MUSICIANS INSTITUTE

PRIVATE LESSONS

Encyclopedia of READING RHYTHMS

by Gary Hess

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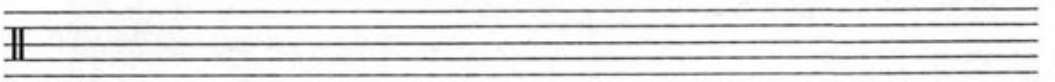
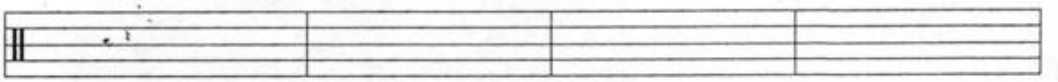
Music Graphics

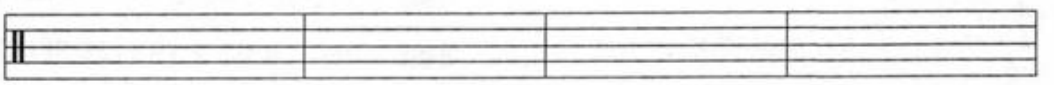
An arrangement of five equidistant, horizontal lines is called a staff.



Vertical lines through the staff are called barlines.

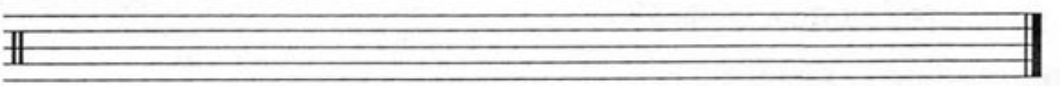


The space between two barlines is called a measure or a bar.

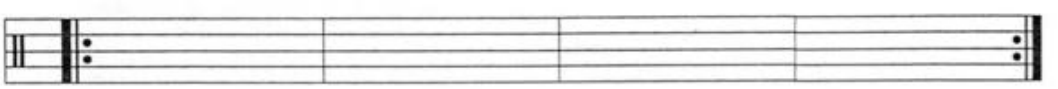


Two barlines close together, referred to as a double bar, are used to indicate the end of a musical section.

A double bar with one thin and one thick line is used to indicate the end of a composition.



Double bars with two dots next to them, in the 2nd and 3rd spaces of the staff, are called repeat signs. The section between these signs is to be repeated.



Notes and Rests

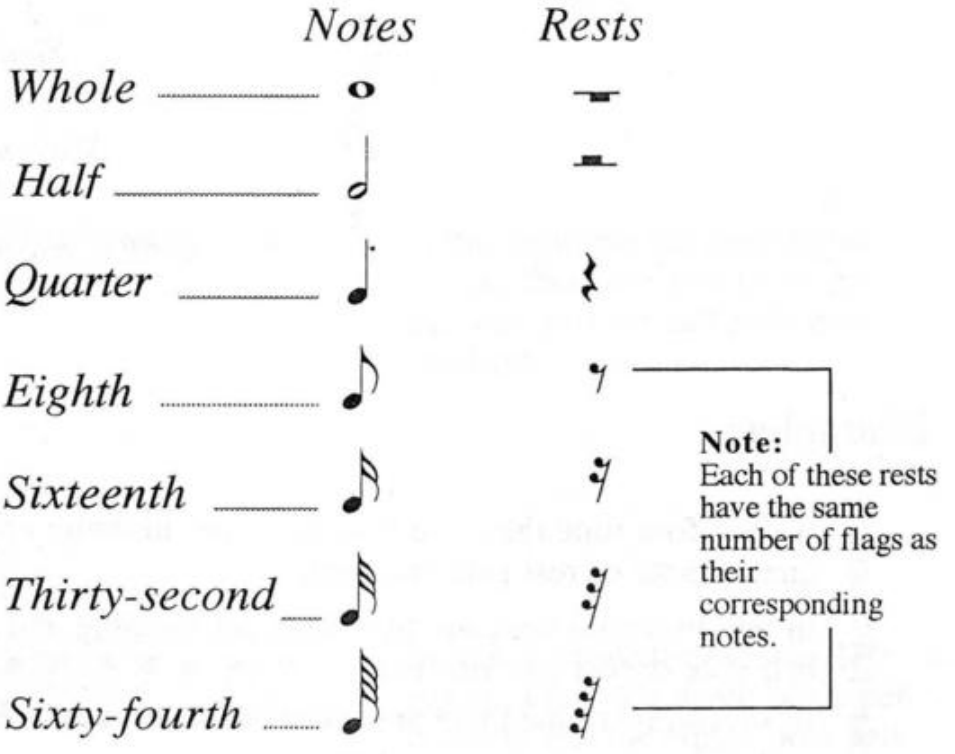
The characters used to represent rhythm and duration are called notes. Notes consist of one or more of the following :

a note head
a stem
one or more flags
one or more beams

Beams are used to create groupings of two or more notes that are otherwise flagged. Whole notes, half notes and quarter notes have no flags, therefore, they connot be beamed together.

The characters used to notate silence are called rests.

The various notes and rests in order of their durational value are:



Time Signatures

Time signatures are fractions used in music to establish a mathematical framework upon which to notate pulse and rhythm. The numerator (upper numeral) establishes the number of beats per measure. The demominator (lower numeral) establishes the note or rest value receiving one beat

The numerator of a time signature can conceivably be any number. The denominator, however, must represent a specific note value.

Throughout this text we will refer to the various meters by the note values of their denominators.

Denominator	*Note value represented*	*Referred to as a(n):*
2		*Half note meter*
4		*Quarter note meter*
8		*Eighth note meter*
16		*Sixteenth note meter*
32		*Thirty-second note meter*

Examples:

4
4 In four-four time there are four beats per measure and the quarter note or rest gets one beat.

2
2 In two-two time there are two beats per measure and the half note or rest gets one beat.

7
8 In seven-eight time there are seven beats per measure and the eighth note or rest gets one beat.

The Pulse

In music, the underlying steady beat upon which rhythms are based is called the pulse.

The speed of a pulse is called the tempo.

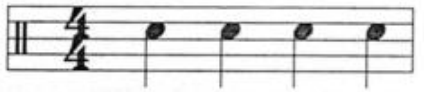
Tempi (plural for tempo) are measured in beats per minute (b.p.m.).

The mechanical or electronic device used to measure b.p.m. is called a metronome.

A metronome marking (m.m.) is notated by using a note value (usually that which is represented in the denominator of the time signature), an equals sign and a number representing the b.p.m. These markings are positioned near the time signature.

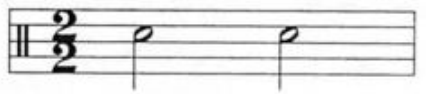
Examples:

♩ = 60



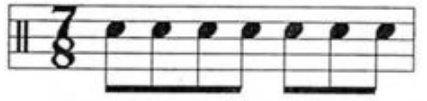
In this example the pulse is 60 b.p.m., there are four beats per measure and the quarter note gets one beat.

𝅗𝅥 = 90



In this example the pulse is 90 b.p.m., there are two beats per measure and the half note gets one beat.

♪ = 120



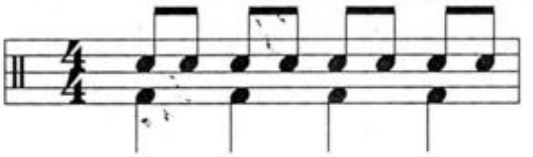
In this example the pulse is 120 b.p.m., there are seven beats per measure and the eighth note gets one beat.

Subdividing

Taking the pulse and dividing it into two or more equal parts is called subdividing.

Examples:

♩ = 60

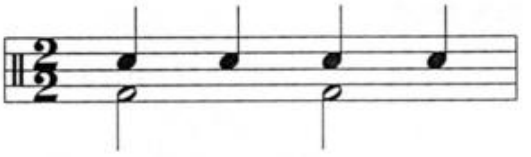


In this example the quarter note pulse of 60 b.p.m. has been subdivided into two equal parts (eighth notes).The eighth notes are to be played at exactly twice the speed of the quarter notes (120 b.p.m.)

♩ = 40

In this example the quarter note pulse of 40 b.p.m. has been subdivided into four equal parts (sixteenth notes). The sixteenth notes are to be played at exactly four times the speed of the quarter notes (160 b.p.m.)

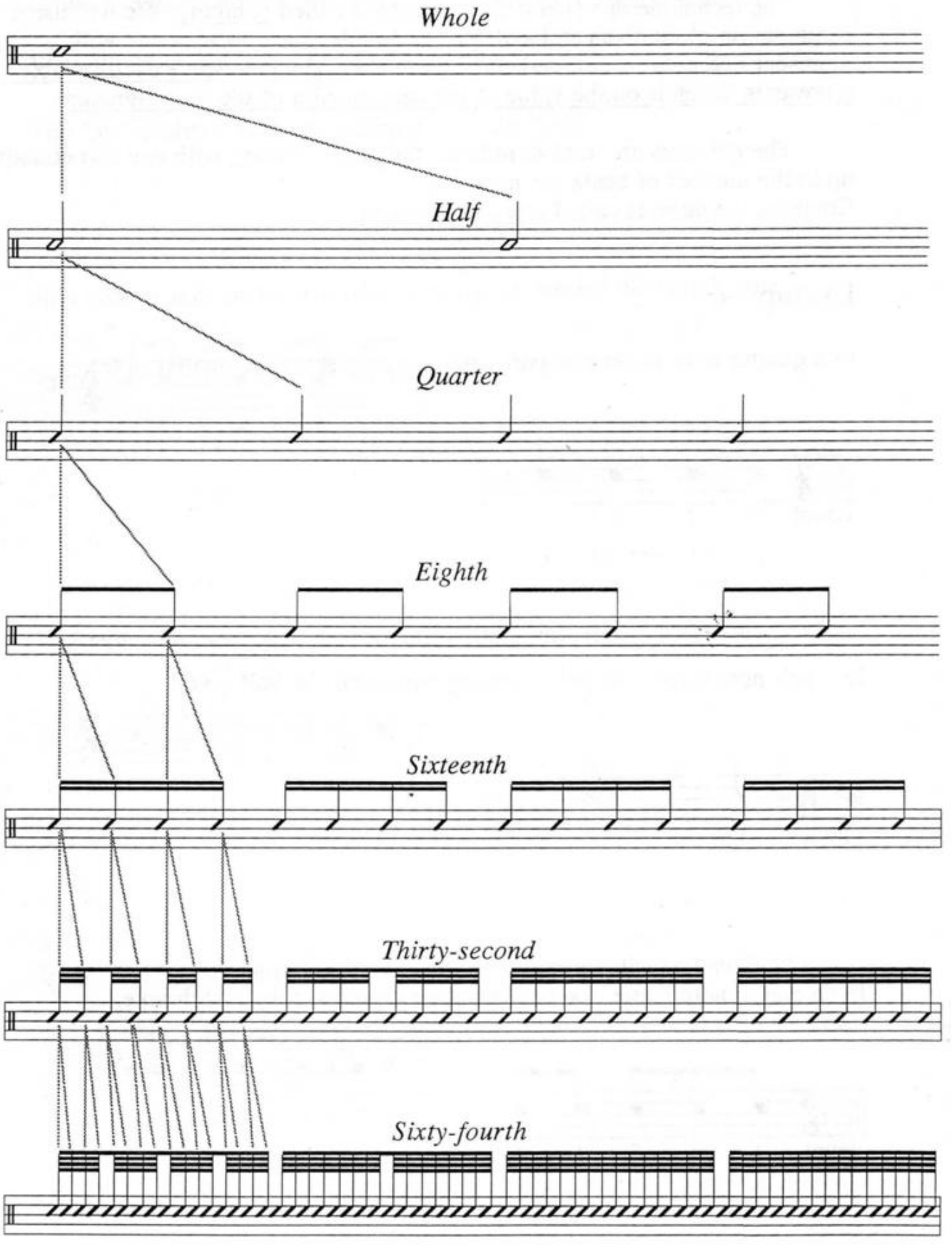
𝅗𝅥 = 90



In this example the half note pulse of 90 b.p.m. has been subdivided into two equal parts (quarter notes). The quarter notes are to be played at exactly twice the speed of the half notes (180 b.p.m.)

The following chart of NOTE VALUE RELATIONSHIPS shows how each note can be subdivided into larger groups of smaller note value.

Note Value Relationships



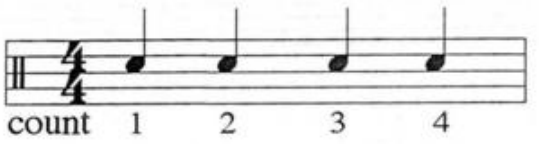
Counting

The technique of verbally subdividing is called counting. We will use a combination of numbers and syllables to do this. Each vocal sound will represent one note from its related subdivision. The note value each syllable represents depends on the value of the denominator of the time signature.

The numbers are used to indicate the pulse, starting with one and counting up to the number of beats per measure.
Counting the pulse is called one part counting.

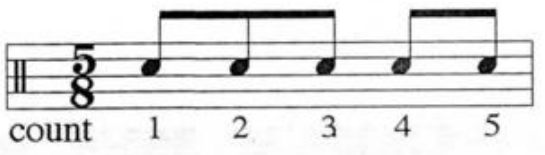
Examples:

In a quarter note meter one part counting represents the quarter note:



In a half note meter one part counting represents the half note.

In an eighth note meter one part counting represents the eighth note.



If we subdivide the pulse into groups of two we add the syllable "an" between each number as we count. This is called two part counting.

We will abbreviate the "an" by using a plus sign (+).

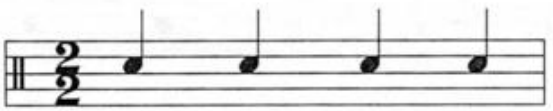
The "an" is also commonly referred to as the "and".

In a quarter note meter two part counting represents the eighth note.

count 1 an 2 an 3 an 4 an

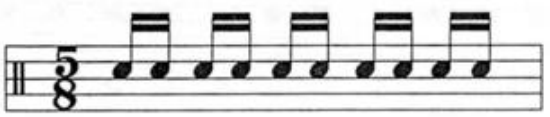
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

In a half note meter two part counting represents the quarter note.



count 1 + 2 +

In an eighth note meter two part counting represents the sixteenth note.



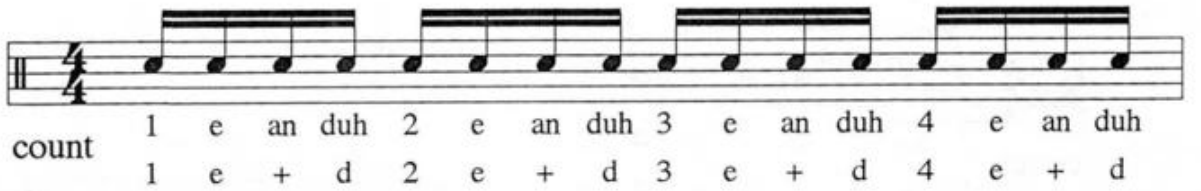
count 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +

If we subdivide the pulse into groups of four, we add the syllables "e", "an", "duh", evenly between each number as we count. This is called four part counting.

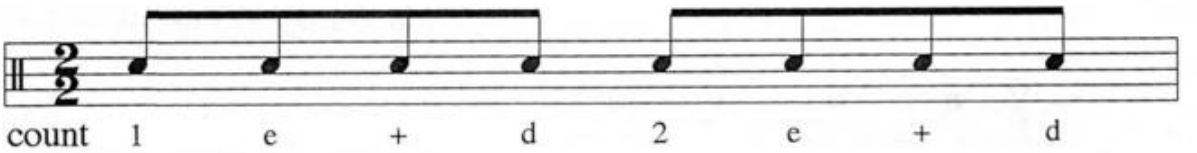
We will abbreviate the "duh" by simply using the letter d.

The "duh" is also commonly referred to as the "a".

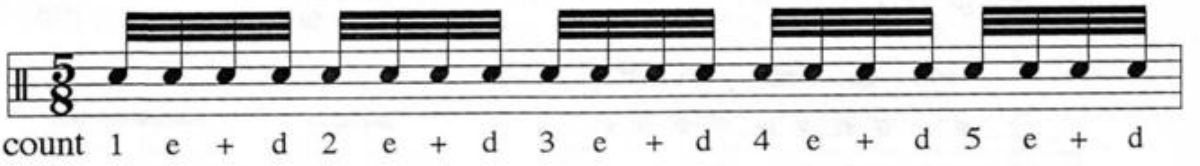
In a quarter note meter four part counting represents the sixteenth note.



In a half note meter four part counting represents the eighth note.



In an eighth note meter four part counting represents the thirty-second note.



The Plan

In order to achieve optimum results from this text I would suggest learning this material one page at a time in the order it is presented. Do not skip around.

Always;

*Use a metronome.

*Count out loud.

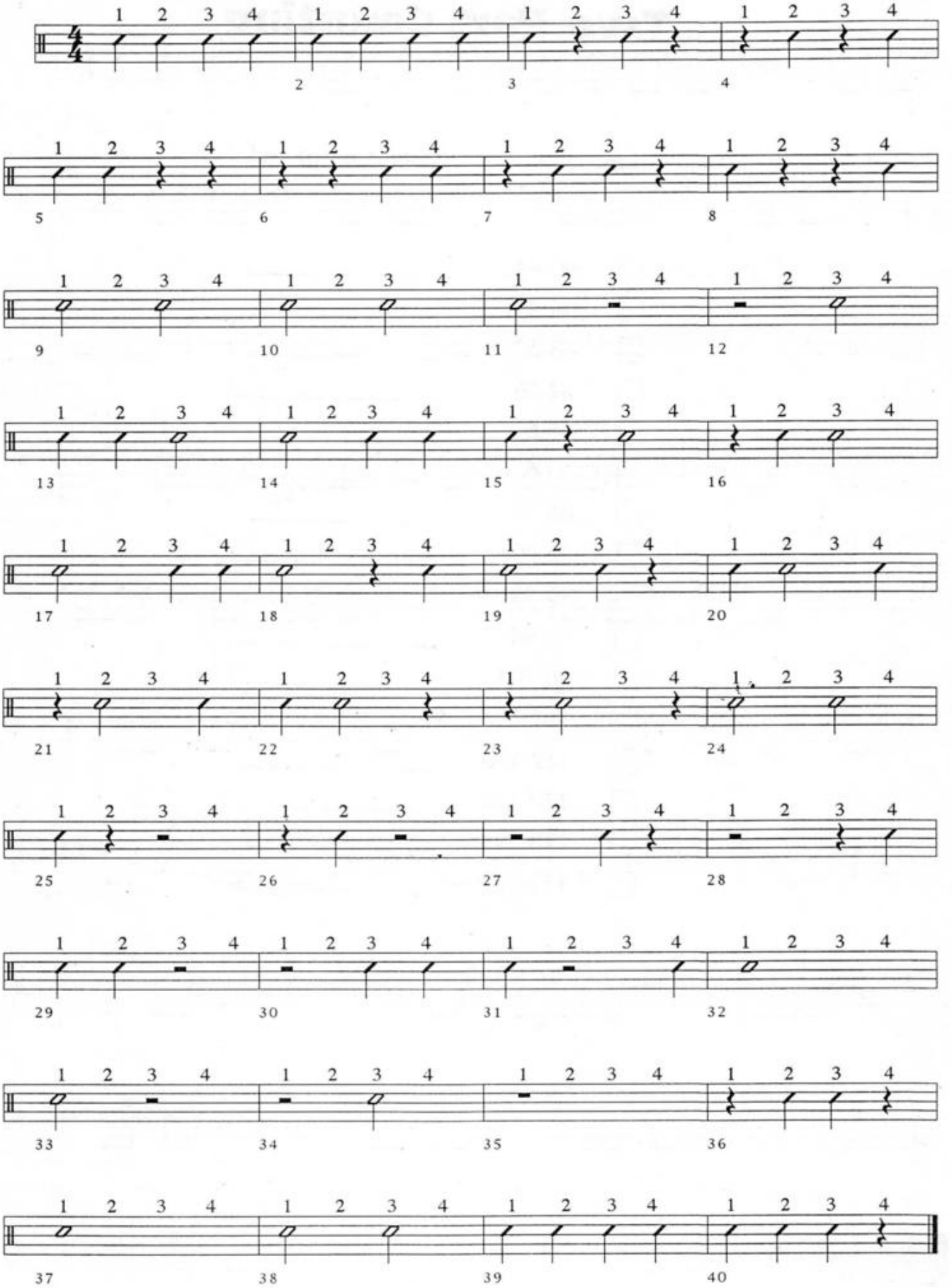
*Tap your foot on the correct pulse.

*Master the slowest tempo range of each counting system before going to the next.

*Strive for accuracy, not speed.

*Master each page to at least the medium tempo ranges before going on to the next page.

*Use the check lists.
When you can play an entire page flawlessly using a particular counting system at a specific tempo range put a check mark in the appropriate box and enter the date to keep track of your progress.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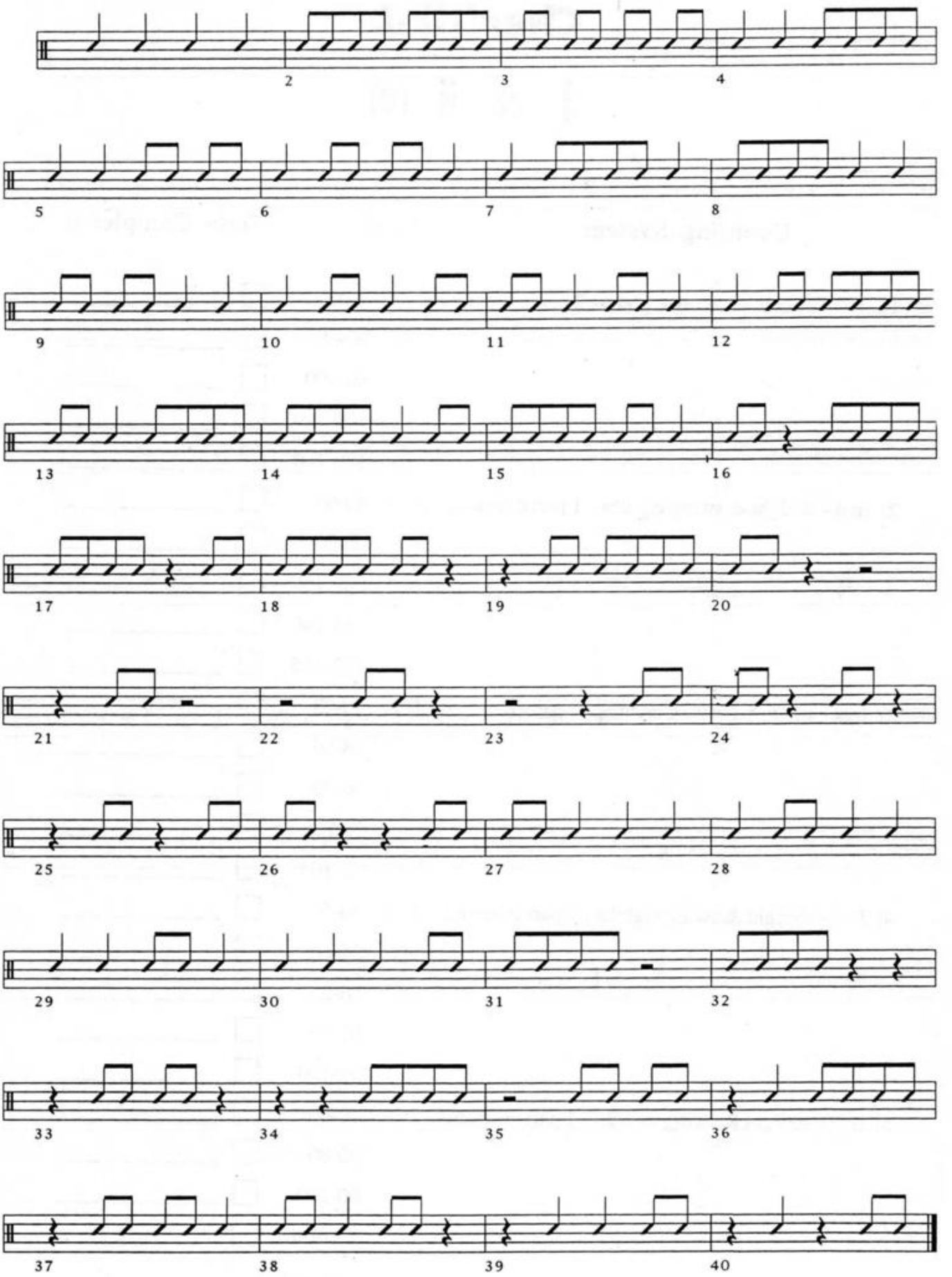
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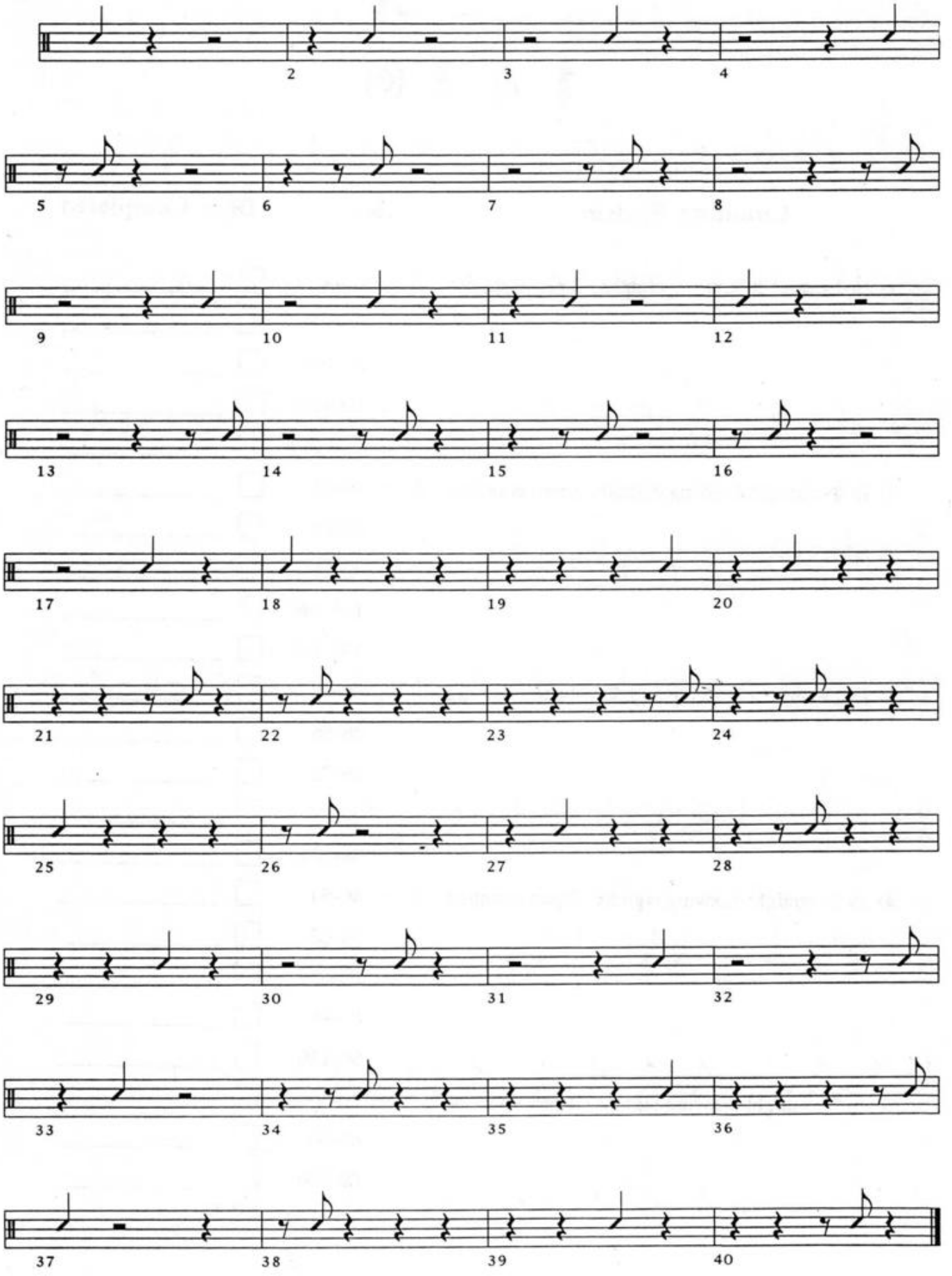
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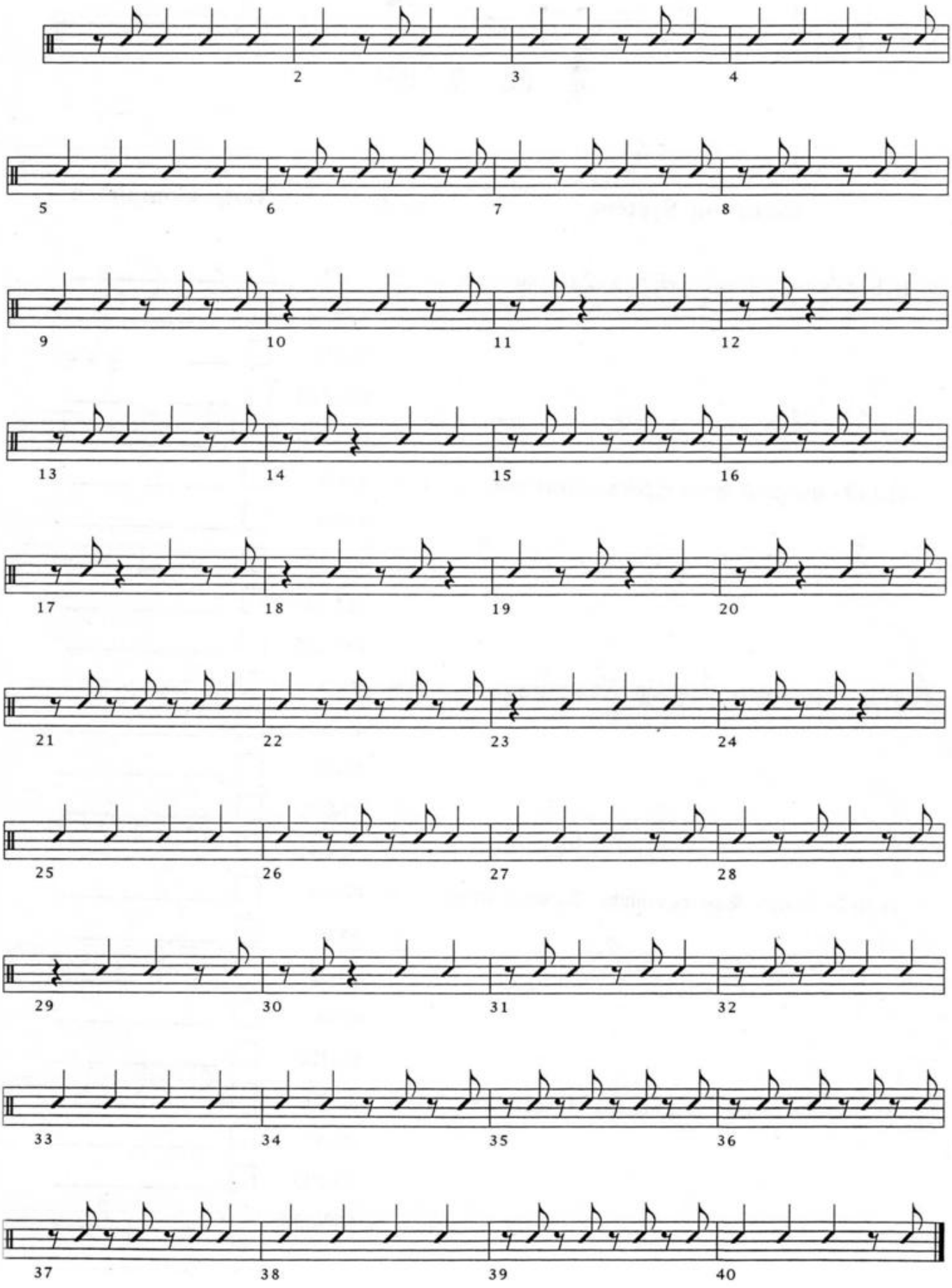
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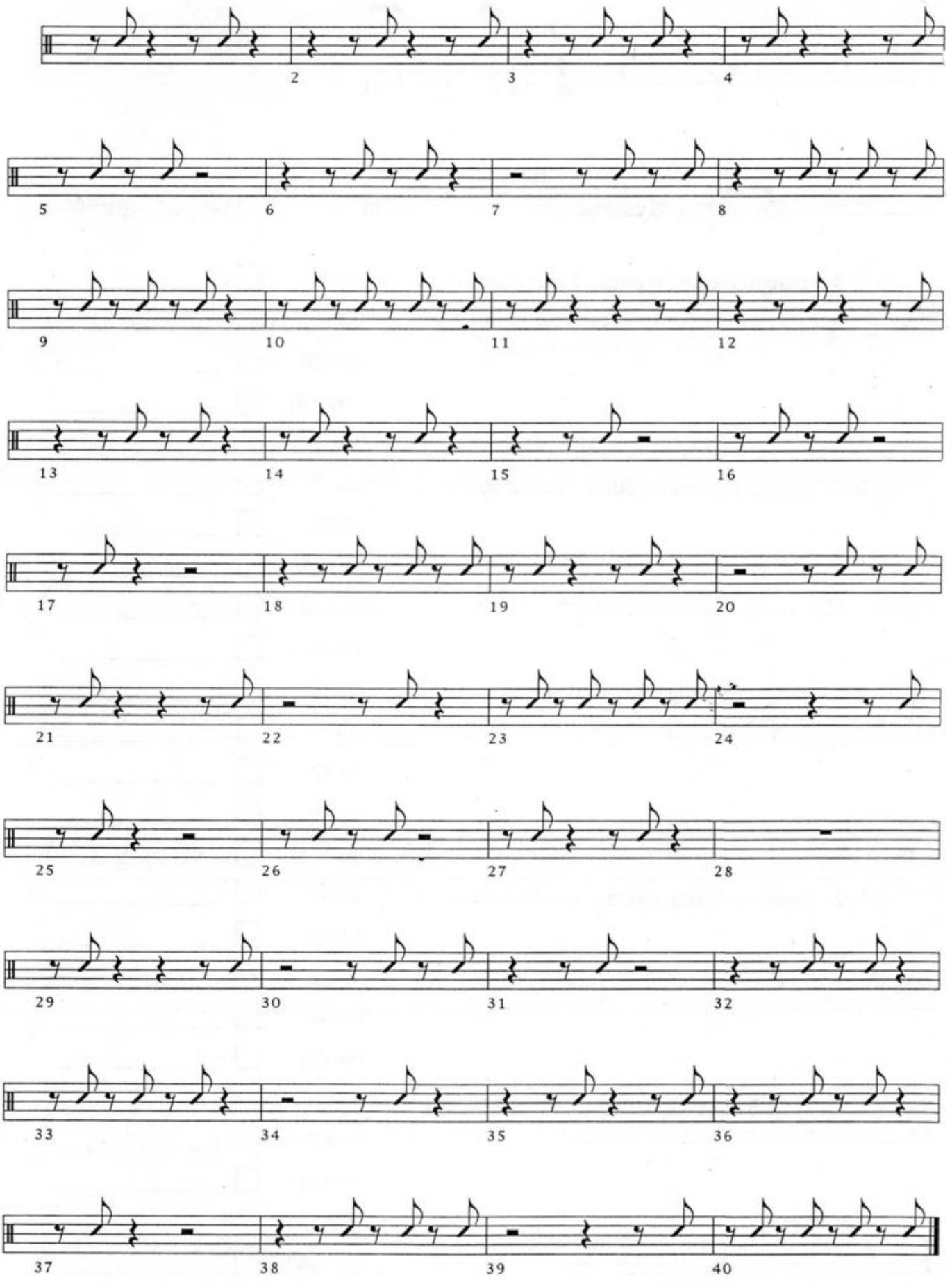
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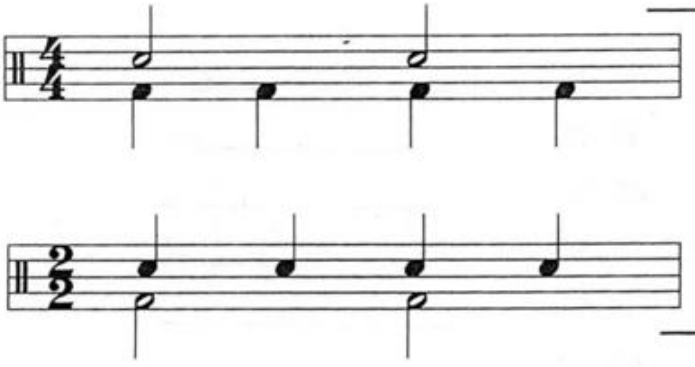
CUT TIME

The time signatures four-four $\frac{4}{4}$ and two-two $\frac{2}{2}$ are mathematically the same. As fractions, when reduced, both equal one, which means that any measure with either of these time signatures would contain one whole note.

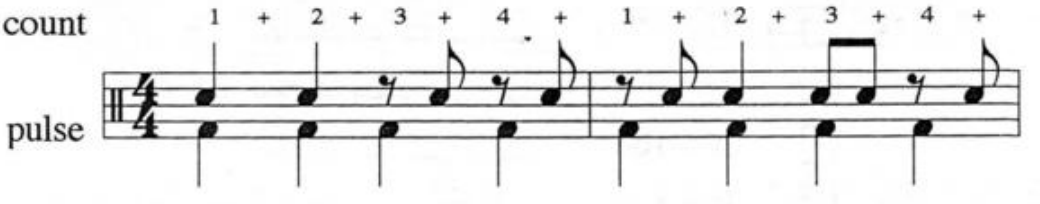


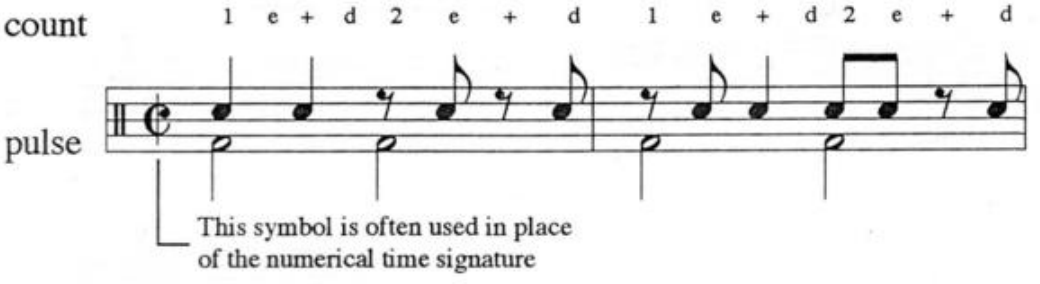
Notice the similarities between these two bars. Also notice the note values representing the underlying pulses.

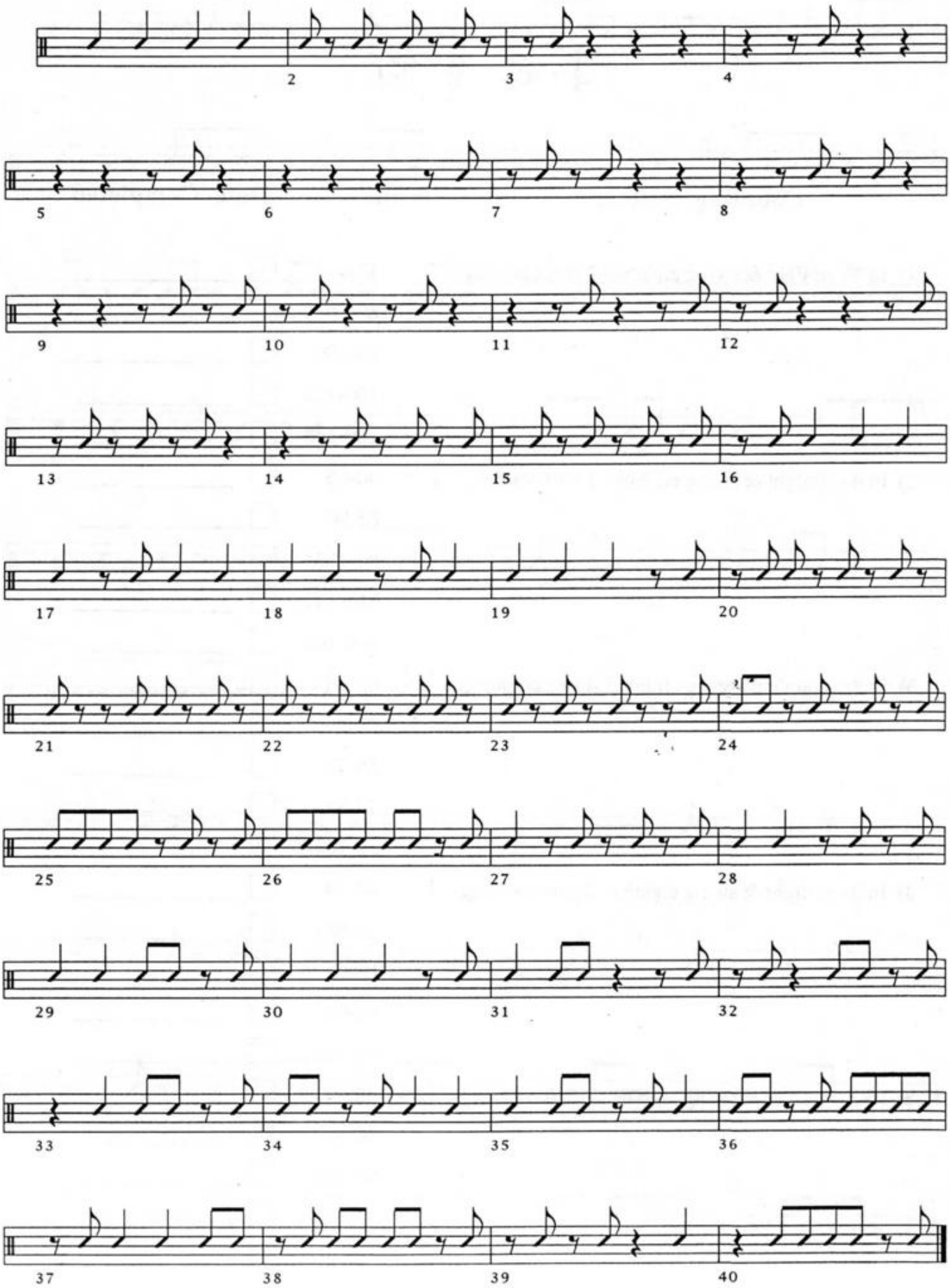
Identically written rhythms in $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{2}{2}$ sound exactly the same. The difference is in the pulse underlying the rhythms. In four-four there is a pulse of four beats. In two-two there is a pulse of two beats.

$\frac{2}{2}$ is commonly referred to as <u>Cut Time</u>.

The symbol for Cut Time is ¢.



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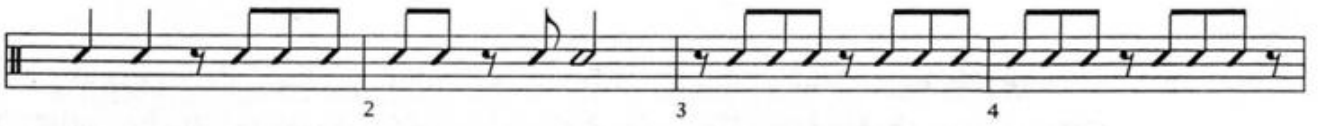
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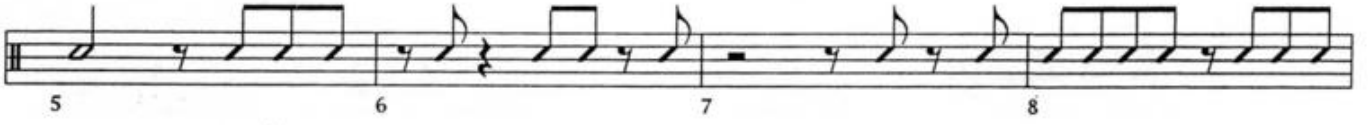
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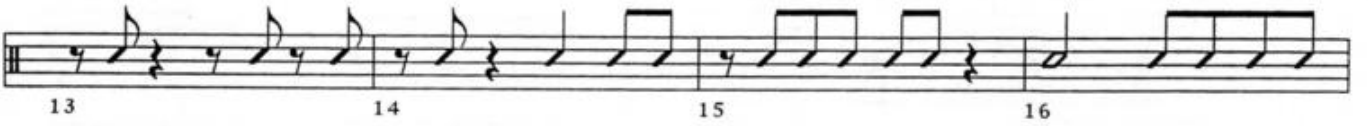
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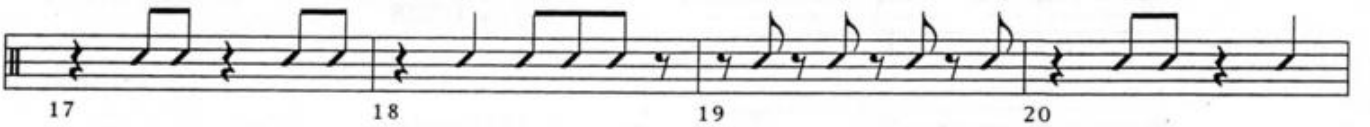
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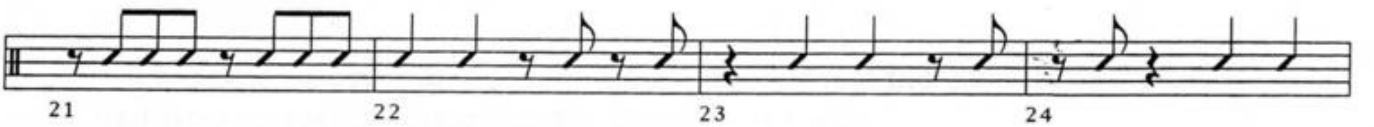
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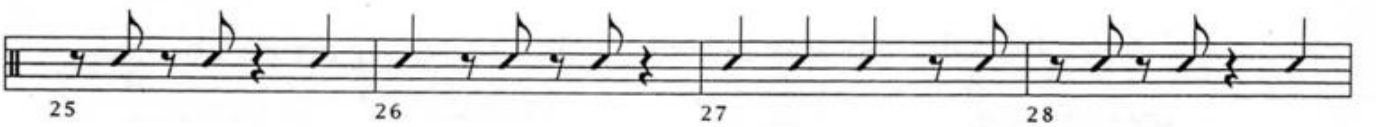
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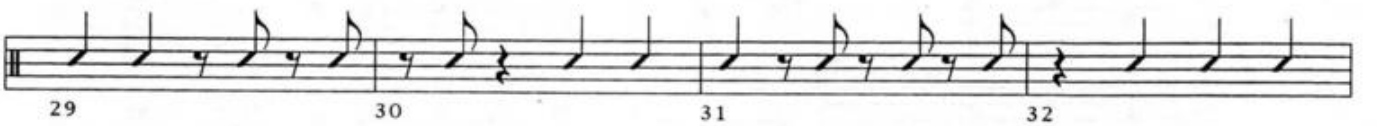
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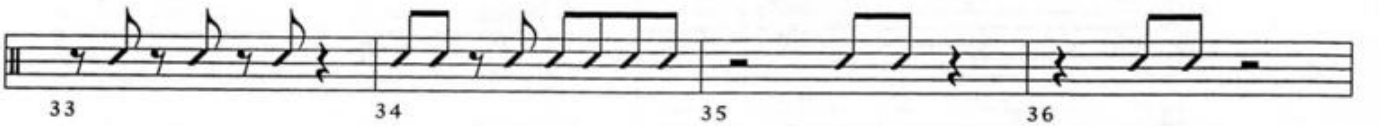
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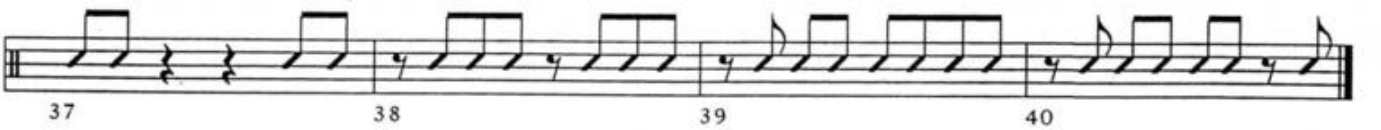
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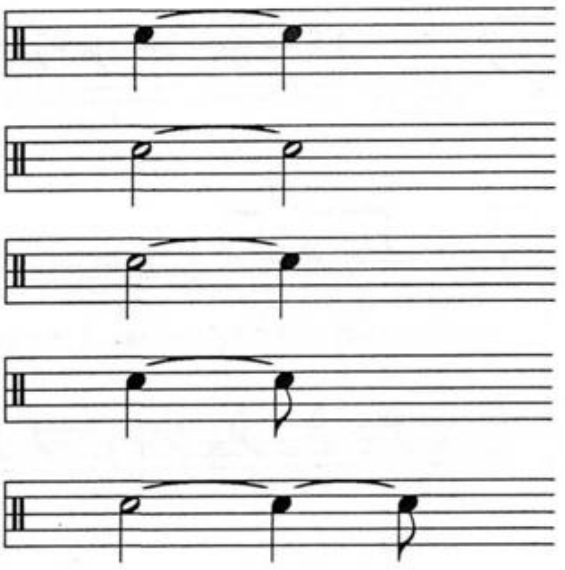
Ties

When two or more notes of the same pitch are connected with a curved line, that pitch is sustained for a duration equalling the sum of the note values connected.

EXAMPLES:



2 beats

4 beats

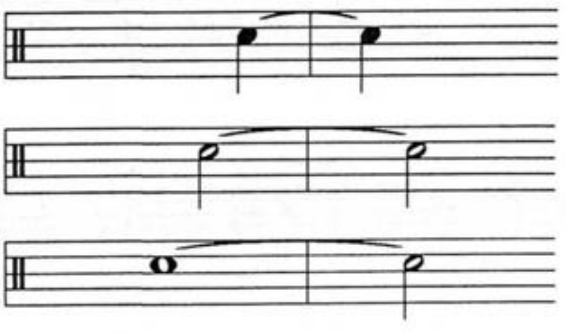
3 beats

1 1/2 beats

3 1/2 beats

Using a tie is the only way to notate a pitch sustaining across a bar.

EXAMPLES:



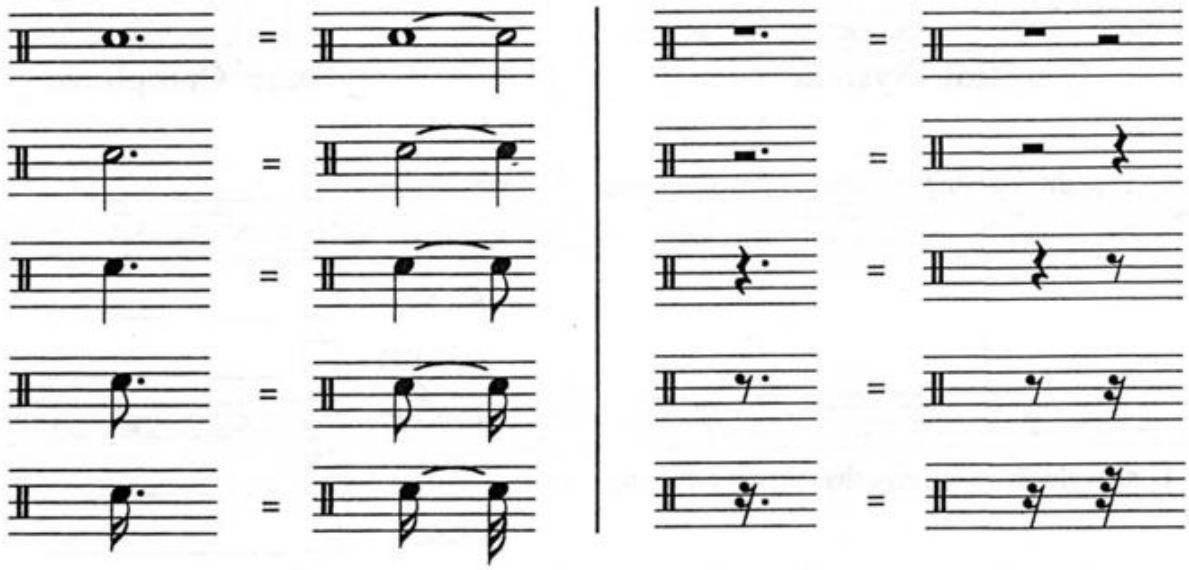
2 beats

4 beats

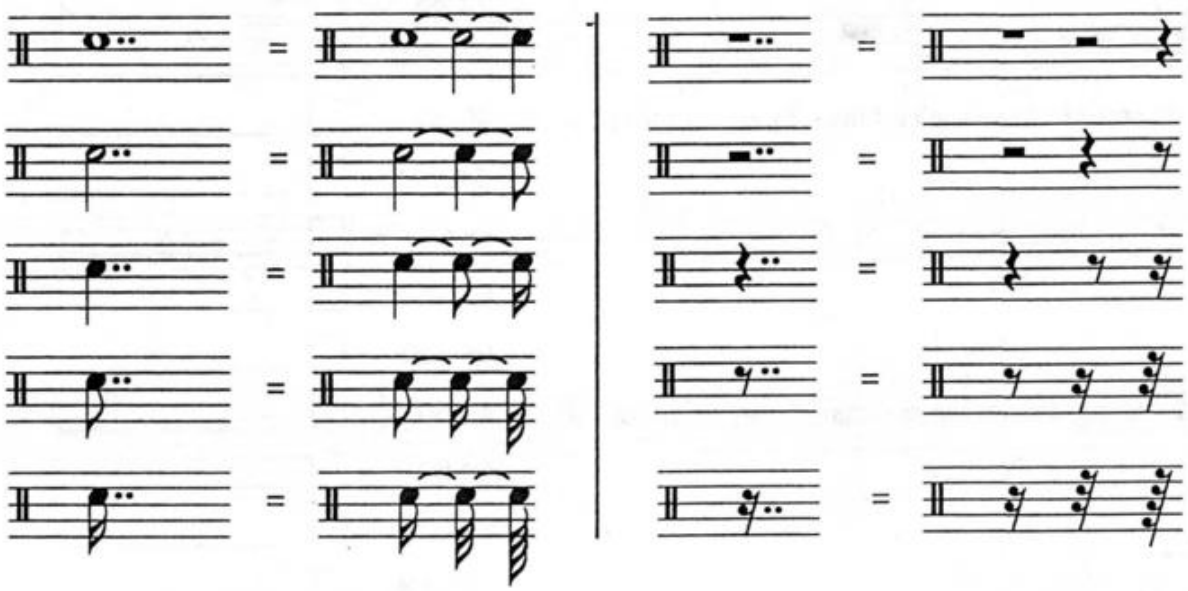
6 beats

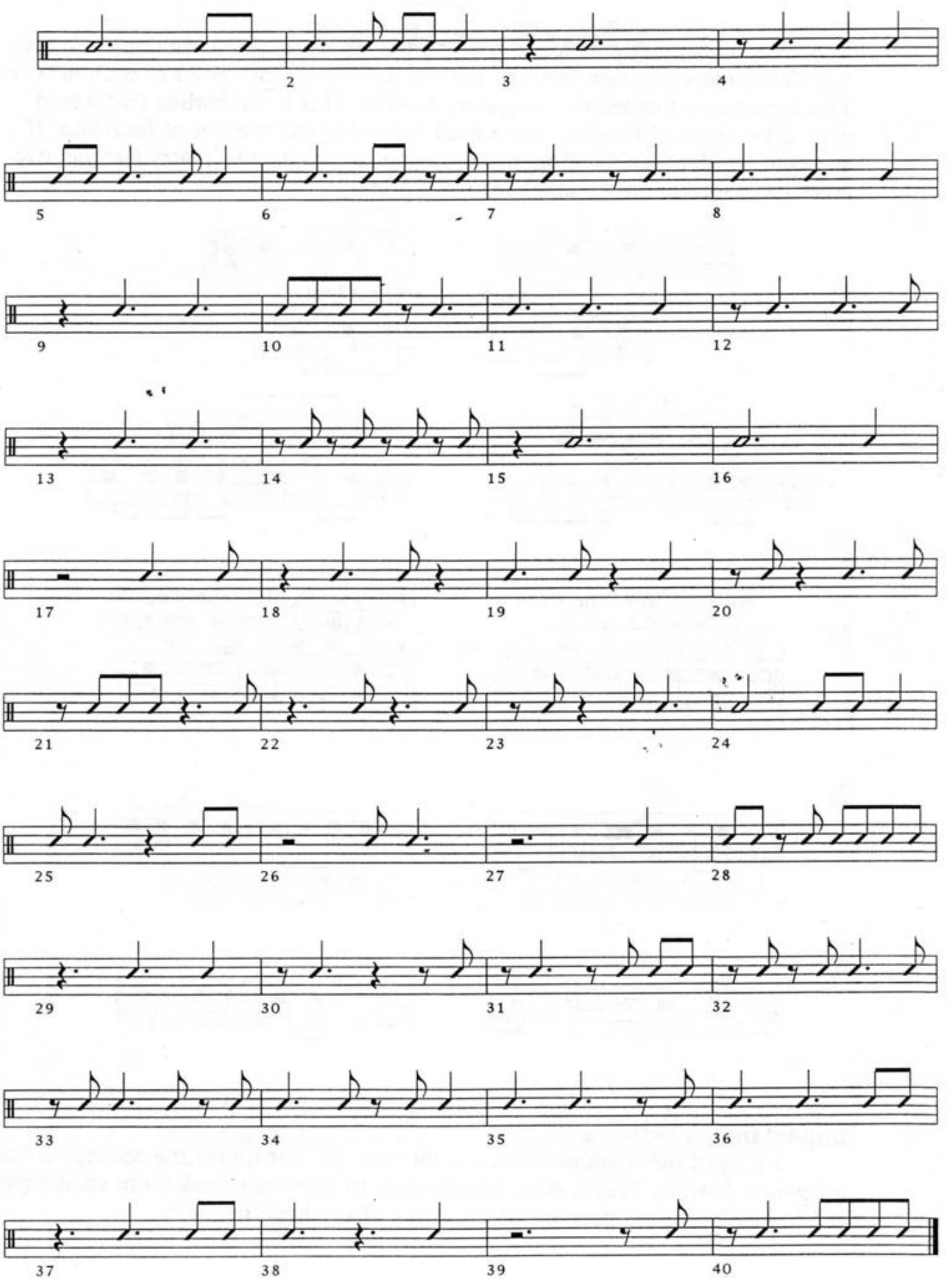
Dotted Notes and Rests

A single dot placed immediately after a note or rest increases the duration of that note or rest by one half its original value.



Two dots placed immediately after a note or rest increase the duration of that note or rest by three fourths its original value.

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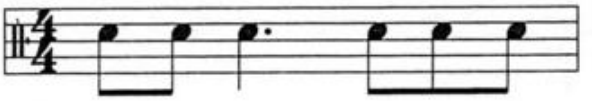
The Imaginary Barline

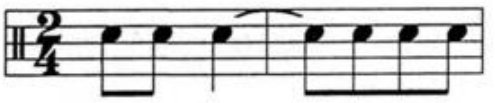
It is a common practice to write four-four and cut-time rhythms in a way that shows the separation between the 2nd and 3rd quarter notes of each measure. This separation is called the *imaginary barline*. This is the barline that would exist if two bars of two-four were used instead of the one bar of four-four. If any note smaller than a half note is to sustain across the *imaginary barline* two notes tied together are usually used in its place.

1)

No separation between beats 2 and 3.



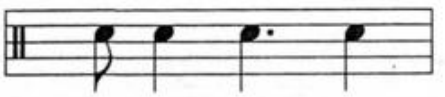
Actual Barline in 2/4



Imaginary Barline in 4/4

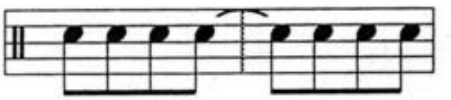
2)

No separation between beats 2 and 3.



The same rhythm applying the imaginary barline concept

3)



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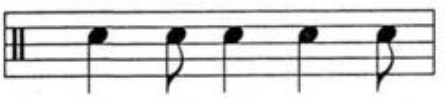
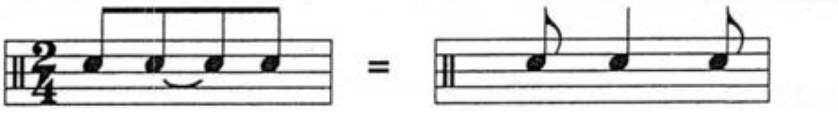


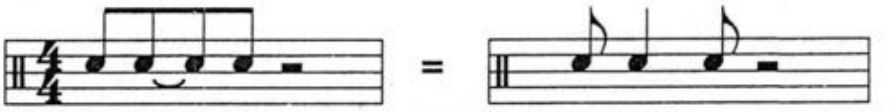
Important:

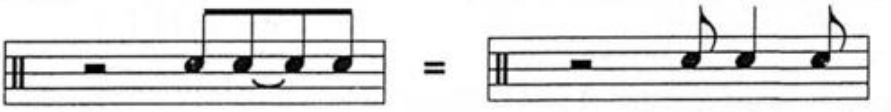
Many of the rhythms written in this text **do not** follow the concept of the *imaginary barline*. This is done intentionally to make this book more challenging and to instill an even deeper understanding of rhythmic notation.

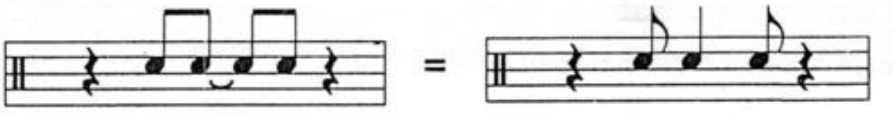
Eighth-Quarter-Eighth
(notes)
Rhythm Study

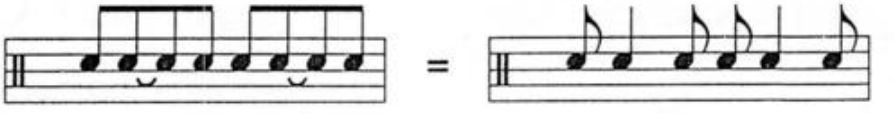
Two beat phrase





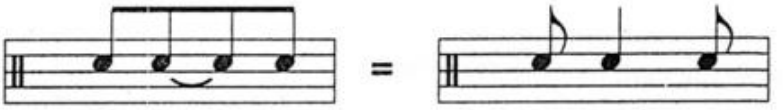


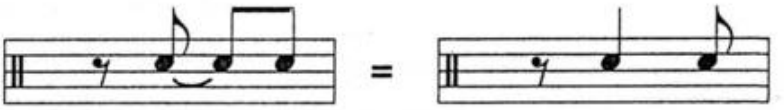


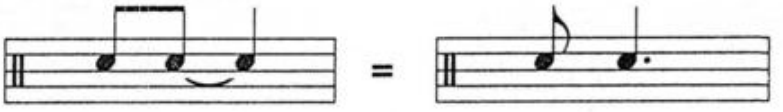


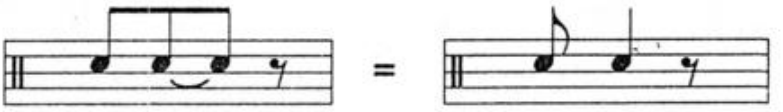
Eighth-Quarter-Eighth
(notes and rests)
Rhythm Study

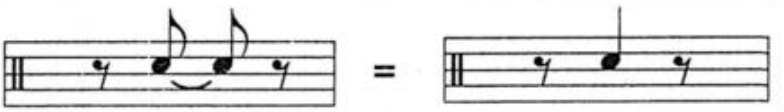
The following figures are all note and rest combinations that equal two quarter notes or one half note in value. Therefore they may used starting on beats one, two, or three of any four-four bar.

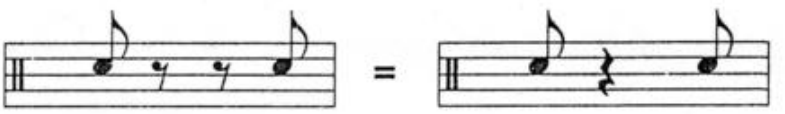


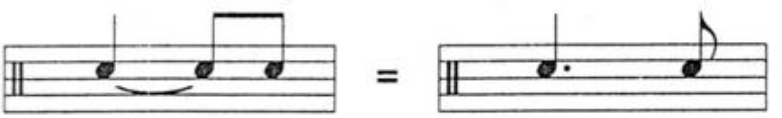


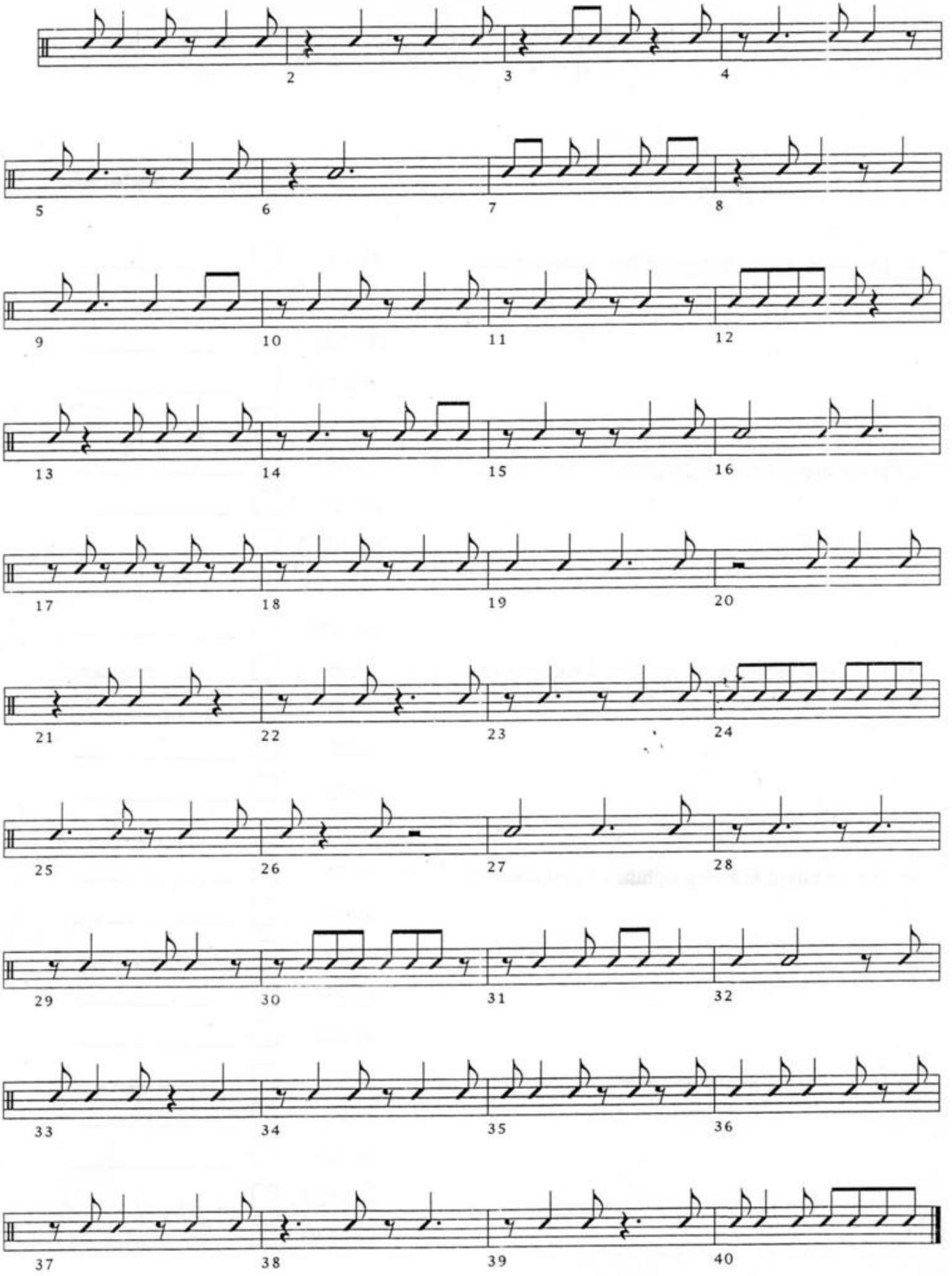








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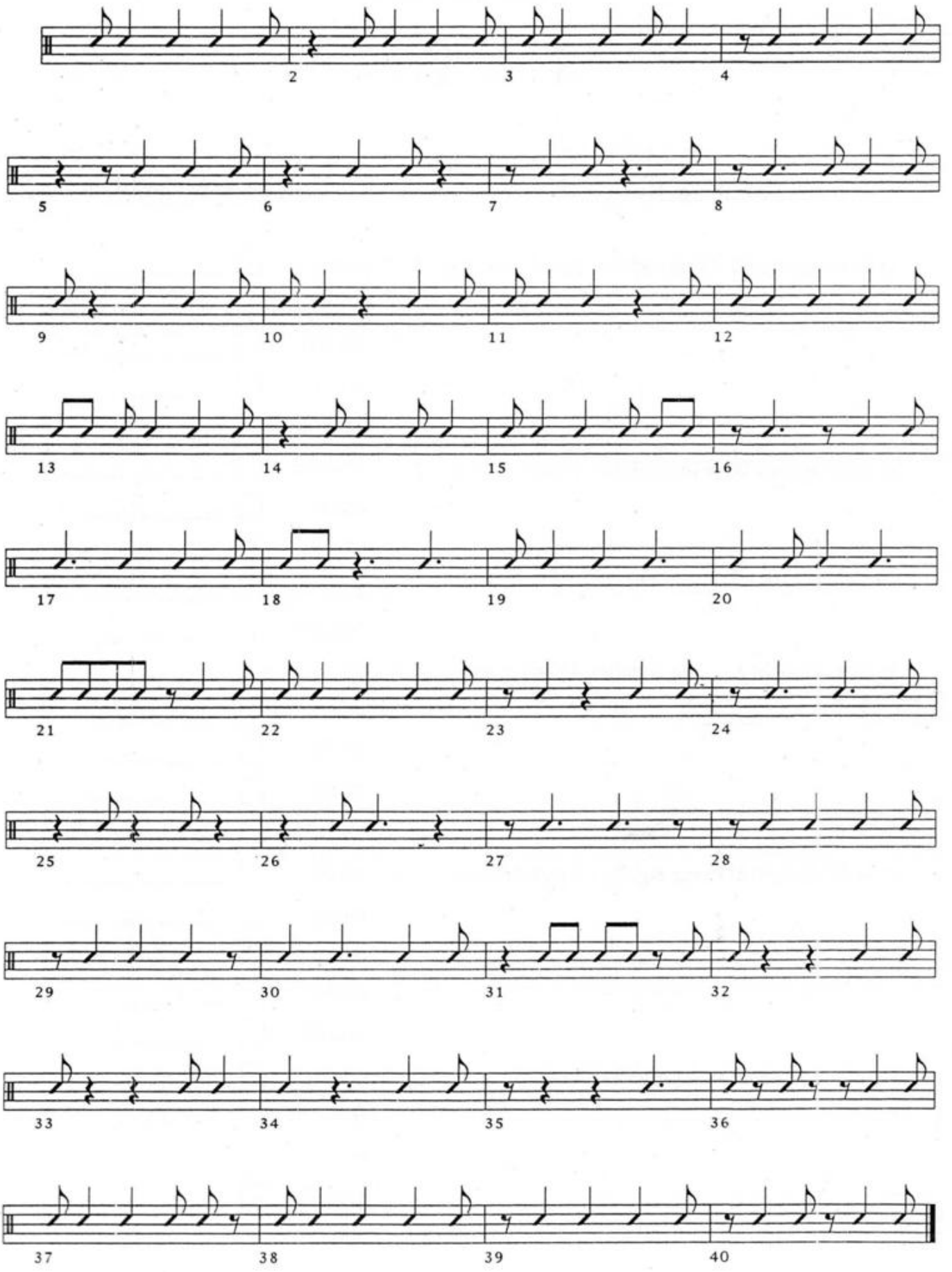
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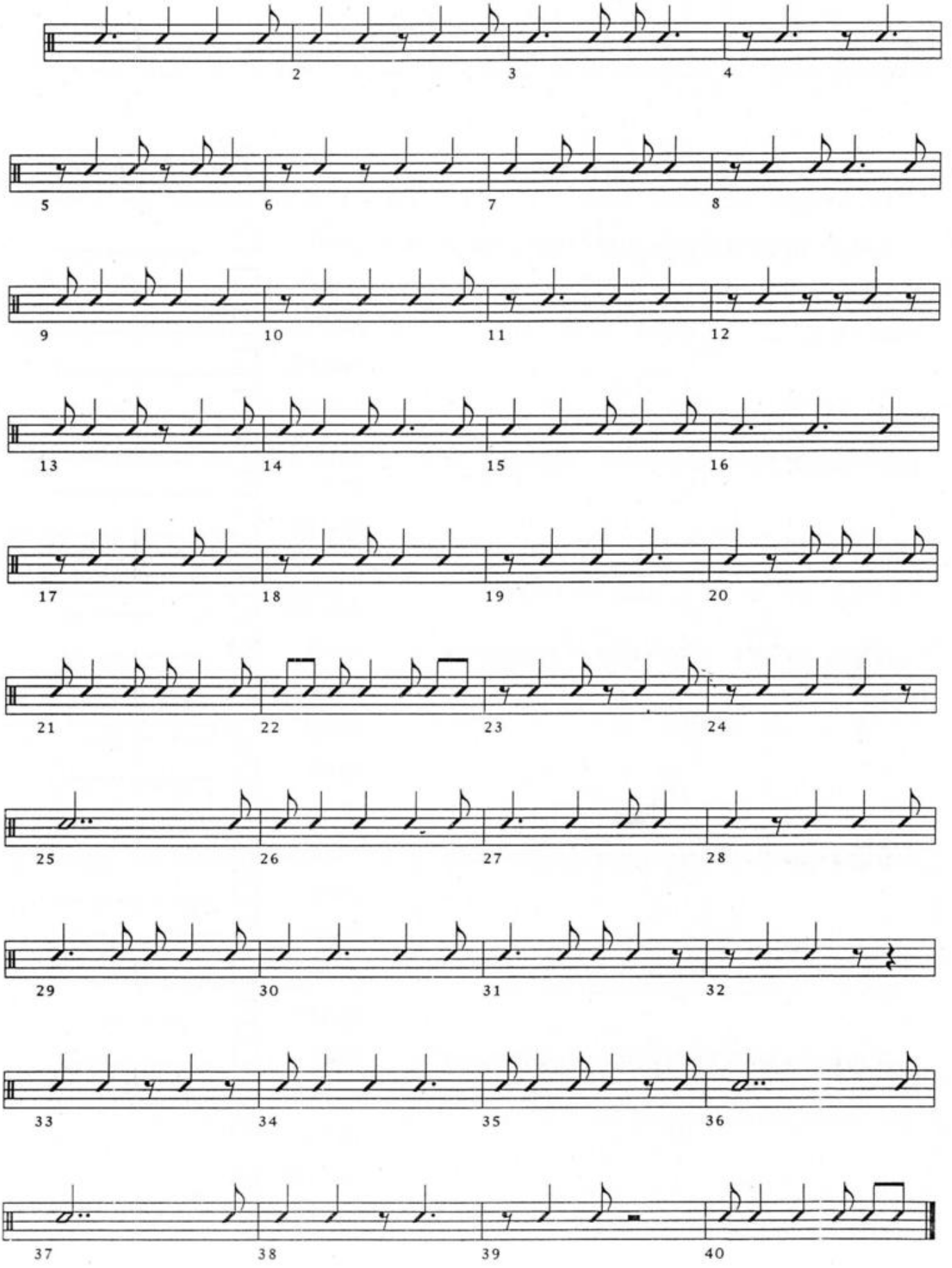
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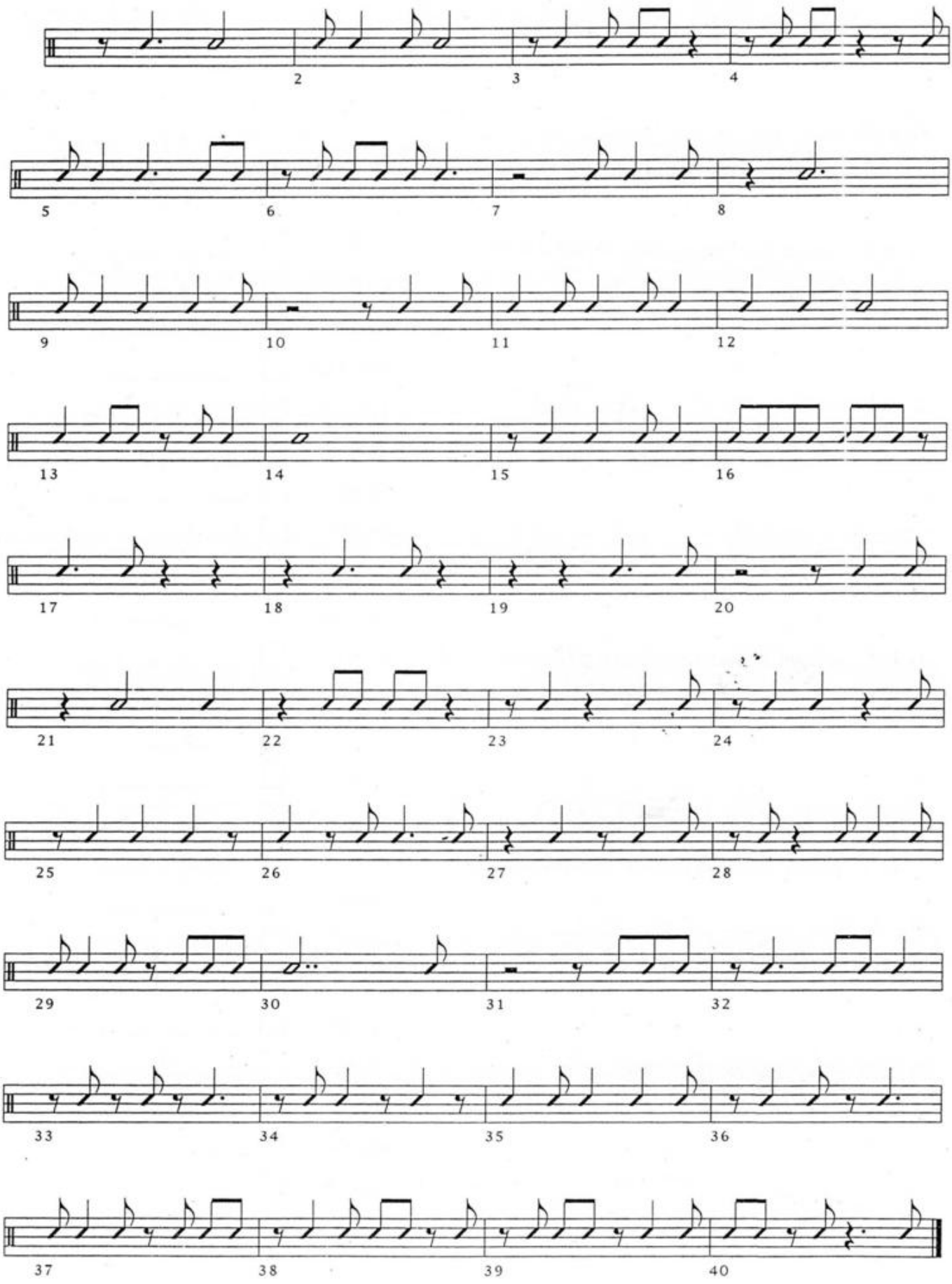
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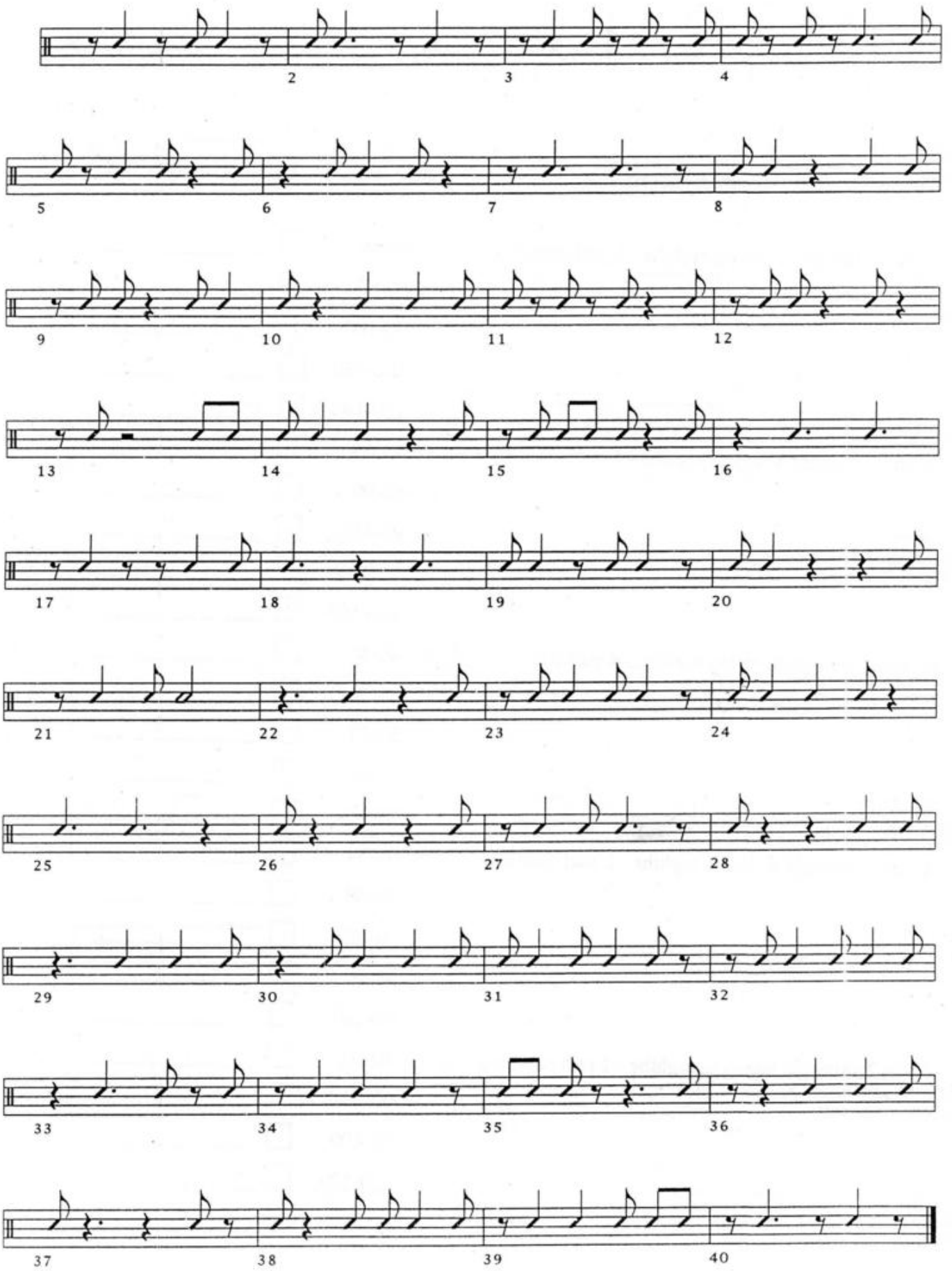
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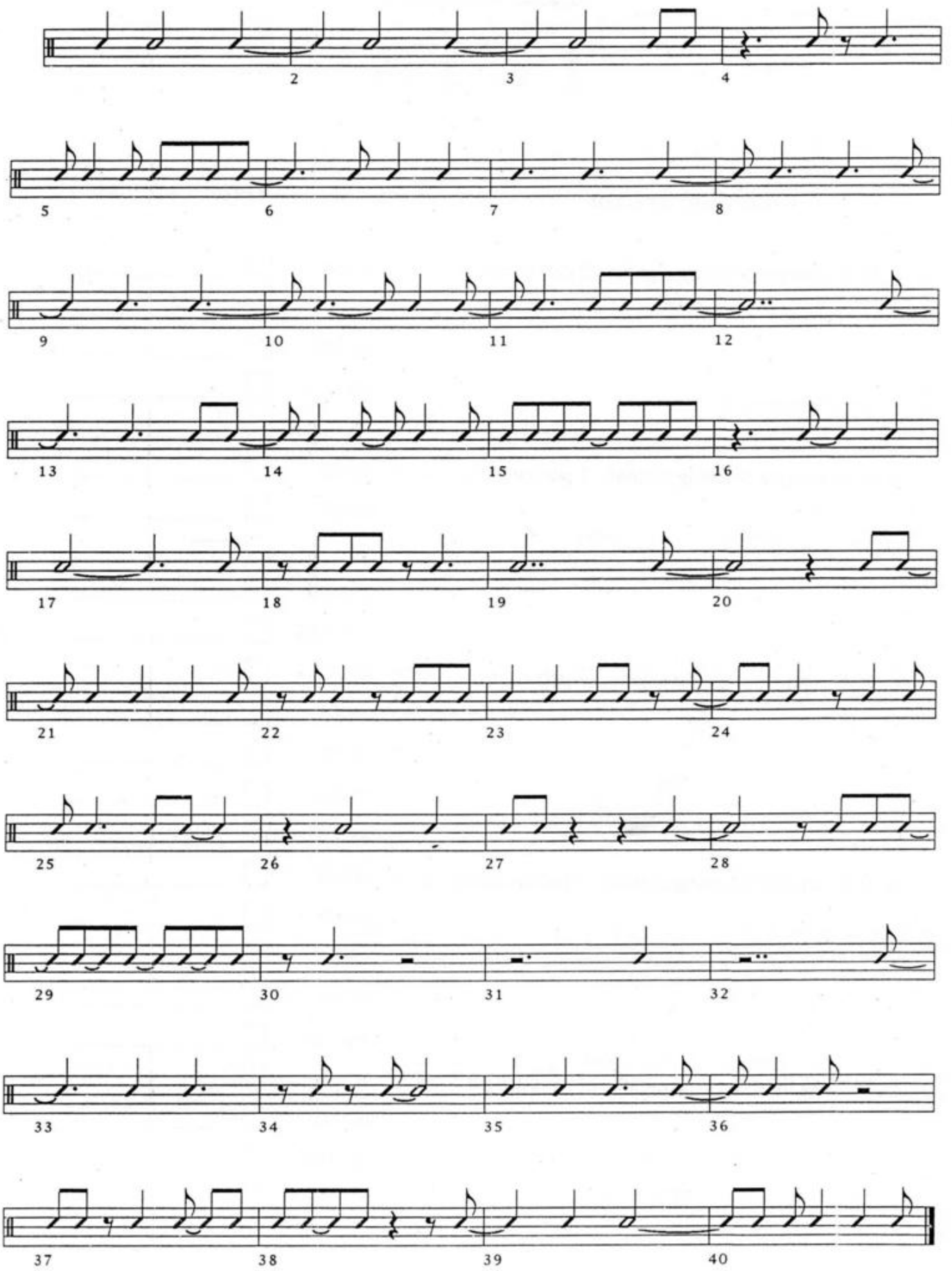
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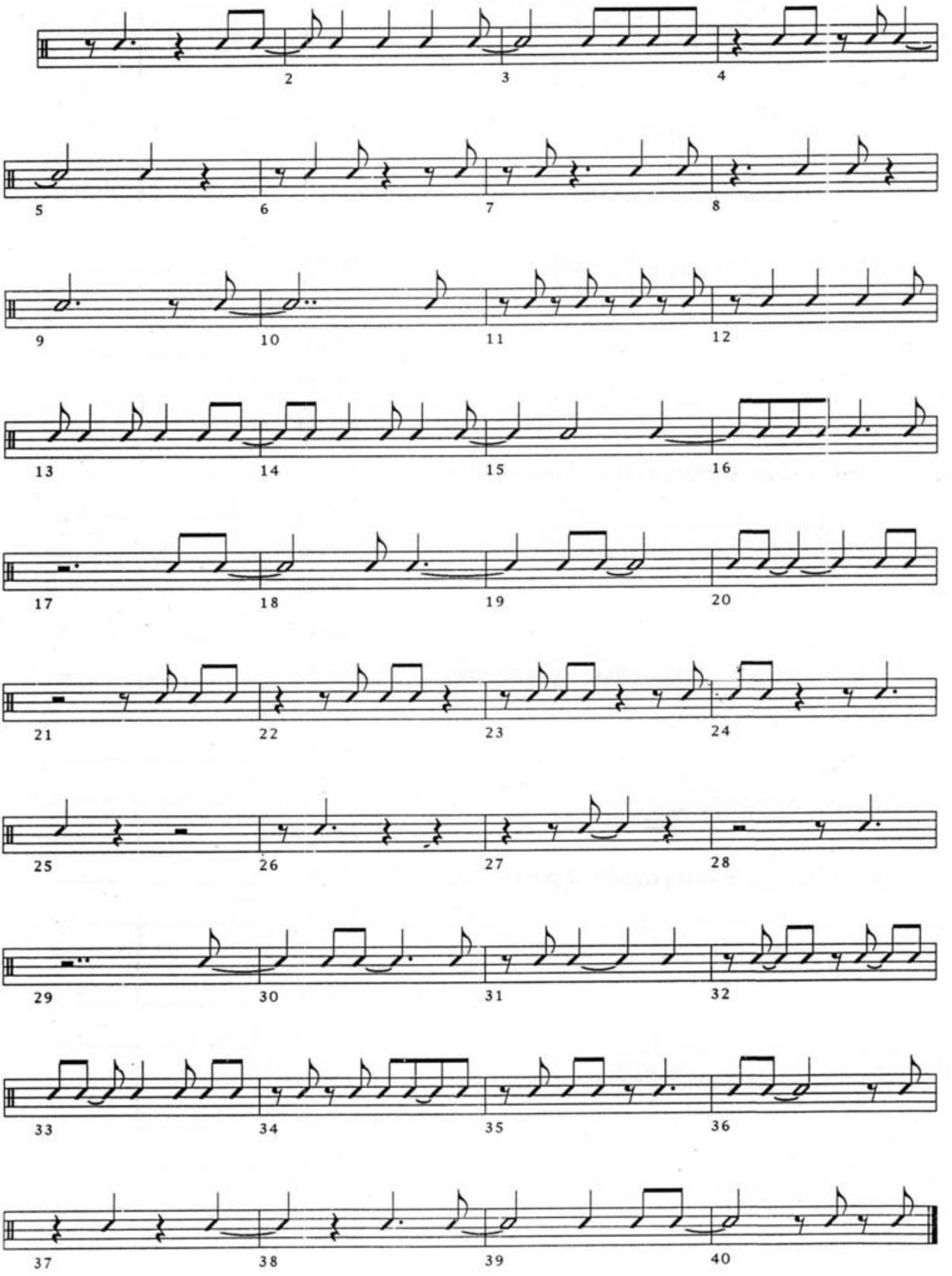
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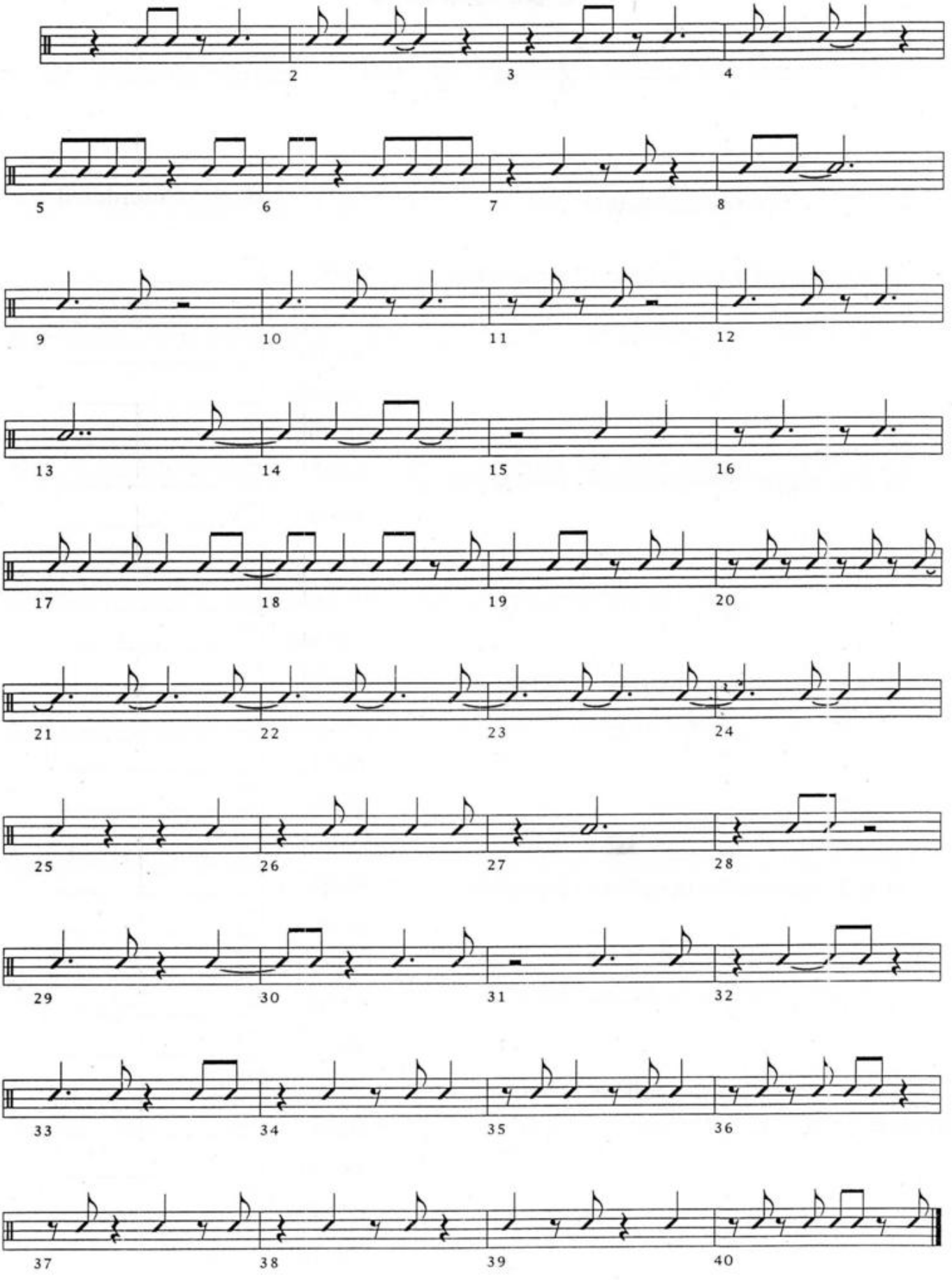
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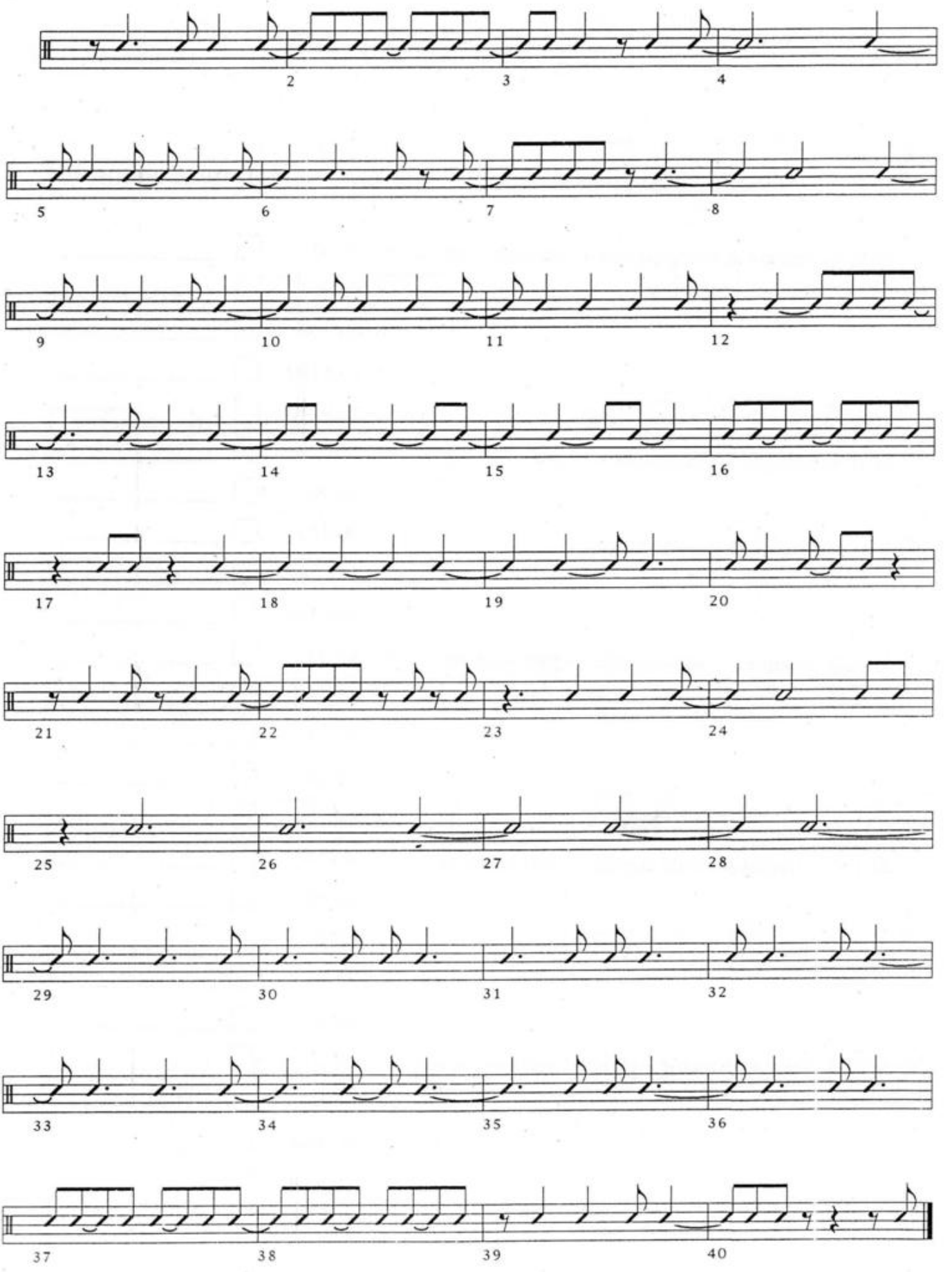
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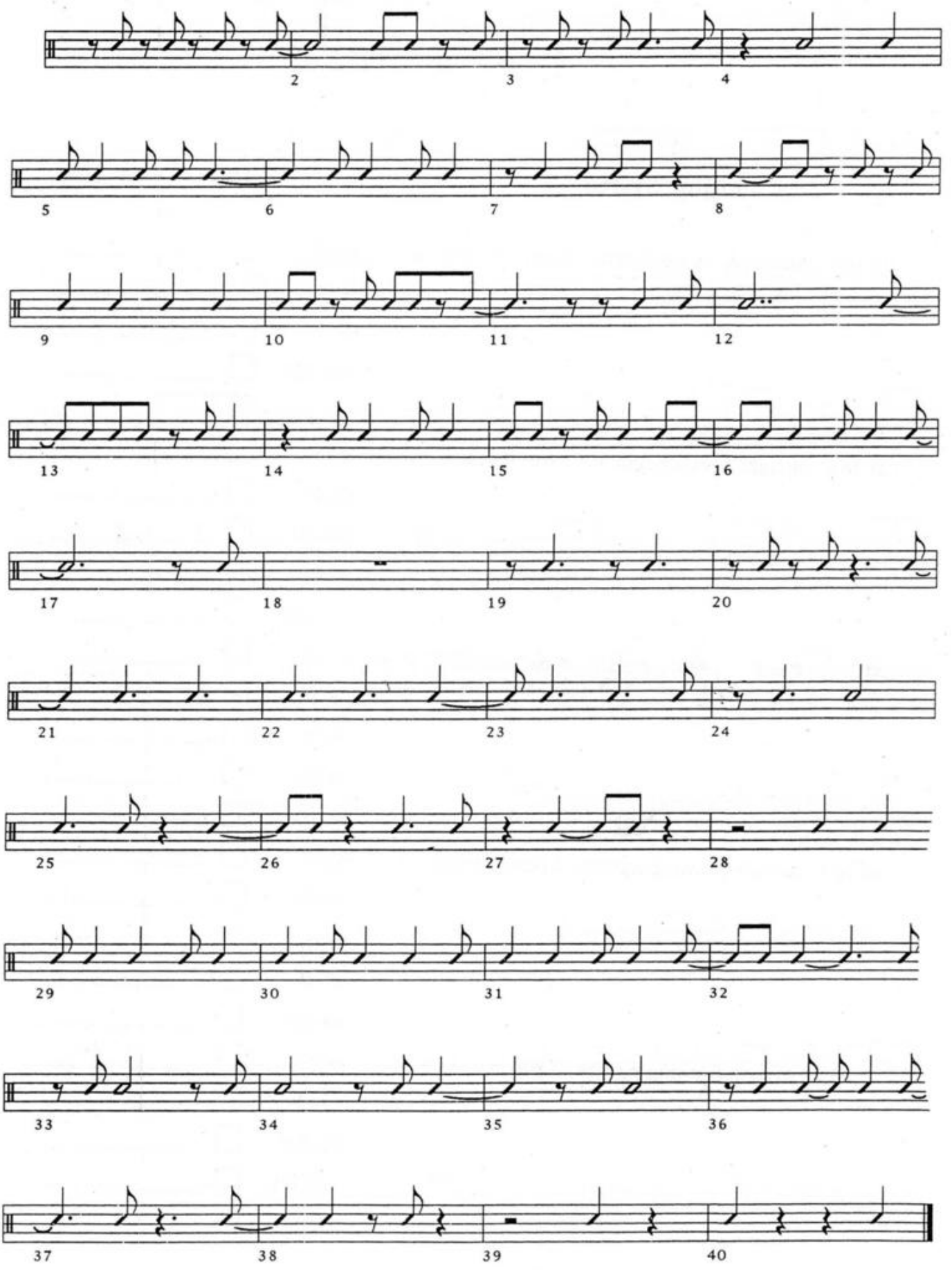
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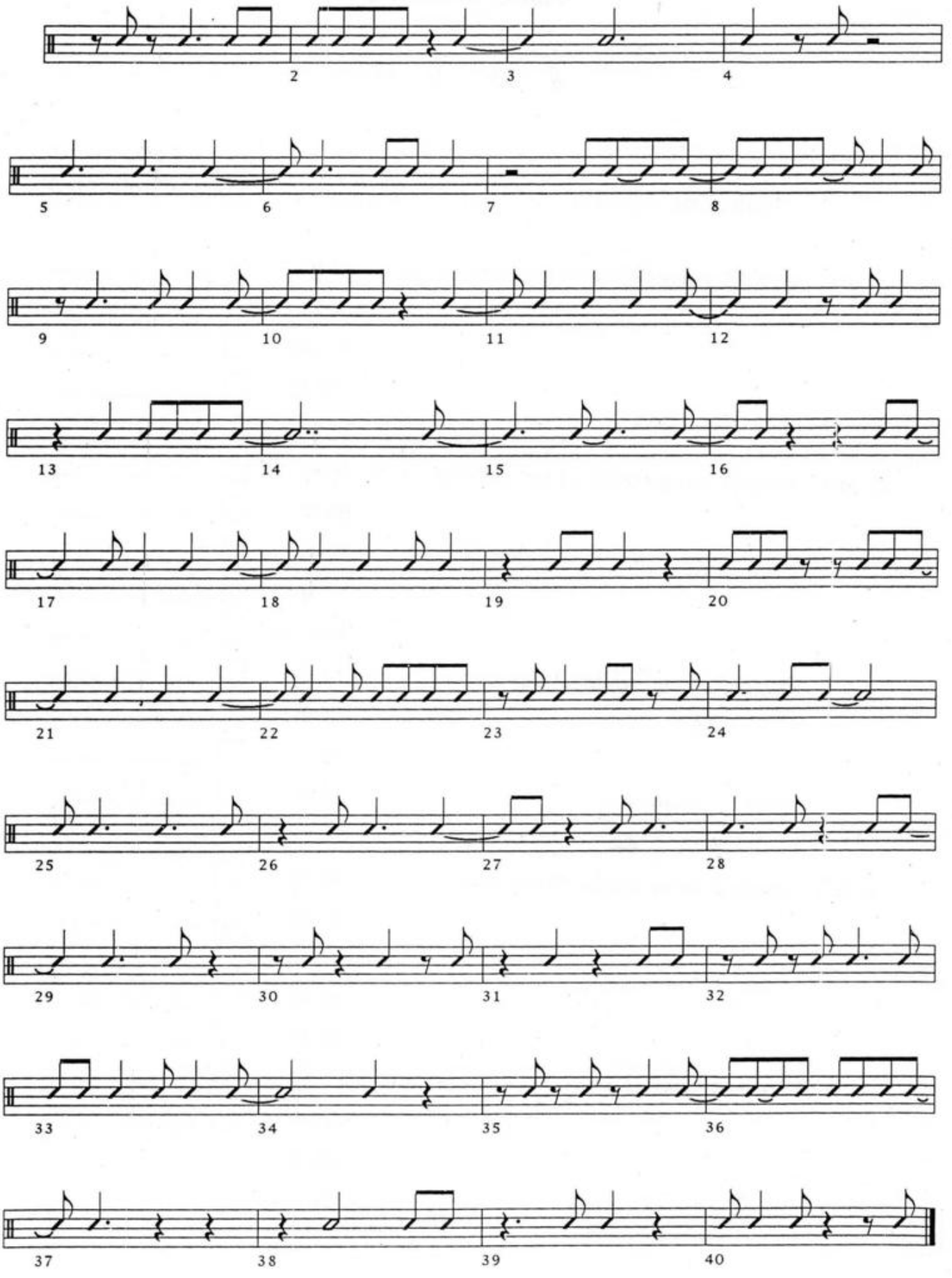
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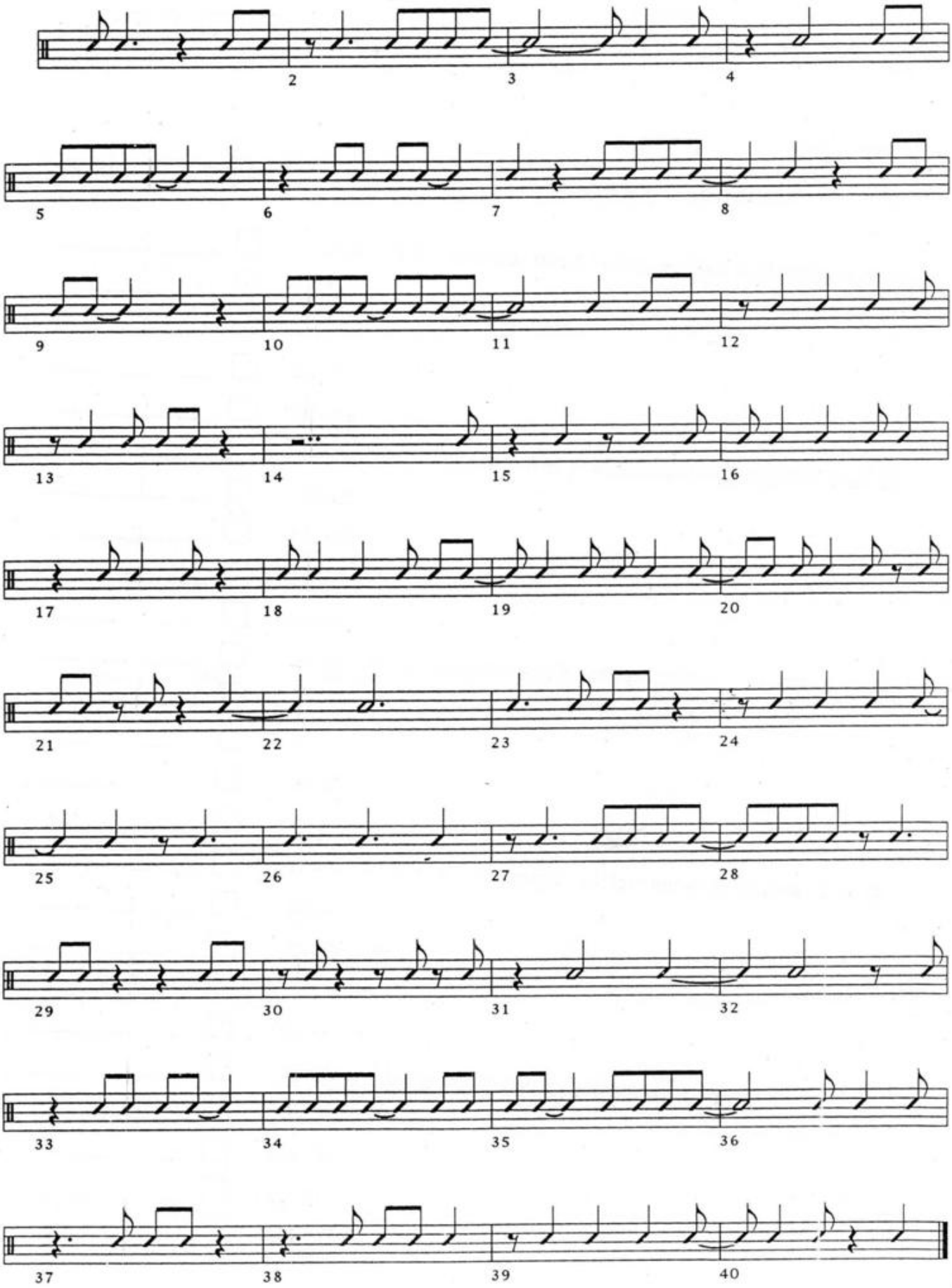
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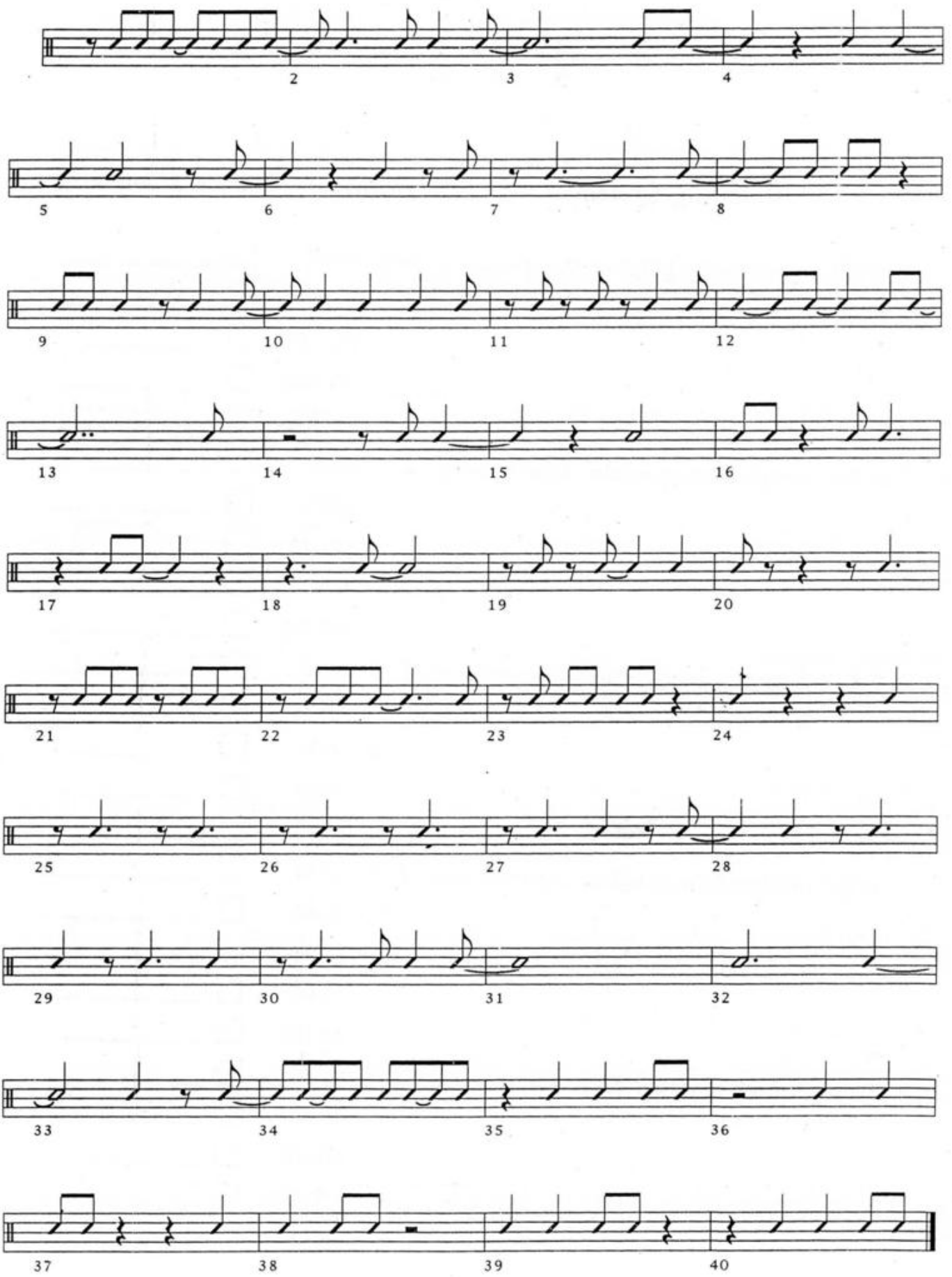
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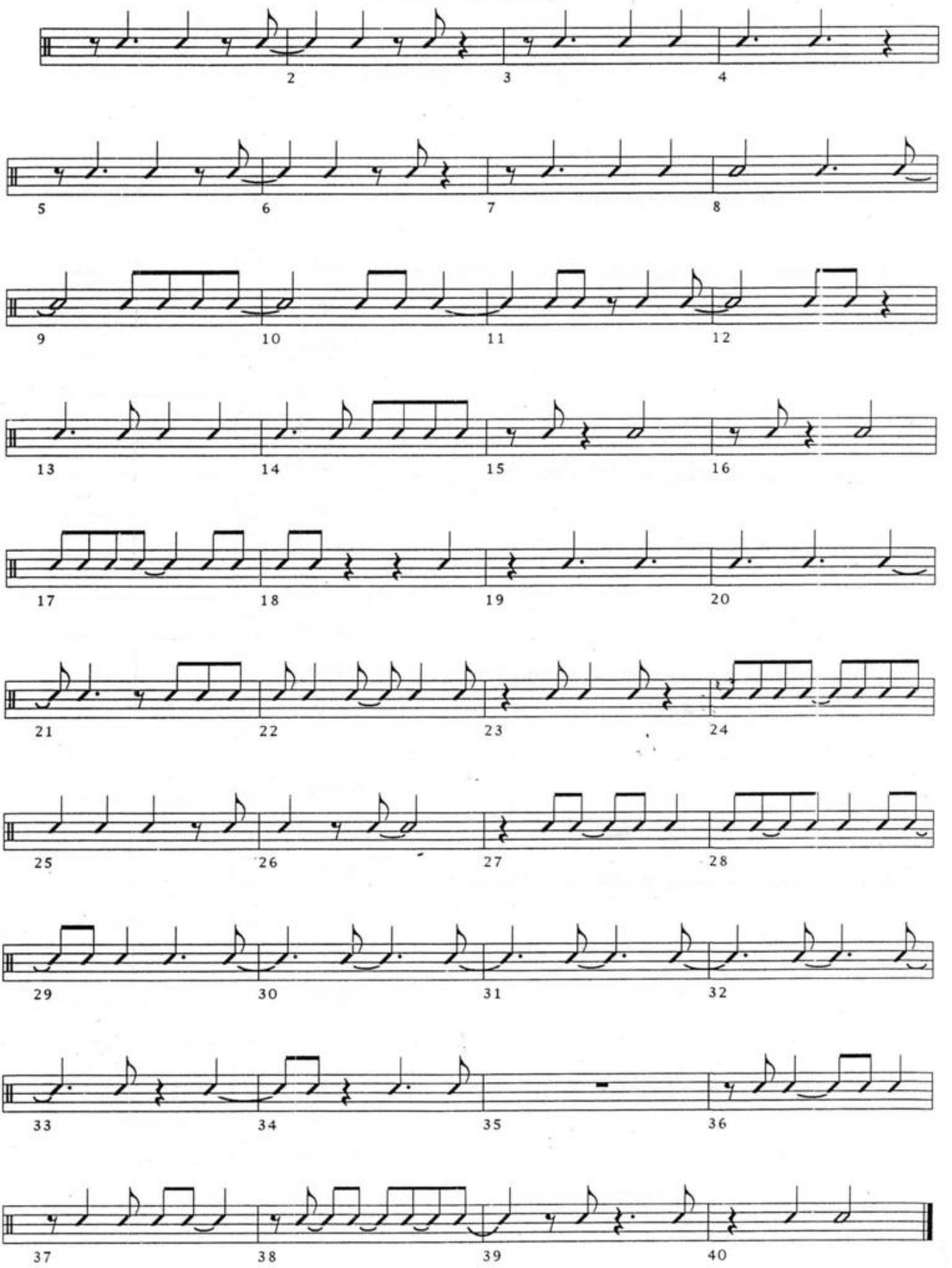
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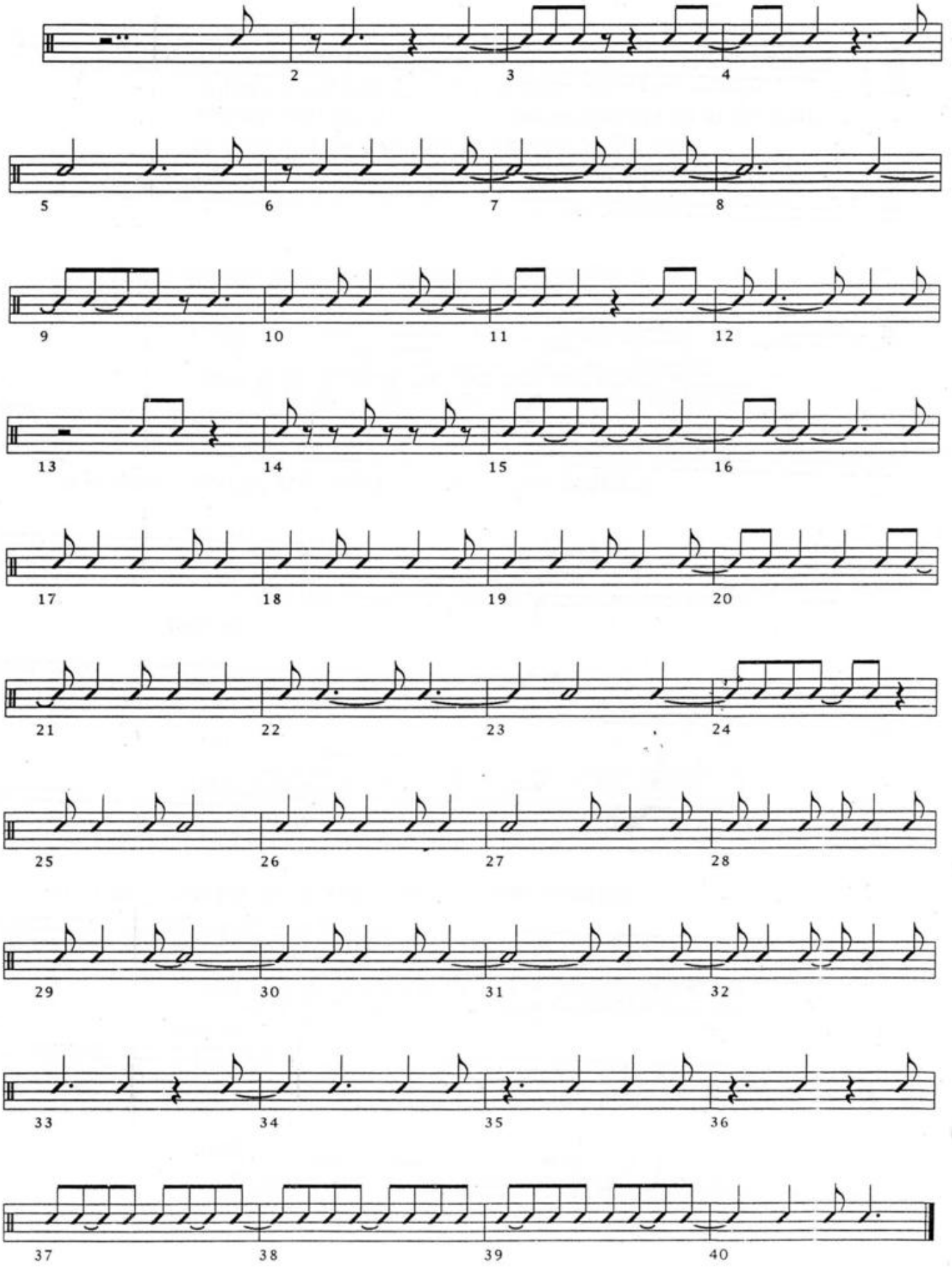
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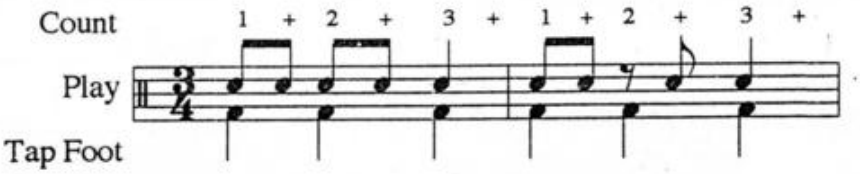
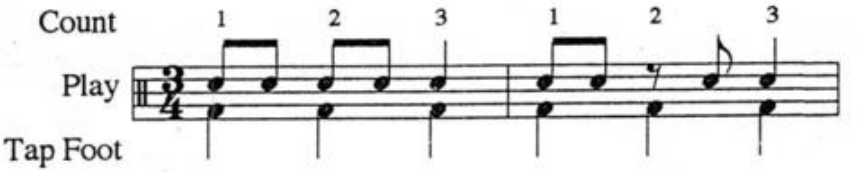
Three-Four Counting Systems

Important: Use a metronome!!!!!
Strive for accuracy.....Not speed.
Master each counting system before moving on to the next.
Master each page before moving on to the next.
Use the checklists to keep track of your progress.

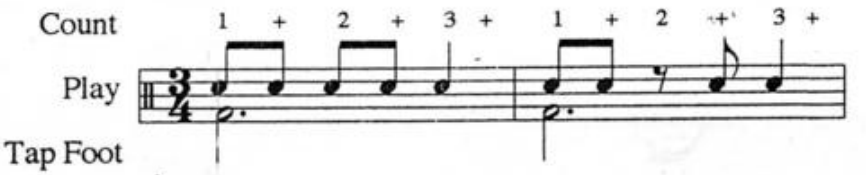
1) In three - straight and swing eighths - 2 part counting



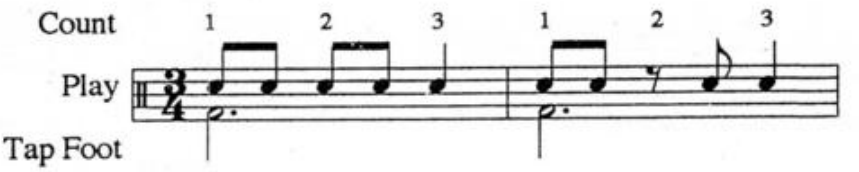
2) In three - straight and swing eighths - 1 part counting



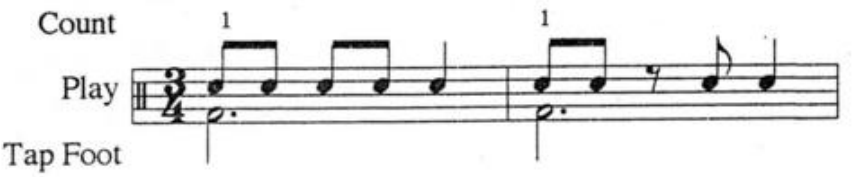
3) In one - straight and swing eighths - 2 part counting

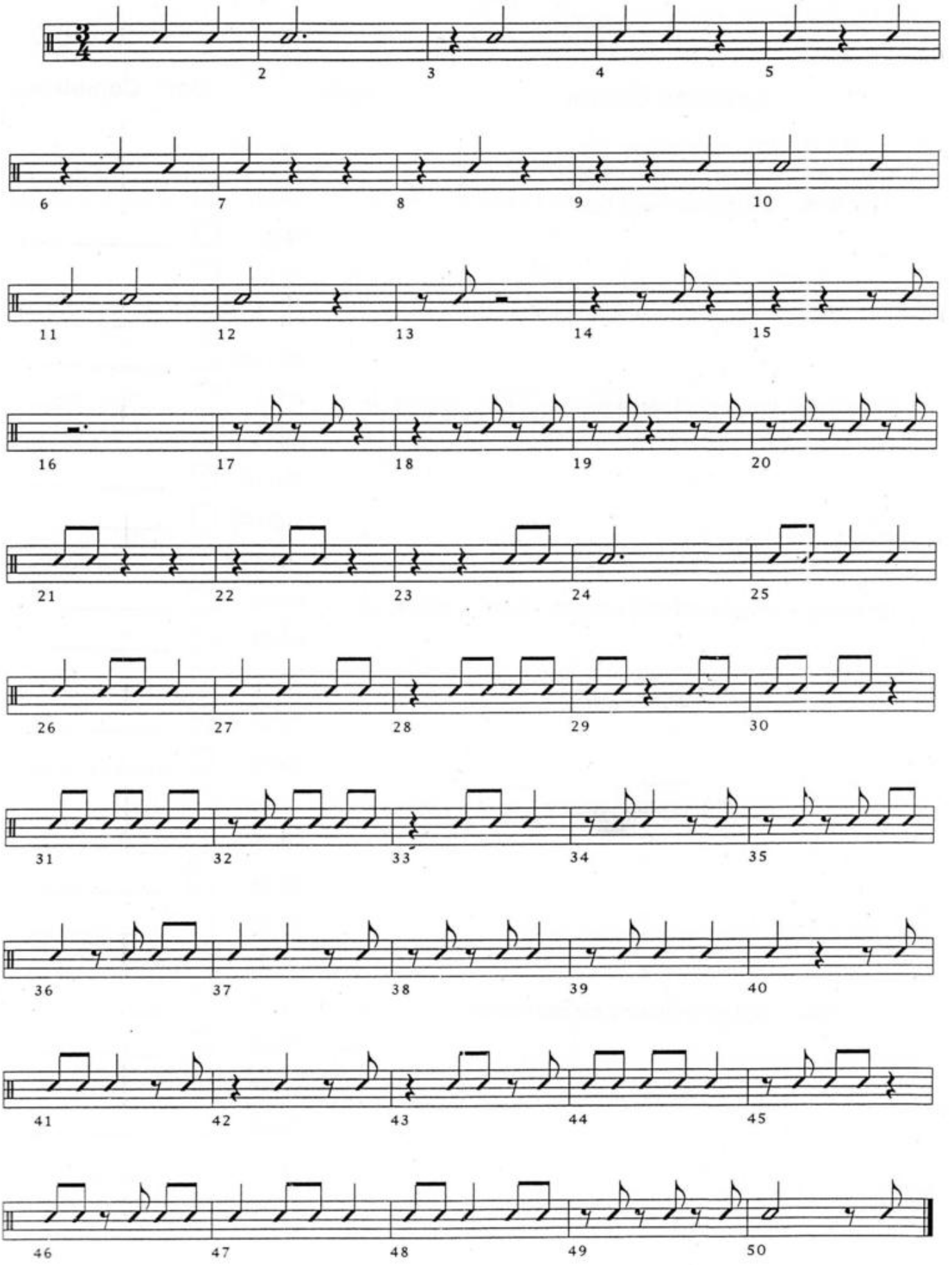


4) In one - straight and swing eighths - 1 part counting



5) In one - straight and swing eighths - count one

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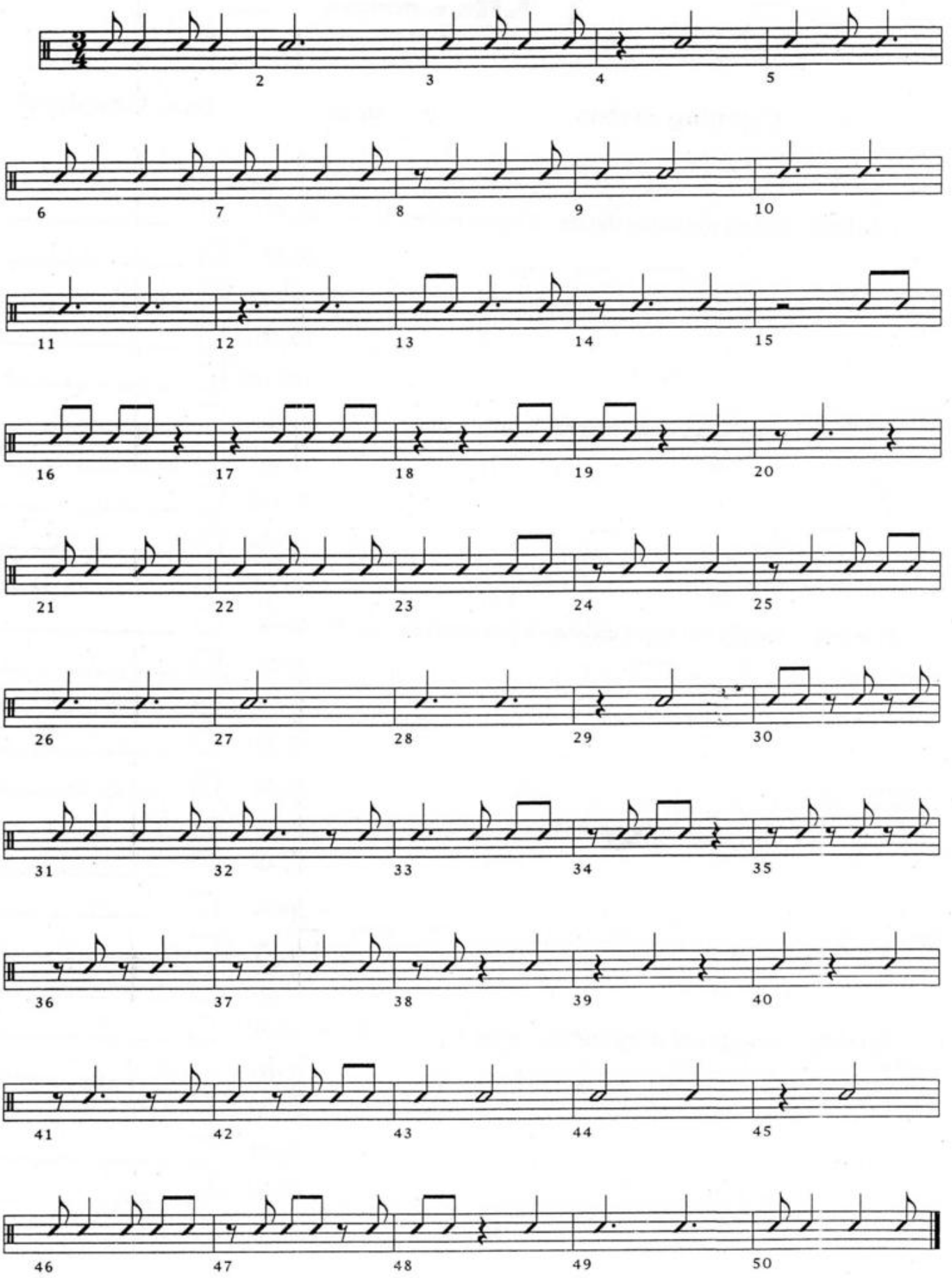
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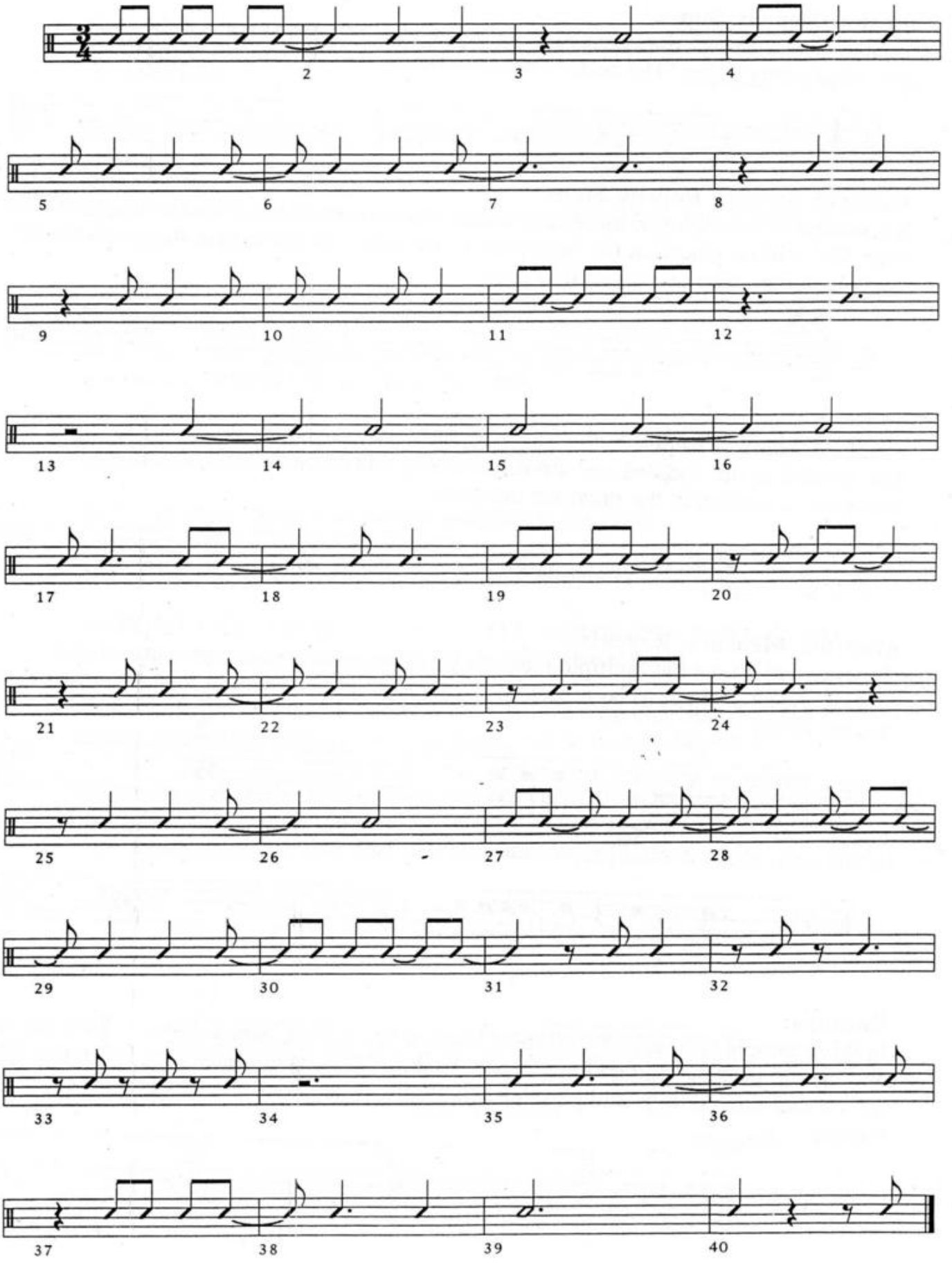
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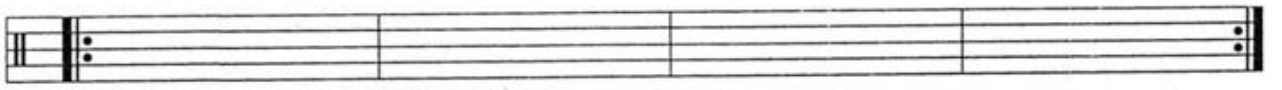
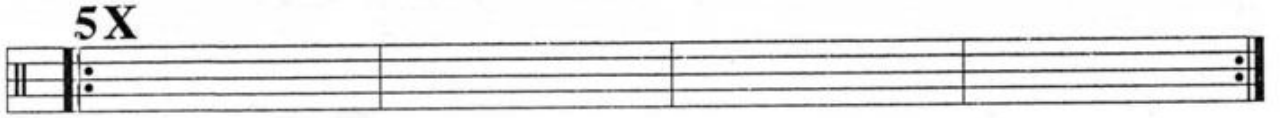
Road Maps

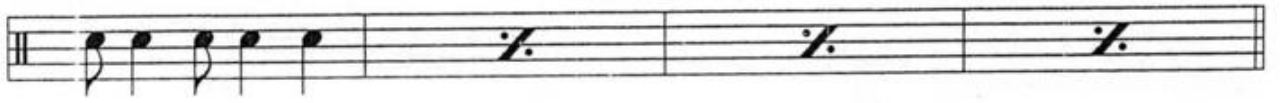
Section Repeat Signs:
Double bars with two dots next to them, in the 2nd and 3rd spaces of the staff, are called repeat signs. The section between these signs is to be repeated.



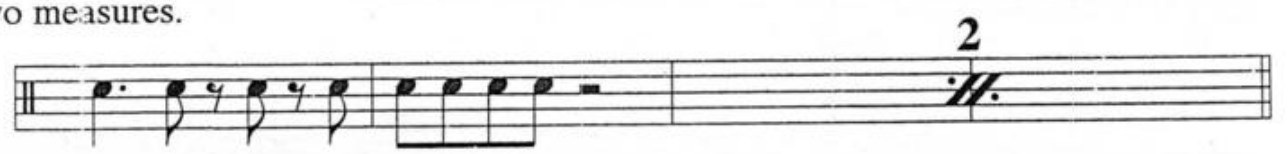
Multiple Section Repeat Signs:
If a section is to be played more than twice, the number of times it is to be played and the letter "X" will be placed at the beginning of the repeated section. In this example the four bar phrase is to be played five times.



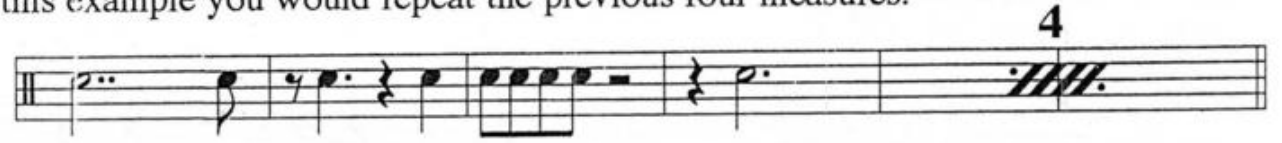
Single Measure Repeats:
The symbol in the 2nd,3rd and 4th measures of this example tells you to repeat whatever is notated in the previous measure.



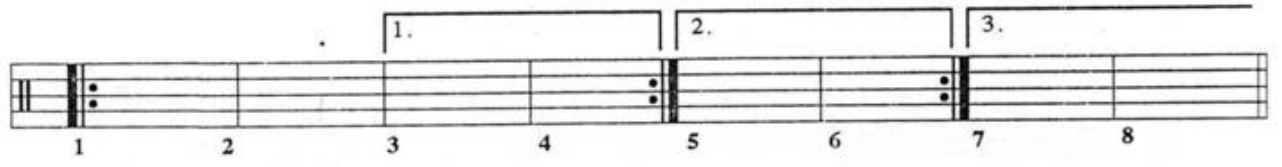
Multiple Measure Repeats:
The numeral above the multiple measure repeat sign tells you how many of the previous measures are to be repeated. In this example you would repeat the previous two measures.



In this example you would repeat the previous four measures.



Endings:
In this example play bars 1-4. Repeat back to bar 1. Play bars 1-2 again. Skip the 1st ending and play the 2nd ending. Repeat back to bar 1 again. Play bars 1-2 again. Skip the 1st and 2nd endings and play the 3rd ending. Then continue on to the next section.



D.C. (da capo) means to return to the very beginning of the composition.

D.S. (dal segno) means to return to this Sign 𝄋 which is previously notated.

Coda Usually the ending section of a composition which is notated by this symbol ⊕.

fine The end or final note of a composition.

D.C. al Coda Return to the top, play to the Coda Sign ⊕ which is previously notated and then play the Coda.

D.S. al Coda Return to the Sign 𝄋 play to the Coda Sign ⊕ which is previously notated and then play the Coda.

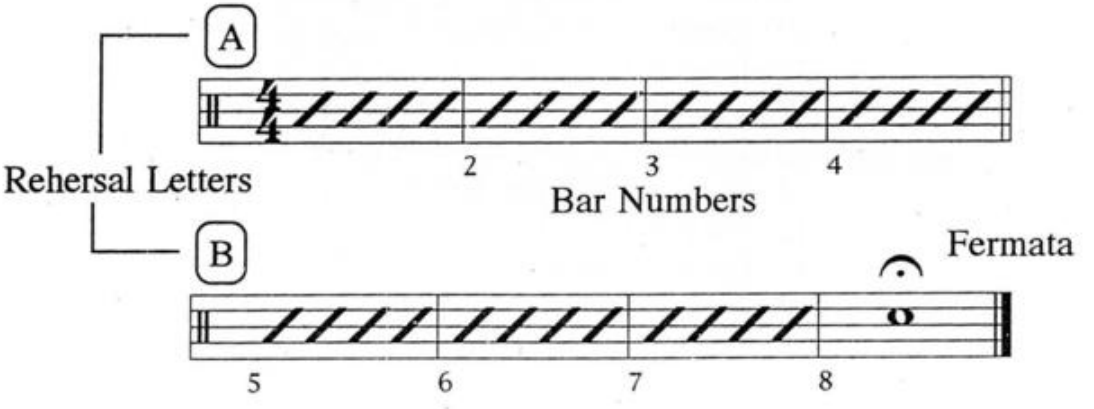
D.C. al fine Return to the top and play to the ***fine***.

D.S. al fine Return to the Sign 𝄋 and play to the ***fine***.

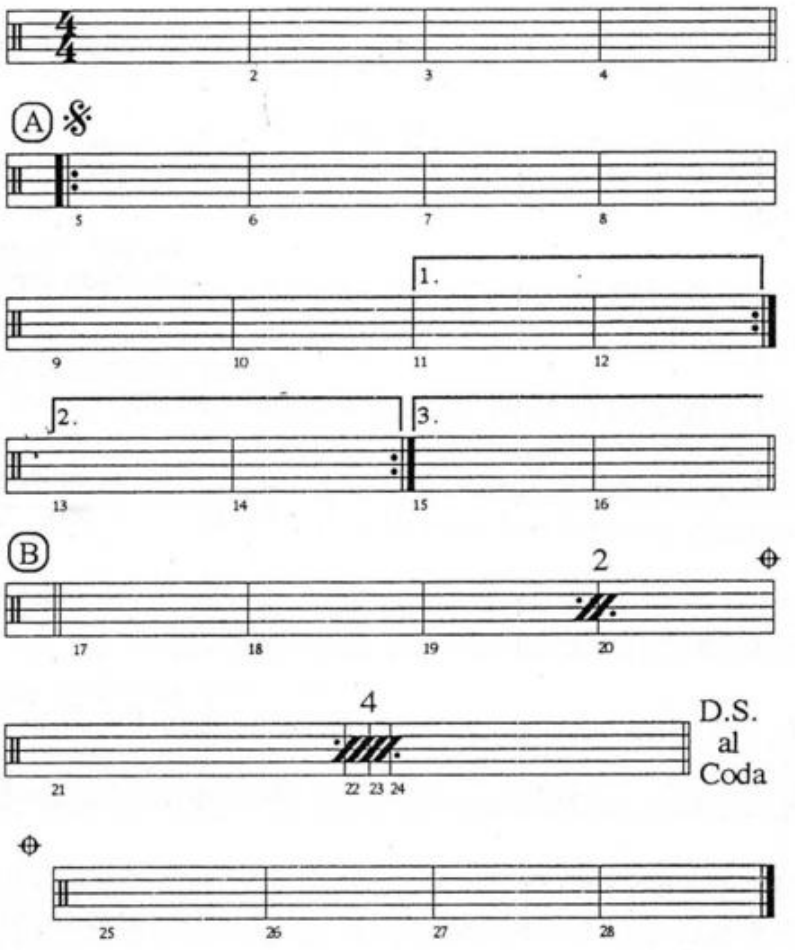
IMPORTANT: On the D.C. or D.S. of a composition a classical rule is that no repeats are to be taken unless otherwise notated.

Rehersal Letters and **Bar Numbers** are used on charts to give the conductor and the players a way to find specific passages quickly.

Fermata or **Bird's Eye** When this symbol 𝄐 is placed above a note the pulse will be interrupted and that note will be sustained (held out) until you receive the **Cut Off** // cue from the conductor.

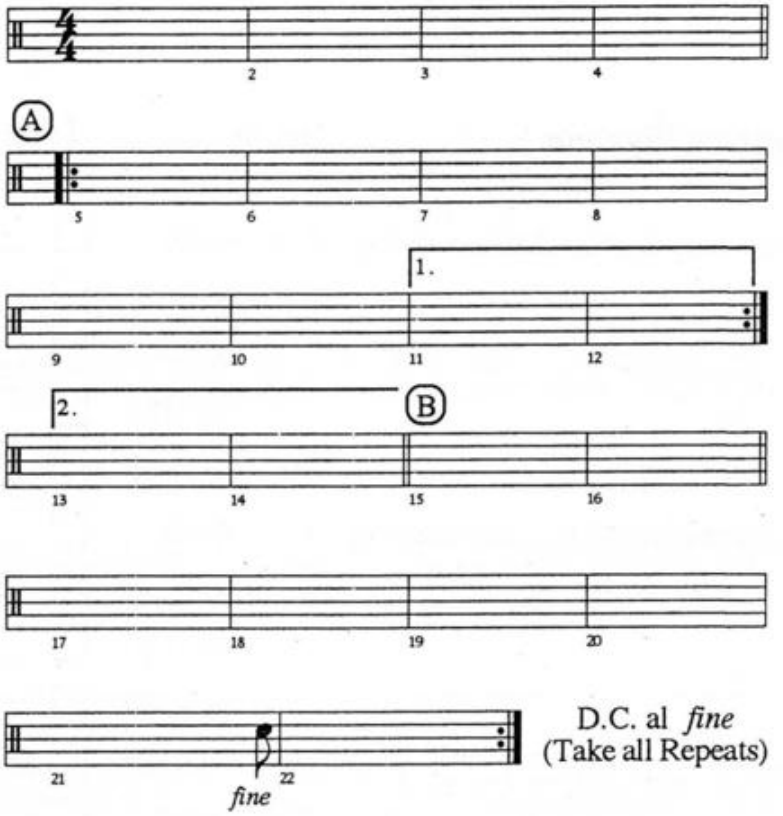


Sample Road Map with D.S.



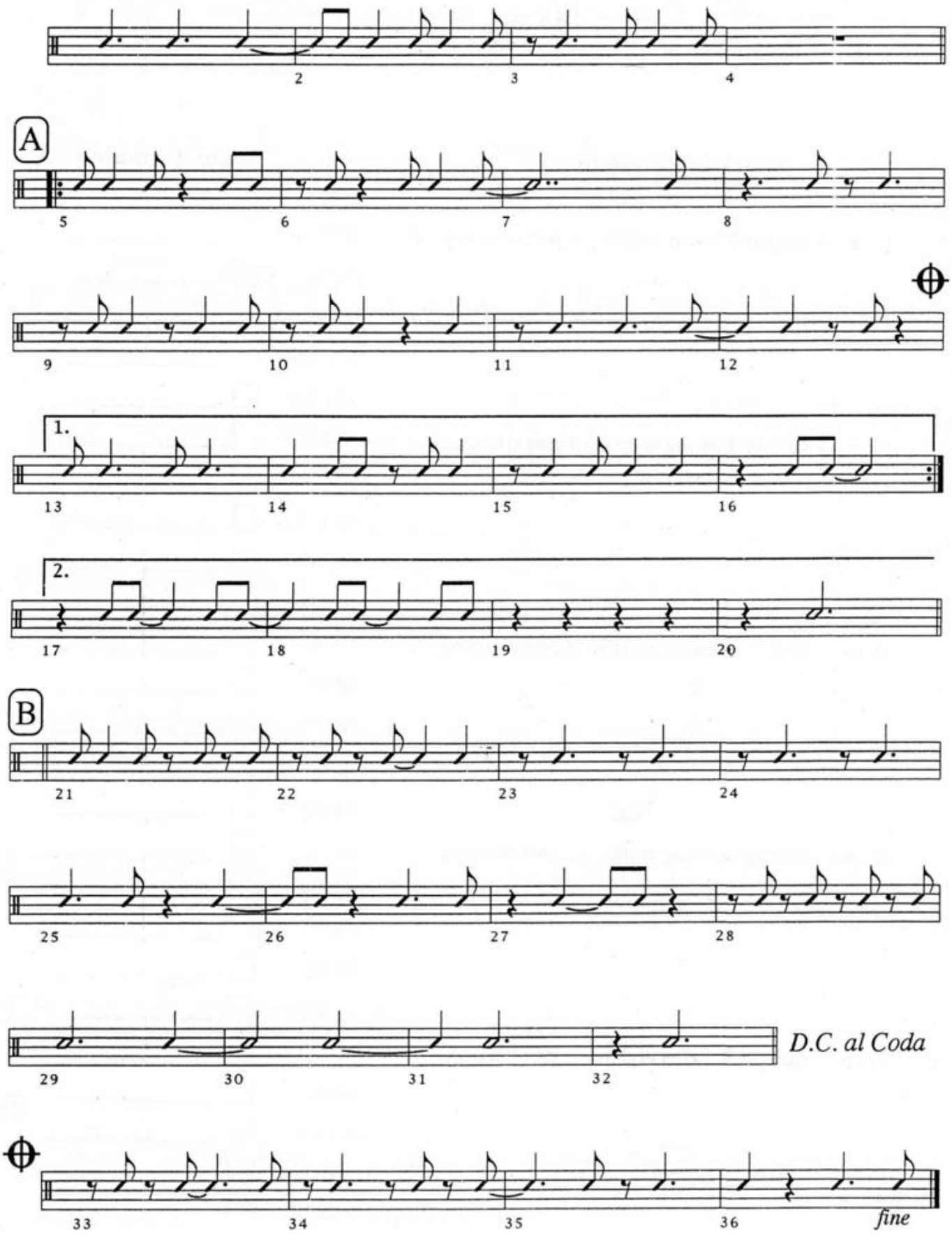
1) Play bars 1-12
2) Repeat to letter A (bar 5)
3) Play bars 5-10
4) Skip 1st Ending
5) Play 2nd Ending (bars 13-14)
6) Repeat to letter A again (bar 5)
7) Play bars 5-10
8) Skip 1st and 2nd Endings
9) Play 3rd Ending (bars 15-16)
10) Continue on to letter B
11) Play bars 17-18
12) Play bars 19-20 (repeat of 17-18)
13) Play 21-24 (repeat of 17-20)
14) D.S. to letter A (bar 5)
15) Play bar 5-10
16)Take 3rd Ending (bars 15-16)
***__Remember:__ no repeats on a D.C. or D.S. unless otherwise noted.
17) Play 17-20
18) Play the Coda (25-28)

Sample Road Map with D.C.

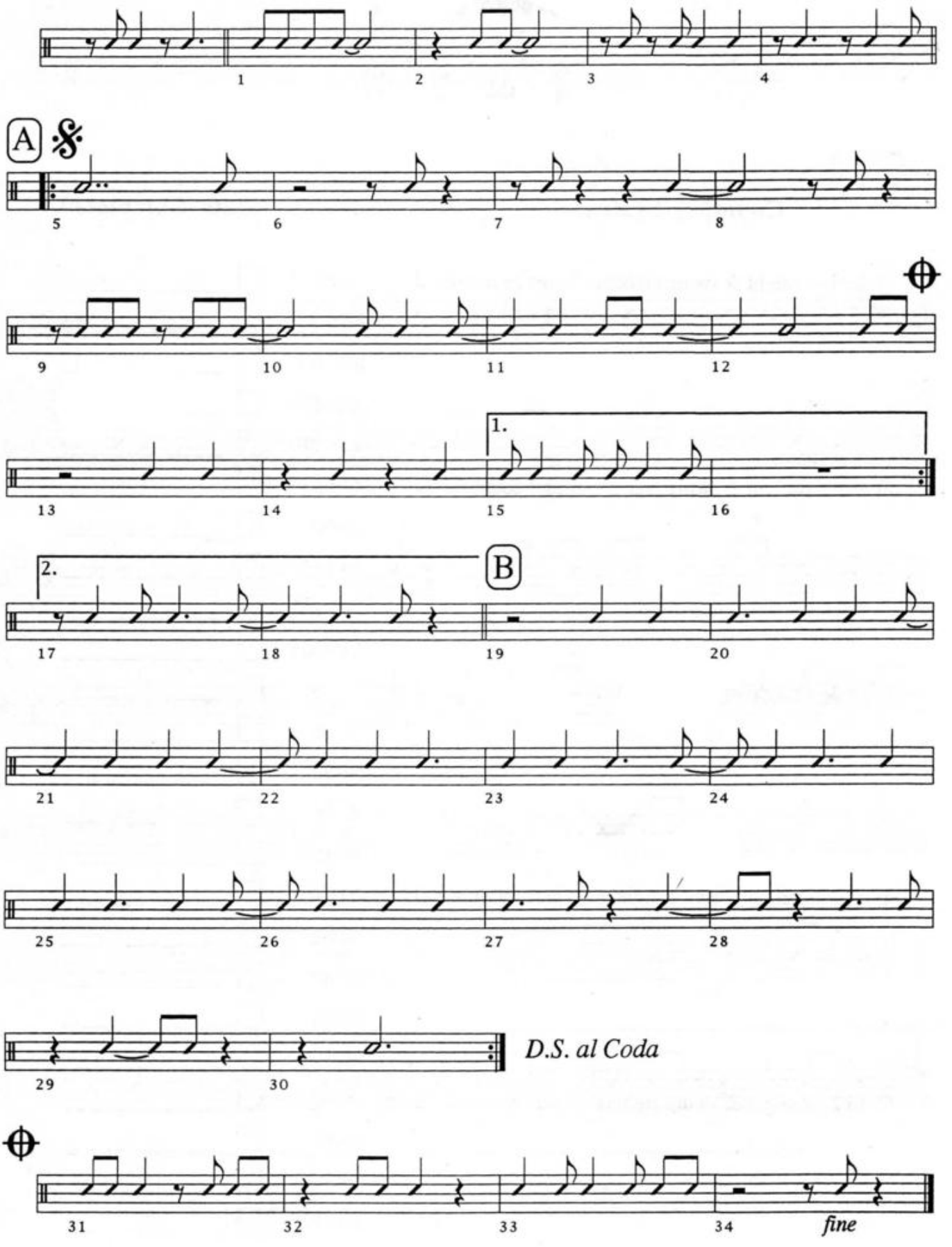


1) Play bars 1-4 (Intro)
2) Play bars 5-12
3) Repeat to bar 5
4) Play bars 5-10
5) Skip 1st ending
6) Play 2nd ending (bars 13-14)
7) Play letter B (bars 15-22)
8) Repeat to letter A
9) Repeat steps 2-7
10) D.C.(to the top)
11) The repeats are good so repeat steps 1-6
12) Play letter B to the *fine* (bars 15 - the last note of bar 21)

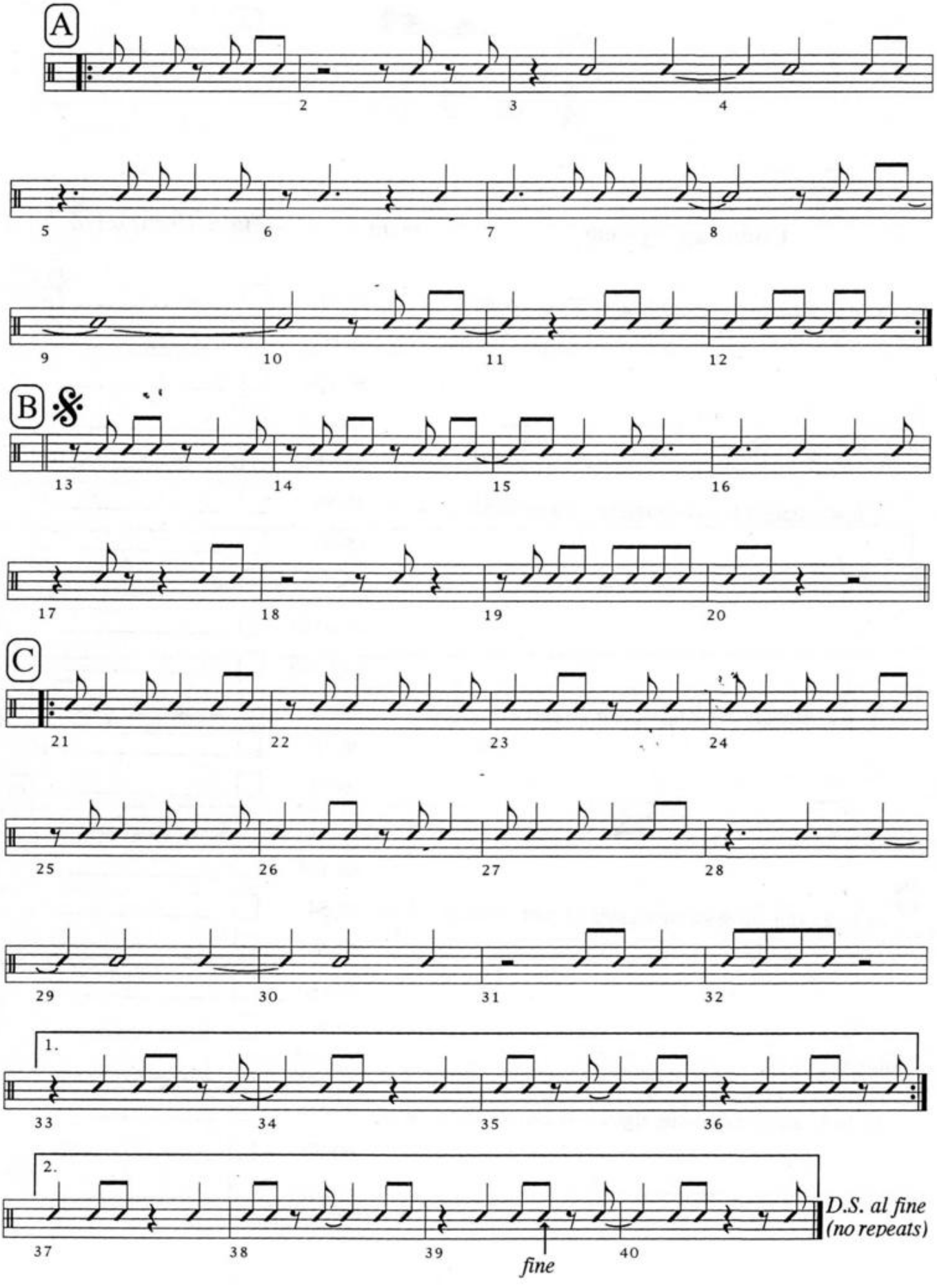
St. Valentine's Day Massacre



Escrow Blues



60th Phase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1.
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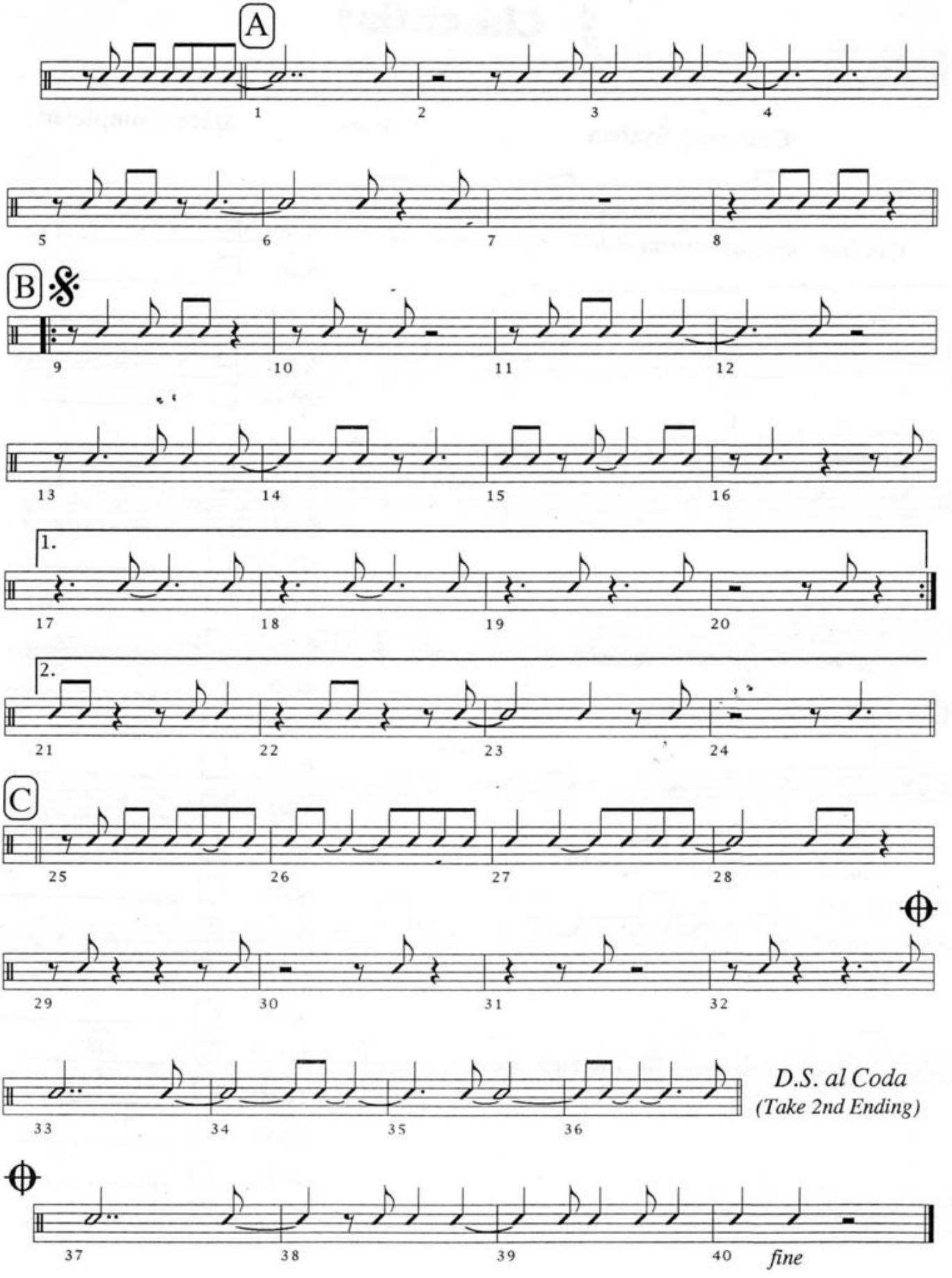
D.S. al fine
(no repeats)
fine

Black Belt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D.S. al Coda
(Take 2nd Ending)
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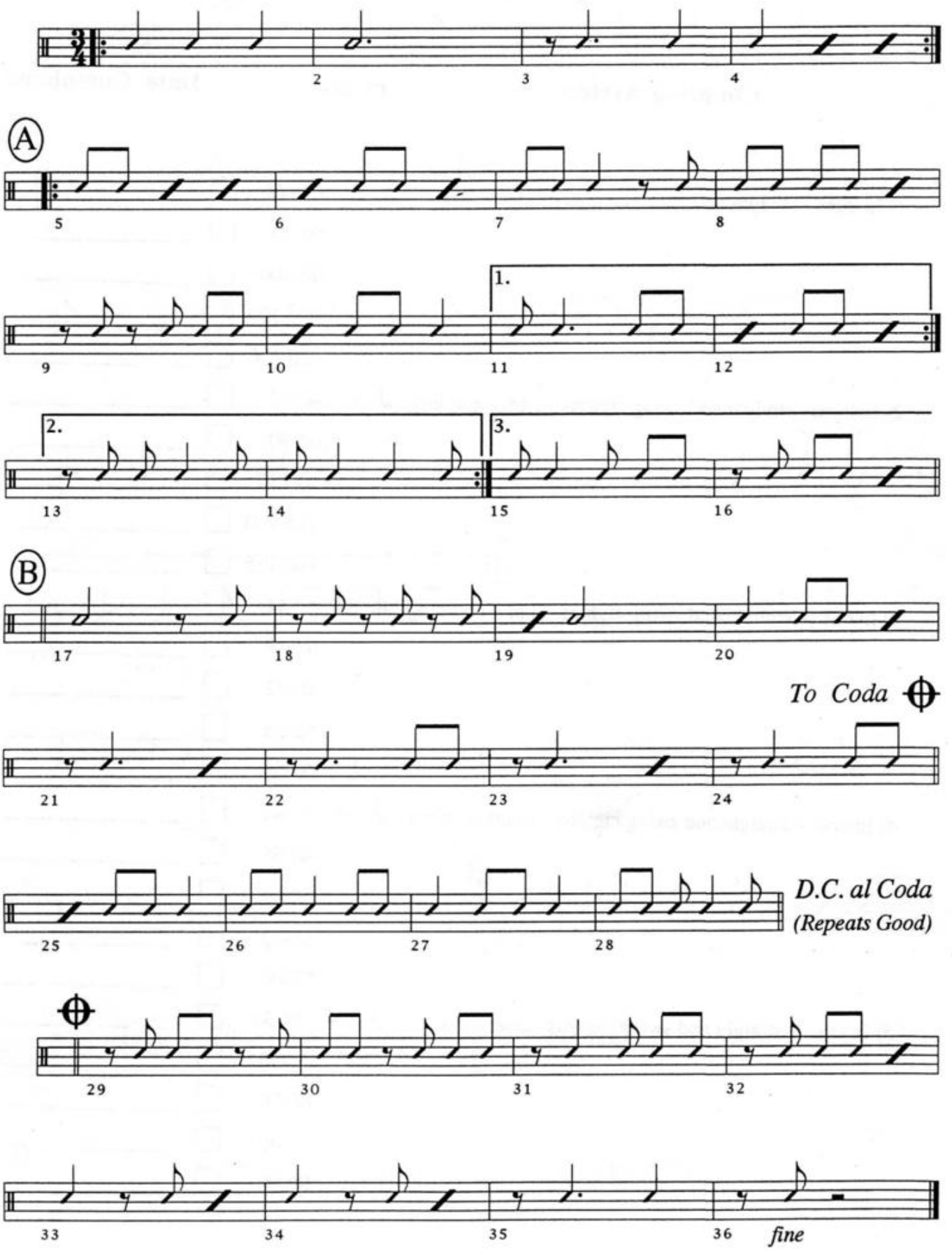
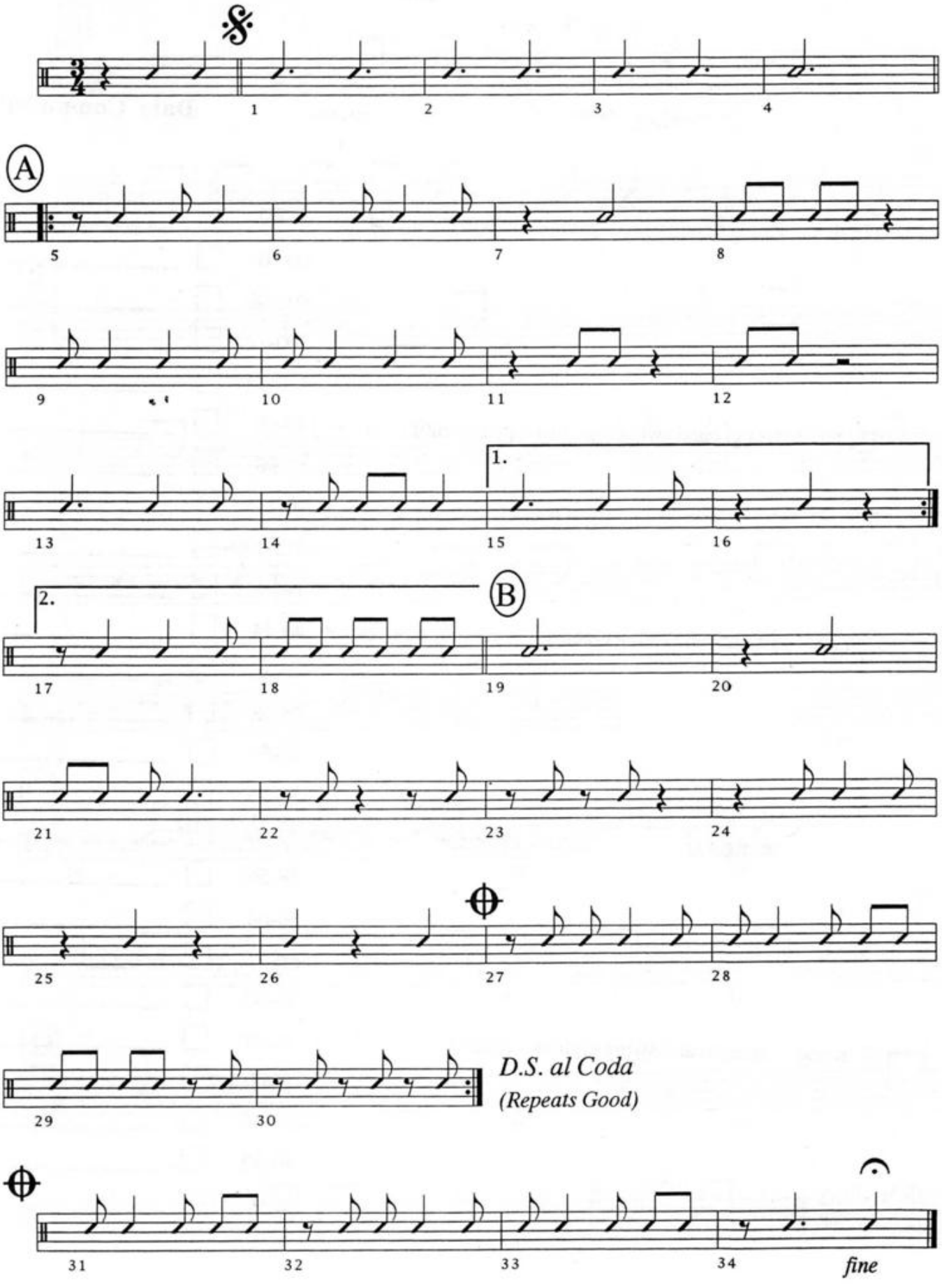
fine

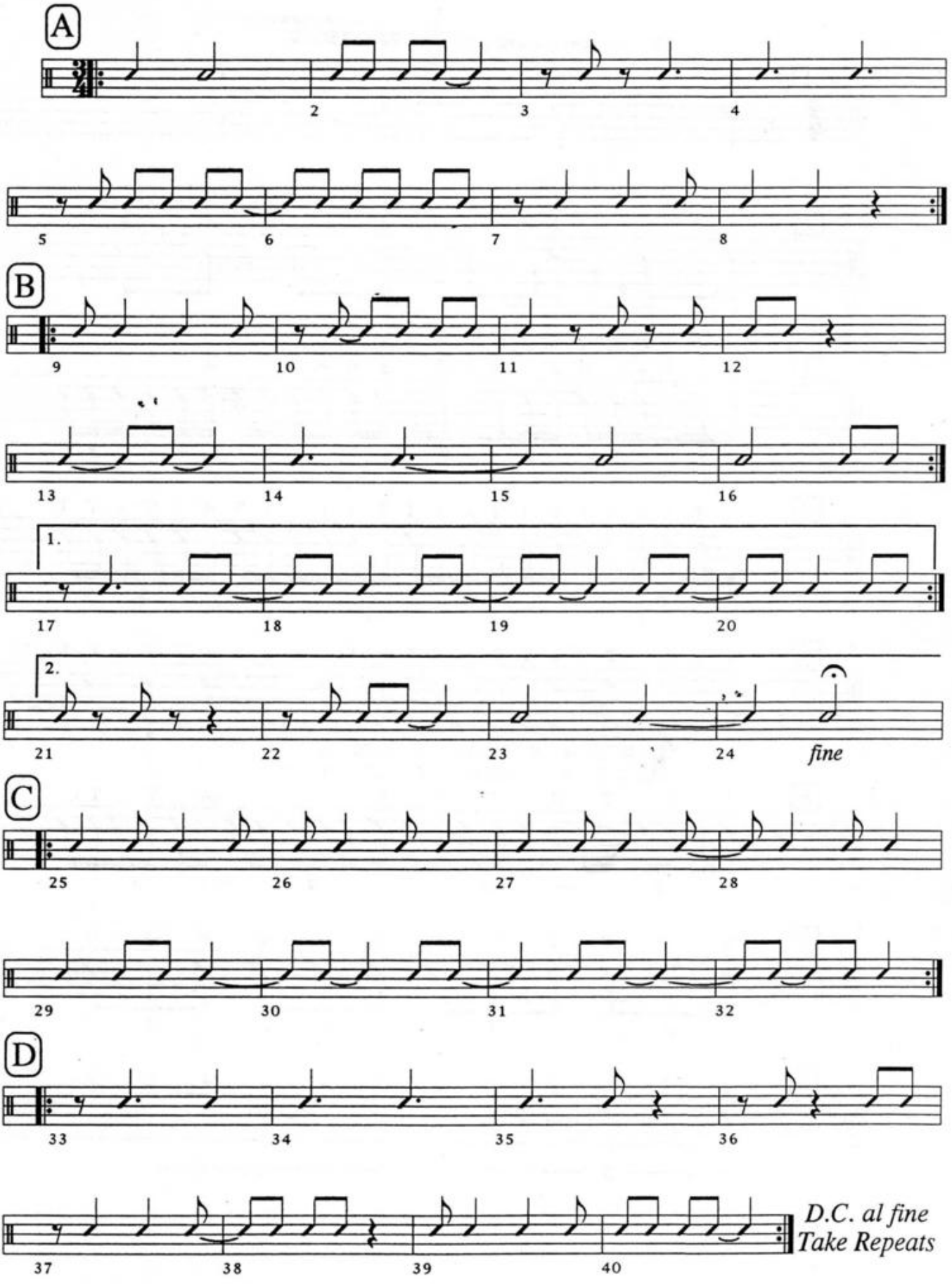
Swingin' in da Trees



Val's Kitchen



"1- 4 -B"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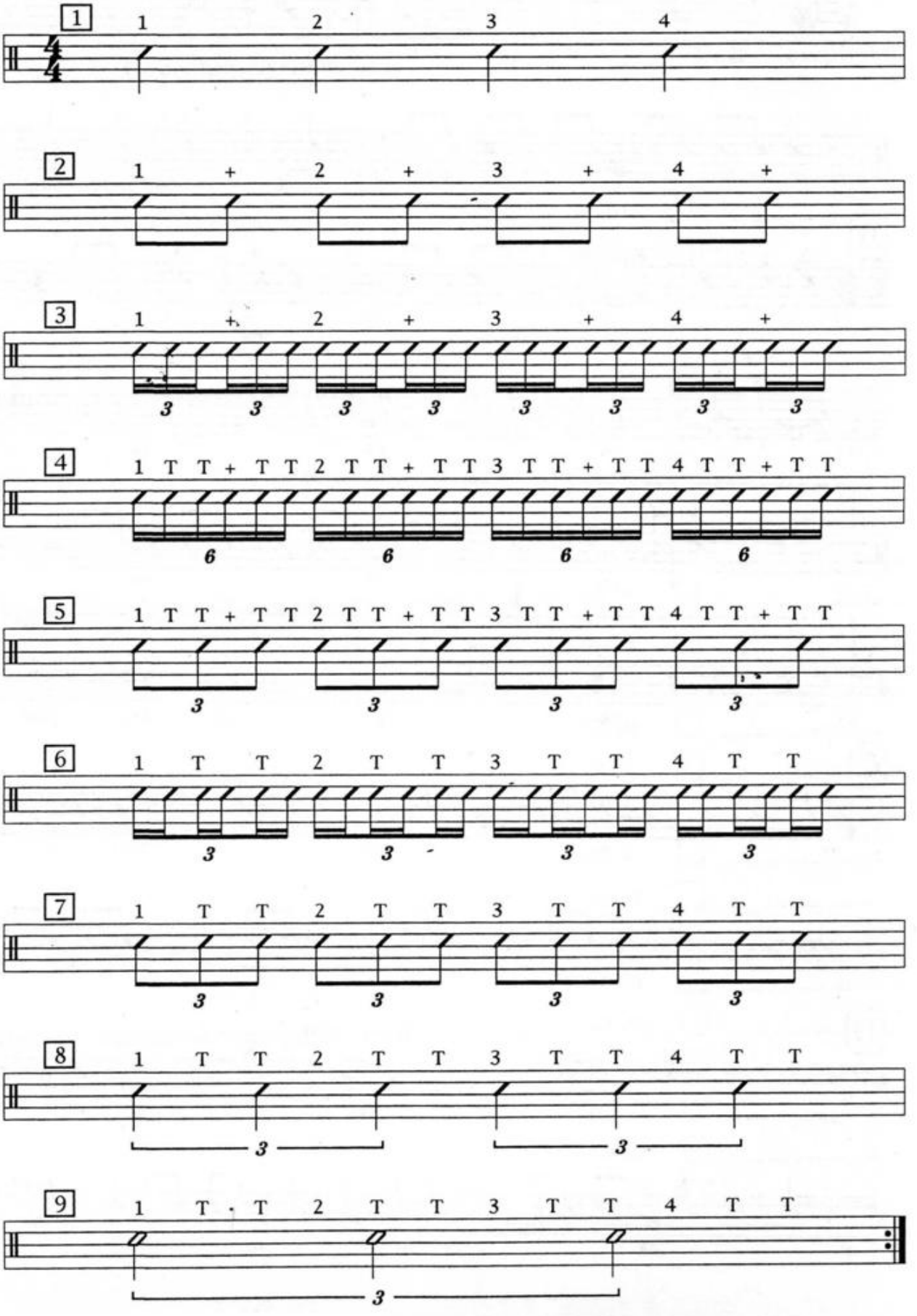
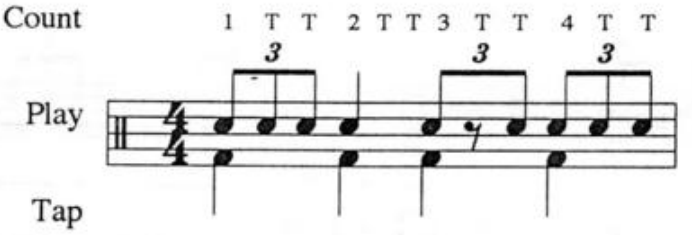
D.C. al fine
Take Repeats

Triplet Relationships
Counting Exercise

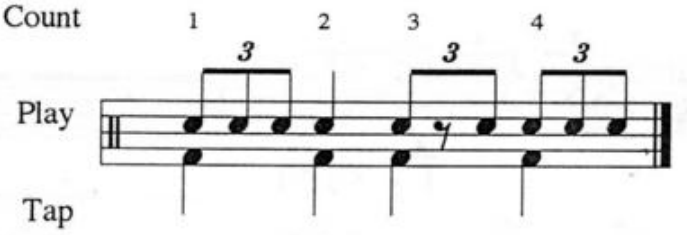


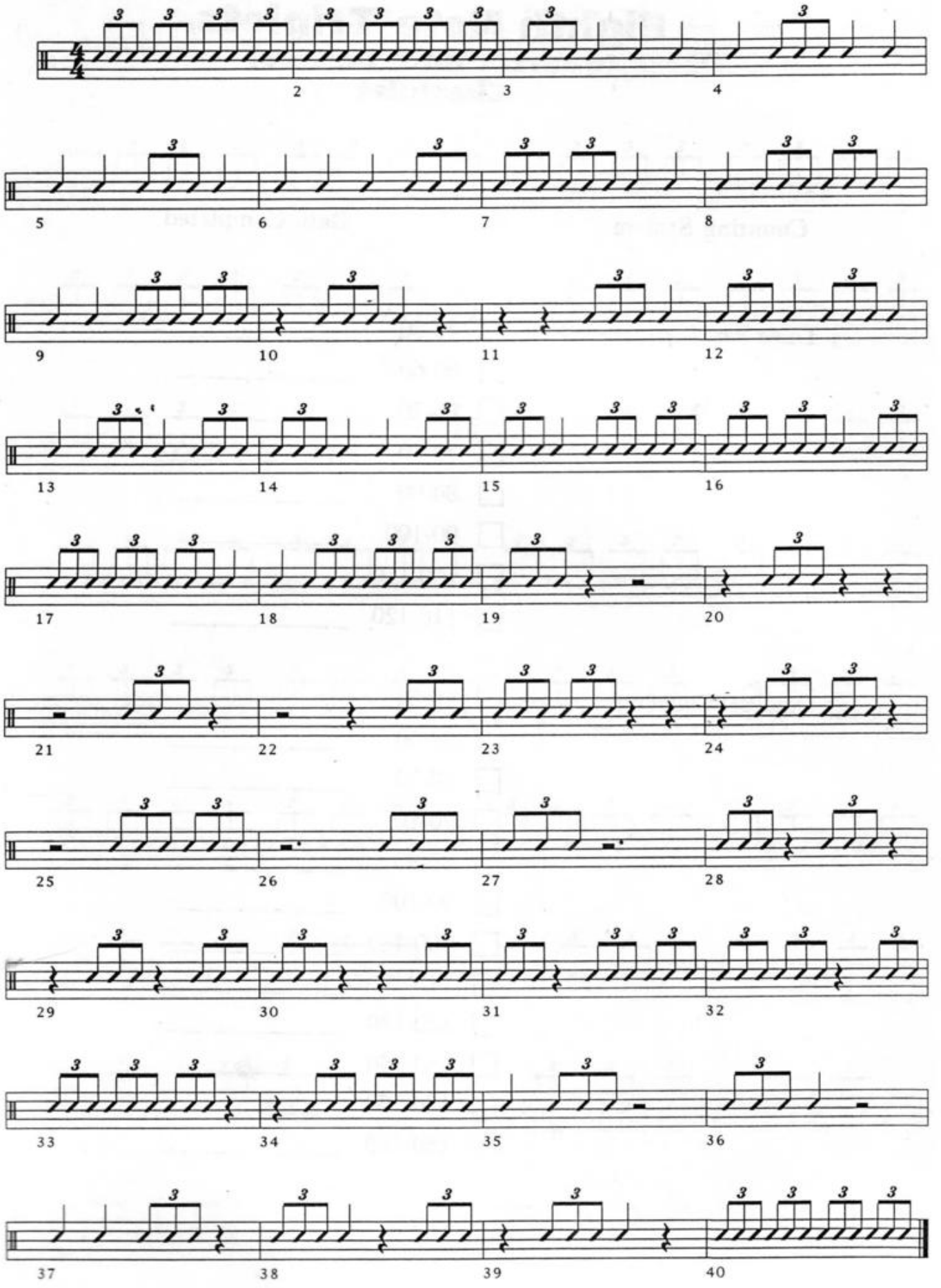
Eighth Note Triplets
(quarter note meters)
Counting Systems

1) Three Part Counting



2) One Part Counting

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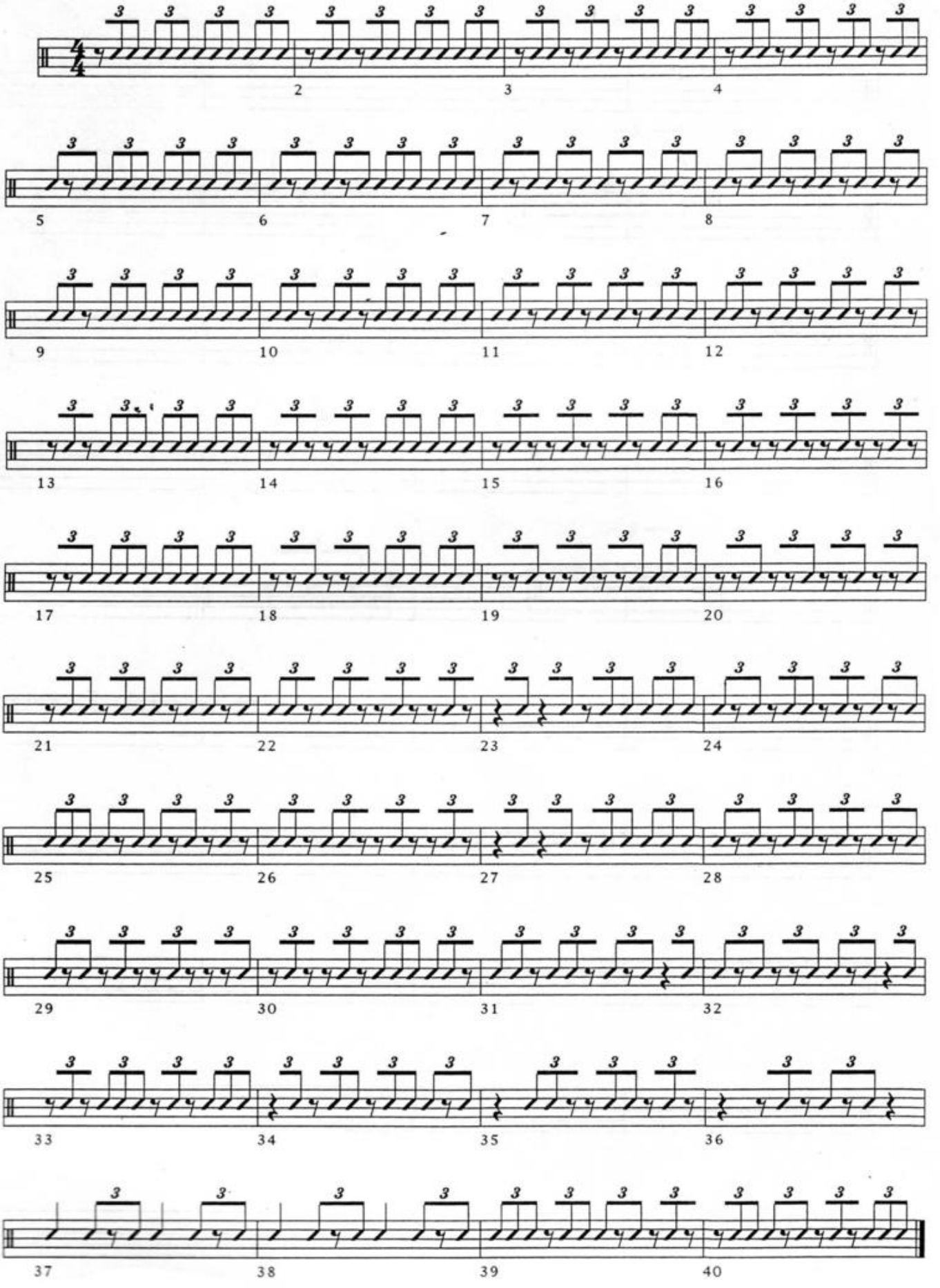
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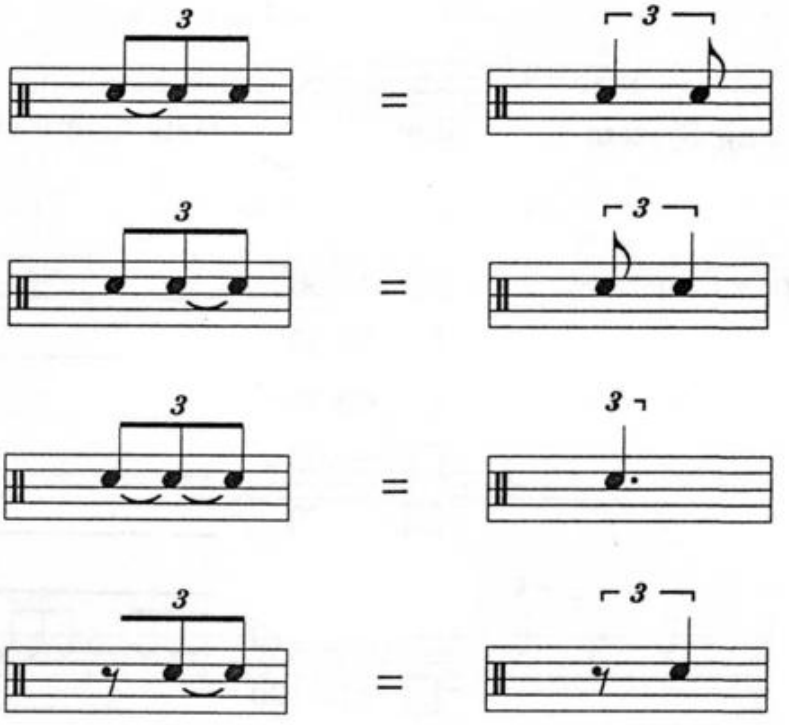
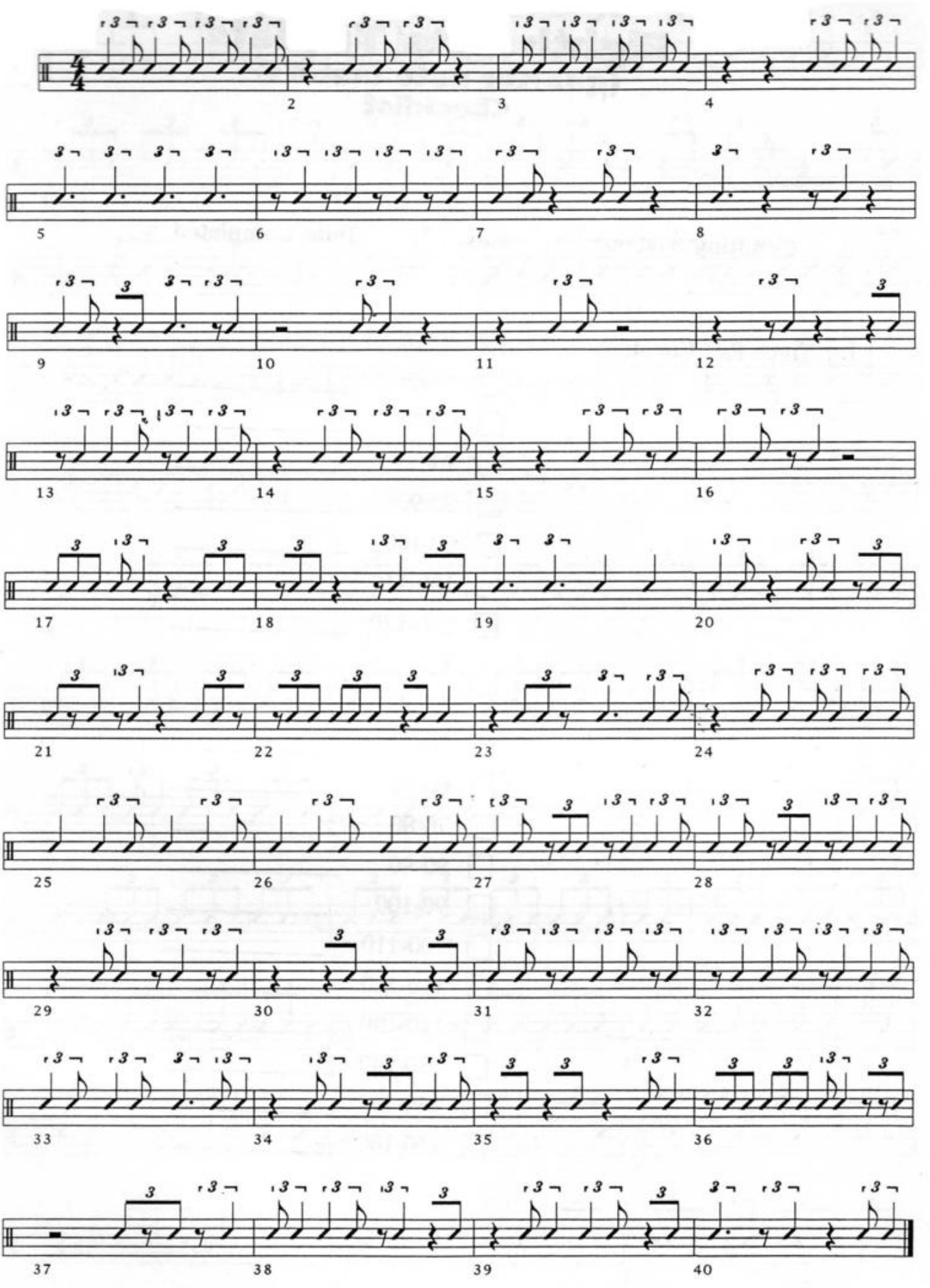
Rhythm Study

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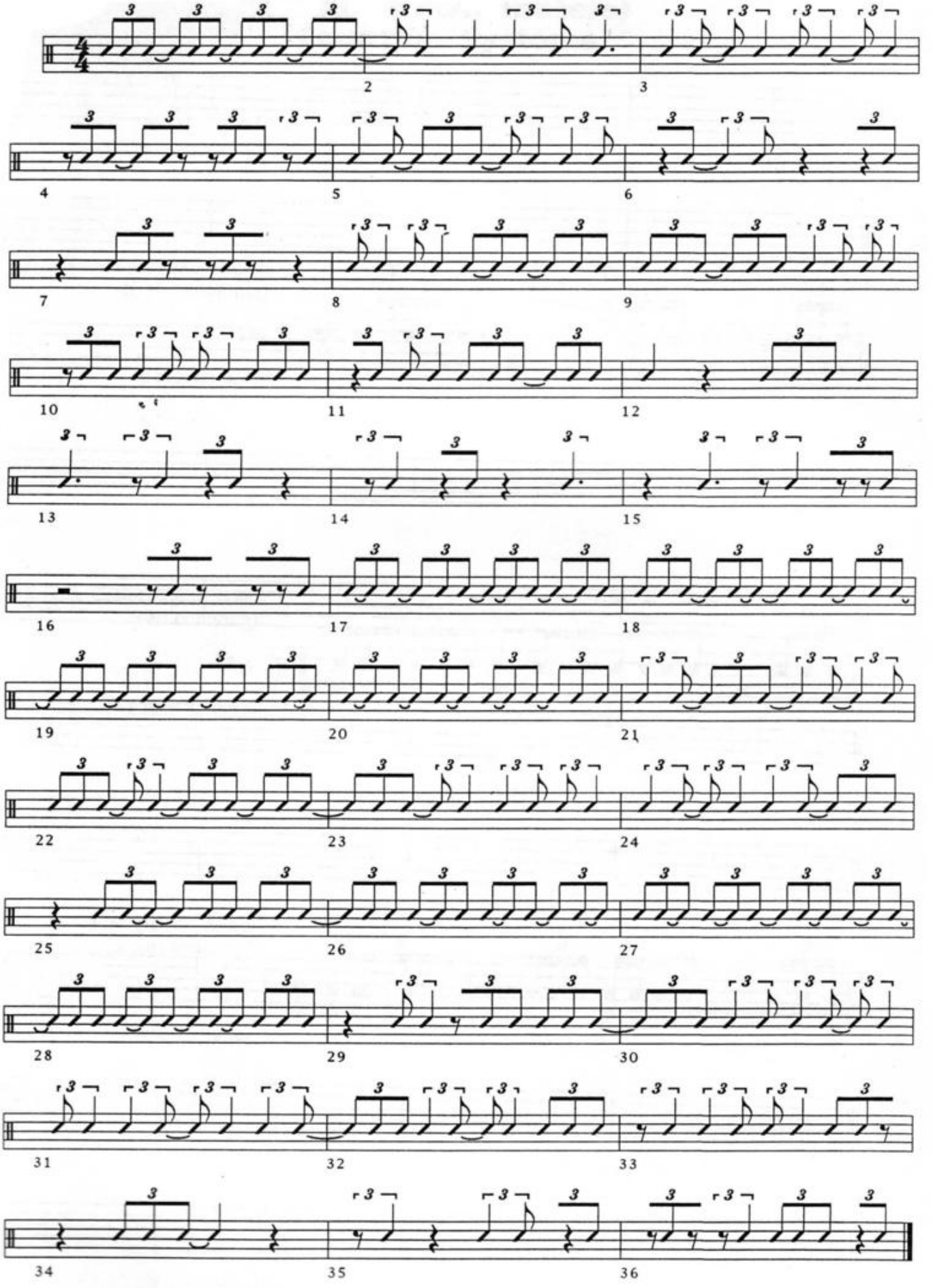
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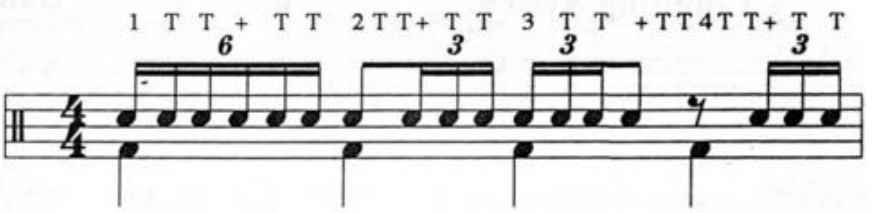
Sixteenth Note Triplets
(quarter note meters)
Counting Systems

1).... Count sixteenth triplets
(6 part counting)

Play

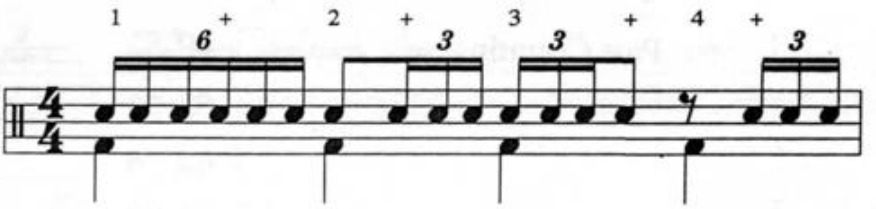
Tap quarter notes



2)..... Count eighth notes
(2 part counting)

Play

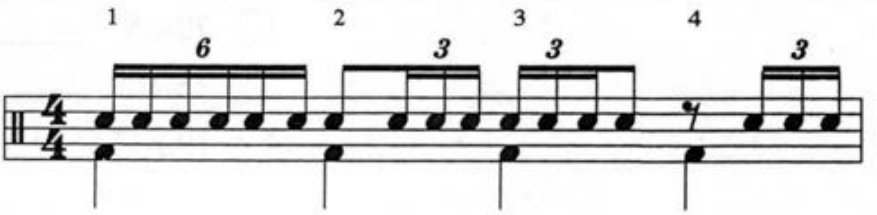
Tap quarter notes

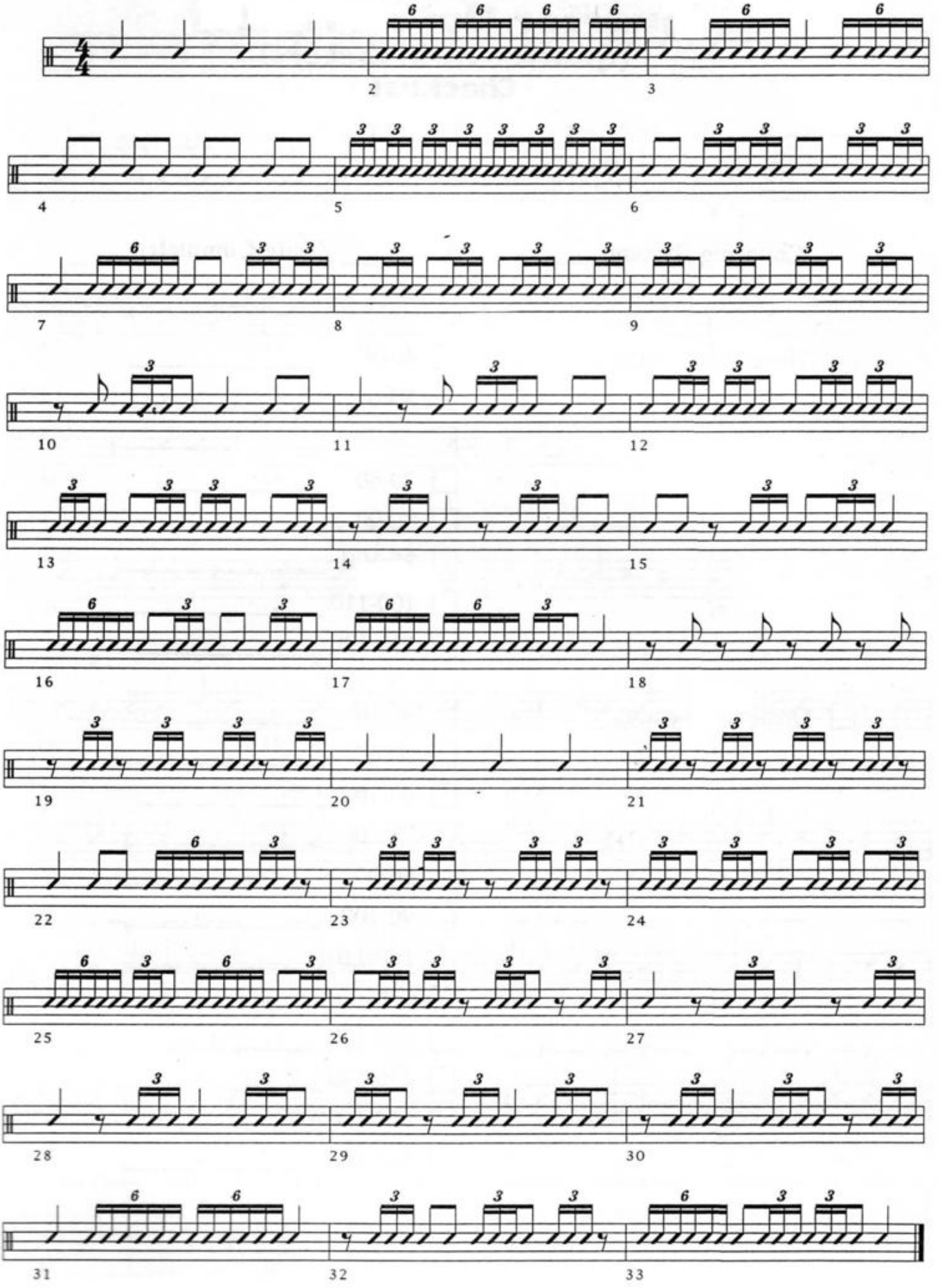


3)..... Count quarter notes
(1 part counting)

Play

Tap quarter notes

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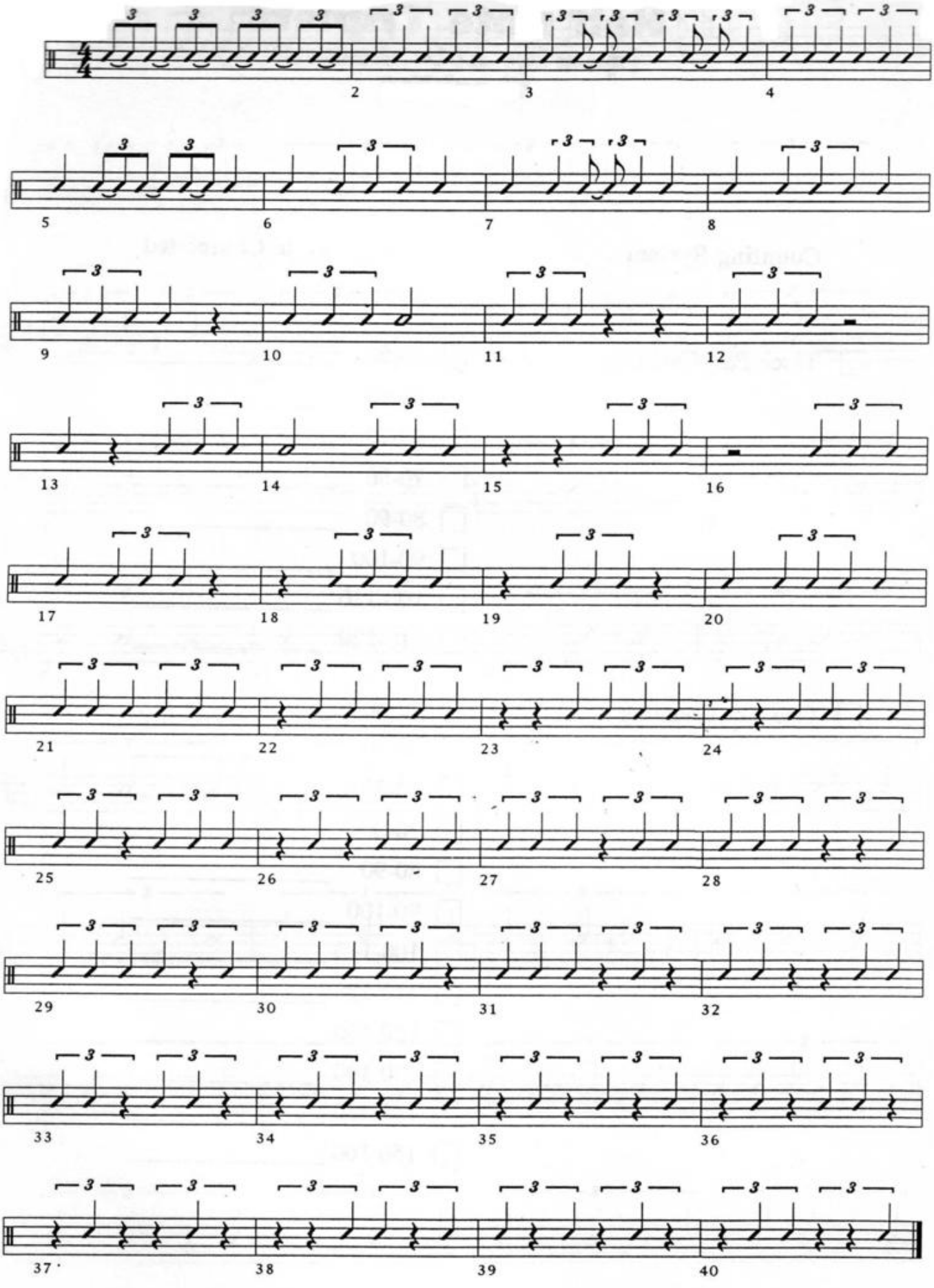
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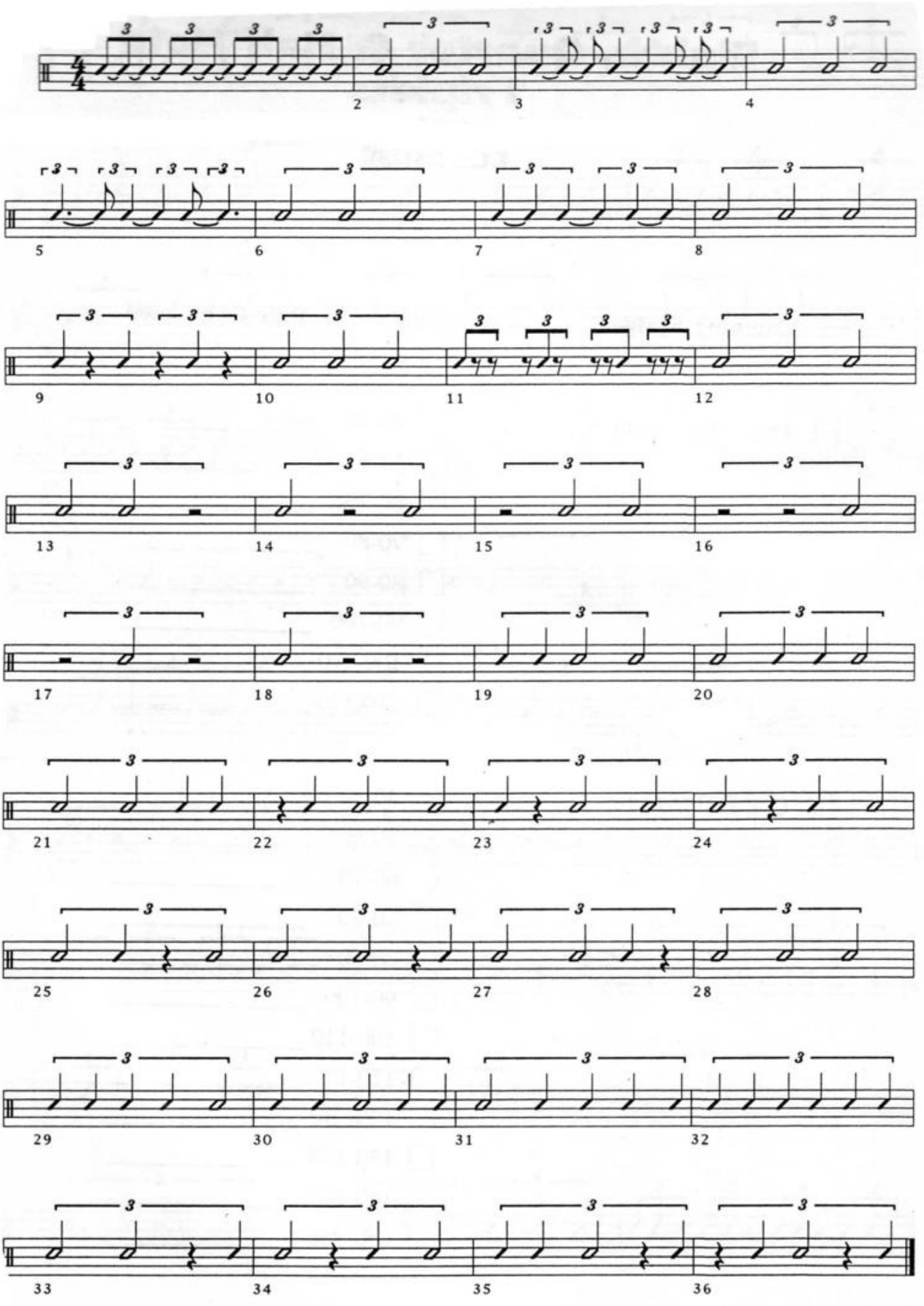
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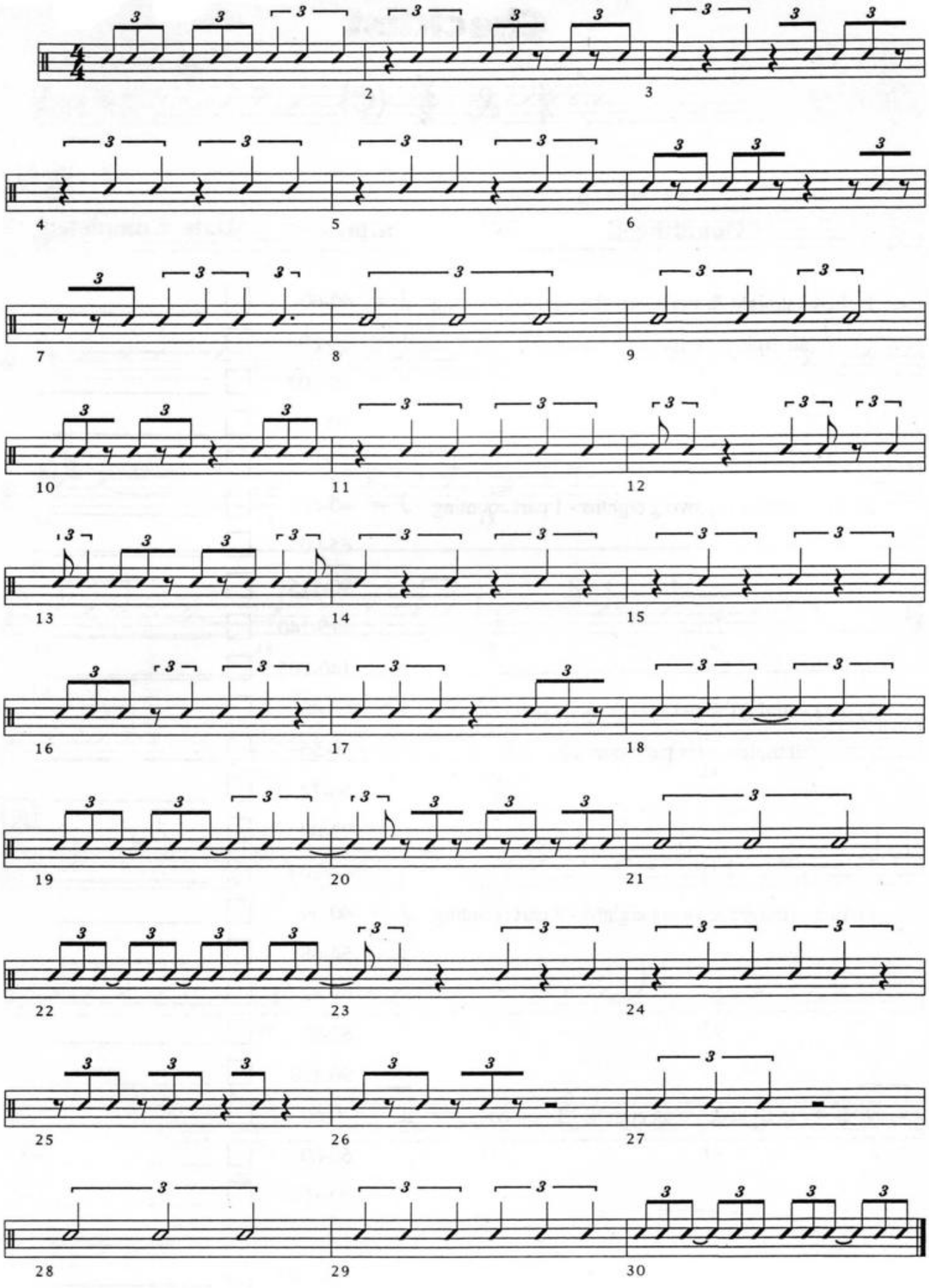
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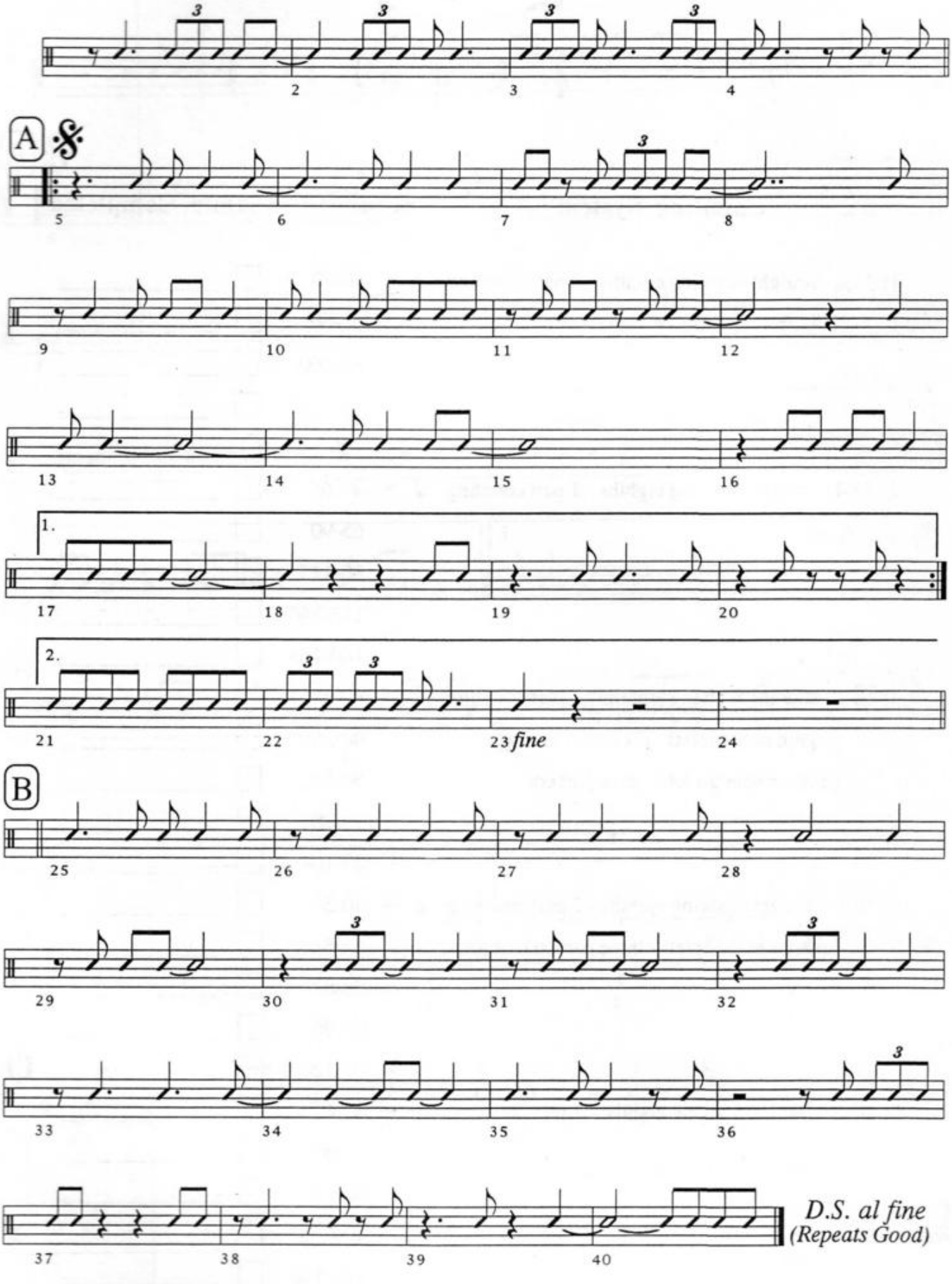
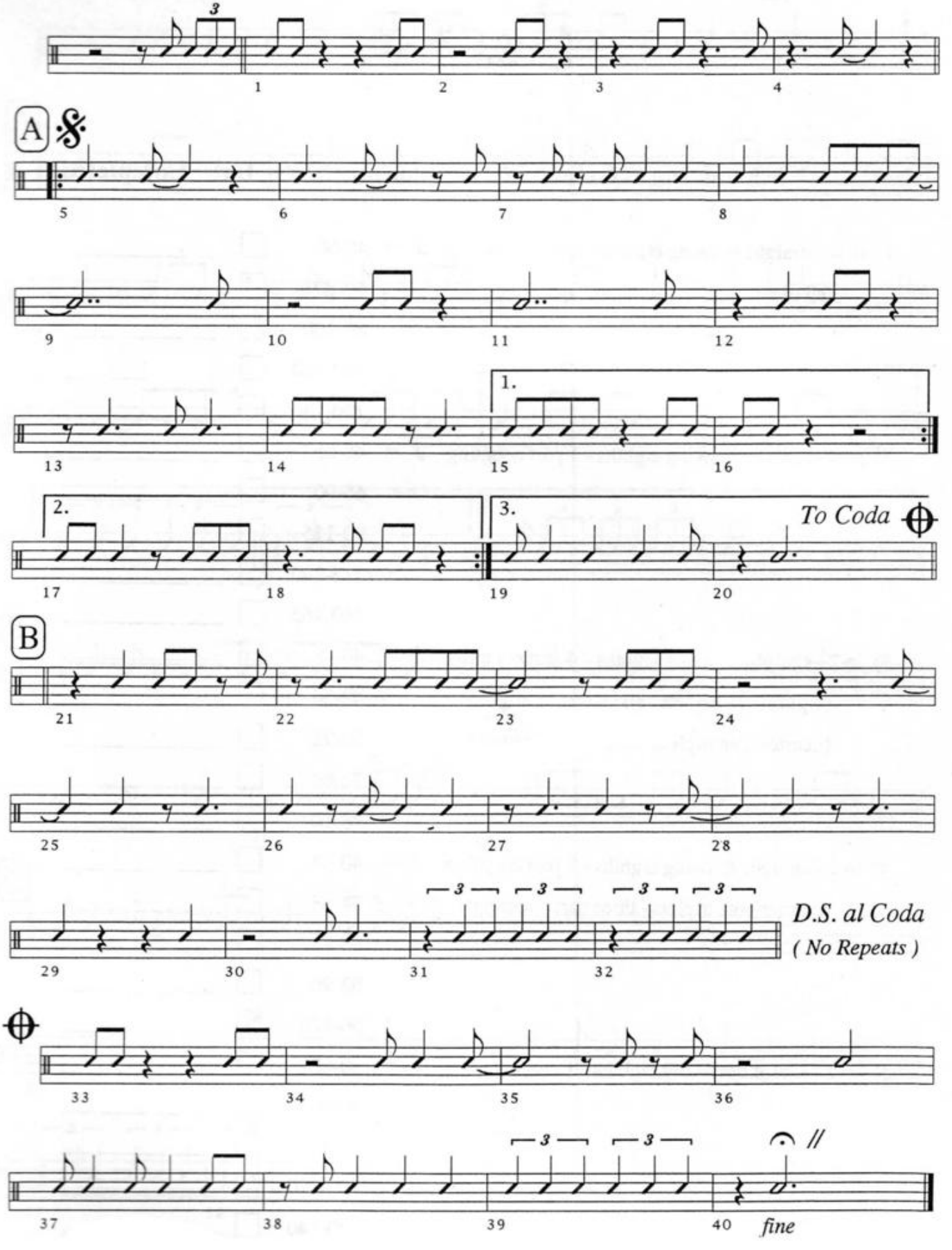
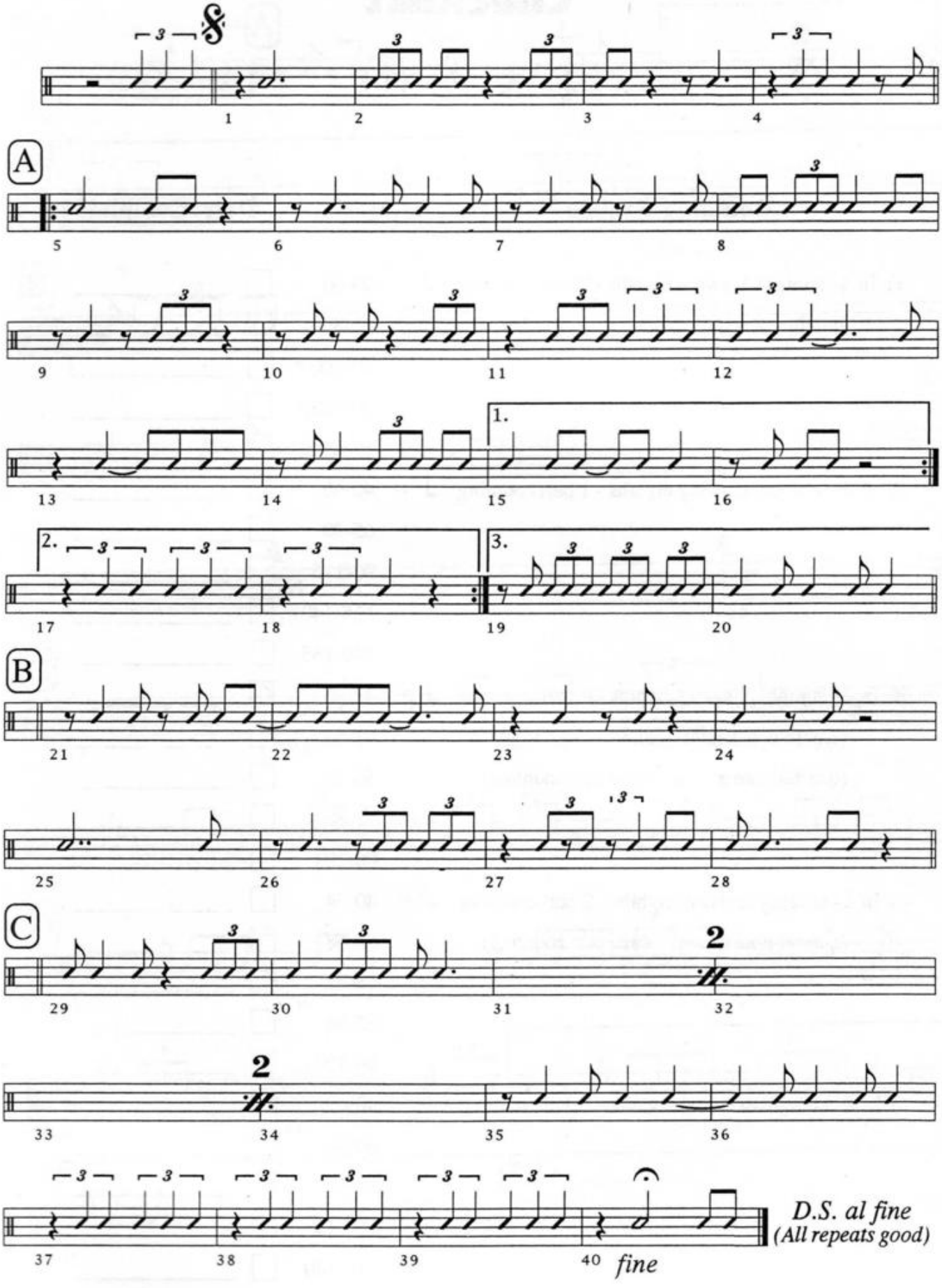
Transport to Jupiter



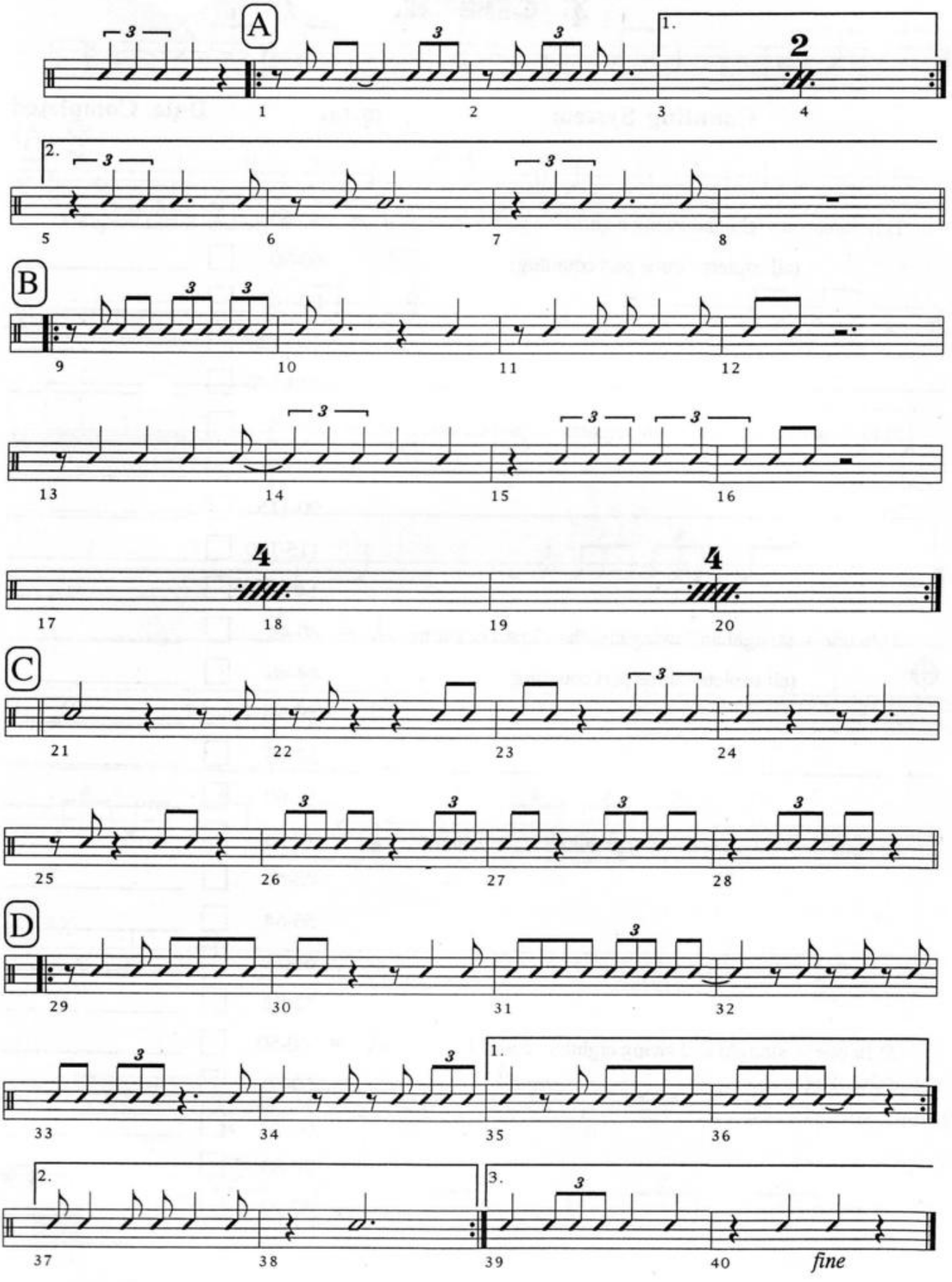
Midnight Oil



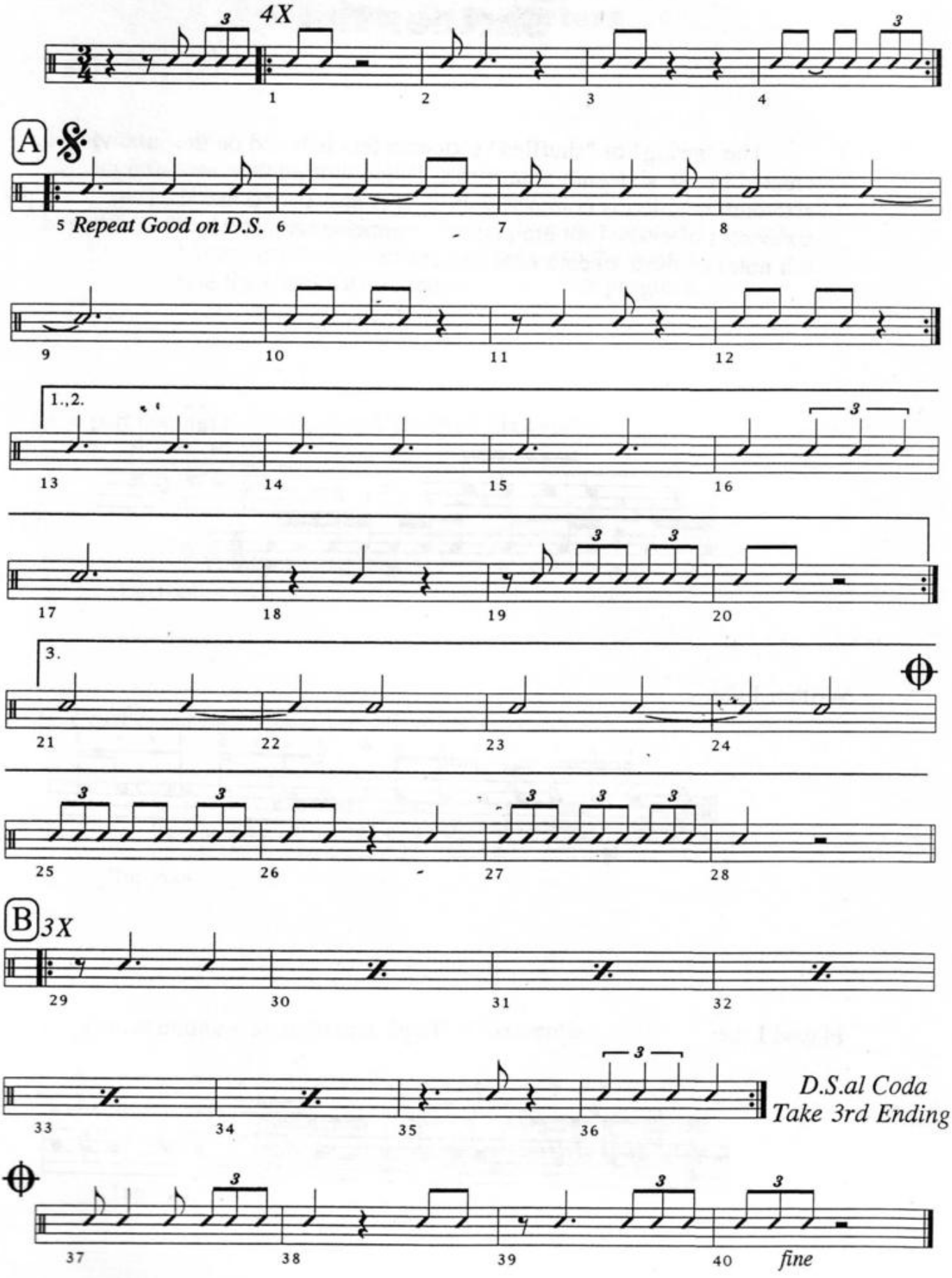
In the Dog House Again



Cliché

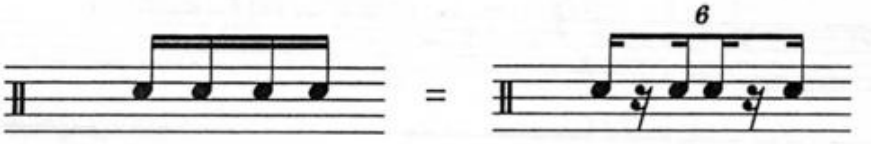


Where's Maynard ?

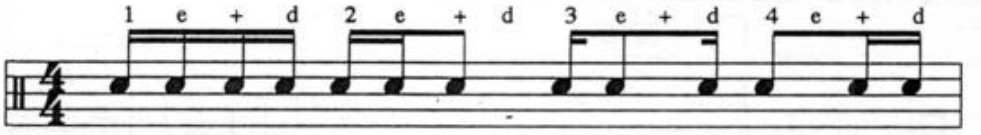


"Swing" or "Shuffled" Sixteenths

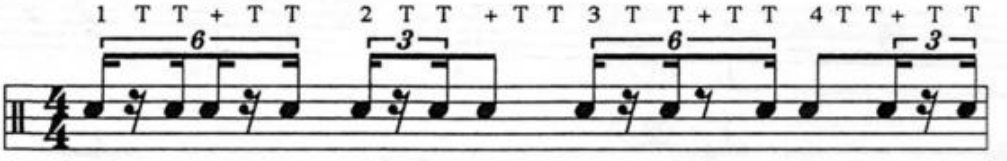
The "swing" or "shuffled" sixteenth feel is based on the subdivision created by the sixteenth note triplet. When writing this feel, straight sixteenth notation is commonly used. It is understood that the four sixteenths of every beat are played to coincide with the 1st, 3rd, 4th, and 6th notes of the sixteenth note triplet.



Written Like:



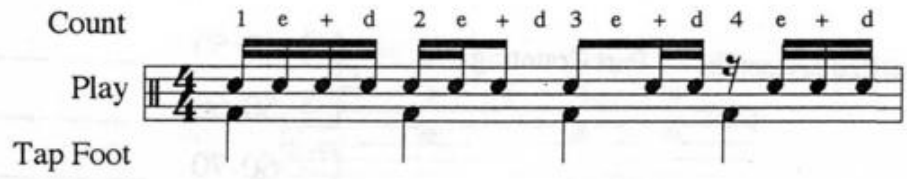
Played Like:



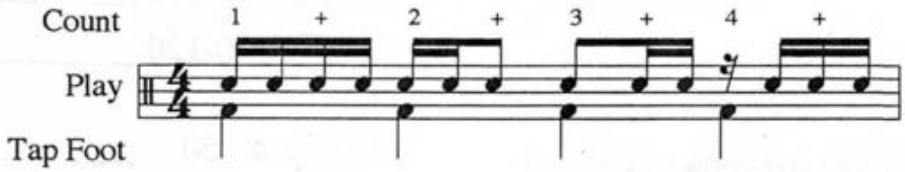
Counting Systems
Sixteenth Note Figures
Quarter Note Meters

Important: Use a metronome!!!!!
Strive for accuracy.....Not speed.
Master each counting system before moving on to the next.
Master each page before moving on to the next.
Use the checklists to keep track of your progress.

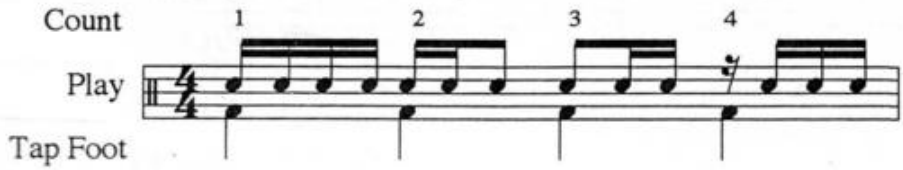
1) 4 part counting - Straight and Shuffled Sixteenths



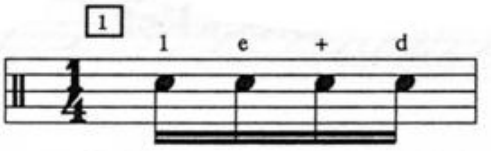
2) 2 part counting - Straight and Shuffled Sixteenths

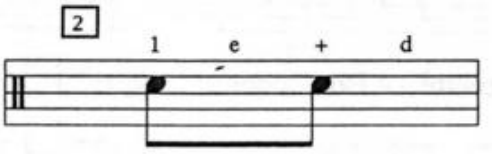


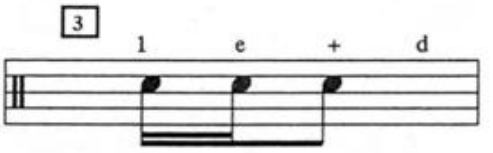
3) 1 part counting - Straight and Shuffled Sixteenths

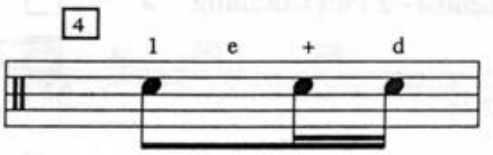


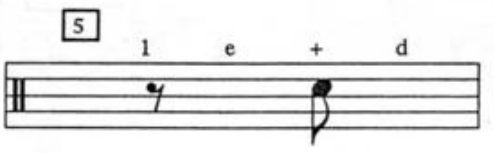
Rhythm Study

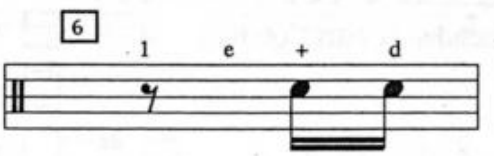


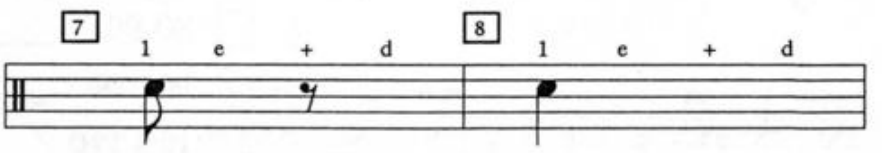


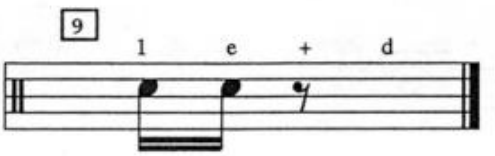


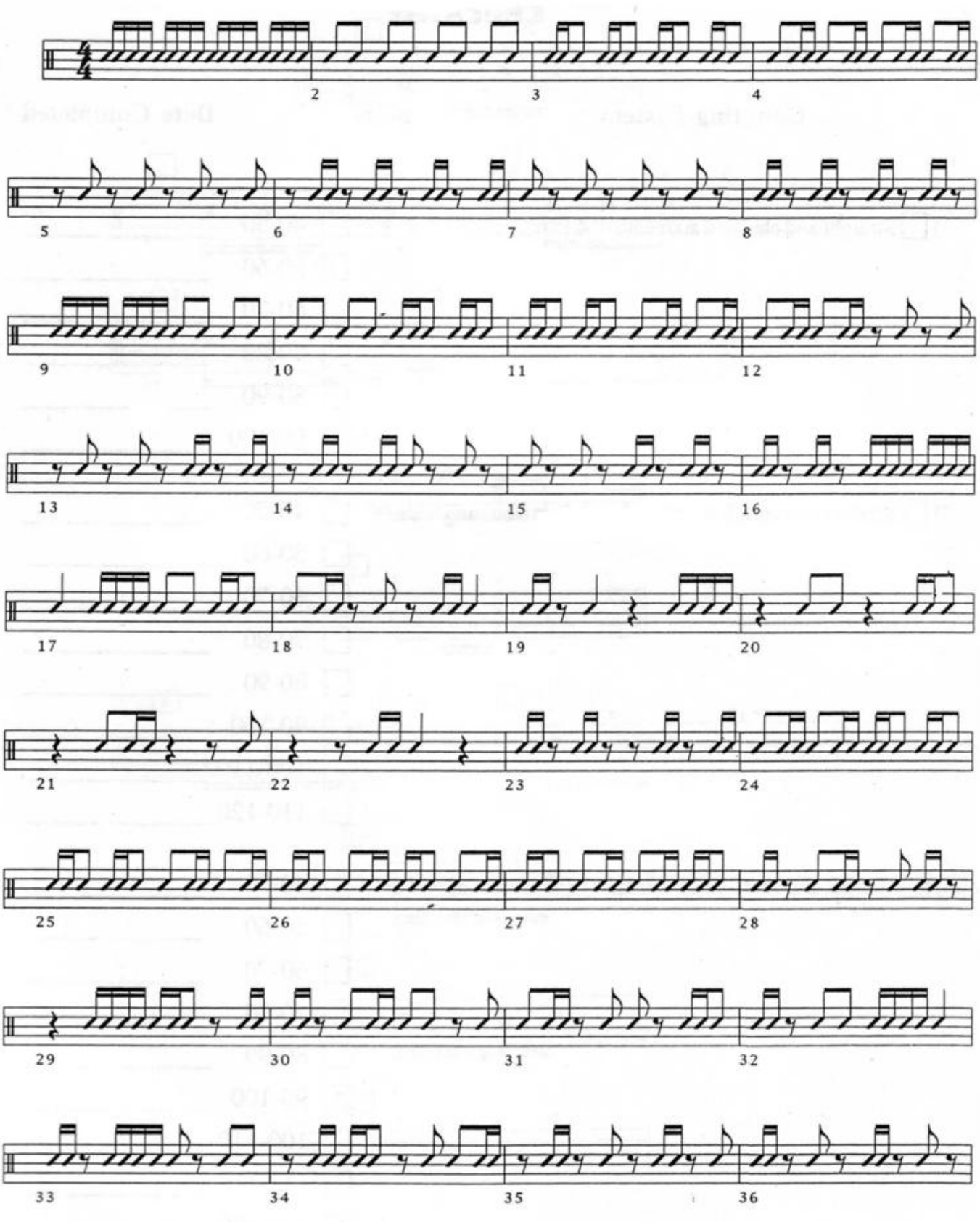








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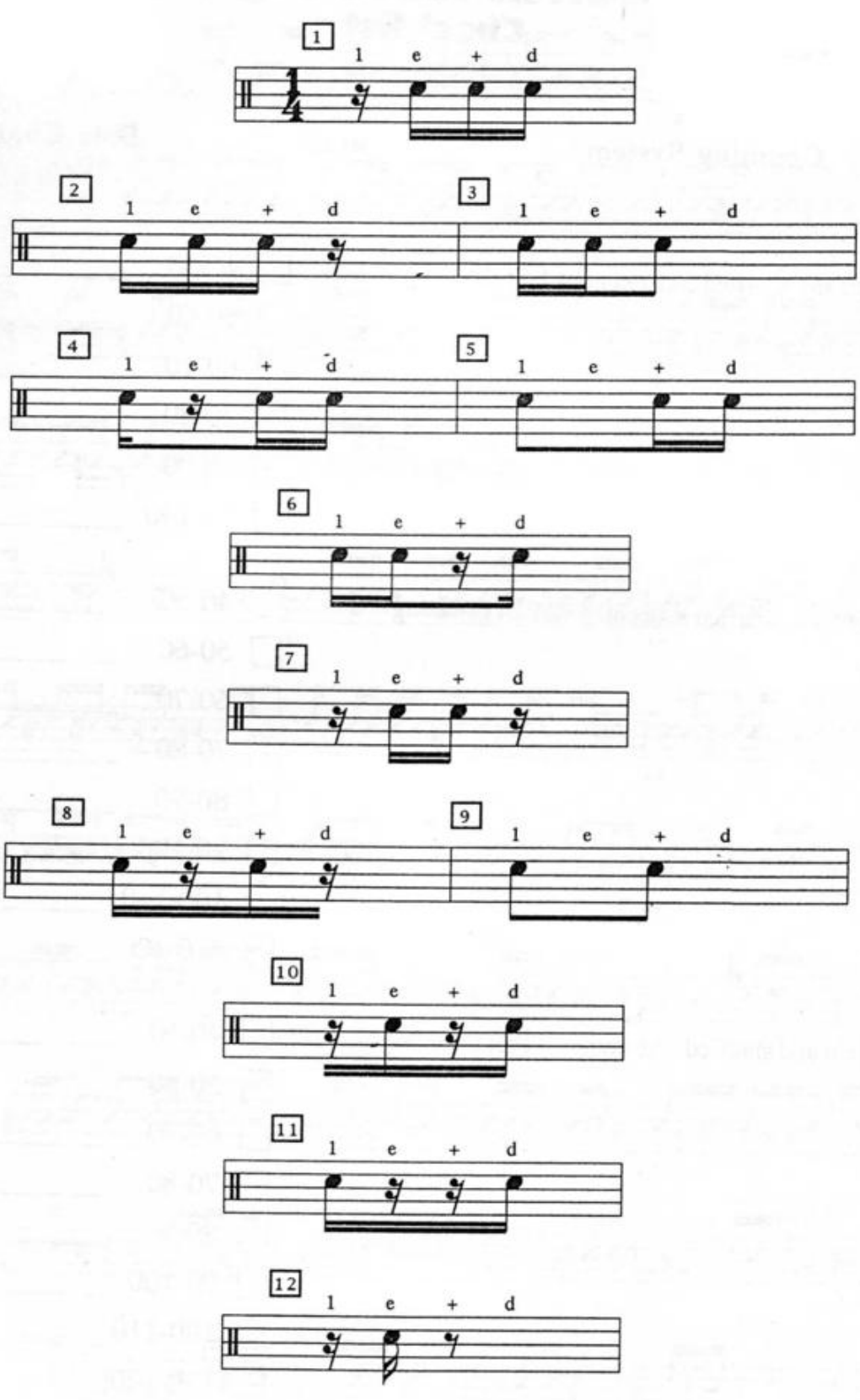
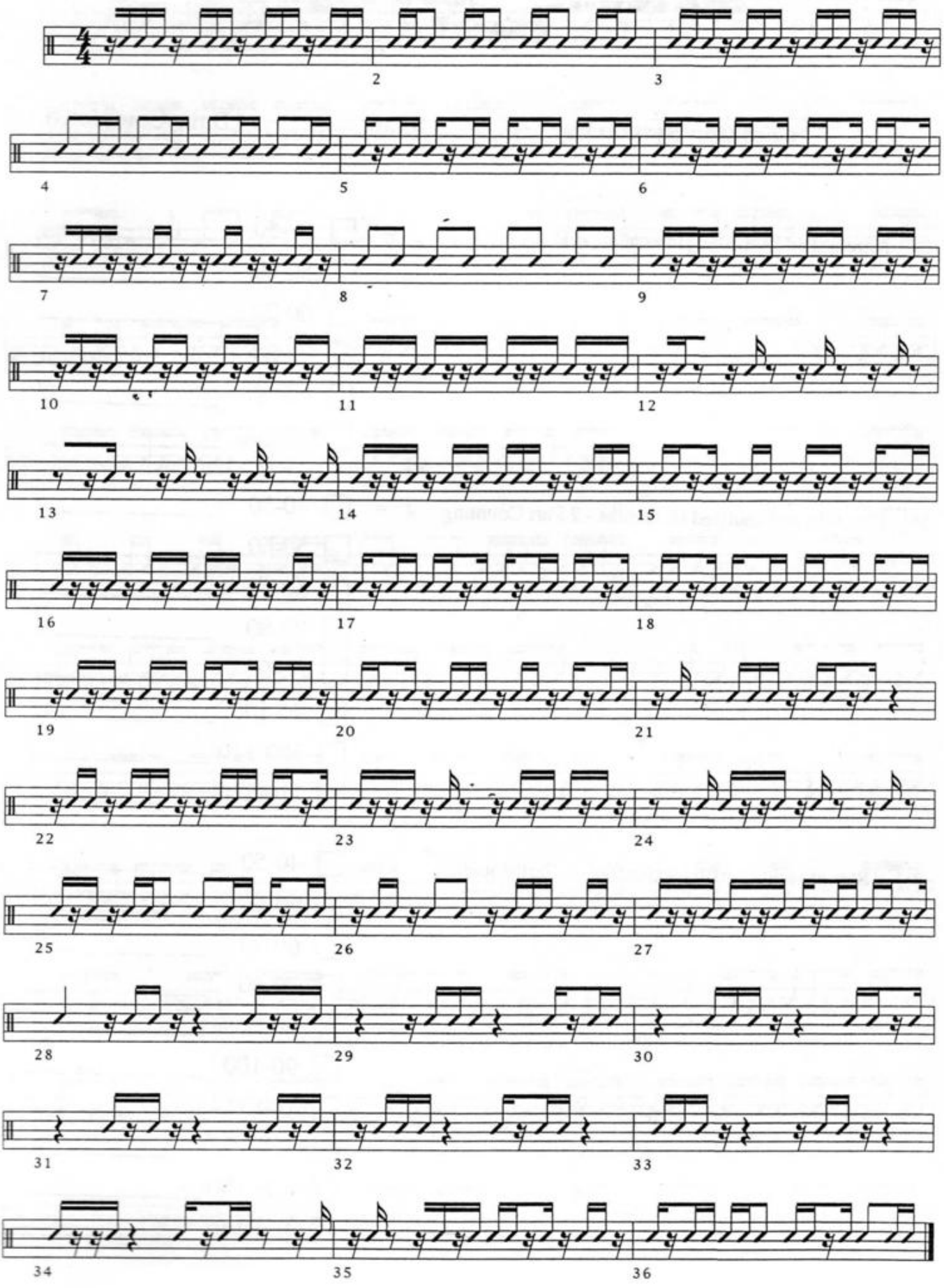
Rhythm Study

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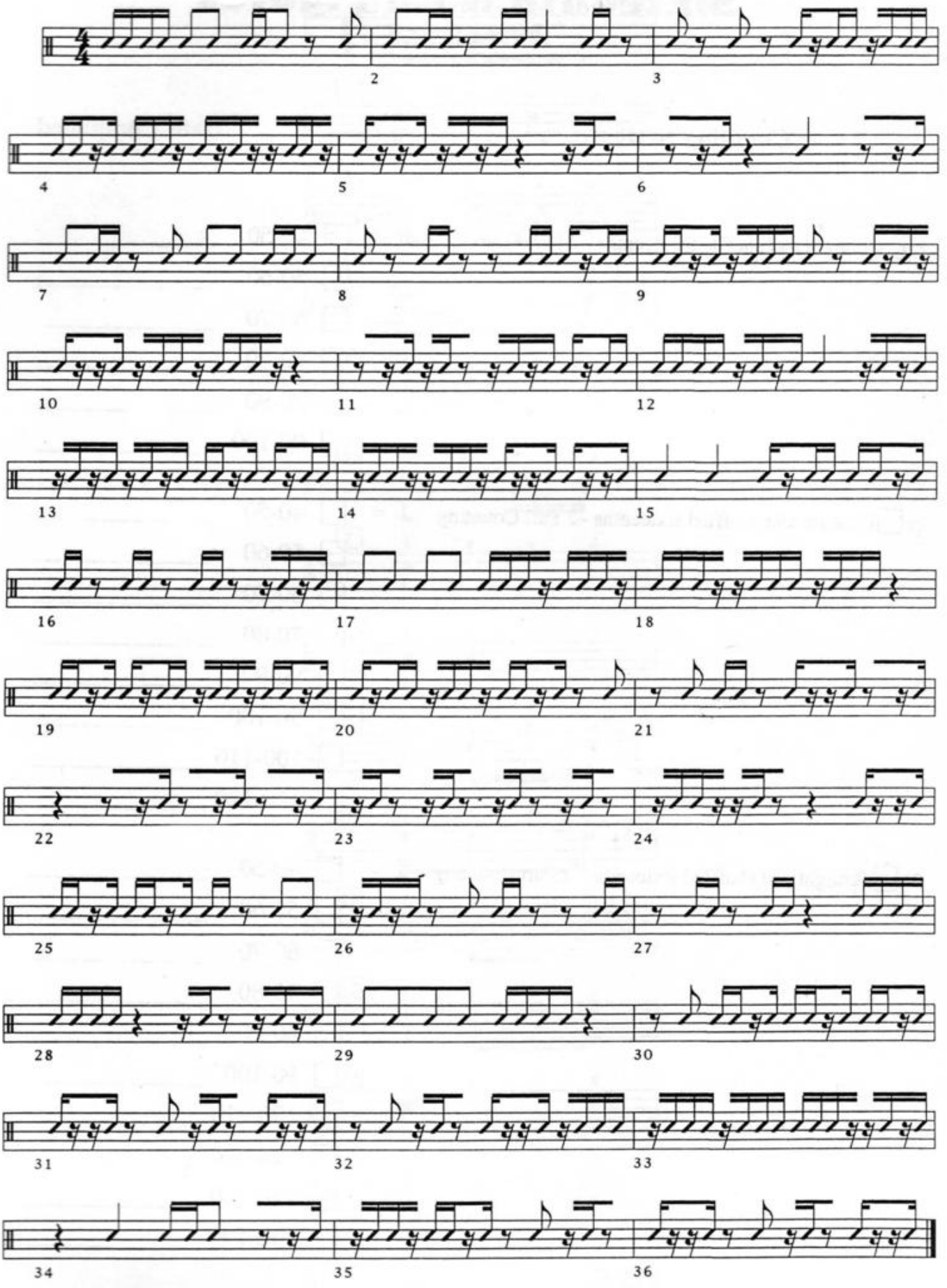
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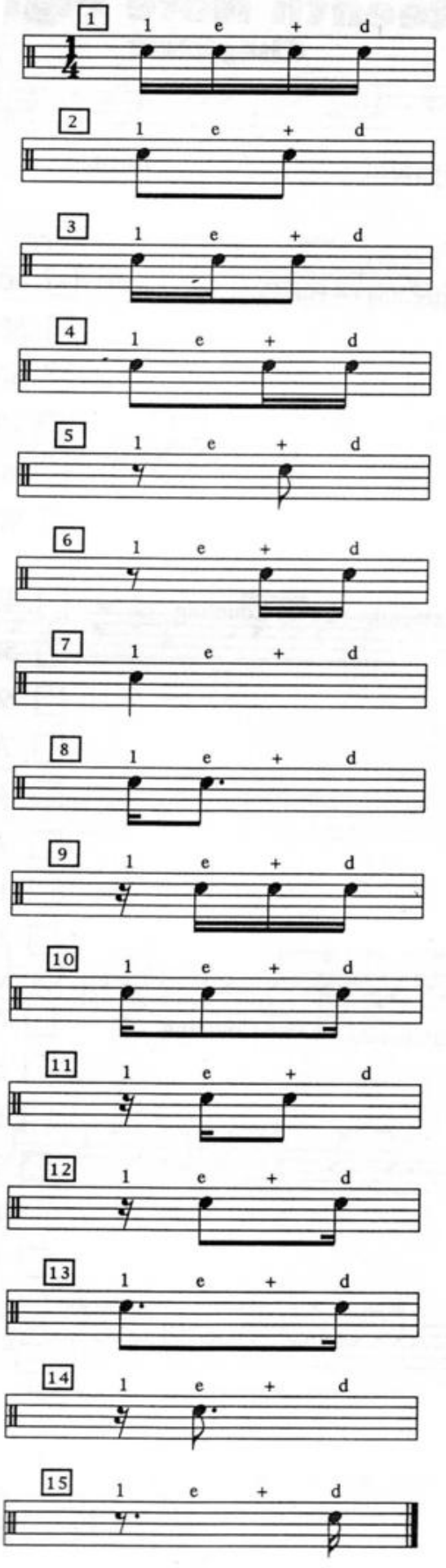
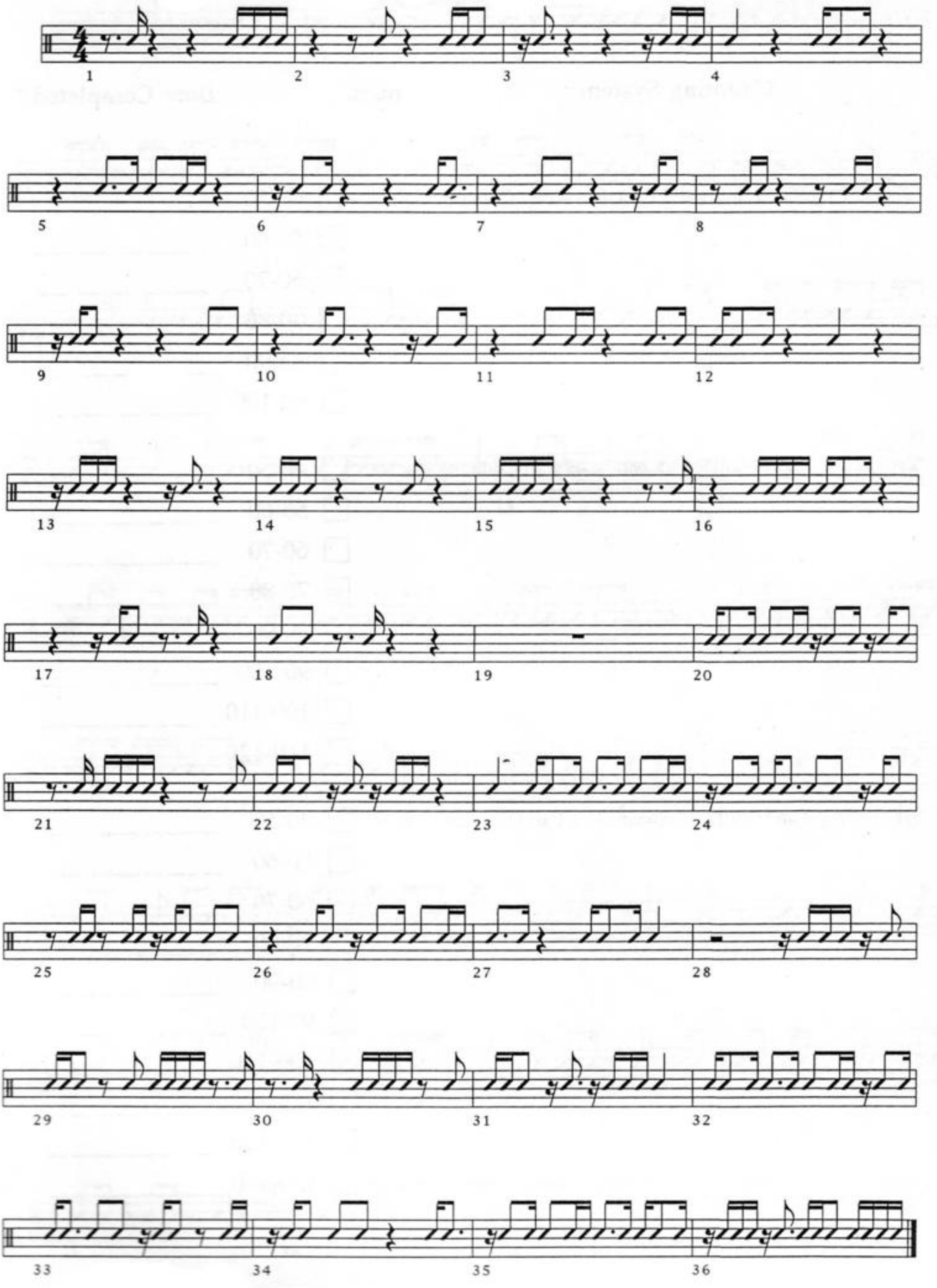
Rhythm Study

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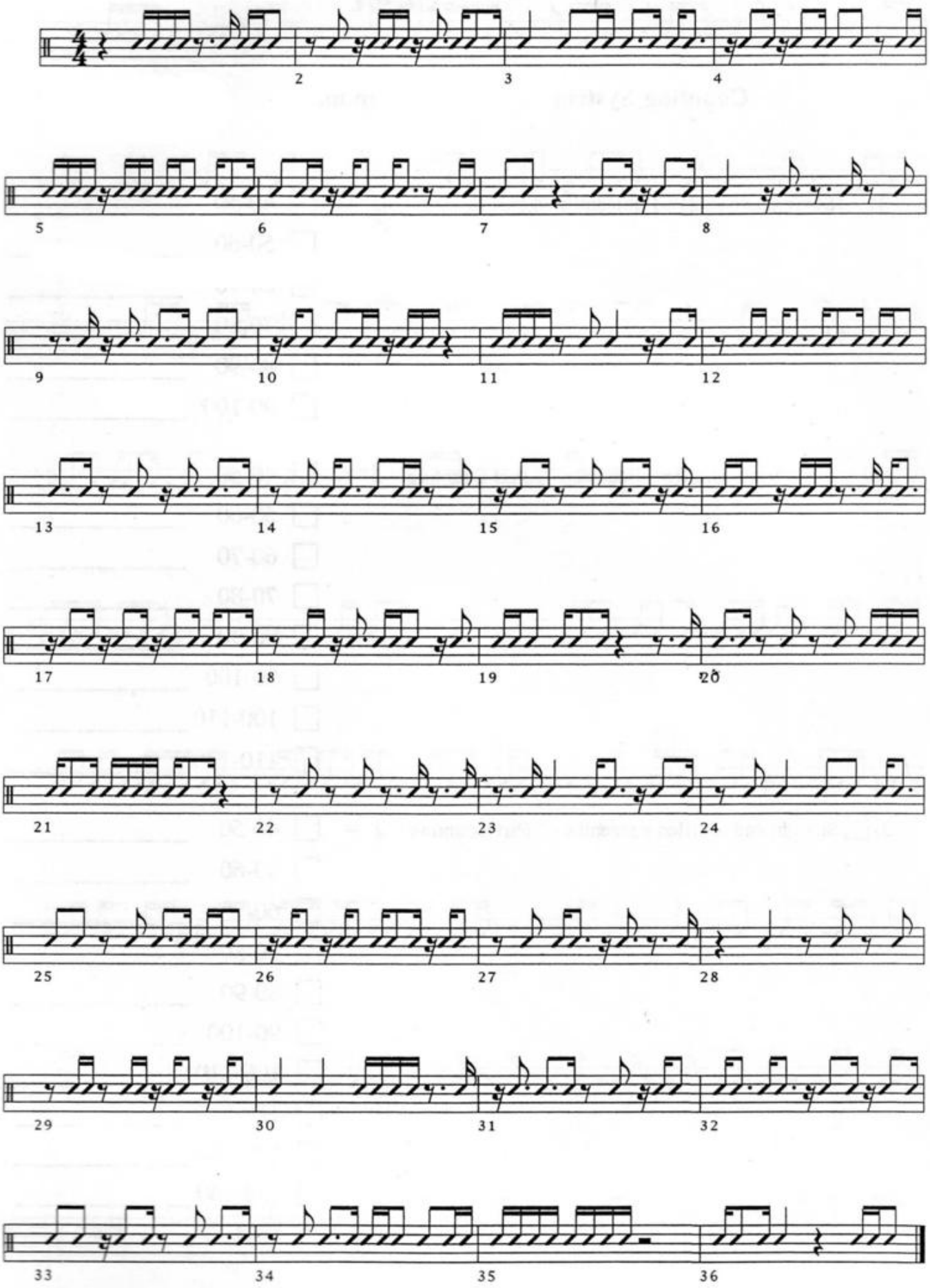
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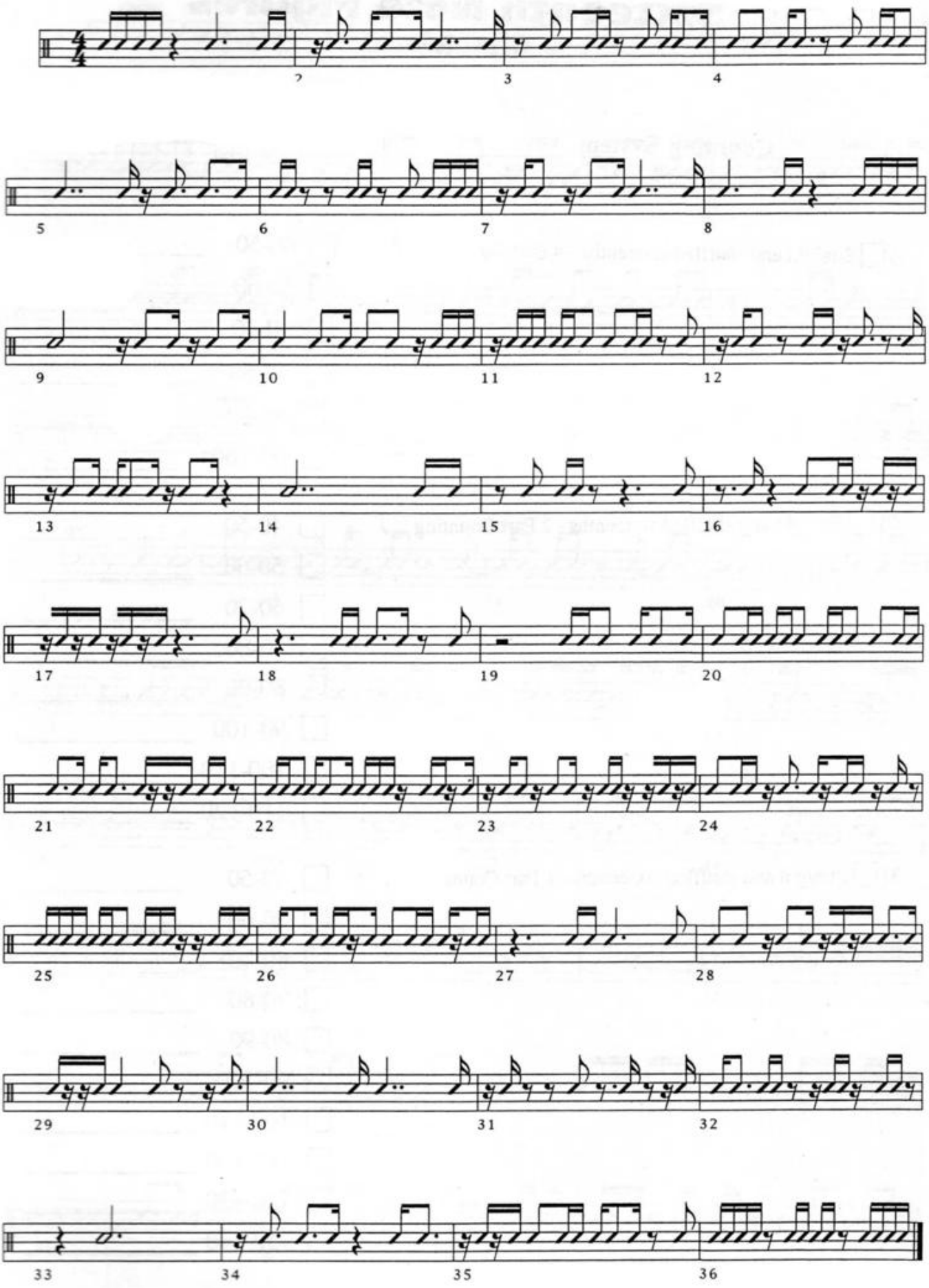
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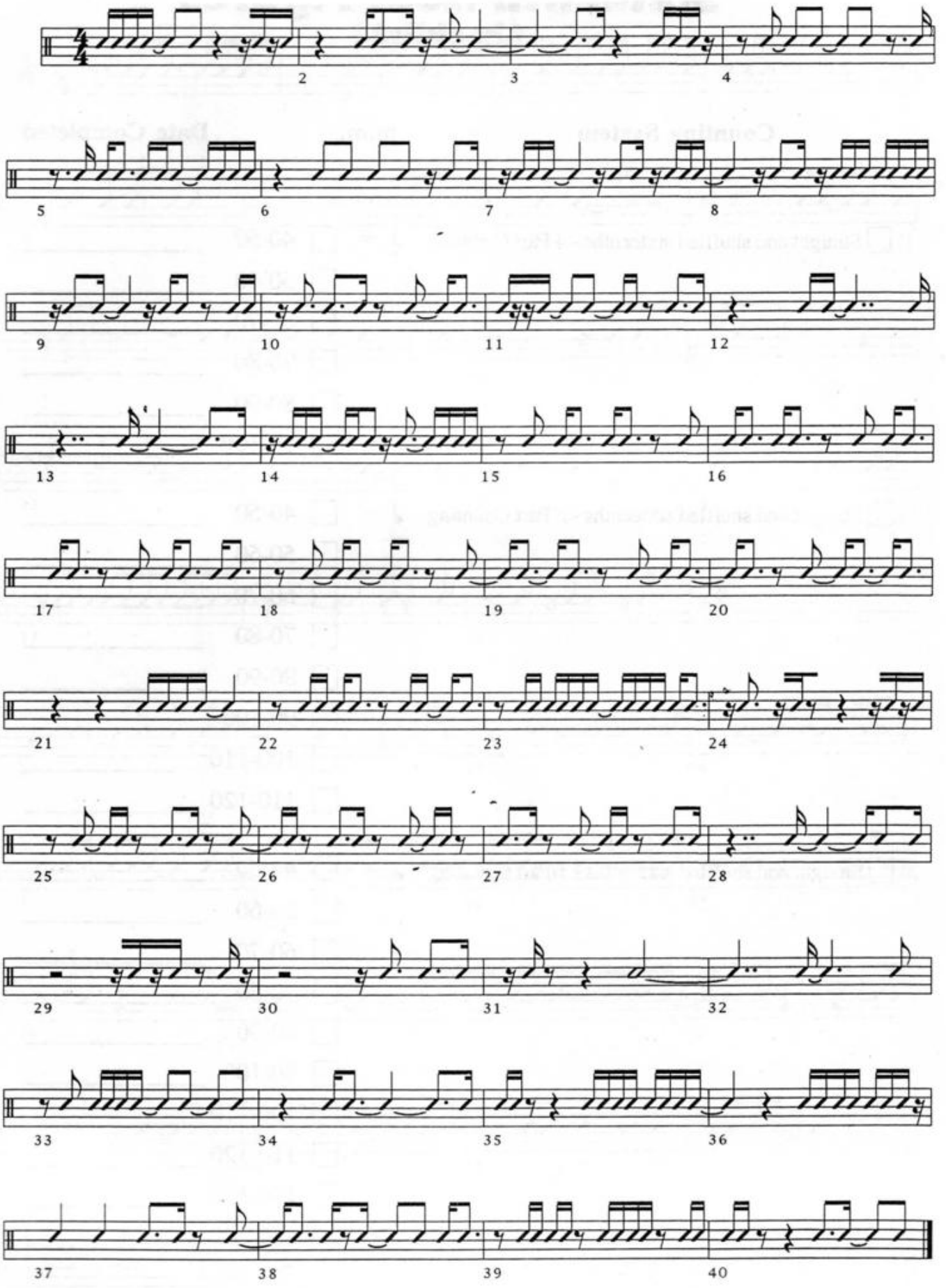
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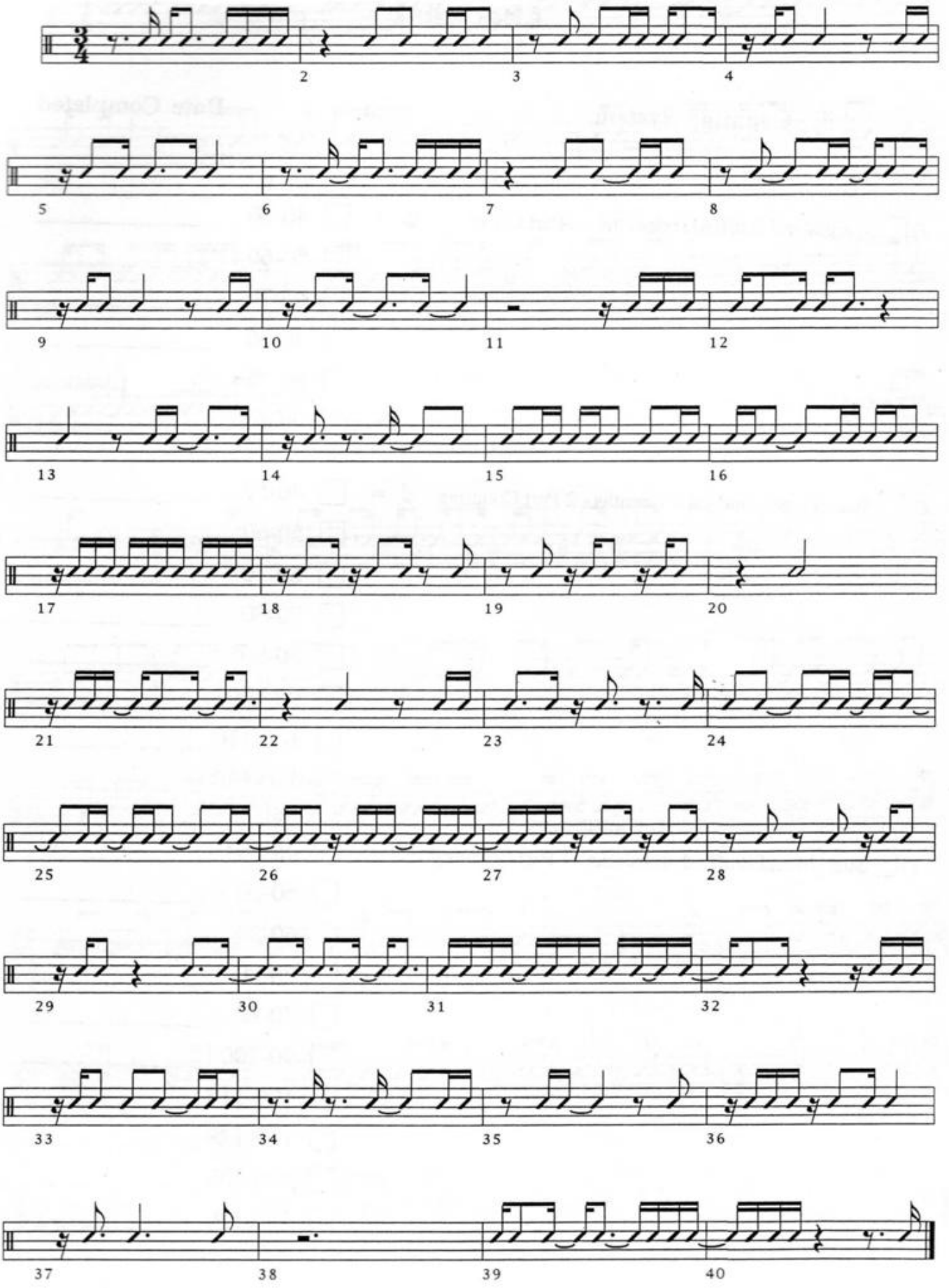
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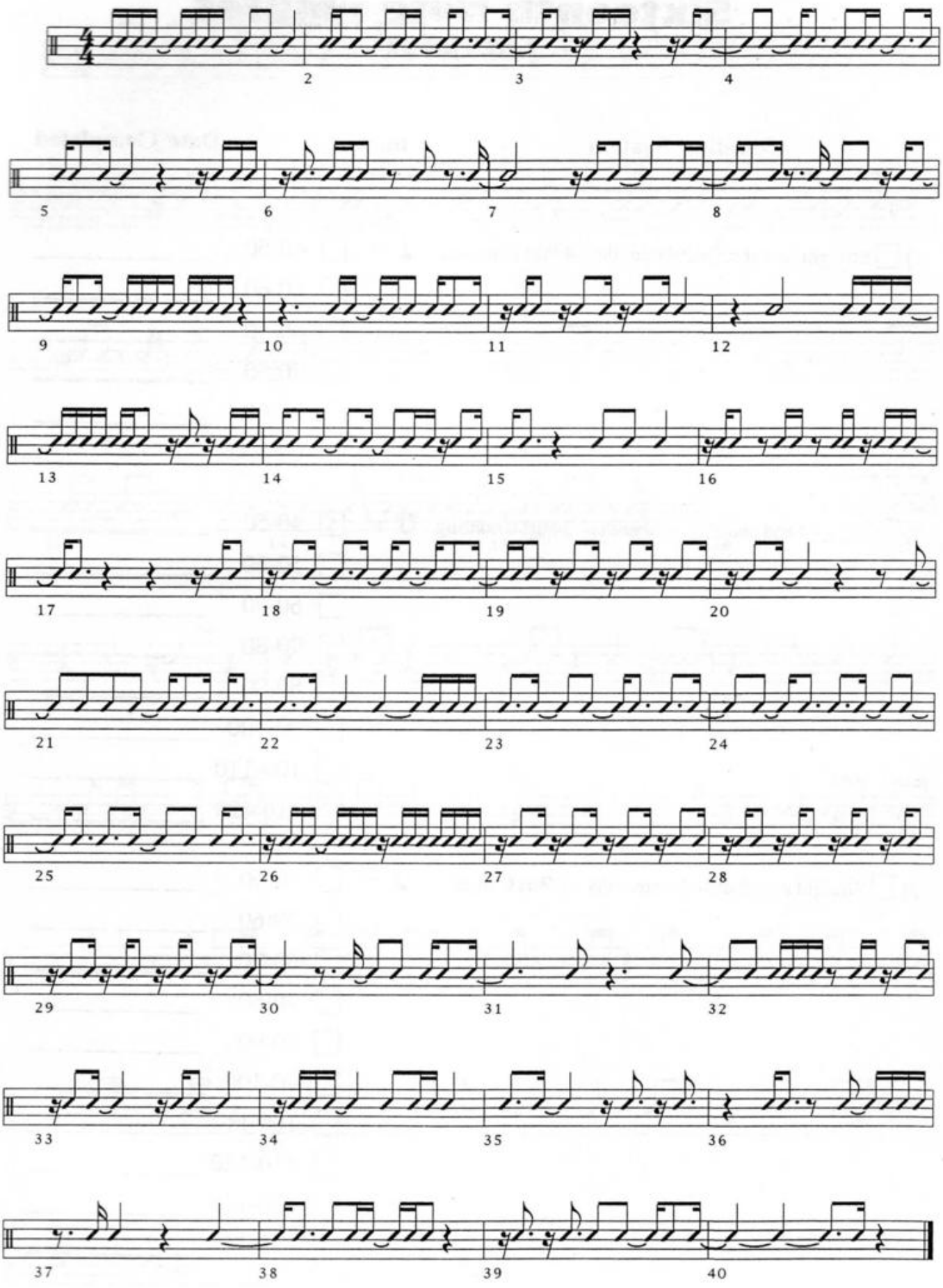
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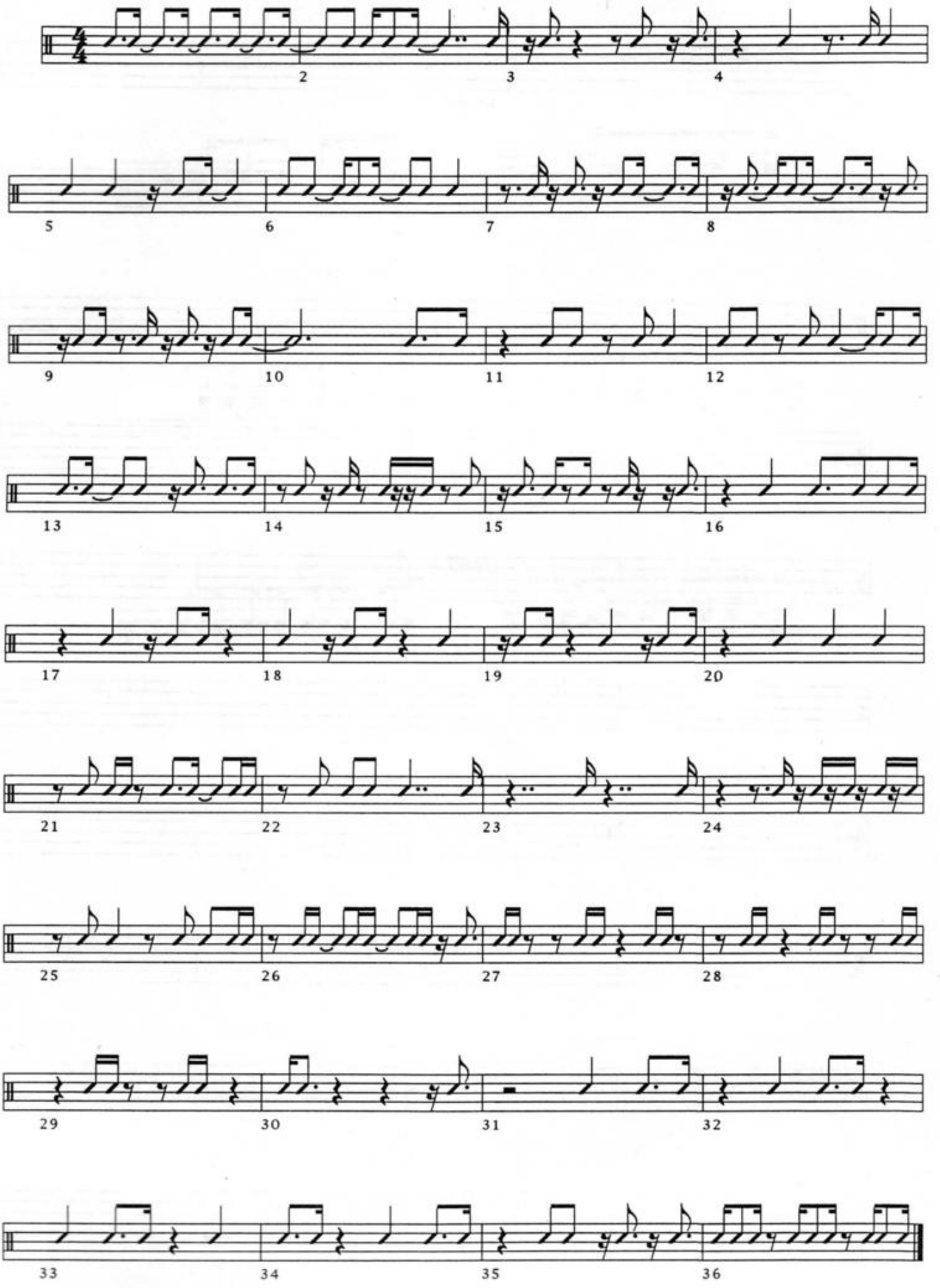
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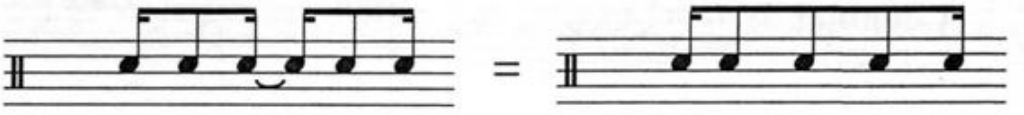
Rhythm Study

2 beats



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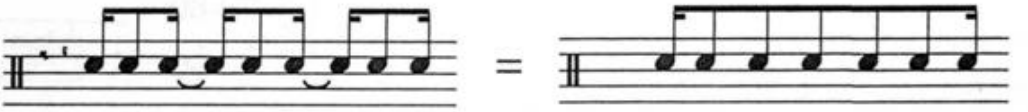
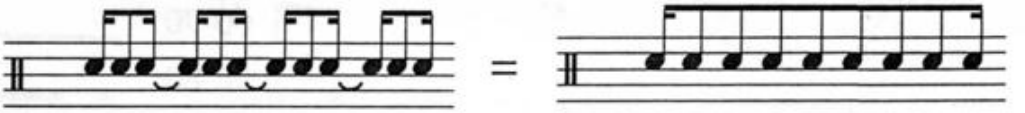
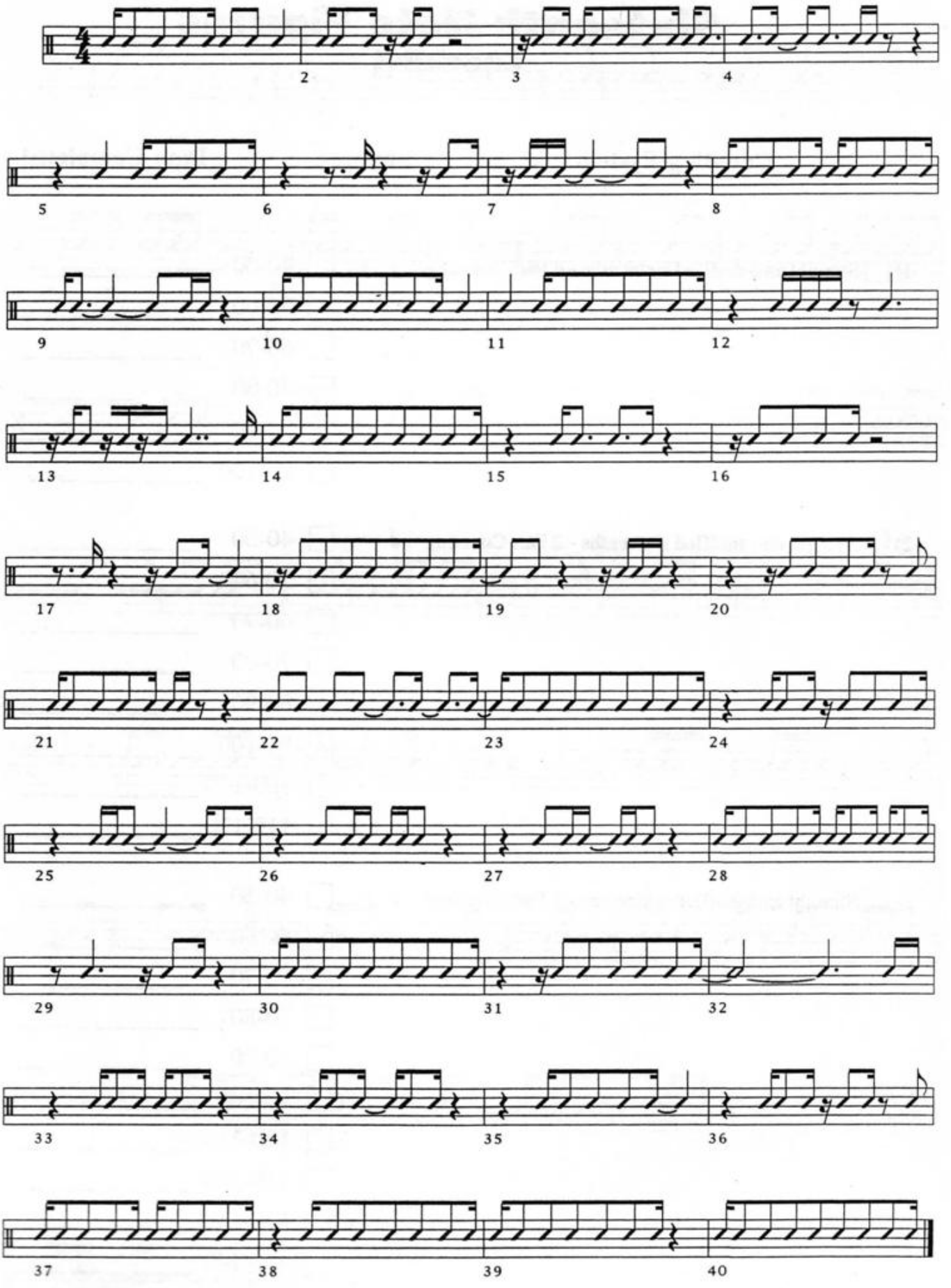


4 beats

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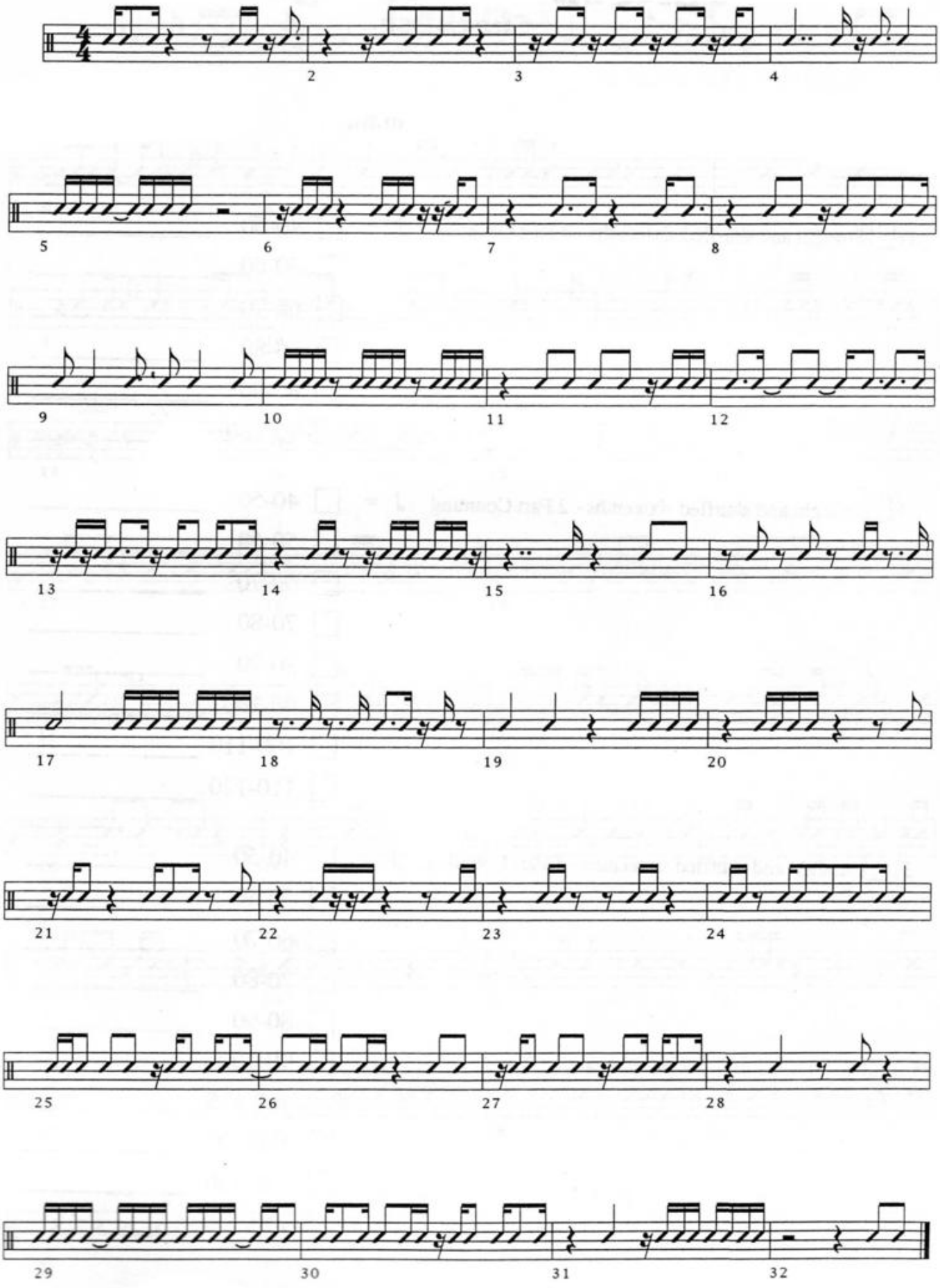
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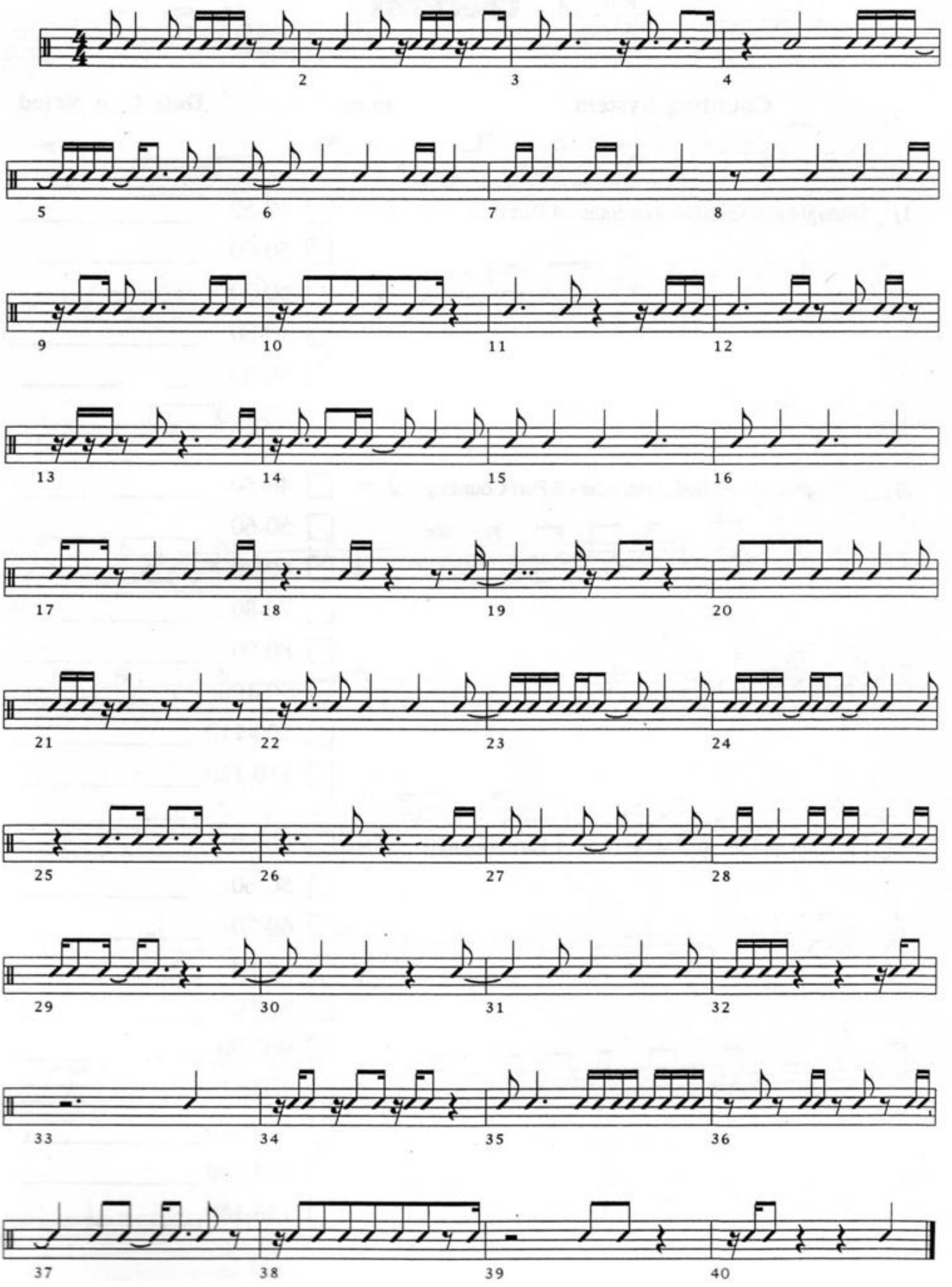
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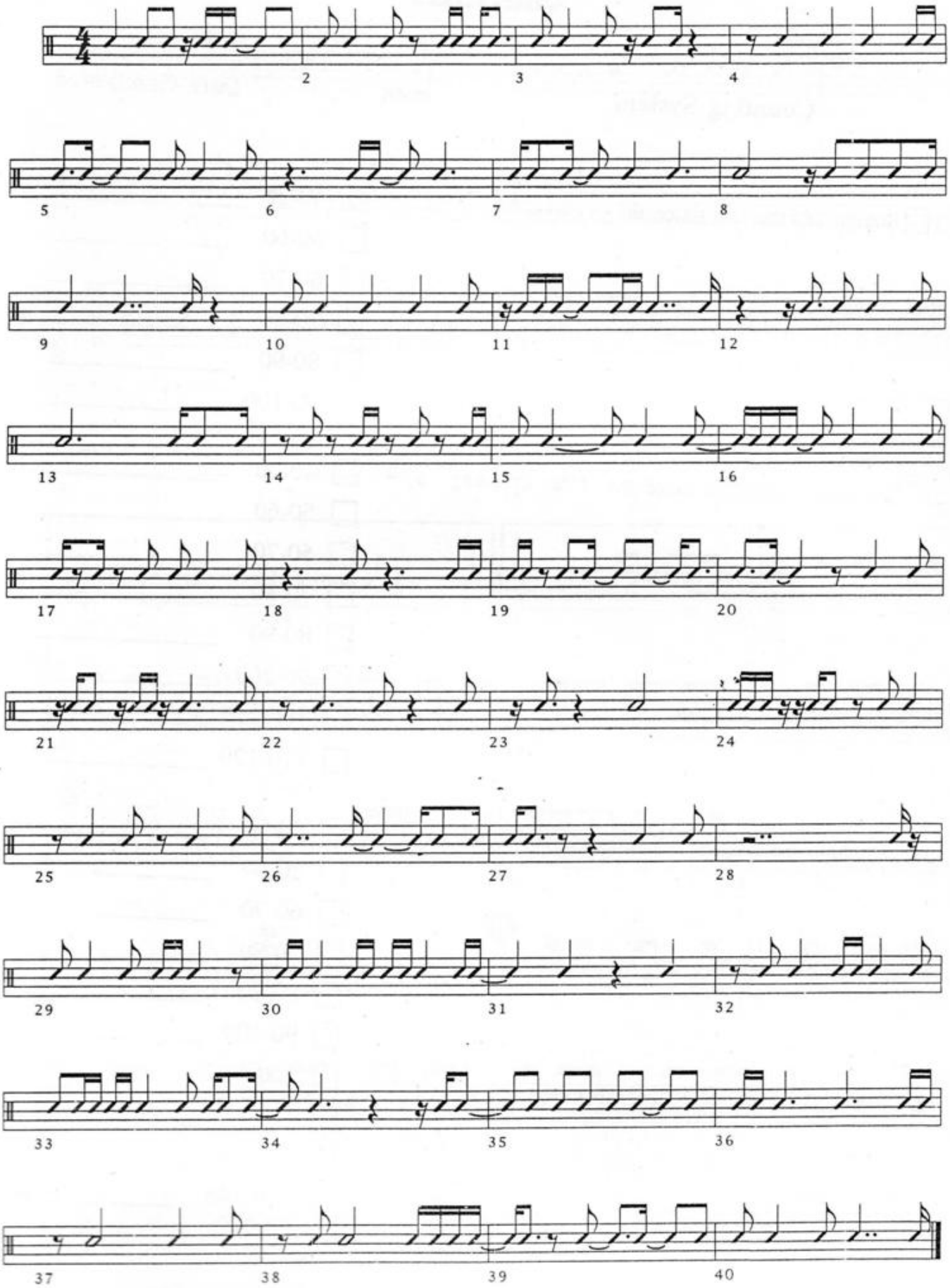
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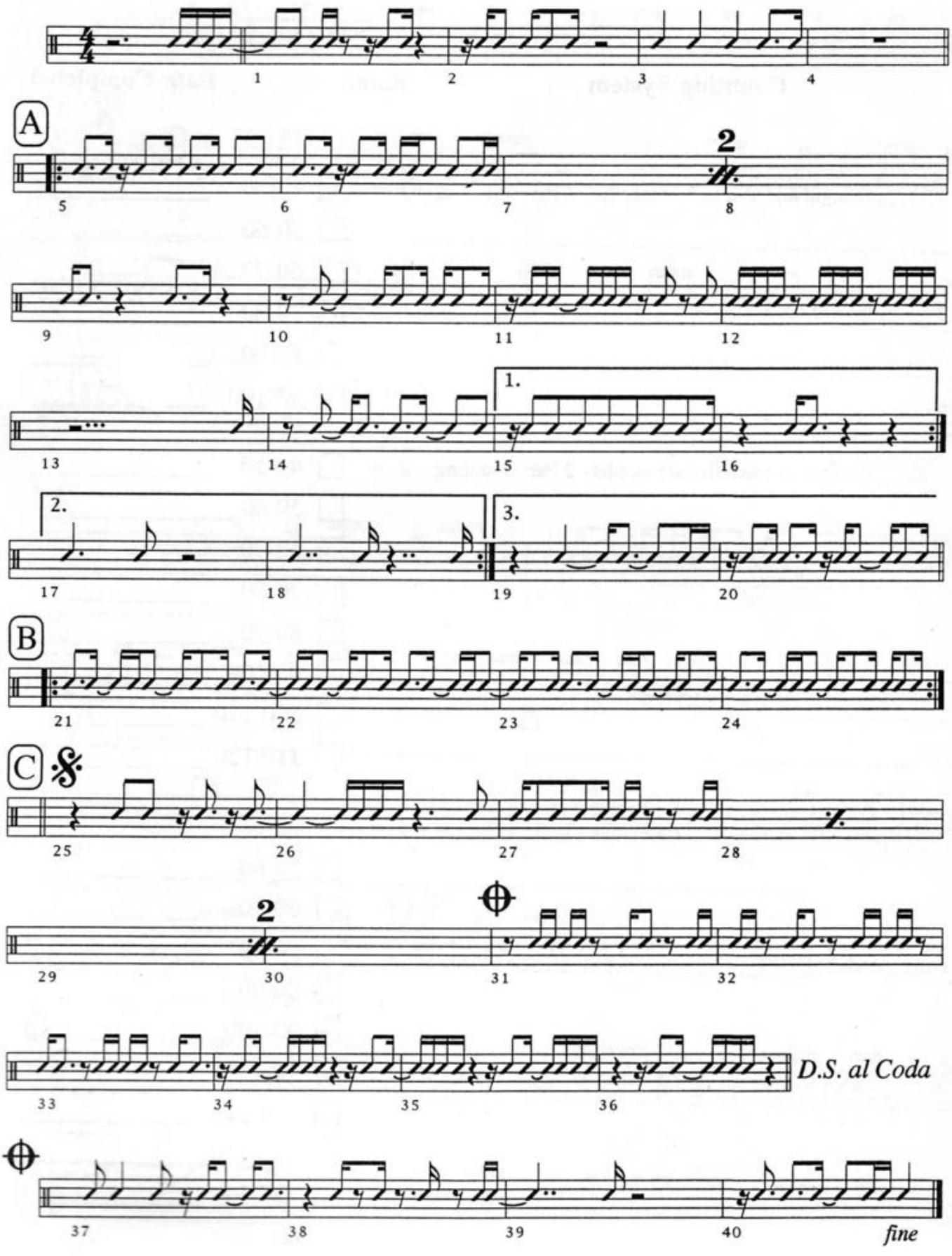
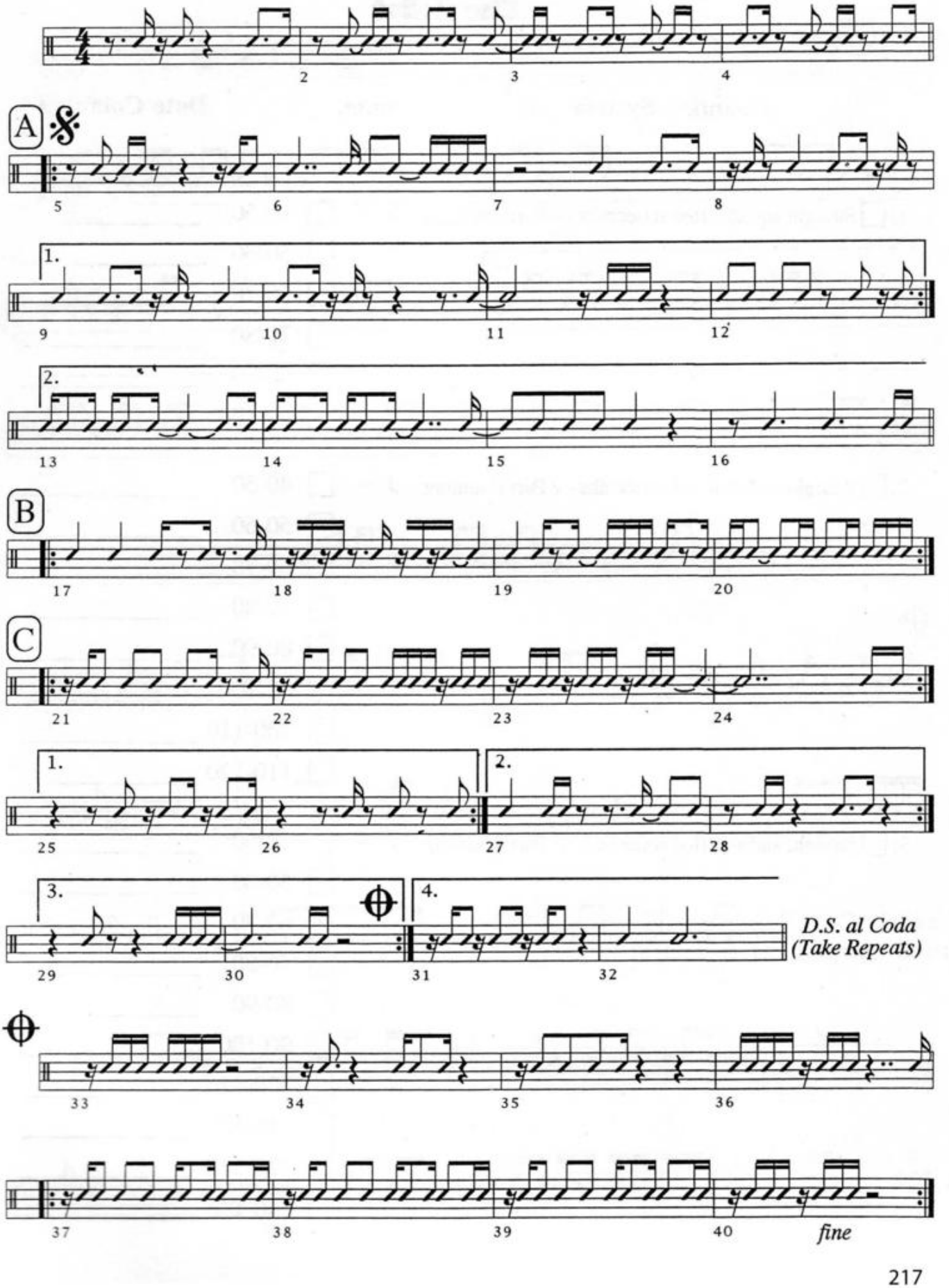
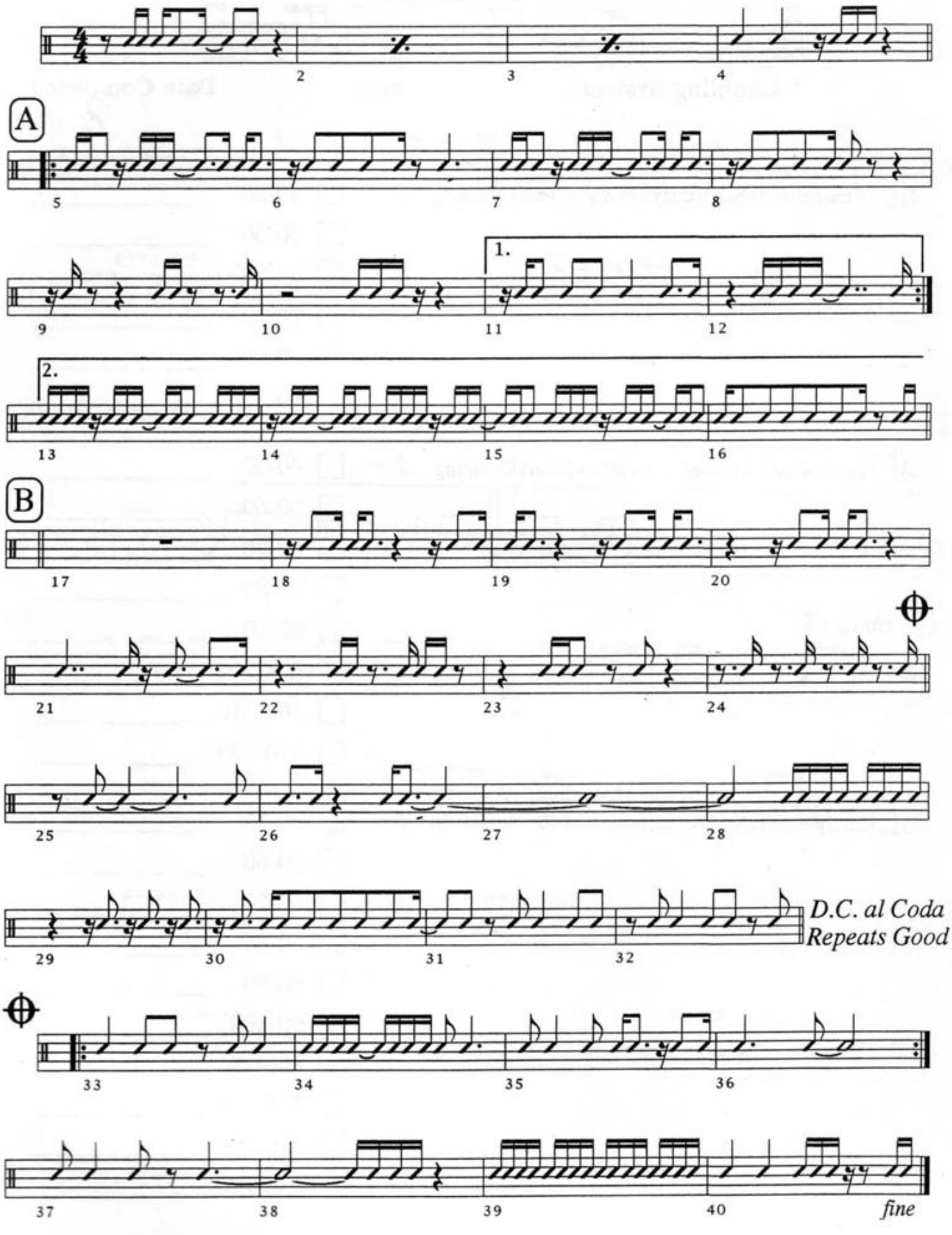
Phunquey Fo-Fo



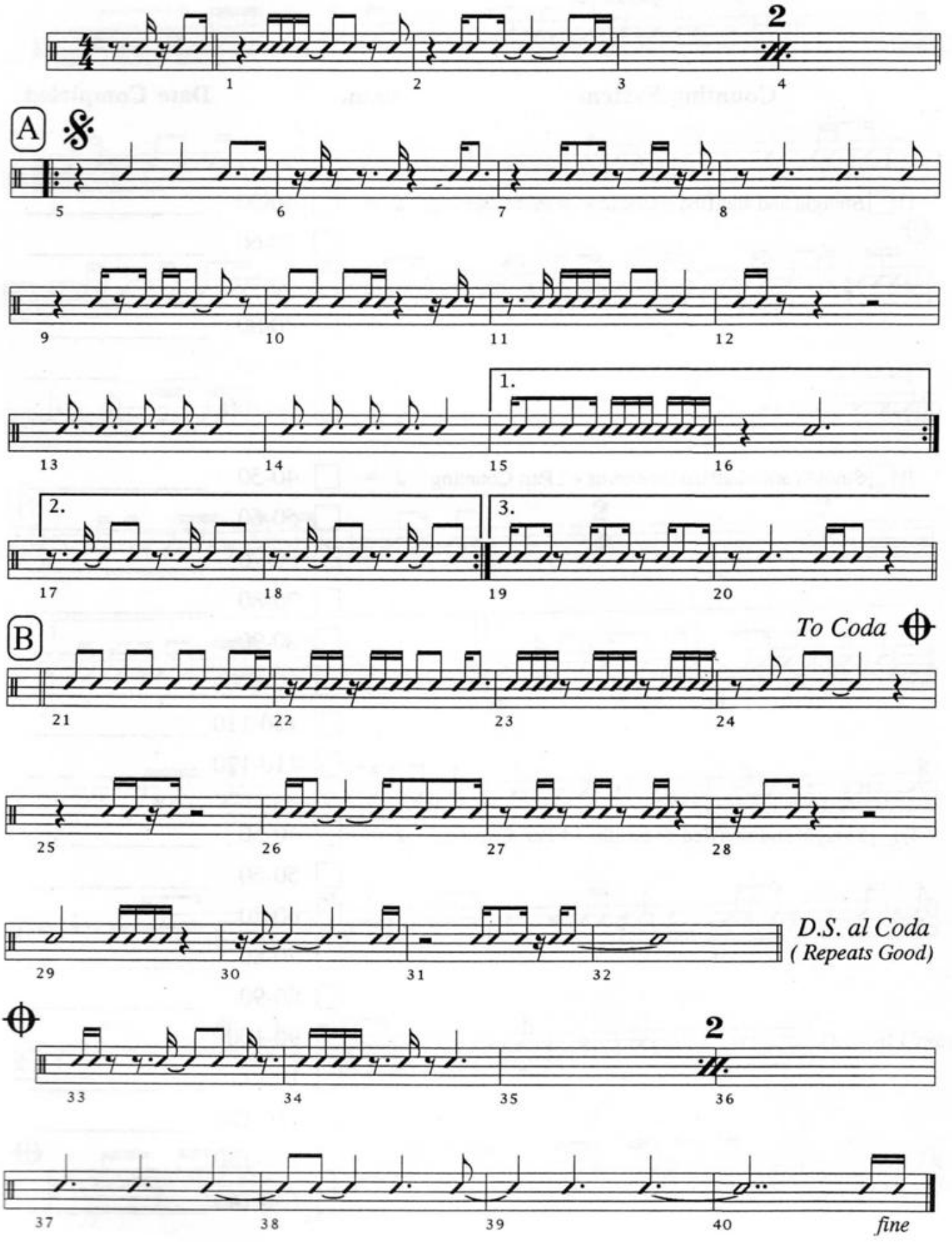
Cleo & Charlie



Another Rainy Day



A & B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B
To Coda
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D.S. al Coda
(Repeats Good)
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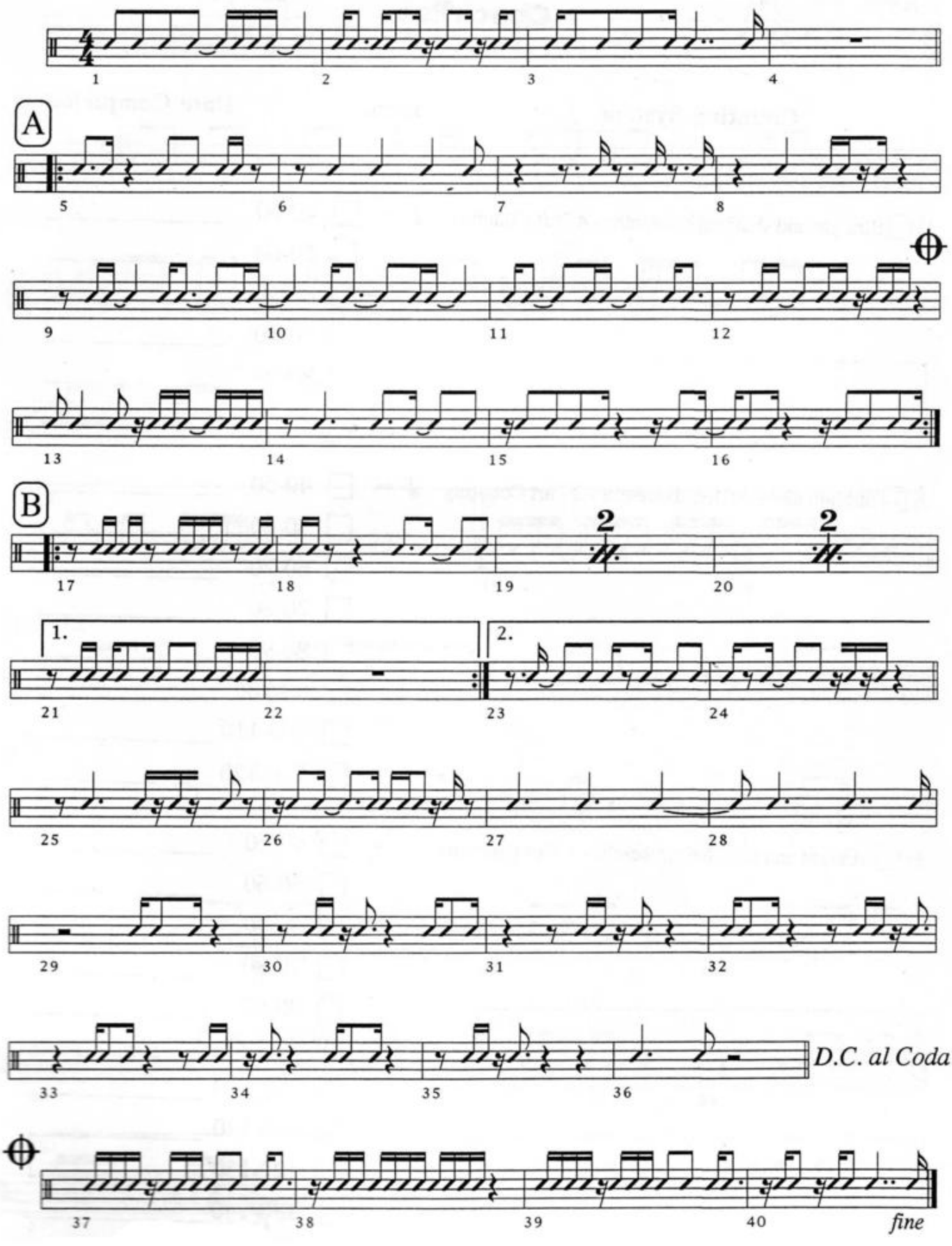
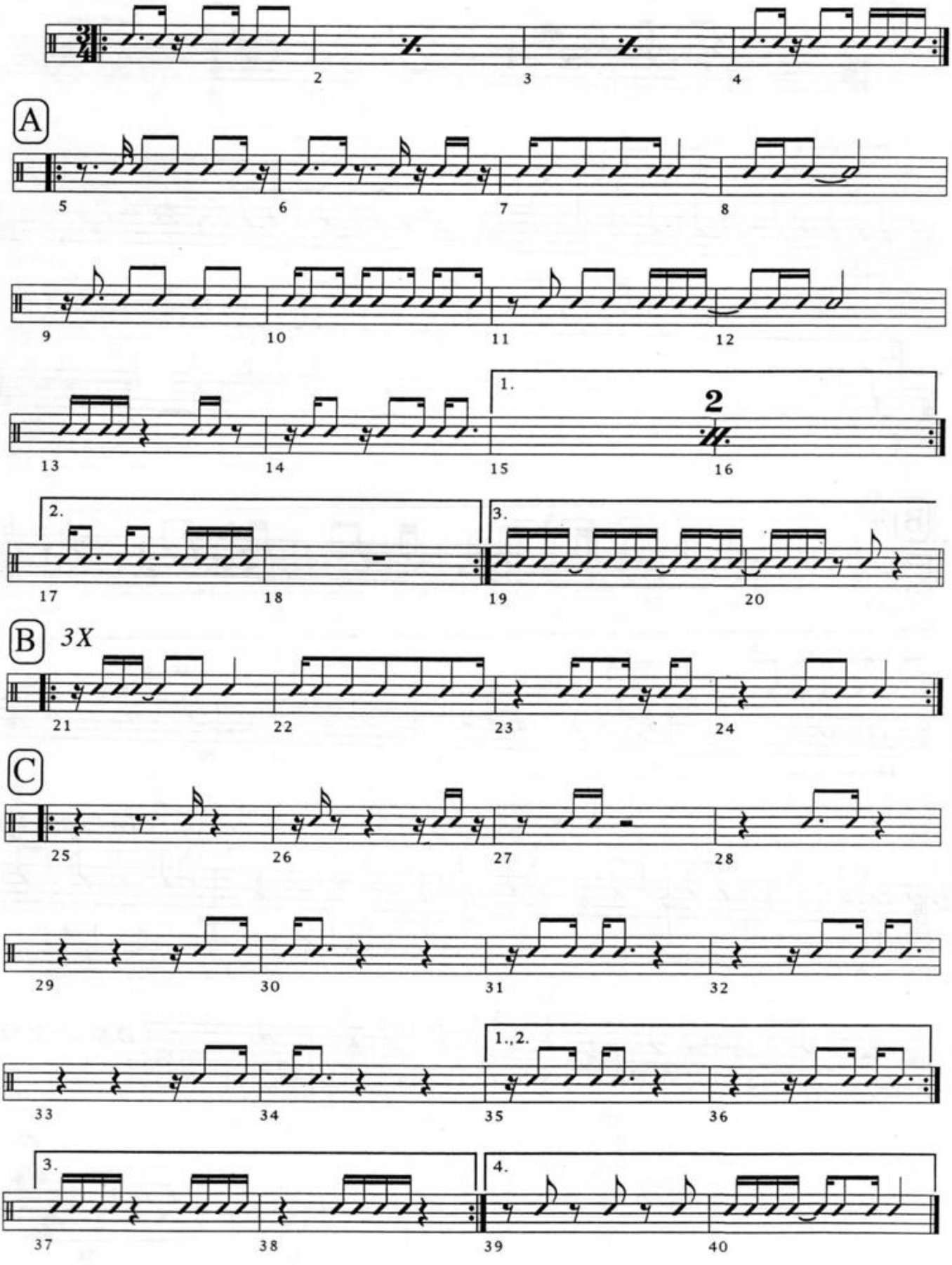
fine

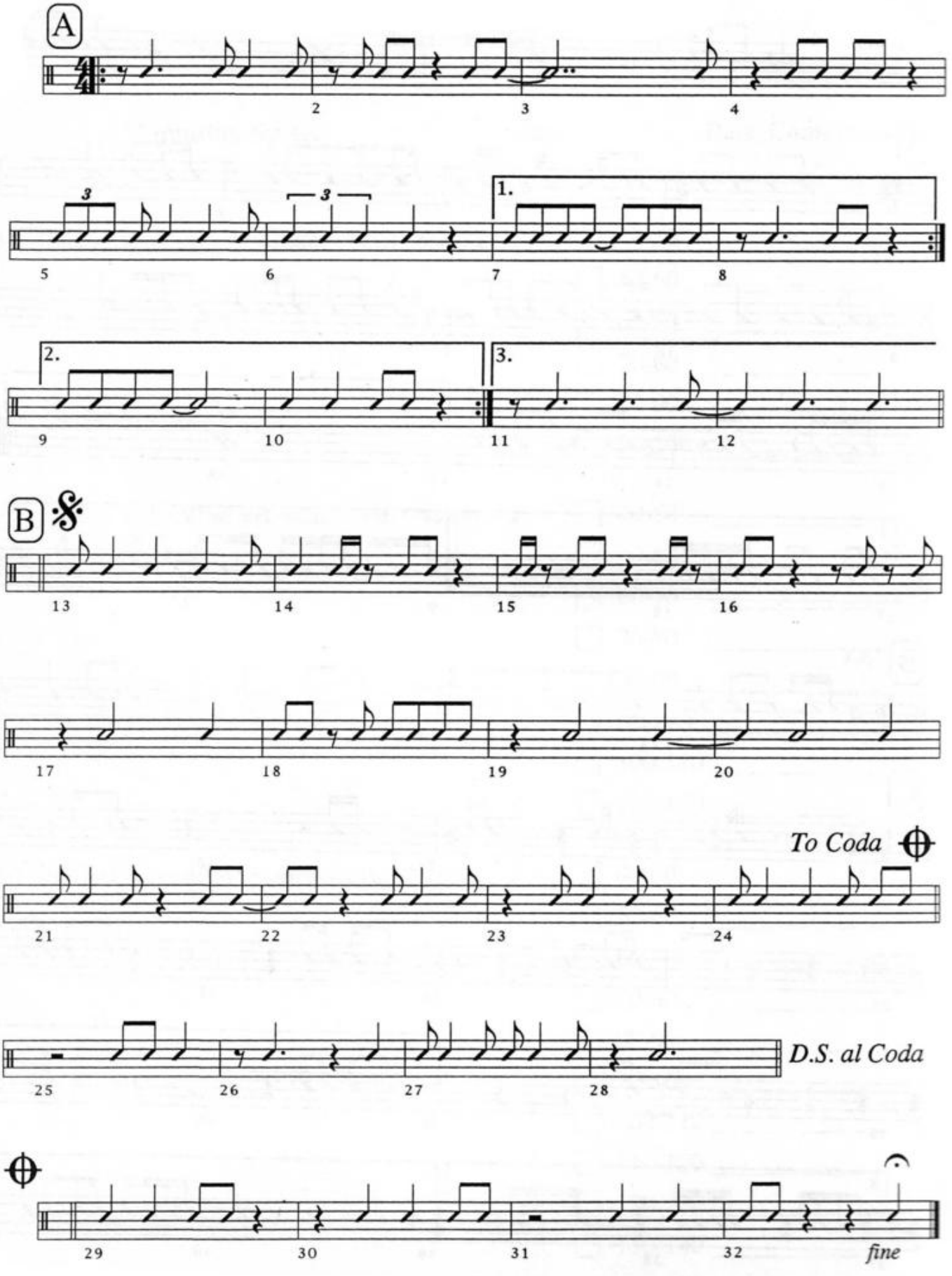
Center Field



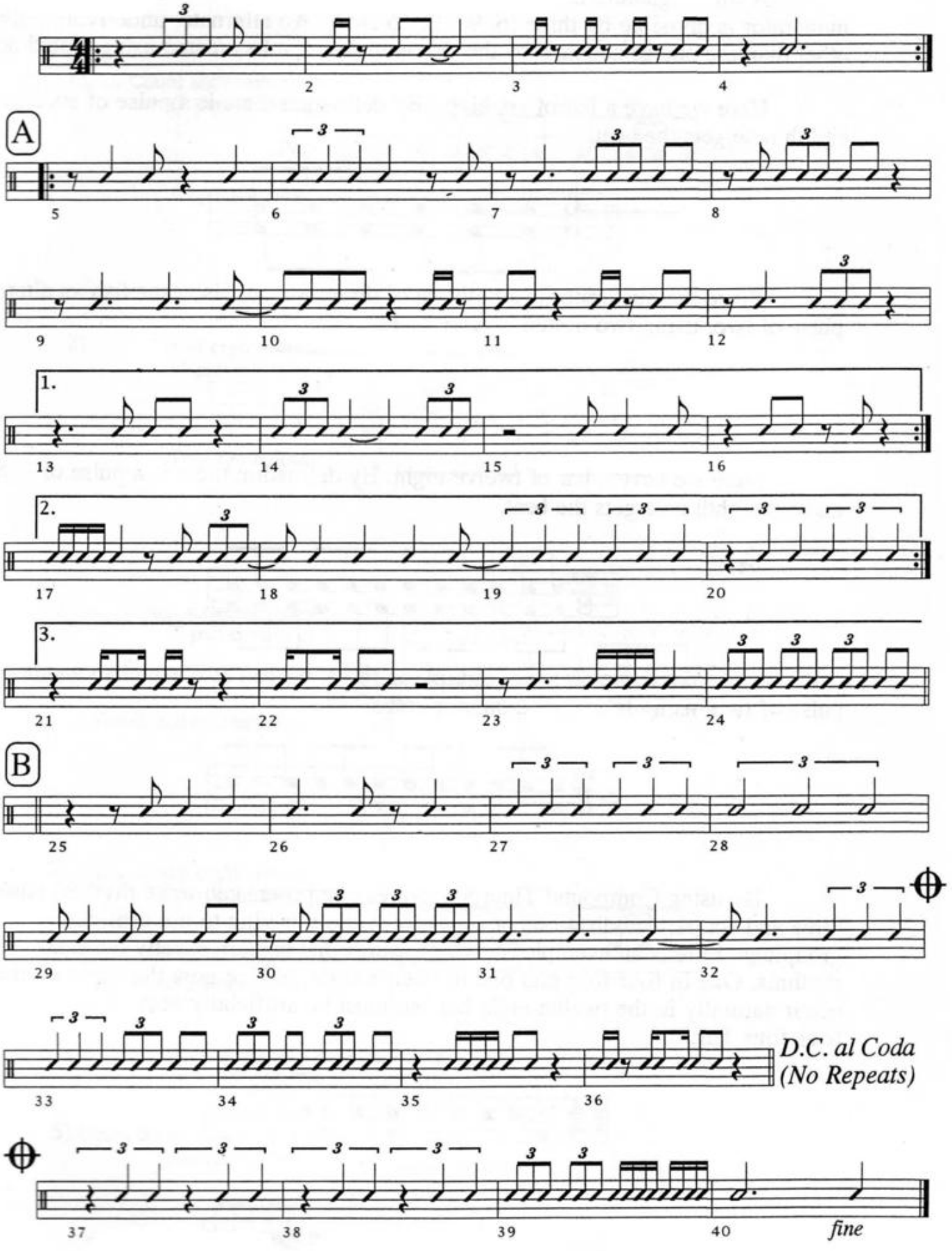
Fe-Fo Funk



Brandon's Theme



Mr. "B"



Compound Time

A time signature may be considered a "Compound Time Signature" when its numerator is divisible by three (6, 9, 12, 15 etc.). An alternate, underlying pulse, other than the one established by the denominator, can be created using dotted notes.

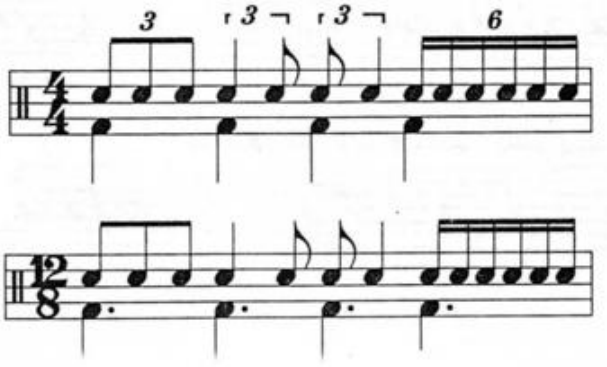
Here we have a bar of six-eight. By defination there is a pulse of six and the eighth note gets the beat.

Since the numerator is a multiple of three, we can also establish an alternate pulse of two, using two dotted quarter notes.

Here we have a bar of twelve-eight. By defination there is a pulse of twelve and the eighth note gets the beat.

Since the numerator is a multiple of three, we can also establish an alternate pulse of two, using four dotted quarter notes.

By using Compound Time Signatures composers can write rhythms based on three and six part subdivisions of the pulse without having to use artificial groupings. Here is an example of two measures that contain exactly the same rhythms. One in four-four and one in twelve-eight. Notice how the triple rhythms occur naturally in the twelve-eight bar but must be artificially notated in the four-four bar.

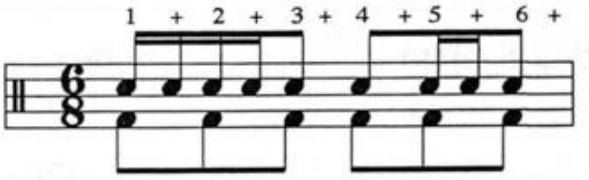


Compound Time
Counting Systems

1)..... Count sixteenth notes
(2 part counting)

Play

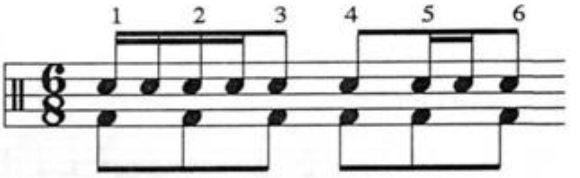
Tap eighth notes



2)..... Count eighth notes
(1 part counting)

Play

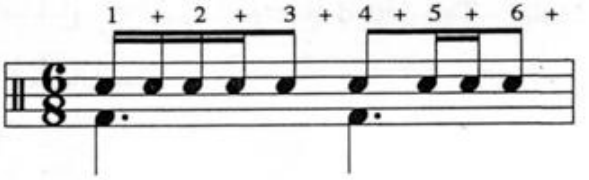
Tap eighth notes



3)..... Count sixteenth notes
(2 part counting)

Play

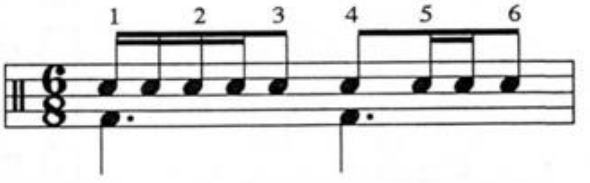
Tap dotted quarter notes



4)..... Count eighth notes
(1 part counting)

Play

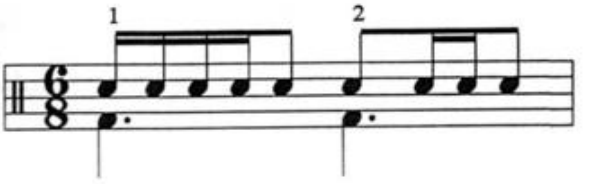
Tap dotted quarter notes



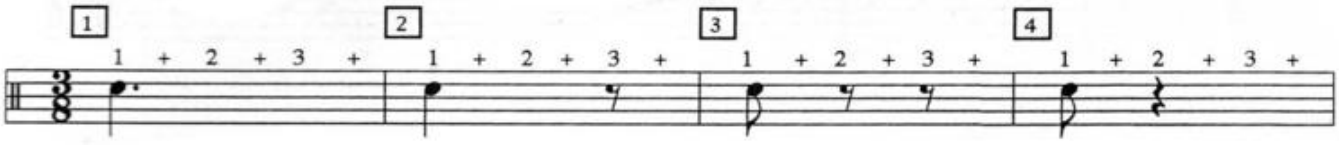
5).Count dotted quarter notes
(alternate pulse)

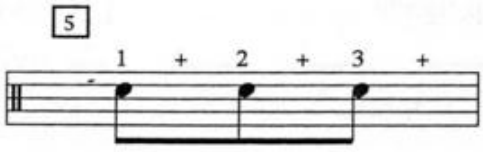
Play

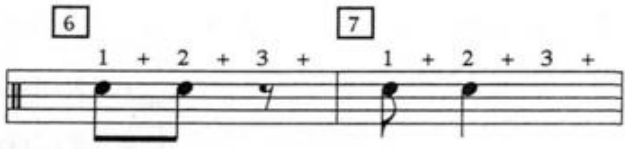
Tap dotted quarter notes

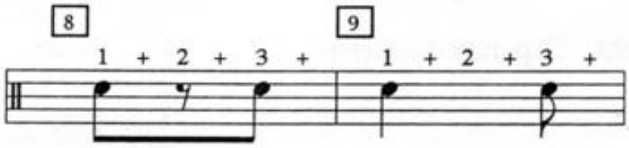


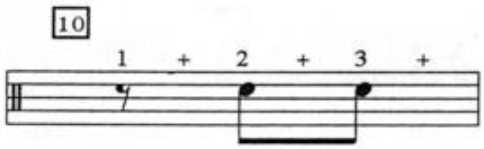
Rhythm Study

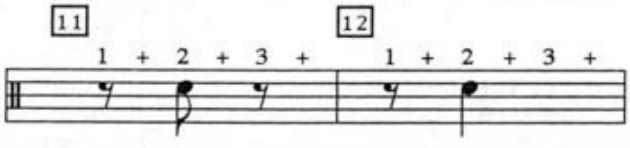


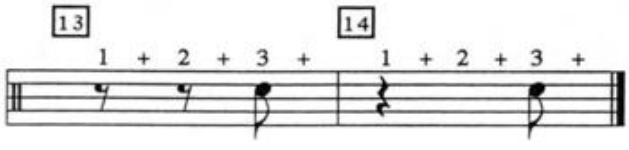


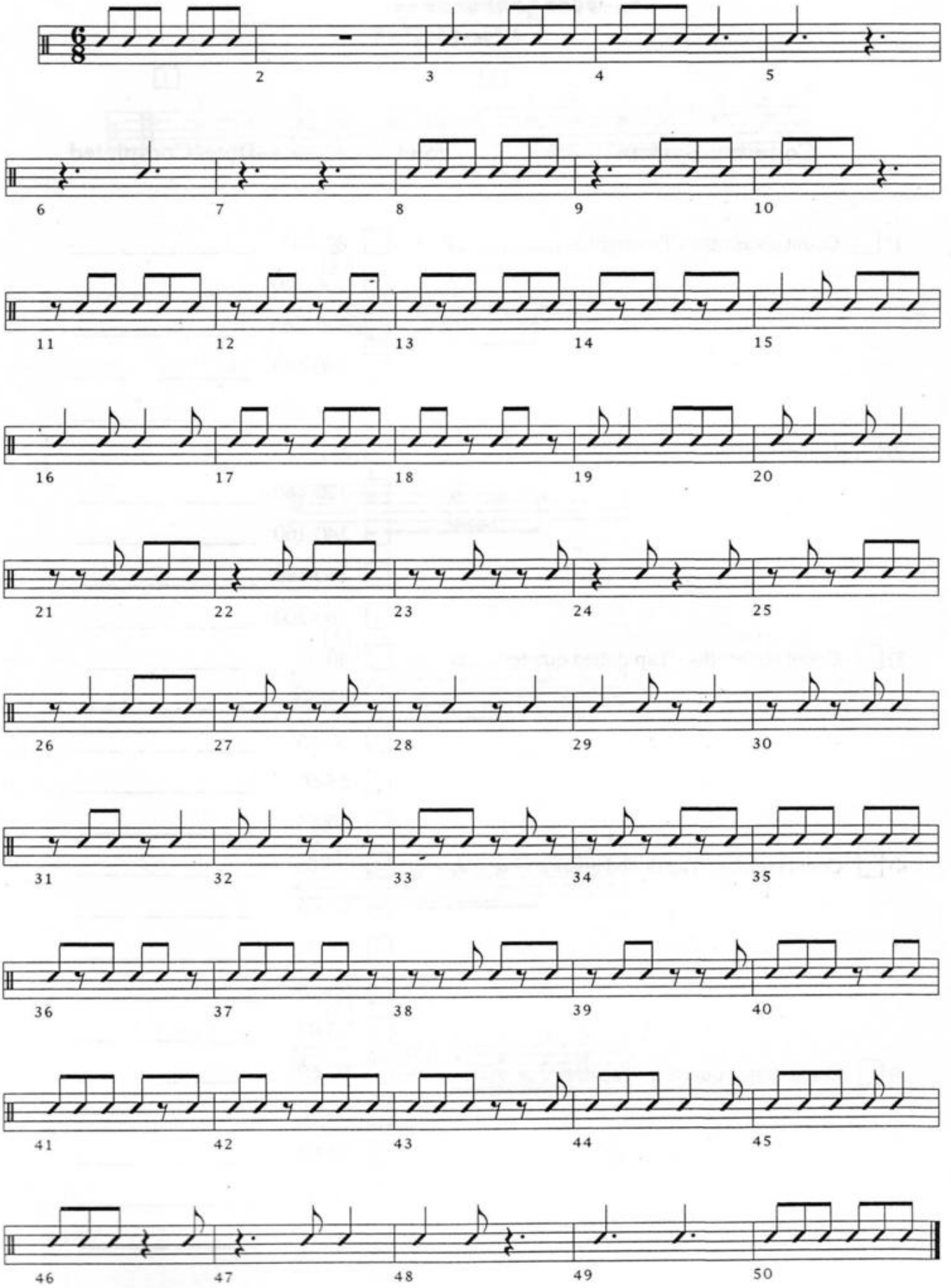








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Rhythm Study

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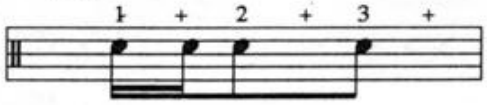

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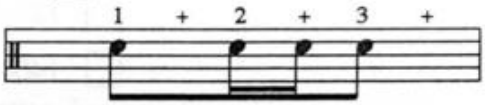

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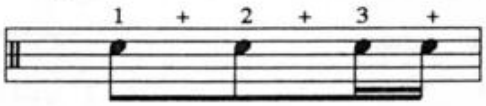

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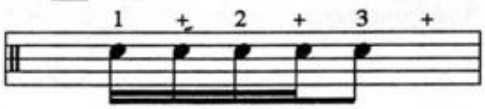

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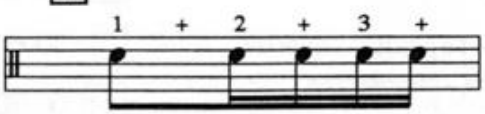

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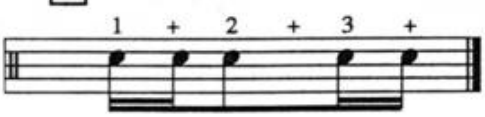

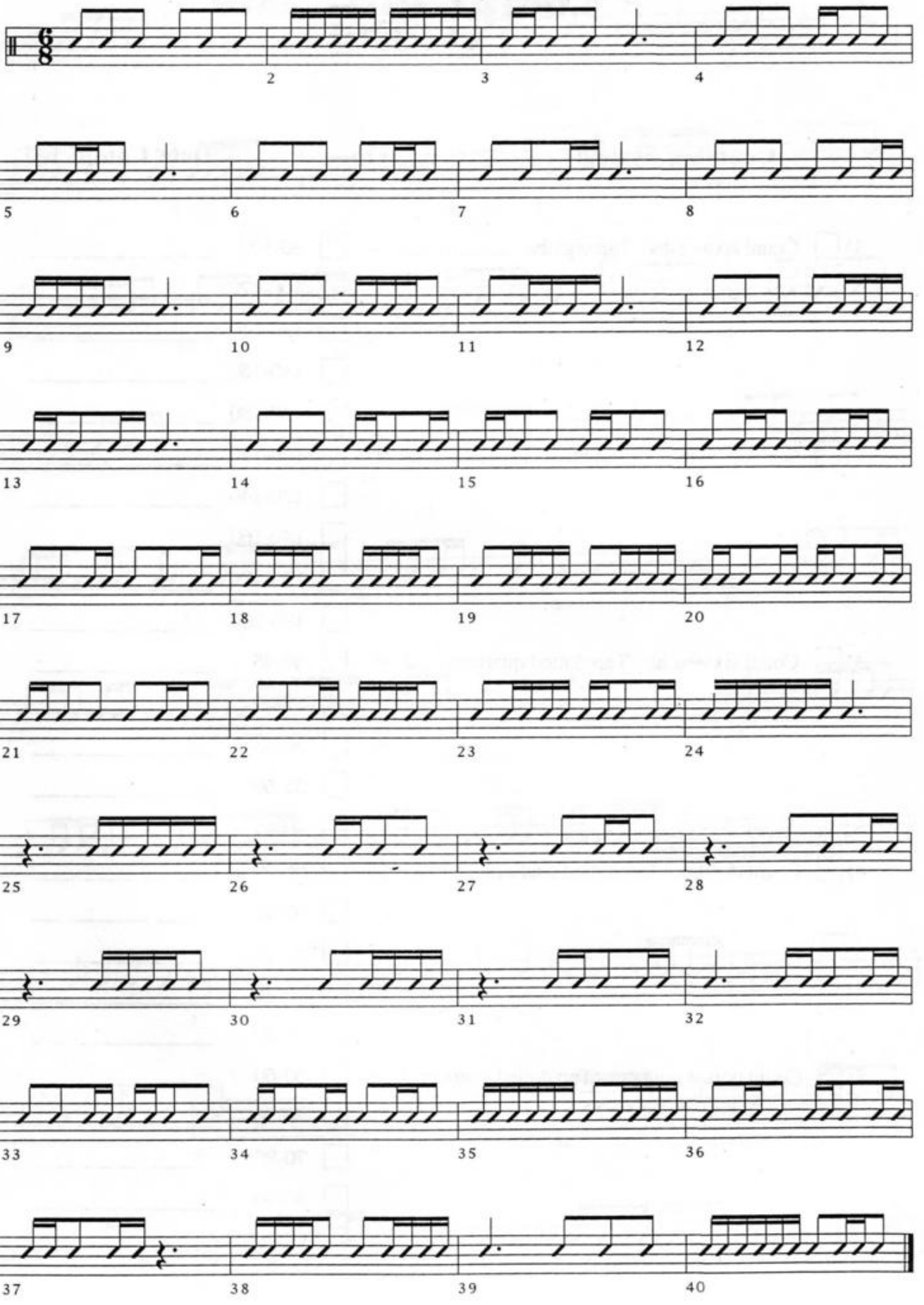
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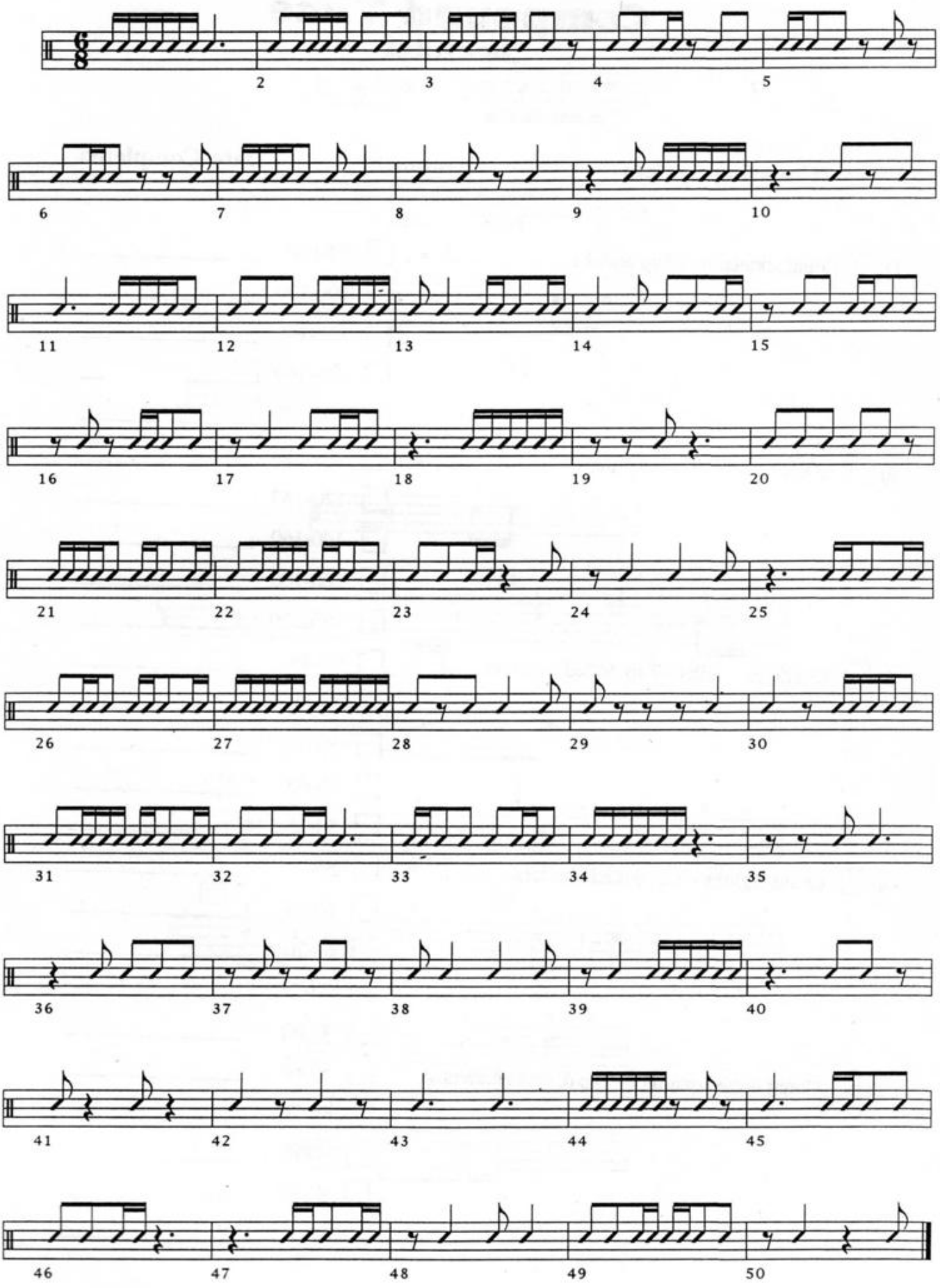
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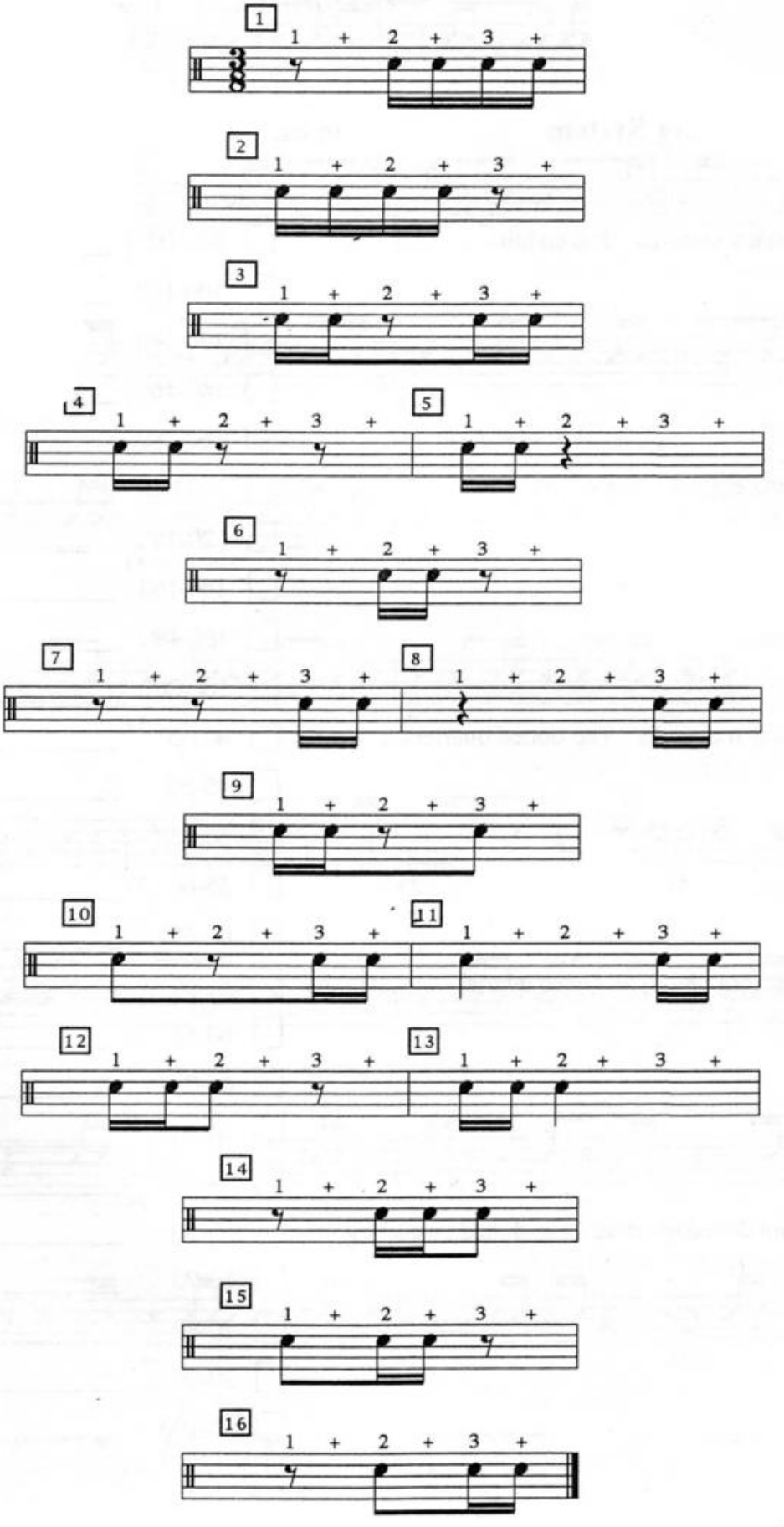
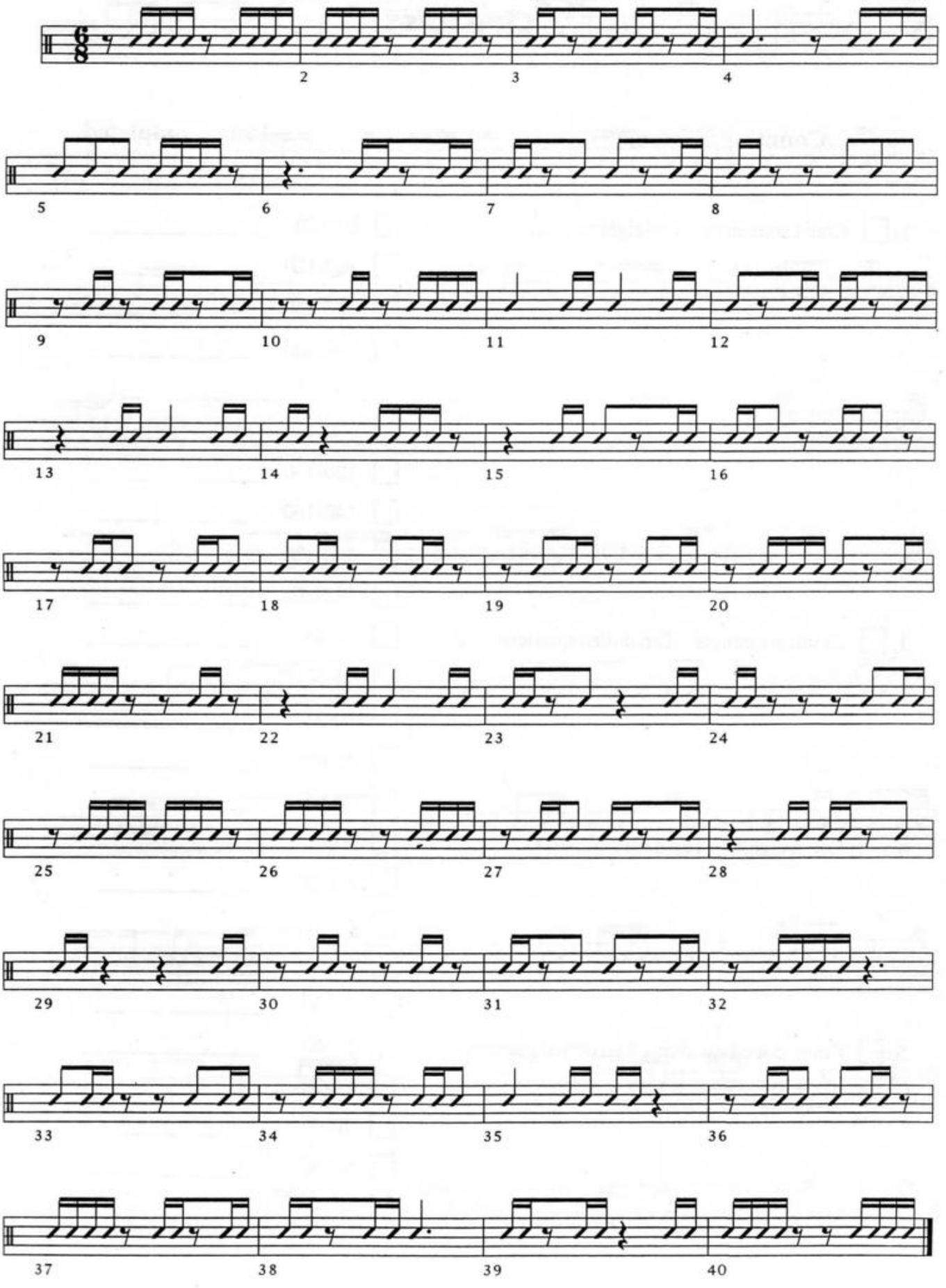
Rhythm Study

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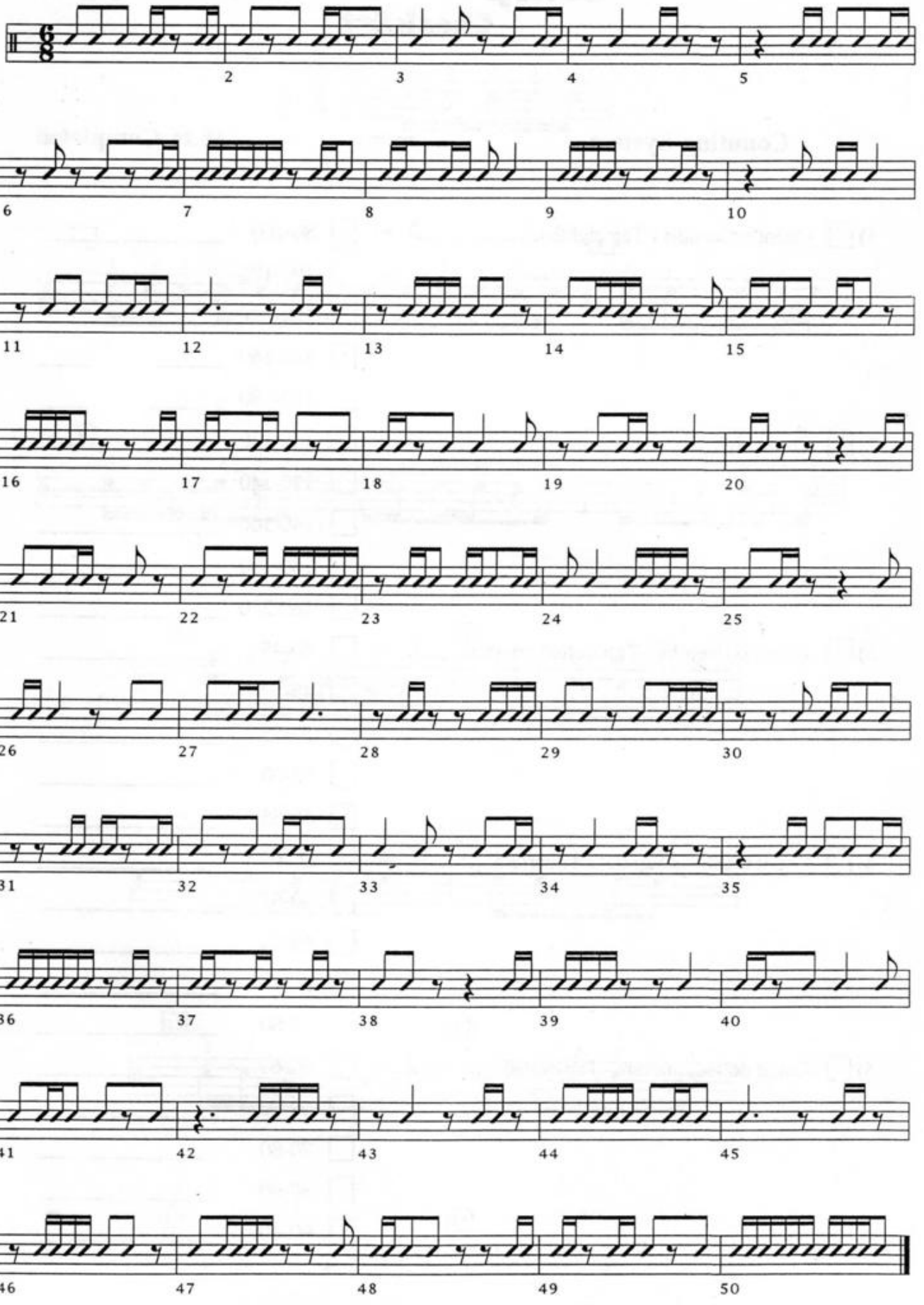
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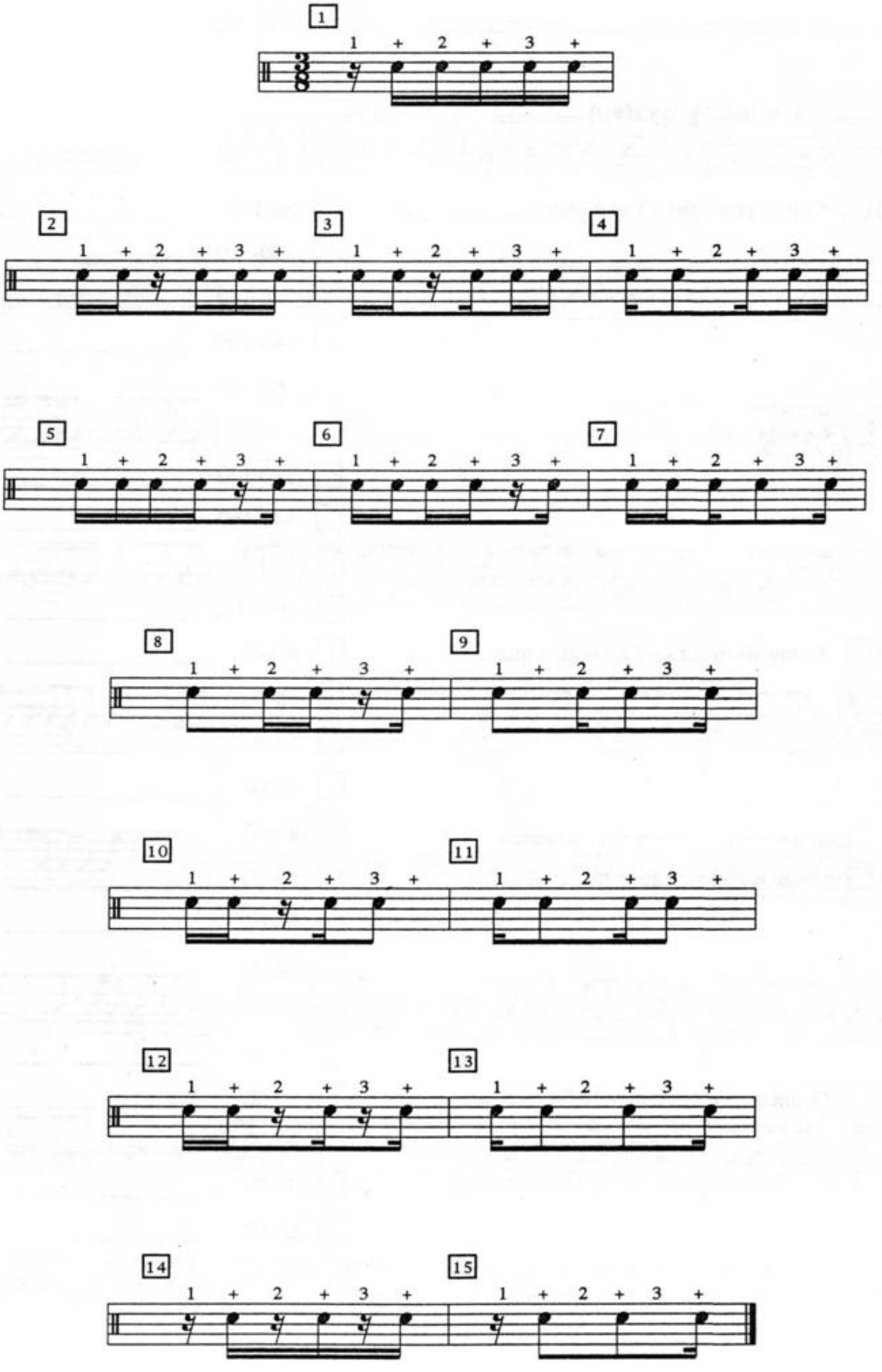
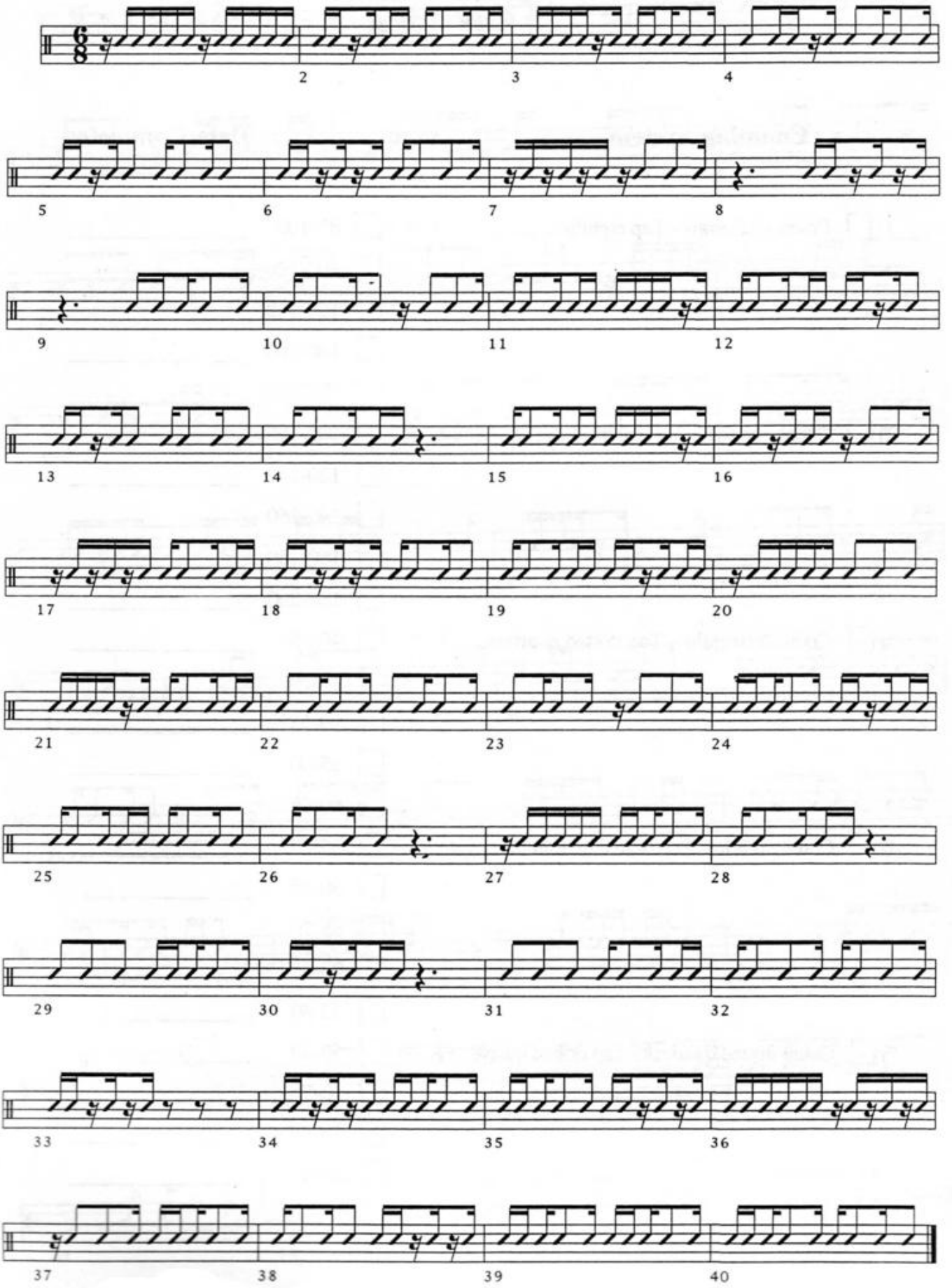
Rhythm Study

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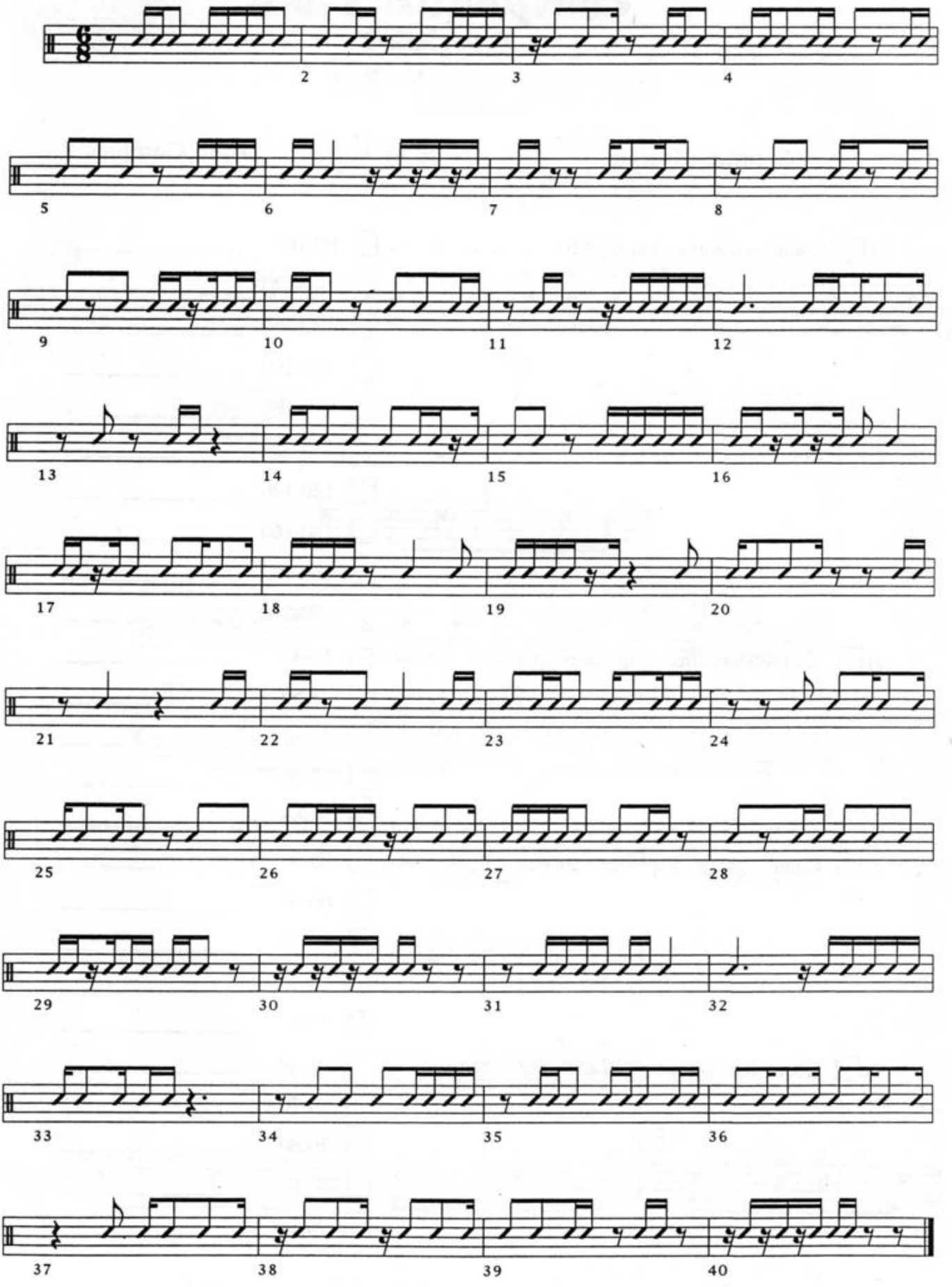
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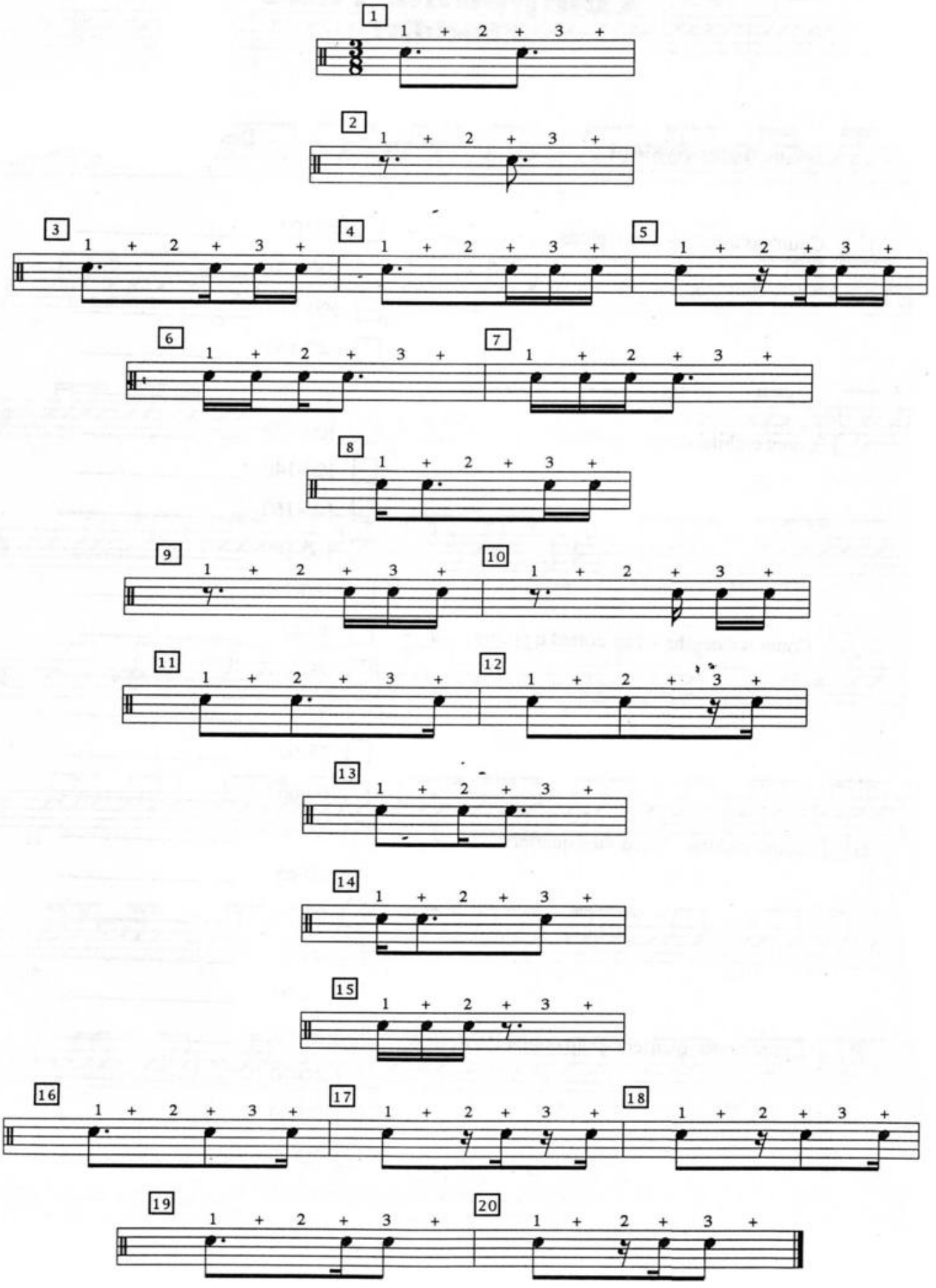
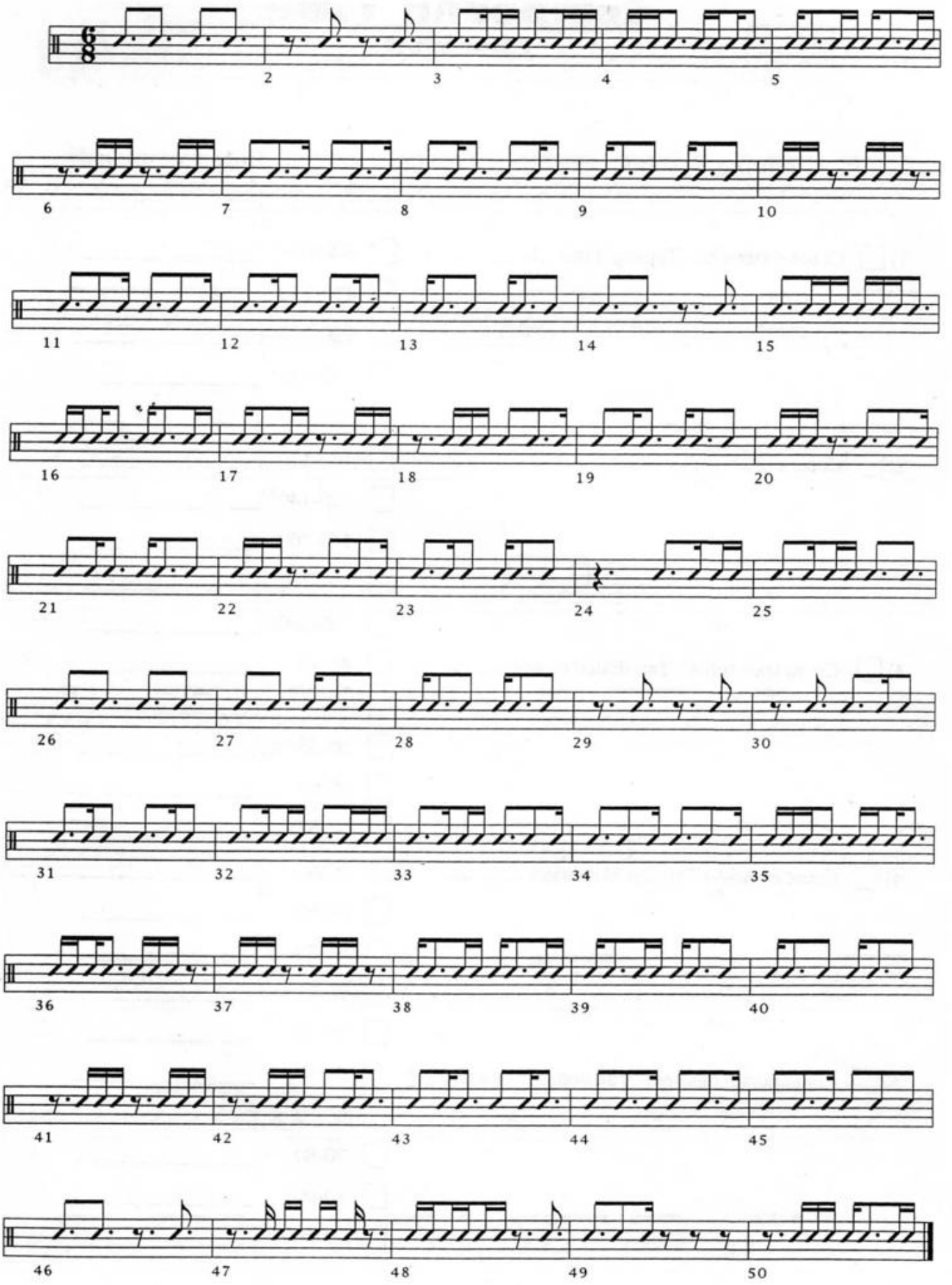
Rhythm Study

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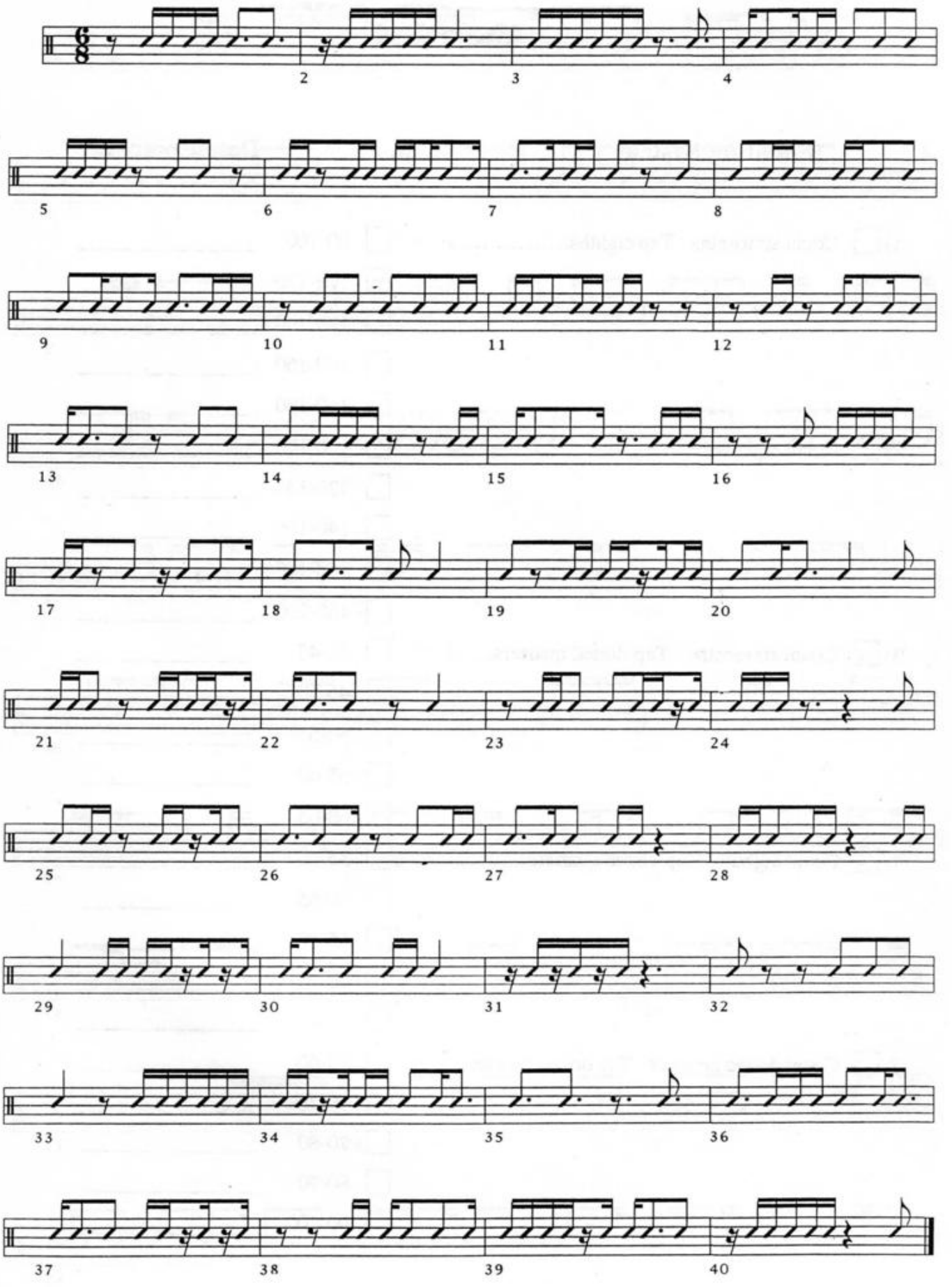
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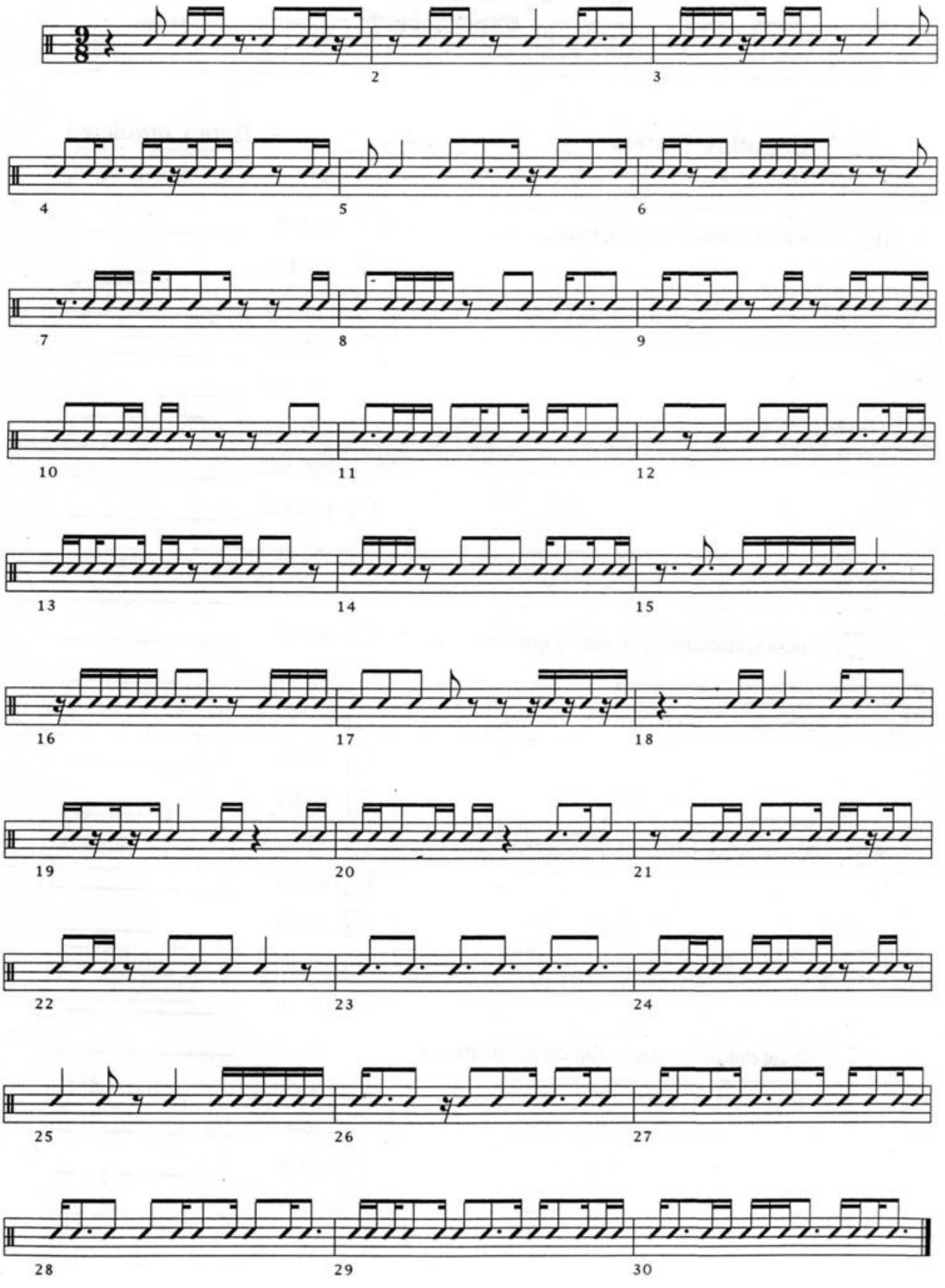
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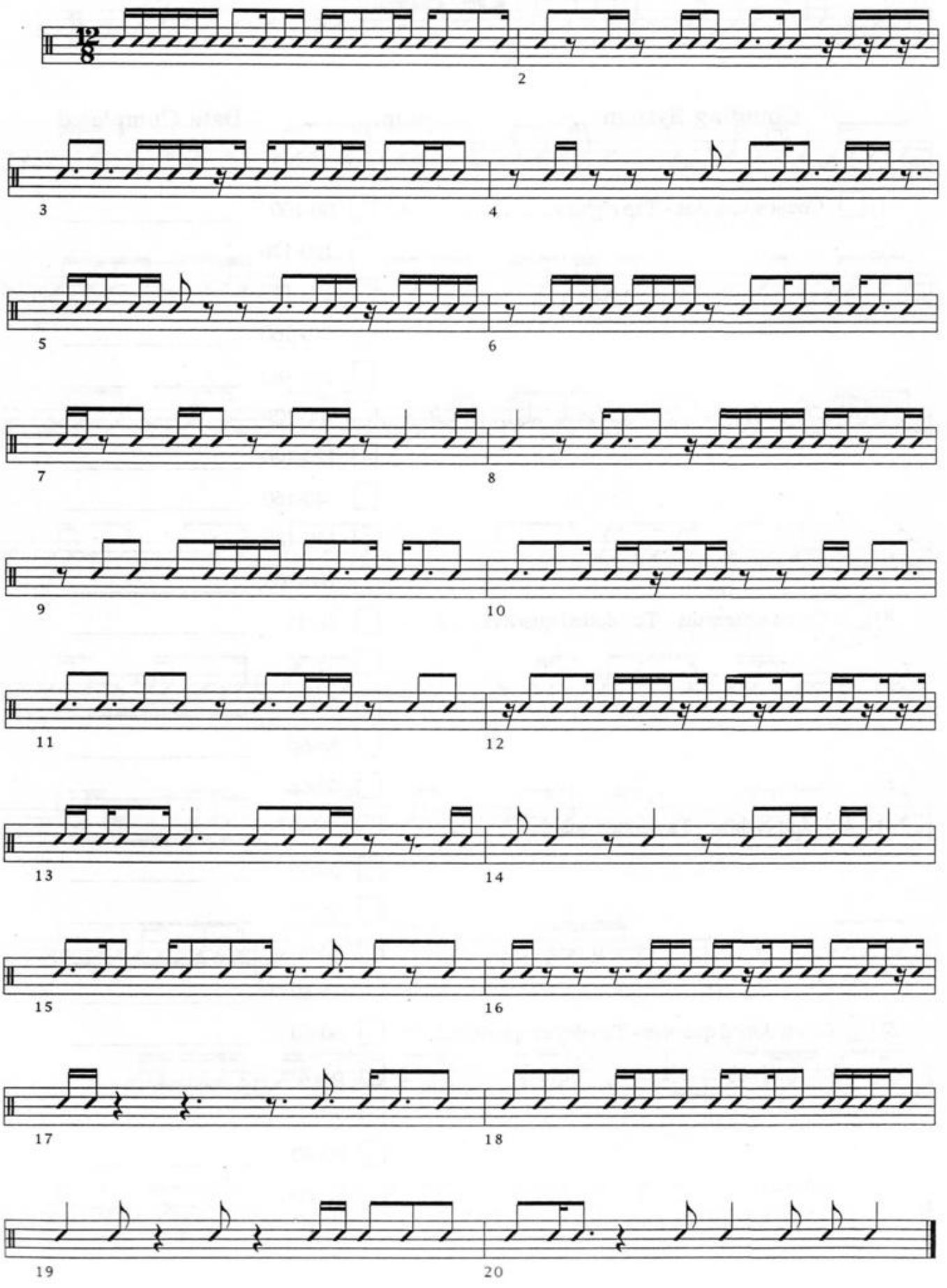
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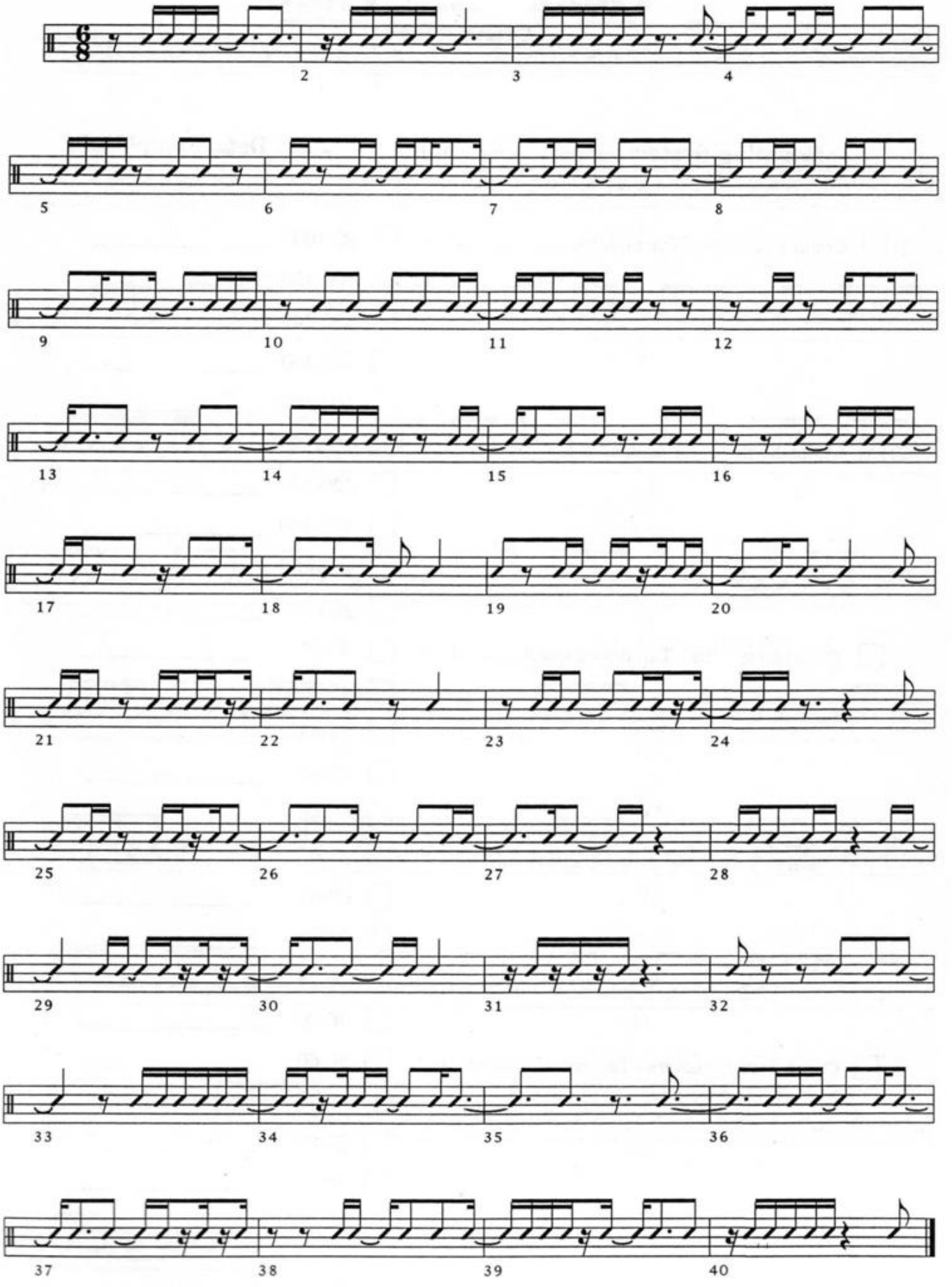
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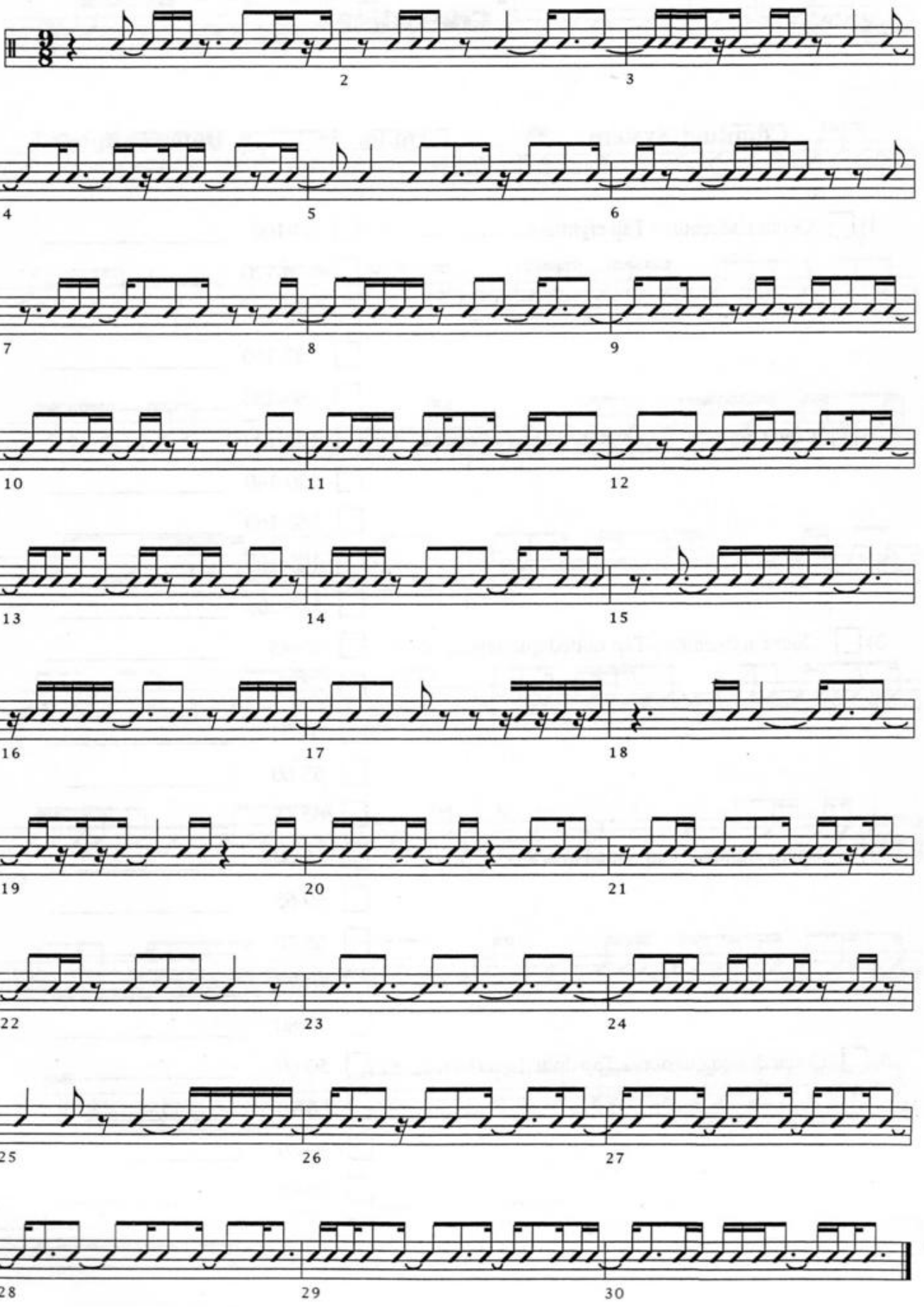
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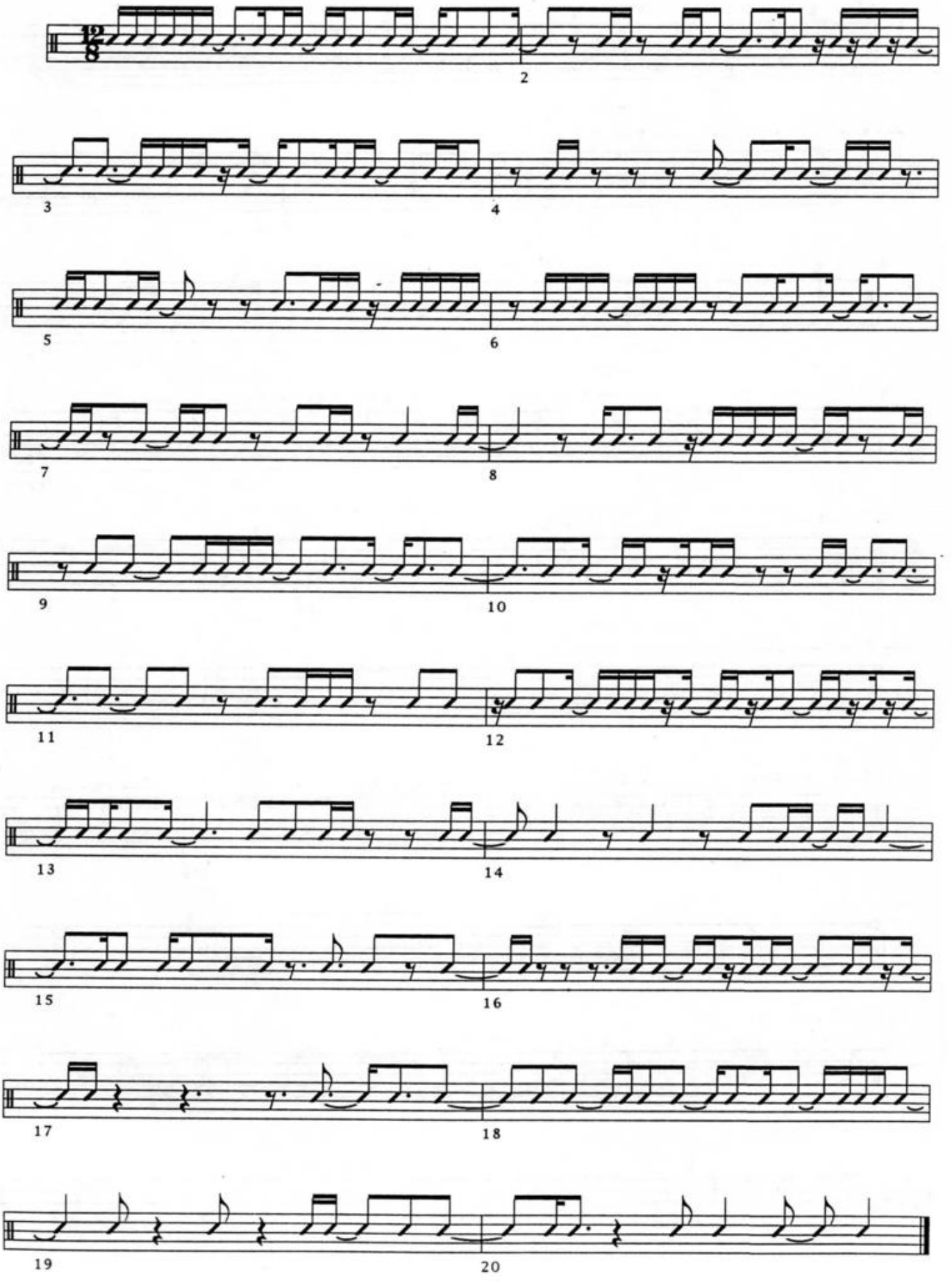
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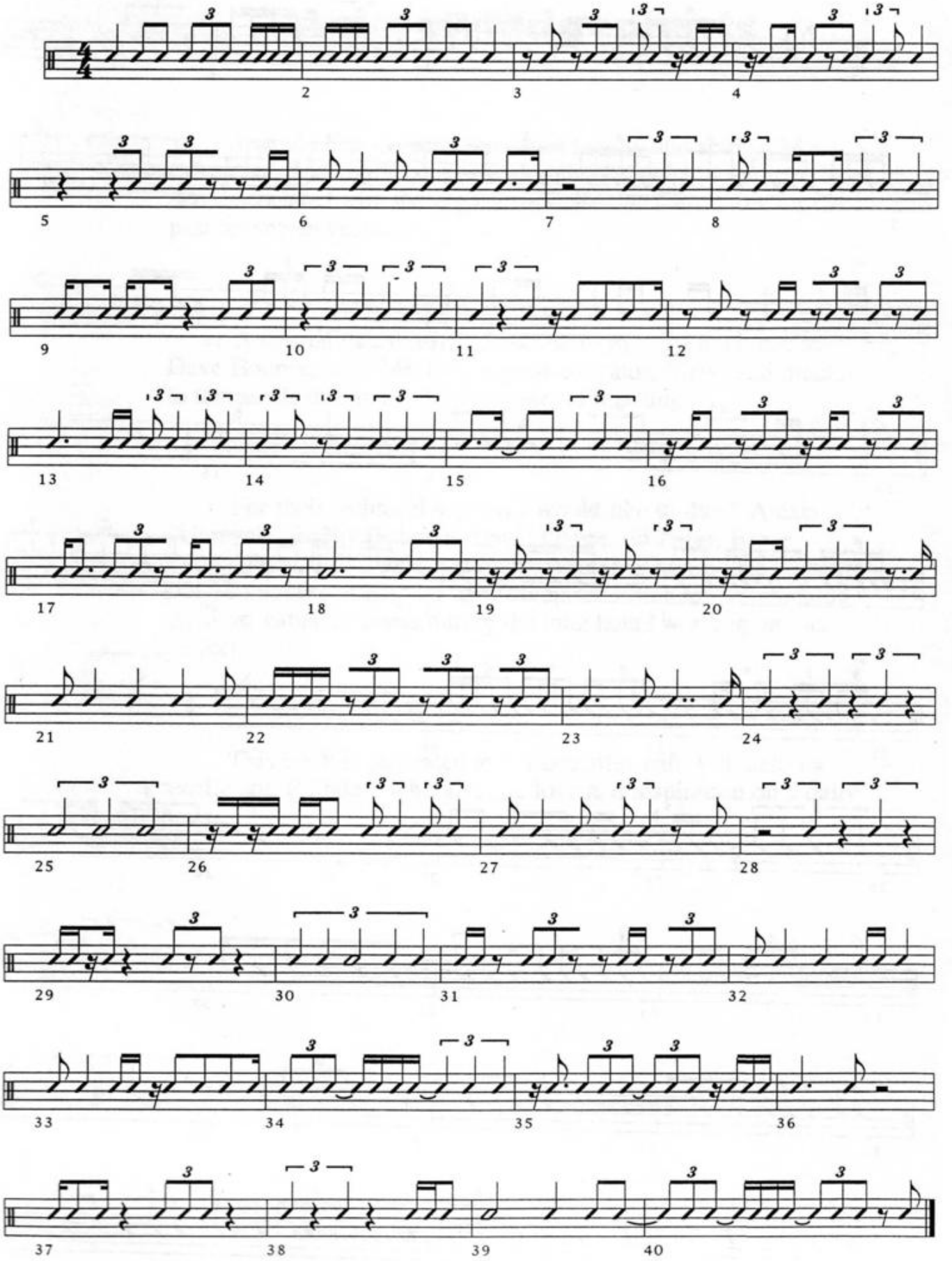
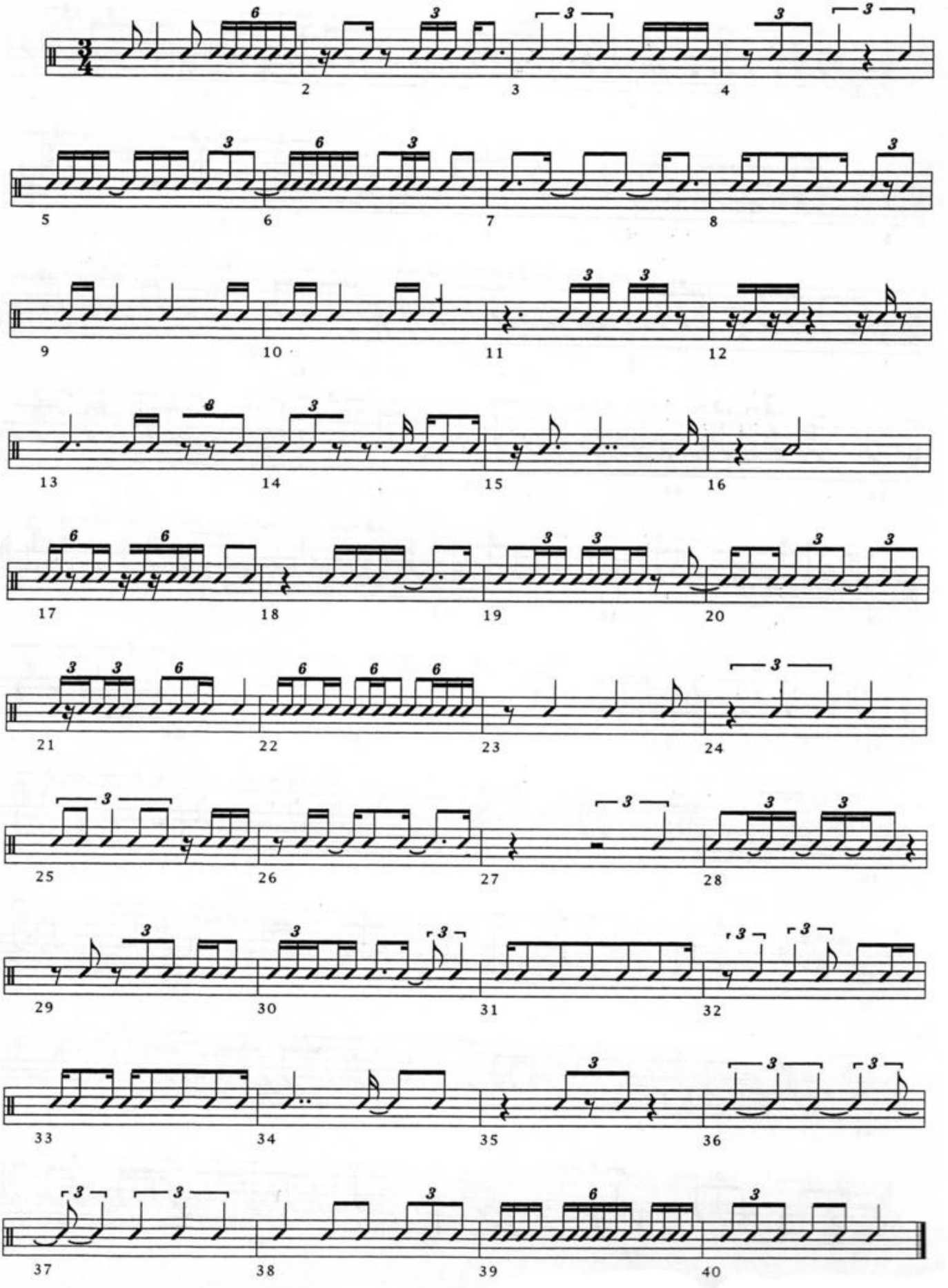
Mixed Subdivisions

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