Learning rhythm with the TAKADIMI system of rhythm solfege

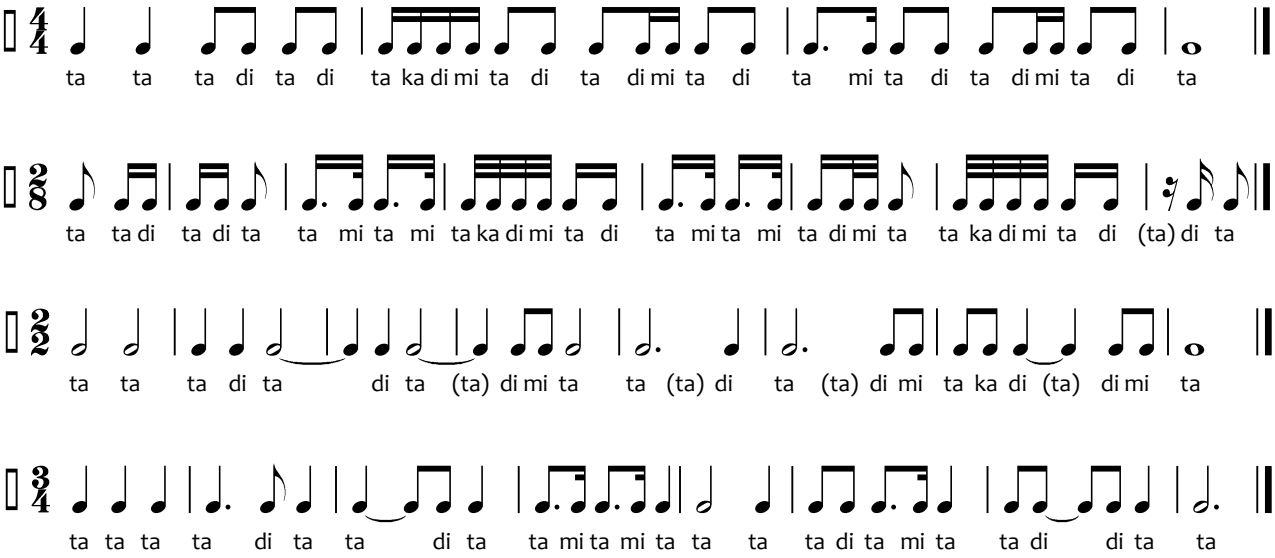
Simple Meter — The beat is always voiced with *ta*. The division and subdivision are always *ta-di* and *ta-ka-di-mi*. Any note value can be the beat. Three common values are shown.

Time sig.	Beat	Division	Subdivision
e.g. 2/2	ta	ta di	ta ka di mi
e.g. 2/4	ta	ta di	ta ka di mi
e.g. 2/8	ta	ta di	ta ka di mi

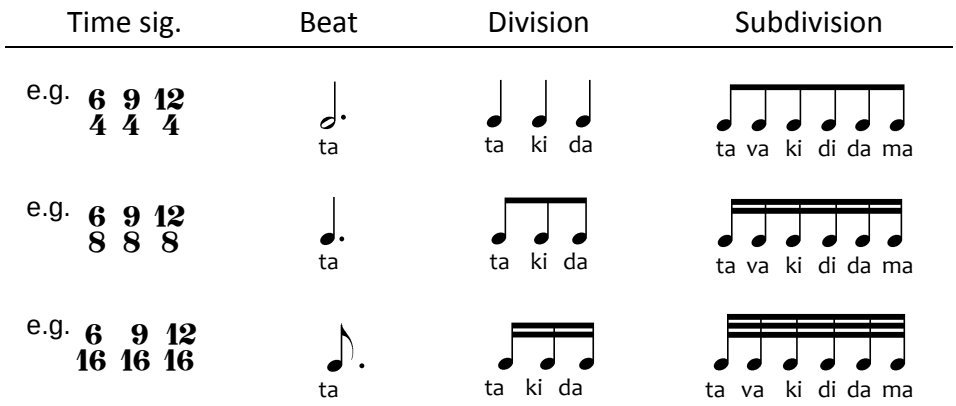
Common Patterns (beat-length)

beat = ta	ta di	ta ka di mi	ta di mi	ta ka di	ta mi	ta ka	ta ka mi	
beat = ta	ta di	ta ka di mi	ta di mi	ta ka di	ta mi	ta ka	ta ka mi	
beat = ta	ta di	ta ka di mi	ta di mi	ta ka di	ta mi	ta ka	ta ka mi	

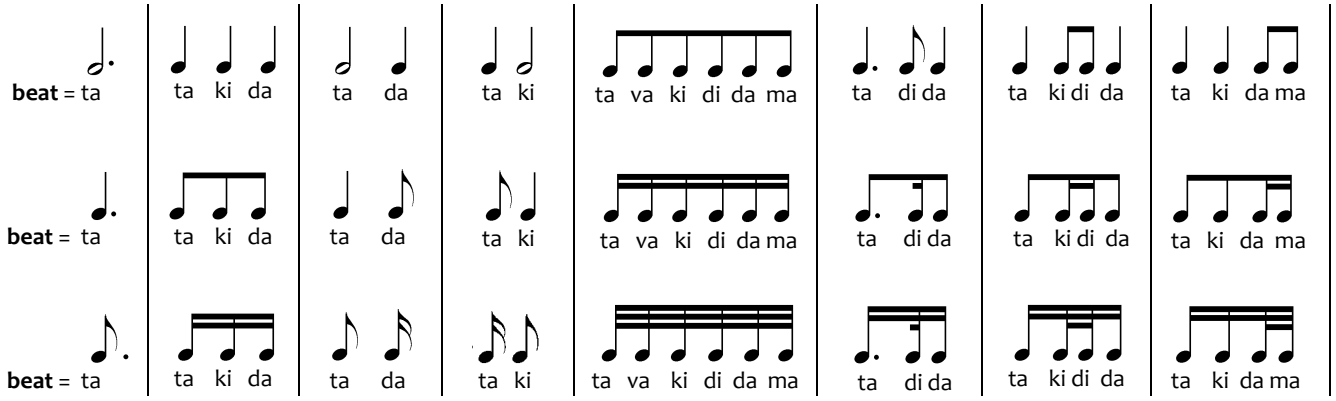
Examples (A *ta* in parentheses is not voiced but may be thought or "felt.")



Compound Meter — Compound meters have dotted beat notes, and the beat is always voiced with *ta*. The division and subdivision are always *ta-ki-da* and *ta-va-ki-di-da-ma*. Any dotted note value can be the beat. Three common values are shown.

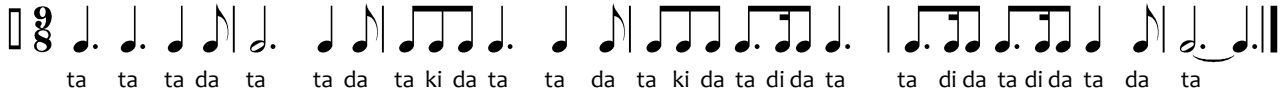


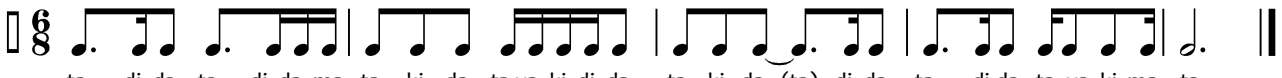
Common Patterns (beat-length)



Additional patterns are possible. Some occur in the examples below.

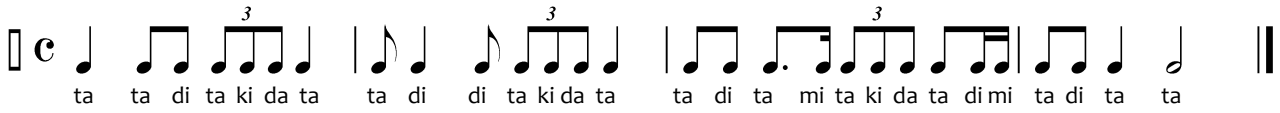
Examples



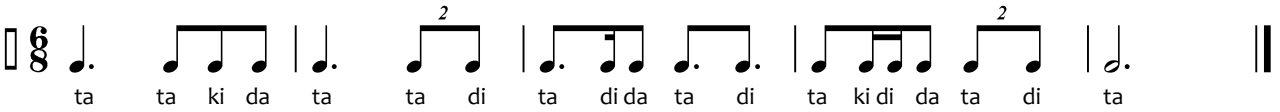


Advanced applications

Duplets and triplets — Use the same syllables for any division of the beat into two or three.

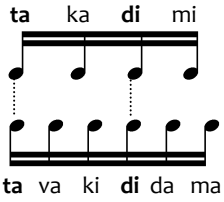


The duplet in m. 3 is performed just like the others in mm. 2 and 4. The syllable *di* falls at the midpoint of the beat in both simple and compound meter. A duplet can be written either way.

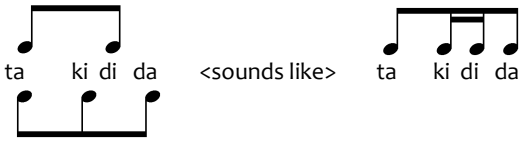


Two against three

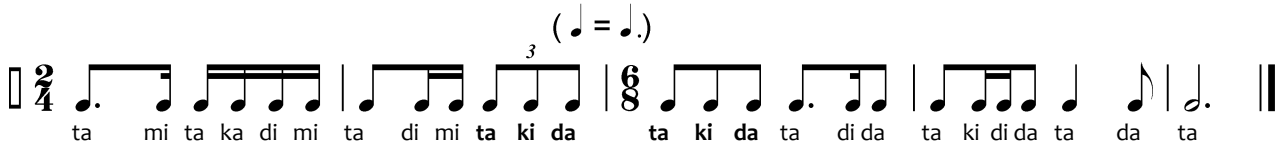
Ta and *di* align at the beginning and midpoint of the beat in both simple and compound meters. Rhythms that involve both simple and compound divisions will share this attack point.



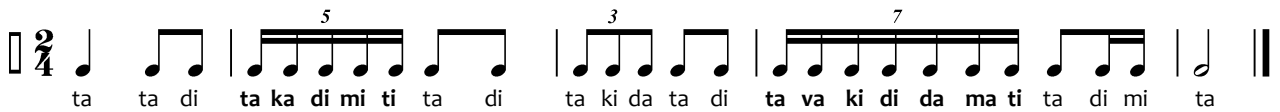
"Two against three" rhythms will produce the composite rhythm *ta-ki-di-da*. Work with the composite rhythm first, then emphasize the *ta-di* and *ta-ki-da* separately. Listening for the *ta-ki-di-da* composite will help ensure accuracy.



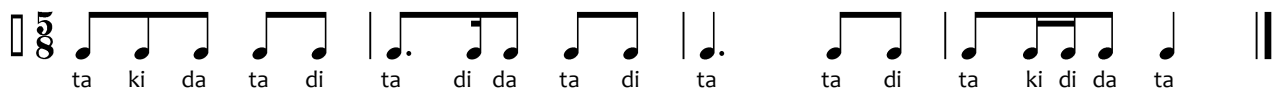
Changing meter — Changing meter can involve either the beat staying the same or the division staying the same. In this example the beat stays the same. Syllables can help make the distinction plain. The *ta-ki-da* triplet in m. 2 and the regular division of the beat in m. 3 will sound exactly alike.



Irregular divisions — To perform irregular divisions of the beat, add a syllable to a common pattern.



Asymmetric meters — Asymmetric meters combine simple and compound divisions. Keeping the divisions equal will produce beats of varied lengths.



Takadimi is helpful in teaching other advanced techniques including super-tuplets (triplets and duplets over more than one beat), 4:3 relationships, syncopations, and metric modulation.

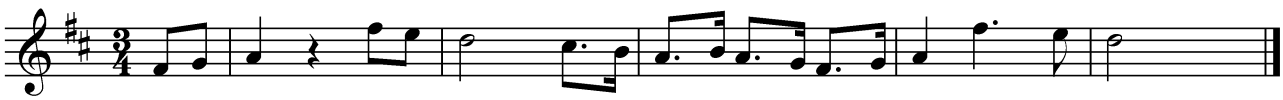
Rhythms for practice — Always practice rhythm with appropriate musical expression. Use vocal inflection to show lines and gestures.

1. Here's an example in simple meter. Can you improvise a second 4 measure phrase to go along with this one?

2. Cut time or "alla breve" indicates the half note gets the beat. In this case there are two half notes in a measure, so 2/2.

3. Perform the rhythm as a duet, or for a challenge, speak the top line on syllables and clap or tap the bottom line.

4. Reading rhythm from staff notation can be different from reading traditional rhythmic notation. Let the contour and melodic groupings suggest an expressive reading.



Teaching with Takadimi

Takadimi is beat-oriented and pattern based. The beat is always *ta* regardless of notation; the syllables help students learn common beat-length patterns. It can be used pre-notationally with preschool children and can help in learning highly complex rhythm throughout the college curriculum and beyond.

Takadimi is great for reading rhythm but it can also be used apart from notation. Try translating the rhythm of popular songs and jingles to takadimi syllables. "Call and response" games are a fun way to practice rhythm patterns and learn important musical skills at the same time. Improvising on syllables is a valuable learning tool. Improvise a short pattern—one or two measures, or even a phrase—then have a student improvise a response. Takadimi syllables encourage play, and play is a powerful learning tool.

The Rhythm Book, a comprehensive college-level rhythm textbook based on Takadimi is available. Contact Richard Hoffman at info@takadimi.net for more information. For an excellent guide to using Takadimi in the elementary classroom, see Micheal Houlahan and Philip Tacka, *Kodály Today: A Cognitive Approach to Elementary Music Education* (New York: Oxford University Press), 2008.

The ***Takadimi system*** of rhythm pedagogy was developed by Richard Hoffman, William Pelto, John W. White along with a number of colleagues at Ithaca College in the 1990s. More information on the system, its origins, and pedagogical rationale can be found in Hoffman, Pelto, and White, "Takadimi: A Beat-Oriented System of Rhythm Pedagogy," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, 1996.

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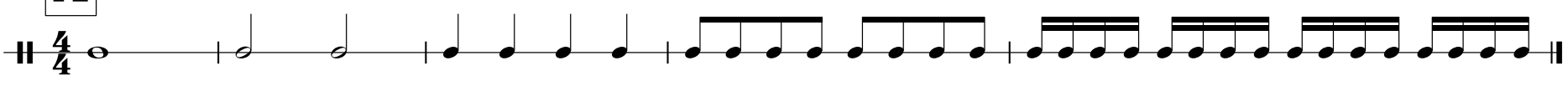
Takadimi Drills

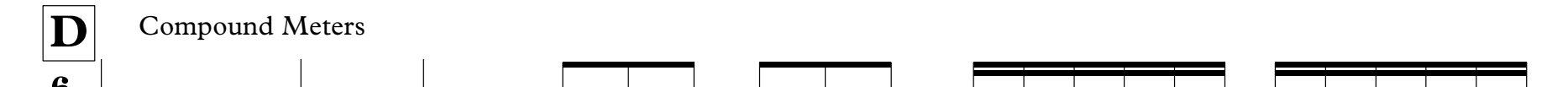
A Simple Meters



B

C

D Compound Meters



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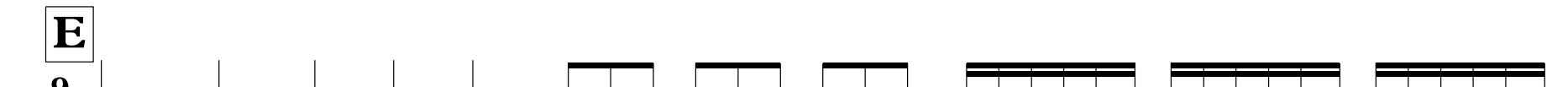


F

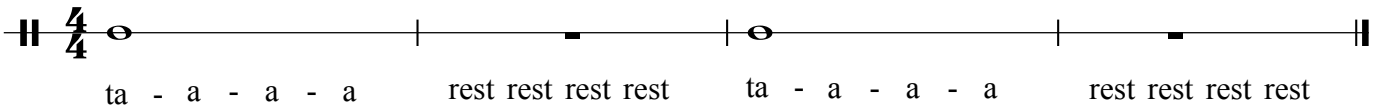
RHYTHMIC SOLFEGE

Practice Tips:
Sing all notes with "takadimi" syllables
ALWAYS CONDUCT
Practice with a metronome
Sing the full value of the notes
Breath on rests
Subdivide the value of notes by emphasizing the vowel: ta-a-a-a

WHOLE NOTES

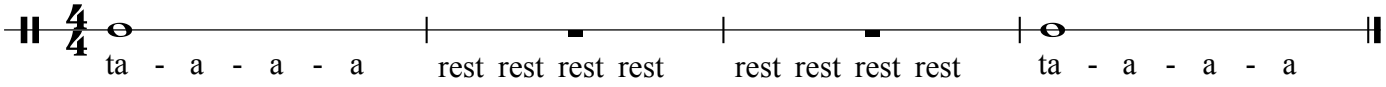
Allegro

1



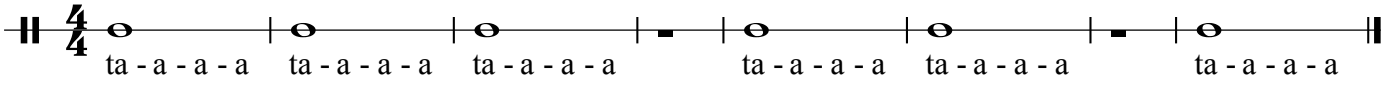
Presto

2



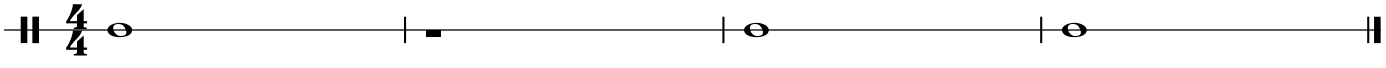
Prestissimo

3



Allegretto

4



Allegro

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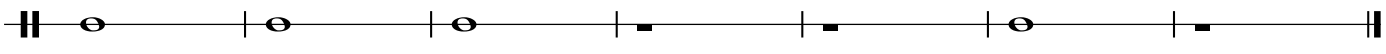
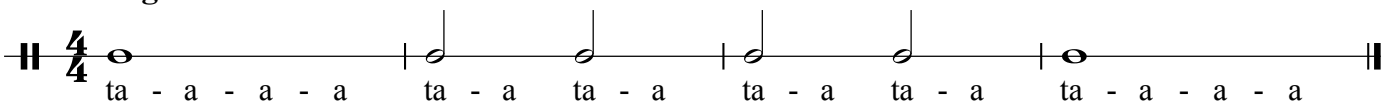


HALF NOTES

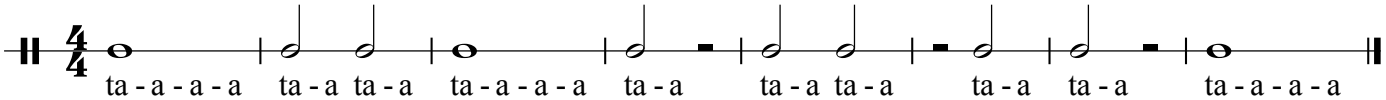
Allegro

6



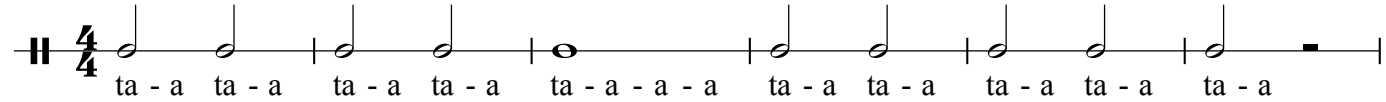
Moderato

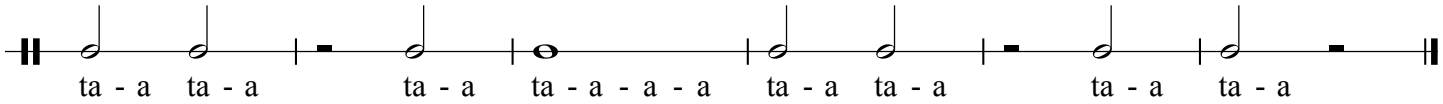
7



Allegro

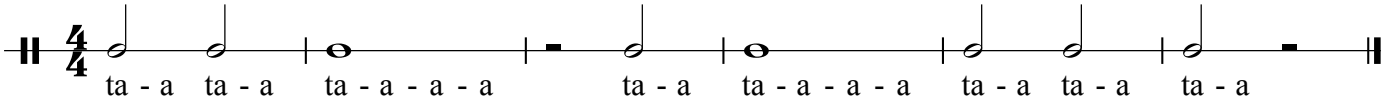
8





Allegretto

9



Presto

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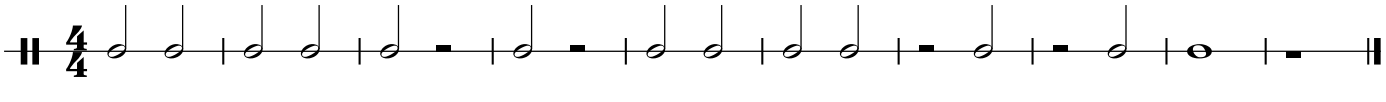

Moderato

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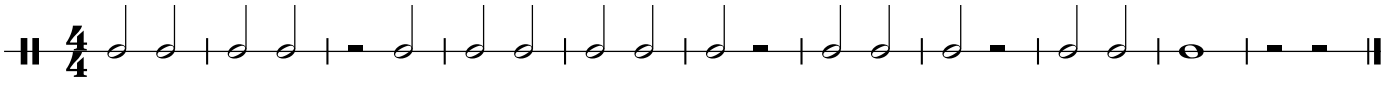
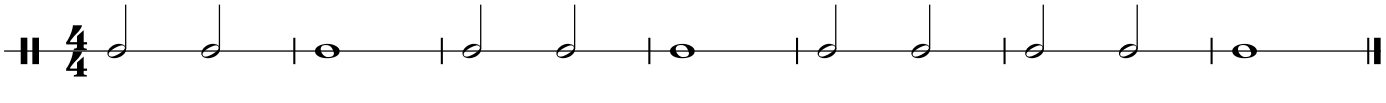


Adagio

12



Allegretto

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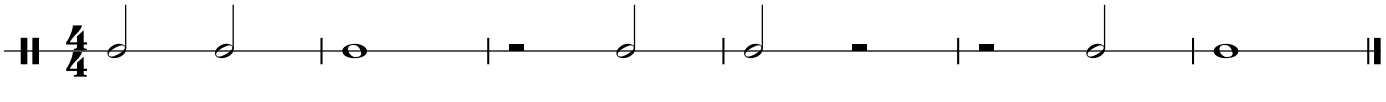

Moderato

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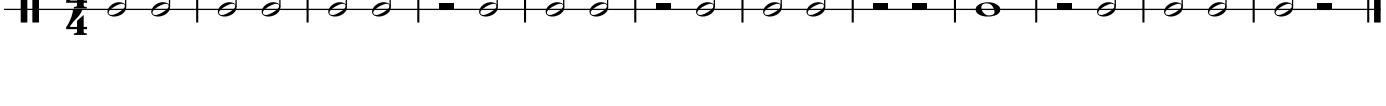

QUARTER NOTES

Allegro

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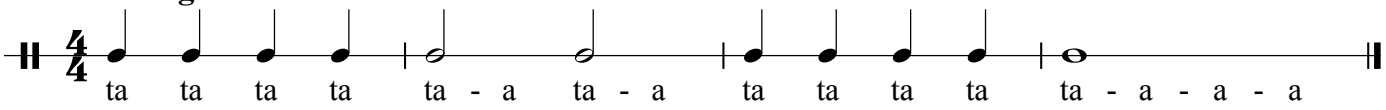

Allegretto

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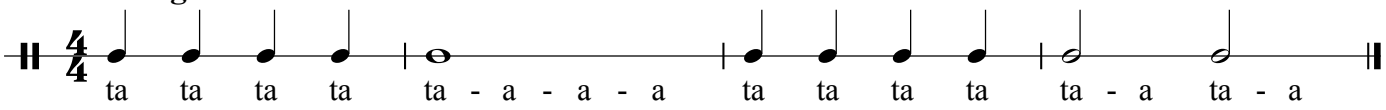

Allegro

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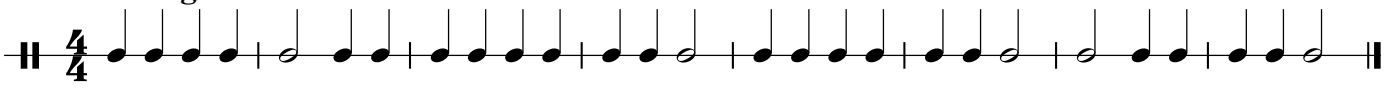
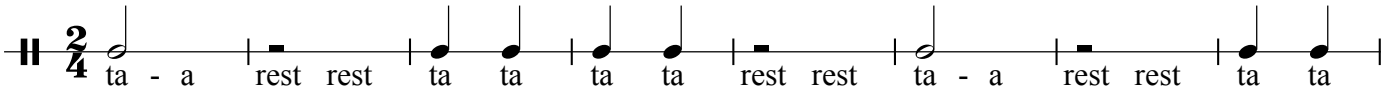
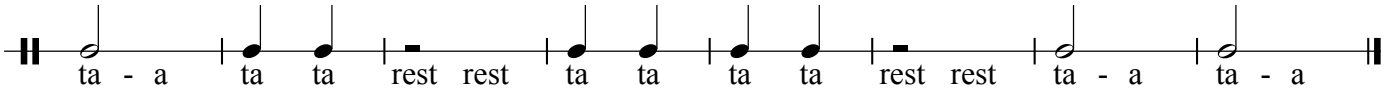


Andante

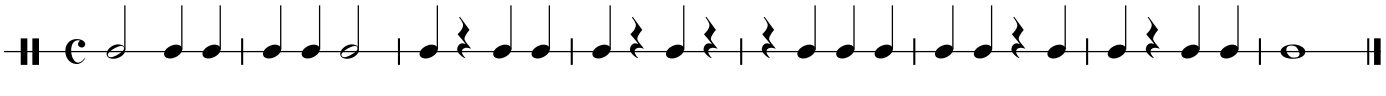
18





Presto

19



Prestissimo

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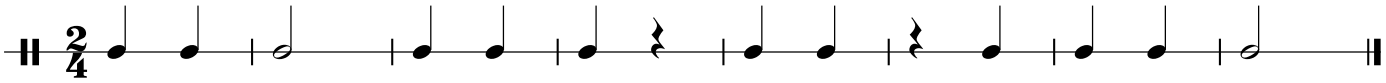
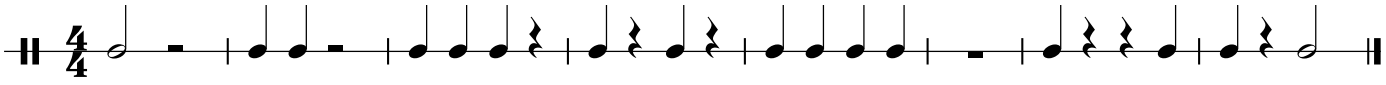


Andante

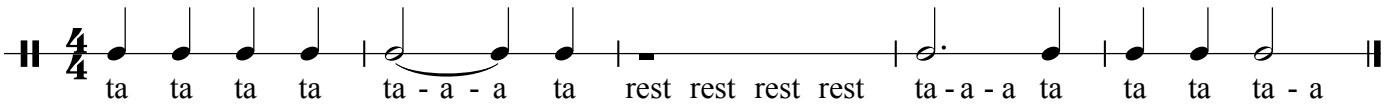
21



TIES AND DOTTED VALUES

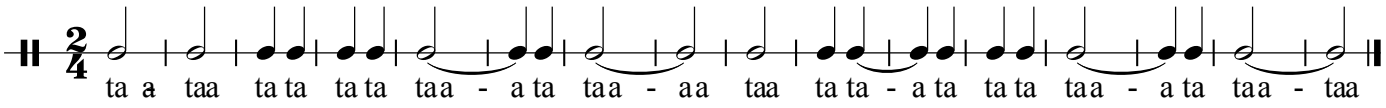
Andante

22



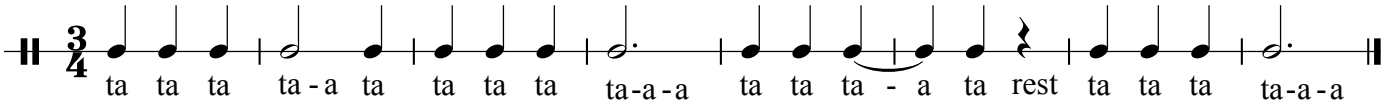
Moderato

23



Allegretto

24

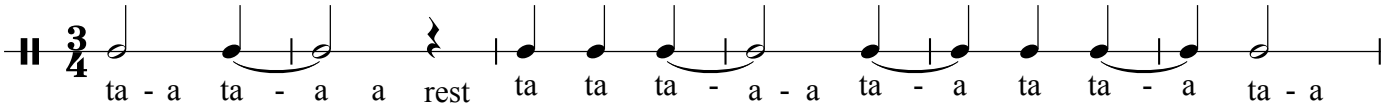


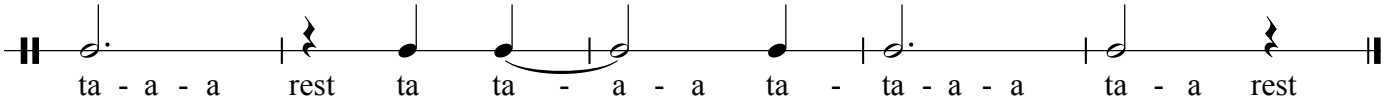
Allegro

25

Andante

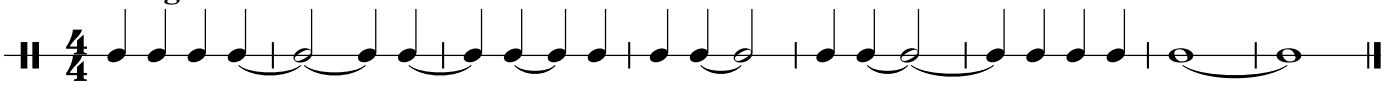
26





Allegro

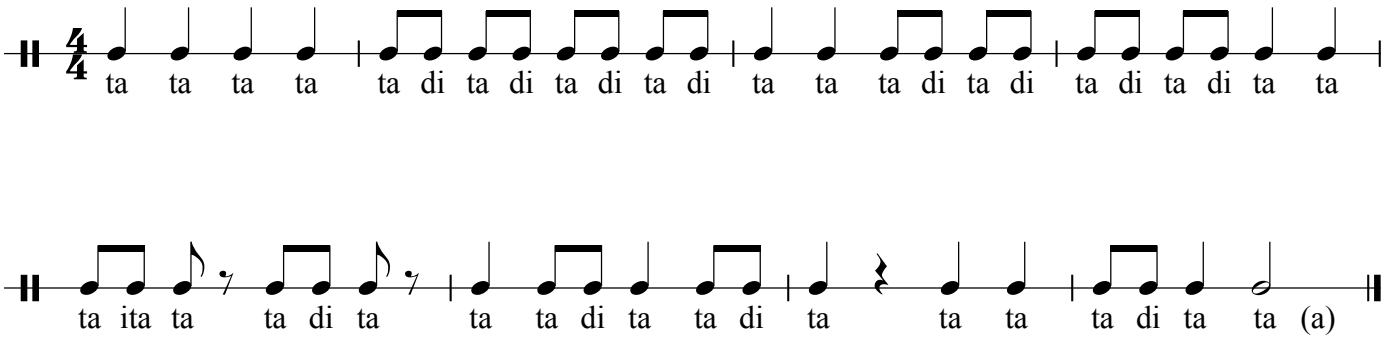
27



EIGHTH NOTES

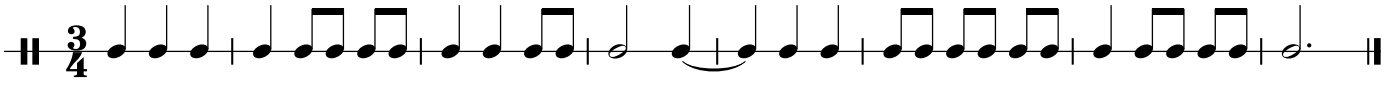
Allegretto

28



Moderato

29



Allegro

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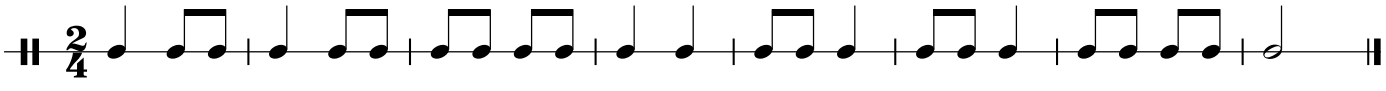

Vivace

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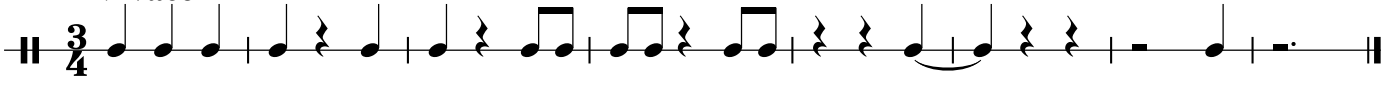

Maestoso

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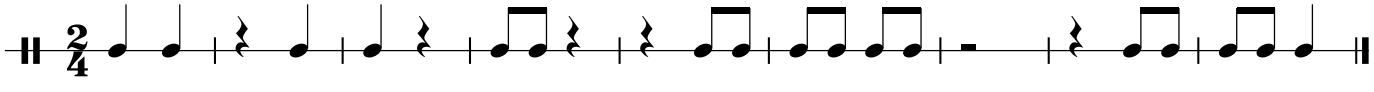

Andante

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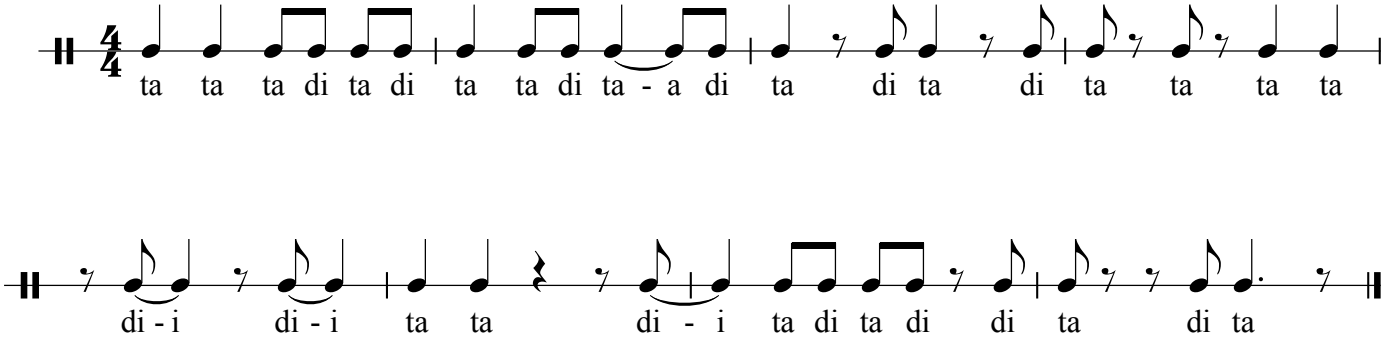

Moderato

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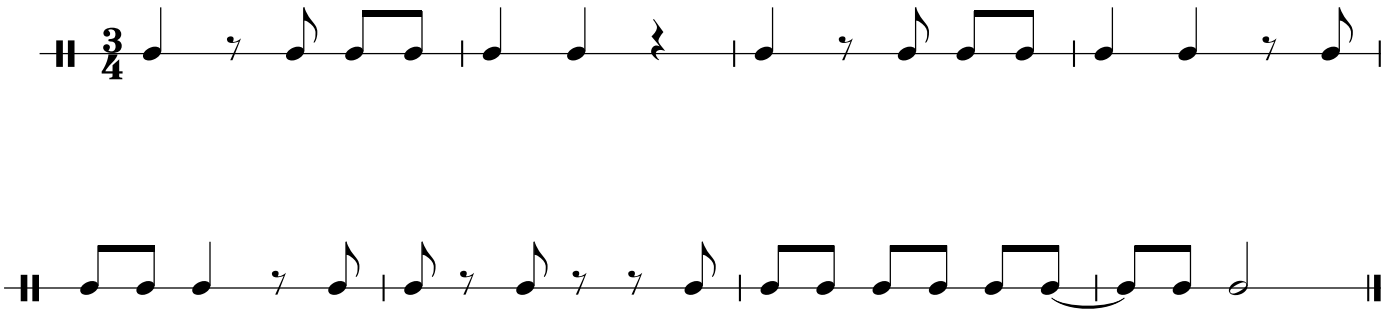

Andante

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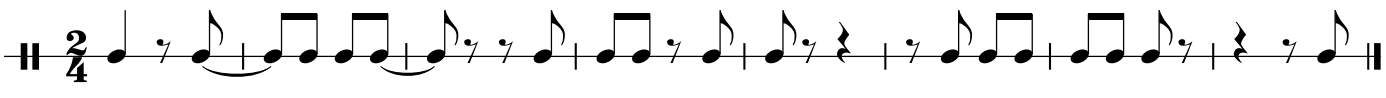

Allegro

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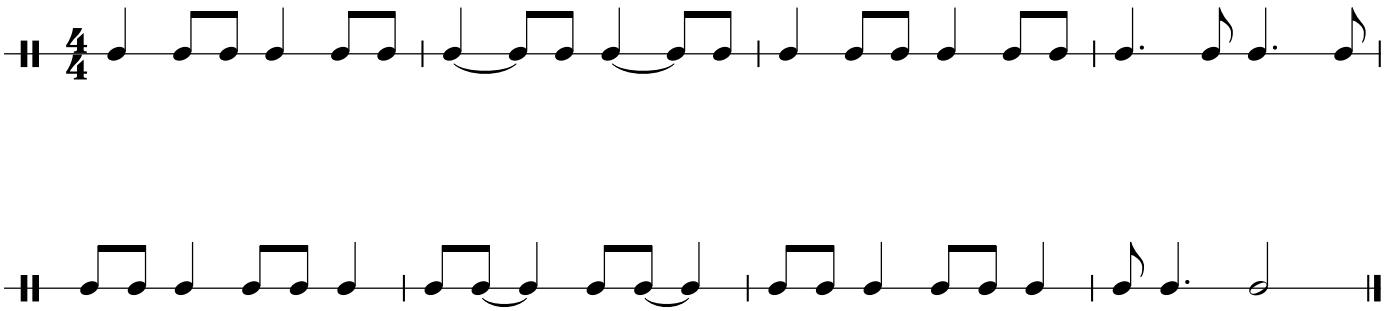

Presto

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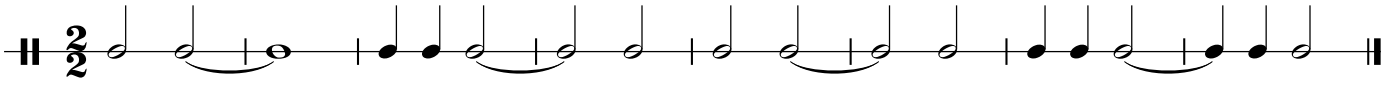


Vivace

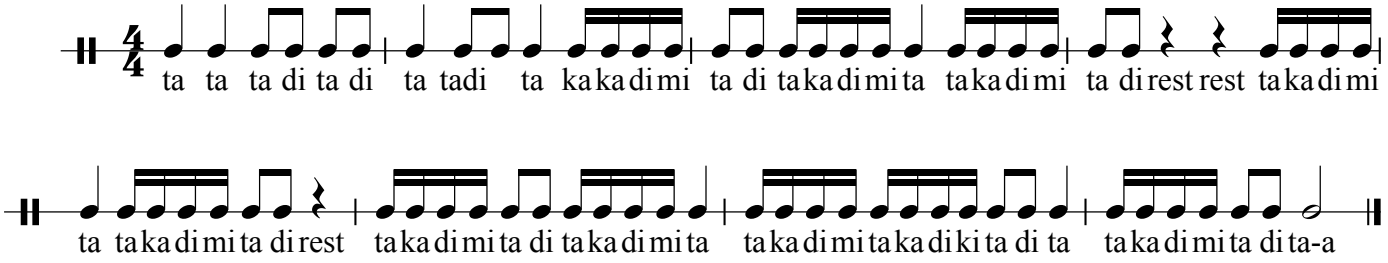
38

39

SIXTEENTH NOTES

Andante

40



Lento

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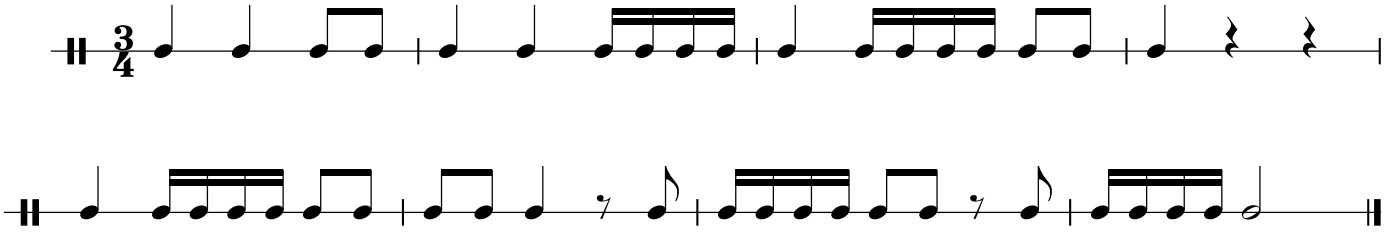

Moderato

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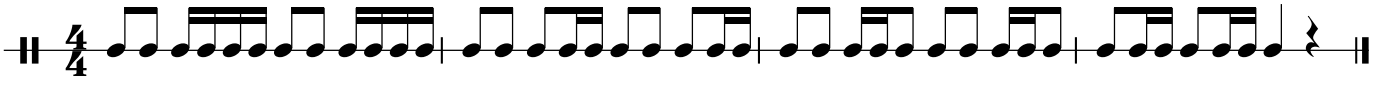
Moderato

43



Moderato

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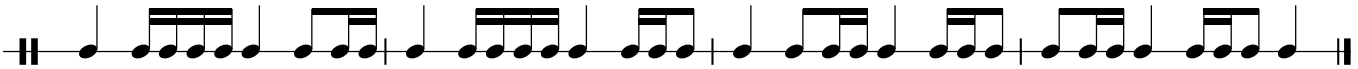


Moderato

45

Allegro

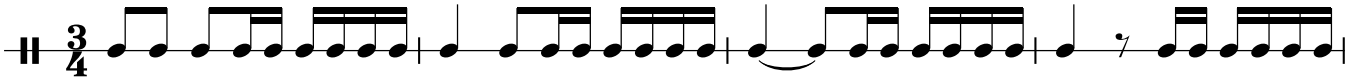
46

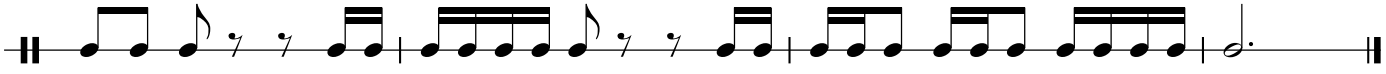
Grave

47

Andante

48





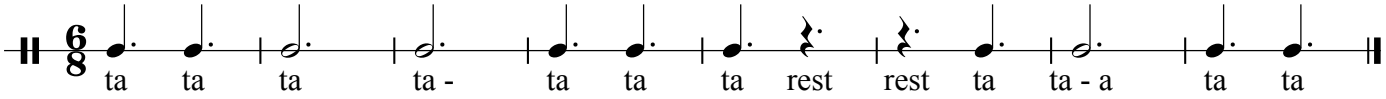
Allegretto

49

COMPOUND METERS

Prestissimo

50



Presto

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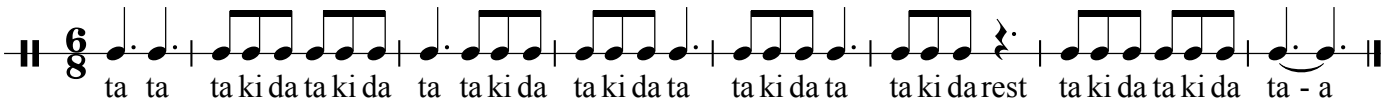

Allegro

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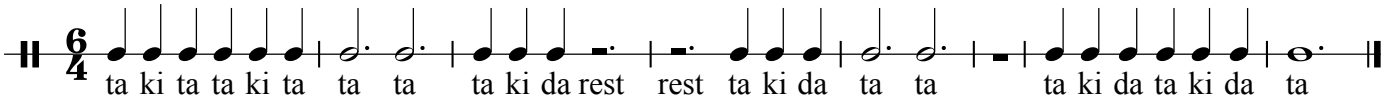
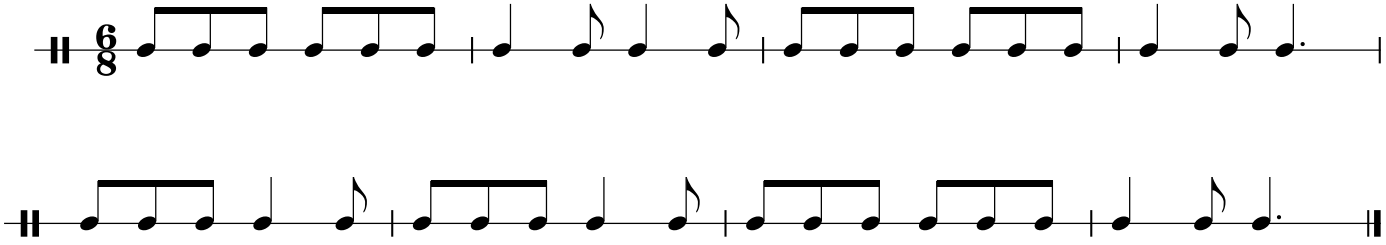


Allegretto

53

Allegro

54



Presto

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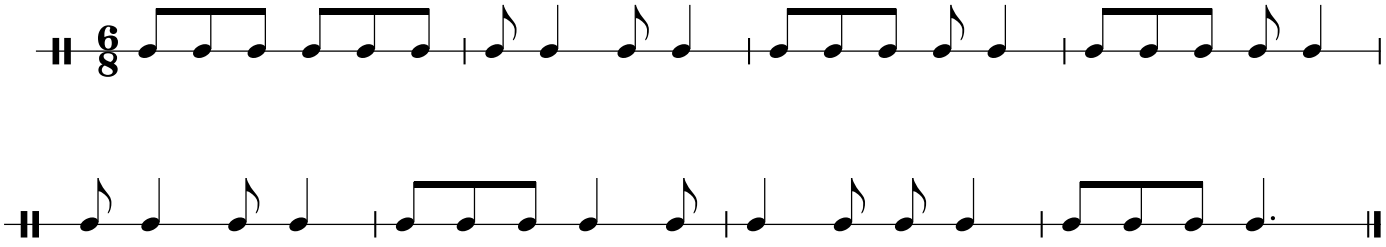

Prestissimo

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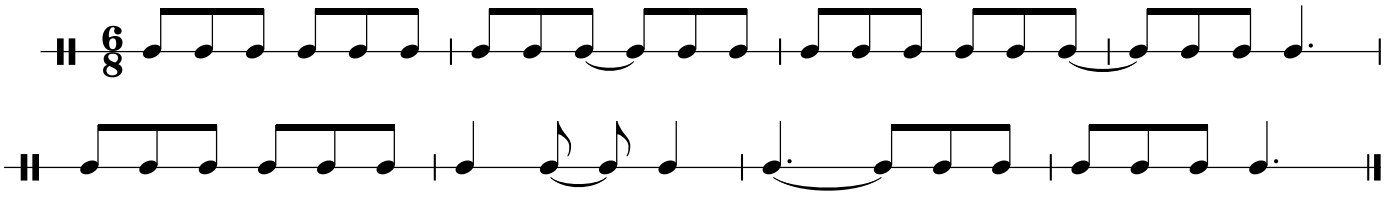

Andante

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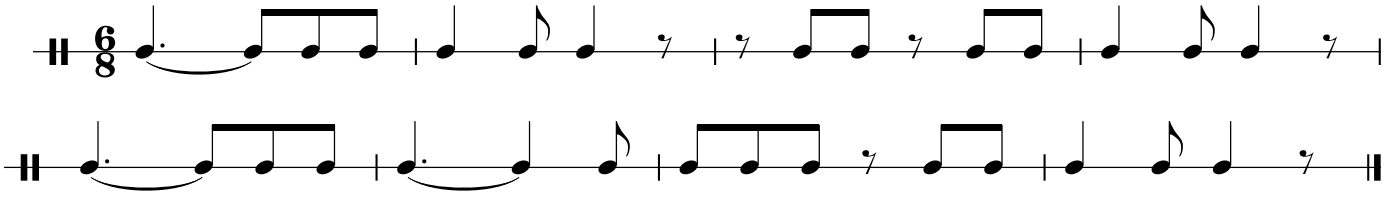

Andante

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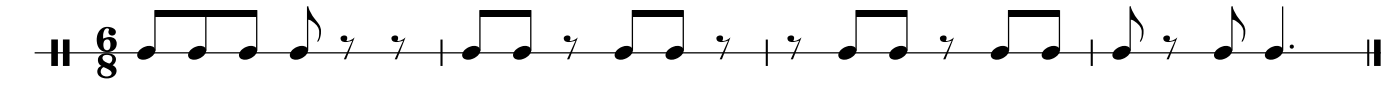

Andante

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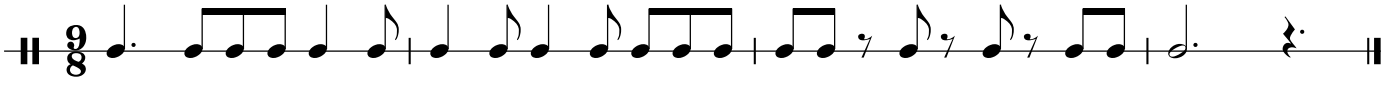

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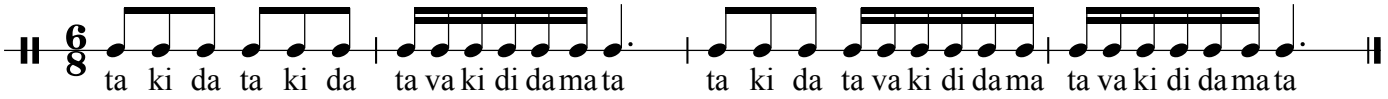

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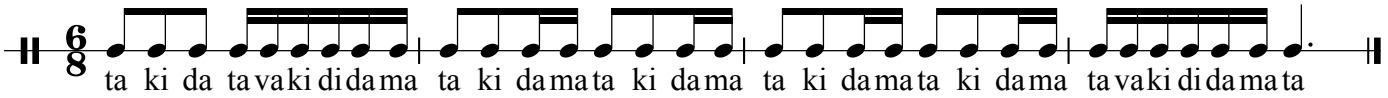

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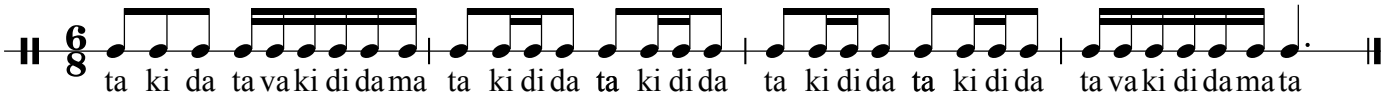

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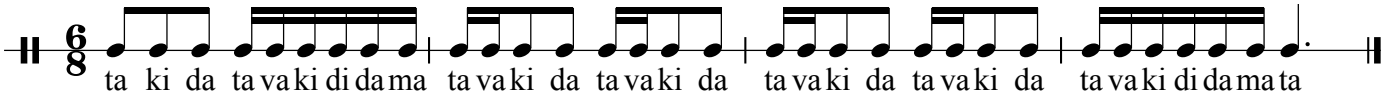

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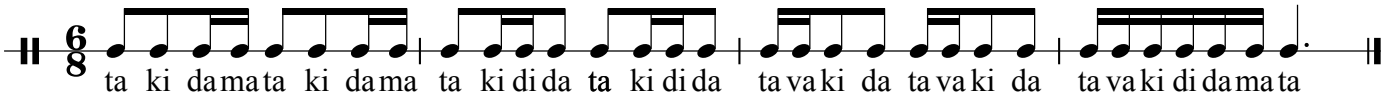

Andante

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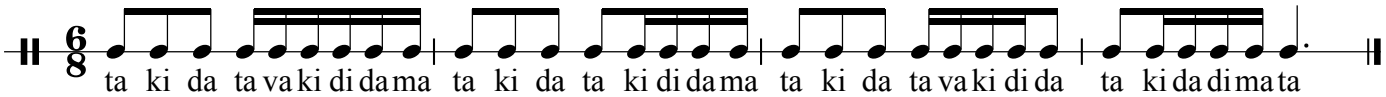
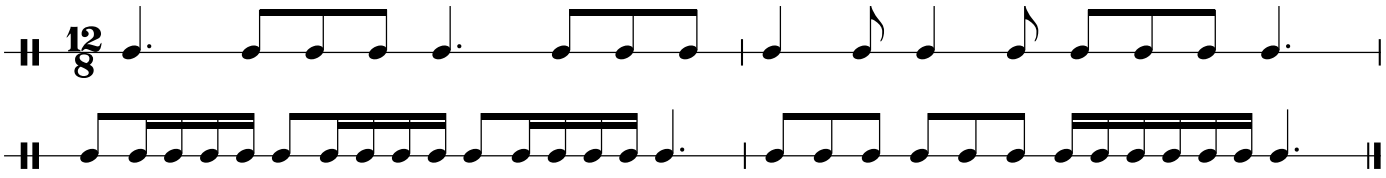


Andante

66

Andante

67



Adagio

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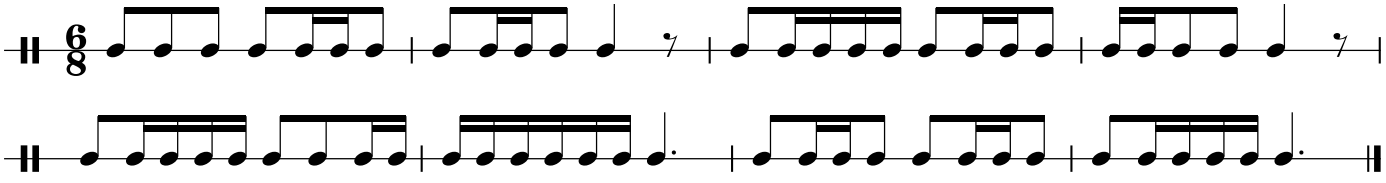

Andante

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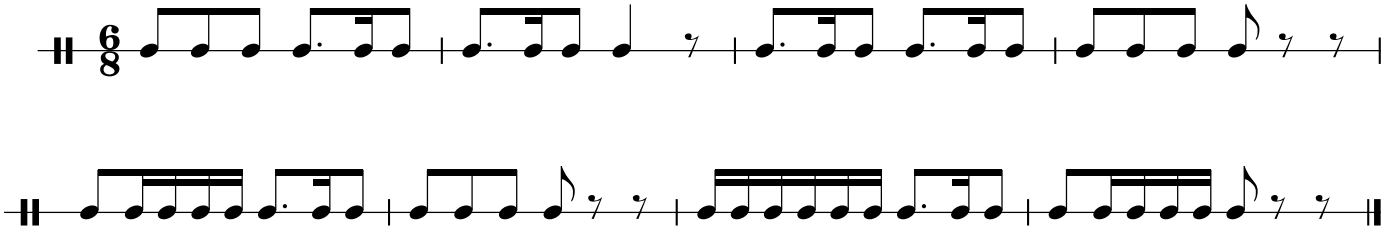

Andante

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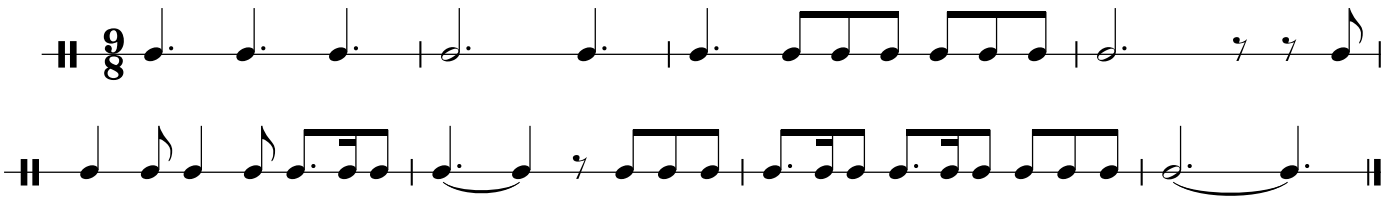

Andante

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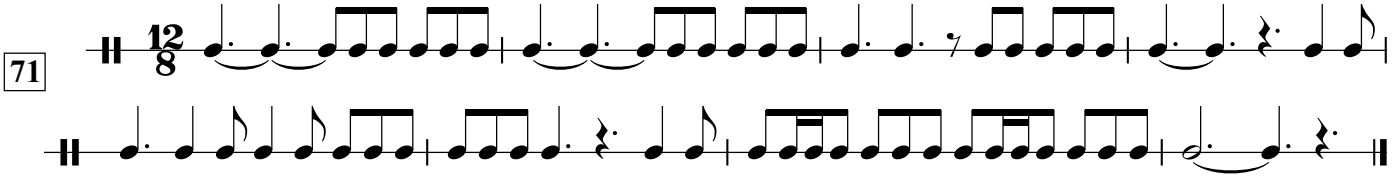
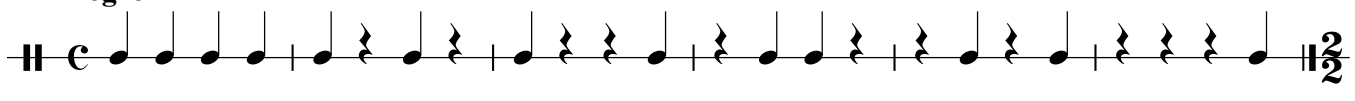
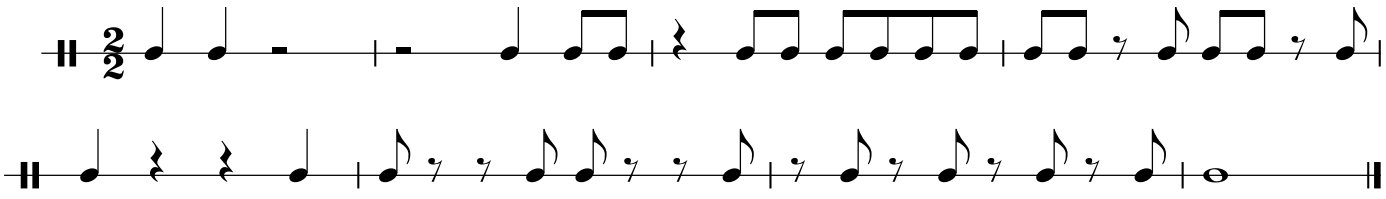


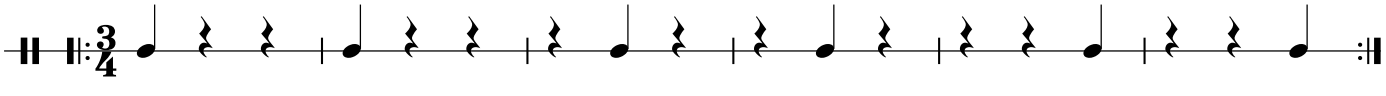
72 Allegro



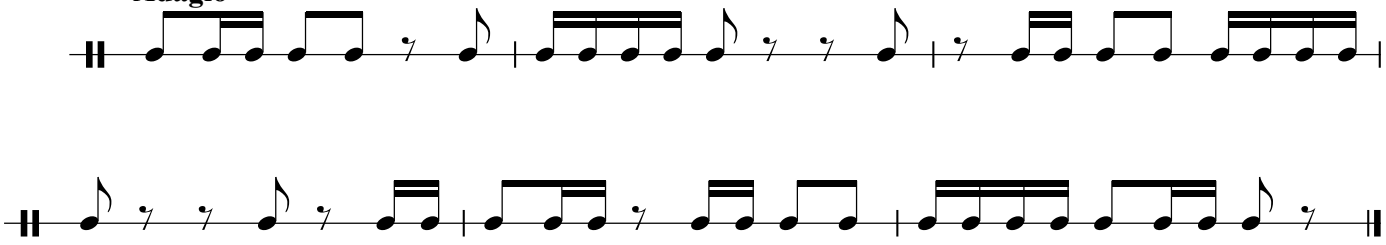
73 Andante



74 Allegro

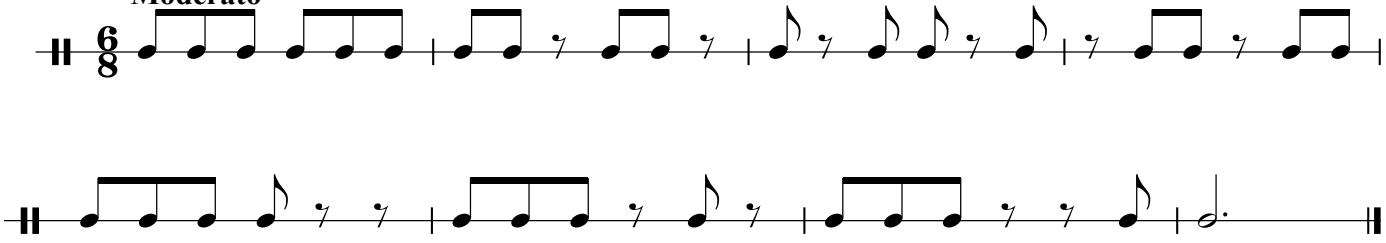


75 Adagio

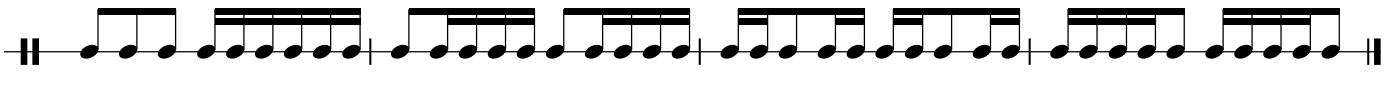


76 Presto

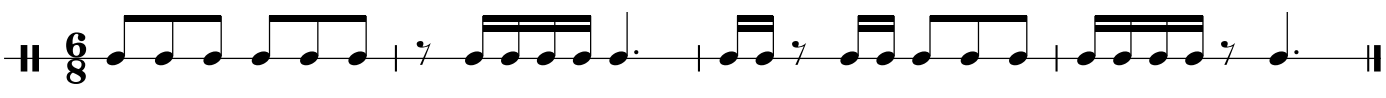
77 Moderato

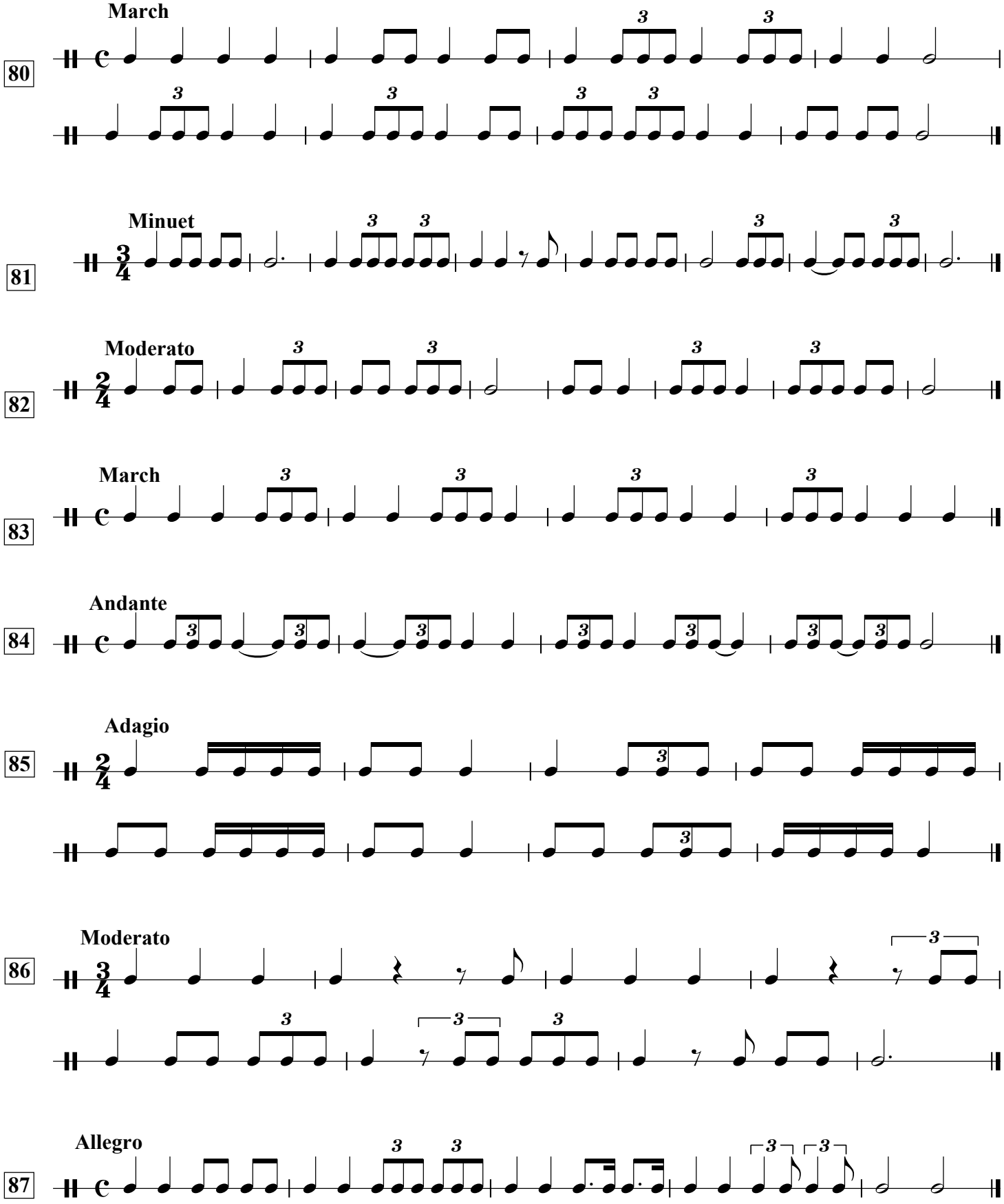


78 Andante



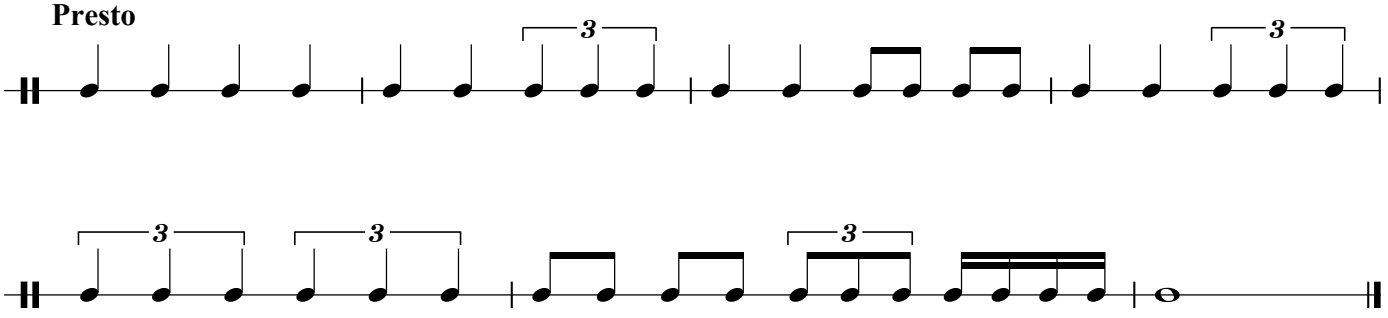
79 Adagio




March
80
Minuet
81
Moderato
82
March
83
Andante
84
Adagio
85
Moderato
86
Allegro
87

Presto

88



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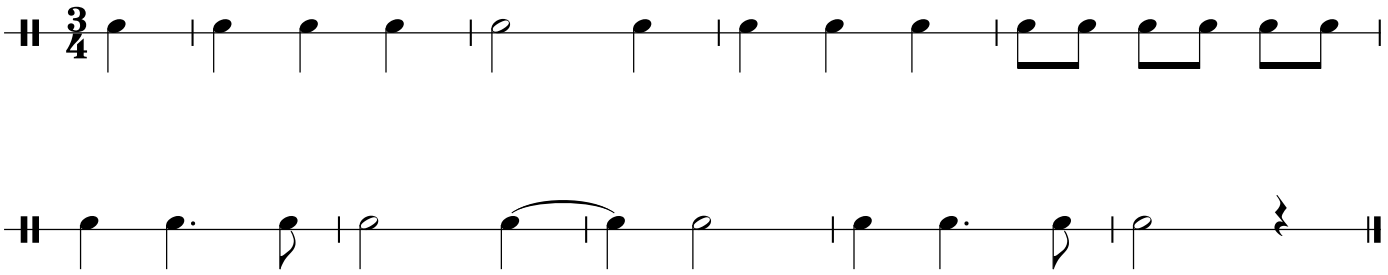
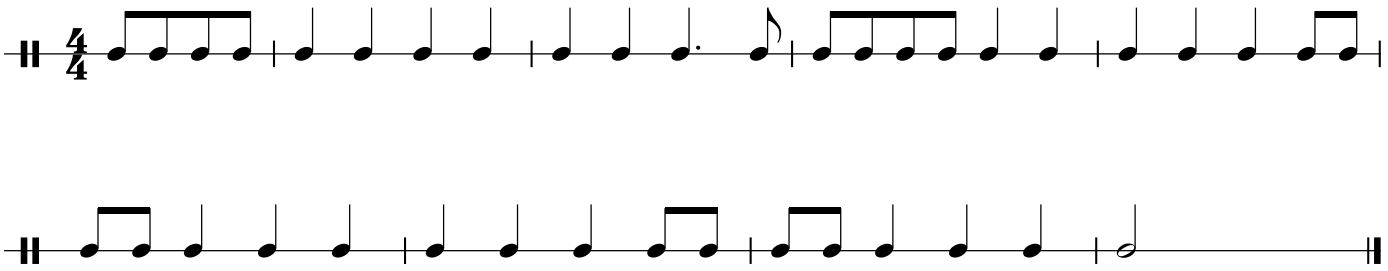


Gavotte

90



Minuet

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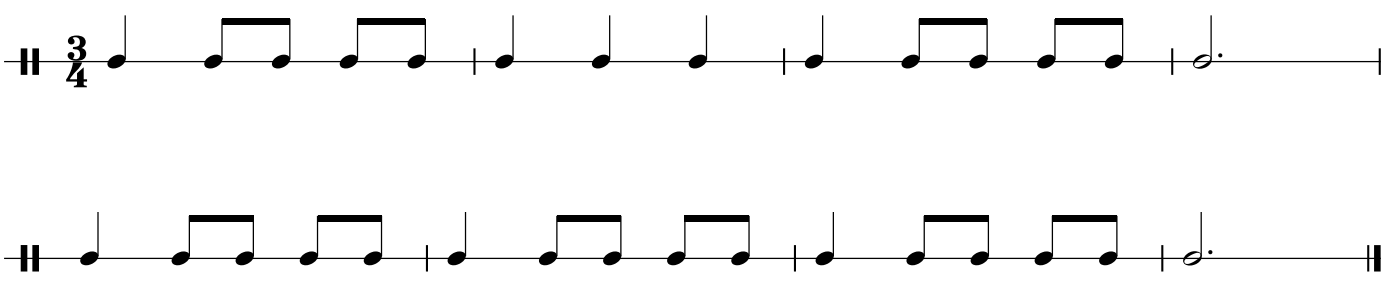
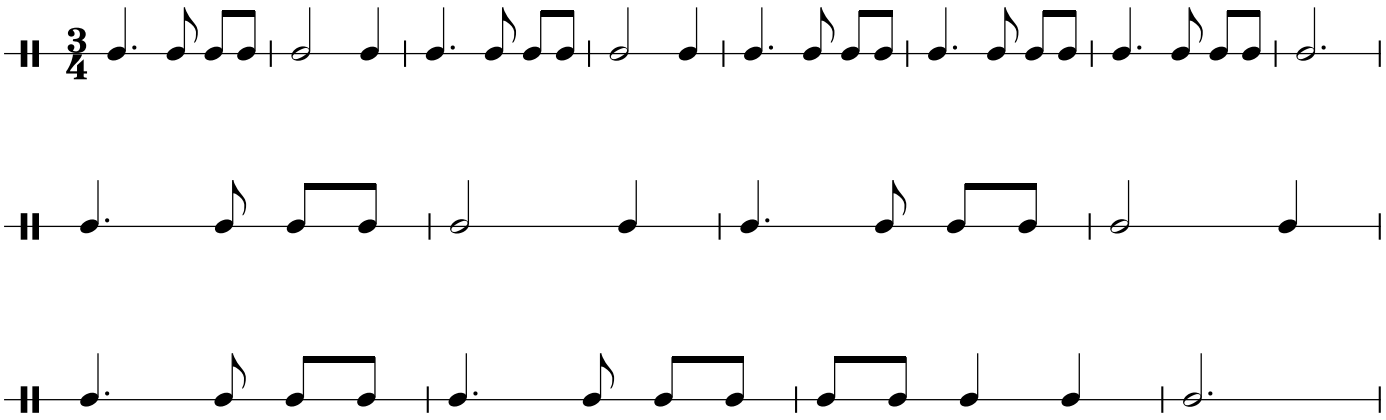


Waltz (slow)

92



Waltz (fast)

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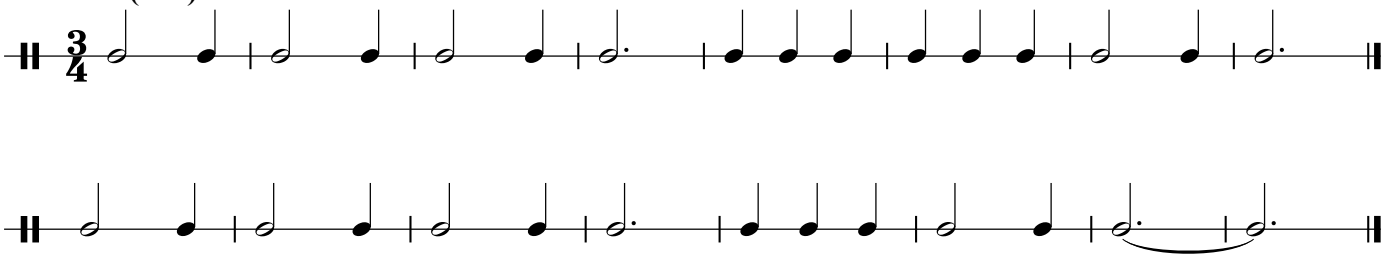
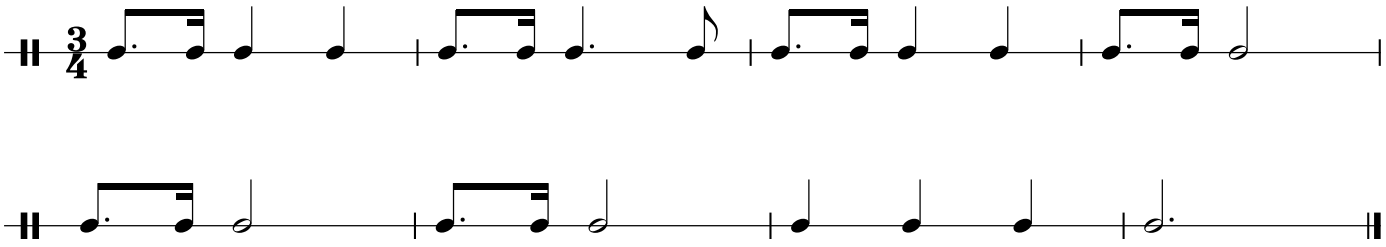


Mazurka

94



Mazurka

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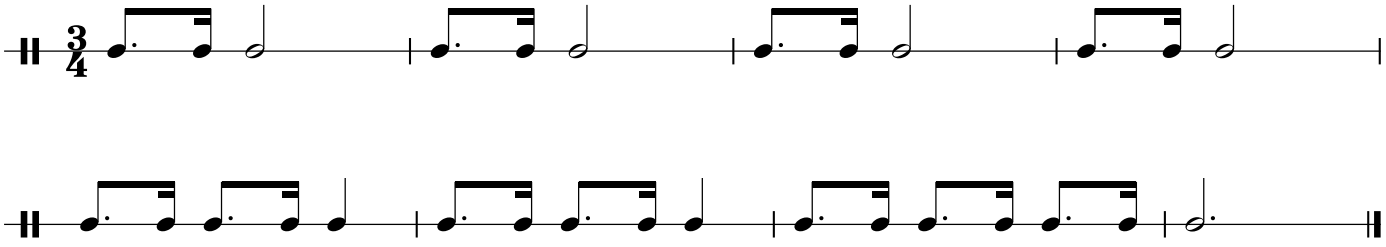

Polonaise

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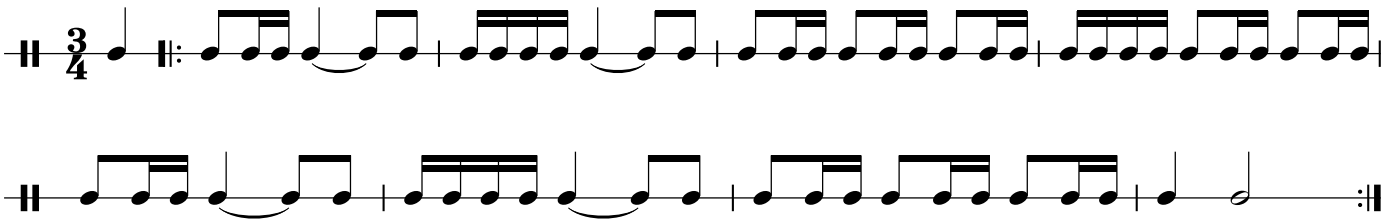
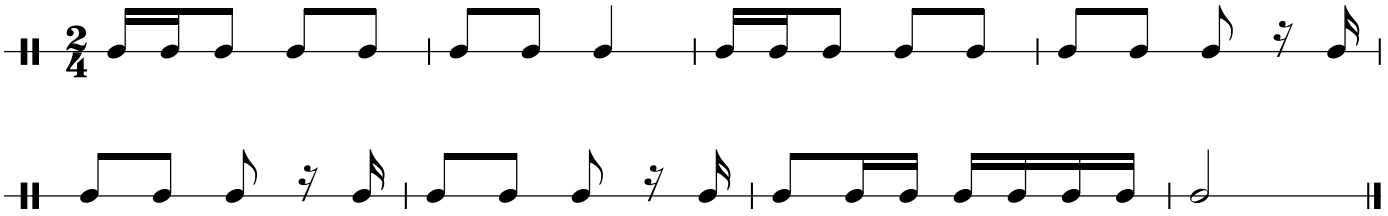


Polka

97

Polka

98



March

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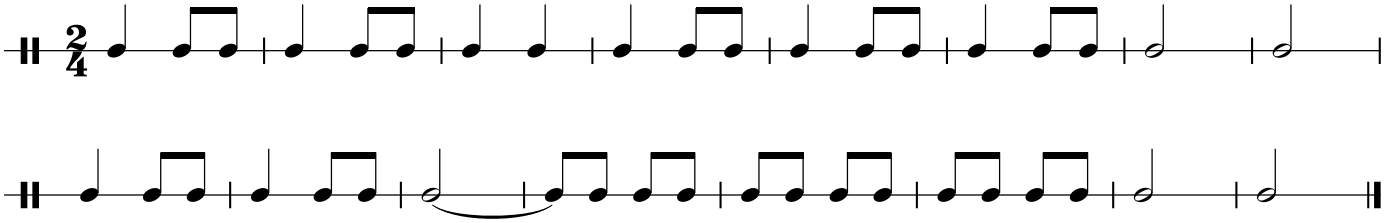
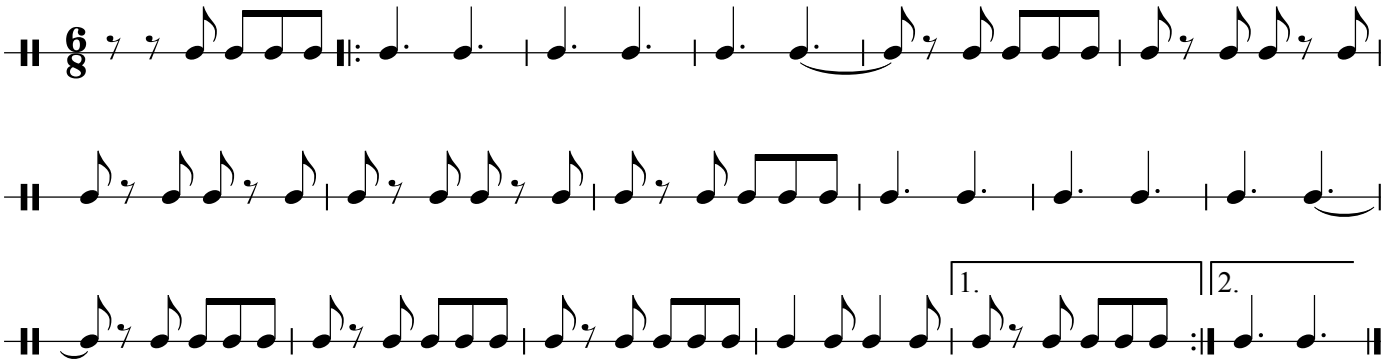
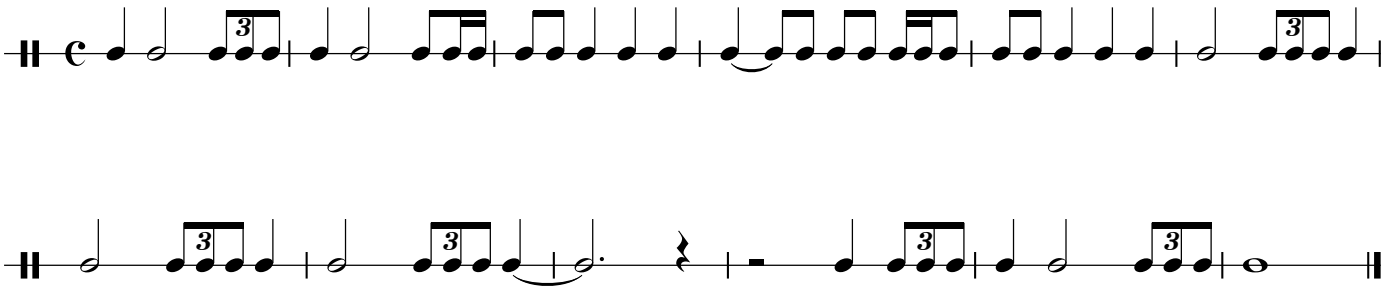


March

100



March

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