Stylistic Composition
2017-18

Seminar 4 – 7 February 2018
Orchestration

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Assignment 3: String Quartet in the style of Ravel

Assignment 3

Compose a slow section of music for string quartet, in the style of Maurice Ravel.

The assignment should be between 16 – 20 bars long, but ought not conform to four-bar phrasing. Include several different sections, with a balance of sustained material and quicker movement.

It is up to you to create stylistically-appropriate melodic and harmonic structures based upon principles garnered from relevant musical examples.

The assignment should be typeset using notational software. It should be uploaded to Grade Centre by 11:59 pm on **Monday 5 March 2018.** Your submission should contain two files: a pdf of the score and the file from your notation software (e.g. a Sibelius/Finale/Musescore/Lilypond file).

You should aim to submit a draft of this assignment in class on **Wednesday 28 February 2018** for formative feedback. If you have any queries regarding this assignment, contact David.Pocknee@hud.ac.uk.

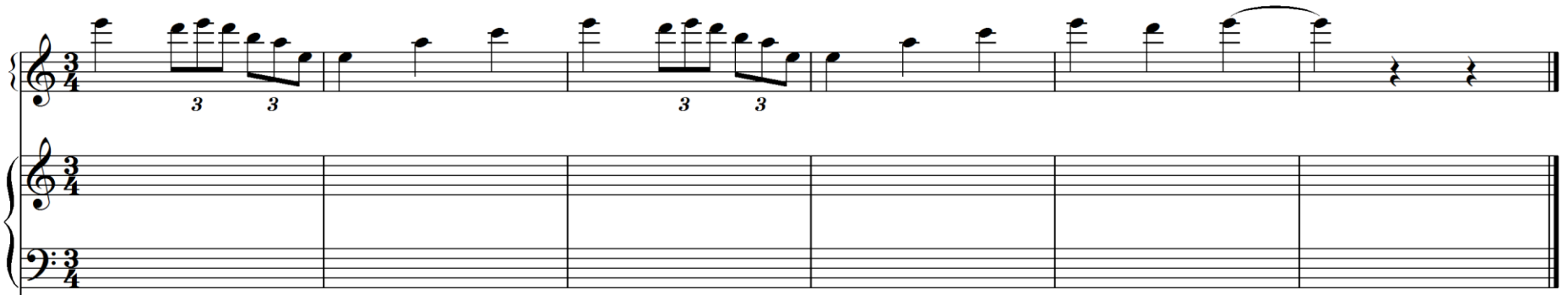
This Lesson

- How to Harmonize a melody
- Writing for String Quartet
  - String Techniques
- Orchestrating a melody and harmony

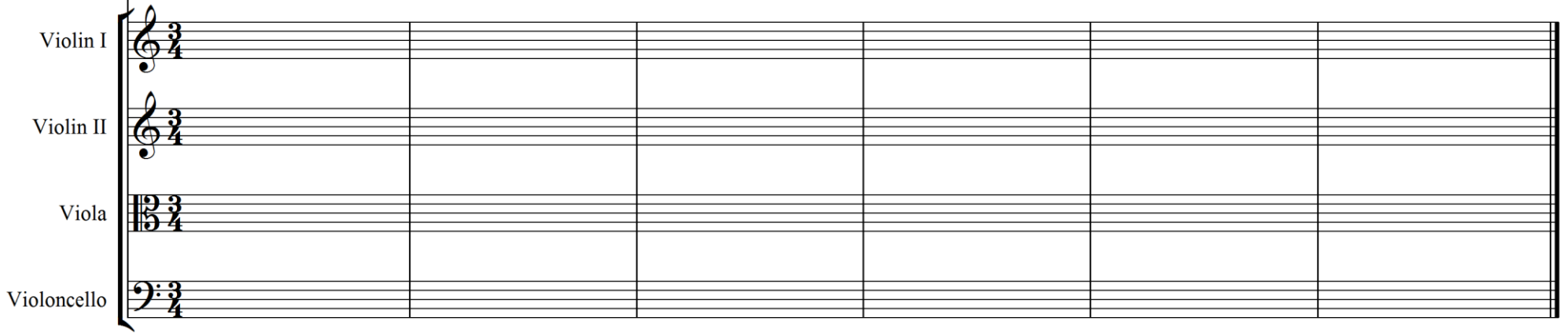
How to Harmonize a Melody

Harmonizing and Orchestrating a Melody

1. Write an accompaniment to this Ravel melody from "Introduction et Allegro"



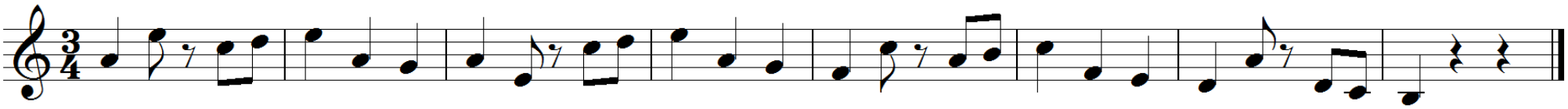
2. Now Orchestrate for the String Quartet



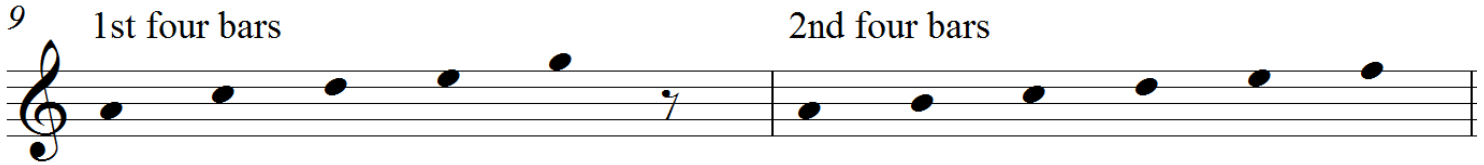
How to Harmonize a Melody

Step 1. Identify what scale or mode the melody is using. Perhaps different parts of the melody are constructed from different types of scale or mode.

Below: The melody from the second movement of Ravel's String Quartet.

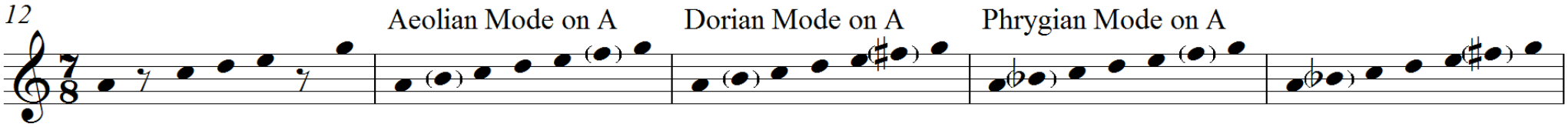


In this extract there are two scales, one for each of the two halves of the melody.



Step 2. Work out if the scale or the mode could fit into another larger mode or scale. Ravel's melodies often only consist of a small number of pitches. The first four bars use a pentatonic scale – this is typical for Ravel's works. However, his harmonies are very rarely pentatonic. The pentatonic scale can fit into several existing modes as the B and F are missing and could be either sharp, flat or natural.

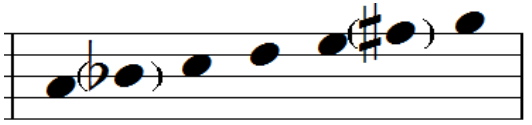
Possible modes compatible with first four bars



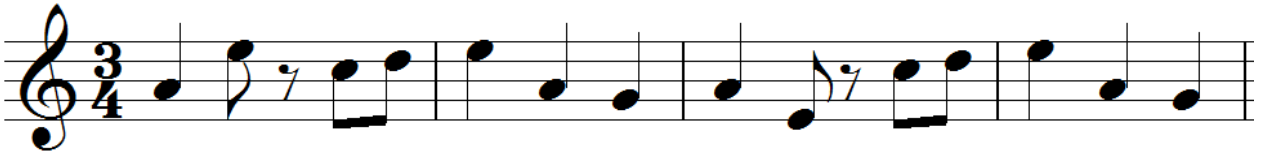
How to Harmonize a Melody

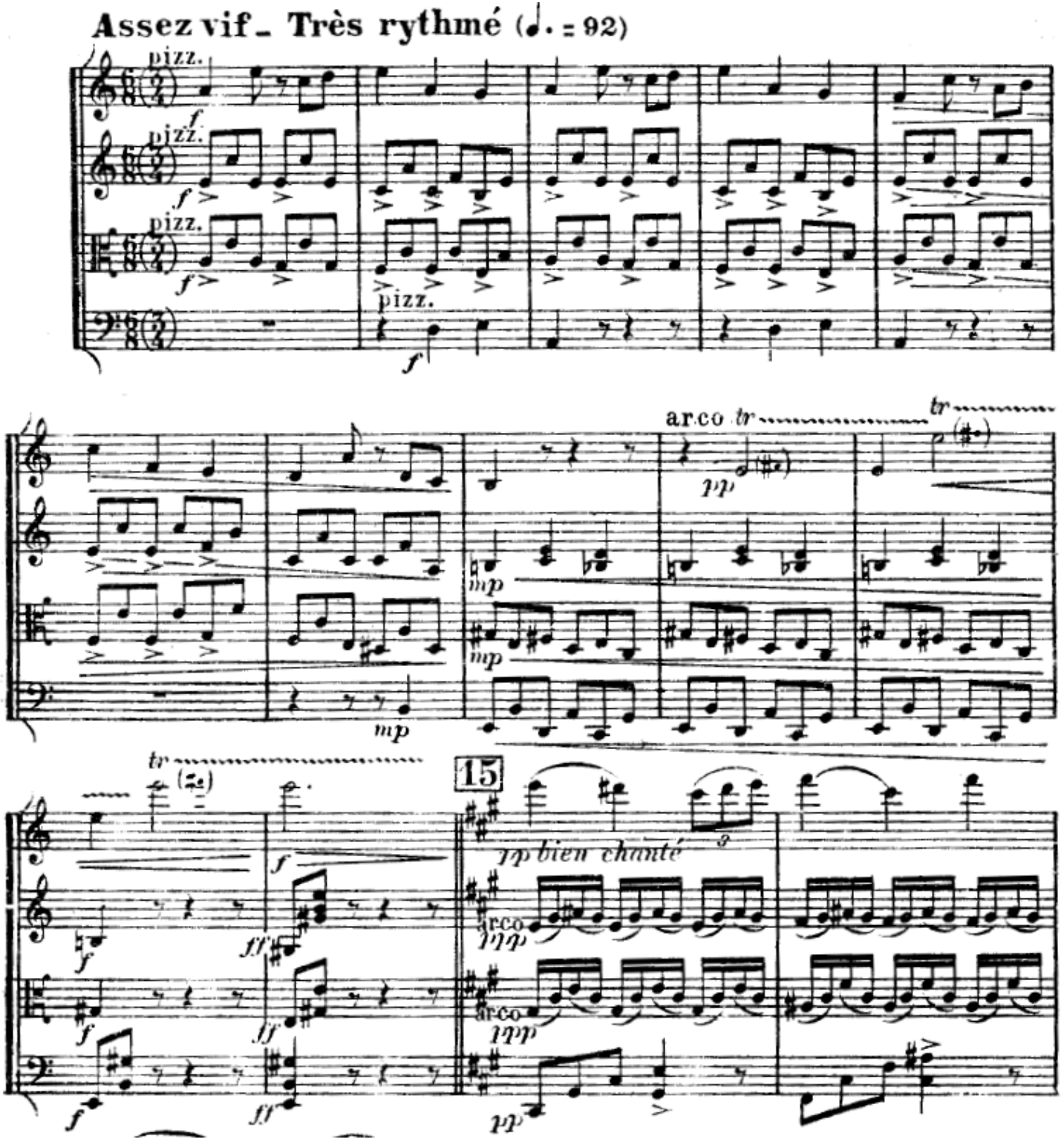
Step 3. Choose a scale or mode to create the harmony in this section.

In this example I'll choose this mode:



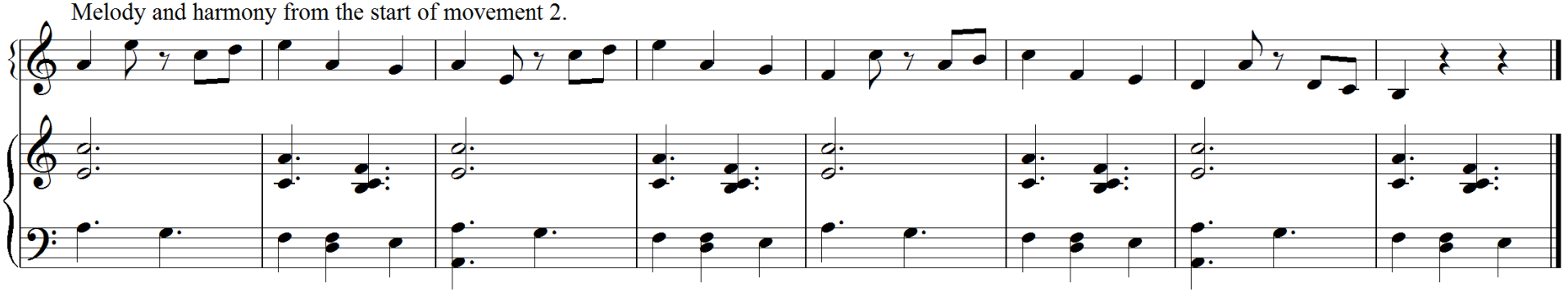
Step 4. Harmonize the melody with 7th, 9th, 11th, and 13th chords. Remember that as the higher extensions of the chords tend to be in the top of chord, the melody notes are more likely to be these than members of the main triad.



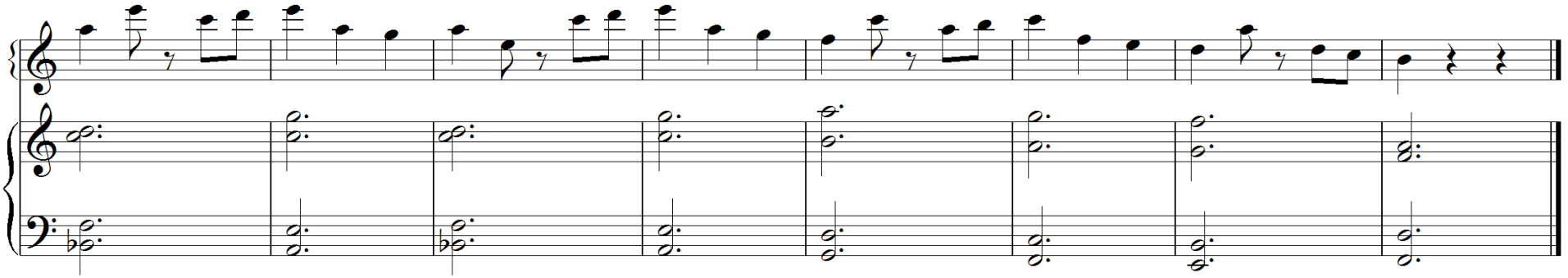

Assez vif _ Très rythmé (♩. = 92)
pizz.
f
pizz.
f
pizz.
f
pizz.
f
arco tr
pp
tr
mp
mp
mp
tr
f
ff
f
ff
f
ff
15
pp bien chanté
arco
ppp
arco
ppp
pp

Ravel's "String Quartet" Movement 2

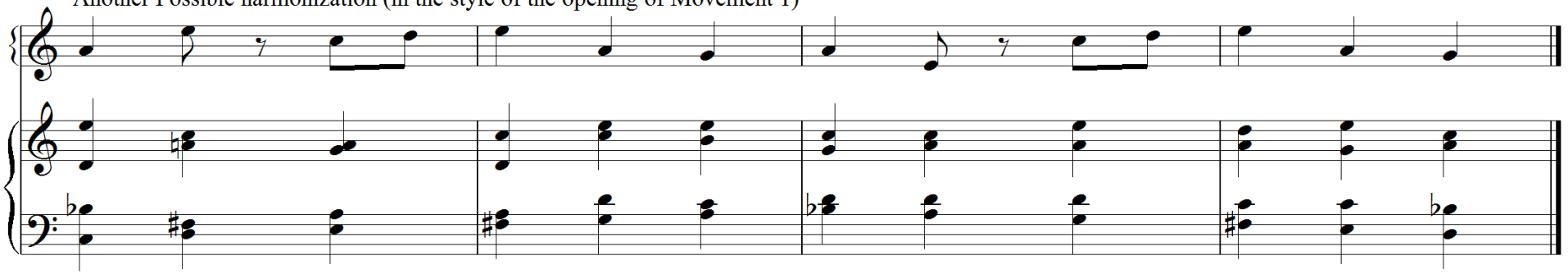
Melody and harmony from the start of movement 2.



One possible harmonization (in the style of Movement 3)



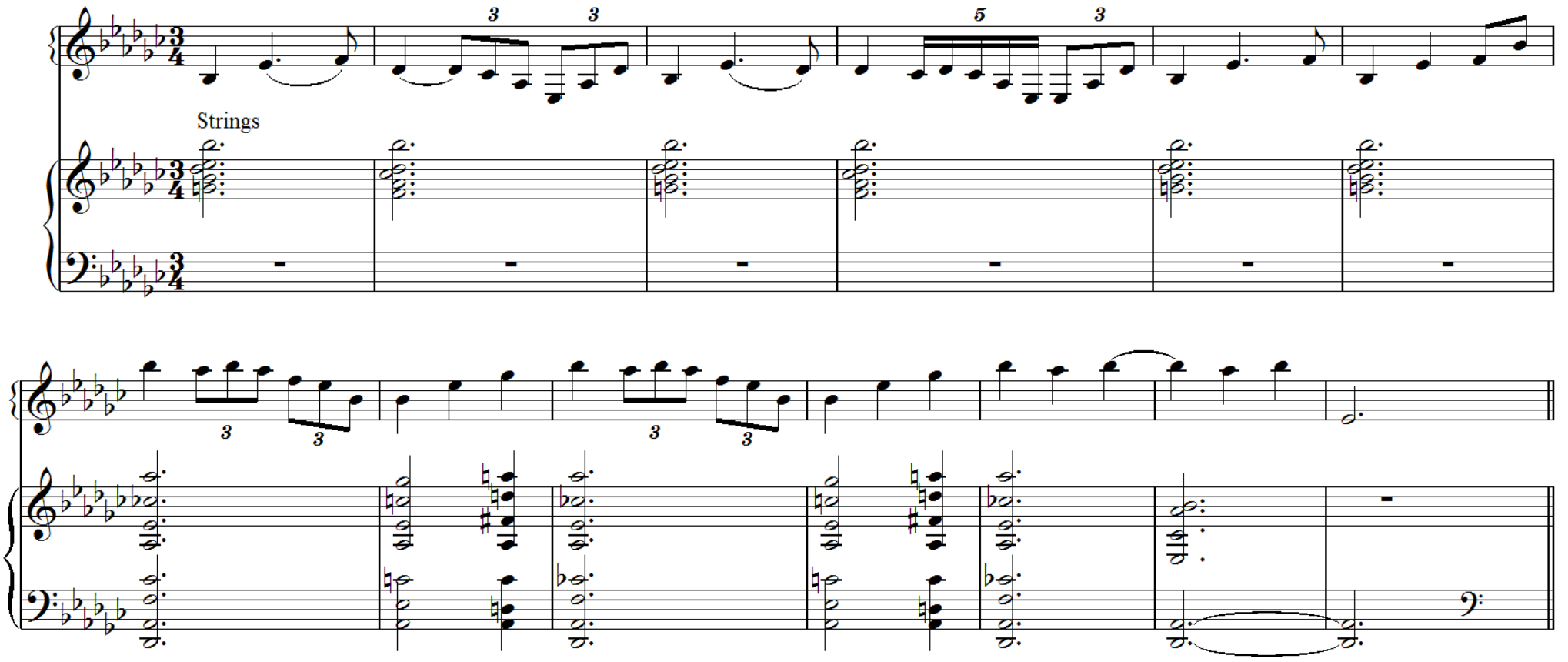
Another Possible harmonization (in the style of the opening of Movement 1)



Introduction et Allegro

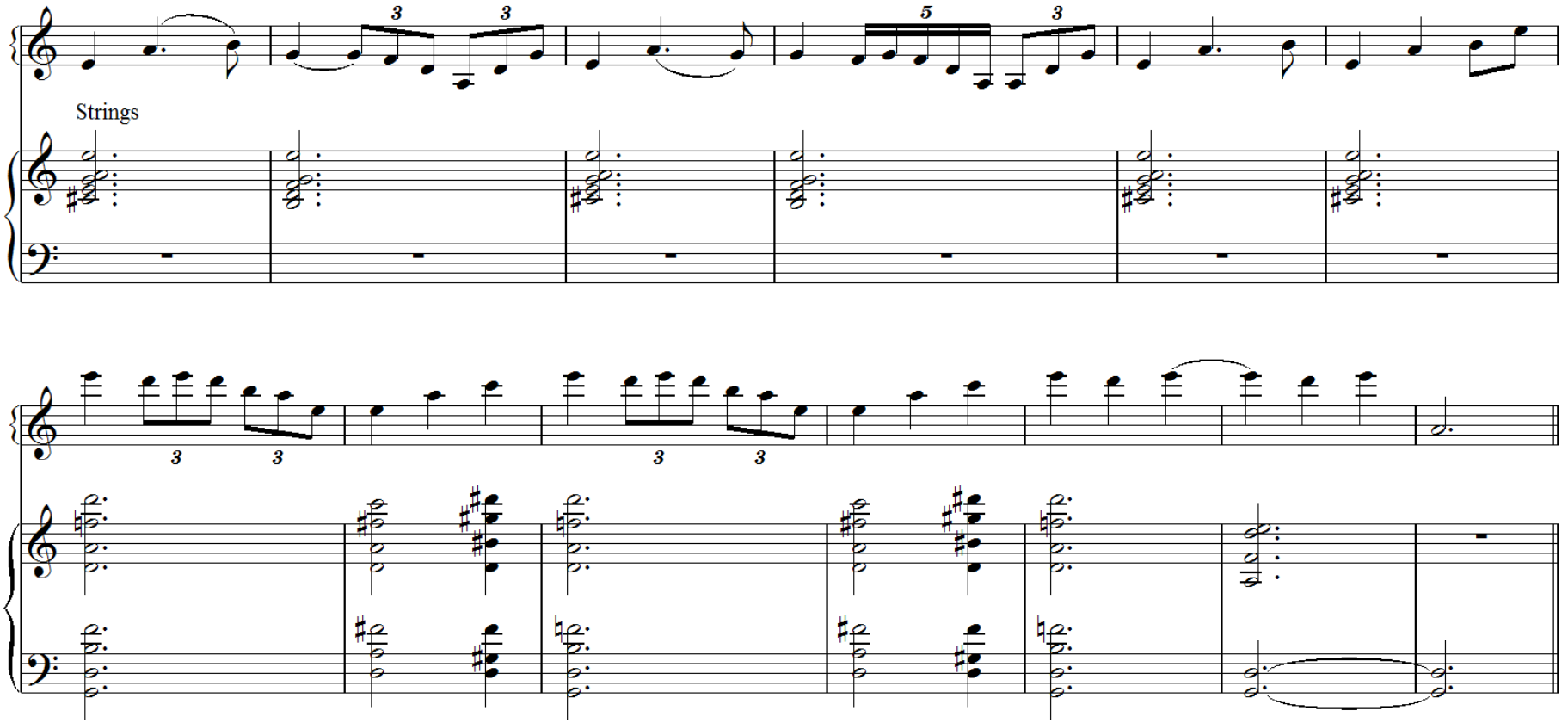
Ravel "Introduction et Allegro" Analysis

Piano reduction of the extract in its original key



Extract transposed into the key of C Major

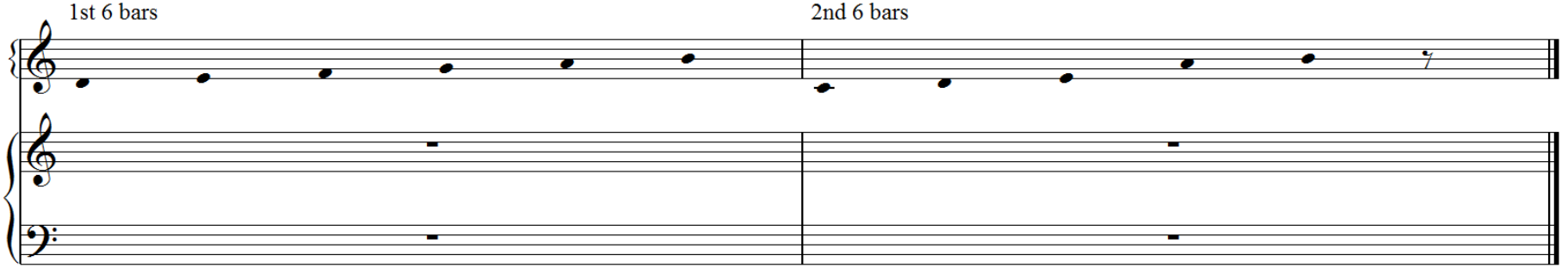
Strings



Scales used in the two sections of the extract

1st 6 bars

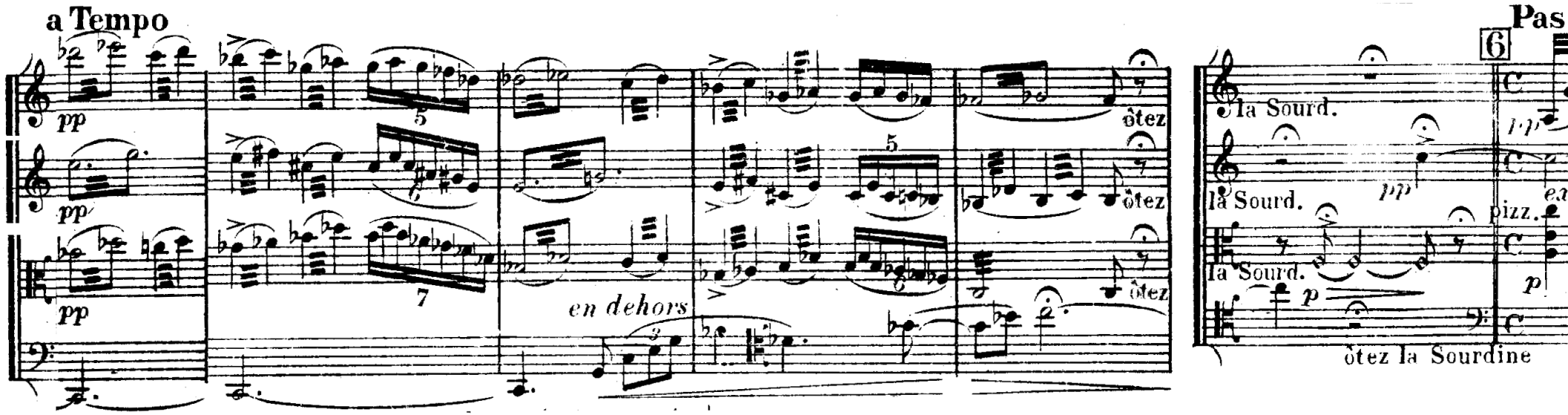
2nd 6 bars



String Quartet: The Basics

Ranges

Timbre



015.wav

String Quartet - 3rd Movement Vocabulary

French	English
Trés lent	Very Slowly
Sourd. (sourdine)	Muted
Préssez	“pressing on”/accelerando
perdendosi	“Losing” / gradually dying away
òtez la Sourdine	Remove the mute
mettez la Sourdine	Attach the mute
en dehors	“outside”/ prominent. Applied to a melody which the composer intends to be particularly prominent.
sur la touche	On the fingerboard. Direction to bow over the fingerboard. (sul tasto)
jeu ord.	bowing in ordinario position.
Cédez	“Give way” / Diminish the speed.
port.	portamento
au Movt.	“Sometimes (as in Debussy), the word is used to indicate a return to the original speed after some tempo deviation”.

Left Hand Techniques

- Harmonics
  - Explanation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PI4LOEVzeyc
  - Arvo Pärt – *Fratres*
  - John Lely – *The Harmonics of Real Strings*
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBQx6q2ll-4
- Double Stops

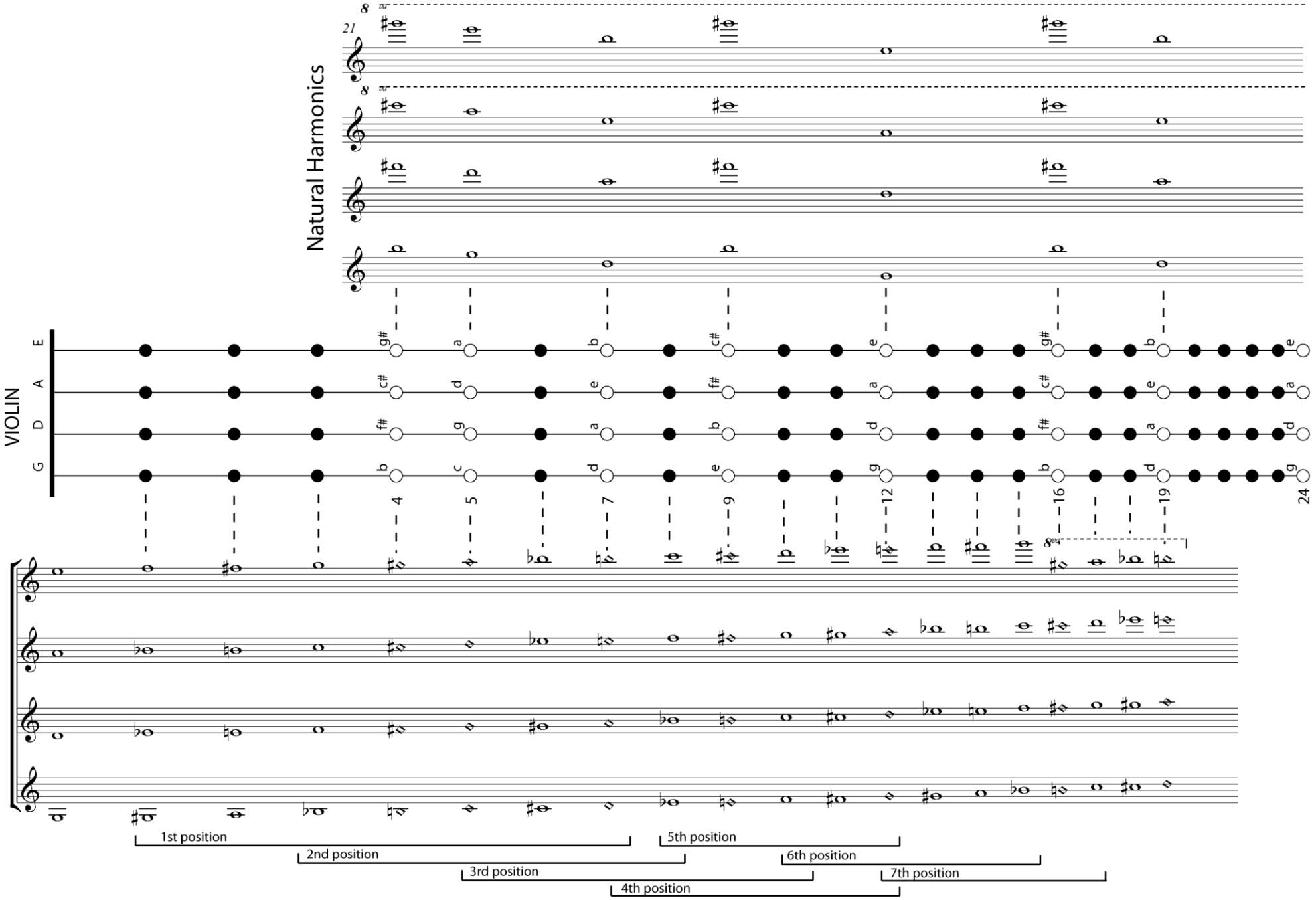
Left Hand Technique

Rules for Successful Double Stops

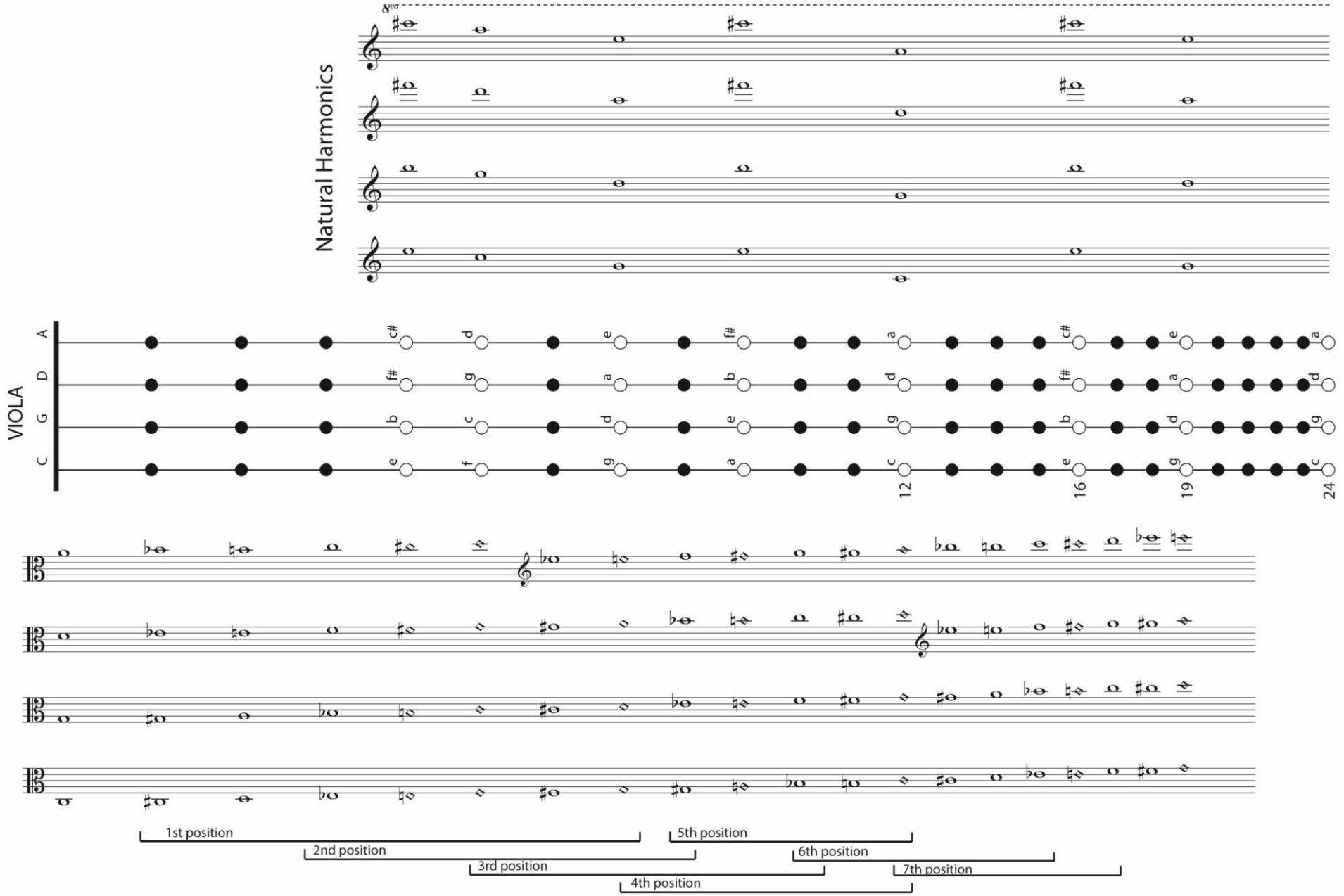
1. Both notes must be on adjacent strings.

2. Both notes must be within the span of the hand, or one or more of them must be an open string.

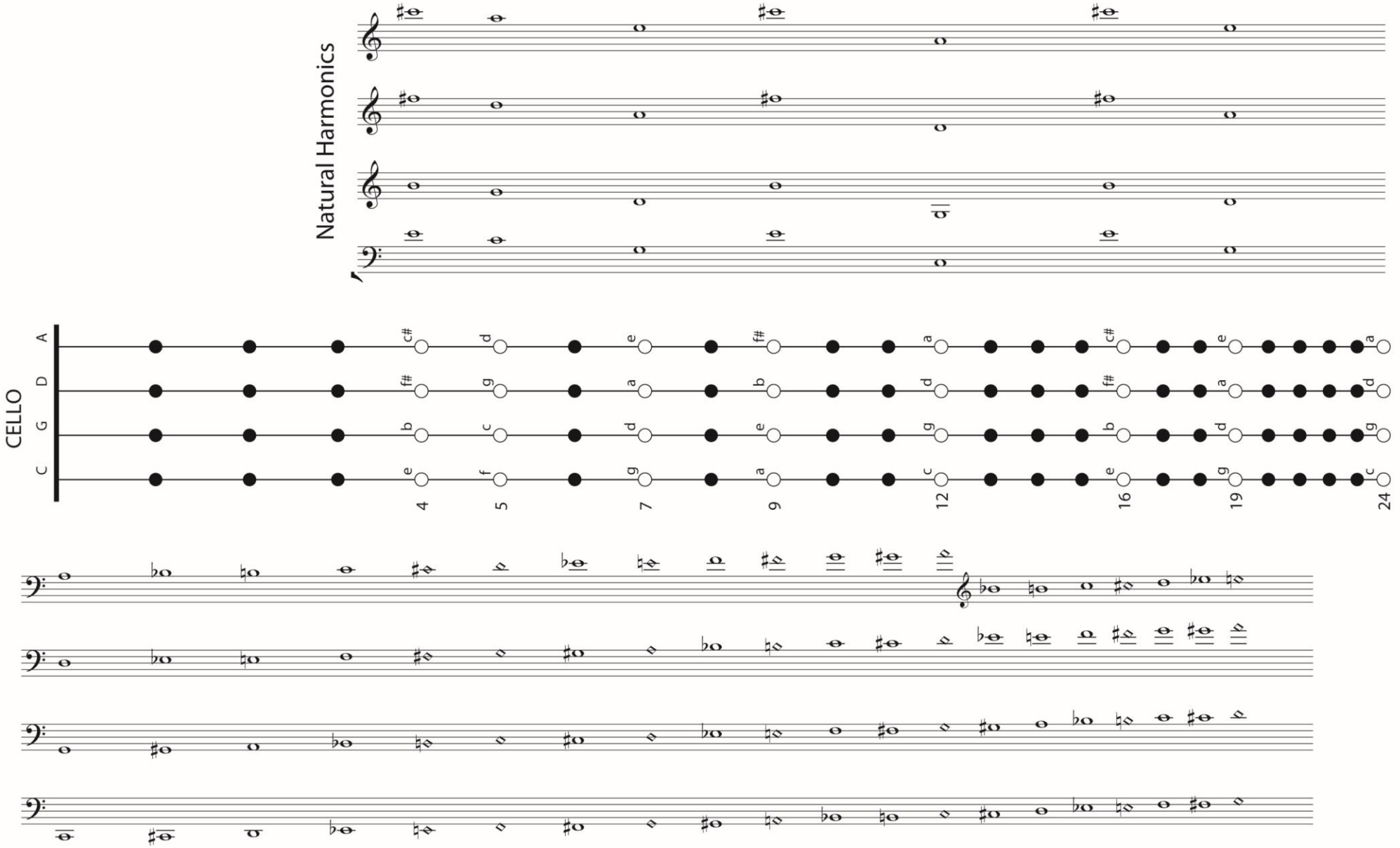
Violin Fingerings and Natural Harmonics



Viola Fingerings and Natural Harmonics



Violoncello Fingerings and Natural Harmonics



Right Hand Technique

Bow Position

- Sul Tasto (over the fingerboard) *(sur la touche)*
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAA5FIBNRH0
- Sul Ponticello (near the bridge)
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDEwJXPl01w
- Ordinario (ordinary position) *(jeu ord.)*

Bowing

- Tremolo
  - Single string tremolo
  - 2-string tremolo
- Luciano Berio – Sequenza VI for viola (1967)
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiJYaPOWj1Q

Right Hand Technique

Pizzicato

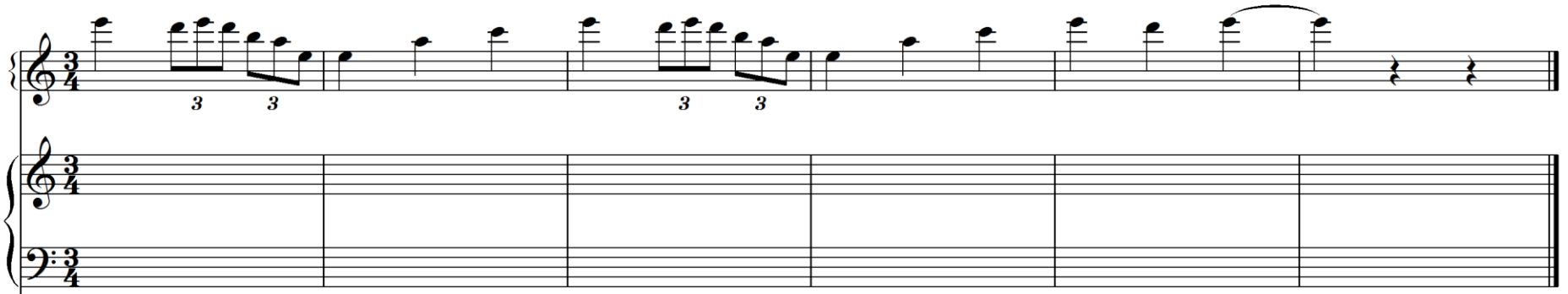
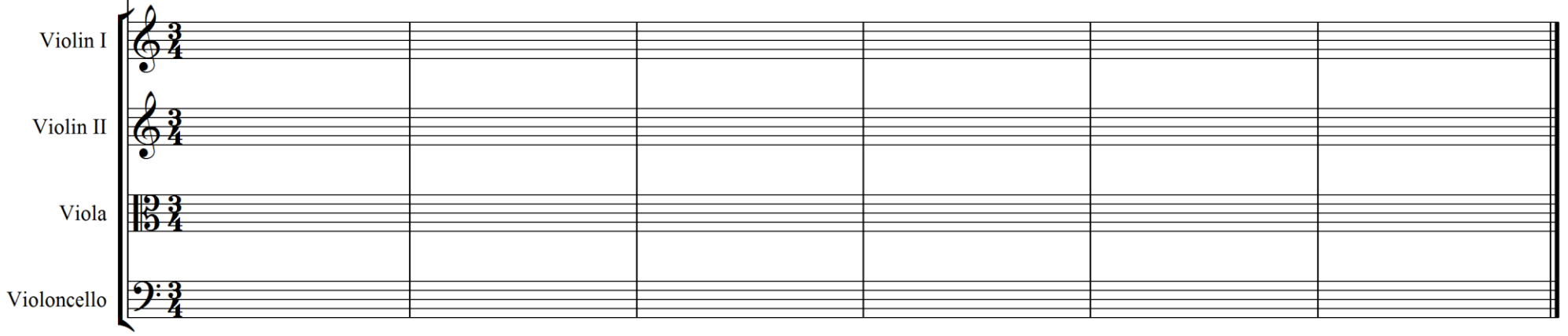
- Pizzicato
  - Ravel – *String Quartet* (2nd Movement)
    - https://youtu.be/Jt_Tc0DXcFQ?t=7m41s

Arpeggios

Orchestrating a Melody

Harmonizing and Orchestrating a Melody

1. Write an accompaniment to this Ravel melody from "Introduction et Allegro"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