WT Band Camp, 2023

A Few Thoughts About Band—Gary Garner

The teacher's fourfold challenge: Information, communication, motivation, evaluation.

The credo: The right note, in the right place, at the right volume, in the right style, perfectly in tune, with a beautiful sound.

Rhythm has two fundamental components: 1) The intellectual (Eastman counting system recommended); and 2) The physical (sub-divided foot-tap).

Five ways of drilling technique: 1) Slow it down; 2) solo-soli; 3) drill routine—thank you, Joseph E. Maddy!; 4) playing in "rhythms"; 5) chaining. The chromatic scale is the wellspring of all technical development. Hey, anyone up for a little *Chromacraze*?

Developing reading skills

- Trite but true: 1)You learn to read by reading; and 2) You can only sight-read a piece once.
- Learn to read ahead, taking in "clumps" of notes at a time, just as in reading the printed word. RhythmBee™ is ideally suited for this.
- Ensemble members must know and understand conducting patterns. And coincidentally, conducting skills are not to be overlooked.

* Finally, the source of most rhythm problems: rests, long notes, and dotted notes.

Fundamental to good sight-reading

- Rhythmic skills. Hmm, let's talk a little Eastman.
- Technical skills, especially mastering scales and arpeggios (the stuff of which most music is made).

Building Technique

- Chromatic scale (full range)
- Major scales (full range)
- Major, minor, dominant 7th, diminished 7th arpeggios (full range)

Trills

- A wrong trill is a wrong note. Director doesn't know the trill fingering? Ever hear of Google? Look it up and mark it in the margin of the score.
- Trill to the next higher note in the key unless there's an accidental inflection is indicated.
- Long trills usually start slower; if the trill fingering is different from the regular fingering, use the regular one for the first turn because the tone quality of the upper auxiliary in a trill fingering is always inferior to that of the regular fingering.
- Trill fingerings are often used to facilitate technical passages.

Intonation Basics

- Sound is vibration; faster-higher, slower-lower.
- Students must be taught to recognize “in tune” (an ongoing process).
- Good intonation is entirely dependent on 1) sound tone production; 2) proper embouchure formation; 3) correct airflow; 4) good equipment in good condition; and 5) concept of tone. Incidentally, anyone ever hear of clarinet tuning rings?

Adjusting Woodwind Pitch

- Alternate fingerings if a different mechanism is involved (saxophone side Bb vs. bis Bb, for example).
- Altered fingerings (usually closing or opening one or more vents).
- The ideal: in tune with a centered tone that can be reliably repeated.
- No one tuning note is best for all, but concert F comes closest, alto and bari sax being notable exceptions.
- When using a tuner, establish the pitch first before looking at the tuner. The best use is for player A to play the pitch while player B looks at the tune, then tries to replicate the pitch.
- The clarinet is the least flexible ww instrument, flute and oboe the most.

Brass Pitch

- Two basic problems: 1) Valve combinations; and 2) The harmonic series. Let’s discuss.

The Three-Note Chorale

- Soprano 8-7-8, alto 6-5-5, tenor, 4-2-3, bass 4-5-1.
- Advantages: 1) Makes it possible to cover the entire range of all instruments; 2) No added distractions, allowing complete attention to matters of sound and pitch without the need to look at the music; 3) Parts can be arranged as the director wishes; 4) Students easily learn to "hear" the pitch before playing it, no matter the key.

Rehearsal Strategies for Intonation

- Play each line separately and identify problems.
- When encountering a problem note, first make the necessary correction, then go back to the beginning of the phrase and hold the problem note when you come it. Finally, put it back in context, understanding it may likely need to be revisited multiple times.
- Record the rehearsal; try to pick out each part and make notes on problem areas.
- In tuning two players, exchange short notes and ask <u>them</u> (or other ensemble members) who's higher and who's lower. Also, try having one player hold a steady tone while the other lips the pitch down, then gradually bring it back up until the waves disappear and a unison is achieved.
- Play a problem passage in a series of wind ensembles, one on a part (eliminate anonymity), or every other player (odds and evens).
- Don't overlook timpani tuning. Out-of-tune timpani can wreak great destruction even when the winds are perfectly in tune.

- The Yamaha Harmony Director is invaluable. A wind controller can also be used to great advantage.

Miscellaneous Points About Intonation

- No vibrato when tuning—just the facts, m'am.
- Don't know which way to go? Make a change.
- In tuning chords, start with the root, then add the 5th, then the third.
- The worst way to tune: Band director acts as an intermediary. Student plays tuning note, director looks at tuner, says “pull out” or “push in,” student complies, director goes to the next player. Not only is this incredibly time-consuming and inefficient, but the student might well end up more out of tune than before.
- And the final word, courtesy of Walter Piston: "Given the relative values of the art of music, it may well be that absolutely perfect intonation is an impossibility. But that a goal is unattainable is no excuse for not giving one's utmost in the attempt to reach it, or at least to approach it as nearly as possible. That is art."

A Few Thoughts about Beginners

- 6-second daily tryouts have been shown to be highly effective.
- The key signature chant.
- Breath impulse, though controversial, can produce excellent results when properly taught.
- Capitalizing on early motivation and reducing apprehension (both students and parents). James Mursell had it right.
- The 3-way connection between note name, fingering, and position on the staff is <u>not</u> automatic; it must be taught.

Testing Criteria

- Keep it short.
- Gear toward the acquisition of a specific goal.
- The Ideal, while difficult, is to make tests challenging for the best players but accessible to all (tempo can often allow for that accommodation).
- Should be carefully calculated to align with the teacher's short-term and long-term goals.
- Allow students to retake as many times as they wish—for a grade, but not for a chair (everyone wins).
- BTW, anyone up for a challenge? Great motivator (at least it was in the ’50’s).

The "Perfect" Rehearsal

- The room is set up and everything is orderly and in place.
- Students enter the room quietly with little or no talking. The director is clearly visible.
- If the band is allowed to warm up individually before rehearsal begins, they do so professionally and intelligently.
- The rehearsal order is on clear display.

- The director has planned every stage of the rehearsal carefully, but is flexible enough to depart from plans as the situation dictates. Beating dead horses is not recommended!
- The rehearsal begins precisely on time; announcements are kept to a minimum.
- When rehearsal is under way, no one speaks unless called upon.
- The director is firmly in control, but always respectful of the students.
- The pace of the rehearsal is fast and intense, punctuated by a few brief moments of relaxation or levity.
- When the director stops, the students stop instantly, listen intently to the director's comments (always clear and succinct), instruments at the ready to start again. Stops rarely exceed a minute, preferably much less.
- The director is unfailingly positive in attitude and demeanor, offering praise when merited and taking care not to make criticism seem personal in any way. Remember, the purpose of the rehearsal is to make mistakes. Identify, correct, and try not to repeat. If we didn't make mistakes, after all, we'd skip rehearsals altogether and just perform.
- The director has anticipated possible problems and has formulated strategies for solving them; quickly recognizing when a strategy is not succeeding, the director either goes to a backup strategy or moves on with plans to attack the problem from a different angle at the next rehearsal.
- Ever-mindful of the time, the director ends the rehearsal with something the band enjoys and plays well, allowing sufficient time for students to clean their instruments (not optional).
- The students leave the room in a quiet, orderly manner and with a sense of accomplishment, eagerly looking forward to the next rehearsal.

A Few Random and Completely Unrelated Ramblings

- Use your instrument.
- Why are we doing all this anyway? Ohmigosh, what a silly question! It's to WIN, of course. And to make ME look good! Or not.
* The 3 greatest lessons about this business I ever learned, courtesy of Kay, Larry, and Gerald at Hutchinson JHS.
* I <u>finally</u> had a good idea—maybe. You be the judge.
* Routine is DEADLY!
* Lesson learned from Prof. Russell Ackoff.
- Always tell the truth, even (especially) when it might seem to work against you. Once you've been caught in a lie, it's extremely hard, perhaps impossible, to regain your credibility.
* Admit your mistakes.
* Never put anything on social media if there's anyone in the world you wouldn't want to see it (because they probably will).
- None of the above matters in the least **UNLESS YOU HAVE THEIR ATTENTION**.

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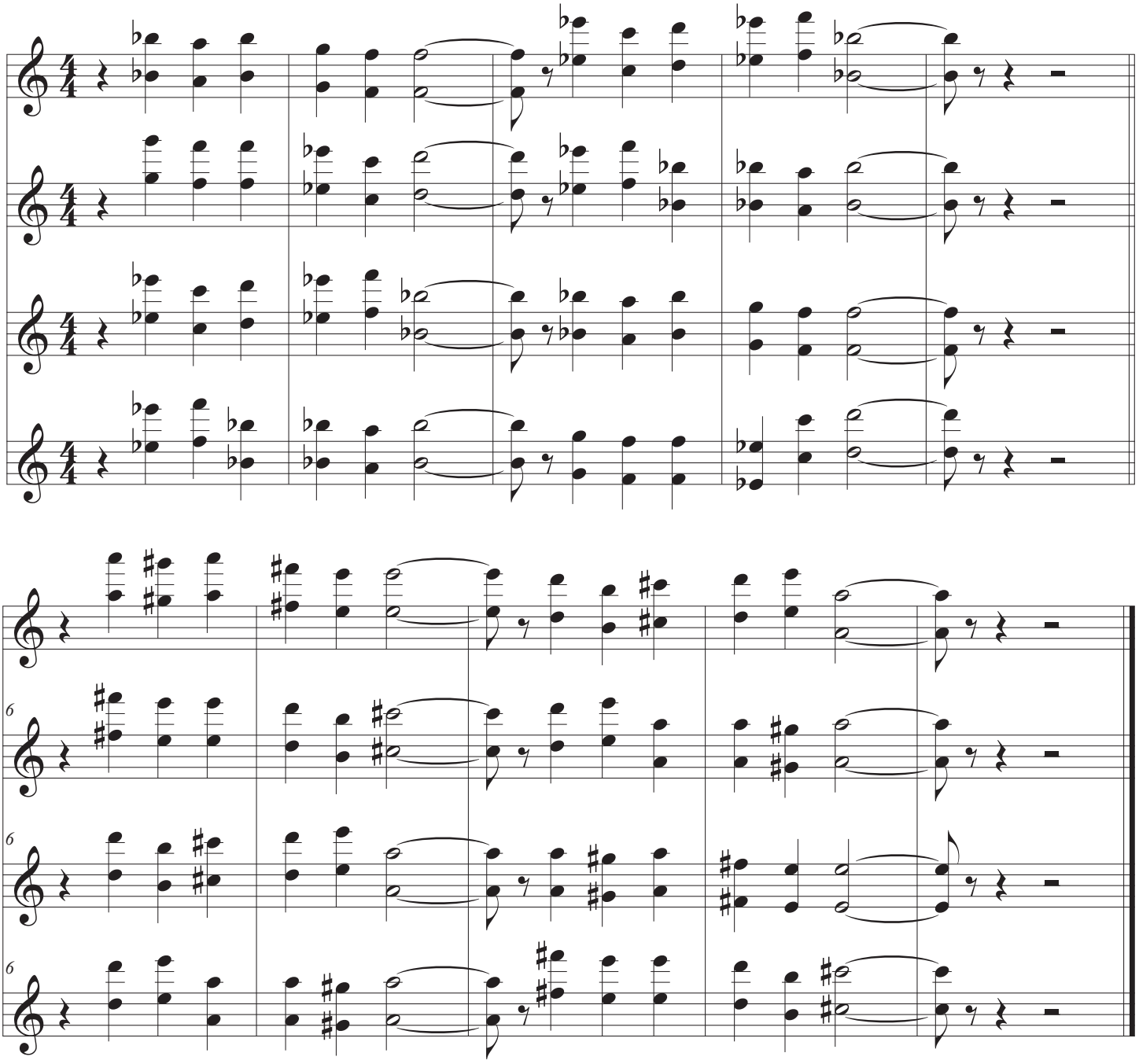
C instruments



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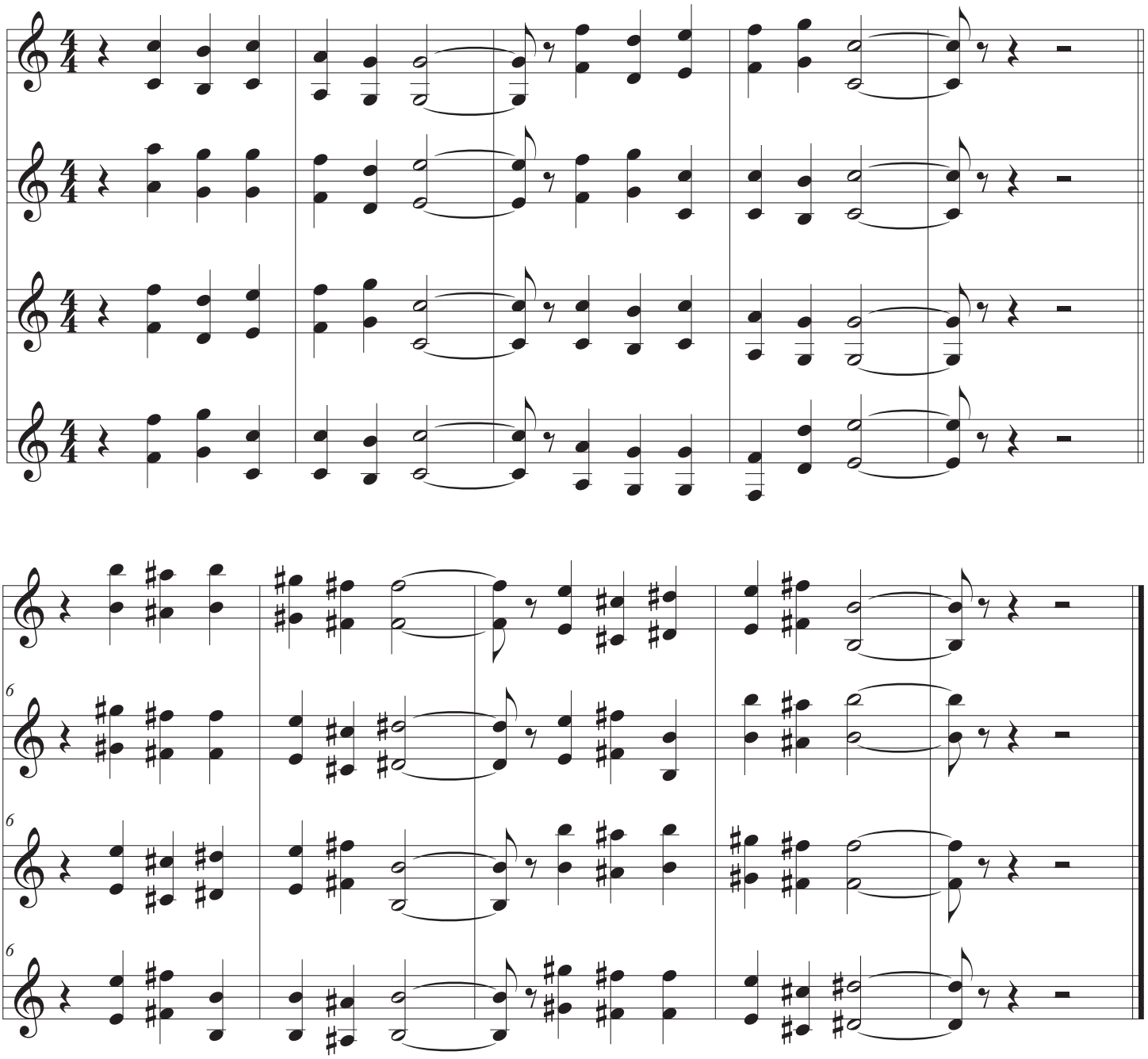
Bb instruments



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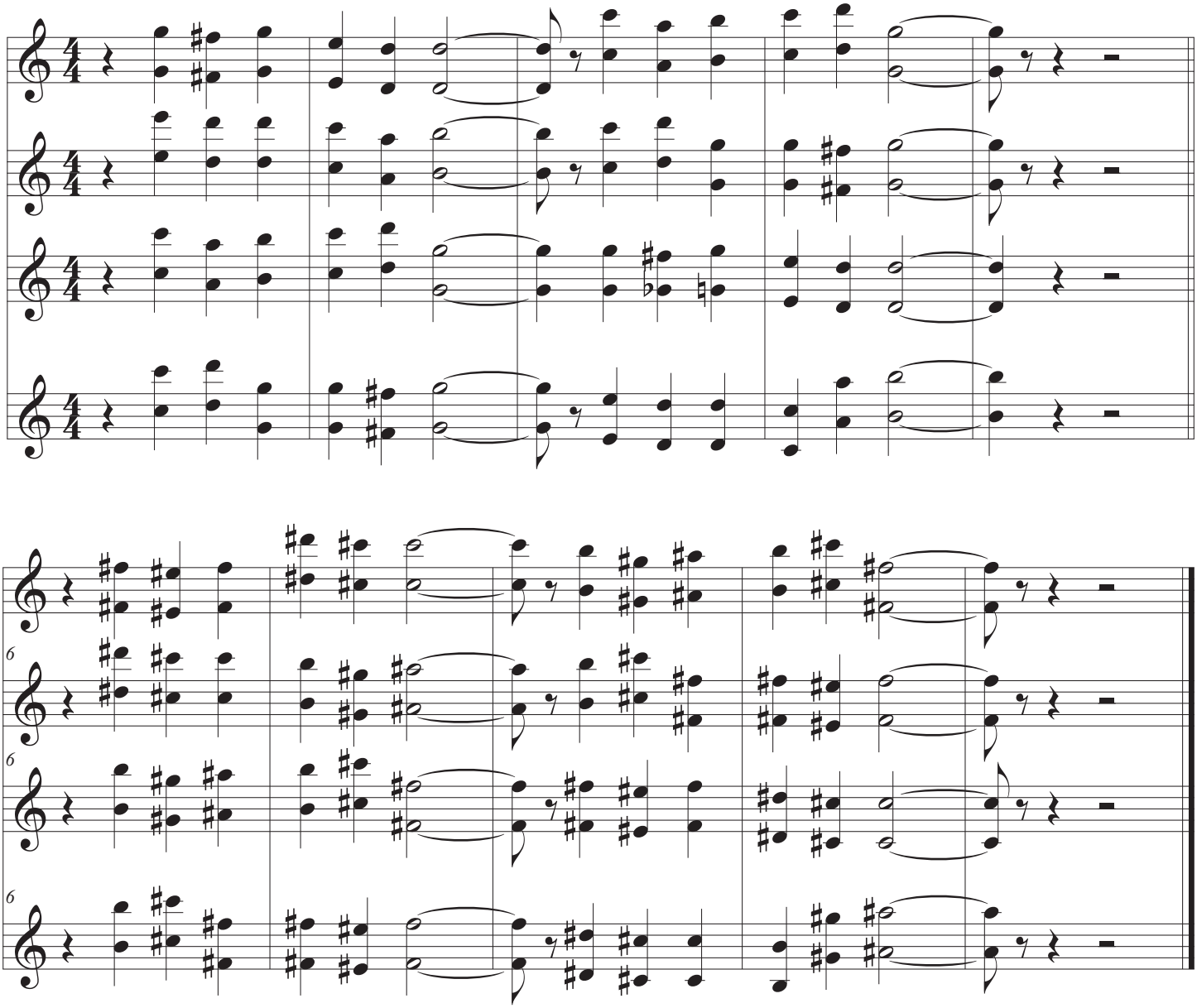

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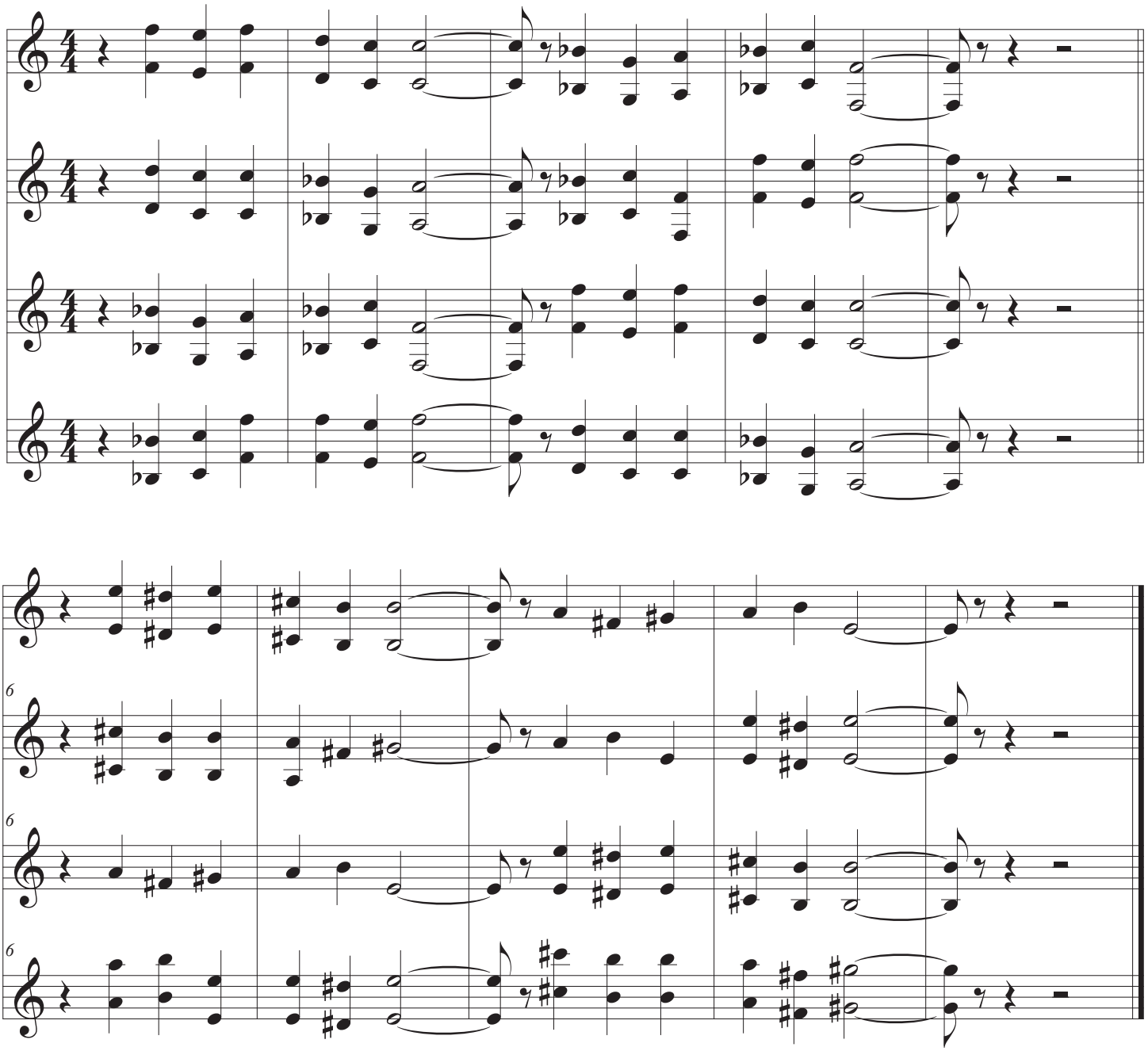

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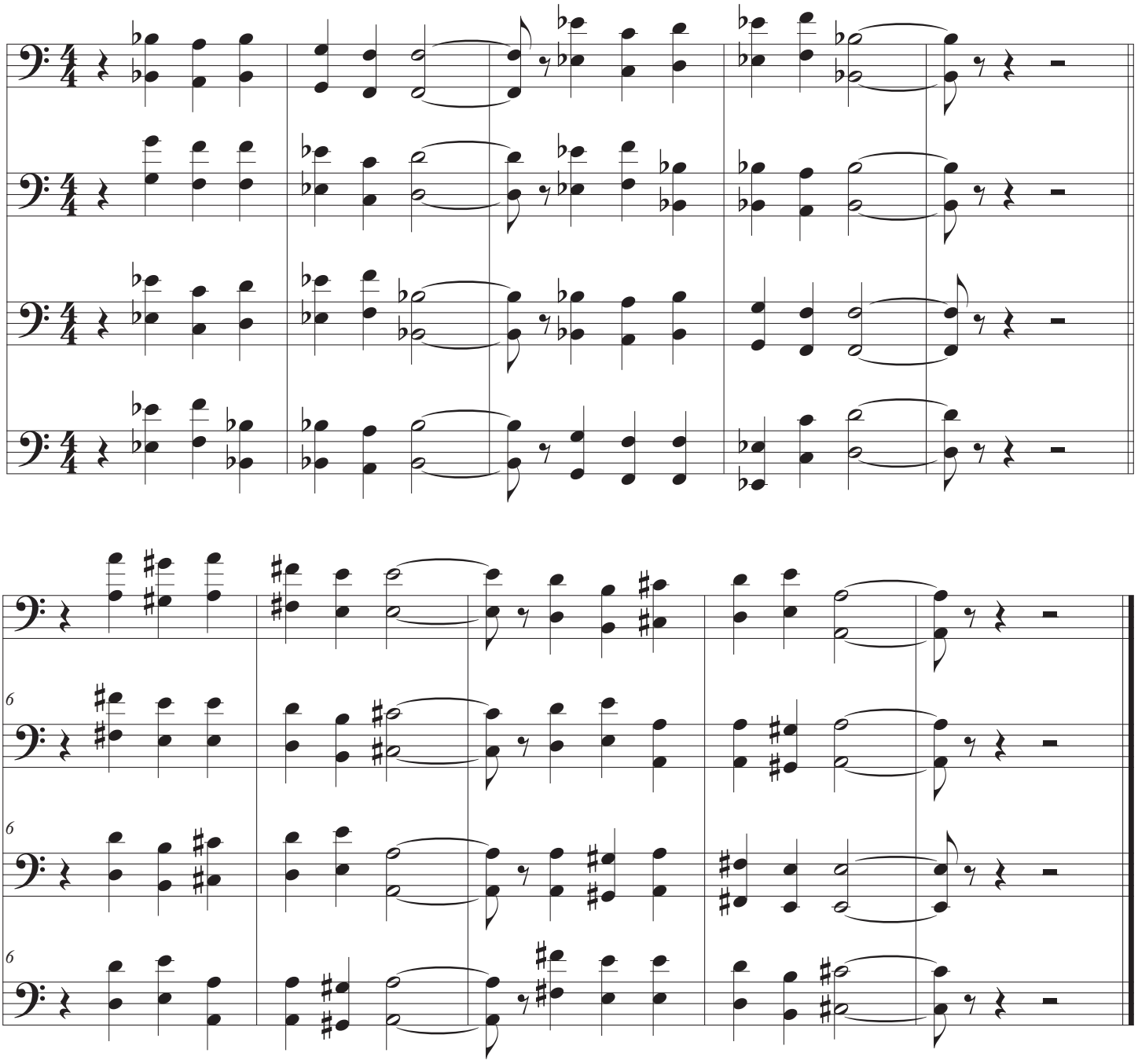
Bass clef instruments



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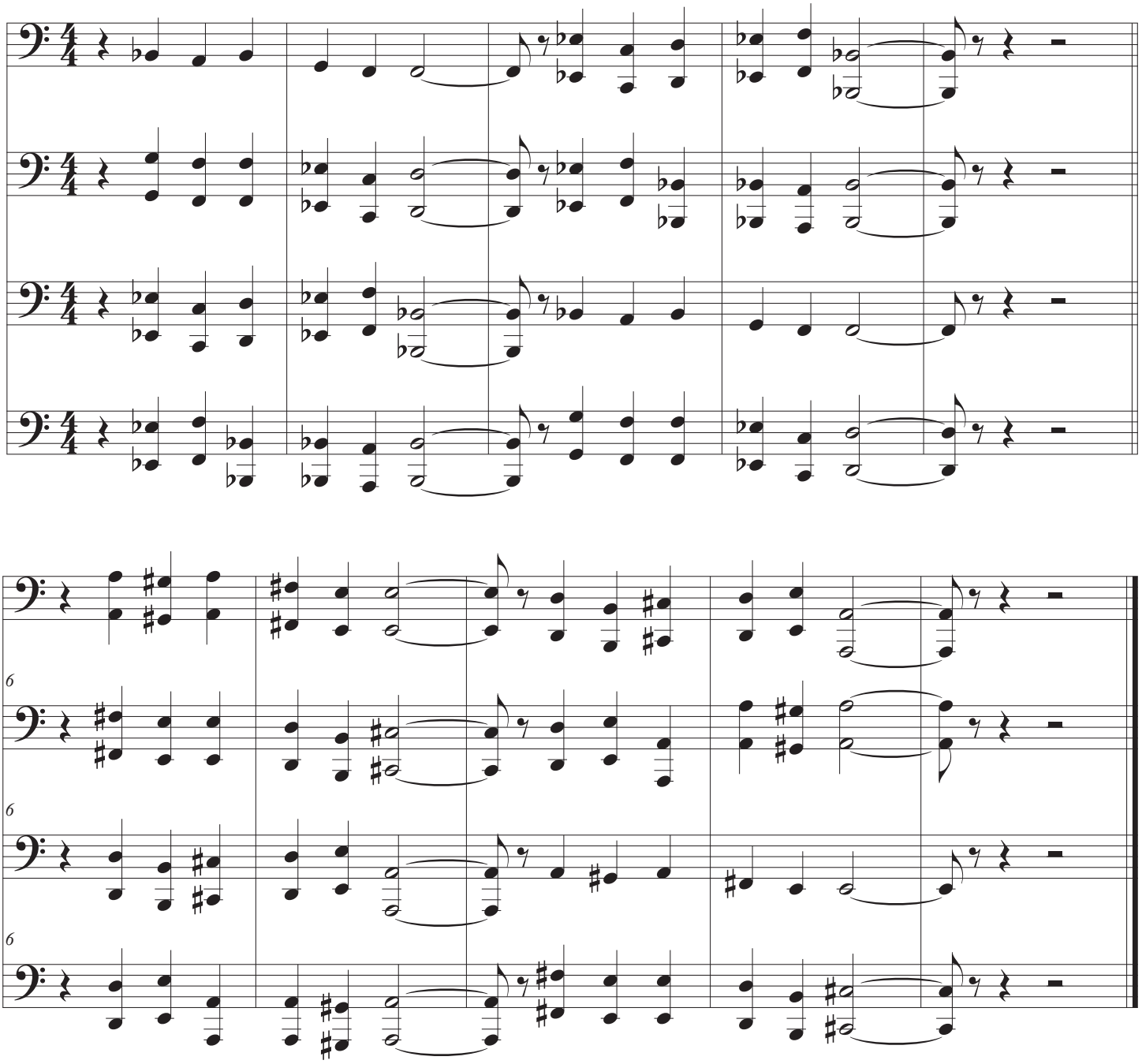
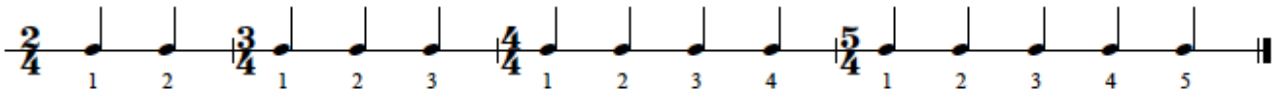
Tuba



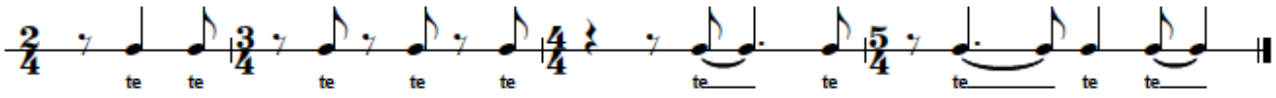
Eastman Counting System

Only Five things to know!

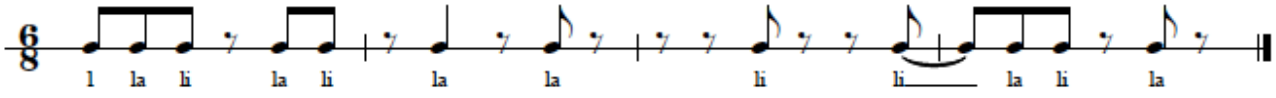
1) A note that comes on the beat is called by the number of the beat:



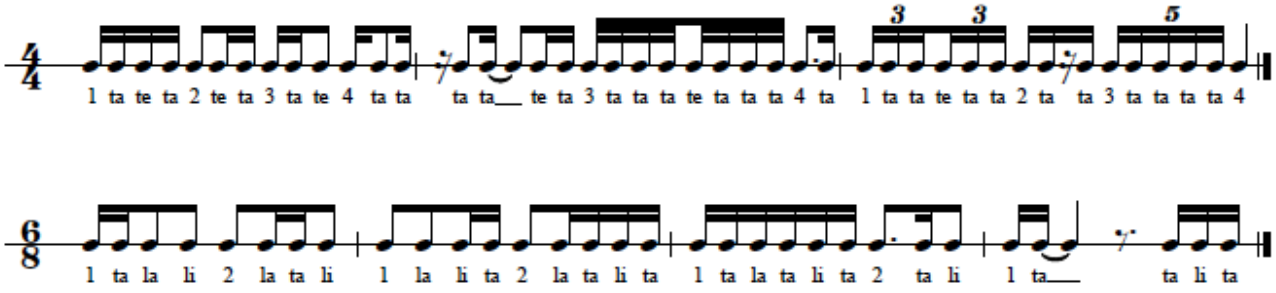
2) A note on the upbeat is called "te" (tay):



3) A note on coming on the second third of a beat is called "la"
4) A note coming on the last third of a beat is called "li" (lee):

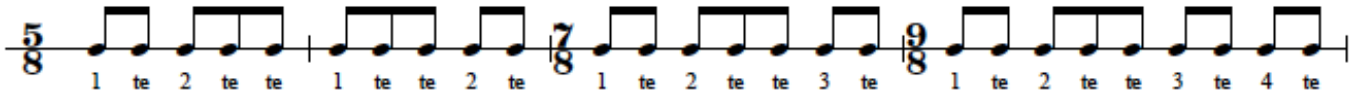
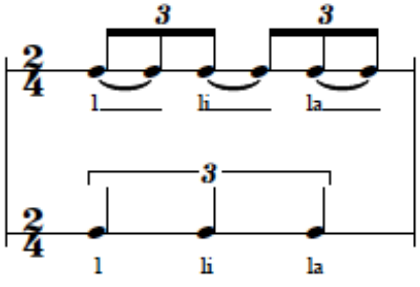
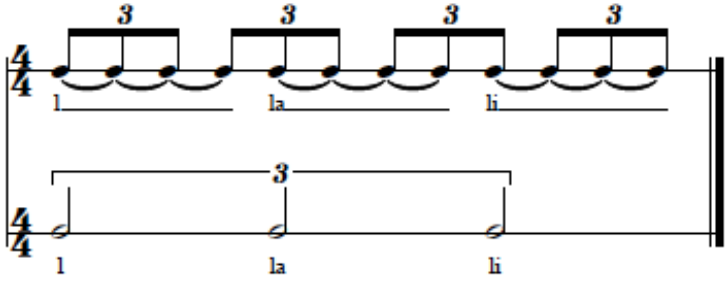


5) **Everything** else is called "ta" (tah):



Special Cases

In those beats having three 8th-notes in asymmetrical meters, the extra 8th is also called "te"



In 2-beat triplets, the second note comes on the last 3rd of a beat and is therefore called "li," while the third note comes on the second 3rd of a beat and is called "la." In 4-beat triplets, the syllables revert to their original order since the second note comes on the 2nd third of a beat and the third note on the last third of a beat: