The Cajón Companion

by Tony Artimisi

10 Easy to Intermediate Duets for the Cajón with Instructional and Performance Videos

Grades 1 to 3

(accompanied by Dr. Lamon Lawhorn)

Front Cover Design - Mark Donaldson, Donaldson Design Group

THE CAJÓN COMPANION by Tony Artimisi
Copyright 2015 by Row-Loff Productions
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved
Published exclusively by Row-Loff Productions

Item WSS005 - RLP1015

Table Of Contents

Notes and Exercises 4

Duet 1 - *Tick Tock (Grade I)* 7

Duet 2 - *Tumbao, Wow (Grade I)* 8

Duet 3 - *Trés Cool (Grade I)* 9

Duet 4 - *Ballad d' Cajón (Grade I)* 10

Duet 5 - *Night Dance (Grade II)* 12

Duet 6 - *Out of Sink (Grade II)* 14

Duet 7 - *Claptastic (Grade II)* 16

Duet 8 - *Tone Twister (Grade III)* 18

Duet 9 - *Lightning (Grade III)* 20

Duet 10 - *Expert Mode (Grade III)* 22

About The Author

Dr. Tony Artimisi is Assistant Professor of Music at Winston Salem State University. He endorses Mapex, Inc., Majestic Percussion, Vic Firth, Paiste, Inc., Moravian Percussion (The Box Kit), and Grover Pro Percussion. He has had articles and works published by Row-Loff Productions, The Percussive Arts Society, and the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association. He is also the author of a book entitled "Rhythm Makers: The Drumming Legends of Nashville in Their Own Words" which is published by Rowman & Littlefield.

Instructional and Performance video can be found on The Cajón Companion page at:

www.rowloff.com

Notes for the Cajón Companion

The cajón is a very rewarding instrument to play because of the simplicity in producing the different tones: bass, open, and slap.

Posture

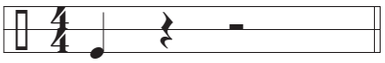
In most cases, the player sits on top of the cajón to perform. Some players are incorporating the instrument into their drum sets and using different implements and angles to play, but the duets in this series will all be performed seated on the cajón. Taller players may want to lean the instrument back slightly to avoid having to bend over dramatically to reach the playing area. It is important to remember not to lean too far back while seated on the cajón to avoid falling backwards. I teach this by having new players slowly lean back and releasing to allow momentum to bring them forward. I continue this until a comfortable balance is achieved, and the position becomes well-engrained in muscle memory.

This process isn't necessary for shorter players. The playing area will be more reachable and leaning the instrument backwards may not be safe.

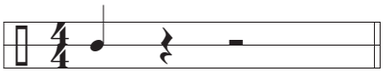
Tones

Both hands should be able to produce the three tones of the instrument. The goal is for both hands to sound the same when playing the same tone. Advanced players are able to play variations of these tones for musical effect, but the foundation of the tones is achieved following the steps below:

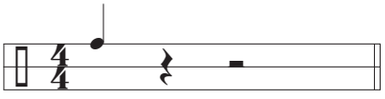
The bass tone is performed by cupping the hand slightly and striking the instrument near the center of the instrument. It is notated on the bottom line of the staff in these duets.



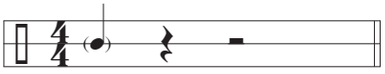
The open tone is performed by striking the middle of the upper edge of the cajón using the second joint of the fingers. It is notated on the middle line of the staff in these duets.



The slap tone is performed with the fingertips near the upper corner of the instrument. It is notated on the top line of the staff in these duets.



A ghost note is performed by striking the instrument lightly. They allow the player to fill in rhythms to help maintain tempo, create a thicker musical texture, or to add any number of musical ideas to a groove. Ghost notes are notated in parentheses in these duets.

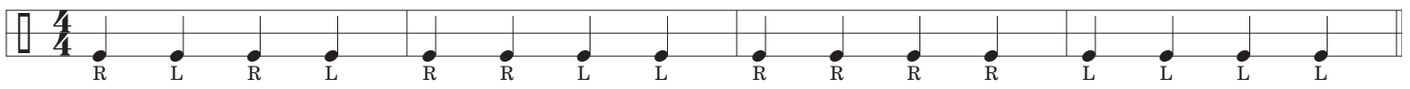


Simple Exercises for Tone Production

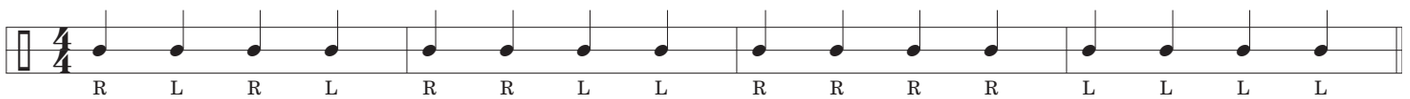
These exercises are designed to help build consistency and coordination in tone production. Perform them at multiple speeds (slow – fast), avoid excessive tension, and listen to ensure the tones sound even between hands. Repeat each exercise four times.

Playing the tones

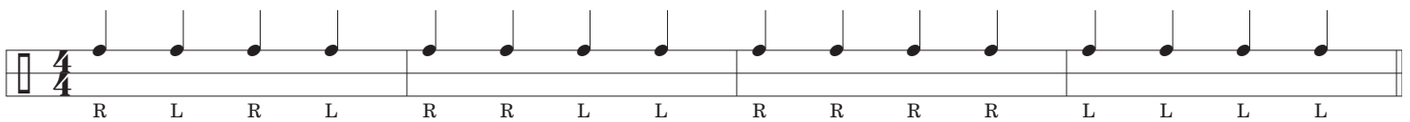
Bass Tone



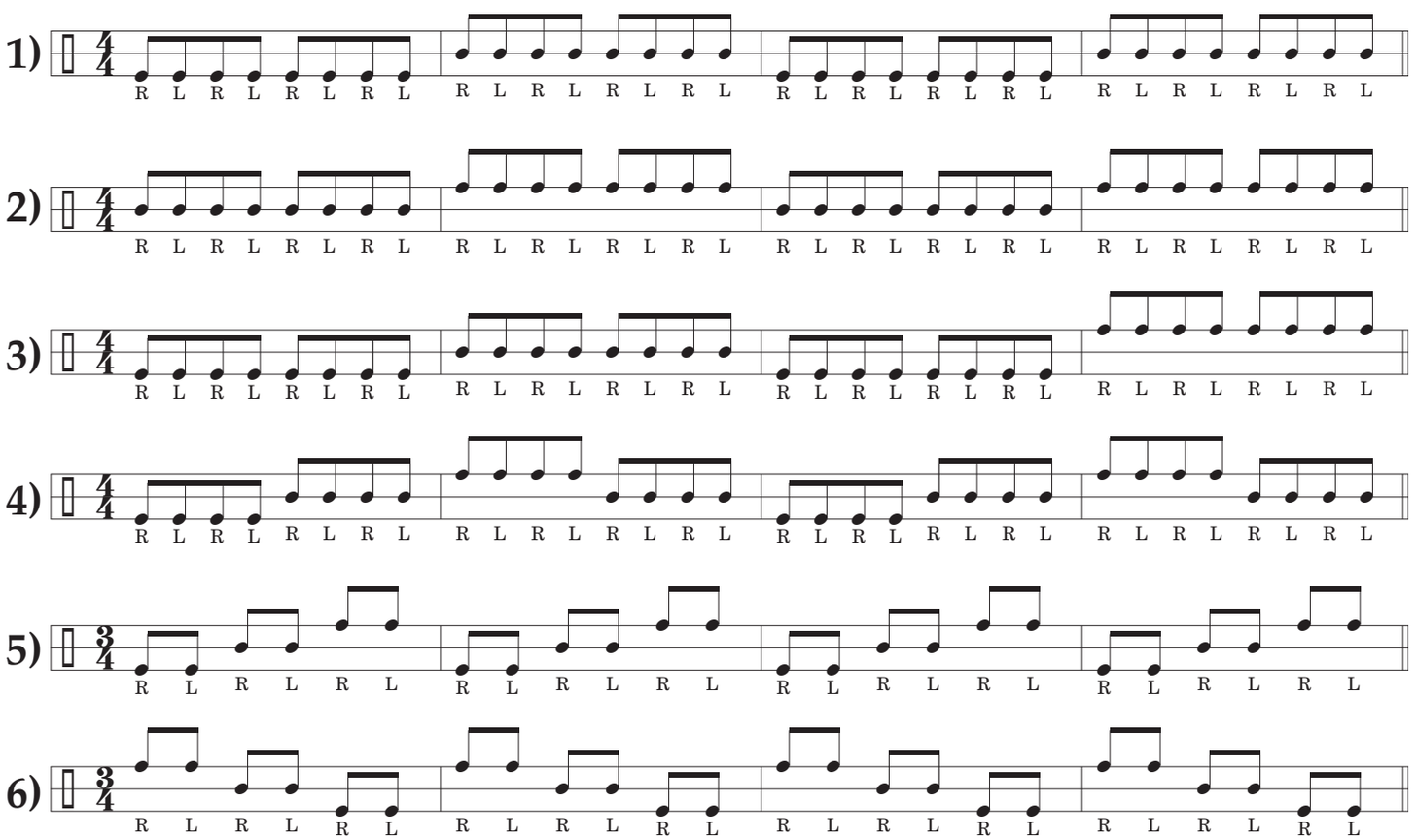
Open Tone



Slap Tone



Alternating Between Tones



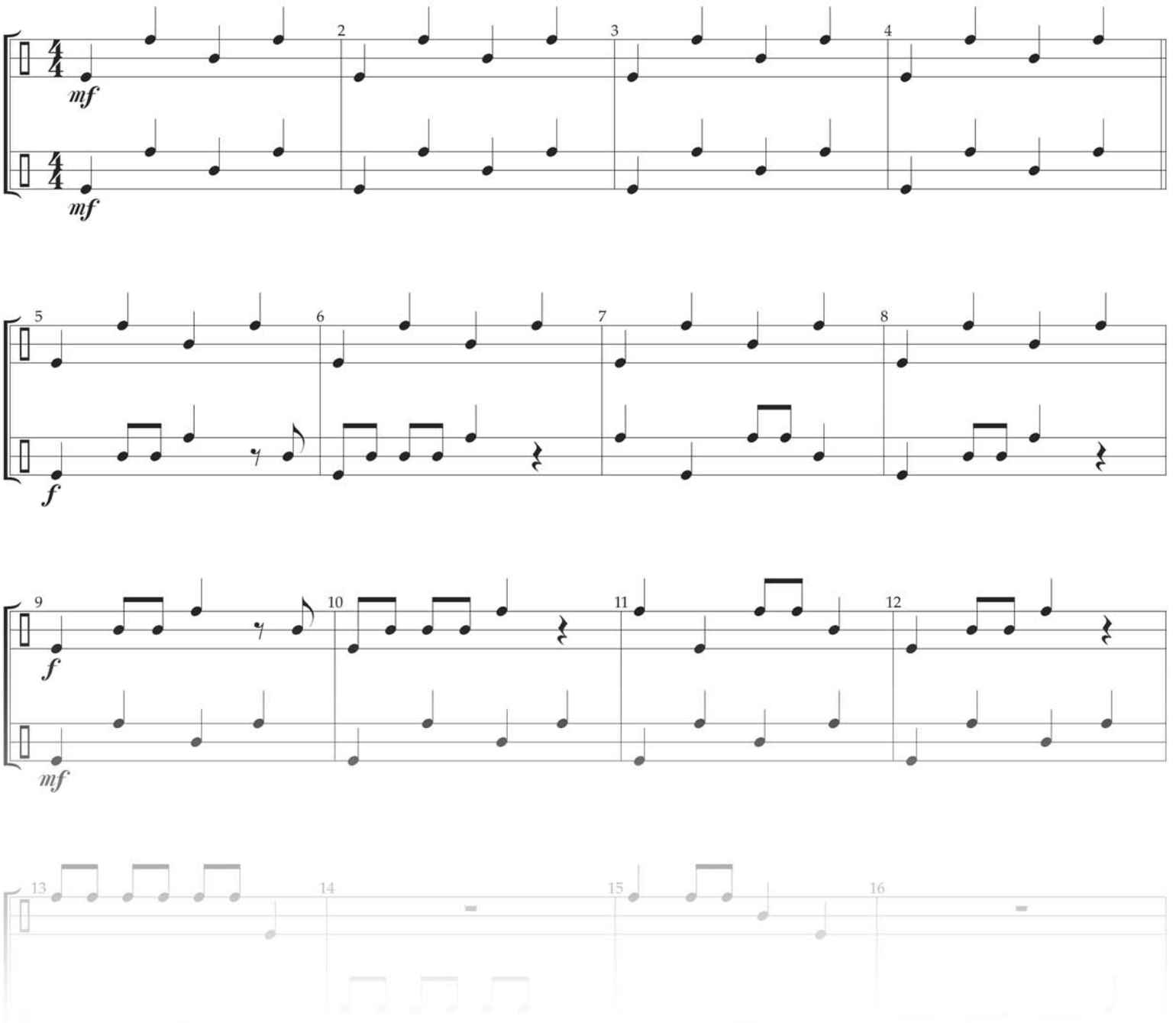
A note about the accompanying performance videos: Dr. Lamon Lawhorn and I used two different sized cajóns to perform the duets to increase the clarity between the parts. They can be performed with instruments that are the same size.

Duet #1 - Grade I

Tick Tock

by Tony Artimisi

♩ = 80 - 96

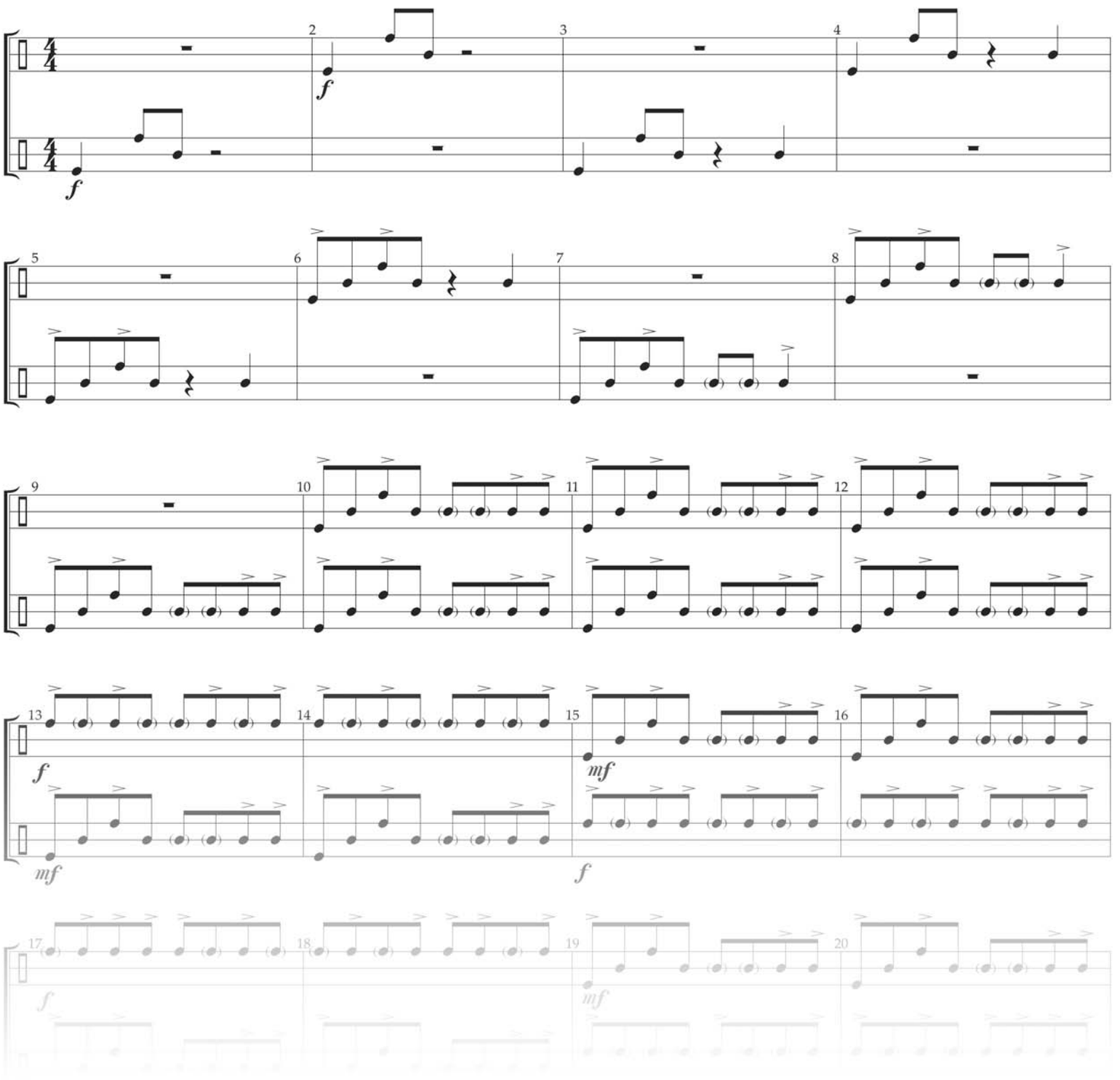


Duet #2 - Grade I

Tumbao, Wow

by Tony Artimisi

♩ = 105 - 125

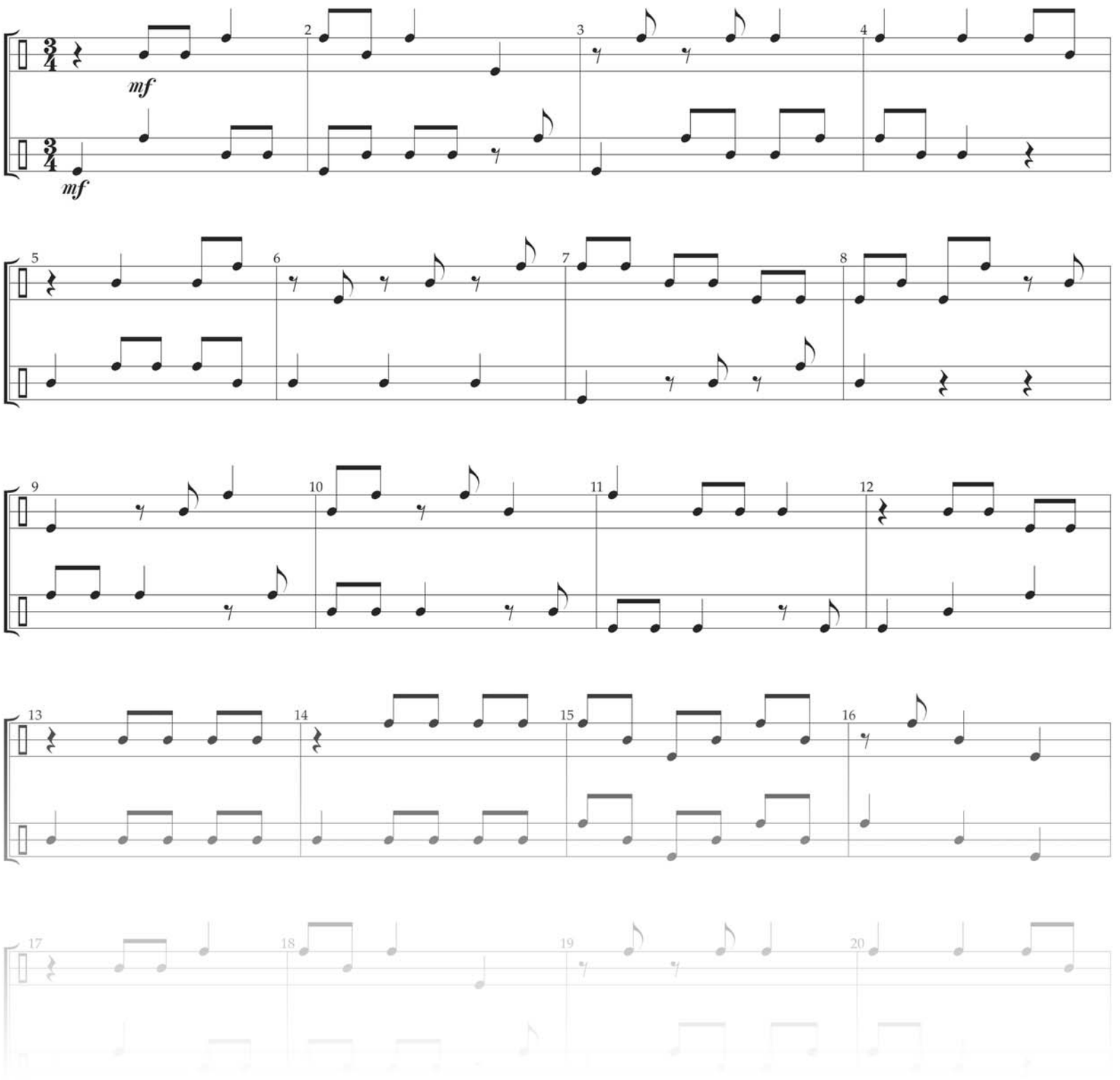


Duet #3 - Grade I

Tres Cool

by Tony Artimisi

♩ = 85 - 105

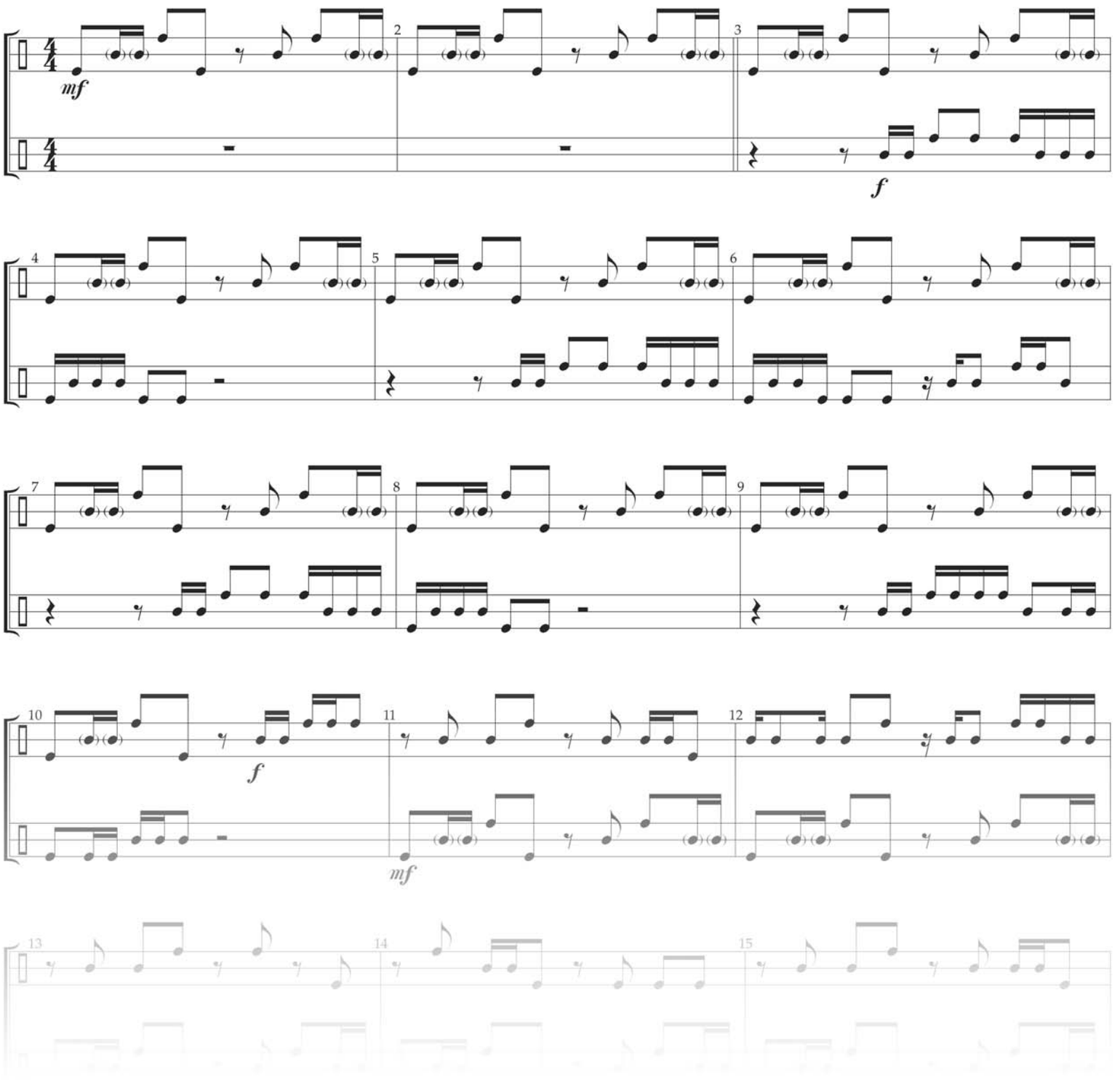


Duet #4 - Grade 1

Ballad d' Cajón

by Tony Artimisi

♩ = 70 - 85

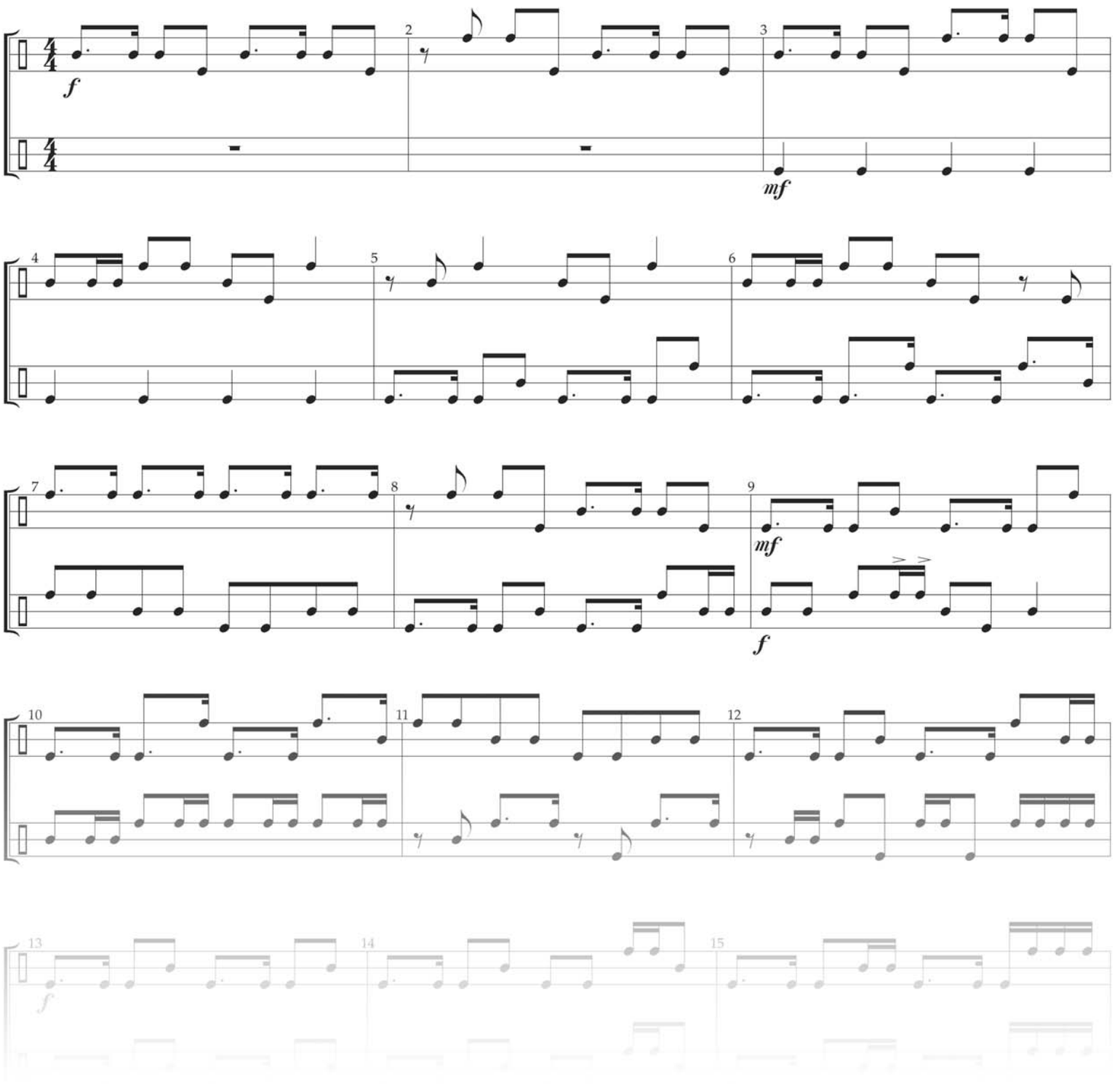


Duet #5 - Grade II

Night Dance

by Tony Artimisi

♩ = 95 - 115

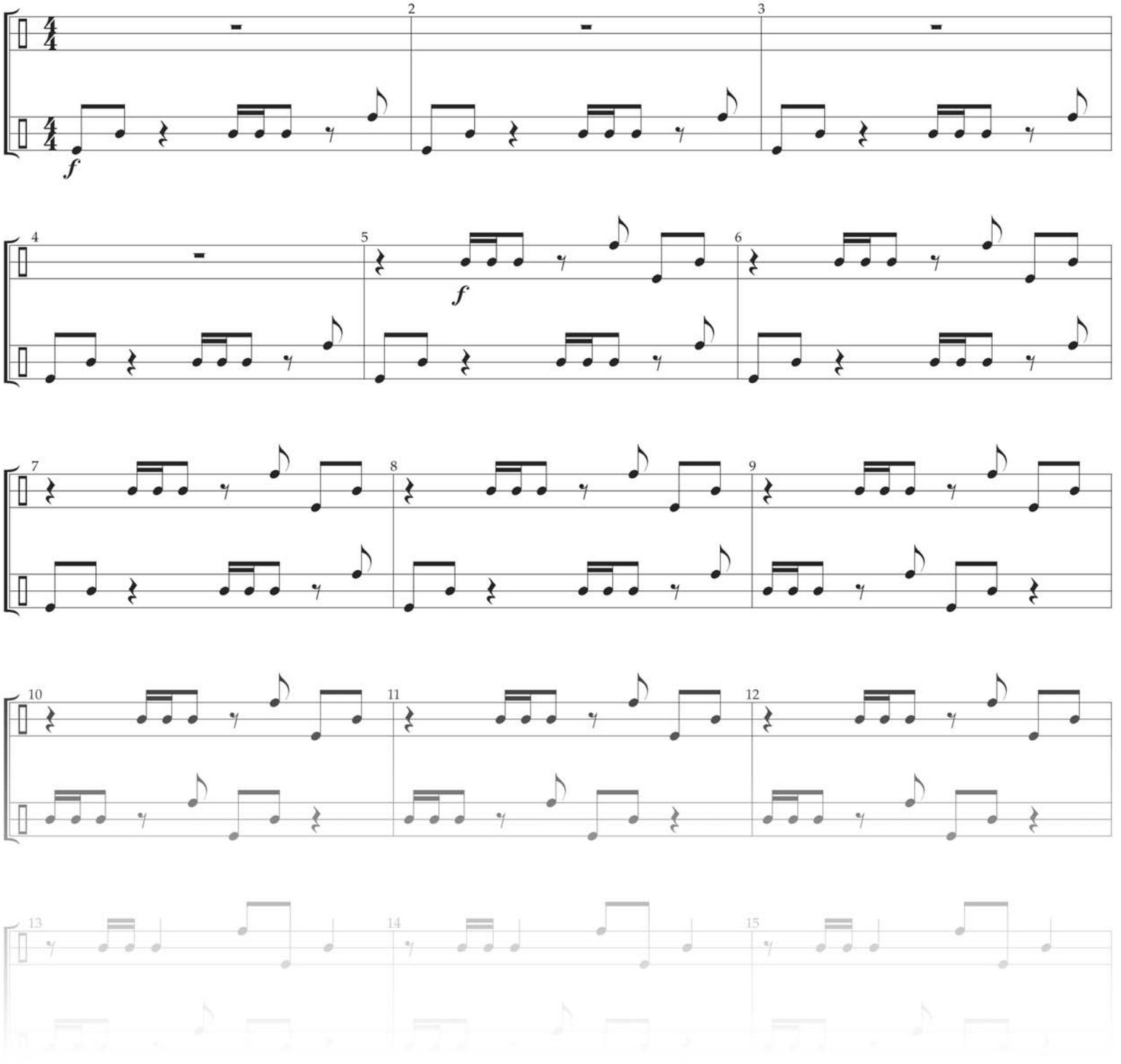


Duet #6 - Grade II

Out Of Sink

by Tony Artimisi

♩ = 100 - 120

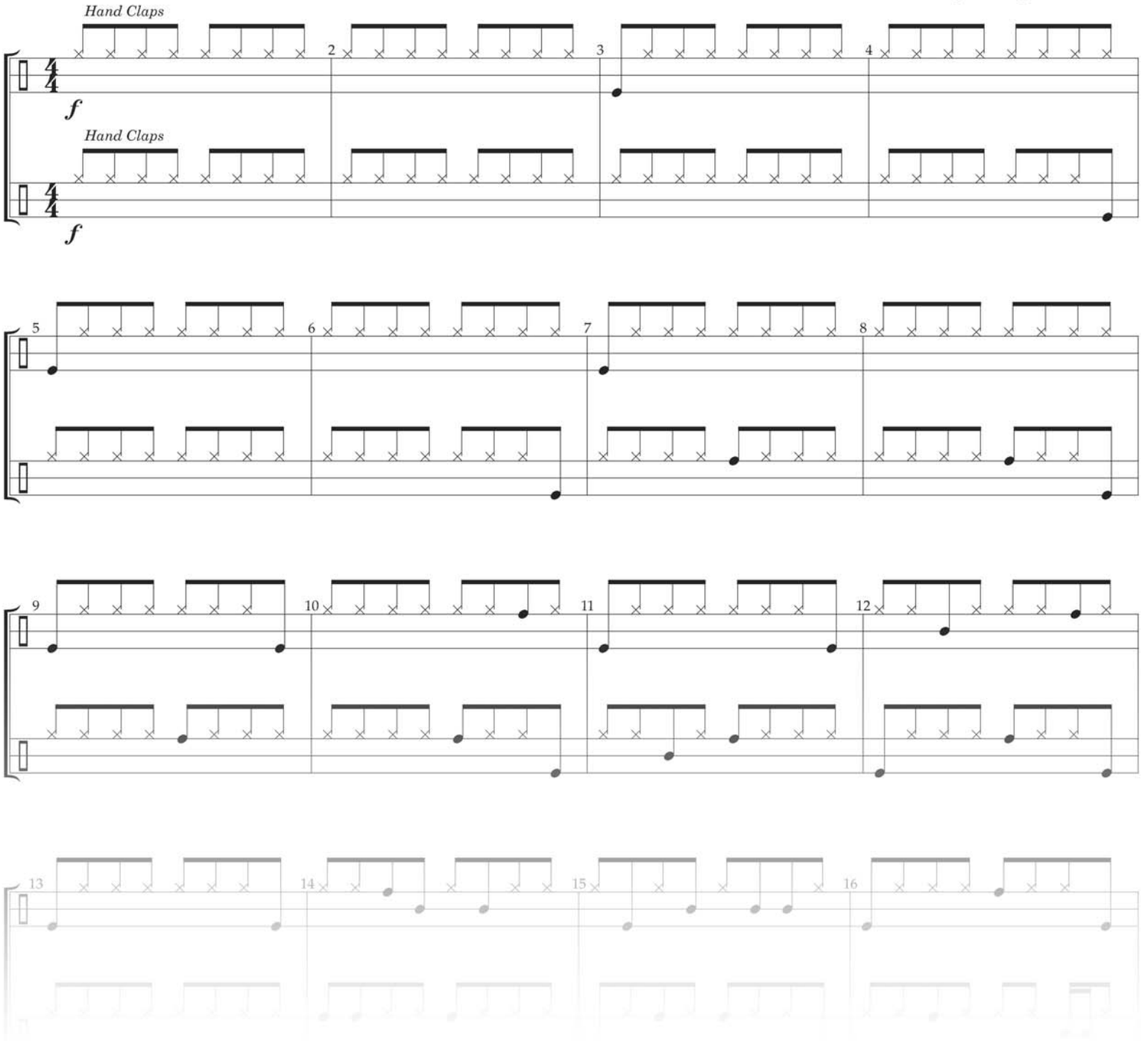


Duet #7 - Grade II

Claptastic

♩ = 90 - 110

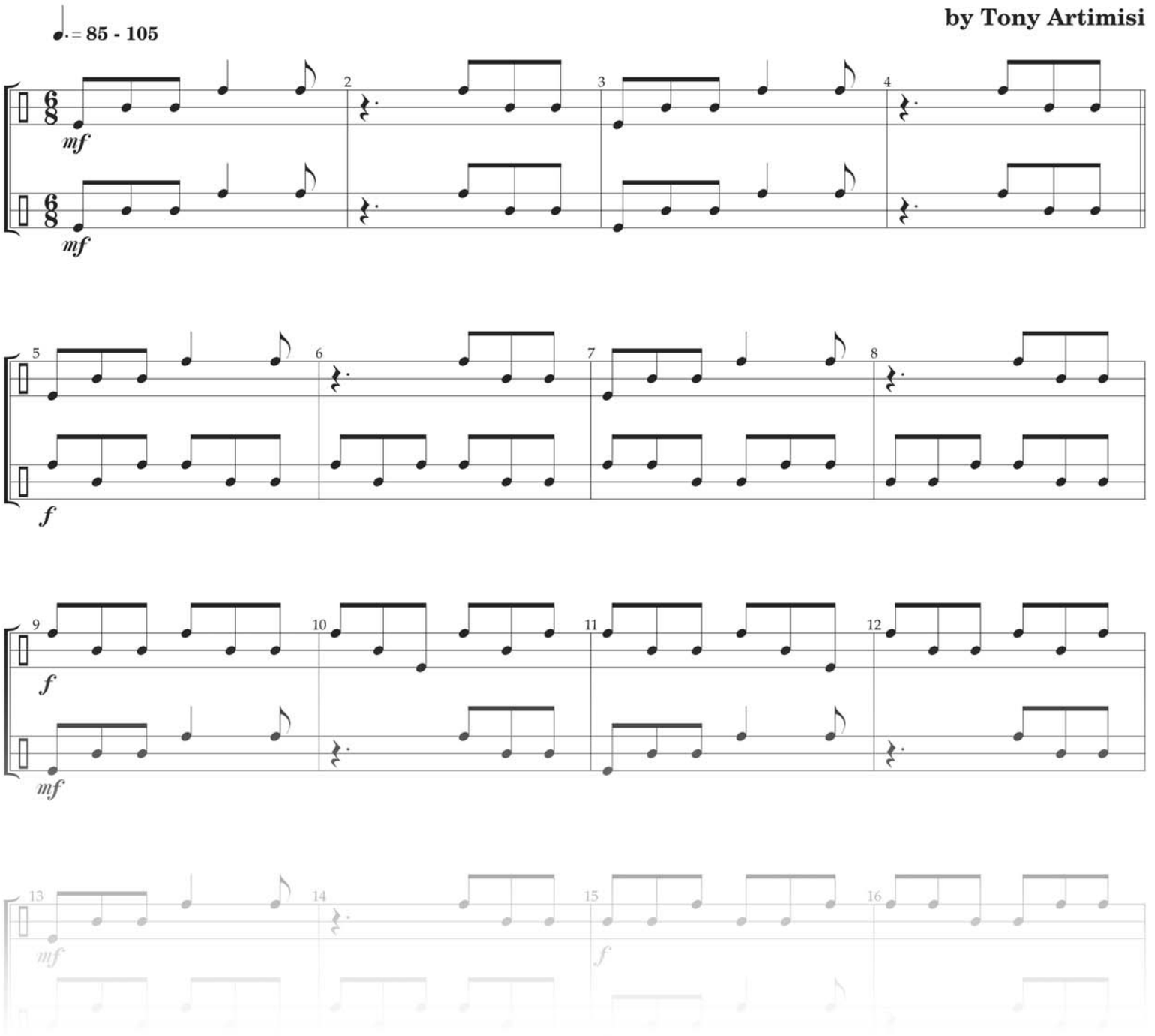
by Tony Artimisi



Duet #8 - Grade III

Tone Twister

by Tony Artimisi

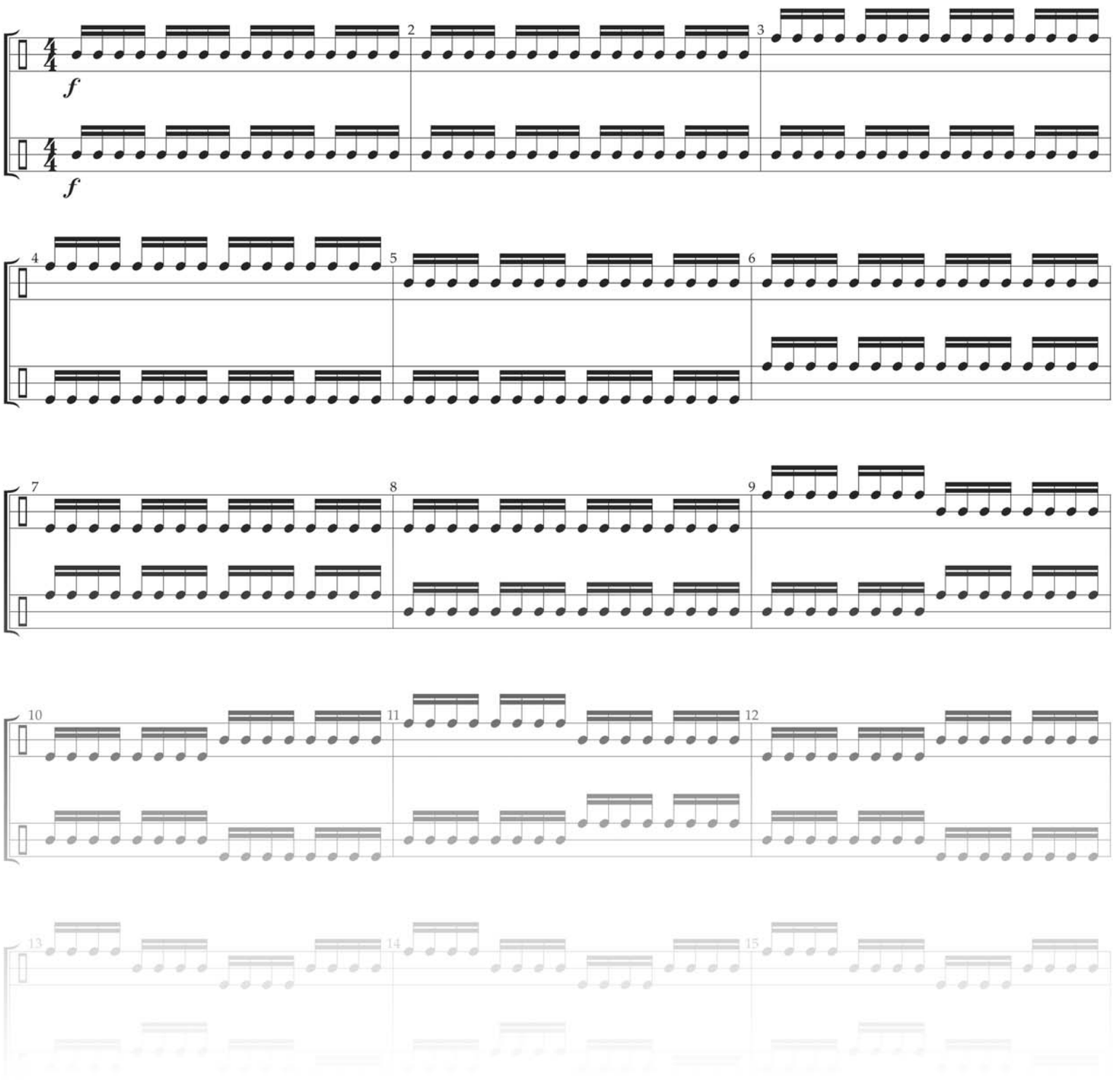


Duet #9 - Grade III

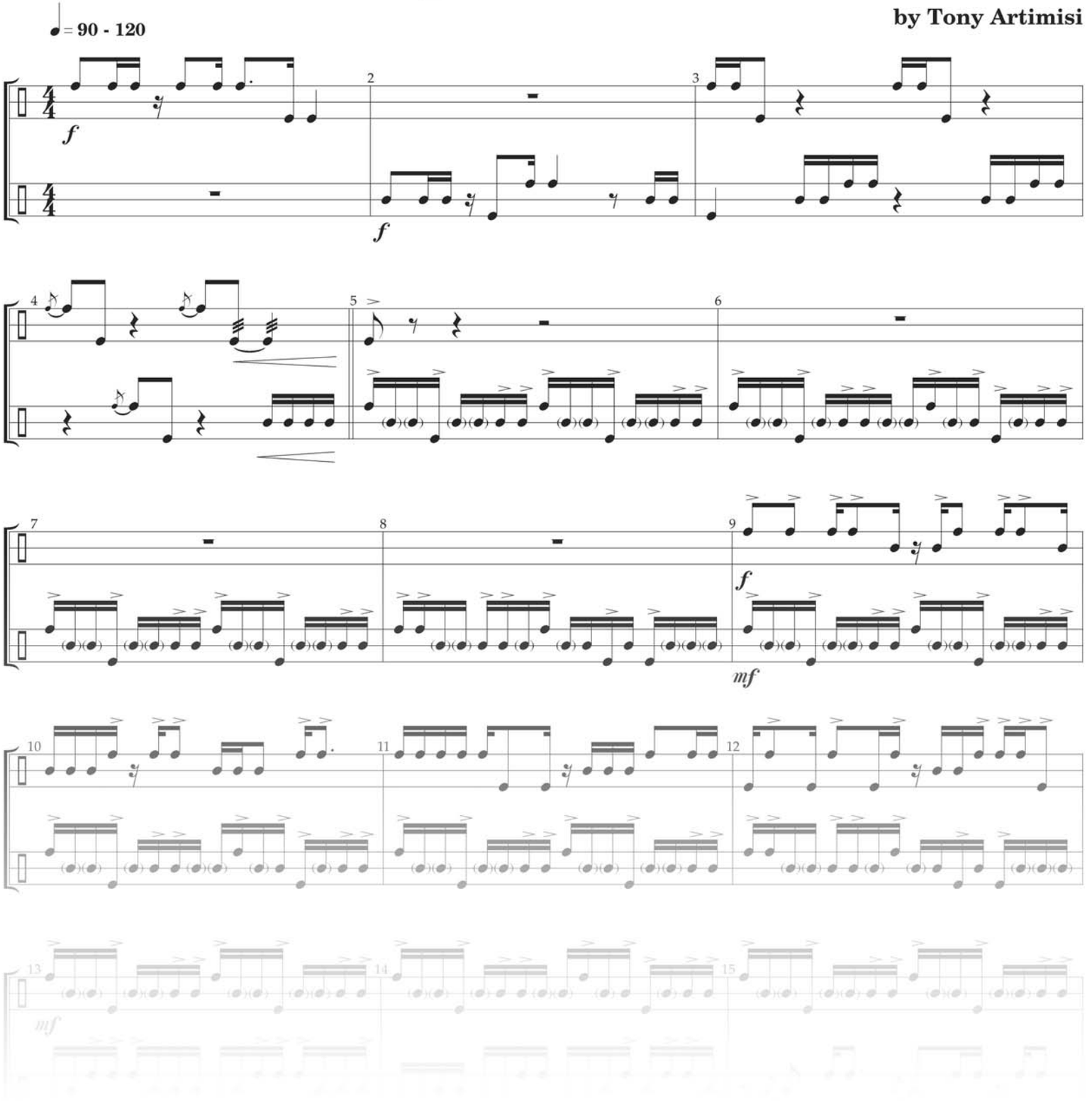
Lightning

by Tony Artimisi

♩ = 100 - 160



Duet #10 - Grade III

Expert Mode

by Tony Artimisi