Drapkin's Book of Clarinet Calisthenics

by

MICHAEL DRAPKIN

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www.bassclarinet.net - info@bassclarinet.net

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Foreword

"If you practice technical exercises every day – and it doesn't matter which ones – over time you will build a marvelous technique."

Stanley Hasty made this as an offhand remark during one of my lessons at the Eastman School of Music. When I moved to New York City after graduation, I no longer had that cradle of playing which surrounded me in school – ensembles, lesson preparation, and chamber music; all goals that I had worked toward through practice and kept me in playing condition. I got rusty that year, and it scared me. Was I slipping? But then I remembered Mr. Hasty's words, and began to craft a clarinet workout regimen. I built a regular workout, and *it worked!* I became strong - really strong - and when I set out to play auditions I rarely missed. I was accurate because I had built strong technique – all because of that offhand remark of Mr. Hasty had made to me.

In this book, I am sharing my workouts with you. There are three of them: 15, 30 and 60 minute versions of exercises selected from Baermann and Langenus Methods. They are great for helping you get in shape depending on what you have coming up or how you want your technique to evolve. It has nothing to do with talent or musicianship, and everything to do with persistence and tenacity. The 15 minute "Short Workout" is for maintenance, the 30 minute "Medium Workout" will put you in good shape and the 60 minute "Long Workout" will make your technique of concert quality.

Obviously anyone can take whatever exercises he or she wants from a variety of books, but my selections are regimented and laid out in a specific course for you to follow. When I prepared for orchestra auditions, most of my time was spent practicing the Long Workout, which smoothed out my technique and made it very strong, helped my articulation, quieted my fingers and strengthened my embouchure. Then I was ready to prepare the actual music.

I suggest you begin with the Medium Workout. It will take a while to learn and get up to tempo. Then, graduate to the Long Workout for long term technical development. You will feel stronger *every day!*

Are you coming off of a break and feel out of shape? Begin again with the Medium Workout. You may feel horrible, but work through it and come back to it the next day. It *will* come back. After 5-7 days move to the Long Workout and you will feel great. The Medium carries over to the Long. Don't feel guilty about getting out of shape. Anecdotally, almost all musicians stop playing when they don't have a goal. We are goal oriented. My workouts will get you back towards achieving your goal.

Finally, you *must* practice these using a metronome! Not only does it set the right tempo, but it will tell you *exactly* where the unevenness is in your playing. The metronome doesn't lie.

I'd like to thank my wife Suzy, who always tells me that I sound great, my kids Shayna, Sara and Leia, who grew up listening to these, my mentors Bob Freeman and Stanley Hasty, my testers, and of course, my colleague and lifelong friend, John Bruce Yeh.

Regards,

Michael Drapkin
mdrapkin@bassclarinet.net – www.bassclarinet.net

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Short Workout

15-20 Minutes Playing Time

9 Pages

Key to Symbology:

^ - Watch the interval between the note before and after this symbol. It may be awkward or difficult and require special attention.

[brackets] - A group of notes that require particular attention or practice.

(♯) - Accidental reminder.

NK - No key. Don't use the fork or side key here.

K - Key. Use the fork or side key here.

L - Left. Use the left fingering.

R - Right. Use the right fingering.

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No. 2 Scales in Major and Minor

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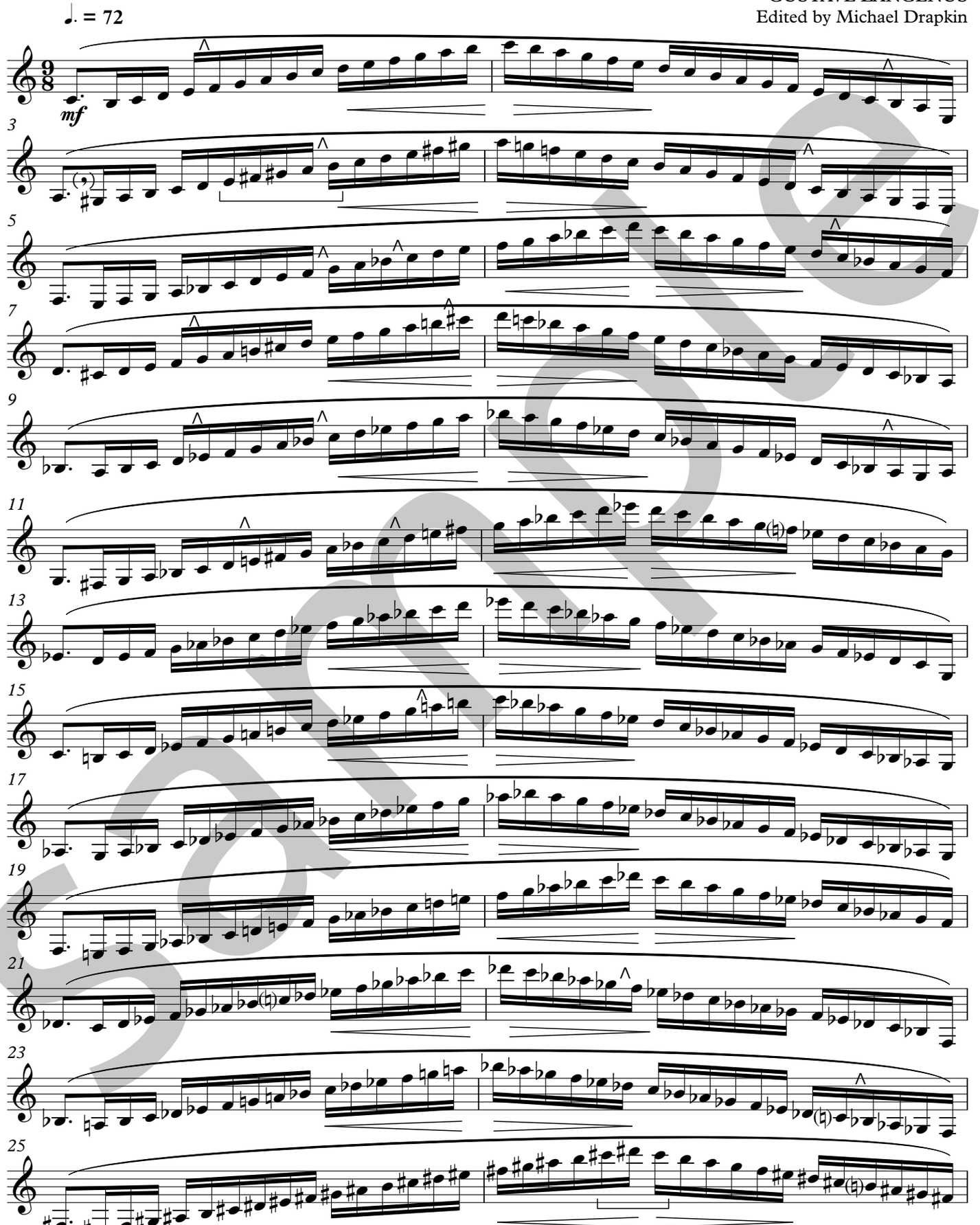
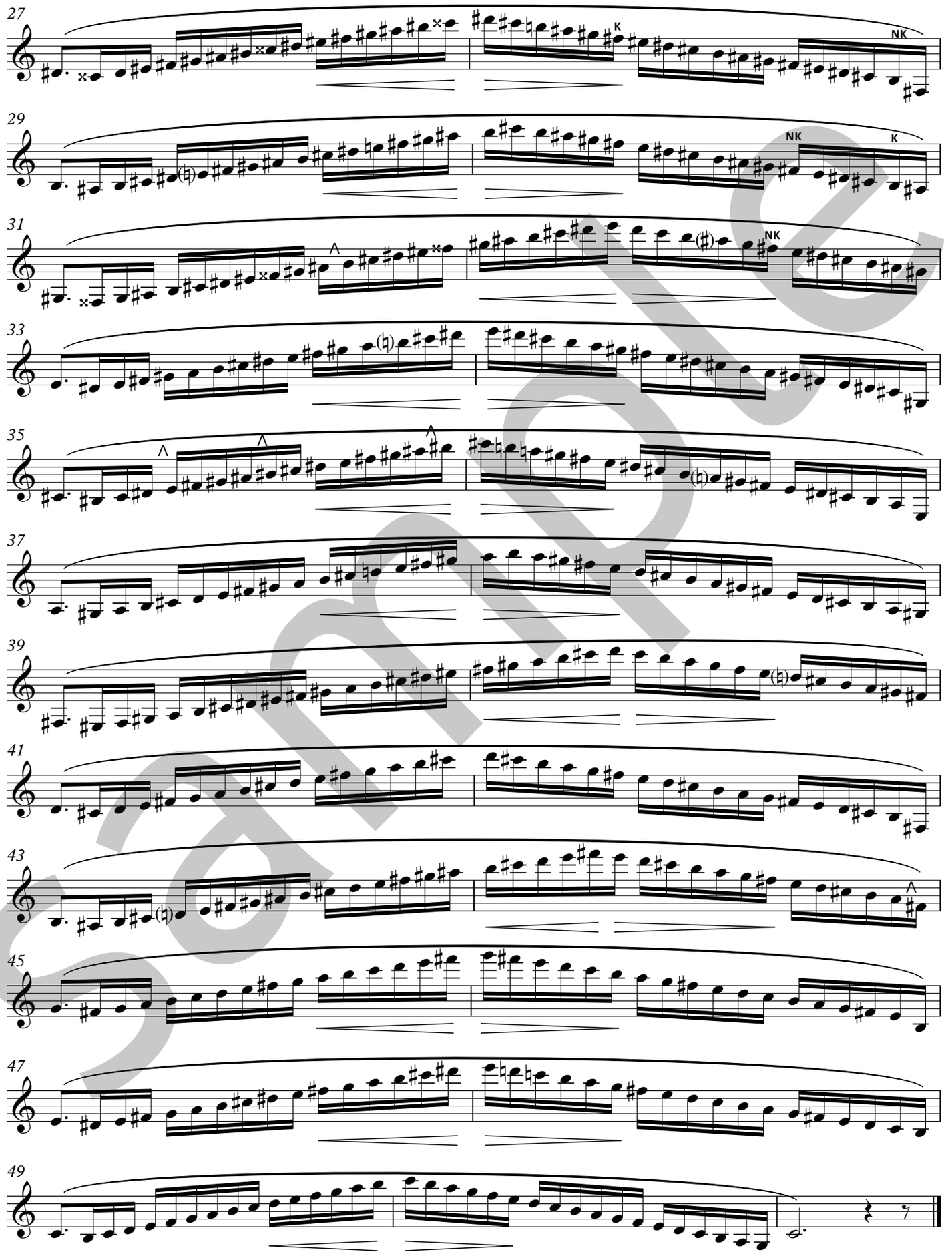


Developing smoothness here is ultra critical. Work out all of the unevenness between intervals and it will carry over into all of your playing. Every key should be as liquid smooth and easy as C Major. Breathe at the beginning of the staff when needed.

Sample



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No. 12 Light Staccato Triple Study

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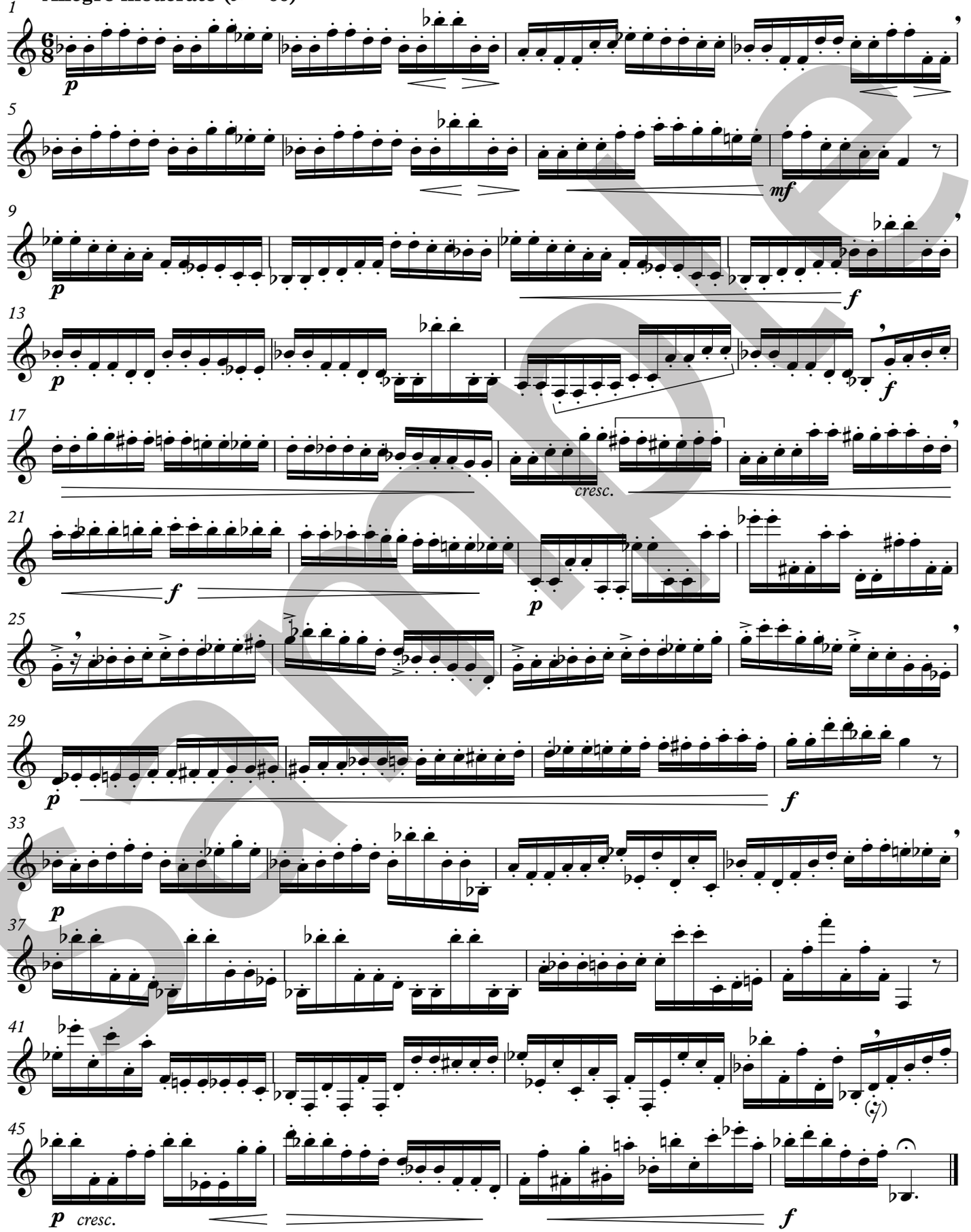
Allegro moderato (♩. = 66)



Watch the last section starting at bar 41 - it is difficult. You will memorize this if you play it enough times.

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No. 5 Arpeggio Studies

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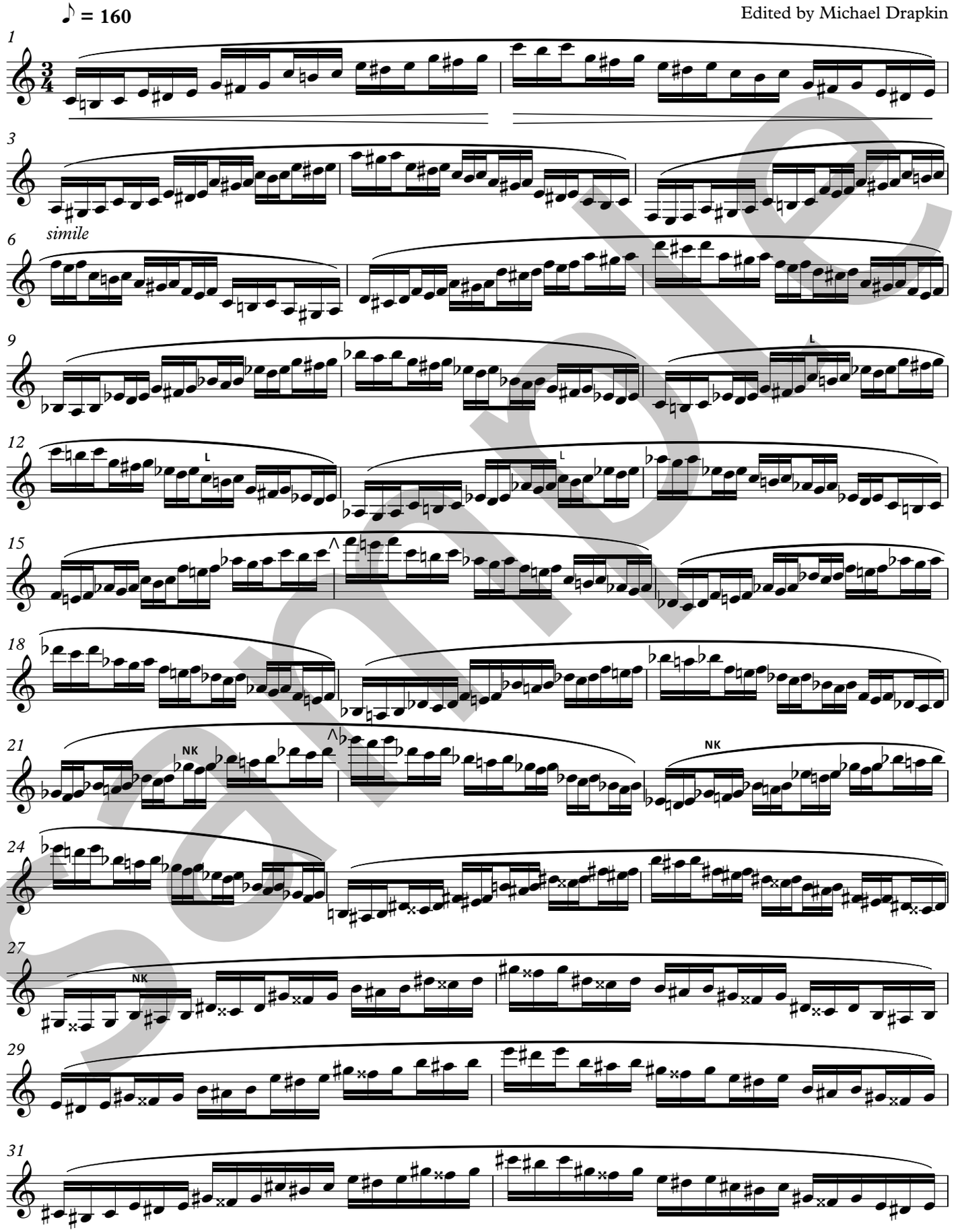
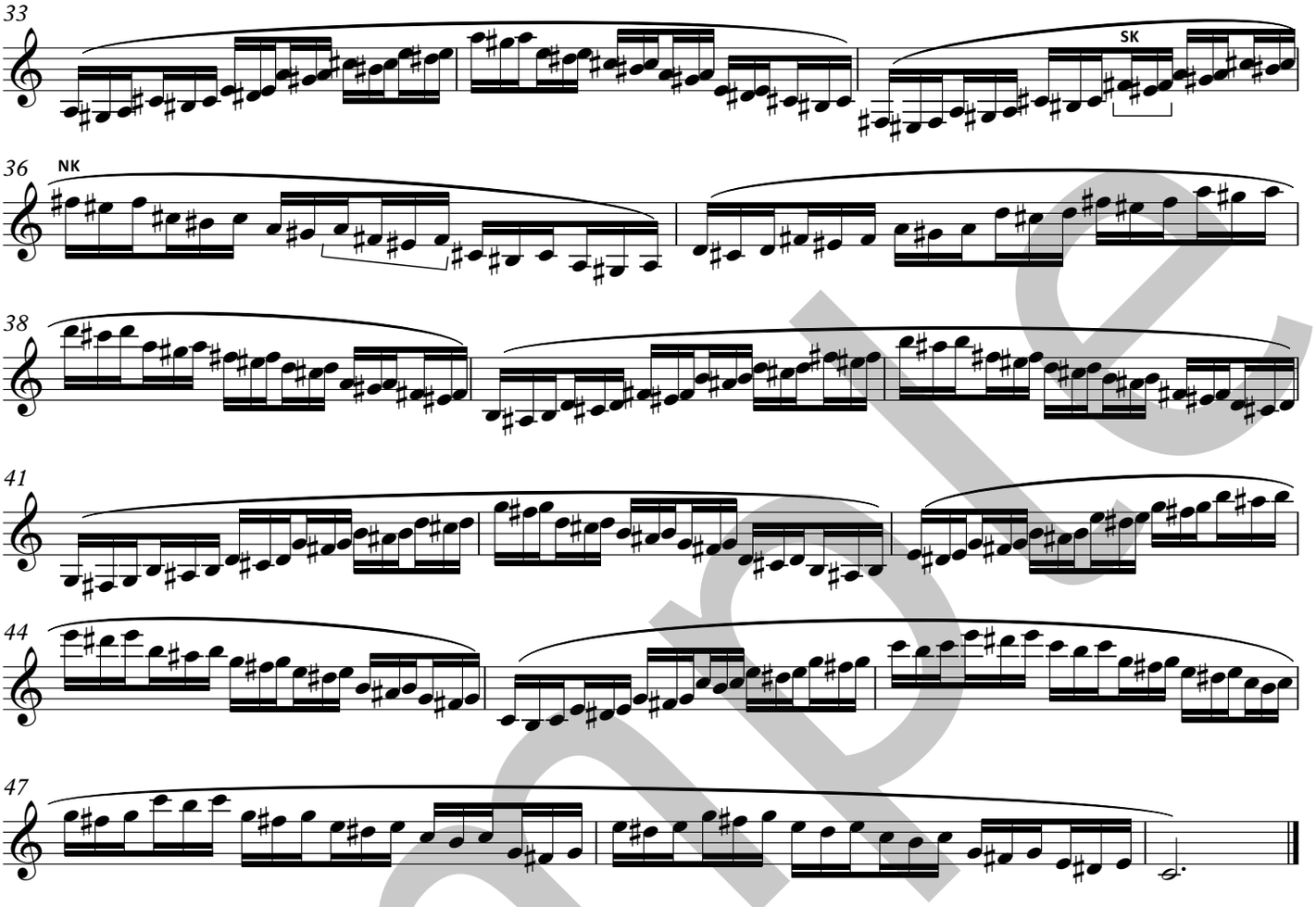
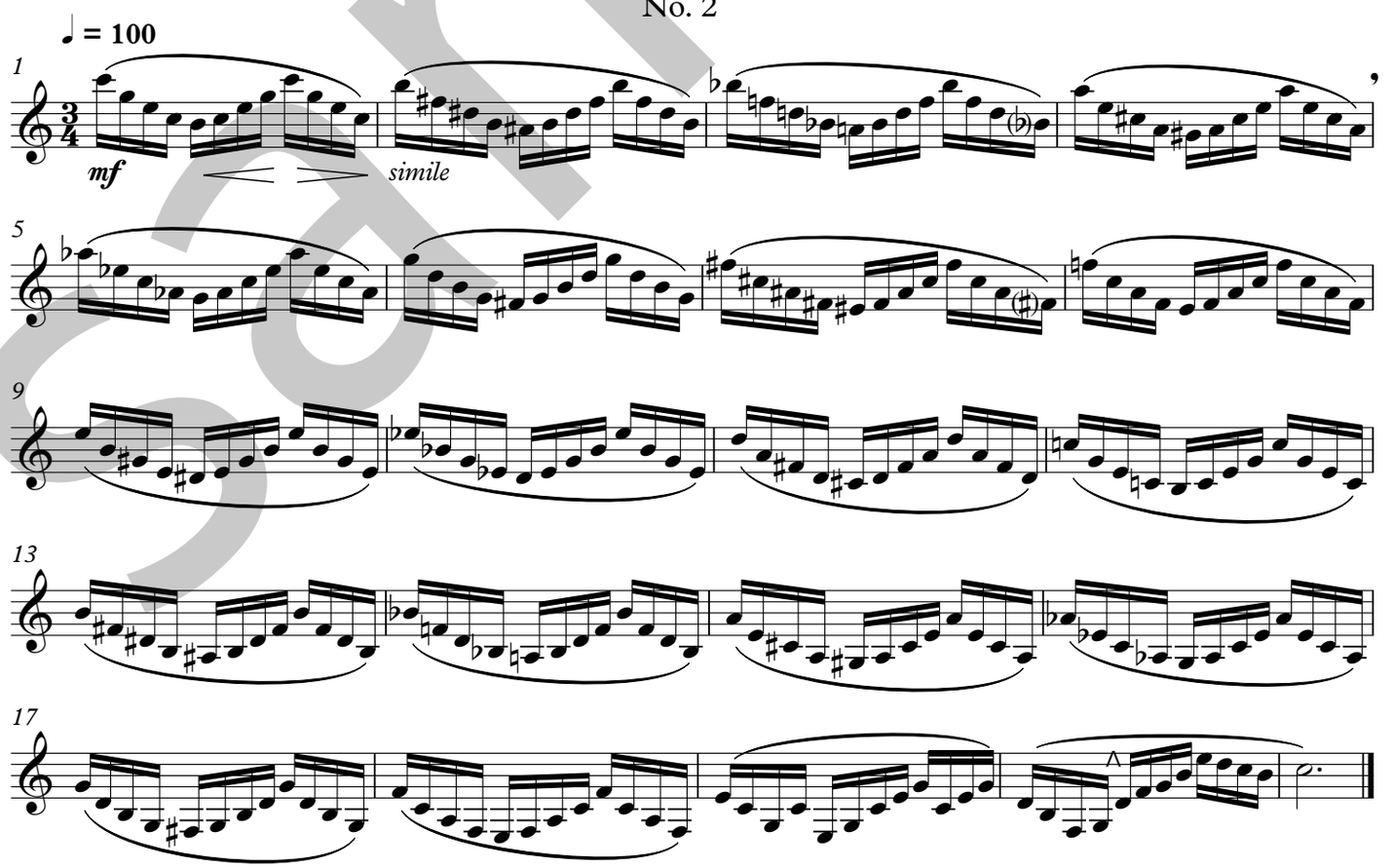


Two exercises for arpeggio fluidity with chromatic neighbors built in. Generally an easier study once it is learned, but watch out for some of the minefields - particularly the use of side F# and non-use of F#-F♮ in both octaves. They will get fluid and easier over time.

Sample



No. 2



This is a fun and quick variant on an arpeggio study. Once you get it down, do a gradual accellerando to max speed at the end.

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No. 9 Scales in Thirds

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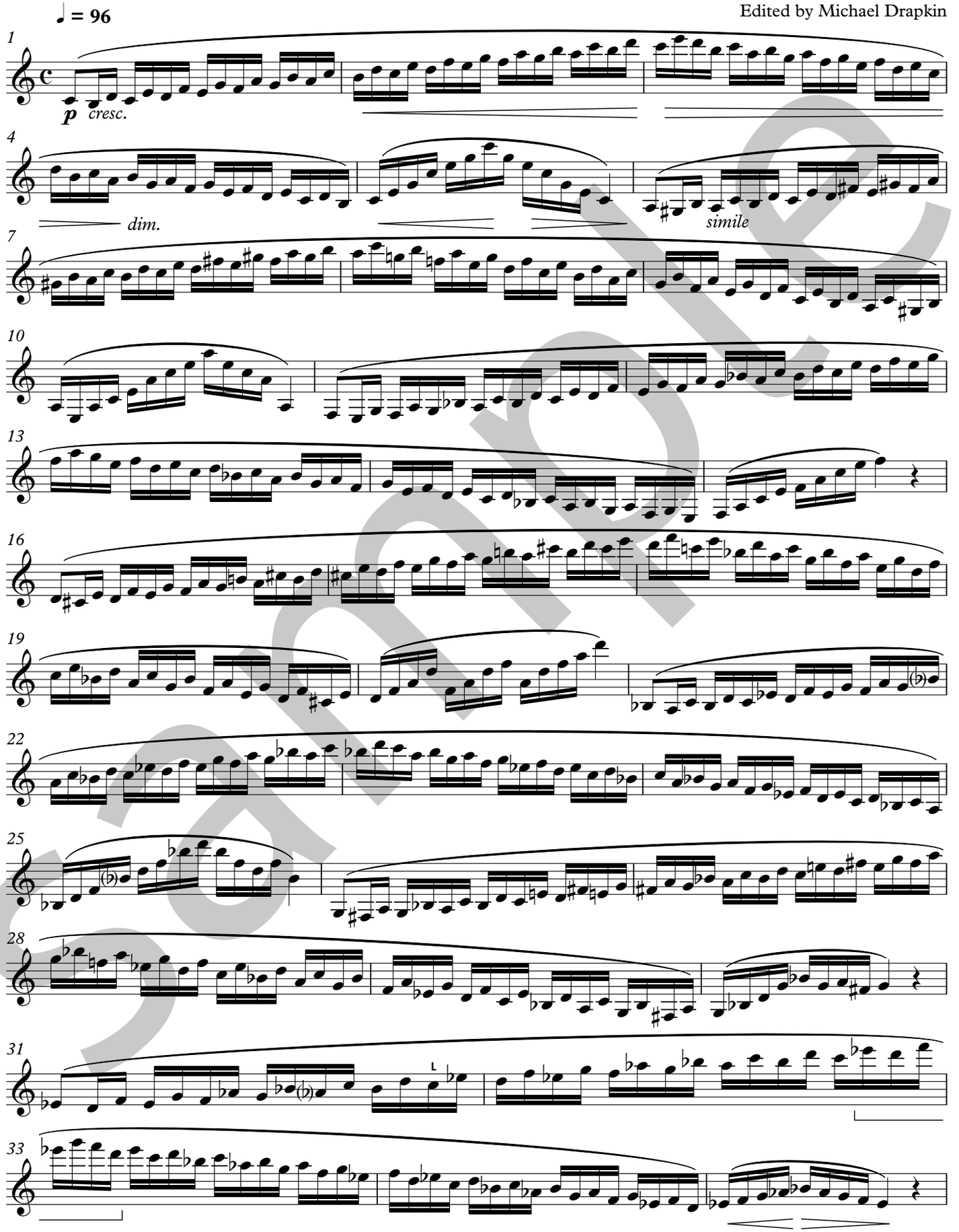

This is the workhorse of exercises, and many are deceptively difficult. Smoothness is the goal here.

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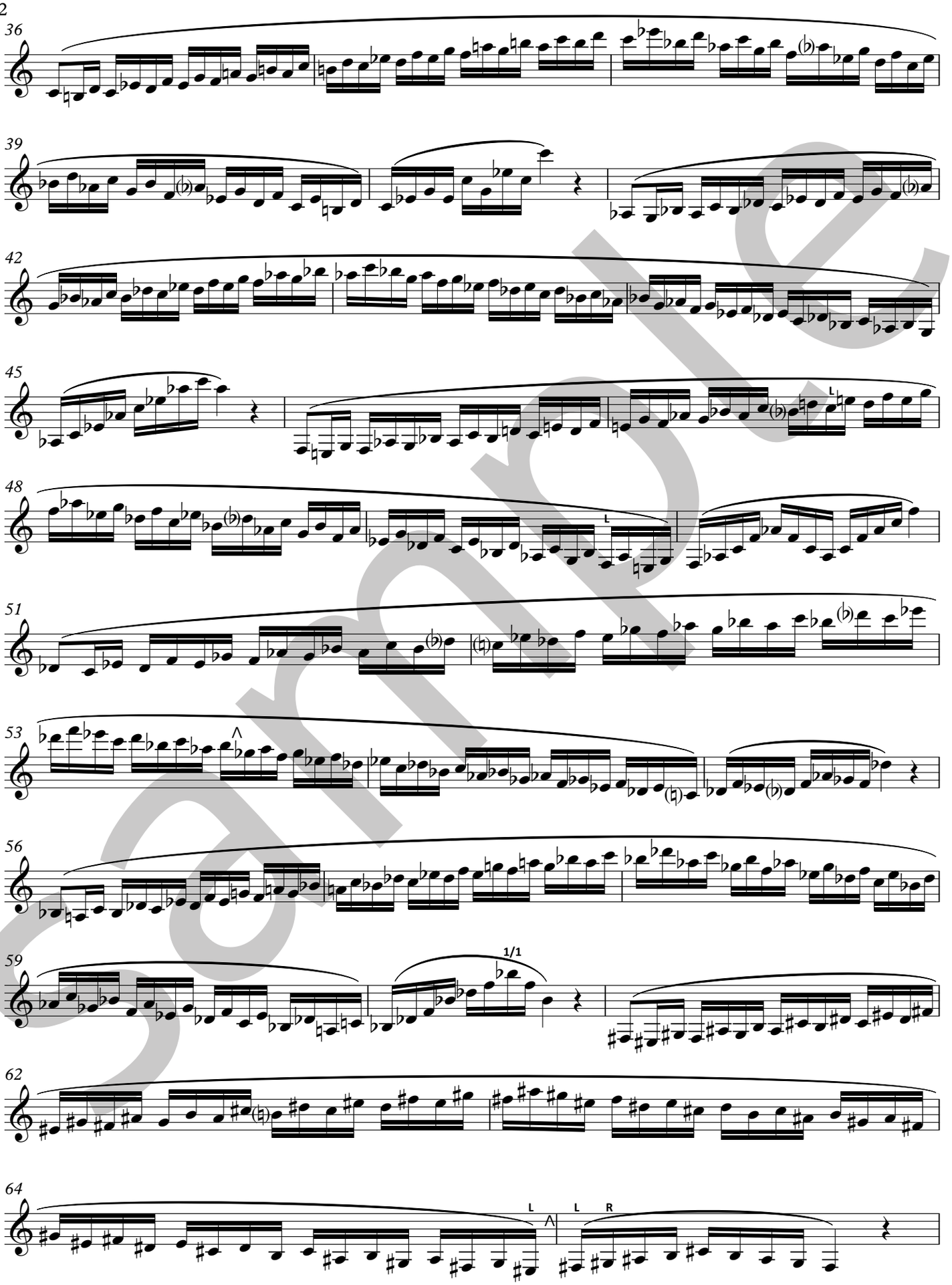

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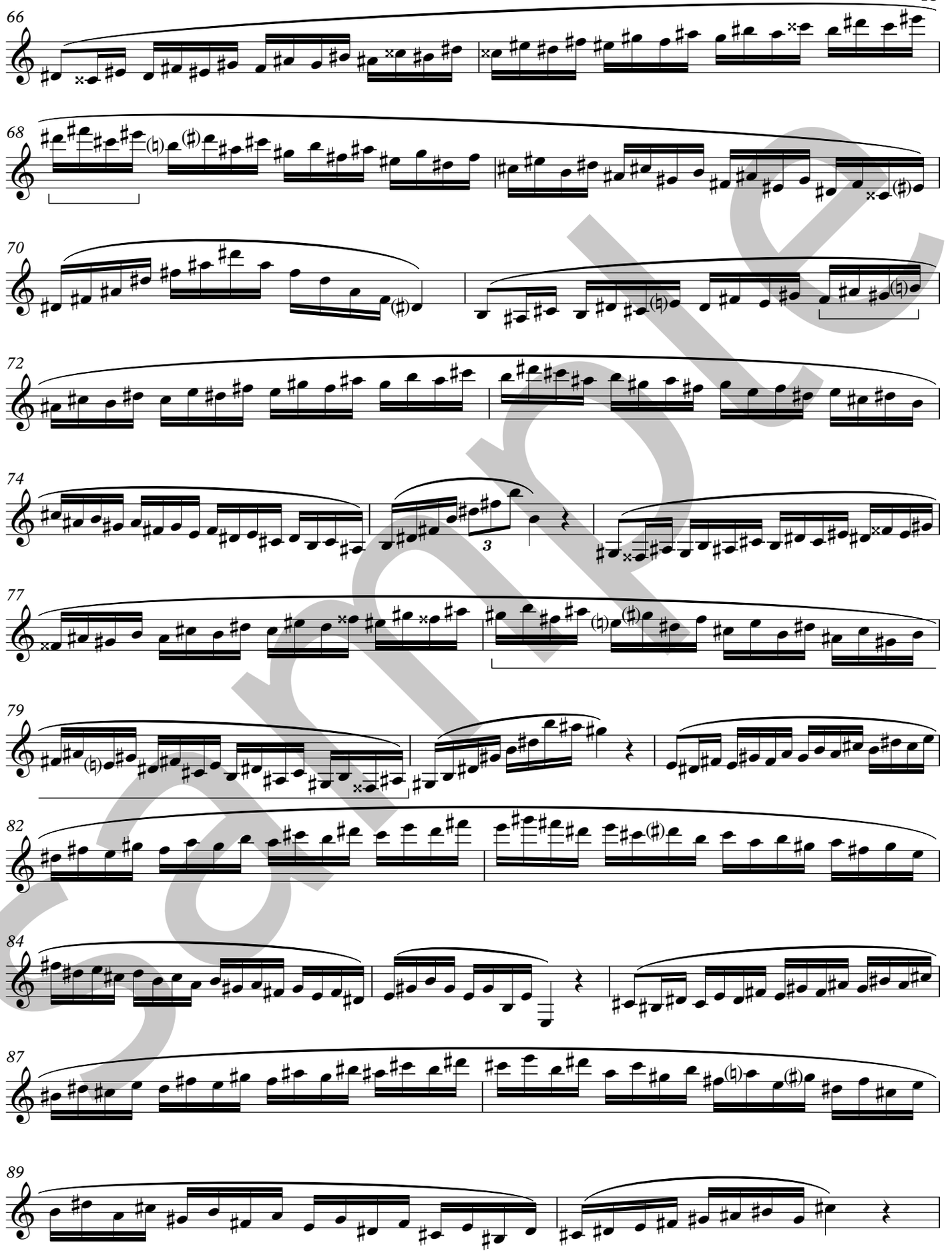

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