Front Ensemble Packet 2022-2023

Director: John Dunlap
Front Ensemble Caption Heads: Tyler Hawk/Dane Castillo
(Rev. August 30, 2022)

Contact: st.martin.independent@gmail.com

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for SM Percussion.
We hope you are excited for a great season!

There are lots of talented people that talk about going to auditions but never do because they are afraid of not making the ensemble. Our team is growing and there will be a lot of opportunities for you to learn and perform at the highest level. Please take every opportunity to ask questions and learn more about playing the instrument of your choice. EVERY spot in the ensemble is open and available each year to the people who audition. Absolutely no spot in the ensemble will be guaranteed to an individual until they have earned it.

Exercises / Audition Process

Included in this packet are several exercises we will be going over during the audition process. Please come to the audition days prepared to play each scale-based exercise in **every major key** and variety of tempos. We will not have time to "spoon-feed" notes throughout the audition weekends or rehearsal weekends, so, **BE PREPARED**. You should strive to have these exercises memorized. **Please also prepare a short solo to play that will highlight your skills.** Overall, the purpose of the audition process is for you to show off what you are capable of and how well you respond to feedback - we want to see if you will be a good fit for the ensemble. Although we highly value humility, the auditions are your opportunity to show us what you've got.
The technique that we use is broken down in this packet and each person should be familiar with the terms used to describe the certain techniques (i.e., perch, rolling intervals, extended octave grip). This packet will go through the basics of setting the grip and striking the instrument with some of the different techniques that will be used.

Above all, have a positive attitude and have fun. Come to auditions eager to learn and get better. Ultimately, YOUR efforts will decide how great this ensemble will be this year.

Mallets

Be prepared to play on all keyboard instruments throughout the audition process (Marimba, Vibraphone, Xylo, Glock).

Synth/Electronics

Piano experience will be beneficial as you support the mallets, as well as an understanding of rhythmic accuracy and being able to adapt to the ensemble.

Percussion (Rack, Drum set)

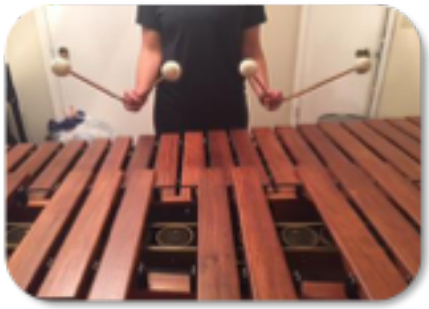
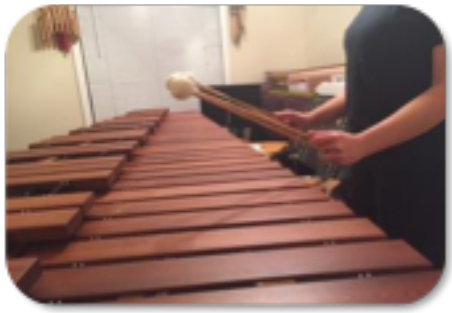
Have knowledge of the keyboard exercises and be ready to play "groove" rhythms and improvise with the mallet warm-ups. Having an understanding of the basic rudiment structures and interpretations will help.

Keyboard Guidelines

Approach

When approaching a mallet instrument, make sure the instrument is at the appropriate height before setting your hands. The top of the keys should be at the same height as your waist or belt. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart and at an appropriate distance from the keyboard (one foot should be slightly in front of the other, so you can move back and forth between manuals). This distance is determined by the length of your arm in relation to the type/size of the instrument. When you put your mallets in the center of the bar on the natural keys, your forearm should be slightly below level. If your forearm is completely level, then you need to lower the instrument.

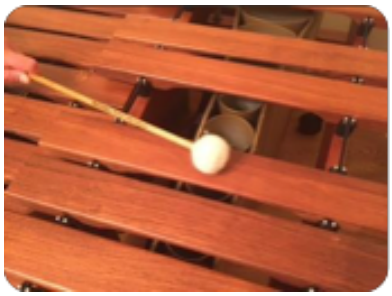
When playing vibraphone, the right foot will be on the pedal and the left will be comfortably behind the pedal. The balance point will be between the heel of the right foot and the ball of the left foot. When playing in the highest register it is suggested that the left foot go behind the right, to make sure the keys are played in the correct playing zone.

Playing Zones

The correct playing zones for all keyboards are in the center of the bar directly over the resonators. For the accidentals it is best to aim for the top of the resonator tube to ensure that you play directly in the center of the bar. When playing on the edges of the marimba (not applicable to vibes, xylo, or bells), you must make sure that you are playing on the very EDGE of the key, so that you can produce a good full sound. Do Not Play on the NODES!

Yes



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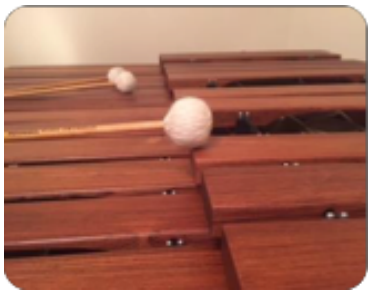

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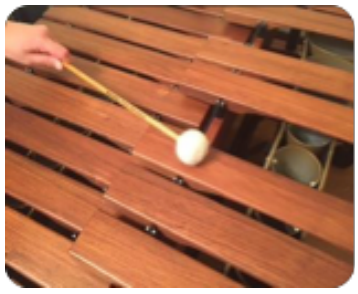
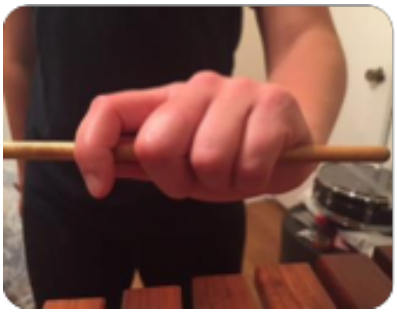
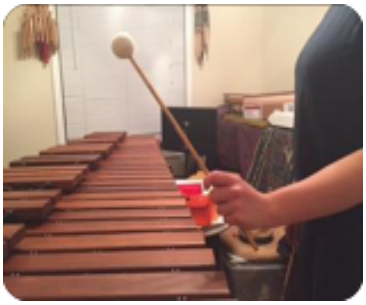


Two-Mallet Technique

Grip

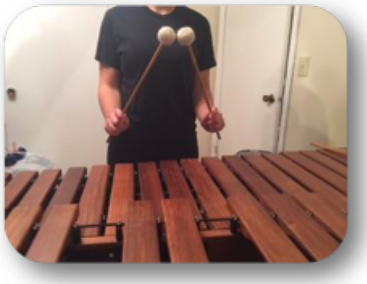
We use the “rear fulcrum” 2-mallet grip. The mallet is held on to by the middle, ring, and pinky fingers with around 1 ½ inches from the back of the hand to the end of the mallet shaft. The thumb and index finger then wrap around the mallet as seen in figure 2, these two fingers should not place any pressure on the mallet. The hand should not be flat but turned in at a slight angle. The wrist and arms should form a natural angle that puts no stress on the wrist joint.

Stroke

From the set position of about a half-inch above the bar, the stroke begins with the head of the mallet and then is continued through the wrist and arm in a fluid motion.

The mallet should come directly up and not away or towards the body or move from side to side. At a moderate tempo the stroke will be mostly wrist and less arm. As the tempo increases the stroke will become all wrist, while as the tempo decreases you will incorporate the arm to connect the strokes. The speed of the mallet coming down to make contact with the board should never change, but the speed of the upstroke will be determined by how slow or fast you are playing. When playing slow connected strokes the mallet should feel like there is a rubber band attached to the keys, so when you move the mallet up it will be as if you are trying to stretch the band and when you initiate the downward motion, the mallet will shoot downward, as if you gave in to the pull of the rubber band.

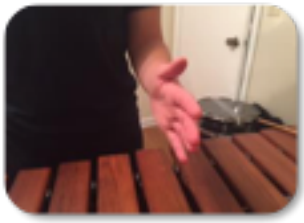
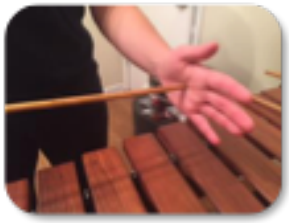
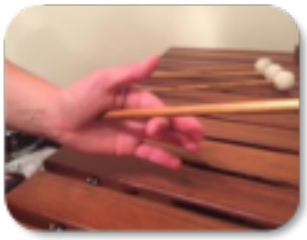
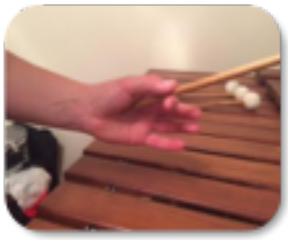


Four-Mallet Technique

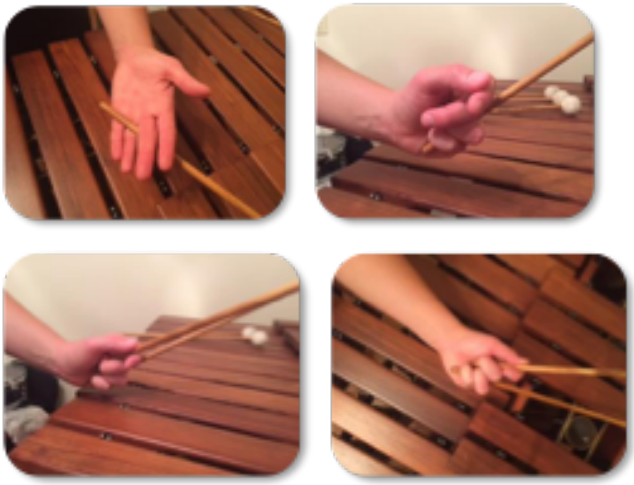
Grip

We use the cross grip and Steven's technique when playing with four mallets. When beginning to learn Steven's technique, we highly recommend purchasing **"Method of Movement" by Leigh Howard Stevens**. This method book has everything you could possibly need to fully understand the grip and different ways you can strike the instrument.

1. **Turn your hand sideways in a "Handshaking" position. For the inside mallet, put the "butt" of the mallet in the center of the palm, slightly above the "life-line" that goes around the thumb pad.**
2. **Curve out your pointer finger as if you were creating a perch for a small bird. The mallet will rest on the third joint of the pointer finger, directly above the fingernail.**

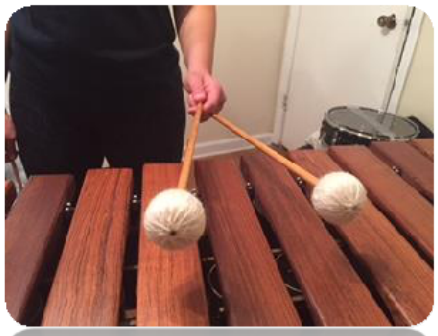





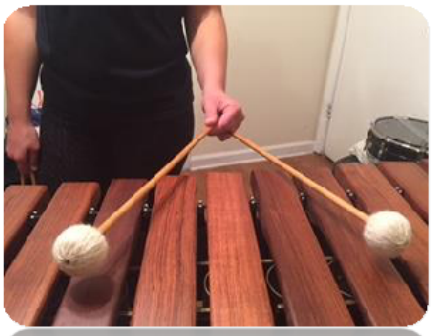
3. **The outside mallet will be placed in between the middle finger and the ring finger directly under the first joint (knuckle). The pinky and ring finger will then wrap around the bottom of the shaft.**
4. **The thumb will rest on the top of the mallet creating a fulcrum for the inside mallet. The middle finger will then create stability by resting on the bottom of the shaft. (Your middle finger will either be on top of the shaft or slightly wrapped around it, depending on your hand size.)**



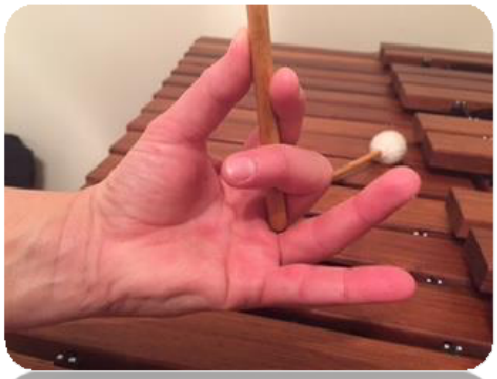
Interval Changes

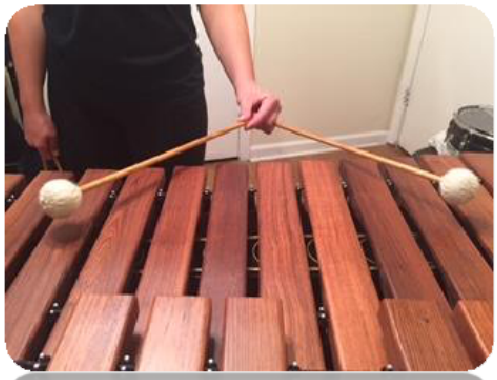
When changing intervals your goal should be to always keep your thumb on top of the mallet and facing towards the ceiling. You should also make sure to keep your "perch" out and never curl your finger into your palm. Interval changes up to a seventh should always be done by "spinning" or rolling the mallet shaft in between the pointer finger and thumb. As you roll to a larger interval you will see that your pointer finger begins to straighten as your thumb remains on top of the mallet.





When using extended octave grip for long use of octaves or octaves at the bottom of the keyboard, your mallet will roll up your palm towards the base of your fingers. The inside mallet will "lock" in to position at the base of the middle finger and at the top of the palm. This can be found on pg. 12-14 in M.O.M.





Finger Use: The use of fingers is one aspect of drumming that is sometimes overstated. We should never release the stick from our fingers. Instead, the fingers move fluidly with the stick and the wrist and can sometimes be used to add extra volume or speed. The fingers will almost always be used in addition to and never in the place of the wrist motion. They act as a way of keeping the stick in the pocket created by your hand, allowing us to more easily manipulate the motion of the stick as it rebounds off of the drum. Many times, the conscious effort of students using their fingers causes tension and increases the amount of energy we have to expend. This should not be the case. Instead, the fingers only add to our ability to efficiently and effectively manipulate the stick through difficult passages, a way of letting the stick breathe in our hand. This concept will be detailed during the audition events.

Musicality: The purpose of good technique is to produce good sounds. Tone quality is an essential consideration for every musician. In percussion playing tone quality is a factor of several factors, the most important of these factors being velocity of stroke and playing zone. While these are not the only factors, they will help us to begin our discussion of what constitutes a good sound. The bass drummer should strive to move the stick as quickly as possible without tension. Tension kills sound, and that is true of most musicianship. Our primary playing zone will be in the center of the drum. This produces the fundamental pitch and gives our sound a firmer attack. Great care should be taken to play in the exact center. Practice in front of a mirror can help you solidify your muscle memory of this zone but listening to your sound can be very helpful as well. As you move out from the center the attack becomes less pronounced, we excite more overtones from the head, and the sustain of the drum lengthens. Always listen to your sound.

Two of the most important ensemble sound concepts are those of balance and blend. Balance is essentially playing the same volume as the people you are playing with. An unbalanced sound is an immature sound. When your staff is making corrections to your volume, take care to remember the correction as this affects the overall sound of the ensemble. Blend comes from everyone in a section playing with the same tone quality at the same dynamic level. Always listen to your sound.

The concept of phrasing in an ensemble activity is quite different from phrasing in solo playing, although one informs the other. If the student does not have a solid concept of musicality, it will be very difficult to match this phrasing to other players and maintain a balanced sound. As a member of the bassline you should focus on developing a confident and consistent sound at each dynamic level and be able to perform crescendos and decrescendos of varying lengths. Once you are able to do that consistently as an individual, you should have the control to apply the levels of listening. The other challenge for the bass drummer is knowing where your particular volume will fit into the overall shape of a phrase. Playing musically as an individual will inform your choices in the ensemble setting. Always listen to your sound.

As a performer you will be called upon to elicit different emotions through your sound. These different emotions will be conveyed through the style and interpretation of the music. In the drum corps world style is much narrower than in other areas of performance, but it is no less important. If you try to play the ballad with the same approach as the closer it will lack authenticity, and it will fail to connect to your audience. The use of touch in your playing will facilitate the communication of intent to your audience. Keeping in mind that tension kills sound, we may ask you to firm up or lighten up your grip/touch to achieve a desired effect. Solo playing can help you to understand these concepts. Always listen to your sound.

Legato/Full Stroke:

• Think "8 on a hand"
• Sticks start and stop at the same point, letting the stick "bounce" back naturally
• Goal is to allow the rebound to "do the work." Throw the stick down, DON'T lift it up
• Rebound should be the same speed as the initial movement (don't stop it!)
• Grip will "open" a bit to allow for rebound inside your hand at higher heights

Marcato/Down Strokes:

• Think "tap accents"
• Should sound the same as full strokes, and feel the same prior to hitting the drum
• Once contact is made with the drum, the difference between full and down strokes is the stopping of the wrist motion, which prevents the stick from rebounding to the initial height
• Hand should feel like "dead weight" after bead strikes the head. Heaviness of the hands helps stop the stick in a warm manner
• Avoid squeezing the fingers to stop the motion

Taps:

• Taps will be played primarily with a wrist stroke, albeit smaller than full strokes
• Taps are neither truly a "full" or "down" stroke. They will rebound, and like a full stroke, they will be played by only initiating downward and not pulling back up. The rebound, however, will not have the same velocity as a "full stroke". To remain fluid, and not have awkward pauses at the top of our strokes, taps will be played *slightly* more "into the drum"
• The grip is slightly more "closed" than the "openness" felt at higher heights for full strokes. The hand must stay relaxed and heavy without being tense to ensure a controlled rebound and quality sound

Dynamics

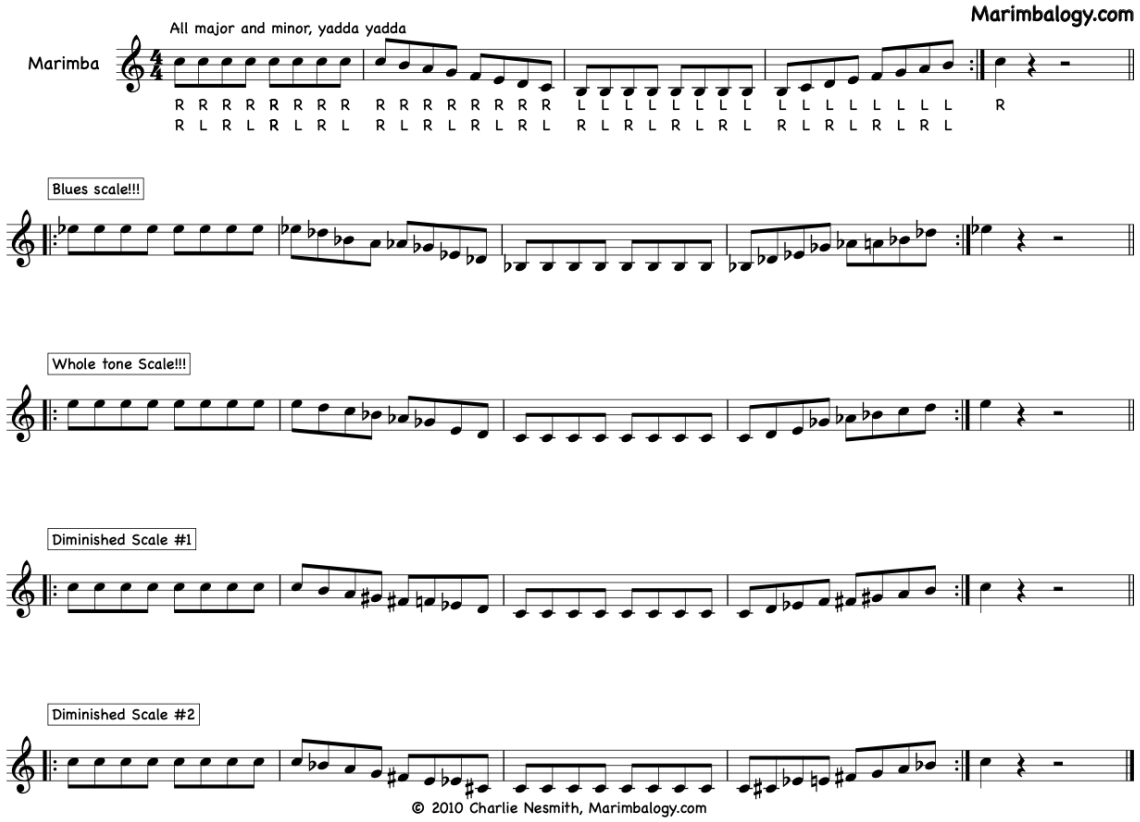
• We use a dynamic system that correlates to specific heights---this makes it easier to define, as well as balance and blend our sounds
• We strive to have a consistent approach to the drum regardless of heights/dynamics
• In general, consistency of heights dictate volume, however the music is the ultimate factor in defining volume (there will be situations in which players are asked to play a phrase stronger or lighter than normal for musical expression)
• Additional arm is added above 15"
• The sticks will never travel past vertical but will be higher in the air because of the arm extension above 15"

Approximate Heights:

• pp 1" (For incredibly soft passages, played from resting playing position)
• p 3" (Taps and grace notes, sticks parallel with the ground)
• mp 6" (Back of hand about parallel with the ground, sticks ~22.5°)
• mf 9" (Sticks ~45° from ground)
• f 12" (As far as wrist can comfortably turn without arm, sticks ~67.5°)
• ff 15" (Sticks vertical, start to "use" arm)
• fff Huge" (Sticks vertical, add additional arm for visual effect)

Not your Dad's Basic 8ths

Charlie Nesmith
Marimbalogy.com



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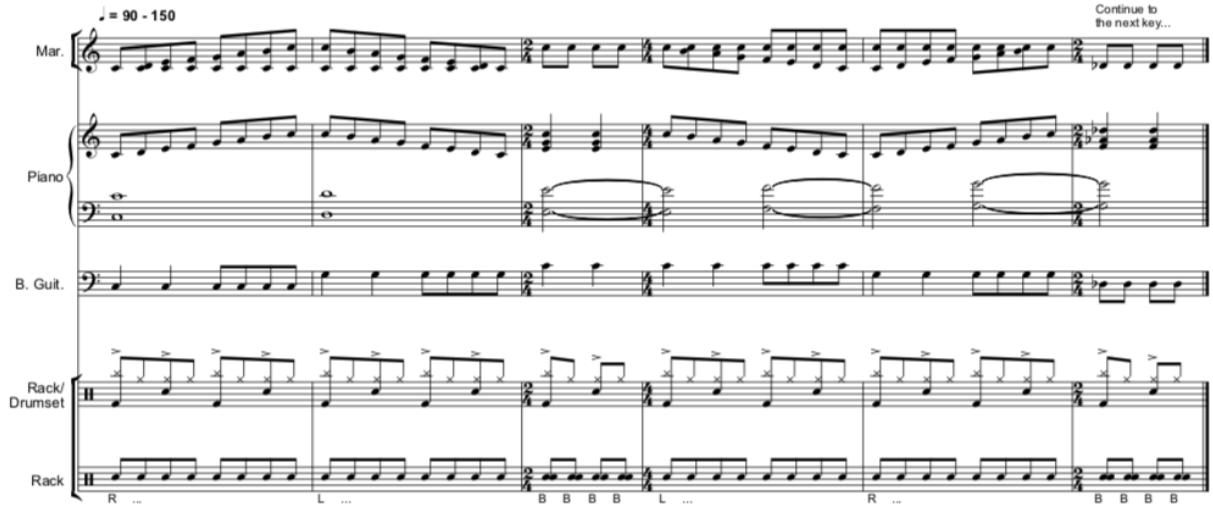
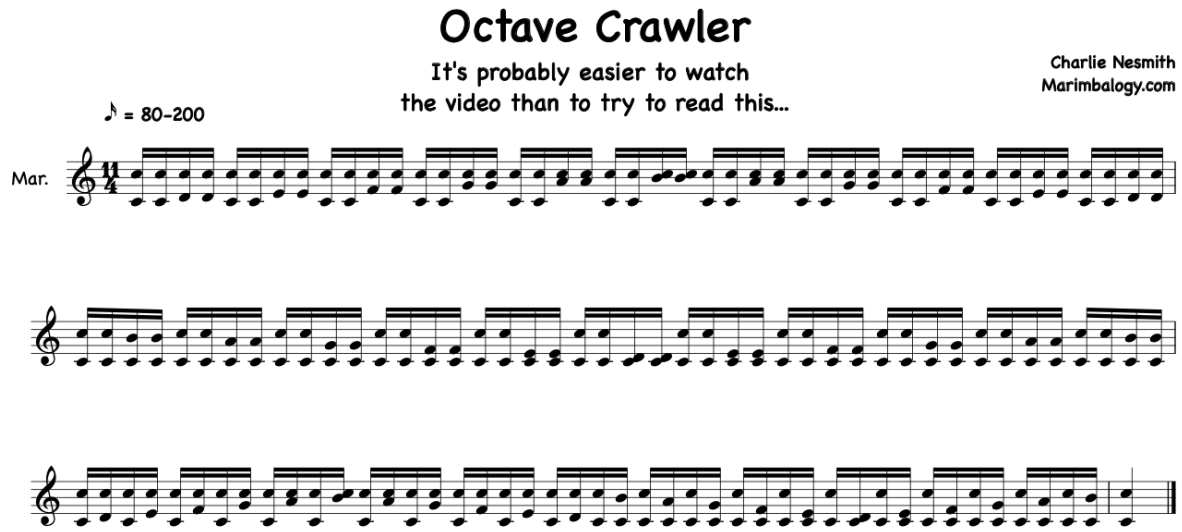
Lockjaw

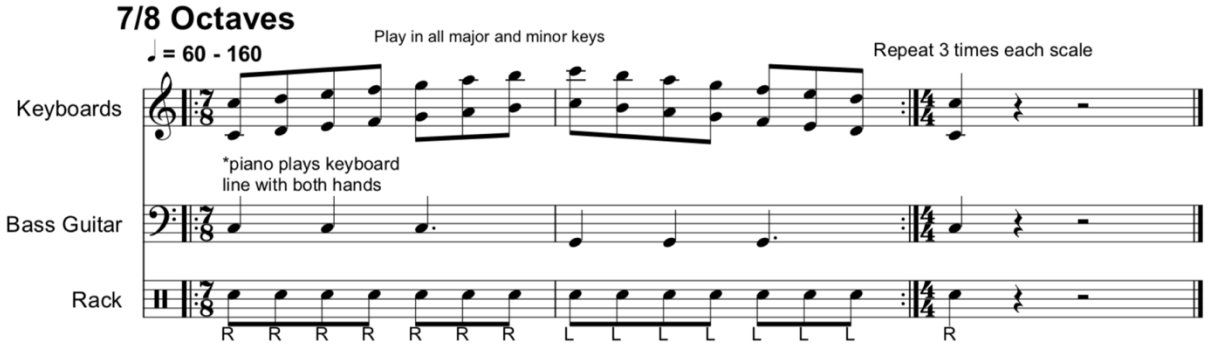
This exercise can be played in the circle of fourths, circle of fifths, and chromatically. Drumset players will be asked to play in different styles.



DRUM SET: Utilize the given meters/parts/information for each exercise to create both basic and more intricate grooves

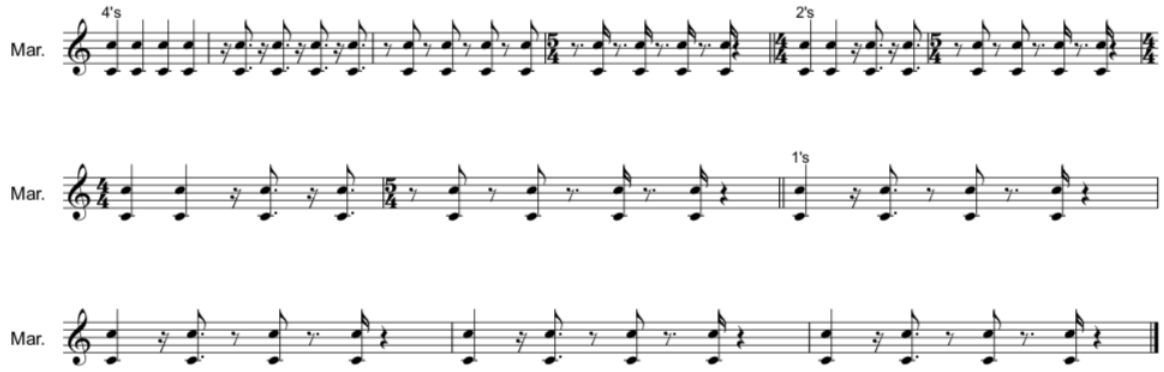


Octave Crawler can be played using 2 or 4 mallets

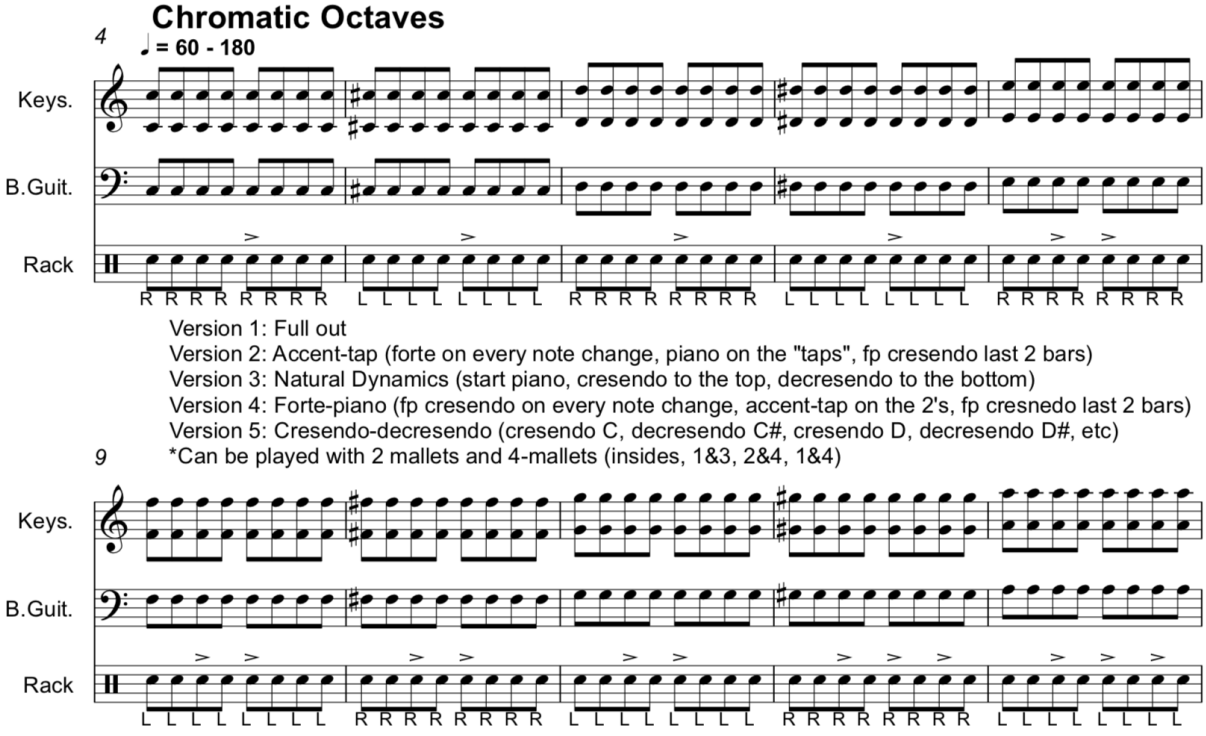


Space and Timing

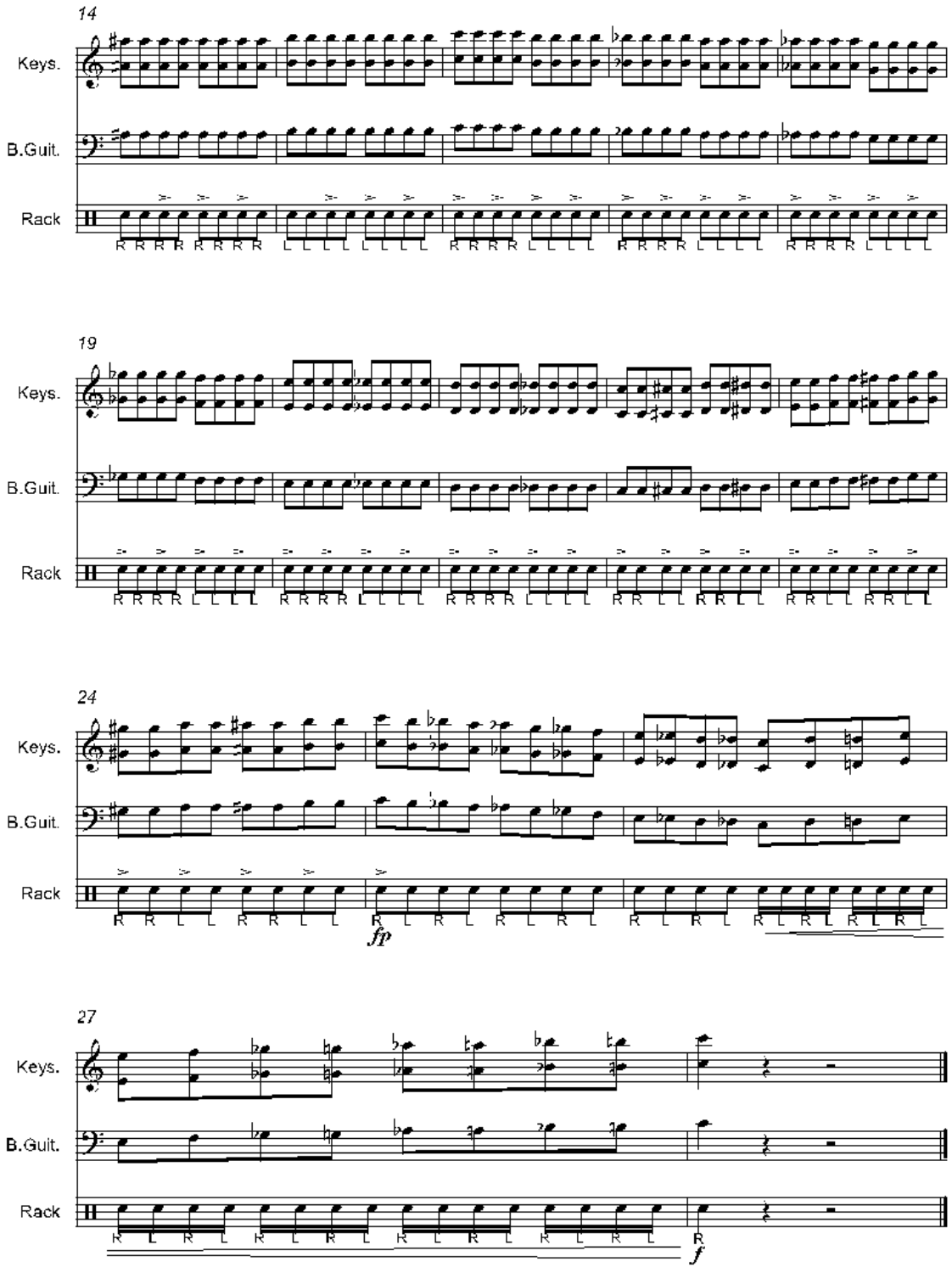
ALL players in the ensemble will play this exercise at a forte dynamic. The keyboard and rack players will connect each stroke while still using a fast velocity wrist stroke down to the keyboard. The upstroke will then be slower as it connects back to the top of the stroke.



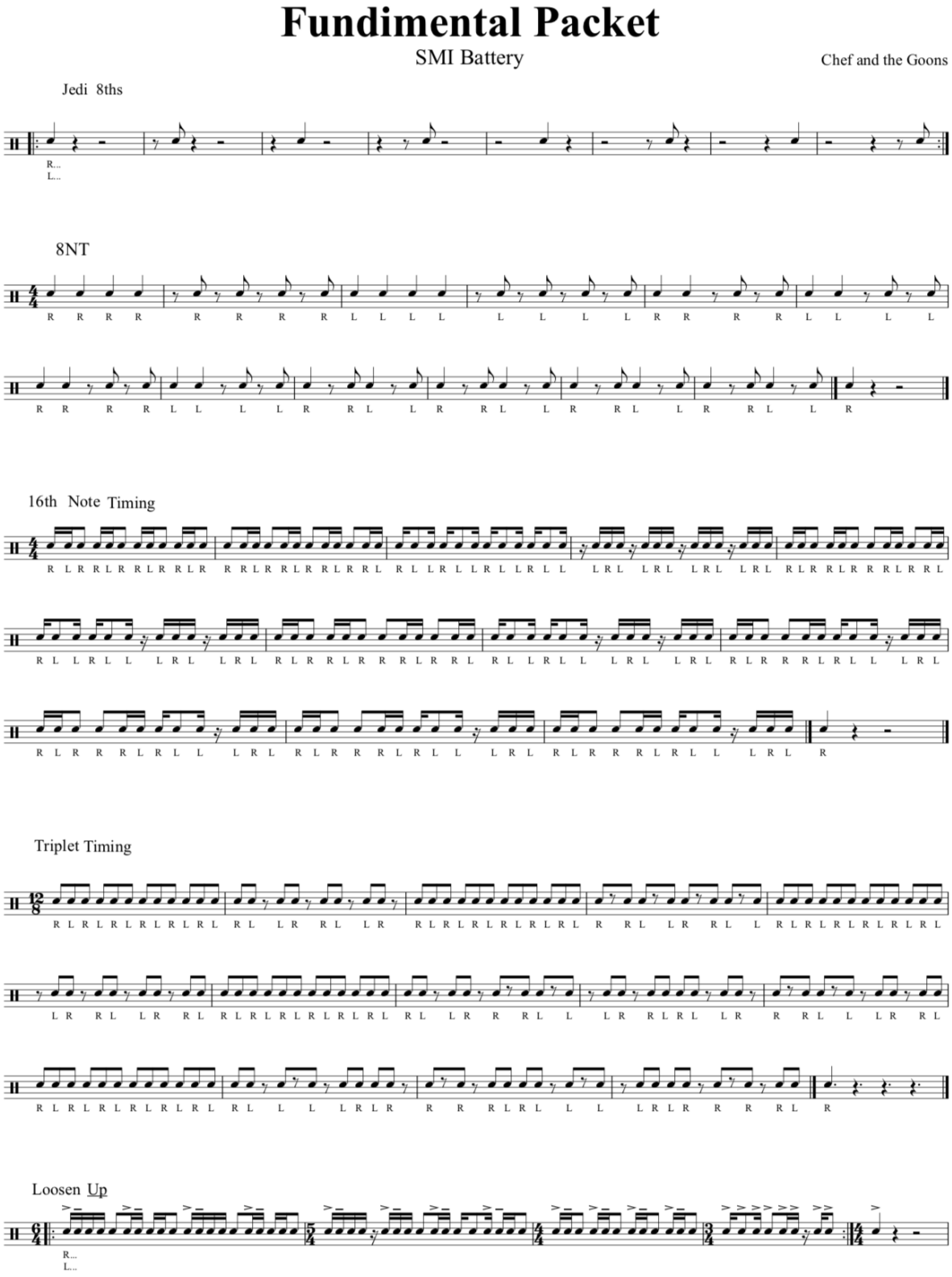
Chromatic Octaves



Version 1: Full out
Version 2: Accent-tap (forte on every note change, piano on the "taps", fp cresendo last 2 bars)
Version 3: Natural Dynamics (start piano, cresendo to the top, decresendo to the bottom)
Version 4: Forte-piano (fp cresendo on every note change, accent-tap on the 2's, fp cresnedo last 2 bars)
Version 5: Cresendo-decresendo (cresendo C, decresendo C#, cresendo D, decresendo D#, etc)
*Can be played with 2 mallets and 4-mallets (insides, 1&3, 2&4, 1&4)


14
Keys.
B.Guit.
Rack
19
Keys.
B.Guit.
Rack
24
Keys.
B.Guit.
Rack
fp
27
Keys.
B.Guit.
Rack
f

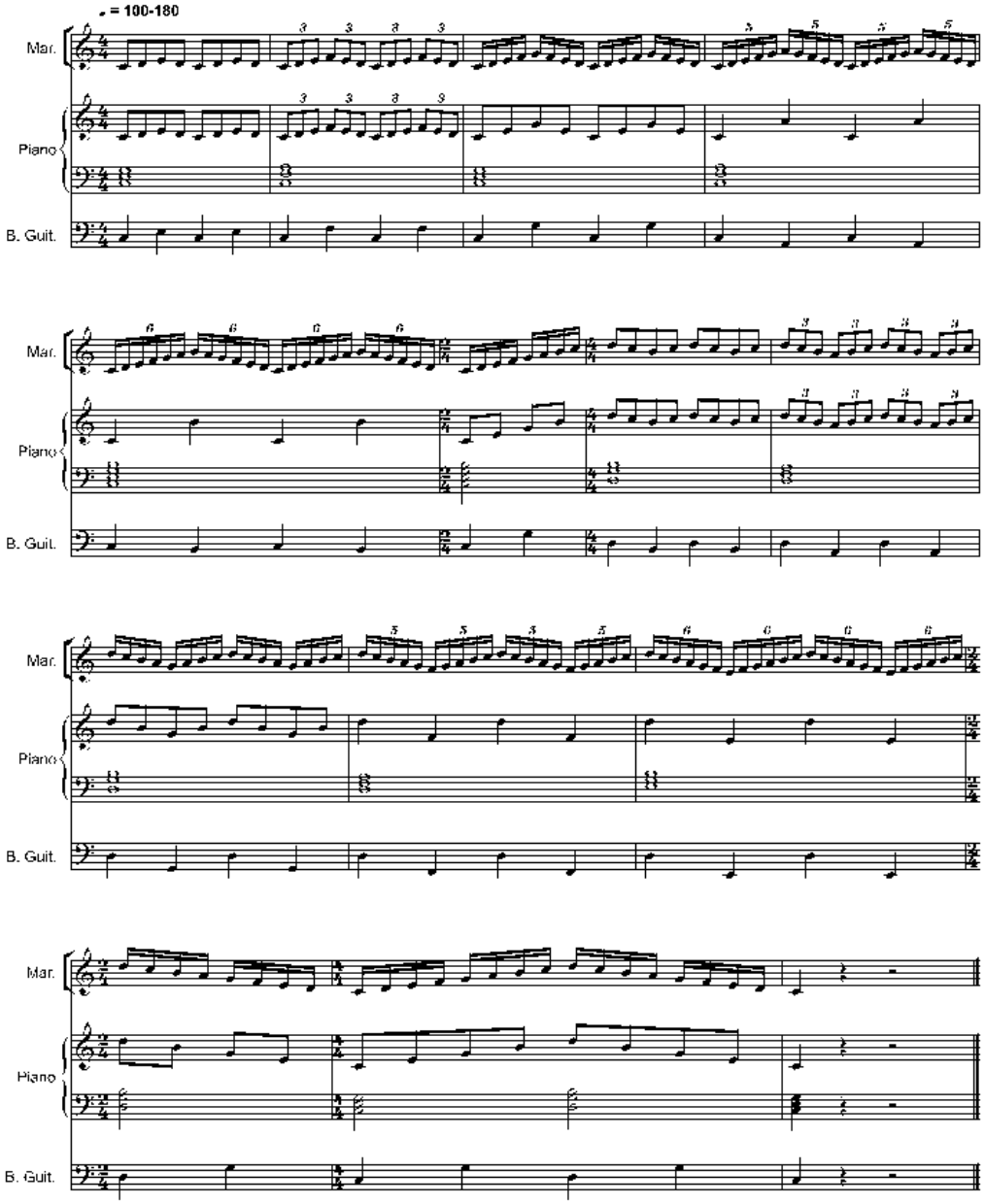
Full Ensemble Unison



Metric Green

Rack and Drum set should keep time and play the rhythm of the keyboard part.

Play in all Major and Minor keys

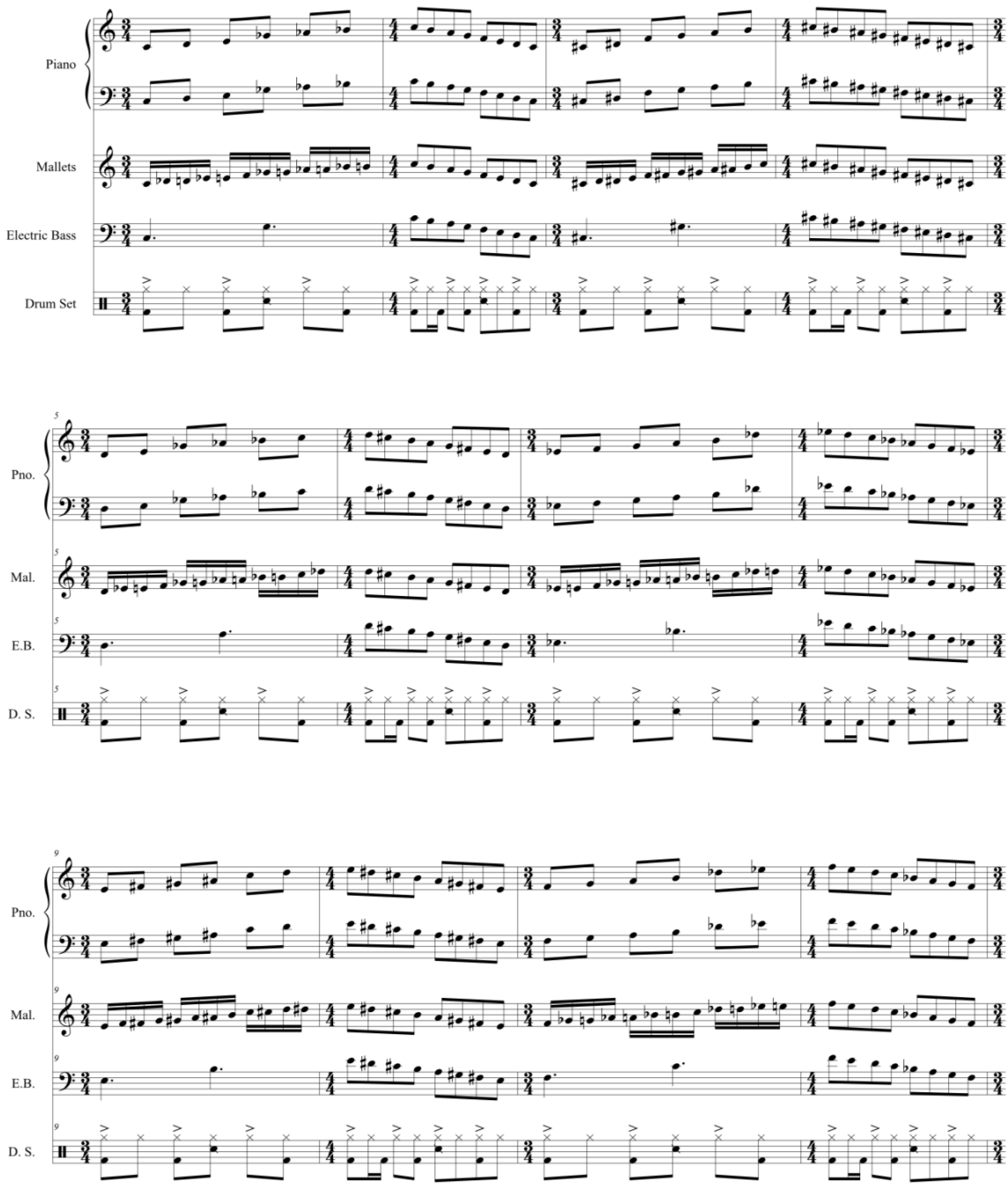


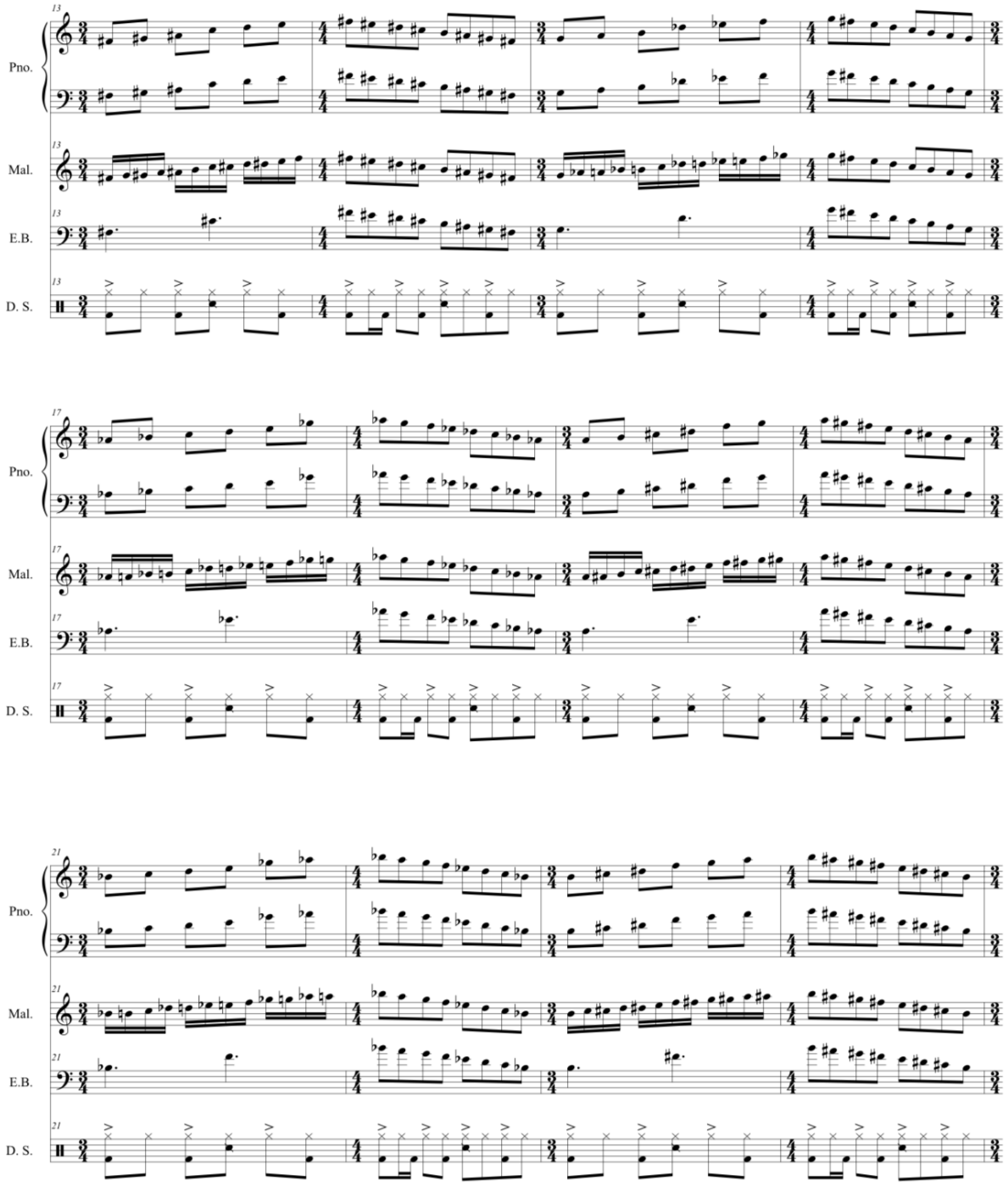
Score

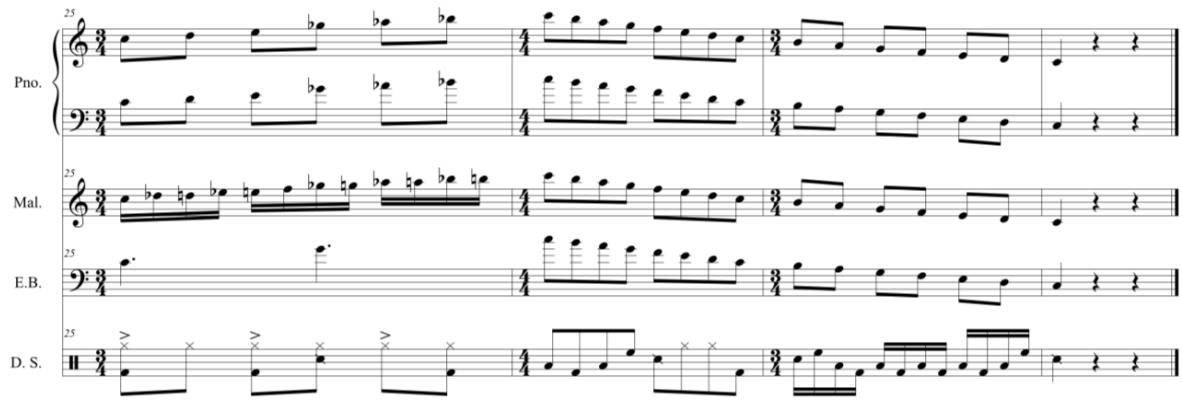
Chromatic Up Major Down

♩ = 100 - 200

Filipiak




13
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.
17
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.
21
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.



Chromatic Up Major Down is an exercise that works on extended linear playing while also transfering back and forth between different scales.

This exercise should be also be prepared using other scales instead of only Major.

EX: Chromatic Up Natural Minor Down OR Chromatic Up Lydian Down etc.

This exercise should be prepared at the entire posted tempo range as well as through the entire dynamic range. Try experimenting with crescendos and decrescendos through this exercise as well.

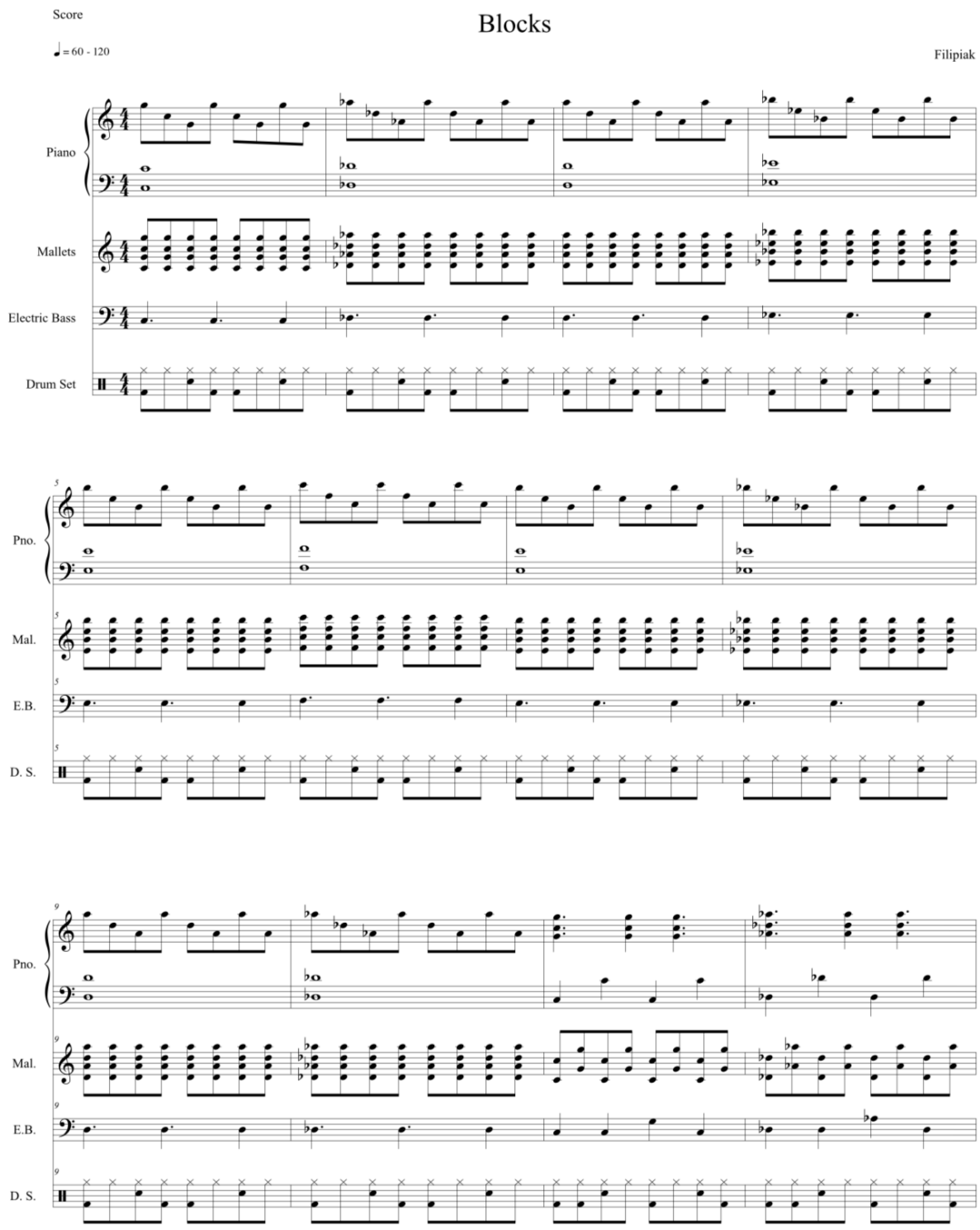
EX: crescendo chromatic, decrescendo scale OR decrescendo chromatic, crescendo scale

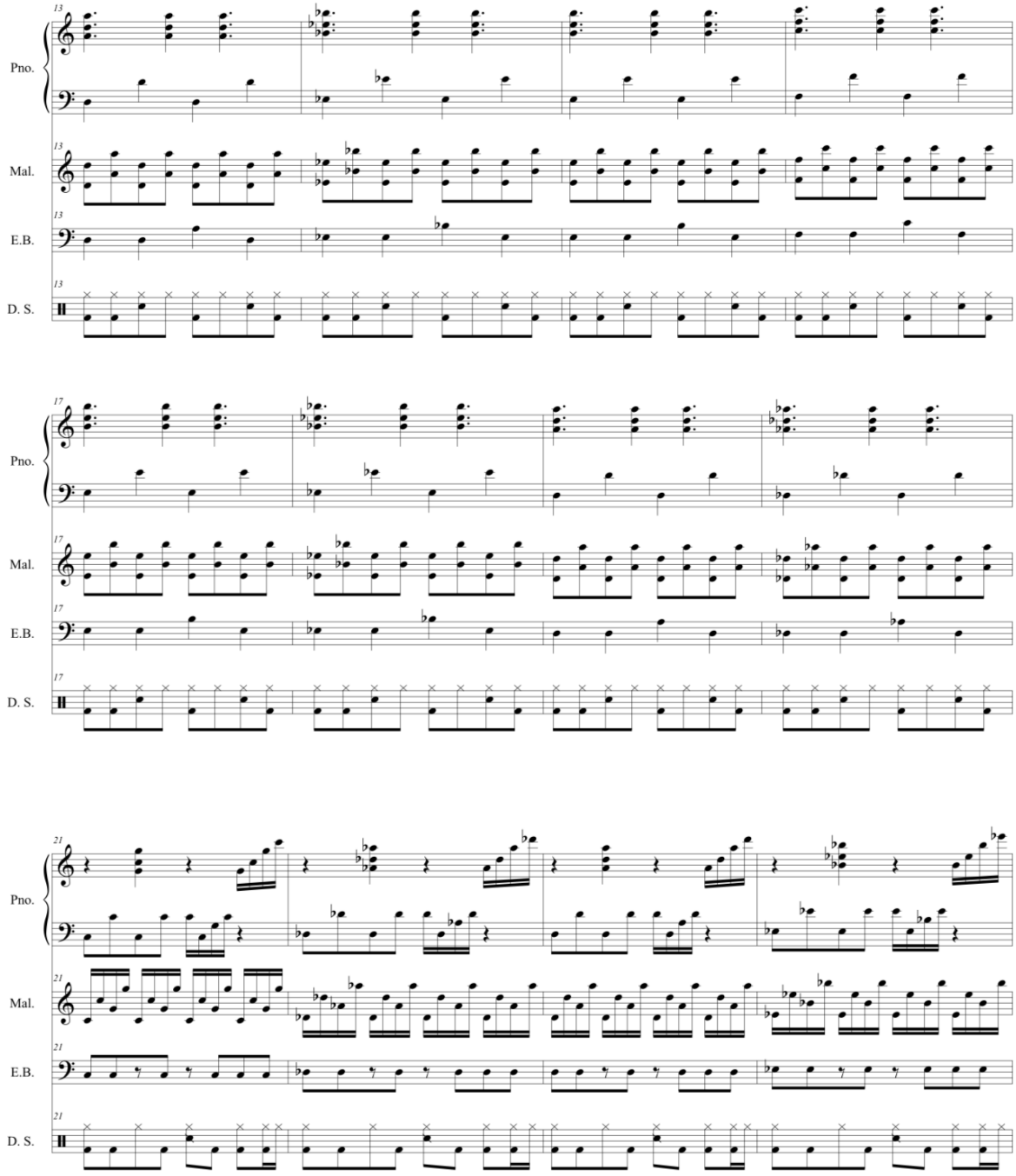
This exercise can also have rhythmic variation that isn't written

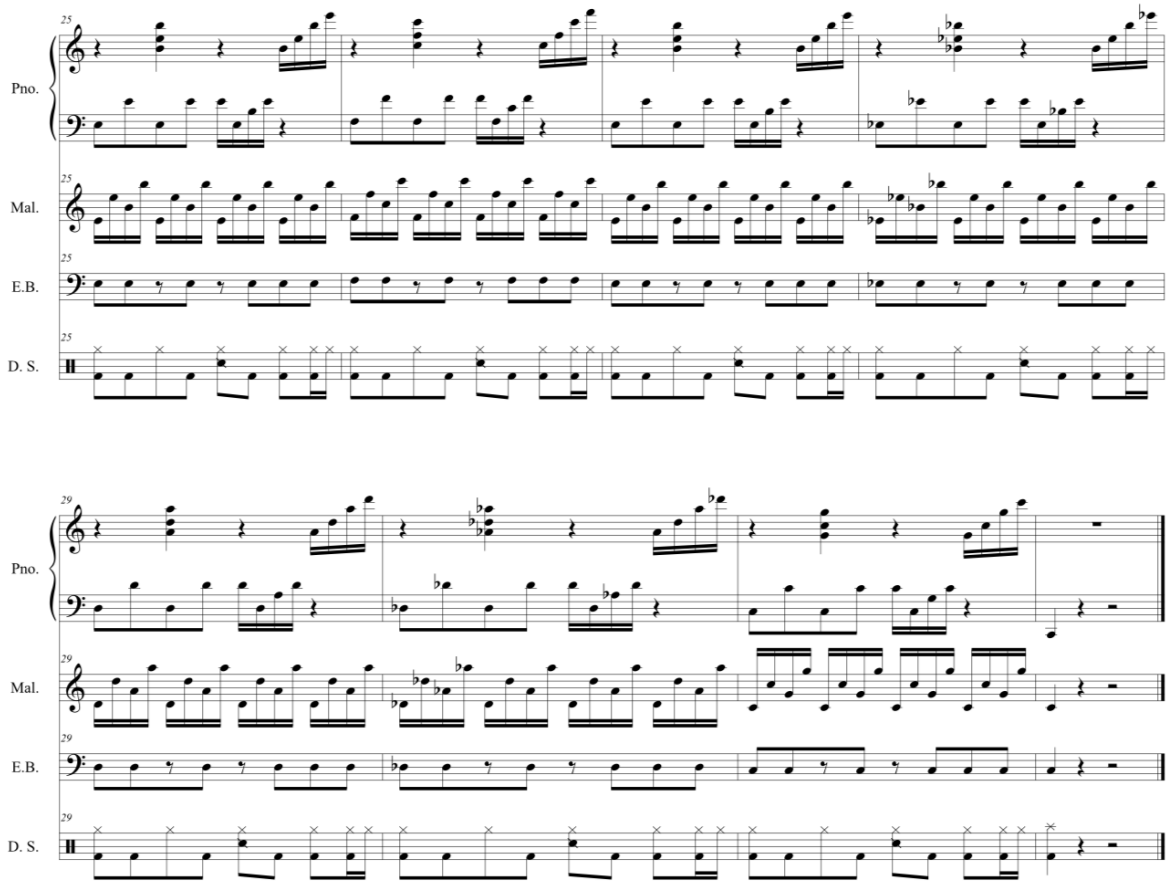
EX: play the chromatic run as 8th note triplets and the scale as 8th notes OR chromatic as 8th note triplets and scale as 16ths

Chromatic Up Major Down can also be played as Chromatic Down Major Up as well as using all of the same permutations mentioned above.

This exercise should also be prepared right hand lead alternating the whole time and also with both 2 and 4 mallets using the inner mallets 2 and 3 when holding 4.


Score
Blocks
♩ = 60 - 120
Filipiak
Piano
Mallets
Electric Bass
Drum Set
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.


13
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.
17
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.
21
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.



Blocks is an exercise that works on both the double vertical as well as the single alternating techniques.

Prepare this exercise throughout the entire posted tempo range as well as the whole dynamic range.

Blocks can also be played using many other sticking combinations than the one that is written

EX: 1/4 - 2/3 hands together 1 - 4 - 2 - 3 hands split OR 2/3 - 1/4 hand togehter 2 - 3 - 1 - 4 hans split

This exercise can also be played right hand lead on the hands split part the, the same holds true for any other permutations that you can come up with using the different sticking combinations described above.

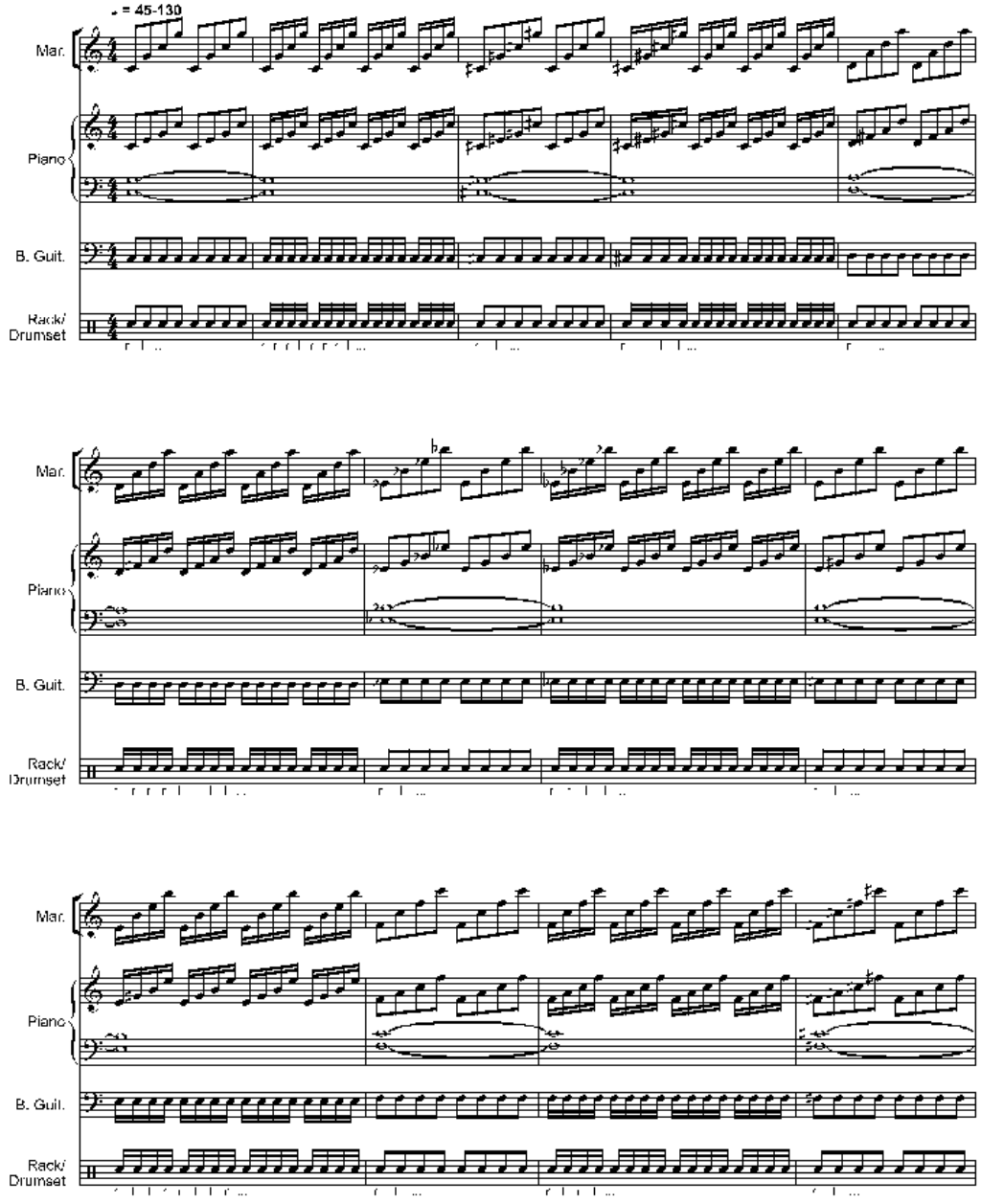
This exercise should also be prepared with a wide variety of shaping definitions

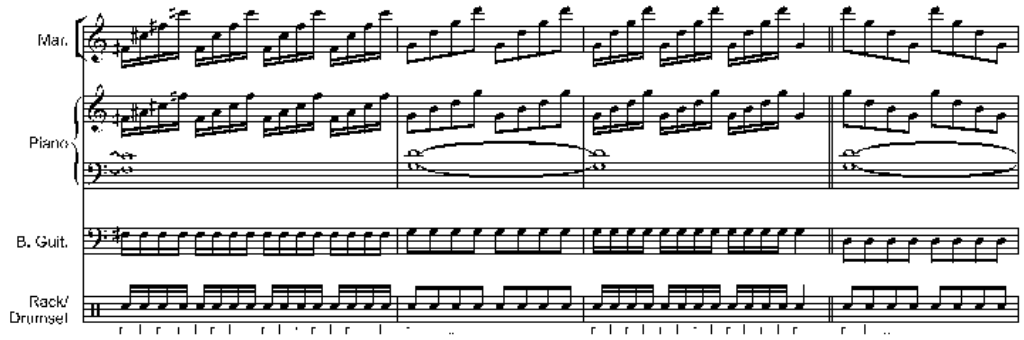
EX: crescendo a bar, decrescendo a bar OR crescendo the double verticals, decrescendo the hands together, crescendo the hands split

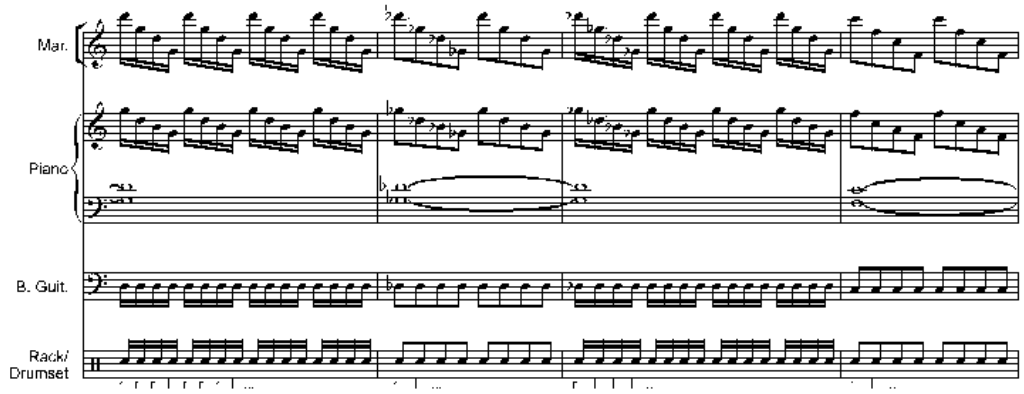
These variations will allow us to practice the full variety of permutations that could be used in the show and also help us be better more thoughtful keybaord players.

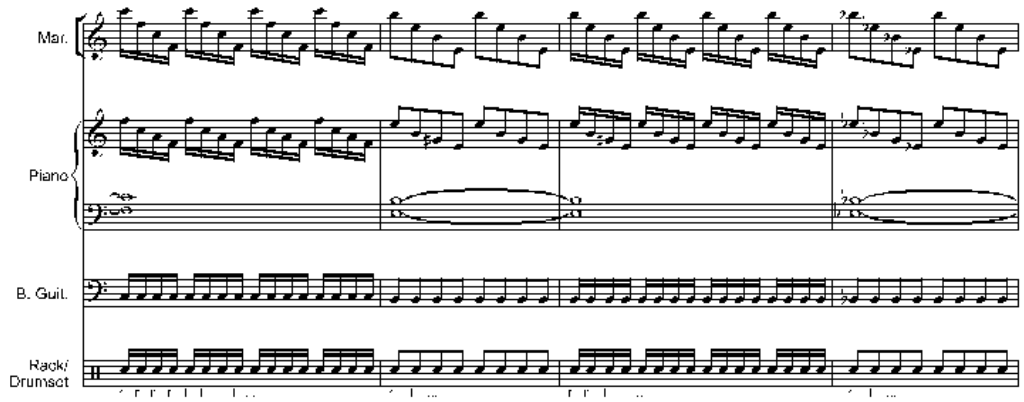
8-16

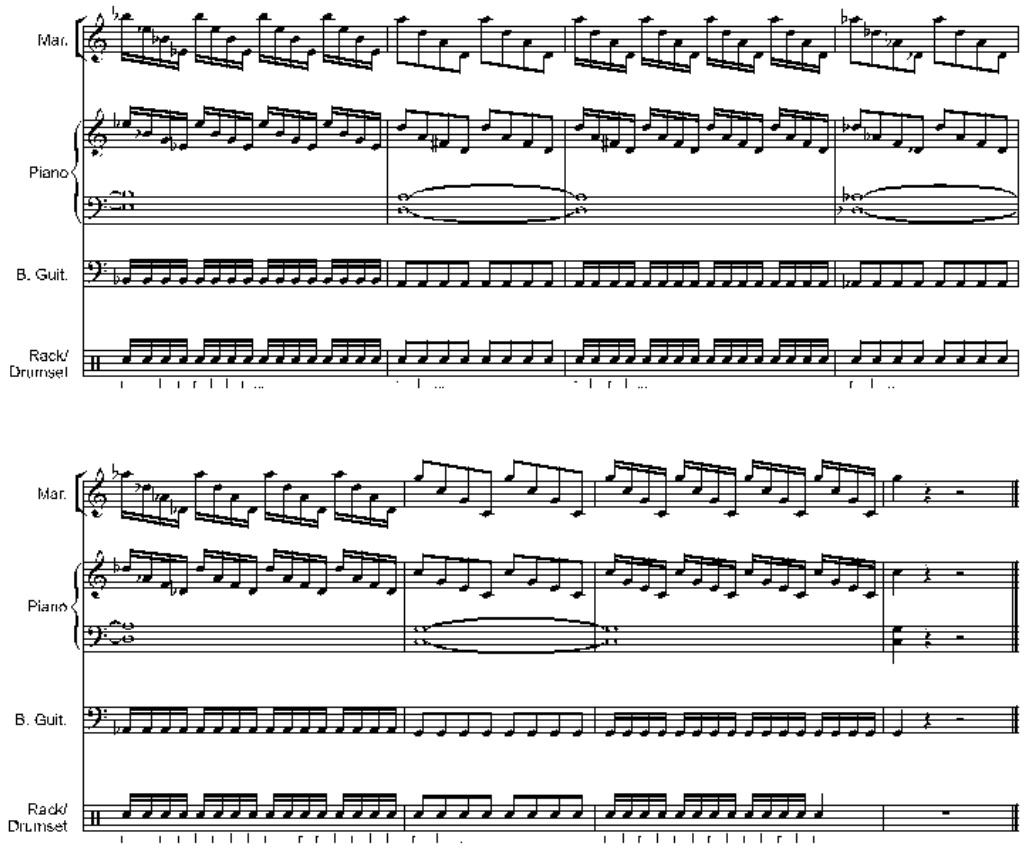
This exercise will be used with all of the different duple-based permutations.
For example: 1234 (as written), 1243, 1324, 1423, etc..

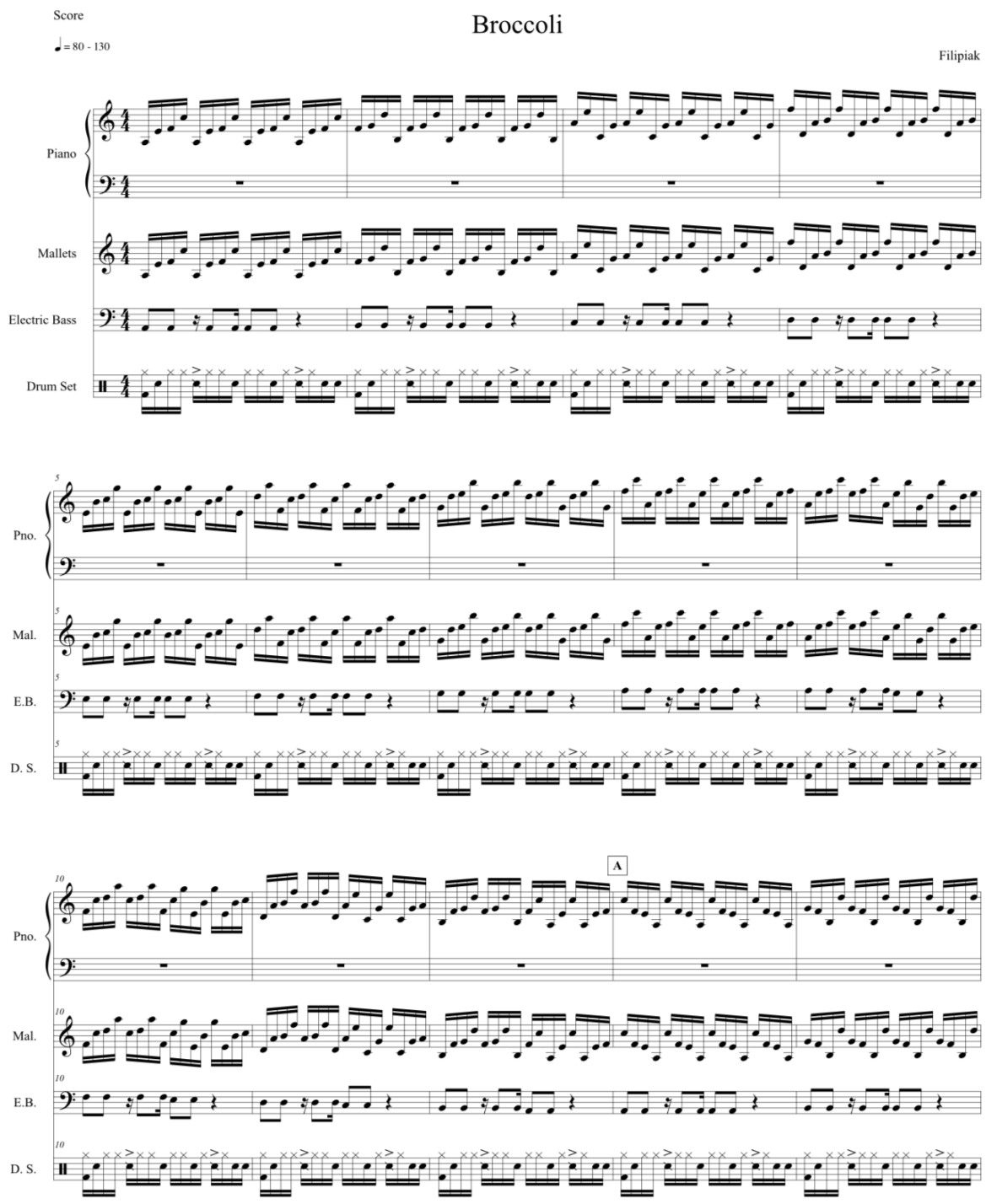


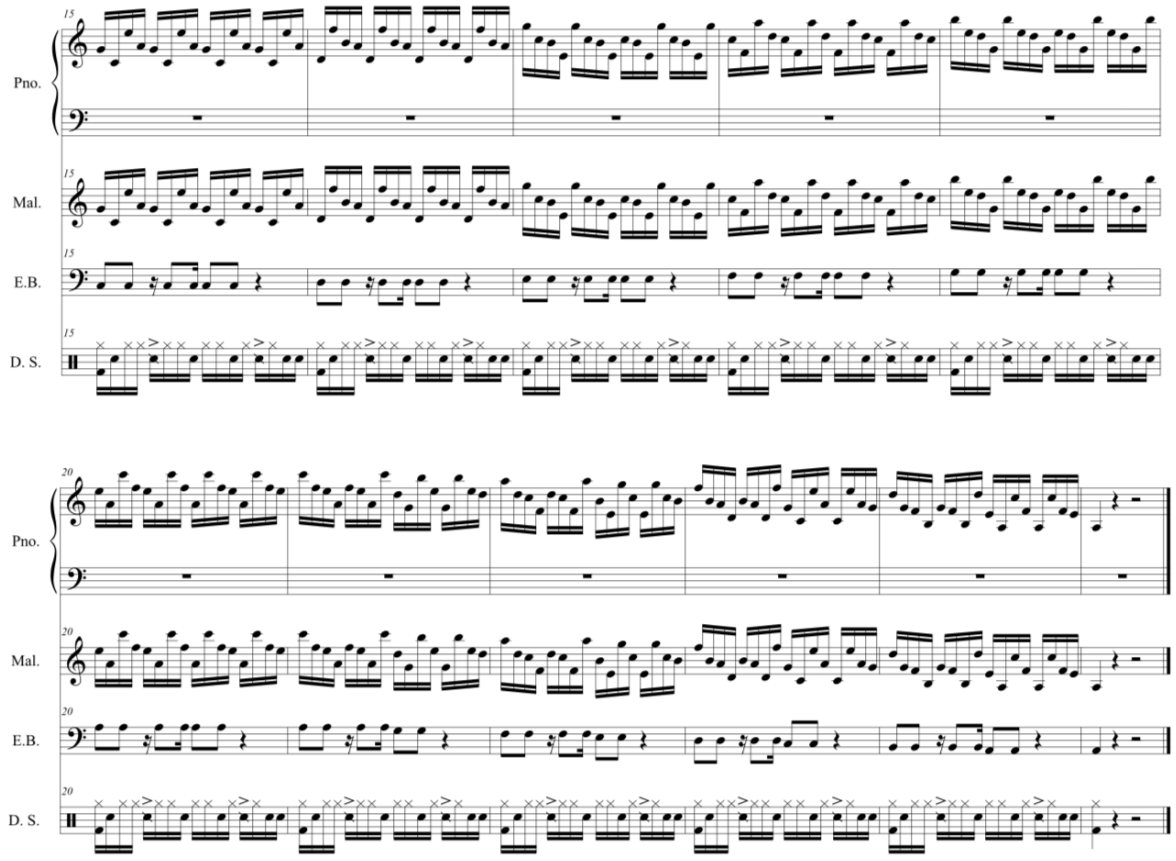

Mar.
Piano
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset


Mar.
Piano
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset


Mar.
Piano
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset


Mar.
Piano
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset
Mar.
Piano
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset

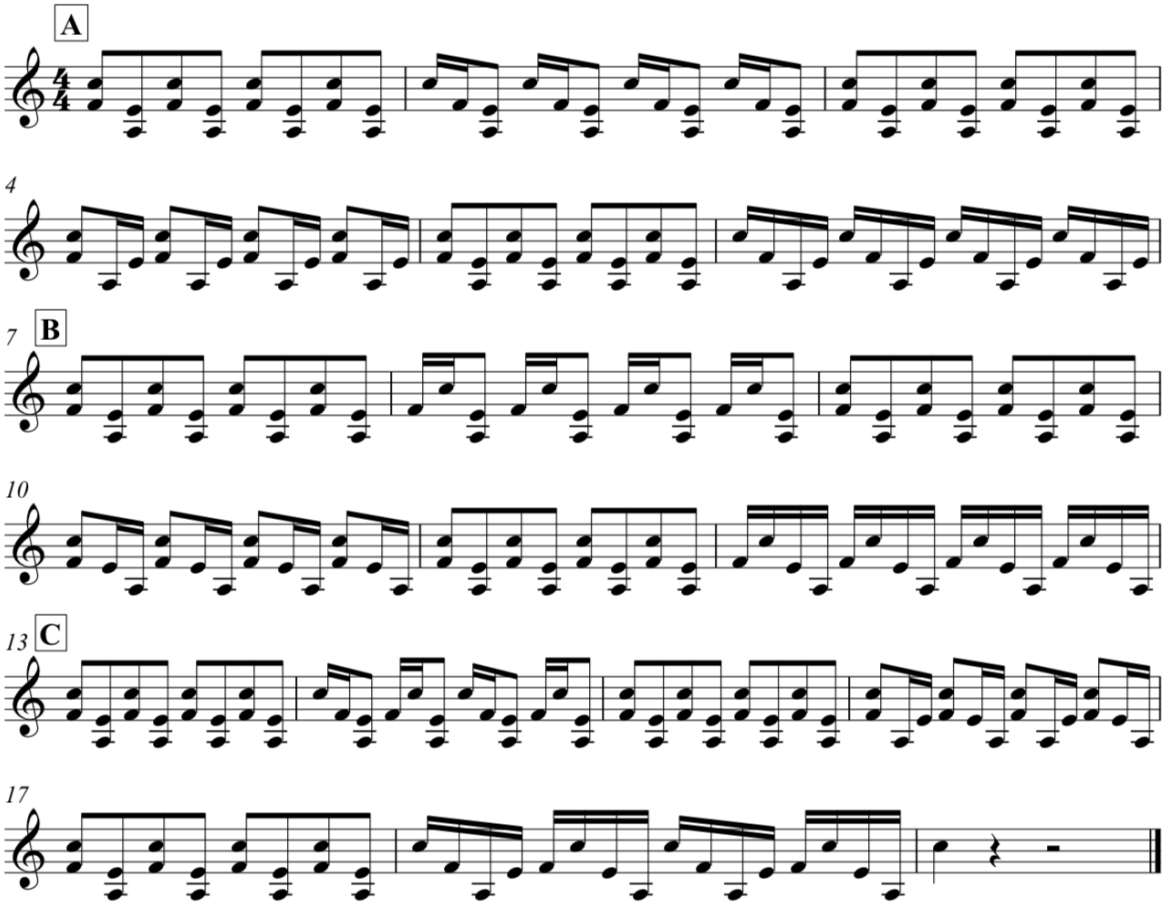

Score
♩= 80 - 130
Broccoli
Filipiak
Piano
Mallets
Electric Bass
Drum Set
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.
A


15
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.
20
Pno.
Mal.
E.B.
D. S.

Laterals

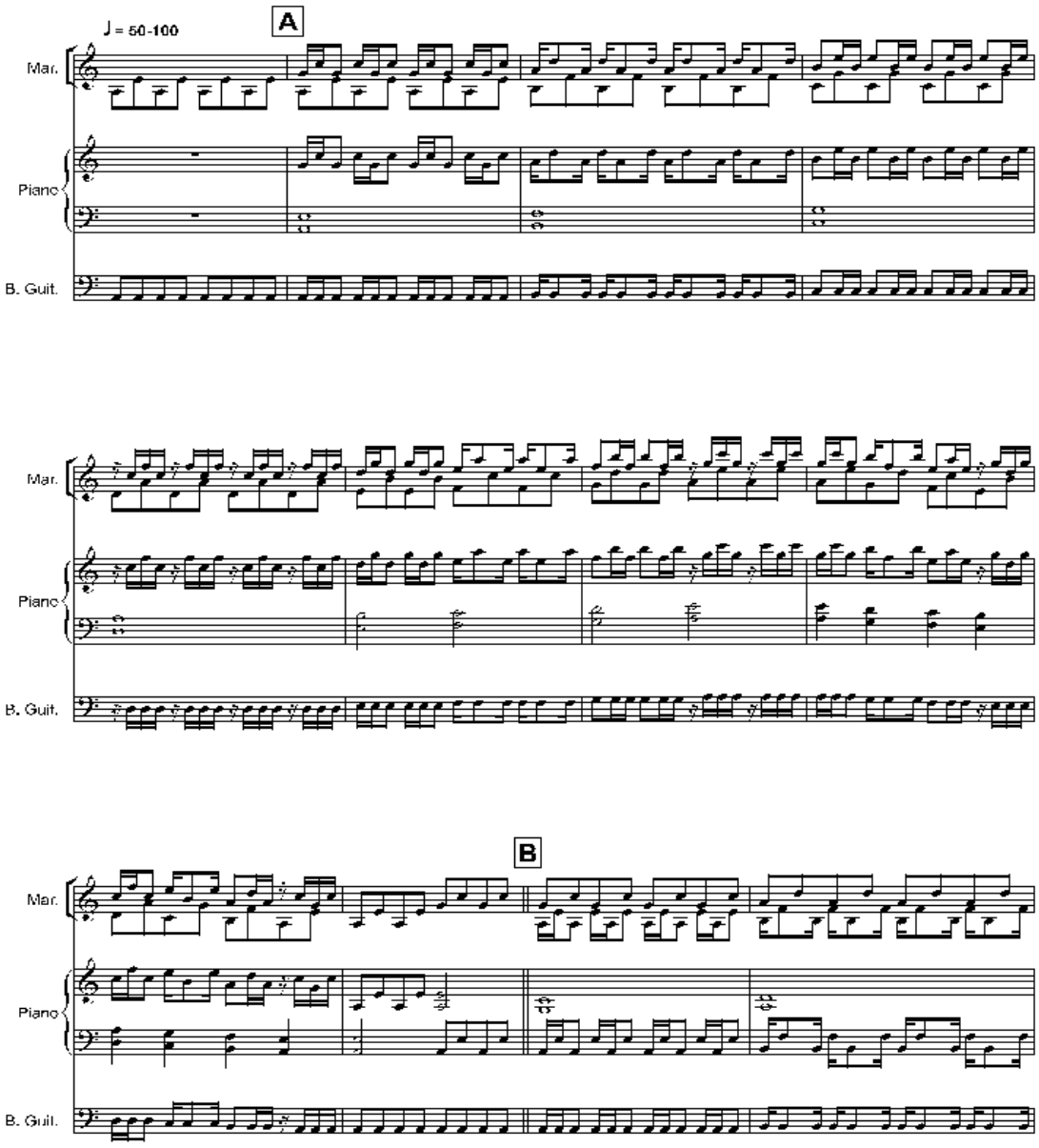
Marimba

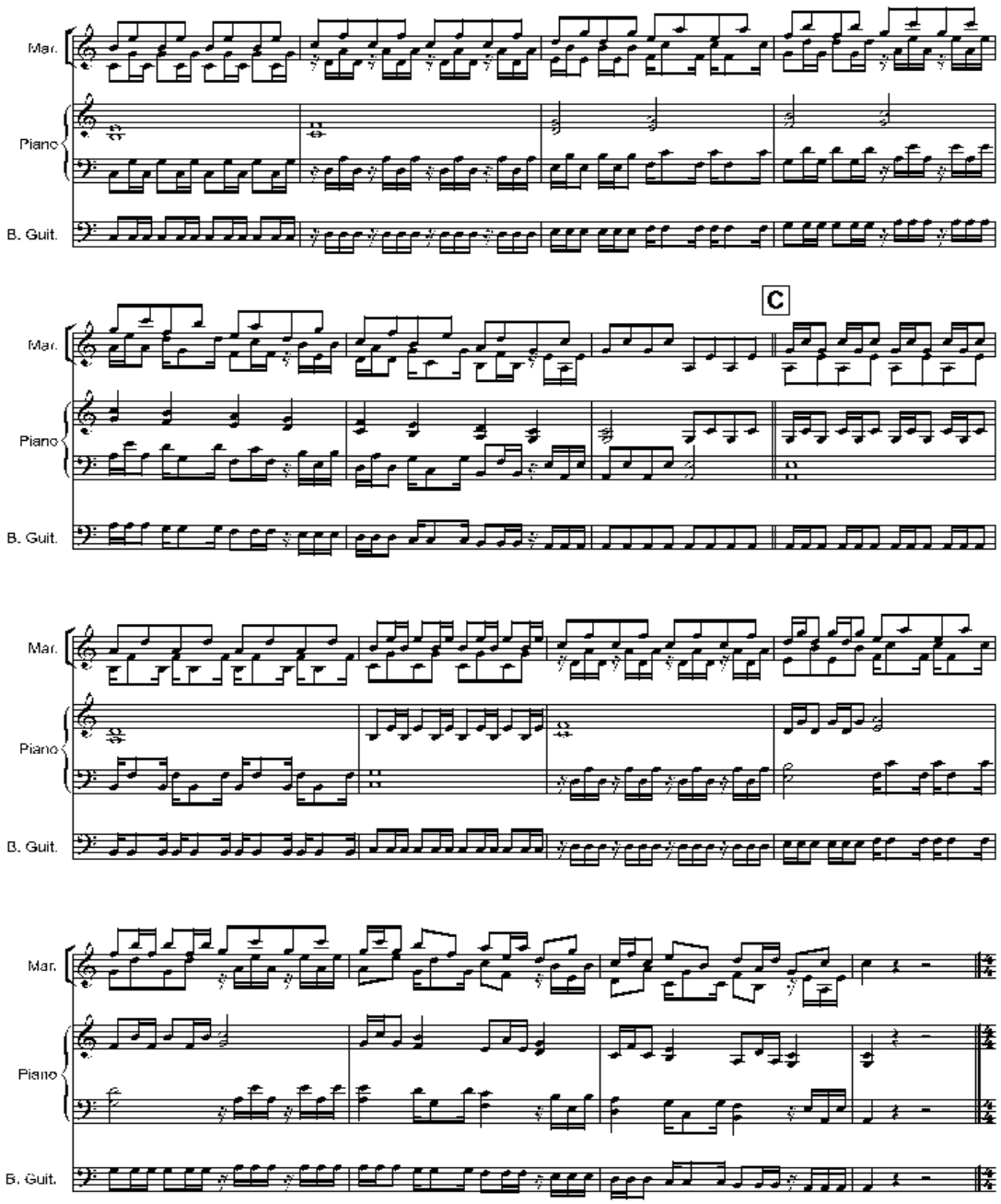
Lousteau



Most Advanced Combination

This 4-mallet exercise works on the indepedence of each mallet and each hand. The beams going up will be played with the right hand and the beams going down will be played with the left hand. Rack and Drum set should keep time and play the rhythm of the bass guitar.

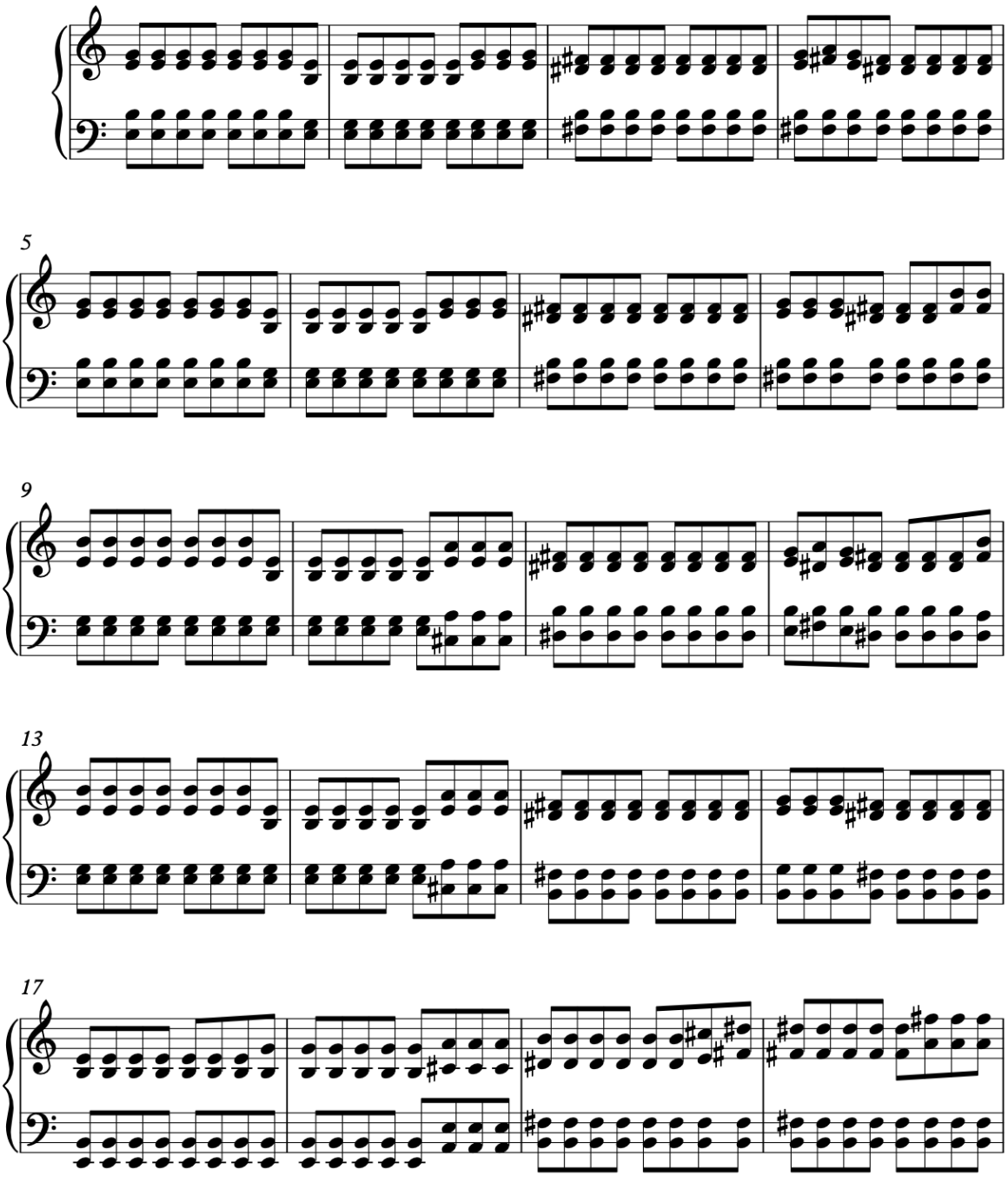



Mar.
Piano
B. Guit.
C

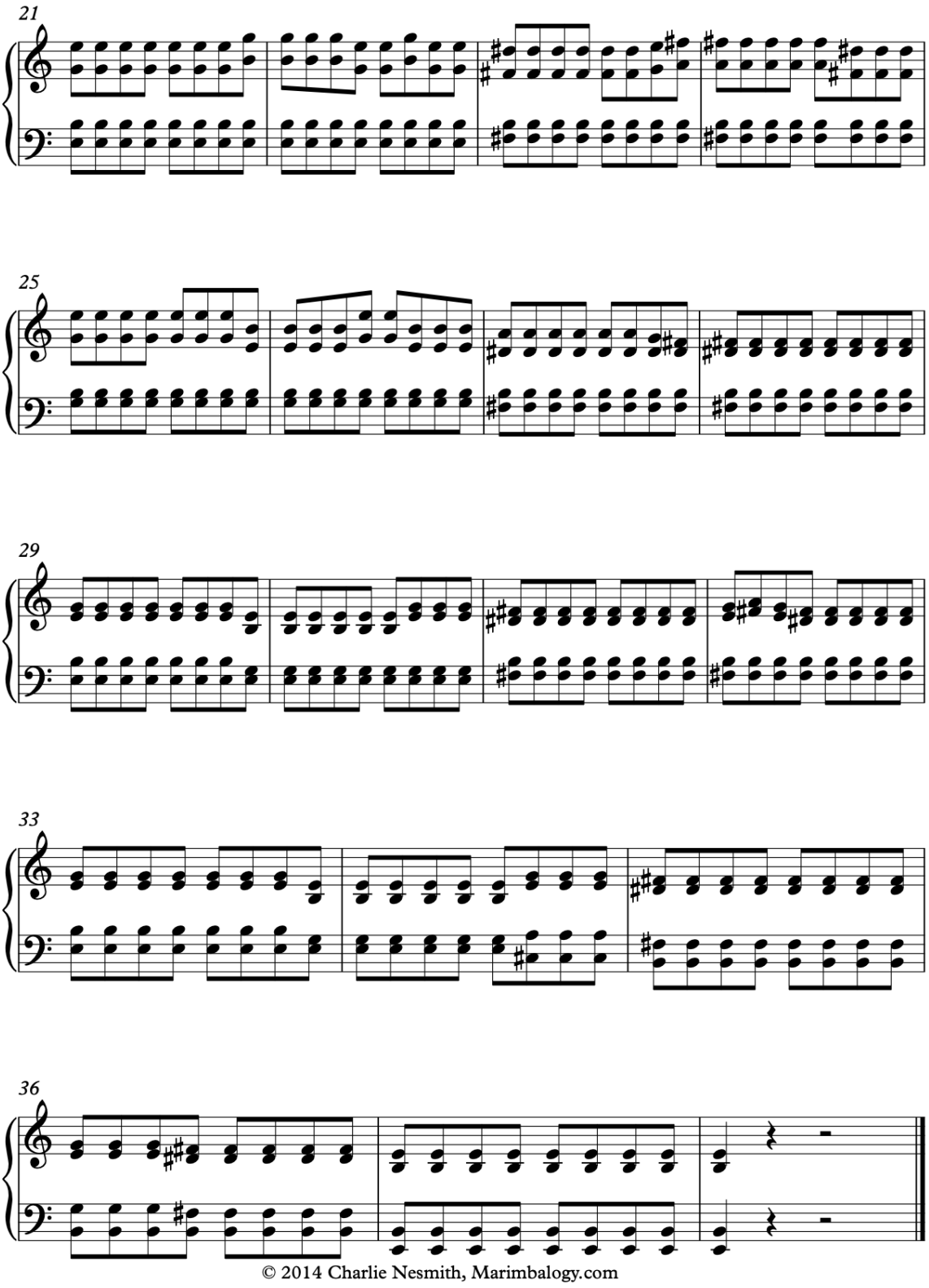
Duda

an EDM inspired adventure

Charlie Nesmith



(Change measure 17/18 to B/E in LH)



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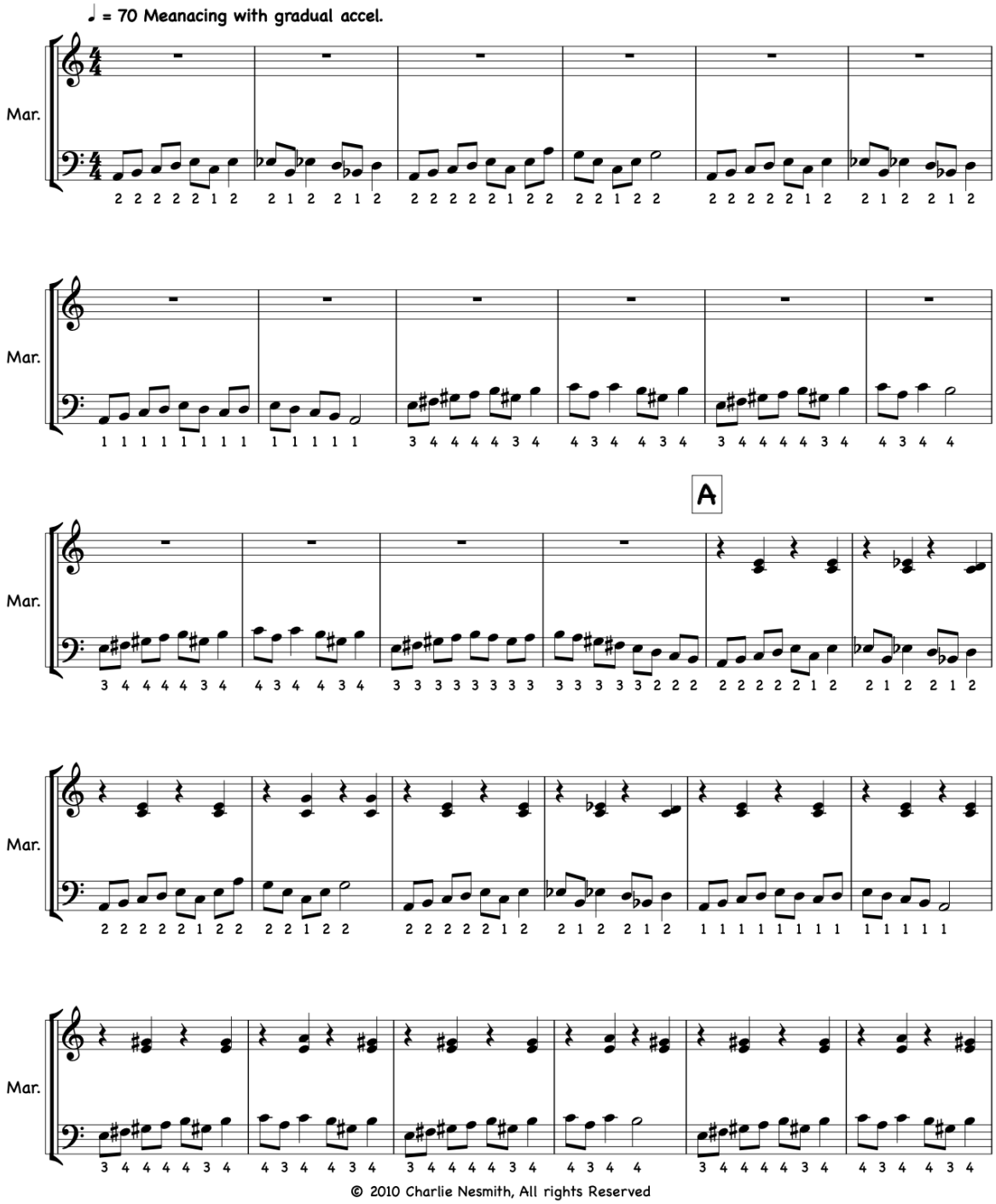
(Change the last measure to B/E in LH)

In the Hall of the Mountain King

Independent Stroke Warm Up

arr. Charlie Nesmith



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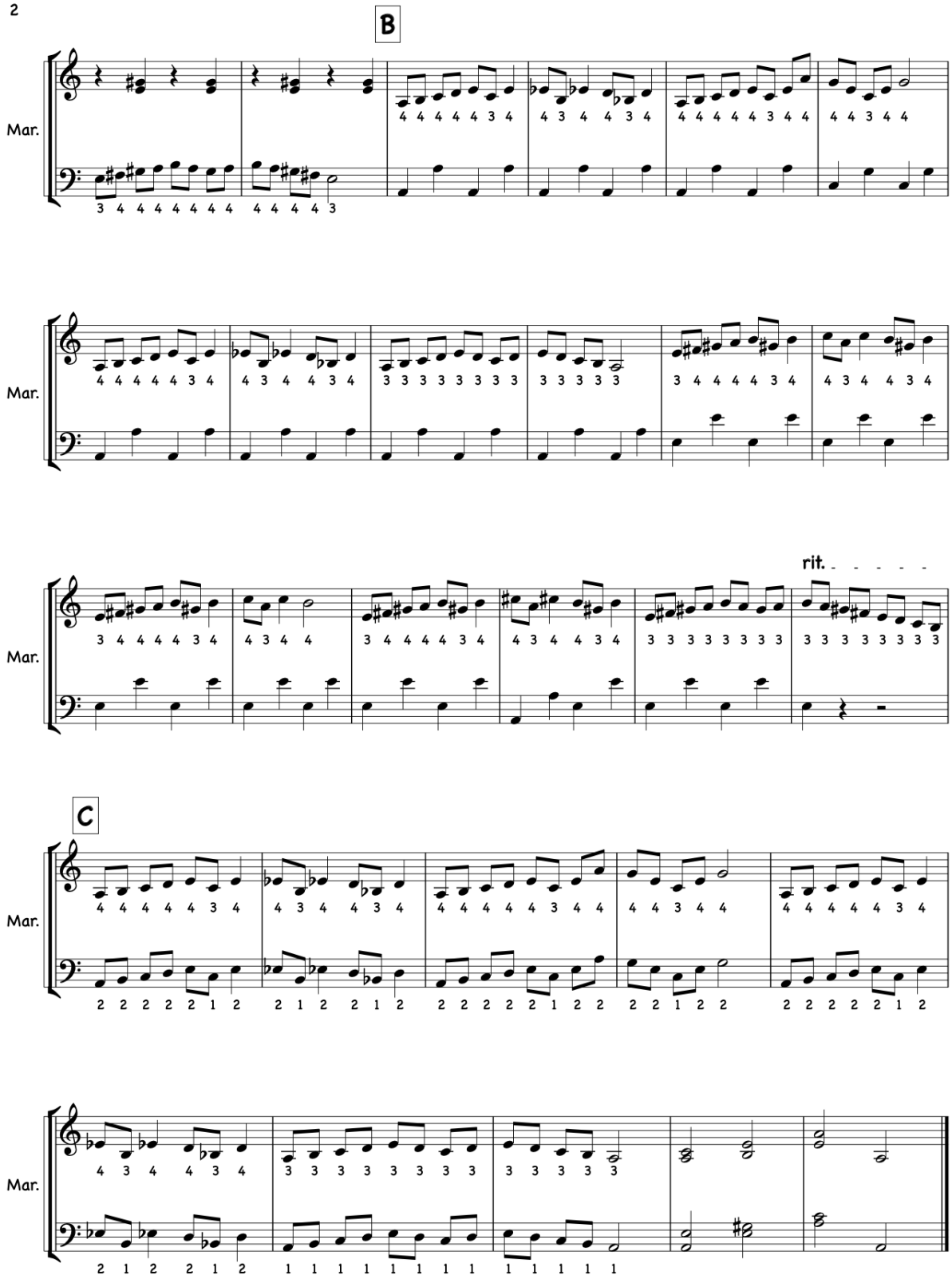
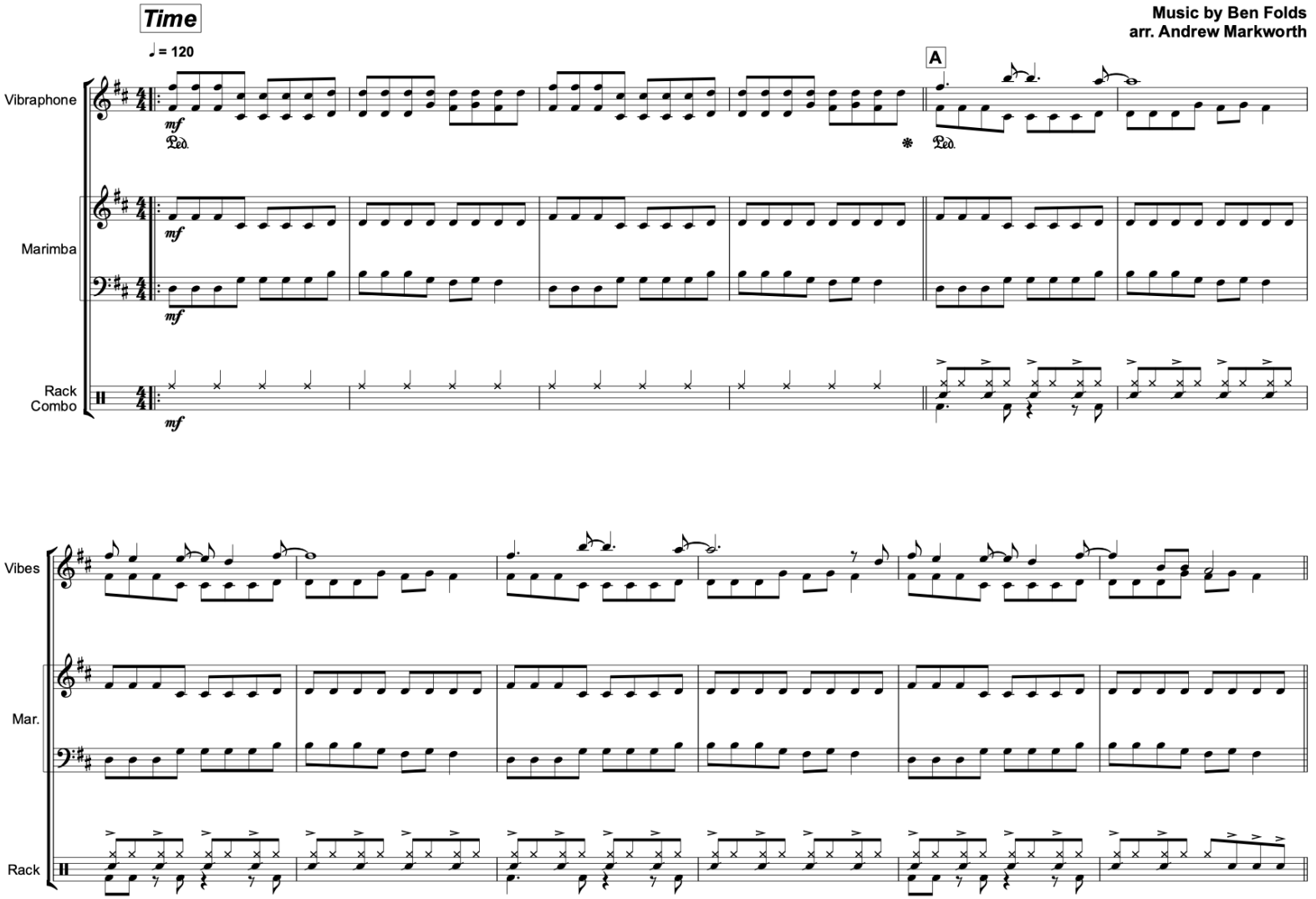
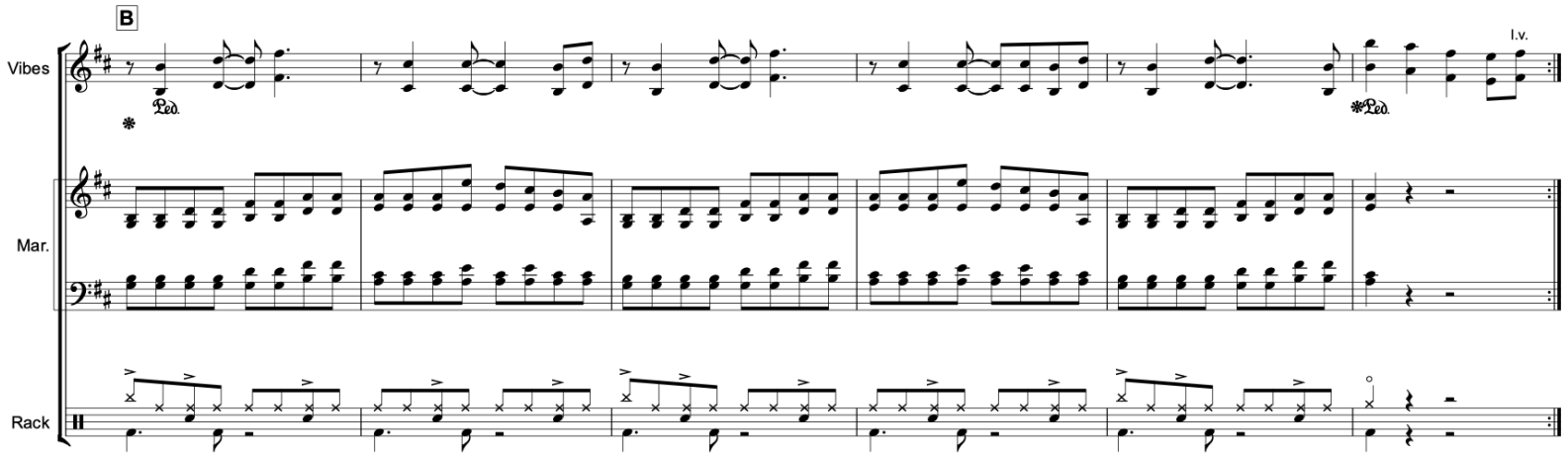
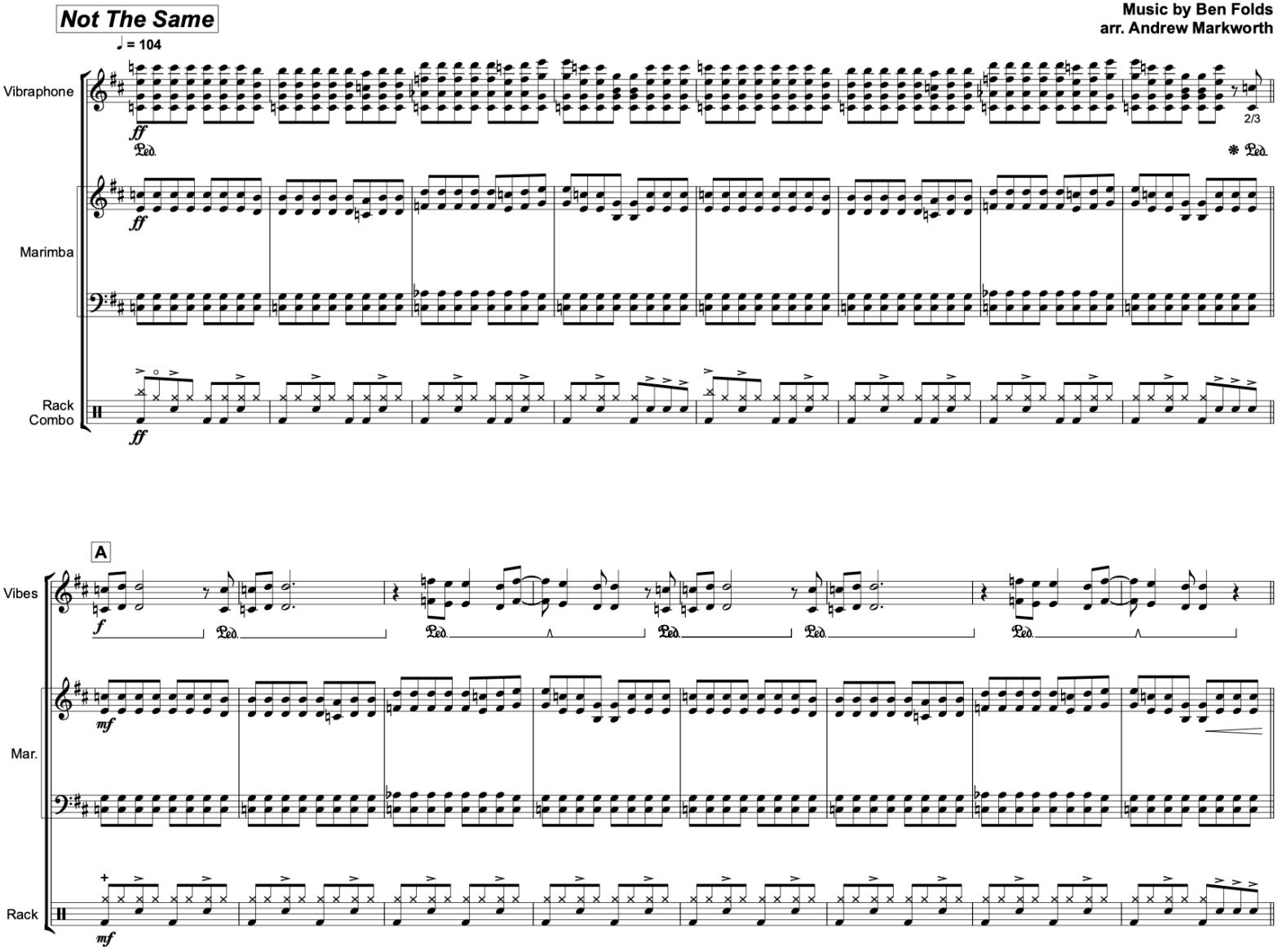
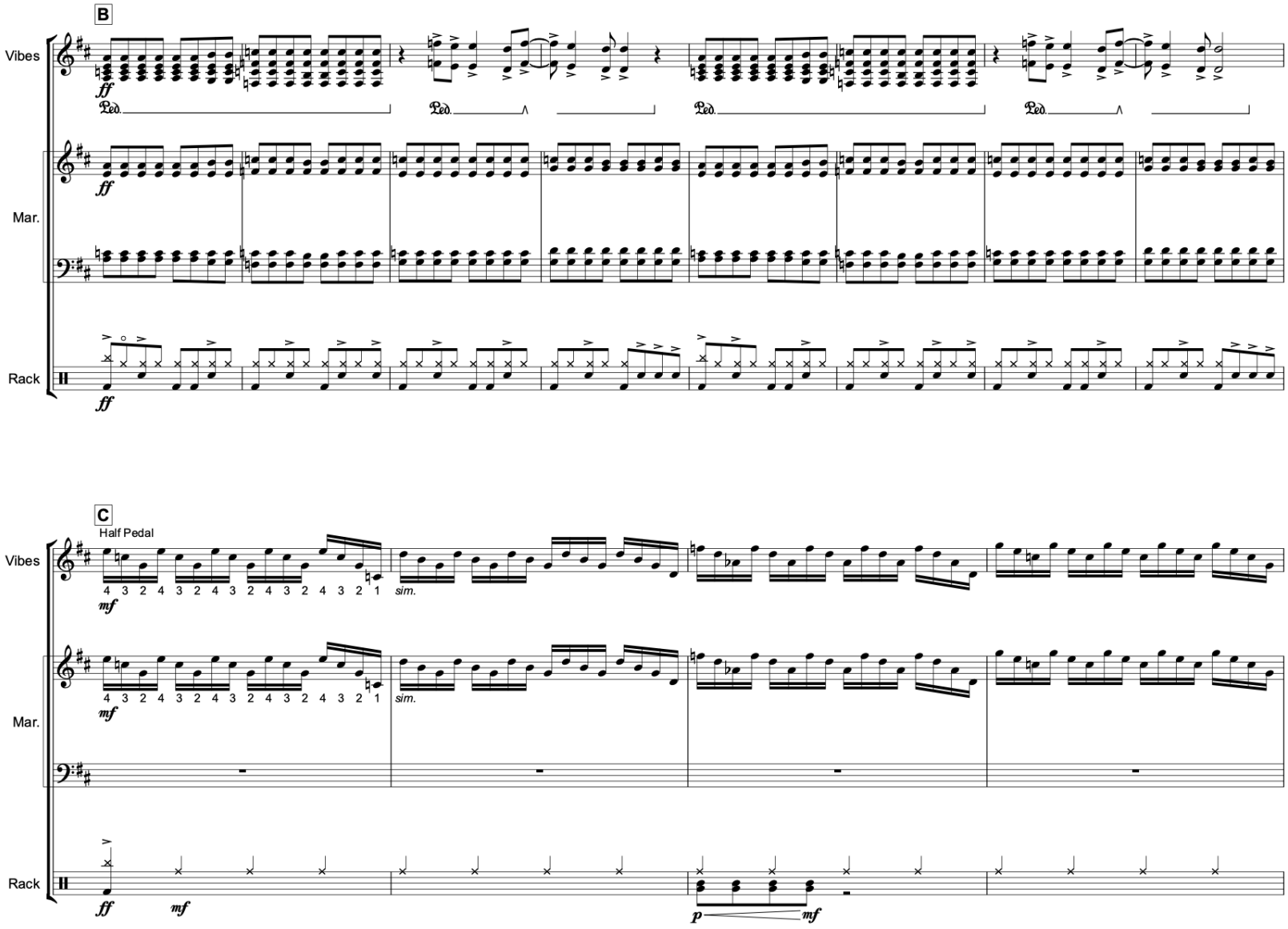
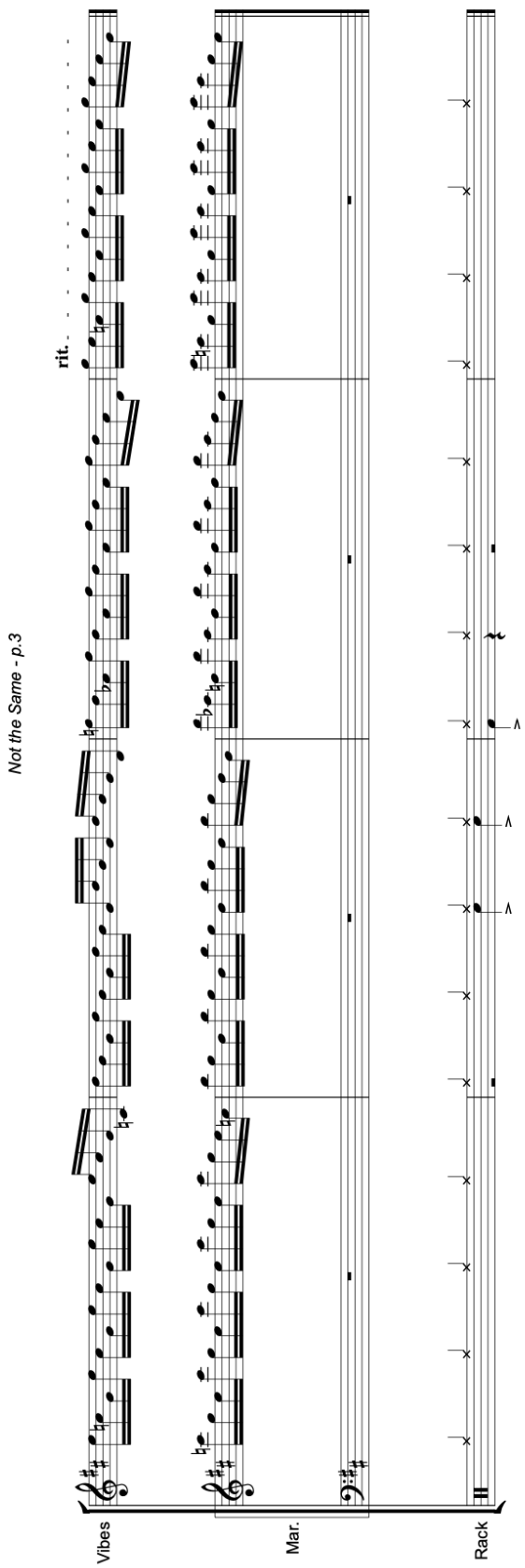

B
Mar.
Mar.
Mar.
rit.
C
Mar.
Mar.


Time
♩ = 120
Music by Ben Folds
arr. Andrew Markworth
A
Vibraphone
Marimba
Rack Combo
Vibes
Mar.
Rack
mf
Ped.


B
Vibes
Mar.
Rack
l.v.
Ped.
Ped.


Not The Same
Music by Ben Folds
arr. Andrew Markworth
♩ = 104
Vibraphone
Marimba
Rack
Combo
ff
2/3
A
Vibes
Mar.
Rack
f
mf


B
Vibes
Mar.
Rack
ff
Ped.
C
Half Pedal
4 3 2 4 3 2 4 3 2 4 3 2 4 3 2 1
sim.
mf
p


Not the Same - p.3
rit.
Vibes
Mar.
Rack