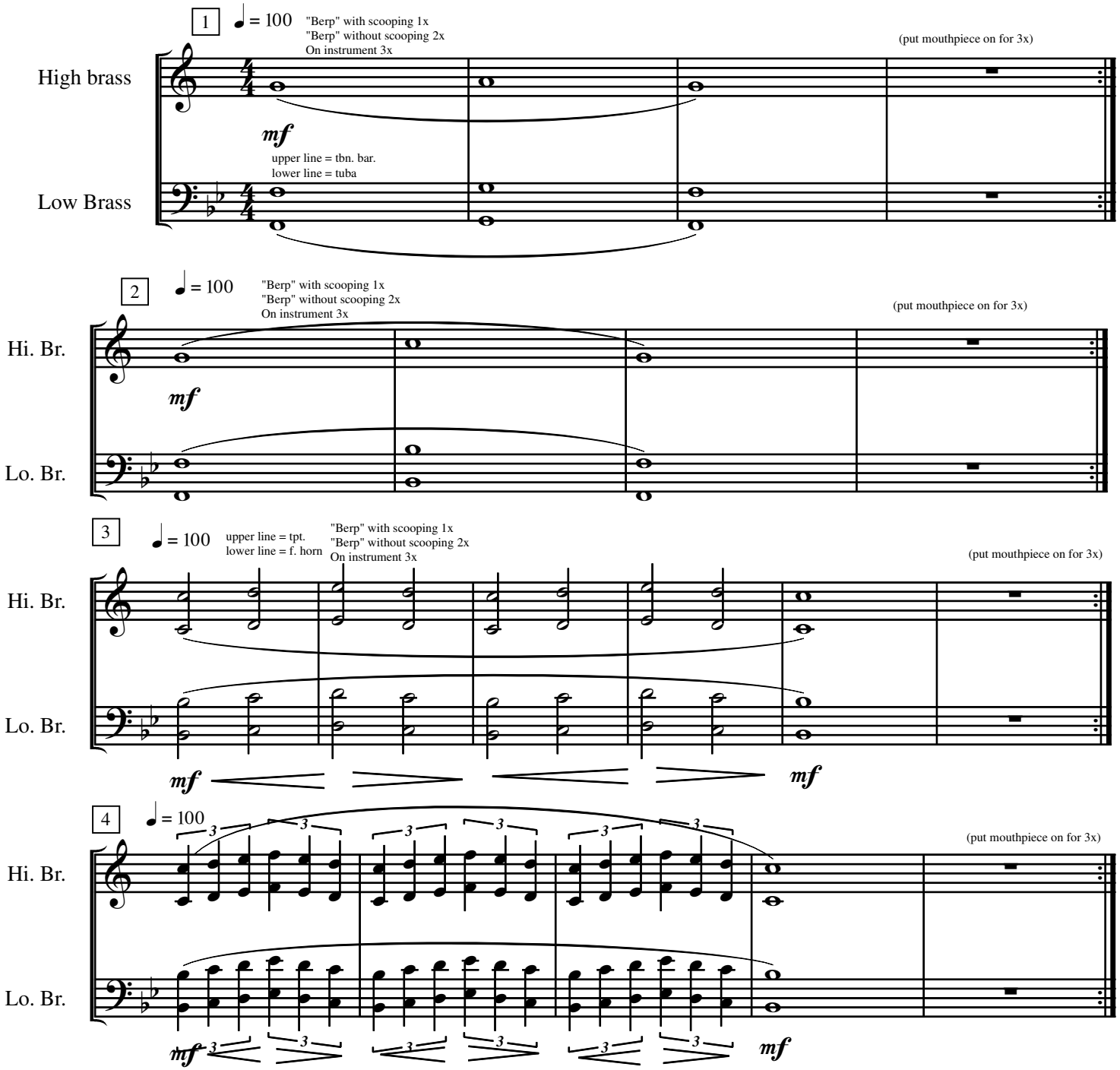
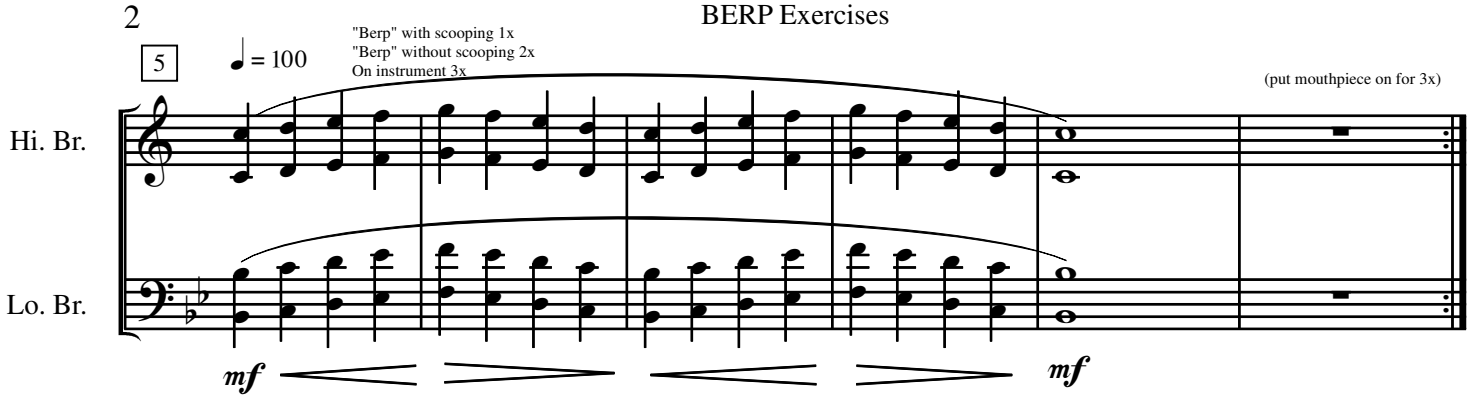
BERP Exercises

Thomas J. West

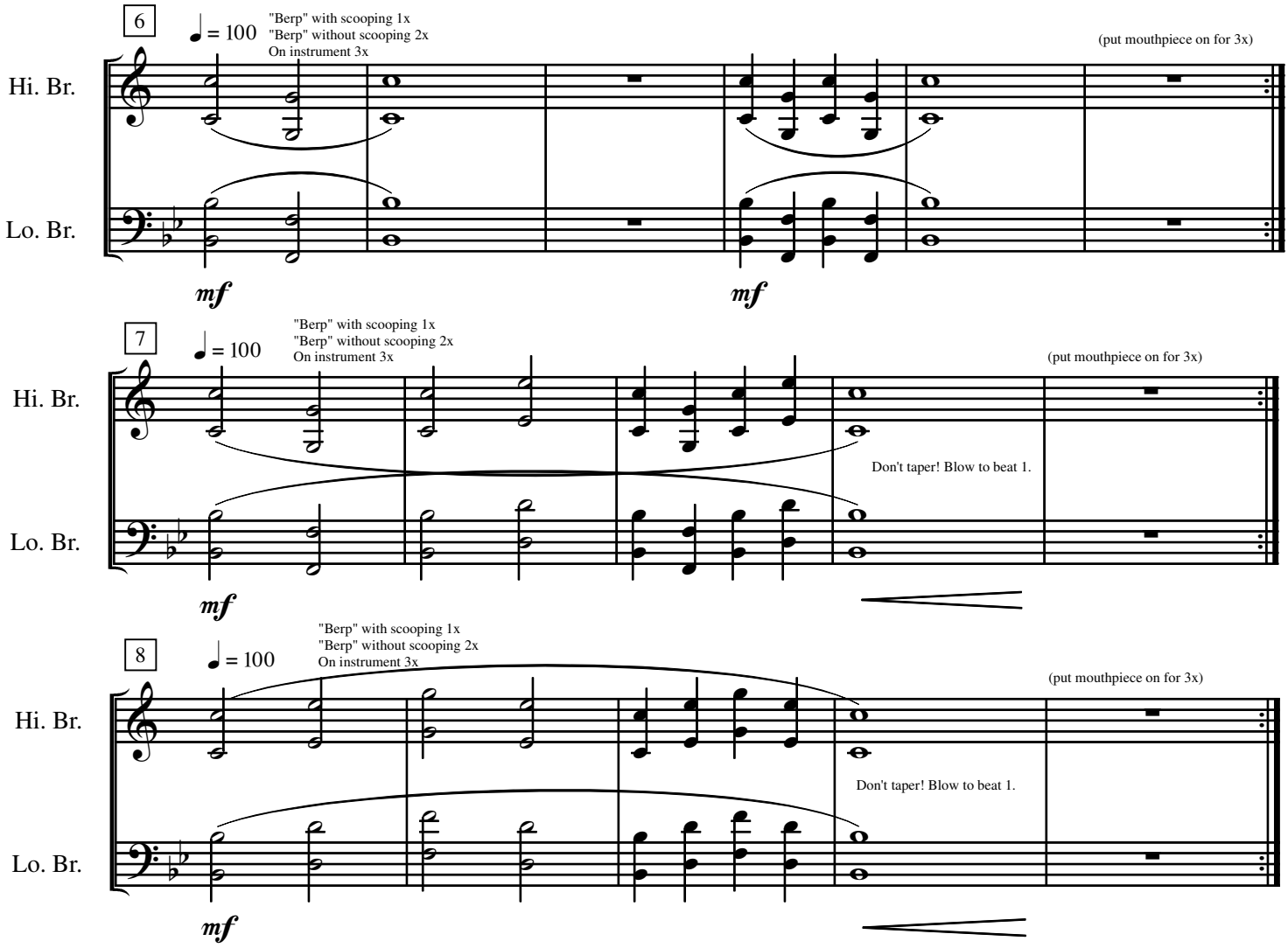
All of these exercises are intended to be played with either a starting reference pitch from a tuner or the instrument, on the BERP ("berping"), and then on the instrument. If playing with a teacher or lesson group, have one person "berp" the exercise while the other player plays it on the instrument. The player serves as a pitch reference. Also note that "scooping" between pitches is encouraged initially to facilitate flexibility. As facility grows, scooping should gradually be removed.

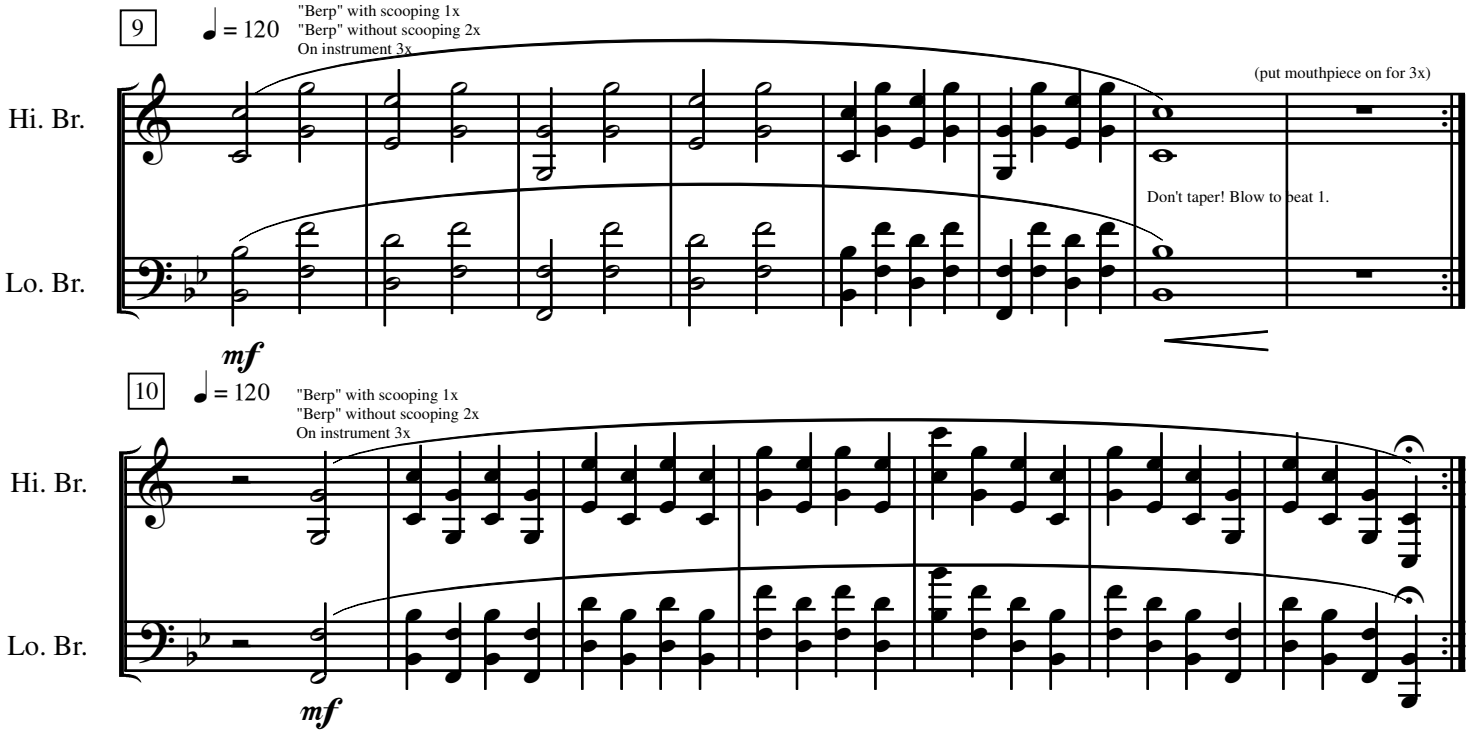
Long Tone Warm-ups: Strive for quality and consistency of tone throughout the exercise. Work for extendingthe length you can go in one breath without changing the quality of sound (usually caused by forcing out air with the latissimus muscles on the side and back of the torso rather than support from the diaphragm).



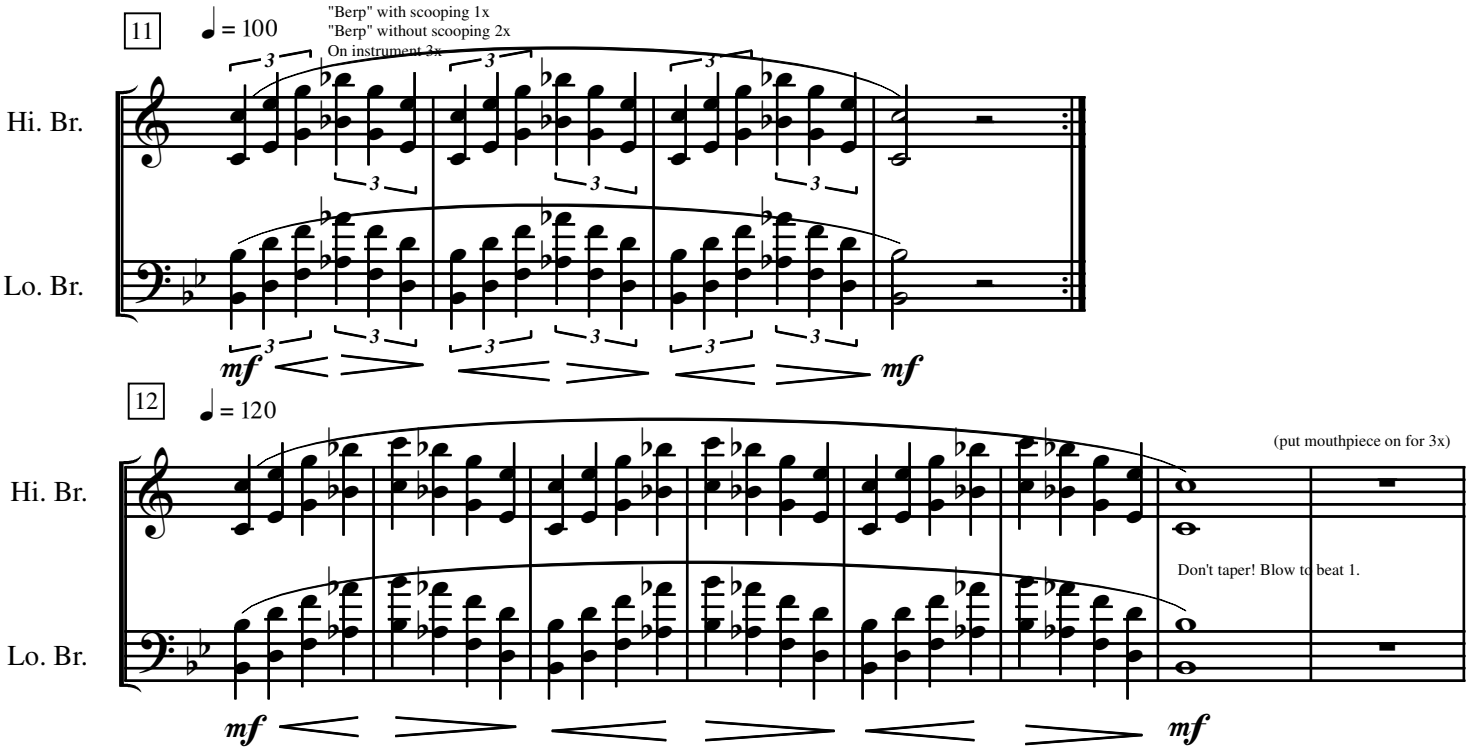


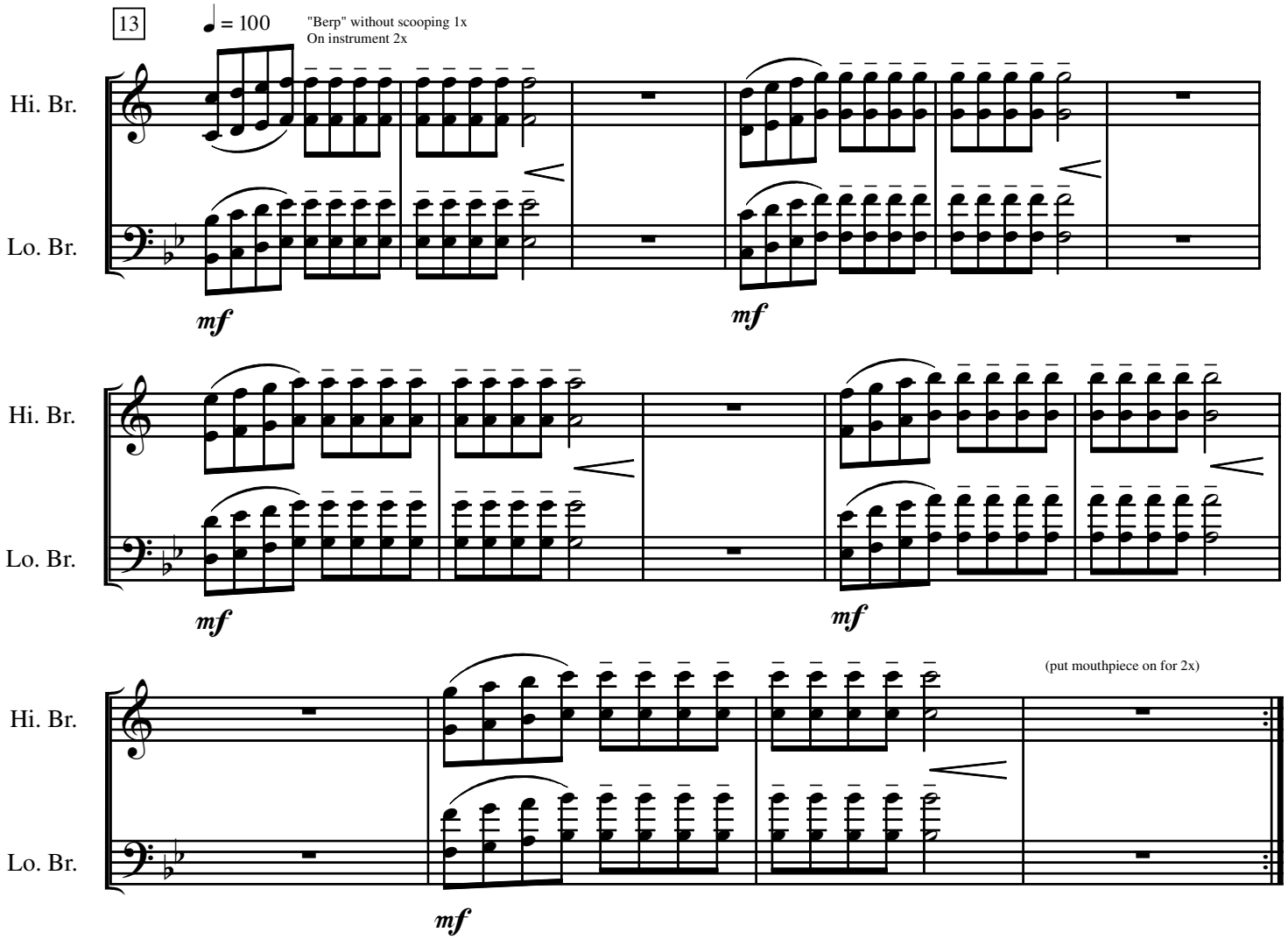
Lip Slurs: Use the dial for maximum resistance when first working with these exercises. Low brass players may need to keep maximum resistance on throughout. Aim for constant tone in any range - you will find that you must work your airstream far more than your "chops" to accomplish even tone throughout the range. Play with increasing tempi as consistency builds.



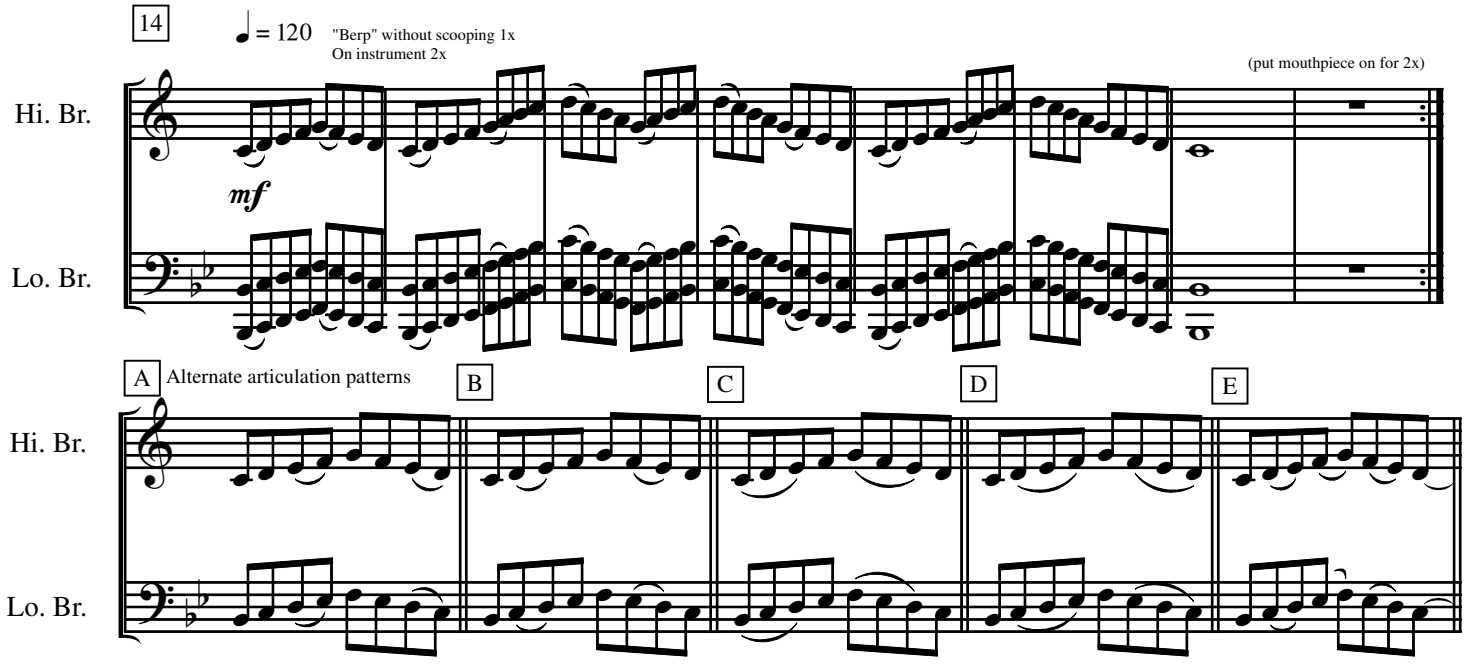


Range Extension: Scooping is a must with these exercises. These exercises do not extend past high C/Bb because the partials above that are created by internal back pressure and the instrument tube is not actively invloved. Articulations are used to "test" the stability of the airstream.

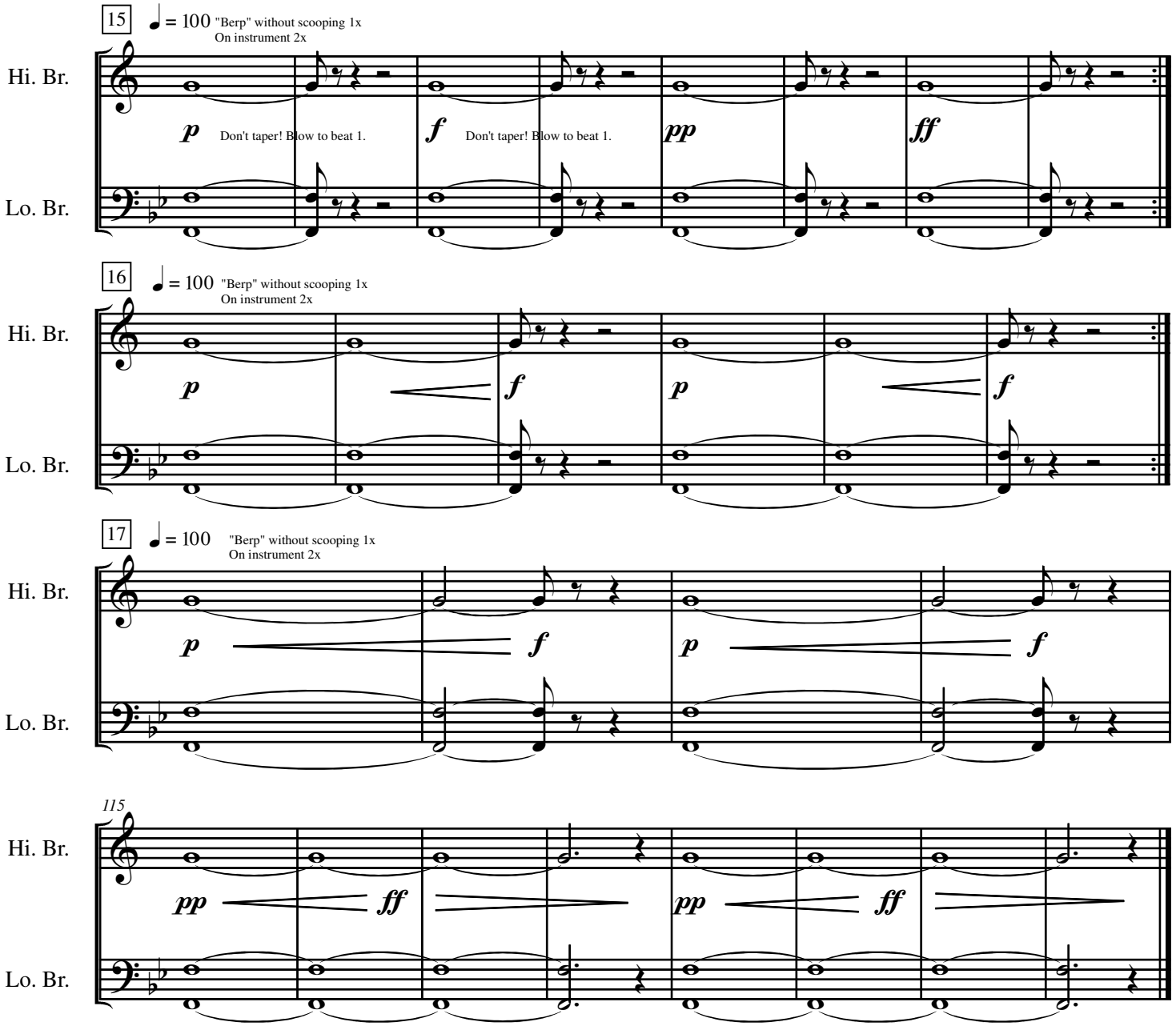




Articulation Exercise: Play these at varying resistance settings and increasing tempi. Articulations should not affect the quality or consistency of the tone at any range. Be sure to apply the suggested articulation groupings to this exercise.



Dynamic Range: These exercises are designed to work on expanding both the piano and forte ends of the spectrum as well as controlling rate of crescendo/decrescendo over time. Work for quality and consistency of tone and accurate intonation at all dynamic levels. Use of a digital tuner with these exercises is recommended.



HAPPY BERPING!