2024 Farmington Drumline Audition Information

You have taken the first steps to becoming a member of the Farmington Phoenix Marching Percussion Ensemble! We are very excited to have you as part of our team. Here at Farmington, you will make life-long friends, memories, and be a part of the ever growing legacy of the Marching Phoenix.

This packet is meant to help prepare you for your amazing experience here at Farmington. Read all provided information carefully as it is meant for your benefit!

We are here to help. Don't be afraid to reach out with any questions you may have! You can contact our percussion staff at the emails below:

Ashton Allen (Percussion Director)
farmingtonperc@gmail.com

Jake Harker (Battery Tech)
jacob.harker.8@gmail.com

Cartson Gowans (Front Ensemble Tech)
carston.gowans@gmail.com

Audition Dates:

Clinics - 04/23 & 04/25 3:30-6:00
Auditions - 04/30 3:30-6:00

PHILOSOPHY

APPROACH

- Relaxed Velocity - sound quality at all dynamic levels, speed, endurance.
- Touch - flow, articulation (tap/accent control), musicality, feel.
- Independence - knowing individual hands responsibility in rudiments, musical passages, breakdowns and quality between hands.

GRIP

- Stable, consistent and focused grip that is not too tight or too loose.
    - A good way to test this is to take two sticks and hit them together while squeezing them as hard as you can. Do you hear a thin choked off sound? Now start hitting the sticks together and gradually start to loosen your grip. Did you hear the sticks start to produce a more open tone? If you hold the stick too tightly, you dampen the stick's natural vibrations and "choke off" much of the sound, leaving you with a very thin quality. Also, the brunt of the impact from the stick striking the drum will be transferred directly into your hand, which can lead to unnecessary injury.
- All your fingers will be in constant contact with the stick, but will never squeeze or choke off the resonance of the stick.

BASSLINE GRIP

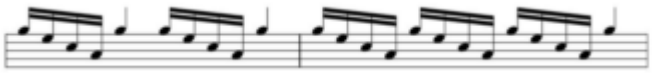
Too far outside

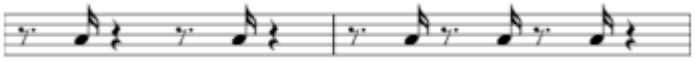
Too far inside

CORRECT

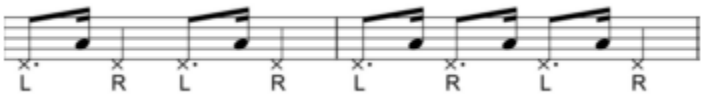
BASSLINE TIMING

Our first rhythmic priority is individual accuracy. Because each bass drummer only plays a fraction of the written part, one is often asked to play difficult and isolated rhythmic partials. To achieve this with consistency, we frequently reference the "composite rhythm," which is the combination of an individual part and the player's tempo source (feet, metronome, other musician's part as a reference).

Here is the written part: 

And here is bass 4's part in isolation: 

On its own, the above rhythm is challenging and is likely to be inconsistent. However, if the player imagines their mark time as "part of their rhythm", the resulting composite rhythm is much more achievable (feet marked with x noteheads):



BASSLINE APPROACH TO 2s, 3s and 4s

We want every note we play to have a strong and clear quality of sound and to be heard clearly by the audience. In order to do this, one must sometimes compensate for the natural resonance of the drum. When playing rhythmically dense figures, the resonance of the first note can often cover up the rest. Therefore, it is imperative to play without any decay in volume, and on some figures, one must add a slight crescendo to maintain the perception of evenness. If one is playing 4 fast notes in a row, the attack of the second, third and fourth notes will be slightly covered up by the resonance of the first note played. So when all four notes are played at exactly the same volume, the quality will sound less clear when a listener gets further away.

We play 2s, 3s and 4s with a slight crescendo though each figure. In order to do this, one must avoid "over-prepping" for these figures. If one initiates a 3 or 4 higher than 12", it is almost impossible to play the figure without decay. Volume is produced by supporting the later notes in the figure, rather than attacking the first note aggressively. Using this technique allows each note to be clearly heard over the constant resonating head, and it helps smooth out a musical phrase.

STROKE TYPES

- Key Points:
  - Every stroke will initiate from a wrist turn with the bead of the stick moving first. Even when playing 18 inches, a wrist turn will lift the bead before the arm rises. This wrist turn is essential to every stroke played. However, do not restrict your arms by trying to use only the wrist. As your wrist turns, your arm should naturally move. Use any combination of muscle groups (arm, wrist and fingers) to your advantage to produce any stroke. Also, there should be relaxed/rebounded weight to your stroke in order to produce a big, full sound.

- Full-stroke
  - Practice by bouncing a basketball.
  - The ball is always moving and never stops.

- Down-stroke
  - No extra tension is required. The beginning of the stroke is the exact same as the full-stroke. The only difference is after the stick strikes the head, your fingers act as a relaxed barrier, preventing the stick from rebounding past 3 inches. It is important not to over-squeeze the stick when stopping it close to the head. If properly relaxed, the skin on your forearm should have a natural jiggle. It is also important not to add extra velocity to the down stroke. A great exercise to test this is to play a measure of legato eight notes immediately followed by a measure accenting the downbeat only. Did the sound change? If so, you are probably adding extra velocity to your downstroke or squeezing the stick before it makes contact with the head.

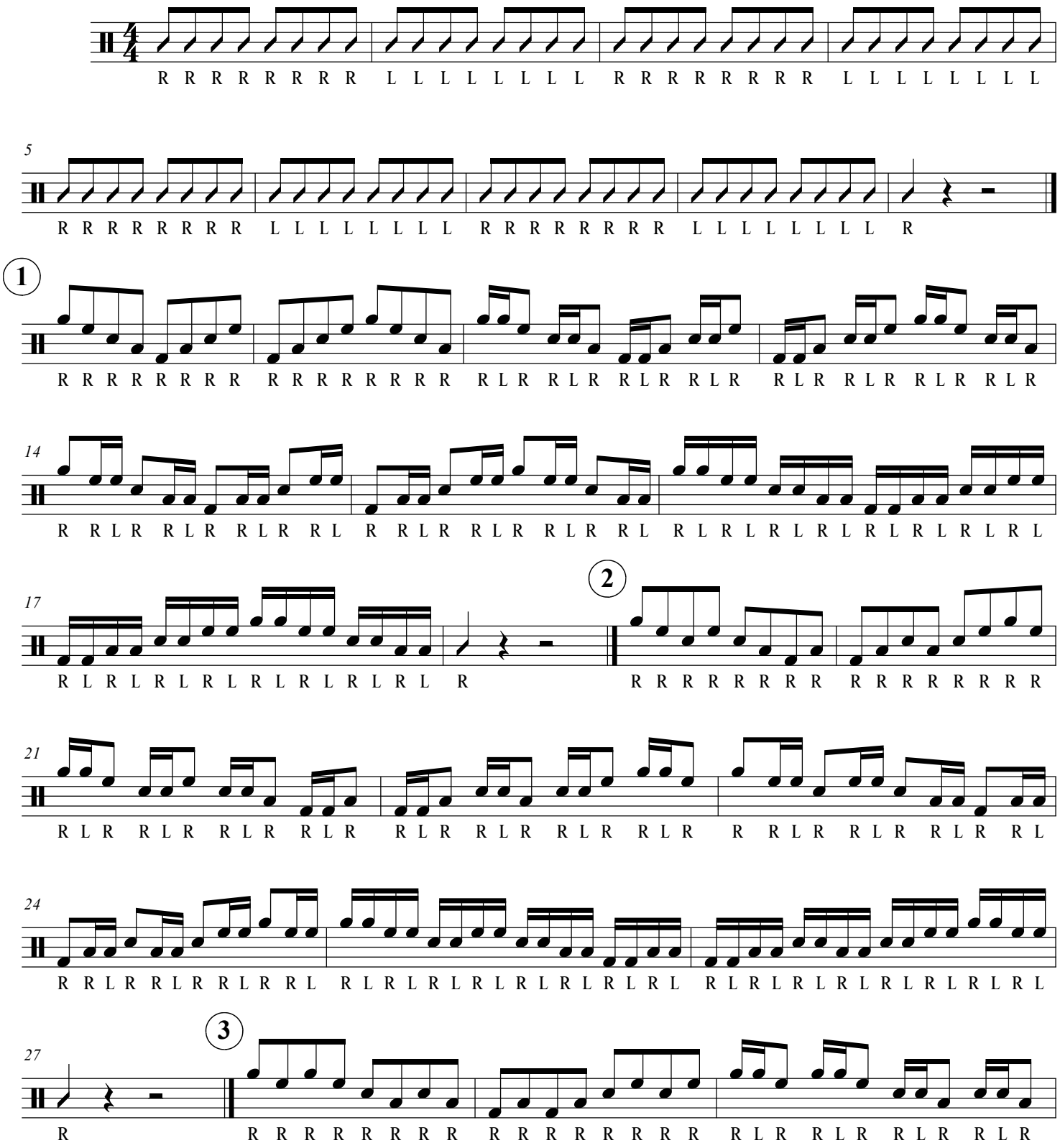
- Up-stroke
  - Anticipating transitions is key for timing and making sure that you are using the correct muscle groups/technique for a given musical passage.

STICK HEIGHTS

Height	Related Dynamic	Angle from the Drum	Notes
1/2"	ppp	Tacet Angle	Grace Note Height
1"	pp	<0	Softest playing dynamic
3"	P	0	Default tap height. Mainly wrist, arms and fingers aid certain material
6"	mp	22.5	Default tenudo height. Mainly wrist, again arms and fingers support naturally when needed.
9"	mf	45	Arm starts to get more involved at this height. Same principles of wrist initiation apply.
12"	f	67.5	More arm, fingers open up more to aid flexibility.
15"	ff	90	Maxed wrist motion combined with open fingers (only about 1" from palm) and natural arm support.
18"	fff	112.5	Avoid "slamming"! Snares and quads will maintain 90° angle and add more arm for a more "visual volume" effect. Basses utilize more angle change for added distance from the head.

Bass Drums

8s



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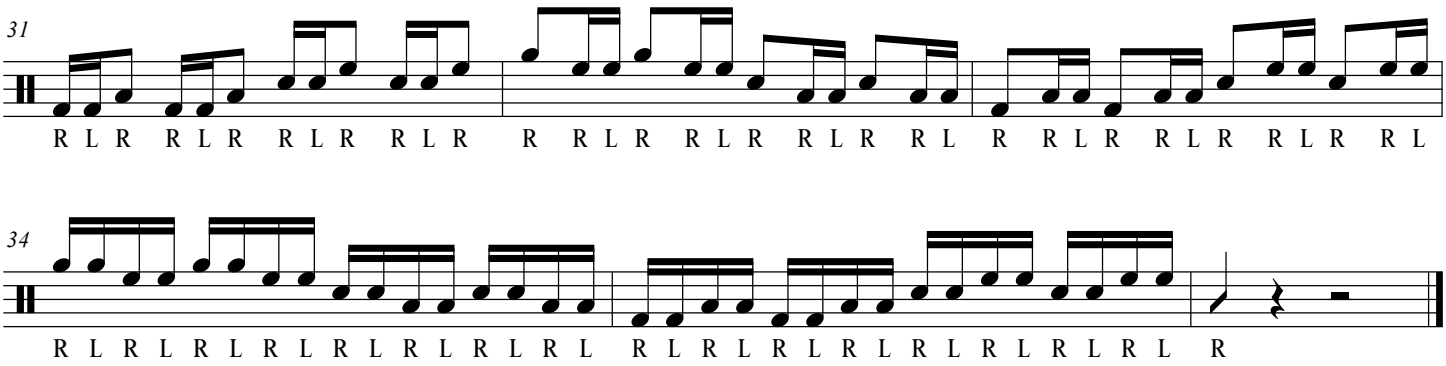
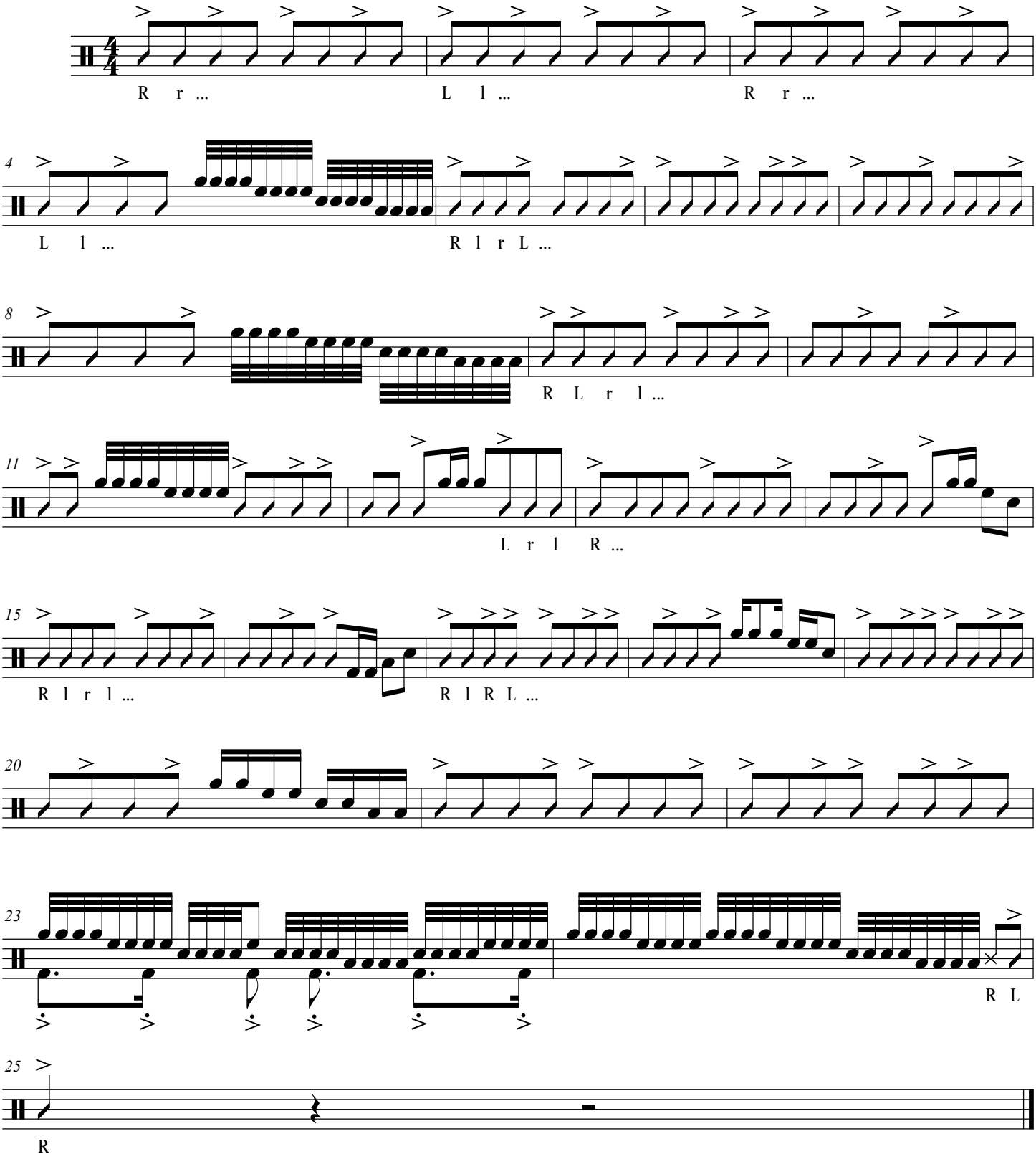
8s


31
R L R R L R R L R R L R R R L R R L R R L R R L R R R L R R L R R L R R L
34
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

Bass Drums

FunkNugget

J. Southard
A. Williams



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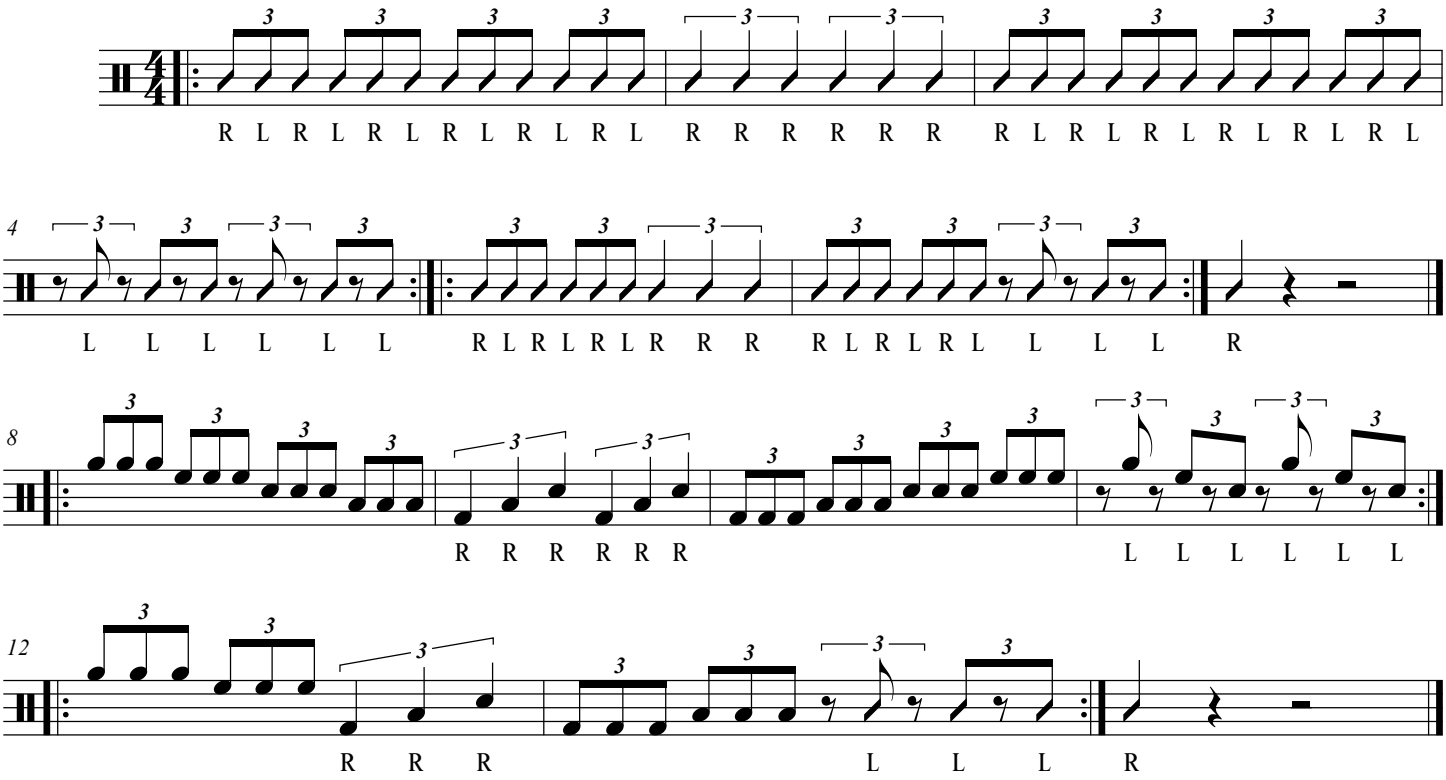
Bass Drums

Triplet Timing



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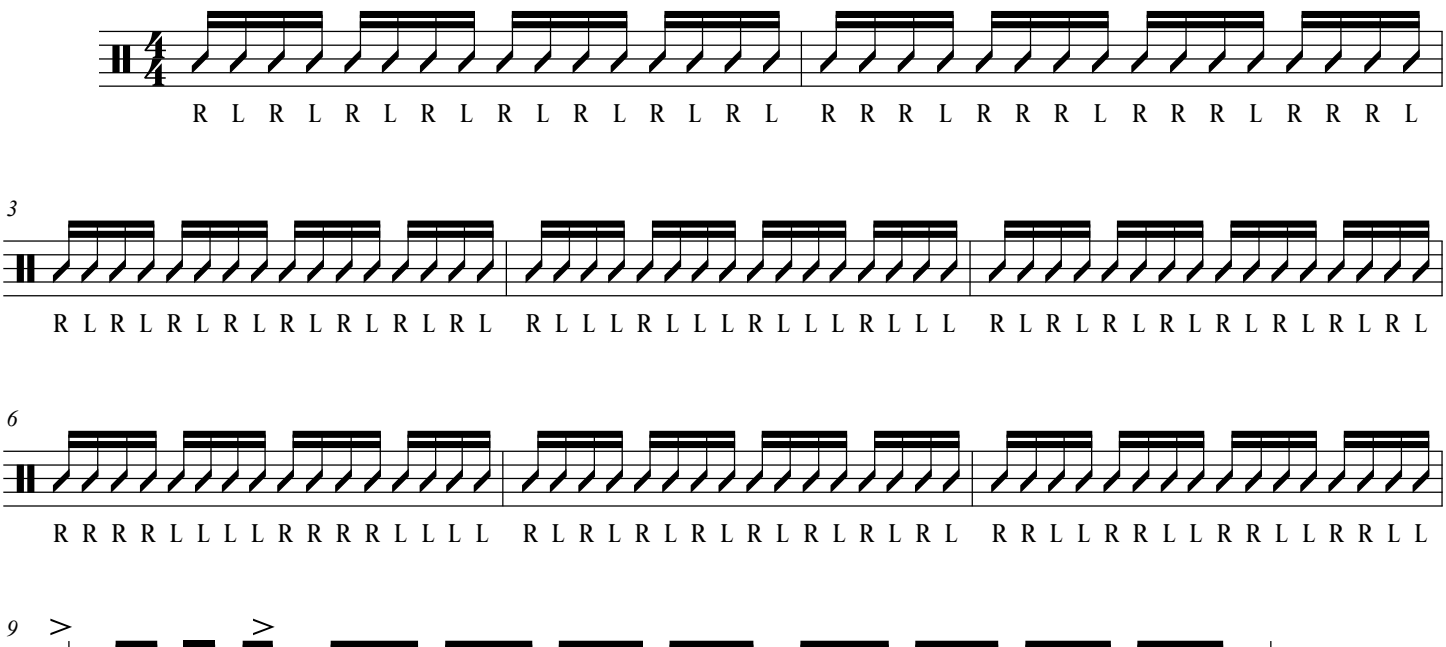
Bass Drums

Stick Control

1



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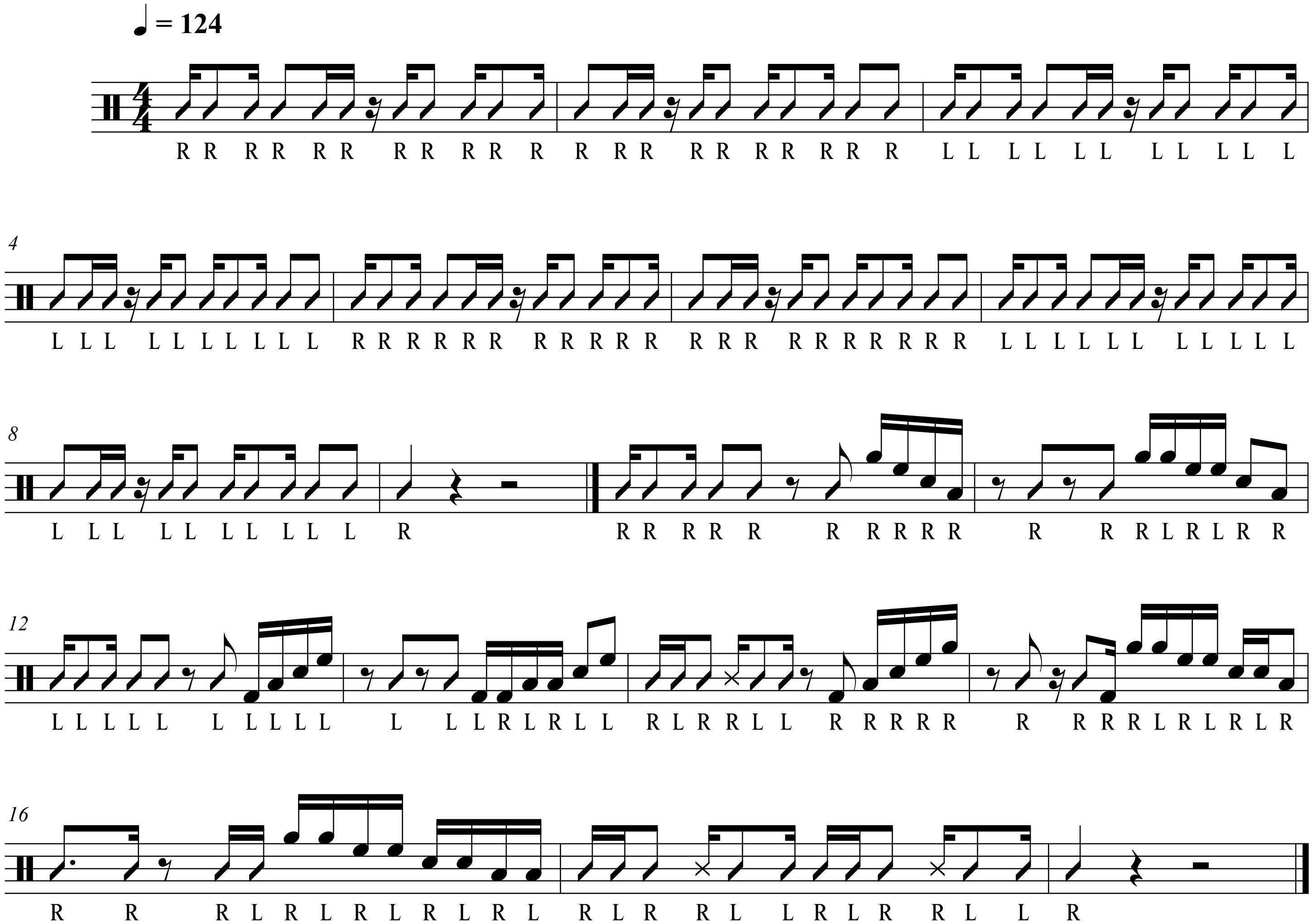
Bass Drums

Double Beat



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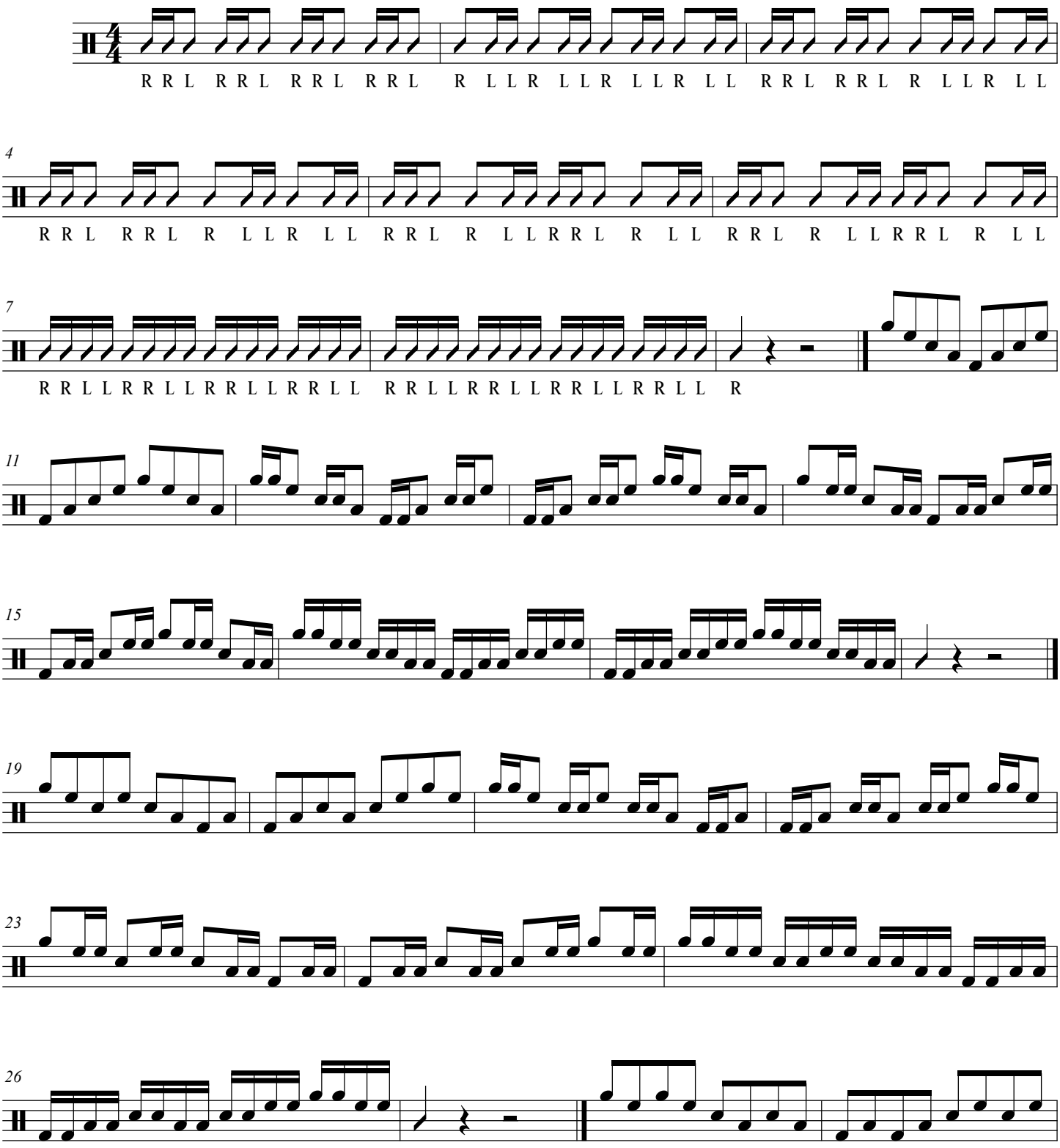
Bass Drums

Gallop



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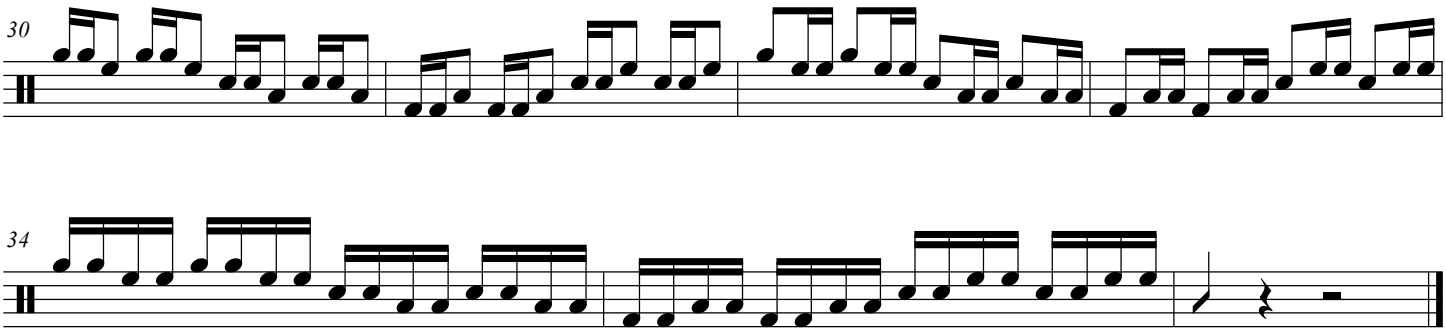
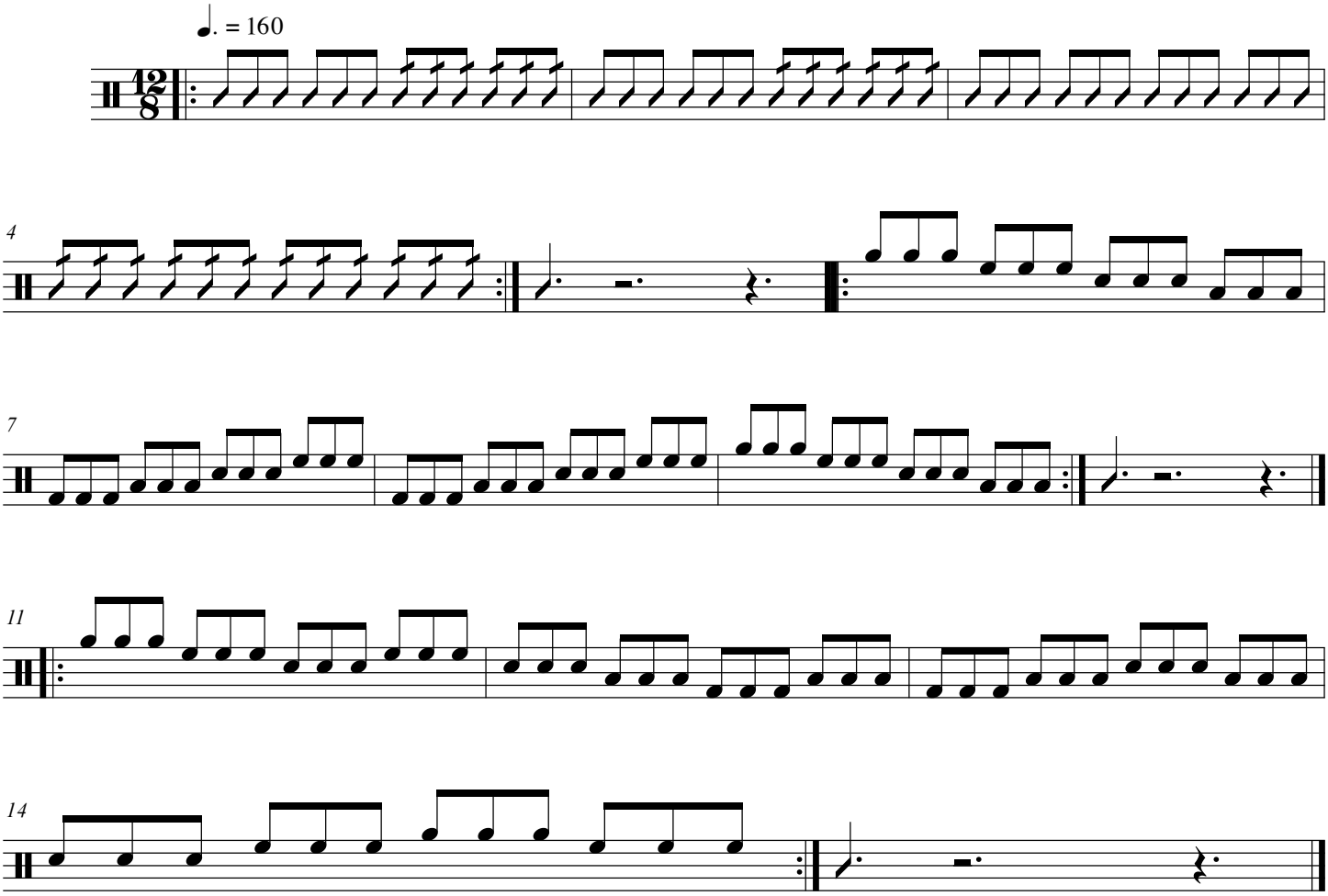
Gallop



Bass Drums

Chicken & a Roll



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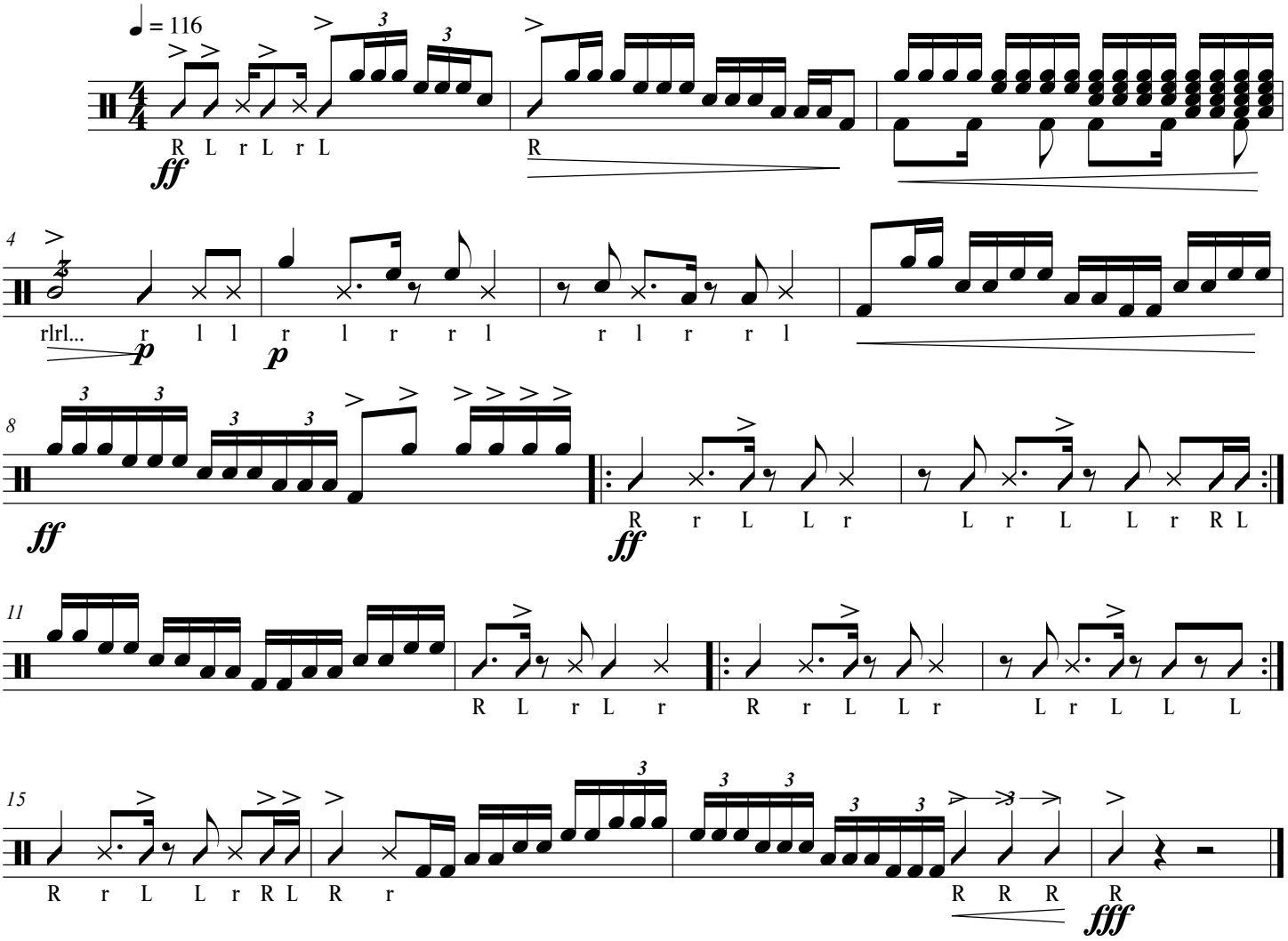
Bass Drums

Phoenix Jam!!!

HYPE!!!

Al Williams



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