SPECTRE PERCUSSION

Front Ensemble

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About the Spectre Front Ensemble

Welcome to the Spectre Percussion Front Ensemble! We are so excited to have you audition to be a part of the 2024 season, which we hope will be a positive, rewarding, and life changing experience for you. In this packet you will learn about our philosophy and techniques – please read each section carefully and thoroughly. By working diligently through the packet using the mindset and guidelines described, you will set yourself up for success. Whether you ultimately end up on the instrument that you want this or any season, these concepts will be a valuable tool in your marching percussion career. If you have any questions about the Spectre Front Ensemble, please don't hesitate to email Angie at aestay@spectreperformingarts.org. Happy practicing!

Audition Process

Auditions are important for us to assess your skill level and provide growth through constructive feedback. Our audition process will consist of playing different exercises from our packet in the Spectre style. You may have played similar versions of this music before, so review carefully!

Please make sure you have a printed copy of this packet in a binder/folder OR a digital copy on an iPad/tablet (*no phones*).

Although we will be playing all of these exercises throughout the season, please start by focusing your practice time in this order:

- Sixteenth Timing
- 4-2-1 Grid
- Trusting Spaces
- 6-3-2-1
- Green
- Teal
- Winter Solstice
- Modulating Scales
- Crepusculo Sul Mare

Instrumentation

The Spectre Front Ensemble is made up of many different instruments. Despite being an important part of the group's music and effect, front ensemble members do not march. This makes the front ensemble a great choice for musicians who do not play a marching percussion instrument, musicians who have physical limitations with marching or movement, and musicians who want to expand their knowledge to include percussion skills. The culture of the section is one of excellence balanced with a unique sense of camaraderie and pride.

Below you will find information about the instruments we have at Spectre, although this changes from season to season depending on how many front ensemble members we have or the show music.

Mallet Instruments	• Includes marimba, vibraphone, bells, xylo, and crotales • Knowledge of scales • Excellent option for percussionists at various levels of technique
Aux Percussion/Rack	• Focus on percussion fundamentals • Includes various percussion instruments such as concert bass drum, gong, suspended cymbals, toms, triangle, tambourine, and more
Synth	• Piano experience preferred but not required • Lots of very unique parts • Includes samples that are integral to the show
Electronics, Drumset, and Other	• Electronics include bass guitar, electric guitar, and other amplified instruments • Knowledge of grooves and rudiments required for Drumset • We can always meet members where they are in their musicianship and technique!

Posture

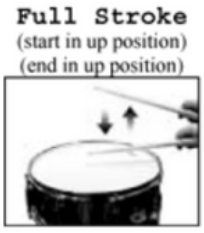
We are always making sure we are standing with the correct posture to ensure comfort, safety, and professionalism. Posture applies to every member of the front ensemble. Starting from the ground up, your feet should be about shoulder width apart. Knees should be soft and relaxed, as locking your knees can prevent blood flow and may lead to passing out! You should stand tall at your instrument with your shoulders back and relaxed. Keep your chin up and look down your nose to see your instrument and music.

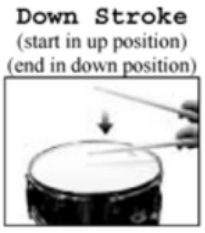
Posture Tips:

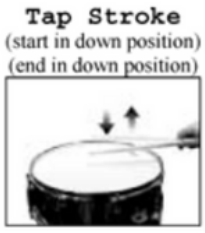
- Avoid crossing your feet while playing and never stand with your feet crossed. In general, this also will inhibit your range of motion and prevent you from moving fluidly behind the instrument.
- When moving around your instrument, use large, graceful steps as opposed to shuffling with small steps. You will move much faster this way and look less frantic.
- Vibraphone players should stand with their right toes on the pedal at all times. Do not use the entire foot – it is not necessary to exert that much energy! Instead, keep your weight distributed evenly between both feet and use only the toes for efficient pedaling.
- Marimba players should be flexible with their body position to the instrument. There will be times when one foot may need to be placed in front of the other to shift between the upper and lower manuals of the instrument or make large horizontal shifts behind the instrument.
- It is easy to hunch and form bad habits while standing for a long time! It is a proven fact; the better your posture, the more attuned you are to the things around you. Good consistent posture will also allow you to play more consistently, as well as do your body a favor (since you will be spending a lot of time on your instrument!)

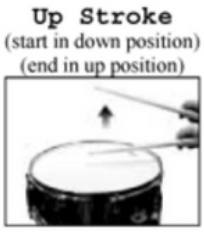
Stroke Types

There are four different strokes we use at Spectre: full stroke, down stroke, tap stroke, and up stroke. These strokes apply to all percussionists, including concert bands. Below you will find the specifics of each stroke.









Two Mallet Technique

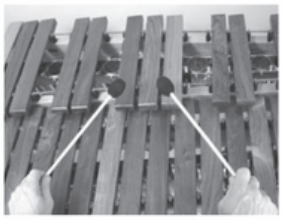
The basic two mallet grip revolves around the concept of a relaxed and natural hand position. If you let your hand hang by your side you'll notice the natural curve of all your fingers. Keep this look in mind as you go through the following setup:

1. Place the mallet between the first knuckle of your index finger and the pad of your thumb. This is a very important contact point as it is the fulcrum of the mallet.
2. Start with your fulcrum one-third of the way up the mallet shaft. In certain situations you may need to choke up a bit, but seldom do you need to go further back on the shaft.
3. The other fingers should wrap around the mallet in a curved and relaxed manner.
4. Leave a little space between the mallet shaft and the palm of your hand. This will help to relax your stroke and let you imitate the look of a natural rebound.
5. When setting up to the keyboard, your palms will be flat to the keys. This should be a relaxed position, don't force your hands over.
6. The mallet heads will be slightly angled in toward each other.

The fulcrum.

Relaxed back fingers.

Palms flat to the keys.



Player perspective.

Four Mallet Technique

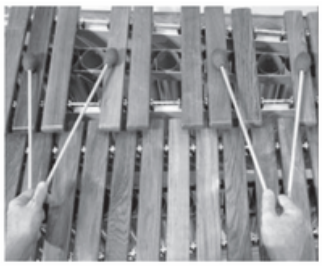
Although there are many different techniques to hold four mallets, we use the Stevens grip at Spectre. This is an independent grip - that means the mallets do not cross and they can move independently of each other. Stevens grip has many important steps to ensure that you keep your wrists and fingers healthy and free of tension:

Start by getting the outside mallet in position. Place the mallet shaft between the ring finger and middle finger, then wrap the ring finger and pinky around the mallet. Notice that only a small nub of mallet is sticking out past the pinky finger. If too much mallet is sticking out, you will not be able to reach the larger intervals. Don't waste the mallet!

Now you can set the inside mallet. Place the end of the mallet under the meaty base of your thumb, then let the mallet rest on the first knuckle of your index finger. The index finger should be curved and relaxed. At this point, the inside mallet should be able to hang in your hand without assistance from your thumb or middle finger.

Now place the middle finger at the base of the mallet...

...and gently rest the thumb on top. The contact point of your thumb, once again, will resemble the two mallet fulcrum.



Make sure that the thumb is facing the ceiling and the index finger is curved and pointing “in” towards your other index finger. You will notice that you don’t have to tightly grip the mallets. The mallets simply hang in place in a relaxed hand. In fact, this concept is crucial! Each finger serves a very important function in changing the interval size. If they are tense, they can’t do their jobs. When you hold your mallets, as described above, your interval size will probably be a fourth or a fifth.

Decreasing and increasing the interval size is the job of the thumb and index finger. The thumb will rotate the inside mallet as it moves towards or away from the base of the index finger. When decreasing, the index finger contracts slightly, but it is still relaxed. When increasing, the middle finger acts as a “shelf” in your hand for the inside mallet. With time and practice away from the instrument, interval changes are very smooth and quick with this technique.

Decreasing interval size.

Increasing interval size.

Sound Quality

We approach the keyboard with velocity and weight in an effort to create a full sound that will project given the environment in which we perform. This approach is designed to allow the performer to play with a full sound with the least amount of tension possible.

Velocity, simply stated, is the speed at which the mallet travels. Hypothetically, if the stroke is played at six inches off the board with a relatively low rate of speed, it may result in a dynamic of mezzo piano. If the same height is played with a much higher rate of speed, the result may be a dynamic of mezzo forte or forte.

Weight, however, is slightly more complicated. Where velocity has more of a direct relation toward dynamics, weight would have more of a relation toward articulations. We focus on the weight of the mallet as being the hard rubber core inside of the yarn. Much like following through when shooting a basketball, if the force of a mallet rebounds "off the bar" (think of your hand touching a hot stove) with the same velocity as the down stroke, it may result in a highly articulate but not resonant tone. If the force of the mallet travels "through the bar," it may result in a warmer, more resonant tone.

We believe that playing in the center of the bar results in the most resonant and consistent tone; therefore, we strive to play everything in the center of the bar. The center of the bar is a single atom so that we are being as precise as possible in our sound quality. When possible, we try to utilize ergonomic sticking patterns (permutations) that better accommodate playing in the center, while also presenting themselves as visually pleasing. At a faster tempo or a phrase with lots of chromatics, the group may opt to all play on the “edge” of the bar. In general, we want the people who are playing the same parts to play with the same stickings in the same zones.

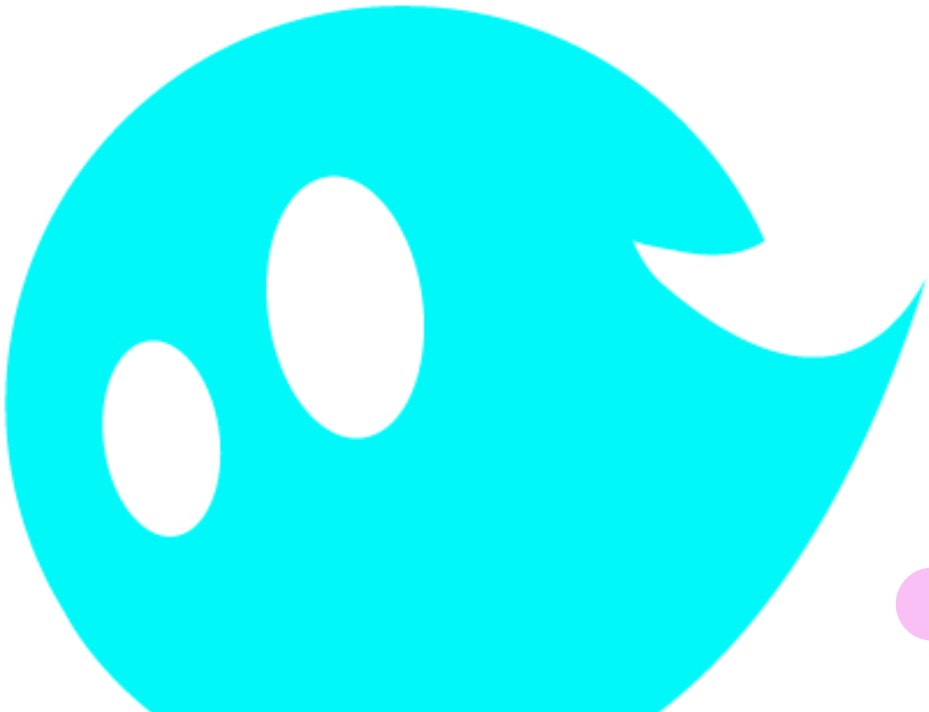
Equipment Care

We are very fortunate to have the instruments and equipment that we have. Please respect and take care of our valuables at all times! This includes, but is not limited to:

- Keeping “things” off the instruments (backpacks, water bottles, laptops, etc)
- Keeping mallets off the floor/ground, and refraining from touching the yarn
- Properly covering and putting away your instruments
- Properly folding or putting aside your instrument covers
- Properly wrapping cables to prevent internal breakage
- Finger tightening your wingnuts and screws
- Being aware of your surroundings when moving locations (loading the truck, lifting the vibraphone pedals, watching out for curbs, avoiding mud, etc)
- Organizing your mallet bag and limiting what you have inside of it
- Never put food or drinks on your instrument, ESPECIALLY the electronics/laptop
- Letting your staff know about any concerns as soon as you discover it

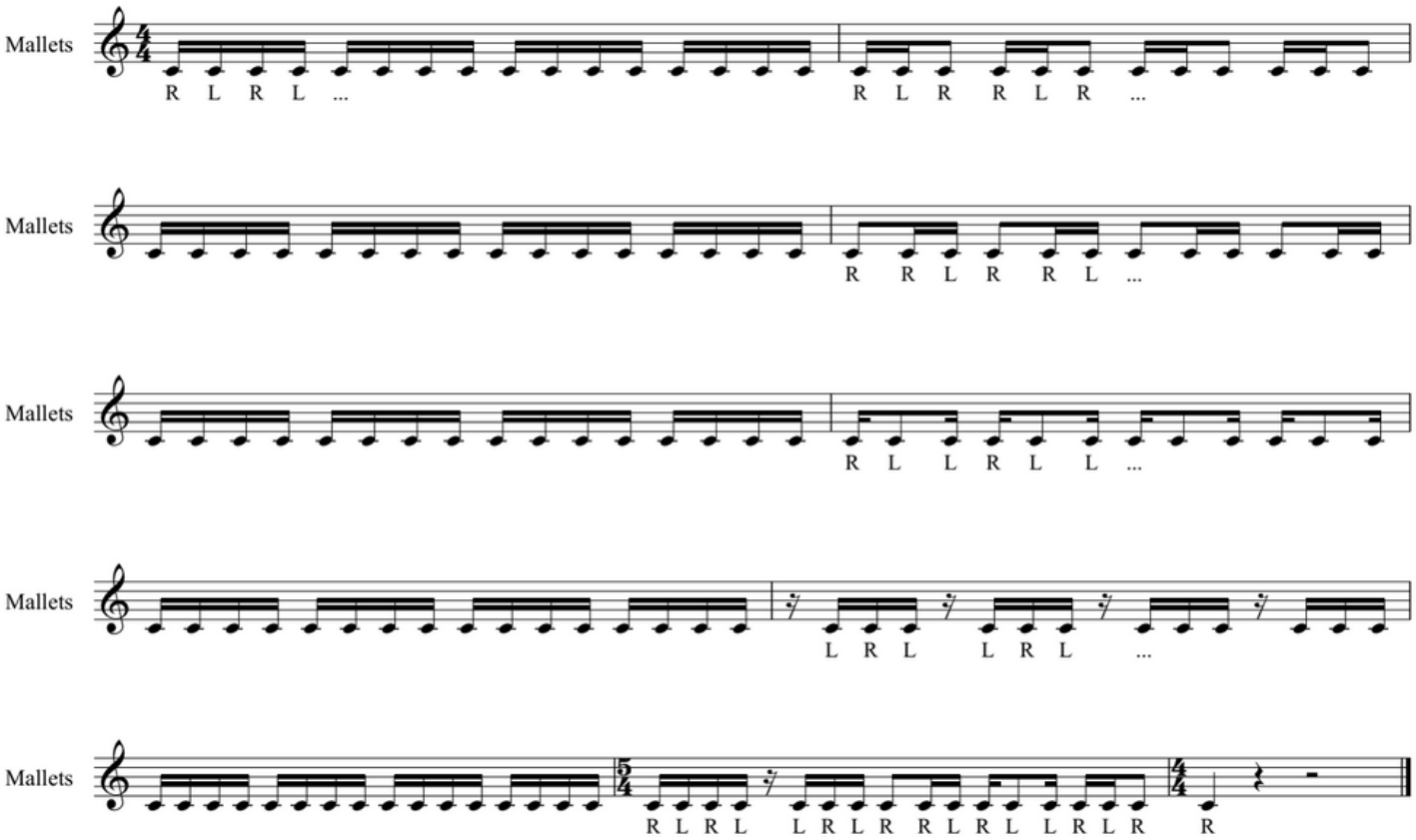
Practice Tips

1. **Set goals.** Make sure you know what you want to accomplish in each practice session. Also make sure you know what you are trying to accomplish with each exercise or musical phrase. Be specific in your goals as well - “working on the first movement” is different from “creating consistent sound quality at tempo in the two measures of 16th note runs at rehearsal letter C."
2. **Practice with a Metronome.** Always! Rhythmic fluidity and accuracy along with a strong pulse control go side by side with the technical skills we work on. We recommend the app Tonal Energy as a personal metronome. Once we have show music, we will be able to create and share a file of the show music and all tempo changes with you, so you can practice at show tempo. Always begin at your “tempo of undeniability,” meaning the tempo where you can correctly execute all the notes, rhythms, dynamics, phrasing, articulations, transitions, and other musical elements. From there, you can move on to a faster tempo, but until then...
3. **Go slow.** This will help develop your muscle memory and make you a stronger player over time. It’s important to develop proper technique and rhythmic accuracy at slow tempos and to carry it forward into any faster reps. We want every faster rep to feel as relaxed as the previous slower rep to build consistency.
4. **Listen to yourself.** We are musicians and should be defined by our ability to positively contribute to the full ensemble sound. Actively work towards developing a consistently mature quality of sound. Check your stroke heights, playing zones, and fulcrum/hand firmness. The goal: dark, full, and articulate quality of sound on each note every time.
5. **Be efficient.** Practice time on your actual instrument is precious and usually much more limited than we would like, especially during the academic year when we may be busy with assignments, work, and other commitments. It’s important to work on stroke types, permutations, and “chops” (another word for endurance) away from the instrument as well. By dividing your practicing into what can be worked on only at your instrument (note accuracy and playing zones) versus what can be practiced away from it (rhythmic accuracy and technique), you will be taking more of a ‘divide and conquer’ approach to building up your abilities.



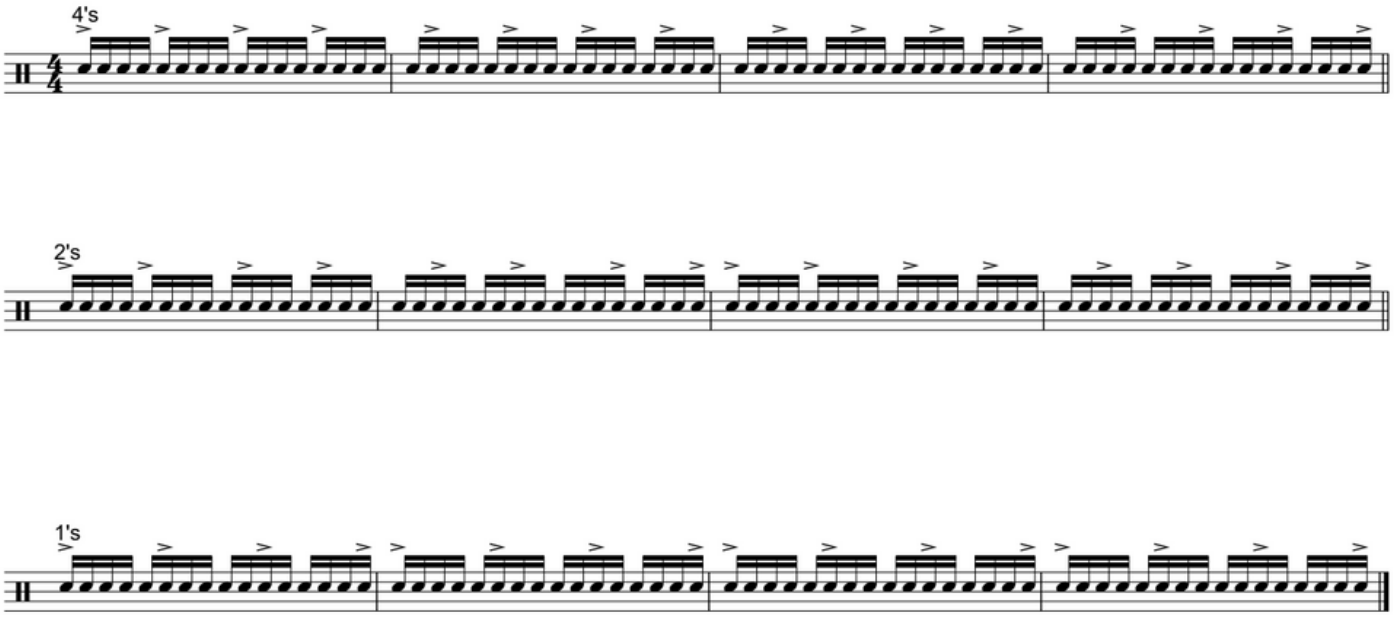
Sixteenth Timing

On drum pad or one note
Tempo = 60+ bpm



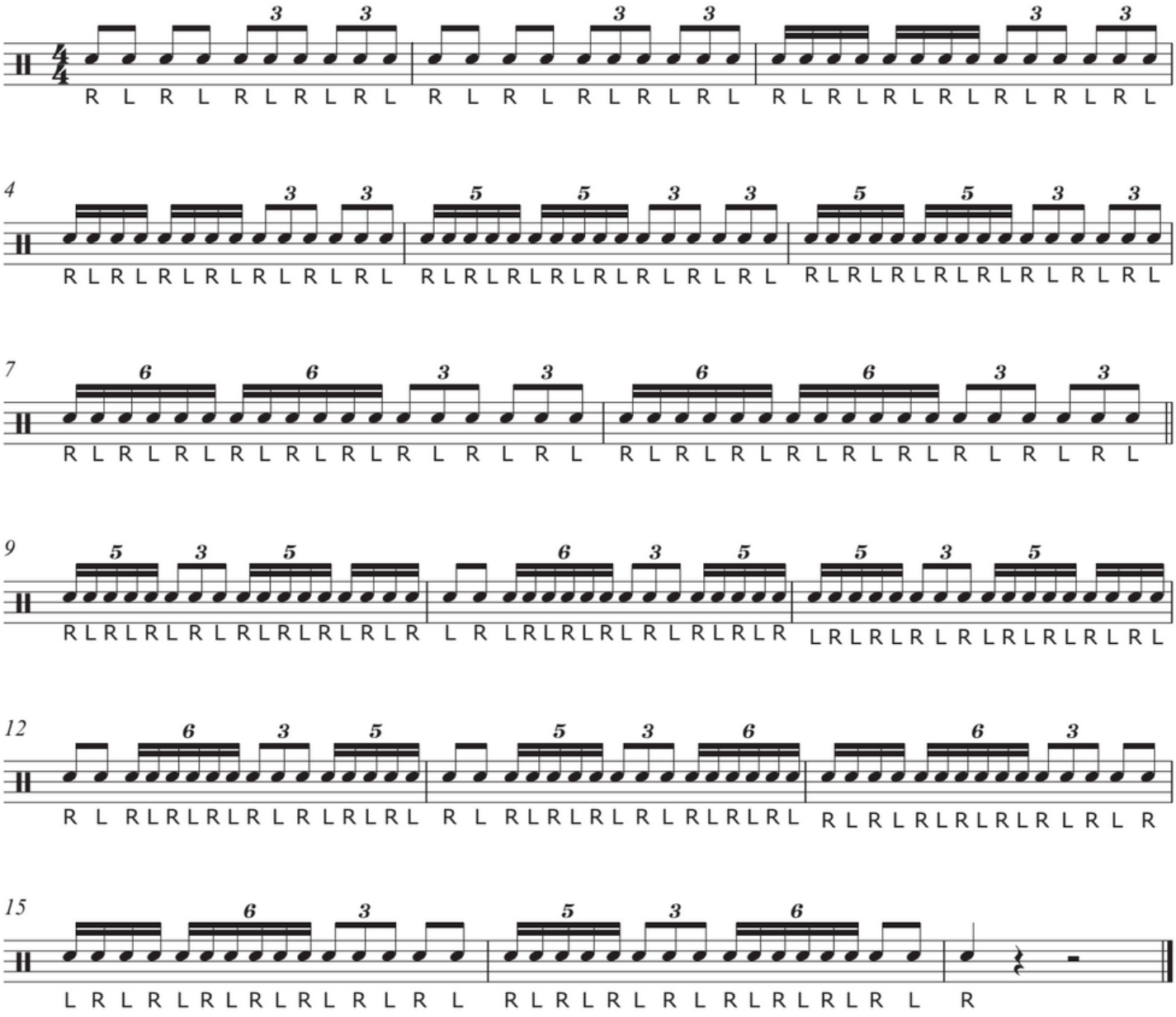
4-2-1 Grid

On drum pad or one note
Tempo = 60+ bpm



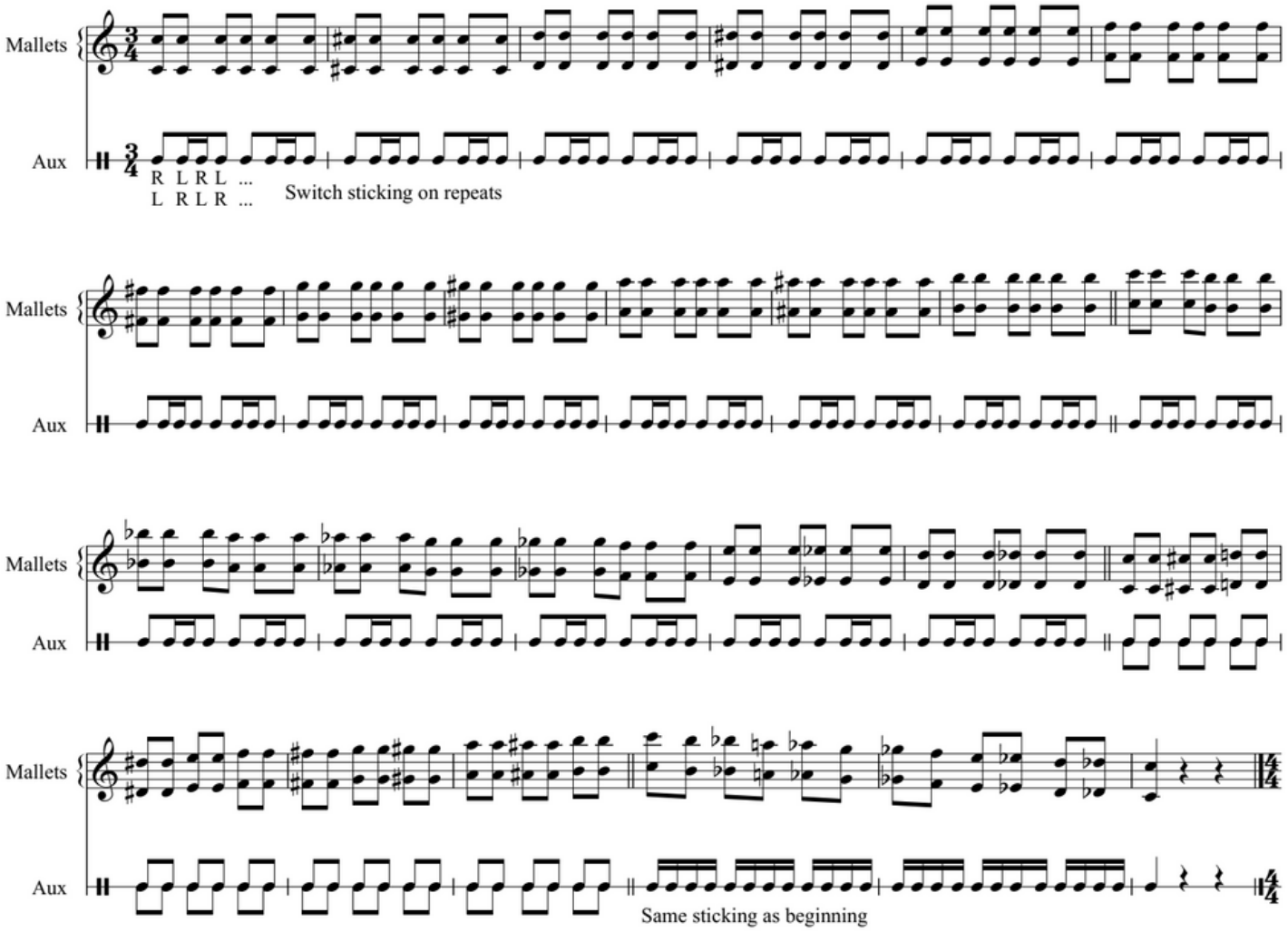
Trusting Spaces

On drum pad or one note
Tempo = 60+ bpm



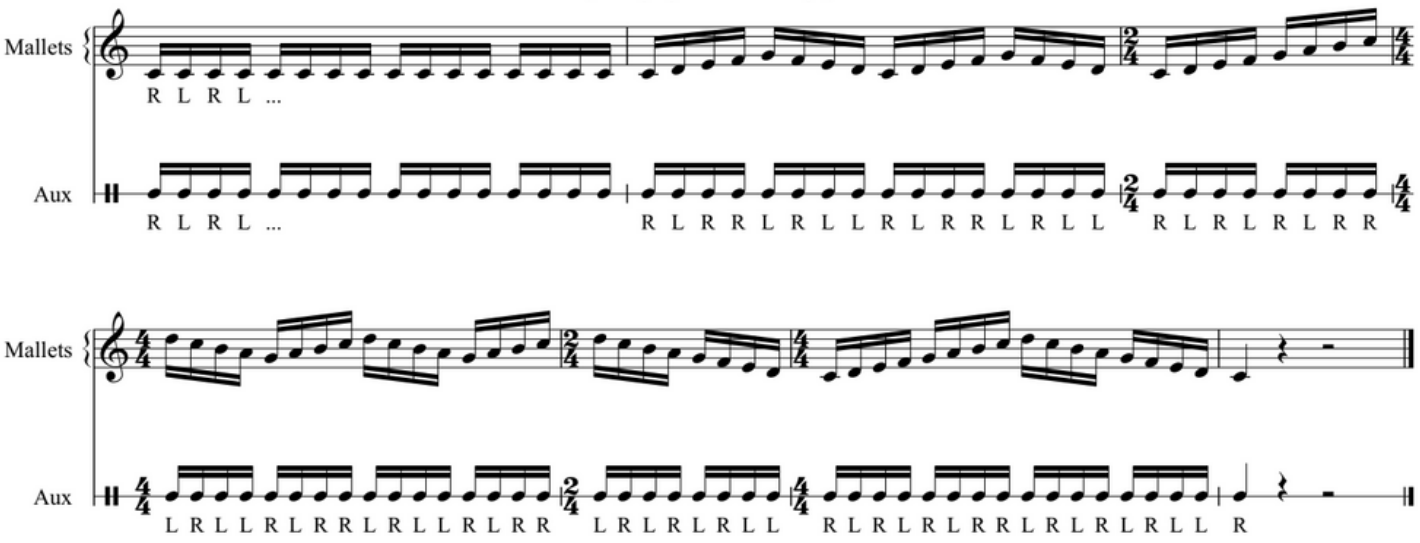
6-3-2-1

Tempo = 60+ bpm



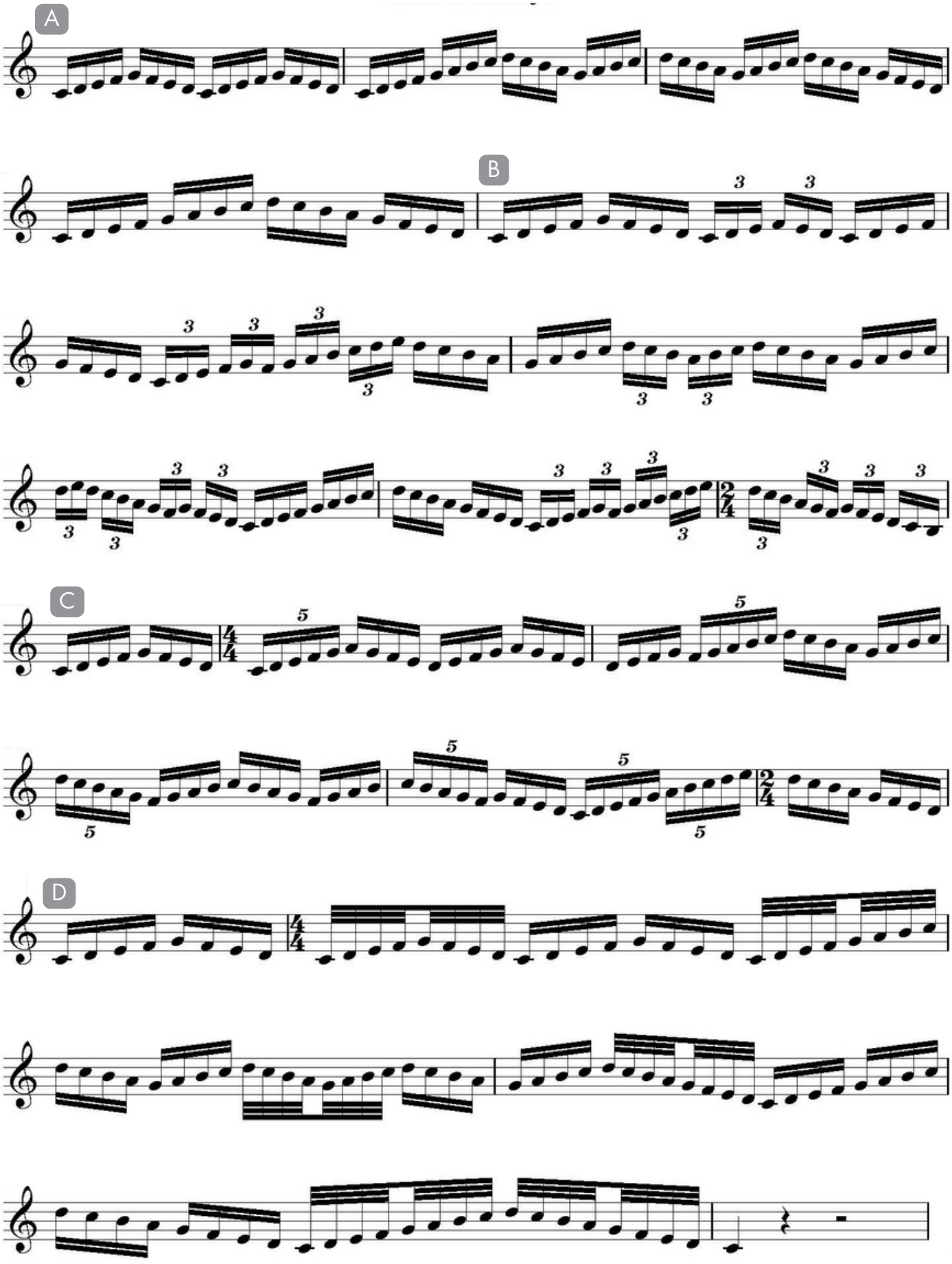
Green

In all 12 major keys
Tempo = 70+ bpm



Teal

In all 12 major keys
Tempo = 60+ bpm

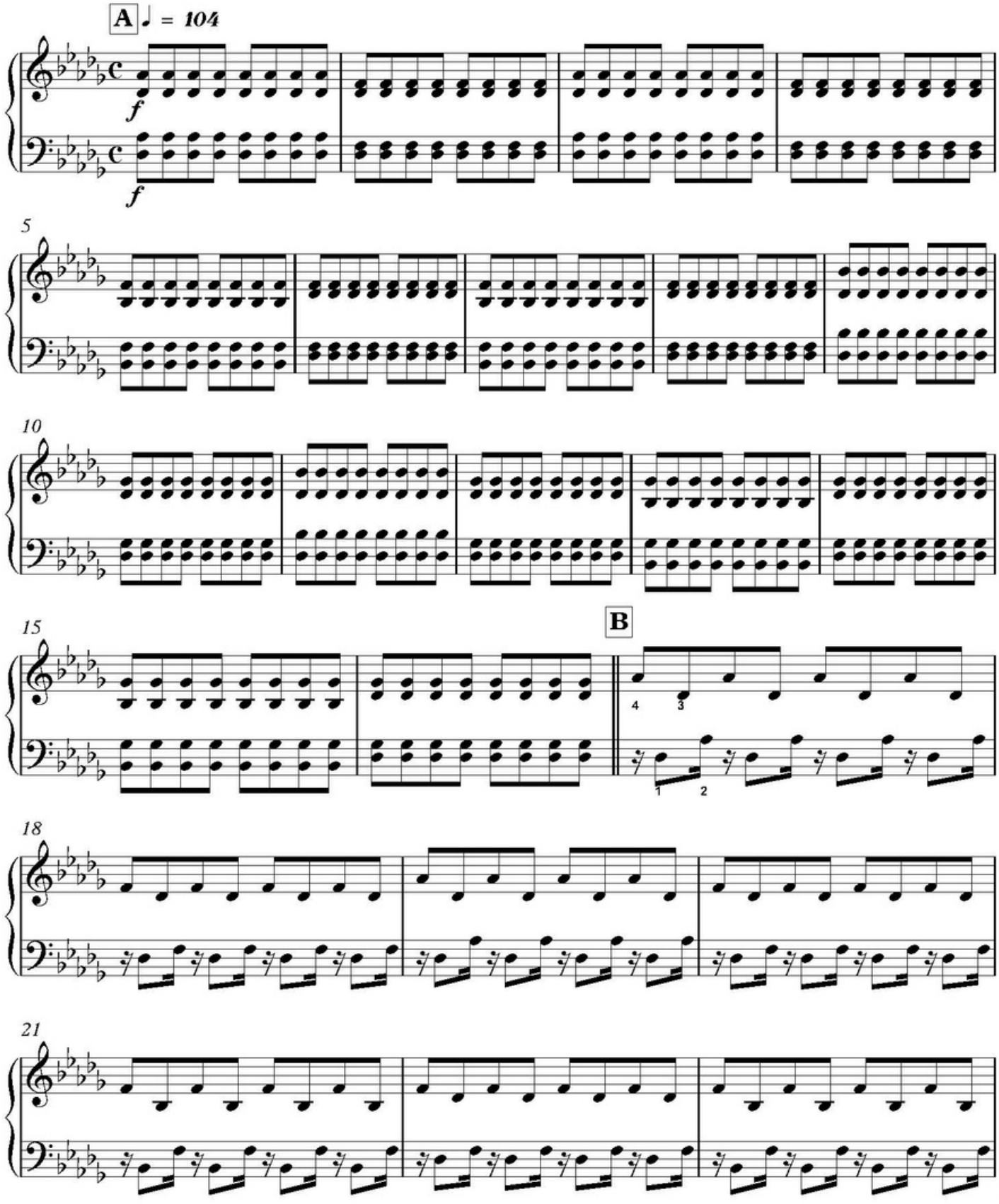


Marimba

Winter Solstice

2017

Mike Bishop



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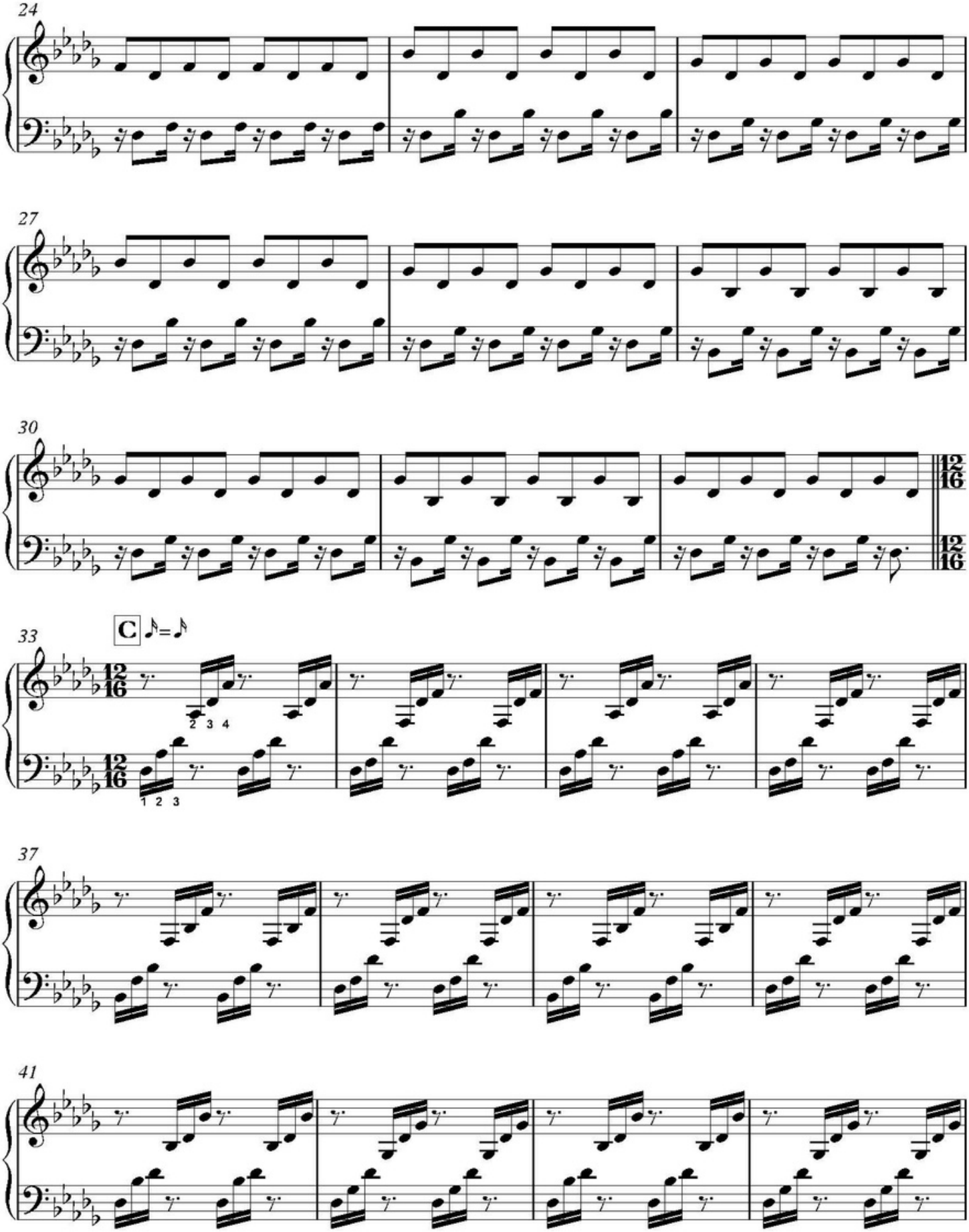
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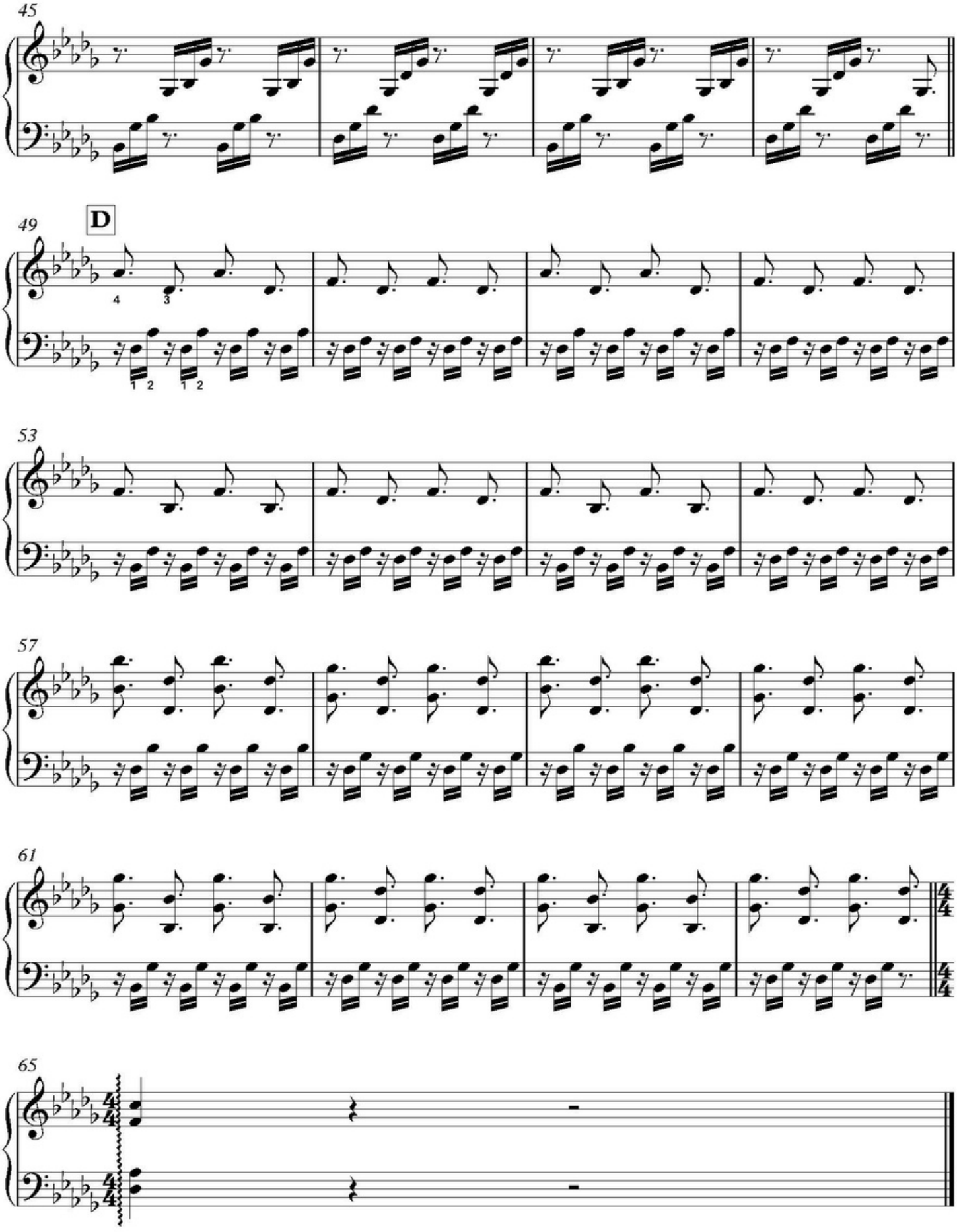
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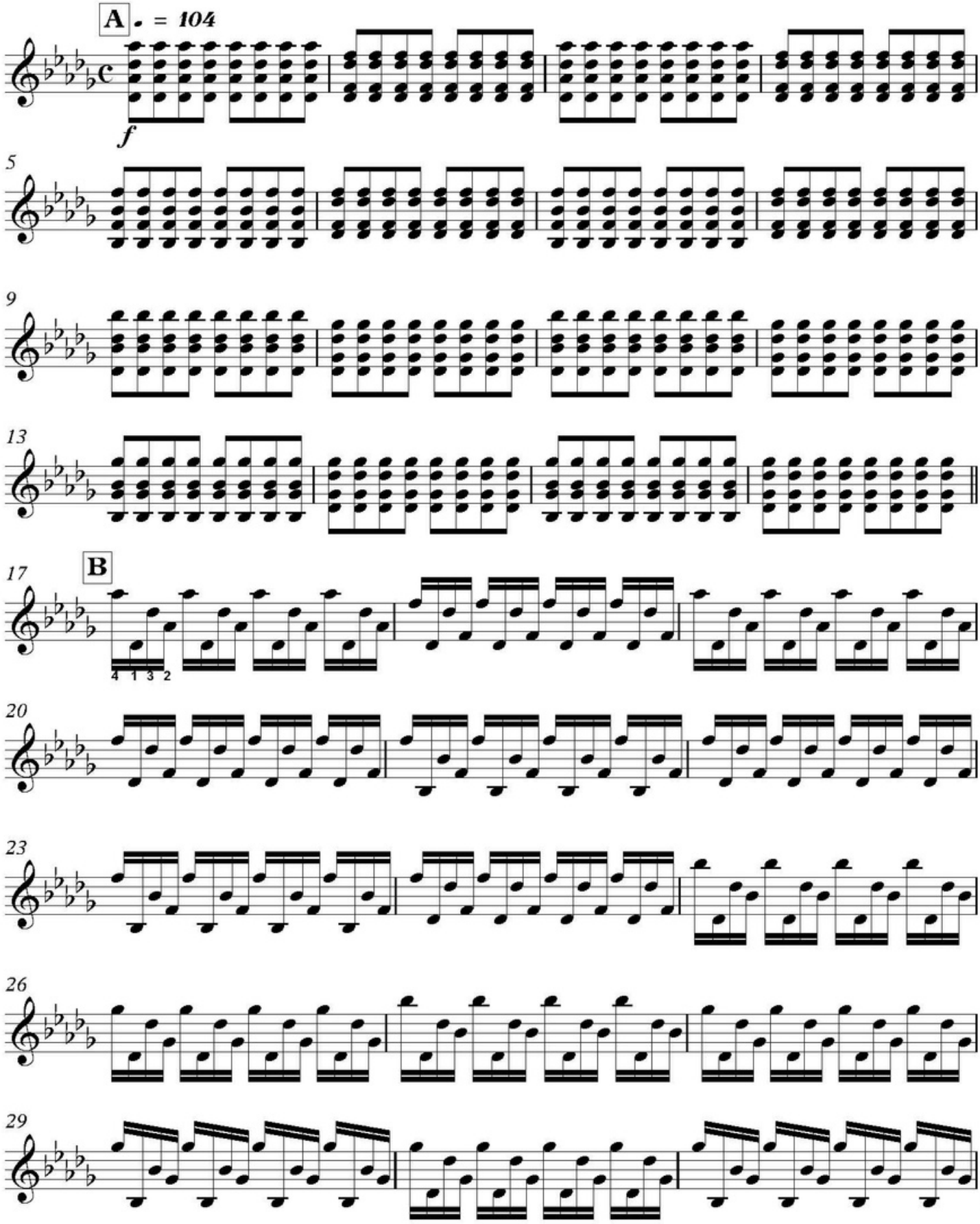
Vibraphone

Winter Solstice

2017

Mike Bishop



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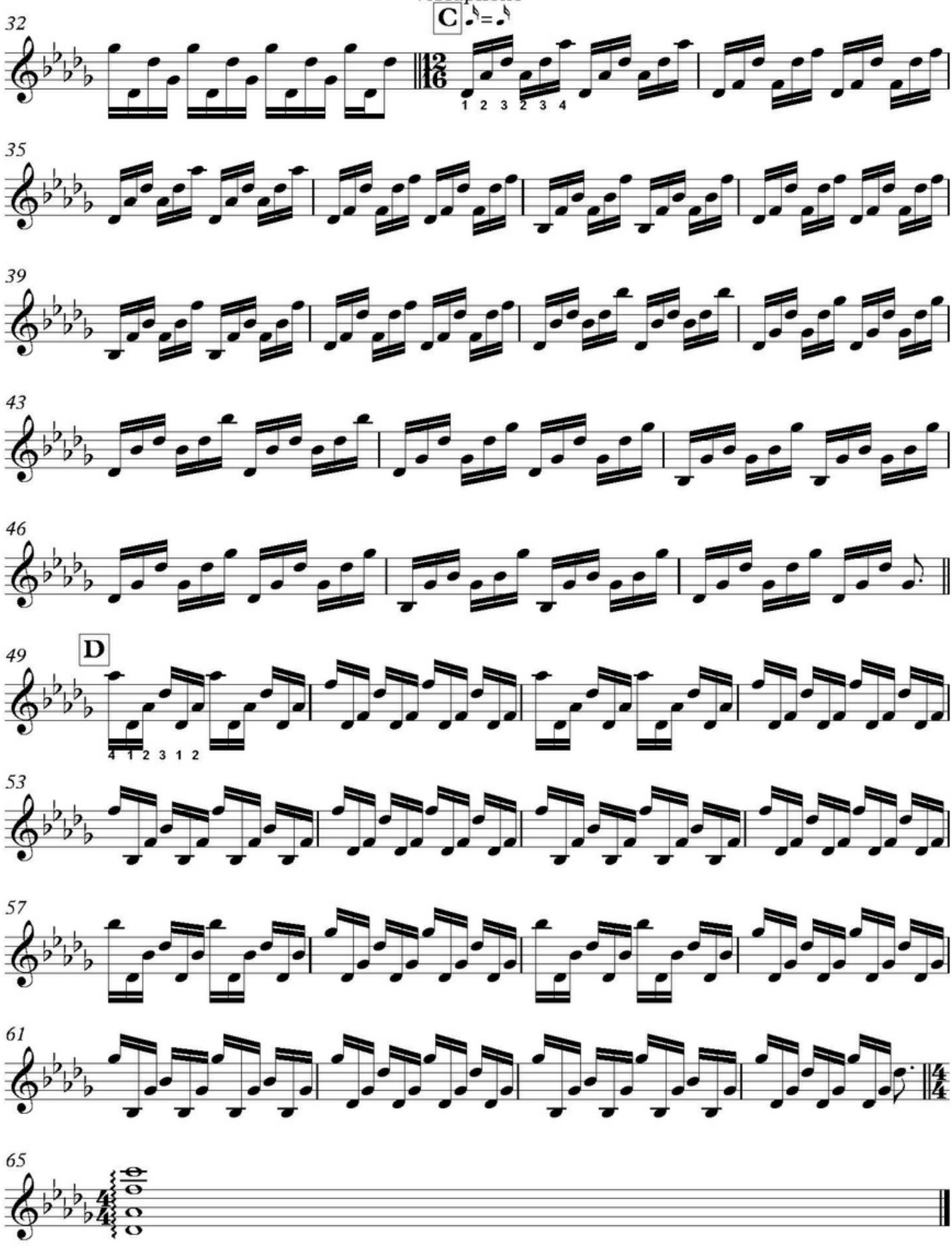
Vibraphone



Synthesizer 1

Winter Solstice

2017

Mike Bishop

♩. = 104

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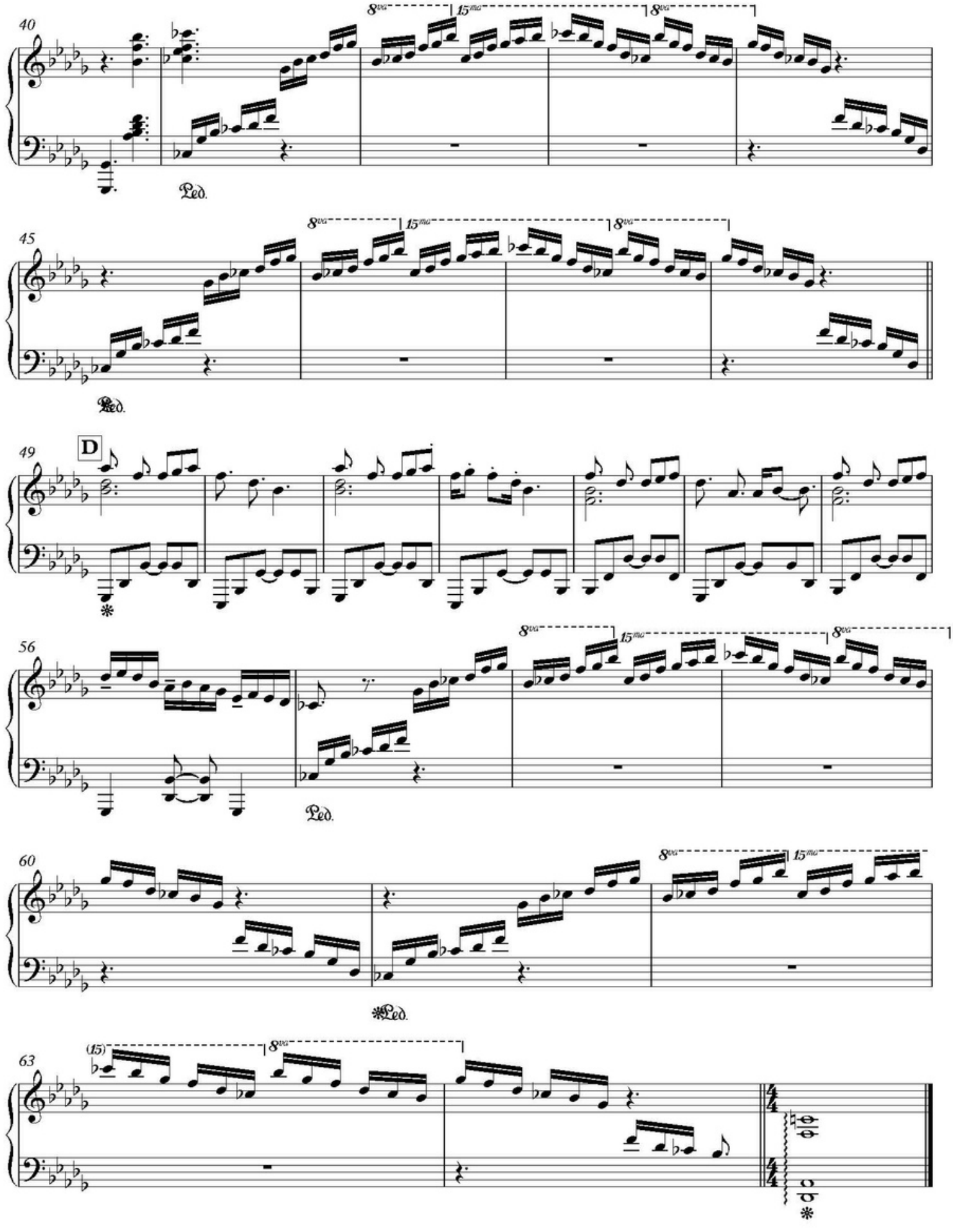
V.S.

Synthesizer 1

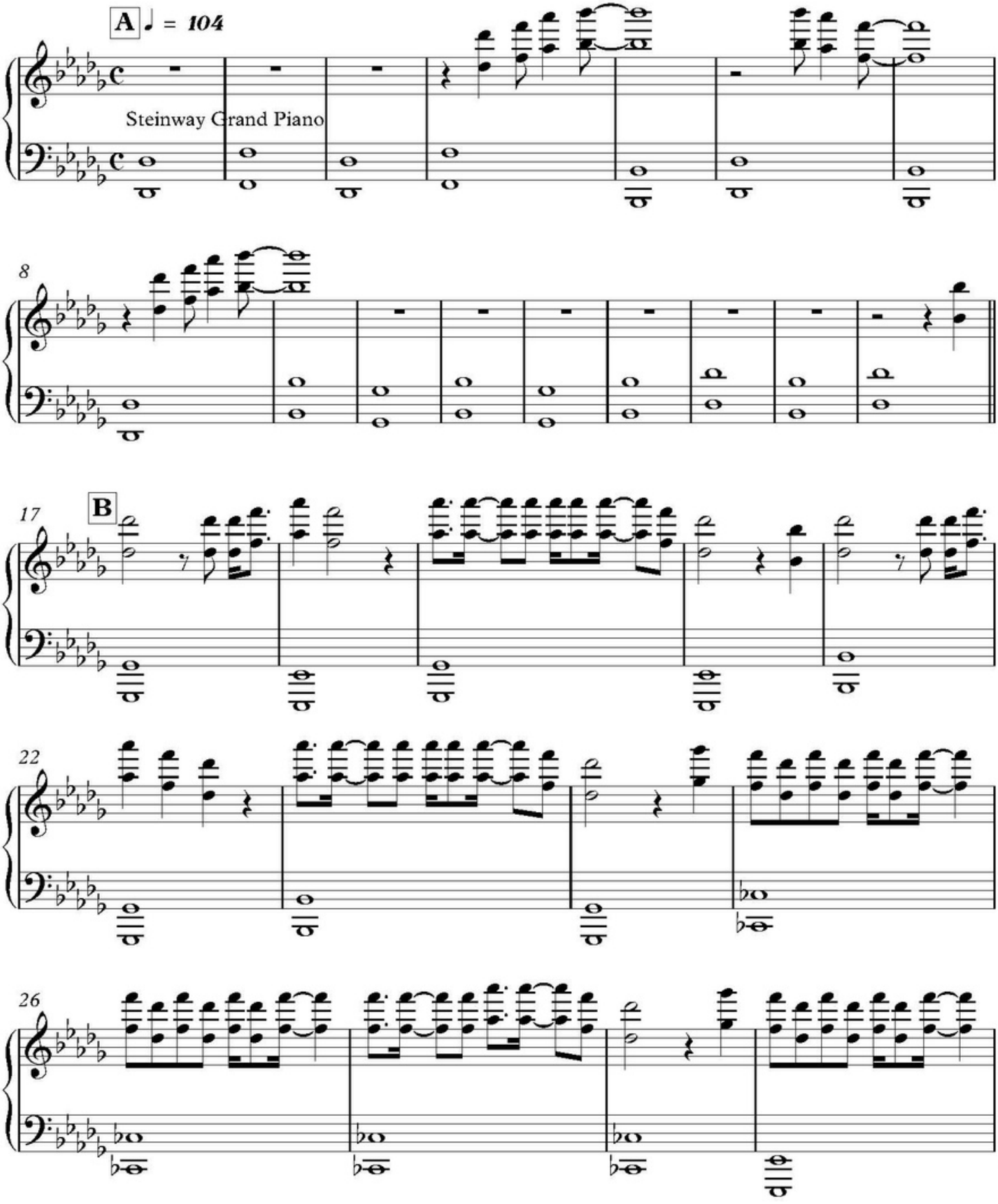


Synthesizer 2

Winter Solstice

2017

Mike Bishop



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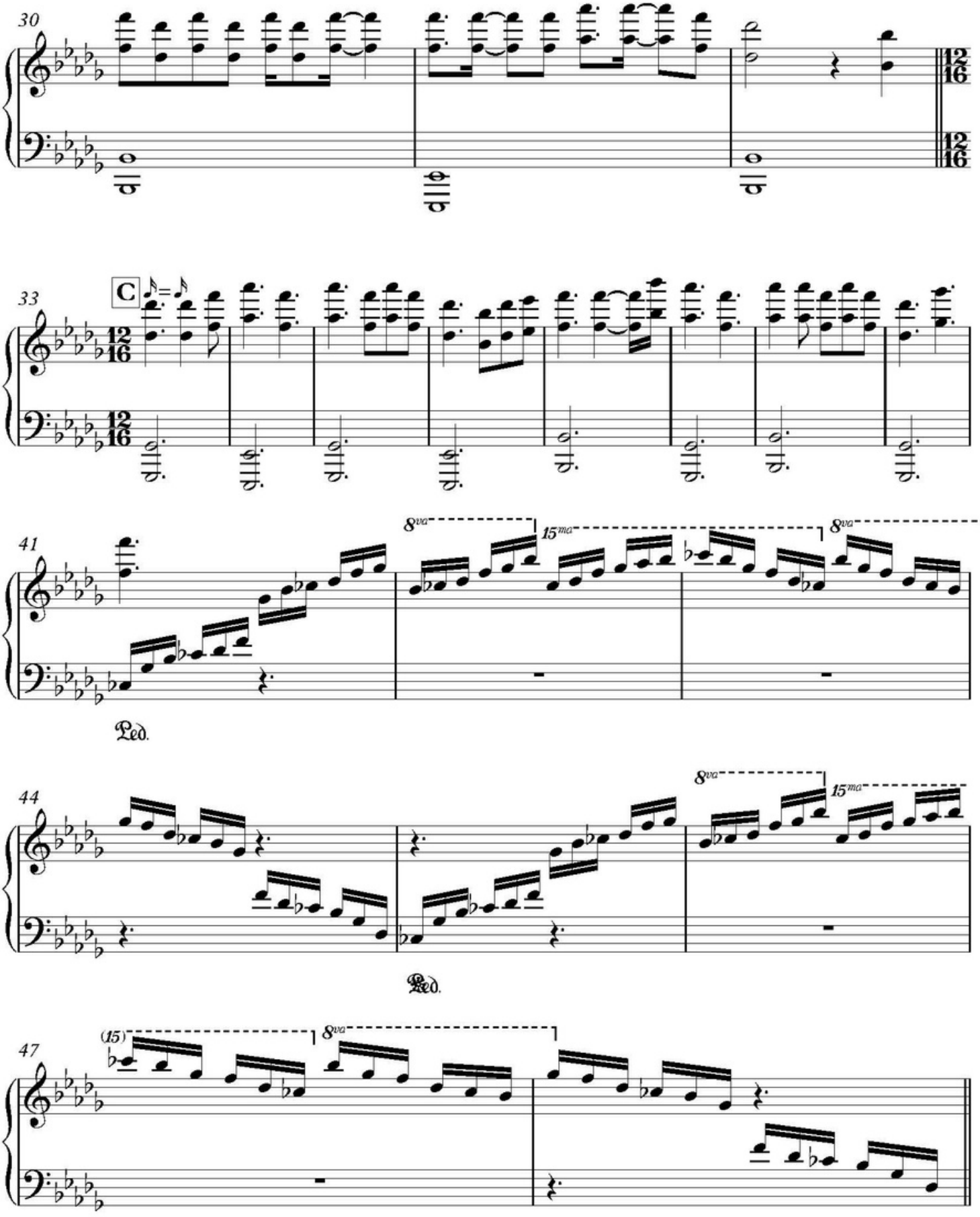
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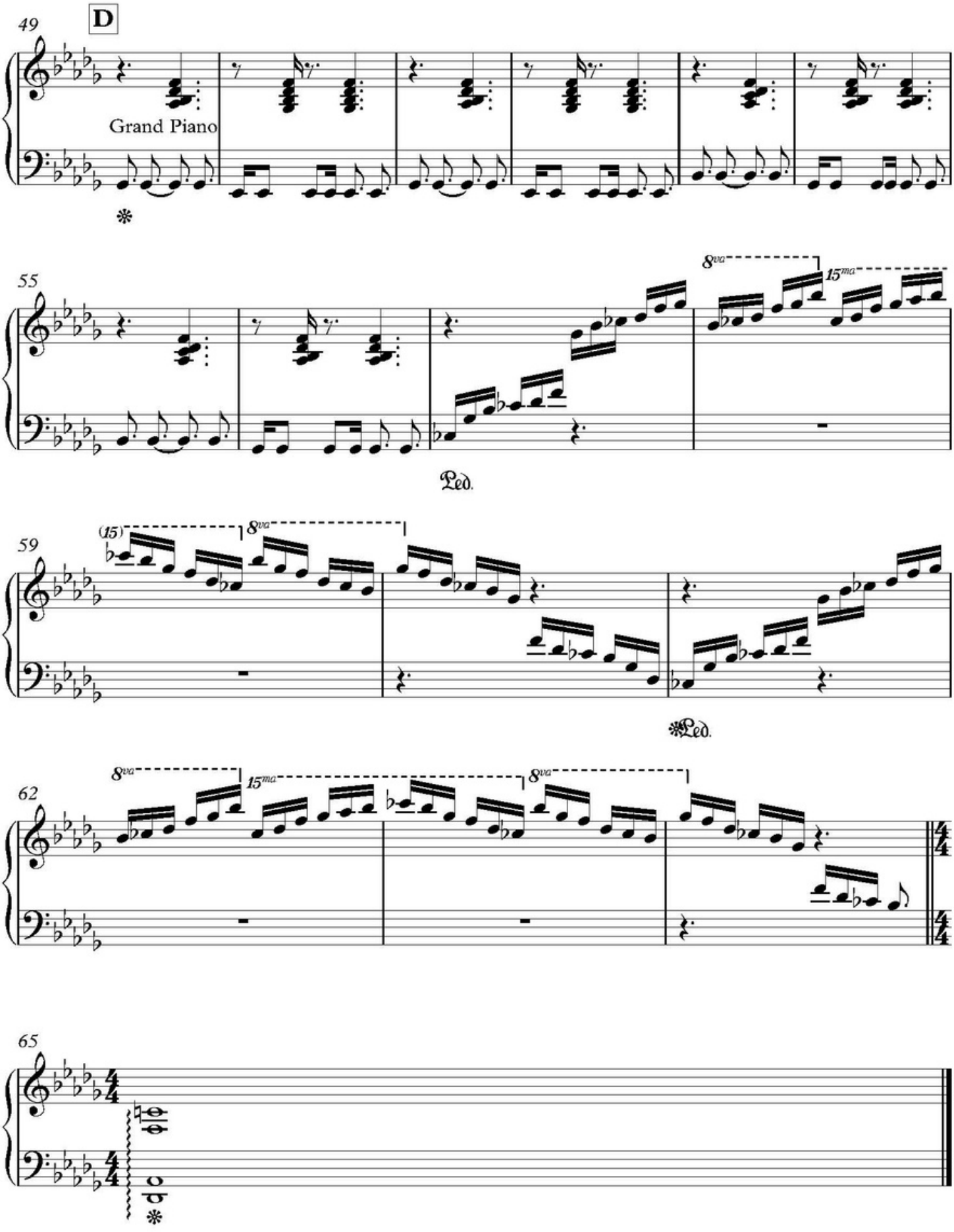
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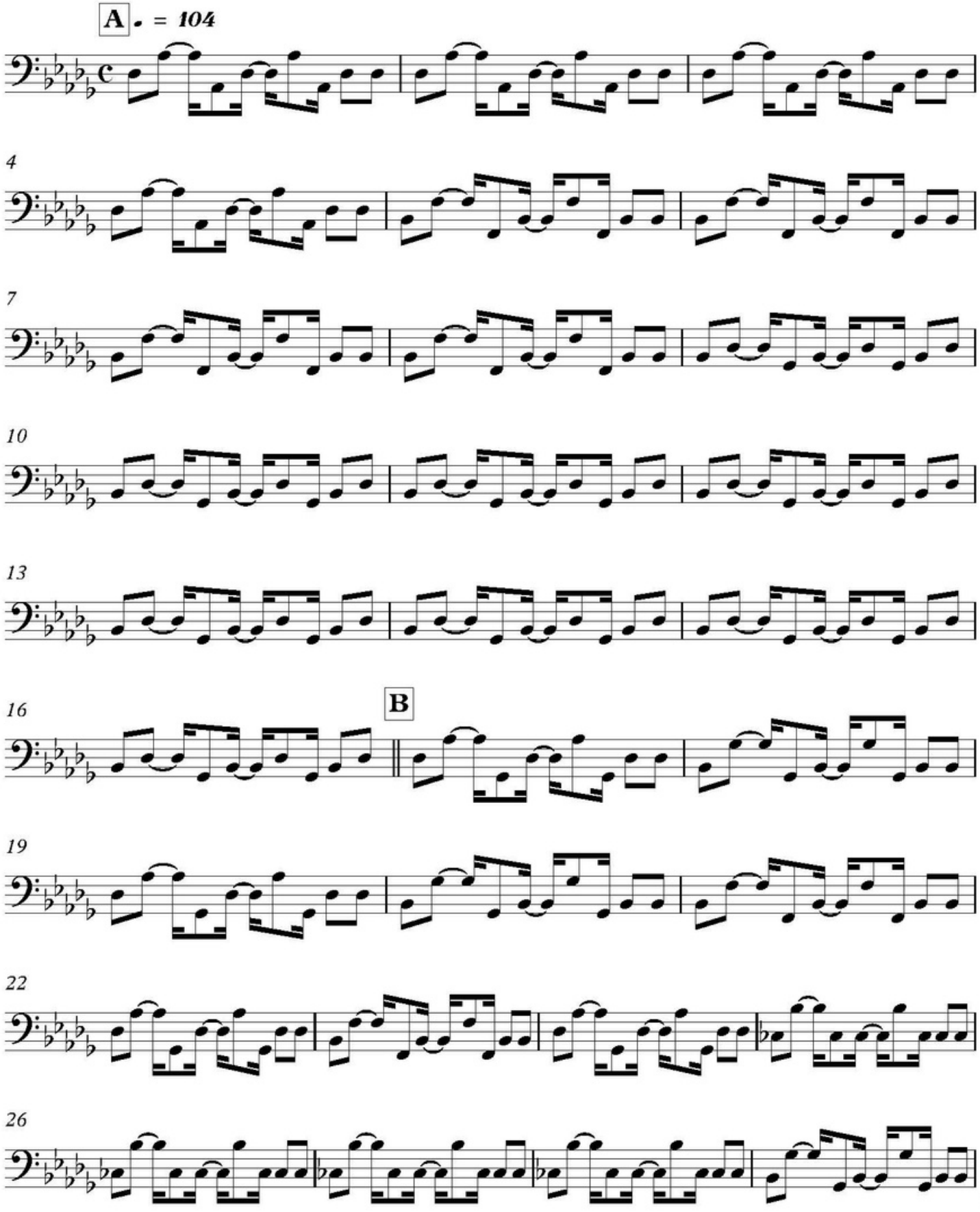
Bass Guitar

Winter Solstice

2017

Mike Bishop



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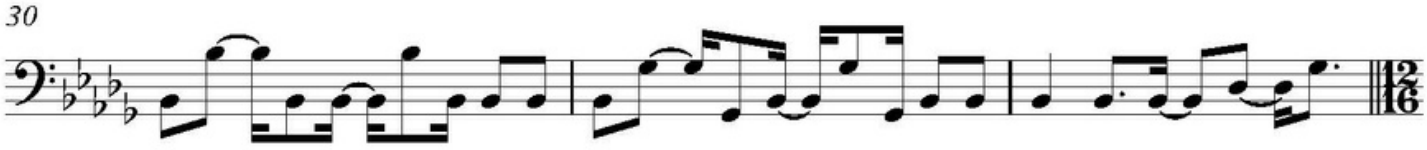

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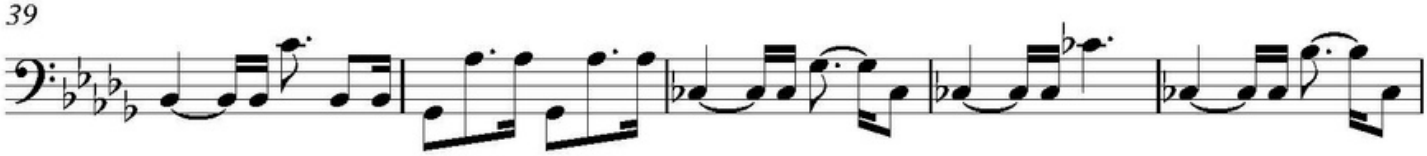

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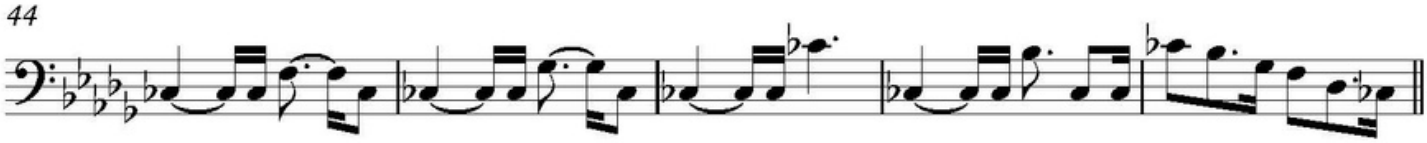

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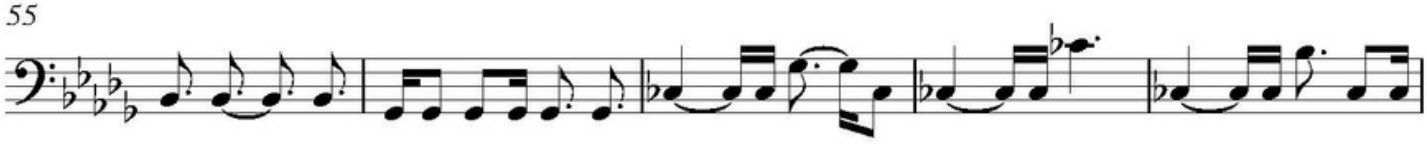

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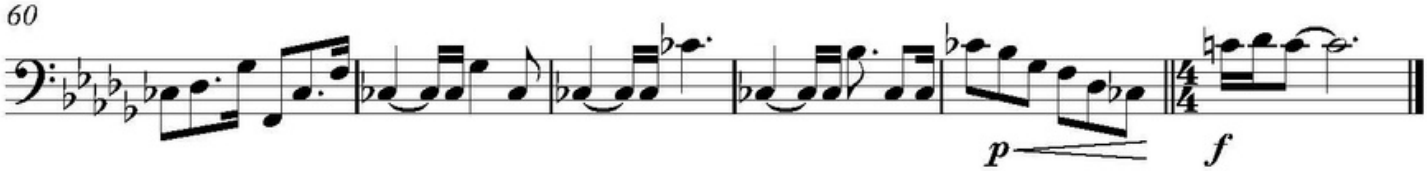


Drum Set

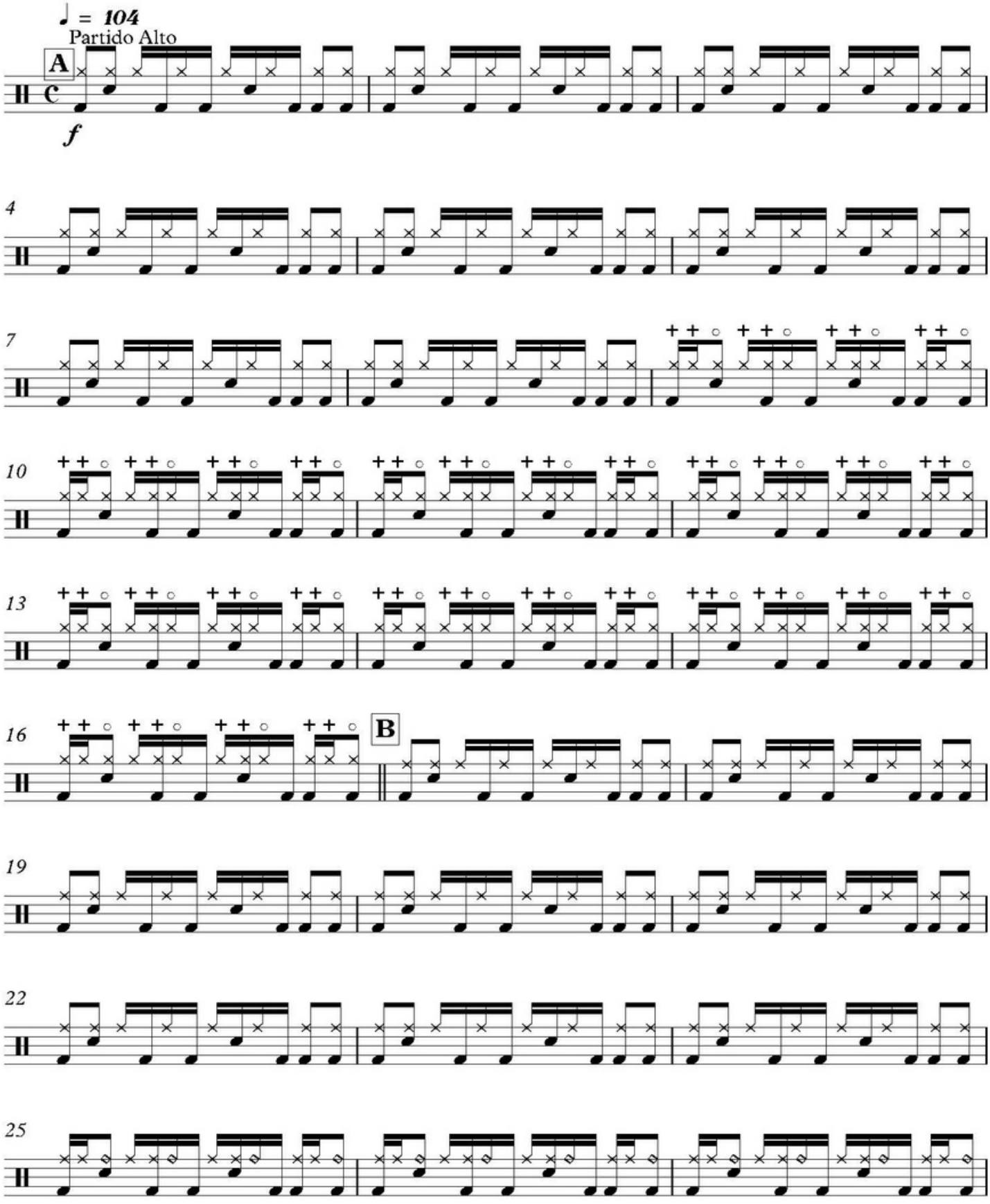
Winter Solstice

2017

Mike Bishop

♩ = 104

Partido Alto



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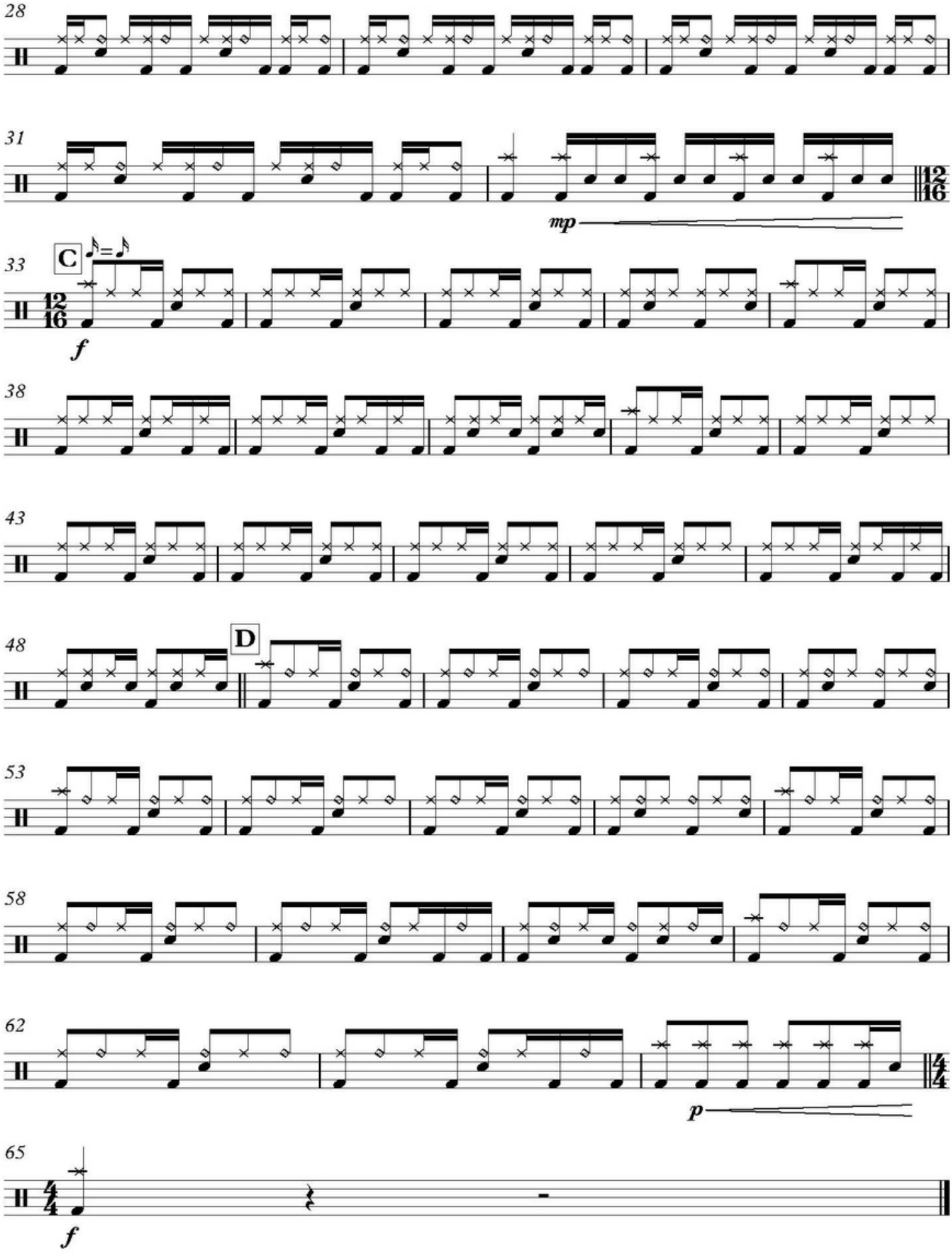
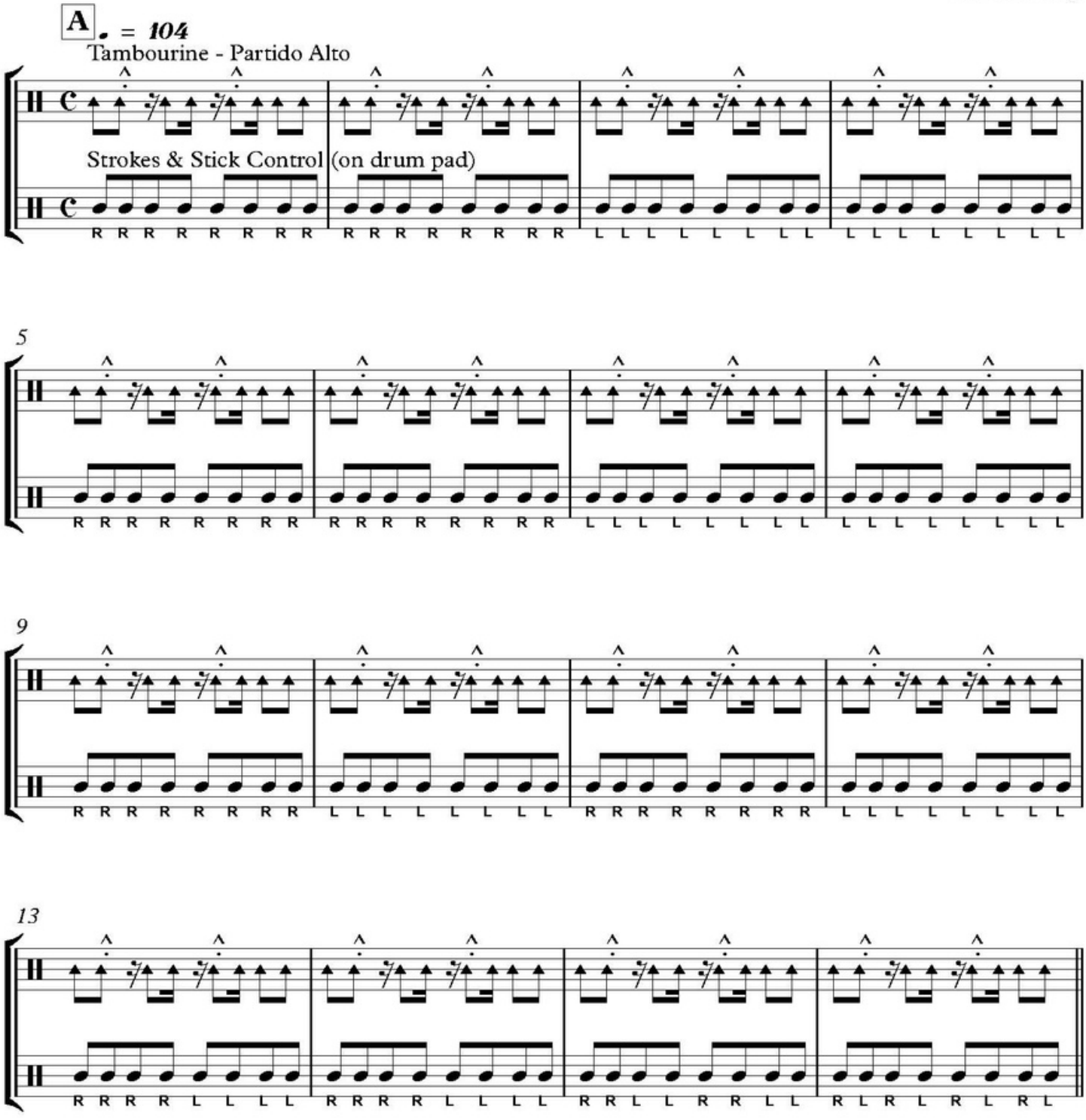
Drum Set



Winter Solstice

2017

Mike Bishop



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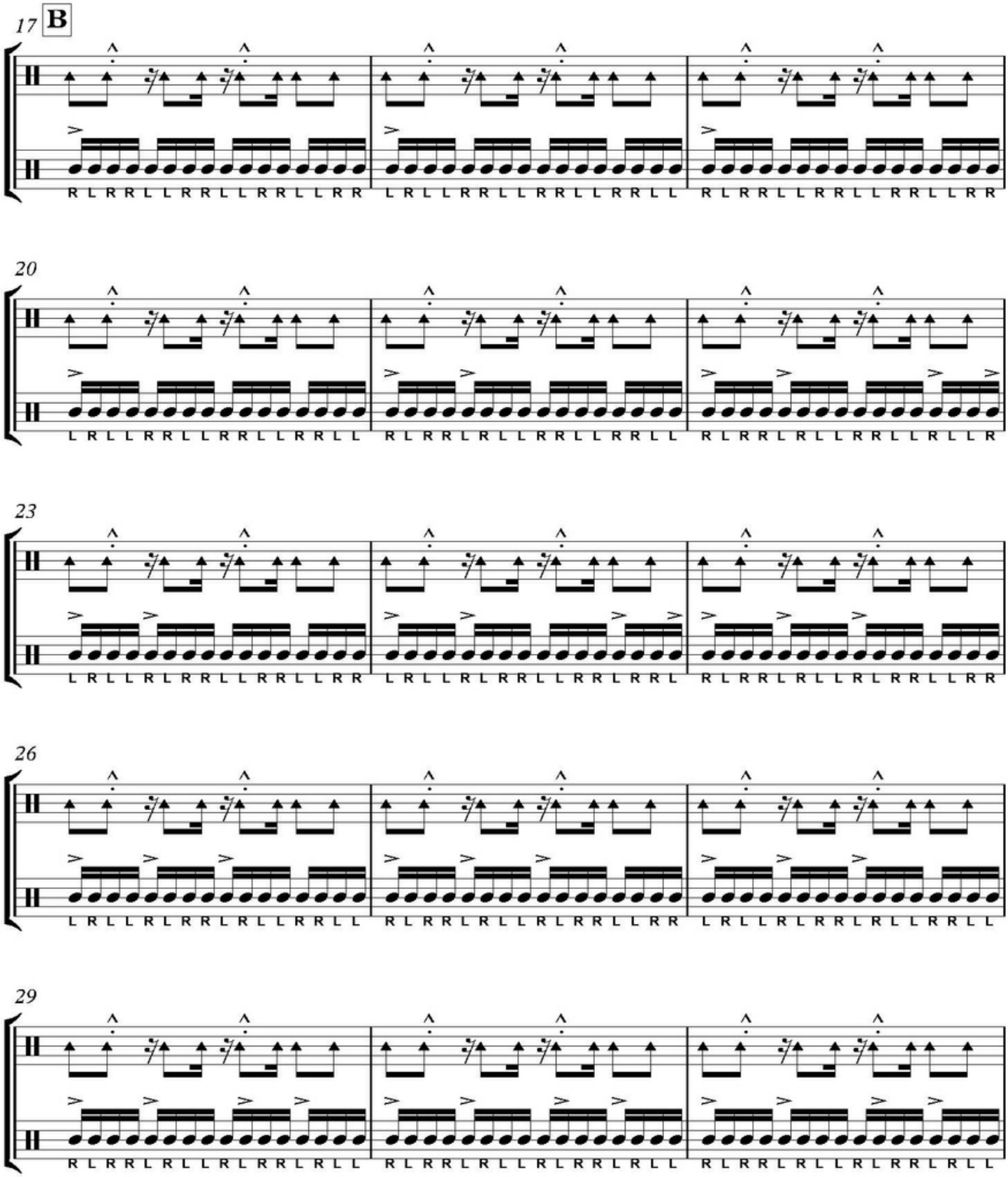
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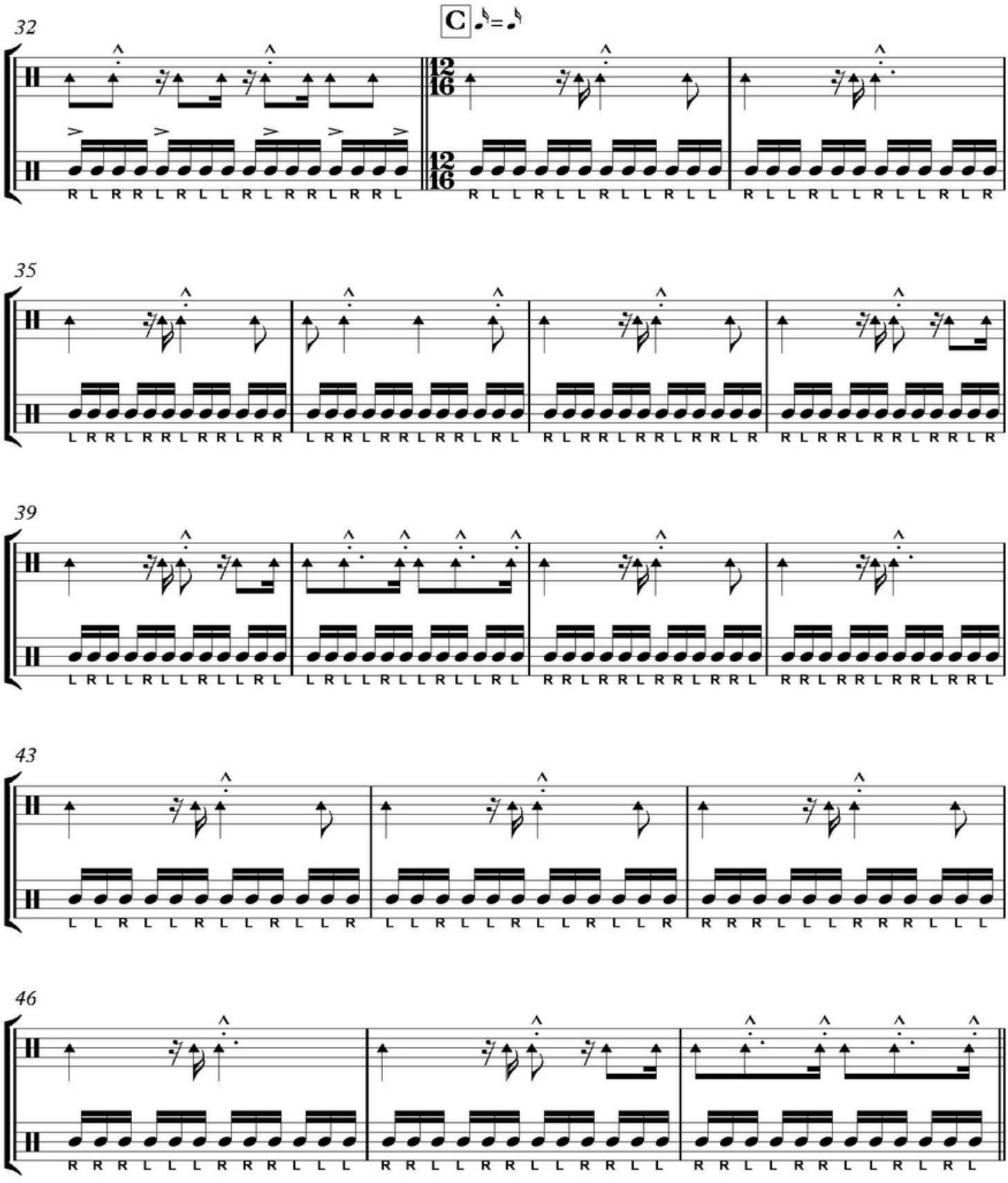
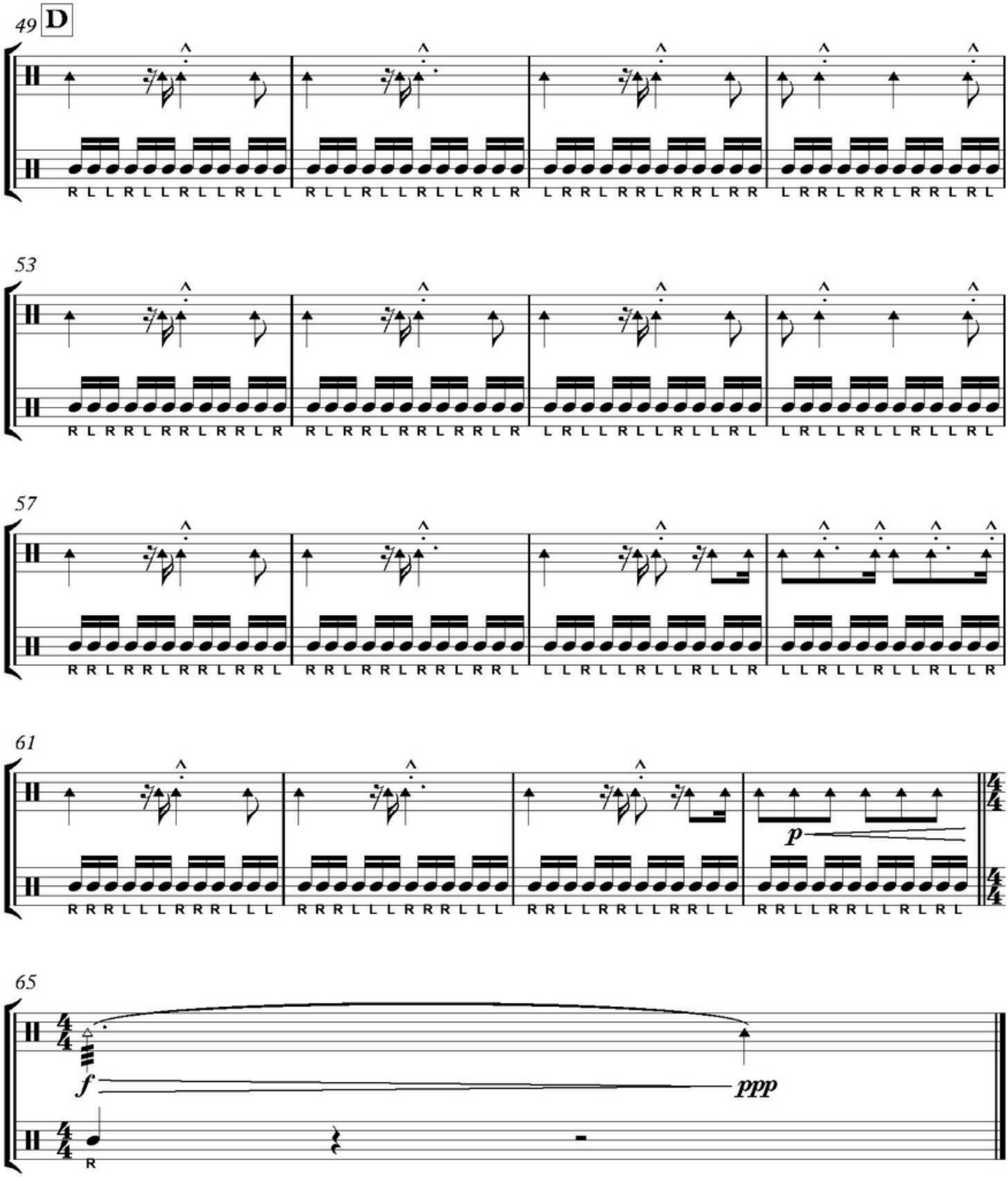
20
23
26
29



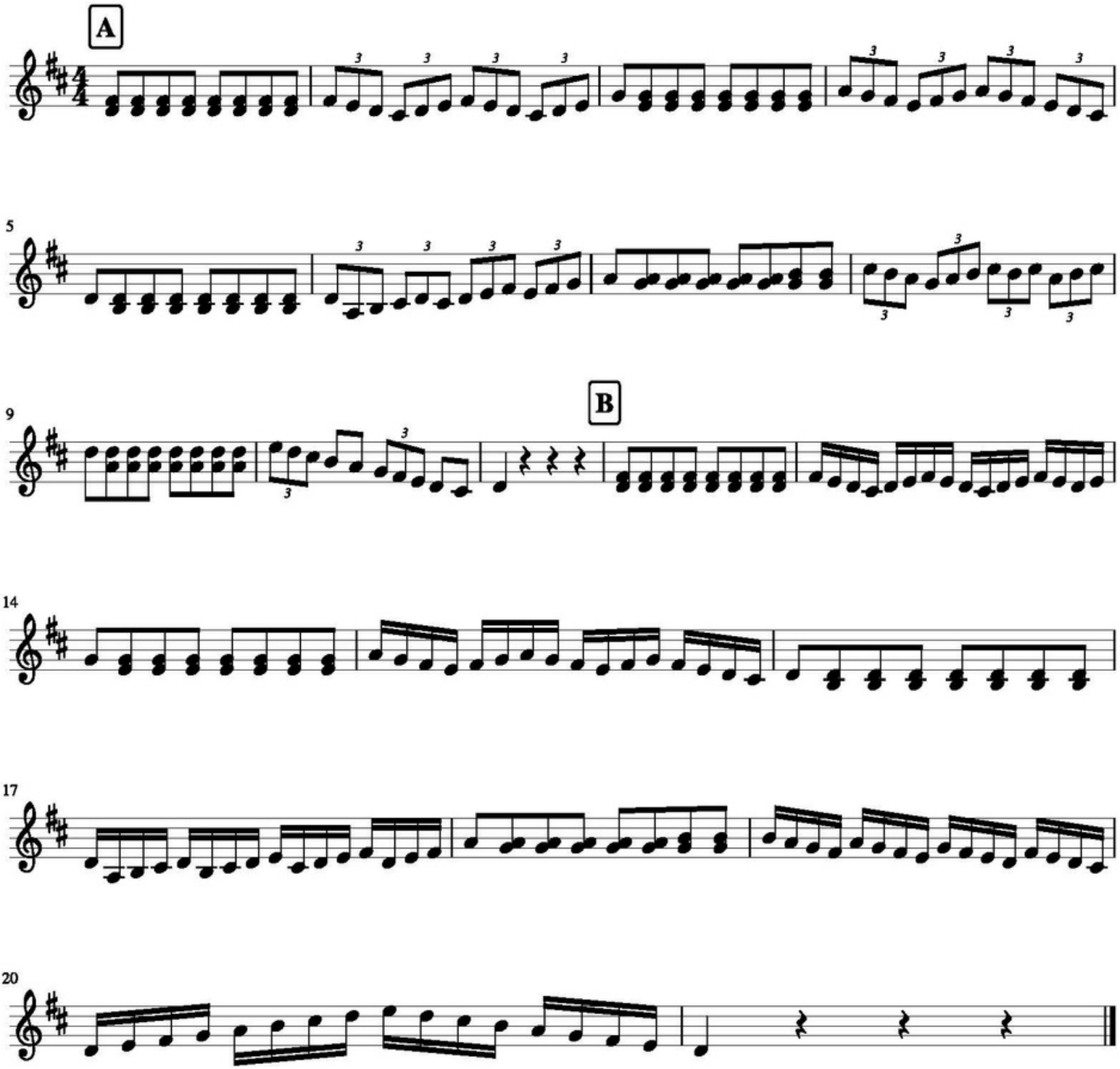
V.S.


49
D
R L L R L L R L L R L L
R L L R L L R L L R L R
L R R L R R L R R L R R
L R R L R R L R R L R L
53
R L R R L R R L R R L R
R L R R L R R L R R L R
L R L L R L L R L L R L
L R L L R L L R L L R L
57
R R L R R L R R L R R L
R R L R R L R R L R R L
L L R L L R L L R L L R
L L R L L R L L R L L R
61
R R R L L L R R R L L L
R R R L L L R R R L L L
R R L L R R L L R R L L
p
R R L L R R L L R L R L
65
f
ppp
R

Mallets

Modulating Scales

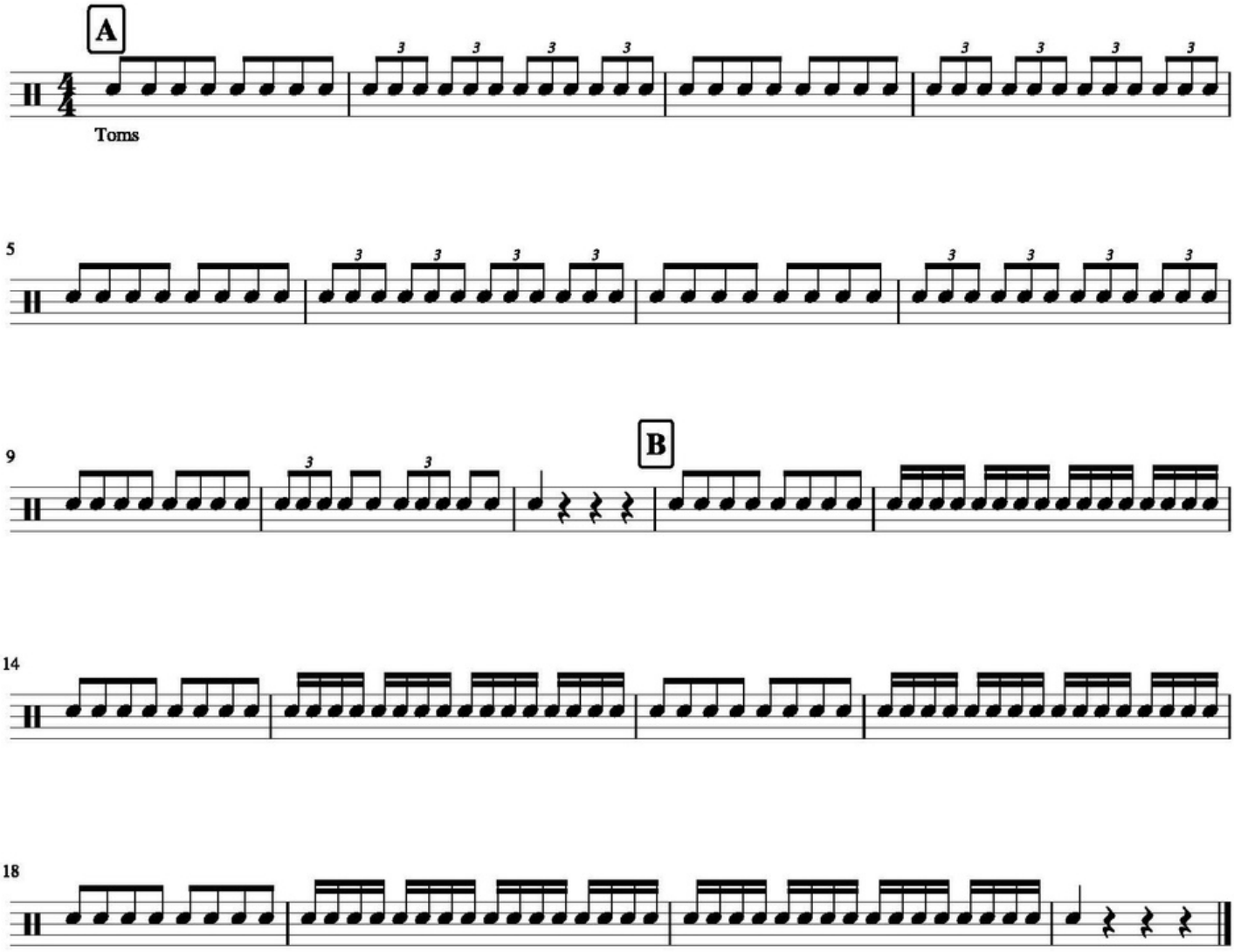
Tempo = 72+ bpm



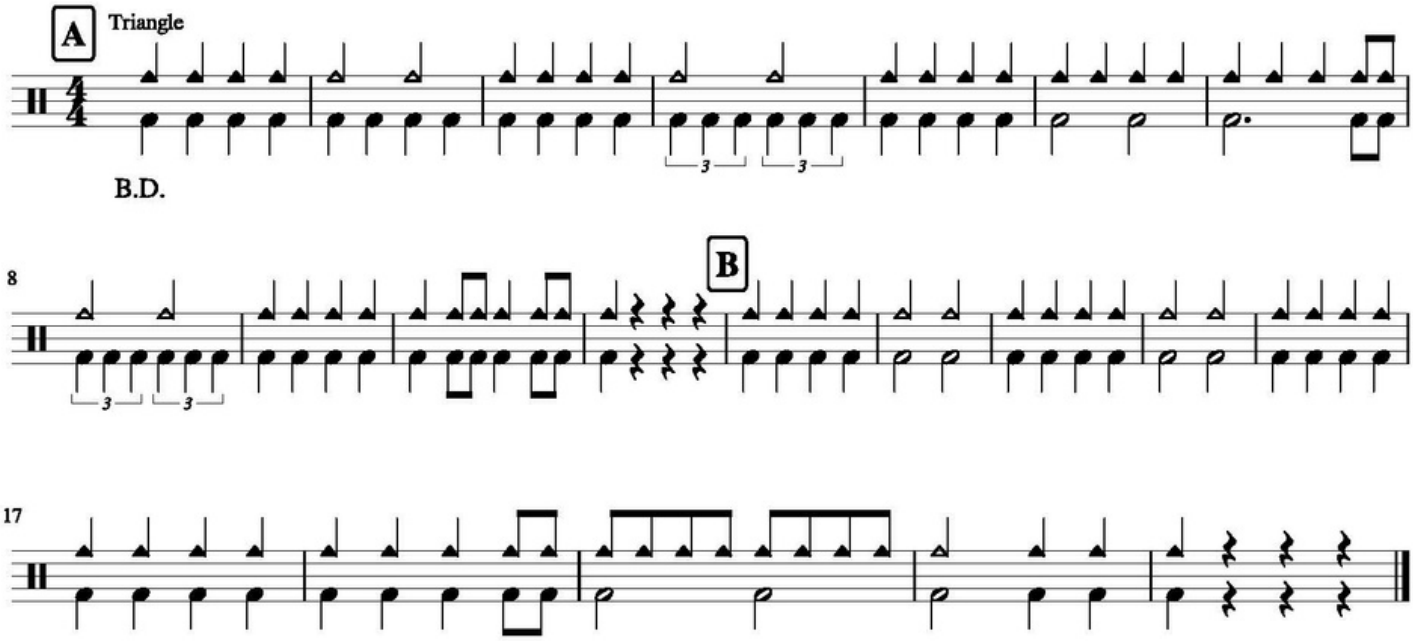
Modulating Scales

Tempo = 72+ bpm

Rack 1



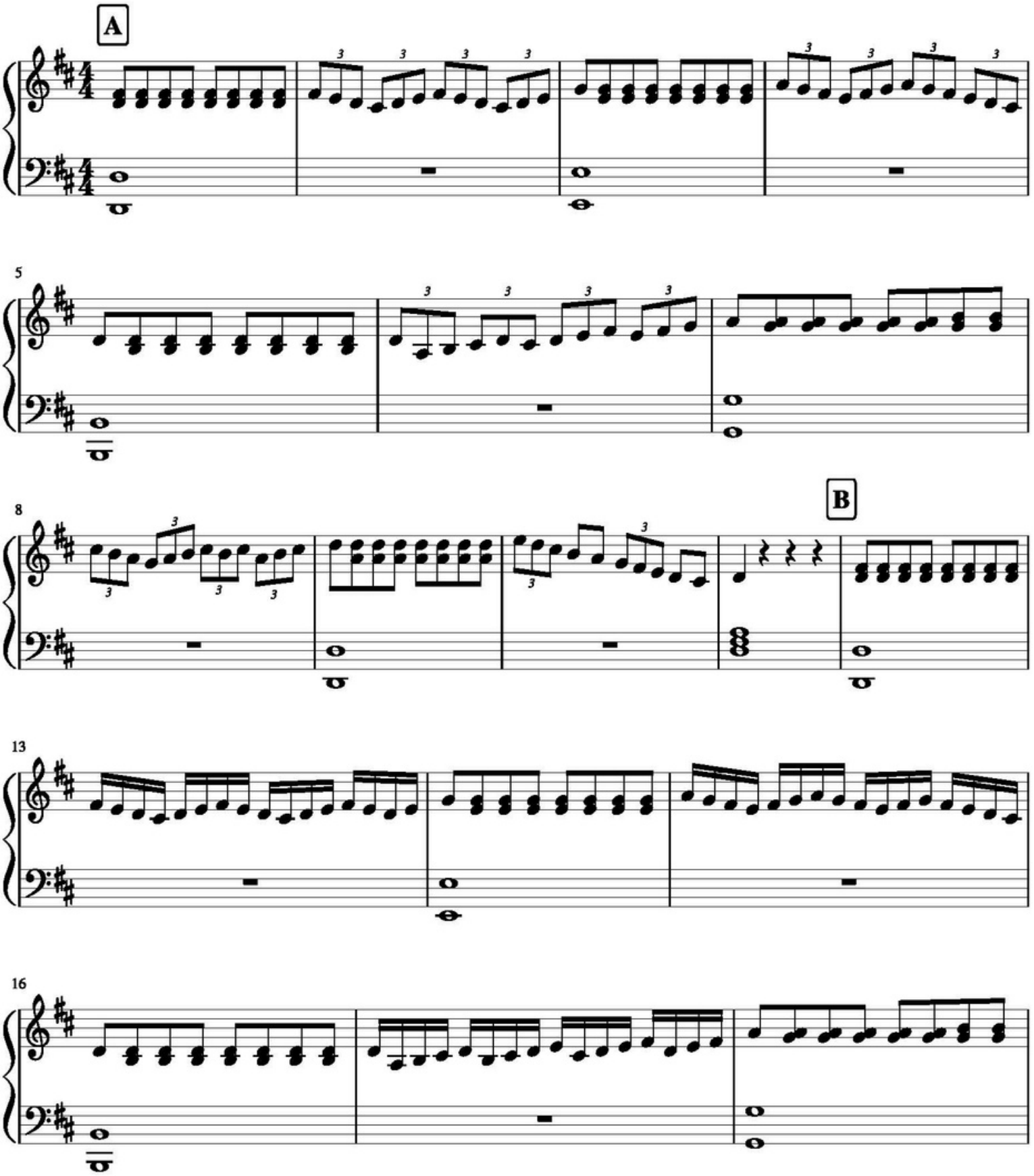
Rack 2



Synth

Modulating Scales

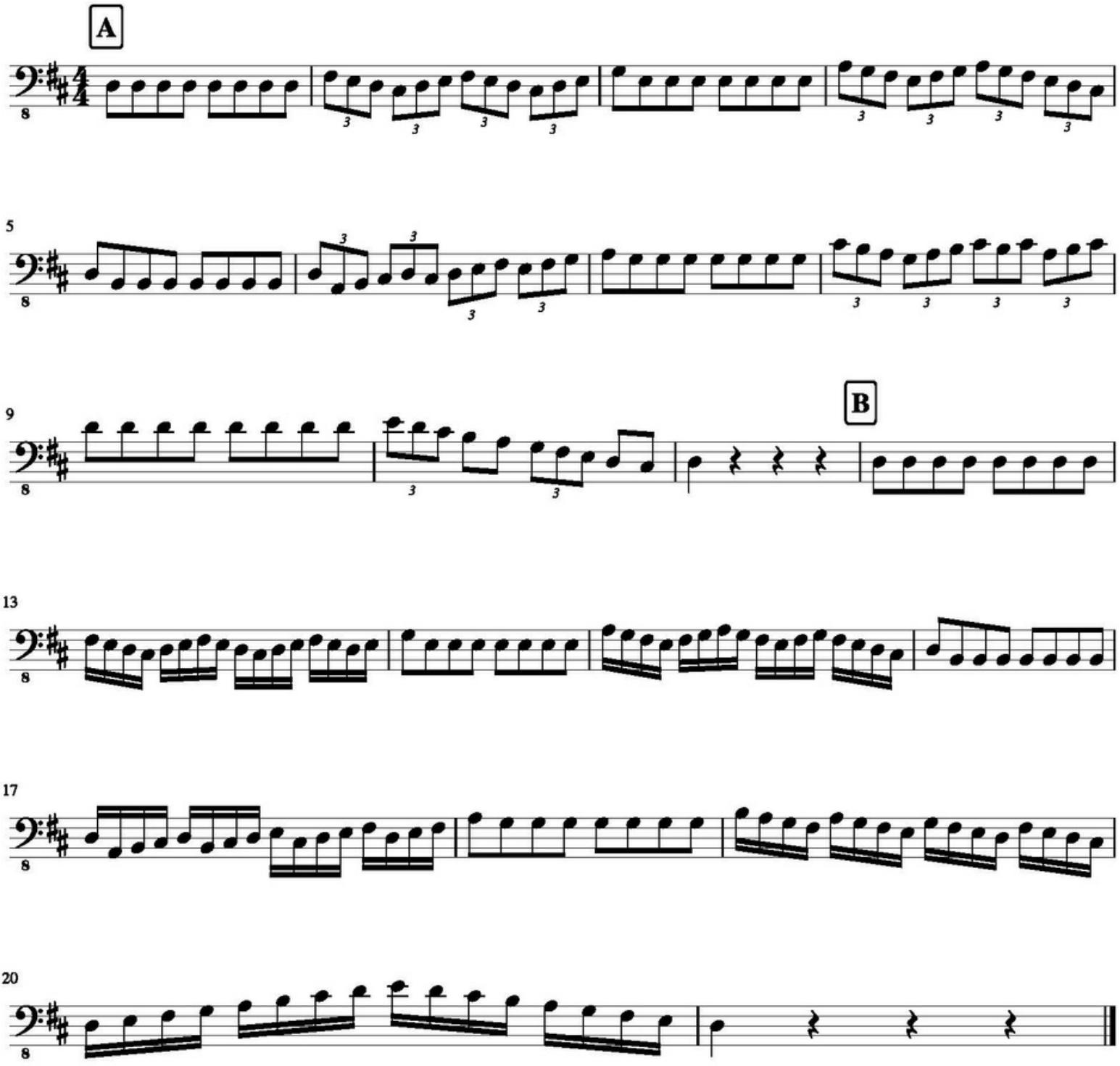
Tempo = 72+ bpm



Bass Guitar

Modulating Scales

Tempo = 72+ bpm



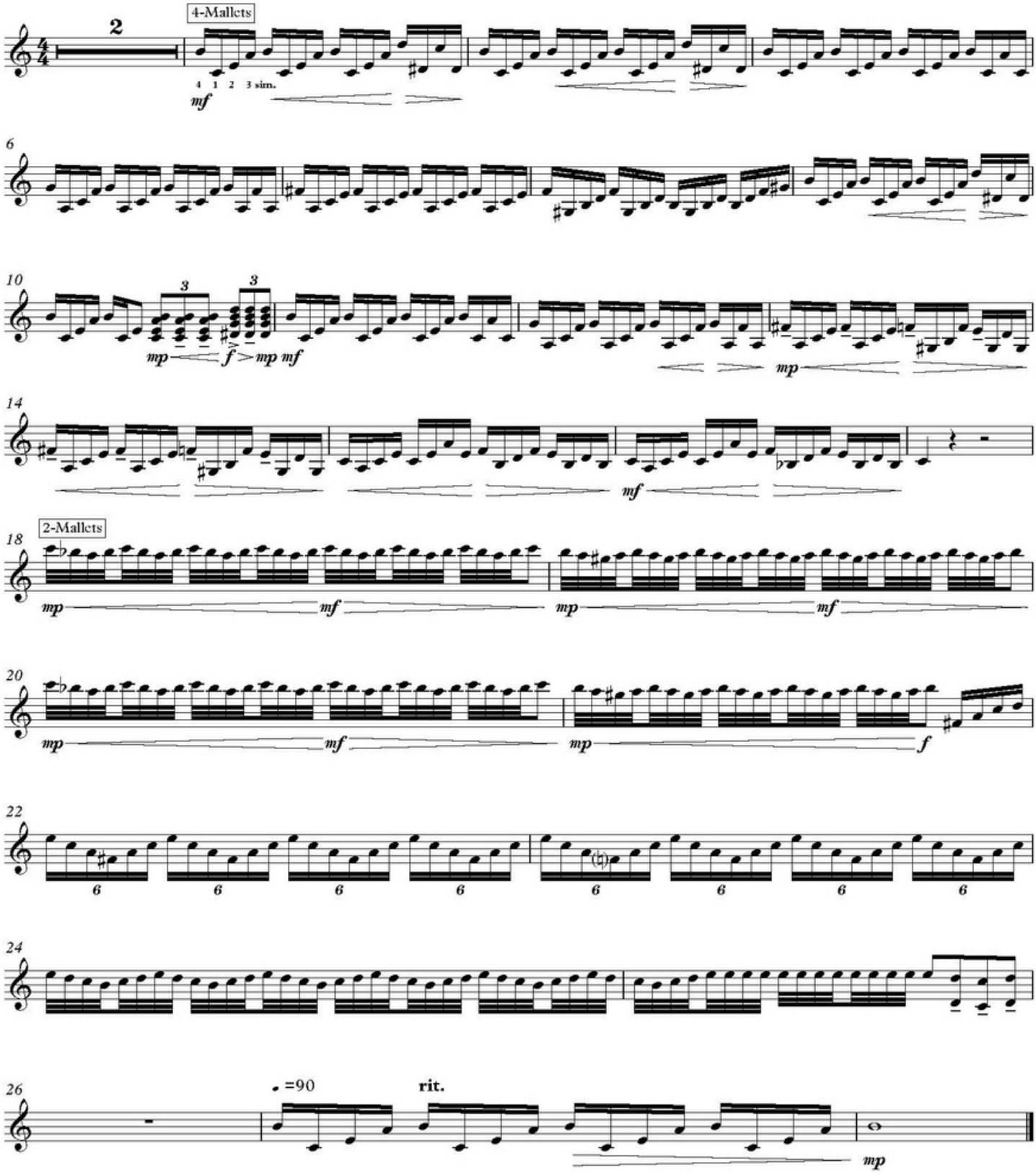
Marimba 1

Crepuscolo Sul Mare

(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
Arr. Maverick Peterson

♩. = 90



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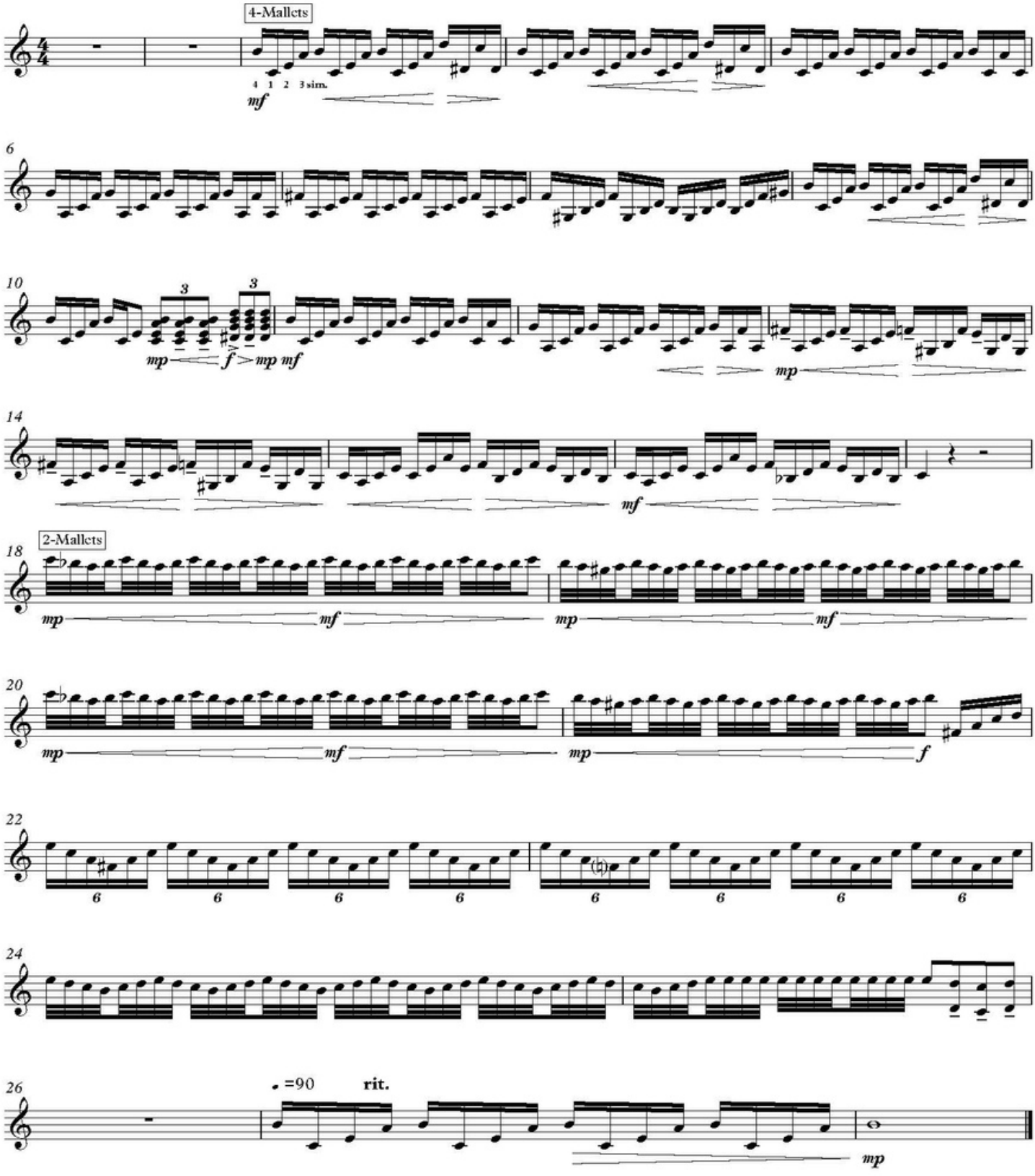
Marimba 2

Crepuscolo Sul Mare

(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
Arr. Maverick Peterson

♩. = 90



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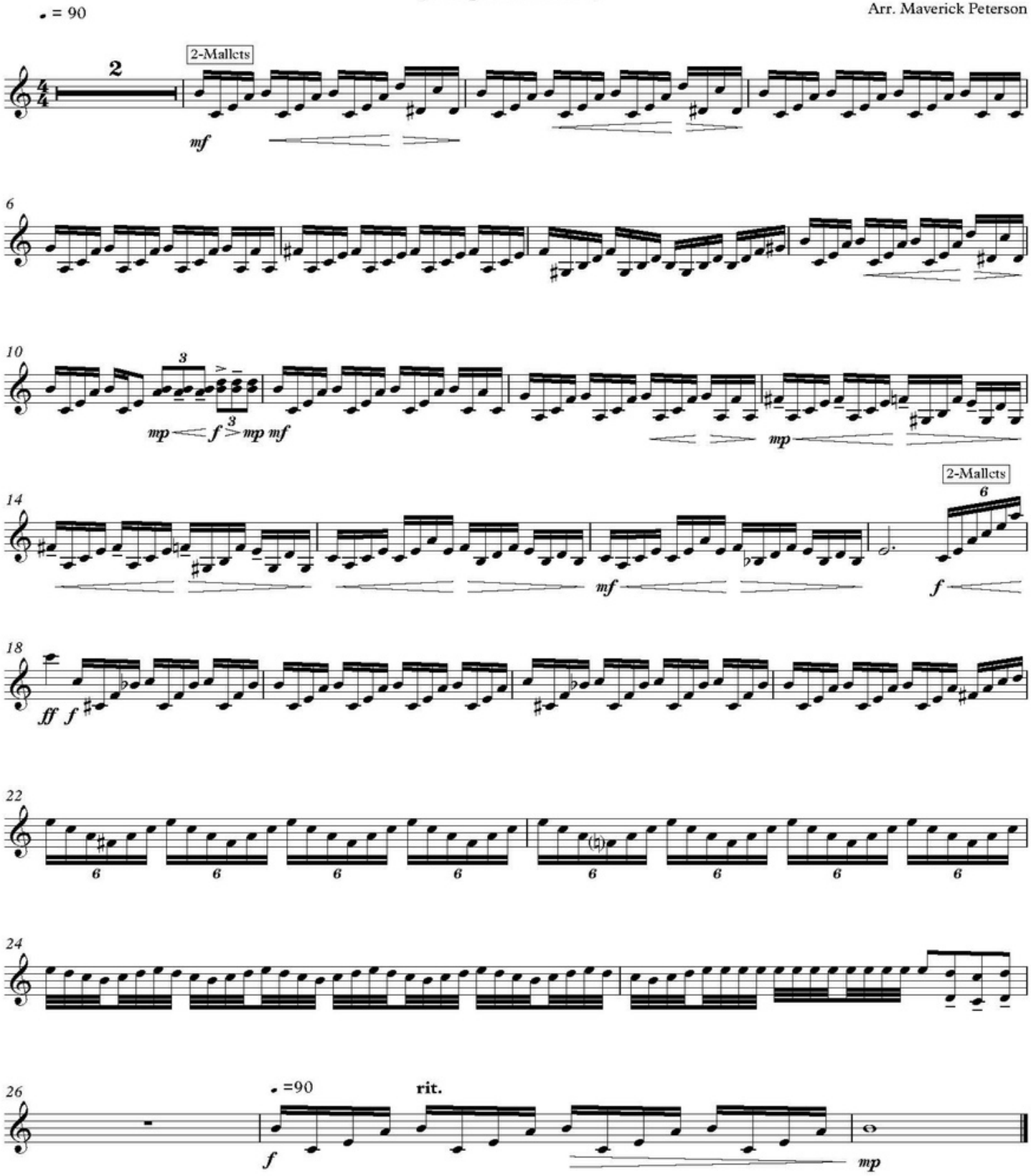
Crepuscolo Sul Mare

(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
Arr. Maverick Peterson



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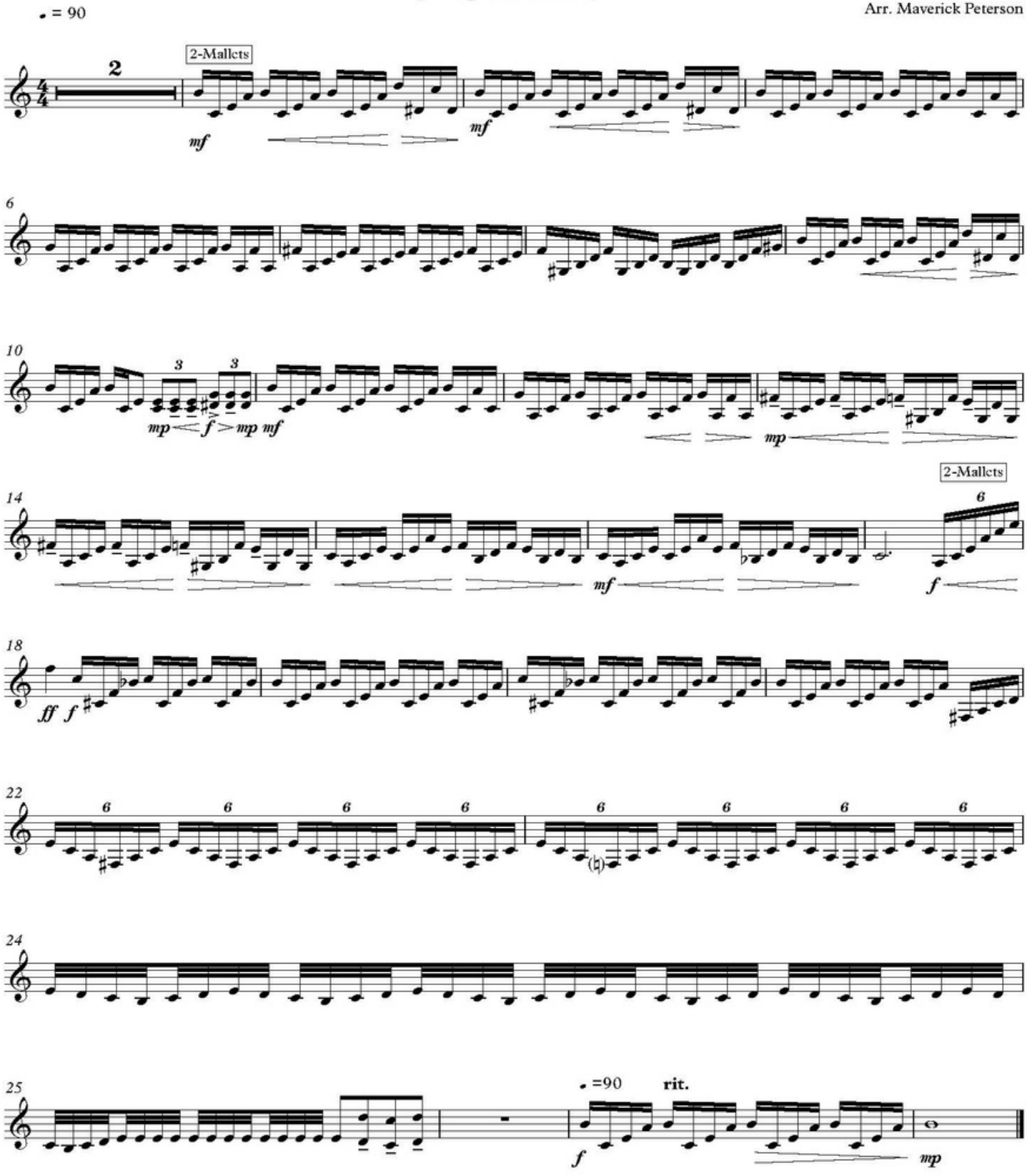
Crepuscolo Sul Mare

(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
Arr. Maverick Peterson



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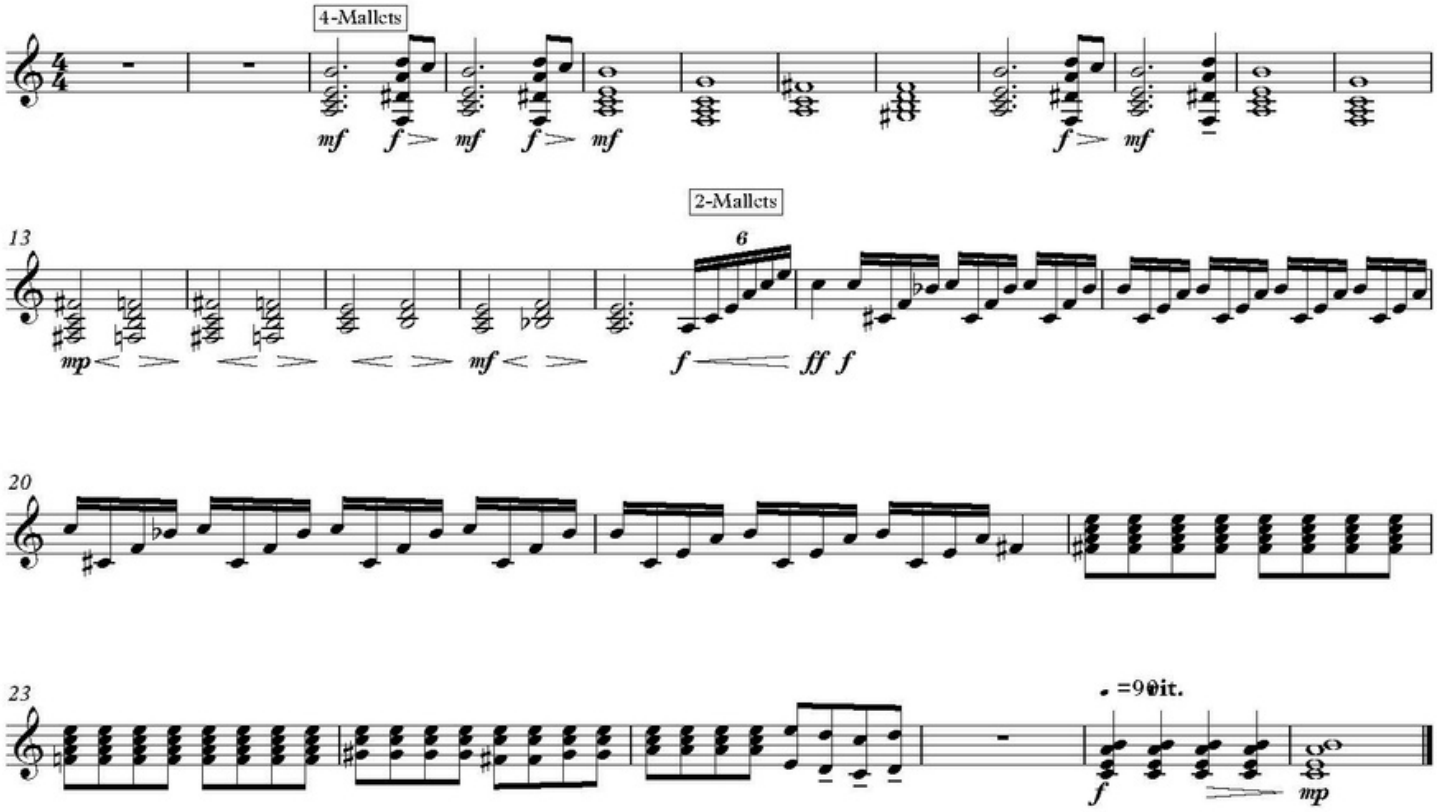
Crepuscolo Sul Mare

(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
Arr. Maverick Peterson

♩. = 90



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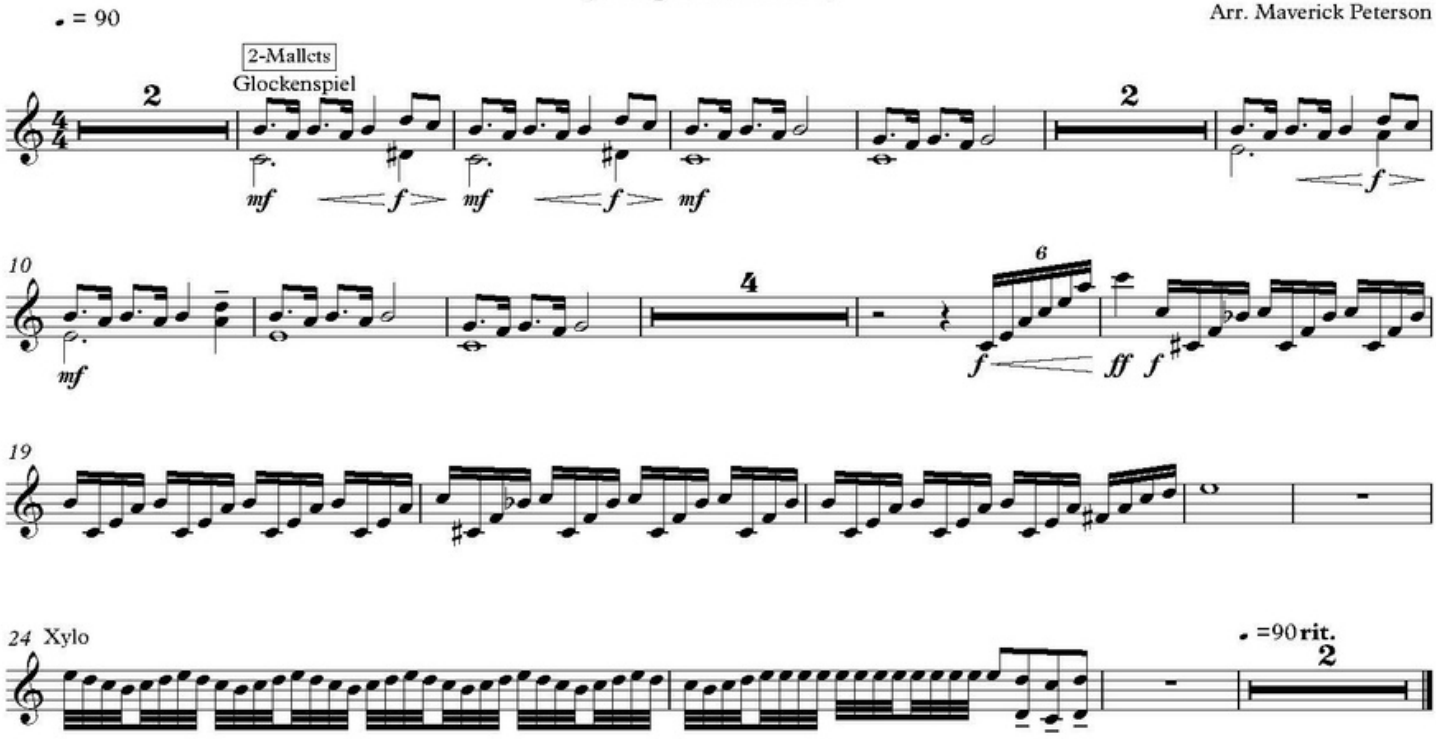
Crepuscolo Sul Mare

(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
Arr. Maverick Peterson



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Crepuscolo Sul Mare

(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
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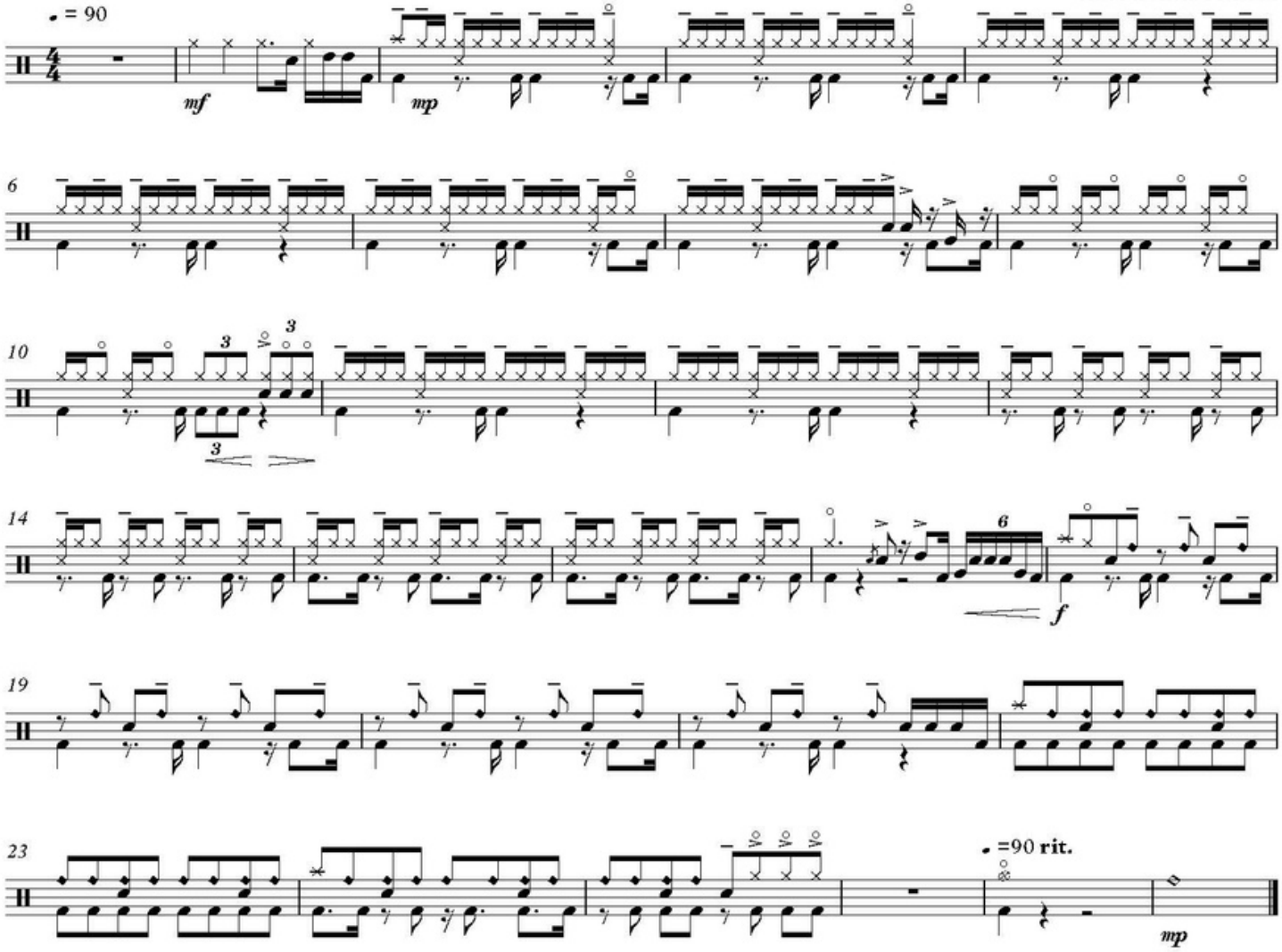

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Crepuscolo Sul Mare

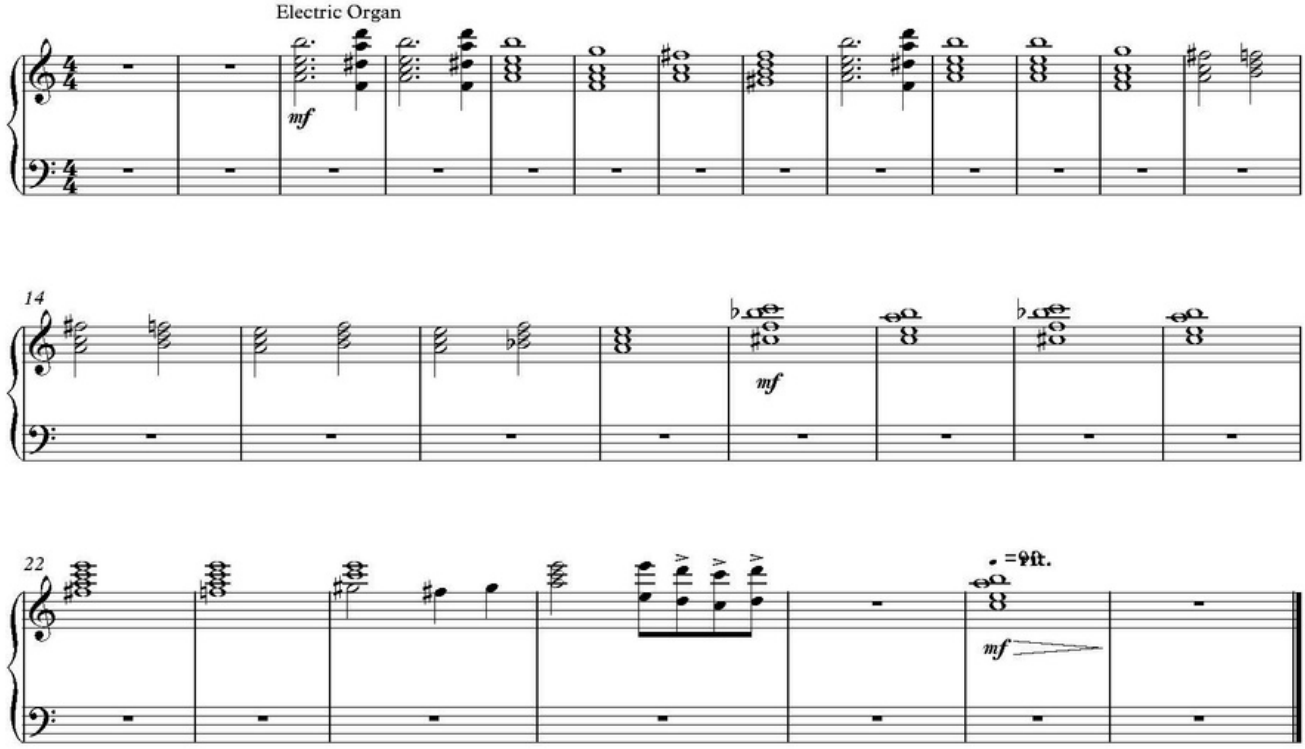
(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
Arr. Maverick Peterson

Synth 1

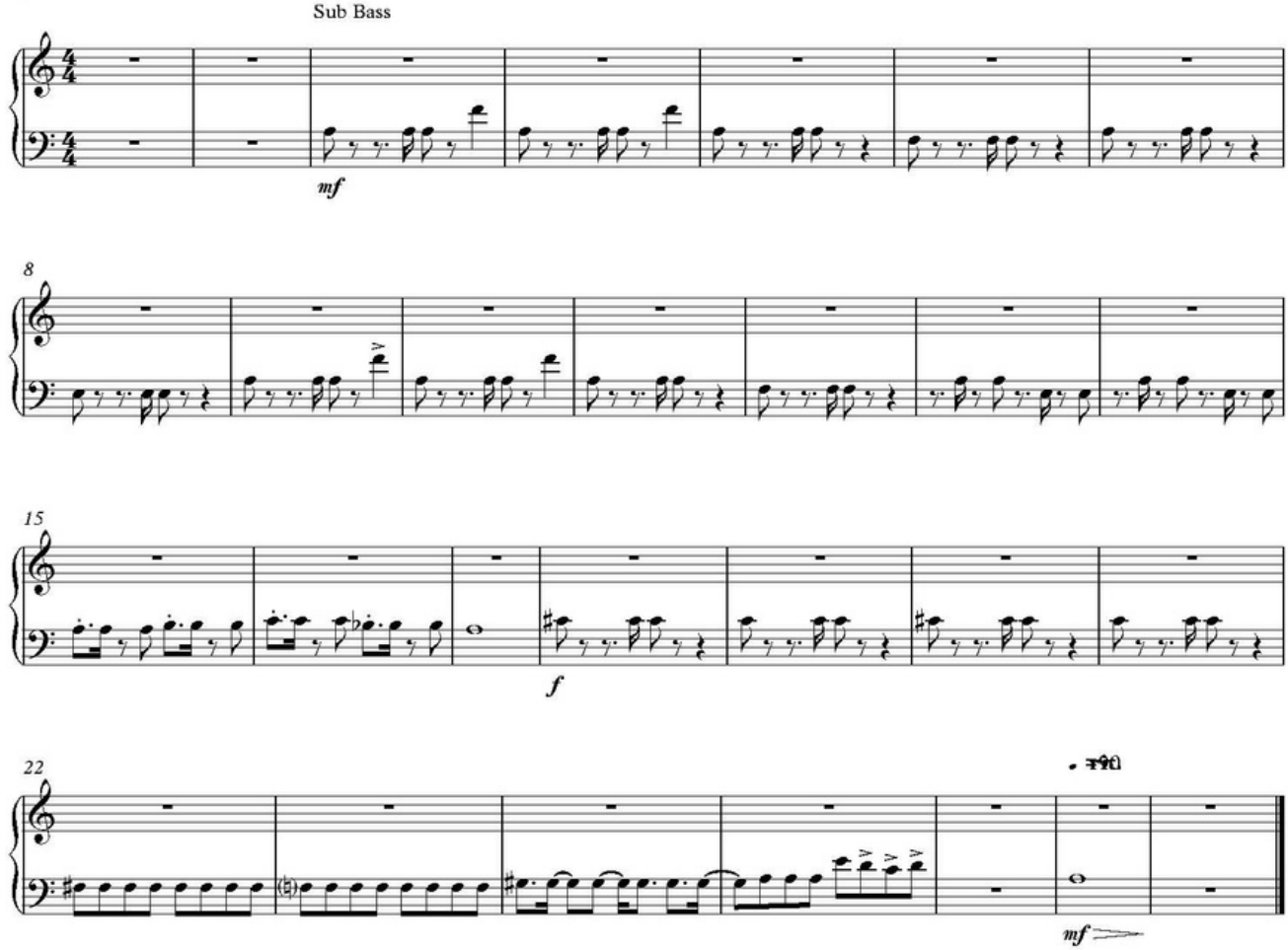
♩. = 90

Electric Organ



Synth 2

Sub Bass



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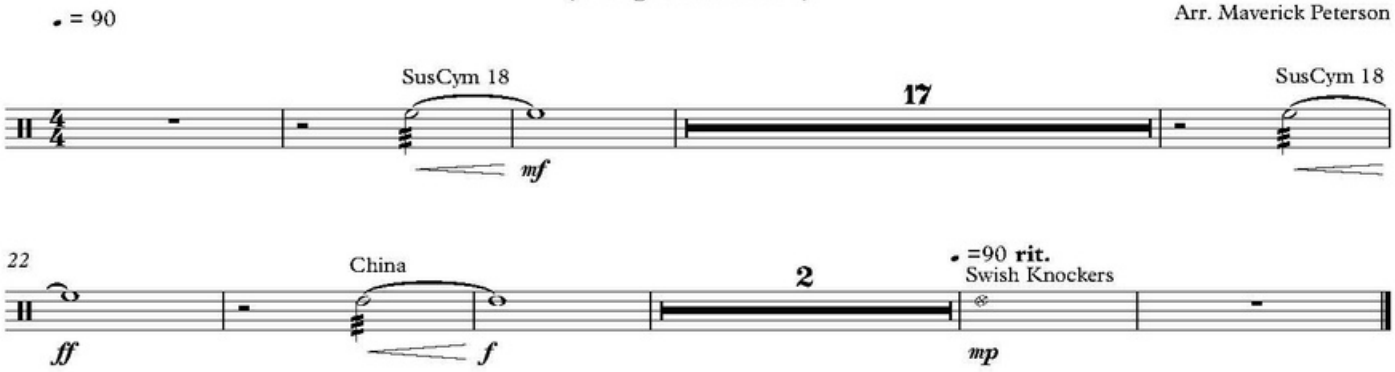
Rack 1

Crepuscolo Sul Mare

(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
Arr. Maverick Peterson

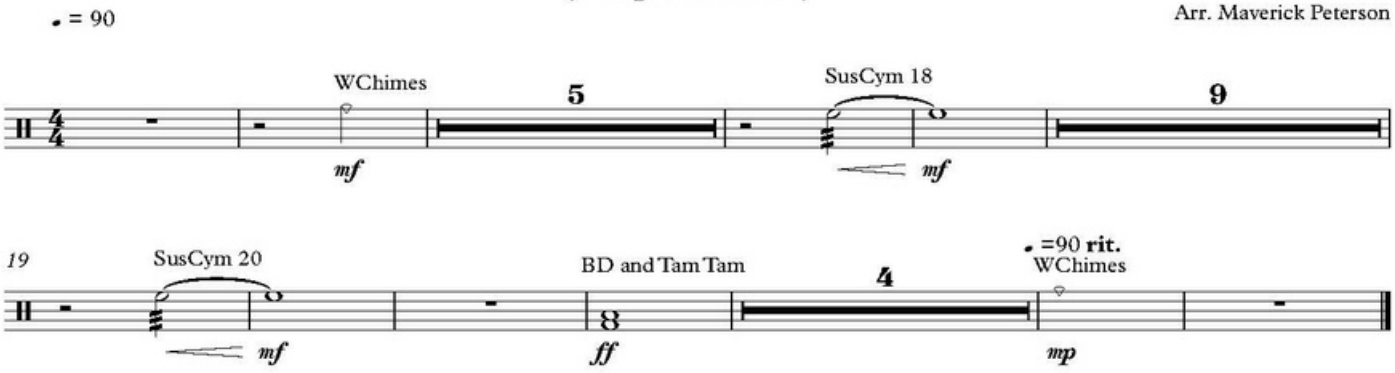


Rack 2

Crepuscolo Sul Mare

(Twilight on the Sea)

Piero Umiliani
Arr. Maverick Peterson



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