

THE OFFICIAL FREEHAND TECHNIQUE



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AND

- CD TRACK 84 is a demo on how to use Groove Loops.
- CD TRACKS 73-75 are groove loop play-a-longs designed to help you practice all the exercises in this book at different tempos.



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BIOGRAPHY

Johnny Rabb was born on February 29, 1972 in Fairfax, Virginia. His parents noticed that he was intrigued by the sound of drums and got him his first drum set at the age of three. The family moved to Sacramento, California, where Johnny was introduced to professional drummer Michael Lawson. From elementary school through entrance to the prestigious Berklee College of Music, Michael mentored Johnny and was the driving force behind his drum education. He also learned valuable musical knowledge from Rio Americano High School band director Craig Faniani. The support from family and teachers allowed him the opportunity to get his playing to a professional level.

Berklee introduced Johnny to many amazing staff members, students and new styles of music. The entire faculty gave him the information and instruction needed to discover his own sound and voice on the drum set.

Upon graduation from Berklee, Johnny moved to Nashville, Tennessee. He stayed busy performing, producing, writing and recording music. While in music city, Johnny was introduced to Boo McAfee and the Drumometer. In the summer of 2000 he played 1,071 single strokes which awarded him the title of Guinness World's Fastest Drummer. His first publication book *Jungle Drum 'n' Bass for the Acoustic Drum Set* received the #1 Educational Book award from *Modern Drummer Magazine* reader's poll.

He has been fortunate to design his own set of cymbals (the Rabb Pack) with the MEINL cymbal company. These cymbals that are part of the GenerationX line won the best cymbals MIPA award at the Musik Messe in Frankfurt, Germany. Johnny was able to design his own signature stick with the Pro-Mark drumstick company, and continues to design and develop new sounds and innovations for his unique concepts on the drums.

He has performed with artists such as Maynard Ferguson, Tanya Tucker, Hank Williams III, SheDaisy, Deana Carter and Mindy McCready. He has done countless clinic tours and master classes including the **Montreal Drumfest**, **PASIC**, **Musik Messe**, **Drummer Fest (Belgium)** and the **Ultimate Drummer's Weekend**, to name a few. He has also instructed at world reknown drum camps, including **RHYTHM** at the Bavarian Music Academy in Marktoberdorf, Germany.

Johnny performs with DW and Pacific drums/pedals/hardware, Roland V-Drums, MEINL cymbals, REMO drumheads, Pro-Mark drumsticks, AUDIX microphones, QuikStix, and Grip Peddler products.

Johnny is currently working with Roland as an international V-DRUM clinician and product specialist. He plays in a duo with Paul "TFO" Allen called Johnny Rabb and Ten Finger Orchestra. Johnny is a member of the rock band U.S.S.A. with Duane Denison, Paul Barker and Gary Call. He has also performed with members of the Disco Biscuits, the New Deal, Clay Parnell (Brother's Past), Borahm Lee and other noteables from the Jam Band scene. His band BioDiesel continues to perform live electronic music for devoted fans.



For more detailed information about Johnny please visit

www.johnnyrabb.com or www.myspace.com/johnnyrabb



ABOUT THE AUDIO

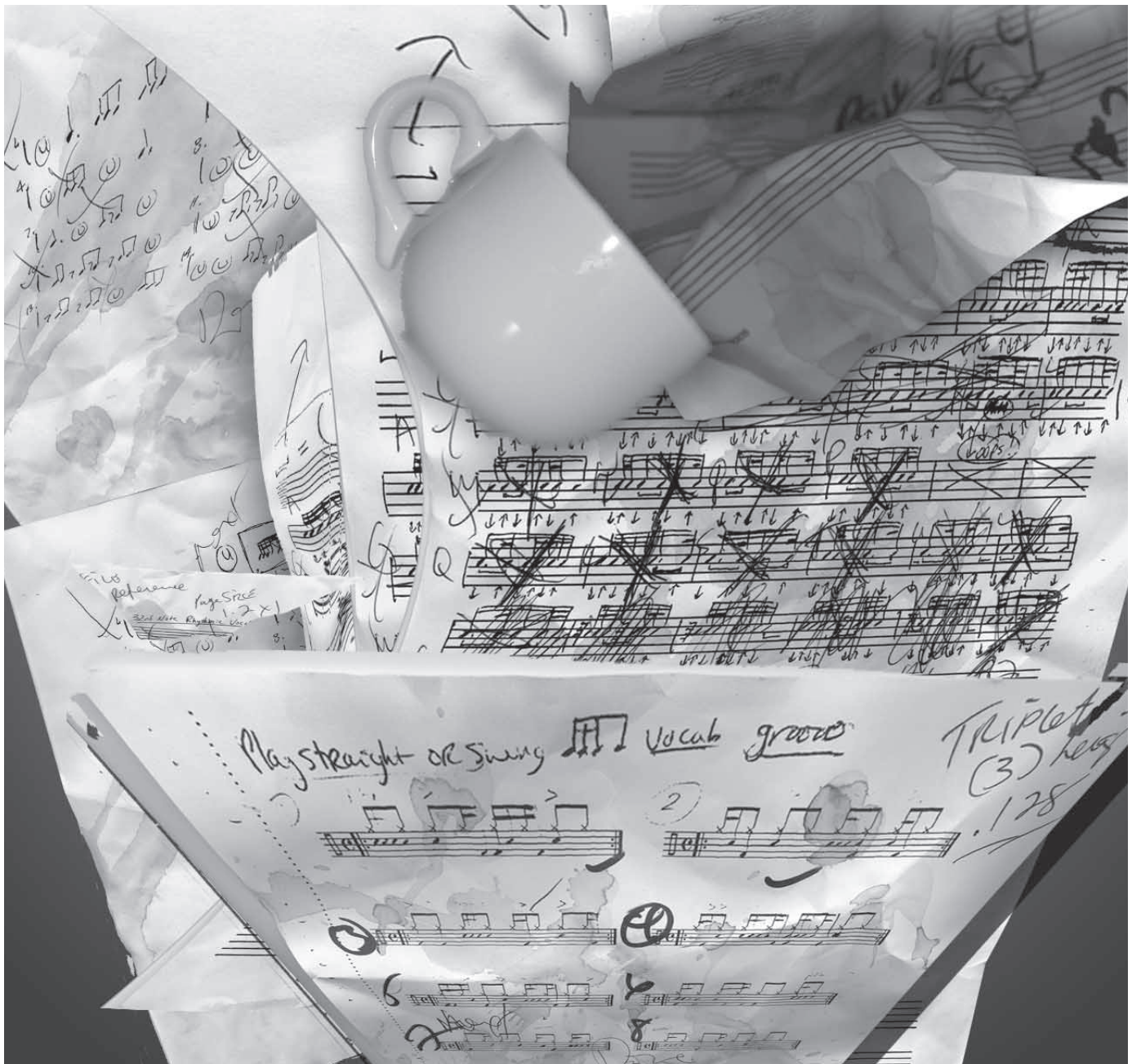
Throughout this book, you will find icons located next to the notation that look like this:



In the print edition of this book, you would select the track number shown on this icon, but in this digital edition, simply click the icon or notation example to begin playback...

IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE!

In order to play back the audio examples, you will need to be connected to the internet.





FREEHAND NOTATION

Besides the basic standard drum notation, I have developed a system of using arrows to represent the two motions of the Freehand Technique. There are two types of arrows in this book:

A downward arrow ↓ indicates that:

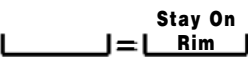
1. You will make a downward parallel motion,
2. Hit the head and rim in unison for the first stroke, and
3. End with the tip of the stick off the drum head and the butt-end of the stick in the downward position while the stick remains on the rim.

An upward arrow ↑ indicates that:

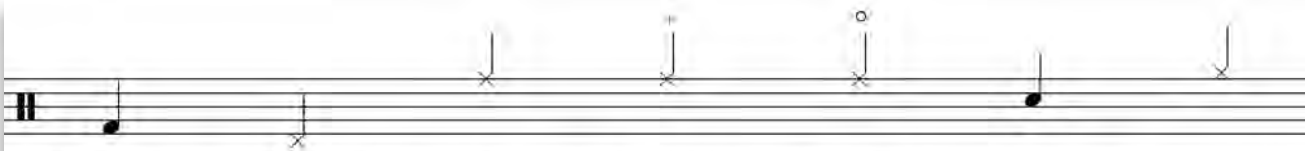
1. That you will lift the butt-end of the stick up while remaining on the rim,
2. Hit the head for the second stroke, and
3. Lift the stick up parallel off the head and rim as soon as the second attack is created.

There are also some abbreviated terms used to differentiate between a full stroke and the Freehand Technique. Below are some common terms used throughout this book:

FS = FULL STROKE FHT = FREEHAND TECHNIQUE

This symbol  is important when working on the Freehand Technique. It specifies when we should keep the stick on the rim and when it should come off. You will find that this is used quite often when dealing with certain rhythmic patterns.

DRUM NOTATION



Bass Drum HI-Hat (foot) HI-Hat (hand) Closed HI-Hat Open HI-Hat Snare Drum Ride Cymbal



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INTRODUCTION



There are many outstanding drummers who have influenced me throughout my playing career. My first first teacher and good friend, Michael Lawson, gave me a solid foundation which enabled me to further my music education in college. While at Berklee, I met teachers who expanded my drumming possibilities and challenged my creativity. This brought my playing to a professional level. I have always believed that once you stop learning, you stop growing. I continue to learn from teachers, professionals, peers, friends, and other musicians. I have always wanted to contribute to the drumming community, because so many contributed to me.

The drummer who inspired the Freehand Technique is Kenwood Dennard. He has an endless array of musical knowledge and is one of the most innovative drummers I have ever seen or heard. He blew me away with his originality and humongous groove, and his innovative approach to the drum set. In his video, *Just Advance*, Kenwood demonstrates a one-handed roll using the rim as the fulcrum. When I saw him blaze a roll with one hand while soloing with the other, I freaked out! That night, I took some time getting familiar with Kenwood's roll. Once I figured out how to play the roll, I realized that my goal would be to incorporate this type of technique into my playing. After months of practicing and refining, I finally came up with what I named the *Freehand Technique*. This technique allows me to play rhythms with one hand that would normally be played with two hands. After much experimentation with this technique, I found it possible to play various rhythmic groupings cleanly and precisely.

I do not think this book or technique should be construed as a gimmick. By no means does the Freehand Technique replace any of the standard rudiments or drum basics. The deeper I have gone into developing this technique, the more I strive for it to be recognized as a modern rudiment. If you take the time to practice it properly, the Freehand Technique will give you new options in your approach to the drums. I feel it is a useful musical tool that will add to your drumming vocabulary.

Always Learning,

Johnny Rabb



Johnny Rabb





TRICK OR TECHNIQUE

The first version of the Freehand Technique book and video was produced for me by Jim Keltner in 1999. Since then, I have received comments from all over the world and have heard a variety of remarks on this technique. My hopes are to demonstrate and teach how the Freehand Technique can be a musically enhancing tool, adding another element to your playing.

Some people occasionally ask me to show them my “little trick”, and I must admit the term “trick” is a thorn in my side. I don’t consider this technique to be a trick or gimmick, and my hopes are that people will discover the Freehand Technique and utilize it to its fullest potential. The thought of playing a multiple bounce, one-handed roll, was not the premise of developing this technique. My goal was to attain control and perform accurate rhythms with one hand and incorporate it into my daily playing in a musical way.

When we think of drumming with one hand, we immediately think it’s some kind of stunt and consider it a gimmick—and it can be if you play it as such. That is okay if you intend it to do just that. However, if the Freehand is executed correctly, it can allow total independence between your two hands, which opens a world of unexplored rhythmic possibilities. Experimenting with new ideas and creating original grooves is what I hope to achieve and share with the drumming community. This book is designed to take you step by step through the process, and help you learn to read, understand and perform any rhythm you can think. With practice, you will be able to play them precisely and accurately with a fresh approach to drumming. I do not want to change your original technique, I simply want to offer a new technique allowing you new options when playing the drums.

Photograph courtesy of Meini.



Meini Drum Festival 2005

