BERNHARD COSSMANN DOUBLESTOPPED EXERCISES IN EXTENDED POSITION - Neck Region - No Shifts

FOR FINGER INDEPENDENCE - COORDINATION - STRENGTH - INTONATION

There are 6 possible finger combinations with two fingers on each string:

1 X 2 1 X 4 2 4 3 4 2 3 1 X 3
3 4 2 3 1 X 3 1 X 2 1 X 4 2 4

For each of these 6 finger combinations there are 8 possible variants, according to the order in which we place the fingers. This total of 48 exercises can seem intimidating, but if we work through them slowly and gradually, they are extremely useful. For the sake of completeness and science, they are all here!

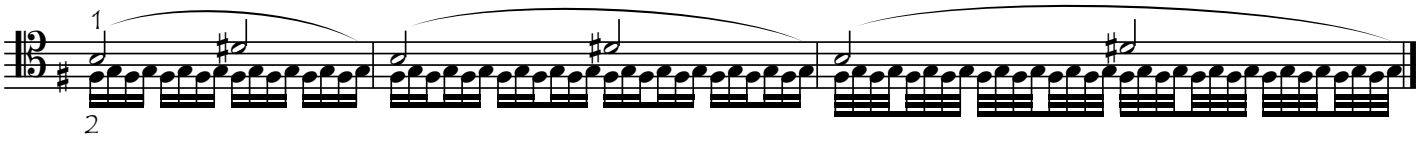
Not all of them are pleasant: some combinations are very dissonant. And not all of them are useful: some are quite easy but others are very uncomfortable unless we are rubber-fingered hand-yoga experts! The finger combinations are presented here roughly in order of difficulty. Playing with the fourth finger on the lower string and the third finger simultaneously on the higher string can be quite awkward so we will leave those ones till last.

Don't overdo them - these are intense, strenuous exercises: a strong medicine to be taken in small doses. These "extended position" versions of the Cossmann Doubletrill Exercises are the most strenuous versions. Before practing them in the extended position we should build up our hand strength gradually by practicing them in non-extended (closed) position.

Let the thumb "float" freely behind the cello neck It is very important not to press with it on the neck of the cello: the fingers use the weight of the arm to stop the strings. We can experiment with both the "violin" (first finger strongly curved) and the "doublebass" (first finger straight and extended back) extended hand postures. As a general rule, we can always keep the lower finges down. They are played simply by removing the higher finger. They don't need to be articulated.

These exercises can be played on other pairs of strings and can be transposed into any of the different positions of the Neck and Lower Intermediate Region. In fact we can practice these horrible little things anywhere, even without a cello - on our leg, chest, arm or on a table !!

These are magnificent exercises for developing strength and intonation. At the same time they are tricky "tongue twisters" (some are VERY tricky), which develop, in a very concentrated and efficient way, the skills of finger cooordination and independence. We will however use these extended-hand versions mainly for developing our strength, intonation and comfort in the extended hand position, rather than for the skills of coordination and finger independance.
For this reason we may want to favour longer note patterns on the moving string, such as:



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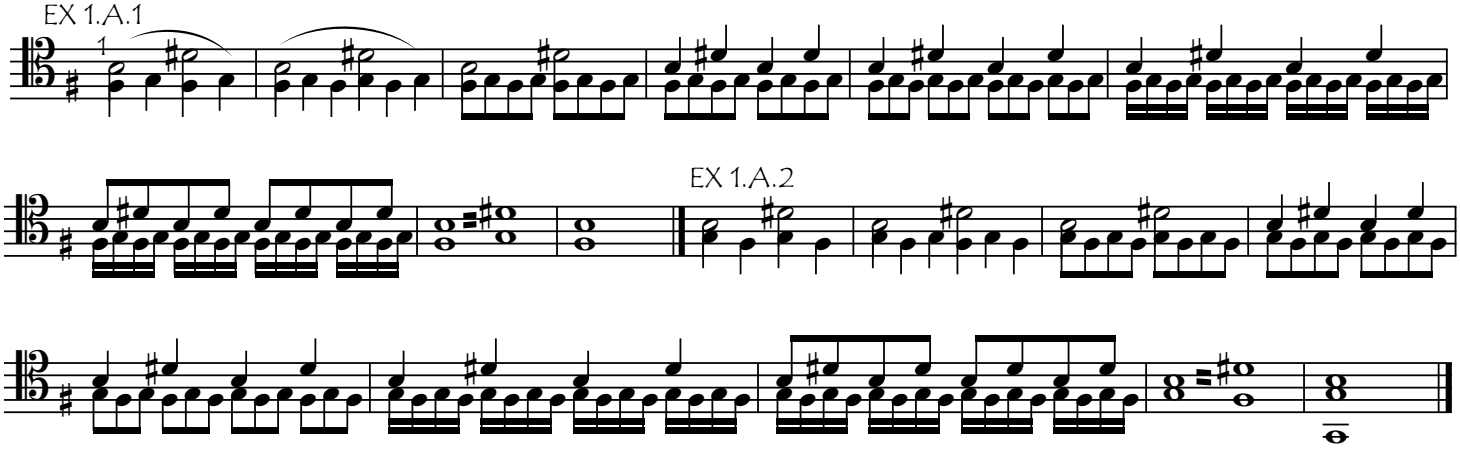
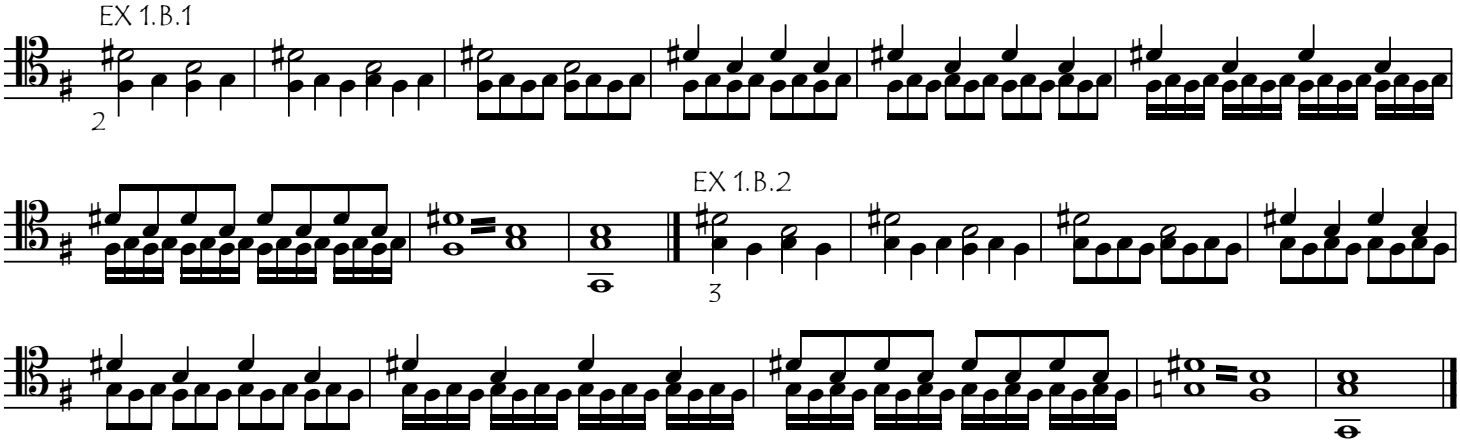
EXERCISE 1: FIRST AND FOURTH FINGERS ON TOP STRING, 2 AND 3 ON THE LOWER STRING

EX 1.A.1



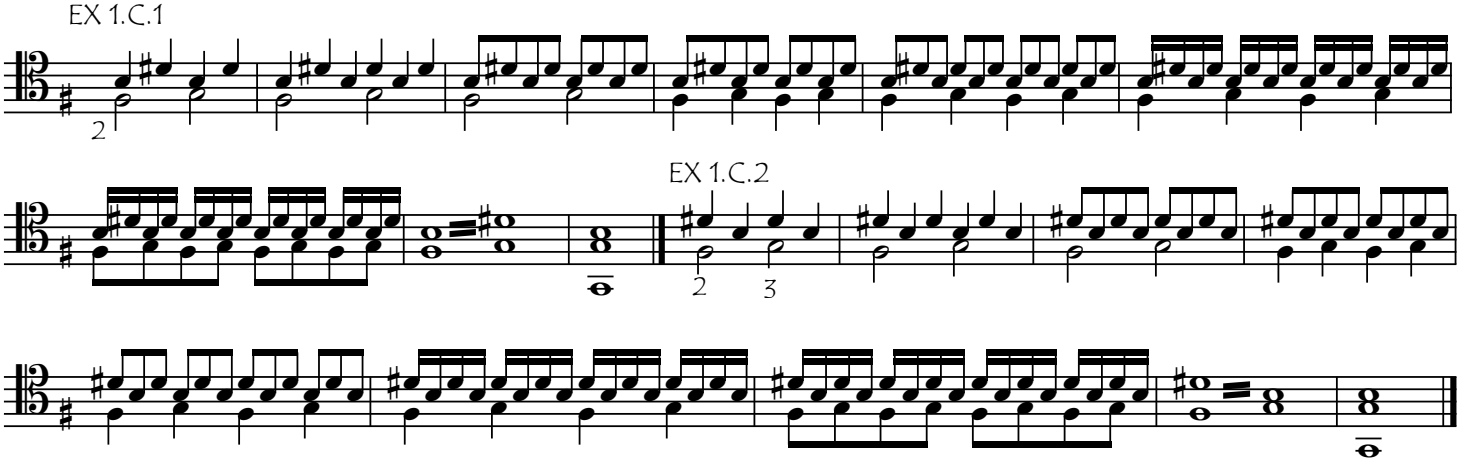
EX 1.A.2

EX 1.B.1



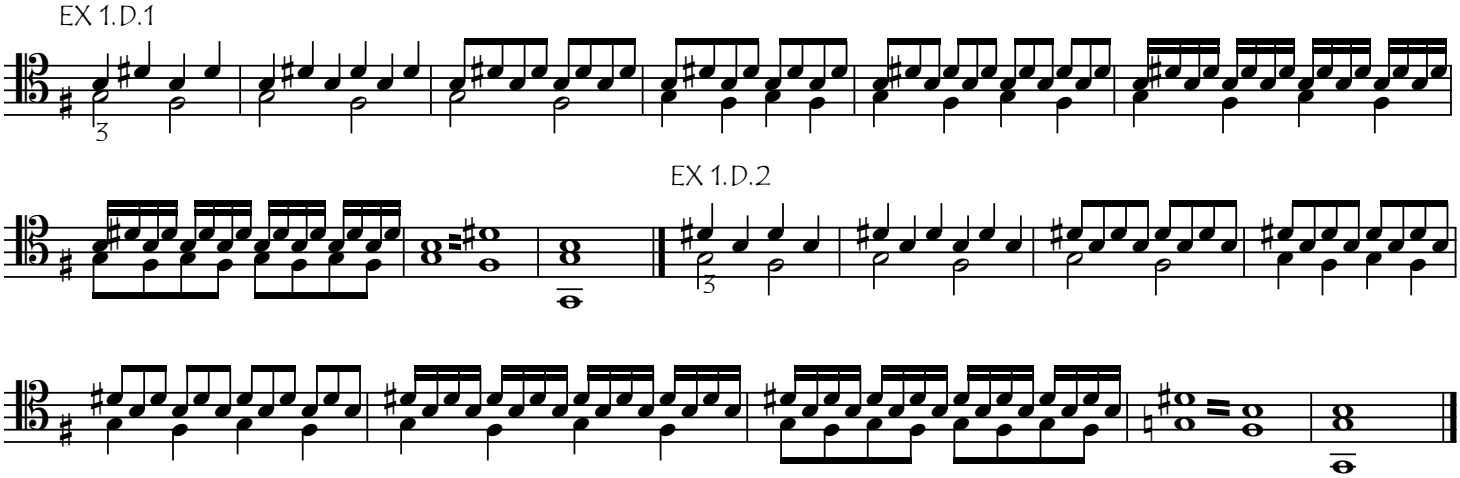
EX 1.B.2

EX 1.C.1



EX 1.C.2

EX 1.D.1



EX 1.D.2

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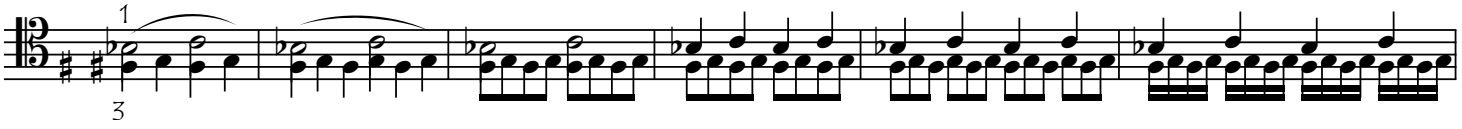
EXERCISE 2: FIRST AND SECOND FINGERS ON TOP STRING, 3 AND 4 ON LOWER STRING

EX 2.A.1



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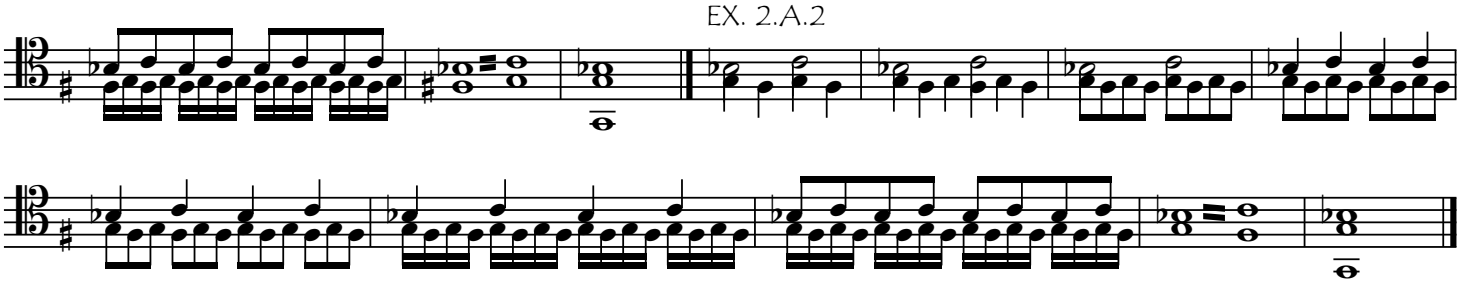

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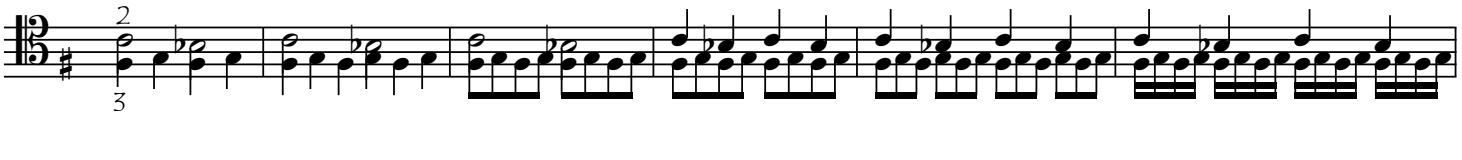

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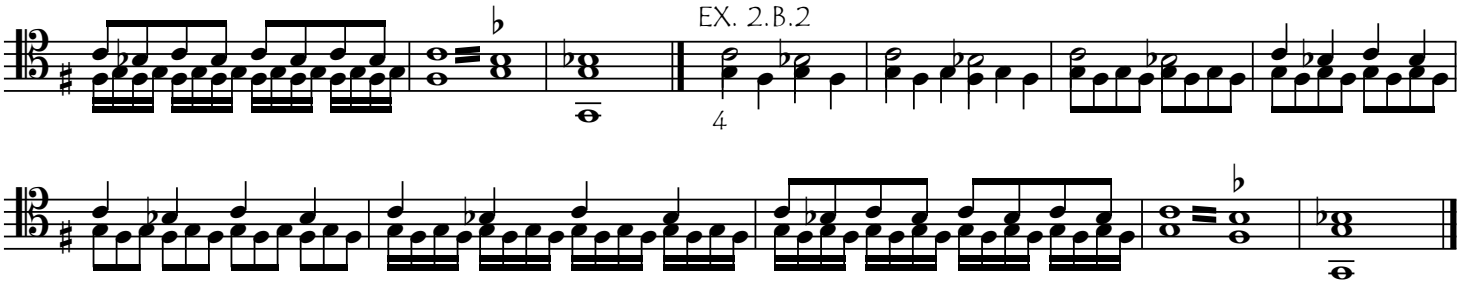

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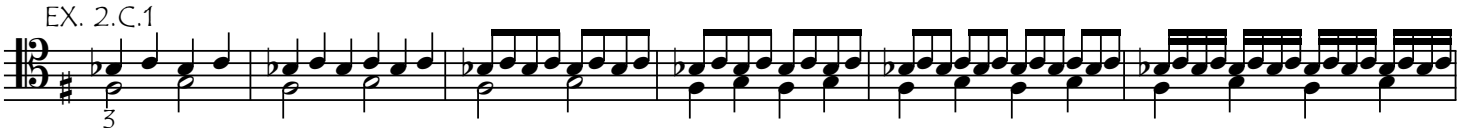

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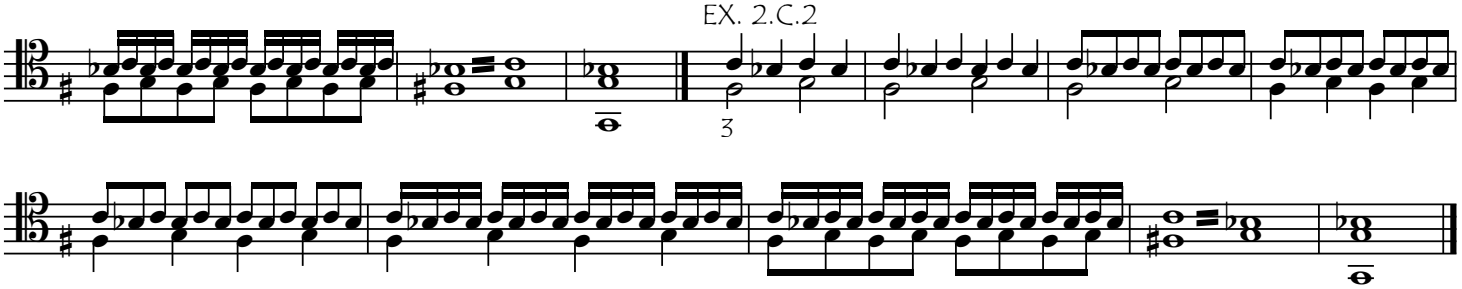

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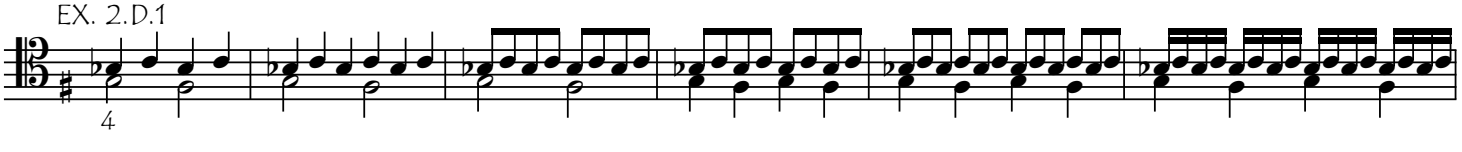

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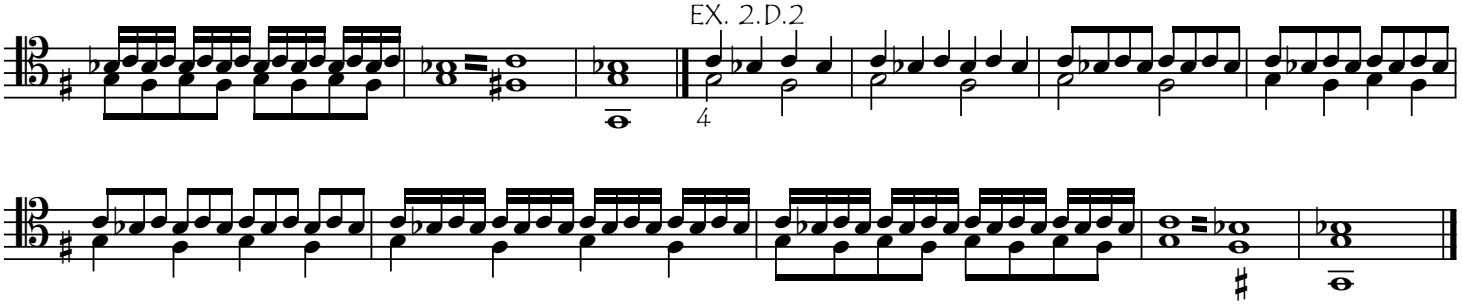

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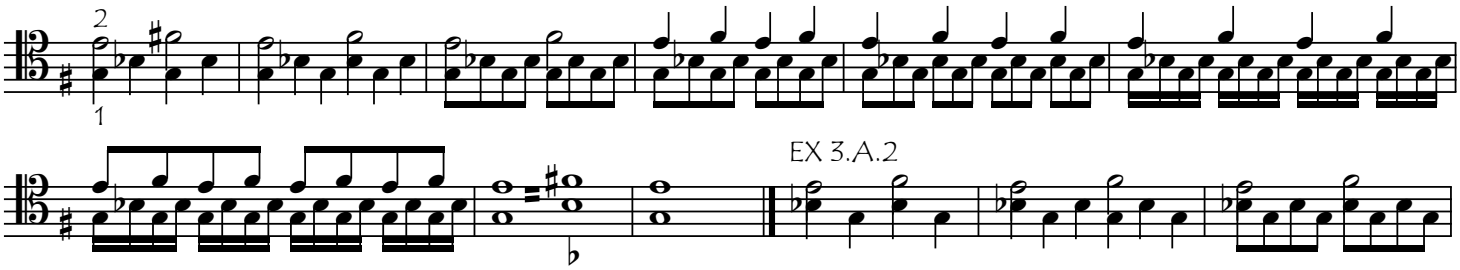
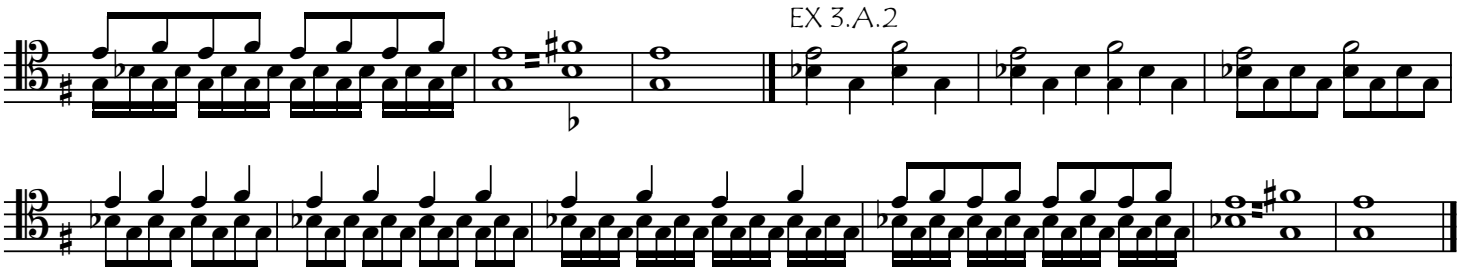
EXERCISE 3: SECOND AND FOURTH FINGERS ON TOP STRING, 1 AND 3 ON LOWER STRING

EX 3.A.1



EX 3.A.2



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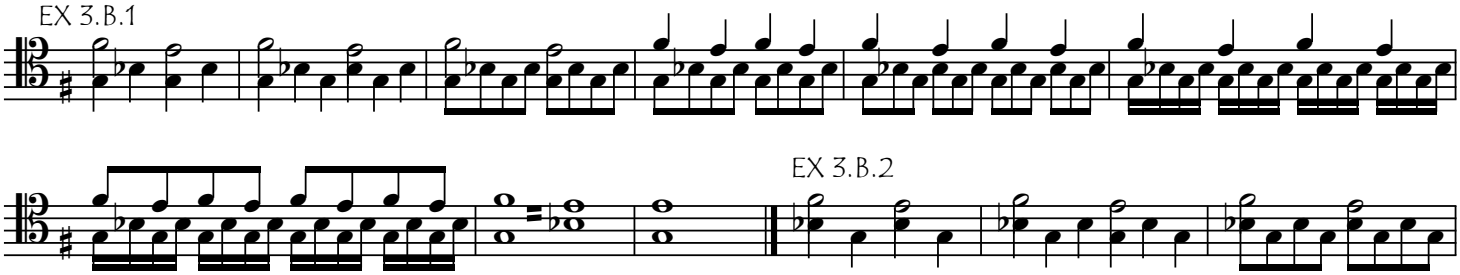

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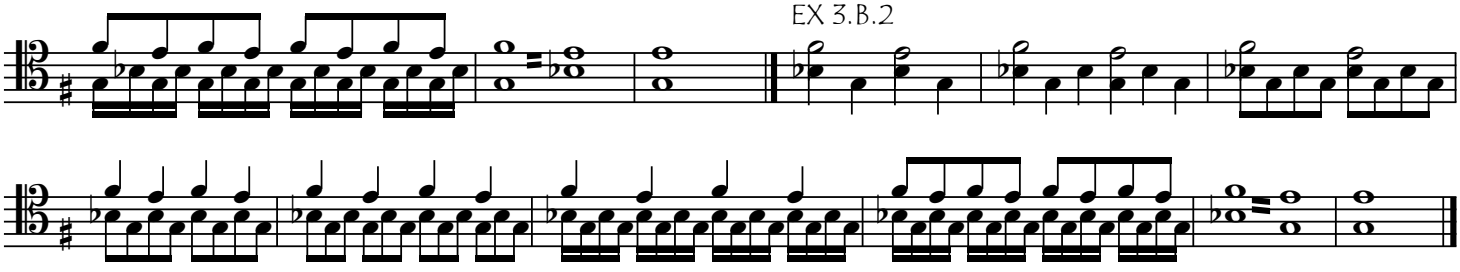

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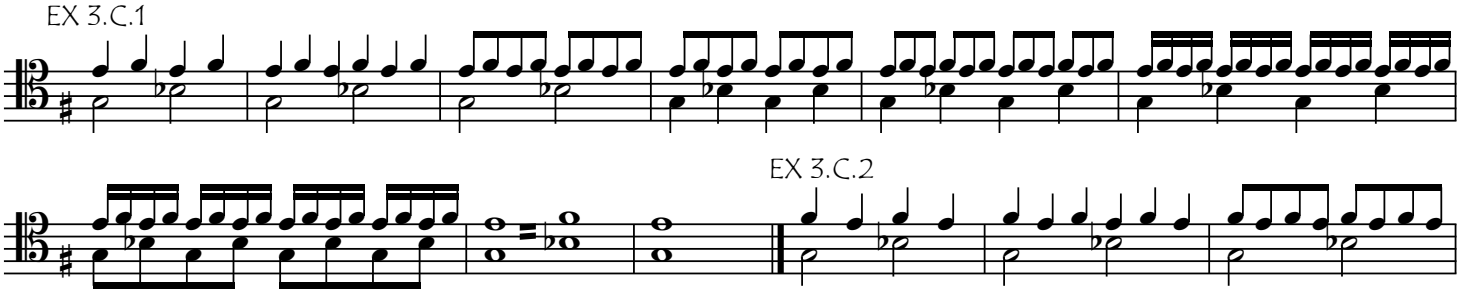

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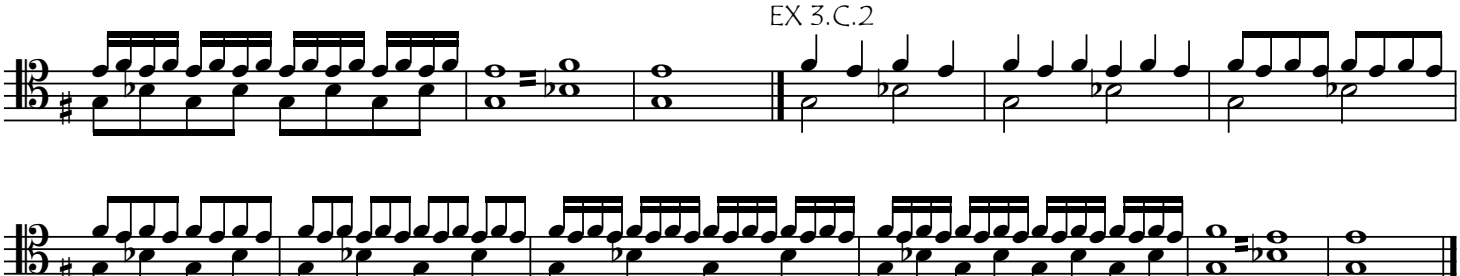

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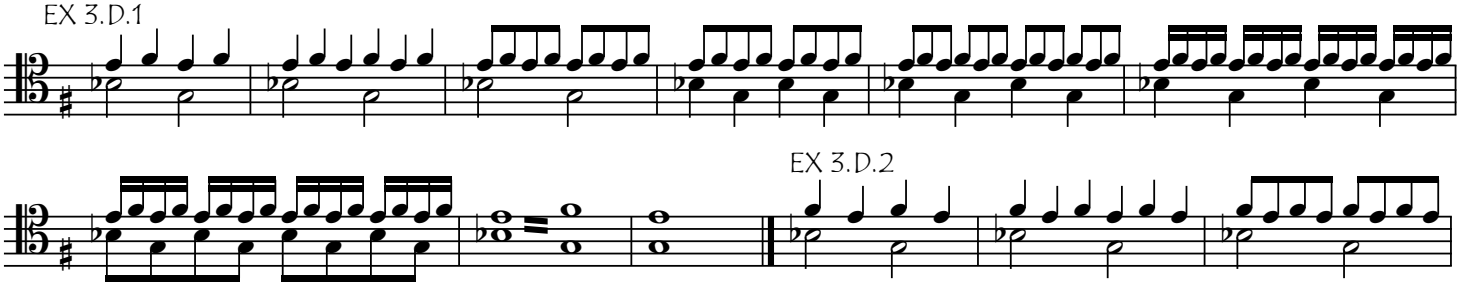

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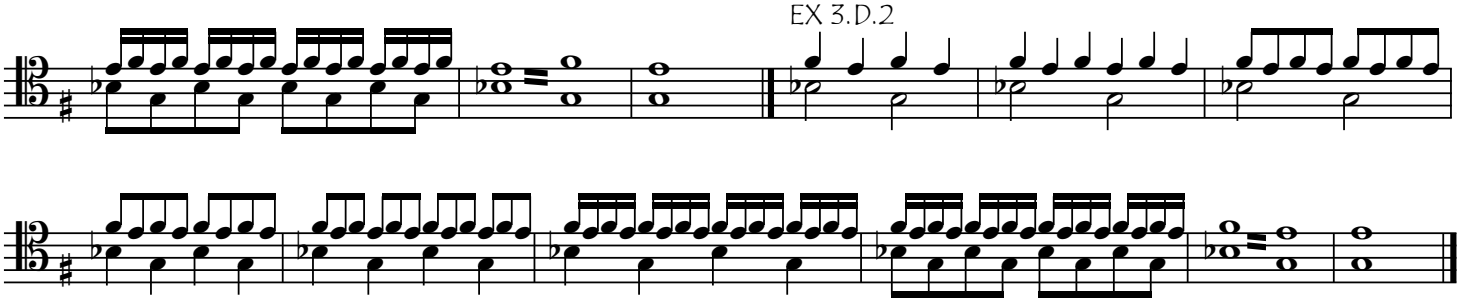

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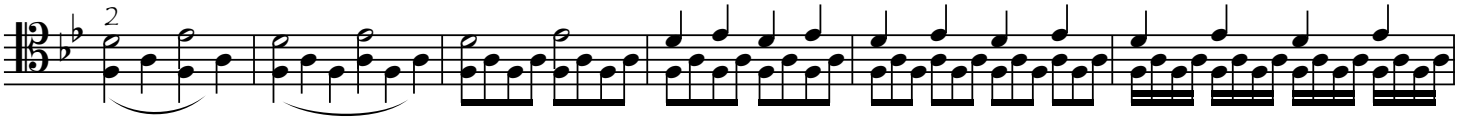
In both of these last two patterns (Exercises 4 and 5), the third finger is on the higher string while the fourth is on the lower. This is very uncomfortable. That is why we have left these patterns till last. Here the hand may need to be not only more square to the fingerboard (in the "doublebass position) but even past 90° to the fingerboard, with the fingers actually pointing "backwards" towards the nut of the fingerboard.

EXERCISE 4: SECOND AND THIRD FINGERS ON TOP STRING, 1 AND 4 ON LOWER STRING. EX 4.A.1



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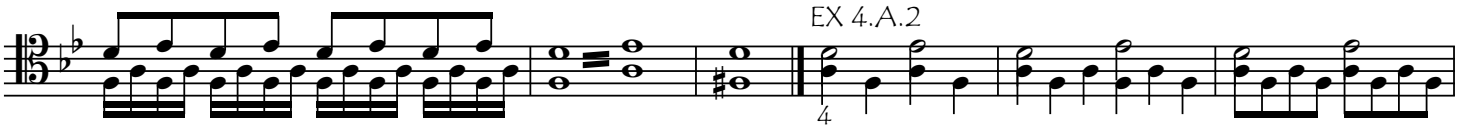

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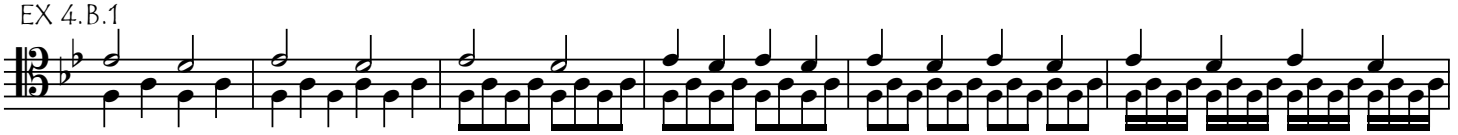

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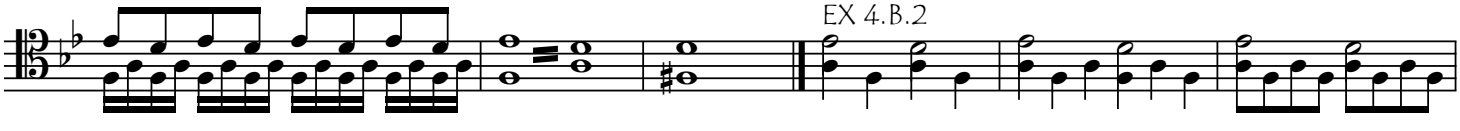
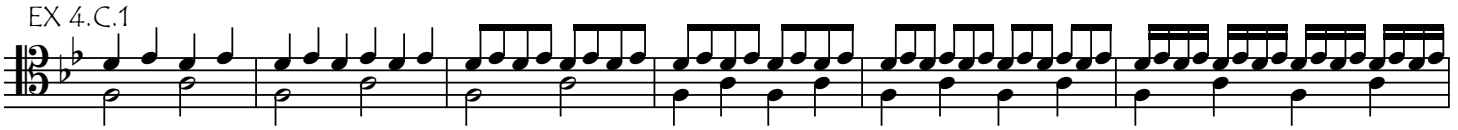


EX 4.C.1



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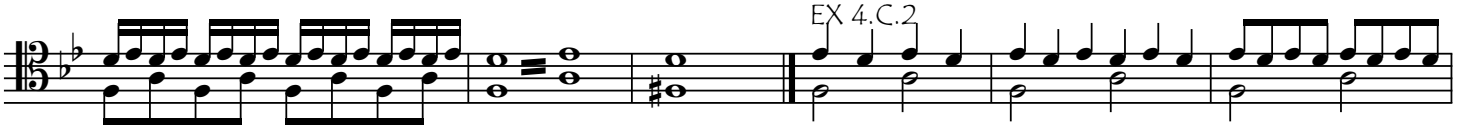
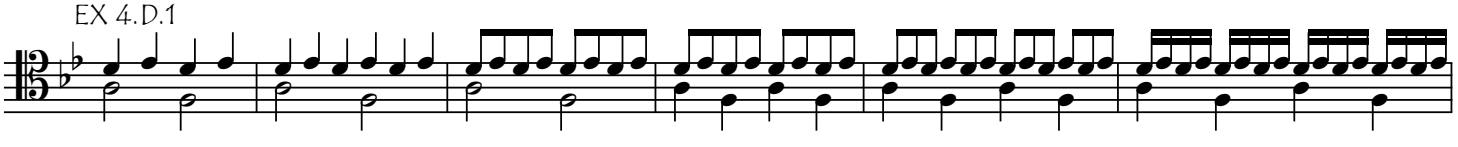


EX 4.D.1



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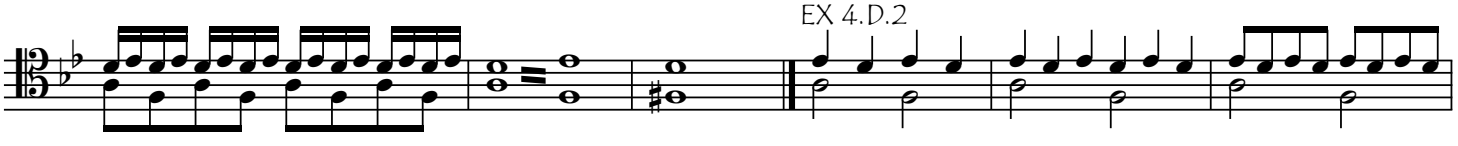

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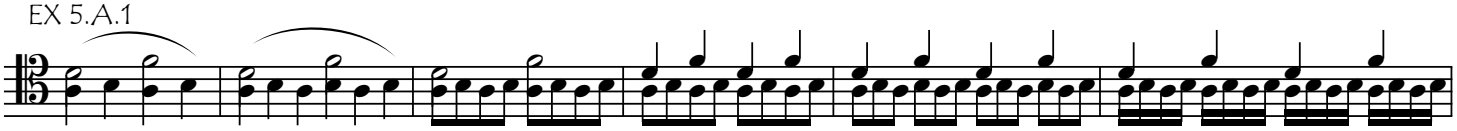
EXERCISE 5: FIRST AND THIRD FINGERS ON TOP STRING,, 2 AND 4 ON LOWER STRING:

EX 5.A.1



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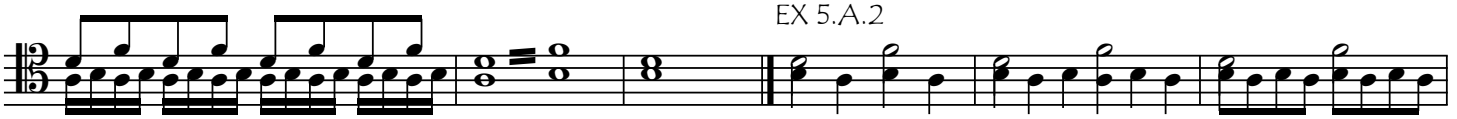

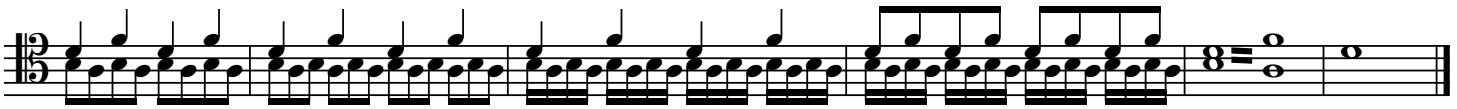

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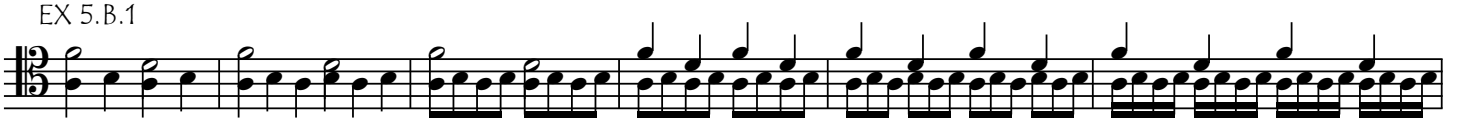

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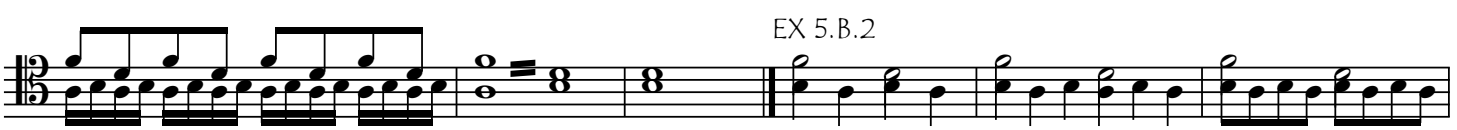
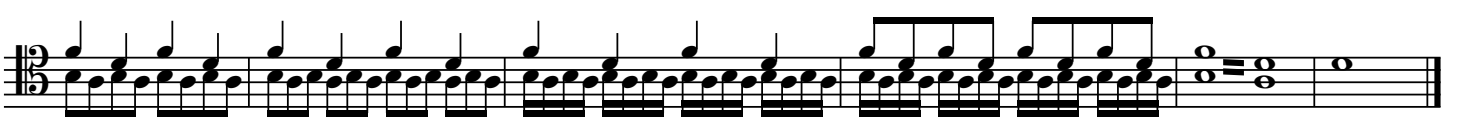
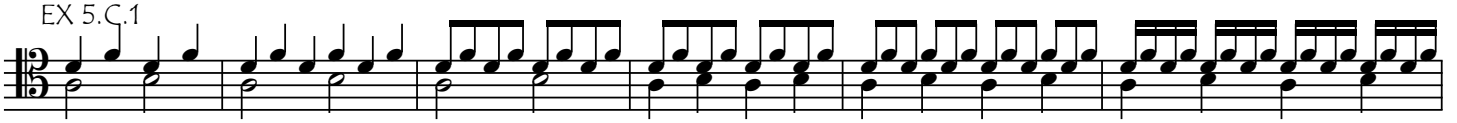




EX 5.C.1



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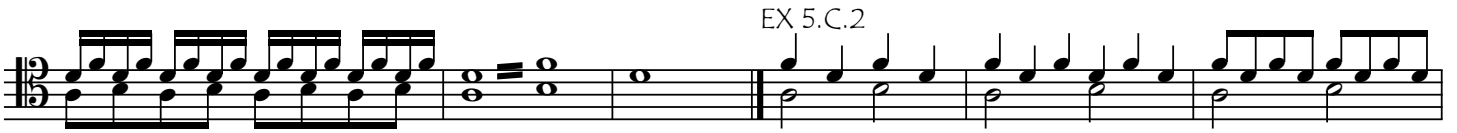

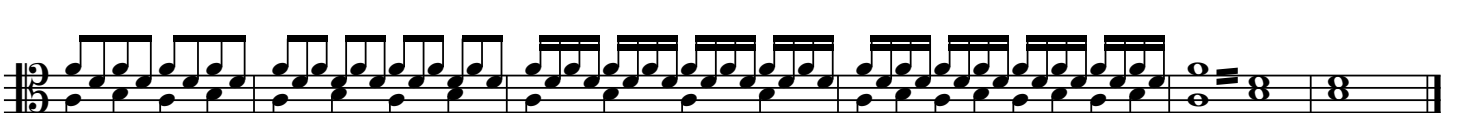

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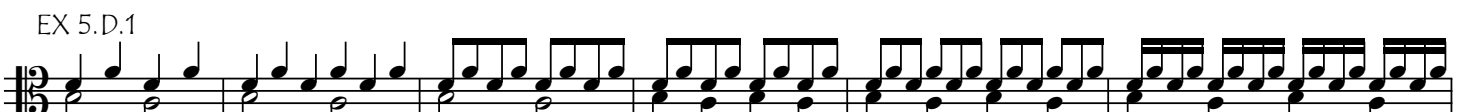

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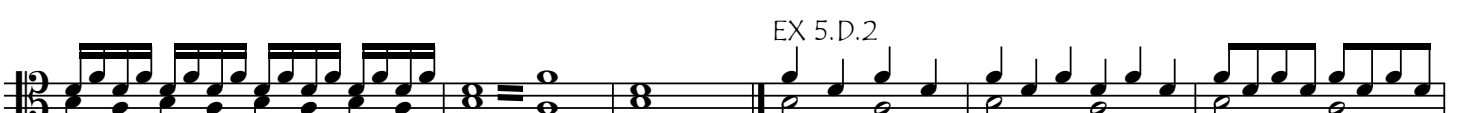

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