

ZORO

The Commandments of R&B Drumming

A Comprehensive Guide to Soul, Funk, and Hip-Hop

By ZORO with Russ Miller

Transcription & notation by Brian Mason



Cover photo by Heinz Kronberger.



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

Published by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.
© 1998, 2007 BELWIN-MILLS PUBLISHING CORP. (ASCAP)
All Rights Controlled and Administered by ALFRED PUBLISHING CO., INC.
All Rights Reserved.
Printed in the U.S.A.

ISBN 10: 0-7692-1691-9 (Book & CD)
ISBN 13: 978-0-7692-1691-1 (Book & CD)

Acknowledgments

The Life Support Team:

"The Way You Do The Things You Do"

Behind any successful project there is a team of individuals whose dedication, work, faith and patience make it a reality; this is mine! This is dedicated to the six outstanding individuals who have shaped my life the most. My wife Renee, mother Maria, and sister Patricia, my mentors Kent Clinkingbeard, and Ralph Johnson and Al McKay of Earth, Wind & Fire. My deepest gratitude for their love, friendship, wisdom, encouragement and faith in my abilities!

The Commandments of R&B Drumming Credits:

Project Line Managers - Joe Testa and Howard Goldberg
 CD recorded at R.M.I. Music Productions, Sherman Oaks, CA by Russ Miller
 Music Play-Alongs written by Zoro, Robby Robinson,
 Fino Roverato and Rex Robinson
 Drum portion of CD produced and mixed by Russ Miller
 Music portion of CD produced by Robby Robinson & Zoro
 Music mixed by Robby Robinson and Russ Miller
 Keyboards - Robby Robinson
 Guitar - Fino "Skank Funk" Roverato
 Bass - Rex "Tripoporous" Robinson
 Sax - Tommy Alvarado
 All drums played completely live by Zoro - ***No drum machine or programming was used for this recording*

Notes About the CD:

"The Funky Monk," "Souledified," and "Sho-Nuff" (© 1997 Zoro the Drummer Music/LazyR Music (BMI), All Rights Reserved) written by Zoro and Robby Robinson, Fino Roverato and Rex Robinson, are used by permission. These recordings may only be used in connection with *The Commandments of R&B Drumming*, and may not be broadcast, reproduced or sold separately without written permission from the composers.

NO SAMPLING OF ANY KIND IS PERMITTED FROM ANY PART OF *The Commandments of R&B Drumming*.

To my children Jarod and Jordan. You fill my heart with unspeakable joy and inspiration! I love you both and love being your father above all things!!!

The Dream Team:

"Wanna Thank You,----- Yeaaaaah!

I would humbly like to give thanks first and foremost to God the Father, for the gift of life and music and for all the creative abilities you have bestowed upon man. To the Holy Spirit for giving me purpose, dreams and visions and the spirit and courage necessary to pursue them. To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for giving me more abundant and eternal life. An extra dose of love goes to my wife Renee for all her hard work and patience. From the bottom of my heart I give a standing ovation to my partners Russ Miller, Brian Mason, and Robby Robinson for their awesome talent, friendship and for their incredible work ethic. It has been a blessing and an honor to work with all of you. This book would not have been possible without your expertise; you are simply the best! I love you guys.

Thanks to Sandy Feldstein, Fred Anton, Joe Testa, Howard Goldberg, Mike Finkelstein, Dave Hakim and Raul Artilles at Warner Bros. for their help, enthusiasm, direction and faith in the project. I'm forever grateful for their unwavering dedication to excellence and the brilliant teaching materials that they are responsible for. I would also like to thank each person on the Warner Bros. staff for the integral part they played with the production of the book: Jorge Paredes, Thais Yanes, Nancy Rehm, Mark Burgess, Glyn Dryhurst, Susan Dwyer for her text editing, and the entire sales force.

The Support Team:

"I Just Wanna Give Gratitude"

My love and appreciation to the following individuals for their friendship and contributions to the cause. Thanks to *Modern Drummer Magazine*, specifically Robyn Flans, Rick Van Horn, Ron Spagnardi, Sue Hurring, Diana Little, Bill Miller, Adam Budofsky and Rich Watson. Also much appreciation goes to Lenny Kravitz, Frankie Valli, Jody Watley, Vanessa Paradis, Bobby Brown, The New Edition, Philip Bailey, Andy Doerschuk and *Drum Magazine*, Ronan MacDonald and Simon Braund at *Rhythm Magazine U.K.*, Jim Payne, Harry Weinger, Allan "Dr. Licks" Slutsky, Dan Pena, Andrea Kaufman, Jerry Ricci, Bill & Beverly Large, Wil & Sandy Strong, Jerry & Emily Hammack, Osama & Nami Afifi, Bobby Rock, Don Essig, Mark & Deniece Guzman, Mike Johnson, Blake Cooper, Dr. Dean Gronemeier, Paul Siegel, Rob Wallis, Jim Henke and Pearl Jones. Thanks to Cathy Williams, David McLees and Tom Muzquiz at Rhino Records for all the Rhino album cover art work. Special thanks to all my funky drummer homeboys for their invaluable information, you all know who you are. Much love and affection goes to Mi Famillia: Armando, Maria, Ricardo, Patricia, Roberto, and Elizabeth for all the adventures we shared together and especially for their tolerance of the "kid with tunnel vision." I would like to extend my deepest love and appreciation to all the recording artists, drummers, authors and journalists referred to, mentioned or quoted throughout this book for their inspiration

and amazing contributions to the world of soul, funk and hip-hop. Thanks to the following organizations for their contribution to the advancement of drumming and education, I'm privileged to know and work with you and your staff: Berklee College of Music, *Modern Drummer* magazine, Percussive Arts Society, National Drum Association, International Association of Jazz Educators and The Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame.

Zoro Equipment Credits and Special Thanks:

My sincere thanks to the following companies for their friendship, equipment and clinic support: DW Drums, Sabian Cymbals, Evans Heads, Vic Firth Sticks, Latin Percussion, Danmar Beaters, Audix Microphones. It is an honor to be associated with you.

Literary Sources and Research Acknowledgments:

All research done by Zoro, additional sources include: All the liner notes from recommended CDs, all the books in the recommended media literature guide, as well as the following sources: The *AMG All Music Guide Series*, *Soul Recordings* edited by Robert Pruter, *The Best of Soul* by Ralph Tee, *Stars of Soul and Rhythm & Blues* by Lee Hildebrand, *Standing In The Shadows of Motown: The Life and Music of Legendary Bassist James Jamerson* by Allan "Dr. Licks" Slutsky, *Modern Drummer* magazine, *Drums & Drumming* magazine, and personal interviews conducted by Zoro with many of the drummers and R&B musicians mentioned in this book.



This book is dedicated in loving memory to my mother Maria. Here we are at the beginning of our journey. It was from her that my passion, faith, zeal, and lust for life derived. She was a tremendous source of encouragement, joy, and love. None of my musical achievements would have been possible without her. She was the greatest mother a boy could have and it was an honor to be her son. Thanks for believing in me mother! I'll see you heaven.

Cover Art Credits and Special Thanks:

All Earth, Wind & Fire album covers courtesy of Columbia Records, *Sly & the Family Stone Anthology* courtesy of Epic Records, *Atlantic Rhythm & Blues 1947-1974 Box Set*, *The Complete Stax/ Volt Singles 1956-1968 Box Set* and *Isaac Hayes: Hot Buttered Soul* and all other Atlantic covers courtesy of Atlantic Records, Stax Records and Fantasy Records. All Rhino Records covers courtesy of Rhino Records, *Crescent City Soul: The Sound of New Orleans* and *Guru Jazzmatazz Vol.1* courtesy of E.M.I. Entertainment Properties, *Funkadelic: Music For Your Mother* copyright Ace Records Ltd. (P) used by permission. Cover art piece by Liz Tarr, *James Brown Star Time Box Set* and *Parliament: Tear The Roof Off The Sucker* courtesy of Polygram Records, *Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers: Go Go Swing Live* courtesy of Future Records and Tapes, *The Roots Do You Want More? !!!??* courtesy of DGC Records 1994 Geffen Records Inc., *Stolen Moments Red, Hot & Cool* courtesy of GRP Records, *Bobby Brown: Don't Be Cruel* and *Guy*, courtesy of MCA Records, *Lenny Kravitz: Mama Said* courtesy of Virgin Records. All 45 records, courtesy of Ricardo Bravo personal collection, are used by permission from their respective labels. Cover photo of drums courtesy of Drum Workshop, cover photo of cymbals courtesy of Sabian Cymbals.

Quote Credits and Special Thanks:

Modern Drummer magazine, *Drums & Drumming*, and *Rhythm* magazine, U.S. quotes courtesy of Ron Spagnardi, *Give The Drummers Some* courtesy of Jim Payne.

Music Special Thanks:

Many thanks to Robby Robinson, Fino Roverato, Rex Robinson and Tommy Alvarado for their great friendship, musicianship and hard work. It was a pure joy making music with all of you!!! Also thanks to Mike McClusky, Jim "Loach" Ingles, and John Bowers for their invaluable assistance with the project.

Rex Robinson uses Hartke Amps and La Bella strings exclusively. Fino Roverato uses La Bella strings, Matchless amps, and Heritage guitars exclusively.



	PAGE	CD TRACK
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	7	
FOREWORD - THE ADVENTURES OF ZORO	8	
<i>Glossary - Definition of Terms</i>	11	
<i>Introduction - The Role Of The Drummer</i>	12	
Discussion of Time.....	13	
The Drum Machine	14	
Master Key	14	
Sixtuplet Understanding.....	14	
32 nd Note Understanding.....	14	
 CHAPTER ONE - SOUL DRUMMING		
Brief Historical Overview	15	
Prelude to a Groove - Developmental Exercises.....	26	
“Ghostbusters” Pt. 1 - 12/8 & 16 th Notes	26	... 2
“Stuff Like That” Buzz Technique Development.....	28	... 3
“Separate Ways” & “It’s The Same Old Song” Independent & Unison Figures	30	... 4
The Grooves - Time Feel Development.....	33	
Early Soul	33	
The Gospel Feel	33	... 5
The 50s Rock Feel.....	34	... 6
The Quasi-Rhumba Feel.....	34	... 7
The Quasi-Mambo Feel.....	35	... 8
The 2nd Line Feel	35	... 9
The Motown Feel	36	... 10
The Shuffle	37	... 11
Transcription “Green Onions”	39	... 12
Transcription “Home At Last”	39	... 13
The 12/8 Feel	40	... 14
Transcription “Don’t Leave Me This Way”	42	... 15
Transcription “I’m Your Baby Tonight”.....	42	... 16
The Slow 16 th Note Ballad (One Hand Lead).....	43	... 17
Transcription “Express Yourself”	45	... 18
Transcription “Use Me”	45	... 19
The Ten Commandments of Soul (Listening Guide).....	46	
“What Is Hip” (Recommended Media & Literature Guide)	51	
50 Most Covered Songs of the Soul Era (Repertoire Guide)	52	
“Souledified” Soul Play-Along With Drums	54	... 20
Soul Play-Along Without Drums	54	... 21

CHAPTER TWO - FUNK DRUMMING

Brief Historical Overview	55	
Prelude to a Groove - Developmental Exercises	70	
" Tighten Up" Hi-Hat Clean Up Exercises	70	... 22
" Ghostbusters" Pt. 2 - 8 th Note	72	... 23
" Let's Stay Together" Pt. 1 - Unison Grooves	74	... 24
The Grooves - Time Feel Developmental Exercises	76	
The Quarter Note Feel	76	... 25
Transcription " Could It Be I'm Falling In Love"	78	... 26
Transcription " Candy"	78	... 27
The 8 th Note Feel	79	... 28
Transcription " Memphis Soul Stew"	82	... 29
Transcription " Get Up, Get Into It, Get Involved"	83	... 30
8 th & 16 th Combinations (One Hand Lead)	83	... 31
Transcription " When Will You Be Mine"	85	... 32
Transcription " That Girl"	85	... 33
16 th Up Tempo (Alternating Sticking RLRL Two Hand Feel)	86	... 34
Transcription " Love Light In Flight"	88	... 35
Transcription " Wanna Be Startin' Something"	88	... 36
The Ten Commandments of Funk (Listening Guide)	90	
" What is Hip" (Recommended Media & Literature Guide)	93	
50 Most Covered Songs of the Funk Era (Repertoire Guide)	94	
" Sho-Nuff" Funk Play-Along With Drums	96	... 37
Funk Play-Along Without Drums	96	... 38

CHAPTER THREE - HIP-HOP DRUMMING

Hip-Hop Historical Overview	97	
Prelude to a Groove - Developmental Exercises	104	
" Funky Situation" Bass & Snare Combinations	104	... 39
" Gettin' on the Good Foot" Bass Drum Development	106	... 40
" One Drummer Under a Groove" Time Feels Over The Top	108	... 41
The Grooves - Time Feel Development	110	
Go Go	110	... 42
Transcription " Bustin' Loose"	113	... 43
Transcription " Slave To The Rhythm"	113	... 44
New Jack Swing	114	... 45
Transcription " Groove Me"	116	... 46
Transcription " Poison"	116	... 47
Slow Hip-Hop	117	... 48
Transcription " Floatin' On Your Love"	120	... 49
Transcription " Tighten Up"	120	... 50
House	121	... 51
Transcription " I'm Every Woman"	123	... 52
Transcription " Ecstasy"	123	... 53
The Ten Commandments of Hip-Hop (Listening Guide)	124	

	PAGE	CD TRACK
“What is Hip” (Recommended Media & Literature Guide)	127	
50 Most Covered Songs of the Hip-Hop Era (Repertoire Guide)	128	
“ <i>The Funky Monk</i> ” Hip-Hop Play-Along With Drums	130	... 54
Hip-Hop Play-Along Without Drums	130	... 55
 CHAPTER FOUR - DEVELOPING YOUR OWN GROOVES		
Developing Your Own Grooves	131	
Song Repertoire.....	132	
Method for Practicing Time Feels.....	133	
Approaching The Music.....	134	
R&B Time/Feel Reference Chart	135	
“ <i>We Can Work It Out</i> ” Bass Drum Endurance Exercise	136	... 56
“ <i>Let’s Stay Together</i> ” Pt.2	138	... 57
“ <i>Cold Blooded</i> ” Hi-Hat Patterns	140	... 58
“ <i>Work To Do</i> ” Triplet Hi-Hat Patterns.....	143	... 59
“ <i>Super Bad</i> ” 32 nd Note Bass Drum Patterns	146	... 60
Play-Along Section “ <i>Creating & Playing With Loops</i> ”	150	
Loop #1 With Drums.....	152	... 61
Loop #1 Without Drums.....	152	... 62
Loop #2 With Drums.....	152	... 63
Loop #2 Without Drums.....	152	... 64
Loop #3 With Drums.....	152	... 65
Loop #3 Without Drums.....	152	... 66
 CONCLUSION		
“ <i>For Those Who Like To Groove</i> ” Interview Reference List.....	154	
R&B Family Tree Lineage “ <i>It’s a Family Affair</i> ”	157	



“There has never been anyone I enjoyed making music with more than Lenny.”
Zoro
Modern Drummer,
 September 2004

Live in Portugal with Lenny Kravitz on the Baptism Tour. This was an incredible tour and a great reunion between Lenny and I. It was pure magic!!!

Ghostbusters Pt.2, 8TH

The Funky Stuff Under The Groove

Ghost notes are just as prevalent in funk as they are in soul music. Their usage in funk is based around 16th notes. The following are some exercises and grooves that focus on ghosting on the snare drum around an 8th note time feel. The same ghosting philosophy applies to these patterns as in exercise one in chapter one. Some of these patterns have you playing the snare drum and bass drum simultaneously on syncopated 16ths. These may take a minute to line up but they're real "fonky"!

CD
23A

CD
23B



It was a great honor to play at the Modern Drummer Festival in 2005 for this spectacular triple DVD release by Hudson Music. This performance allowed me to express the many sides of my playing that had not been captured on tape before. I taught extensively on playing the half-time shuffle, played an extended solo and a killer Latin song called "Samba 4-2." This is one of the most inspired and emotional performances of my career



Triplet Phrasing:

R L L R L L L R L L R L L R L R L L R L L L L R L L R L L R L R L L

CD
23C

R L L R L L L R L L R L L R L R L L R L L L L R L L R L L R L R L L

32ND Note Phrasing:

R L L R R L L R L L R R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L

CD
23D

R L L R R L L R L L R R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L