2026 CYMBALS
IMPACT
PERCUSSION

Welcome to IMPACT Percussion!

On behalf of our administrative, design, and educational teams, we would like to sincerely thank you for your interest in participating in IMPACT Percussion's 2026 season. Our entire team is looking forward to another remarkable year full of meaningful moments, personal growth, and inspiring experiences. We are also looking forward to 2026 being our first full season in **Percussion Independent World**! We can't wait to kick off this historic season with **YOU!**

At IMPACT Percussion, our mission is to **empower youth to reach their full potential through achieving excellence in the performing arts**. We carry out our mission by creating an inspiring environment that fosters performance, artistry, and excellence at the highest level.

To get the most out of your **2026 audition experience**, we encourage you to bring a **positive attitude, an open mind, and a strong desire to grow**. As part of the audition process, we'll focus on both musical and visual skill sets to help you understand our approach and assess your abilities. Depending on your progress throughout the process, you may be asked to complete an **individual audition** to highlight your skills. While we'll dig deeper into our technique and approach during rehearsal camps, the following core concepts are the essential building blocks for the IMPACT Percussion Battery. Please carefully review this packet and get ready for the season. We can't wait to see you and begin this exciting new chapter together!

- *IMPACT Percussion 2026 Cymbal Education Team*

Our Approach

At IMPACT Percussion, our core cymbal playing philosophy centers on **intentionality** — creating high-quality sound while being purposeful with our movements and thoughts and maintaining a strict sense of control. Below are some key concepts detailing how to apply this philosophy to our musical approach at IMPACT:

Rhythmic Accuracy

We strive for mathematically perfect rhythms unless specifically defined otherwise. This means a strong sense of internal timing and pulse control is imperative. During the season, a great deal of work must be done at home every week to perfect your sound before arriving at rehearsal. Everyone is responsible for playing in time and keeping the energy of the music alive!

Blend & Balance (Ear Training)

Musical blend begins with a mature awareness of one's personal sound in relation to others. Moving around the floor creates a variety of demanding listening environments, requiring constant adjustments in a player's sound production and contribution. It is imperative to know your role in the balance of the entire ensemble at all times.

Goals To Strive For

- Always strive for a BIG, STRONG uniform quality of sound, we are musicians first and foremost - sound quality is everything!
- Stay relaxed. Cymbals are a very physically demanding instrument, and we are going to feel tense and uncomfortable at times. It is important that you breathe deeply and allow as much oxygen as possible to flow through your muscles.
- Create a strong presence behind the instrument with a big upper body while maintaining a relaxed posture.
- When practicing, always use a metronome, mark time, and use a mirror if possible. The mirror will help show us how we look while playing our instrument.
- Always carry yourself in a mature and confident way when we are together.

What We Are Looking For

- Be the best person you can be - your true self can only be discovered when no one is watching.
- Don't get frustrated when something doesn't click right away. There is a learning curve to cymbals, so don't get upset when things seem difficult right now. Everything will come together as we practice and get comfortable with our instrument.
- Change and new ideas should be embraced with an open mind and a willingness to adapt.
- Don't forget to enjoy the process. Although we are here to get better, we want to enjoy ourselves and our time with everyone!

Practice Guide

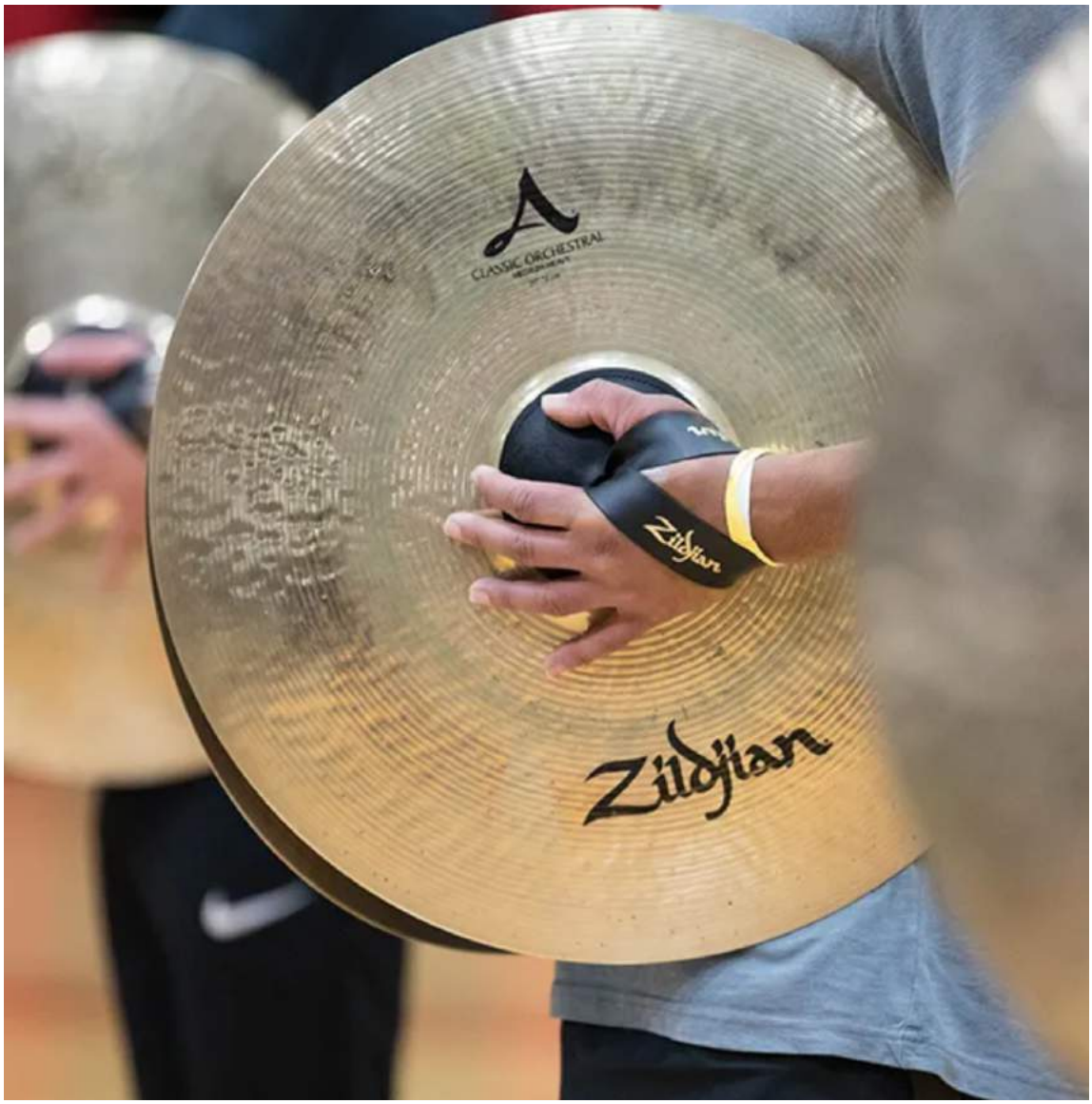
Overall, this packet is designed to be used as a tool and a reference, but it is not the only source of information. There are many right answers when it comes to cymbal technique; this just happens to be the right answer for IMPACT Percussion this year. Since everyone's body is different, some minor adjustments may be necessary to ensure that everyone feels comfortable while playing.

Attention to detail in the minutia is what separates the good cymbal lines from the great cymbal lines. We will be a **great** cymbal line.

Practice with a metronome, mark time whenever possible, and work on each exercise slowly, gradually working up to the written tempos. There are no cheat codes or shortcuts on the road to mastery of any craft - **put the time in, ask for help as needed, maintain a growth mindset, and you will eventually see the results you're looking for.** This takes time, so be patient with yourself. And don't forget to enjoy the process!

Holding the Cymbals

- The strap will sit in between the webbing of your thumb and pointer finger.
- The strap should be felt behind the wrist.
- Fingers should feel relaxed and slightly touching the cymbals.
- Straps should be tight on the hands but not cutting off circulation to the fingers. You should be able to maintain control over the plates even when fingers are released.



Positions

Set

- Hands should be down to your side.
- Knot of strap at inner seam of pants.
- Slight bend in the elbows (2”- 3”).
- Blades to the audience.
- Plates are parallel to each other and perpendicular to the ground.

Choke

- Cymbals tucked underneath the arm.
- Squeeze into your chest feeling 4 contact points - the torso, upper arm, lower arm, and your hands.
- Elbows pinned down against the torso.
- Tips of cymbals are about 2”- 3” apart.

Flat

- Center of your body/middle of torso.
- Knots about sternum level.
- Cymbals roughly 45°/shoulder to hip/seatbelt.
- Elbows out, but relaxed.
- Hands spread for control.
- Straight line from wrist to elbows through the ring finger, parallel to the ground.

Port (Eval)

- Knots at eye level.
- Parallel to each other.
- Perpendicular to the ground.
- Cymbals will be 2” apart.
- Same distance from the body as flat.
- Hands spread for more control.
- Elbows have a straight line through the ring finger.

Technique

Prepping for a Crash - Left Arm

- At flat, fingers are relaxed and off the cymbals.
- Slightly flatten out the wrist until the cymbal is parallel to your forearm.
- Make sure to maintain the 45° angle. The angles between the cymbals should always match.

Prepping for a Crash - Right Arm

- At flat, fingers are relaxed and off the cymbals.
- Pull the arm back as if you are drawing a bow or someone is pulling a string attached to the back of your elbow.
- Forearms stay parallel to the ground with the end of the cymbal sitting on the outside of your bicep.
- Cymbal should be pointing towards the contact point (2” in from the outside of the left cymbal).

Playing the Crash

1. Drive
    - Maintain orch. prep angles (blades).
    - Straight line path forward with the right hand.
    - Aim for front 12 o’clock, 3 fingers space from the edge.

2. First Contact
    - What to feel: flexing from fulcrum created by the strap in webbing of thumb/palm.
    - On hand: relaxed palms, still supporting the weight of the cymbal.
    - Requires relaxation to achieve second contact/reaction, AVOID tensing up.

3. Pull
    - Pull as soon as the first contact hits.
    - Lightens the impact of the second contact.
        - Without the pull, the weight of the cymbals cause the cymbals to land heavily on each other.
        - “Out”, or in the opposite direction as the drive in.

4. Second Contact
    - Cymbals do the work.
    - First and second contact sounds should be as similar as possible.
    - No more, no less; same bright sound.
    - Hand speed/velocity - Fast in, Faster out!

Taps

- Tips of cymbals at eye level.
- Cymbals at about 90°.
- Cymbals about 2” space between tips.
- Hands at shoulder width.
- Just like flat/port/choke you should feel lines between elbows through the ring finger.

Playing the Tap

- The dynamic will determine how high we raise the right cymbal, but it should not pass vertical.
- There will be more wrist movement than elbow, but the elbow will dip a little to cover the 2” distance to make contact with the cymbal.
- Gravity will do most of the work, just let the cymbal drop. With higher dynamics we will add a little power behind it.
- After contact, go with the flow and reset at tap.

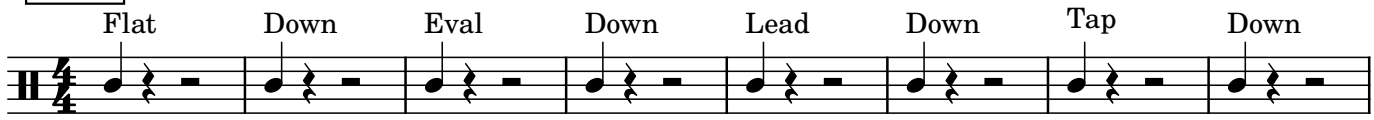
Zings

- Cymbal bells at eye level.
- Right cymbal is making contact right above the left cymbal bell.
- There will be about a 30° angle.
- Quick hard grind/push from the right cymbal against left cymbal ridges.
- Feel the pull from the rising of the right elbow.
- Left arm slightly pulls down.
- Cymbals reset in tap position.

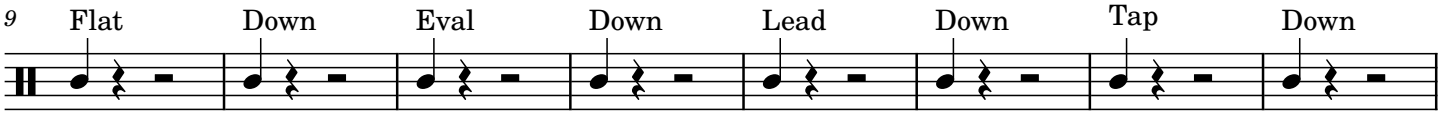
FELT

Flat Eval Lead Tap

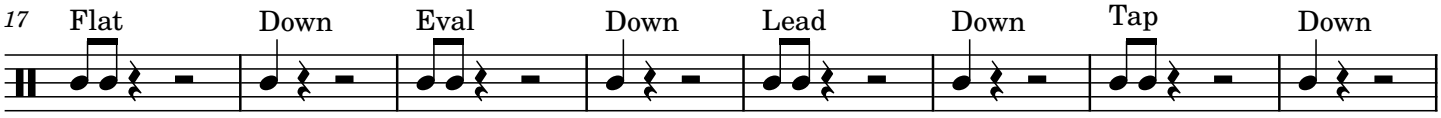
Hits



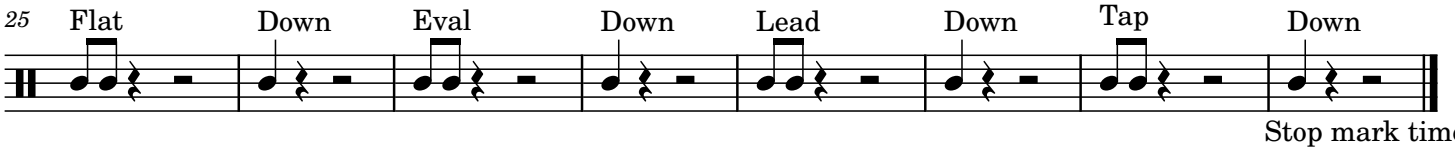
Flips



L R Flips



R L Flips

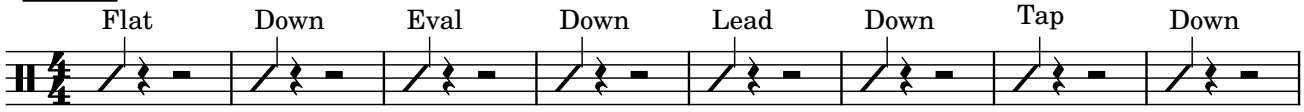


Stop mark time 4 1

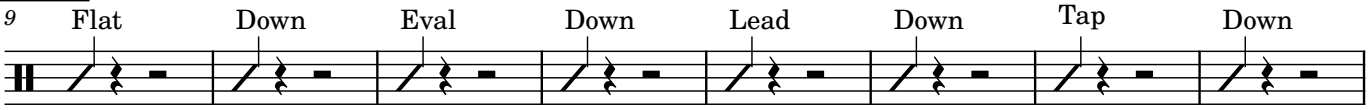
FELT With Ripples

Flat Eval Lead Tap

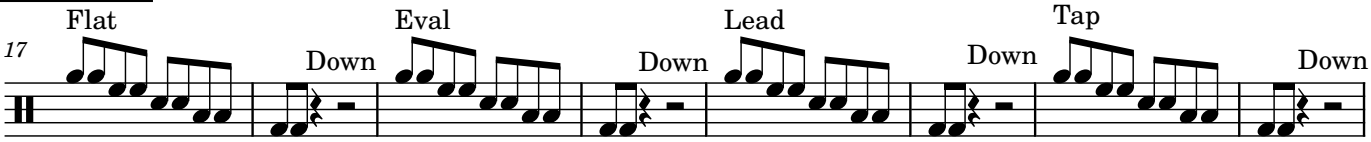
Hits



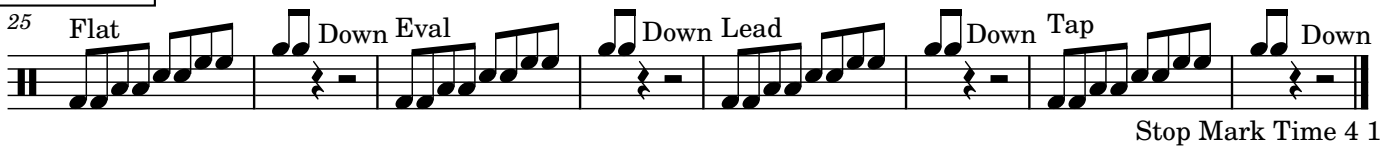
Flips



L R Ripples

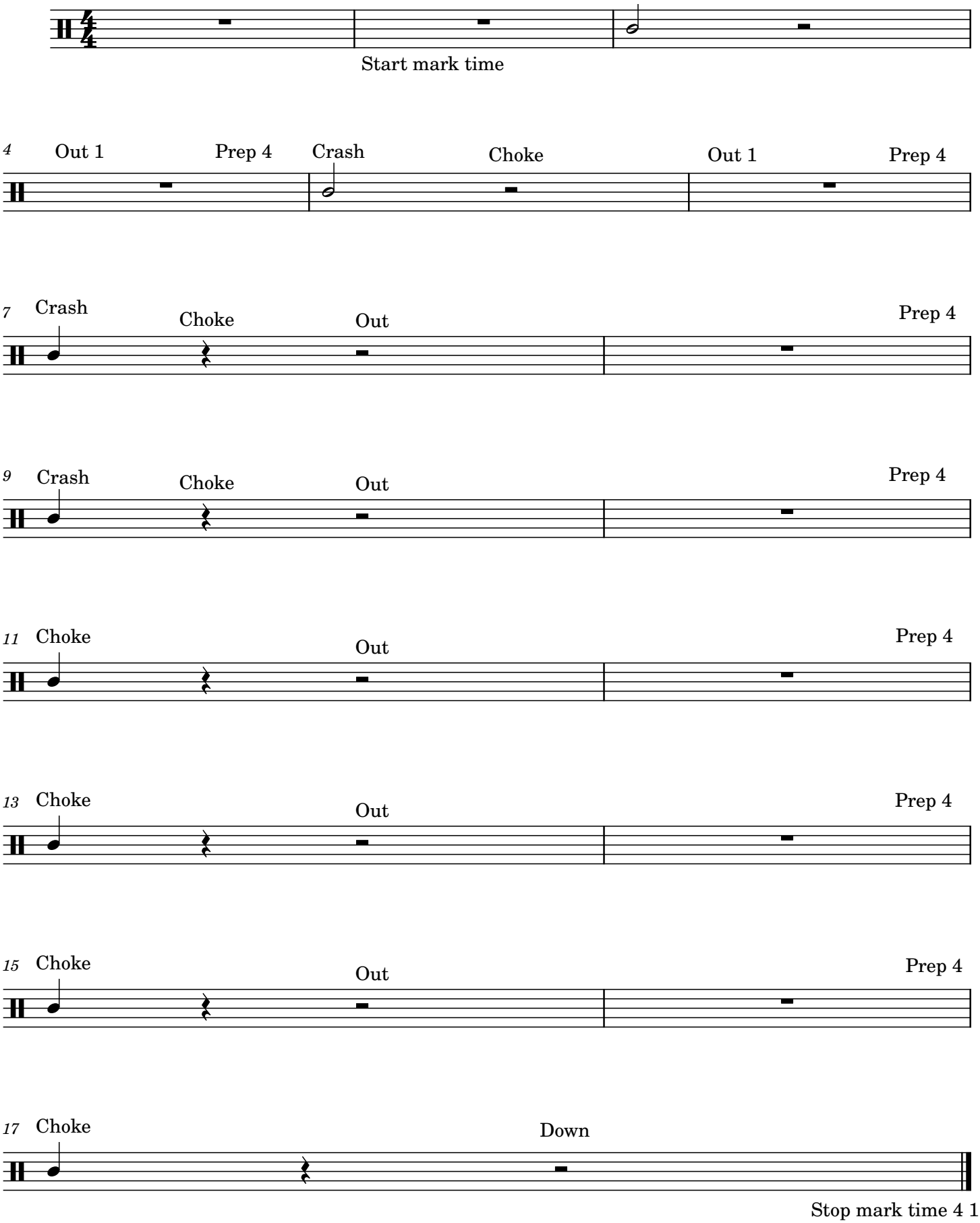


R L Ripples

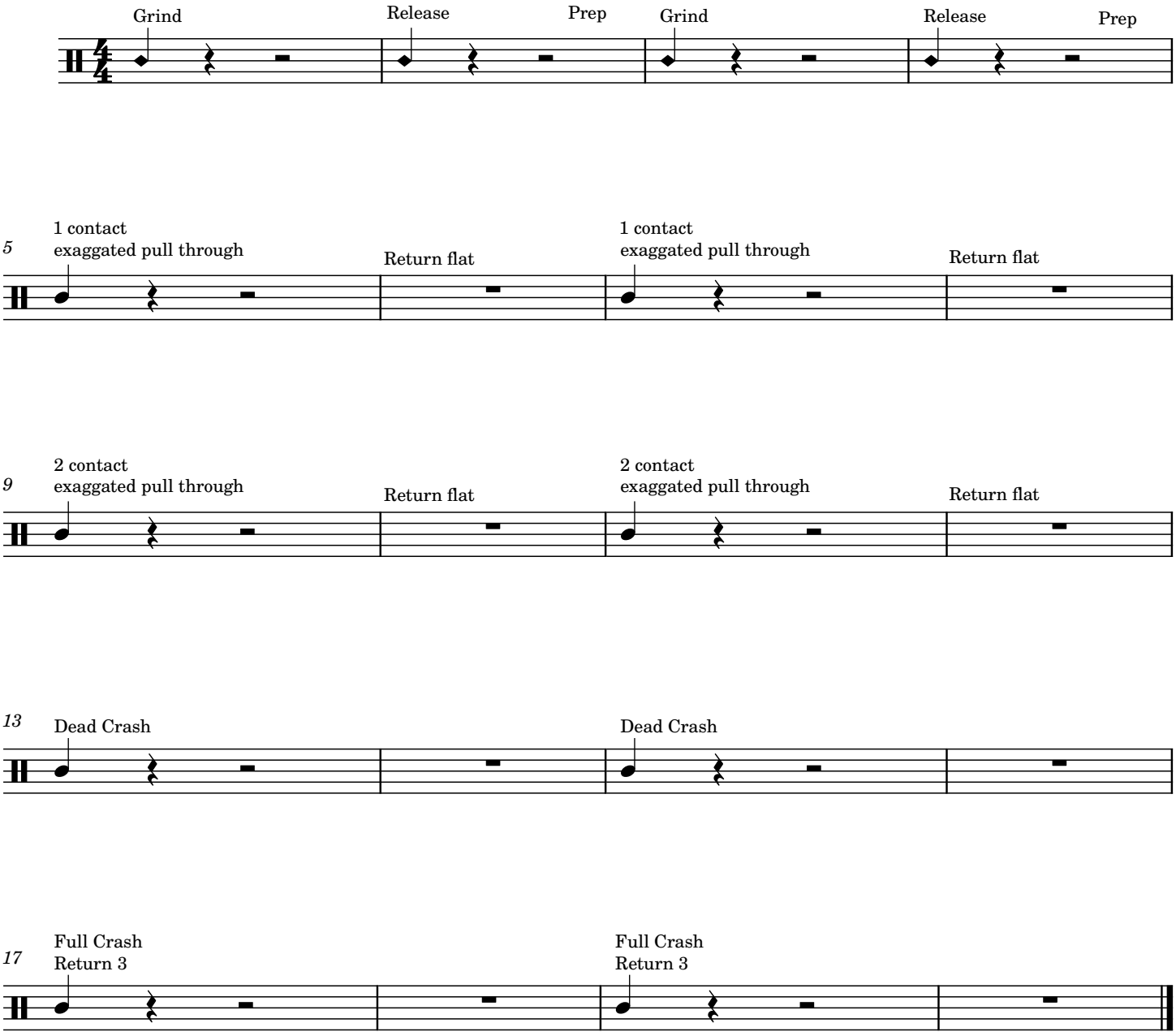


Stop Mark Time 4 1

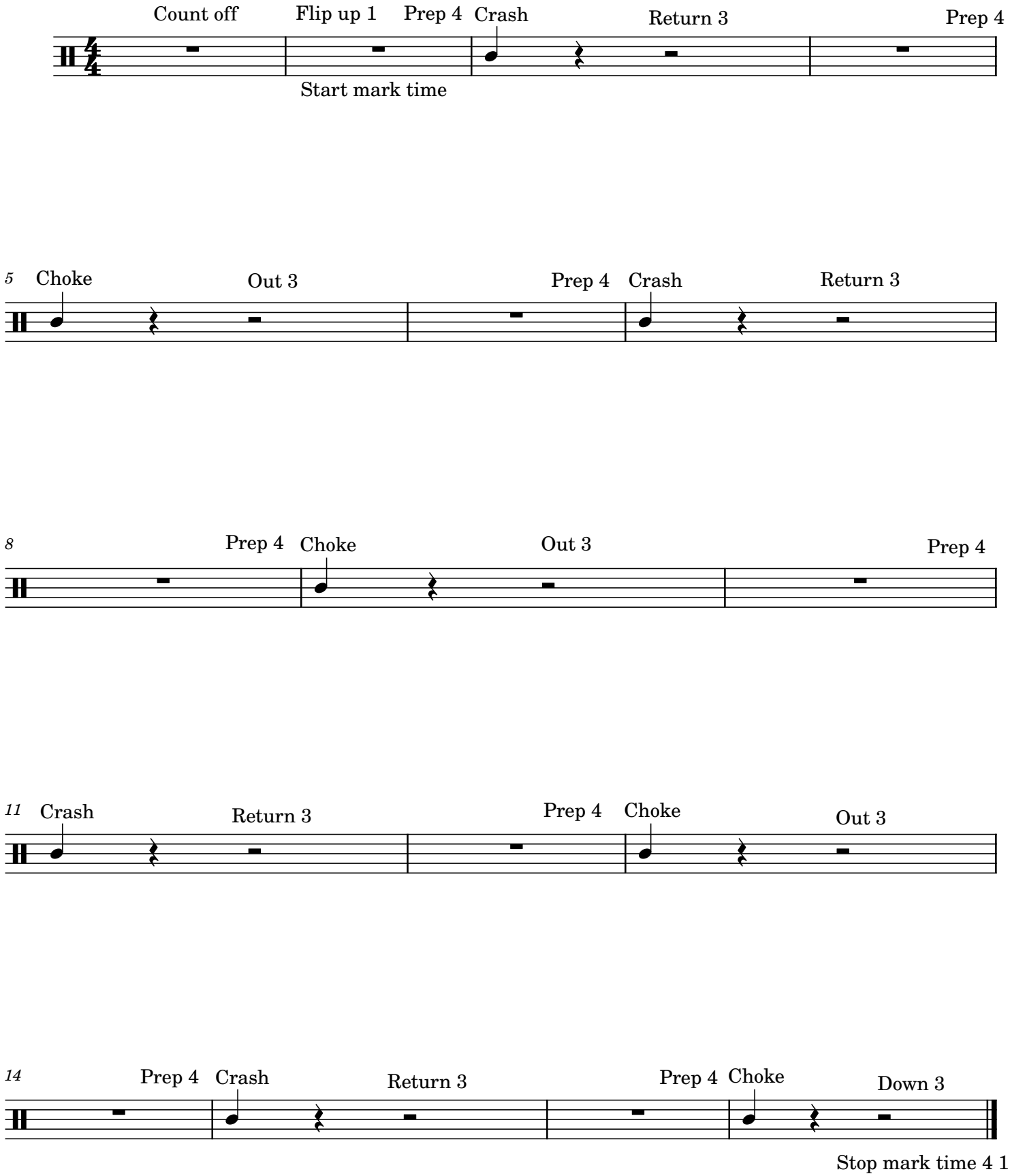
Crash Choke Breakdown



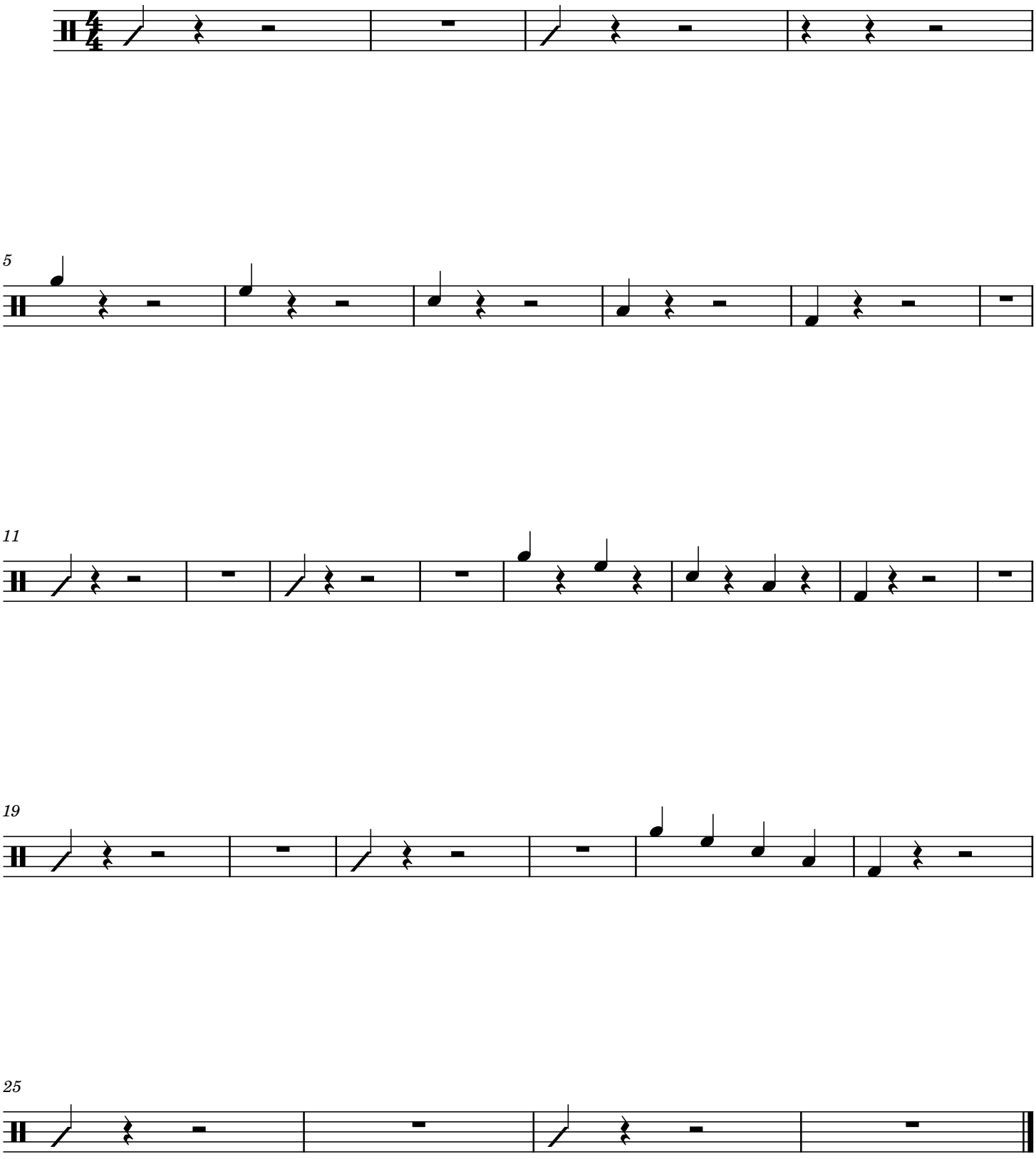
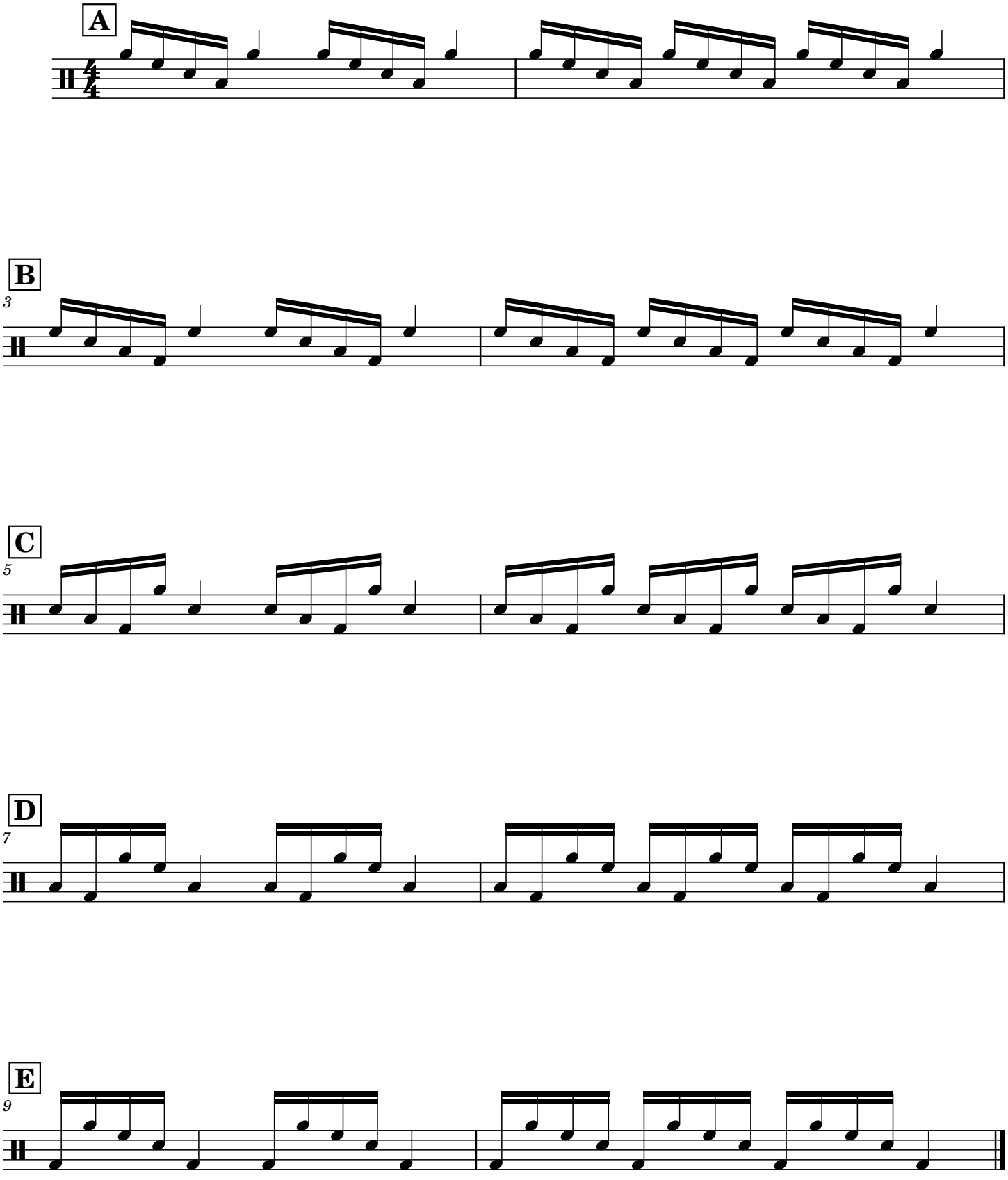
The Process


Grind
Release
Prep
Grind
Release
Prep
5
1 contact
exaggated pull through
Return flat
1 contact
exaggated pull through
Return flat
9
2 contact
exaggated pull through
Return flat
2 contact
exaggated pull through
Return flat
13
Dead Crash
Dead Crash
17
Full Crash
Return 3
Full Crash
Return 3

8 for Free


Count off
Flip up 1
Prep 4
Crash
Return 3
Prep 4
Start mark time
5
Choke
Out 3
Prep 4
Crash
Return 3
8
Prep 4
Choke
Out 3
Prep 4
11
Crash
Return 3
Prep 4
Choke
Out 3
14
Prep 4
Crash
Return 3
Prep 4
Choke
Down 3
Stop mark time 4 1

Down the Line



16th Note Parrot