When playing isolated full strokes, the only time the stick is not in motion is when it is resting in the "up" position. When full strokes are played consecutively, the stick will then never be at rest, as it was in the up position; the stick WILL however pass through the "up" position preceding every throw down. The following guidelines will help to perfect the Full Stroke:

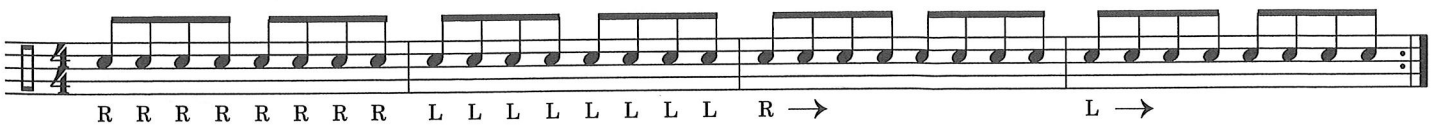
The 5 Full Stroke Rules

1. The stroke starts and stops at the same height.
2. Never pick up the stick, only throw it down.
3. The stick should rebound up at the same speed it was thrown down.
4. Don't let the back of the stick hit the palm of the hand (except lightly at low stick heights).
5. Avoid using the arm.

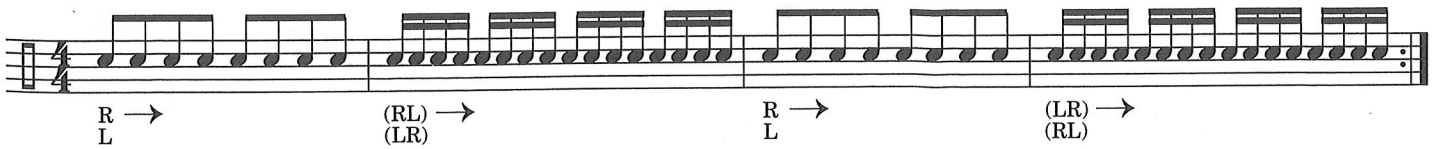
NOTE: It is beneficial to practice all single stick height rudiments and exercises using just the first finger (or just the thumb for traditional grip) with the sticks stopping and starting past vertical. These "first finger only" full strokes will not only build up the all important "trigger finger", but they'll also help to affirm that the fulcrum is working properly.

The exercises, "Eight on a Hand," and "Purple Singles" are the preliminary full stroke exercises. When playing these consecutive full strokes the stick will always be in motion flowing smoothly up and down in your fulcrum. Play the exercises with the sticks turning up to vertical and then further develop the other stick heights/dynamic levels. This exercise can be played with all of the strokes starting and stopping in the "up" position, or with the down stroke technique applied to the last stroke played on each hand in order to stop the stick in the set position.

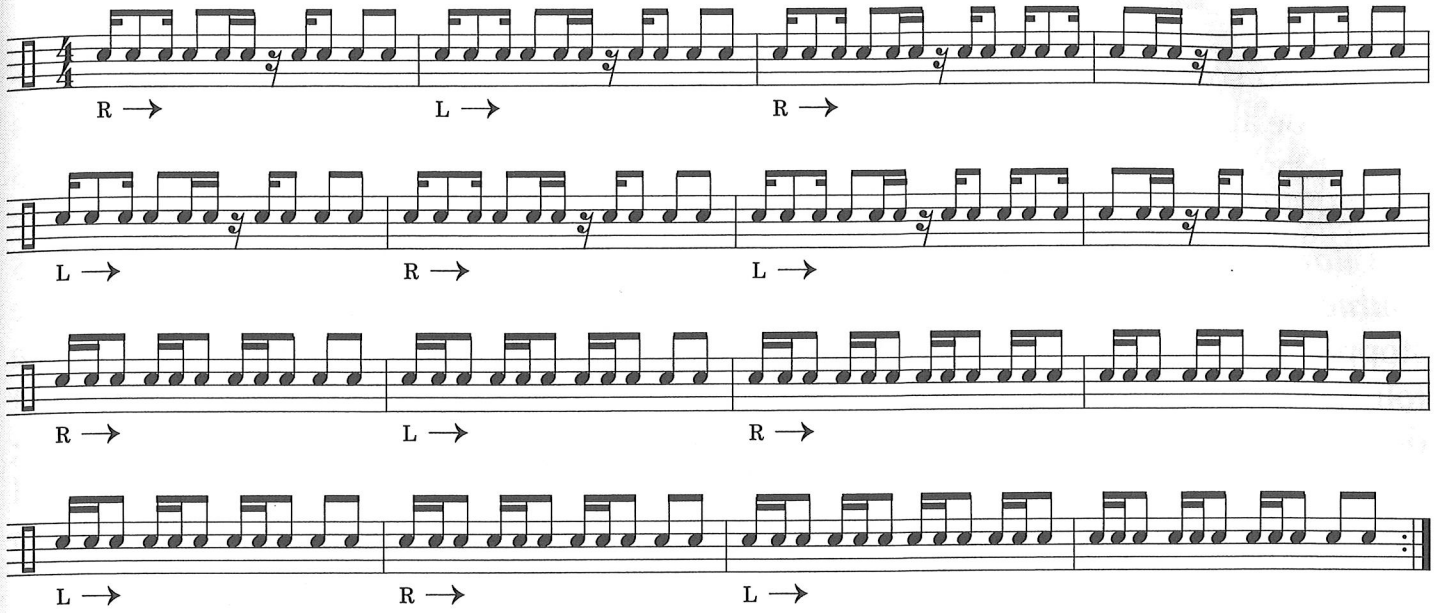
Eight on a Hand



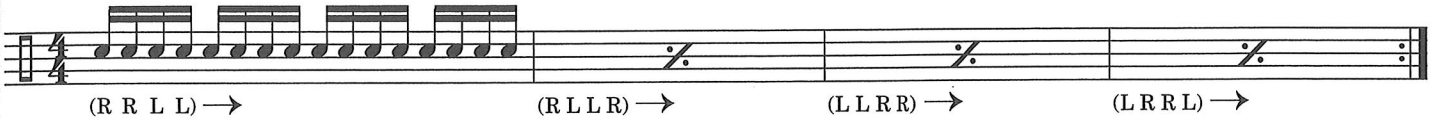
Purple Singles



Double / Triple Beat



Inverting Diddles



Chapter 6 - Quality of Sound / Dynamics

It is vital to play as relaxed as possible and with consistent velocity in order to achieve a good quality of sound. When told to bring their dynamic level up, some players do so by "pounding" on the drums. Playing overly hard through the drum head actually distorts the sound; the resulting "bark" does not blend or carry well. When told to bring their dynamic level down, some players do so by "feather-tapping" on the drums. Playing too lightly on the drum head doesn't allow the drum to speak properly; the resulting "scratch" does not blend or carry well. A smooth sound that allows for a proper blend comes from relaxation. Think about this: once a stick is set in motion, the only thing that can interfere with its velocity is tension. The less the human interference, the better the sound and consistency will be; it is best to let physics do as much of the work as possible. Keep in mind that it is important to play through the drum head in order to allow the stick to contact the head with its full velocity.

Once it is understood to play relaxed and through the drum head with consistent velocity, dynamics essentially come from stick heights. I denote stick heights along with the stick's angles to define the various dynamic levels as shown in the following pictures:

pp

Played From
Set Position

p

Zero degrees
or 3 inches

mf

40 degrees
or 9 inches

f

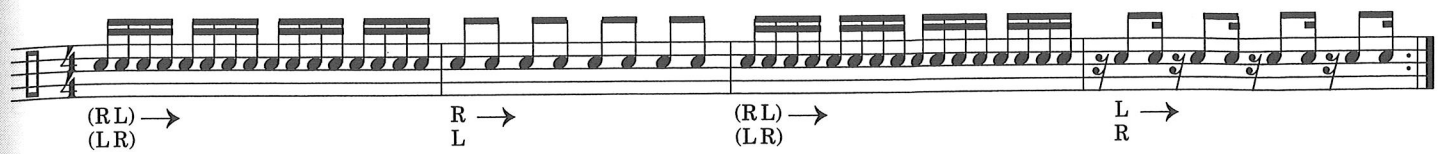
80 degrees
or 14 inches

ff

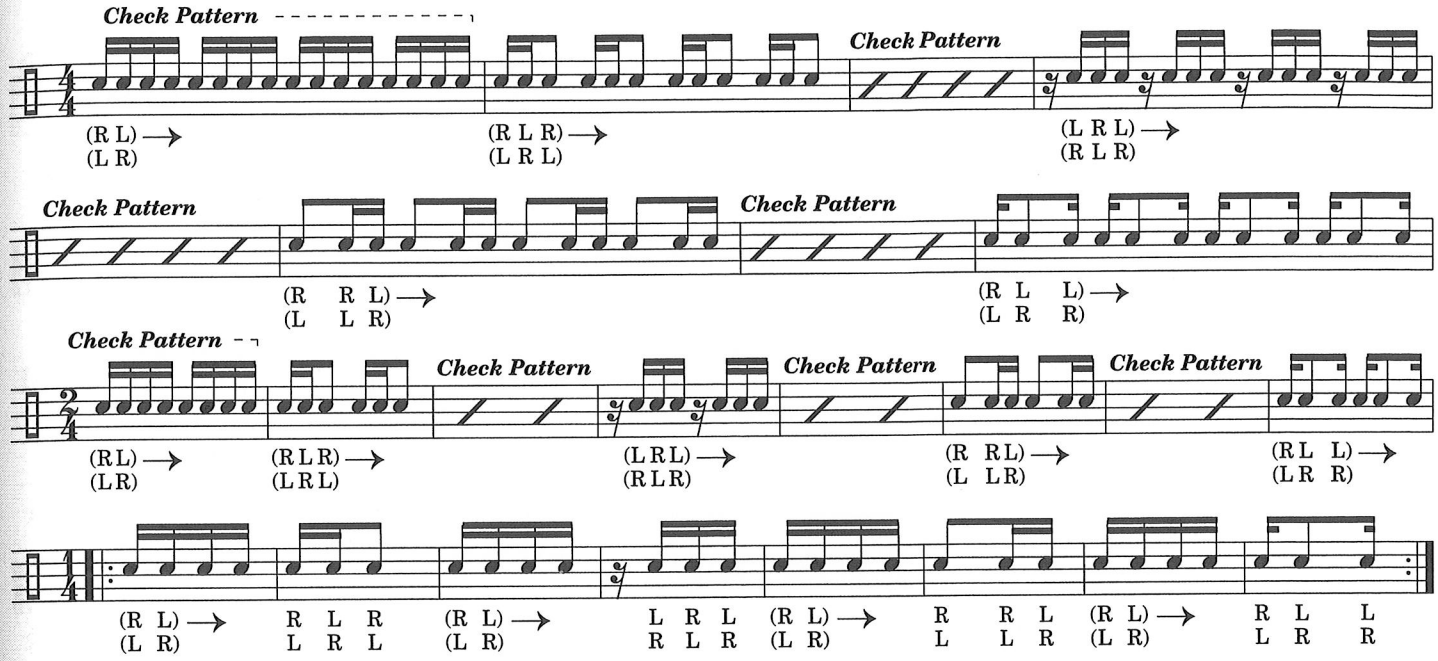
Same as forte
- add arm

The stick angles and heights shown above should serve as general guidelines. Obviously there will be some exceptions and gray areas, such as during crescendos. It is imperative to play with a relaxed technique and accurate stick heights. With the correct technique, a good quality of sound can be achieved at any dynamic level.

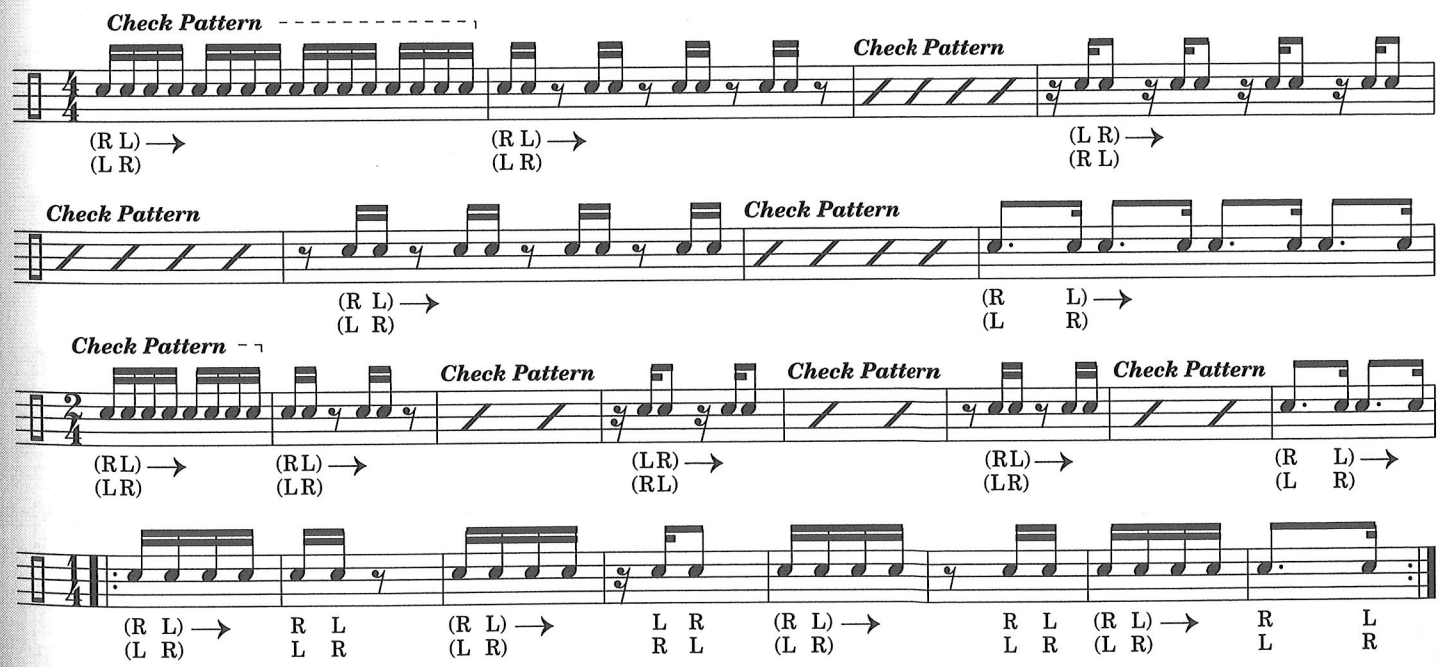
8. Isolated 8th & 16th



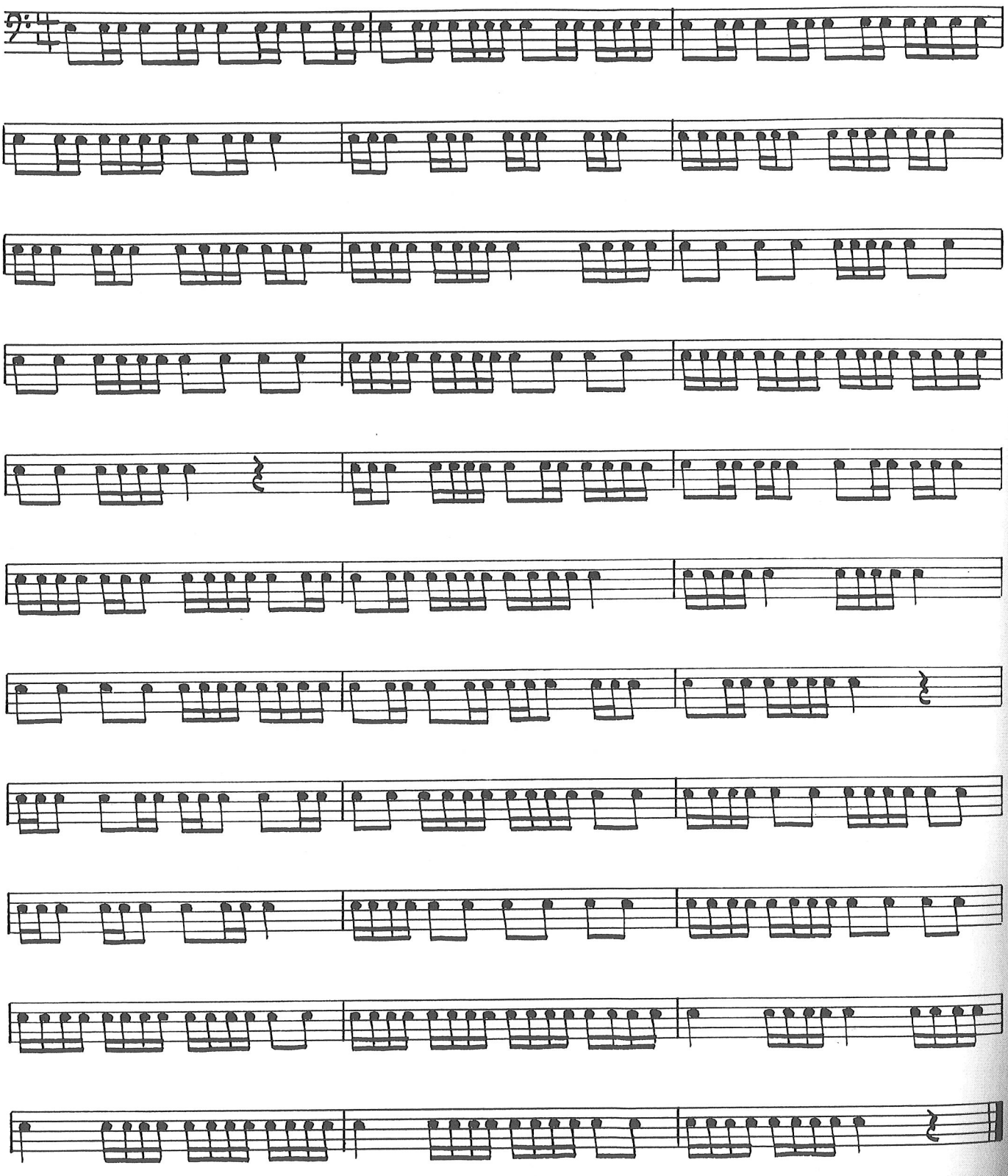
9. 16th Timing - 3 Notes



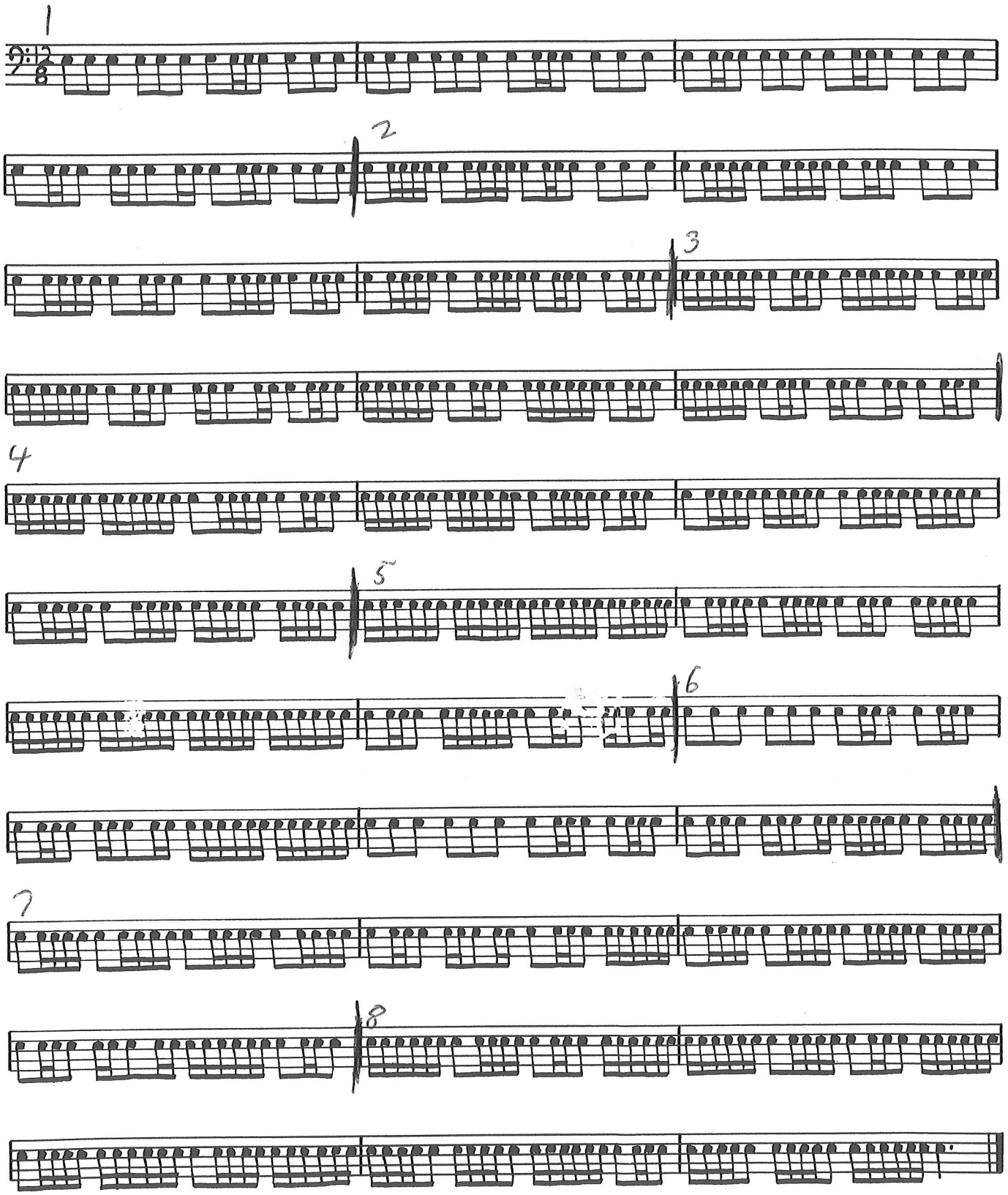
10. 16th Timing - 2 Notes



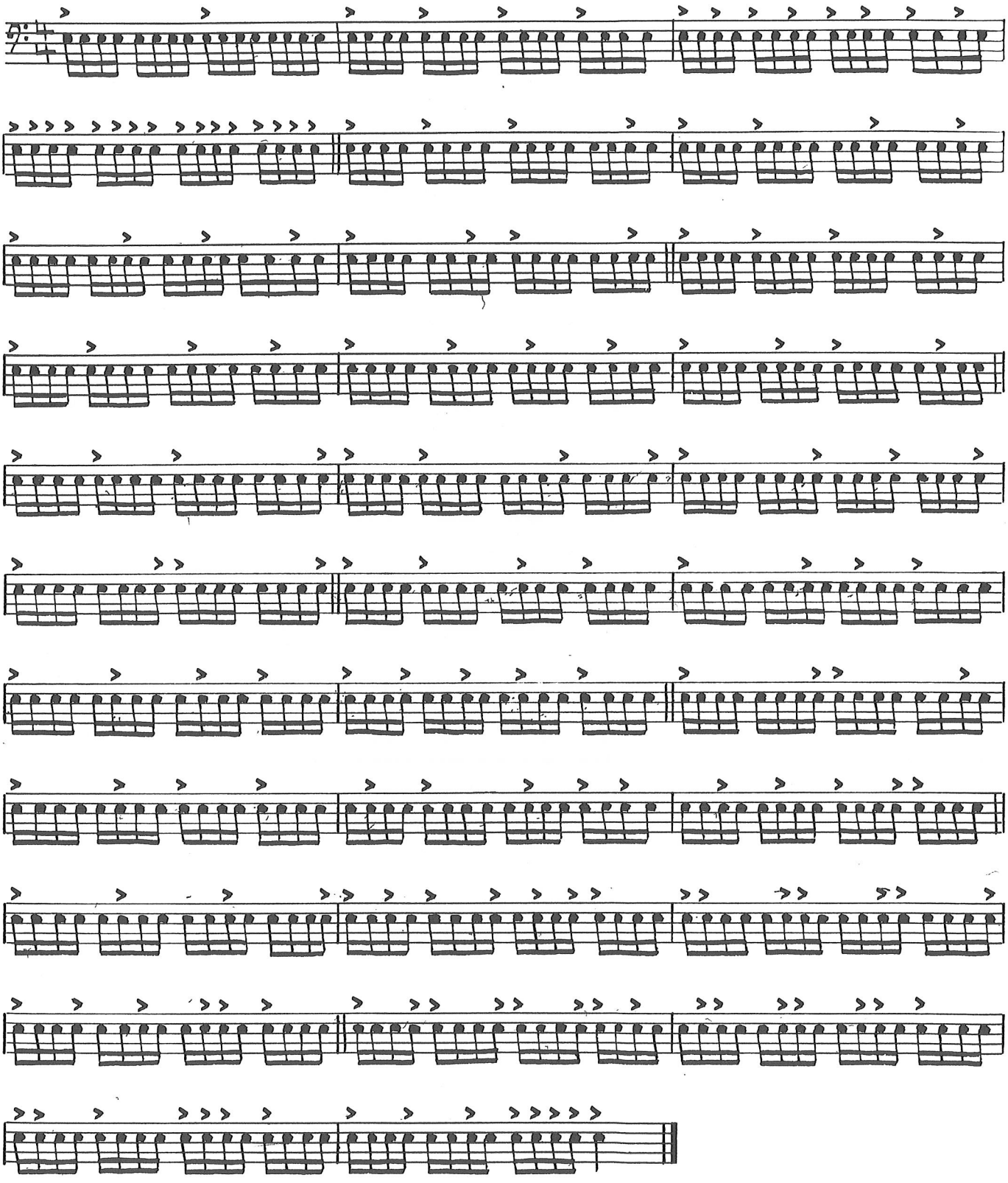
I



III

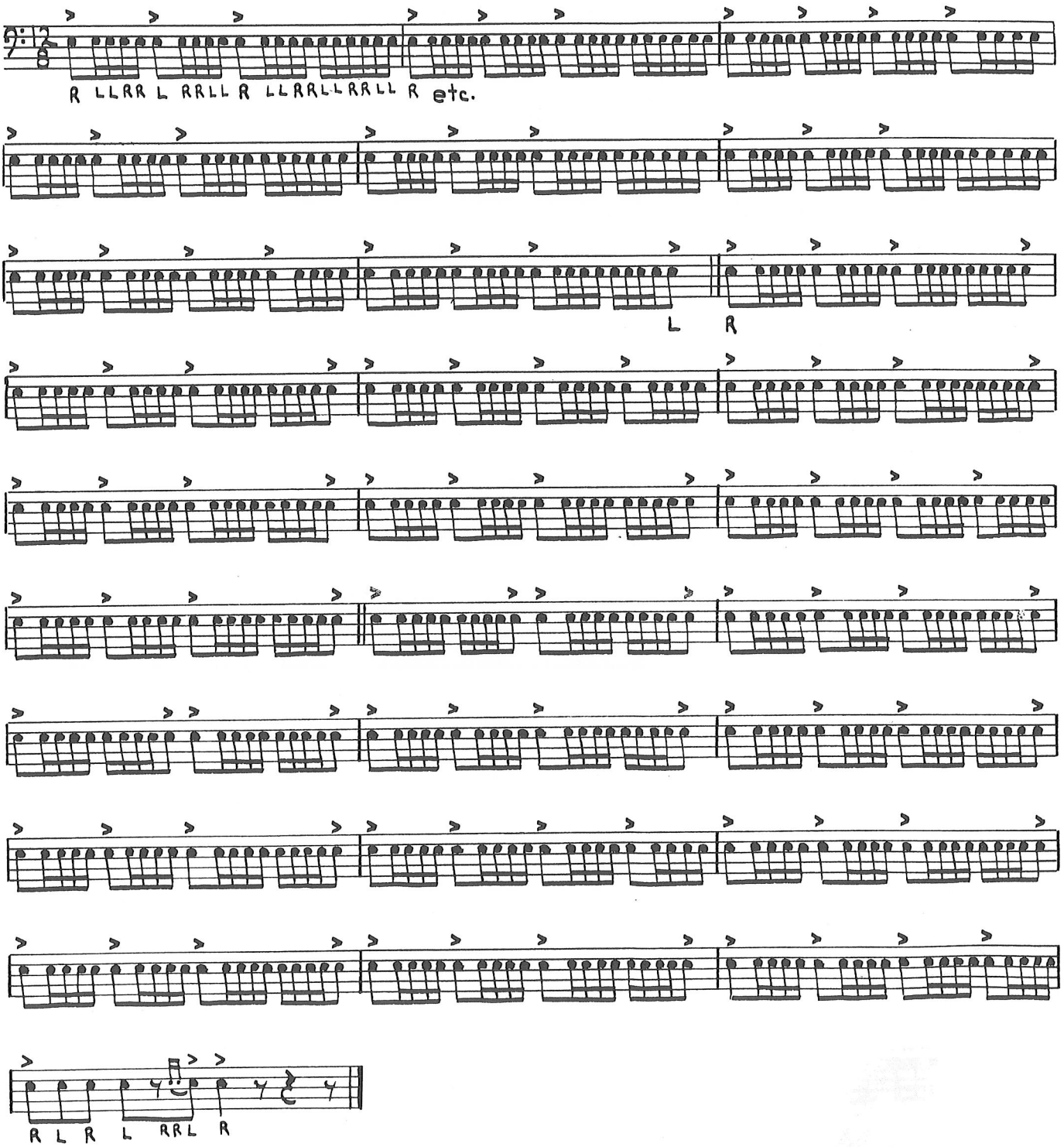


IV

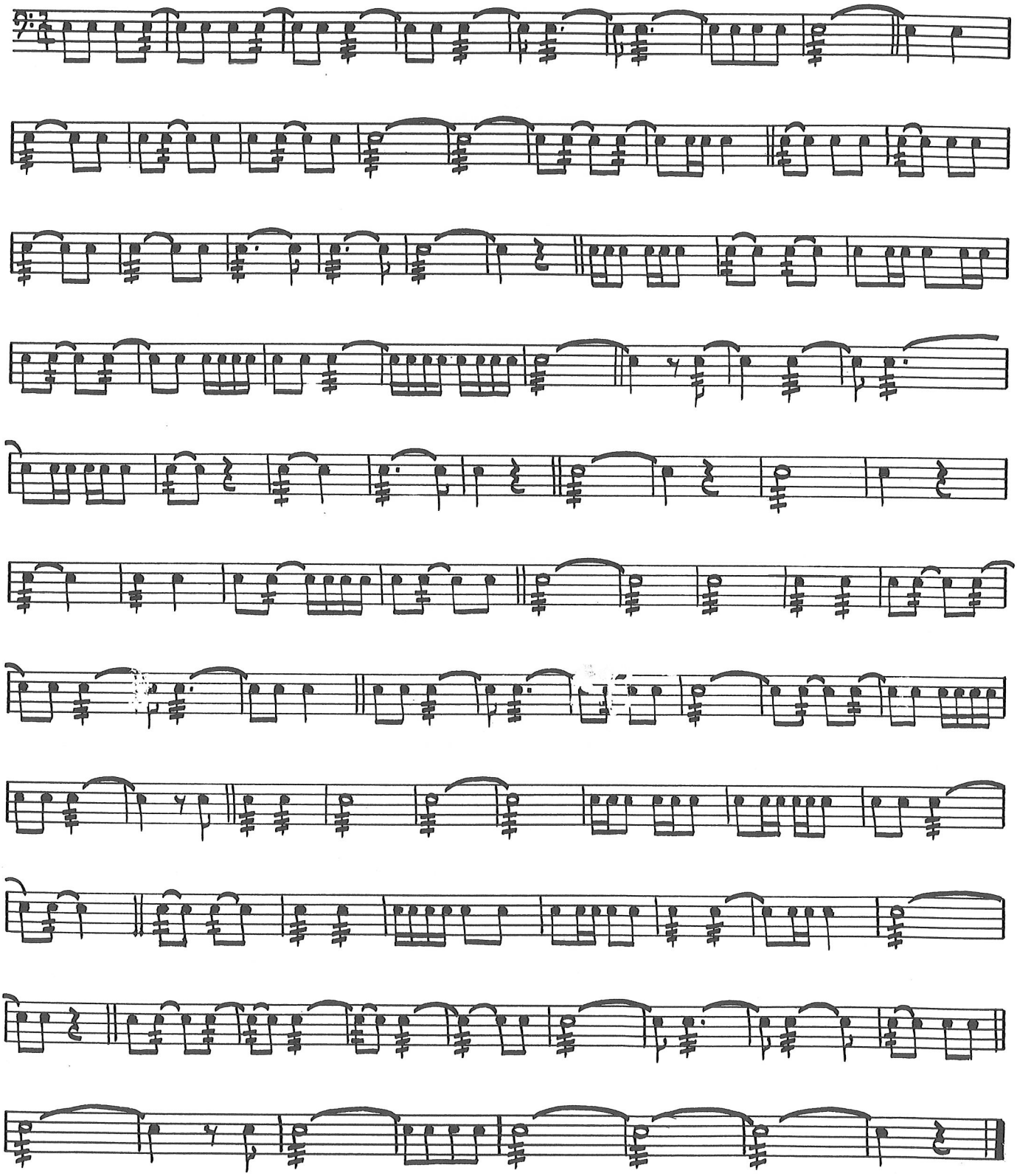


V

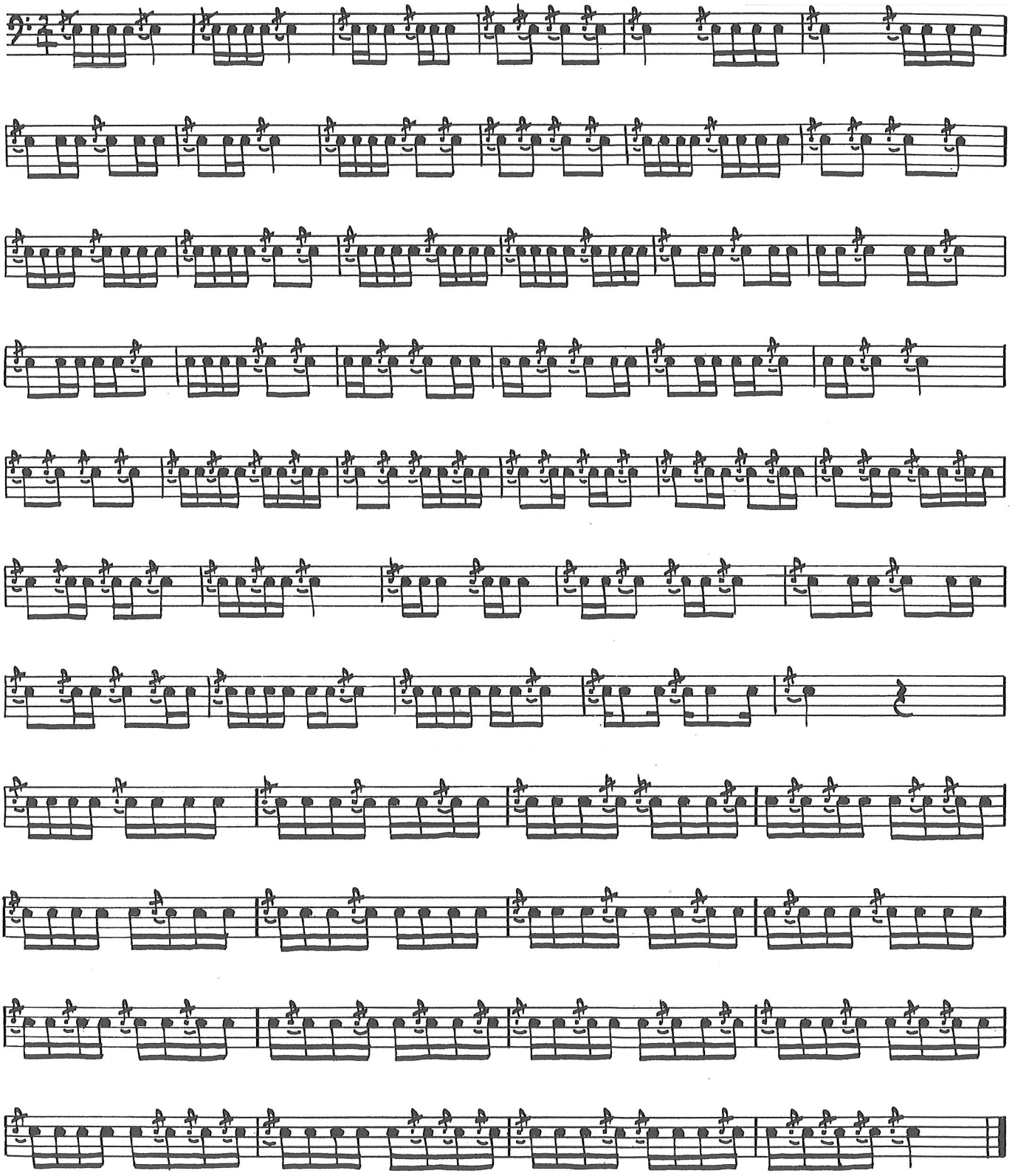
THE THREE CAMPS (A Traditional Drum Solo) 3 Hand Motions Per Pulse

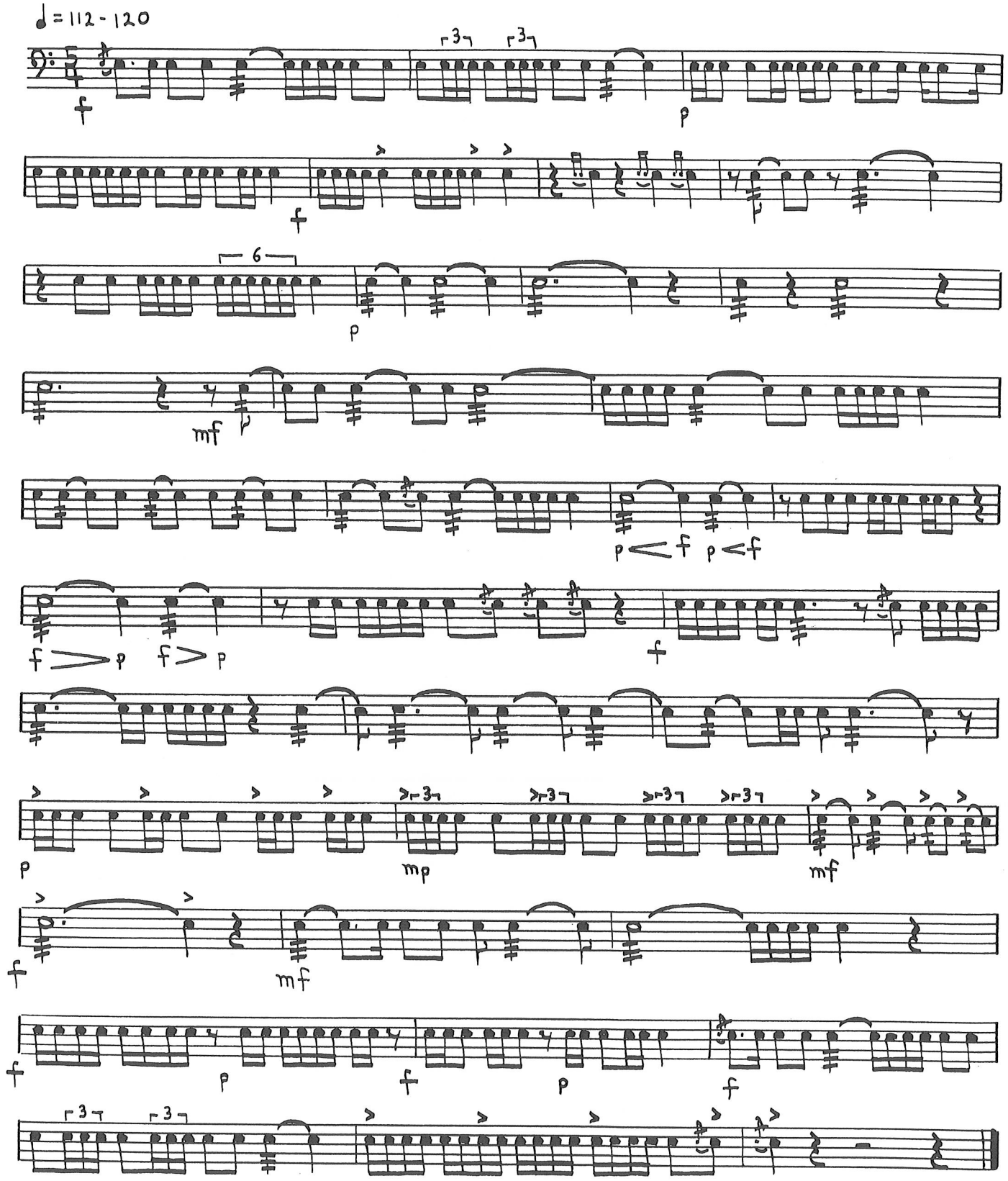


IX



XI



FOR PRACTICE, IN THE ABOVE STUDY PLAY RUFFS IN PLACE OF THE FLAMS

17