Overbrook Regional Senior High School
1200 Turnersville Road • Pine Hill, • New Jersey • 08021
Telephone (609) 767-8000

William F. Garton
Band Director

PLAYING THE SAXOPHONE

I. Embouchure; Ex. K

A. Never remove top teeth or top lip from mouthpiece.
B. Always drop lower jaw when breathing.
C. Roll very small amount of lower lip over teeth.

BAD HABITS:
A. Do not puff cheeks!
B. Do not swallow lower lip!

II. Breathing; Ex. L

A. When inhaling air, your stomach should fill with air. The stomach should move out -- not up.
B. When you exhale, your stomach should stay firm -- This is called support.

BAD HABITS:
A. Do not raise chest or shoulders.
B. Do not close throat.'
C. Do not breathe through nose.

III. Head and Body Position; Ex. L

A. Sit up straight, feet on floor, sit on edge of chair, head erect - facing straight ahead. This will help air flow smoothly through body.

IV. Instrument Position;

A. Support the instrument with right thumb, keeping instrumen out and away from body, mouthpiece should enter mouth at this angle:

Teeth

lower lip

V. Tone Production and Development; Ex; A B I L

A. Produce a big, pleasing sound using a straight, clean clear tone. Try to match one note to another, make a smooth connection between notes. A controlled, steady flow of air is necessary for good tone production. Use warm air.

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VI. Vibrato; Ex. B

A. Should be used "ONLY" after good tone is developed. Jaw vibrato is most often used. Lower jaw will move slightly up and down. Classical saxophonists normally use 6 pulsations per beat (52-60 = on metronome). However, saxophone vibrato could be a combination of lip and jaw, diaphragm and throat. Pulsation of air, the intensity change, and slight change of pitch are achieved by using a vah-vah-vah-vah, syllable which causes the jaw to move slightly. Movement is so small that it can not be seen. This movement creates a change in the intensity of the air as well as a very slight change in the pitch. A change of pitch is below basic pitch, not above.

VII. Technique; Ex. C D E F G H J

A. Hand and Finger Position

1. Place fingers on tips of pearls positioned slightly toward center.
2. Hands should be curved around instrument forming the letter "C".
3. Relax!
4. Keep fingers resting on pearls.

BAD HABITS:
1. Do not slap keys.

B. Tonguing; Ex. C D - Tongue Exercise

1. Part of tongue used is the upper part close to tip.
2. Tongue should touch underside of reed near the tip.
3. When tonguing, think of releasing tongue away from reed, instead of attacking reed.
4. Certain syllables can be used: (tah-normal; teh-short dah-legato; la-fast; tut-staccato).

VIII. Relaxation; Ex. L

This is necessary in producing good tone, control of breathing and good technique.

IX. Practicing; Ex. K L

Use mirror when practicing, and practice slowly!
You can see and hear your mistakes.

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X. Reeds

Vandoren,Java, Vandoren, Lavoz, Rico Royal, Rico, Rico Plasticover, Bari.

Use reedguard to protect reeds - types Lavoz, Vandoren.

XI. Mouthpieces

Jazz - Dave Guardala (Alto Studio Gold Plated), Brecker II (Ten Beechler Metal, Claude Lakey, Berg Larsen, Meyer, Otto Link.

Classical - Selmer, Rousseau.

XII. Ligatures

Winslow, Harrison, Bonade, Mitchell Lurie, Rovner (L6), Gigliotti.

CARE OF INSTRUMENT, MOUTHPIECE AND REEDS

The mouthpiece+reeds should be clean at all times. This will hel produce a good, clear tone. The mouthpiece can be cleaned with a soft toothbrush, lukewarm water and mild soap. The reed should be rubbed with the tip of the index finger after wetting it.

The instrument should be in good working order. All padsshould cover tone holes completely. If certain notes do not respond, the instrument should be looked at by a professional repair person and adjusted. The saxophone should be cleaned with a sax swab to get rid of excess water to preserve pads.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Two fundamentals in saxophone playing:
   a. A round embouchure
   b. Warm air

2. Pitch - "A" = 440-442
   at 72°
   Tuning - Adjustment of saxophone to pitch
   Intonation - Adjustment made in playing after tuning.

3. Play mouthpiece on alto to concert "A"
   tenor to concert "G"
   baritone to concert "D"

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4. Reed, mouthpiece and ligature:
   a. Ligature always put on first.
   b. Then reed should be placed so that it is even with the end of the mouthpiece at eye level.

5. Saxophone tone is enriched by using vibrato
   a. Good tone is achieved by good embouchure and by proper use of the air.

6. Articulation and Tonguing:

   Causes of Distortion:
   a. Too much tension in the tongue.
   b. Too much build-up of air pressure.tonguing

   Tonguing is a combination of a consonant and vowel:
   Tongue is consonant - Air is vowel - TAAAAH!

7. Practicing:
   a. When? - Practice regularly
   b. How? - Practice intelligently
   c. What? - Use good practice technique

      1. Tone quality
      2. Technical facility
      3. Musicianship

8. Use metronome for development of even technique. Fingers must always move at the same speed, regardless of note values.

9. Always make a <u>mental check list</u> of:
   a. The tonal concept
   b. Embouchure position
   c. Relaxed throat
   d. Breathing procedure
   e. Musical vibrato
   f. Intonation

10. The building of a fine technique is a lifetime job, so patience is required. Try to eliminate later remedial work by practicin as correctly as you can.

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SAXOPHONE EMBOUCHURE

1. Top teeth bite down on top of mouthpiece about ½".
2. Never remove top teeth or top lip from mouthpiece.
3. Drop lower jaw when taking a breath.
4. Curl lower lip a little over bottom teeth. Do not swallow lower lip.
5. Keep weight of head on top of mouthpiece.
6. Push corners of mouth in.
7. Push up with lower lip (support with it).
8. Pull lower teeth and lower jaw down.
9. Keep throat open at all times, as in yawning or having a ping pong in your mouth.
10. Do not puff cheeks.

So that was it. I played sax, and I got by. I worked at it, I practiced, but the sound just wasn't right, and it was out of tune. During all my years on clarinet I had become accustomed to certain standards of perfection, especially regarding tone and intonation. This made the saxophone even harder to take. And it went on like this for over ten years!

The Secret of the Saxophone — MIKE GUERRA

Then, in the course of a few weeks, it was all changed. A show came to the Forrest Theatre for six weeks. They carried several musicians with them, and one was a tenor saxophonist.

I heard this sax, and I couldn't believe my ears. It sounded just like those Chicago saxes back in the early days of radio: the tone, the style -- even the vibrato was identical.

I went over and talked to him during our first break. His name was Eddie Copland, and it turned out that years before he had been one of the leaders in Chicago

So I invited him over to the house. We went upstairs to my little studio, and I told him the whole story.

"Mike," he said, "maybe I can help you."

He had me play for him, and then he said, "Here's what I want you to do: drop your jaw -- like this." And he took me over to the mirror and demonstrated what he wanted.

"Think of the top of the head and the upper teeth as a lid that you place on the mouthpiece -- all the pressure and support are there.

"Now drop the jaw, and let the lower lip come un in an 'O' so that it forms a pad against the reed. But leave the chin natural -- don't let that chin come up!"

He worked with me for about 20 minutes in front of the mirror. I dropped my jaw, and he showed me how to bring my lower lip up.

"Don't let the muscles bunch up. Relax -- just let the lower lip form a natural cushion against the reed. Keep that jaw down!

"Don't take in too much lower lip -- let part of it show -- just bring it up in a natural 'O'."

The show was in town for six weeks, and Copland would come over to the house and work with me 2 or 3 times a week.

"Now this is very important: breathe by dropping the jaw. When you take a breat drop the jaw and lower lip away from the reed -- but don't disturb the upper lip! The top lip should remain motionless. The entire lid of the head is stationary: t weight and pressure are on top, the relaxation is on the bottom.

"And don't cheat by breathing from the corners of the mouth -- breathe by dropping the jaw. Every time you take a breath, the circulation is restored and the lower lip is rested slightly. Your lip won't get tired, and the tone won't thin out. Also, your embouchure will be more natural, since you won't have time to put your lower lip in an unnatural position.

He made me use a much softer reed.

"Don't move your embouchure at all, from the low notes to the high notes. In the beginning the last few high notes are going to sound flat, but don't let that worry you."

So I experimented, and it started to come. The notes were in tune -- I didn't play sharp, I didn't play flat. I was so excited I couldn't think about anything else.

"Keep the lid of the head on the mouthpiece -- don't move the top lip when you

breathe."

"Cushion the reed with your lower lip."

"Don't raise up the jaw."

I was on the right track then: getting the right pressure against the reed, the low notes popping out, the high notes singing away -- and it was in tune!

In about two months it was sounding like a million dollars.

Doubling

Then I began to notice something else: clarinet and sax are different. The clarinet embouchure is tighter, with a smaller bite. If you take in too much mouthpiec the tone will sound hollow -- too open. The angle is also different; the clarinet is held in closer to the body (the mouthpiece enters in a more up-and-down fashion) This exposes more of the reed without taking such a large bite.

With the sax embouchure I learned from Copland (who was also a very fine clarinetist), the two instruments were separated -- and they actually helped each other.

Isn't it strange how the use of a few muscles can alter the course of a man's li

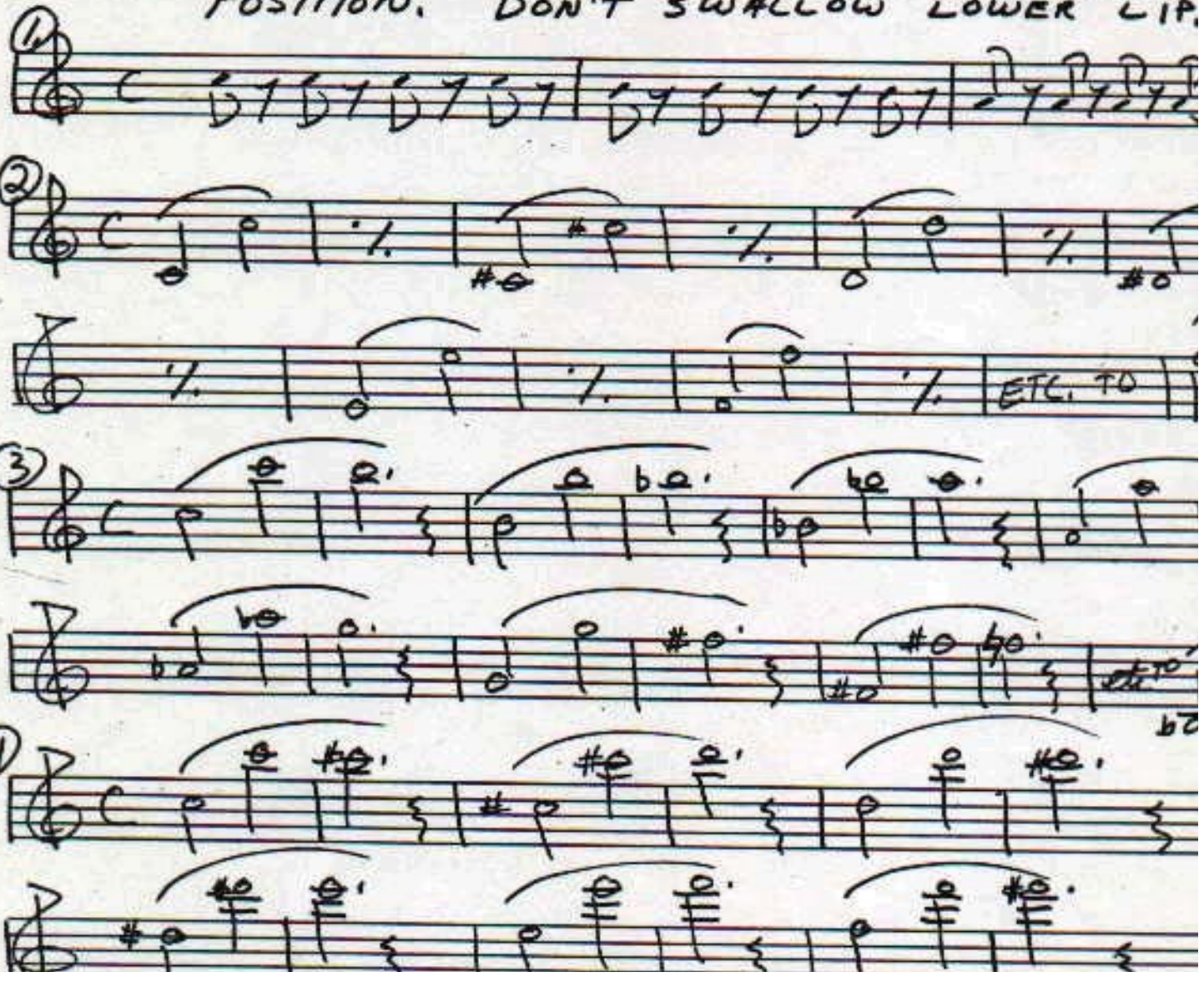
"EMBOUCHURE STUDY"

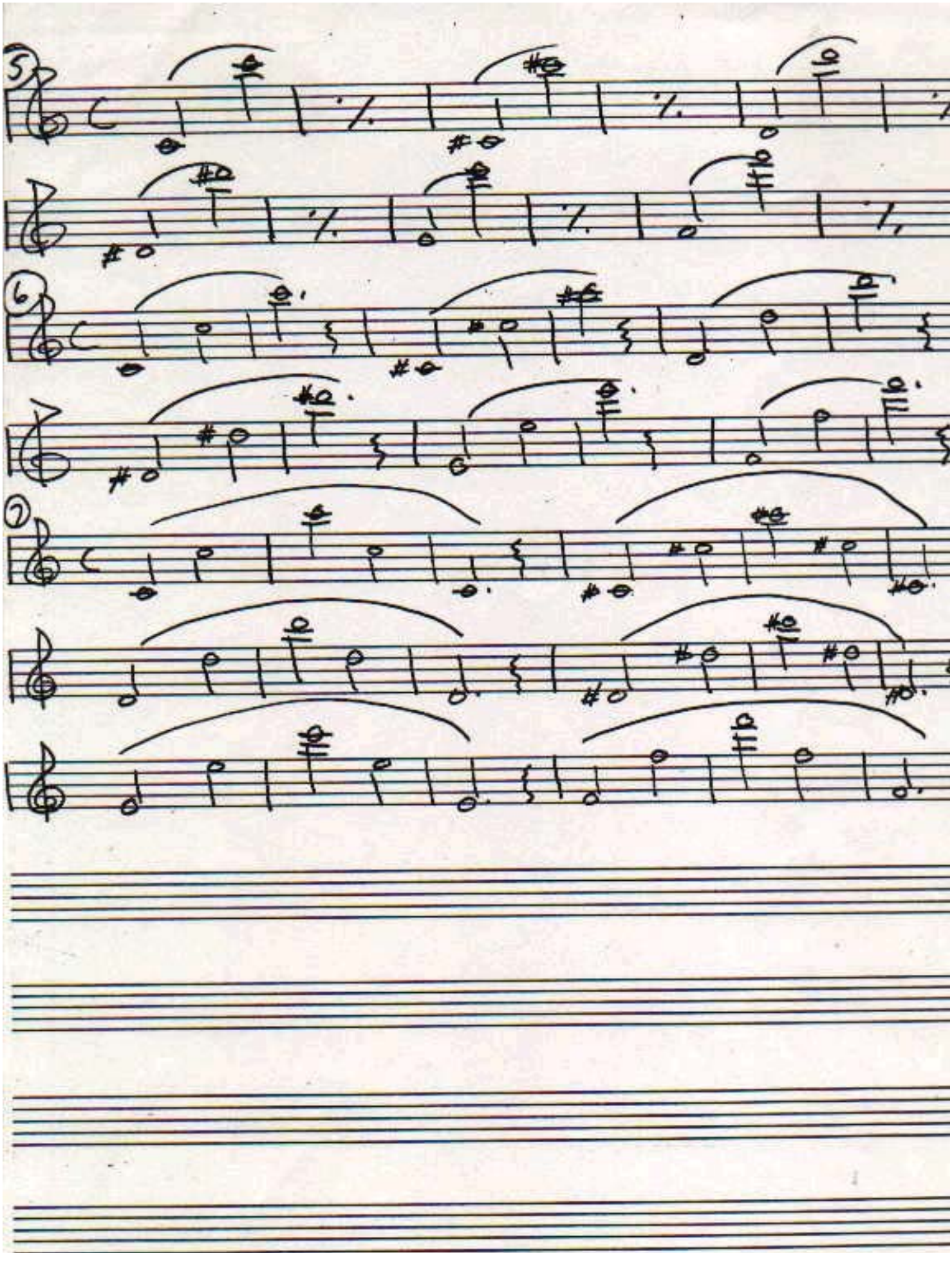
1. DROP LOWER JAW WHEN TAKING A BREATH.

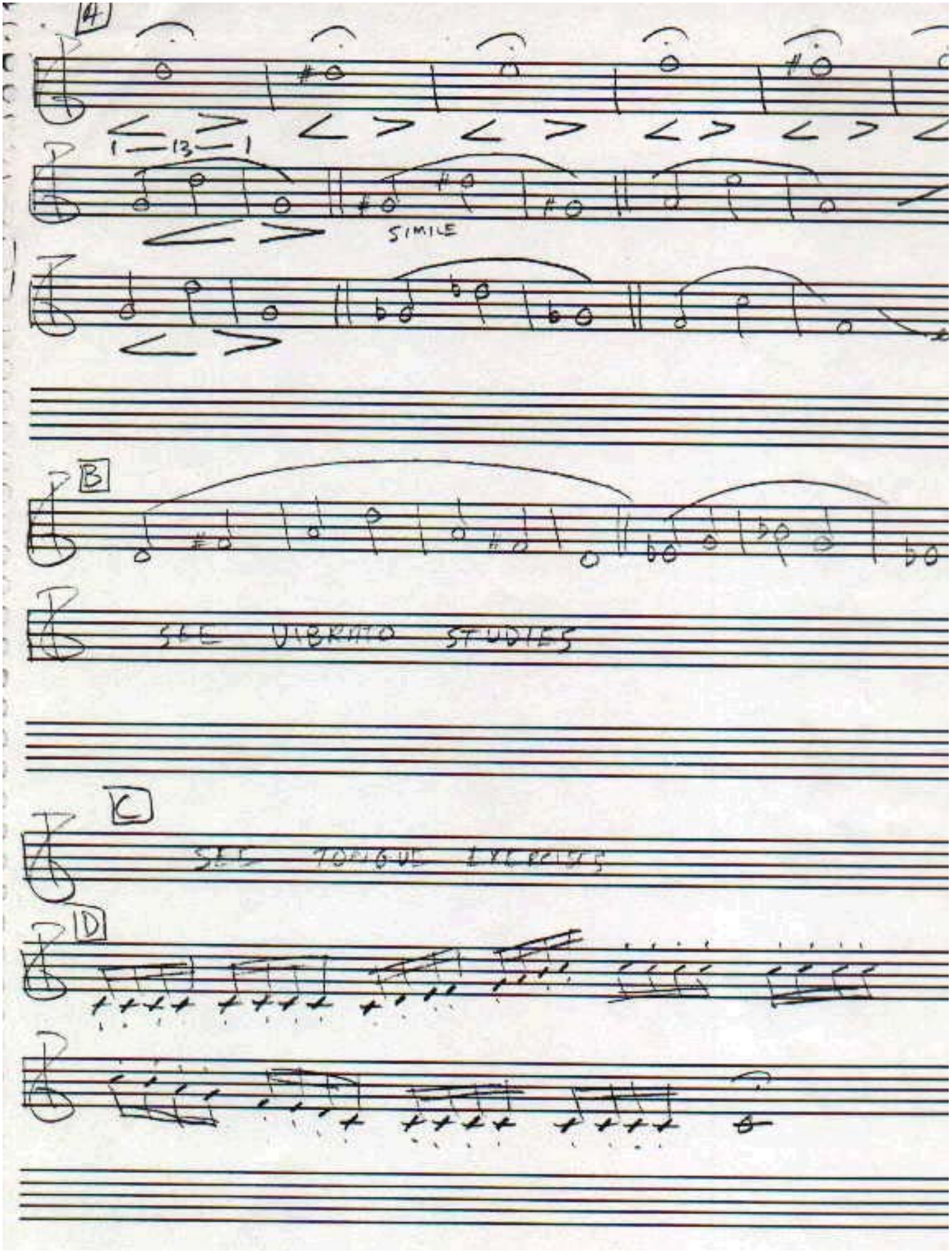
2. NEVER REMOVE TOP TEETH FR MOUTHPIECE

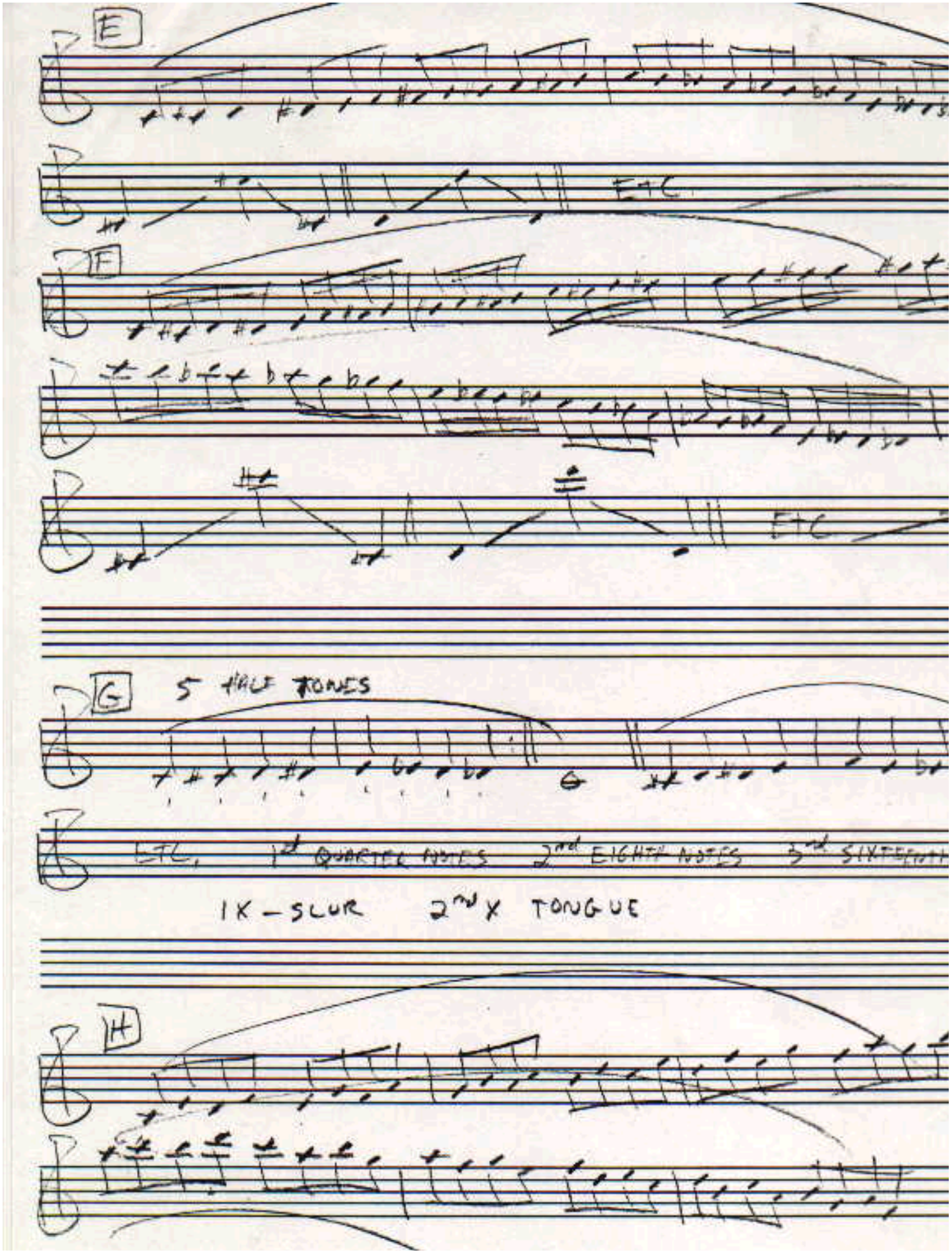
3. KEEP PRESSURE OF HEAD ON T OF MOUTHPIECE

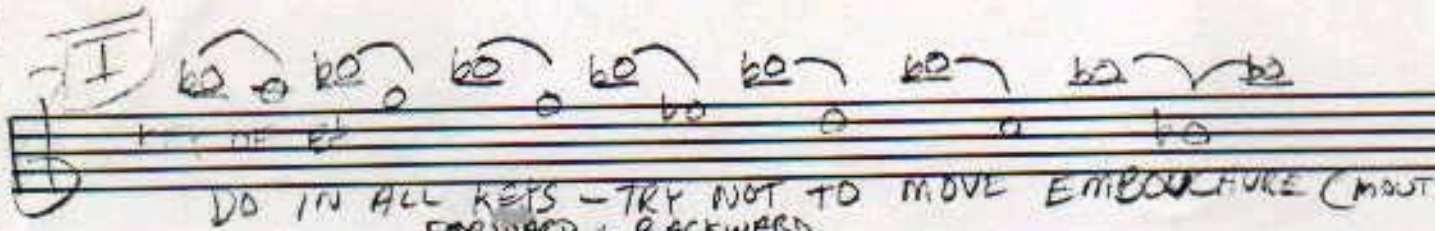
4. KEEP LOWER JAW IN RELAXED OR N POSITION. DON'T SWALLOW LOWER LIP.



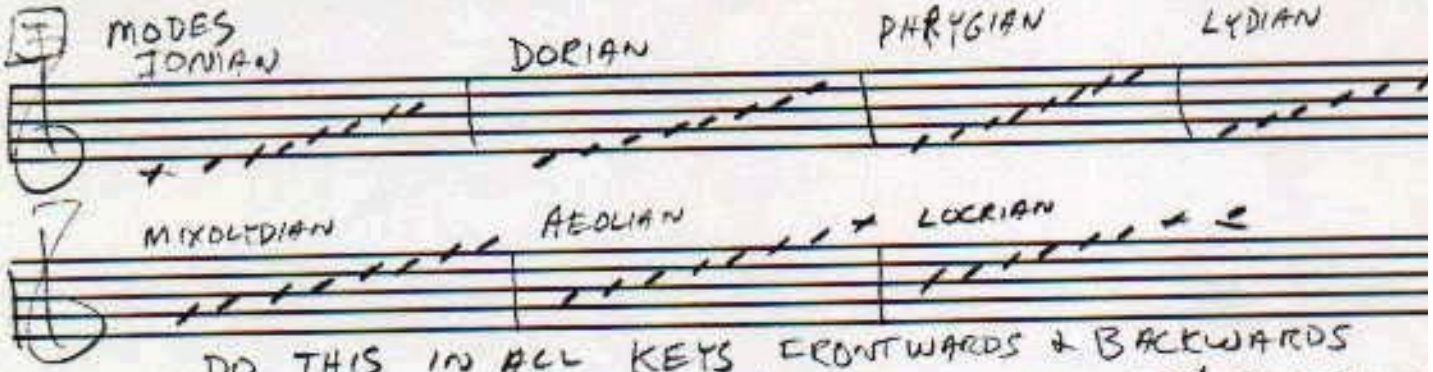



A
1—13—1
SIMILE
B
SEE VIBRATO STUDIES
C
SEE TONGUE EXERCISES
D


E
F
G
5 HALF TONES
1X - SLUR
2ND X TONGUE
H



DO IN ALL KEYS - TRY NOT TO MOVE EMBOUCHURE (MOUT
FORWARD + BACKWARD



DO THIS IN ALL KEYS FRONTWARDS & BACKWARDS
1st QUARTER NOTES, 2nd EIGHTH NOTES, 3rd SIXTEENTH
TONGUE & SLUR

DROP LOWER JAW EXERCISE - USE MIRROR 15
EACH DAY

BREATHE IN SLOWLY FILLING STOMACH OUT WITH
THEN LET SMALL STREAM OF AIR OUT WHILE
HOLDING STOMACH FIRM

TONE QUALITY

1. IMPROVE THE TONAL CONCEPT BY LISTENING TO FINE SAXOPHONISTS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTALISTS AND SINGERS.

2. START THE TONE FROM THE DIAPHRAGM — BLOW FROM THE "BOTTOM UP."

3. "RELAXATION" SHOULD BE THE RESULT OF REQUIRED SENSITIVE CONTROL. IT DOES NOT MEAN TOTAL COL

4. VIBRATO IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE SAXOPHONE TONE BUT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MANIPULATION, RATHER THAN A PART OF THE TONE. A GOOD "BASIC" TONE MUST BE THE CORE OF ANY MUSICAL SOUND.

5. KEEP THE TONE IN "FOCUS."

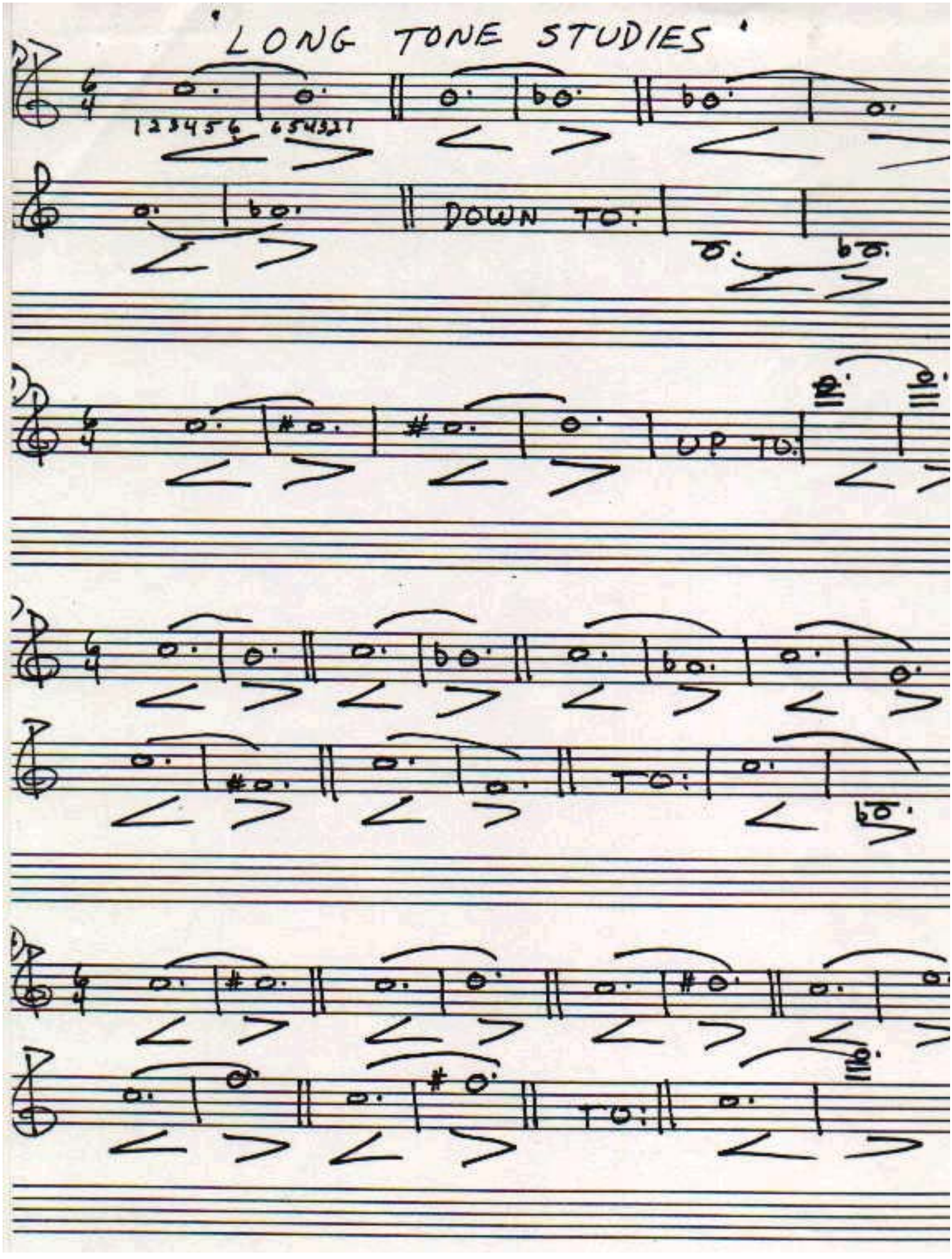
6. "BLENDING" WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS IS OF EXTREME IMPORTANCE.

7. "ALL" STUDIES ARE TONE STUDIES. NEVER DIVORCE TONE QUALITY FROM TECHNIQUE.

8. "FILL THE INSTRUMENT WITH TONE" NOT WITH WIND.

9. THINK OF THE TONE QUALITY "BEFORE" YOU PLAY; AVOID BLOWING AND THEN ADJUSTING LATER.

10. MAKE "YOURSELF" RESPONSIBLE. AFTER A GOOD MOUTHPIECE AND REED ARE OBTAINED, THE REST IS UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL.


LONG TONE STUDIES
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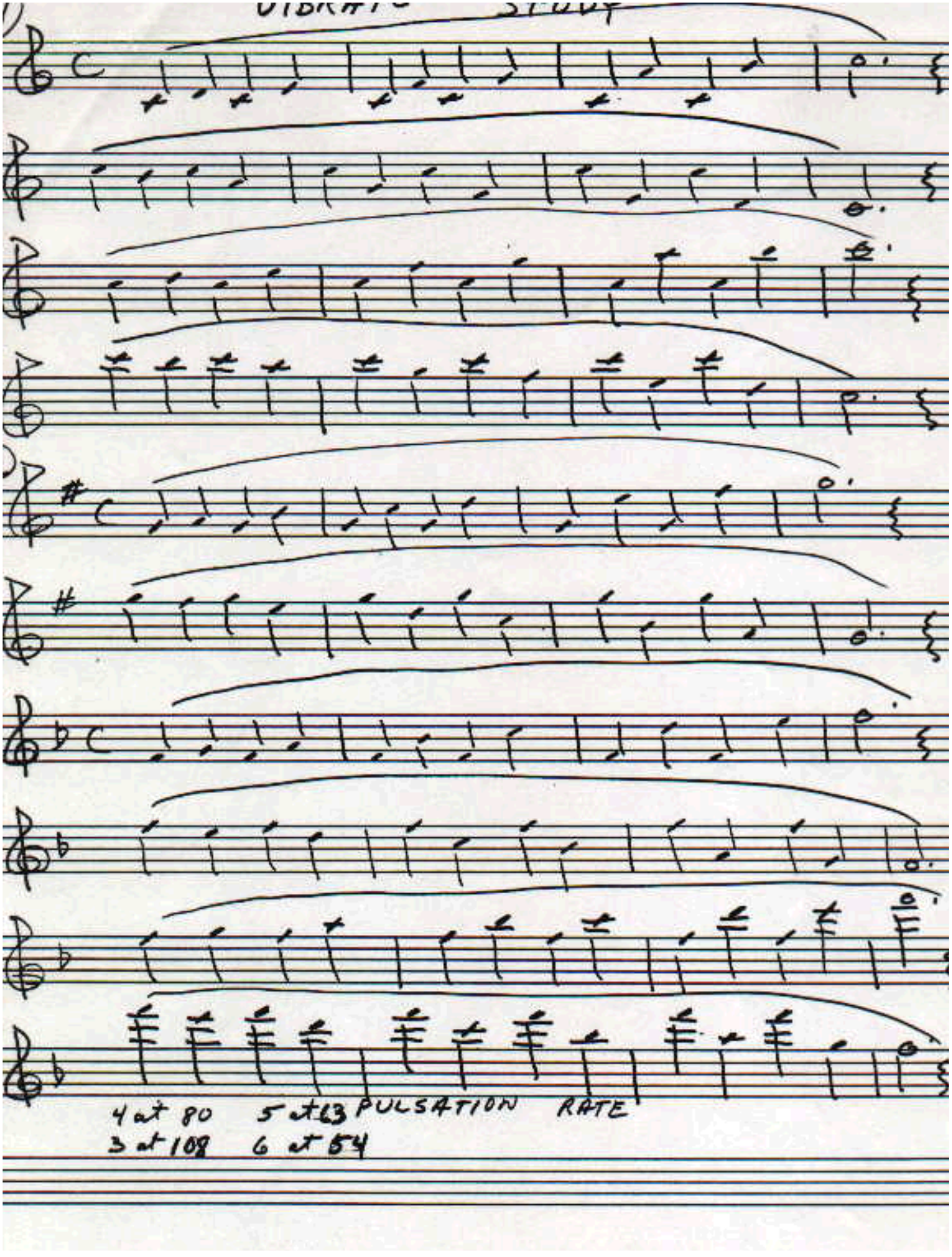
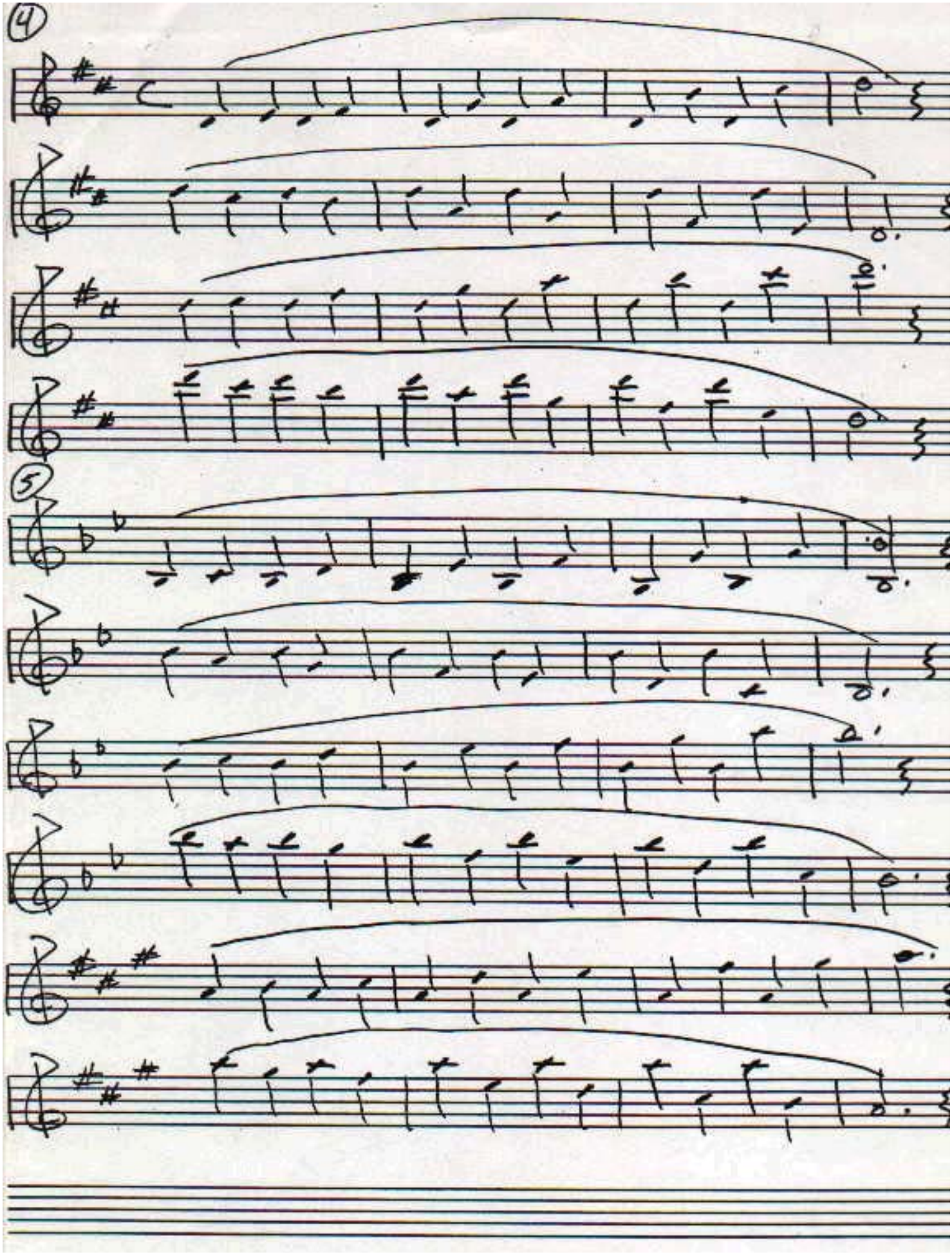
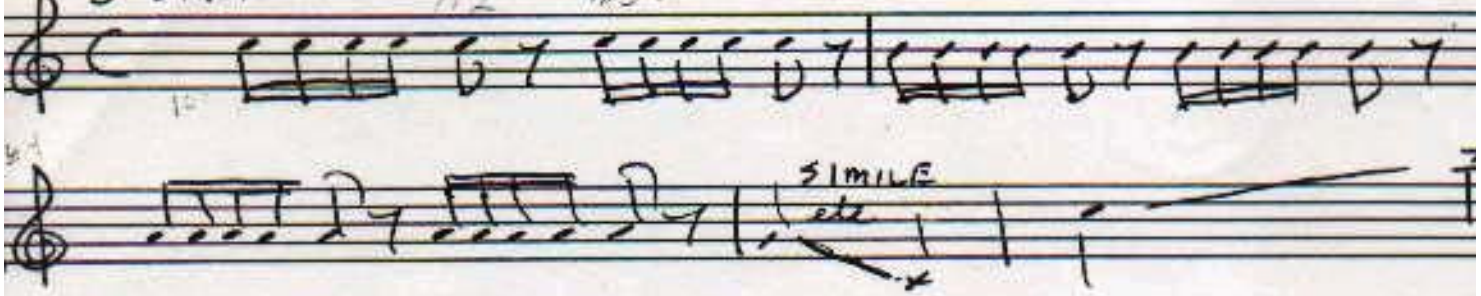
DOWN TO:
UP TO:
TO:
TO:


4 at 80
5 at 63
PULSATION RATE
3 at 108
6 at 54

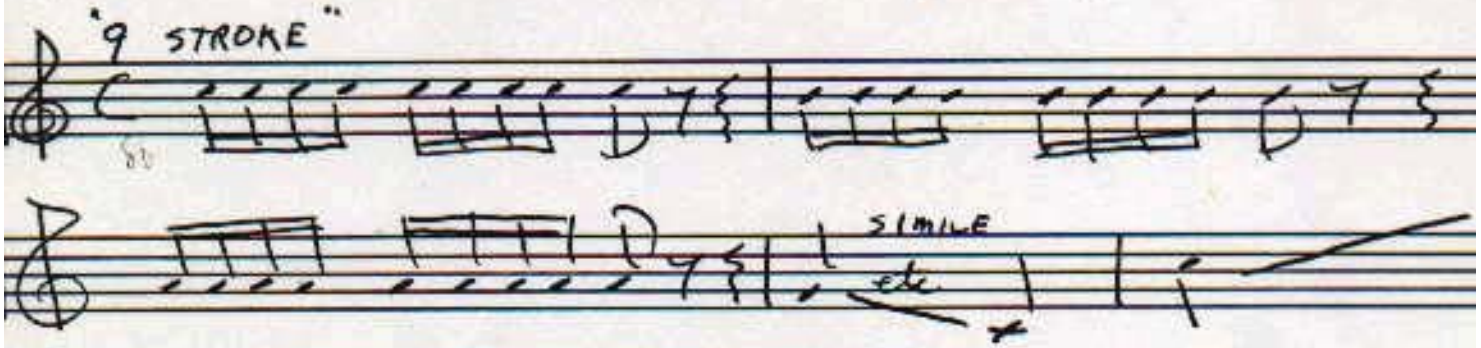


"TONGUE EXERCISE"

"5 STROKE" 112 120?

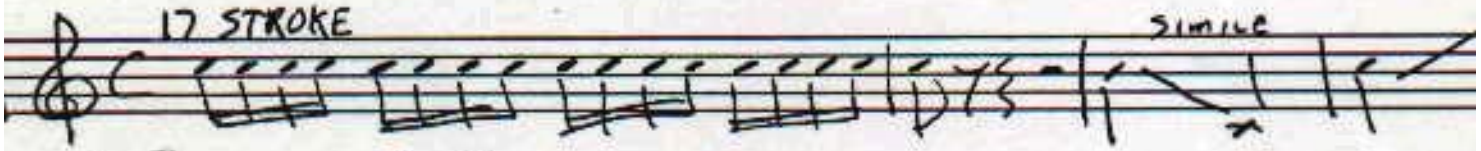


"9 STROKE"

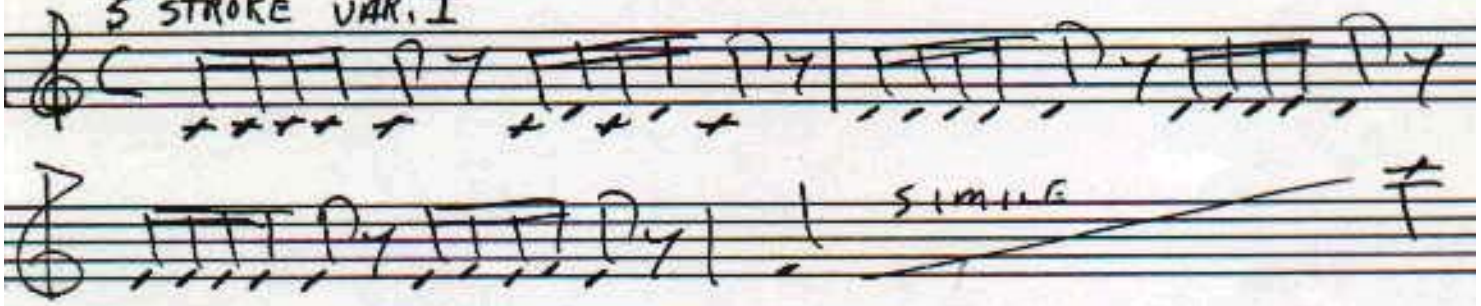


13 STROKE

17 STROKE



"5 STROKE VAR. I"



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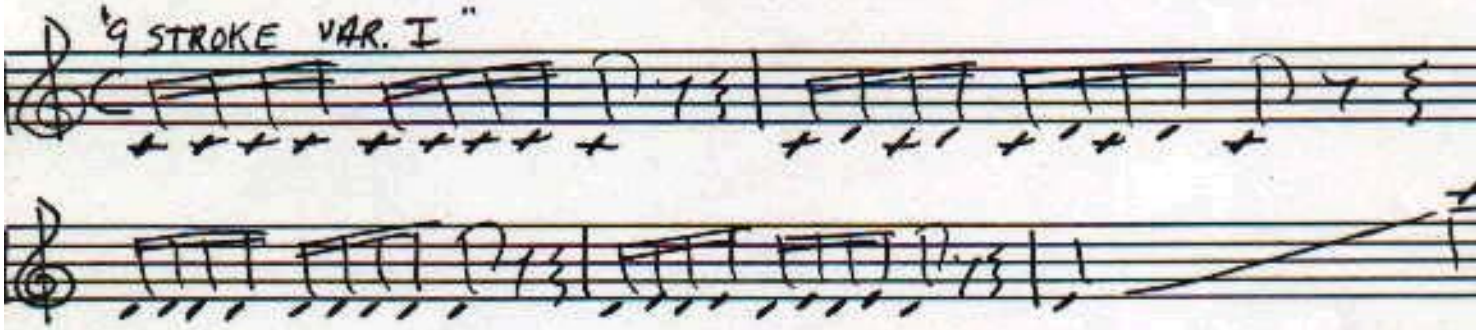
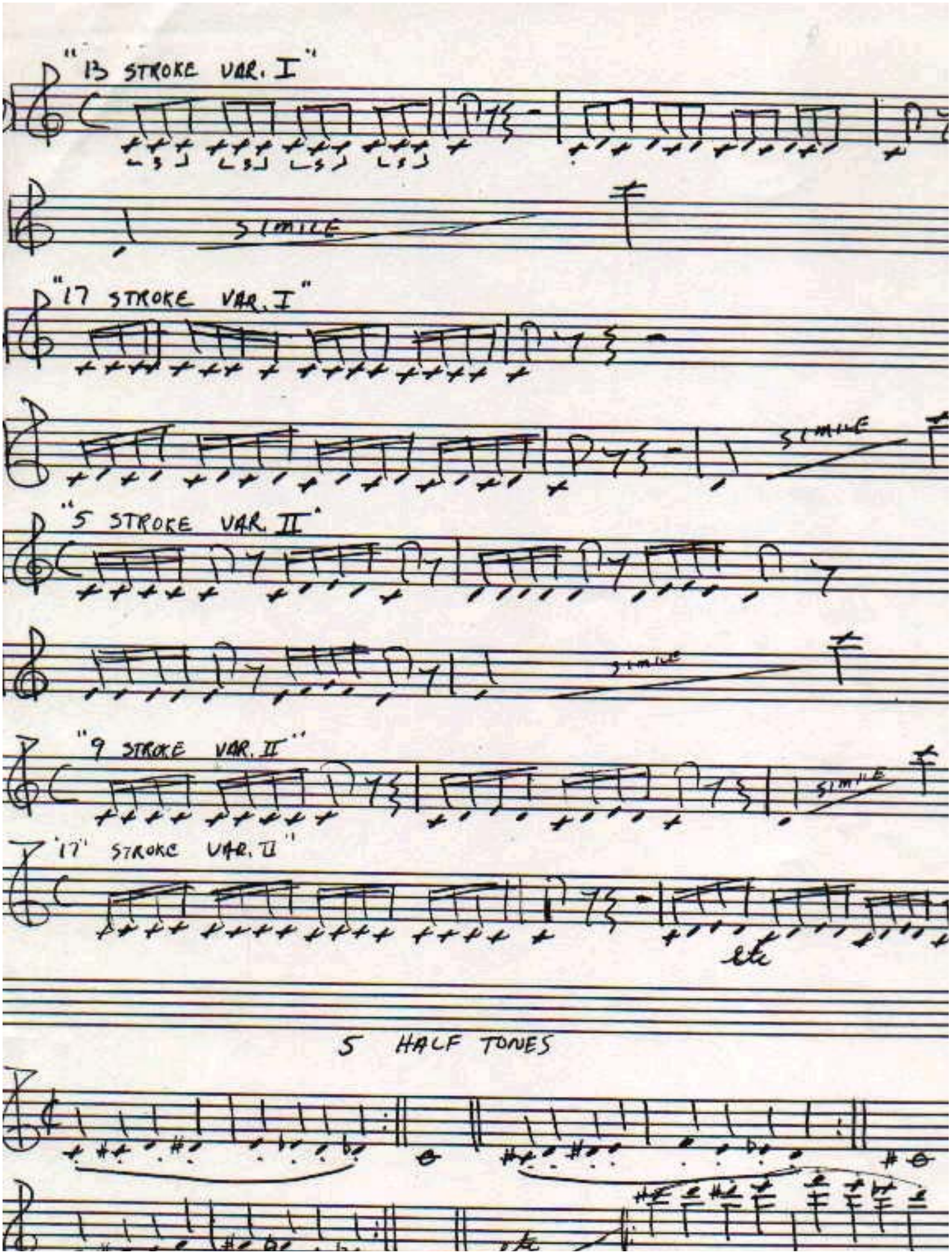
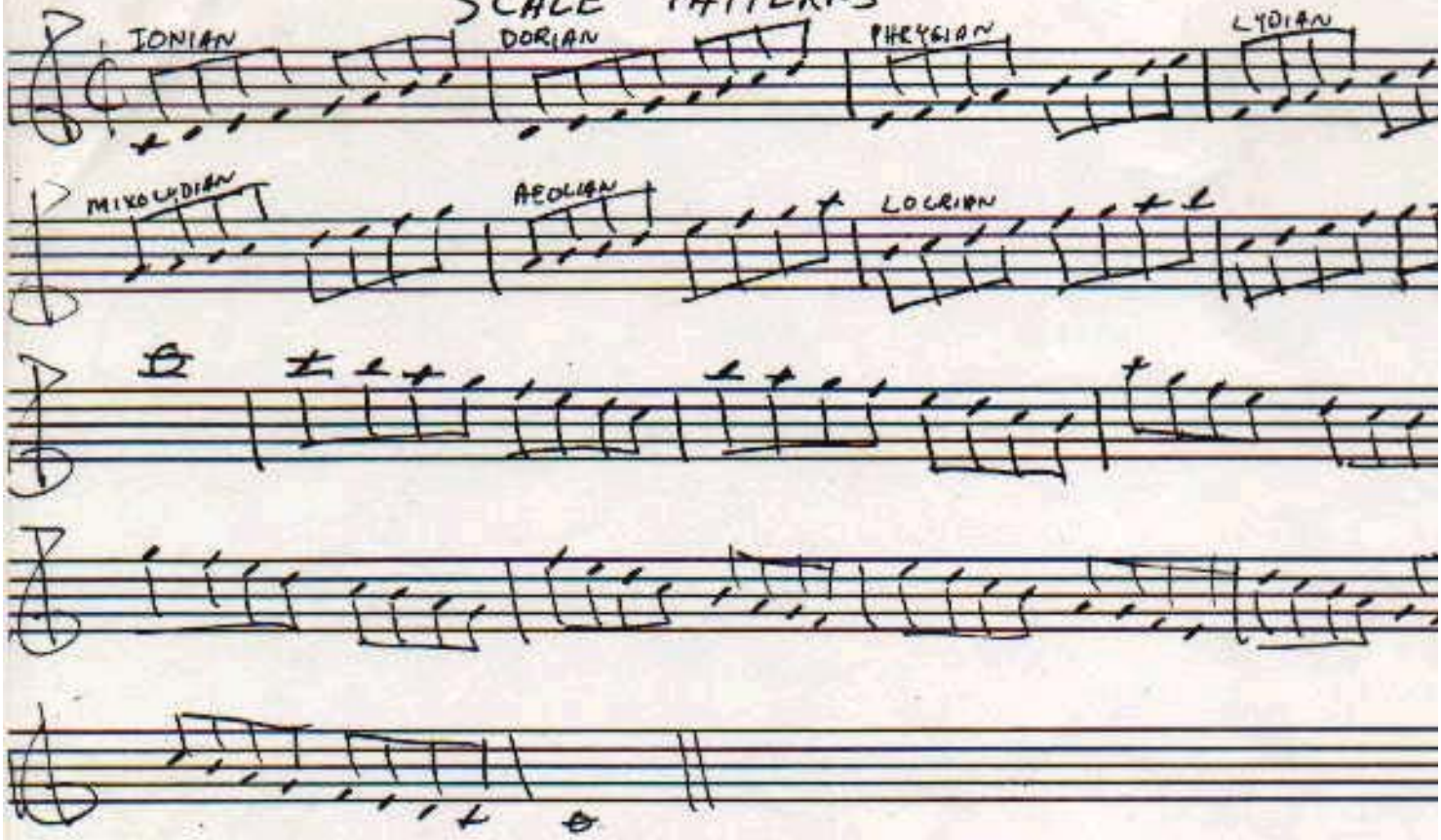



"13 STROKE VAR. I"
SIMILE
"17 STROKE VAR. I"
SIMILE
"5 STROKE VAR. II"
SIMILE
"9 STROKE VAR. II"
SIMILE
"17" STROKE VAR. II"
etc
5 HALF TONES

SCALE PATTERNS



DO IN THE KEY OF - $D^{\flat}$ - D - $E^{\flat}$ - E - F