Diminished Scale Studies

by

Edward Petersen

Roving Bovine Music

This book is intended to serve as a point of departure for the study of the diminished scale. It is not a traditional method book. It is to be used as a source of amorphous practice material that should be personalized and developed by the player.

All of the exercises in this book are in the same key. Most of them are in the same meter. In order to benefit as much as possible from these studies, it is essential that the player do the following:

1. Practice each exercise throughout the full range of the instrument. These patterns are constrained to the practical written range of the saxophone, but they can be modified to apply to any melodic instrument in any register. Saxophonists are encouraged to extend these exercises into the altissimo register.
2. Transpose the exercises to all keys. Because of the symmetrical nature of the diminished scale, some of the exercises will need to be transposed to only two additional keys to obtain the full range of tonal possibilities, but many of the patterns in this book are asymmetrical and should be transposed to twelve keys.
3. Modify the exercises to fit different rhythmic contexts. Most of these are written in 4/4, but the player is encouraged to change the patterns so that they work in a variety of meters. (See Appendix A for some suggested rhythmic variations, but please remember that the variations in this book are just a starting point. The player is expected to transform these exercises into musical ideas that are personally meaningful.)
4. Try to **HEAR** the sound of these exercises in relation to different harmonic configurations. The patterns in this book are very closely related to the following chords: B7(-9), D7(-9), F7(-9), Ab7(-9), Cdim7, Ebdim7, F#dim7, and Adim7, but there are many other harmonic contexts in which musical ideas based on these patterns will sound great. Much of the study of the material in this book should take place at the keyboard. It is important to experiment, listen, and remember the combinations of sounds that are appealing before

practicing these studies as technical exercises.

I hope that this book will help some people to gain new insights into the vastness of the diminished scale. Please contact me if you have any comments or questions.

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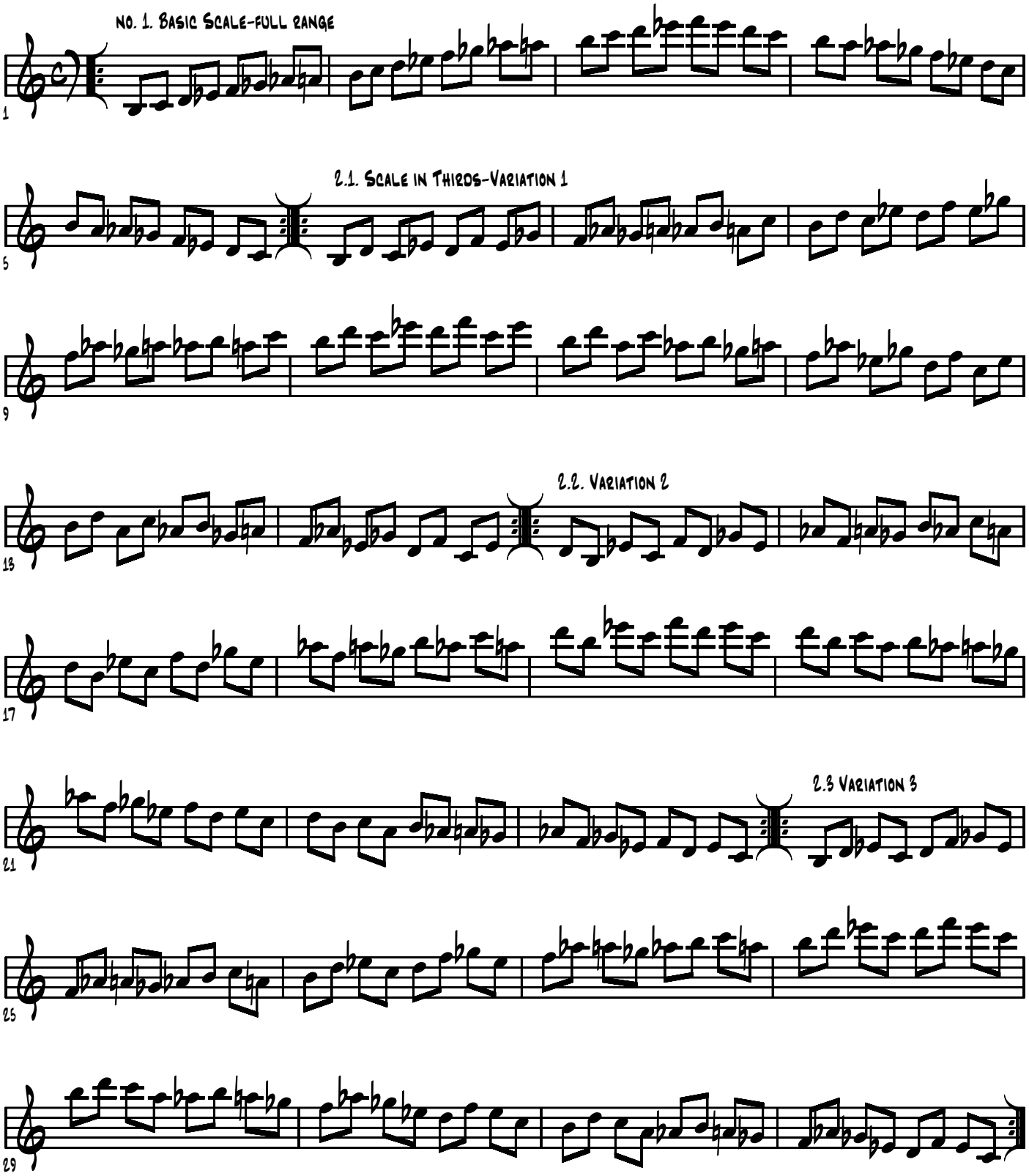
Note on enharmonic equivalents:

The spelling of the scale is consistent throughout this book. In order to make the unusual intervallic configurations as memorable as possible, I have chosen to describe them using the simplest terms that relate to the sound (d4=M3, d7=M6 etc.), rather than the visual appearance of the interval. I hope that this practice does not offend anyone. If it does, please ignore the text!

-Peace, E.P.

Diminished Scale Studies



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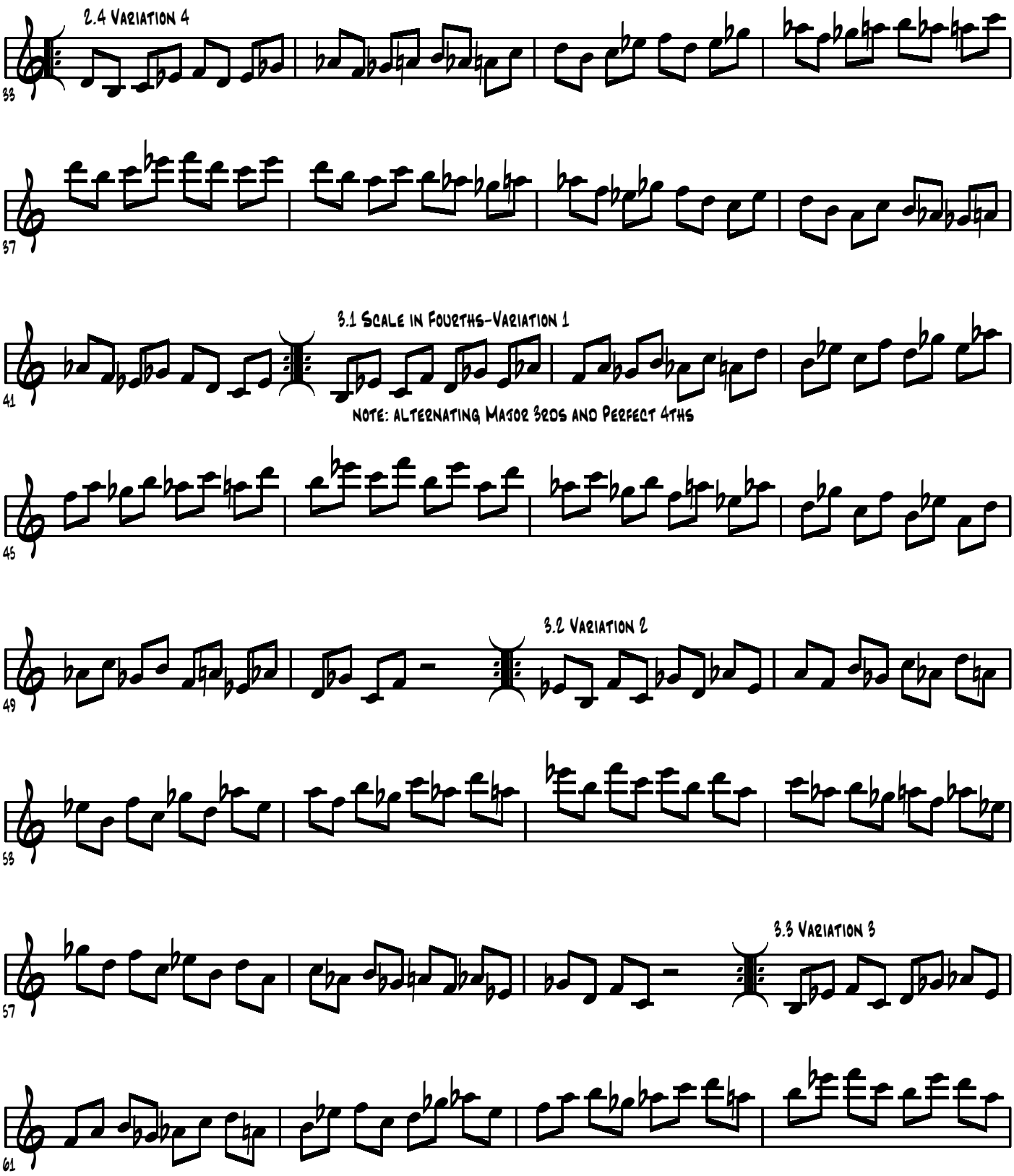

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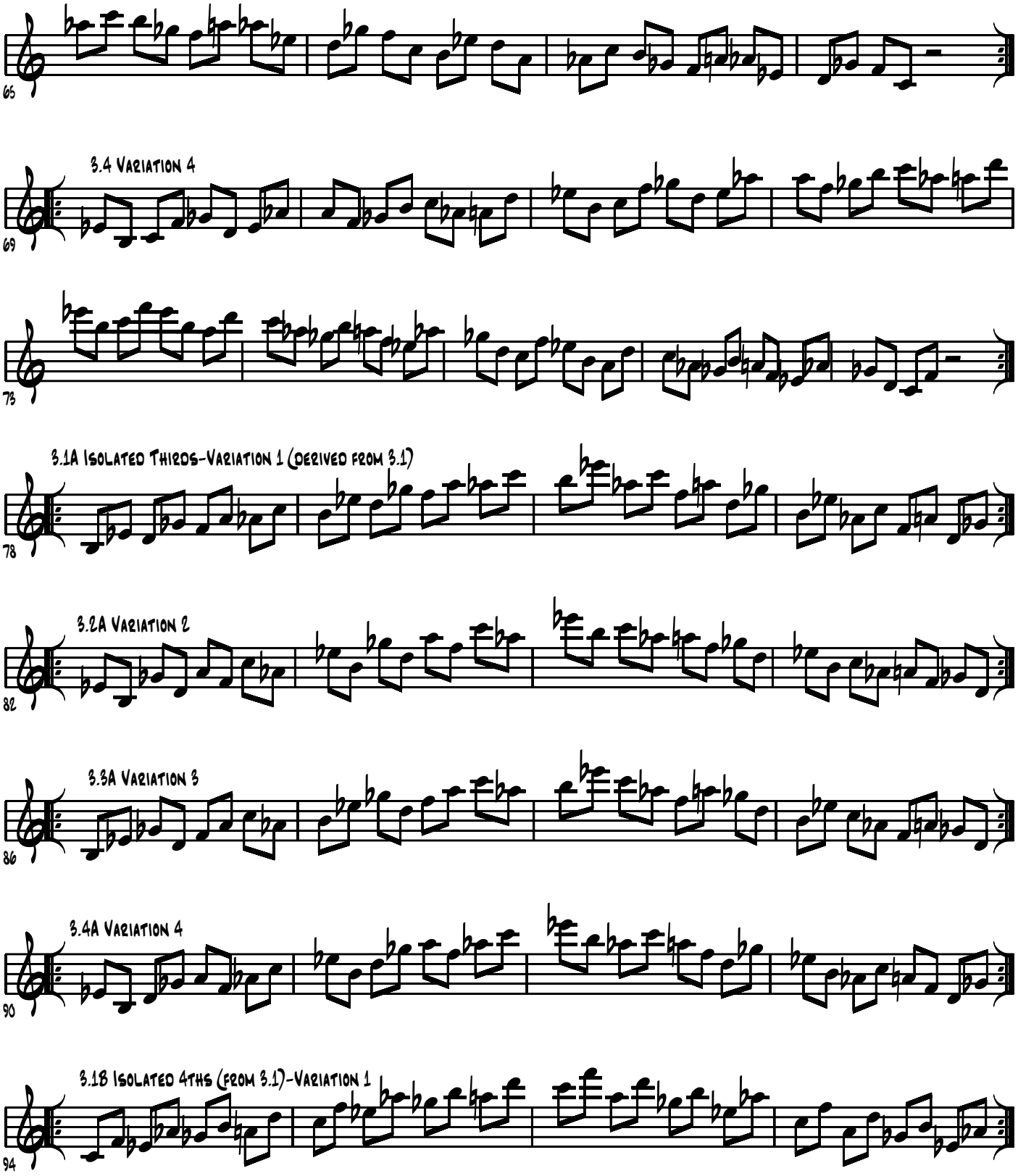

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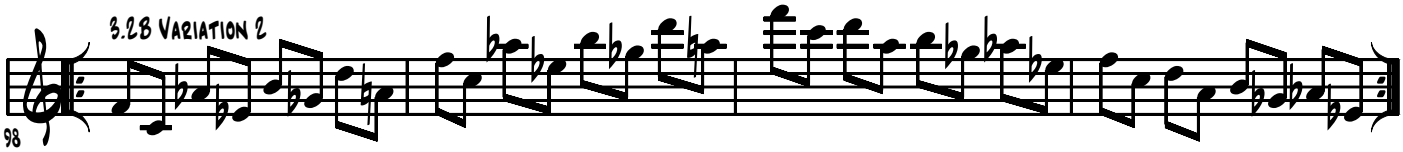
3.2B Variation 2



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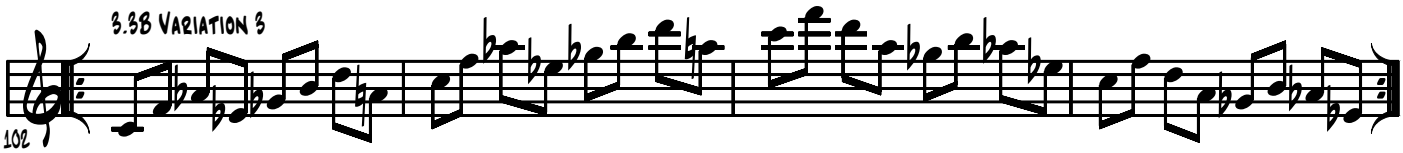
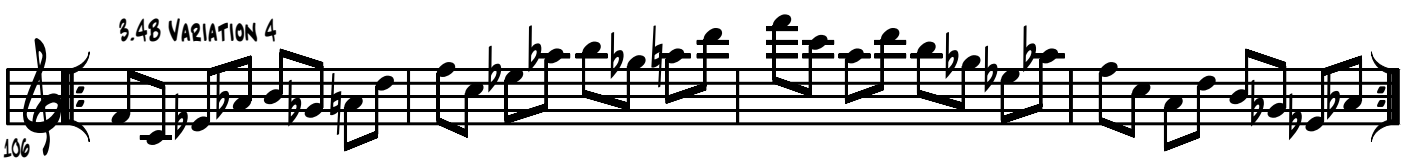


3.4B Variation 4



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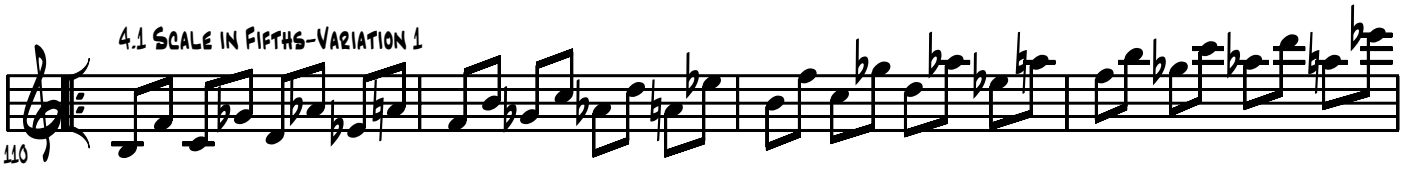
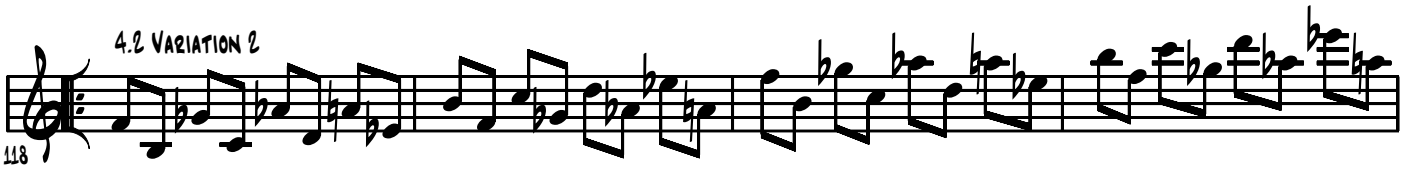
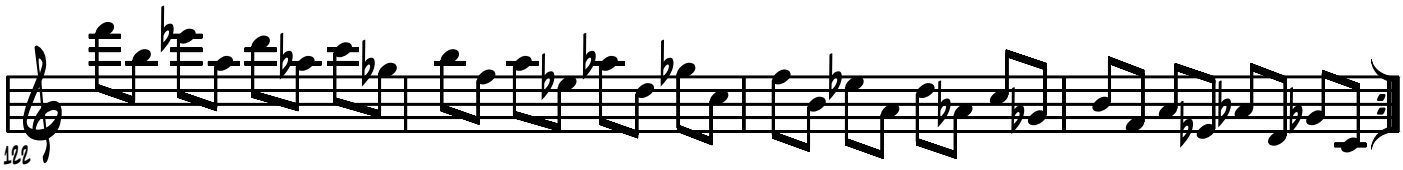


Note: all tritones

4.2 Variation 2





4.3 Variation 3

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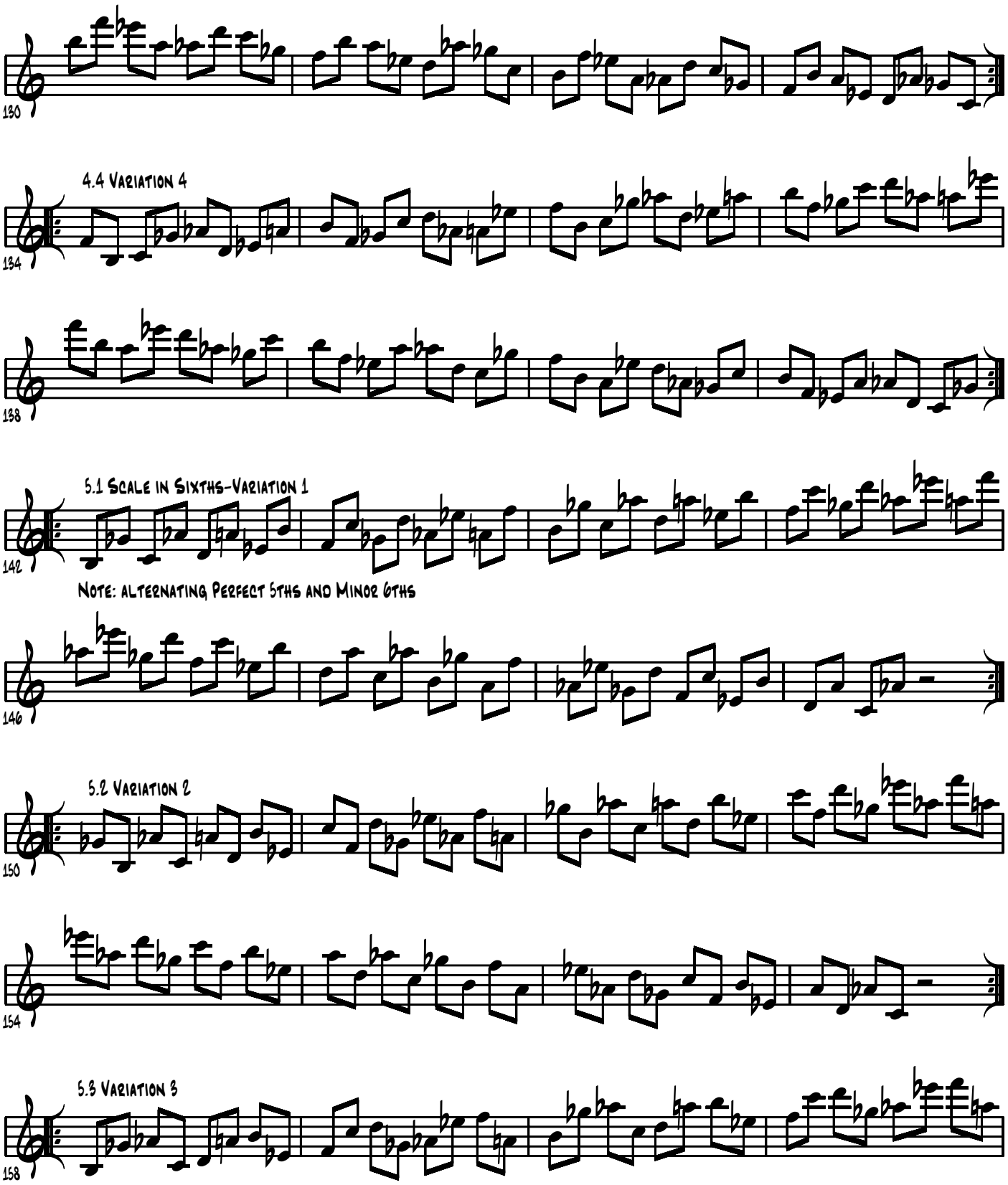

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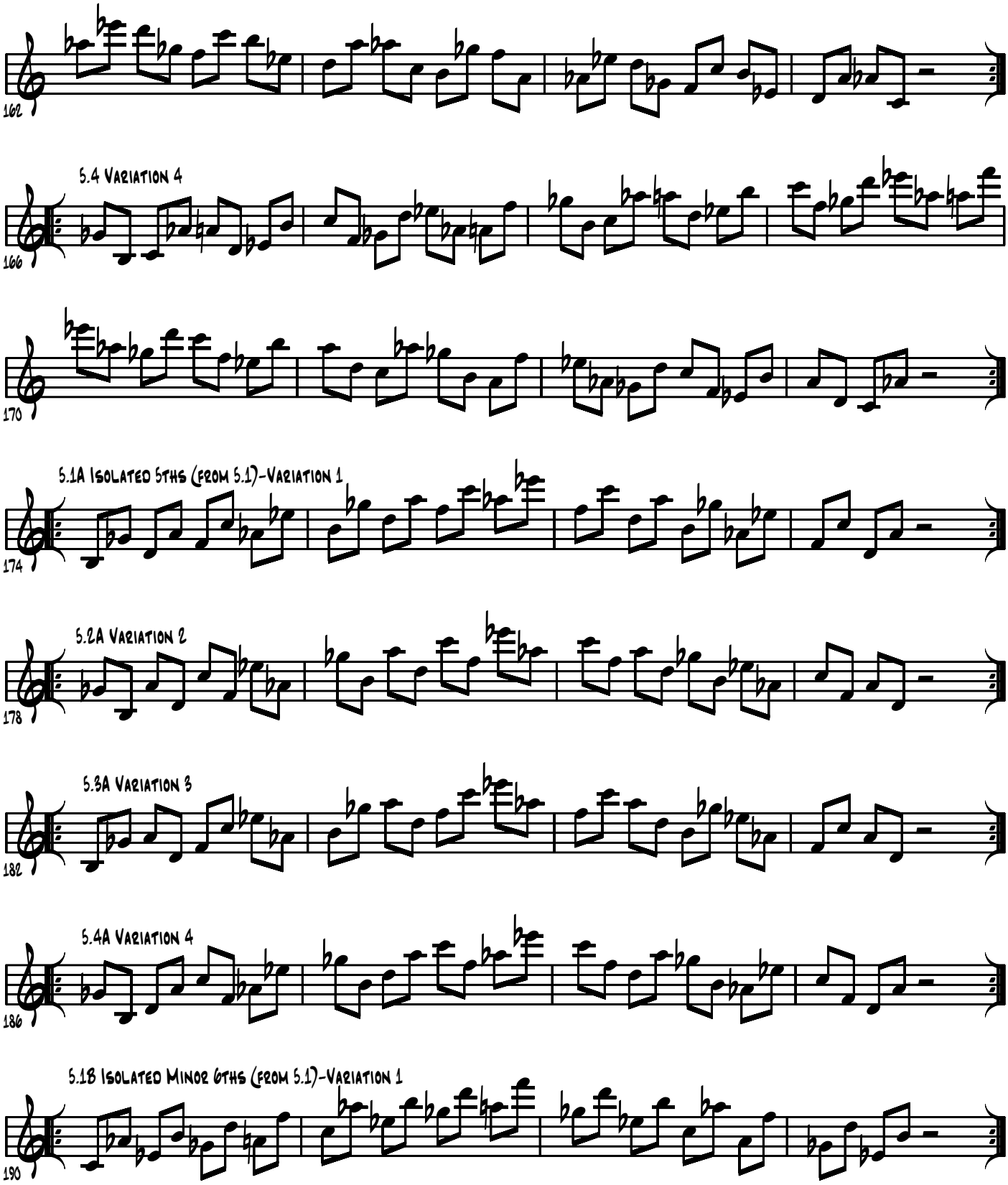

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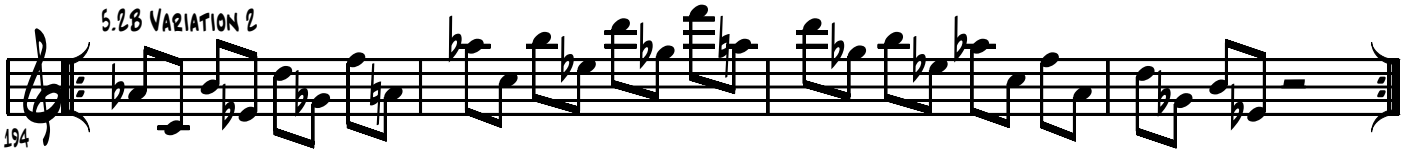

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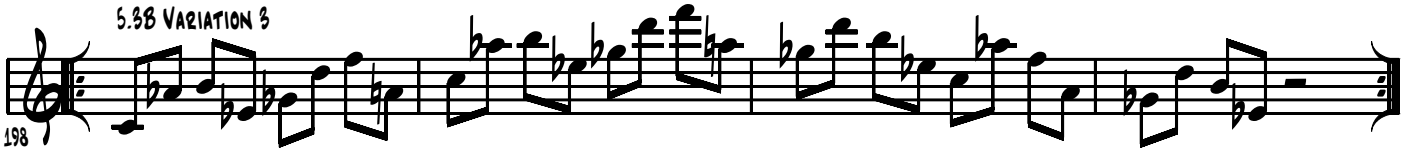

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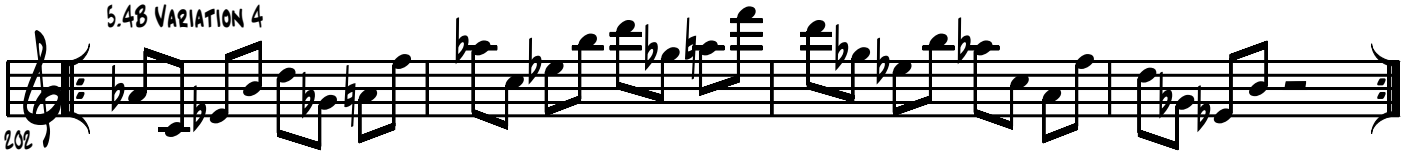
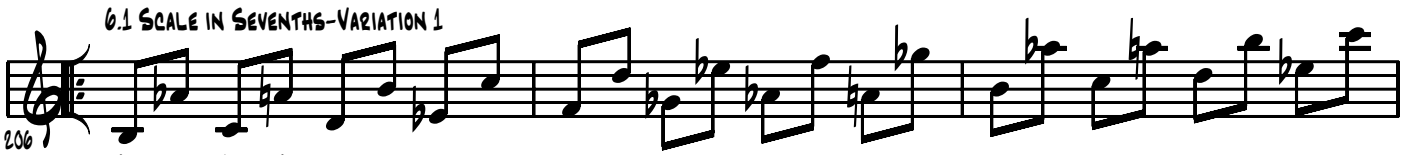
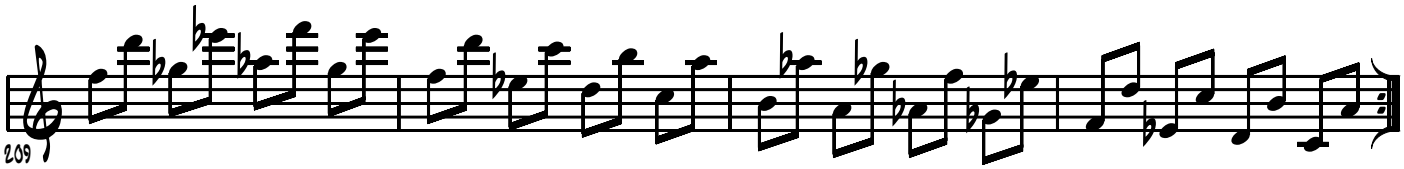


6.1 Scale in Sevenths-Variation 1



Note: all Major 6ths



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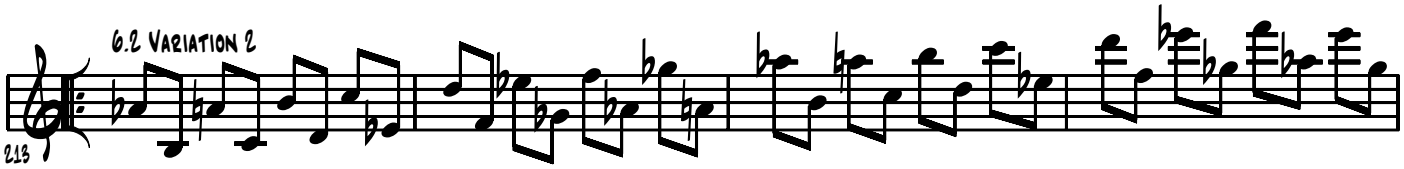

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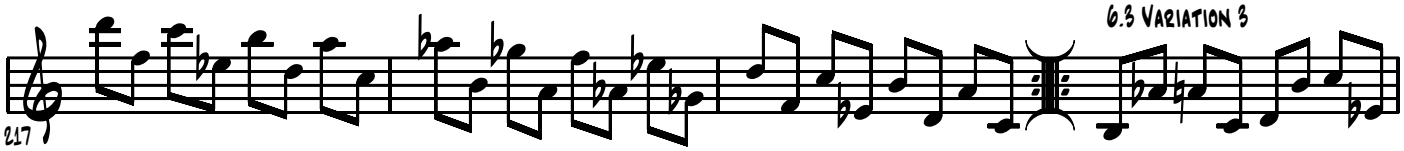

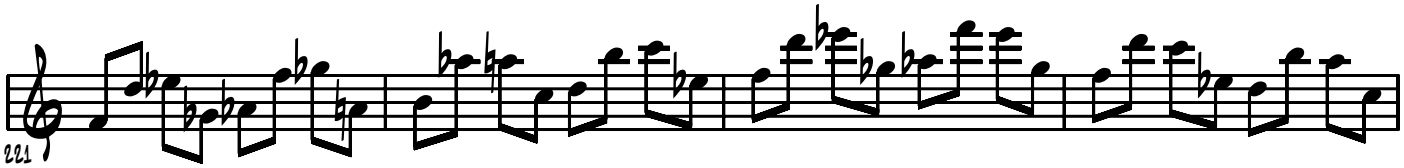

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6.4 Variation 4

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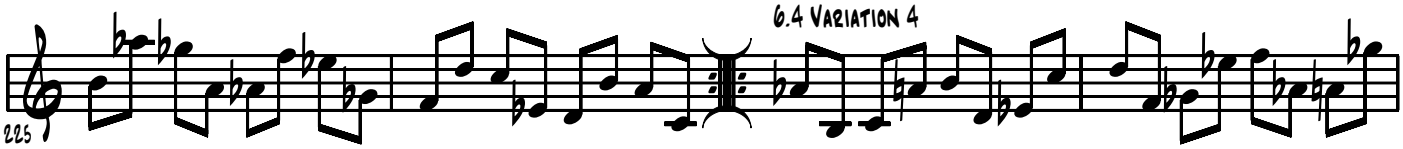

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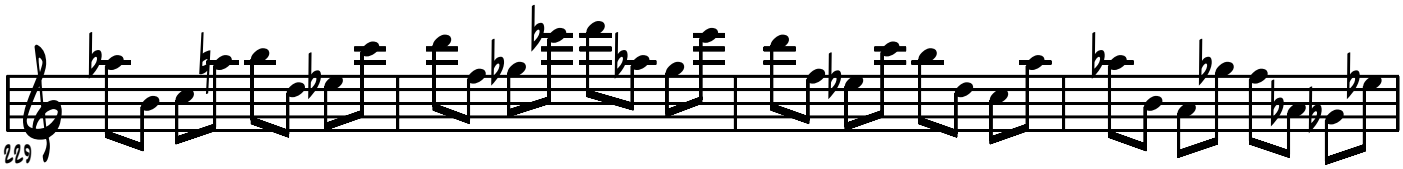

7.1 Scale in 8ths-Variation 1

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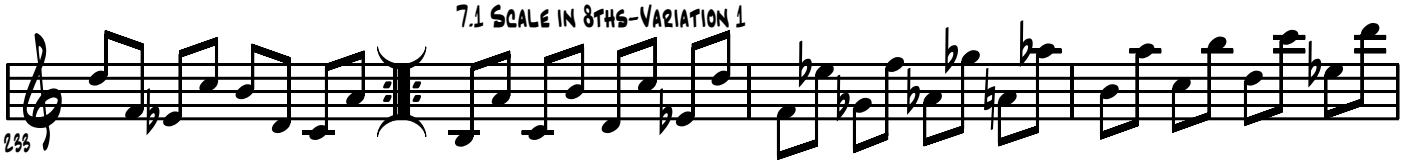

Note: alternating Major and Minor sevenths

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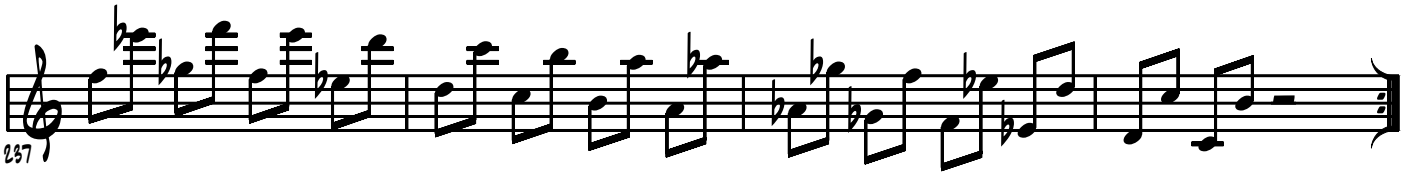

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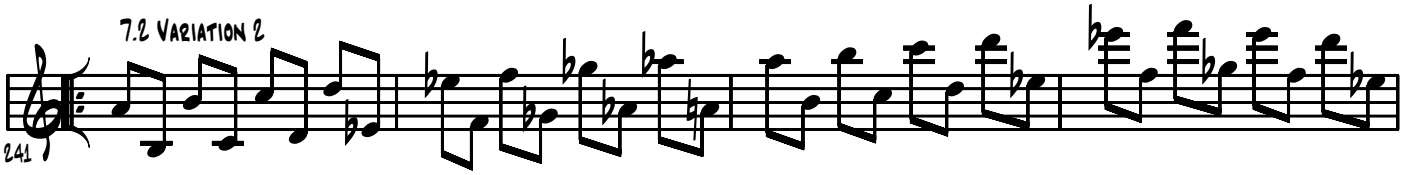

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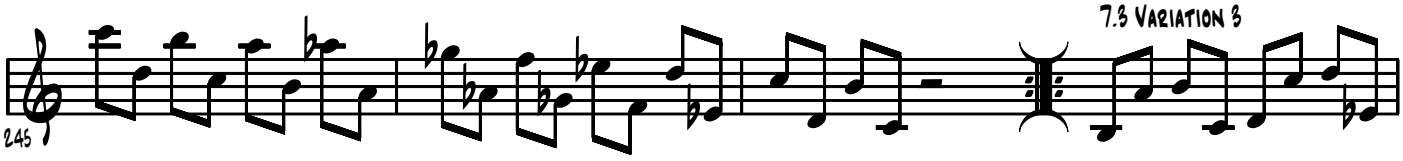

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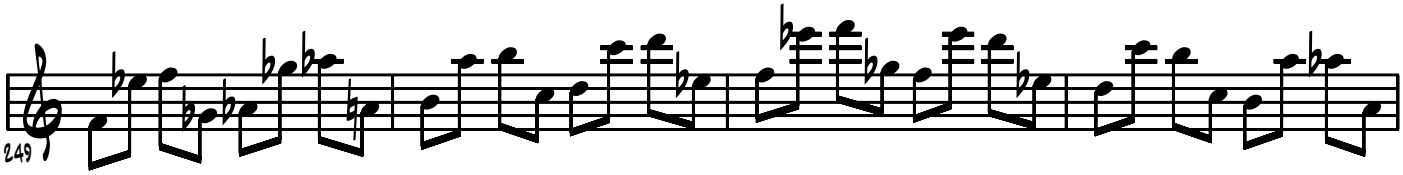

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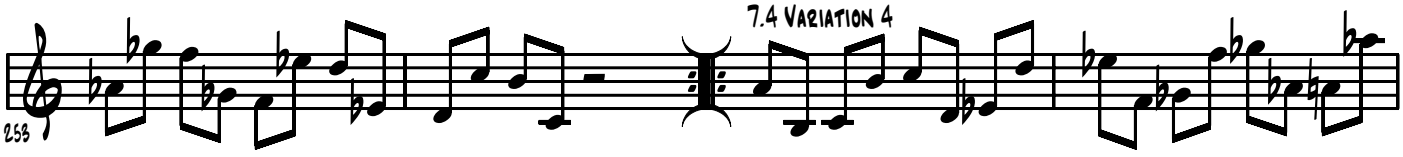

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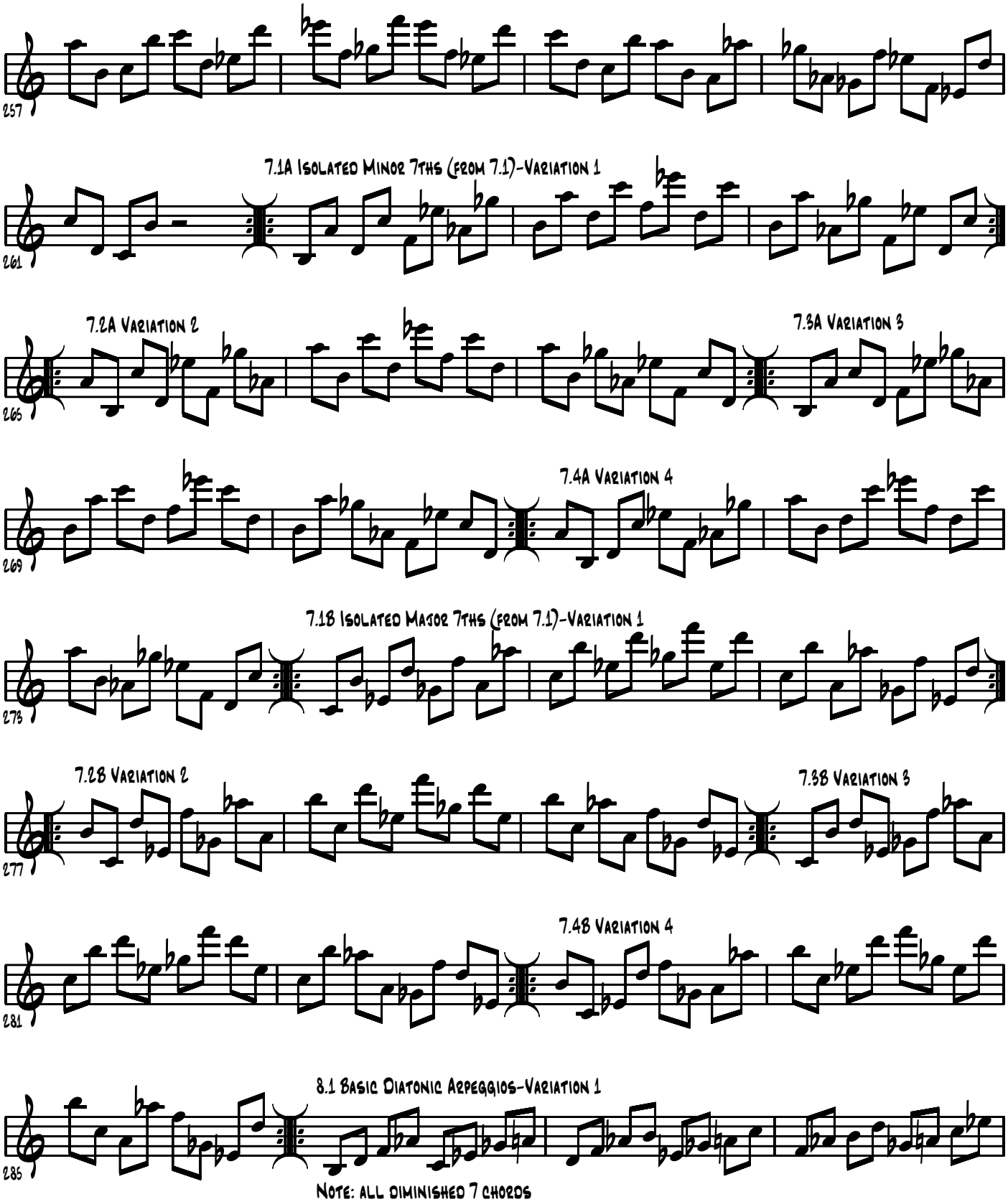

Note: all diminished 7 chords

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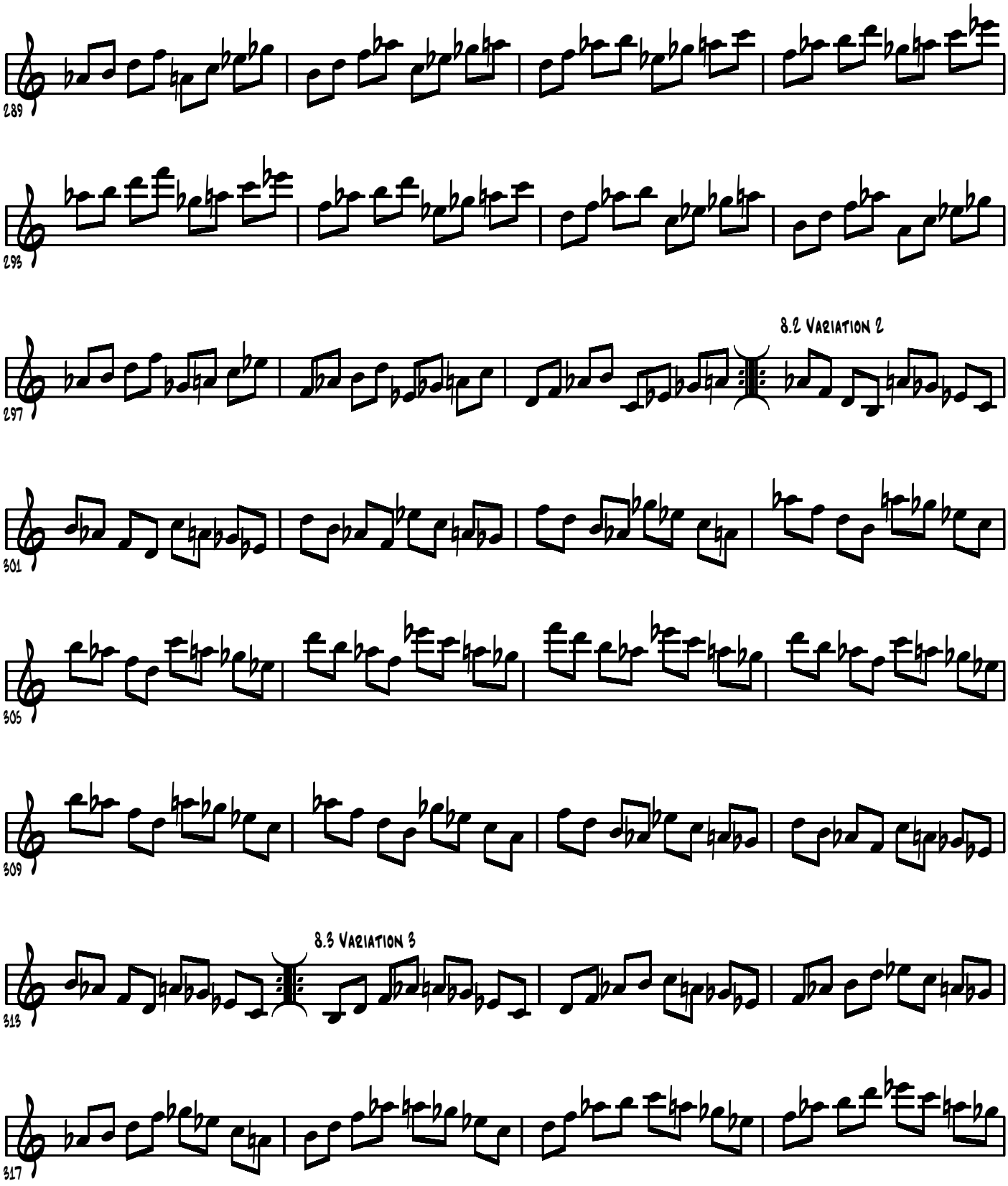

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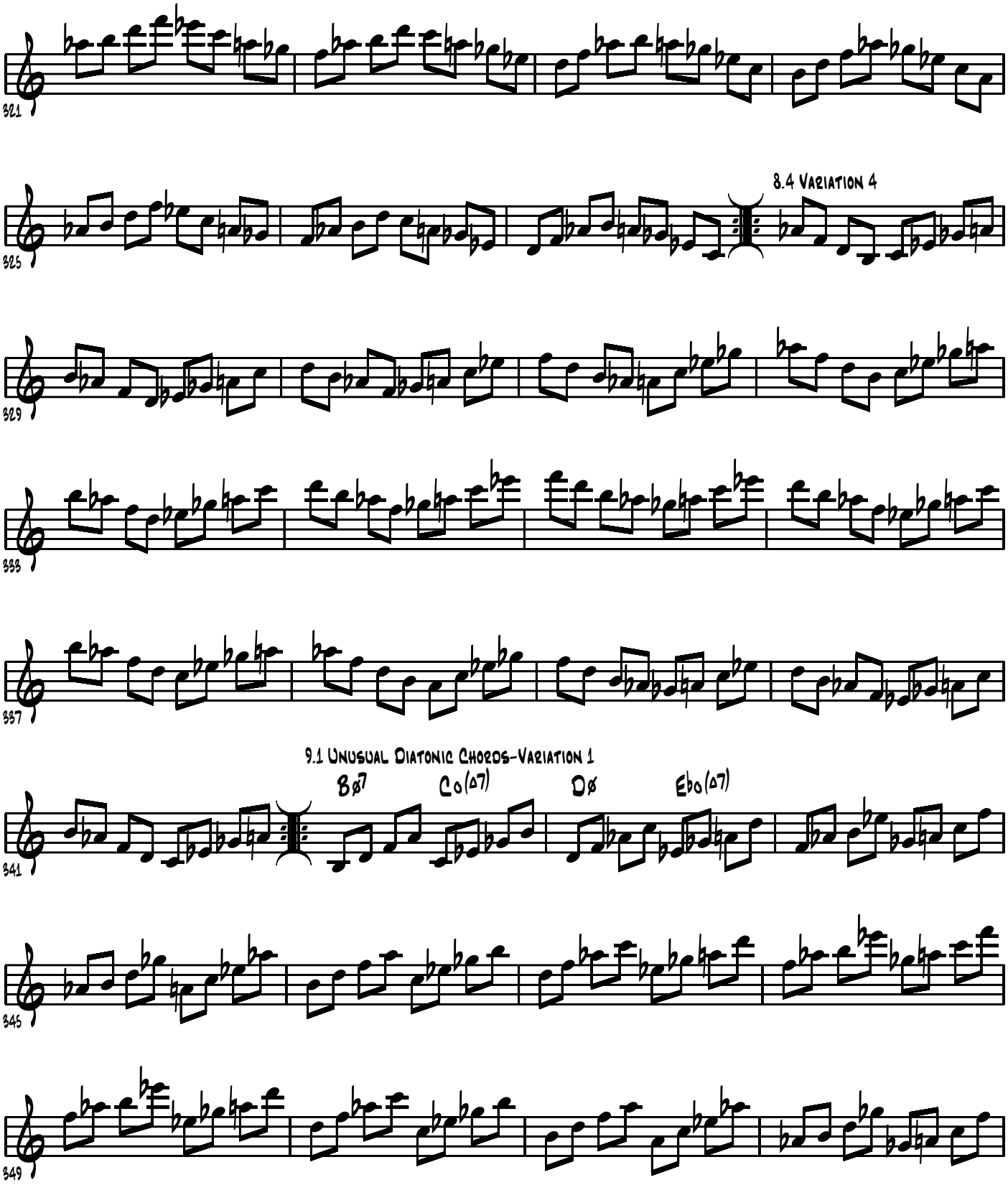

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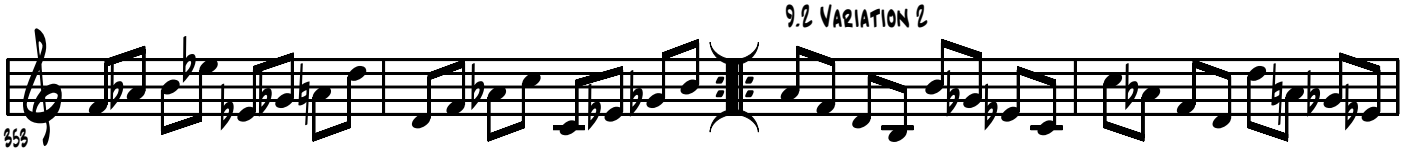
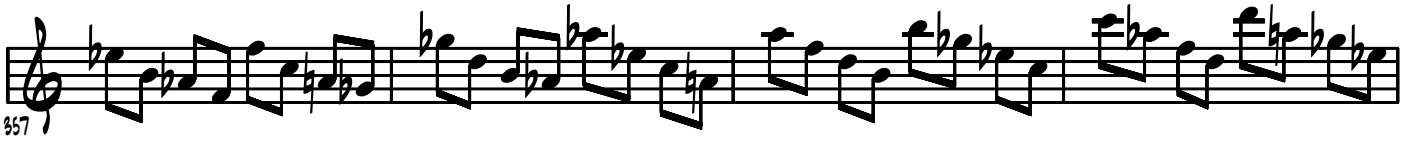
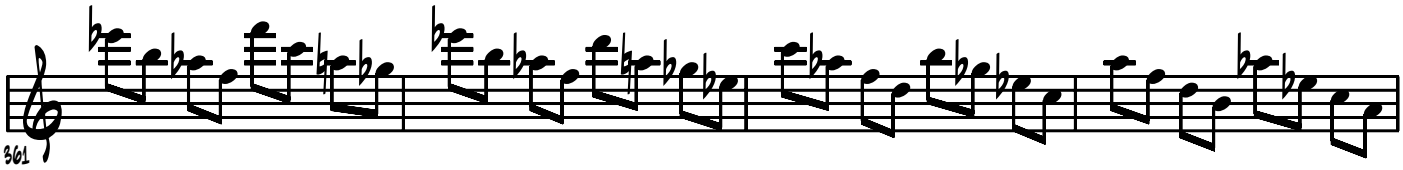
9.2 Variation 2







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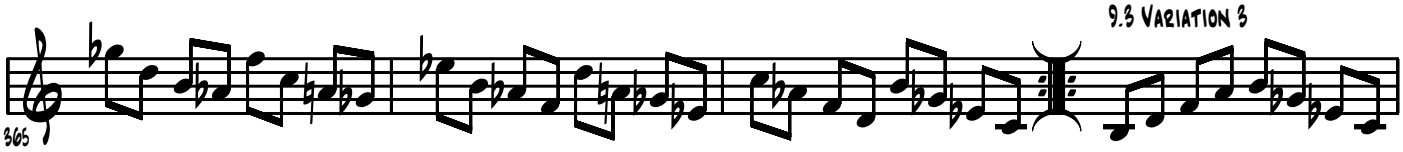

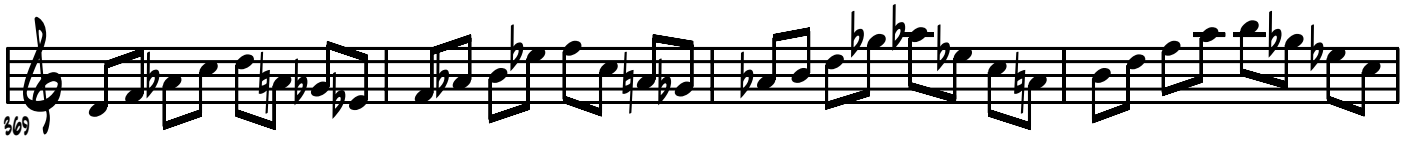

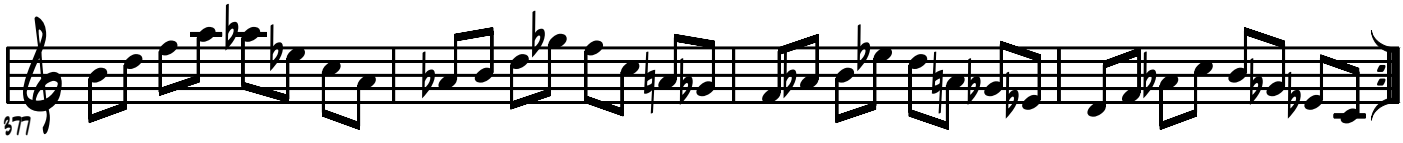

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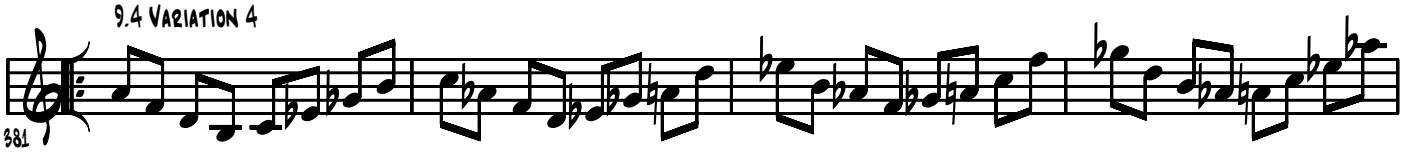

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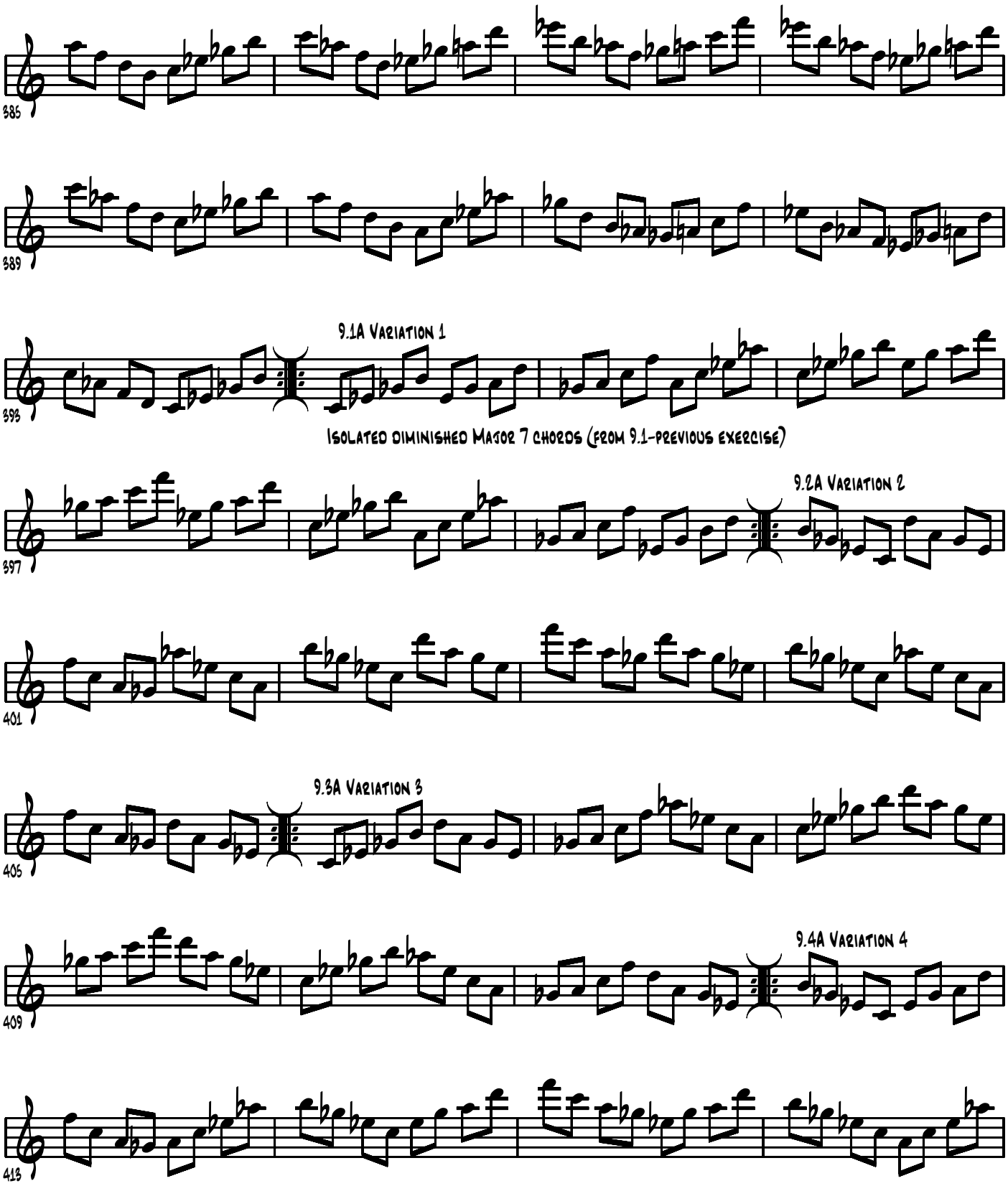

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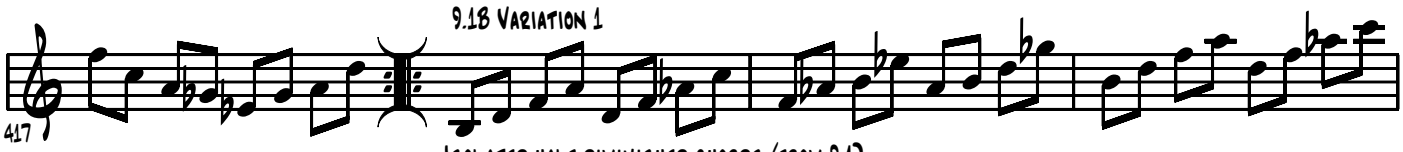
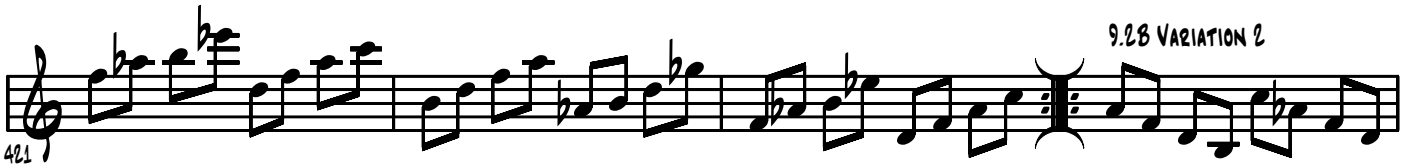
9.1B Variation 1



Isolated half diminished chords (from 9.1)



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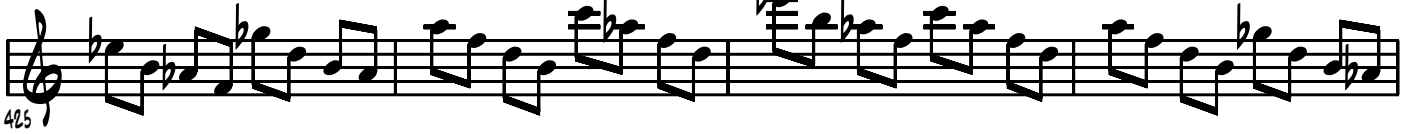

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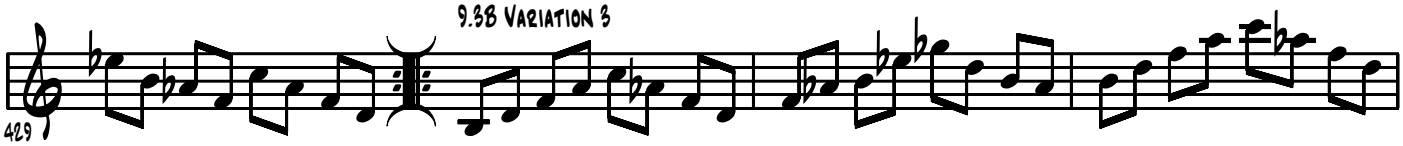

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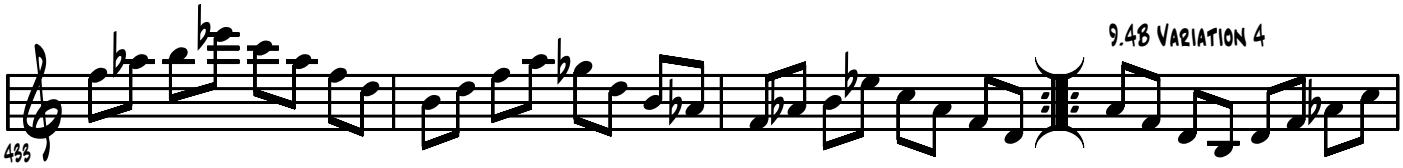
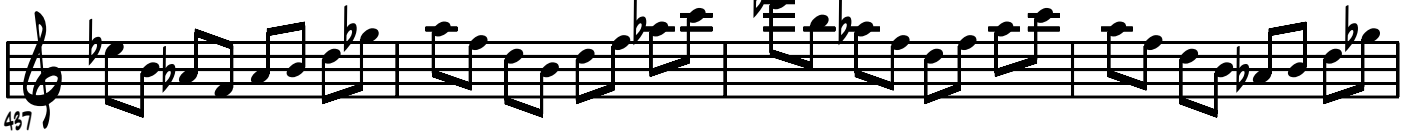
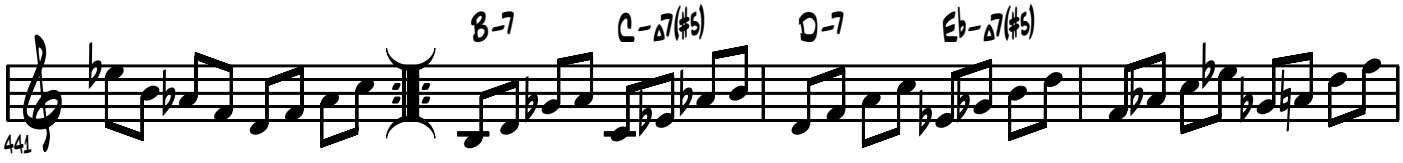
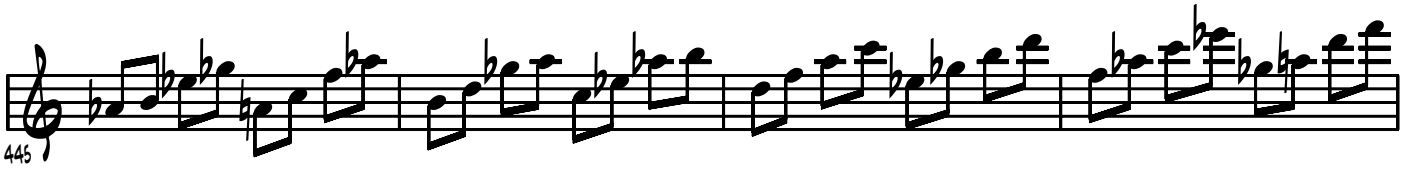




10.1 Variation 1





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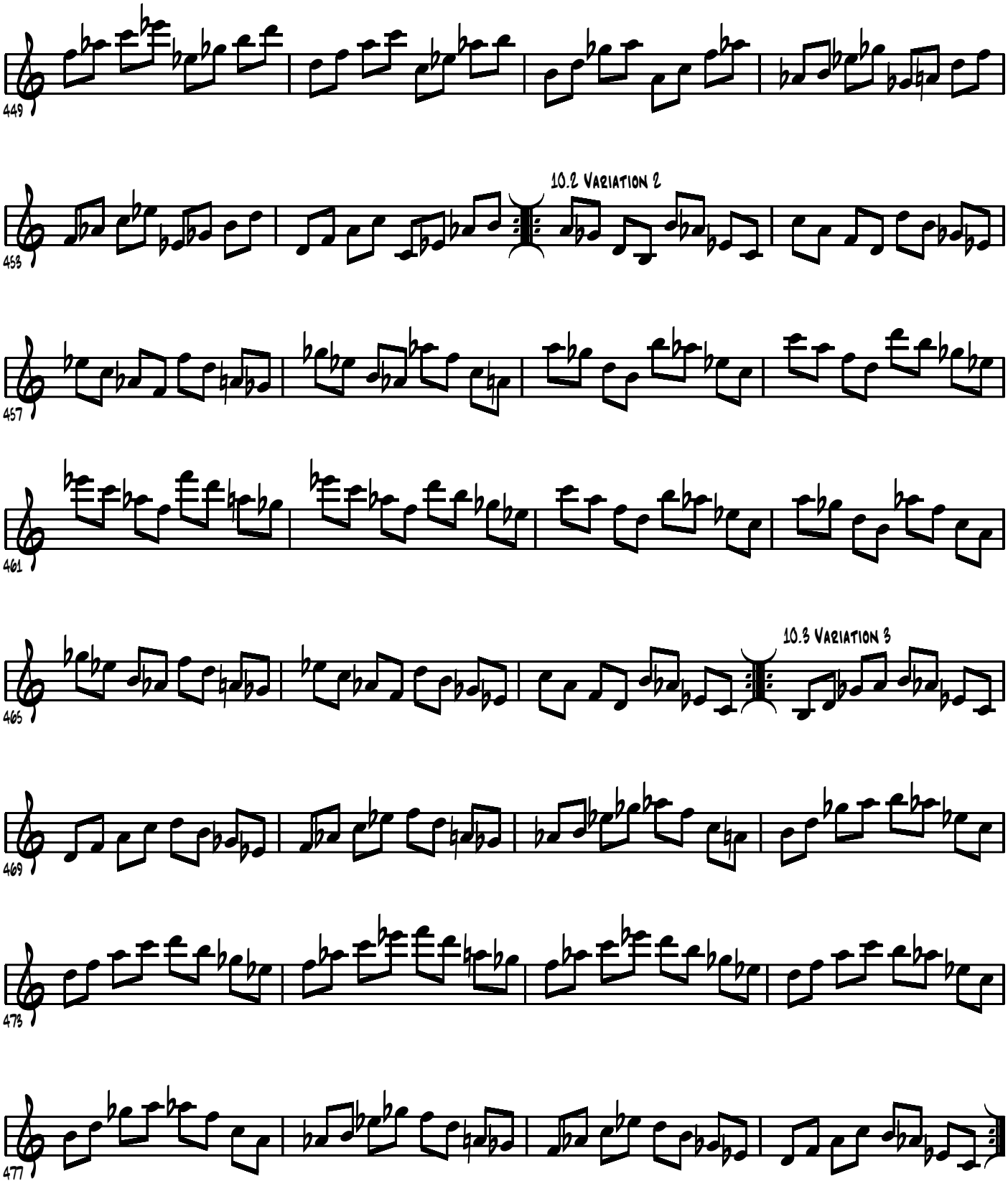

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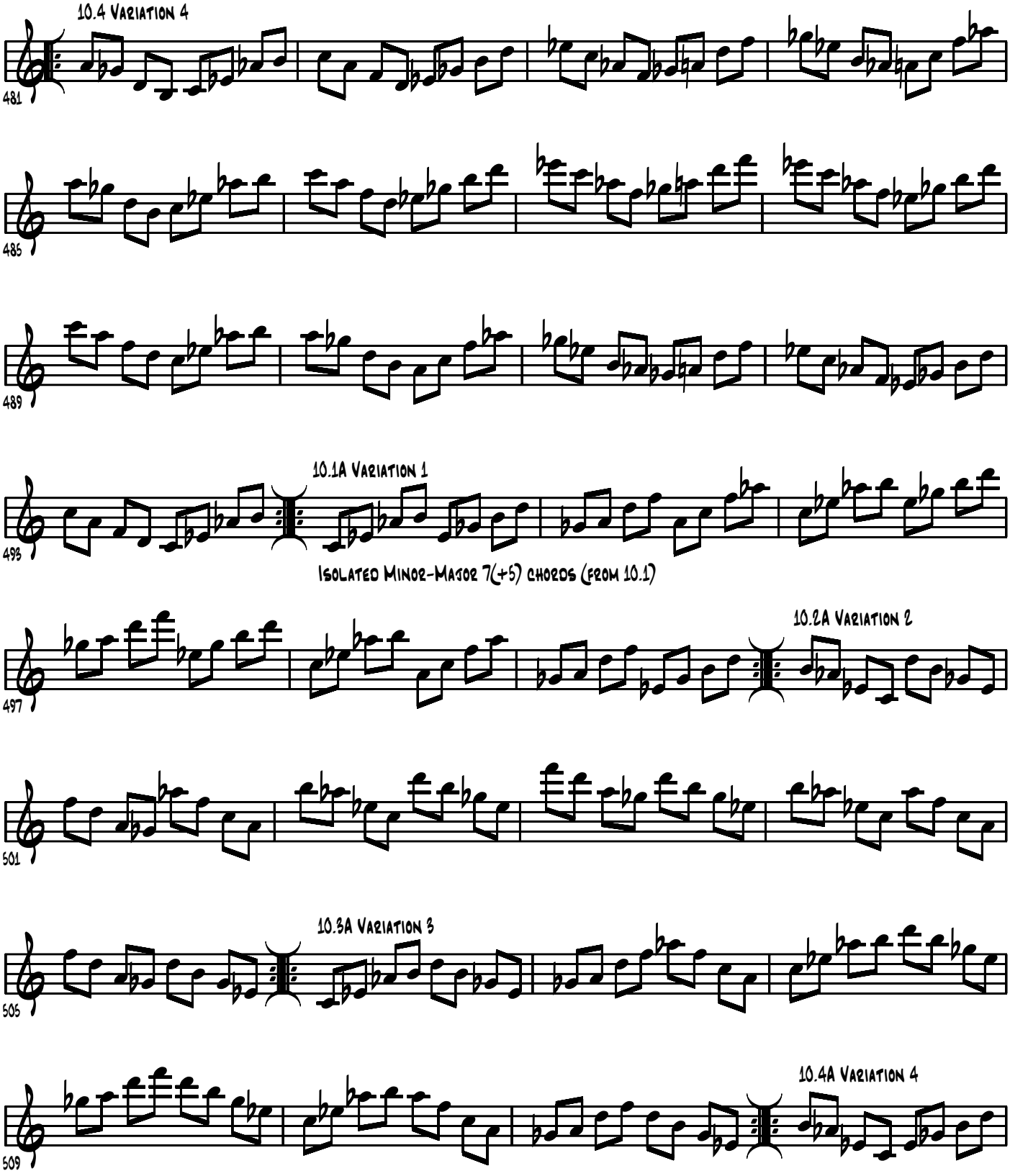

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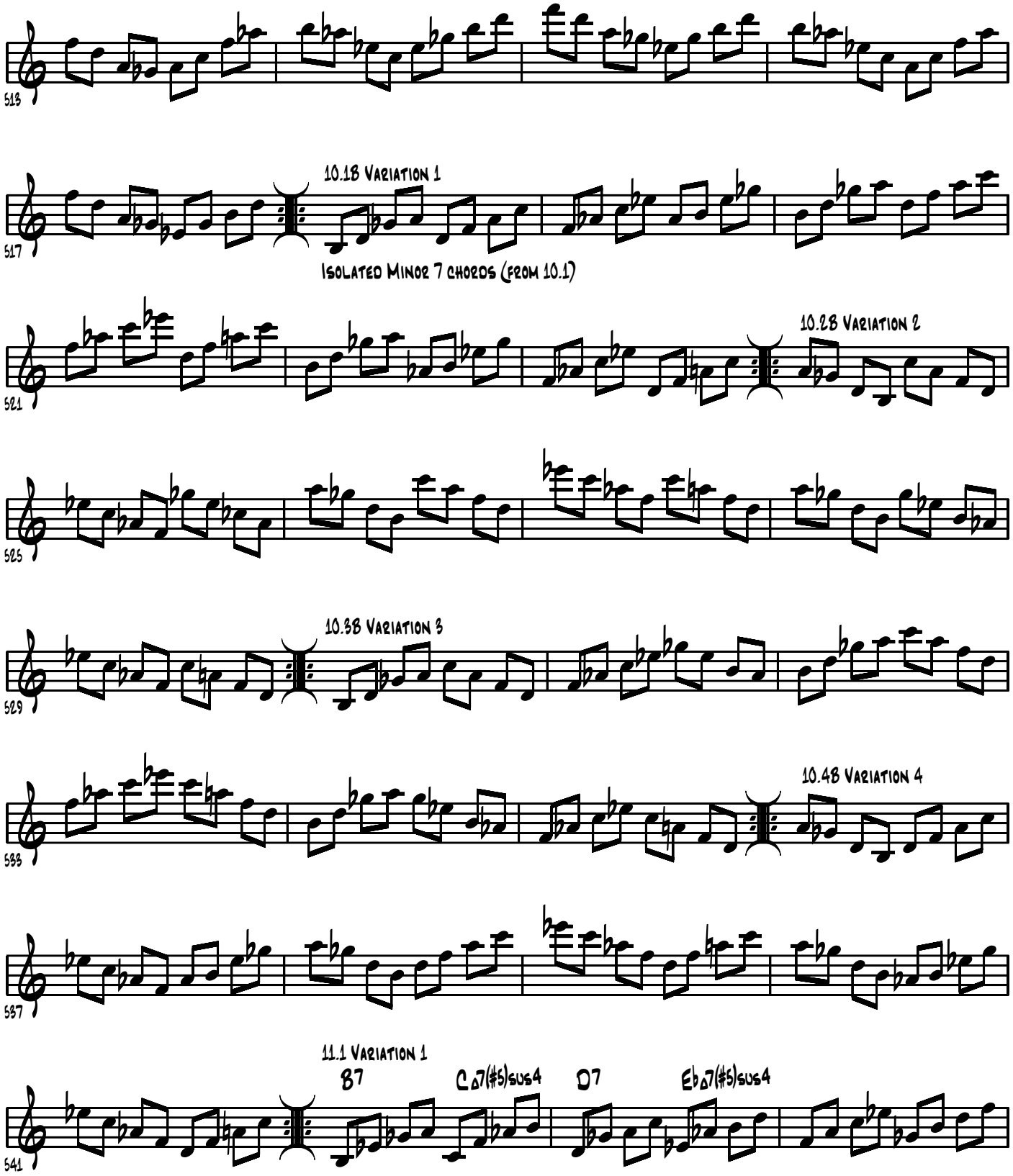

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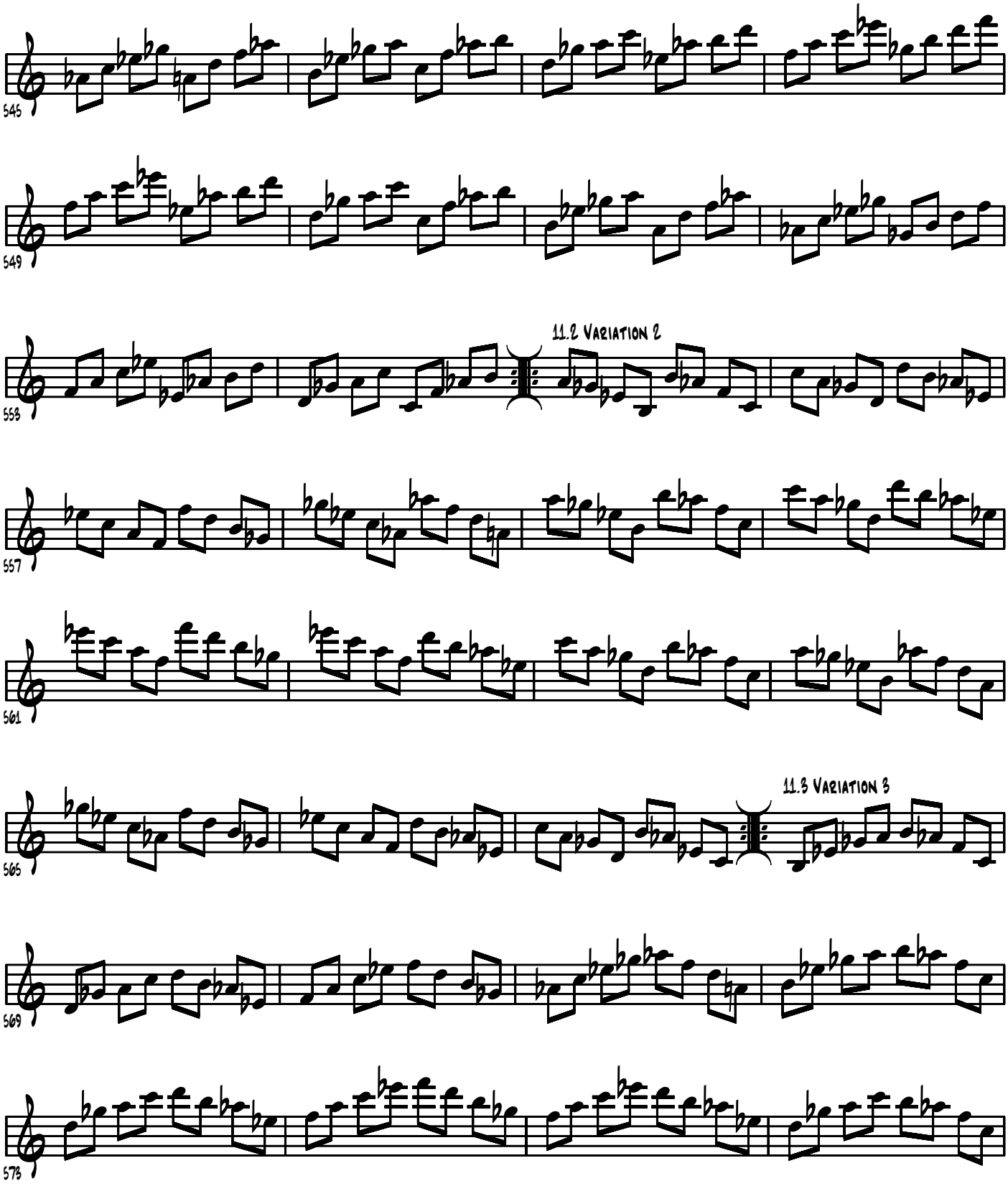

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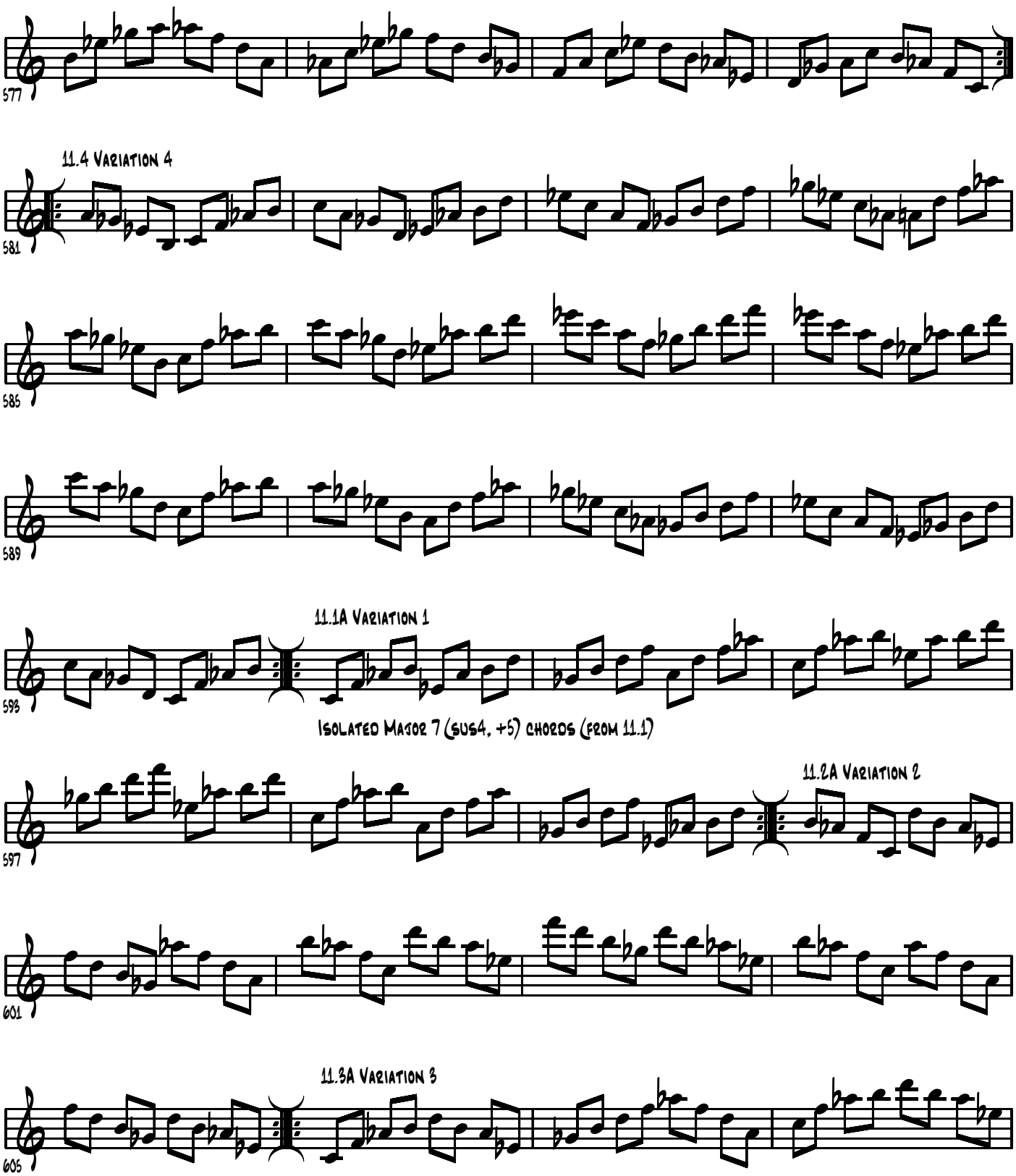

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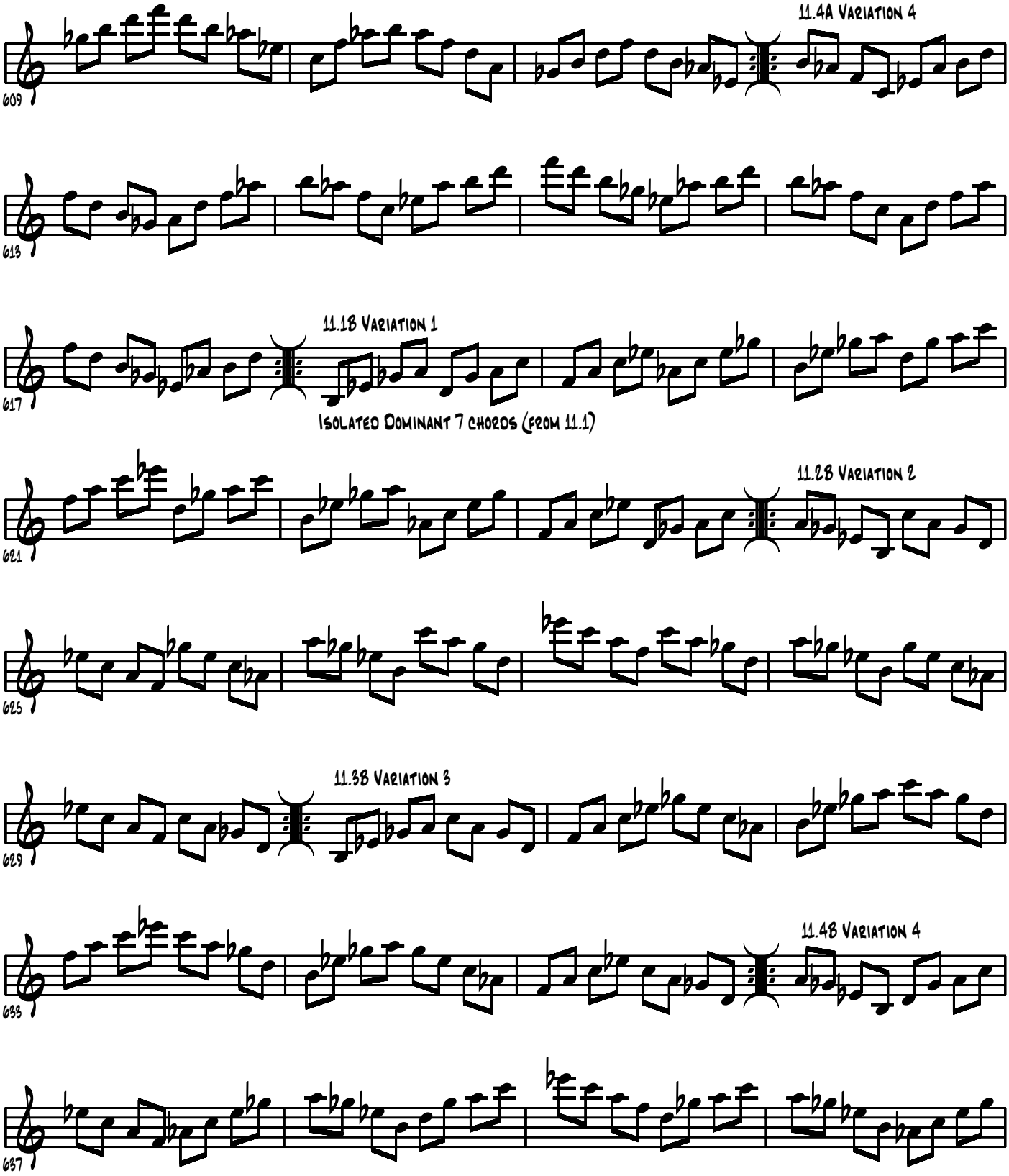

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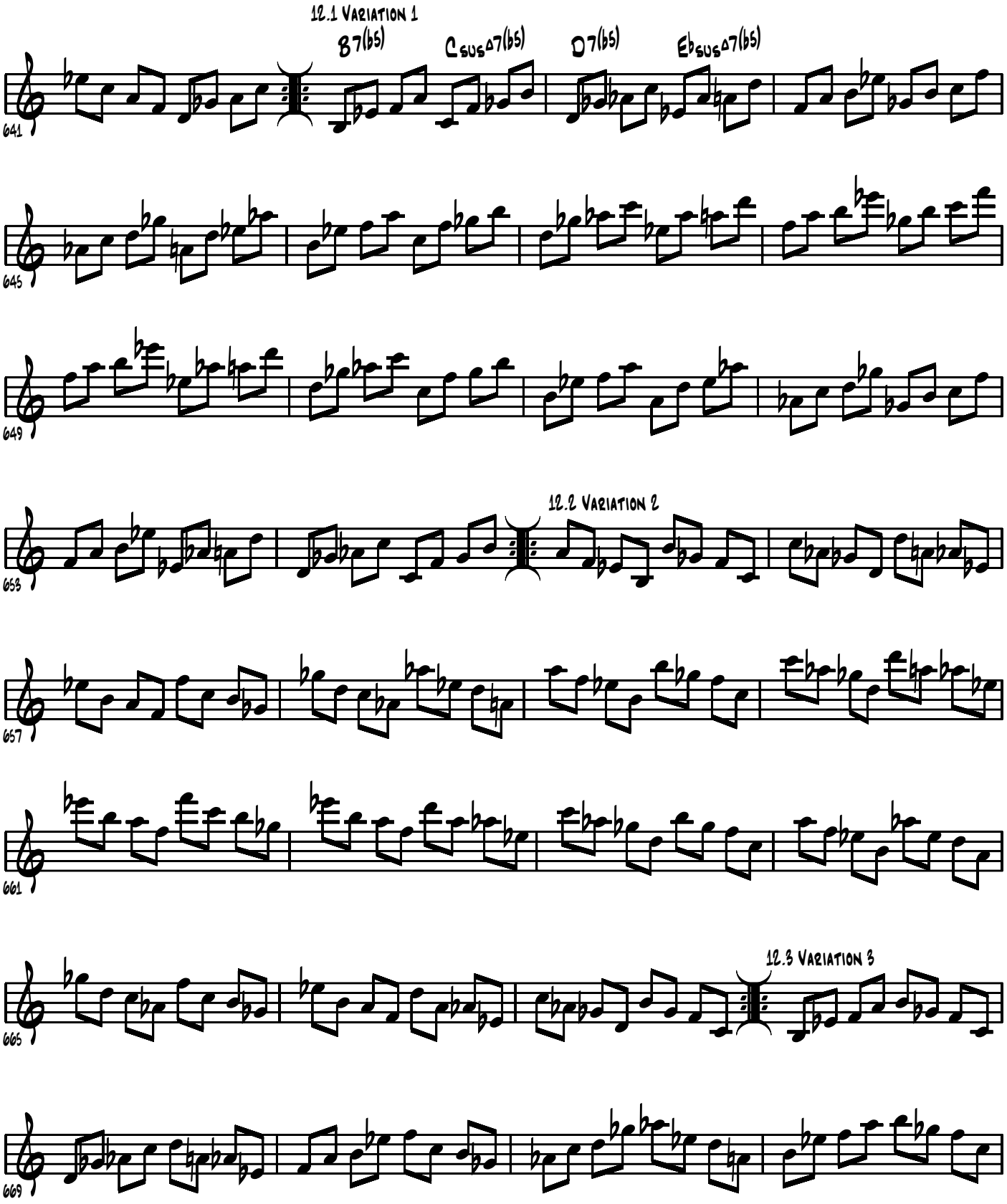

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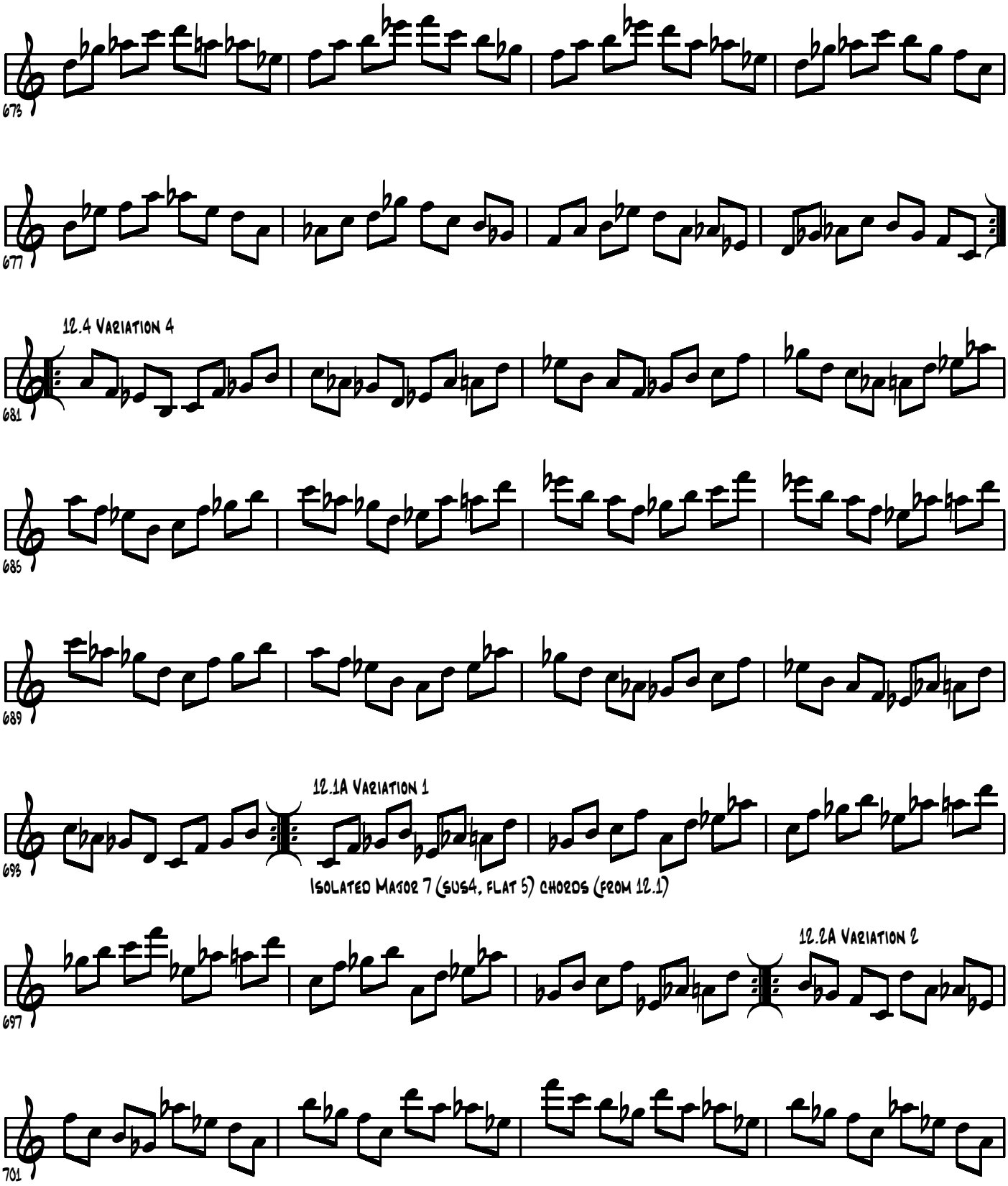

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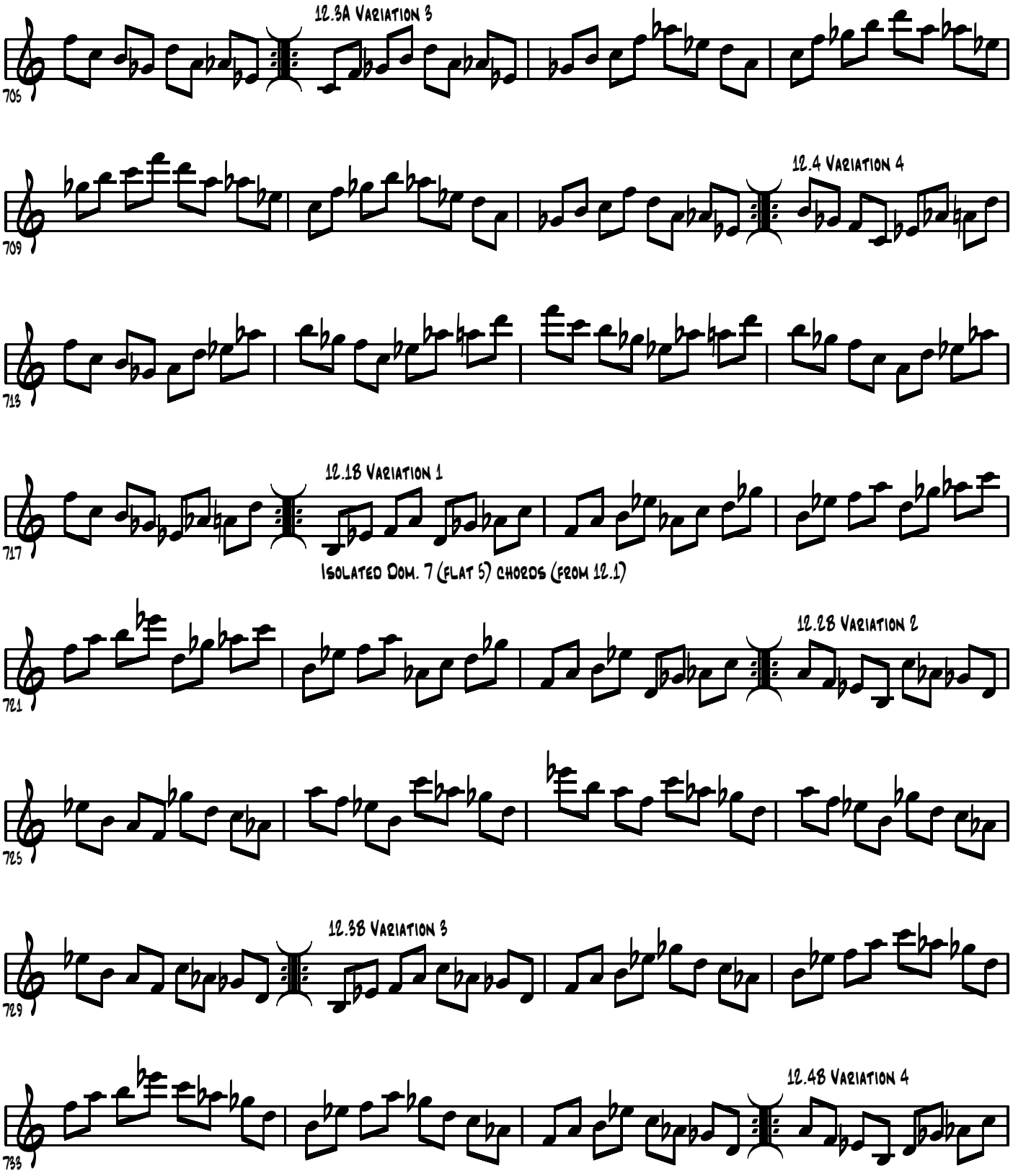

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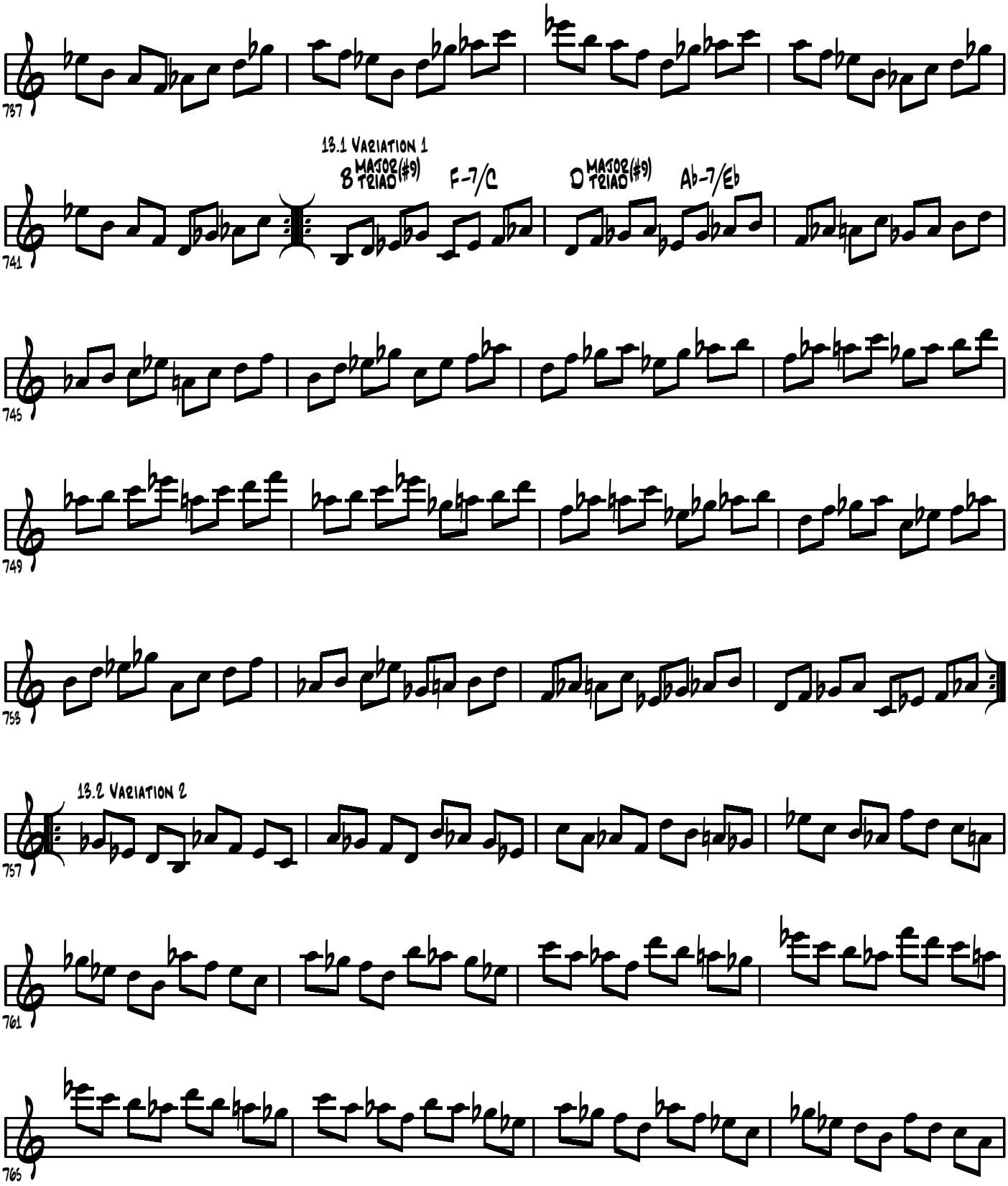

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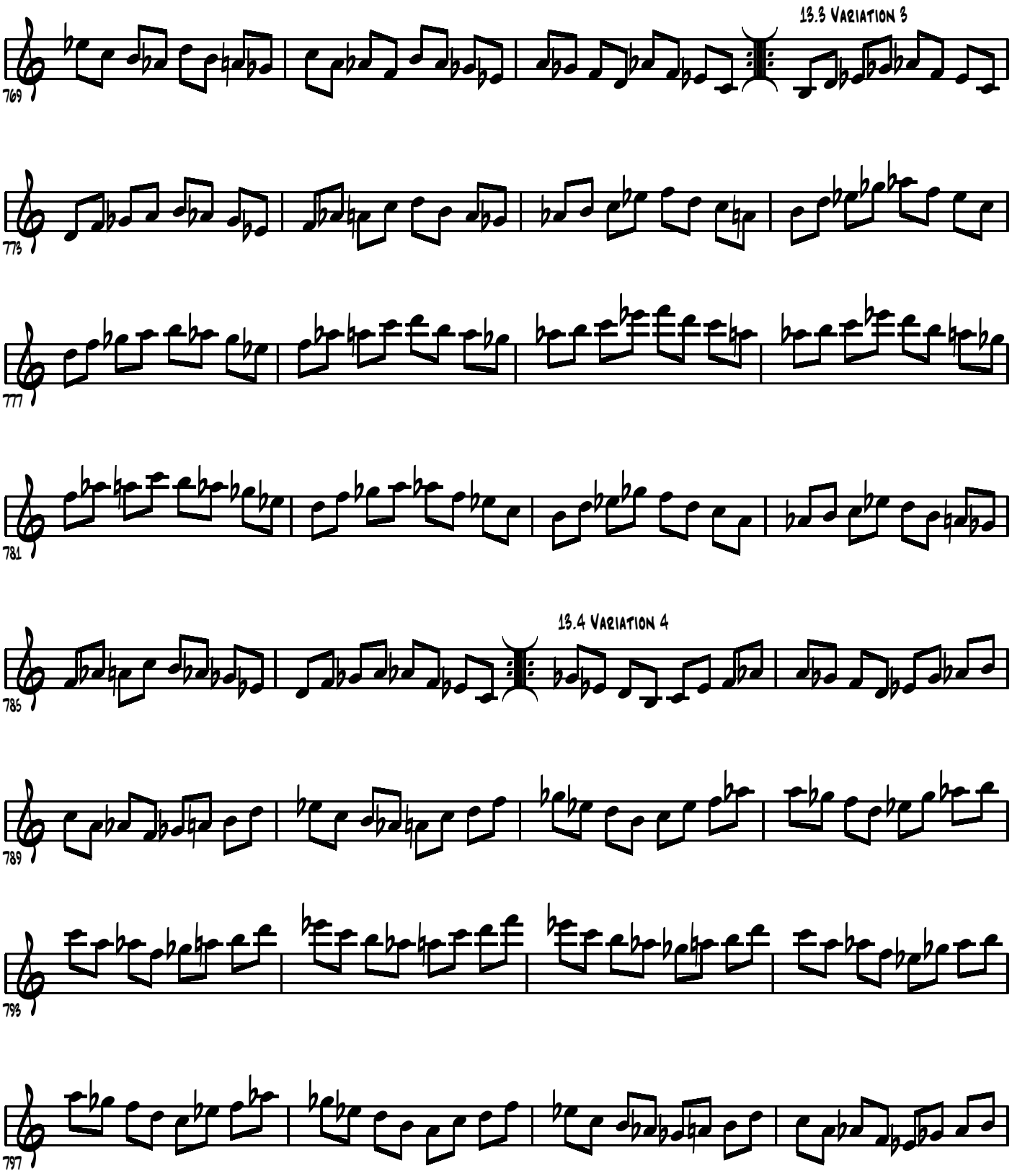

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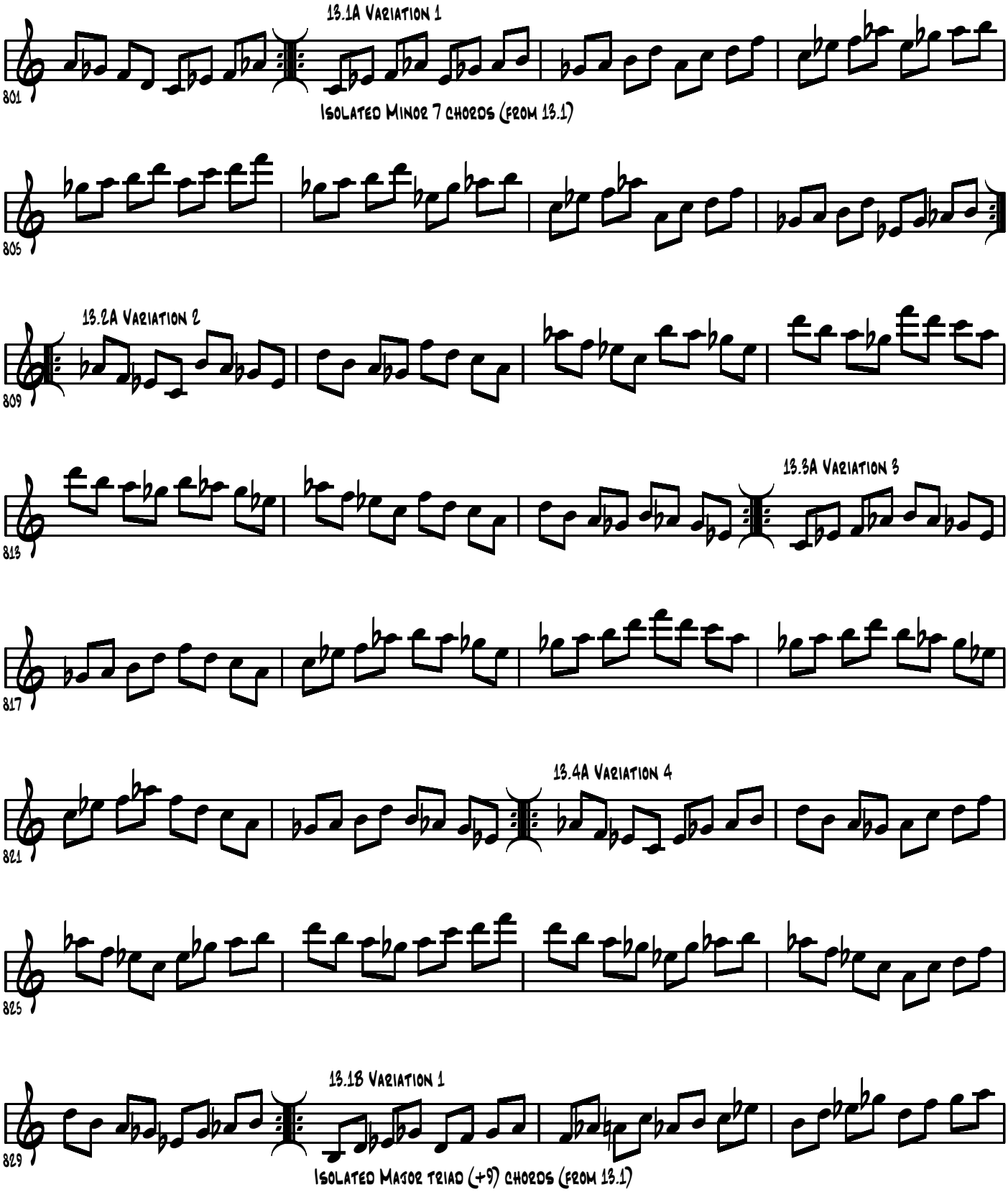

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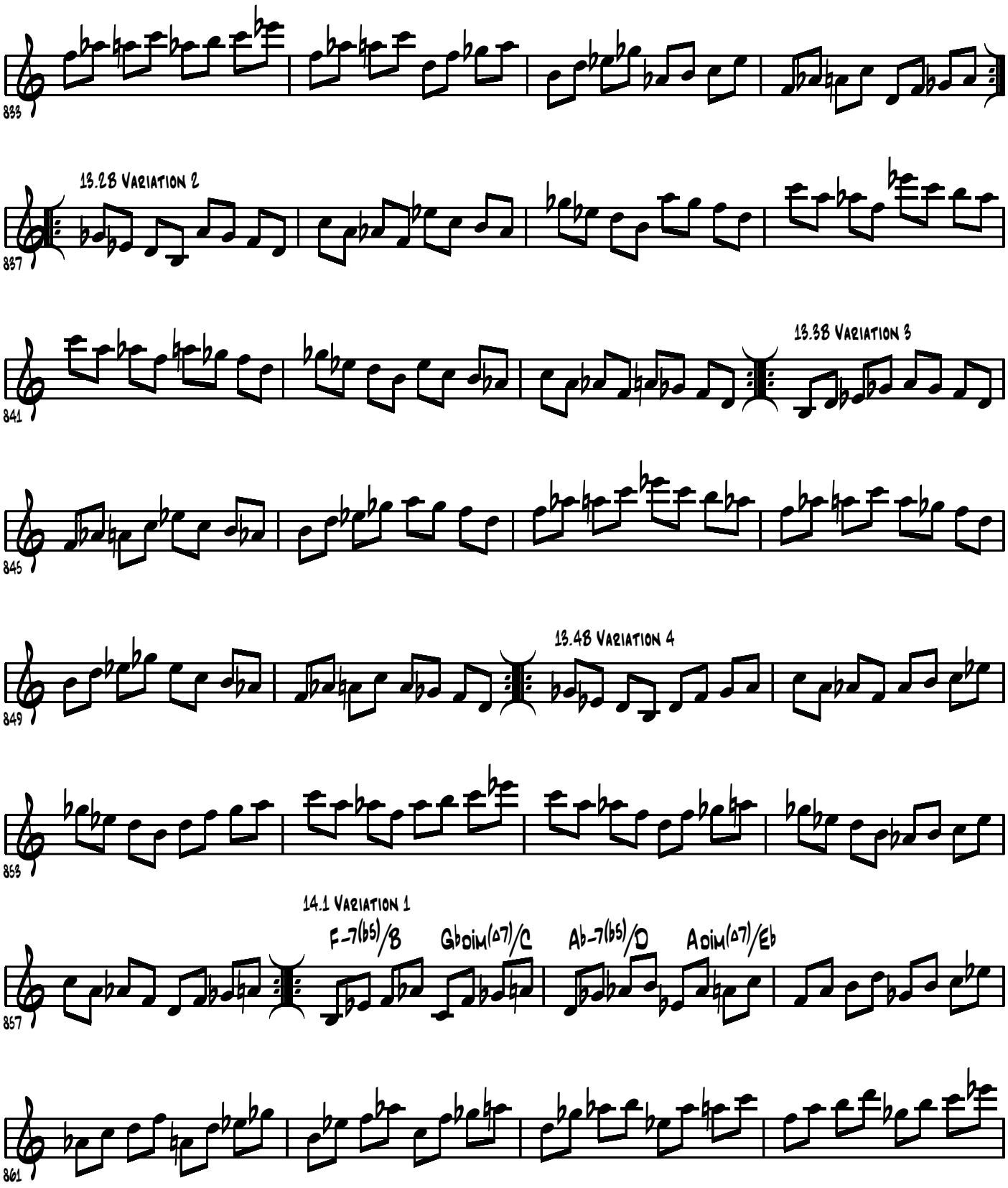

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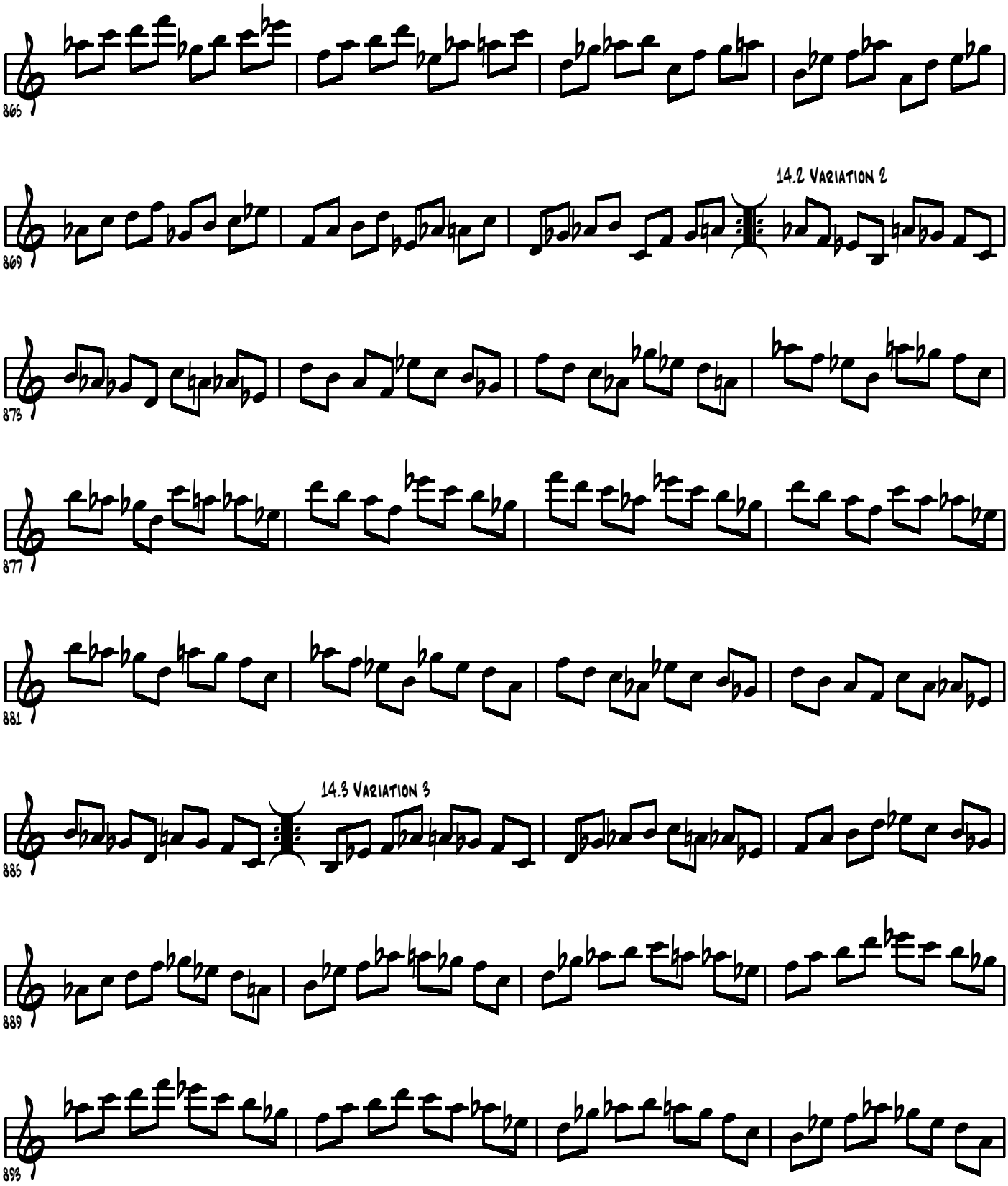

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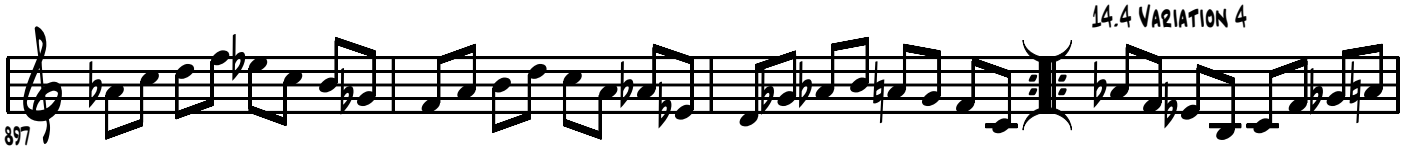
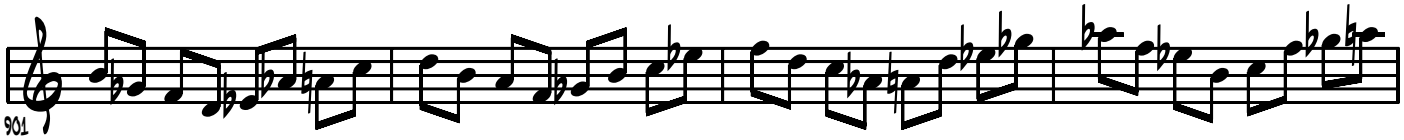
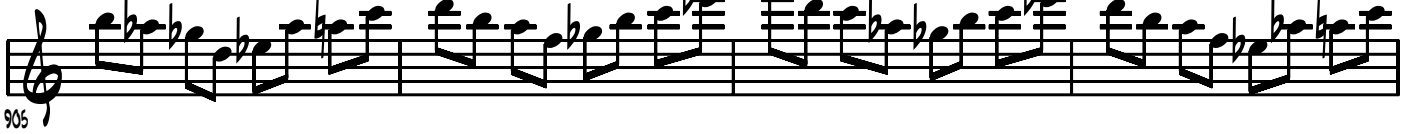
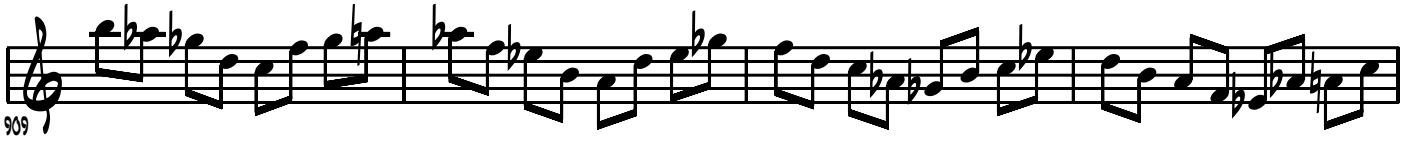
14.4 Variation 4

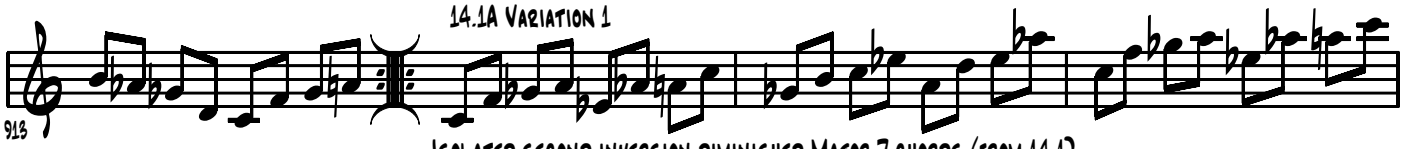






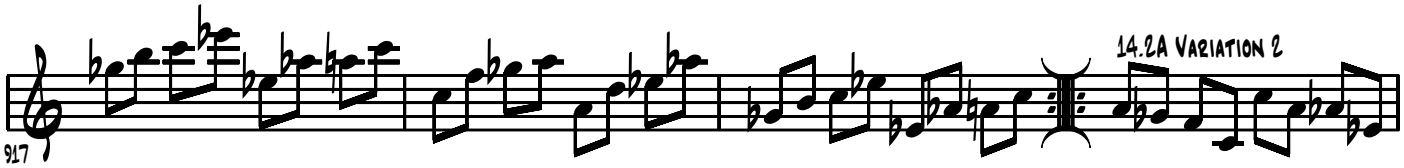


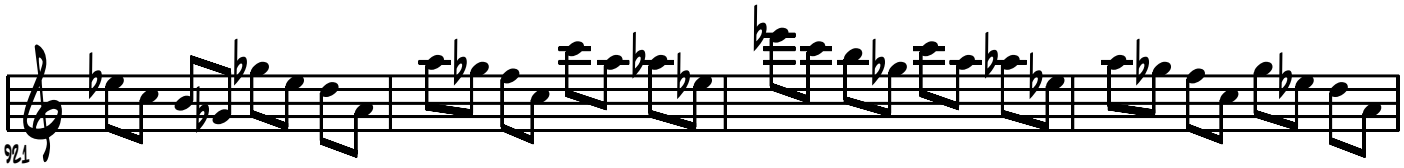
14.1A Variation 1



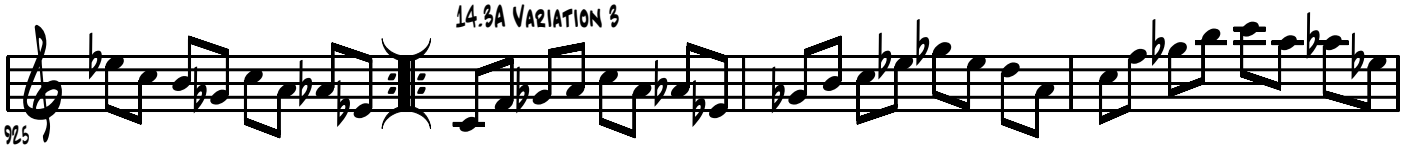
Isolated second inversion diminished Major 7 chords (from 14.1)

14.2A Variation 2





14.3A Variation 3



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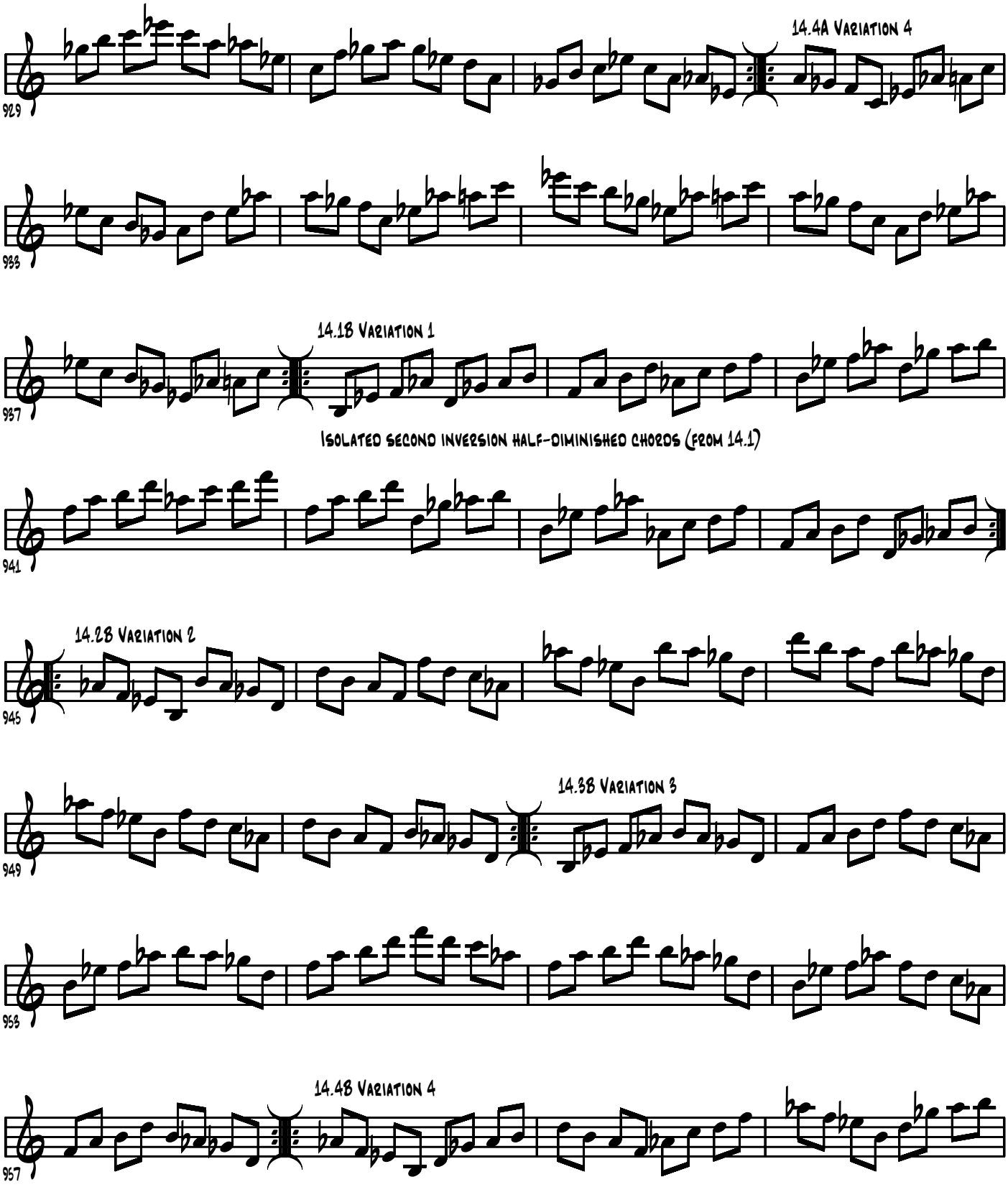

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961

15. Useful Vocabulary

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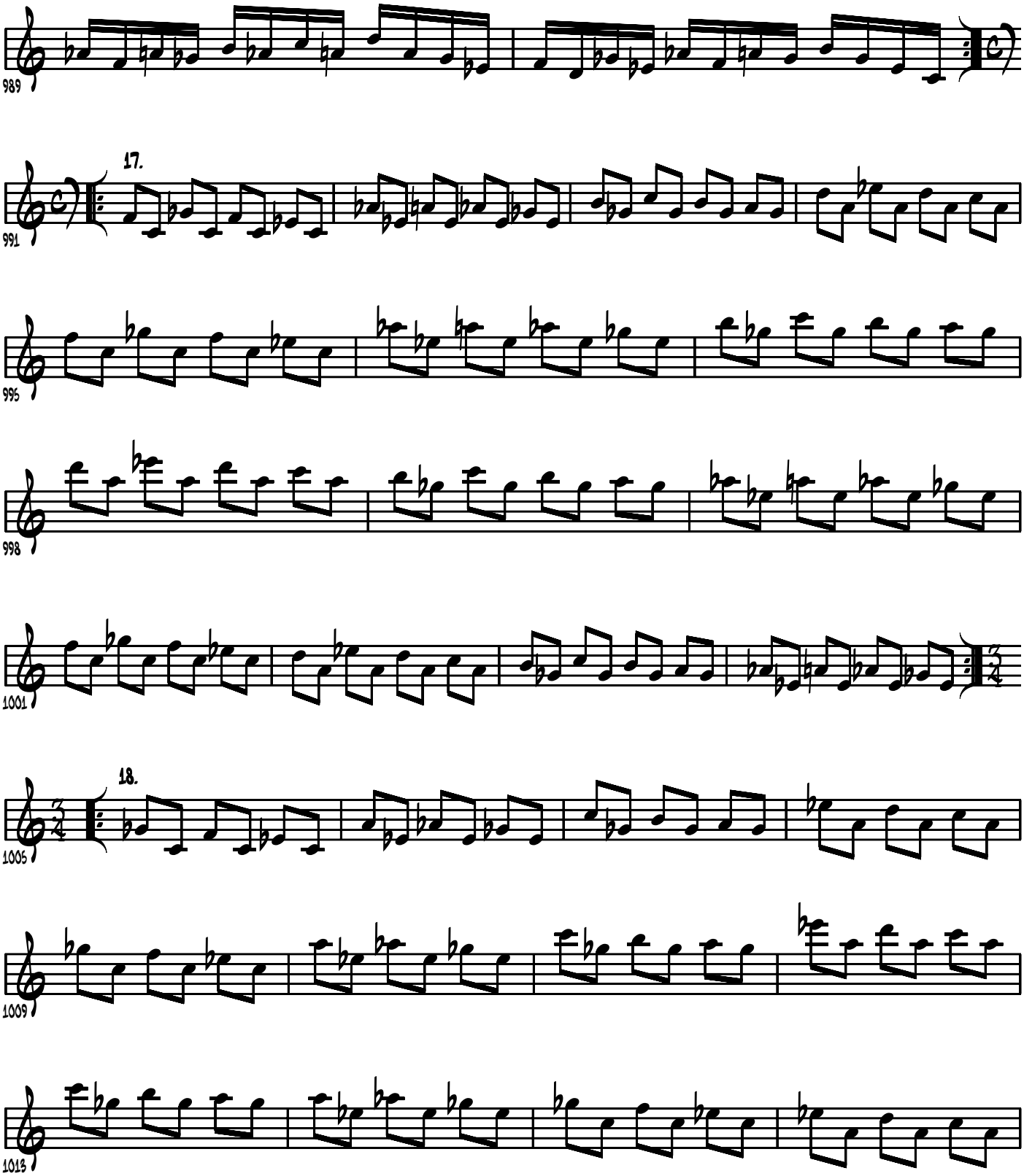

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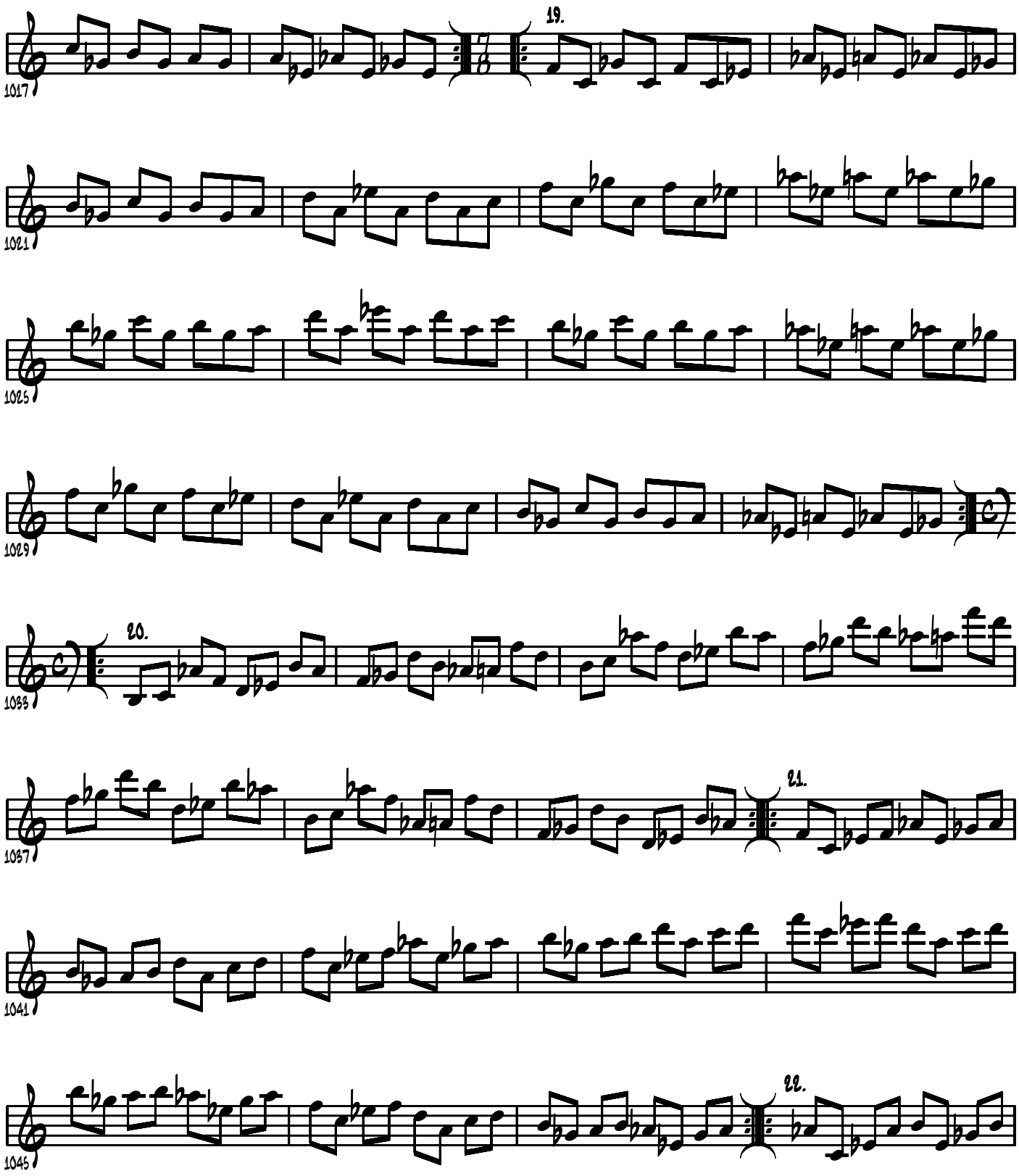

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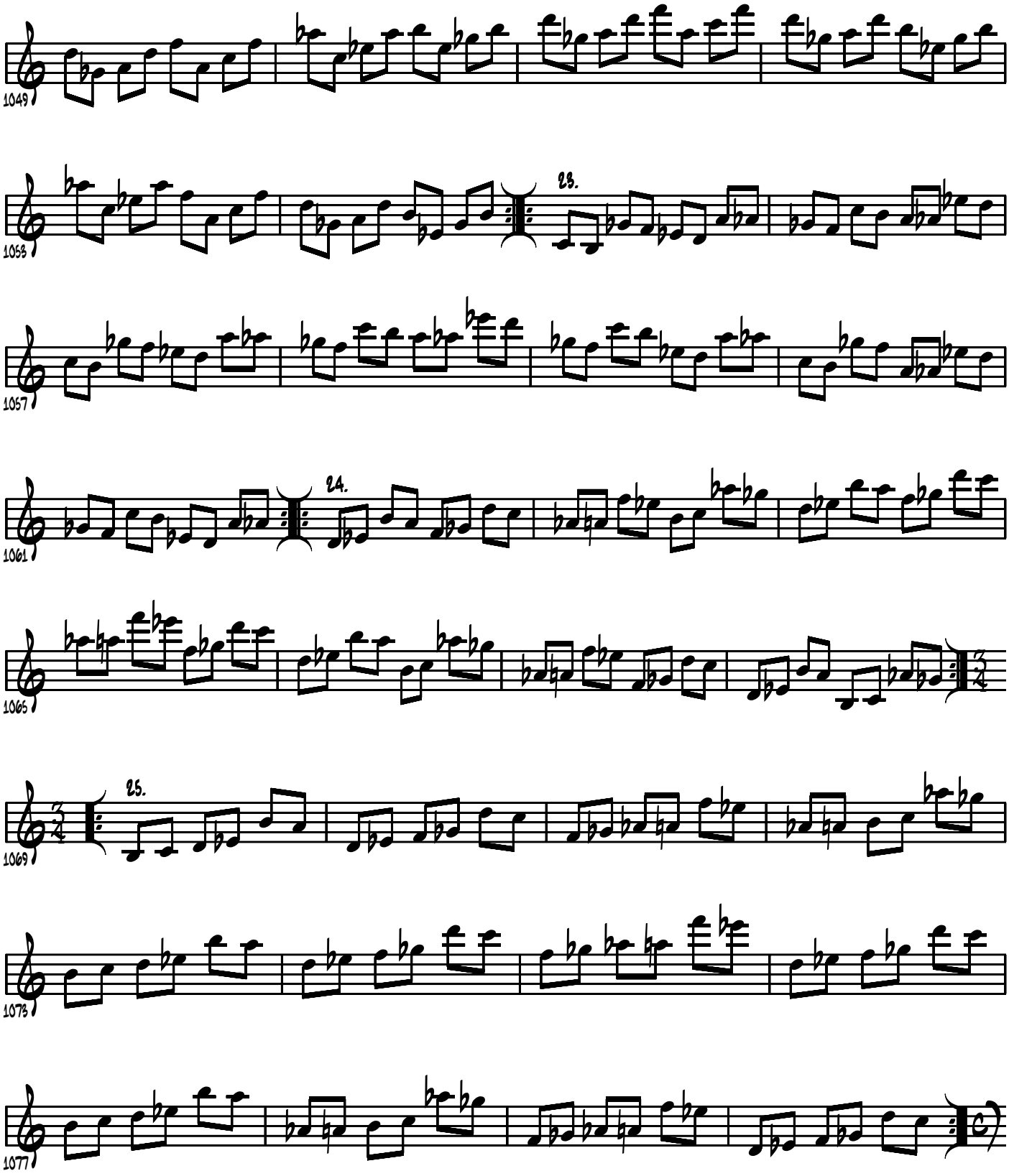

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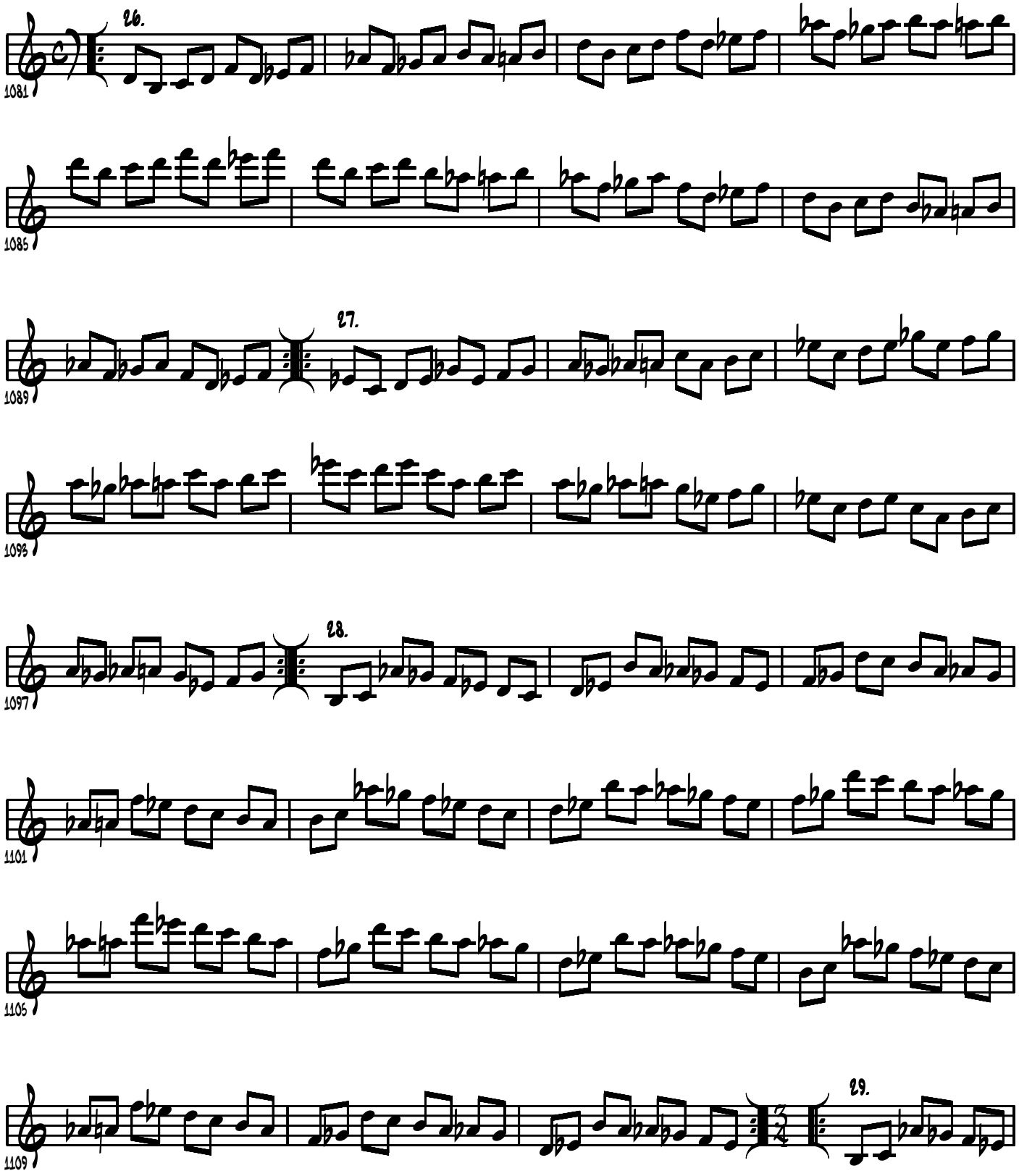

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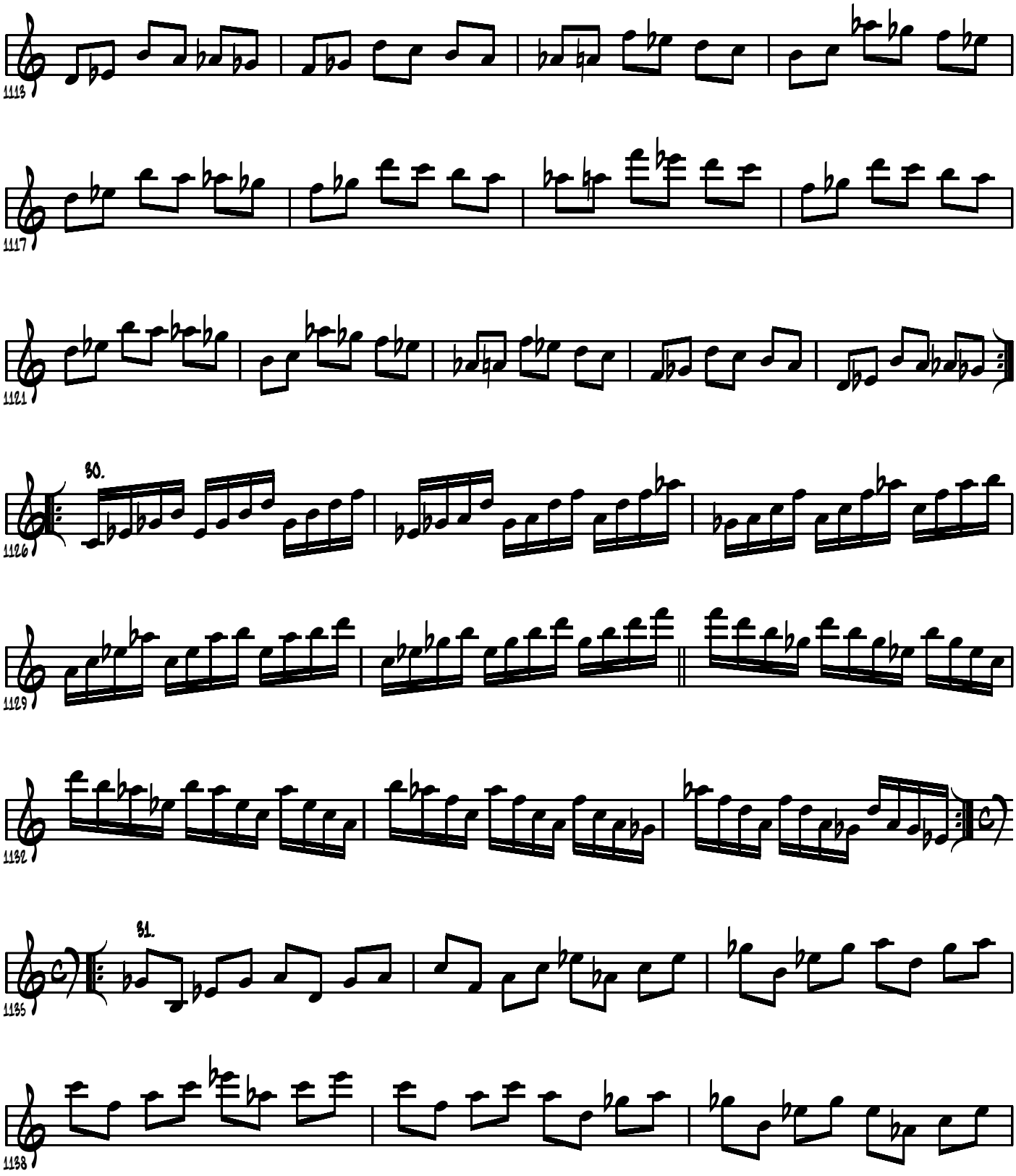

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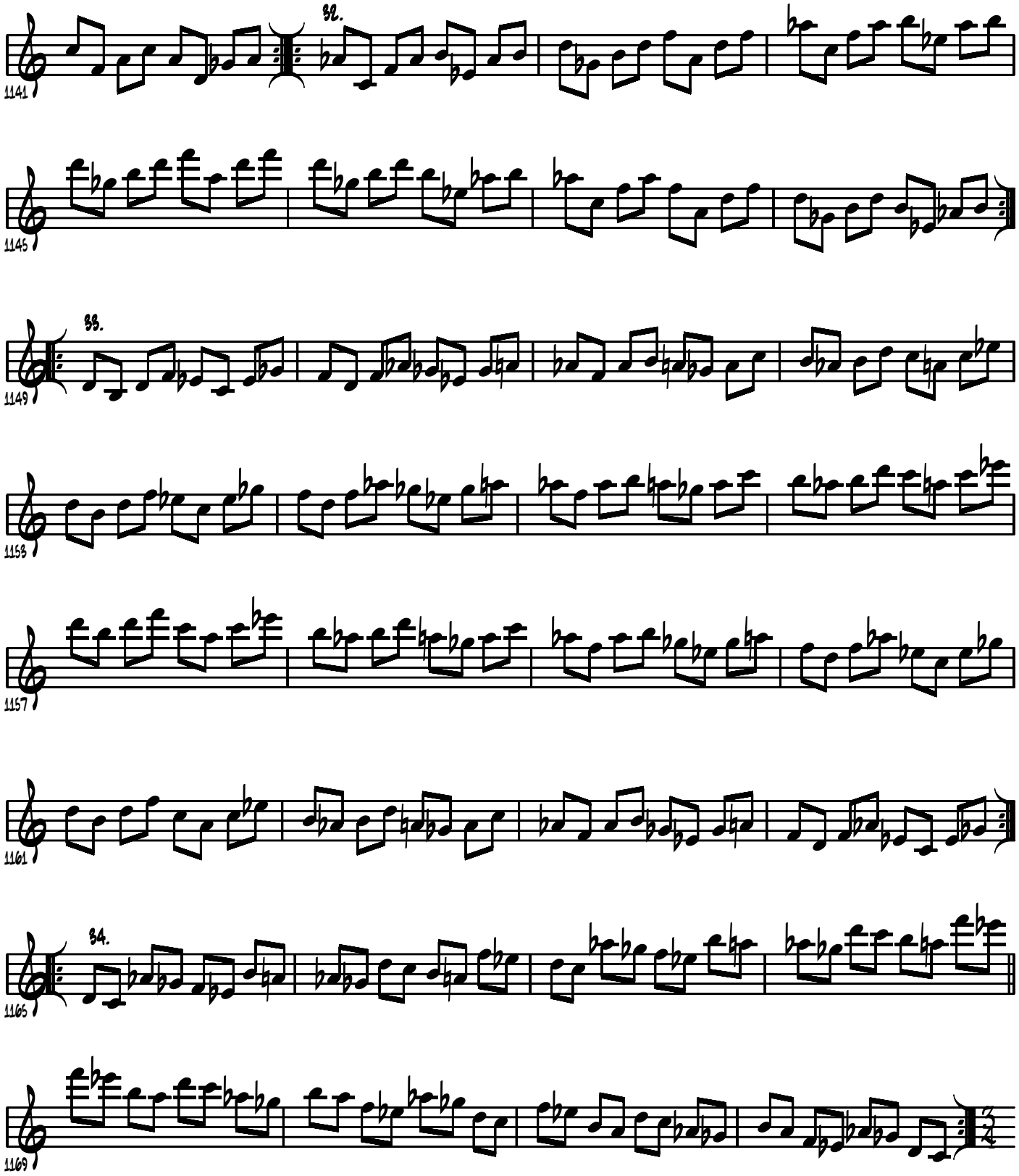

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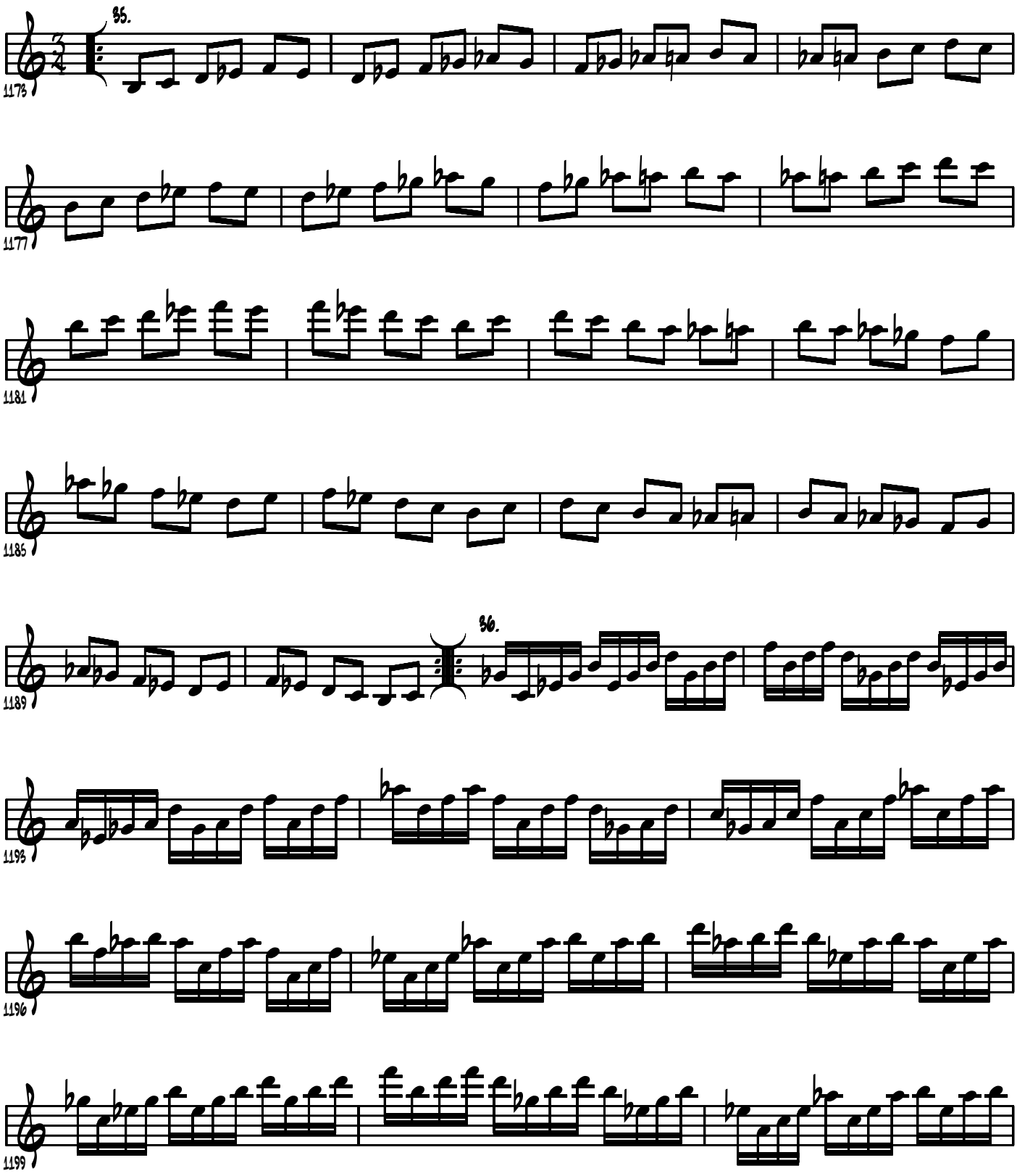

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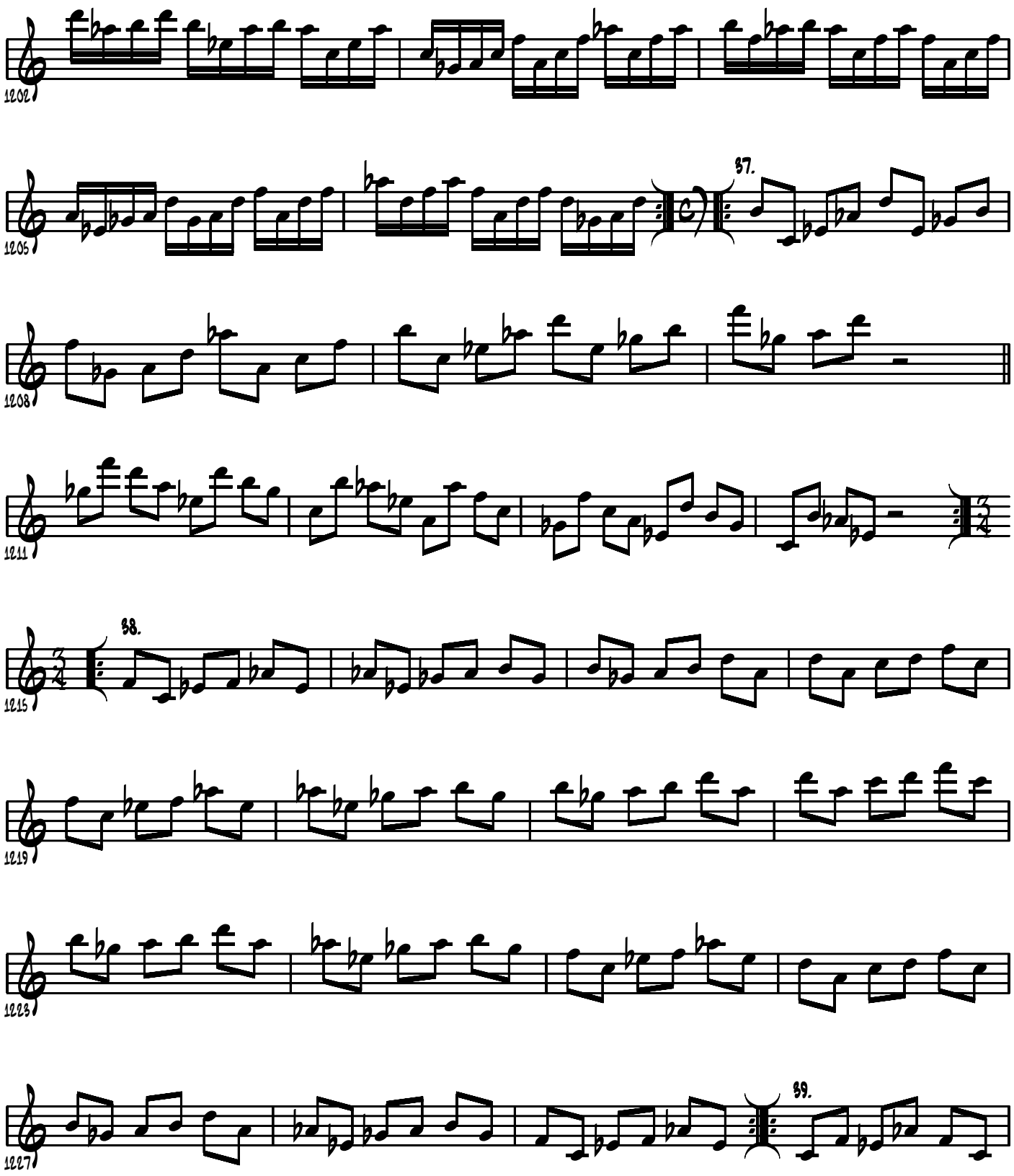

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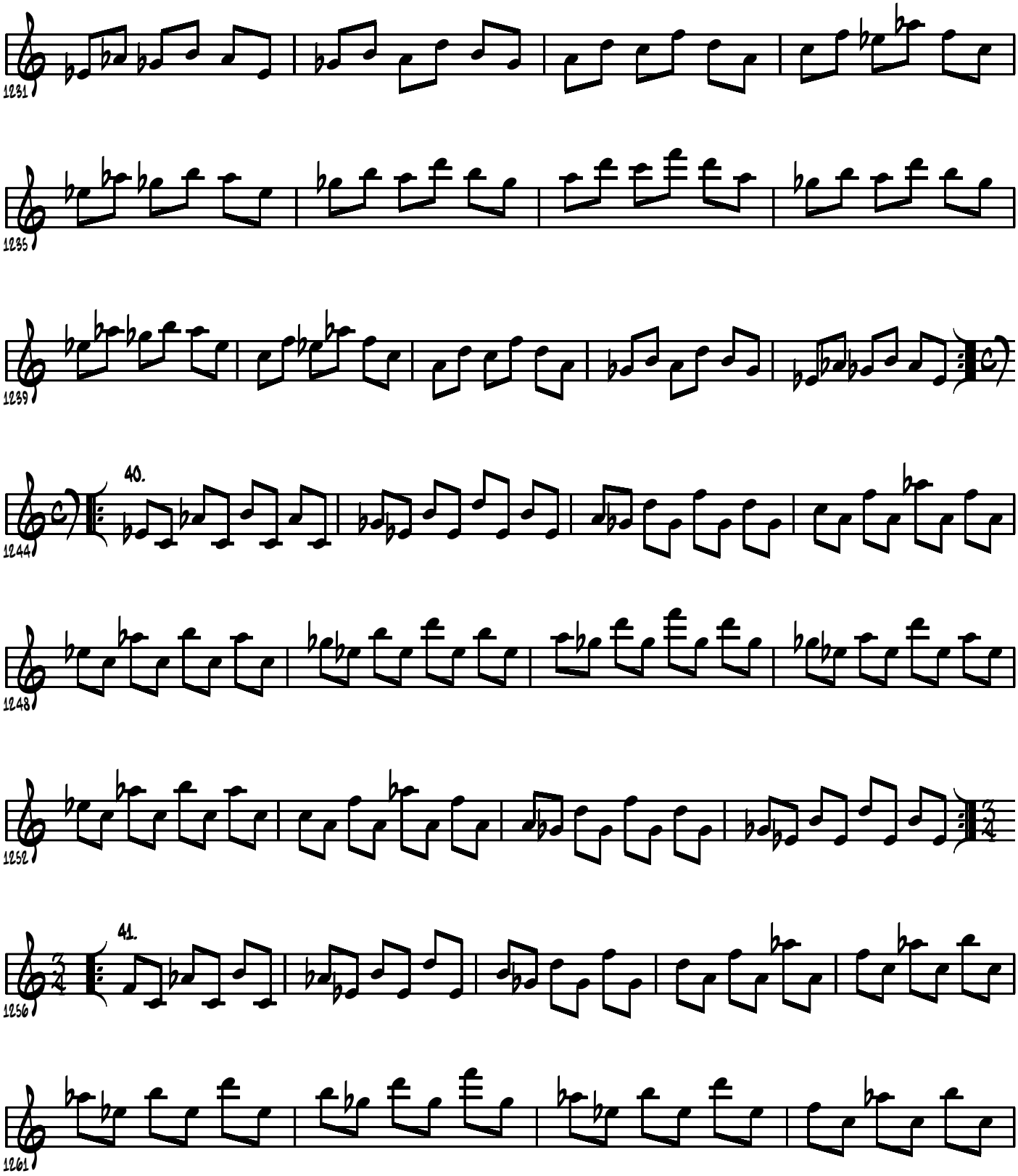

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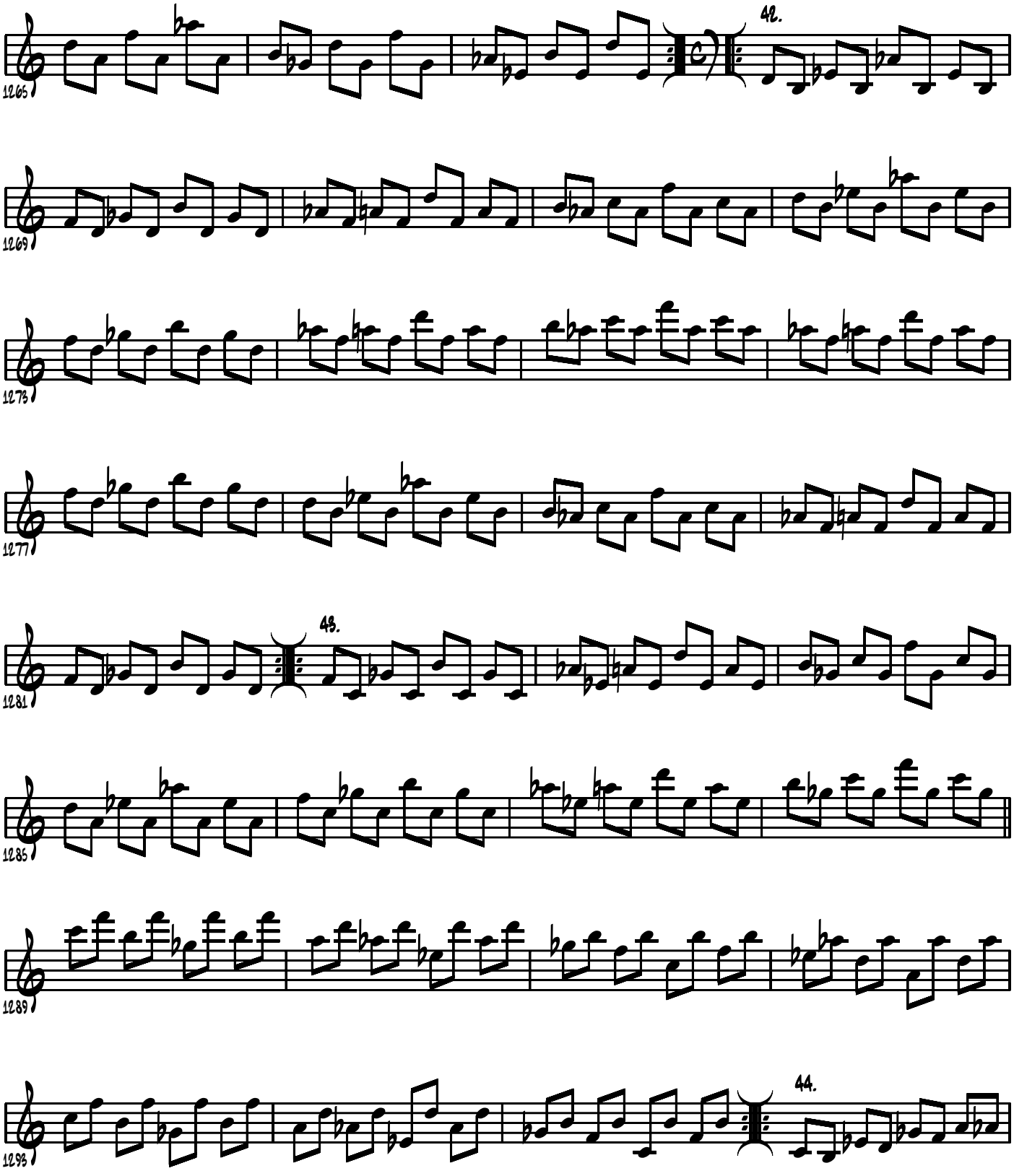

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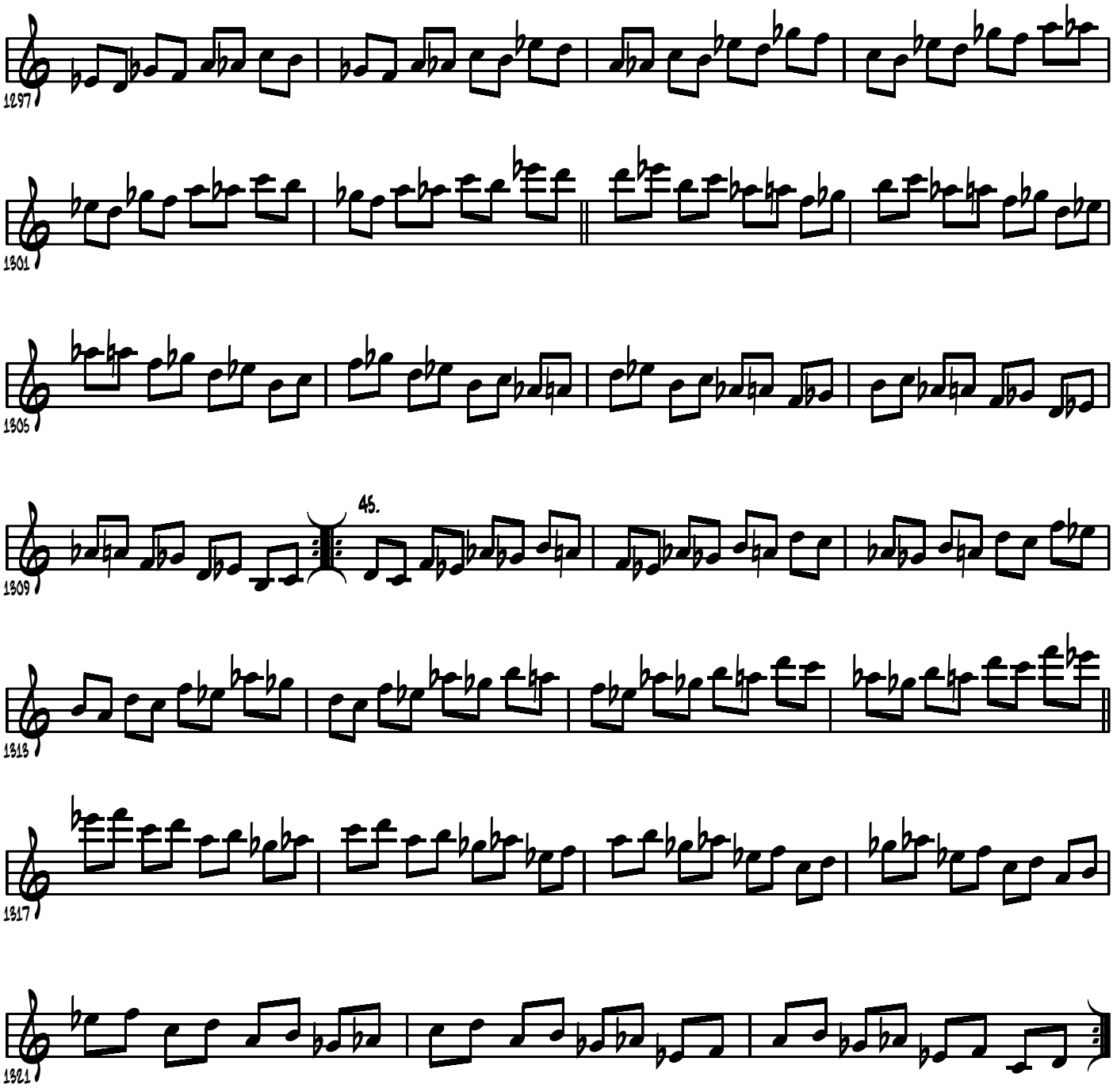

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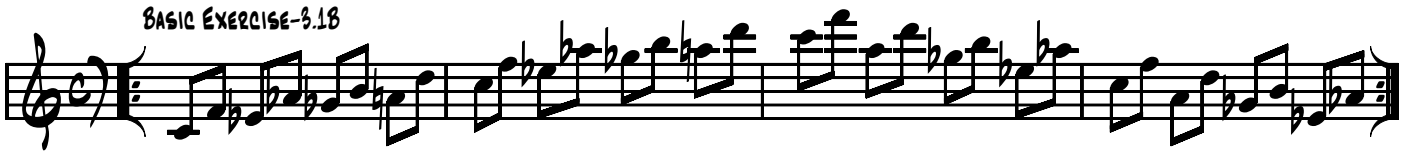
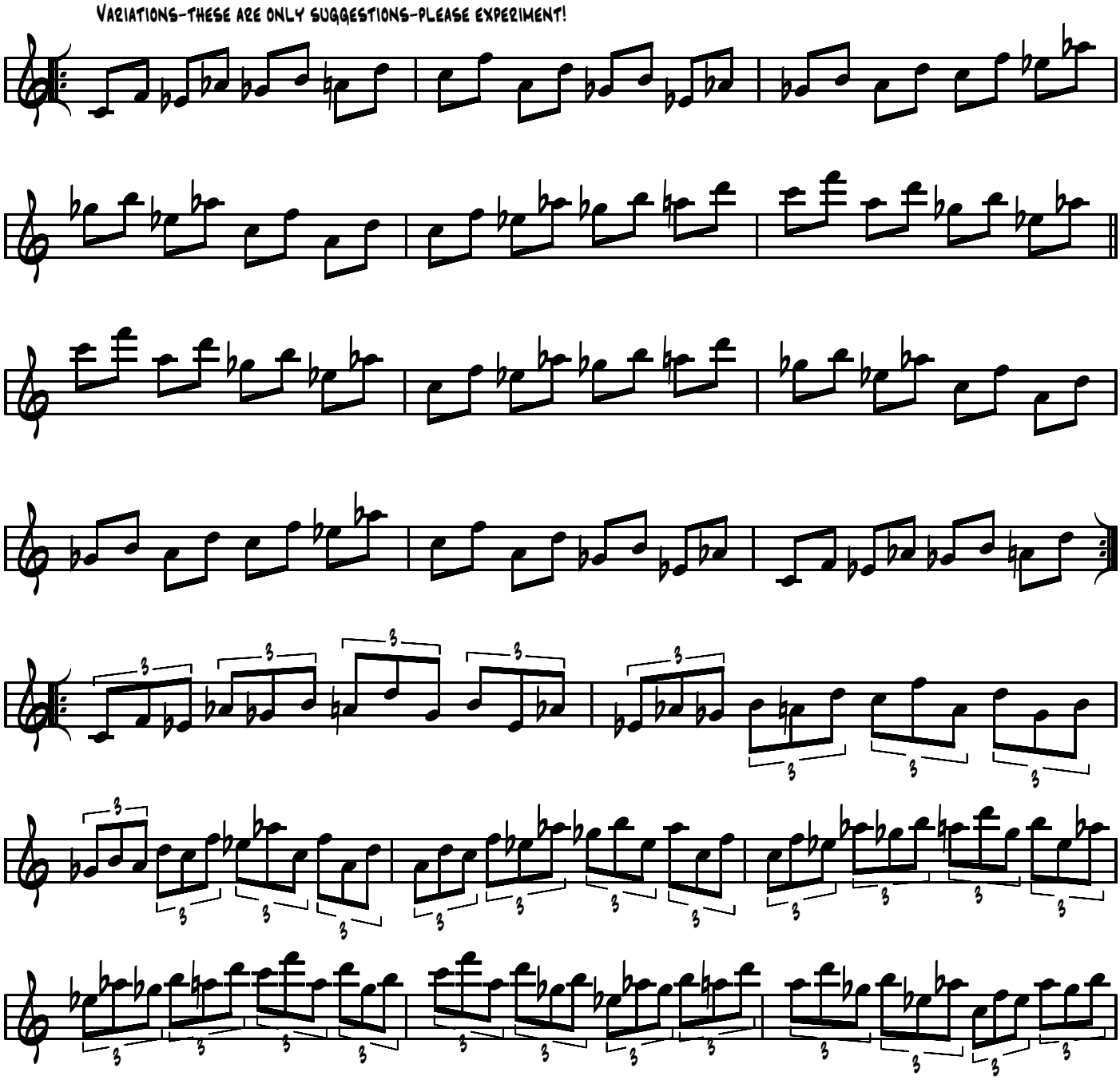
Appendix A

Rhythmic Variations

Basic Exercise-3.18



Variations-these are only suggestions-please experiment!



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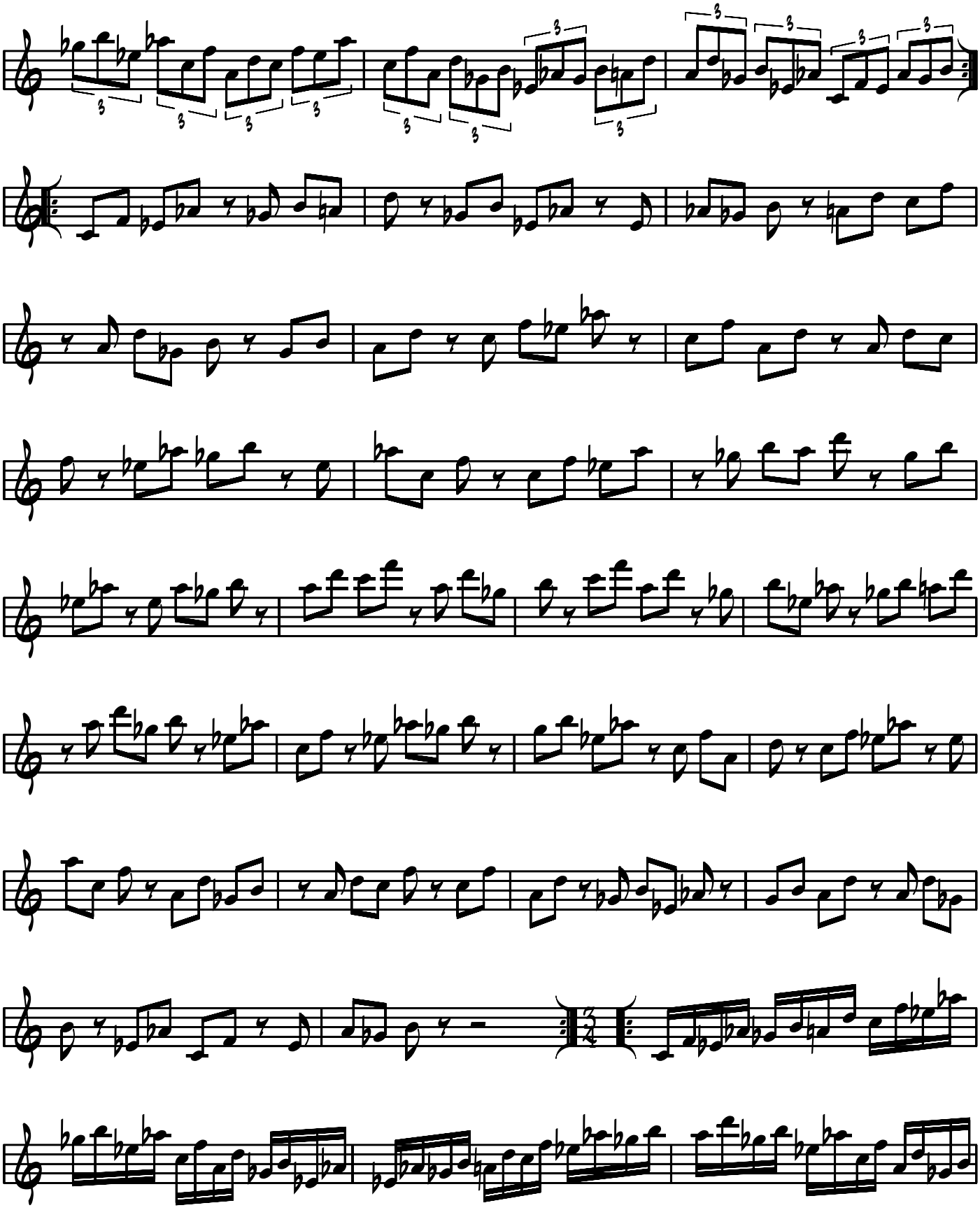

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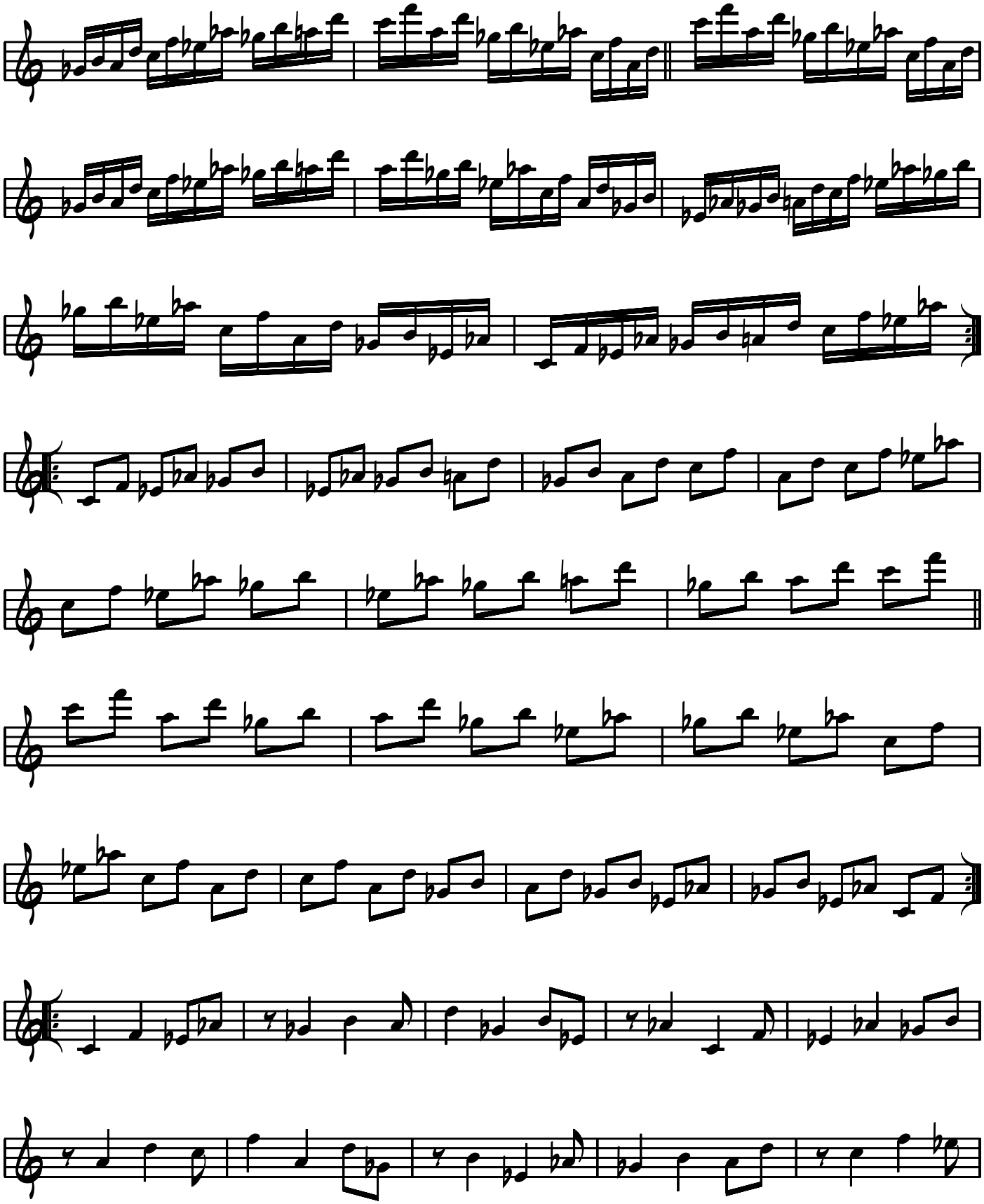

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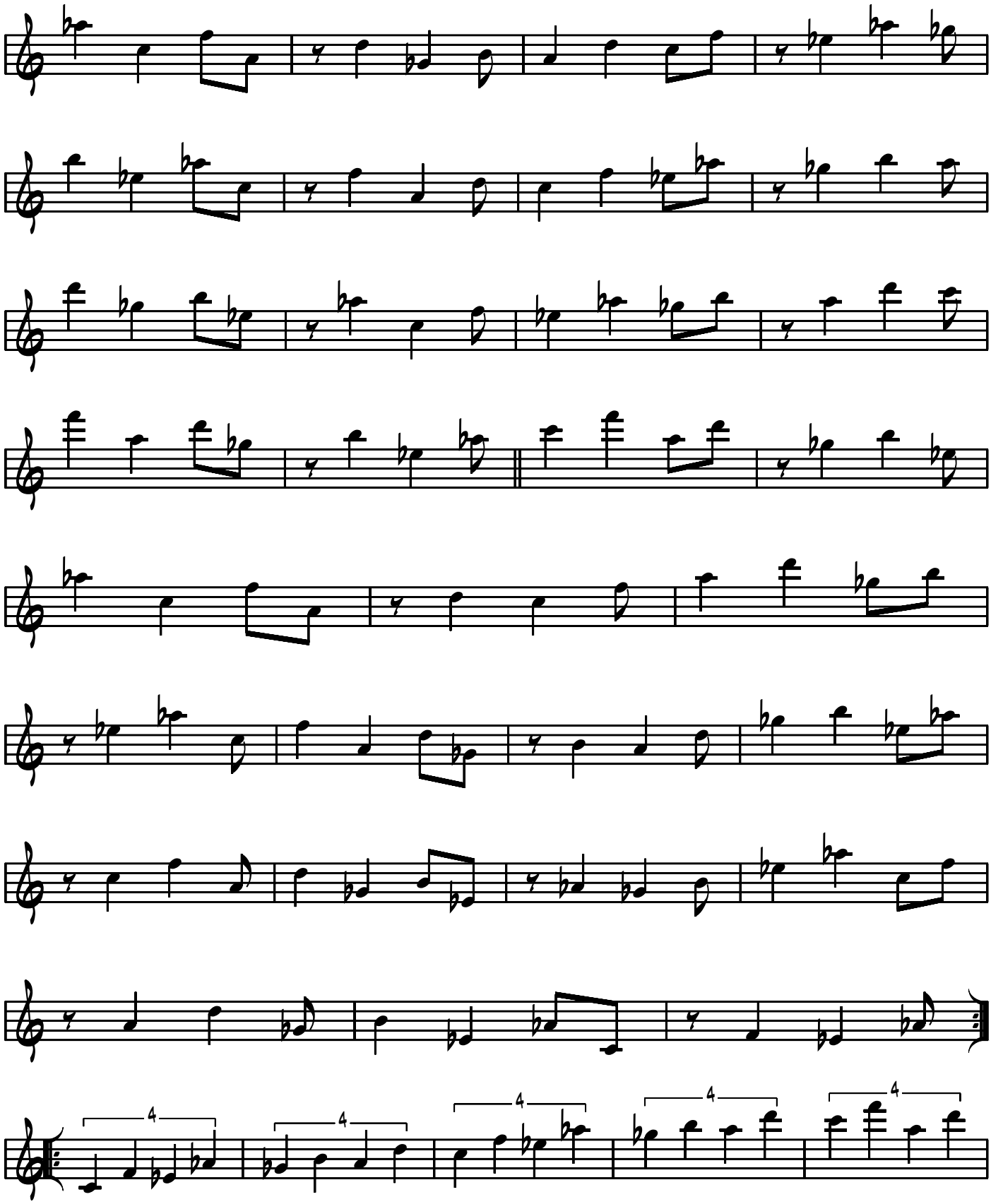

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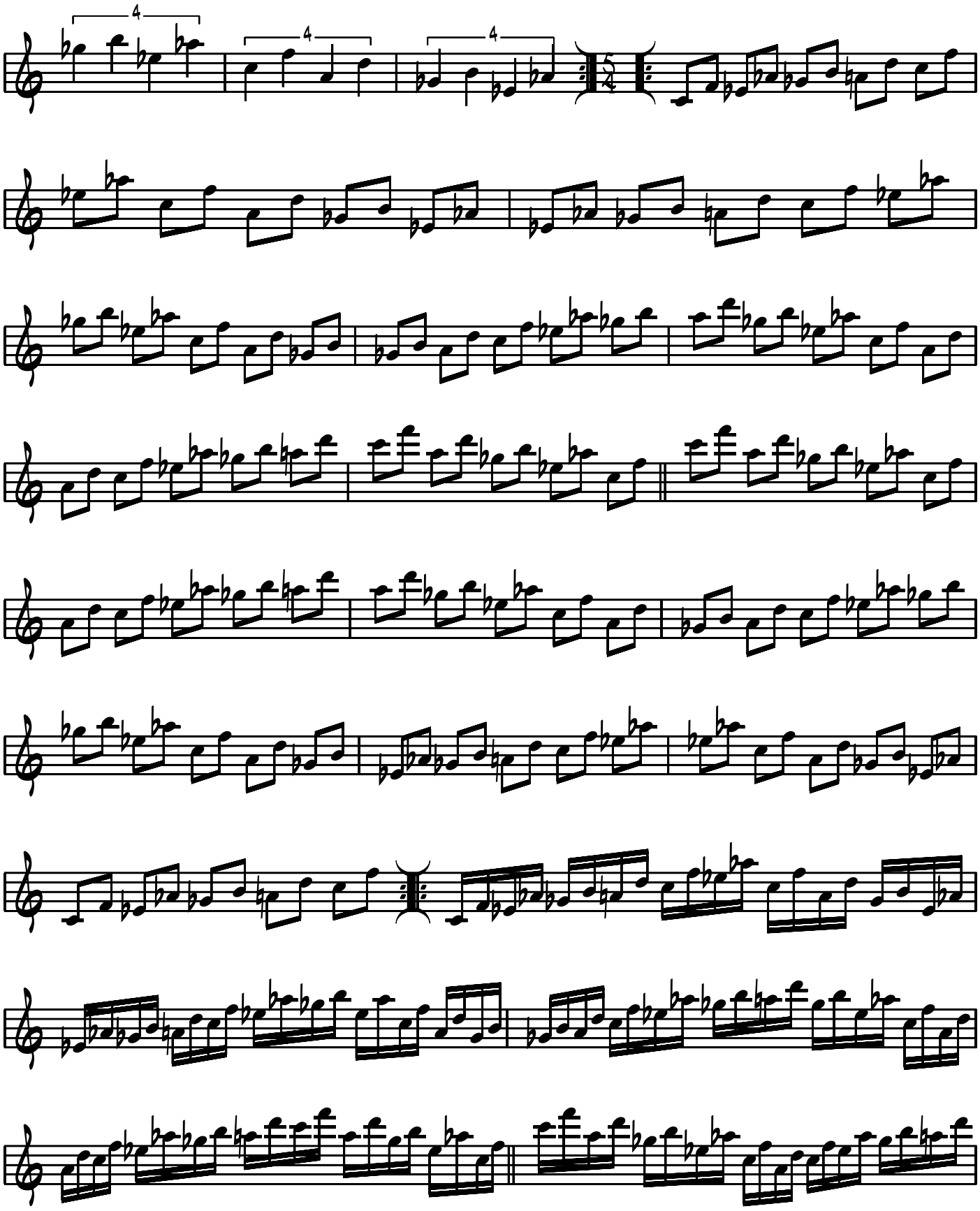

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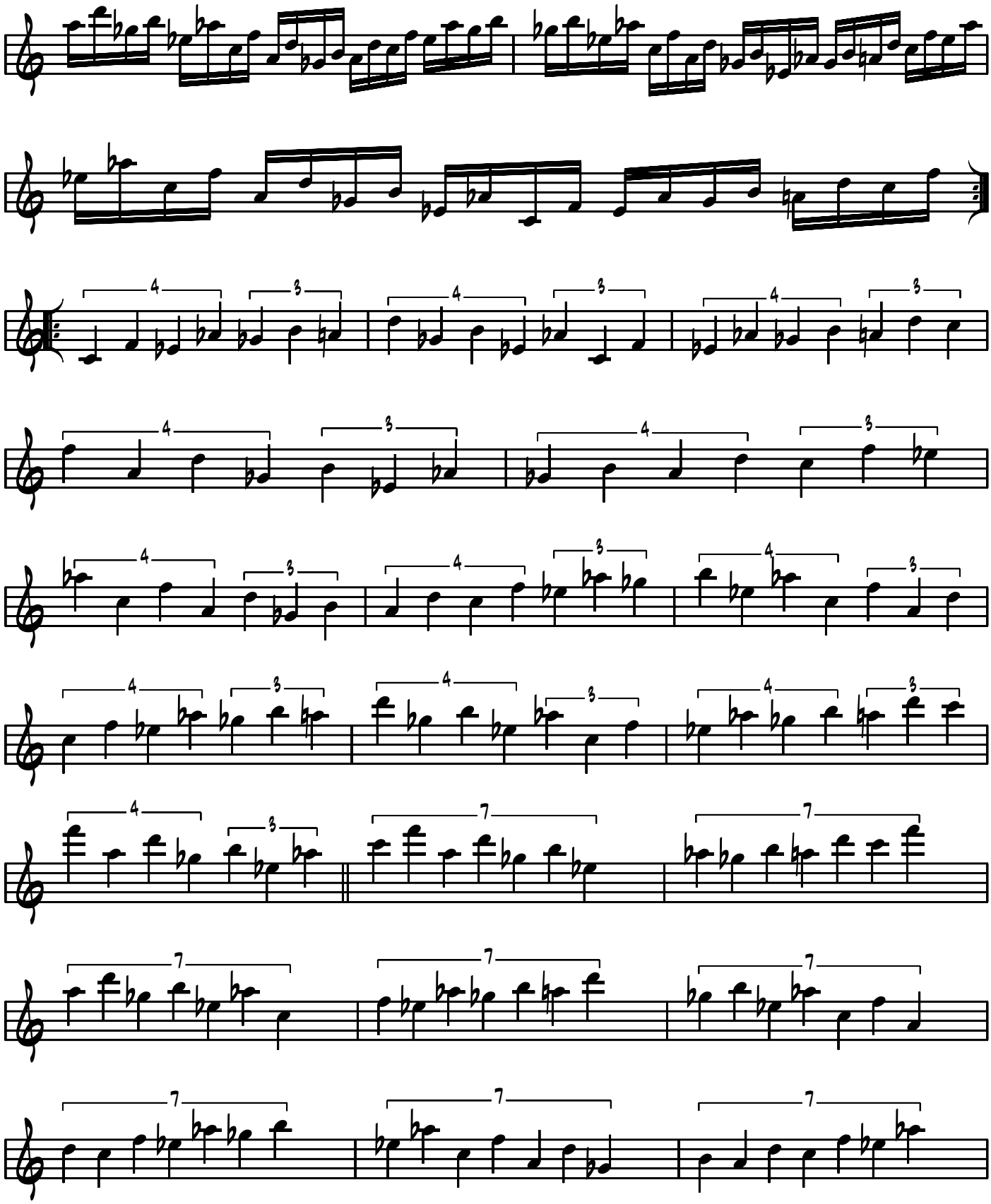

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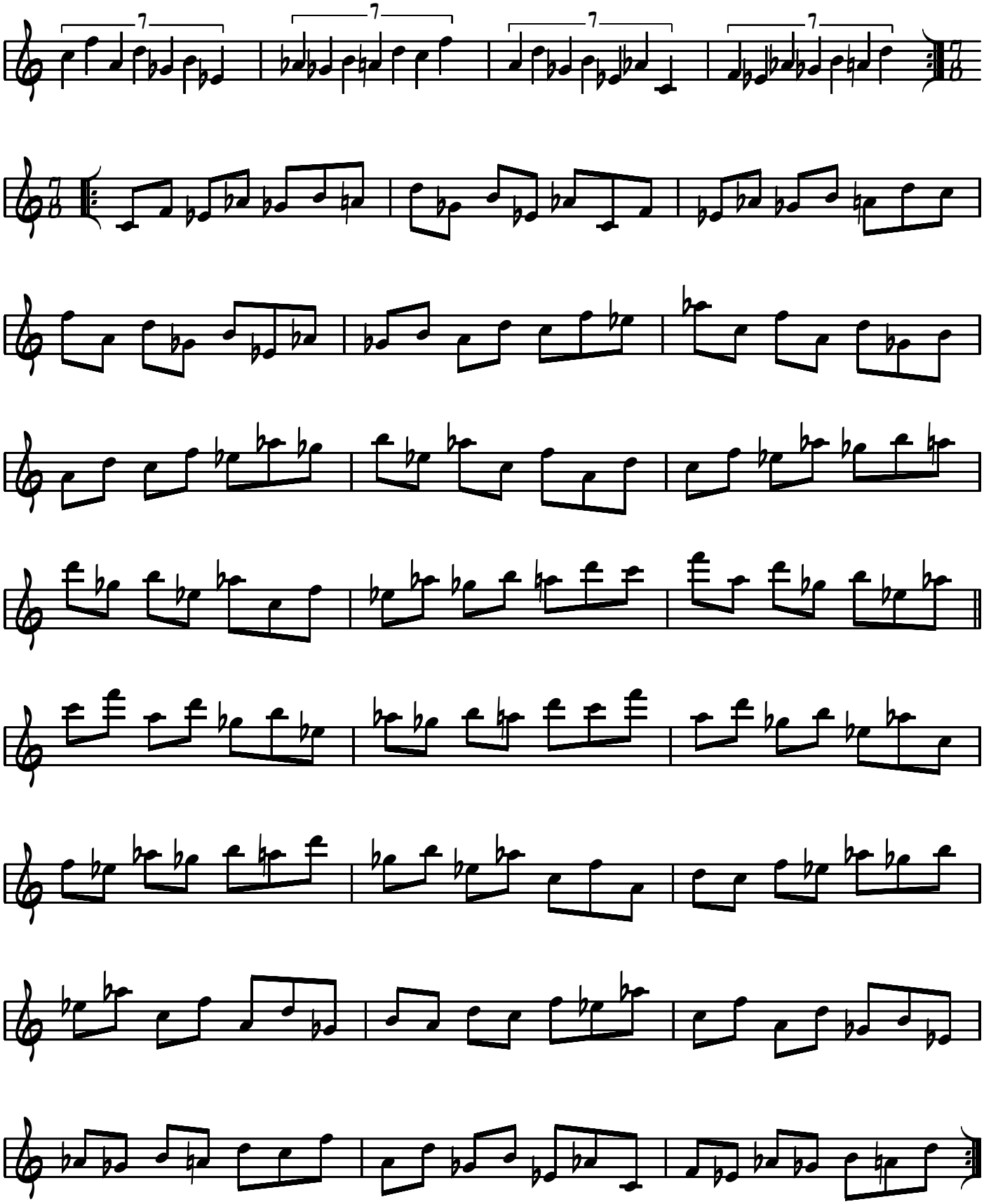

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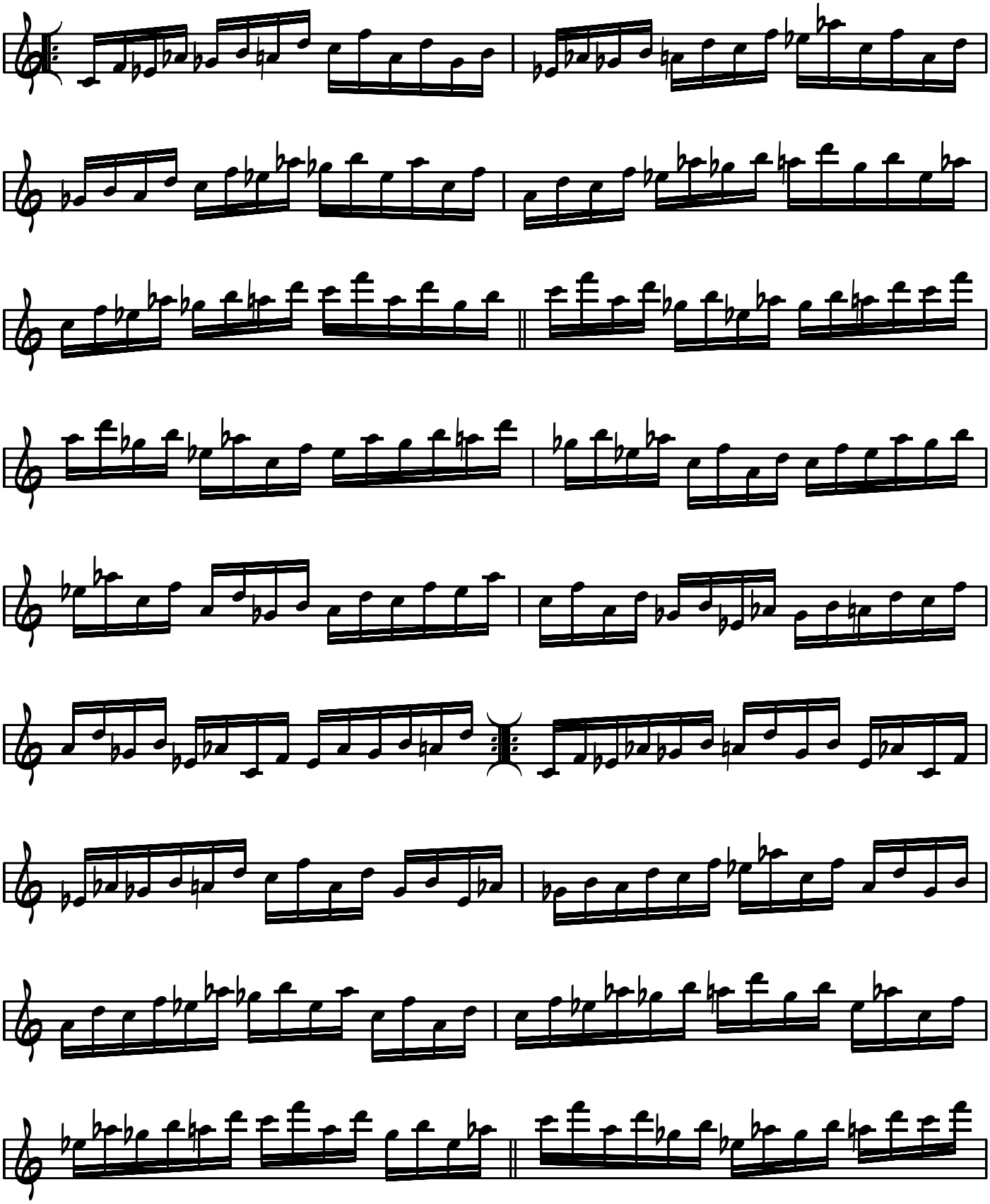

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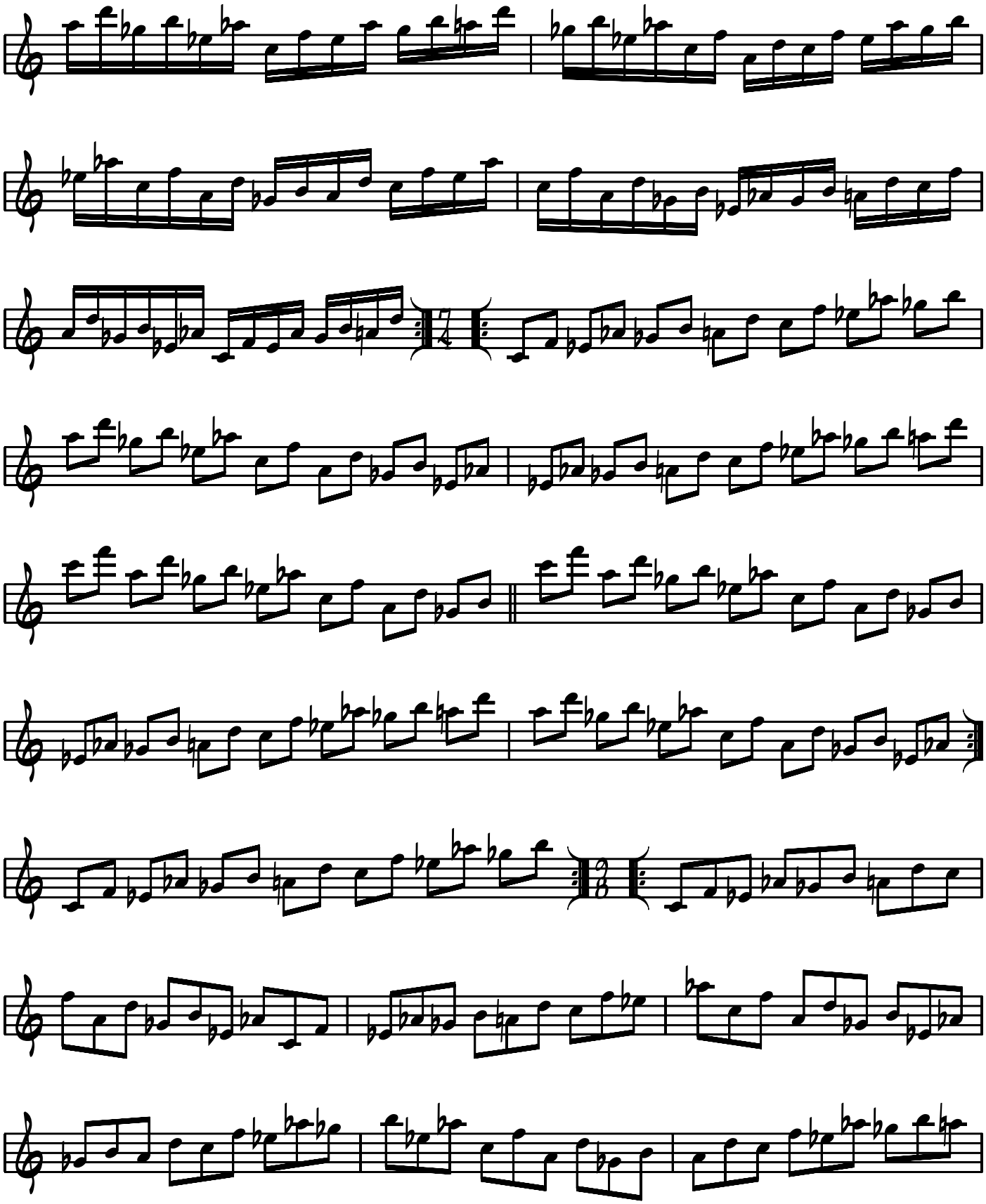

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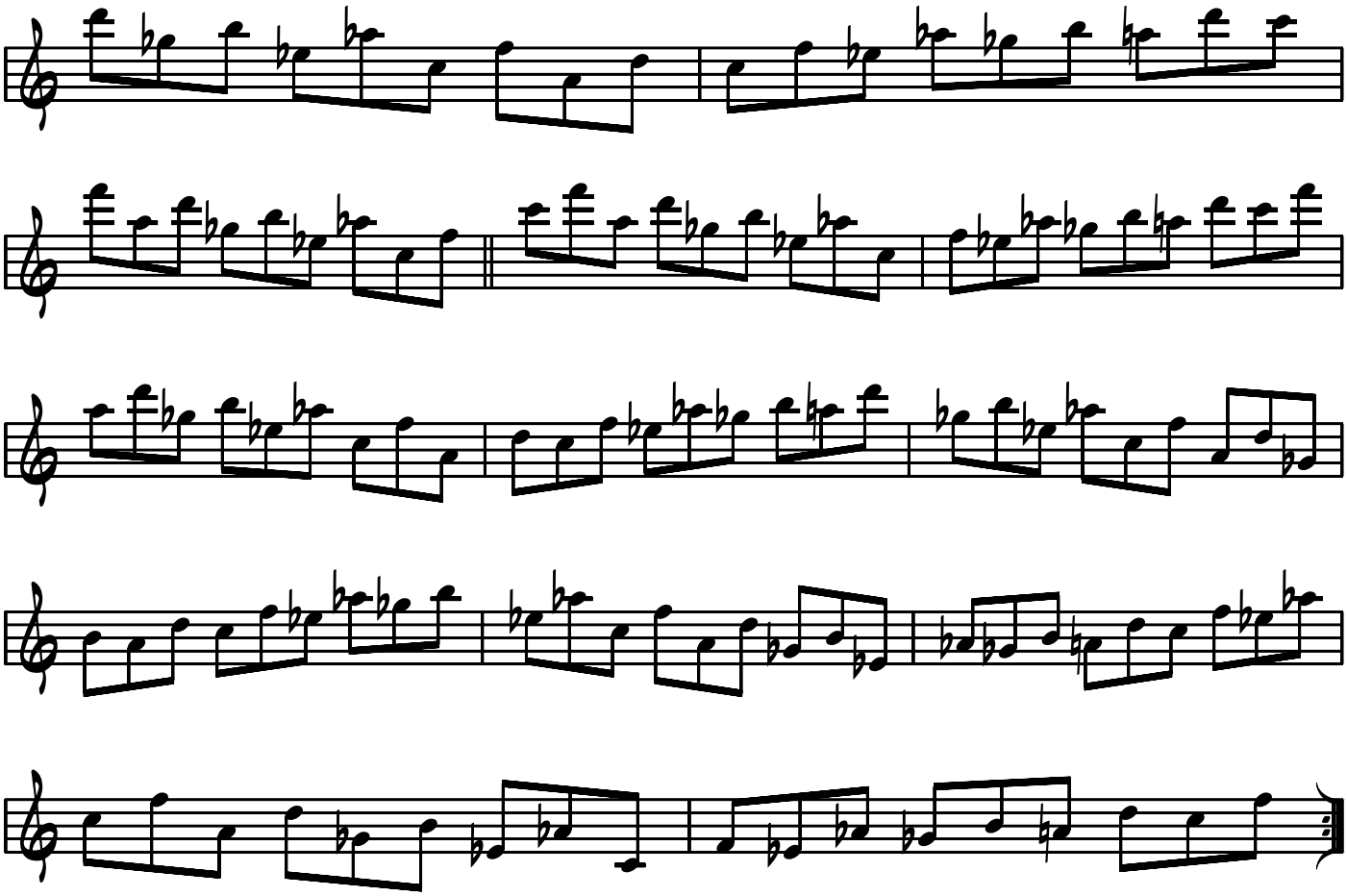

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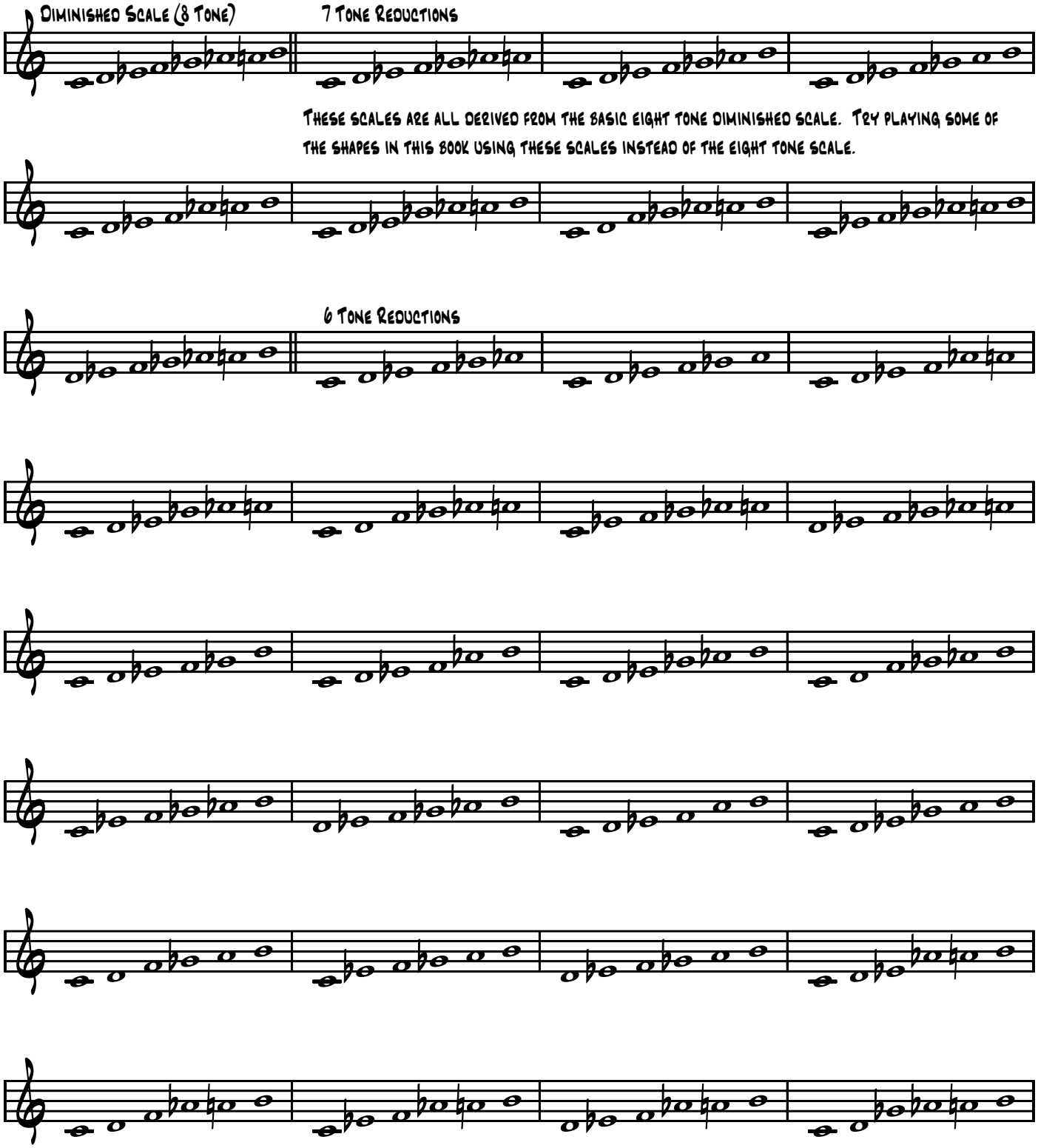
Appendix B

Diminished Scale Reductions



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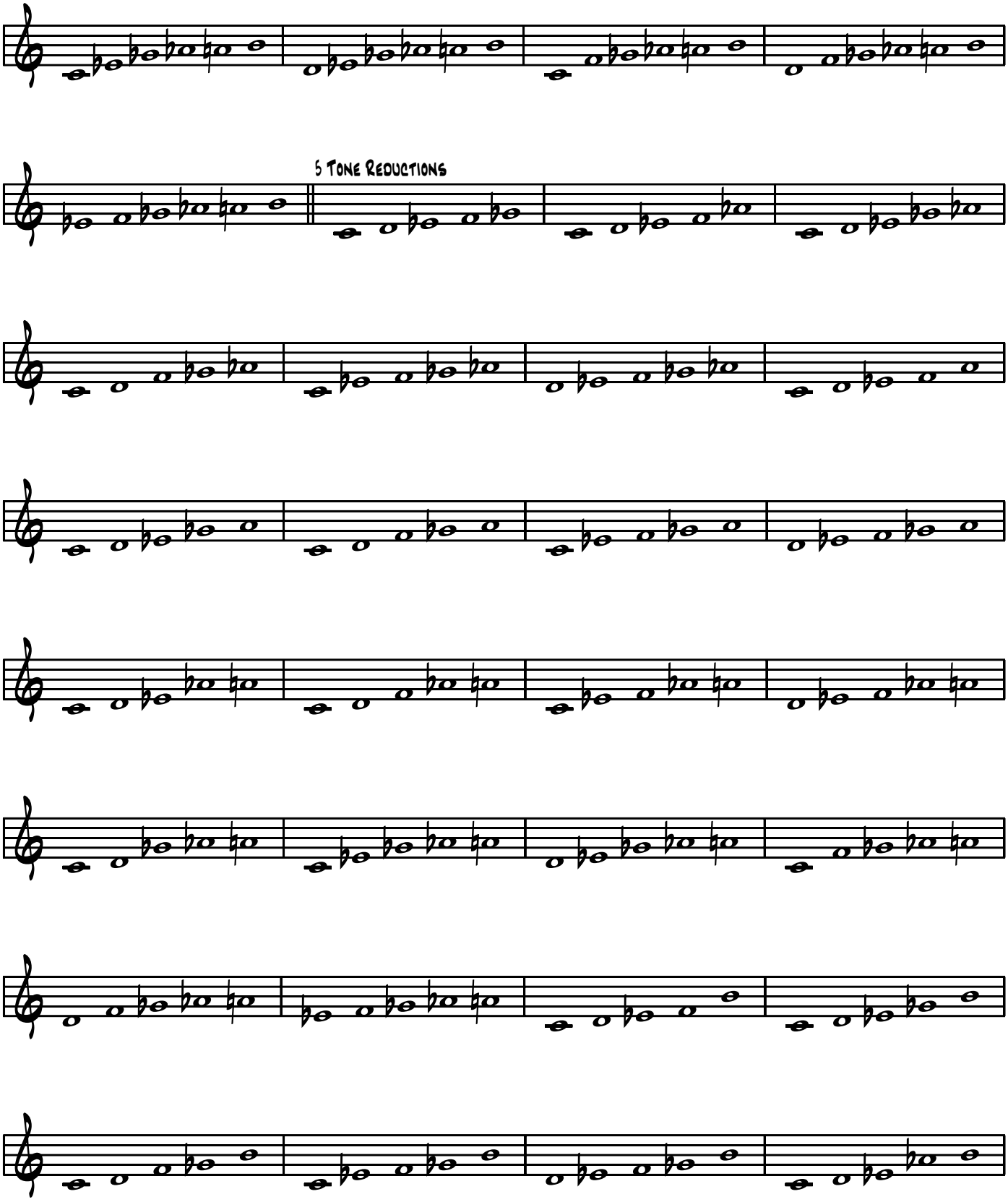

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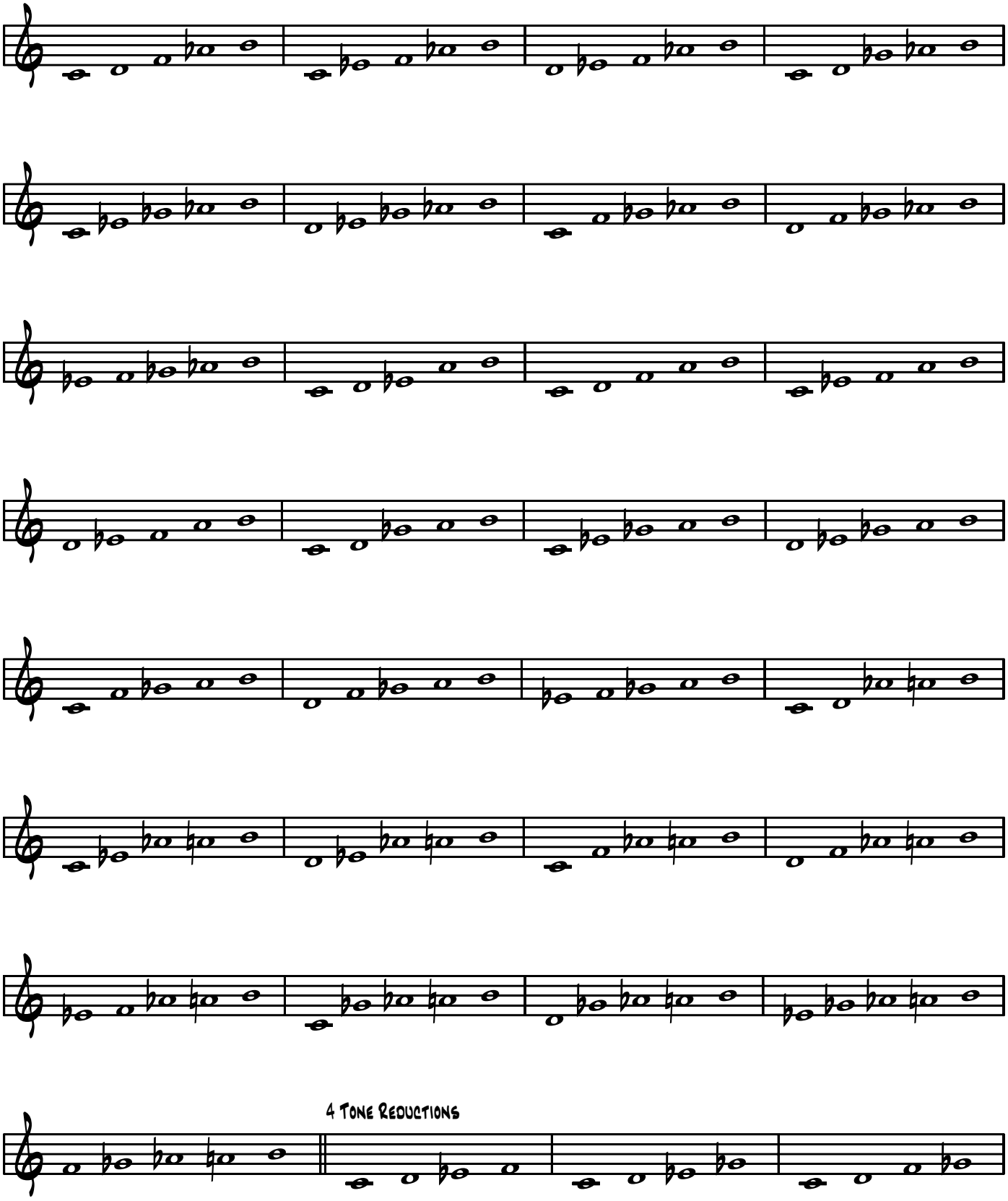

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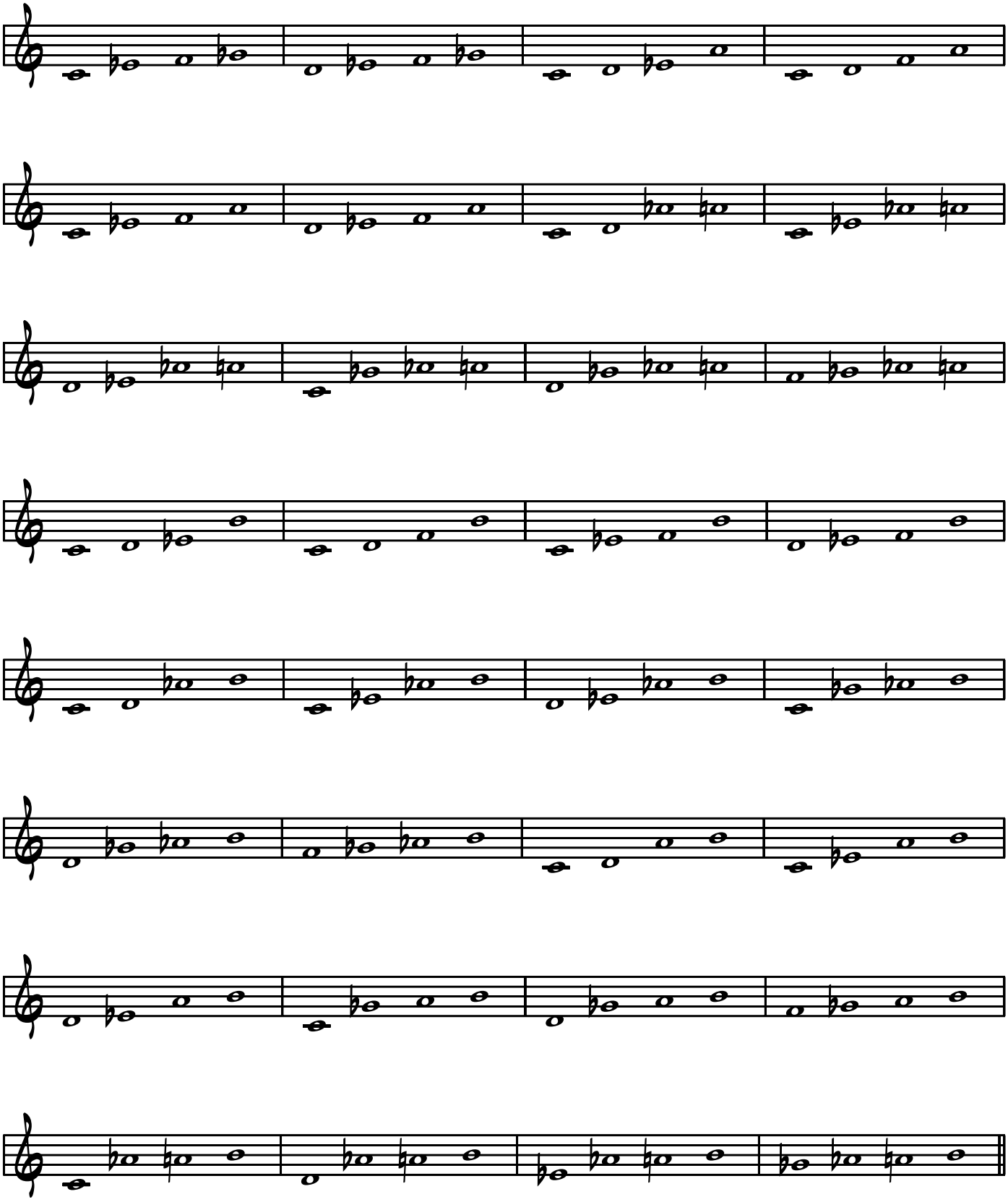

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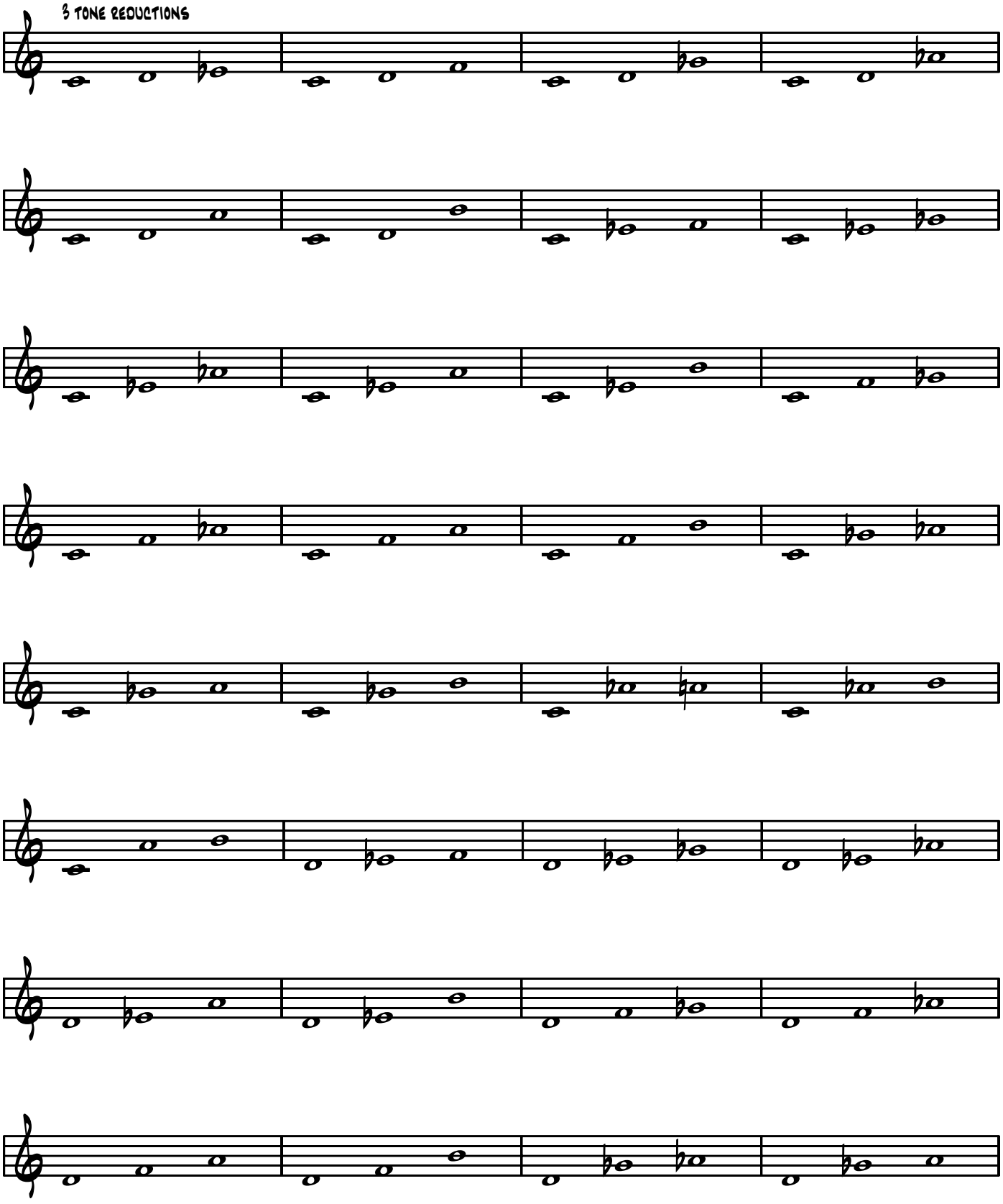

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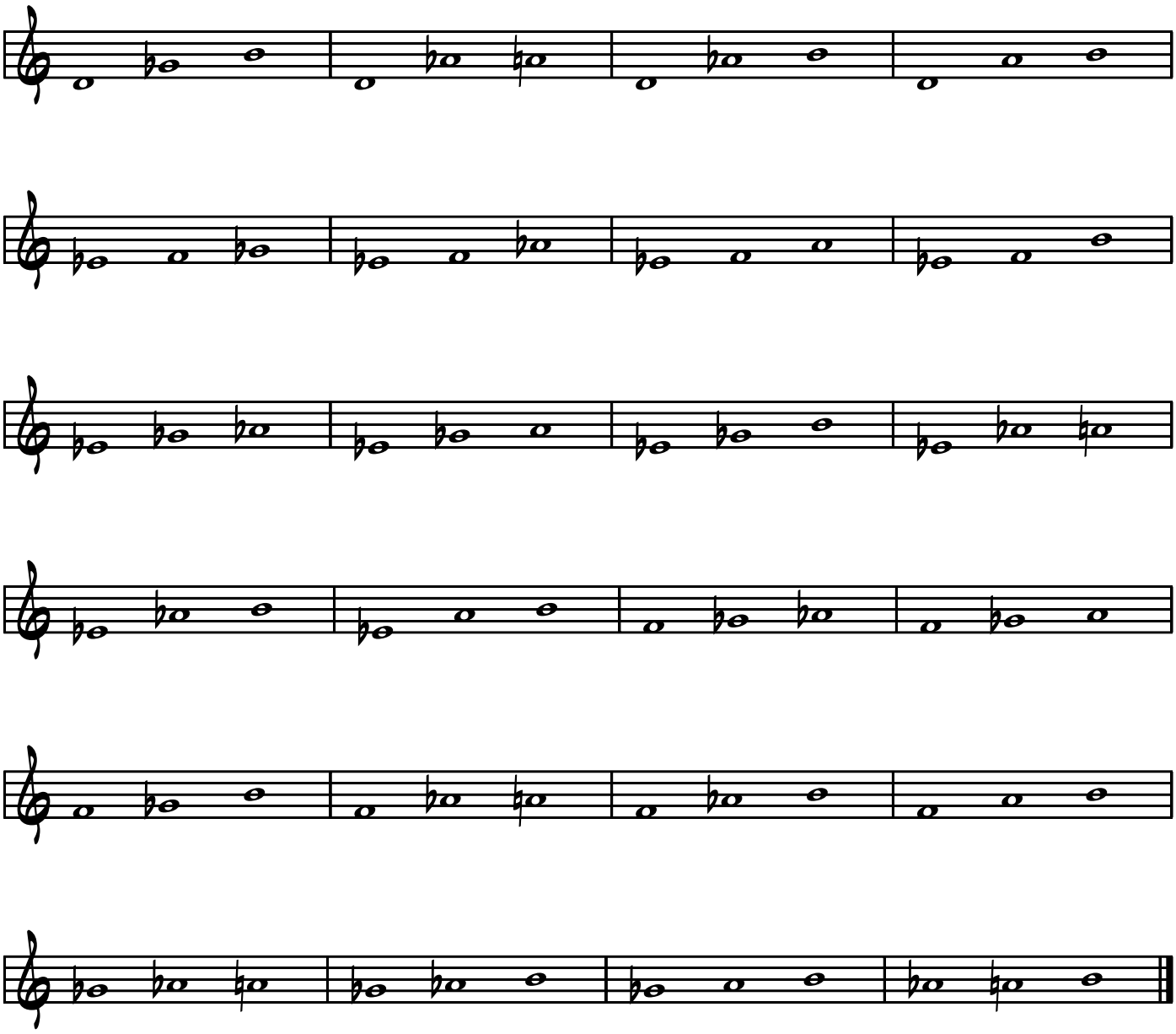

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