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INTRODUCTION

A sense of rhythm exists in every person. What sets drummers apart from the rest is that for some reason, we are more responsive to its call. My goal is to help you discover the rhythms around us, to help take some of the mystery out of the more difficult rhythms, and to demonstrate how we can use these rhythms in a musical way.

It seems to me that as drummers we learn our craft in three steps. The first is simply by being aware of rhythms. Second, and perhaps most difficult, is by spending hours and hours practicing and learning our instrument. And the third involves playing with other musicians—acquiring our musical experience. The first and third steps cannot be learned from a music book. My goal is to help you with the second step—practicing and learning our instrument—which is what any dedicated musician spends most of his or her time doing. In this book we will cover most of the areas that I think a serious drummer needs to learn.

The first chapter is based on **Technique** and covers fundamental strokes, rudiments, foot development and balance at the drumset. The techniques covered in this chapter will greatly help your progress in the chapters that follow.

The second chapter explores **Contemporary Styles**, including funk, jazz, fusion and rock as well as Brazilian and Afro-Cuban rhythms. Numerous conceptual development exercises are included which will help you develop the necessary coordination and independence to make your playing more comfortable and natural. Rather than just working on the feel of each particular style, the structure is broken down to help you understand the rhythmic logic behind each.

The third chapter examines **Rhythmical Concepts** which will help further your understanding of rhythm and various rhythmical structures. Included in this section are discussions and exercises involving cross rhythms and polyrhythms. As with the other sections of this book, the goal is to internalize the rhythmic

concepts, which will then allow you to make practical use of the ideas by creating your own patterns and phrases.

In the back of the book you will find pages of rhythmic notation. These are used as rhythmic reading material (**Sources**) and are applied to different examples throughout the book. These examples include the **Quarter and 8th-Note Source, 16th-Note Source Groups of I and II, Accented 8th-Note Triplet Source** and **Top and Bottom Exercises in 16th-Notes**. It is necessary to refer to these sources whenever they are indicated. If you only play the examples in the book and fail to use the notation, you won't gain the full benefit of the exercises and concepts being explored.

Any exercise, whether technical or conceptual, needs to have a practice procedure to make better and more practical use of it. You will notice that many of the exercises are accompanied by a recommended practice procedure. Using these practice procedures with their accompanying metronome markings will help you keep track of your progress and provide you with some additional incentives for your own development.

The online audio contains examples of the majority of the exercises found here. Before each example, you will hear a brief explanation which will help you reference the written examples. You will also notice that the examples in the book having corresponding examples on the online audio will have an indication that reads **Audio Example**. It's a good idea to reference them whenever an exercise is giving you trouble.

By reading the explanations before each exercise, examining the clearly notated rhythmic examples and listening to the online audio, I think you will be able to grasp the concepts in much the same way as if we were working on this material one on one. If you have any further questions on the material, please feel free to write me c/o Drummers Collective, 541 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10011 USA.

KEY

BD Snare Cross Stick Brush Hi Tom Alternate Tom Mid Tom Floor Tom Hi-Hat Open Hi-Hat Closed Hi-Hat Closed Hi-Hat Ride Cymbal Cowbell
(L. Foot)

▲ METHOD FOR PRACTICING RUDIMENTAL SOLOS

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned that a strong working knowledge of the rudiments is fundamental to establishing good technique. If you are interested in developing agility, comfort, relaxation and ease of expression on the drumset, take every opportunity to get your rudiments together.

Rather than isolating each rudiment and practicing it individually or using more repetitive practice patterns, I have developed a method for practicing rudimental solos using published material as my source. Playing the rudiments in this manner has become one of the most useful tools in the development of my technique. By practicing snare drum solos as exercises, I found that it was easier to spend long periods of time developing my technique, because I was doing it in a more interesting and musical fashion. The more interesting and musical your practice is, the easier it will be.

To accompany this section, I have written a 48-bar rudimental snare drum solo. Upon close examination, you will notice that it contains many of the standard rudiments. This solo is offered as a source from which to develop a rudimental practice routine. The idea is to become familiar enough with this piece so that you are able to play it without stopping or making mistakes. Once you accomplish that, establish six consecutive metronome markings (slow to fast) and begin practicing the piece twice through at each metronome marking. *You should always be striving to increase your speed.* If you can go faster, cross out your slowest speed and add the next highest speed.

Using this method with the rudimental solo, or any other rudimental literature, will give you an interesting and musical routine for practicing rudiments. Besides increasing your familiarity with the rudiments, you will also be increasing your ability to play them at faster speeds while integrating them into your technique.

When applying this method, pay attention to the following:

- The solo is to be played twice at each metronome marking.
- If you can go faster, cross out the slowest speed and add the next highest speed.
- Do not sacrifice cleanliness and precision for speed.
- Follow all stickings and observe all accents.

▲ RUDIMENTAL SOLO

AUDIO EXAMPLE

The musical notation consists of four systems, each with four bars. The time signature is 2/4. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns with stickings (L, R, RL, LR, RLRL, LRLR, R LRL RLR L, RL RLR LRL, RLRLRLRL, RLRLRLRLRL, RLRLRLRLRLRL, RLRLRLRLRLRLRL) and musical markings such as accents (>), slurs, and fingerings (7, 3, 5).