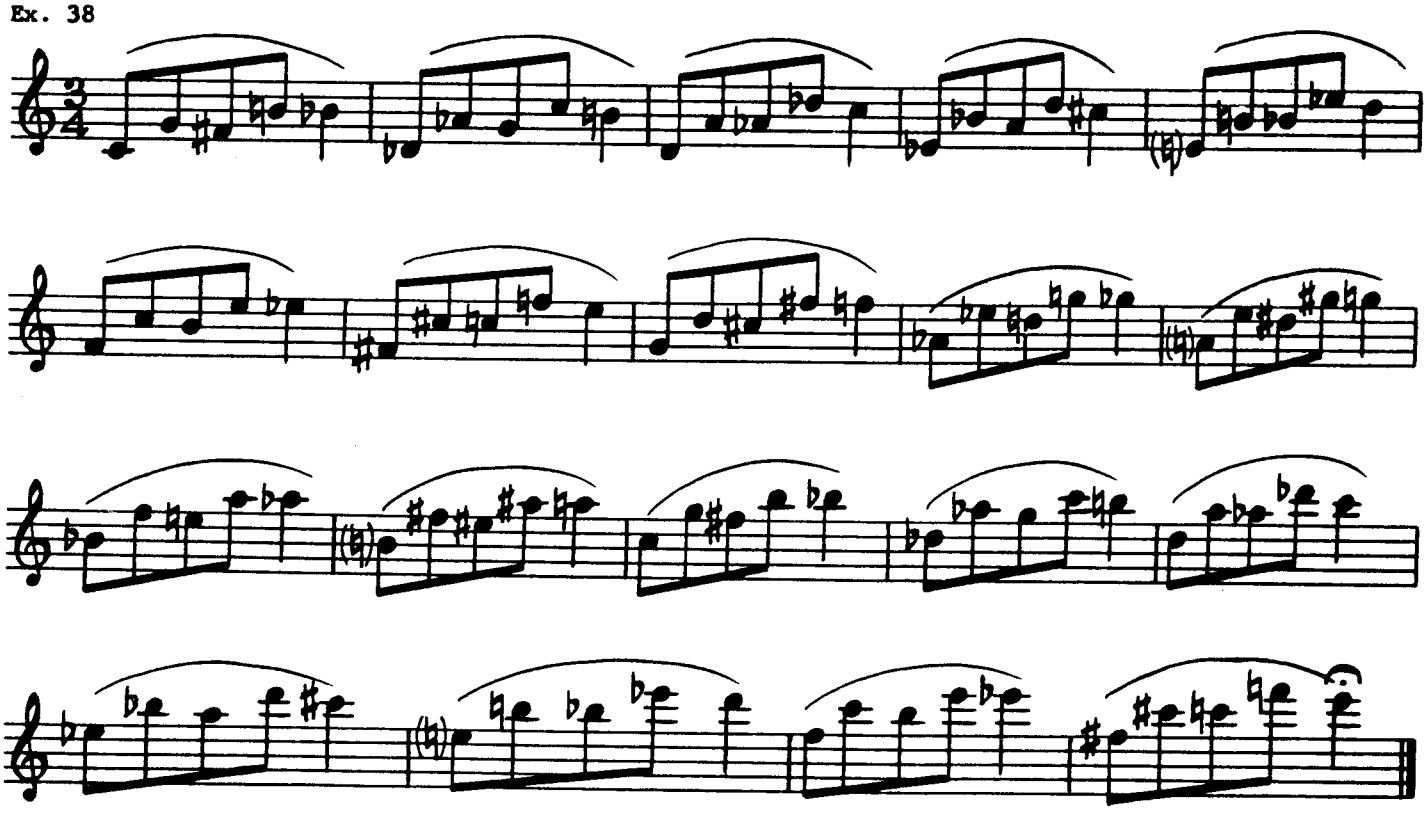

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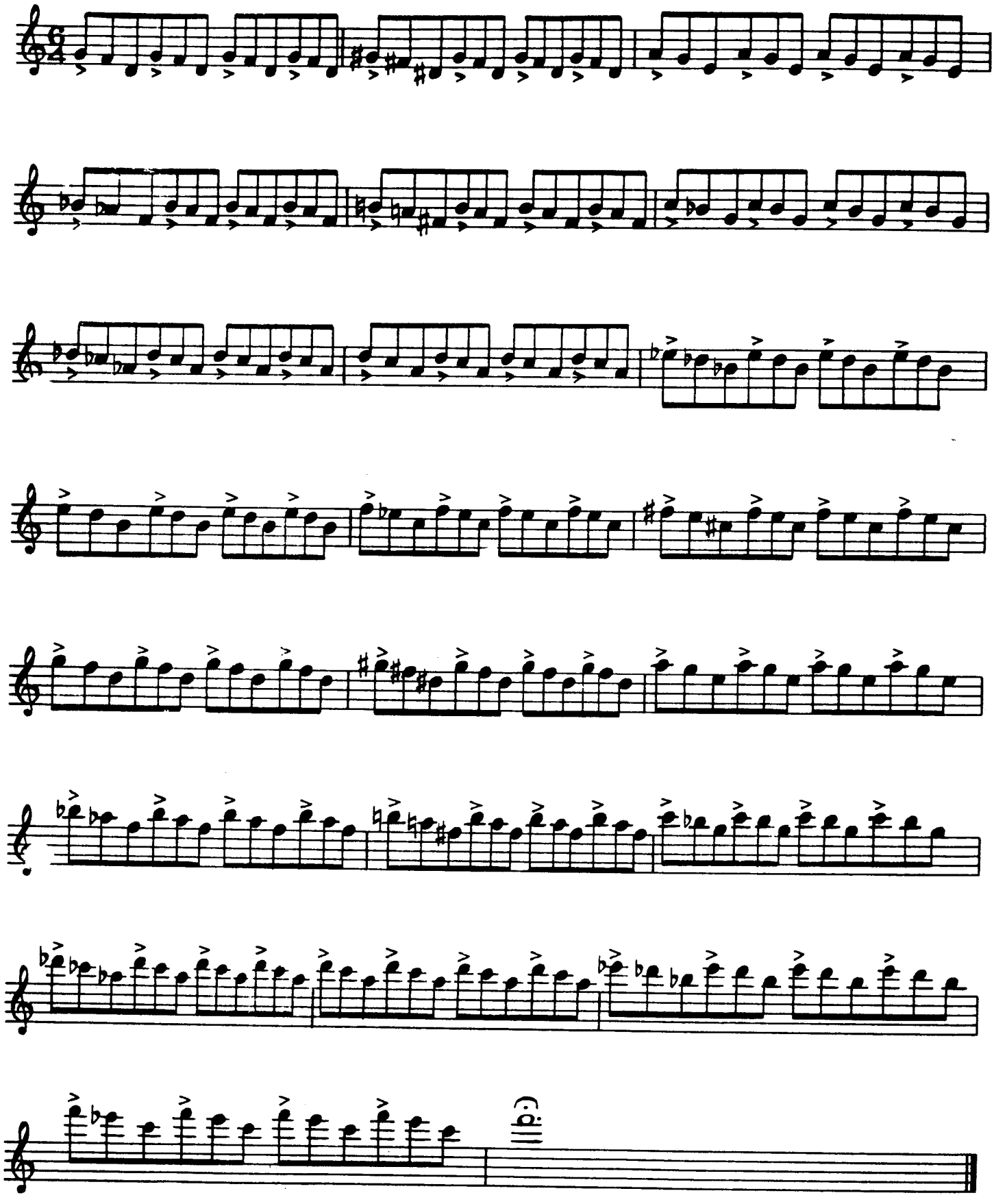

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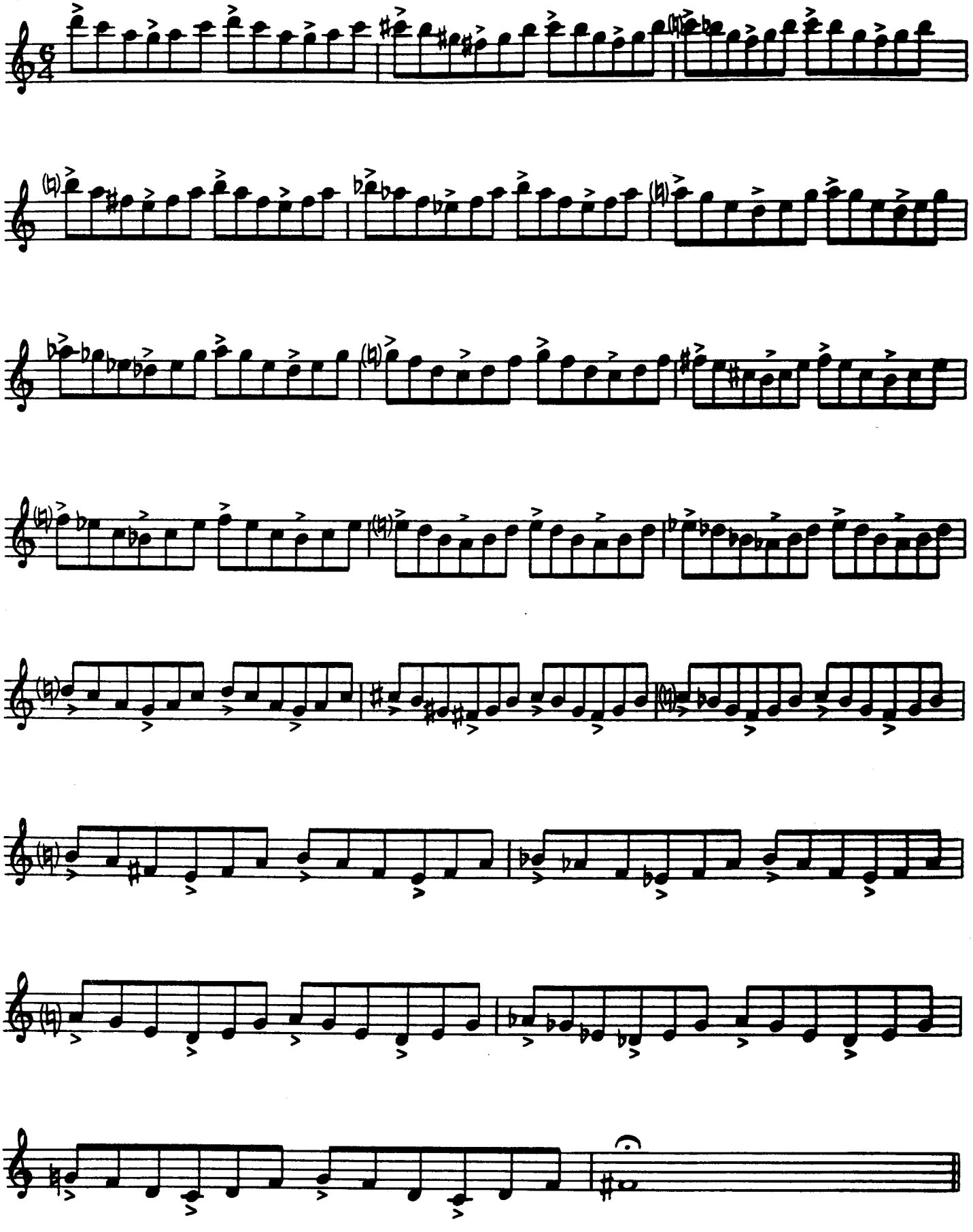

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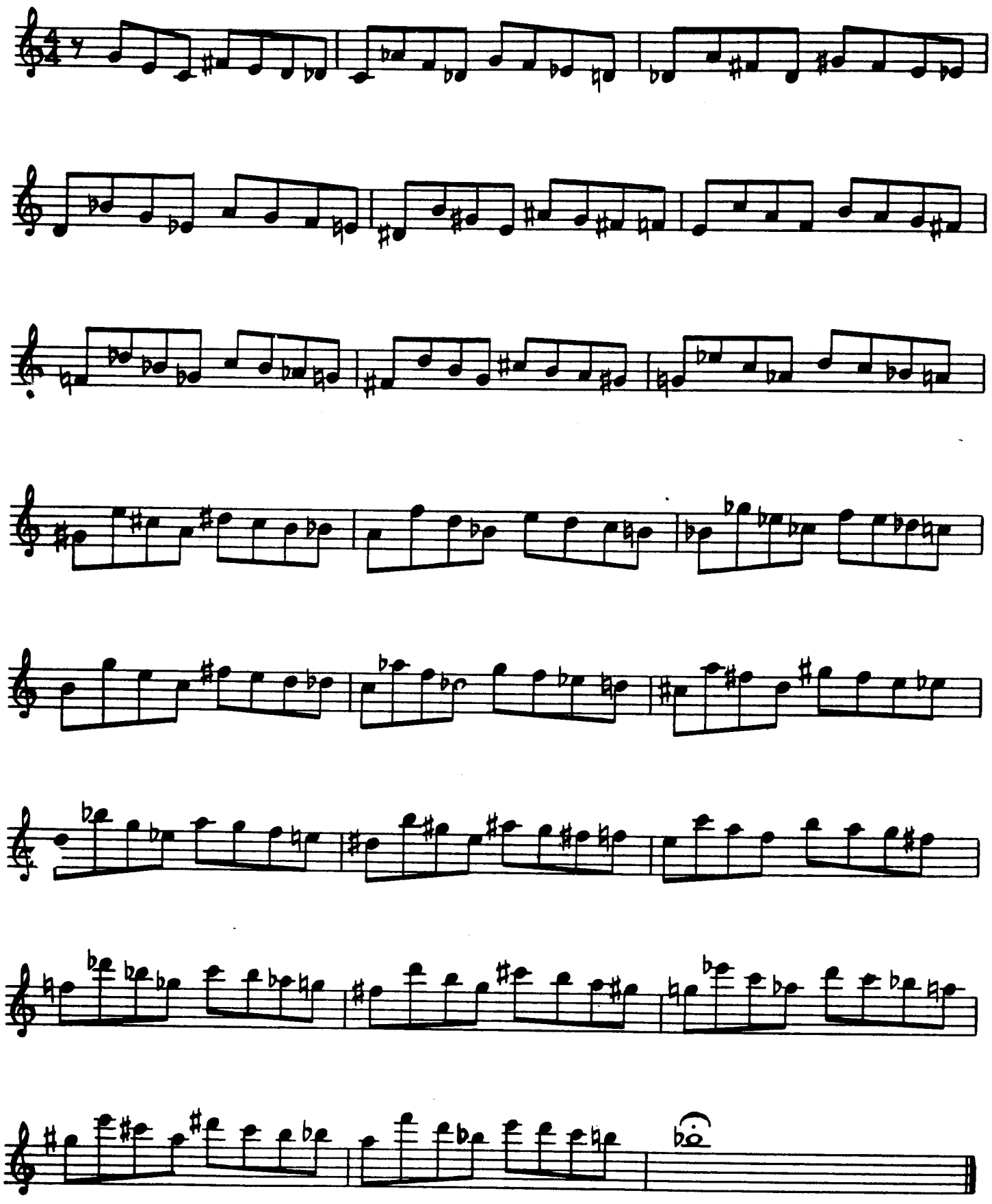

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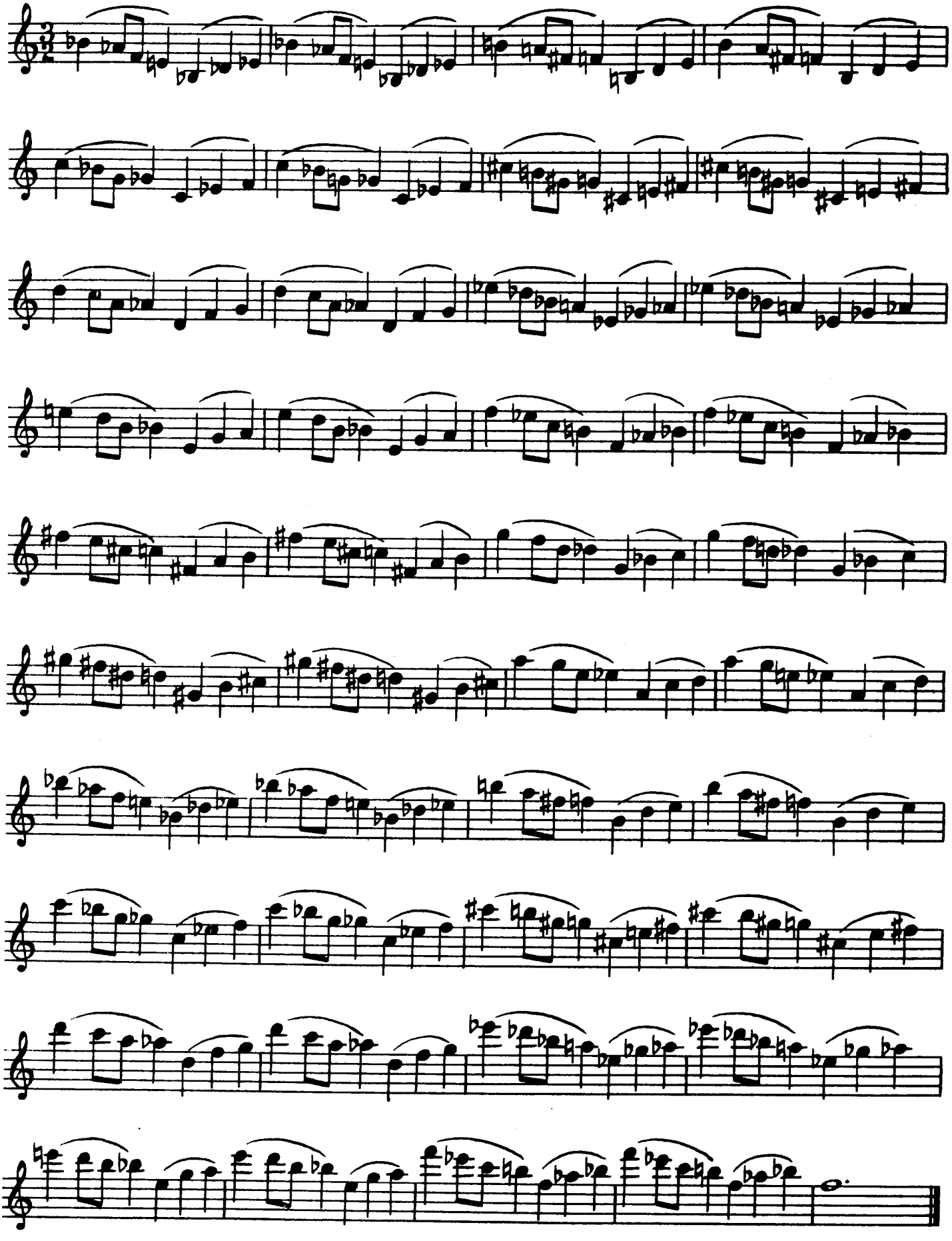
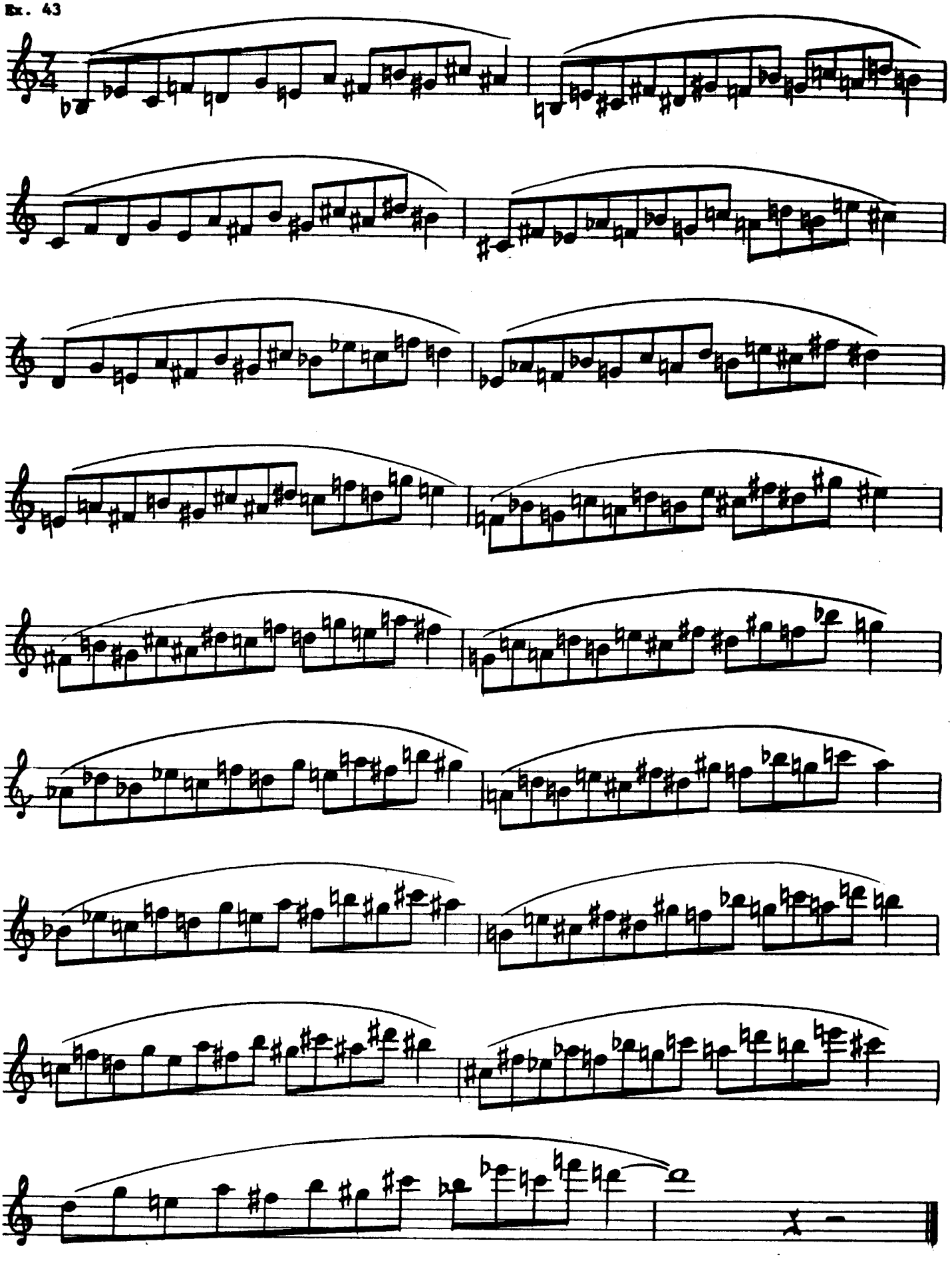
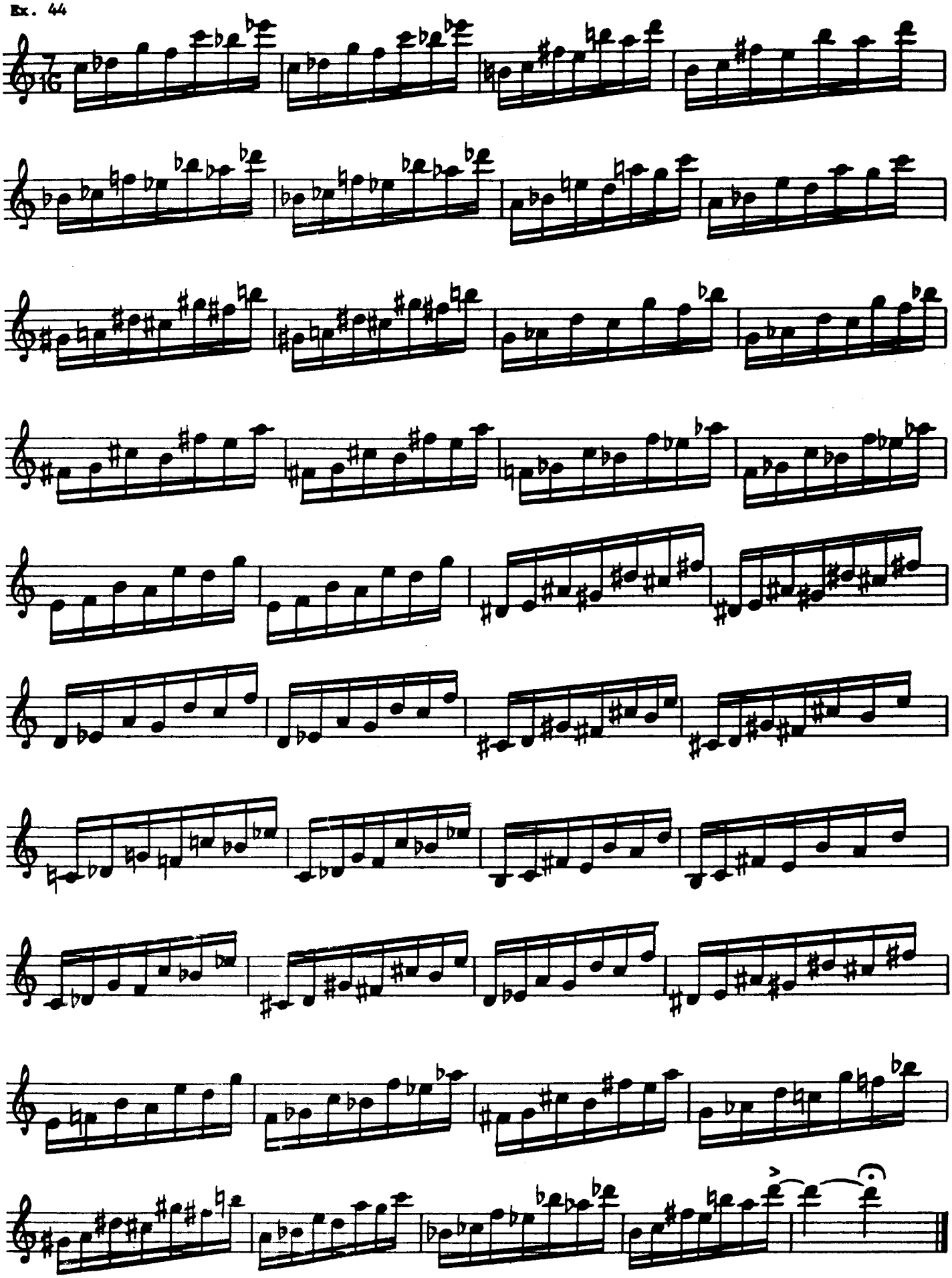


Ex. 43



Ex. 44



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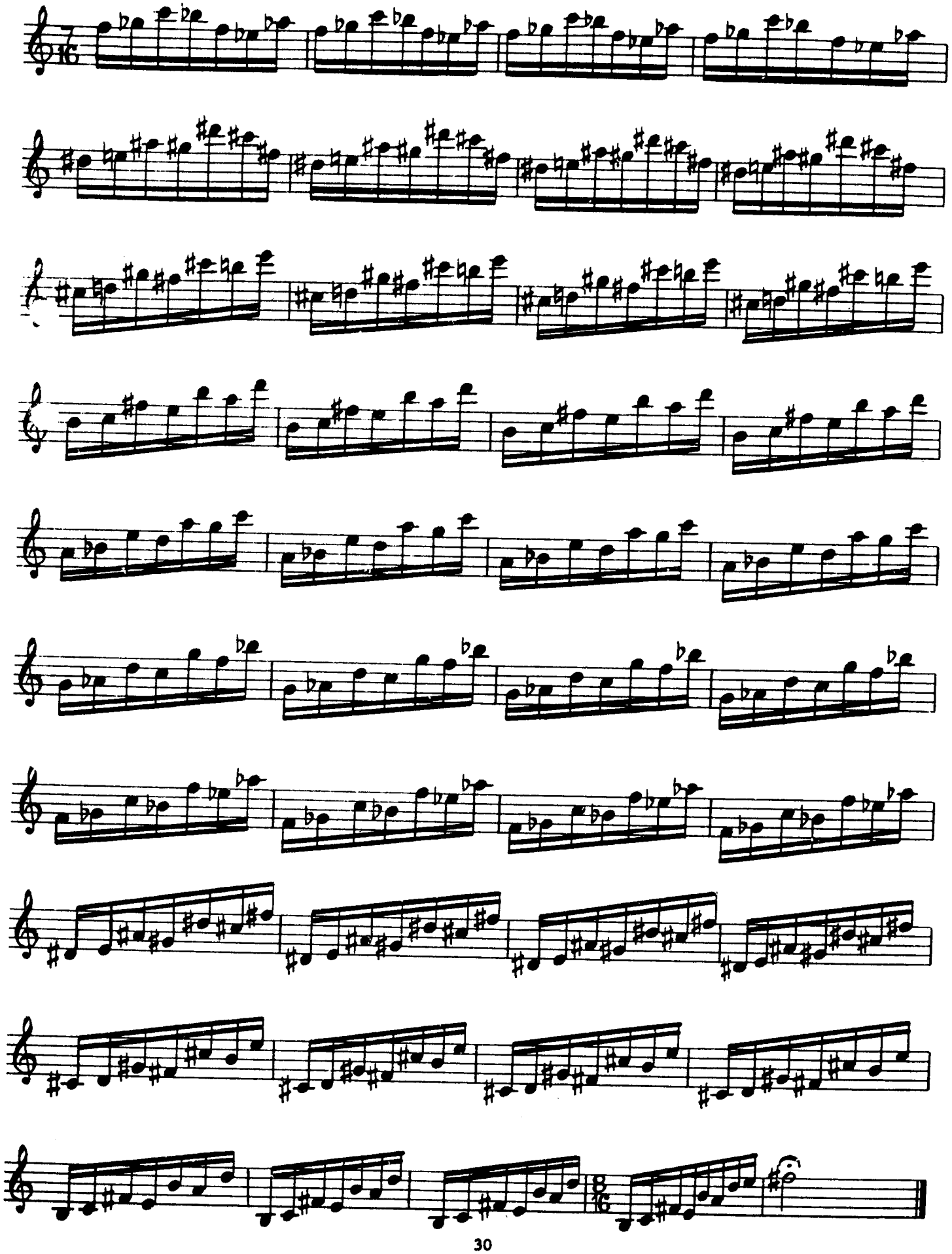

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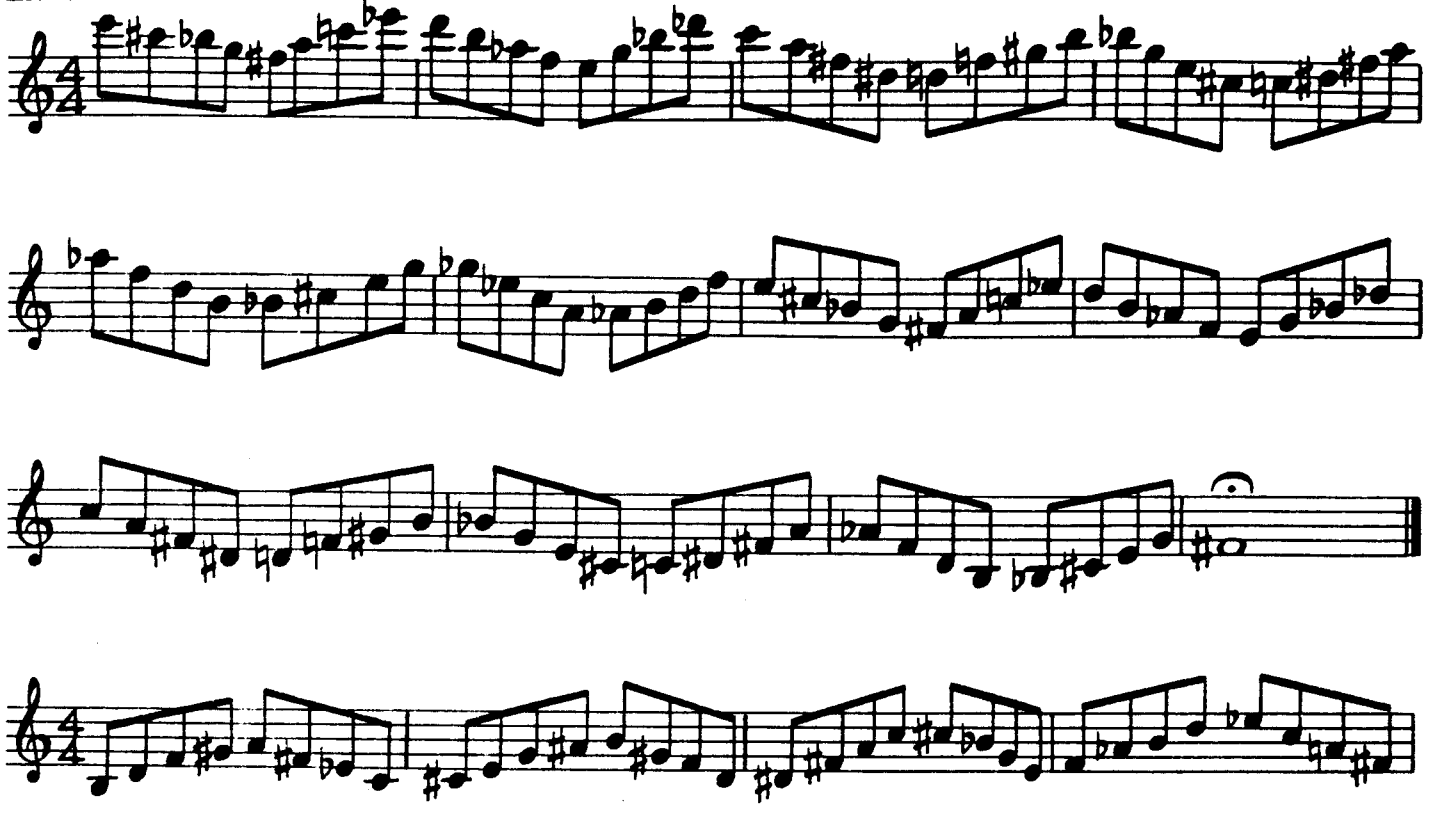

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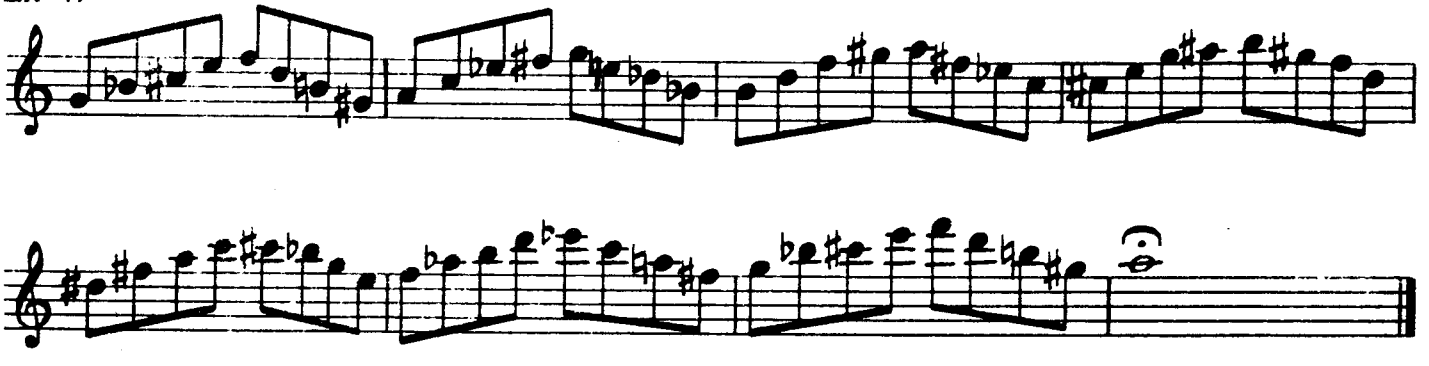

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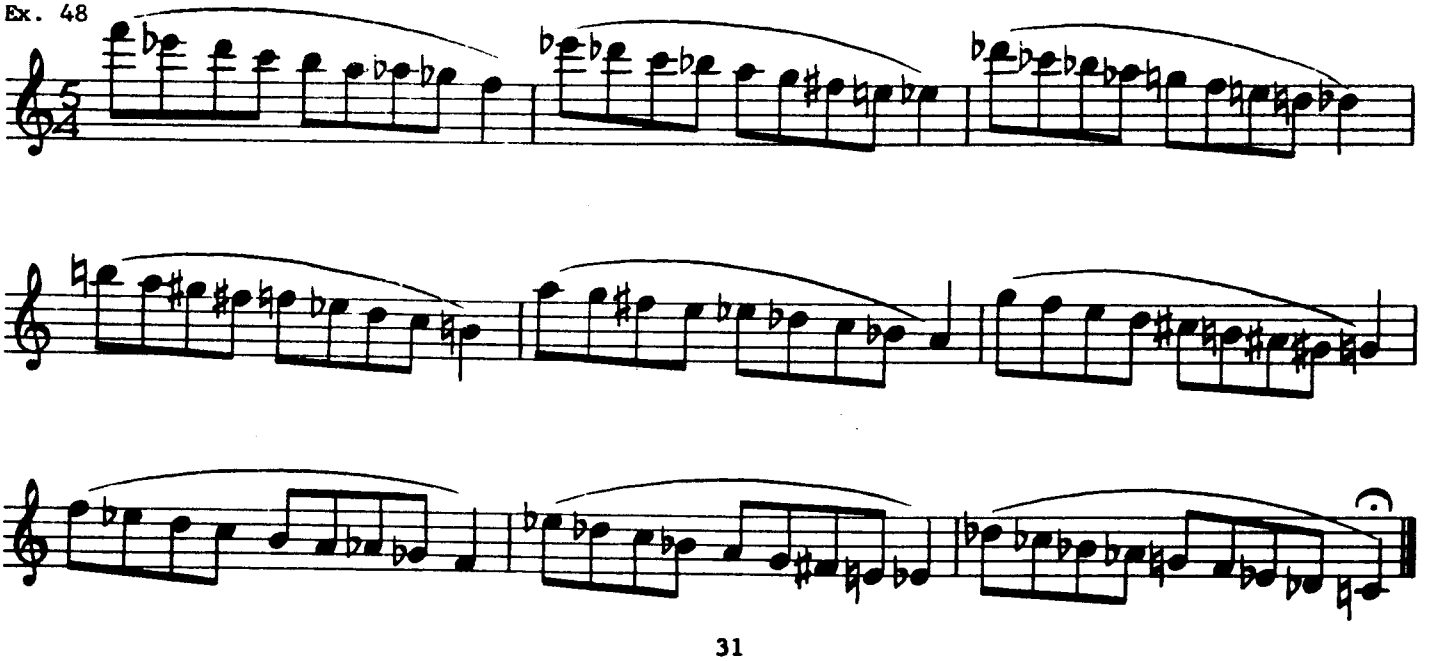

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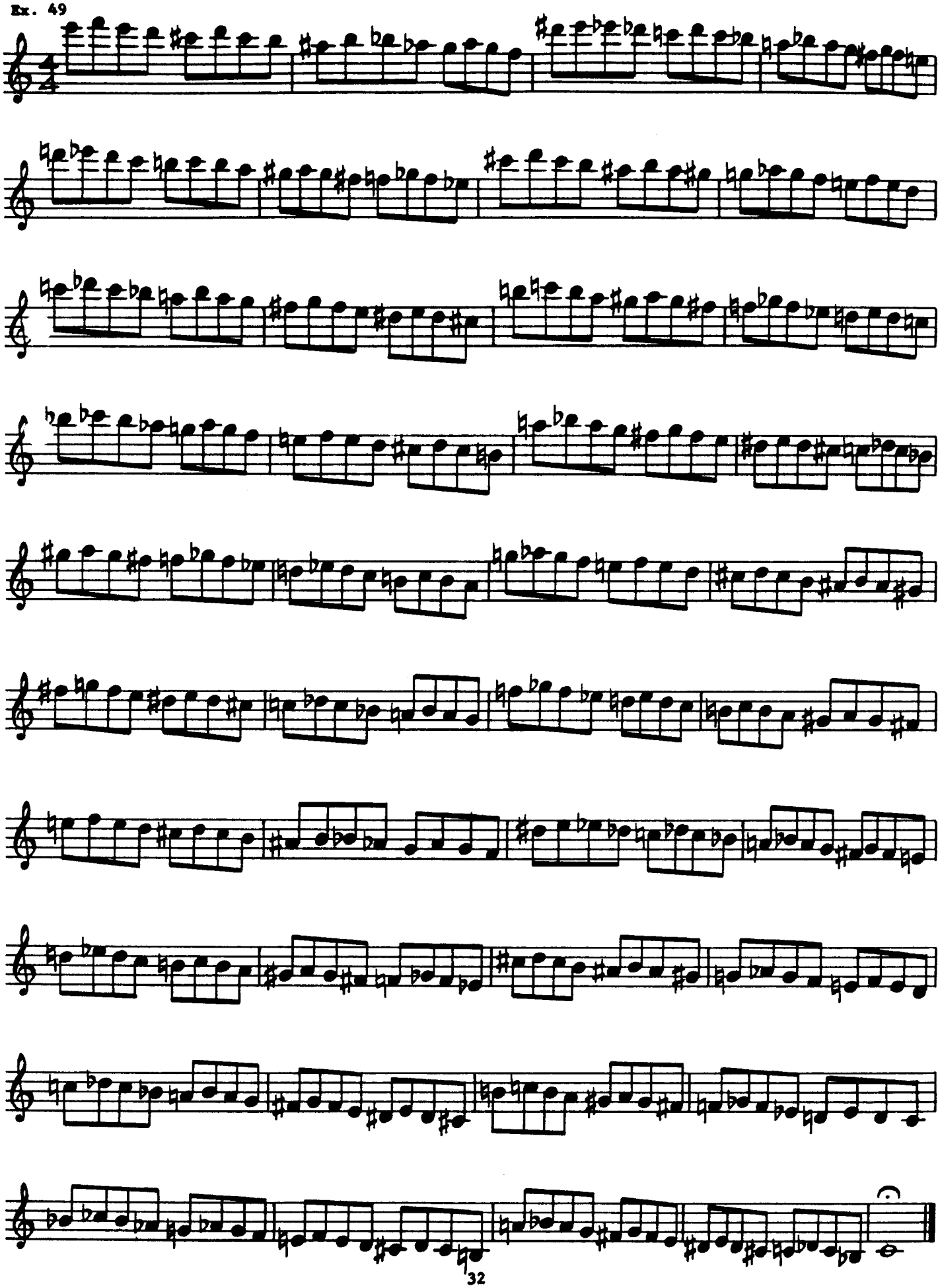

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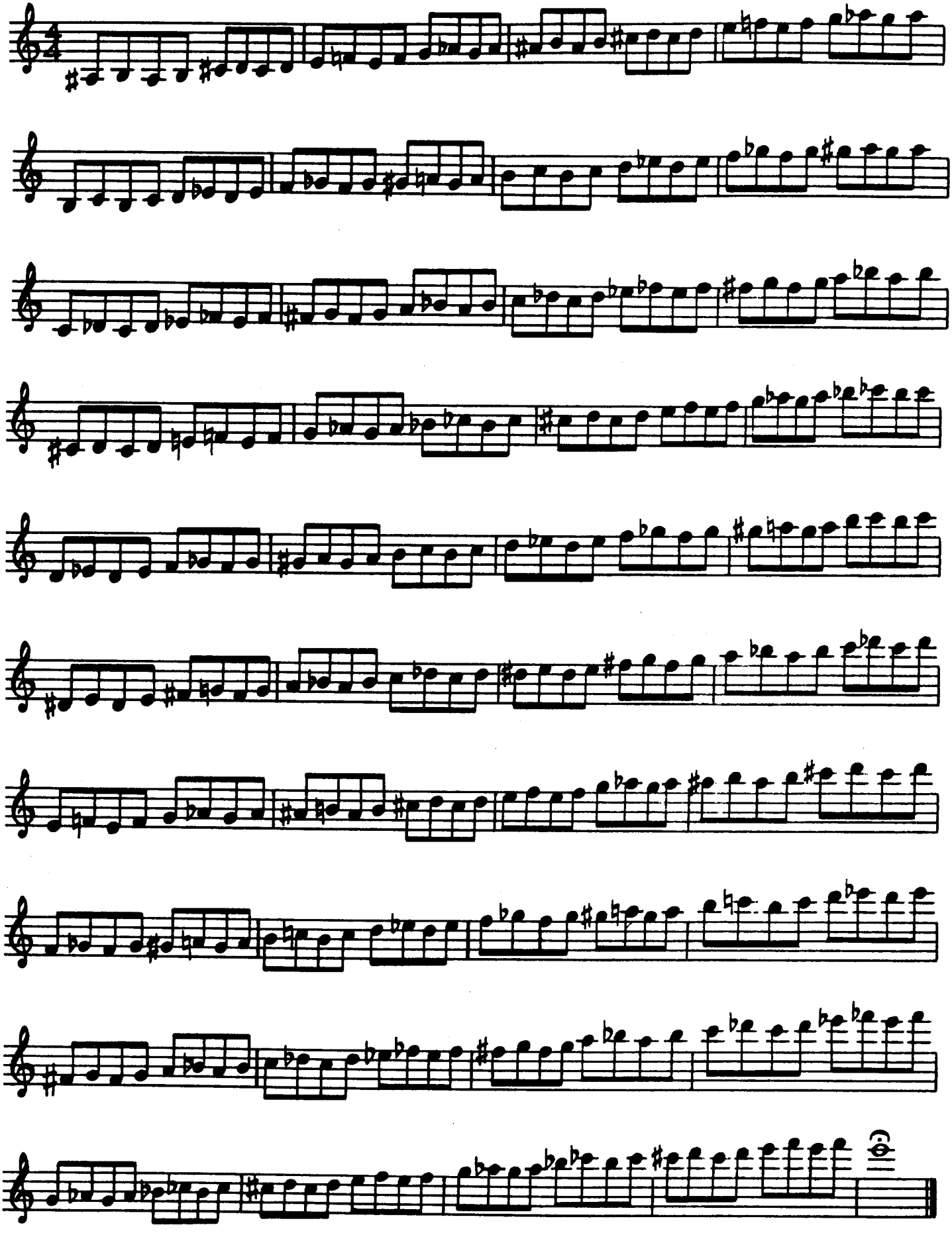

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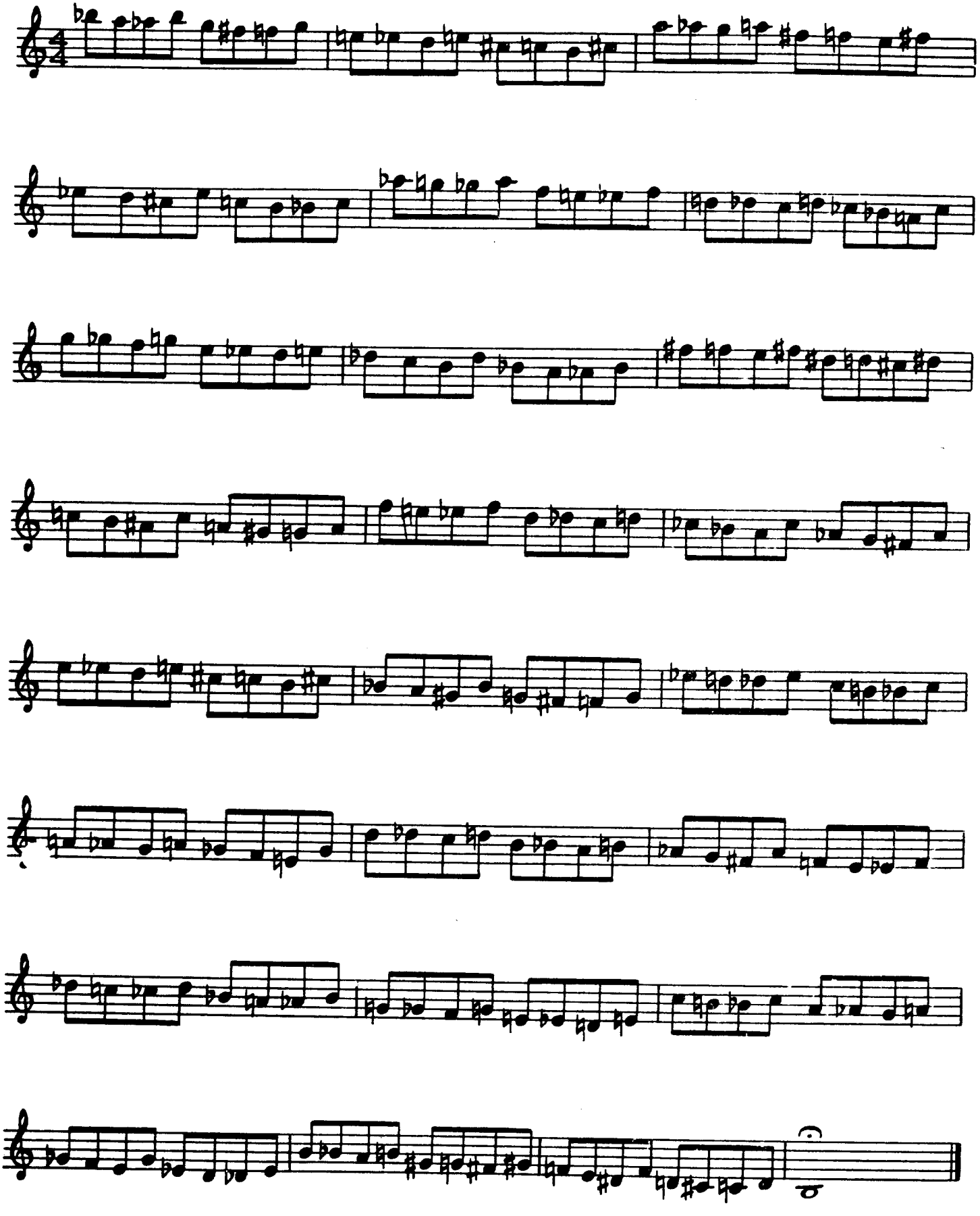

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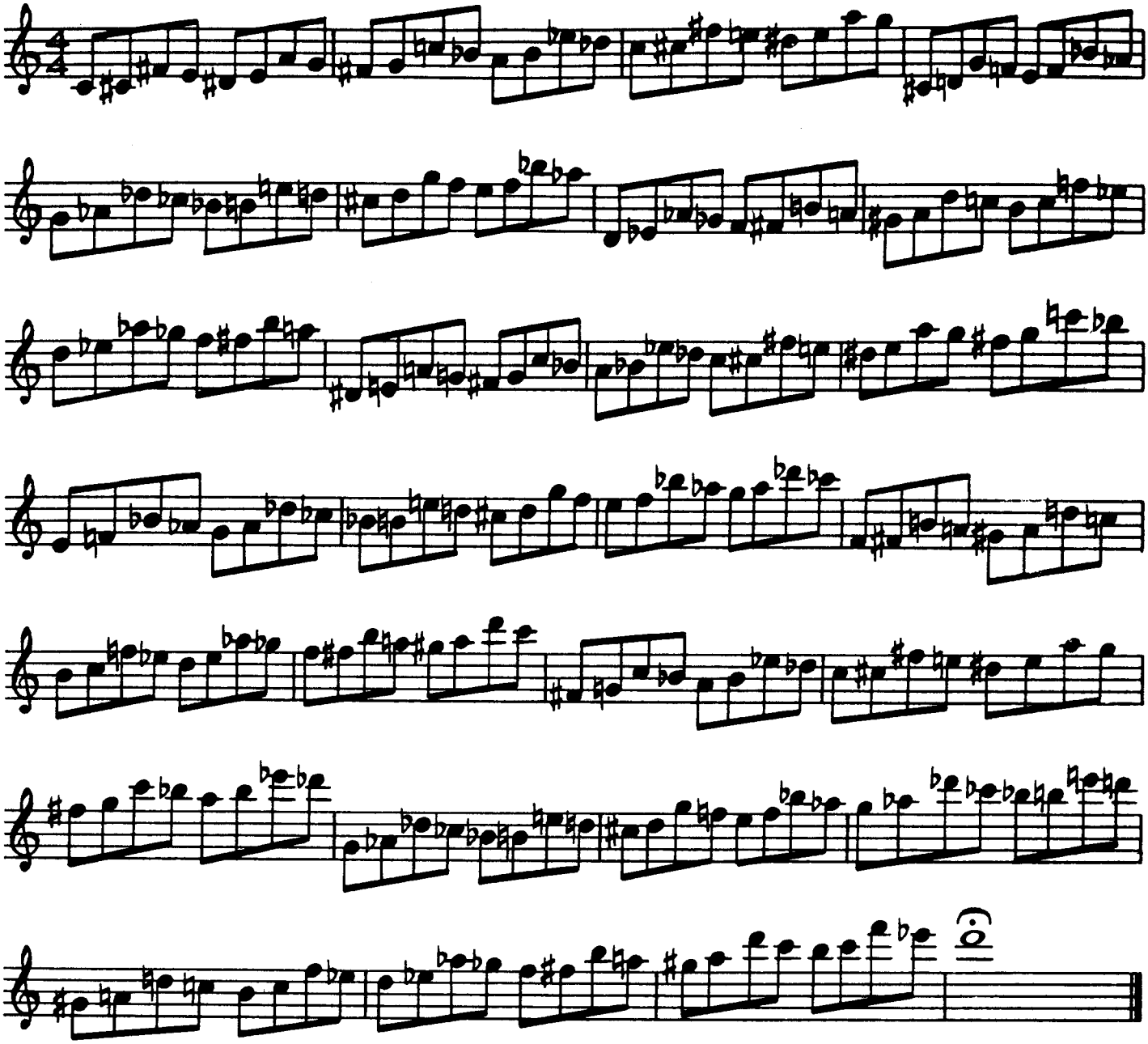

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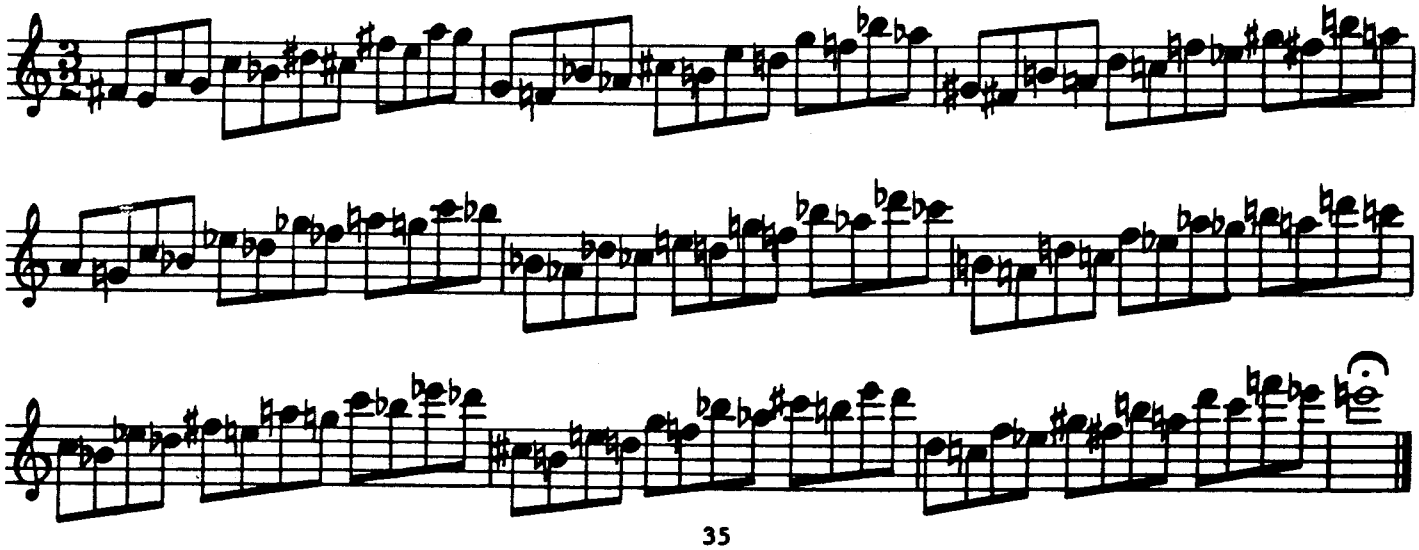

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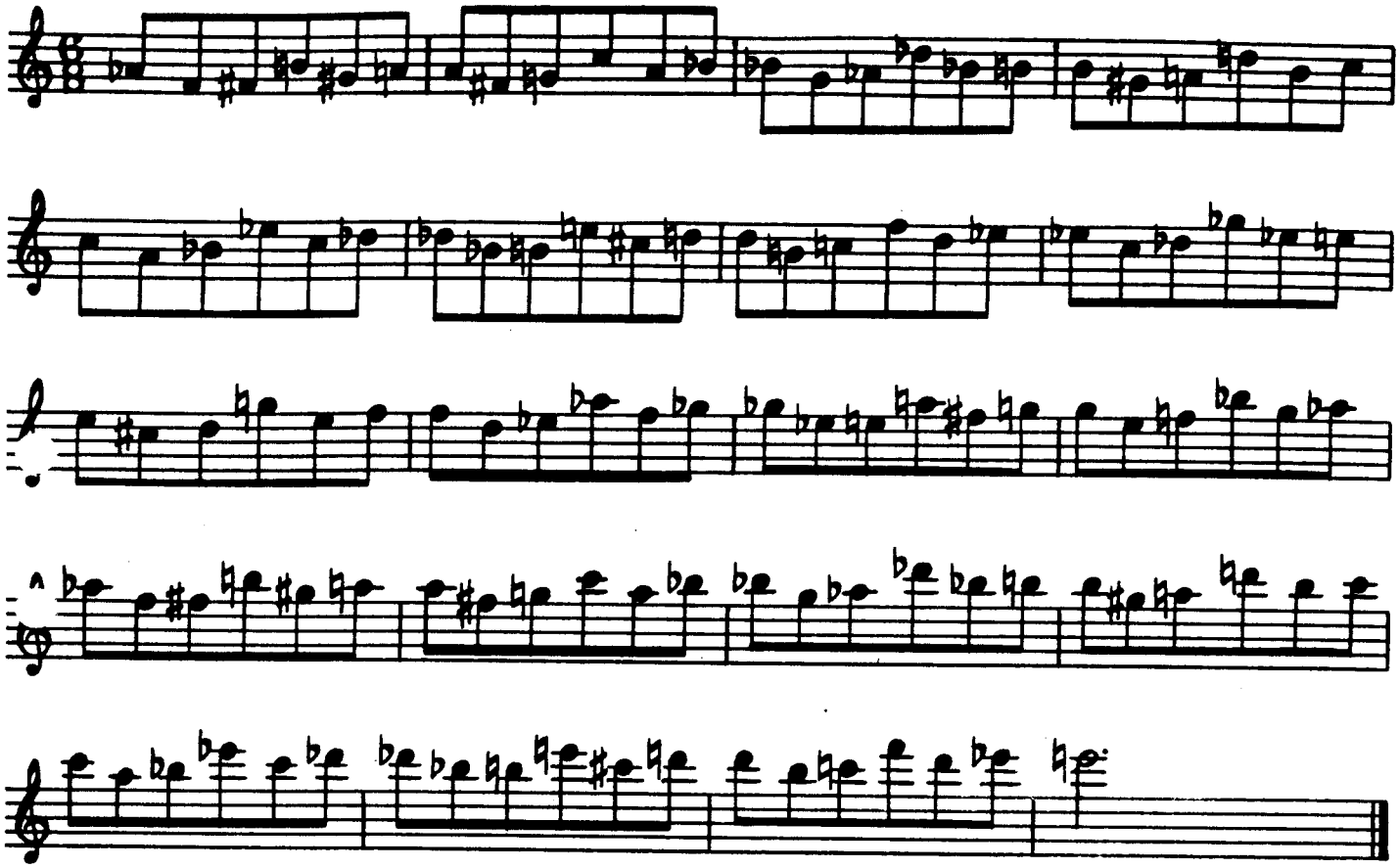

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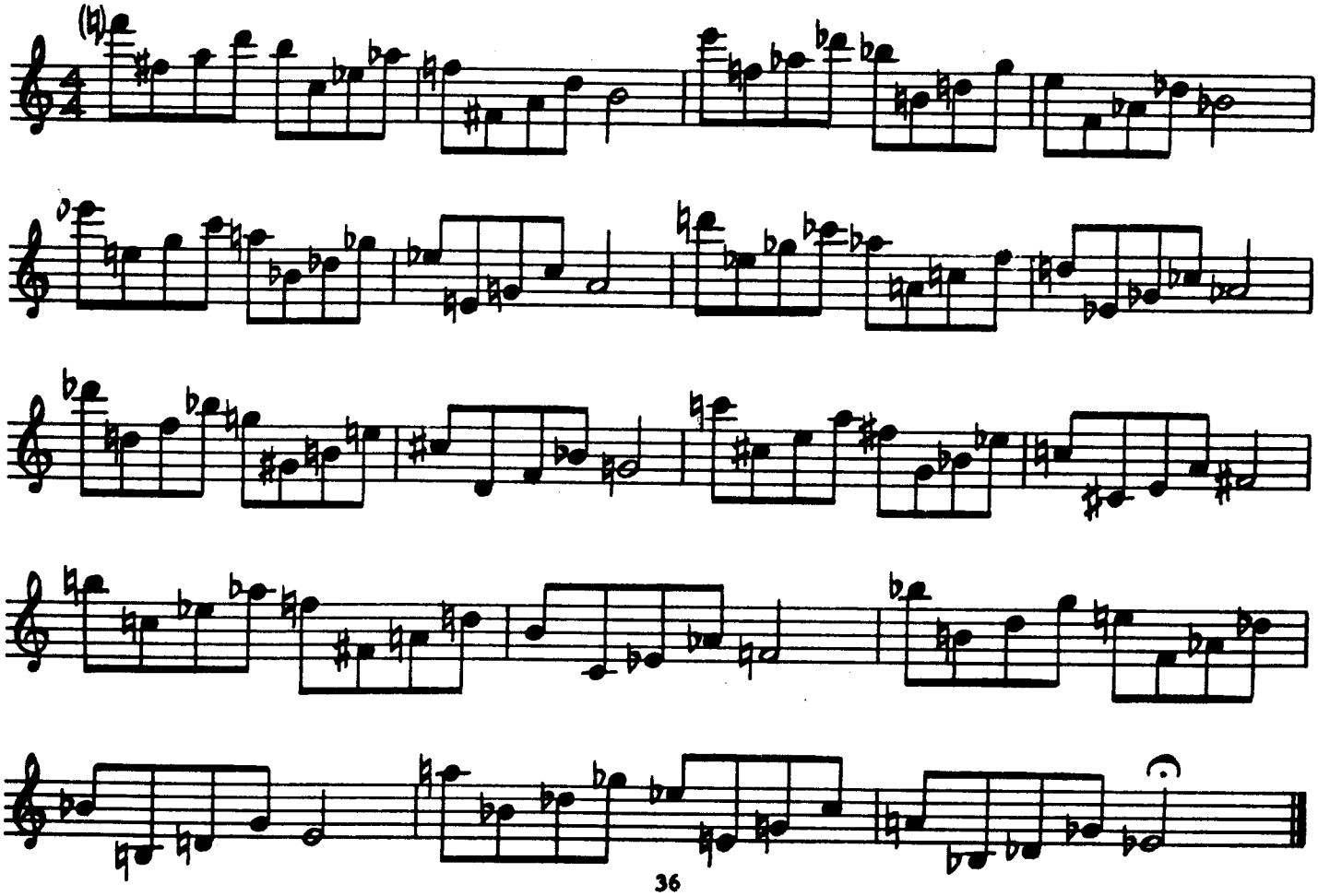

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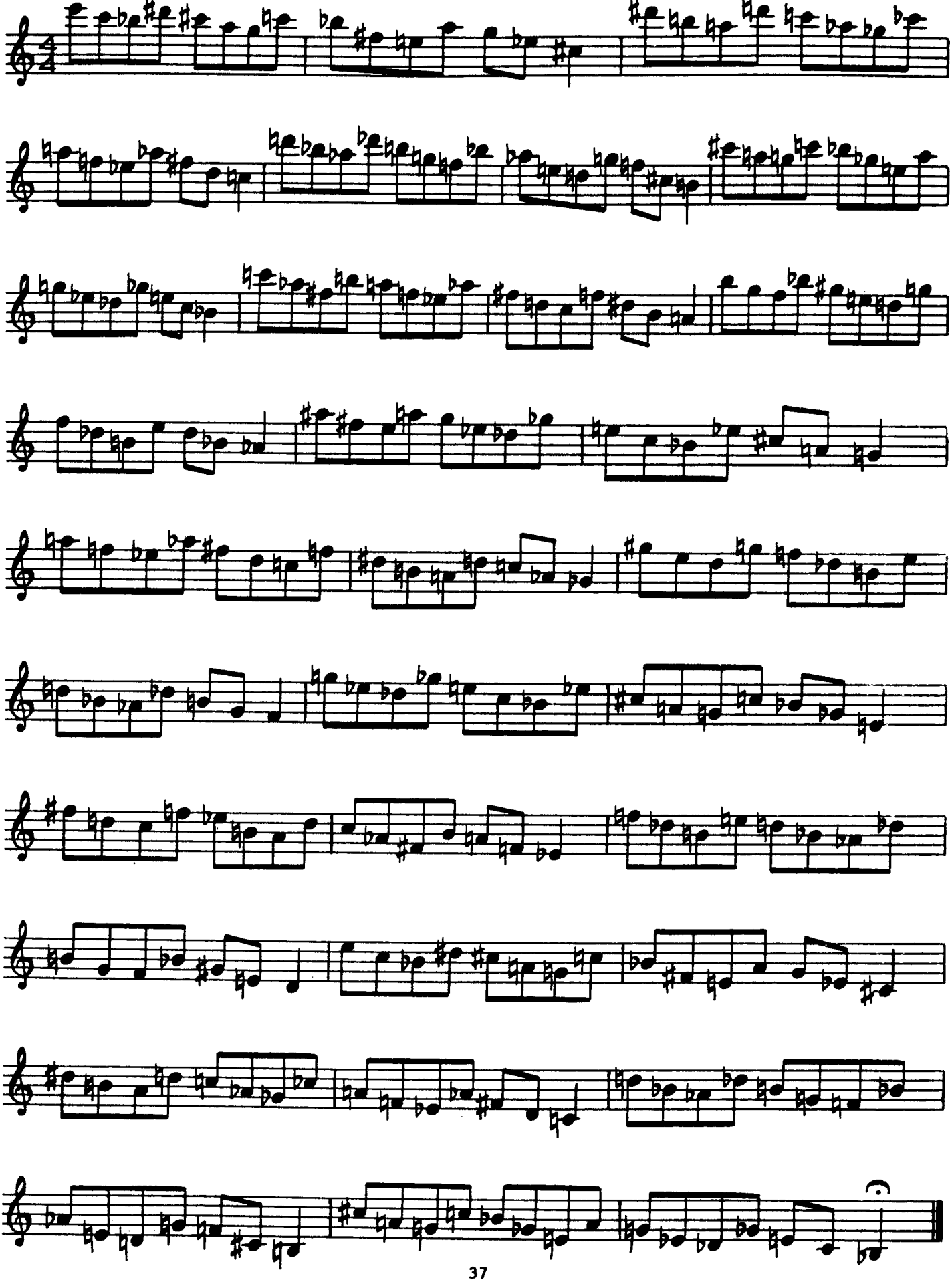

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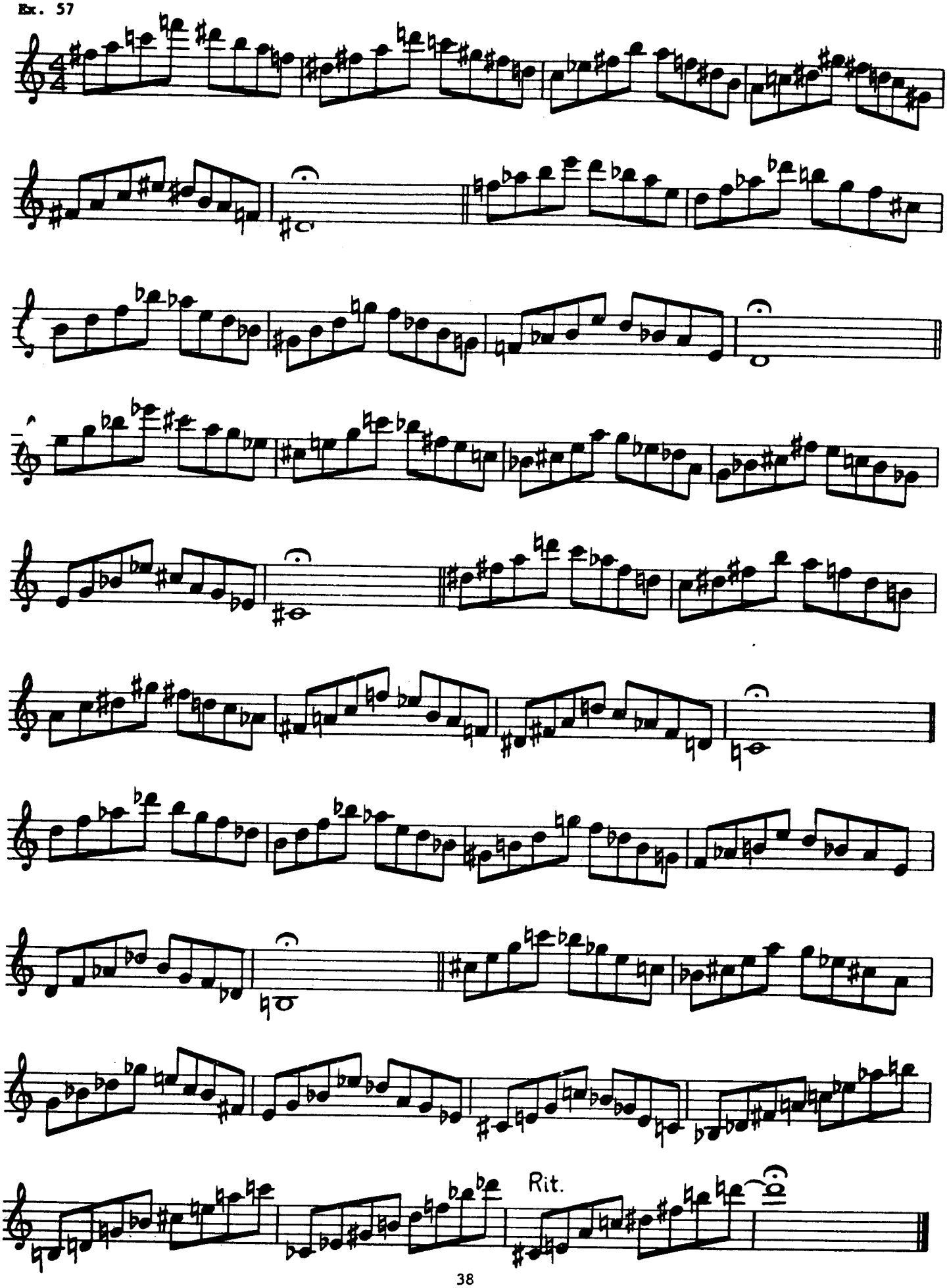

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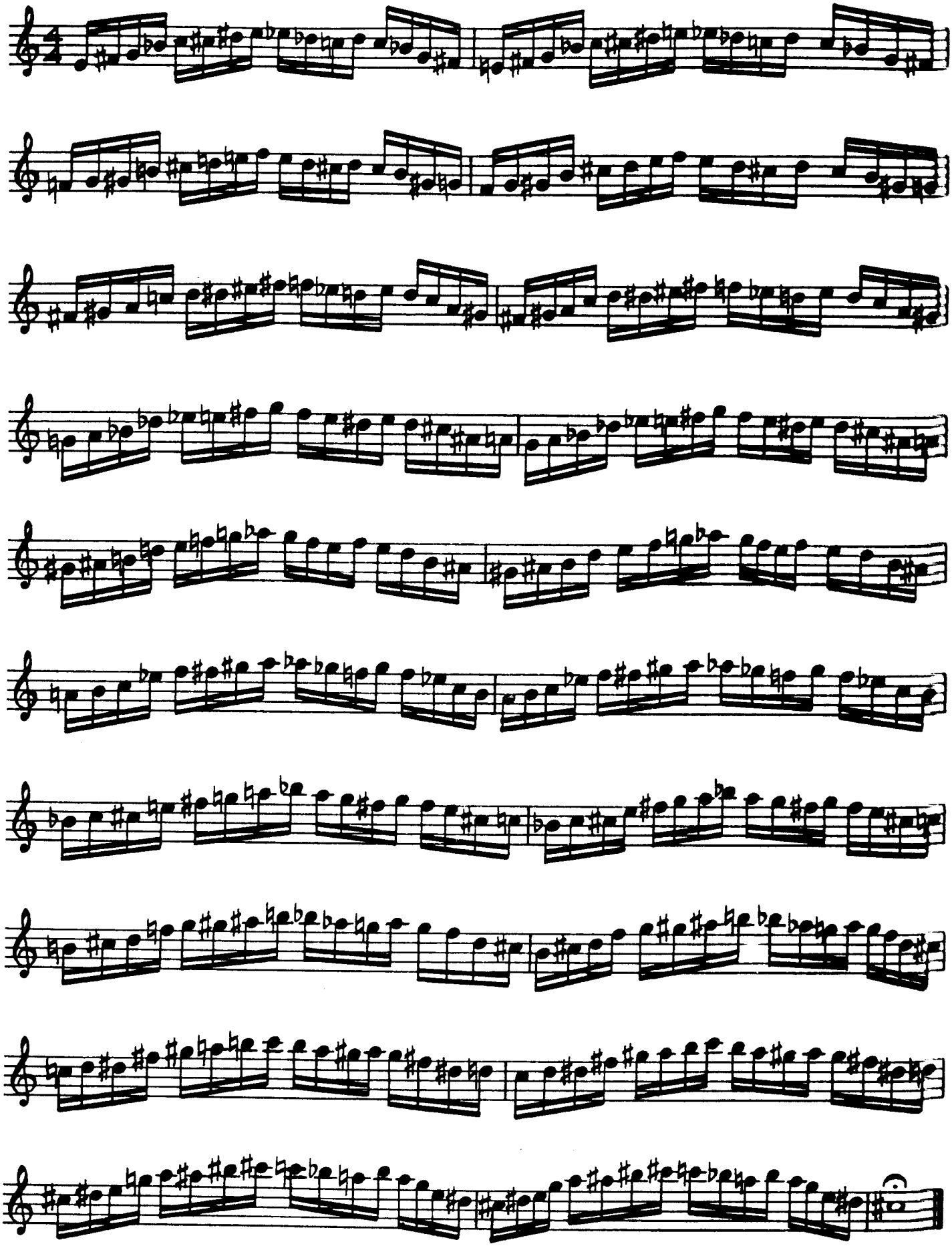

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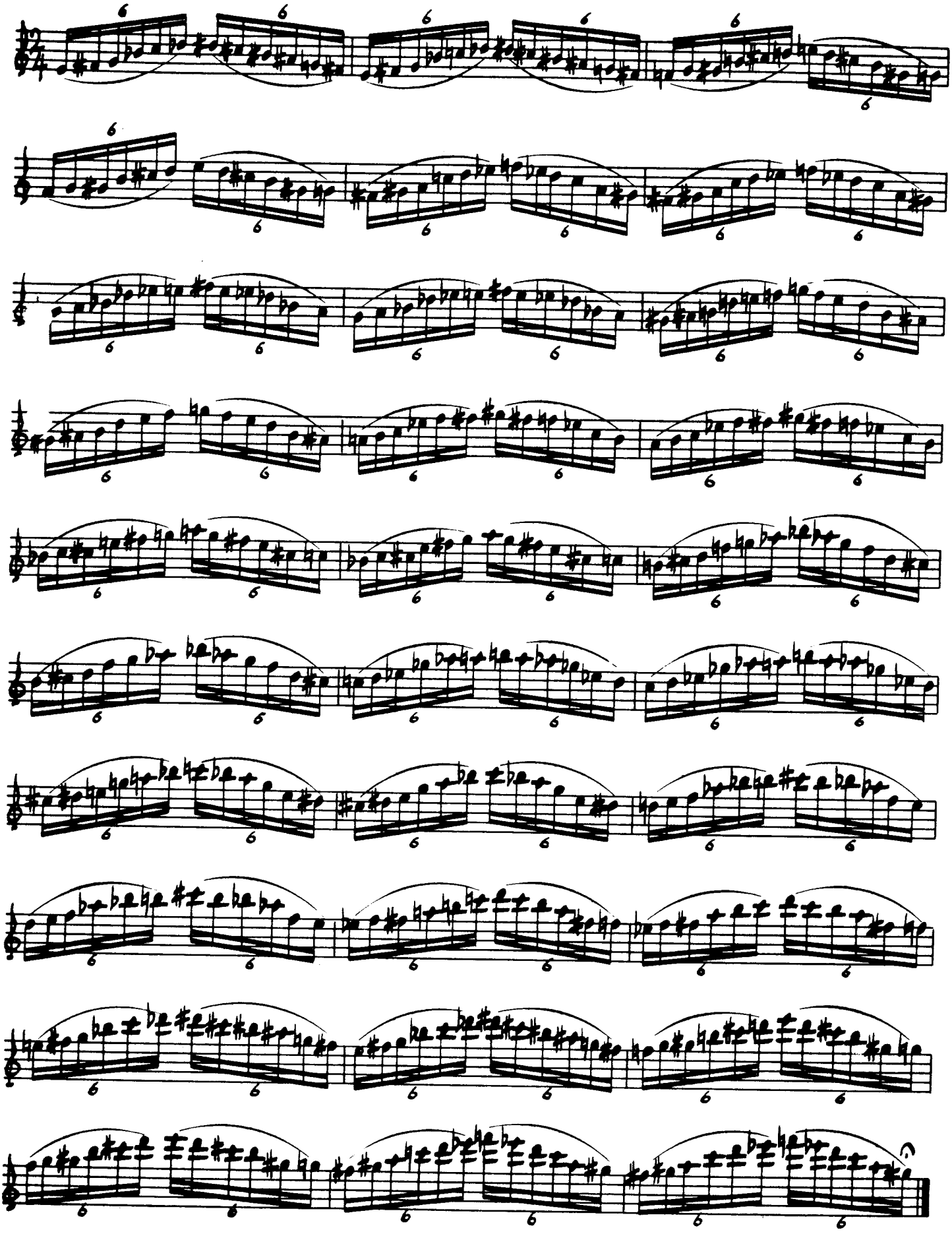

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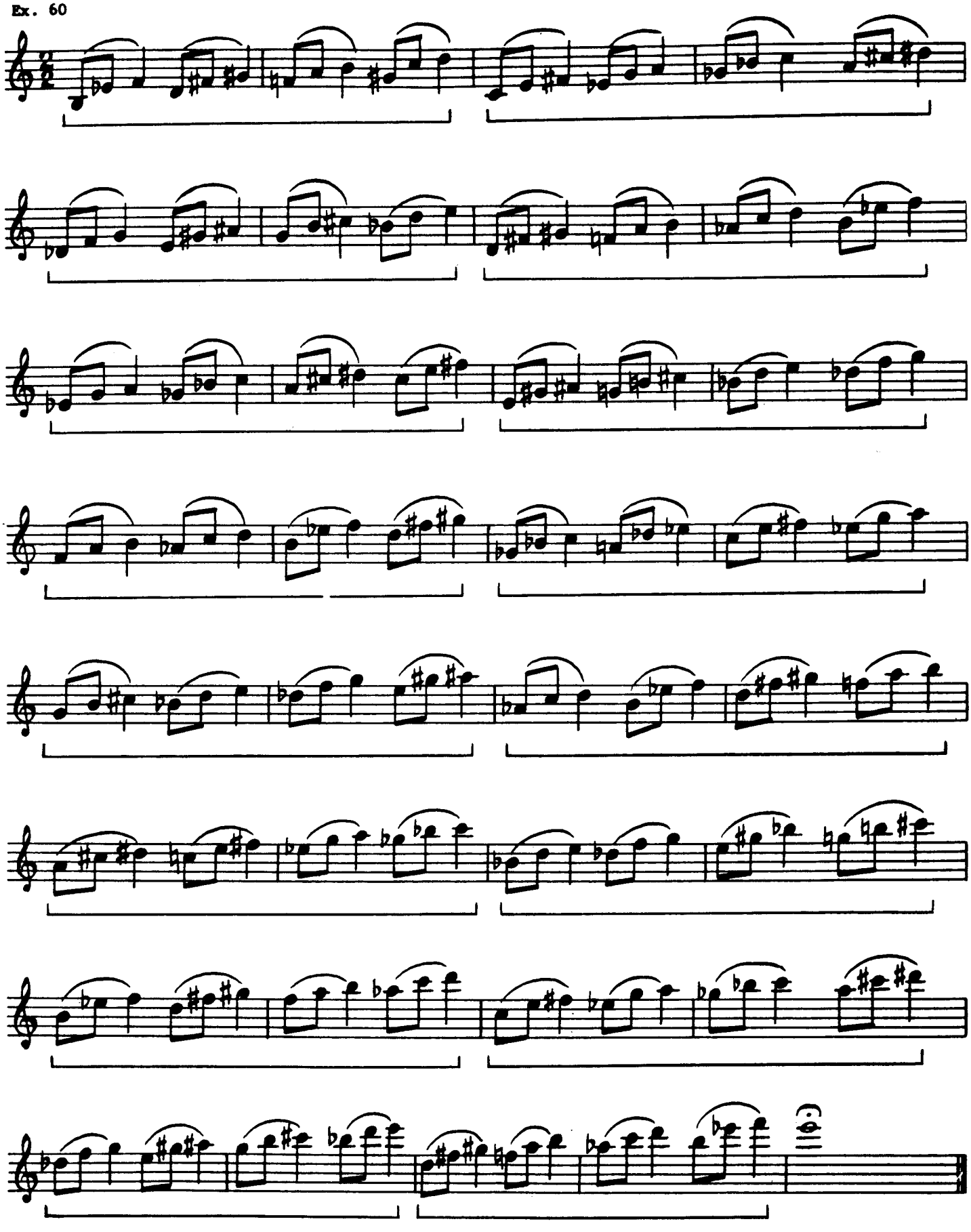

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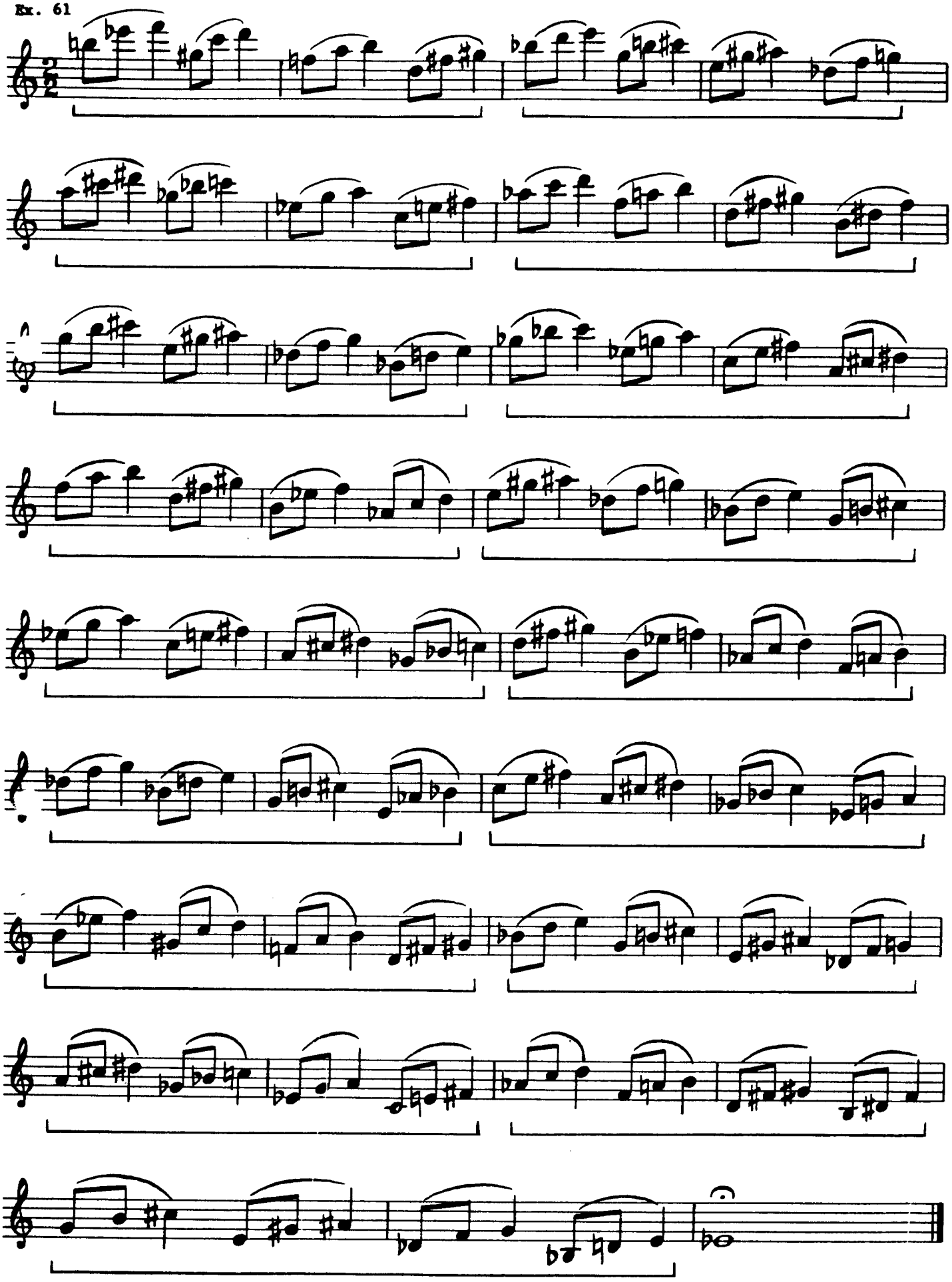

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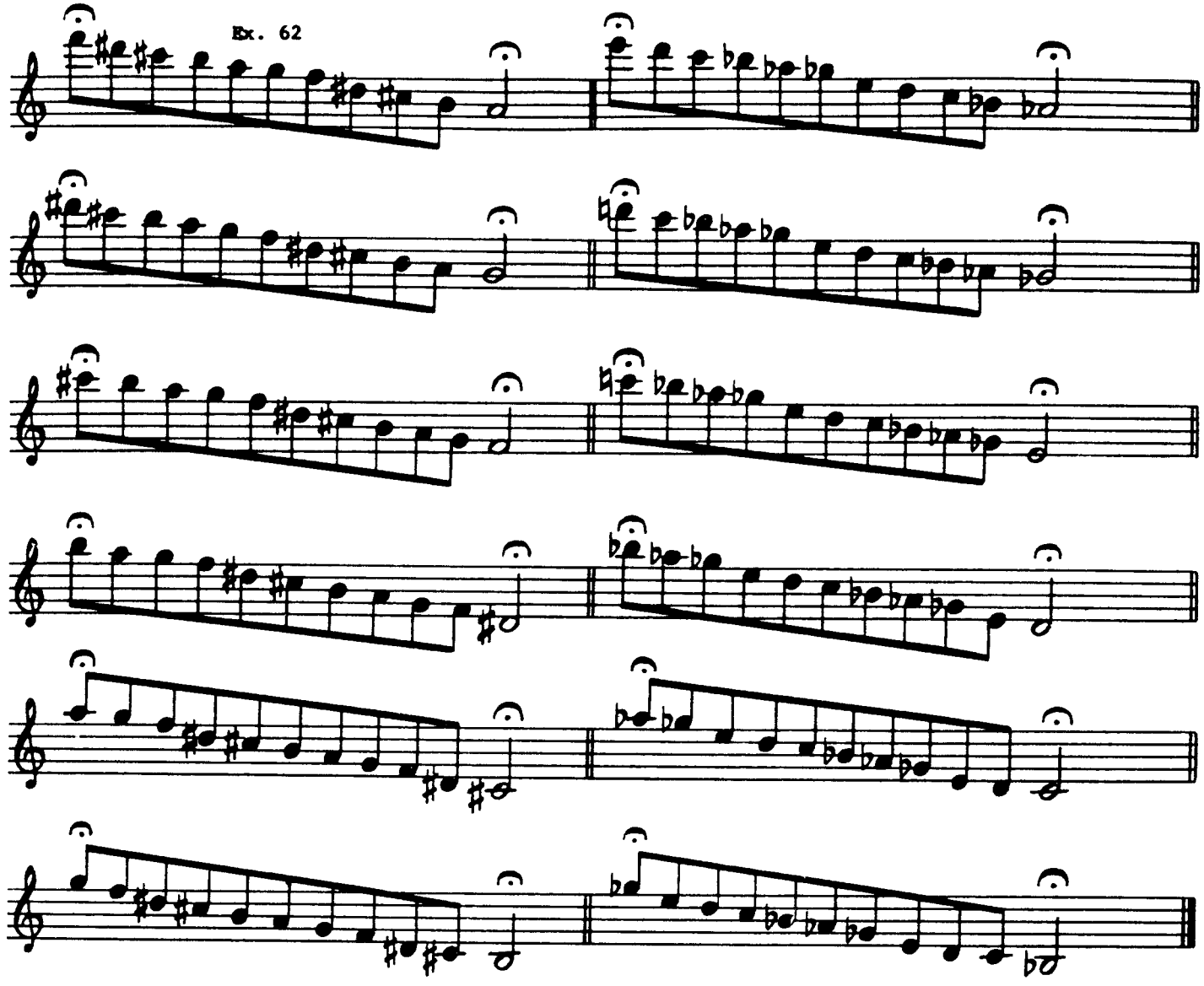

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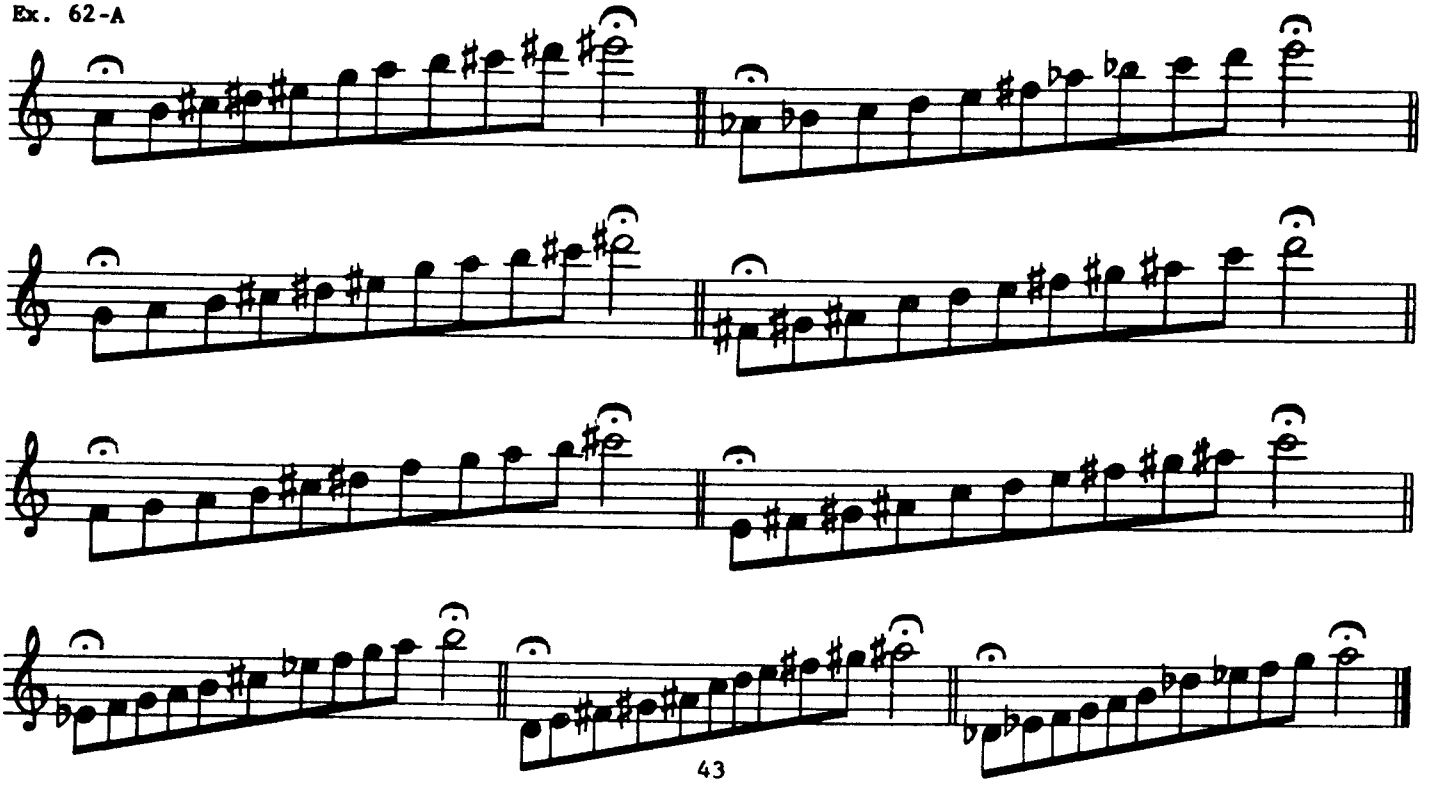

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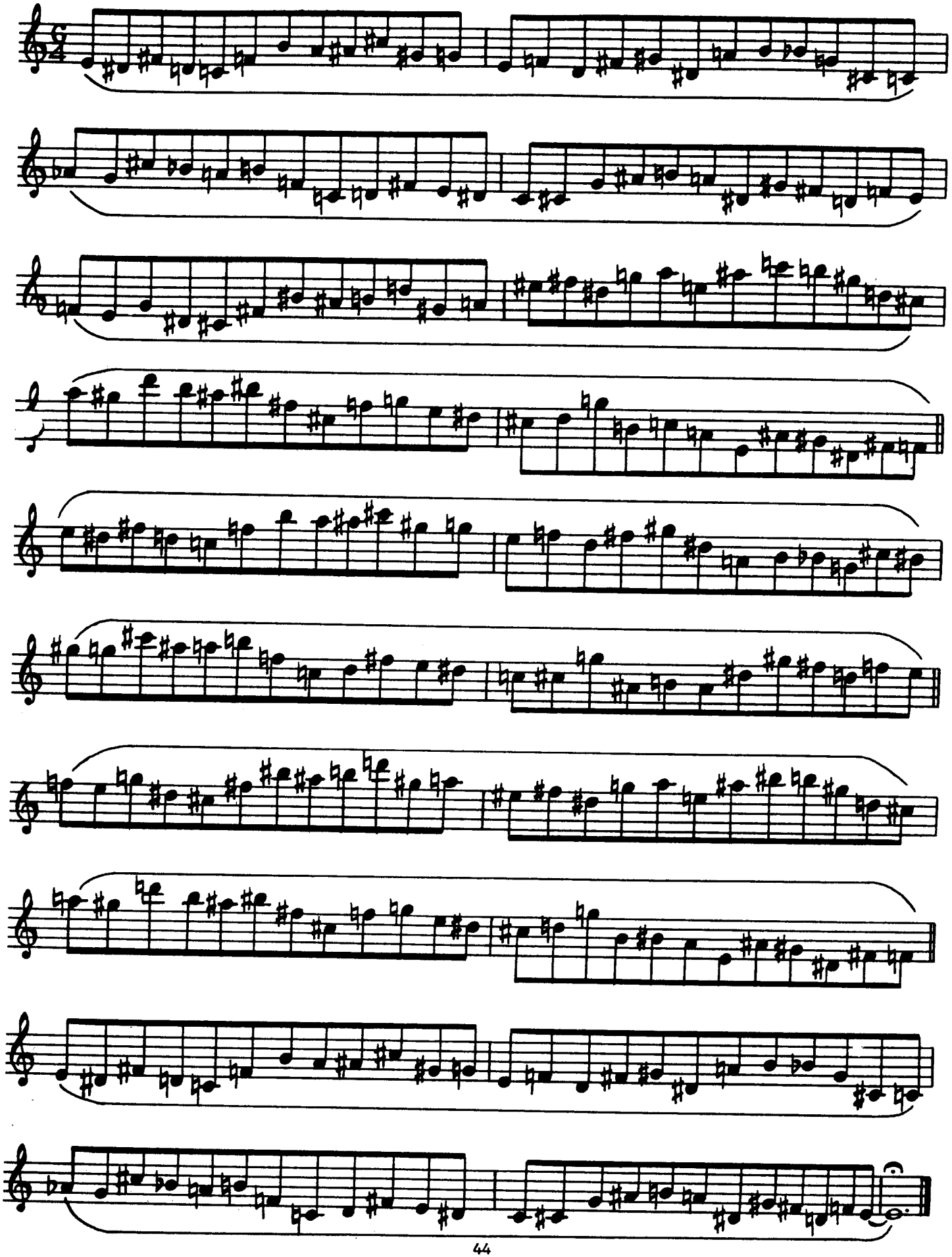

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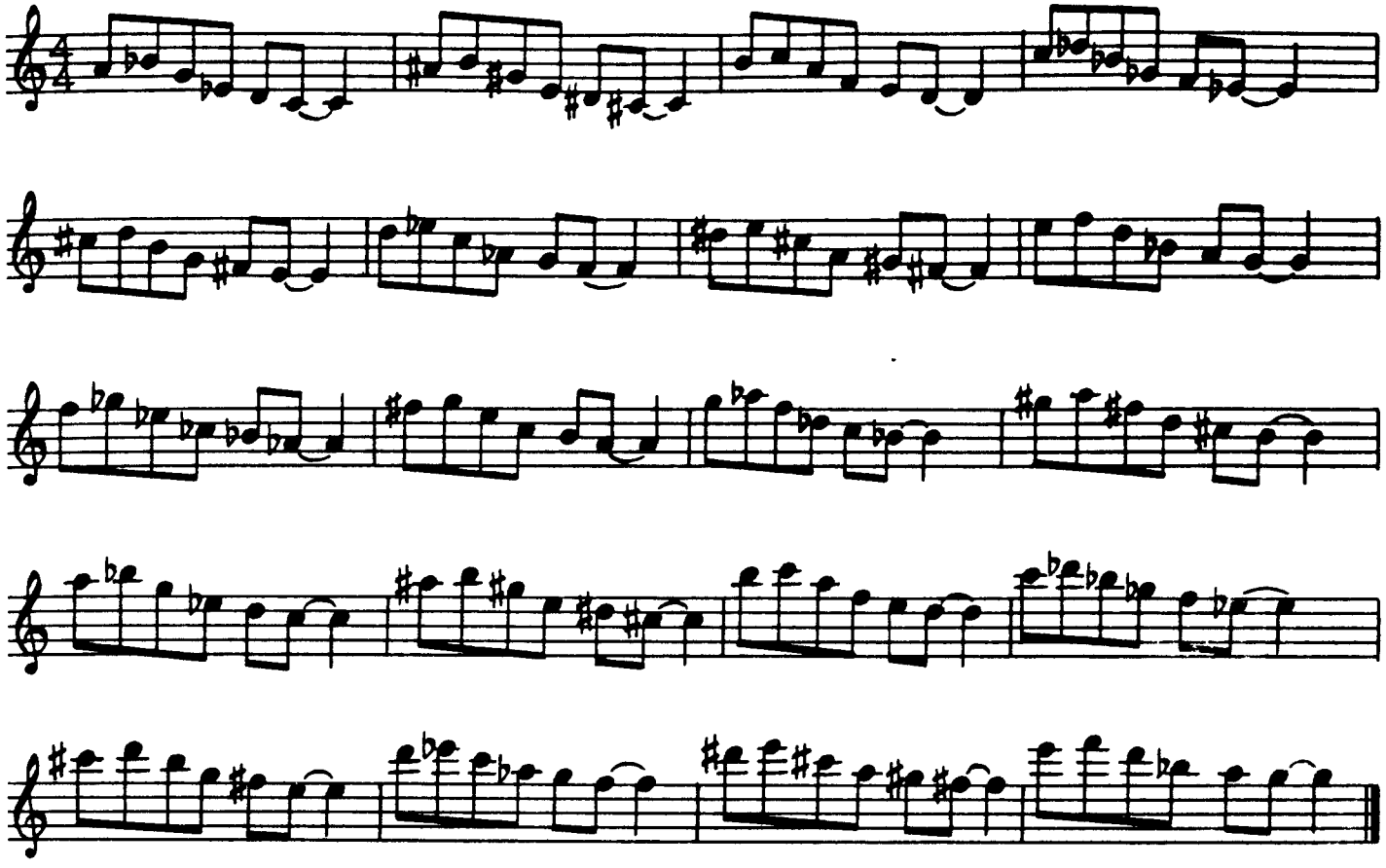

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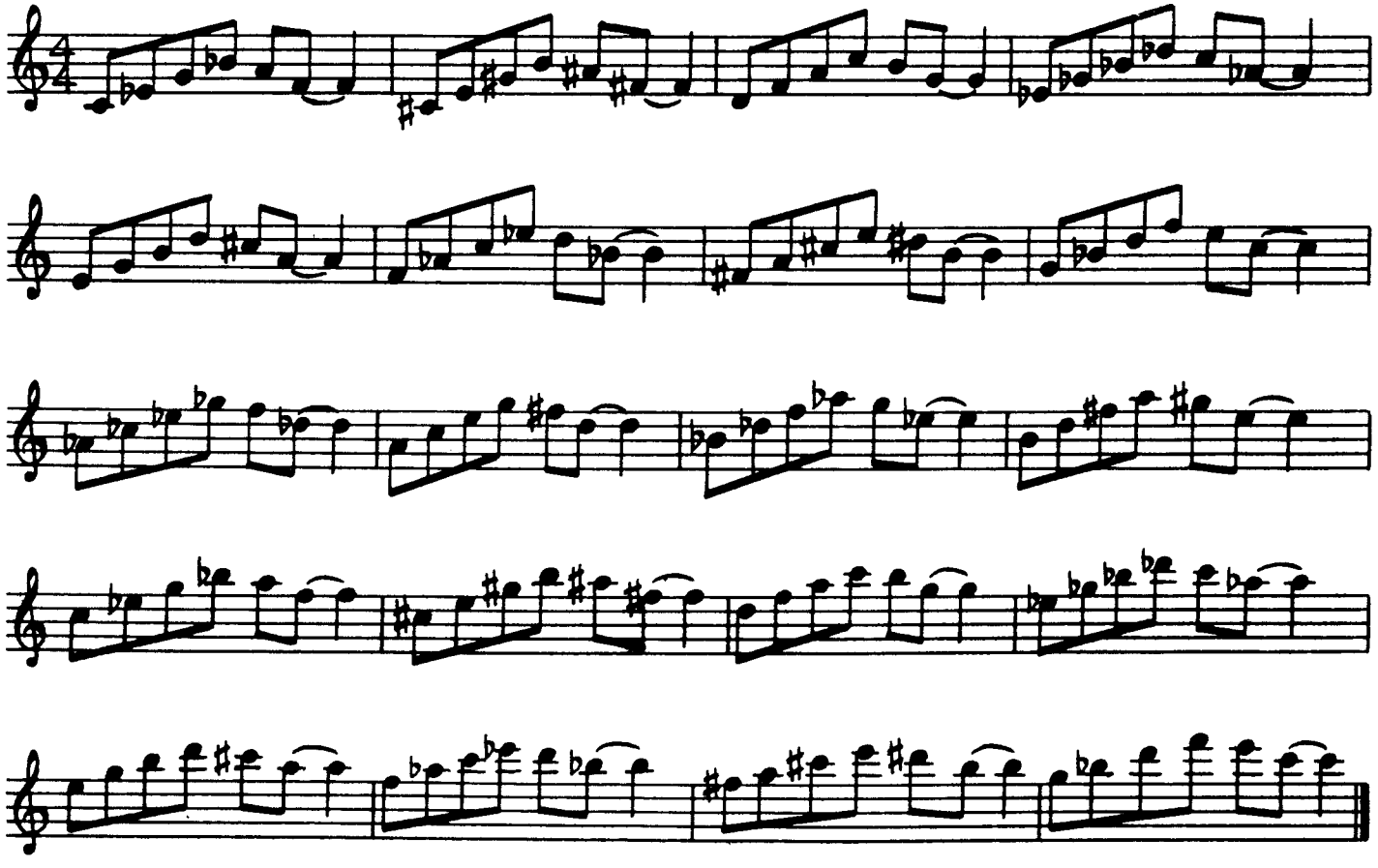

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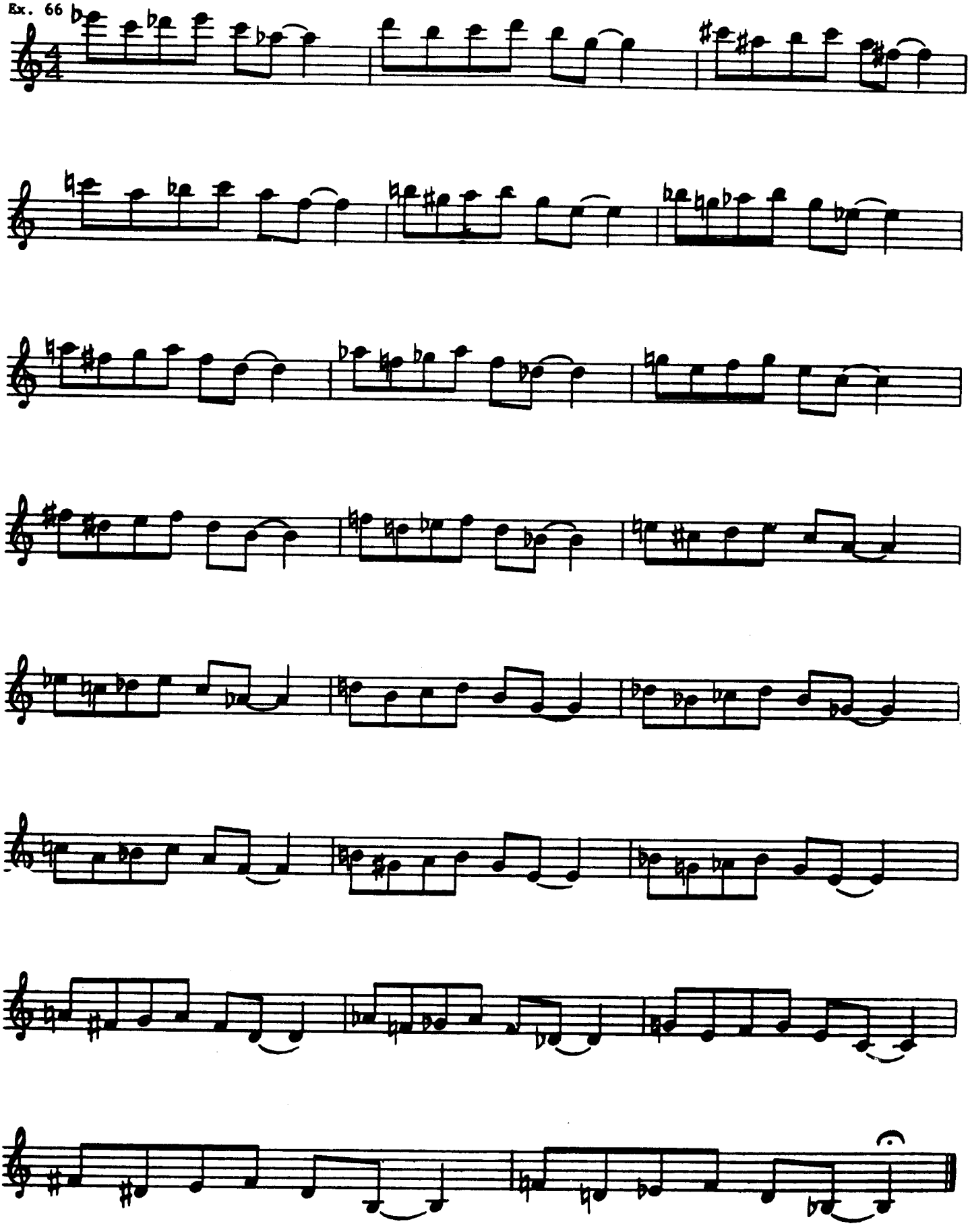

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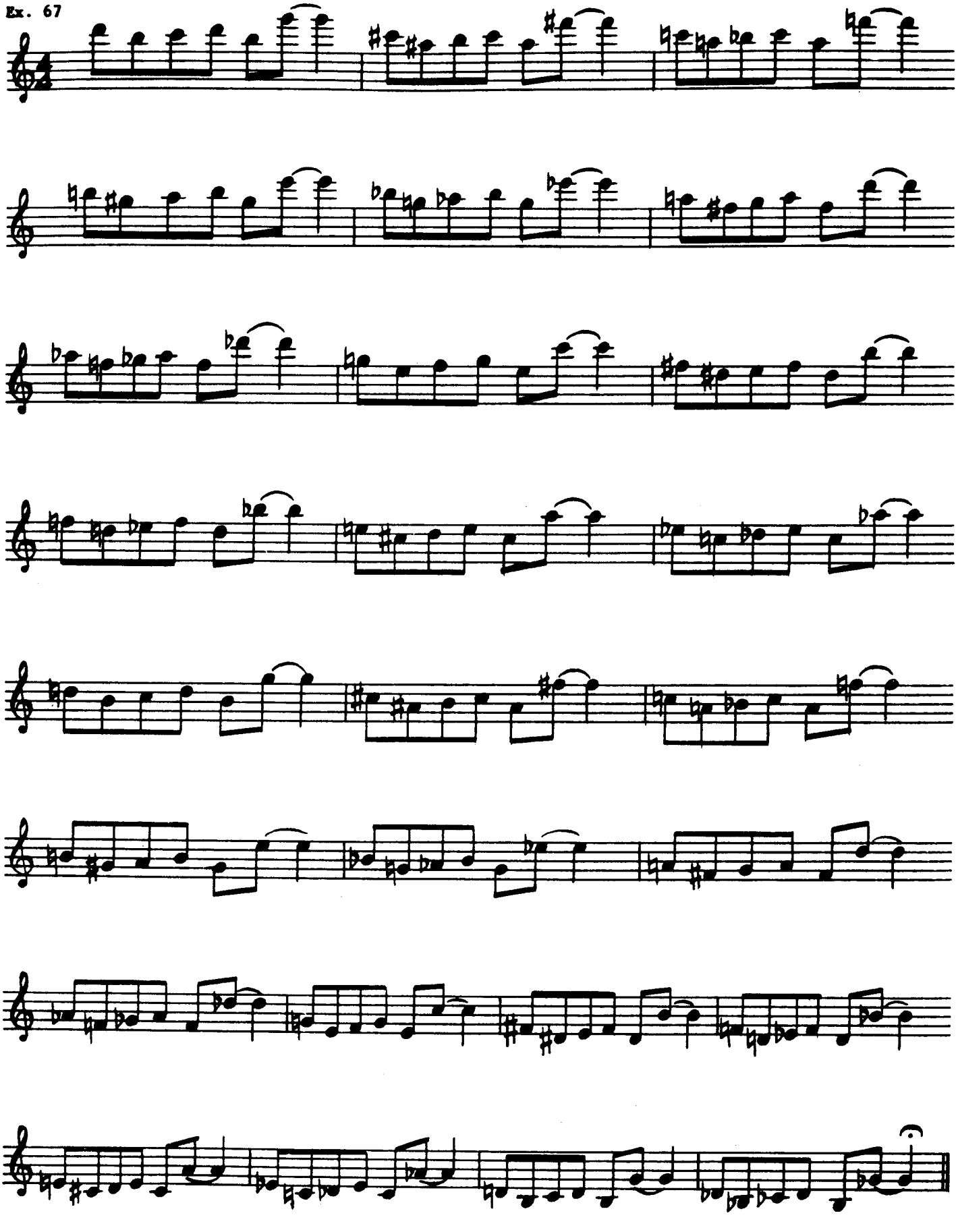

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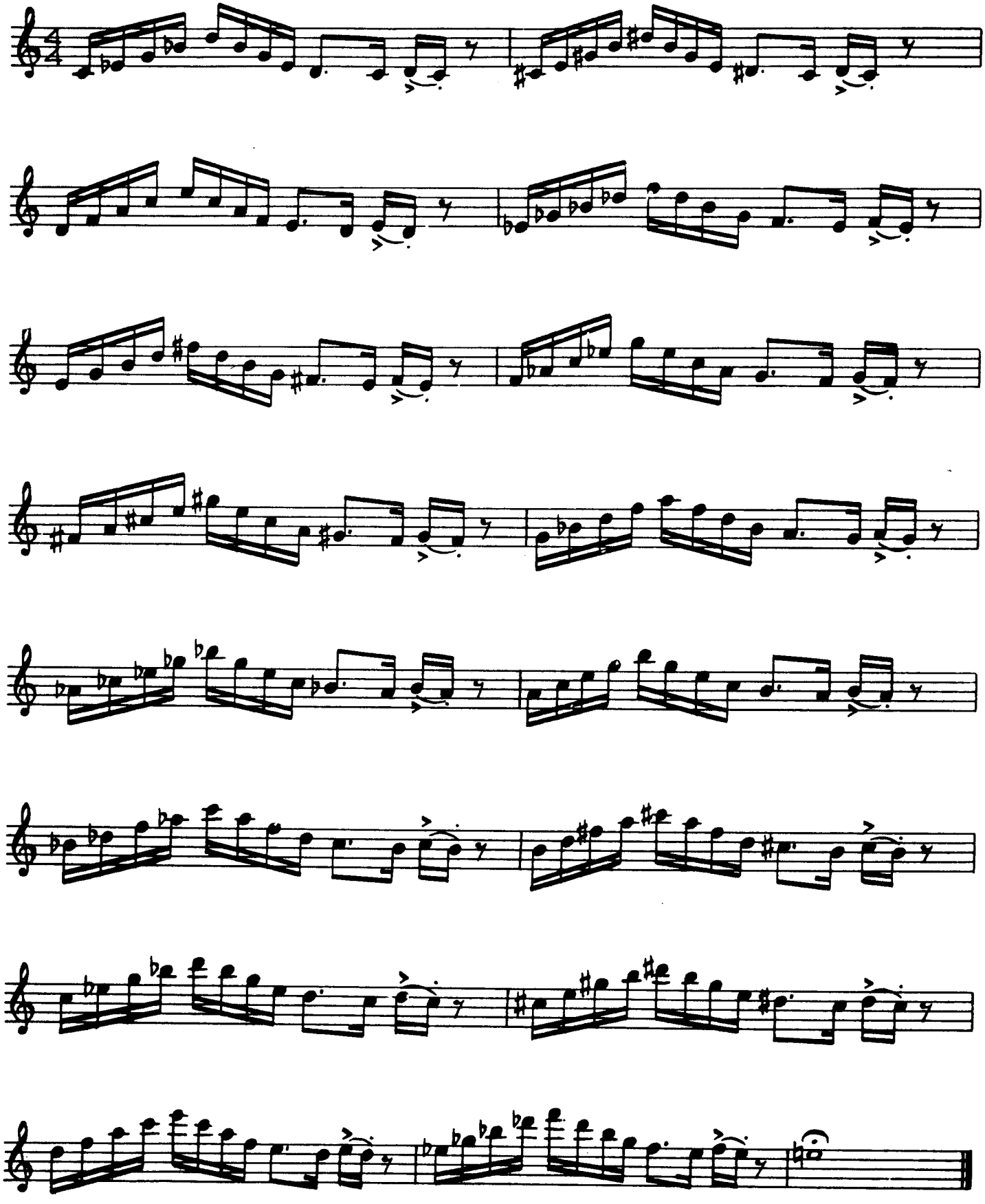

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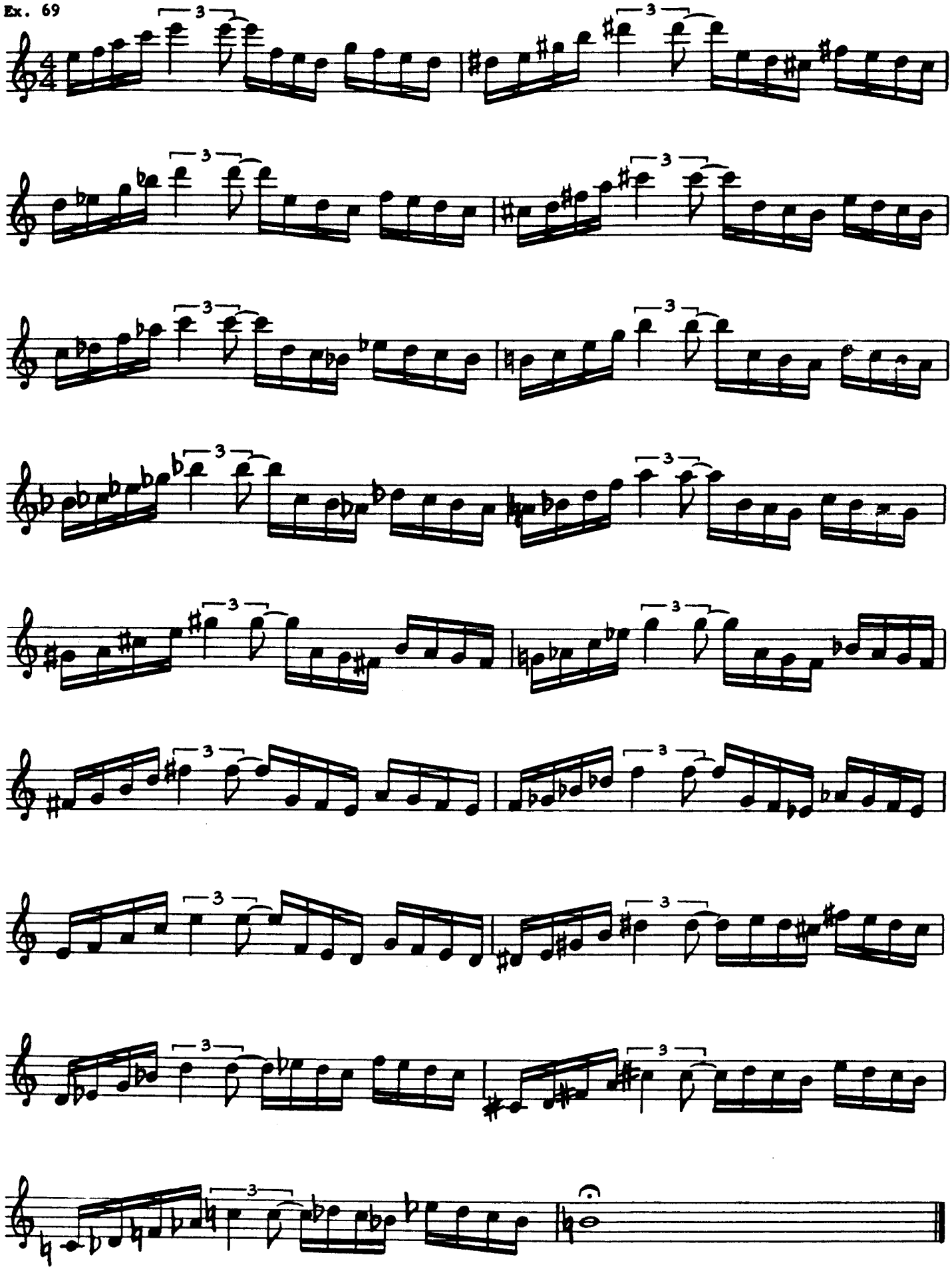

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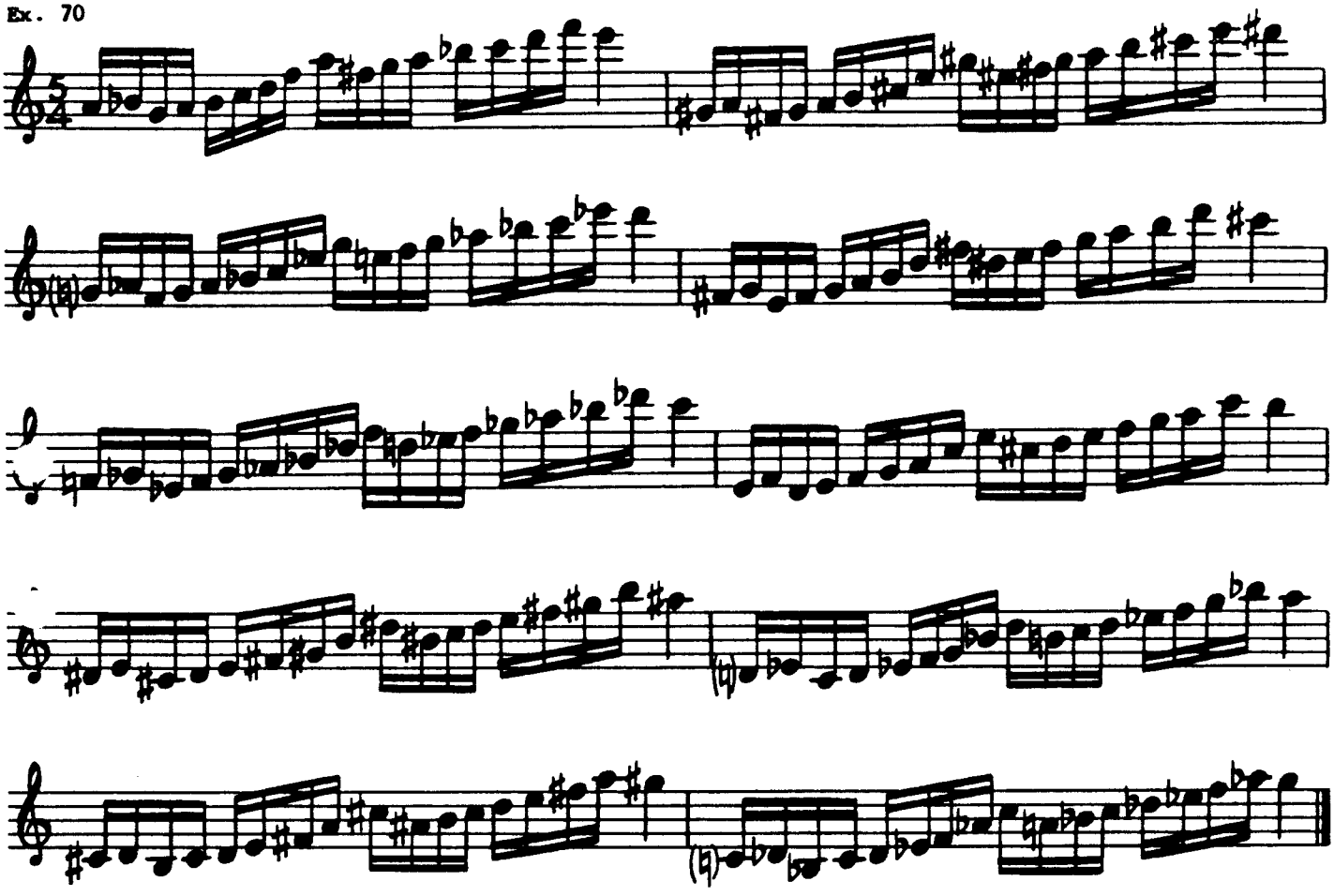

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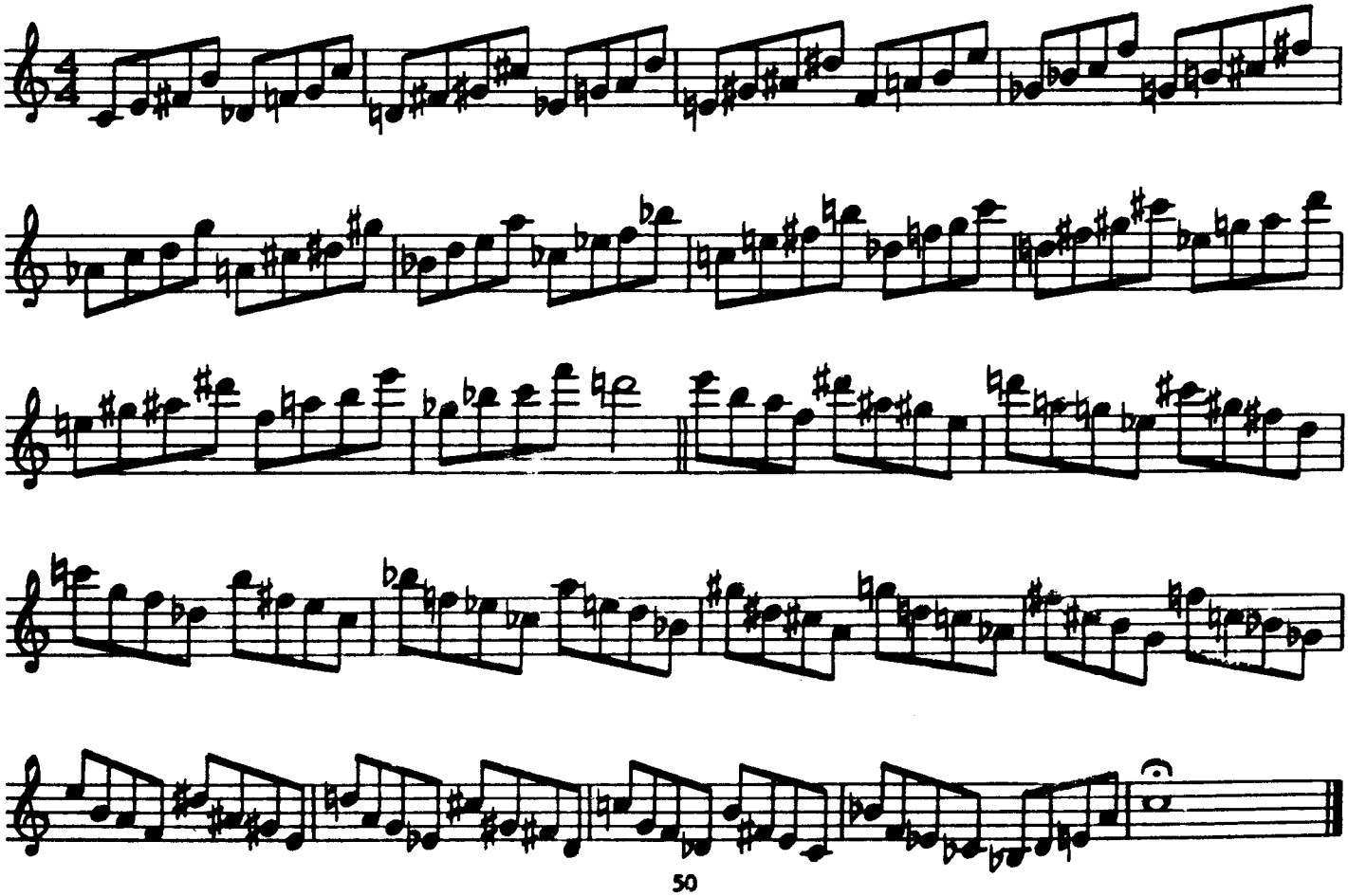

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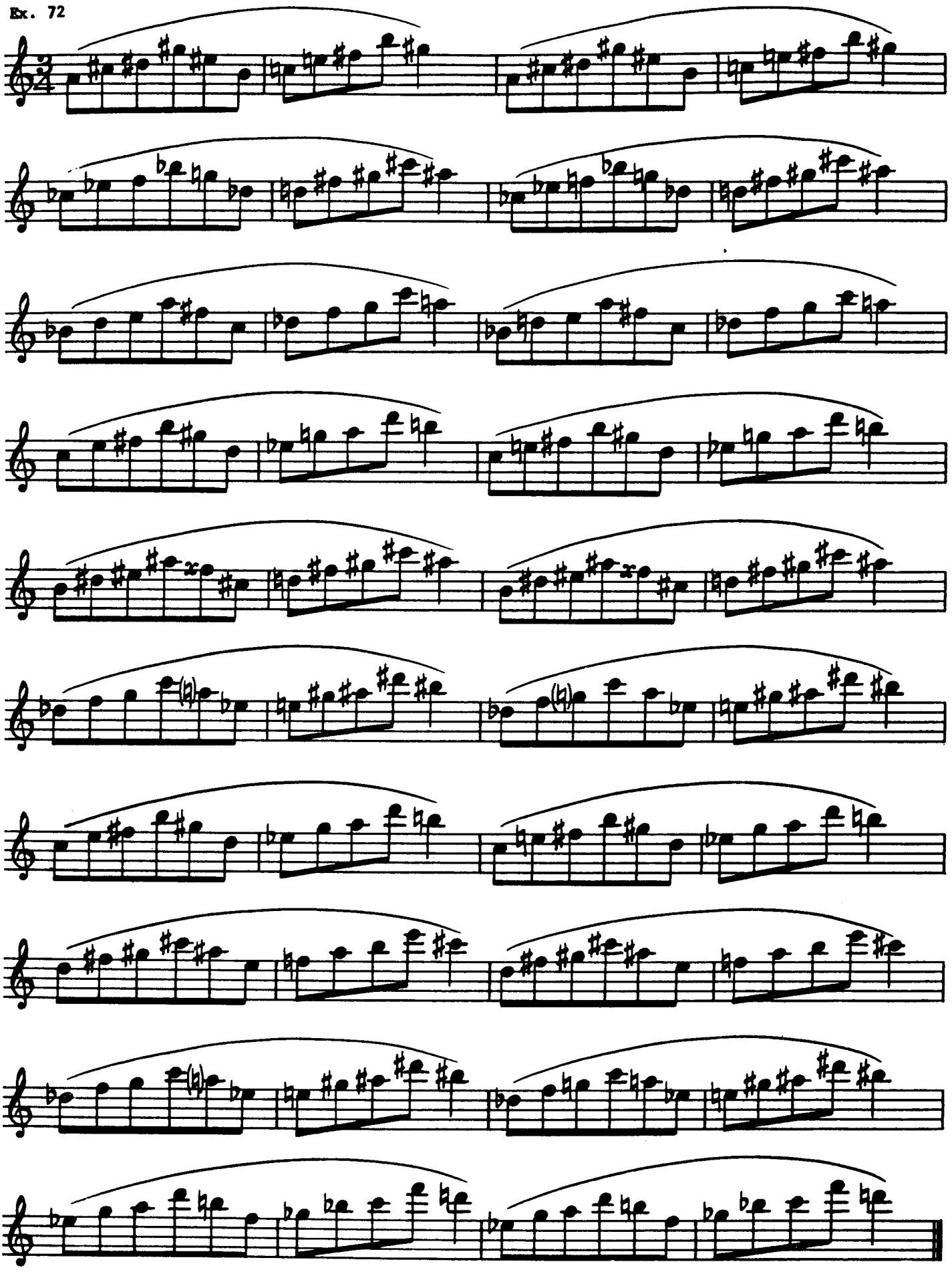
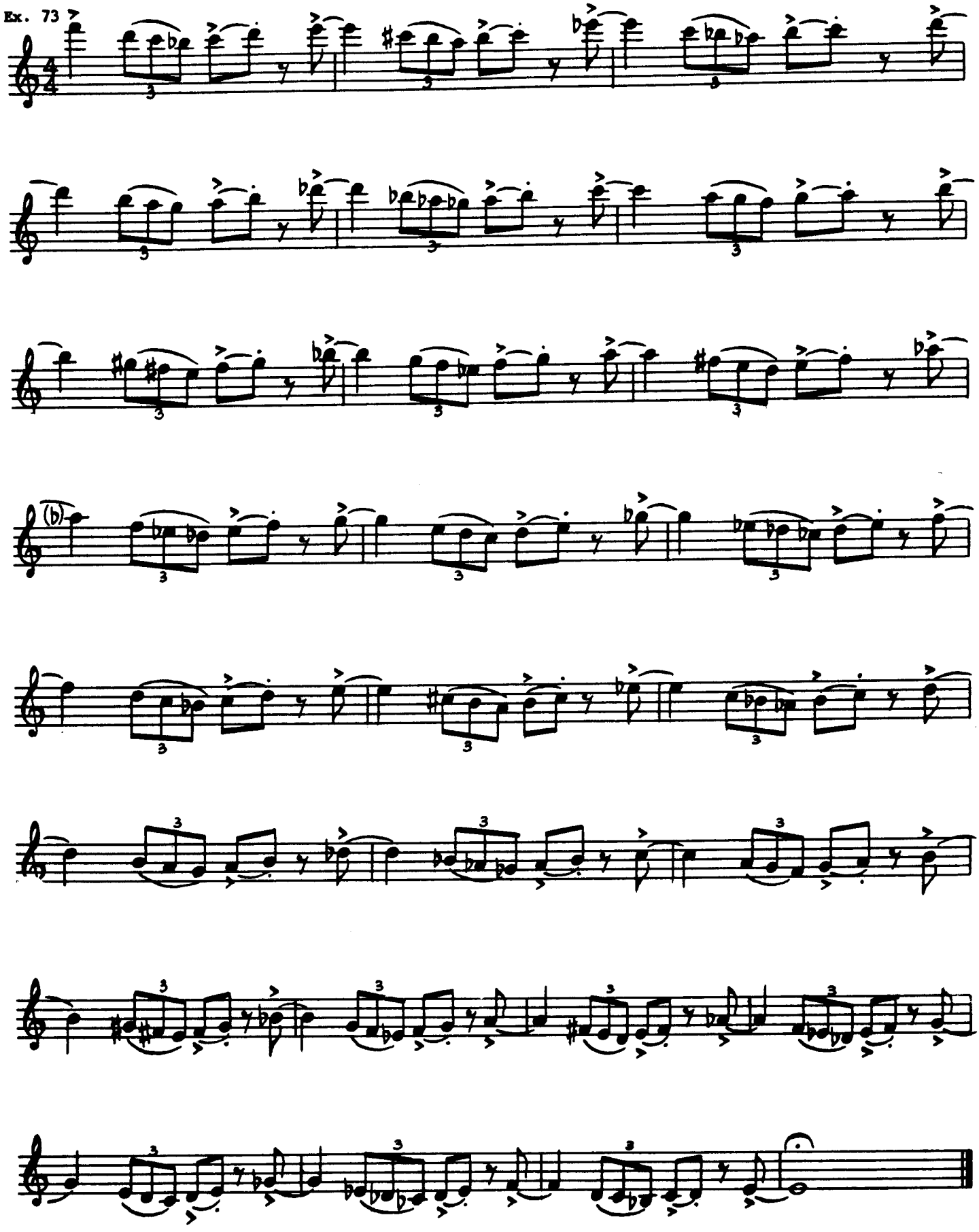
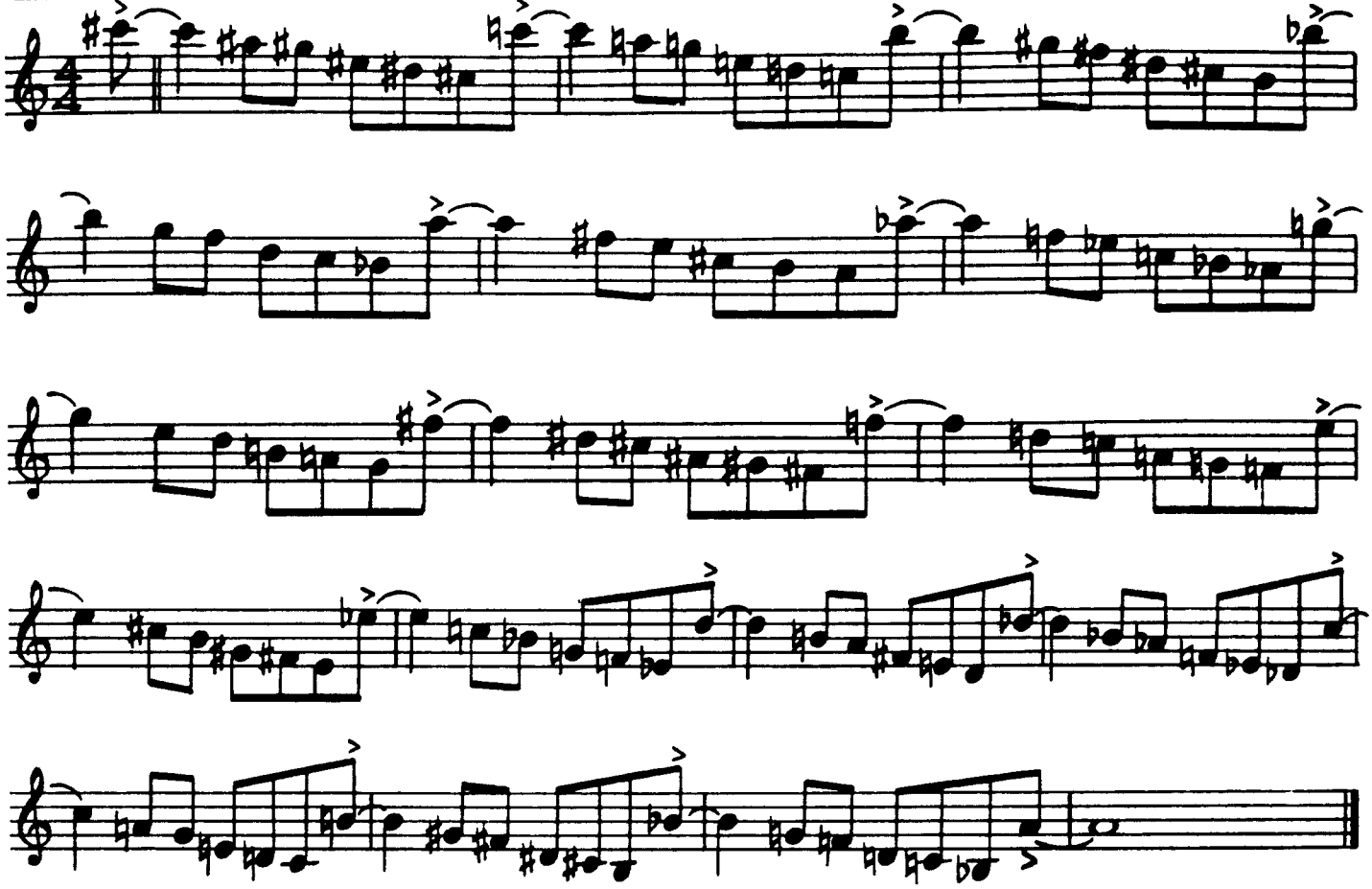



Ex. 73

Ex. 74



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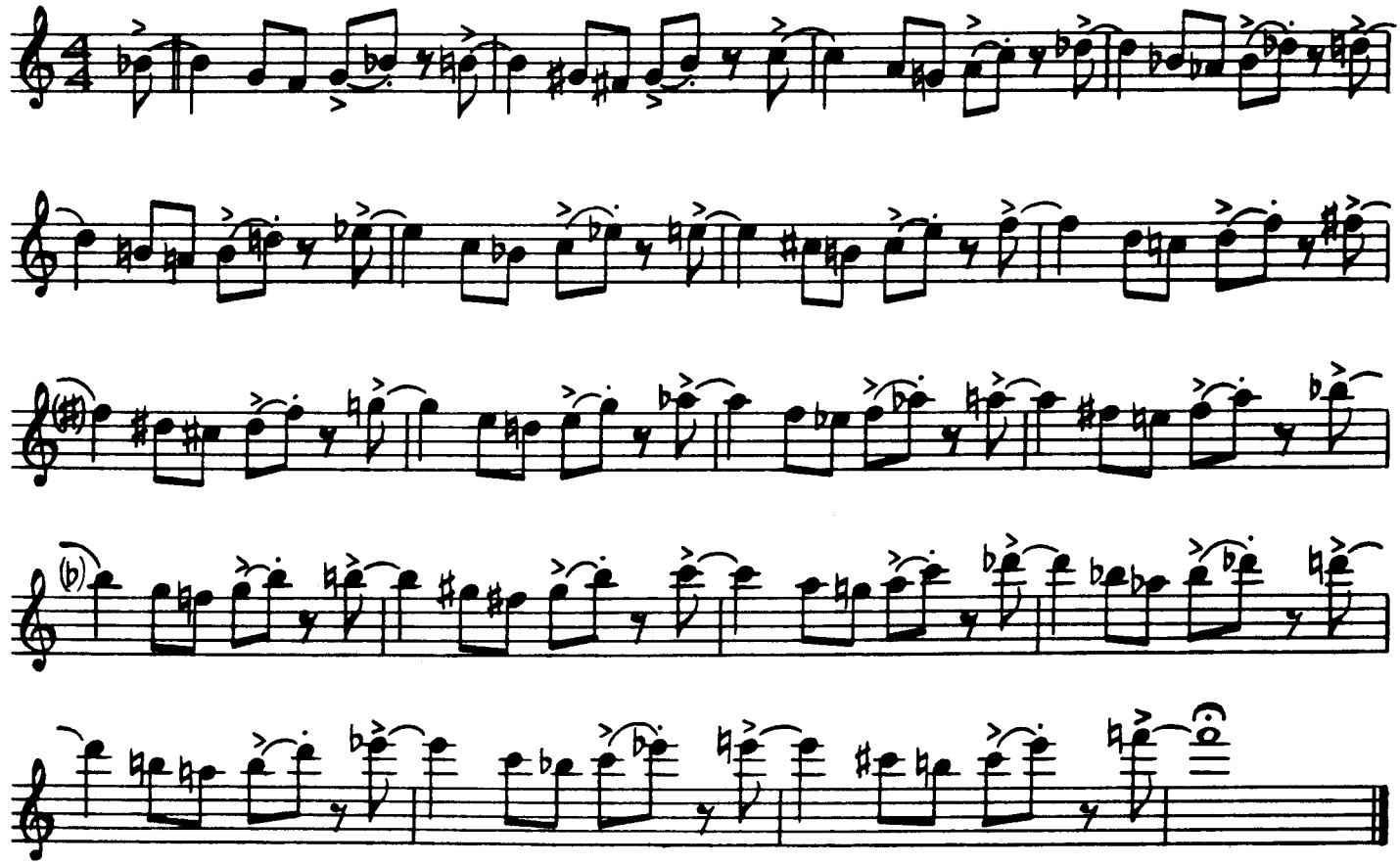

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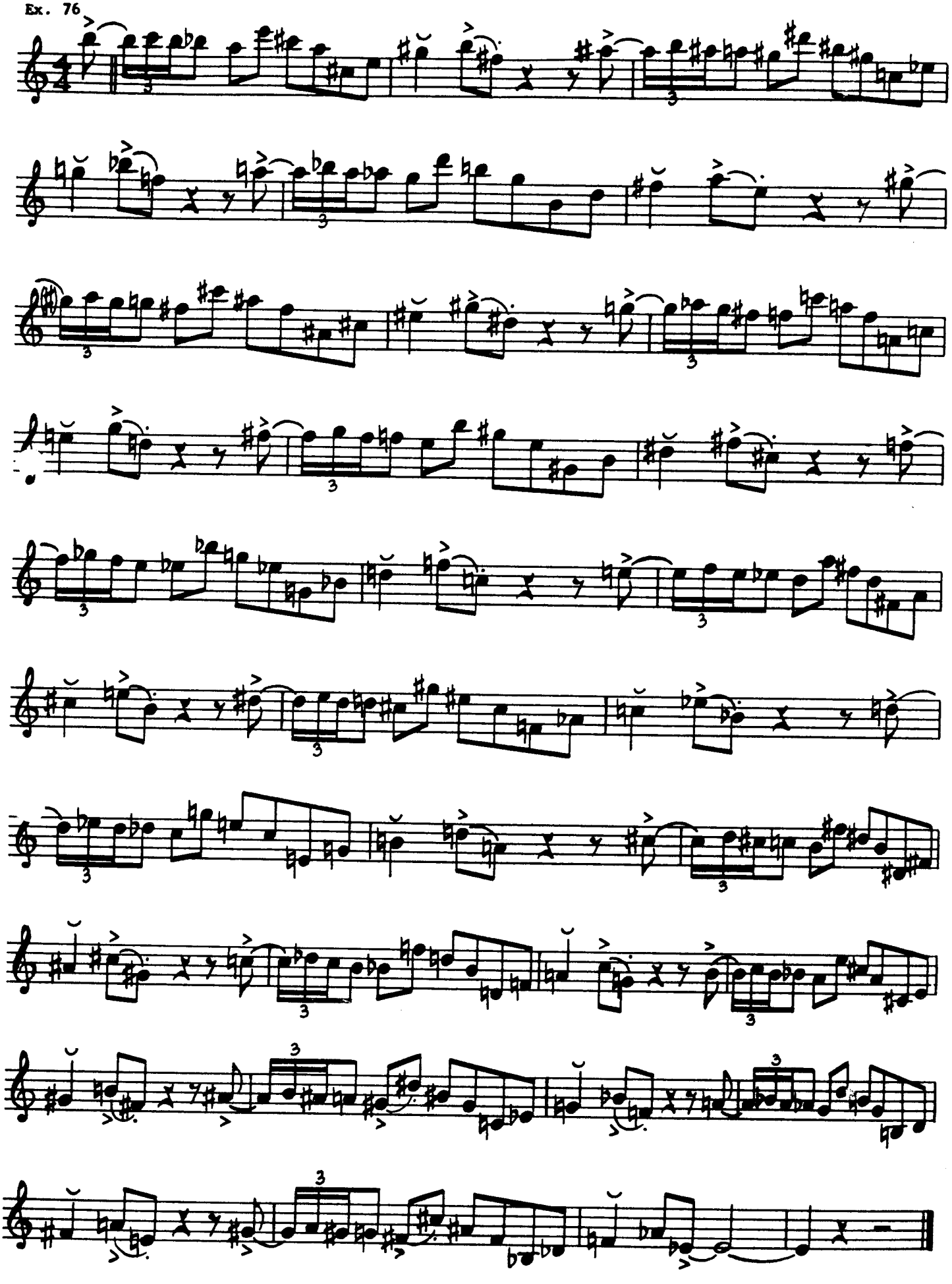

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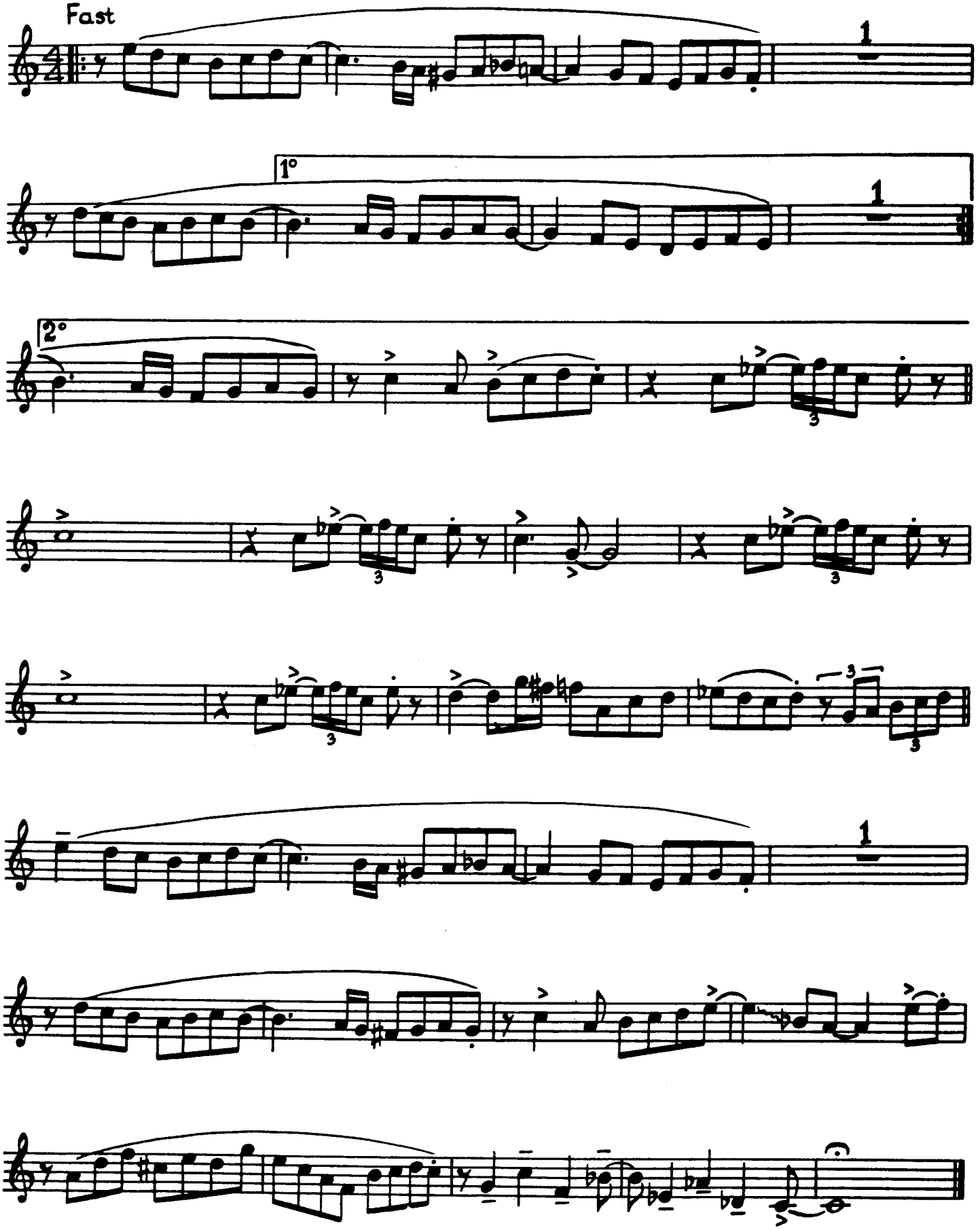

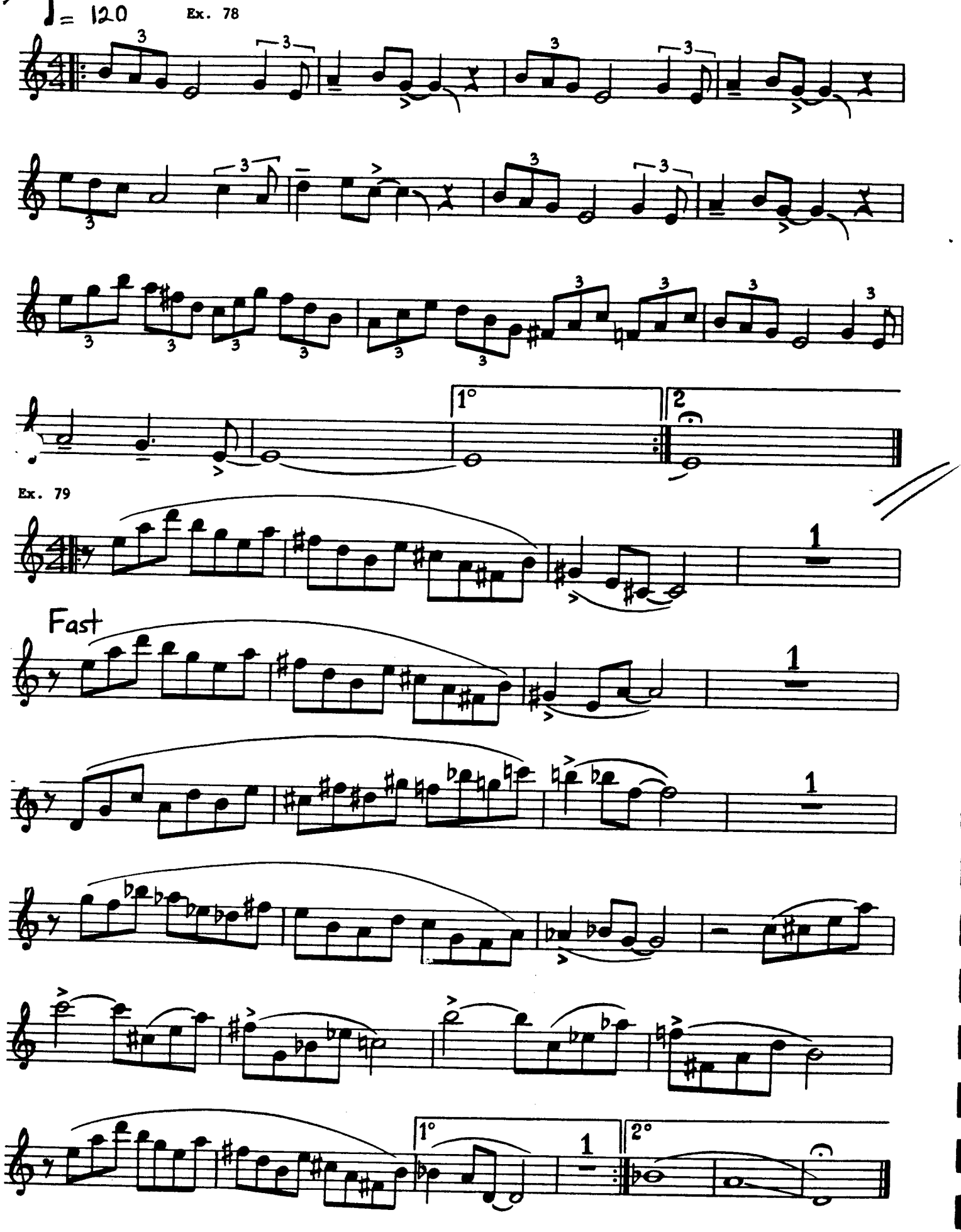
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Ex. 78
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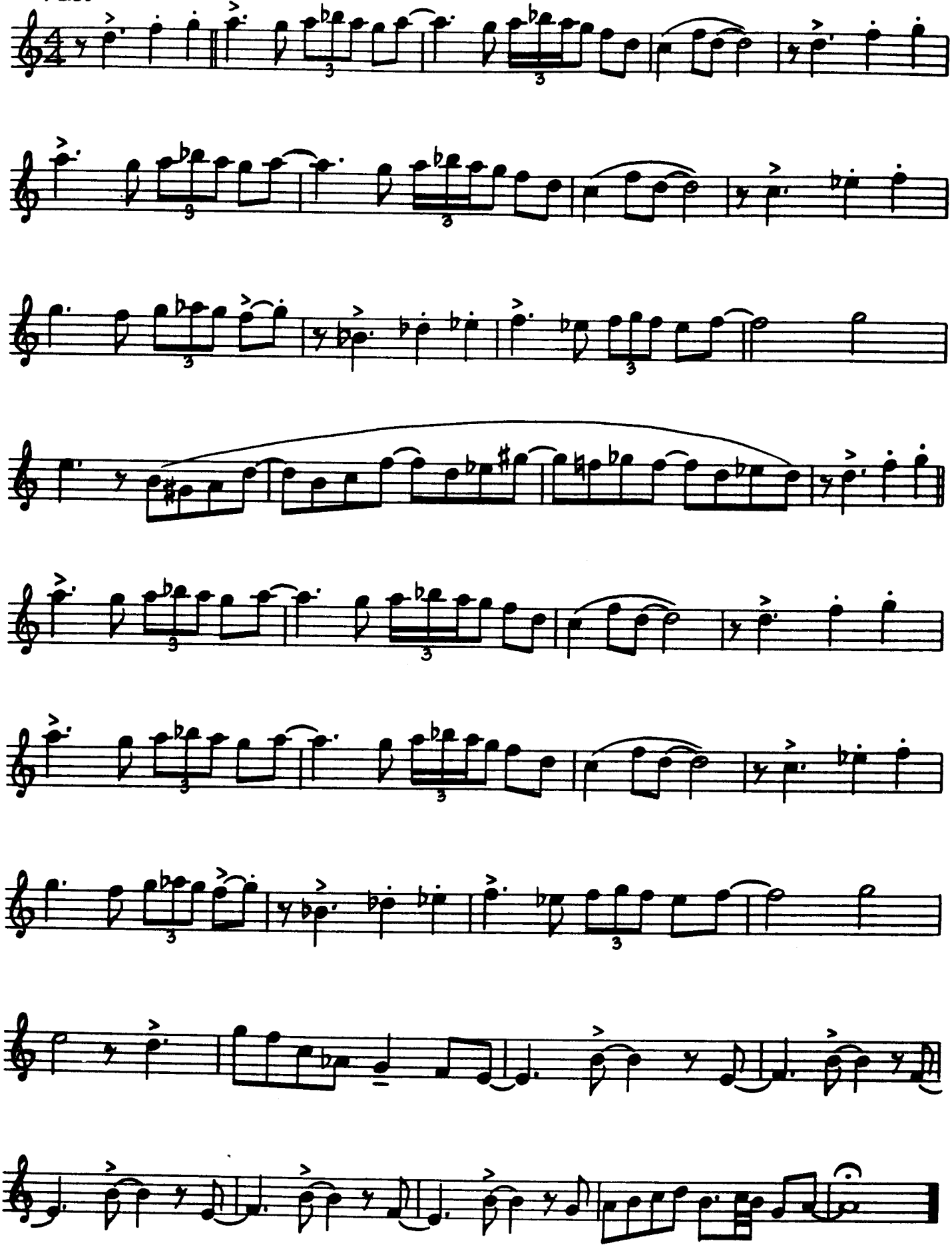
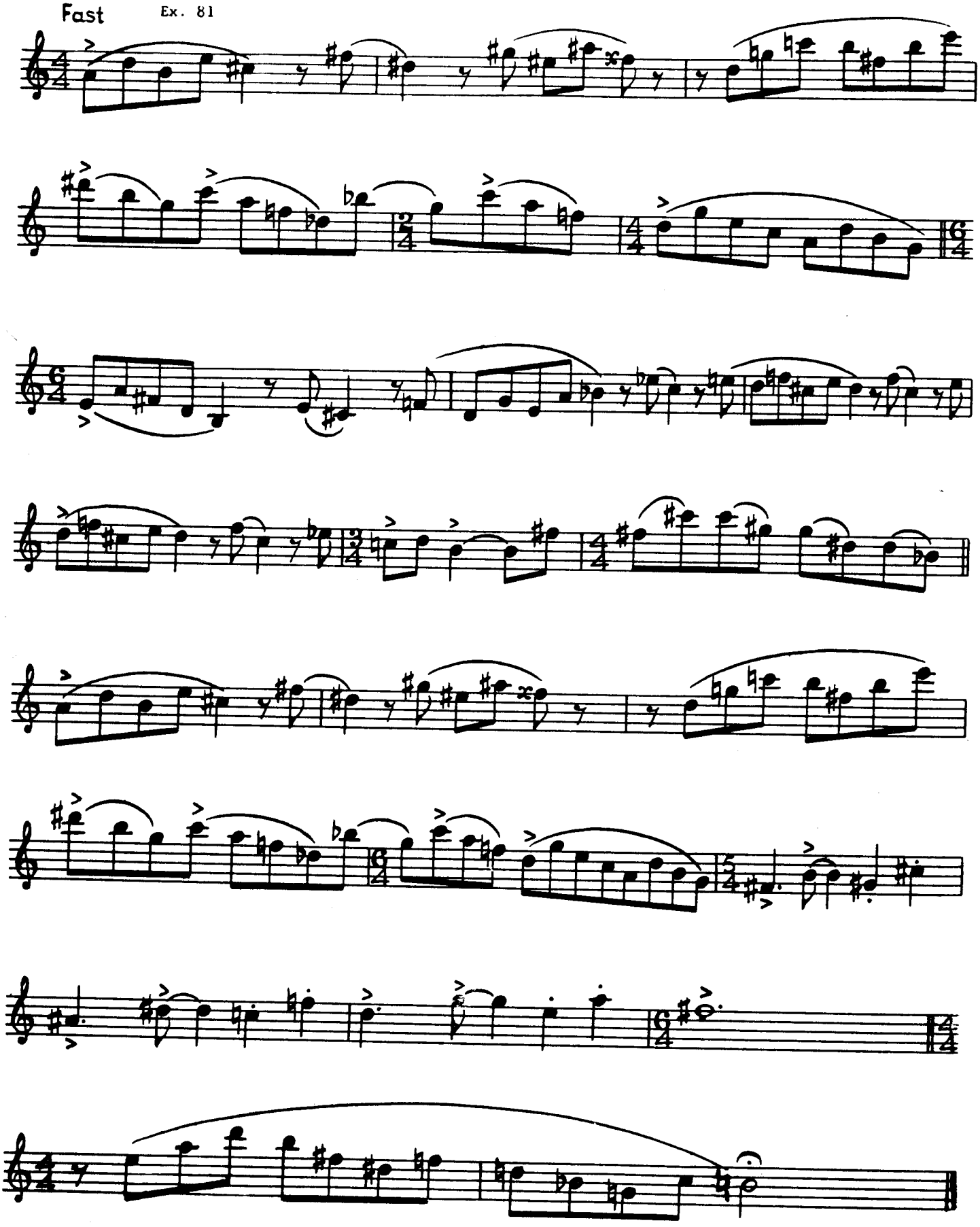
Fast Ex. 80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