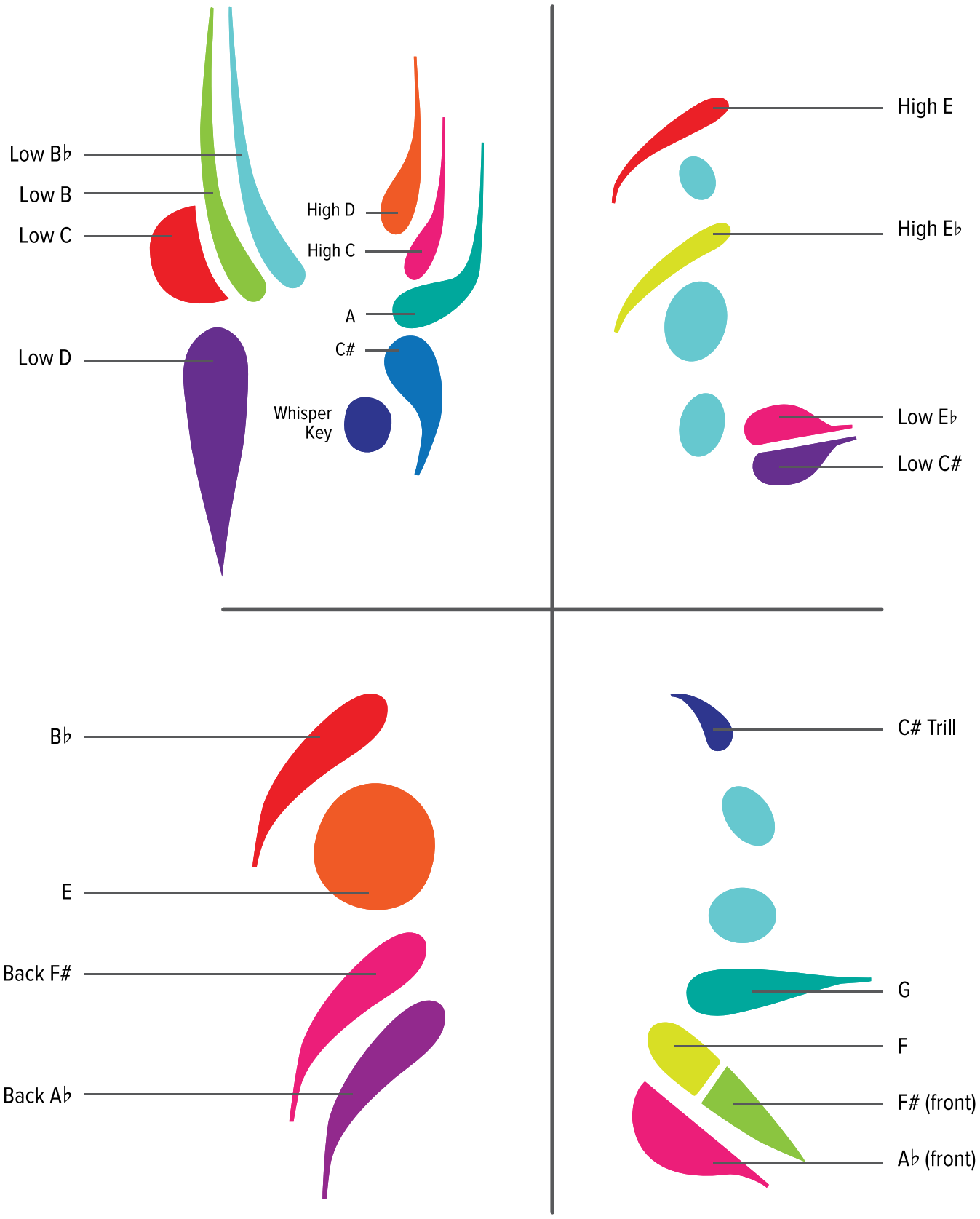
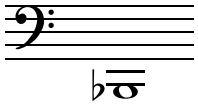
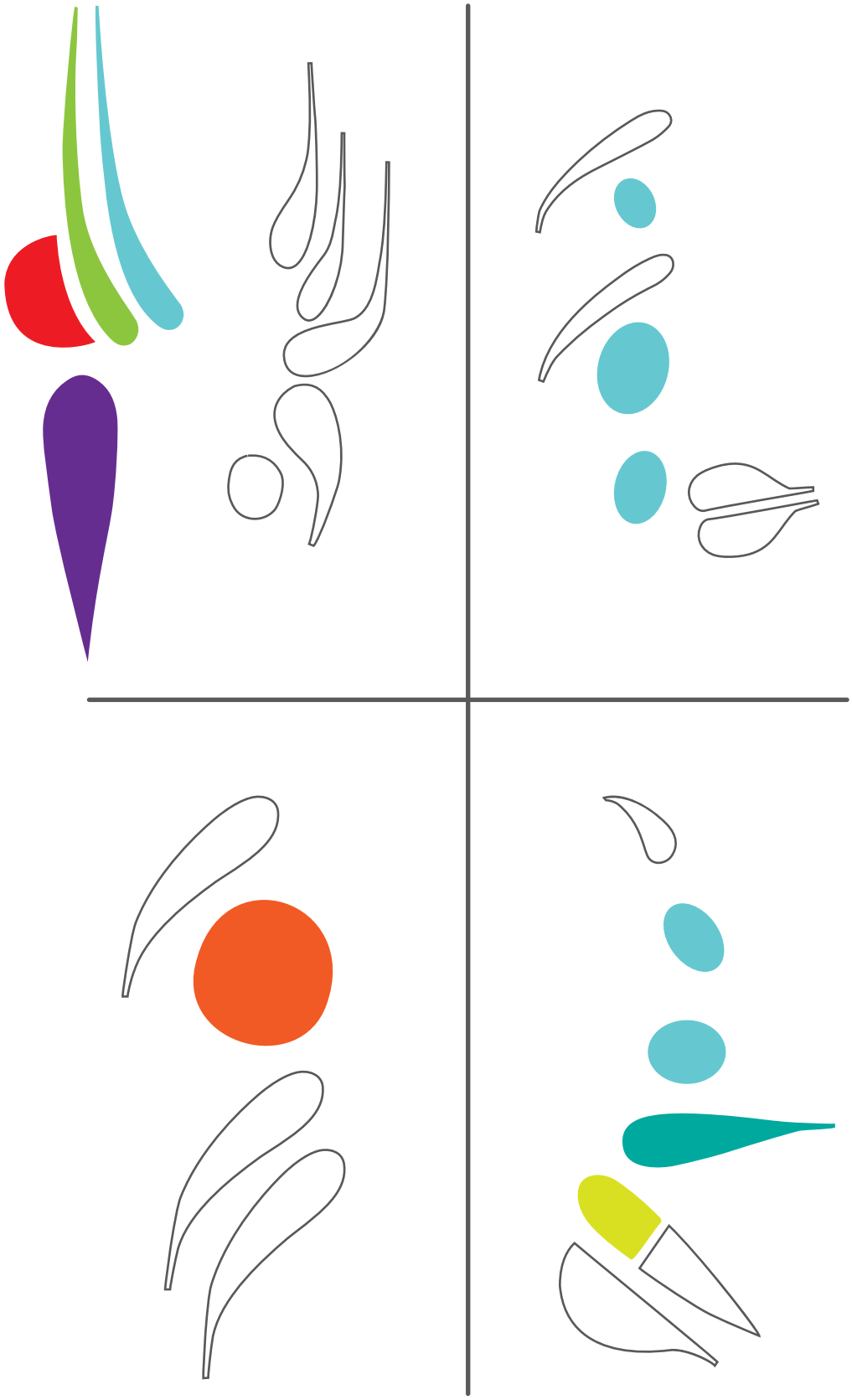
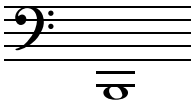
Bassoon Key Names



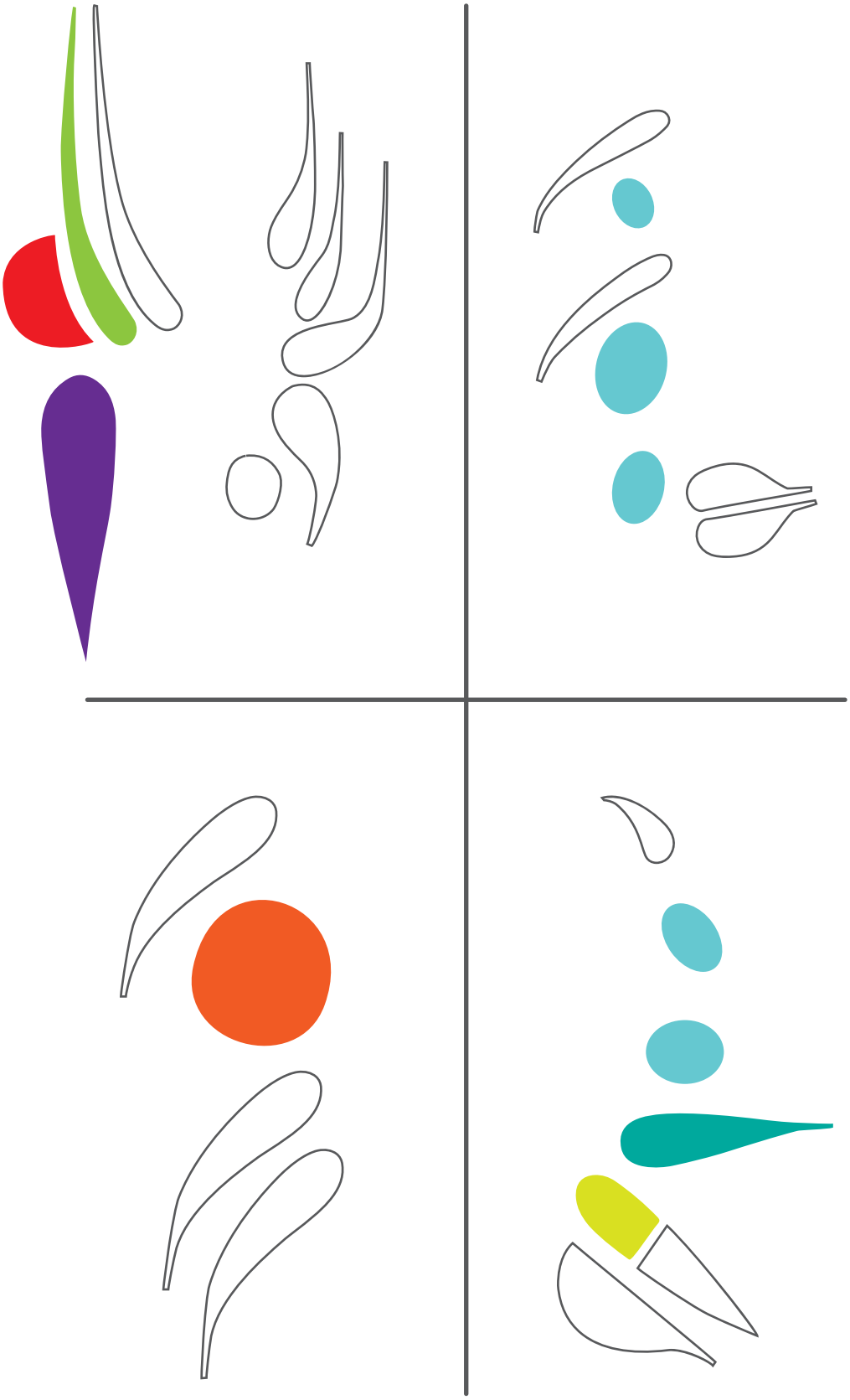


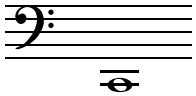
LOW B♭



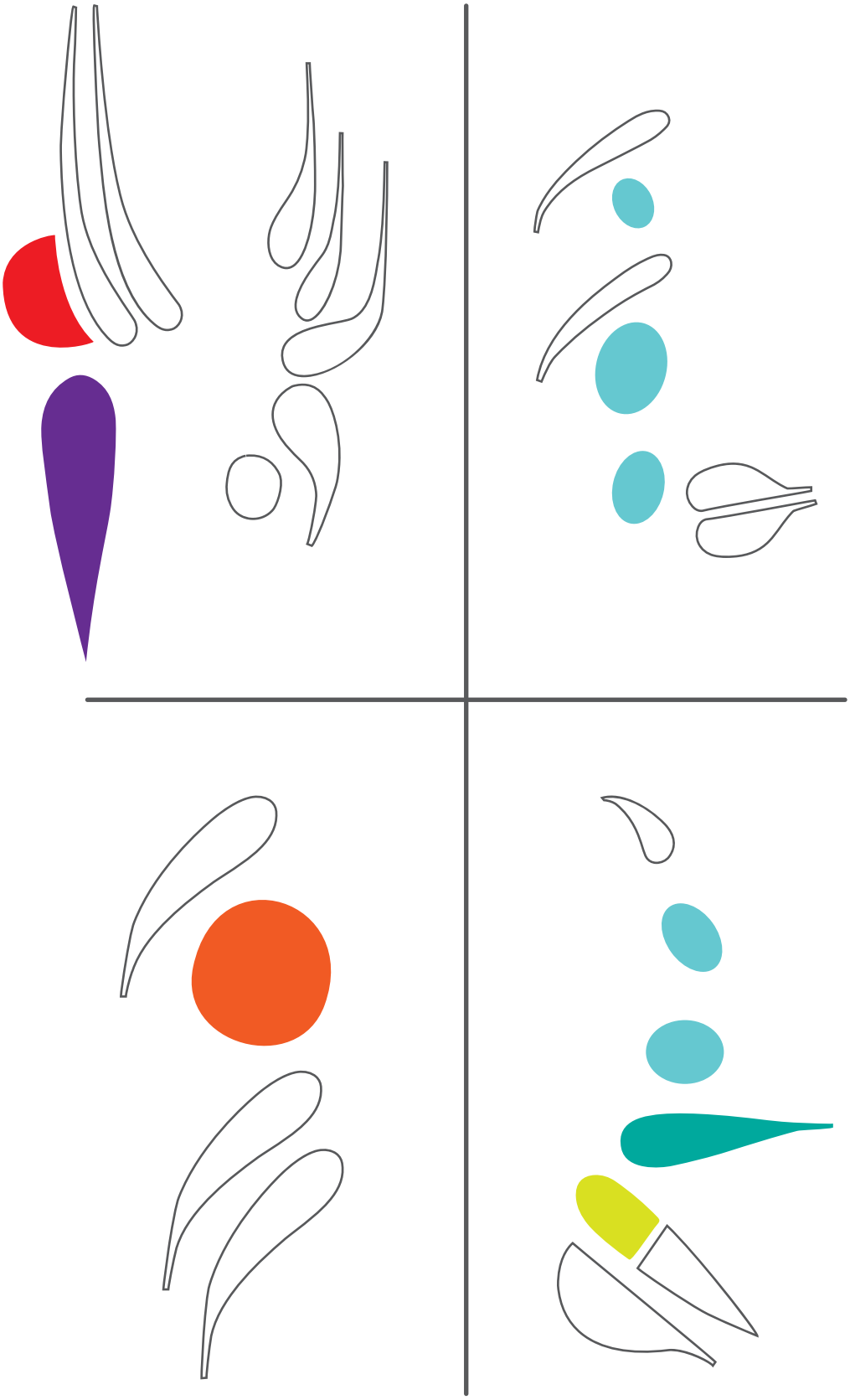


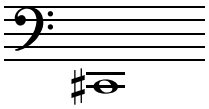
LOW B



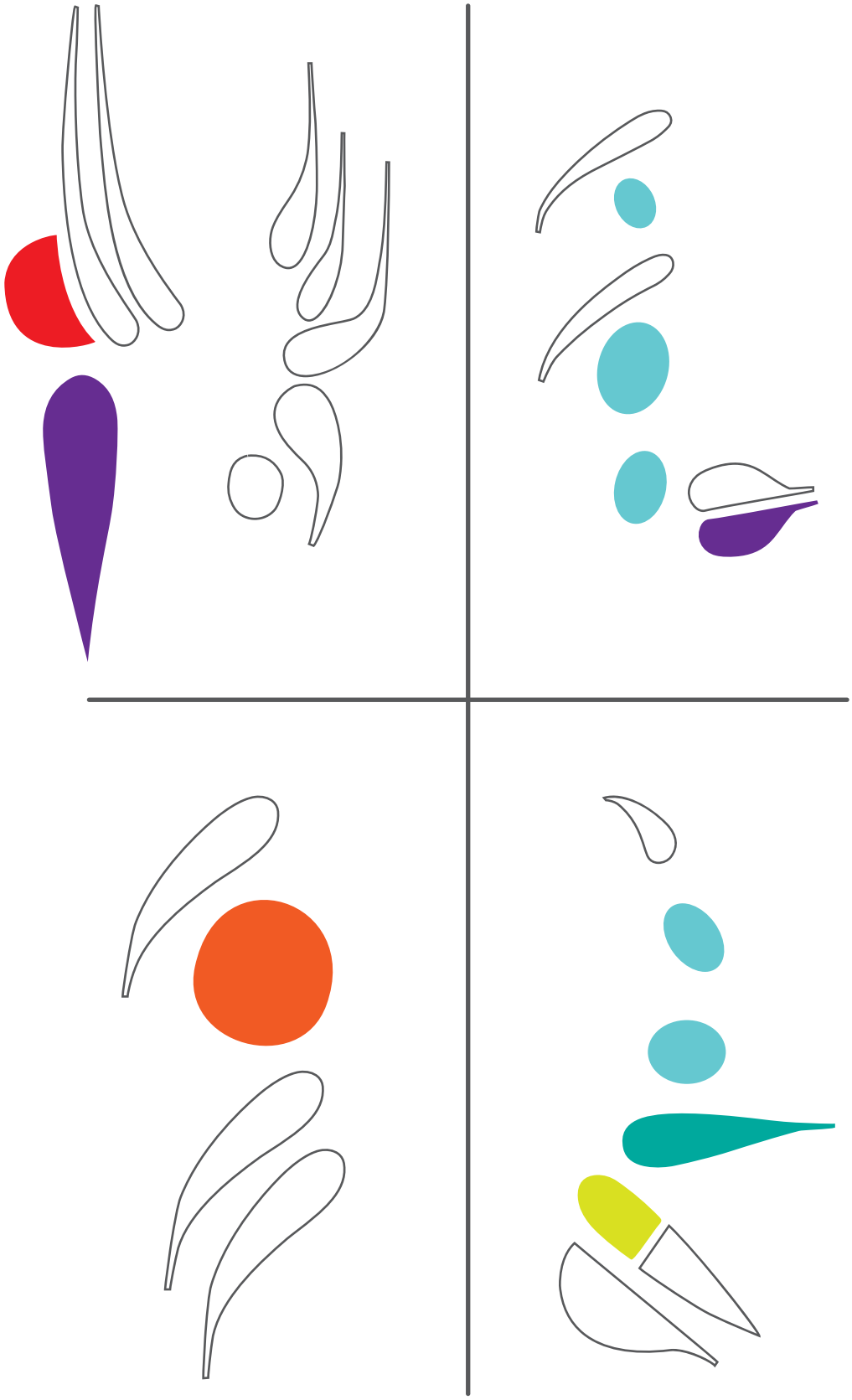


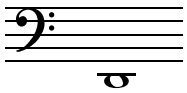
LOW C





LOW C#

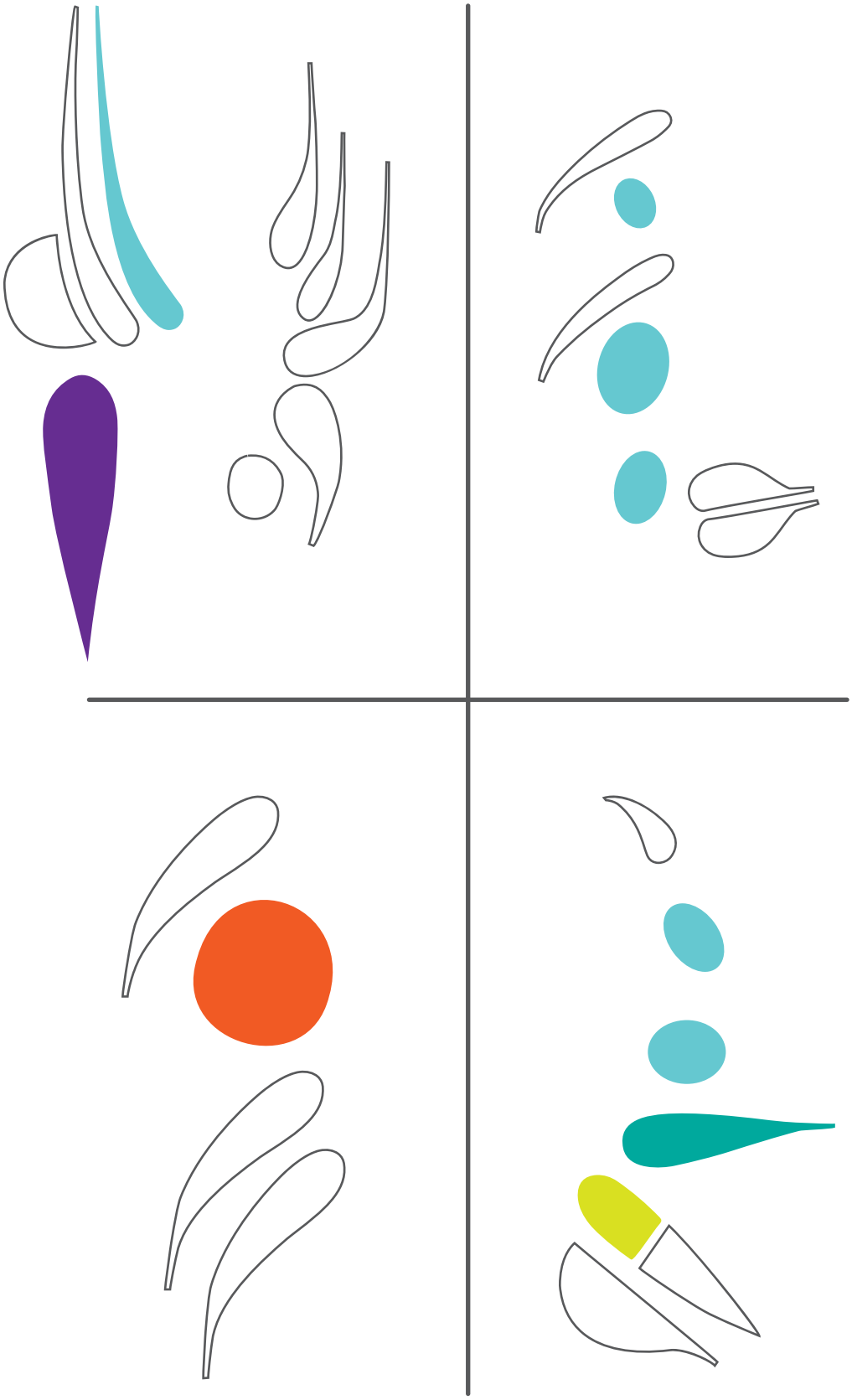
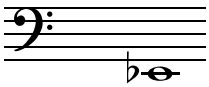




LOW D

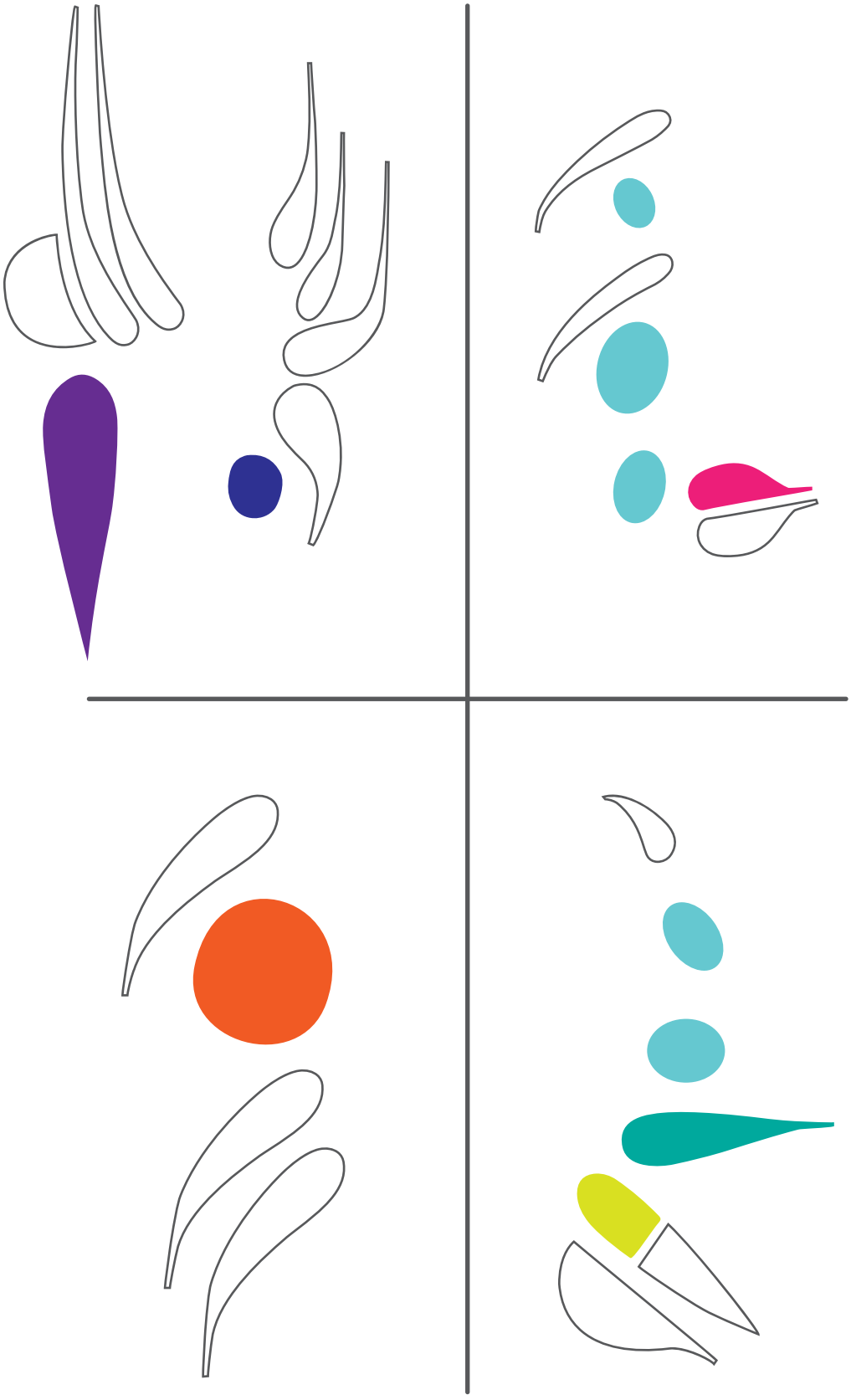
OPTIONAL

add low B♭ key to lower pitch and increase resonance

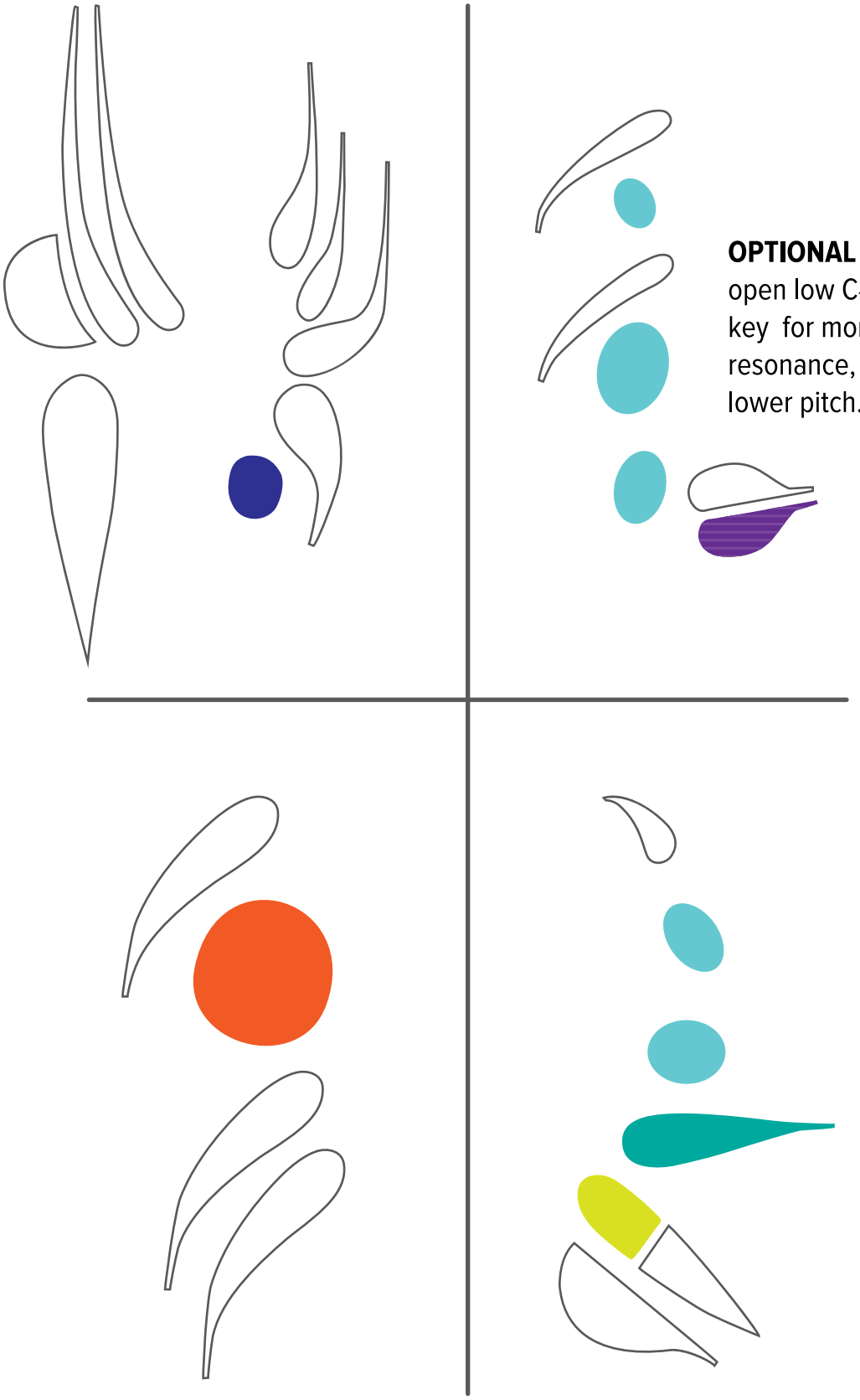


LOW E♭

While whisper key is not required for Low E flat, sometimes placing the thumb on this key facilitates passage work.



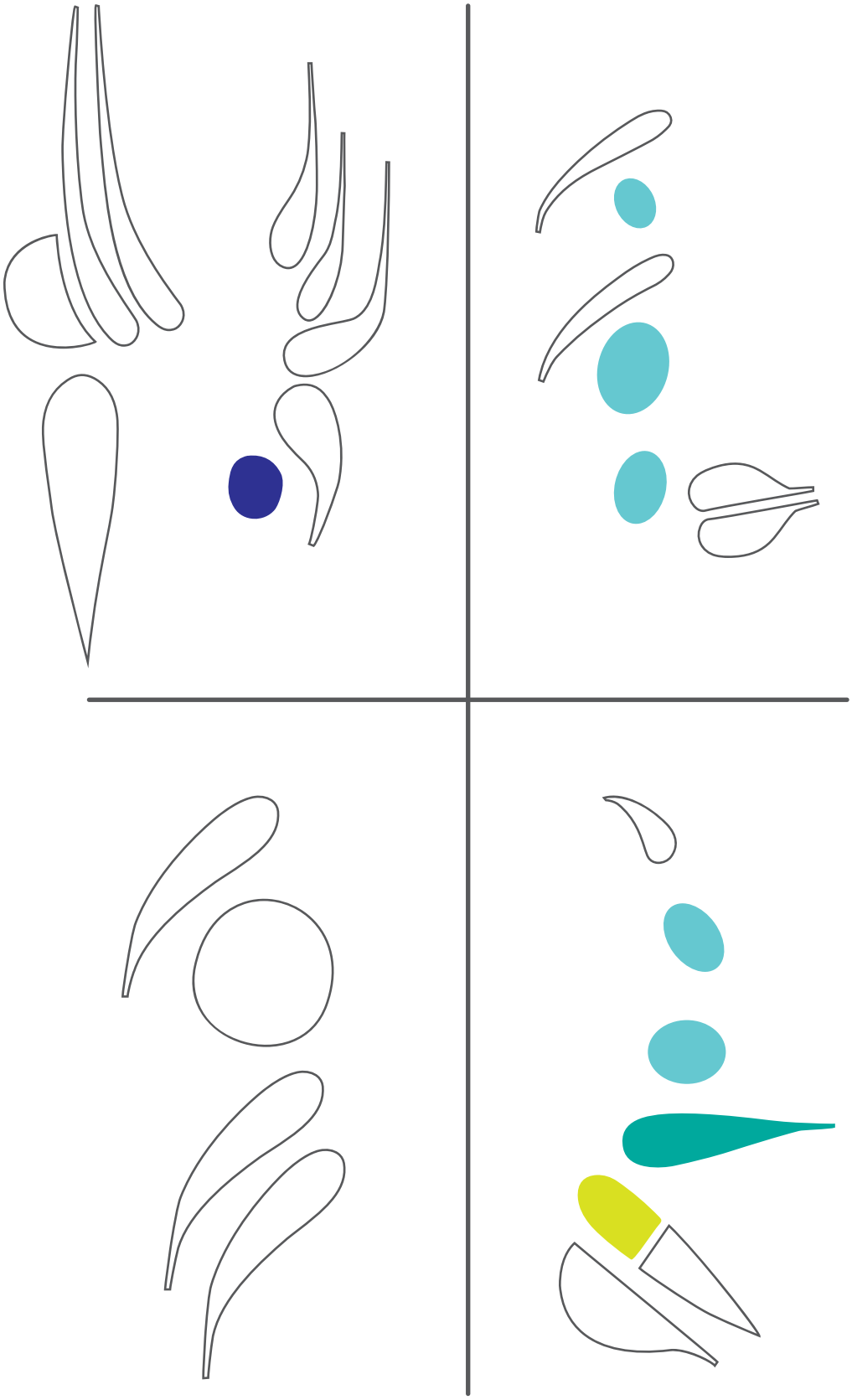
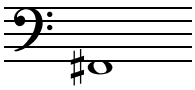
LOW E



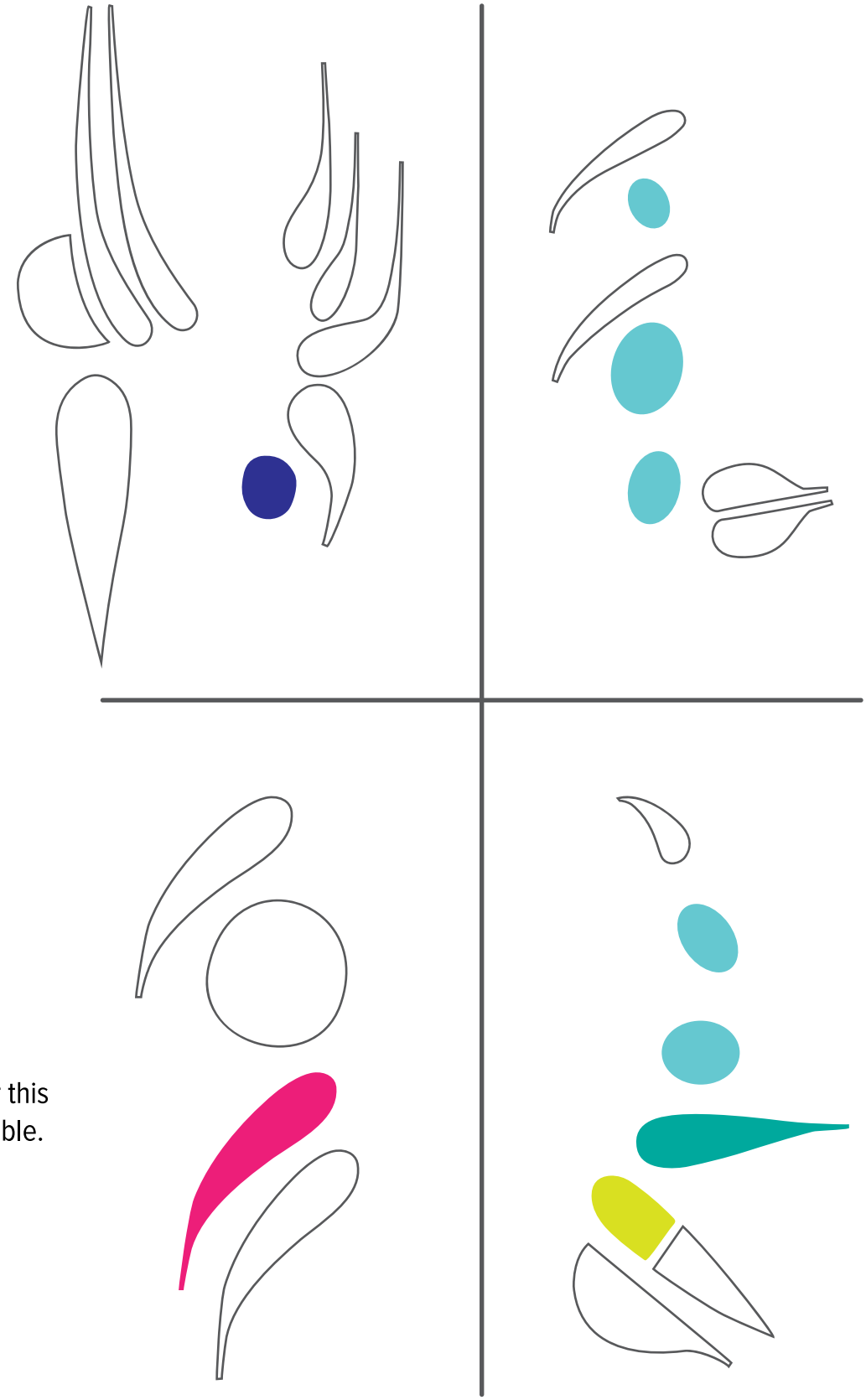
OPTIONAL
open low C# key for more resonance, lower pitch.

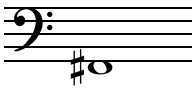
While whisper key is not required for Low E, sometimes placing the thumb on this key facilitates passage work.

LOW F

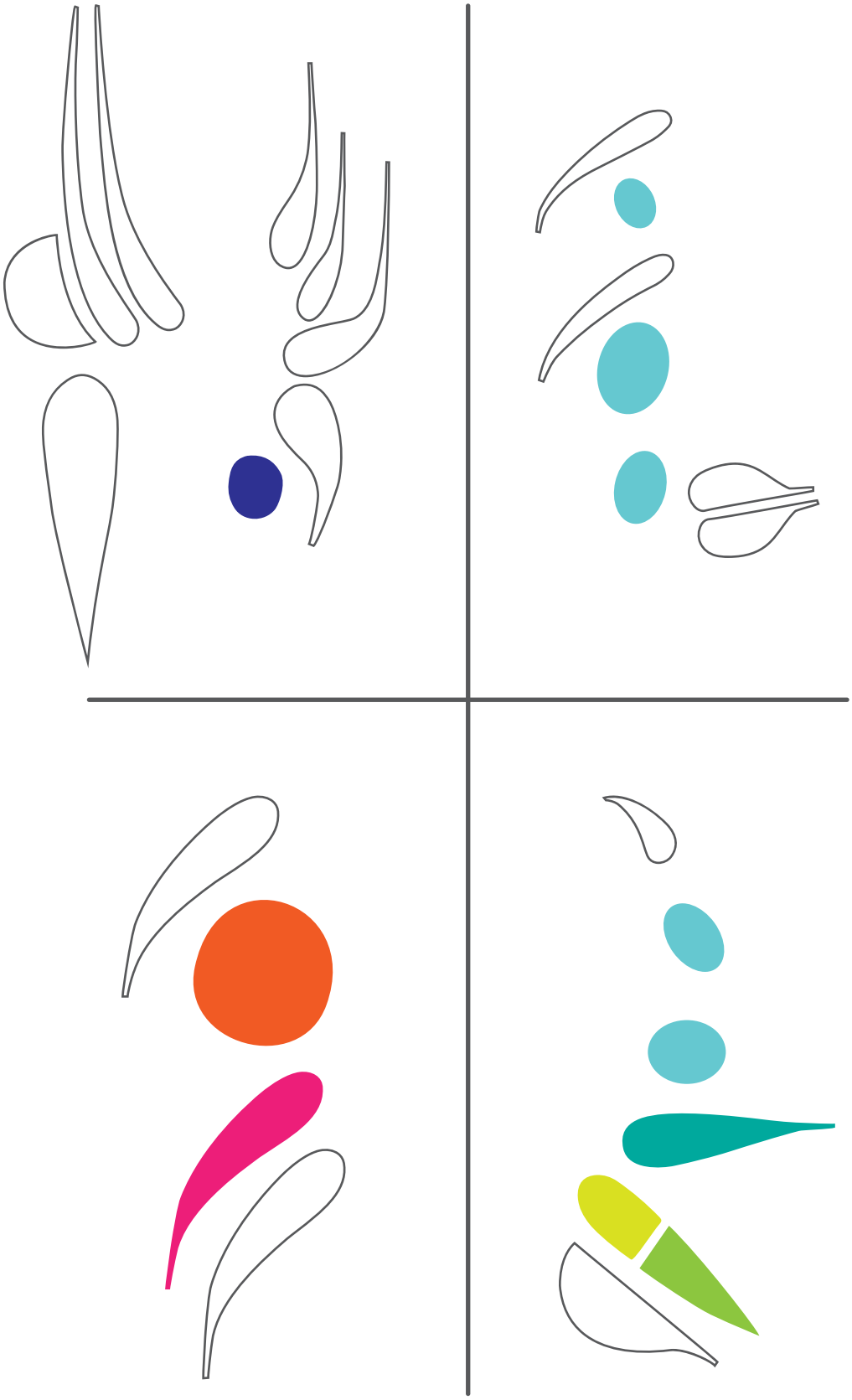


LOW F#

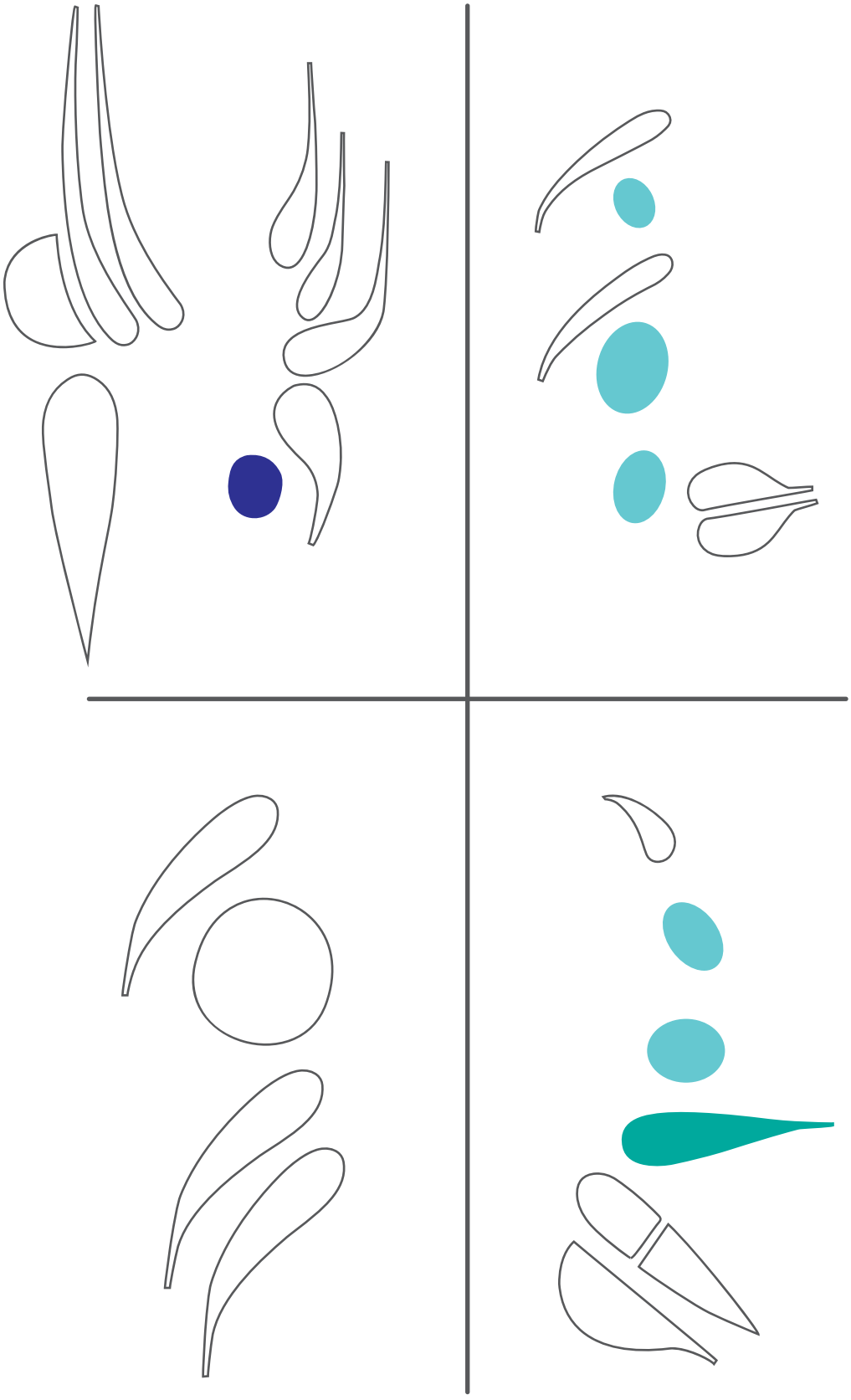


Back F# is preferred for this octave, whenever possible.

MUTED F#

Sometimes useful for very soft attacks.

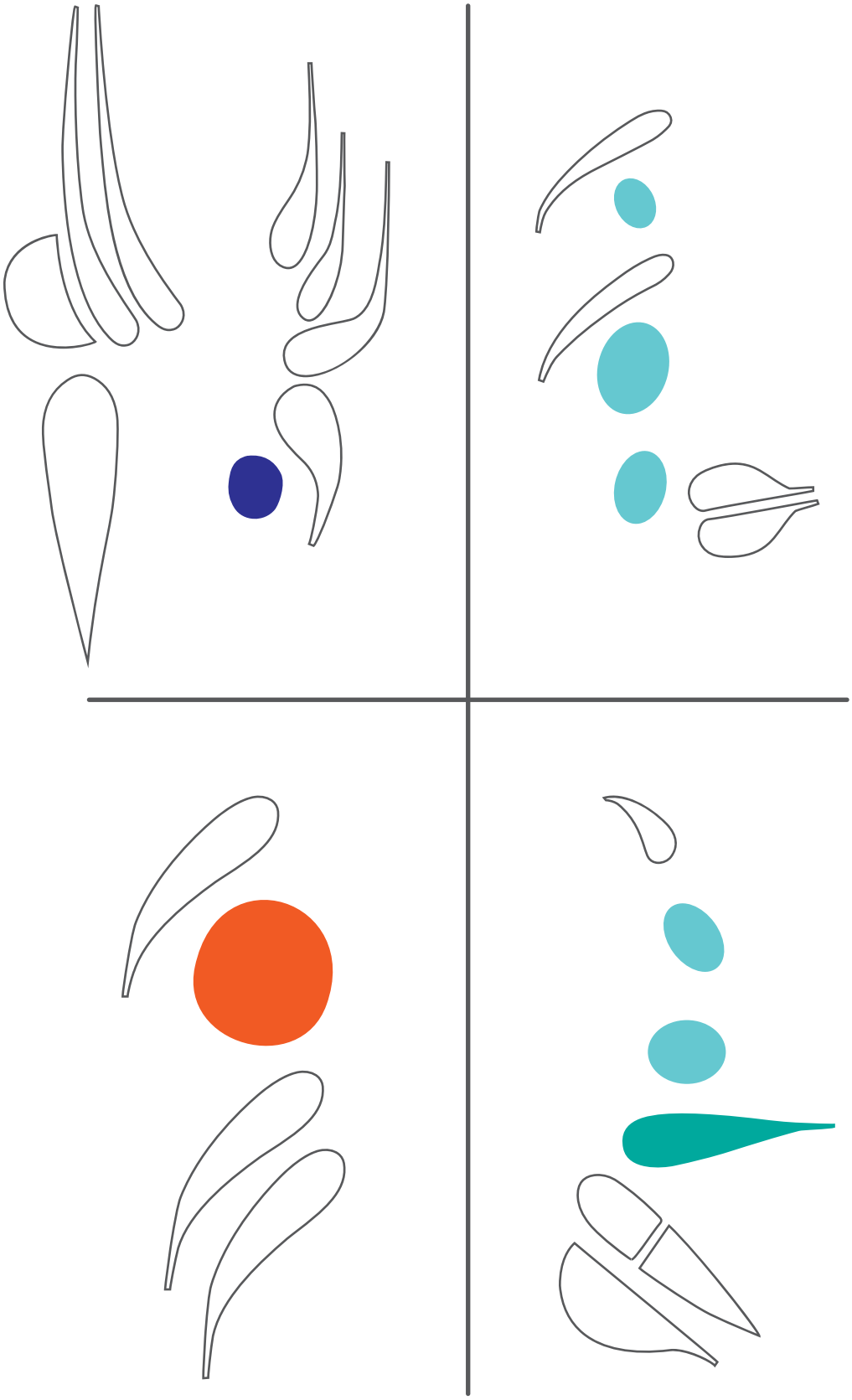


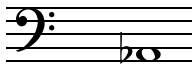
G



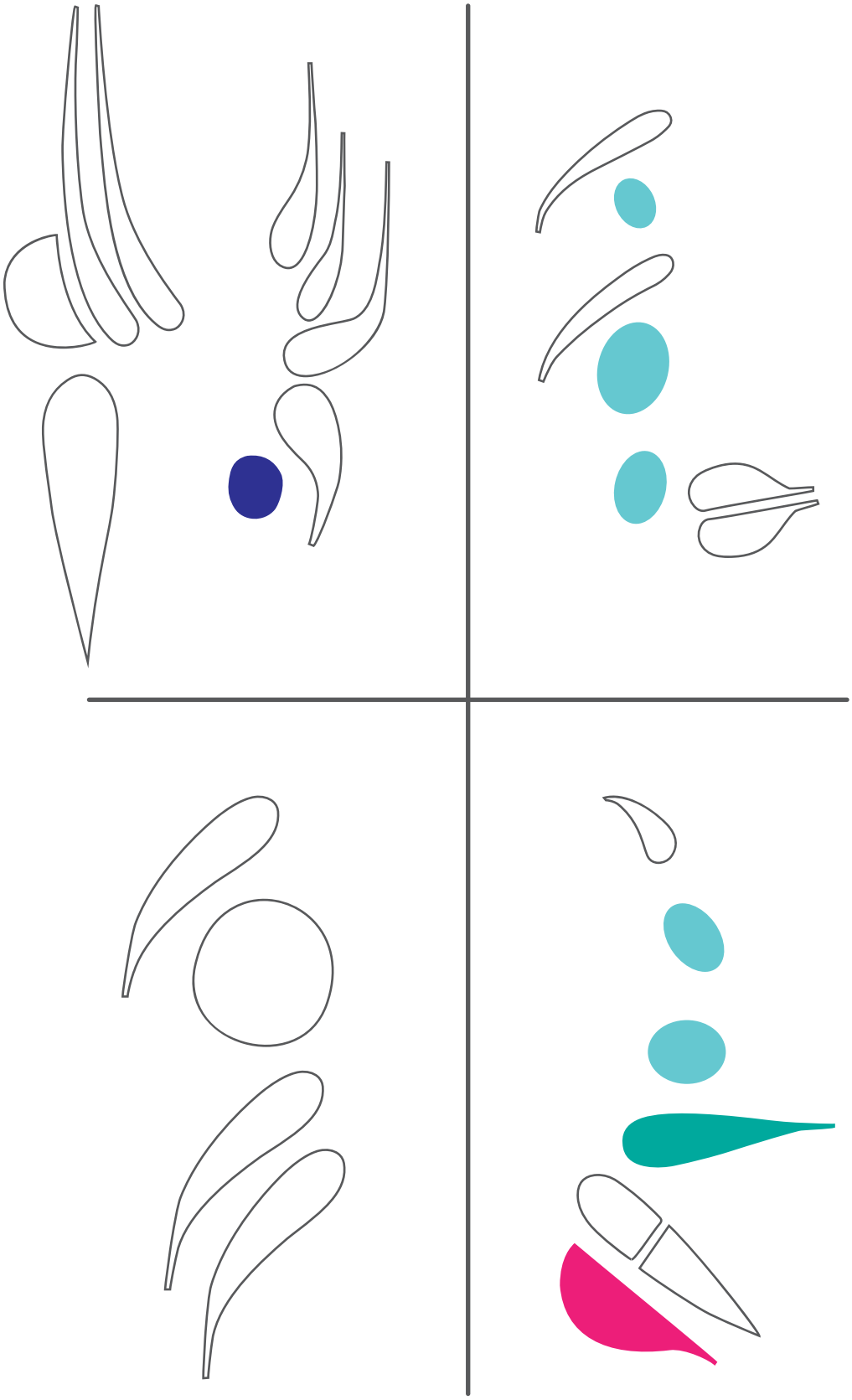
MUTED G

Sometimes useful for very soft attacks.

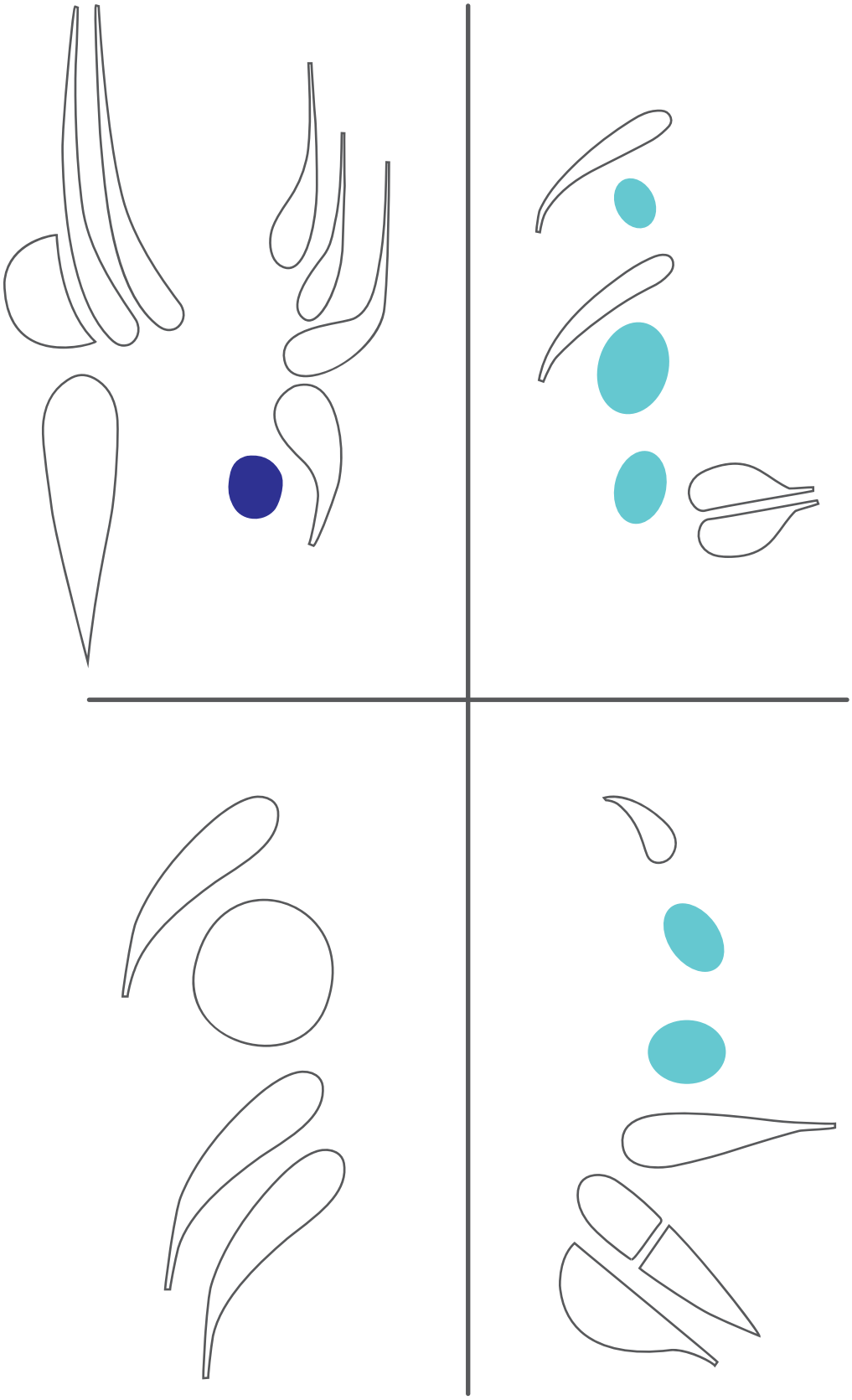




A♭

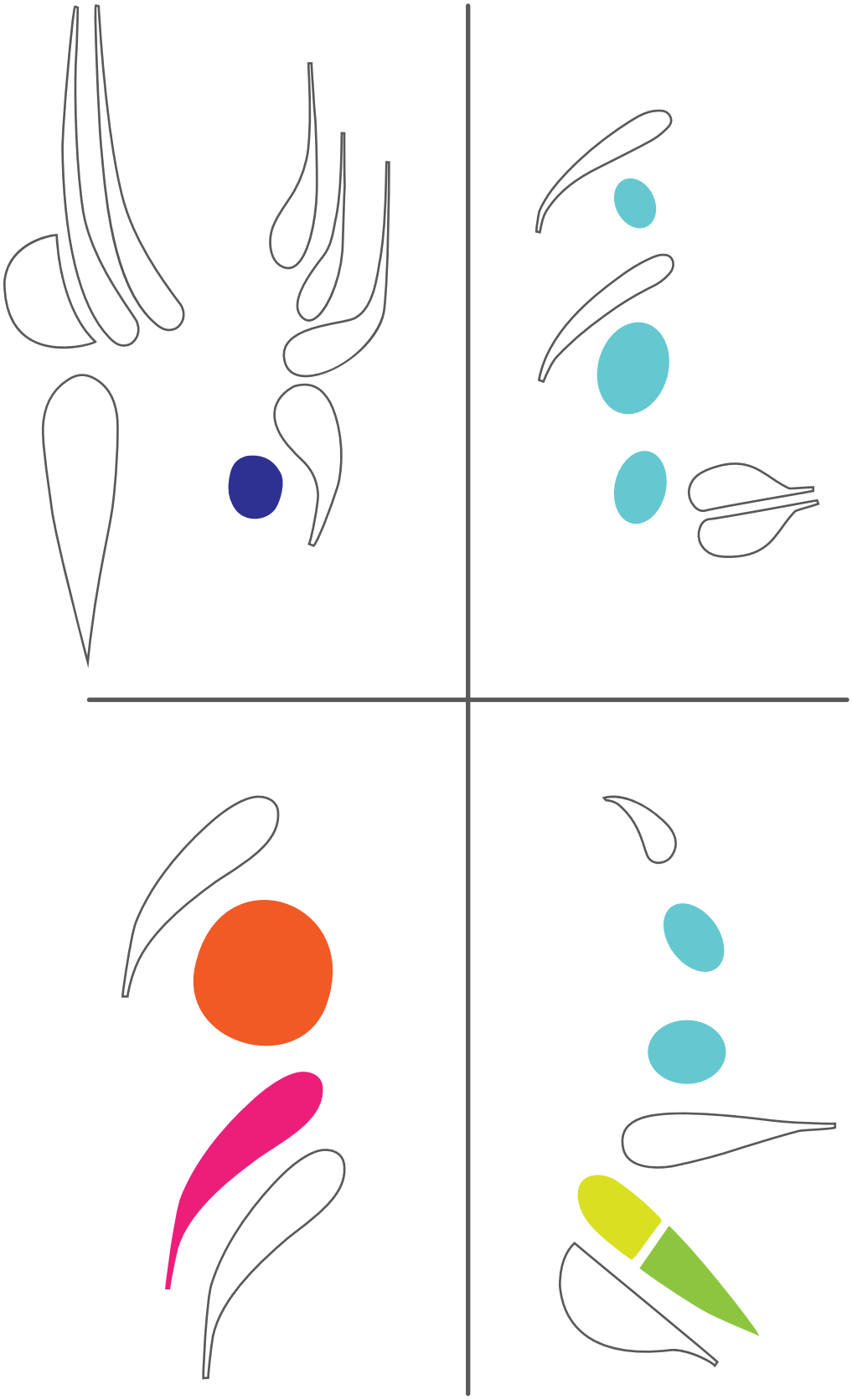


A

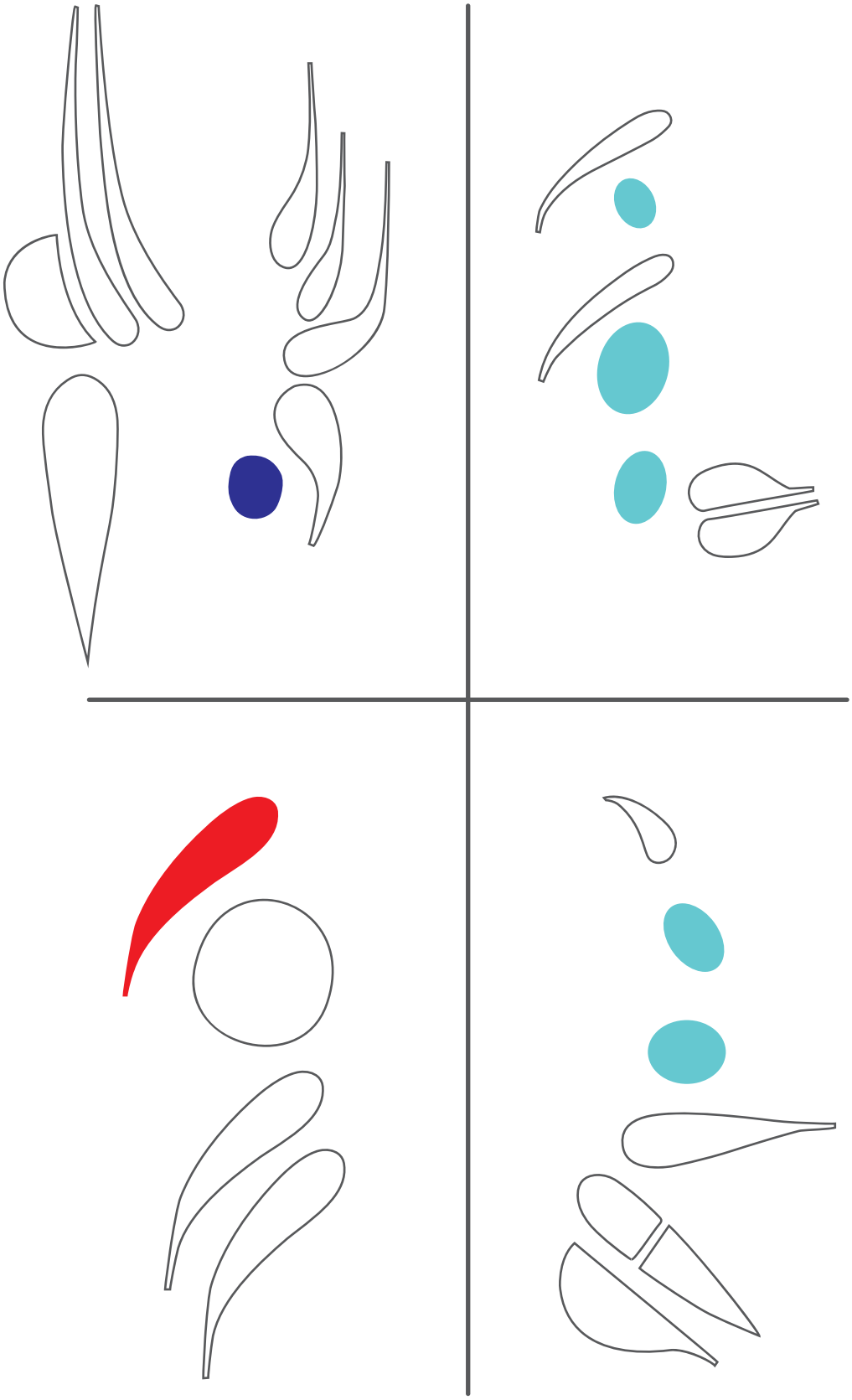
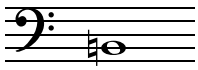


MUTED A

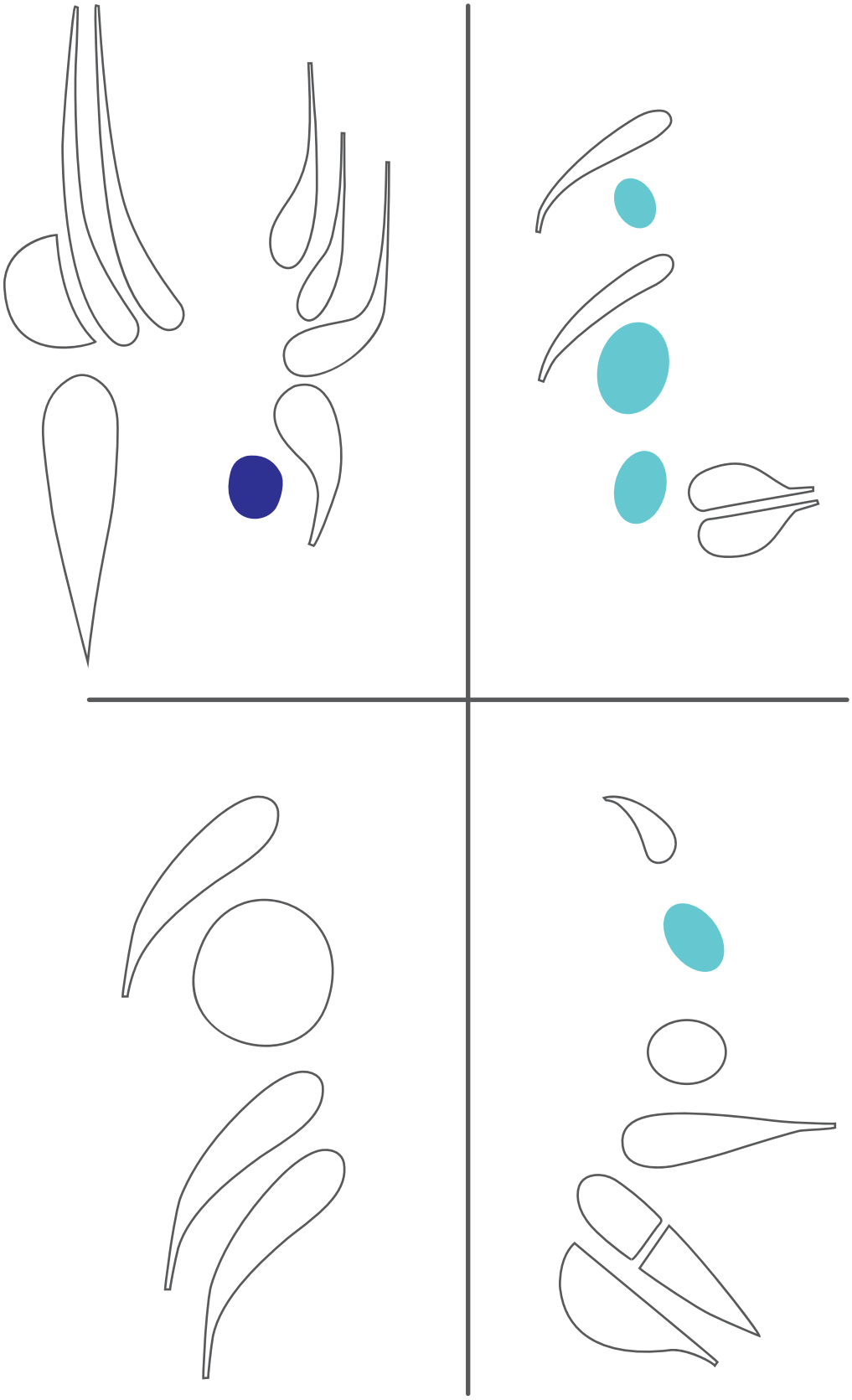
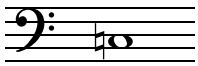
Sometimes helpful
for very soft attacks.



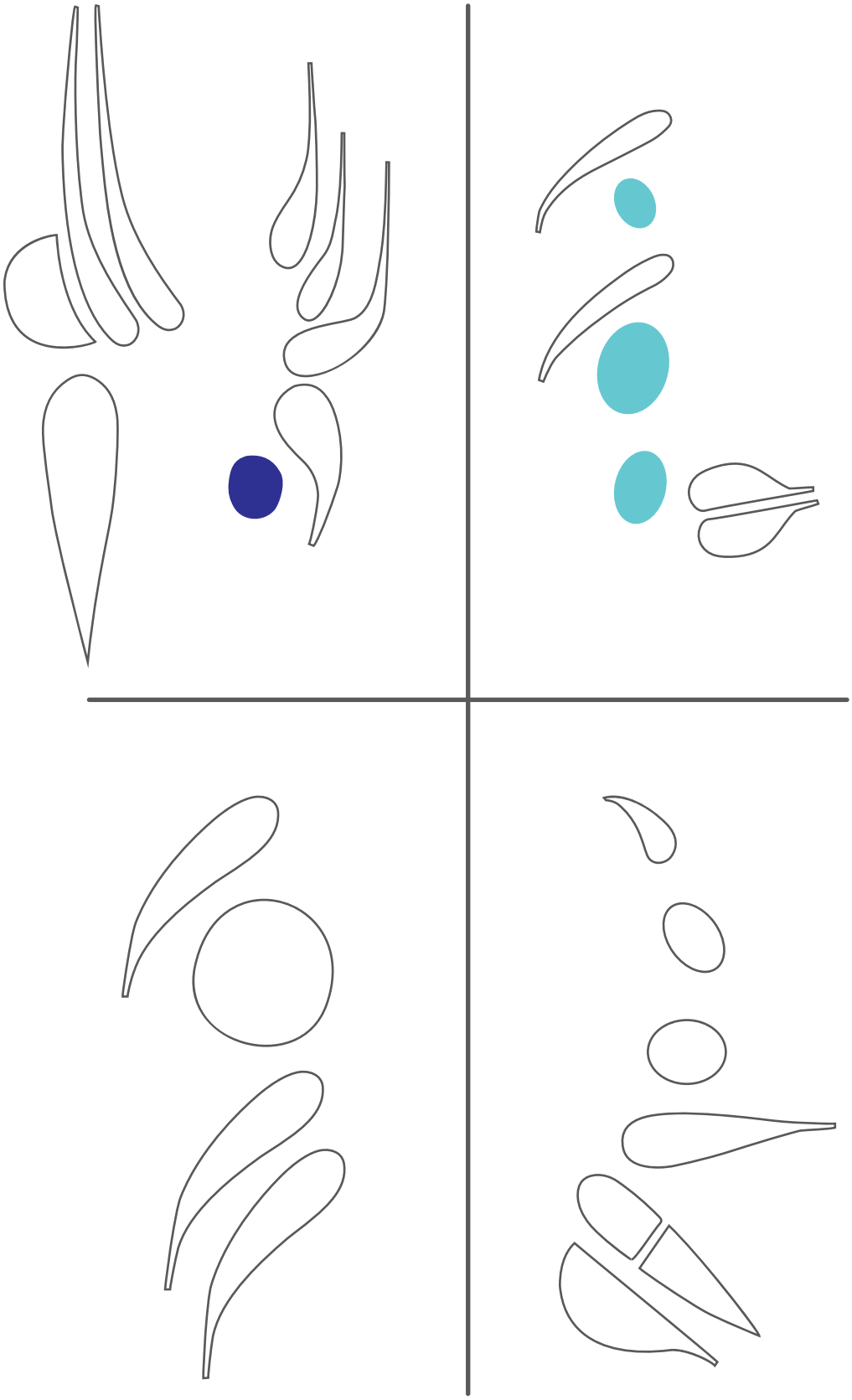
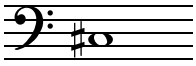
B♭



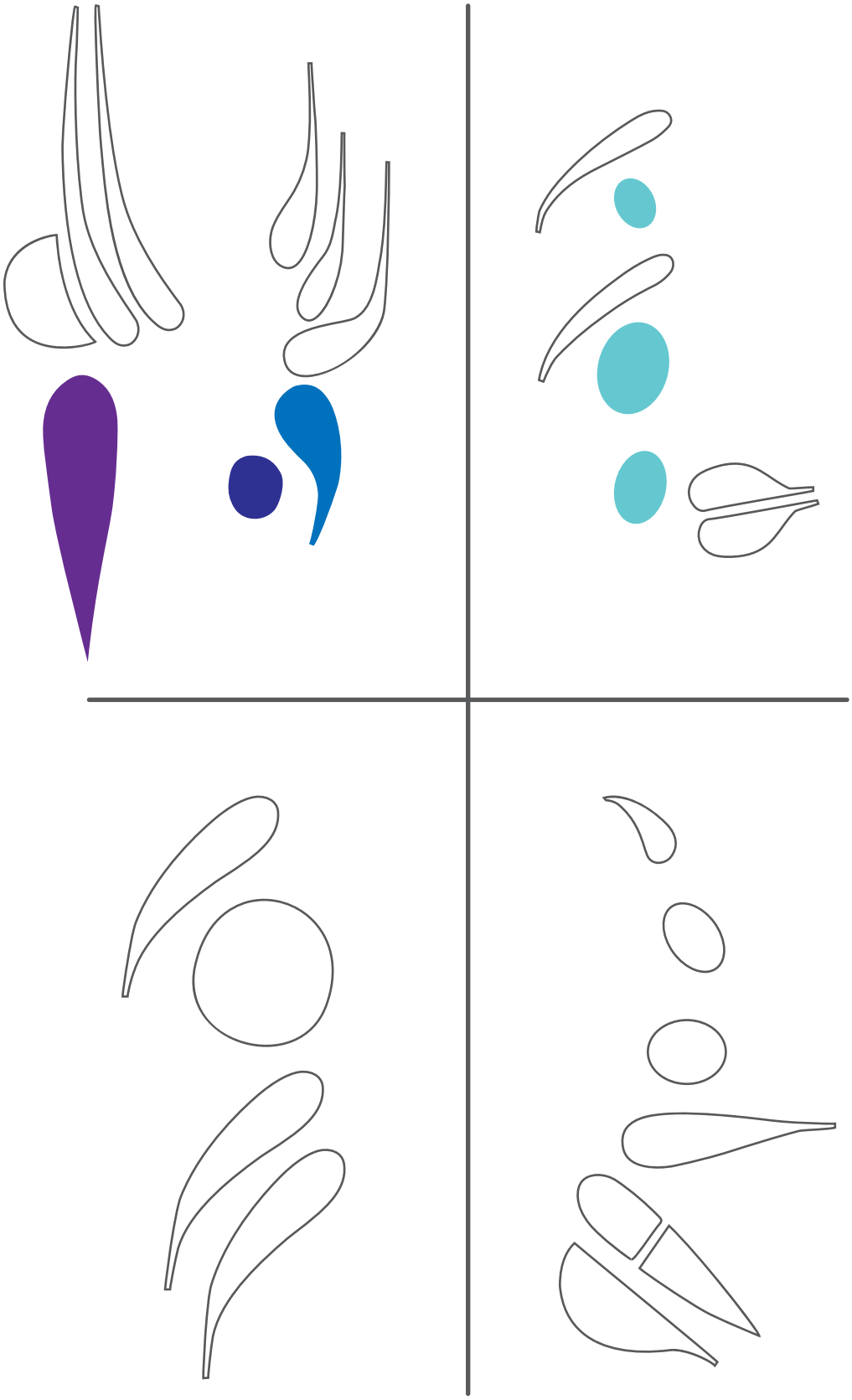
B



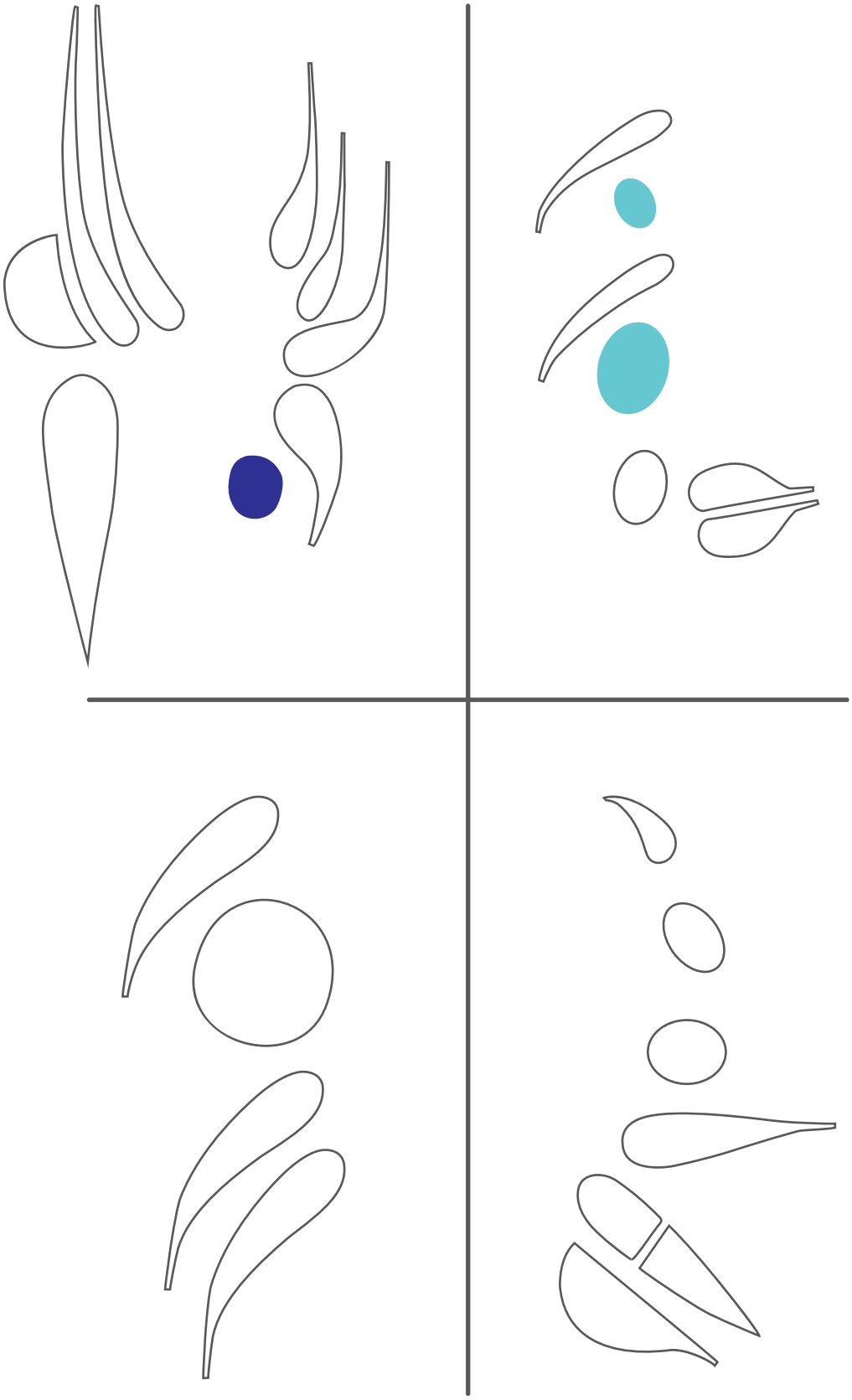
c



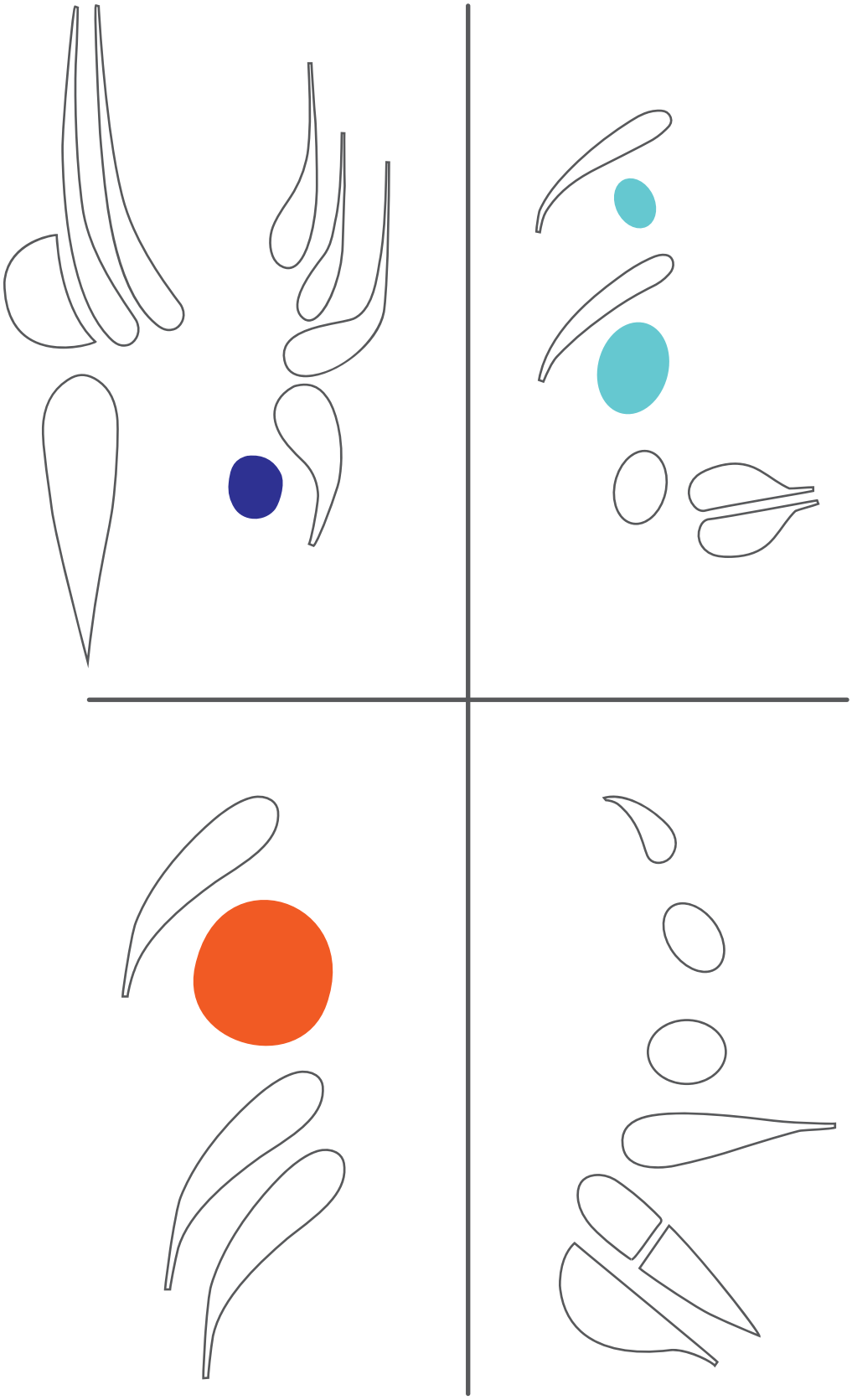
C#



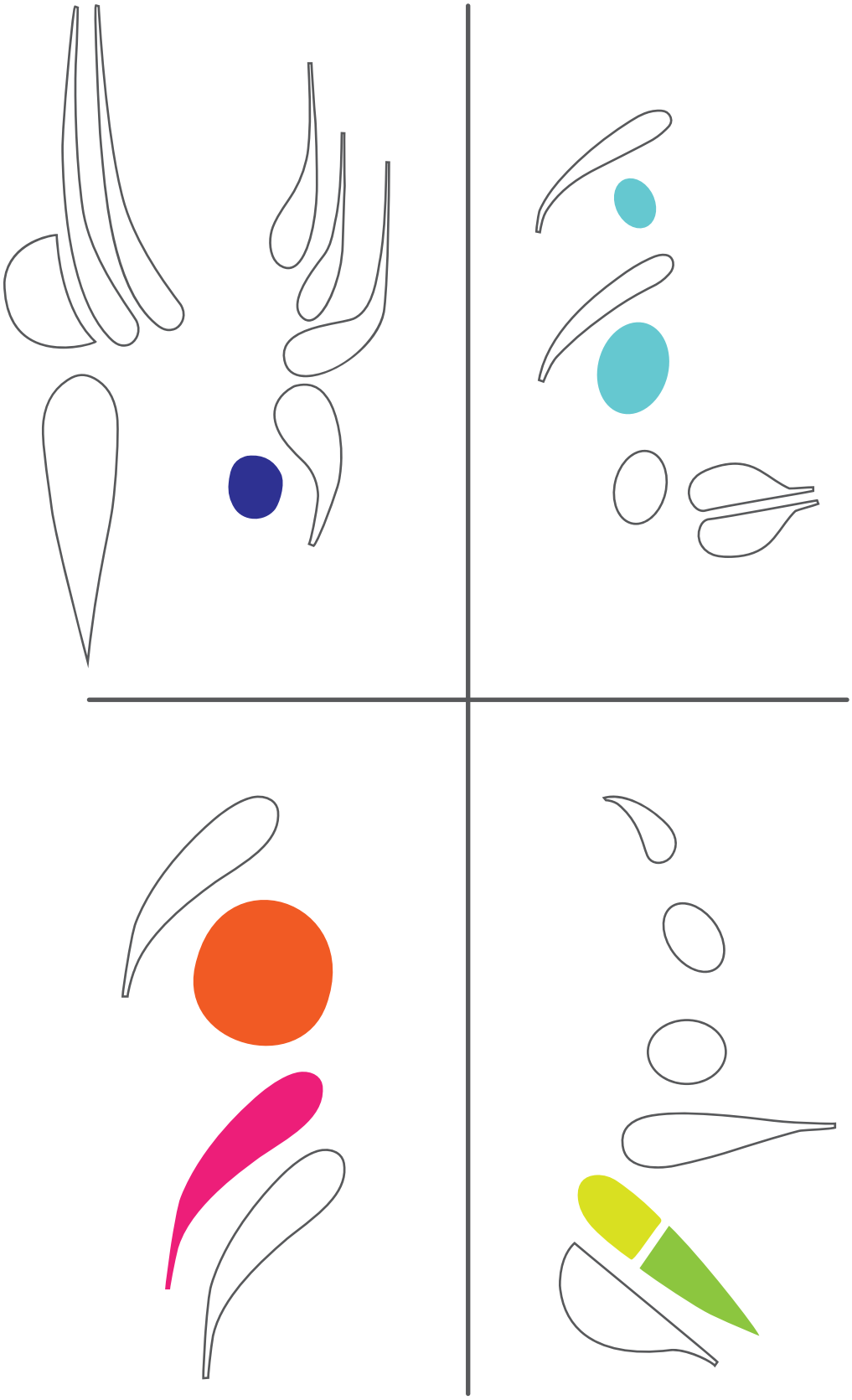
D

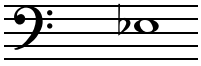


MUTED D

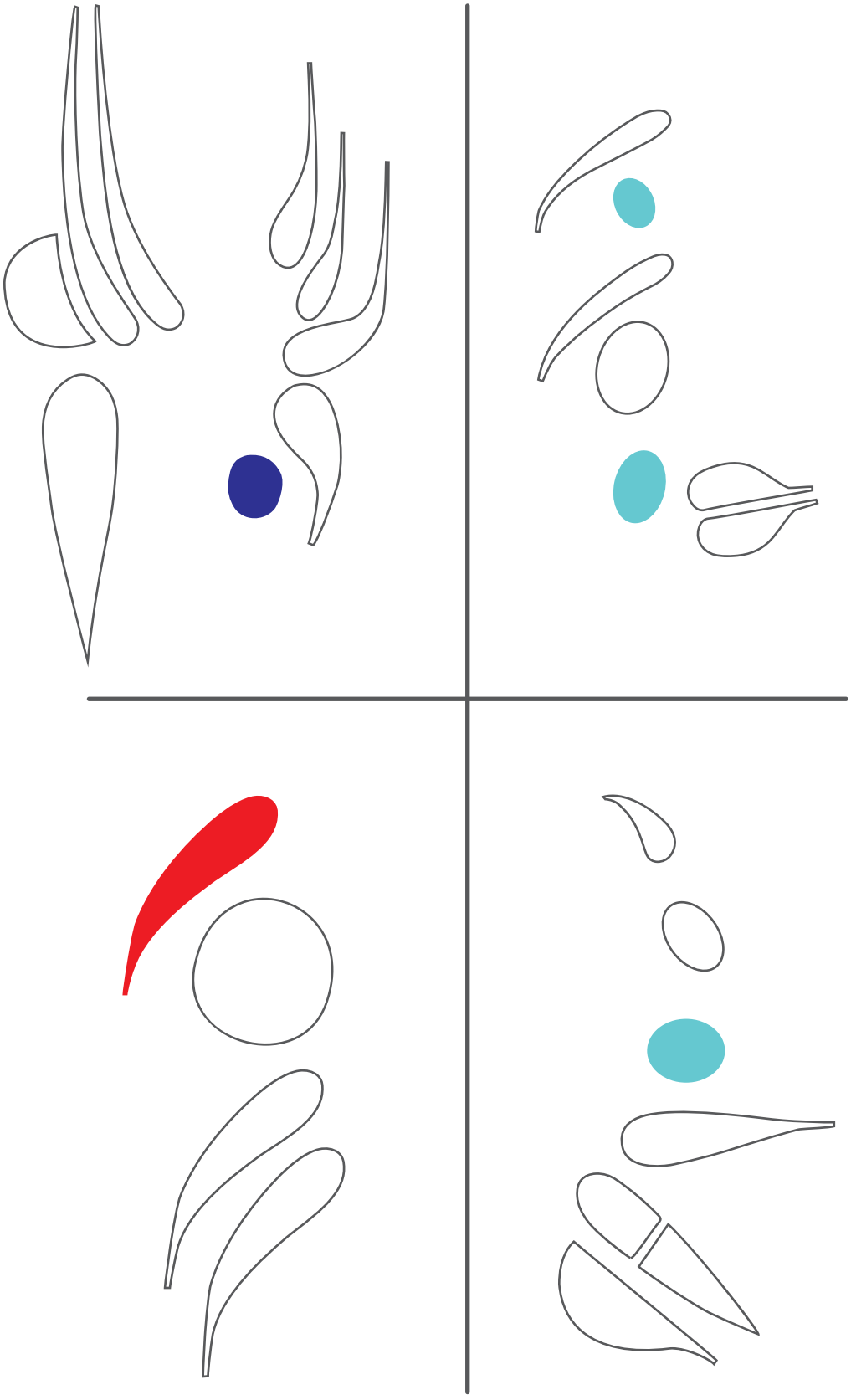


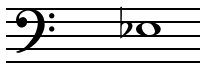
MUTED D
Tends flat



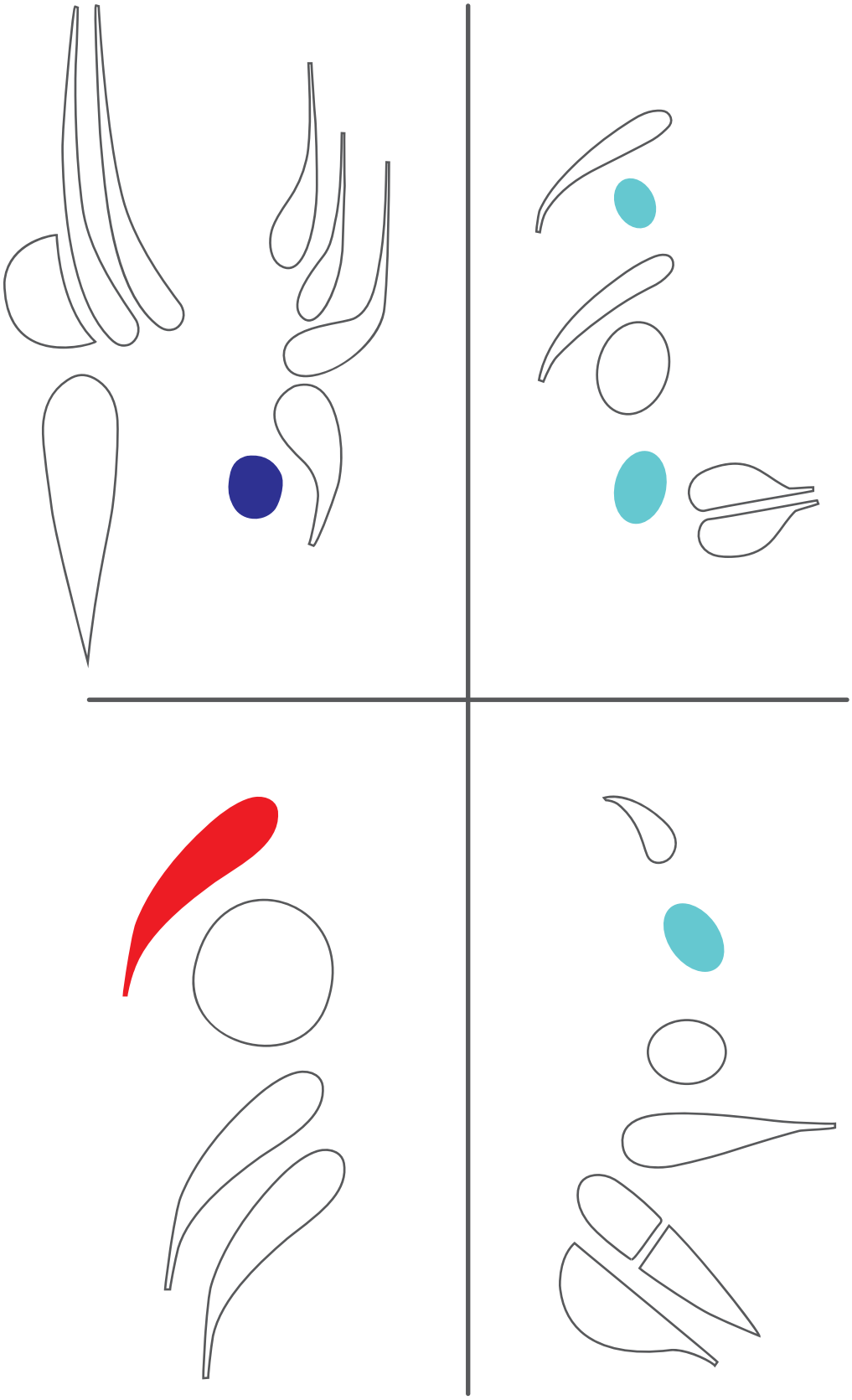
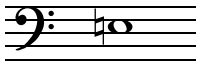


FORKED E♭

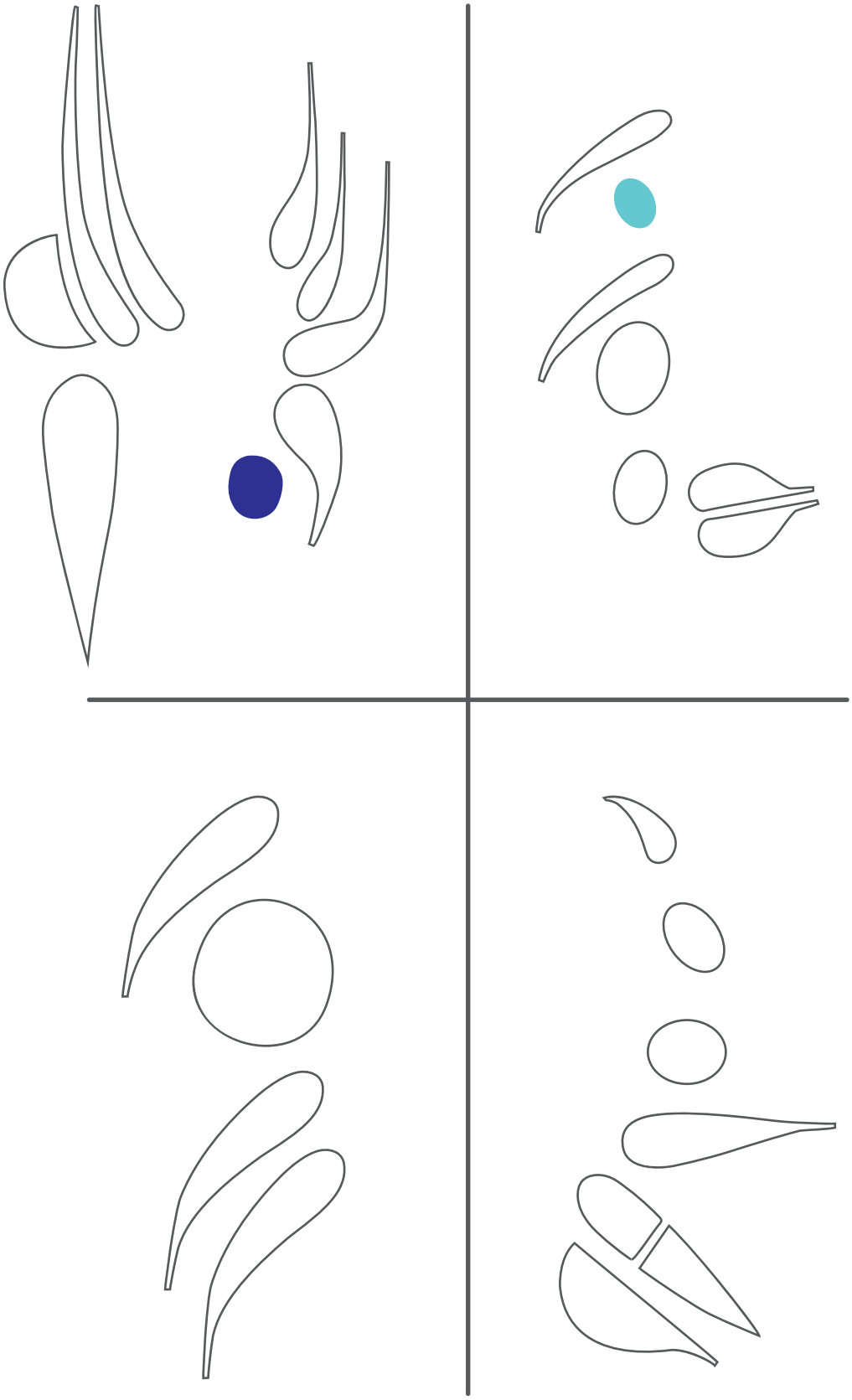
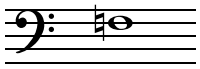




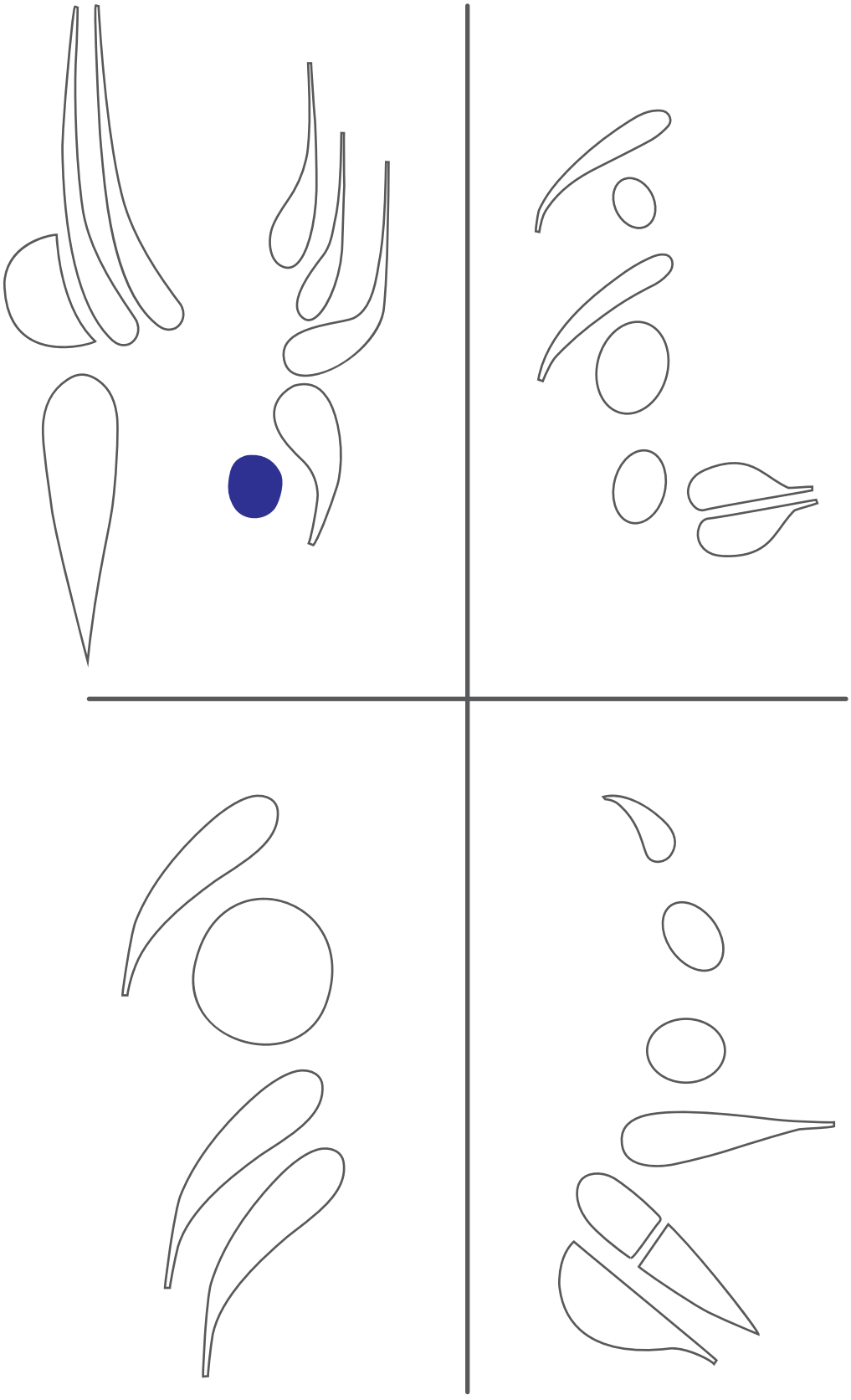
SOFTER AND FLATTER E♭



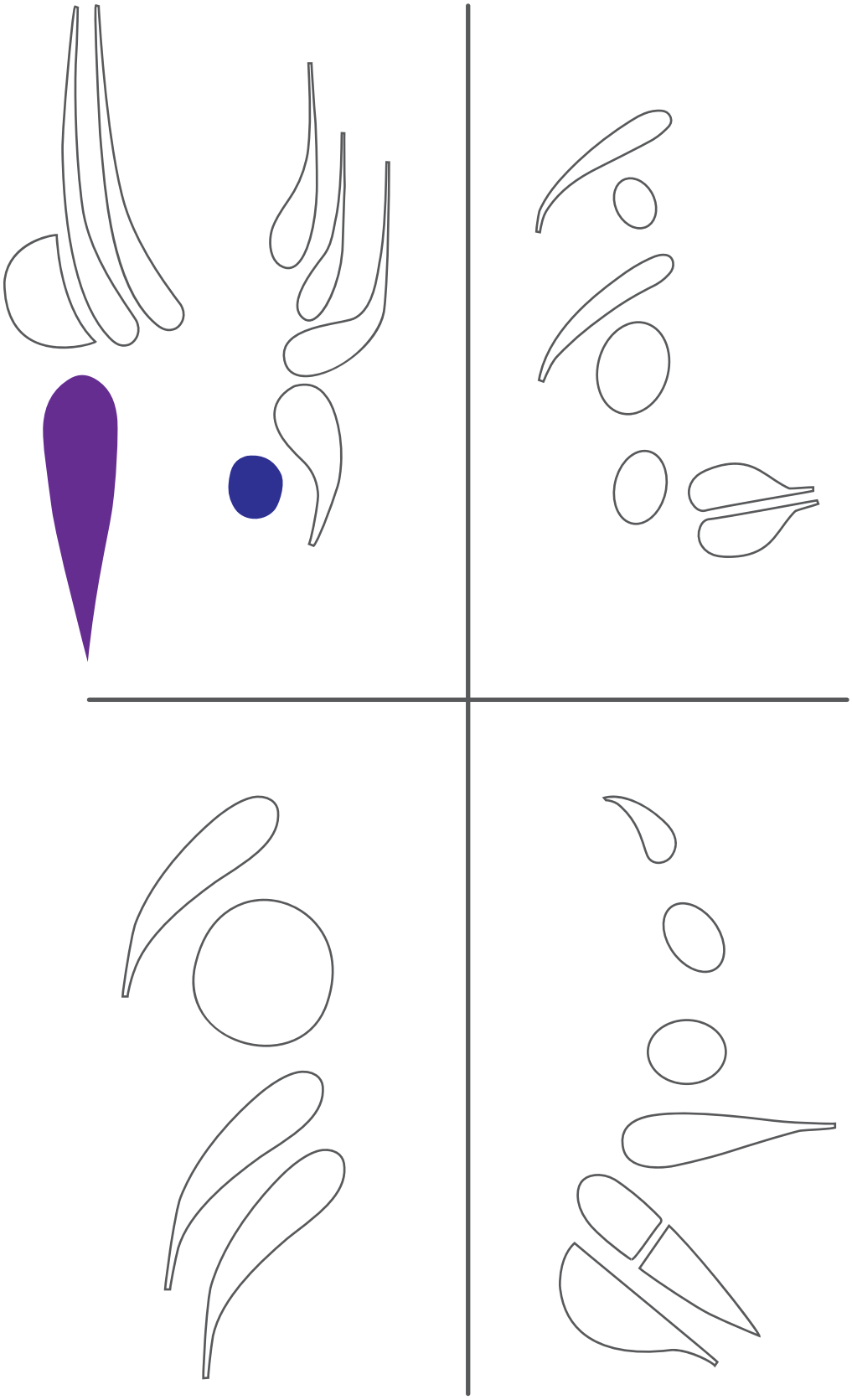
E



OPEN F

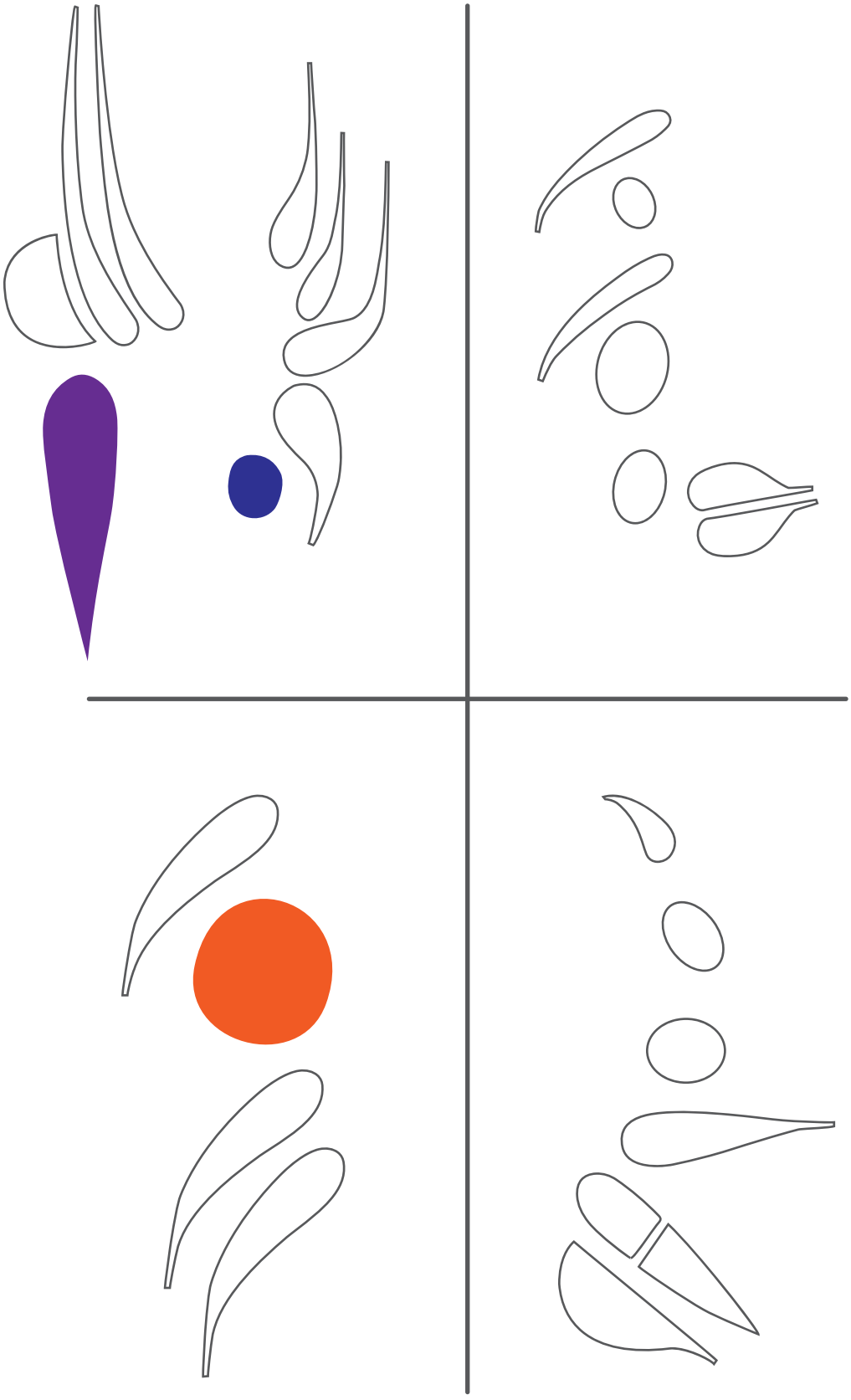
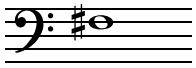


SOFTER AND FLATTER MUTED OPEN F

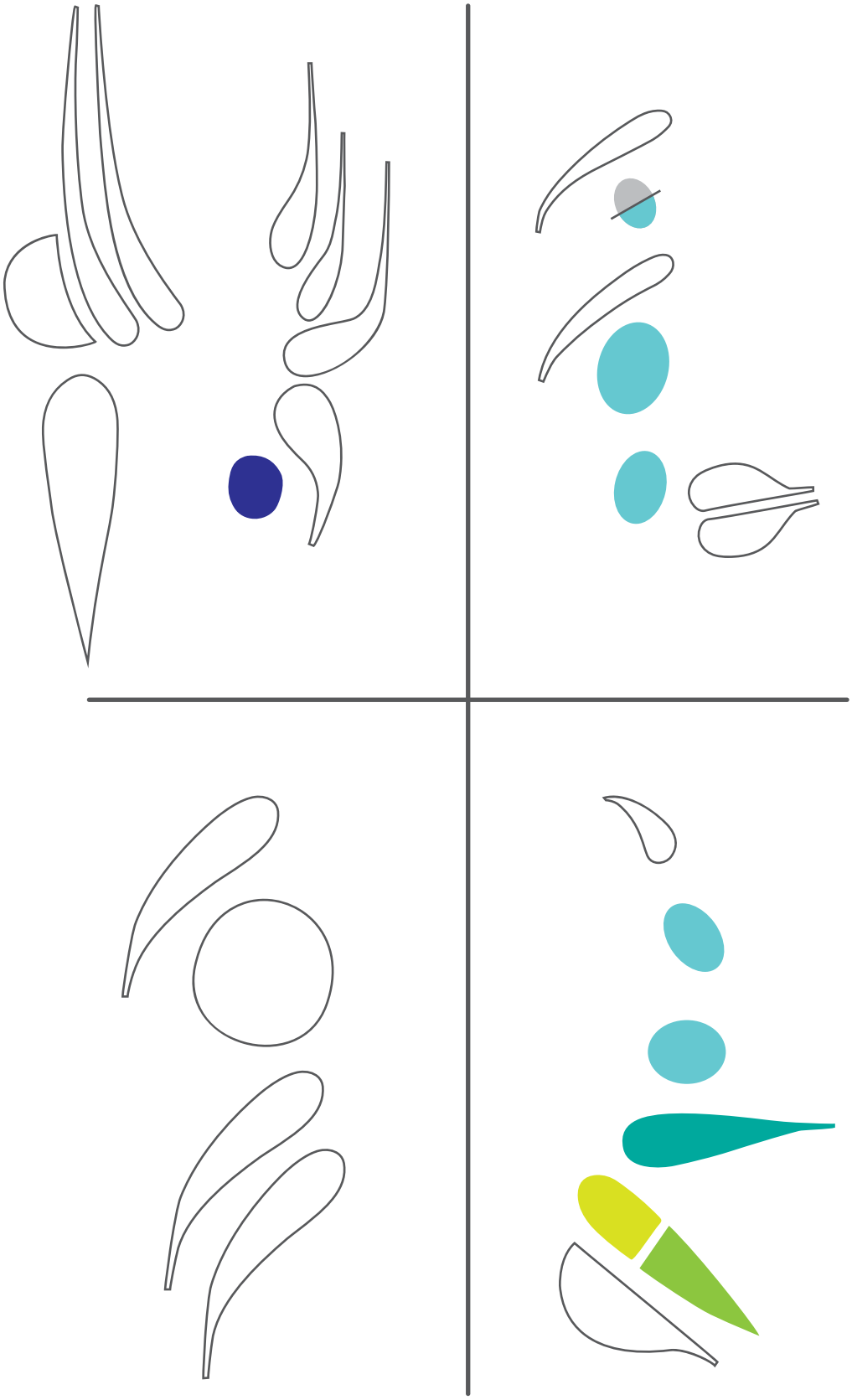


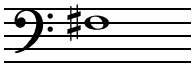
MORE MUTED OPEN F

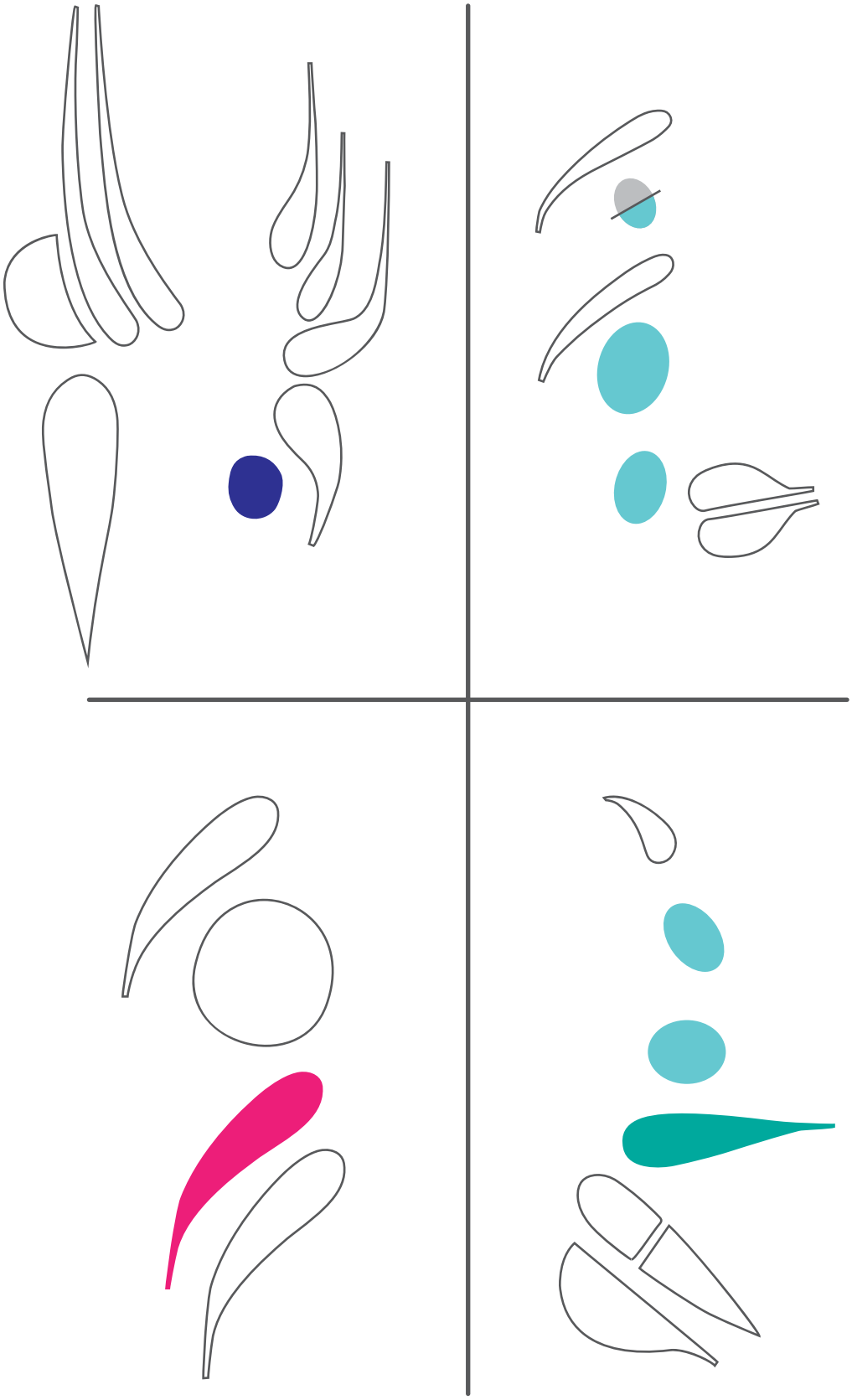
Exact pitch depends on bassoon and reedmaker but generally stable, soft and not sharp.

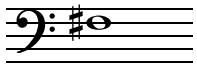


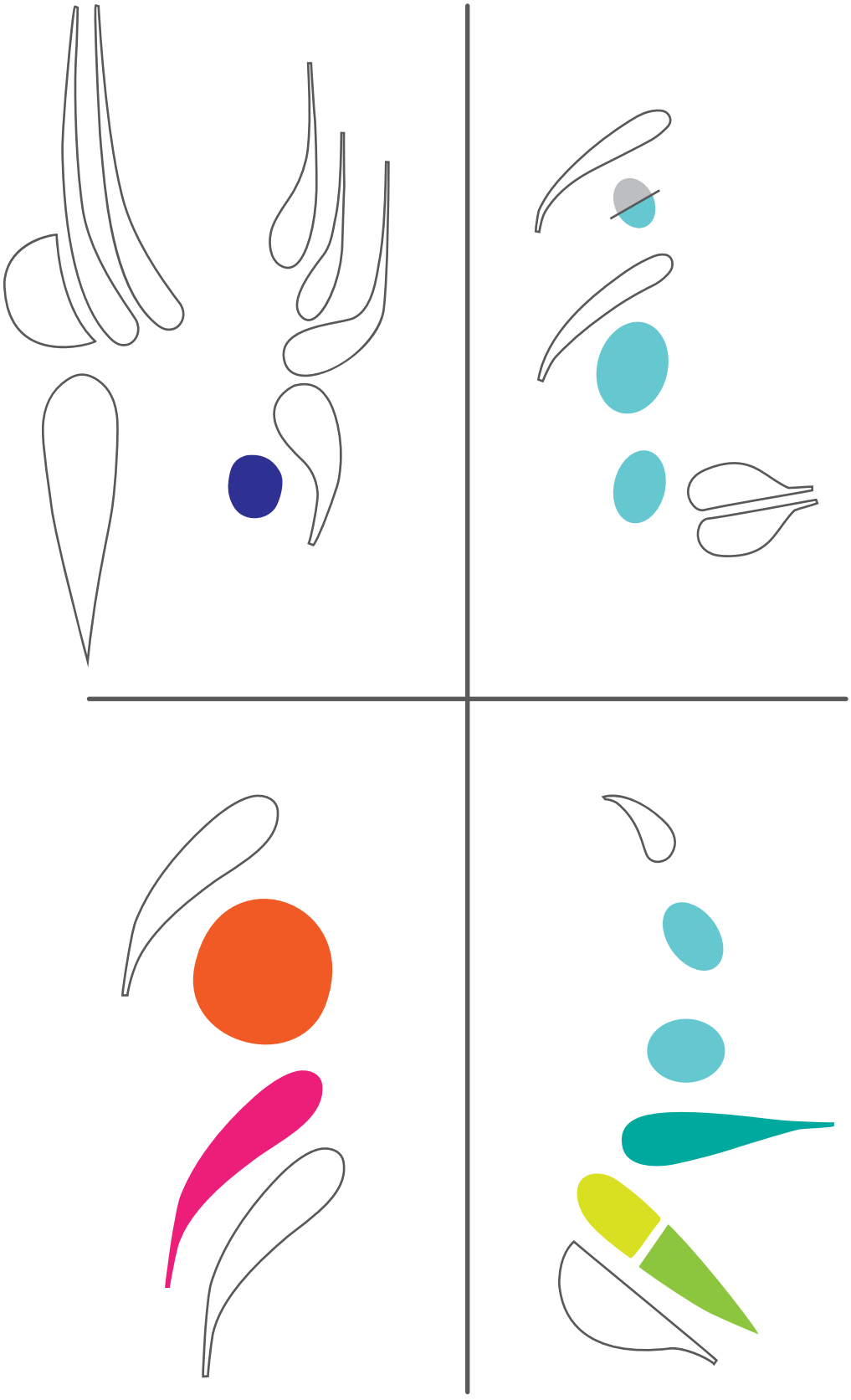
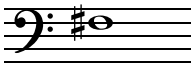
F#



Front F# is preferred for this octave, whenever possible.

F# WITH
BACK F# KEY

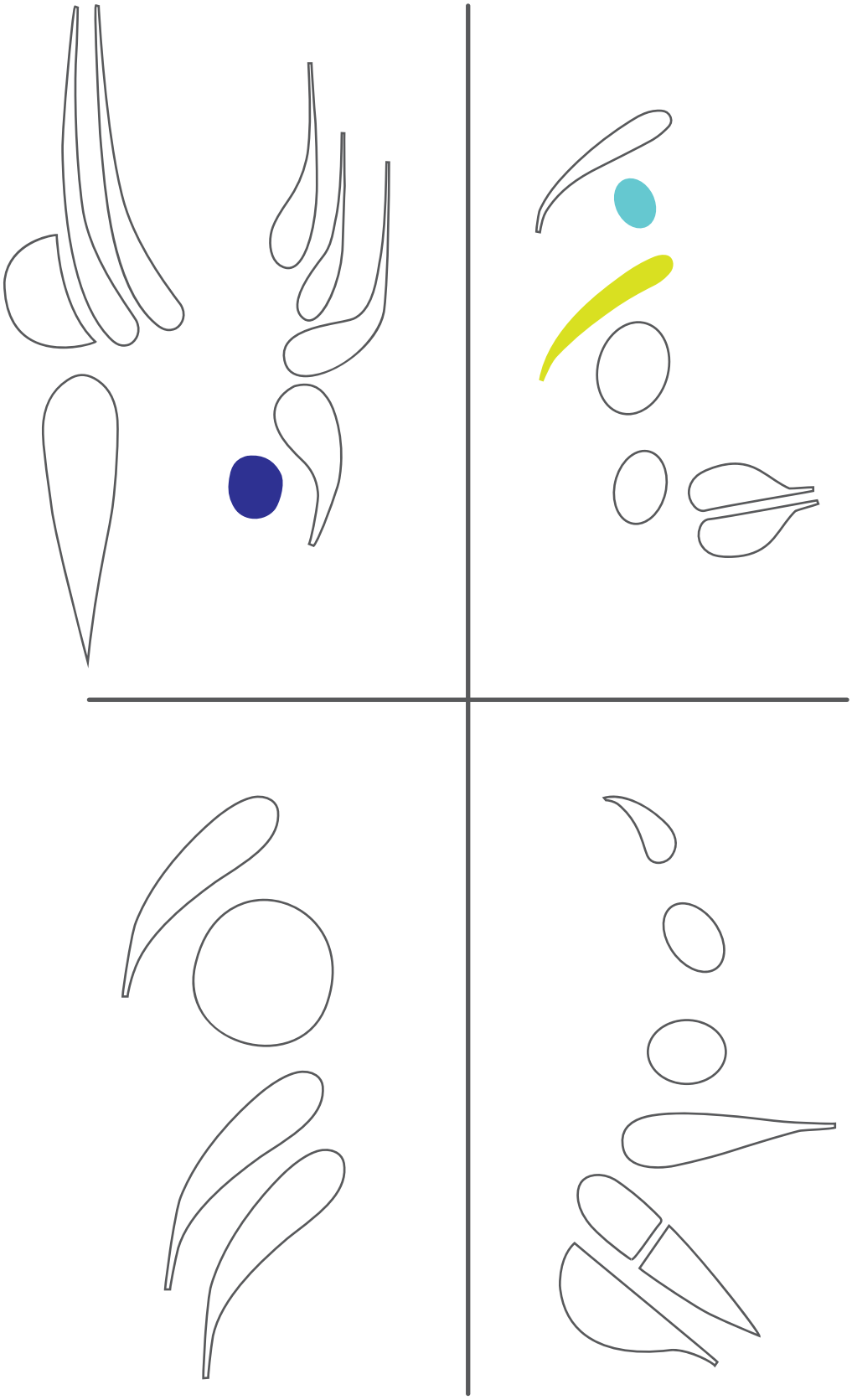
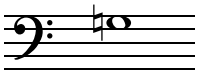


Use back F# only if you cannot use front for this octave.

MUTED,
FLATTER F#

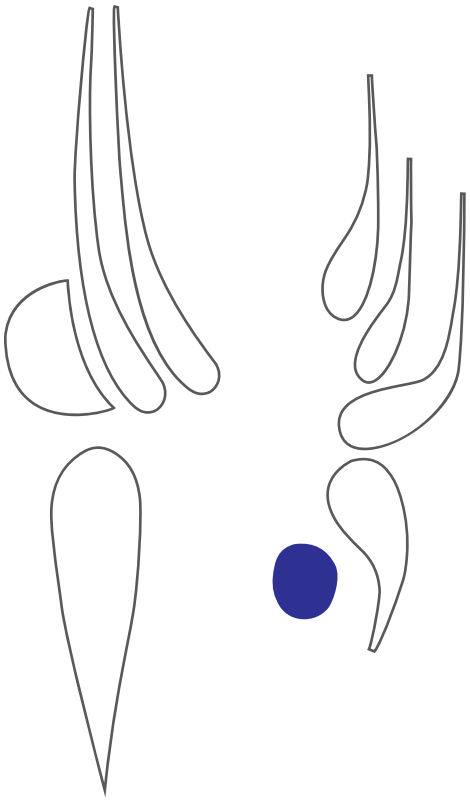


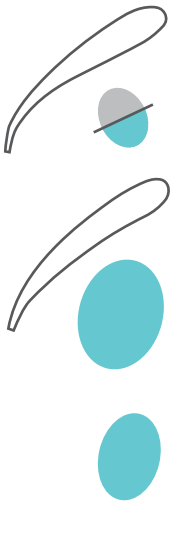
SHORT F#

Sometimes useful as a mordent or trill, or as a speed fingering in exceedingly rapid passages.



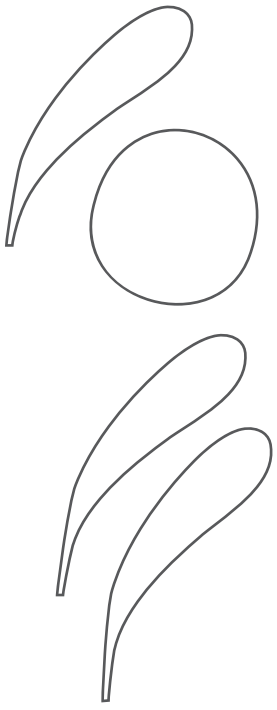
G



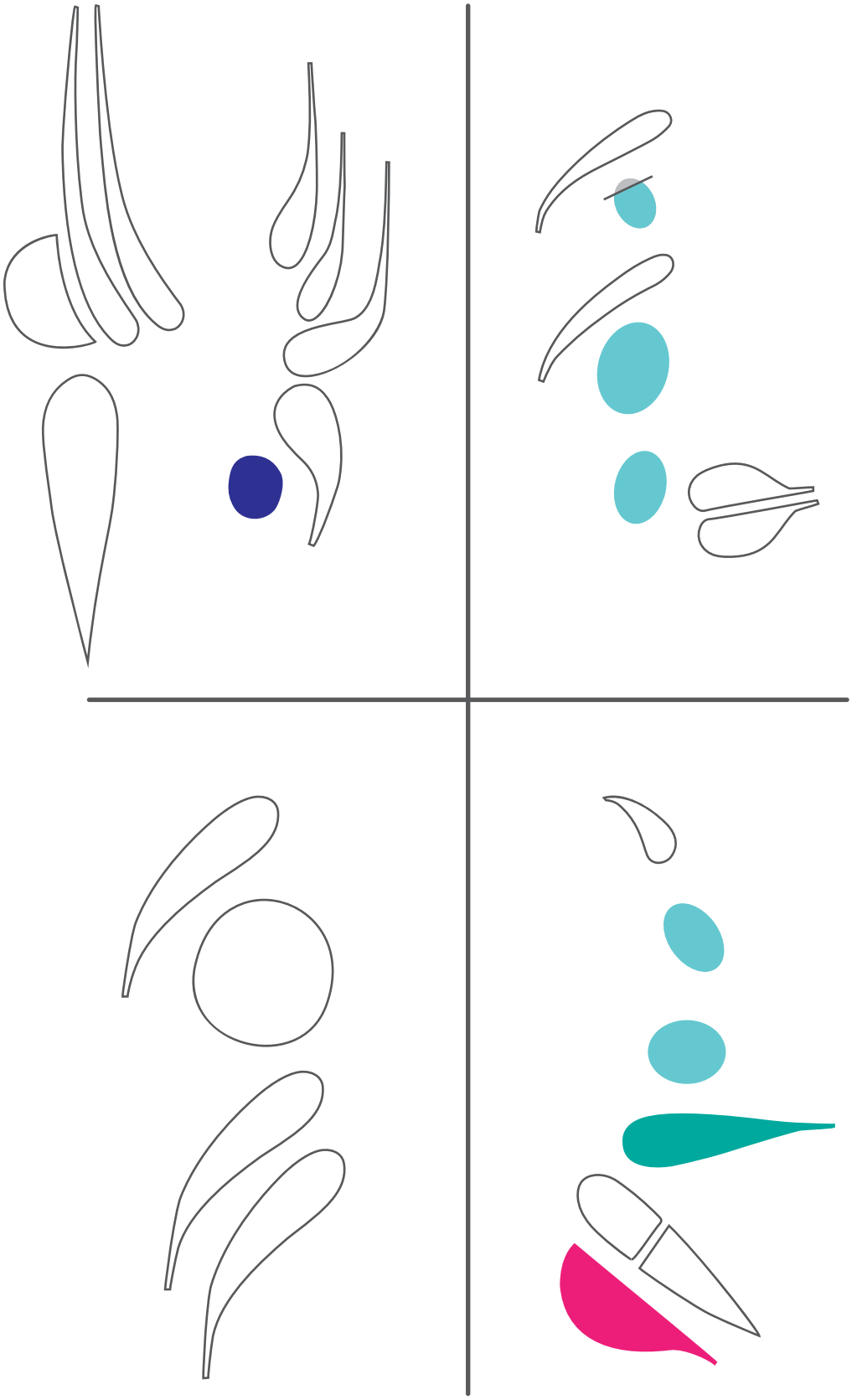
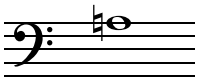


Adding low E♭ key lowers pitch.

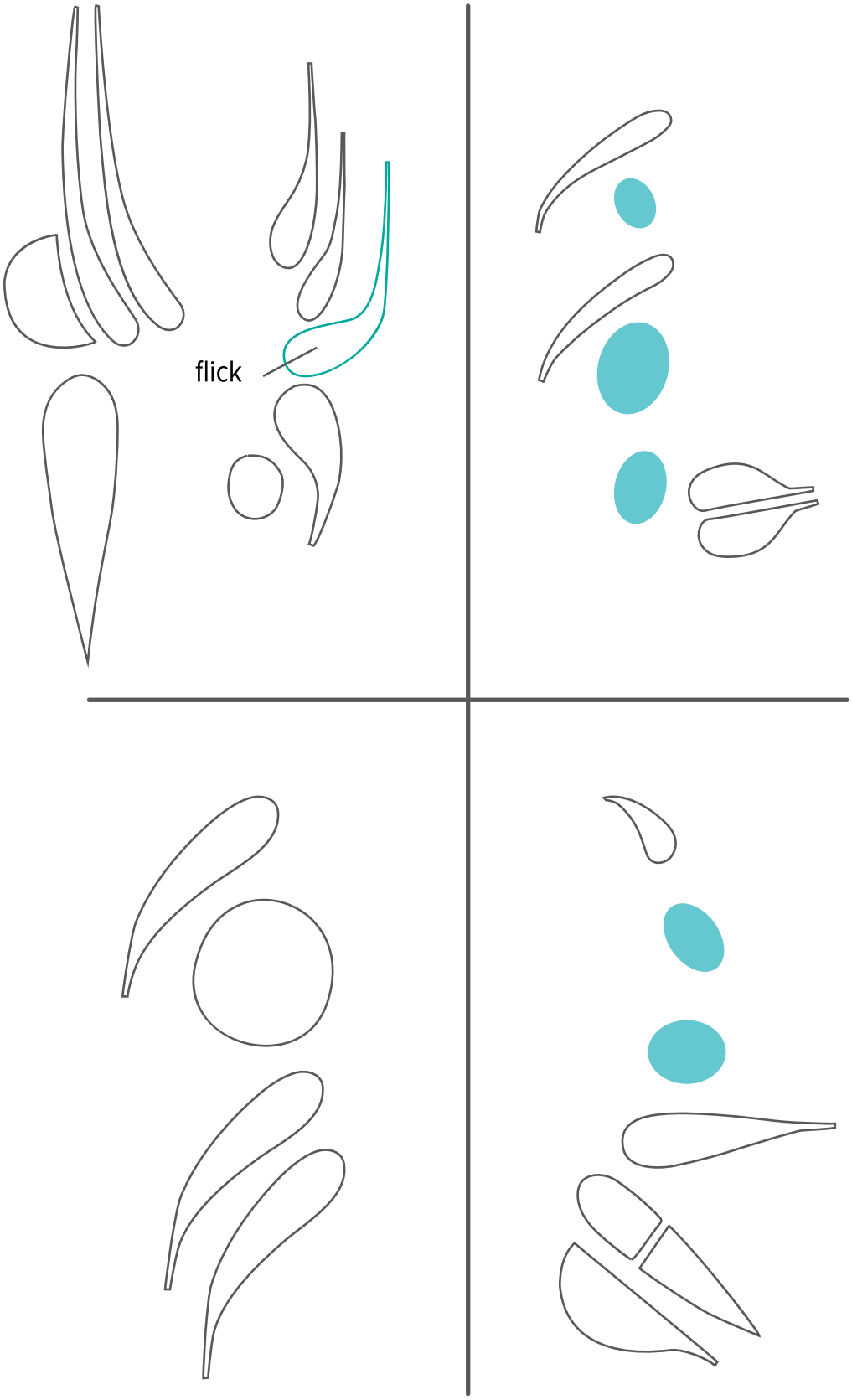
Some players can play G in tune without adding the Low E♭ key.



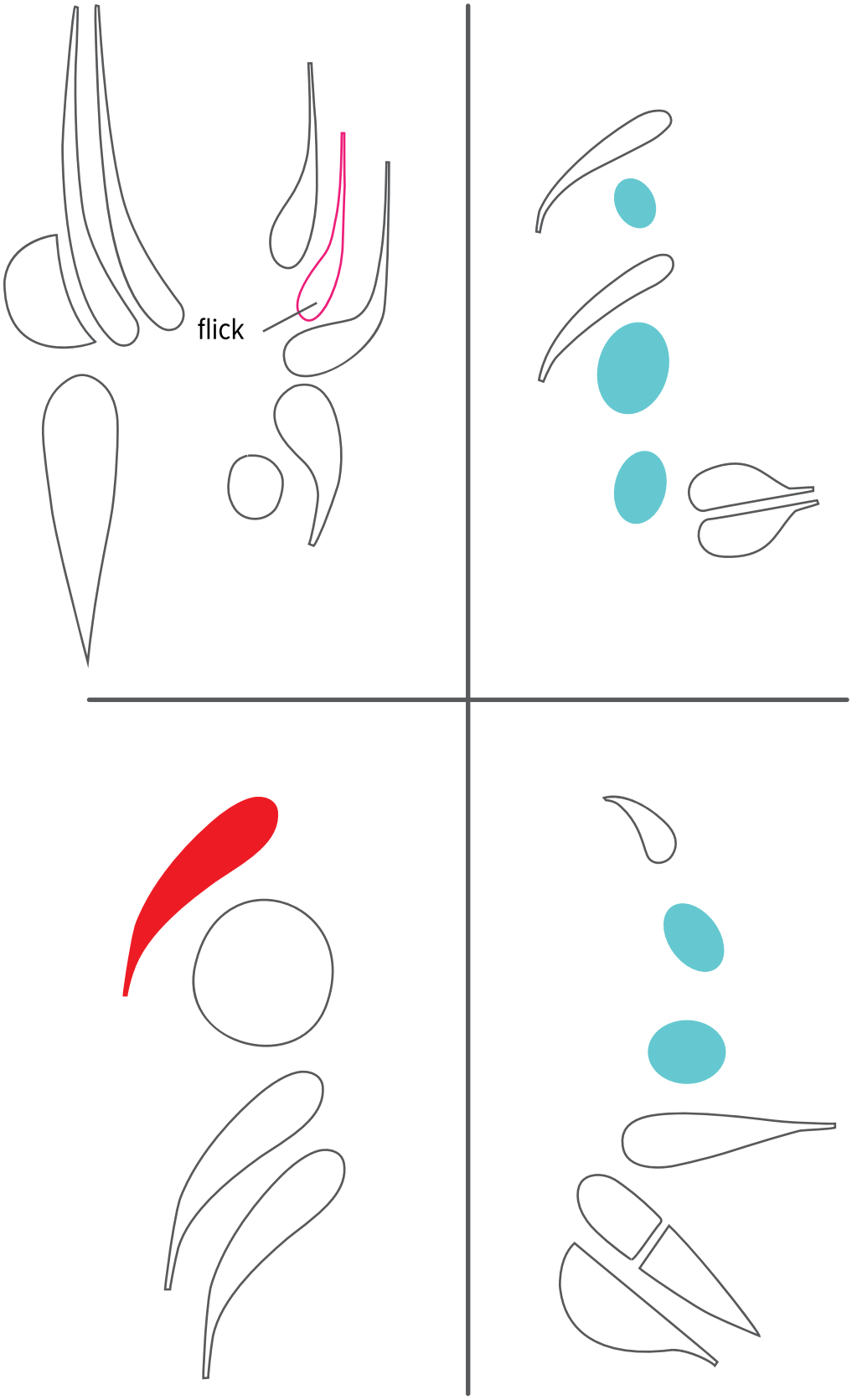
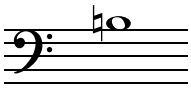
A♭



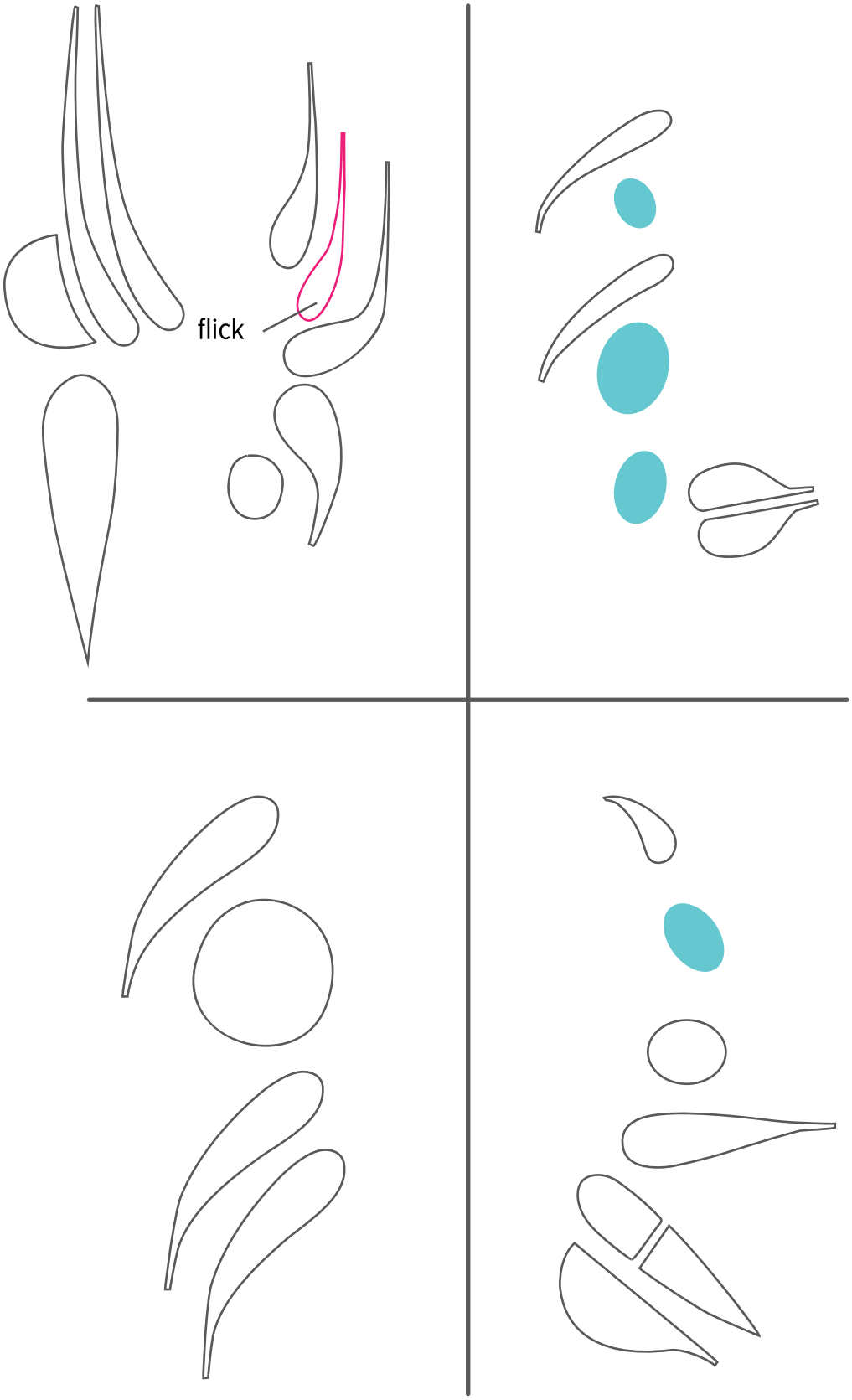
TUNING A

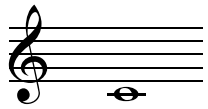


MOZART CONCERTO
B♭

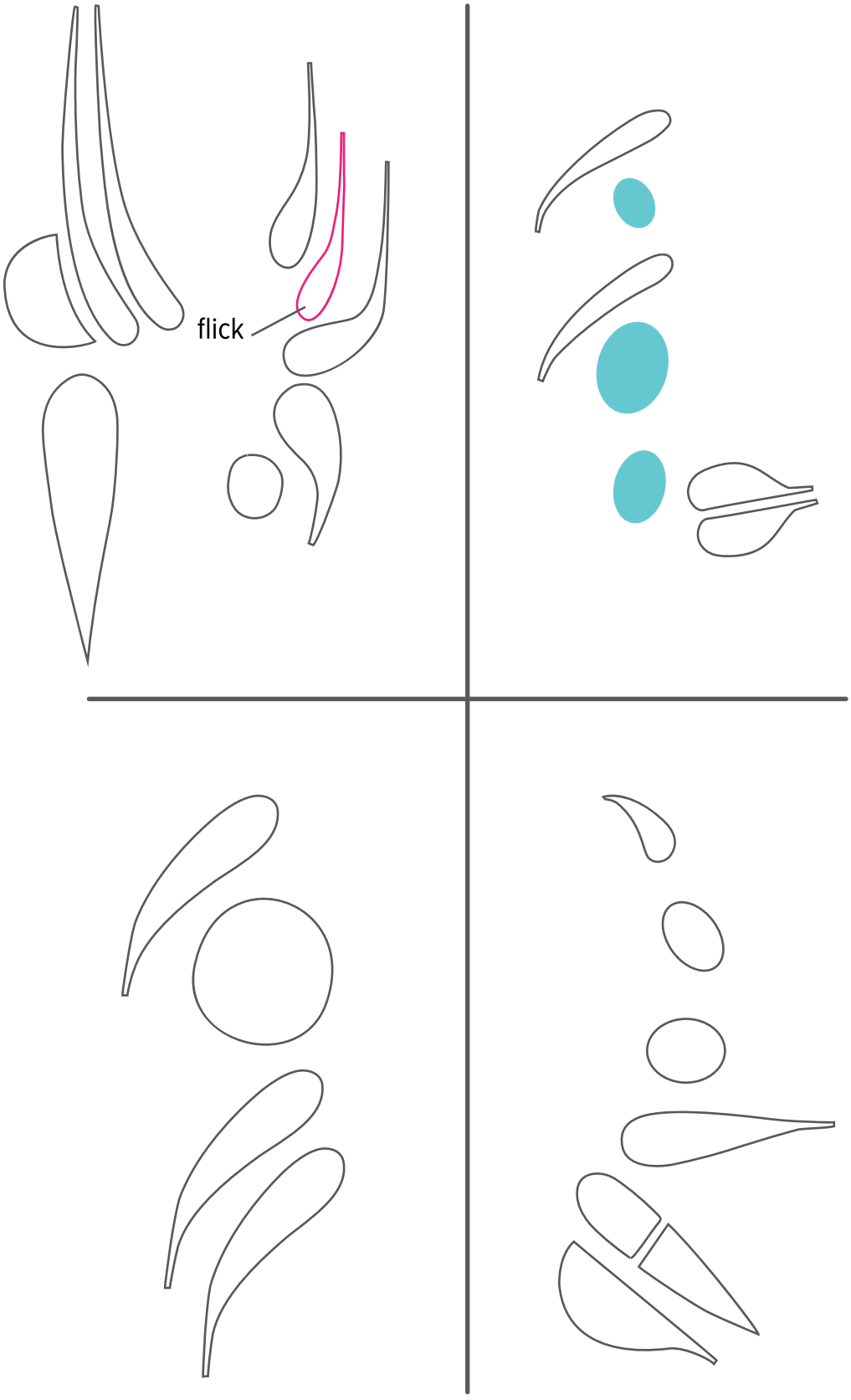


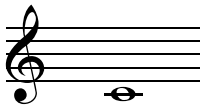
B



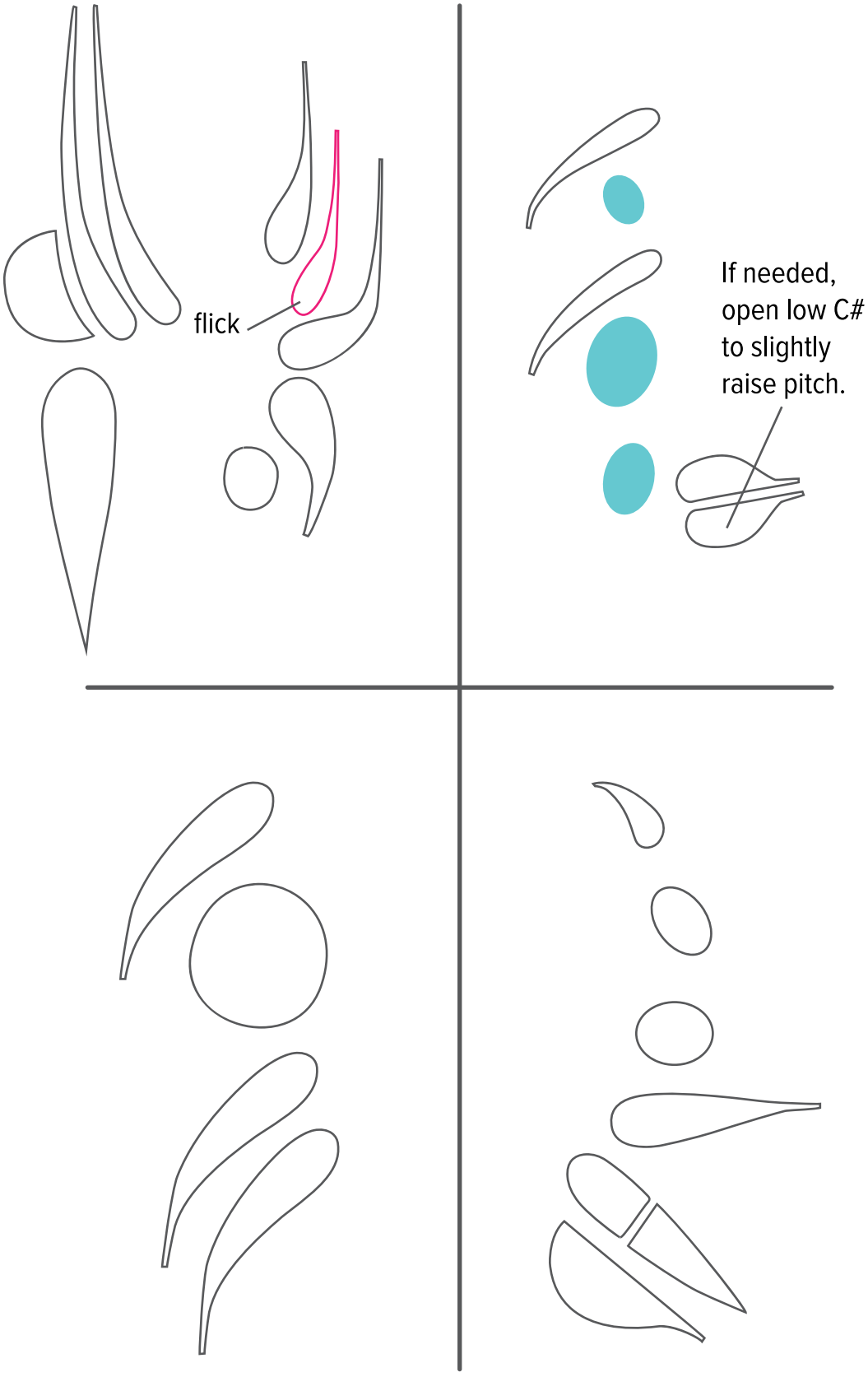


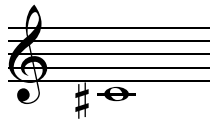
MIDDLE C



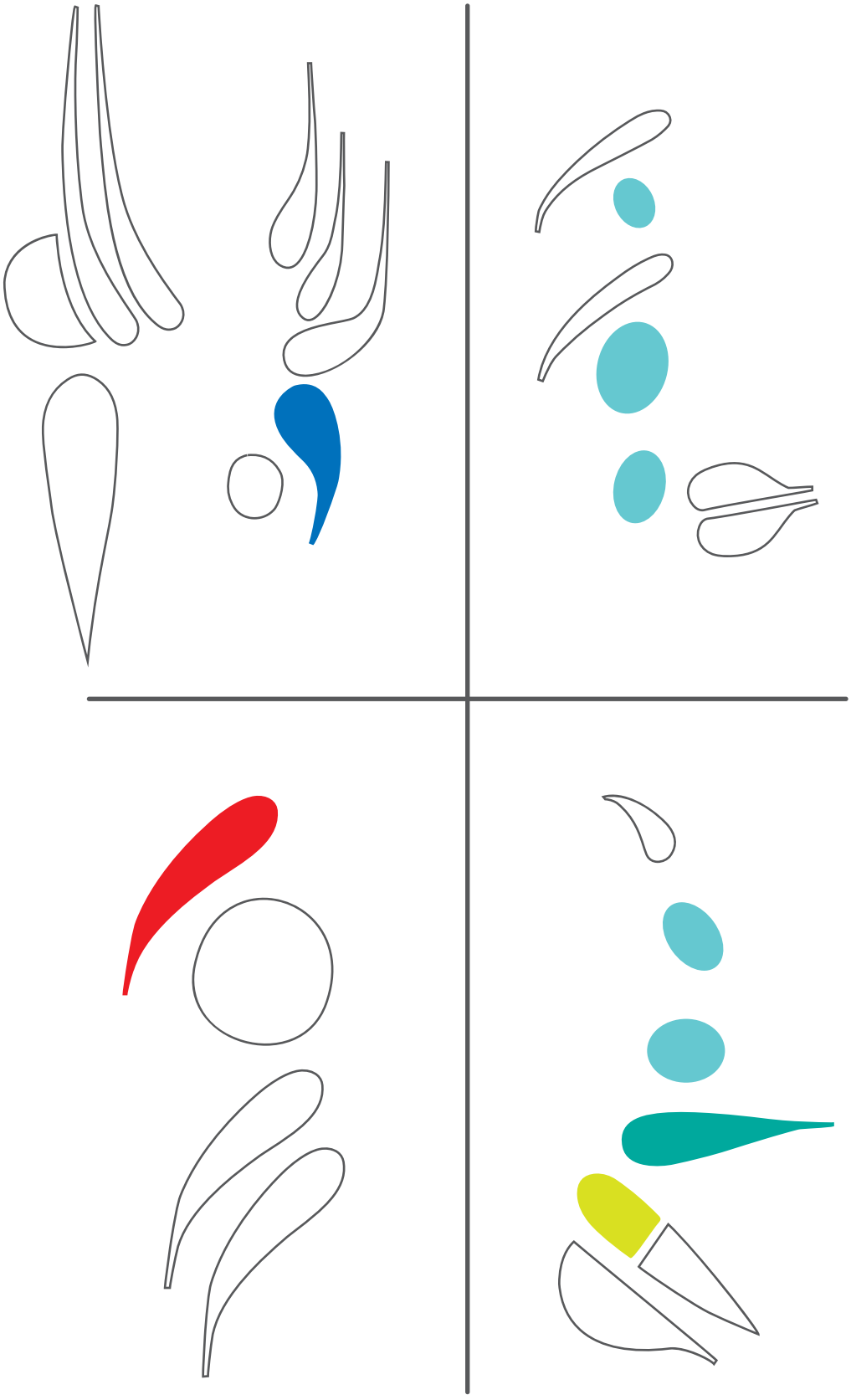


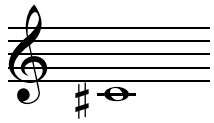
MIDDLE C





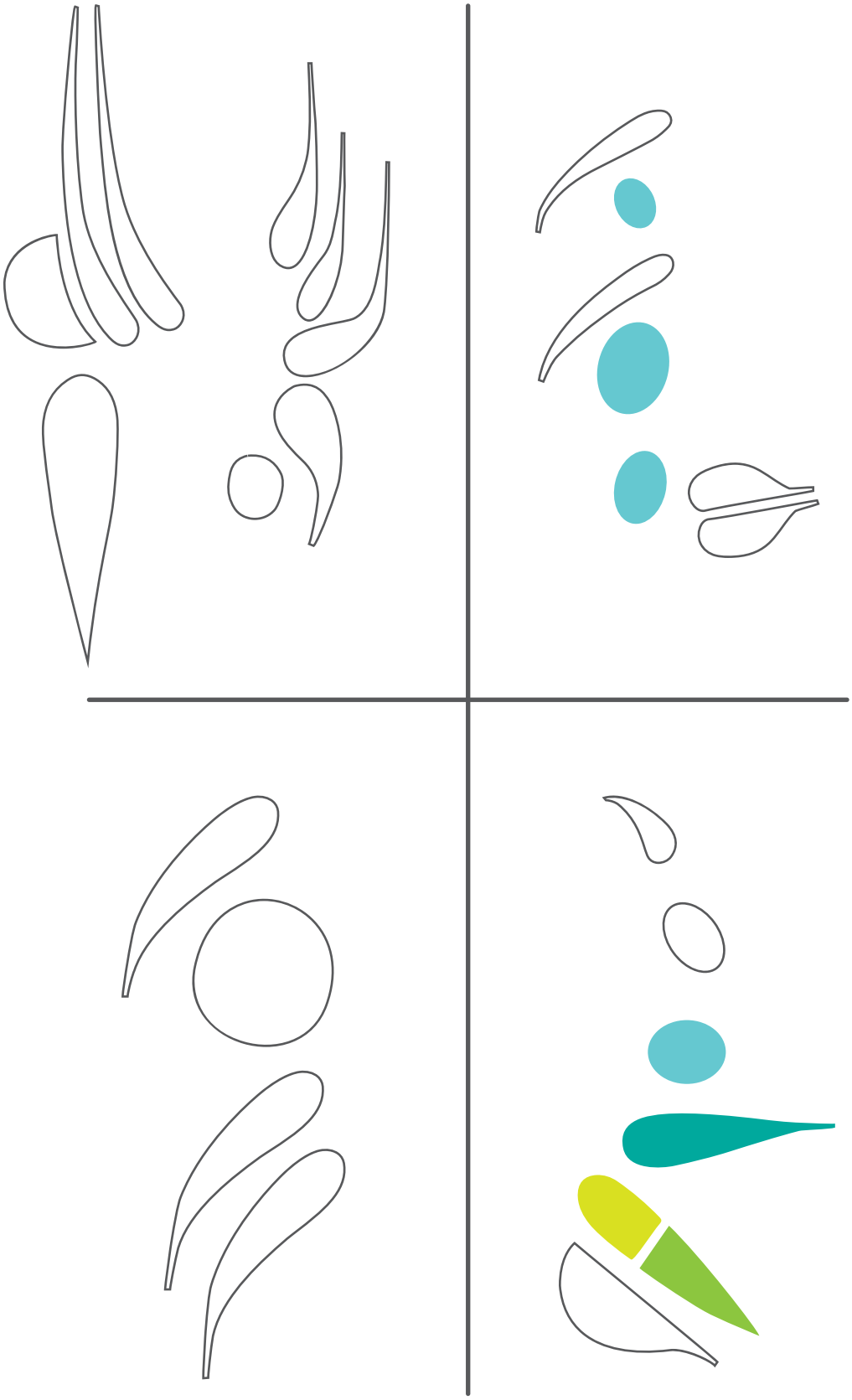
FULL C#

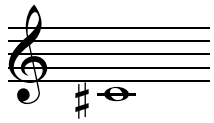




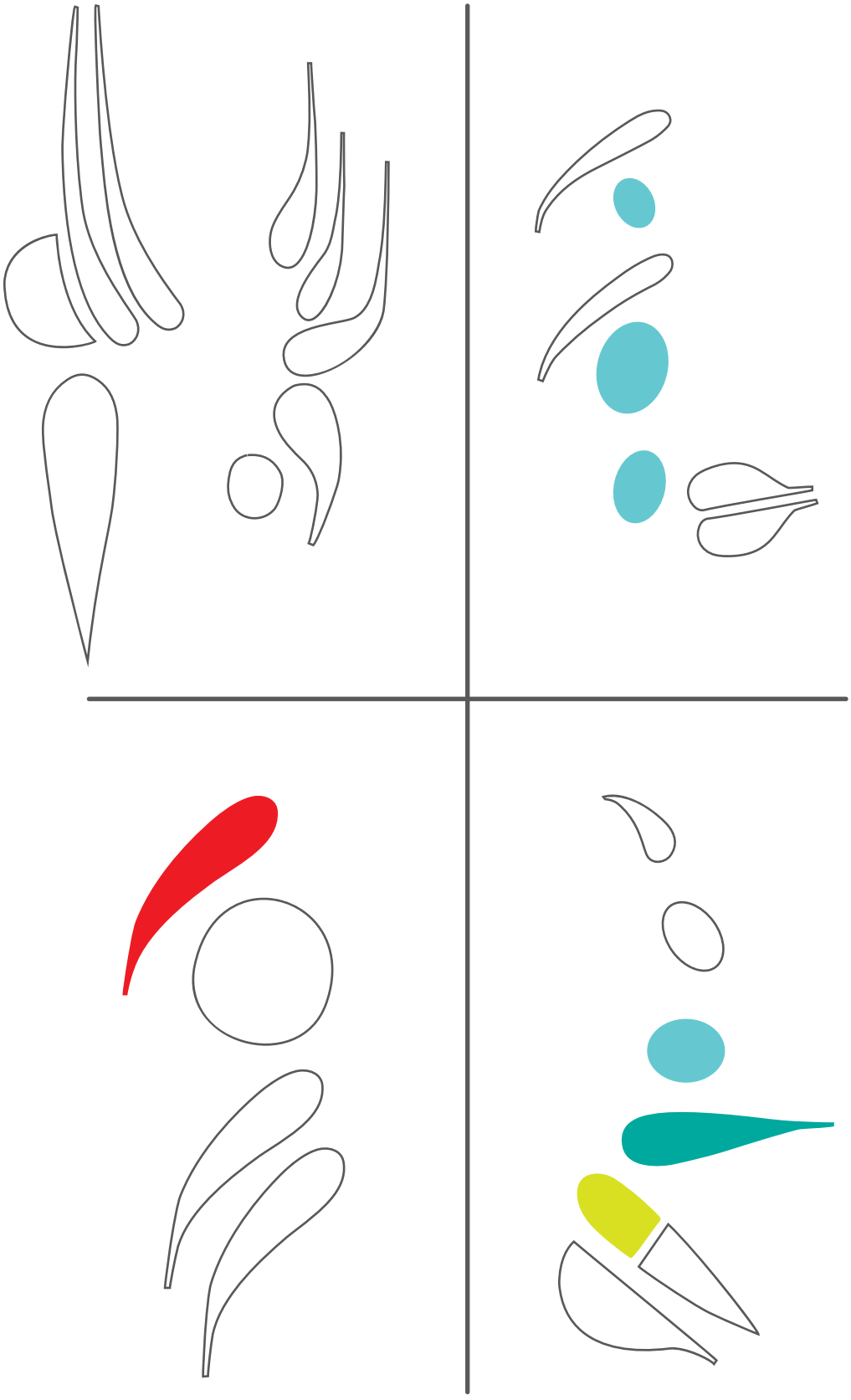
HALF FULL C#

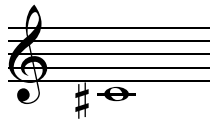
Useful also when trilling C# - D.





ANOTHER
HALF FULL C#

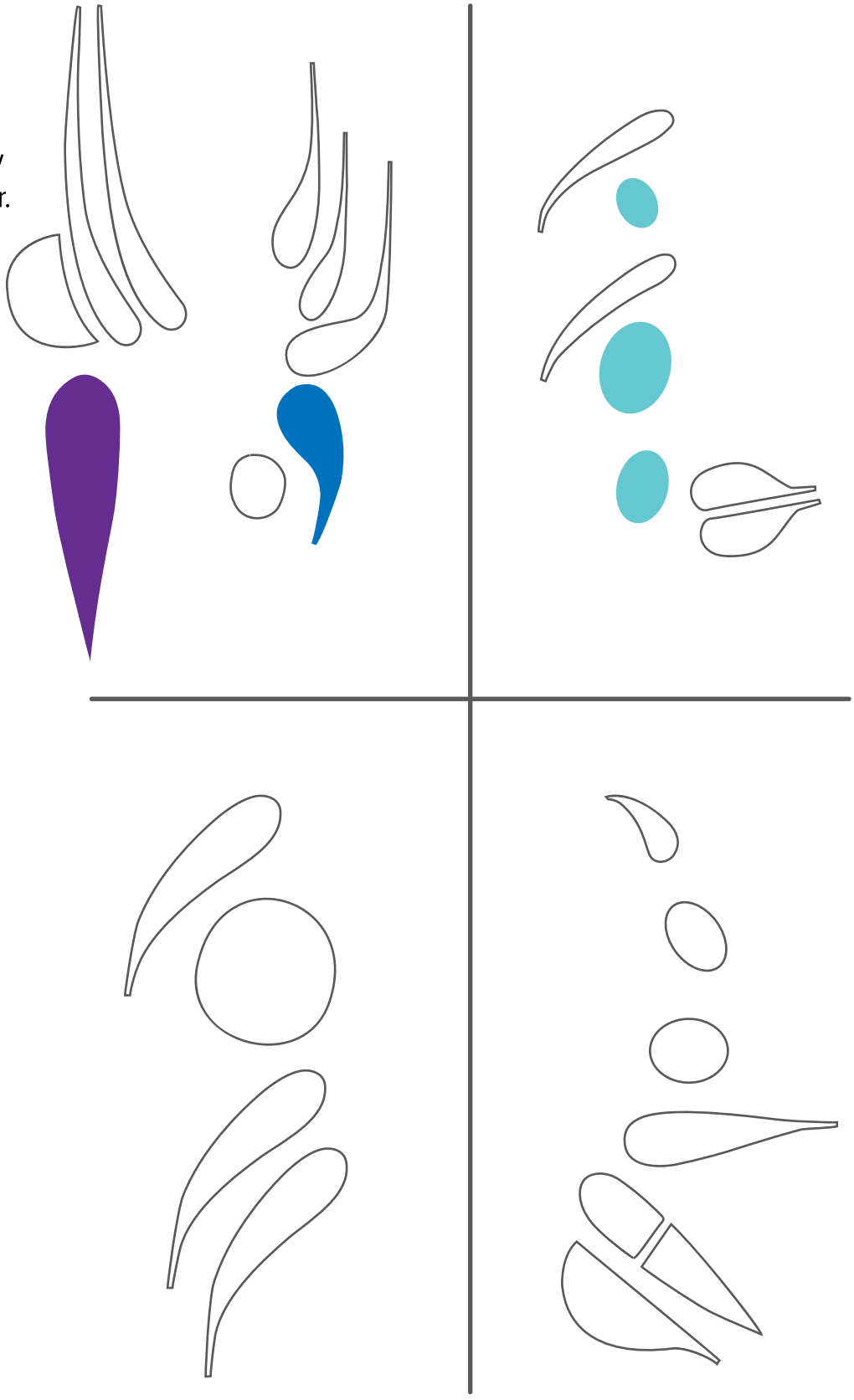


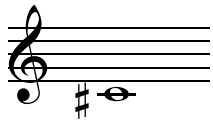


SHORT HALF C#

Tends to be soft and flat.

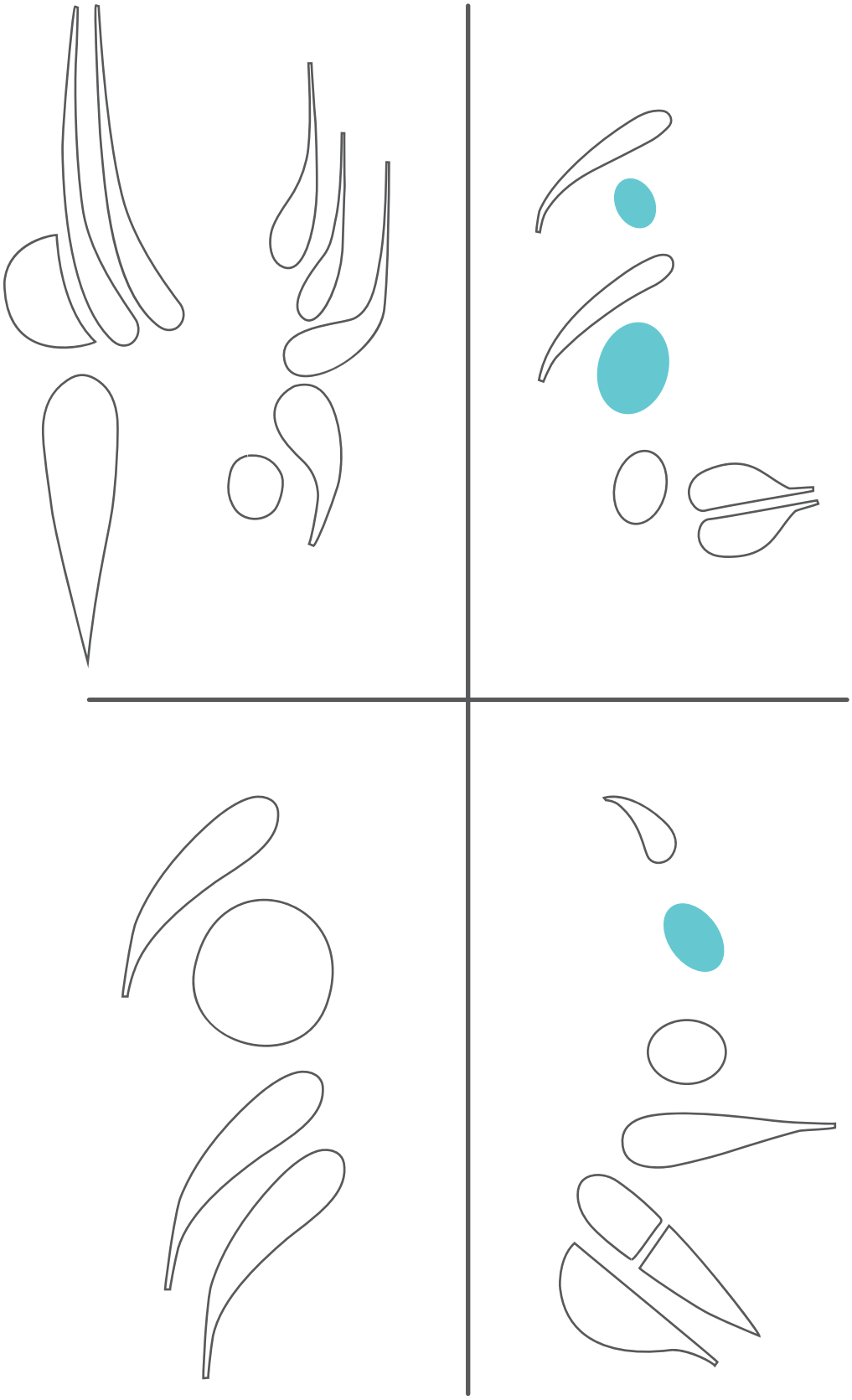
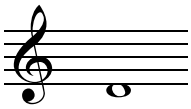
Useful if you have to play the major third in A major.



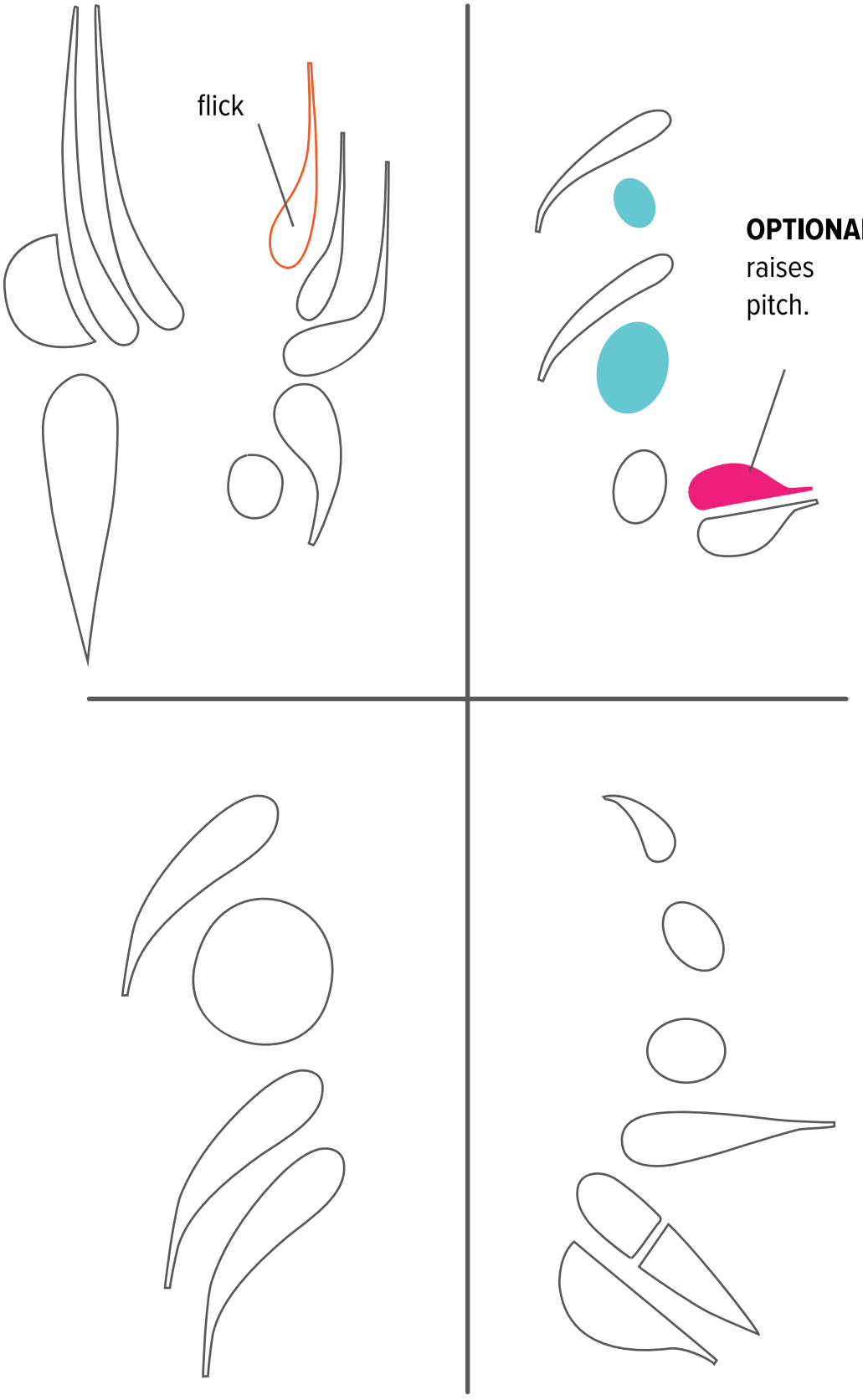


SHORT C#
(historical)

This is the basic fingering for C# on baroque and classical bassoons and works well in some technical passages on modern bassoon. Also allows for a slightly blurry C# to D trill.

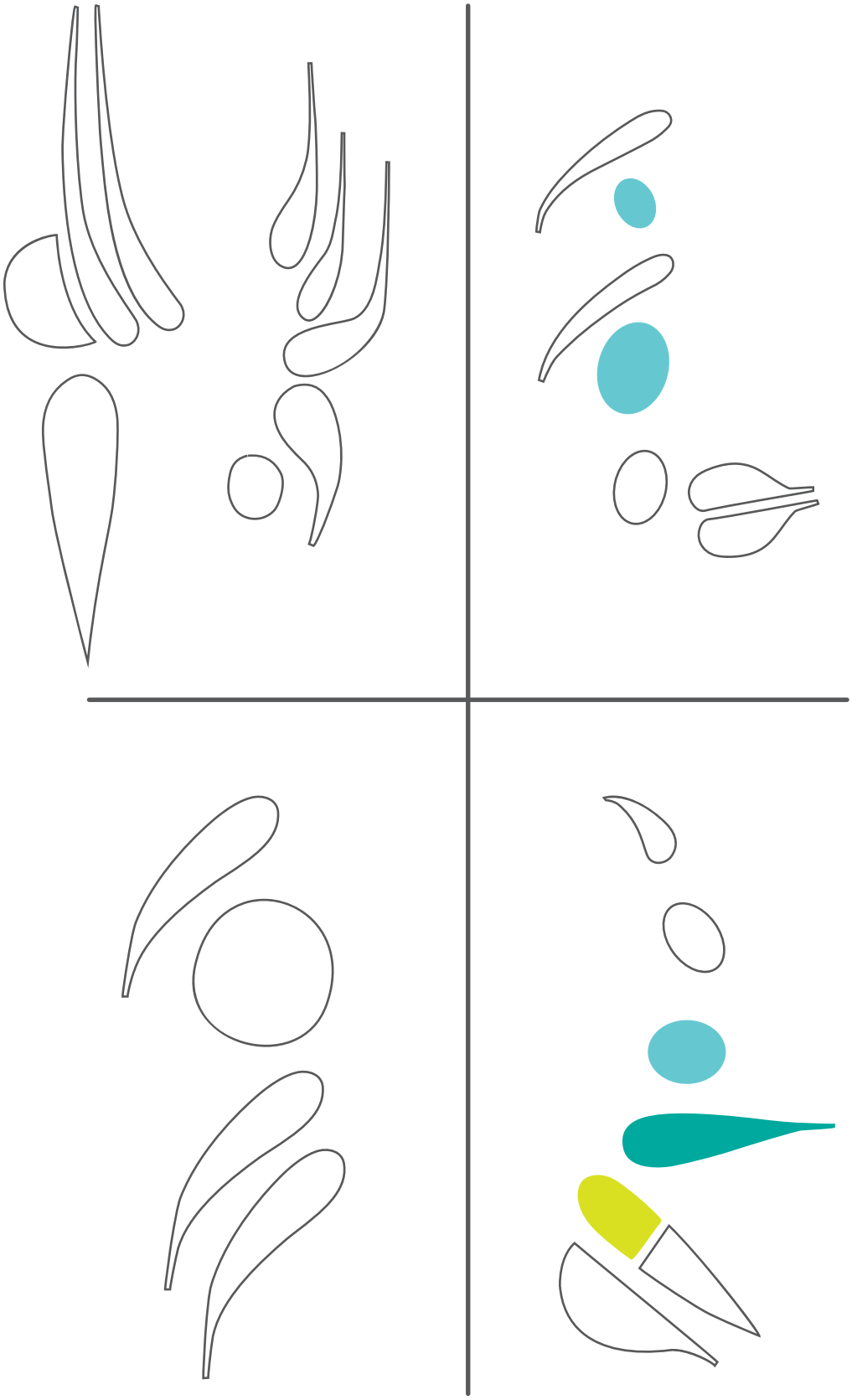
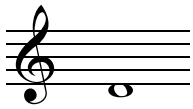


TENOR D



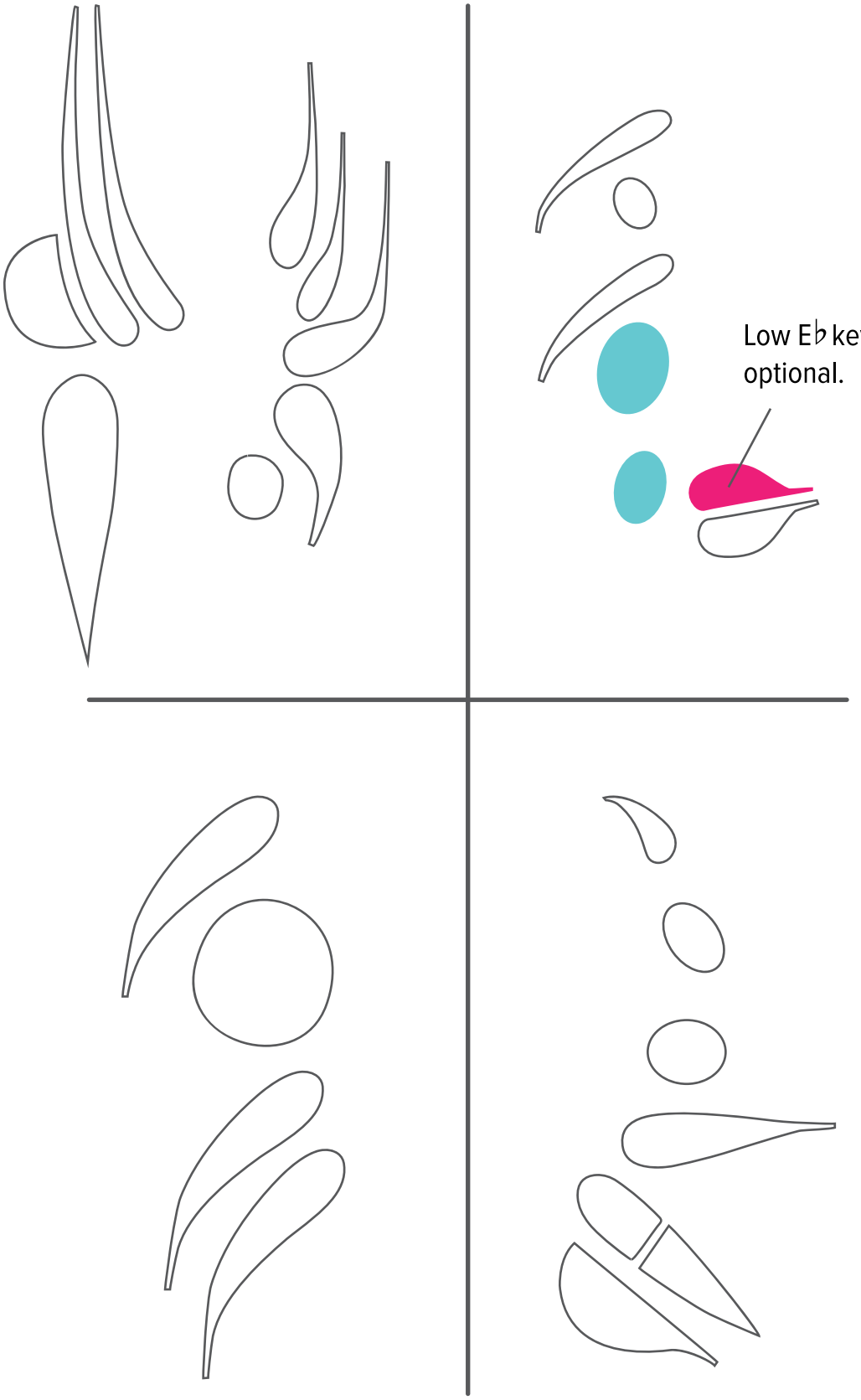
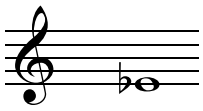
MUTED TENOR D

Tends sharp.

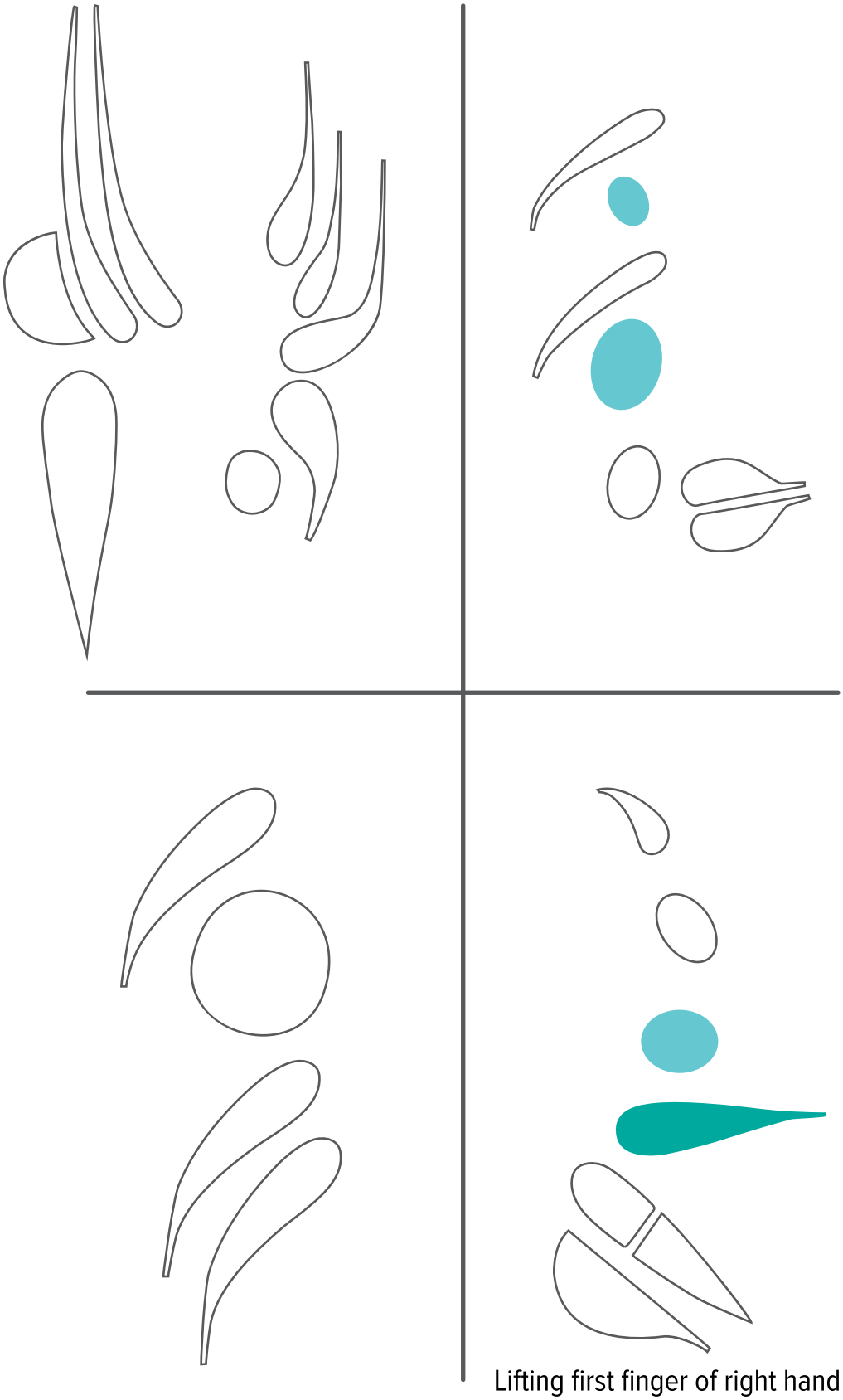


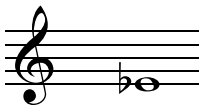
TENOR D ALTERNATE

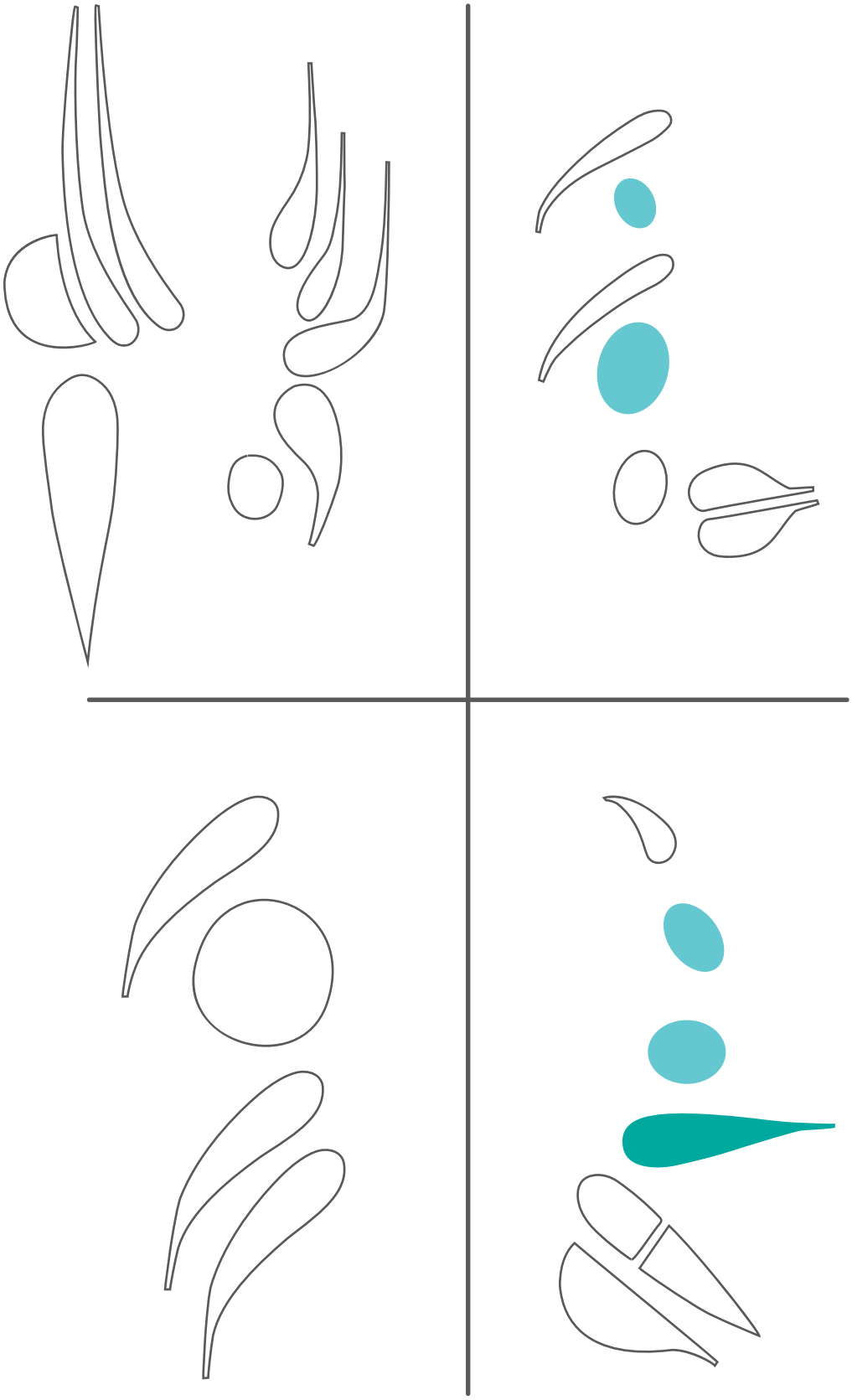
I use this fingering for the extended C-D trill for bassoons in Le Sacre du Printemps.

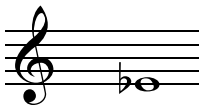


E♭



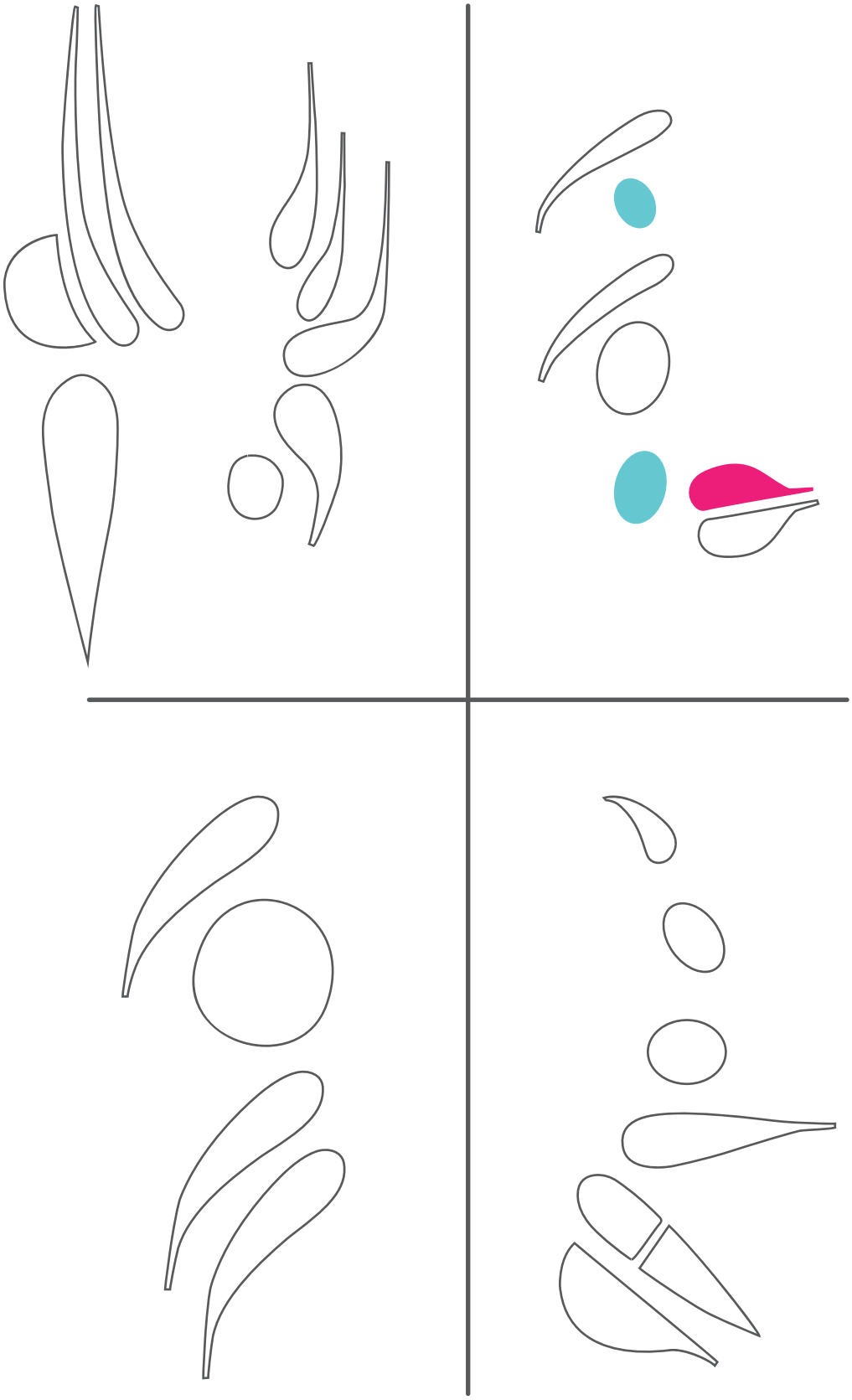
Lifting first finger of right hand can clarify attacks and/or raise pitch slightly.

E♭

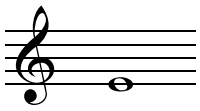


This is the fingering I use to trill to F in Mozart concerto by trilling LH2 and RH3. If using for trill, add E♭ resonance key.

VERY SHORT E♭

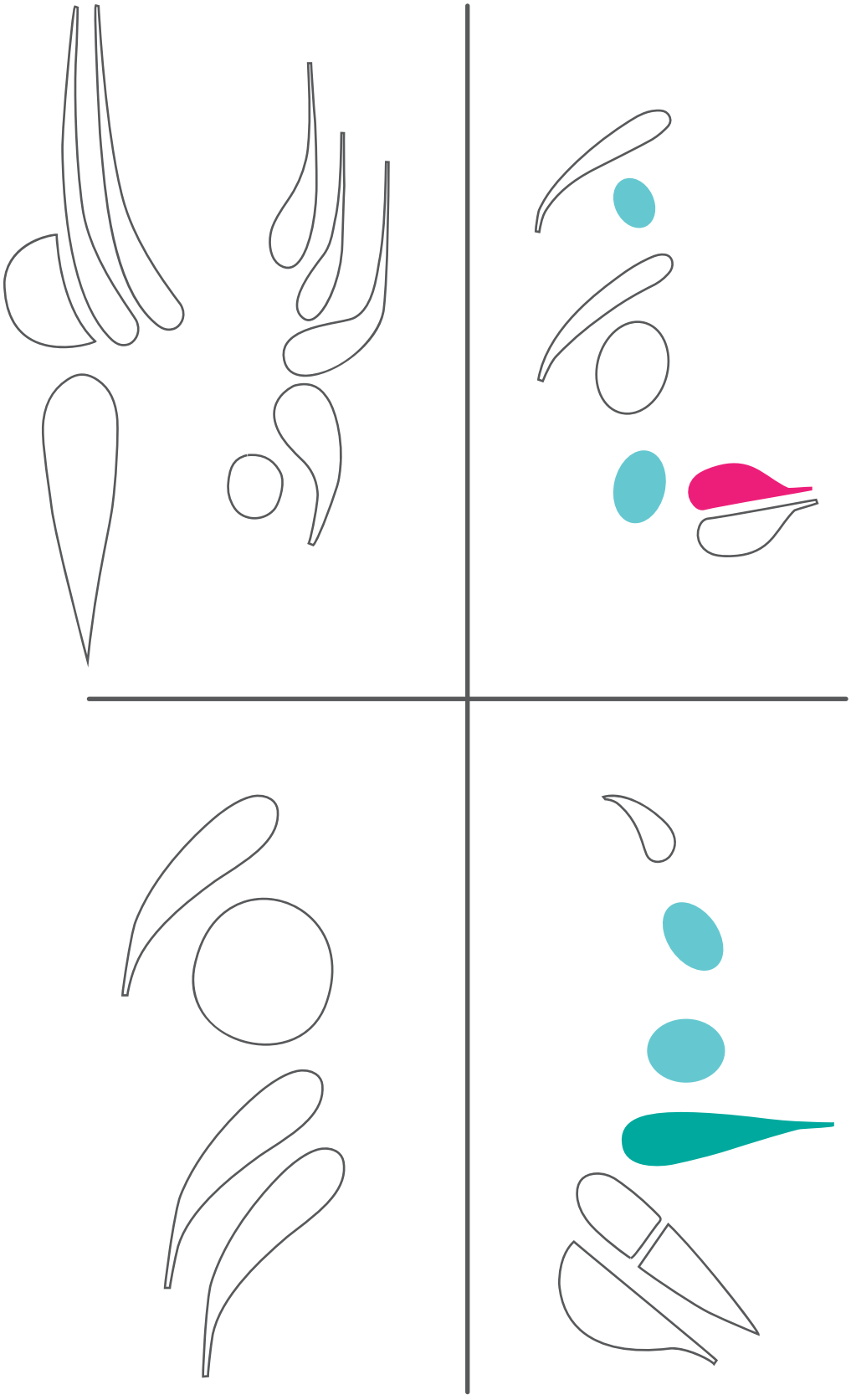
Only use for rare technical passages, but spend some time learning to tune.

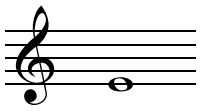
Also works as a slighty blurry down trill from F.



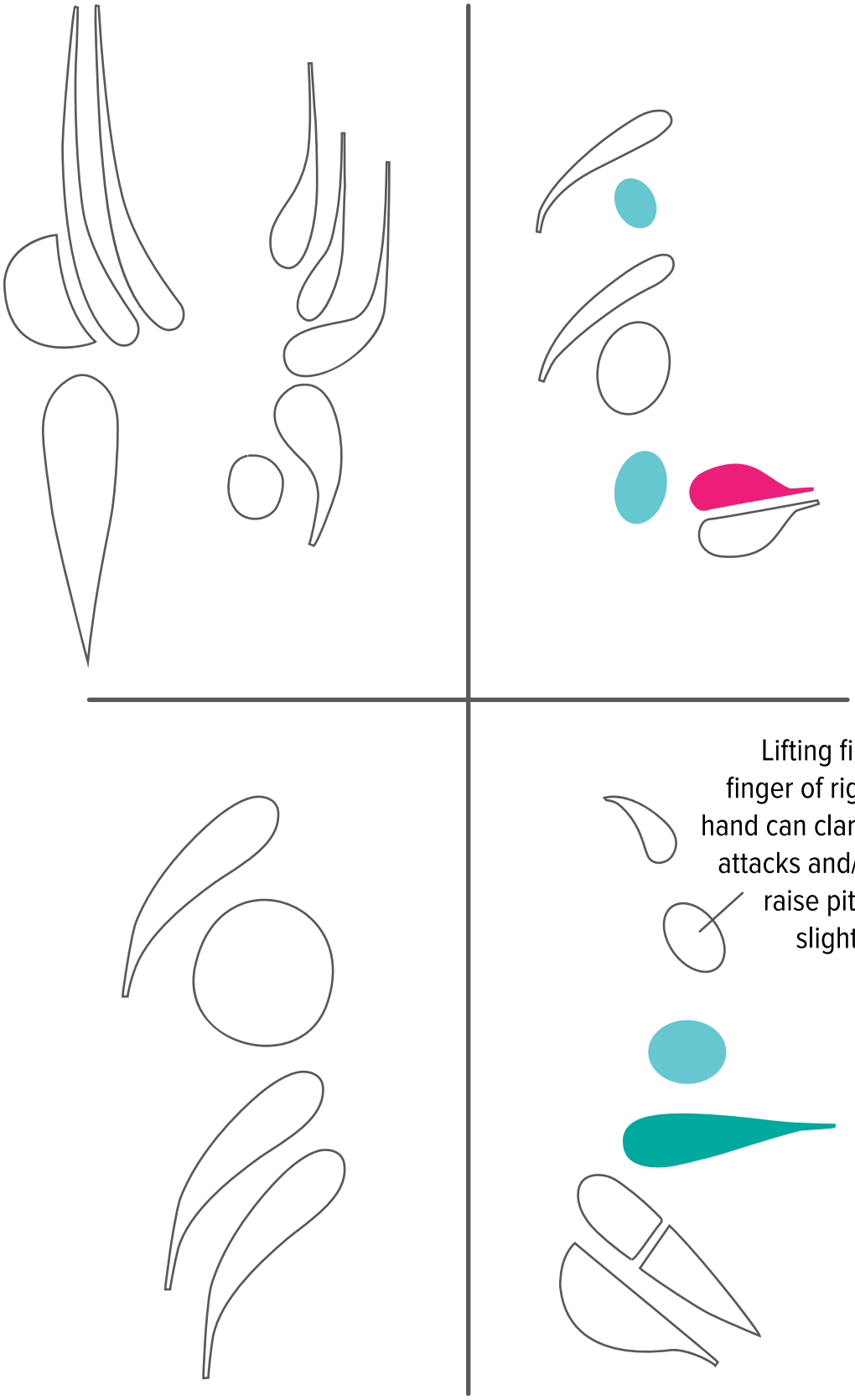


E





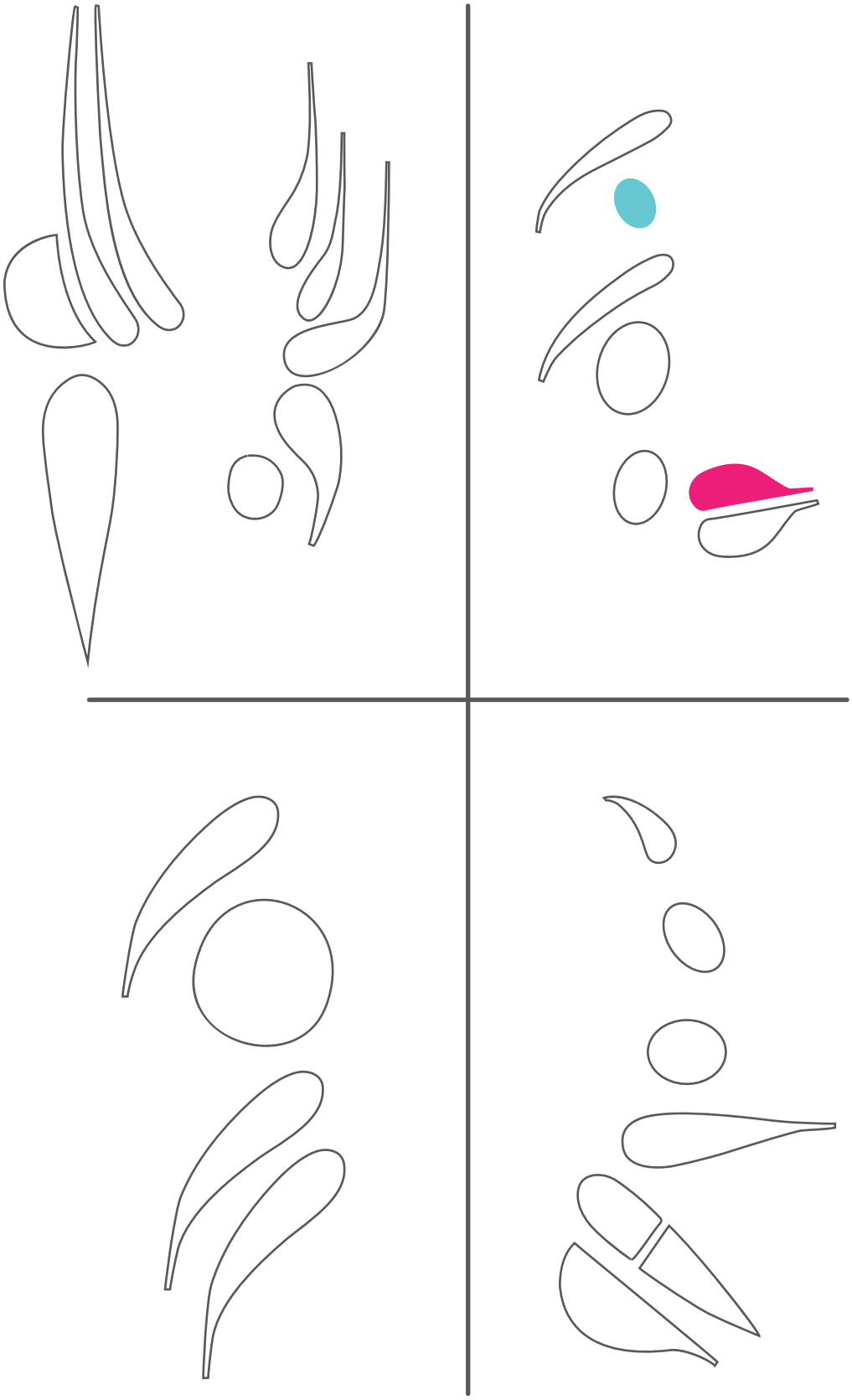
E

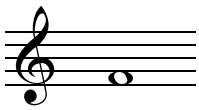


Lifting first finger of right hand can clarify attacks and/or raise pitch slightly.

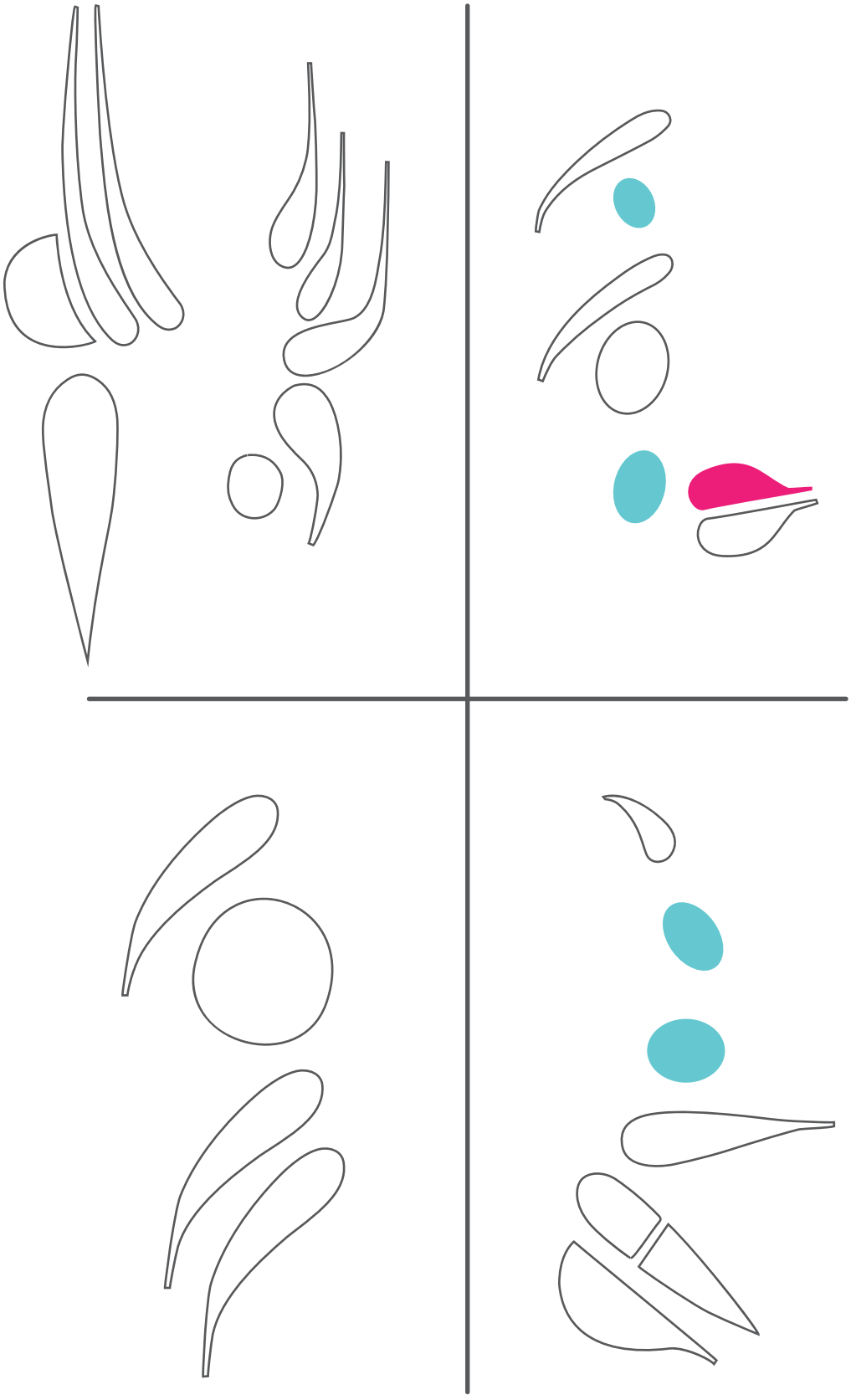
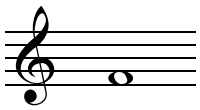
VERY SHORT E

Useful in selected rapid passages, and for D-E trills.



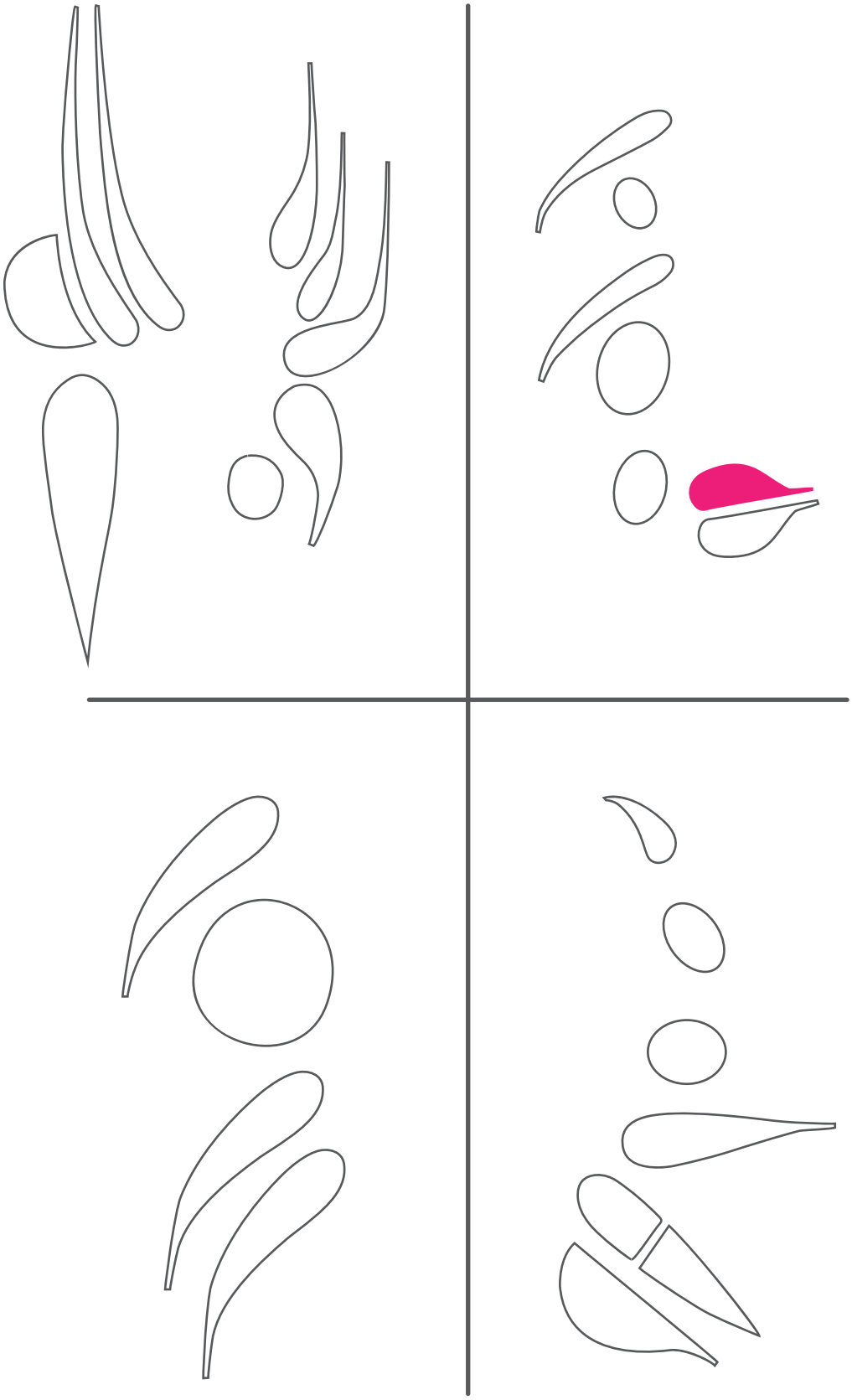
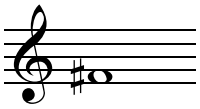


F

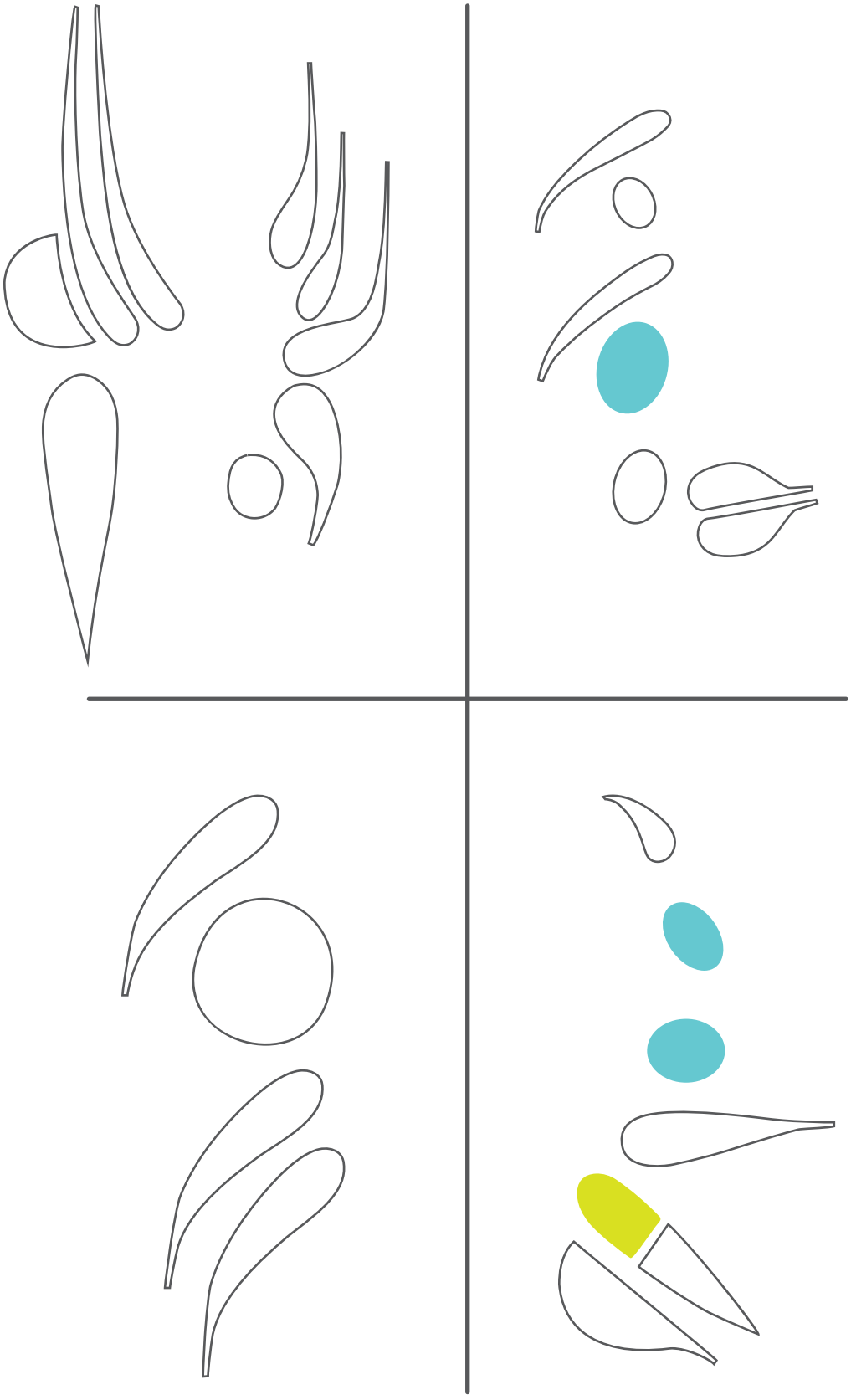
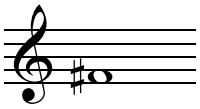


VERY SHORT F

Sometimes (rarely) a good choice in exceedingly rapid passing notes.

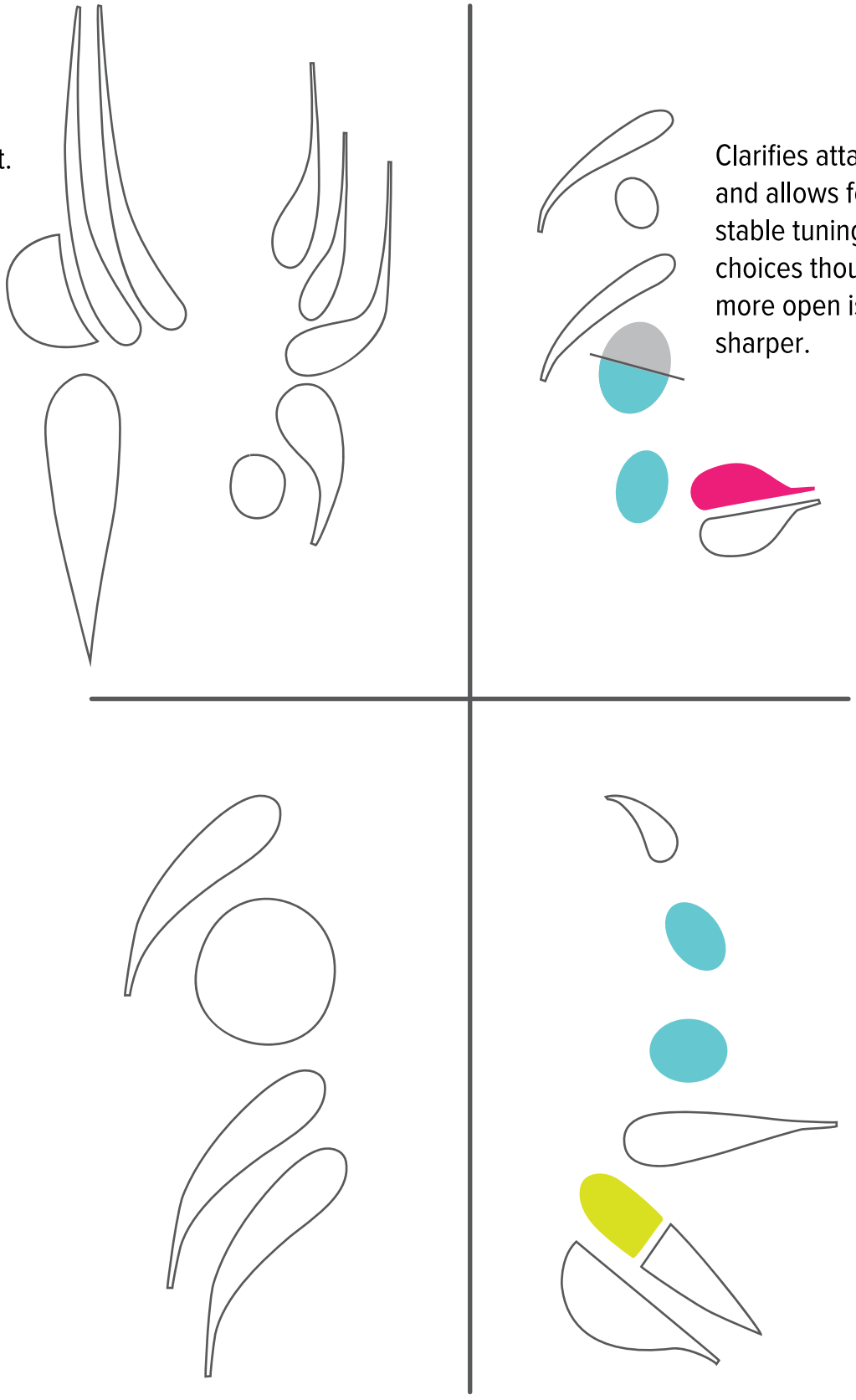


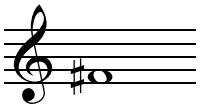
F#

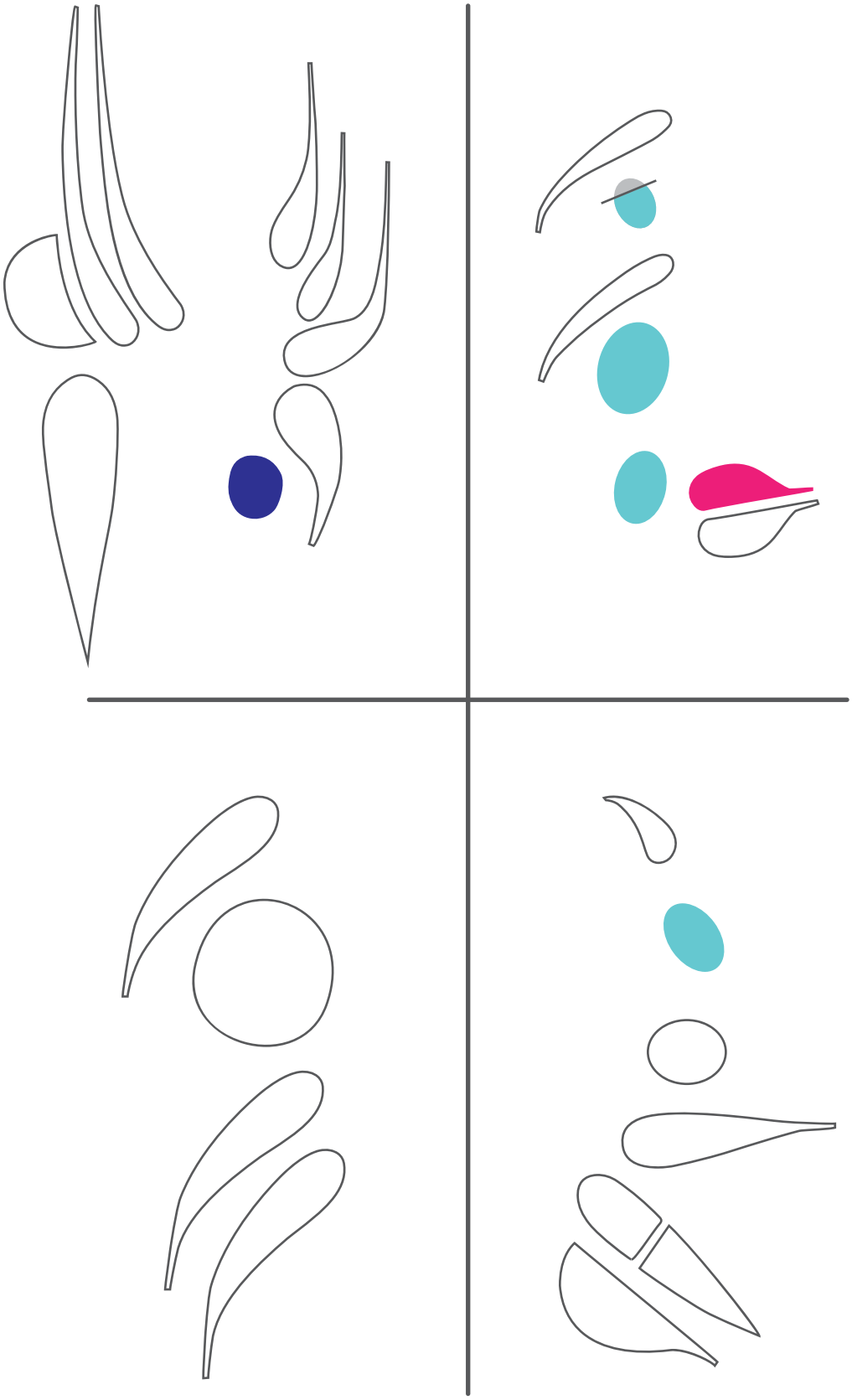
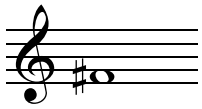


ANOTHER F#

There are really so many and none of them perfect.

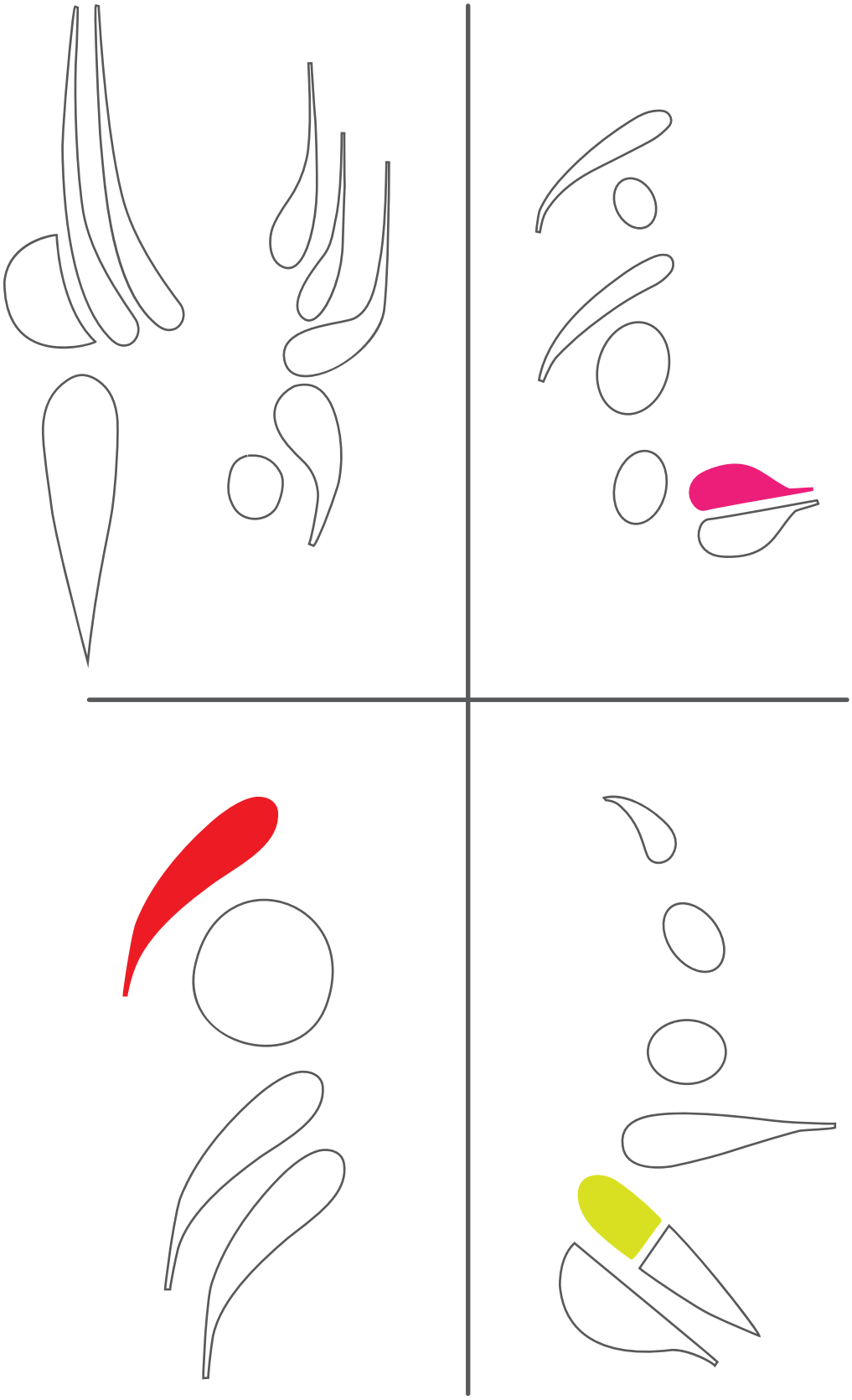


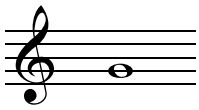
Clarifies attack and allows for stable tuning choices though more open is sharper.

SHORT F#



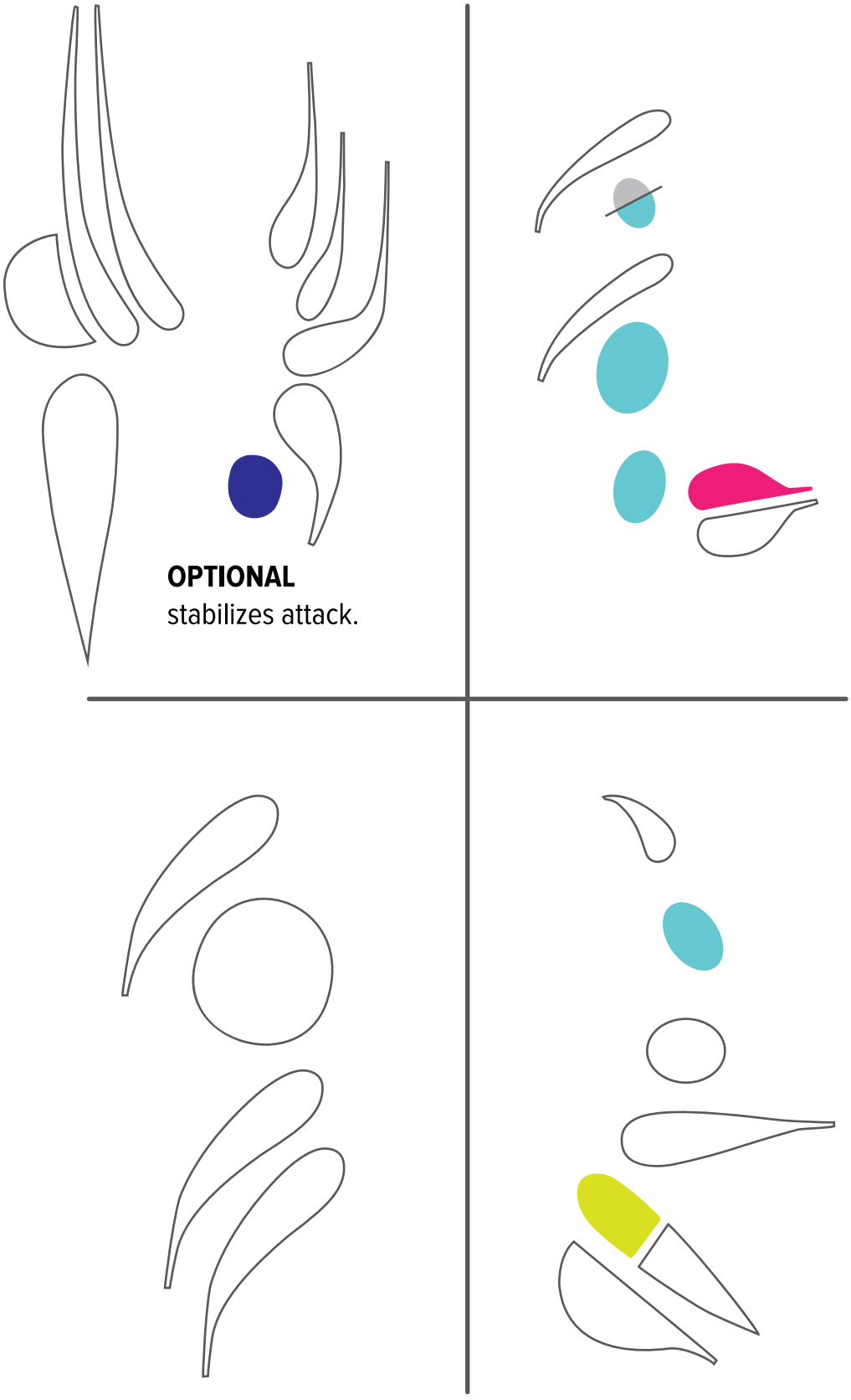
SHORT F#

Good for shakes between A and A♭ and probably more.

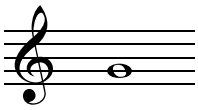




G



OPTIONAL
stabilizes attack.



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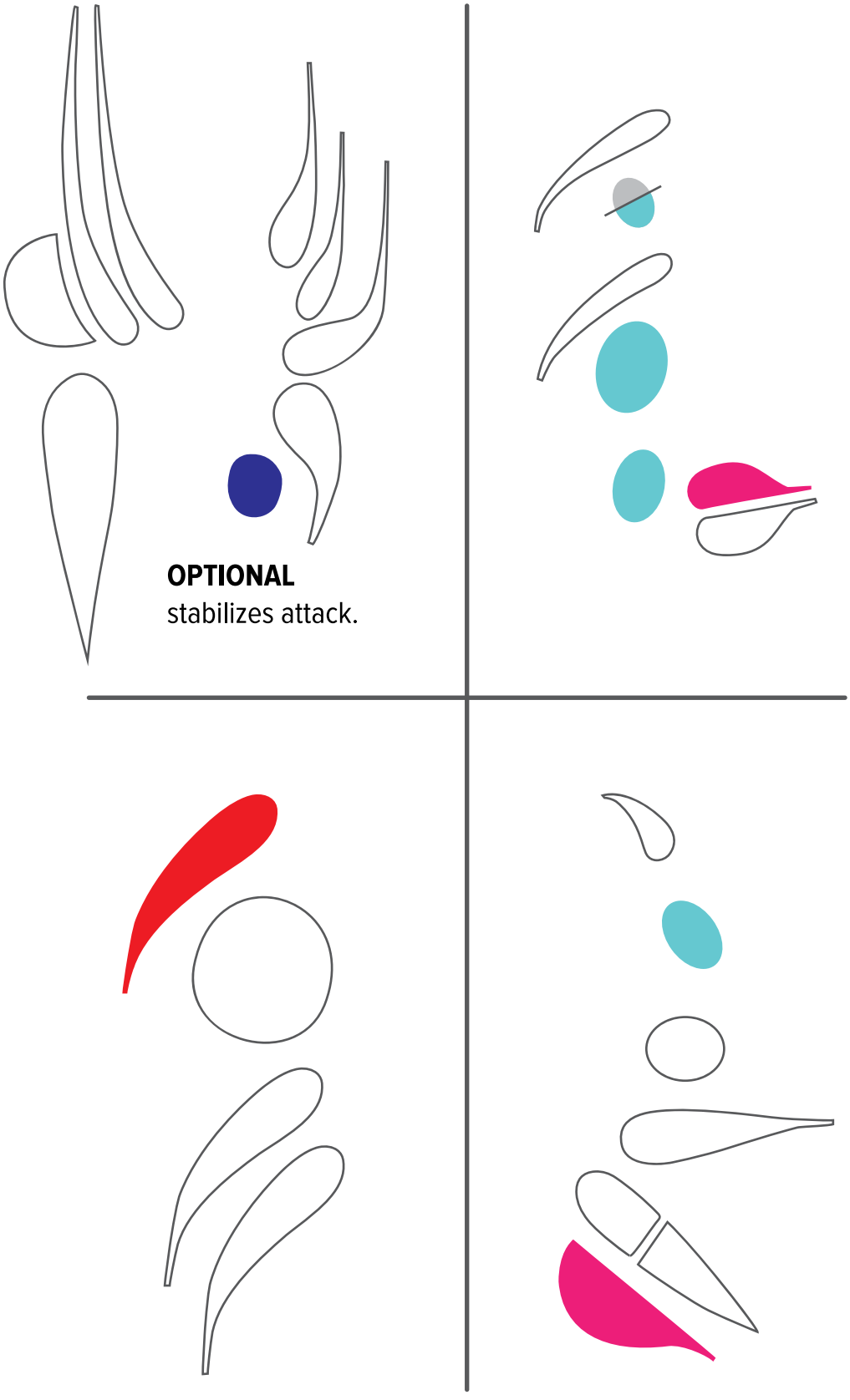
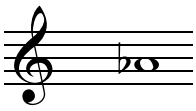
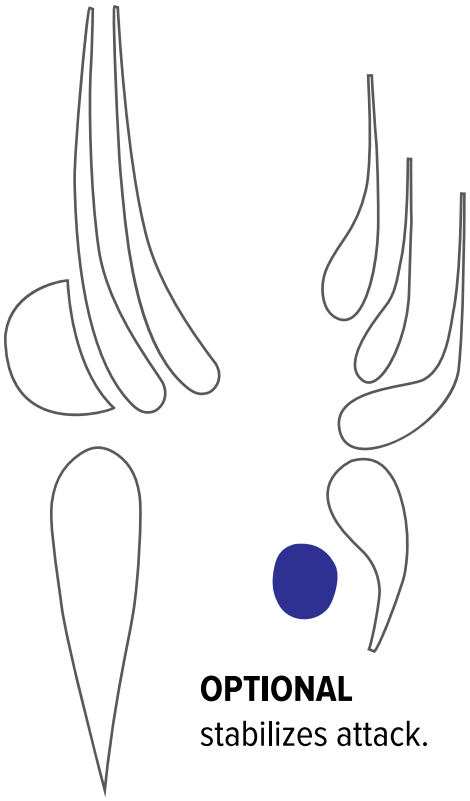
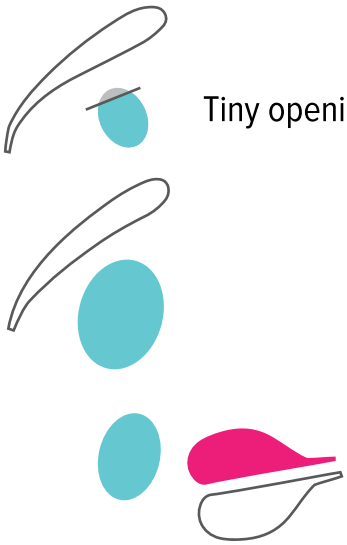


OPTIONAL
stabilizes attack.

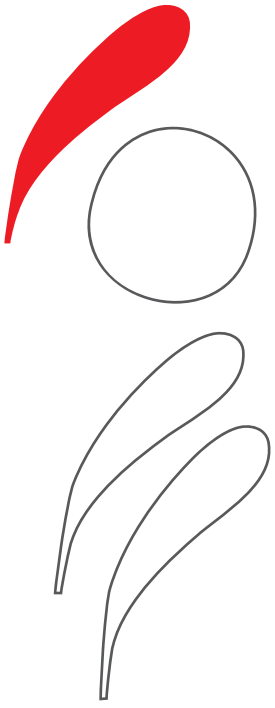
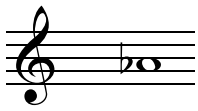
Very stable, for repeated Gs in Boléro.

FULL A♭



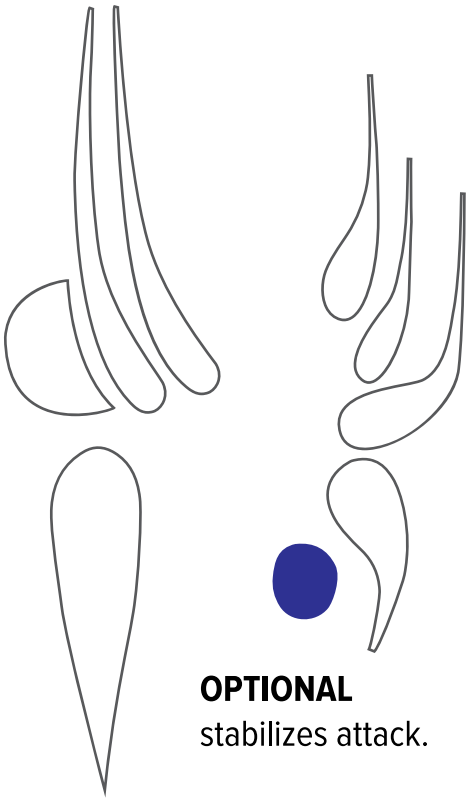
OPTIONAL
stabilizes attack.



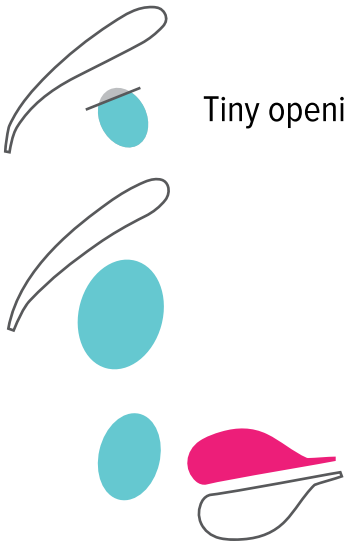
Tiny opening.



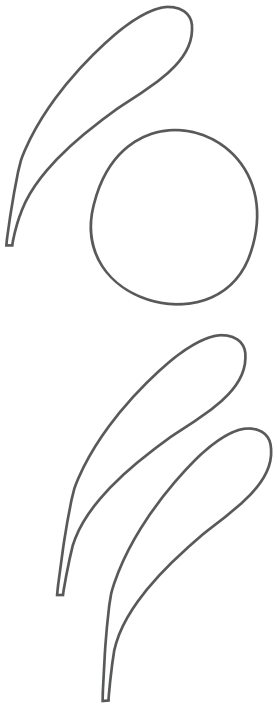
SHORT A♭

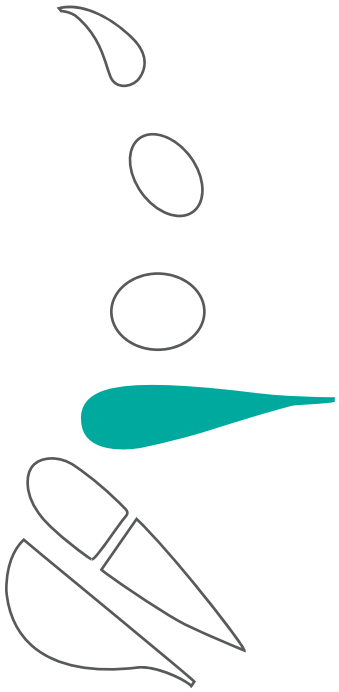


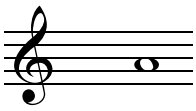
OPTIONAL
stabilizes attack.



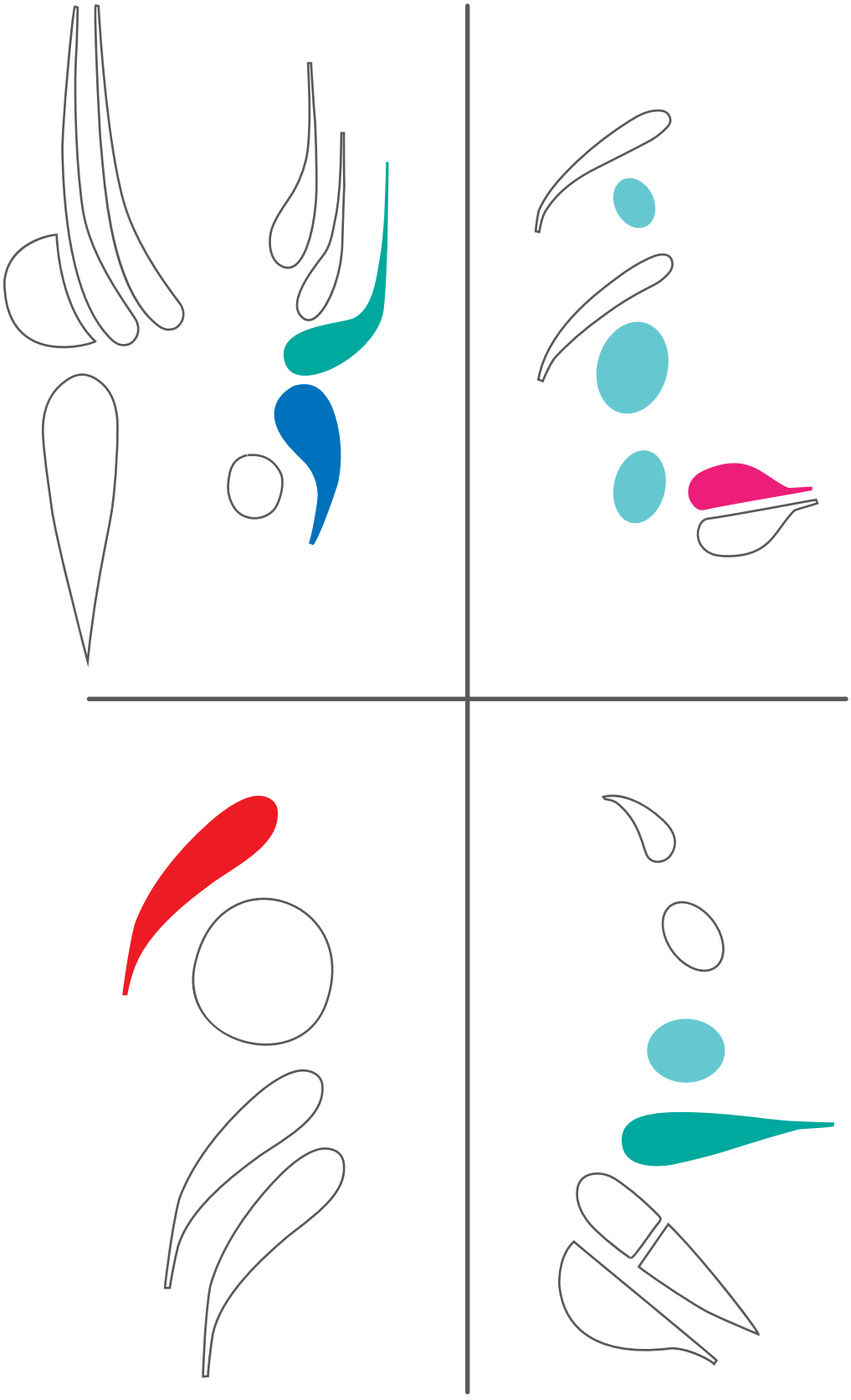
Tiny opening.

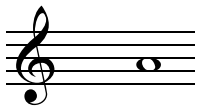




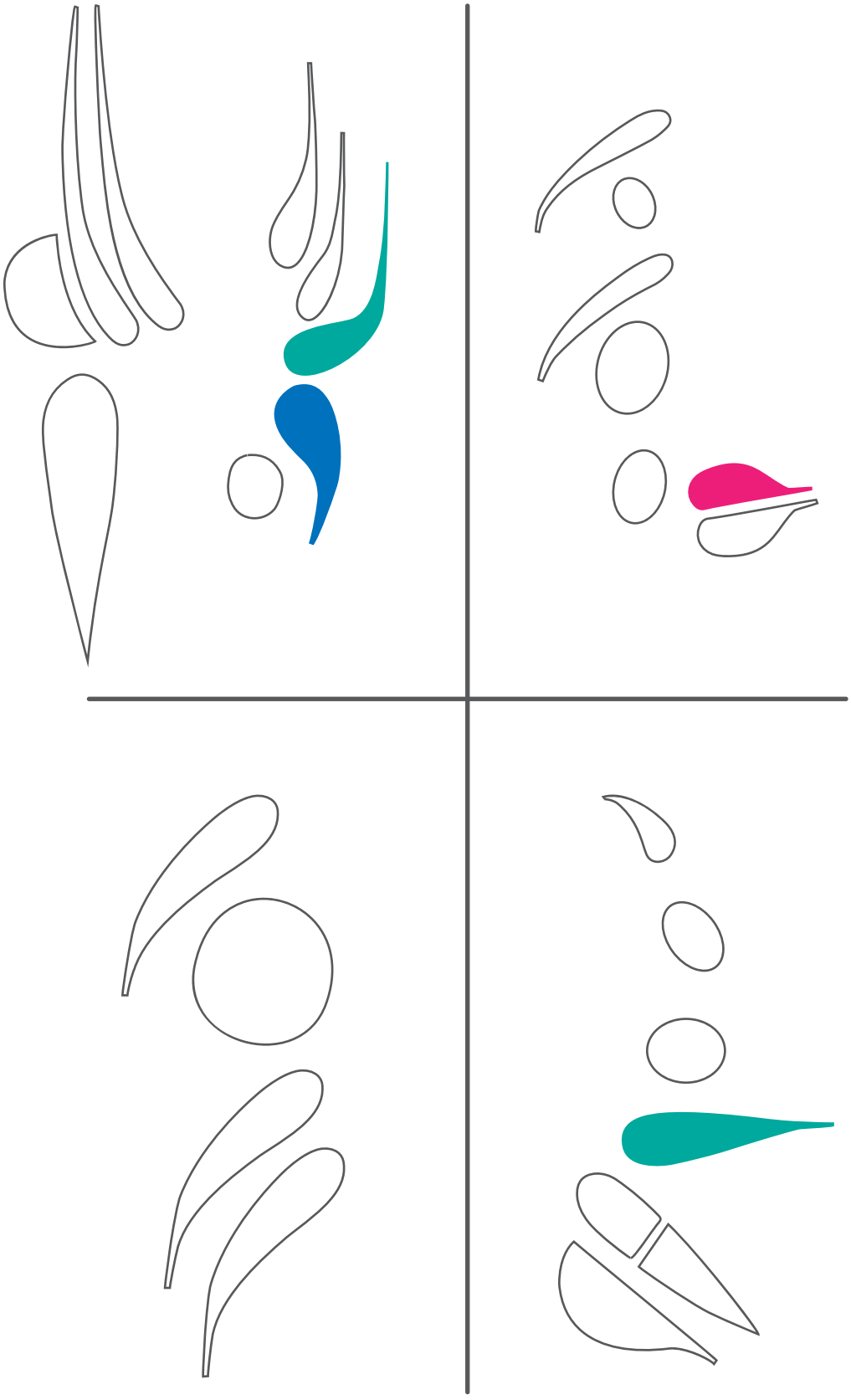
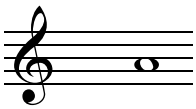


HIGH A



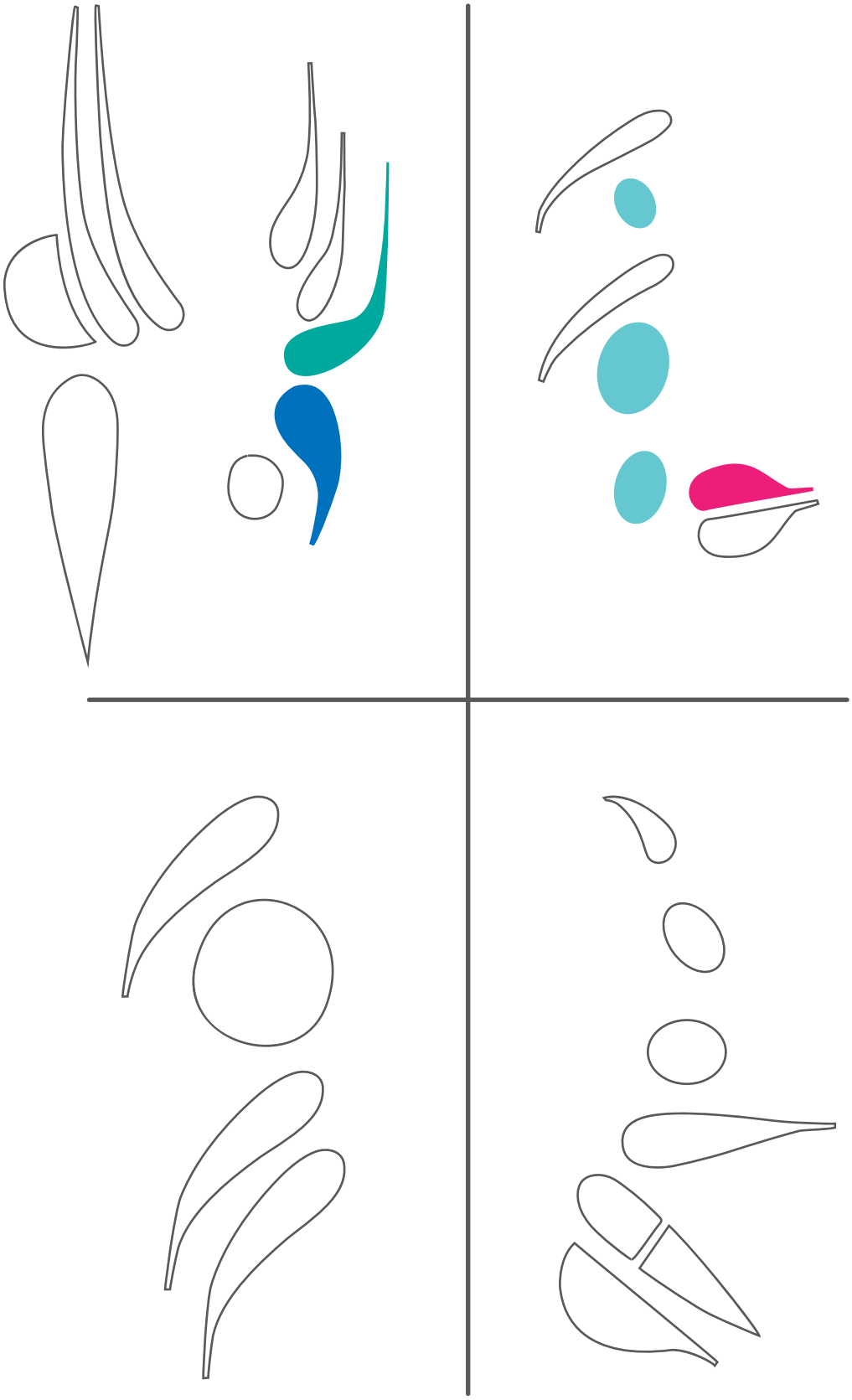
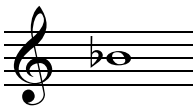


SHORT HIGH A

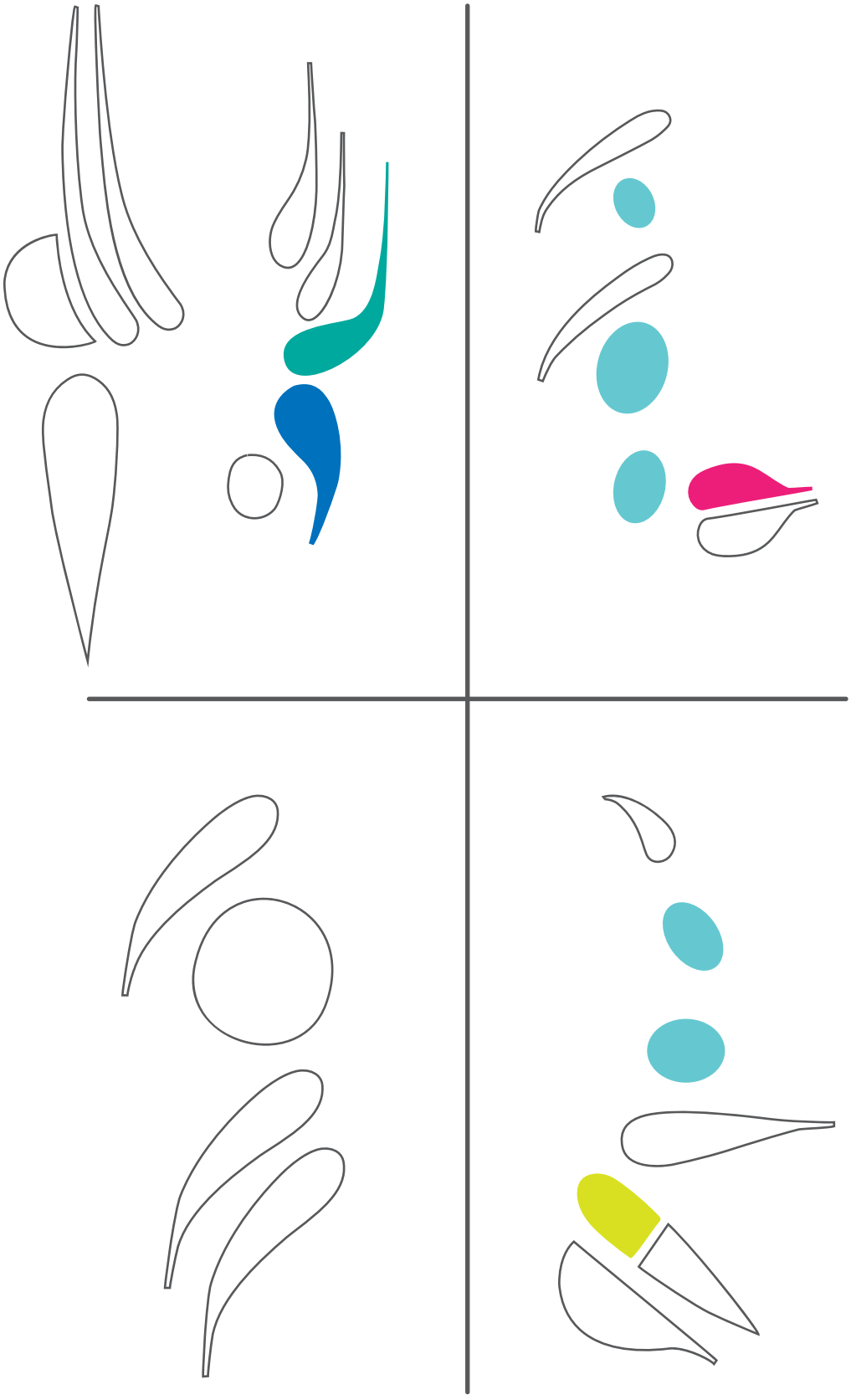
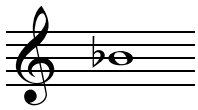


VERY SHORT HIGH A

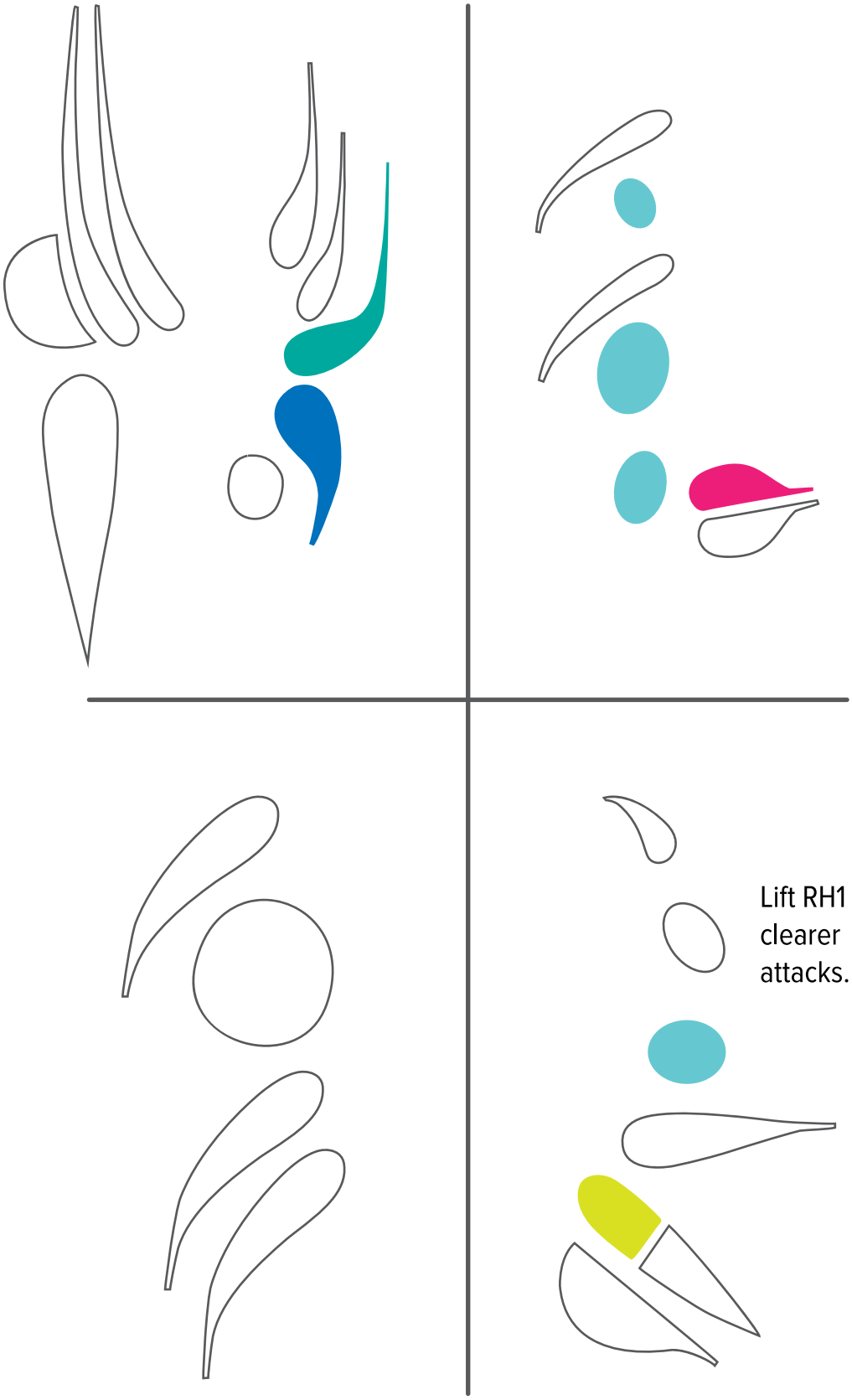
Wonderful for trills and shakes.

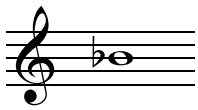


HIGH B♭

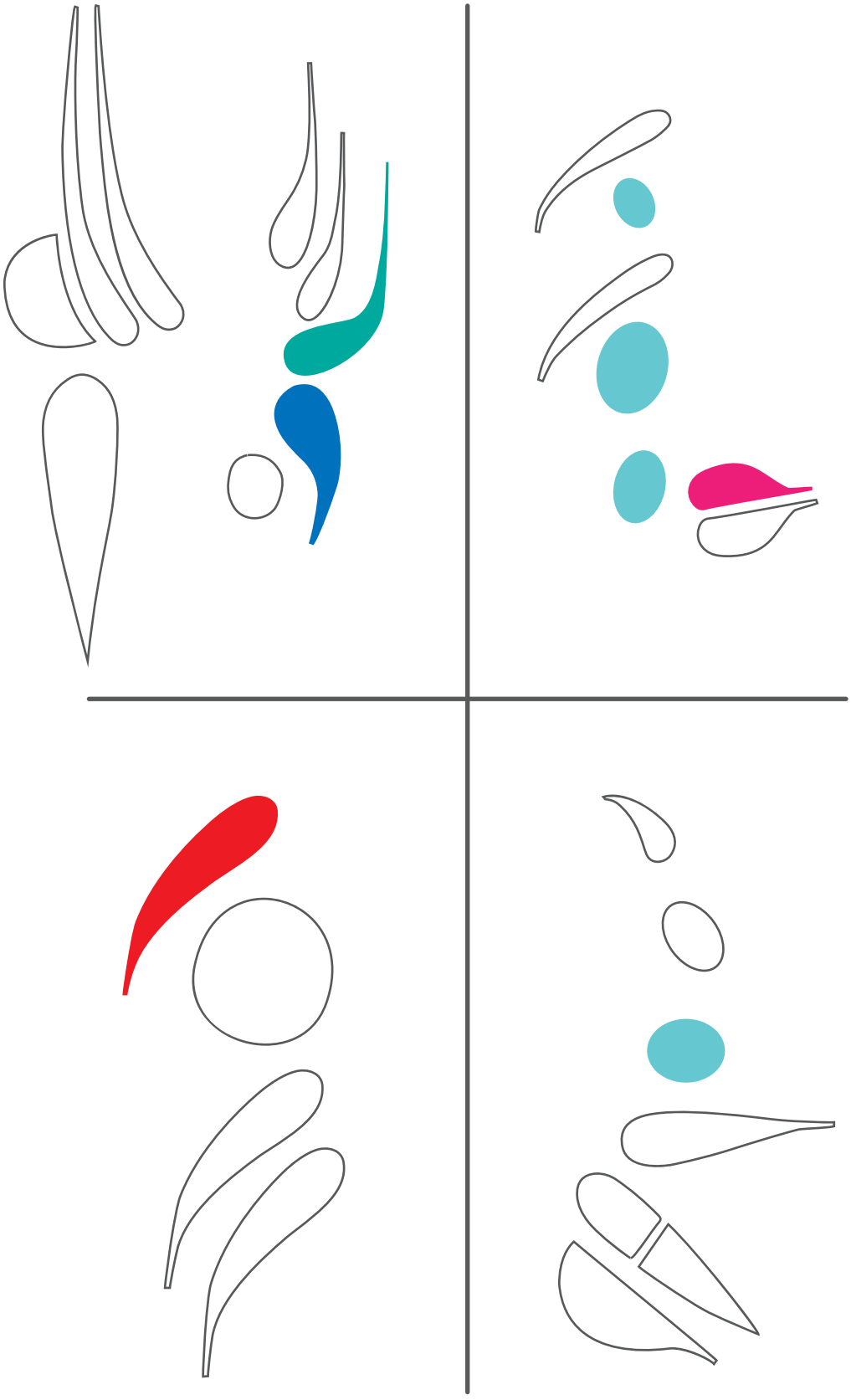
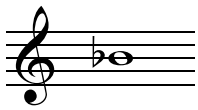


HIGH B♭



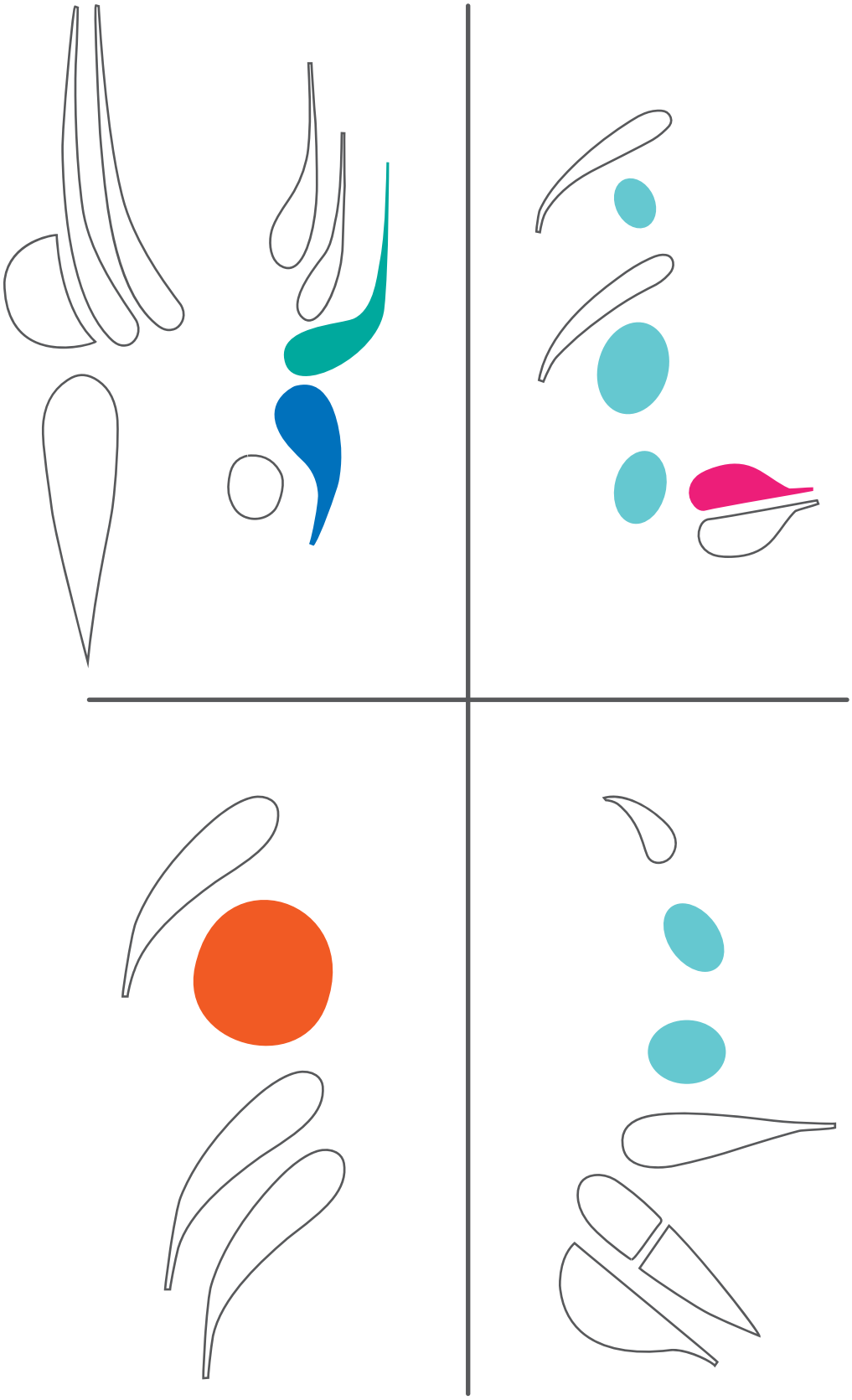
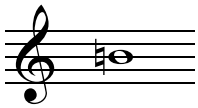
Lift RH1 for clearer attacks.

HIGH B♭

Another choice for clear attacks, slightly lower pitch.

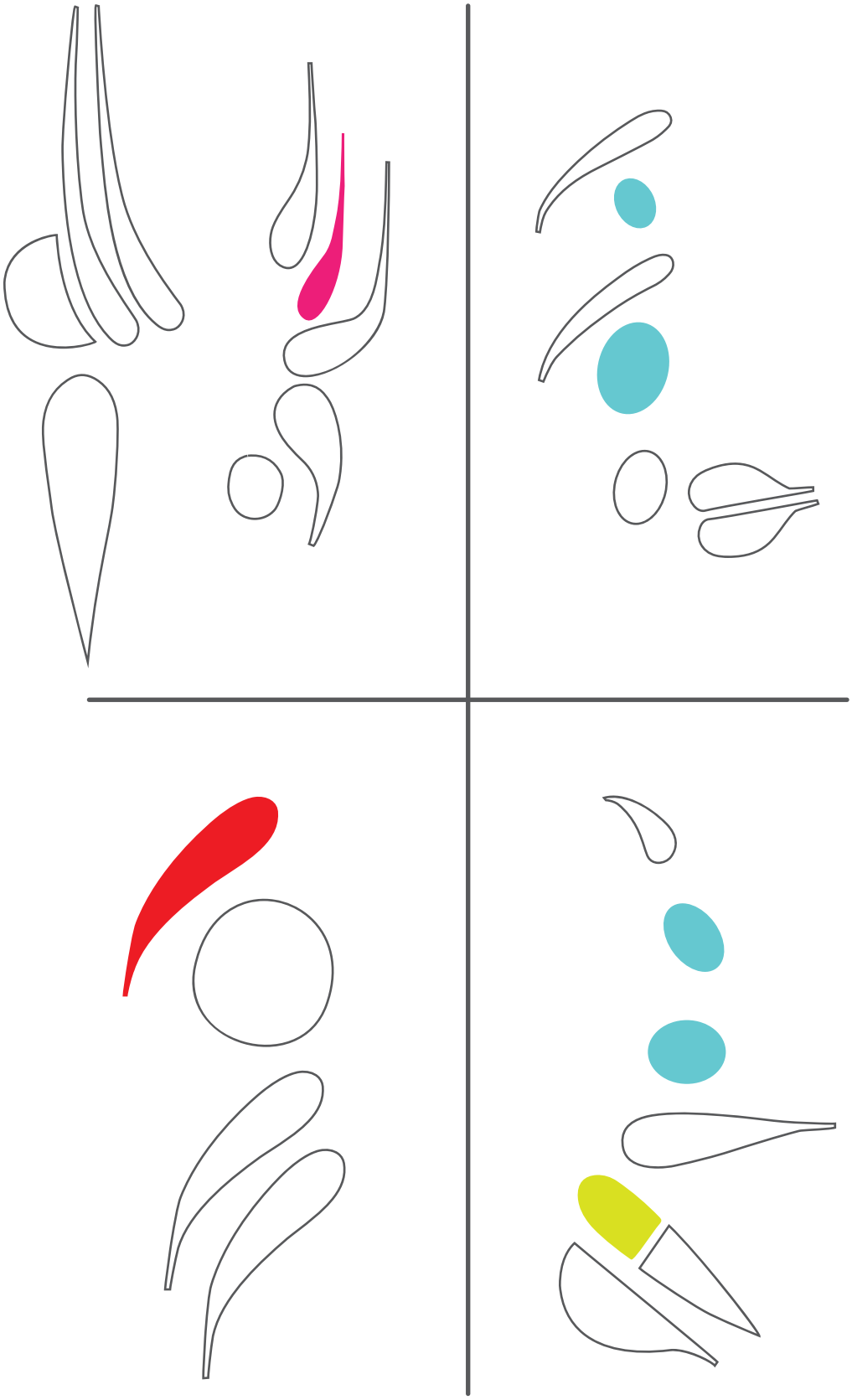
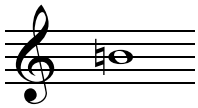


HIGH B♭

Another fingering for clear attacks and lower pitch.

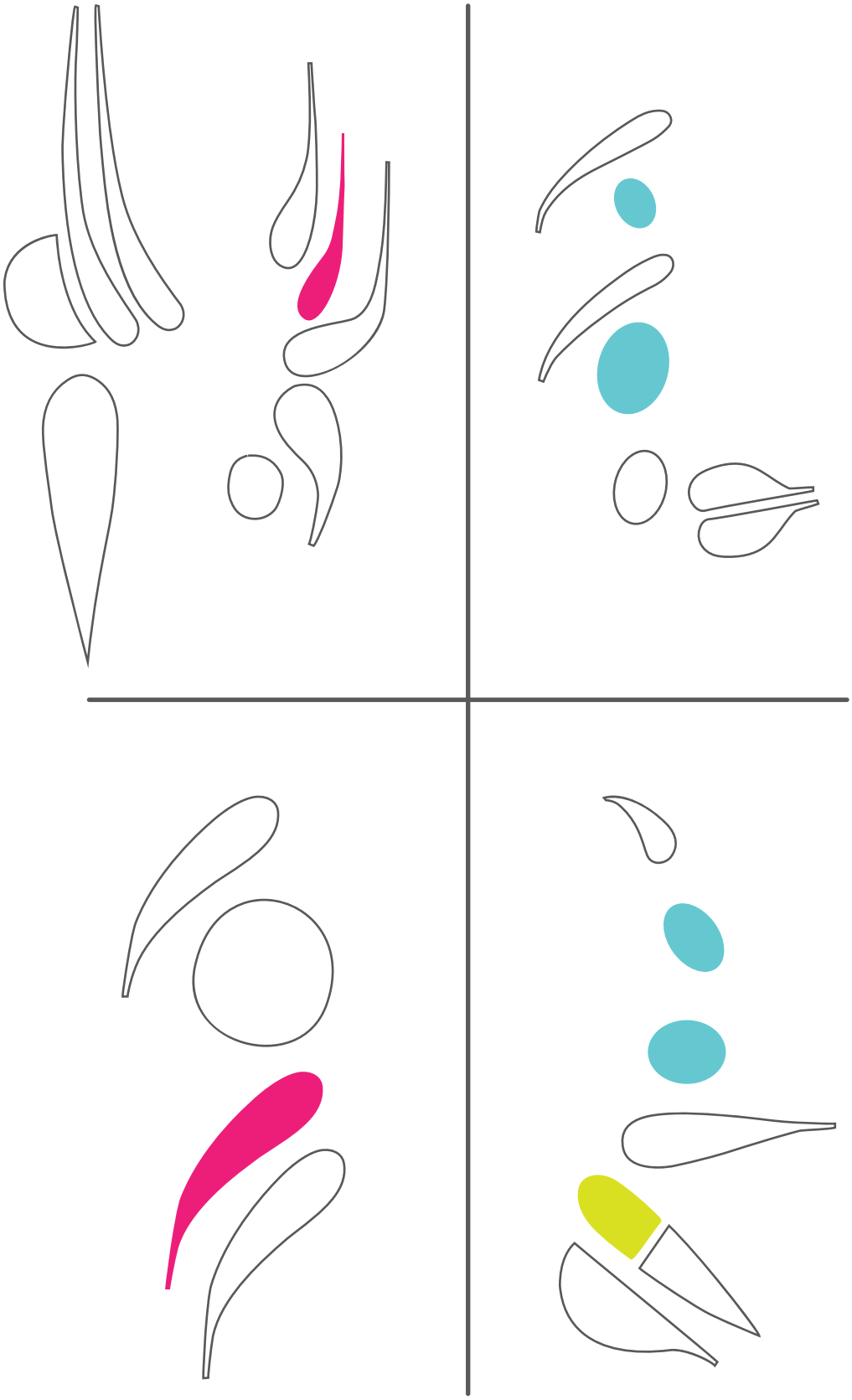
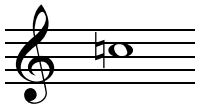


HIGH B

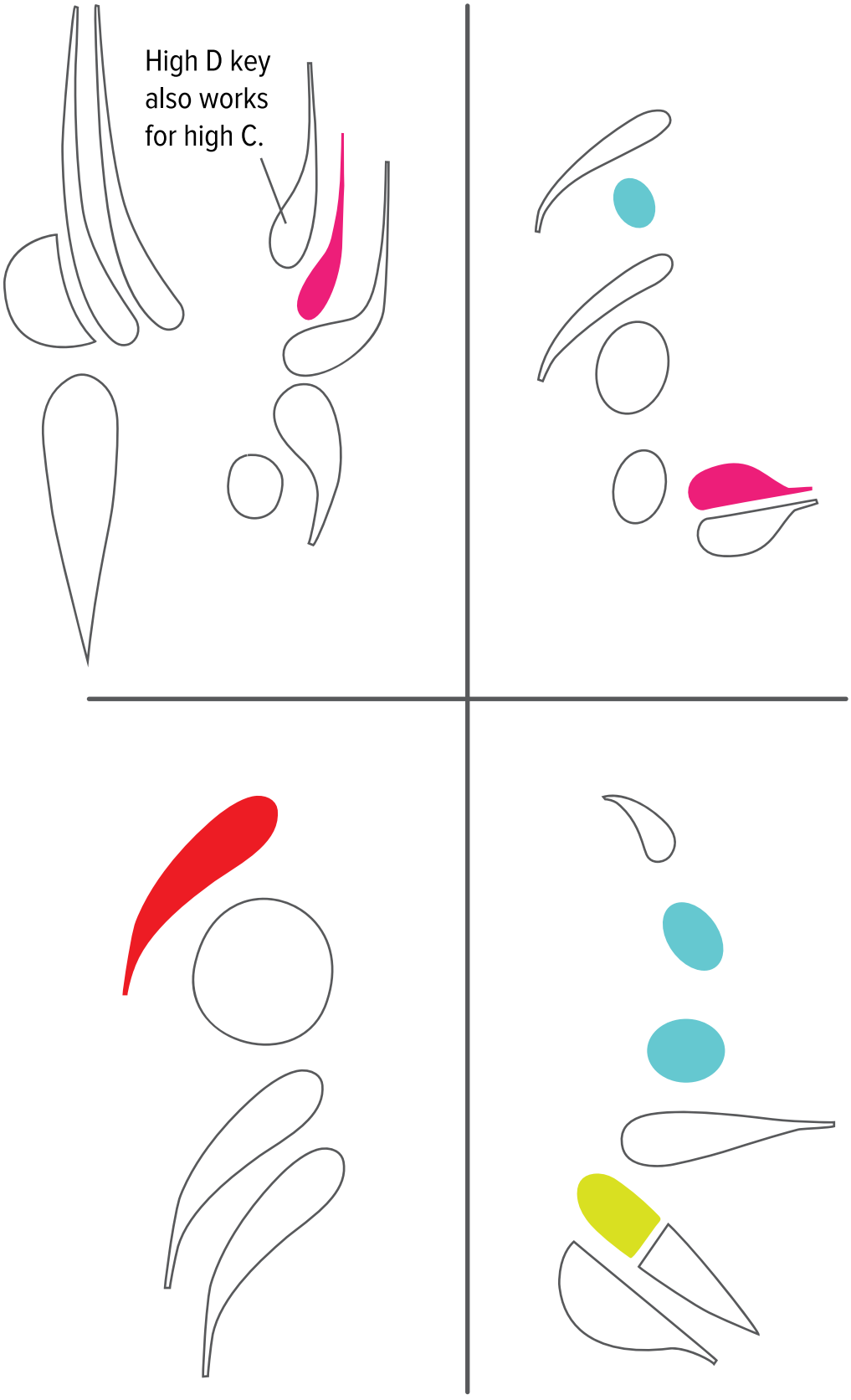
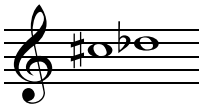


HIGH B

Very stable fingering with a clear attack.

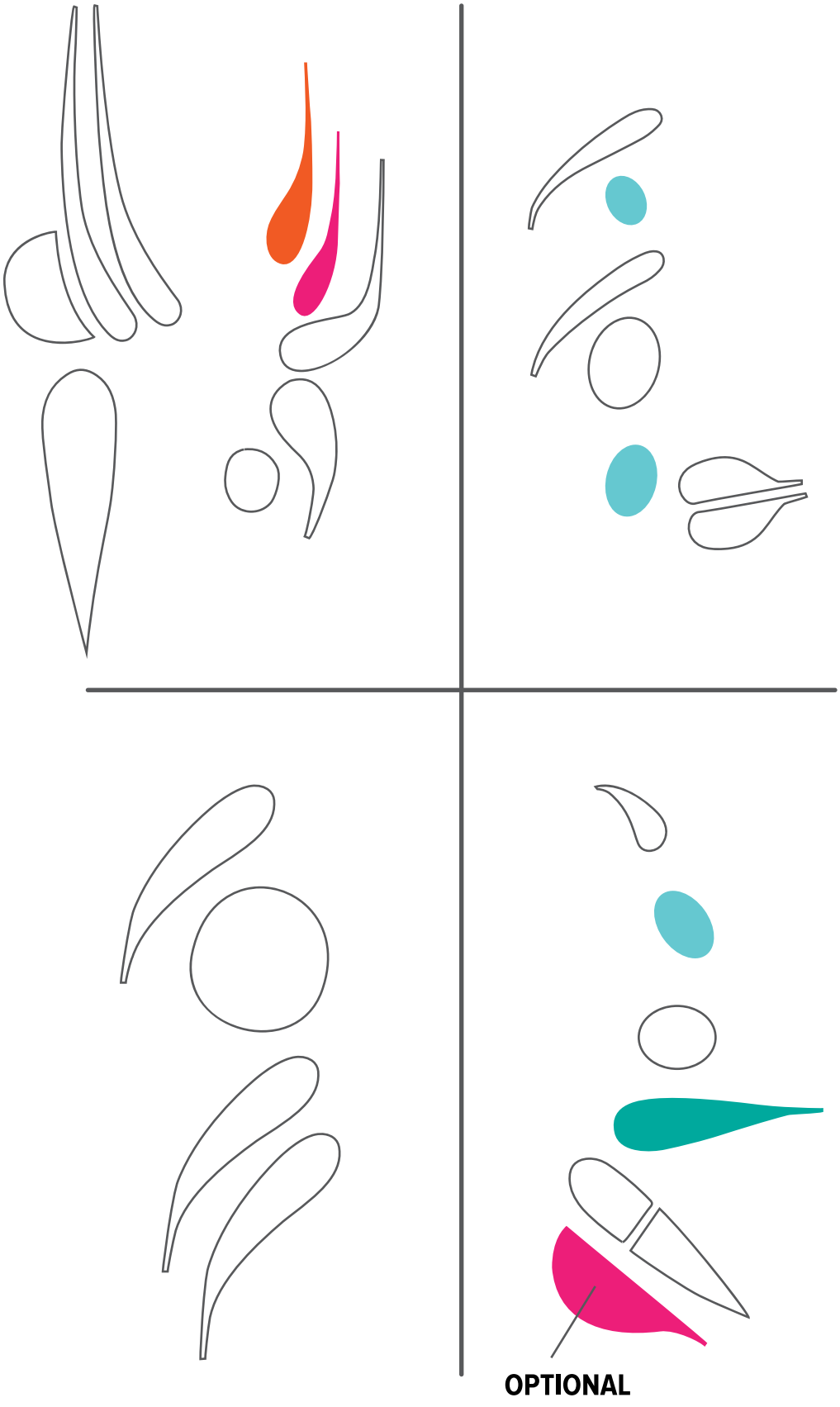
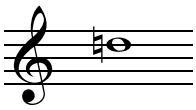


HIGH C

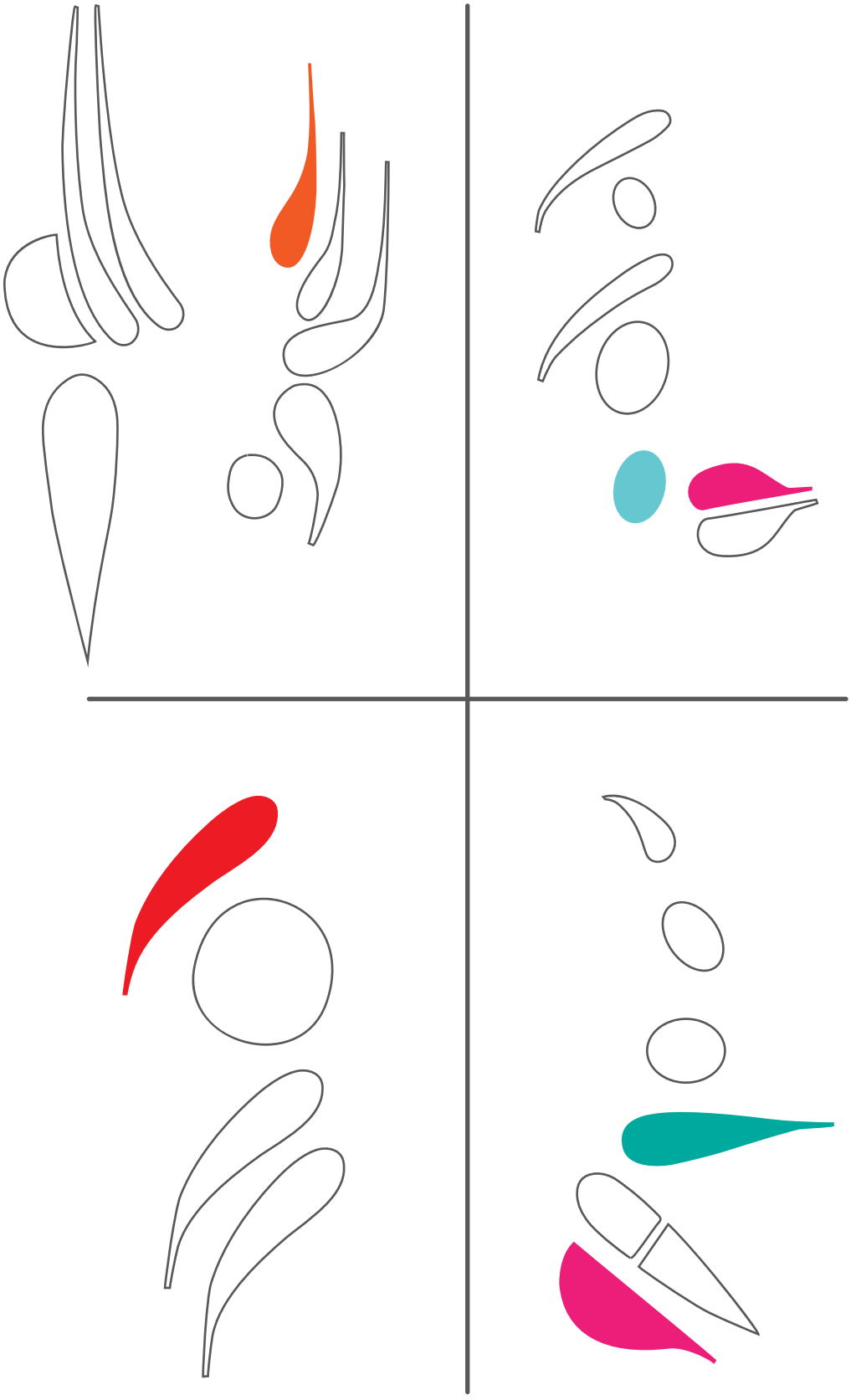


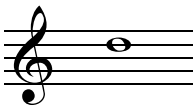
HIGH C# / D♭

You can use both high C and D keys, or only high D, or only high C depending on your bassoon/bocal.



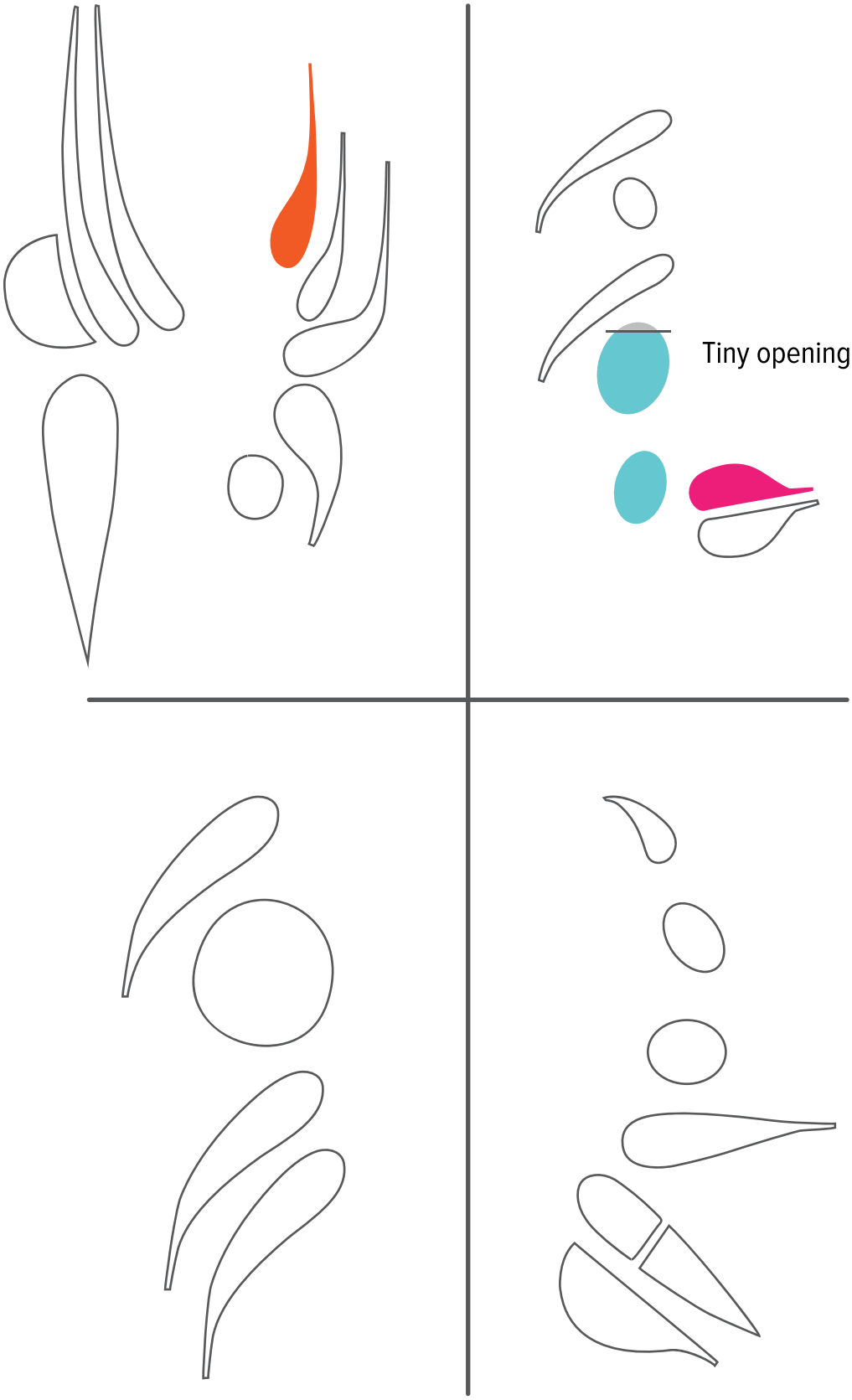
HIGH D

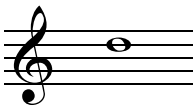




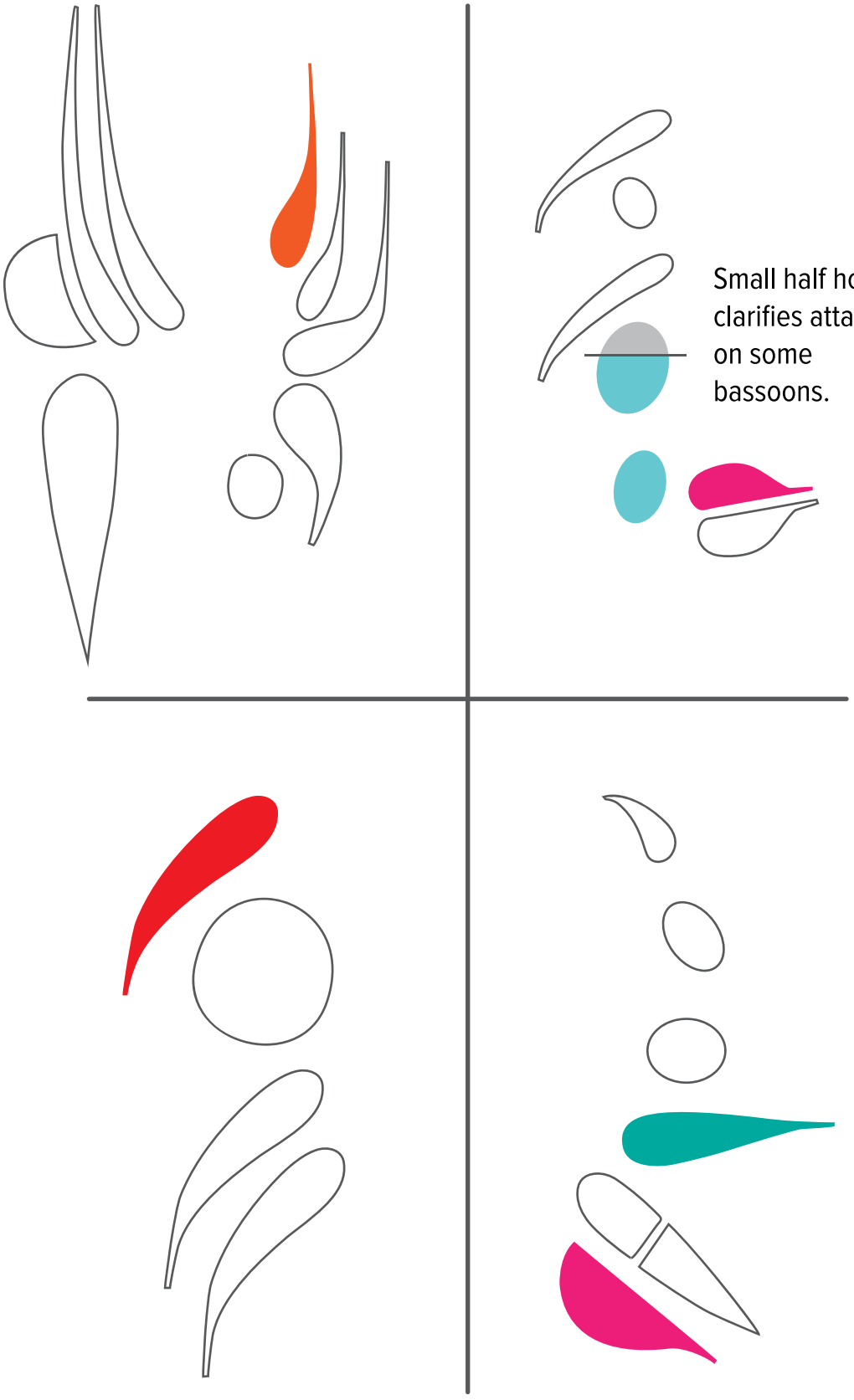
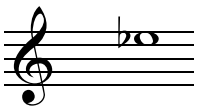
VERY SHORT HIGH D

This fingering is an example of how you can find fingerings by using overtones with a leak (LH2 finger).

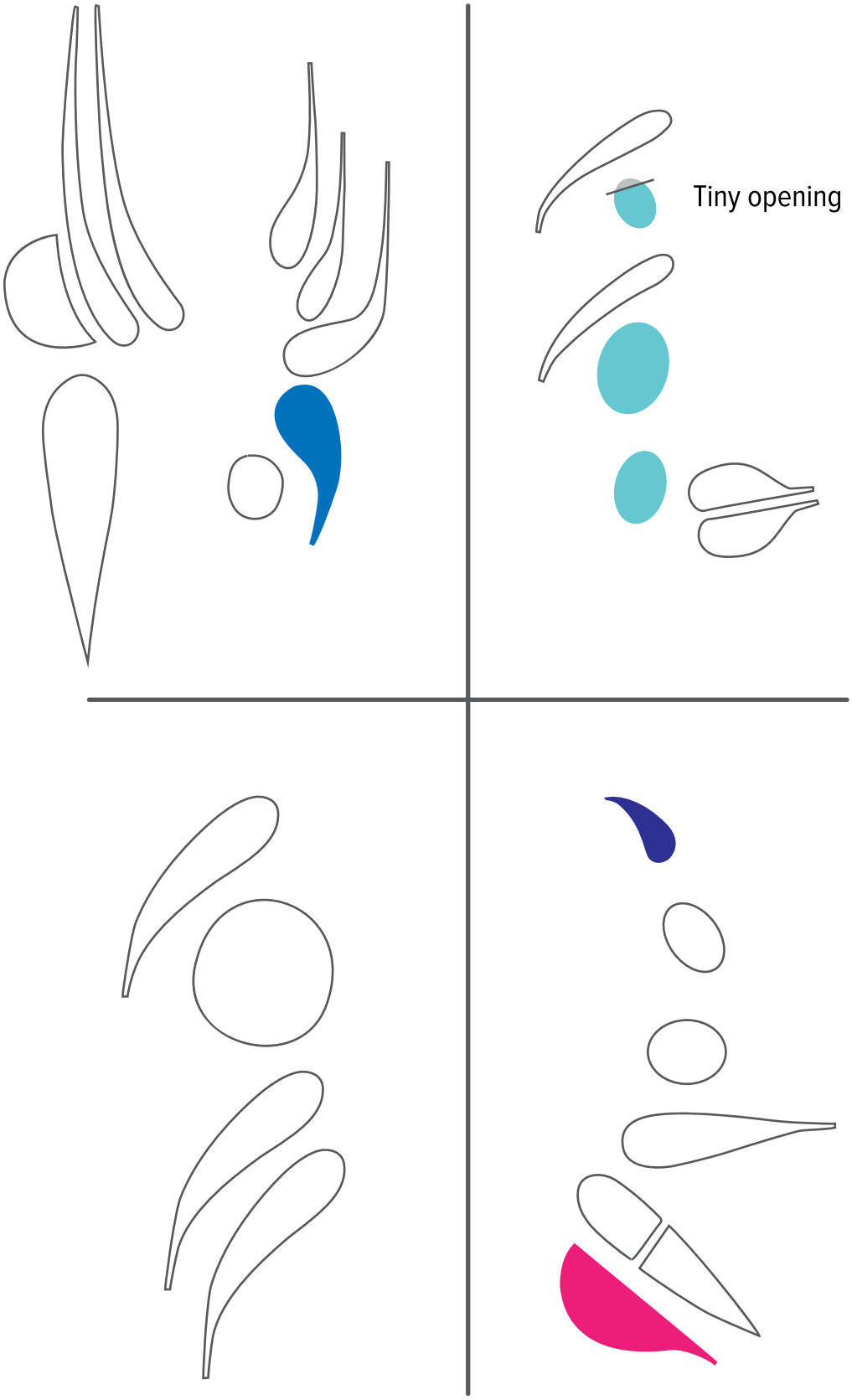
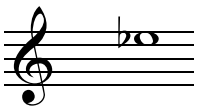




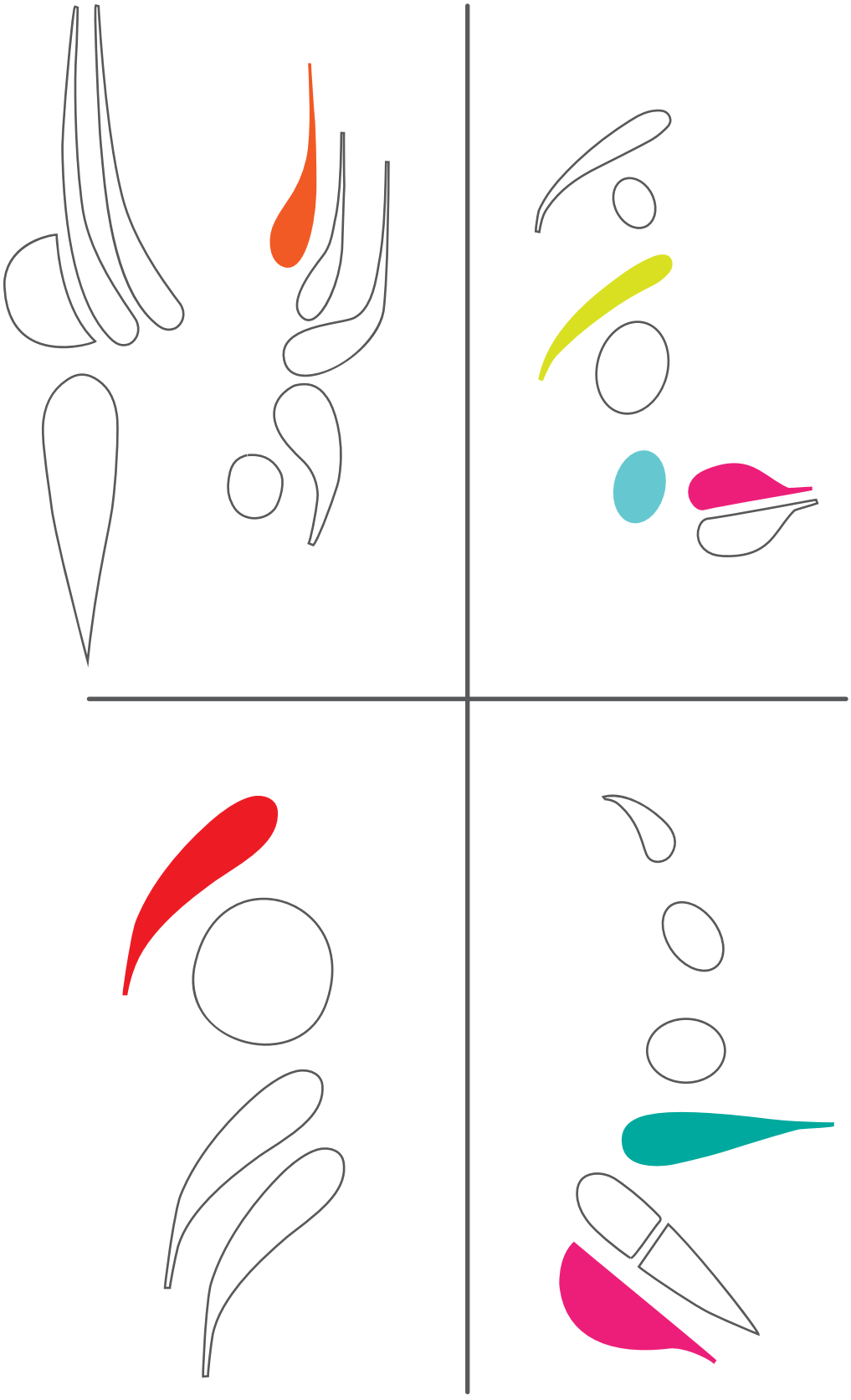
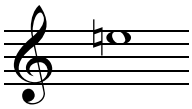
ANOTHER HIGH D



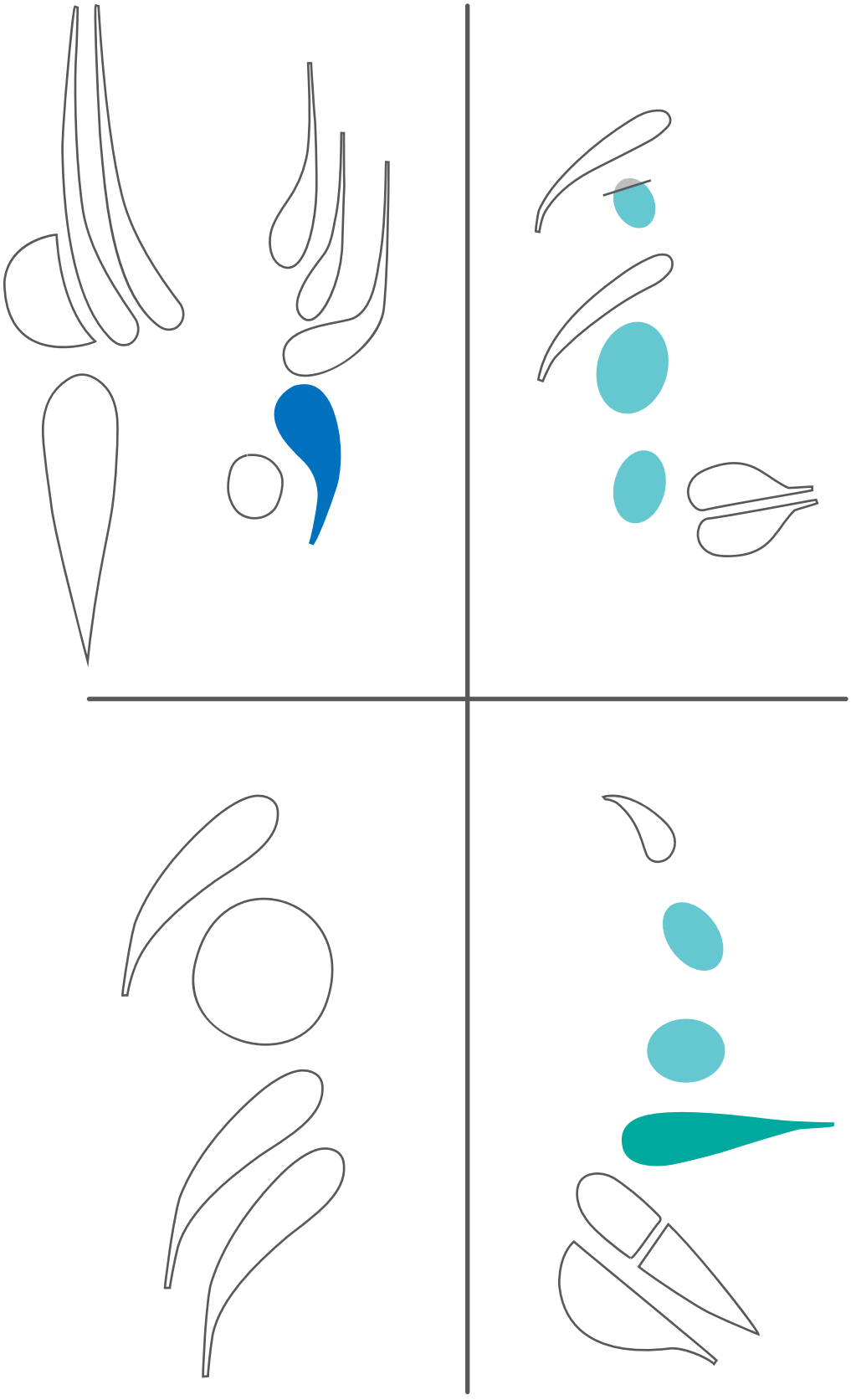
FULL HIGH E♭

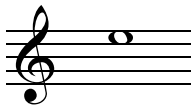


SHORT HIGH E♭

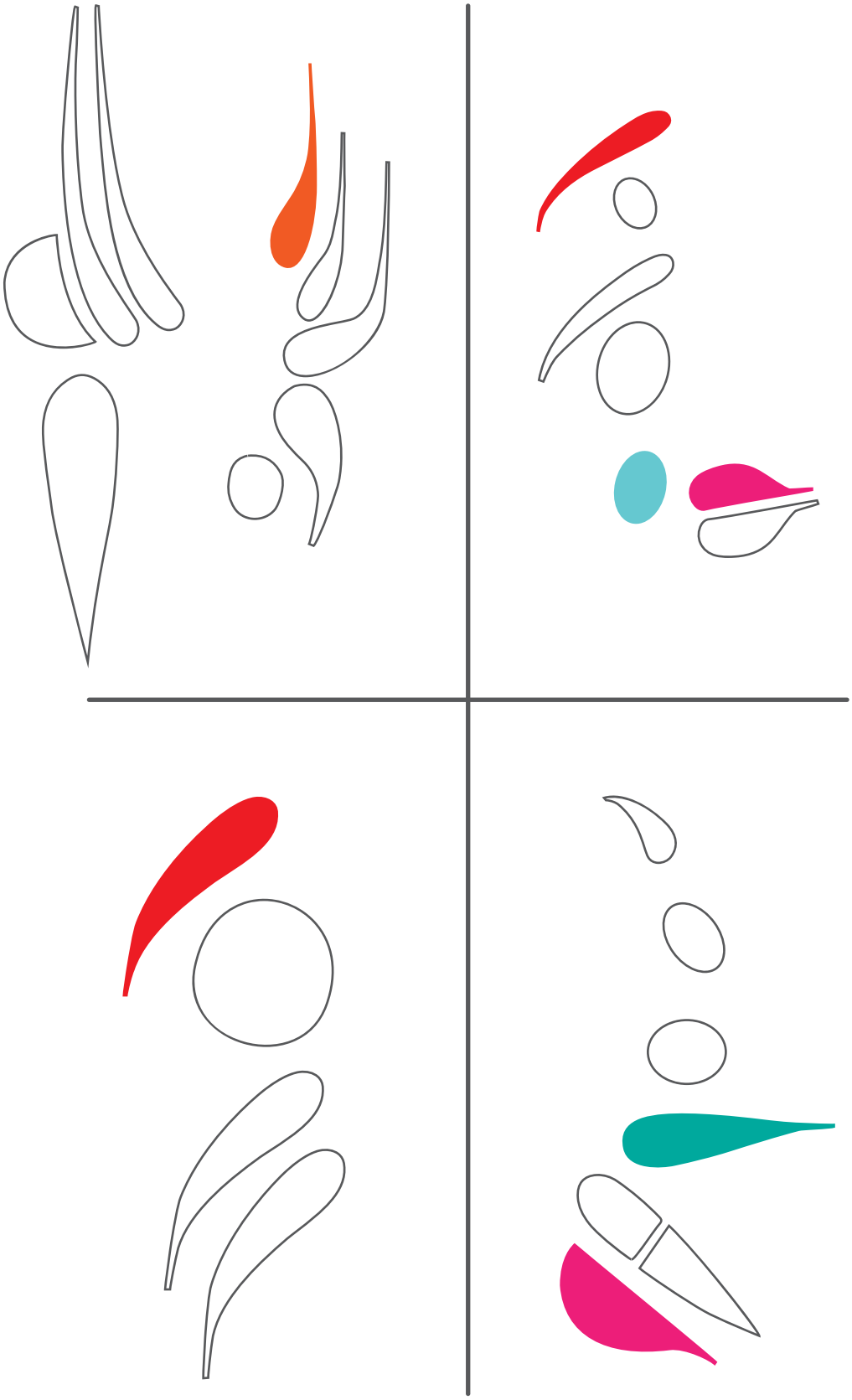


FULL HIGH E

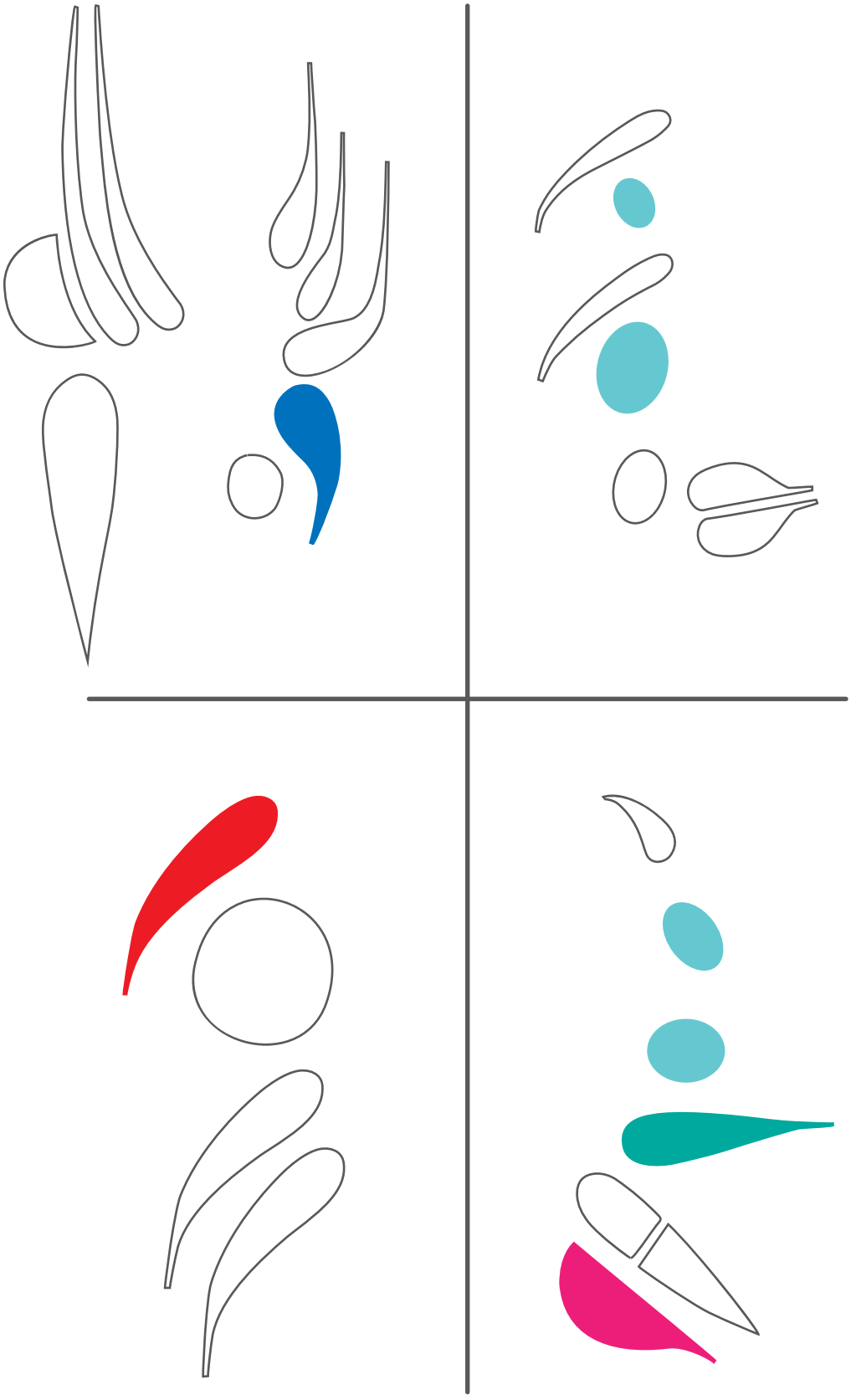
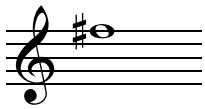




SHORT HIGH E



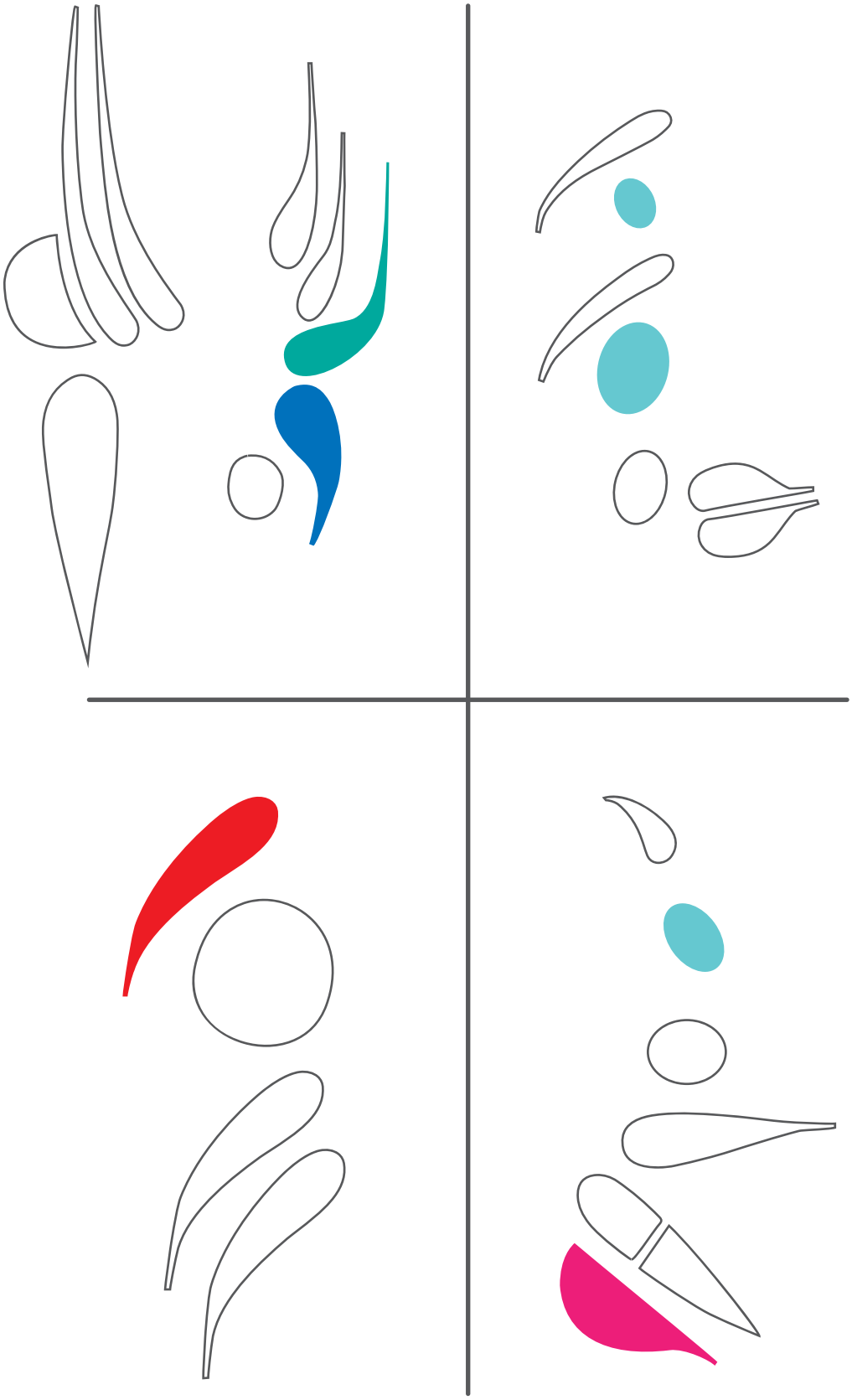
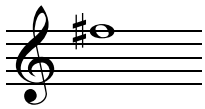
JOLIVET
HIGH F



HIGHEST F#

I use this fingering when ascending.

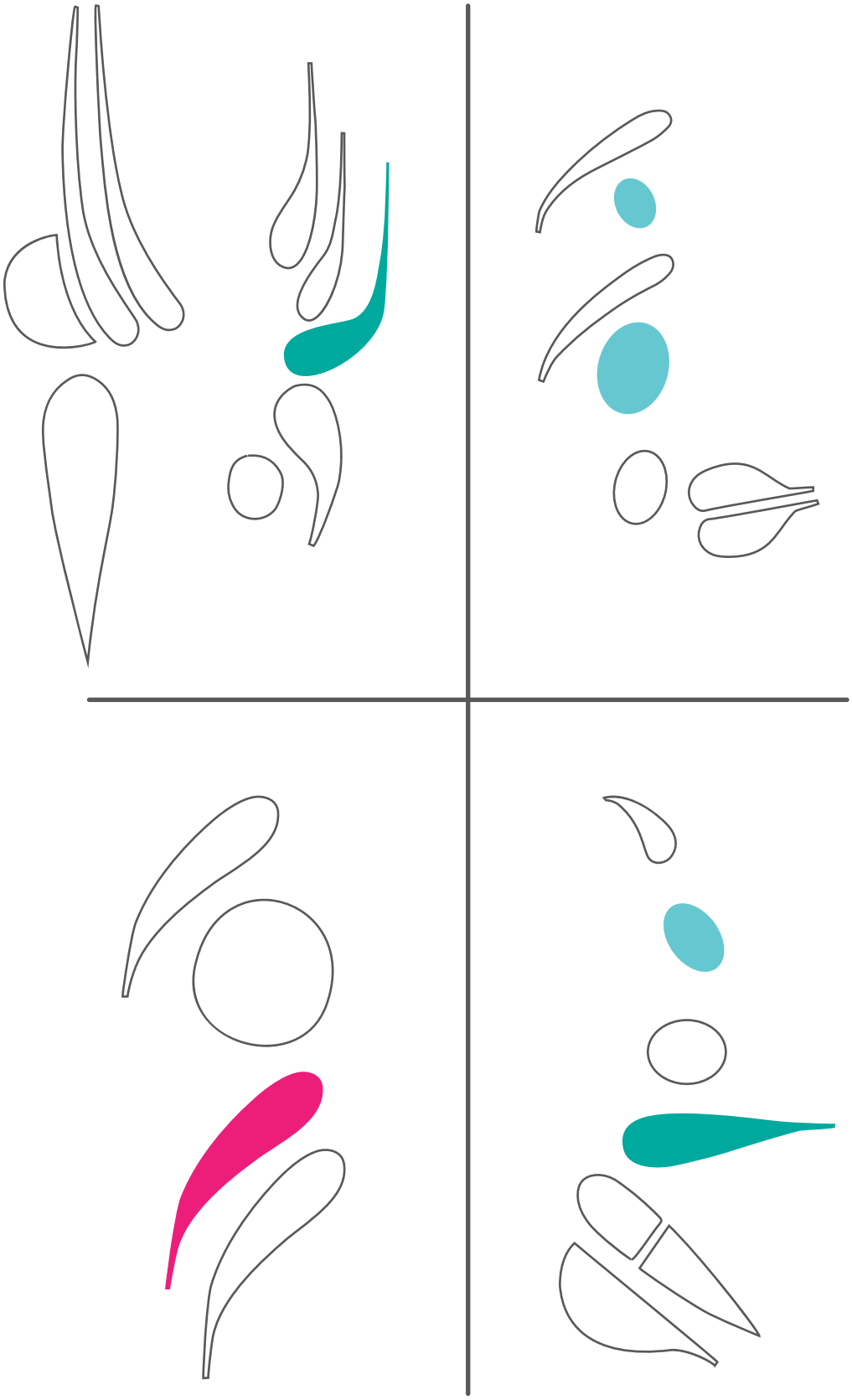
Tends to be a bit flat.

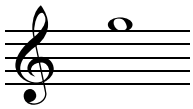


HIGHEST F#

I use this fingering when descending.

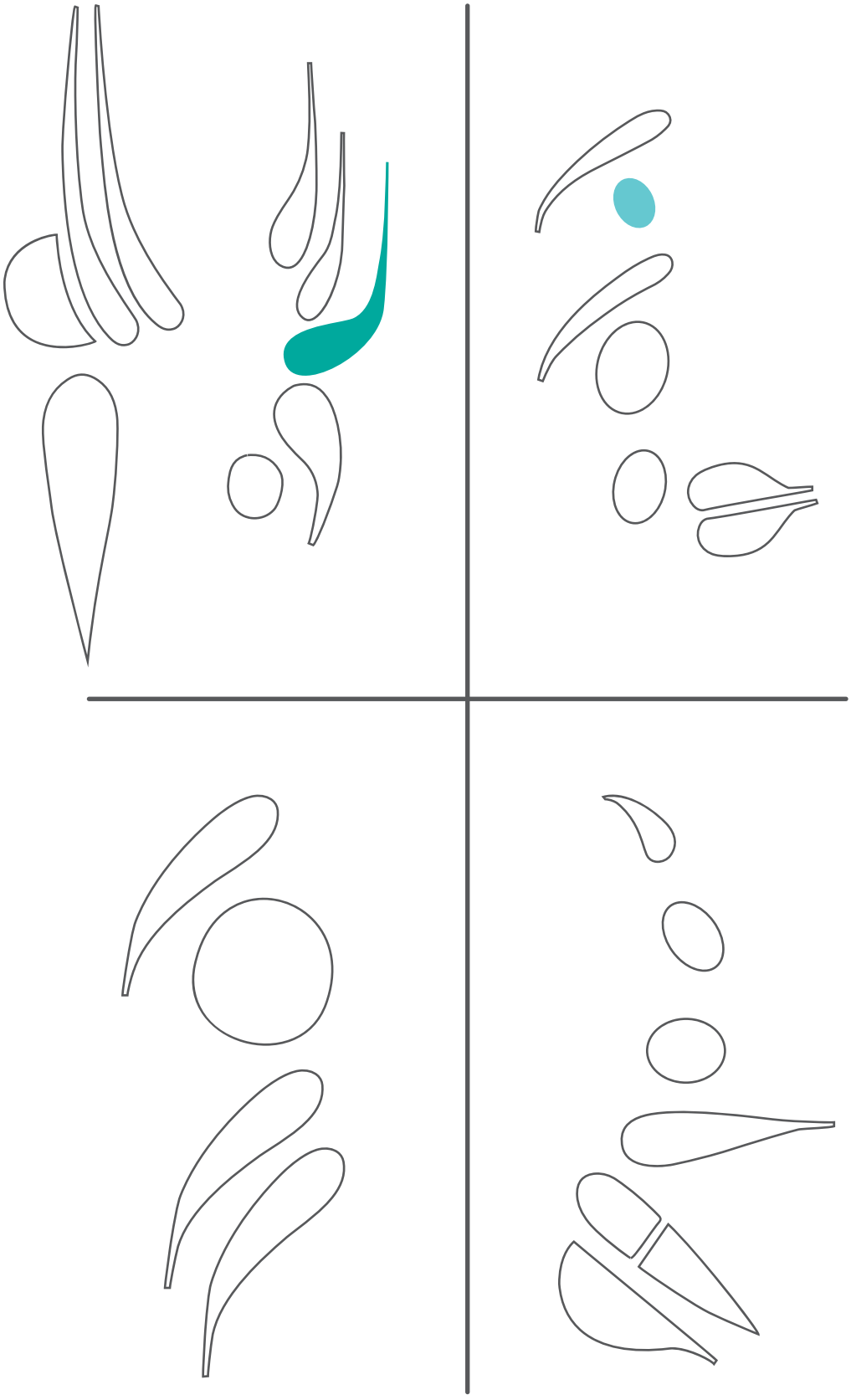
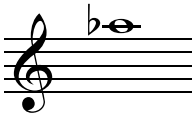
Tends to be a bit sharp.



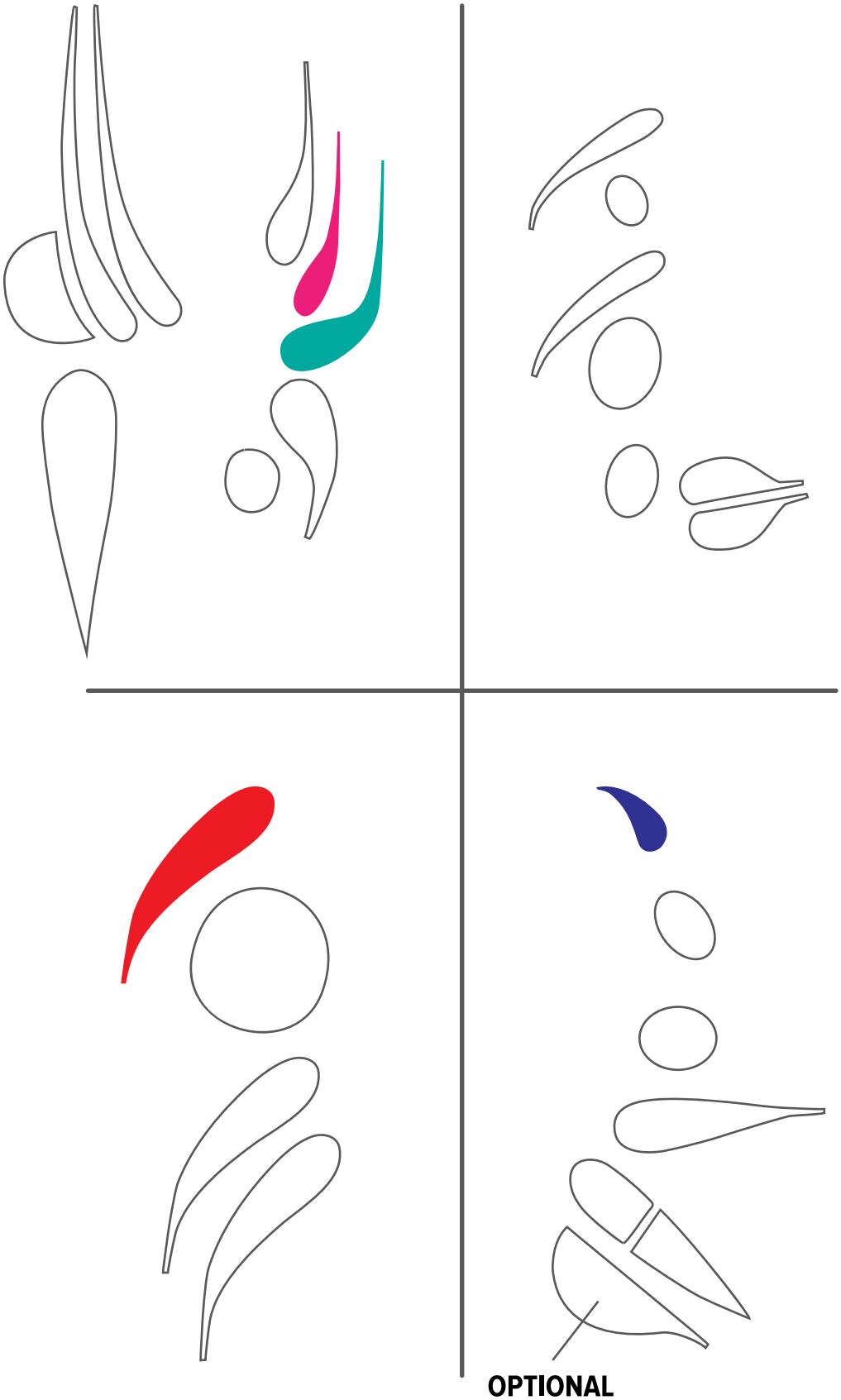


HIGHEST G

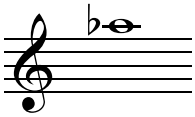
Tends sharp.

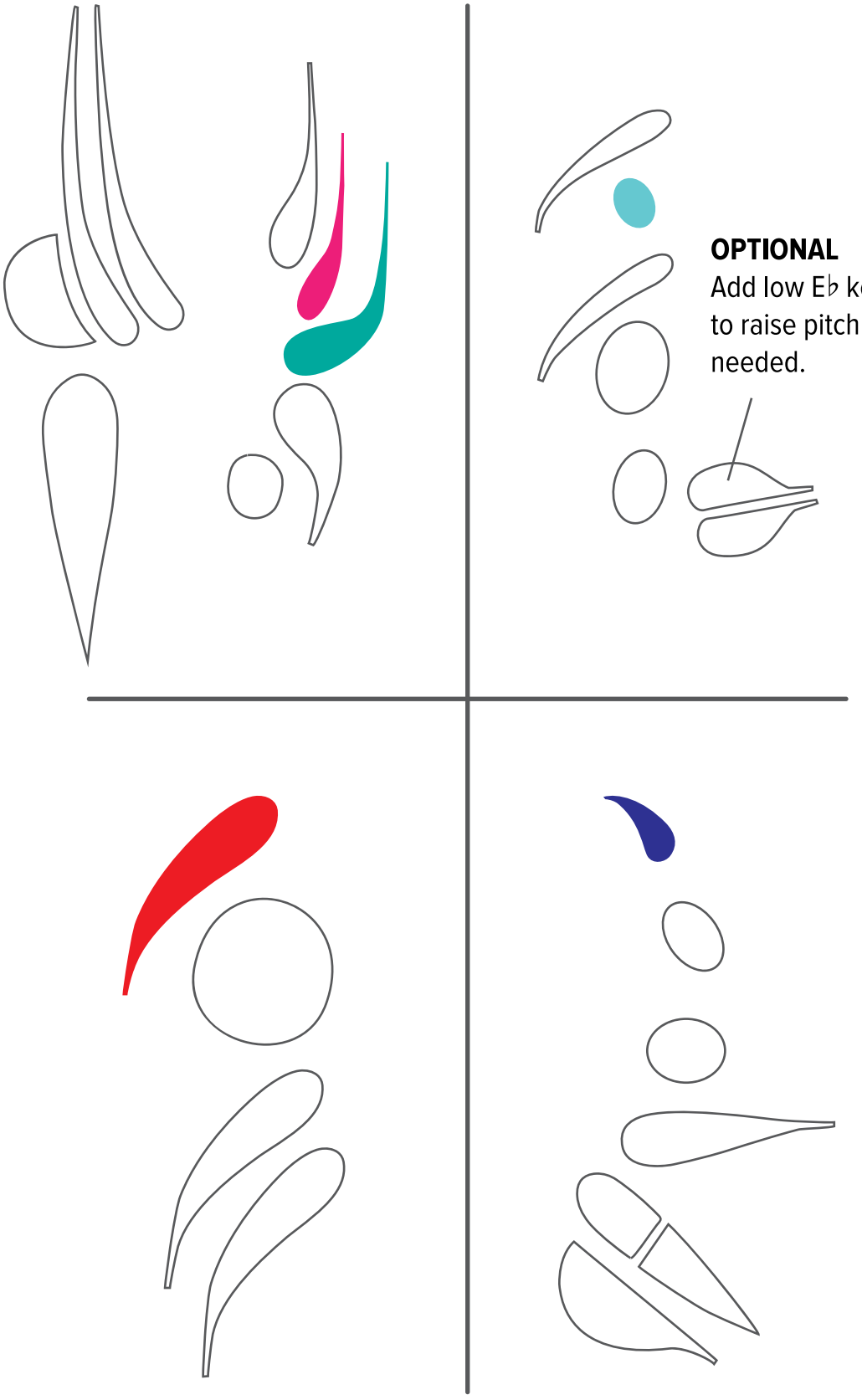


HIGHEST A♭



OPTIONAL

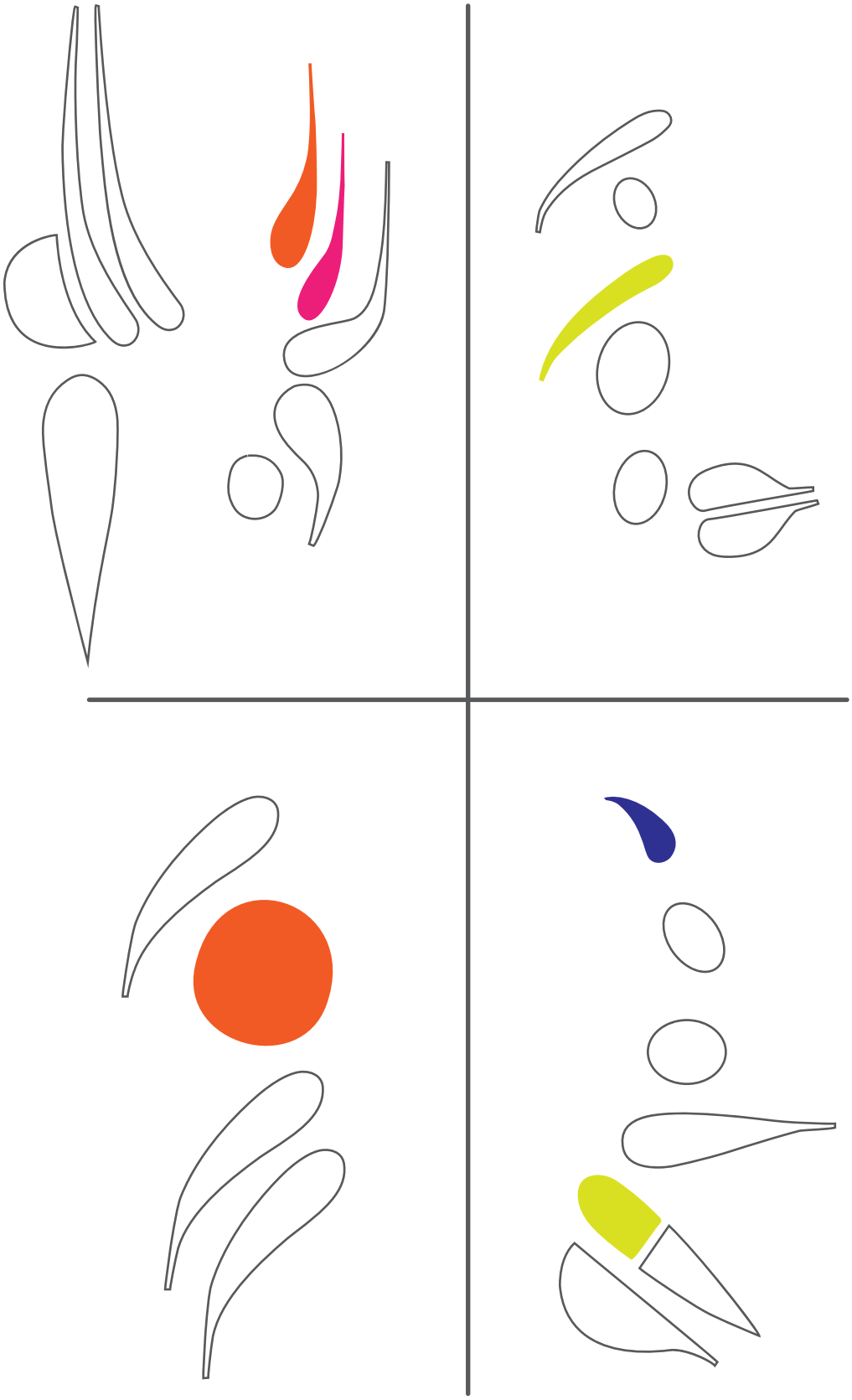
Add A♭ to raise pitch if needed.

ANOTHER HIGHEST A♭



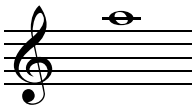
OPTIONAL
Add low E♭ key to raise pitch if needed.

HIGHEST A*

Tends slightly sharp.



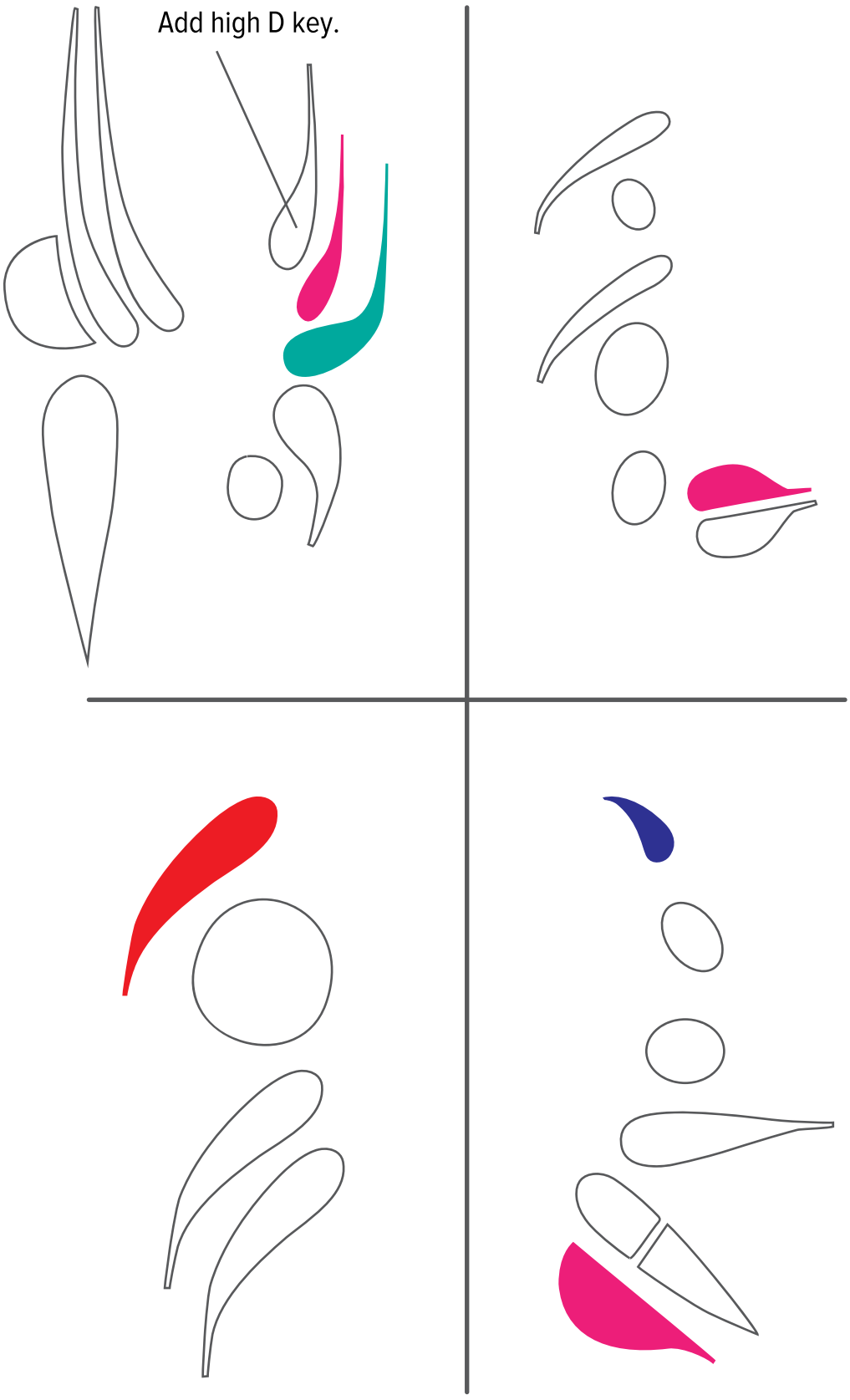
*Thanks to David A. Wells

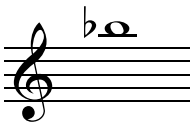


HIGHEST A

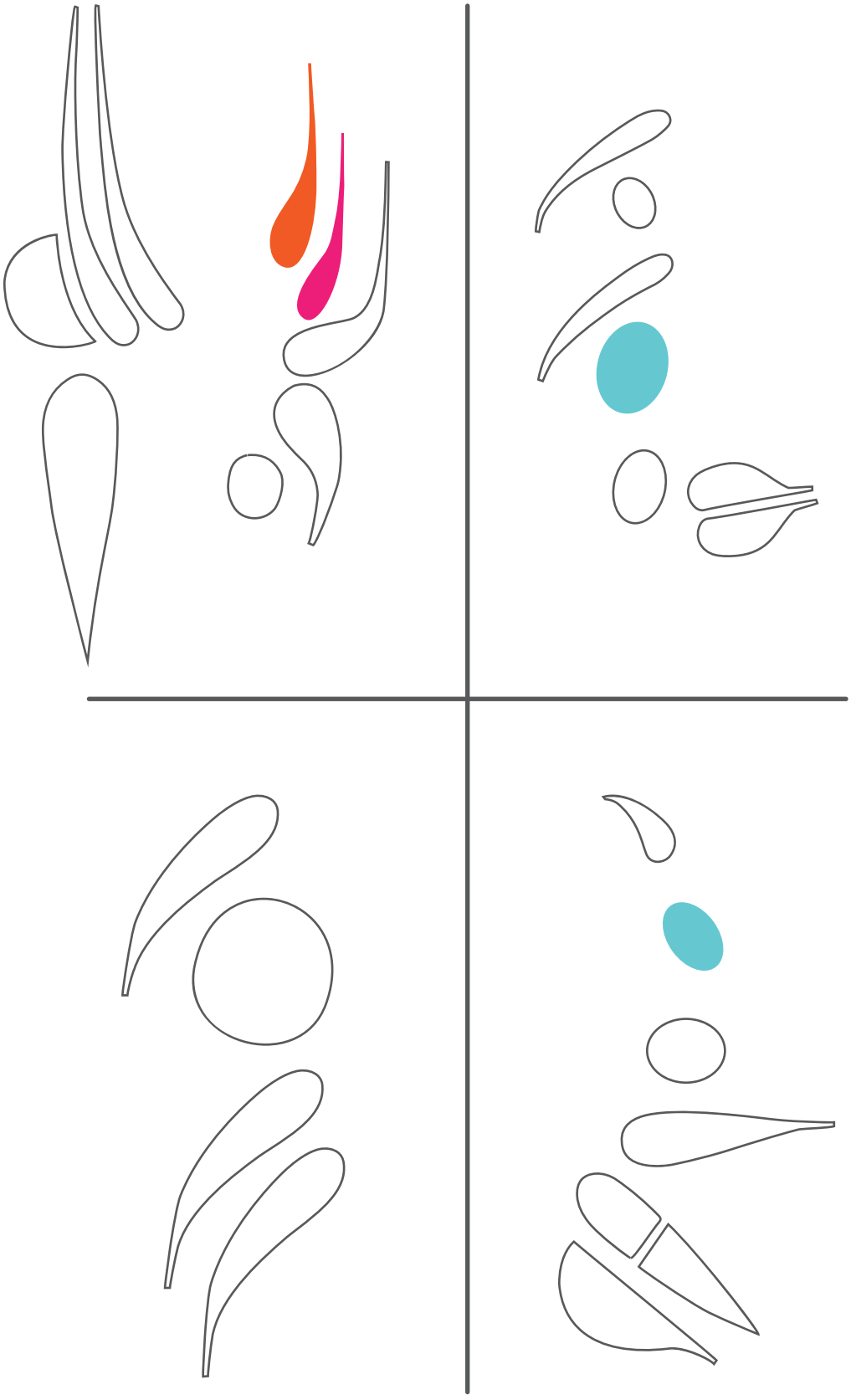
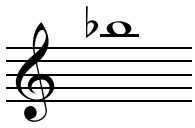
Tends quite flat.

OPTIONAL
Add high D key.

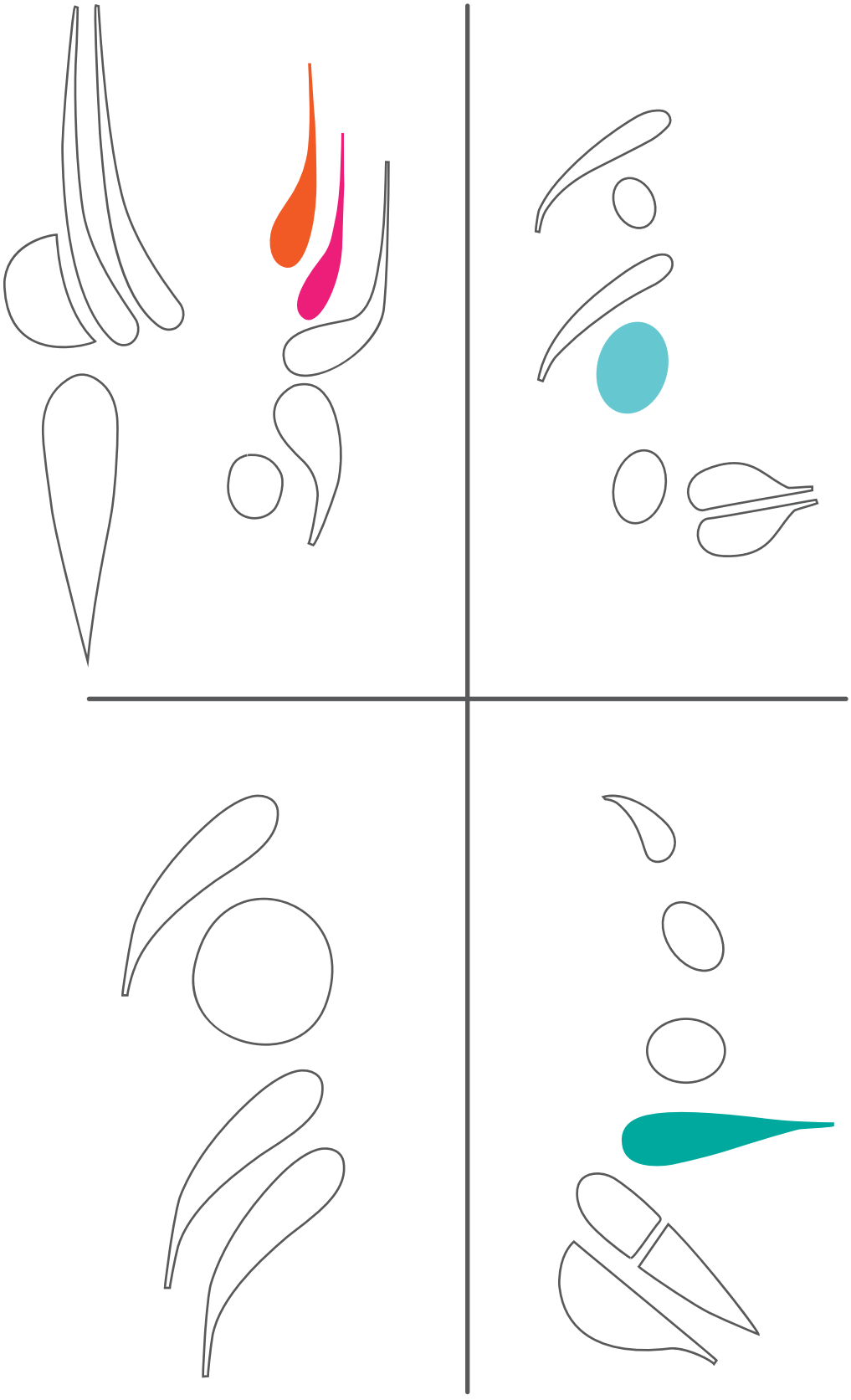


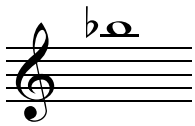


HIGHEST B♭

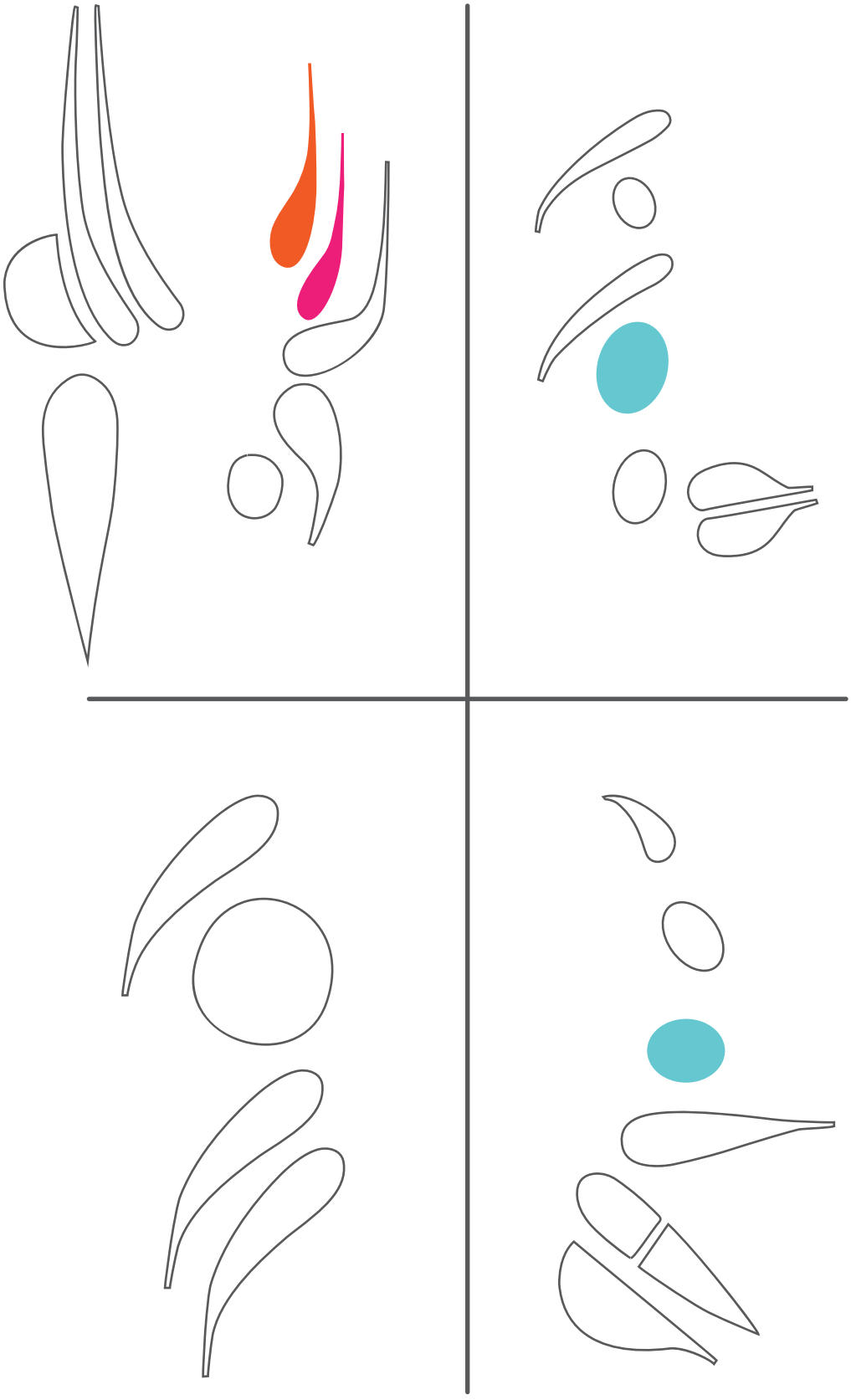


ANOTHER HIGHEST B♭

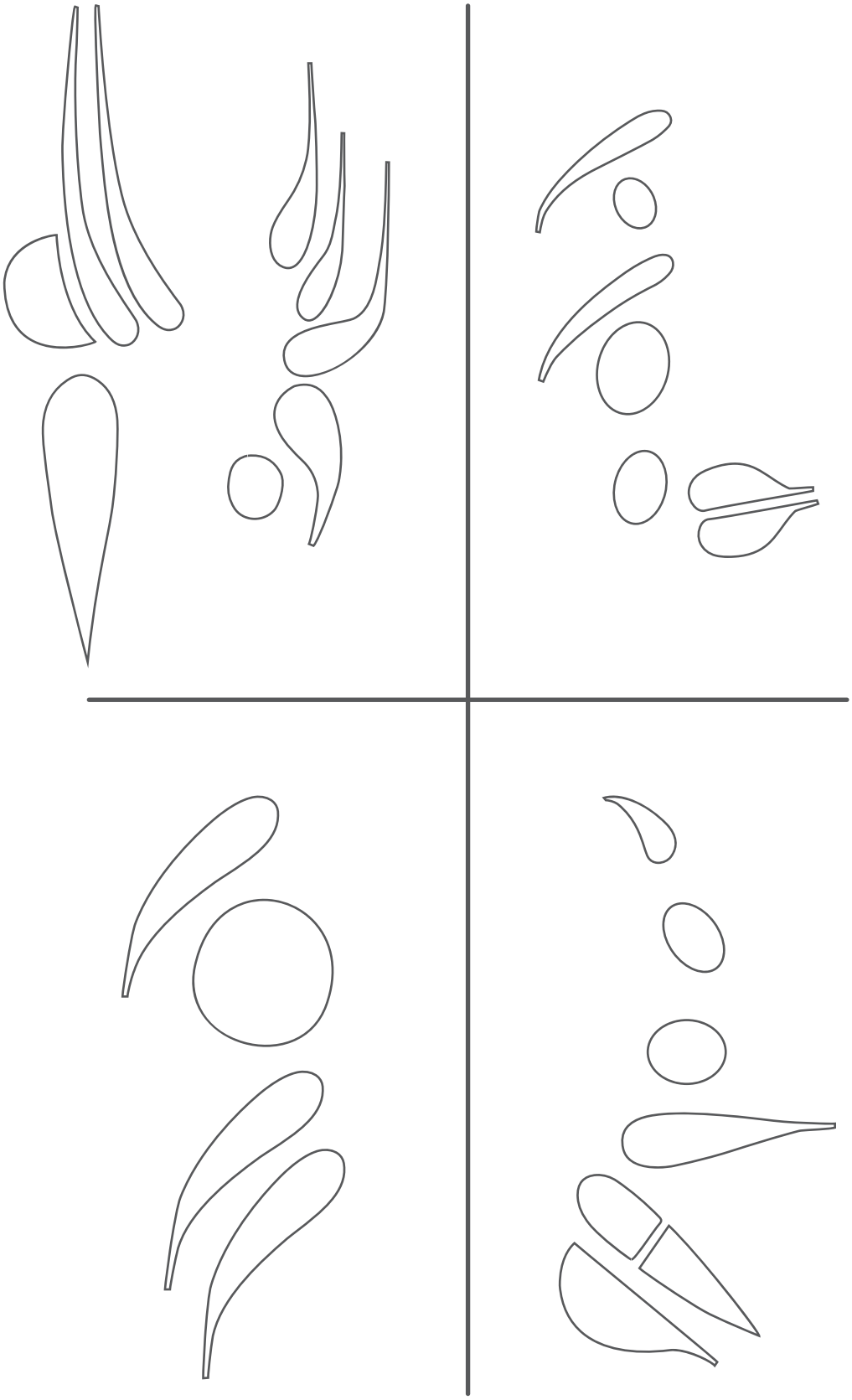




YET ANOTHER HIGHEST B♭



SOLITARY REFINEMENT



Once you start exploring the full range of the bassoon, you will make many discoveries.
Take the time to write them down.