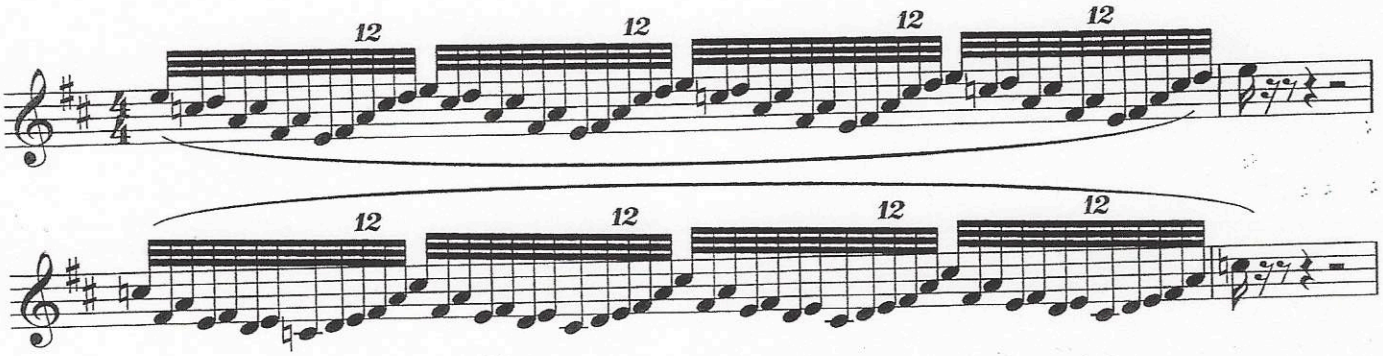
TRUDY KANE

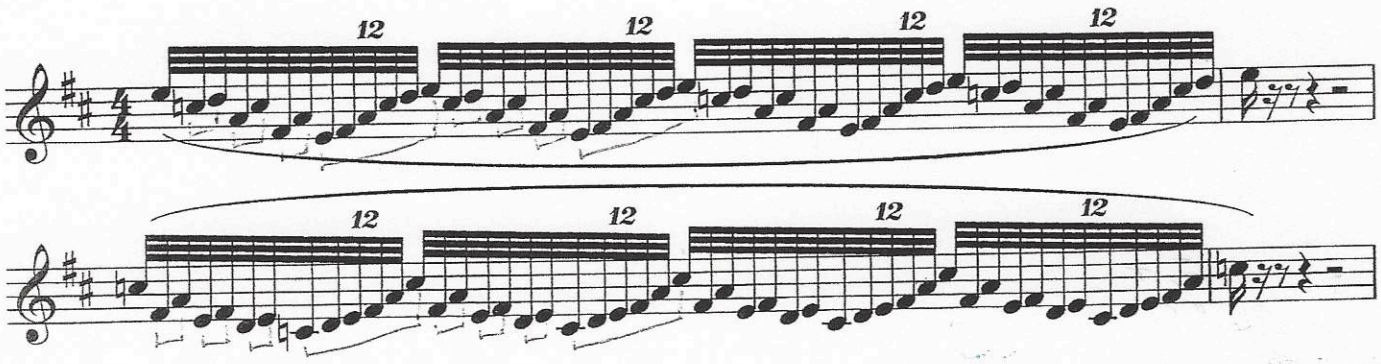
FLYING FINGERS - *Groupings*

The mind can only remember 5 things - even 5 can be difficult.
Best to break into smaller groups.

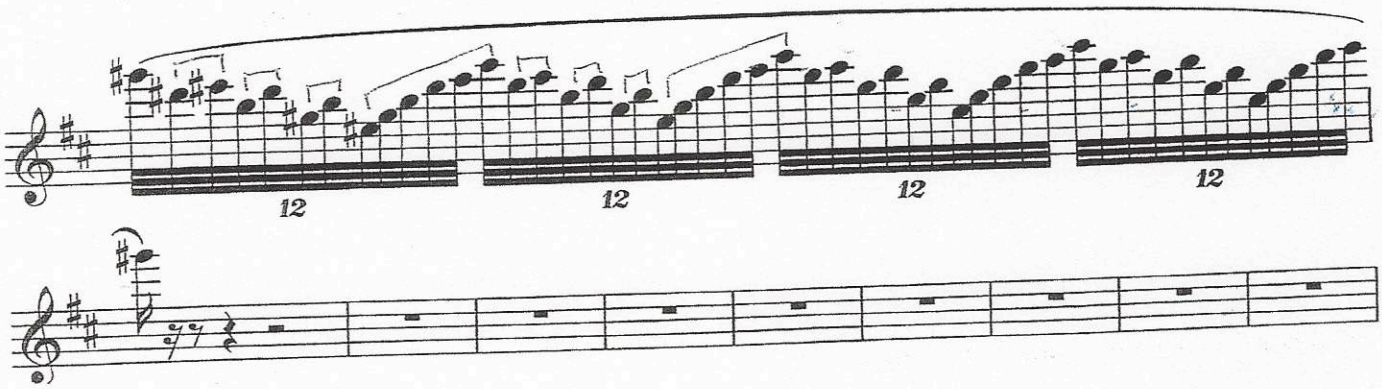
Daphnis et Chloe - opening runs should be broken up.
Try that in the traditional groupings - 3's or 4's. Not so easy. Especially look at the first group in the second flute part.



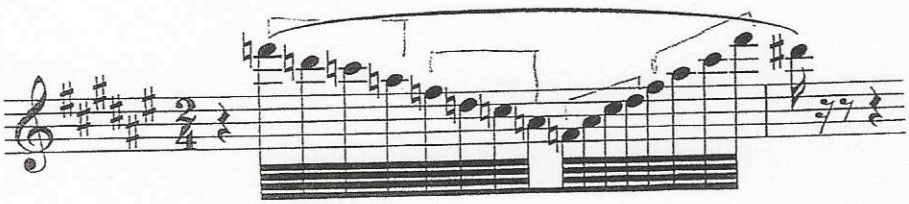
Now let's try grouping according to how it feels and looks:



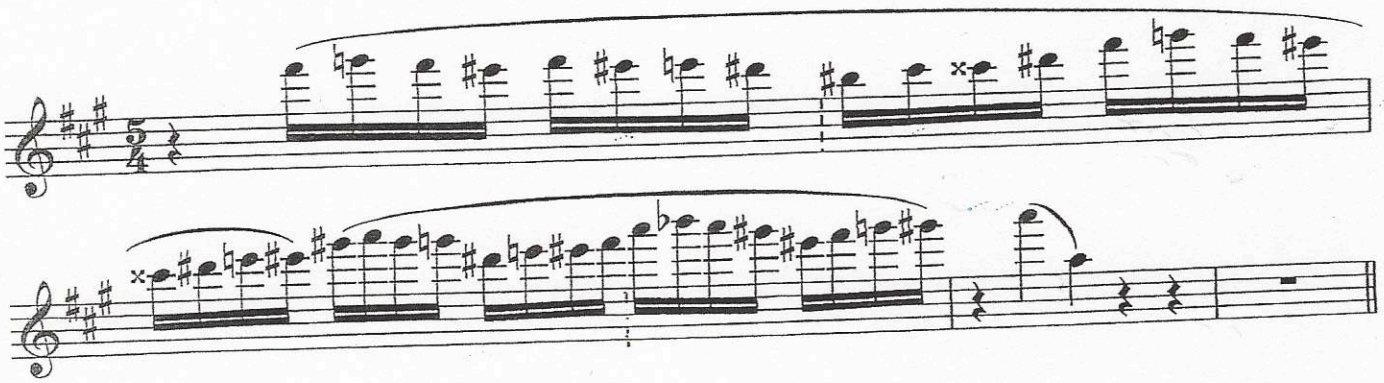
This grouping works for ALL of these groups that are the same shape:



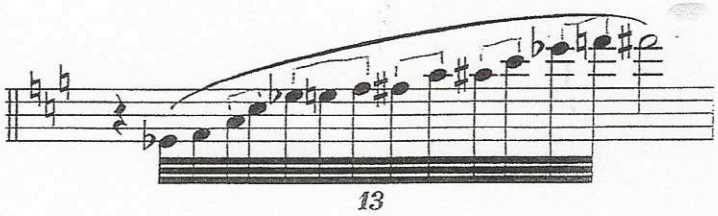
The second flute run after the flute solo is off putting until you realize that it is all groups of four:



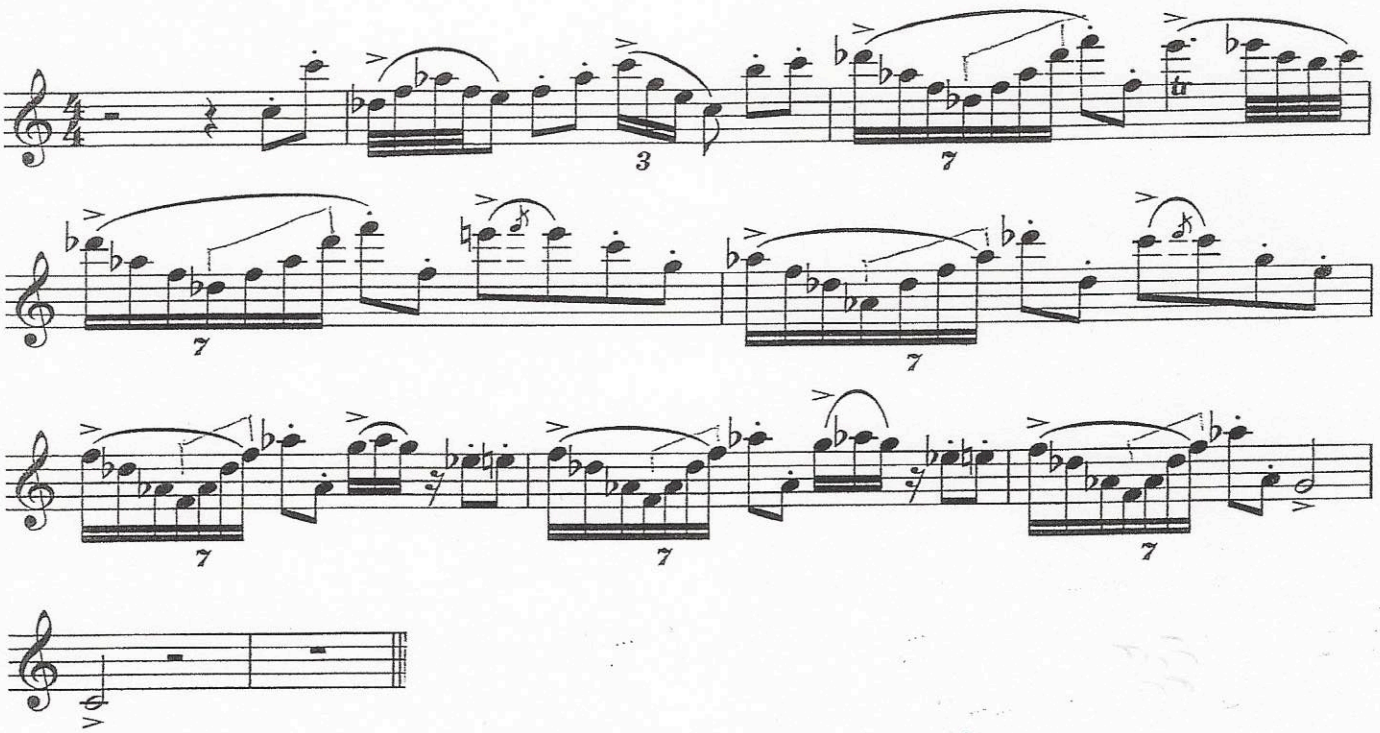
This difficult passage from the end of the piece is much easier if read one group at a time - just the way Ravel wrote it:



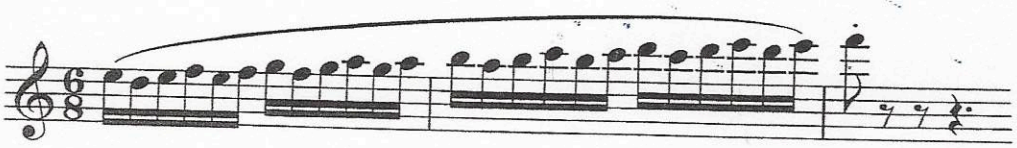
In this passage from Ervin Monroe's "The Flutist's Life" there is an interesting group of 13:
I put the three notes that were very close to each other together, leaving the rest in comfortable groupings of twos:



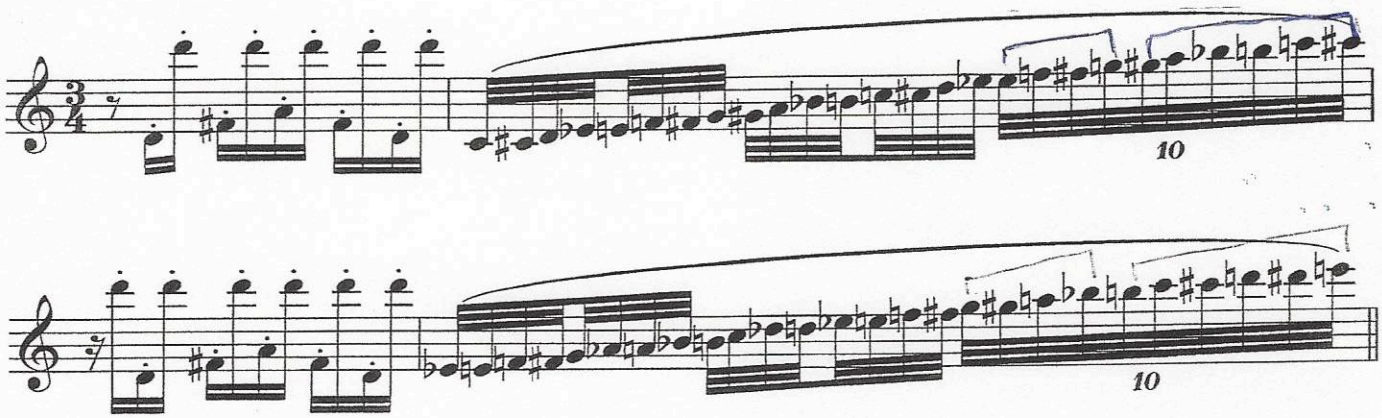
Here is a passage from Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf:
Grouping the sevens in 3 and 4 gives a great sweep up and comfort.



I grouped this little passage from Bizet's Carmen for many years in groups of 2 and 4. Only after hearing a colleague practicing it did I realize who much easier it is in threes:



Carnival of the Animals: Here are runs all in fours until the 10. I recommend continuing the four and playing a faster 6 at the end - for a wonderful sweep:



In this passage from the second movement of Burton's Sonatina we can use groupings to help us see these runs and feel them more easily:

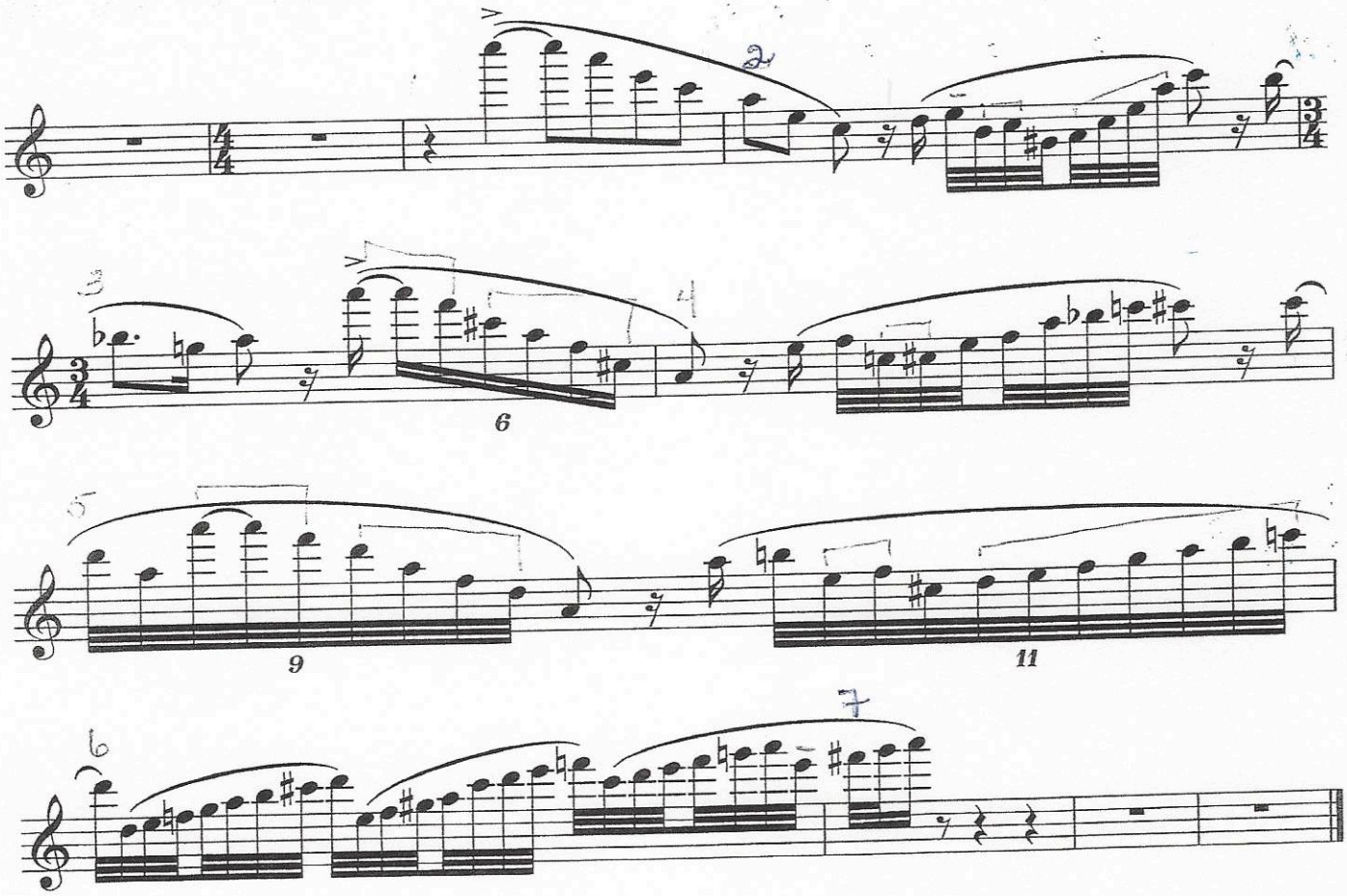
Bar 2 - leaning on the E then putting the B and C together, a hair of time on G# and the arpeggio is easy!

Bar 3 - putting the A and F together leaves an easy arpeggio down

Bar 4 - it helps to see the C and C# together

Bar 5 - once again putting the A and F together leaves an easier arpeggio down
In the next run put E and F together, separate the C# and play the scale with a sweep

Bar 6 to 7 - a little time on the last E separates it from the A (always a difficult interval) and makes beginning the next bar with the short scale beginning on the F# much easier to see



The Firebird Variation: this difficult movement always shows up on audition lists.

Probably the most difficult passage is the third bar:
there are two things we can do to make it easier.

First: look at the third bar of 15. The same music - in a flat key.
Somehow, this is much easier to read. If you can memorize it in the flat key or even read it in the flat key for that one bar - it tricks your mind into thinking it is easier.

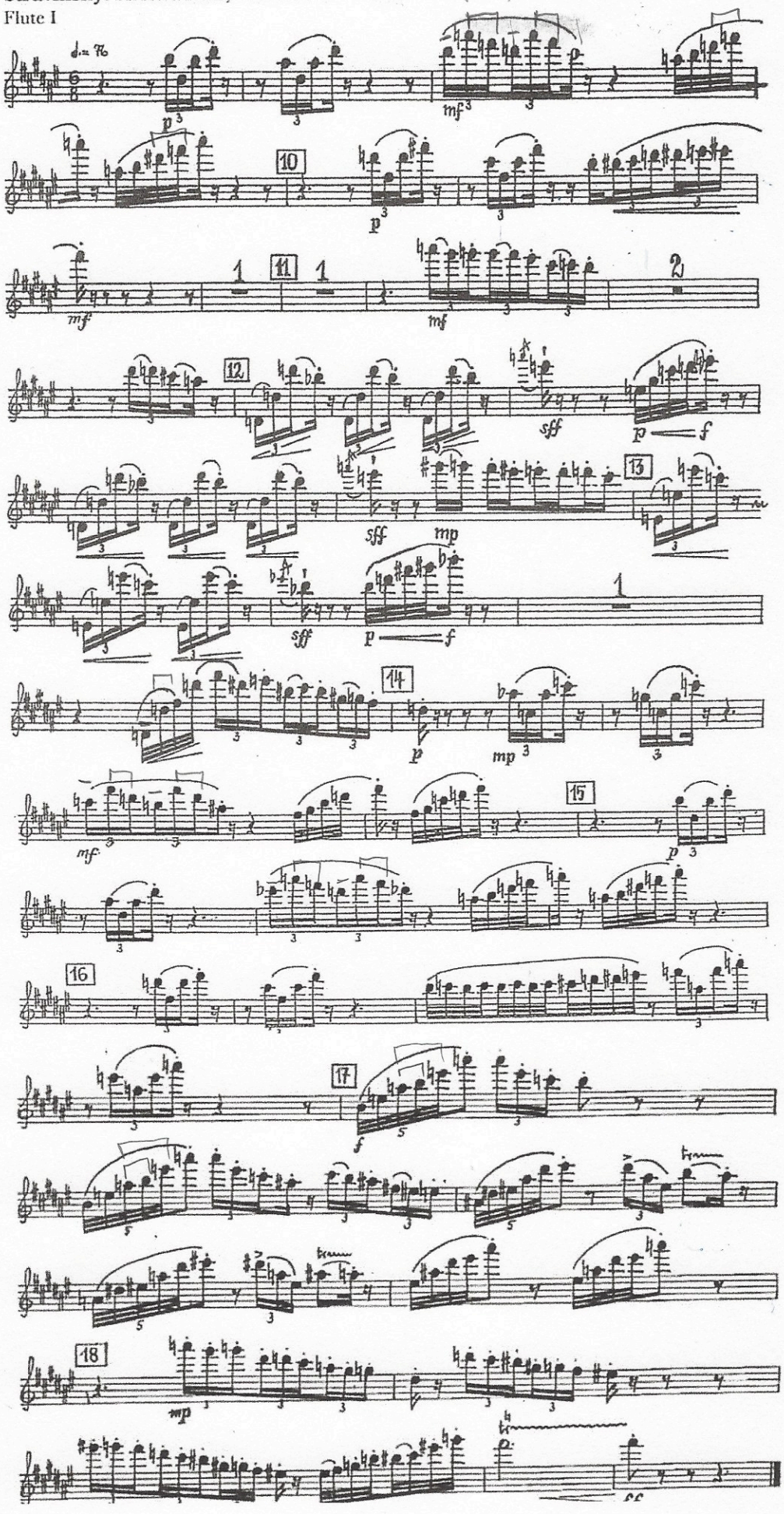
The other thing is the grouping. Lean on the first note then group the next two together.
This separates the large interval making it easier to see; leaning on the first note is grounding.
This works well for both groups, both times.

The arpeggios that follow are more easily seen in twos - once again separating the large interval.

The bar before 14 was not in the parts I learned from and performed from for many years.
That first arpeggio is nearly impossible to play in tempo. It can be helped by leaning on the first note and making a group of the next two - thus separating them from the large intervals on either side.

At 17 I suggest either: 2, 2 and 2 OR 2 and 3 with the A by itself.

REMEMBER, not all groupings work for everyone. If you are teaching you may need to find a few different ways for different students. Sometimes, a grouping works very well for a long time - until the day it does not. That does not mean there is anything wrong, just change the grouping.

Stravinsky: Firebird Suite, Variation de L'oiseau de feu (1919)

Flute I