COLTS

Front Ensemble Book

2019

COLTS DRUM & BUGLE CORPS · DUBUQUE · USA

Thank you for your interest in the 2019 Colts Percussion Section! The purpose of the audition is to assess your ***Ability*** and ***Attitude*** while providing an enjoyable and educational environment for everyone attending.

This is an exciting time as we look to continue our recent successes and move forward toward even higher levels of musicianship and performance. It will take a highly motivated individual, fueled by maturity, integrity, and discipline, to perform as a member of the Colts. This said, we welcome your audition!

We are all familiar with the product drum and bugle corps offers, but it is the process that brings it all to light. Logistical information for the camps will soon be released. A more detailed explanation of technique for each section will be given at camp. The posted exercises should be the focus of your preparation for the audition camps. They are basic in nature and are designed to focus on fundamentals. More complex exercises and arrangements, as well as more detailed technique language, will be layered in over the course of the winter and spring camps.

The primary goals of the camps are to orient you to the standards, techniques, and approaches we employ, and secondly to evaluate skill sets. Each of you will be assessed individually and given constructive feedback. Please familiarize yourself with the exercises and the language used to supplement them. We place a great deal of emphasis on the musical/visual relationship and you will be held accountable for physical preparedness.

Any questions you may have concerning the audition process or specific questions about the packet are always welcome.

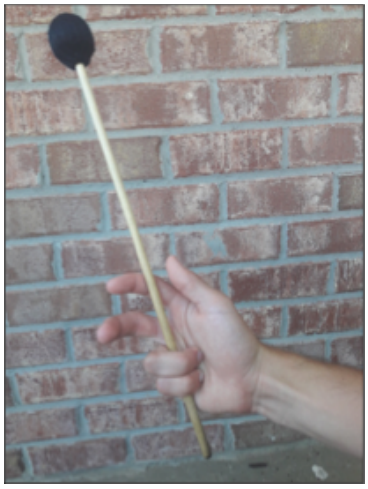
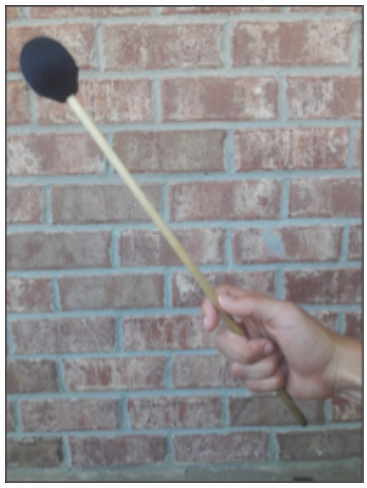
Please contact, Benjamin Pyles - b.t.pyles@gmail.com

Technique

Two Mallets

Begin by wrapping your pinky and ring finger around the mallet. You should have between an inch and an inch and a half of the shaft showing underneath these two fingers. This is your anchor point, and your back fingers NEVER let go of the mallets.

Your middle finger rests right beside your pinky and ring finger and supports the mallet. Rest the shaft of the mallet on the first knuckle of your index finger. There should be a small space between your index finger and your middle finger. Place your thumb directly on top of the shaft of the mallet above your index finger.


Flatten out your wrists. Then turn your wrists out 15 degrees. This is the angle at which you will strike the keyboard.

The stroke primarily comes from the wrists. Think about a moderate tempo using 90% wrist and 10% arm. Quick tempi do not allow for any use of the arm.

Four Mallets

Begin with the outside mallet.

- Place the end of the shaft in the pinky and ring fingers on the crease above your palm

- Wrap your pinky and ring fingers around the mallet.

Wedge the mallet in between your ring finger and middle finger so that the shaft rests just behind your middle finger's middle knuckle.

- Check to see that the shaft of the mallet is flush with you palm; there shouldn't be any mallet sticking out of the back of your palm.

- Flatten your wrist and check the angle of the mallet. It should be at a 45-degree angle.

- Turn your wrist so your thumbnail is facing the ceiling. Your outside mallet should be at its set position. Now for the inside mallet.

- With the outside mallet still in your hand, make a fist as best you can.

- Lift up your index finger and thumb

- Place the tip of the mallet shaft under the tip of your middle finger. The mallet should be supported by your middle finger, and the fleshy part of your thumb.

- Rest the mallet on the first knuckle of your index finger.

- The thumb rests on the mallet shaft directly above your index finger.

- Avoid pulling the index finger in. You should also avoid bending your thumb at the knuckle. At this point, your mallets should be on an even plane.

Here's another way to check hand position. Without any mallets in your hands, make fists with both hands. Turn your hands so that your thumbnails are facing the ceiling. Roll out your index fingers so that they are pointing toward each other and lay your thumbs down on our index finger's first knuckle. This point of contact is commonly referred to as the "perch."

Stroke Types

Piston Stroke

The piston stroke is the stroke we use to maximize efficiency. To perform a piston stroke, simply strike the keyboard from a certain height and return immediately to your starting position.

Double Vertical

The double vertical stroke occurs when both mallets in one hand strike the keyboard at once. Your thumb should face the ceiling for the duration of this stroke. Height comes from the part of your wrist in line with your thumb. This requires flexibility.

Simply holding mallets in the set position while you watch T.V. will build this flexibility, but you have to actively stretch the wrist. As you stretch, it should be mildly uncomfortable, but you should feel NO PAIN. Try to avoid flattening out the wrists.

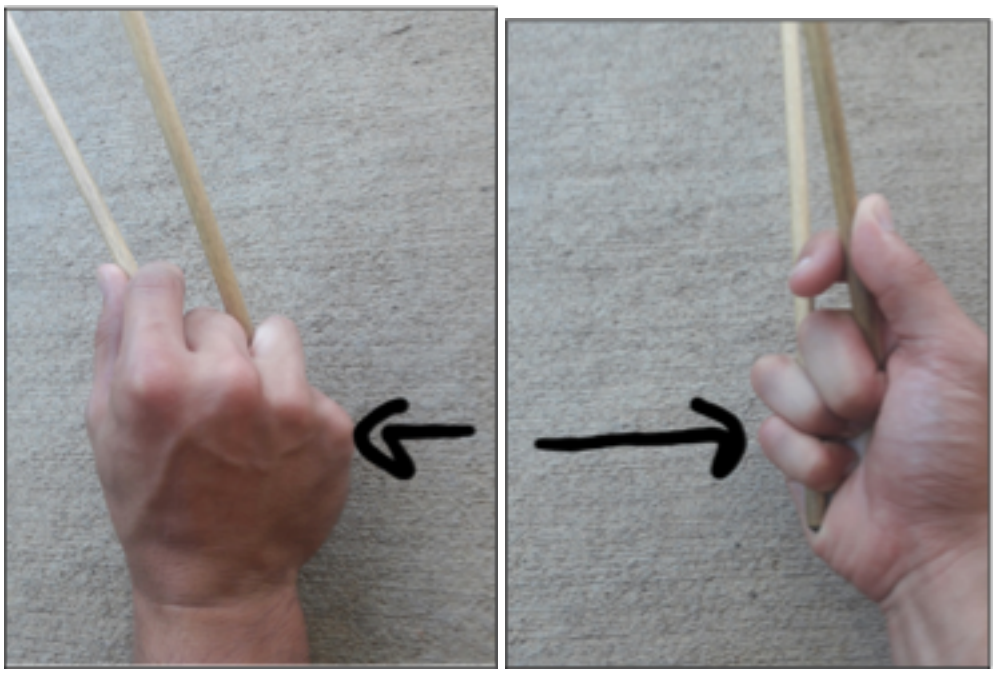
Single Independent

The single independent stroke occurs when one mallet is played in one hand, and the other mallet in the same hand remains still. This stroke is achieved by rotating the wrist and forearm. The thumb faces the ceiling and the wrist rotates either inside or outside. After the stroke is keyboard has been played, the wrist returns to the original position with the thumb facing the ceiling.

A good way to gauge if you're getting a good rotation is by paying attention to the visibility of the pinky knuckles.

- When performing an inside stroke, you should briefly glimpse the knuckle at the base of the pinky before returning to your set position.

- When performing an outside stroke, you should briefly glimpse the pinky's middle knuckle before returning to your set position.



The mallet not in use acts as an axis for the rotation of the one that is in motion. You should practice this until you alleviate any “wiggle” that may occur in the stationary mallet. Practice with each individual mallet on a single note doing several repetitions until each feels “independent” of the other.

Double Lateral

A double lateral consists of two single independent strokes in the same hand that have been sped up to create a single, smooth motion.

Because the second mallet is striking immediately after the first one, the down-stroke of the first mallet must also include the preparation stroke of the second mallet. After the stroke, both mallets rebound to their original position.

Triple Lateral

The triple lateral adds a third note in the same hand. i.e. 3,4,3 or 2,1,2. The idea is very similar to the double lateral. The three notes are played by rotating the hand quickly in one smooth motion. After all three notes have been played, both mallets return to their original position.

Float/Connected Stroke

There will be times when the piston stroke is not as useful to us as a connected, slower rebound.

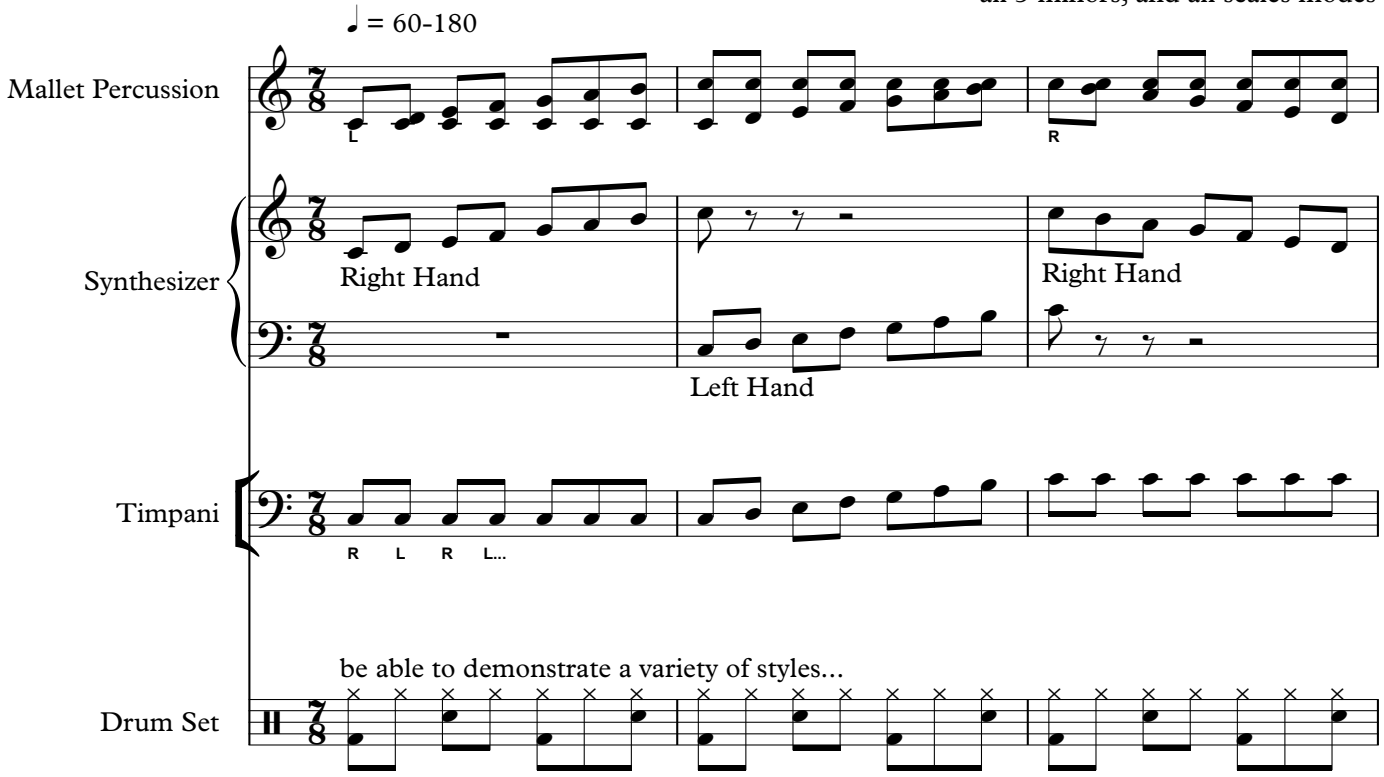
To achieve a float stroke, you down stroke a note, but you do not stop the motion. The motion continues as if you were pulling the mallets through molasses. The rebound is always led with the mallet heads and not with the wrists.

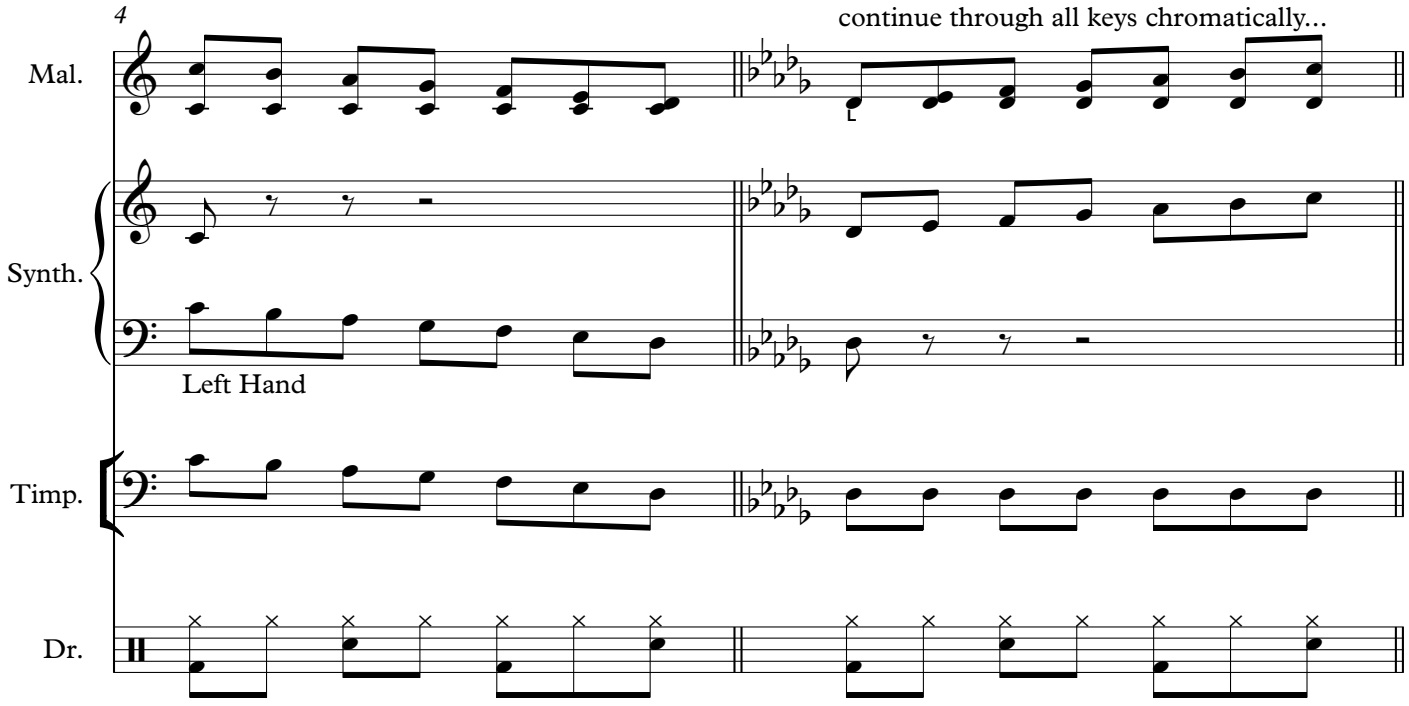
Independent Roll

The independent roll is a fast, one-handed, alternating stroke. It creates the illusion of sustained sound. You should be able to achieve an independent roll in both hands at all intervals.

7/8 Legati

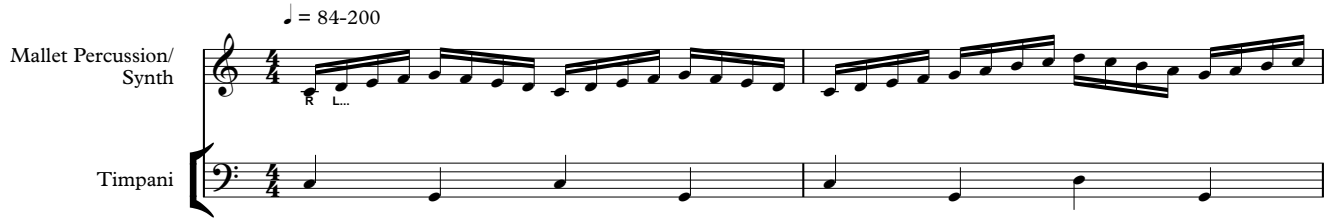
Be prepared to play in all majors,
all 3 minors, and all scales modes

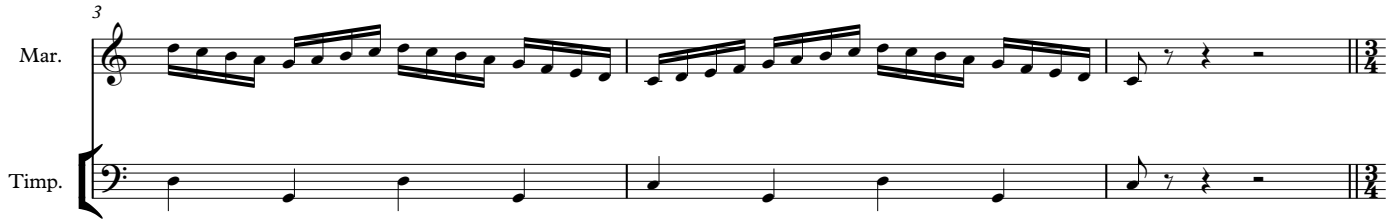




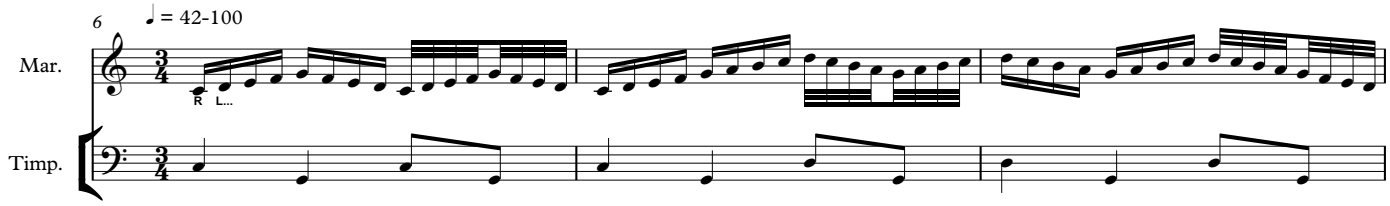
Scales

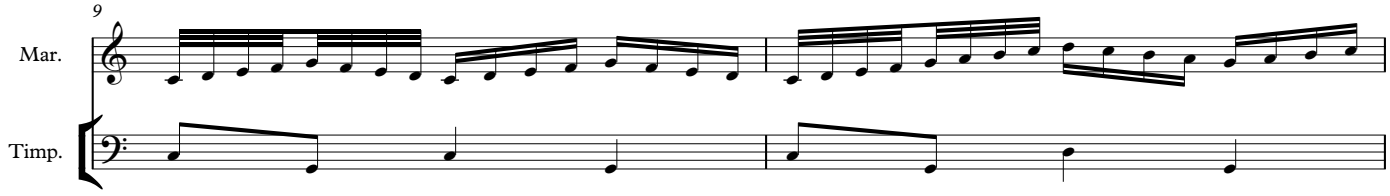
Prepare in all scales and be ready
to play holding 2 mallets or 4 mallets

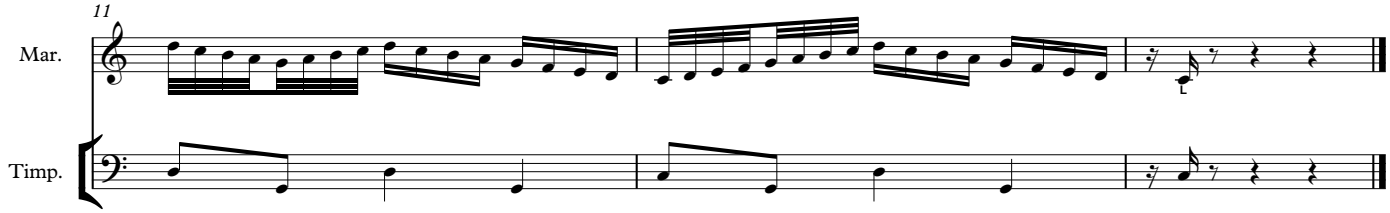




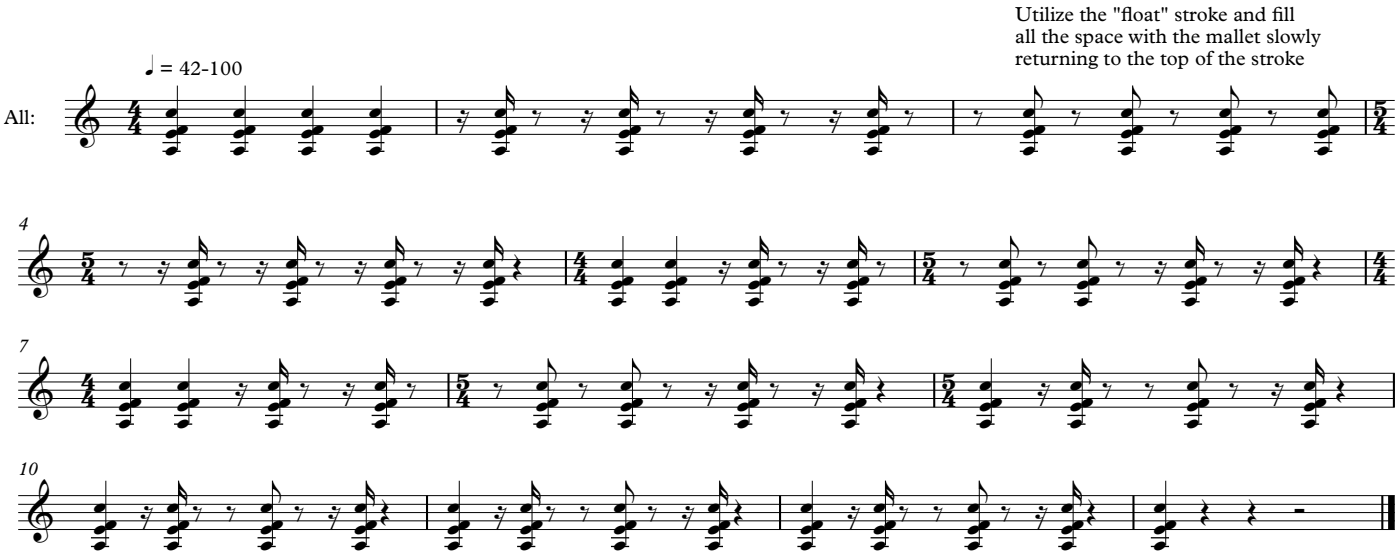
Var. 2





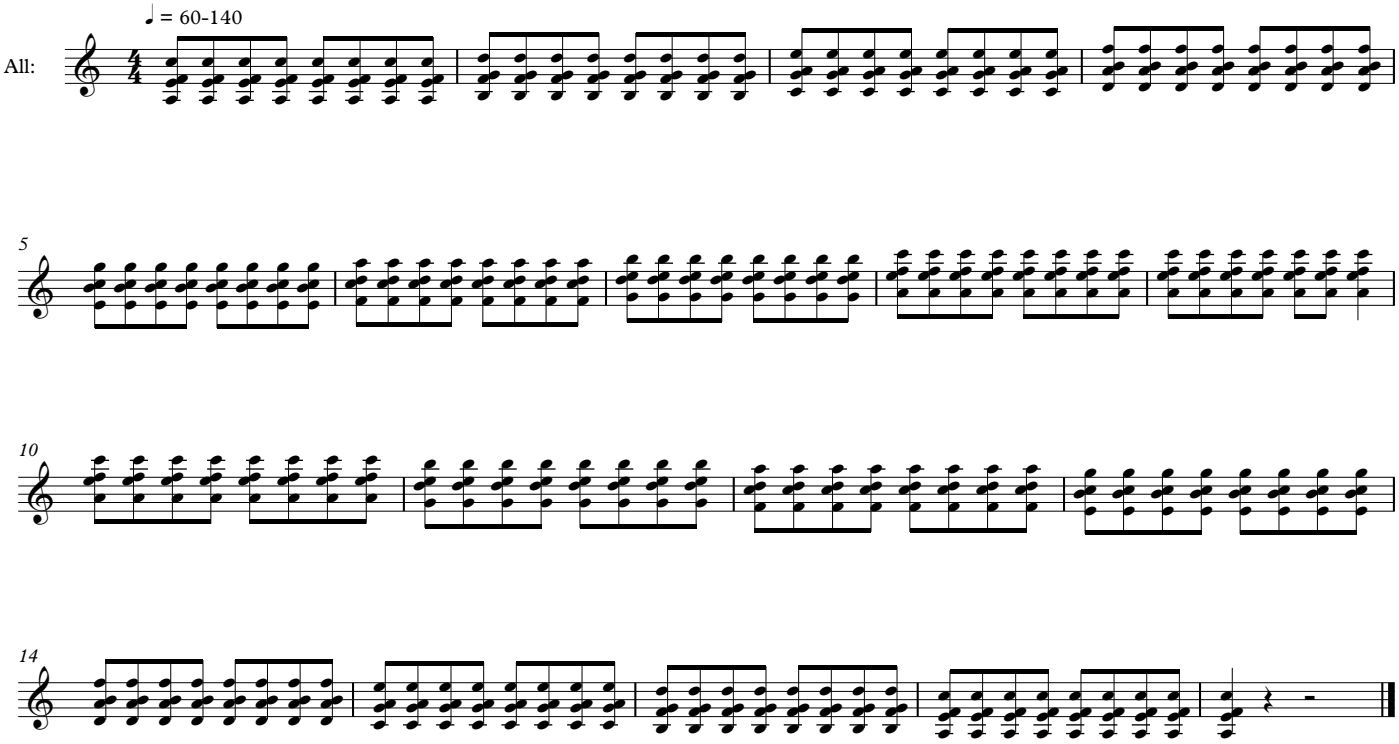


Space & Timing

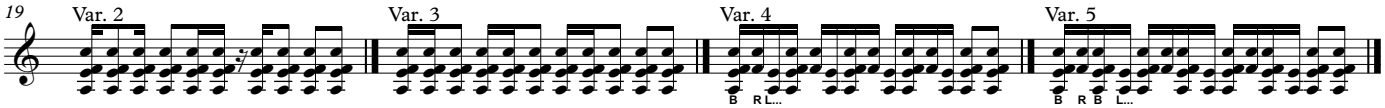


Infiniblocks

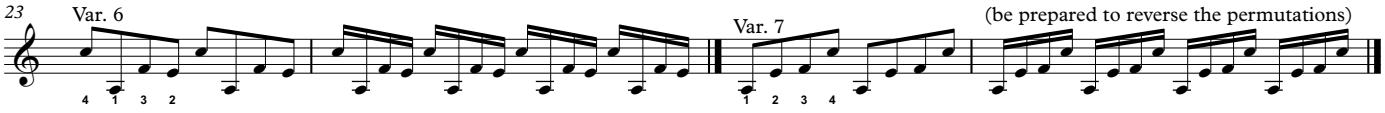
Each variation can be moved up and down the scale like variation 1

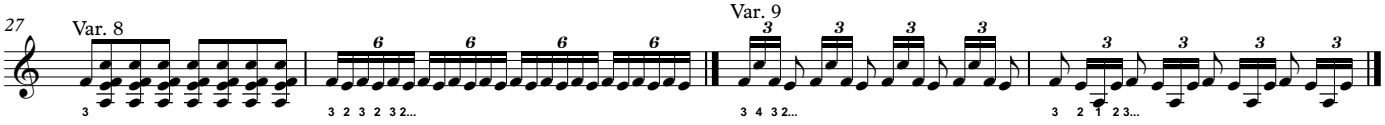


One-bar variations:

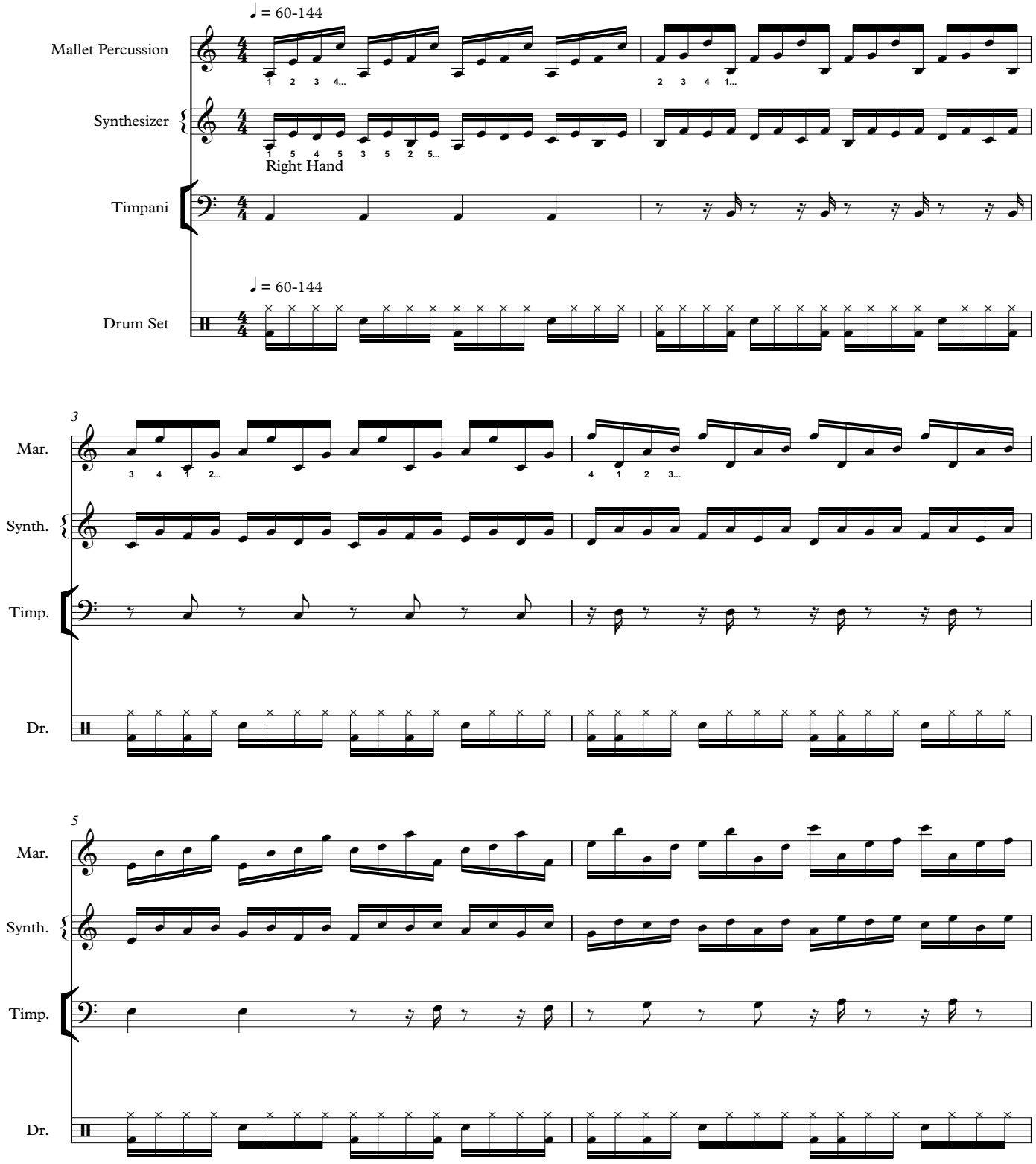


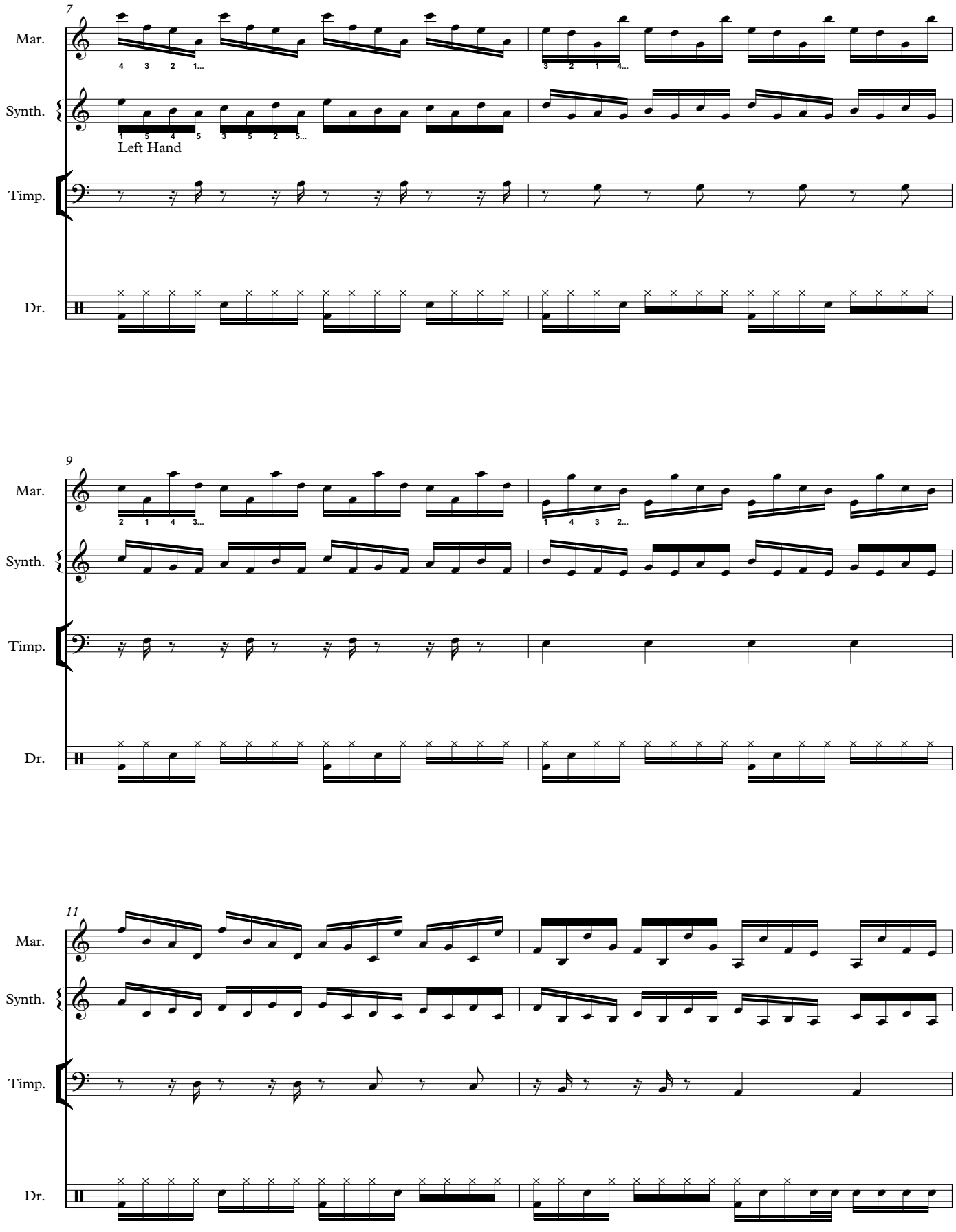
Two-bar variations:

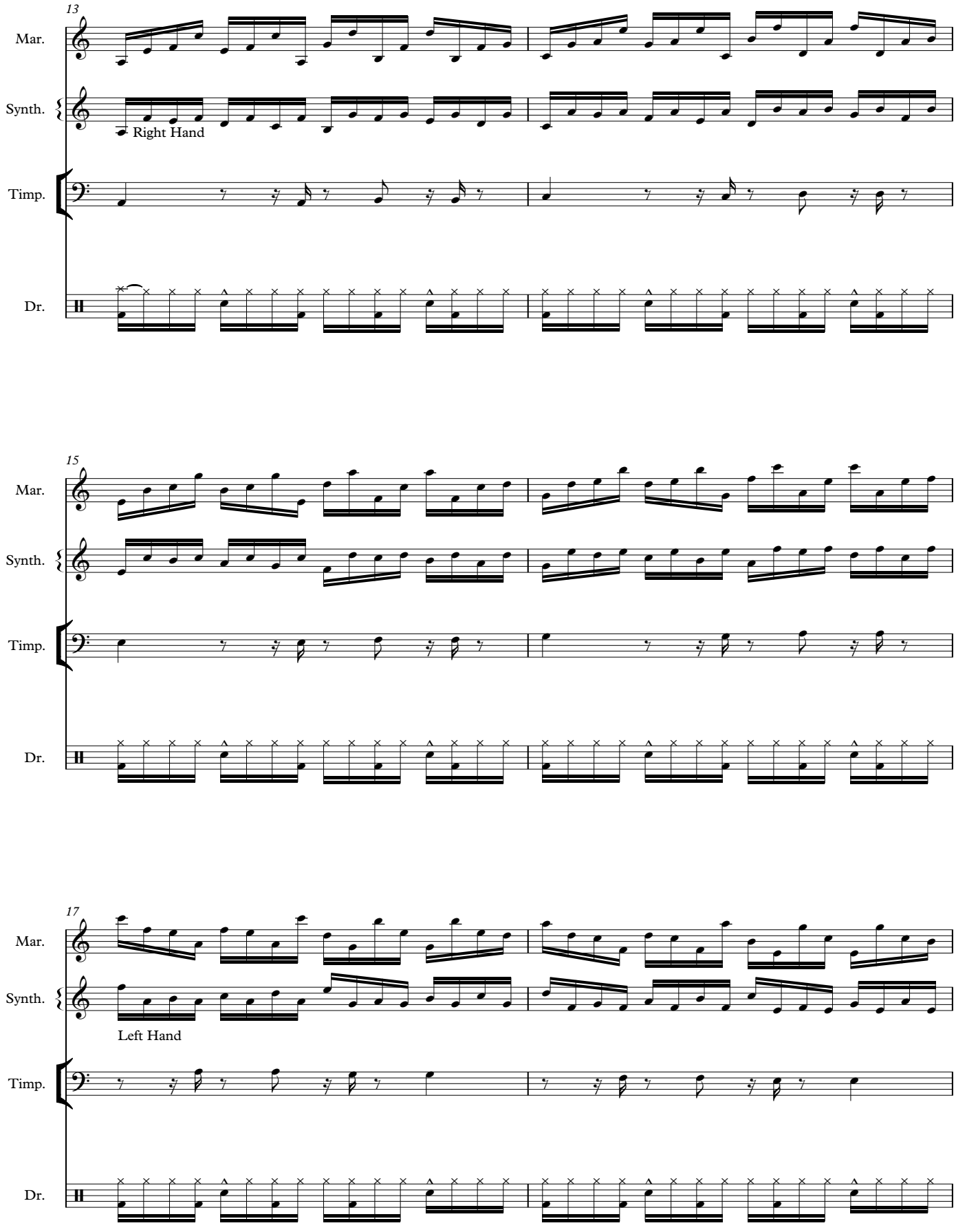


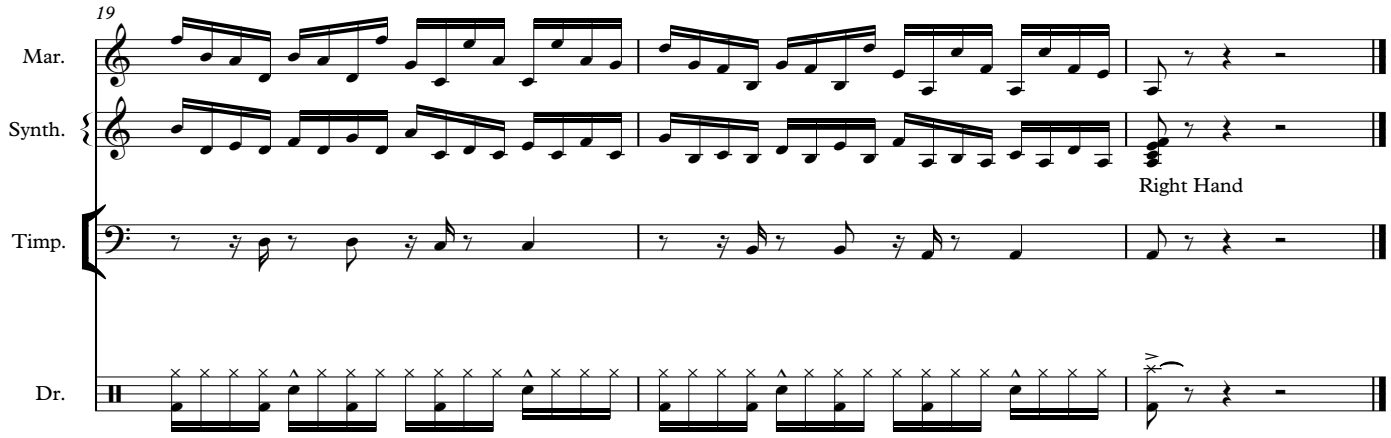


Moving 5ths Grid



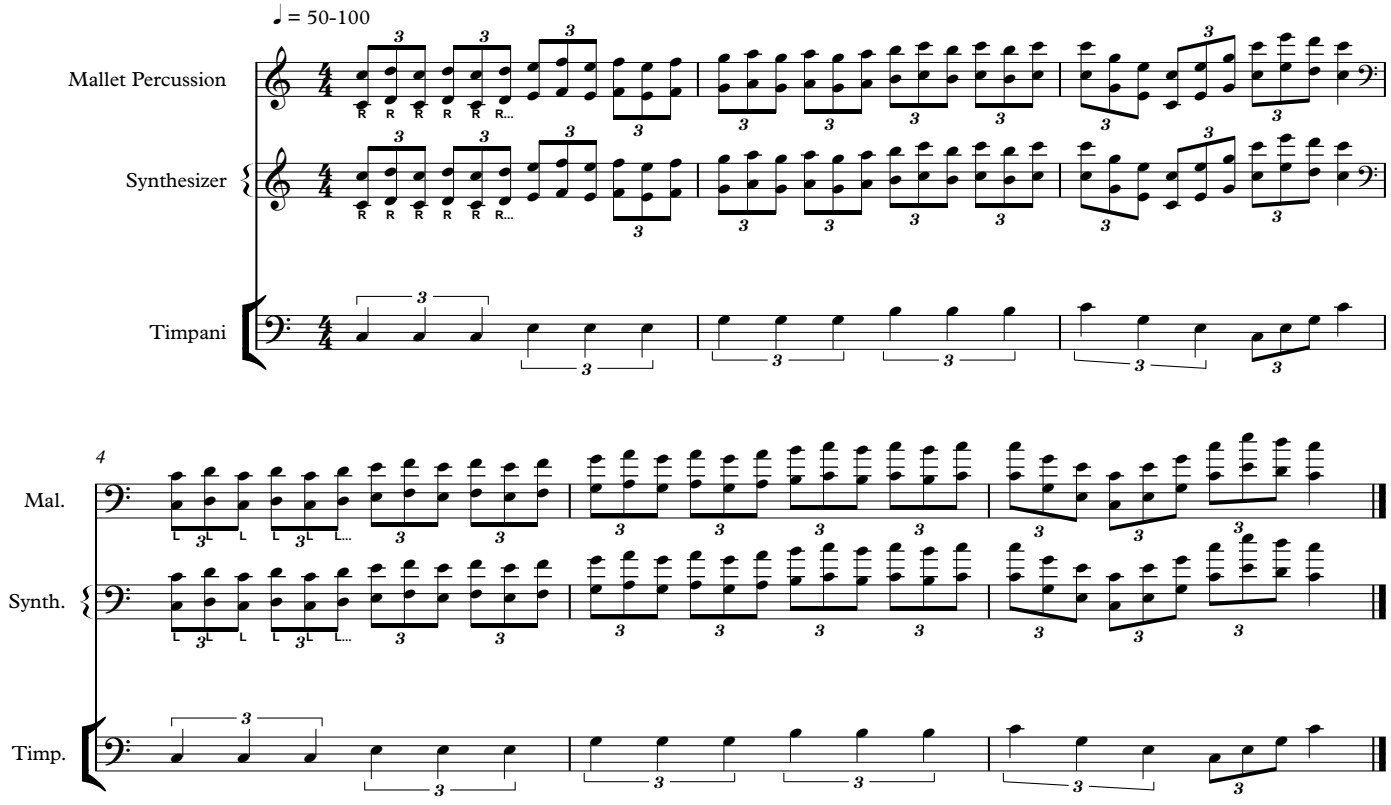

7
Mar.
Synth.
Left Hand
Timp.
Dr.
9
Mar.
Synth.
Timp.
Dr.
11
Mar.
Synth.
Timp.
Dr.


13
Mar.
Synth.
Right Hand
Timp.
Dr.
15
Mar.
Synth.
Timp.
Dr.
17
Mar.
Synth.
Left Hand
Timp.
Dr.


19
Mar.
Synth.
Right Hand
Timp.
Dr.

Octaves

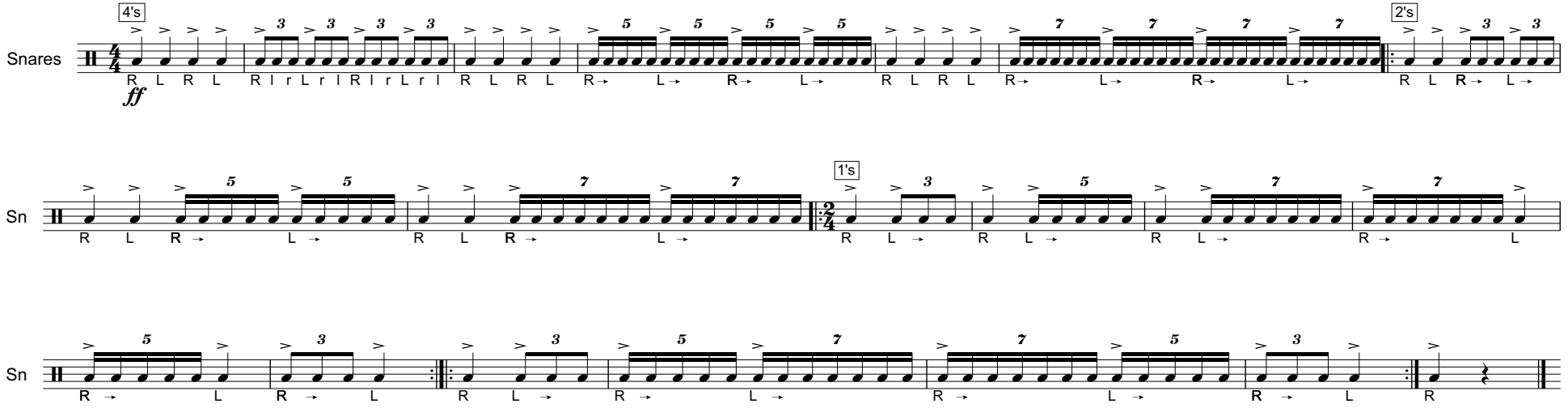
Exercise is to be played holding an octave
in each hand with Stevens 4-mallet grip
Be prepared to play in all keys



Odd Variations

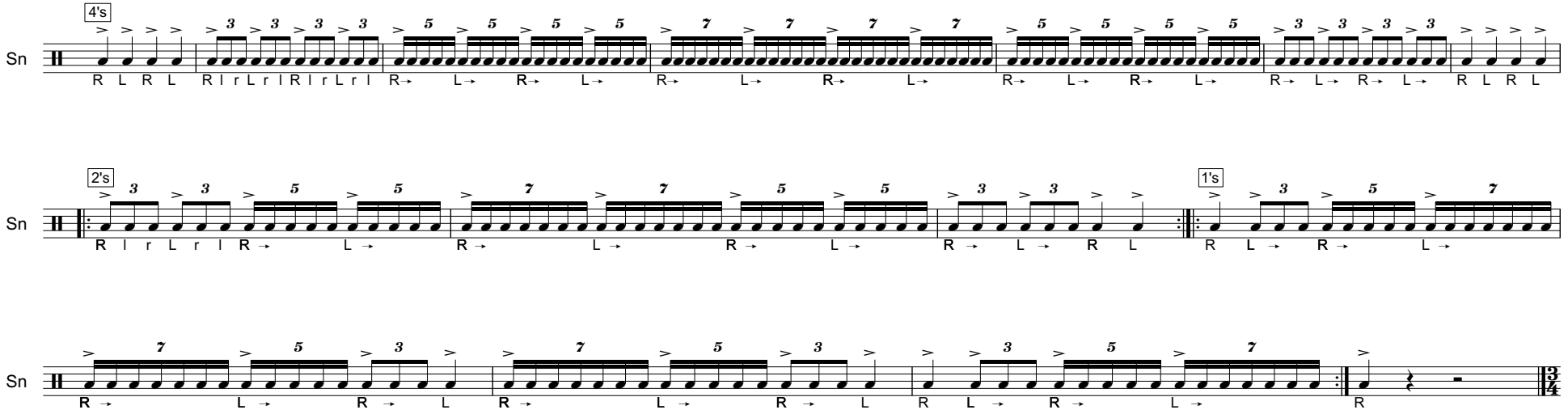
Downbeat Flow

♩ = 90 - 112



Count Down

♩ = 90 - 112



Dotted Flow

♩ = 140 - 160