Dr Milton Mermikides
University of Surrey
International Guitar Research Centre
surrey.ac.uk/guitar

INTERNATIONAL GUITAR RESEARCH CENTRE

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

Jazz Guitar Research Day

Exploring the history, craft and future of jazz guitar

Dr Tom Williams
John Wheatcroft
Nigel Price
Dr Kate Lewis
James Dean
Mike Outram
Dr John McGrath
Ant Law

10am-6pm
October 20th 2018
Ivy Theatre
University of Surrey

INTERNATIONAL GUITAR RESEARCH CENTRE

Unswung Hero

Breaking Jazz Guitar's Rhythmic Taboos

Milton Mermikides

Ant Law Trio

Speaking of Rhythm

“You can’t have a sound without having any duration.”

–Steve Reich

“One of the reasons I believe in jazz is that the oneness of man can come through the rhythm of your heart. It’s the same anyplace in the world, that heartbeat. It’s the first thing you hear when you’re born — or before you’re born — and it’s the last thing you hear” *–Dave Brubeck*

“Music creates order out of chaos: for rhythm imposes unanimity upon the divergent, melody imposes continuity upon the disjointed, and harmony imposes compatibility upon the incongruous. *–Yehudi Menuhin*

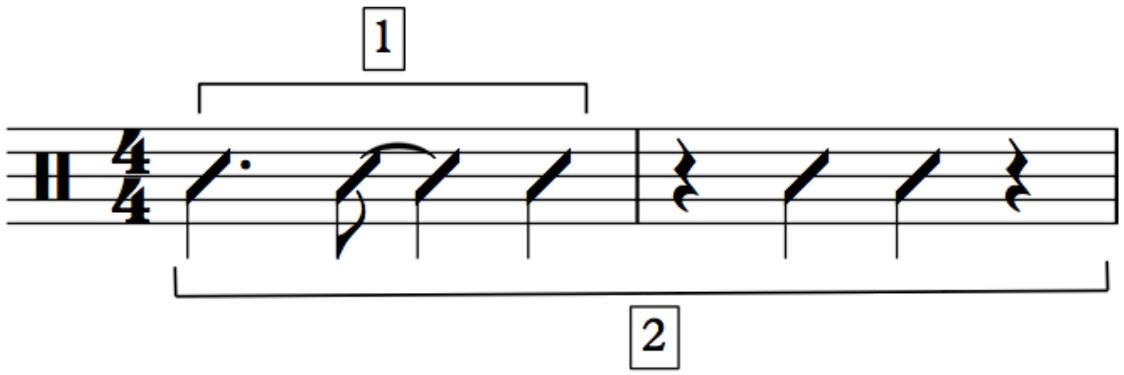
“Rhythm is our universal mother tongue. It's the language of the soul.”

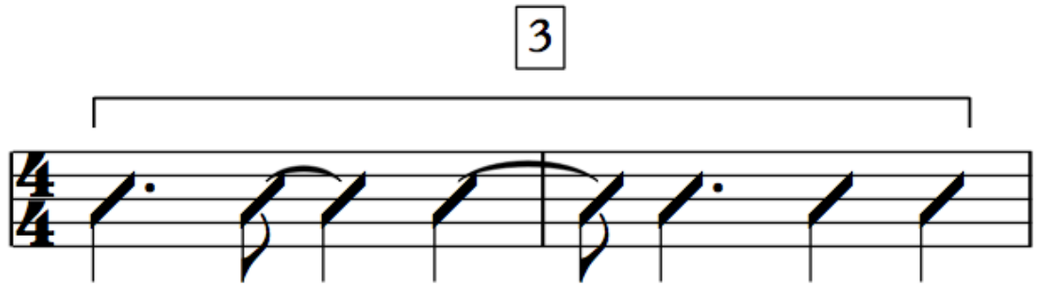
–Gabrielle Roth

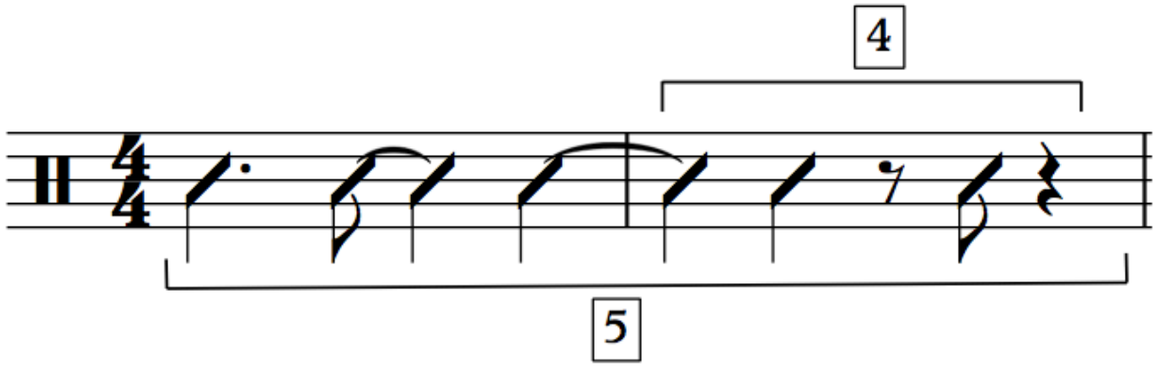
Rhythmic time-feel is the most basic, fundamental element communicated by the soloist, and appreciated (or criticized) by an audience. The greatest technique, creativity, melodic accuracy, lyricism, sound, style, etc. matters very little if the music doesn't feel good rhythmically, whereas less evolved technique, ideas, melodic choices, sound etc. can actually sound okay when executed with rhythmic accuracy (good time-feel) and conviction.

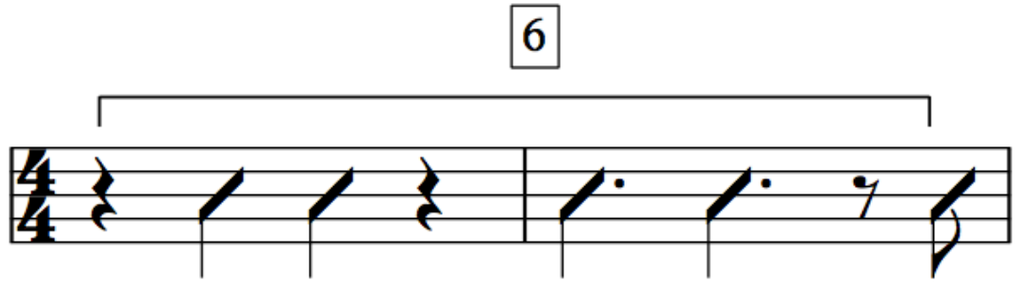
Crook 1991, p 10

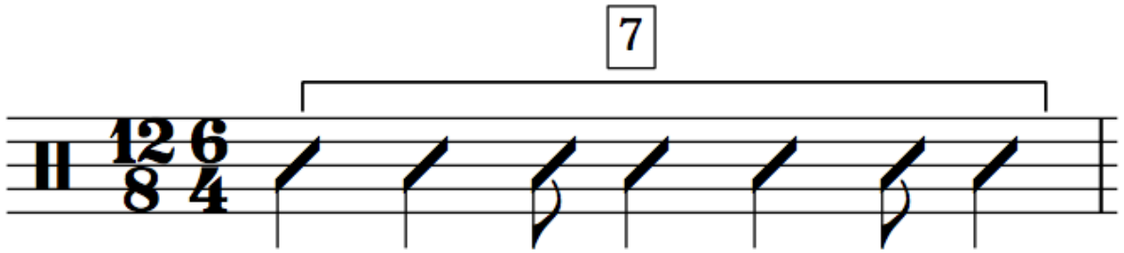
An Unspoken Language

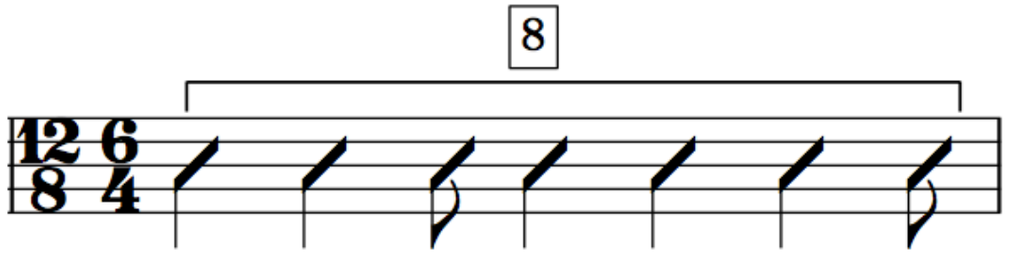

1
2

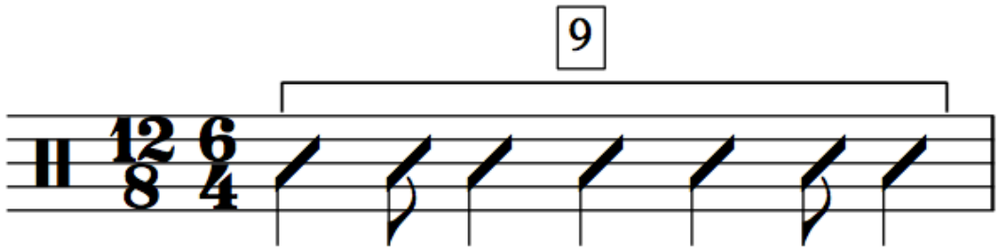

3

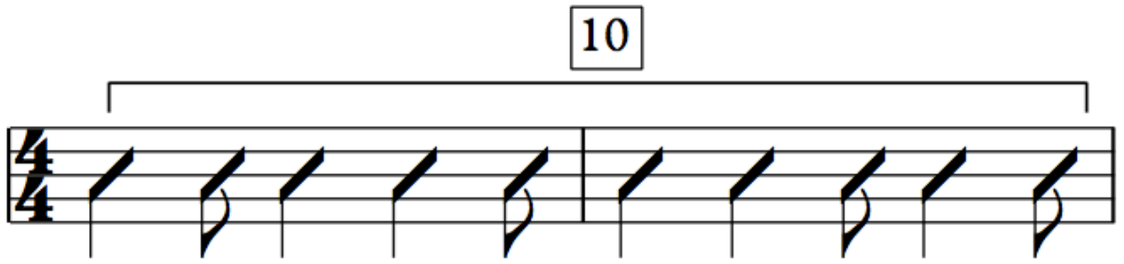

4
5

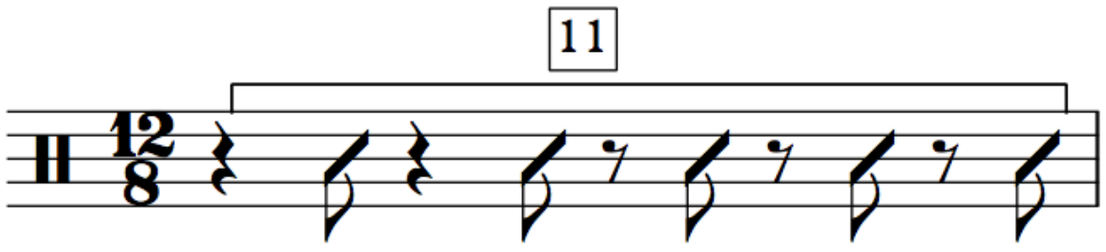

6

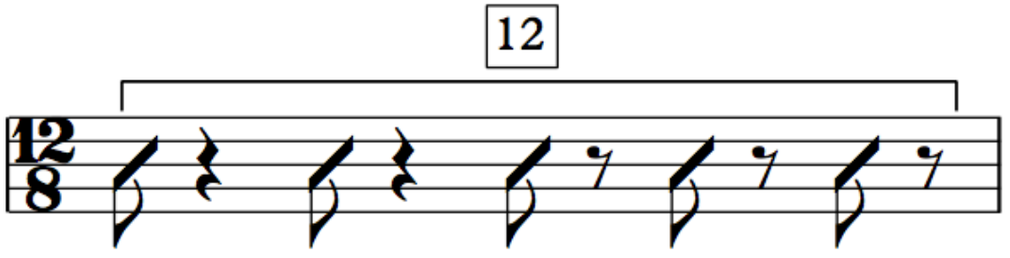

7


8

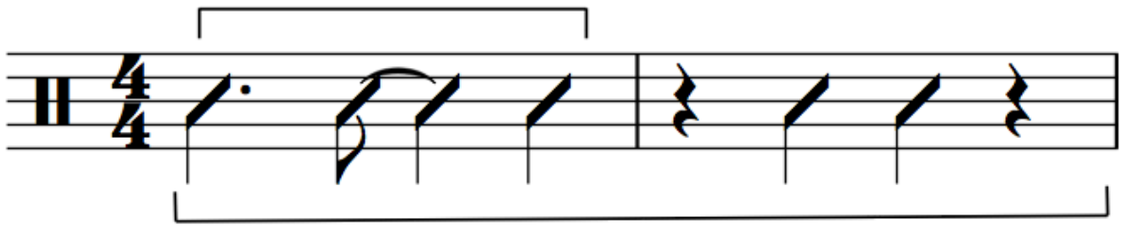

9


10

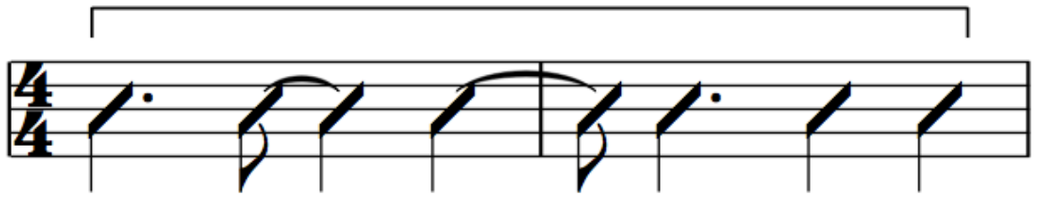

11


12

Tresillo

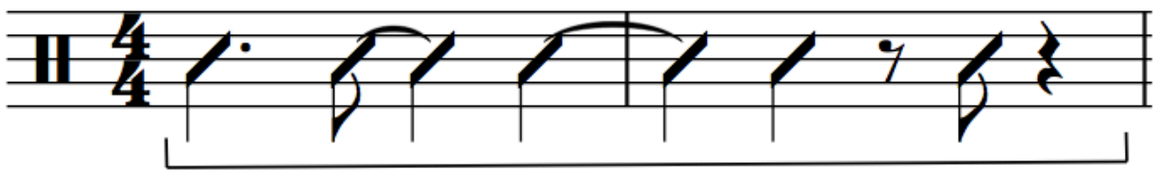


Double Tresillo

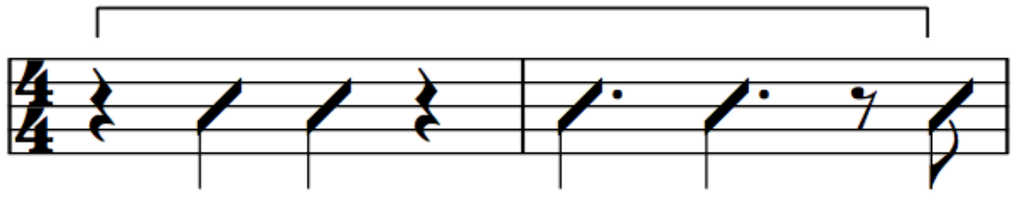


3-2 Son Clave

Batida

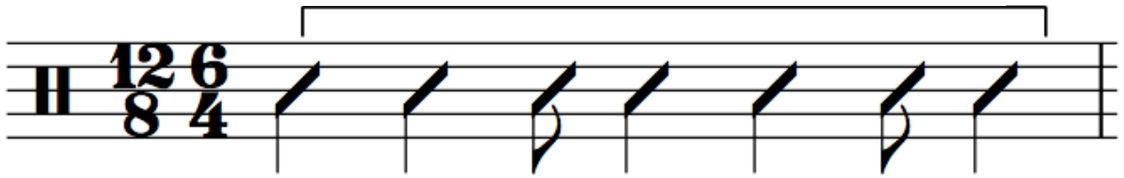


2-3 Rhumba Clave

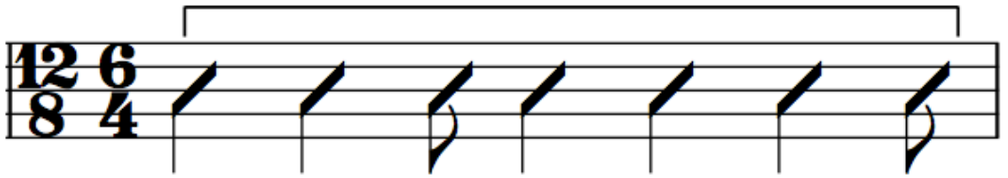


3-2 Bossa Clave

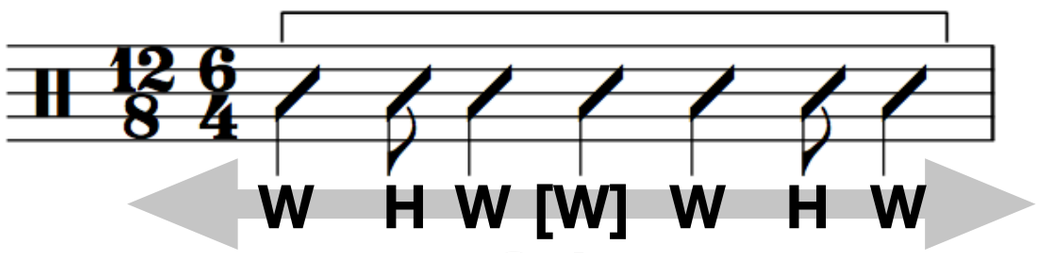
African Standard Pattern



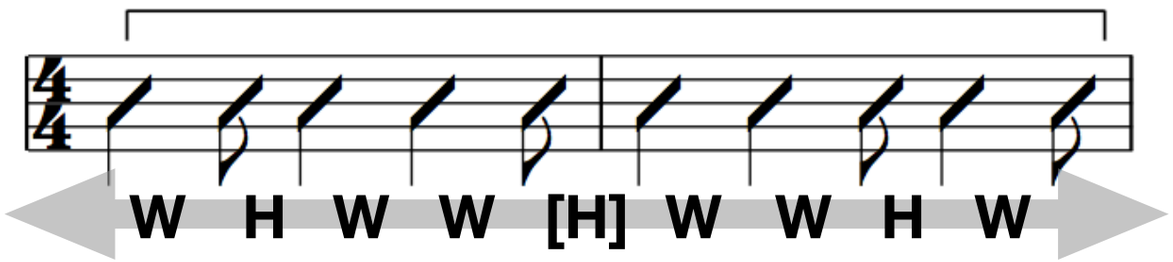
Agbekor Timeline



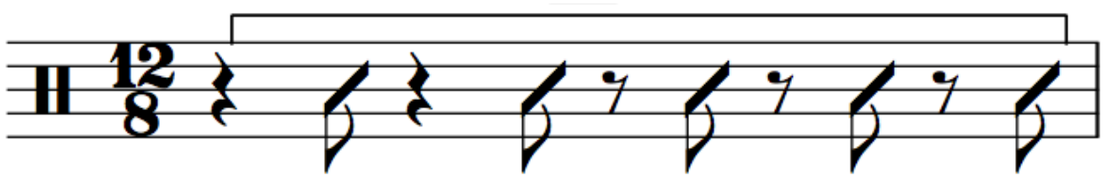
Diatonic (palindromic)



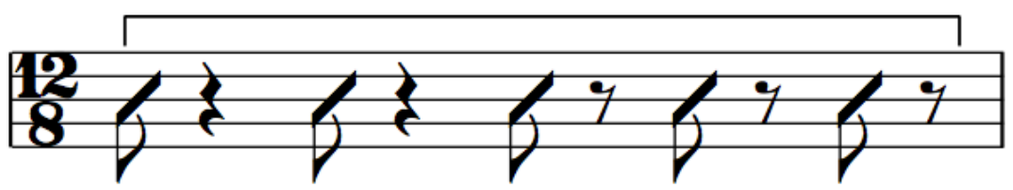
Cáscara (IOI palindrome)



Soleares



Bulerias



1. Proximity Blindness

2. Brain/Body Bias

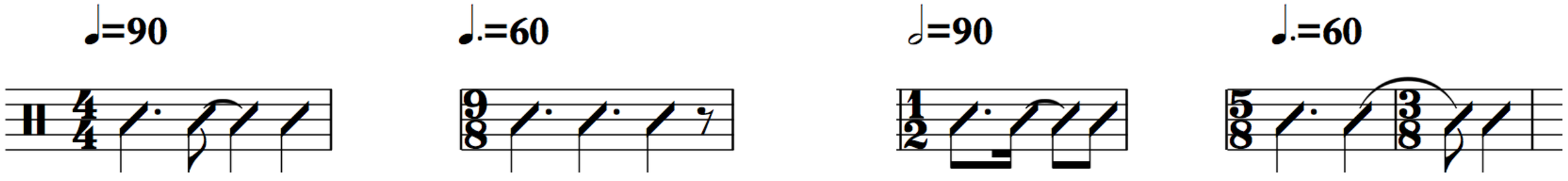
MARTINO UNSTRUNG (2008)

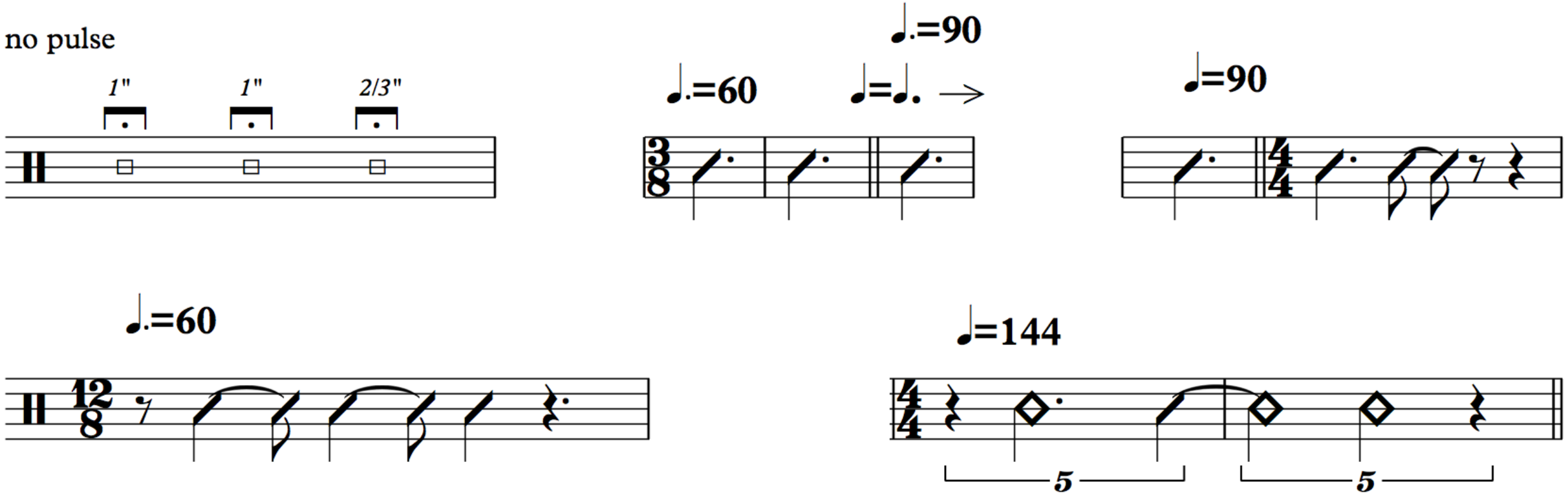
MARTINO UNSTRUNG (2008)

3. Rhythm as Belt

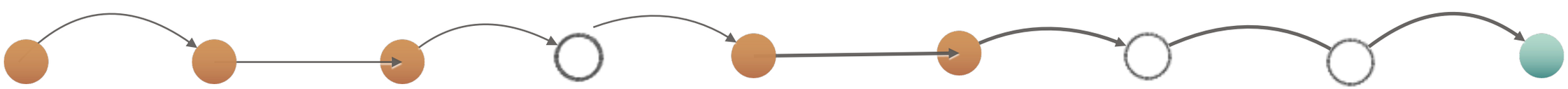
Music and Time

Multiple Perspectives

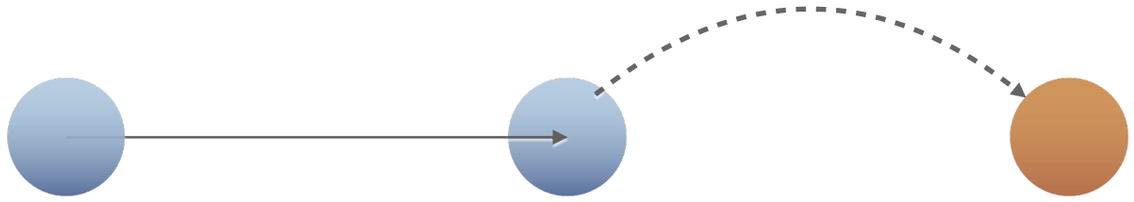


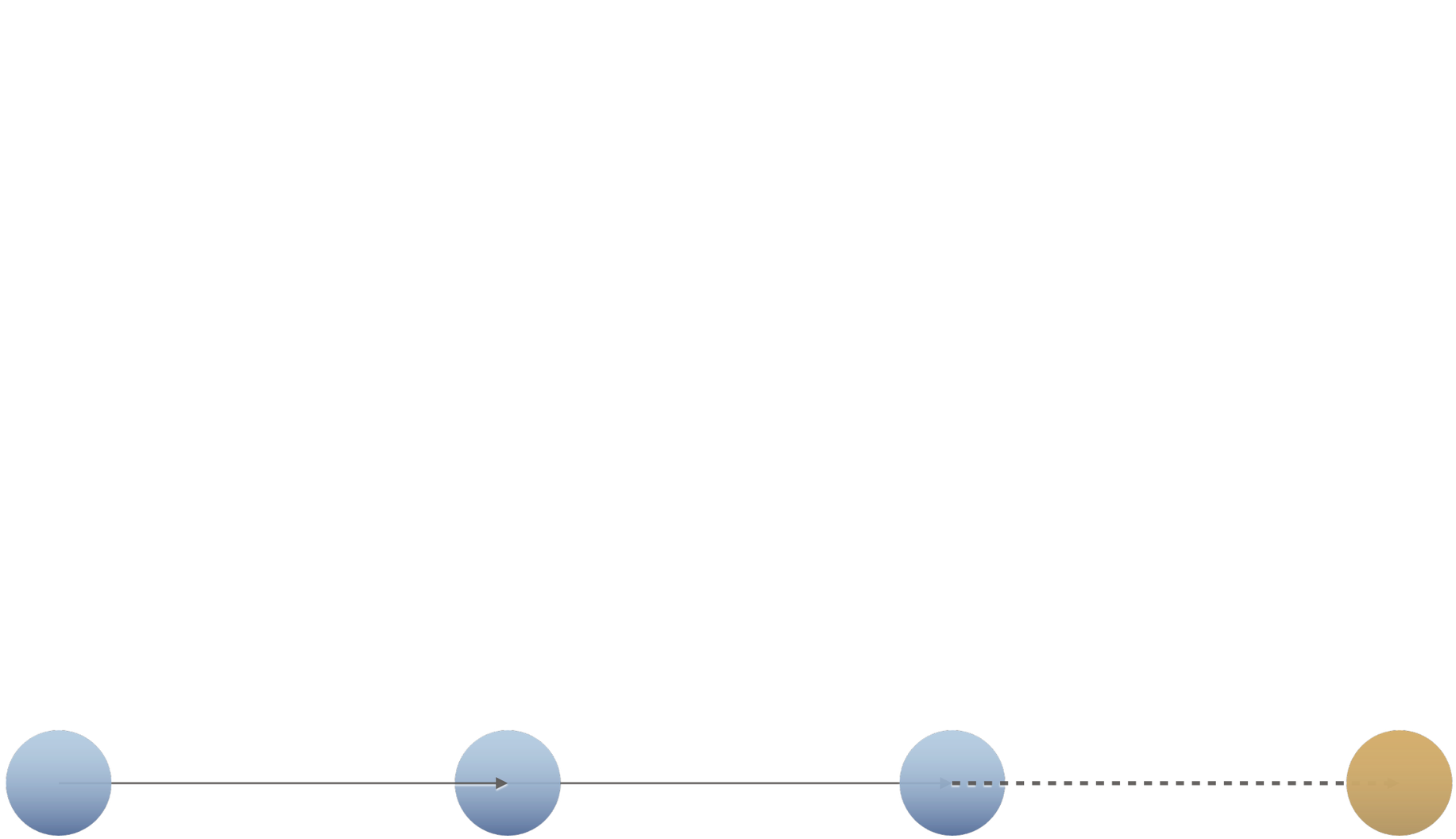


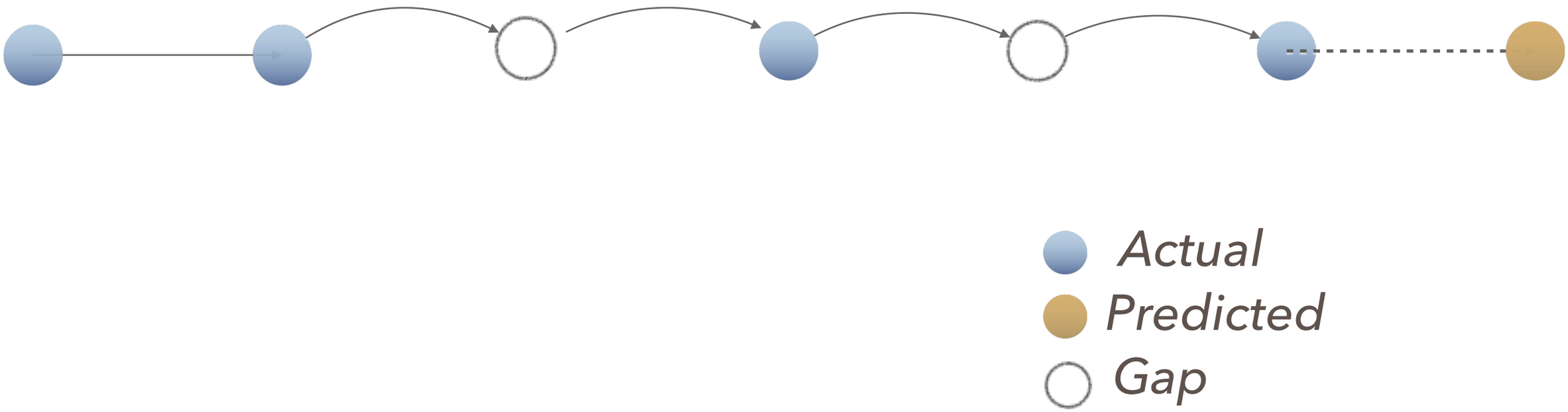
Rhythm as Prediction

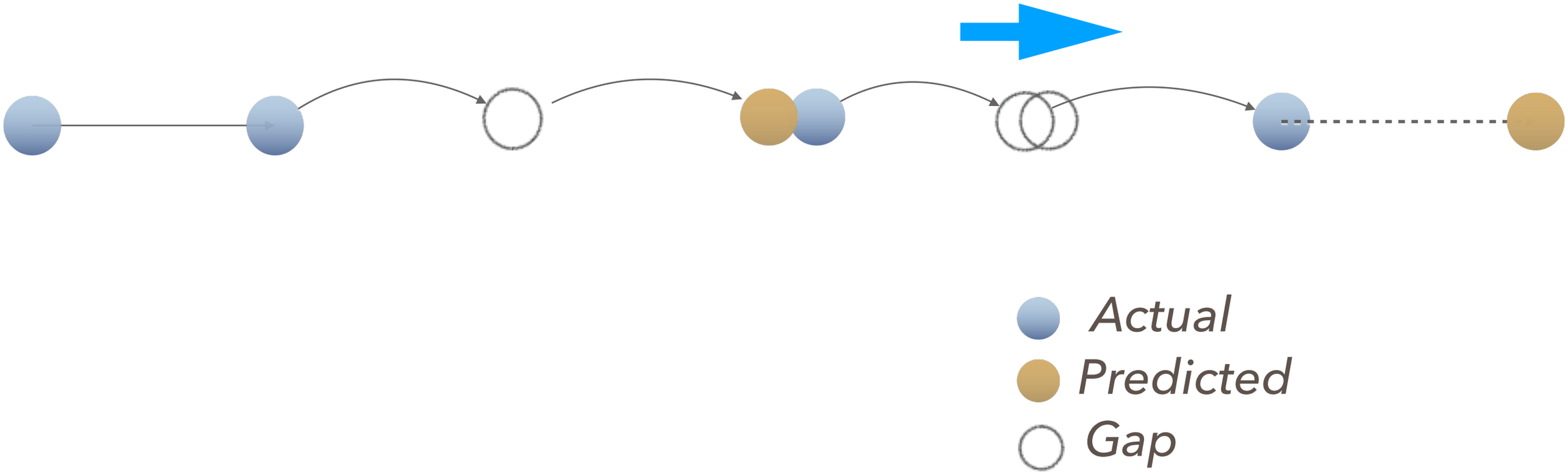


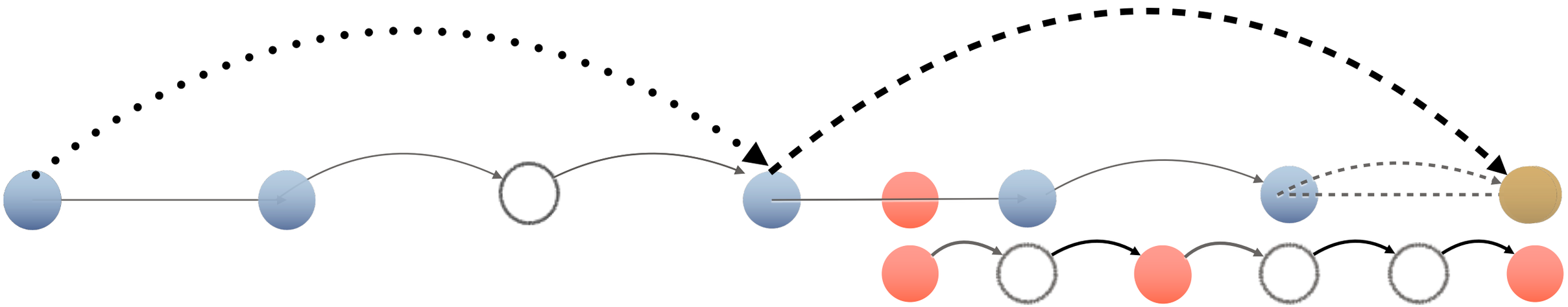
Rhythm As Prediction
(body maths)




Actual
Predicted


Actual
Predicted
Gap


Actual
Predicted
Gap

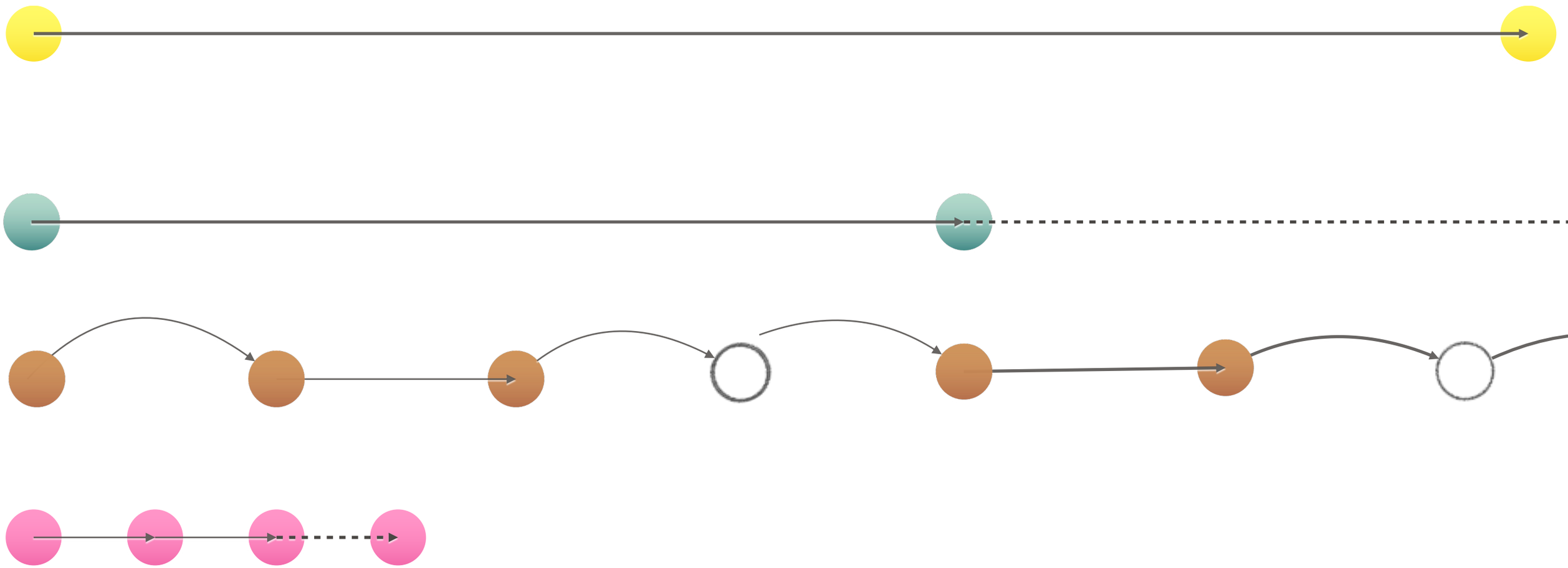


Actual

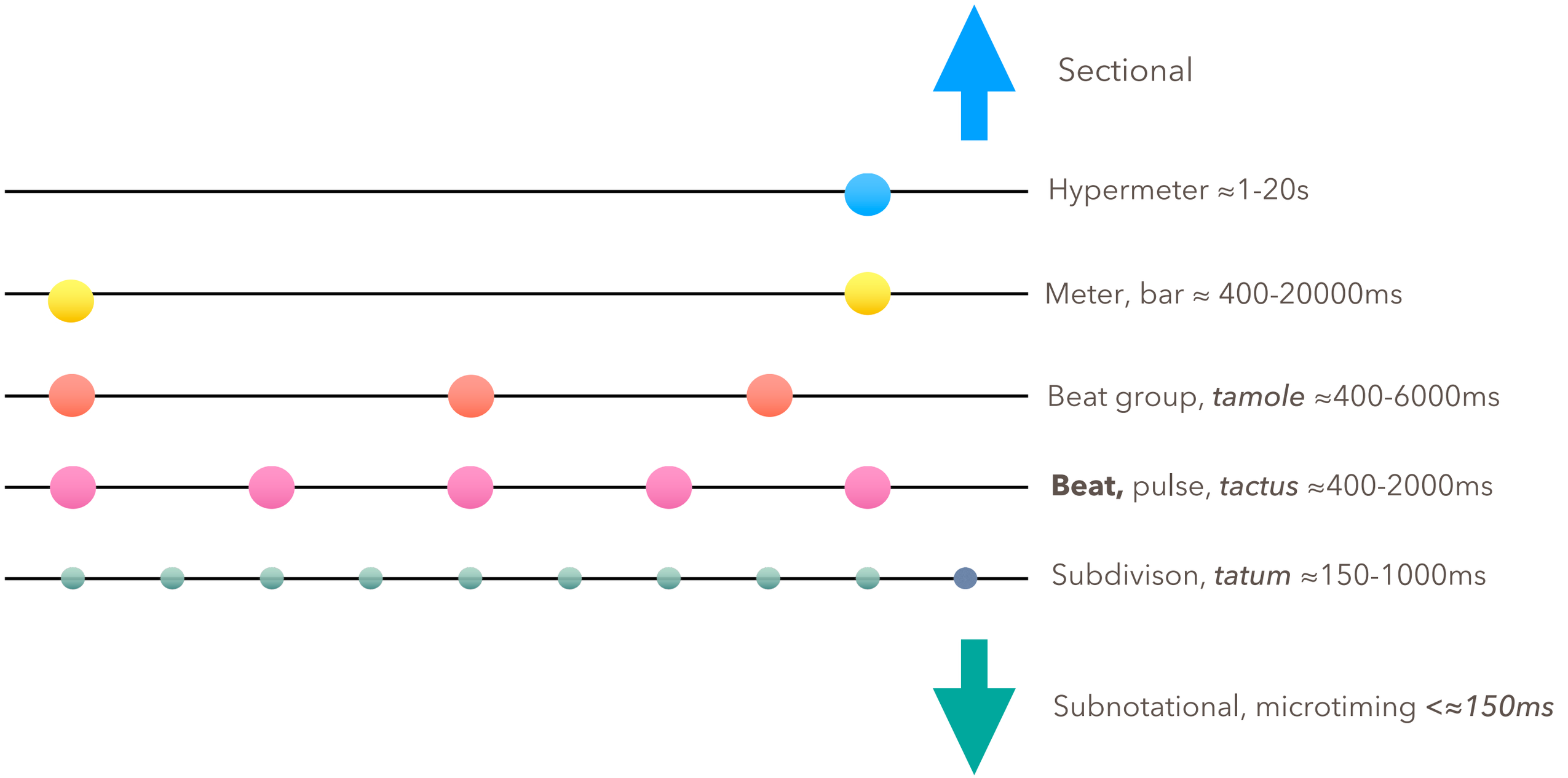
Predicted

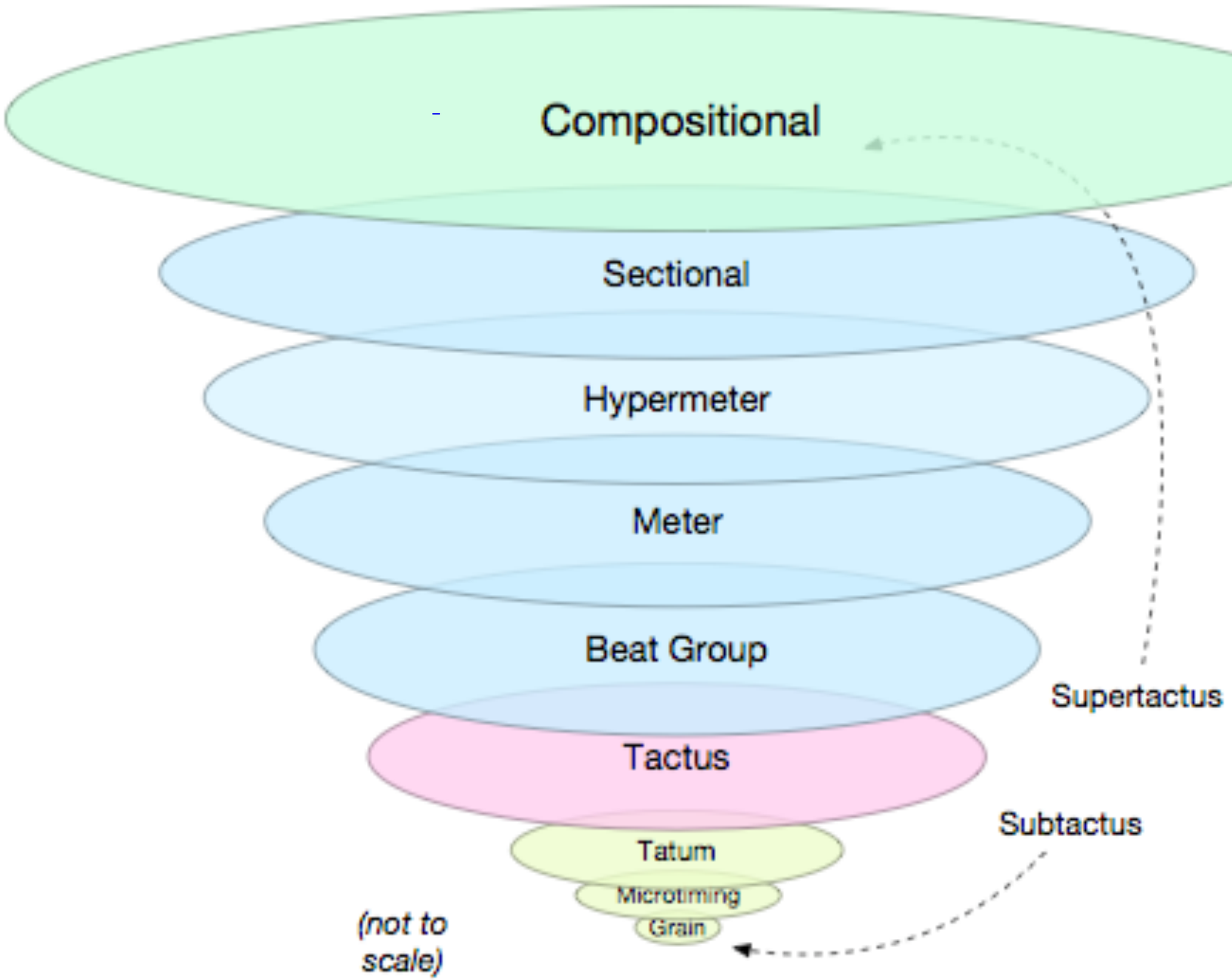
Gap

Novel



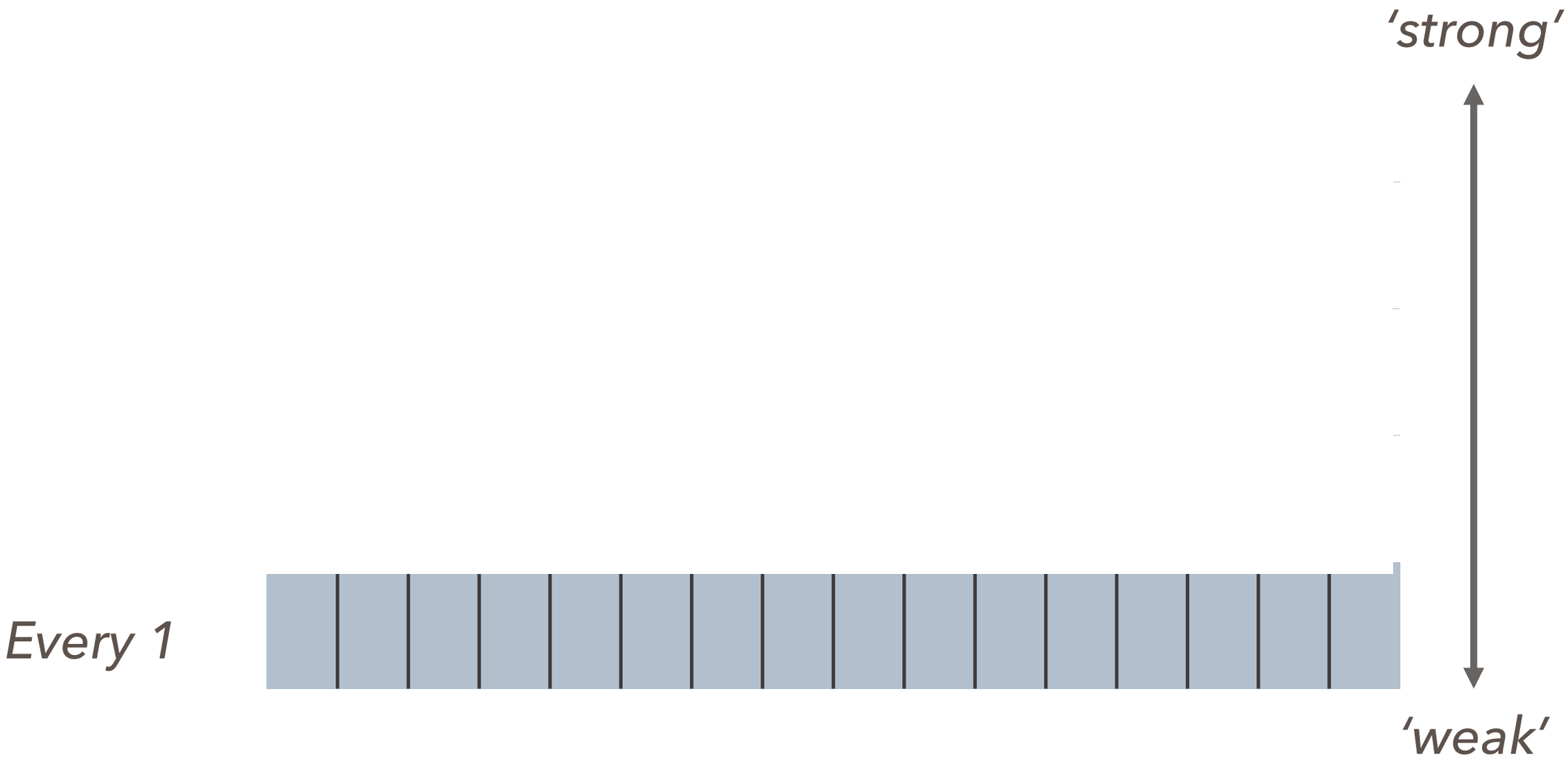
Levels of Musical Time



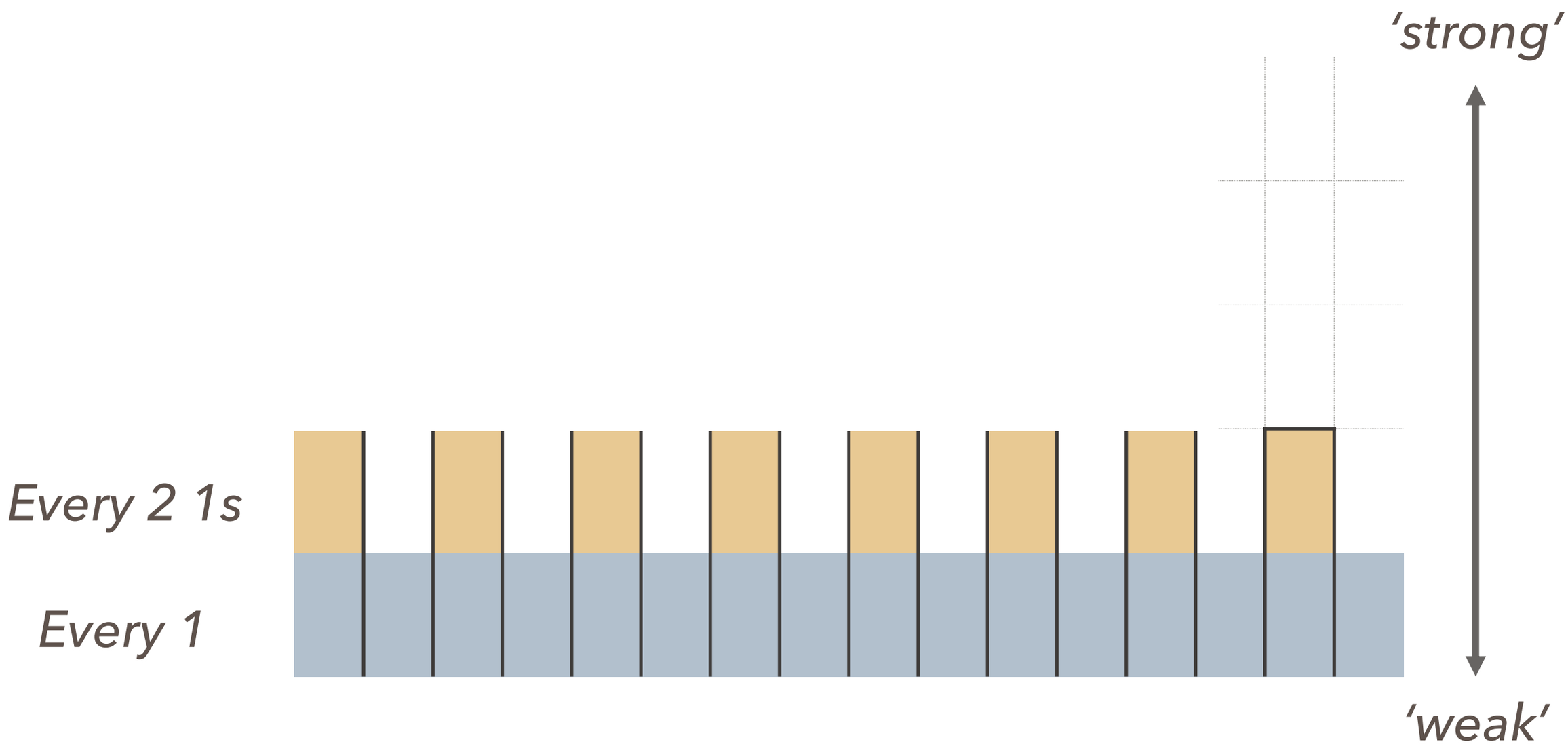

Compositional
Sectional
Hypermeter
Meter
Beat Group
Tactus
Tatum
Microtiming
Grain
Supertactus
Subtactus
(not to scale)

Displacement Dissonance

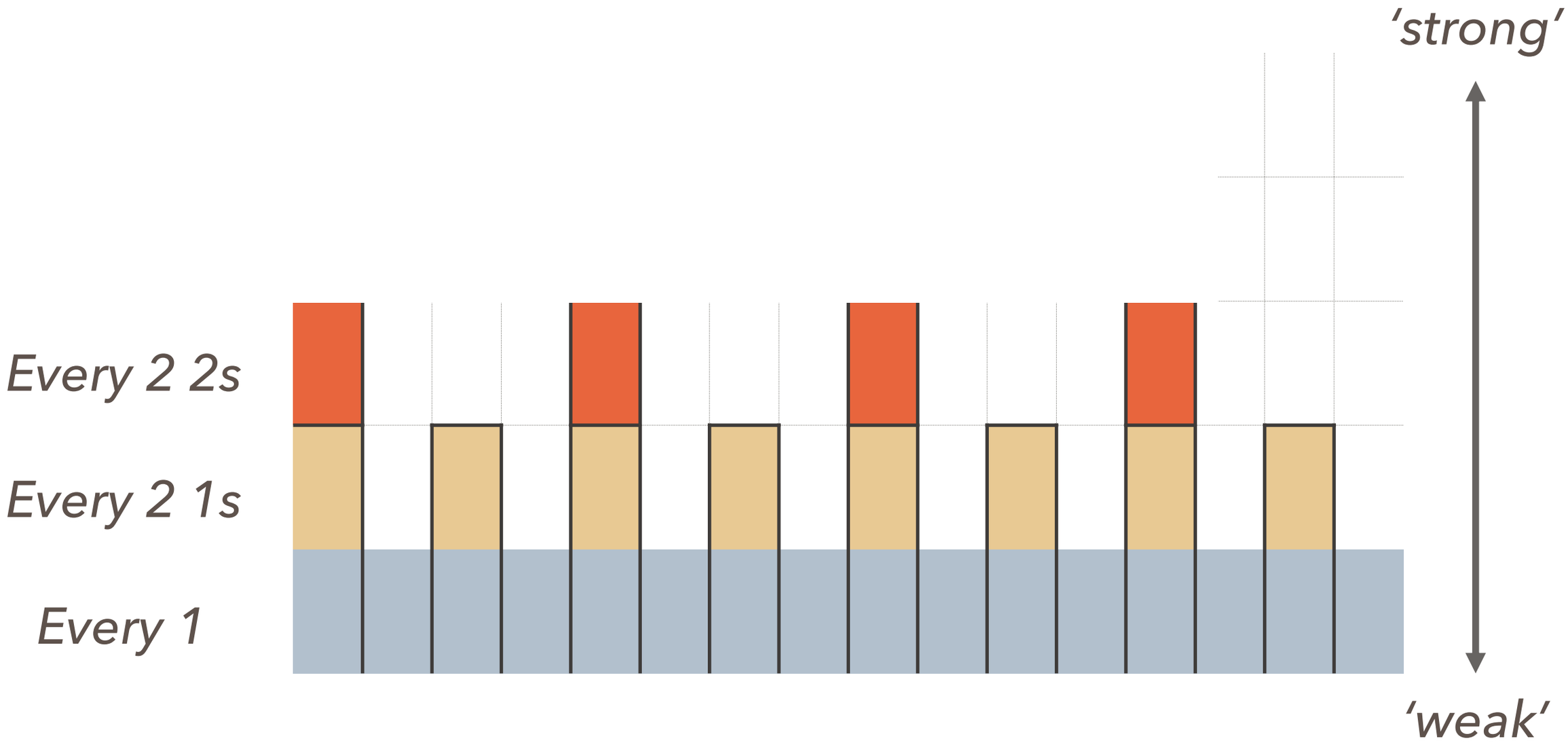
The Binary Default



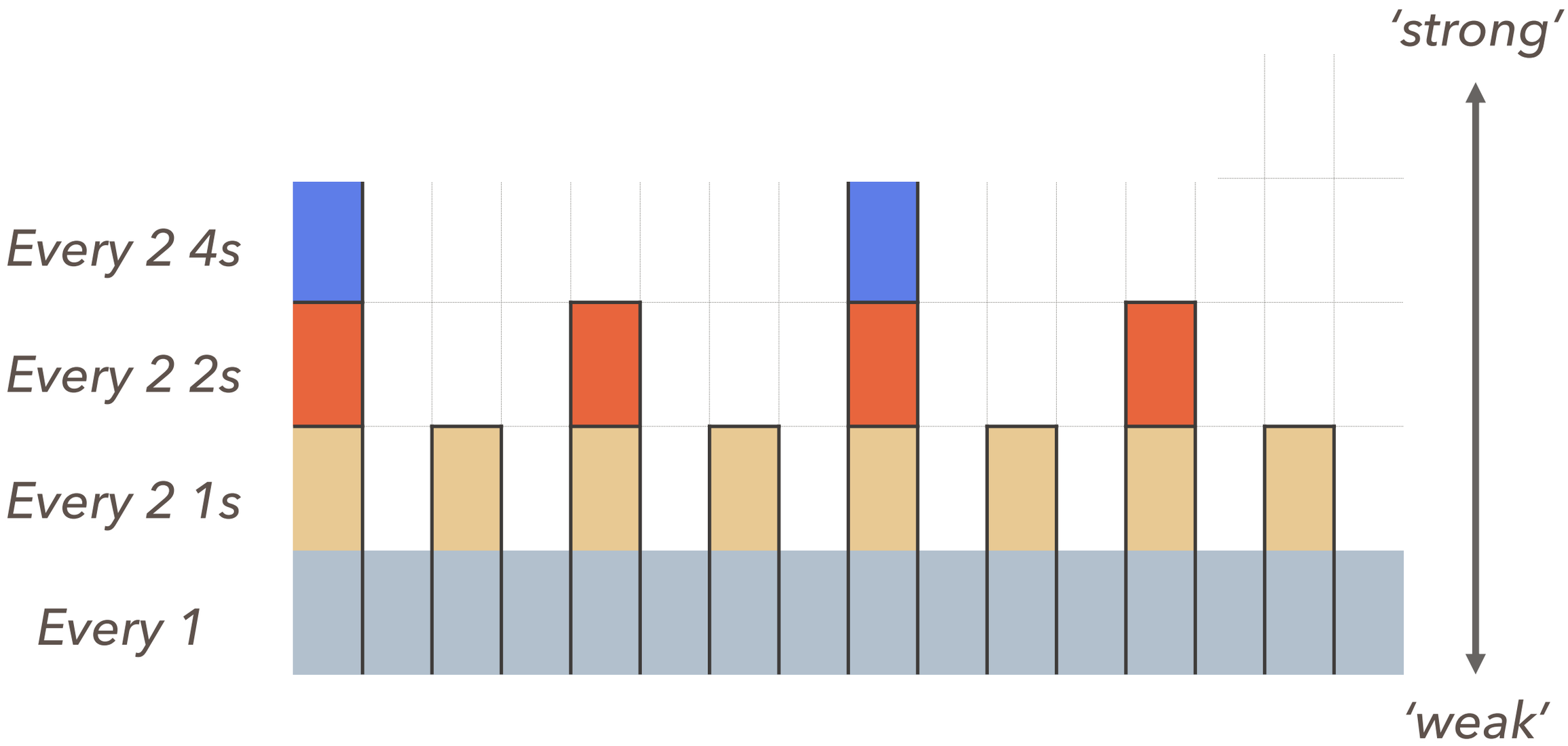
2 by 2 by 2



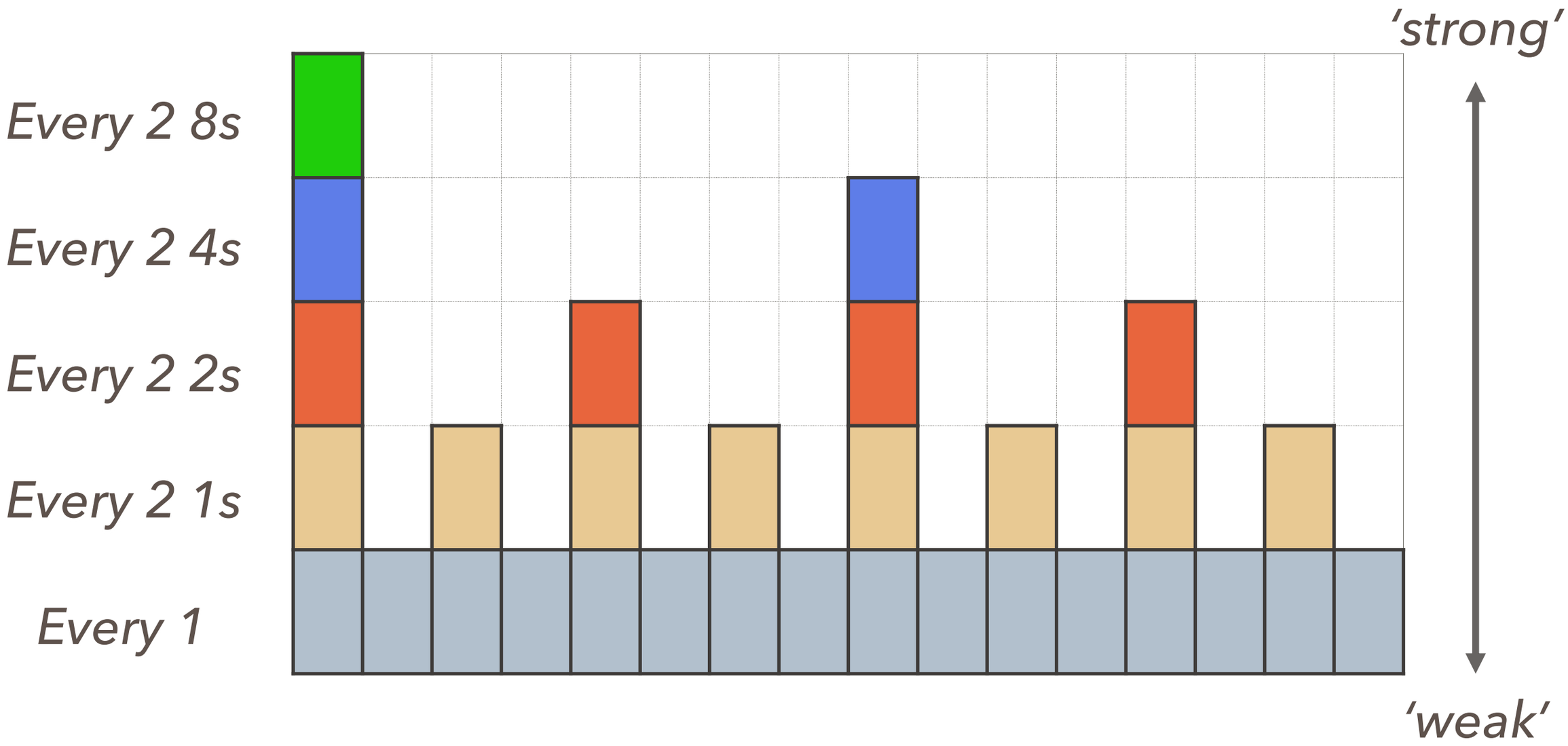
2 by 2 by 2



2 by 2 by 2



2 by 2 by 2



2 by 2 by 2

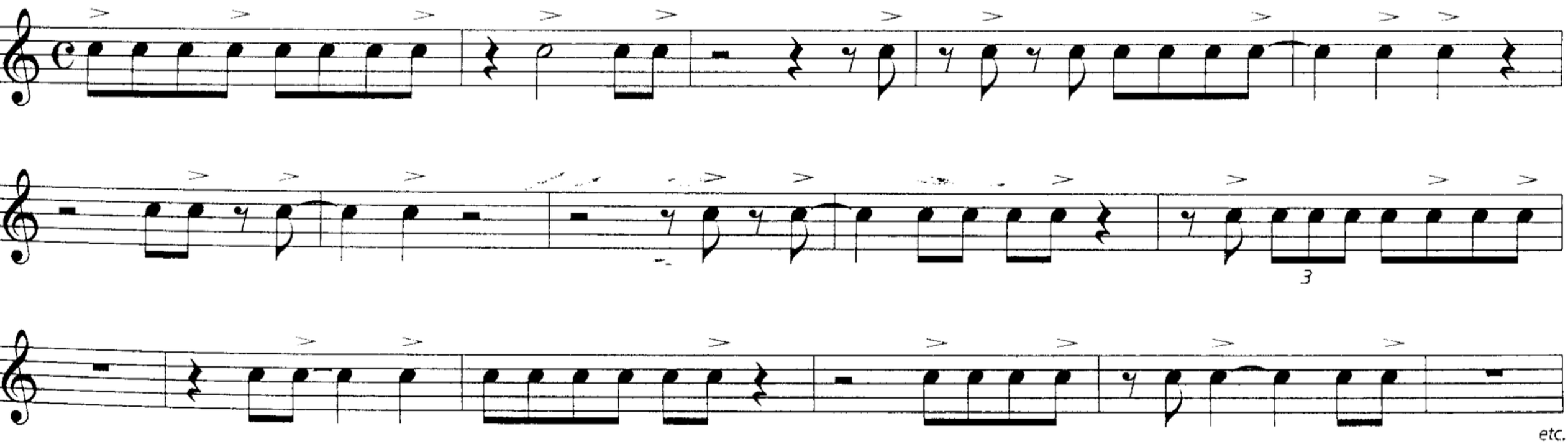
SYNCOPATION
(AKA DISPLACEMENT DISSONANCE)

POWER THE WEAK
WEAKEN THE STRONG

Jazz Rhythm as Beat Democracy

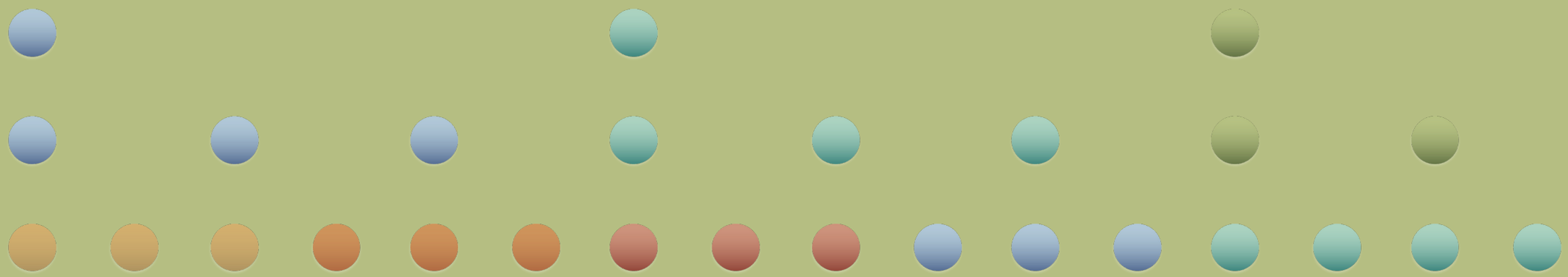
single pitch throughout.]

Example I:22R



Hal Crook *How To Improvise*

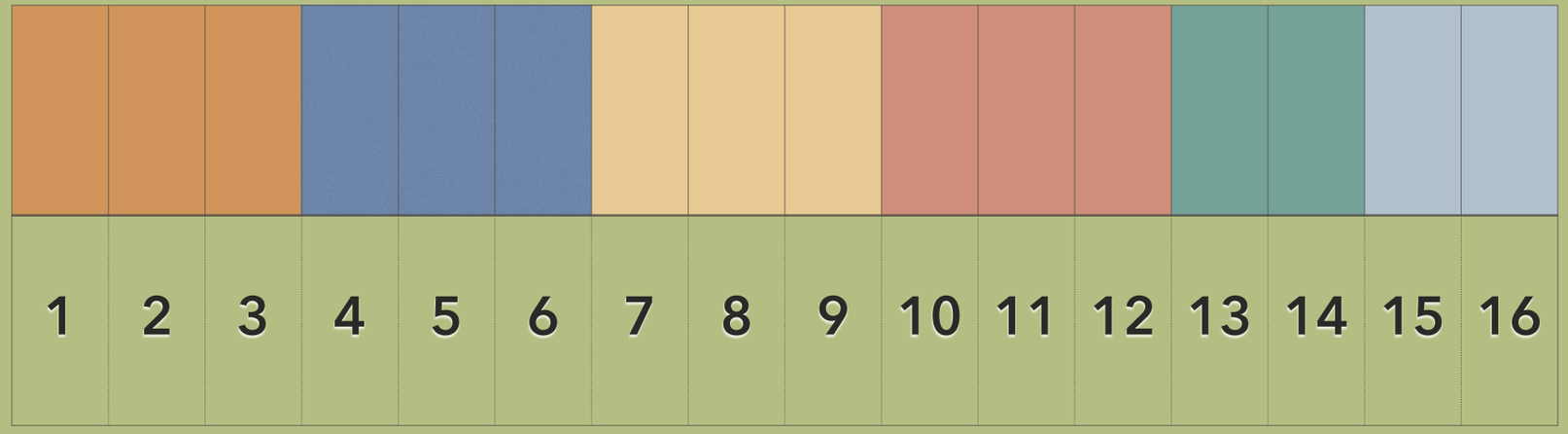
GROUPING DISSONANCE



THE TRESILLO, DOUBLE TRESILLO & BEYOND

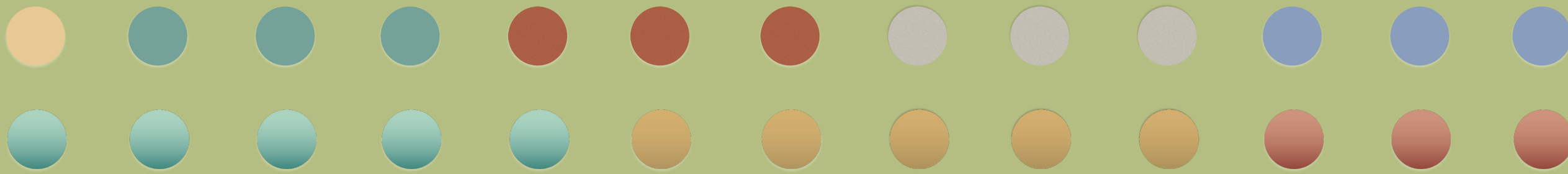
TRESILLO

DOUBLE TRESILLO



THE TRESILLO, DOUBLE TRESILLO & BEYOND

ENDLESS THREES



Low-Prime Phrase Grouping

Play/Rest Combinations

I. Even-bar phrasing (easy)

Play (bars)	Rest (bars)	Total (bars)
1	1	2
2	2	4
3	1	4
1	3	4
4	2	6
2	4	6
2	6	8

(etc.)

Hal Crook *How To Improvise*

Higher-Prime Phrase Grouping

II. Odd-bar phrasing (more difficult)

Play (bars)	→	Rest (bars)	→	Total (bars)
1		2		3
2		1		3
3		2		5
2		3		5
4		1		5
1		4		5

(etc.)

Hal Crook *How To Improvise*

Multi-level Grouping Dissonance

Jazz Taboo #1

Harmonic Rhythm

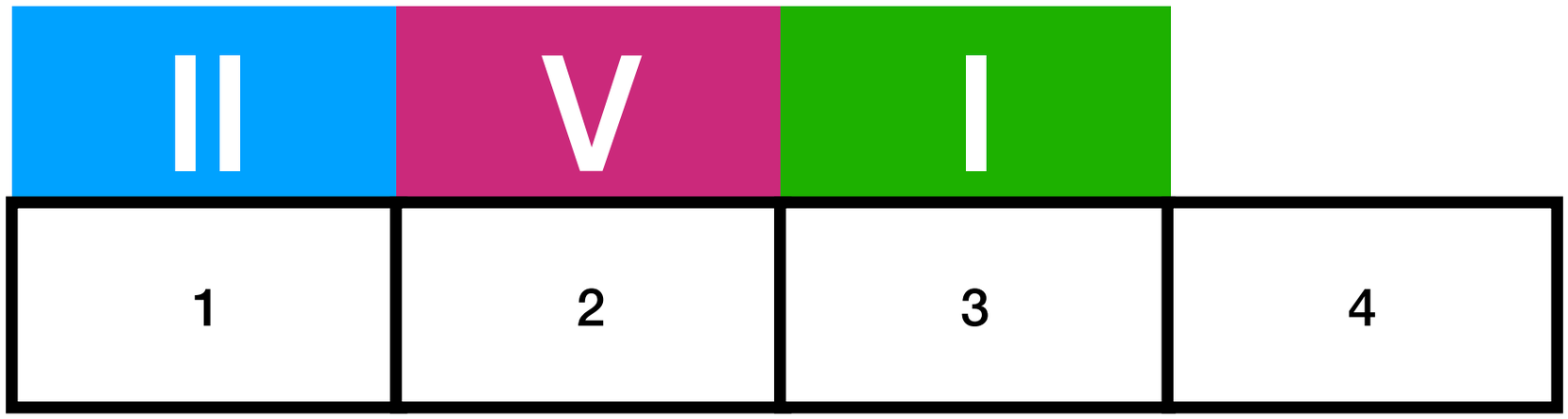
The II-V-I

4 Bars

2 Bars or

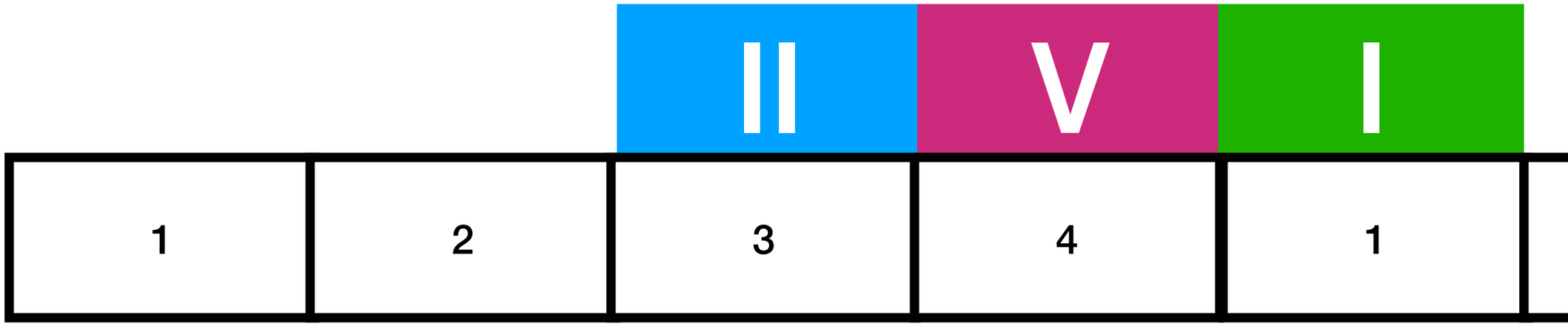
1 Bar

The II-V



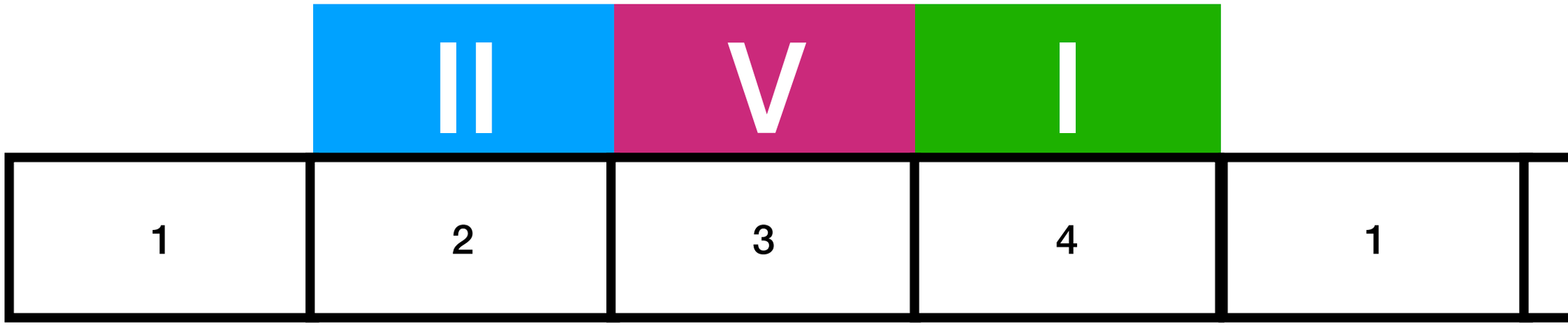
‘weak’

The II-V



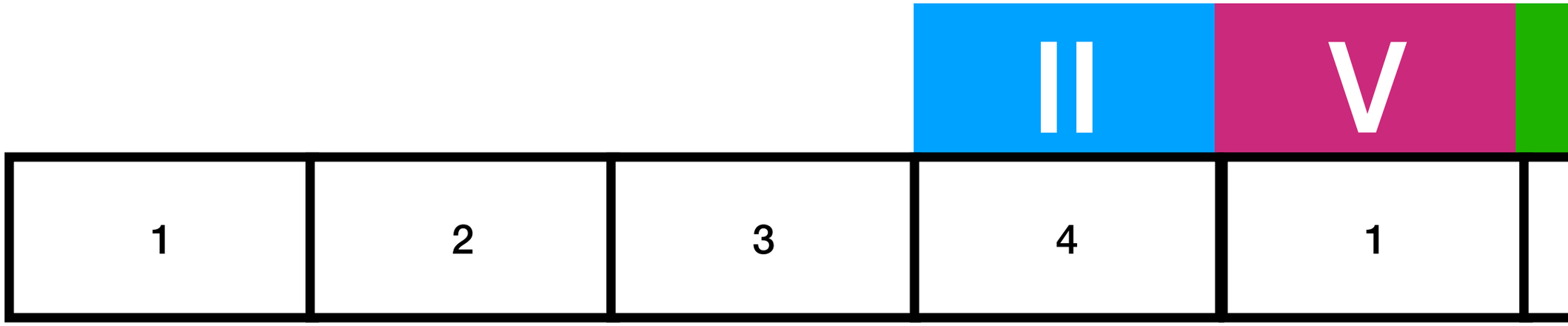
‘strong’

The II-V



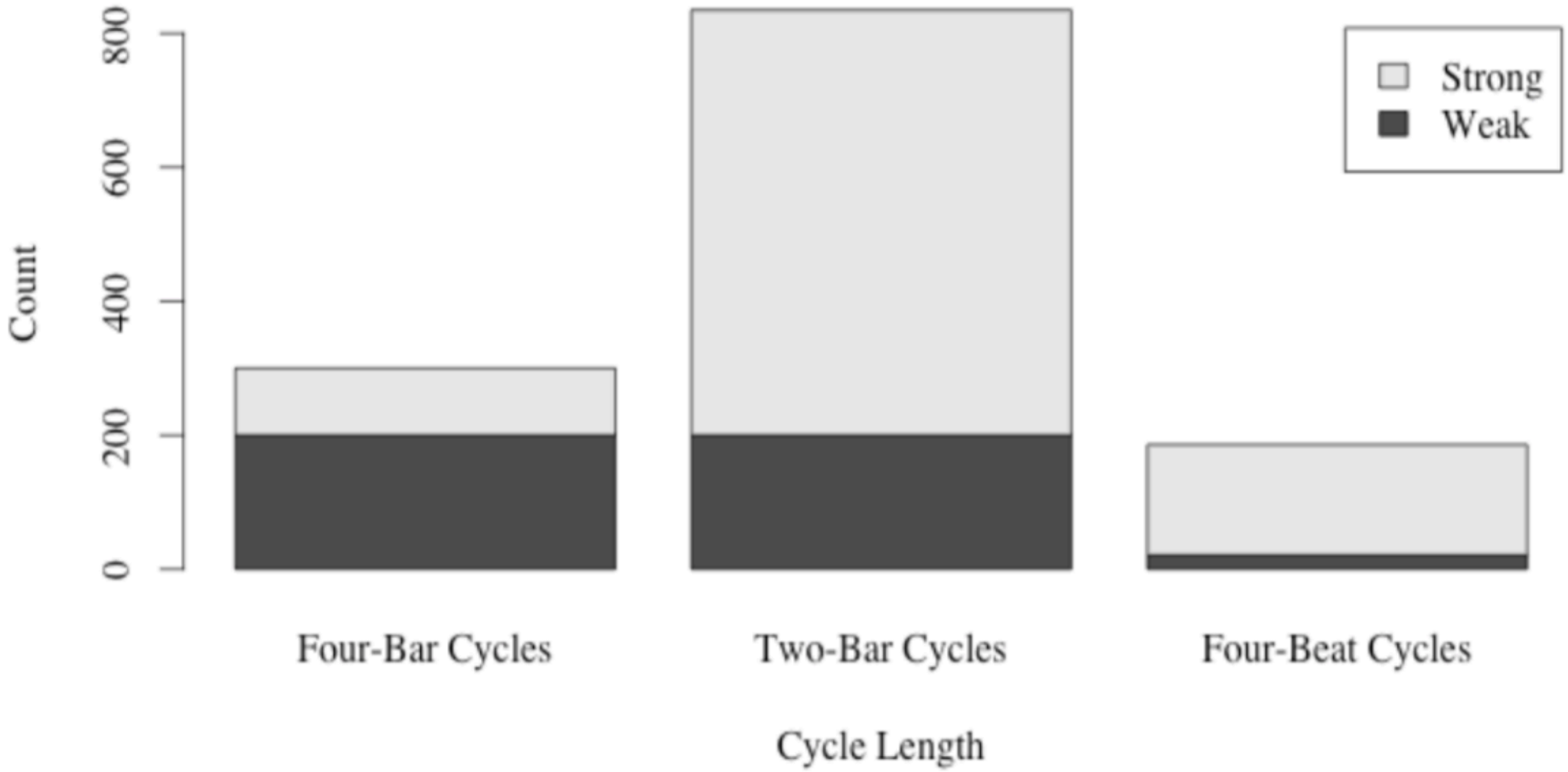
Rare, and only when a bar per chord
(*All the Things You Are, Fly Me to the Moon* etc.)

The II-V



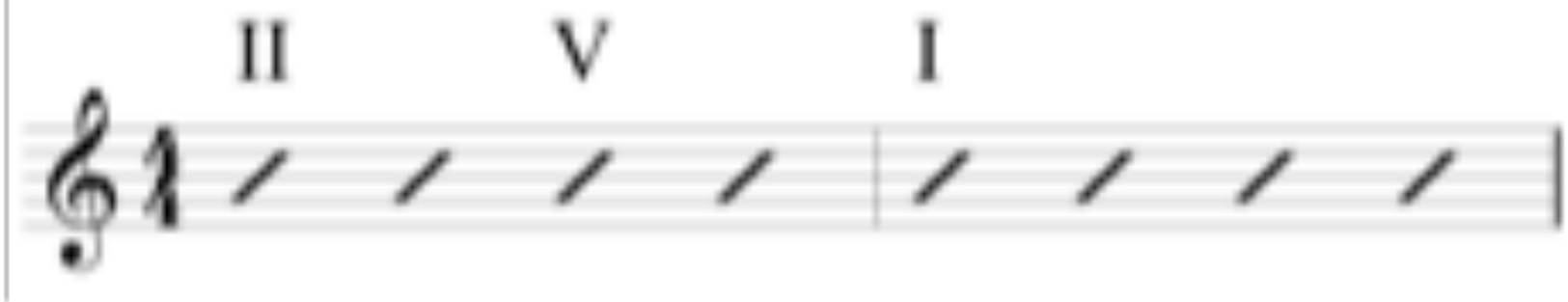
Implausible

Figure 3. Comparing the prominence of strong and weak cycles at four-bar, two-bar, and four-beat levels.

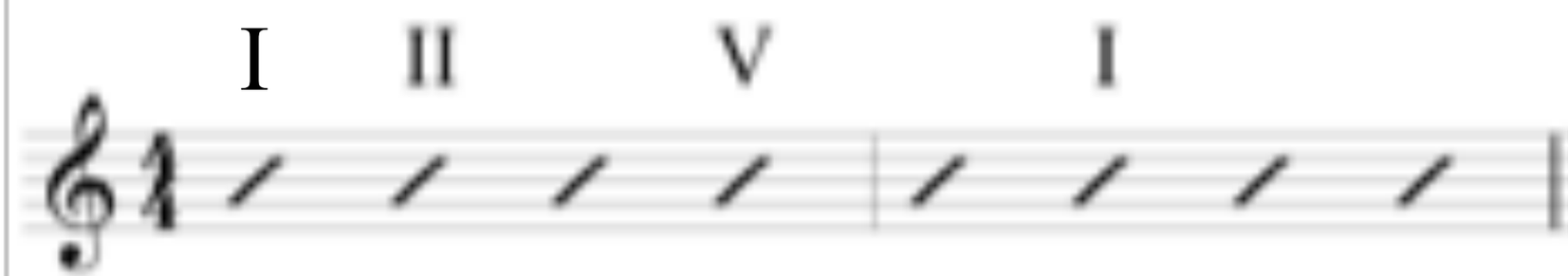


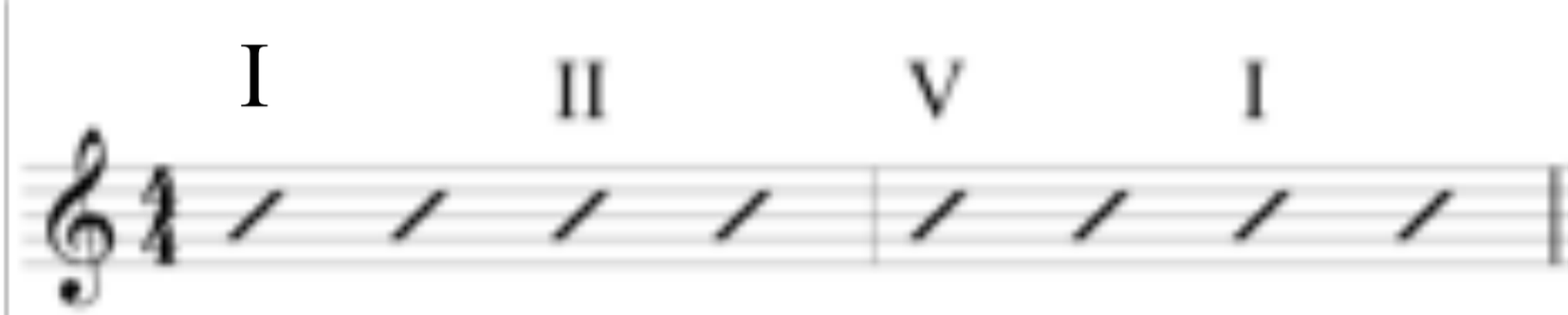
Phrase Rhythm in Standard Jazz Repertoire: A Taxonomy and Corpus Study Keith Salley and Daniel T. Shanahan (2016)

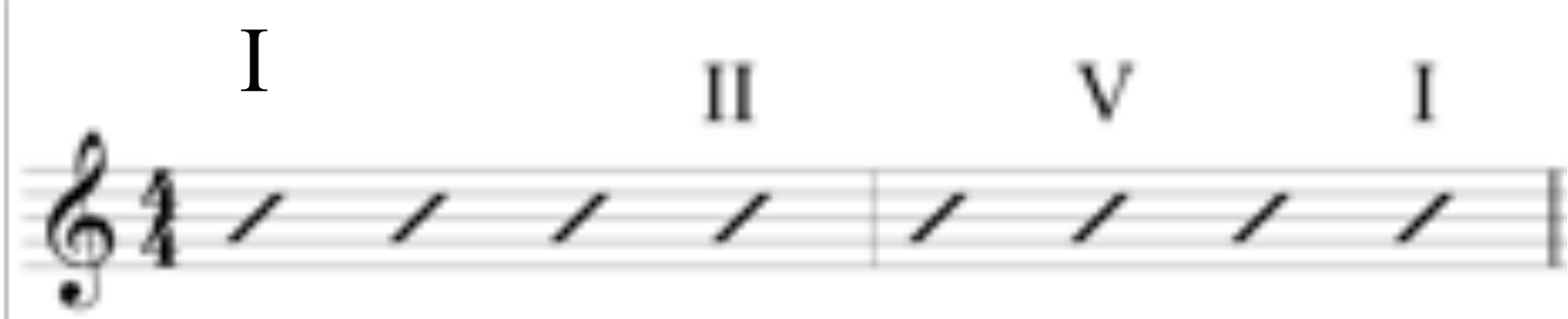
A. Standard setting.



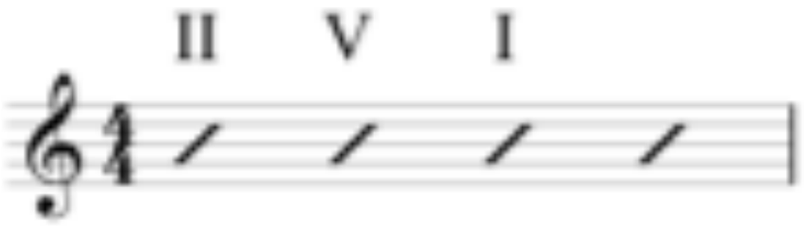
B. Implausible settings.



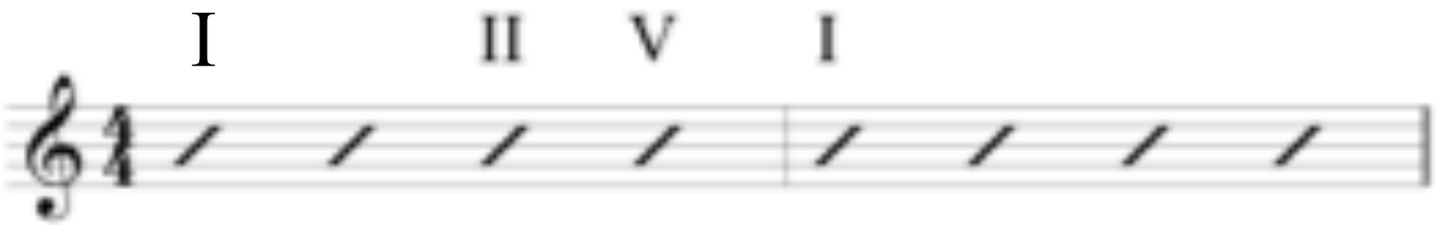




A. Standard settings.

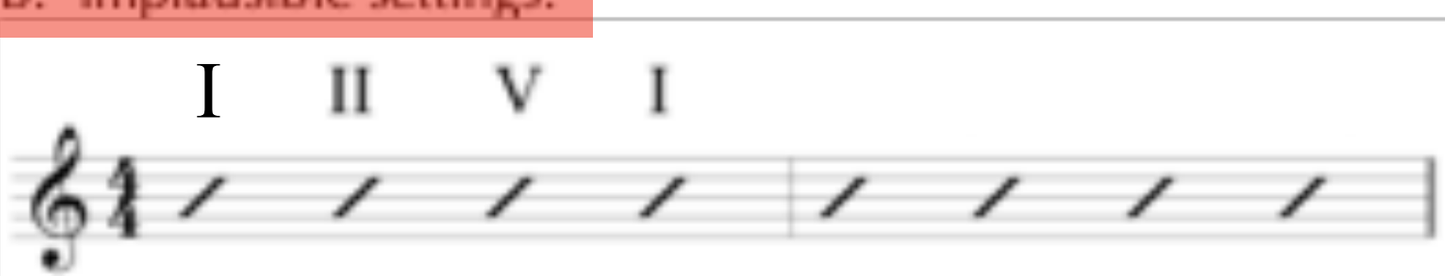


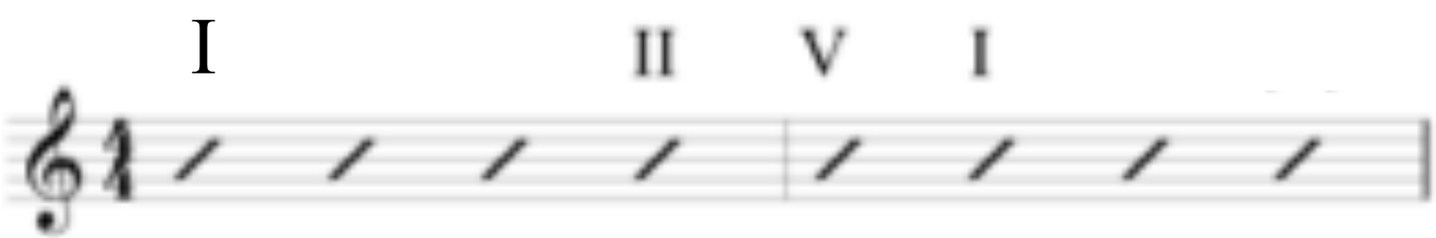
Less common



Very common

B. Implausible settings.





Jazz Taboo #2

Breaking the Binary Backdrop

Moonlight In Vermont

Music by Karl Suessdorf
Lyric by John Blackburn

Med. Ballad

A

E♭6 C♏7 F♏7 B♭7 E♭6 C♏7 D♭9

Pen - nies in a stream, Fall - ing leaves, a sy - ca- more,

F♏7 B♭9sus E♭6 (B♭9sus) E♭6 C♏7 F♏7 B♭7

Moon- light in Ver - mont. I - cy fin - ger waves,

E♭6 C♏7 D♭9 F♏7 B♭9sus E♭6

Ski trails on a moun - tain - side, Snow- light in Ver - mont.

B

A♏7 D7 G♎A7 E♏7

Tel - e - graph ca - bles, they sing down the high - way and

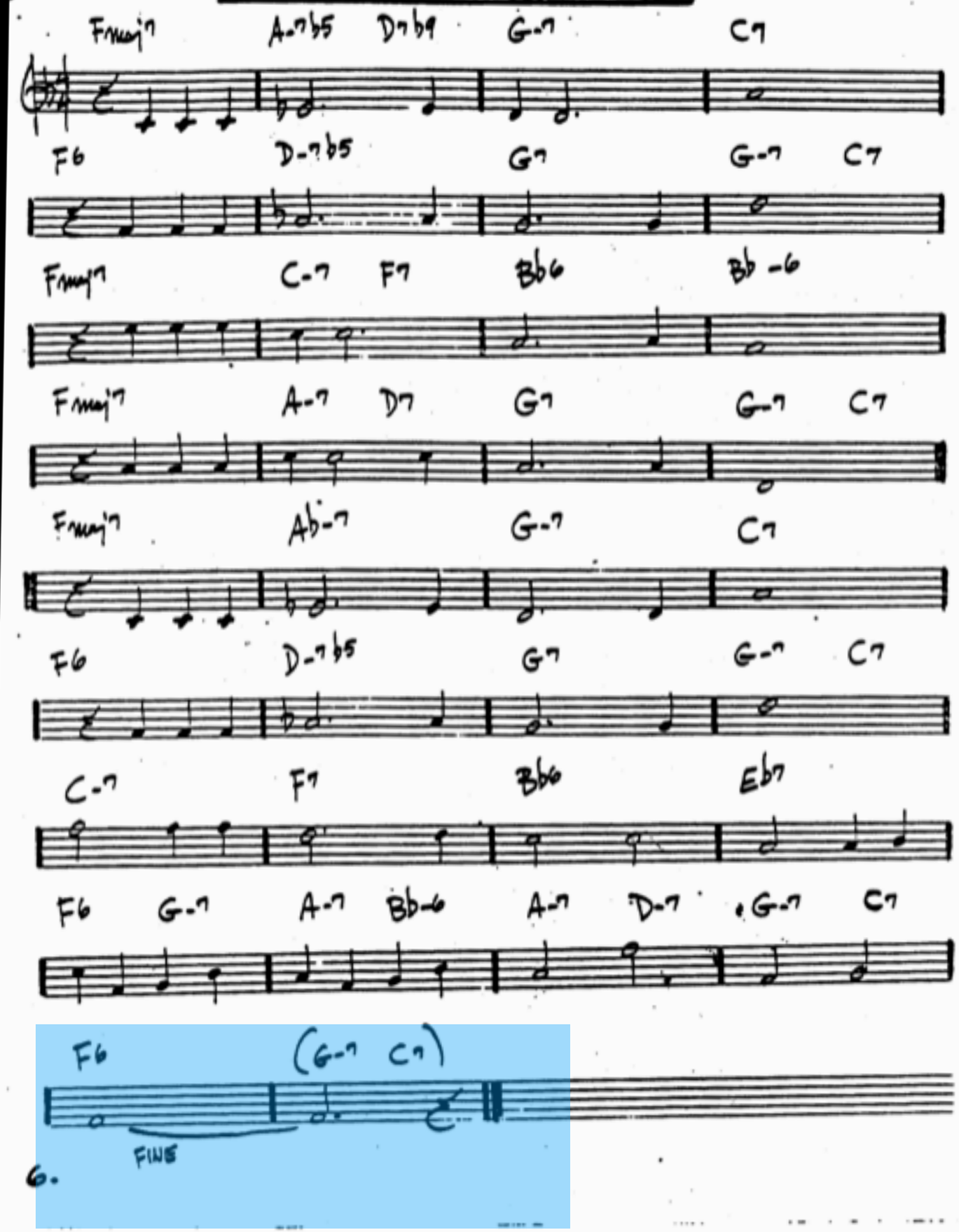
A♏7 D7 G♎A7 B♭♏7 E♭7

trav - el each bend in the road, Peo - ple who meet in this

A FOGGY DAY

(ED. SWING)

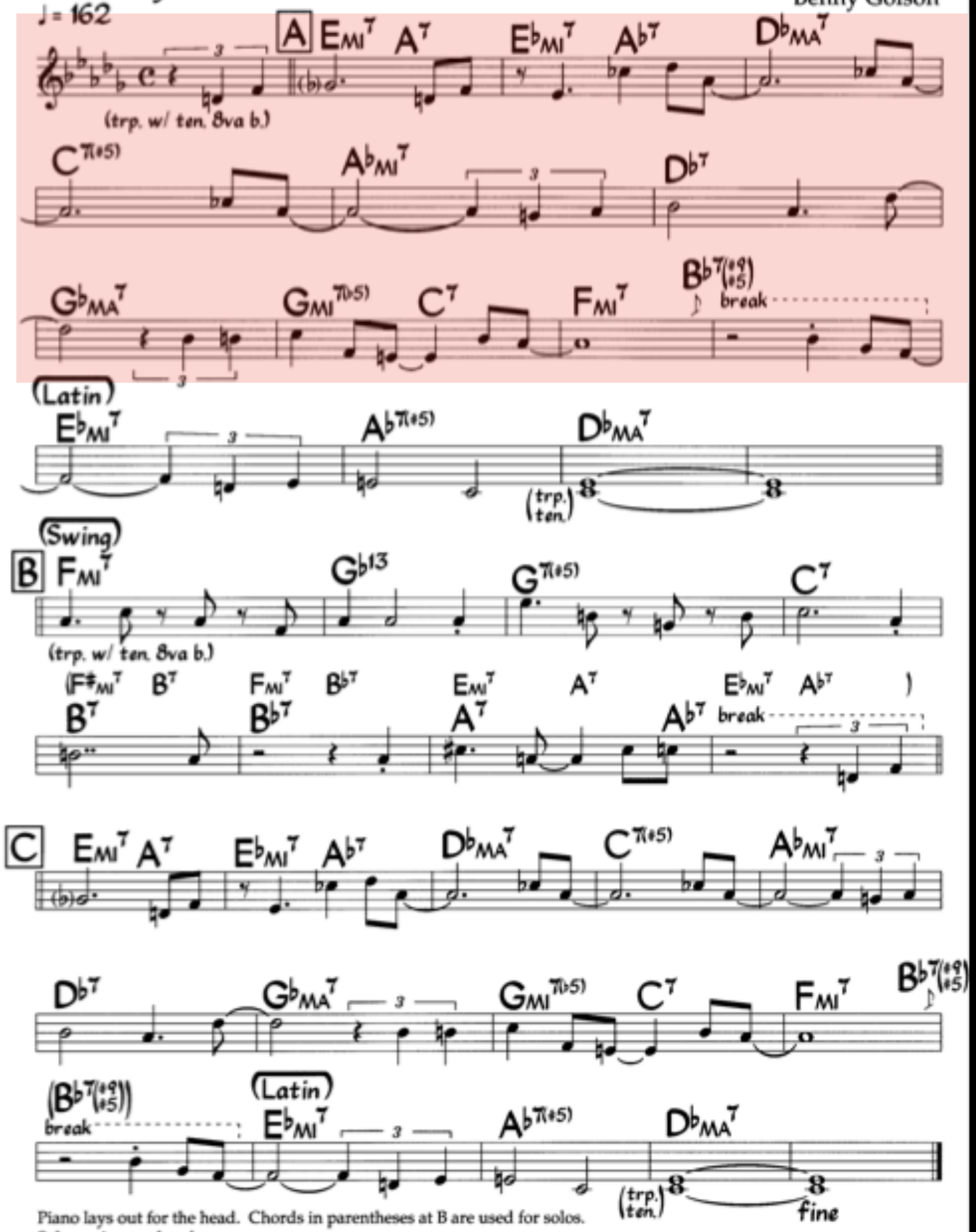
— GERSWIN



6.

Stablemates

Benny Golson

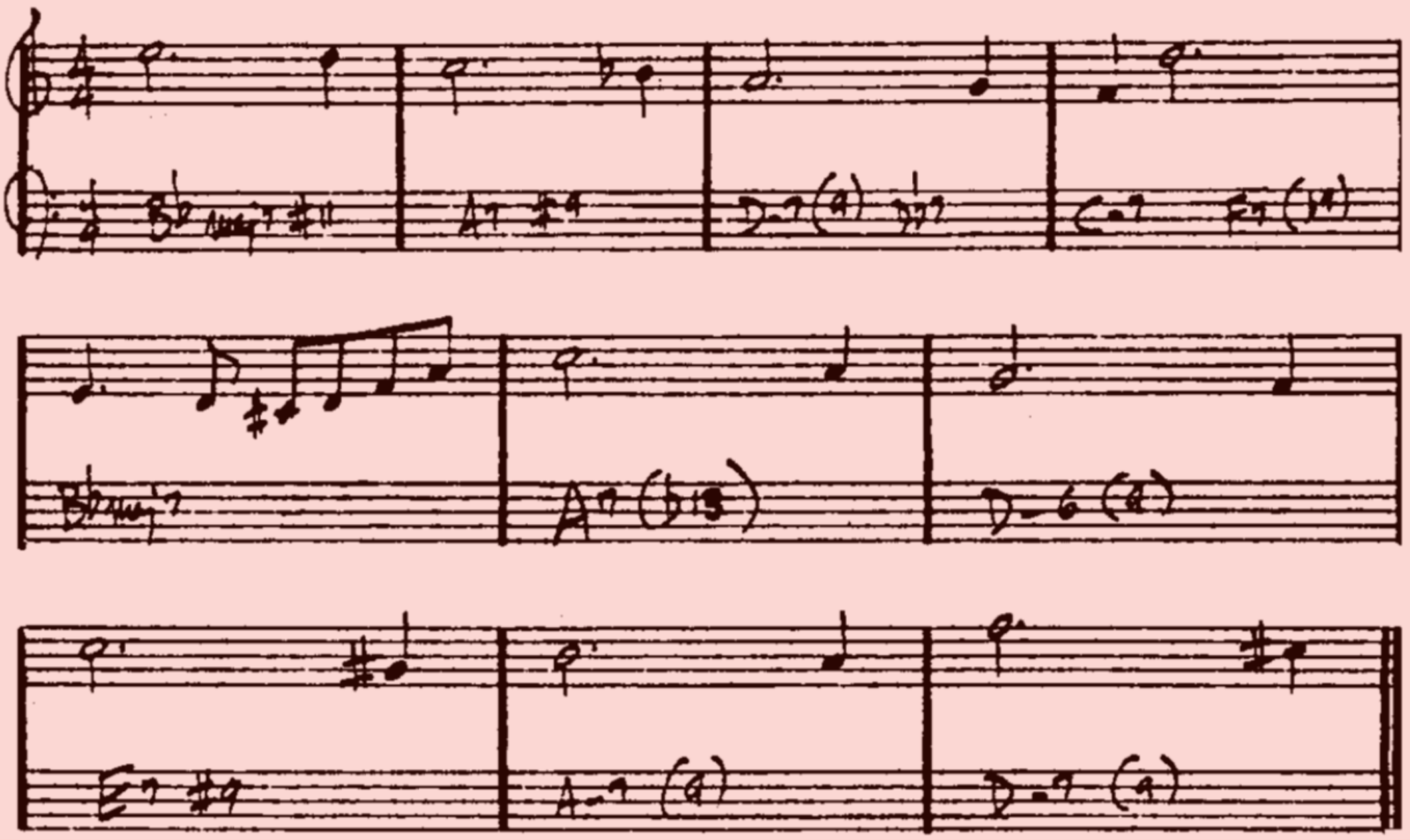


Piano lays out for the head. Chords in parentheses at B are used for solos.
Solos swing, no breaks.

©1955, renewed 1983 Time Step Music. Used by Permission.

BLUE IN GREEN

MILES DAVIS



Someday My Prince Will Come

Music by Frank Churchill
Lyric by Larry Morey

Med. Jazz Waltz

A

B♭MA7 D7(#5) E♭MA7 G7(#5) CMI7

Some – day my prince will come, Some

G7(#5) CMI7 F7 DMI7 C#07

day I'll find my love, And how thrill – ing that mo – ment will

CMI7 F7 DMI7 C#07 CMI7 F7

be, When the Prince of my dreams comes to me.

B

B♭MA7 D7(#5) E♭MA7 G7(#5) CMI7

He'll whis – per, "I love you," And

G7(#5) CMI7 F7 B♭MA7 (B♭9) D7(#5)

steal a kiss or two, Though he's far a – way, I'll

E♭MA7 E07 B♭MA7/F (CMI7 F7 B♭6) G7 CMI7 F7

find my love some day, Some day when my dreams come true.

420.

TAKE FIVE

— PAUL DESMOND

Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7

Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7

Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7

Cbmaj7 Ab-6 Bb-7 Eb-7 Ab-7 Db7

Gbmaj7 Cbmaj7 Ab-6 Bb-7 Eb-7

Ab-7 Db7 F-7 Bb7 Eb- Bb-7

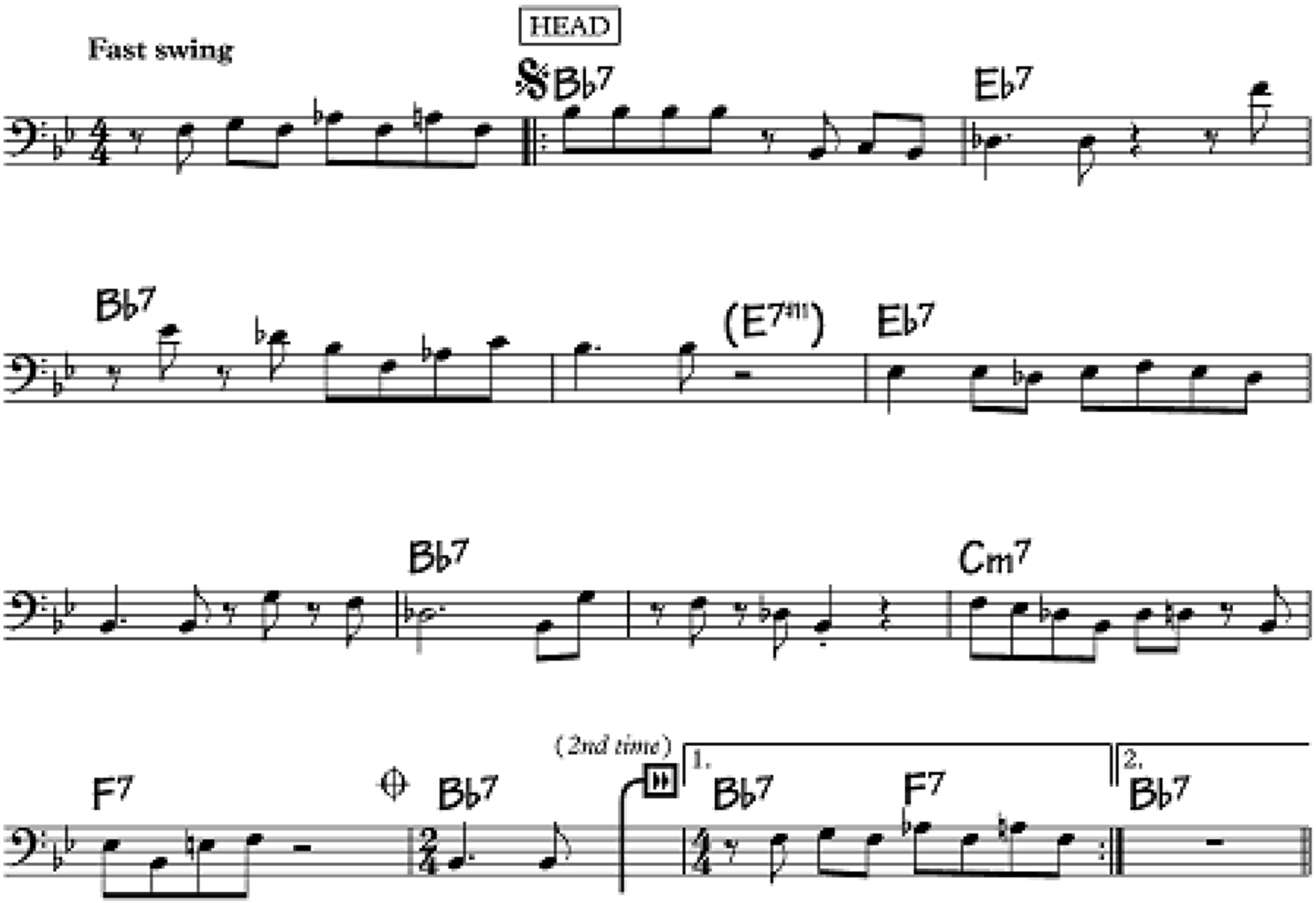
Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7 Eb- Bb-7

BLUES CONNOTATION

ORNETTE COLEMAN
arr. Liam Noble

Fast swing

HEAD

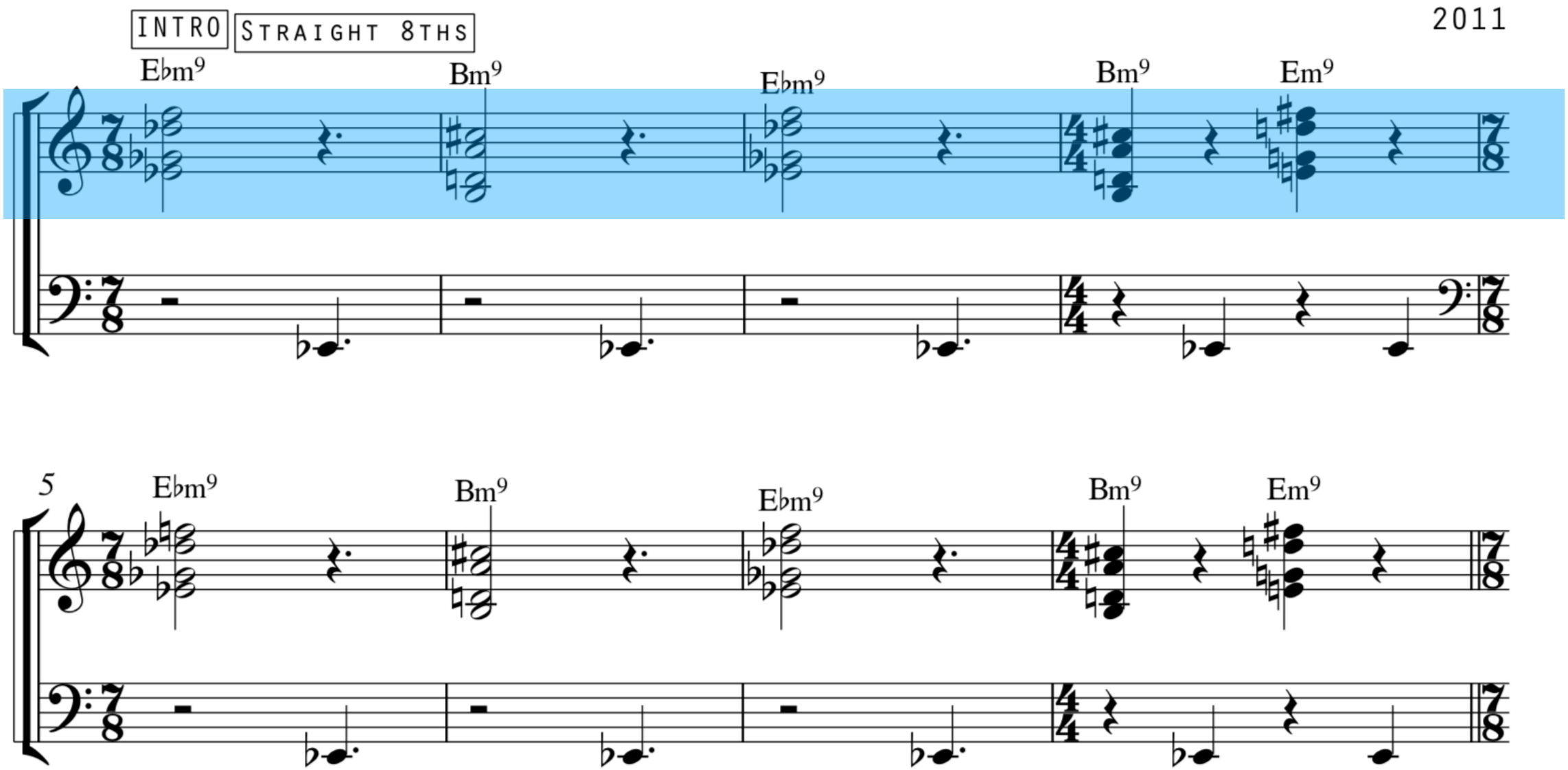


For solos, time-no-changes
After solos, D.S. al Coda

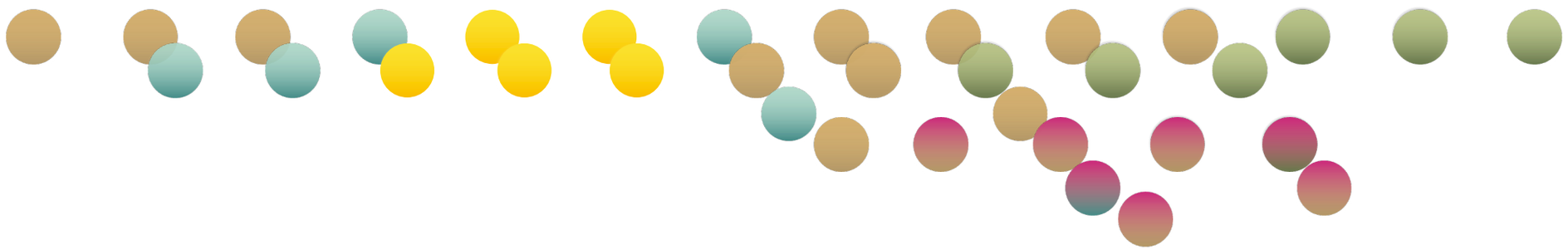
Laurvin Glaslowe

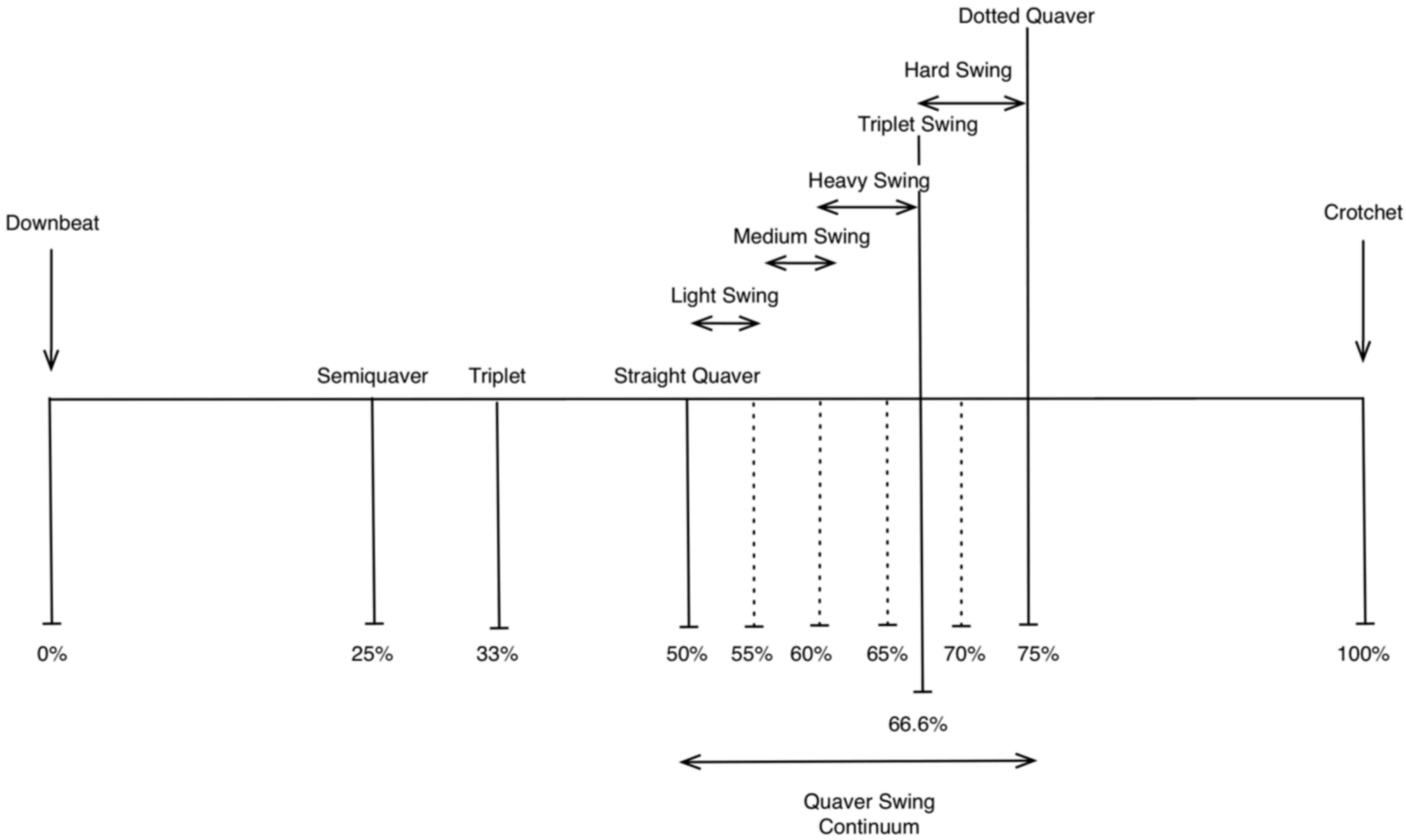
From The 2013 Album "Entanglement"

Ant Law
2011



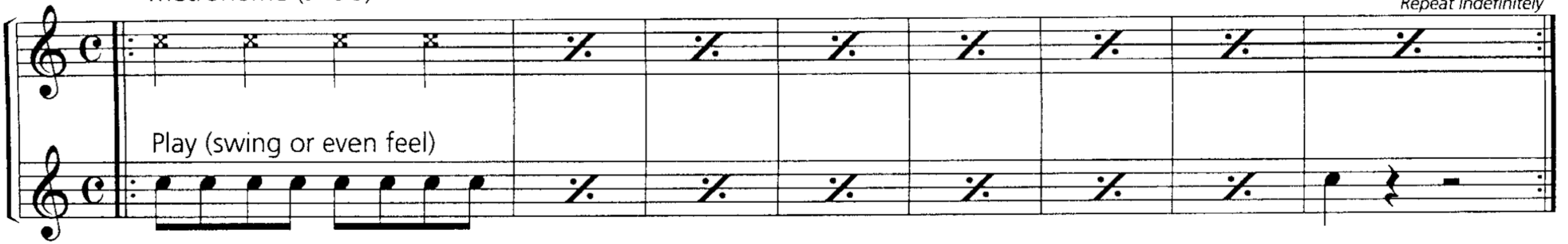
(Sub-)Notational Expression




Dotted Quaver
Hard Swing
Triplet Swing
Heavy Swing
Medium Swing
Light Swing
Downbeat
Crotchet
Semiquaver
Triplet
Straight Quaver
0%
25%
33%
50%
55%
60%
65%
66.6%
70%
75%
100%
Quaver Swing
Continuum

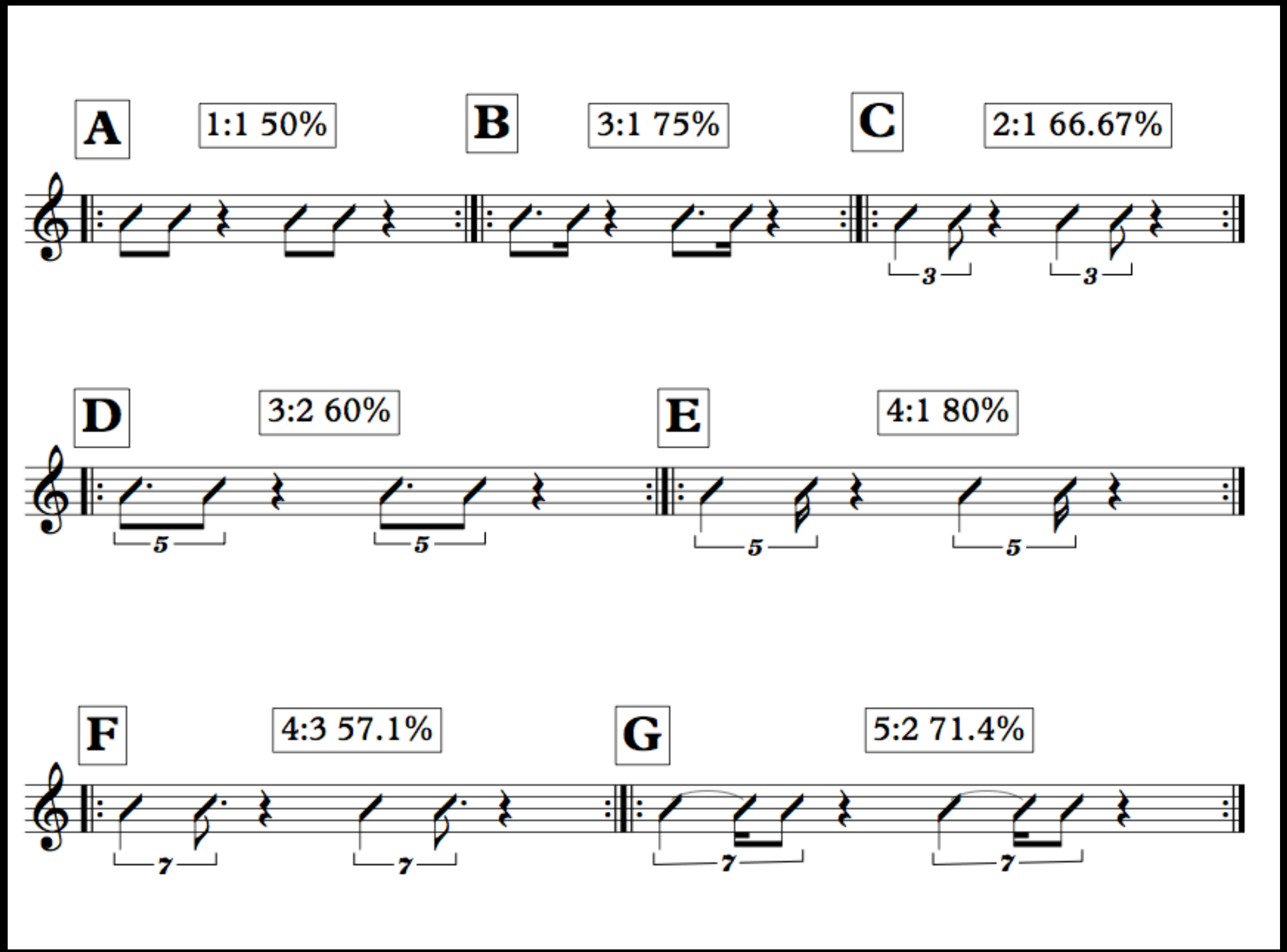
Crook's Time-Feel Exercise

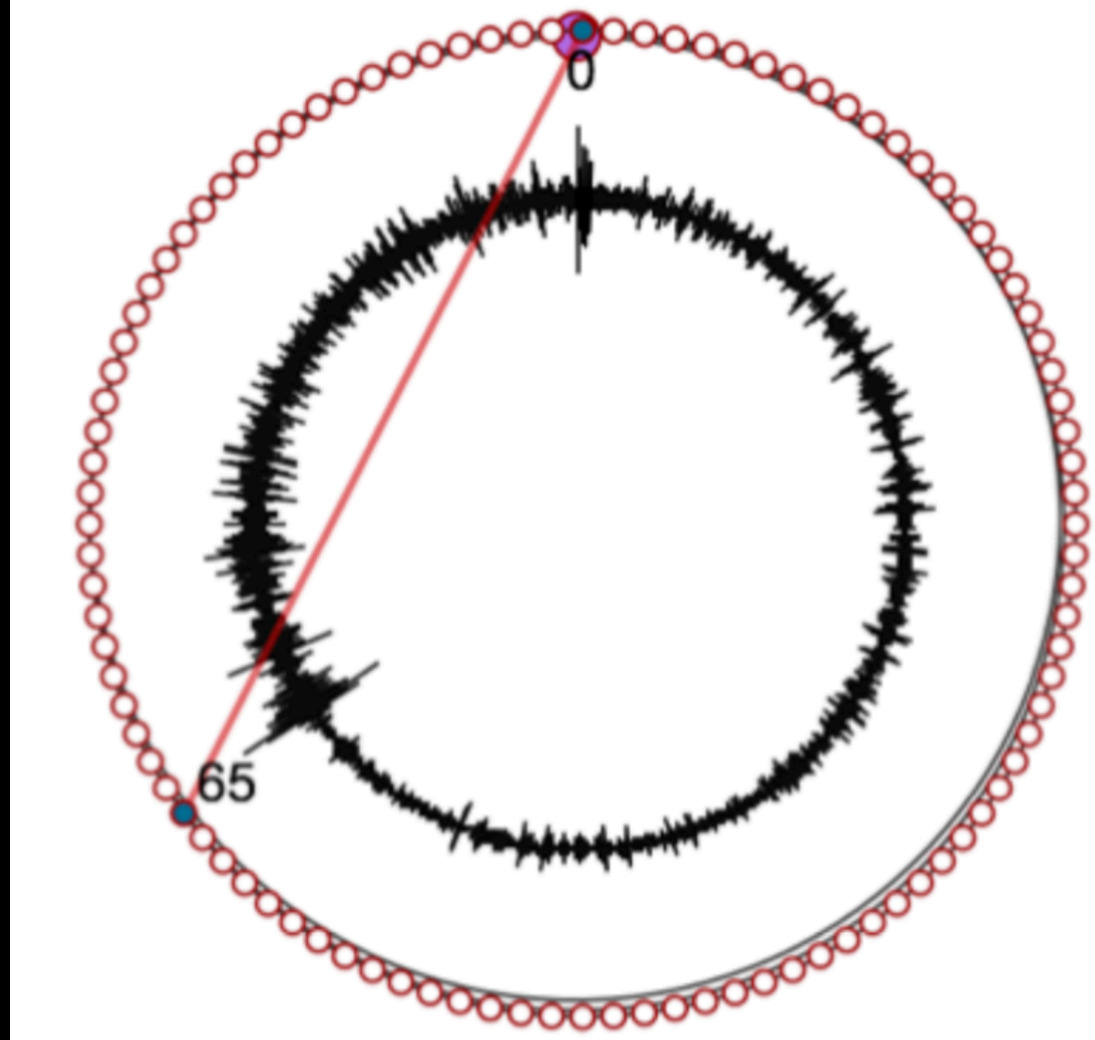
Example II:1R

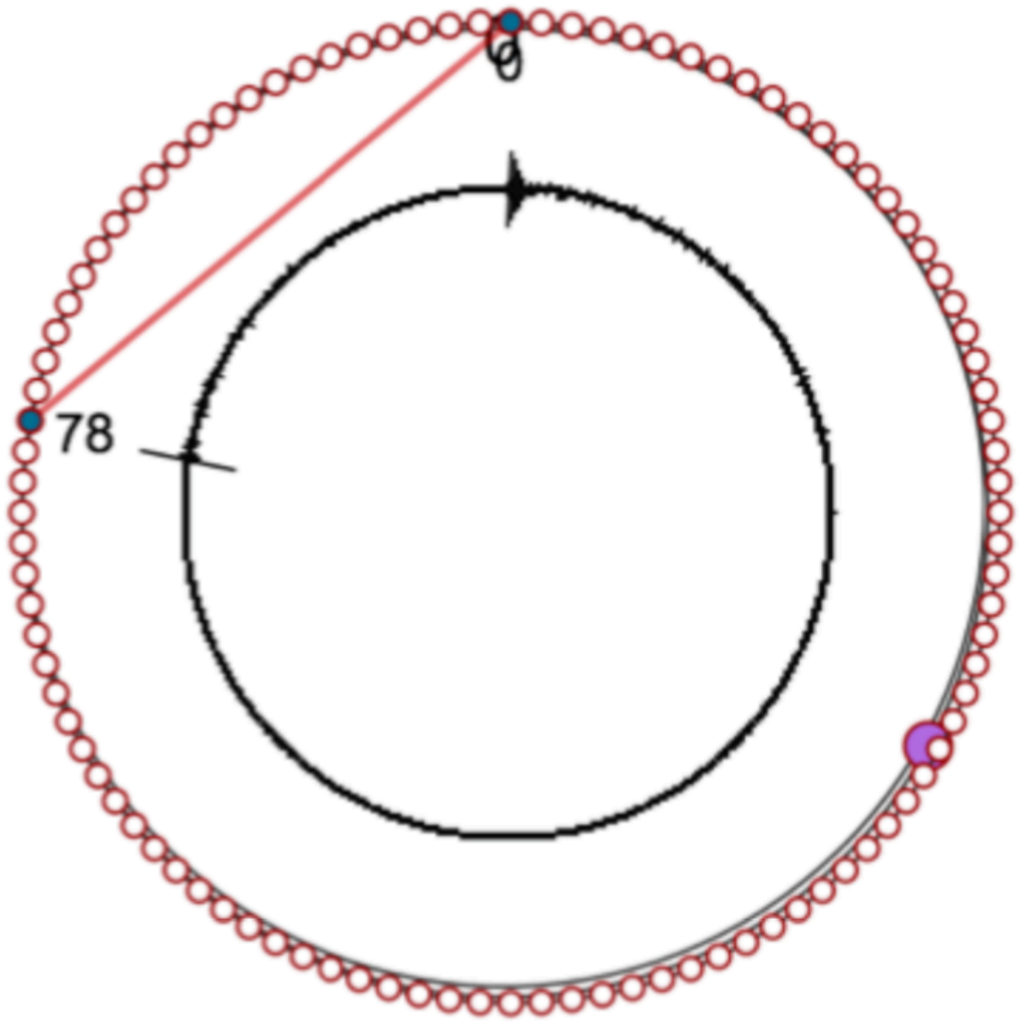


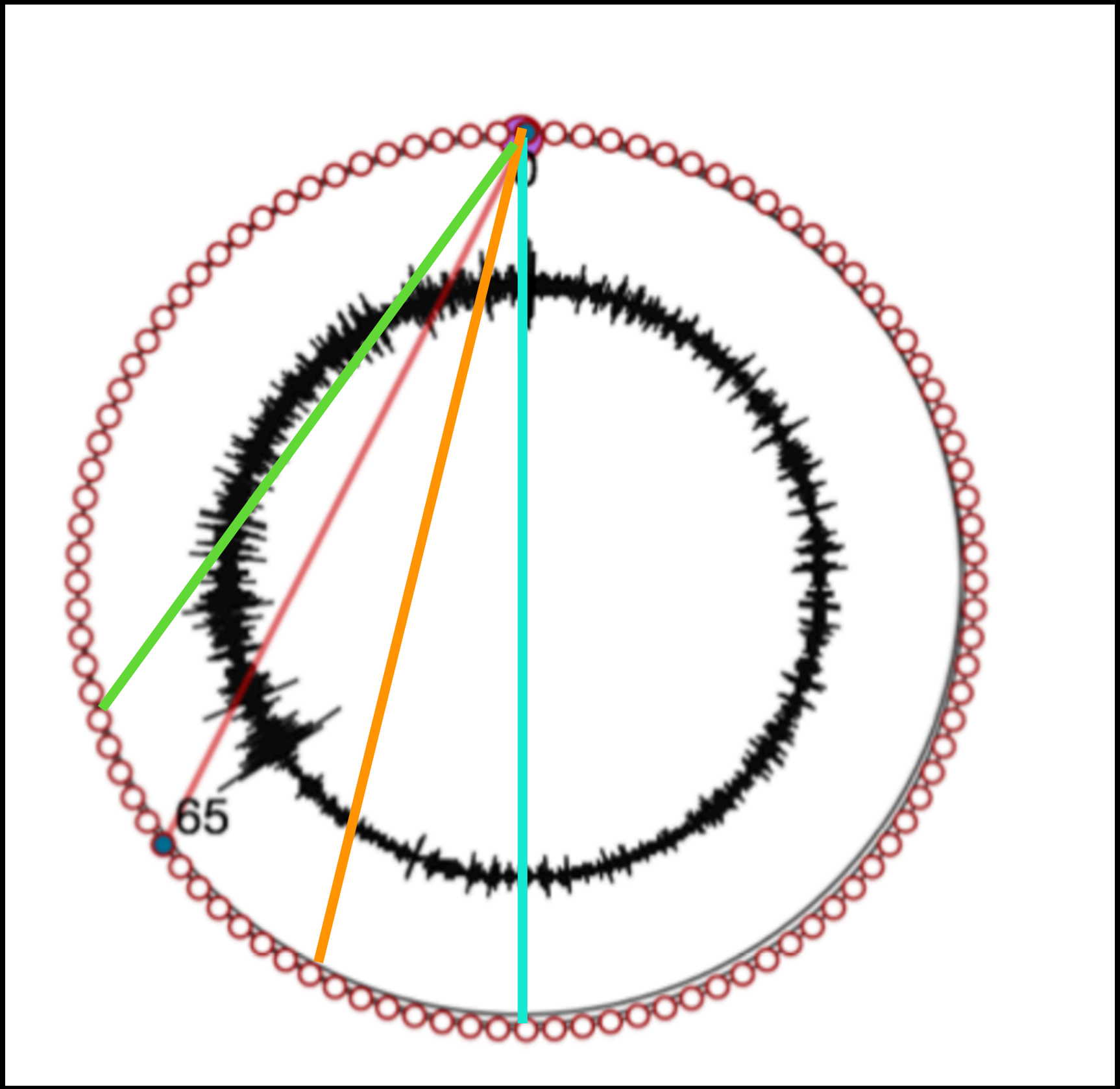
Dead center time — — — — — — slight accell. (or ritard.) — — — hold new tempo — — — — ritard. (or accell.) — — — Play dead center

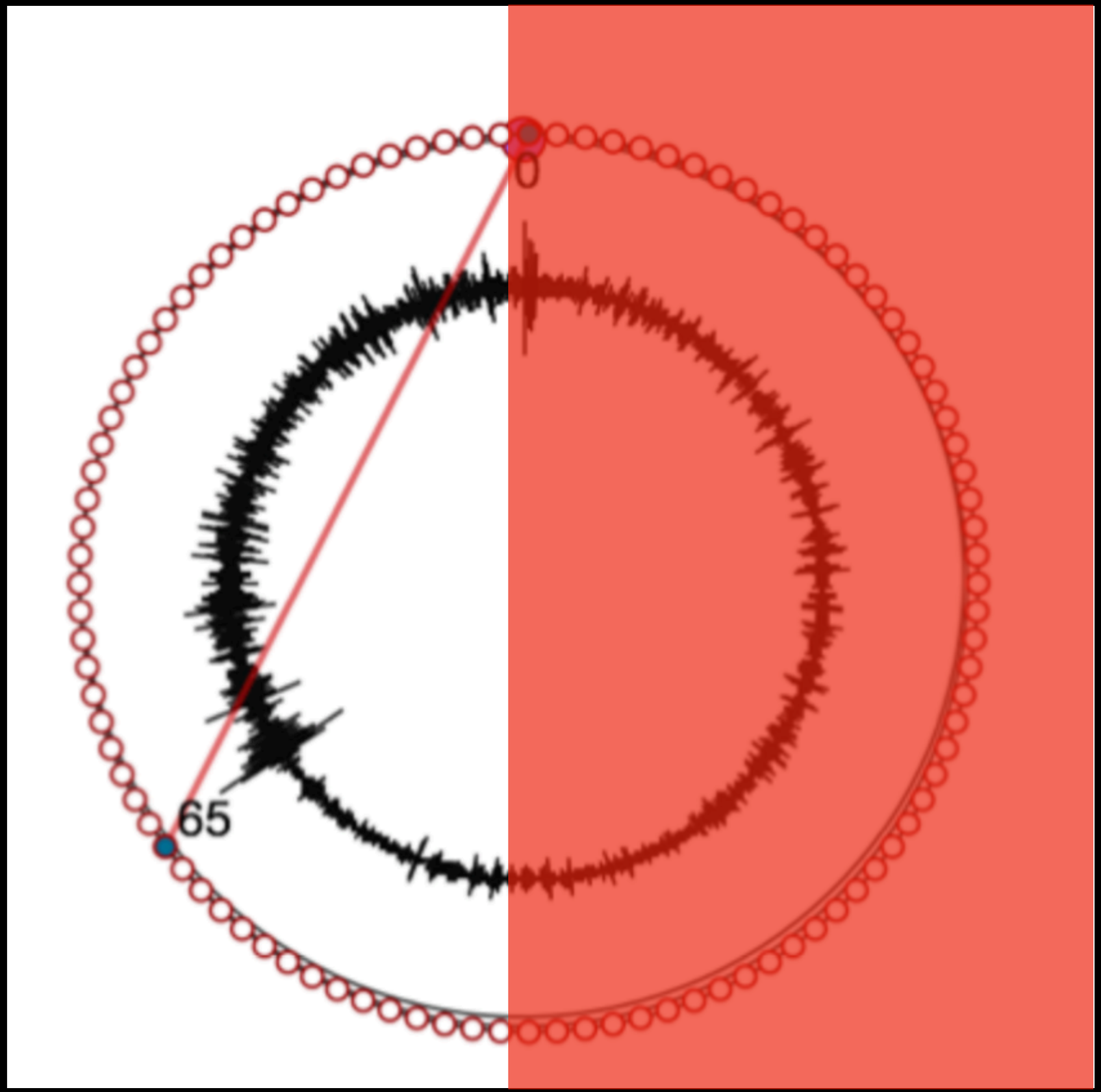
Slicing the Beat

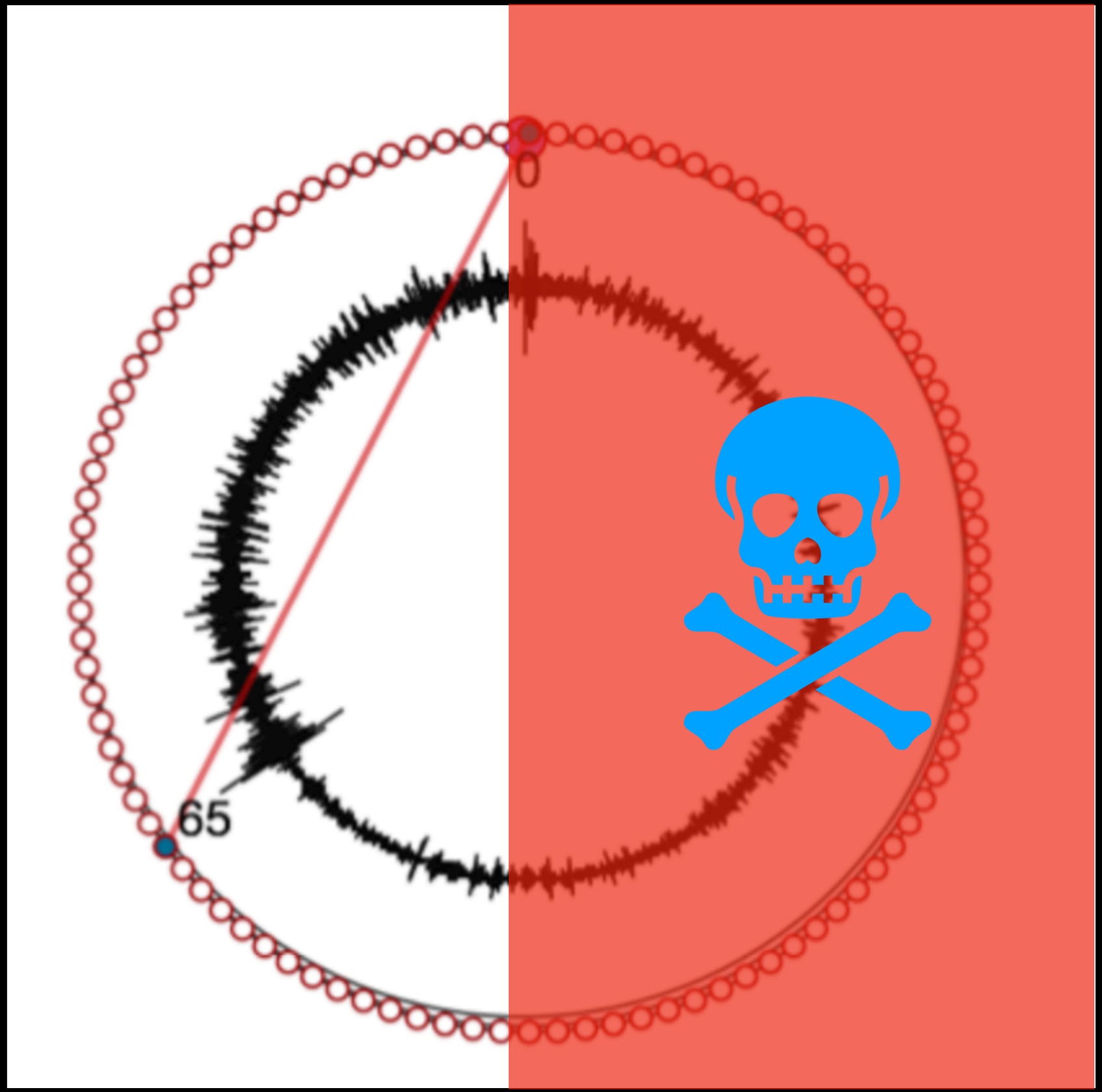



0
65


0
78


65

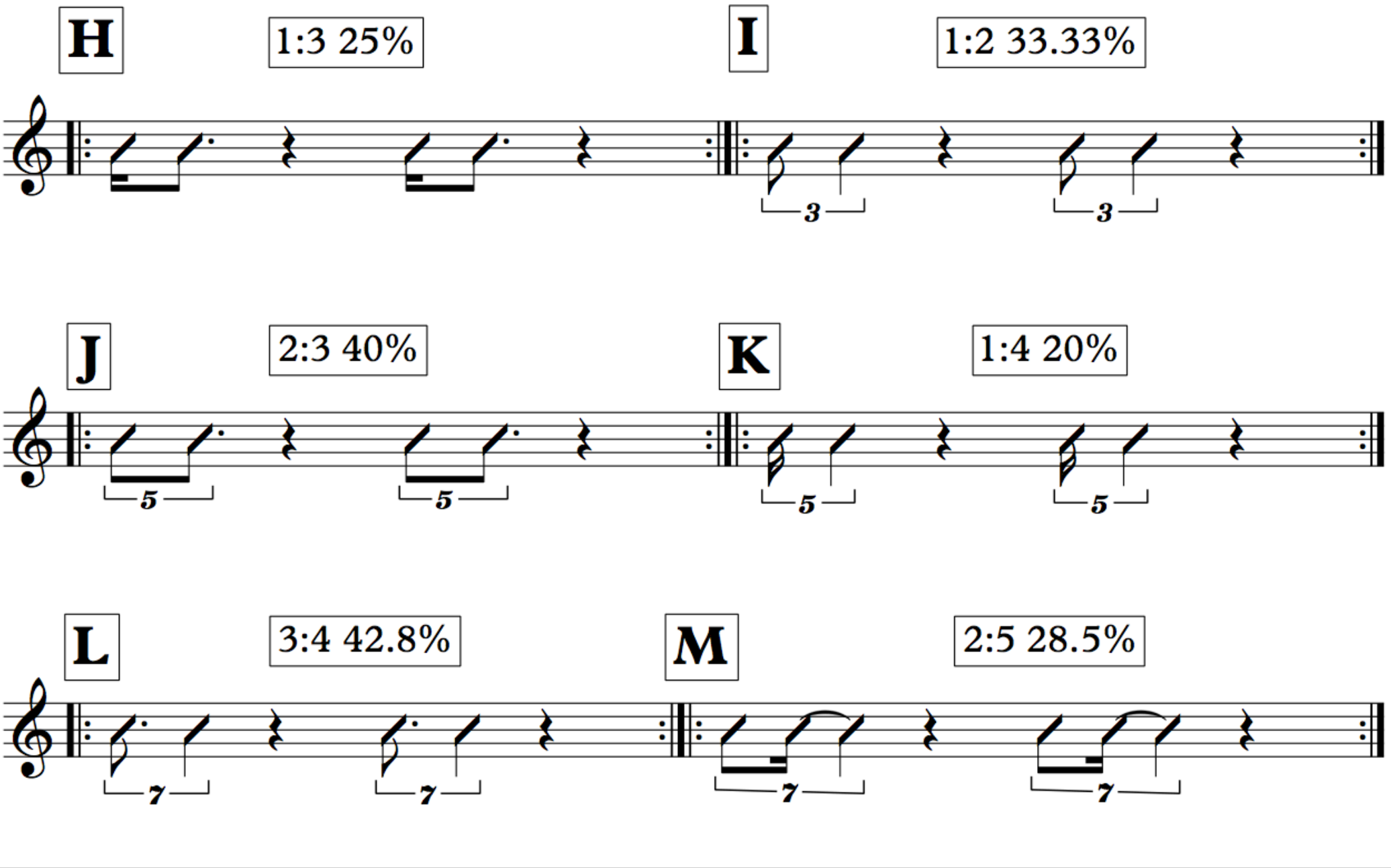

65


65

Jazz Taboo #3

Forbidden Swing

Inconceivable Swing



Predictions on Predictions

Kanda Jhati - 5/8 version

From the 2013 album "Entanglement"

C

♩=174

Ant Law
2011

A INTRO

1st+2nd times just guitar
3rd+4th add bass/drums

Gm7

f

x4

5 Gm7 B♭6 Gm7 Am7 B♭maj7

x2

Kanda Jathi - quintuplet version

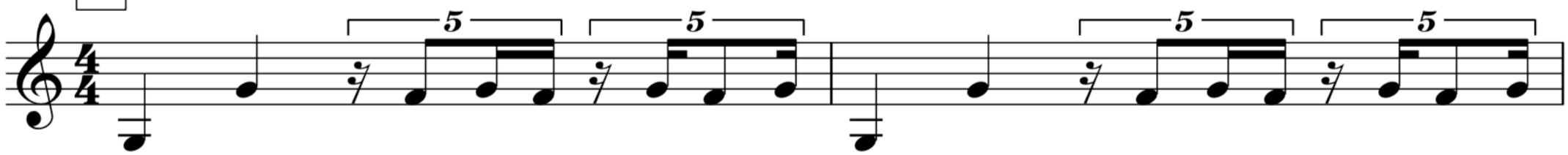
From The 2013 Album "Entanglement"

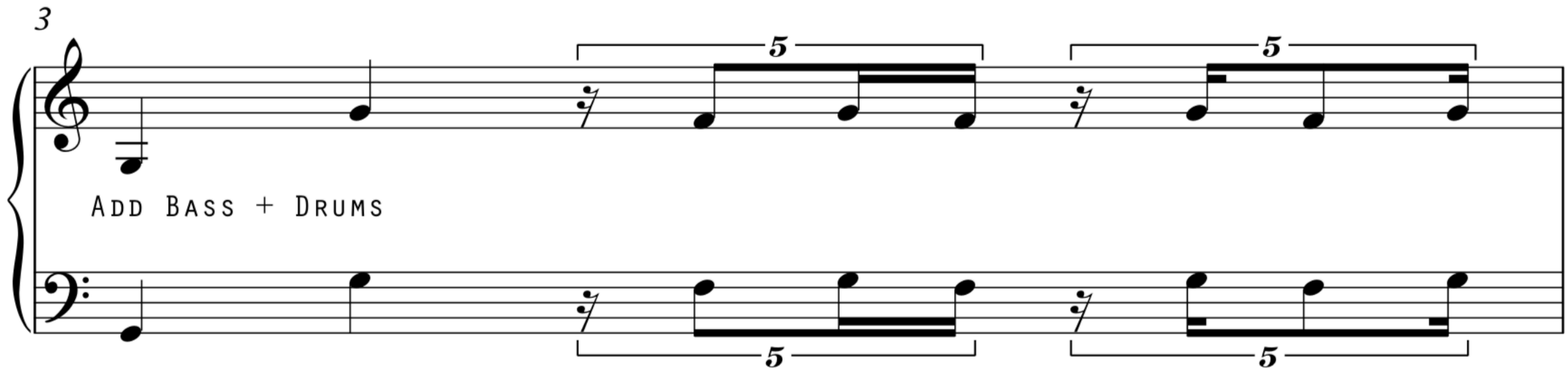
C

♩=72

Ant Law
2011

A Just Guitar





EDITION EDN1119

antlaw.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL
GUITAR
RESEARCH
CENTRE

Thank You

miltonline@me.com

surrey.ac.uk/guitar

UNIVERSITY OF
SURREY