ABOUT PAUL DELONG

Best known for his multi-platinum success with Canadian rock artist Kim Mitchell, Paul has forged a career which encompasses funk, fusion, jazz, and latin, working with such diverse artists as Tom Scott, Domenic Troiano, David Blamires, Doug Riley, Hilario Duran, Roger Hodgson, and David Clayton Thomas to name a few.

As a Juno award winner and respected session player Paul has performed at P.I.T. and the N.A.M.M. shows in L.A., twice at the Montreal Drumfest, and at the Cape Breton Drumfest. He is one of SABIAN cymbals most popular and effective clinicians.

He has taught at Humber College in Toronto for over 20 years and written several articles for Modern Drummer magazine.

Current endorsements include Yamaha drums, Sabian cymbals, Remo drumheads, and Vater sticks.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CREDITS ................................................................. 7
INTRODUCTION ......................................................... 8
MUSIC KEY ............................................................... 11

CHAPTER ONE
SIX AGAINST FOUR

BREAKDOWN .............................................................. 13

SECTION ONE
EIGHTH NOTES ......................................................... 16
PRACTICE TIP #1 ......................................................... 19
PRACTICE TIP #2 ......................................................... 30

SECTION TWO
TRIPLETS ............................................................... 33
PRACTICE TIP #3 ......................................................... 34
PRACTICE TIP #4 ......................................................... 43

SECTION THREE
SIXTEENTHS ............................................................ 45
PRACTICE TIP #5 ......................................................... 54

CHAPTER TWO
THREE AGAINST FOUR

BREAKDOWN .............................................................. 64

SECTION ONE
EIGHTH NOTES .......................................................... 68
Hi. I'm really glad that you decided to pick up my book. Now that you have found DeLong Way, you must be asking yourself “what’s in it for me?” Let me answer that question with a few questions of my own.

- Have you ever found yourself bored with your own fill and solo ideas?
- Have you ever wondered about polyrhythms but were afraid to approach them because of their complexity?
- Would you like to gain a better understanding of polyrhythms?

If you answered any of these questions with a resounding “YES!,” then you’ve bought the right book.

Before we begin though, please let me tell you a bit about my own polyrhythmic journey.

As a young developing drummer, I was thankful to have had the opportunity to study with the man who literally “wrote the book” on polyrhythms: Mr. Pete Magadini. I then embarked on my own quest to gain a deeper understanding of polyrhythms. This journey took me down a path of listening and transcribing the recorded work of world-class drummers such as Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, Narada Michael Walden, Terry Bozzio, Vinnie Colaiuta, Chad Wackerman, Gary Husband, Bill Stewart, Antonio Sanchez and Dafnis Prieto, to name but a few. I’ve also been fortunate enough to see live performances of many of the legends I’ve just named.
Why am I telling you this?

My purpose is to share some of the information that I’ve gleaned over the past 30+ years of study, i.e. practical ways of applying polyrhythms to the drumset in a musical and creative way.

The focus of my book is mainly on six-against-four, three-against-four, and four-against-three, because I have found those to be the most useful and accessible polyrhythms. For the sake of clarity, I’ve written the book with a four piece set in mind. My intention with this was also to show you that you don’t need a lot of drums to be creative! The CD examples were recorded on a four piece set with a ride and one crash cymbal only, but that’s not to say that you have to limit yourself to a small kit.

For a contrasting approach to playing polyrhythms on the drumset, I would encourage you to become familiar with Bill Stewart and Terry Bozzio. Both drummers are master musicians, with wide-ranging polyrhythmic vocabularies. When you watch them perform on drum kits that range from four drums to several dozen, your mind can’t help but open up to all kinds of incredible musical possibilities! You will also notice that it is not about the number of drums, but about the musicality.

My approach in writing this book was to make polyrhythms accessible to every drummer that is looking to broaden his or her musical vocabulary. You will begin by playing exercises that are fairly easy, and, from that point, rapidly progress to more advanced polyrhythmic concepts that will challenge and inspire your musical creativity.

Don’t Let This Happen To You!

I can remember when I was 19 or 20 sitting in with a local bar band and playing the Van Morrison tune “Moondance”. I thought it was the perfect vehicle for displaying my newfound polyrhythmic expertise, and proceeded to annihilate my fellow musicians. If looks could kill!

I remember the singer turning around to me and saying; “Nice guy: We ask you to sit in and then you polyrhythm us to death!” The point is, you have to use these ideas for good, not evil! Pick
your spots and only play this stuff only when the music calls for it. Don’t experiment or practice onstage. Wait until you’re in a musical situation that is “polyrhythm friendly”.

Whenever you listen to a drummer like Bill Stewart play polyrhythms, he does it musically. It never sounds like he is playing a technical exercise. When you go back and transcribe and analyze the things he plays, they may work out to be polyrhythmic, but they always fit the context of the music he is playing.

My wish for you is to be able to play polyrhythms so musically that the people listening to you do not hear “three-against-four”, or “four-against-three”; they hear a musically interesting phrase or motif and not a math lesson!

Keep a notebook nearby and always record your ideas.

While you are mastering the ideas presented within the pages of DeLong Way, experiment, experiment, experiment! Every time you come up with a new way to apply, stick, or voice a polyrhythmic idea, write it down immediately. Don’t assume that you’ll remember the idea later; take it from me, you probably won’t! If you can, you should also record yourself whenever possible.

But remember, an idea is only good if it sounds and feels good! Just because something looks interesting on paper doesn’t mean that it will have any musical value! I’ve tried to fill this book with only the ideas that I think make the most musical sense, but you’ll have to decide what you like for yourself. This book should be a catalyst to kick-start your creativity, and I’m sure that once you get into it you’ll probably find all kinds of variations on my ideas.

Let’s begin!
CHAPTER ONE
SIX AGAINST FOUR

QUARTER-NOTE TRIPLET

If we take eighth-note triplets in 4/4 and leave out every other note, we have the basis of quarter-note triplets:

Written as:

Start by playing quarter-note triplets around the drums using the snare, toms, and cymbals/bass drum to get used to how they feel against the hi-hat foot quarters. Make sure that you’re playing six even notes per bar and that you don’t lapse into this:

There is a big difference between the two!
For every quarter note of the quarter-note triplets, we are now substituting two eighth notes. Play it like this, with an accent in the right hand to feel the polyrhythm strongly:

This could also be written as:

Now, theoretically we are just playing eighth-note triplets, but remember, we're feeling this as six groups of two, not four groups of three. Some of these eighth note examples are reminiscent of things that you might find in Jim Chapin's book *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*, but I think it's important to examine them from the polyrhythmic perspective. So now we can begin to try some different ways to voice the polyrhythm:

Hand to foot between the snare and bass drum:

Same idea, adding the toms:
Note that when the snare and toms are voiced with this four-note phrase, a strong four pulse is created over the existing polyrhythm. Even a simple idea like this can sound pretty far out when it's voiced this way, particularly if the hi-hat doesn't play quarter notes.

You should also realize that all the ideas in this section can be played with the quarter-note triplet displaced. The easiest way to think of this is:

But of course it could be written as:

Here's example c) displaced in this way:

By adding an extra note on the hands or on the bass drum you can flip back and forth between the normal and displaced quarter-note triplets. This concept sounds particularly good if you play it using double stops between the snare and floor tom like this: