Section I
Articulation - long and short

Drum sounds are inherently short and precise. However, we know from band and orchestra repertoire that there are a number of ways to produce longer sounds – in particular, the use of the drum roll, or some combination of drums and cymbals. On the drumset, we can use the roll - or single-handed buzzes - on the snare drum or toms, and we can also employ a system of combining drums with cymbals to produce the impact of the drum with the sustaining quality of the cymbal.

Before investigating particular articulation options on the drumset, we will first undertake a methodology of singing with designated syllables to achieve a contrast of sounds (short and long) in musical lines.

Singing rhythmic lines in the swing style (scatting)

It has long been the practice - especially in world percussion study - to have vocalizations that represent sounds and even particular locations on a drum to play to achieve these sounds. In Western music in general (and jazz drumset in particular) these vocalizations are achieved by matching articulations played by jazz horn players. Many books have been written detailing these vocal and instrumental utterances, represented by syllables such as: *bee, doo, dot, bah, dah, beet, day, boe, doe* - and many others. Vocal **scats** in mainstream jazz are full of these syllables, presenting a version of a musical line that is easy to produce, and therefore *imitate.* This imitation is useful for drummers to pick up on and define on the drums, thus creating a "hand-in-glove" connection to other musicians in the jazz context.

Here are some common approaches to arrive at and use these syllables. These are to be practiced as "swung" 8th notes at first, but can also be adapted for "straight" 8th's in rock or Latin styles.

1) Use soft consonants (*b, d, g, j, l, m, v*) at the beginnings of the vowel sounds *ee, oo, ah* (as in "bah hum-bug"), long *a* (as in "able"), and long *o* (as in "oval"). This matches the legato tonguing of a horn player. As an example, when you speak a soft consonant like *d,* the tongue touches the roof of the mouth lightly, then releases the vowel behind it. When you speak a *b* consonant, the lips come together and then part, also giving way to the vowel behind it. Singers talk about this as singing *vowel to vowel*, and horn players call this *legato tonguing.*

I use the *b* and *d* consonants often. When combining these consonants with vowels, **long** sounds are created like: *bee, dee, boo, doo, bah, dah, bay, day, boe, doe.*
Notice they are open-ended, in that they don't have a clear ending, unless you follow one of them immediately with another, as in *bee-dee-bah-day*, *doo-bah-dee-dah*, etc.

2) An *n* consonant between these syllables make them shorter, especially if you want to make them part of a longer line. *Doo-n-dah-n-doo*, etc. The legato interruption of the long sound with the tongue, again on the roof of the mouth, sets up the next syllable nicely, and doesn't stop the flow of the line. The *n* consonant is often used by horn players to create a "ghosted" note. In horn lines, this is often applied to a note that is lower in pitch than the other notes in a line. For the drummer, this can translate many different ways - more on drum voicing later.

3) Use a *t* consonant to finish a syllable (shorter note) or to put space in between single notes or groups of notes. *Doo-ba-dee-daht* or *daht-daht-doo-dut*. Also, use a *t* consonant when finishing a phrase with a short note. Common ending *t* consonant syllables include: *dot, dut, dit, doot, bot* and *but*.

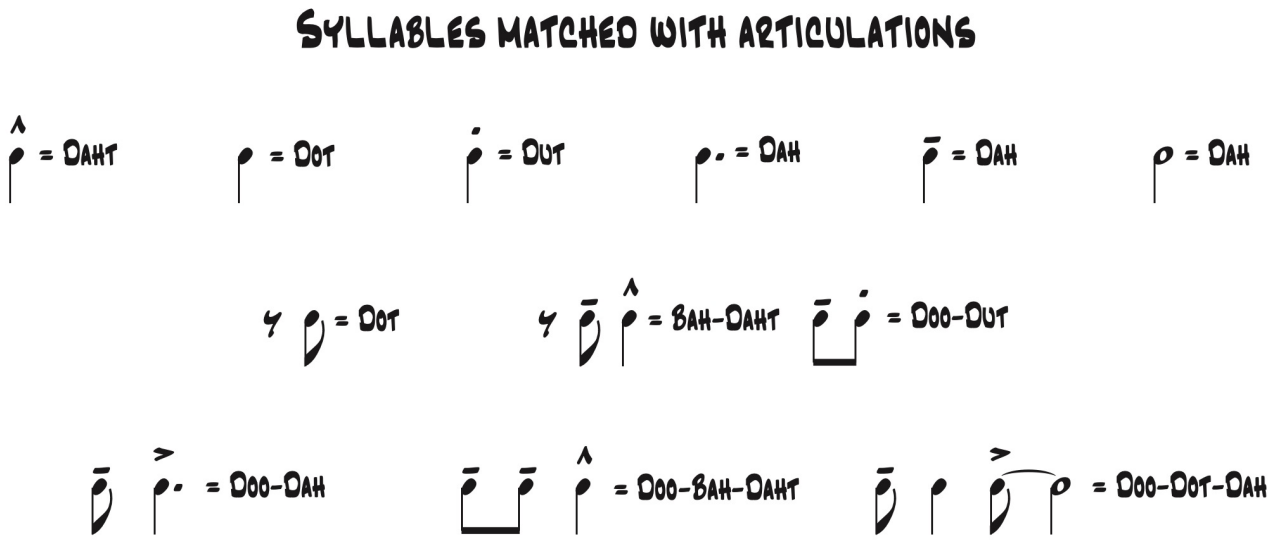
4) Alternate *b* and *d* consonants when part of a longer phrase of 8th notes (more than three). Bah-doo-bah-doo-bah. Also, the downbeat often uses the *d* consonant, while the upbeat uses the *b* consonant. Depending on tempo, the vowel that comes after the *b* consonant may be shortened from *bah* to *ba.* (See Example 2.)

5) Use open-ended syllables for longer sounds - either quarter notes with a legato phrase marking, or notes tied, dotted or longer than a quarter note. Examples include: *dah, bah, dee, bee, doo* and *boo.*

6) When a series of 8th notes starts on an upbeat, accent the first note of the phrase.

7) Treat quarter notes as short notes (*dot*) unless designated legato or staccato. The same is true for eighth notes alone - when not immediately followed by another note.

Example 2 shows a number of these syllables along with common articulations. (Swing 8th notes.)

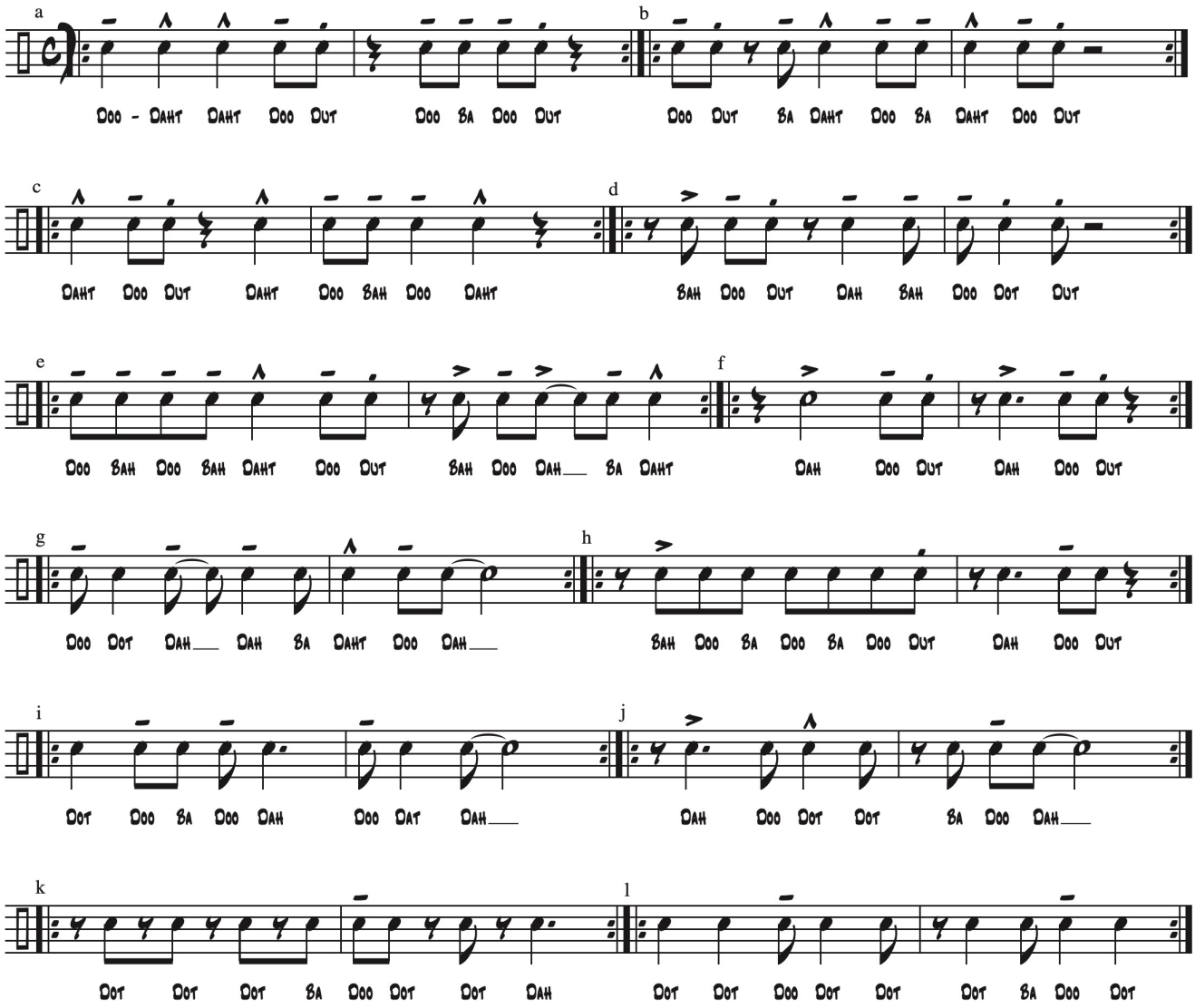


At this point, we'll introduce syncopated notation for practicing these common uses of syllables, to create a plan for singing jazz lines. Notice that we will also add articulations to identify the treatment of the particular notes in the line. Articulations often show up in musical scores for horn players, but seldom for drummers, which is all the more reason we need to be keenly aware of how lines are being treated in order to match them when appropriate.

Notice in Example 3, the first 6 phrases (a-f) have articulations above every note, while the last 6 (g-l) have minimal articulations. The syllables used are the same, but there are more assumptions made regarding the interpretation of them.

Example 3:

Singing Rhythmic Phrases Using Jazz Syllables

2-measure phrases

To reiterate, these are syllables that are comfortable for me. I would encourage you to try these or come up with your own - see paragraph 1) above. The most important point in singing figures is that you arrive at a set of articulations that delineate the short and long notes of the phrases.

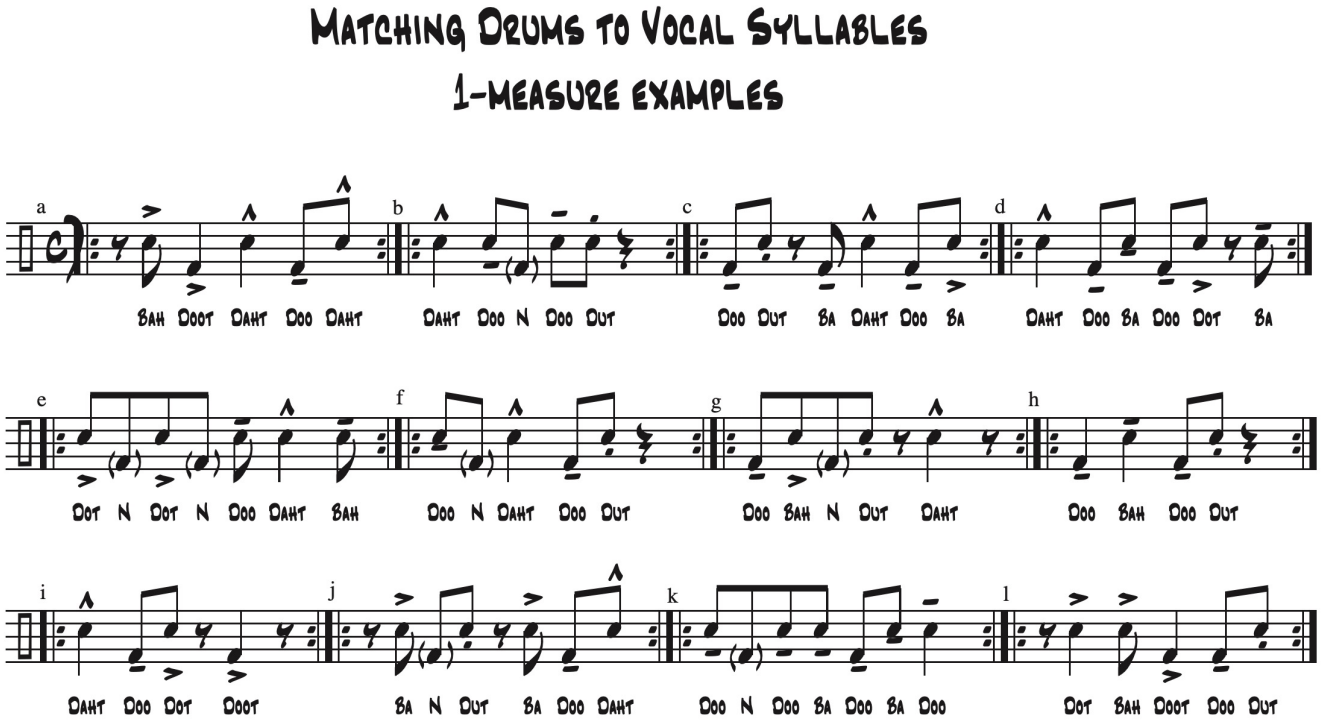
Matching rhythmic lines with drums

Once we have an understanding of articulation, the next step is to use drums and cymbals to execute articulations. These may be written or improvised, but all in the service of keeping a linear, or horizontal approach to the music, in effect, *playing what we sing*.

If we use the syllables from examples 2 and 3 above, drums may be matched as follows:
doo = bass drum, tom tom, or snare drum with buzz (or snare drum ghosted if followed by *daht*)
daht/dot = snare drum alone
dut/but/doot = snare drum or bass drum (often notated with staccato mark)
dah = snare drum with buzz, or combination of cymbal with snare drum or bass drum
ba/da = any drum in front of a *doo, daht* or *dah* syllable
n or en = any drum intended to be ghosted - usually in between *doo* or *daht*

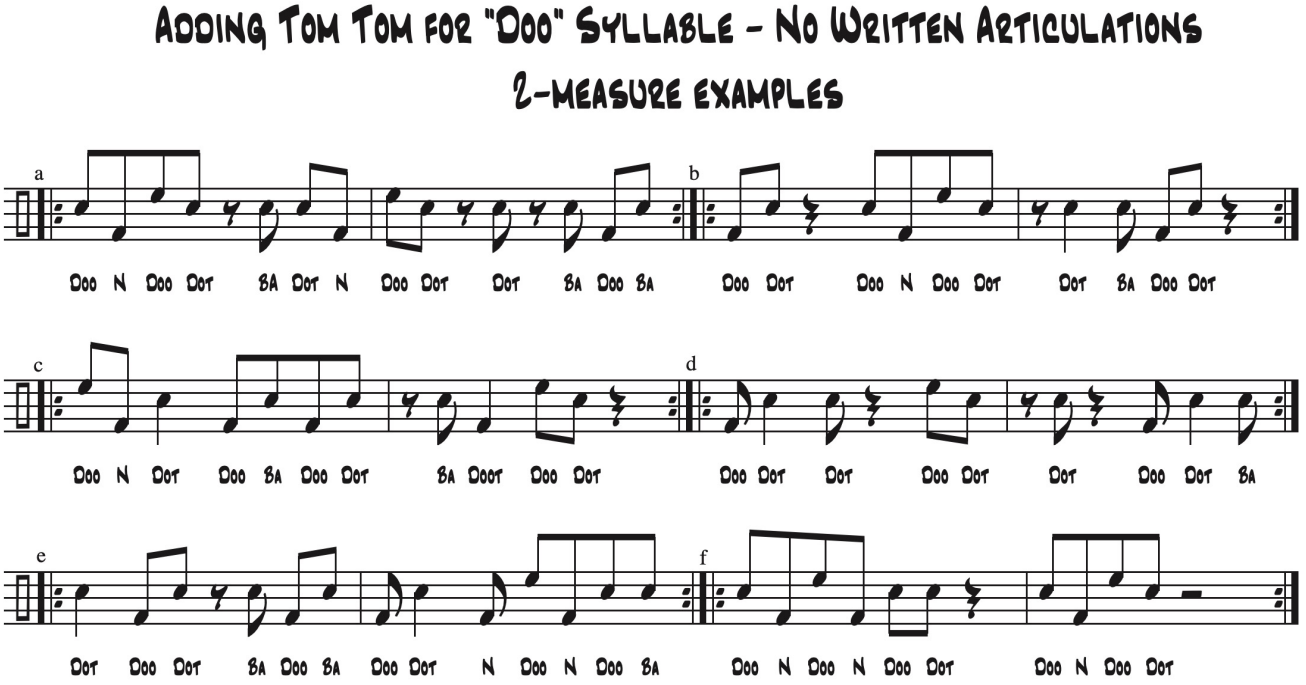
*There are a number of other options that involve the hi-hat open or closed (struck with the stick) combined with a single drum to produce long or short sounds. For the purposes of these exercises, we are limiting the hi-hat to time-keeping - see the ride cymbal/hi-hat ostinatos in the introduction section of this volume. In the transcriptions section at the end of the book, some of these other hi-hat options are presented.

Here are some examples of drum sounds applied to sung/scatted lines: Syllables are applied assuming the 1-measure patterns are repeated.
Example 4:



The next example adds the small rack tom for *doo* syllables. Also, notice this example is void of any articulations, similar to what one might see in a drum part for a big band chart. The syllables used are only one realization. Adjustments could be made to accommodate for longer sounds or specific accents where notated. As with the previous example, this set of suggested articulations matches drum sounds with vocal sounds. The tom can be played with either hand. (If the strong hand is used, it would need to be moved off of the ride cymbal.)

Example 5:



The "*dah*" syllable - long sounds

For the purposes of this study, we will approach long, sustained sounds (***dah***) with buzzes on the snare drum and long sounds created on the ride cymbal by using the shoulder of the stick on the bow of the cymbal, combined with a drum. First, long sounds with buzzes on the snare drum.

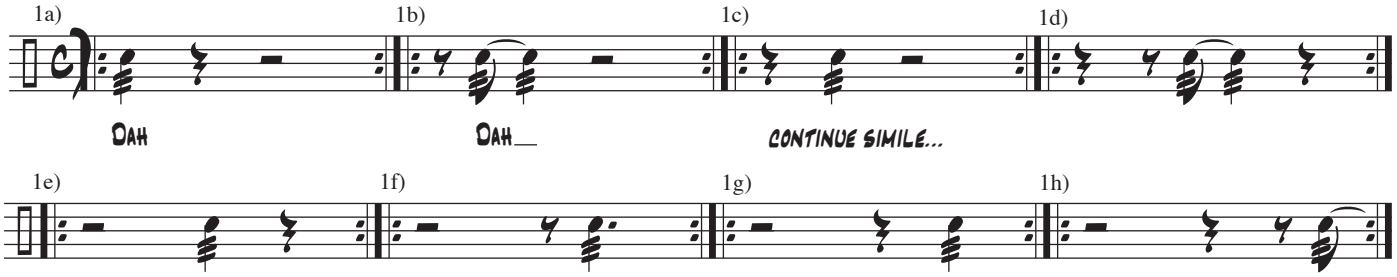
Snare Drum Buzzes

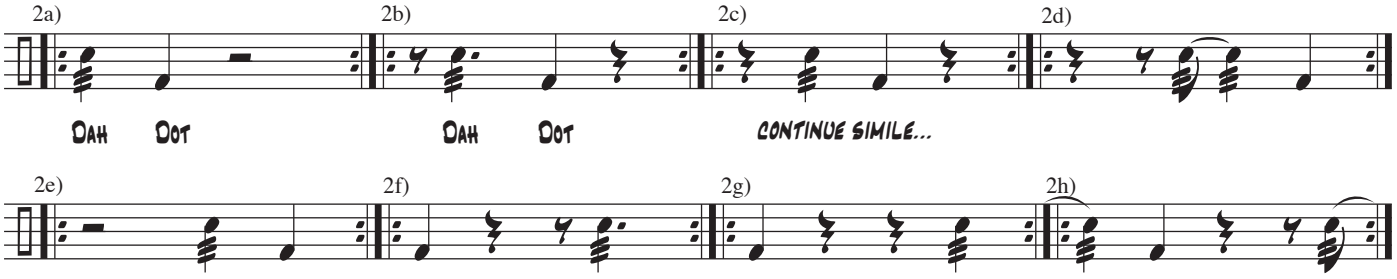
Simply put, the idea of creating longs with the snare drum means employing a multiple-bounce (or concert-style) roll sound with one hand. Dropping the stick and letting it bounce will suffice to begin with, and coordinating how long to let it bounce will be a matter of choice depending on the musical context, and whether or not it has closure to it - as in a "finish" with the bass drum or some other drum. The following exercises, beginning with grids in 4/4 time, are designed to solidify the buzz sustain concept using quarter notes and eighth notes. Buzzes of triplet durations will be covered later in the book.

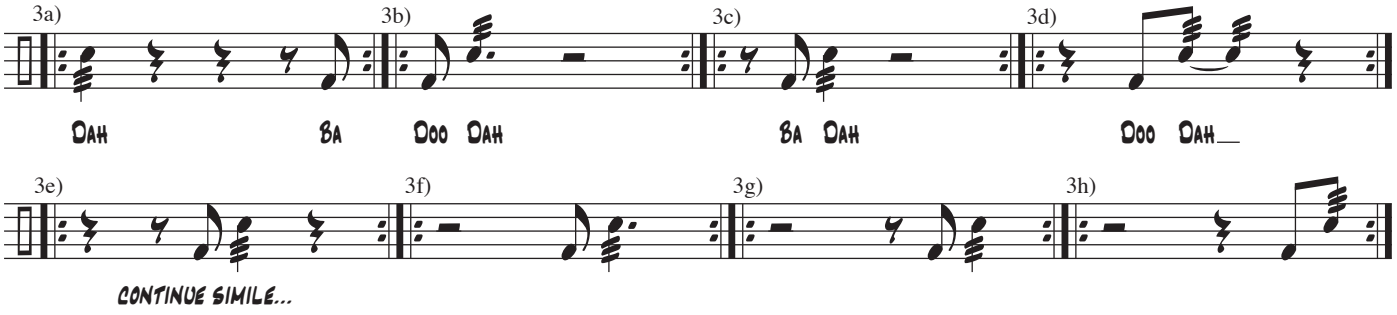
Exercise 1 - Long Sounds with SD Buzzes

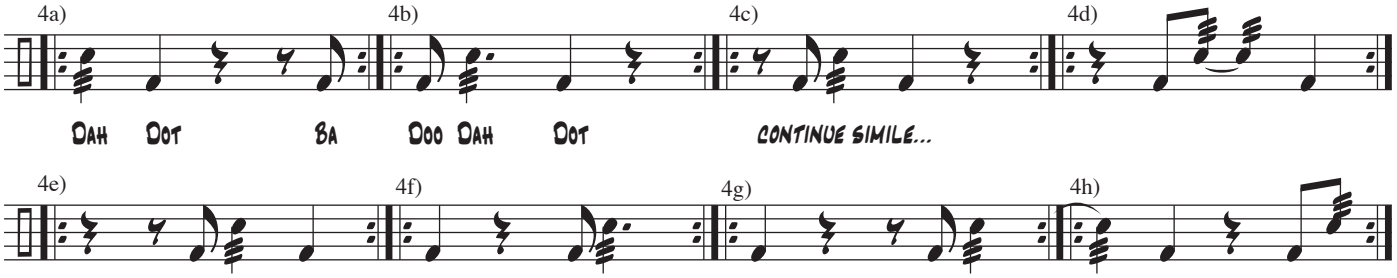
Grids and Patterns

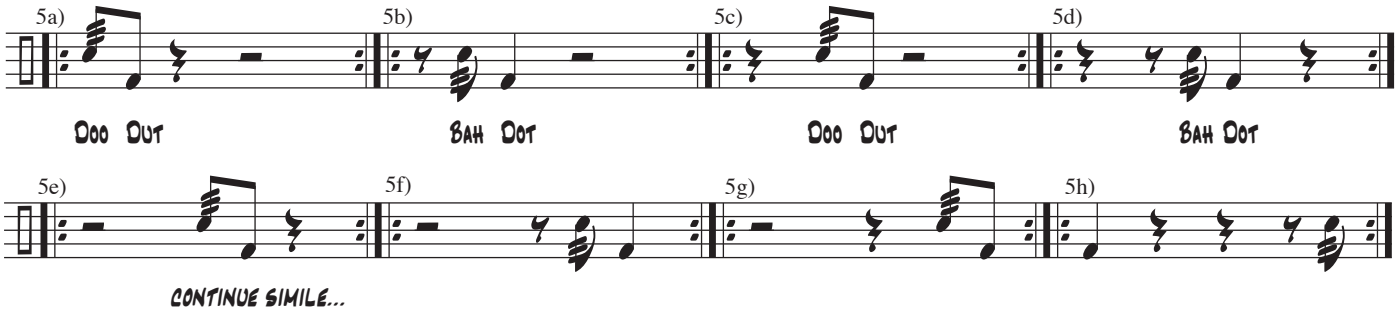
Apply 4/4 ride/hi-hat patterns 1-16

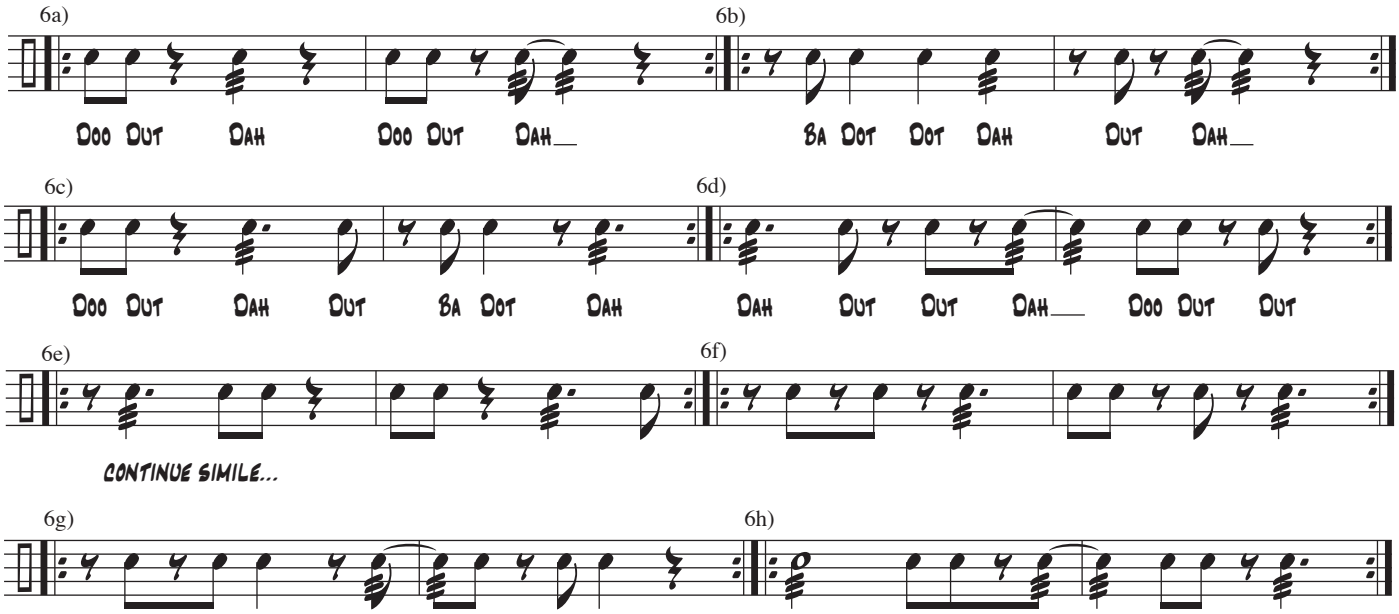
Group One : Open

Group Two : Closed w/BD on downbeat

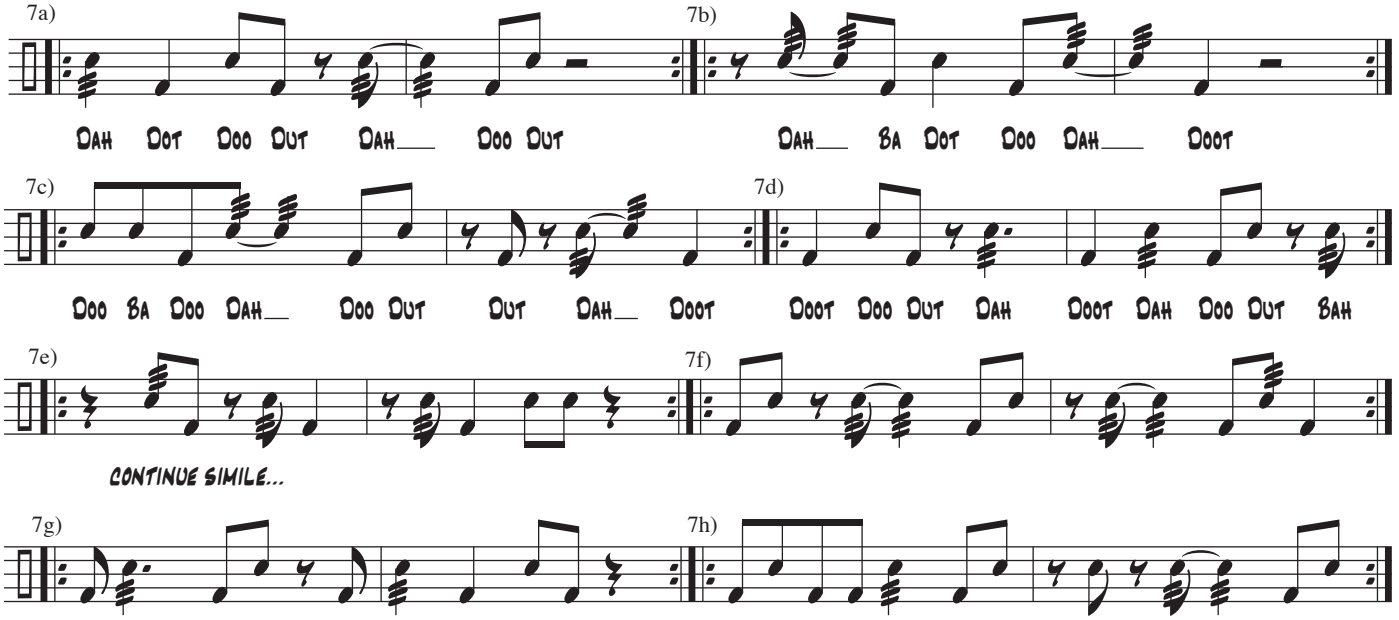


Group Three : open with BD set-up

Group Four: closed w/BD on Downbeat



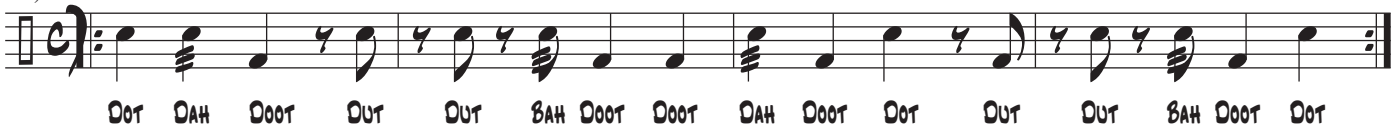
Group Five : Closed w/BD on next 8th note

Group Six : 2-bar Phrases, Snare only (open and closed)



Group Seven: 2-bar combinations - closed w/BD

Exercise 2 - Long Sounds with SD Buzzes

4-Measure Phrases

Apply 4/4 ride/hi-hat patterns 1-16

a)

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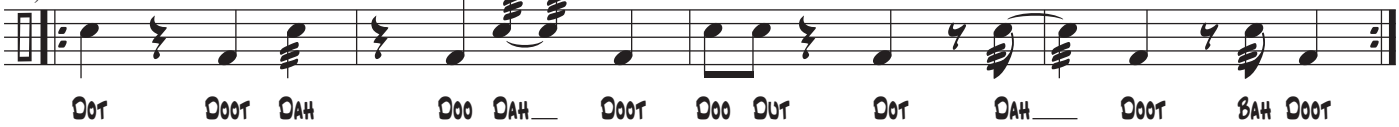
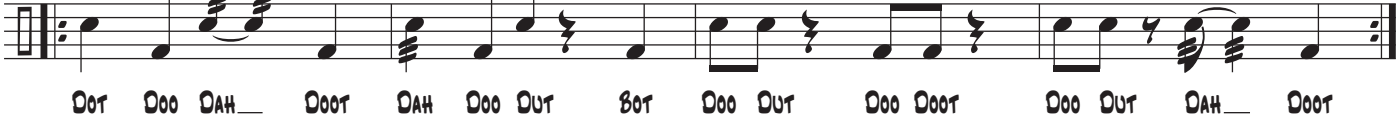
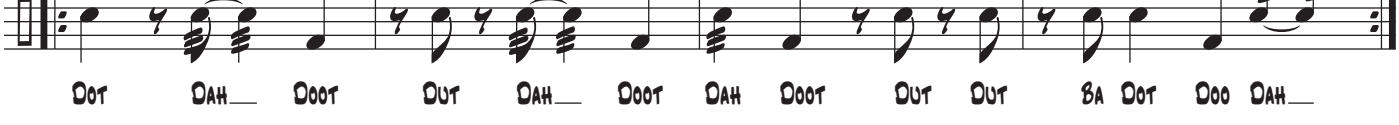
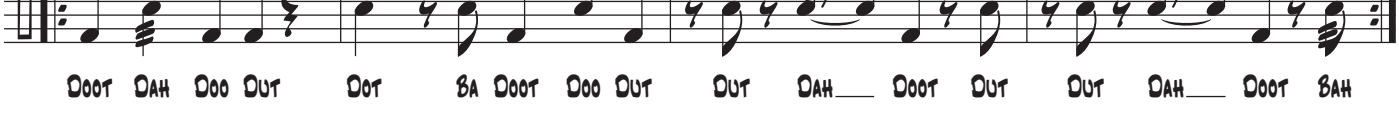
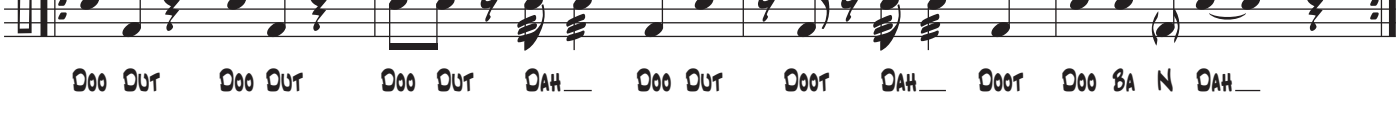
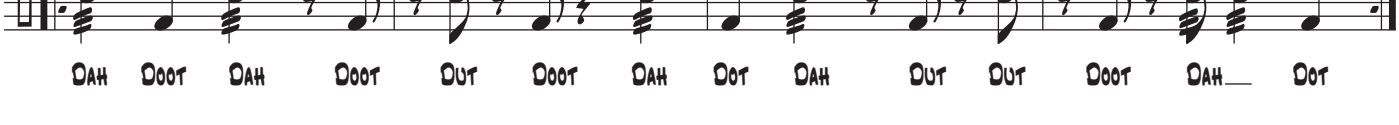
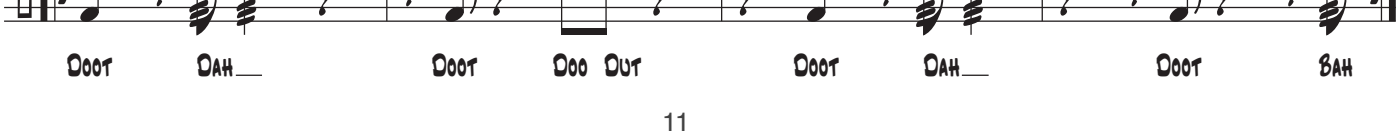
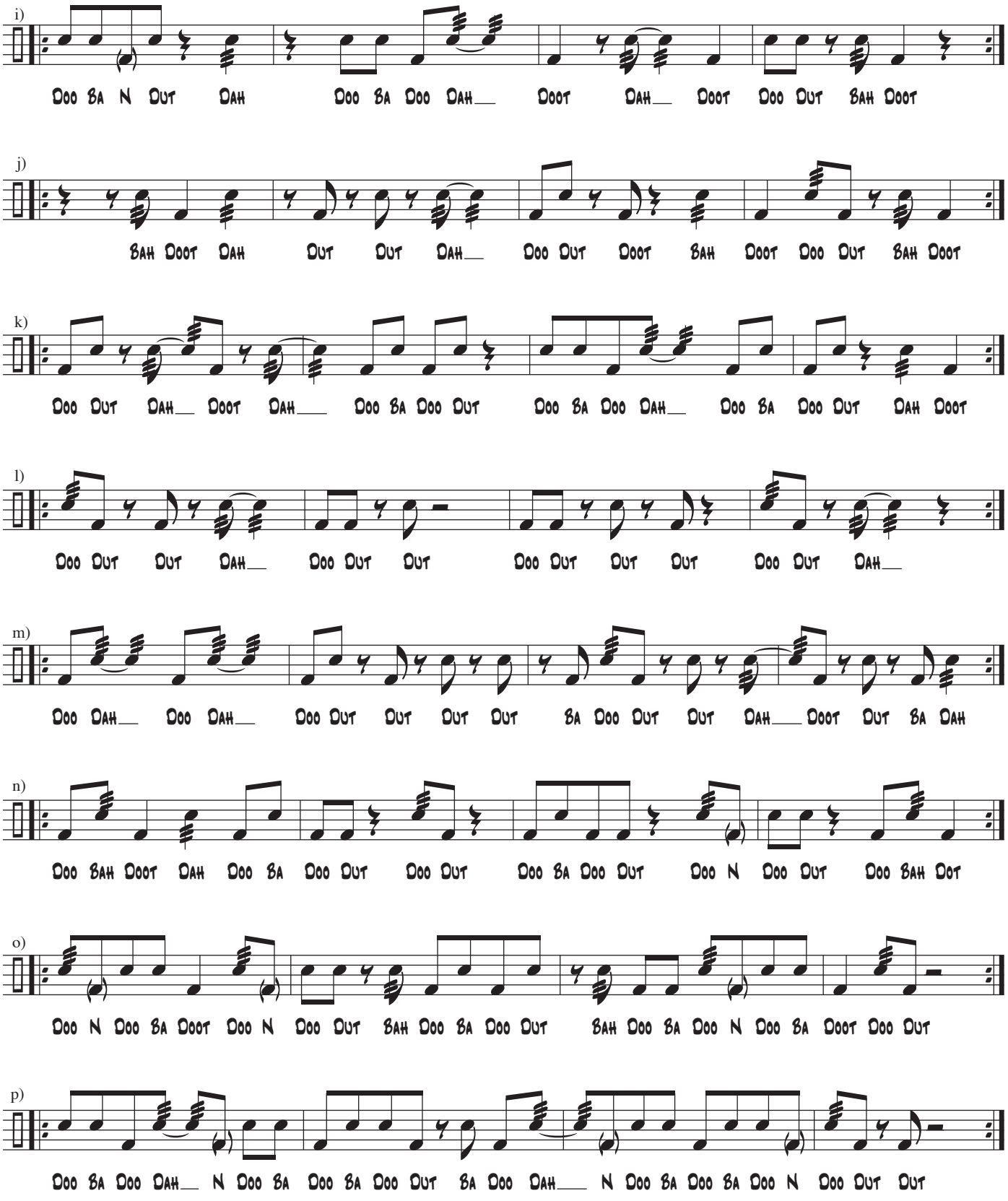

c)

d)

e)

f)



g)

h)

i)
Doo Ba N Dut Dah Doo Ba Doo Dah__ Doot Dah__ Doot Doo Dut Bah Doot
j)
Bah Doot Dah Dut Dut Dah__ Doo Dut Doot Bah Doot Doo Dut Bah Doot
k)
Doo Dut Dah__ Doot Dah__ Doo Ba Doo Dut Doo Ba Doo Dah__ Doo Ba Doo Dut Dah Doot
l)
Doo Dut Dut Dah__ Doo Dut Dut Doo Dut Dut Dut Doo Dut Dah__
m)
Doo Dah__ Doo Dah__ Doo Dut Dut Dut Dut Ba Doo Dut Dut Dah__ Doot Dut Ba Dah
n)
Doo Bah Doot Dah Doo Ba Doo Dut Doo Dut Doo Ba Doo Dut Doo N Doo Dut Doo Bah Dot
o)
Doo N Doo Ba Doot Doo N Doo Dut Bah Doo Ba Doo Dut Bah Doo Ba Doo N Doo Ba Doot Doo Dut
p)
Doo Ba Doo Dah__ N Doo Ba Doo Ba Doo Dut Ba Doo Dah__ N Doo Ba Doo Ba Doo N Doo Dut Dut

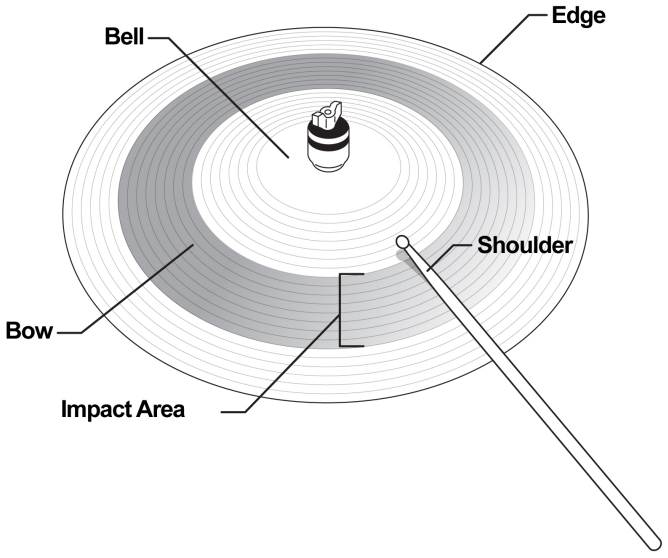
Section II
Articulation of Long Sounds on the Ride Cymbal

Long sounds created on the ride cymbals are useful in comping and in playing specific lines with an ensemble - be it a small jazz combo or a large jazz ensemble. For comping, maintaining the sound of the ride cymbal while articulating long and short allows for a seamless flow of articulation from the drums. Certainly, a crash cymbal can also be used for long sounds, but for the jazz drummer, **maintaining a constant ride cymbal presence**, while still articulating long and short rhythmic figures is a must. Suffice it to say, that all the exercises that follow illustrating long cymbal sounds can be transferred to a crash cymbal if and when it is appropriate musically.

An ideal "comping" long sound can be attained by using the shoulder of the stick striking the bow of the cymbal (see illustration below). This is not a "crash" sound, but rather a variation that when coupled with a drum, creates a long sound that fits well with the line of the moment. Like the buzz sound on the snare drum, the length of this sound clarifies the *dah* syllable. So, now the options for *dah* (long) are:

1. snare drum buzzes of varying length
2. ride cymbal shoulder of stick on bow of cymbal coupled with snare drum or bass drum
3. combining snare drum buzzes with shoulder/bow ride cymbal
4. using other drums in combination with snare drum or cymbal longs
5. crash cymbal either combined with a drum or alone

The following diagram illustrates the shoulder/bow cymbal long sound. Notice the impact does not occur on the edge of the cymbal, but about halfway between the edge and bell - similar to the location where the ride pattern would be played. In context, the player can just "flatten" out the stick to achieve the long sound, and then go back to using the tip of the stick to play the ride cymbal as normal.



Ride Cymbal Shoulder/Bow Exercises

The following exercises start with grids of shoulder/bow cymbal sounds in 4/4 time. Note the rhythm of the ride cymbal pattern. With these sounds, the constant quarter-note-based ride pattern is interrupted both before (preparation) and after (resolution) the sound is played (exercise 3, group one). The long sounds are then prepared with downbeats on the opposite drum - that is, the snare drum "sets up" the bass drum and vice versa (exercise 3, group two).

Beginning in group three of exercise 3, the long sounds are presented in the context of an ensemble line. As a matter of sequence, it is recommended that the player sing the lines first, then try the realization that is offered in group four. Notice each long sound is prepared with a downbeat on the opposite drum (SD to BD, or BD to SD), and the ride cymbal pattern is adjusted to compensate for the shoulder/bow long technique, including both preparation and resolution. Finally, group five shows the musical line with syllables (top staff), and then the possible realization of that line from group four (bottom staff). This same idea is then repeated for the following exercises (4-6). In these exercises, there are a number of notes in parentheses – the parenthetical notes may be omitted depending on tempo in order to leave time for preparation and resolution of the long sounds.

It is important to keep in mind that these can also be played in a comping fashion to simply execute the sounds per the vocalization. Also, the long sounds need not always be prepared on downbeats. As in all musical endeavors, experimentation is strongly encouraged, but for the novice person, these realizations provide a good foundation.

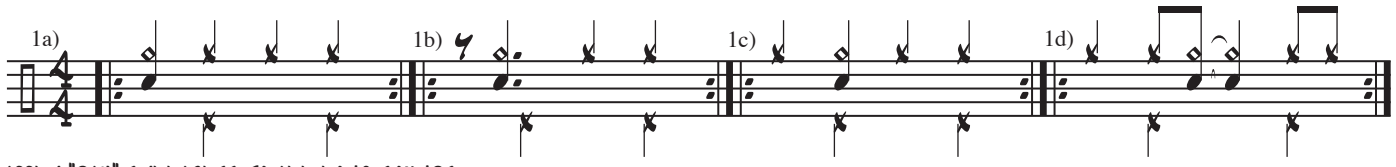
The final two exercises of this section present longer phrases, first with cymbal only for the *dah* syllable (exercise 7), then coupled with SD buzzes (exercise 8). Notice the specific ride cymbal patterns are left to the individual, the intention being that the ride cymbal and hi-hat time functioning will be employed in similar fashion to the previous exercises with attention being given to preparation and resolution of the long sounds.

Exercise 3 - Long Sounds with Ride Cymbal (SD/BD)

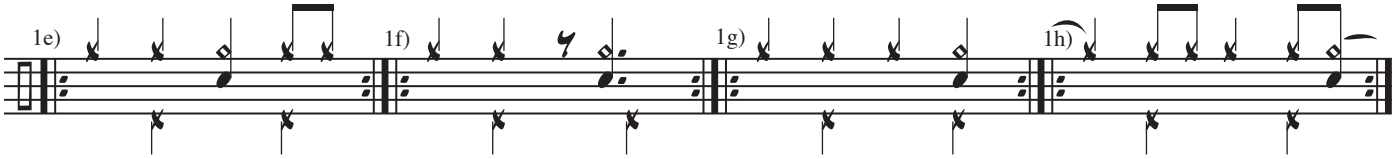
Includes Set Ups

𝅗𝅥 = Long Sound on Ride Cym.

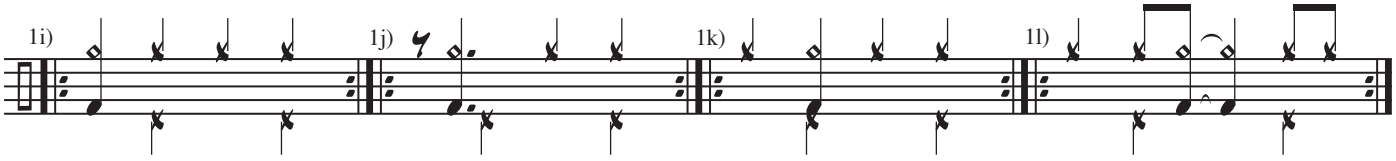
Group One (a-h) SD Long

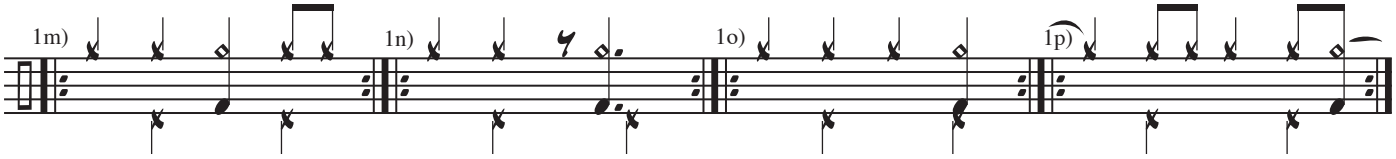


Apply "Dah" syllables to all long sounds

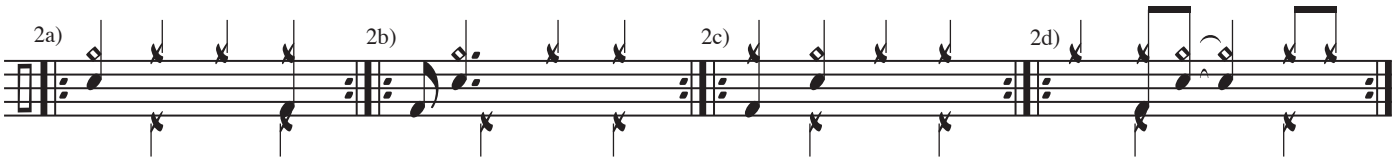


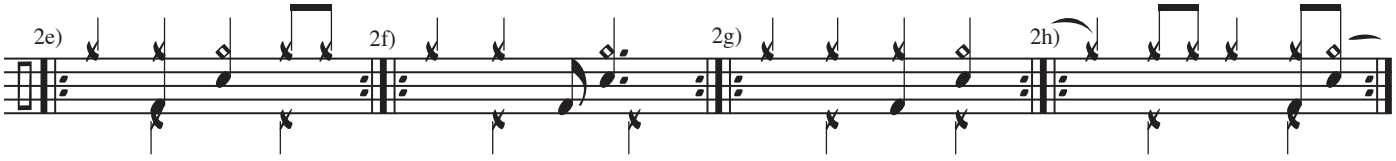
Group One (i-p) BD Long



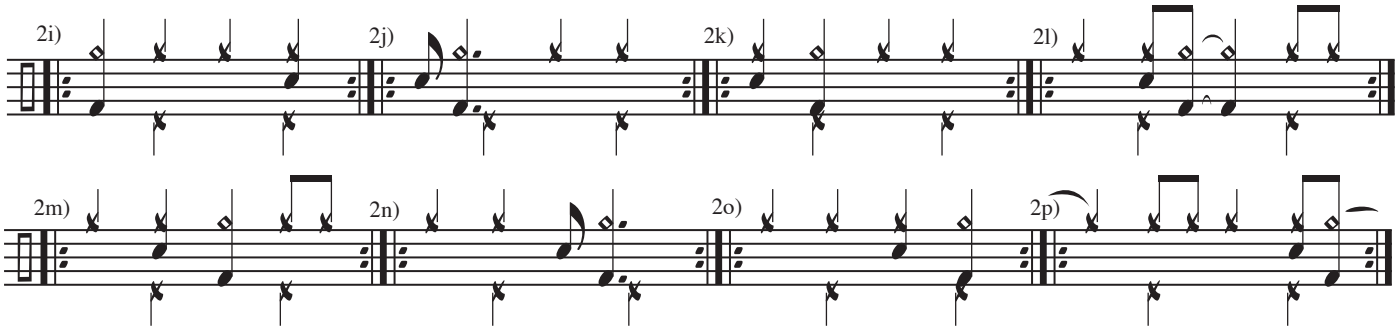


Group Two (a-h) SD Long w/BD set up

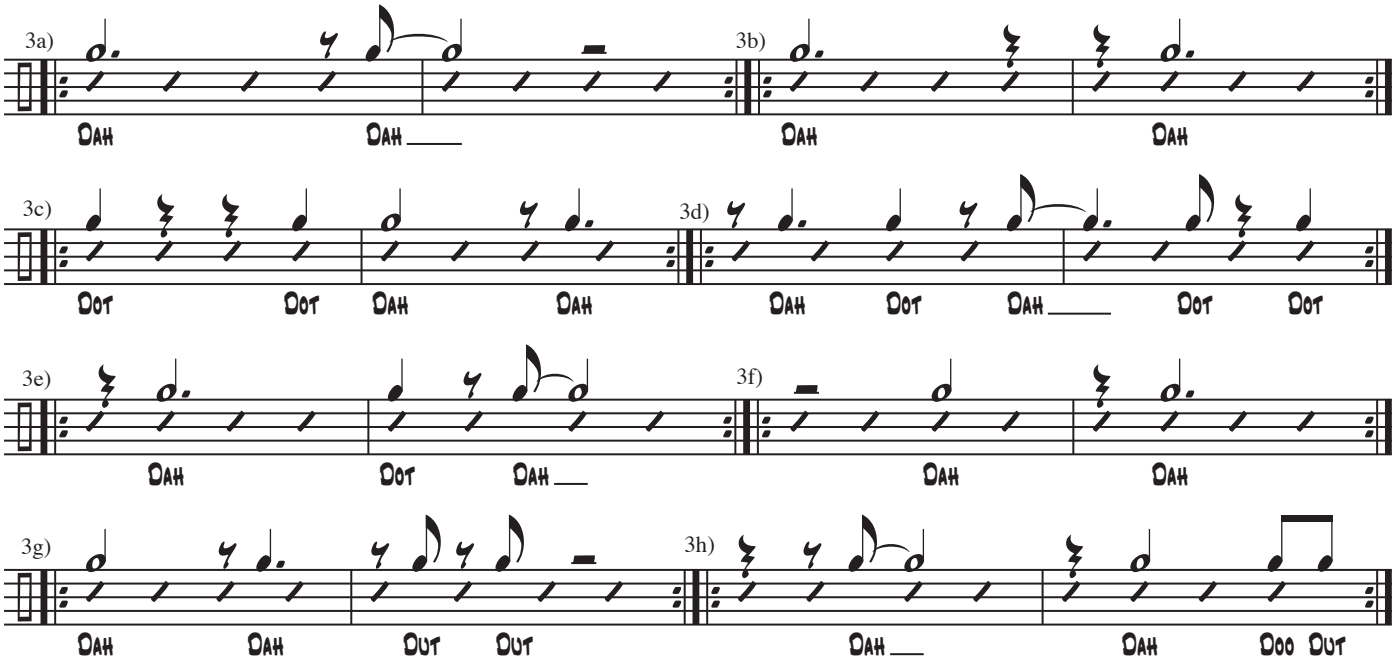




Group Two (i-p) BD Long w/SD set up

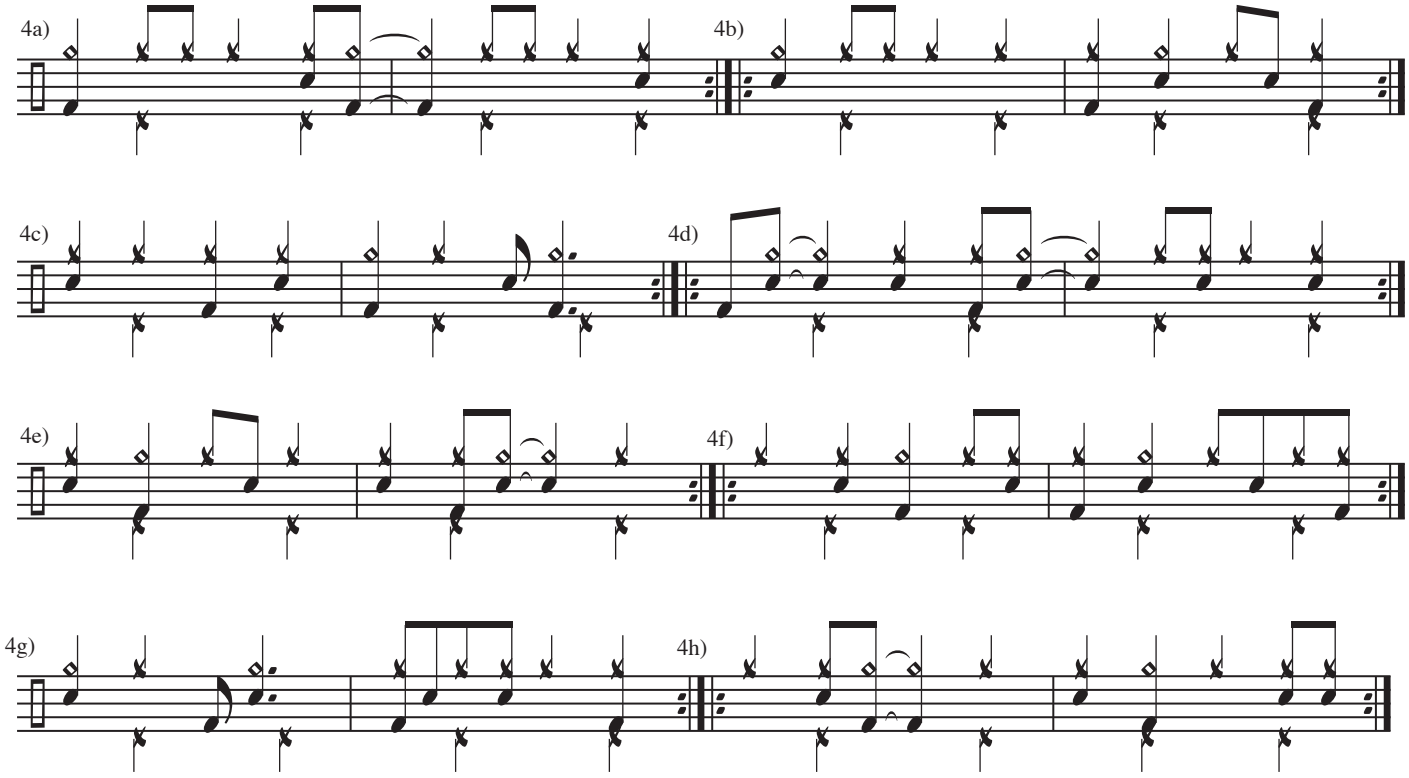


Group Three (a-h) 2-measure Combinations...practice these with SD and BD long and short notes
Experiment with set-ups, keeping in mind that the SD sets up BD, and BD sets up SD
This is typical of big-band notation - the notes present on the top of the staff represent the horns' long and short rhythmic figures



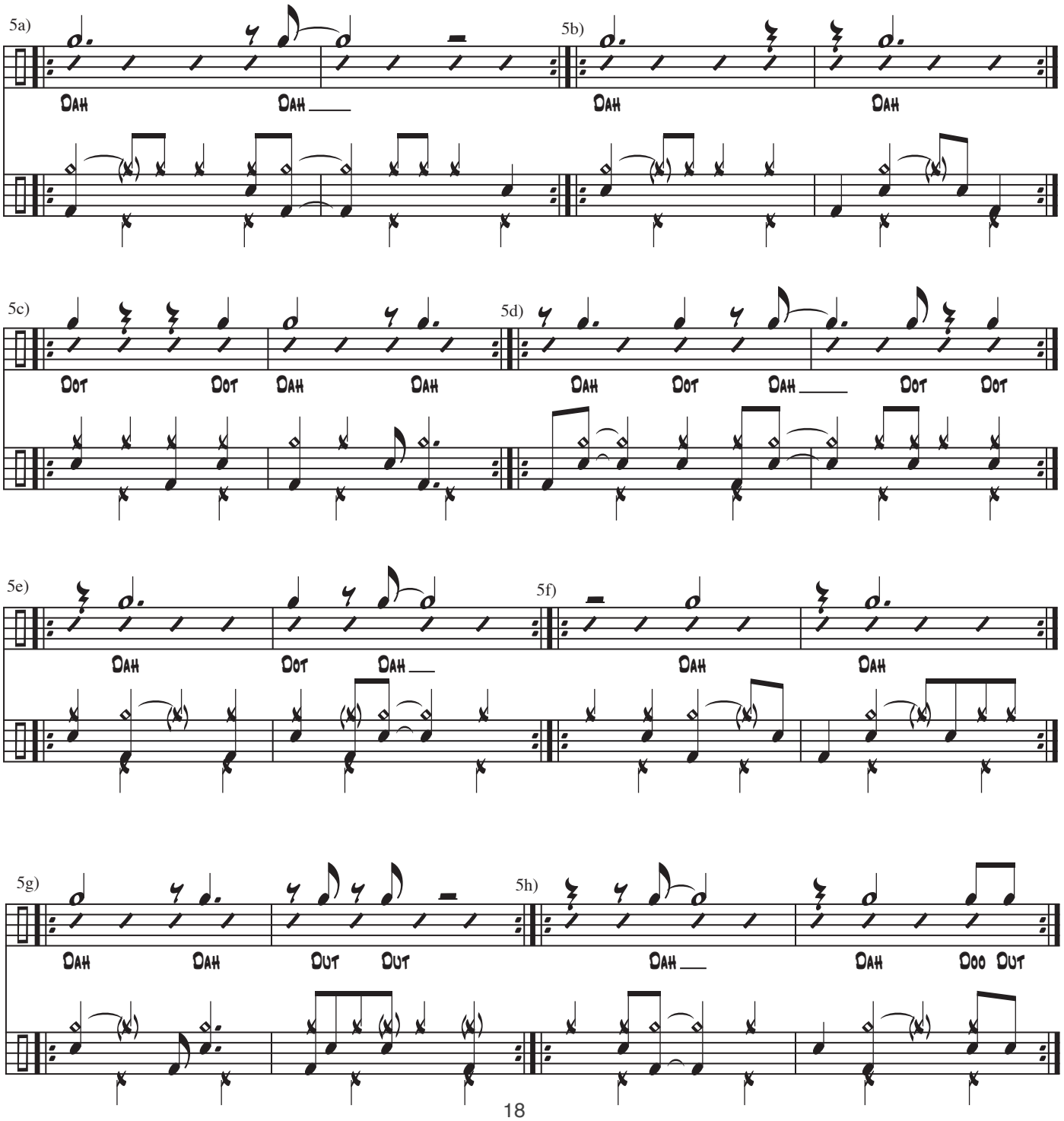
Group Four (a-h) 2-measure Combinations

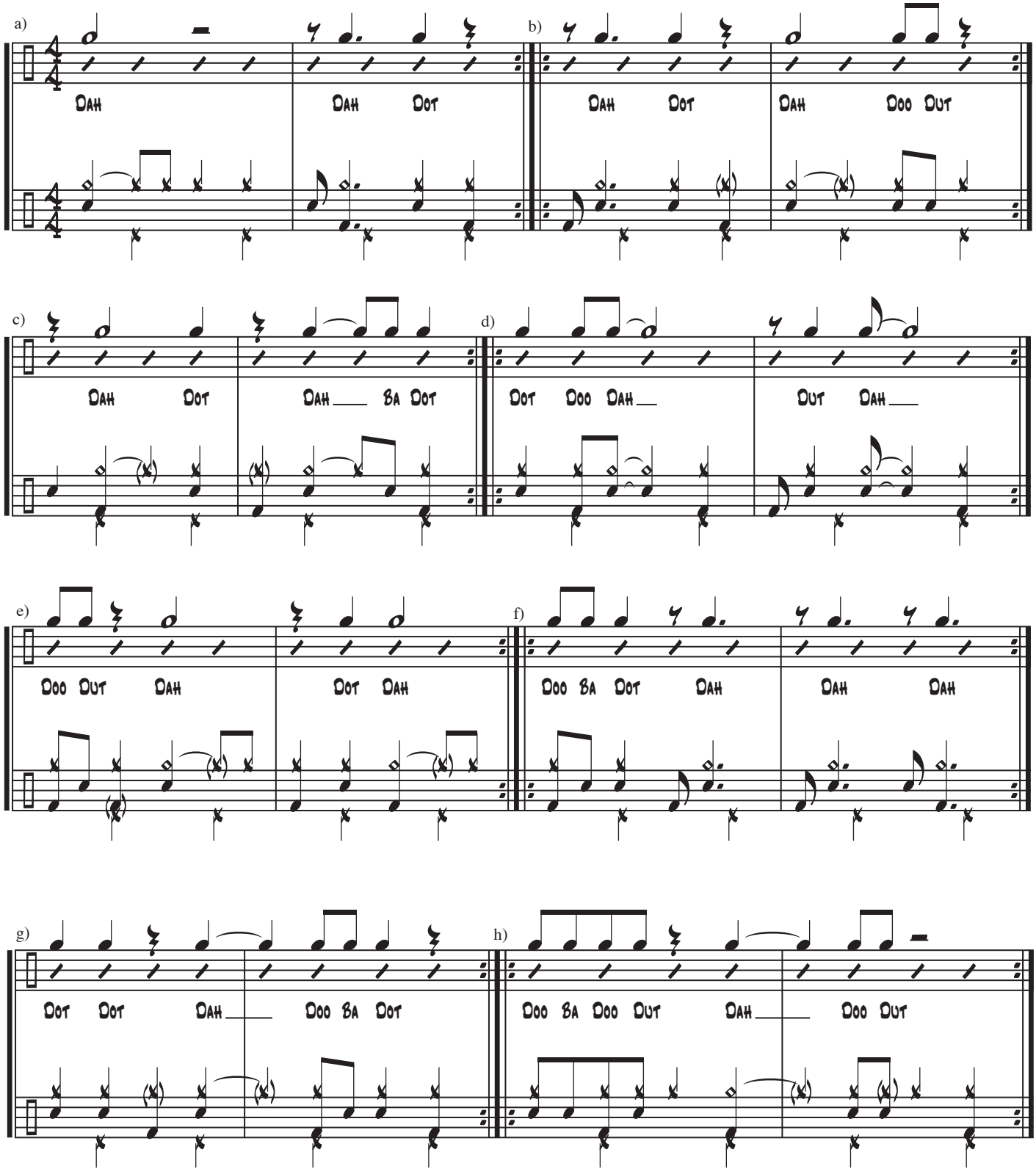
This represents one possible realization of the figures presented in Group 3

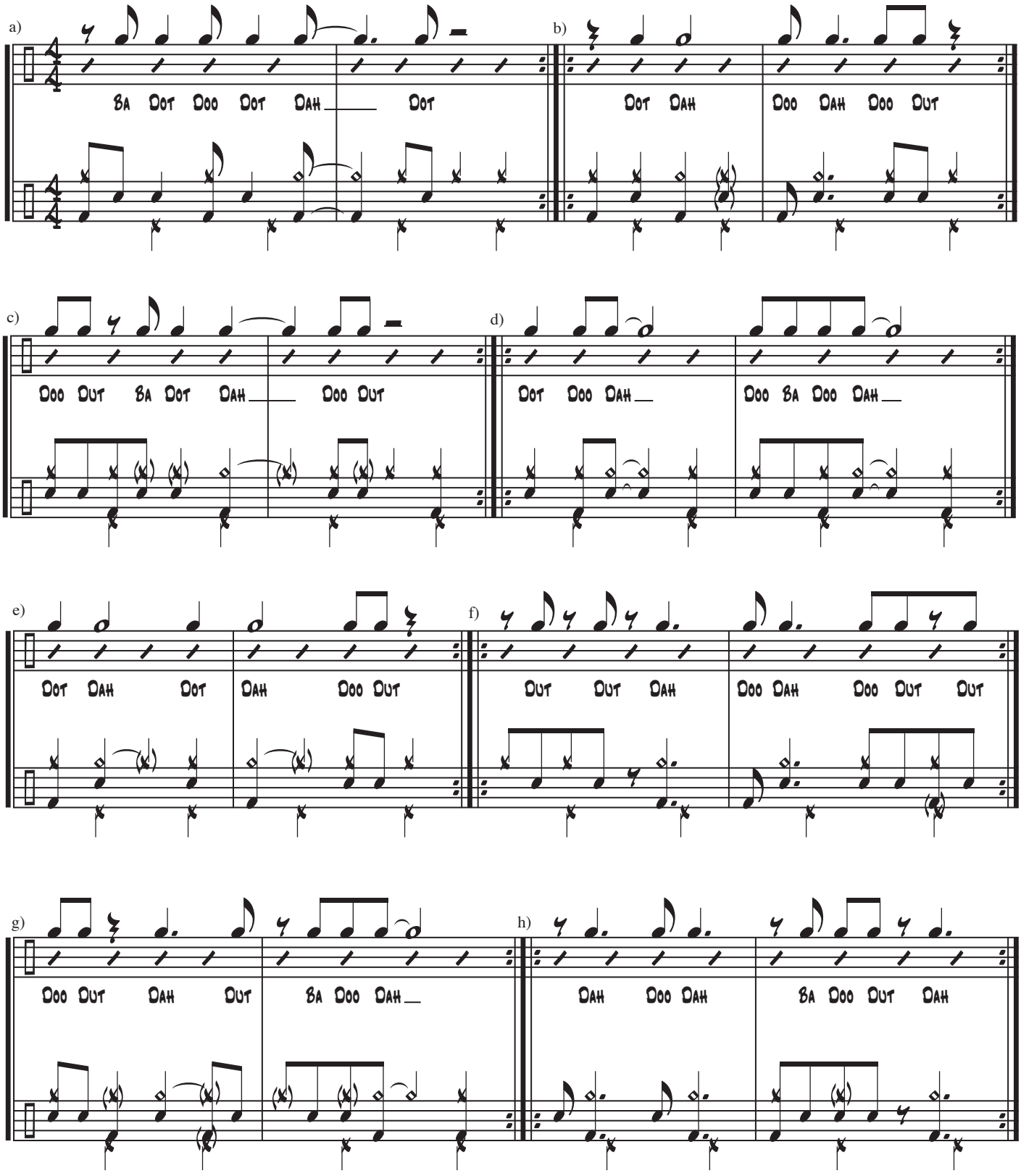
Experiment with other combinations while maintaining the correct written rhythmic figures and articualation (long and short)

Group Five (a-h) 2-measure Combinations

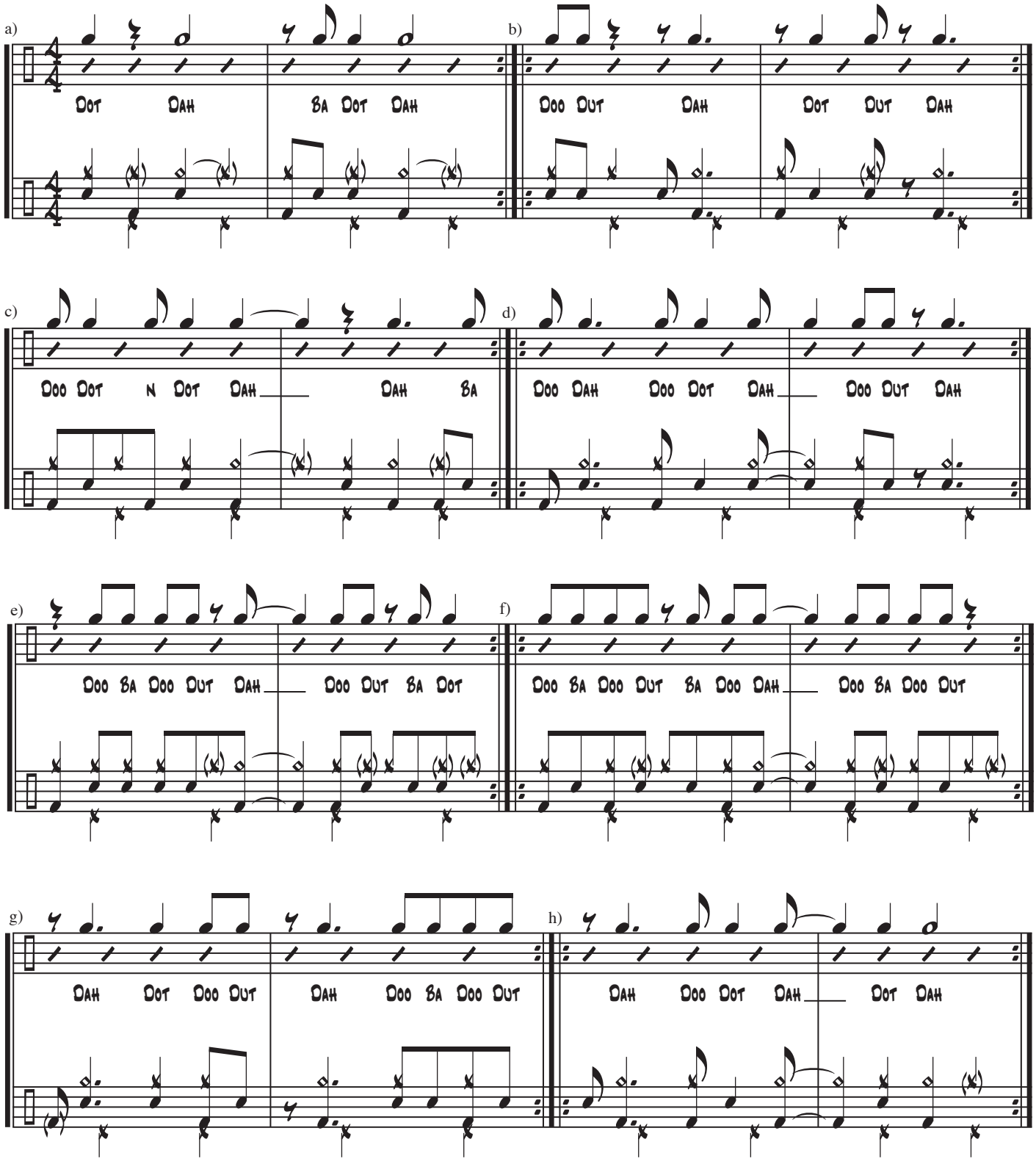
The rhythmic figures from Group Three are on the top stave.

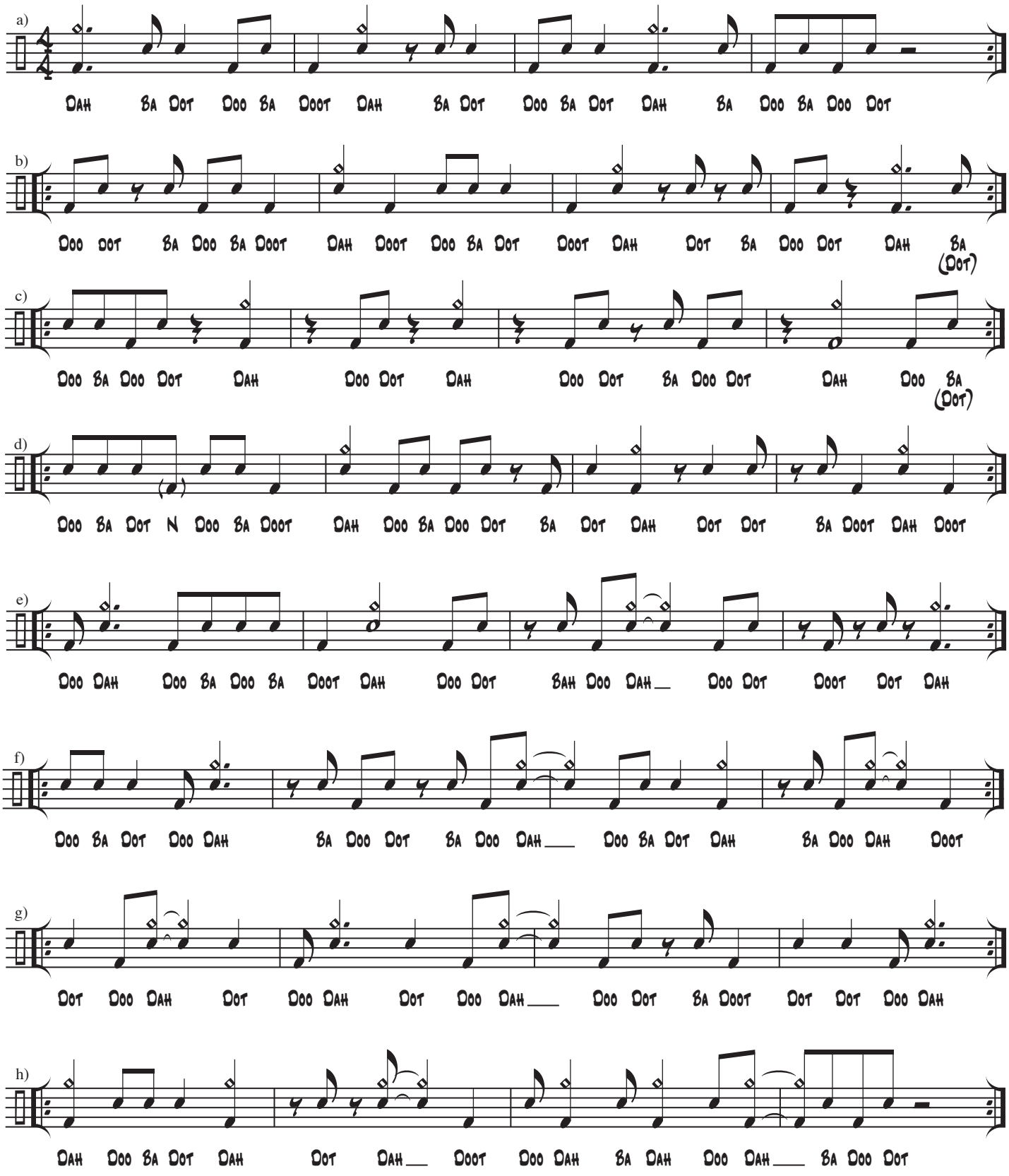
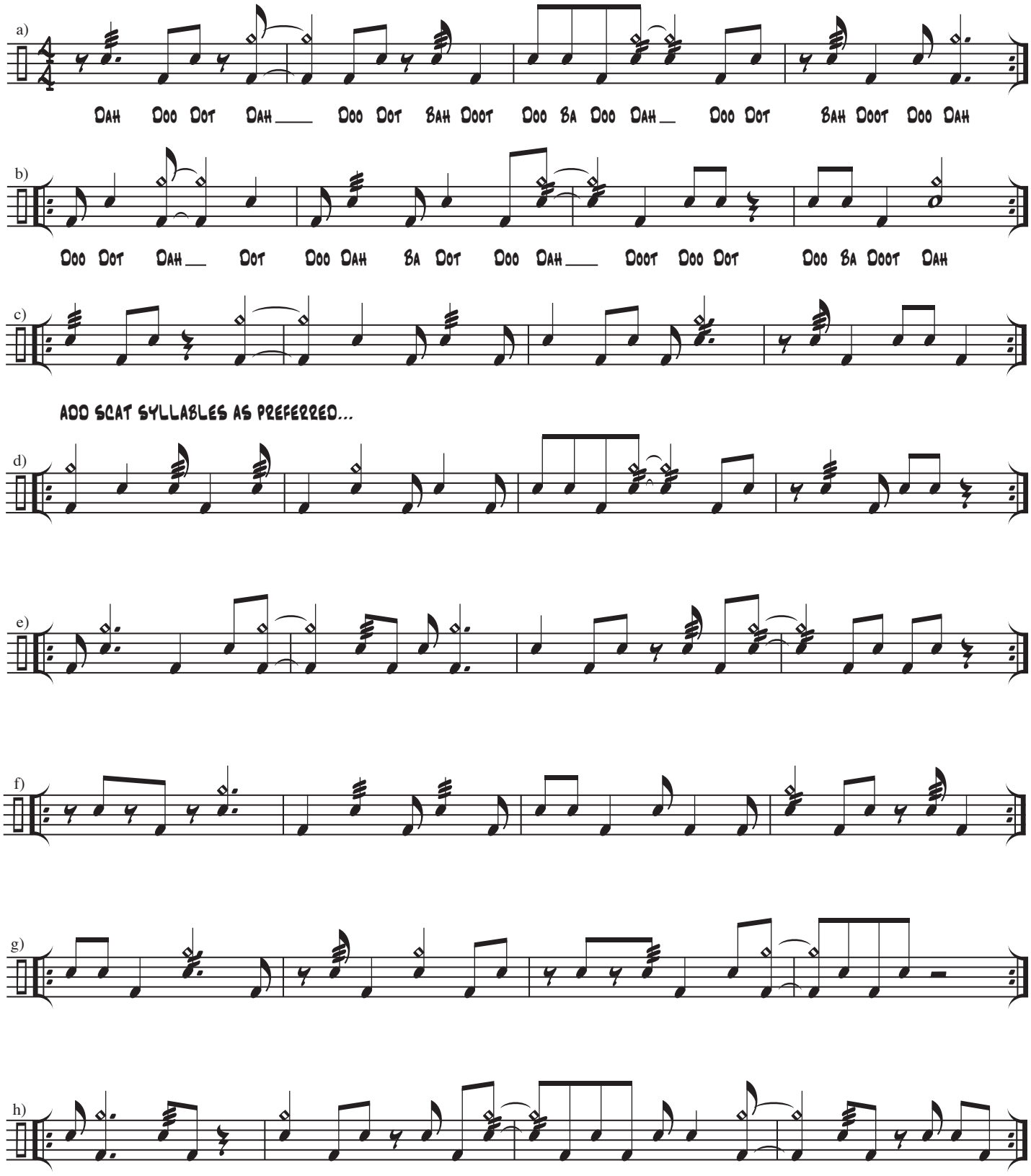
The bottom stave is the realization from Group Four.

The notes in parentheses are possible ommissions of the ride cymbal "time" pattern

Exercise 4 - Long Sounds with Ride Cymbal 1 (SD/BD)

2-measure phrases

Exercise 5 - Long Sounds with Ride Cymbal II (SD/BD)

2-measure phrases

Exercise 6 - Long Sounds with Ride Cymbal III (SD/BD)

2-measure phrases

Exercise 7 - Long Sounds with Ride Cymbal IV (SD/BD)

4-measure phrases

Exercise 8 - Long Sounds V - Snare Buzz/Ride Cymbal (SD/BD) Combined

4-measure phrases