

CONTENTS

About The Video	4
Drum Key.....	4
Foreword	5
Introduction	6
Exploring Your Creativity	7
D.R.O.P.	8
Dynamics.....	9
Rate.....	12
The Loop	14
First 2 Notes.....	16
Rate Variations.....	17
Leaving Space	18
Changing Rates in Different Places	26
Changing Rates in Different Places Worksheet #1	28
Changing Rates in Different Places Worksheet #2	29
Ear Training	30
More Rates	31
Orchestration	32
Orchestration Paths	34
Improvised Orchestration	36
The Bass Drum	38
Adding the Bass Drum	39
Improvised Orchestration with Bass Drum	47
Ornaments.....	49
Seven Sounds	51
16th Variations with All 7 Sounds	52
Improvise (16ths)	54
Triplets with All 7 Sounds.....	55
Improvise (Triplets).....	56
A Different Sound for Each Note.....	57
Locked in a Basement	59
Heernt.....	60
Phrasing	61
Phrasing Fills: 16ths	64
Phrasing Fills: Triplets	66
Phrasing After the Fill	68
Paradiddle Phrasing	69
Orchestrated Paradiddle Improvisation	74
Paradiddle Improvisation with Seven Sounds.....	75
Flam Accents	77
D.R.O.P.	78
Orchestration	80
Phrasing.....	81
D.R.O.P. Improvisation	82
Composition	83
D.R.O.P. (6/4)	84
Composition	85
D.R.O.P. (12/8).....	86
Conclusion	87
Thank You	88

INTRODUCTION

First and foremost, THANK YOU.

I put a lot of time and energy into this book and I am grateful to have the opportunity to share this information with you.

This book is a representation of what I have been working on extensively over the last decade or so. These concepts and exercises have helped me become a better musician, and I hope they can do the same for you.

My goal is to inspire you to inject your own personality into this material, explore your creativity, and have the confidence to make a personal statement on the drumset.

I hope this book helps you not only learn more about your instrument, but also learn more about **yourself**.

Mark
July, 2016



EXPLORING YOUR CREATIVITY

“Discovering the truth about ourselves is a lifetime's work, but it's worth the effort.” - Fred Rogers

Music is my life.

Everyday is a new adventure and an opportunity to explore.

This book is a result of my love affair with music; more than two decades of inspiration, experimentation and curiosity. I am constantly in search of new ideas and ways to improve my musicianship, and the exercises contained here are the ones that have provided me with the best results.

My favorite thing about this material is that no two of us will come out the other side with the exact same content. These concepts are reliant on your own ideas and intuition. We are all a unique combination of our influences. The more you can allow your influences to coexist in an honest way, the closer you will be able to express your true self.

My intention is not to show you exactly what to play or how to play, only you can decide that for yourself. I hope the concepts in this book can help unlock your creativity on the drums, and inspire you to develop your own musical identity.

What I am most interested in is what **YOU** will create.



R

RATE

The speed at which something happens over a particular period of time

One of our most important responsibilities as a drummer is to play with a strong groove and make the music feel good. A strong groove requires a deep understanding of rhythm and the ability to play a consistent pulse in a way that best fits the music.

Both of the following examples have identical rhythmic information. So what makes them different?

(♩=90)	(♩=128)
A.) $\frac{4}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	B.) $\frac{4}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

The speed (tempo) at which they should be played is what creates a different musical result.

Here is a better visual representation of how these examples should sound:

A.) $\frac{4}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	B.) $\frac{4}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
---------------------------------------	------------------------------

Because the tempo of example A.) is slower, there is more space between the notes. We must develop a strong relationship with this space in order to play a solid, consistent pulse.

Let's investigate a few different ways to organize the space between two beats:

First, divide the space in half.

Now, divide the space in thirds.

And finally, divide the space into quarters.

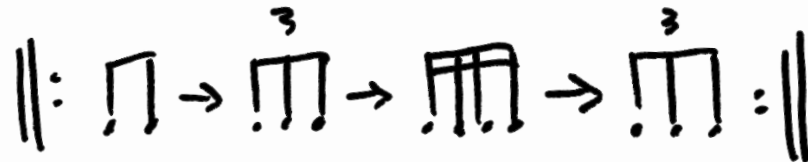
These examples create the three **RATES** that we will focus on in this chapter: eighth notes, triplets and 16th notes.

R

THE LOOP

When I was younger, my pulse was fairly consistent, as long as I was playing one rate for an extended period of time. However, anytime I needed to switch to another rate, the overall feeling of what I was playing would suffer because I hadn't yet developed a strong enough relationship with each rate individually to be able to move between them with confidence.

Improving this area of my playing quickly became the priority of all my practicing and I found that the more simple the exercise, the more effective the results. Here is what became the template for the majority of my practicing over the last 15 years:



This is a simple concept, but that doesn't mean it is easy. Every time I sit down to work on this loop I discover new ways in which it can be improved: more relaxed, more precise, more confident, etc.

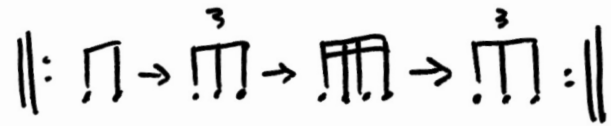
"The minute you get away from fundamentals – whether it's proper technique, work ethic or mental preparation – the bottom can fall out of your game, your schoolwork, your job, whatever you're doing."

- Michael Jordan

START SLOW and focus on precise placement of each note. It was at very slow tempos that I learned the most about where the notes "belong." However, it is also very important to explore how this loop feels and sounds at a wide variety of tempos, as they will all have their own unique challenges.

I recommend doing all of the exercises with a metronome... but I also recommend doing everything without one as well. The metronome is certainly a great reference for accuracy, but it is important to not become too reliant on it. One of our main goals is develop our OWN pulse, and we need to give ourselves a chance to discover what exactly that is. When you are playing with other people, the pulse will have to come from inside your body, not from a metronome.

**Although our goal in these exercises is to play with precision, it doesn't always mean that precise placement is the most musical choice. By having a strong connection to where the notes "belong," we can use our intuition and taste to place them where we believe best fits the music.*



* Play quarter notes with your hi-hat foot for all examples.

Let's start by playing two measures of each rate.

1.



Now, let's play one measure of each.

2.



Two beats of each.

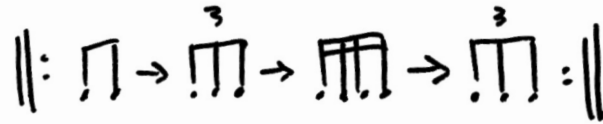
3.



And finally, one beat of each.

4.





The key to moving between the rates with accuracy is internalizing where the second note of each belongs. The first note of each rate is always the same (the downbeat), so it isn't until we hear or play the second note that the rate can be identified. If the second note is where it belongs, we are set up to play the remaining notes of the rate with accuracy as well. By examining these rates with great detail, we can start to gain confidence in our note placement and overall time feel.

Let's play the same exercise from the previous page, but now we will only play the FIRST TWO notes of each beat.

Two measures of each rate.

1.

One measure of each.

2.

Two beats of each.

3.

One beat of each.

4.