

Fruitport Independent PIA 2023/2024 "Gunslinger" Packet Battery Percussion





Welcome

Marching Percussion is constantly evolving art and sport. This guide will serve as a foundation for high school through early college aged students to develop the fundamentals needed to excel in the activity. The concepts presented are not our own, rather they have been compiled and refined over 25 years of learning, teaching and growth in percussion studies with fantastic educators. Note that every percussion section approaches playing as an individual and ensemble differently, some more successfully than others, and every ensemble has technique definitions they choose based on their perceived overall success for the ensemble. Our goal is to provide each student with two things; First, a technique foundation that will serve them in future ensembles. Whether auditioning for a university's symphonic winds, a drum and bugle corp, or a jazz combo, students will develop an understanding of both the physical techniques used to produce quality sound, and an in-depth understanding of music interpretation and ensemble performance. Second, a love for percussion studies. We truly believe that if you don't enjoy what you're doing, you'll never reach your full potential. The staff will provide a learning environment that allows students to express themselves through art and physicality like no other activity can. And, we will have fun doing it!

Your Staff

Notes:

Executive Director: Tim Priest Ensemble Director: Nick Lootens

Dance, Body and Guard Coordinator: Sarah Jantz-Lootens

Visual Technician: Alexa Elkouri

Front Ensemble Coordinator: Makenzie 'Mak' Mattis

Front Ensemble Technician: Matt Leslie Battery Coordinator: Justin Sciullo Battery Technician: Erick Ramirez Battery Technician: Evan Sala Cymbal Technician: Olivia Muller

110100.					
	-				
		•	-	•	•



How To Practice and How to Rehearse

Practice and rehearsal are very different things. Practice is for you as an individual to improve the specific aspects of your playing that are lacking. It should be limited to very specific portions of concepts and be conducted very methodically. Rehearsal is meant for performers to come together and work on broader, group concepts that you can't practice alone, like blend, form/function, uniformity, voicing, listening responsibilities etc. You must practice individually in order to have a foundation for which rehearsal can be successful. The staff expects every member to practice daily.

How to Practice

- **1. Make a plan.** Never practice without a very specific goal you'd like to achieve. Start with small goals (a single beat or measure isn't too small), focusing on basics and get more in-depth in later plans.
- **2. Focus.** Make sure to narrow your practice to only one idea at a time before combining concepts. Free yourself of distractions. Choose a place where you have appropriate space, equipment, time and isolation.
- **3. Write it down.** Document your plan and take notes as you go. Critique yourself. And refresh yourself on the previous session before your next. This packet has space specifically designed for those notes.
- **4. Time it.** Limit individual practice to 30 minutes. Start slowly and build. If you realize a change in sound quality or consistency of technique, stop, go back and start again. After 30 minutes, give your brain a break (at least 15 minutes). Start fresh and retain what you've learned.

How to Rehearse

- **1. Stay quiet.** Listen to what's being said by staff and internalize concepts. Listen to those playing around you, can you hear the inconsistencies the instructors are referencing? Do you understand where you fit in the sound? You will always learn more by listening and trying to understand than you ever will through speaking.
- **2. Stay Focused.** Do not turn rehearsal into practice. If you or a staff member notes a particular problem in your playing, attempt to make a change, write down a note, and practice that concept individually later. Your brain can only do so many things at one time. By focusing hard on your individual problems, you take away from the overall ensemble's chance for success.
- **3. Take criticism as a compliment.** If a staff member tells you you're doing something wrong, it is because they care about you and the ensemble's success. Don't be upset, or embarrassed, instead; MAKE A CHANGE! This may take multiple reps, multiple corrections, and multiple rehearsals. If you are practicing on your own as described above and have a great attitude, you will be successful!



Dynamics:

For the purposes of uniformity, dynamics will be defined in terms of height (playing surface to bead of the stick) for our ensemble. Please note that dynamics are defined differently for every ensemble. A college drumline with 300 brass players may define piano as 6 inches, as anything lower is not heard when the brass is playing. A quartet may define piano as 1 inch, as percussion is more easily heard in the ensemble. For our ensemble:

	' '		-
pp	Pianissimo	Very soft	= 1" @ Edge/Wood or Gut
p	Piano	Soft	= 1" @ Center or 3"@ Edge
mp	Mezzo-piano	Medium soft	= 3" @ Center
mf	Mezzo -forte	Medium Loud	= 6" @ Center
f	Forte	Loud	= 9" @ Center
ff	Fortissimo	Very Loud	= 12" @ Center

Louder Dynamics (FFF = Vertical/18" and FFFF = Over head drumming) will be used very sparingly and as such should be used in warmup and when practicing in context only.

Other Terms:			



Battery Fundamentals

Approach: We believe in a relaxed approach to marching percussion. Your body should be free of tension. Focus especially on your neck, shoulders, wrists, arms and face being completely relaxed. Tension causes your body to use energy to hold a stressful position and compensate for a lack of mobility by using other muscles. It is better you conserve that energy and focus it on marching and playing. Additionally, tension leads to injury.

Posture: Stand so that your ankles, knees, hips, shoulders and head are in a generally straight line. The only muscle strain you should feel is in your back and core from holding the weight of the drum. Those muscles will develop as the season progresses and as such, you will feel less and less tension in them. Never force your body to squeeze to a point of discomfort. Instead focus on using your lower core muscles to support the weight of the drum. Try to fill your harness with your chest and relax your shoulders. Never march in a manner that causes knees to lock, legs to jar under pressure or causes twisting of ankles. Remember to breathe.

Attitude: When performing, whether rehearsing or playing for an audience, your eyes should be focused well above the horizon with your chin up. Make a connection with your audience. Members are required to love what they do. Let the audience know you do, and they and the judges will appreciate your performance much more. We encourage performers to become fully involved in their art. As such, nodding of the head to the music, facial expression of emotion, etc. are never discouraged so long as the ensemble performance does not suffer because of it. You should approach the drum with a great deal of positive energy every time you play. Give it your all, every single note.

Grip: The sticks (or other implements) should fit comfortably in your hands. Grab the stick in the rear third, with all of your fingers touching the stick. You should have a solid grip, that is neither so firm that it causes tension in your hand and wrist, but not so loose that gaps between fingers appear nor the stick can easily slide from your hand. We will focus primarily on the use of our wrists, fingers and arm in controlling the implements. It is important you develop an understanding of your body and think critically about how we produce each movement. You must know how much wrist, finger and arm you are incorporating into every stroke and be able to adjust when instructed to do so.

Snare Drums will use a "traditional grip" in their left hand. The same fundamentals of wrist, fingers, arm apply, but how we use them changes. Your left hand will make a tear-drop with your thumb and index finger. The pad of your thumb should contact the side/pad of your index finger. The rest of your fingers should line up underneath your index. The stick will rest relaxed inside the tear-drop and comfortable on the nail area of your ring-finger.

Basses and Tenors right and left hands will be matched grip, meaning identical from left to right. On all drums when sticks come out, there is a slight taper from the wrists down the stick to the playing surface, and the bead of the sticks are in the center of the head.



Stroke: In general, all strokes will initiate with the wrist and lead with the bead of the stick. Fingers will control rebound and the arms will support and generate additional force/height. Focus on consistency of sound. Make every note feel the same. Consistency is key. After the initiation of movement from your wrist, the bead of the stick rises to the desired height using your arms to lift, wrist to turn and fingers to control angle. Remember "the bead should lead". All of this should "flow" as the stick strikes the head and returns to its "up" position. Think about bouncing a basketball. Don't "choke off" or stop the sound. Make each stoke as smooth and connected (legato) as you possibly can. For your right hand, consider placing your relaxed closed hand on the playing surface and knocking as you would a door. This creates the same general wrist motion as a correct stroke. Your left hand will do the same, but for snare drums, rather than knock, roll your relaxed hand from front to back. Tenor drummers will find their grip, while using the same fundamentals is more "French" in the positioning of the hands (see previous page). This allows for a smoother transition from one drum to the next. Bass Drums will play with a more "German" grip (see previous page), as this allows for greater power when playing on a horizontal surface. Due to the complexity of bass drum technique, the following page is dedicated to its instruction.

We will use this as a foundation for understanding how we achieve all strokes successfully and will learn how to incorporate into "Up-Strokes", "Down- Strokes", "Subito Rolls", Over head accents, etc.

Additionally, please familiarize yourself with the following playing "Zones":

Center: The center of the head.

Edge: approximately 1/2 an inch from the rim of the drum (snares: directly in front, basses: up top)

Wood: While extremely rare in writing, this is the area of the playing surface where the head covers the shell of the drum. Beyond the edge and just before the rim, there is almost no snare resonance on the wood.

Trap Gut/2 O'clock: Snares only, the forward and right position on the head directly above the snares, 2" from the rim.

Rims: Play on the rim of the drum, Snares position varies, basses up top, tenors dependent on the drum.



The 8's Sequence

Everyone's body is different and in order to play together as an ensemble with any success, we must begin on common ground. The Legato Stroke will be the foundation for which all music is built in this ensemble. The following exercises will be looped. Instructor will call out or signal to the ensemble which to move to next while playing and can be played in any order. Members should practice in varying patterns to prepare for rehearsal.

This exercise should always be played while marking time, and with a metronome. Performers should focus on the following:

1. Consistency.

- Consistency of stroke: This exercise is about developing and perfecting a legato stroke. Ensure that you are staying relaxed, the travel path of the stick is perpendicular to the playing surface (don't strike the drum at an angle), and you are incorporating wrist, fingers and arm in a natural, flowing motion.
- Consistency of sound. Strike the drum in the exact same place, with the same amount of force. Ensure you are playing with a dynamic that matches those around you. Focus on blending your sound seamlessly with the drums next to you.

2. Energizing your mind and body.

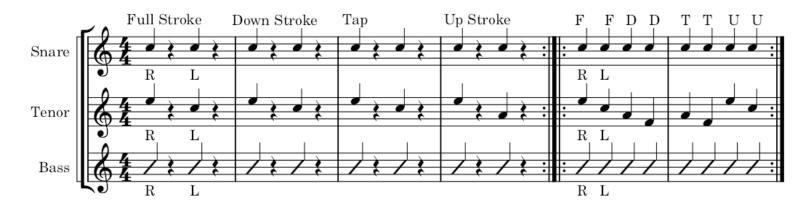
- This is typically the first exercise we will play as an ensemble. Use it as an opportunity to begin to focus your mind. Fight to stop you mind from drifting or "zoning out" and focus on your playing.
- Because the exercise is very repetitive, it is an excellent opportunity to perfect small inconsistencies in visual performance. Check your posture, your hand position, your playing surface, your mark time and ensure consistency and intensity. Are you playing this exercise with the same intensity as you would an end of season competition show? Why not?

My Practice Notes:			



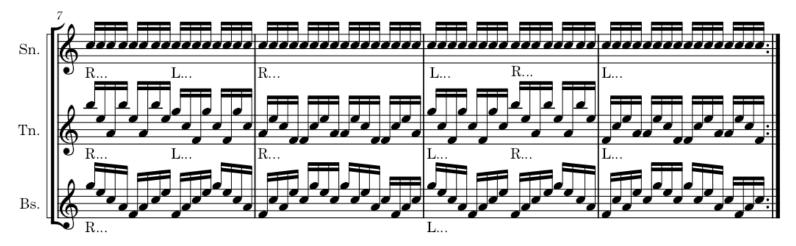
8's Sequence

Part I: Four Strokes



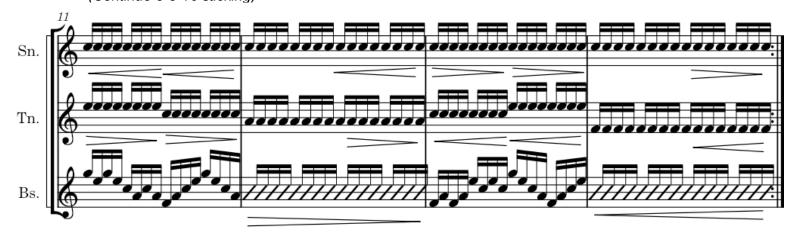
, | = J

Part II: 8-8-16



Part III: Crescendo and Decrescendo

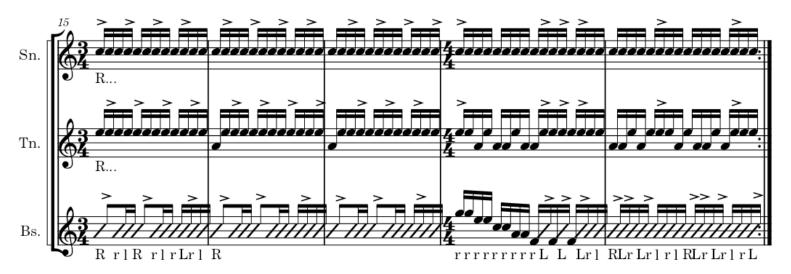
(Continue 8-8-16 sticking)



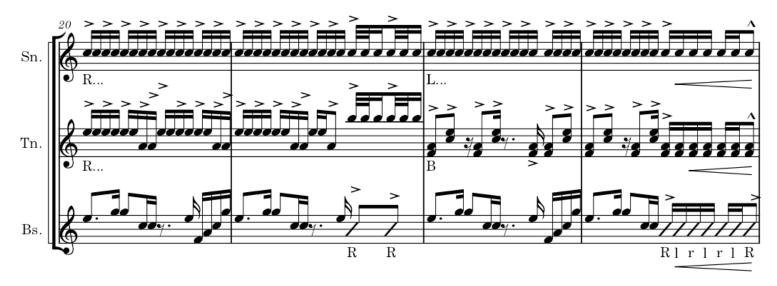


Part IV: Thirteen (Tap-Accent)

(Repeat on Left Hand - Tenors, Mirror Pattern on 2 and 4)



Part V: Thirteen Ending





Timing Variations

In order to play in-time, we must understand how time works. These variations in Tap-Timing and The Grid give us the best possible opportunity to interpret and place notes in time as an ensemble. It is imperative we understand how accents, taps and rests function in music and in space. Practice these with a metronome regularly. These exercises give back! Adding them to a practice routine for new drummers and seasoned alike is an excellent way to work time and space in a controlled and uniform way.

Focus on:

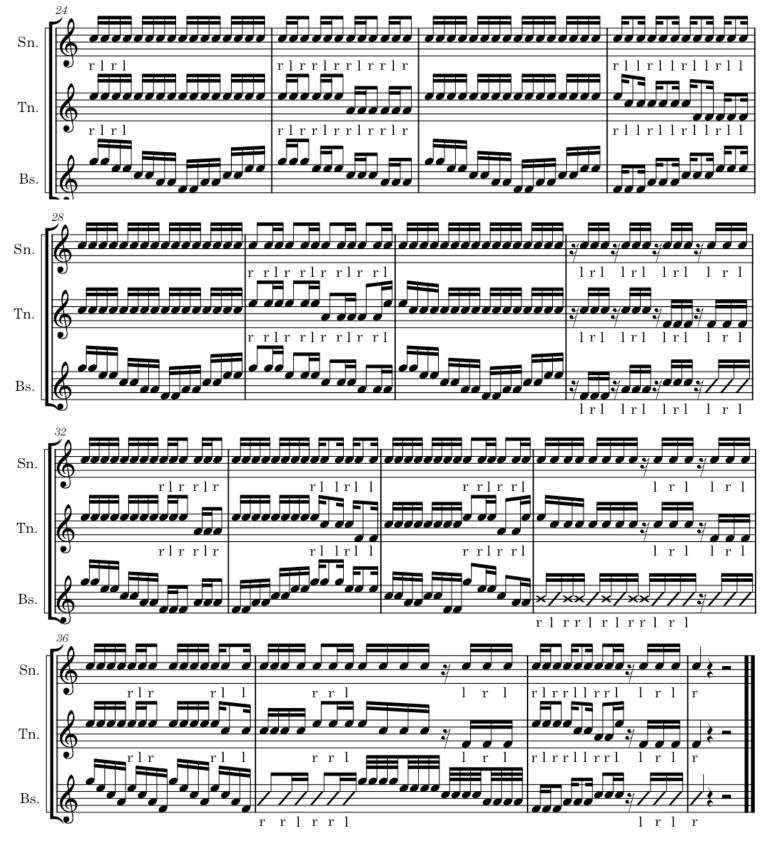
- 1. **Consistency.** Hand to hand sound quality as well as the ability to think "through a phrase" are key in executing these exercises. The slower you go the better this should become. Though be careful, too slow may make this more challenging than you imagined.
- 2. **Tempo.** As patterns change it's important to recognize our tendencies in certain stockings and patterns. Are you pushing/pulling? Do you emphasize certain notes or patterns more than others? How does that impact time?

y Practice Notes:	



Timing Variations

Tap-Timing





16th Note Grid





Triplet Grid



Stick Control

Continuing with the legato approach, Stick Control is designed to allow the performer to utilize the stroke achieved in Daily Double Triple while placing notes in time. You will notice that if you remove notes from Stick control, you see the structure of a double beat exercise emerge. The faster this exercise is played, the more connected the physical strokes become. The intent should be to produce a group of 2, 3 or 4 notes with identical sound quality, that occur with identical space between notes. Remember, the rhythm ALWAYS comes before the rudiment.

Focus on:

grouping.

- 1. Timing. Play with a metronome. Ensure proper space between notes exists.
- **2. Consistency.** Consistency both of sound and stroke. Are you approaching each grouping the same, with identical prep, wrist turn, finger squeeze and arm support? Are you controlling the placement of the beads with each note?
- **3. Placement.** The tendency is going to be to "drop in" notes rather than use energy and finger/wrist/forearm control to place each beat. Fight that tendency by being critical of each and every note and note
- **4. Flow.** Allow your sticks to travel in continuous motion. Do NOT force the stick down to tacit as it creates a great deal of tension in your wrists. Rather, let it relax slowly into position and prep naturally for the next attack.

y Practice Notes:	



Stick Control





Paradiddles

Now that we've MASTERED the legato stroke, double and triple stroke and our ensemble sound has been established and locked in, we can work on putting multiple ideas together. Paradiddles is an exercise meant to put hand changes, double beat, accents and taps as well as legato motion together. This exercise contains a building pattern of the paradiddle-diddle rudiment. It is important to approach the exercise as 16th notes in time, and then apply sticking in a legato fashion, NOT play paradiddles and attempt to "fit" them in time.

Focus on:

- 1. Playing 16th notes in time. Don't lose yourself in the rudiment aspect of the exercise.
- 2. Be critical of your timing and place each note. Like before, don't "drop" notes in or cheat, using excessive bounce to produce sound. Instead practice slowly, and ensure each note is playing with excellent sound support from your wrist, fingers, and arm.
- 3. Stay relaxed.
- 4. Understand where each accent and tap falls in time. Challenge yourself to play with a metronome oth on the beat, and one different beats.

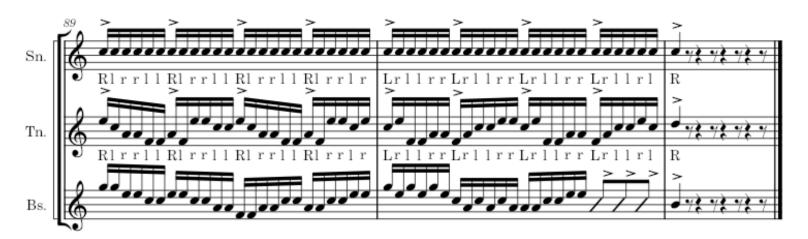
My Practice Notes:		



Paradiddle Builder







Diddles

Diddle exercises are meant to develop and understand as a group the use of multiple bounces of the stick on the playing surface. Each diddle is composed of 2 notes, played on the same hand, utilizing one stroke. In understanding that each note within a diddle occurs in a defined space, we can begin to control where each note within a diddle is placed. A diddle that is "closed" or "crushed" is one in which the two notes occurred to close together and were rushed or buzzed. A diddle that is two "open" is the opposite with the notes too far apart in time.

Focus on:

- **1. Consistency of technique**. It is a common habit to approach the taps or "check" of the exercise with a different wrist turn, finger squeeze and arm support than that of the diddle. The point of the check is to approach it exactly the same as the notes that have a diddle.
- **2. Consistency of sound**. When you play left hand and right hand diddles, while there may be a slight pitch difference, the sound, support, and quality/character of each note should be the same. Are you "dropping" notes in? Are you "death gripping" the stick and "choking" the sound off?
- **3. Timing.** The check is there to develop a solid foundation of time and sound prior to adding a diddle. Use it. Don't change your motion and listen to each other. Play with a metronome whenever possible.
- **4. Minor adjustments = Maximum Success.** In general don't change things about your playing drastically in diddle exercises. There are many notes, and drastic changes affect parts of the playing you may not intend to impact. Make small corrections.

My Practice Notes:	



Chickens and Biscuits





Triplet Diddle/Triple Rolls

(Also to be played with buzz press/roll)





Flams

A flam consists of a primary attack note and a grace-note. The grace note is played at a lower volume than the primary note. In marching percussion, the grace note and primary note occur at the same time. This adds a level of complexity and interest to the music and provides the performer a larger 'tool-kit' from which to produce sound. A flam does not need to be accented, but by its very nature, it will pop out of a consistent tap sound.

Focus on:

- **1. Consistency of technique**. Don't change the way you approach the grace note or accent. The only change is when these notes occur. Not how we produce the sound
- **2. Over turning for grace notes.** While you NEVER want to drop-in a note, don't focus on playing the grace note particularly strong. Attempt to play the grace note 1 dynamic level below your lowest 'tap' in that section.
- **3. Independence.** Understand what each hand is doing individually. It is very helpful to break down each hand separately and focus on playing the correct rhythms before attempting the rudiment.

y Practice Notes:	



Flam Accents





Latin Lover

Latin Lover is a classic in the marching percussion world. It is an all encompassing warmup meant to bring all of the ideas in our warmup book together. While this exercise requires a great deal of focus, it should be fun! Let yourself lay into the groove, understand when your part is the most important and when it's not and really develop your ensemble sound.

Please note that Latin Lover is licensed Specifically for the use by Fruitport Independent Percussion for the 2023-2024 season. Any copying, distributing or otherwise use of this piece is prohibited. Out of respect for Brian Perez and this incredible work, please purchase on tapspace.com should you wish to use the piece at a later date, or with a different ensemble.

My Practice Notes:	



Latin Lover - Snares By Brian Perez J = 124 RH-rim/LH-rim knock mprrlR A 10 13 flip RH to butt LH to edge RH-center/LH-rim



1 1

r

#

19





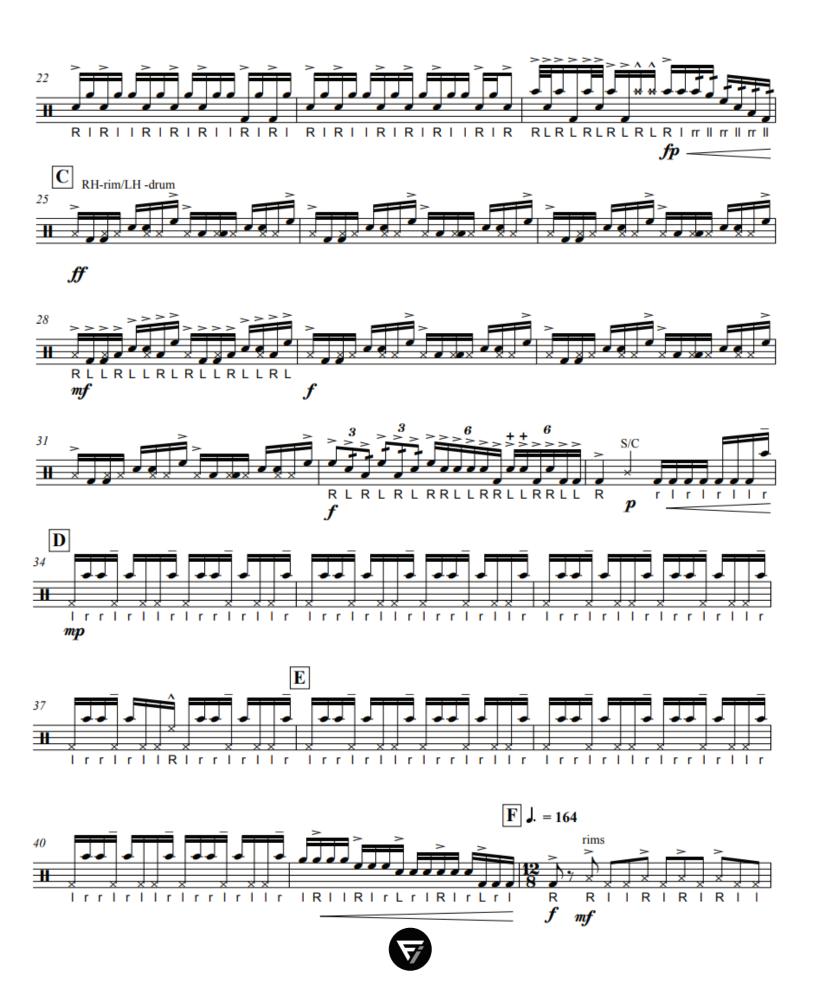










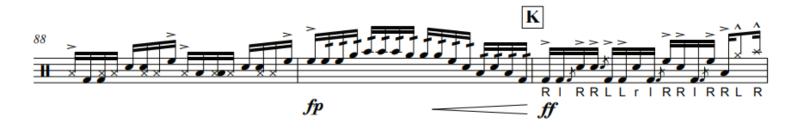






















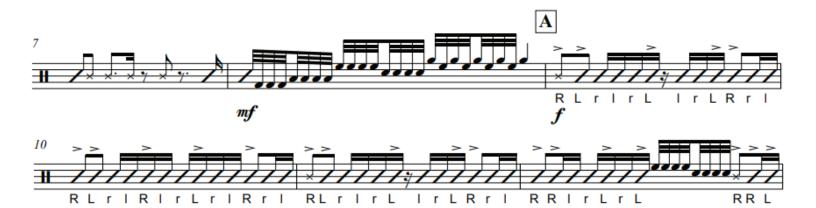
Latin Lover - Basses

By Brian Perez

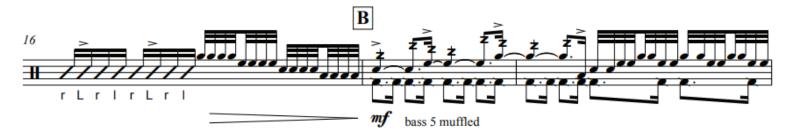




















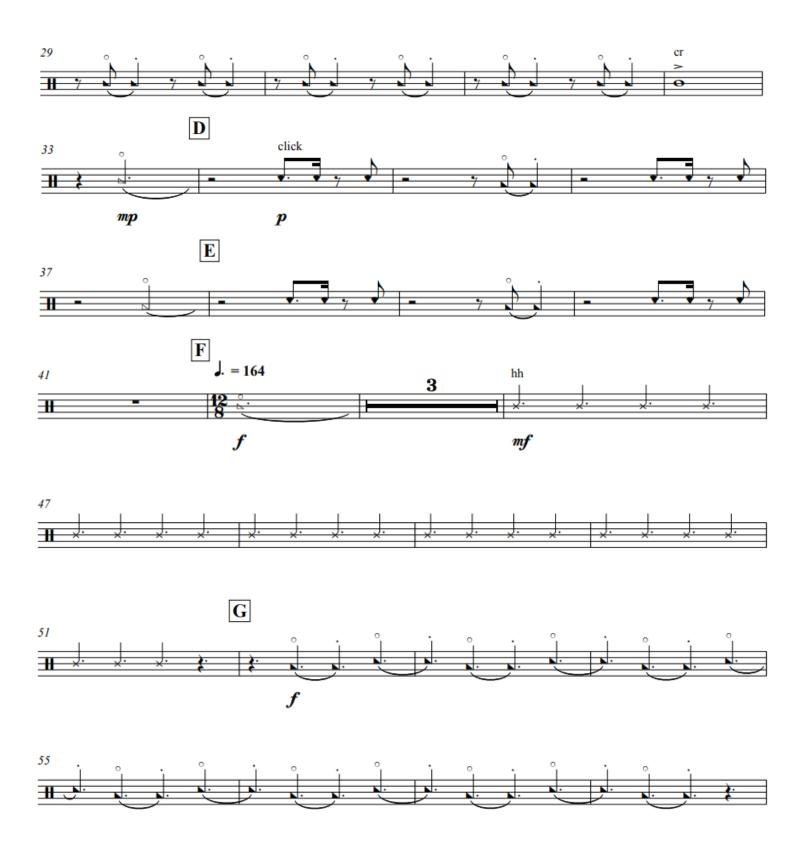


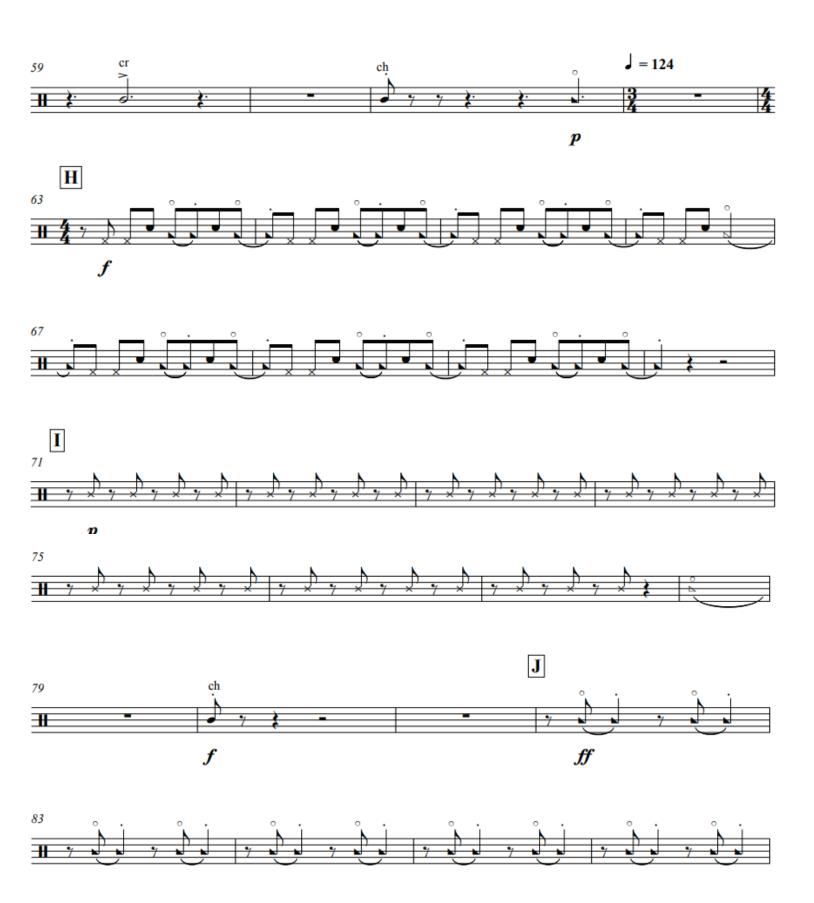


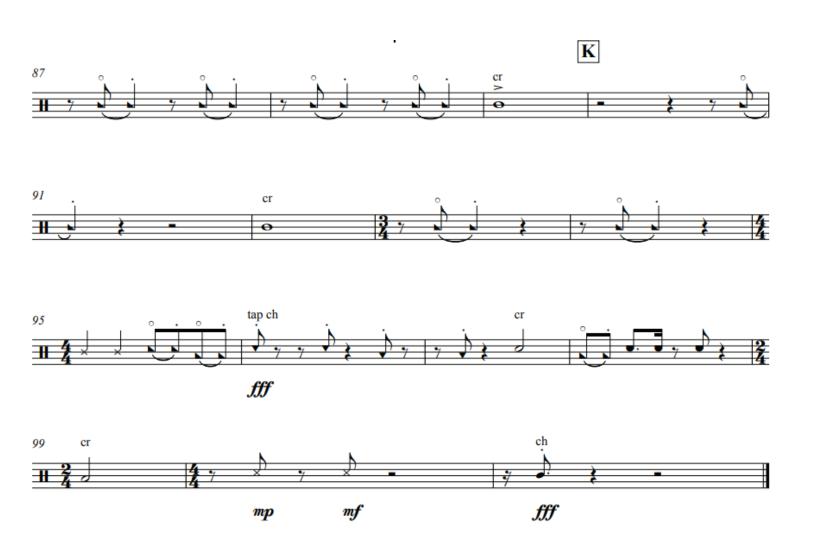
Latin Lover - Cymbals

By Brian Perez









Latin Lover Grande. © 2008 Tapspace Publications, LLC. Portland, Oregon. www.tapspace.com. All rights reserved Unauthorized use of this file by anyone other than the purchased licensee is a violation of U.S. Copyright Act and is punishable by law. Use of this product constitutes your agreement with the included licensing terms.