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INTRODUCTION

The materials contained in this text are designed to acquaint students with some of the more contemporary rhythmic and metric devices being used in today's music. Topics that will be dealt with include the use of odd-rhythmic groupings in both quarter note and dotted quarter note meters, polyrhythms over two, three and four beats, mixed meters, metric modulation, as well as other related issues.

The use of such materials first became apparent in the work of certain 20th century composers, including such people as John Cage, Charles Ives, Luciano Berio, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez. In the last fifteen or twenty years, this same type of material has begun to appear in more popular musical styles, as is evidenced by such groups as Frank Zappa, Weather Report, Don Ellis, The Tony Williams Lifetime and many others.

The reasons for these trends are fairly easy to understand. Western music has historically been concerned primarily with melodic and harmonic issues. It has only been in the last seventy-five years or so that we have begun to take a closer look at this whole issue of musical time. The possibilities in this area are enormous, and it is hoped that this book will help students in beginning to develop some of this potential.

Most of the materials contained in the book are first presented in the form of snare drum pieces. These pieces are designed to acquaint the student with what the materials look and sound like. As you start becoming familiar with them, you should begin experimenting with how they could be used on the set, either in solos or while playing time.

There are some suggestions contained in the book concerning how this could be done. However, you should feel free to work on applying them in whatever way seems the most practical.

Also included in the text is a 'method' of performance which is called the Down-Up Technique. This method deals with an examination of the physical aspects of playing (stroke motions, stick heights, etc.). Such issues constitute what is perhaps the weakest area in the training of young percussionists. The results of this are always easy to see: imbalance between the hands, inability to execute dynamic shifts, problems in switching smoothly and accurately between various stickings, rhythms and the like. The Down-Up Technique offers one means of dealing with such technical considerations and should be carefully studied and practiced.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Hand Position

Many methods of holding the sticks are currently in use. I would personally recommend the like-hand (matched grip) method. My reasons for this are as follows:

- a. Since both hands use the same position, the student can deal with them on an equal basis, rather than having to approach them as separate entities.
- b. Transfer to other percussion instruments is easier since they too use versions of the matched grip.
- c. In this position, the wrist can be used in its natural and most powerful turning motion.
- d. Since the thumb and first finger are used to hold the stick, the remaining three fingers can be used in the actual playing situation.

In the like-hand method, the wrist normally controls the initial motion of the stick, while the fingers help to regulate various aspects of impact and rebound. In some instances, especially those at lower dynamic levels, the fingers may take over more of the total motion responsibility from the wrists.

The forearm and upper arm are not normally used in most playing situations. However, they should always be kept as loose and relaxed as possible. (The arms are used in those situations where the physical requirements of the instrument demand large motions, as is the case with drum set. In such instances, their job will be to get the hands into playing position.)



In the matched grip, the stick is held between the pad of the thumb and the first joint of the first finger. (This is referred to as the 'fulcrum'.) A space should be visible between the fulcrum fingers. This is done to allow the stick some turning flexibility without necessarily involving the wrist.

The remaining three fingers are placed lightly on the stick, so as to be in a useable position. Also, the stick is not held tightly against the palm, but is positioned slightly away from it. This gives the fingers some room to move the stick.

The butt end of the stick should line up approximately at the center of the wrist line. This allows the wrist to turn in a relatively straight up and down motion, which is by far the easiest and most practical.

Finally, it should be understood that with all the differences in hand size, stick weight and length, etc., one can and should expect variations from individual to individual in these holding procedures. There are, in fact, many different versions of the matched grip, and the student may find it helpful to experiment with a number of different possibilities.



DEDICATION

"To Carol and Bridgett, for putting up with 20 years of 'pounding' and for always being supportive."

Motion Principles — The Down-Up Technique

The materials contained in this text demand a high degree of facility and control. In order to develop such skills, it is necessary for the student to understand how the hands are used in various performance situations. This is the main purpose of the Down-Up Technique.

The Down-Up Technique is a method by which the student can learn 'how' to play. It consists essentially of two components: Stick Heights and Stroke Types.

Stick Heights — The sticks can be used in any number of height positions off the drum from low (15°) to high (90°). Because of the effects of height on impact, these positions can be related to dynamic levels.

height —	90°	75°	60°	45°	30°	15°
dynamic —	<i>ff</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>mp</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>pp</i>

Stroke Types — In any given dynamic situation, the sticks will normally start and end in the same relative height position. This type of stroke will be referred to in terms of its size (i.e. a 45° stroke, a 60° stroke, etc.).


motion —						
height/ dynamic	90° - <i>ff</i>	75° - <i>f</i>	60° - <i>mf</i>	45° - <i>mp</i>	30° - <i>p</i>	15° - <i>pp</i>


It should be understood that the downward and upward motions are not separated, but are rather parts of a continuous process. The entire stroke should be executed as quickly as possible.

There are two reasons why this type of motion procedure is necessary. First of all, on most percussion instruments, once the surface has been struck, it should be allowed to vibrate freely. Secondly, by completing the motion as soon as possible, the student will be preparing for upcoming strokes and will avoid any time loss in this respect.

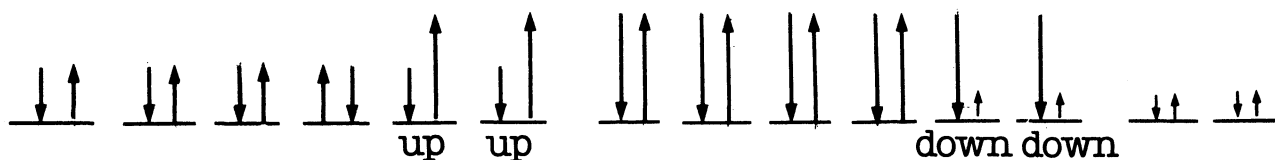
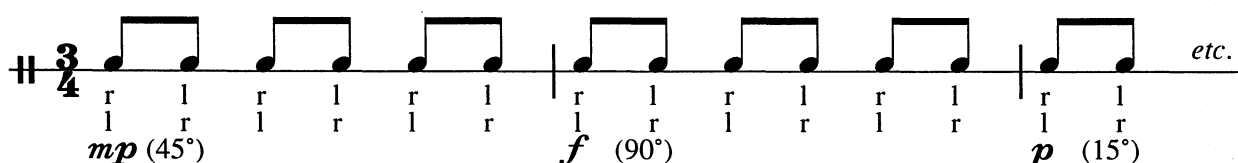
Dynamic Considerations

In situations involving dynamic mixtures, the sticks are obviously going to have to make adjustments between the various heights. These adjustments can be executed through the use of two additional stroke types.

Up Stroke  Starts in a lower position and moves to a higher position after impact.

Down Stroke  Starts in a higher position and moves to a lower position after impact.

The Up Stroke is used when moving to a higher dynamic level, while the Down Stroke is used when moving to the lower levels.



These motion principles will serve as the basis upon which the student can begin to develop a degree of dynamic control. Generally speaking, the principles that have been discussed relate primarily to single strokes, which are used almost exclusively throughout this text. Additional motion possibilities as related to other types of stickings will be dealt with in the book *STICKING PATTERNS*.

