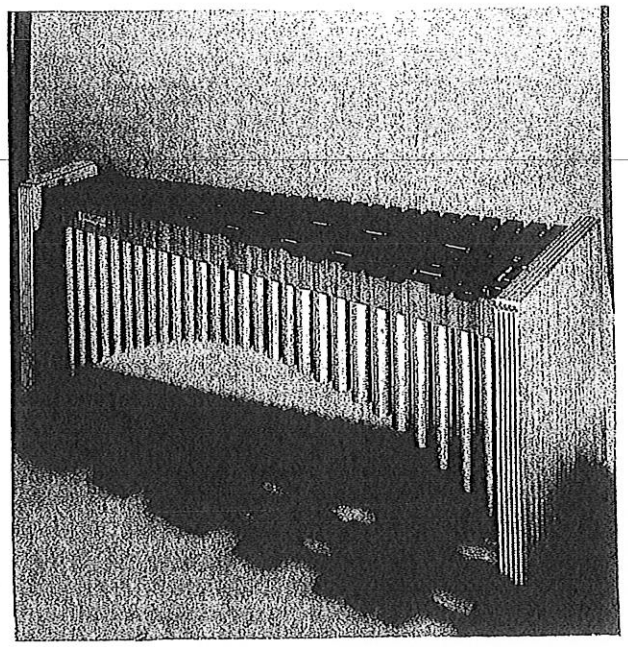
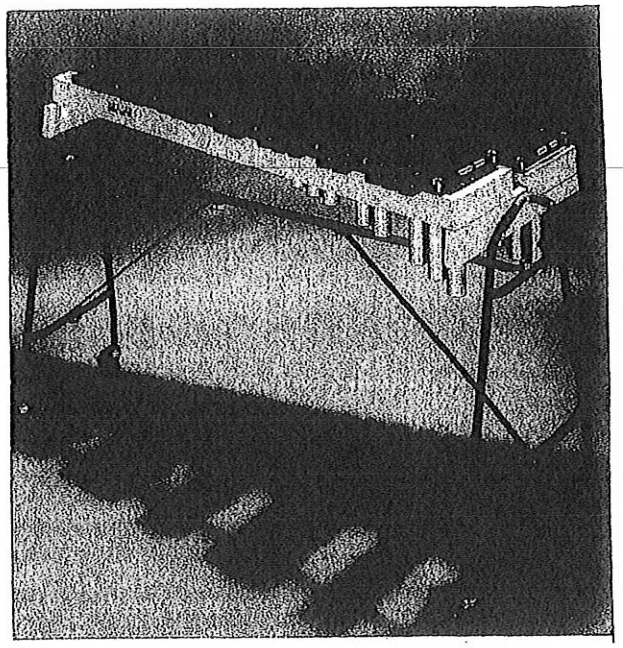
Mallet Packet

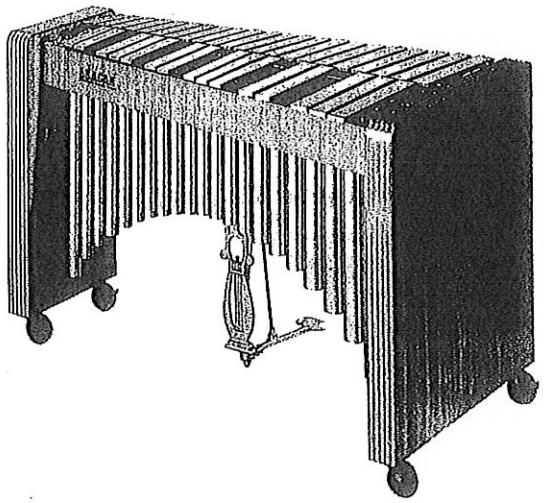
The percussion keyboard instruments include the marimba, the xylophone, the vibraphone, and the bells. These instruments are so called because their keys are arranged in a manner similar to that of a piano.



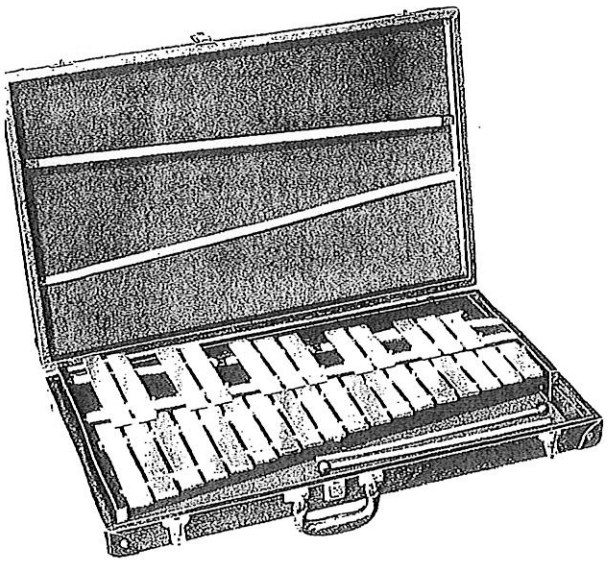
MARIMBA



XYLOPHONE



VIBRAPHONE (VIBRAHARP)



BELLS

Photographs courtesy of J.C. Deagan, Inc.

The keys of both the marimba and xylophone are made of hard wood. However, the tone quality of each instrument is quite different. The tone of the xylophone is piercingly brilliant, while that of the marimba is comparatively soft and mellow.

Both the bells and the vibraphone have metal keys. In addition, the vibraphone is capable of producing a type of vibrato. This vibrato is created by motor driven fans located in each resonator. It also has a damper pedal to sustain or stop the sound.

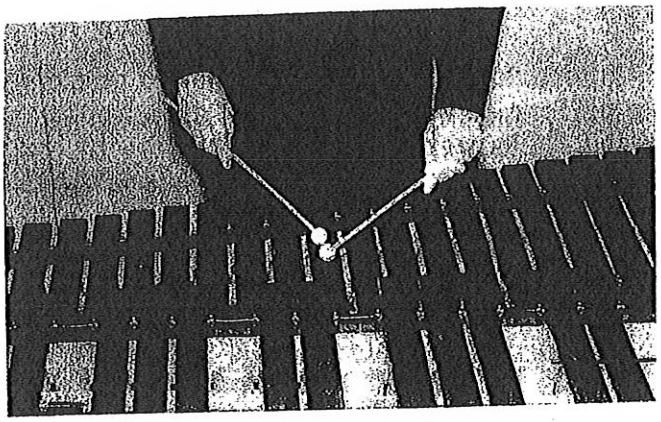
Whereas the bells and xylophone are found in practically all bands and orchestras, the vibraphone and marimba are used almost exclusively for solo playing.

Mallets

Various types of mallets are used to play these instruments. Marimba mallets include: soft, medium and hard rubber; yarn and plastic models. Medium and hard rubber, plastic and wooden mallets are appropriate for the xylophone. Bell mallets are made of metal, plastic and wood. Vibraphone mallets are usually covered with wound thread or yarn.

Holding the Mallets

Holding the mallets primarily with the thumb and second finger will give the maximum amount of control and relaxation. Place the hands about one-third of the stick length up from the end. Be careful not to hold the sticks at the extreme far end or near the ball, as the natural balance will be destroyed.



Body Placement and Foot Movement

Much of the music written for these instruments is confined to about two and one-half octaves. Therefore, the performer should place himself directly in the middle of the area in which he is to play.

Some pieces, however, cover a larger range. It may then be necessary to move up and down the length of the instrument. This should be done by shuffling the feet in the desired direction. The important point to keep in mind is not to cross one foot over the other. An awkward shift of balance will interfere greatly with playing accuracy.

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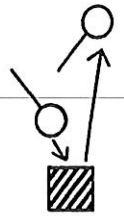
The Various Strokes

UP-STROKES

It is necessary to learn the different types of attacks used to strike these instruments. Probably the most important one is the up-stroke. The up-stroke is started from a position approximately two inches above the note. The note is struck by "snapping" the wrist. As soon as the note is struck the mallet must be lifted quickly to achieve clear articulation. Moreover, this type of stroke allows the maximum amount of tone to be drawn out of the instrument.



The Up-Stroke

STACCATO STROKES

When a passage calls for staccato strokes, a firmer than normal grip must be employed. This, in addition to extremely quick wrist snap, will produce a staccato stroke.

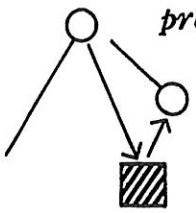
Staccato strokes may be divided into two categories: (1) the full staccato stroke and (2) the half staccato stroke. Full staccato strokes are performed by using the firmest possible grip coupled with a great amount of wrist snap. To perform half staccato strokes, use a firm grip with quicker than normal wrist snap. Use only the appropriate type of staccato stroke; the style of music will determine this.

LEGATO STROKES

Passages covered by slur markings ⁀ indicate legato strokes should be used. This type of phrasing should be performed with the mallets close to the keyboard. The grip is very relaxed, almost as if the sticks were feather-light. Smooth, graceful movement from note to note is important.

These three strokes must be developed if a player is to become a fine performer.

One word of caution: *do not use an over amount of preparatory (downward) motion when striking the notes.*



This stroke is similar to a hammer striking a nail and can in no way be considered a musical approach to playing percussion instruments.

Striking the Notes

The best place to strike the bars is in the center. However, when playing fast passages, it will be necessary to strike the *"black keys"* near the end. The *"white keys"* will always be struck in the center.

The Roll

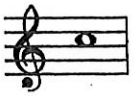
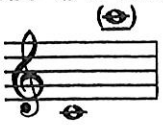
Single alternating strokes are used to roll. The double stroke roll is never employed on these instruments.

Changing Notes While Rolling

It is necessary to move extremely fast from one note to another when rolling legato passages. To facilitate smooth movement, a general rule is to have the mallet that is nearest the next note start the roll. The student should try to eliminate any separation in rolling. Convey the impression that there is one continuous roll.

Ranges

There has been no standardization in regard to the ranges of these instruments. The xylophone may extend anywhere from two to four octaves; the marimba, two and one-half to four and one-half octaves; the bells, one to two and one-half octaves; and the vibraphone, three to four octaves.

The xylophone and bells are transposing instruments. In the case of the xylophone, this note when played, actually sounds  . In other words, there is a one octave transposition. On the bells there is a two octave transposition. *e.g.* 

Reading Music

The student should realize it is important when reading to keep his eyes on the music. The teacher should be very careful to have the student avoid looking first at the music, then at the keyboard before finally striking the note.

It is possible to see the keyboard out of the "corners" of the eyes while looking at the music. Concentrate on perceiving the *black keys*; the *white keys* can be located in relation to these.

A Practice Suggestion

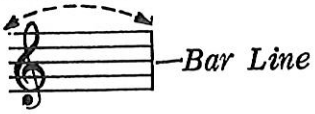
It is highly recommended that the student practice a few minutes every day away from the instrument. Go through the usual practice procedure; holding the sticks, reading the music and making appropriate movements to strike the notes. This method of practice has been found to greatly improve the accuracy and speed of reading, as well as aiding in memorization.

All of the compositions found in this volume are based upon the original literature and have been arranged and adapted solely for use on percussion keyboard instruments.

MUSIC FUNDAMENTALS

TREBLE STAFF

MEASURE



TIME SIGNATURES

$\frac{4}{4}$ C $\frac{2}{4}$ ¢ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Ex.

KEY SIGNATURES

Ex.

ACCIDENTALS

♯ sharp ♭ flat ♮ natural

𝄪 double sharp ♭♭ double flat

NOTE VALUES

𝅝 whole note

𝅗𝅥 half note

𝅗𝅥. dotted half note

♩ quarter note

♩. dotted quarter note

♪ eighth note

♪. dotted eighth note

𝅘𝅥𝅯 sixteenth note

𝅘𝅥𝅰 thirty second note

REST VALUES

𝄻 whole rest

𝄼 half rest

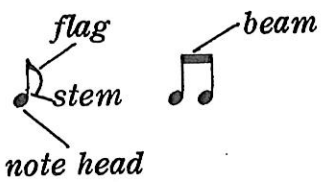
𝄽 quarter rest

𝄾 eighth rest.

𝄿 sixteenth rest

𝅀 thirty second rest

PARTS OF THE NOTES



DYNAMIC MARKINGS

ff fortissimo *(very loud)*

f forte *(loud)*

mf mezzo forte *(medium loud)*

pp pianissimo *(very soft)*

p piano *(soft)*

mp mezzo piano *(medium soft)*

< crescendo *(gradually getting louder)*

> diminuendo *(gradually getting softer)*

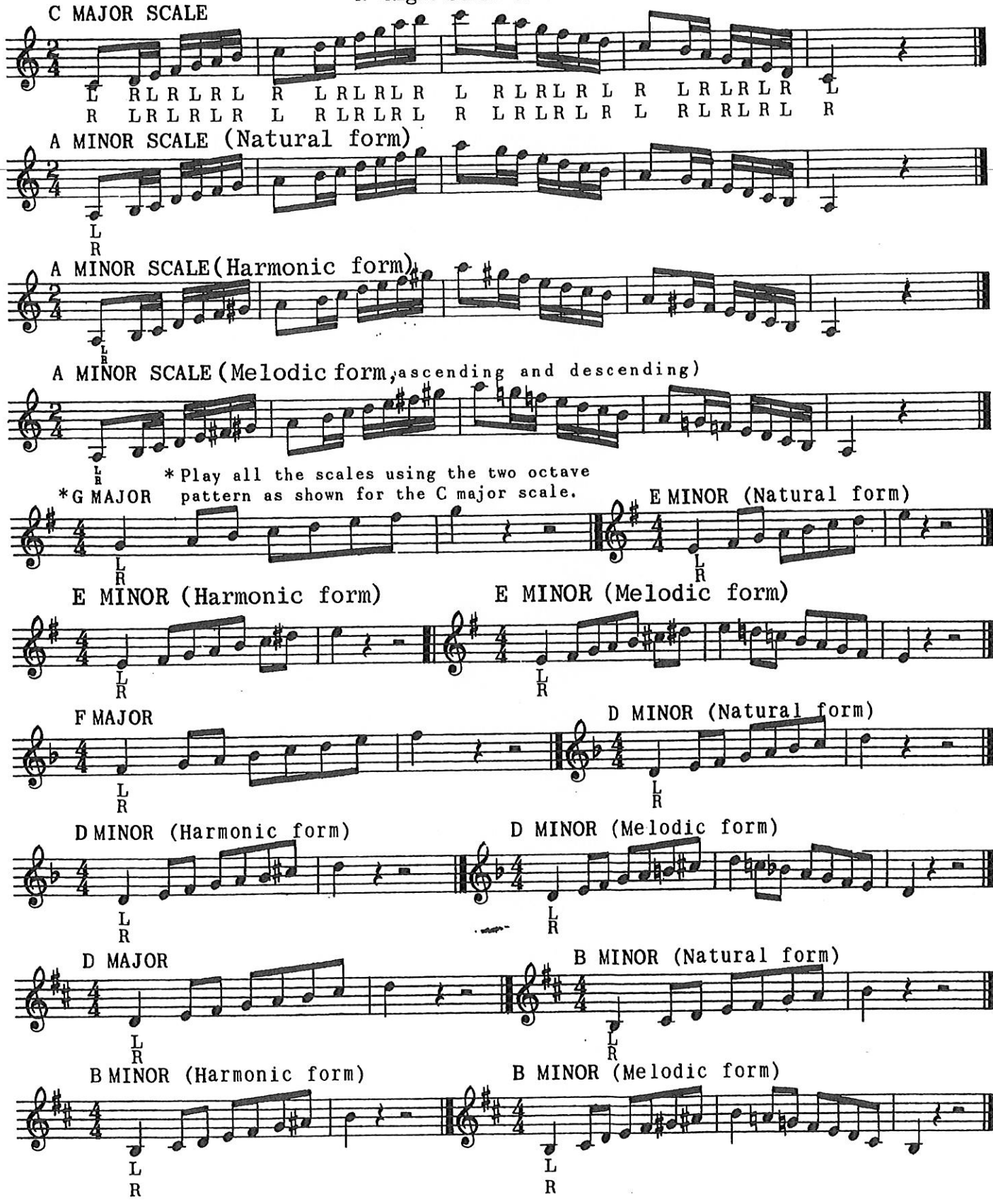
FUNDAMENTAL EXERCISES

The student should have specific exercises to practice each day. There are many examples of good "warm-ups", the following are just a few:

SCALES

Presto

R-Right Stick L-Left Stick



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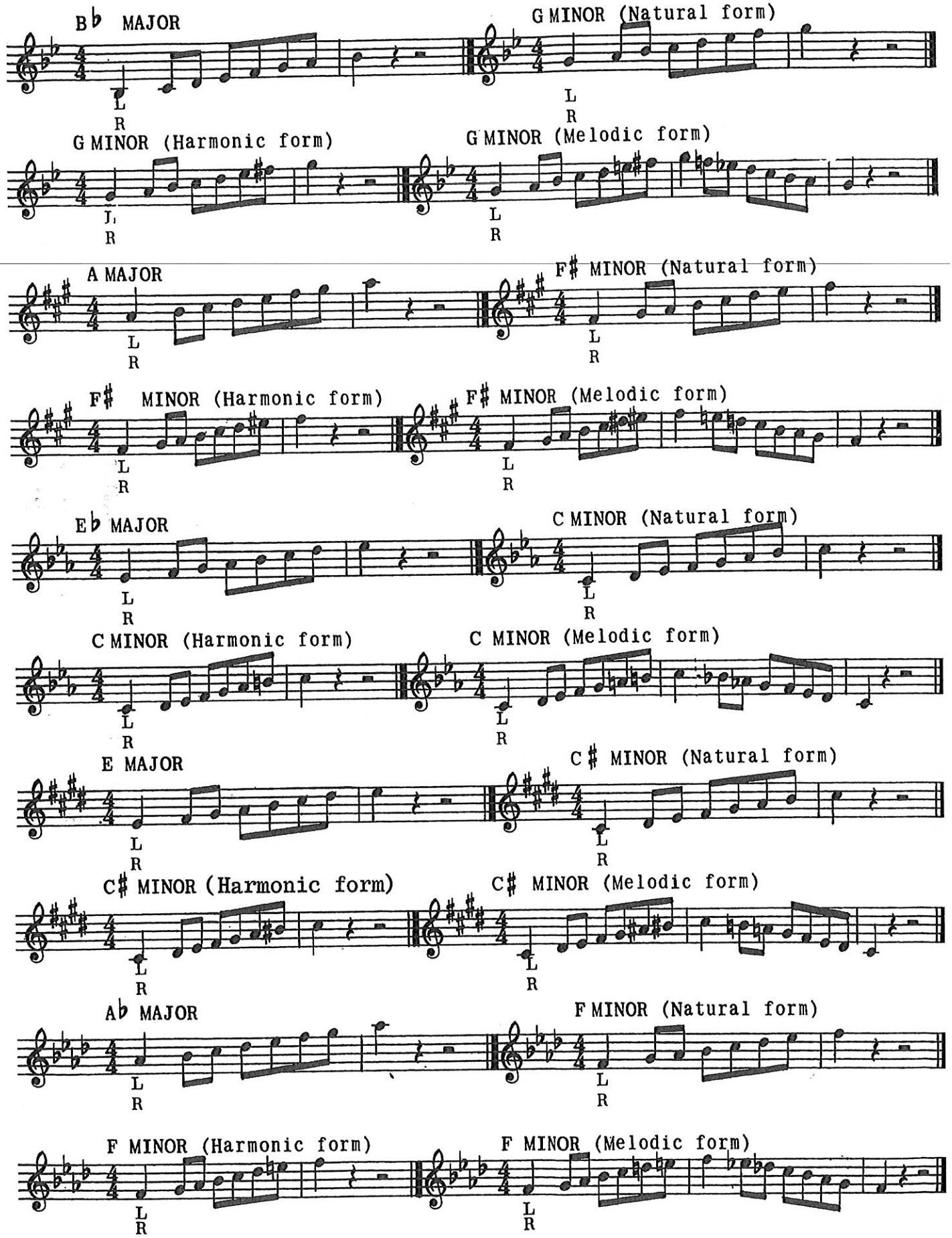
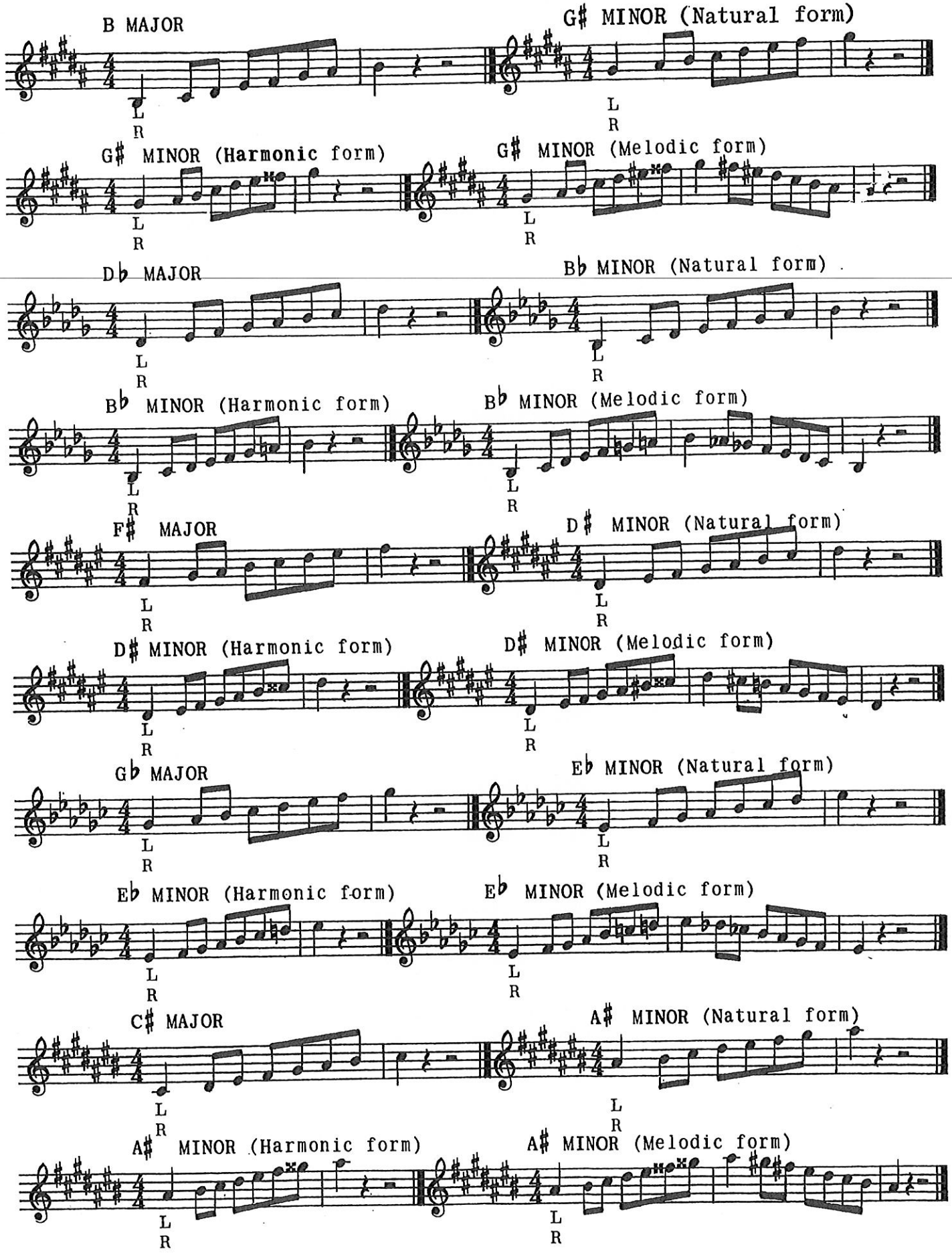
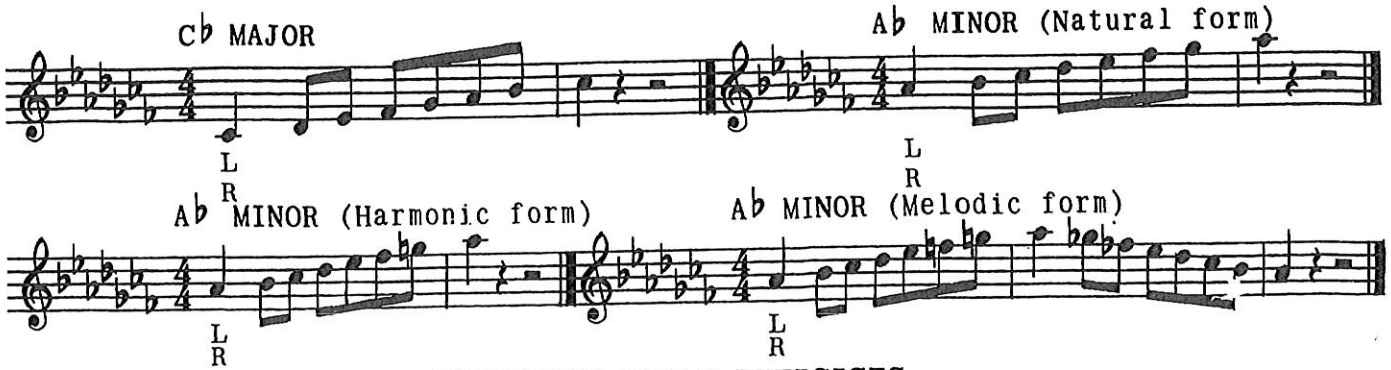
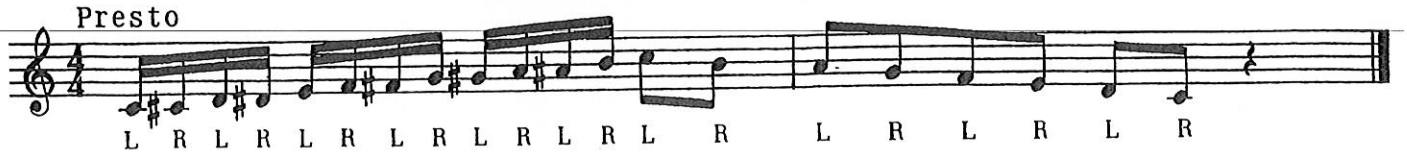

B♭ MAJOR
G MINOR (Natural form)
G MINOR (Harmonic form)
G MINOR (Melodic form)
A MAJOR
F♯ MINOR (Natural form)
F♯ MINOR (Harmonic form)
F♯ MINOR (Melodic form)
E♭ MAJOR
C MINOR (Natural form)
C MINOR (Harmonic form)
C MINOR (Melodic form)
E MAJOR
C♯ MINOR (Natural form)
C♯ MINOR (Harmonic form)
C♯ MINOR (Melodic form)
A♭ MAJOR
F MINOR (Natural form)
F MINOR (Harmonic form)
F MINOR (Melodic form)
L
R

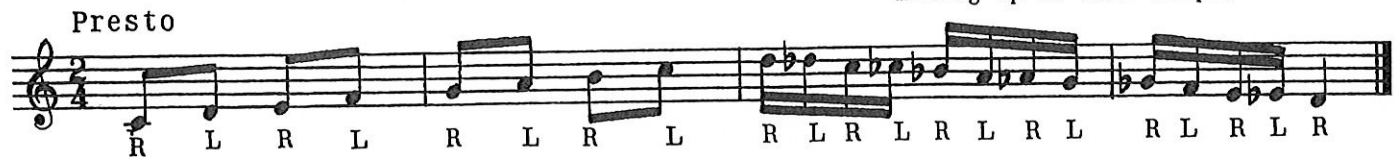

B MAJOR
G♯ MINOR (Natural form)
G♯ MINOR (Harmonic form)
G♯ MINOR (Melodic form)
D♭ MAJOR
B♭ MINOR (Natural form)
B♭ MINOR (Harmonic form)
B♭ MINOR (Melodic form)
F♯ MAJOR
D♯ MINOR (Natural form)
D♯ MINOR (Harmonic form)
D♯ MINOR (Melodic form)
G♭ MAJOR
E♭ MINOR (Natural form)
E♭ MINOR (Harmonic form)
E♭ MINOR (Melodic form)
C♯ MAJOR
A♯ MINOR (Natural form)
A♯ MINOR (Harmonic form)
A♯ MINOR (Melodic form)
L
R

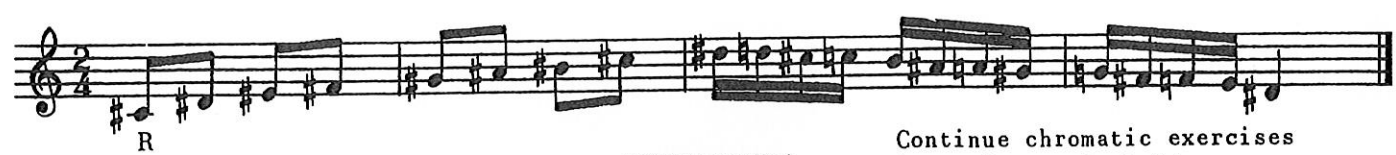


CHROMATIC SCALE EXERCISES



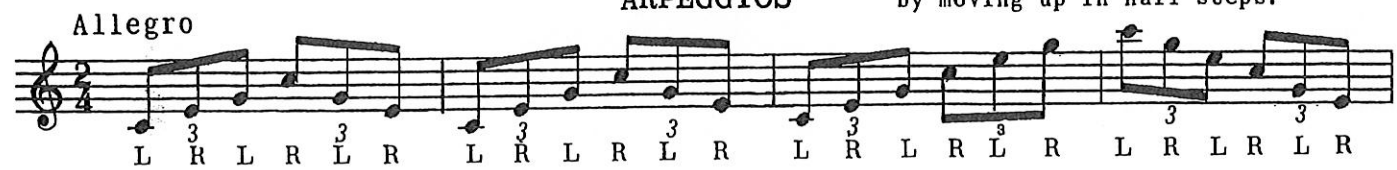
Continue chromatic exercises by moving up in half steps.

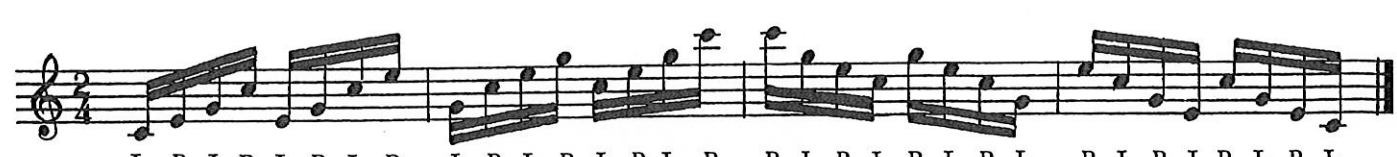




Continue chromatic exercises by moving up in half steps.

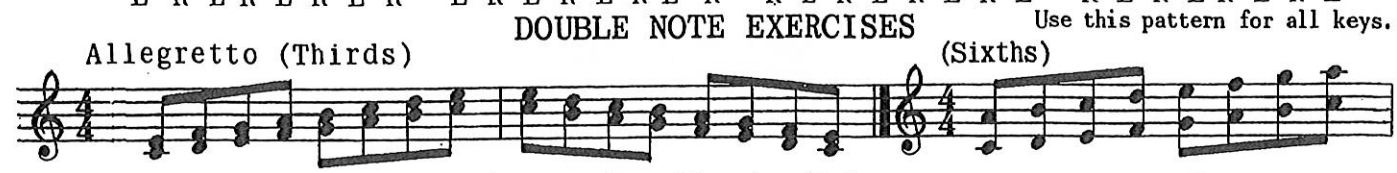
ARPEGGIOS





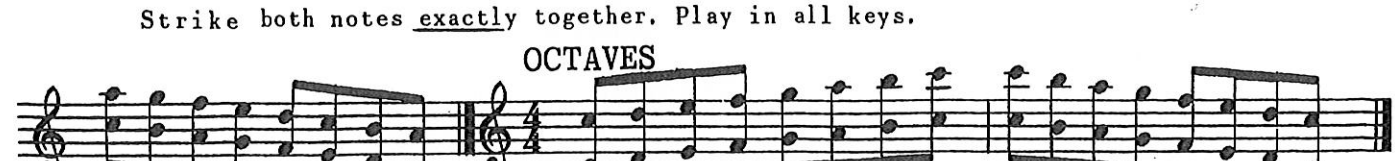
DOUBLE NOTE EXERCISES

Use this pattern for all keys.



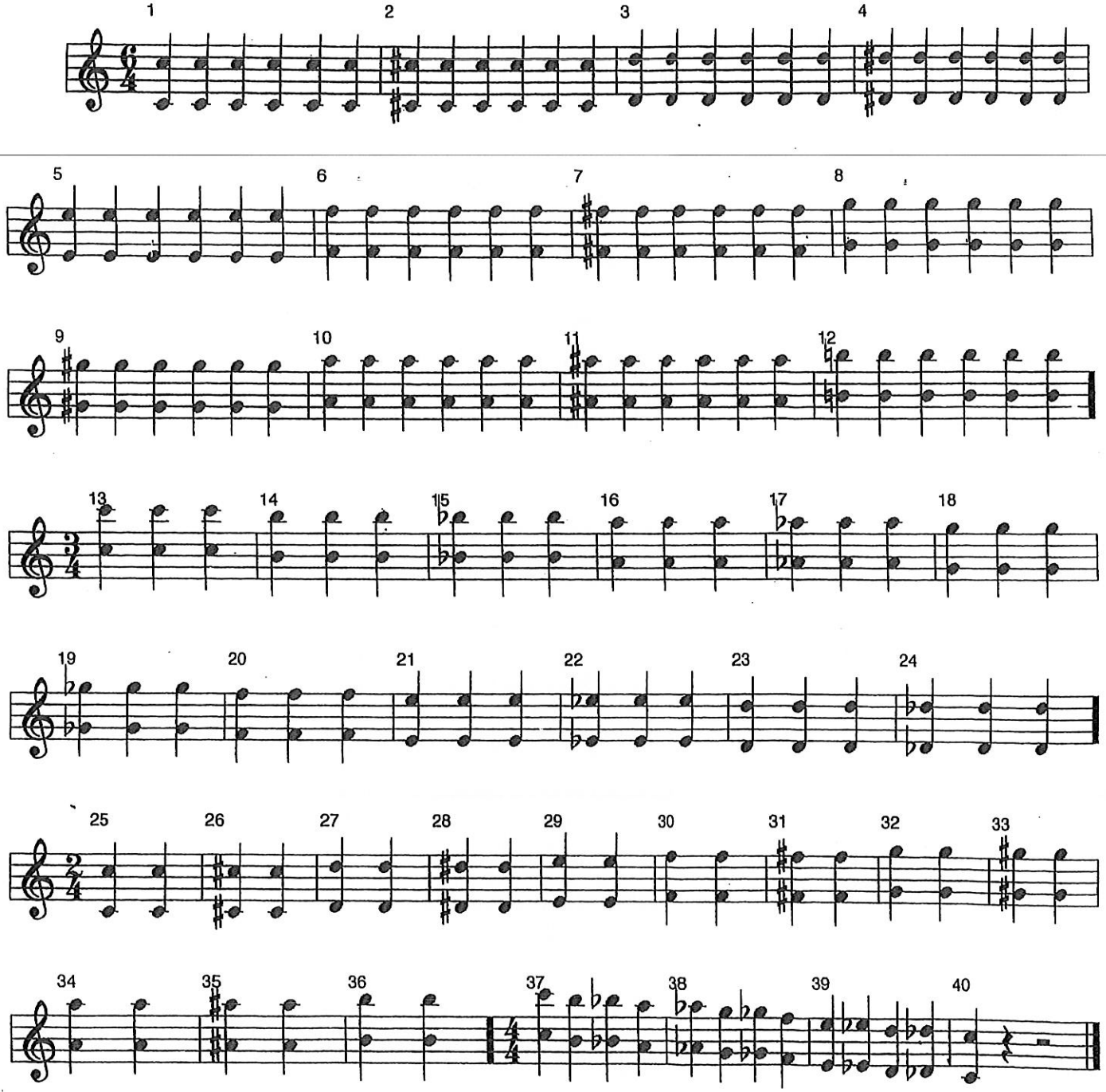
Strike both notes exactly together. Play in all keys.

OCTAVES



Use this pattern for other intervals.

6-3-2-1


1
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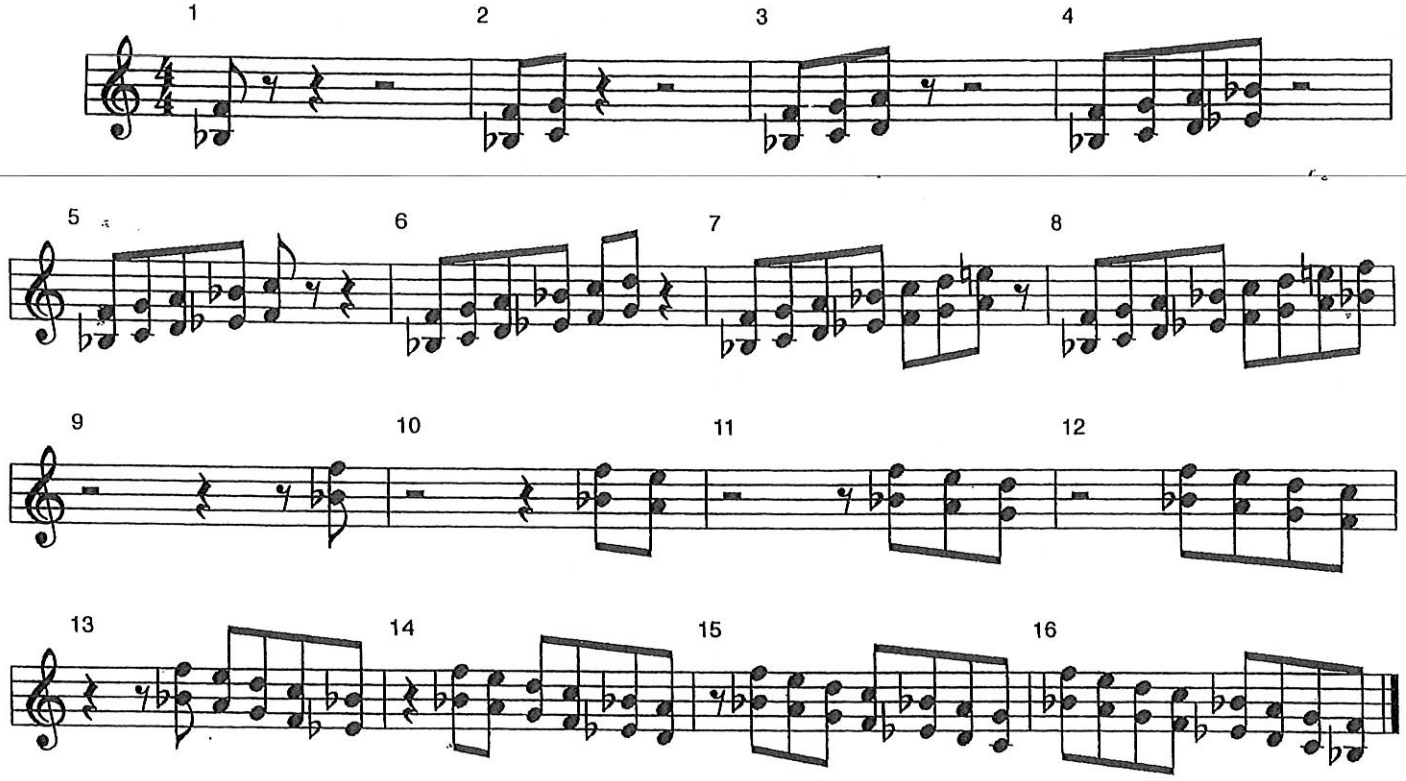
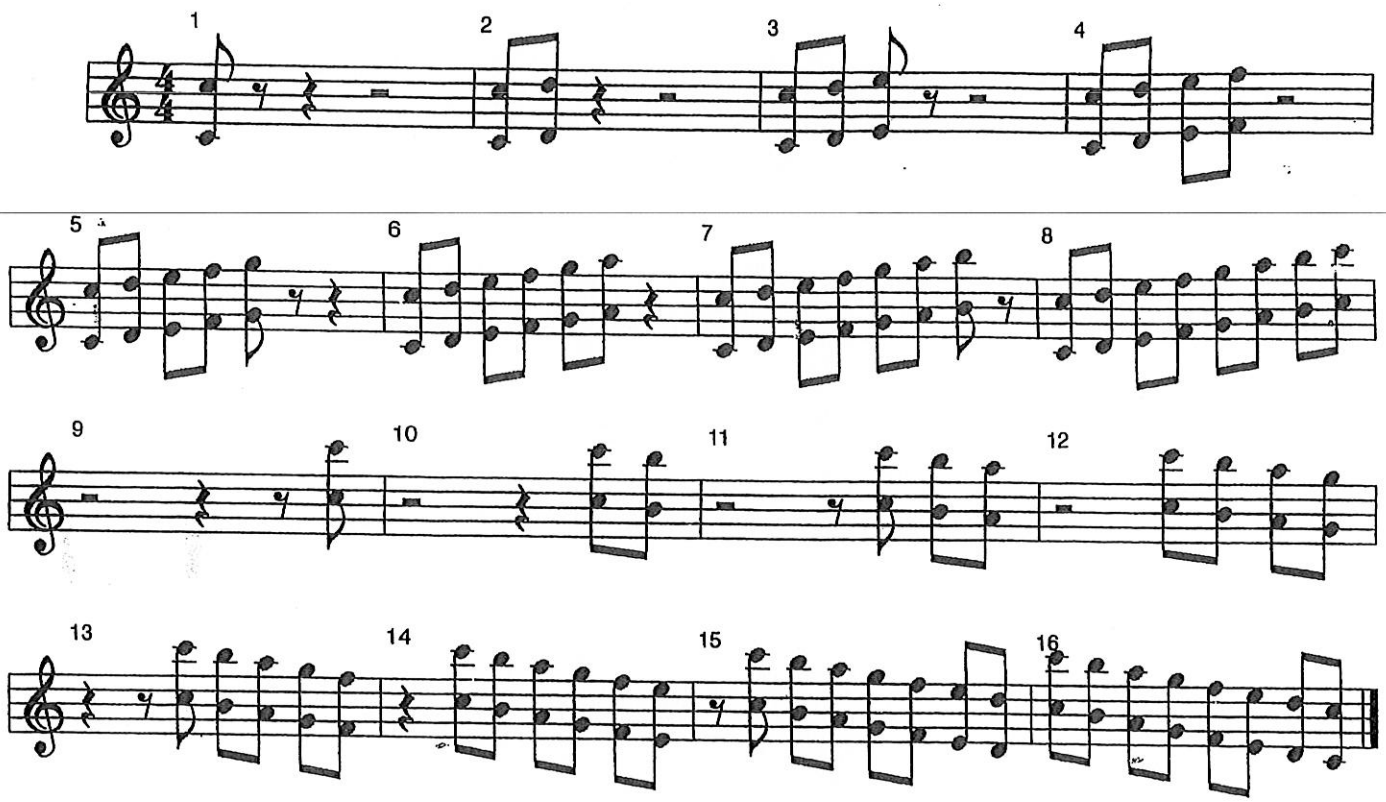
40

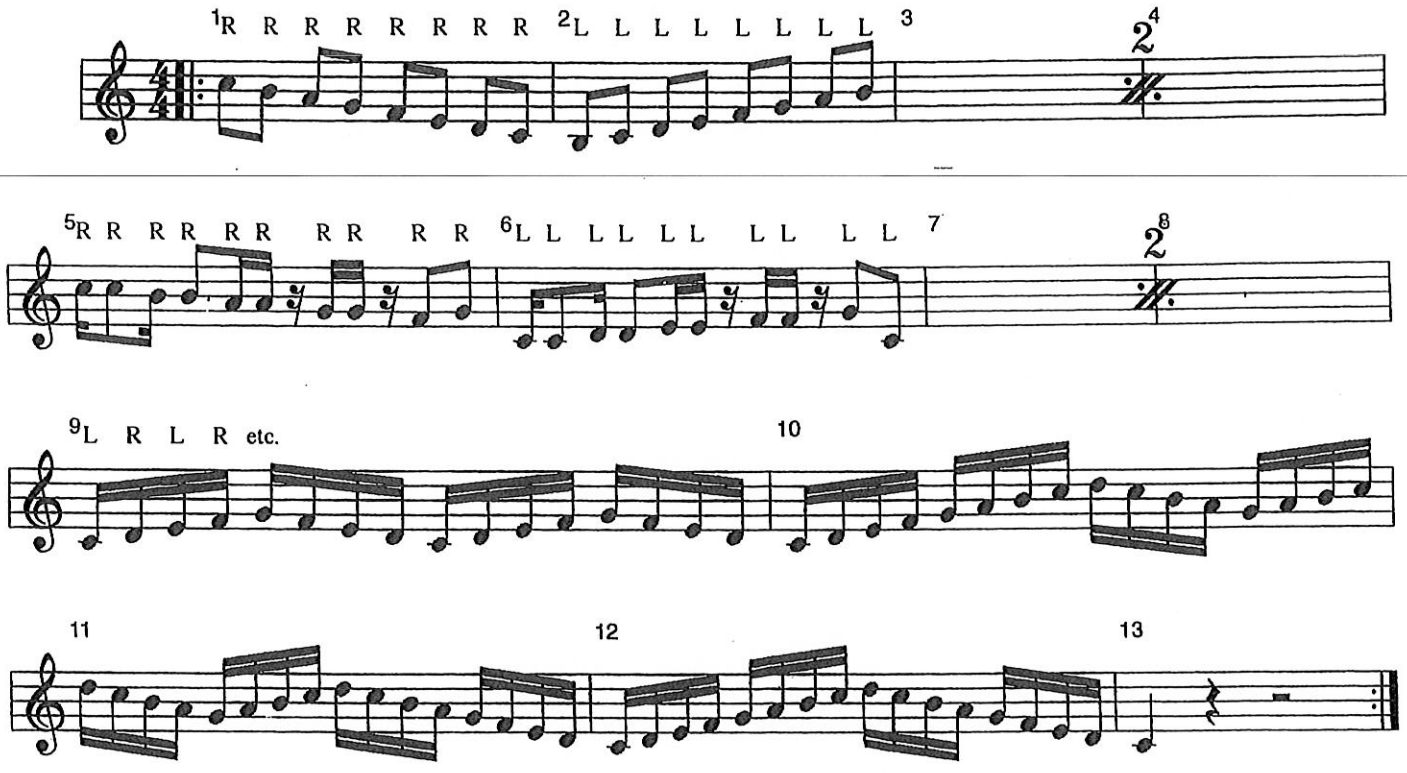
Ren & Stimpy/Stimpy & Ren



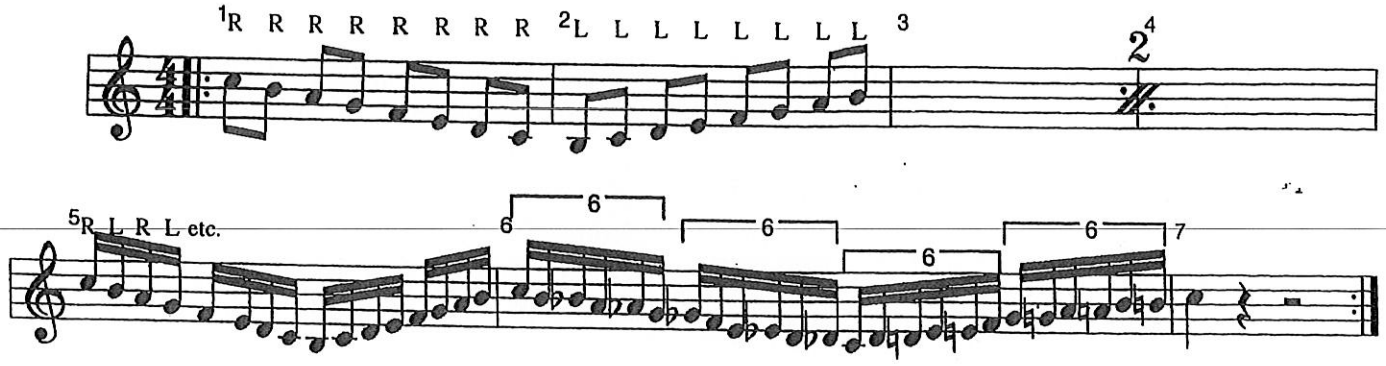
Ren & Stimpy/Stimpy & Ren



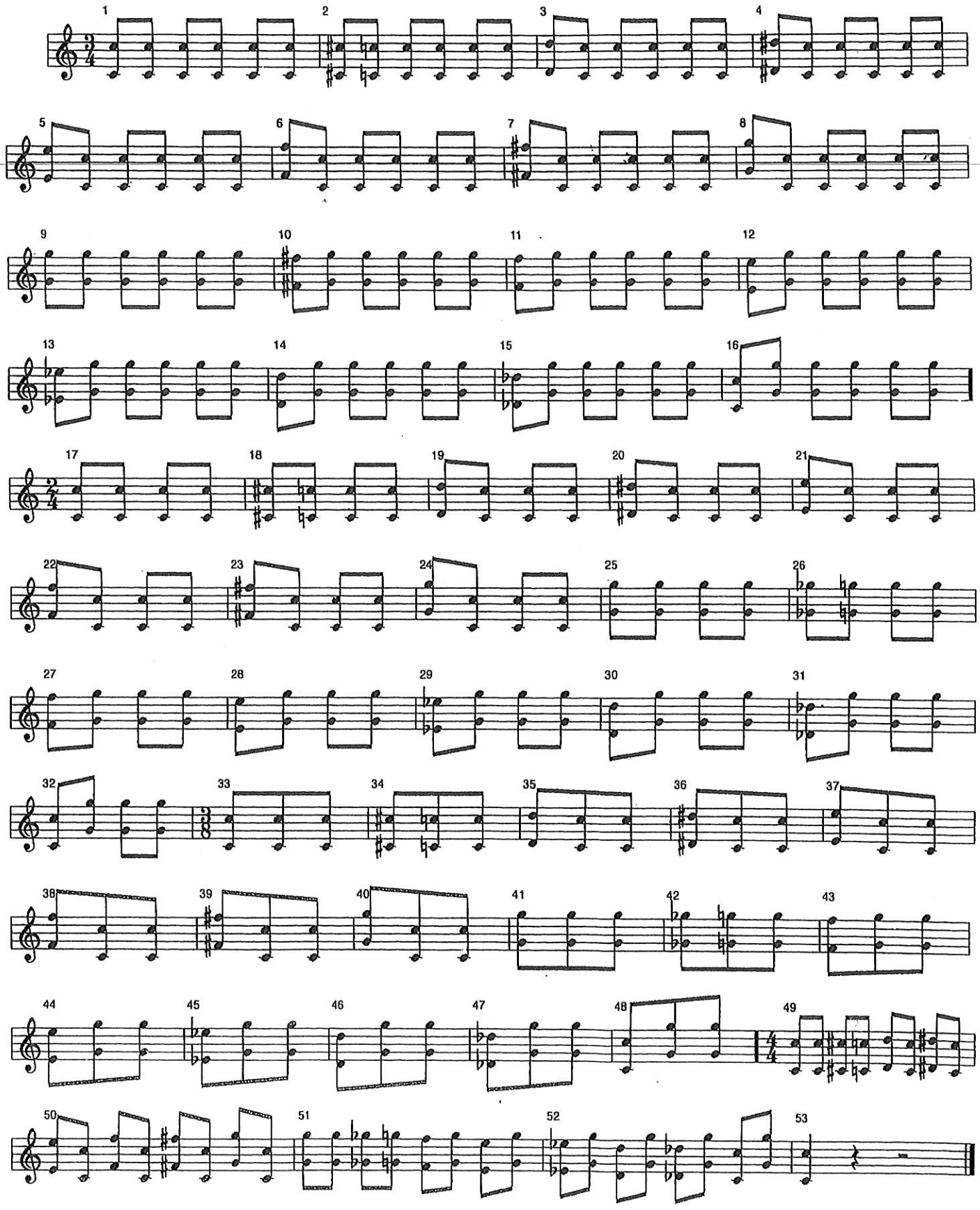
Single/Double/Triple Combo



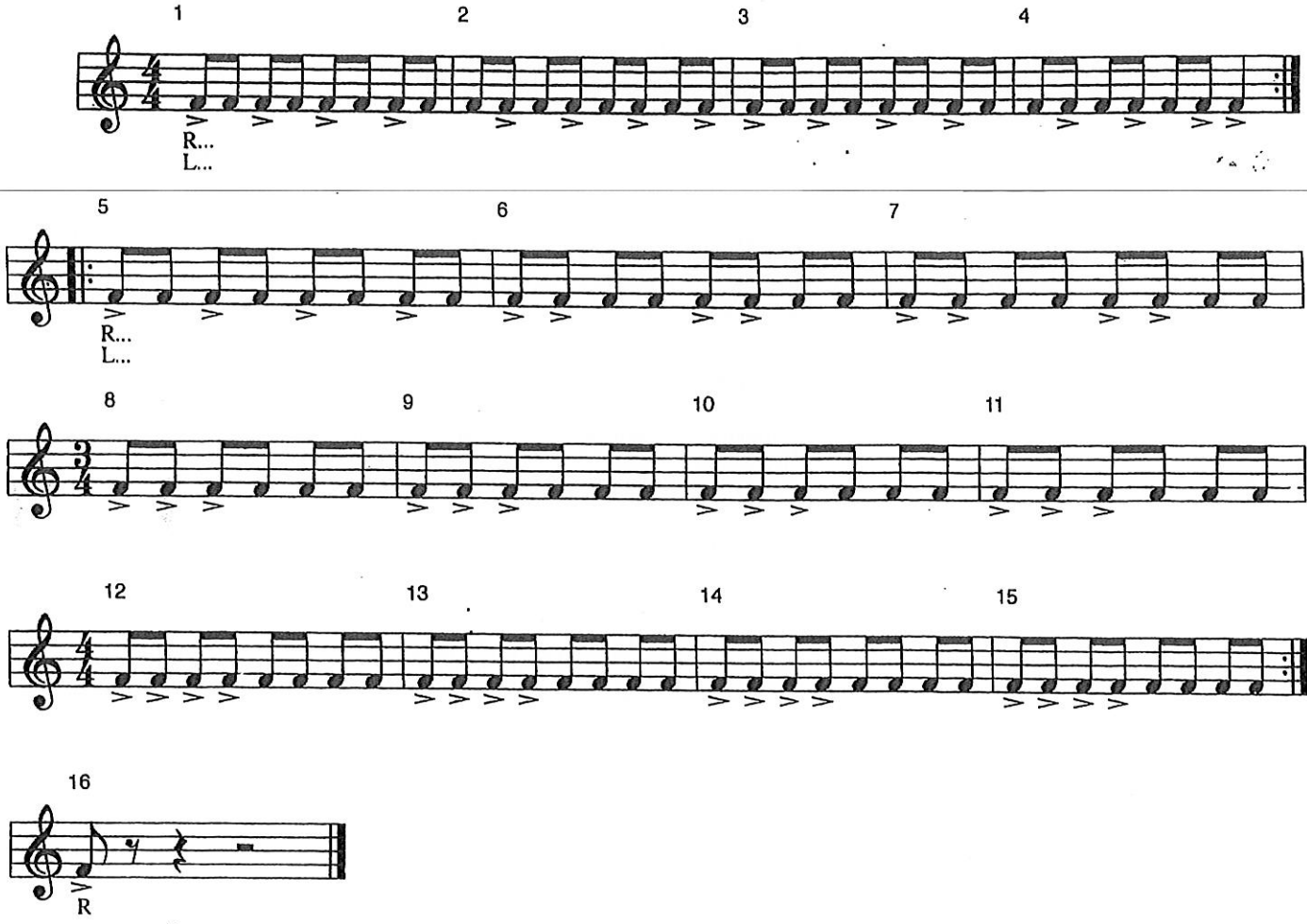
Extended Single Beats



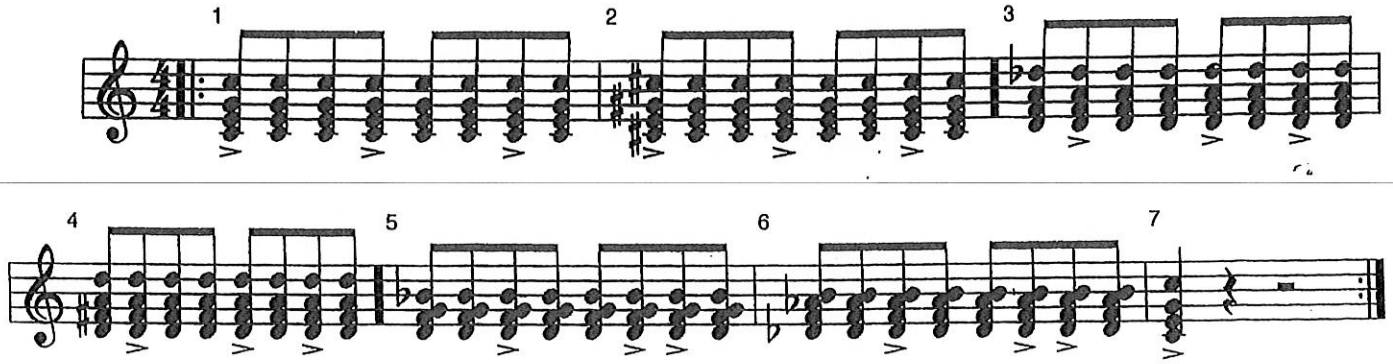
Skillet Beans



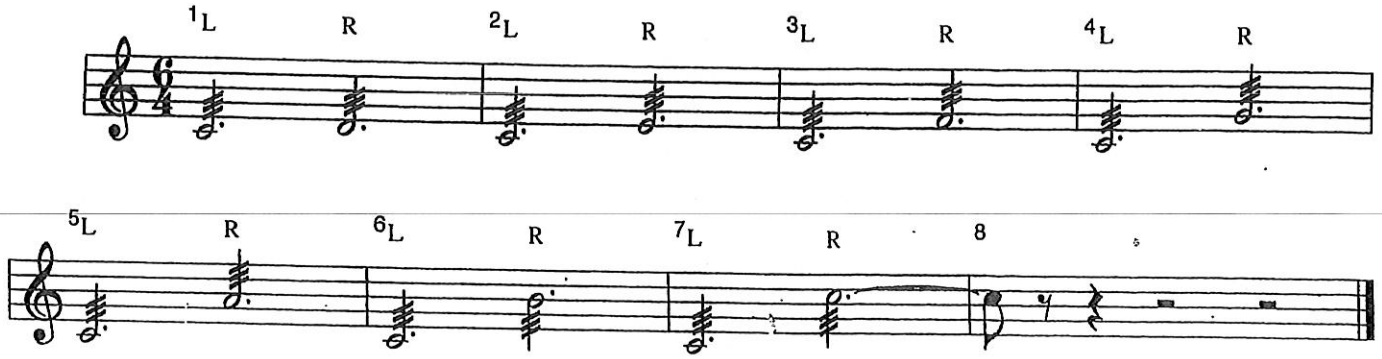
Bucs - 1 to 4



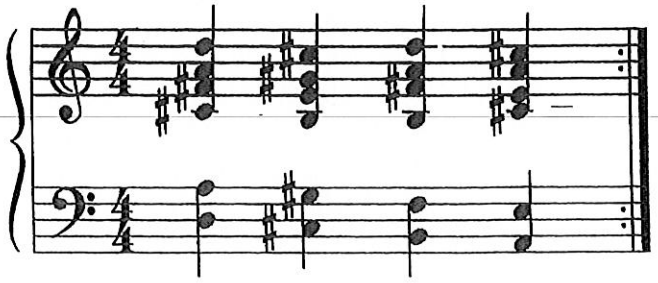
Accent Patterns



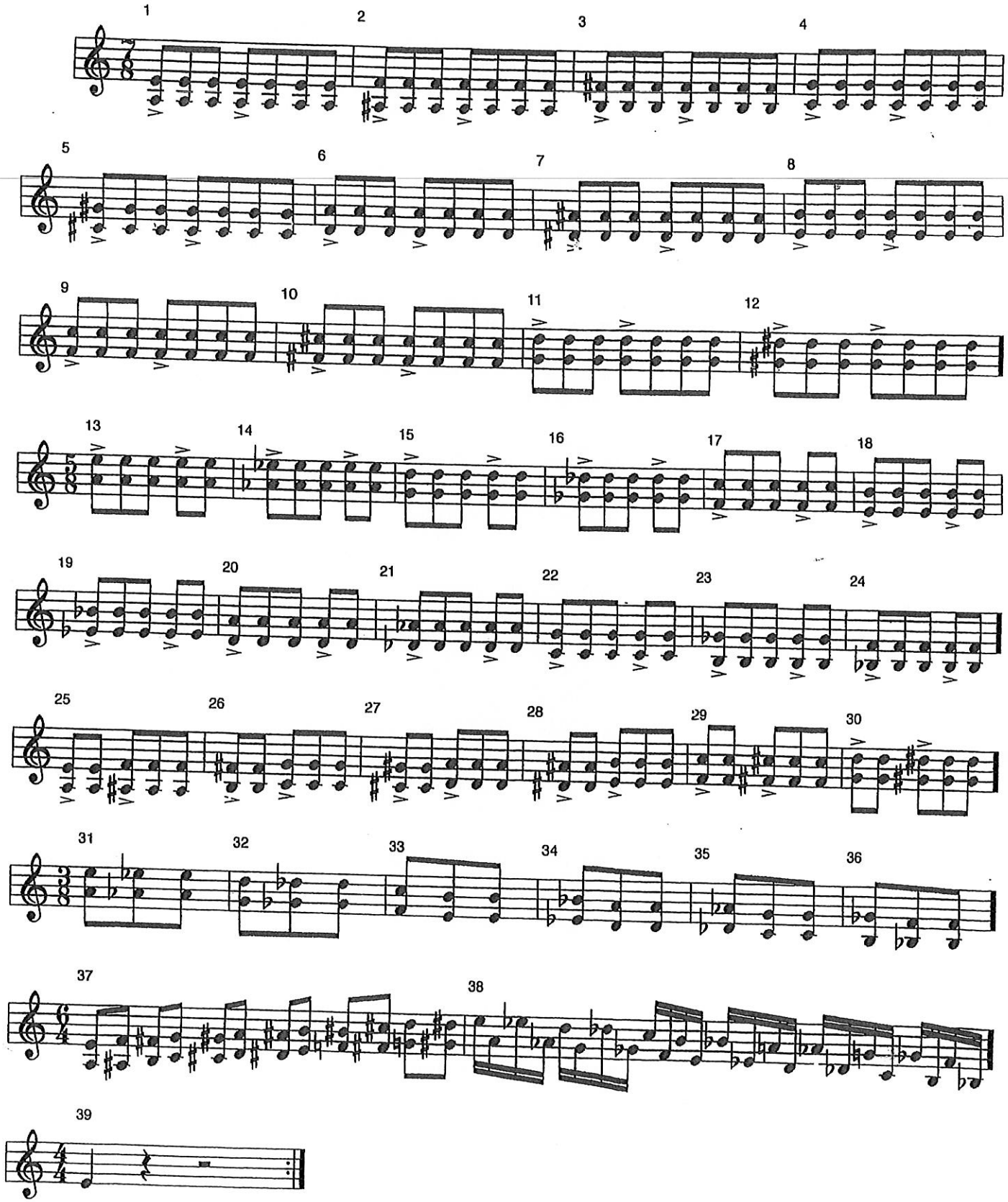
Rolls



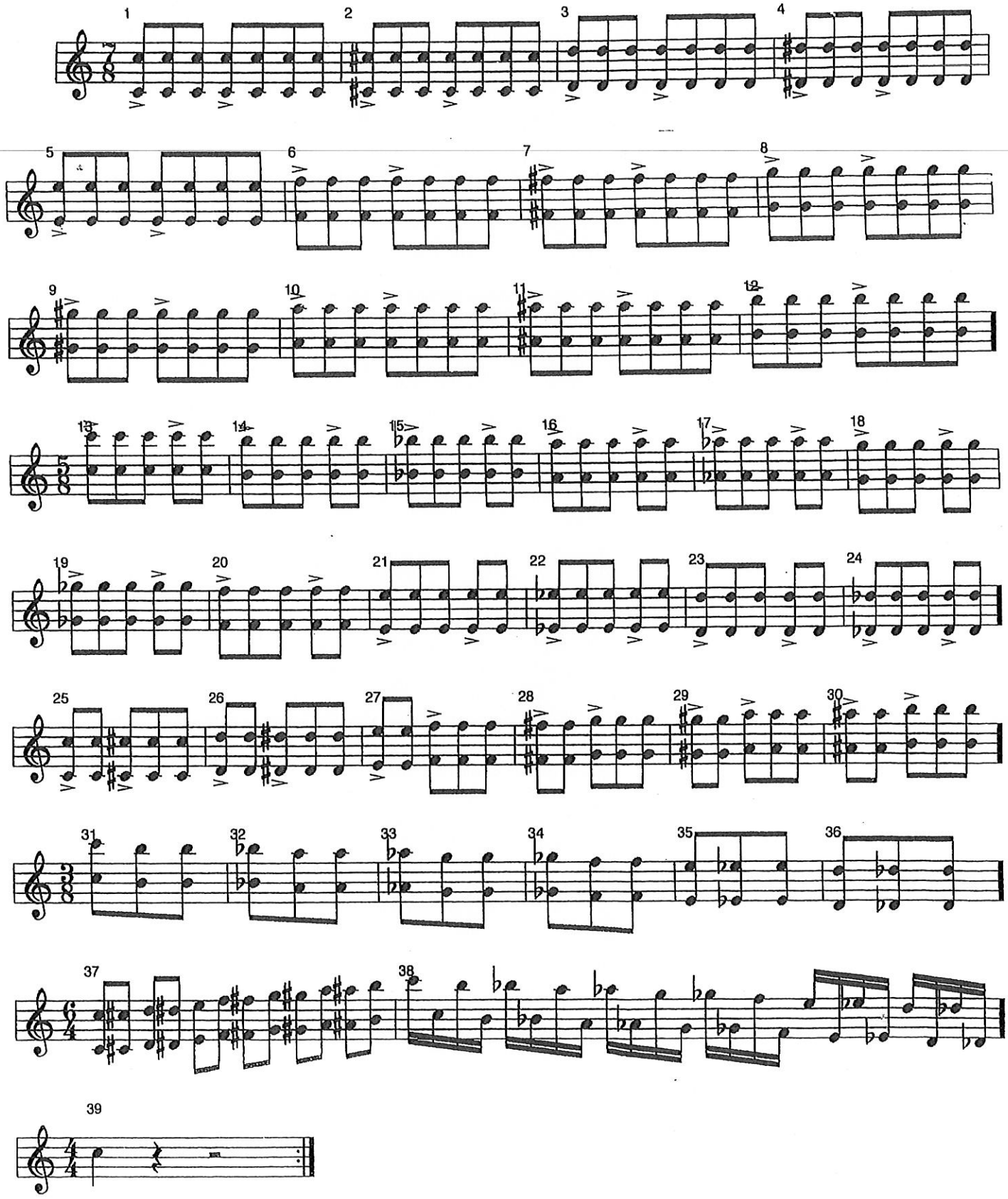
Visual Cues



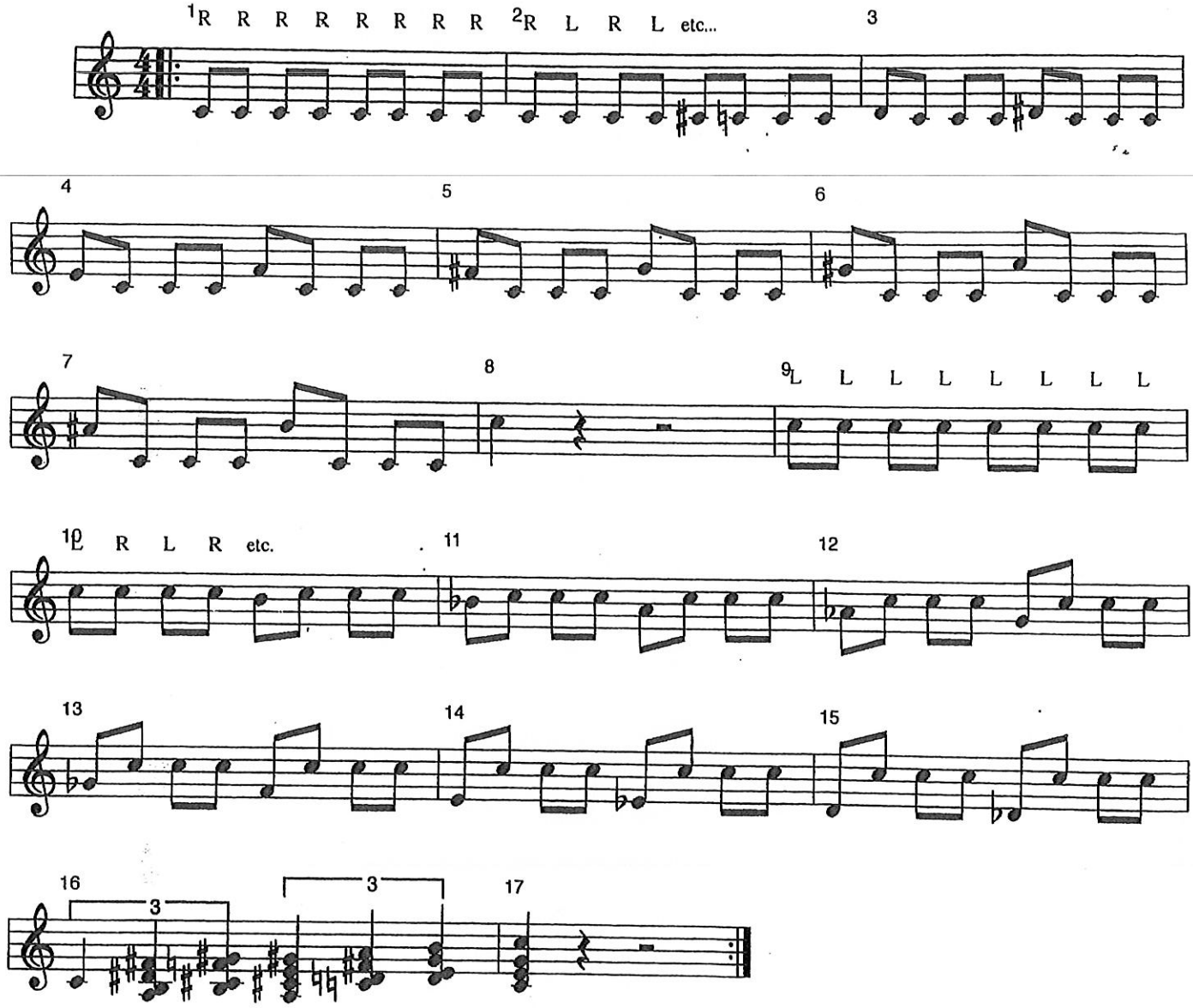
Fifth Chromatics



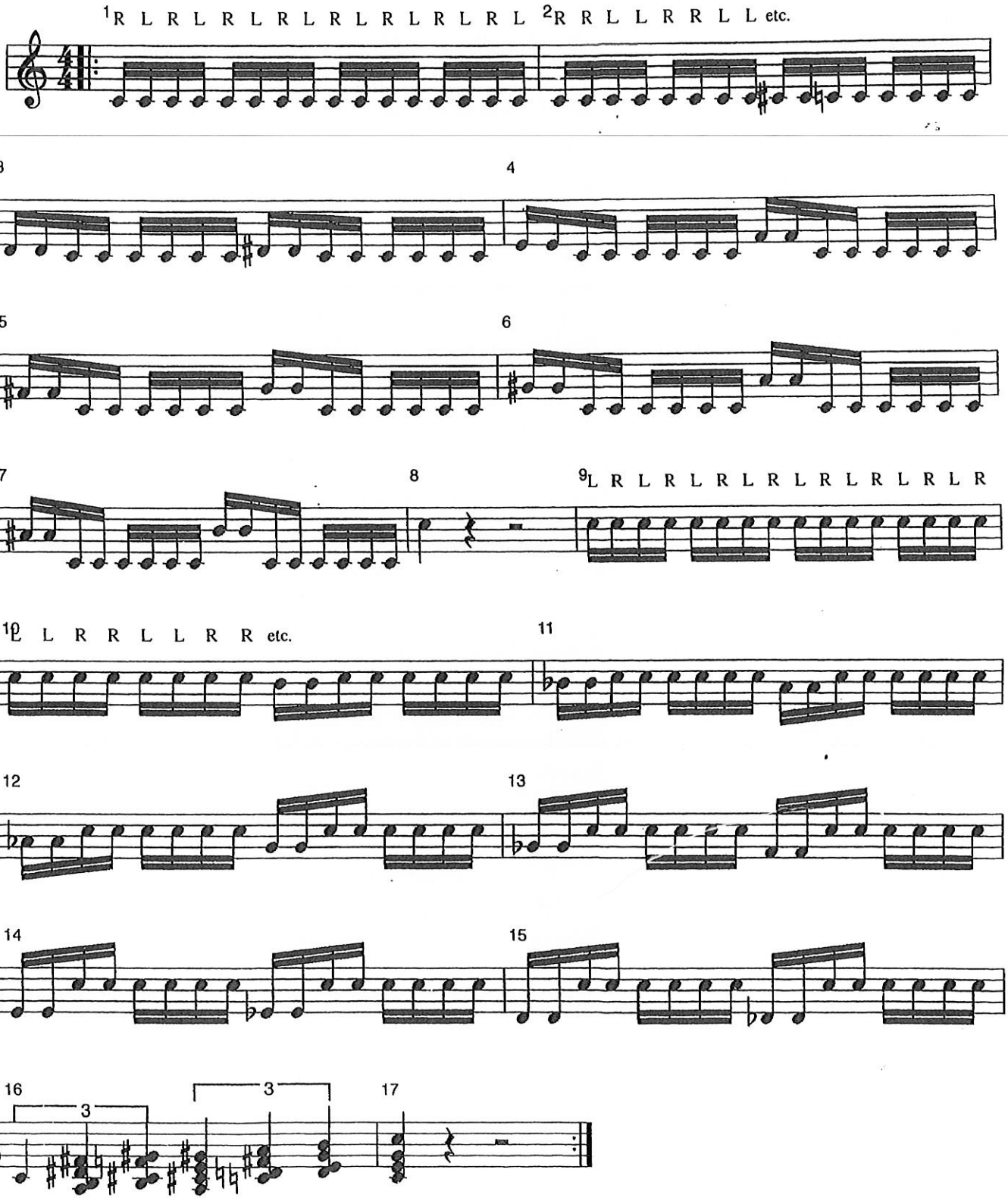
Octave Chromatics



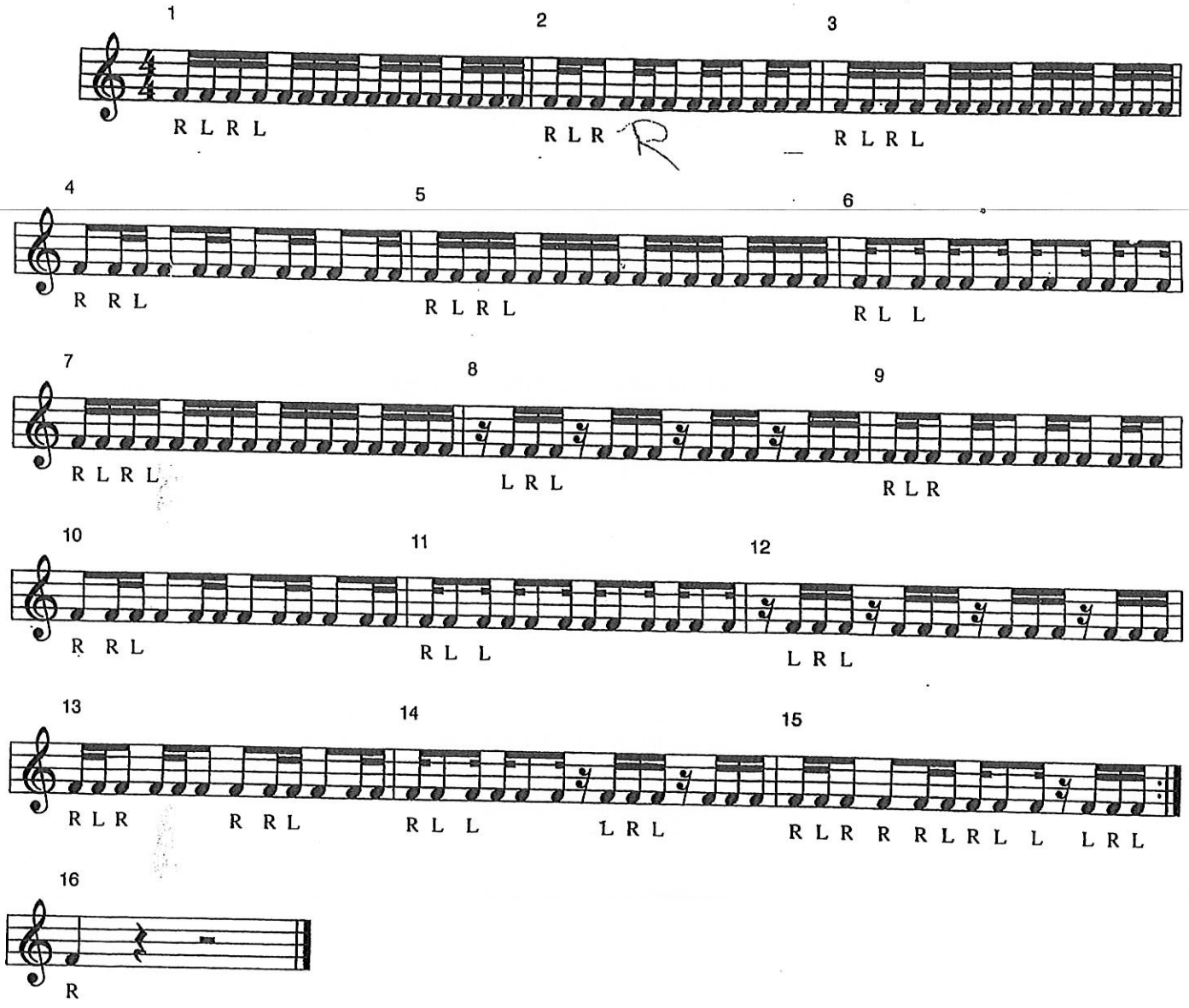
Crossmen Double Beat Prep



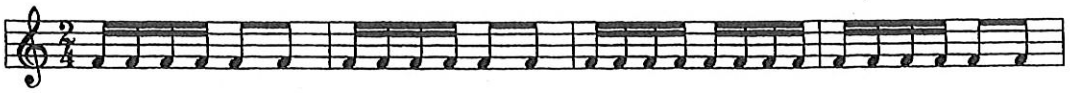
Crossmen Double Beat

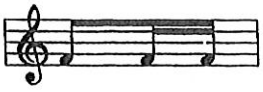


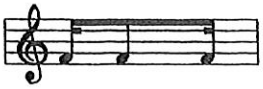
16th Note Timing

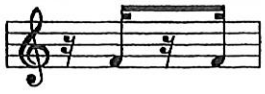


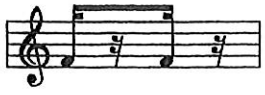
16th Note Check Pattern

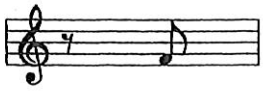


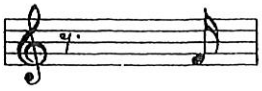


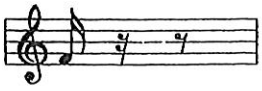




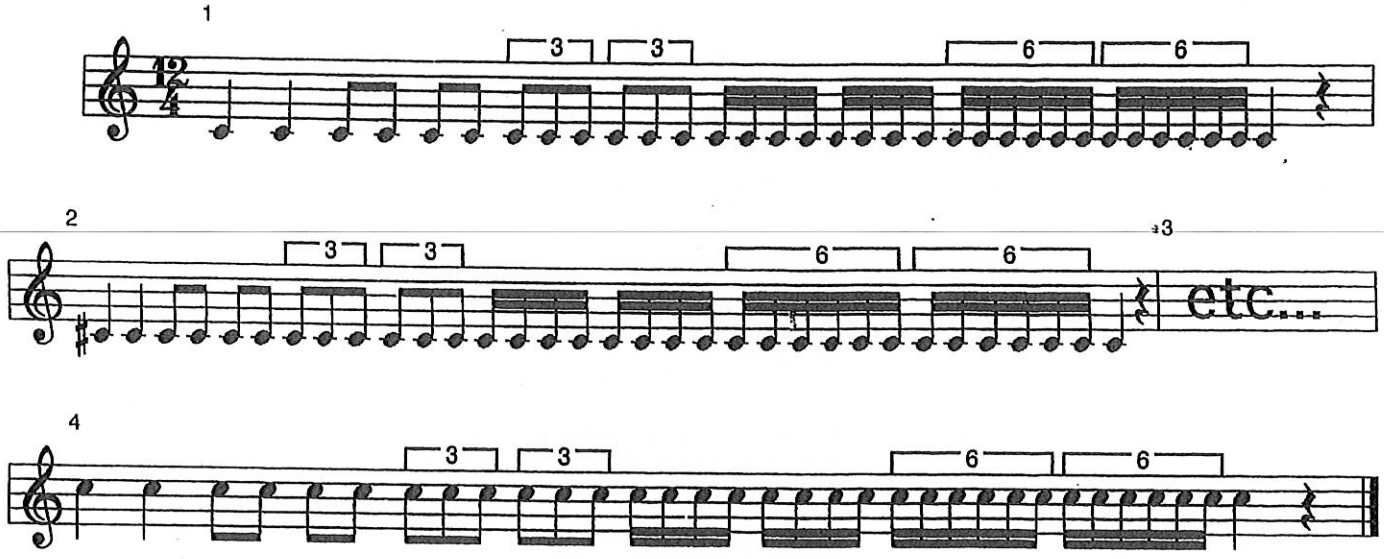
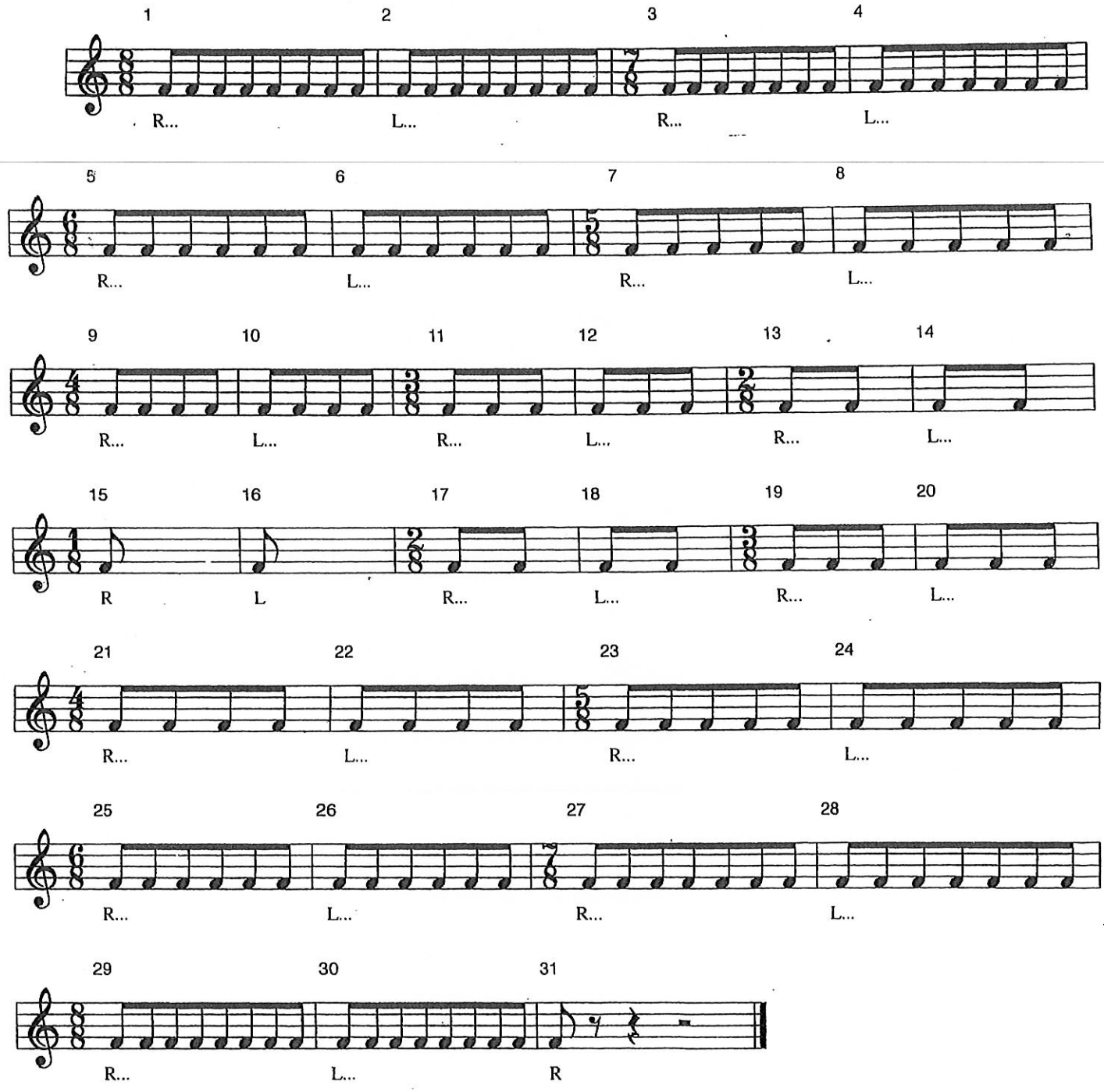








Mike's Rhythm Thang



Countdown/Countup