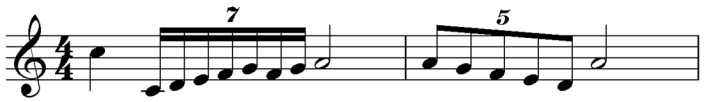
Chapter 16

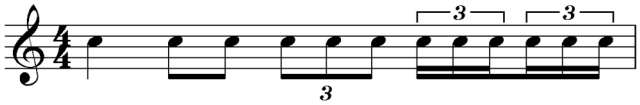
Irregular Groups of Notes
Cadenzas

The term "irregular group" refers to any grouping of notes that differs from the normal number of notes on any given beat or partial beat. In print, irregular groups are usually marked with a number above or below the beamed notes, indicating how many notes are played in the irregular group.

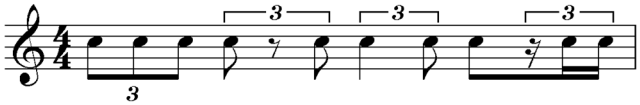


16.1 The Triplet

The most common irregular group of notes is the triplet, which consists of three notes of the same value that are to be performed in place of two notes of that value. For instance, in 4/4 time two eighth notes normally get one beat; an eighth-note triplet, consisting of three eighth notes, gets one beat. In the same time signature two sixteenth notes normally get half a beat; a sixteenth-note triplet, consisting of three sixteenth notes, gets half a beat.

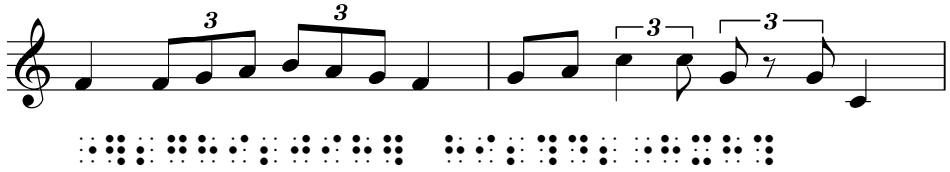


A rest may be substituted for one or more of the notes in the triplet. Occasionally, the triplet may consist of notes of unequal value. For example, an eighth-note triplet may consist of a quarter note and an eighth note.



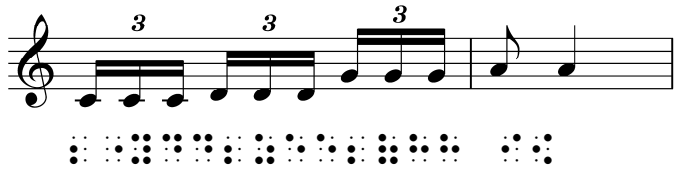
In braille, the single-cell triplet sign (dots 23) ⠜ is usually used for the triplet (rather than the 3-cell sign described later in this chapter). The triplet sign is brailled before the first note of the triplet.

Example 16.1.1

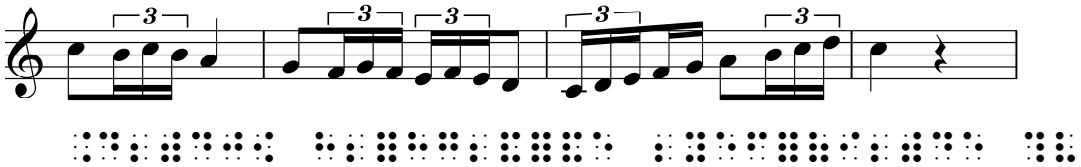


If the notes are sixteenths or smaller, braille grouping may be used if all the notes are of the same value.

Example 16.1.2

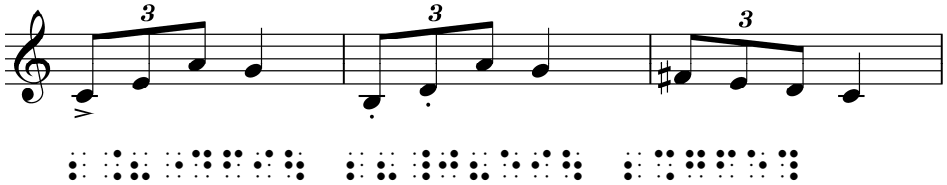


Example 16.1.3



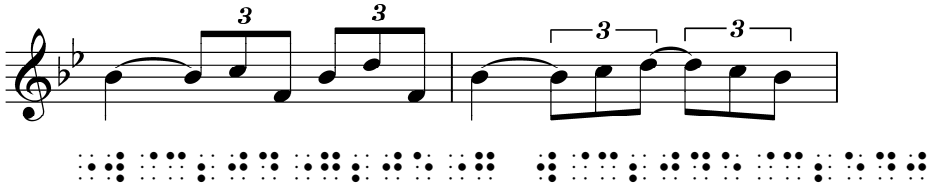
The triplet sign is brailled before any sign that specifically affects the first note of the triplet, such as a staccato mark, an accent mark, or an accidental.

Example 16.1.4



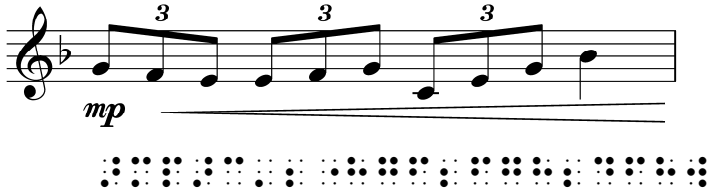
If a preceding note is tied over to the triplet, the tie precedes the triplet sign.

Example 16.1.5

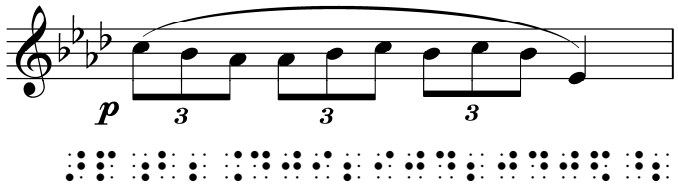


The triplet sign is preceded by word-sign expressions, hairpin symbols, and the opening bracket slur.

Example 16.1.6

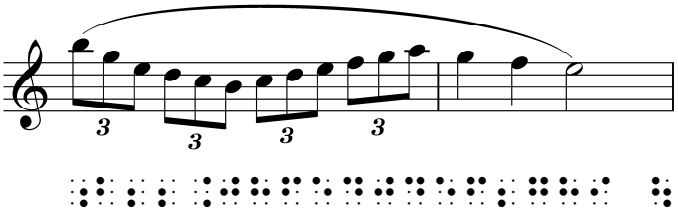


Example 16.1.7



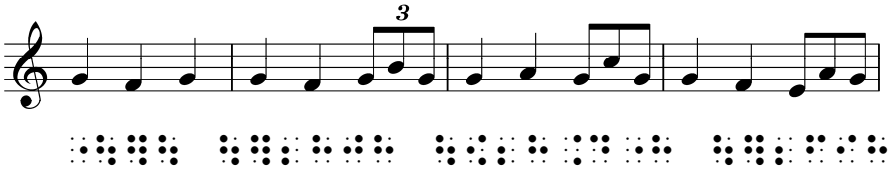
If four triplets occur in succession, without intervening notes or rests, the triplet sign may be doubled. The triplet sign will thus be brailled twice before the first triplet and once before the last triplet.

Example 16.1.8

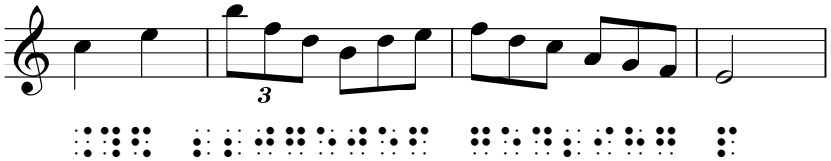


Triplets are easiest to recognize when the notes are connected by a bracket or curved line and when the print music includes a small numeral "3." Sometimes, however, the "3" is missing or very small, and it may even be confused with a finger mark. Whether or not the "3" is shown in print, the triplet sign must be shown in braille. To establish the presence or absence of a triplet, you may need to count the beats of the measure very carefully.

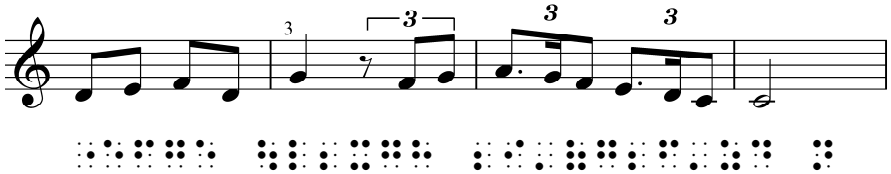
Example 16.1.9



Example 16.1.10



Example 16.1.11



16.2 Other Irregular Groups

For irregular groups of two or four or more notes, the first note of the group is preceded by dots 456, followed by a lower-cell number (without numeric indicator), followed by dot 3. Thus, the symbol requires three braille cells (or four cells for groups of more than nine notes).

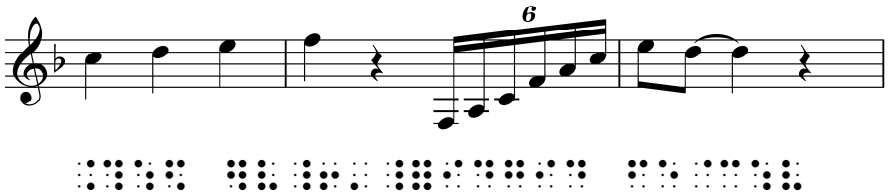
The irregular-grouping prefix:

Two-note group:

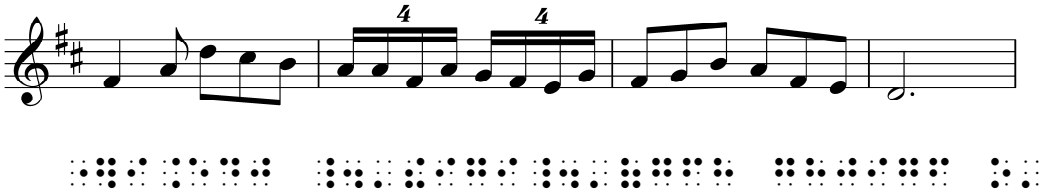
Five-note group:

12-note group:

Example 16.2.1

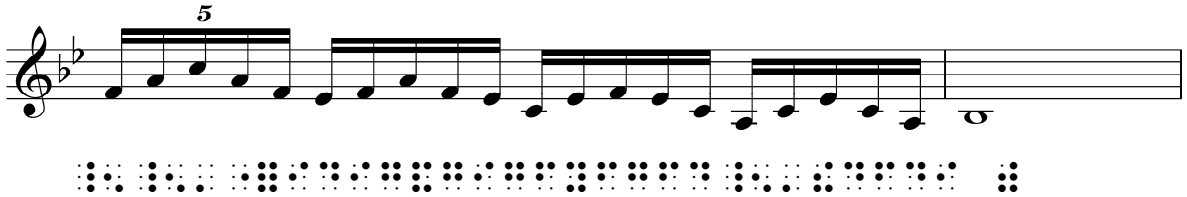


Example 16.2.2



The symbol may be doubled for four or more groups of the same number of notes. The doubled symbol consists of dots 456 and the lower numeral; these signs are brailled twice, followed by one occurrence of dot 3 before the first note of the first group.

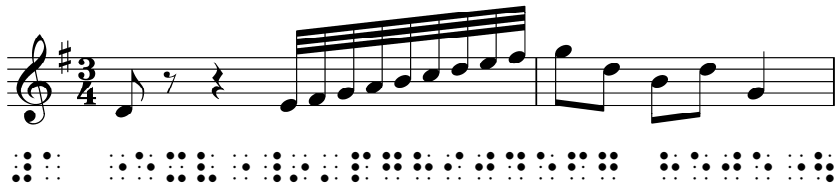
Example 16.2.3



As with triplets, the number of notes in the irregular group may not be shown in print. In braille the number must always be shown. When the irregular group is a triplet, the braille transcription does not include any indication that the triplet sign is a transcriber's insertion. For any irregular

group other than a triplet, dot 5 should precede dots 456 to indicate the transcriber's insertion.

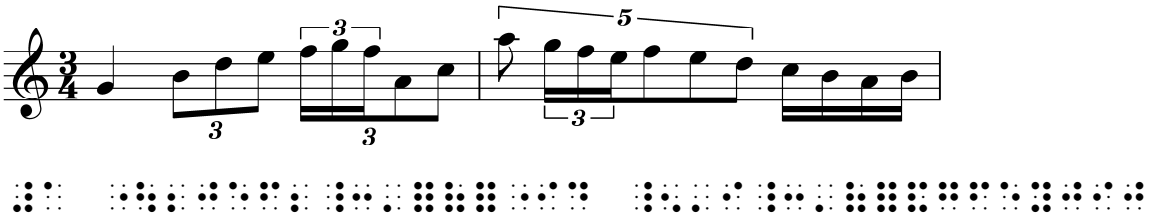
Example 16.2.4



16.3. Three-Cell Sign for Triplet

Occasionally a triplet occurs within a triplet or other irregular groups. Instead of the usual triplet sign, these situations require a special three-character symbol consisting of dots 456, the lower numeral 3 (dots 25), and dot 3. Per Section 8.5.1 of MBC-2015, braille grouping may not be used for the notes of this special triplet.

Example 16.3.1



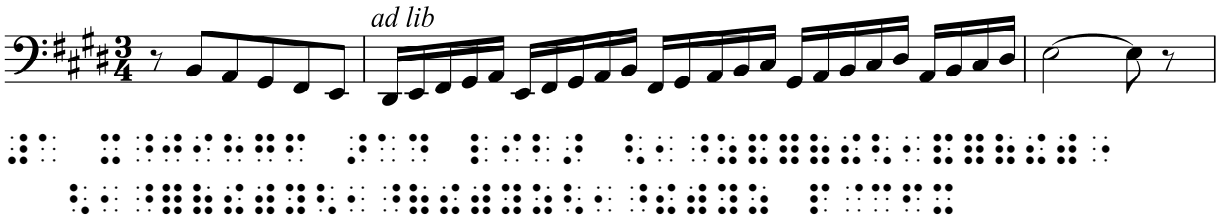
16.4 Grouping in Cadenzas

A cadenza is an elaborate musical passage designed to show the virtuosity of a vocal or instrumental soloist. The print music may use the words "ad lib" or "cadenza" or "unmeasured" to mark such music. These indications should of course be brailled as word-sign expressions.

Elaborate cadenzas consist of many notes of smaller value, beamed in unusual ways. There might, for example, be seven sixteenths followed by seven sixteenths followed by eight sixteenths. Braille grouping is not advisable in such passages, nor is using the irregular braille grouping indicator. Instead, the notes should be brailled at true value. The groups should be separated by the music comma, dots 126 2, to indicate the beaming of the printed music.

music comma: ⠸⠂

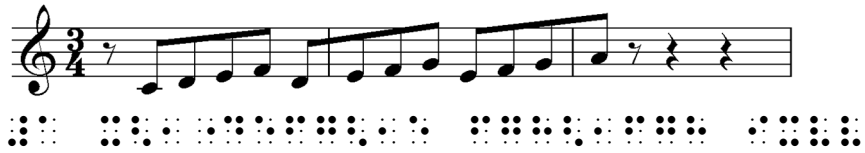
Example 16.4.1



16.5. Other Uses of the Music Comma

Braille grouping is of course not available for eighth notes. The normal beaming of eighth notes in printed music is ignored in braille (MBC-2015, Section 8.2). Occasionally, however, eighth notes in print music are beamed in special ways, as in unusual time signatures (such as five-eight) or unusual metrical divisions where the beaming crosses the bar line. The braille reader needs to know about these kinds of beaming. Section 8.3 of MBC-2015 explains the use of the music comma for special beaming of eighth notes and for other unusual situations.

Example 16.5.1



16.6 Order of Signs

Preceding the note:

reminder tie
simple word-sign expression or abbreviation
line of continuation sign
opening bracket slur
music comma
triplet or irregular-grouping sign
larger or smaller value sign
signs of expression or execution that precede a note
(staccato or staccatissimo, accent, tenuto)
accidental
octave mark

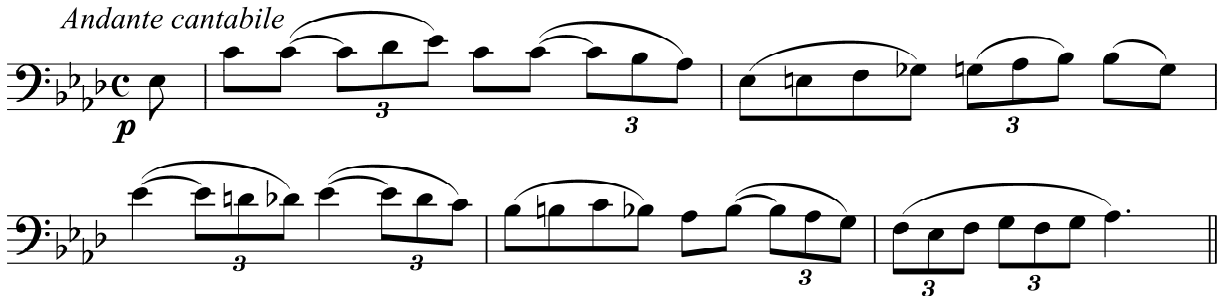
Following the note:

dot
finger mark
fermata
single slur, opening doubled slur
closing bracket slur
tie
termination sign for line of continuation or "hairpin"
breath mark
terminal music comma
double bar
music hyphen

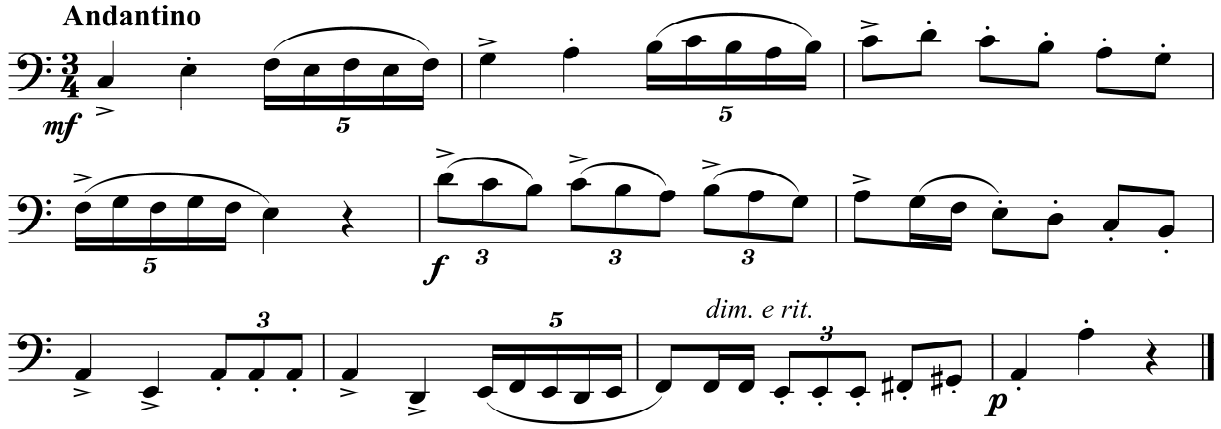
Drills for Chapter 16

(Correct transcriptions of these drills are at the end of this chapter)

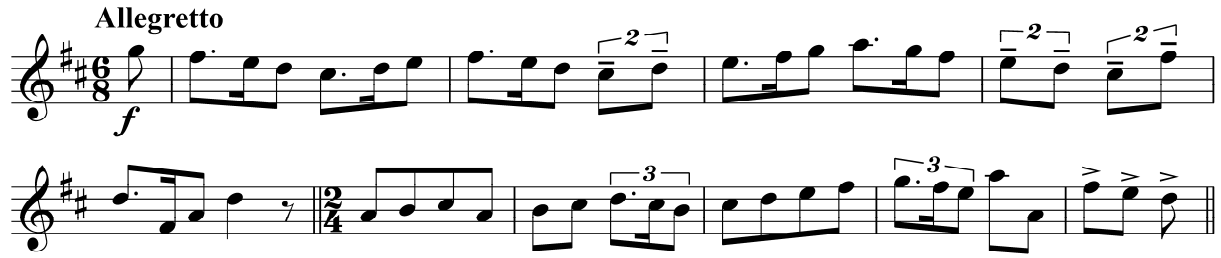
Drill 16.1



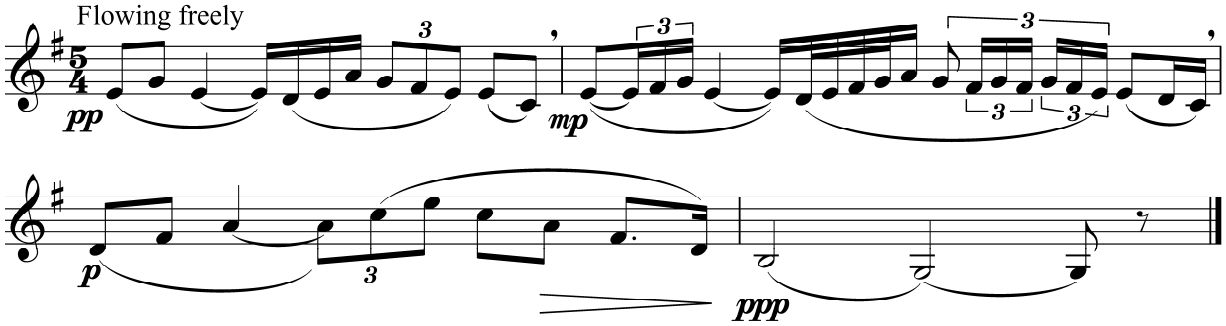
Drill 16.2



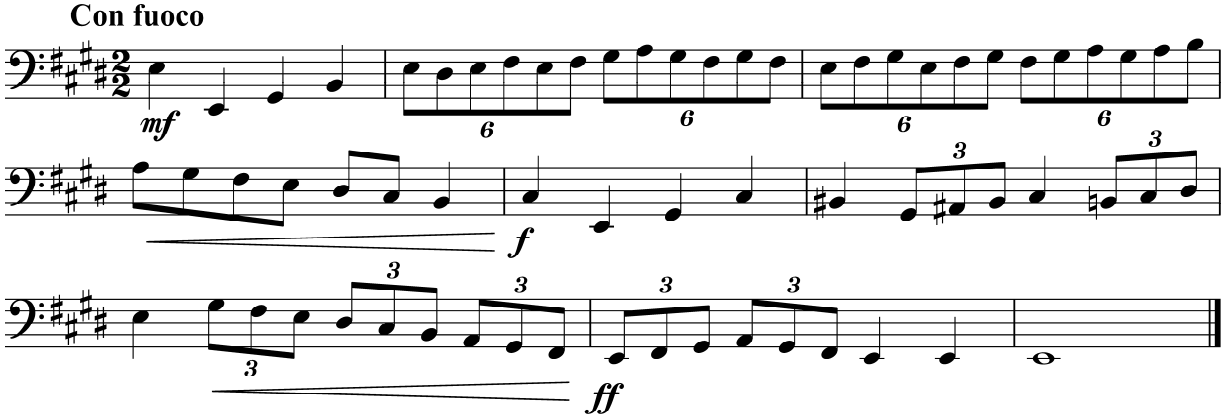
Drill 16.3



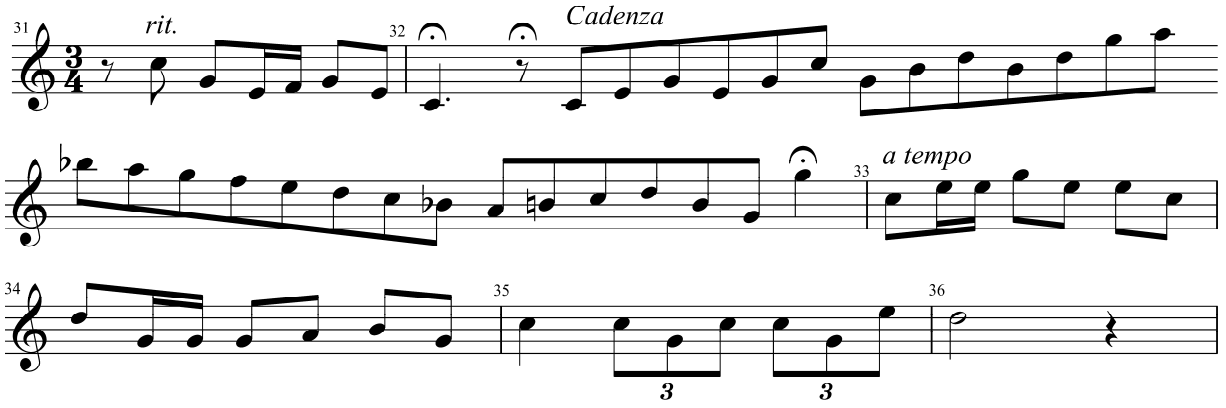
Drill 16.4



Drill 16.5



Drill 16.6



Exercises for Chapter 16

(Submit the following exercises to your instructor in BRF file format)

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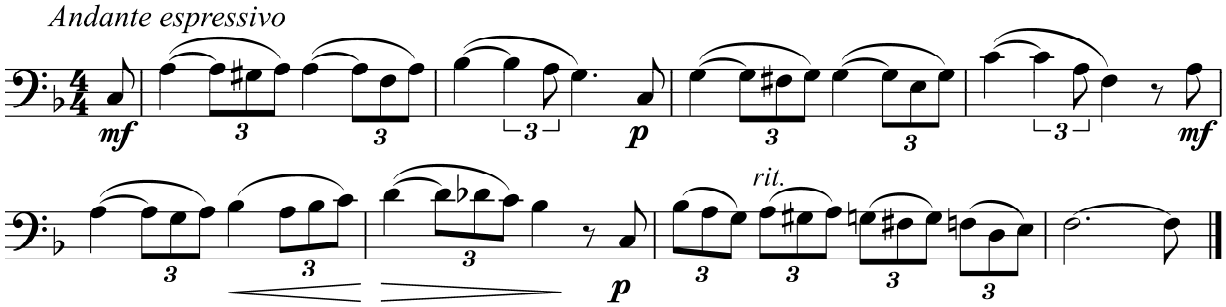
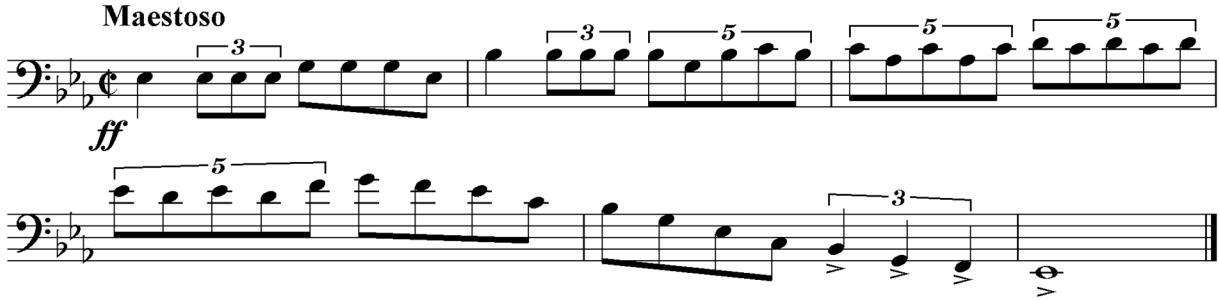
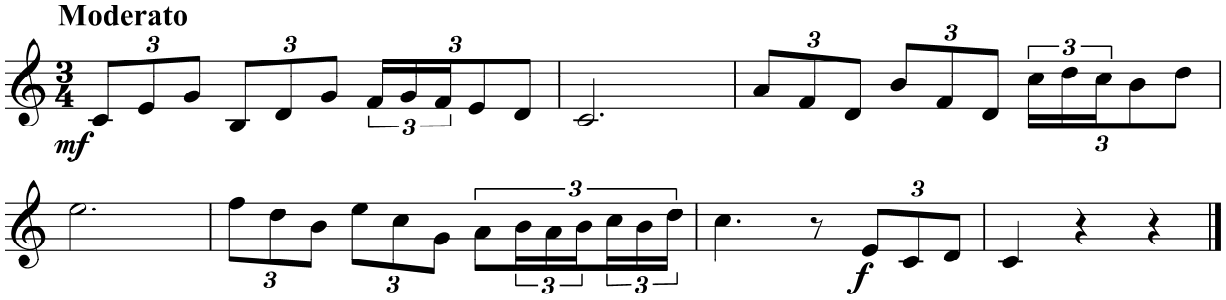


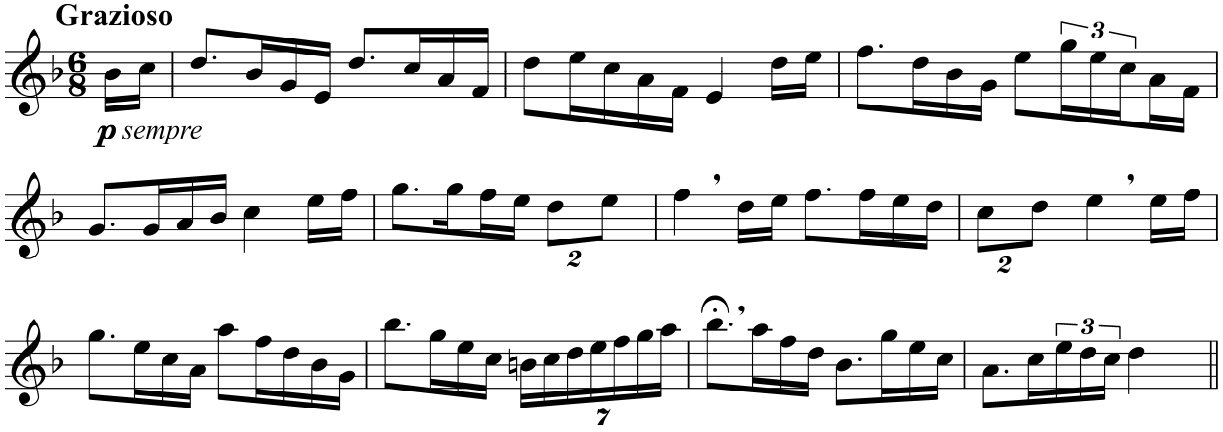
Exercise 16.2



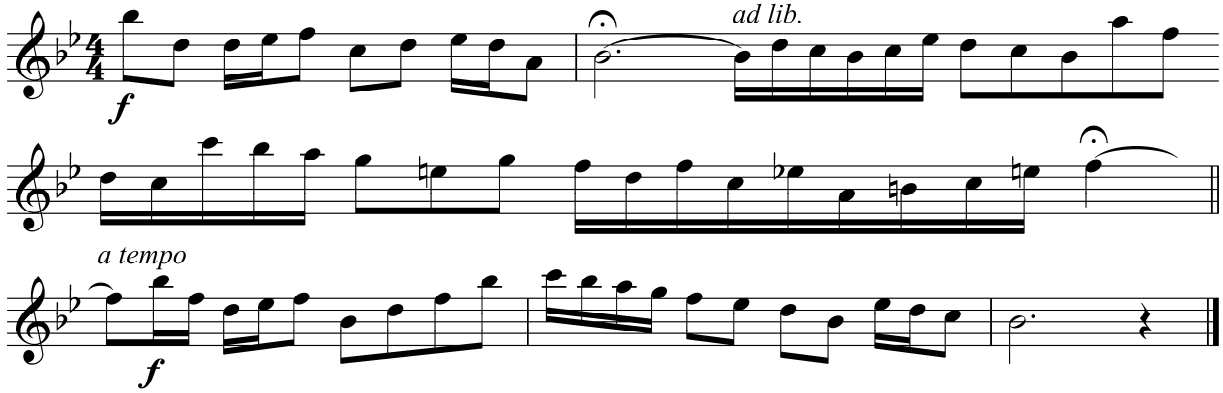
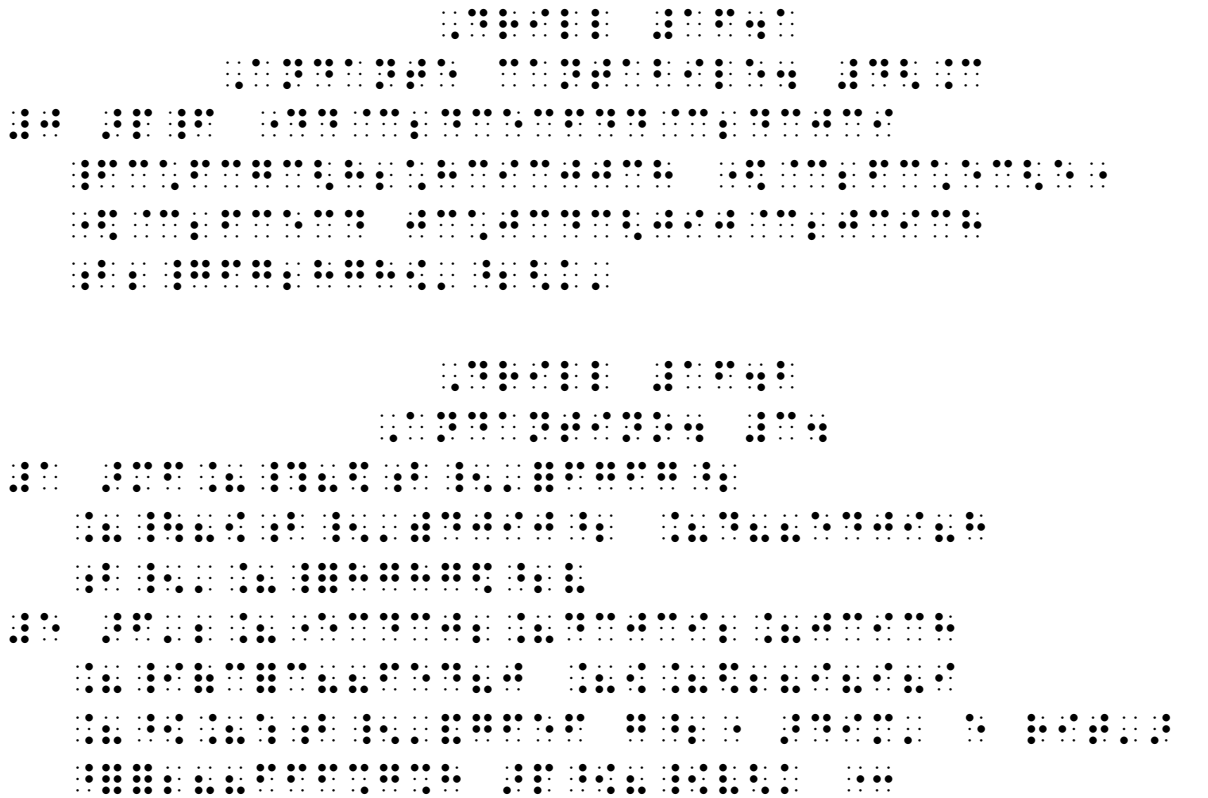
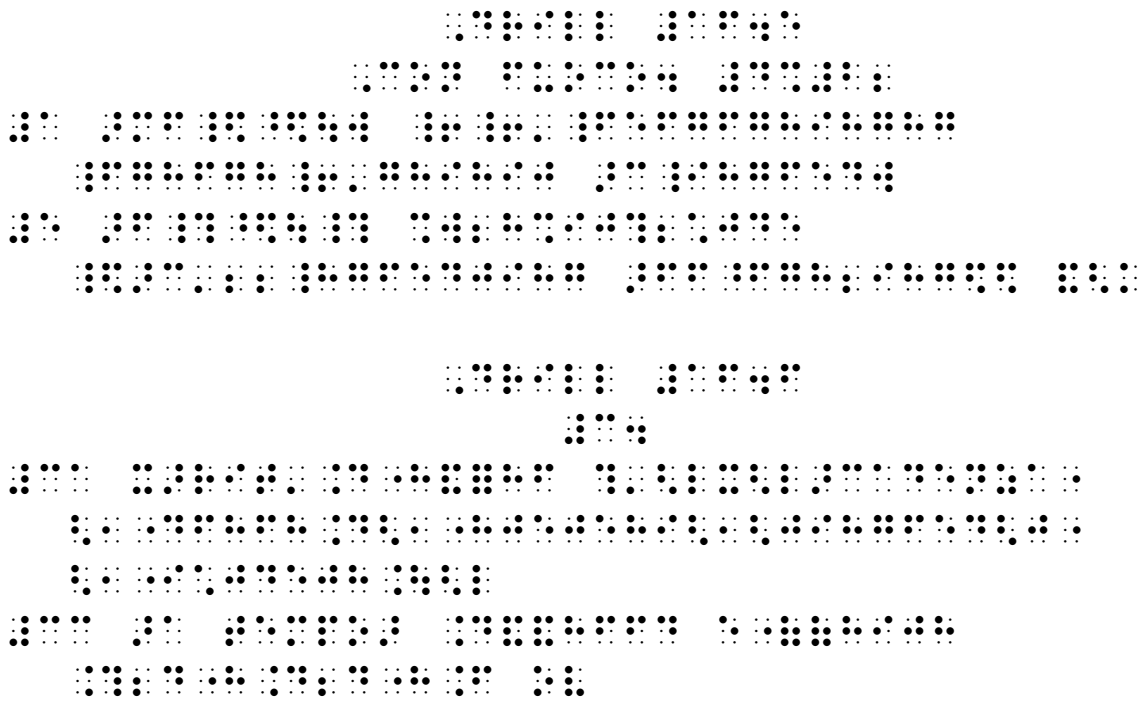
Exercise 16.3



Exercise 16.4



Exercise 16.5



Correct transcriptions of the Drills for Chapter 16