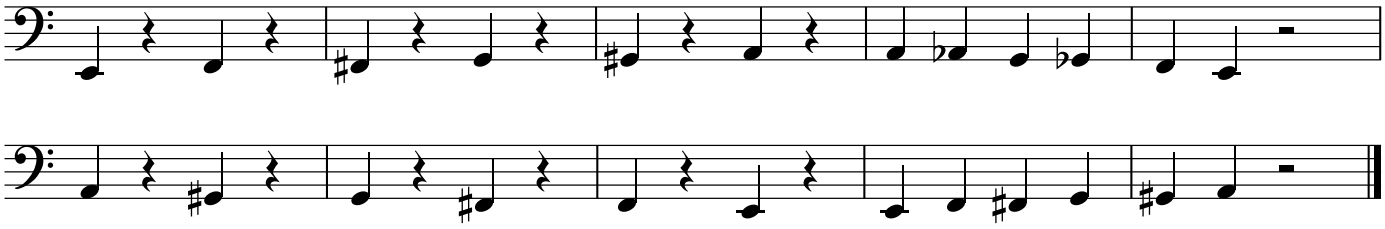
TIMPANI EXERCISES

Chromatic Pedaling

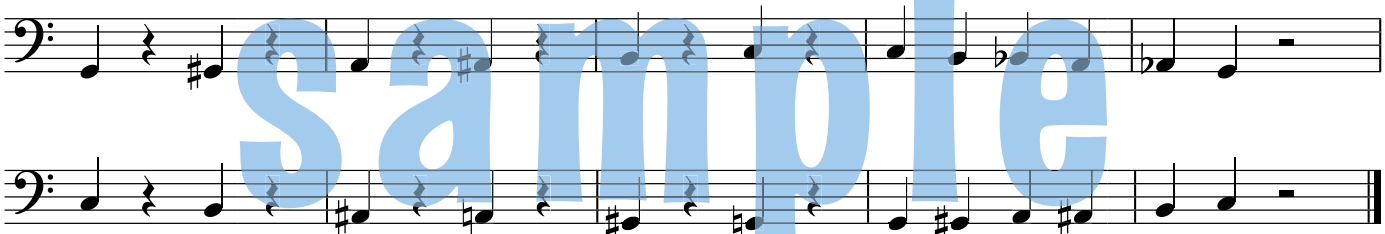
This exercise is meant to familiarize the timpanist with each of the drums. First, make sure you can sing each of the exercises in your own voice range. Play each exercise very slowly, in a legato style (dampening only during rests). For some thoughts on pedaling technique, refer to page 115. Next, experiment with different dynamic shapes and accent patterns.

♩ = **55 - 100**

32" drum

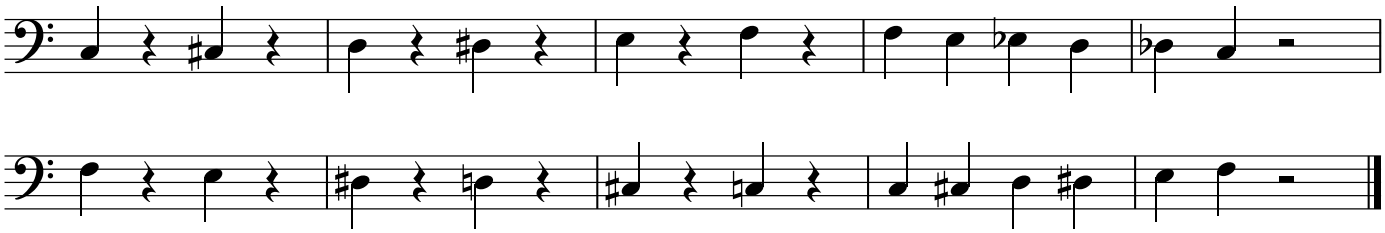


29" drum

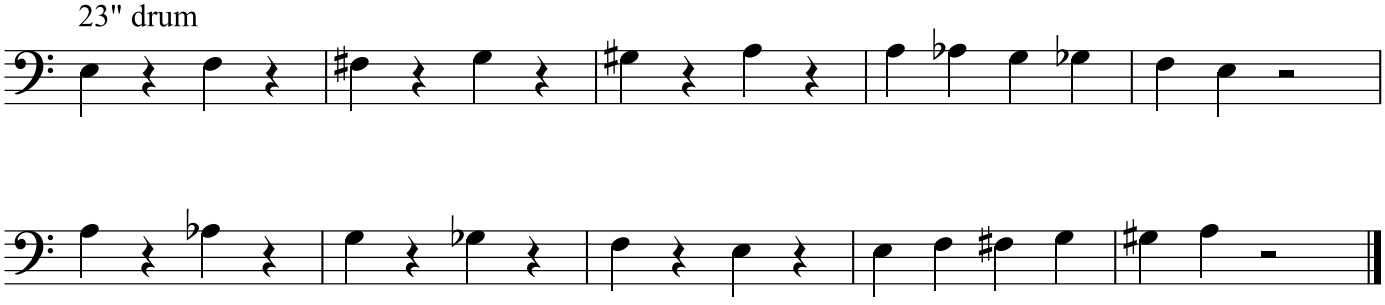


sample

26" drum



23" drum



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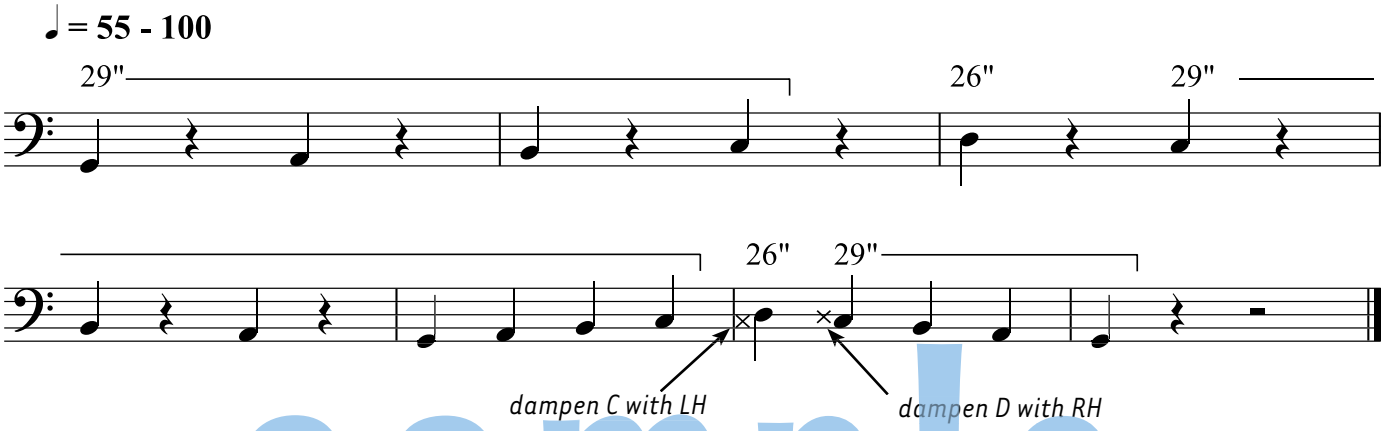
5-Note

This is just one example of a five-note pattern. You can also try minor patterns (G, A, B♭, C, D), Lydian patterns (G, A, B, C♯, D), or any others you can think of. Next, try moving through all twelve keys. As always, **make sure you can sing the exercise first, then play it slowly.** These patterns are usually done on two drums. Make sure to dampen the sustain during rests and when moving from one drum to another. Depending on the key, the top or bottom pitch will be on one drum and all the others will be pedaled on another (as illustrated). Experiment with different dynamic shapes and accent patterns. See page 115 for pedaling technique advice.



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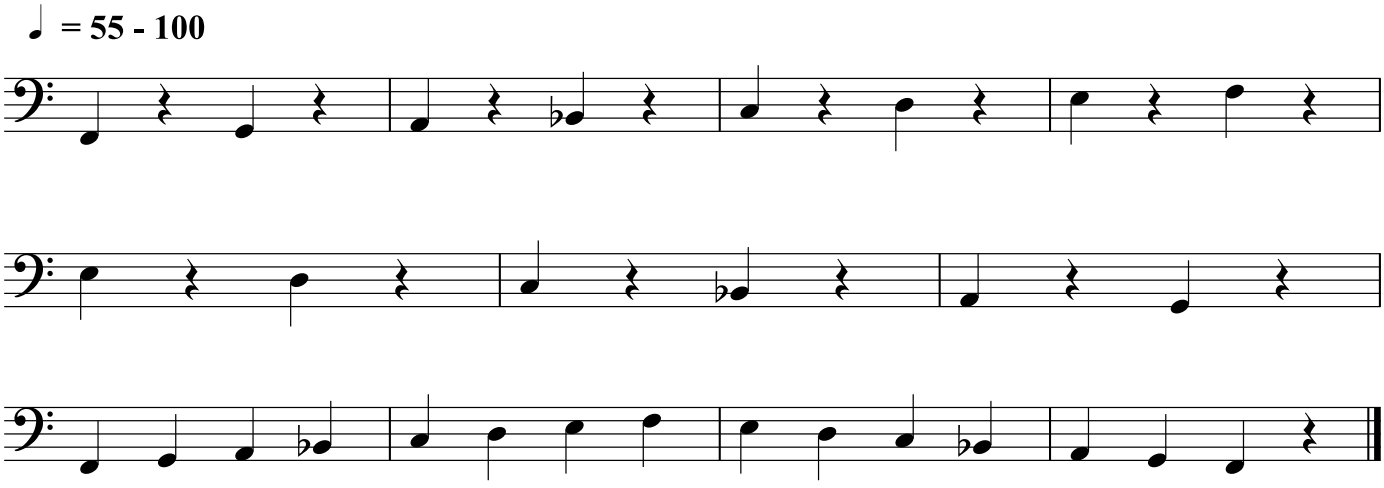
Timpani Scales

This exercise is designed for timpanists who have access to 4 or 5 drums. Which scales you can play will depend on how many drum you have. F major (or any other mode) is a good place to start. Try to set the pitches so that you only have to pedal on two drums. For example: with F major, set the low F on the 32", pedal G-C on the 29" and D-F on the 26". For F♯, set the low F♯ on the 32" and the high F♯ on the 23"; all the other notes can be pedaled on the two middle drums. Again, make sure you can sing the exercise first, then play it slowly. Use the same method as above for dampening. Experiment with different dynamic shapes and accents.



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Other Exercises and Methods for Timpani

Below are a few exercises to help develop rolls and rhythmic articulation. Combined with the tuning exercises above, these exercises will provide a solid foundation for the timpanist. In addition, try composing exercises that will suit your timpanist's needs, coordinate with your keyboard exercises, and work with the equipment that you own.

Timpani Roll Variations (play with keyboard "Singles")

Here are four exercises for developing rolls that will allow the timpanist to play with the keyboard ensemble (playing the exercise *"Singles"*). Remember, the roll speed rules will be similar, though less exaggerated, to those of the keyboard players. Here's a reminder:

Roll Speed Rules	
Rule #1:	*The* **louder** *the dynamic, the* **faster** *the roll speed.* *The* **softer** *the dynamic, the* **slower** *the roll speed.*
Rule #2:	*The* **higher the register** *on the instrument, the* **faster** *the roll speed.* *The* **lower the register** *on the instrument, the* **slower** *the roll speed.*

Here are a few other ideas to apply. If the rolls are not tied, leave a slight breath in between each roll. For forte-piano rolls, strike the drum at forte, pause very briefly, then start to roll at piano. Most importantly, timpani rolls should be **rebounded, single-stroke rolls**, not double-stroke rolls or buzz rolls.

Again, experiment with shaping ideas and accents. Feel free to create your own roll exercises to go along with other keyboard exercises.

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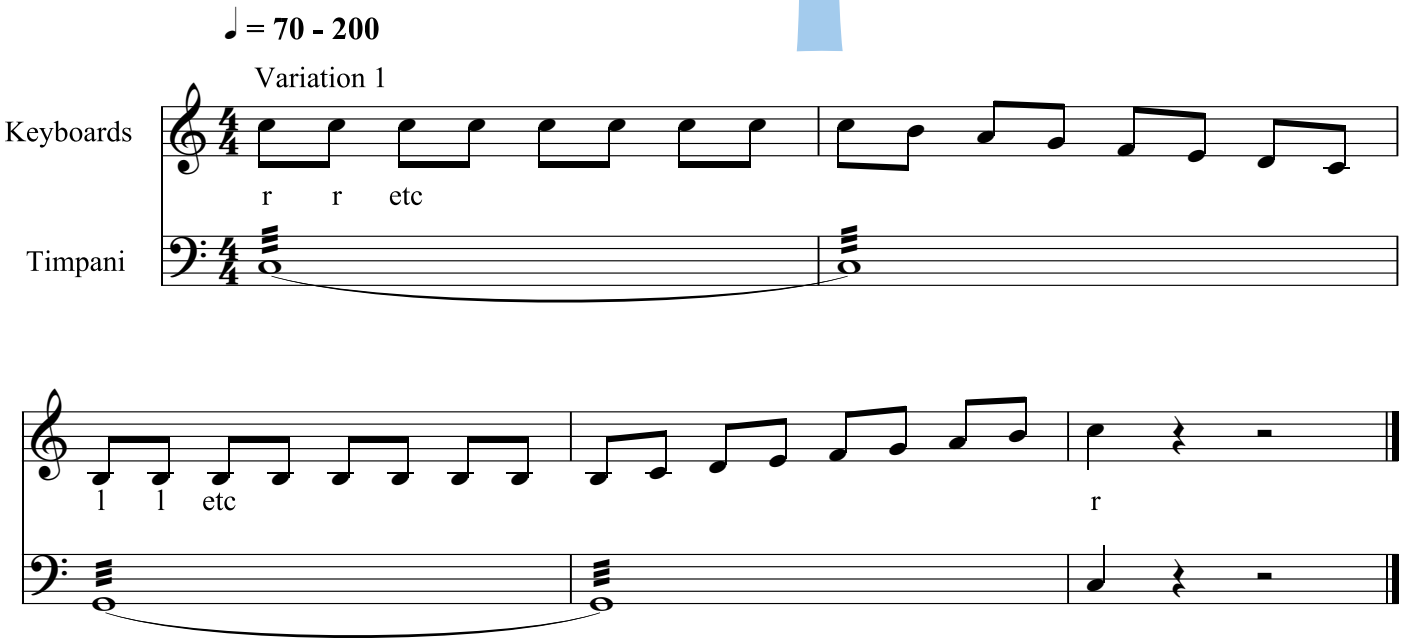

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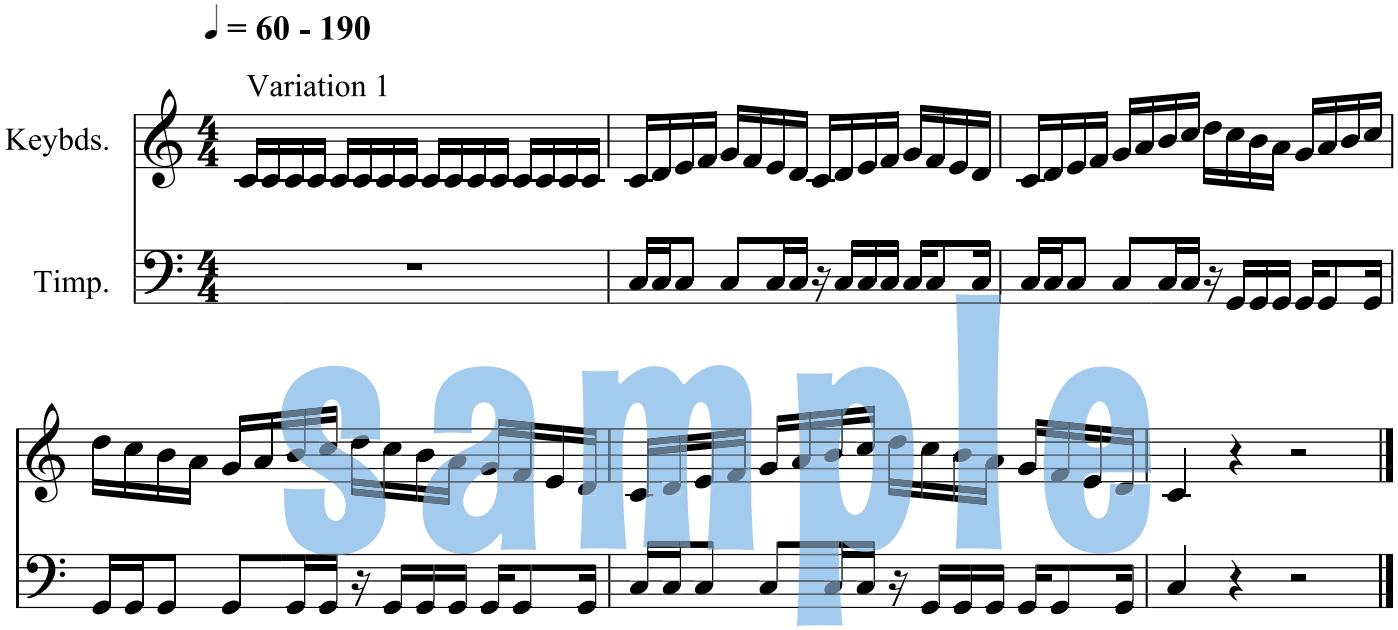
Articulate Variations (with keyboard "16th Note Scales No.1")

Here are two exercises that work on articulating rhythms. Again, these can be played with the keyboard ensemble (playing *"16th Note Scales No. 1"*).

The goal is to develop rhythmic accuracy and "touch." Instead of immediately going to a harder mallet, try playing the exercises with a medium mallet and a firmer fulcrum. You may also want to experiment with turning your hand over slightly so the palms are flat to the timpani head. Some timpanists feel more secure articulating rhythms with their hands "flat." Experiment with different accent patterns and dynamic shapes.



sample

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