DANA

VOCALIST · EDUCATOR · ARRANGER

10 minutes of warmups, vocal growth, and ear training

for August

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SCAN FOR ALL LINKS

Hum around the cycle

WHAT IT SHOULD FEEL LIKE

Focus on creating a strong sensation from the hum in the nose. Keep the lips together, but create space in the mouth by lowering the jaw as much as possible to create space for the sound. Relax the throat and allow the sound to shift into the upper register without holding tension.

BENEFITS

A gradual warmup, sliding through the registers — starting in the middle of the range and moving down to warm up the bottom of the register first, then moving up. Singing the roots of dominant 7 chords moving around the cycle allows students to begin to hear their way through functional harmony.

The slide doubles as a way to slowly move through unfamiliar intervals without being locked into leaping to either the wrong or right note, while also allowing singers to slowly navigate and strengthen their register shift.

Hum Around the Cycle

(displace octaves as you wish)

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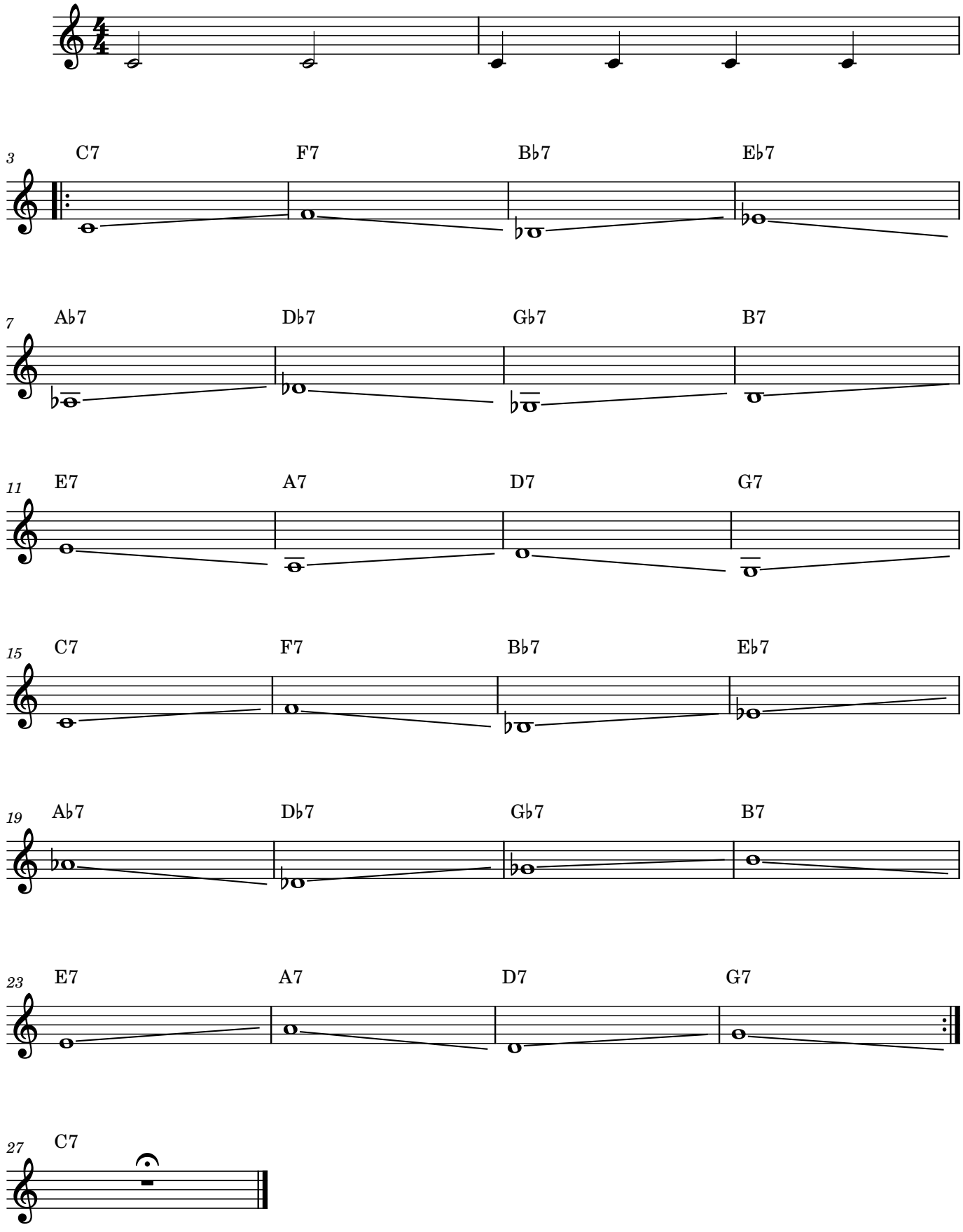

Lip trill on a dominant 9 arpeggio

ascending and descending chromatically

WHAT IT SHOULD FEEL LIKE

Similar to the hum, keep the jaw as lowered as it can be while the lips are still able to come together to create the trill. Relax the throat and try to focus the sound toward the nose and front of the face.

BENEFITS

Lip trills are a semi-occluded sound, which is important to begin with when warming up. As the lips partially block the airflow, they create a back pressure on the vocal folds while they phonate, which means they are supported and have an easier time navigating areas of the voice where they are typically challenged — such as through the register shift, or the very top and bottom ends of the voice.

This arpeggio trains the ability to hear up to the 9 and works on bigger leaps than scales, while practising on a dominant chord rather than major, which is the typical default for vocalists — this will expand their ear.

Dominant 9 Arpeggio

Lip Trill

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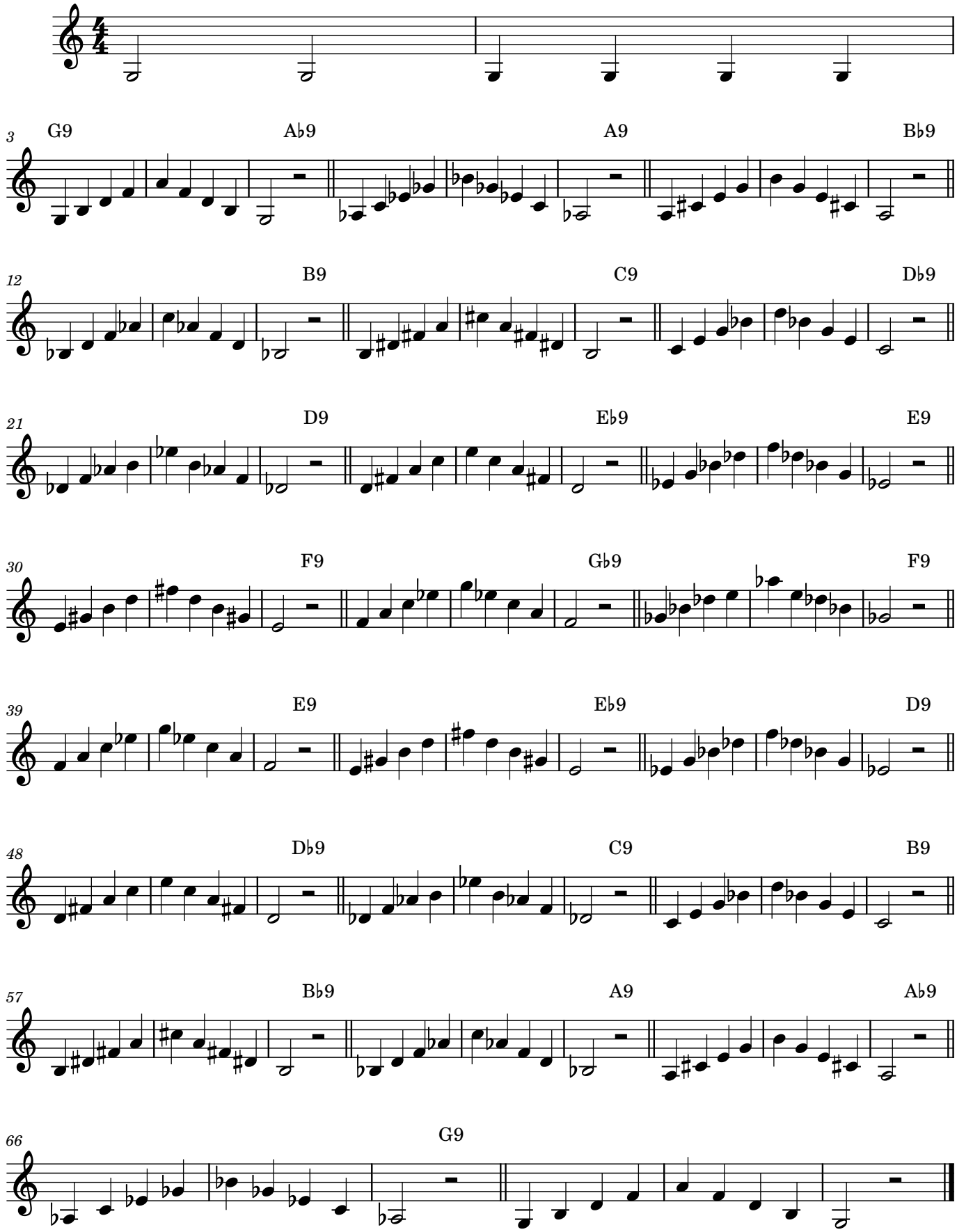

Dorian scale up to the 9, sung on ‘doo’

as in ‘cool’ — moving up and down chromatically

WHAT IT SHOULD FEEL LIKE

To produce the ‘doo’ sound, bring your lips forward and don’t allow your mouth to widen horizontally. This should focus the sound in your forehead, particularly as you move up higher.

BENEFITS

After completing a semi-occluded exercise we move on to a closed vowel sound such as ‘doo’. This continues to gradually warm up the voice, and the ‘d’ consonant at the start of each note reinforces the placement of sound to begin at the front of the mouth.

The Dorian scale is an important mode for vocalists to be familiar with, as it is a common minor scale used in music they will sing, coming from the ii chord in a major key. When singers read the scales and learn what they sound like, they are improving both their aural skills and their music theory.

Dorian Mode

Articulate each note on 'doo'

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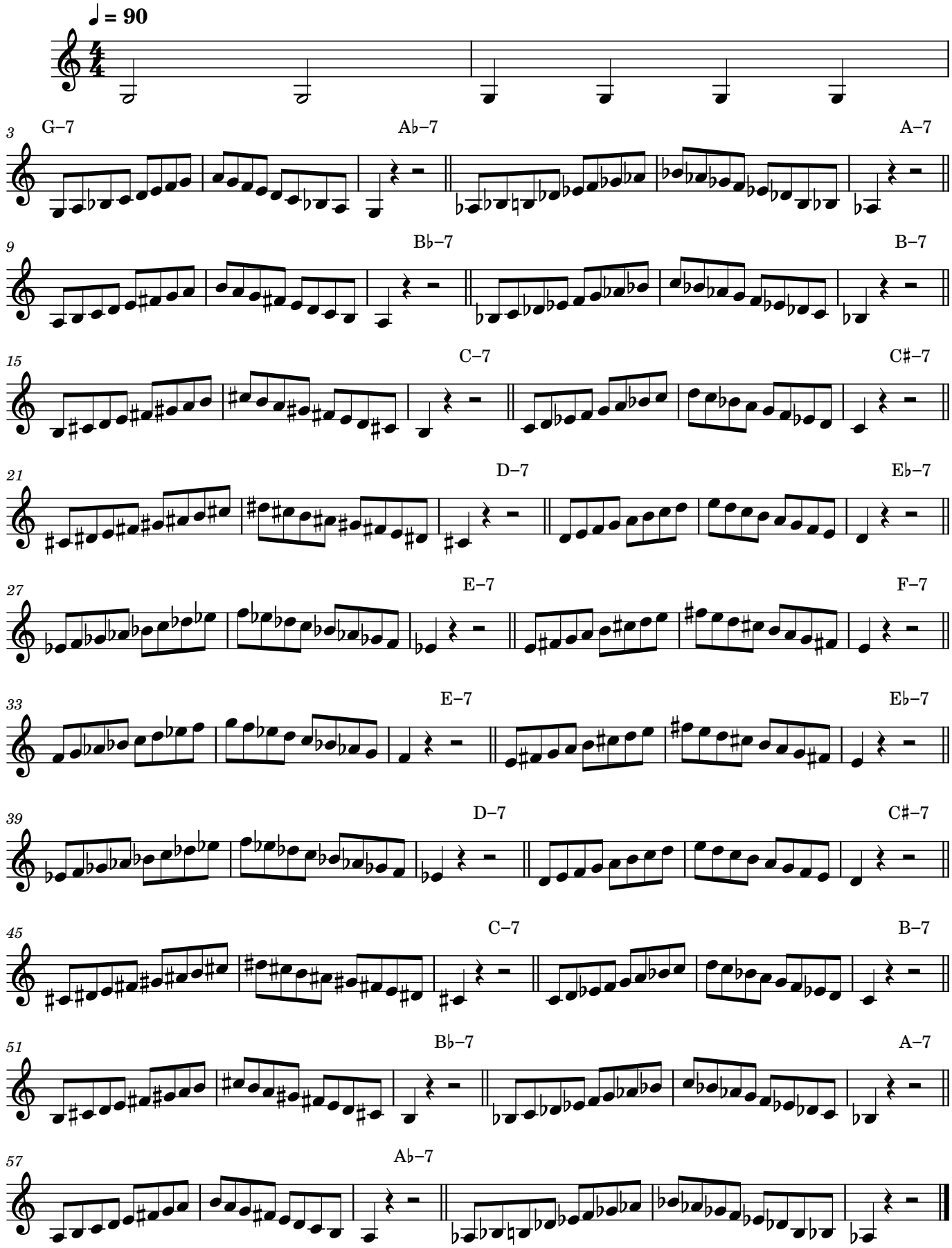


Extended major scale pattern on ‘muh’

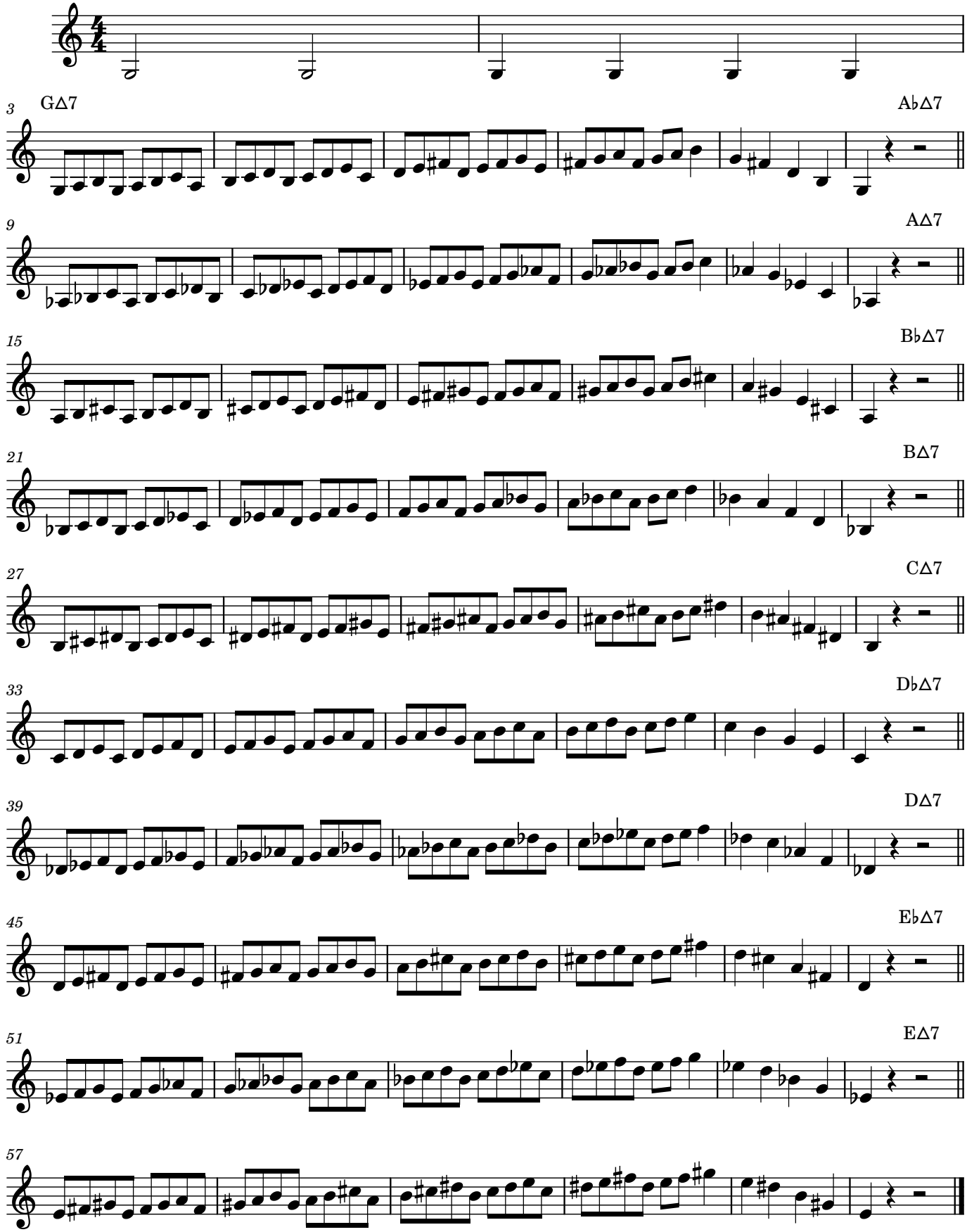
WHAT IT SHOULD FEEL LIKE

This exercise is longer than the others to build controlled breath management. It’s important to focus on taking a large breath that expands the rib cage outward rather than pushing the shoulders up, and to focus on managing consistent airflow through the exercise. Drop the jaw as low as possible while producing each note, and keep the cheeks and sides of the mouth completely relaxed to keep the sound forward and focused on the front of the face. Relax the tongue and let it sit at the bottom of the mouth.

BENEFITS

Producing a strong open vowel sound with great tone is what singing is all about. This exercise will improve air support and consistency, as well as vocal strength. As this is a major scale variation, vocalists will pick it up quickly, but will still be developing their ear by learning a new way to navigate the scale.

Major Scale Pattern/Arpeggio

Articulate each note on 'muh'

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