Front Ensemble Technique & Warm-Up Packet

2024

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WELCOME TO KUMU PERCUSSION!

You will find that music is one of the most demanding and rewarding of the arts. The amount of work and sacrifice that you are willing to commit directly reflects the outcome of the season.

This packet is your marching percussion guide that will assist you along your musical journey.

Please take some time to develop a solid understanding of the basics in this packet in order to graduate to a higher level of playing. Spend a generous amount of time studying these concepts and exercises with a metronome at slow tempos. Patient practice of these techniques will tremendously assist you in establishing a firm foundation on which to build.

The greatest single factor that will determine the success of any individual or organization is attitude. Let's have a positive attitude and work towards a common goal of excellence.

Danny Mark
dannymark20@gmail.com

"The only person you are destined to become, is the person you decide to be"

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

INTRODUCTION

This warm-up packet contains fundamental exercises for the front ensemble. The information provided will help build a strong foundation for a successful season. There are many different approaches and techniques that are used to teach front ensembles. We will be using the following terminology and approach in KUMU front ensemble this season. Please familiarize yourself with this information.

Your mental commitment to excel will determine how fast and how far you will progress. This commitment is your ability to focus on specific guidelines, evaluate your level of achievement, and make adjustments when necessary. Be willing, be patient, and trust the experience of your instructors.

COMMITMENT

> "Desire is the key to motivation, but it's determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal – a commitment to excellence – that will enable you to attain the success you seek."
>
> -Mario Andretti

POSTURE

Maintaining a good posture while rehearsing and performing is very important. It brings uniformity to how the ensemble looks visually and allows us to bring a good musical approach to the instrument.

The beginning posture:

- Begin with feet about shoulder-width apart
- Your legs should be relaxed with your knees slightly flexed (not locked)
- Relax your arms at your side
- Your neck and shoulders should remain relaxed with no tension
- holding your head up with both eyes focused straight ahead at all times
- projecting a facial expression of confidence
- remaining still while standing at attention
- Avoid crossing your feet while playing and never stand with your feet crossed. This will inhibit your range of motion and movement behind the instrument.

Two-Mallet Technique

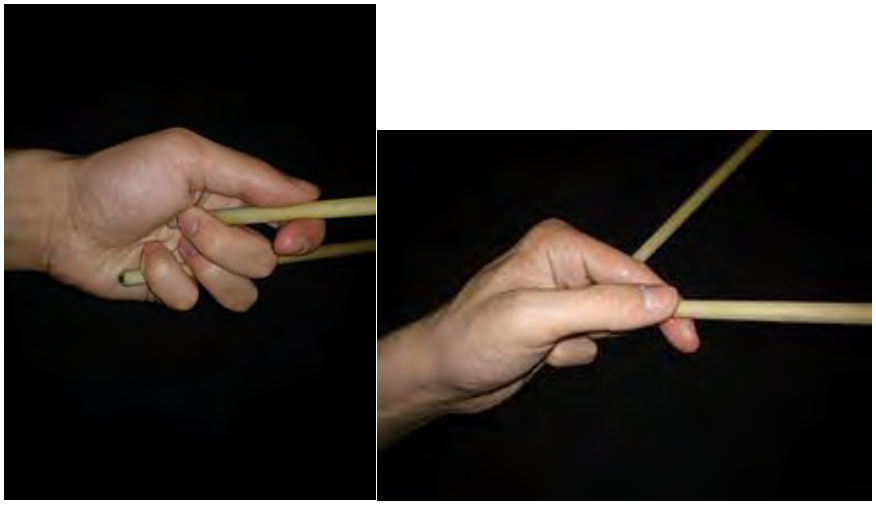
Without the proper grip, achieving a high-performance level with good sound quality is impossible. Take the time to understand the checkpoints for a proper grip and how to produce a fluid, relaxed stroke at all heights.

To achieve a proper grip, start with your hands open and relaxed at your sides. Slide a mallet through the opening between your thumb and for finger (this is your fulcrum) in your right hand and let your fingers close gently around the mallet. Do not clamp your fingers down on the mallet as this will create unwanted tension.

Four-Mallet Technique

We will use the "Stevens" grip when playing with 4 mallets.

To start, place one mallet between the middle and ring fingers on your right hand. Close your ring finger and pinky finger around the end of the mallet. Let the shaft of the mallet rest on your knuckle of your middle finger. When it's position correctly, you should see about a half inch of the mallet sticking out from the side of your hand. Place the butt of the second mallet directly in the center of your palm and then pick it up with your thumb and forefinger. Some minor adjustments may be necessary, but this is the basic way to achieving the Steven's grip.



STROKE

We will use a few different stroke types and articulations. These are the most used strokes.

Full Legato Stroke

- remain relaxed
- start in the "up" position
- the mallet will come straight down, attack the bar, and return the height it started at
- this should be a fluid motion
- imagine that you are pulling the sound out of the bar

Down Stroke

- a strong, aggressive stroke
- the mallet head will be stopped down at the bar
- engage the fingers to trap the mallet

QUALITY OF SOUND

All of the concepts will come together to create "quality of sound" - presenting musical thoughts with a mature, rich, full sound through every rhythm, dynamic, and tempo. **Sound quality is when the mallet and bar resonate to its maximum potential.** This can be achieved by approaching every stroke with maximum relaxed velocity at every height without adding pressure.

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS BEHIND EFFECTIVE DRUMLINE REHEARSALS

1. **Always work with a metronome.** Much of percussion performance is related to muscle memory. Working with a metronome will develop consistency for each technique covered in these exercises. Always mark time when appropriate.

2. **Always start slowly** and strive for consistent mallet heights, tempo control, rhythmic accuracy, and quality of sound. When you feel comfortable, gradually begin to increase tempo. As the tempo increases, be sure to remain relaxed.

3. **Memorization is key.** The sooner you can get your head out of the music, the sooner you can direct your focus to playing with the ensemble. Anything needed to perform the show and technique program is required memorization material. This includes anything from rhythms, stickings, and stick heights to rehearsal markings, visuals/vocals, and drill information.

4. **Repetition is necessary.** In order to develop the proper muscle memory necessary for a high-performance level, each exercise should be practiced (correctly) a minimum of a dozen times at a given tempo.

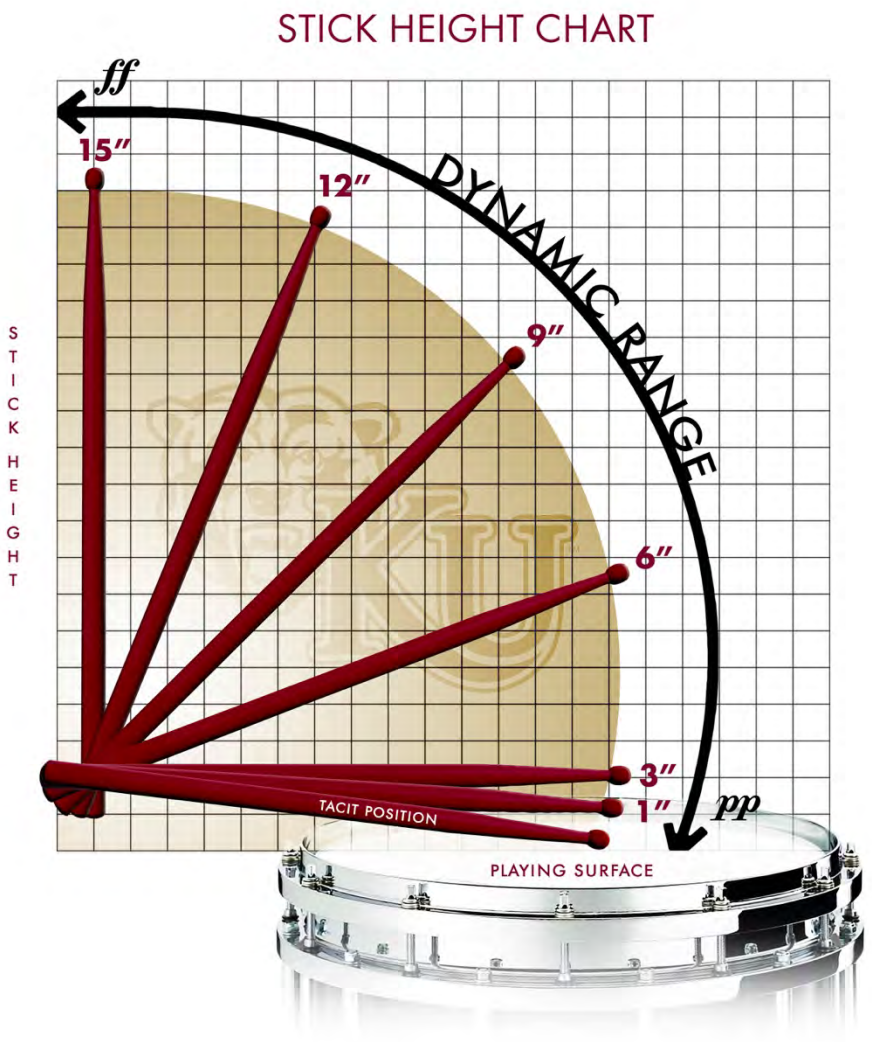
5. It is helpful to rehearse the technique program at a variety of tempi and dynamic levels. Each variable affects how the muscles respond, and therefore must be a part of the regular rehearsal routine.

Practice the way you perform. You may be tempted to practice with poor posture, approach, and/or technique. This can often do more harm than good as it may train the wrong muscles thus leading to poor tempo/rhythm control and quality of sound.

USING THE HEIGHT SYSTEM FOR DYNAMICS

Because the visual consistency from player to player is a vital part of the marching activity, it is essential to define a system of heights when applying dynamics to exercises or show music. This allows each player to match volume and mallet heights on any given musical passage. The graph below shows a visual representation of the stick height system the battery uses. The Front Ensemble will utilize the same dynamic approach. (**In the picture – the drumhead acts as the marimba bar.)

pp – 1″ ***p*** – 3″ ***mp*** – 6″ ***mf*** – 9″ ***f*** – 12″ ***ff*** – 15″

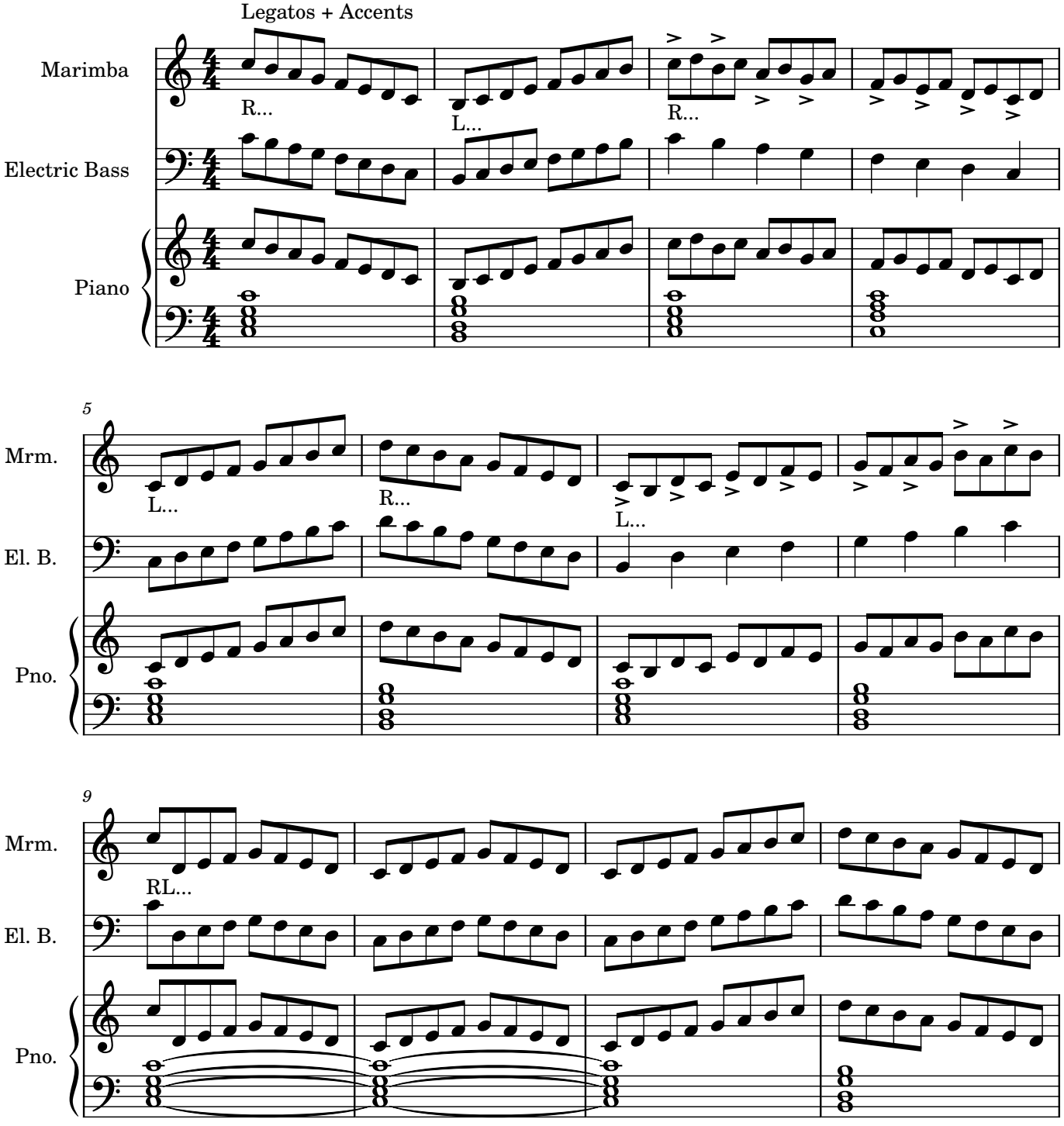


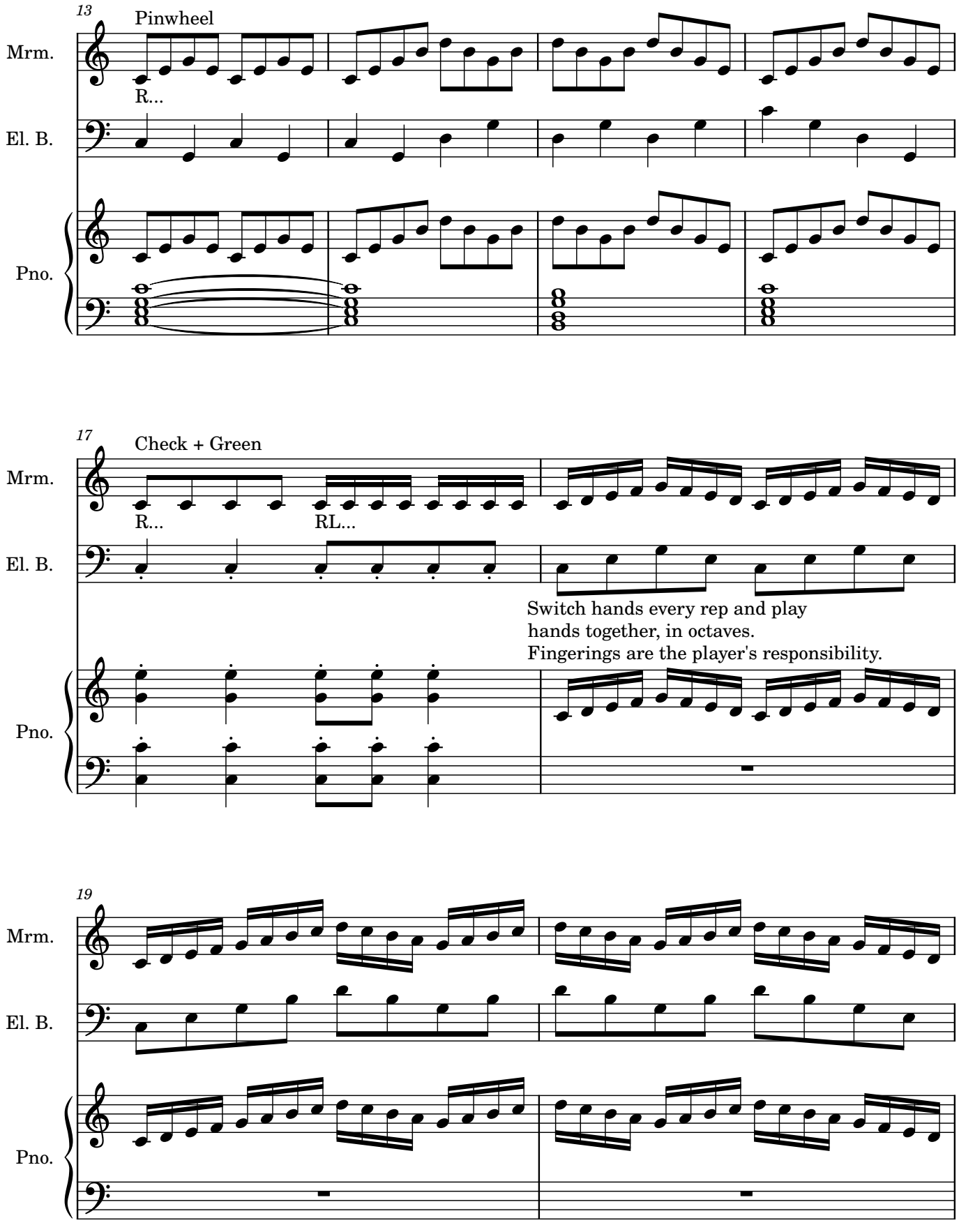
Peg

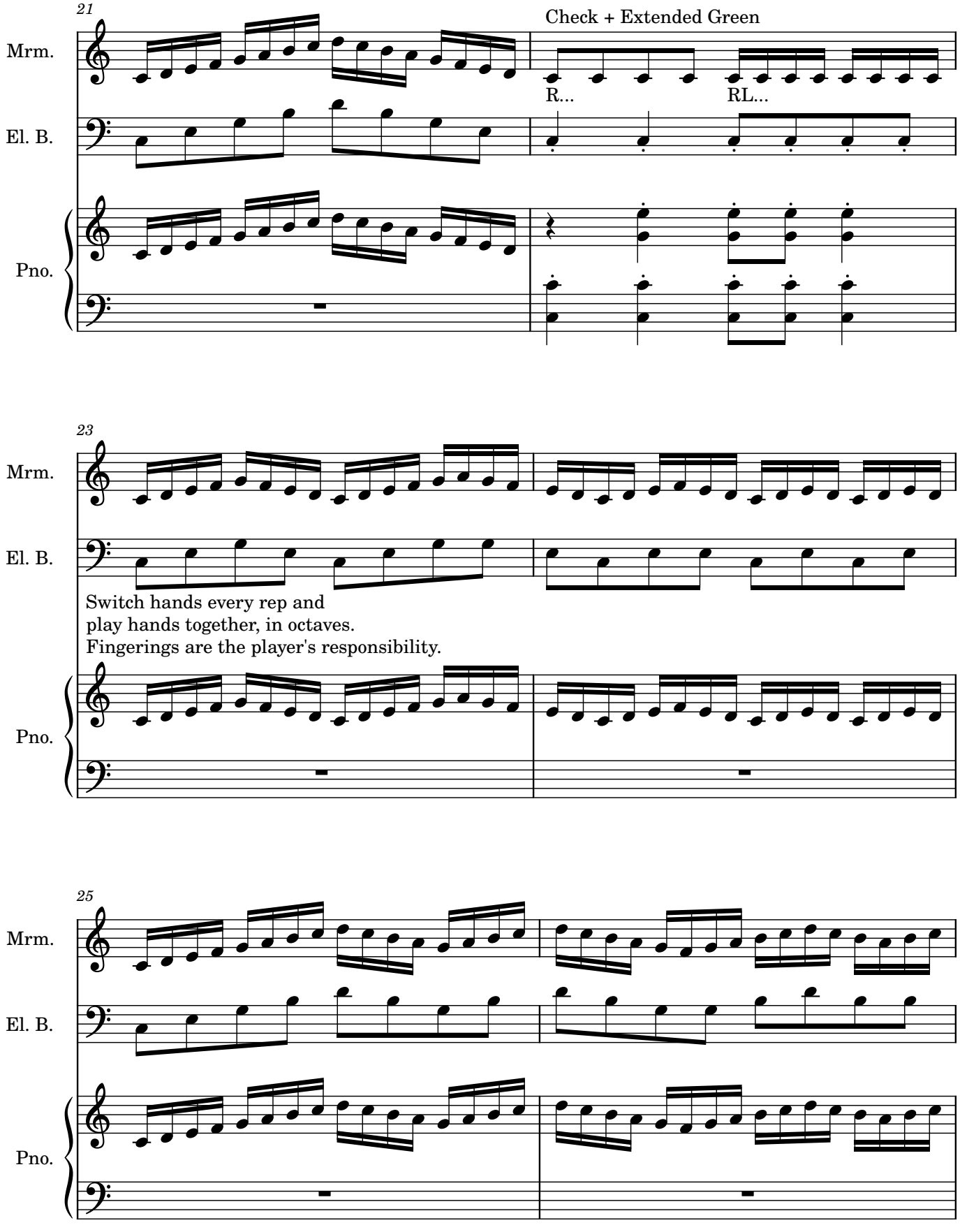
A Legatos and 16ths Exercise

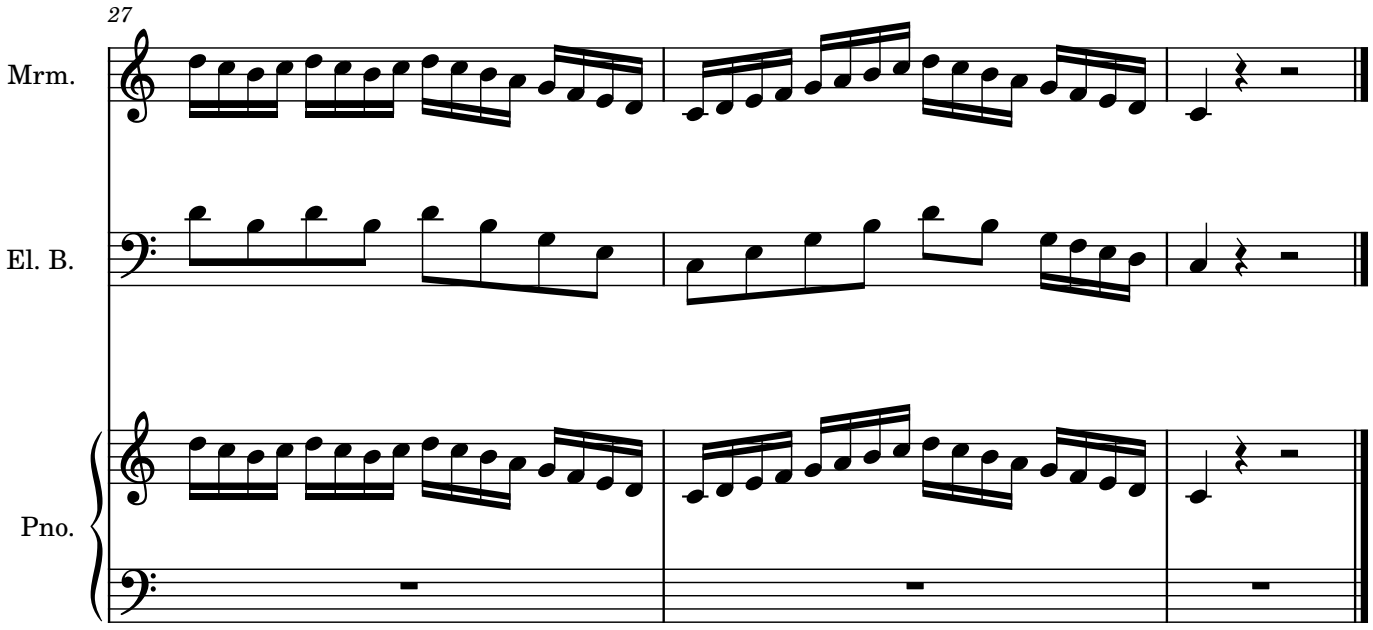
Notes: Exercise should be learned and played in all 12 Major and Minor Keys.
Hands should be equal at all times. Accents are to be played at the same height as the rest of the exercise, indicated by the lead player, with taps at 1"(pp) height.
Pulsing through Extended Green will be awkward due to unevening phrasing within the 16th notes, push through the rhythmic crunch and feel the overall 16ths.

Alexander Felix




13
Pinwheel
Mrm.
R...
El. B.
Pno.
17
Check + Green
Mrm.
R...
RL...
El. B.
Switch hands every rep and play
hands together, in octaves.
Fingerings are the player's responsibility.
Pno.
19
Mrm.
El. B.
Pno.


21
Check + Extended Green
Mrm.
El. B.
R...
RL...
Pno.
23
Mrm.
El. B.
Switch hands every rep and
play hands together, in octaves.
Fingerings are the player's responsibility.
Pno.
25
Mrm.
El. B.
Pno.


27
Mrm.
El. B.
Pno.

Marimba (Single Staff)

Peg

A Legatos and 16ths Exercise

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learned and played in
all 12 Major and Minor Keys.
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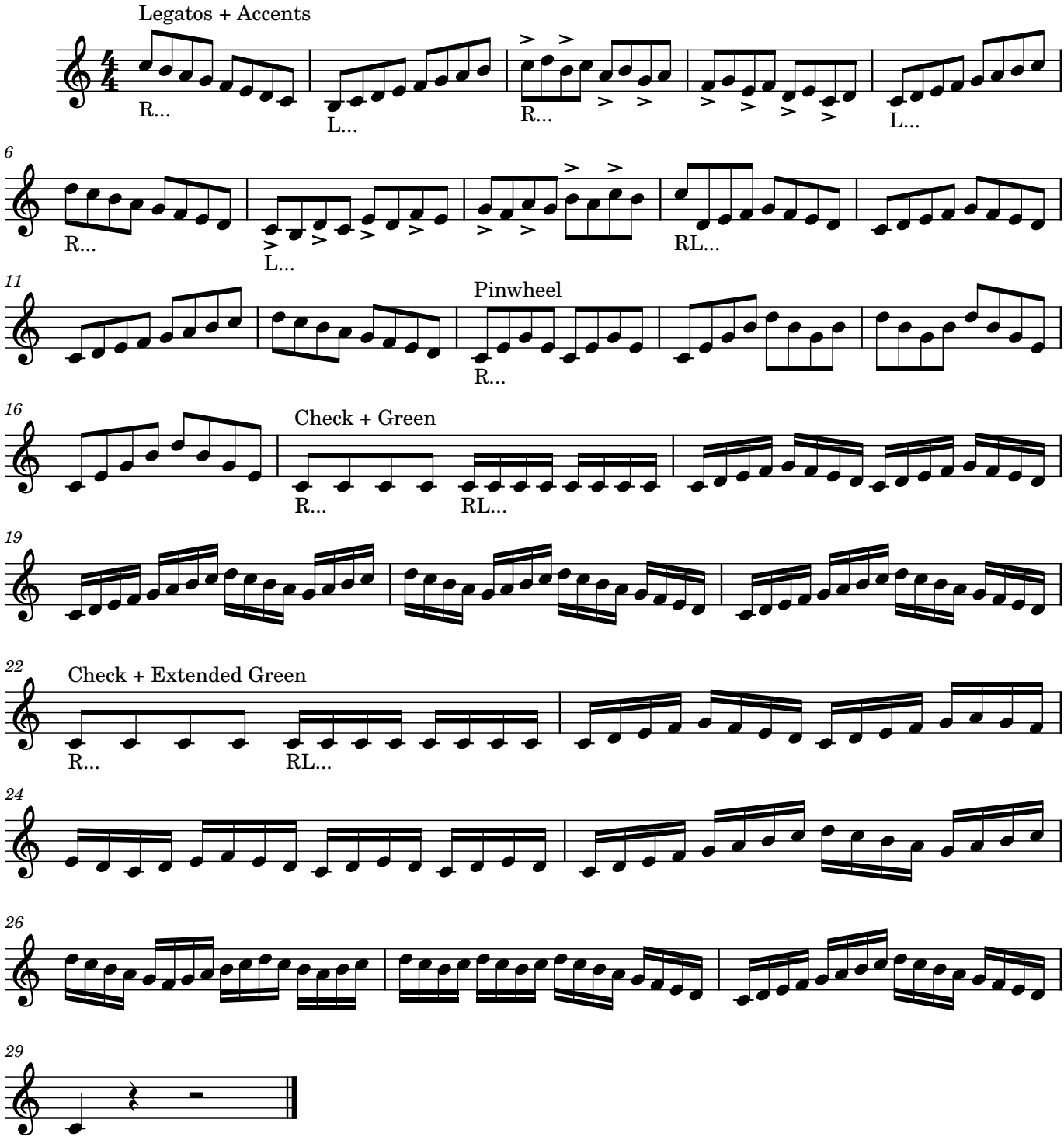
at the same height as the rest of the exercise, indicated by the
lead player, with taps at 1"(pp) height.
Pulsing through Extended Green will be awkward due to
unevening phrasing within the 16th notes,
push through the rhythmic crunch and feel the overall 16ths.

Alexander Felix



Electric Bass

Peg

A Legatos and 16ths Exercise

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all 12 Major and Minor Keys.
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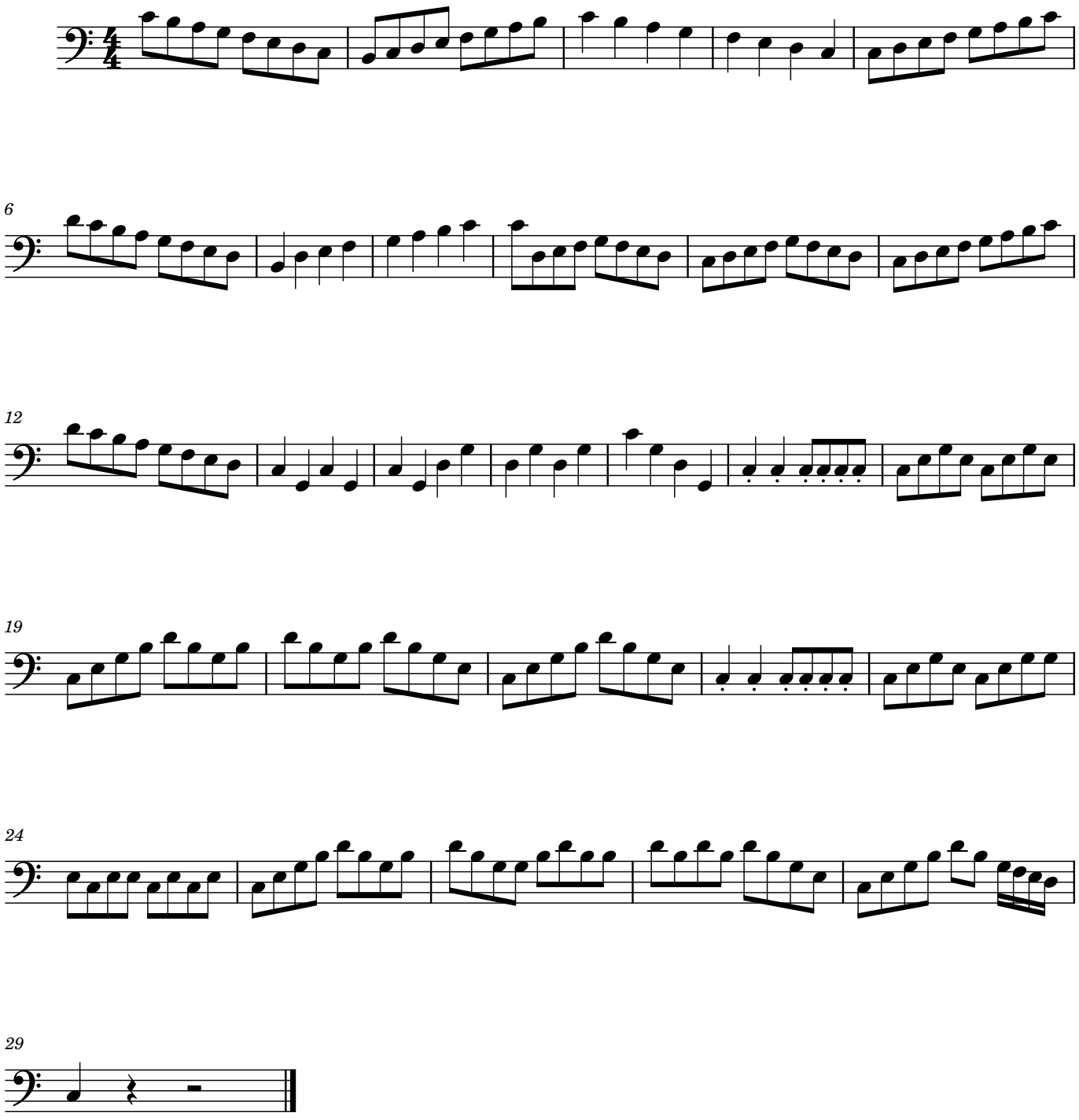

Piano

Peg

A Legatos and 16ths Exercise

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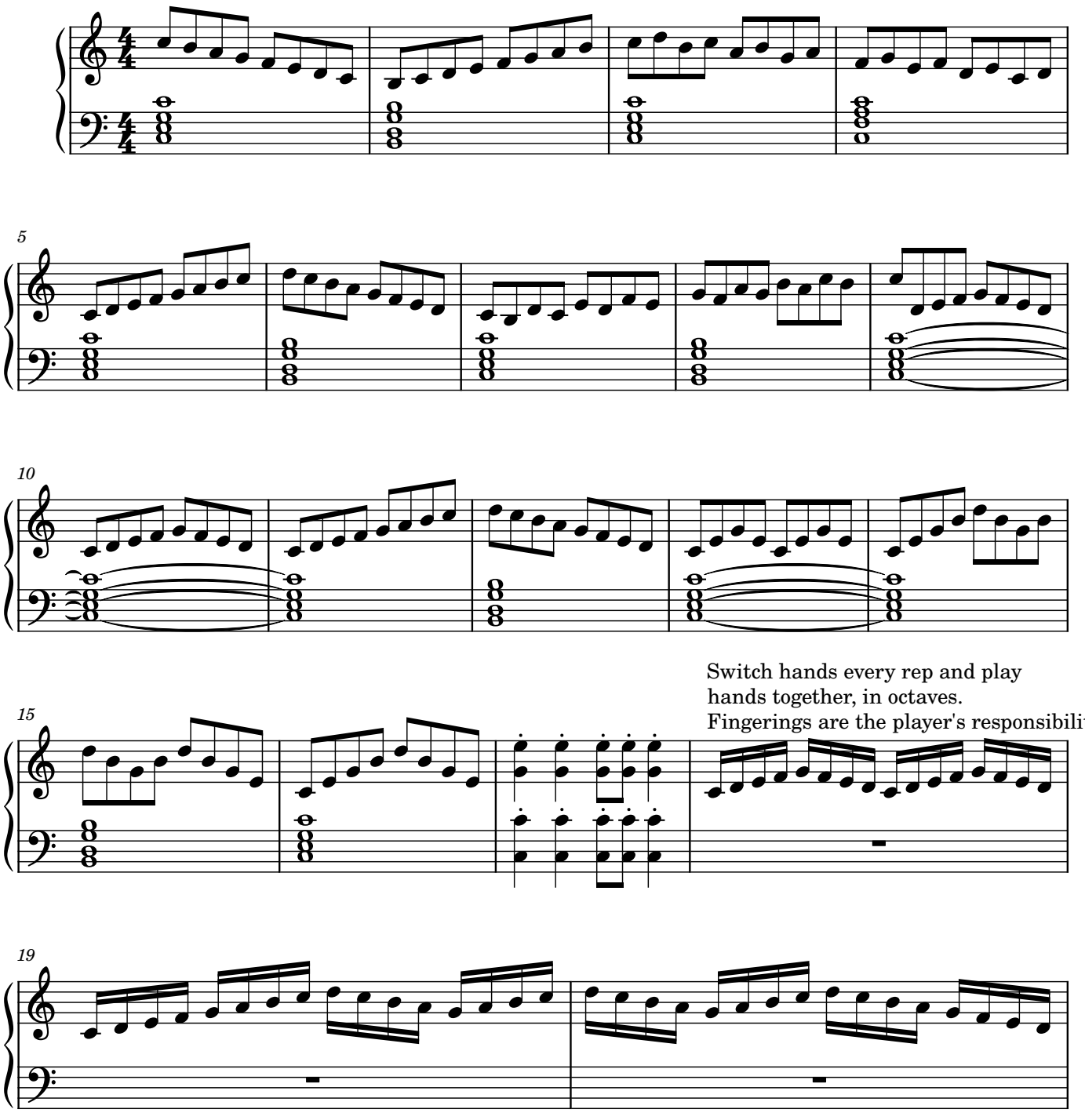
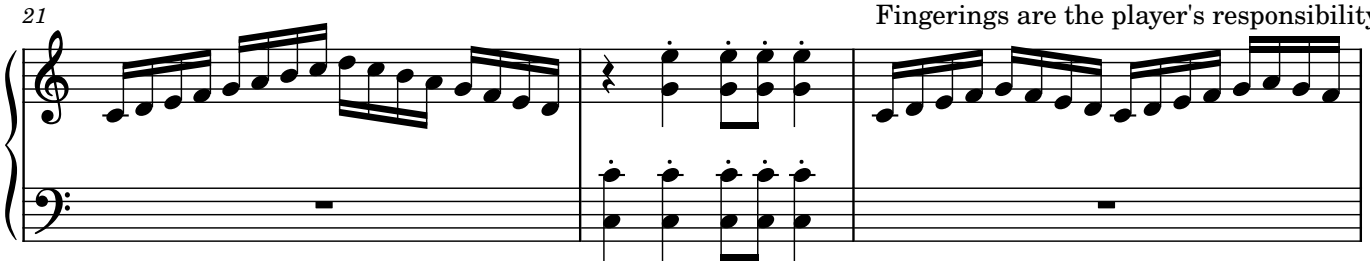


Switch hands every rep and
play hands together, in octaves.
Fingerings are the player's responsibility.

21



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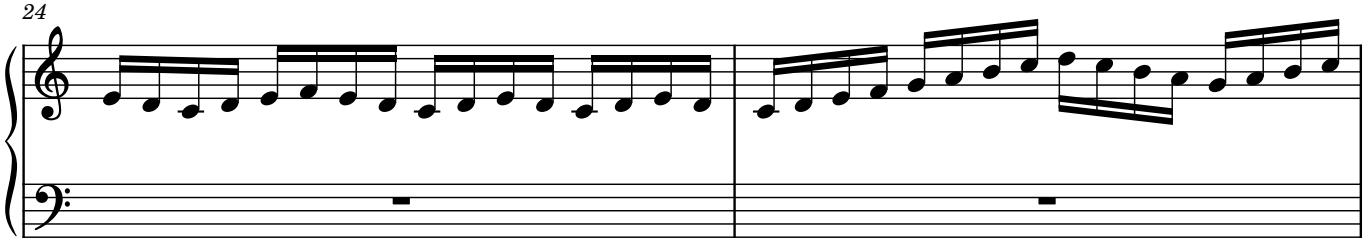

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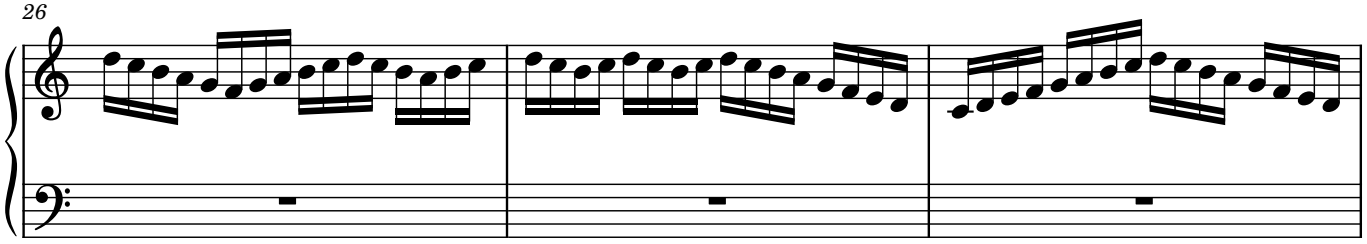

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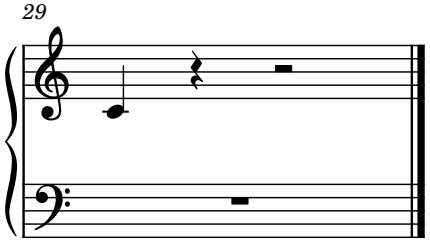
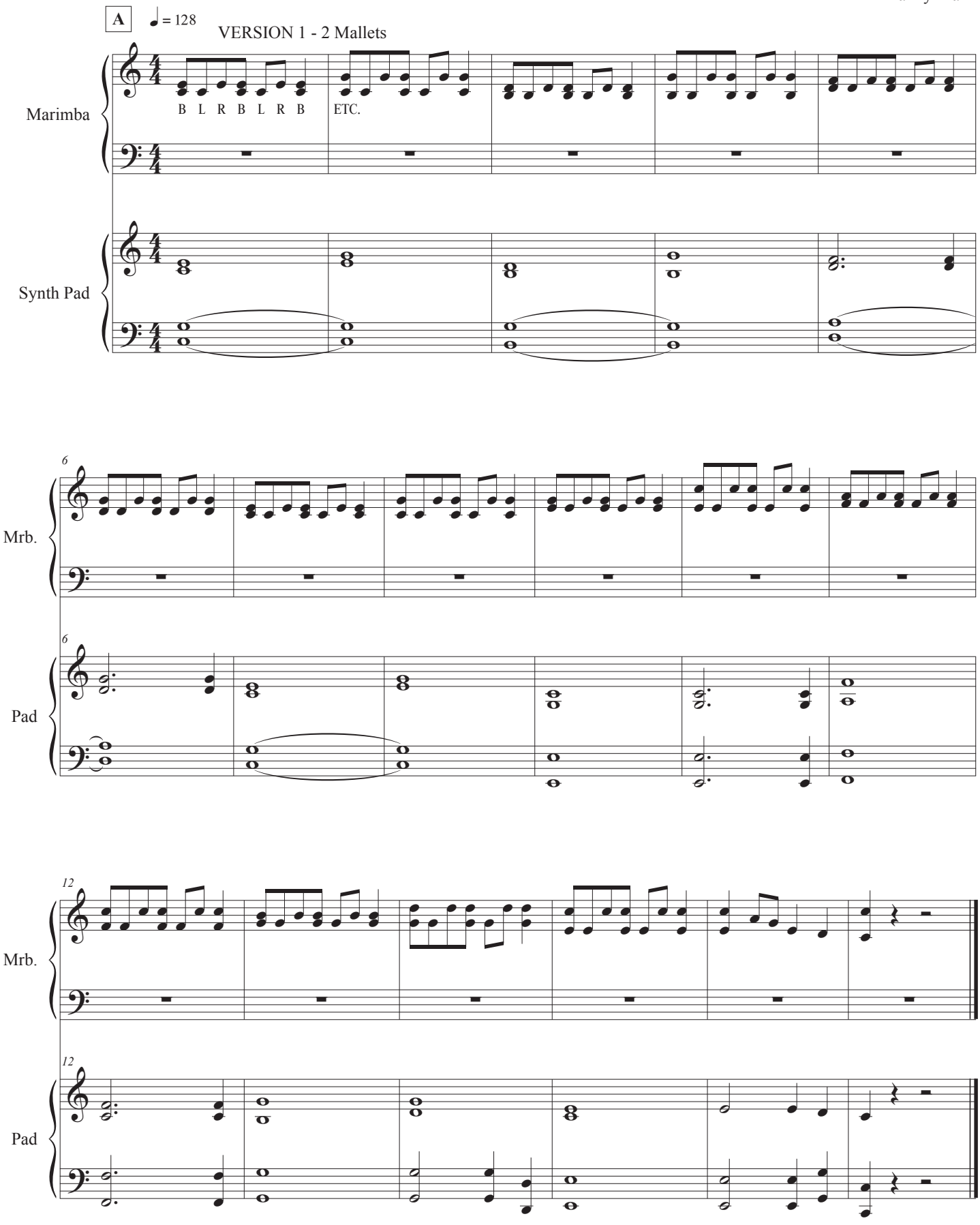


Score

Calypso Remix

Danny Mark



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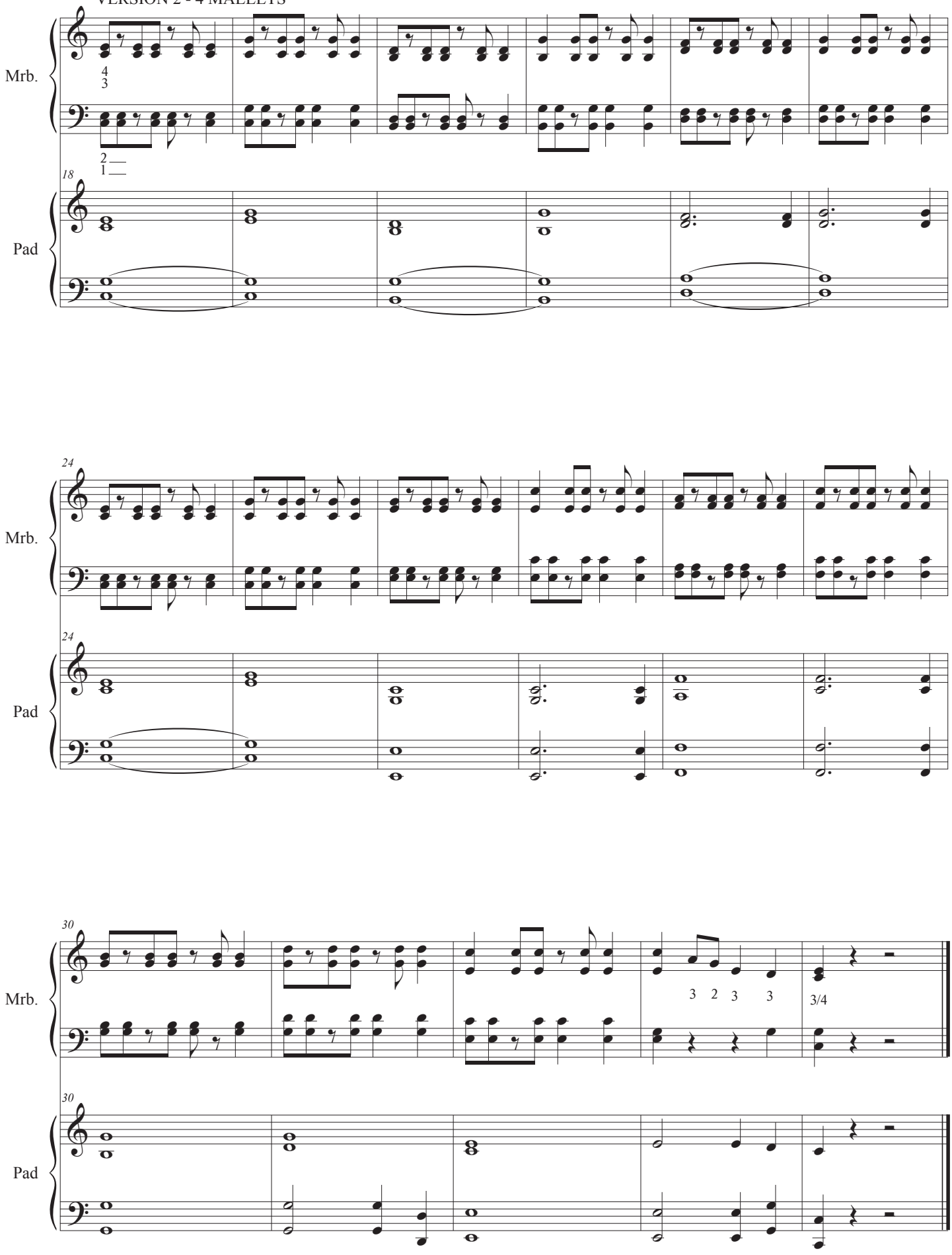
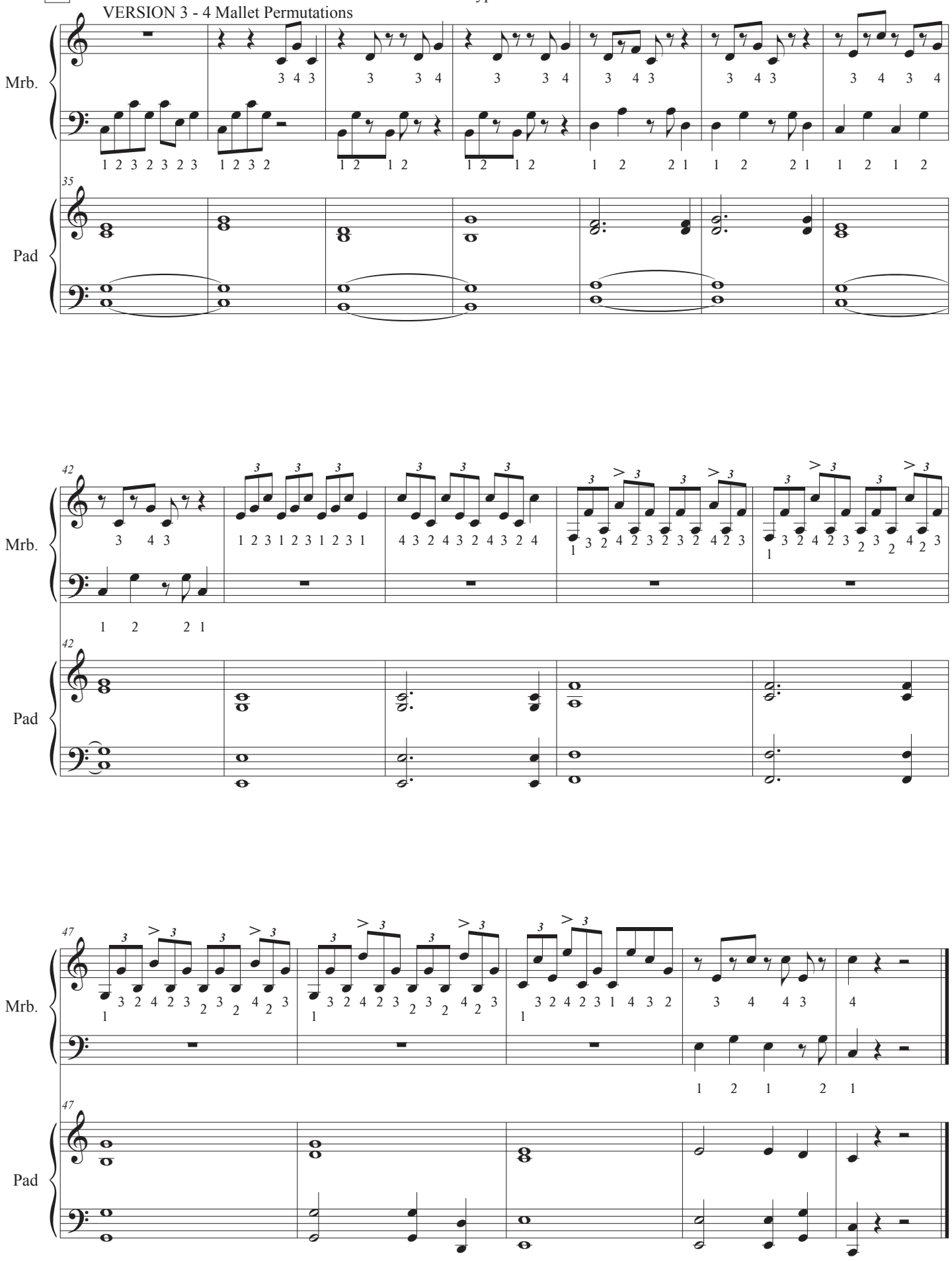
B

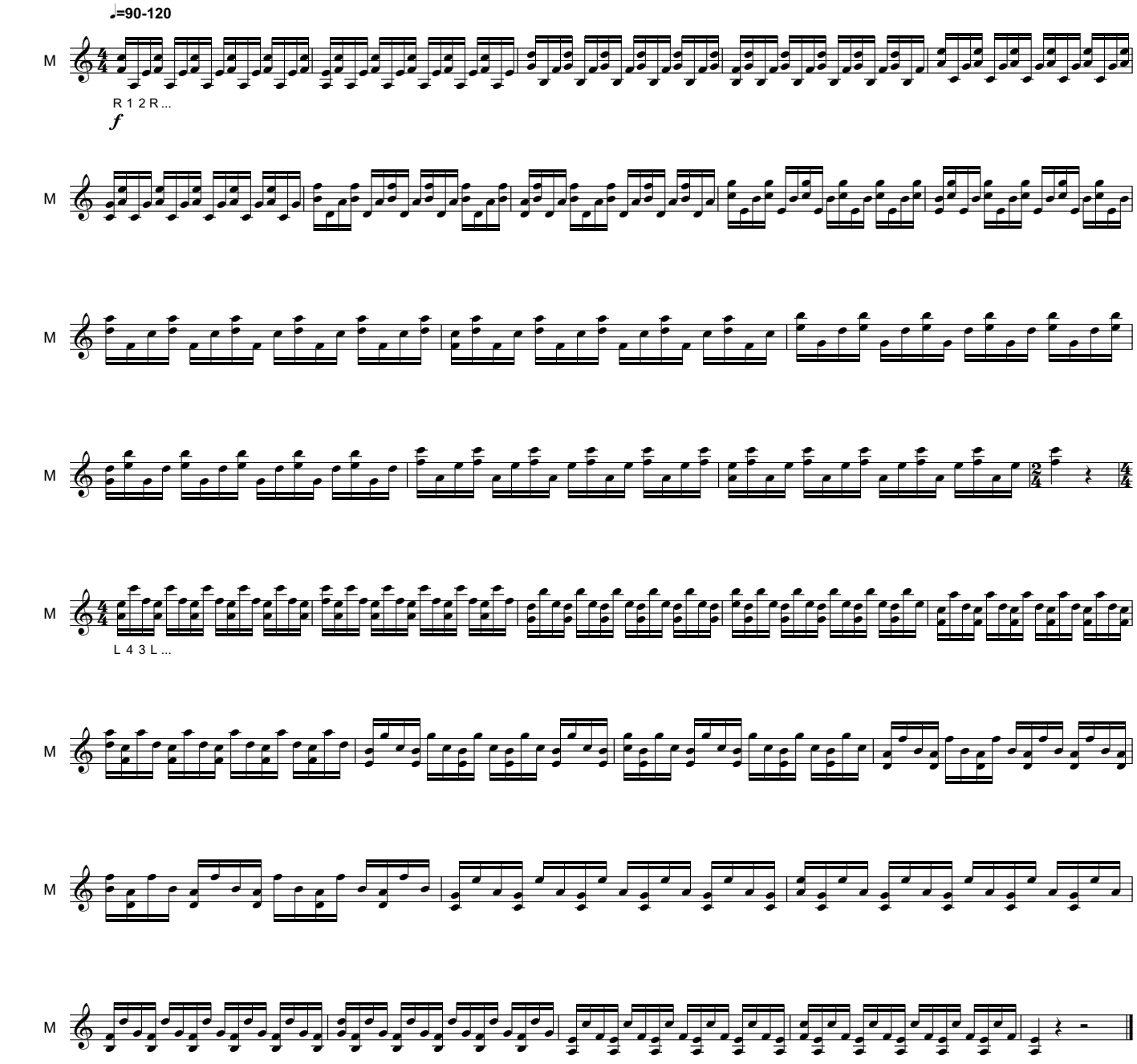
VERSION 2 - 4 MALLETS



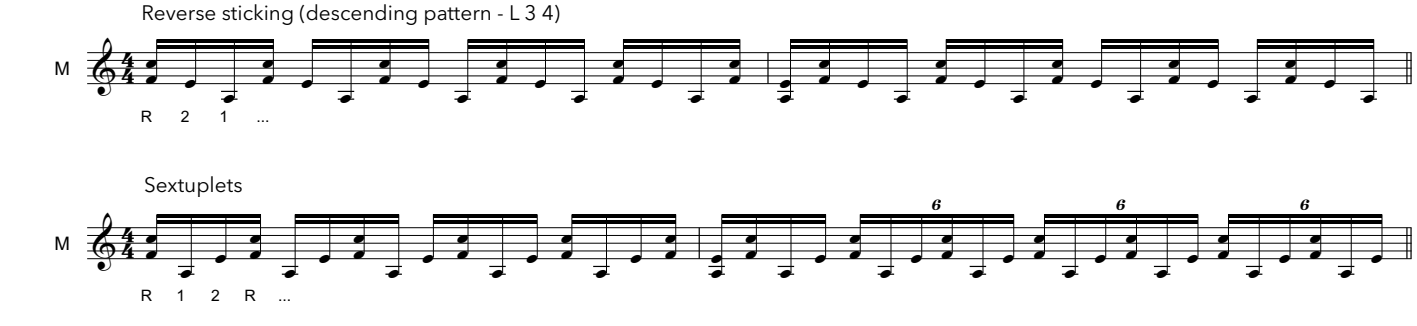
VERSION 3 - 4 Mallet Permutations



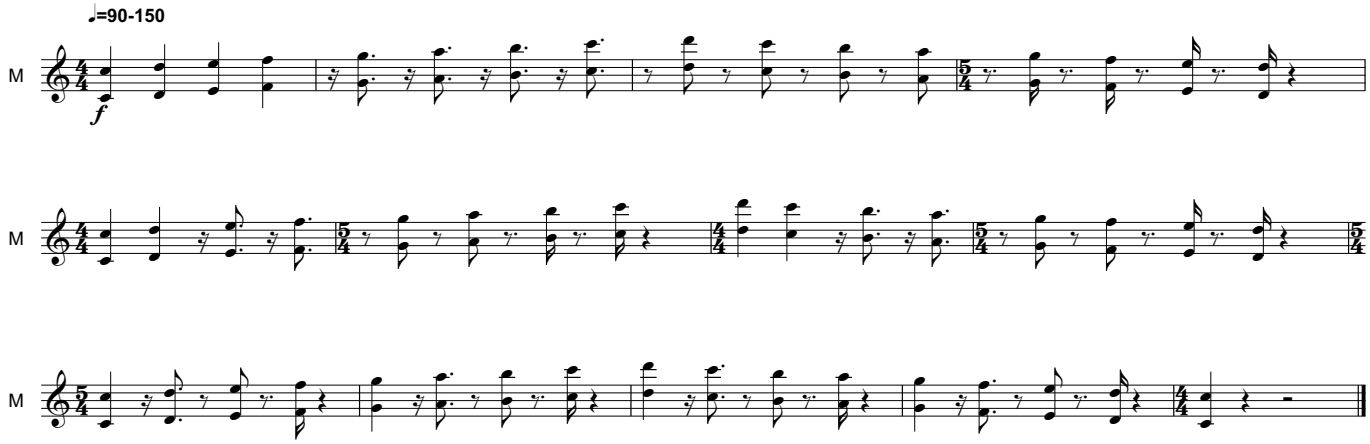
Pizza



Pizza - Variations

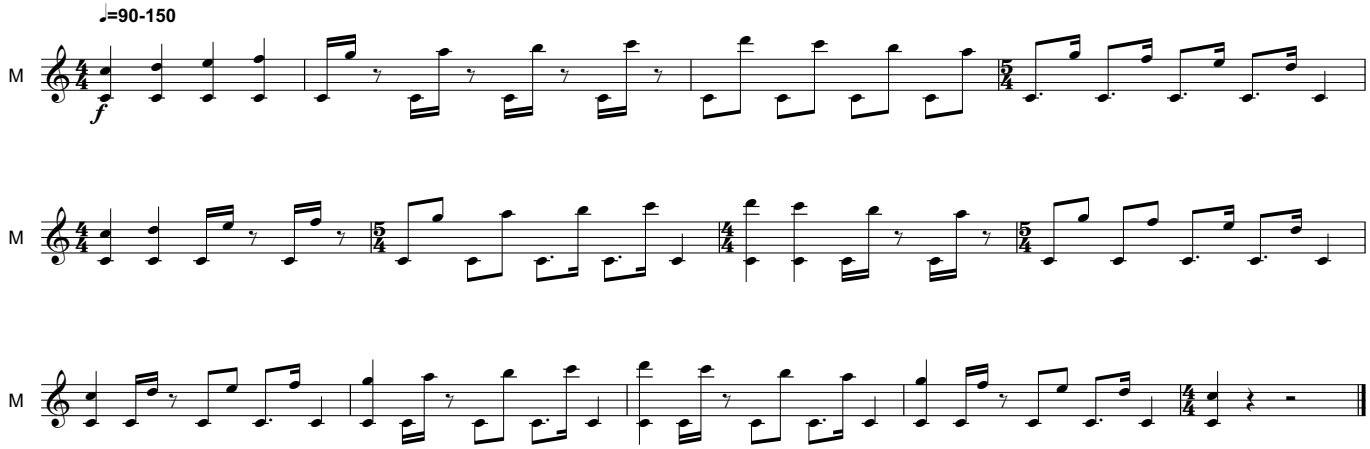


Timing



Timing

left hand on downbeats

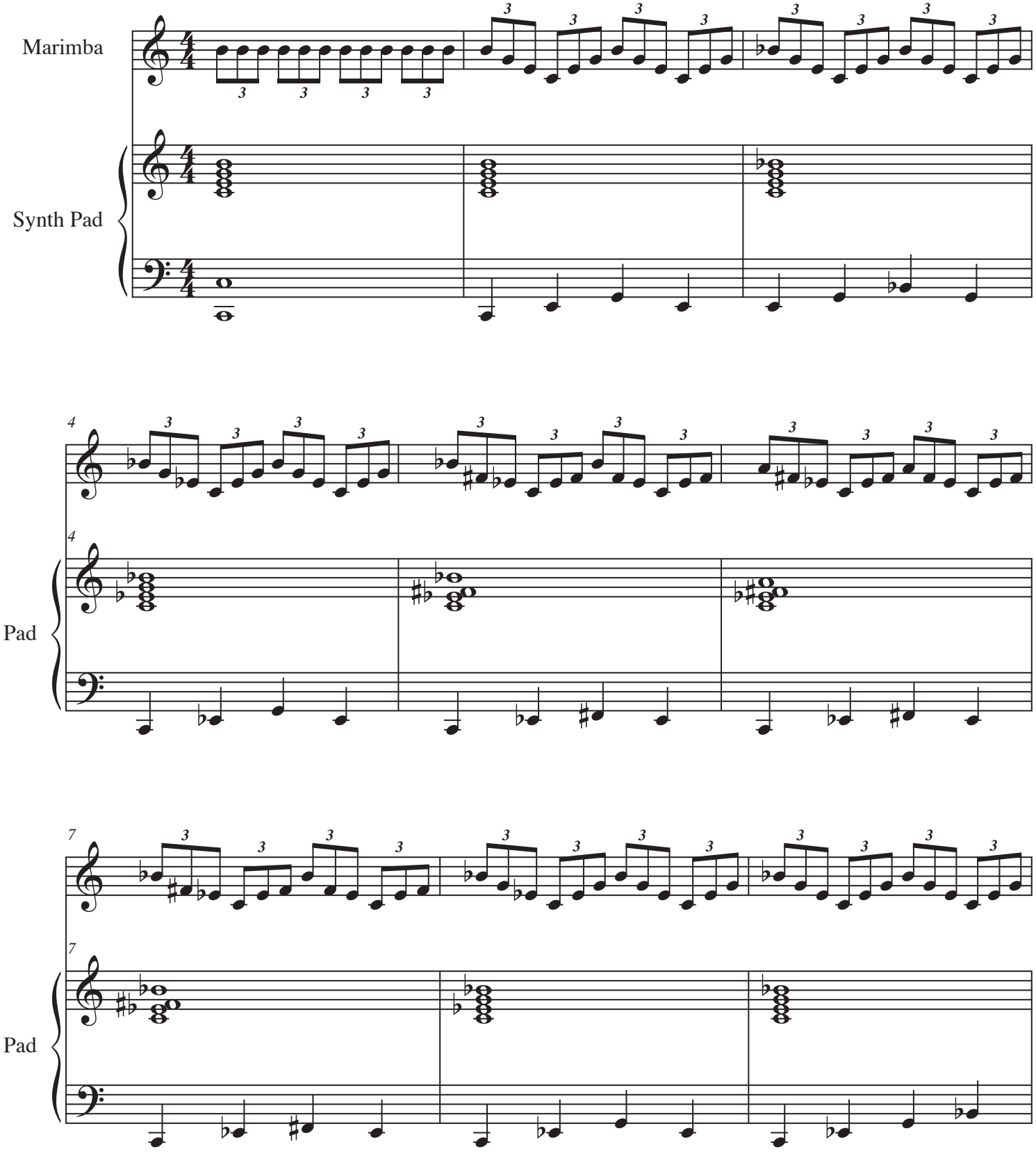


Steady, Don't Trip and Fall!

(Or get STUCK...Ha...ha...ha)

Score

Arr. Danny Mark



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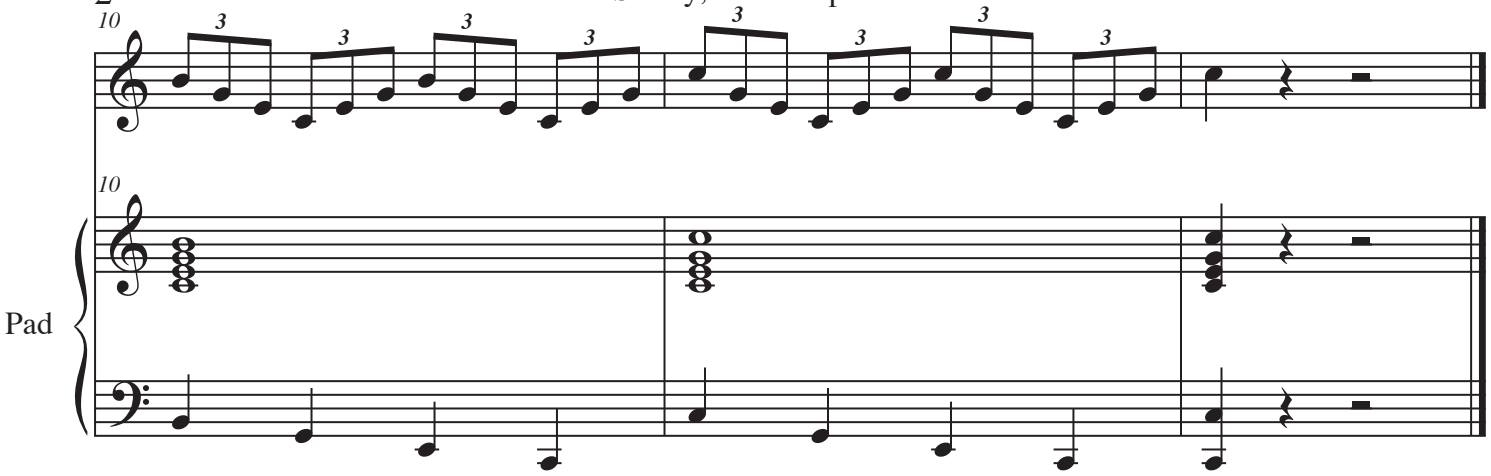
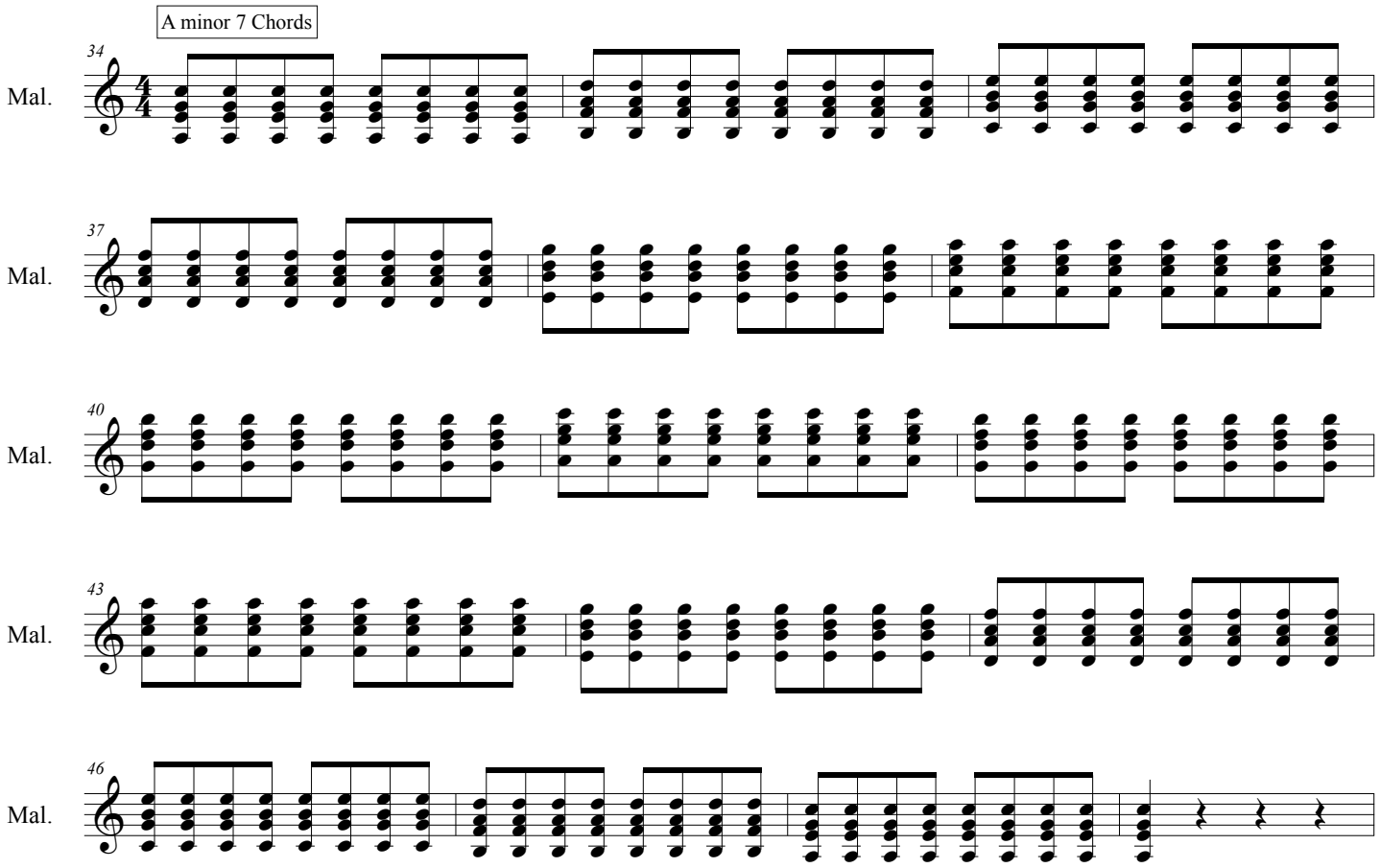
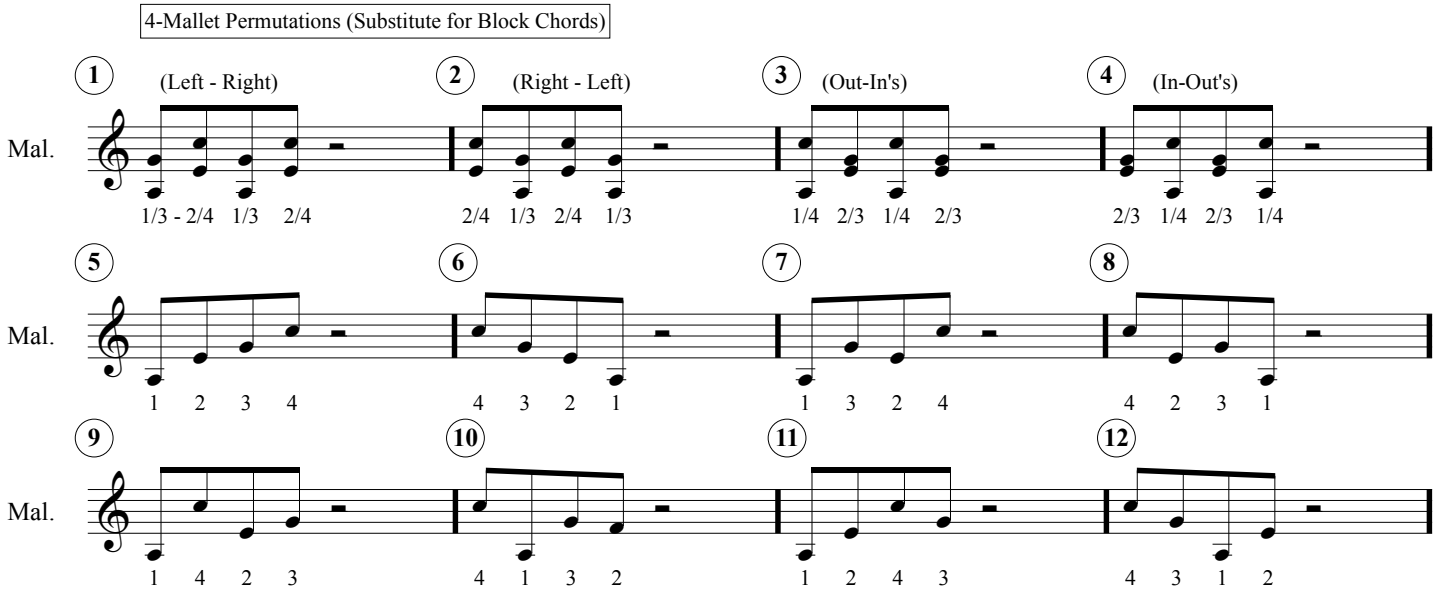
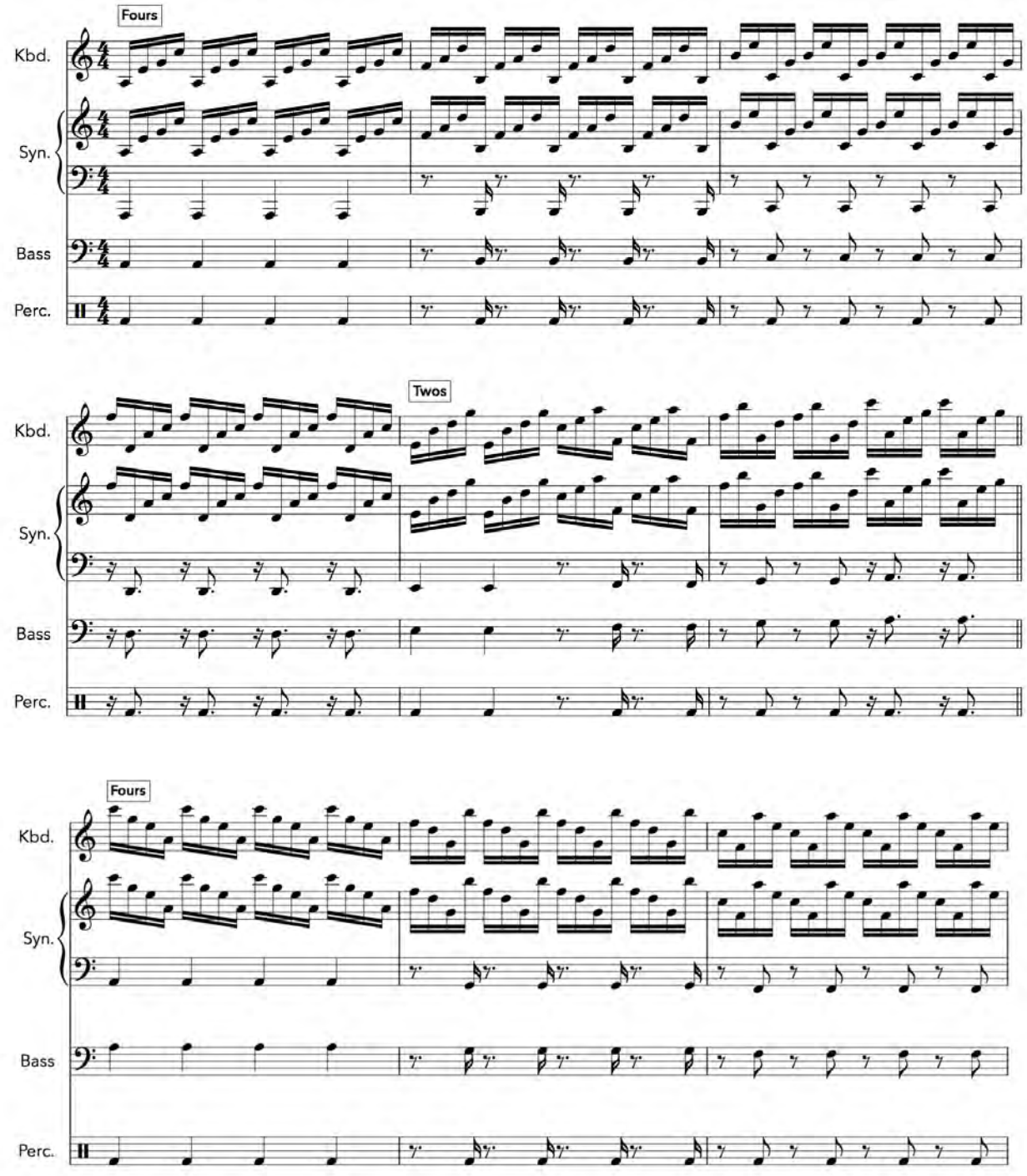
Steady, Don't Trip and Fall!

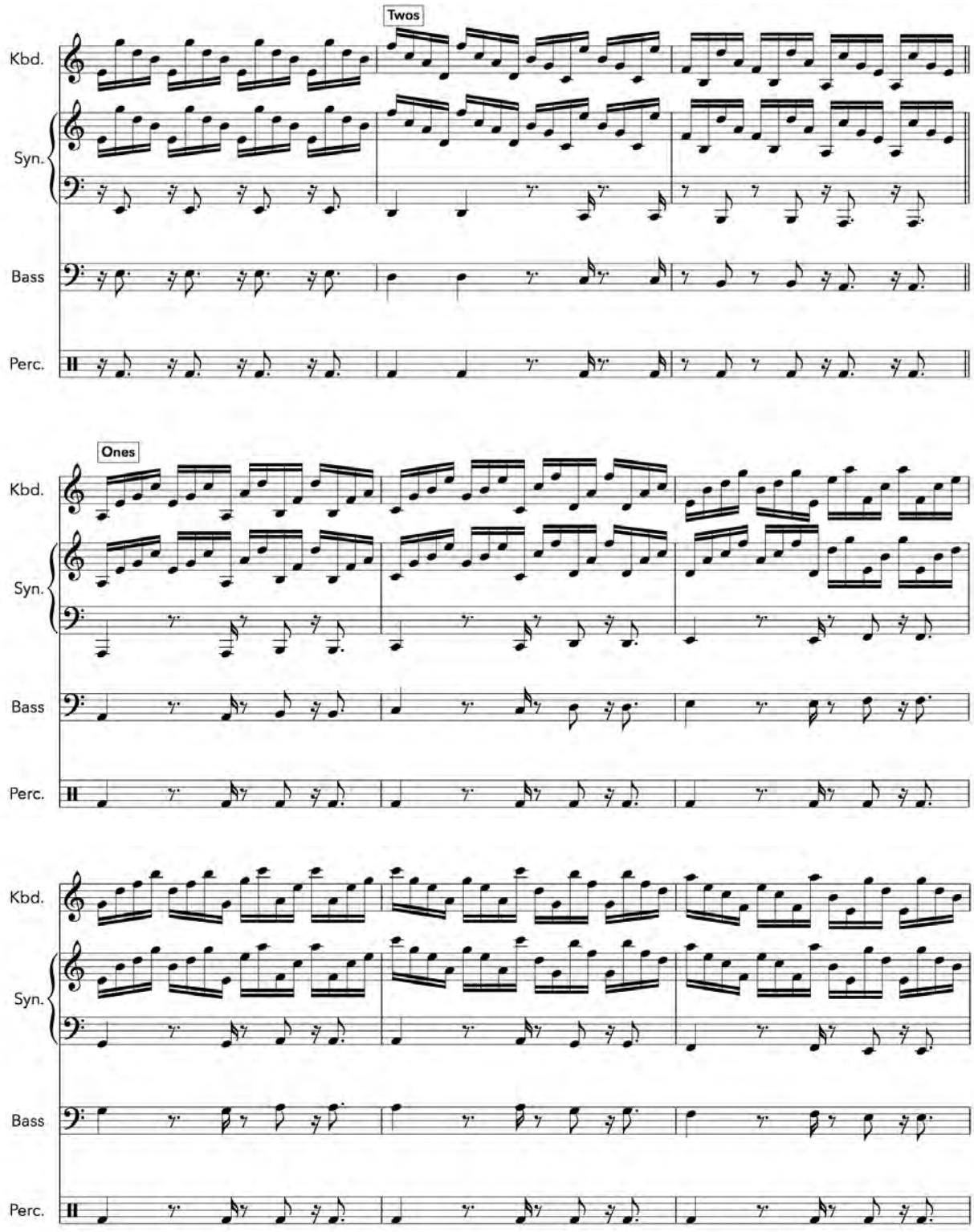


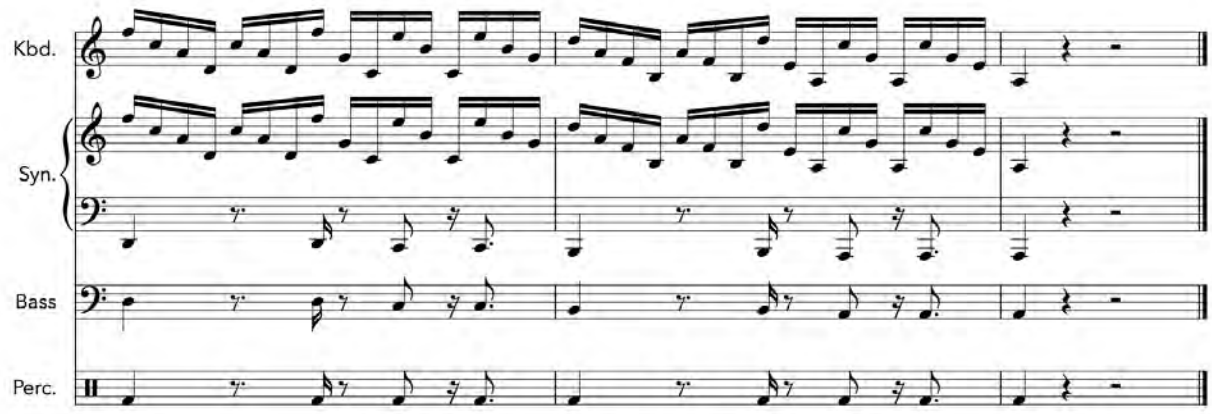

A minor 7 Chords
34
Mal.
37
Mal.
40
Mal.
43
Mal.
46
Mal.


4-Mallet Permutations (Substitute for Block Chords)
1
(Left - Right)
1/3 - 2/4 1/3 2/4
2
(Right - Left)
2/4 1/3 2/4 1/3
3
(Out-In's)
1/4 2/3 1/4 2/3
4
(In-Out's)
2/3 1/4 2/3 1/4
Mal.
5
1 2 3 4
6
4 3 2 1
7
1 3 2 4
8
4 2 3 1
Mal.
9
1 4 2 3
10
4 1 3 2
11
1 2 4 3
12
4 3 1 2
Mal.

Broccoli


Fours
Kbd.
Syn.
Bass
Perc.
Twos
Kbd.
Syn.
Bass
Perc.
Fours
Kbd.
Syn.
Bass
Perc.

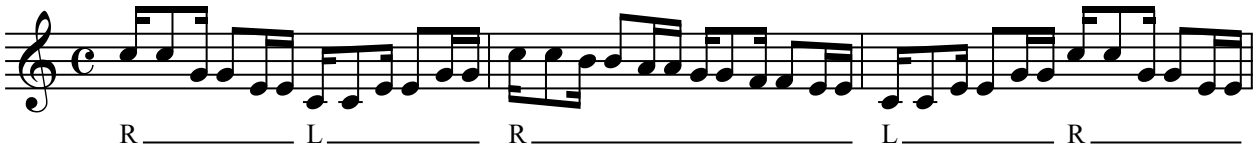

Twos
Kbd.
Syn.
Bass
Perc.
Ones
Kbd.
Syn.
Bass
Perc.
Kbd.
Syn.
Bass
Perc.


Kbd.
Syn.
Bass
Perc.

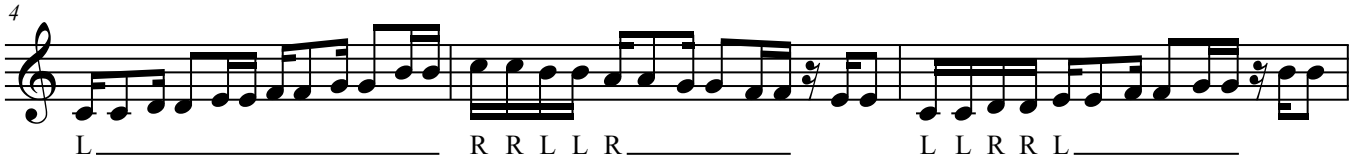
Luau

Dan Mark

Marimba



Mrb.



Mrb.

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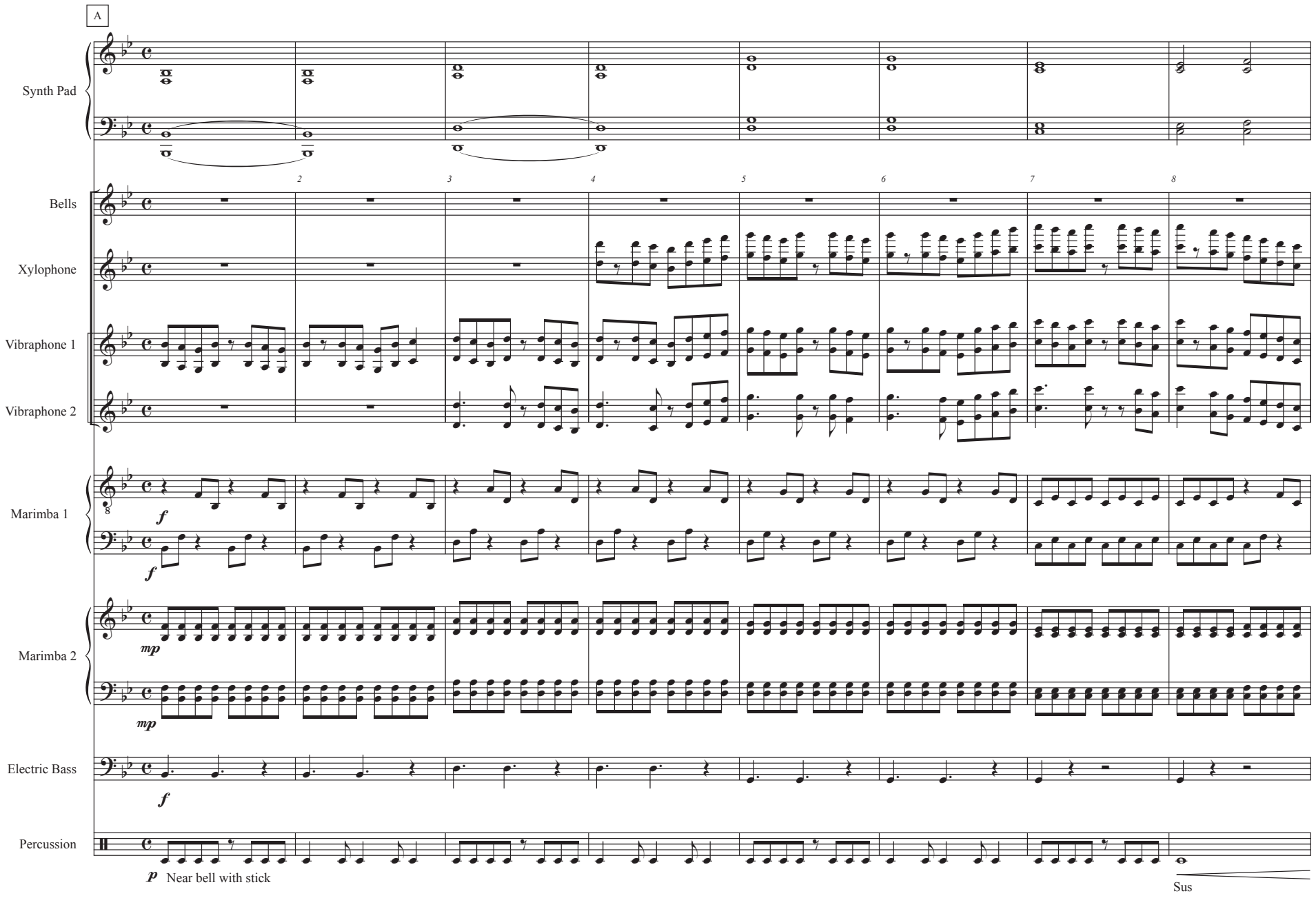
RELAX V

In honor of the man, the myth, the legend

Composer - Proctopus circa 2010
Arranged by: Danny Mark 2022



Matthew Prockup/Danny Mark
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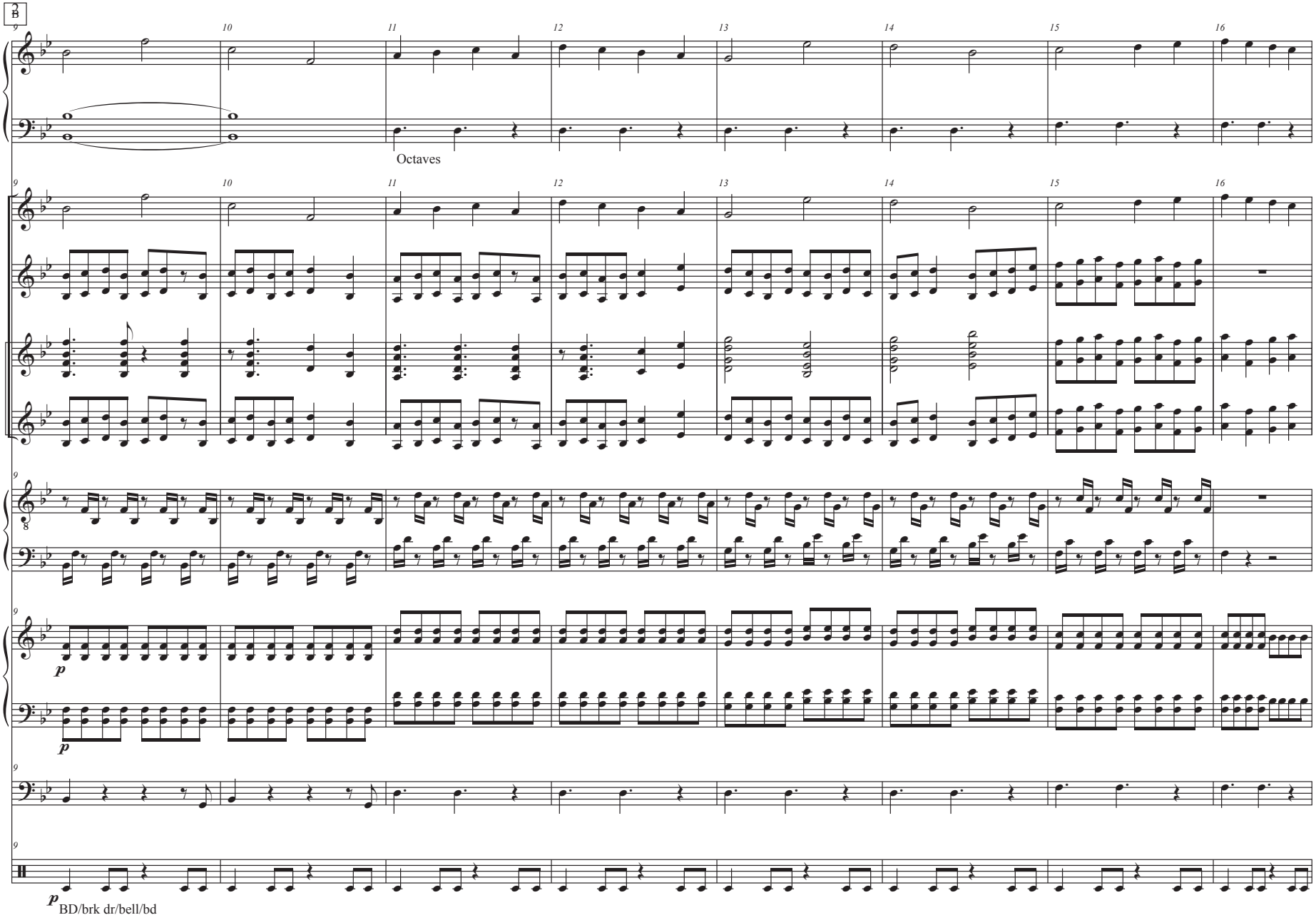
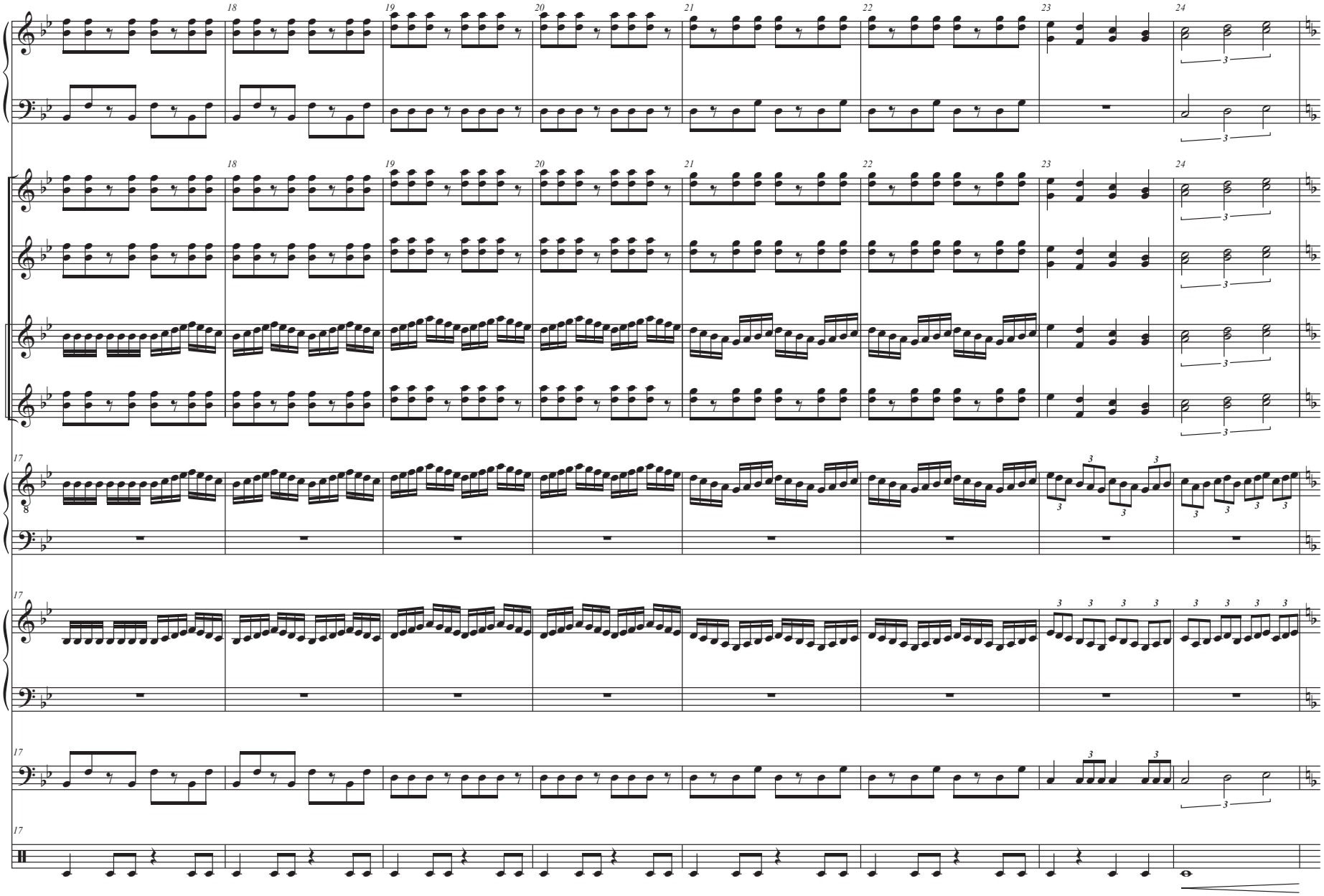
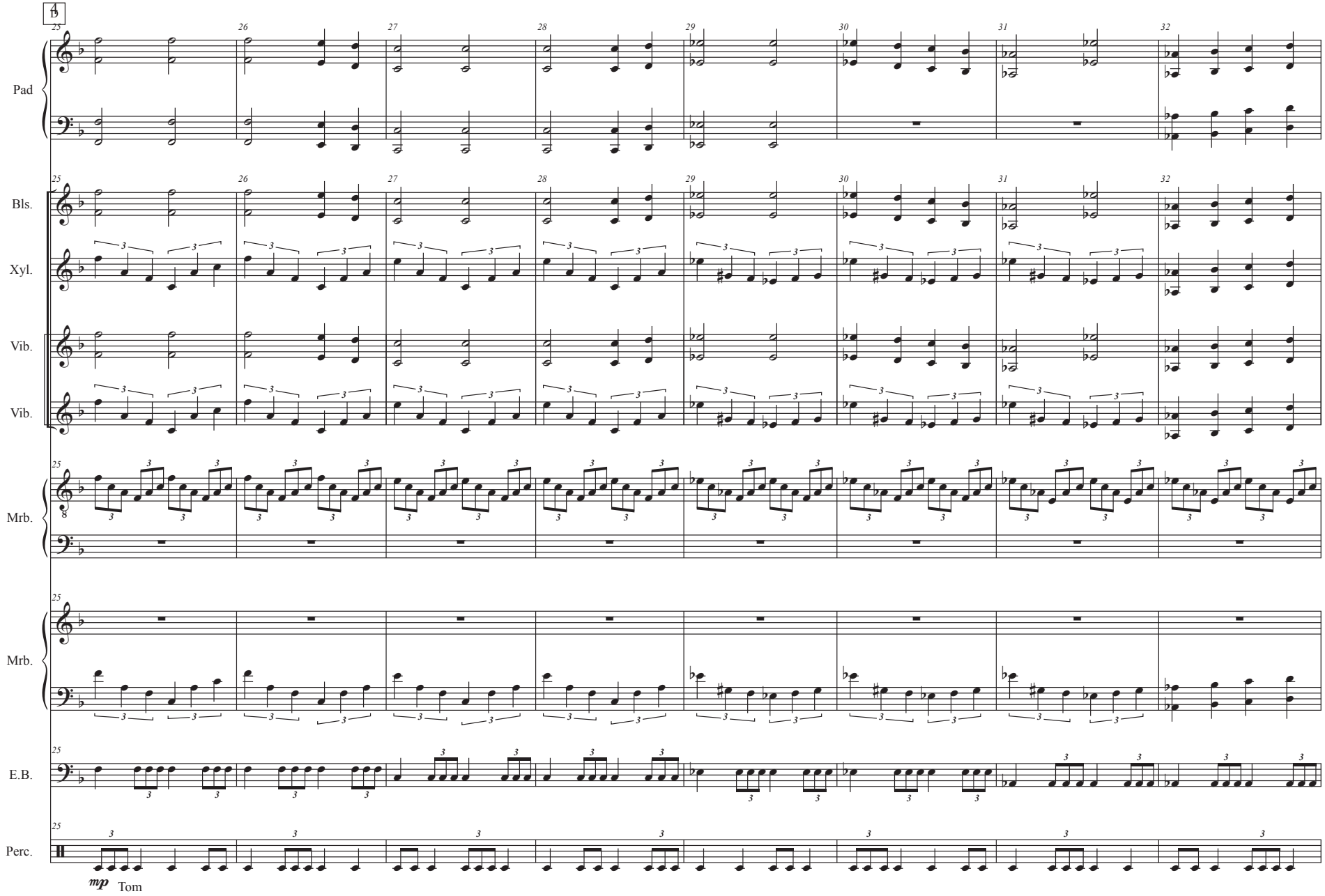
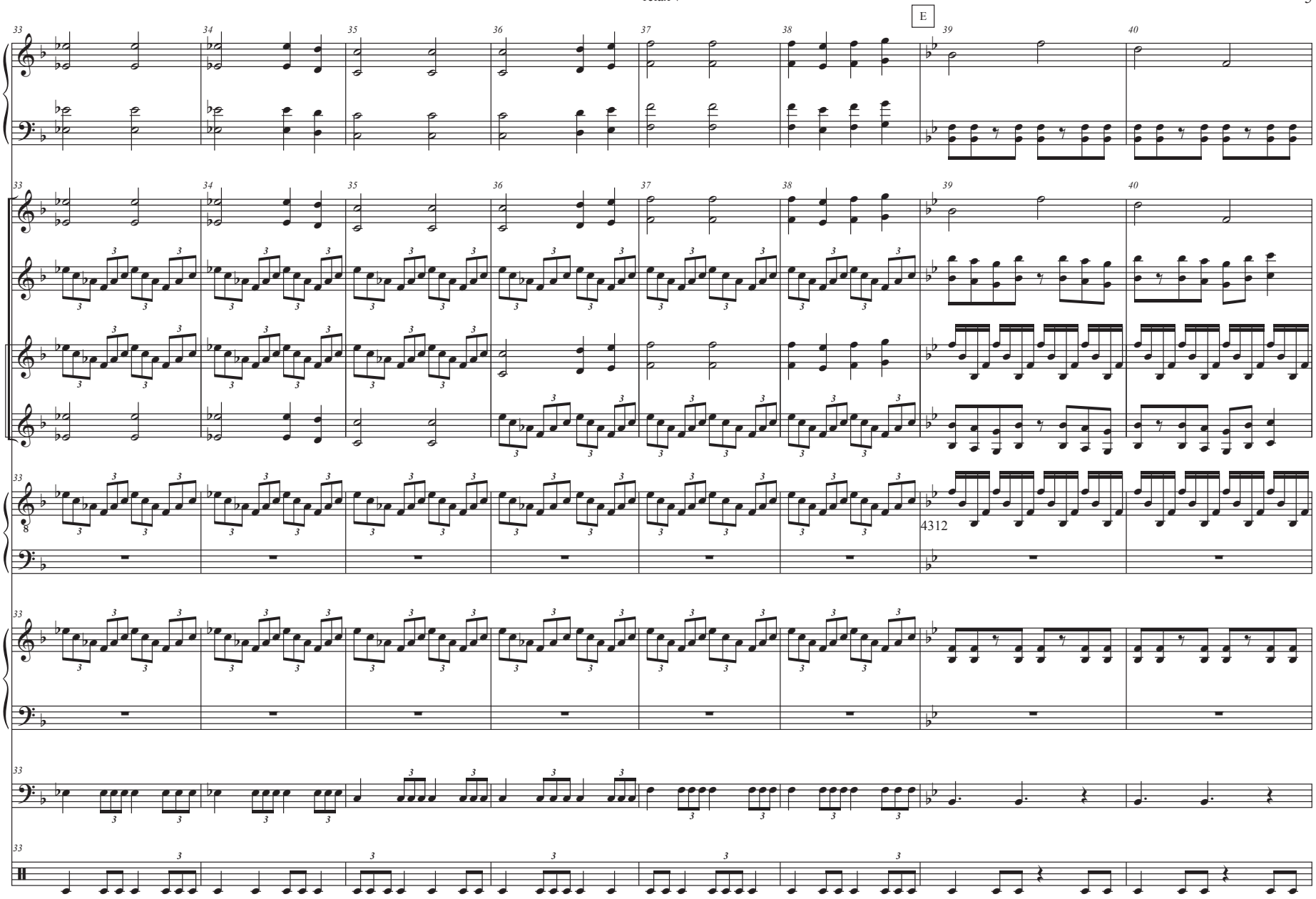
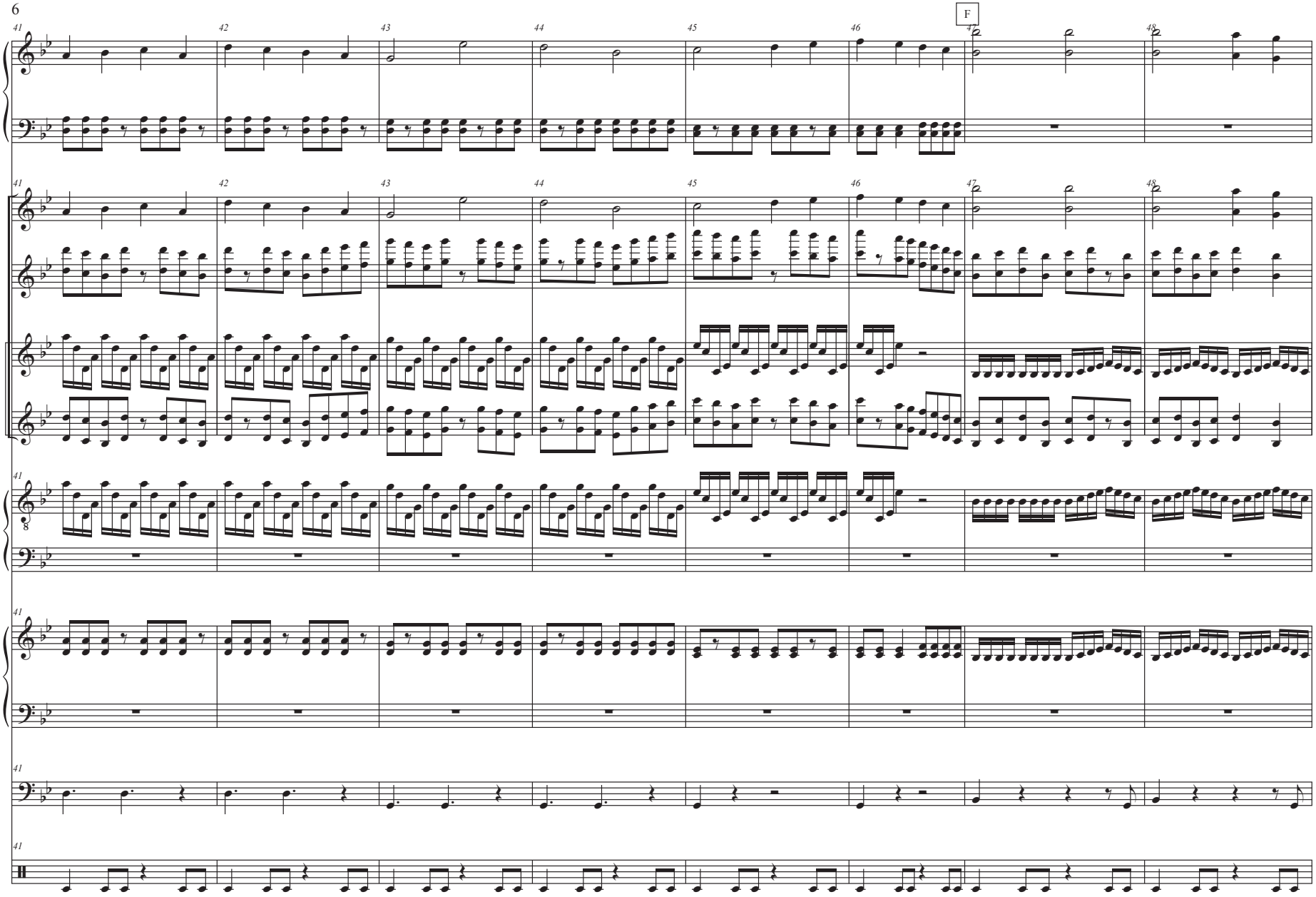

2
Pad
Octaves
Bls.
Xyl.
Vib.
Vib.
Mrb.
Mrb.
p
E.B.
Perc.
p
BD/brk dr/bell/bd

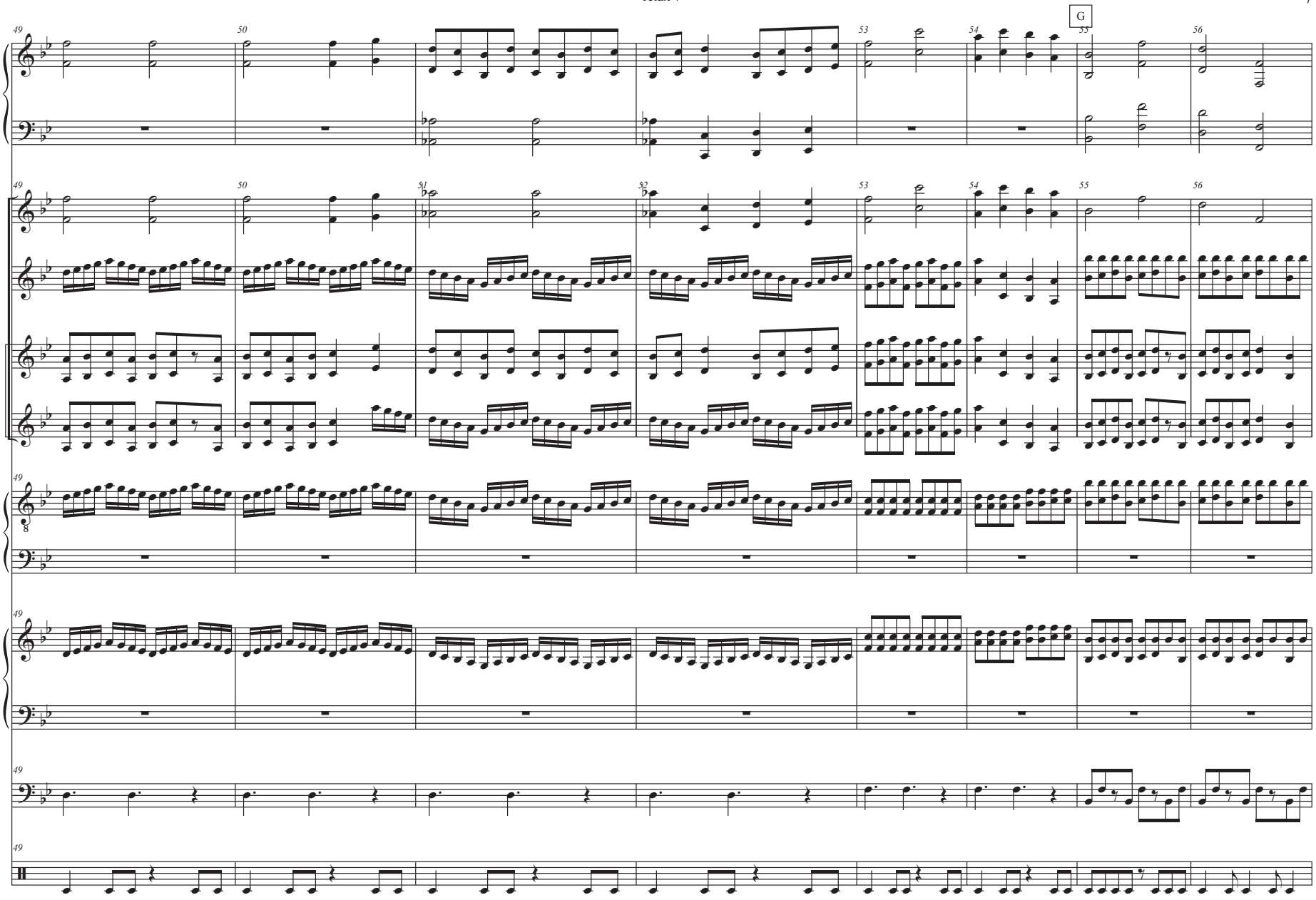
C

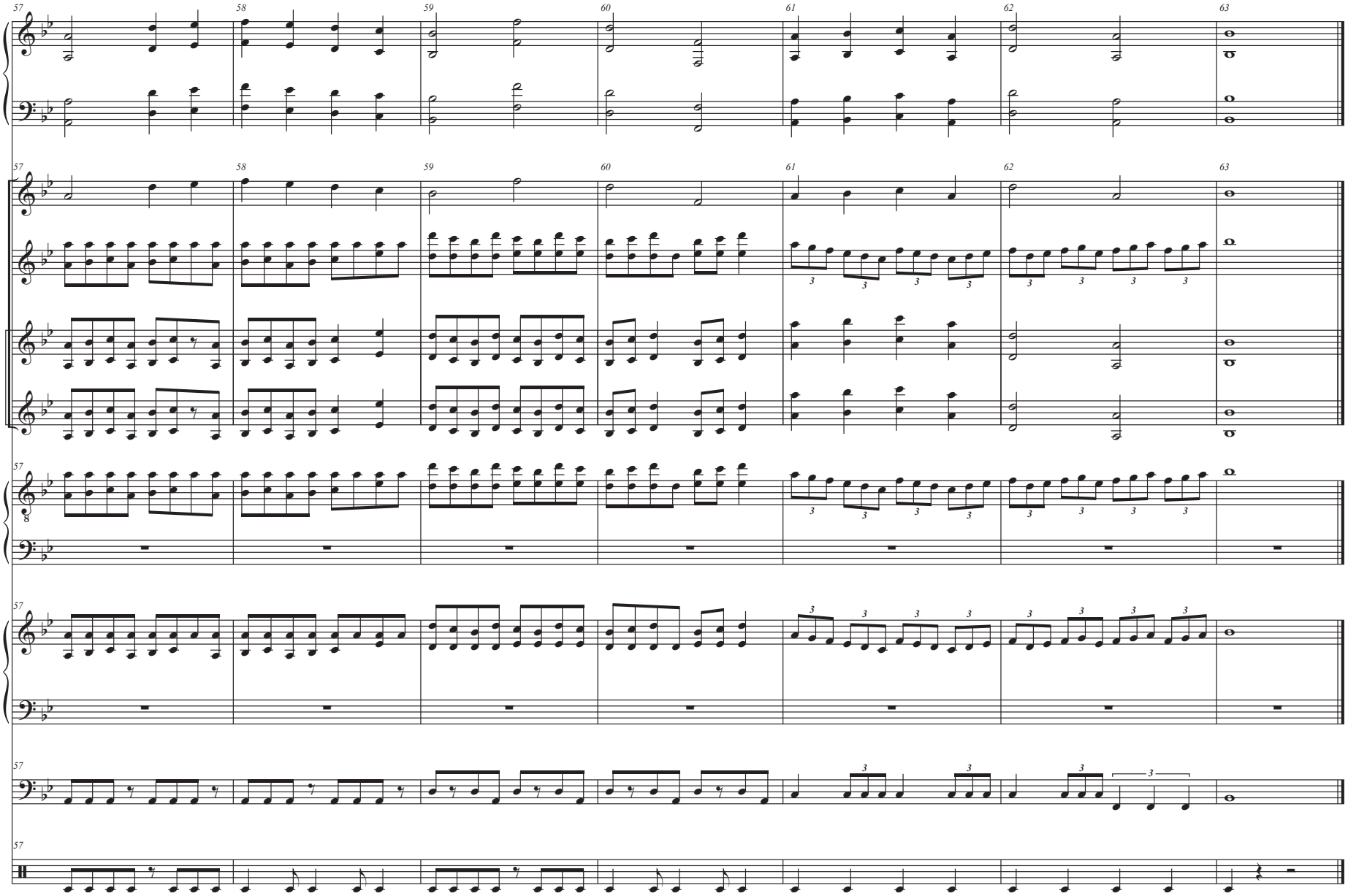



4
Pad
Bls.
Xyl.
Vib.
Vib.
Mrb.
Mrb.
E.B.
Perc.
mp
Tom


E
Pad
Bls.
Xyl.
Vib.
Vib.
Mrb.
4312
Mrb.
E.B.
Perc.


F
Pad
Bls.
Xyl.
Vib.
Vib.
Mrb.
Mrb.
E.B.
Perc.


G
Pad
Bls.
Xyl.
Vib.
Vib.
Mrb.
Mrb.
E.B.
Perc.

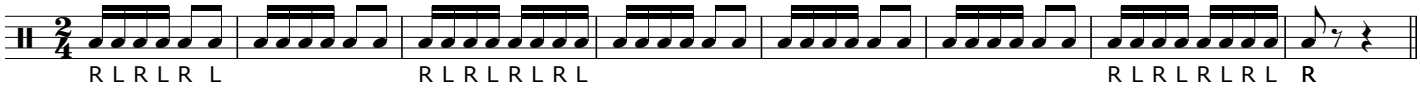

57
58
59
60
61
62
63
Pad
Bls.
Xyl.
Vib.
Vib.
Mrb.
Mrb.
E.B.
Perc.

snare & bass drum

The Check Pattern

and 14 Duple Variations

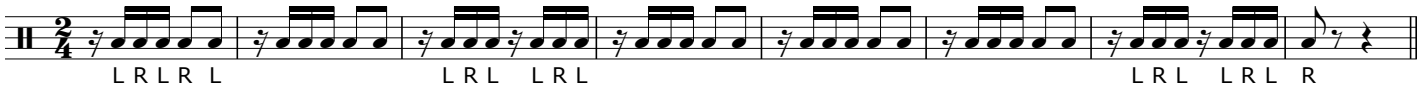
The Check Pattern



THE 14 DUPLE VARIATIONS

THREE BEAT PATTERNS

Var. 1



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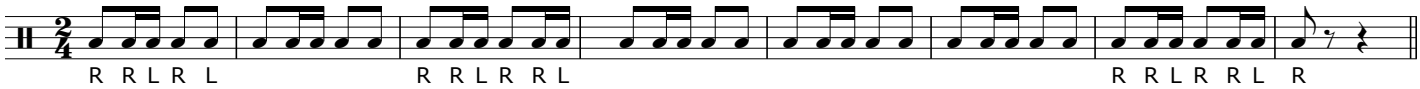

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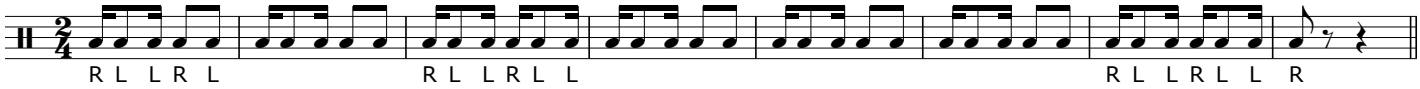
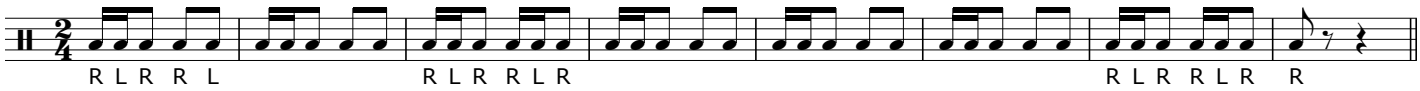
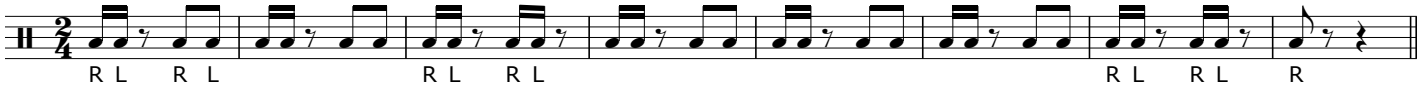


Var. 4



TWO BEAT PATTERNS

Var. 5



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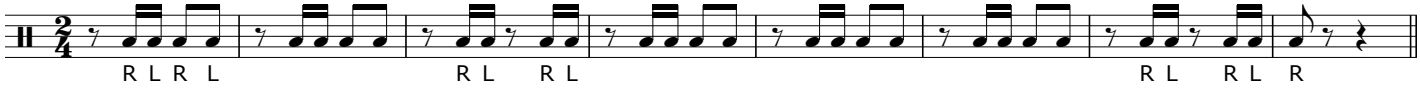

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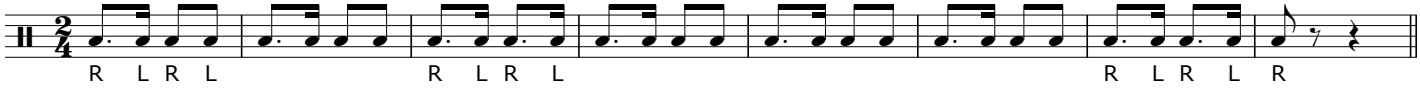
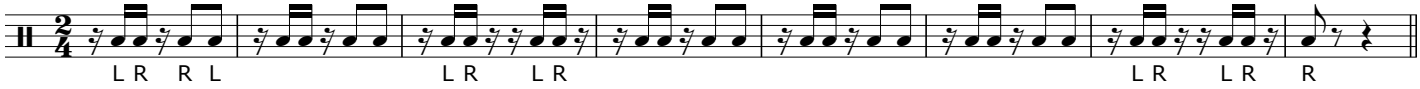


Var. 8



V.S.

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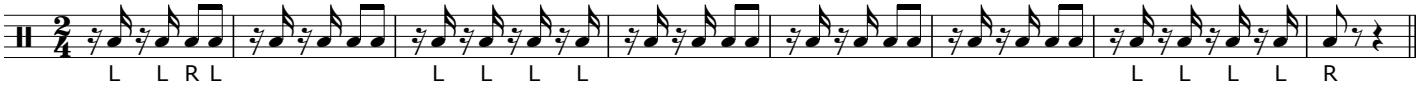
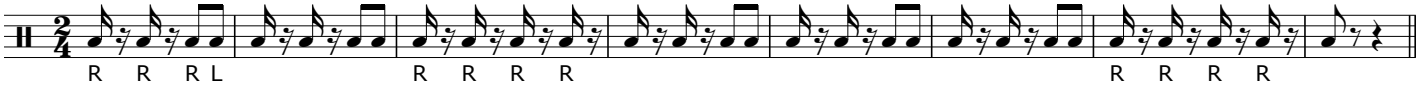
p. 2 Check Pattern and 14 Duples: snare and bass drum

Var. 9

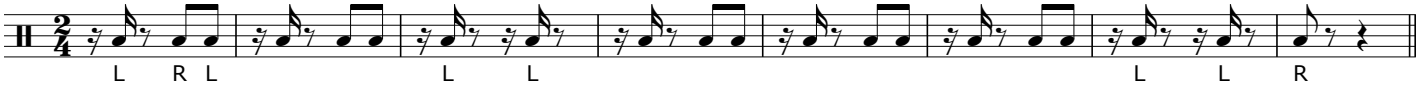


Var. 10



ONE BEAT PATTERNS

Var. 11



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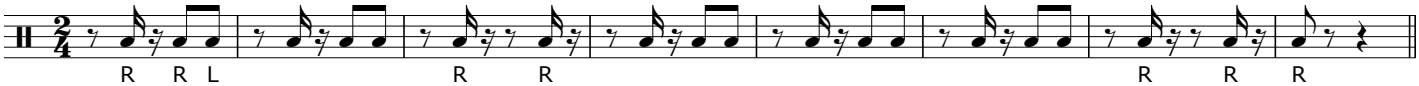

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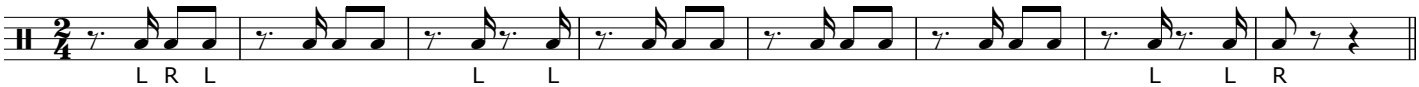
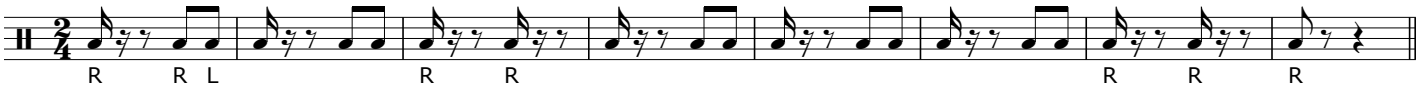
Var. 14