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# Introduction



**T**he *Jazz Drummer's Workshop* is a collection of columns written over the past ten years for *Modern Drummer* magazine. Each piece is an in-depth look at a specific drumming issue, almost like a private lesson on the given topic. In fact, many of the chapters grew out of issues particular students were having or from things I've worked on.

The book is organized into three sections—Concepts, The Masters Speak, and The Chop Shop—not in chronological order. Each chapter addresses, in varying degrees, the theoretical, technical, conceptual, and musical components relating to the given subject. Like life's lessons, some of these lessons will be absorbed immediately, while others will require considerable diligence. I play many of the examples

on the accompanying CD so that you can hear the sound, balance, and flow of the material.

I see *The Jazz Drummer's Workshop* as a great supplement to my prior books, *The Art Of Bop Drumming* and *Beyond Bop Drumming*, as it covers many topics not addressed in them. *The Jazz Drummer's Workshop* fortifies the contents of those earlier books. I hope this material gives you insight into solving musical issues on the drumset. I also hope it leads you to a better understanding of the drummer's role in a band, to greater fluidity at the instrument, to a higher level of music making, and to more fun. Good luck.



# Thanks

I want to thank the late Ron Spagnardi, *Modern Drummer's* founder and publisher, whose encouragement and support launched this project; Ron will be greatly missed. Thanks also to Bill Miller for his excellent editorial eye and constant enthusiasm; to Yamaha, Zildjian, and

Remo for their great and innovative products and support of the music; to my parents and siblings for their nurturing and patience for all these years; and to my wife, Susan—thank you for everything. And finally, thank you to musicians *everywhere* for your continued inspiration.

# Technical Info

MUSIC KEY			
Open	○	R.C.	C.C.
H.H.	⊗	⊗	⊗
T.T.	⊗		
S.D.	⊗		
F.T.	⊗		
B.D.	⊗		
H.H. w/foot	⊗	Cross-stick	

## John's Kit (used on recording)

**Drums:** Yamaha Maple Custom Absolute

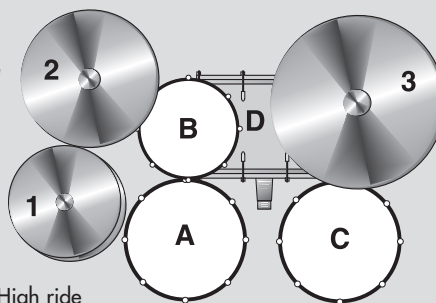
- A. 4x14 snare drum
- B. 8x12 mounted tom
- C. 14x14 floor tom
- D. 14x18 bass drum

**Cymbals:** Zildjian

- 1. 14" K Constantinople hi-hats
- 2. 18" K Pre-Aged Dry Light ride
- 3. 22" K Constantinople Medium-Thin High ride

**Heads:** Remo Ambassadors

**Sticks:** Zildjian John Riley model



CD recorded and mixed by Paul Wickliffe at Charleston Road Studio, Hampton, NJ. Mixed and mastered at Skyline Productions, Warren, NJ.

# Holding The Groove

In Chapter 1, we discussed ways of finding the groove. Now we'll take the next step and work on *maintaining* the groove once you have established it.

Hooking up with the rest of the band, for an entire song or an entire tour, is critical in order for a band to groove and for a drummer to keep the gig. Once the rhythm section is "locked," the other players will play their best. Maintaining the "lock" is essential, but it can be just as elusive as generating one.

There are only two reasons why musicians lose the groove. First, they attempt to play things that they don't have control over. This leads to coordination problems and results in the groove fluctuating. Second, they lose their concentration, which also causes the groove to fluctuate.

To deal with these problems, I've found that practicing progressively more complex coordination exercises, while maintaining solid time and a clear, focused pattern on the ride cymbal, helps to reduce incidents of "groove busting." This type of practicing simultaneously addresses control and concentration issues. The concept is to gradually increase the density of what you can play comfortably and fluidly in order to strengthen both your reflexes and your mind. Playing complex stuff *in time* automatically improves your coordination while simultaneously requiring sustained, deep concentration.

Below are some coordination/concentration exercises to work on. These are three-beat motifs that are designed to challenge your control of your limbs and test your ability to keep your place in a four-measure phrase. The patterns start out fairly simply, but when orchestrated, become quite complex. These are just a small sampling of the types of things you could practice in order to create your

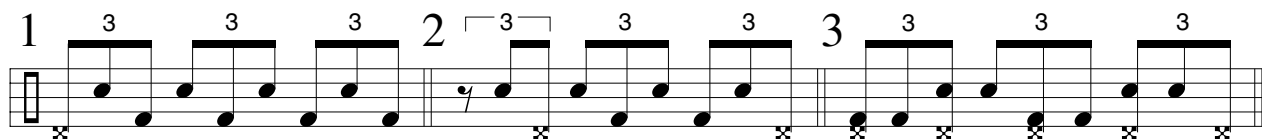
own catalog of "puzzles" to master.

First, practice each three-beat motif while playing quarter notes on the ride cymbal. Once you are comfortable with that, go on to the four-measure phrases while playing the ride pattern. Work through this material slowly while counting out loud: "1234, 2234, 3234, 4234." The phrases must flow underneath your unvarying ride cymbal pattern. The numbered example in each group, i.e., 1, 2, and 3, is the basic pattern. Following each numbered exercise are orchestrations of the original motif designated 1A, 1B, and 1C.

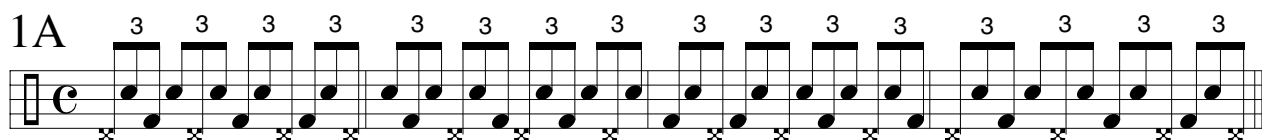
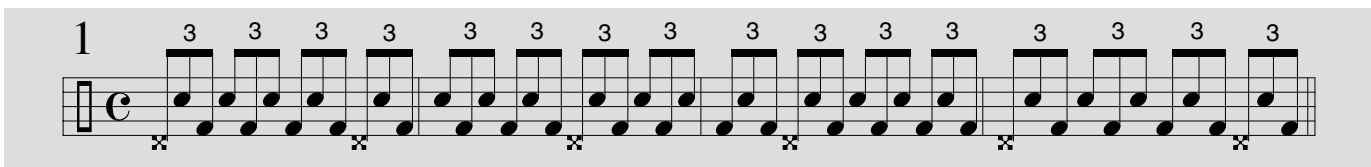
After mastering a substantial amount of physically and mentally difficult material, you will gain a level of coordination and concentration that will allow you to play the most common grooves with greater ease and a deeper pocket. In other words, this added strength will give you the ability to "take care of business" while tapping a smaller portion of your resources. The end result will be that more of your brain power is available for you to check out and contribute to the bigger picture—the intensity of the groove, group dynamics, and group interplay.

An analogy: You buy a sports car that is capable of going 150 mph, but the maximum speed that you are allowed to drive is 65 mph. Car manufacturers describe the car's easy ability to exceed 65 mph as "headroom." The power available from 65 mph to 150 mph, which you will very rarely need to use, nonetheless translates to effortless functioning under normal conditions. Please keep in mind that additional drumming horsepower is useless, and perhaps even dangerous, in the hands of an unskilled (read: unmusical) driver—I mean drummer!

## Three-Beat Motifs



## Four-Measure Applications

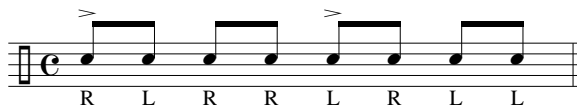


## Basic Training 2

In Chapter 24 we discussed fundamental hand-technique issues. To begin this one I'm going to refer to the earlier column and give you several additional ways to practice that page of accented paradiddles. These exercises are control- and speed-builders.

First, every time you have an accented note, convert that accent into an unaccented double stroke.

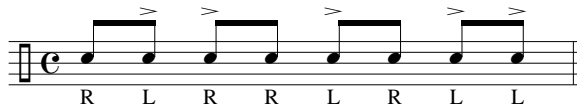
This...



becomes this:



This...

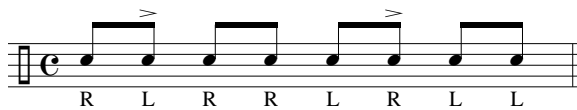


becomes this:



Second, convert each accent into an unaccented triple stroke.

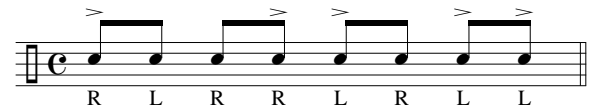
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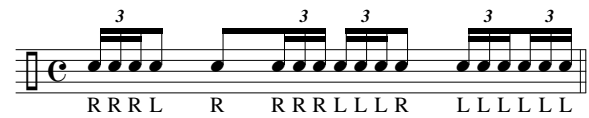
becomes this:



This...

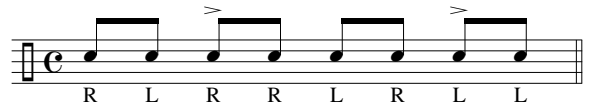


becomes this:

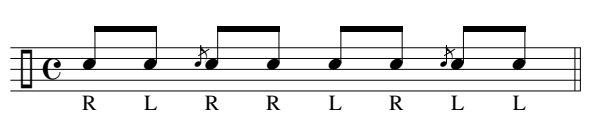


Third, convert each accent into a flam.

This...



becomes this:



This...



becomes this:



You'll find that the issues related to stick heights are the same as with the original accented paradiddles.