Stage 10 Layered subdivision

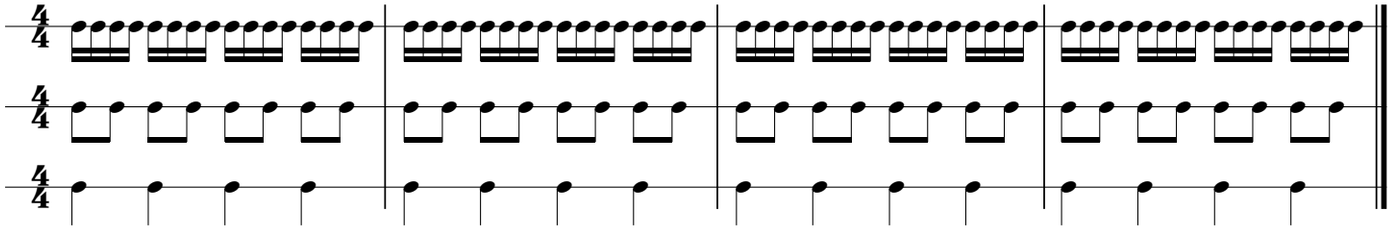
Having worked through the exercises in Stage 9, you are already developing your understanding and control of what I call **Layered subdivision.**

Way back in Stage 2, I mentioned that there are 60 minutes in an hour. A bigger unit divided into smaller units. And of course, we all know that there are 60 seconds in every minute – the minute unit is divided into even smaller units.

The same is true, of course, of the rhythmic elements of music. A 𝅗𝅥 is divided into 𝅘𝅥𝅮𝅘𝅥𝅮, and a 𝅘𝅥𝅮 is divided into 𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯:

So, we now have three layers. And although the next diagram may look a little intimidating because of the number of notes in it, it's really quite straightforward.

It's just like knowing *hours, minutes and seconds…*



Try to hear what you see above internally. This may help:

- Hear the pulse (the lower line) as a resonant bass drum.
- Hear the 𝅘𝅥𝅮𝅘𝅥𝅮 subdivision as a crisp side drum.
- Hear the upper line (the 𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯 subdivision) as a tinkling triangle.

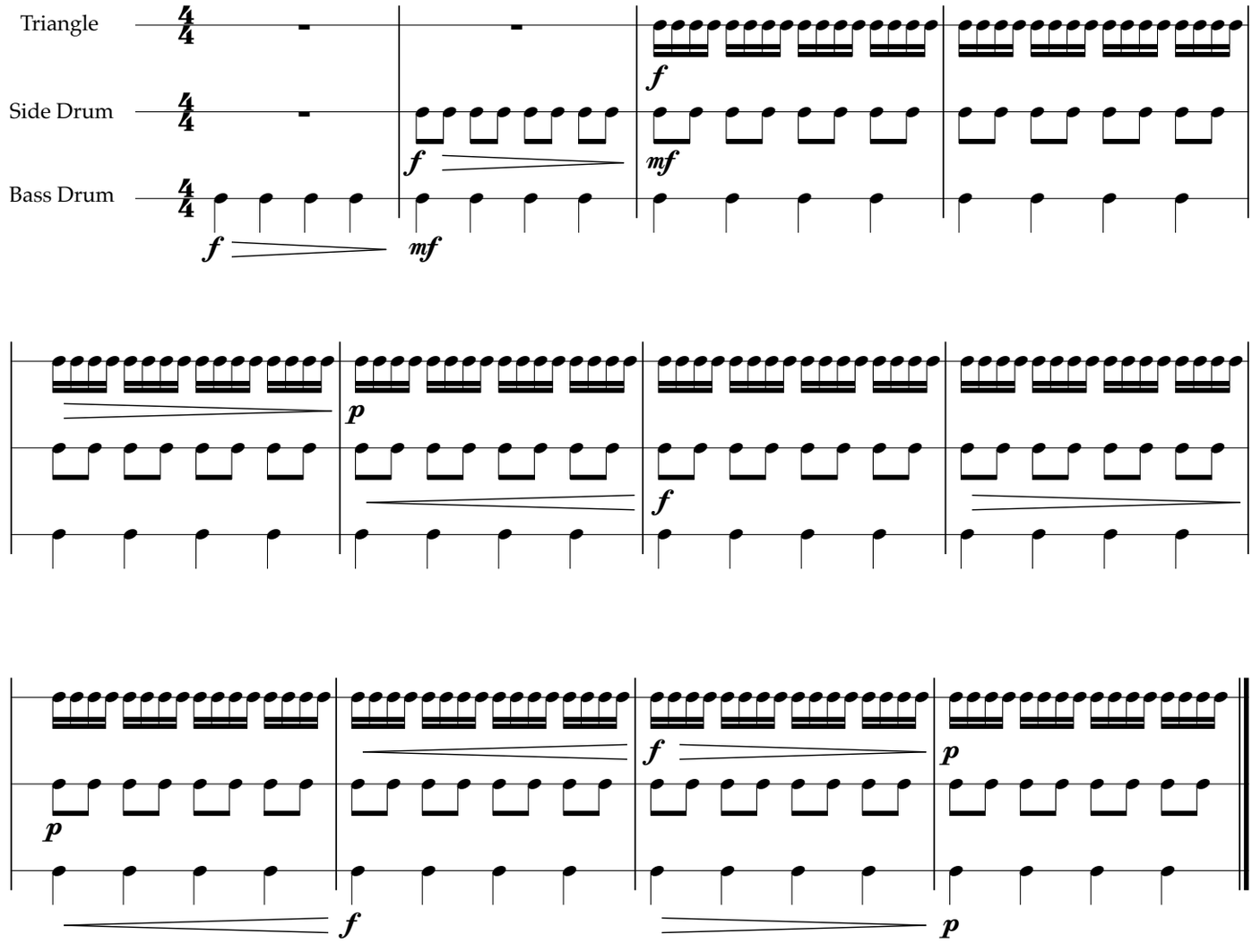
Practise until you feel you can hear this (it may take days or a week or two, or even longer), but you will get it!

Now we're going to make a big leap of thought:

> You don't actually have to hear it – you just have to *understand* it!
>
> You just have to *know* it. That's what counting is really all about.

Once you do understand it, we need to bring back the volume control.

Here's a little piece (based on the pattern above) for you to hear internally. Practise it until you feel you really can hear it with all the dynamics marked. Maybe ♩ = 60.

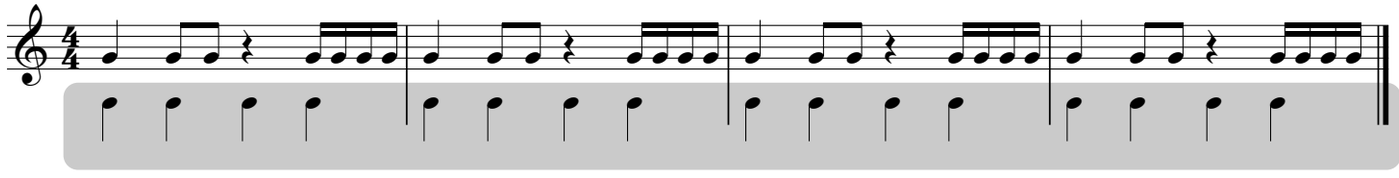


This represents a *knowledge*. An understanding of how rhythm works. Once you've really got it, most decoding of the rhythmic element of your music reading will be easily managed.

> You'll know how it goes (no one will have to tell you) and you'll know that you're right!

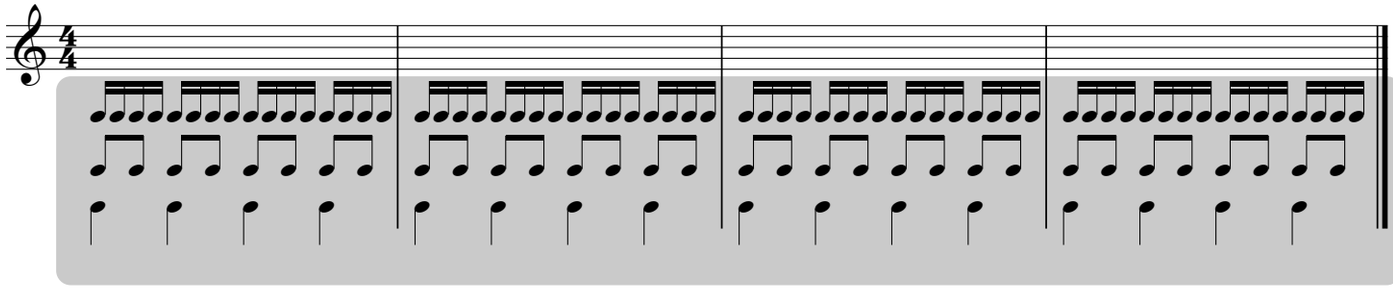
Here are some more practical exercises:

- Sense a bar of 4 beats at about ♩ = 60.
- Continuing to feel the pulse, clap the rhythm and, for the first two bars, actually count the beat numbers. After a few bars stop counting the numbers.



- Now hear the rhythm pattern internally, still sensing the pulse.
- This is an excellent pattern to clap, or just think, while walking around the room or on an extended walk. Each step must of course be regular (see also page 12).

It's always the smallest note values in a piece or section that determines what you need to have available in your VIM. So, if 𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯 based rhythms occur, your **Virtual Internal Metronome** (VIM) should be this:



It's not easy or difficult. It's just something that you come to *know*. Something that you understand. And over time you will know it more and more instinctively.