Atlanta Quest

Audition Materials

2024

FRONT ENSEMBLE

Welcome!

Thank you for downloading the Atlanta Quest audition packet for the 2024 season. You have made the first step towards being a member of one of the oldest and most established ensembles in WGI. With the addition of Q2 in 2015, the Atlanta Quest organization offers multiple opportunities for you to learn and perform at the highest level. We have some of the best instructors in the activity, so please take every chance to ask questions and learn as much as you can during your time here. EVERY spot in the ensemble is open and available each year to the people who audition. Absolutely no spot in the ensemble will be guaranteed to an individual until they have earned it.

Please attend as many audition days as possible to maximize your experience and show growth throughout the audition process. It is expected that you come to the auditions prepared to play each scale-based exercise in **every major and minor key**. We will not have time to teach notes throughout the audition weekends or rehearsal weekends, so **BE PREPARED**. The technique that we use is broken down in the following pages and each person should be familiar with the terms used to describe certain techniques (i.e. perch, rolling intervals, extended octave grip).

As well as knowing all exercises, every prospective member should prepare a **2-3 minute solo** that displays both the technical **AND** musical ability of the player. These solos, along with a couple exercises, will be played in a short individual audition that will help the staff place you in the ensemble that best fits your ability level. Please also choose **ONE PART in BOTH EXCERPTS** to play with the group; acoustic keyboard players should choose the part that they can play successfully, not necessarily the instrument they prefer to play. If you have any questions at all, feel free to email any of the front staff below. We look forward to seeing you at auditions!

Atlanta Quest Front Ensemble Staff

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AQ Rhythm Section Audition Information

Bass Guitar: Being able to produce a good sound with correct intonation is key. Prepare the bass part of each exercise and be able to play in different keys and modes. During individual auditions, we will ask to hear specific exercises as well as a short 1-3 minute solo or bass excerpt from a song of your choice. This solo should display specific skill sets you excel at and/or extended techniques. Please bring a bass guitar, amp and chord with you.

Drum Set: First and foremost, drum set players should be able to play all exercises and styles with rhythmic accuracy with a metronome. Candidates should be able to play each exercise as written as well as improvise over each exercise in a variety of styles. Atlanta Quest will provide one drum set and each auditionee will rotate throughout the audition process. Please bring your own sticks and a practice pad to play while you're not playing with the ensemble.

Piano/Synth: Synth positions at Atlanta Quest are a unique and integral part of the ensemble. While some parts will not be as challenging as the other instruments, all musical passages that synths play must be in time with perfect note accuracy. We are looking for accuracy through finger dexterity as well as rhythmic precision and a good sense of timing. Please prepare a short additional solo/prepared piece that displays your strengths. Prior mainstage experience is helpful but not necessary to audition. All synths and electronics will be provided and each auditionee will rotate as often as possible.

Rack/Auxiliary Percussion: Rack positions are also a unique position at Atlanta Quest. You must have great timing and be able to create good characteristic sounds on all instruments that are encompassed in the role of auxiliary percussion. Please bring your own concert sticks and a practice pad for the audition process. Along with preparing each exercise, please prepare the AQ Rack Audition Etude. We will have each instrument setup in the individual audition room but feel free to adjust the setup as necessary. Observe all rests accurately and be able to transition to and perform on each instrument.

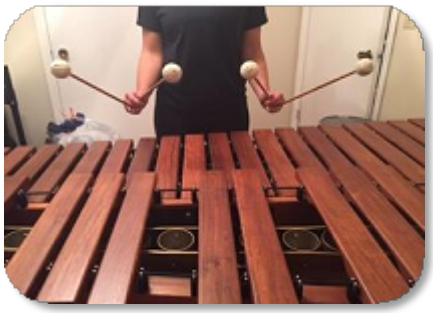
Timpani: The timpani spot will serve as both a bass sound enhancer and a virtuosic instrument within the ensemble. Individuals auditioning for this spot must be comfortable moving around a set of 5 drums with varying types of touch and great intonation. Along with playing exercises, please prepare to play rolls at varying dynamics and a short solo during your individual audition. We will provide the drums, a stool and a few pair of general mallets, but feel free to bring whatever mallets you are comfortable playing with.

Keyboard Guidelines

Approach

When approaching a mallet instrument, make sure the instrument is at the appropriate height before setting your hands. The top of the keys should be at the same height as your waist or belt. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart and at an appropriate distance from the keyboard (one foot should be slightly in front of the other, so, you can move back and forth between manuals). This distance is determined by the length of your arm in relationship to the type/size of the instrument. When you put your mallets in the center of the bar on the natural keys, your forearm should be slightly below level. If your forearm is completely level then you need to lower the instrument.

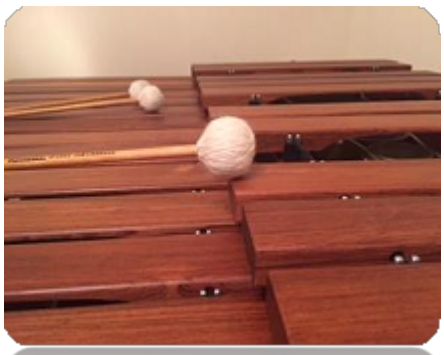
When playing vibraphone, the right foot will be on the pedal and the left will be comfortably behind the pedal. The balance point will be between the heel of the right foot and the ball of the left foot. When playing in the highest register it is suggested that the left foot go behind the right, to make sure the keys are played in the correct playing zone.

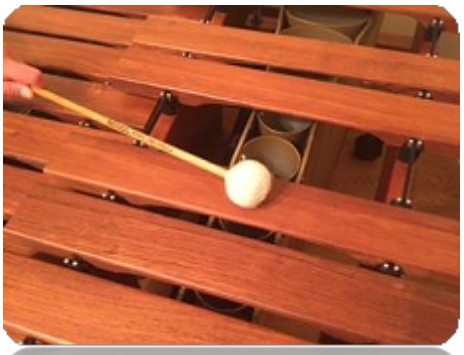


Playing Zones

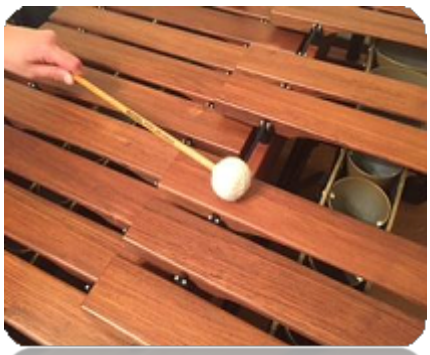
The correct playing zones for all keyboards are in the center of the bar directly over the resonators. For the accidentals it is best to aim for the top of the resonator tube to ensure that you play directly in the center of the bar. When playing on the edges of the marimba (not applicable to vibes, xylo, or bells), you must make sure that you are playing on the very EDGE of the key, so that you can produce a good full sound. Do Not Play On The NODES!

YES!





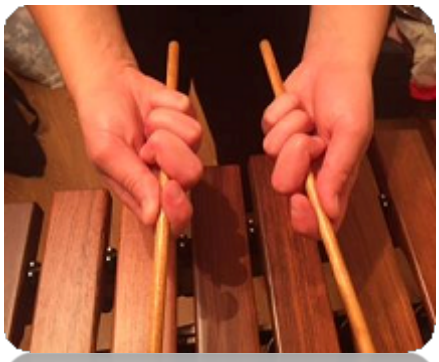
NO!

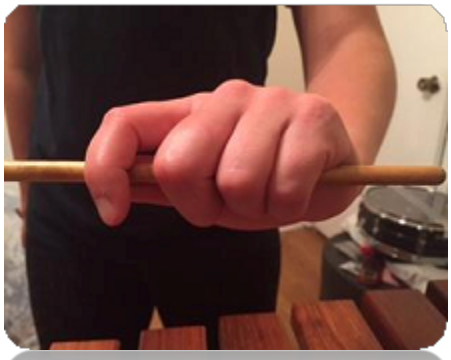


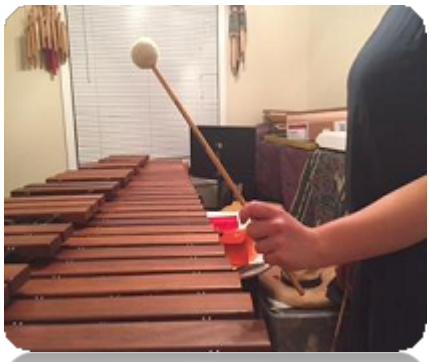
Two-Mallet Technique

Grip

At Quest, we use the “rear fulcrum” 2-mallet grip. The mallet is held on to by the middle, ring, and pinky fingers with around 1½ inches from the back of the hand to the end of the mallet shaft. The thumb and index finger then wrap around the mallet as seen in figure 2, these two fingers should not place any pressure on the mallet. The hand should not be flat but turned in at a slight angle. The wrist and arms should form a natural angle that puts no stress on the wrist joint.

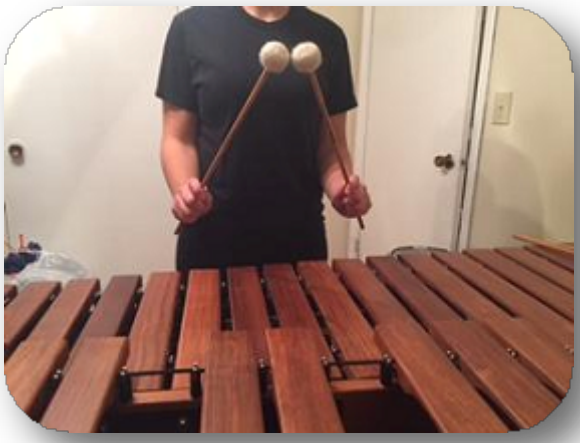






Stroke

From the set position of about a half-inch above the bar, the stroke begins with the head of the mallet and then is continued through the wrist and arm in a fluid motion. The mallet should come directly up and not away or towards the body or move from side to side. At a moderate tempo the stroke will be mostly wrist and less arm. As the tempo increases the stroke will become all wrist, while as the tempo decreases you will incorporate of the arm to connect the strokes. The speed of the mallet coming down to make contact with the board should never change, but the speed of the upstroke will be determined by how slow or fast you are playing. When playing slow connected strokes the mallet should feel like there is a rubber band attached to the keys, so when you move the mallet up it will be as if you are trying to stretch the band and when you initiate the downward motion, the mallet will shoot downward, as if you gave in to the pull of the rubber band.

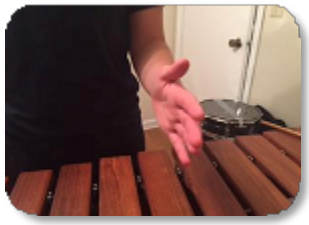
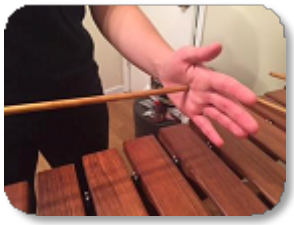


Four-Mallet Technique

Grip

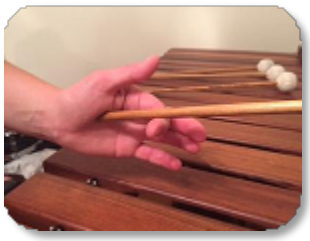
At Quest, we use the Musser grip with Steven's technique when playing with four mallets. When beginning to learn Steven's technique, we highly recommend purchasing **"Method of Movement" by Leigh Howard Stevens**. This method book has everything you could possibly need to fully understand the grip and different ways you can strike the instrument. This packet will go through the basics of setting the grip and striking the instrument with some of the different techniques that will be used while at Atlanta Quest.

1. Turn your hand sideways in a "Handshaking" position.

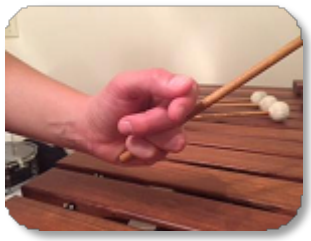



2. For the inside mallet, put the "butt" of the mallet In the center of the palm, slightly above the "life line" that goes around the thumb pad.

3. Curve out your pointer finger as if you were creating a perch for a small bird. The mallet will rest on the 3rd joint of the pointer finger, directly above the finger nail.



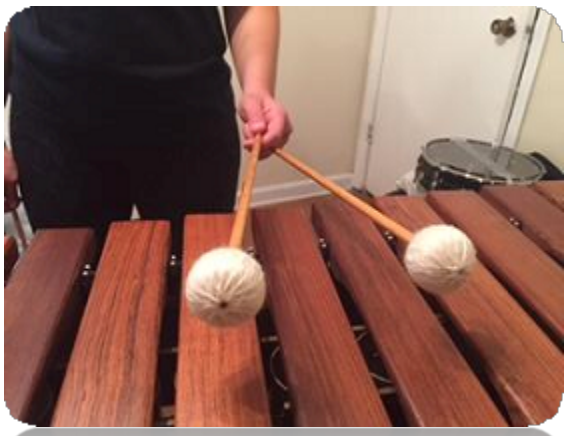
4. The outside mallet will be placed in between the middle finger and the ring finger directly under the first joint (knuckle). The pinky and ring finger will then wrap around the bottom of the shaft.

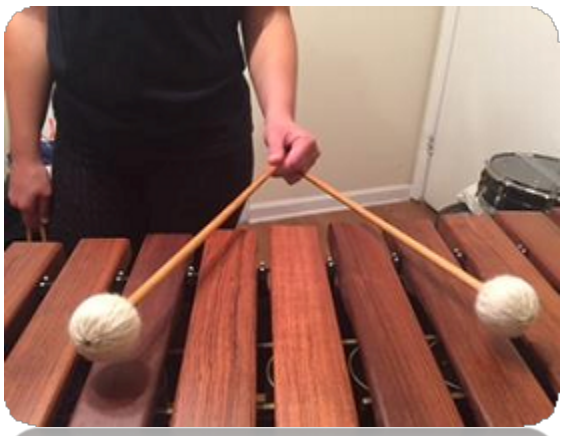


5. The thumb will rest on the top of the mallet creating a fulcrum for the inside mallet. The middle finger will then create stability by resting on the bottom of the shaft. (Your middle finger will either be on top of the shaft or slightly wrapped around it, depending on your hand size.)

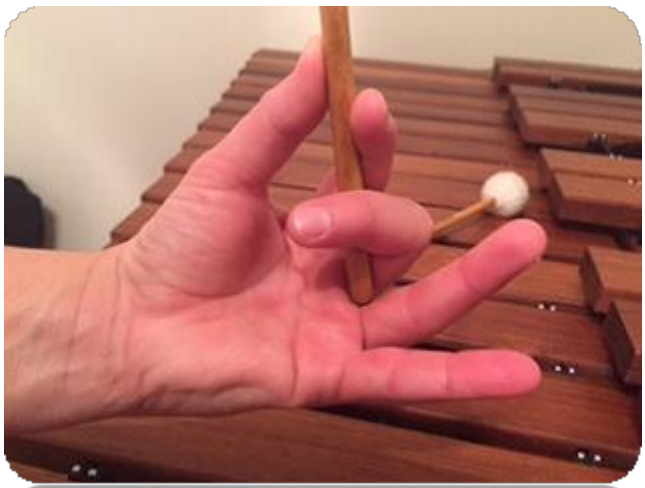
Interval Changes

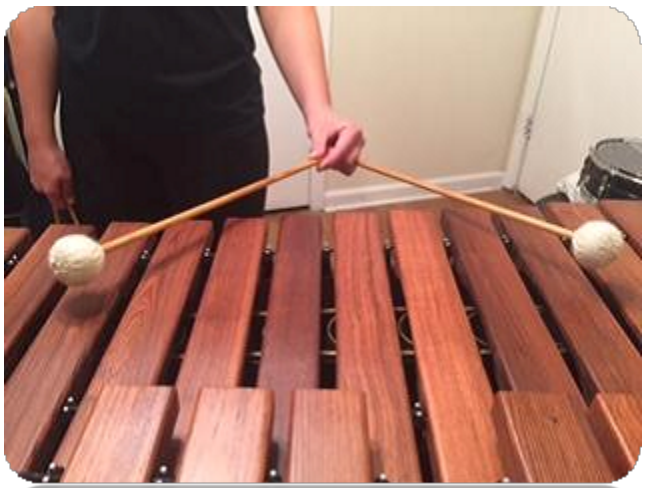
When changing intervals your goal should be to always keep your thumb on top of the mallet and facing towards the ceiling. You should also make sure to keep your "perch" out and never curl your finger into your palm. Interval changes up to a seventh should always be done by "spinning" or rolling the mallet shaft in between the pointer finger and thumb. As you roll to a larger interval you will see that your pointer finger begins to straighten as your thumb remains on top of the mallet.

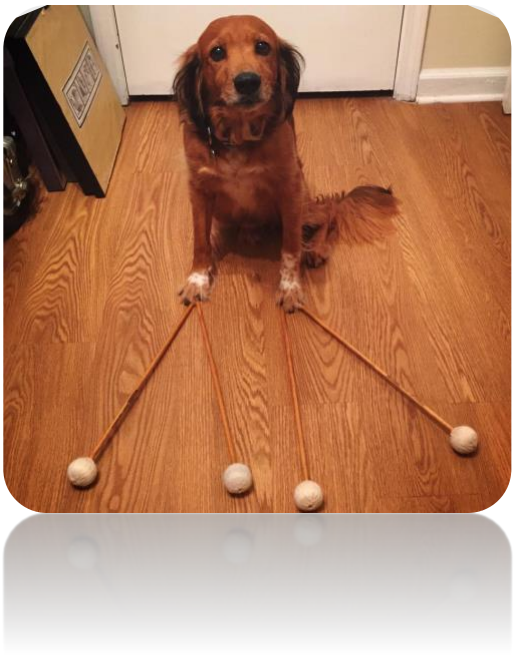




When using **extended octave grip** for long use of octaves or octaves at the bottom of the keyboard, your mallet will roll up your palm towards the base of your fingers. The inside mallet will "lock" in to position at the base of the middle finger and at the top of the palm. This can be found on pg. 12-14 in **M.O.M.**



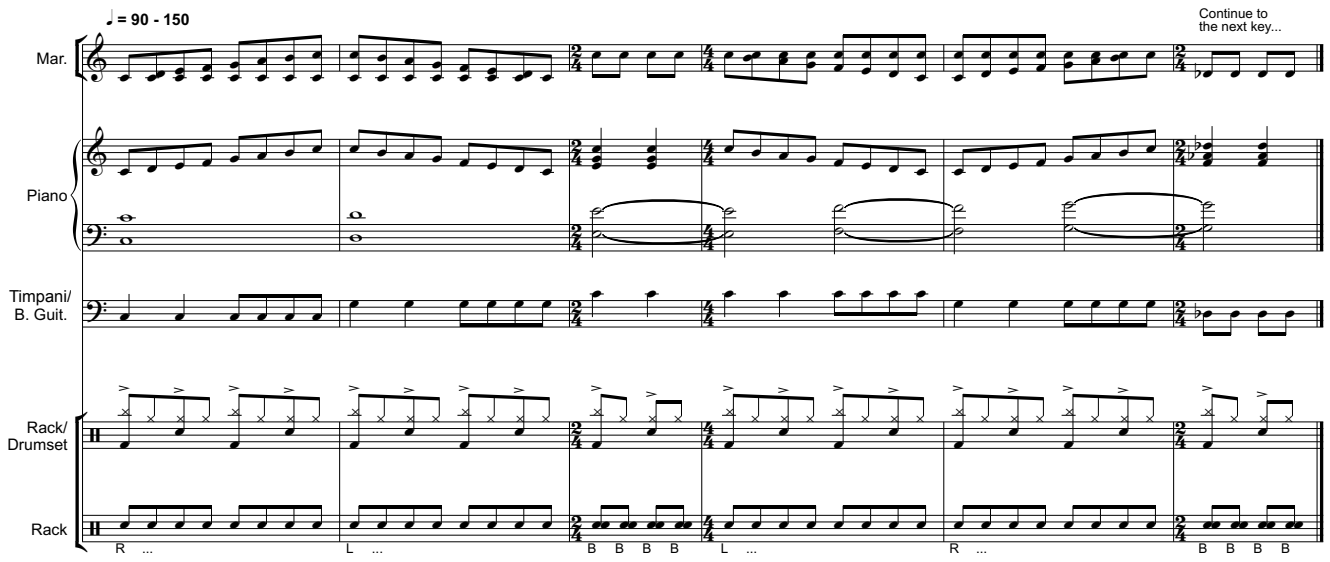




”Check your perches”
-Rufio

Lockjaw

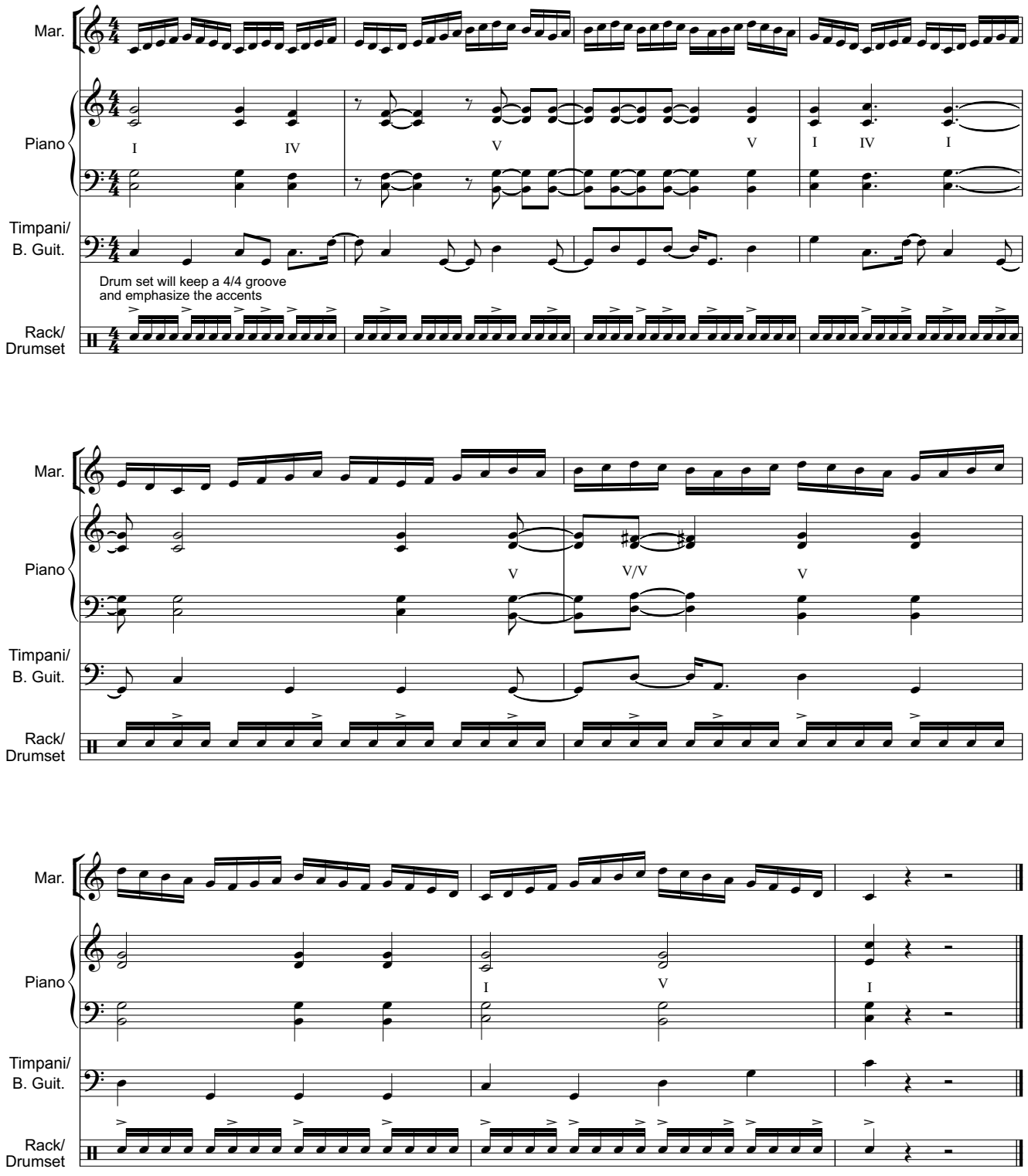
This exercise can be played in the circle of fourths, circle of fifths, and chromatically. Drumset players will be asked to play in different styles.



Green

Play in all Major and Minor keys

♩ = 110-180

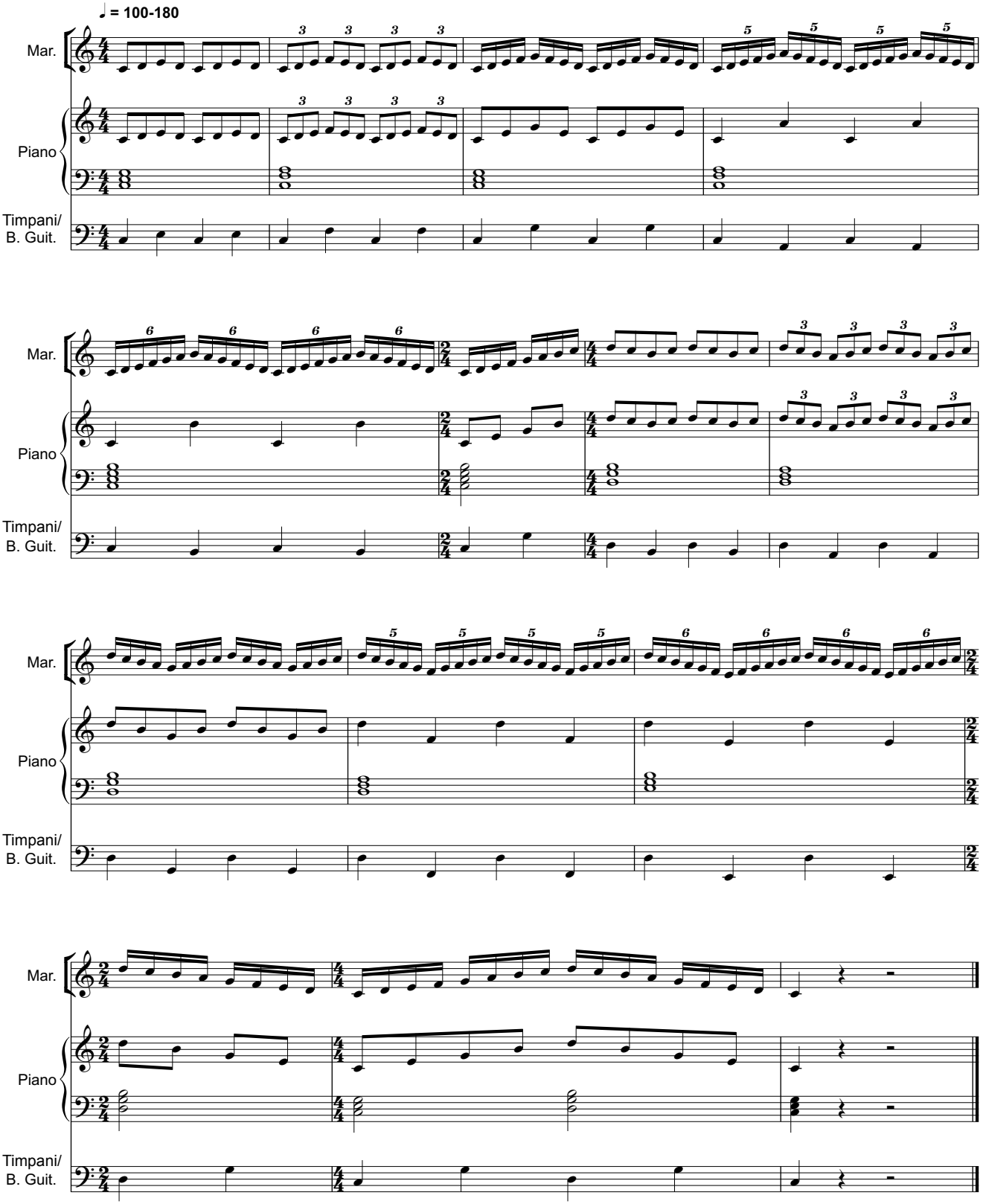


Metric Green

Rack and Drum set should keep time and play the rhythm of the keyboard part.

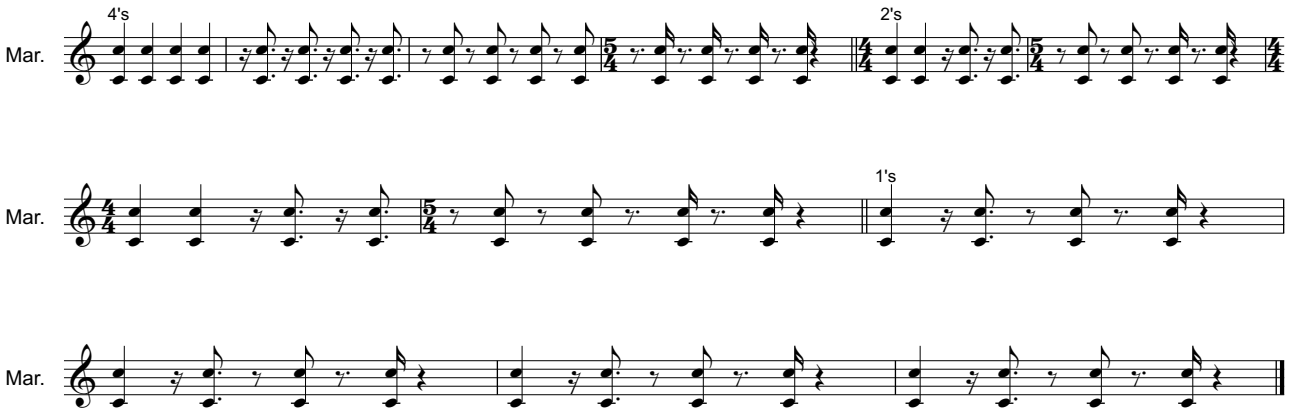
Play in all Major and Minor keys

♩ = 100-180



Space and Timing

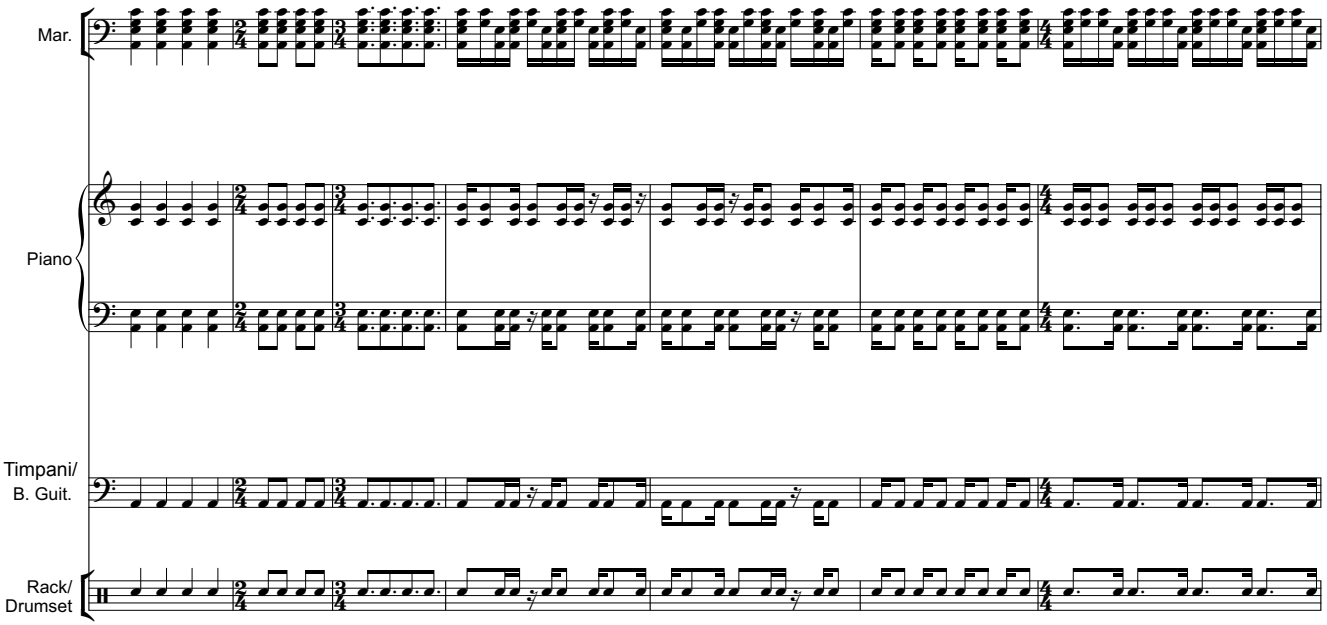
ALL players in the ensemble will play this exercise at a forte dynamic. The keyboard and rack players will connect each stroke while still using a fast velocity wrist stroke down to the keyboard. The upstroke will then be slower as it connects back to the top of the stroke.



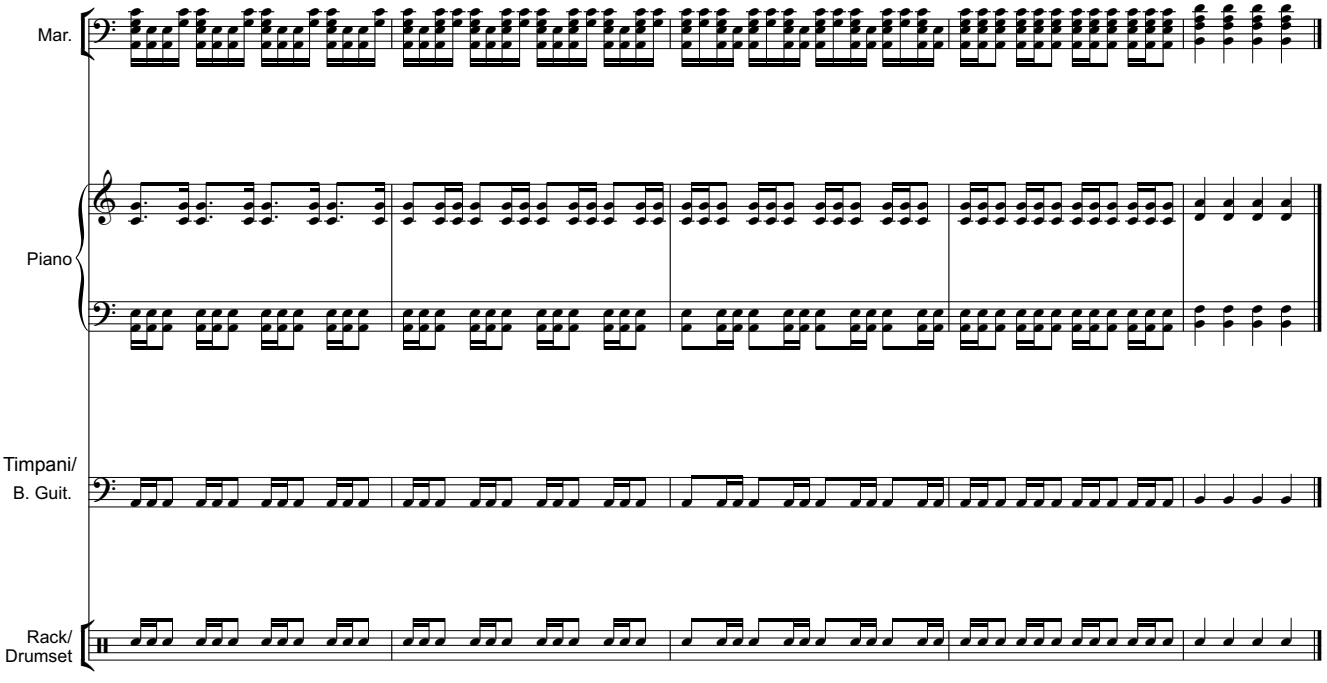
SRT

Greg Tsalikis

♩ = 50-100

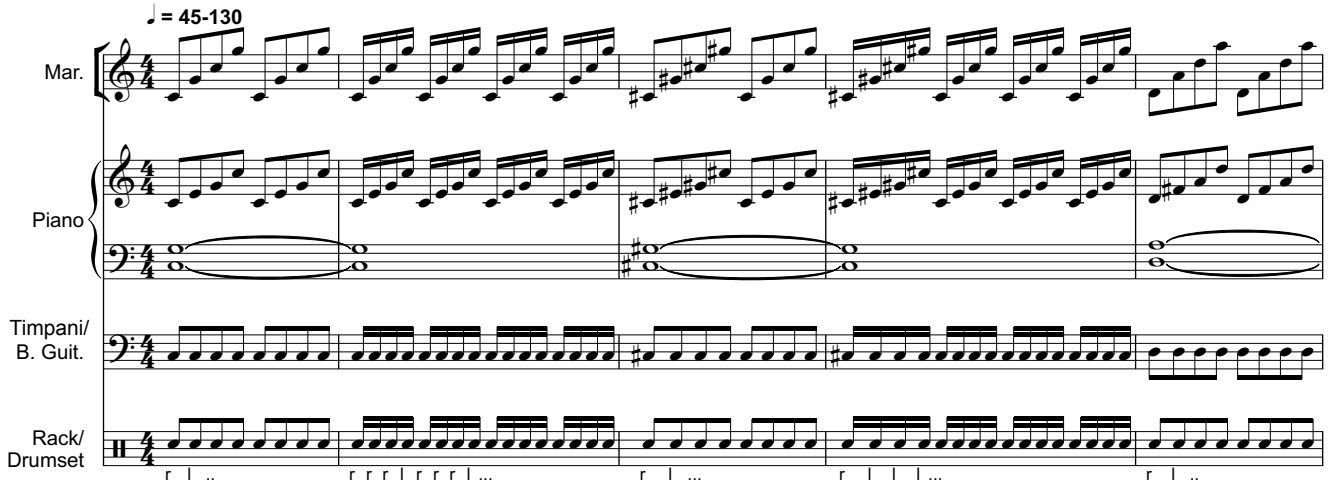


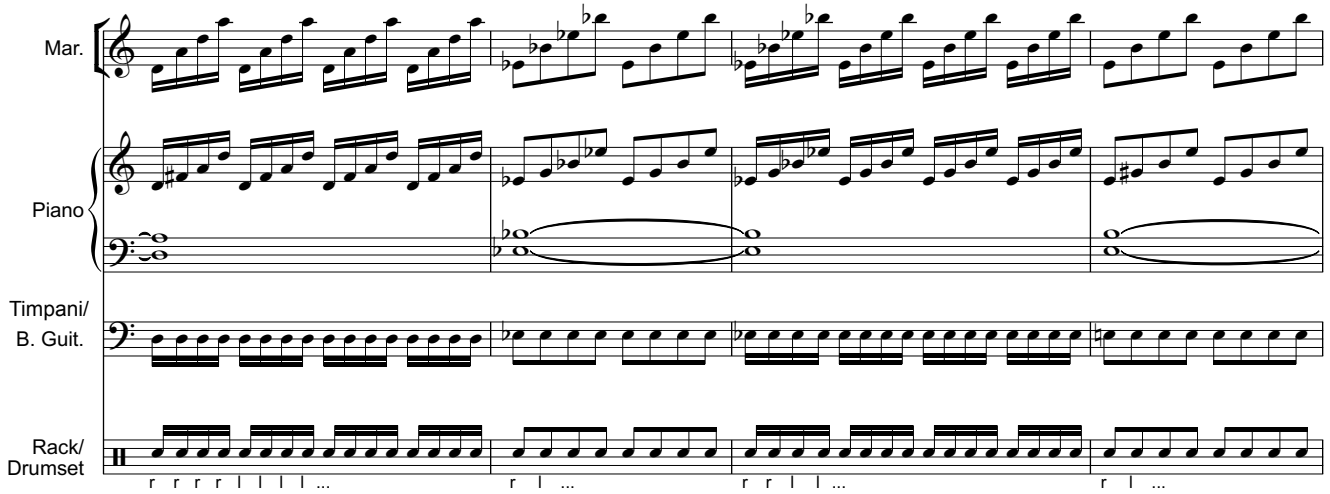
Continue up in Broccoli Chords

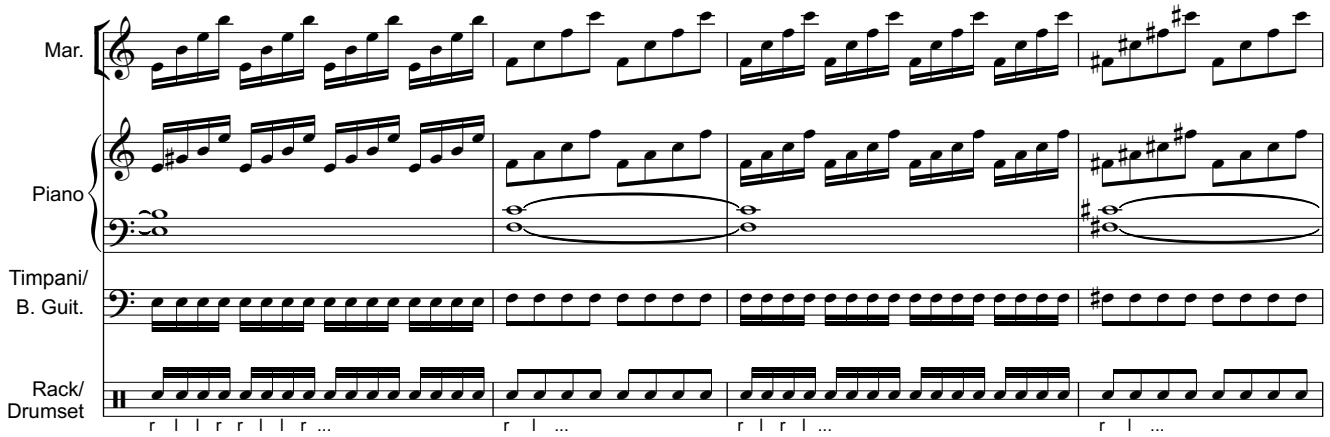


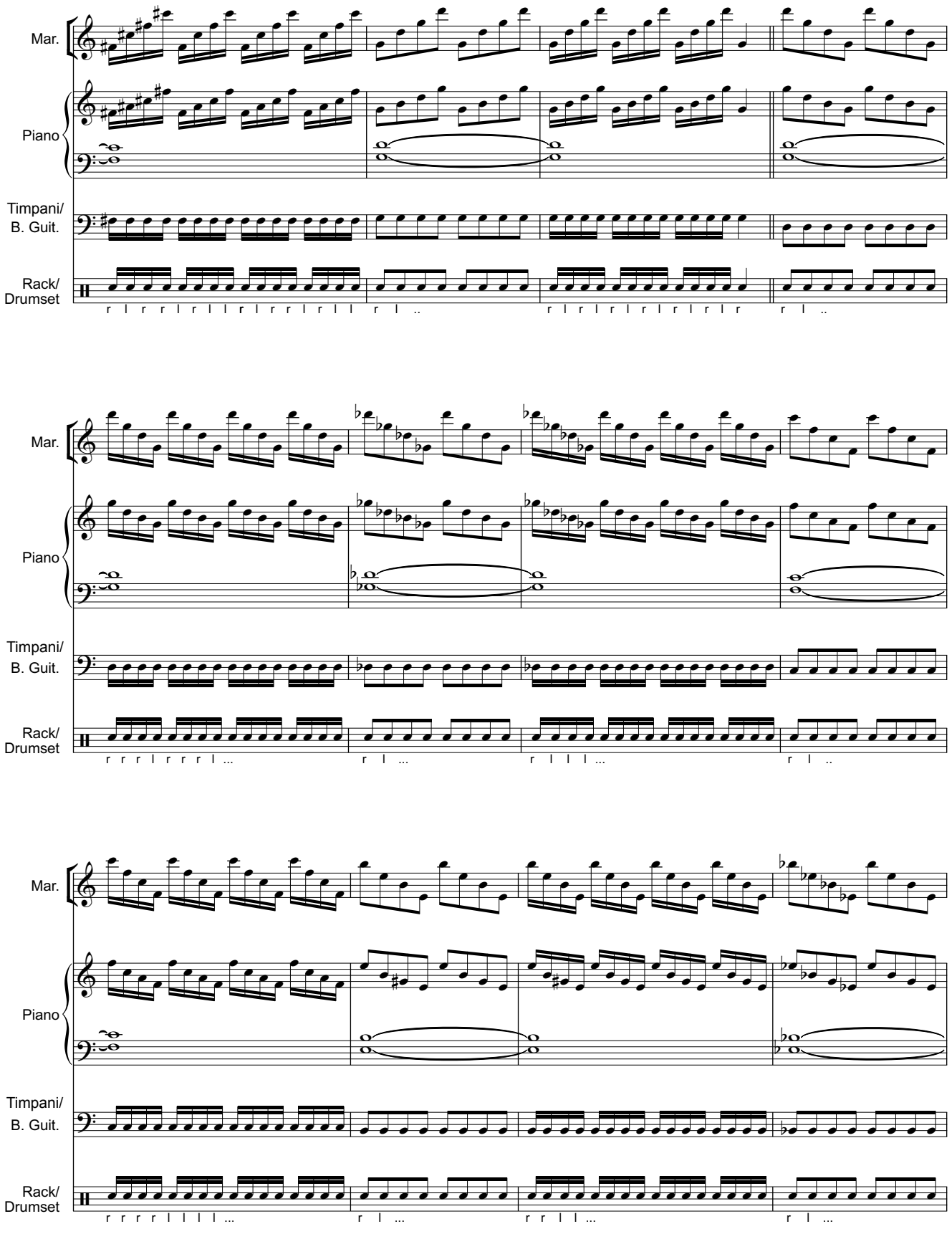
8-16

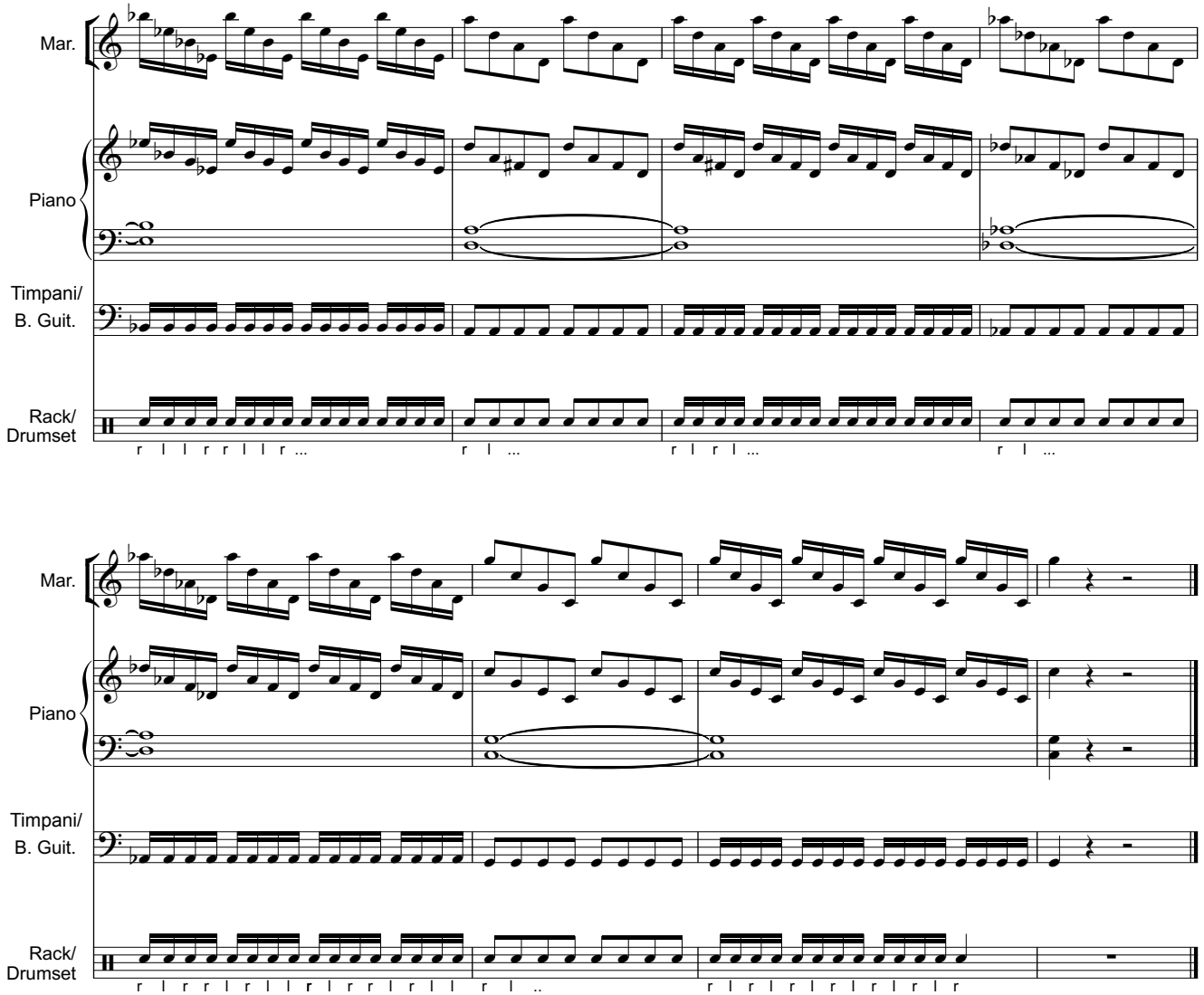
This exercise will be used with all of the different duple-based permutations.
For example: 1234 (as written), 1243, 1324, 1423, etc..



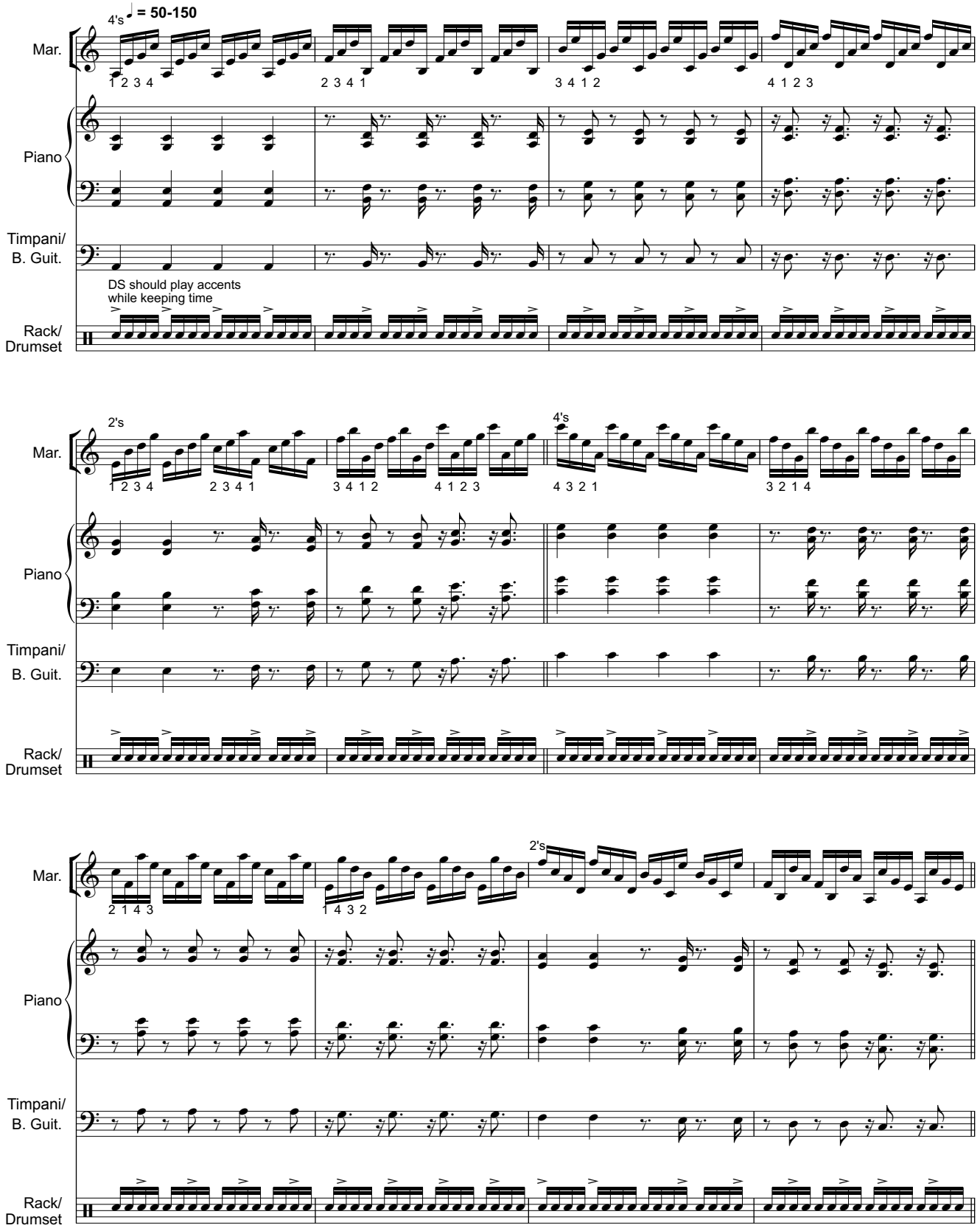


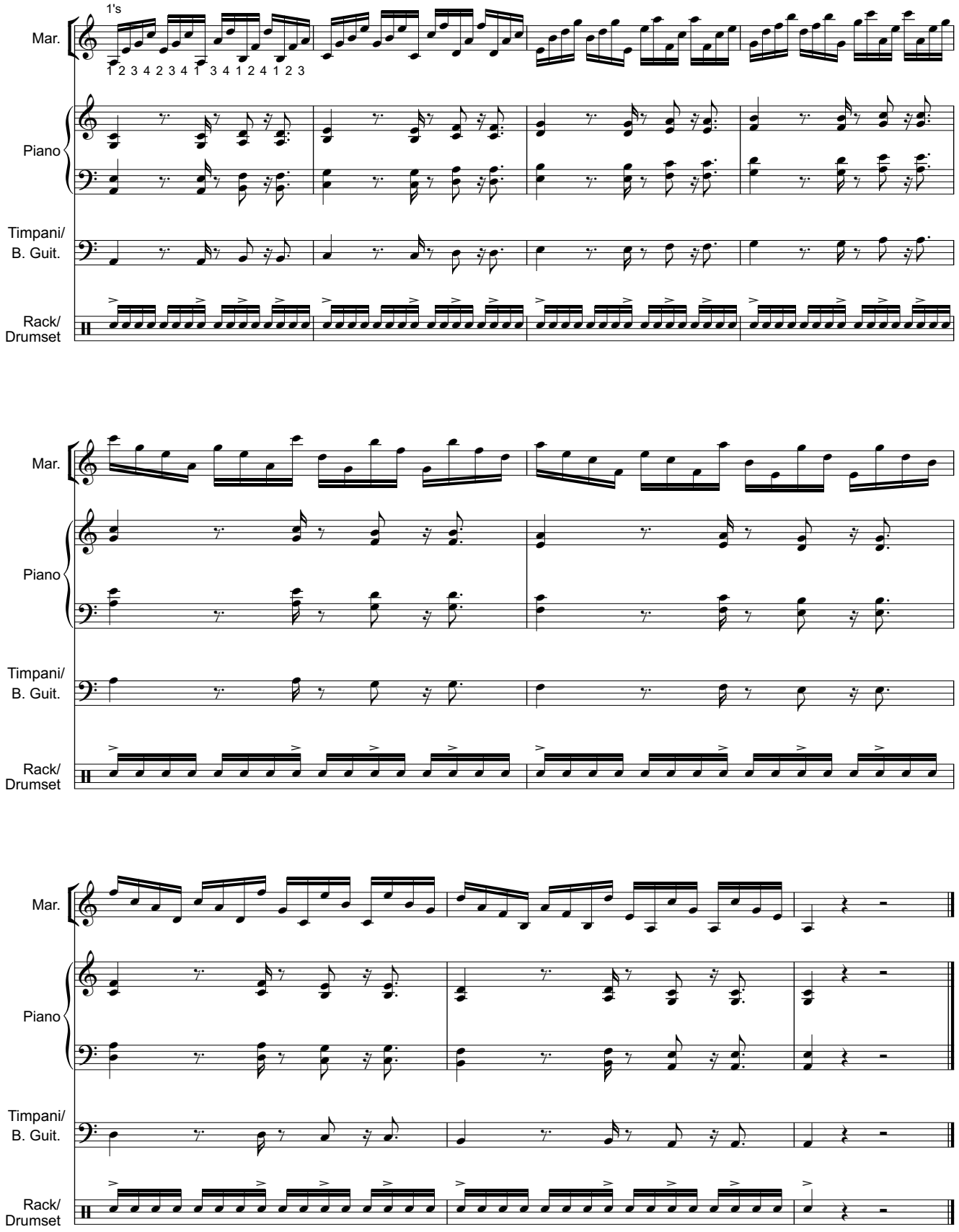



Mar.
Piano
Timpani/
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset
Mar.
Piano
Timpani/
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset
Mar.
Piano
Timpani/
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset


Mar.
Piano
Timpani/
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset
Mar.
Piano
Timpani/
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset

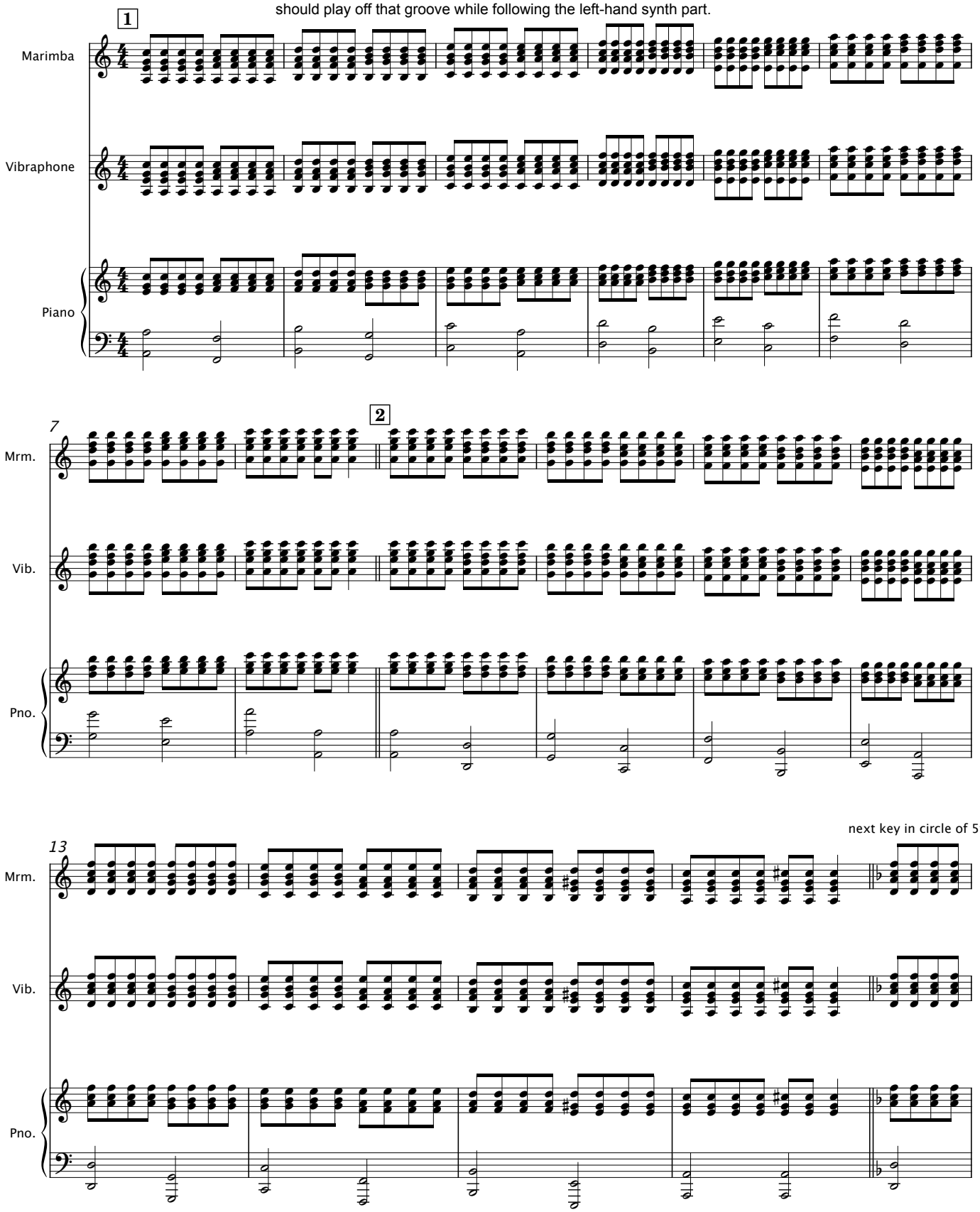
Broccoli


4's
♩ = 50-150
Mar.
1 2 3 4
2 3 4 1
3 4 1 2
4 1 2 3
Piano
Timpani/
B. Guit.
DS should play accents
while keeping time
Rack/
Drumset
2's
1 2 3 4
2 3 4 1
3 4 1 2
4 1 2 3
4's
4 3 2 1
3 2 1 4
2 1 4 3
1 4 3 2
2's


1's
1 2 3 4 2 3 4 1 3 4 1 2 4 1 2 3
Mar.
Piano
Timpani/
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset
Mar.
Piano
Timpani/
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset
Mar.
Piano
Timpani/
B. Guit.
Rack/
Drumset

Bachords

Drum set and Racks should use good musicianship and set up a 4/4 groove while Bass Guitar and Timpani should play off that groove while following the left-hand synth part.



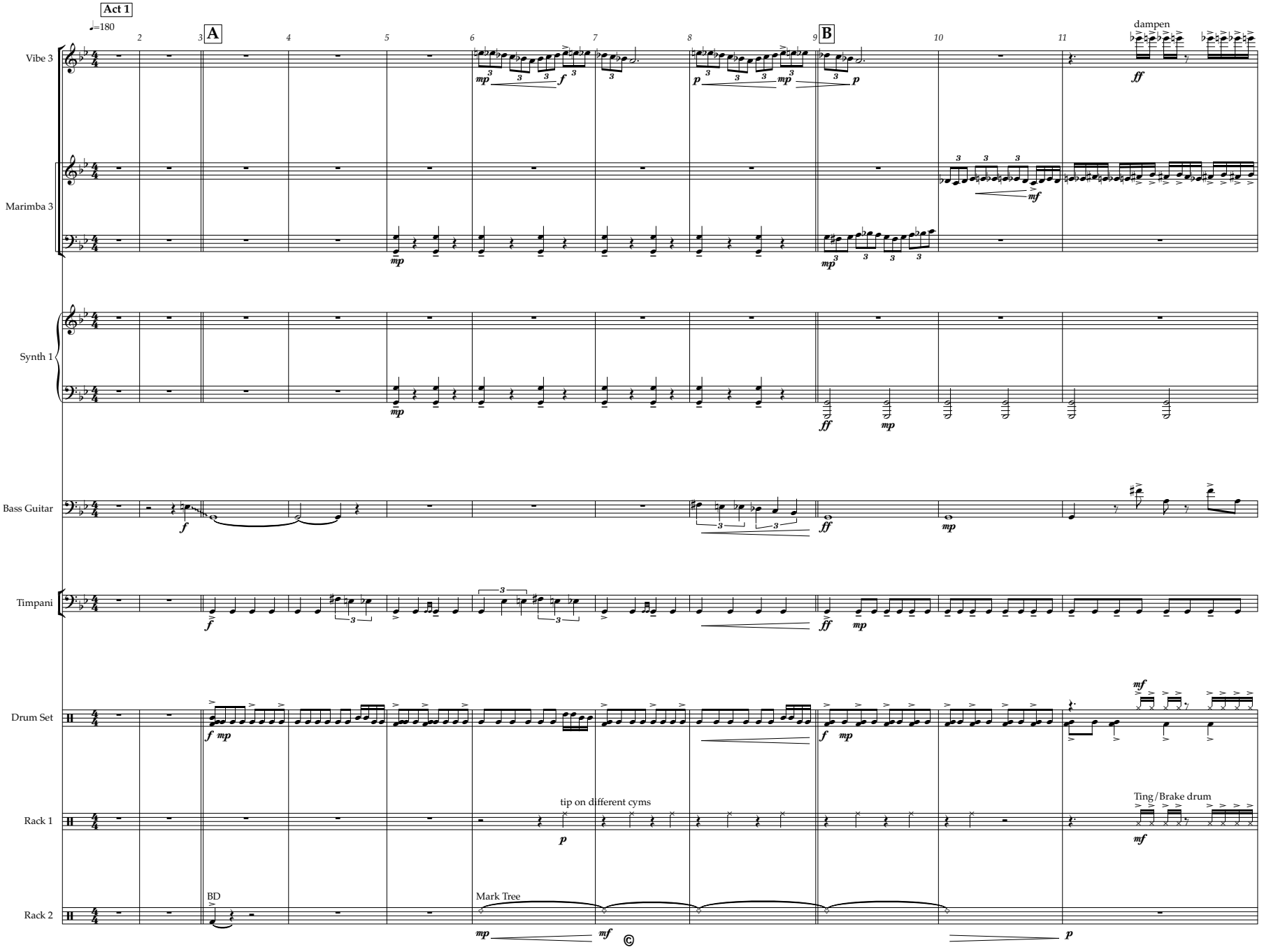
AQ '24 Rack Audition Etude

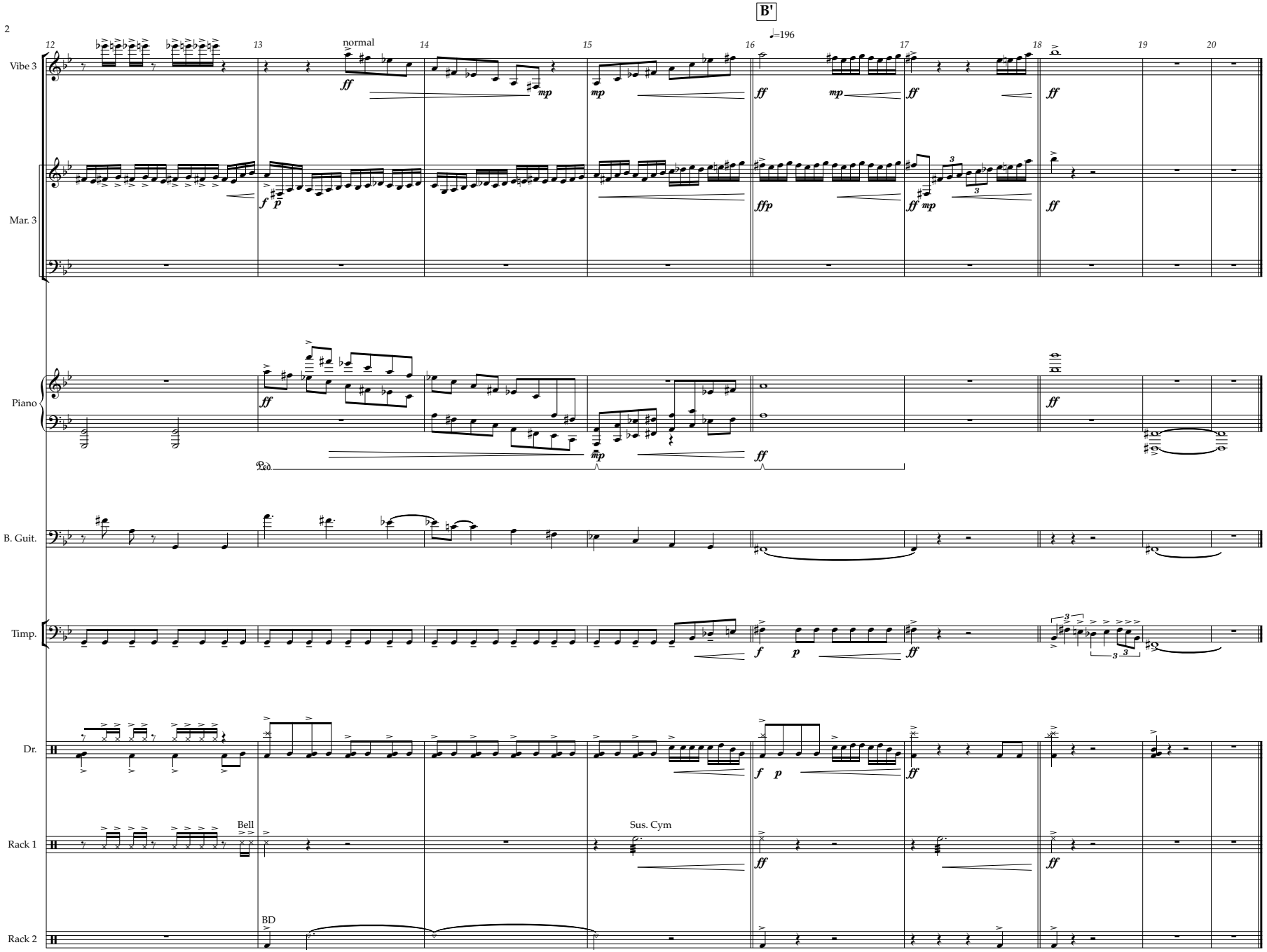
C. Kenney

AQ 2023

Bring MeA Dream

Original Music by Alan Sears and Kevin Kenney

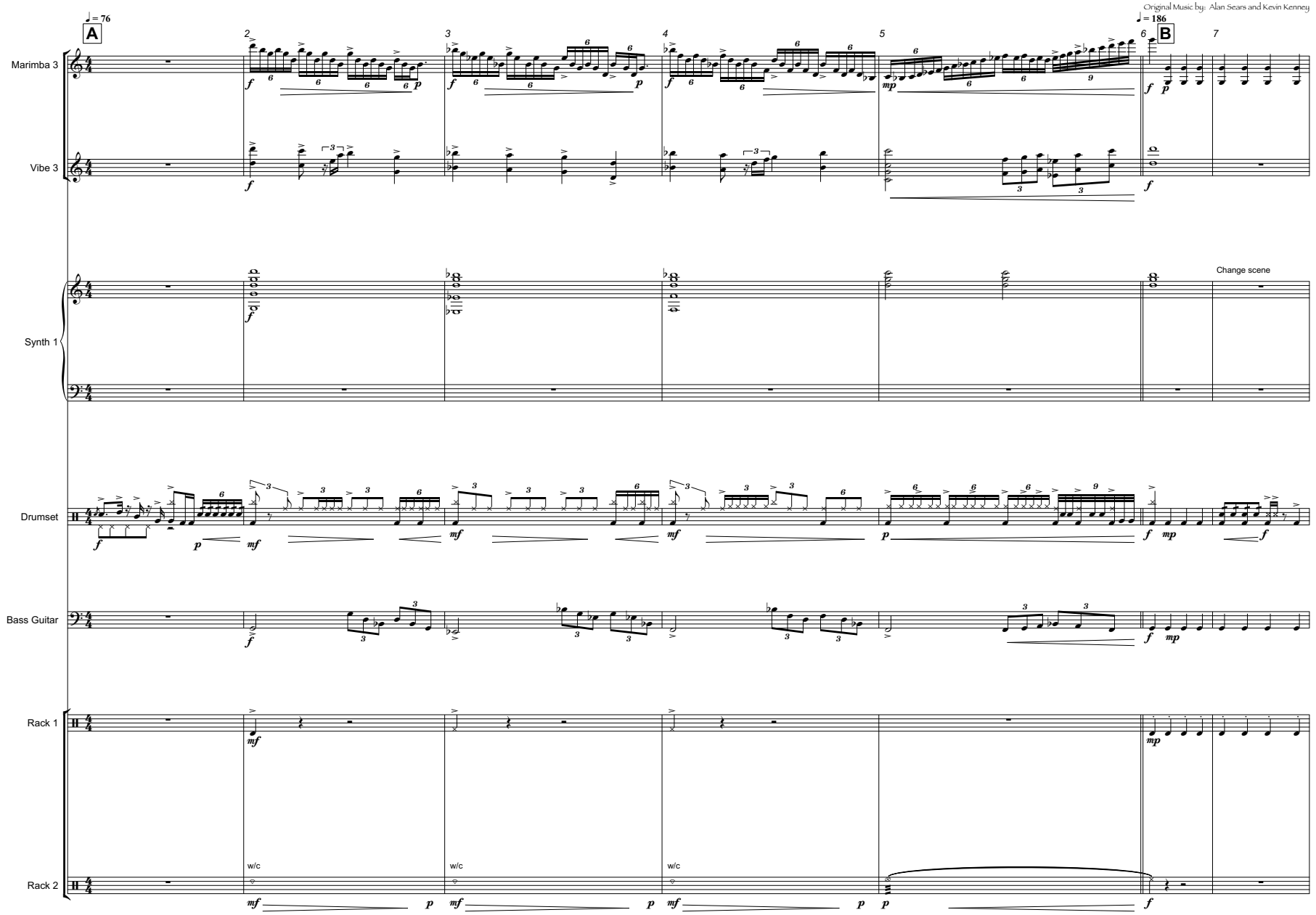


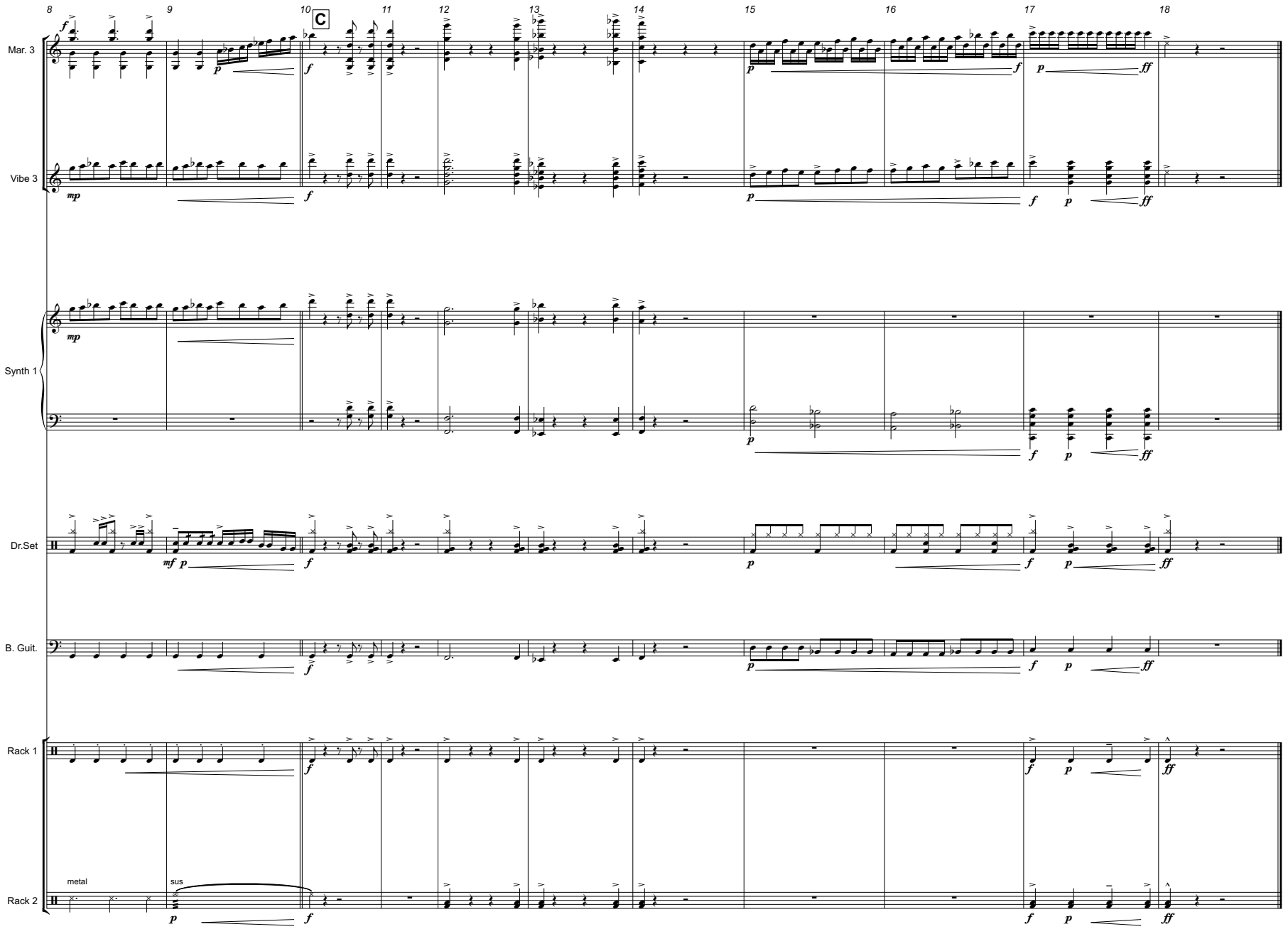

B'
♩=196
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
normal
Vibe 3
Mar. 3
Piano
B. Guit.
Timp.
Dr.
Rack 1
Rack 2
Bell
Sus. Cym
BD

Q2 2023

Life Imitates Art

Original Music by: Alan Sears and Kevin Kenney




8
9
10
C
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
Mar. 3
Vibe 3
Synth 1
Dr.Set
B. Guit.
Rack 1
Rack 2
metal
sus