Strategies for Developing Intonation in the Orchestra Classroom

David Pope

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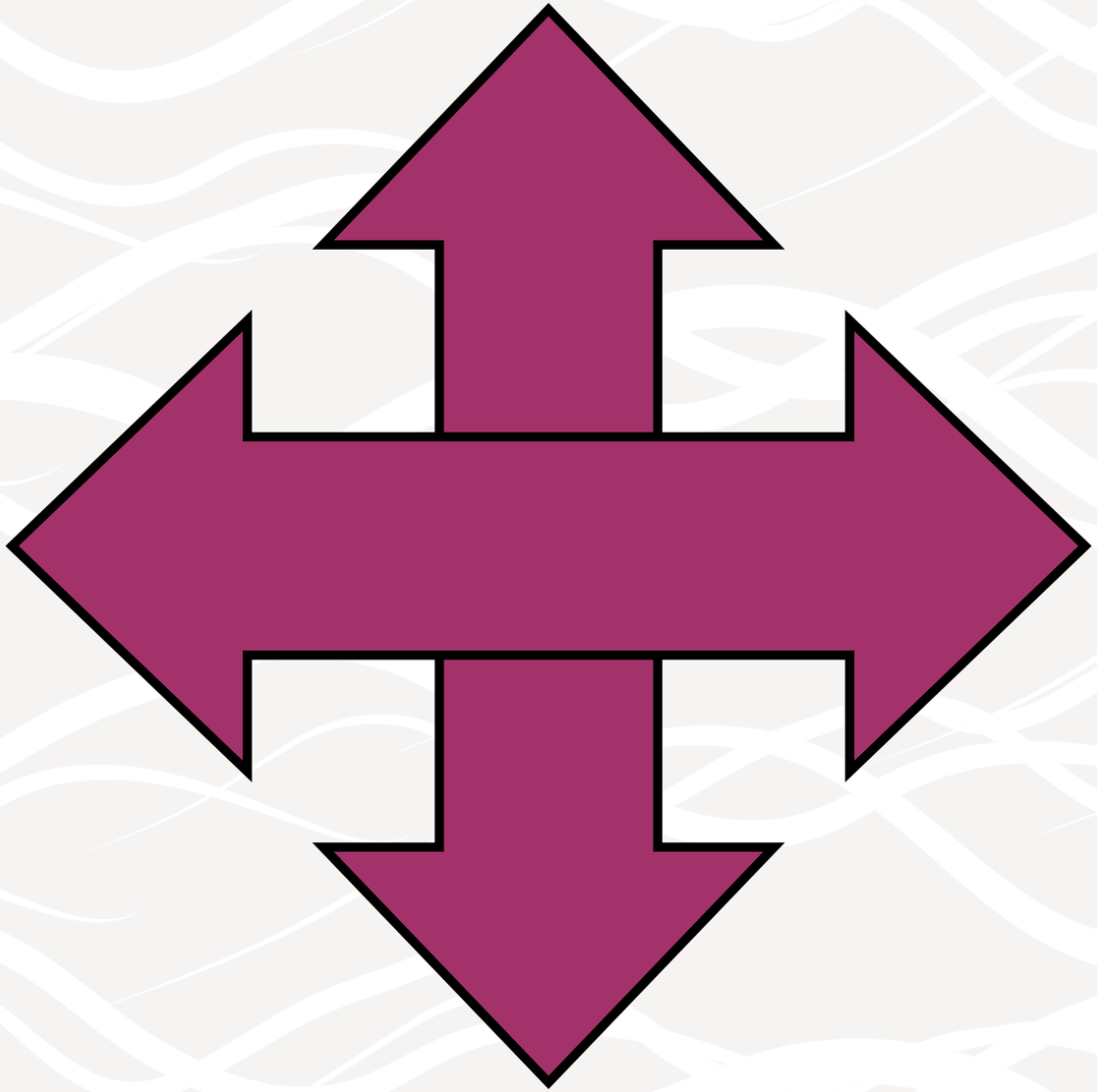
conservatory of music

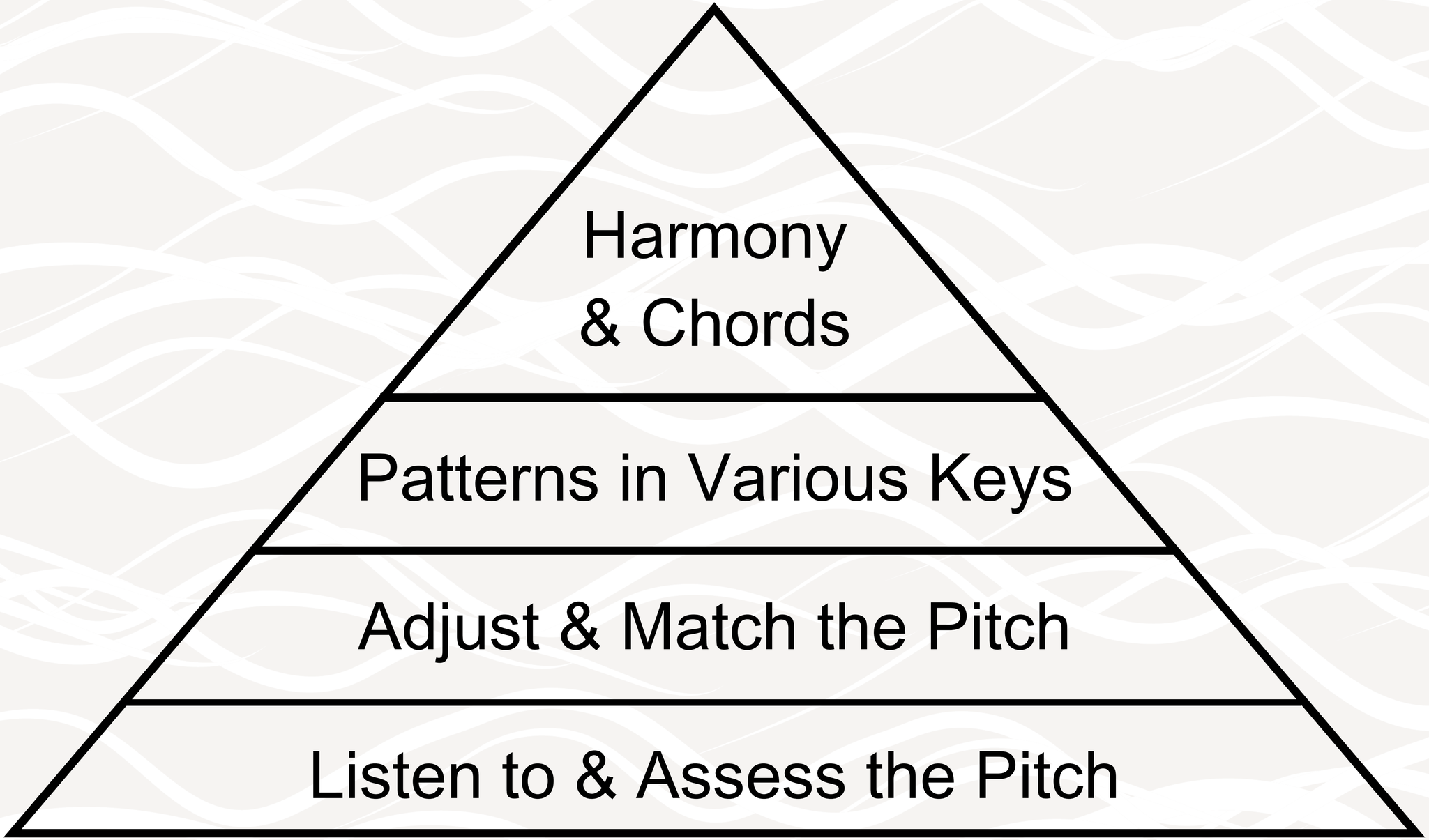
“The problem isn’t playing out of tune…it is NOT knowing you are out of tune.”

Develop Students' Listening Skills

Listen &
Adjust Both
Directions



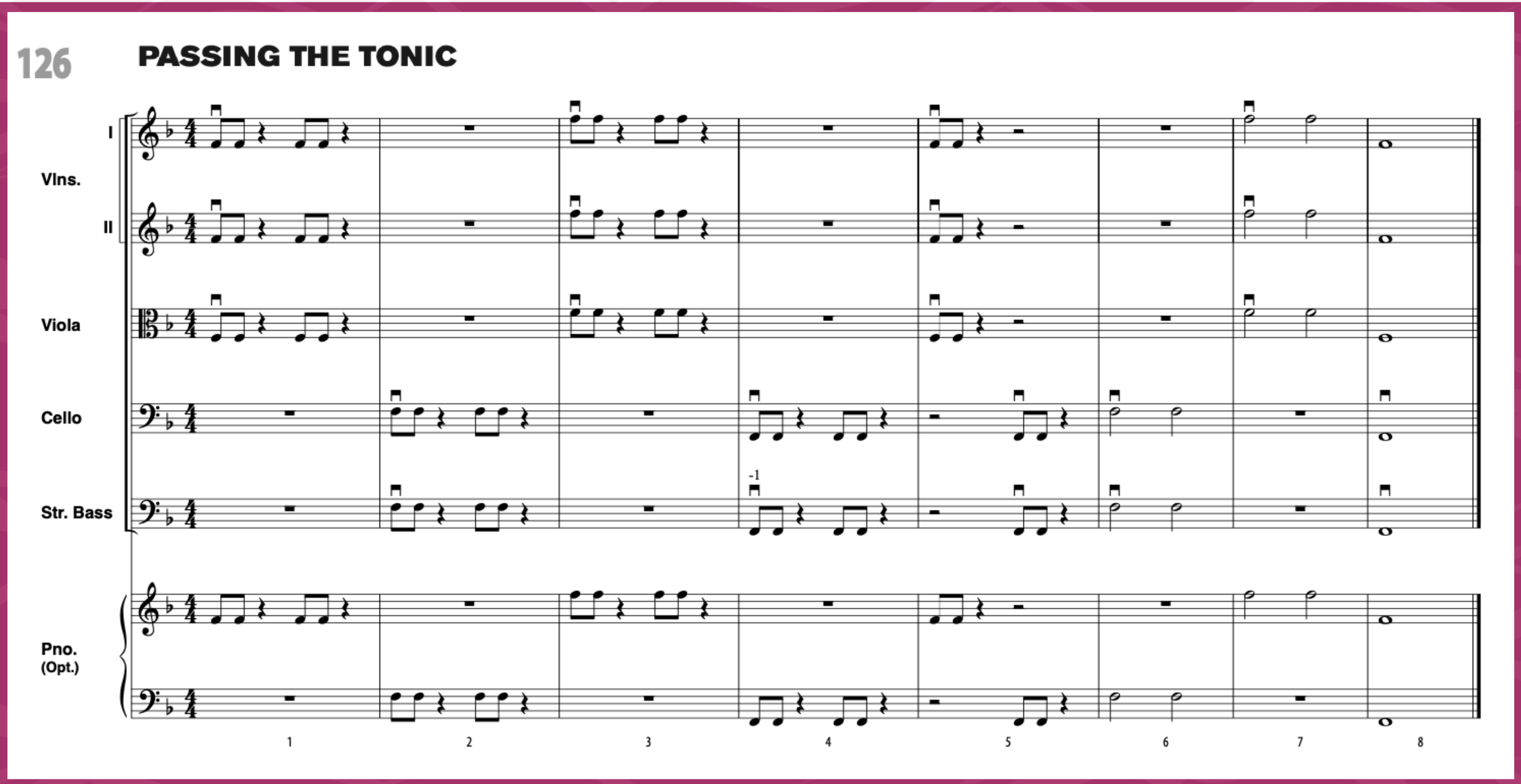
Develop Students' Listening Skills



Focus on the Basics

- Tune & Retune the Ensemble
- Set-Up & Posture Matter
- Listen & Learn to Adjust the Pitch
  - Humming & Playing
- Finger Patterns
  - Rote Finger Patterns
  - Rote Modulating Scales

Listen, Assess, Adjust, & Match Pitch



Scales - Develop an Indepth Understanding

Scales

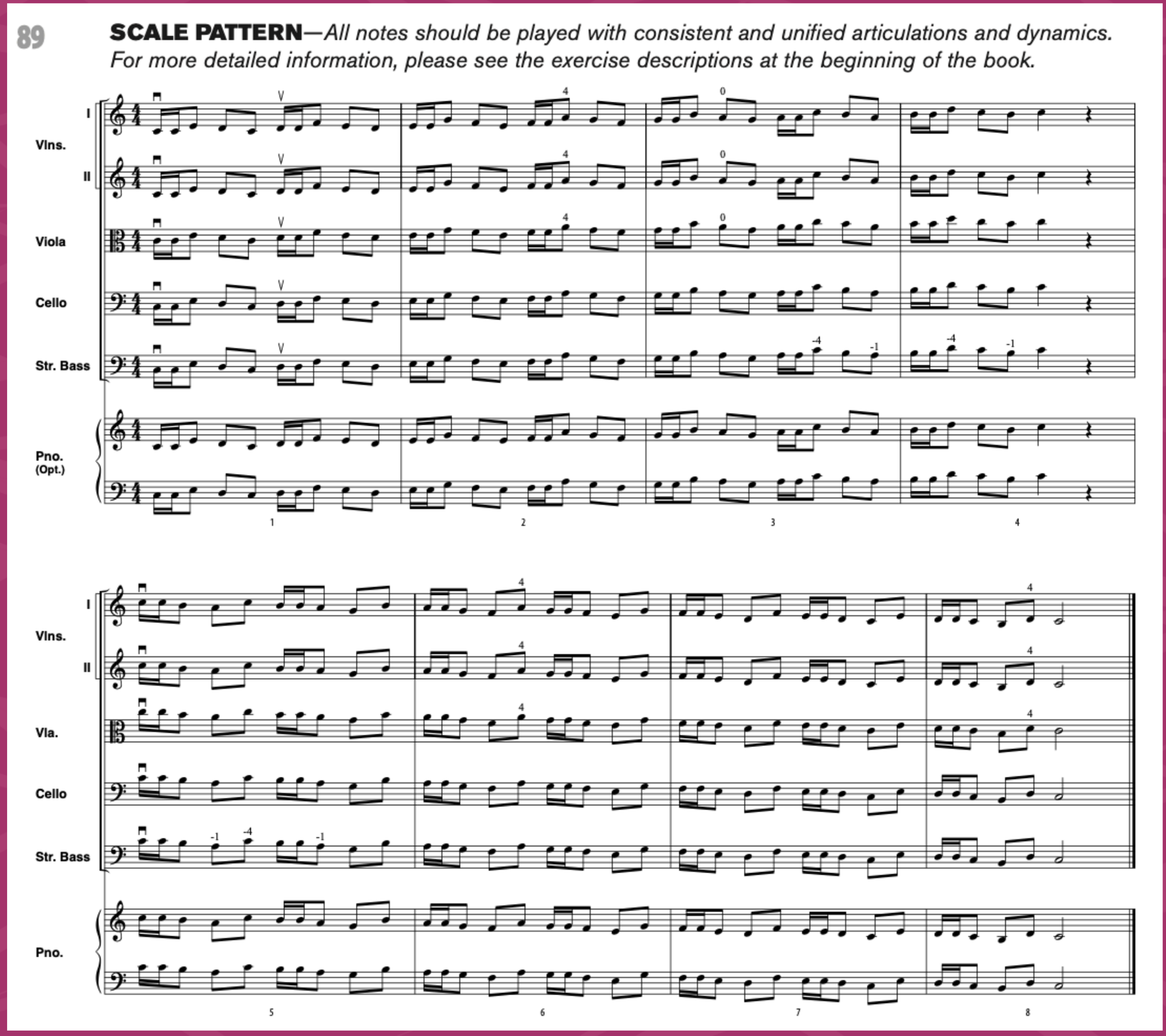
- Sing or Hum with a Drone
- Audiate with a Drone
- Alternate Scale Degrees
- Practice Descending More than Ascending
- Play in Thirds, Fifths, & Octaves

Scales - Develop an Indepth Understanding

Partner “Chase” Scales

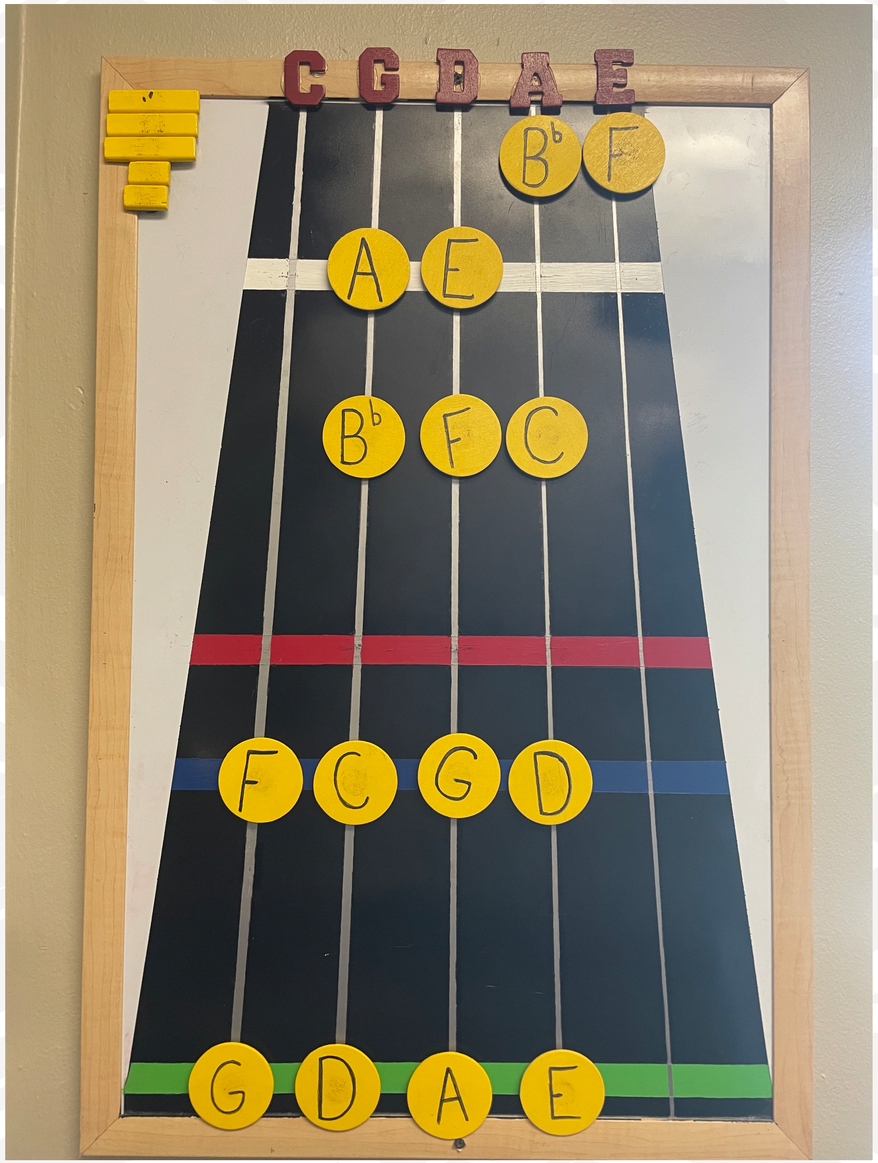
- 70% Drone
- 30% Scale
- Adjust Intonation
- Match Bow Speed
- Match Style
- Change Bow Direction Together
- Watch Each Other
- Listen to Each Other
- Cue Each Other
- Breathe Together

Build & Reinforce Positive Tonal Habits

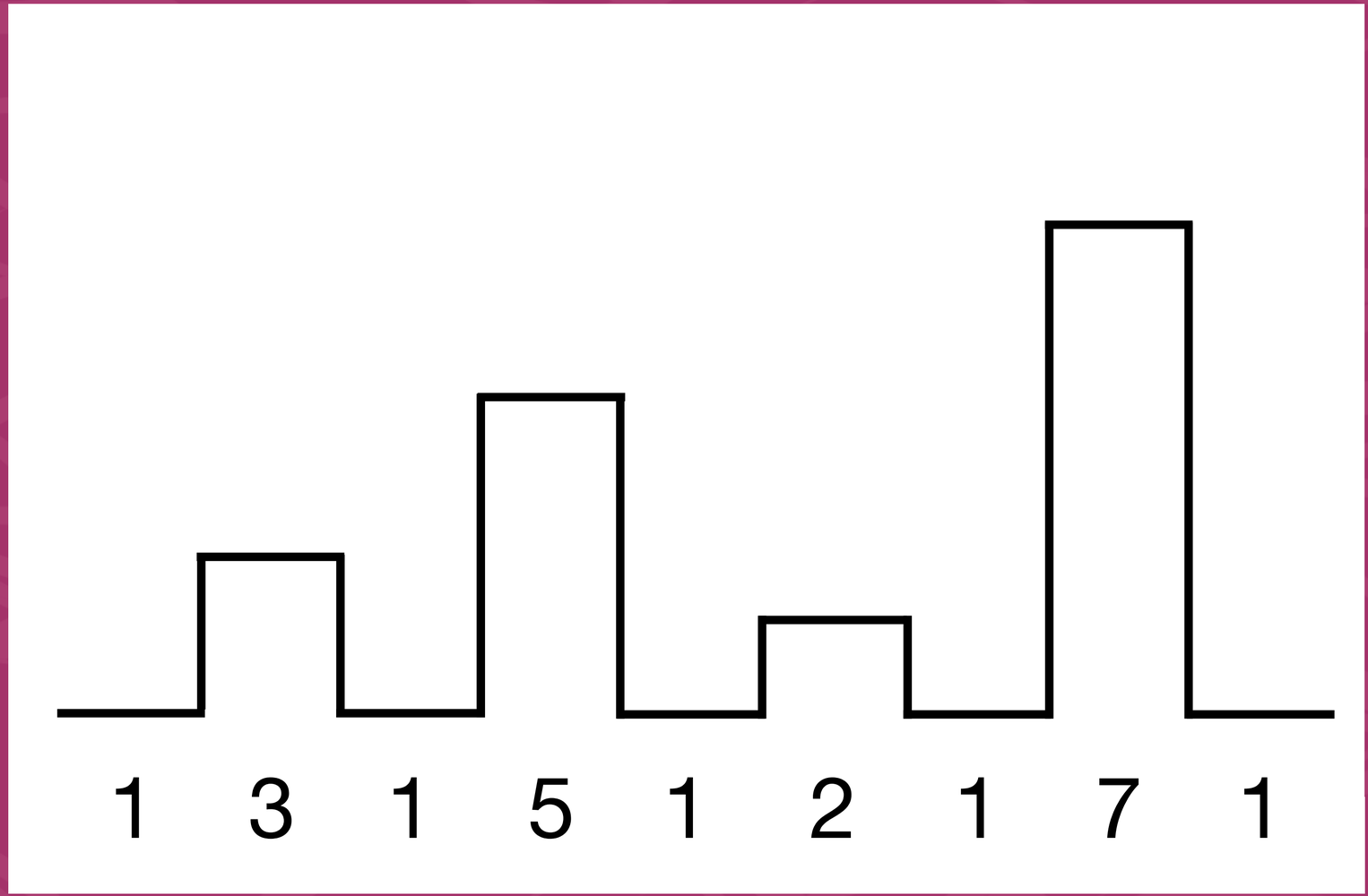


Perfect the Intervals

- Fingerboard Mapping
  - Diatonic Notes within a Key
  - Chromatic Notes within a Key
  - First Finger Shifts



Perfect the Intervals



Hold the Tonic

Perfect the Intervals

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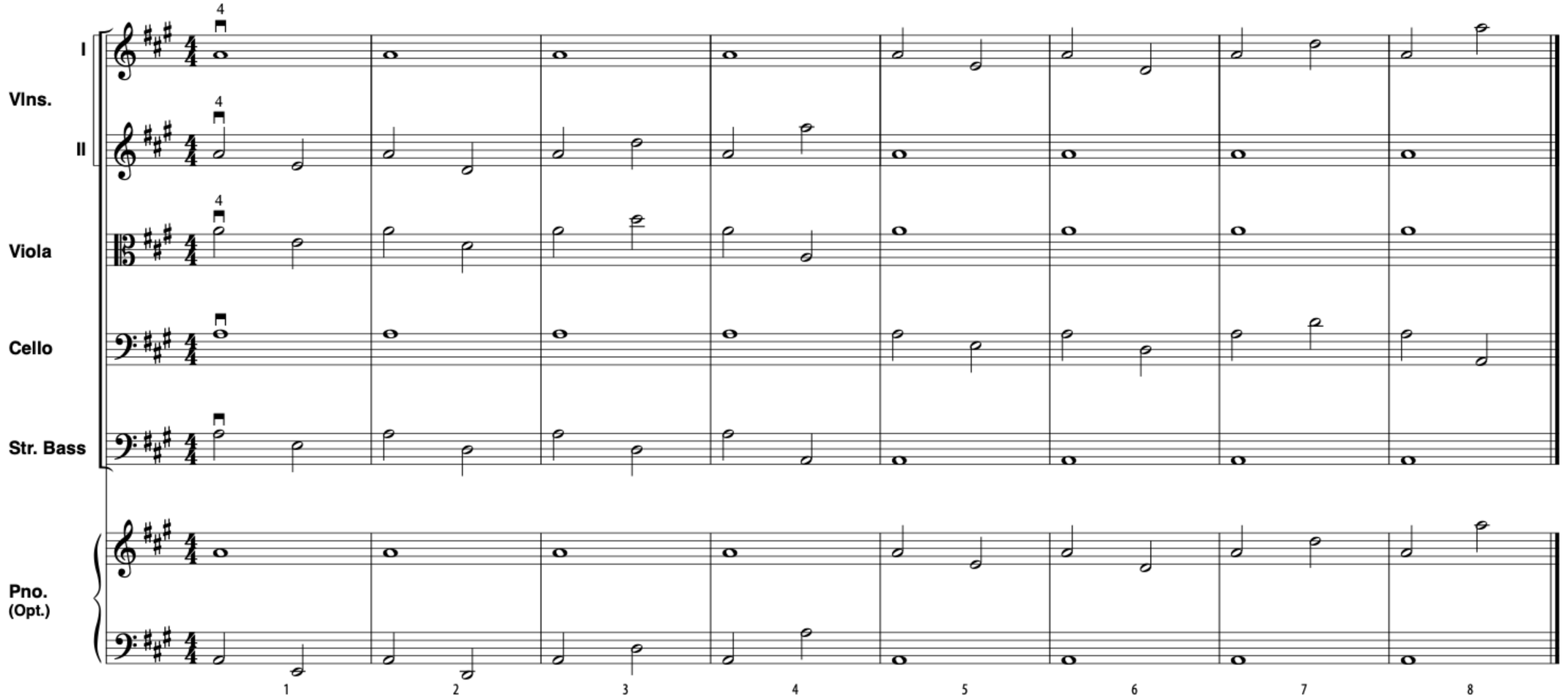
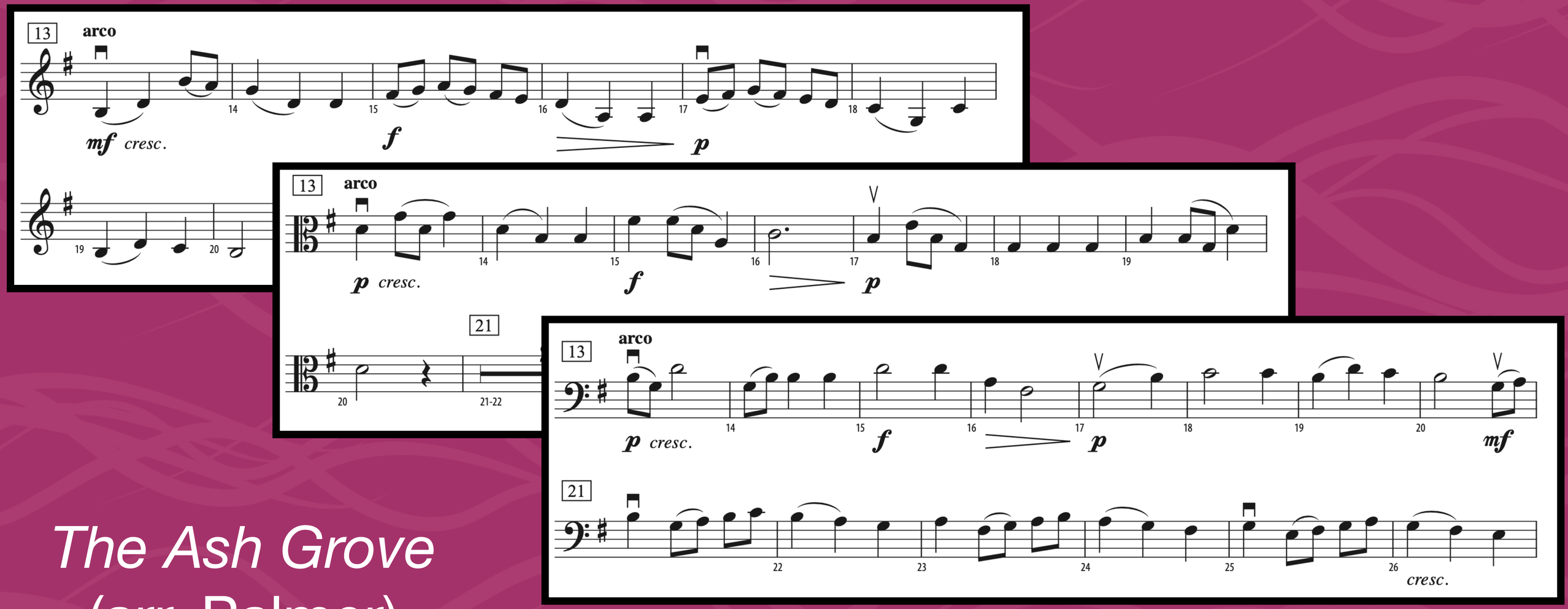
BALANCE AND INTONATION: PERFECT INTERVALS—*This exercise focuses on the challenge of tuning the perfect intervals of a unison, fourth, fifth, and octave. For more detailed information, please see the exercise descriptions at the beginning of the book.*

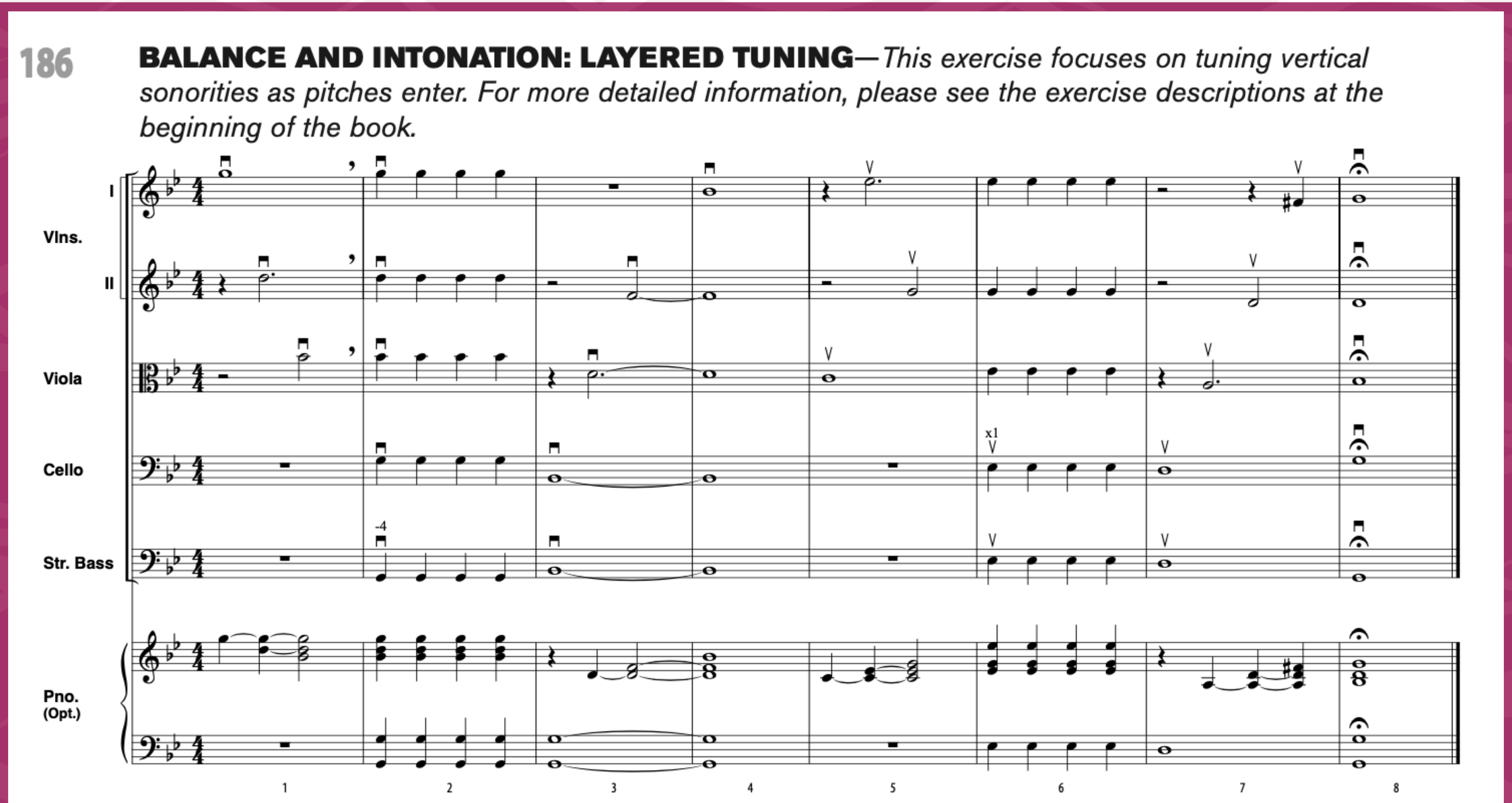


Focus on the Inner Lines

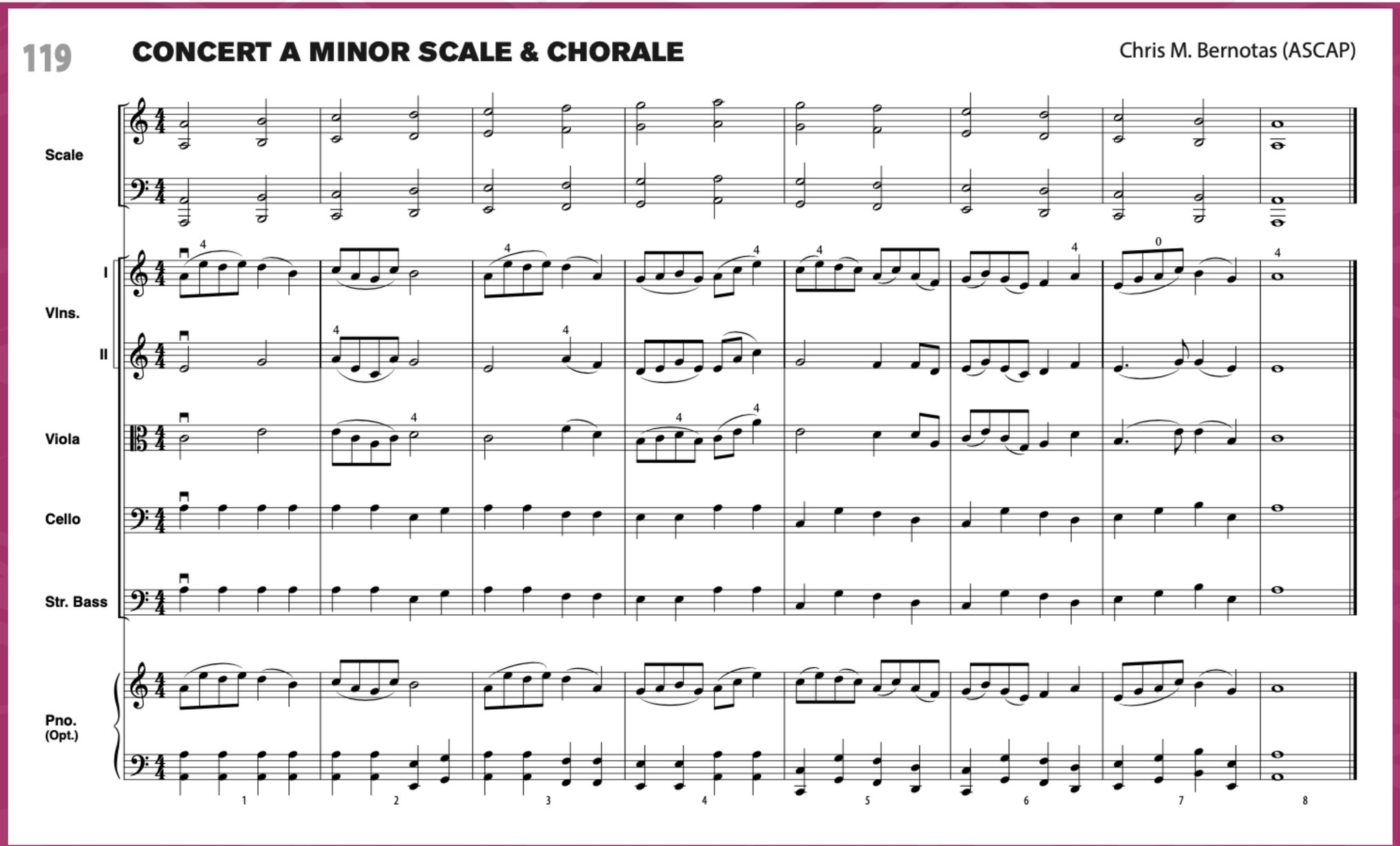


The Ash Grove
(arr. Palmer)

Focus on the Harmony

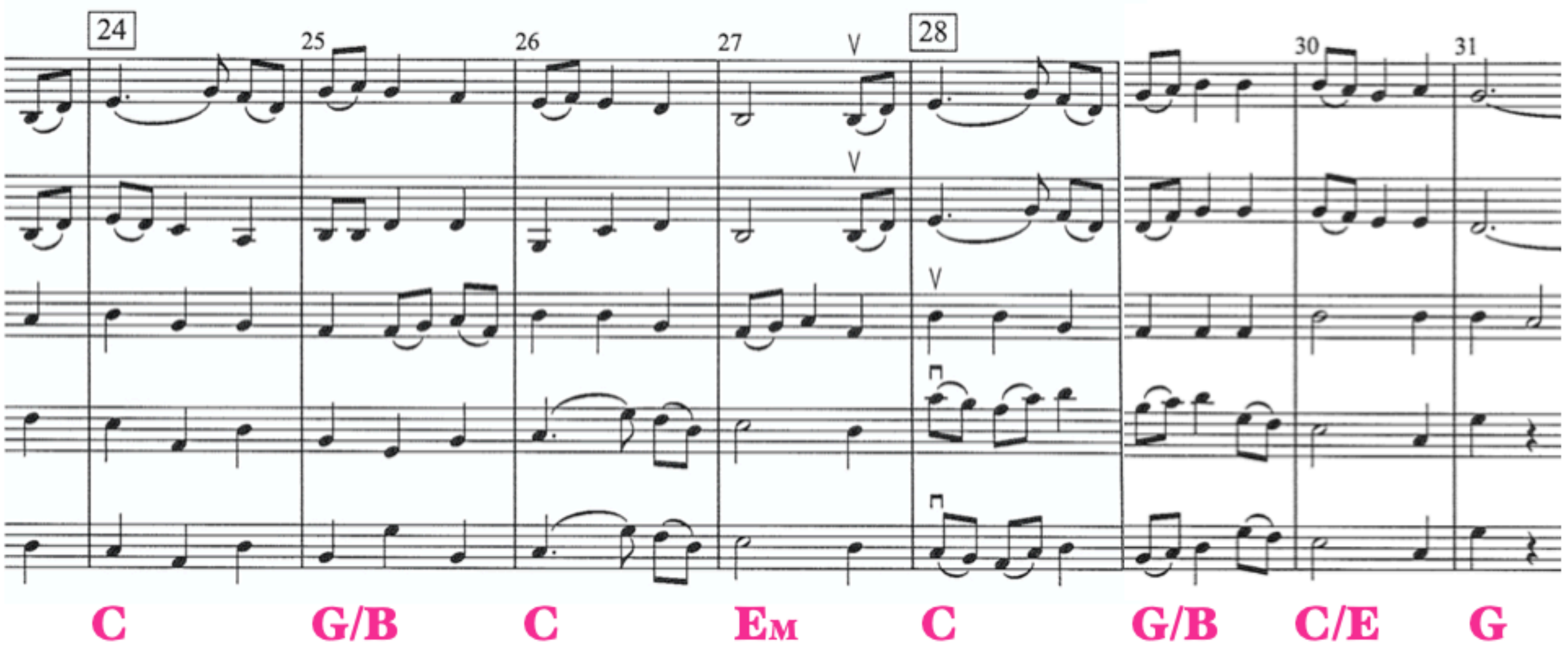


Focus on the Harmony

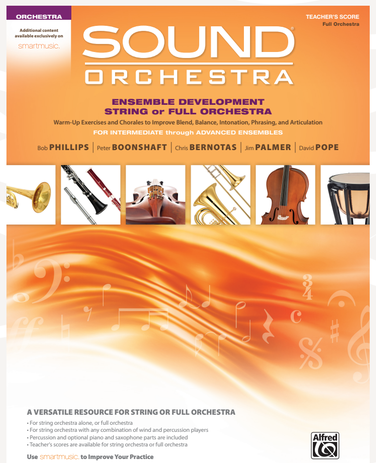


Focus on the Harmony

Holst/arr. Monday - “Jupiter”
(chords)



Questions / Comments



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