Welcome!

Dear Prospective Member,
Thank you for your interest in auditioning for the 2023 Guardians Front Ensemble. Our staff is looking forward to meeting each of you. Please take a look at the audition materials following this letter and prepare the exercises thoughtfully.

Audition Process

The goal of the audition process is to provide you with an educational experience while evaluating your musical performance. A camp with the Guardians will consist of a group and an individual audition. The evaluation will take place over the course of the whole camp – not just your individual audition. For virtual auditions we ask for you to submit a video of what is below. You will receive a rating after the camp that will place you in one of these three categories:

1. You have earned yourself a spot on the Guardians Front Ensemble due to your preparation, playing abilities, and attitude. You will be sent a contract to make your position official.

2. We would like to see more from you before making a final decision. We'll then evaluate your growth between camps along with your performance at the following camp.

3. This option is for students who aren't quite ready to be a member of the Guardians. You will be given feedback on how to approach next year's auditions and what to work on until then.

Core Values

At the audition camp we will primarily be looking for individuals who exhibit:

- **Quality of sound** (achieved through relaxed technique) **- Strong rhythmic understanding/accuracy**
- **Ensemble/listening skills** (playing clean/together)

- **Fundamental music theory knowledge**
- **Great attitude with a desire to learn**
- **Compatibility with other members/auditionees**

Front Ensemble Approach

The Guardians DBC Front Ensemble's number one priority is sound. Be sure that throughout the preparation process you are **listening** to what you're playing - prioritizing evenness between the hands, precise rhythmic accuracy, and a relaxed yet full sound.

Our 2-mallet exercises are built on simple building blocks: scales, arpeggios, chords, and scale patterns. Challenge (and prepare) yourself by adding variations to what is printed:

- **Change the order**: Chromatic ascending/descending, Circle of 4ths/5ths
- **Play it backwards**: start on the top note and go down
- **Without a break**: Remove the last note and rest in between scales, connecting them

We start our exercises by holding the mallet heads stationary above the first two notes of the exercise at the dynamic level we are about to play. There should be stillness and relaxation in your hands before your first stoke, with no prep before you play, just a motion down. Fewer variables generates more consistency.

In terms of 4-mallet technique, we are looking for Stevens grip players as well as Burton grip (though not required). Please play the technique that you are most comfortable with. Be prepared to play any of the "2-mallet" scale exercises with four mallets using the inside mallets (2/3 or 2/4 for Burton) at various tempi.

Individual Audition

Please prepare a short (1-3 minute) solo to perform in an individual audition. (For drum set players a solo of your choice.) We ask for a few exercises for your individual audition as well demonstrating 2 mallet ability, and various 4 mallet techniques. This is a great opportunity to demonstrate your musicianship and quality of sound.

For drum set we ask you to play the drum set exercises below, a (1-3 minute) solo, and 3 different drum styles. The styles are: Samba, Bossa, and a Rock. Please play these patterns twice between the BPM of 100 – 160.

Please bring these materials to the audition:

- Mallets (2pairs)
- A pair of sticks (Drum set)
- Front Ensemble Packet
- An open mind

For the Video audition, you need to have these additional items:

• Your instrument to play on (Preferably a marimba, vibraphone, or drum set)

- A camera to record
- A microphone
- A metronome

What to watch out for in your video audition

• Camera placements

o Please be certain that your camera angle is in an appropriate position. Meaning, it is in a position where we can see your hands and mallets fully. If you were to point straight ahead of yourself, then slightly to the side and up, this is where the camera should be placed. This placement allows for visual depth and clarity to what you are doing.

o **Drum set:**
o We recommend having a higher camera angle. Research "drum set camera angles" on YouTube for ideas!
o We want to see you can do. We need to be able to see your hands.

• Sound quality of the video

o We want to see you succeed! Having the microphone too close to the metronome or keyboard distorts the sound quality. Please make sure to watch your video to fix audio distortion.

• Video quality

o We need to see a clear video of your audition. Sometimes a problem occurs when you send a video through different platforms. Double check that when you upload a video that the video and sound quality are clear.

• Uploading videos

o If you are sending an unlisted YouTube link, make sure that it is viewable and properly uploaded.

Open and Adaptable Mindset What to perform/ record for video audition

At times during the camp, you may receive feedback that's different from what you've heard before. That is OK. We just ask that you do your best to apply the information given, even if it goes against what you've been taught. How you apply information and how quickly you make adjustments is something that is looked at in the evaluation process.

What to Perform/ Record for Video Audition

Keyboards:

- All 2 mallet exercises should be played in all 12 major keys
- Play both 2 mallet exercises in 4 mallets
- All exercises should be played at 2 varying tempos.
- 4 mallet exercises should be played in Block Chords (as written)

- And as a permutation as seen above exercise

- All exercises should be performed with an audible metronome between the BPM range of 100 – 160
- A 4-mallet solo (1 – 3 minute) of your choice.
- 1 of your favorite 2 mallet exercises to play, and 1 of your favorite 4 mallet exercises to play

Drum set:

- All exercises at 2 different tempos (100 – 160 BPM)
- 3 different drum patterns – Samba, Bossa, and a Rock pattern
- A (1 – 3 minute) solo of your choice

Lastly

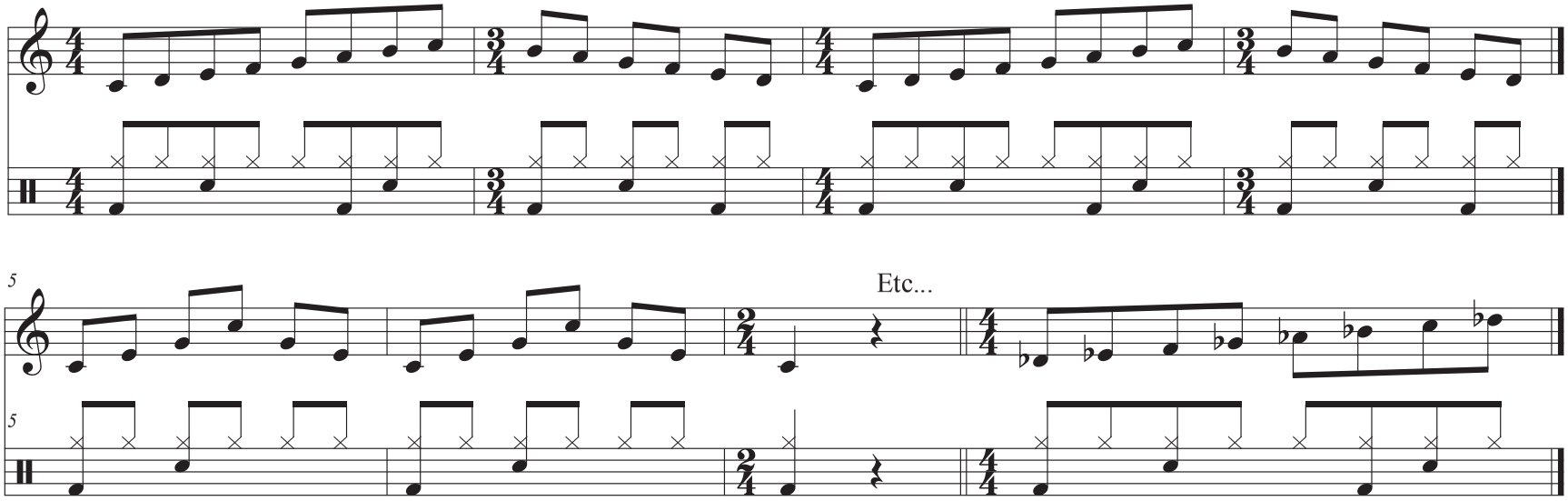
Please refer to the Guardians 2021 official packet for more exercises. This packet is for video audition intended purposes. This official packet can be found on the Guardians website.

Thank you for your interest in Guardians DBC, Sincerely,
Josh Gregory (percussion@guardians.org) Caption Head

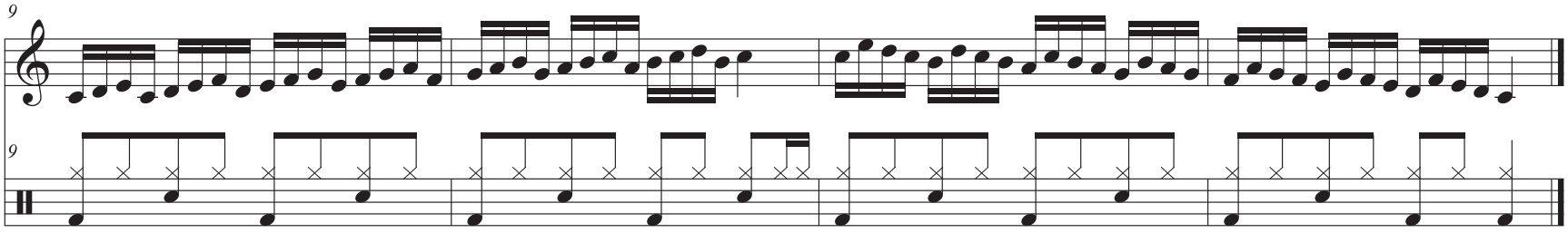
Lester Rushin (lesterrushin@gmail.com) Front Ensemble Coordinator
And the Guardians Front Ensemble Staff

Guardians Video Audition 2023

Scales and Arpeggios - As you alternate in this exercise, try to make each stroke connects to the next. Listen for evenness between the hands



Green 1 - This exercise should push your sound quailty at faster hand speeds (q = 100-160+). Be sure you're getting a great sound out of each note.



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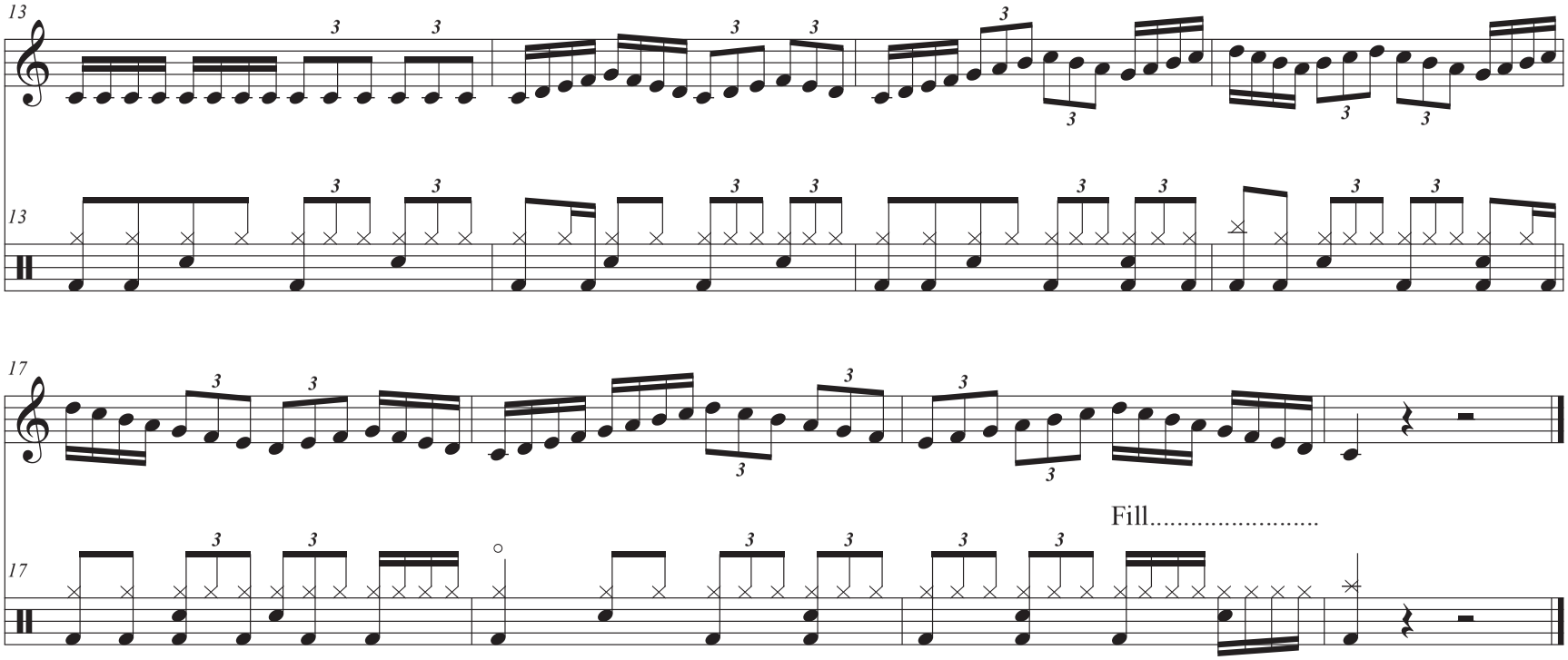
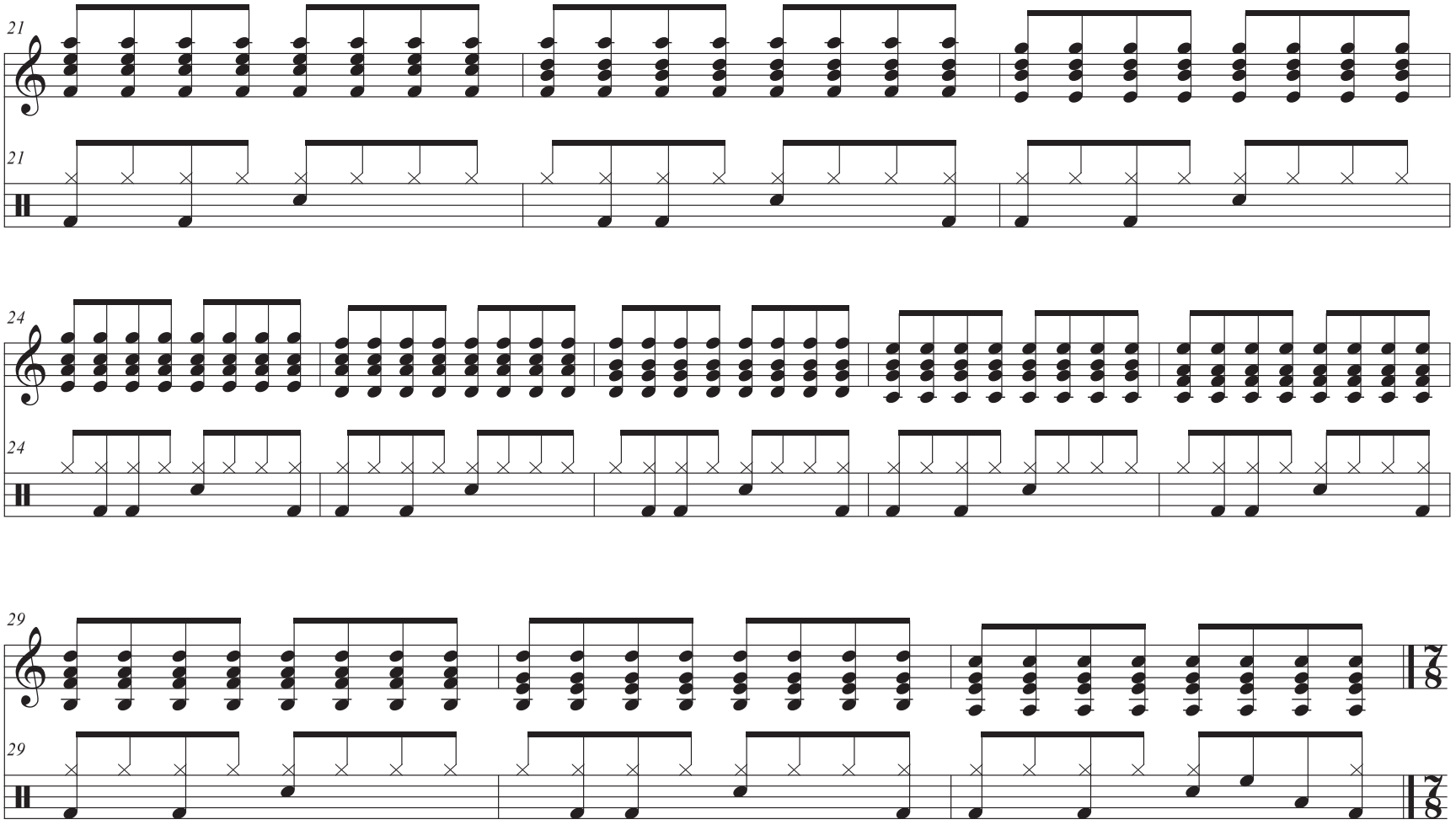
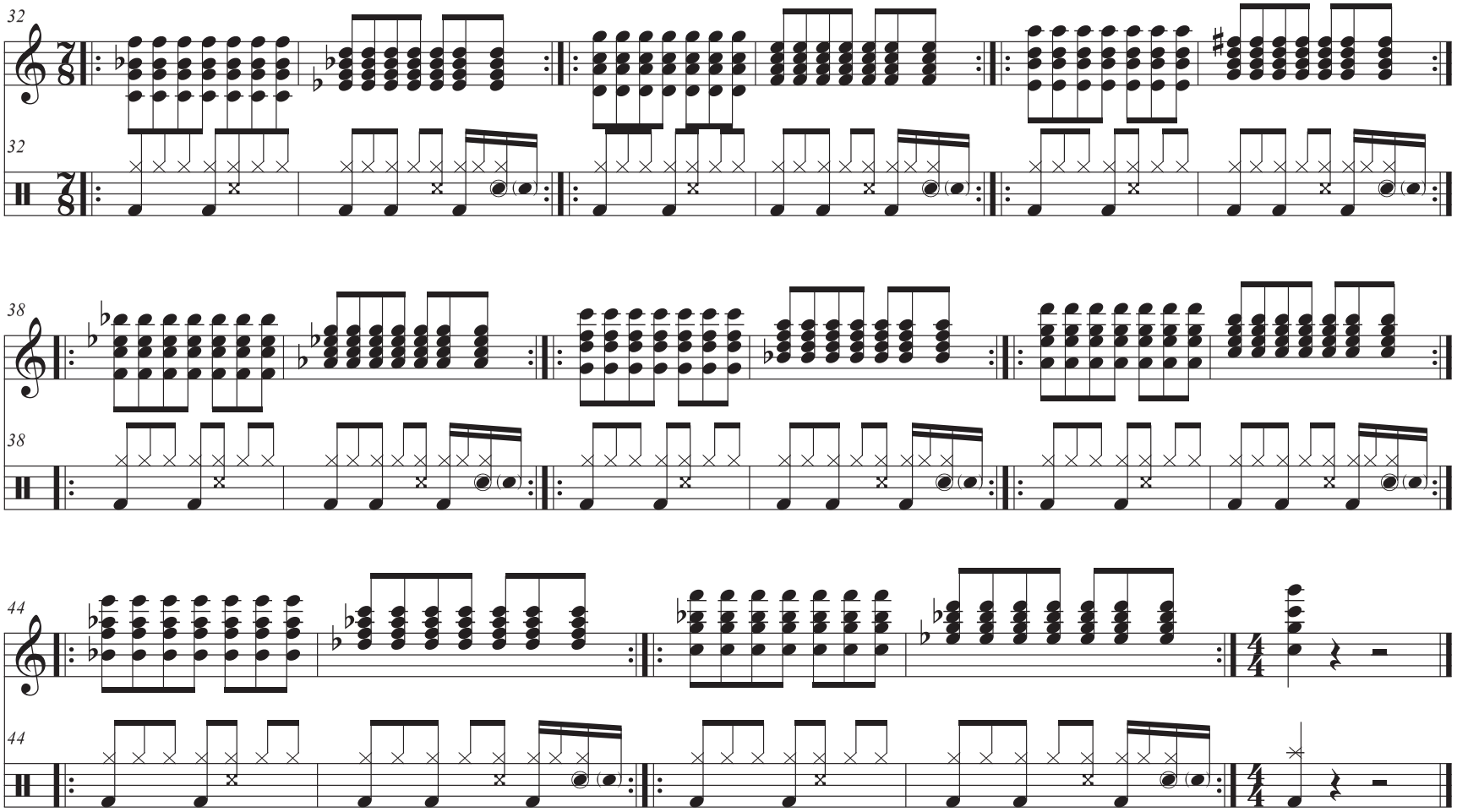
16th Triplet Green - This exercise should push your sound quailty at faster hand speeds (q = 100-160+).
Be sure you're getting a great sound out of each note, and accurately placing every rhythm



14 shifts - Play this exercise as block chords and as permutations (1234 & 4321)



7/8 - Play this exercise as block chords and as permutations (4132 4132 413232, etc...)