Teach Your Students to Compose Themselves!

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1) **Where to begin?**

- ♪ What does the composer want to say?
- ♪ What sounds can best accomplish the portrayal of the composer's message?
- ♪ Group lessons
- ♪ Individual lessons

2) **Group lessons**

- ♪ Planning to write a piece of music
- ♪ Developing the message, mood and form of the piece
- ♪ Aleatoric music using non-traditional instruments
- ♪ Transposition chart
- ♪ Orchestrating a chorale

3) **Individual lessons**

- ♪ Five finger melodies
- ♪ Five note clusters X 3
  - ♫ *Develop list of moods (resolute, apprehensive, bored, angry, etc.)*
  - ♫ *Create the melodies and clusters to represent the moods*
  - ♫ *Match the melody/cluster to the mood*

4) **How to begin less experienced students with little or no theory background**

- ♪ Omit notes/measures to melody; have students decide which notes to use
- ♪ Repeat interesting rhythms or melodic fragments for interest and strength
- ♪ Improvise melodies trading measures with another teacher or student
- ♪ Use antecedent & consequent phrases to promote musical conversation
- ♪ Write a short melody, bass line and countermelody or accompaniment
- ♪ Experiment with changing textures and thematic variations
- ♪ After the "A" theme is complete, write a contrasting "B" theme and create a piece in A-B-A form, or create a variation of the "A" theme for an A-A'-B-A piece

5) **Keep it relevant**

- ♪ Write the piece so it can be played immediately (piano or small ensemble)
- ♪ Keep it short – at this stage it needs to be played with no rehearsal required
- ♪ Procedure
  - ♫ *Plan the piece as if it was a vacation*
  - ♫ *Where are you going? How long will you be gone? Who is going with you? What do you plan to see? Are you returning home or is it a one-way trip?*

6) **Sharing and Caring**

- ♪ Make it playable – key, rhythm, range, technique
- ♪ Using pencil & paper or computer
- ♪ Beware the allure of "cut and paste"

7) **Helping the composer with craftsmanship**

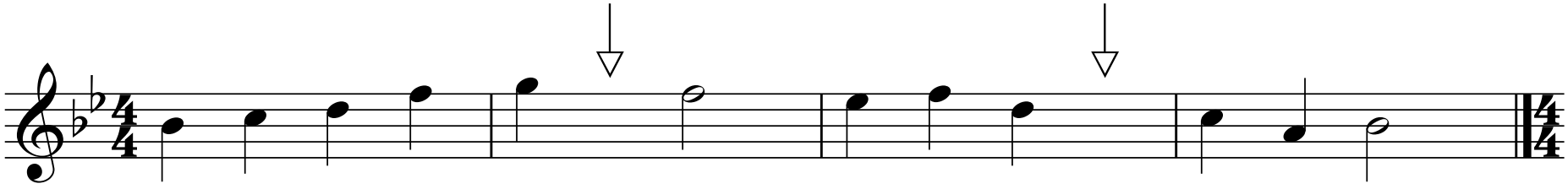
- ♪ Is the tempo indicated? Is there a style or expression marking?
- ♪ Are dynamics, articulation markings clear, consistent and appropriate?
- ♪ Color is created by using interesting instrument combinations and RESTS
- ♪ Do instruments have enough rests to avoid fatigue?
- ♪ Are percussion instrumentation and personnel requirements reasonable?
- ♪ Are passing tones interfering with harmony?
- ♪ Are technical issues easily resolved?
- ♪ Is the key signature correct?
- ♪ Are rehearsal numbers in appropriate places?
- ♪ Cause and effect is a great way to ensure logic and a musical conversation
- ♪ Examination of published scores (extracting parts)

8) **The final product**

- ♪ Deadlines are important
- ♪ Playing the piece in class
- ♪ Performance of the piece in concert or recital

Beginning the Composition Process
Making Decisions About "Right" Notes

1. Complete the melody by adding your own notes in the indicated places.



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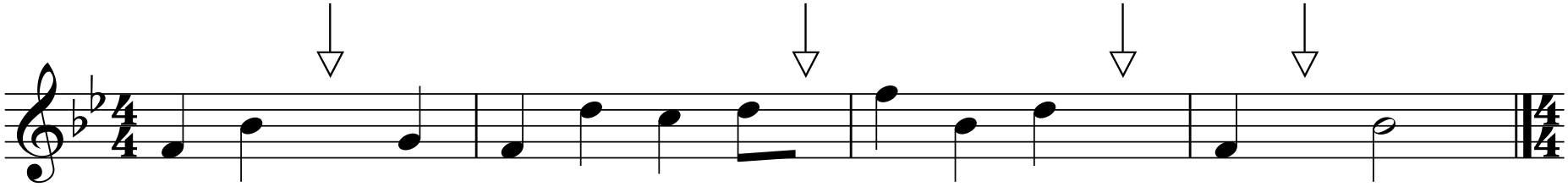
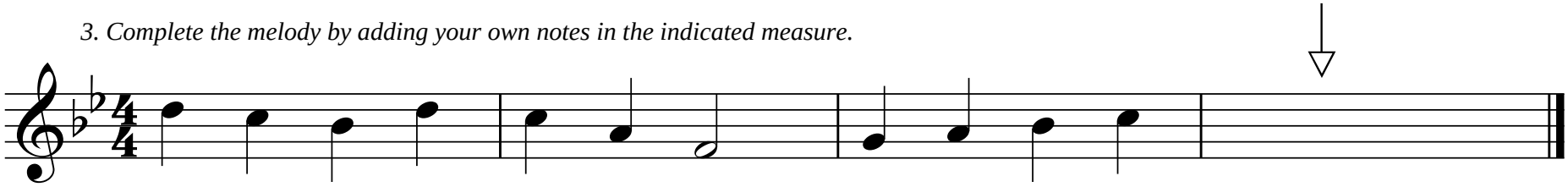
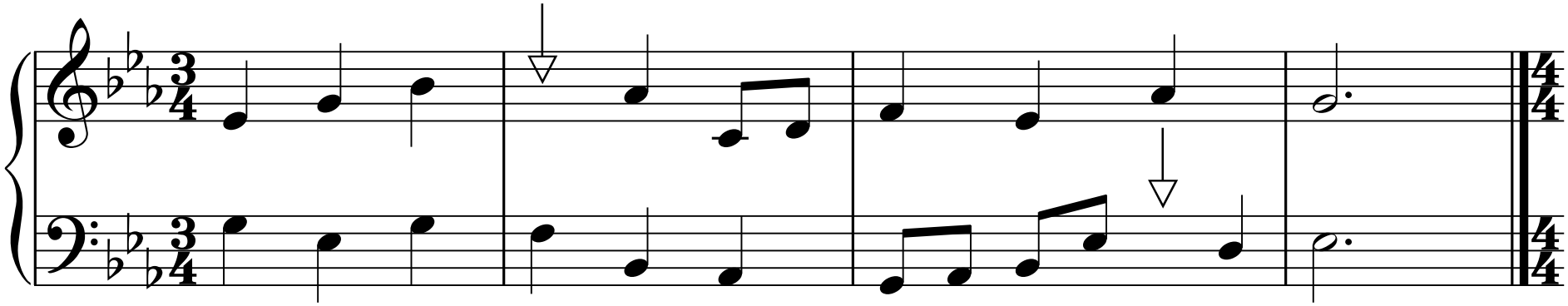


3. Complete the melody by adding your own notes in the indicated measure.

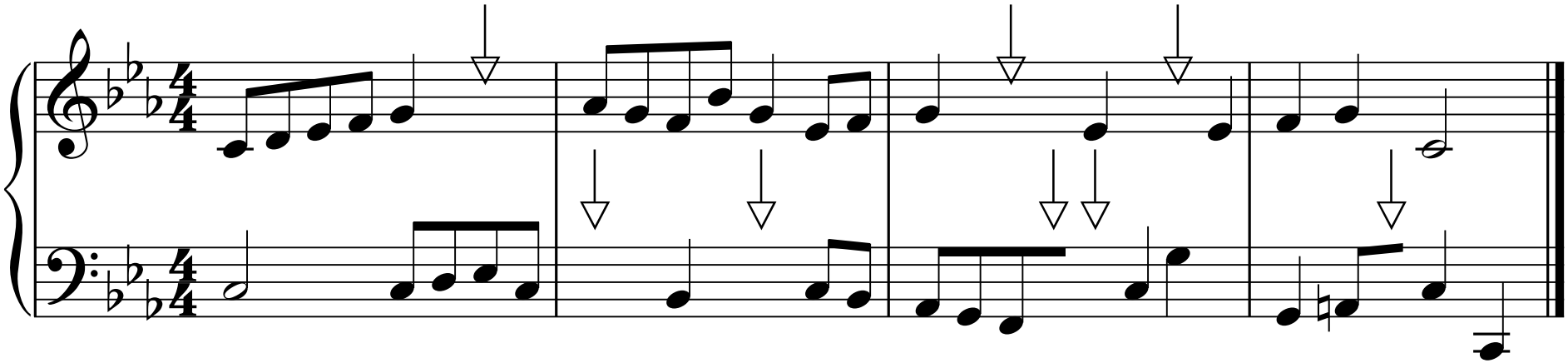


Intermediate Level
Note Selection Exercises

4. Add your own notes in the indicated places to complete the melody and countermelody.

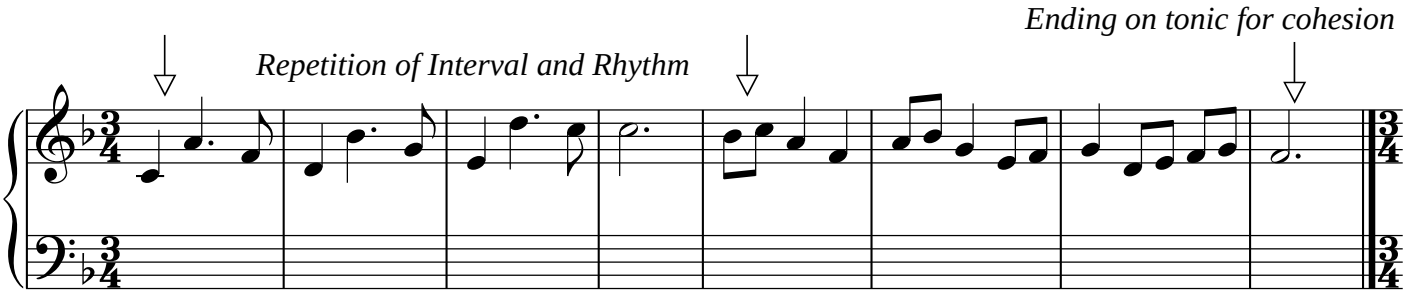


5. Add your own notes in the indicated places to complete the melody and countermelody.

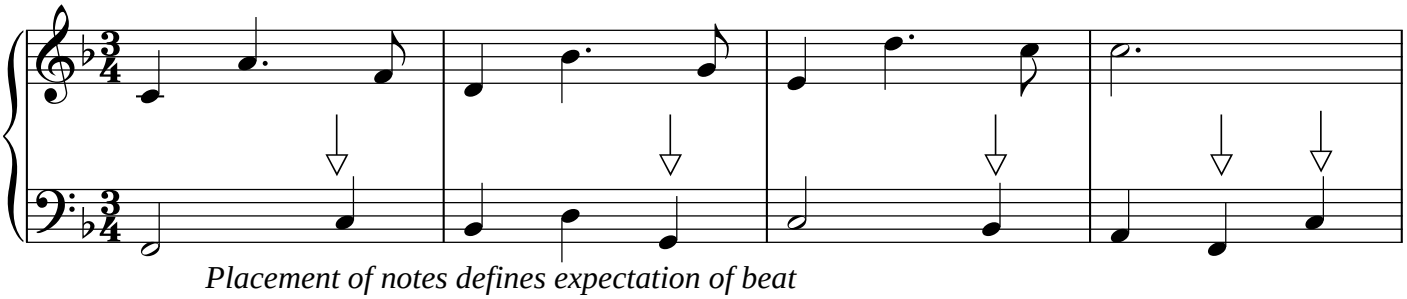


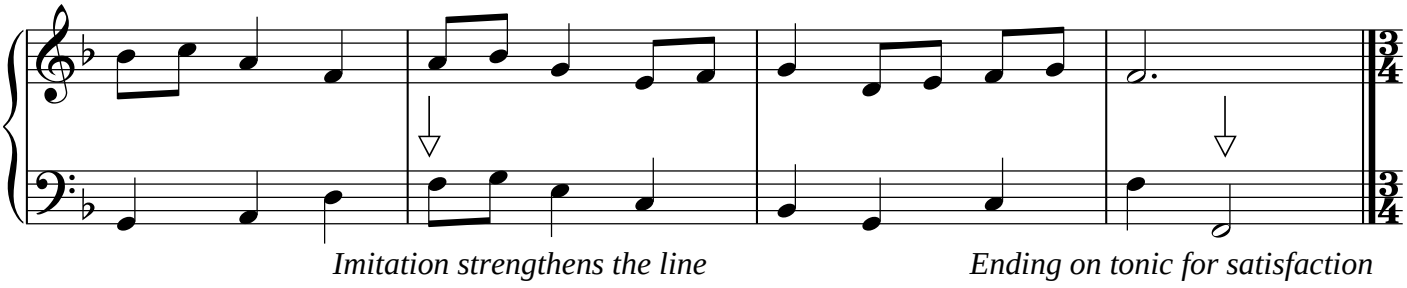
Writing Melody and Bass Lines

6. Writing a strong melody often involves outlining chordal structures, repeating interesting melodic or rhythmic ideas and ending on the tonic note.



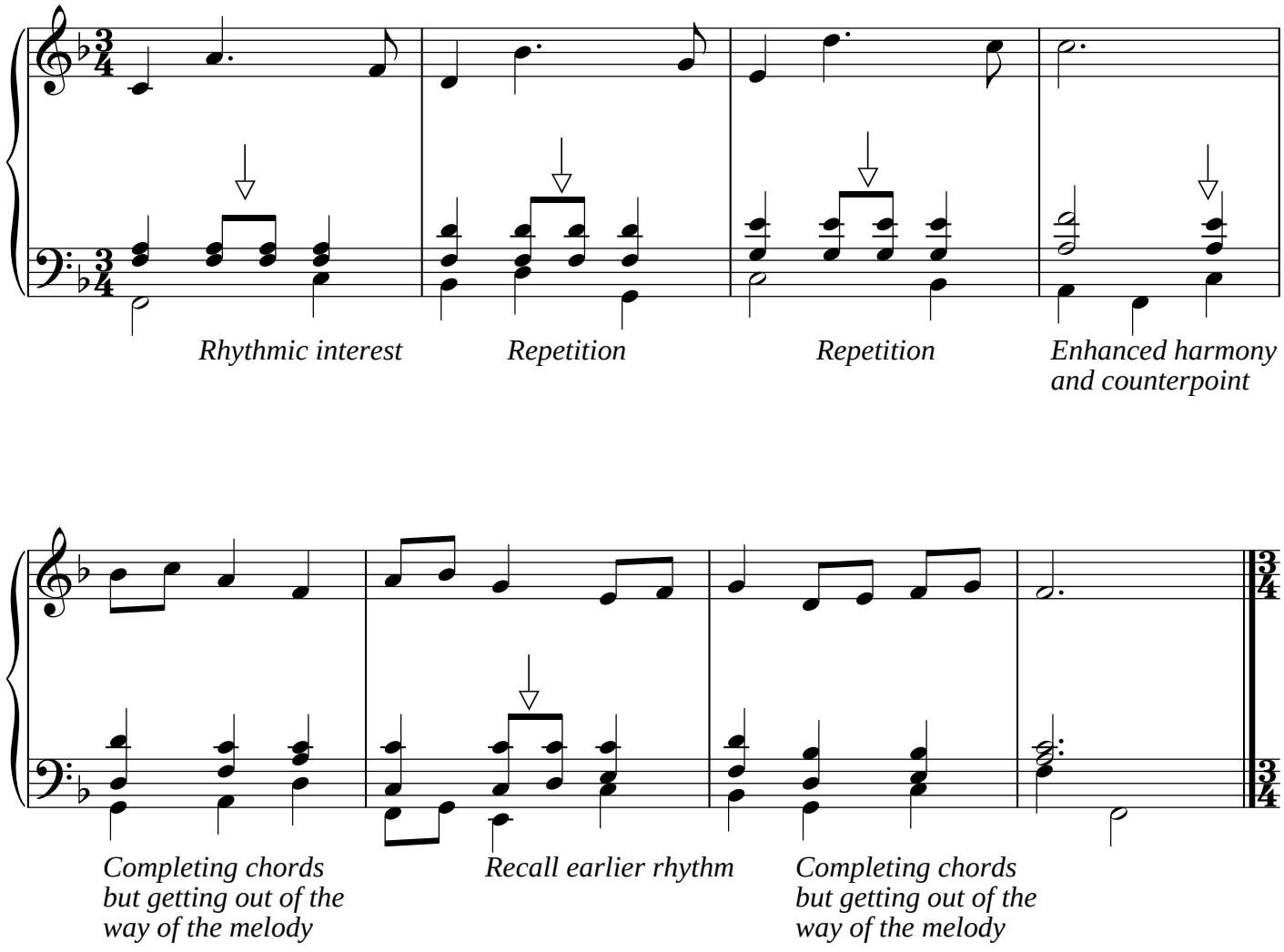
7. Writing a good bass line often involves finding notes that enhance the melody while satisfying the harmonic structure in an interesting way..





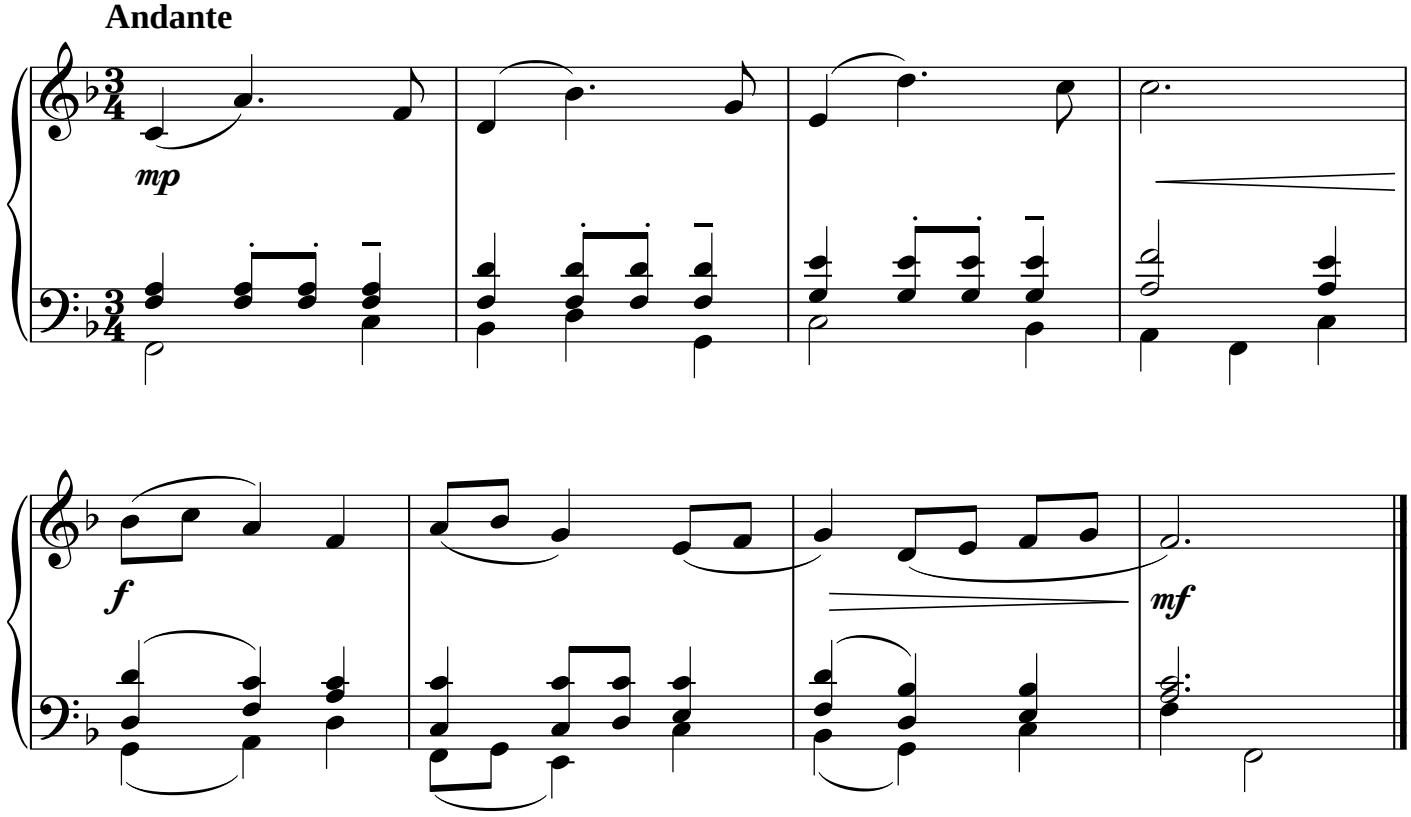
Adding Accompaniment Parts

8. Adding accompaniment brings interest and added texture..



Putting It All Together!

9. Adding articulation, dynamics, tempo and style indications completes the piece.



THEME AND VARIATIONS YOUR WAY—*Write your own variation by changing the rhythm and/or notes, then play it!*

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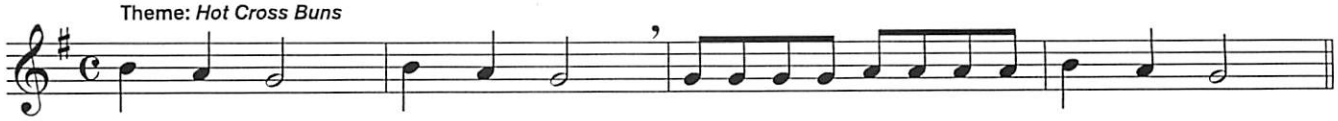
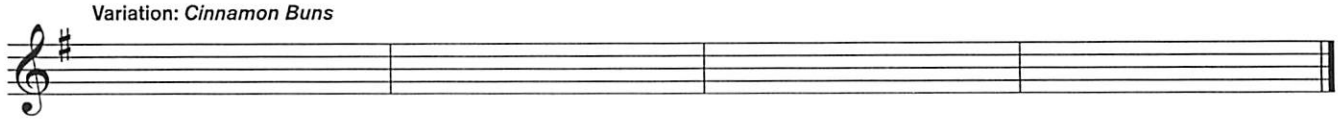
Theme: *Hot Cross Buns*



Variation: *Cinnamon Buns*



ON YOUR OWN!—*Play the first four measures, then write the last four measures yourself! Now, play the entire piece.*

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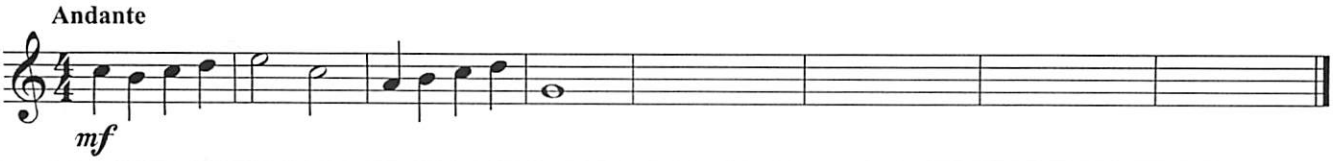
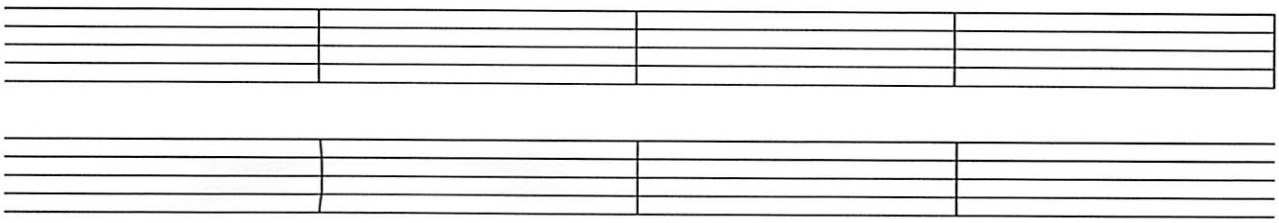


MUSIC MY WAY! Write your own composition:

- Write in the clef, meter, key signature, tempo and style you choose.
- Place the notes and rhythms that you already know on the staff in any order you like and add a final bar line.
- Add articulations (staccato, legato, accents, slurs) and dynamics (*p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *cresc.*, *decresc.*).
- Give the piece a title, and be sure to add **YOUR NAME** as the composer.
- Now play the piece for your friends and family!

*Title:*_____ *Composed by*_____



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ORIGINS OF THE STAFF AND CLEF

You have learned to read music on a staff in either treble or bass clef. The staff developed from its origins as a larger set of lines and spaces.

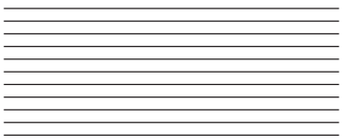

Fig. 1 11-line staff

This eventually led to the creation of treble and bass clef signs.

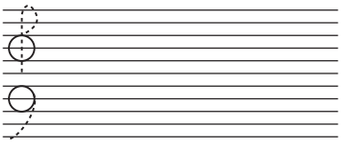

Fig. 3 Line staff with circles and dotted lines showing the formation of treble and bass clef

Since this large staff made it difficult to locate specific notes, two circles were added to help musicians find correct pitches. The upper circle centered on the G line while the lower circle centered on the F line.

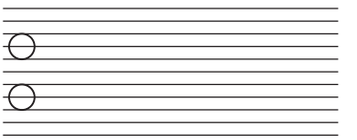

Fig. 2 Line staff with circles added

When the middle line (C) was removed, this became the Grand Staff.

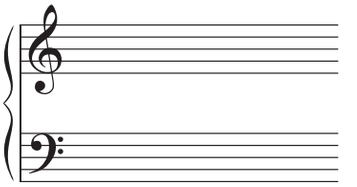

Fig. 4 Grand Staff

The Grand Staff is used primarily by harp and keyboard instruments such as piano and organ. Band instruments generally play in just one clef. Which clef does your instrument use?

MATCH THE SYMBOLS AND TERMS WITH THEIR DEFINITION

1. Staff ____
2. Clef ____
3. Meter ____
4. Bar Line ____
5. Sharp ____
6. Flat ____
7. Whole Note ____
8. Quarter Note ____
9. Half Rest ____
10. Fermata ____

COMPOSITION

Complete the following melody by writing in the quarter notes of your choice from the notes you have learned. Once you have finalized your piece, play it and give it a title.

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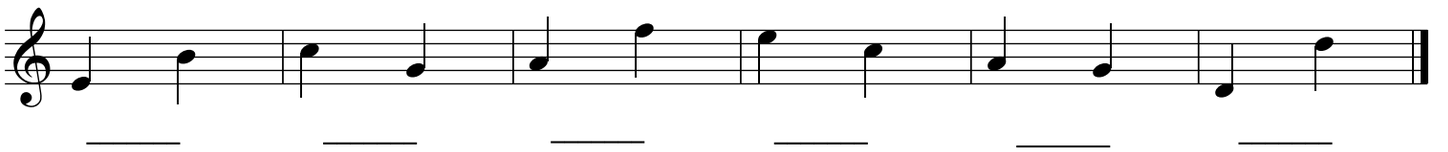
INTERVALS

1. Write the name of each interval in the space provided.
2. Play the notes in each interval, then sing it.
3. Take turns with another band member playing different intervals while the player identifies the interval just by listening to it.

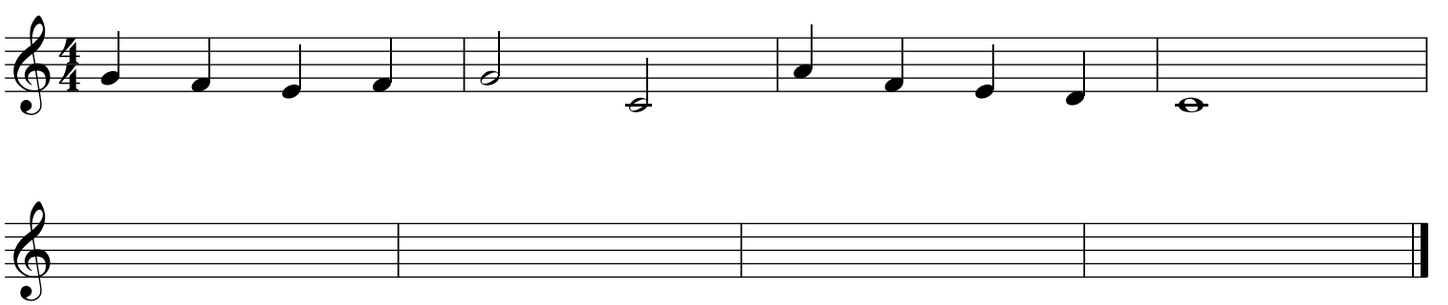


MATCH THE SYMBOLS AND TERMS WITH THEIR DEFINITION

1. $\frac{2}{4}$	____ Notes that receive half a count in $\frac{4}{4}$ time
2. Divisi	____ A curved line connecting notes that indicate they are to be played with separation
3. Unison	____ The interval of an 8th
4. Key Signature	____ A bar line that ends a section of music
5. Eighth Notes	____ A meter in which there are two beats per measure and the quarter note receives one beat
6. Dynamics	____ The distance between the pitches of two different notes
7. Interval	____ When two notes appear at the same time
8. Octave	____ Indicates note affected by sharps or flats
9. Slur	____ When two parts play the same note
10. Double Bar	____ Change in volume

COMPOSITION

Write a variation on this four-measure theme by changing some of the rhythms. When you are finished, clap and count the variation, then play it and give it a title.



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KEY SIGNATURES – FLAT KEYS

Major keys are indentifiable by the number of flats or sharps in the key signature. Flats are always added in the same order. The first flat to be added is always B♭, then E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, C♭ and finally F♭. Memorize the order of the flats: B E A D G C F.

To find the name of the key, refer to the letter to left of the last flat added. If there are two flats in the key signature, they will be B♭ and E♭. The key is B♭ major.

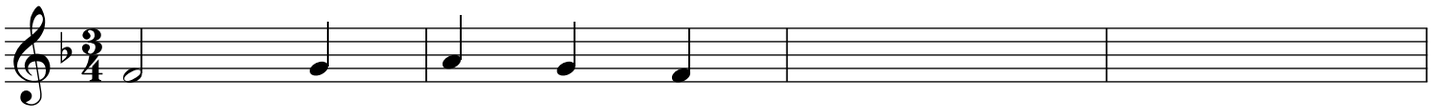
If there are three flats, what will they be? What is the name of the major key?
Four flats? Five flats? Six flats? Seven flats?

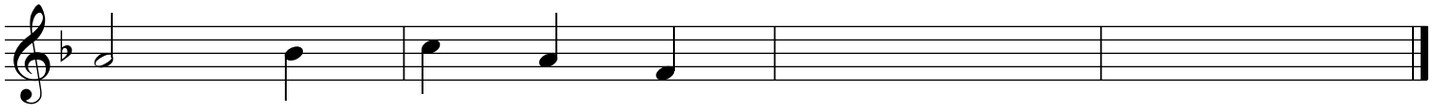
MATCH THE SYMBOLS AND TERMS WITH THEIR DEFINITION

1. Fine	____ An articulation that emphasizes a note
2.	____ Repeat from the beginning
3.	____ Resting for more than one measure
4.	____ Eighth note
5.	____ Right-facing repeat
6. >	____ Repeat from the sign
7.	____ Dotted quarter note
8. D.C.	____ Eighth rest
9. D.S.	____ The end
10. Articulation	____ A symbol indicating the way a note should be played

COMPOSITION

Complete the empty measures on your own using notes, rhythms, dynamics and articulations you have learned. Add a tempo or style marking and when you are finished, clap and count your piece, then play it and give it a title.





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KEY SIGNATURES – SHARP KEYS

Major keys are indentifiable by the number of flats or sharps in the key signature. Sharps are always added in the same order which happens to be the reverse order of flats. The sharp added is always F♯, then C♯, G♯, D♯, A♯, E♯ and B♯. If you have memorized the order of the flats (B E A D G C F) you can easily figure out the order of sharps by reversing it (F C G D A E B).

To find the name of the key refer to the last sharp added on the staff and go up a half step. If the only sharp on the staff is an F♯, go up a half step and you are on the note G. That is the name of the key–G major. If there are two sharps (F♯ and C♯) the last sharp added is C♯. Go up a half step and you are on the note D, which is the name of the key–D major.

If there are three sharps, what will they be? What is the name of the major key?
Four sharps? Five sharps? Six sharps? Seven sharps?

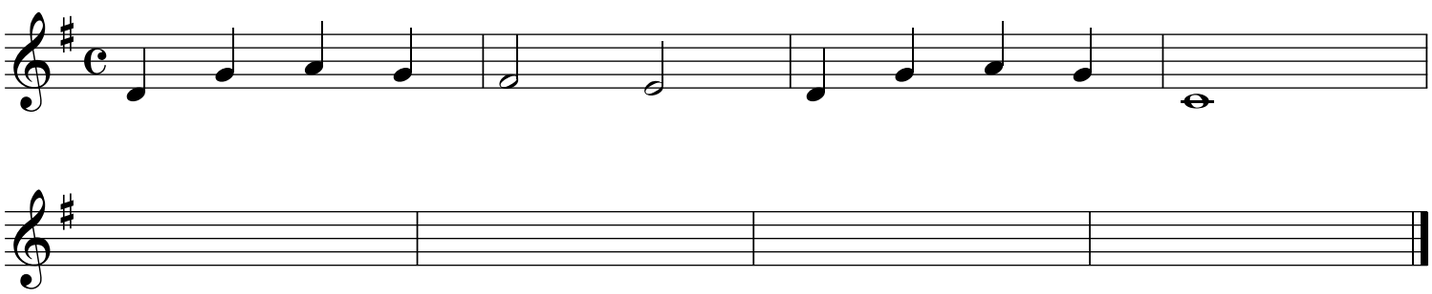
You may have noticed that there is one key that has no sharps or flats. That is the key of C major.

MATCH THE SYMBOLS AND TERMS WITH THEIR DEFINITION

1. Scale	____ An articulation or style of playing that is light and separated
2. Waltz	____ A series of notes moving in half steps
3. Legato	____ Play in a heavy style
4. Staccato	____ A series of notes that ascend or descend stepwise within a key
5. Chromatic	____ A popular dance in $\frac{3}{4}$
6. Pesante	____ An articulation or style of playing that is smooth and connected
7. Swing	____ Big-band jazz style of playing
8. Minuet	____ A key that can sound sad or solemn
9. Major	____ A French country dance
10. Minor	____ A key that can sound cheerful or heroic

COMPOSITION

Complete the empty measures on your own using notes, rhythms, dynamics and articulations you have learned. Add a tempo or style marking and when you are finished, clap and count your piece, then play it and give it a title.



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KEY SIGNATURES – COMPARE SHARP AND FLAT KEYS

One way to remember how many flats or sharps are in any major key signature is to use the number SEVEN. Each musical letter has a sharp key and a flat key. For example, the key of E♭ is a flat key since it has a B♭, E♭ and A♭ (THREE flats) in the key signature. The number of flats in any "letter's" flat key signature added to the number of sharps in the "letter's" sharp key signature always equals seven.

F major has ONE flat (B♭)
F# major has SIX sharps (F♯, C♯, G♯, D♯, A♯, E♯)
1 flat + 6 sharps = SEVEN

Bb major has TWO flat (B♭, E♭)
B major has FIVE sharps (F♯, C♯, G♯, D♯, A♯)
2 flats + 5 sharps = SEVEN

E♭ major has how many flats?_____ What are they? _____
E major has how many sharps? _____ What are they? _____
_____ flats + _____ sharps = 7

A♭ major has how many flats?_____ What are they? _____
A major has how many sharps? _____ What are they? _____
_____ flats + _____ sharps = 7

D♭ major has how many flats? _____ What are they? _____
D major has how many sharps?_____ What are they? _____
_____ flats + _____ sharps = 7

G♭ major has how many flats? _____ What are they? _____
G major has how many sharps?_____ What are they? _____
_____ flats + _____ sharps = 7

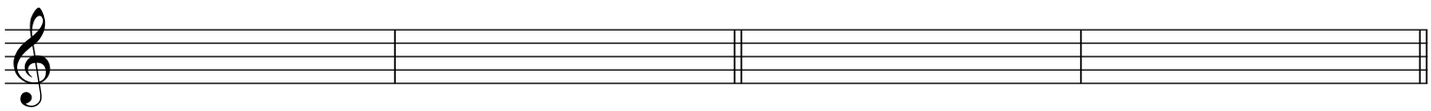
C♭ major has how many flats? _____ What are they? _____
C♯ major has how many sharps? _____ What are they? _____
What is the key signature for C major? _____

COMPOSITION

Create four two-measure melodies in the following moods: excited, sad, angry, and content.

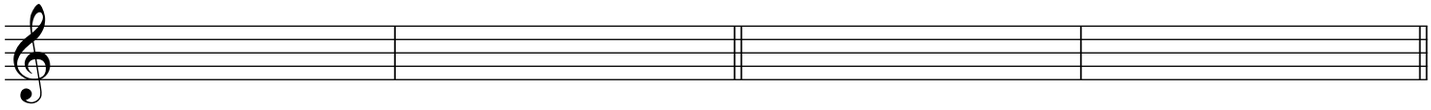
Be sure to include a tempo and/or style indication. Play them for your friends and family to see if they can guess which mood goes with each of your melodies.

1. Excited



2. Sad

3. Angry



4. Content

Innovative Theory & Composition

THE CIRCLE OF FIFTHS

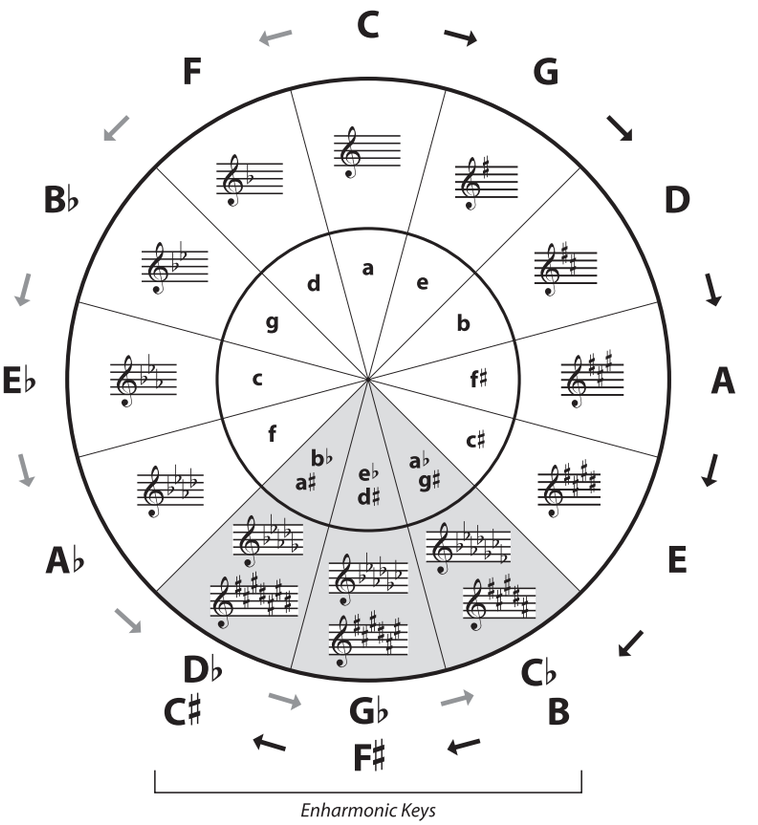
All of the information you have learned about key signatures and major keys are easily found on a diagram referred to as the CIRCLE OF FIFTHS.

Find the following information on the circle:

1. The order of flats
2. The order of sharps
3. The names of the flats in any given flat key
4. The names of the sharps in any given sharp key

The names of the minor keys are in the center of the circle. These are called relative minor keys because they "relate" to the major keys in that they share the same key signature.

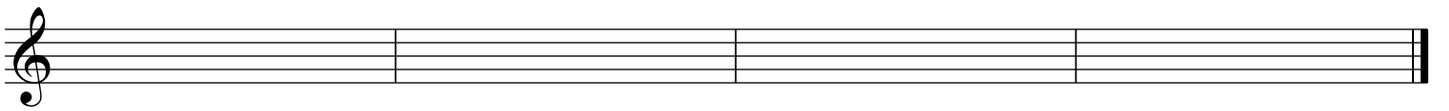
Find A minor. It is the relative minor to C major
What is the relative MINOR to F major?
What is the relative MAJOR to G minor?



COMPOSITION

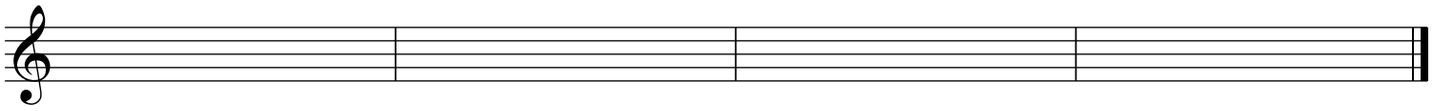
Some composers create music using a mathematical device called a series or tone row to create a serial composition. Select a note from the 12-note chromatic scale you have learned; continue to select different notes until all 12 notes are used. The notes can be in any order and can be in whatever rhythm you like. On the staff below write a tone row then play it. Be sure to include a tempo or style markings and articulations.

Tone Row



Serial composers write variations of their tone row by writing it in reverse order. This is called retrograde. Write the retrograde version of your tone row on the staff below using any rhythms you like, then play it.

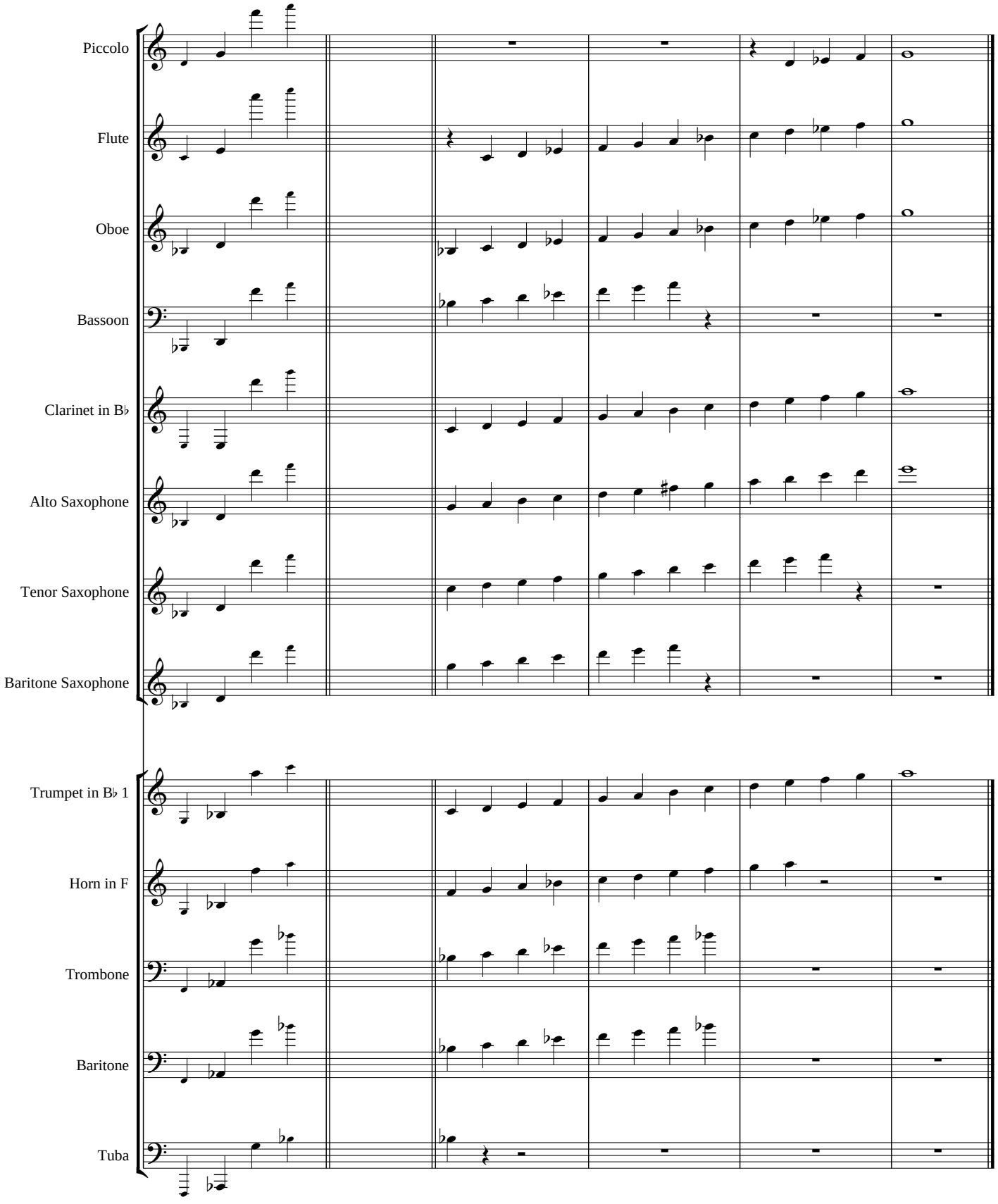
Retrograde



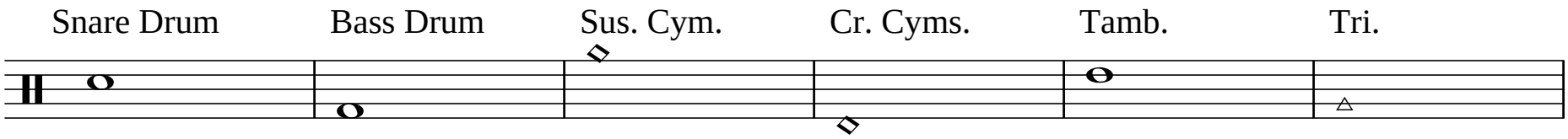
Now you can perform your piece as a duet with a friend with one performer playing the original tone row while the other player performs the retrograde version at the same time.

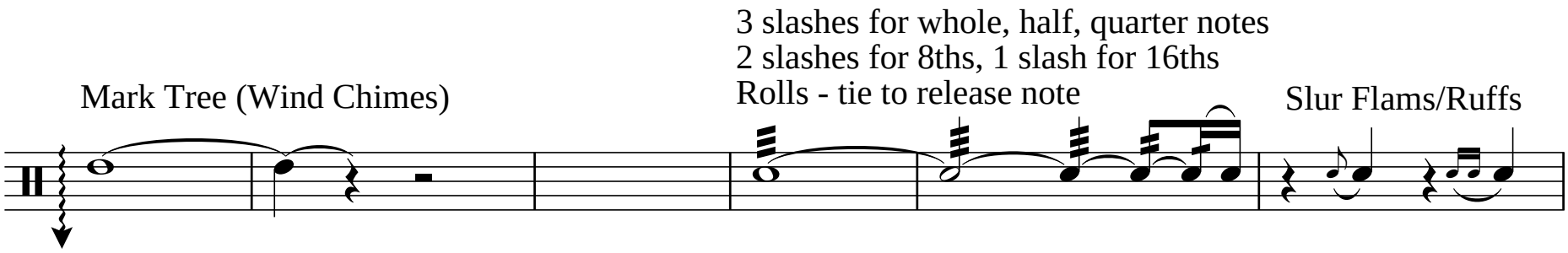
Student Composer Band Instrument Transposition Chart

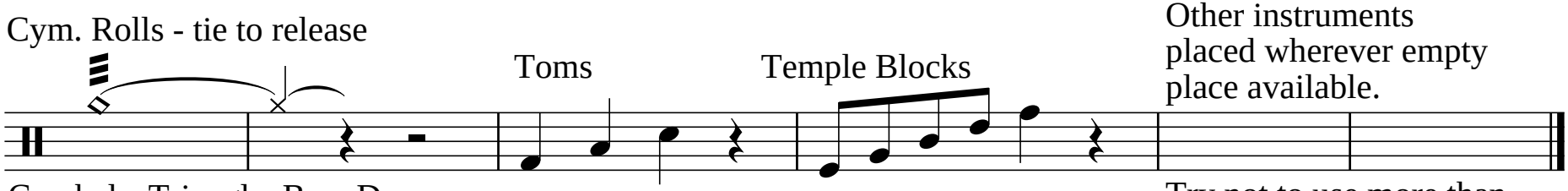
Small notes are possible - some players can exceed this range
Large notes are safe for most players
Staying in the middle of the range provides the best sound and best results
Consider the experience level of the ensemble when scoring



Percussion Map and Notation Guide







Cymbals, Triangle, Bass Drum,
Timpani, Bells, Chimes &Vibraphone
damp on rests; use let ring tie to sustain

Try not to use more than
one instrument per line or
space.