2024 AUDITION MATERIALS

FRONT ENSEMBLE

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MUSIC CITY YOUTH IN THE ARTS, INC.

CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME!

By downloading this packet, you have taken the first step in a journey that could change your life. The drum corps activity continues to provide young people with a unique experience unlike other performing arts activities. Drum corps asks us to be the best versions of ourselves in pursuit of a common goal: connecting with others through performance. You will spend each day this summer training and improving your 11- minute show with more than 150 fellow performers, building lifelong friendships. No matter the path you choose in life, this activity will provide you with tools and leadership skills you can use beyond your time as a performer.

The mission and purpose of Music City Youth in the Arts shall be to provide experiential education in music and visual performance arts to young people through an immersive program emphasizing camaraderie, fitness, and leadership development. Music City Drum Corps is a youth performing arts organization based in Nashville, TN that participates in World Class competition in Drum Corps International. We are committed to providing a safe, educational, and growth-centered experience for our membership.

Whether you have aspirations to perform with Music City in 2024, or just want to see what drum corps is like, we sincerely thank you for joining us!

2024 AUDITION DATES

DECEMBER 8-10 | NASHVILLE, TN

JANUARY 12-14 | CALL BACK AUDITIONS | NASHVILLE, TN

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Front Ensemble Packet

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Front Ensemble Audition Process

Congratulations on taking your first step toward joining Music City 2024! The exercises in this packet will be played at camps and be used to assess your ability to play in an ensemble setting and individually.

Specific things the staff will be assessing:

- Knowledge of the exercises
- Ability to blend into the ensemble
- Individual sound quality
- Ability to learn music quickly
- Ability to make changes and retain those adjustments

Ideally, we want uniformity across the ensemble. Technique will be more thoroughly addressed as you move forward in the audition process. That said, being able to adjust your technique to match the line will be an important part of the audition process.

For the FE, the audition will be divided into two sections:

1. Individual Audition
2. Ensemble Performance

*During the individual evaluation, you will be required to perform a prepared solo, preferably around 3:00 to 5:00 min in length, and represent the best qualities in your playing. You will also be asked to perform exercises from this packet on your chosen instrument. Expect to receive immediate and detailed feedback from an instructor during your individual evaluation. *(**Drumset/Auxiliary/Timpani individuals will have a more interactive audition process)*

*In the ensemble environment, we will assess your ability to blend, balance, and adapt to changes. As we work through the technique program as an ensemble, specific explanations of approach will be provided. Your ability to keep an open mind and incorporate the Music City way of doing things in

your playing will be crucial. If available, we will learn a short excerpt or piece of music that will be handed out at camp.

Rehearsal Expectations

Rehearsal time is invaluable, and it is important that as a member you are constantly engaged in rehearsals and actively trying to make each rep more consistent. The staff will clarify what each rehearsal's goals will be. You should stay focused on those goals throughout the rehearsal.

It is equally as important to maintain a positive attitude in rehearsals and to be receptive to constructive criticism. Remember we are all on the same team working toward the same goal.

It is expected that you show up to rehearsals prepared with any music given to you prior to rehearsal. Rehearsals are for micro-adjusting what you have learned on your own time and incorporating everyone into the ensemble sound.

Once the membership of the ensemble has been decided, we will spend time unifying the technical approach. The priority is always making a good sound on the instruments. However, there will be time devoted to developing a visually uniform approach.

Arriving on time for rehearsal means arriving early enough to be set-up and ready to play at the start of rehearsal. Take into consideration equipment needs, travel time, etc. and plan accordingly so that we can be as productive as possible with what little rehearsal time we have.

Keyboard Technique

The following is a guide to familiarize you with general topics of our approach to the keyboard instruments. The differences in energy, sound production, and performance quality necessary to communicate in NFL stadiums are different from techniques commonly accepted for the concert hall. In light of this, recognize that you may be faced with some new ideas. These concepts are intended for the drum corps environment, and not necessarily applicable to other performance situations.

Posture/Approach

Good posture is essential. Not only is good posture beneficial for health reasons, it portrays a confident and professional presence.

- Stand roughly 6 inches away from the keyboard.
- Upper arms relaxed at your sides, with your forearm slightly below parallel to the keyboard.
- Feet shoulders width apart, head up, and the shoulders back and relaxed.
- Keep your hips parallel to the keyboard.
- Never cross your feet to facilitate movement behind the keyboard. (Except for playing the upper register of the vibraphone.)
- Take lateral steps while maintaining a parallel orientation of the hips.
- Play in the center of the bars at all times. (Unless instructed to do otherwise based on idiomatic and sound quality considerations.)

Uniformity

Drum Corps is an activity that is based in uniformity of approach. Different from a symphonic setting, we routinely ask several people to perform unison or similar parts. Through uniformity we convey a sense of professionalism and confidence to the audience. Posture, facial expressions, moving from instrument to instrument, mallet changes, and pulling instruments on the field are all taken into account. Uniformity is essential in producing balanced sounds from player to player, as well as a unified interpretation of the music we are performing.

Two Mallet Approach

Fulcrum

MCDC will use a modified back finger fulcrum for two mallet grip. This is created with the back two fingers firmly holding the shaft of the mallet yet remaining relaxed and devoid of tension. Since there is little to no rebound from the bar, we combine the back finger fulcrum and wrist to create an upstroke and enhance control over the mallet.

Grip

- Place your thumb and forefinger about a 1/3rd of the way up the mallet (from the base)
- Wrap the back three fingers around the mallet (there should be about 1.5" of the mallet exposed from the bottom of the hand)
- Relax the thumb and forefinger – these two fingers act to control the mallet, but should not be squeezed.
- Ensure that you don't over-squeeze with the back three fingers.
- This should be firm, but no white in the knuckles.

Stroke

A key stroke that MCDC will use is the “piston” stroke. The piston stroke is characterized by an efficient straight down–up motion. The stroke is intended to produce the fullest quality of sound, as well as increase accuracy in your performance.

It is also important to note that maximum velocity is
always used in order to produce an immediate activation of the fundamental pitch. The stroke should move with the same velocity whether playing at pp or ff. Other types of strokes are used as dictated by the musical passage.

These techniques are taught by the staff and are addressed when they are needed. For the audition process, you should practice the following descriptions of the piston stroke.

- Start with the mallet directly over the key you intend to strike.
- Initiate the stroke from the wrist.
- A relaxed forearm follows the stroke to provide weight and enhance projection and sound quality.
- Down stroke directly into the center of the bar.
- Upstroke straight up if striking the same pitch again, or in a direct line to the “up” position over the next note you are to play.
- Down and up strokes are the same velocity.

Various types of strokes are required based on idiomatic and sound quality considerations. These variations are explained and implemented by the staff as needed. Concentrate on mastery of the piston stroke for the audition process.

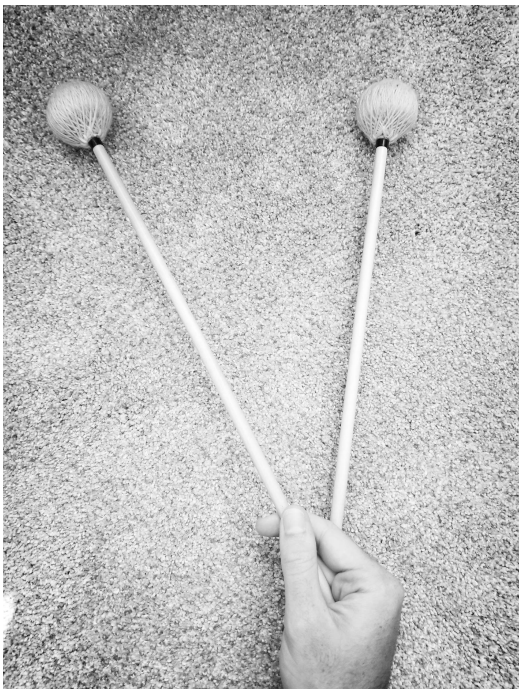
Four Mallet Approach

Grip

We use the Stevens grip for all keyboard instruments. This affords uniformity of both sound characteristics and aesthetic appeal. Below is a general guideline for the grip, but we highly recommend purchasing “Method of Movement” by Leigh Howard Stevens.

The mallets are numbered from left to right – 1, 2, 3, and 4. You will see these indicated in both the music and exercises in this packet.

Mallets 1 and 4



- Grip the mallet with your pinky and 4th finger.
- There should be no more than a 1/2 inch of the shaft extending below the pinky.

Mallets 2 and 3

- Place the other mallet against the palm of your hand, just below the base of the thumb.
- The tip of the middle finger retains pressure on the end mallet so that it stays in contact with the palm.
- The forefinger creates a perch for the mallet on the first knuckle, where the mallet rests.
- The thumb applies downward pressure and control on the perch, with the thumbnail remaining up.

4 Mallet Stroke Types and Characteristics

Single Independent/Single Alternating

- Use of one mallet - acting independently of the unused mallet in the hand.
- Stroke motion pivots around the unused mallet.
- Relaxed fingers in the unused mallet to eliminate sympathetic movement and avoid unnecessary tension.
- Principals of the piston stroke used, returns to up position.

Double Vertical

- Both mallets – same hand – striking the bar at the same time.
- Stroke motion is identical to the 2-mallet approach.
- Keep grip firm but relaxed to control double stop accuracy.
- Principals of the piston stroke used, returns to up position.

Double Lateral

- Principals of the piston stroke NOT used.
- One motion – two strokes – same hand.
- Achieved by lateral motion from the wrist.
- Returns to up position.

- Tempo dependant – for our purposes (slower tempo = single independent motion, faster tempo = double lateral motion)

Application

As you progress into the exercise portion of this packet, please consider the concepts of approach, grip, and posture that have been detailed to this point. These are the building blocks of the technique and will be important to incorporate into your practice as you prepare for the audition. Start slow, have patience, and bring the best of your playing with you to the audition camp.

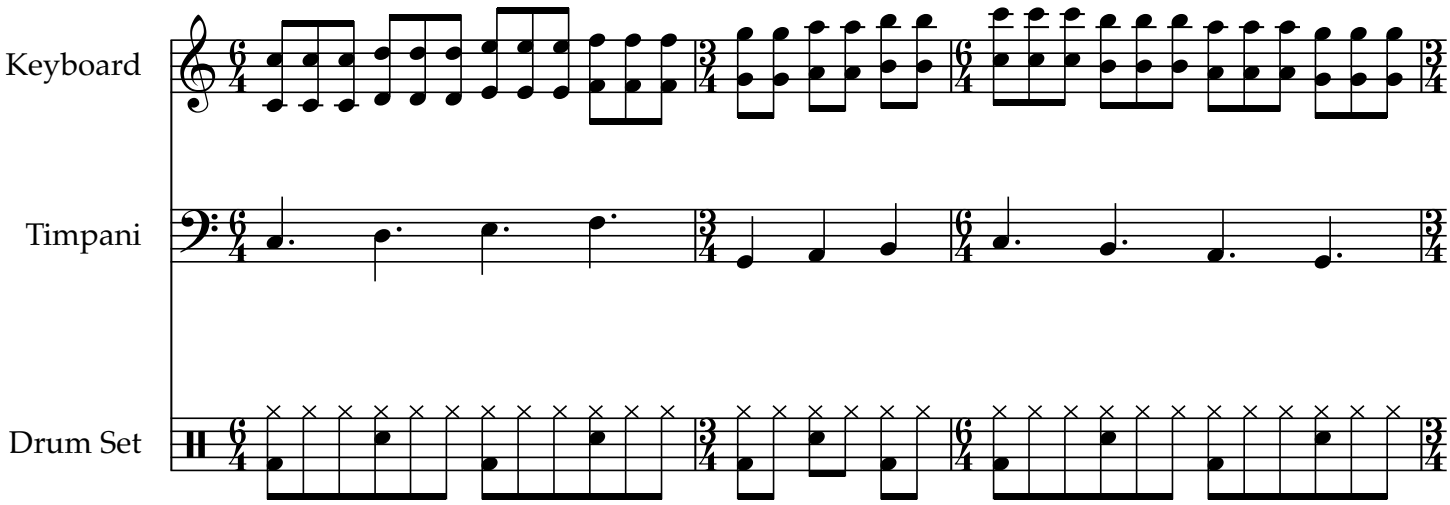
Video Auditions

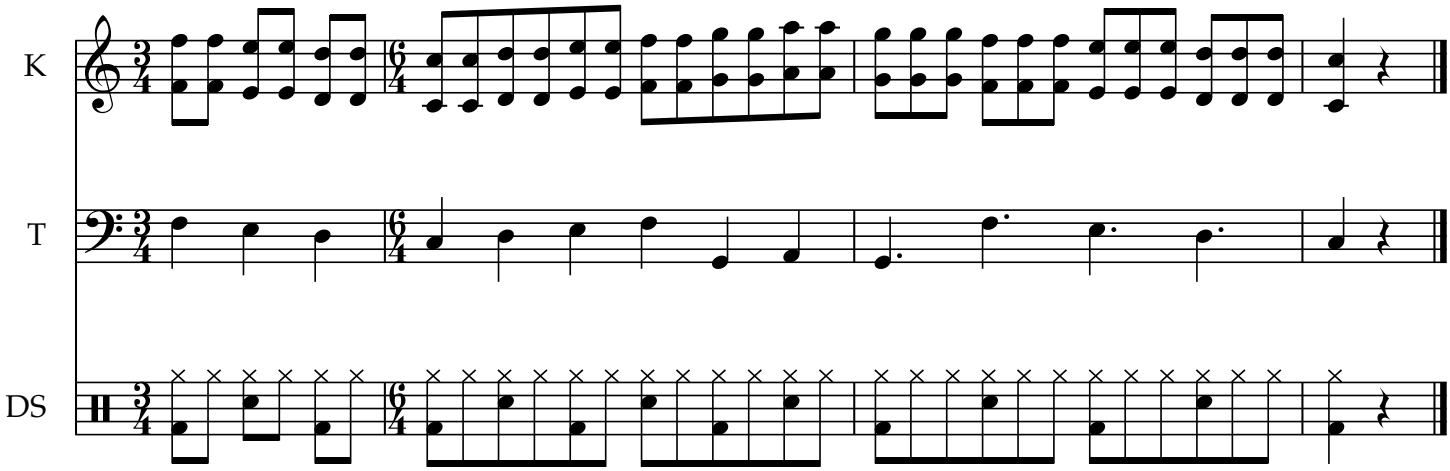
If you register for a video audition, a separate link will be provided to you for video submission. For video auditions, play through the exercises below in key and temp listed. The video should include an audible metronome.

8th Note Octaves

Exercise shown in Major
Prepare all Major and minor keys in
diatonic, chromatic, circle of fourth, etc. progressions.

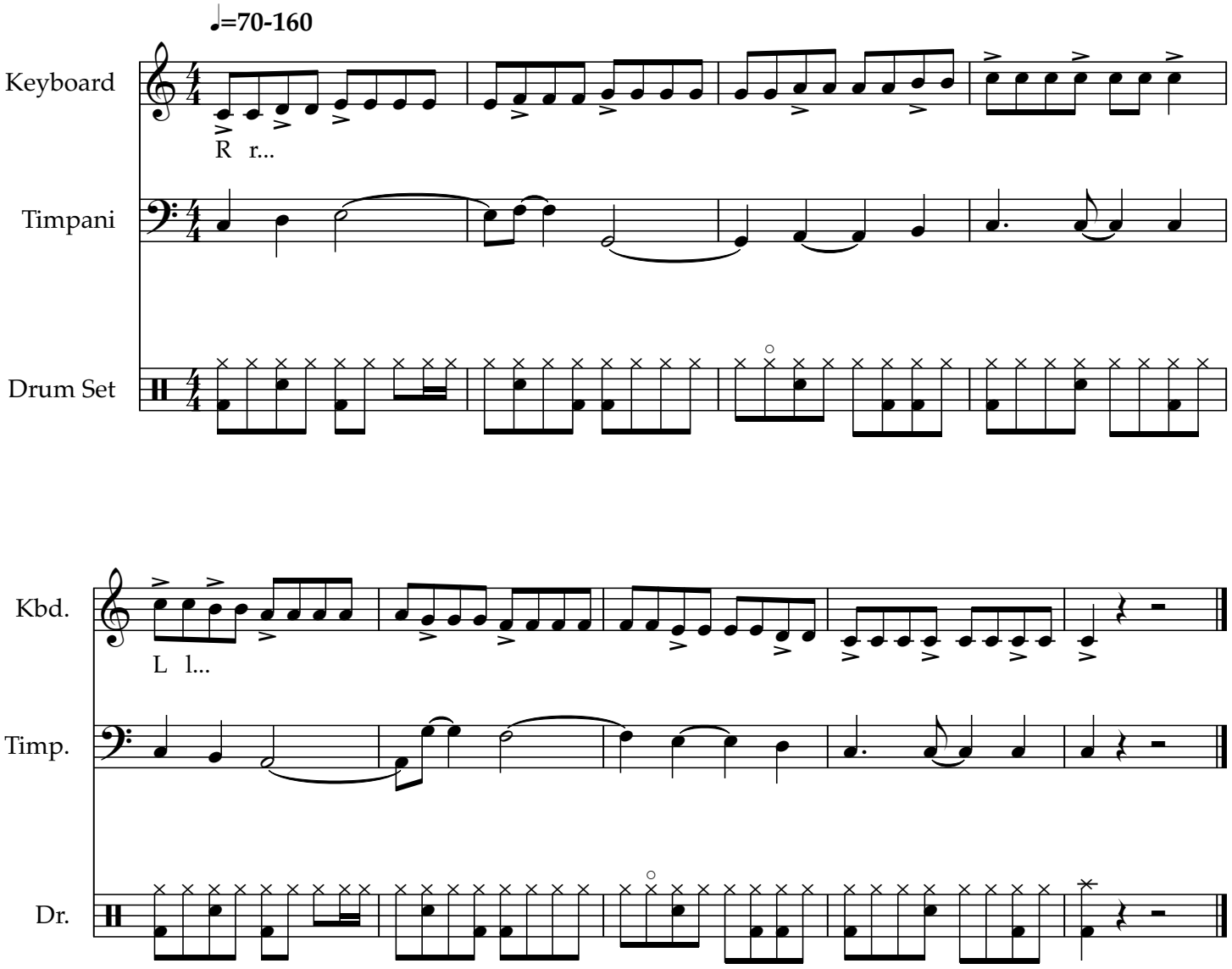
♩=80-190



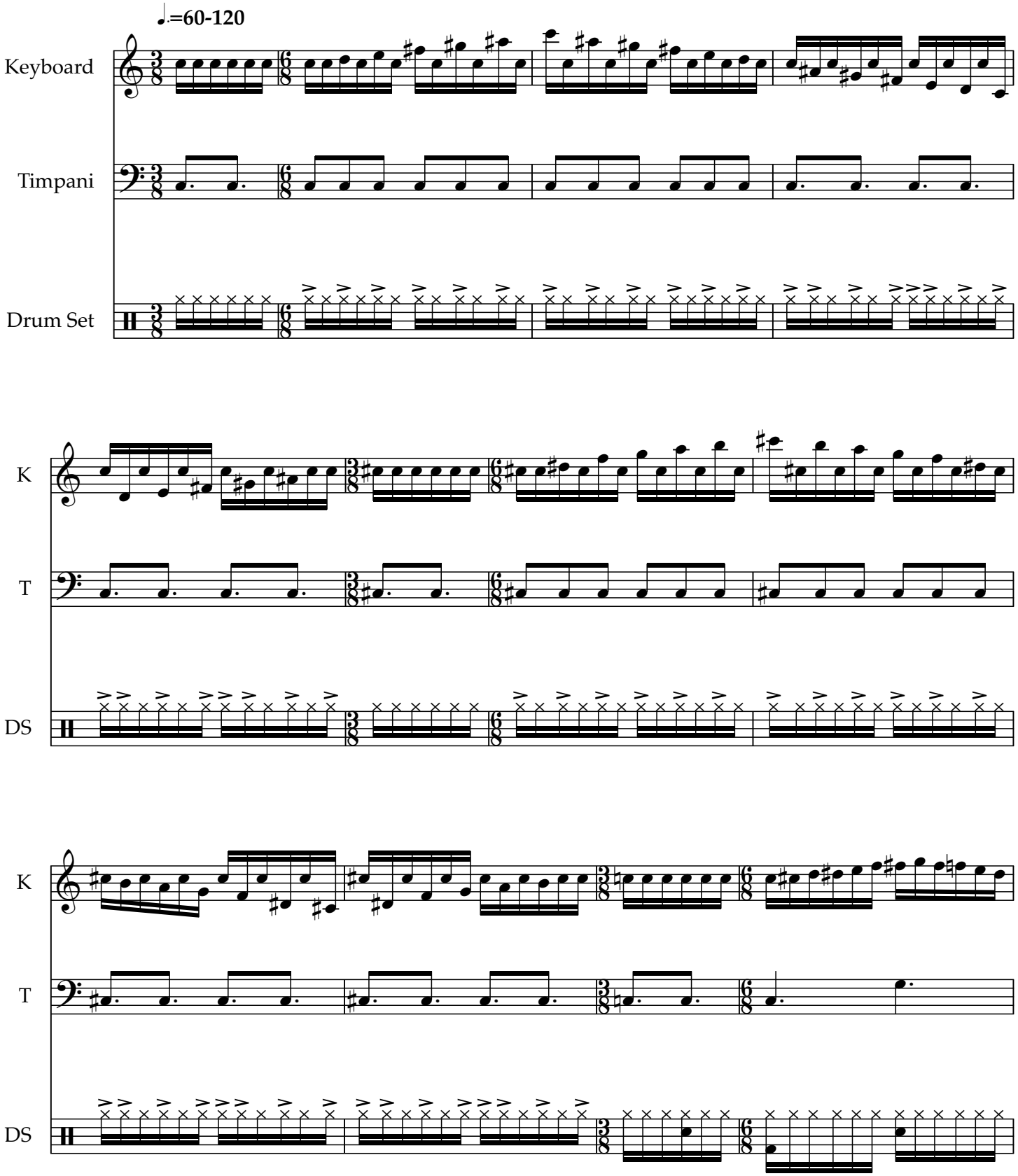


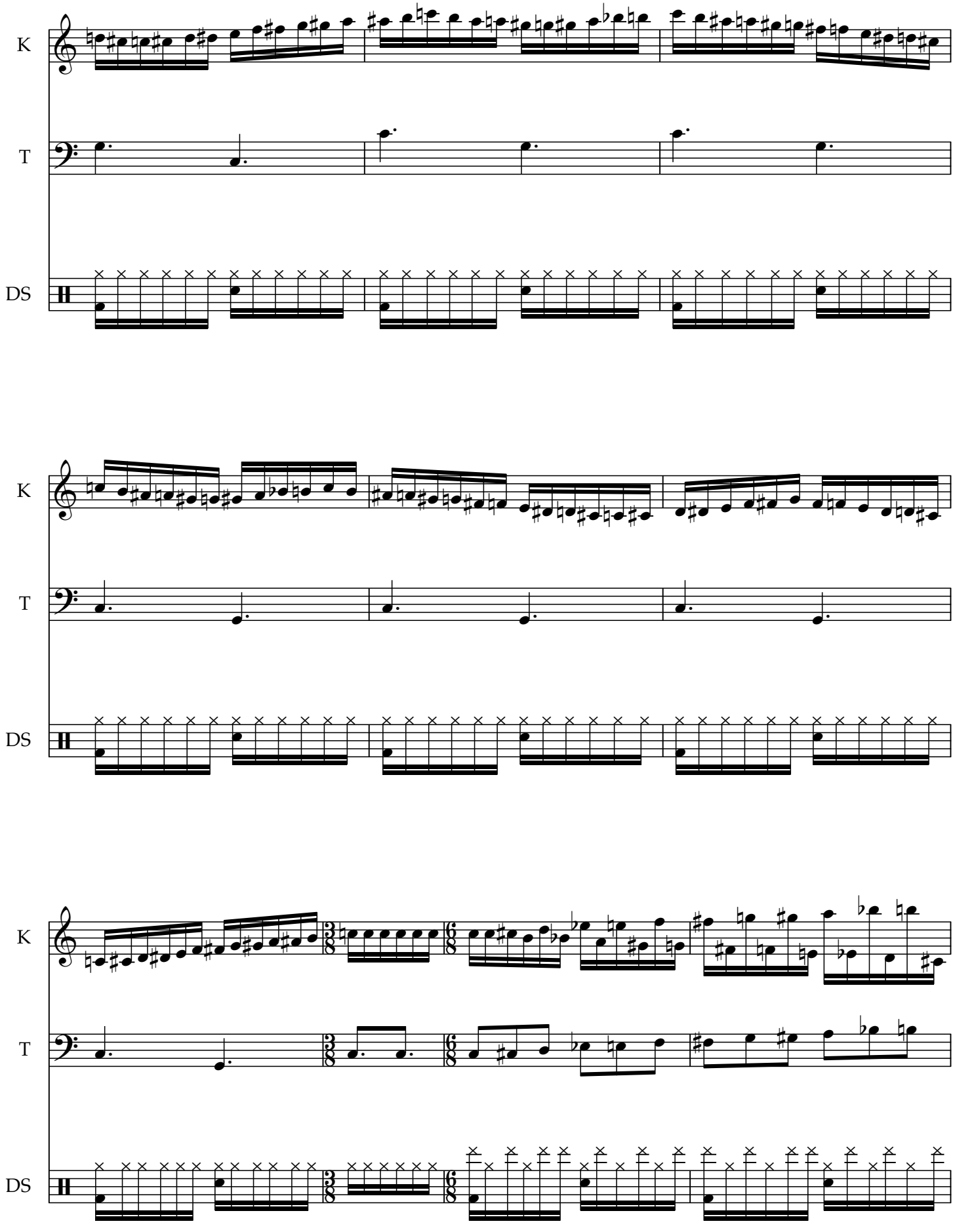
Tap-Accent Groove

Exercise shown in Major
Prepare all Major and minor keys in
diatonic, chromatic, circle of fourths, etc. progressions



CF

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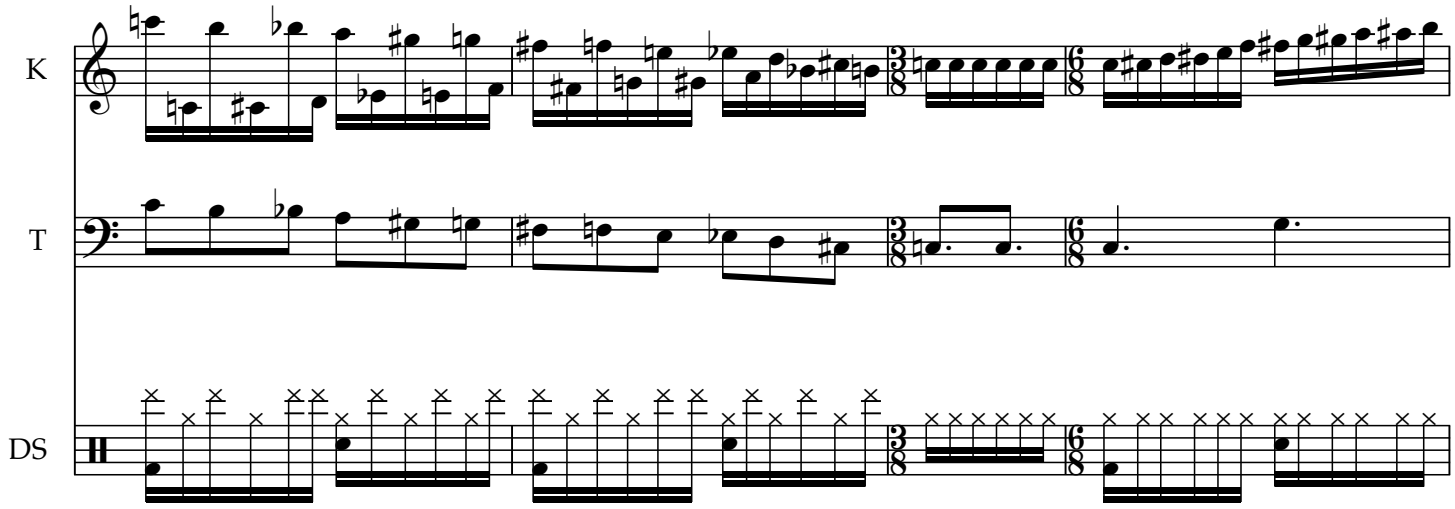
K
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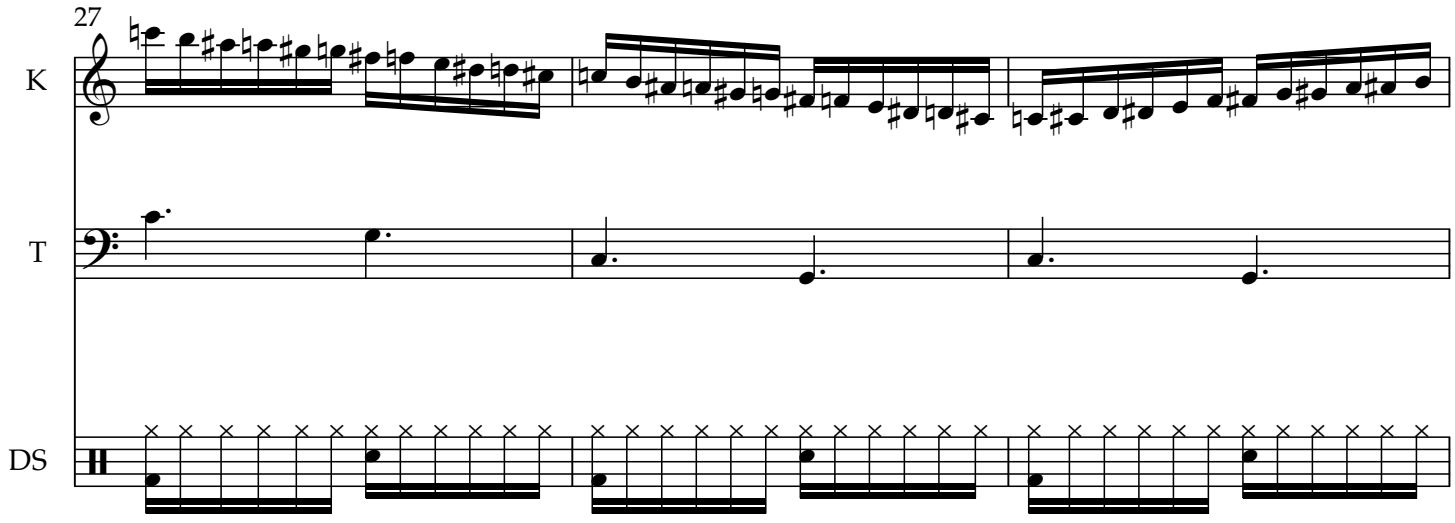
DS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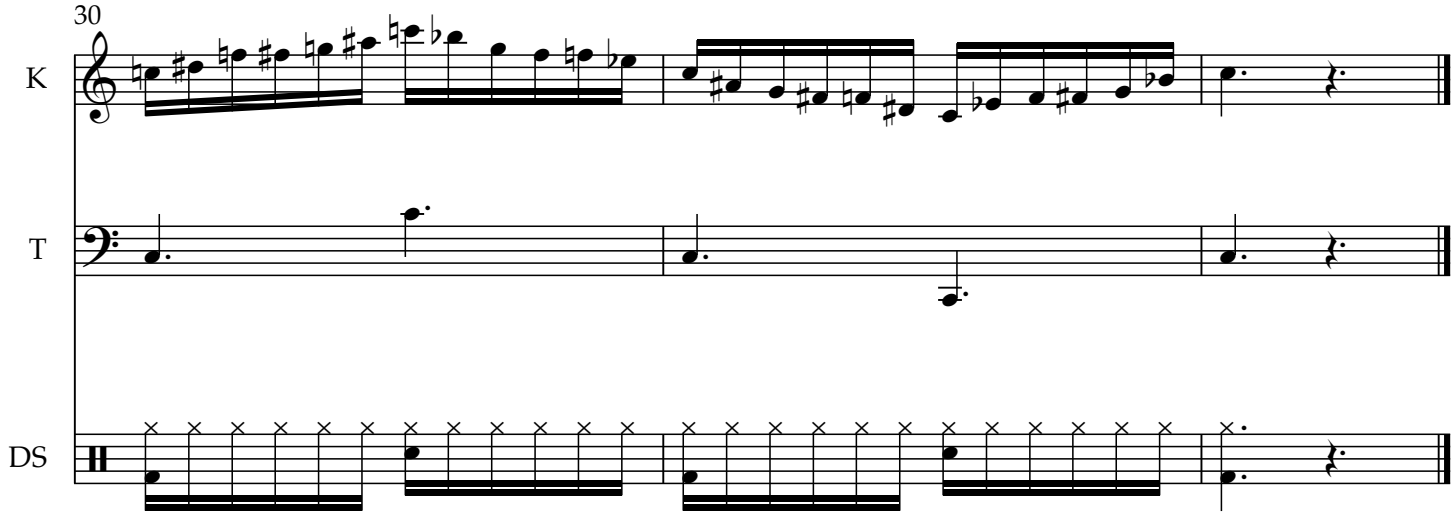
K
T
DS


30
K
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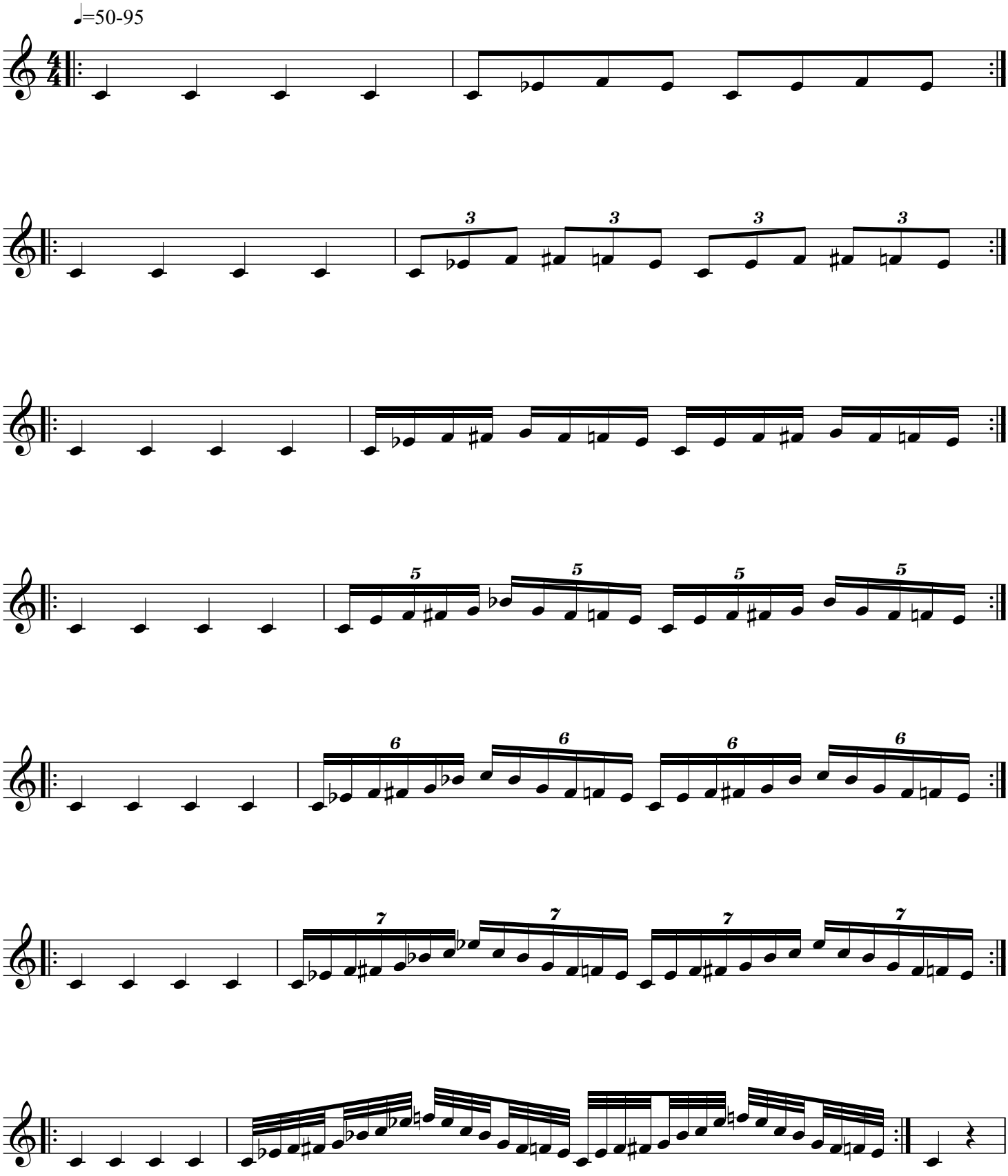
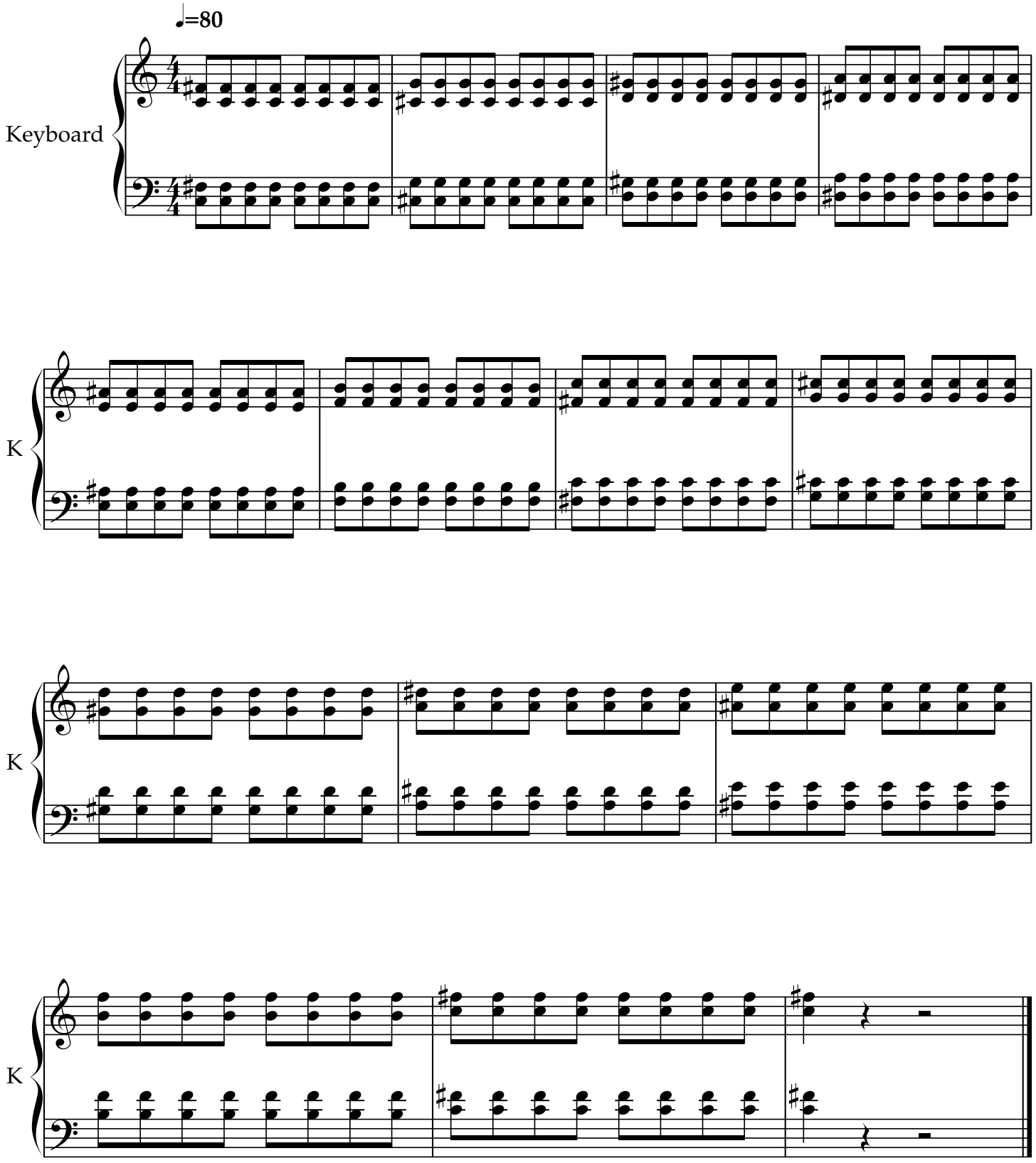
DS

ABCs

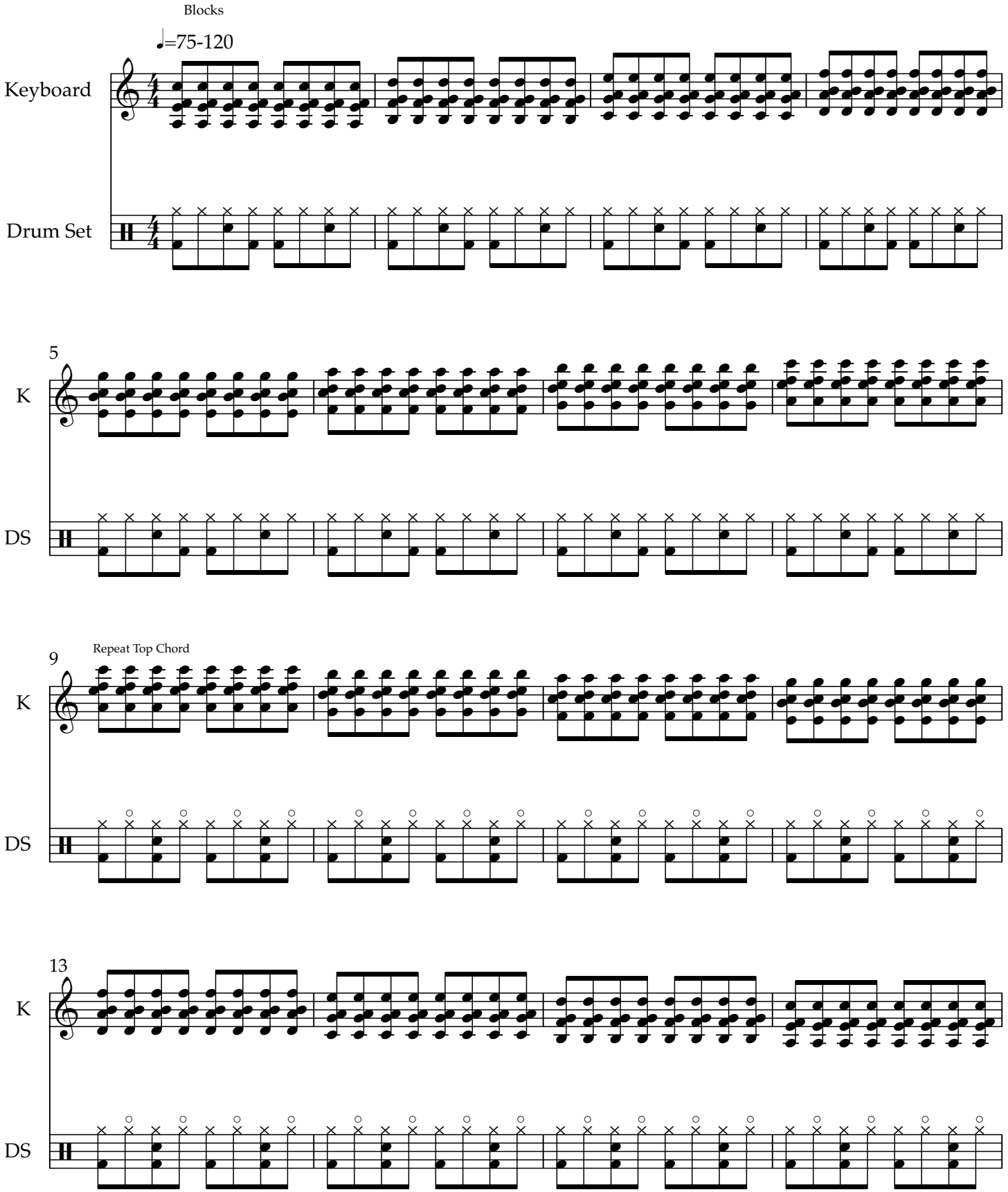


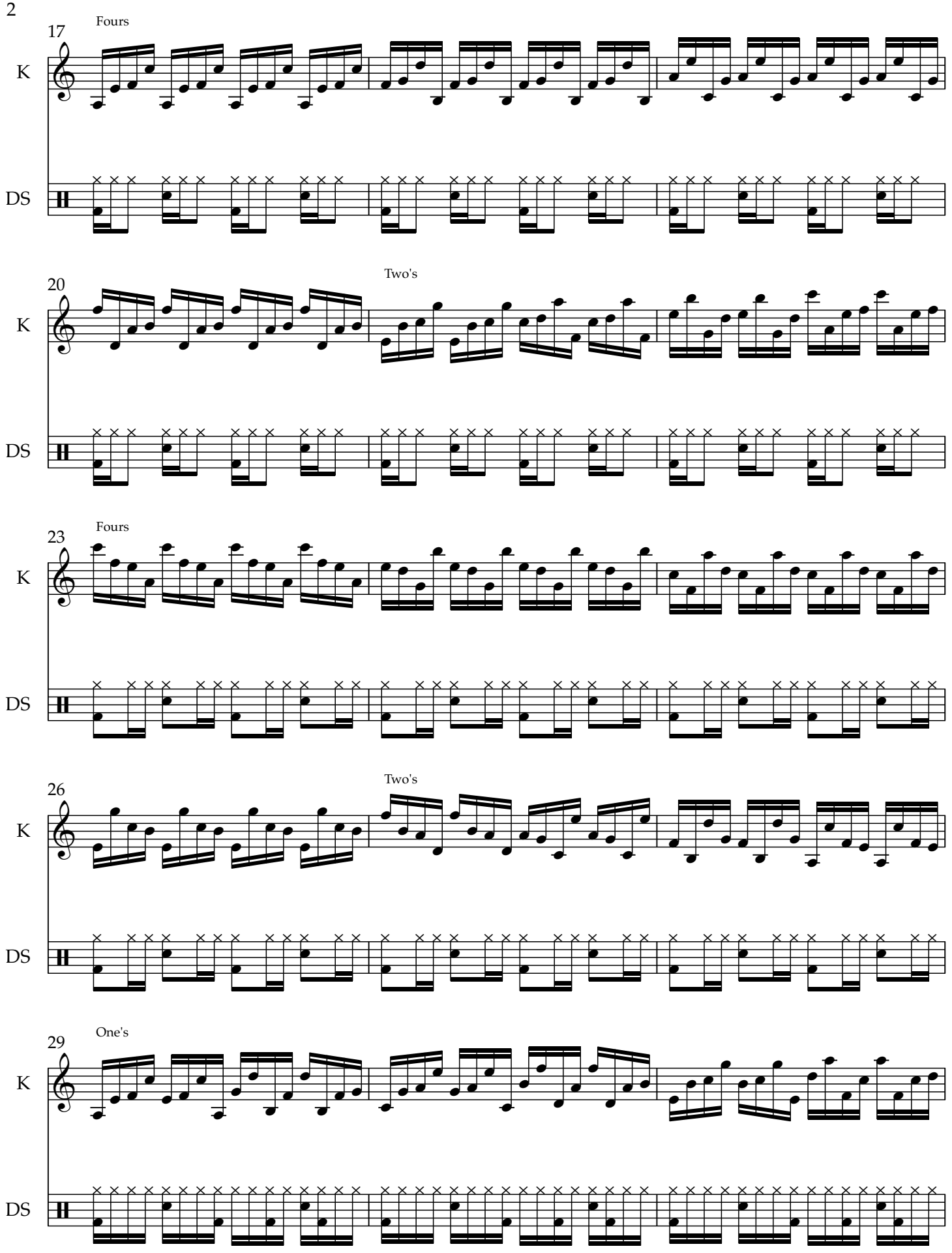
Learn as written (Tritones) and in:
-3rds
-minor 7ths
Prepare w different permutations:
-out/in
-13/24

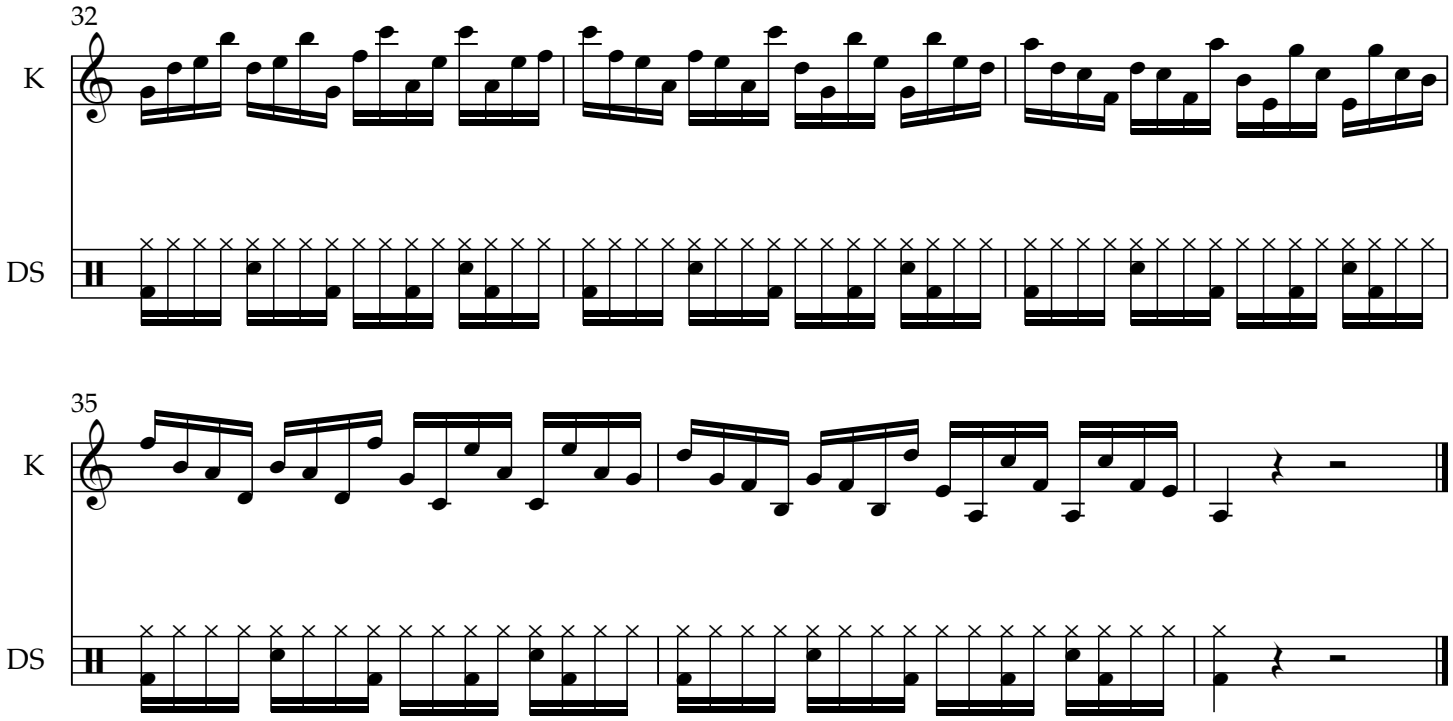
4-Mallet Variants



Bloc-coli


Blocks
♩=75-120
Keyboard
Drum Set
5
K
DS
9
Repeat Top Chord
K
DS
13
K
DS


17
Fours
K
DS
20
Two's
K
DS
23
Fours
K
DS
26
Two's
K
DS
29
One's
K
DS


32
K
DS
35
K
DS