COLT CADETS
DRUM & BUGLE CORPS

PERCUSSION BOOK
FRONT ENSEMBLE

CC25

WELCOME!

*Thank you for your interest in the Colt Cadets Front Ensemble. We are **VERY** happy you are here and looking forward to the 2025 season! Our approach to all things percussion technique is with an open mind. The Colt Cadets staff comes from a wide variety of performing and teaching backgrounds - all of which we are excited to share with you on your Drum Corps journey!*

We are here to teach you how to speak the "language" that is percussion. *The Front Ensemble is capable of a wide variety of musical expression - melody, harmony, texture, color, and the like.* ***Scales, chords, and arpeggios are the "words" of the melodic percussion language****; we are learning (together!) about all of the different combinations of notes that sound good together - and they all may require a new approach or understanding of a technique or stroke type. The uniqueness of every season with a Front Ensemble and the music they play is what keeps percussionists (students and educators alike!) coming back to this activity year after year. We hope you learn a lot while you are here!*

The Differences Between Mallets and Drums:

Drums - *are very small trampolines - they get a lot of bounce! You need a strong fulcrum to create rebound and lots of control over the rebound you get!*

Mallets - *are very big pianos. They require a lot more movement behind the instrument than the piano! Your hands cannot reach all of the notes from every position. They do not get a lot of bounce so you need to be in full control of where your mallets are going.*

Previous Experience on Mallet Instruments:

Again, we are so happy you are here! We welcome students of all ability levels and will find a spot for you to learn and grow as a performer! The benefits of our technique program are applicable to all percussion instruments, including if you would like to find yourself on a battery instrument in the future. Prepare any music you are able, and we will help you continue to succeed!

General Mallet Approach:

We approach mallet playing for students with all ability levels! You may have never played in a Front Ensemble before, held four mallets before, or not used a specific grip before. That's okay! We have parts for Marimba, Vibes, Synthesizer, along with general "Mallet" parts if you do not know where to start. We are here to help expose you to all of the possibilities of a Drum Corps Front Ensemble!

Mallets are much more top-heavy than drumsticks. This creates a lot of sound that goes through the keys and into the resonators of the instrument. We use a lot more of the back of our grips than our drumming counterparts (middle, ring, and pinky fingers) to create big, full sounds on the keys. This is different than a drum - the key to success in the front ensemble is being open to the difference!

The Piston Stroke:

The mallets and instruments will not rebound like a drum. You will need to create rebound on these instruments!

If you come from a battery or drum background, you may be familiar with the "Full Stroke" - where the stick rebounds back to the same height it started. We have a different name for this stroke type on mallet instruments - the "Piston Stroke."

Two mallet Piston Strokes are created like a piston from a motor on a vehicle - there are two separate motions that make up the stroke.

1. *The mallet is moved downward (from the wrist) towards the bar*
2. *The mallet strikes the key and then is picked back up immediately (from the wrist)*

The Piston Stroke creates the illusion of rebound by combining two motions into one relatively quickly. It will take a lot of practice to make it look fluid!

2 Mallet Stroke Types:

Piston Stroke - The mallet starts at a set height and is returned by the player to the same height after playing

Down Stroke - The mallet starts at a high height and the player uses the wrist and back fingers to keep the mallet down (1-3" from the bar) after playing

Up Stroke - The mallet starts at a low height (1-3" from the bar) and the player uses the wrist and back fingers to bring the mallet up to a higher height (4-12") after playing

4 Mallet Grips:

Marimba - Stevens Grip
Stevens Grip was created by Leigh Howard Stevens, who was predominantly a marimba performer.
This grip is a French Grip - your thumbs are facing upwards.
This grip is not a cross grip - the mallets should not cross in your palms!
The Piston Stroke still applies to this grip!

PAS (Percussive Arts Society) How to Hold Stevens Grip:

Vibes - Burton Grip
Burton Grip was created by Gary Burton, who was predominantly a vibe performer.
This grip is a German Grip - your thumbs are facing sideways.
This grip is a cross grip - the mallets should cross in your palms!
The Piston Stroke still applies to this grip!

PAS (Percussive Arts Society) How to Hold Burton Grip:

The Metronome:

A good rule of thumb for practicing with a metronome is that every minute of practice is worth double your "money" - 2 for the price of 1.*

For example, you get a new piece of music and on first glance you think it might take you two hours to learn. If you practice with the metronome, it will only take you one hour!*
**exact scientific citation needed :)*

*Again, we are **VERY** glad you are here at Colt Cadets and look forward to working with you!*

Tim Berg, Percussion Caption Head
timbergpan@gmail.com

Octaves

Tempo = 80-200 (eighth note)
Goals
- *Play for every major scale*
- *Even sound quality RH to LH*
- *Even sound quality up and down the scale*

Octaves and Tetrachords

Tempo = 60-180
Goals
- *Maintain sound quality from octaves (RH + LH) to tetrachord (hands separate)*
- *Even RH-LH on eighth notes*
- *Tetrachord - four notes*

Green

Tempo = 60-180
Goals
- *Maintain sound quality from Octaves and Tetrachords (quarter and eighth notes) to sixteenth notes*
- *Even sound quality RH lead (ascending) and LH lead (descending)*

Check Patterns

Tempo = 80-160

Goals

- *Straight sticking throughout*
- *Counting accuracy, sticking accuracy, and timing accuracy*
- *If you can play all the rhythms, you shouldn't be fooled by any music you see!*

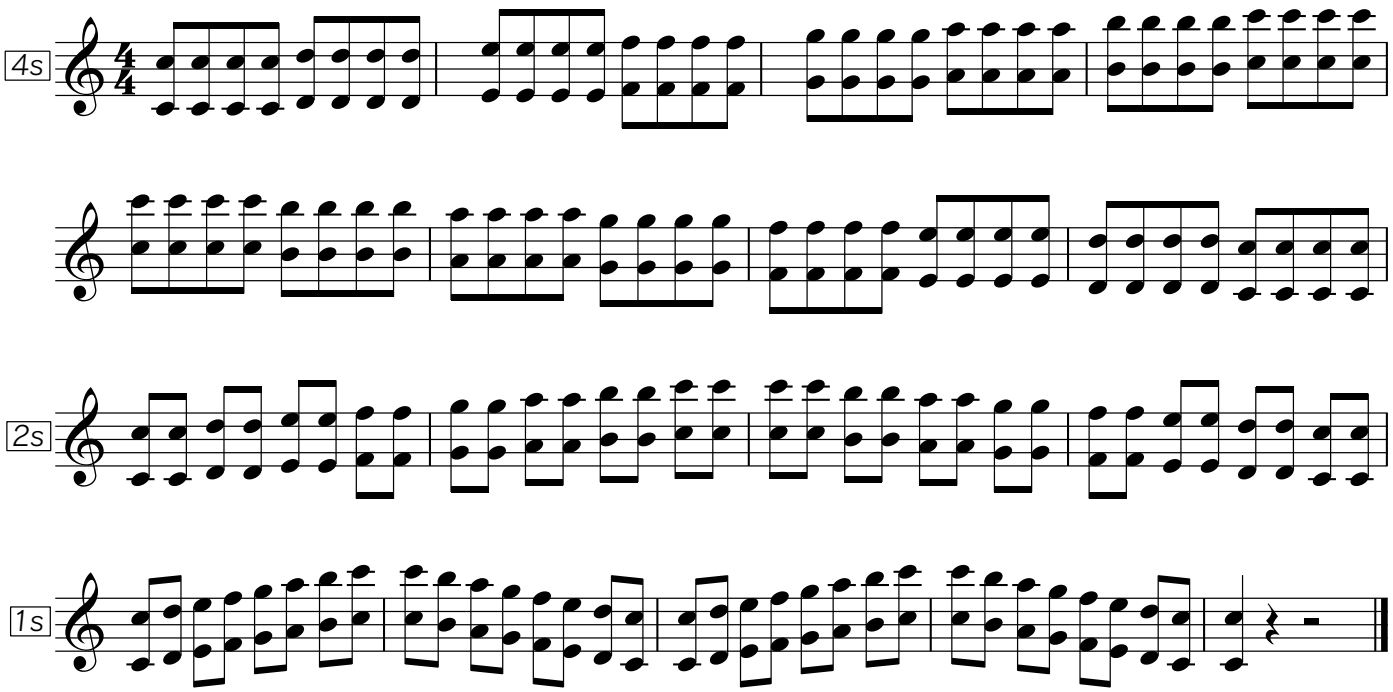
CC 4 Sticks

Tempo = 60-94

Goals

- *This is a popular chord progression from a well-known song - do you recognize it??*
- *Beginning four mallet stroke types*
  - *Double Vertical*
  - *Alternating*
  - *Inside/Independent Mallets*
    - *Mallets 2 & 3 (Stevens Grip)*
    - *Mallets 2 & 4 (Burton Grip)*
- *If you are a beginning mallet player, work on hands separately!*
- *Interval shifting*
- *Piston Stroke - within four mallet technique, this is achieved by rotating your wrist!*

OCTAVES



OCTAVES & TETRACHORDS

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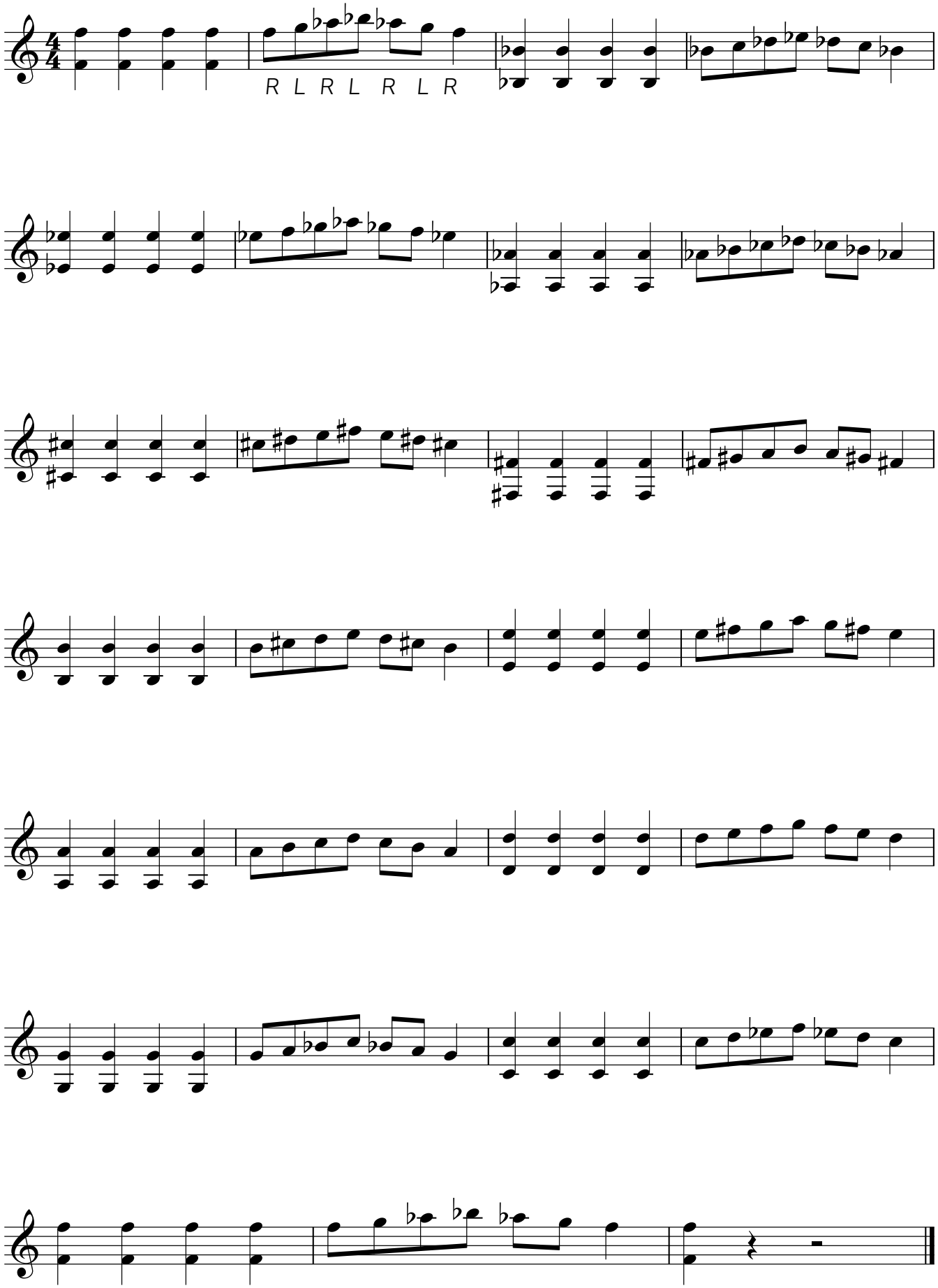
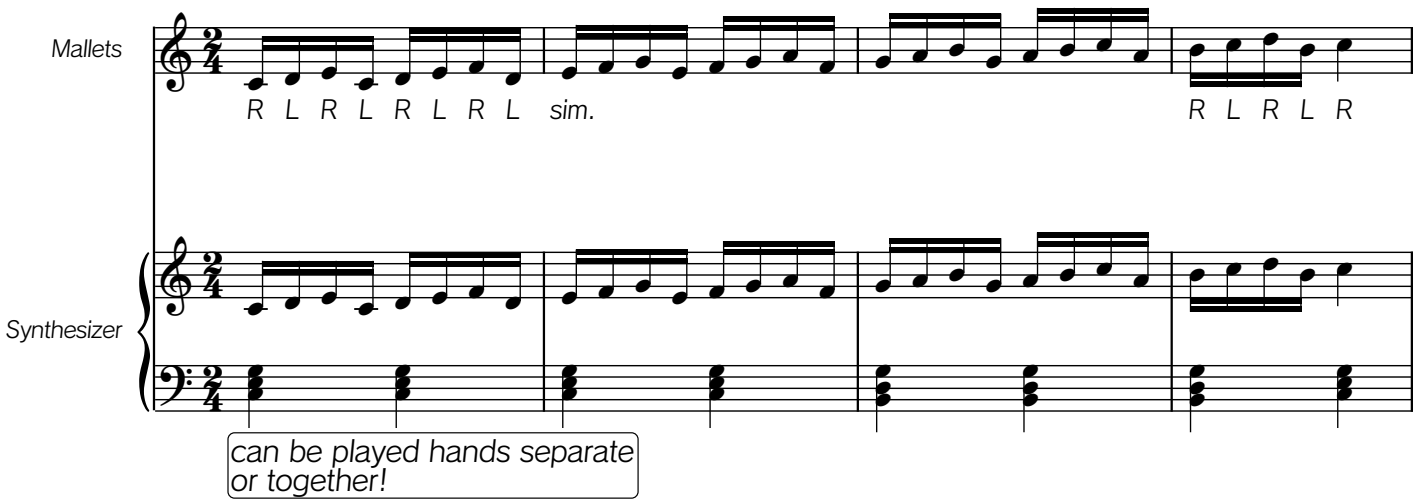
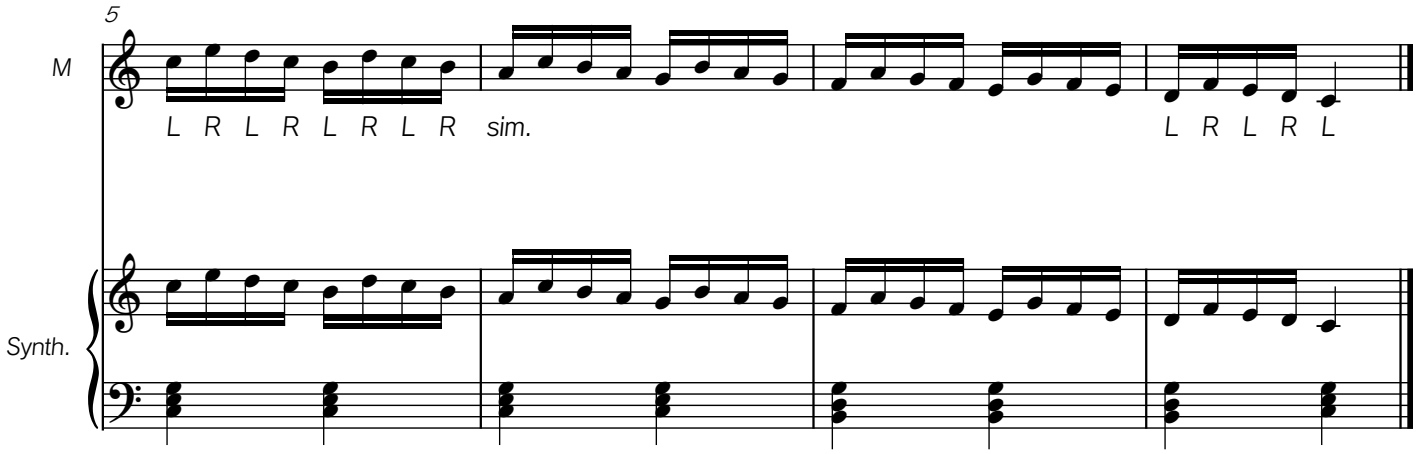


COLT CADETS
DRUM & BUGLE CORPS

GREEN

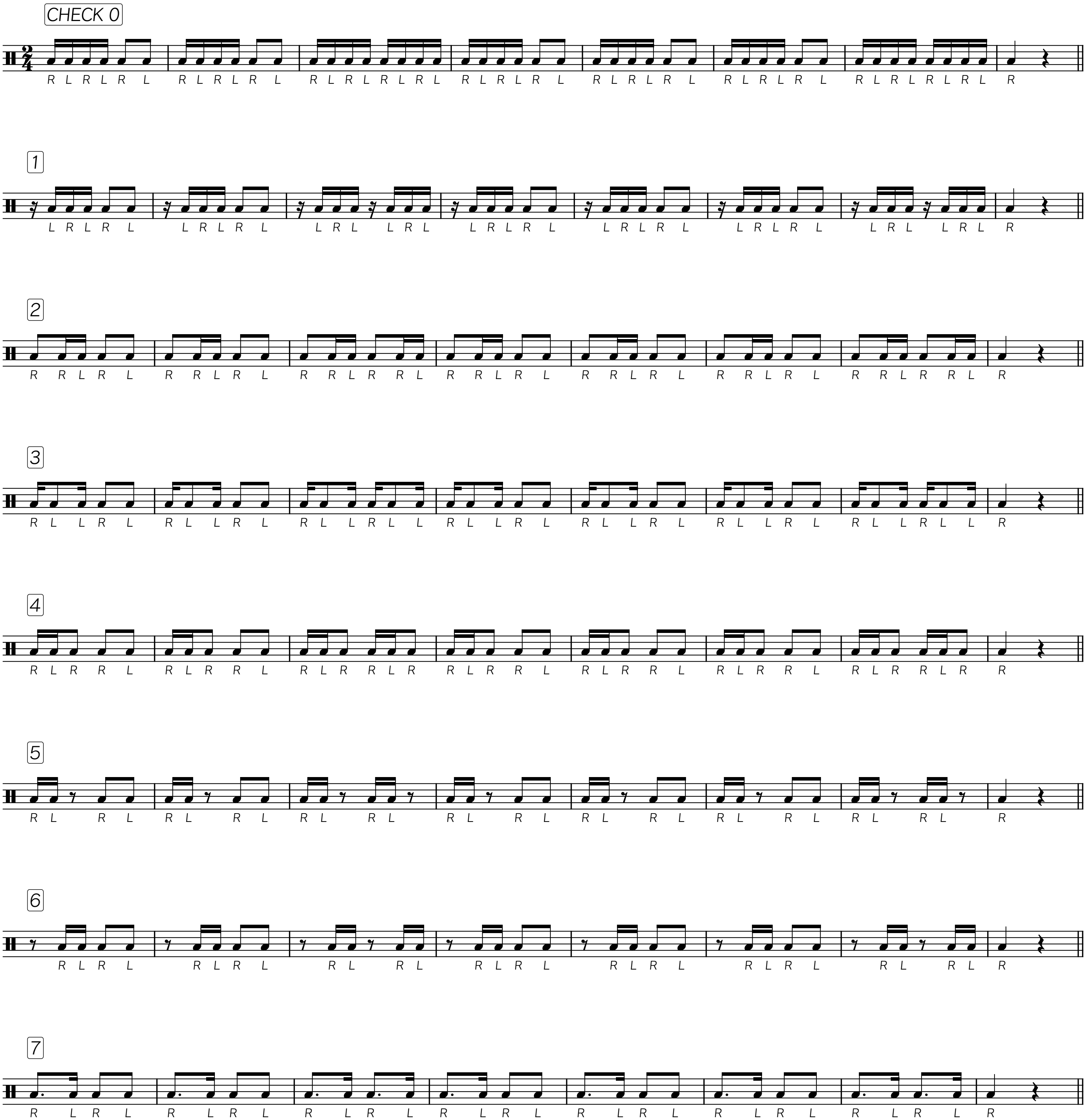
arr. BERG





Check Patterns

THOM HANNUM
arr. BERG



Check Patterns 2

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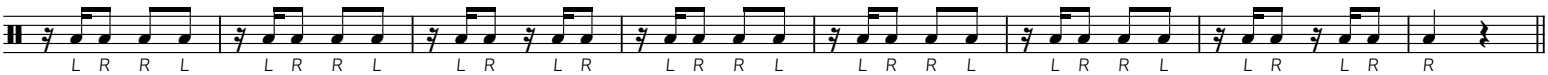

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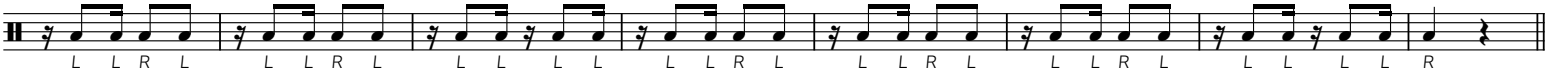

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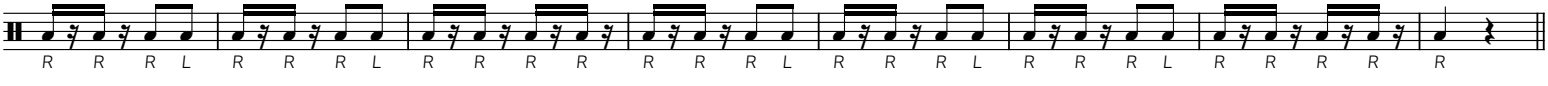

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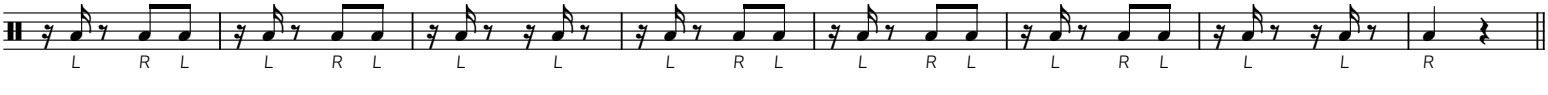

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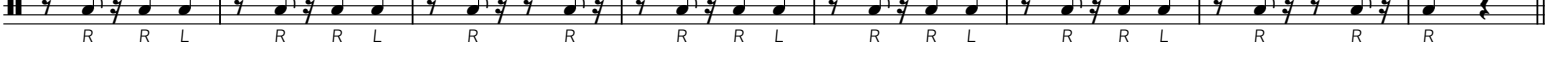

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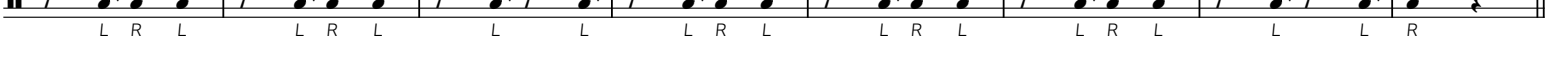

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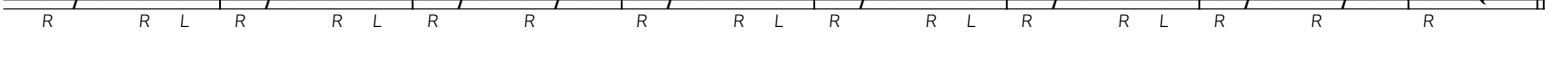

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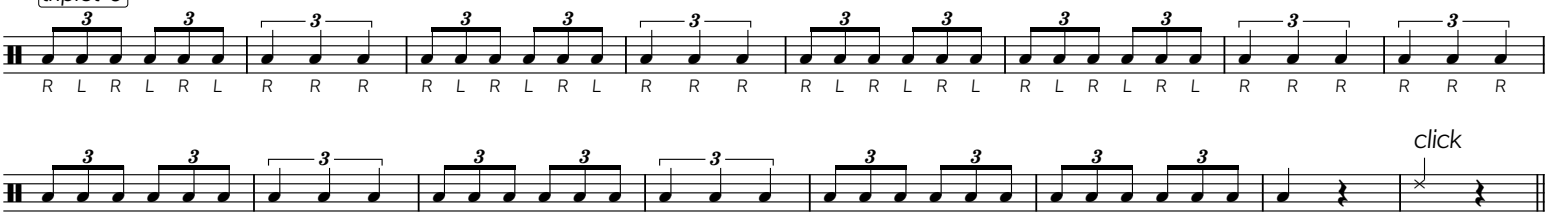

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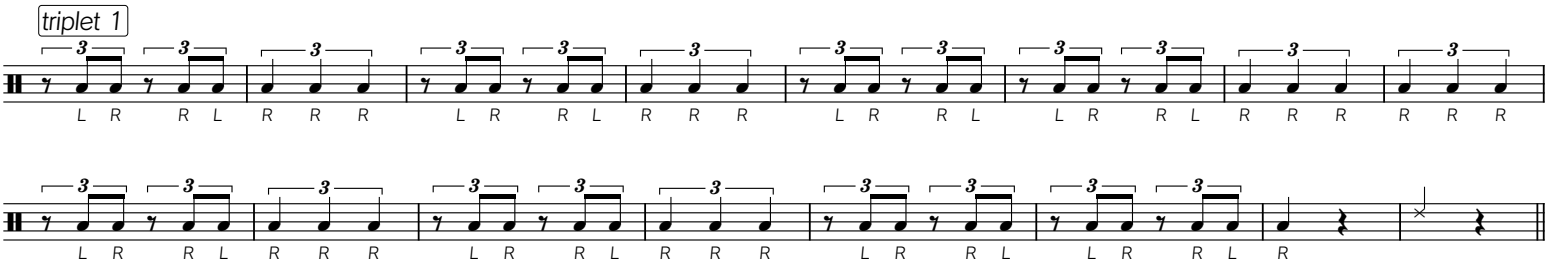

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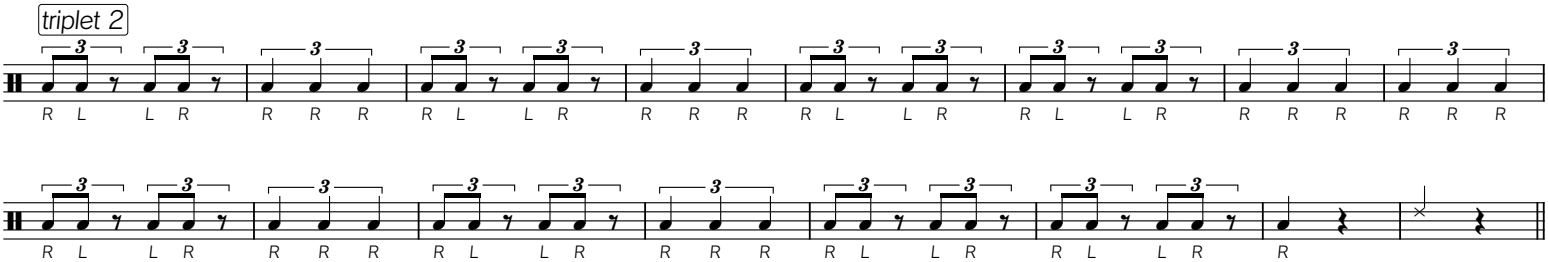

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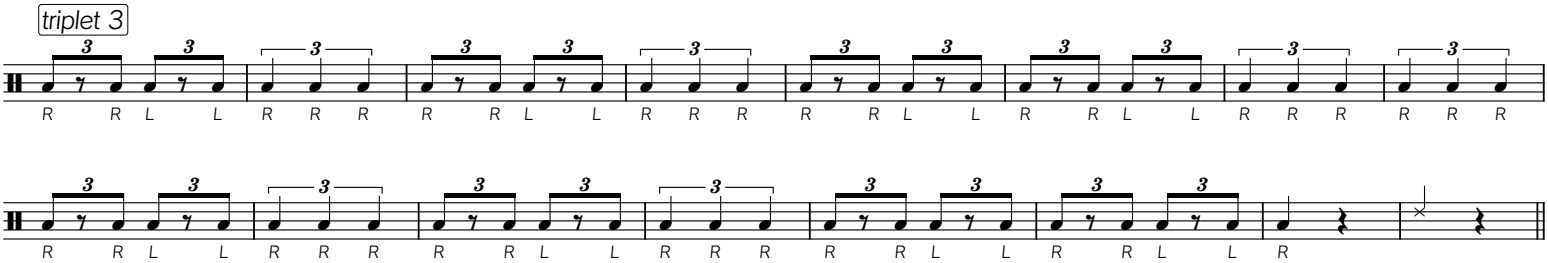

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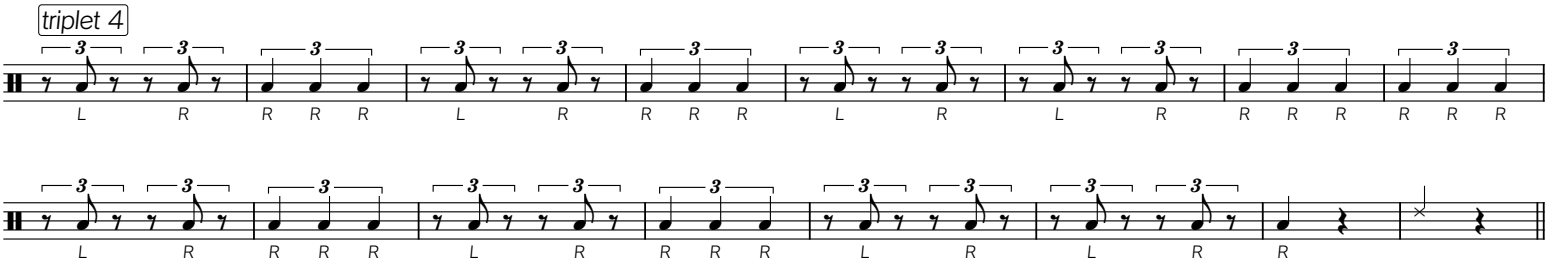

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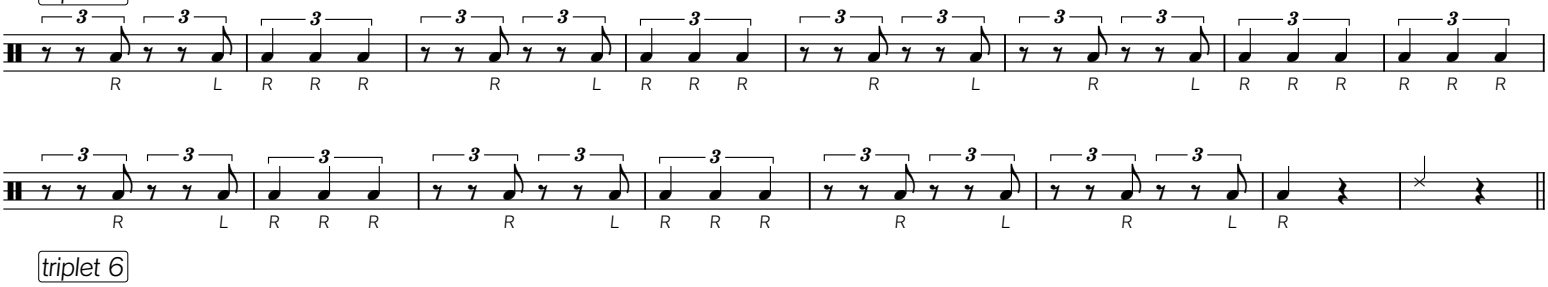

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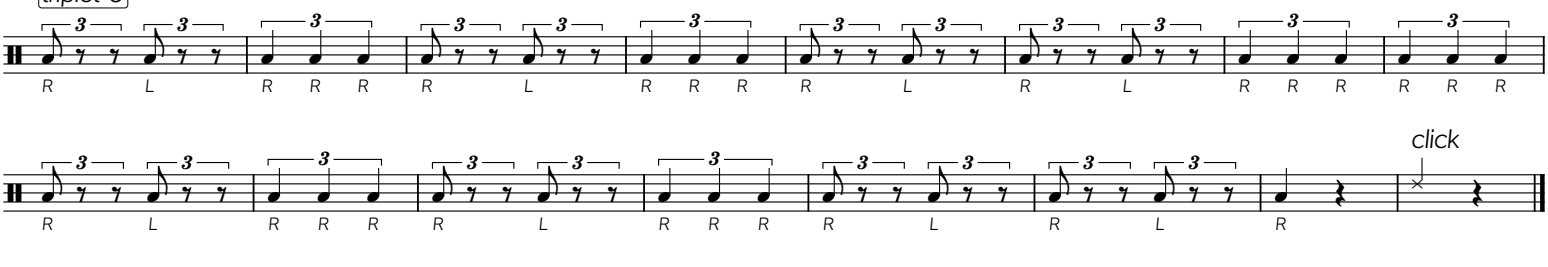

MARIMBA

CC 4 STICKS

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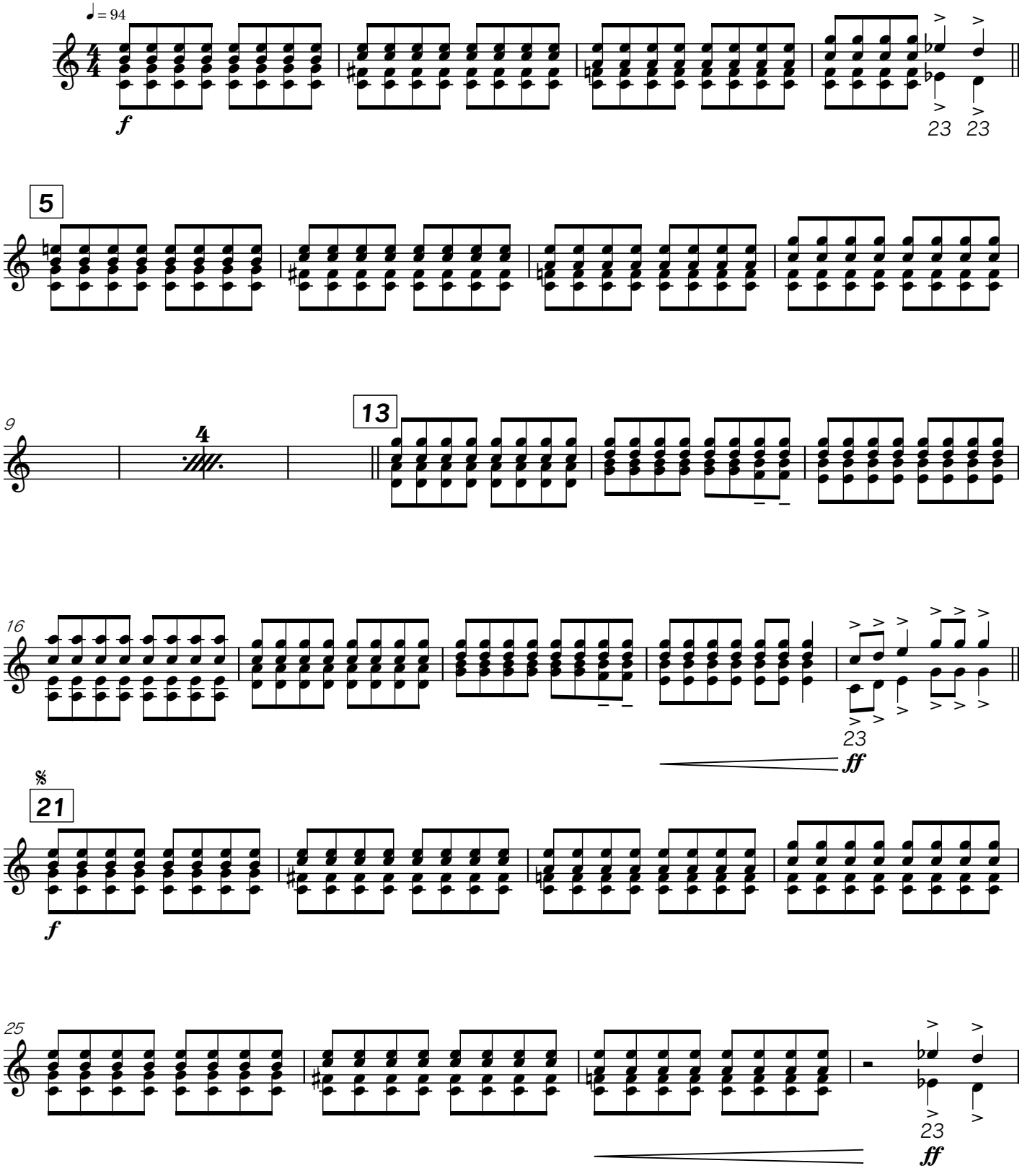
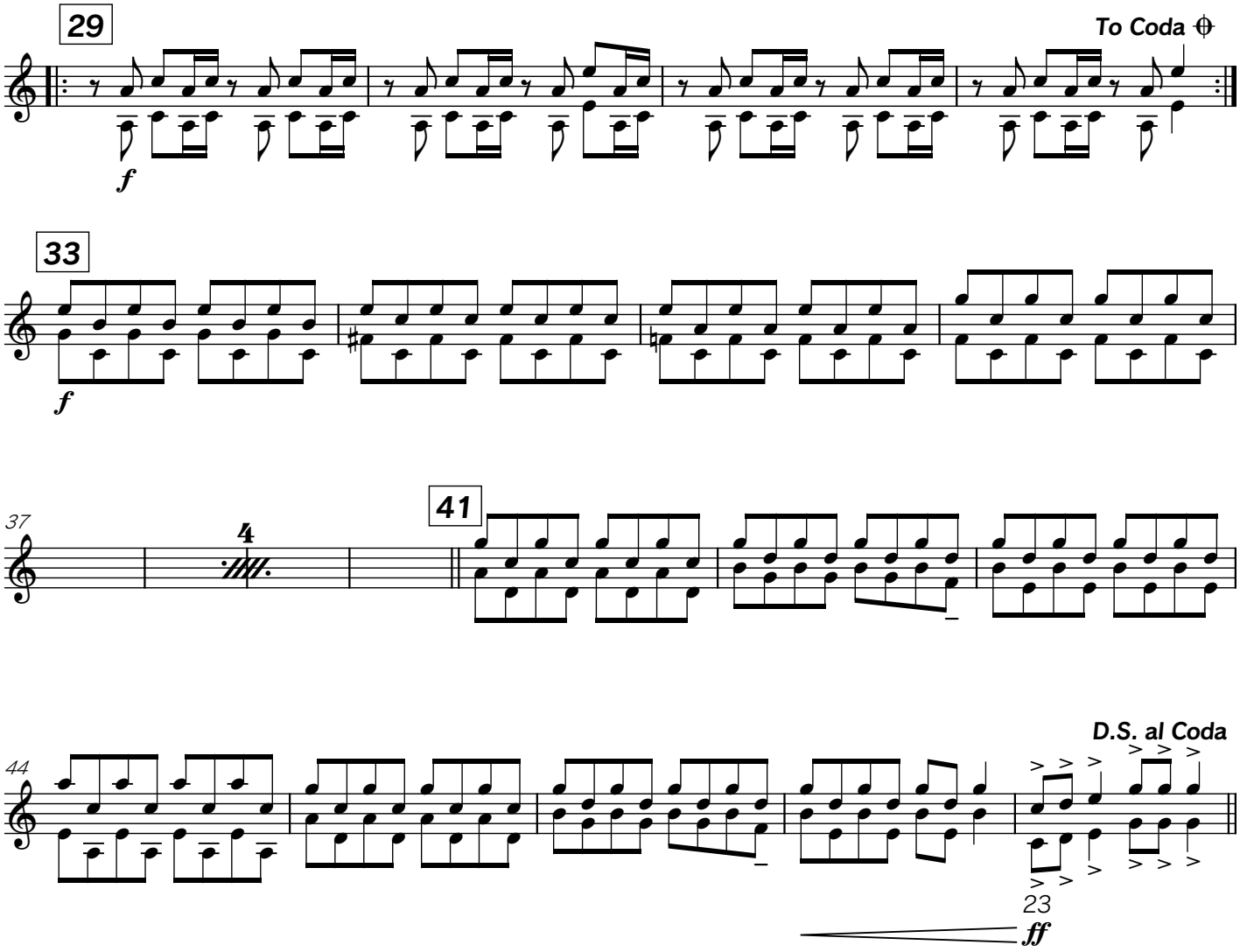
DRUM & BUGLE CORPS

??? arr. BERG

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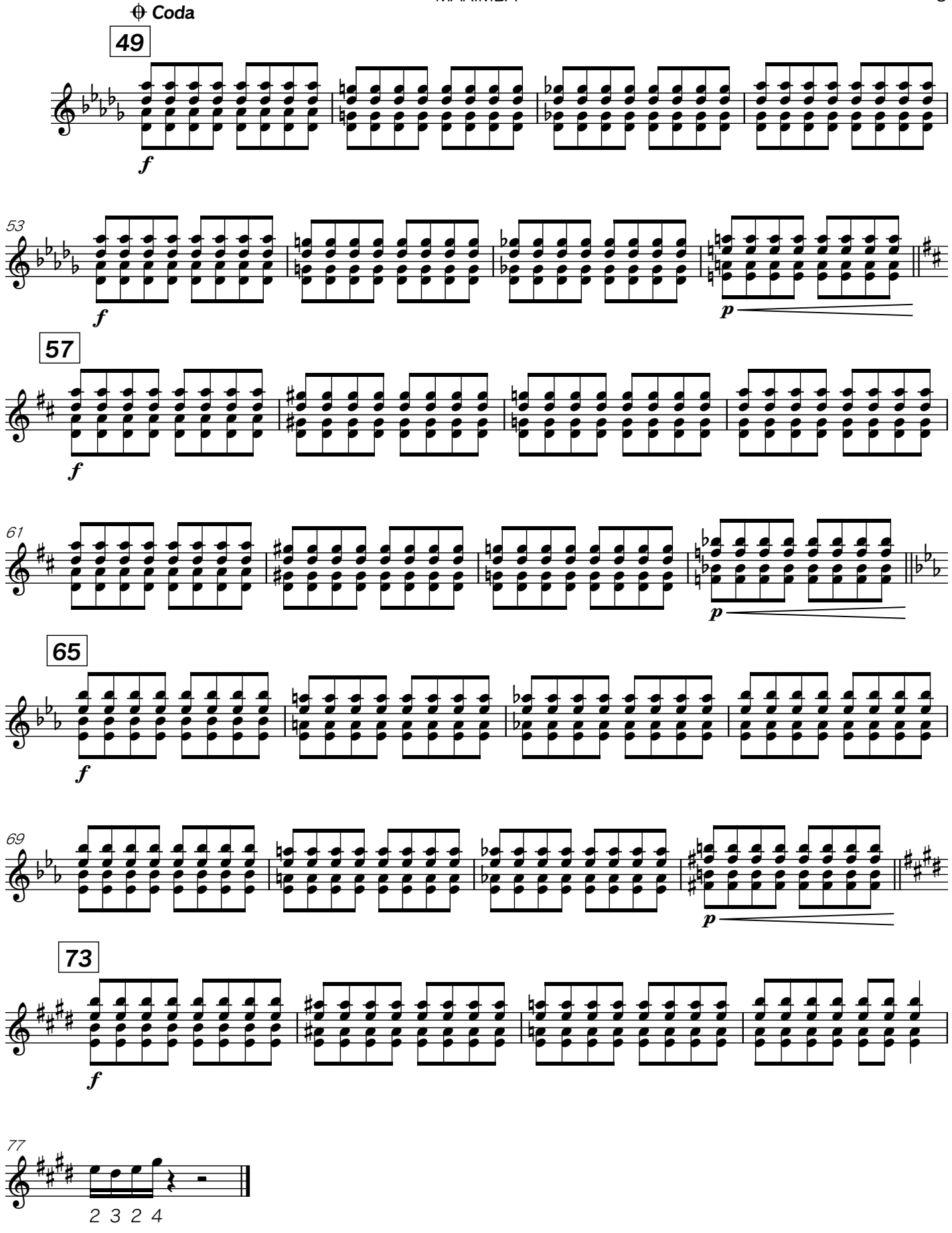
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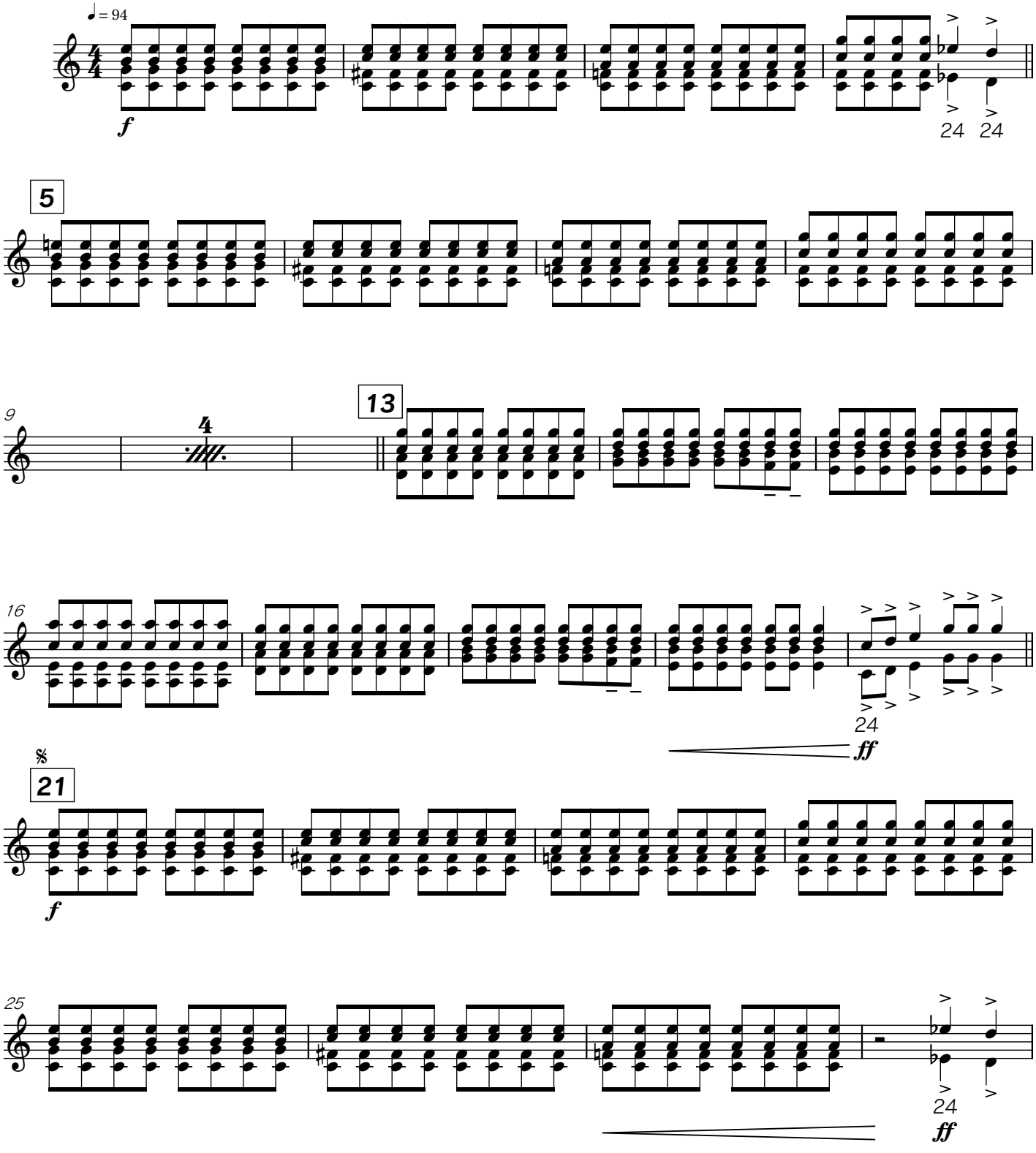
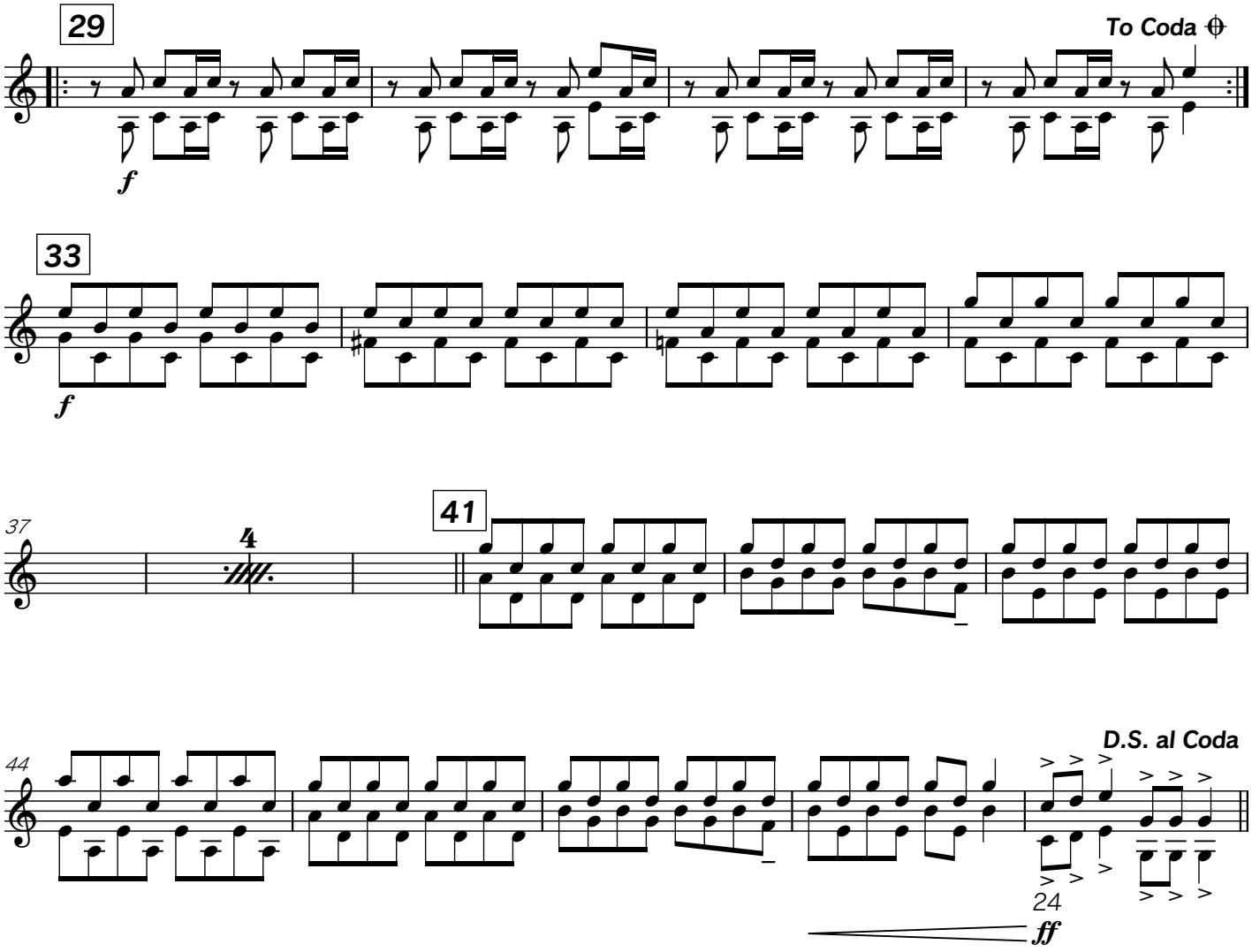
VIBES

CC 4 STICKS

COLT CADETS
DRUM & BUGLE CORPS

??? arr. BERG

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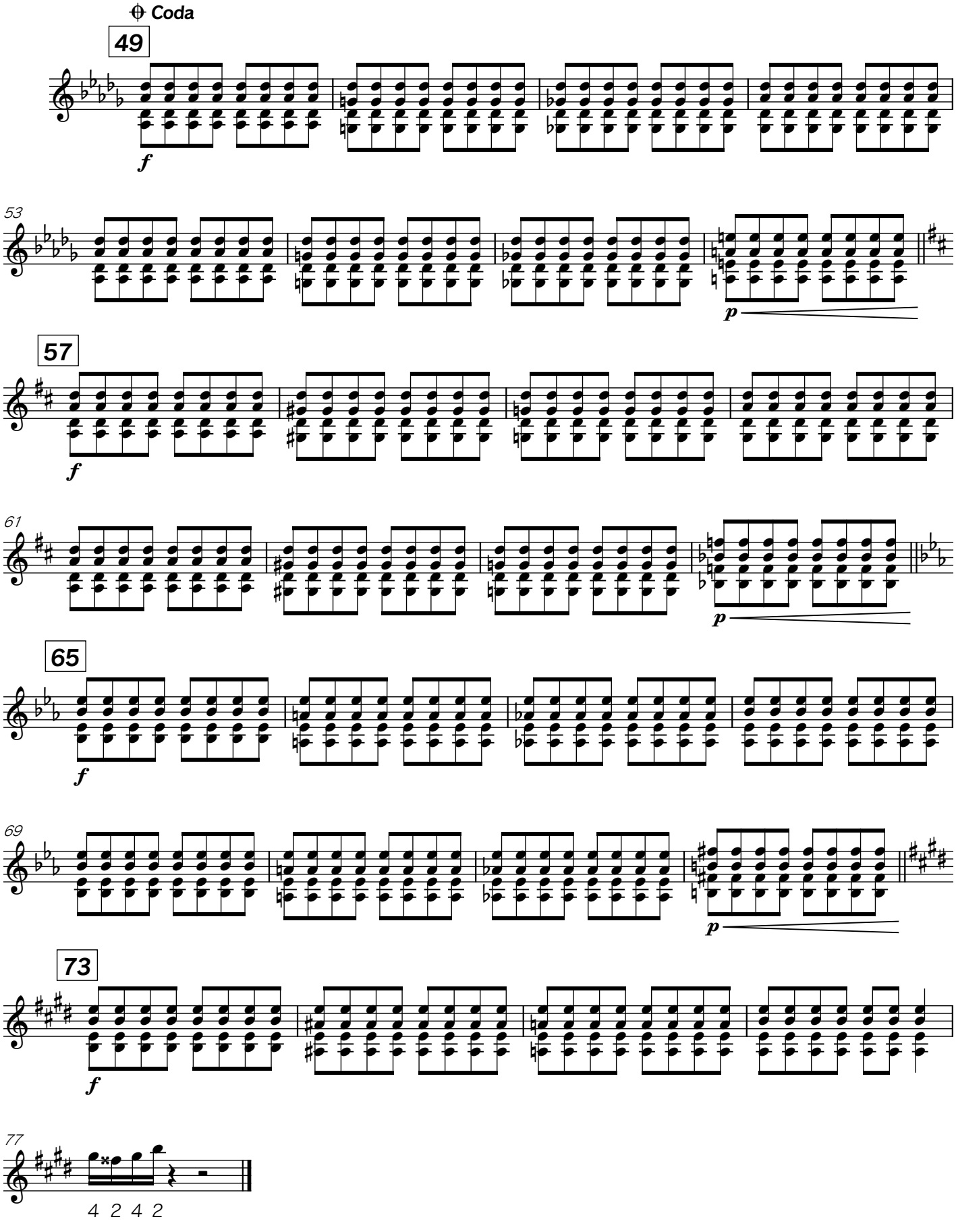
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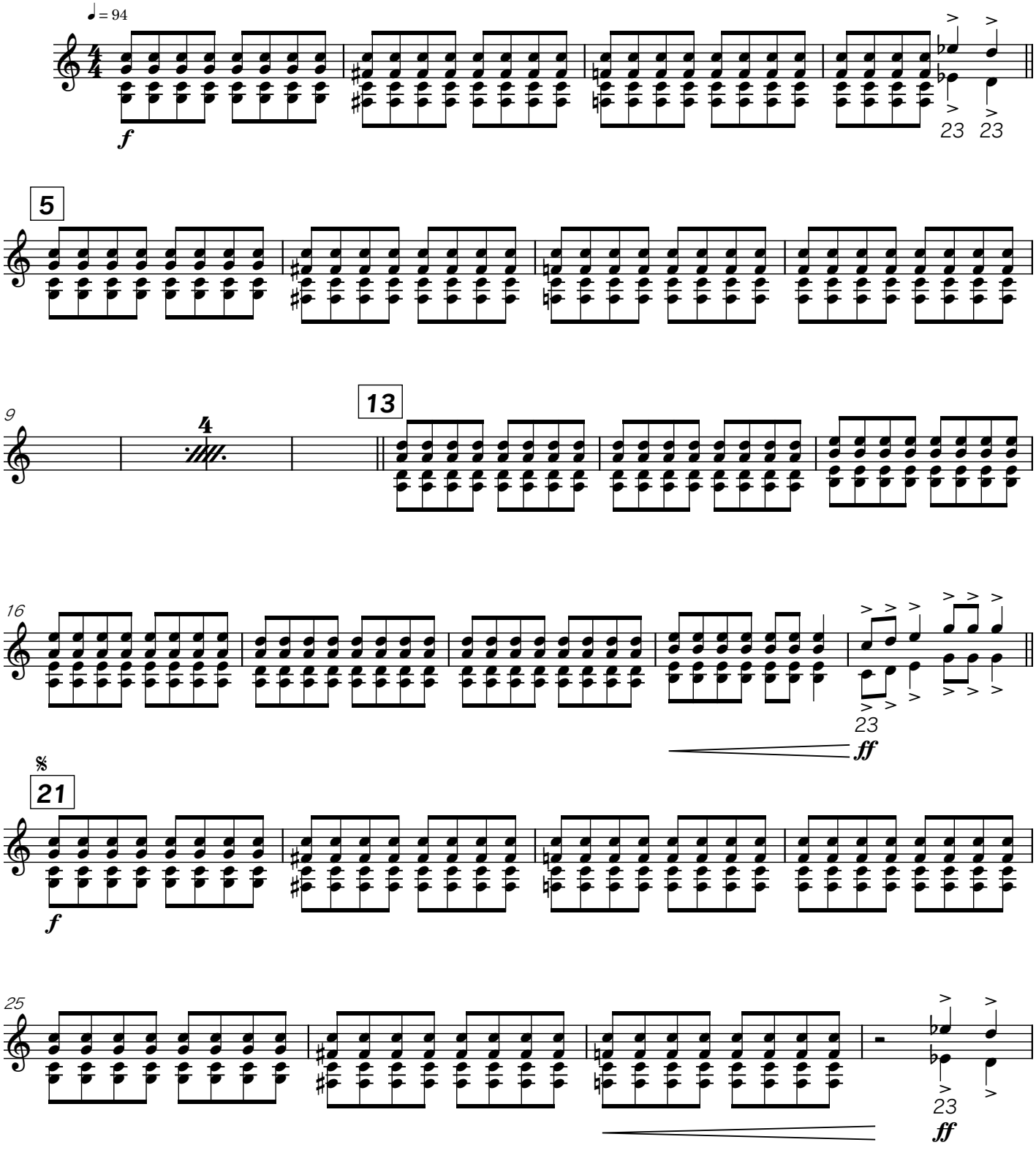
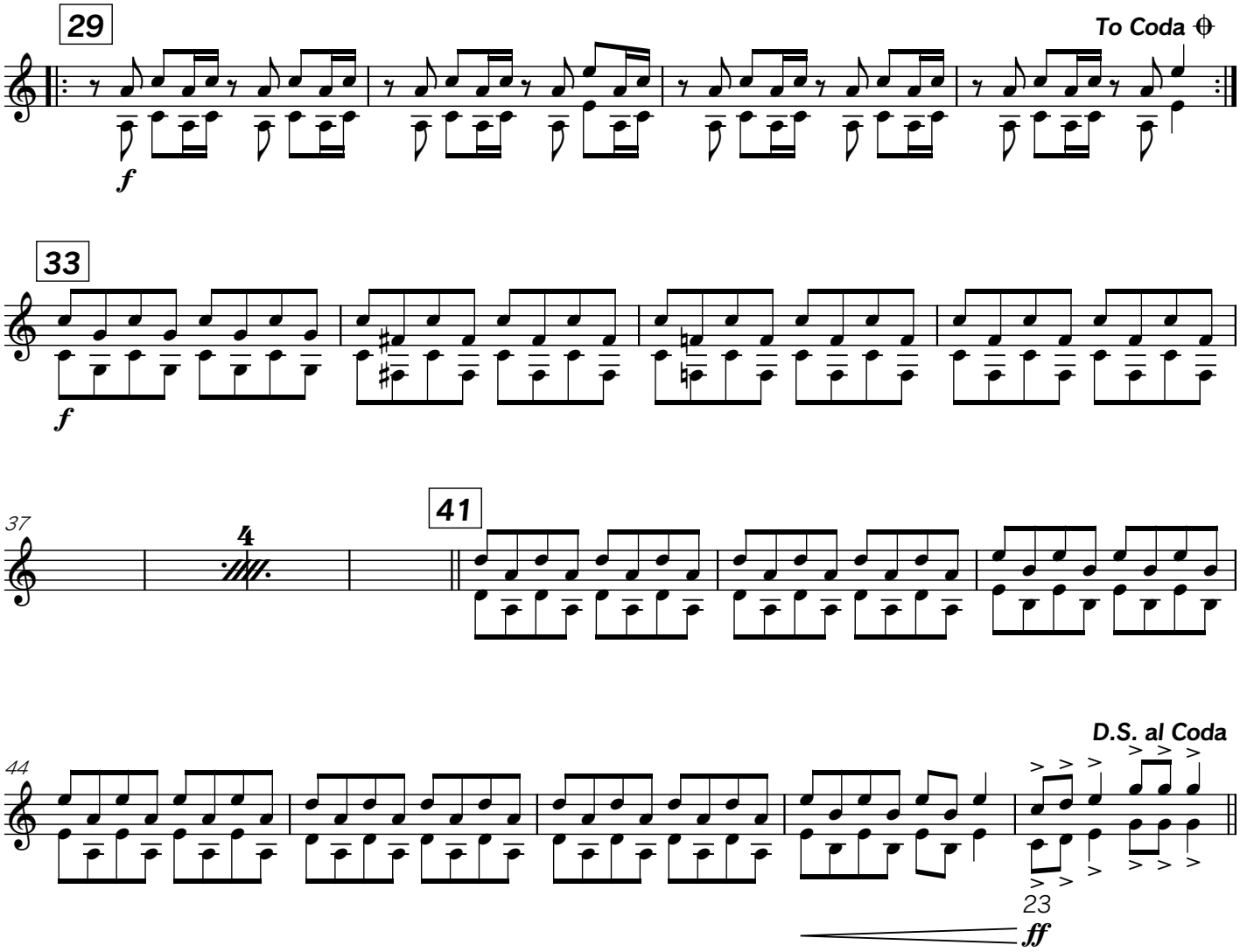
Mallets

CC 4 STICKS

COLT CADETS
DRUM & BUGLE CORPS

??? arr. BERG

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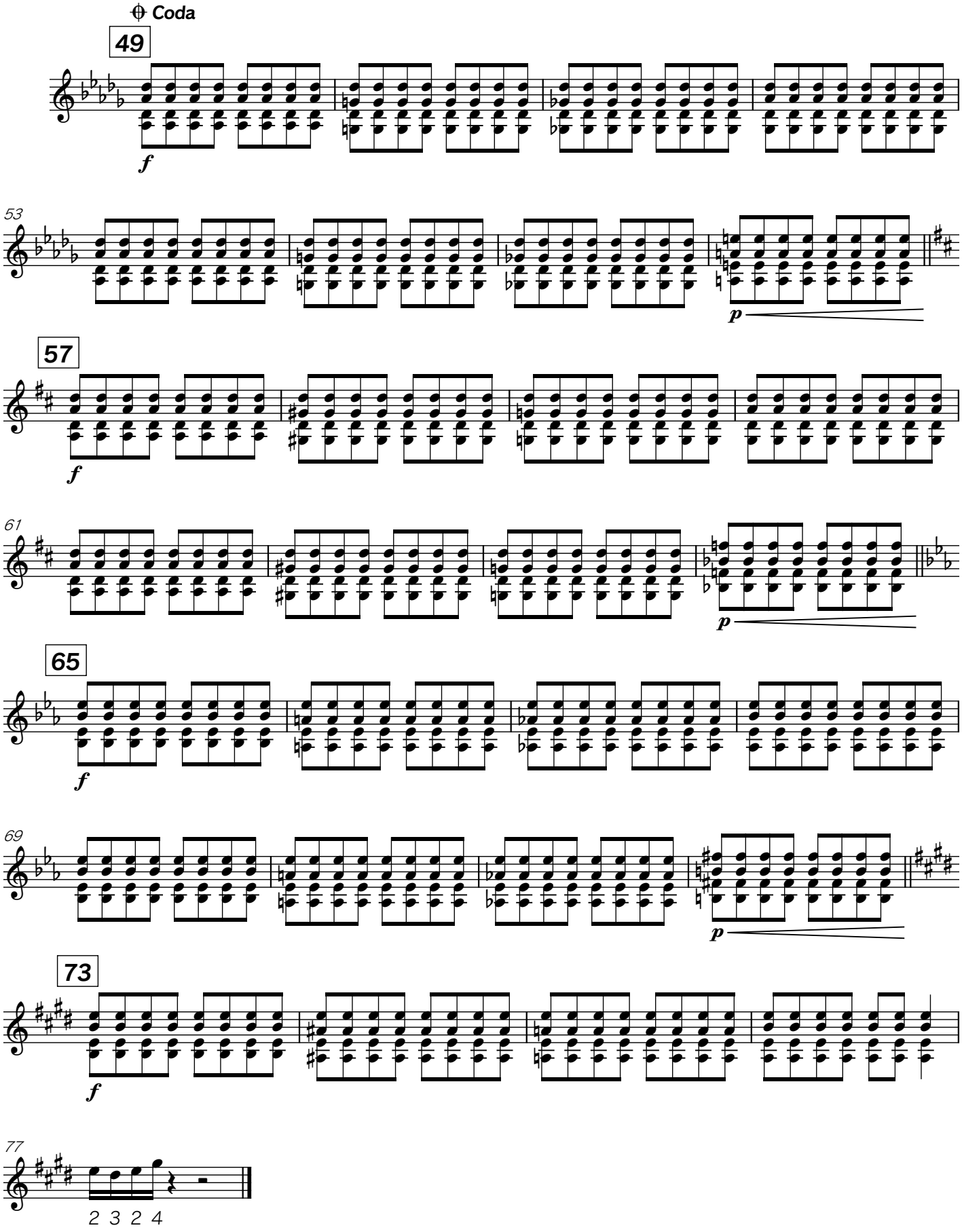
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