

GRAND VALLEY STATE DRUMLINE

Technique Program 2024



Foreword

Hello current and prospective members of the GVSU Drumline,

Thank you for your interest in being a part of one the most visible and exciting groups on campus! As the GVSU Drumline, it is our job to provide energy, excitement, and atmosphere, not just for the Laker Marching Band and our national champion Laker Football Team, but for the GVSU community and Western Michigan as a whole. With plenty of performance opportunities, traditions, and strong membership, you will find no lack of excitement, fun times, and great memories.

My time spent as a member is the backbone of my college experience, providing friendships, a sense of family, and a solid work ethic that I have carried forward ever since. The drumline - and the band as a whole - won't hesitate to back up that statement. I hope that after a season, you won't hesitate to say the same.

In this handbook, you will have a comprehensive discussion about our values, mechanics and technique, and the exercise packet with descriptions of the purpose and method behind each exercise. Take the time to understand everything that is discussed and learn the music.

I hope you are as excited as I am to begin this season and leave your mark on the next version of the GVSU Drumline.

Anchor Up!

Jaden McCallum
GVSU Drumline Coordinator

Introduction

Again, thank you for your interest in the 2024 edition of the Grand Valley State University Drumline. We are incredibly excited to move forward with the upcoming season and hope the audition process will be very educational, enjoyable, and helpful in your musical development.

Below are a few items we expect each member to have with them at auditions:

- This packet in a three-ring binder with room to take notes
- Pencils
- Sticks and/or mallets (we will have these to provide if necessary)
- A practice pad
- A great, focused attitude.

The rest of the packet is divided by section and breaks down the program, approach, technique, and exercises you will need to master for your audition. We wish you the best throughout the audition process!

- GVSU Drumline Staff

The Audition Process

At GVSU, we value your audition experience. Please reach out to us at any time for more clarification, more specific information, or more insight on your abilities and how we can help you to improve. One of our top priorities in the audition process is to find you an instrument to march, whether that's with your primary instrument or a different instrument.

Here is what our audition process looks like:

Saturday, May 18:

- Every member will be considered for GVSU.
- During this process, you will be evaluated in a subsection setting, full ensemble setting, as well as an individual setting.
- Expect to work through the entire packet on the first day, as time allows.
- Individuals will be pulled out intermittently to participate in an individual audition.
 - This may include exercises, rudiments, instrument specific skill sets, and Series excerpts (upper battery only - specified beforehand).
- We will wrap up in full battery.
- At the end of the day, we will let you know where you stand.
- Moves between instruments may occur at any time, either by your choice or the staff's choice.
 - You are not required to move if asked, but in these circumstances, it is highly recommended.

Sunday, May 19:

- Similar process to the day before
- Final decisions will be made.
- You will be able to receive feedback from the instructional staff at the end of the day.
- We will onboard all members onto the Slack channel for the year.

The following technique program was established by the staff of, and for the use of Cap City Percussion.

Special thanks to James Sparling and the rest of the Cap City staff for allowing us to inherit this.

Some verbiage and the exercises within were altered to better fit our needs.

Check them out: <https://www.capcitypercussion.com/>

Approach

Presence

- A confident presence is inherent in everything we do
- We stand with an aligned body, activated core, full chest, and relaxed arms. Our chins will be up, full of confidence.
- We will “dut” 4 counts before we play. This is to internalize tempo as well as create a unified approach to starting reps with the right mindset.
- We create the atmosphere around us. The way in which we stand, look, move, and act, are all vital to our presence as performers.
- Awareness of your contribution to the whole is imperative. This extremely high level of awareness is the only way to create a cohesive ensemble approach.

Establishing & Maintaining Proper Grip

- The hands are relaxed at all times — no tension!
- All fingers are in contact with the stick at all times. The index finger will maintain a firm grip in line with the thumb to create the fulcrum.
- The sticks act as a natural extension of the forearm, yet not extending out parallel to the forearm
- The sticks are held with a downward angle to the playing surface
- The sticks travel in a straight line path away from the playing surface
- The beads are confined to the correct zone of the drum head

Sound Quality

Our commitment to quality of sound is what will set us apart from other ensembles. Our definition of sound quality is developed through the following concepts:

- Sound Quality is equivalent to maximized resonance of the drum and implement
- We have the most direct control over the resonance of the implement
- Resonance of the implement requires a lack of pressure, while control of the implement requires maximum contact
- Maximizing relaxed velocity allows the implement to resonate to its greatest potential
- Consistent Sound Quality can be achieved through maximizing velocity without adding pressure

These ideas are very simple to understand, however very difficult to master. Keep in mind the notion of Sound Quality can be interpreted many different ways, but adherence to our concepts will help all performers come closer to achieving a higher personal standard of our sound quality.

1. Relax! This is the first step to achieving an open sound. Multiple elements contribute to sound quality. The sticks are the main one that most people ignore. If your grip is too tight, the sticks simply will not resonate the way we desire. You must always use the least amount of pressure on the sticks as possible.
2. Commit to a consistent set position with beads securely in the correct playing zones. Bead placement is another integral part of sound production that is often overlooked or given little attention.
3. Play with maximum velocity at all times. The sticks should be moving very quickly from the top of each stroke, regardless of height, to the playing surface. Keep in mind it is possible to distort your sound by forcing the velocity and not using a relaxed grip. You must train yourself to use velocity at all times unless specifically asked to approach something differently. This will come with constant reminders and a very high level of awareness.

Stroke Types

Full Stroke (or Tap Stroke)

- a stroke that starts and stops in the same position
- has a smooth, 'pendulum' -like motion, without any interference
- can be performed at any height
- is allowed to rebound fluidly

Down Stroke

- a stroke that stops lower than its starting position
- allow a natural stroke to occur until the stick strikes the head
- use the wrist and a heavy hand to stop the stick at a lower height
- the grip must remain relaxed!

Up Or Prep Stroke

- a stroke that stops higher than its starting position
- same quality of sound as the full and down strokes
- allow natural rebound to occur
- the fingers are relaxed, but remain on the stick

The Wrist

Each stroke type will be initiated from the wrist with the head of the stick moving first. Wrist turn will exist at all times. The arm may move as a result of the height being played, but its main job is to provide power and weight to the stroke.

Natural Decay

Our approach to multiple strokes, 3 or more, is to utilize Natural Decay. The amount of decay over the course of the strokes is dependent upon the tempo, hence the "natural" idea. At slower tempos, the strokes will be played more at the same height; at faster tempos, the strokes will have more decay with the last note being much lower than the first. At any tempo, we can utilize "block height" playing where we work to play all notes at the same height.

Dynamic Definitions

Snare & Tenor

p - 1.5" - with a light touch, simply drop the sticks down from the set position

mp - 3" - a fully rebounded, *wrist-based stroke!* Sticks will be parallel to the drumhead. This is where a "break" in the wrist shows up and must be present in every tap. The back of the hand opens up SLIGHTLY and must remain relaxed!

mf - 6" - sticks are opposite angle of set position, this height is considered part of the accent family, but can be interpreted as a tap for bigger moments

f - 9" - from the wrist, sticks prep up to a 45 degree angle

ff - 12" - wrist turn with support from the arm, lead with the bead, this height is 1.5" below vertical and will be where a lot of our accents will occur

fff - 15" - vertical. the arm moves with the rebound of the beads, creating a fluid "bouncing basketball" type motion

ffff - 18" - as high as possible with extreme arm and lift

Bass Drum

p - 1.5" - from the playing position, with a light touch

mp - 3" - parallel to the drum head, engage more with the back three fingers to achieve a full sound, *must be a wrist-based stroke!*

mf - 6" - This is a wrist only based stroke. Slightly less than a 45 degree angle, you will likely not be able to see your mallet head

f - 9" - *This is a wrist only based stroke, no arm.* 45 degree angle to the drum head, you should be able to see your mallet head.

ff - 12" - wrist turn with support from the arm, parallel to the ground with a little arm

fff - 15" - 2" past parallel to the ground, your arm will naturally be involved

ffff - 18" - as high as possible with extreme arm and "lift"

Snare Drum Technique

General

Before we strike the drum, great snare drumming begins with the look in our hands. Setting our hands up correctly will create a home base to reference stick angle and bead placement. The sticks should create a 90 degree angle between themselves at all times. You should always strive to play with a “heavy hand” which requires whole hand contact on the stick, especially at the higher heights and slower tempos. We will strictly adhere to our height system as defined in the “Dynamic Definition” section.

Left Hand

The home base for the left hand revolves around the thumb being on top of the stick. This is very important because it compensates for where the stick is held compared to the right hand. The right hand has a palm on top of the stick, allowing more weight to contribute to a controlled stroke. More weight on top of the stick equals less squeeze and more dead weight to stop the stick. The correct placement of the thumb prevents a slice, thus eliminating bead path problems. The LH thumb should be in a straight line with the elbow, as an extension of the arm.



Right Hand

The home base for the right hand is all about the angle of the palm. Much like the left hand, the right hand relax in a natural way without adding tension. To set this up, simply set your palm at an angle parallel to the ground, and rotate it until it matches the height of the drum.

Tenor Technique

General

Great quad drumming starts at the core of our body. Having the ability to operate each arm independently while keeping our chest and shoulders motionless are key figures in obtaining a controlled look and feel. Continuously activating your chest/core to be full will provide a strong foundation that allows our hands to move freely without moving our entire body.

Home Position

Start with your arms relaxed down at your side; be sure your sticks are parallel to your legs and not angled in toward your toes. There should be no tension in the shoulders or chest. From here, without sticking your elbows out or adding tension in the shoulders, stay as close as possible to drum 3 and 4 and bring your sticks up to drums 1 and 2.

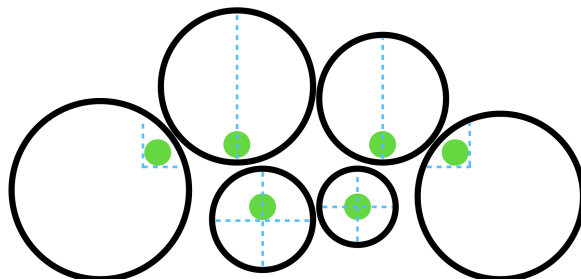
The beads should be between the front two lugs of the 1 and 2 drum with a slight downward angle at the drum. Sticks will always be set over drum 1 or 2 when not playing, unless otherwise specified.

Grip, Movement, Zones

We use a firm but relaxed grip. All fingers should be in contact with the stick. The main contact point of the index finger will be between the knuckle and joint. At times we may choose to utilize not completely wrapping the fingertip around the stick but it should never be pointed.

While playing, our sticks will move in *straight lines* from point A to B, there will be little to no arc in our travels from zone to zone. This will allow us to move efficiently and produce the same quality of sound while playing around the drums.

Our zones will be our guide at all times:



Bass Drum Technique

Grip

The mallets should be held similar to matched grip on the snare drum, with a few slight changes. The back three fingers of each hand should wrap around the mallet shaft so that the mallet is even with the base of your hand; no extra mallet will extend past your hand. The pad of your thumb and the middle portion of your index finger should connect to form a 't' shape. Place the mallet between those fingers so that your thumb is in line with the mallet shaft. Your thumb should rest on top of the mallet and your thumb nail will face up toward the ceiling.

Playing Position

Start with your arms relaxed down at your side; be sure your mallets are parallel to your legs and not angled in toward your toes. Next, raise your arms up from the elbow ensuring your shoulders, chest, and arms remain fully relaxed. The forearms will remain parallel to the ground at all times. We won't always use a true 45 degree angle, for the mallets but we also will not play flat. There is some leeway with the angle to account for anatomical differences in the player to an extent. The goal is to achieve a natural product by attaining more physical comfort and reduced restriction by eliminating indirect tension.



The Prep

The thumb should stay on top of the mallet. The wrist will break/extend back in a knocking type motion. Velocity should account for any use of natural forearm and slight wrist turn at maximum height without rotation being a deliberate motion. Make sure the angle of the wrist stays relatively consistent while not allowing the thumb to pull up into the forearm.

The Exercises

The following descriptions are provided to explain the approach to each exercise. We will utilize these exercises throughout the course of the entire season, in a variety of ways.

Floating 8's & 16's | 120 bpm

This exercise serves the purpose of being a diagnostic “check-in” on technique and our approach to a given stroke type. Each entrance should be initiated one beat before the note. Each stroke type can be visited in the stock variation - including downstrokes (throw high, catch low), up strokes (throw low, catch high), rebound strokes (throw high/low, catch high/low), and grace notes (“drop”). Basses can also use this as a means to check their multiple time, using a reference from the upper battery in two and three note variations.

8 - 8 - 16 | 120 - 200 bpm

This exercise should serve as a way to fully relax and “reset” your hands. Allow full rebound, maximum velocity, and complete relaxation to reign supreme. Utilize the connection of finger to fulcrum to stop the momentum of the stick for the tap heights, but making sure we don't squeeze or pinch to do so.

One Height: Utilize the dynamic definitions to clearly define wrist and arm usage. Fingers will be relaxed but connected to the stick throughout all tempos. The back of the hand should not be clamped down but allowing the stick to move slightly when playing 3” and more as you increase the height. At faster tempos, fingers should be utilized to move the stick faster and get a faster rebound from the head. Make sure the downstrokes at the end of each hand and the prep for the initiation of each hand are a priority.

Variations: All accents are downstrokes. Be especially aware of not adding excessive pressure to these. Downstrokes can be achieved by stopping the wrist and focusing on the fulcrum. Ensure the rhythm of the note before and after each accent is lined up with the 8th note. The “prep” portion of each accent is vital to it being played in time.

Cresc/Decresc Variations: It is vital that each note is a different height except on the 1 height measures. The back of the hand should open up as you crescendo and close down as you decrescendo. Velocity should also increase as you crescendo. Velocity should not decrease per se in a decrescendo; you should still strive for as much velocity as you can achieve within the given height. All 3” notes should be initiated from the wrist, adding arm as you crescendo into the 12” and 15” range. Again, as you speed up the fingers become used more to get a faster rebound.

Multi Variations: These variations introduce the double stroke into the accent pattern templates. All double strokes should be produced using a wrist stroke and an open-close action from the fingers. Arm motion should be very minimal but inherently present (i.e. not forced, simply just not restricted). Focus on proper rhythmic integrity, and consistent sound within each double stroke.

3's, 4's, and 5's: At no time should the rebound of the sticks be interfered with. Allow the arm and hand motion of each macro pattern to be the prominent focus. Great rhythmic

integrity and sound production should be achieved through support of the arms and fingers. Be sure to focus on even, balanced sound production from hand to hand regardless of sticking pattern. Multiple strokes (3, 4, or more) should have a natural decay. The LH should prep for these with a little more wrist than normal. Preps for each accent should happen four 16th notes before, or immediately if there are less than four 16th notes before the accent. All groupings should have fingers helping move the stick but especially the groups of 6. The wrist is still involved in all strokes regardless of length, prep, height, etc.

Duple | 132 - 190 bpm

The focus of this exercise is connecting double strokes with complete and even sound quality. This exercise should be prepared at all heights up to 15". Strive to have every second note of a double be as near to the starting height as possible. This demands velocity at all times, and allowing the hand to open up to receive the rebound of the first note. At no point should your hand ever close entirely. Maintain proper wrist turn. Arm motion will be dictated by the height and tempo, but should never exceed more than 1-2" of vertical wrist motion. Again, don't actively move the arm, but never restrict it. With your ears, you should be dividing your attention between hearing a complete 16th note rhythm, as well as the eighth note subdivision.

Para | 132 - 190 bpm

Stay relaxed at all times! The flow between accents, taps, and single strokes should be connected throughout. Do not allow speed or sticking patterns to sacrifice this! Ensure the fingers are moving through all patterns and the touch is very defined, yet not tense or rigid. The feel of the double strokes in Duple should be maintained through all patterns. Utilize the breakdown at the beginning of the exercise to influence how you approach the remaining tag.

Michi's | 100 - 200 bpm

Michi's is a grid format that allows endless combinations depending on the focus at hand. In the version we are using, there is a two beat "check", followed by a two beat "fill". The check and fill can be whatever combination you would like. Every two repetitions, the fill moves forward in time by one beat. This allows this exercise to work on rudiments off of both hands, at any point in a bar, as well as over barlines. Our standard variations will be triplet rolls, and flam work, but we may call out other variations to insert into the template. Make sure you understand how the format works, and be prepared to work new variations on the fly.

Rolls Variations: Rhythms, rhythms, rhythms; this is the name of the game. Don't let the "diddles" become anything but perfect rhythms. Ensure you are playing very strict 2 heights throughout, with all taps being played from the wrist. In addition to this wrist turn, the fingers will be more involved in the creation of the double strokes helping to keep the two notes of each double even in regards to sound and rhythm. Another constant focus in your preparation should be consistent sound and weight on every stroke, both singles and doubles. Please be prepared to play this with all diddles as buzzes as well!

Flam Variations: The focus here should be consistent accent and tap sound throughout the exercise. Also important is proper flam spacing, so as not to be "wide" or "popped". All flam taps and flam swisses will be natural decay.

Flams | 100 - 200 bpm

This exercise, written by Landon Ewers for use with the Western Michigan Drumline and Legends Drum and Bugle Corps, serves to isolate each hand in a flam rudiment. Written out is the breakdown for flam fives. Each isolated hand should be played with maximum quality, and with strict two heights. Performers should strive to hear the isolated hand continuously through each progression.

The second half of the exercise stands to be a variation on the exercise Jed/Chuggeda, but with the ability to flip lead hands during each fill. We may isolate this part of the exercise to work on any flam rudiments on their own.

Please have all exercises memorized to the best of your ability so you can show us the best version of yourself.

This packet will serve as the basis to our approach and give insight to what we value as a drumline. More specifics will be covered at the audition camp.

If you find yourself with questions, please feel free to email us!

Jaden McCallum
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Notation Guide

GVSU Drumline

Snare/Battery

tap half accent accent shot ping shot full shot rim knock stick shot buzz press double flam extreme arm rim stick click on cymbal

Tenors

down drums shots rims stick click crossover

Bass

drums rims shots unison rim unison

Floating 8's & 16's

McCallum

♩ = 120

Floating 8's

Snareline

R L R L R L R L R

mp-ff

Tenorline

R L R L R L R L R

mp-ff

Bassline

R L R L R L R L R

mp-ff

Cymbals

mp-ff

Variations:

Two Note 8th
Three Note 8th
Three Note Dotted 8th

Basses:

Two's
Three's
Four's

Cymbals:

Sounds
Spins up/down

10 *Floating 16's*

S. L.

R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L R R L L R R L L R L R L R L R

T. L.

R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L R R L L R R L L R L R L R L R

B. L.

R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L R R L L R R L L R L R L R L R

Cym.

GV8's

McCallum

♩ = 120

Snareline

R L R L R L R

mp:ff

Tenorline

R L R L R L R

mp:ff

Bassline

mp:ff

Cymbals

release move to prep move to CP release move to prep move to CP release move to prep move to CP release move to prep move to CP

Variations:

"Bookends/multi" - "Stroke Types/multi"
 "Whip/multi" - "Bucks" - Cresc. - Decresc.
 Threes - Fours - Fives - Funky

Tenors:

Around

Basses:

Unison - 2's - 3's
 Double Stop 2's - 4's
 Variation Page

Cymbals:

4's/2's Flat/Vert Crash Breakdown
 Fast On Hand Spins

10

"Bookends" "Bookends Multi" "Stroke Types" "Stroke Types Multi" "Whip" "Whip Multi" "Bucks" "Threes"

S. L.

18

"Fours"

S. L.

R L L R R L

22

"Fives"

S. L.

R L L R R L

GV24 Legatos Patterns

Mitchell Gunnett

Stock

Handwritten musical notation for the 'Stock' pattern in 4/4 time. The staff contains eight measures of eighth-note patterns. The first six measures are grouped into three pairs, each with a 'R' or 'L' label below. The seventh measure contains a quarter note, and the eighth measure contains a quarter rest. The pattern is: R . . . L . . . R . . . L . . . R . . . L . . . R.

Triangles

Handwritten musical notation for the 'Triangles' pattern in 4/4 time. The staff contains eight measures of eighth-note patterns. The first six measures are grouped into three pairs, each with a 'R' or 'L' label below. The seventh measure contains a quarter note, and the eighth measure contains a quarter rest. The pattern is: R . . . L . . . R . . . L . . . R . . . L . . . R.

Across the drums

Handwritten musical notation for the 'Across the drums' pattern in 4/4 time. The staff contains eight measures of eighth-note patterns. The first six measures are grouped into three pairs, each with a 'R' or 'L' label below. The seventh measure contains a quarter note, and the eighth measure contains a quarter rest. The pattern is: R . . . L . . . R . . . L . . . R . . . L . . . R.

Funky

Handwritten musical notation for the 'Funky' pattern in 4/4 time. The staff contains eight measures of eighth-note patterns. The first six measures are grouped into three pairs, each with a 'R' or 'L' label below. The seventh measure contains a quarter note, and the eighth measure contains a quarter rest. The pattern is: R . . . L . . . R . . . B B B B R R R R.

5

Handwritten musical notation for pattern 5 in 4/4 time. The staff contains eight measures of eighth-note patterns. The first six measures are grouped into three pairs, each with a 'R' or 'L' label below. The seventh measure contains a quarter note, and the eighth measure contains a quarter rest. The pattern is: L . . . R . . . L . . . L L R L R L R.

Quad 8's Variations

Bookend Multi



Whip Multi



Stroke Types Multi



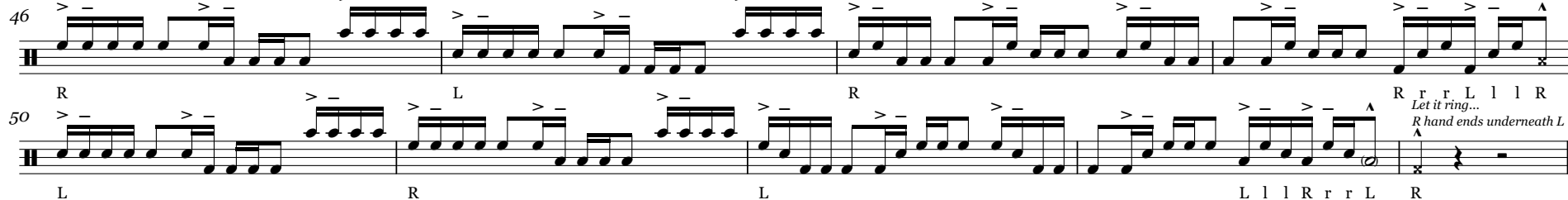
Threes



Fours



Fives



Bass 8's Variations

♩ = 120

4's

6

5's

10

14

Funky Eights

(Snare Tap Off)

19

25

mf pp ff p ff fff

R l r l r l r l r l r l R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R L R

L R

GVduple

McCallum

$\text{♩} = 140-200$

Snareline $mp \cdot ff$

Tenorline $mp \cdot ff$

Bassline $mp \cdot ff$

Cymbals

Right Hand Unload Right Hand Reload Left Hand Unload Left Hand Reload Right Hand Catch Right Hand Reload Left Hand Catch Left Hand Reload

9

S. L.

T. L.

B. L.

Cym.

Right Hand Invert Left Hand Invert Right Hand Unload Right Hand Bucket Left Hand Unload Left Hand Bucket Right Hand Meat Chopper Left Hand Meat Chopper Double Drop Reload

Variations:

Cresc/Decres
RH/LH Doubles only

Quads:

7/8 Motion
13/8 Motion

GVpara

McCallum

[illegible]

GVmichi's

McCallum

♩. = 140-180
Check

Fill

Snareline

Tenorline

Bassline

Cymbals

5

S. L.

T. L.

B. L.

Cym.

Primary Variations:

Tap Roll Fill (written)
Check and Roll (No accents)
Flam Accent Check, Flam Tap Fill
Flam Accent Check, Swiss Army Triplet Fill
Etc.

Quads:

7/8 Motion
13/8 Motion

Basses:

Triplet Check/Eighth Note Fill
Etc.

Cymbals:

Flat
Vertical
Etc.

GVflams

Ewers

♩. = 120-180

Snareline

12/8

R r r r R r r r R r r r R r r r R r L r R r L r R l r L r l R l r L r l

Tenorline

12/8

R r r r R r r r R r r r R r r r R r L r R r L r R l r L r l R l r L r l

Bassline

12/8

R R R r r r r r r R R R r r r r r r R R R R R R r r r r r r r r r r r r r

5

S. L.

1 1 L 1 1 1 L 1 1 1 L 1 1 1 L 1 R l L 1 R l L 1 R l r L r l R l r L r l R R

T. L.

1 1 L 1 1 1 L 1 1 1 L 1 1 1 L 1 R l L 1 R l L 1 R l r L r l R l r L r l R R

B. L.

As Written

R L L L r r r r r r R L L L r r r r r r r R L L L R L L L r r r r r r r r r r R L R L R

10

S. L.

R l r L r l R l L r R l L r l R l r L r R l L r R l r L r l R l r L r l R l L r R l L r

T. L.

R l r L r l R l L r R l L r l R l r L r R l L r R l r L r l R l r L r l R l L r R l L r

B. L.

1s/2s

14

S. L.

R l r L r l R l L r R l L r l R l r L r R l L r R l r L r l R l L r R l L r R l L r R l L r

T. L.

R l r L r l R l L r R l L r l R l r L r R l L r R l r L r l R l L r R l L r R l L r R l L r

B. L.

B6 As Written
Top 2 4s/2s

r r r r r r R

Motion

7/8 Motion, NOTE: All motions can be interpreted with different rhythmic values (8th notes, 16th notes, triplets, etc)

4