ARKANSAS

BANDS

2025 RAZORBACK DRUMLINE AUDITION PACKET

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the 2025/2026 Razorback Drumline! At the University of Arkansas, we have a rich history of musical excellence. We are happy that you are choosing to spend time learning more about our program.

It is important that you are prepared for auditions. This packet contains the foundation of our system; these tools will be essential for success within the Razorback Drumline. Pre-season preparation of included materials is imperative to our success because we will continually build upon these concepts throughout the season. Not only are we looking for musical aptitude, but we are also looking for good attitudes. Be professional, stay positive, and stay mentally engaged. We understand that the students who are auditioning come from a variety of pedagogical systems, so during auditions, the ability to shift your technique, perspective, and be attentive is of the utmost importance.

Please note that this packet does not contain the "one and only correct technique" of playing marching percussion instruments. It is just the way we choose to play at the University of Arkansas.

Prepare and memorize everything in this packet to the best of your ability. This will factor in your audition standing. There may be changes to exercises and sightreading at auditions, so be ready to adjust on the fly when presented with changes or personal feedback.

Have a backup plan. Look at the music for other instruments BEFORE the audition day. If you only prepare the snare packet and get cut, you are unlikely to make another section while sight reading against other performers who have prepared extensively and auditioned for a different section all day.

We learn a new halftime show every game – sometimes every week for many weeks in a row. Show music also has the potential to change at the last minute, so being adaptable during auditions will show your ability to keep up with the fast paced learning and edits we experience during the season.

If you cannot make it on audition day or must leave early, please email cmschere@uark.edu so you have a chance to audition for your preferred section(s). We can do individual front ensemble auditions earlier in the day if you have to leave early or we can set up a series of video auditions for battery candidates who have to miss. Please note that recorded auditions will have higher standards than live auditions due to the ability to have multiple takes. Individual auditions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When do I need to arrive at auditions?

Please check the most updated schedule for specific questions about when auditions will begin and end. Arrival and departure times may depend on what sections you are auditioning for.

What should I expect at auditions?

Students auditioning for the Razorback Drumline will be separated by instrument section (more details on this are below). Staff, student staff, and section leaders will be running exercises, giving feedback, seeing how those auditioning are using the given feedback to adapt and improve, and switching students between sections as the day continues. Expect ALL sections to make cuts. Cuts will begin early in the day to give students a chance to audition for other sections as soon as possible. Again, if you are competitive in a section and you end up getting cut later in the day, it will be more difficult to make a different section where other students have been working longer if you have not prepared their music. This is why having a backup plan (or three) is important. At any point during the auditions, you may be asked to demonstrate something as an individual. This is not meant to humiliate or embarrass you, but to instead allow us to see how you do when you're on the spot. You may be asked to play because we want to use you as an example of how to do something correctly!

Will any sections be auditioning together, or will they all be separate?

Throughout the day, snares and tenors may be together or separate depending on the number of auditionees. Basses, cymbals, and front ensemble will be 100% separate from other sections. In the unlikely event that a section is set early, they may begin working on technique and exercises to get a head start on the Fall 2025 season, but we will not play together as a full battery during auditions.

What should I prepare?

On audition day, our goal is to go through every exercise in this packet, so you should prepare everything in it as extensively as possible. You should also work on any basic fundamentals of marching technique that you know (even if your first preference is being in the front ensemble).

How should I prepare?

By using a diligent practice schedule. Don't try to procrastinate and cram everything the day before! Your muscles need time in order to build what is necessary to be successful at this

audition. Play in front of a mirror and compare what you see to the images in the technique sections on this packet. Your focus needs to be geared towards relaxed and pain-free technique so that you gain endurance and strength without injuring yourself. Practice slowly and meticulously on large muscle groups before you work on speed. It is imperative to have chops in order to be able to contribute to the overall group, but chops are worth nothing if you are not producing an appropriate and characteristic sound. We expect our students to use a metronome during every individual practice session. While it is a tool to develop your muscle memory and improve your internal timing, the metronome should not be relied on. Instead, it should be used to internalize pulse within the player so they are independently grounded in a consistent sense of timing.

What should I bring with me to auditions?

This packet, a pencil, a pair of your own sticks, a pair of your own mallets, athletic attire (shorts and tennis shoes), a water bottle/water jug, EARPLUGS, and a great attitude.

I haven't marched in a very long time or I have never marched before. How much does marching weigh in auditions?

Some, but not much. If you can keep your feet in time while moving, playing, and maintaining good posture, then that will do. The internet is a great resource for learning basic marching fundamentals.

What technique are you looking for?

No matter the instrument, sound quality and musicianship are the most important aspects of being in the Razorback Drumline. At the beginning, we primarily want to see that you are playing through the drum or keyboard with relaxed, yet controlled strokes. Please refer to the next few pages for in-depth technique for specific instruments.

What will get me a spot on the line?

Well prepared music, adaptability, flexibility, and a healthy outlook. Being in the Razorback Drumline will require regular attention, commitment, and dedication for us to be as successful as possible. This is a team activity, and after the competitive aspect of auditions is over, we will be a tightly-knit group of musicians that hold each other accountable by being the best humans and percussionists we can be.

I'm a veteran and this music is new. Will I be expected to know any music from the old packet?

We may (or may not) pull music from the old packet when the season starts depending on the musical needs of the group, but that music will be passed out without any extra expectations from veterans.

I'm a veteran and this music is new. Will my spot be safe if I can't learn this music on time?

We trust our veterans to uphold a higher standard of expectations than new members because of their previous knowledge and experience granted from being in the group previously. If a veteran is not upholding those standards, then the spot will be rightfully given to someone that is.

BATTERY TECHNIQUE

The battery is one of two sections of the drumline (the other section being the front ensemble). Although there are skill sets that can travel between the two sections, there are some major differences that require explanation and understanding in order to be able to use the battery technique we require in the Razorback Drumline.

Approach

We don't stress every member of the group looking exactly the same while playing because we take into consideration that each individual is built from a unique anatomical standpoint. Our overarching philosophy is that instead of telling the players what to do, we let them play how they are comfortable playing (to an extent) and, if needed, tell them what not to do. Obviously, there will be guidelines but in the end, we want the player to feel comfortable while playing. That being said, players will naturally approach the technique the same way and will inherently end up looking similar if they sound the same. If someone's technique is inhibiting them from achieving the desired sound, then we will make adjustments.

Sound

We prioritize musical phrasing and dynamics: we aim for a sound that is a full, warm tone that isn't choked off. The word "resonance" can be applied to all aspects of drumming. To create a full sound, we must allow the drum to resonate. To allow the drum to resonate, the drumhead must resonate. To allow the drumhead to resonate, the sticks must resonate. If you are causing sounds that match our sound identity out of your instrument, you are more than likely approaching it the way we are aiming for.

Each individual has to create a good sound while also keeping blend and balance according to the rest of the section in mind. You have to be able to use your ears equally as well as your hands. Not only do you have to evaluate your sound actively and constantly, but you need to be able to blend that sound within your section and subsequently within the ensemble. This takes ears that can hear everything in the environment you're in and a brain that is capable of making subtle adjustments that enable you to fit into – and contribute to – the ensemble sound.

The first step in achieving this is to make sure you are producing even sounds between your hands and playing in the proper zones. The sticks have a pitch of their own and if you hold them too tightly you will inhibit them from resonating, therefore choking off the sound. The drum heads also need to resonate in order to produce good sounds. This is achieved by playing with a

good touch. Touch simply refers to the amount of pressure you apply to the implement in your hand. For the most part, we talk about making the stick “feel heavy” by having a “light touch” to get a characteristic sound. This is achieved by having even pressure throughout the fingers and the hand on the stick. The stick will vibrate (breathe) in your hand as a result of the impact. We control this with different strokes.

Timing

Timing is an integral concept for the battery. As a whole, the battery must be predictable with their tempo to allow the rest of the ensemble to have an anchor to listen to and play with. Each individual is responsible to be able to play in time so the battery has no variance. Be excellent with your timing for the rhythms to be mathematically accurate (there will always be exceptions). When you play something, play as if your audience is a computer that will transcribe your every note. Always practice with a metronome! Building good internal time is just as important as building chops. As an individual, you should practice perfect tempo, so that as an ensemble, we can practice perfect alignment.

Feel

Many of our techniques are dictated by the feel*:* The feel of the music, the feel of the sticking patterns, the feel of the visual responsibilities, etc. Players should be relaxed but deliberate. We are looking for the best sound with the greatest ease, or in other words - efficiency. We use an ergonomic and anatomy-based approach to movement. Your body’s joints, muscles, and tendons all have specific ranges of motion, and we therefore utilize this knowledge to play as efficiently as possible. It is also acceptable (and recommended) to feel the music you are playing. It is easier to convey the intent to the audience if they can see you expressing emotions while performing. Monitoring one’s posture is also much more important than people think. Your neck, shoulders, arms, and hands should all be relaxed and there should be no unnecessary tension anywhere in your body. Any tension can lead to less resonance, therefore negatively affecting the sound (and potentially causing pain and injury within your body).

The Height System

We will typically reference five primary heights (this is subject to change depending on different musical needs within exercises and show music).

- *pp*: 1”
- *p*: 3”
- *mp*: 6”
- *mf*: 9”

- *f*: 12”
- *ff*: 15”

Grip and Stroke Types

It is important that the drum be at the right height for you. For snares and tenors: from your elbows down to your hands, there should be a slight downward angle. From your hands down to the bead of the stick, there should also be a slight downward angle. We want the fulcrums to be as low as possible without breaking the hand from a neutral position. For basses: your forearm should be as parallel to the ground as possible.

For all drums, the thumb will be across from the index finger, but sometimes we will relax the index finger and allow the leverage to be shifted to the middle fingers, depending on the application and context. The rest of the fingers should wrap naturally around the stick. They should not leave the stick, but they should be loose and relaxed.

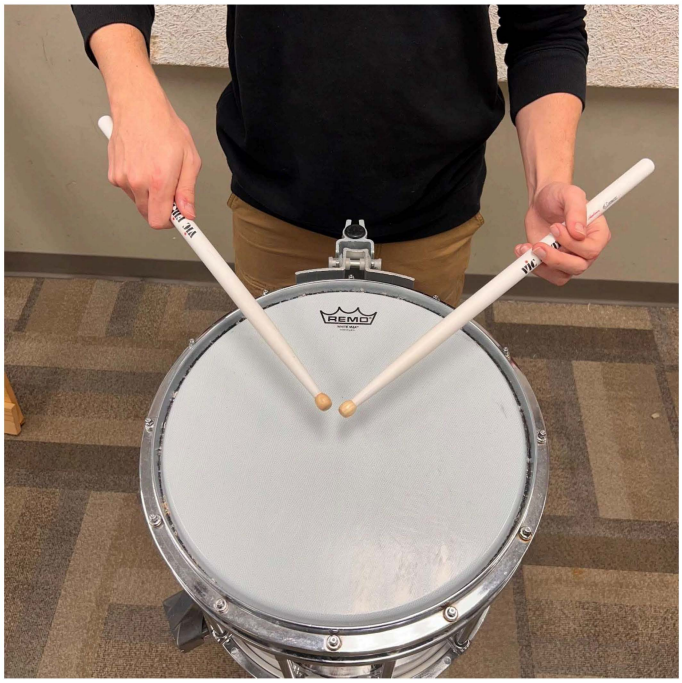
The stroke will lead with the fulcrum and initiate from the wrist, but it is not isolated to just the wrist. The arm and fingers will move naturally when different muscle groups are needed. Using the arm, wrist, and fingers in conjunction allows you to utilize the full range of muscles, from the big power muscles to the small, fast, twitch muscles. The stroke should have velocity.

The main stroke types are full strokes (rebound), down strokes, taps, and up strokes. The full and taps are essentially the same strokes at different dynamics. With these strokes, the rebound should be the same speed as the stroke and the stick will return to the point of initiation (hence “rebound”). With a down stroke, the stroke should feel the same as a full stroke prior to hitting the drum. After contact, the wrist motion should stop to cause the stick to not rebound back to the initial height. The drummer should avoid squeezing the fingers to stop the stick as this will cause a change in sound. The upstroke is the reverse; it begins with the same stroke as a tap and then after contact with the drum, the stick is rebounded and the wrist motion returns the stick to a greater height than it began with. Again, the less variation in hand shape and pressure on the stick, the less variation in sound.

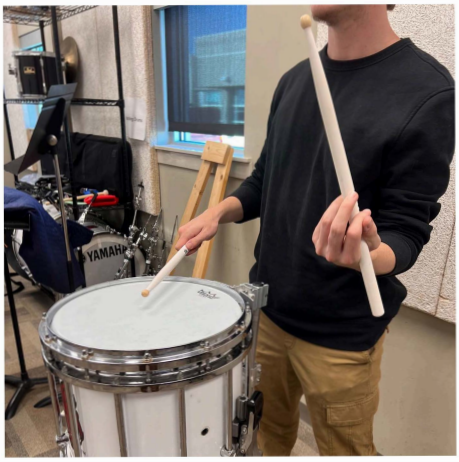
SNARE DRUM REFERENCE IMAGES

Set Position

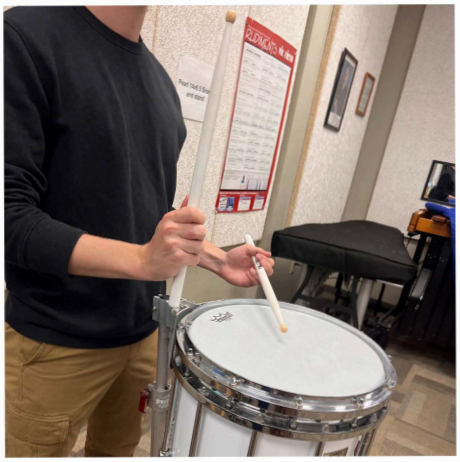
Sticks Out Position



Wrist Turn



Left



Right

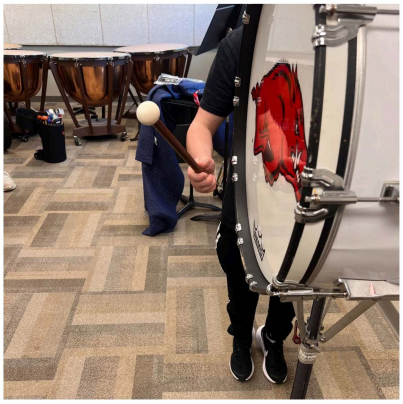
Both

Always make sure the stick/wrist is above the rim by using the two-finger rule.

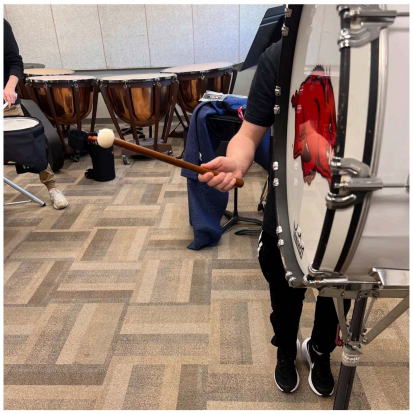
BASS DRUM REFERENCE IMAGES

Set

Sticks Out



The Razorback Bassline uses a combination of rotation and wrist break.



Muffle Technique

Rim Placement

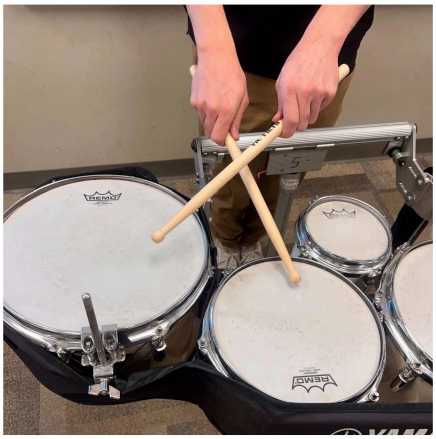
TENOR DRUM REFERENCE IMAGES

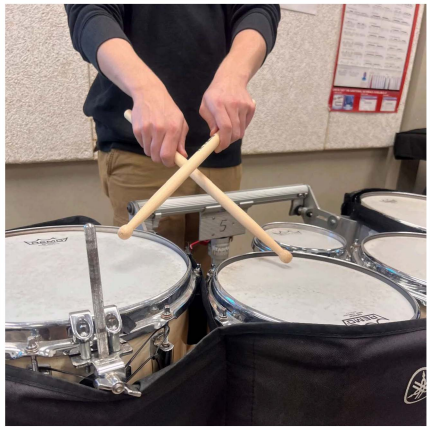
Sticks In/Wrist Turn

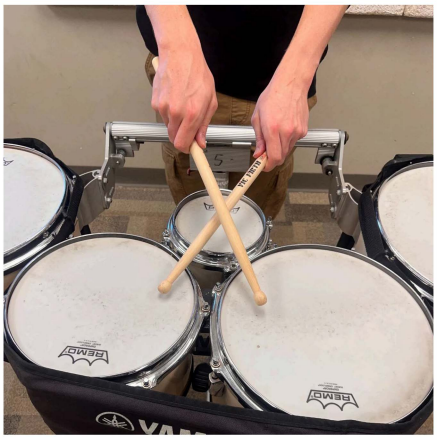
Sticks Out

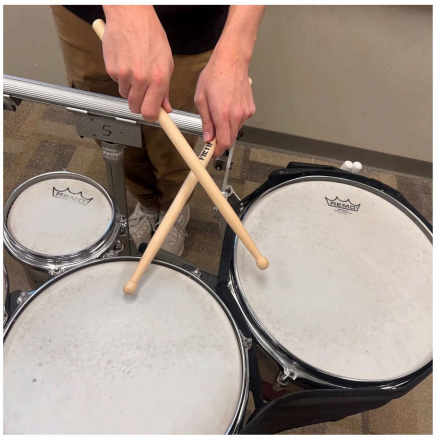
Crossover Technique

Stick Over Stick

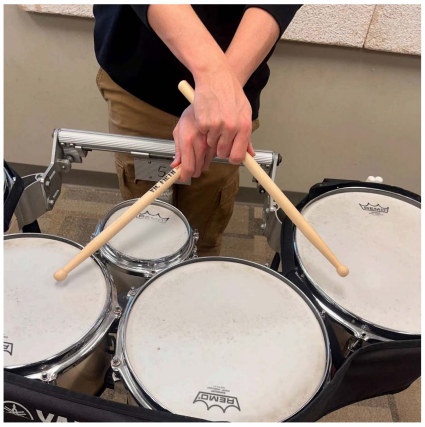




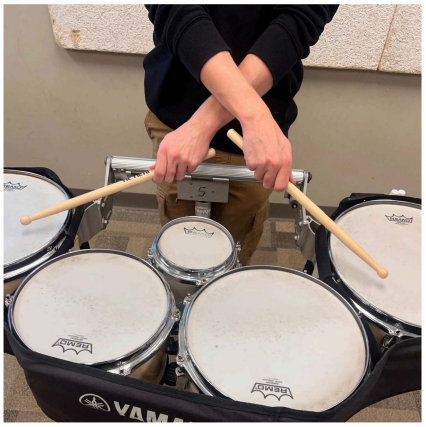




Wrist Over Wrist



Arm Over Arm



CYMBALS TECHNIQUE

This section is dedicated to explaining the way that the Razorback Drumline approaches playing the cymbals. Although the cymbals are a subsection of the battery, they require a completely different technique than playing a drum.

Posture is slightly forward with the weight of your body being distributed 60/40 between the platforms of the feet and the heels.

Positions

Orchestral**:** The cymbals are held in a relaxed position around the midsection of the body with the forearm parallel to the ground. It should look similar to how a concert cymbal would typically be played.

Standard**:** This is a marching specific position that involves the cymbals being held vertically near the head. Your thumbs should be around eye level and the space between the cymbals should be around 2-4 inches. This is a more strenuous position than orchestral, so be sure to maintain your core strength and keep the cymbals level.

Sounds

Crash**:** A bright resonating sound created when both cymbals hit each other. The edge of the right cymbal strikes 2 inches inside the edge of the left cymbal and pushes the cymbals into each other, creating a slight flam to avoid air pockets.

Horizontal Crash**:** Prep occurs on the quarter note or half note before the crash. Prep position is achieved by simultaneously opening the space between the wrists and slightly bending the wrists forward, allowing the edges of the cymbals to rest on the forearms. Arm shape remains the same. This movement also positions the edge of the right cymbal 2 inches inside the edge of the left cymbal's "contact point". In one motion, the right cymbal drives into the contact point which pushes the cymbals into each other, while the right arm continues to extend forward until the slightest bend of the elbow is achieved. There is a slight displacement when the cymbals meet–the right cymbal sits slightly forward of the left cymbal. Contact is initiated from the right wrist and the follow-through/crash comes from the right palm. Upon playing the crash, the left cymbal has returned to horizontal, and the extended right arm is pulled back to horizontal. The amount of physical force applied determines the dynamic.

Vertical Crash**:** Prep occurs on the two quarter notes before the crash. The first quarter note brings the cymbals to the "A" position. Similar to the horizontal crash prep, A position is achieved by simultaneously opening the space between the wrists while slightly bending the wrists forward. Tops of the cymbals remain 2 inches apart, bottoms of the cymbals are shoulder-width apart. The second prep, "V" position, is the opposite of A: the bottoms of the cymbals are two inches apart and the tops of the cymbals are shoulder-width apart. V is achieved by bending the wrists back. Maintaining the V angles, the contact point is made by slightly adjusting each cymbal until the bottom edge of the right cymbal is 2 inches inside the bottom edge of the left cymbal. In one motion, the cymbals are brought together at the contact point, which pushes the cymbals into each other, continuing the movement back to A. The first quarter note following the crash returns to V and the second quarter note returns to vertical position. Contact is initiated from the wrists while the follow-through/crash comes from the palms. The amount of physical force applied determines the dynamic.

Crash Choke: A bright and short sound is created when both cymbals hit each other. They are immediately choked off by pressing the cymbals into the midsection of the body.

Horizontal Crash Choke**:** Horizontal crash prep and the horizontal crash choke prep are identical. In one motion, the right cymbal drives into the contact point which pushes the cymbals into each other–essentially bringing the hands back to horizontal. The same displacement of the cymbals for the crash applies to the crash choke. At horizontal, and the crash played, the cymbals are then pressed into the midsection of the body and hugged with the front edges, about 2 inches apart, angled toward the center of the body. Contact is initiated from the right wrist while the follow-through/crash comes from the right palm. The amount of physical force applied determines the dynamic.

Vertical Crash Choke: Vertical crash prep and the vertical crash choke prep are identical. In one motion, the cymbals are brought together at the contact point, which pushes the cymbals into each other and continues moving back to A. The first quarter note following the crash returns to V and the second quarter note is designated to the cymbals' return to vertical position. Maintaining A position, the edges of the cymbals are brought into the front of the armpits and hugged by the biceps and forearms. The top edges of the cymbals are about 2 inches apart. Contact is initiated from the wrists while the follow-through/crash comes from the palms. The amount of physical force applied determines the dynamic.

Press/Crunch**:** A short sound from forcefully pressing the cymbals together with equal amounts of pressure from both hands. There is a slight displacement of the cymbals when placed

together; the right cymbal shifts slightly forward of the left cymbal. Typically played with a 2-inch space in between the cymbals, there is no prep for this implementation. The amount of physical force applied determines the dynamic.

Hi-Hat: A short sound from lightly pressing the cymbals together. The cymbals should be horizontal (with the right hand above the left) while being pressed into the midsection of the body. The right cymbal will rise from the side not pressed against the body and then will collapse onto the lower cymbal, all while the two cymbals are still touching on the side against the midsection.

Sizzle**:** A resonant sound played by loosely, yet forcefully placing the cymbals together. There are equal amounts of pressure from both hands, allowing the cymbals to vibrate on each other. There is a slight displacement of the cymbals when placed together–the right cymbal shifts slightly forward of the left cymbal. There is no prep for this implement–typically played with a 2-inch space in between the cymbals. The force applied determines the dynamic. Fingers hover off of the cymbals to allow optimal sound quality.

Suc**:** A deep and short sound is created by forcefully pulling the right cymbal into the left cymbal. Prep position is defined as the back edge of the right cymbal meeting the back edge of the bell of the left cymbal which remains stationary, maintaining a 2-inch separation of the cymbals. The right cymbal is then placed into the left cymbal and forcefully pulled in against the left cymbal simultaneously.

Sizz-Suck**:** This is the combination of the resonating sound of a sizzle with the short sound of a suck. First playing a sizzle, the right cymbal then extends forward until the back edge of the right cymbal meets the back edge of the bell of the left cymbal. This is the “suck prep position” which remains stationary. While maintaining the sizzle sound, a suck is then played, cutting off the sound. Another form of a sizz-suck is referred to as a “sizz-press,” which combines a sizzle and press.

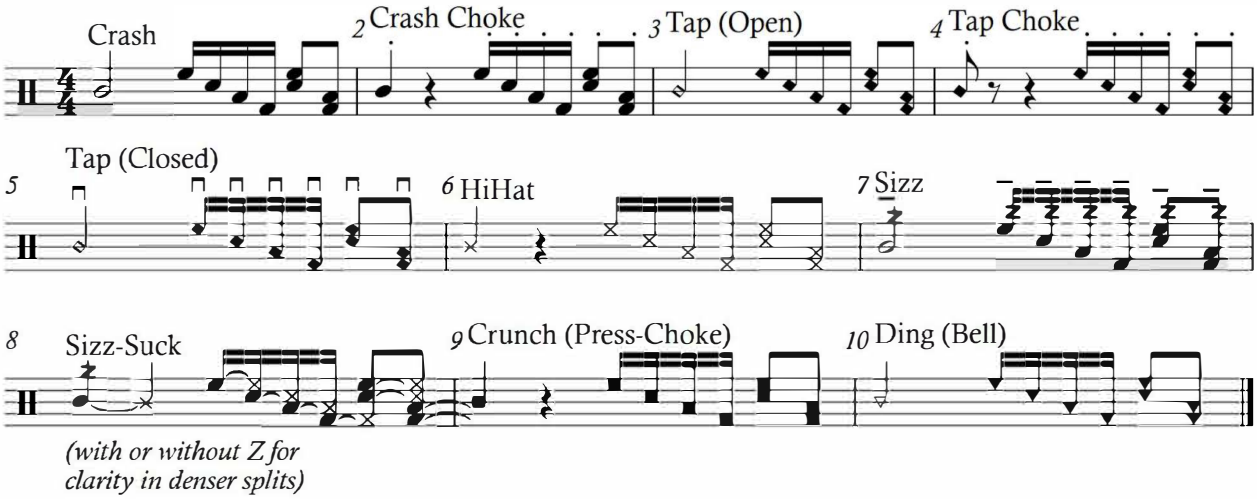
Closed-Tap**:** A short sound from“tapping” the edge of the left cymbal with the inside of the right cymbal while both cymbals are placed against the midsection of the body. It is played by hugging the cymbals with the front edges, 2 inches apart, angled toward the center of the body. The left cymbal is stationary while the right cymbal, remaining against the body, strikes the edge of the left. The left cymbal makes contact 2 inches inside the edge of the right cymbal. The amount of physical force applied determines the dynamic.

Open-Tap: Similar to a tap, but with the cymbals placed off of the body so the sound resonates. It is played by having the left cymbal at a stationary position while the right cymbal strikes the left. The left cymbal typically makes contact about 2 inches inside the edge of the right cymbal. The prep angle/height of the right cymbal determines the dynamic. Fingers hover off of the cymbals to allow optimal sound quality.

Tap Choke: A bright and short sound made by the right cymbal striking the edge of the left cymbal, which is then immediately choked off by pressing into the midsection of the body. Similar to ting position, but instead the right cymbal is pushed slightly forward of the body with the right wrist bending back toward the forearm. Cymbals are parallel. The front edge of the right cymbal then rotates toward the front edge of the left cymbal, making contact 2 inches inside the edge of the right cymbal. Both cymbals are then pressed into the body, at tap position, cutting off all sound. The prep angle of the right cymbal determines the dynamic–the prep angle will never be beyond parallel with the left cymbal.

Zing: A bright and resonant sound from scraping the edge of one cymbal across the ridges/grooves of the opposite cymbal. It is generally played by having one cymbal make contact at the edge of the opposite cymbal's bell, which then scrapes along the radius of the opposite cymbal. Fingers hover off of the cymbals to allow optimal sound quality. The amount of physical force applied determines the dynamic.

RDL Cymbal Notation



Cymbals Notation Key

This notation key eliminates the need to write out different definitions in our music.

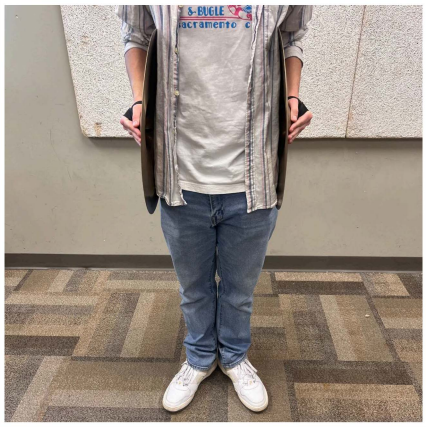
There are 2 main components: the various sounds and the splits. Sounds are defined by using different noteheads. Splits are defined by the positions of the notes on the staff.

We have three splits that are commonly used in our music: A/B (which you've been introduced to already), R/M/B (used for groups of 3s), and H/O/G/S (used for groups of 4s). Each split uses different positions on the staff so there is no risk of confusion from misreading. For example, notice that the "M" in R/M/B isn't on the middle line of the staff; that's because the middle line is for unison notes, so "M" can't be there, or it will get misread.

Each sound has a different notehead. Certain sounds are related in their notations—for example, the notations used for sizzle and sizz-suck are very similar, but they're different enough that you should be able to tell the difference just by looking at them.

Sounds that can occur in multiple positions (e.g. crash can be in orchestral or standard) are assumed to be in the orchestral position. If they are not, the correct position (standard, etc.) will be written above the note or passage in question.

CYMBALS REFERENCE IMAGES



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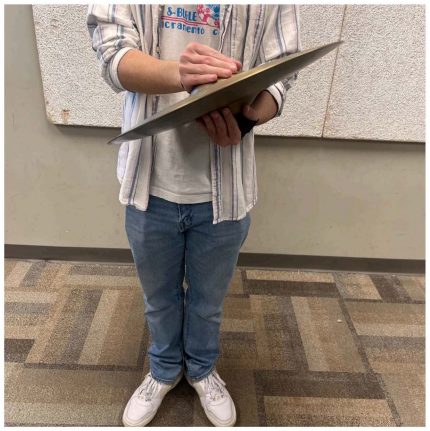
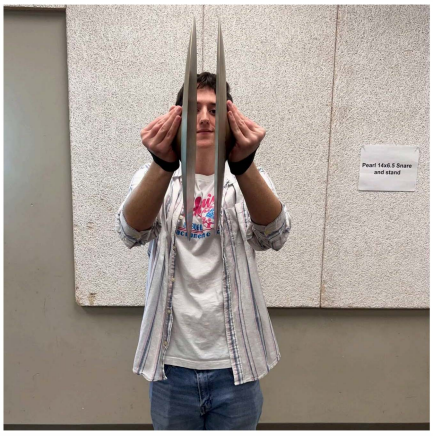
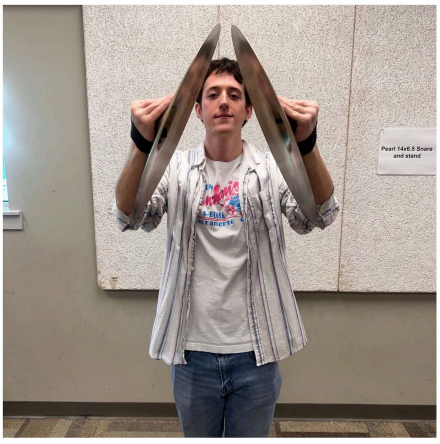


Orchestral



Standard



A Prep

V Prep

FRONT ENSEMBLE TECHNIQUE

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Approach

We don't stress every member of the group looking exactly the same while playing because we take into consideration that each individual is built from a unique anatomical standpoint. Our overarching philosophy is that instead of telling the players what to do, we let them play how they are comfortable playing (to an extent) and, if needed, tell them what not to do. Obviously, there will be guidelines but in the end, we want the player to feel comfortable while playing. That being said, players will naturally approach the technique the same way and will inherently end up looking similar if they sound the same. If someone's technique is inhibiting them from achieving the desired sound, then we will make adjustments.

Sound

We prioritize musical phrasing and dynamics: we aim for a sound that is a full, warm tone that isn't choked off. The word "resonance" can be applied to all aspects of playing the keyboard. To create a full sound, we must allow the keyboard to resonate. To allow the keyboard to resonate, the bars must resonate. To allow the bars to resonate, the mallets must resonate. If you are causing sounds that match our sound identity out of your instrument, you are more than likely approaching it the way we are aiming for.

Each individual has to create a good sound while also keeping blend and balance according to the rest of the section in mind. You have to be able to use your ears equally as well as your hands. Not only do you have to evaluate your sound actively and constantly, but you need to be able to blend that sound within your section and subsequently within the ensemble. This takes ears that can hear everything in the environment you're in and a brain that is capable of making subtle adjustments that enable you to fit into – and contribute to – the ensemble sound.

The first step in achieving this is to make sure you are producing even sounds between your hands and playing in the proper areas of the bars. The bars need to resonate in order to produce

good sounds. This is achieved by playing with a good touch. Touch simply refers to the amount of pressure you apply to the implement in your hand. For the most part, we talk about making the mallet “feel heavy” by having a “light touch” to get a characteristic sound. This is achieved by having even pressure throughout the fingers and the hand on the mallet. The mallet will vibrate (breathe) in your hand as a result of the impact. We control this with different strokes.

Timing

Timing is an integral concept for the front ensemble. As a whole, the front ensemble must play with the tempo given to them from the battery to allow the sound to align at the perspective of the audience. Each individual is responsible to be able to play in time so the front ensemble has no variance. Be excellent with your timing for the rhythms to be mathematically accurate (there will always be exceptions). When you play something, play as if your audience is a computer that will transcribe your every note. Always practice with a metronome! Building good internal time is just as important as building chops. As an individual, you should practice perfect tempo, so that as an ensemble, we can practice perfect alignment.

Feel

Many of our techniques are dictated by the feel*:* The feel of the music, the feel of the sticking patterns, the feel of the visual responsibilities, etc. Players should be relaxed but deliberate. We are looking for the best sound with the greatest ease, or in other words - efficiency. We use an ergonomic and anatomy-based approach to movement. Your body’s joints, muscles, and tendons all have specific ranges of motion, and we therefore utilize this knowledge to play as efficiently as possible. It is also acceptable (and recommended) to feel the music you are playing. It is easier to convey the intent to the audience if they can see you expressing emotions while performing. Monitoring one’s posture is also much more important than people think. Your neck, shoulders, arms, and hands should all be relaxed and there should be no unnecessary tension anywhere in your body. Any tension can lead to less resonance, therefore negatively affecting the sound (and potentially causing pain and injury within your body).

While conveying emotions to the audience while playing in the front ensemble, we typically use a grooving method. Members of the front ensemble do not march or mark time, so this is one of the primary ways of keeping external tempo shown within the section. Grooving is when the members of the ensemble move their head up and down or bend their knees to move their bodies up and down in a slight and relaxed, yet wholly in-time and flush way, communicating to each other where the pulse of the beat is, and expressing performance energy to those watching.

The Height System

We will typically reference five primary heights (this is subject to change depending on different musical needs within exercises and show music).

- *pp*: 1”
- *p*: 3”
- *mp*: 6”
- *mf*: 9”
- *f*: 12”
- *ff*: 15”

Posture

It is important that the keyboard be at a comfortable height for you. A rough guideline is this: With your hands relaxed down by your side, bend at the elbow to place your hands on your keyboard. From there, the elbow down to your hands should have a slight downward angle (30° - 45°). Once you have the correct height for your instrument, your body placement should be such that your upper arms are perpendicular to the ground. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart with your hips over your ankles, your shoulders over your hips, and your head resting naturally over your spine. You should stand roughly 7 inches away from your keyboard (this varies for vibraphones due to the pedal). You should never cross your feet to facilitate movement behind the keyboard, except for when you are playing the upper register of the vibraphone while your right foot needs to be on the pedal. Do your best to look down at your keyboard with your eyes and not your whole head as this will cause tension in your neck and upper back. Your body should be positioned centrally between your hands at all times. Unless instructed otherwise, we strive to play in the center of the bars (directly over the resonators) at all times. In rare cases, if you need to use the edge of the bar, your mallet will be as close to the edge as possible.

Two Mallet Technique

In two mallet technique, the Razorback Drumline Front Ensemble generally uses a middle fulcrum approach. This is subject to change depending on the speed or visual needs within the music. To achieve a middle fulcrum, all fingers should be in contact with the shaft mallet in a comfortable position. Since there is no natural rebound from the bar of a keyboard like there is on the drumhead of a drum, we combine the initiation of all of the fingers, the movement of the wrist, and “complimentary” arm motion to enhance control over the mallet.

The stroke will lead with the fulcrum and initiate from the wrist, but it is not isolated to just the wrist. The arm and fingers will move naturally when different muscle groups are needed. Using

the arm, wrist, and fingers in conjunction allows you to utilize the full range of muscles, from the big power muscles to the small, fast, twitch muscles. The stroke should have velocity.

Two Mallet Stroke Types

The main stroke types are full strokes (rebound/piston), down strokes, and up strokes. In full strokes, the height mallet will return to the point of initiation (hence "rebound"). With a down stroke, the stroke should feel the same as a full stroke prior to hitting the keyboard. After contact, the wrist motion should stop to cause the mallet to not rebound back to the initial height. The musician should avoid squeezing the fingers to stop the mallet as this will cause a change in sound. The upstroke is the reverse; it begins low, and then after contact with the keyboard, the mallet is rebounded and the wrist motion returns the mallet to a greater height than it began with. Again, the less variation in hand shape and pressure on the mallet, the less variation in sound.

The mallet should start directly over the bar you intend to strike, and the relaxed motion led with the fulcrum and initiated from the wrist will lead the mallet directly into the center of the bar. An upstroke should be implemented straight up if the same bar is struck again, and otherwise it should travel in a direct line above the next bar of the next note in the phrase. This is called shifting. Unless otherwise instructed, you should play in the center of the bars, directly over the resonators. When playing in the lower register of the marimba, play slightly off-center to avoid cracking the bars.

Four Mallet Grip

For four mallet grip, we use Stevens Grip. Your hand should be turned on its side as if you were shaking hands with someone in front of you. The inside mallet should be balanced underneath your thumb and over an extended index finger while your middle finger helps hold the inside mallet against your palm. Your thumb should then rest gently on top of your index finger. It is important to remember that your thumbnail should point straight to the sky and while your index fingers are relaxed and pointing straight across your body at one another. The outside mallet is gripped with the back two fingers (ring and pinky) with no more than ¼" of the shaft visible. Please do not pinch your grip or have any tension in it. When setting up to play with four mallets, your arm and wrist should create a straight line that bisects the angle of your mallets. The desire is that all four mallets are in the center of the keys and that your arms are as relaxed as possible.

Double Vertical Strokes in Four Mallet Grip

To perform a double vertical stroke, many of the 2 mallet stroke guidelines are followed. Our double vertical can best be described as a "full stroke" where the mallet begins and ends the playing motion at the maximum height of the dynamic you're playing. First, use your wrist to lift the mallets to a full height. From here, move the mallets through the keys as quickly as possible and then lift the mallets back up using your wrist after completing the stroke. It is important to remember that your grip should not move unless you plan on changing intervals. When playing consecutive strokes at the same interval, maintain a consistent grip pressure the entire time to ensure all four mallets move together as a single unit. Keeping the mallets at the same height during all parts of the stroke will ensure that we hear a perfect quad stop and will avoid unwanted flams.

Single Alternating Strokes in Four Mallet Grip

To exemplify single alternating strokes, we will assume a 13/24 hands together single alternating passage. To properly prepare for this stroke, you will need to lift all 4 mallets to a "half height," equidistant between the bars and the maximum height of your stroke. From there you will rotate mallets 1 and 3 to the maximum height while keeping mallets 2 and 4 at the half height. To properly play the stroke you will use wrist/forearm rotation to move mallets 1 and 3 vertically through the keys. Within the return stroke, mallets 1 and 3 will now be at the "half height with mallets 2 and 4 at the maximum height. The keys to the single alternating strokes are that the mallets always move vertically and that the difference between the half height and maximum height are clear the entire time.

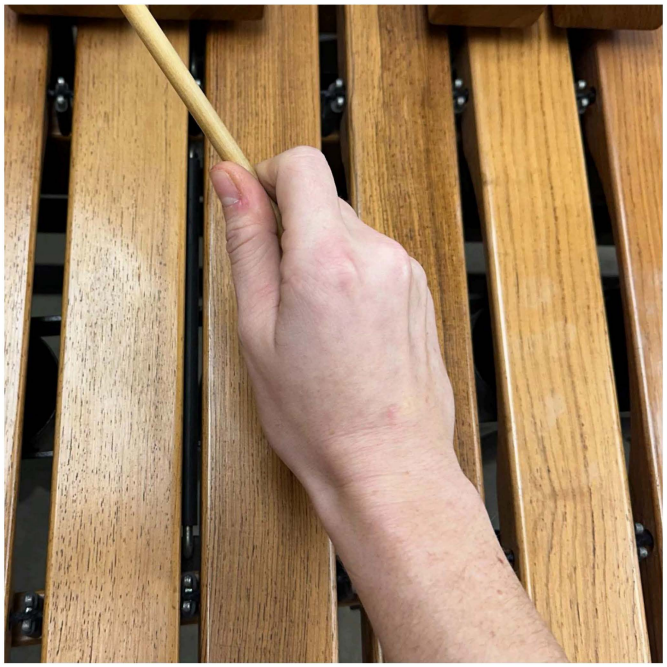
Single Independent Strokes in Four Mallet Grip

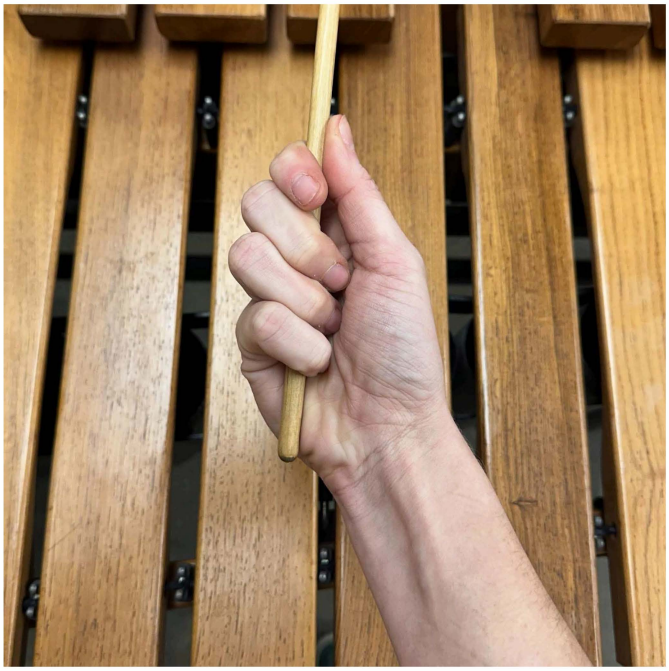
For a single independent stroke where we are considering using any mallet at any point in time, it is assumed that all four mallets start and return to the maximum height. In order to accomplish this approach, you will need to use wrist/forearm rotation. It is okay for the mallet not being used in each hand to move slightly, although we do want to minimize that motion. For example: if I'm going to rotate with mallet 1, mallet 2 should stay relatively close to maximum height during that stroke. It's also important to understand that the mallets should move vertically through the keys and avoid a curved path. If we will be using the single independent stroke to play with just our inside mallets (2 and 3) then our approach will change slightly. We will use full strokes for mallets 2 and 3, and mallets 1 and 4 will stay at the half height the entire time. In this approach, mallets 1 and 4 should be as still as possible while we use rotation to move mallets 2 and 3.

Double Lateral Strokes in Four Mallet Grip

For a double lateral stroke, the approach will be dictated by tempo. For this example, we will assume a left hand out-to-in lateral (mallets 1-2). When starting at slower tempos, the control of a double lateral stroke has three distinct motions. Starting from the maximum height of the dynamic, the first motion uses rotation to move mallet 1 vertically through the key while mallet 2 stays at the top of the stroke. The second motion uses rotation to move mallet 2 vertically through the key while returning mallet 1 to the half height. The final motion is to return both mallets back to the maximum height. Note that mallet 1 will get back to the maximum height first, but it's imperative that mallet 2 also returns back to that same height to re-achieve the correct maximum height as well. As the tempo increases and you need to play double lateral strokes faster and faster, these three motions should transform into one fluid motion. In this faster motion, be sure that both mallets start from and return to the maximum height for each stroke. Also, listen to the two played notes and make sure that they sound identical in articulation.

FRONT ENSEMBLE REFERENCE IMAGES





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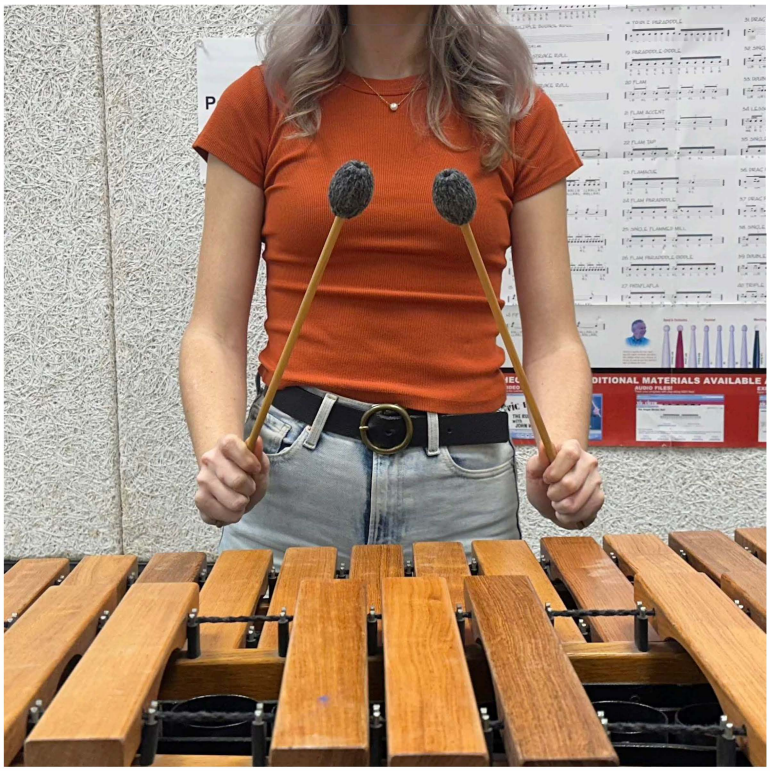

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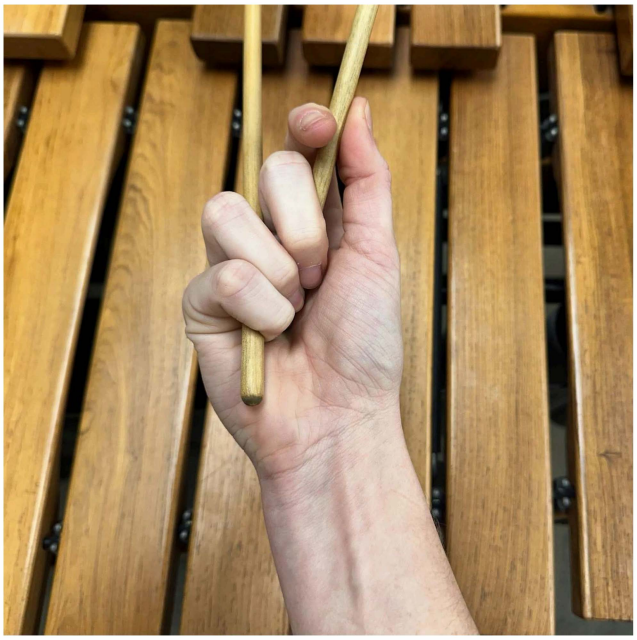
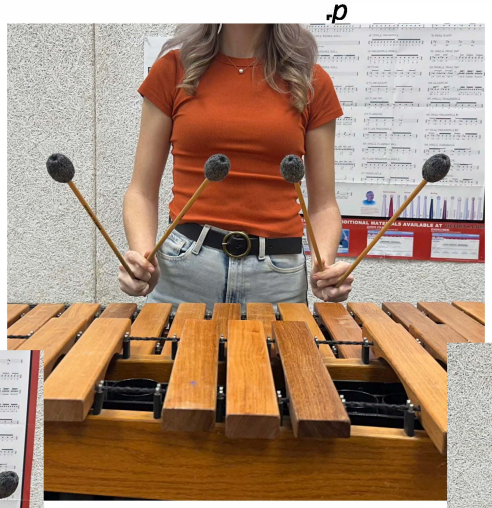
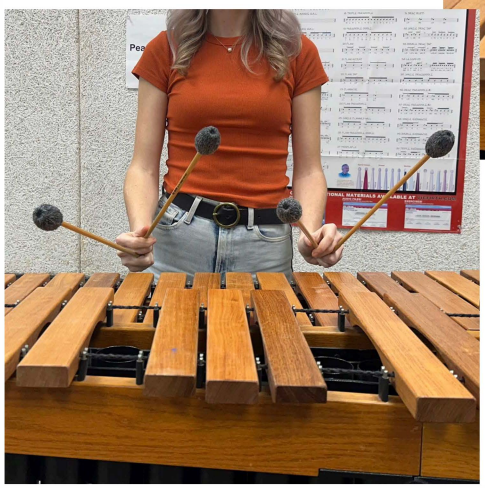


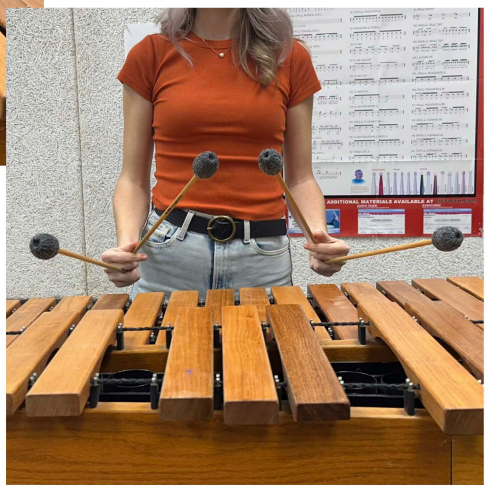
Four Mallet Grip

.p





Four Mallet Set Position



1/3 Prep

Insides Prep

Snare Packet

1. Snare Cover Sheet
2. 8816 Snare Variations (be prepared to play with dynamics and added accents)
    Tempos: 100-160bpm
3. Stick Control
    Tempos: 85-110bpm
4. Hot Spring
    Tempos:110-145bpm
5. 16th note grid (accents, diddles, flams, combinations)
    Tempos: 85-110bpm
6. Triplet grid (accents, diddles, flams, combinations)
    Tempos: 110-130 bpm
7. Short Short Long (be prepared to play with dynamics and added accents)
    Tempos: 130-180 bpm
8. Base12 paradiddles
    Tempos: 80bpm+
9. Horology
    Tempos: 165+
10. Flammus
    Tempos: 80-110bpm
11. Martian
    Tempos: 136+

(Sight Reading)

Expect to move your feet to everything except Martian Mambo
Expect to make changes on the fly

We are looking for students with solid timing, solid technique, and solid feet, but most importantly, we are looking for students with a **great attitude** who can take feedback and adapt quickly.

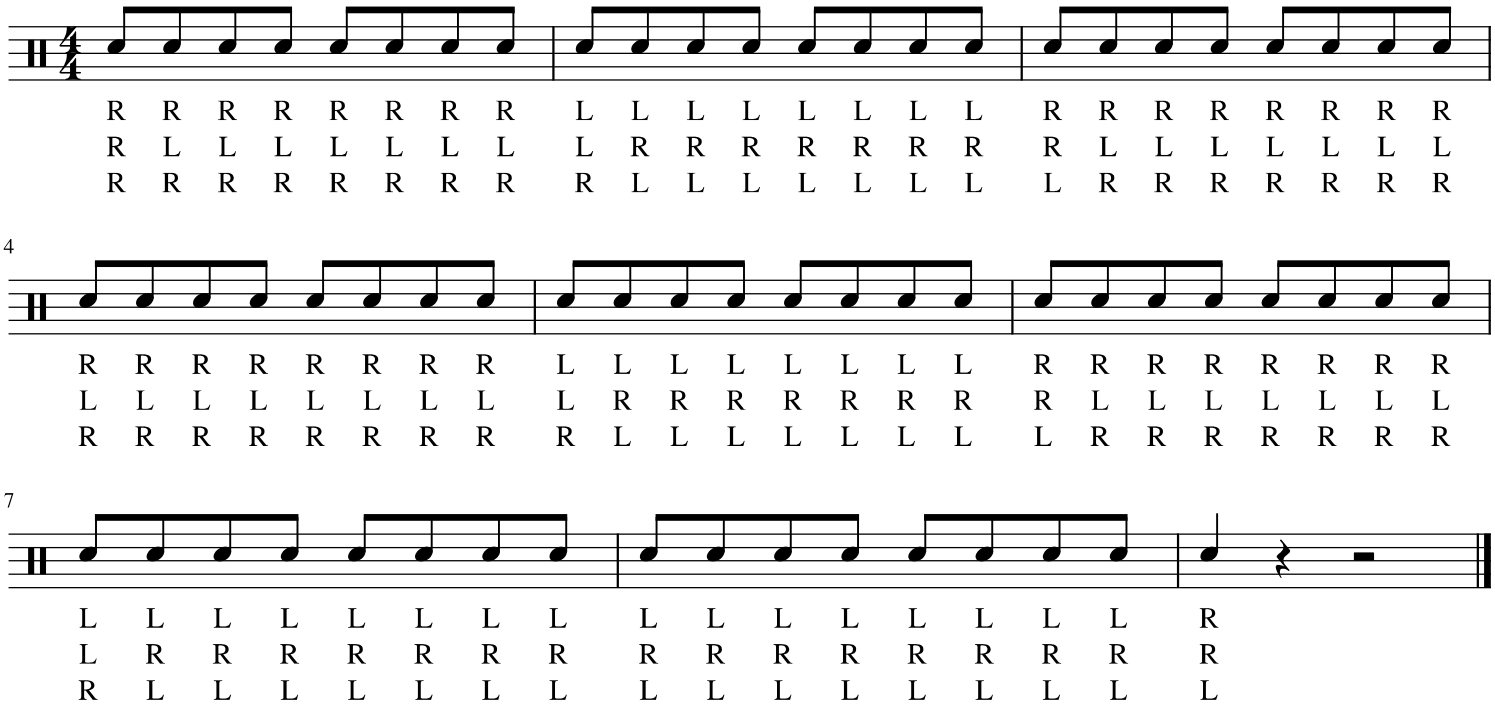
8/8/16

snare variations

George Washington

♩ = 132

Repeat each sticking once; play each 2 times total

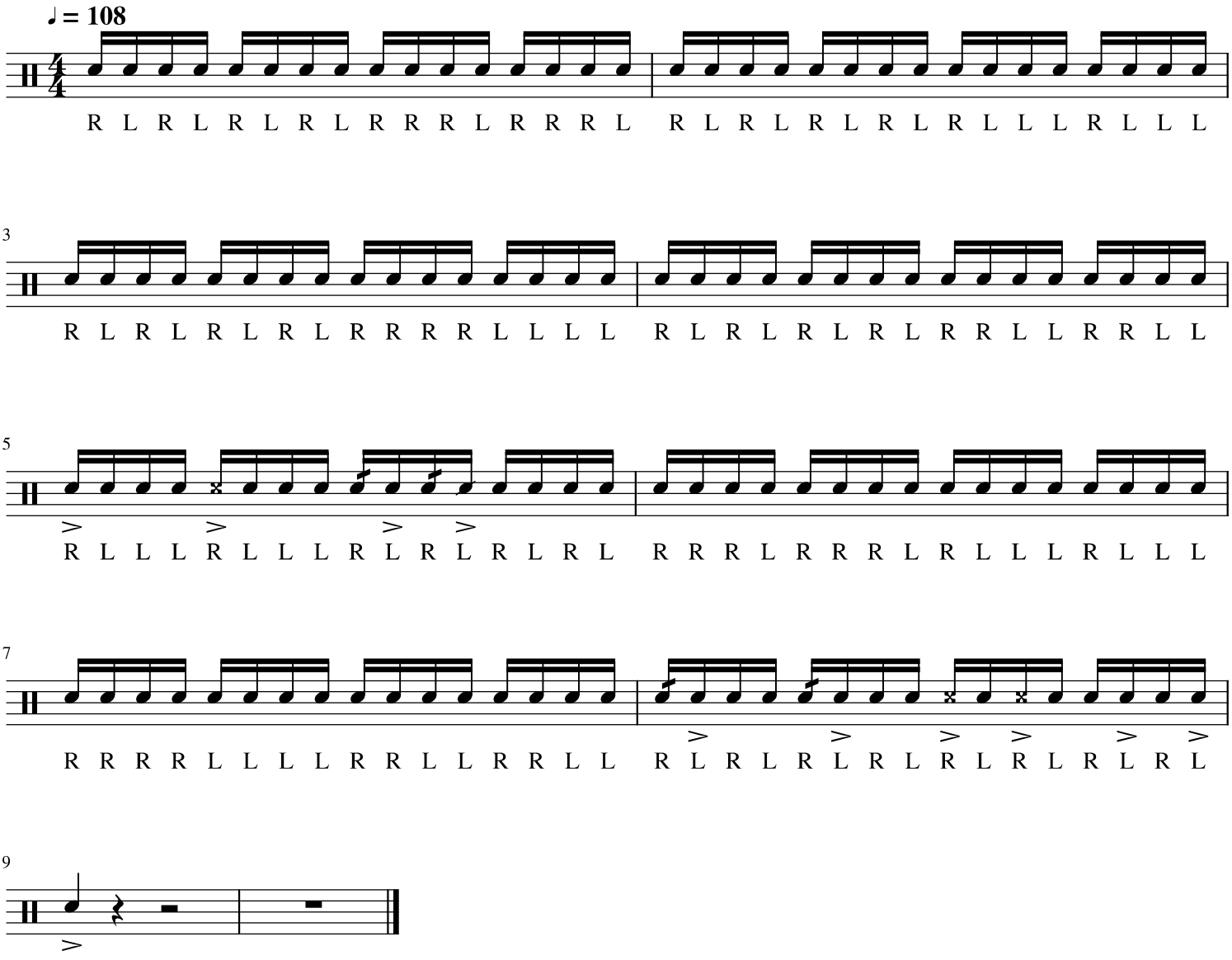


Snare Line 31

Stick Control

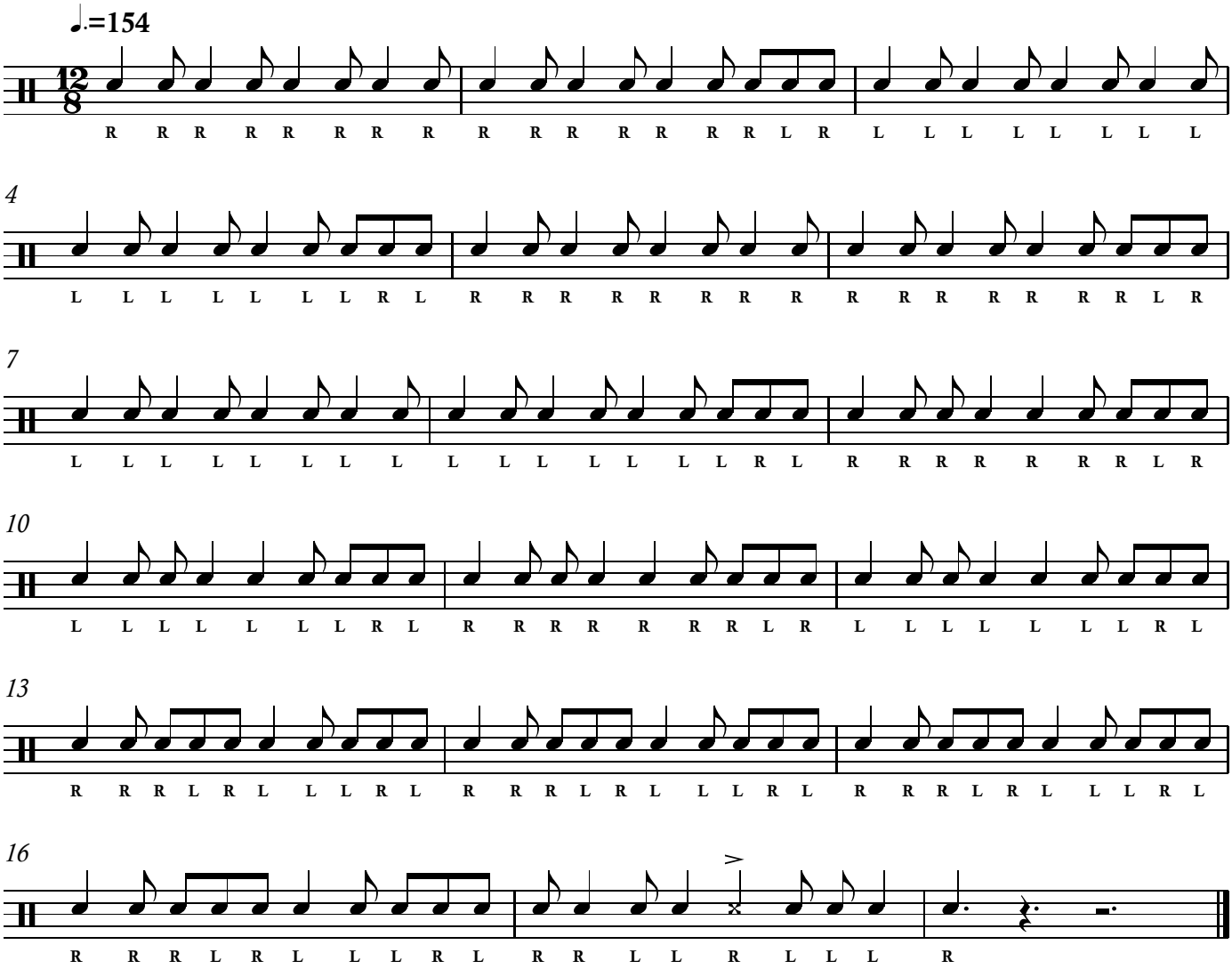
some Texan in the 2000s

♩ = 108



RDL SNARES

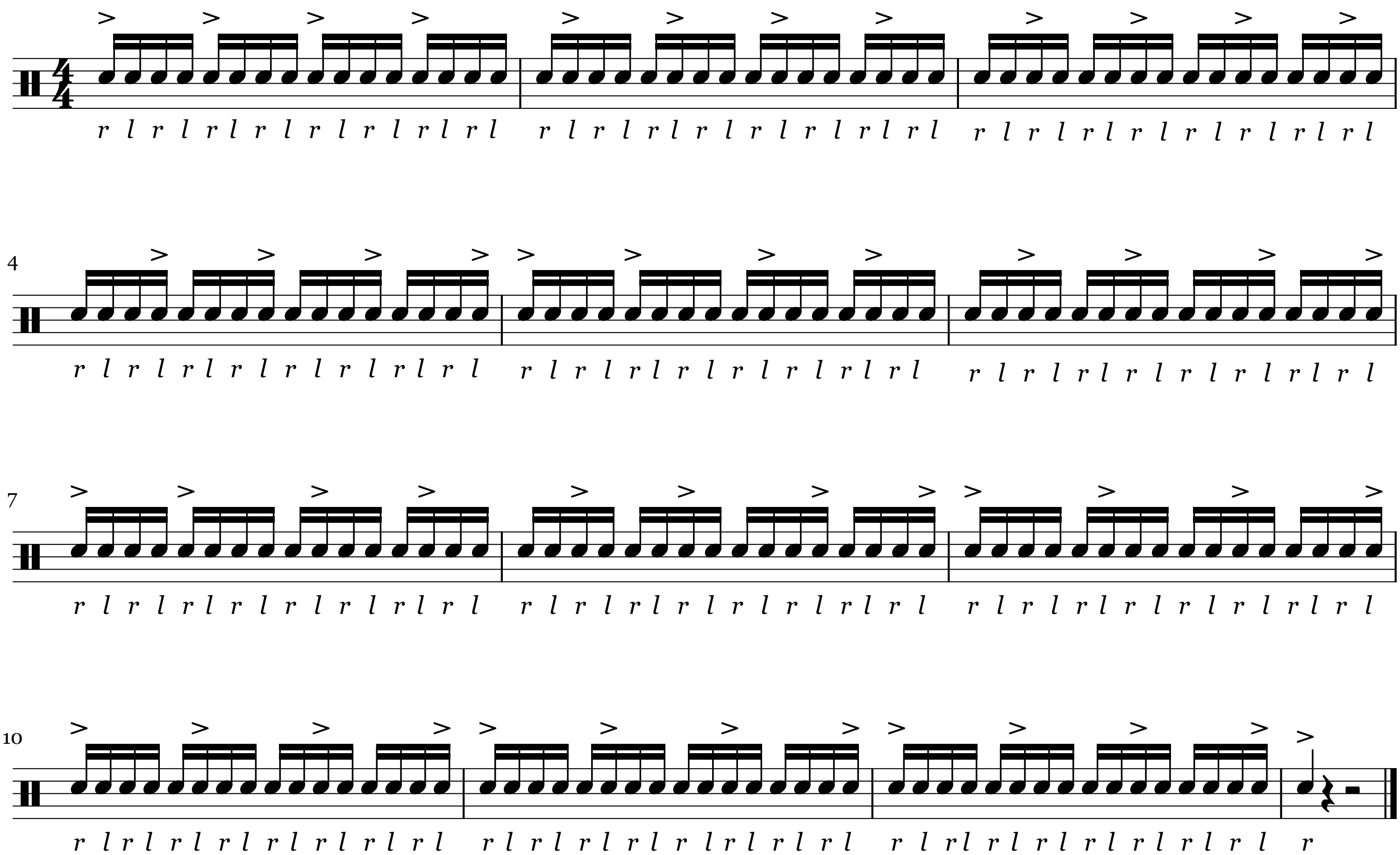
Hot Spring



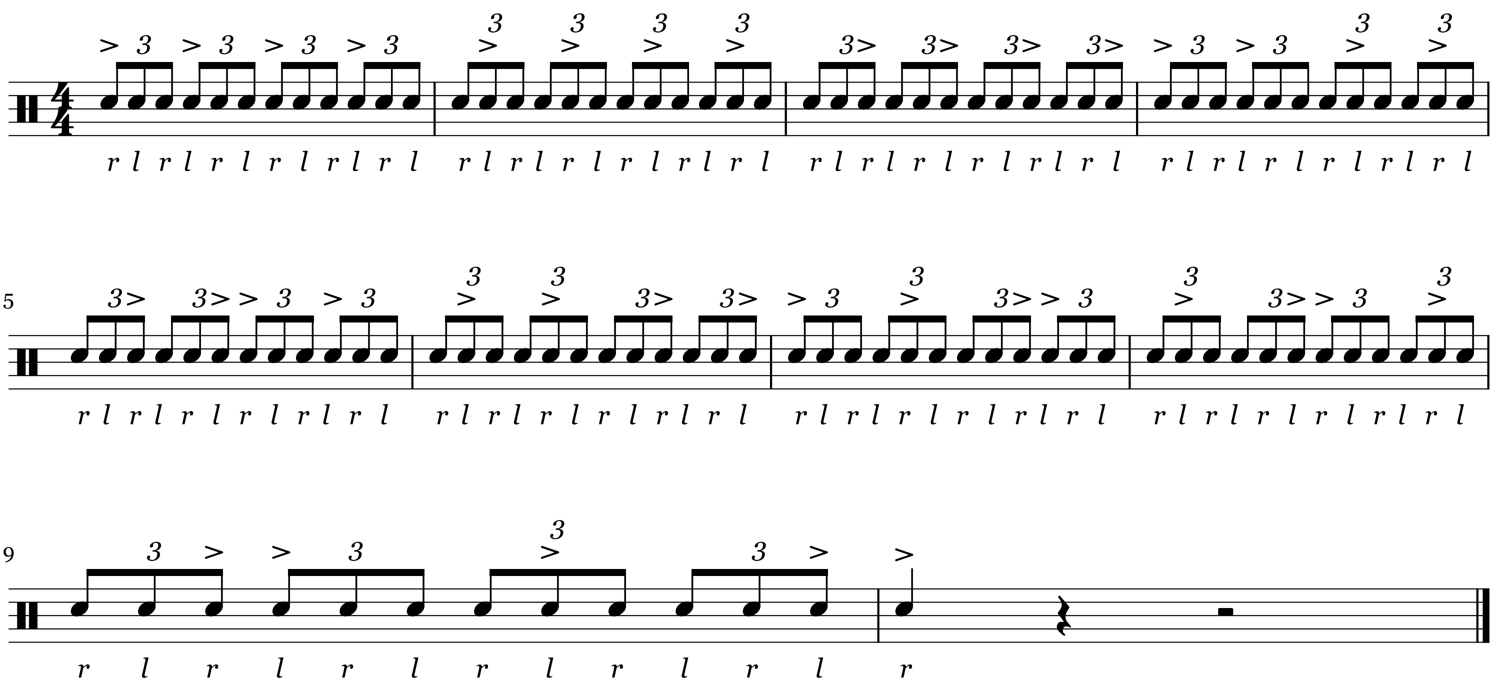
16th Note Grid

Be prepared to play the flowing variations. The accent pattern will not change

-Check/Buzz/Diddle
-Buzz/Diddle the accents
-1 Diddle/Buzz after the accents
-Diddle/Buz everything but the accents
-Flam the accents



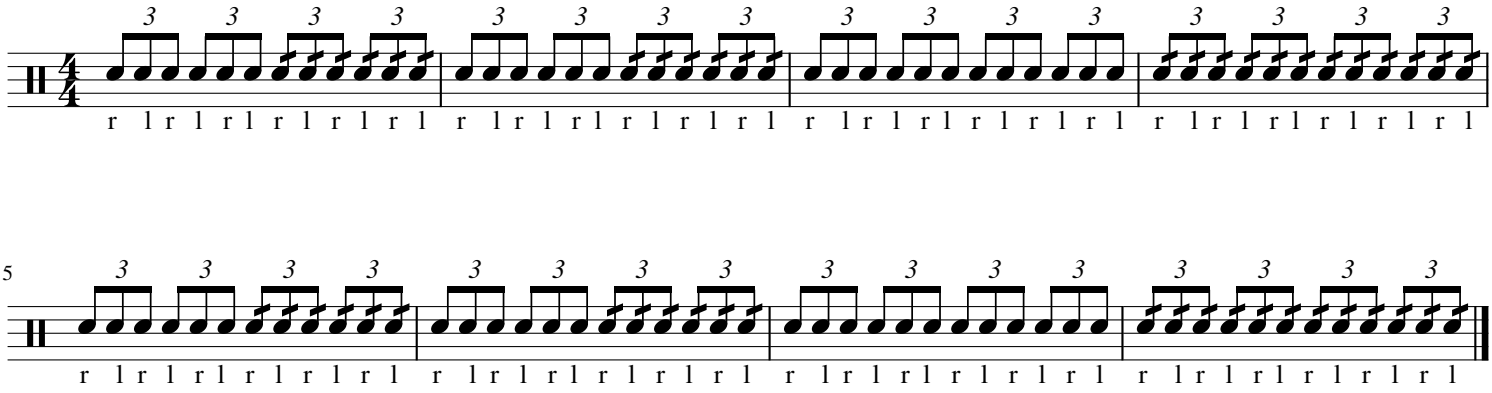
Triplet Grid



Be prepared to play the following variations with the exercise. The accent pattern will not change with the different variations

Check
Buzz all
Diddle all
Buzz/Diddle the accents
Buzz/Diddle everything but the accent
Diddle after each accent
Flam the Accents

Short Short Long

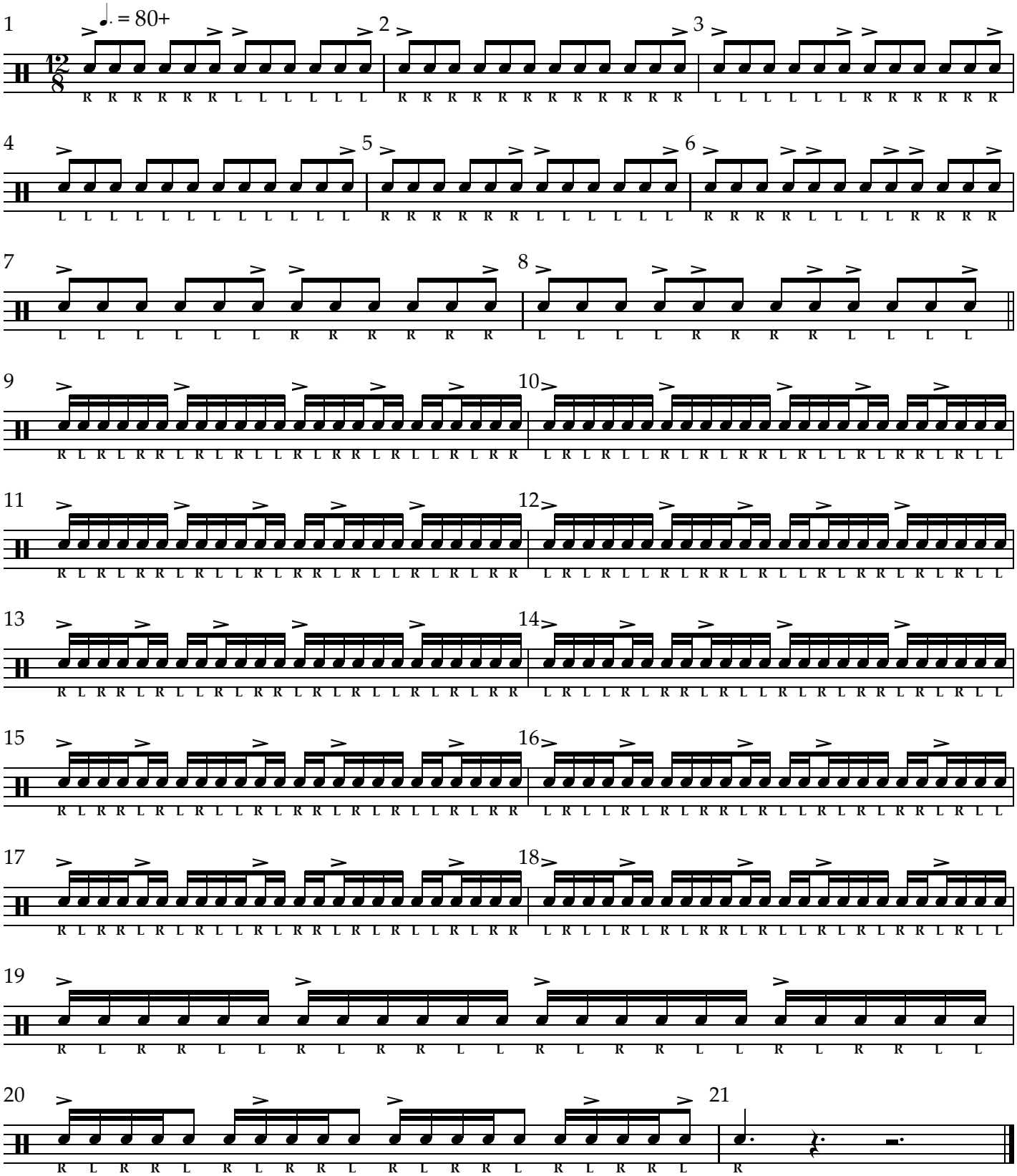


base12

Variation 3 - Paradiddles

six12four
(with and without accents)

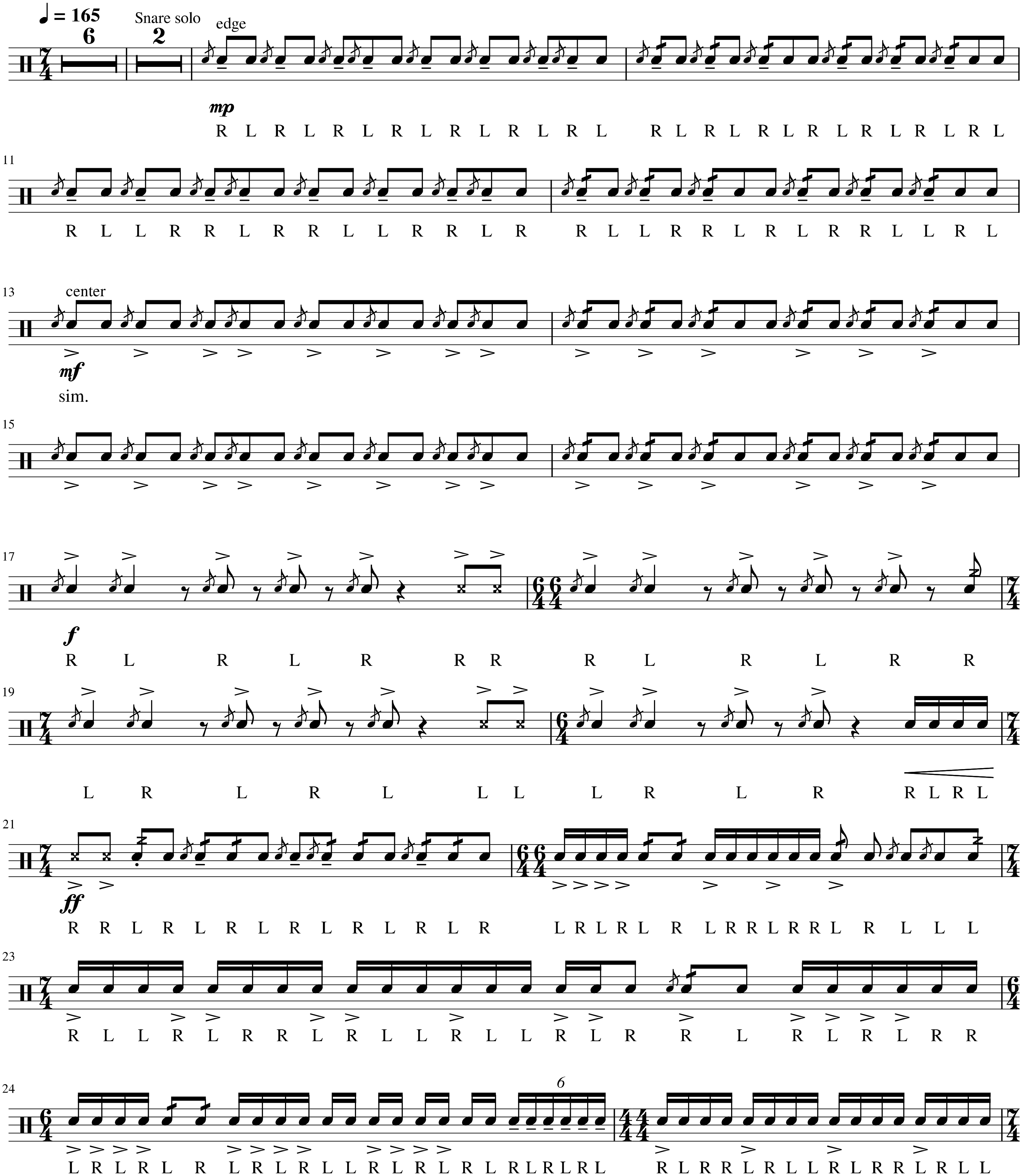
Chris Scherer

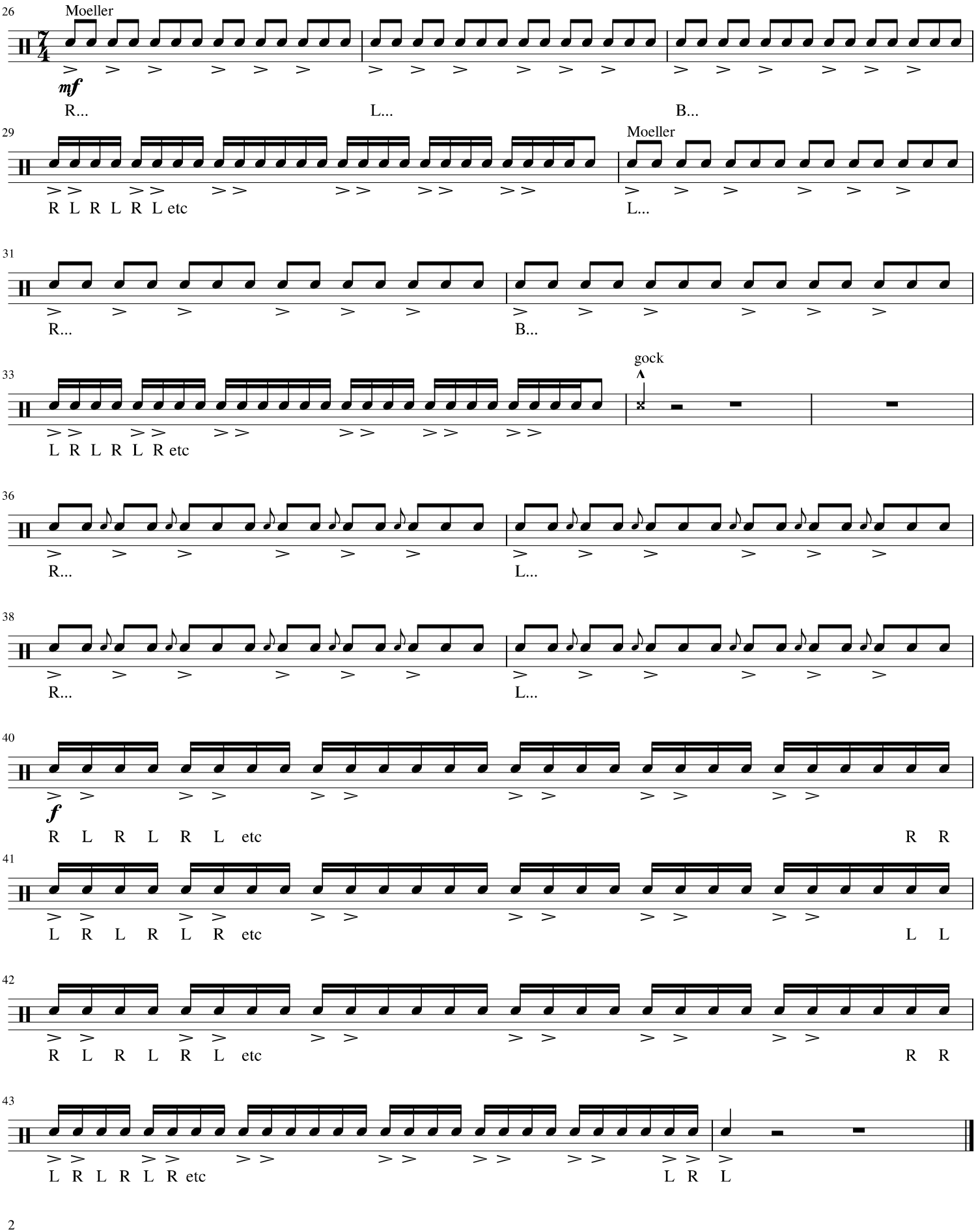


MDL Snare Line

Horology

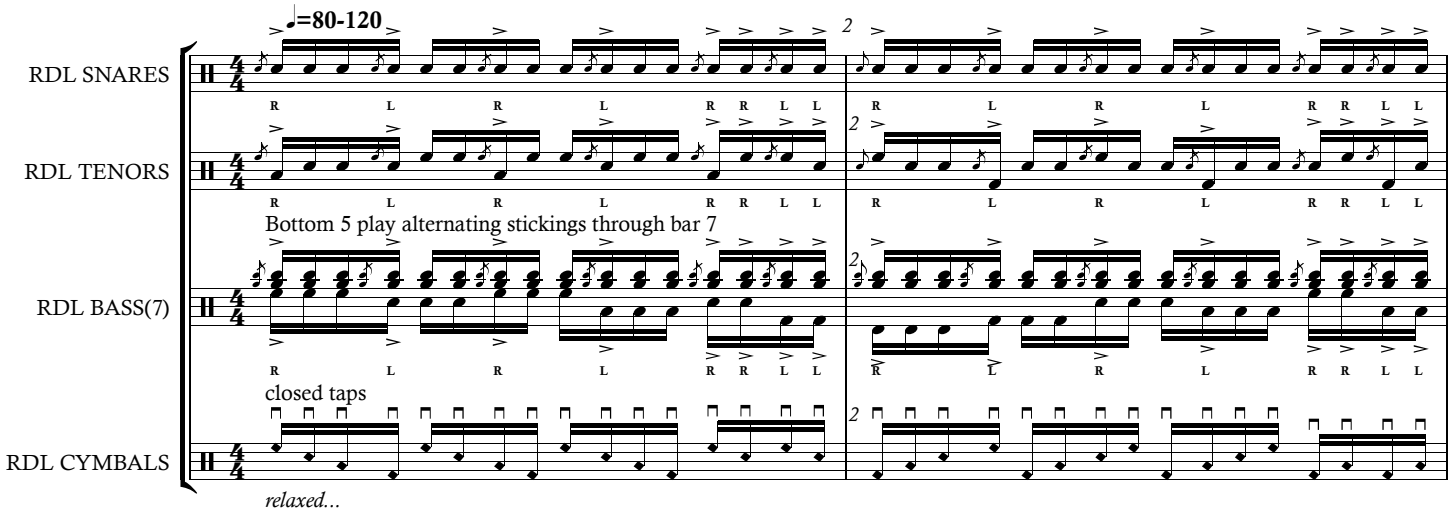
King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard, arr. Christian Leon, Chris Scherer

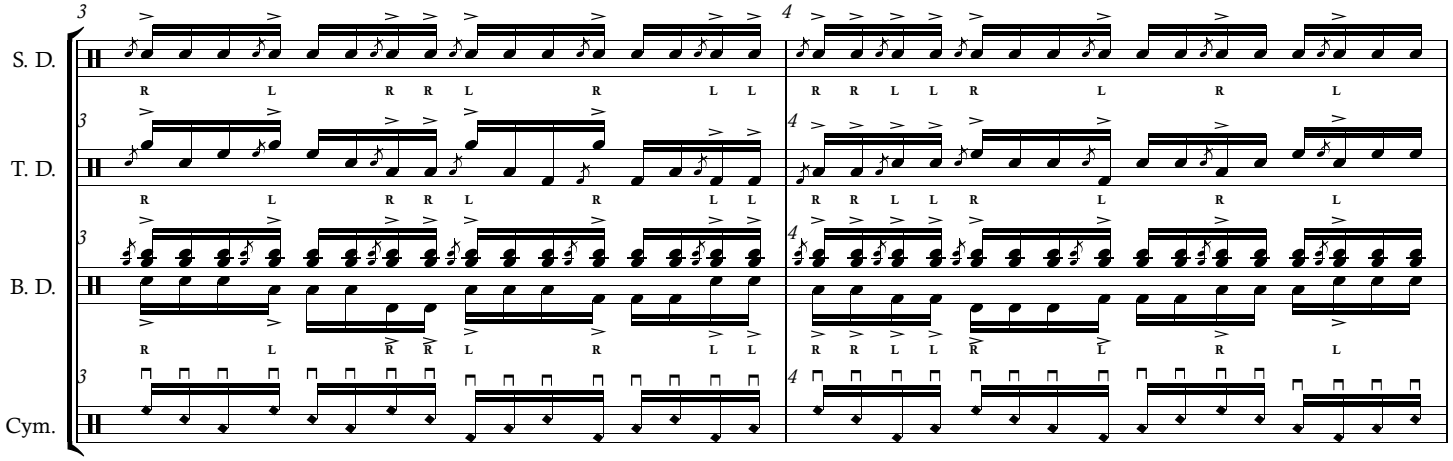


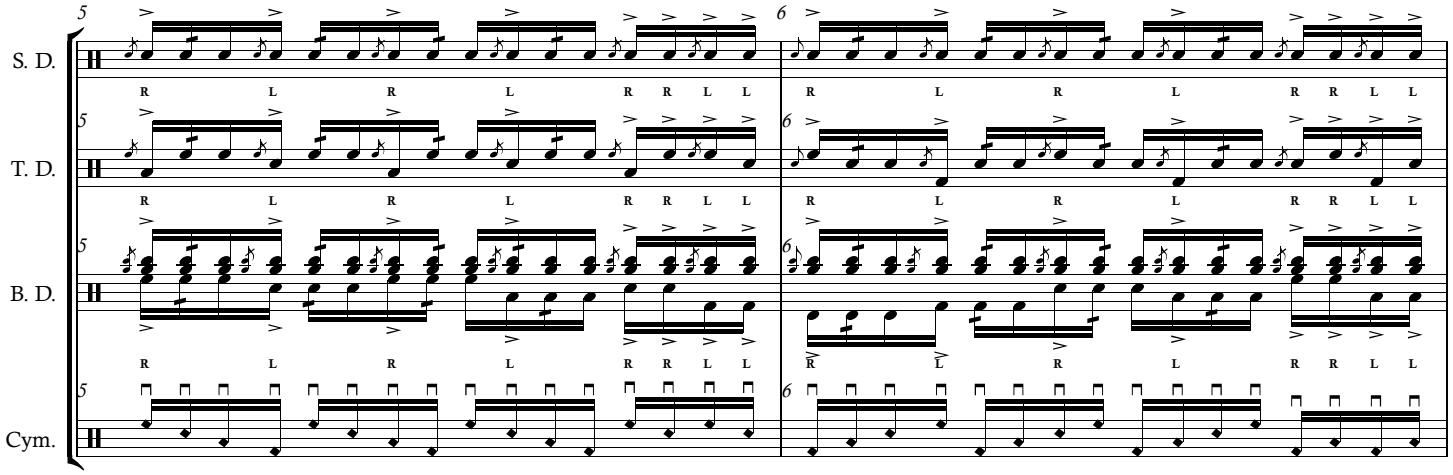

26
Moeller
mf
R... L... B...
29
Moeller
R L R L R L etc
L...
31
R... B...
33
gock
L R L R L R etc
36
R... L...
38
R... L...
40
f
R L R L R L etc
R R
41
L R L R L R etc
L L
42
R L R L R L etc
R R
43
L R L R L R etc
L R L

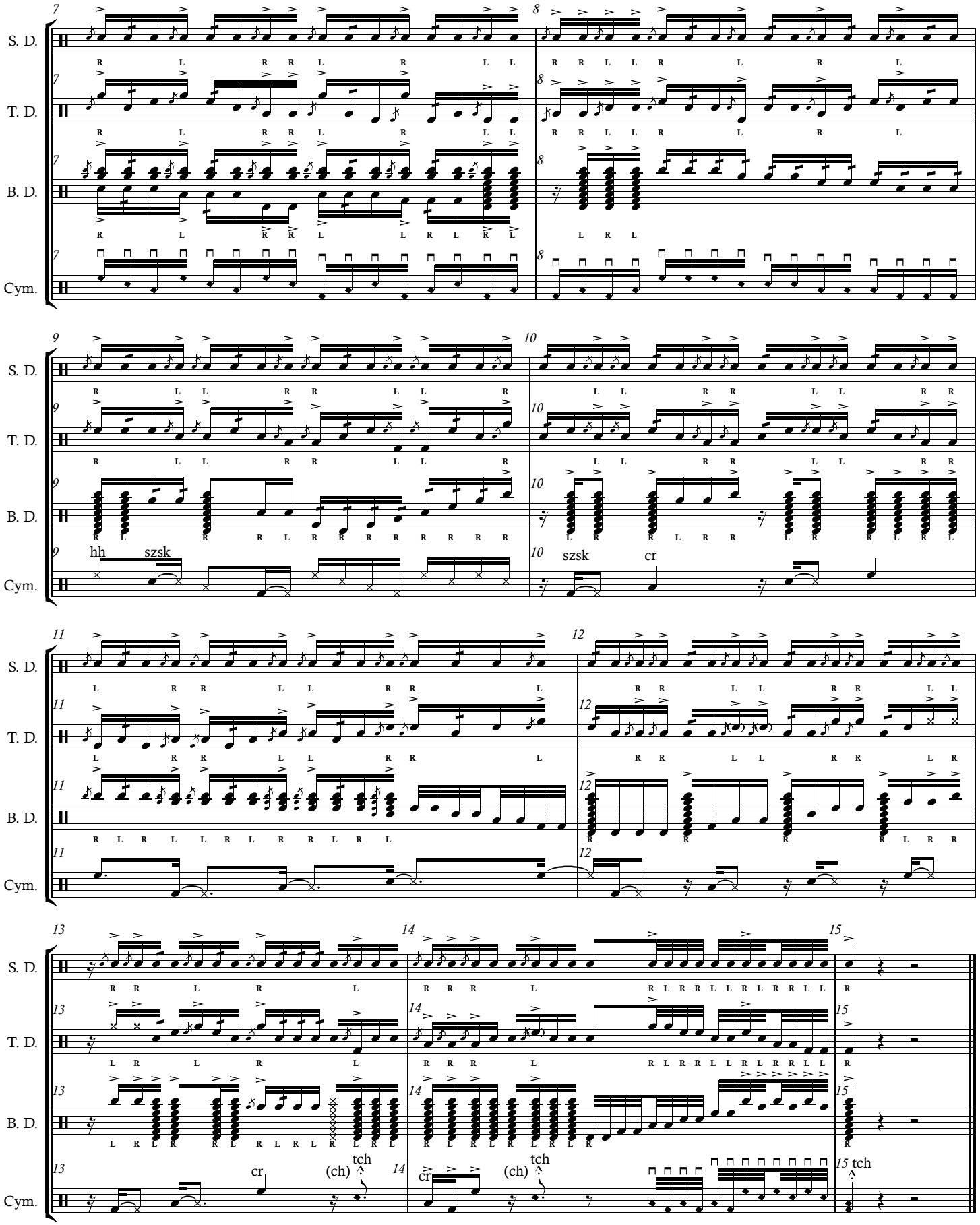
Flammus

Murray Gusseck, ed. Chris Scherer





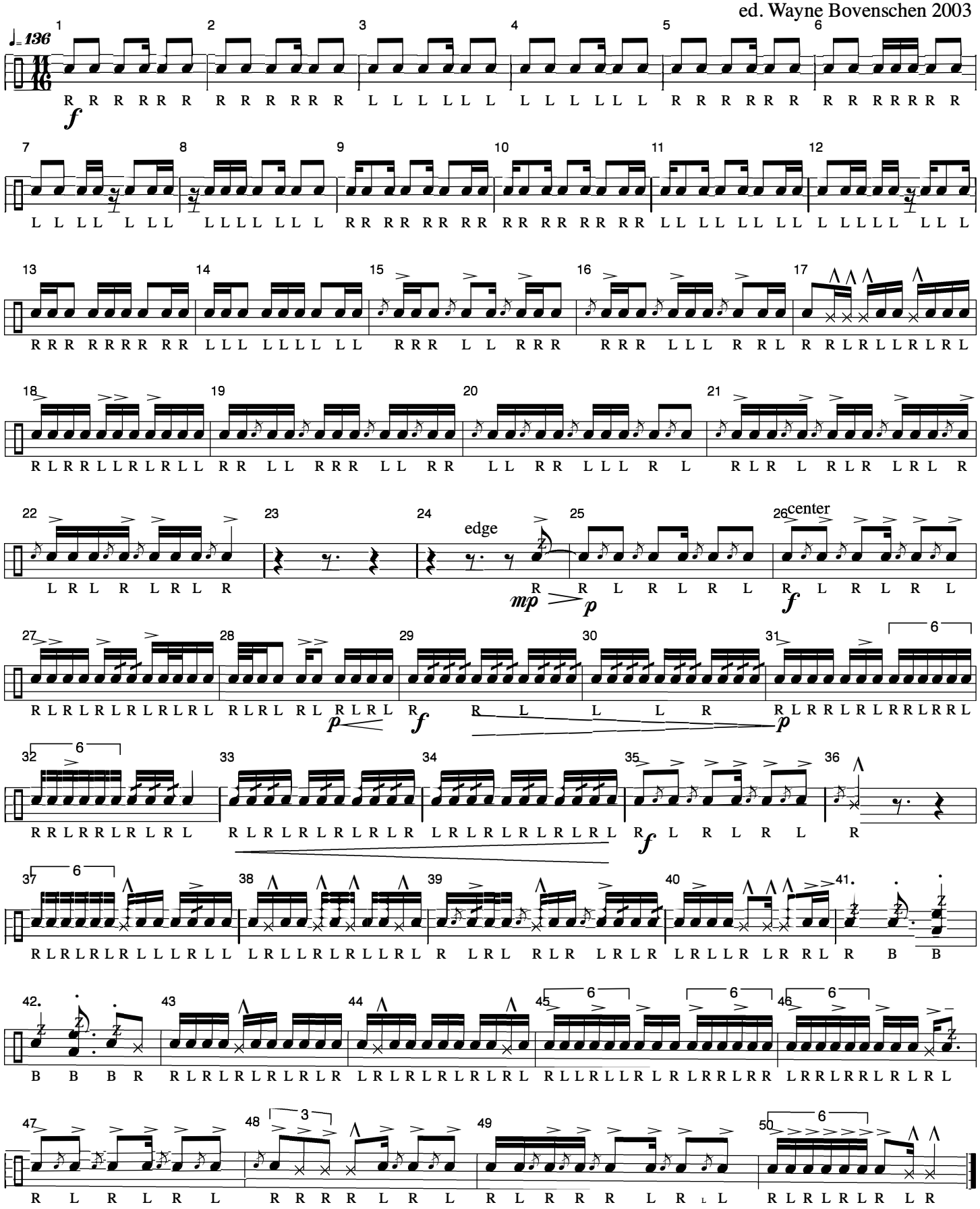



S. D.
T. D.
B. D.
Cym.
hh
szsk
cr
(ch)
tch

Snare

Martian Mambo 2003

Murray Gusseck
ed. Jon Weber 2000
ed. Wayne Bovenschen 2003



Tenor Packet

12. Tenor Cover Sheet
13. 8816 Tenor Variations (be prepared to play with dynamics and added accents)
    Tempos: 100-160bpm
14. Stick Control (3 tenor variations)
    Tempos: 85-110bpm
15. Hot Spring
    Tempos:110-145bpm
16. 16th note grid (accents, diddles, flams, combinations)
    Tempos: 85-110bpm
17. Triplet grid (accents, diddles, flams, combinations)
    Tempos:110-130bpm
18. Short Short Long
    Tempos: 130-180 bpm
19. Base12 paradiddles (paras and feet timing)
    Tempos: 80bpm+
20. Horology
    Tempos: 165+
21. Flammus
    Tempos: 80-110bpm
22. Martian
    Tempo: 136+

(Sight Reading)

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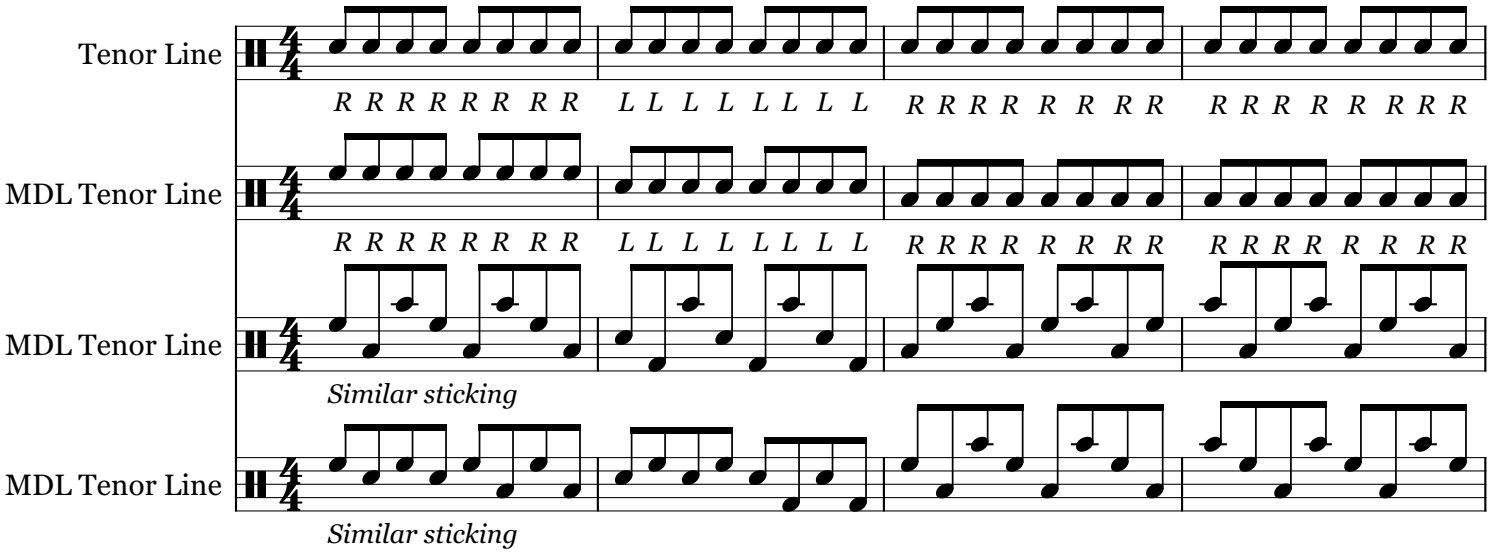
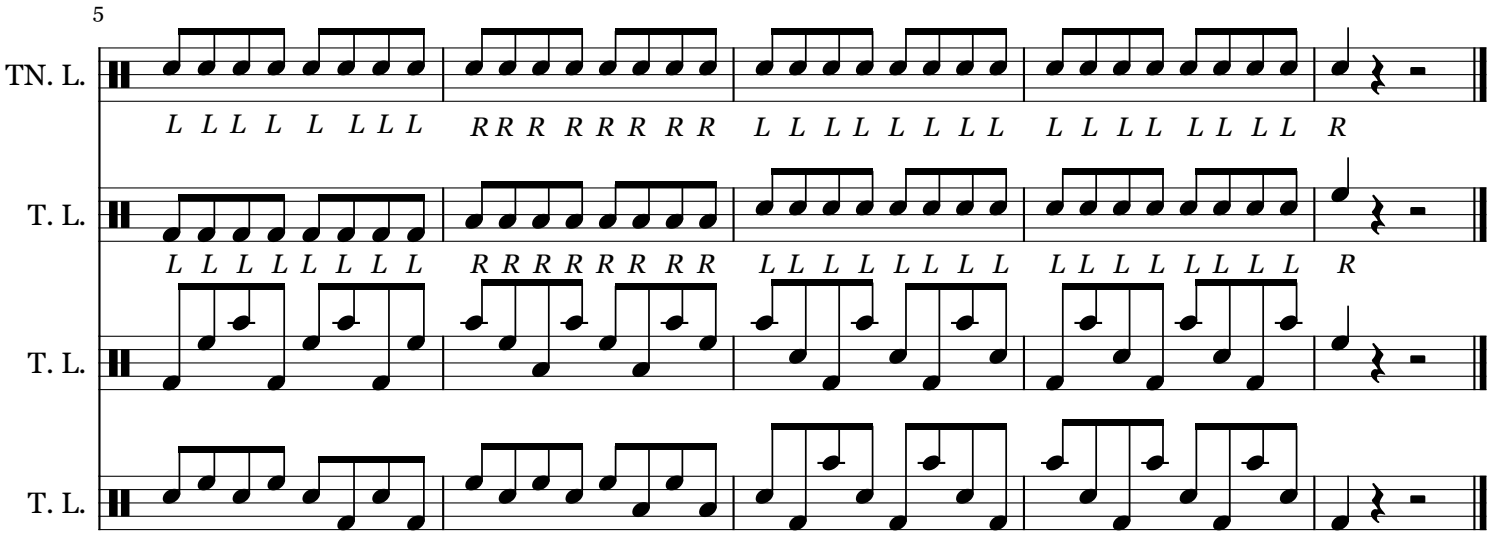
8/8/16

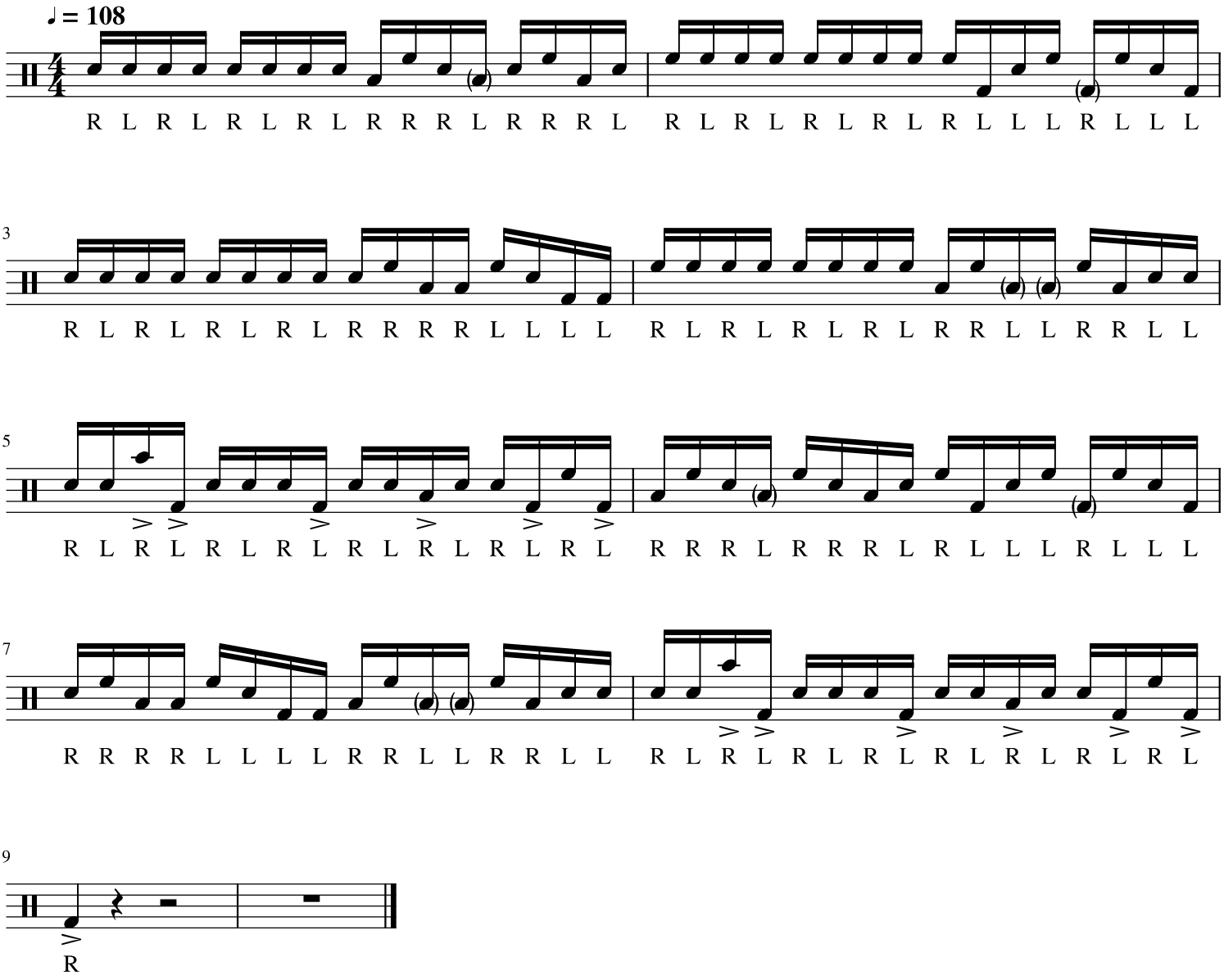

Tenor Line
R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R
MDL Tenor Line
R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R
MDL Tenor Line
Similar sticking
MDL Tenor Line
Similar sticking


5
TN. L.
L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L R
T. L.
L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L R
T. L.
T. L.

Tenor Line

Stick Control

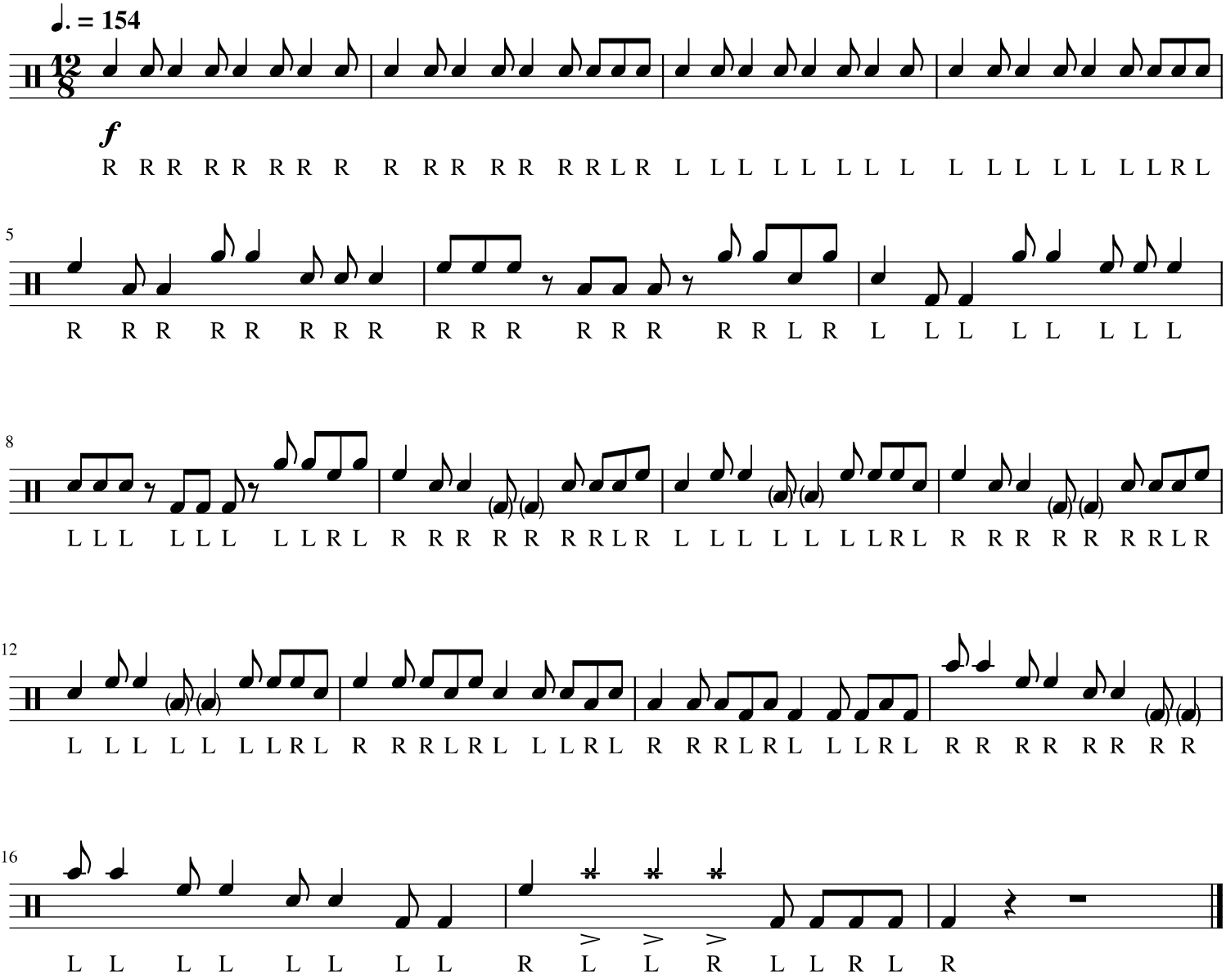
some Texan in the 2000s



MDL Tenor Line

Hot Spring

Christian Leon
Amber Jones



16th Note Grid

Be prepared to play the following variations. The accent pattern will not change

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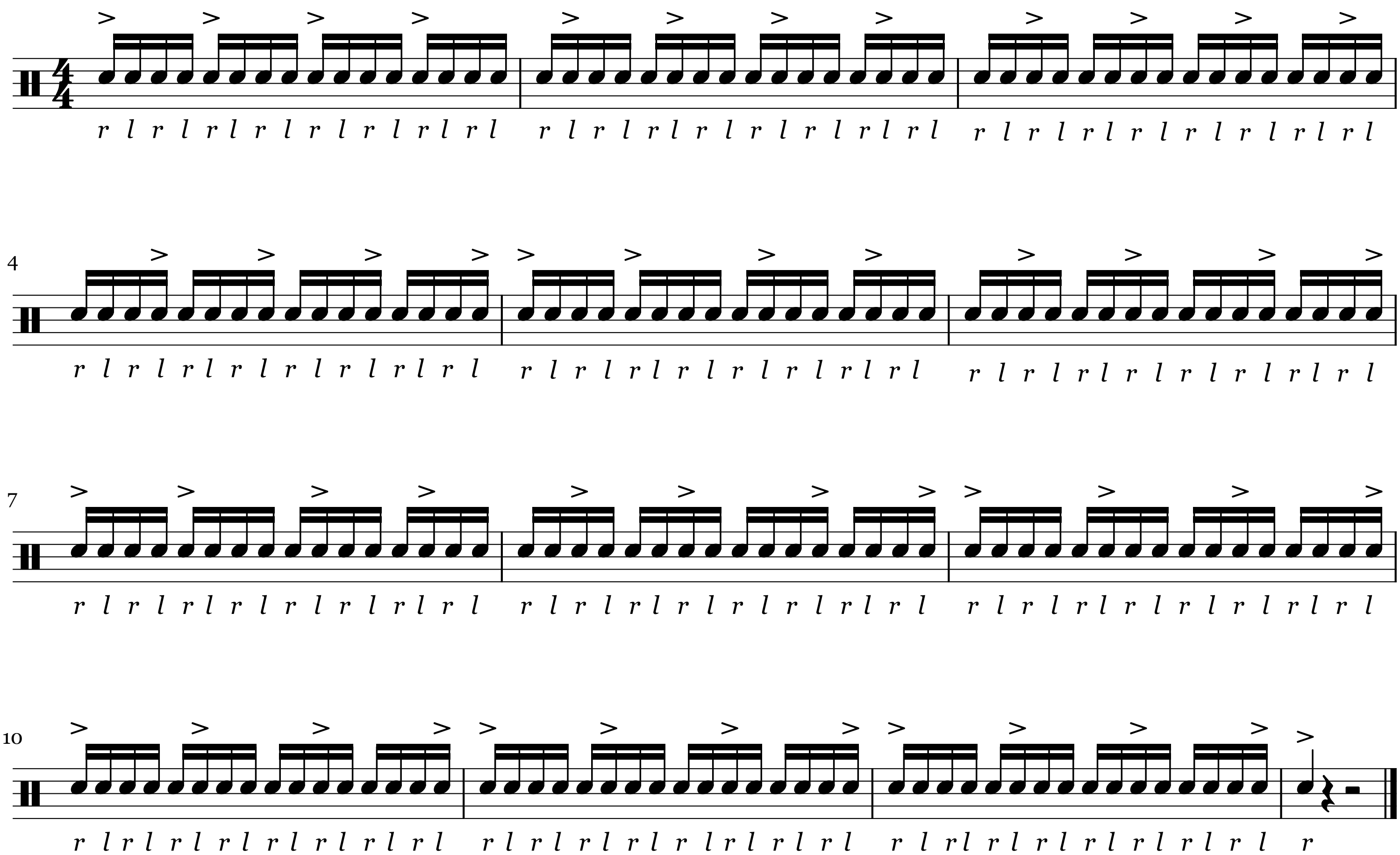
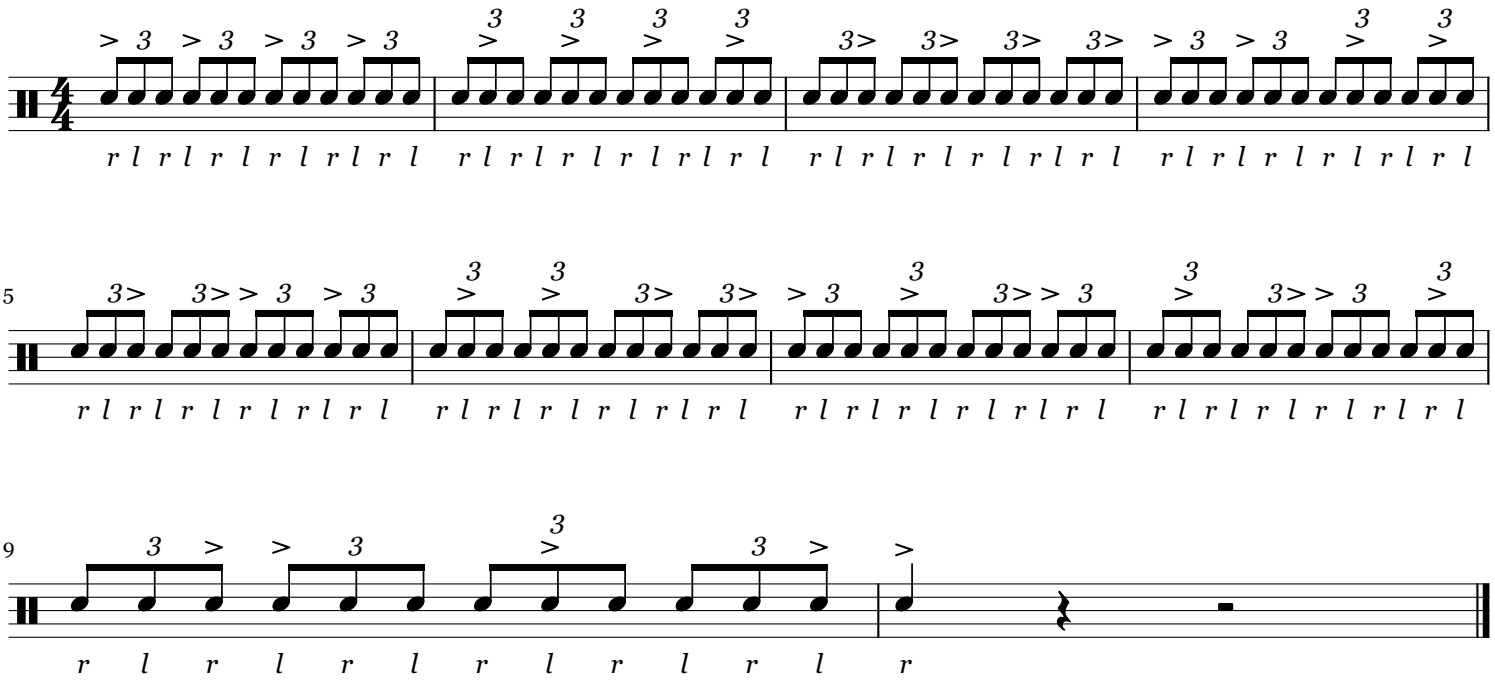
-Buzz/Diddle the accents
-1 Diddle/Buzz after the accents
-Diddle/Buz everything but the accents
-Flam the accents

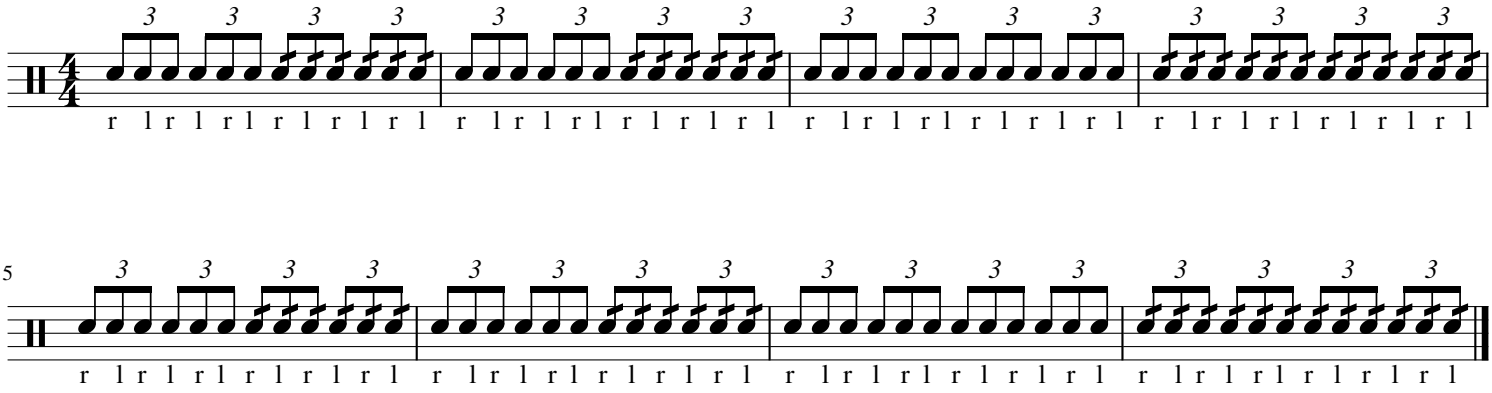


Triplet Grid



Be prepared to play the following variations with the exercise. The accent pattern will not change with the different variations
Check
Buzz all
Diddle all
Buzz/Diddle the accents
Buzz/Diddle everything but the accent
Diddle after each accent
Flam the Accents

Short Short Long



base12

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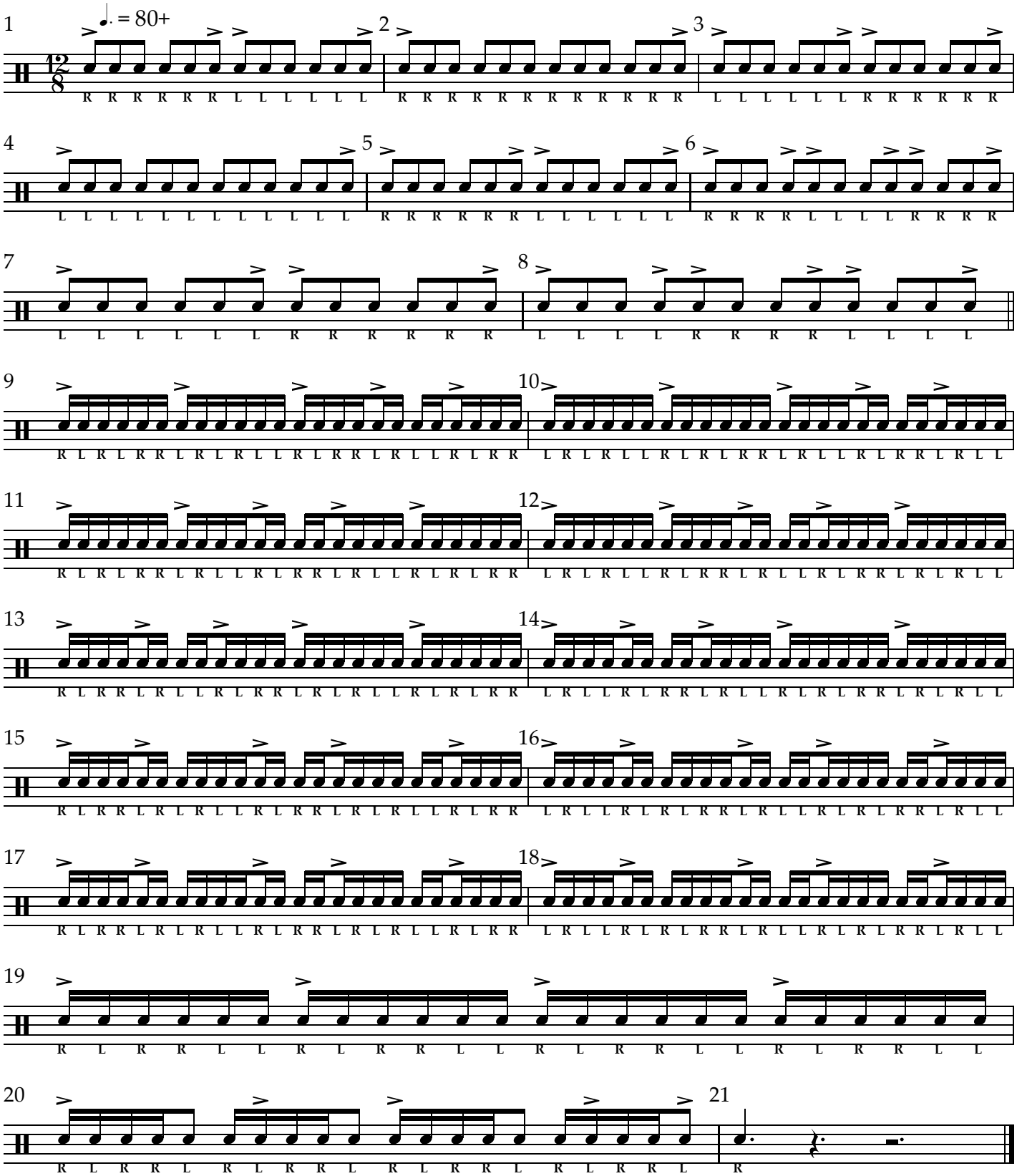
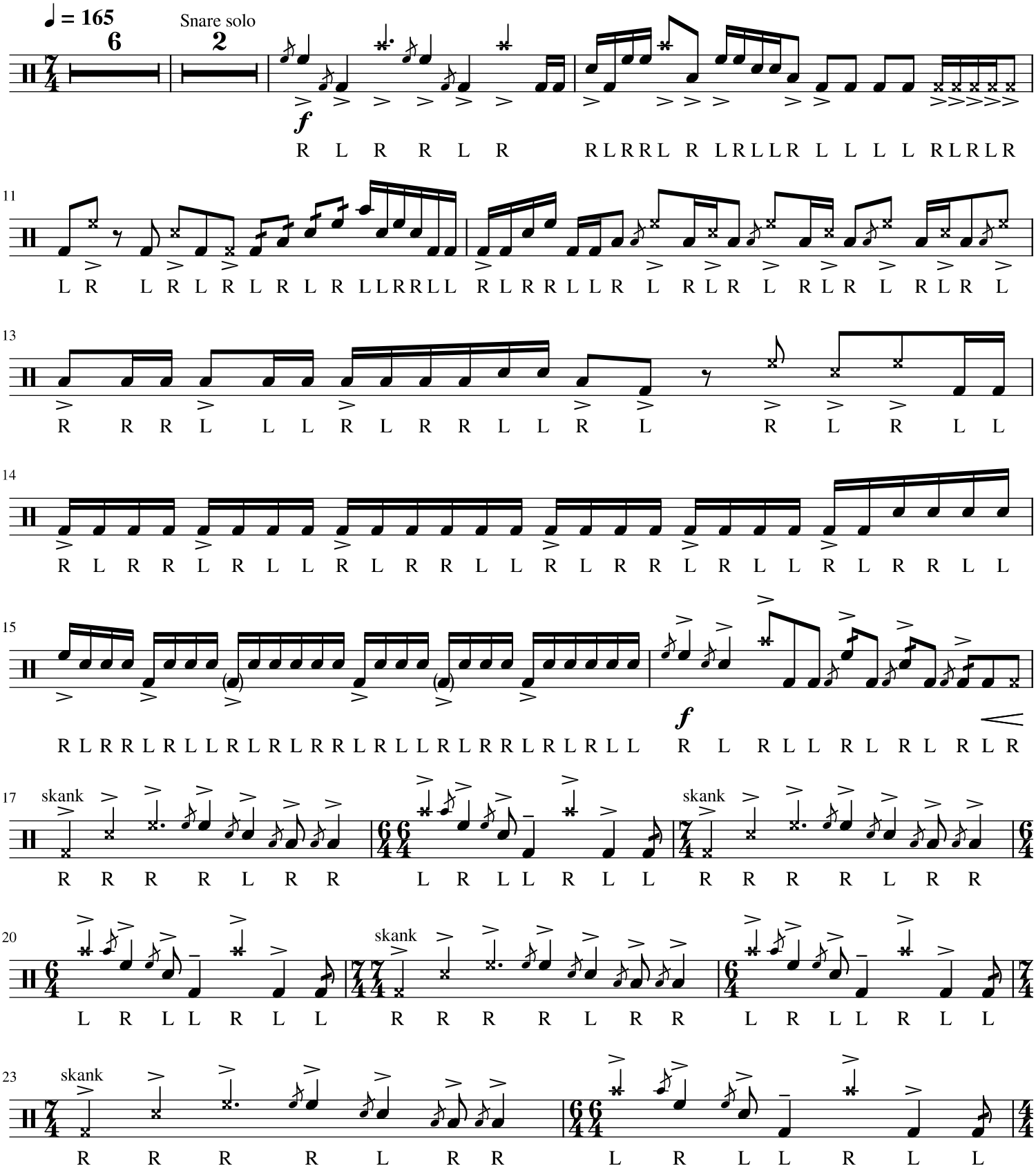
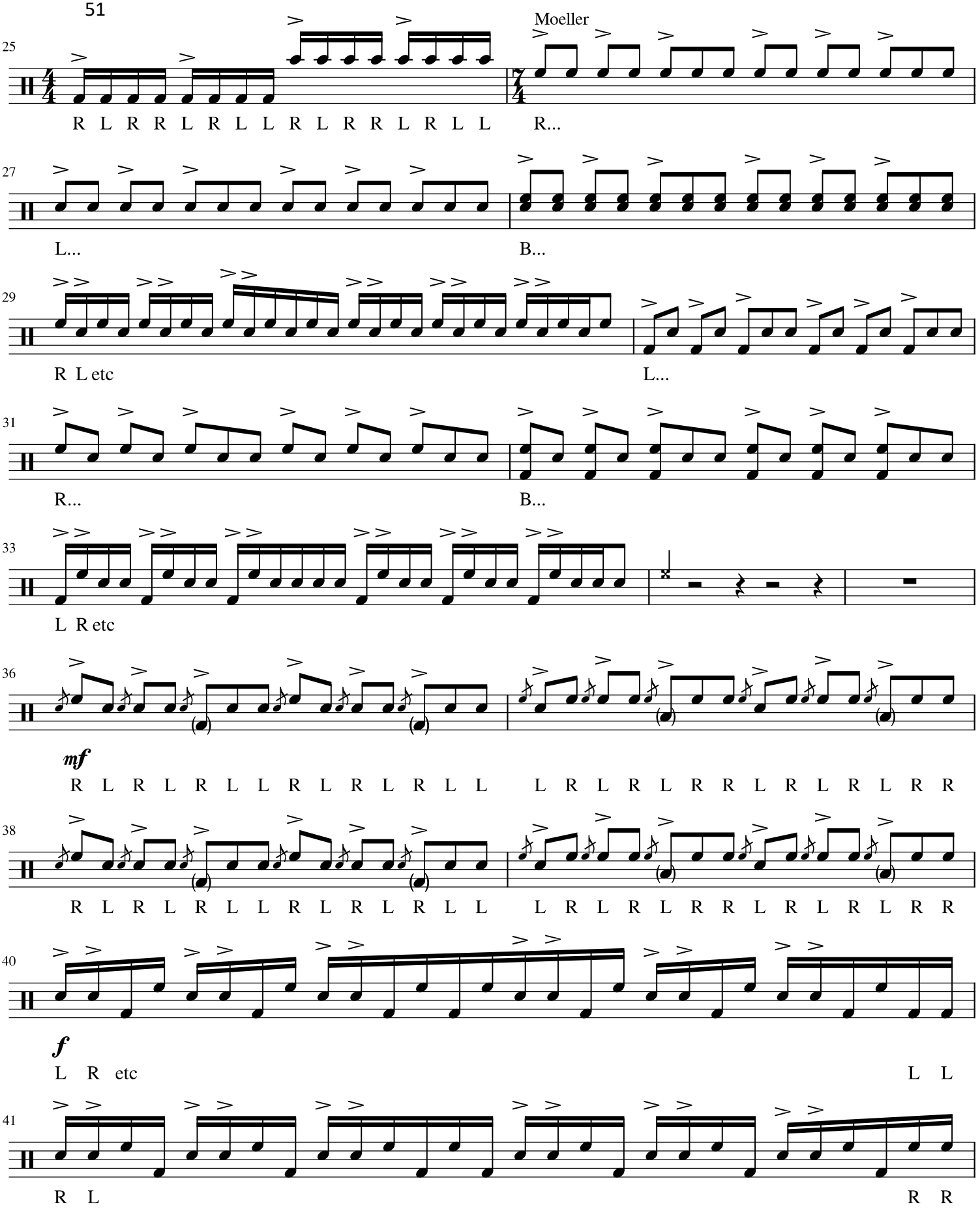


MDL Tenor Line

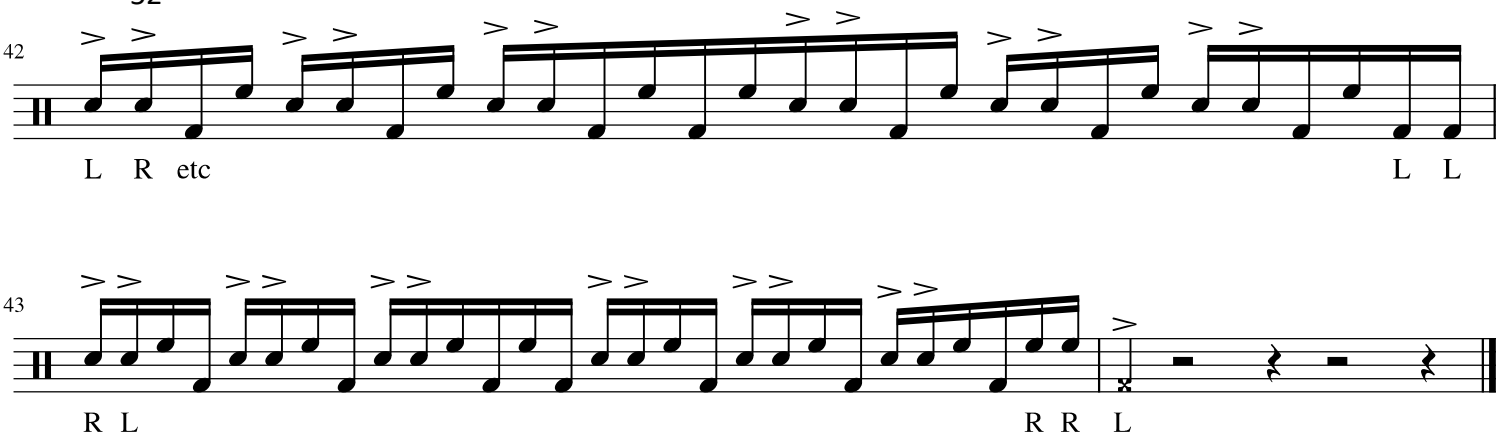
Horology

King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard, arr. Christian Leon, Chris Scherer



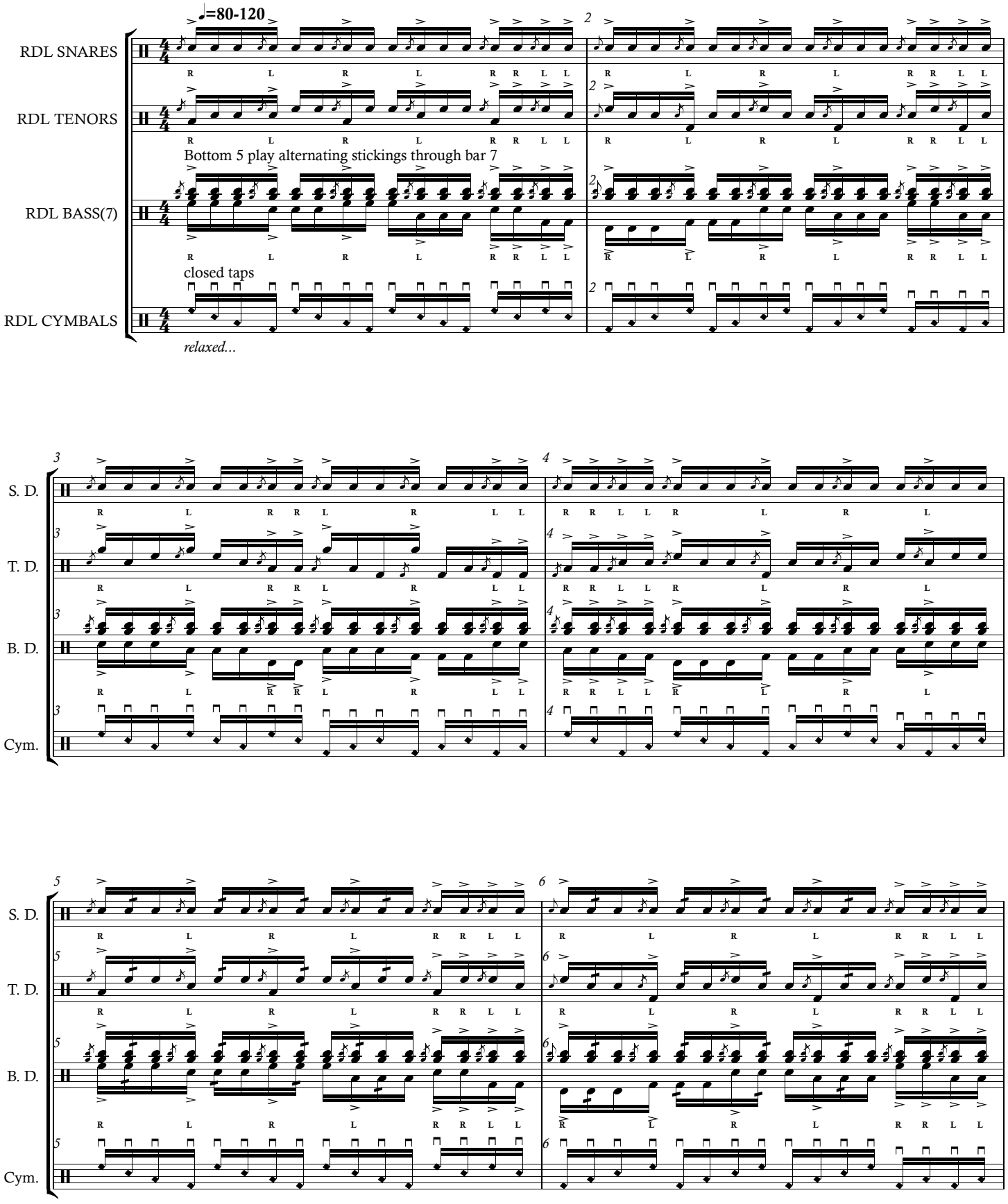

Moeller
25
R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L
R...
27
L...
B...
29
R L etc
L...
31
R...
B...
33
L R etc
36
mf
R L R L R L L R L R L R L L
L R L R L R R L R L R L R R
38
R L R L R L L R L R L R L L
L R L R L R R L R L R L R R
40
f
L R etc
L L
41
R L
R R

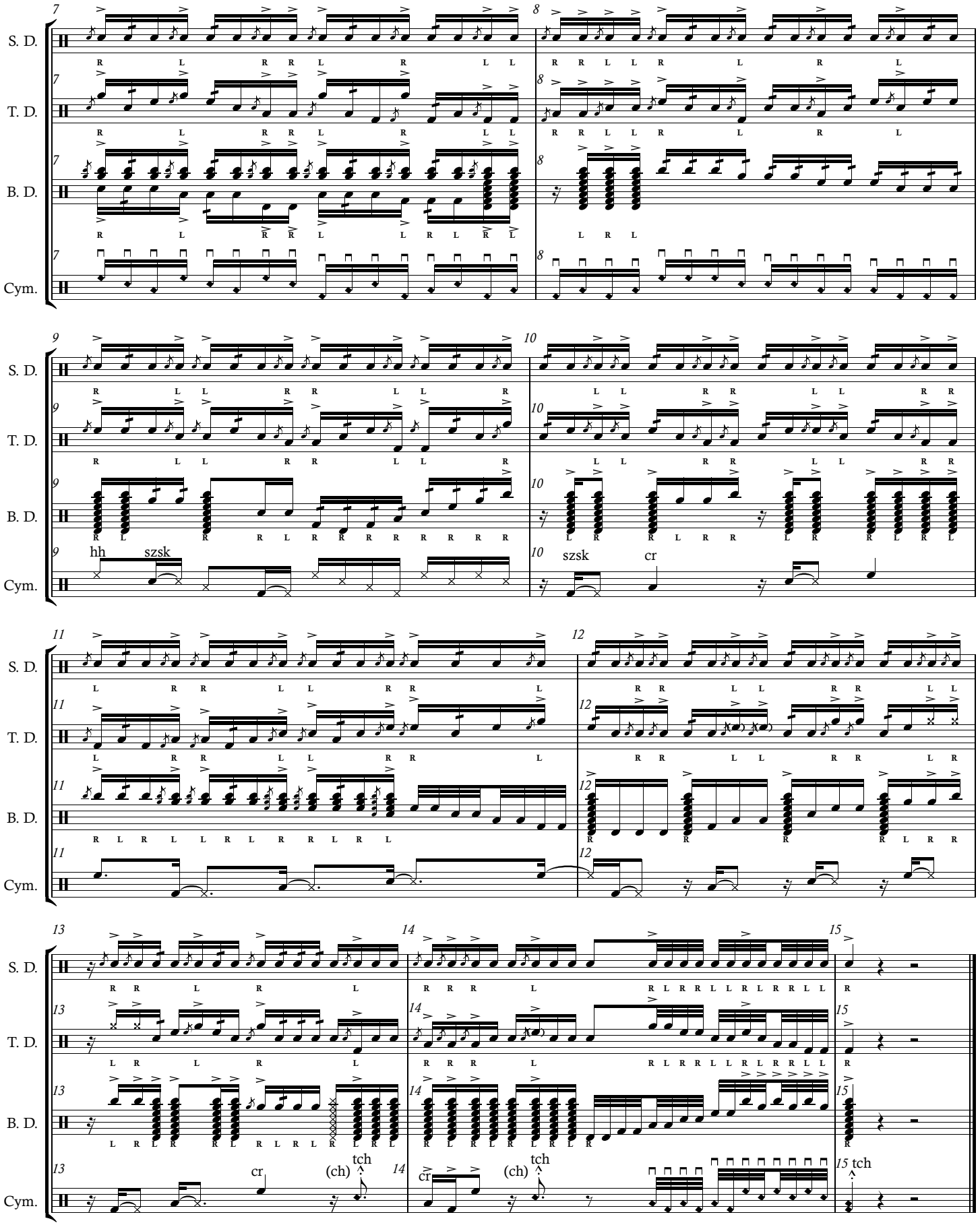
52



Flammus

Murray Gusseck, ed. Chris Scherer

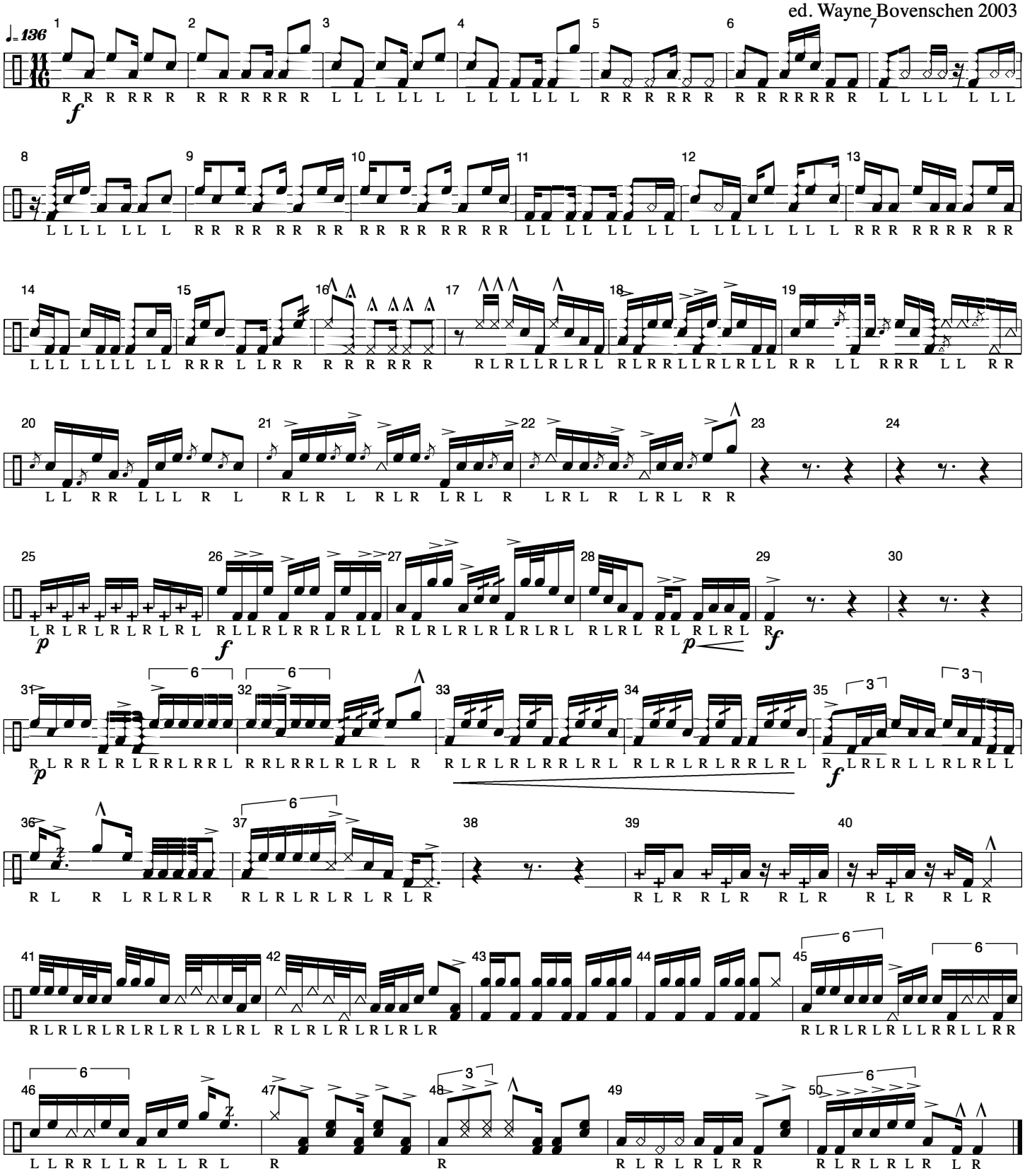



S. D.
T. D.
B. D.
Cym.
hh
szsk
cr
(ch)
tch

Tenor

Martian Mambo 2003

Murray Gusseck
ed. Jon Weber 2000
ed. Wayne Bovenschen 2003



Bass Packet

23. Bass Cover Sheet
24. 8816 – all unison and split variations
    Tempos:100-160bpm
25. Hot Spring
    Tempos:110-145bpm
26. AB
    Tempos:100bpm
27. Stick Control w/ indicated sticking
    Tempos:85-110bpm
28. Flammus
    Tempos:80-110bpm
29. Base12 paradiddles (unison - all drums)
    Tempos:80bpm+
30. Short Short Long (Top 4 basses only)
    Tempos:130-180bpm
31. Martian Mambo
    Tempos:136+

(Sight Reading)

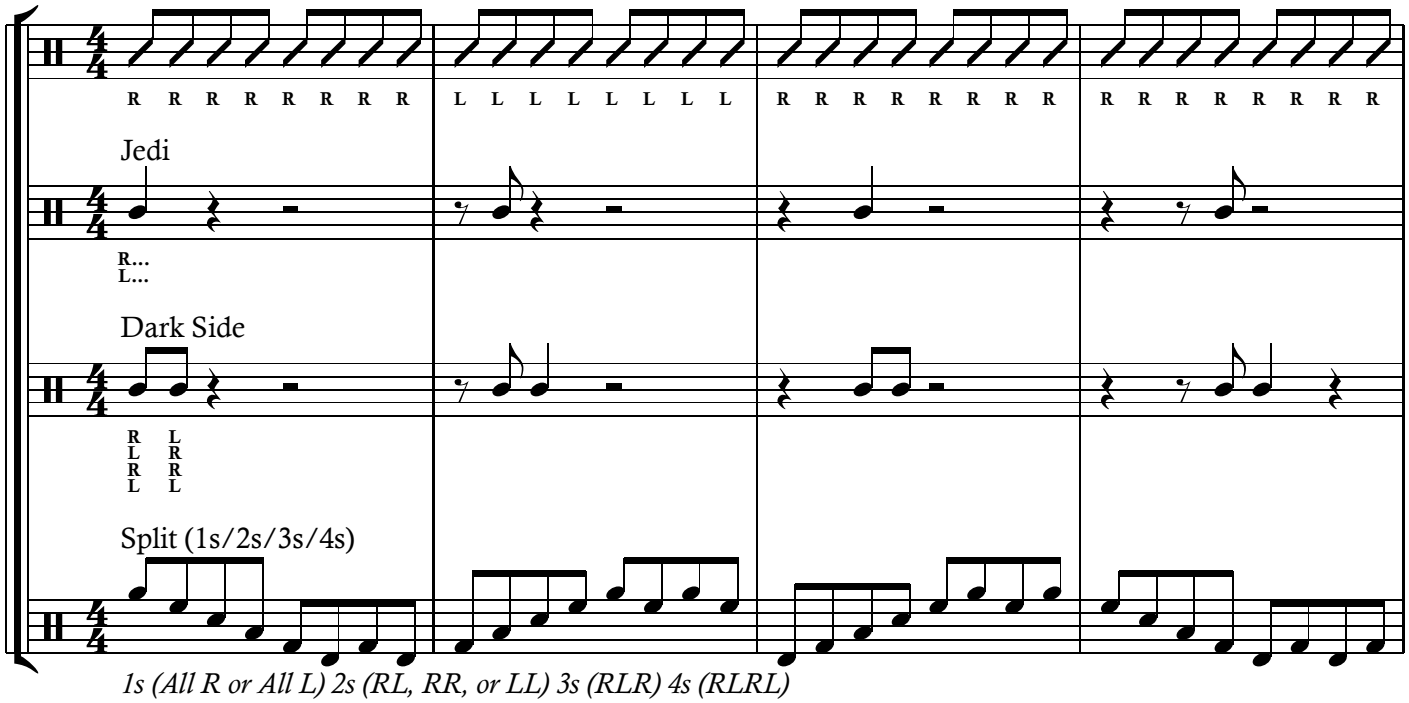
Expect to move your feet to everything except Martian Mambo
Expect to make changes on the fly

We are looking for students with solid timing, solid technique, and solid feet, but most importantly, we are looking for students with a **great attitude** who can take feedback and adapt quickly.

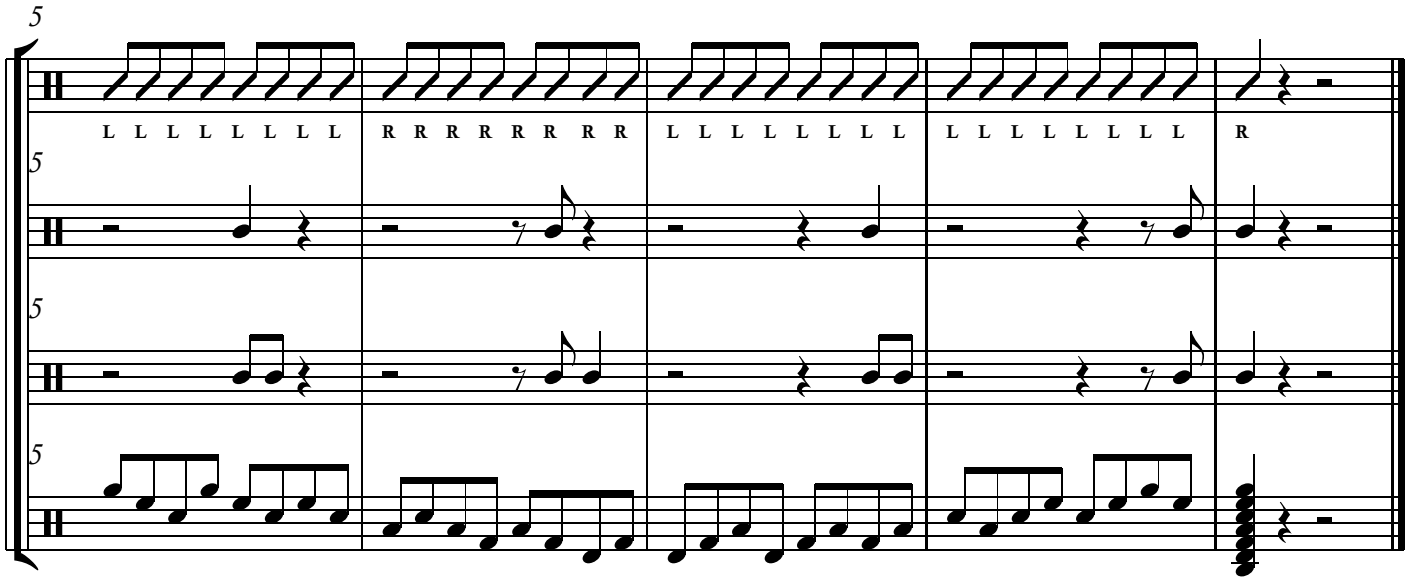
Expect to read any part of the splits, regardless of which drum(s) you think you are auditioning for. We will move people around on anything with splits - be ready!

8/8/16

RDL BASS(7)

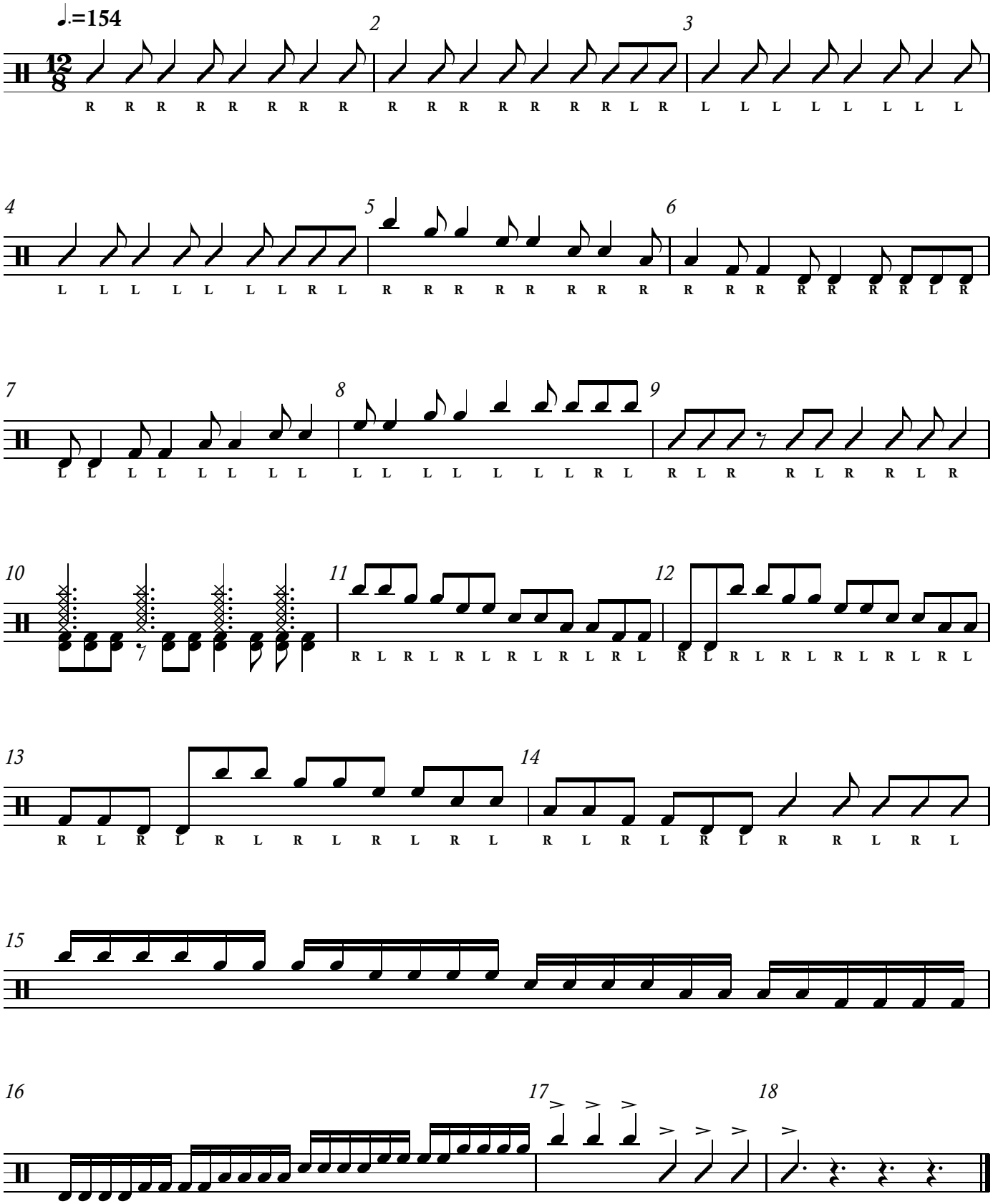


1s (All R or All L) 2s (RL, RR, or LL) 3s (RLR) 4s (RLRL)

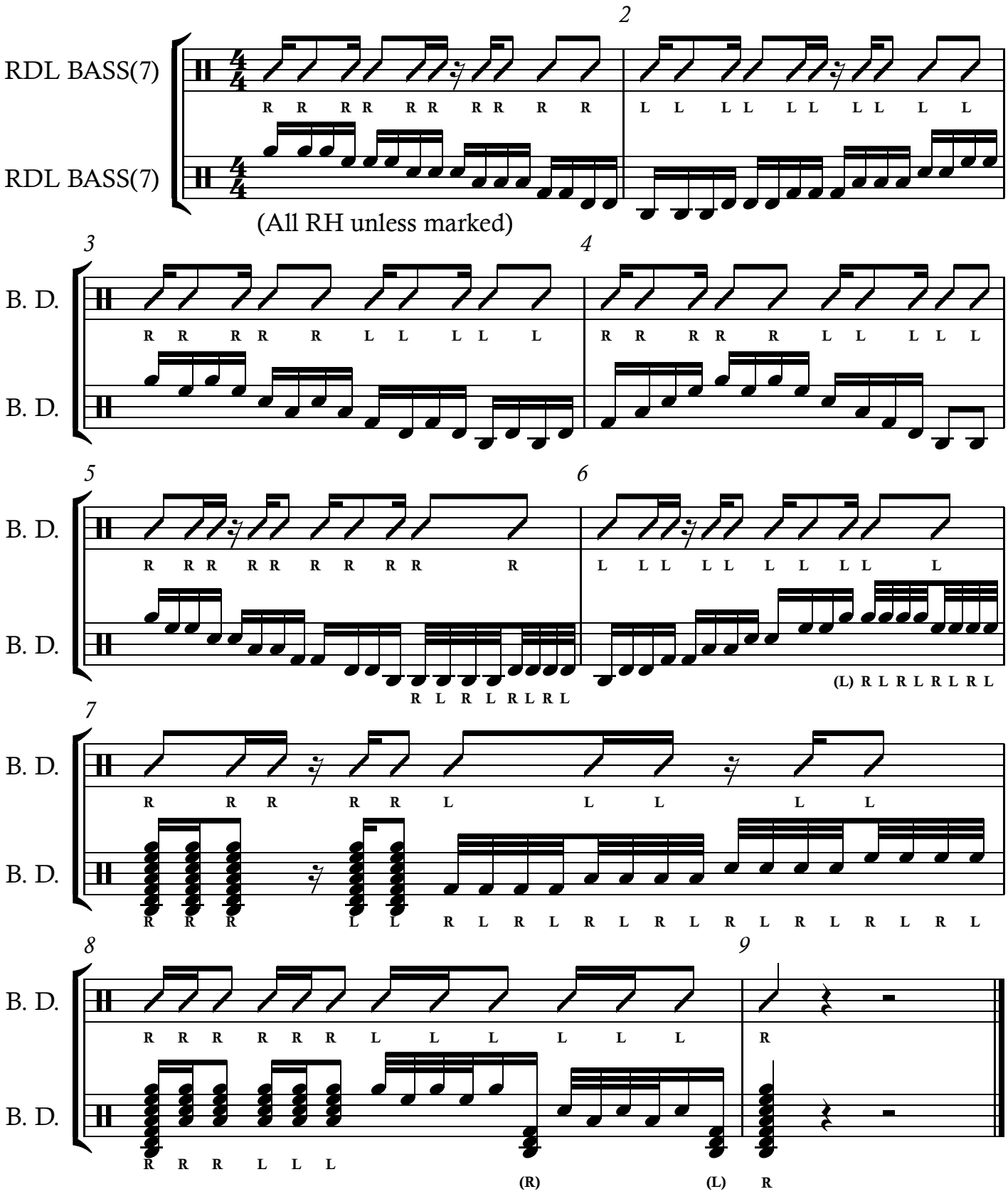


RDL BASS(7)

Hot Spring



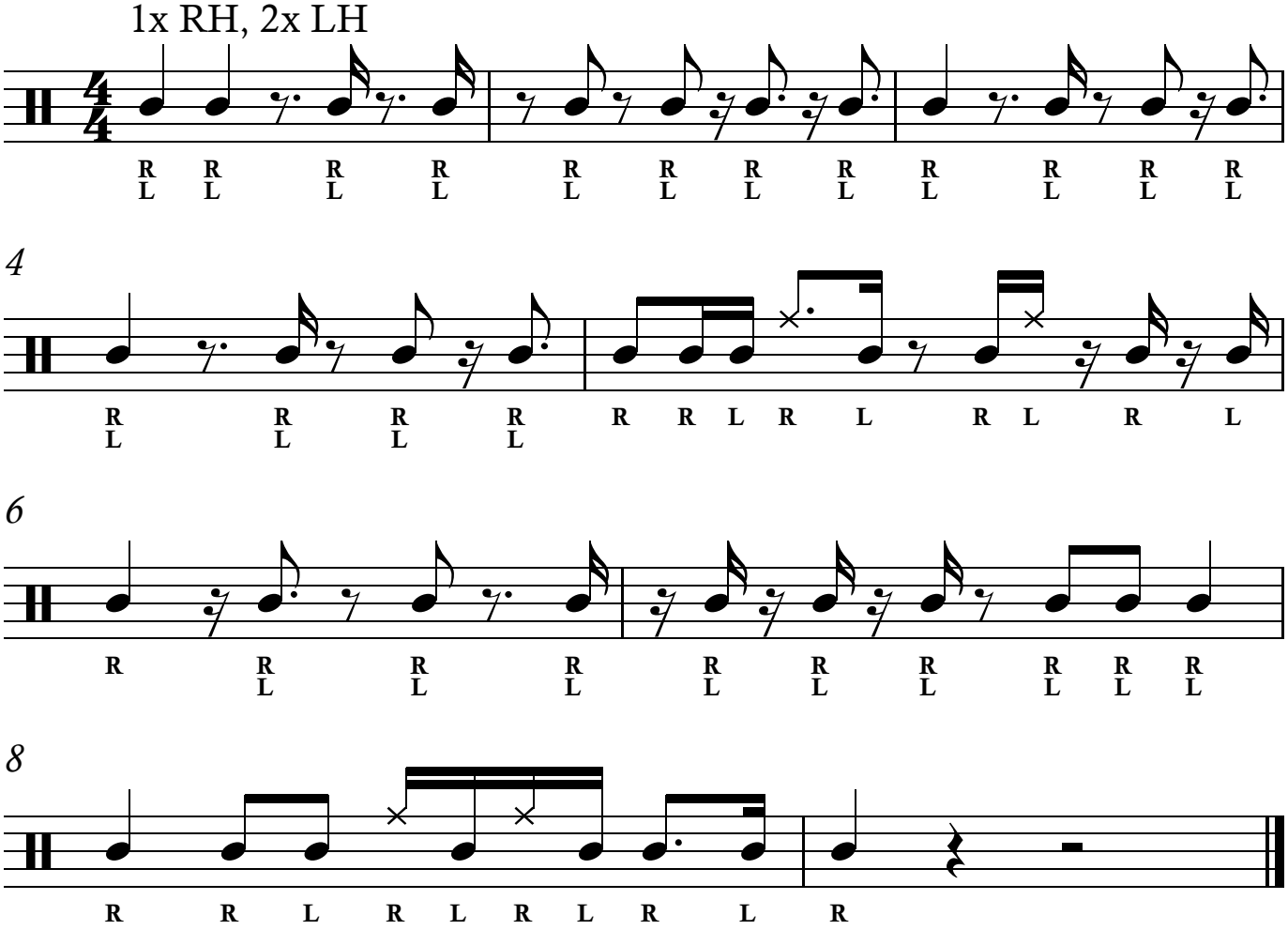
AB


2
RDL BASS(7)
R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R
L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L
RDL BASS(7)
(All RH unless marked)
3
4
B. D.
R R R R R L L L L L R R R R R L L L L L
B. D.
5
6
B. D.
R R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L
B. D.
R L R L R L R L
(L) R L R L R L R L
7
B. D.
R R R R R L L L L L
B. D.
R R R L L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
8
9
B. D.
R R R R R R L L L L L L R
B. D.
R R R L L L
(R)
(L)
R

Stick Control

RDL BASS(7)

1x RH, 2x LH

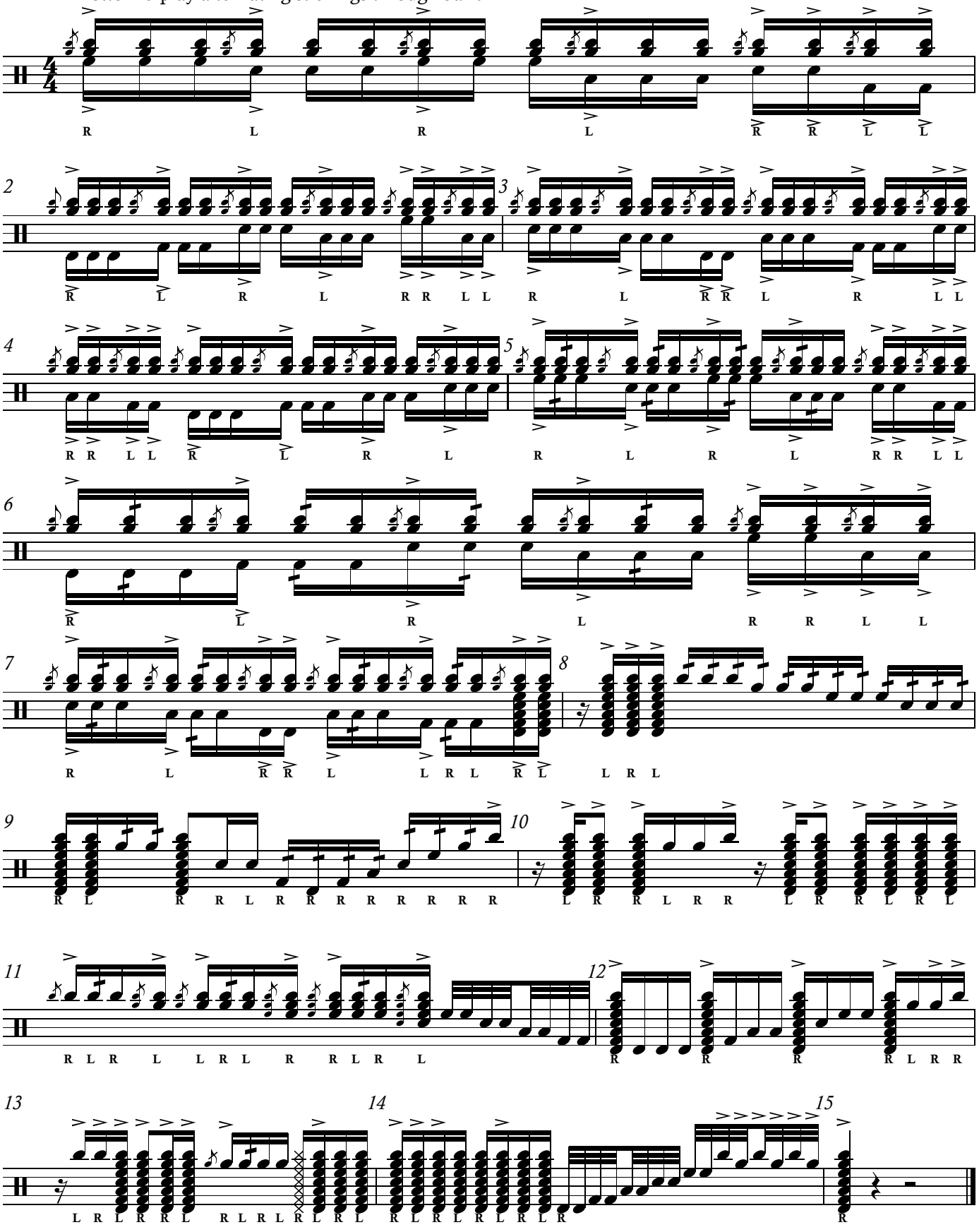


Flammus

♩=80-120

Murray Gusseck, ed. Chris Scherer

Bottom 5 play alternating stickings through bar 7

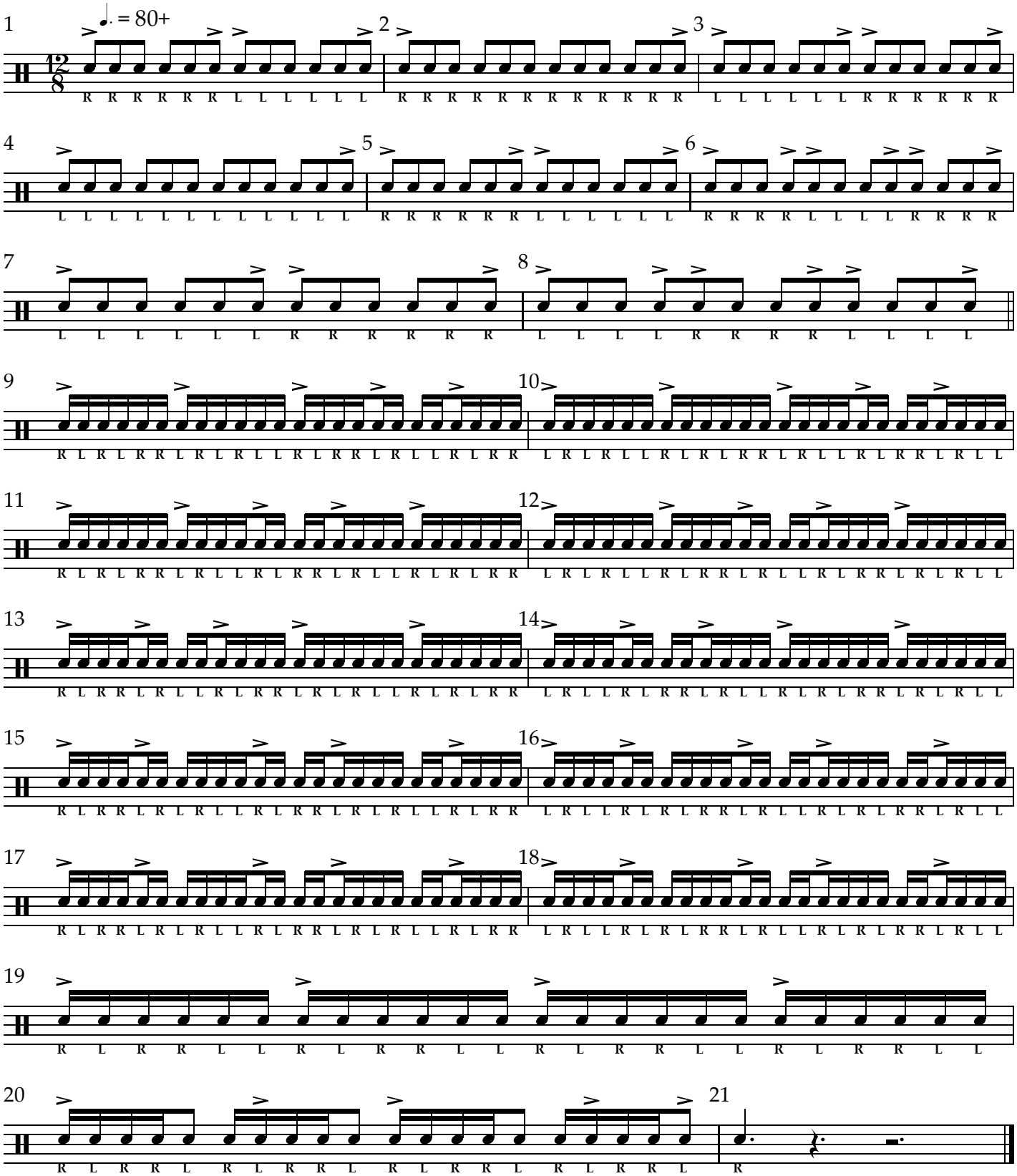


base12

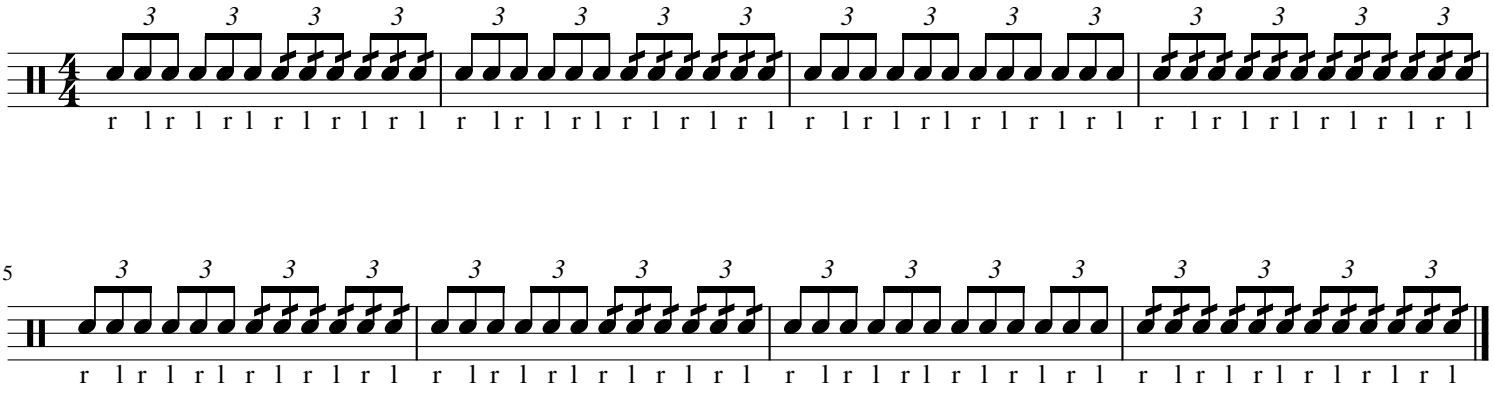
Variation 3 - Paradiddles

six12four
(with and without accents)

Chris Scherer



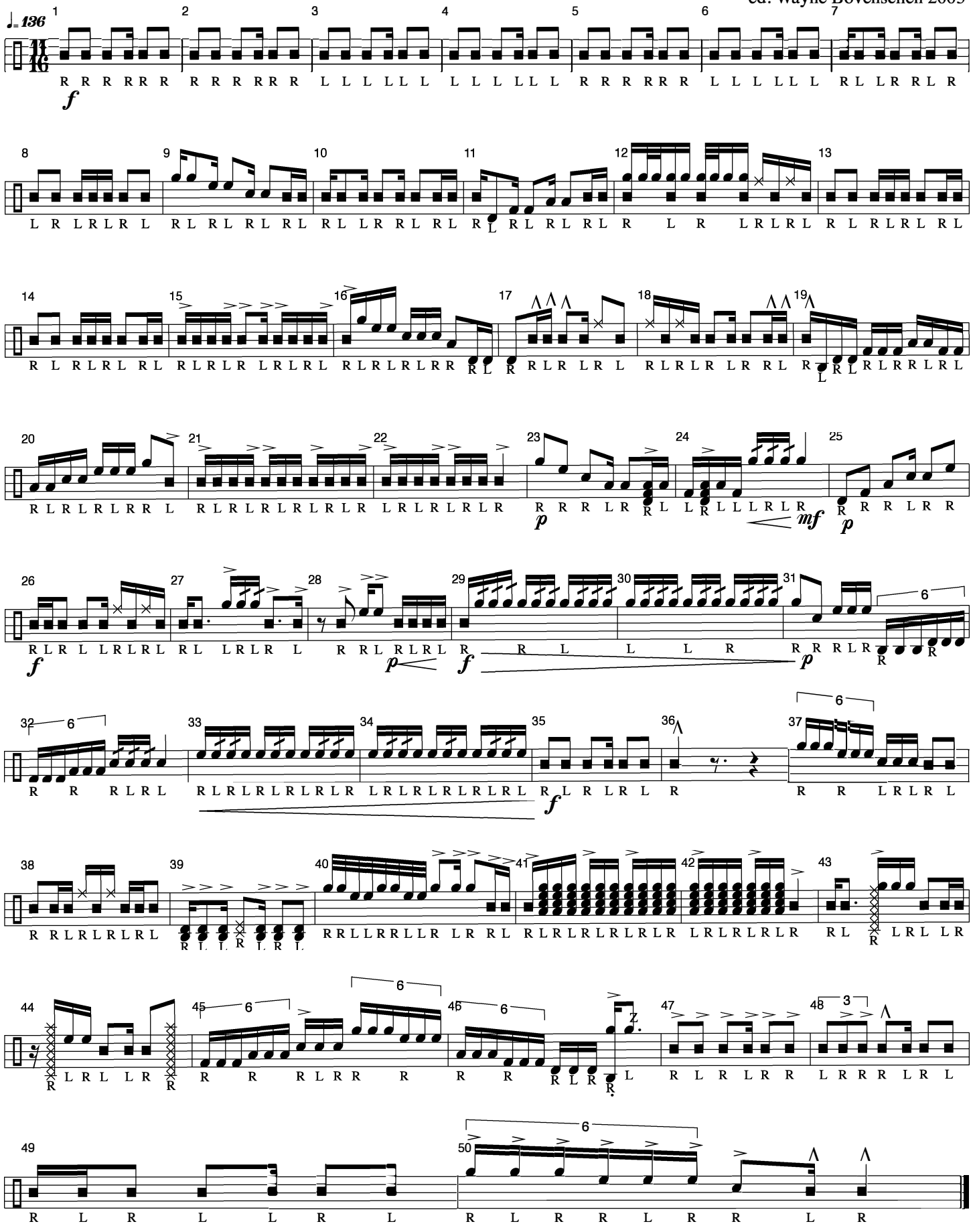
Short Short Long



Bass

Martian Mambo 2003

Murray Gusseck
ed. Jon Weber 2000
ed. Wayne Bovenschen 2003



Cymbals

31. Cymbal Cover Sheet
32. 8816 cymbal variations
    Tempos: 90-140 bpm
33. Hot Spring
    Tempos: 110-145bpm
34. Stick Control
    Tempos:85-110 bpm
35. Flammus
    Tempos: 80-110bpm
36. Timing Exercises (These will all help you playing other audition etudes, but we will ONLY play the following listed exercises at auditions):
    Exercise 4: AB split, 3s and 2s
    Exercise 9: 16th grid, unison
    Exercise 12a: 16th-32nd HOGS splits, groups of 2
    Exercise 13: Rhythmic Alterations in 11/16
    Exercise 13b: 16th-32nd split in 11/16 4-group splits (Sightreading)

Expect to move your feet to everything except Timing 13 & 13b
Expect to make changes on the fly

We are looking for students with solid timing and solid feet, but most importantly, we are looking for students with a **great attitude** who can take feedback and adapt quickly.

For cymbal auditions, we are less concerned with students knowing our cymbal technique than we are with your ability to read splits and learn and adapt quickly.

Expect to read any part of the splits.

8/8/16

Ed. Yamashita

george washington

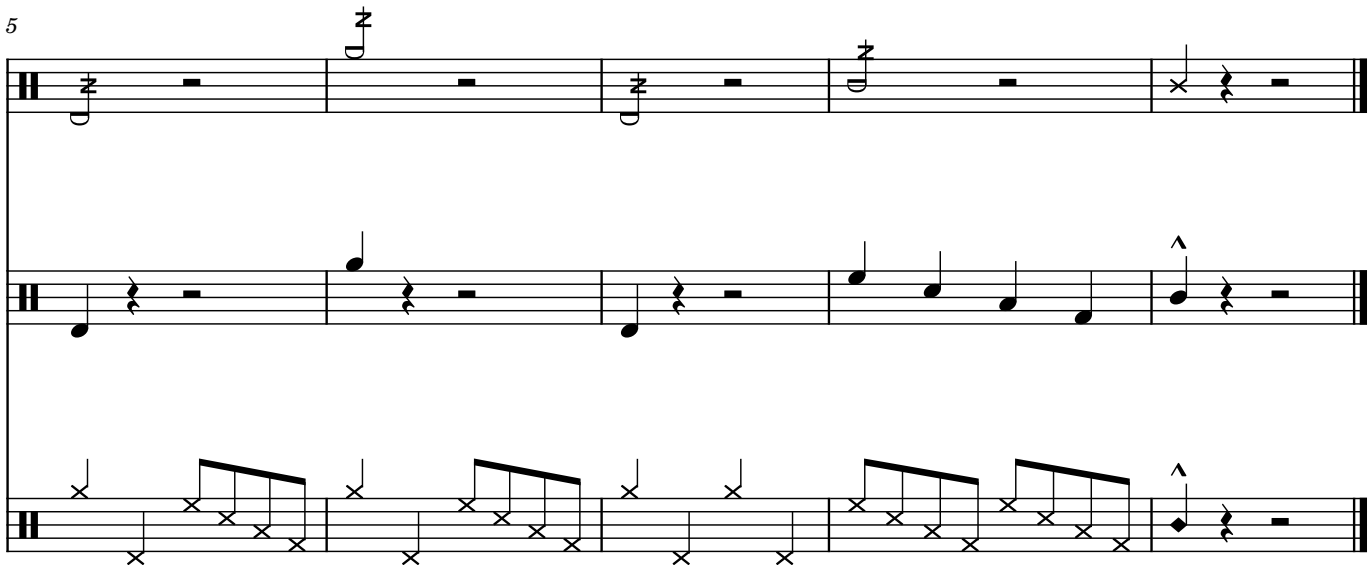
Play vars. in order, tacet 4th time

Var. I

All crashes have preps

Var. II

Var. III

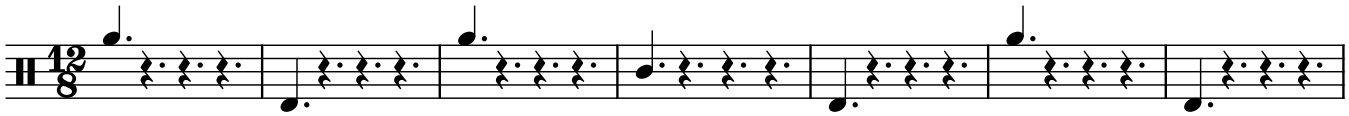


Hot Spring

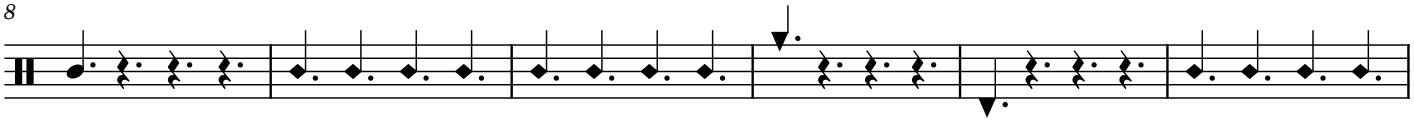
Ed. Yamashita

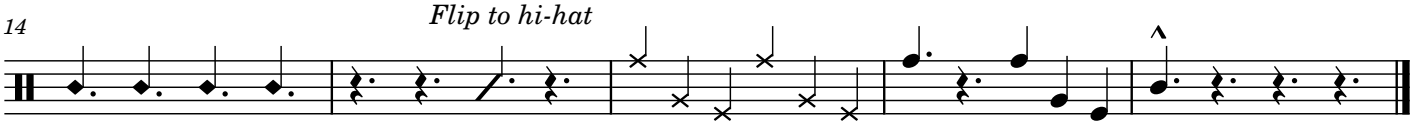
george washington

In standard until marked



Note: all standard crashes have A-V preps



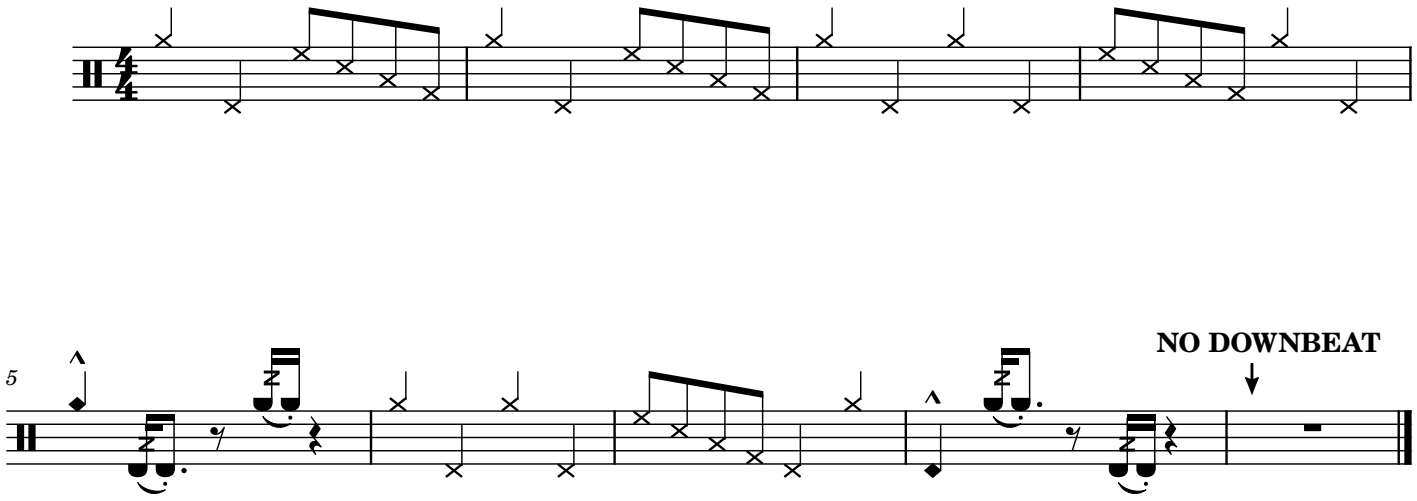


(in orchestral position, no preps)

Stick Control

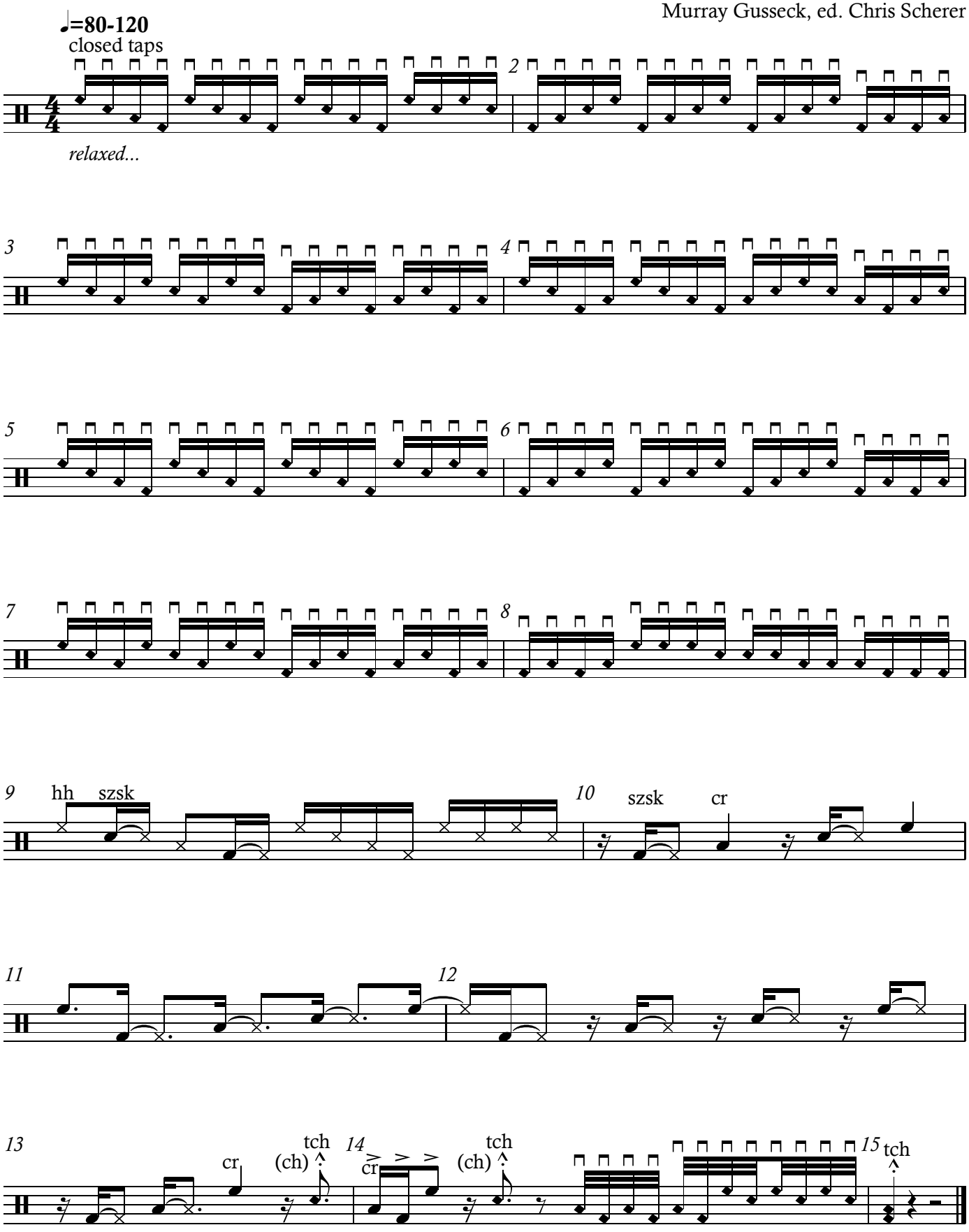
Ed. Yamashita

george washington



Flammus

Murray Gusseck, ed. Chris Scherer



RMB Cymbals 2025

Timing Exercises

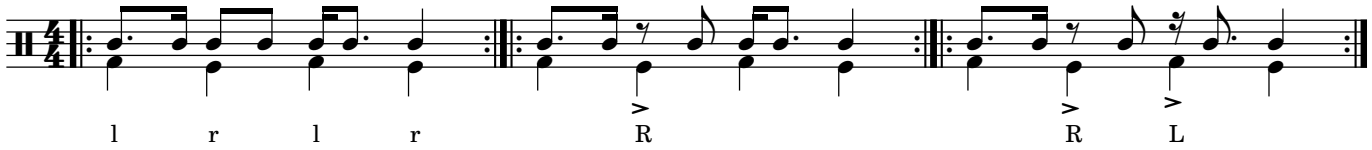
All exercises with repeated measures/sections:
At first, play each repeated measure/section until it is rhythmically secure.
When secure, repeats may be omitted to facilitate efficiency.

"Don't practice until you can play it right, practice until you can't play it wrong"

Yamashita
2023
rev. 2024, 2025

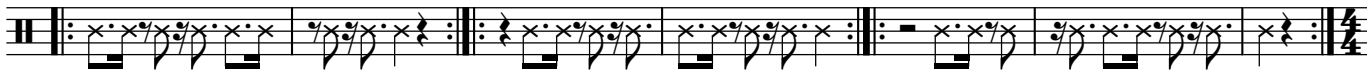
Exercise 1a: 4 over 3 pattern (Chop City)

CLAP top line.
♩ = 60-135 Audibly mark time bottom line. This is so you can hear and feel downbeats.



Exercise 1b: 4 over 3 pattern, permutation in 2s

♩ = 60-135 Clap or play with cymbals. Mark time normally.

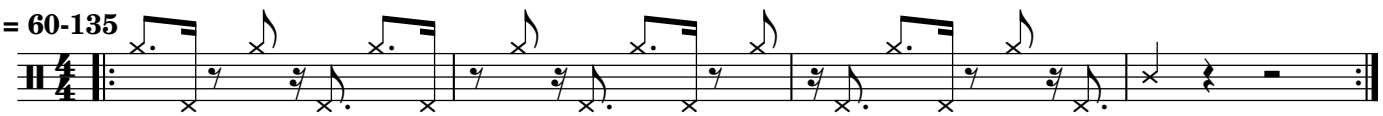


(starting on 1, starting on 4) *(starting on 2, starting on 1)* *(starting on 3, starting on 2)*

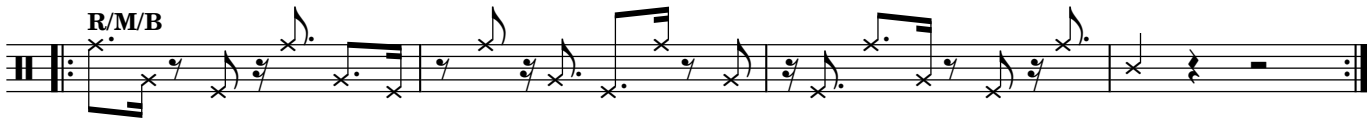
Exercise 2: 4 over 3 pattern, splits

A/B *(also play with open taps, sizz, orchestral, tap-chokes)* *(re-count-off between sections if needed)*

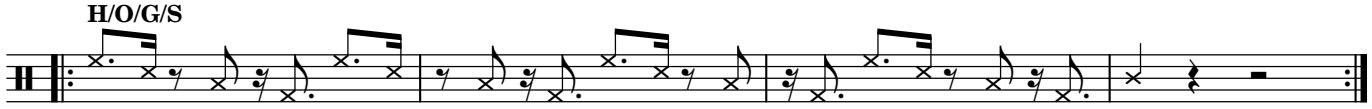
♩ = 60-135



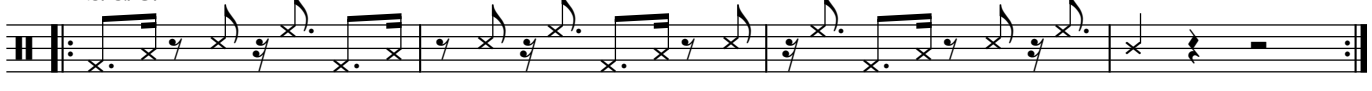
R/M/B



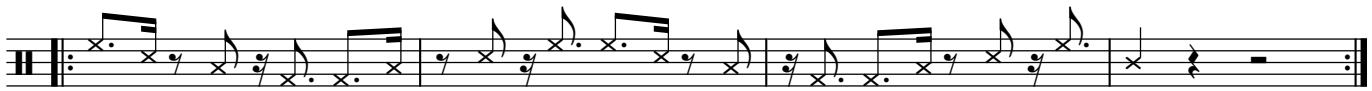
H/O/G/S



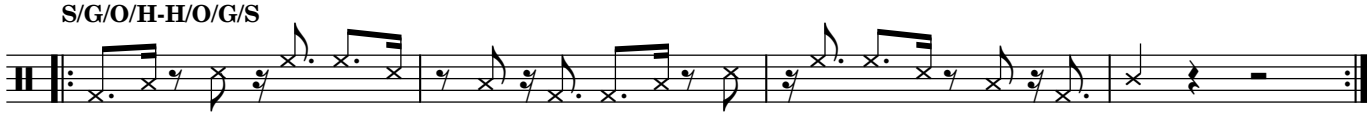
S/G/O/H



H/O/G/S-S/G/O/H

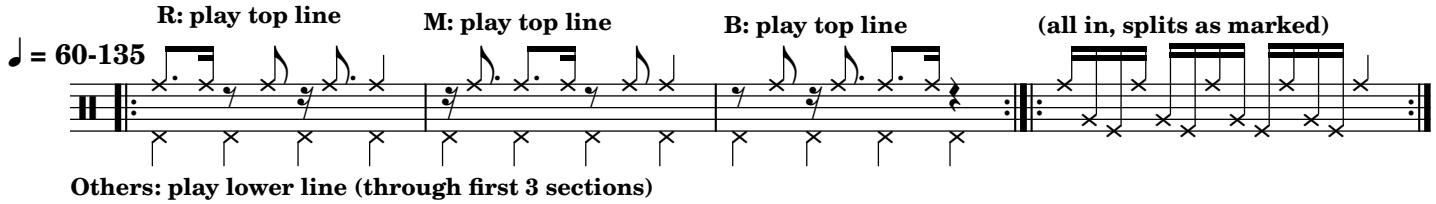


S/G/O/H-H/O/G/S

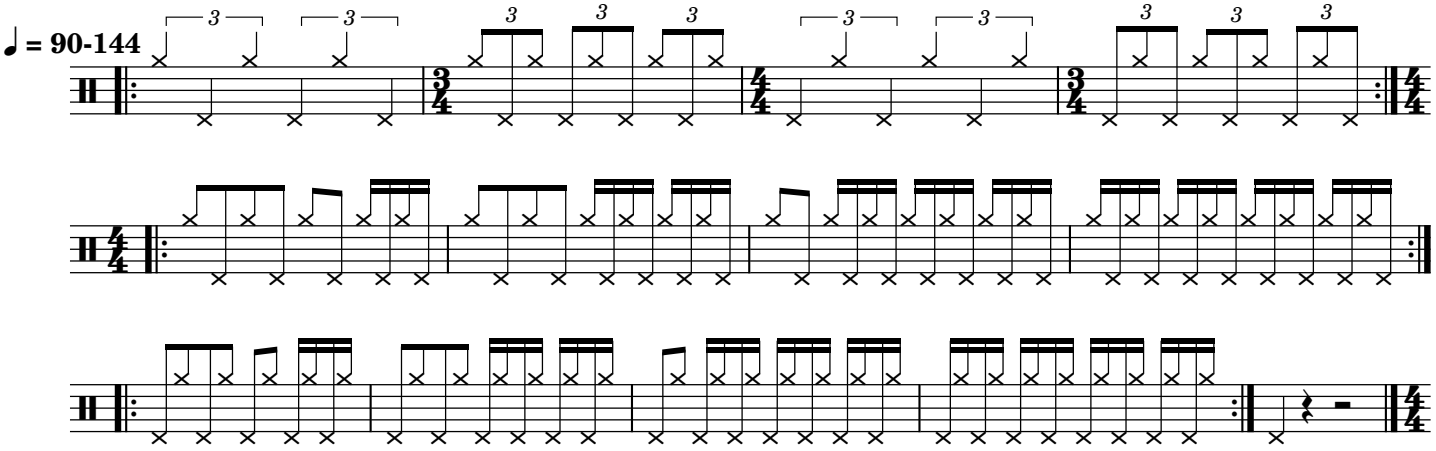


Note: The exercises in this packet are not arranged by difficulty or complexity.
They are listed in the order in which they were written.

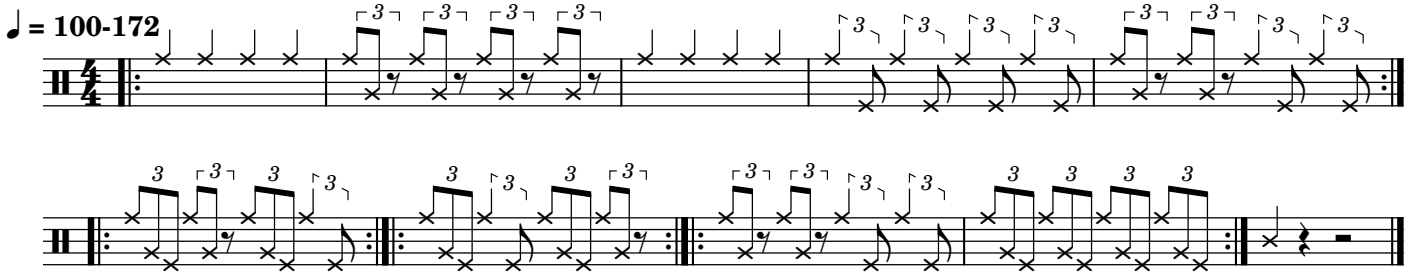
Exercise 3: 4 over 3 pattern, split 16th notes (RMB, 4s)



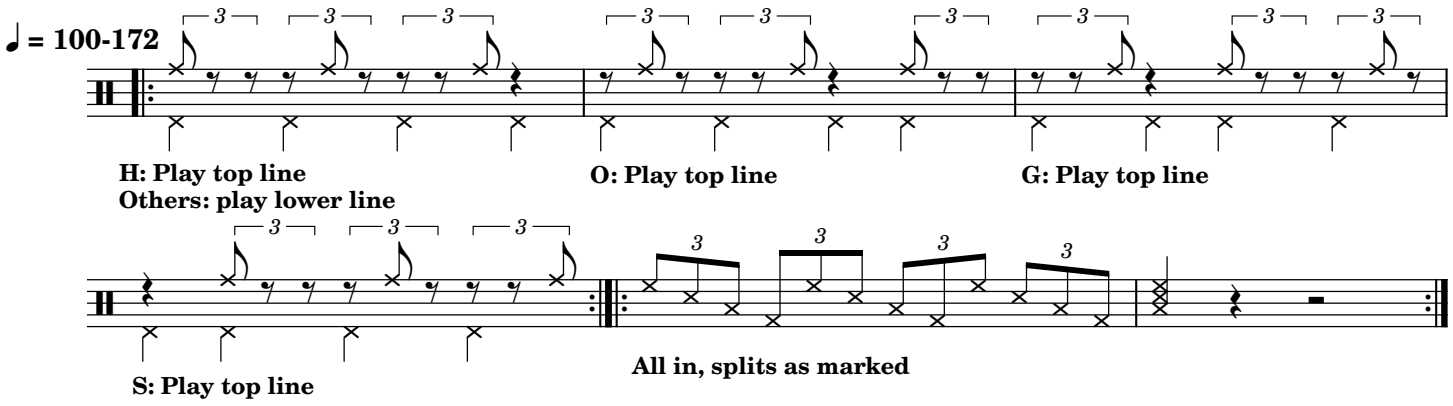
Exercise 4: AB split, 3s and 2s



Exercise 5: RMB split, 3s (for 4s refer to Exercise 3)

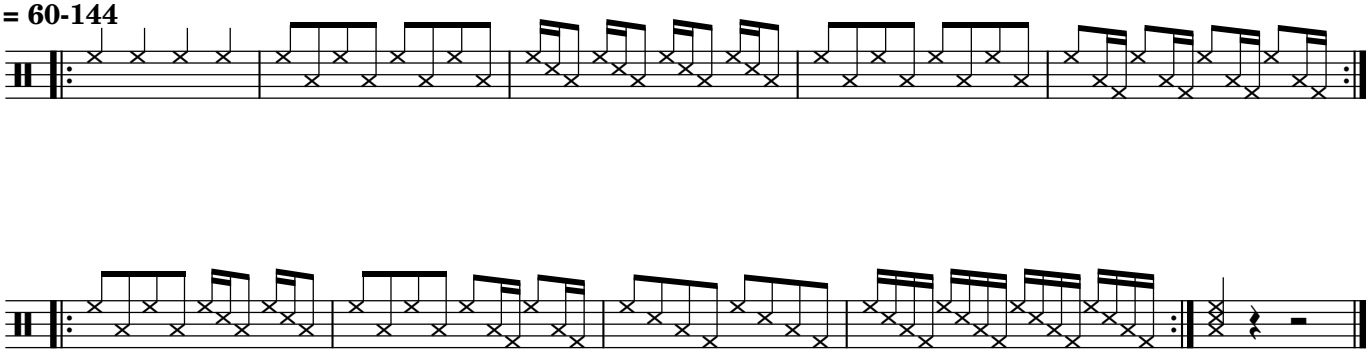


Exercise 6: HOGS split, 3s (4 over 3)



Exercise 7: HOGS split, 4s

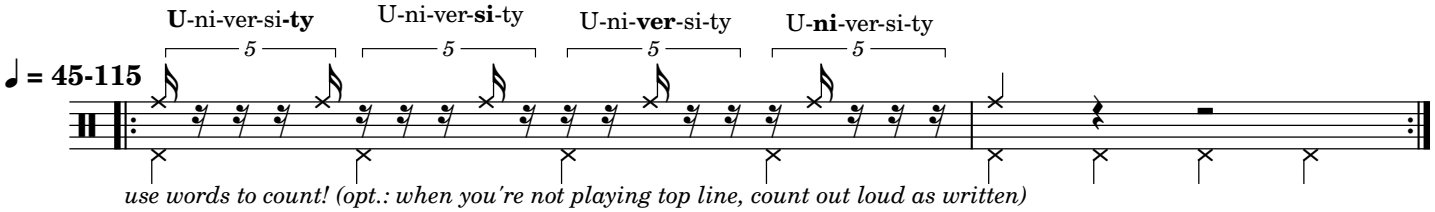
♩ = 60-144



Exercise 8: HOGS split, 5s

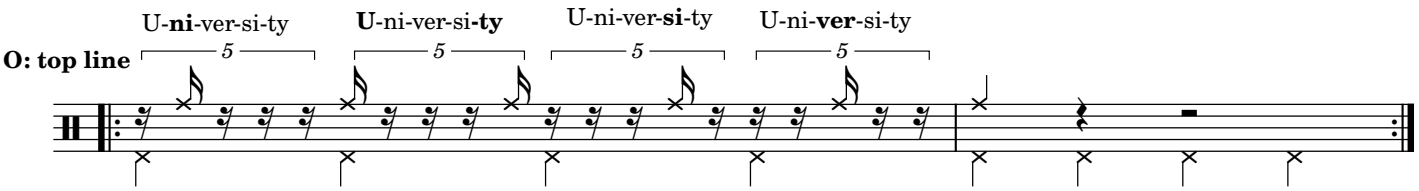
H: top line; others, lower

♩ = 45-115

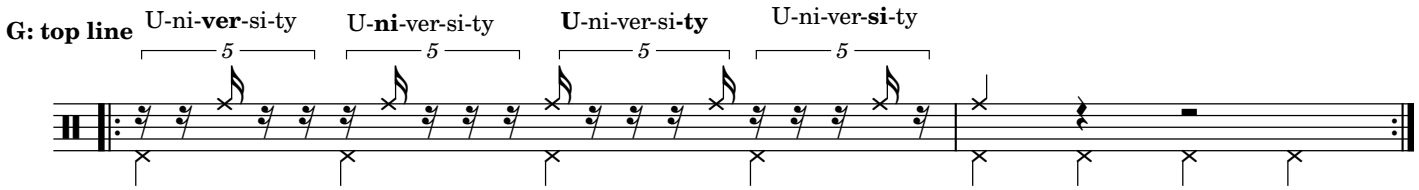


use words to count! (opt.: when you're not playing top line, count out loud as written)

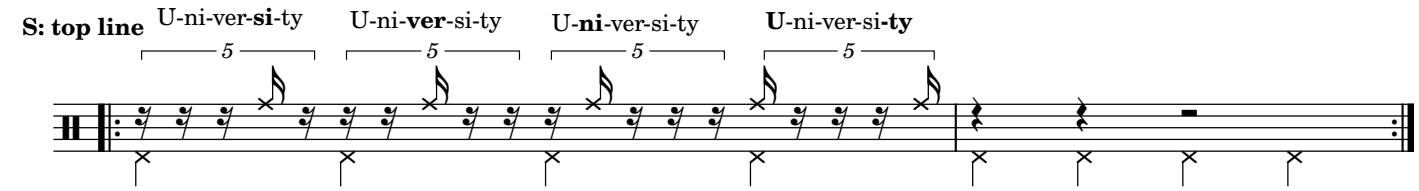
O: top line



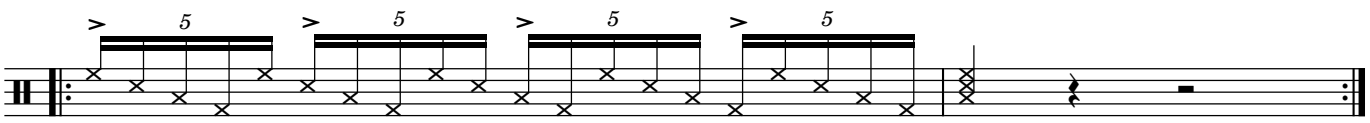
G: top line



S: top line



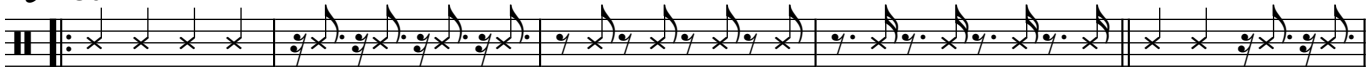
(all in, splits as marked)



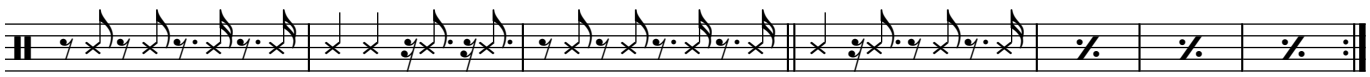
RDL Cymbals: Timing

Exercise 9: 16th grid, unison

♩ = 80-144

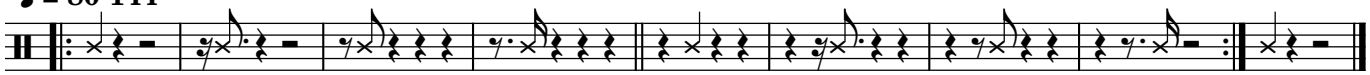


(opt for all exercises in this section: 1 person play quarter notes underneath)



Exercise 9a: 16th grid, isolated single notes on even/odd counts

♩ = 80-144

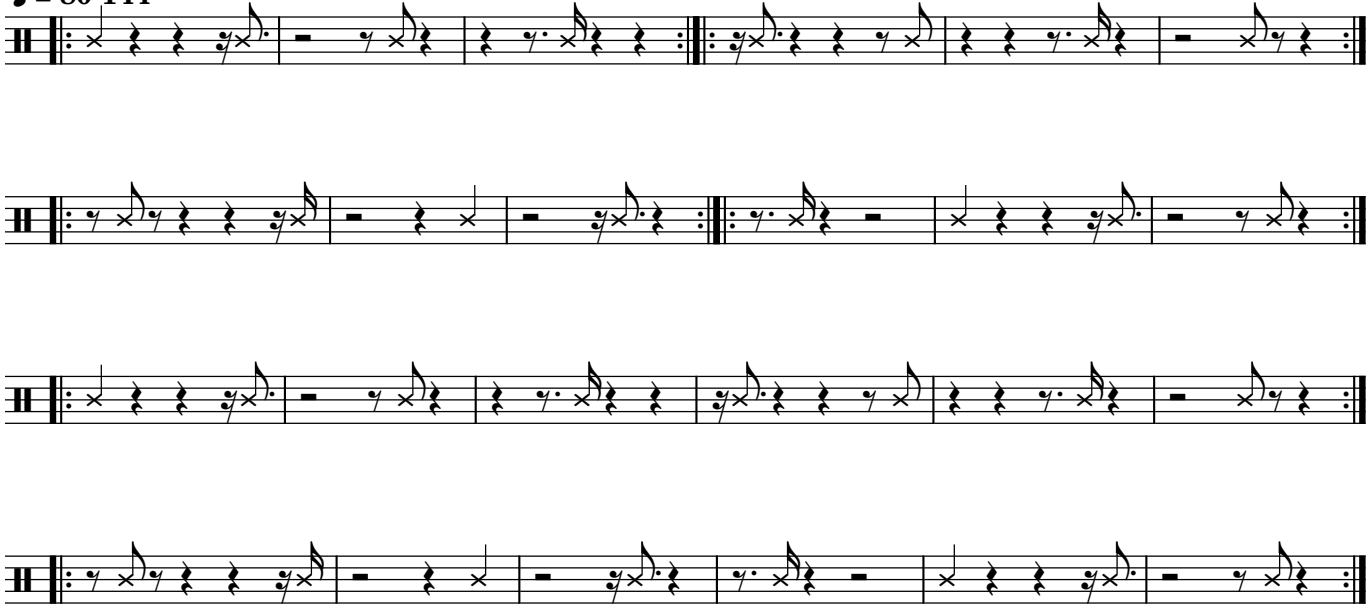


starting on odd beats (L mark time) *starting on even beats (R mark time)*

Exercise 9b: 16th grid, isolated single notes with 3-beat permutation

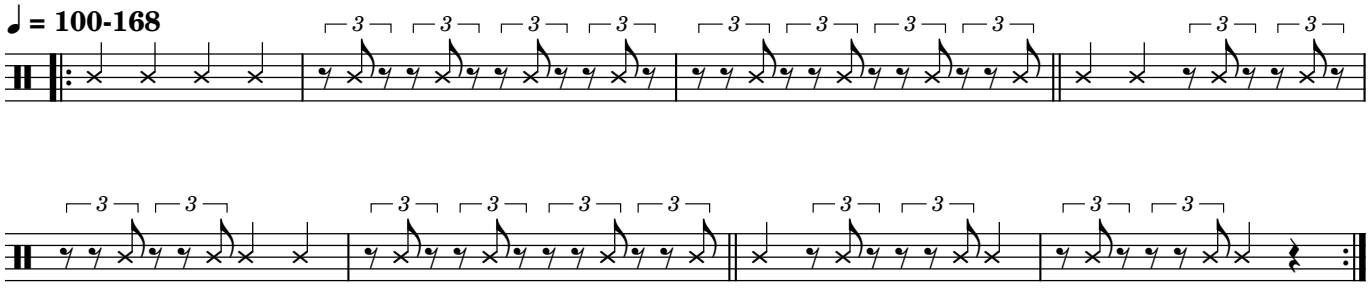
Variation: Split each note value thru H-O-G-S (eg. H = 𝅗𝅥, O = 𝅝., G = ♪, S = 𝅘𝅥𝅯 or similar)

♩ = 80-144



Exercise 10: Triplet grid, unison

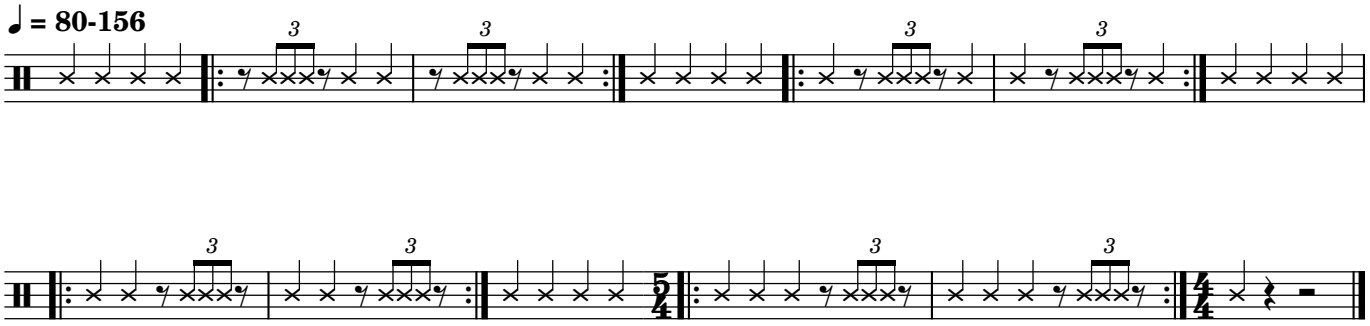
♩ = 100-168



RDL Cymbals: Timing

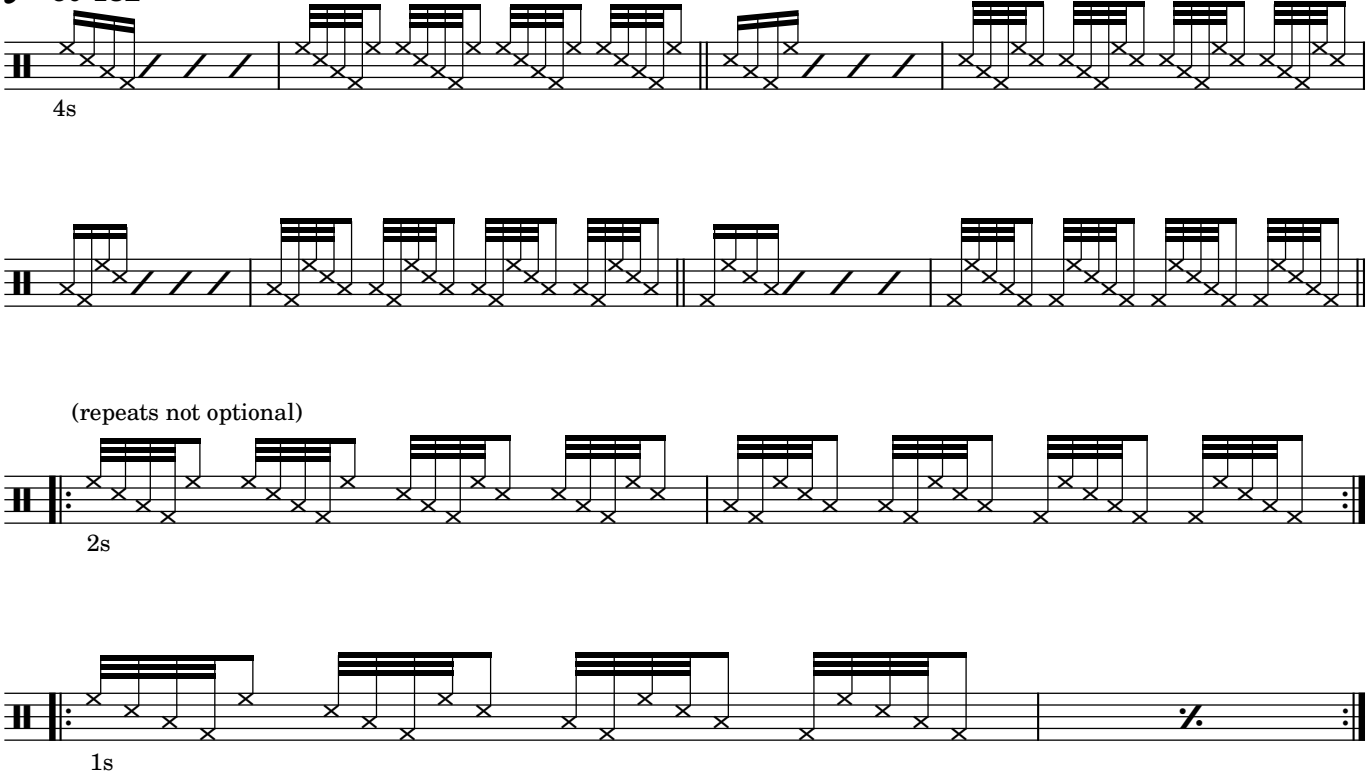
Exercise 11: Offbeat triplets

♩ = 80-156



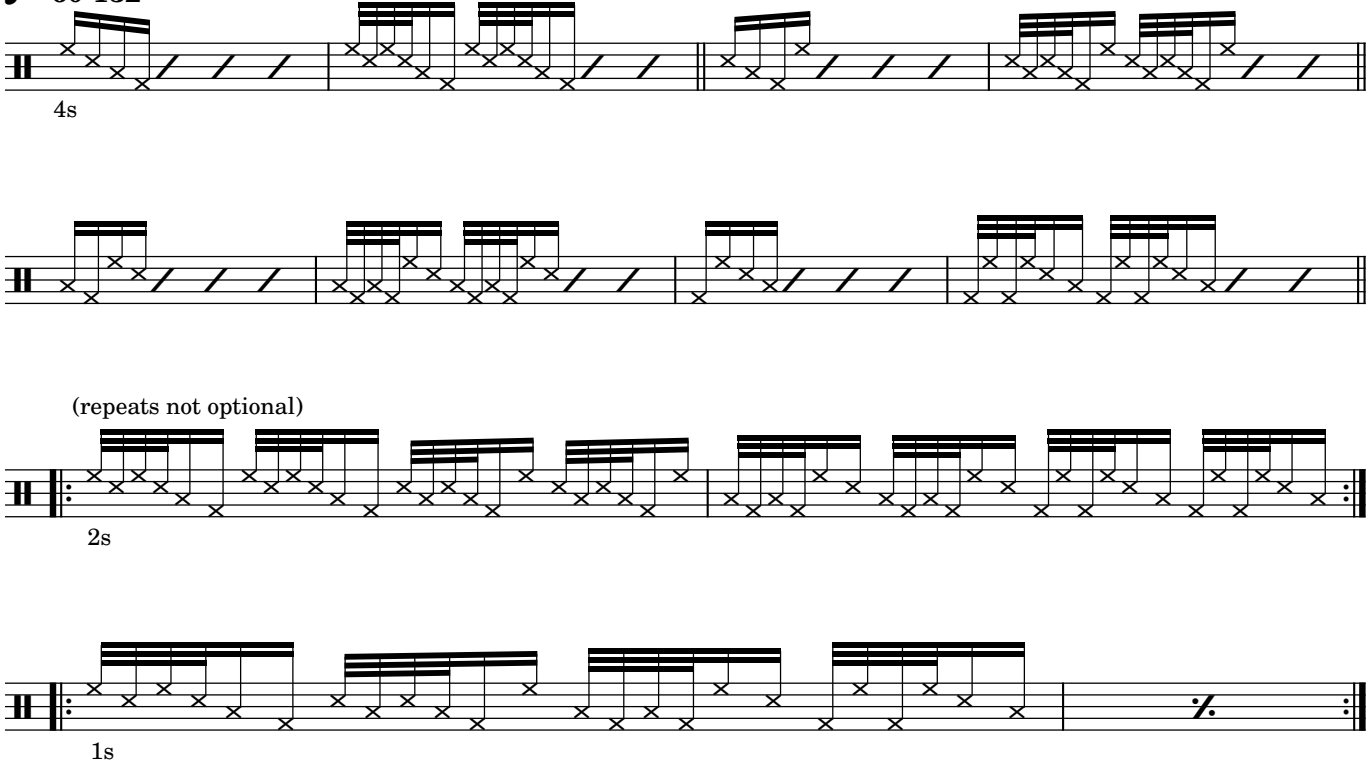
Exercise 12: 16th-32nd H/O/G/S splits, 4-2-1 grid

♩ = 60-132



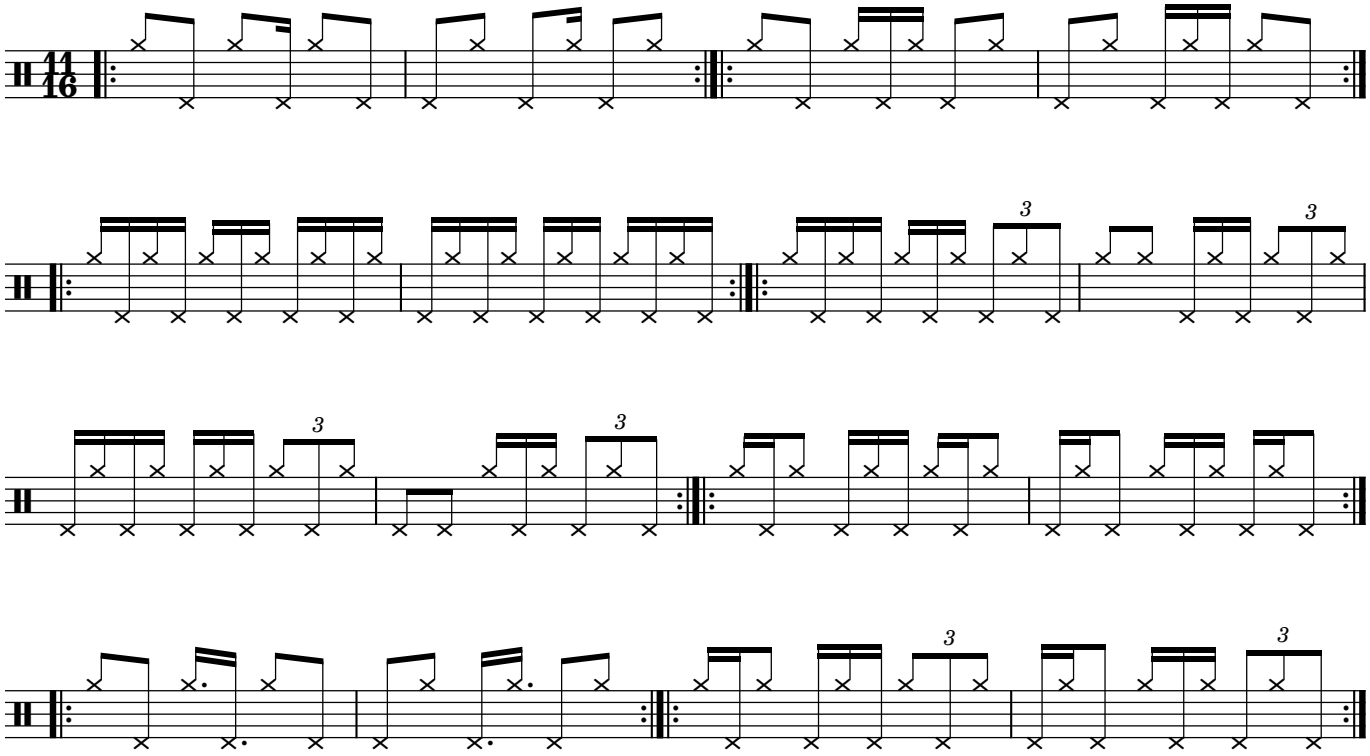
Exercise 12a: 16th-32nd H/O/G/S splits, groups of 2, 4-2-1 grid

♩ = 60-132

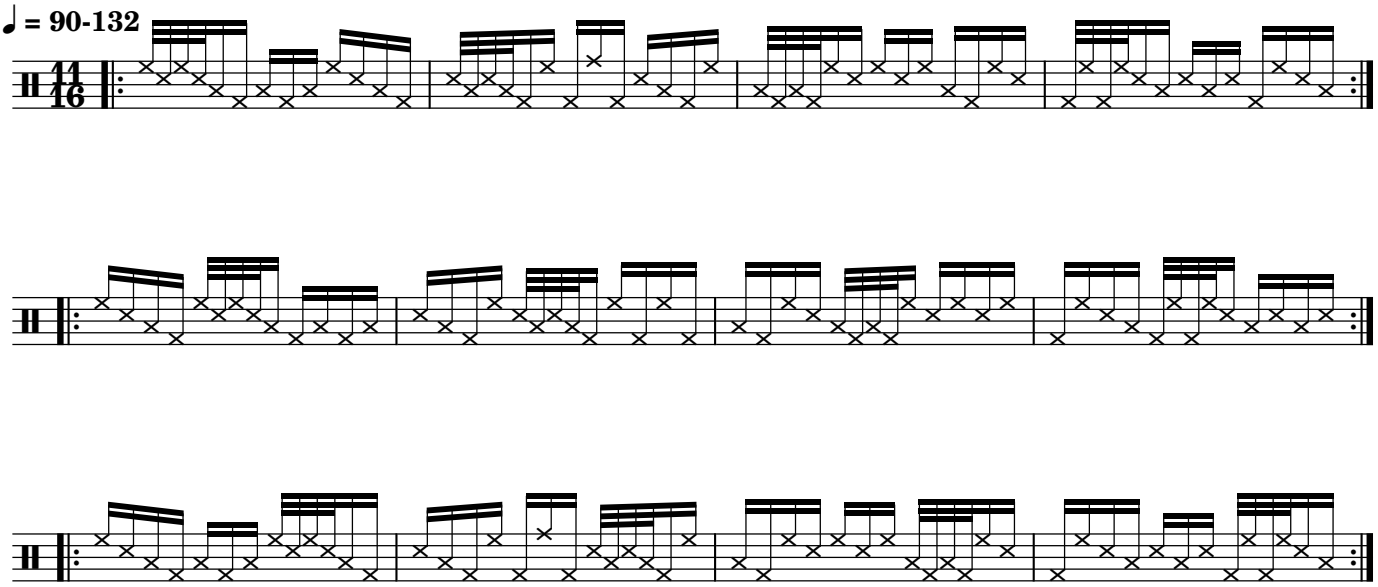


Exercise 13: Rhythmic alterations in 11/16 time (4+3+4, *ala* Martian Mambo)

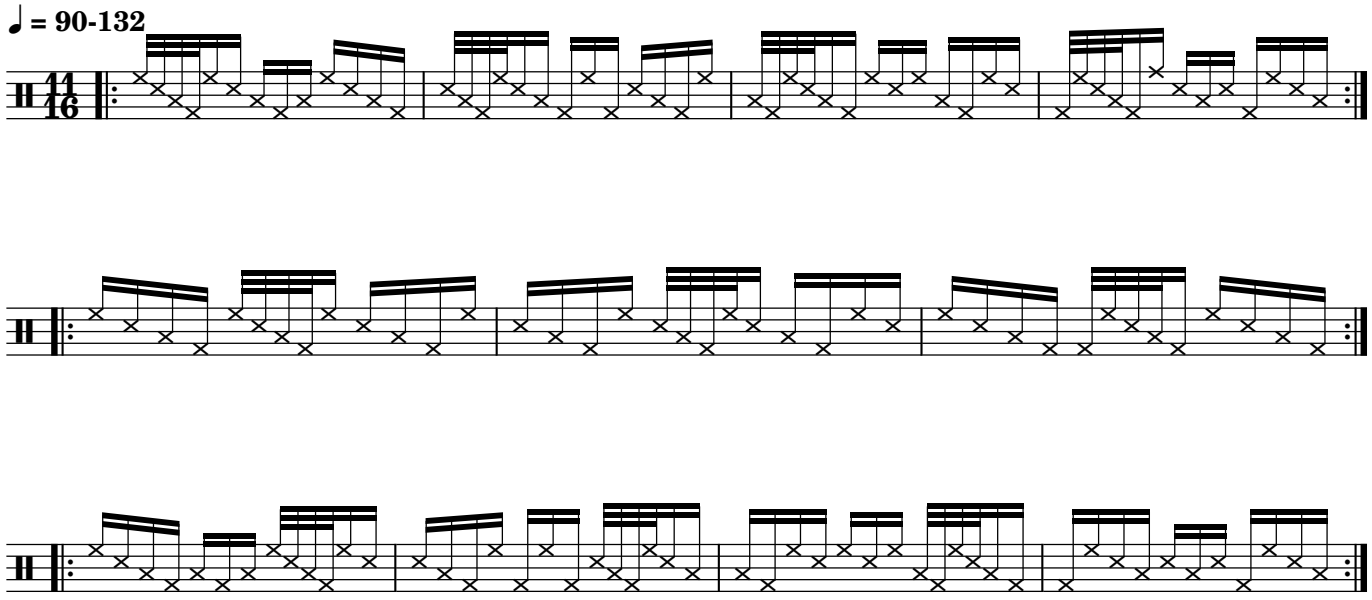
♩ = 120-132 (repeats opt. as stated on pg. 1)



Exercise 13a: 16th-32nd splits in 11/16 time, 2-group split (4+3+4, *ala* Martian Mambo)



Exercise 13b: 16th-32nd splits in 11/16 time, 4-group split (4+3+4, *ala* Martian Mambo)



Front Ensemble

37. Front Ensemble Cover Sheet
38. Front Ensemble General 2-Mallet Exercises (ALL KEYS)
    Tempos: 80-140
39. Snapple (Short)
    Tempos: 110+
40. Hot Spring
    Tempos: 154
41. Horology (audition excerpt) (choose top or bottom)
    Tempos: 165+
42. Front Ensemble General 4-Mallet Exercises
    Tempos: 80-140

(Sight Reading)

We are looking for students with solid timing, solid technique, but most importantly, we are looking for students with a **great attitude** who can take feedback and adapt quickly. Expect to be challenged on your scale knowledge.

You MUST know your scales.

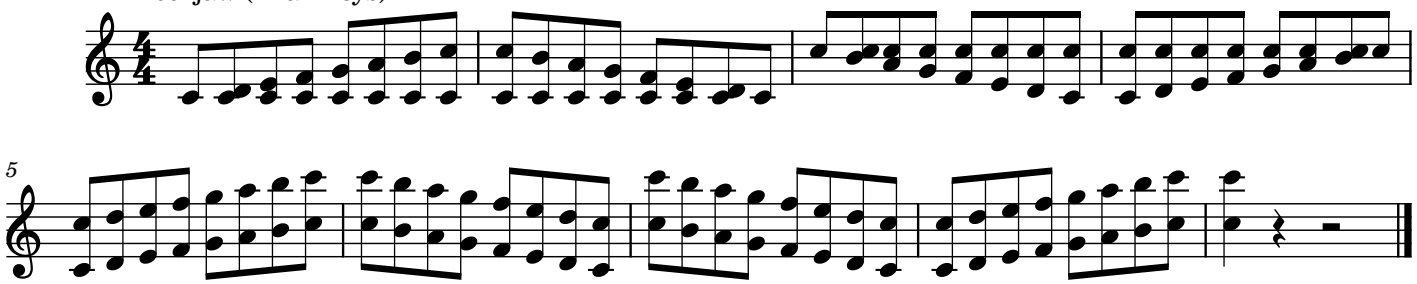
4-mallet experience is NOT required, but is preferred.

RDL Front Ensemble

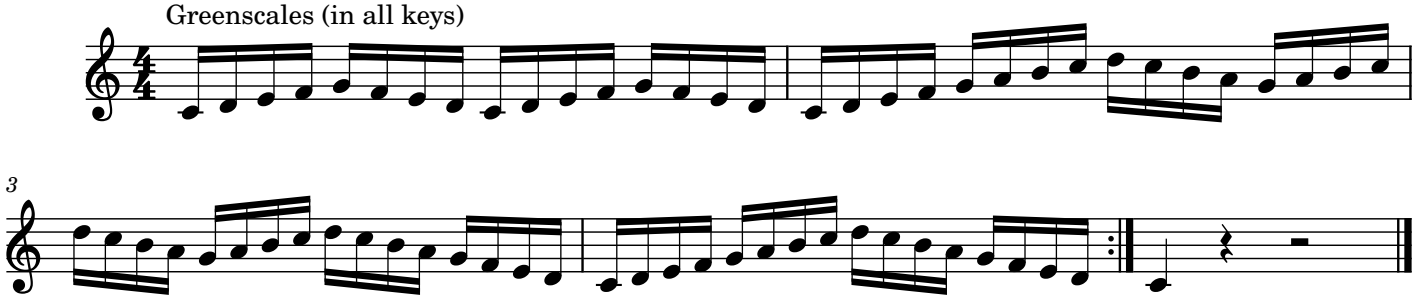
General Exercises for 2 Mallets

♩ = 80-140

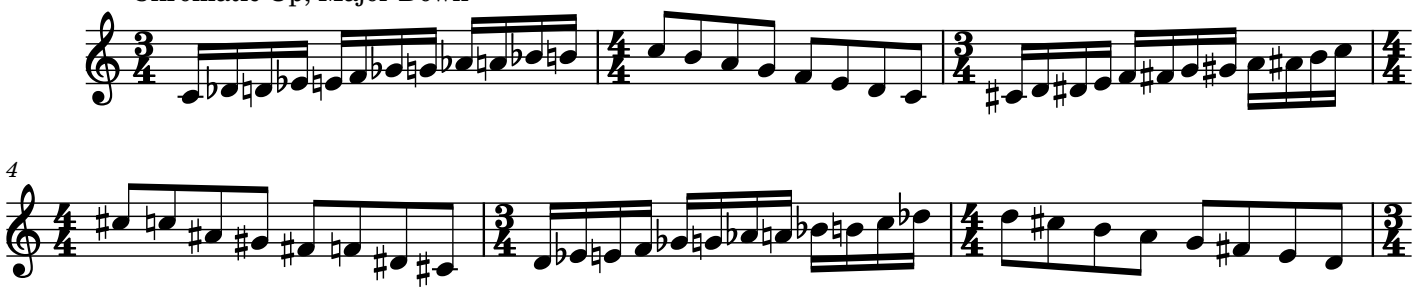
Lockjaw (in all keys)



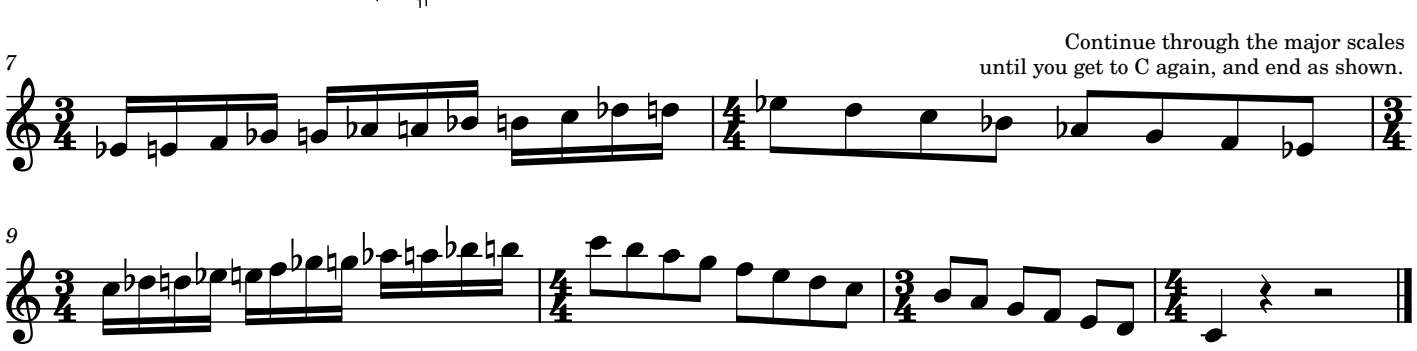
Greenscales (in all keys)



Chromatic Up, Major Down

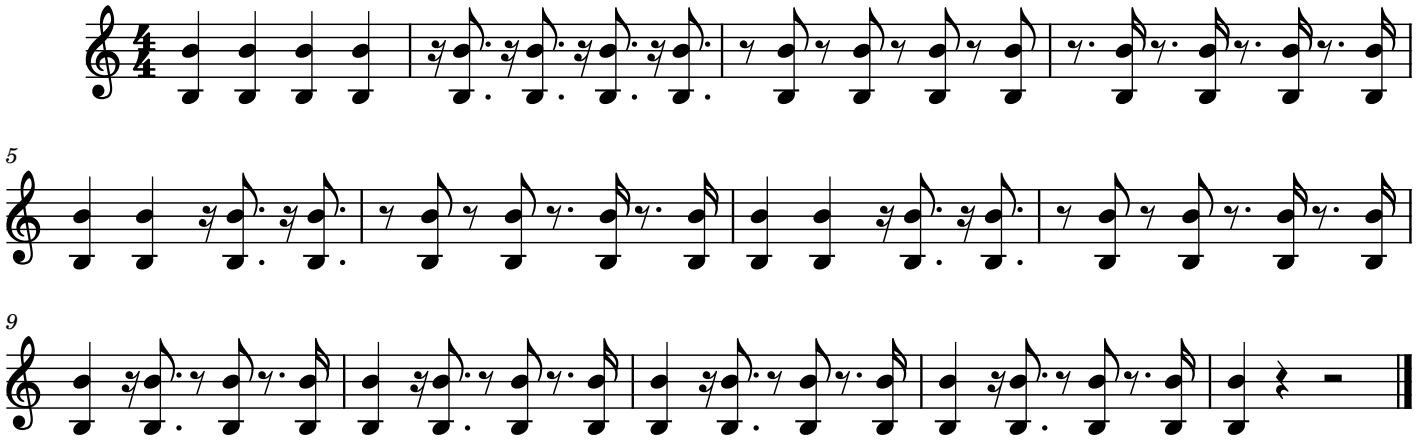


Continue through the major scales
until you get to C again, and end as shown.

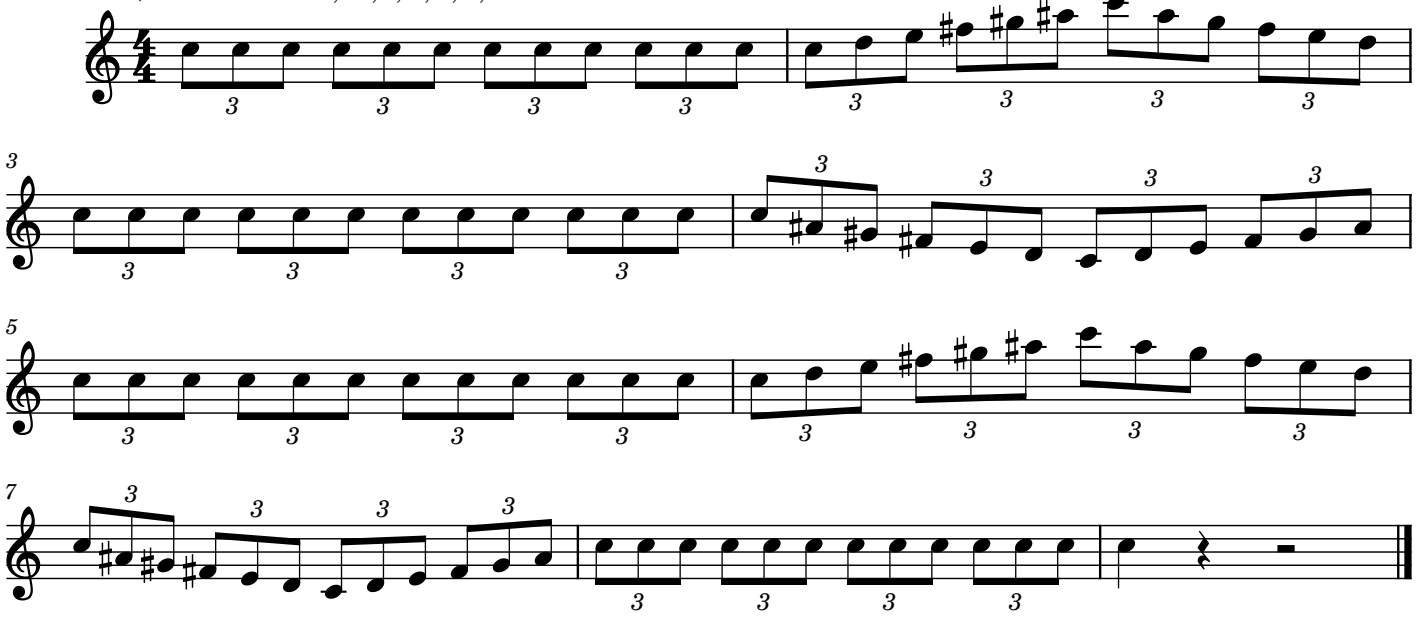


2

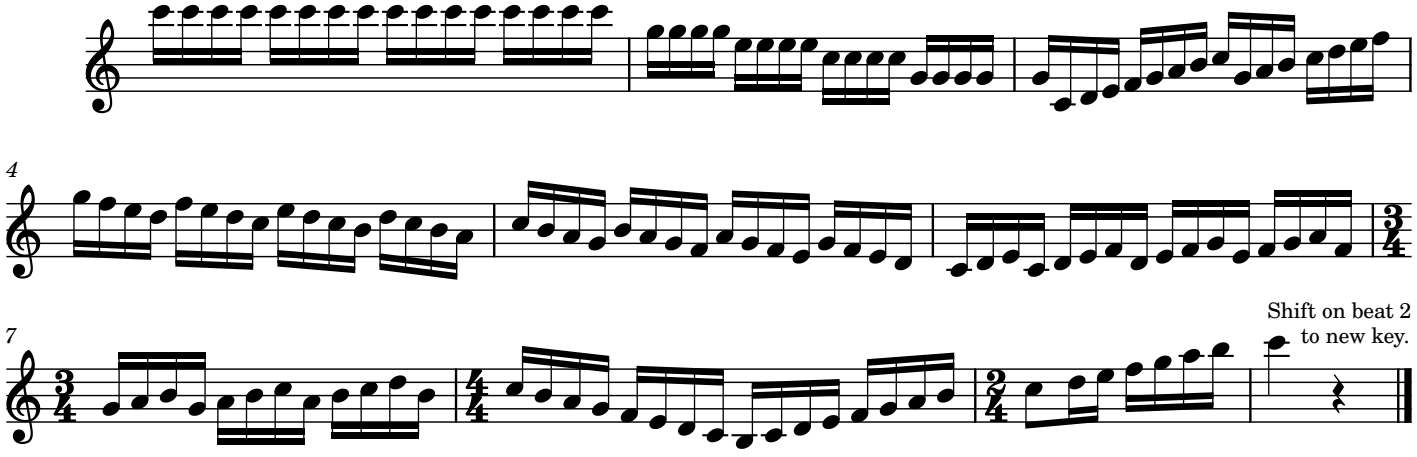
Time



Whole Tone (0) Triplets
(also learn WT1: Db, Eb, F, G, A, B, and Db

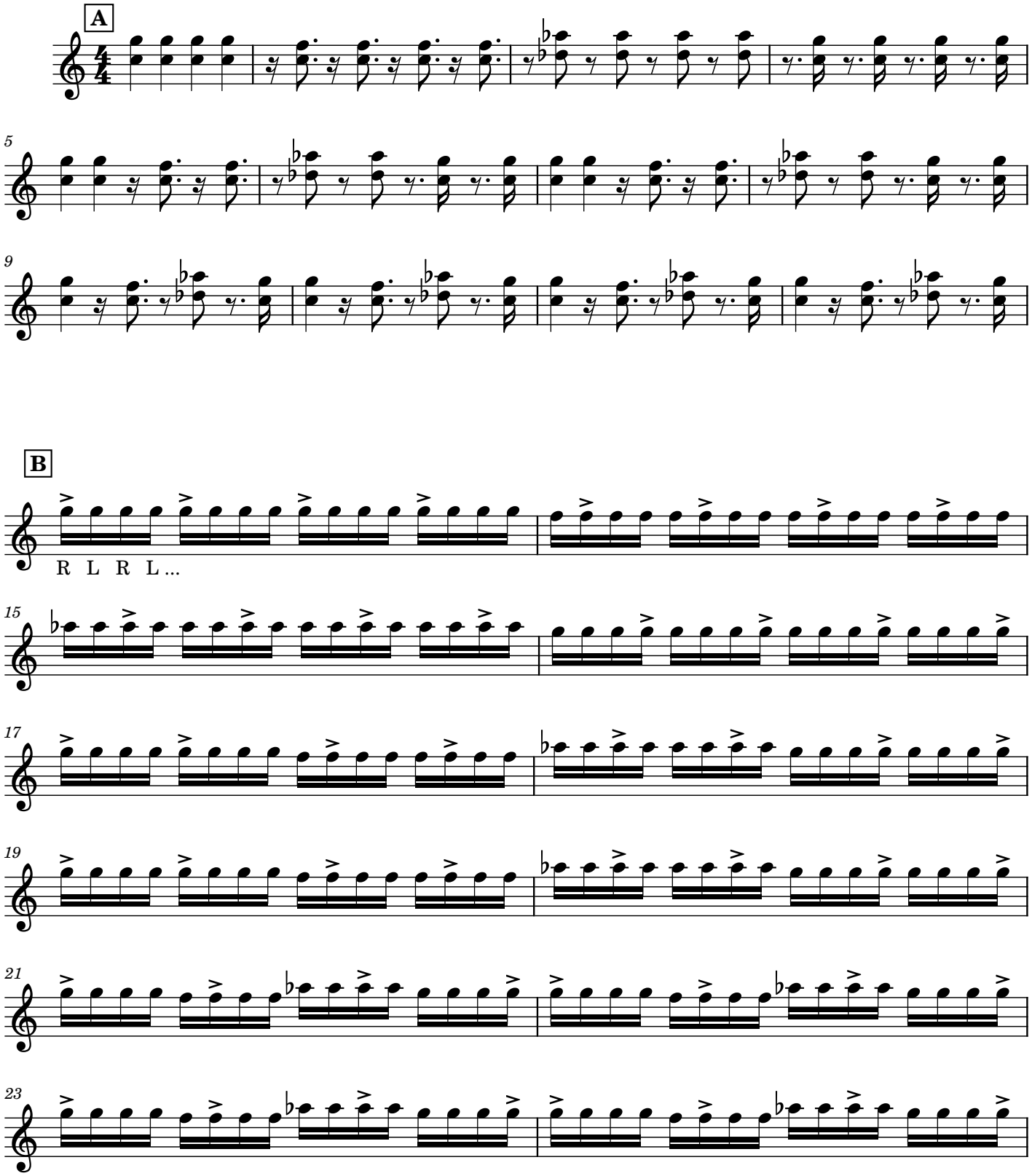


Dirt (in all keys)



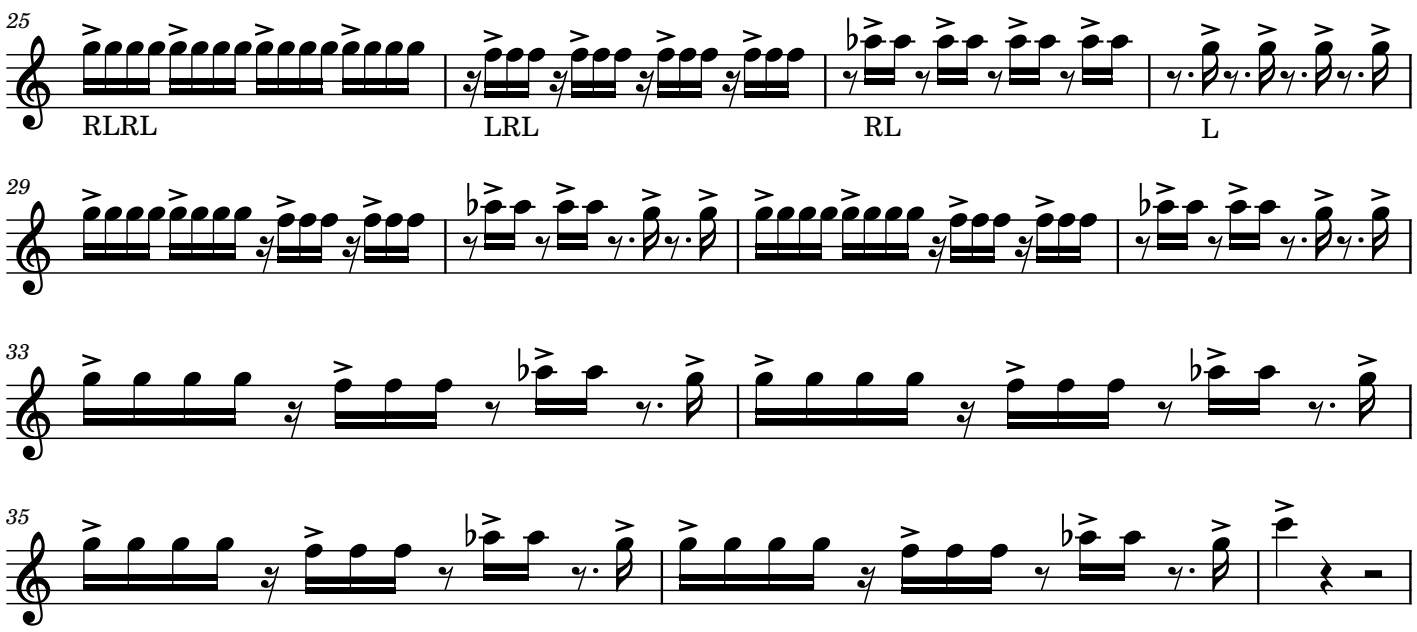
Snapple

Sixteenth/Triplet Grid Version

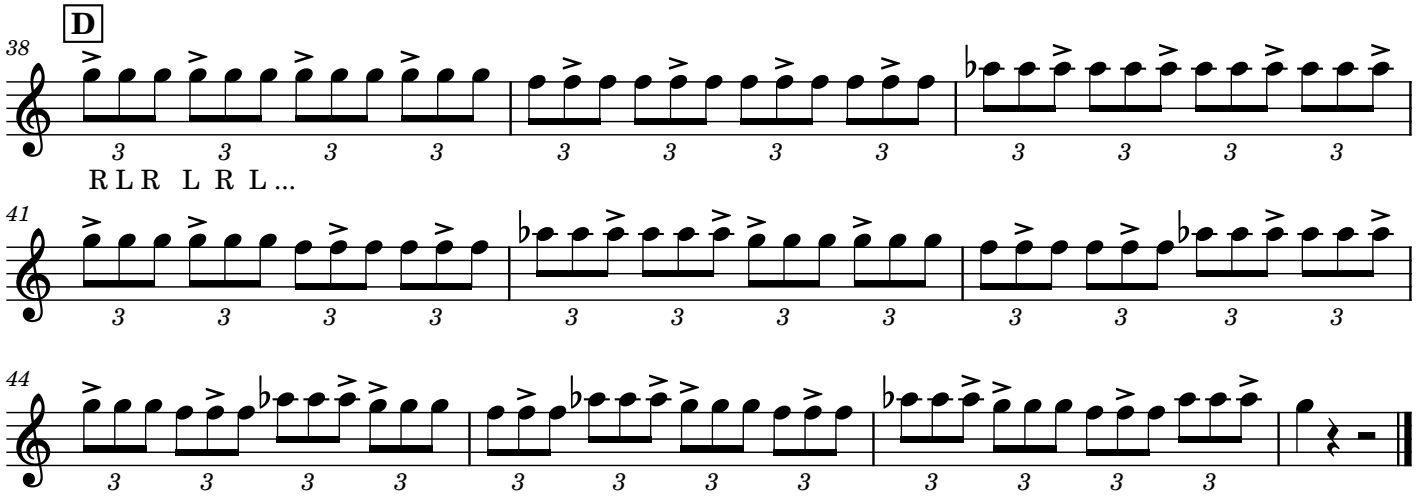


2

C



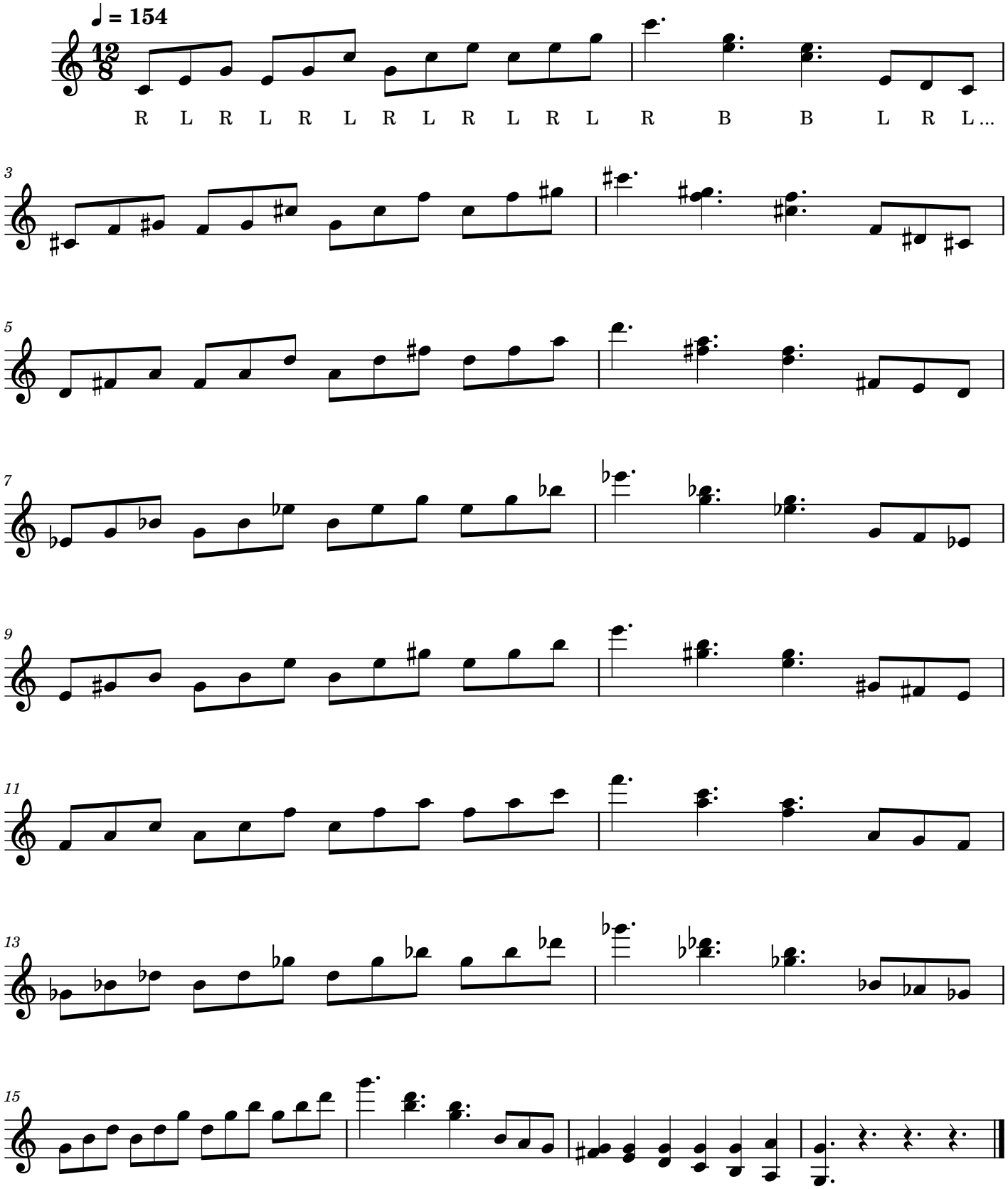
D



Hot Spring

RDL Front Ensemble

Be able to start on any note!

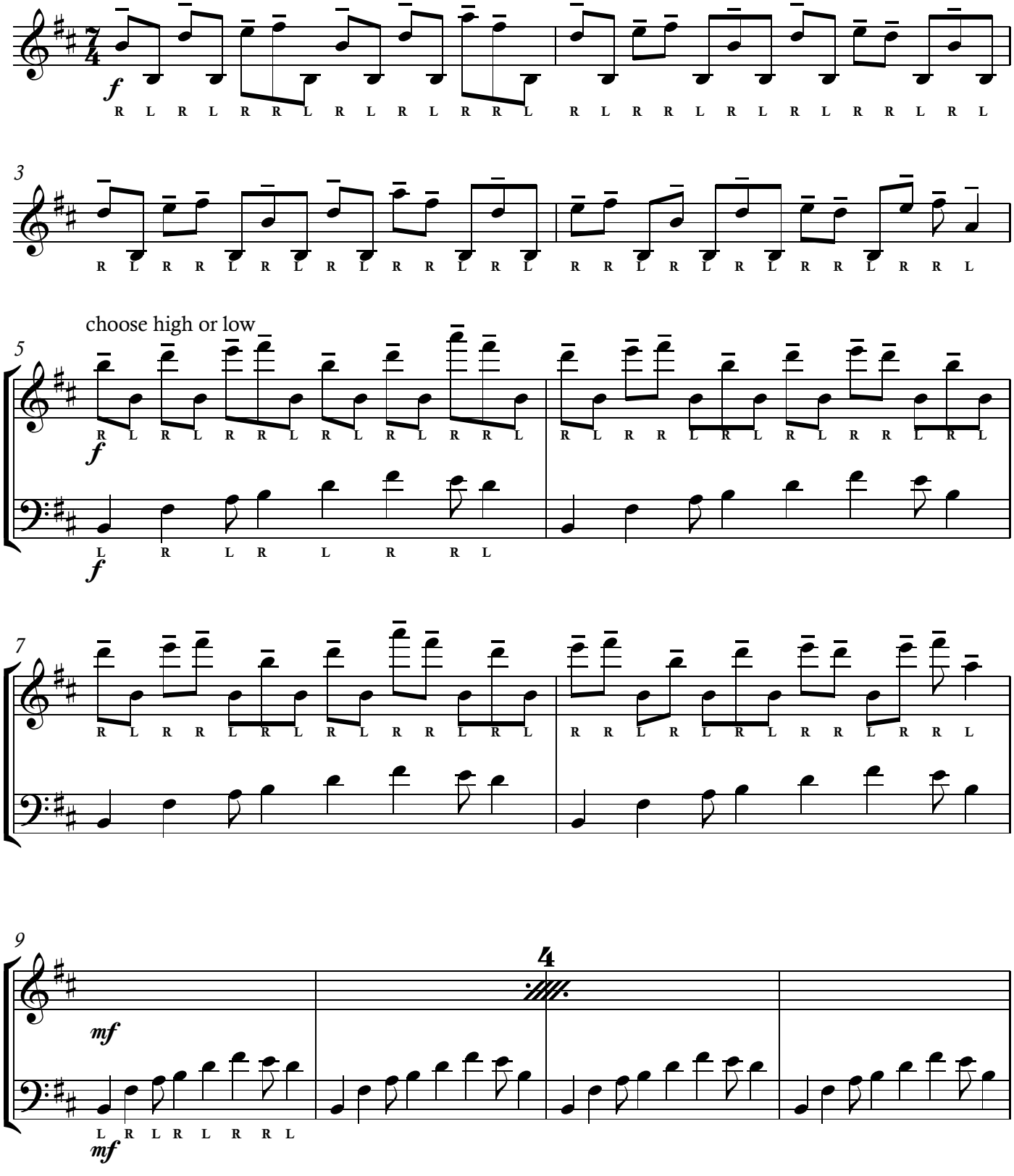


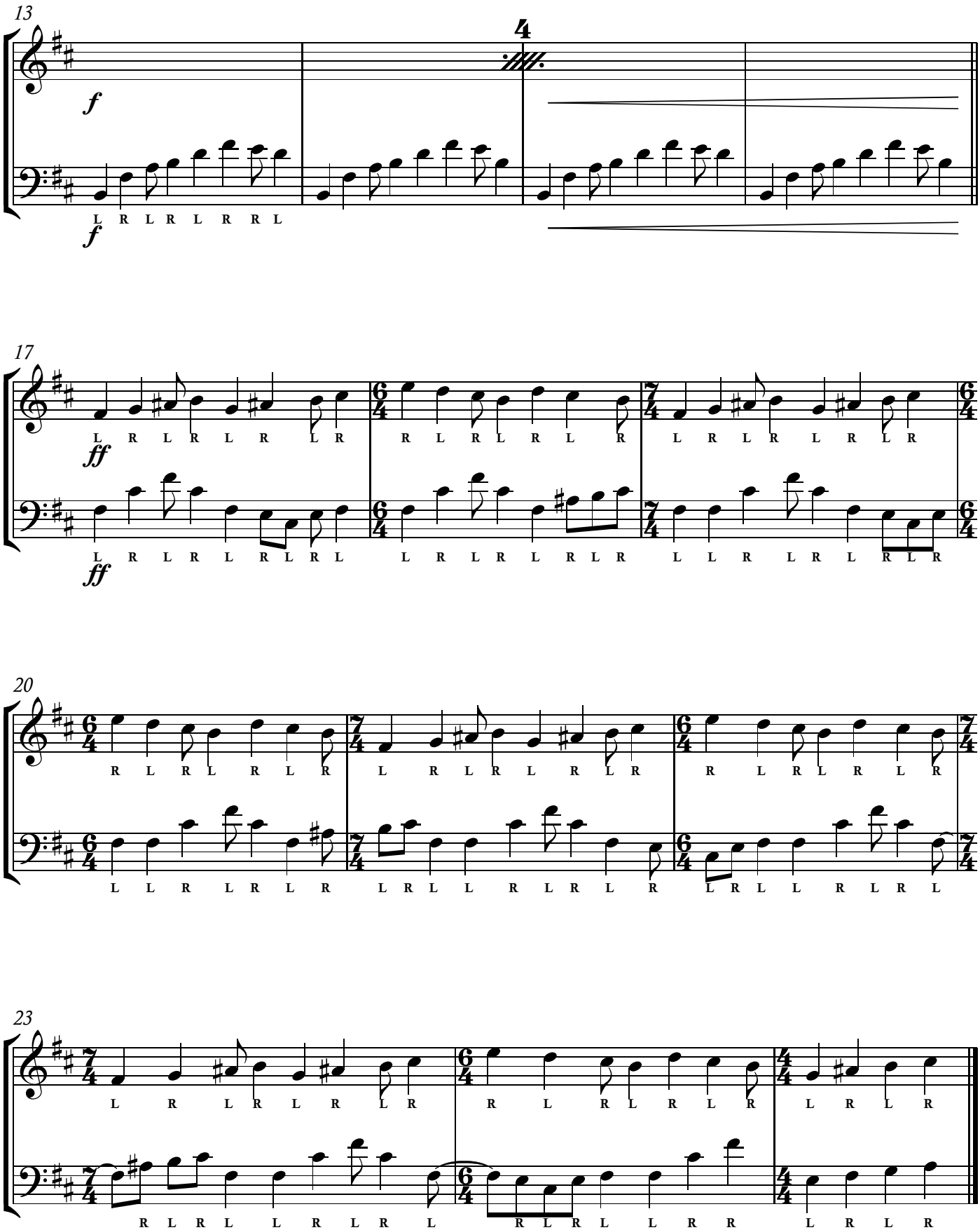
Marimba Top
Marimba Bottom

Horology

King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard
arr. Chris Scherer and Christian Leon

♩ = 165
Everyone Play, regardless of part/instrument



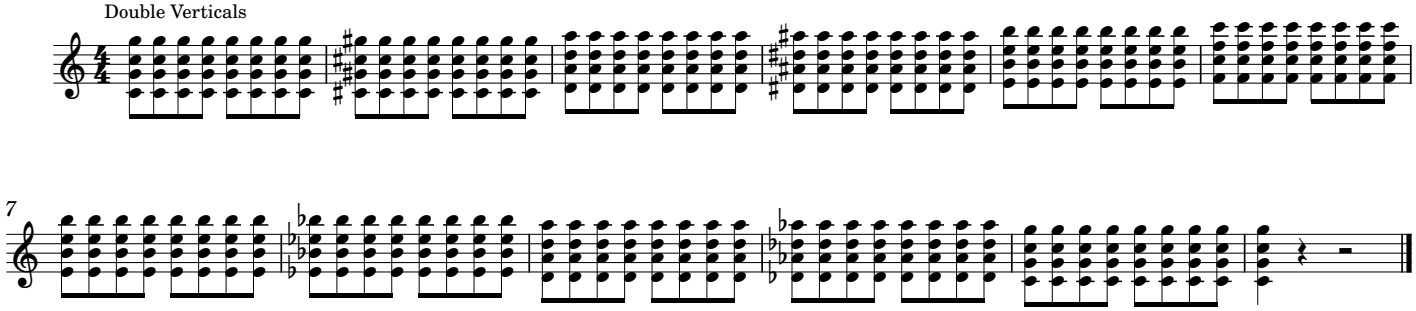

13
f
4
f
L R L R L R R L
17
ff
ff
20
23

RDL Front Ensemble

General Exercises for 4 Mallets

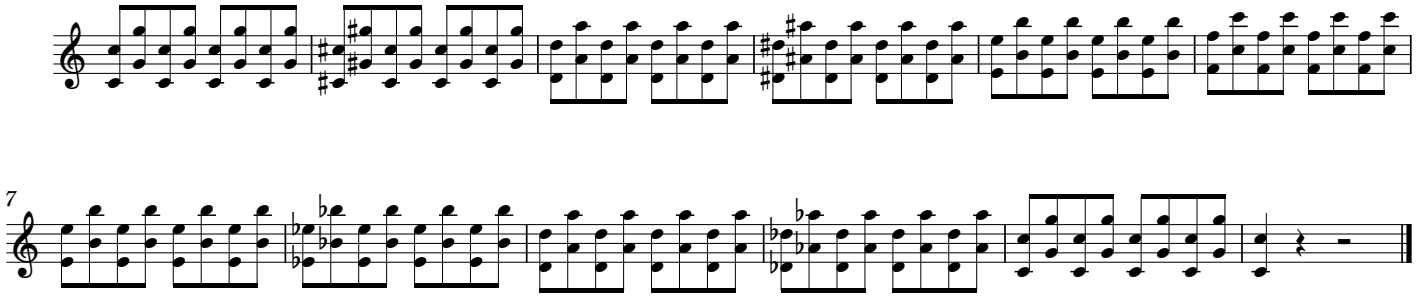
♩ = 80-140

Double Verticals



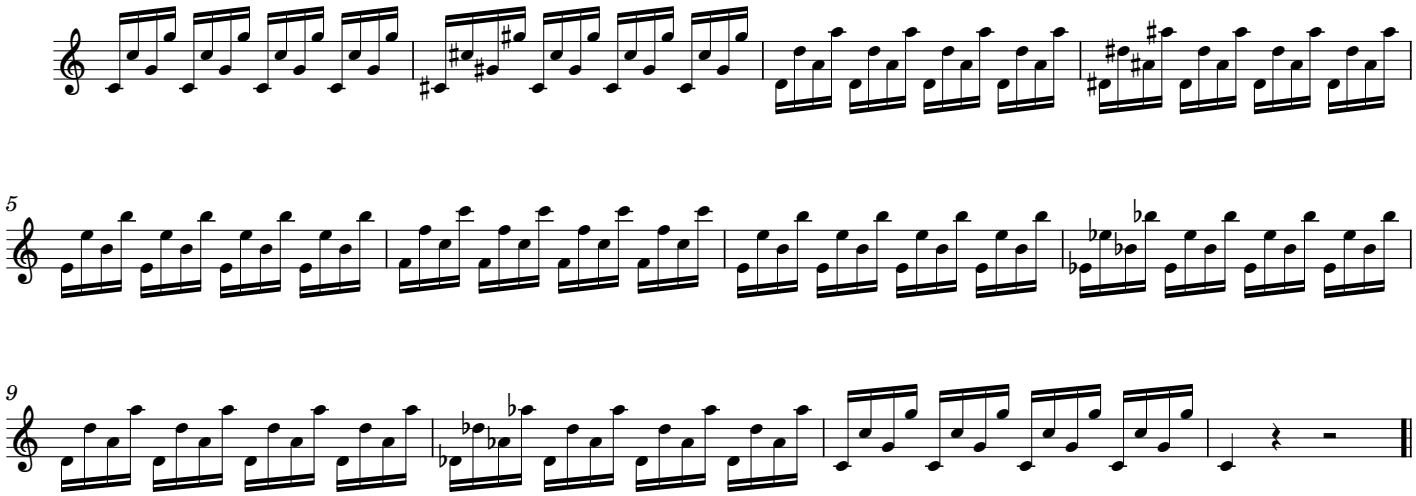
Single Alternating

Also prepare with 1-4/2-3, 2-4/1-3, and 2-3/1-3 patterns



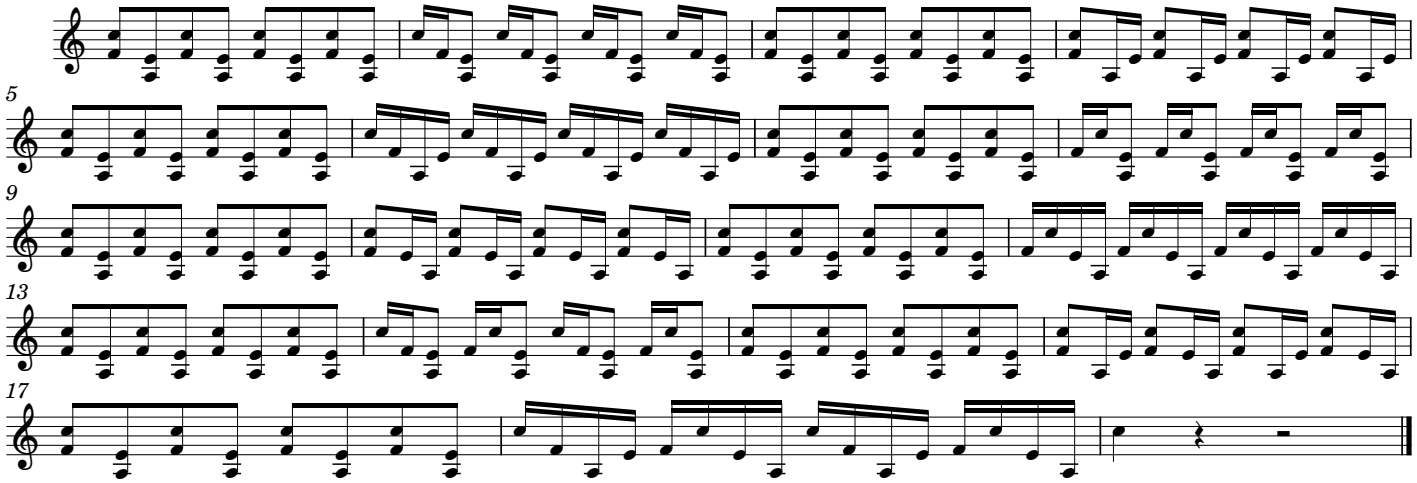
Single Alternating, Split

Also prepare with 1423, 4231, and 3241 patterns



2

Laterals



Single Independents