10 Comping Etudes for Jazz Drum Set

Volume 3: Advanced Vocabulary

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INTRODUCTION

To “Comp” means to accompany. As drummers, we accompany ourselves, the rhythm section, and most importantly, the soloist. The idea of the drummer comping between the snare drum and bass drum, while playing the “spang-a-lang” cymbal beat on the ride, with 2+4 on the hi-hat, became popular during the Bebop era, with drummers Kenny “Klook” Clarke, and Max Roach. During this time, the drummer’s role grew to being an equal participant in the group improvisation. The drummer was now improvising ideas in a supportive, contrapuntal way, between the hand and foot. Comping in support of the music.

The dialogue between the snare and bass drum better supported, and stimulated the dialogue between the drummer and soloist. As the complexity of the melody and harmony developed, the comping style of the drummer did as well.

The coordinative aspect of comping as a drummer can be challenging. Balance is key. The ride cymbal should always be on top, driving the bus. The hi-hat on 2+4 supports the feel of the ride beat. The dialogue between the snare and bass drum should sit underneath. As the rhythmic complexity of the ideas increase, the coordinative difficulty also increases.

We practice this coordination not to regurgitate these ideas while playing, but to gain the facility necessary to articulate the ideas being created within the music. What we play MUST ALWAYS SERVE THE MUSIC.

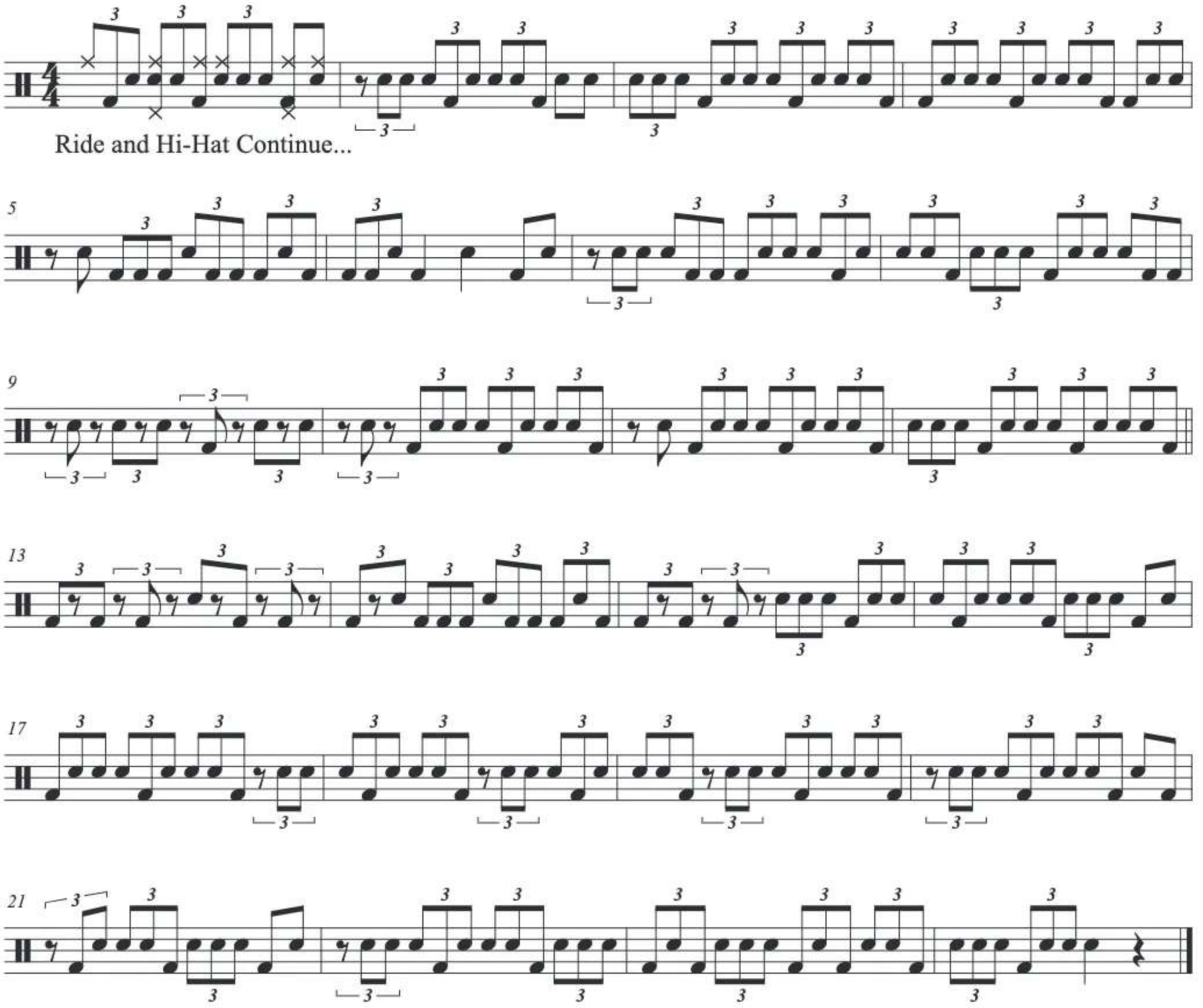
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

“10 Comping Etudes for Jazz Drum Set” will be presented in three volumes. Each volume will feature ten comping etudes which are “melodies” between the snare and bass drum. This third volume features advanced vocabulary. Over the course of ten etudes, the rhythmic ideas become more complex.

You will notice that there are no metronomic markings or dynamics. This is because each etude is meant to be used as a multi-purpose exercise, played at varied tempos and dynamics.

Please remember, these etudes are not meant to be mimicked as comping ideas. They are to be used to gain the facility and coordination necessary to comp freely, without hesitation.

ONE



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