

RHYTHM AND DRUMMING DEMYSTIFIED

by Dave DiCenso

A METHOD TO EXPAND
VOCABULARY WHILE
IMPROVING READING,
TIMEKEEPING,
COORDINATION,
PHRASING, AND
POLYRHYTHMIC
SKILLS.

SAMPLE

CMI

HUDSON MUSIC.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
About the Author	4
Acknowledgements	4
Online Tutorial Information	4
Preface	5
Introduction	6
The Importance of Verbal Recitation to Mastering Time	8
The <i>Above the Neck</i> Concept	8
The <i>Above the Neck</i> Disciplines.	9
How to Use This Book	14
CHAPTER I • Lessons based on Rhythm Code 1	16
Rhythm Code 1 (Skeleton)	16
Chapter Preface	17
1 Eighth-Note Singles.	18
2 Train Beat.	20
3 Swung Eighth-Note Unisons	22
4 Blues Shuffle	24
5 Eighth-Note Triplet Flams	26
6 Rock Shuffle.	28
7 Sixteenth-Note Diddles	30
8 Rock/R&B/Country/Pop.	32
9 Sixteenth-Note Triplet Hand-Foot Combos (Double Bass)	34
10 Prog/Metal (Double Bass)	36
11 Sixteenth-Note Triplet Doubles	38
12 Medium Swing.	40
CHAPTER II • Lessons based on Rhythm Code 2	42
Rhythm Code 2 (Skeleton)	42
Chapter Preface	43
13 Sixteenth-Note Inverted Paradiddles.	44
14 Funk/Rock/Pop	46
15 Swung Sixteenth-Note Paradiddles.	48
16 Swung Funk.	50
17 Sixteenth-Note Triplet Diddles.	52
18 Linear Funk/Fusion/Hip-Hop	54
19 Thirty-Second-Note Hand-Foot Combos	56
20 R&B/Funk.	58
21 Thirty-Second-Note Triplet Hand-Foot Combos (Double Bass)	60
22 Prog/Metal (Double Bass)	62

CHAPTER III • Lessons based on Rhythm Code 3..... 64

Rhythm Code 3 (Skeleton)..... 64

Chapter Preface..... 65

23 Eighth-Note Triplet Drags 66

24 Swing..... 68

25 Sixteenth-Note Triplet Hand-Foot Combos..... 70

26 R&B/Rock Shuffle (12/8 Feel) 72

CHAPTER IV • Lessons based on Rhythm Code 4 74

Rhythm Code 4 (Skeleton)..... 74

Chapter Preface..... 75

27 Sixteenth-Note Flams 76

28 6/8 Afro-Funk..... 80

29 Sixteenth-Note Triplet Diddles..... 82

30 6/8 Blues-Rock 84

31 Thirty-Second-Note Hand-Foot Combos (Double Bass)..... 86

32 6/8 Double-Time Rock/Metal..... 89

CHAPTER V • Lessons based on Rhythm Code 5 92

Rhythm Code 5 (Skeleton)..... 92

Chapter Preface..... 93

33 Swung Eighth-Note Paradiddle Diddles 94

34 3/4 Medium Swing..... 97

35 Eighth-Note Triplet Flams 100

36 3/4 Jazz-Rock 102

CHAPTER VI • Looking Forward 104

Rhythm and Drumming Demystified II 104

Drumset Notation Guide

The diagram shows two musical staves. The top staff contains the following symbols from left to right: a vertical bar (R. foot bass drum), a quarter note (L. foot bass drum), a quarter note with a stem (R. hand snare drum), a quarter note with a stem (L. hand snare drum), a quarter note with a stem and a circled dot (Ghost notes), another quarter note with a stem and a circled dot (Ghost notes), and a quarter note with a stem and an 'x' (R. hand hi-hat). The bottom staff contains the following symbols from left to right: a quarter note with a stem and an 'x' (L. hand hi-hat), a quarter note with a stem and an 'o' (R. hand open hi-hat), a quarter note with a stem and an 'o' (L. hand open hi-hat), a quarter note with a stem and an 'x' (Hi-hat with foot), a quarter note with a stem and an 'x' (Ride cymbal), a quarter note with a stem and a circled 'x' (Bell of ride cymbal), a quarter note with a stem and an asterisk (R. hand crash cymbal), and a quarter note with a stem and an asterisk (L. hand crash cymbal).

NOTE: When you see “voc.” this tells you to subdivide a figure—or a set of figures—with your voice.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave DiCenso's eclectic resume is evidence of his ability to play many styles of music convincingly. From punk to fusion, prog to r&b, metal to pop, and beyond—Dave's done it. A select listing of his credits includes Josh Groban, Steve Morse Band, Hiromi, Duran Duran, John Petrucci (Dream Theater), Cro-Mags, and Johnny A.

Equally skilled in the field of education, Dave is the author of the acclaimed method book *Universal Rhythms for Drumset* released by Alfred Music Publishing. He is also among the most sought-after faculty in the Berklee College of Music percussion department, where he has been teaching since 1994. In addition, Dave has performed clinics and master classes at major drum industry events including the Modern Drummer Festival, the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, N.A.M.M, and the Frankfurt MusikMesse.



Photography by Laurie DiCenso

Dave has made television appearances in the U.S., Europe, and Japan, and is featured on the DVDs *Modern Drummer Festival 2006*, and *Modern Drummer Festival: The Best of Ten Years: 1997-2006*.

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AUDIO/VIDEO TUTORIAL INFORMATION

Please visit www.DaveDiCenso.com

PREFACE

The Purpose

This book offers a comprehensive method for expanding your vocabulary while improving your reading, timing, coordination, phrasing, and polyrhythmic skills.

The Process

The process involves adapting the rudiments—and the myriad variations and time-feels they spawn—to five systems of common figures referred to as *rhythm codes*. I suggest moving through this process conceptualizing the rudiments, etc., as our *words*, and the rhythm codes as a *contextual link* between our words and our ability to refine them into coherent language.

A rhythm code is derived from permutating a “mother” figure to create related, or “sibling” figures. This process manifests a rhythmic context that we use as a means to increase the fluency and flexibility of *any* sticking or time-feel applied to it.

I view the five codes provided in this book as making up the rhythmic foundation upon which any Western style of music is built and, subsequently, perceive them individually as building blocks.

The Benefits

By simply fitting pieces of drumset vocabulary to these *rhythmic templates* we are rewarded with immediate phrasing options as our words are forced to conform to different meters, grids, accent patterns, and/or different positions within the time.

As we practice multiple variations on the short rhythmic passages contained in the codes, we are not only exponentially increasing our vocabulary, but we are developing a deeper, more thorough understanding of rhythm.

With this understanding comes the ability to see the relationships between all stickings and styles of drumming and, for me, to see how the infinity of what can be played on a set of drums can be traced to a finite amount of rhythmic ideas.

Using the disciplines in this book as instructed, a wealth of vocabulary is eventually *internalized and “stored” in our mind and limbs*. As the words and phrases become second nature to these faculties, they become easier to express *in the context of music*. This is an essential freedom that all great musicians possess.

I have experienced many successes with the concepts and disciplines in this book personally, and in my teaching practice at Berklee College of Music. They are designed for students at any level, though beginners and intermediate players are strongly encouraged to work with a teacher.

While these lessons compile a very thorough study, ultimately I hope you will view this material as a breeding ground from which to discover *your own ideas* about rhythm, drumming, and music.

—Dave DiCenso

LESSON 7

PRELIMINARY STEP

Master each figure in Code 1, first with alternating single strokes, then with alternating double strokes.

Example:

Fig. #7 with singles



Example:

Fig. #7 with doubles



STEP 1

Master each figure in Code 1 as offered.

Code 1 • Offered with Diddles Interpretation

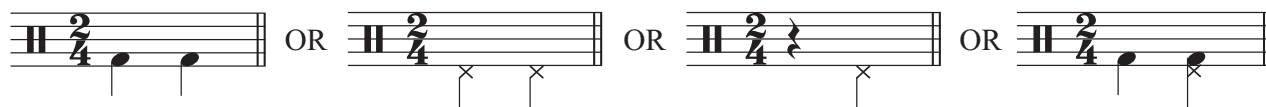
NOTE: Subdivide eighth notes at faster tempos.

* = Stickings reverse to accommodate repeats.

Voc. 1 e & a 2 e & a

STEP 2

Repeat the previous steps, and add one of the following bass drum and hi-hat foot ostinatos to each exercise.



STEP 3 – Fill Applications

Interpreting Code 1 figure #9 as fills applied to a pop/rock time-feel.

♩ = 80/125

Voc. 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &



LESSON 17

PRELIMINARY STEP

First master each figure in Code 2 with alternating single strokes.

Example:

Fig. #7



STEP 1

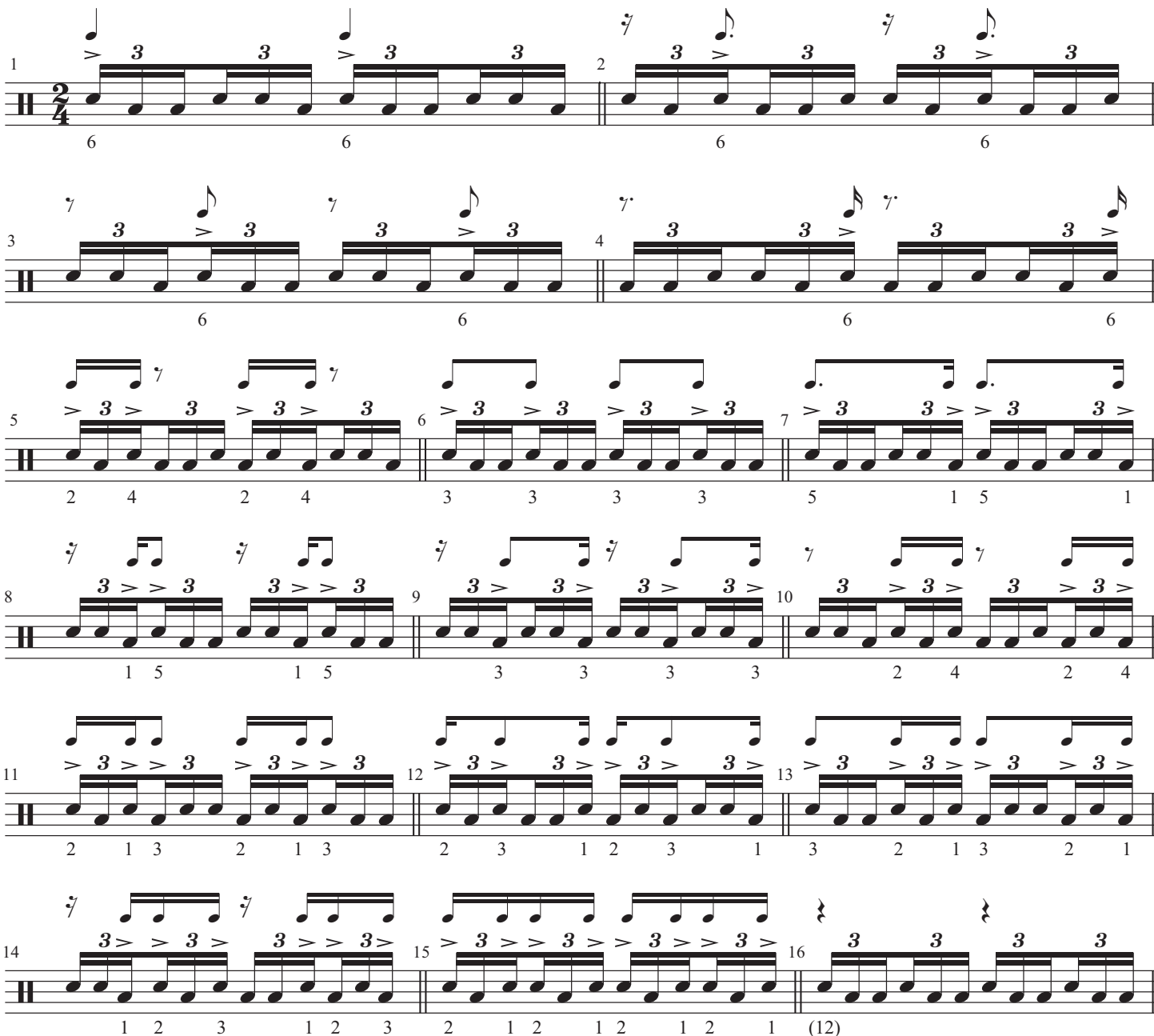
Master each figure in Code 2 as offered.

Code 2 • Offered with Diddles Interpretation

NOTE: Subdivide swung sixteenths at faster tempos.



Voc. 1 n d & n d 2 n d & n d OR 1 e & a 2 e & a



1 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

3 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

5 2 4 2 4 3 3 3 3 5 1 5 1

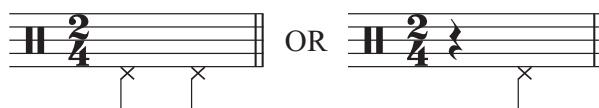
8 1 5 1 5 3 3 3 3 2 4 2 4

11 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 3 1 2 3 1 3 2 1 3 2 1

14 1 2 3 1 2 3 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 (12)

STEP 2

Repeat the previous steps, and add one of the following hi-hat foot ostinatos to each exercise.



STEP 3 – FILL APPLICATIONS

Interpreting figure #8 as fills applied to a funk/hip-hop feel.

♩ = 75/100 $\text{♪} = \text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$

Voc. 1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

$\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$

1

Voc. $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$

2

1. $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$

2.

Voc. $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$

3

1. $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\text{♪} \overset{3}{\text{♩}}$

2.

LESSON 19

PRELIMINARY STEP

Master each figure in Code 2, first with alternating double strokes, then with alternating single strokes.

Example:

Using fig. #2
with doubles

Voc. 1 e & a

Example:

Using fig. #2
with singles

Voc. 1 e & a

STEP 1

Master each figure in Code 2 as offered.

Code 2 • Offered with Hand/Foot Interpretation

Voc. 1 e & a

STEP 2 – FILL APPLICATIONS

Interpreting figure #3 as fills applied to a rock/funk feel.

♩ = 60/85

Voc. 1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

1

2

3

Interpreting figure #2 as fills applied to a rock/funk feel.

Voc. 1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

4

5

6