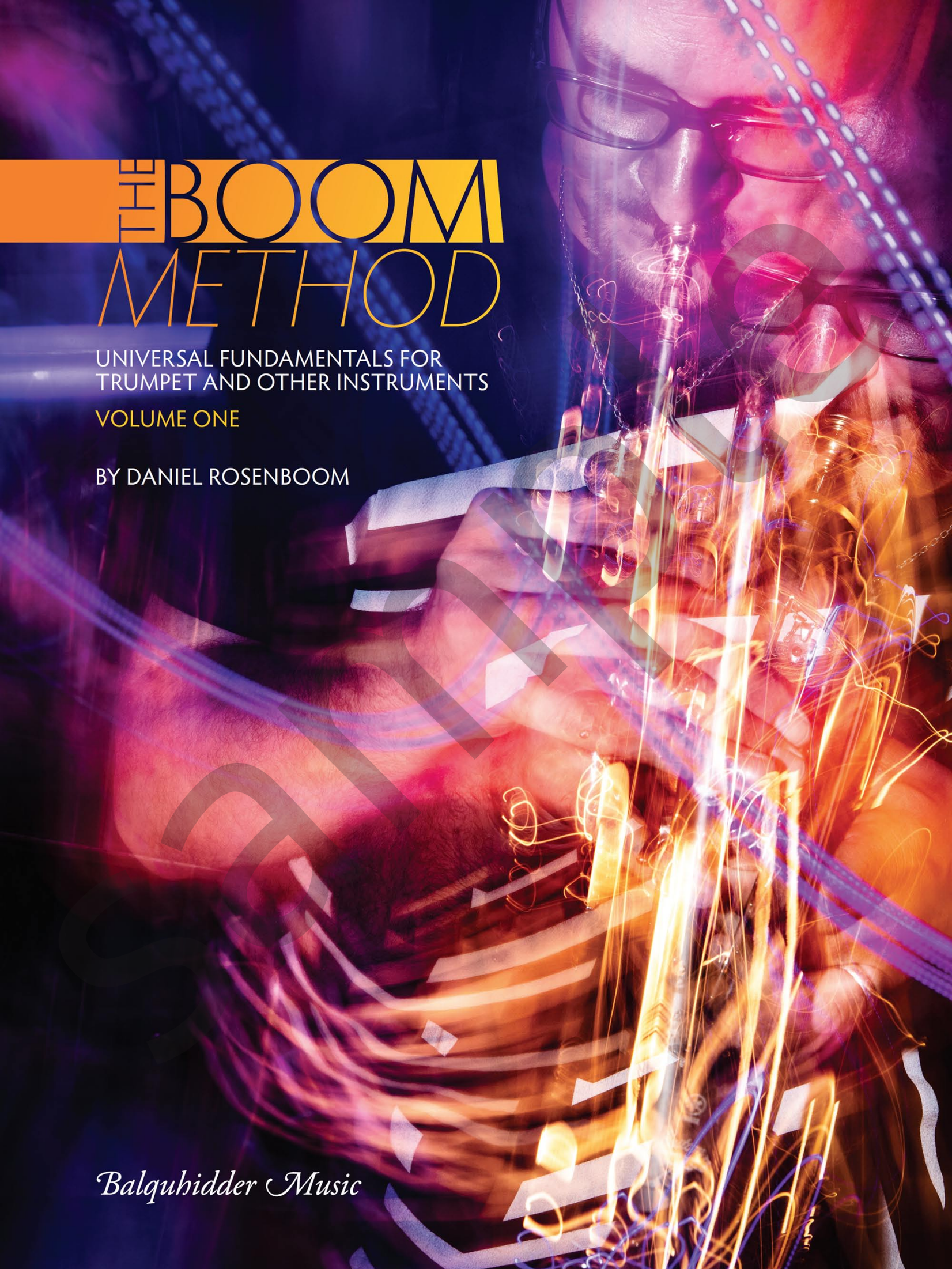

THE BOOM METHOD
UNIVERSAL FUNDAMENTALS FOR TRUMPET AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS
VOLUME ONE
BY DANIEL ROSENBOOM
Balquhidder Music

STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

My trumpet-playing career has taken on a wide variety of musical directions and challenges that have required a creative approach to practicing in order to efficiently cover all the bases. From studio recording, to improvisation, to chamber music and orchestral playing, there is an extremely broad skill set I have to maintain on a daily basis. That's where this approach to fundamentals comes in!

The common denominator for all of these musical activities is that they require strong fundamentals on the instrument. So, I have to be creative with my fundamental practice in order to expand my own technique and endurance, and maintain the skills I need for work.

There's nothing in this book that I don't practice myself. Everything in here has been incredibly useful in terms of developing and maintaining a broad skill set, and continuing to push myself farther each day.

This book is intended to be a hardcore practice routine for an advanced player. It's designed to push your agility, endurance, efficiency, mental focus, and efficiently target many of the skills needed for a wide range of musical contexts.

I hope you find this a challenging and enjoyable supplement to your studies, and I hope you have fun in the process!

Happy practicing!

---------- Daniel Rosenboom

Dedicated with tremendous gratitude to my teacher, James Thompson.

FOREWORD

The Boom Method is a practical approach to trumpet fundamentals developed as a way to address the range of technical challenges presented by a multi-faceted career involved in many different kinds of music. The book is sequenced as a continuous practice routine, but isolating any of the individual sections can also be very beneficial.

Many trumpet pedagogical methods conceive of G on the second line of the treble staff as the center of one's range and/or the starting point of one's daily trumpet practice. This can allow a student to develop their technique in a relaxed and efficient way, and can be a useful approach for developing players. However, that is not the center of the requisite range for a modern trumpet player. In fact, that is not the center of the requisite trumpet range for any period in western music history.

The Boom Method conceives of C in the treble staff as the dead center of the macro-range of the trumpet. This puts the player mathematically in the center of the instrument, no matter how far you wish to go on either end of the range. A modern trumpet-playing career essentially requires a range of F# below middle C to F# an octave above the top line of the treble staff (on a B-flat trumpet). More range on either end of this spectrum is certainly beneficial, but for the most part, this range would allow most trumpet players to navigate a career well. Consequently, this is the range emphasized in this book.

People aspiring to be strong commercial lead trumpet players or baroque/piccolo trumpet players will need to develop an efficient approach to the extended upper register. Additionally, the balanced practice of pedal tones can yield myriad benefits. If you wish to extend the range of the exercises in this book, please do! As you do, balance your extensions so that as you add range to the upper register you balance with equal extensions to the lower register.

The *Activation* warm-up exercises begin with breath attacks on C in the treble staff, and quickly extend an octave in both directions. The breath attacks immediately activate and balance the air compression going into the instrument with the natural air resistance inherent in the horn, and are then counterbalanced with a descending arpeggio that arrives at a resonant lower note. The *Integration* series again starts from this center point to address additional technical challenges in a balanced way, adding to the upper register as the patterns descend. Many of the *Flexibility and Control* exercises pivot symmetrically around a moving center point in order to target the same kind of balance and counterbalance in a micro-range, as opposed to the macro-range of the instrument. The *Expansion* series emanates from the "C" macro-center and counterbalances by alternating ascent and descent. Finally, the *Resolution* series helps restore elasticity to the embouchure after an intense practice, and returns to the center point.

All together, the exercises in *The Boom Method* calibrate one's technique to be centered and balanced for the demands of a modern trumpet-playing career.

A Few General Notes

✢ Throughout this book place particular attention and emphasis on balance, efficiency, and relaxation. Never strain!

✢ The airstream should *always* be in charge. If you find yourself leading with the lips, tongue, or fingers, stop. Take a moment and reset. Lead with the air.

✢ In order to stay centered, think in the opposite direction from what you are playing. As James Stamp said, "Think down as you go up, and up as you go down."

✢ It is more important to develop all 12 key centers simultaneously than to play through all of these exercises. Try to figure out an effective mix of patterns for you to move through all the keys in a practice session. The endurance will come with time and attention to form.

✢ The enharmonic spellings throughout this book provide deliberate challenges to your mental focus. One of the biggest challenges in sight-reading can be navigating awkward assortments of sharps and flats, so being adept at reading a confusing mix of both is vital to a career in music.

✢ "How?" and "why?" are the two most important questions for your practice. It's not so important *what* you practice. *How* you practice is everything! And while there are specific technical answers to *why* for any given exercise, the overarching answer is always "to play music more beautifully, poignantly, and effortlessly than before."

✢ Get creative! If there is something you need to improve that is not represented here, find a way to work it into your routine. If you feel comfortable expanding on the printed exercises, go for it! If you are practicing and think, "oh _____ could be a good thing to work in here," do it! Ultimately, this is *your* practice.

✢ Remember to have fun! There is no point in training anxiety. Practice with focus and be demanding of yourself, but do it with a light heart.

THOUGHTS FOR PRACTICE

Navigating the modern challenges of being a professional, multi-faceted musician means an increased devotion to and reverence for the fundamental concerns of your instrument. The skill to move fluidly from one kind of playing to another, and the trust in your technique to surmount any music challenge is vital. Similarly, improvisers must cultivate the connection of mind to instrument in such a way that you can play whatever you can imagine in the moment. Your imagination will always exceed your physical ability, but dedicated fundamental practice significantly narrows the gap.

Connect to your inner musicality, even when highly focused on building physical ability. Remember *why* you practice: to be a more consummate and expressive musician; to convey ideas with more clarity and fluidity; to develop the ability to deliver whatever a musical situation demands; to be a more valued member of the musical community; to move an audience more deeply; to access deep truths through music.

Playing music is an act of generosity and love. Music can give listeners a respite from the challenges of their own lives and offer moments of connection and reflection to both performer and audience. In the best circumstances, music offers moments of transcendence to those who listen deeply. It is a musician's great responsibility and opportunity to provide this possibility of experience to an audience. The more adept, agile, focused, confident, and internalized your fundamental technique, the more deeply you can convey the message in the music, and the more profoundly you can connect with your audience.

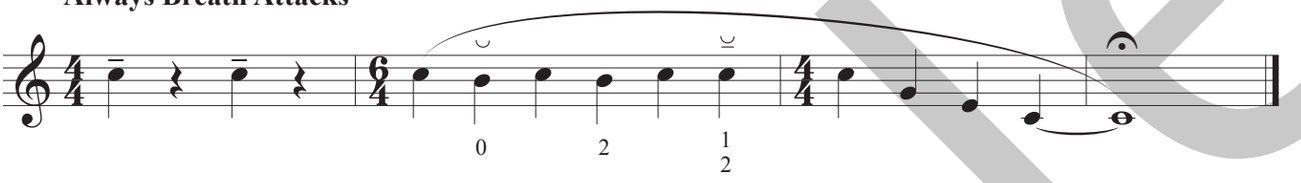
"**Enjoy** the work."

"**Remember *why*** you do this."

"Get **creative** with ***how*** you do this."

ACTIVATION
Warm-Up and Air Engagement

Always Breath Attacks



This series of breath attacks, bends, and descending arpeggios is an excellent way to center on the instrument, and develop consistent and immediate engagement of air support. As you practice, pay particular attention to the following aspects:

Breath Attacks

The breath attacks throughout *Activation* should be pointed, articulate, rhythmic, and confident. Generate a fast focused airstream that flies out of the bell of the trumpet as the note sounds, and to allow the lips to be totally responsive to the airstream. Increased air speed and compression, coupled with responsive and flexible aperture, provide incrementally higher partials.

There are many kinds of breath attacks that are useful as a trumpet player. For the purposes of these studies, we can break them into three types:

✢ "POO" Attacks: beginning with the lips closed, using the air to create a clear articulation at the moment of vibration.

✢ "FOO" Attacks: beginning with the lips ever so slightly more open, and allowing the air and lips to come together at the moment of vibration.

✢ "HOO" Attacks: beginning with the lips more open so as to hear no attack. You can imagine this like a clarinet fade-in from nothing.

For these exercises, "FOO" and "POO" attacks are the most useful, and should be used interchangeably to focus on different elements of tone inception. When working on generating air compression and air speed from the abdominal core, "FOO" attacks are very useful because they emphasize the timing synchronicity between abdominal support and lip vibration. When focused on making a compact and focused aperture, "POO" attacks are very useful because they emphasize the minimization of aperture in balance with a very focused, laser-like airstream. That is all a complicated way of saying "FOO" for airstream focus, "POO" for aperture focus.

Throughout these flow studies, and for trumpet playing in general, the airstream should lead and the lips should respond. They work in tandem, but the air is in charge.

Bends

There are two kinds of note bends represented in these flow studies:

- Lower Bends: using the airstream to bend the note down by a half step.

- Upper Bends: using the airstream to maintain a constant pitch while fingering a half step up.

- Once the half step is comfortable for both types of bend, experiment with wider intervals.

The sequence of a lower bend, followed by an actual lower neighbor, followed by an upper bend, is helpful in finding the resonant center of a pitch. The airstream directs the pitch in balance with the instrument. Once the air is working in sync with the natural resistance of the horn, the lips inside the mouthpiece can simply relax and respond to what the air commands.

I have to thank Hollywood studio trumpeter extraordinaire, Jon Lewis, for introducing me to the upper bends, along with many other concepts.

The Center

If you imagine a note as a target, the bull's-eye is the center of your tone. What does that mean for trumpet players?

The center is the most resonant part of the tone. When one is playing in the center, they are in the most balanced alignment between the airstream (compression/flow) going into the horn, the natural resistance (internal air pressure) of the horn, and the freest vibration of the lips inside the mouthpiece.

In the center of any given note, its full overtone spectrum is activated. This is typically termed "resonance" or "sparkle" or "sheen" or any number of other adjectives we apply to centered tones. What we actually hear is the sympathetic vibration of the upper overtone structure as well as the sub-tones present in a harmonic series. These are active in both the instrument and the room.

The greatest players play with a centered, resonant core to their tones, fluidly and consistently throughout the range of their instruments.

"Let the sound be your guide!" –James Thompson

The Embouchure

The Aperture:

The aperture, or the center of your embouchure that vibrates on the airstream, essentially operates like a camera lens.

As one ascends or decrescendos, the aperture is drawn into a more focused, compact position by a fast, focused airstream. As one descends or crescendos, the aperture is widened as the airstream broadens.

Notice that the airstream is in control of this process.

The Corners:

The corners of an embouchure provide the stabilizing foundation for everything lip-related. The corners should be set firm and maintained in an engaged position that is roughly the same as where they normally rest. Imagine your face at rest, and just set the corners of your mouth firm, *without* stretching them back toward your ears. That is the basic starting position.

Every face is unique, so there's plenty of variance here. But the principle is that the center of the lips is supported without being stretched thin. This allows for a relaxed aperture, with plenty of flexibility and responsiveness.

The Long Corner:

The long corner is a line of engagement that extends from the corners of the lips to the edge of the jawbone. (Note: "engagement," not "tension.")

By engaging the musculature of the cheeks and jaw in a firm but relaxed way, one can increase support for the embouchure.

Tip: Don't obsess on this. It's easy to overdo it. Just notice that you can engage more than just your lips.

Casting the Line

Metaphors are often helpful in conceptualizing abstract physical concepts. It can be helpful to liken these flow studies to casting a fishing line.

The two preliminary breath attacks in each exercise are like preparing the main cast. Then the final breath attack is the like flick of the wrist when the line is cast, and the following bends and descending arpeggio are the long arc of the fly sailing through the air and landing in the water.

Here, one uses breath attacks to calibrate the correct balance of air compression and lip vibration with the natural resistance of the instrument. Then the bends emphasize the resonant core of the tone. Finally, the broadening air stream directs a beautiful descending major arpeggio, and arrives at a warm, clear resonant low note.

One reason the fishing analogy is helpful is that it extends this arc and arpeggio forward, and emphasizes a horizontal direction to the phrase, rather than a vertical one.

I have to thank Jens Lindemann for impressing upon me the importance of thinking horizontally, letting all the notes extend in front of you regardless of ascent or descent.

As upper partials are added to the beginning of the exercise, the calibration becomes more precise and refined. Do not strain for the upper partials. Only go as high as you can comfortably generate the tone with a pointed articulate airstream, and relaxed, responsive aperture.

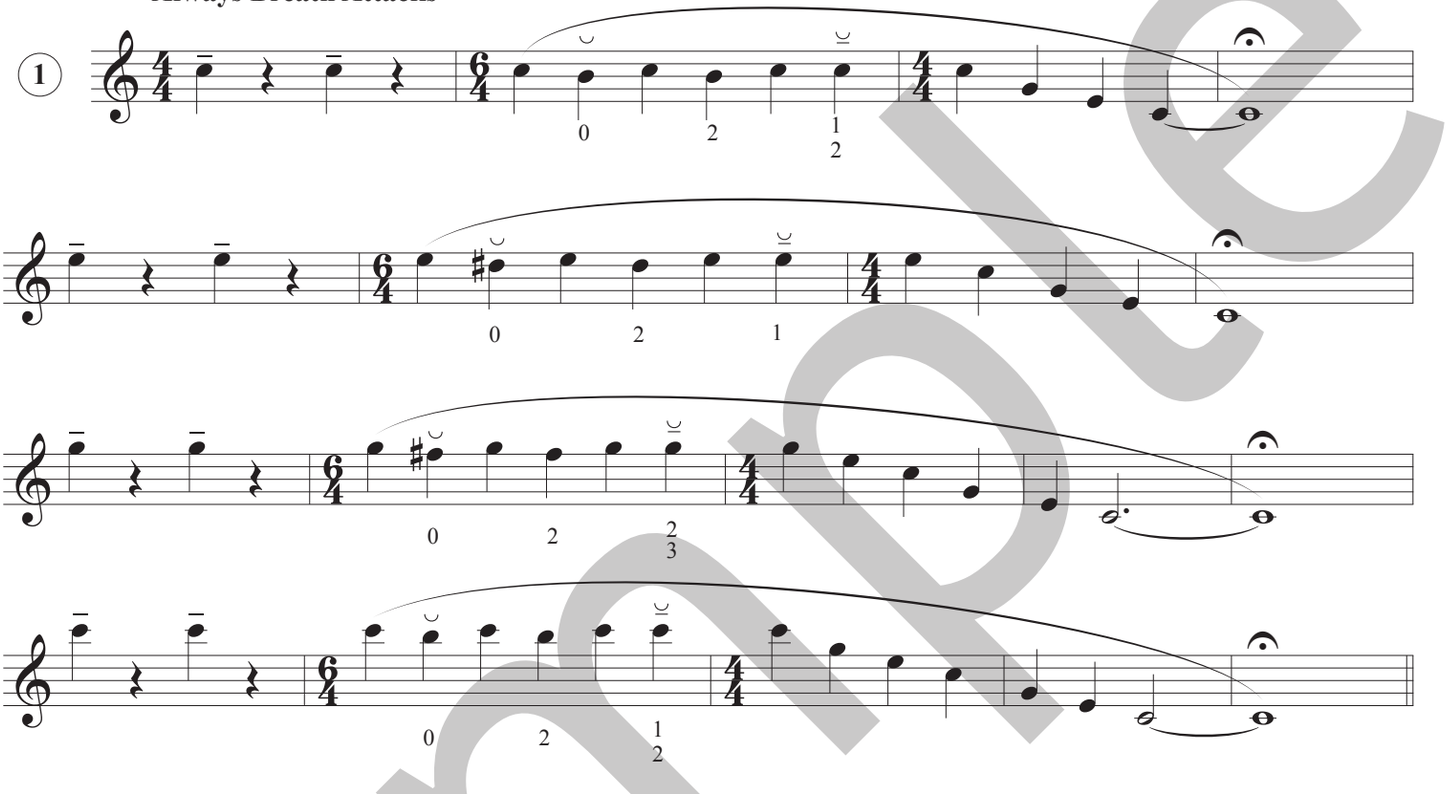
Remember, always play these flow studies with attention to beauty of sound and melodic phrasing. The end goal here is not physicality – it is musicality!

Activation

Warm-Up and Air Engagement

NOTE: The breath attacks should always be rhythmic and precise, with active engagement of abdominal support. Once the form is comfortable, vary the harmonic quality of the arpeggio (minor, augmented, diminished, etc.).

Always Breath Attacks



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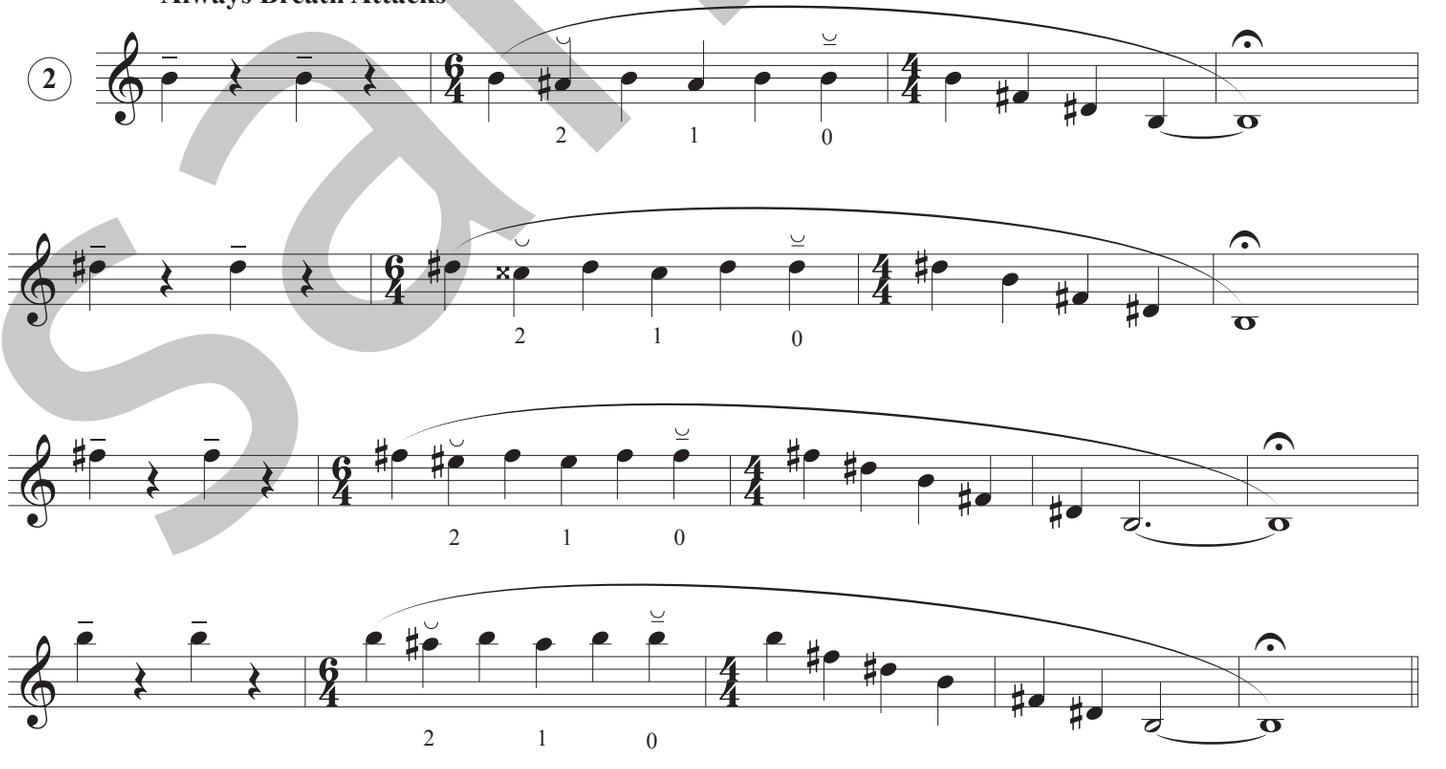

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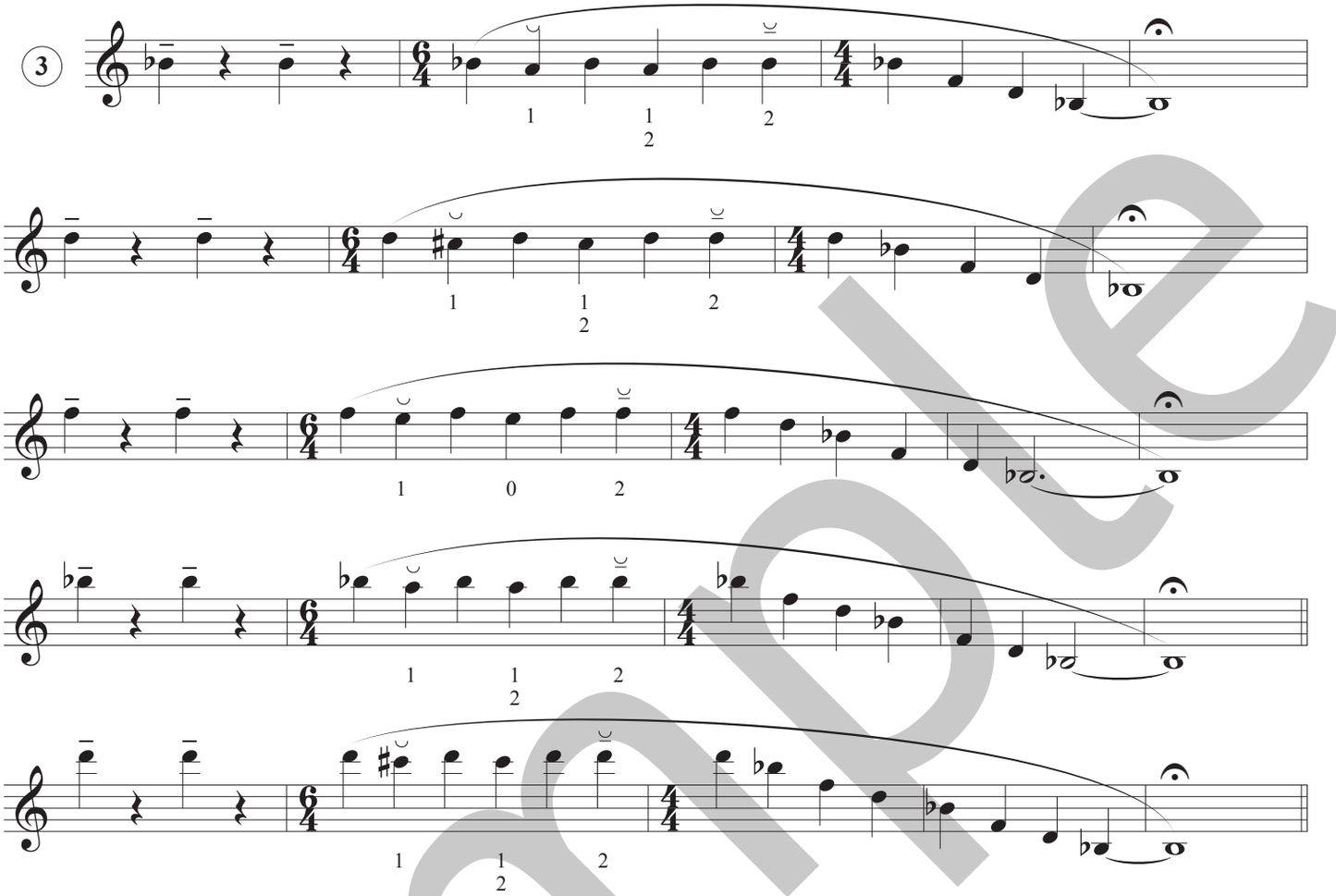

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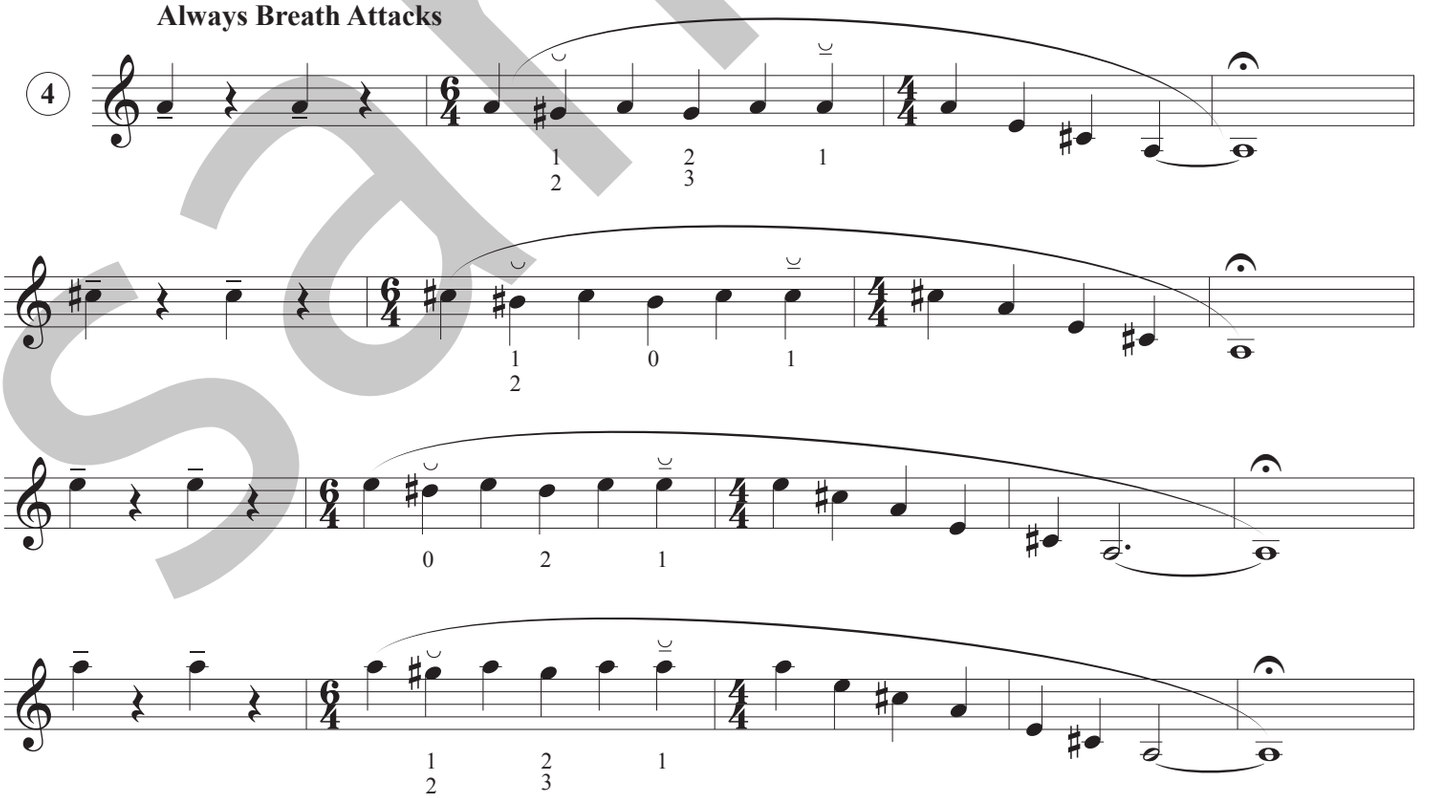

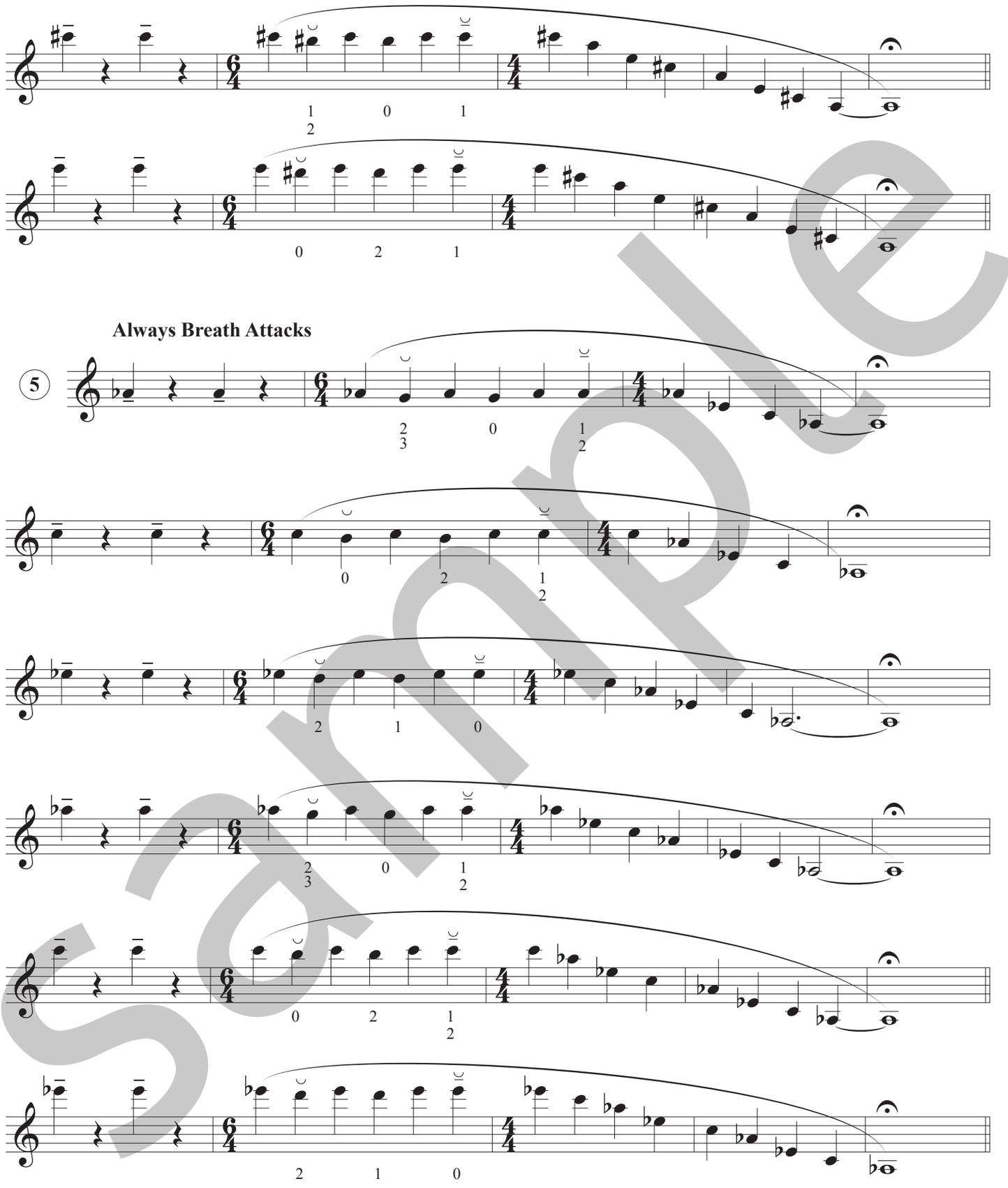

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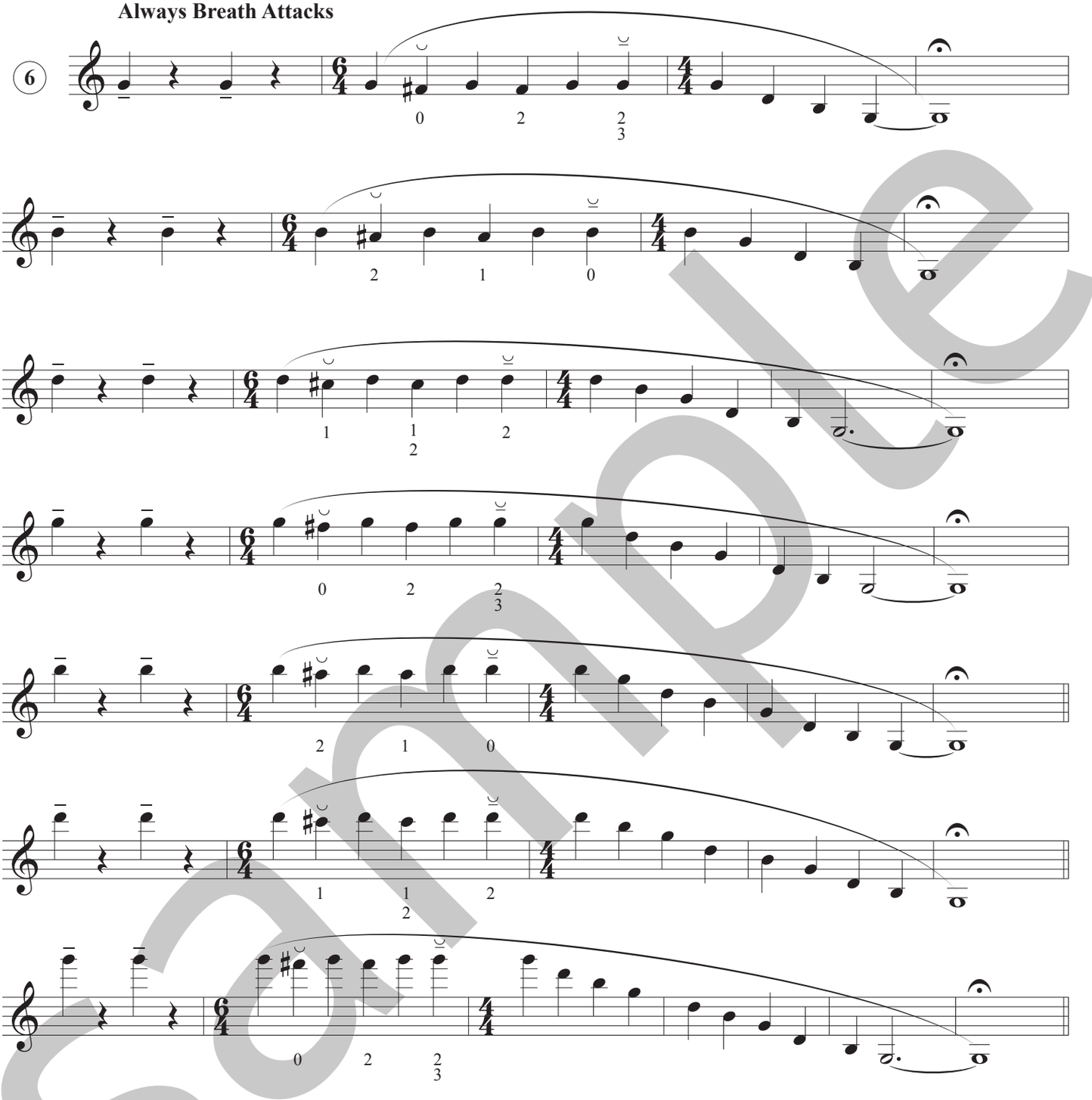

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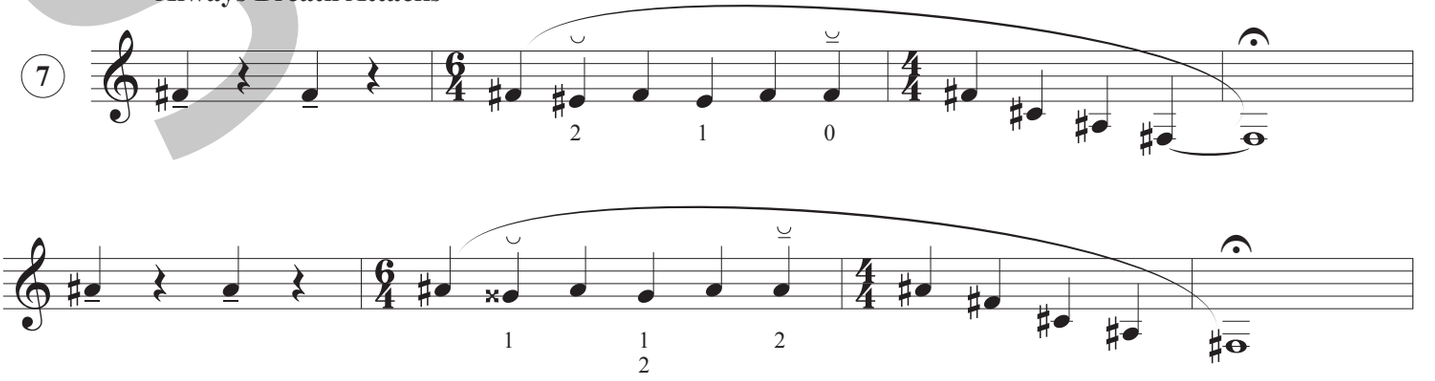

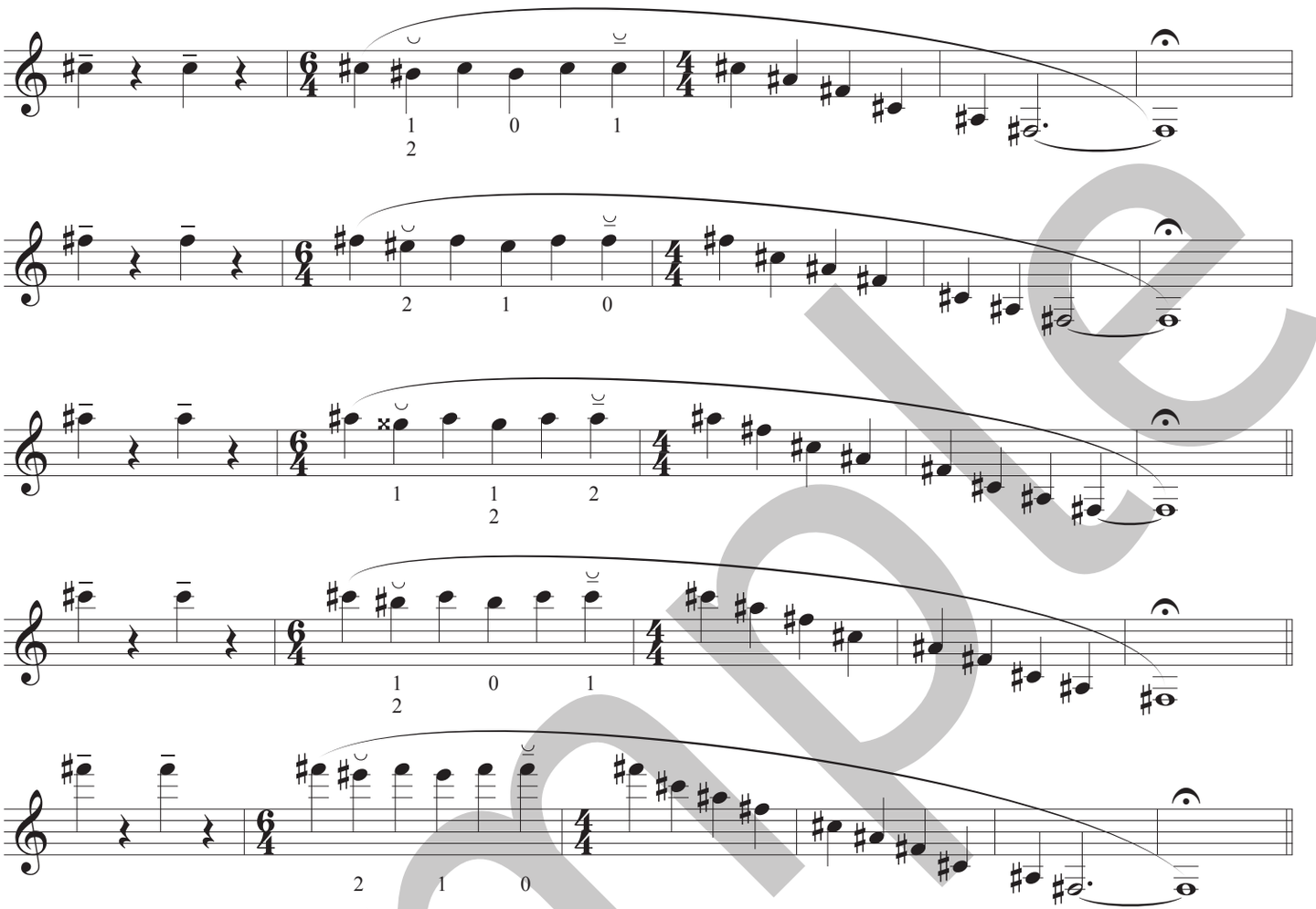

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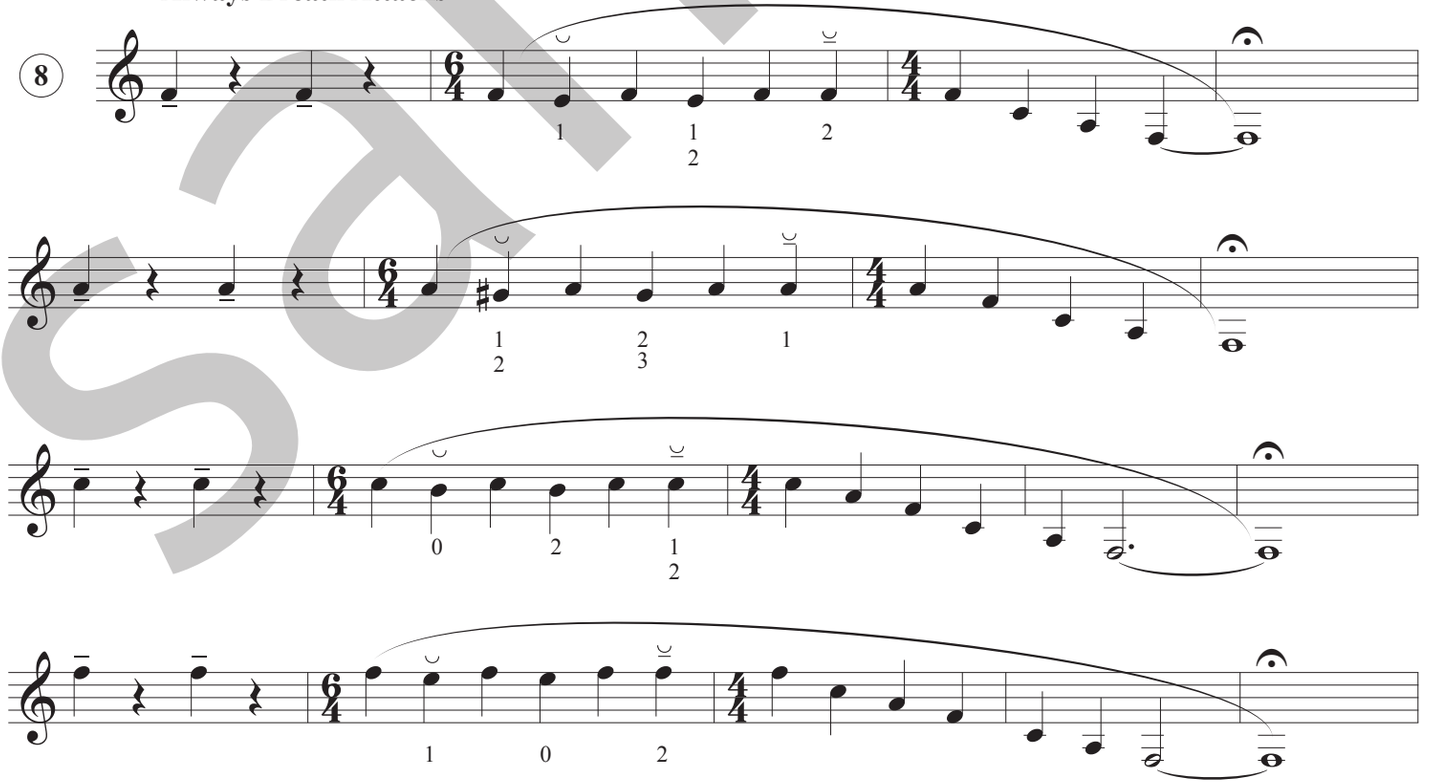

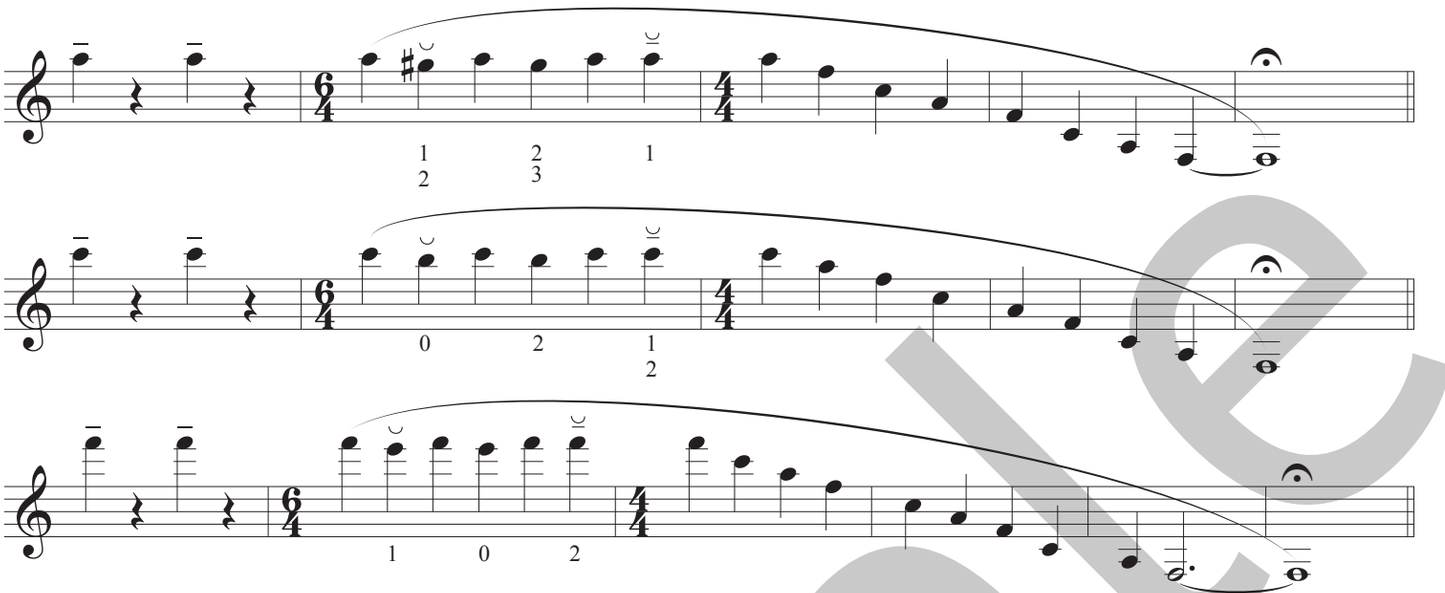

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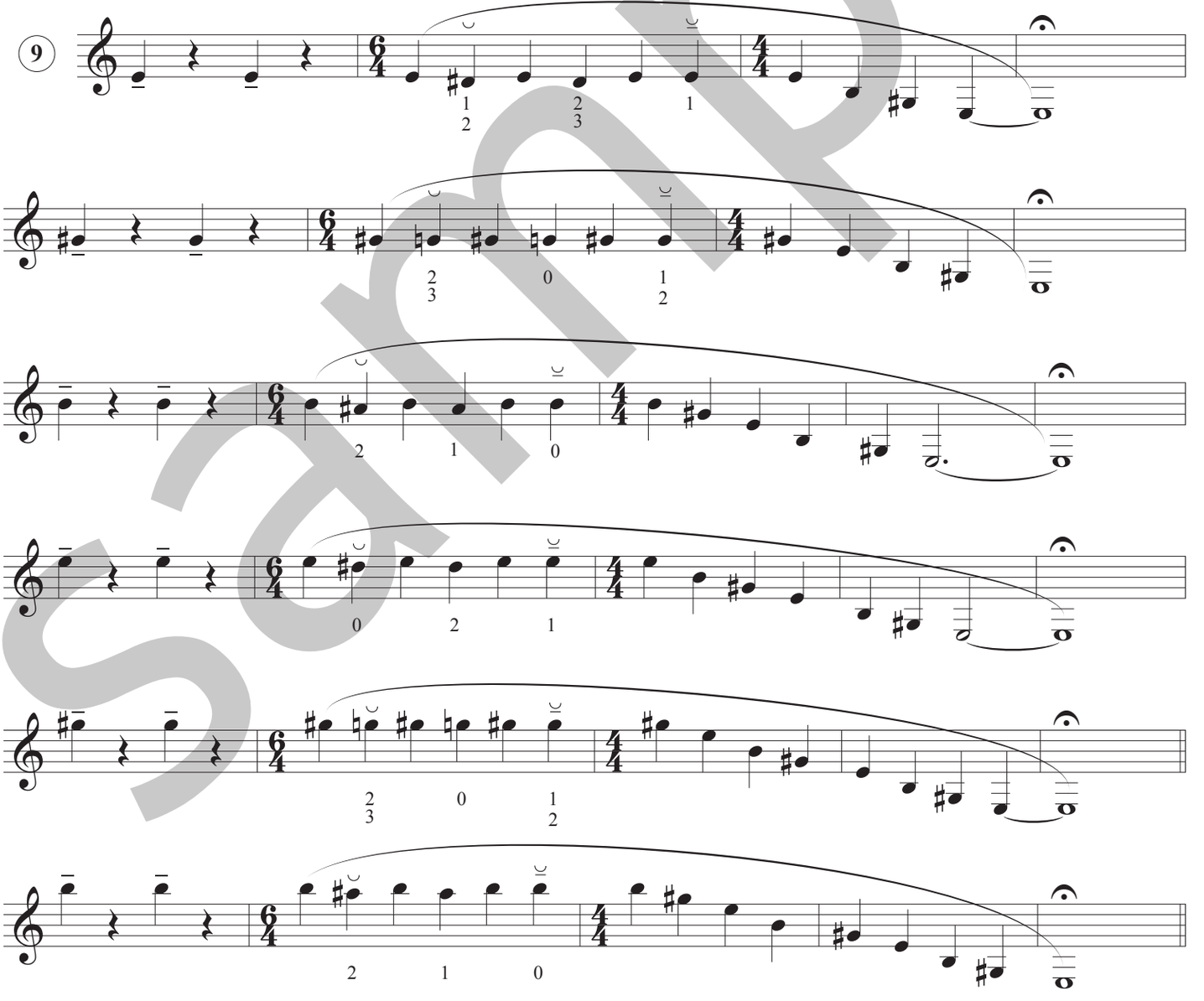

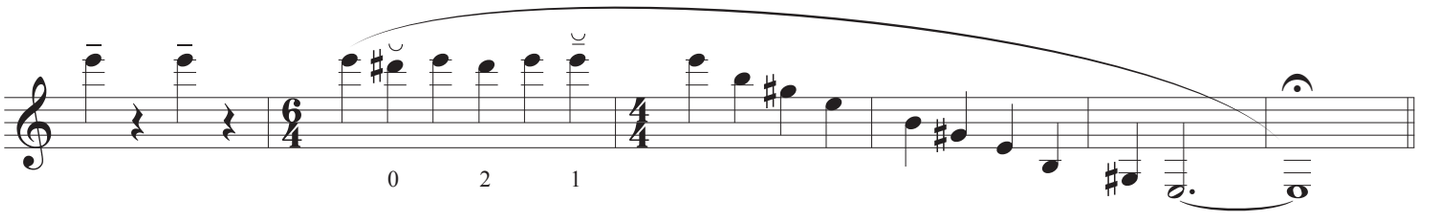

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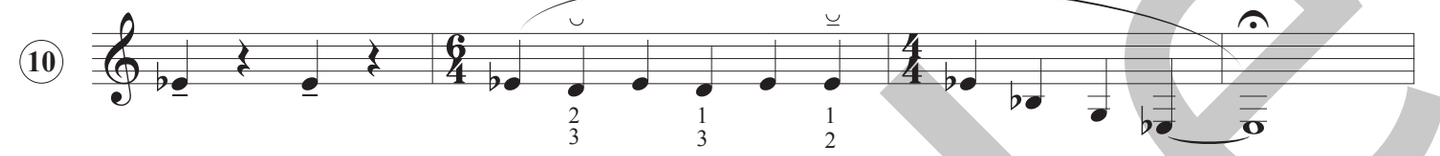

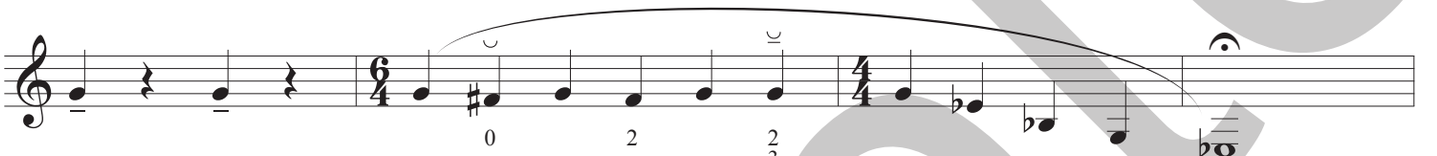

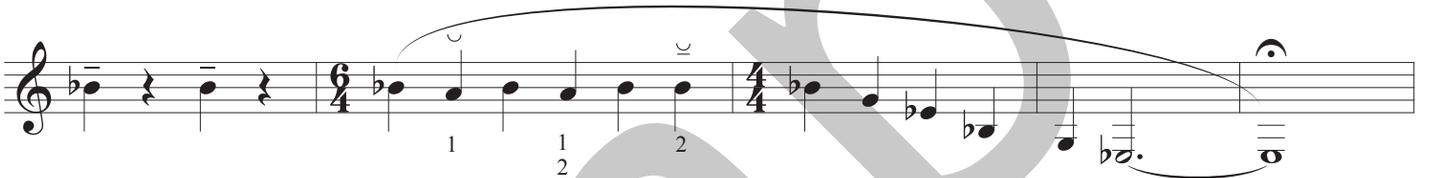

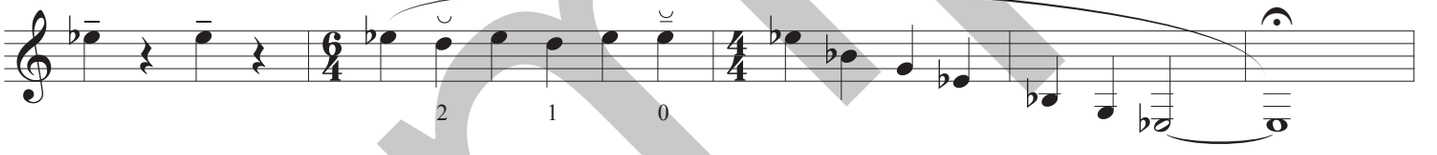

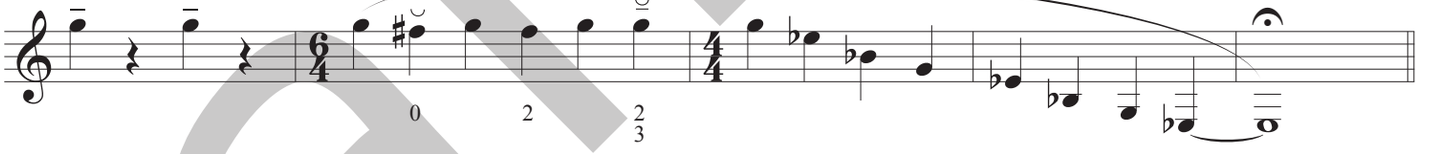

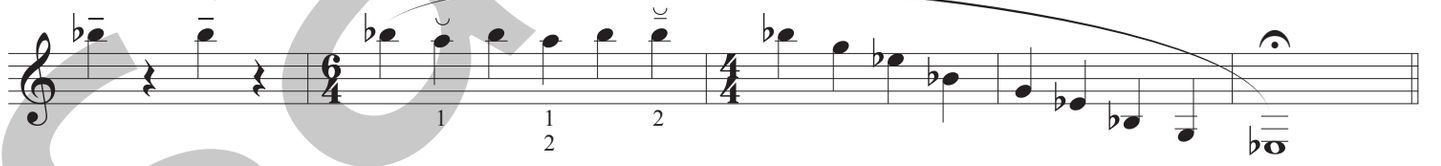

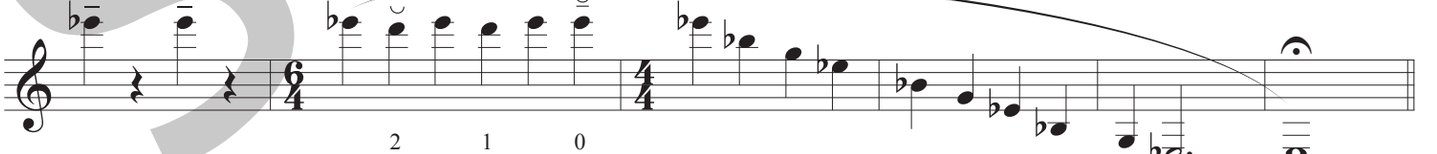

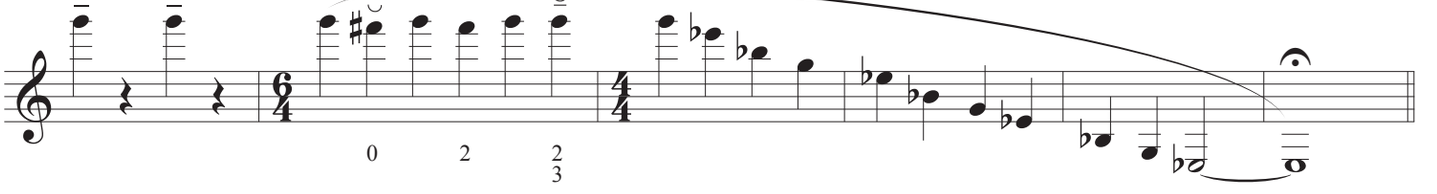

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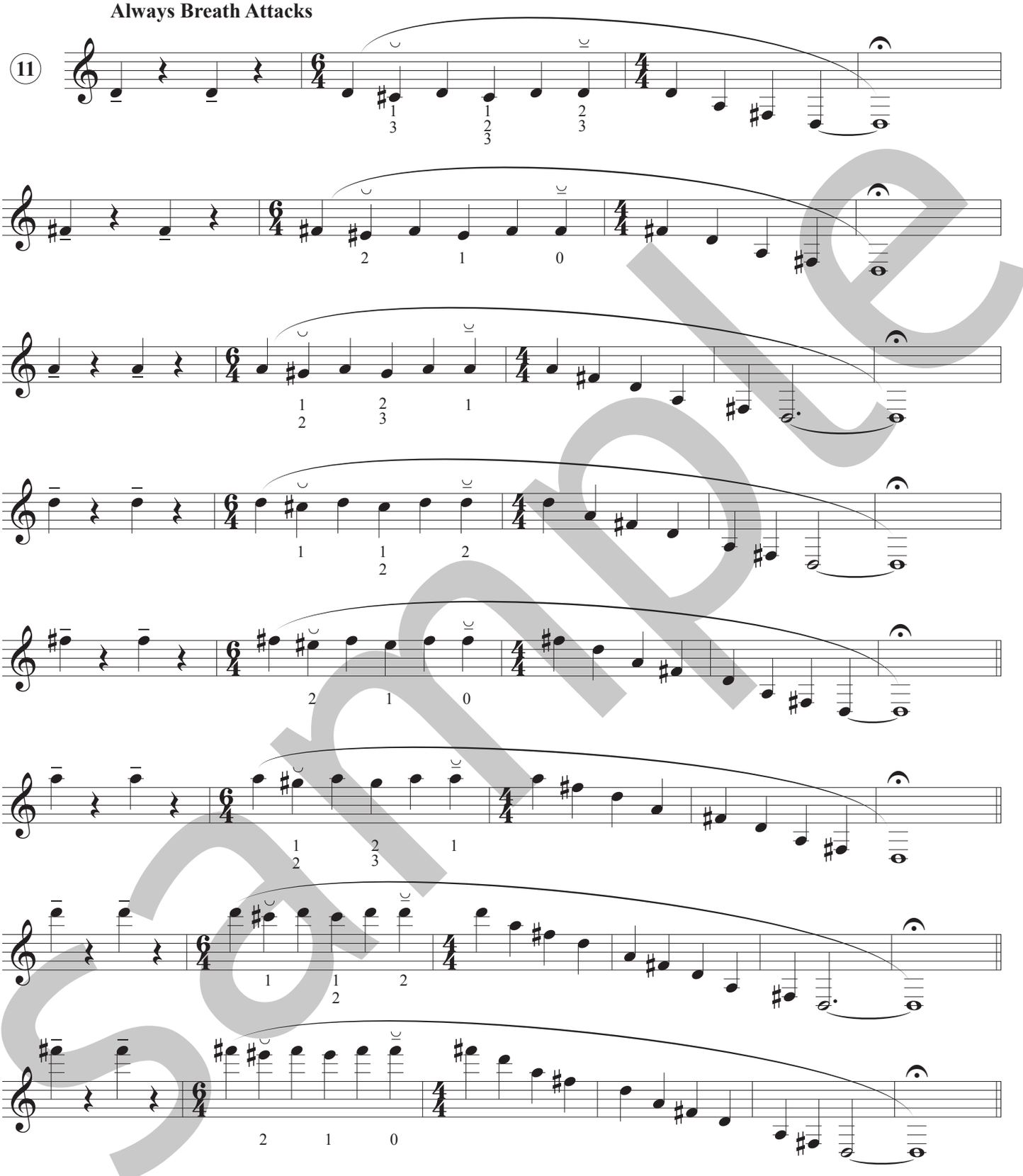

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