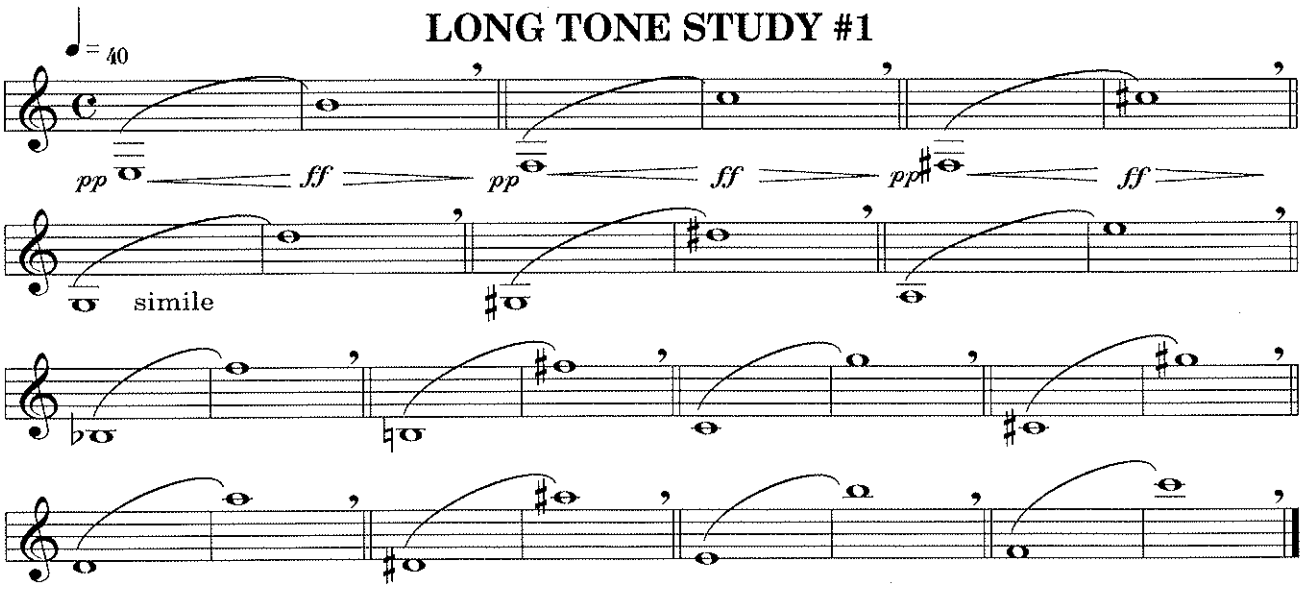
LONG TONES AND SOUND STUDIES

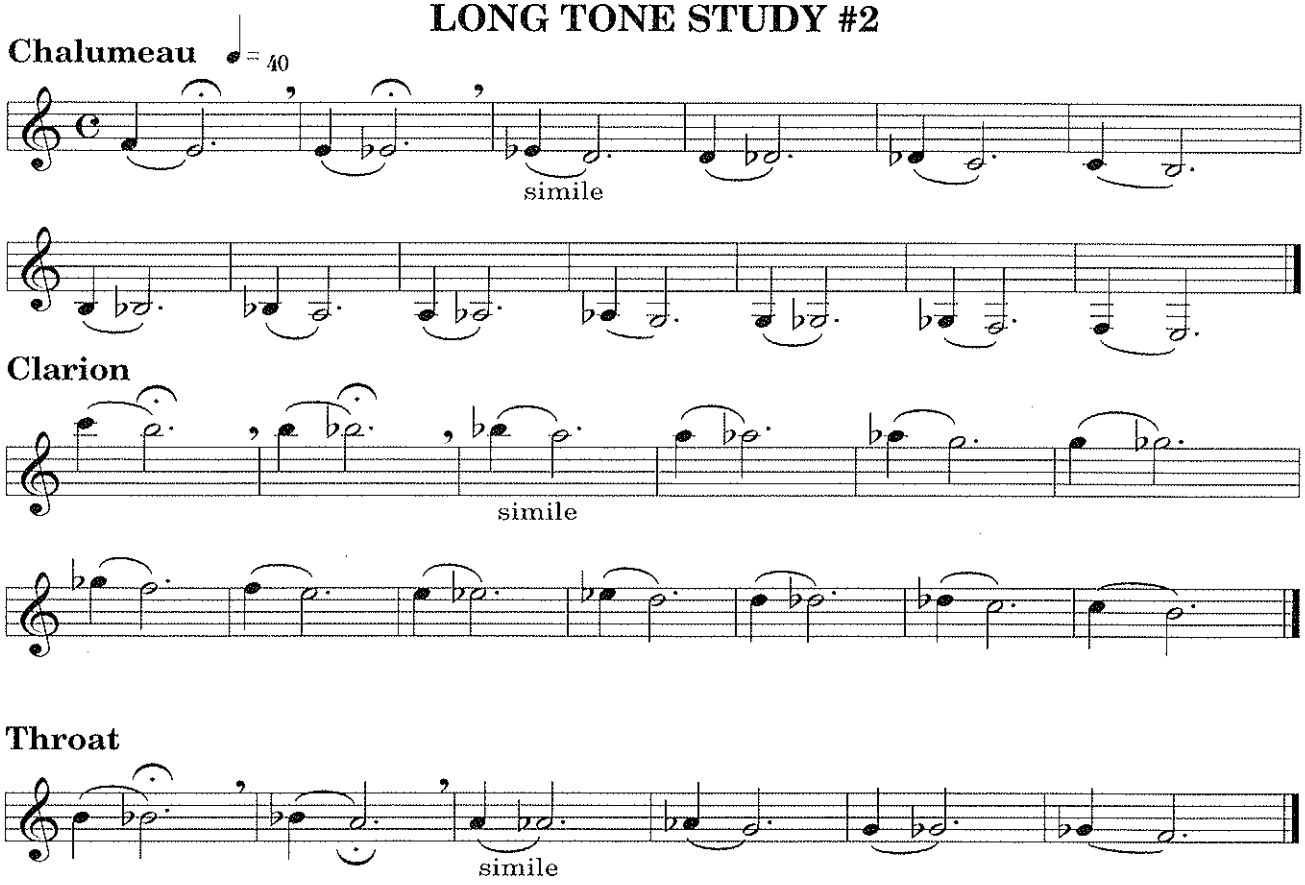
Playing long tones is a dreaded task for most young players, although it is quite valuable. Not only does it provide the opportunity to concentrate specifically on the physical demands of the embouchure, but it allows for careful listening to tone quality. It is too easy to be distracted from focusing on the tone when fingers are involved, so the basic long tone remains a staple. Each of the exercises in this section should be performed very slowly. The provided metronome markings are suggested tempos and may be adjusted faster or slower to suit the individual player. The goal is to use all of the available air for each set in the exercise. While performing each of these exercises, it is important to focus on the areas that are being warmed up. Breathing should be deep and full with good control of the air flow. The embouchure can be checked periodically in a mirror, with attention being paid to form and relaxation. Long tones are a good opportunity to work on new fingerings and hand position, as well as a chance to work with a tuner for intonation. Most importantly, attention should be paid to the tone quality, which should be clear, focused and consistent throughout all registers.

Long Tone Study #1 consists of long tones combined with registral unity and dynamic control. It is a very useful exercise for endurance and expanding the dynamic range, although because of the physical demands, only a few sets should be performed each day. Listen specifically for tone quality and pitch at the various dynamic levels with control of a gradual crescendo and decrescendo.



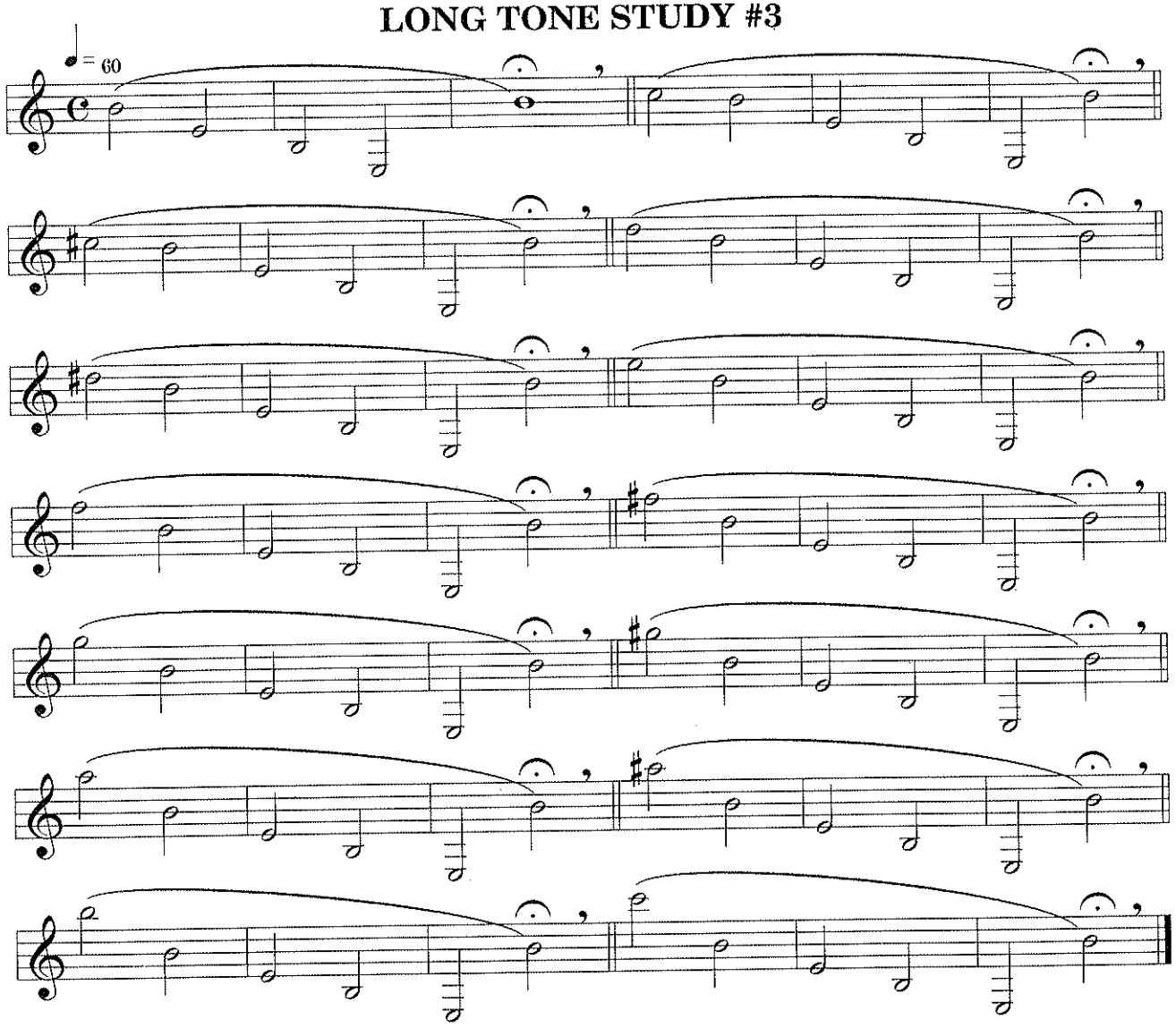
Long Tone Study #2 combines basic long tones with slowly descending half steps that cover each register of the clarinet. Careful attention should be given to the timbre and consistency of each note to give a uniform sound throughout the entire range of the clarinet. Players could expand the range with upward half steps into the altissimo to work on complete tonal unity.

LONG TONE STUDY #2



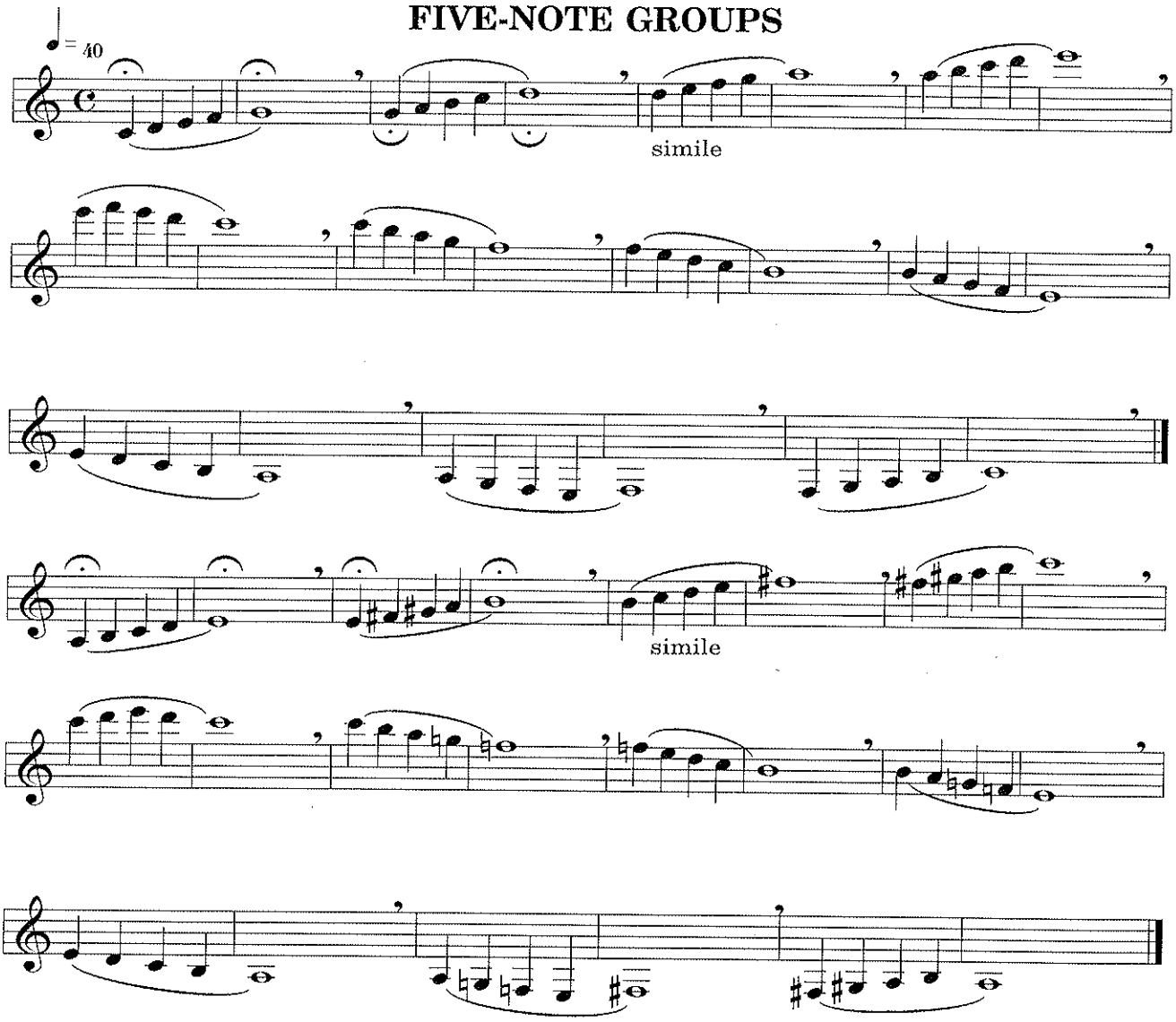
Long Tone Study #3 continues the basic long tone and slow finger motion of the previous exercises and expands the intervals between tones to stress registral unity. Careful attention should be paid to the embouchure to insure that it remains stable during the wide intervals. Again, it may be useful to expand upwards into the altissimo to gain complete timbral consistency.

LONG TONE STUDY #3



Five-Note Groups are an excellent exercise to combine the elements stressed during long tones with very slow finger motions. The exercise allows one to check the air stream to ensure that it functions independently from the fingers. Many younger players will incorrectly pulse the air as they move from note to note. Five-Note Groups are to be executed slowly enough to allow for concentration on the sound, embouchure, and hand position. These can also be used to give the fingers an opportunity to warm up very slowly. Most importantly, Five-Note Groups stress registral unity, especially across each of the breaks. It would be useful to repeat each of the five-note segments at different dynamics, listening carefully for tonal beauty at each dynamic level. Any scale form may be used for this exercise.

FIVE-NOTE GROUPS



Upper-Break Flexibility is an exercise designed to encourage a consistent internal throat position and relaxation when traversing the upper break. The open diamond shaped notes are to be played in the third partial with the regular notes played with their normal fingerings. It is important to concentrate on maintaining the same embouchure and throat position at all times. Each set may be repeated several times for relaxation. (See page 67 for an explanation of the fingering chart.)