11th National Percussion Workshop Gdańsk, Poland

Joshua Watkins

JW
PERCUSSION

Caribbean Rhythms of Trinidad and Tobago Clinic Materials

www.jwpercussionstudio.com

Trinidad Traditional Drumming

Josh Watkins

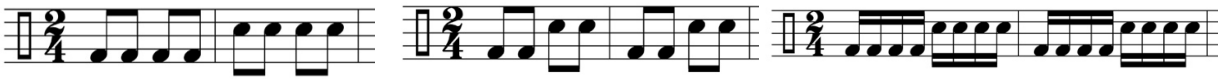
Session Description: While many music programs integrate the study of Steelpan and occasionally Tamboo Bamboo, Trinidad Traditional drumming is often absent. Integrating this historically significant tradition can be an exciting way to enrich the educational experience on students of all levels. It can also add variety to concert programs.

Concise History Timeline:

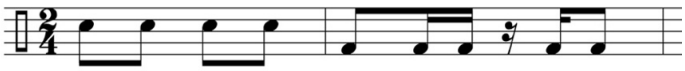
- First inhabitants of Trinidad and Tobago - Caribs and Arawaks
- August 1, 1498 Christopher Columbus landed and renamed the island "La Trinidad" in honor of the Holy Trinity
- Spanish Rule first
- 1797 - British rule
- 1814-1816 Merikens come to Trinidad following the War of 1812
- 1833 - Great Britain outlawed slavery
- 1845 - Indentured labor primarily from India arrive in Trinidad (some came from other places)
- 1881 - Clashes between the poor and the authorities led to riots during the 1881 Carnival and again in 1883 (known as the Canboulay Riots)
- 1884 - Peace Preservation Ordinance, a law banning noisy musical instruments in enacted
- 1890s - Introduction of Tamboo Bamboo- people began cutting bamboo into various lengths, and either stamping them on the ground or striking them against one another.
- 1930s - Metal containers replaced bamboo as the primary source for rhythmic music
- 1951 - Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra travels to Europe

Drums: Three drum set – Bass, Fuller, and Cutter
Tones: Trinidad Traditional Drumming is primarily made up of two tones sometimes called tone and variation. **Tone** is executed by striking near the center of the drum with the whole hand. **Variation** is executed by striking the drum with the fingers near the edge of the drum. In the following notation the tone is on the bottom space and the variation is on the third space.

Warmup exercises:
I use exercises like these to teach the two tones and for warmups.

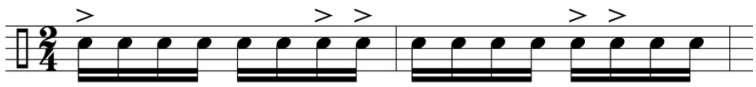


Signal: This signal is used in many different styles. The signal is used to communicate beginnings and endings of sections as well as starting and stopping.

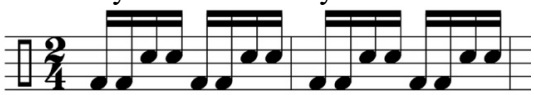


Bongo:
Bongo is a traditional practice of drumming, singing, and dancing during the wake before a person's funeral. *Fun Fact, limbo originated in Trinidad and was part of the wake.

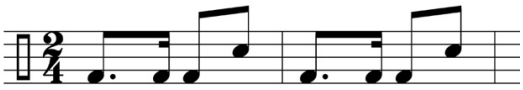
Cutter:
The cutter is the highest drum. The cutter plays the signal as needed and improvises. This is a sample of a standard "cut" that is frequently used in several styles.



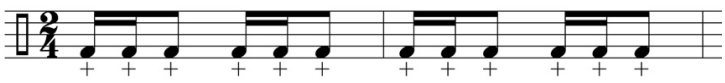
Fuller:
The fuller is the middle drum and plays a consistent pattern. This is a pattern that is used in several styles. In some styles the fuller will play the same part as the bass.



Bass:
The bass is the lowest drum and plays a consistent pattern with little variation. This variation is played more in the southern part of the country.



Calinda:
Calinda is a style that is played for stick fighting (also known as Kalinda). In this style the bass and fuller play the same part. The interaction of the drumming and the fighters is an integral part of the build up. The + sign is used to communicate that the tone is muted.



If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at jwpercussionstudio.com or jmw83d@yahoo.com.

Tamboo Bamboo

1. Tamboo Bamboo
    a. Bamboo stamping tubes that took on the role that was previously filled by drums in Trinidad following the Peace Preservation Ordinance.
    b. From *Tambour* (French for drum) Bamboo later became Tamboo Bamboo
2. Tamboo Bamboo Ensemble
    a. Ensemble made up of bamboo stamping tubes
    b. Voices of the Tamboo Bamboo ensemble mirror the secular traditional drumming and Orisha drumming
    c. Three or four voices are most common
        i. Expanded on to accommodate more players in larger ensembles, the names of the voices and roles are <u>not standardized</u> and are not the same from one ensemble to the next
        ii. Cutter, Foulé/Fuller, Chandlers, and Bass/Boom
    d. Bottle and spoon is frequently used in these ensembles
    e. Commonly replaced drums in Kalinda groups, Carnival processions, accompanying calypsonians, and Orisha
    f. Commonly accompanied by singing

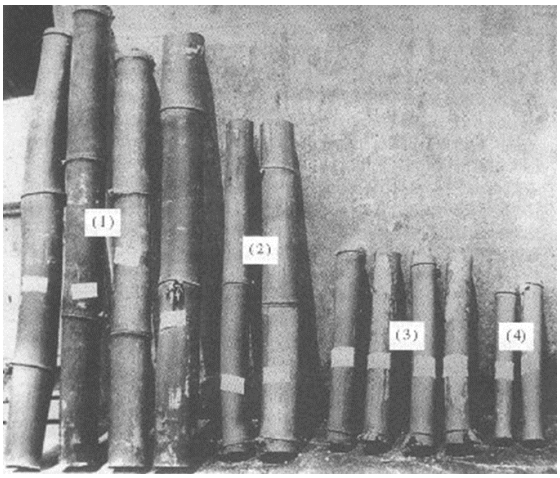


Figure 1: 1. Bass 2. Foulé 3. Cutters 4. Chandlers picture from SeeTobago

Figure 2: Tamboo Bamboo Ensemble Canboulay 2013 picture by Maria Nunes

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Time Line

- First inhabitants of Trinidad and Tobago- Caribs and Arawaks
- 1498 – August 1, 1498 Christopher Columbus landed and renamed the island "La Trinidad" in honor of the Holy Trinity
- Spanish rule – described as incompetent by some historians
- French Catholic Plantation owners that had come from other Caribbean islands were the first to bring enslaved African people to Trinidad
- 1797 – British rule
- 1833 – Great Britain outlawed slavery
- 1845 – indentured labor primarily from India (some came from Nigeria/Yoruba Land and other locations)
- 1881 – Clashes between the poor and the authorities led to riots during the 1881 Carnival and again in 1883 (known as the Canboulay Riots)
- 1884 – Peace Preservation Ordinance, a law banning noisy musical instruments
    - With the passage of this law, drumming in the streets was effectively crushed.
- 1890s – Tamboo Bamboo – People began cutting bamboo into various lengths, and either stamping them on the ground or striking them against one another.
    - Bamboo, while plentiful on the island is not very sturdy material by the 1910s, tamboo bamboo bands had increasingly incorporated other sounds (Stuempfle)
- 1930s – By the 1930s, metal containers had completely replaced bamboo as the **primary** source for rhythmic music (young people tended to move to metal and older people tended to hang on to the bamboo tradition)
    - Some of the players discovered that the dented surface of a metal can produce a pitch on either side of a dent
    - Discarded biscuit tins (cookie or cracker tins) and caustic soda barrels were very commonly used (Crix tins are commonly used now)

- 1934 – Tamboo Bamboo was banned (the nature of this is being questioned by some historians)
- 1940s – Pan was developing quickly
- 1951 – Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra travels to Europe

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at jwpercussionstudio.com or jmw83d@yahoo.com.

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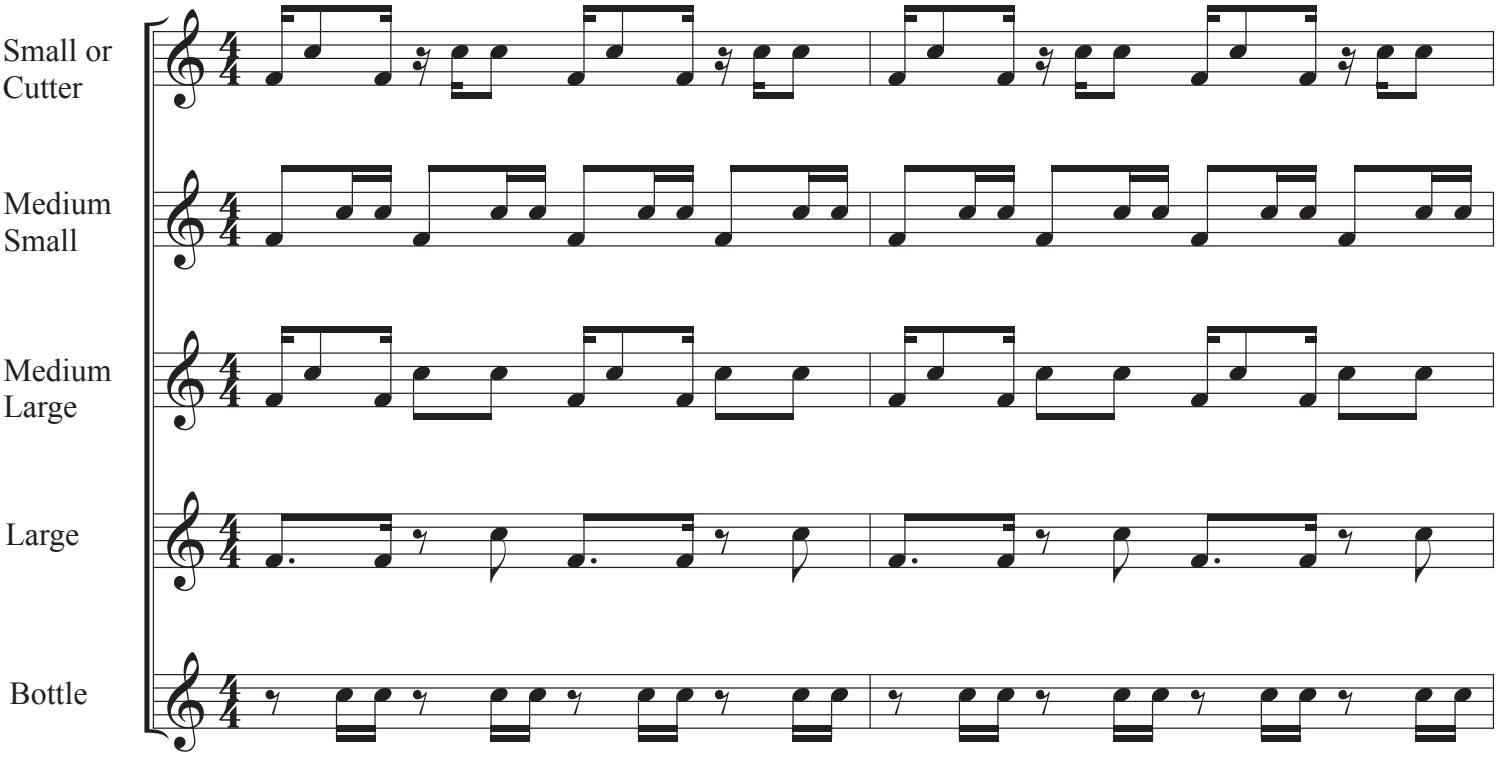
Tamboo Bamboo

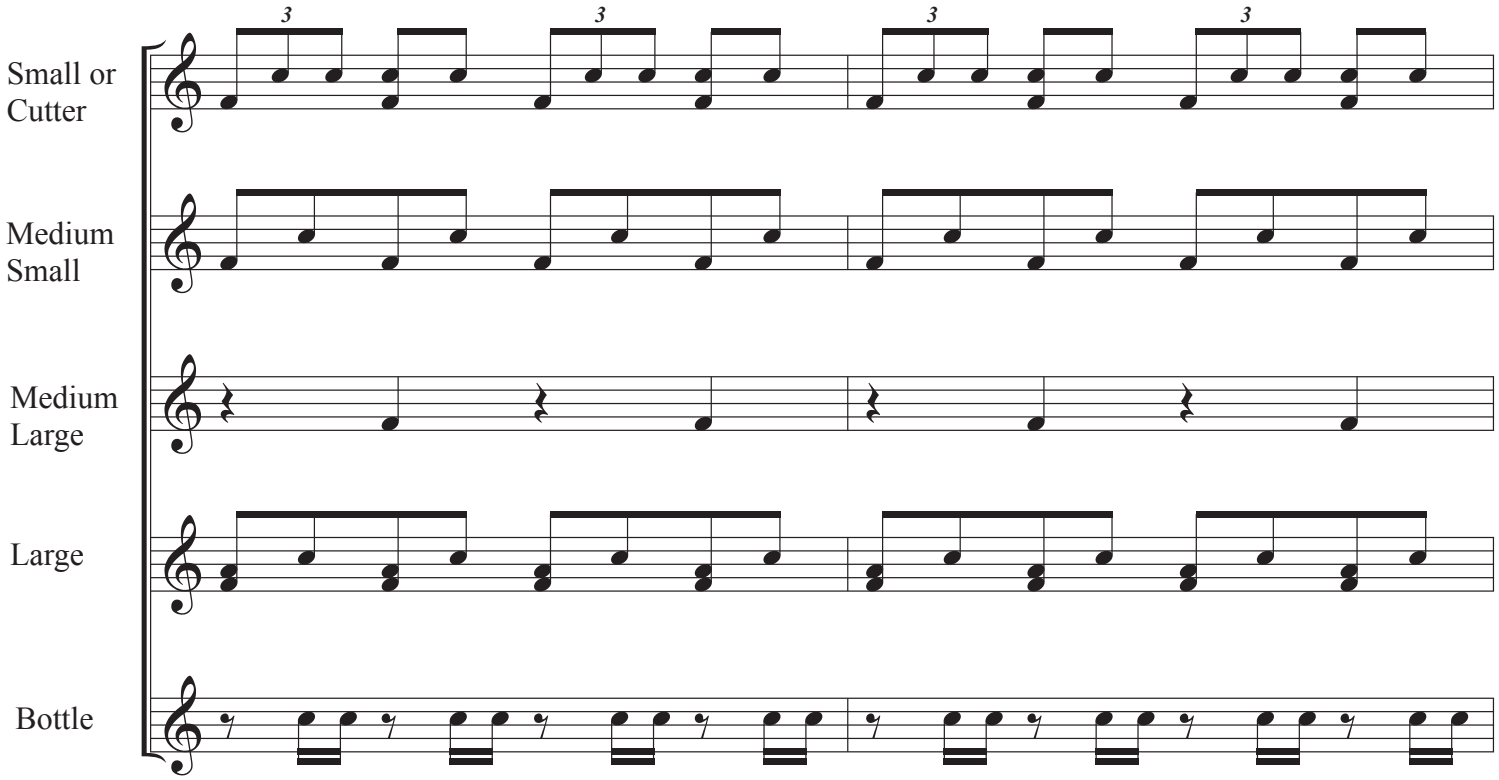
Trinidad and Tobago

Compiled by Josh Watkins

Trinidad
from Darlington Theodore



Tobago
from Khalen Alexander



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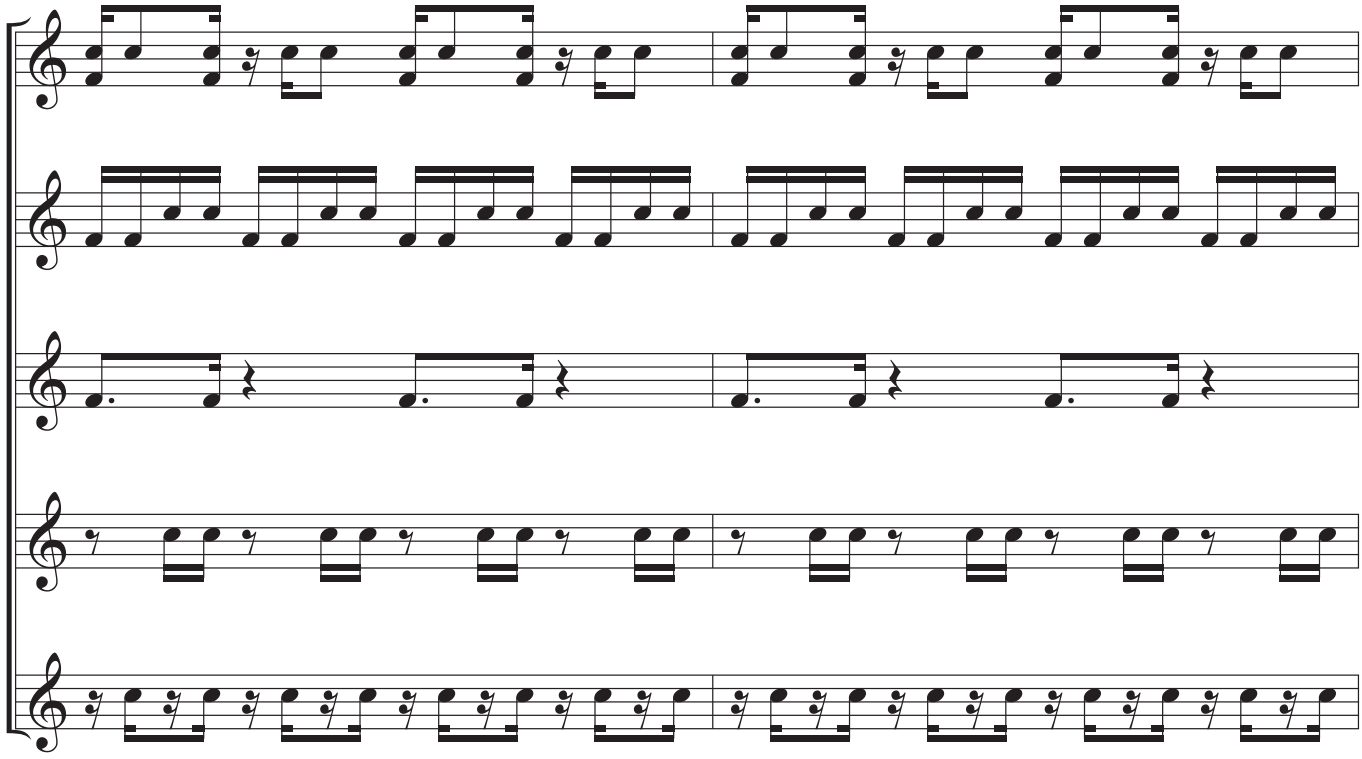
Trinidad
from George Goodard
Dudley, 33



Trinidad
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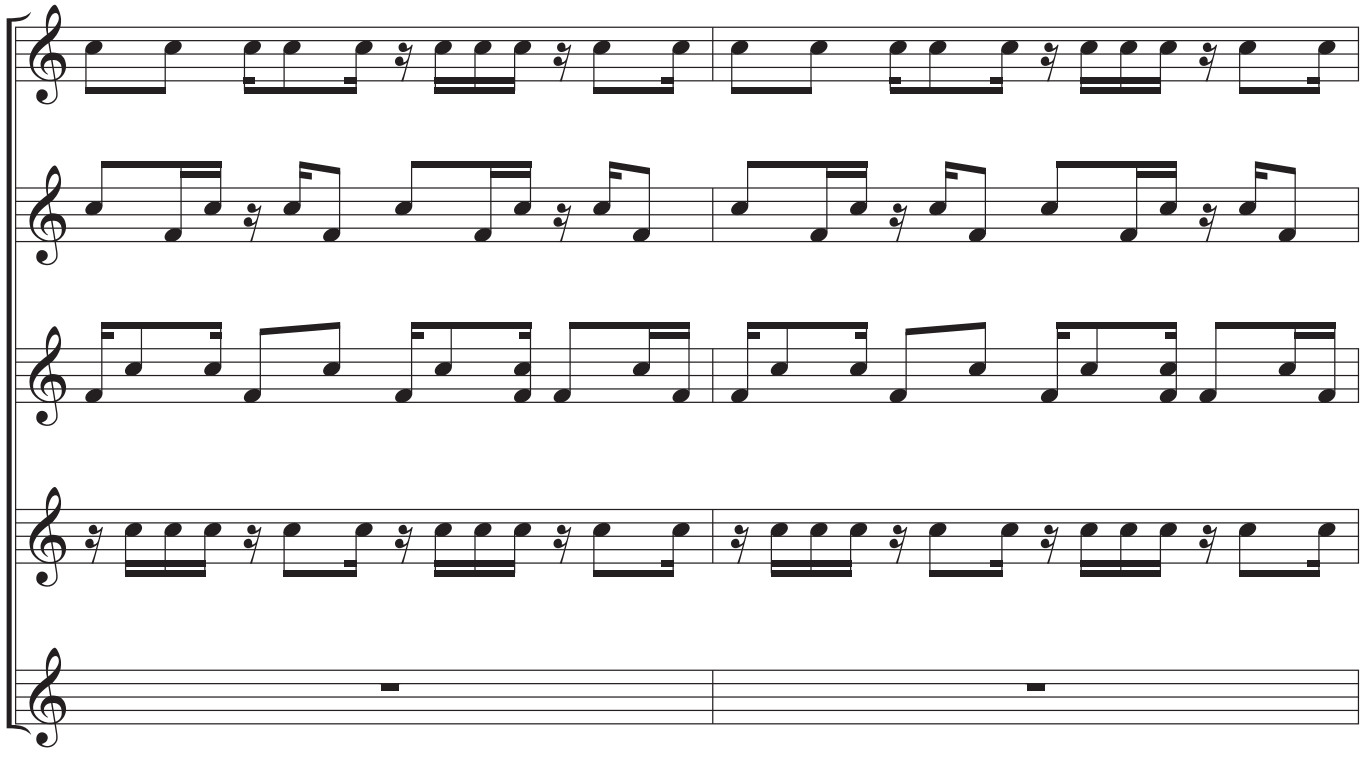
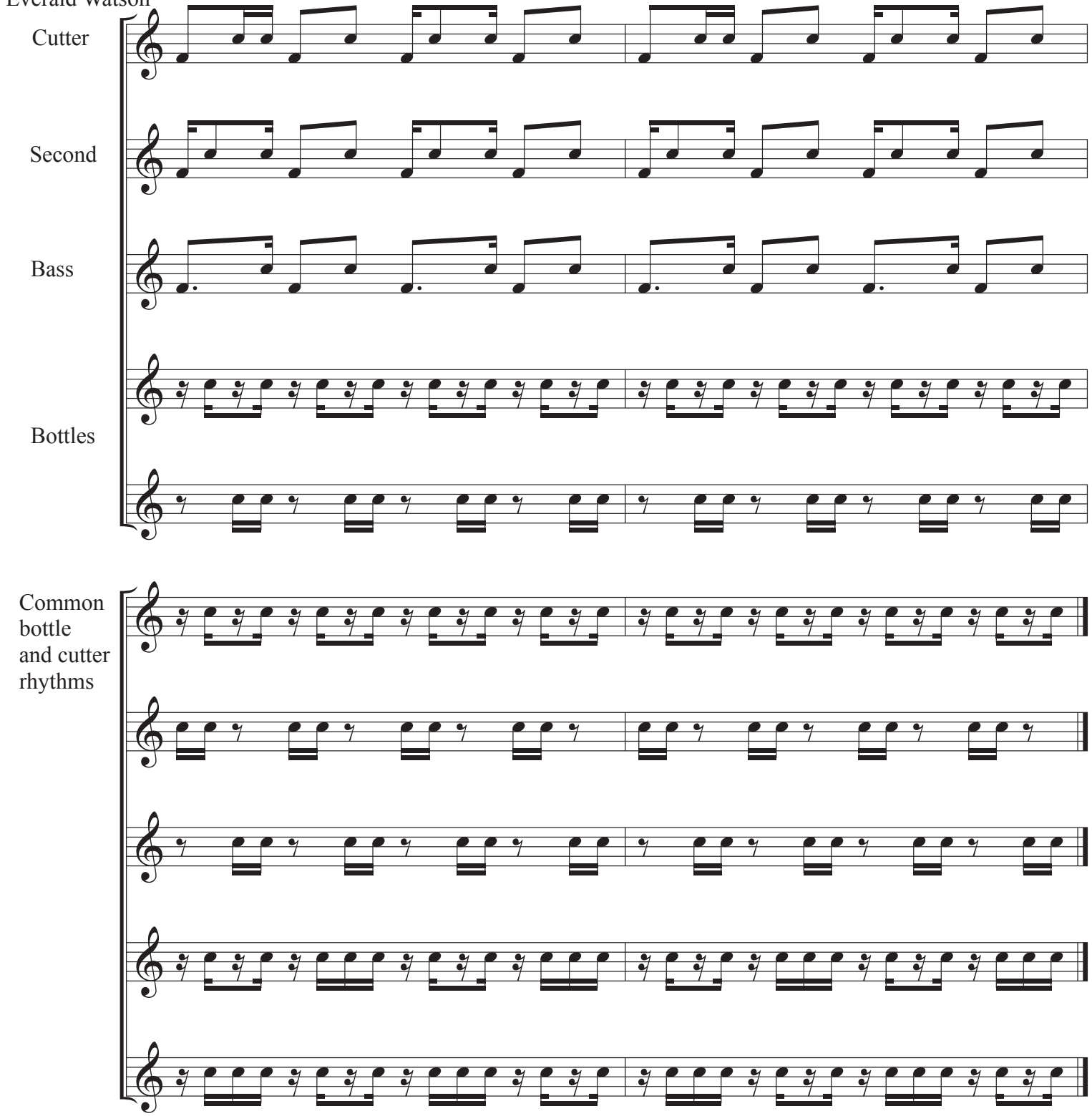
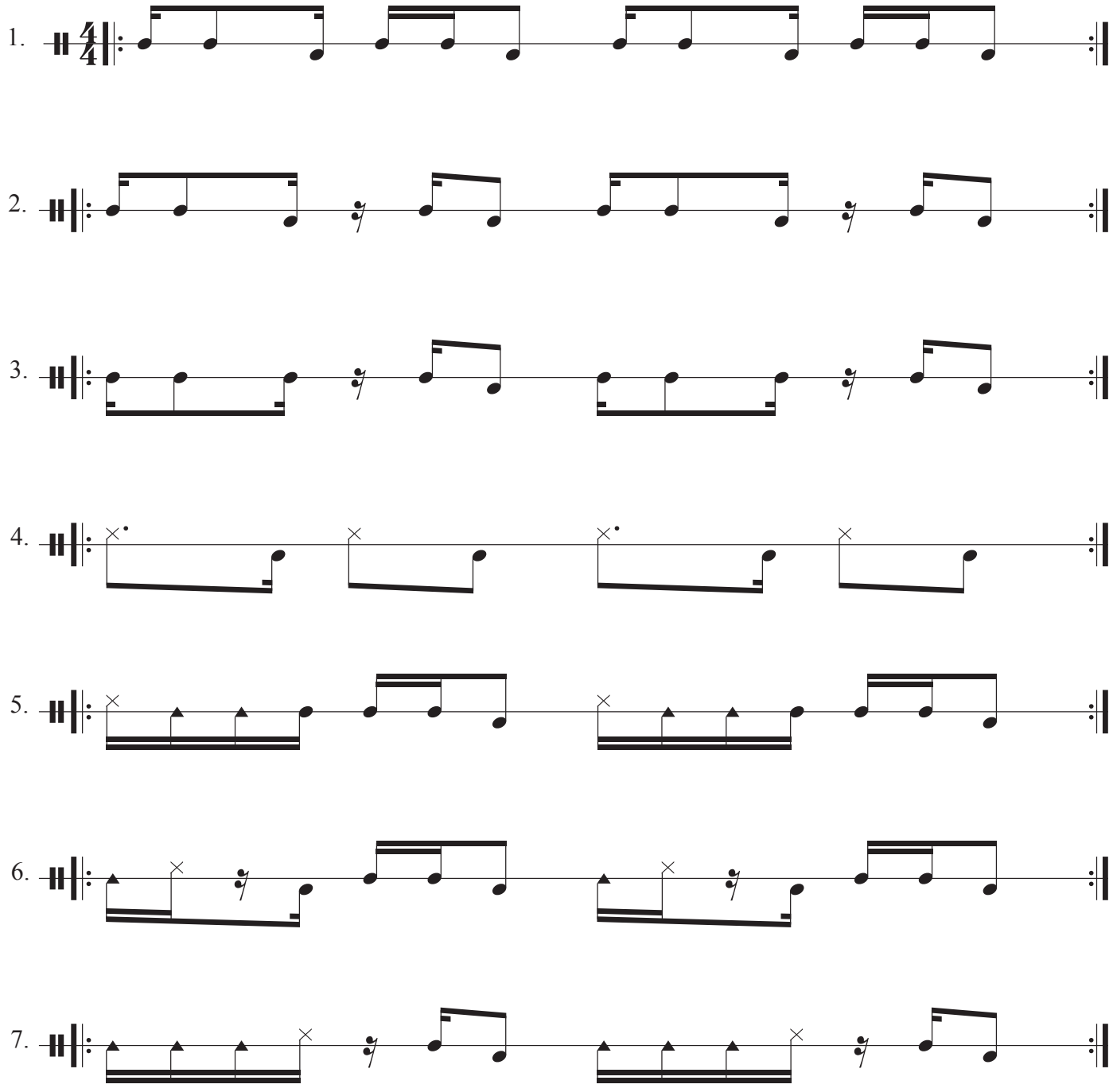



Cutter
Second
Bass
Bottles
Common
bottle
and cutter
rhythms

Steel Band Congas

Basics



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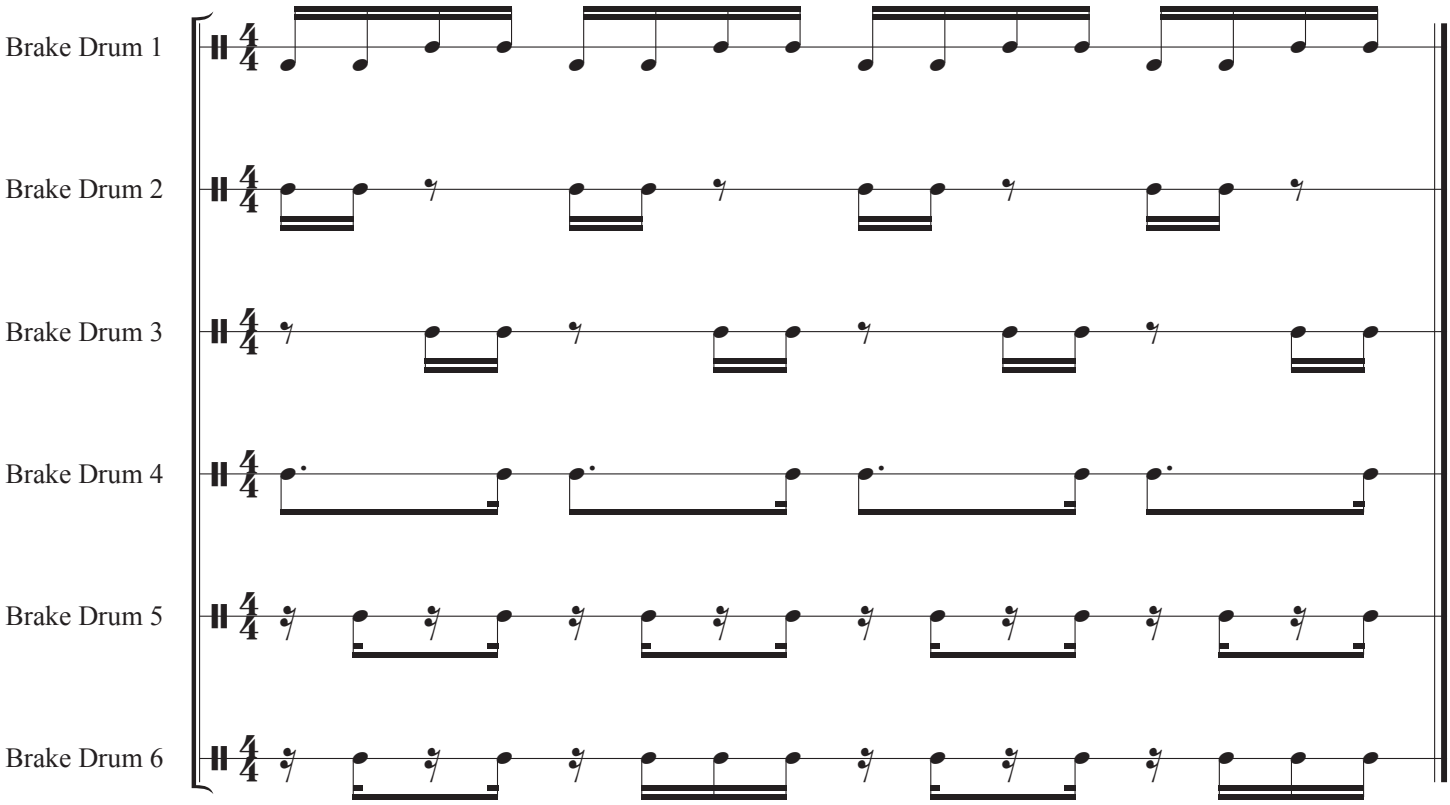
Steel Band Irons



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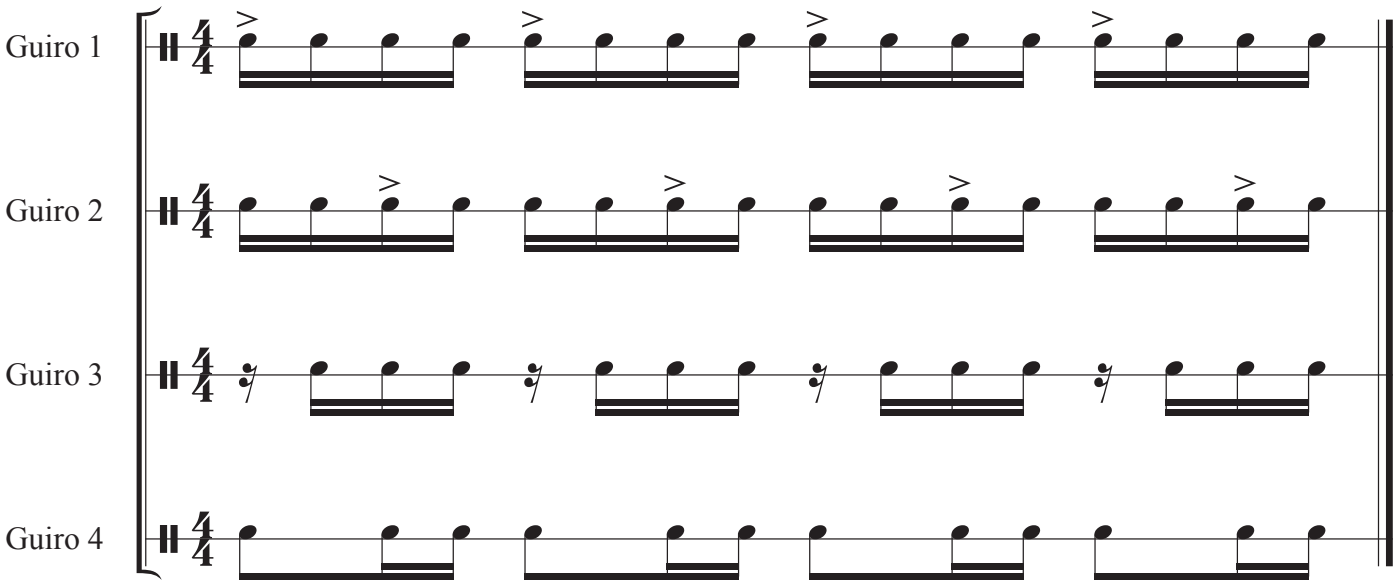
Steel Band Scratchers

Basics



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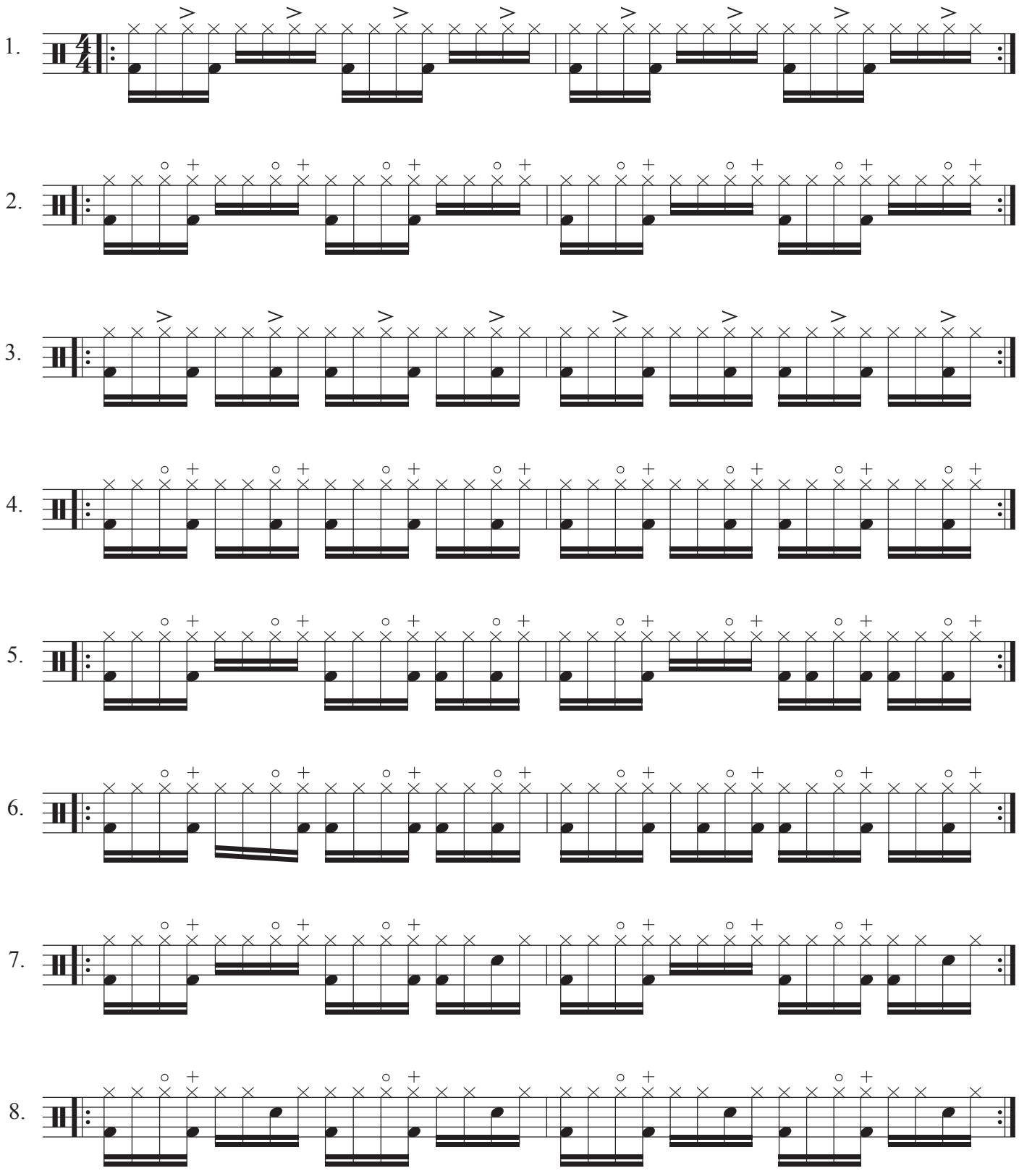
Calypso Drumset Patterns

The Basics



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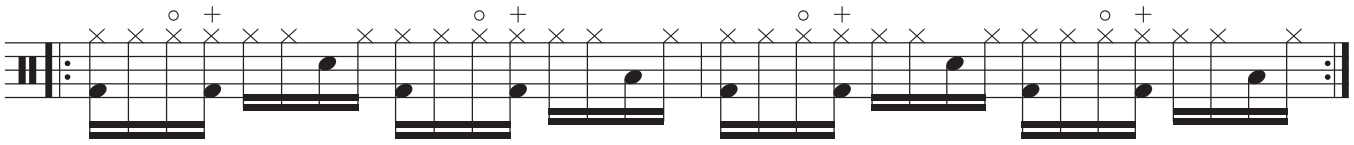

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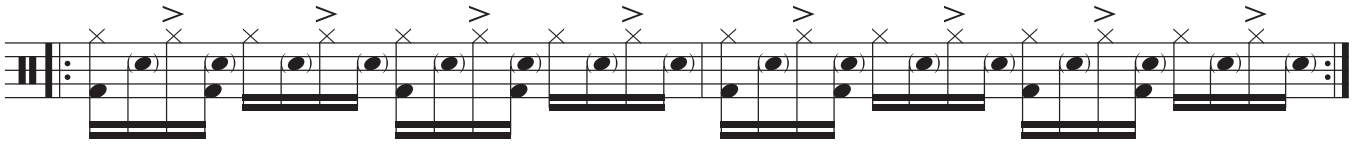

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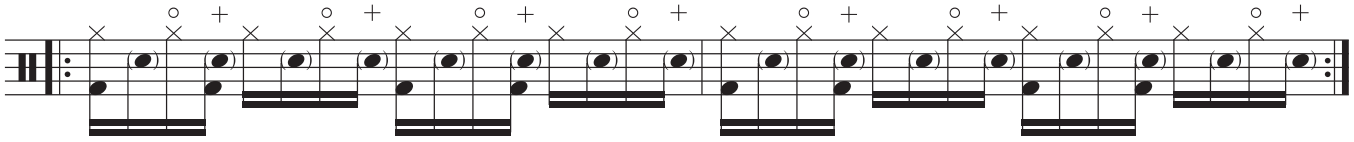

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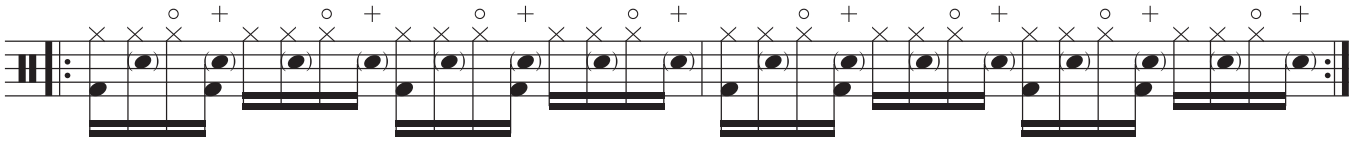

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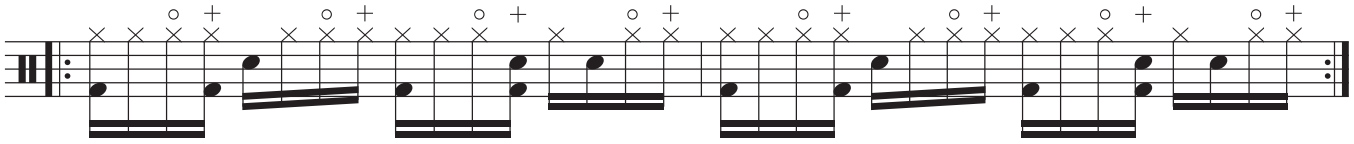

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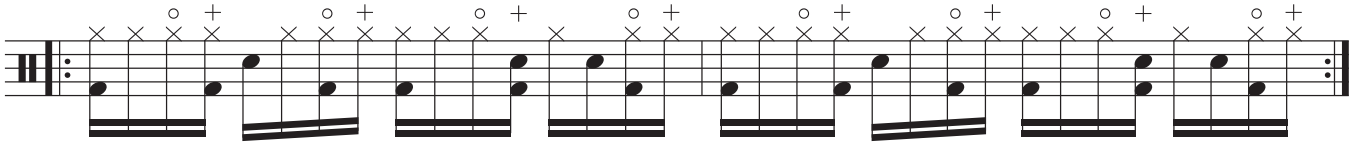

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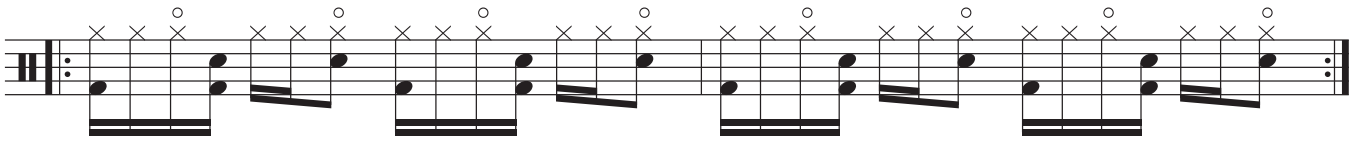

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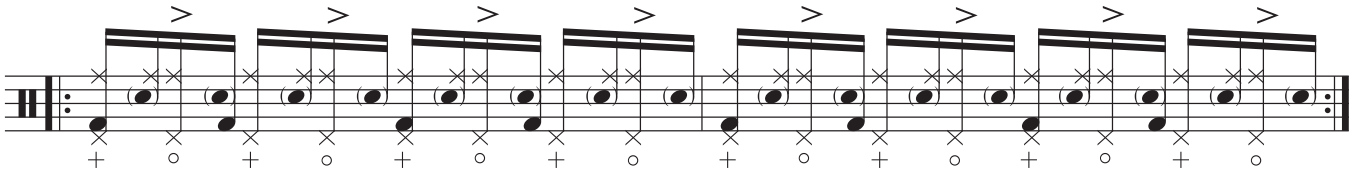

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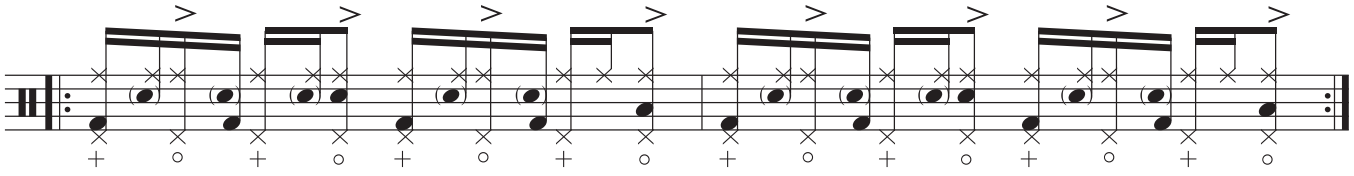
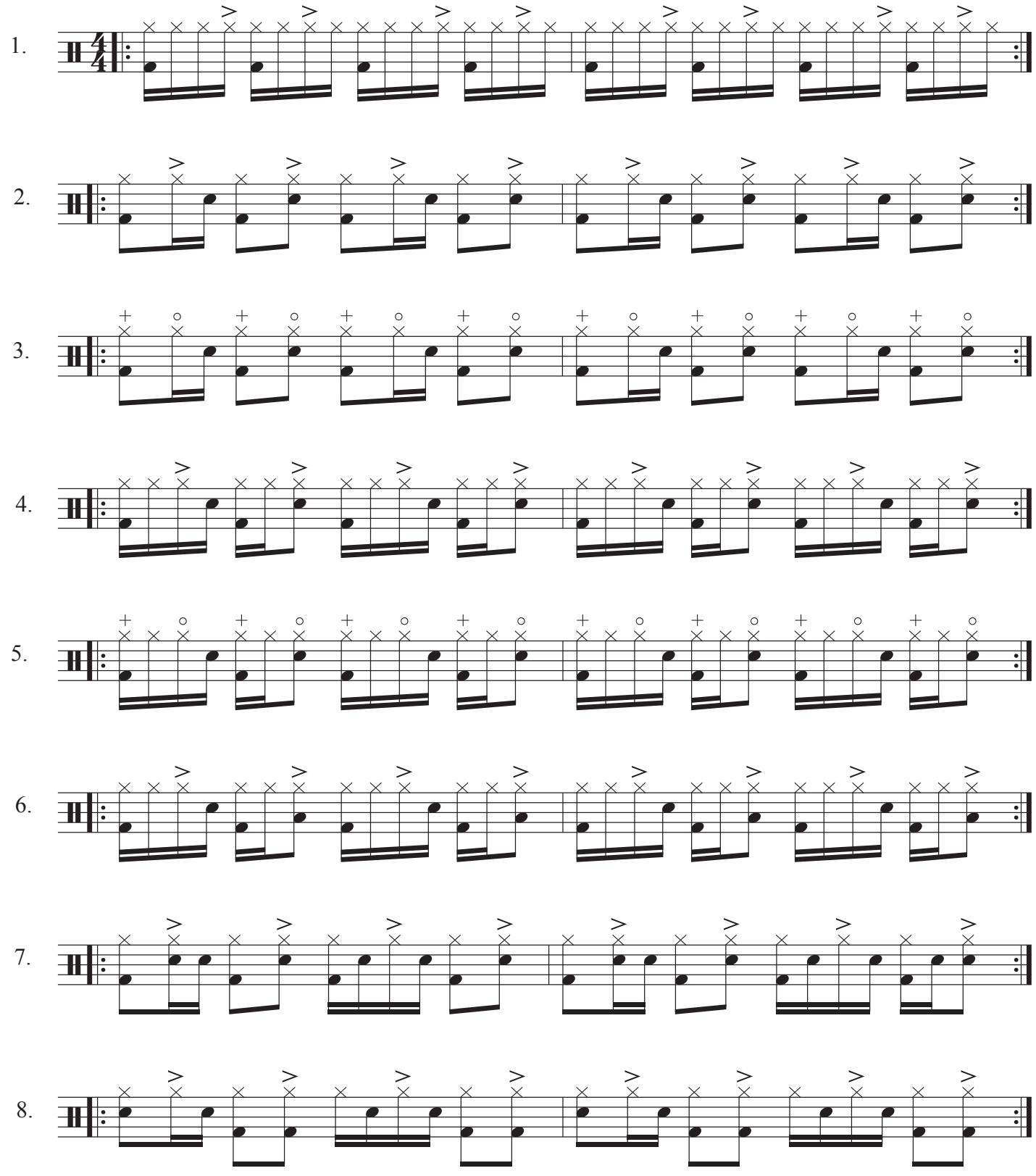


Soca Drumset Patterns

Soca and Beyond Basics



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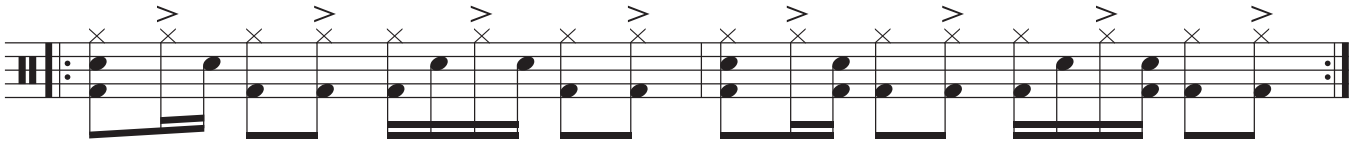

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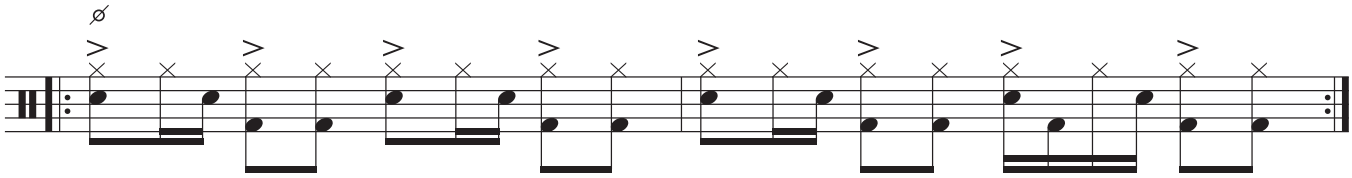
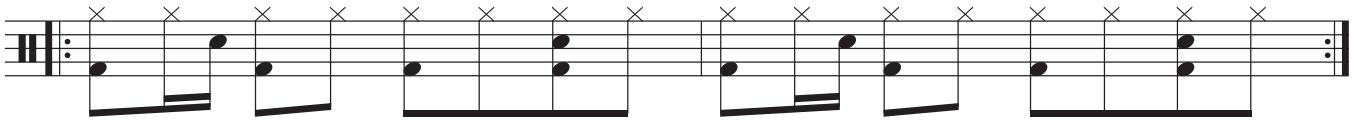
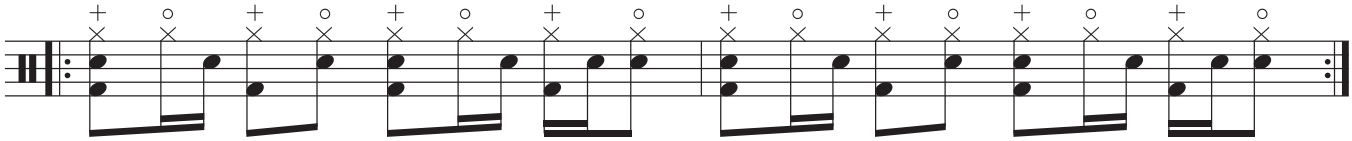


Ola by Olatunji
2015

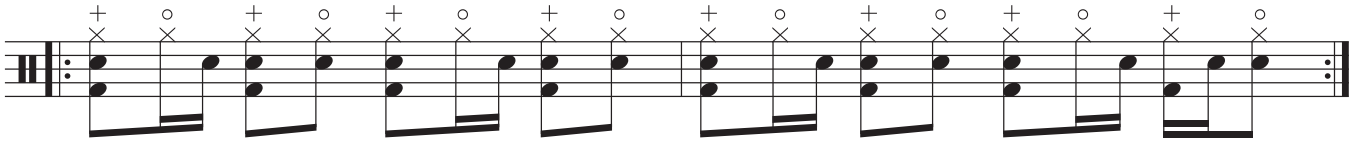
Improvise H.H. to fill out



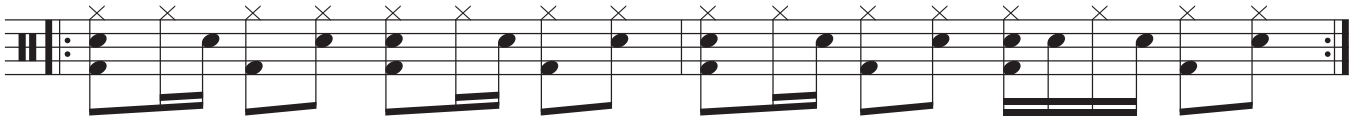
Jump for Joy by Super Blue
2000



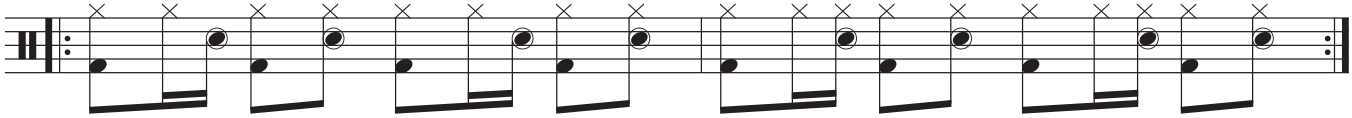
Bacchanal Time by Super blue
1993



Mr. Fete by Machel Montano 2012

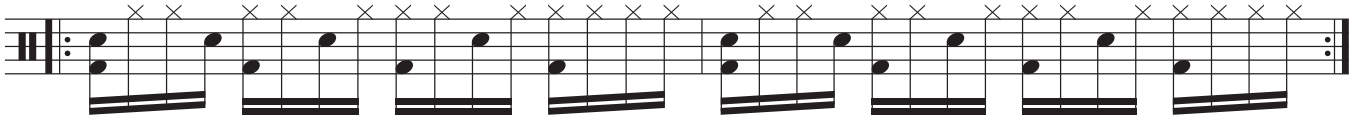
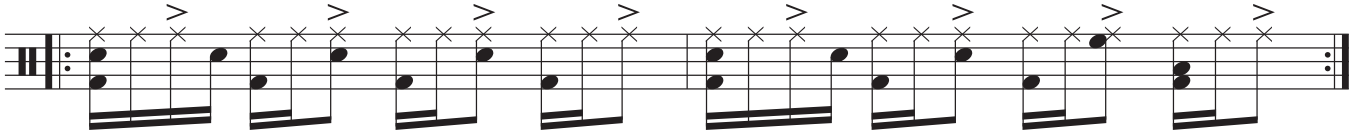


Savannah Grass by Kes 2019



Hello by Kes
2018

*try to play steady 16ths with one hand too



my variation