Bakersfield College Drumline

Audition Packet - Front Ensemble

PRACTICE

New players, a few guidelines when working on technique…

- If it feels comfortable right away, you're probably doing it wrong. These are new muscles that you are developing. Make sure you are following the technique exactly and maintain that feeling (even if it is awkward) when you practice. Eventually, you will get used to how things are supposed to feel. Muscle memory can be a mallet player's best friend or bitter enemy.

- Don't treat this lightly, especially new players. The worst thing a mallet player can do is develop bad habits. The easiest way to develop bad habits is to not put in enough effort to make it correct. 100% focus when working on technique always.

- Stay positive. Work can be very tedious and frustrating. Stay focused on improving during every opportunity and every rep. Our goal is perfection, so there is always room for improvement; don't just go through the motions.

- The tech's job is to look for the negatives. I WILL harp on every mistake. Remember, our goal is perfection. Remain positive, that is your job.

- Practice with a metronome! Take things slow first and then build them up to tempo.

- Relaxed hands work, move, and sound better than hands with tension. When you play faster, you have to relax even more. The more chops you have, the easier it is to play fast with a relaxed feel.

- Make sure you sound good when you play. You will figure out what this means more over time, but just be aware of the sound you make when you practice. The technique is there so that we get the best sound out of the instrument.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

In order to maximize efficiency in our technique, we will assign different muscle groups specific responsibilities suited for their natures. Larger muscles are geared toward large, slow motions. Smaller muscle groupings are for small, fast motions.

Here is a general outline. The muscle groupings are listed in order from largest to smallest.

1. Your legs and feet control the left and right motion.
2. The arms move the hands horizontally: forward and backwards, left and right. When moving forward and backwards, your arms may move vertically slightly to make up for the height difference between accidentals and naturals.
3. The wrist controls the up and down acceleration of the mallet. The wrist SOMETIMES helps the arms by making slight horizontal adjustments. Mallet players should practice first without these wrist adjustments.
4. The fingers sometimes help the wrist by making slight adjustments to the mallet acceleration. Mallet players should practice first without fingers.

   The main responsibility of grouping 1 and 2 is horizontal motion.
   The main responsibility of grouping 3 and 4 is vertical motion.

Sometimes smaller muscles can help out with the tasks of larger muscles. Larger muscles should NOT help with the tasks of smaller muscles. For example, you shouldn't take small steps to the left or to the right if you can easily just shift your arms.

KEYBOARD TECHNIQUE

Our default feet position is shoulder width apart, with knees slightly bent. Stand up straight, no slouching. For the most part, our bodies are parallel to the keyboard. We move by shifting our weight from one foot to the other, or taking a deliberate step to the left or right. Avoid turning by the hips except in certain passages.

Vibraphones: your right toes will be on the pedal. This is to ensure that your right foot (heel) will provide you balance as you move behind your keyboard with your left foot. Don't forget to stretch!

Set position: Mallets are over the correct note/s and at the correct height. Everyone will follow the section leader so that we all move to "set" at the same time.

Relax: Mallets are at your side or in the mallet bags, not making noise.

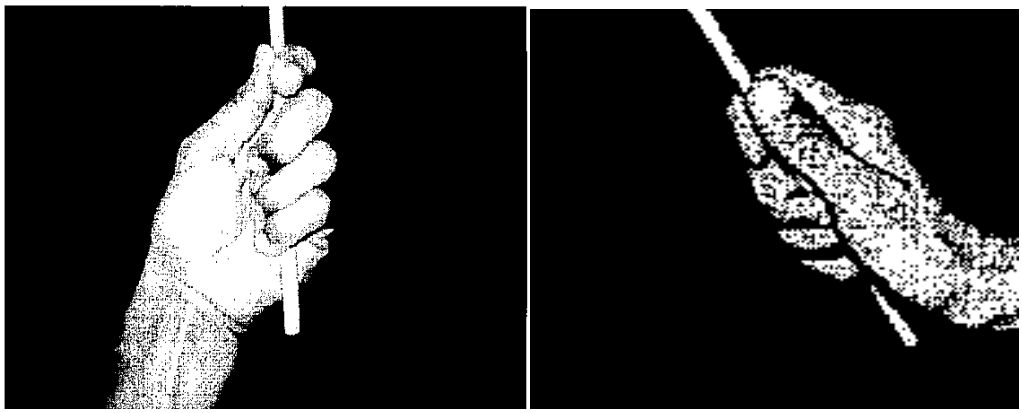
Prep: This is how we "tap ourselves off." One person will give two preps followed by the entire group giving two preps before an entrance.

Piston stroke: the type of vertical motion where the starting and stopping position are the same, no wasted or extra motion. The mallet starts in Set position, moves straight down into the bar, and then rebounds straight up to the same set position. This occurs all in one motion. The downward and upward velocity are exactly the same, both should be quick. If done correctly, there should be a "wait" at the top of the stroke where the mallet head doesn't move until the next stroke.

Legato stroke: another type of vertical motion. The difference between legato and piston is the legato stroke has a relaxed velocity and the mallet takes the full duration of the note to rebound. The mallet never stops moving.

Shift: the horizontal motion from one note to another. To be efficient, shifting should occur during the upstroke.

2-MALLET TECHNIQUE



The two-mallet grip is divided into two separate parts, each with a specific purpose or function.

BACK FULCRUM: this consists of your pinky, ring, and middle finger. Wrap these fingers around the mallet so roughly an inch of the shaft sticks out from the bottom of your hand. The tips of your pinky and ring finger should maintain contact with the center of your palm.

FRONT FULCRUM: this consists of your thumb and index finger. The mallet should make contact with the index finger on the joint closest to your finger tip. The thumb holds the mallet in place against the index finger. This is also known as the “t-grip” for the t shape that is formed between the thumb and index finger. Make sure your index finger is curved and relaxed; your thumb is flat on the mallet and fully extended.

Mallet instruments have little to no rebound. Unlike a snare drum, we have to create our own rebound. For this reason, a majority of our two mallet grip will be geared toward the back fulcrum. Always try and use as much back fulcrum possible in each situation for a strong sound. In general, slower, higher strokes require the most back and little to no front pressure. The lower and faster the stroke, the more the front fulcrum should be applied.

The next section covers the 4 mallet grip. This is an excerpt from “Method of Movement for Marimba” by Leigh Howard Stevens. Because of the complexity of 4-mallet technique, I felt it best to not cover the different strokes until we go over this subject together. If you absolutely cannot wait, get the book.

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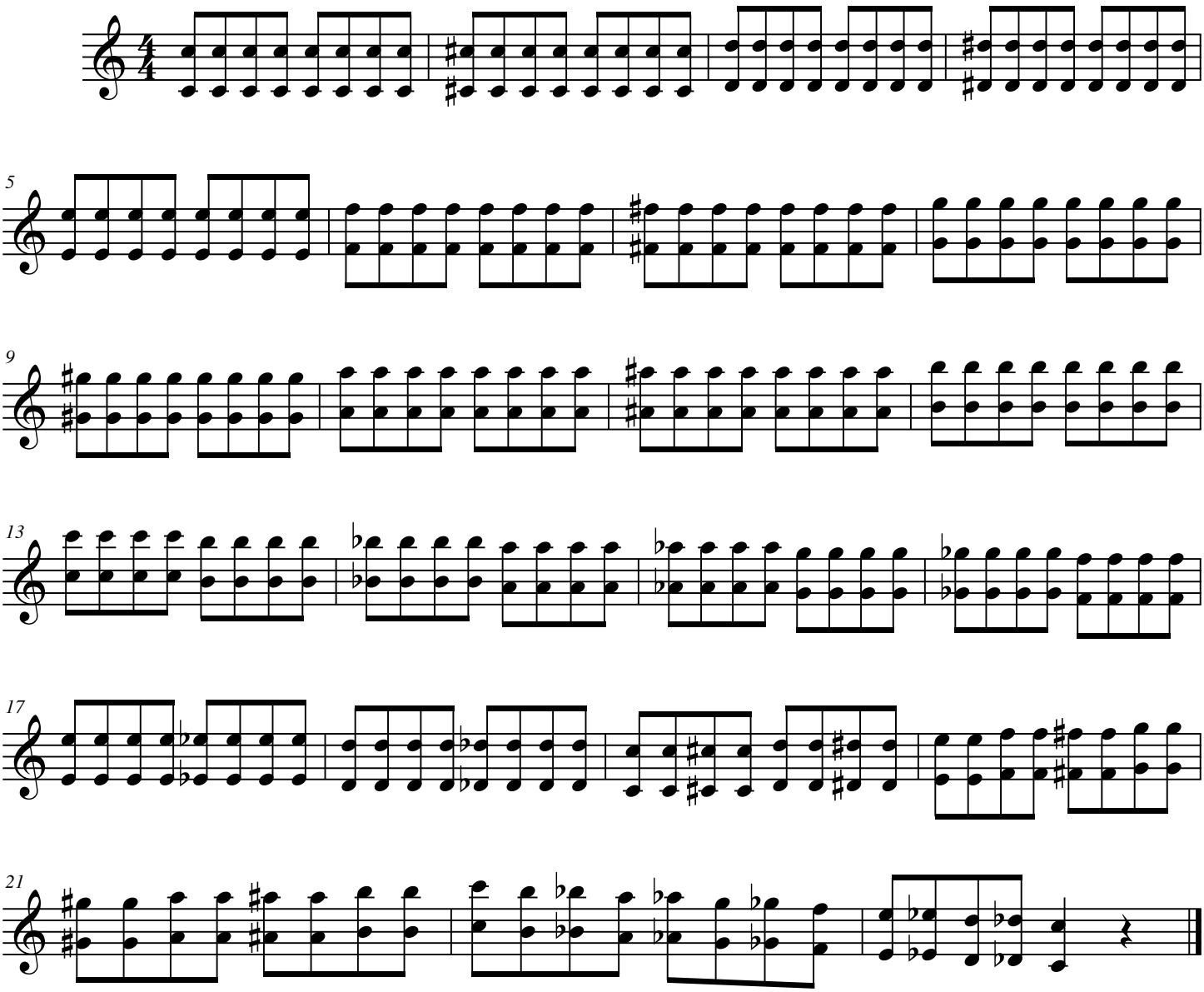
Anonymous



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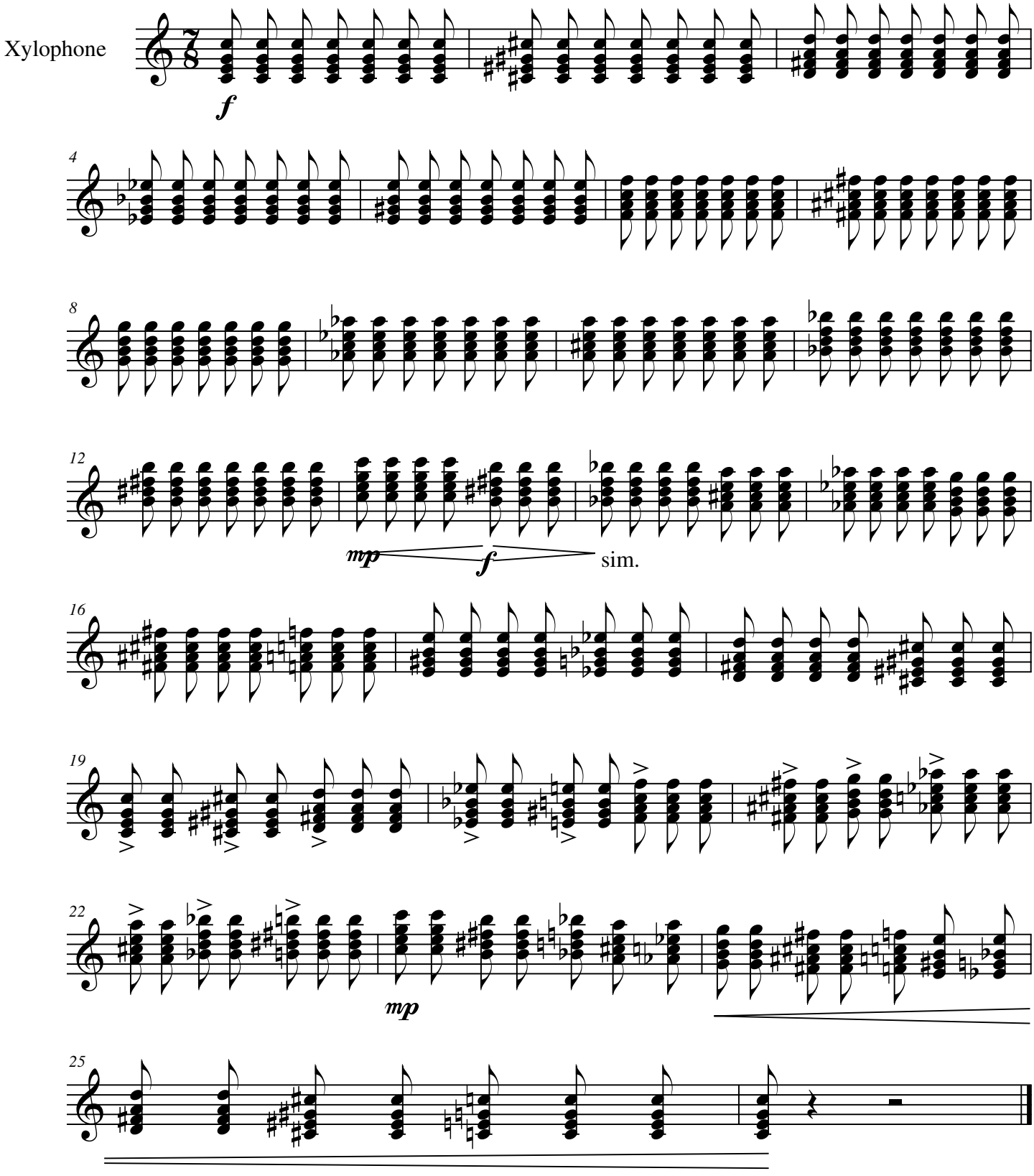
Joey Hubbard

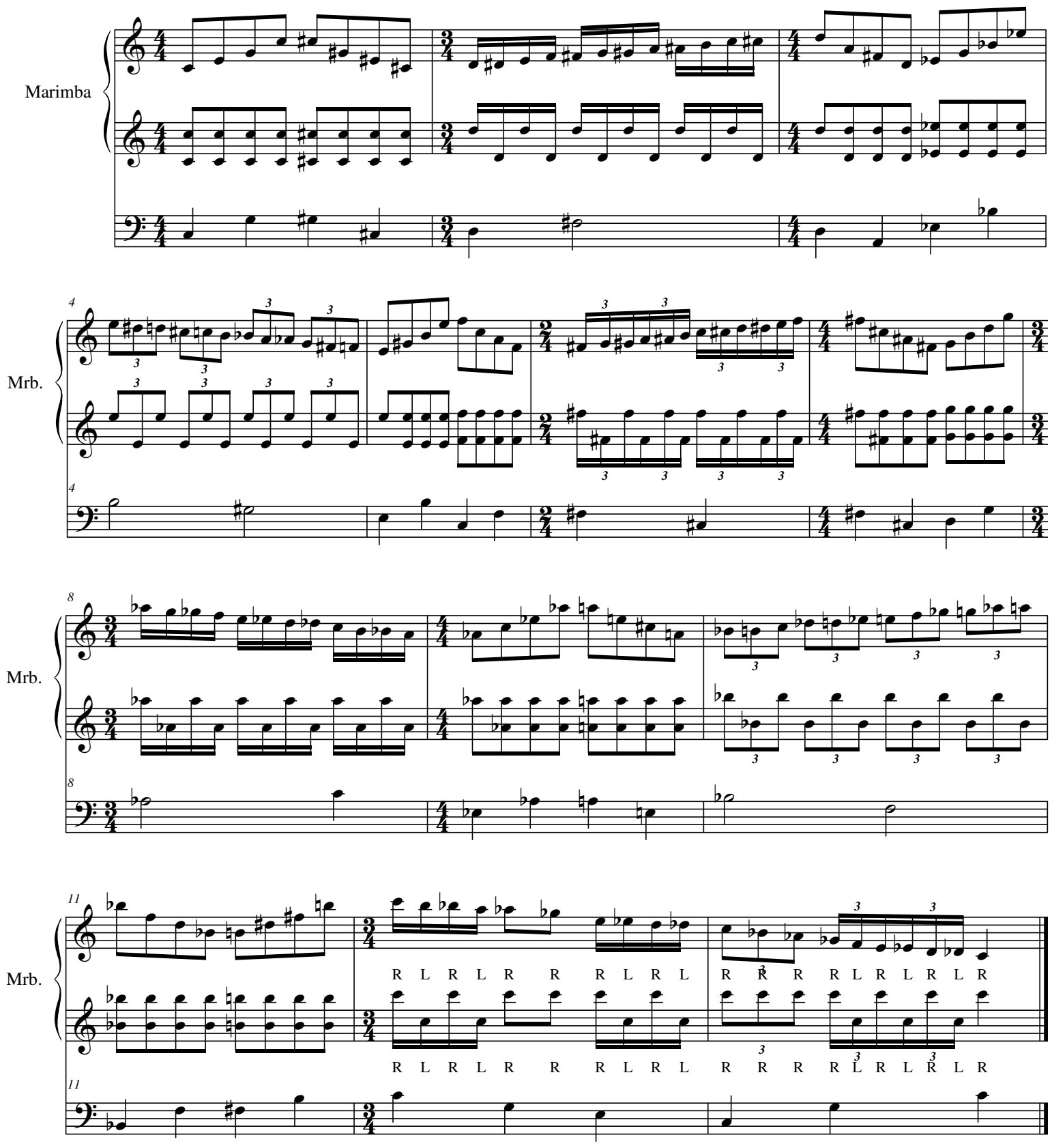


Marimba

Arpeggios

with chromatics

Joey Hubbard



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Nails

Score

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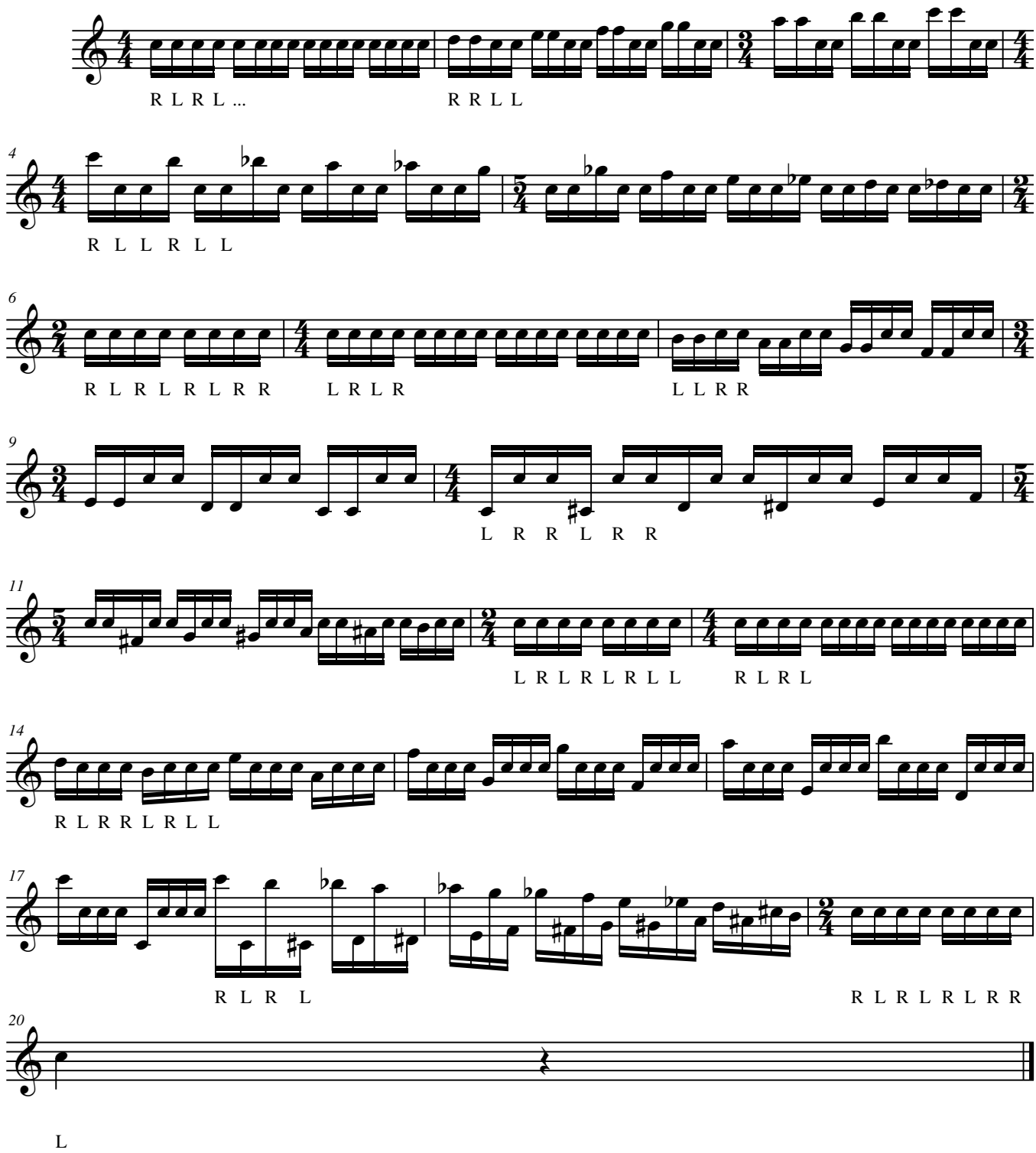
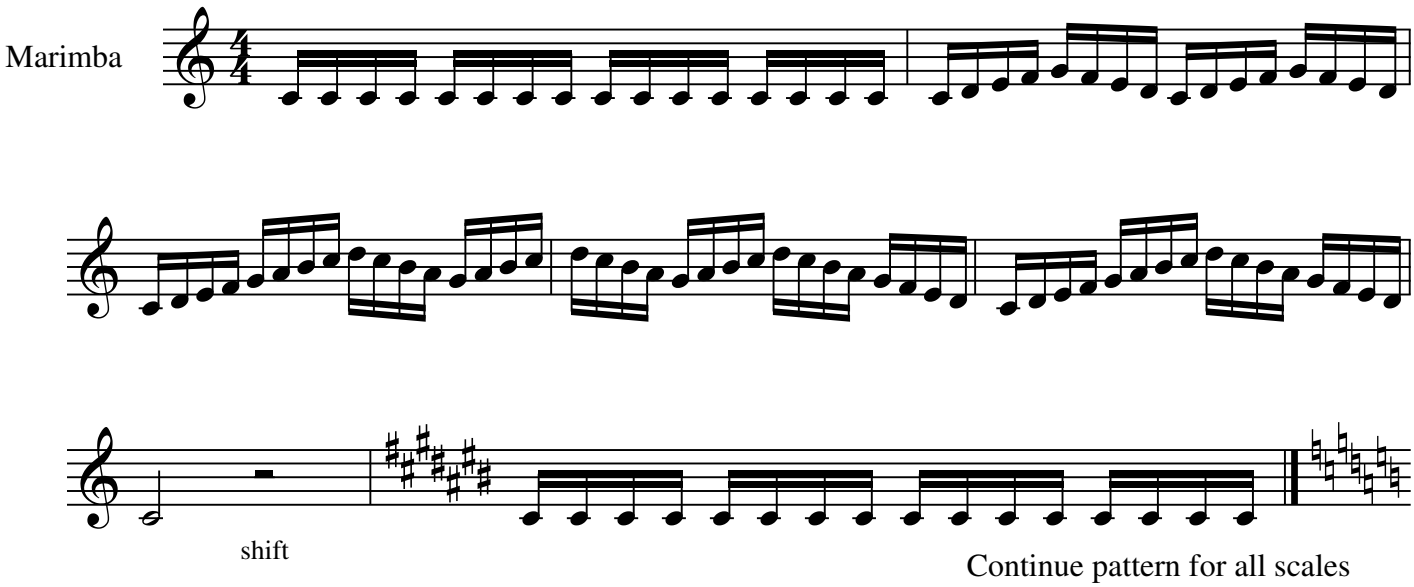
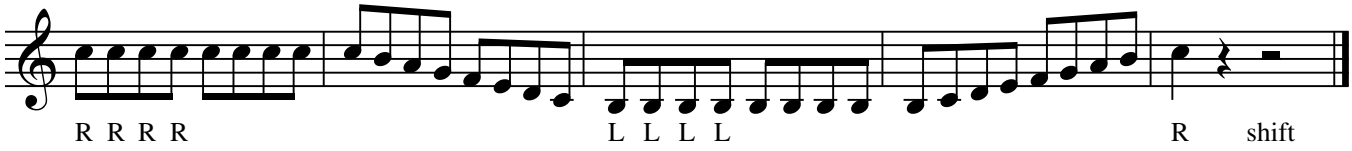


Scales

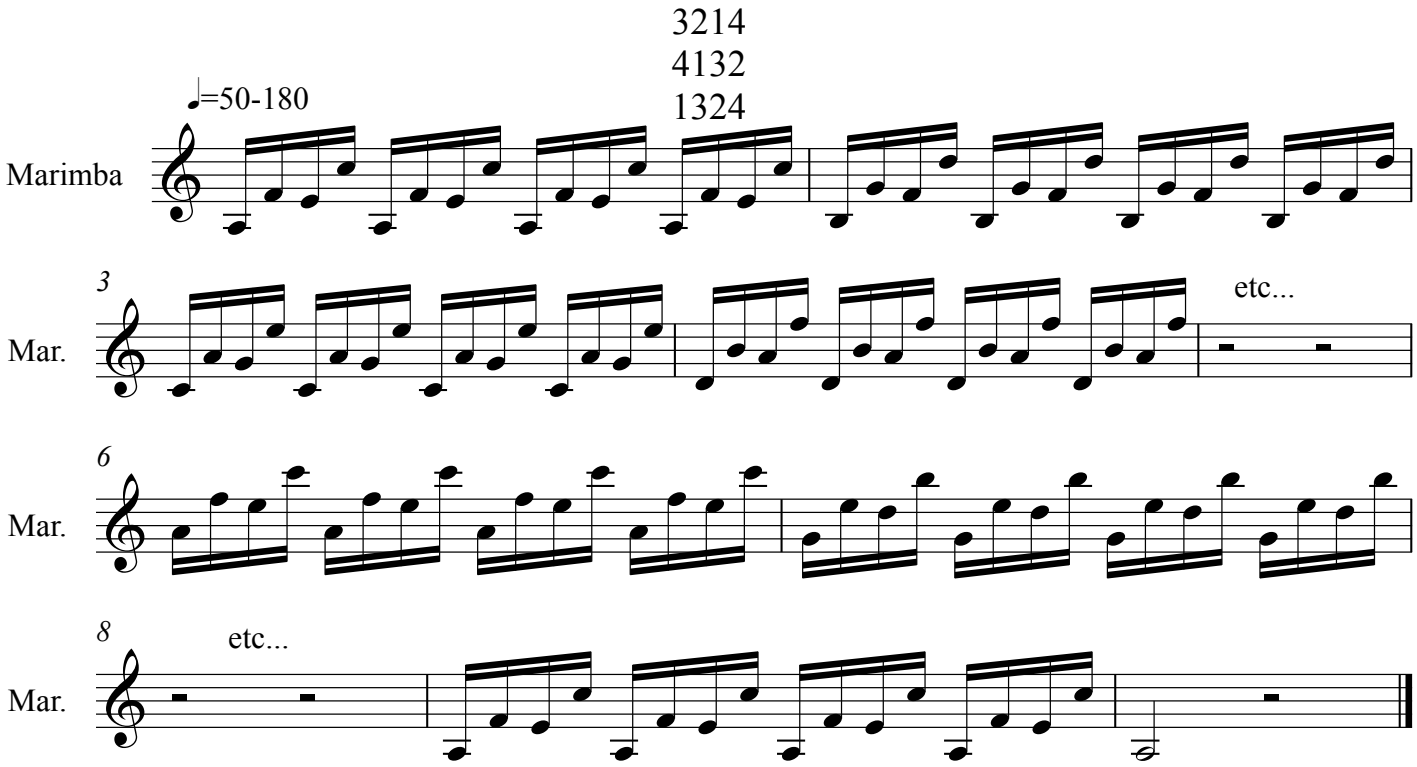


SINGLES



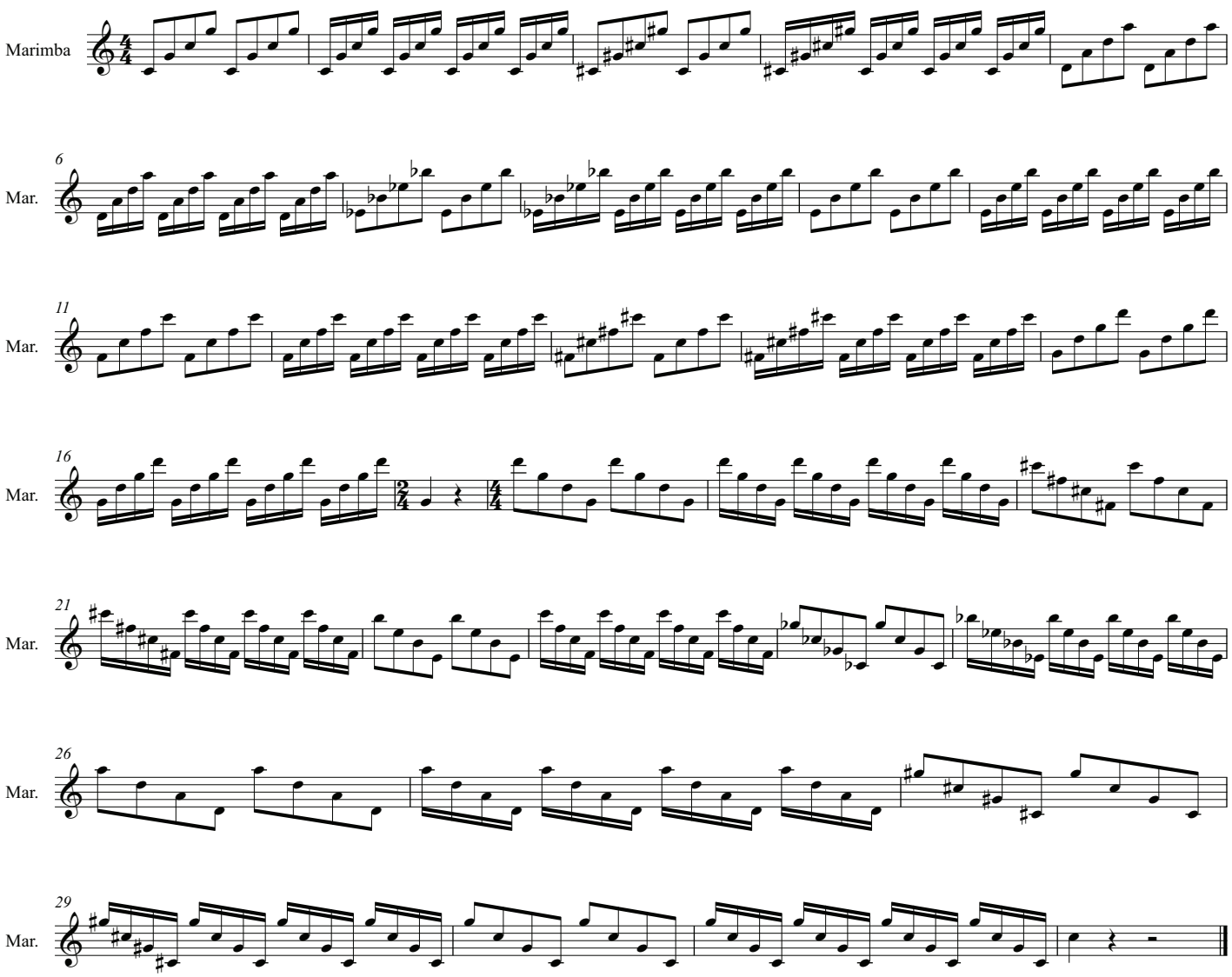
Continue pattern for all scales

Alternating Stroke Exercises

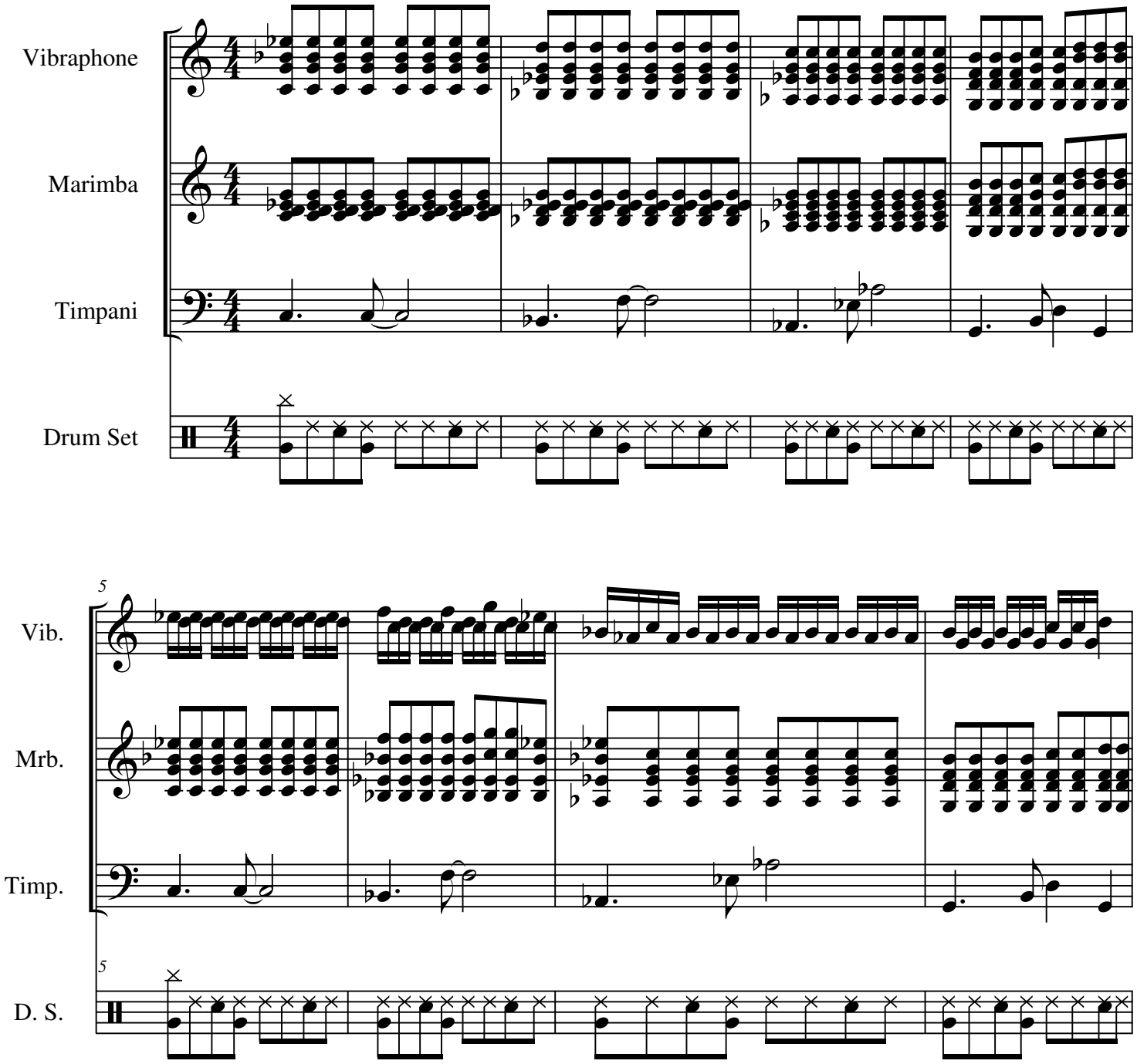


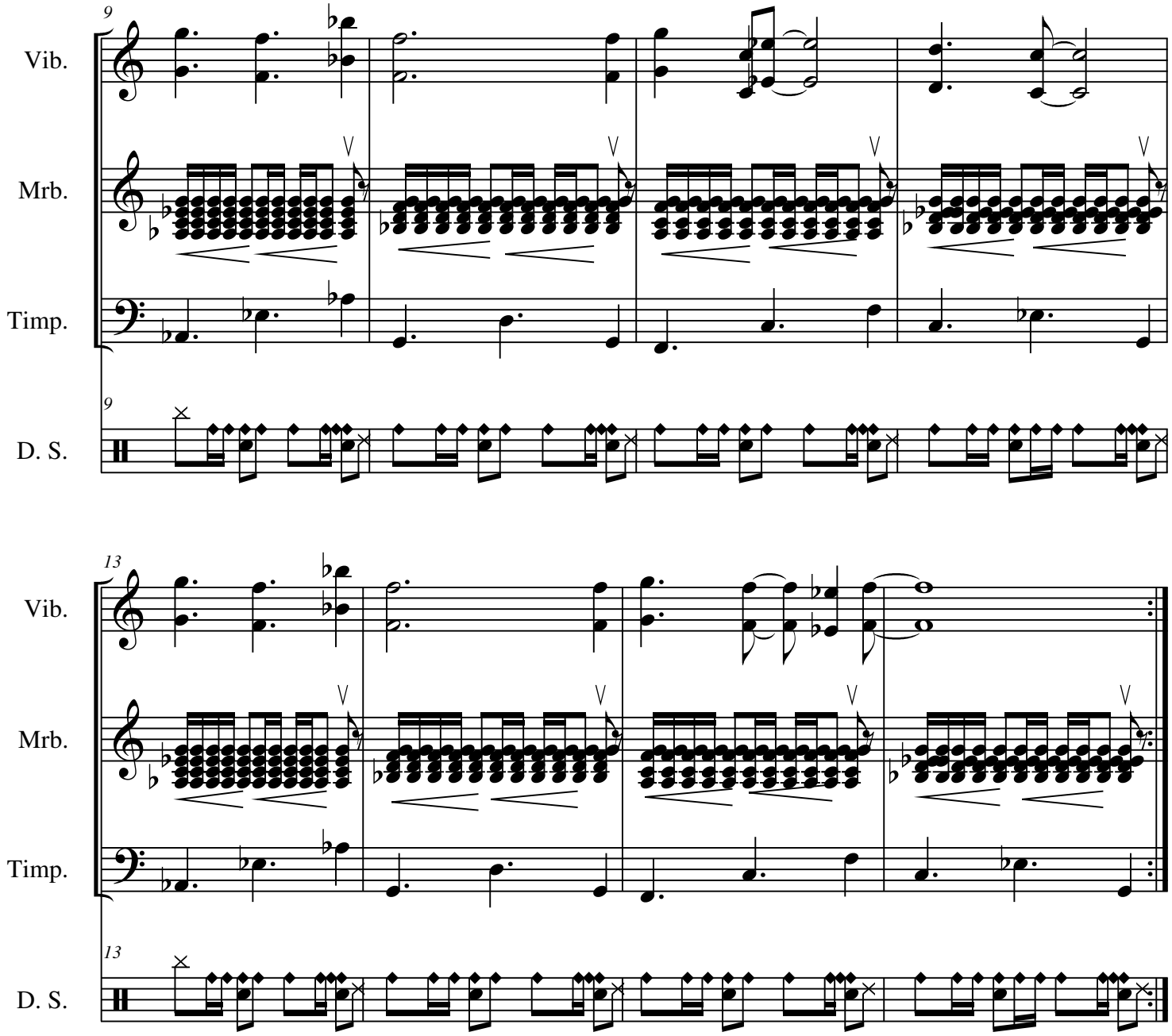
This excercise can be done in many different permutations, But we will only focus on the 3 listed above.
Remember to use piston stroke throughout this exercise, rotate your wrist, relax your index fingers & maintain mallet independence. Keep your mallets parallel to one another 6-8 inches off the instrument, allowing them to move only when they are to play.

Double Lateral #1



When I Drown

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Mrb.
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D. S.
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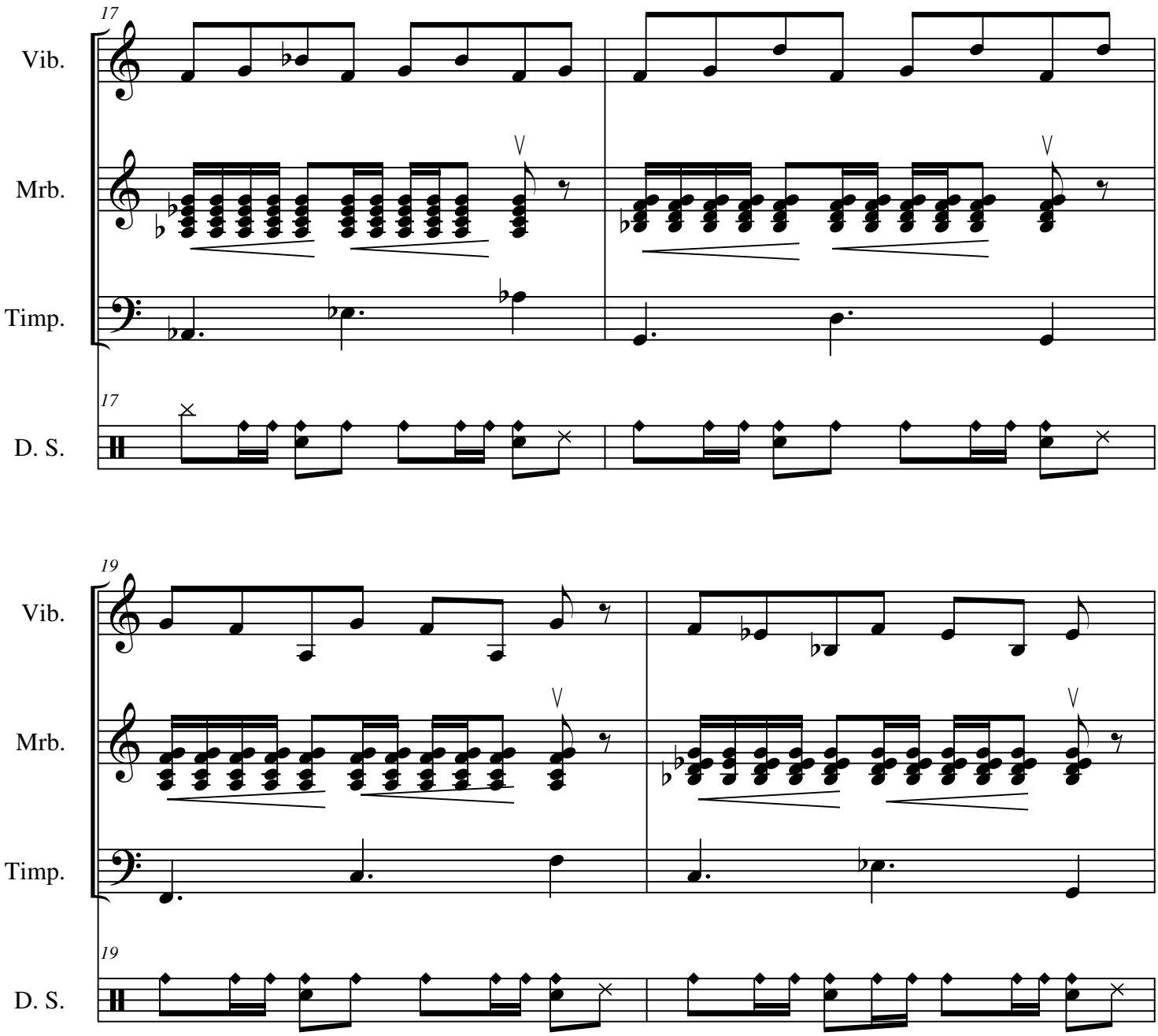
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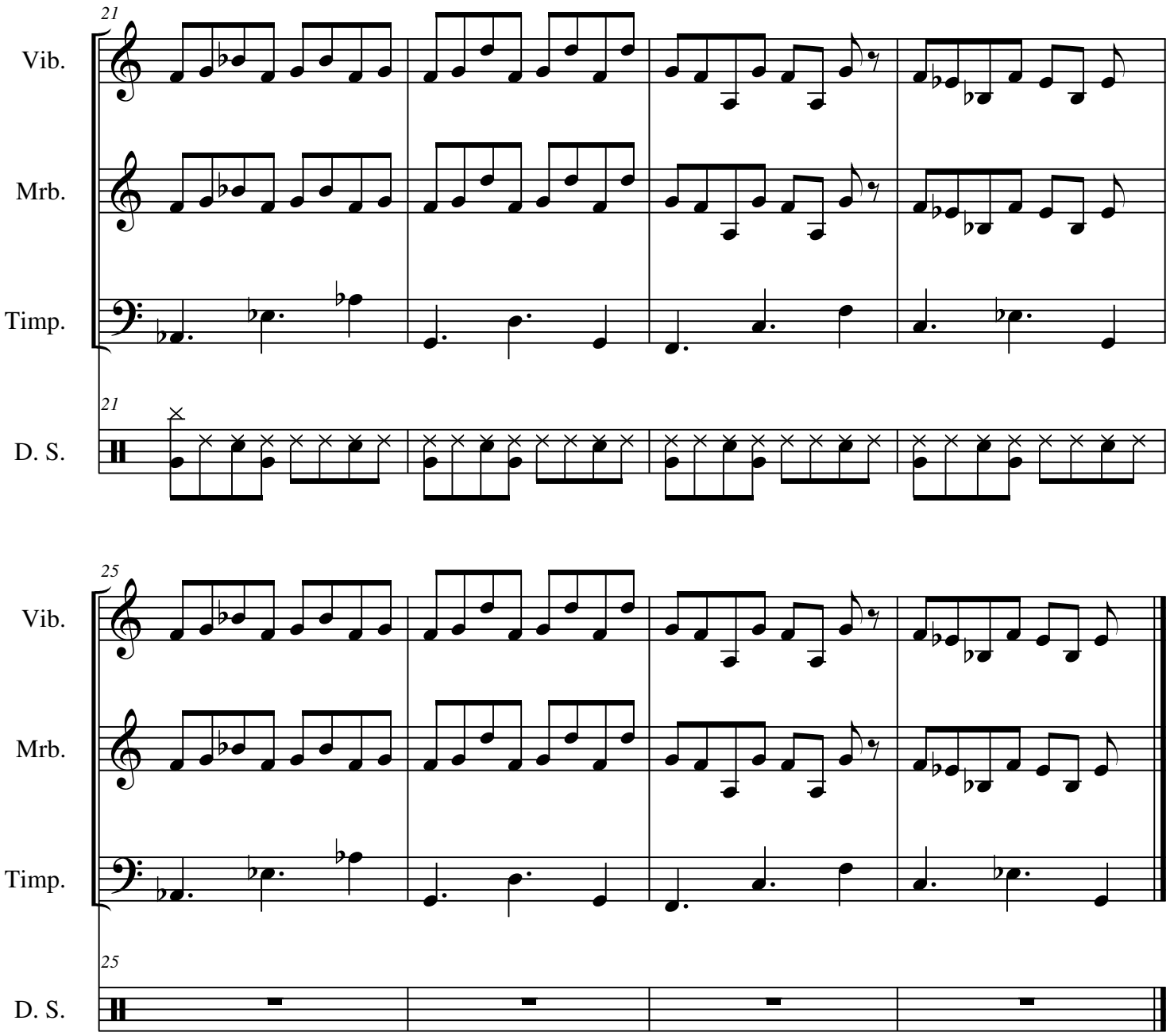
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