

It's About Time

Designed to help drummers and other musicians understand, control, and improve their sense of time

by Fred Dinkins



Alfred Music
16320 Roscoe Blvd., Suite 100
P.O. Box 10003
Van Nuys, CA 91410-0003
alfred.com

Copyright © 2003 by Alfred Music
All rights reserved. Printed in USA.

ISBN-10: 0-7579-1410-1
ISBN-13: 978-0-7579-1410-2

It's About Time

Designed to help drummers and other musicians understand, control, and improve their sense of time

by Fred Dinkins

■
Project Manager
Ray Brych

■
Editor
Joe Testa, Ed Uribe

■
Additional Editing
Don Meagher, Ray Brych

■
Technical Editing
Nadine DeMarco

■
Photography
Mildred Dinkins and Gerald Rodriguez

■
Cover Design
Fred Dinkins, Ken Oefelein and Dancing Planet® MediaWorks™

■
Book Design and Layout, Music Typesetting
Dancing Planet® MediaWorks™

■
Audio Recording, Mixing, and Mastering
Fred Dinkins and Leonard Jones

■
Music Composed and Performed by:
**Fred Dinkins, John Barnes, Greg Moore, Dwayne "Smitty" Smith, Reggie Hamilton,
Nick Smith, Del Atkins, Danny Diaz, David Leach, Richie Garcia**

■
Music Pre-production Assistants:
**Tony Coleman, Leonard Jones, Todd Shoemaker,
Clarence Allen, Orlando Rashid**

Table of Contents

Foreword	5
About the Author	7
Acknowledgments	9
Introduction	11
Notation Key	12
Chapter 1 Grooving With Independence	13
The Fifth Limb	13
1. Sixteenth-Note Subdivision Grooves	14
a) Quarter-Note Grooves	14
b) Eighth-Note Grooves	15
2. Eighth-Note Triplet Subdivision Grooves	17
Adding the Fourth Limb	18
Three-Limb Ostinatos (TLOs)	18
The Fourth Limb Patterns (FLPs)	18
TLOS (Three-Limb Ostinatos)	18
FLPs (The Fourth Limb Patterns)	20
Advanced Groove Independence Exercises	24
1. Open Hi-hat Ostinatos	25
2. Left Foot Splashes	26
3. Half Time Feel	26
4. Shuffle the Sixteenth-Note Ostinatos	26
Chapter 2 Subdivisions: Keeping It Even	27
Against the Upbeat	27
1. Eighth-Note Subdivisions	28
2. Sixteenth-Note Subdivisions	29
3. Eighth-Note Triplet Subdivisions	30
The "Big 1" and "2 & 4 Pocket"	30
1. The Big 1	31
2. The 2 & 4 Pocket	32
Play-Along 1: Two-4-One	34
Chapter 3 Playing the Space	37
Short Periods of Space	37
Quarter-Note Groove	37
Eighth-Note Groove	37
Sixteenth-Note Groove	37
Eighth-Note Triplet Groove	38
Preparation Exercise	38
1. Quarter-Note Space	38
2. Half-Note Space	39
3. Dotted Half-Note Space	40
4. Whole-Note Space	41
Long Periods of Space	41
1. Two Bars of Space	41
2. Four Bars of Space	42
3. Eight Bars of Space	42
Middle Changes	43
1. Quarter Changes	43
a) to Eighths	43
b) to Sixteenths	43
c) to Eighth-Note Triplets	44
Optional Groove	44
d) to Triplet Shuffle	44
2. Eighth-Note Changes	44
a) to Quarters	44
b) to Sixteenths	44
c) to Eighth-Note Triplets	44
Optional Groove	45

d) to Triplet Shuffle	45
3. Sixteenth-Note Changes	45
a) to Quarters	45
b) to Eighths	45
c) to Eighth-Note Triplets	45
Optional Groove	45
d) to Triplet Shuffle	45
4. Triplet Note Changes	46
a) to Quarters	46
b) to Eighths	46
c) to Sixteenths	46
Optional Groove	46
d) to Triplet Shuffle	46
Middle Changes on the Upbeats	47
1. To Eighth-Note Upbeats	47
2. To Eighth-Note Upbeats (e)	47
3. To Eighth-Note Upbeats (a)	47
4. To Eighth-Note Upbeats (e, a)	47
5. To Eighth-Note Upbeats (e, &)	47
6. To Eighth-Note Upbeats (&, e)	48
7. To Eighth-Note Upbeats (pull)	48
8. To Eighth-Note Upbeats (let)	48
9. To Eighth-Note Upbeats (pull, let)	48
Advanced Middle Changes Exercises	48
Count-Offs	49
1. Two-Bar Count-Offs	49
2. One-Bar Count-Offs	50
3. Two-Beat Count-Offs	50
4. One-Beat Count-Offs	50
Play Along 2: Space Boogie	52
Chapter 4 The Drum Fill Workout	55
1. One-Beat Fills	55
2. Two-Beat Fills	57
3. Three-Beat Fills	58
4. Four-Beat Fills	60
Advanced Exercises	61
Play-Along 3: How Do You Fill?	62
Chapter 5 Playing the Hits	65
Hits and Accents	65
Preparation Exercise #1	65
Preparation Exercise #2	65
Preparation Exercise #3	65
Hits and Accents Exercises	65
Play-Along 4: Just Hit Me	73
Set-Ups	75
Play-Along 5: Hitsville	78
Chapter 6 Time Movement and Feel	81
Playing on Top of the Beat	81
Playing in the Middle of the Beat	82
Playing Behind the Beat	82
Play-Along 6: Emotions	84
Chapter 7 The "Time Maze"	87
Play-Along 7: The "Time Maze"	88
Chapter 8 Grooving in All Time Signatures	93
3/4 TLOS	93
3/4 FLPs	96
Chapter 9 Fred's Musical Recommendations	99
CD Track Index	102

Foreword

by Harvey Mason

Fellow Musicians,

The *It's About Time* method is a guaranteed solution to time problems. Many years ago, I experimented with this concept and found it to be a proven method for improvement and confidence. Fred has worked tirelessly to perfect this approach and he has finally produced this book, which I fully endorse. If used consistently, *It's About Time* will cure rushing, dragging, and confidence problems and will provide stability to your musical vocabulary. This method will definitely work!

Harvey Mason



Fred with Harvey Mason

About the Author



Fred Dinkins was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and at the early age of six began swinging his first pair of sticks. By the age of 13, he began his professional career playing with various gospel acts.

In 1982, he moved to Los Angeles, California, with his family to expand his musical education. Shortly thereafter, Fred became a teacher at the world-famous Musicians Institute, Percussion Institute of Technology (PIT). His unique style of teaching good time-keeping and grooving has earned him recognition as one of PIT's most sought-after teachers and clinicians.

Fred has performed with saxophonist Sam Riney, gospel great Andrae Crouch, the Emotions, Edwin Hawkins, Kurt Whalum, Paul Jackson Jr., Norman Brown, Barbara Morrison, Hugh Masakela, and many others.

Fred's recording credits include Tramaine Hawkins' Grammy-nominated and Dove Award-winner "What Shall I Do" from *The Joy That Flood My Soul* album, the O'Neal Twins' Grammy-nominated *Blessed Boulevard*, and Debbie Allen's Broadway musical ballet soundtrack *Soul Possessed*.

Some of his video and television credits include *Blackstreet*, *You Are My Joy*, *The American Dream*, *Documentary of the Jackson 5*, Jerry Lewis's 1998 *MD Telethon*, *Good Morning America* with the Emotions, Sinbad's *Funkfest in Aruba* for HBO, Verdine White's *Rhythm of the Earth* bass instructional video, and *Dick Clark's 50th American Bandstand Anniversary* with 2002 Taste of Honey seen on VH1. He was also the drummer and producer of *The Emotions Live*.

Throughout the year, Fred tours with the Emotions as drummer and musical director, Denise Williams, and other artists. When home, he can be found teaching at PIT or in a session at Intersound Production Studios working for producer John Barnes, as well as on numerous other projects.

You can contact Fred via his Web site at: www.freddinkins.com.



Chapter 1

Grooving With Independence

The most common obstacle in developing good time is the lack of a strong independence vocabulary. It is essential to develop good independence between all four limbs and your voice. The slightest delay or anticipation in any one limb can cause the time of any beat to “stutter” or “hiccup,” which will in turn cause a hesitation or disruption in the groove. The best way to avoid these disruptions and develop good independence is to perform as many limb combinations as possible. This takes a good amount of practice but, in time, the communication between the brain and muscles becomes more familiar, and the movement between limbs becomes more natural. This increases your independence vocabulary causing the hesitations and delayed reactions among the limbs to lessen. Developing a good independence vocabulary is the first step towards improving time and groove.

There are many books and videos that focus only on the development of independence. I recommend that you practice with as many of these materials as possible. The more independence mastered by your brain, muscles, and limbs, the better.

The Fifth Limb

The first step to building your independence vocabulary is developing what I like to call the Fifth Limb. In a fun way, your ability to vocalize while playing can be considered an additional “limb” to your hands and feet, simply by counting the subdivisions out loud while you play each exercise. Though this may seem weird to do at first, do not take it lightly. Counting out loud will assist you in developing an internal clock and will help build a foundation for your independence vocabulary.

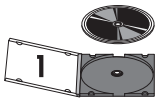
Choosing what to verbalize depends on the tempo of the groove but, in most cases, the smallest or basic subdivision is the best. For example, if the tempo is very fast, vocalizing all the sixteenth-note subdivisions may not be feasible; however, in a slow tempo, it works perfectly.

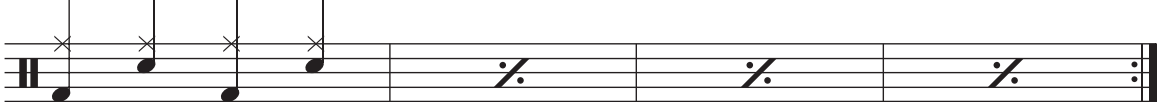
The following exercises are to help you strengthen your Fifth Limb. While playing, you have to think of the basic subdivisions of the groove while verbalizing the specific subdivision shown above each exercise. Remember to practice ALWAYS with a click or metronome. On the CD, I perform one example of each subdivision type, so you can get an idea of what it should sound like when you first practice these exercises.

1. Sixteenth-Note Subdivision Grooves

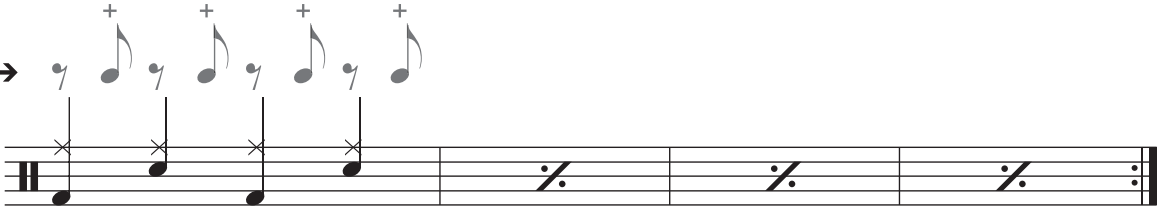
For the following exercises, it is best for you to THINK all the sixteenth-note subdivisions (such as 1-e-&-a 2-e-&-a 3-e-&-a 4-e-&-a) but to VERBALIZE only what is indicated.

a) Quarter-Note Grooves


1.  1. Voice → 1 2 3 4



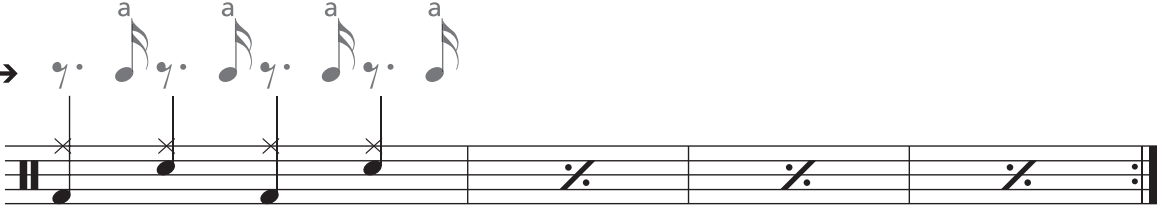
2. Voice → ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪




3. Voice → e e e e



4. Voice → ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪



5. Voice → e a e a e a e a

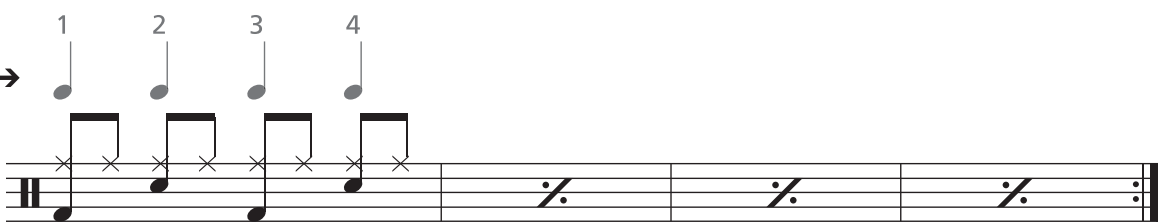


Sixteenth-Note Subdivision Grooves (continued)

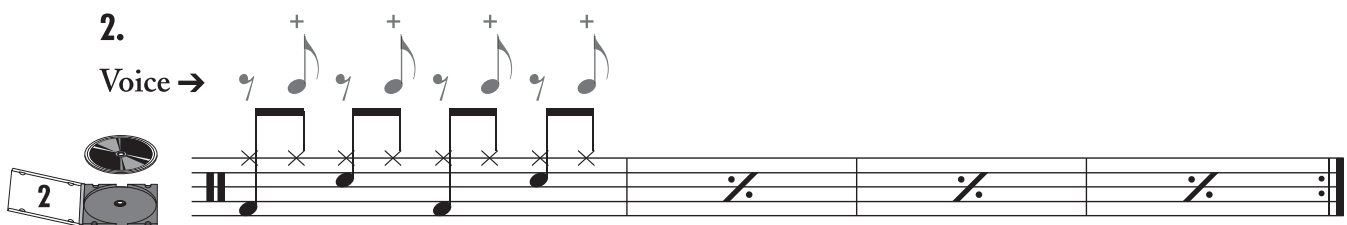
As in the previous exercises, it is best for you to THINK all the sixteenth-note subdivisions (such as 1-e-&-a 2-e-&-a 3-e-&-a 4-e-&-a) but to VERBALIZE only what is indicated.

b) Eighth-Note Grooves

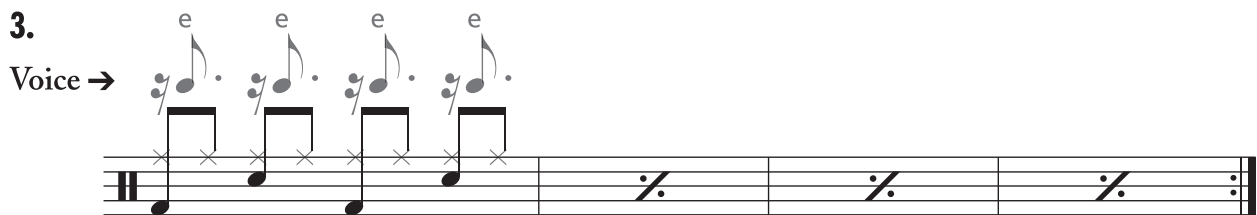
1. Voice →



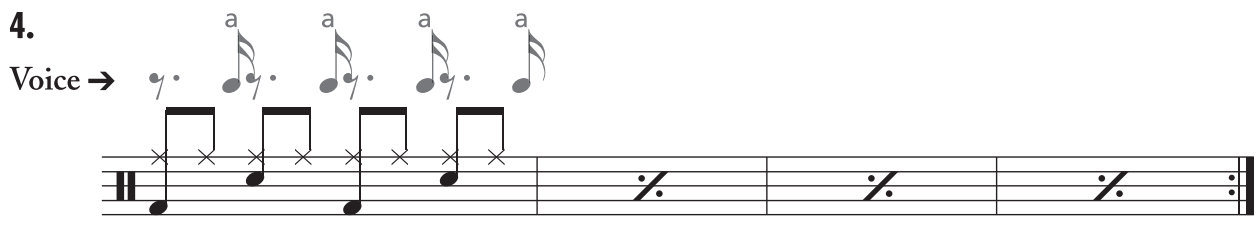
2. Voice →



3. Voice →



4. Voice →



5. Voice →

