Sound / Tone Development

by Andrei Pricope
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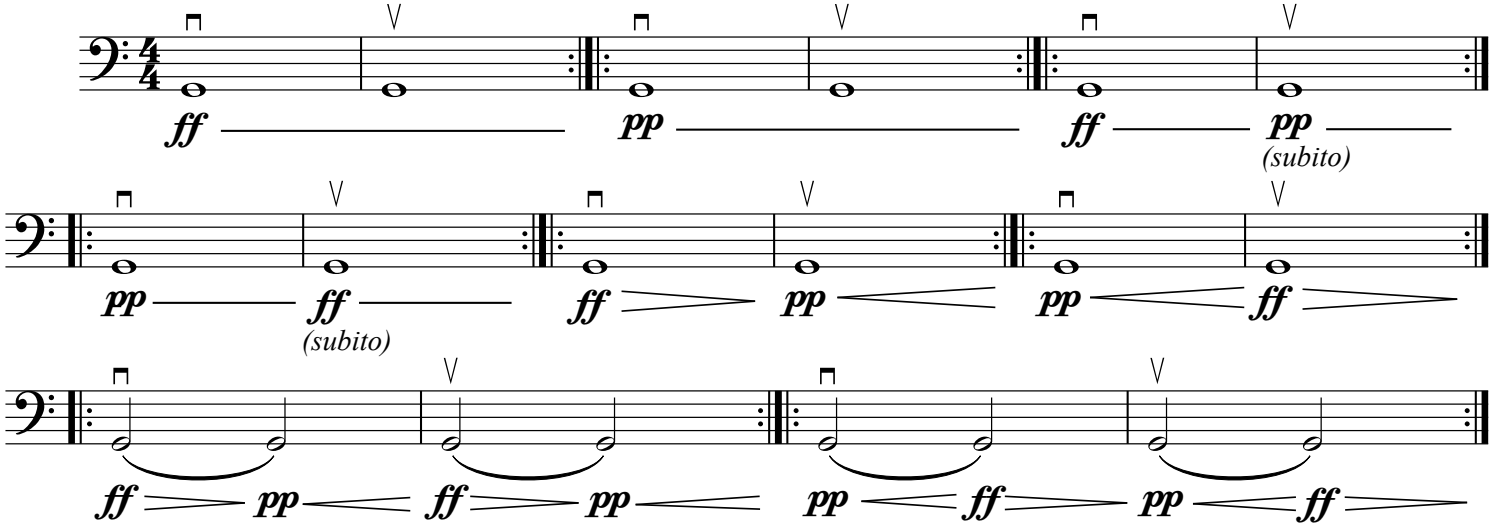
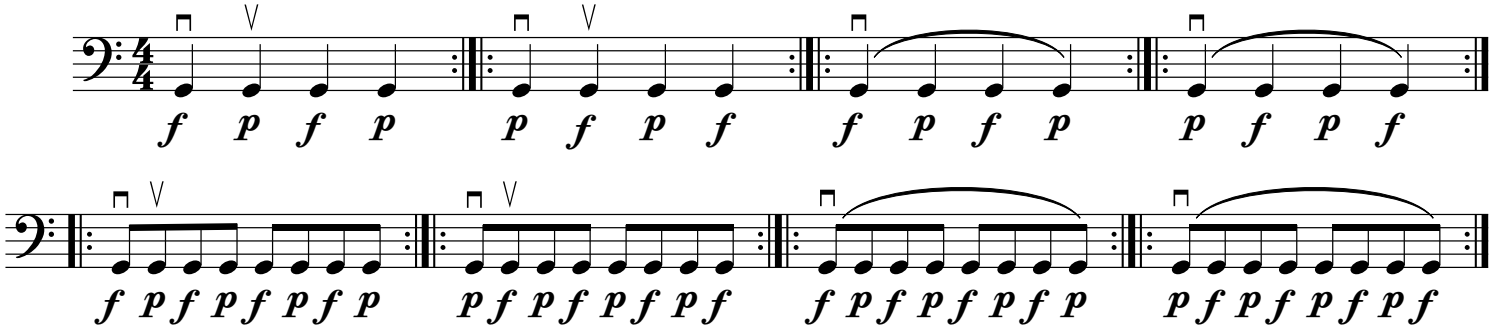
Before practicing the following, the student must be familiar with the preceding Open Strings/Rhythm Drills section.
Experiment with the five variables of tone production: weight, speed, point of contact, tilt, and angle to the string.
The goal is a relaxed but alert arm, that produces a strong, projecting tone. Practice the following on other strings.
Advancing players: 1. Try also holding the bow with only the thumb, index, and 4th finger. Notice the difference.
2. Try also holding the bow backwards, at the tip. Notice the weight difference. Don't overdo!

Son filé ("spun sound")

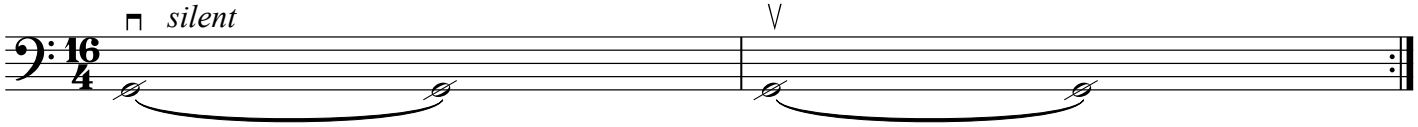


Alive 1st Finger



Ghost Bowing

The following is a silent exercise. The bow must be drawn very slowly and steadily, 1 inch (2.5 cm) ABOVE the string.
The goal is complete control of the bow's speed, elevation from the string, and (non-)point of contact.
Notice the time signature.



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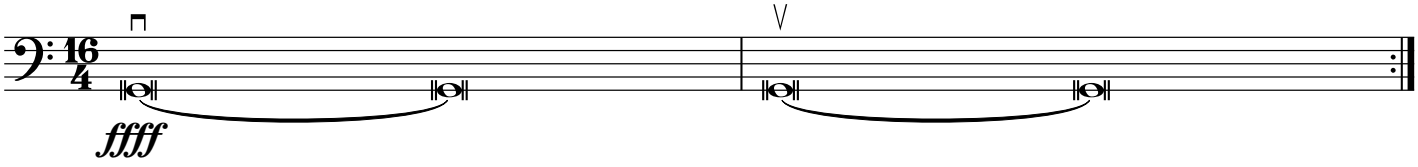
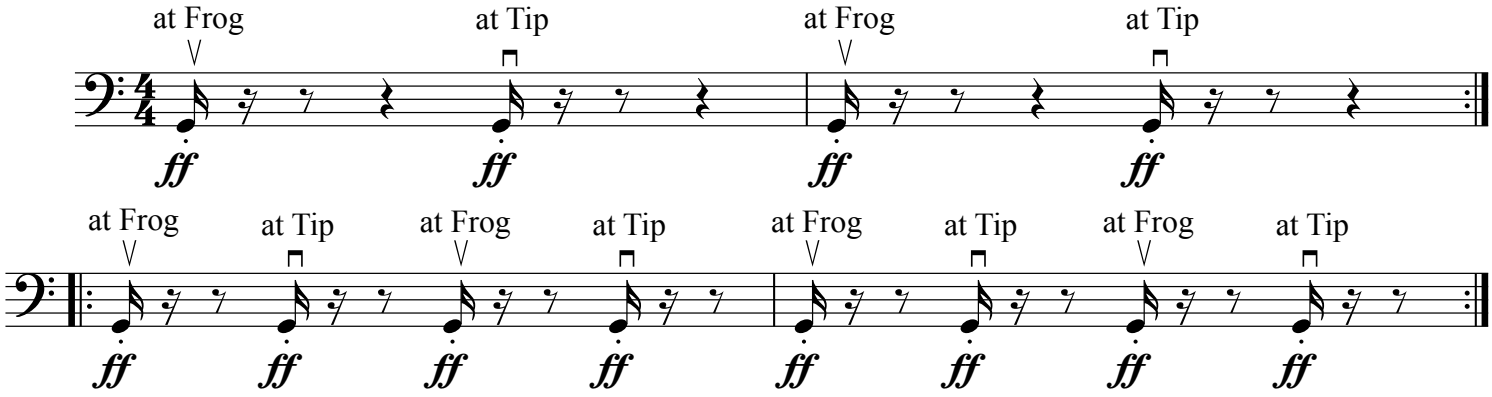
The 'Russian Sound Builder'

Play as closely to the bridge as possible, as loudly as possible, and as slowly as possible. Relax from the shoulder. Keep constant the bow's speed, volume, and point of contact. Notice the time signature.



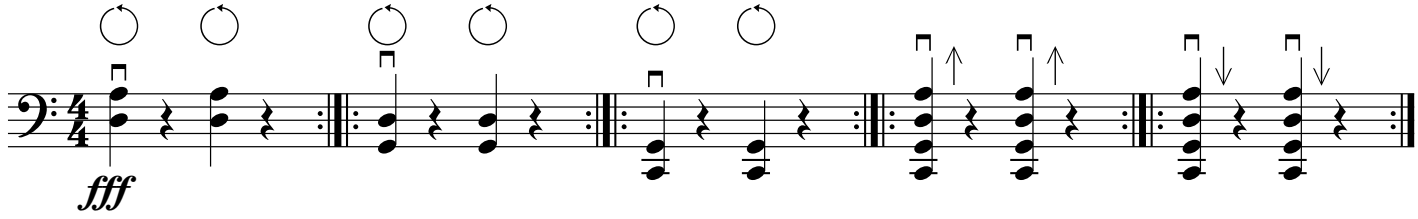
The Grasshopper

Short strokes (1 inch; 2.5 cm), using mainly fingers and wrist. Up-bow at the Frog, Down-bow at the Tip. Always *ff*. Practice also on scales. Do not allow the bow to splash and bounce on the string at the tip - control it.

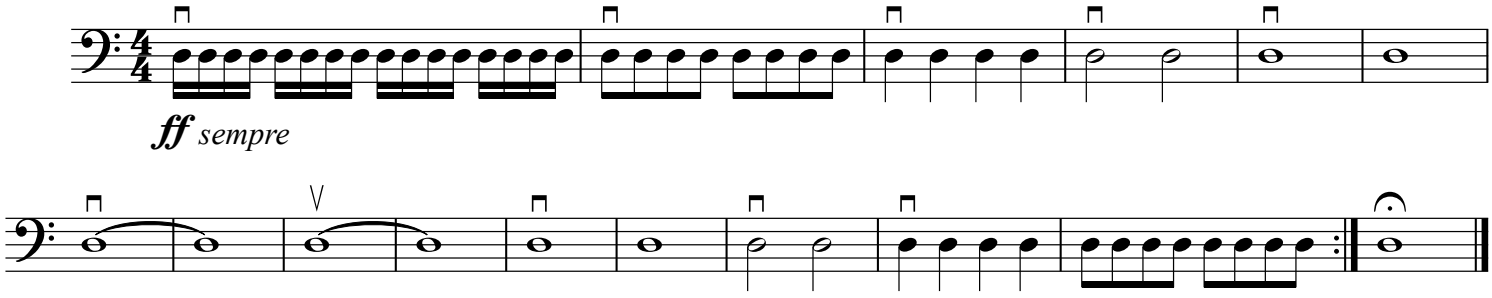


Bouncing Ball

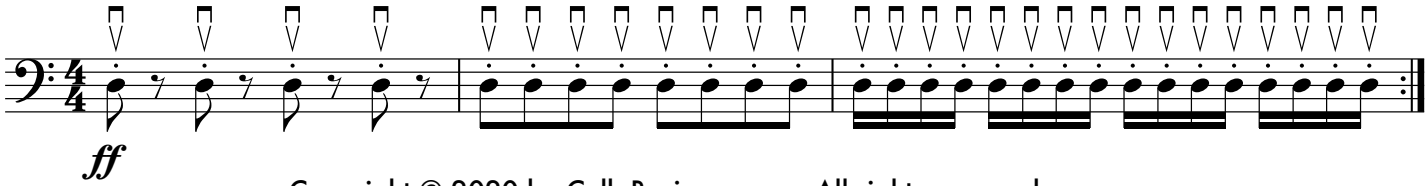
Landing on the string loudly, relaxed from shoulder to wrist, describing circles in the air, bouncing off the string.



Double the Bow



Retakes / Bow Lifts (all ⊓ or all ∨)



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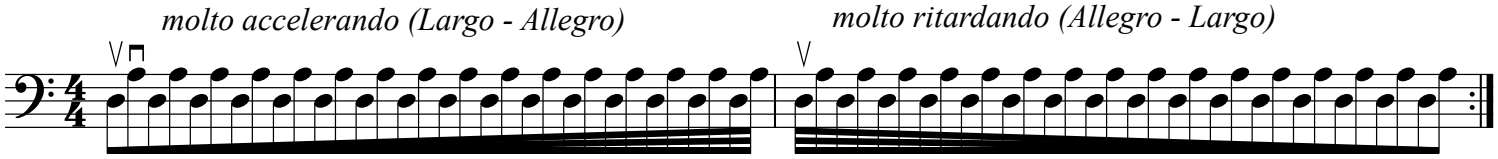
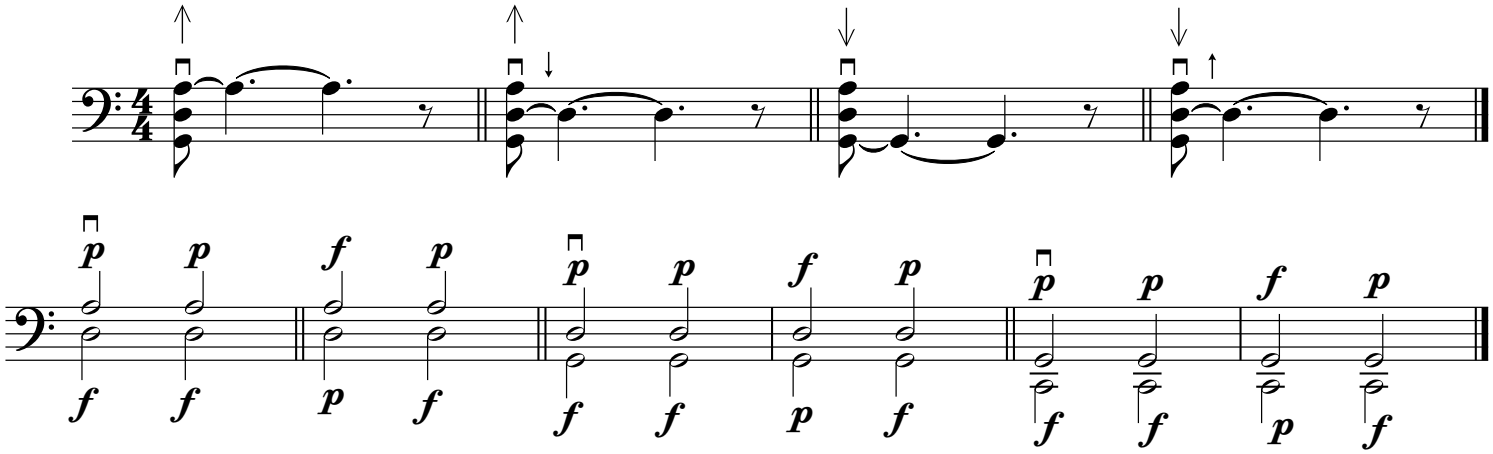
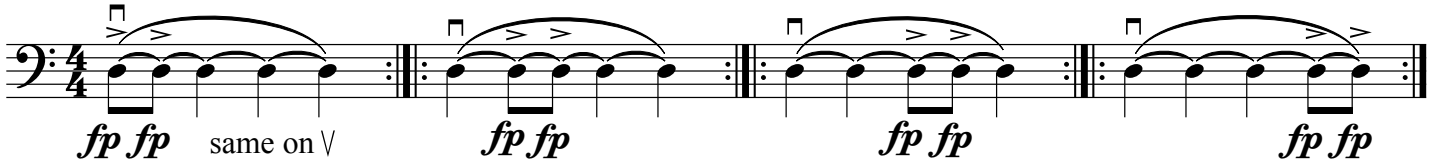
Wrist Exercise



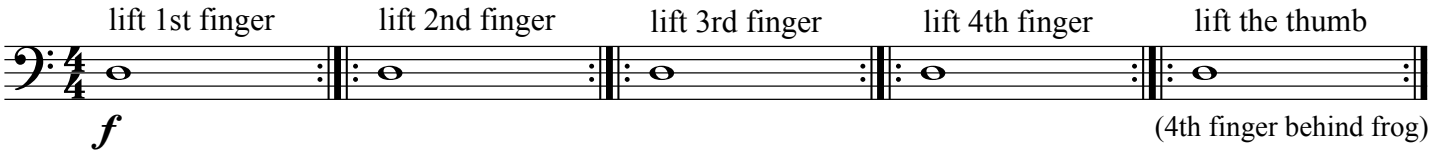
Voicing



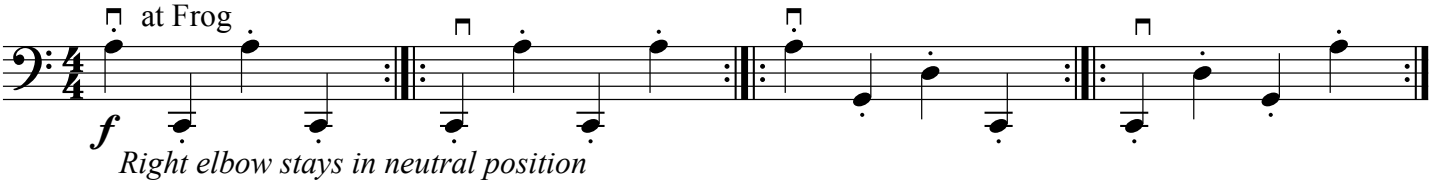
Biting Accents (1st finger must be very "alive")



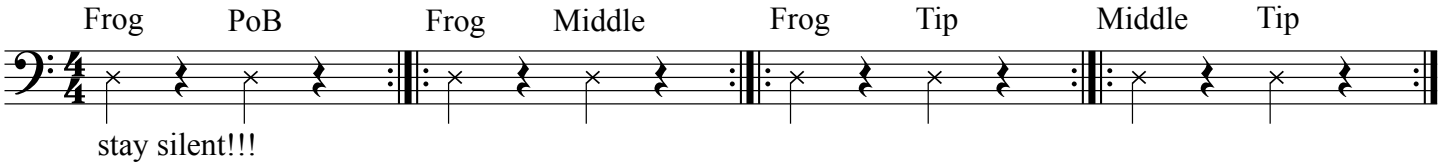
Missing fingers (lift selected fingers off the bow stick; feel the difference)



Role of the wrist and fingers in changing strings (use mostly finger motion - Collé)



Silent bow placement (PoB = Point of Balance) *Challenge: close your eyes!!!*



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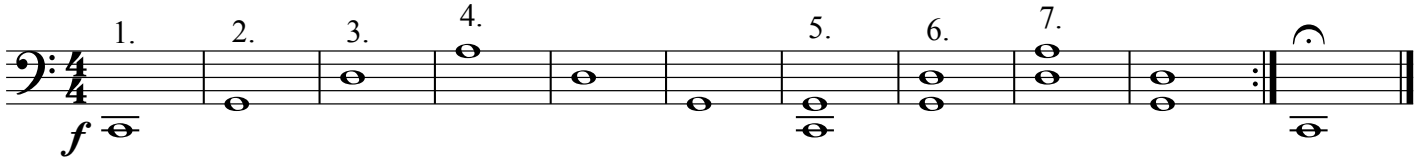
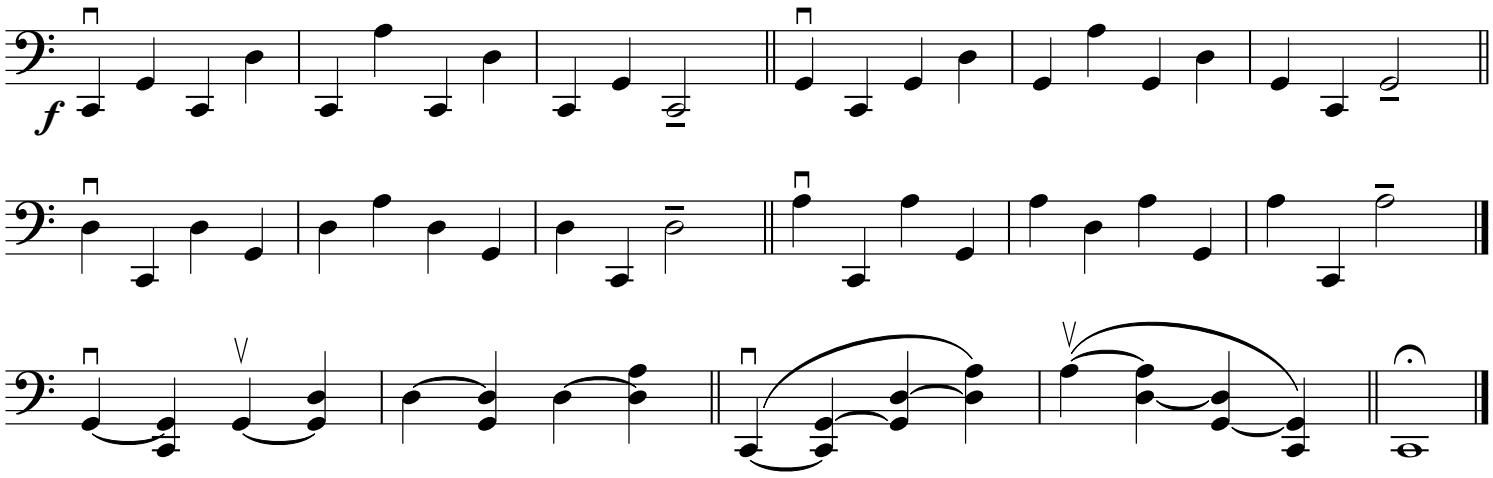
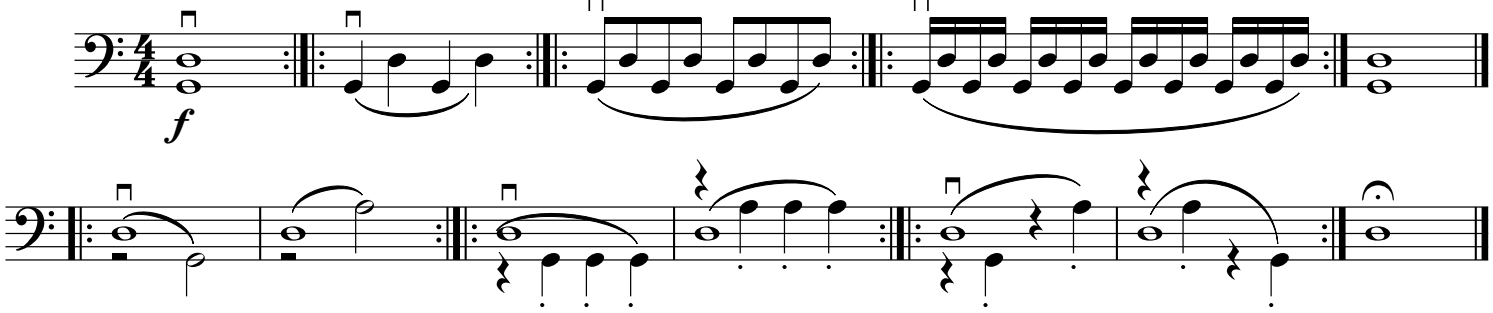
The Seven Levels (Planes) of the Bow



Play the following at the Frog, PoB, Middle, and close to the Tip:

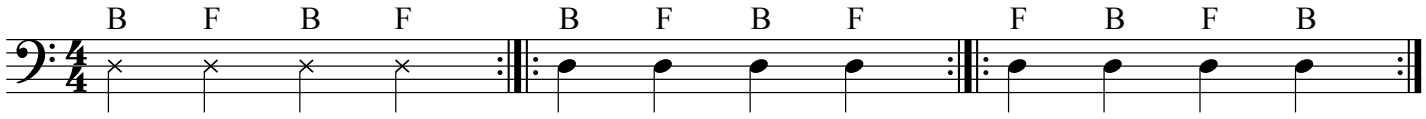


Balancing Double Stops



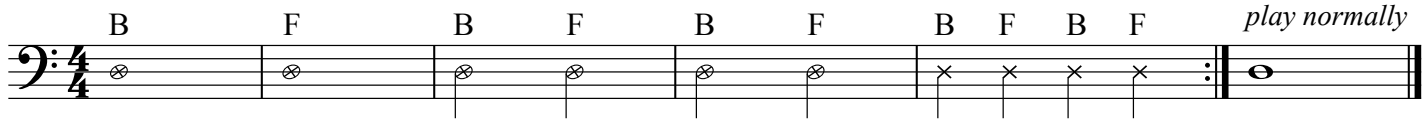
Bow Tilt

B = tilt toward Bridge; F = tilt towards Fingerboard. First measure is silent. Notice the role of the fingers and thumb.



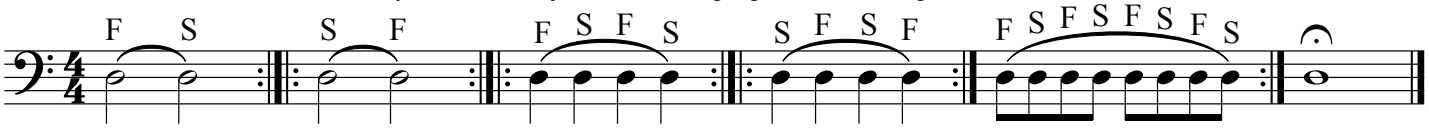
Bow Angle

B = push wrist toward Bridge; F = pull wrist towards Fingerboard. This is a silent exercise. Notice the role of the arm.



Bow Speed / Sounding Point

F = fast bow; S = slow bow. Keep the same dynamic, changing the Sounding Point.



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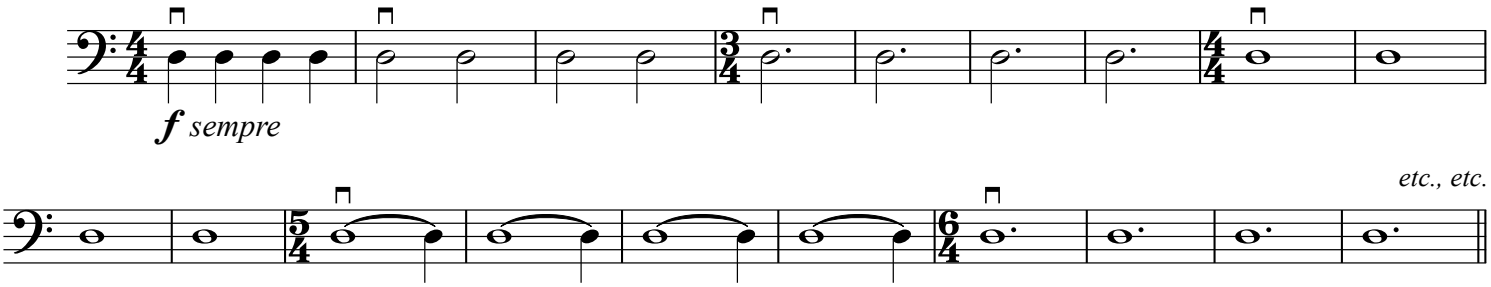
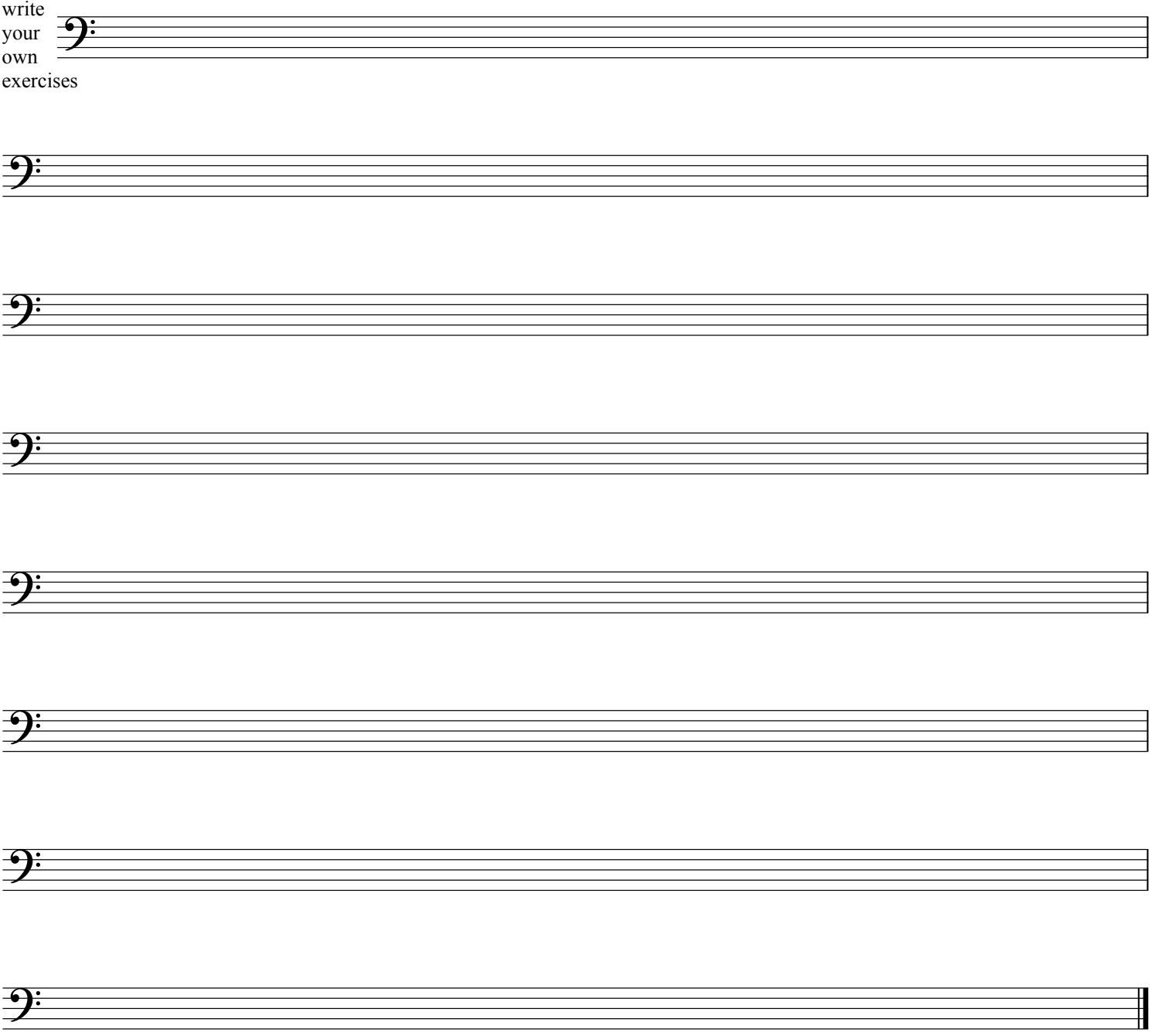
Add-A-Beat every four notes (Practice with the metronome ♩ = 60. Slower is better...)



write your own exercises



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