DEVELOPING YOUR BIG BAND SECTION

TRUMPET TALK

ABOUT ME

- Teaching Experience
  - Instructor in Jazz Studies at the University of Oregon
  - Director of Bands & Jazz Studies at Lane Community College
  - Assistant Director of Bands at Washington HS, Sioux Falls, SD
- Education
  - Masters in Music (Jazz Studies) from University of Oregon
  - Bachelors in Music Education from University of Nebraska

WHO IS THIS FOR?

- Educators who are not primarily trumpet players and are looking for a refresher on their trumpet tech course
- Educators looking for clarity on jazz articulation concepts
- Students who are looking for practice ideas to help them address specific topics

OUTCOMES OF THIS PRESENTATION

- A variety of exercises to help educators and students address topics of need
- A fuller understanding of how these exercises should be approached and how they should sound
- An approach to teaching and practicing idiomatic jazz articulation
- Suggested repertoire for addressing these jazz articulation style/technique

TONE PRODUCTION

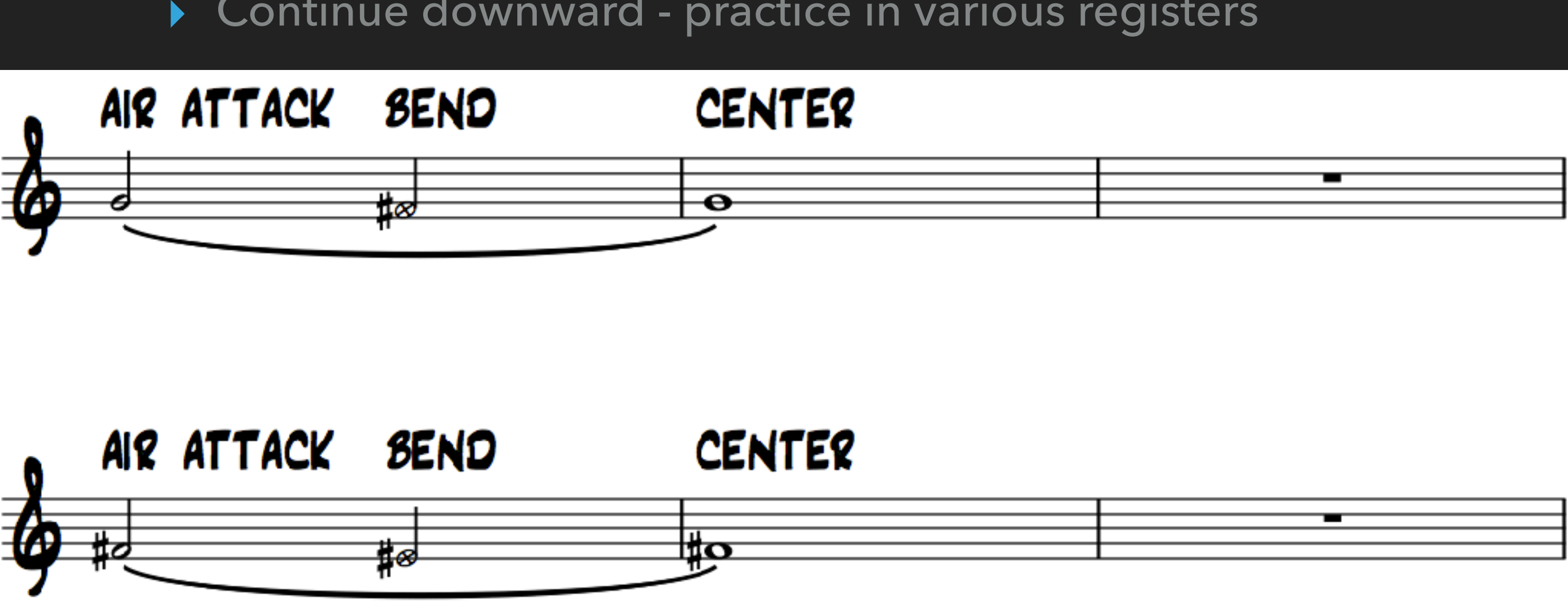
- Breath
  - Common problem: shallow breath
    - Possible solution: breathe slow
    - Later, focus on open vowel shapes and large volume
  - Common problem: extra tension
    - Possible solution: don’t stop before exhaling
  - Common problem: the breath is not part of the music
    - Focus on breathing in time, and *in character*

TONE PRODUCTION

- Developing warm, rich, centered tone
  - Lip bend
  - Vowel shape
  - Flow studies
- Developing upper register
  - Whisper Tones
  - Scales (softly and with ease)
  - Air Concept

TONE PRODUCTION

- Lip Bend
  - Bend the pitch gradually - not suddenly
  - Listen for the core of the sound, where it is most resonant
  - Continue downward - practice in various registers



TONE PRODUCTION

- Whisper Tones
  - Start with air only, and gradually crescendo to the point of the softest tone possible
  - Continue moving between air and “sub-tone,” and try to keep the tone steady
  - Start on second-line G, and move to other partials to work on strength and control
  - This exercise can help us to develop aperture control needed for the upper register - learning keep our lips vibrating even with a smaller volume of air

TONE PRODUCTION

- Free buzz
  - Reason: For developing stronger corners and better embouchure control
  - Common problems:
    - Weak corners (will only be developed with practice)
    - Overblowing and losing control
- Possible solution:
  1. Bring teeth together and form lips as if making “p” sound
  2. Keep corners firm, start air, and lower jaw to separate teeth
  3. Hopefully, this results in a relaxed, soft, easy buzz sound that can be developed into a more flexible, dynamic sound

FLEXIBILITY AND CONTROL

- Lip Slurs
  - What is the goal?
    - *Listen* for smoothness and ease - avoid jolting or clumsy transitions
    - *Feel* for ease - avoid unnecessary motion or tension
      - Ask students to experiment and try to discover how little they can change and still move from note to note

FLEXIBILITY AND CONTROL

- Lip Slurs
  - Common problems and solutions
    - Jolting or clumsy transition
      - Mouthpiece buzzing - *travel the distance between each note*
      - Focus on eliminating unnecessary movement
    - Unnecessary tension
      - Gradually speed up and slow down the slur (similar to snare drum rudiments)

ARTICULATION

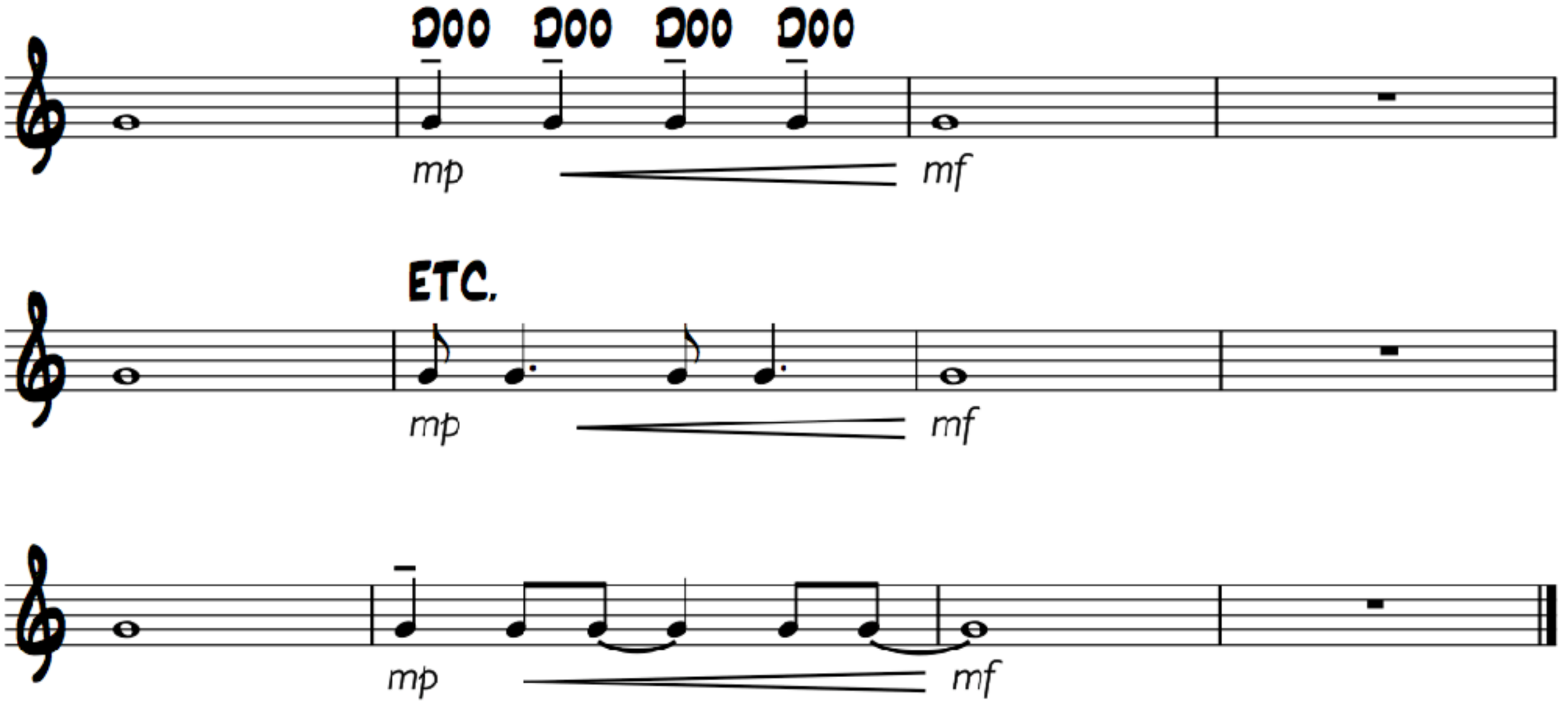
- Common problems
  - Lack of concept
    - Solution: imitating teachers or recordings
  - Tongue placement
  - Vowel shape
  - Air interruption
- Practice strategies:
  - Alternating slurring and tonguing
    - Scales
    - Lip slurs
  - Spider exercise

ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Techniques to develop
  - Doo-tongue (light/legato attack)
  - Offbeat articulation
  - sFz attack
  - Tongue-stop release

ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

Doo-tongue (light/legato attack)

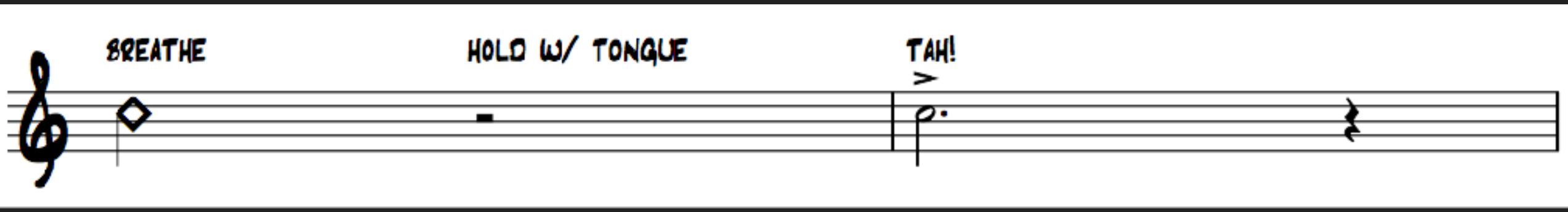


ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

Doo-tongue (light/legato attack)

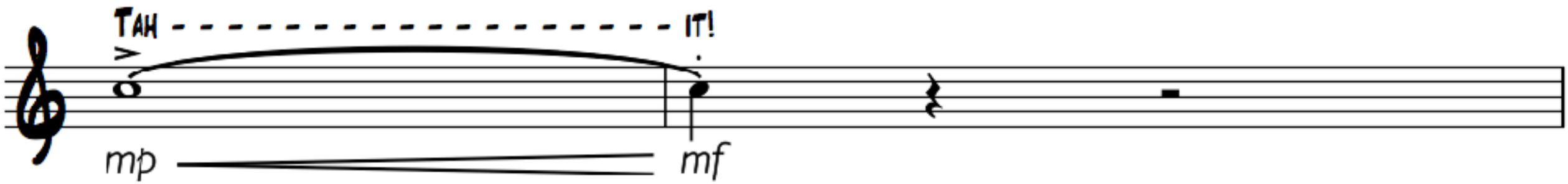
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

sfz attack (hard tongue)



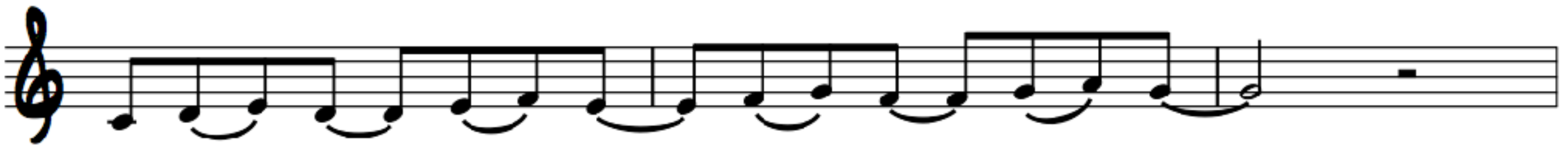
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

Tongue-stop release

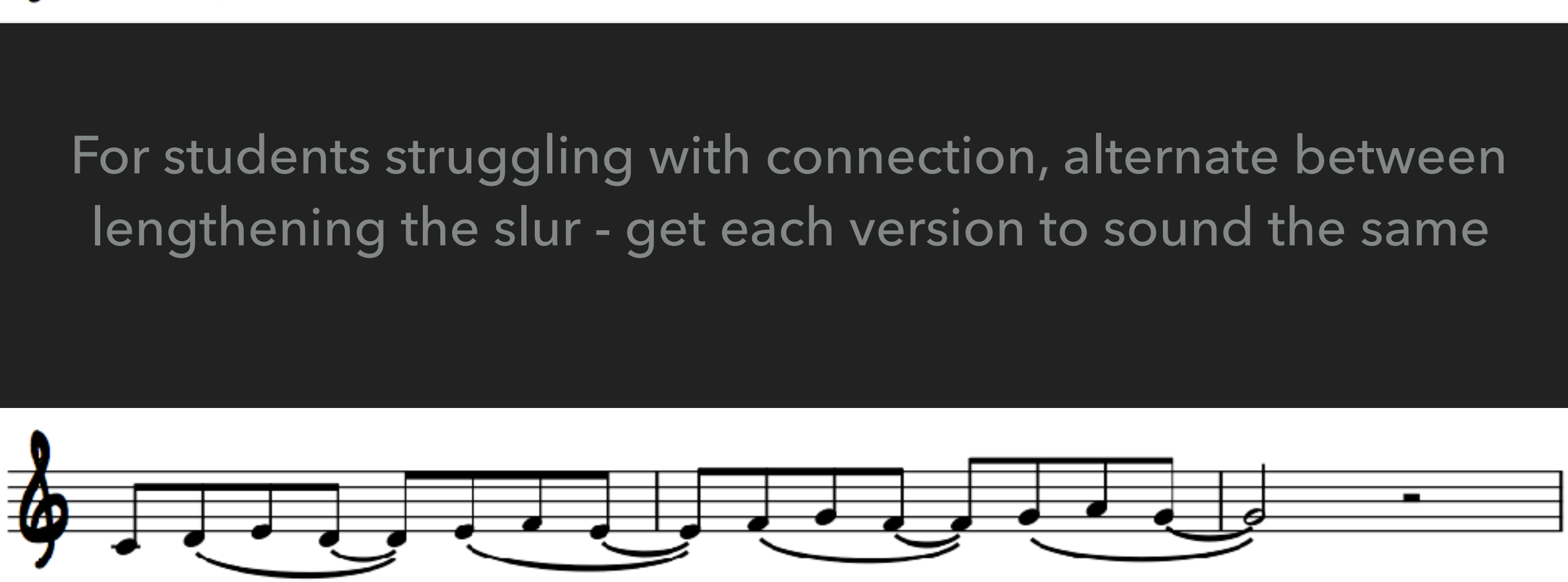


ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

Off-beat articulation



For students struggling with connection, alternate between lengthening the slur - get each version to sound the same

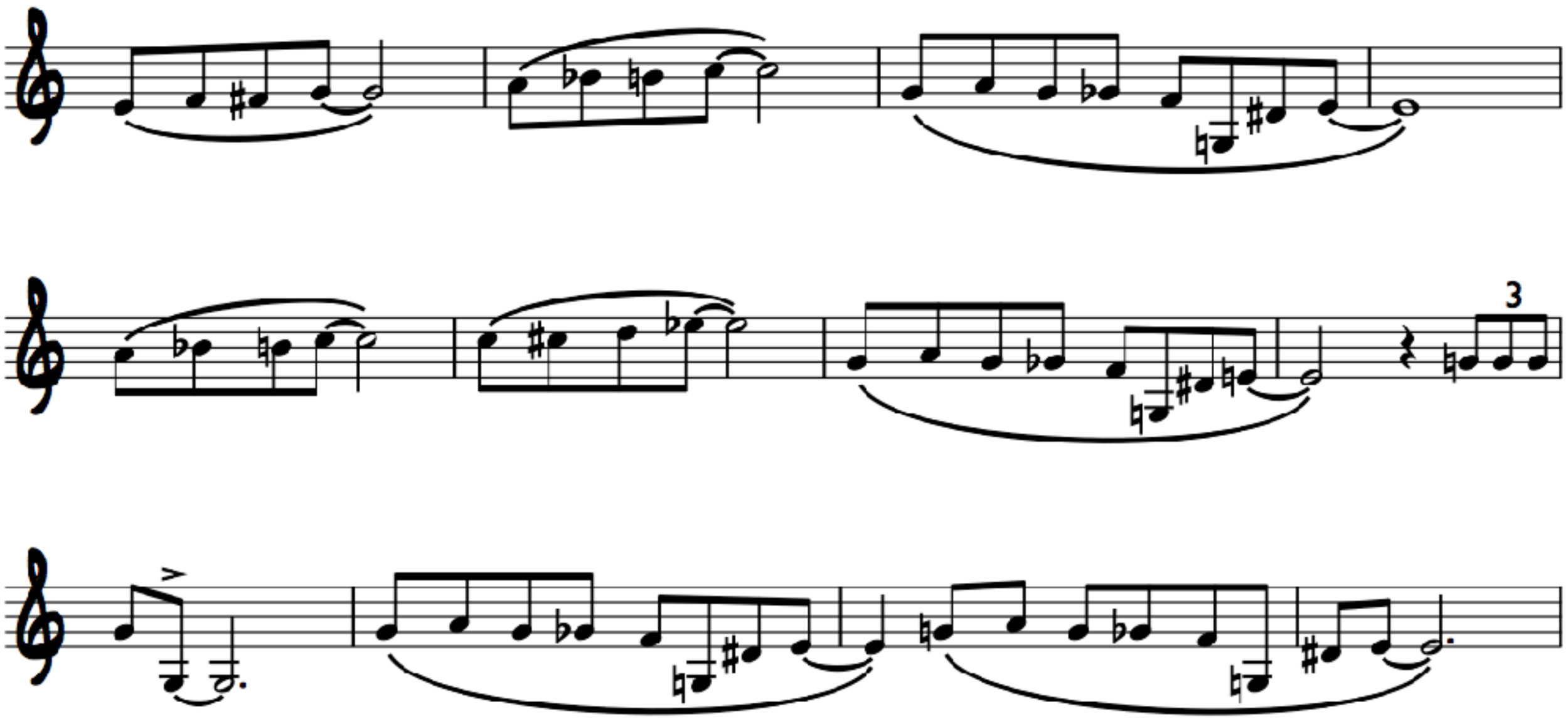


ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Which notes in a line should be articulated?
  - Priority #1: Notes of quarter-note length or longer
  - Priority #2: Notes that are higher than others
  - Priority #3: Offbeat 8th notes (off-beat articulation)
    - Priority #3 may be ignored if:
      - The tempo is too fast
      - It creates awkwardness

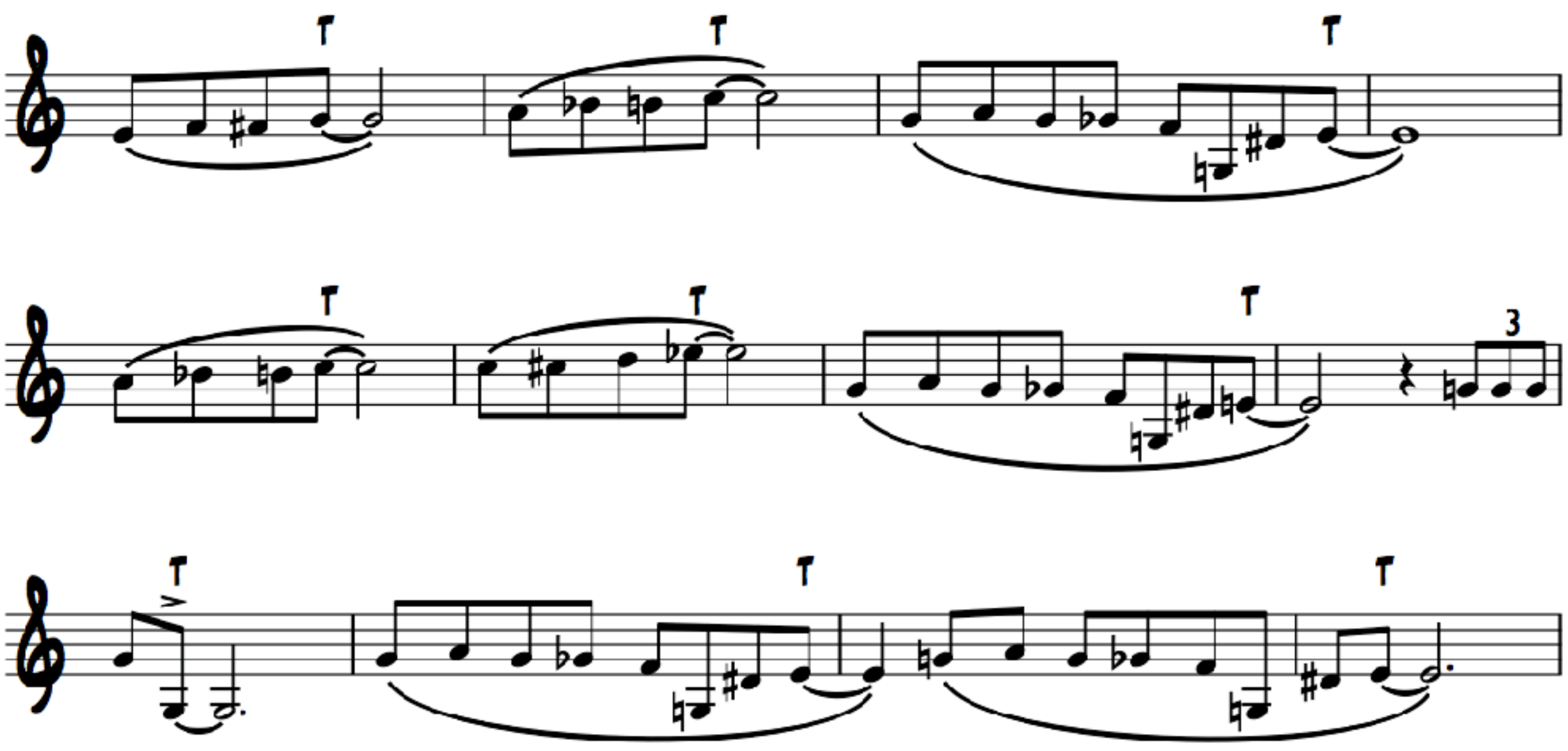
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

First - be able to play the melody slurred (with steady air)



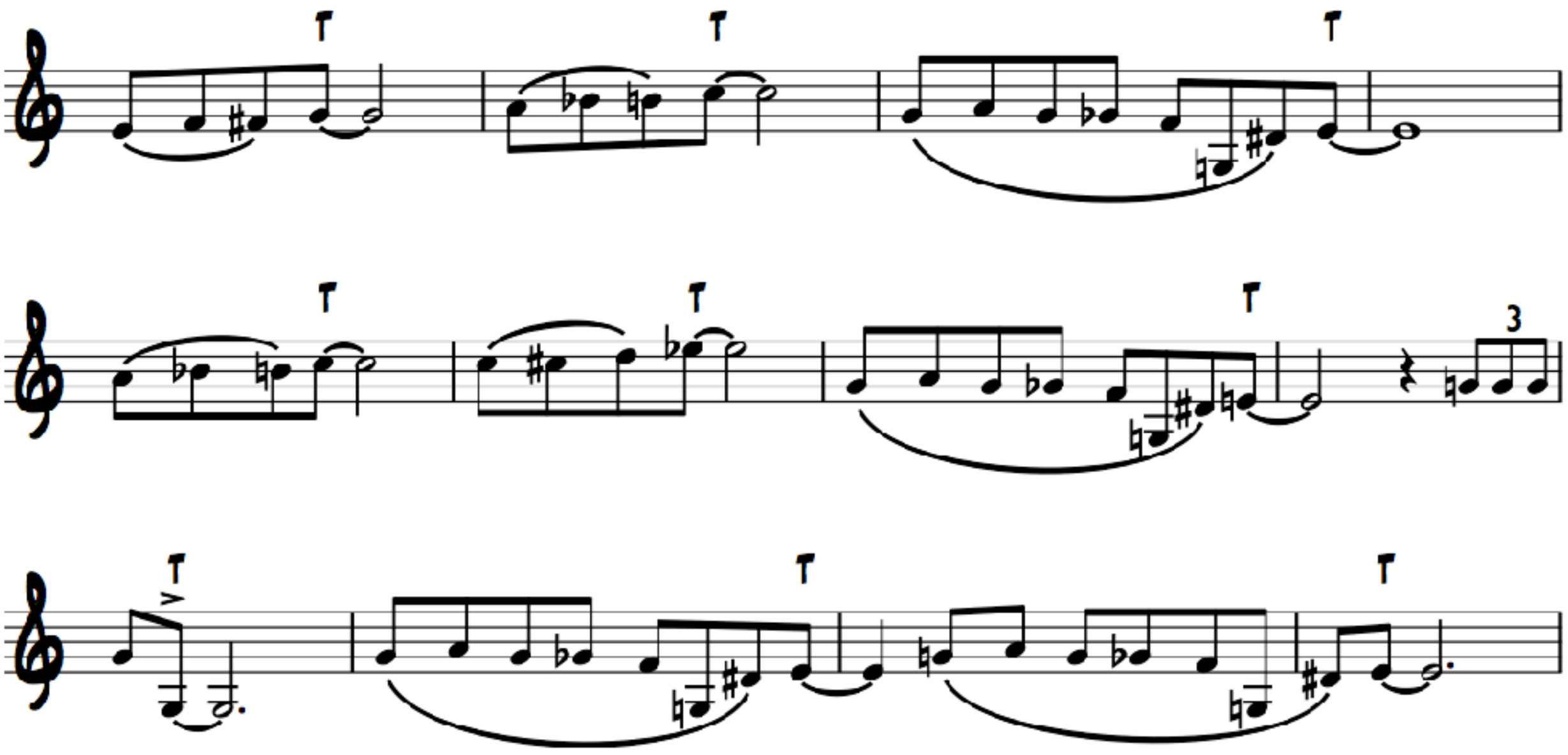
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

Next - have students identify and articulate longer notes (priority #1)



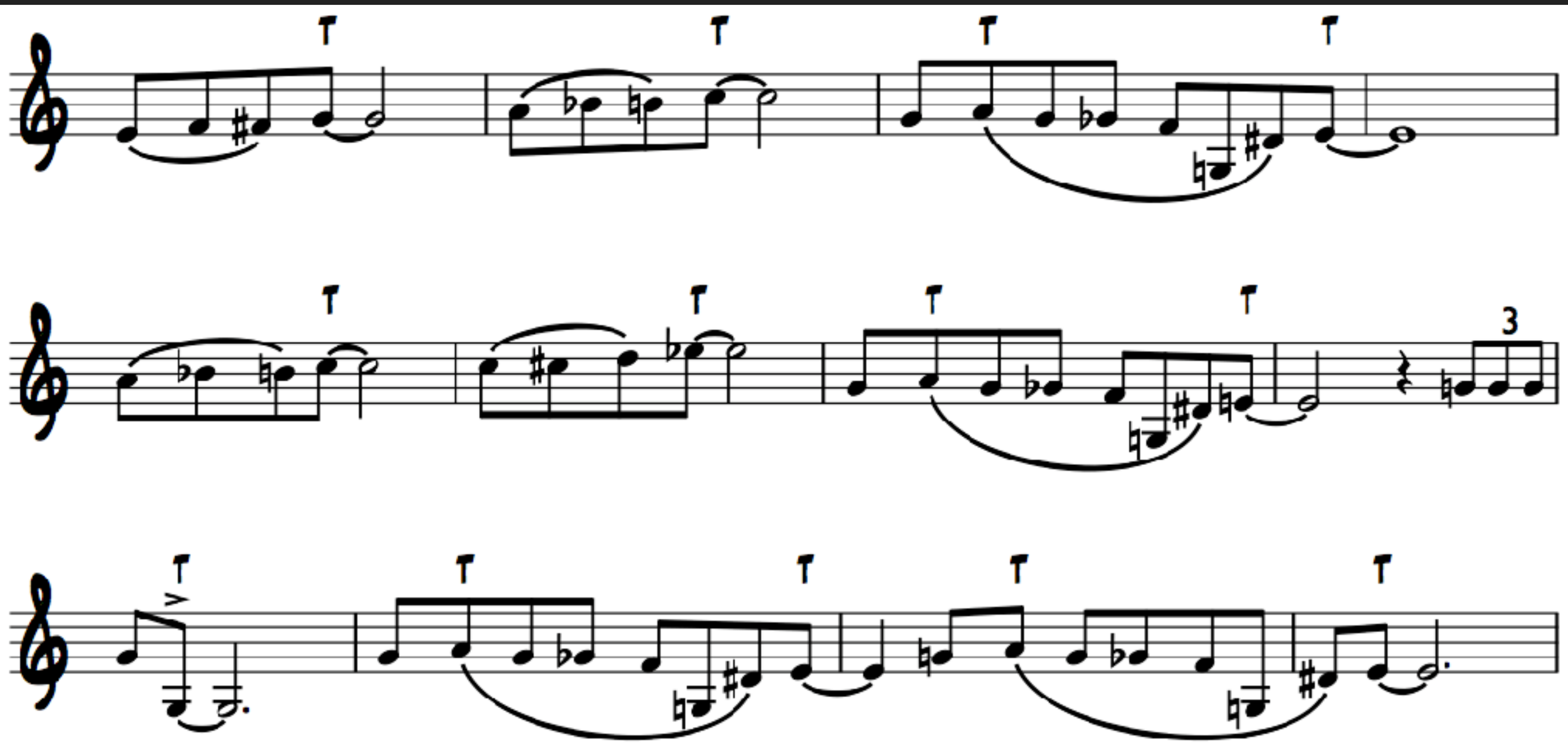
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

(Priority #1) - Make sure it remains *connected!*



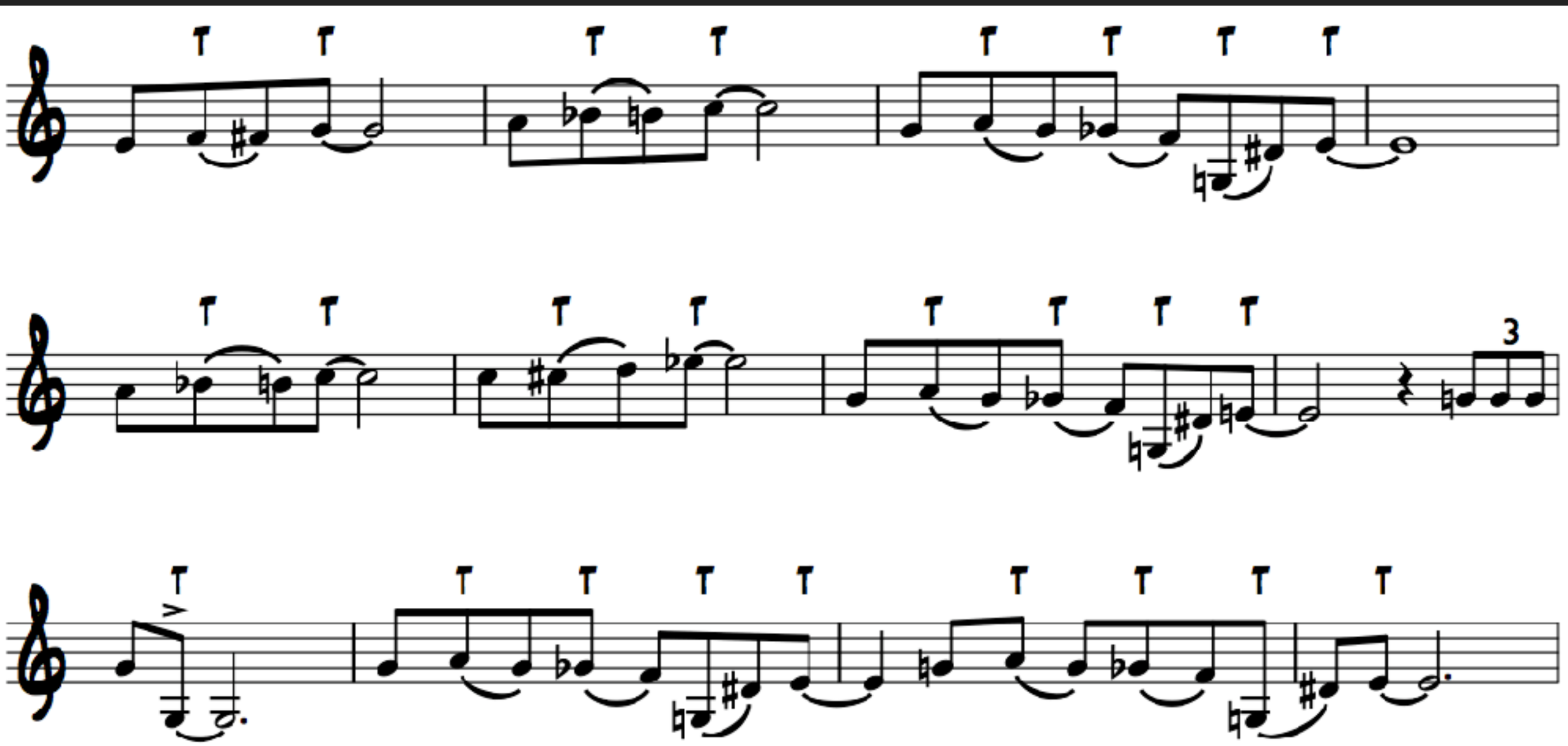
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

Priority #2 - Identify notes that are higher



ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

Priority #3 - Add offbeat articulations where appropriate



ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

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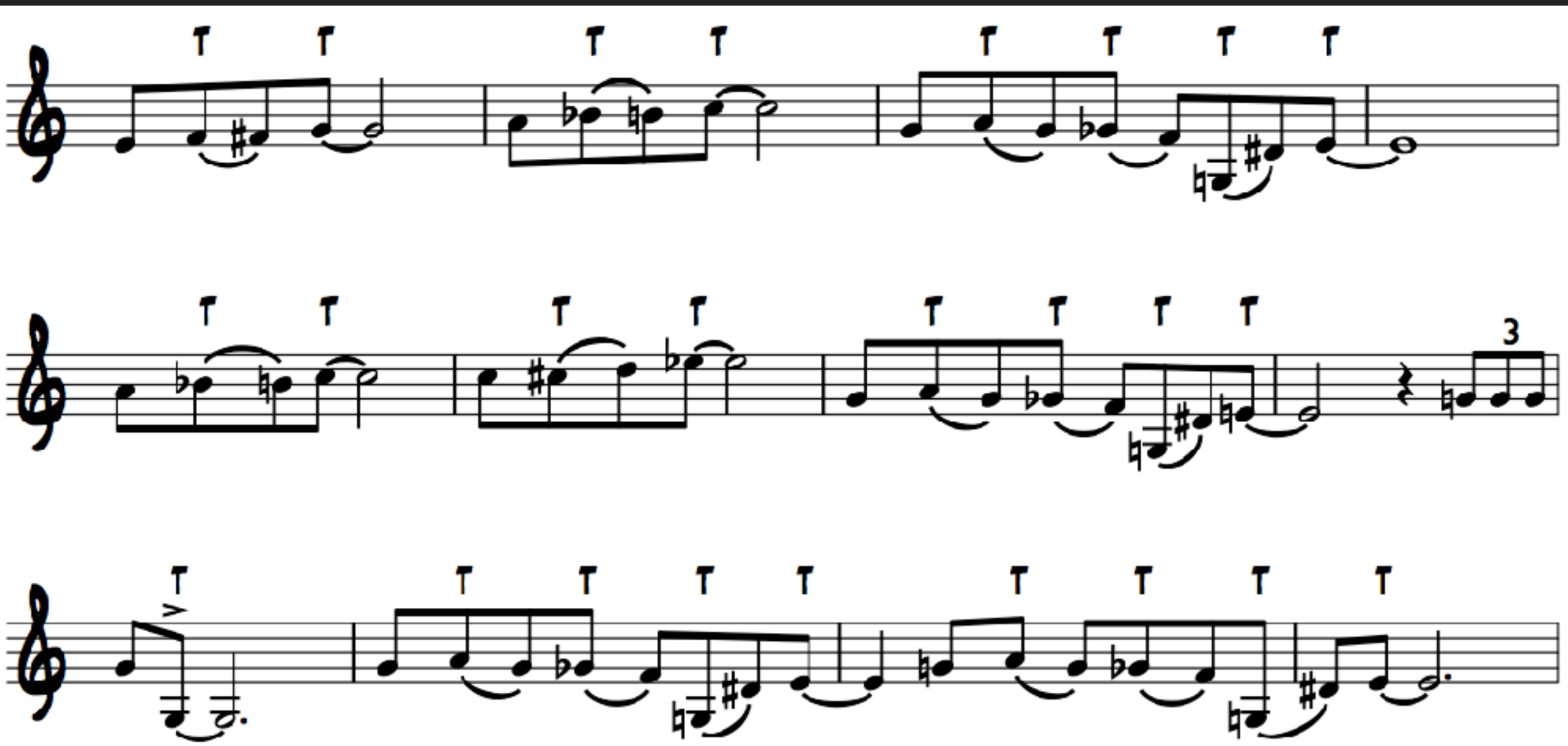
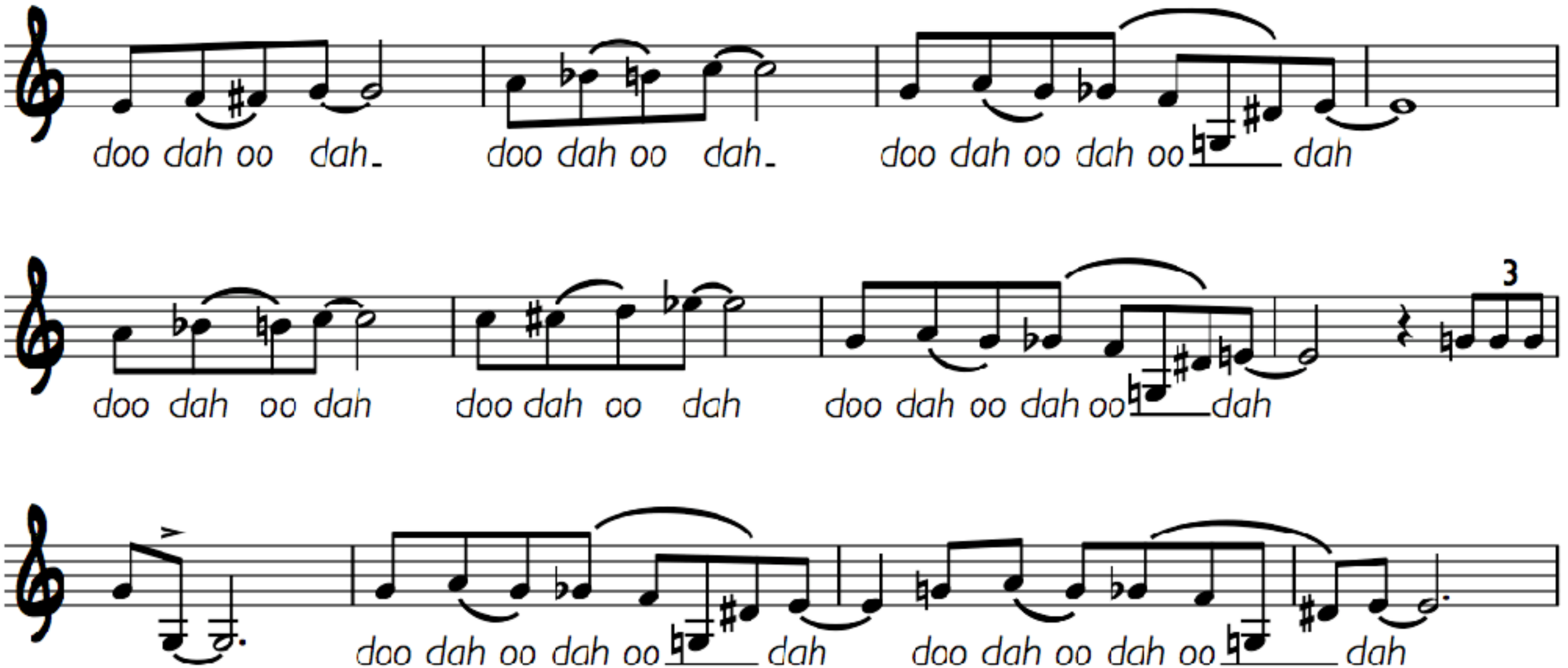


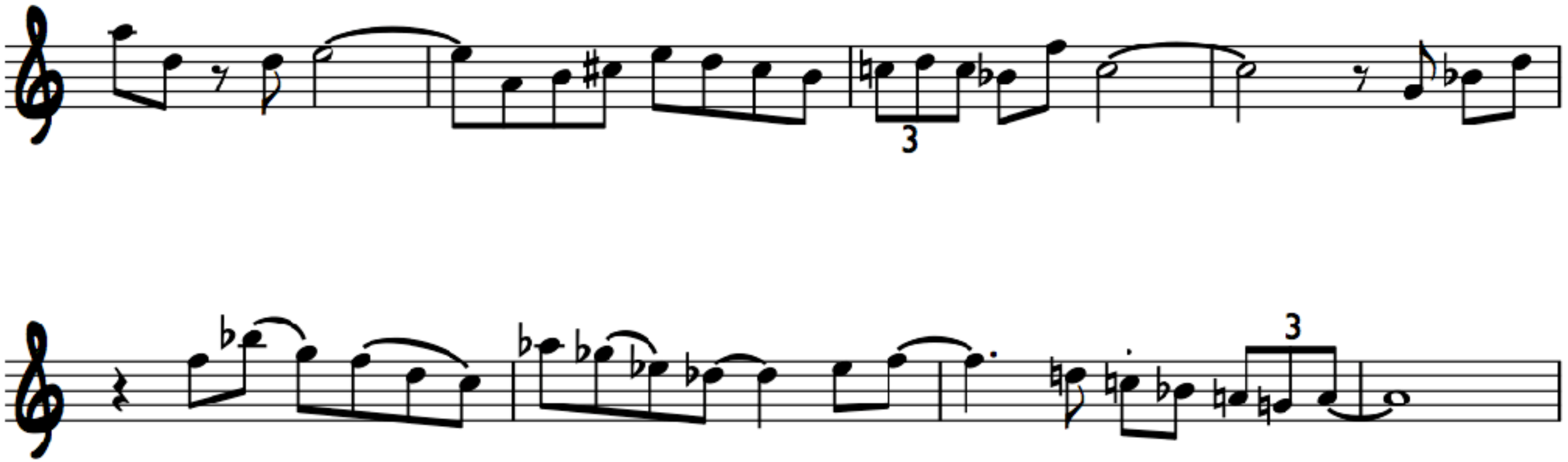
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Other considerations:
  - Trumpeters may also wish to slur lines in the extreme low register (see *Blue Monk*) where it is more difficult to articulate without interrupting the air stream



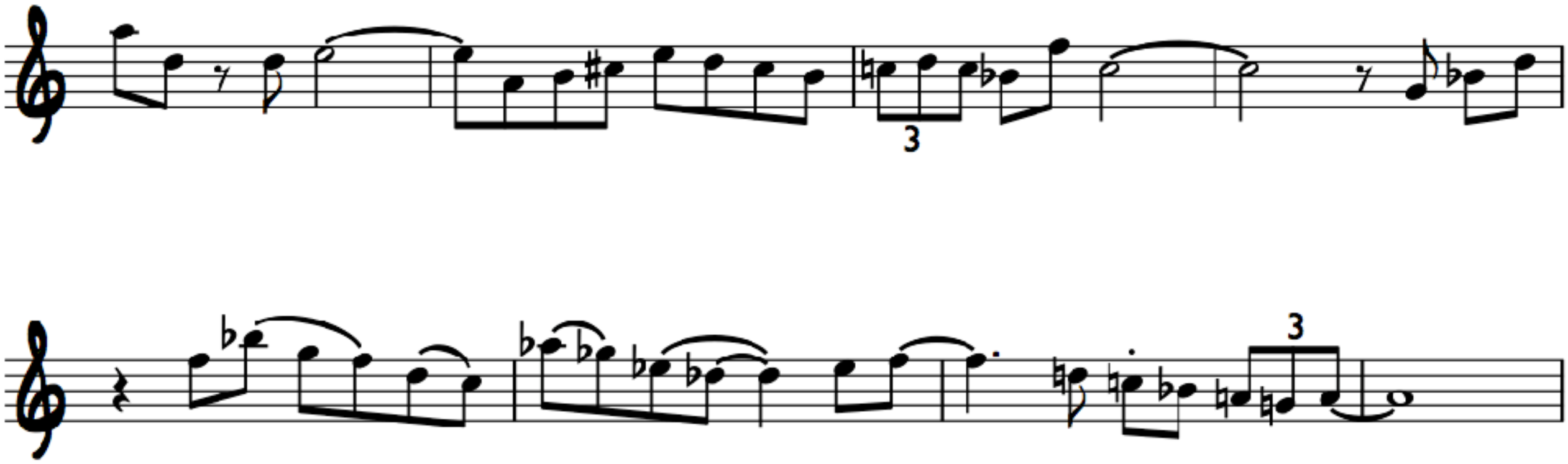
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Other considerations:
  - Trumpeters may wish to add articulations to a line in order to avoid lip slurs or large leaps which are more difficult to control in time (see *Chick's Tune*)
  - (only the second phrase has articulations marked appropriately)



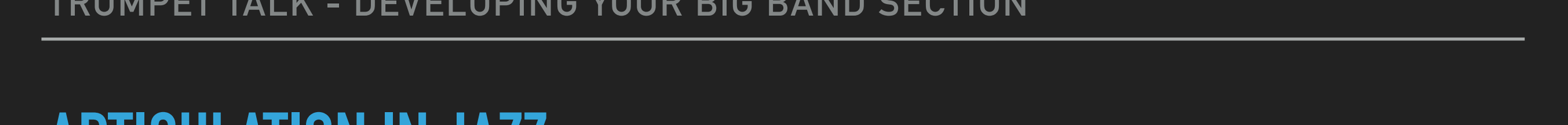
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Other considerations:
  - *Chick's Tune* (articulation scheme v. 2.0)
    - (only the second phrase has articulations marked appropriately)

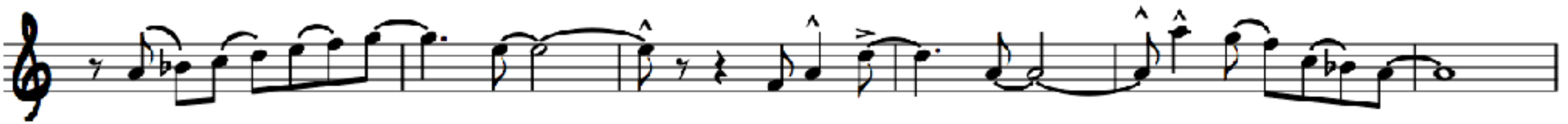


ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Other considerations:
  - With some exceptions, rests should be articulated (tongue-stop)

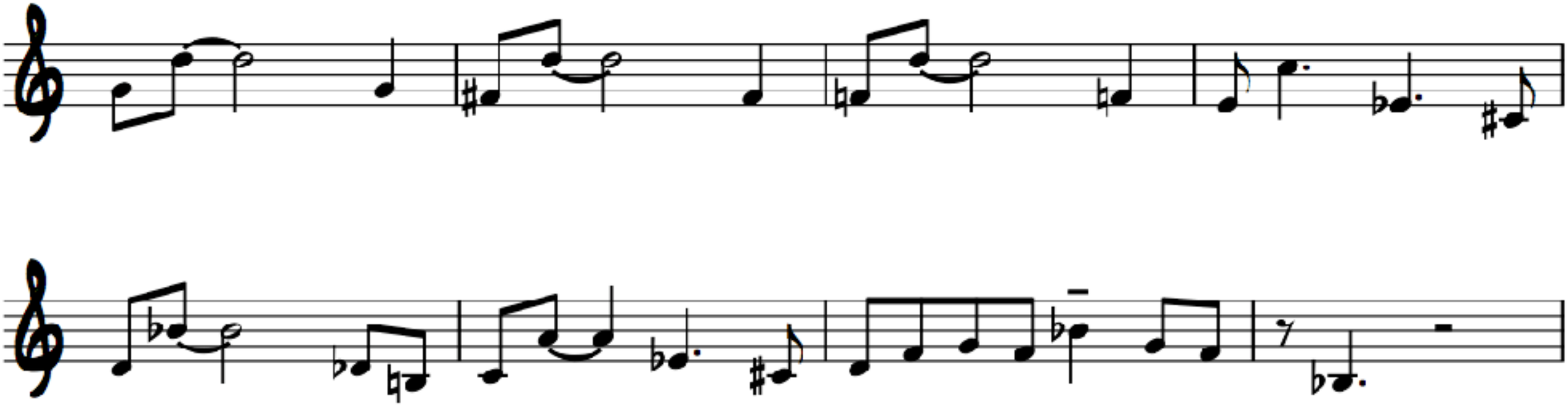


becomes:



ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Apply these rules to the A section from “In Walked Bud”



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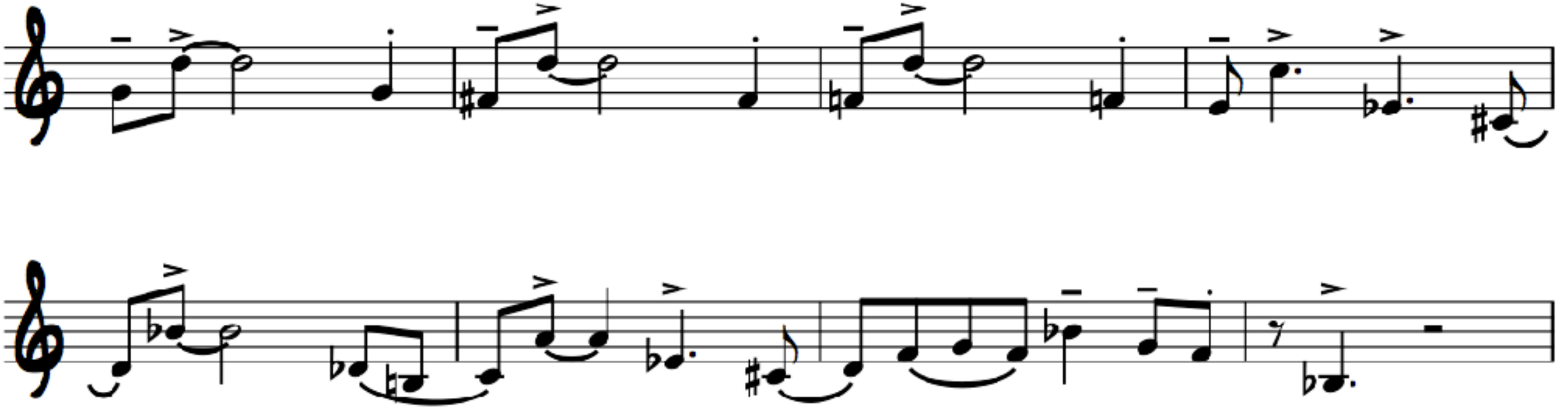
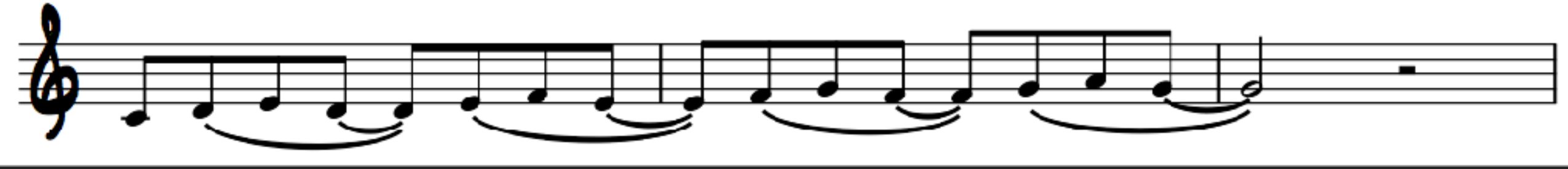


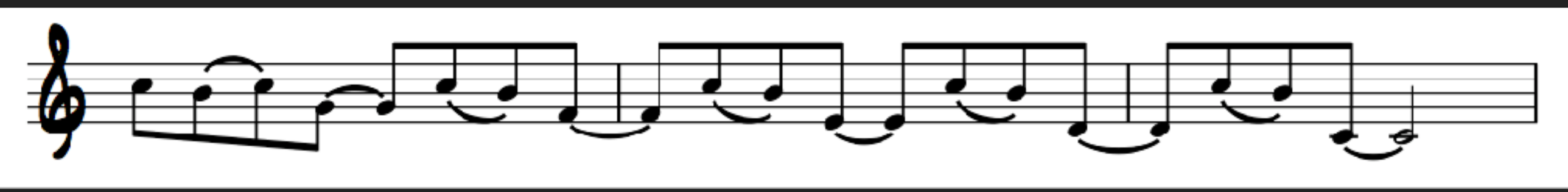
ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Scale-based exercises to introduce and reinforce these articulation priorities:



ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Scale-based exercises to introduce and reinforce these articulation priorities:
  - This exercise helps reinforce the concept of “long” notes getting weight more than high notes or offbeats



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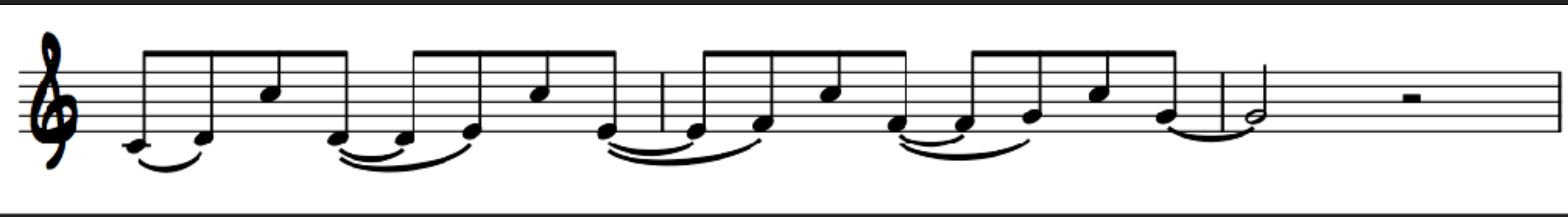

ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Suggested big band repertoire for studying and applying these concepts
  - **Easier:**
    - Blue Monk (Mike Sweeney)
    - Work Song (Peter Blair)
    - Blues at the Gate (Mike Tomaro)
    - Blues in the Mirror (Fred Sturm)
  - **Intermediate:**
    - September Swing (Bob Curnow)
    - Nova Bossa (Michael Phillip Mossman)
    - Minor Chant (Terry White)
  - **More Difficult:**
    - Kissing Bug (Bill Holman)
    - Just You Just Me (George Stone)
    - Miss Missouri (Benny Carter)
    - And Another Thing (Tom Garling)

ARTICULATION IN JAZZ

- Suggested melodies for working on these concepts:
  - **Easier:**
    - Blue Monk
    - In Walked Bud
    - Satin Doll
    - Blue Trane
  - **Intermediate:**
    - Billie's Bounce
    - Blues Walk
    - Four
    - Good Bait
  - **Advanced:**
    - Anthropology
    - Groovin' High
    - Scrapple from the Apple
    - Yardbird Suite

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THIS?

Besides applying the articulation concepts to your repertoire…

- Set up practice stations for students to work on articulation or fundamental exercises during rehearsal
  - Even better if they have model recordings they can access at their practice station
- Teach one concept at a time, and give students several minutes before or after rehearsal to experiment *(“free practice time”)*
- Rotate some of these exercises in and out of your ensemble warm-ups
  - e.g. if you typically have your brass players do lip slurs, have them buzz on their mouthpiece on occasion instead

QUESTIONS?

Contact me!

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Session PDF available for download at
paulkruegermusic.com