

FUNdamentals[™] of Drumming for Kids



Percussion theory for children ages 5 to 10

Developed by Rich Redmond and Michael Aubrecht

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Percussive Arts Society.

**Visit us online at
moderndrummer.com/fundamentalsofdrumming**

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***This book is dedicated to
the next generation of drum heroes.***

*Pictured: Rich's 2012 DW Collector's Series Maple/Mahogany drumkit (Photo: Paul Griffin)

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FROM THE PROFESSIONAL

I love rhythm. As a drummer, it means everything to me.

Rhythm is the primary source of my inspiration and the driving force behind my self-expression. Sharing my love of rhythm is what this book is all about. In fact, the primary purpose behind the *FUNdamentals of Drumming for Kids* program is to help children discover the same love for rhythm that I have. As a professional musician and educator, I always knew there was a way to break the ice on this subject and to systematically introduce young students to the language of music making.

This book was inspired by a conversation with my friend Michael Aubrecht. While many readers may be familiar with Michael's work as an author and film producer, they may be surprised to know that he is also a drummer. In fact, Michael and I are both products of music education, and we share many of the same drumming influences. As a parent, Michael was seeking guidance on the best way to introduce his youngest son to the drums. After doing some research, we both concluded that there were few materials available that catered to very young drummers. It was then that the *FUNdamentals* system was born. By pairing proven drum teaching methods with elementary classroom exercises, we developed a new teaching philosophy.

The *FUNdamentals of Drumming for Kids* program uses a step-by-step process in which each exercise builds upon the previous one. Although being a drummer certainly helps, the lessons in this book are designed in such a way that non-drumming parents can also practice them alongside their children. The book is also set up in a format that can be easily adapted by general classroom music teachers. The core of the *FUNdamentals* philosophy is found in the kid-friendly techniques that are used to present music theory.

As an extension of the book, we have developed moderndrummer.com/fundamentalsofdrumming, where additional drumming activities and exercises have been made available. We encourage parents and teachers to share their own success stories by emailing photos, videos, and stories of them using *FUNdamentals of Drumming for Kids*. Selections from those submitted will be posted and shared with our online community.

Michael and I sincerely hope that you enjoy using this book as much as we enjoyed writing it. Visit me online at richredmond.com. Here's to the rhythm of life!

Rich Redmond



FROM THE PARENT

Long before I was anything else, I was a drummer. In fact, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that for most of my adolescent life, drums meant everything to me. Following the path of many eager musicians, I took up the instrument in the seventh grade and quickly became the prototypical band kid, playing in the choir band, marching band, stage band, symphonic band, and percussion ensemble.

A product of public school music education, I practiced hard and was designated the co-captain of my high school drum line. I was selected to participate in the Pitt University High School Senior Ensemble and the Mellon Jazz Festival Student Orchestra. I played at the national level in marching band and drum line competitions in Nashville and was fortunate to study with some great percussionists. I also jammed with anybody and everybody who would have me.

As a father of four, I was very excited to see my son Jackson (pictured above) beginning to show an interest in the drums. Unfortunately, I was also very disappointed in the lack of instructional aids available for children under the age of ten. Out of frustration, I decided to contact Rich Redmond, who is one of the most respected drummers in the music business. Rich's reputation as a top clinician and teacher precedes him, and my goal was to ask for his guidance and share the successes I had experienced, using simple counting and playing exercises at home.

Somehow I managed to catch Rich's attention long enough to pitch the need for instructional drum lessons geared toward children. Knowing that I was a writer who played the drums, Rich suggested that we tackle this dilemma together. A few weeks later, we found ourselves sitting together backstage at a Jason Aldean show, drafting an outline that evolved into the system we refer to as *FUNDamentals*. Today, we are great friends, and we are developing an entire drum education program together.

As a parent, I can tell you that this program will provide enjoyment for kids of all ages and stages of development. Rich and I simply want to see kids experiencing the joys of drumming, no matter what goals they attain or what skill levels they achieve. Visit me online at pinstripepress.net. Play on!

Michael Aubrecht



INTRODUCTION

The auditory stimulation of sound is one of the first sensations experienced by humans. Many experts believe that music, in particular, offers a welcome sense of security to the unborn child. As they grow, children continue to rely on music as an important element in the learning experience. This is why parents and teachers rely on the repetition of a song as a teaching aid. Music promotes memory!



Many parts of a child's first skill set come from singing exercises, such as the ABC song. These repetitive patterns enable children to subconsciously correlate the cadence of the music to the material, thus helping them to remember it. Music is, therefore, a major brick in a child's foundation of learning.

Children at the early-developmental stage can be extremely creative and far less inhibited than those who are older. Often they will develop a desire to make their own sounds. Some may even show an interest in playing music. This can be a wonderfully exciting time. Parents may wish to seize this opportunity to introduce their child to a variety of musical styles and instruments. Sometimes the child will gravitate toward a particular instrument, and he or she may even show an aptitude for it. It is at this stage that a teaching opportunity exists. If handled correctly, it may even result in the pursuit of mastery of that musical instrument.



Drums can be an excellent choice for a young child's first instrument. Whether it's banging on pots and pans or pounding away on a tom, playing percussion is a great release of energy. Playing the drumkit can also be an excellent way to exercise and develop manual dexterity. Sometimes a child will start out with a toy drum, a practice pad, or a simple snare drum before graduating to a real drumkit. Regardless of the instrument, the fundamentals of drumming remain the same.

How to Use This Book

This book has been written so it can be used by individual children (ages 5–10) and by multiple students in a classroom. Parents and teachers are strongly encouraged to read aloud to guide younger students. Older children should be able to read and comprehend the material on their own. This book is complemented with an exclusive DVD shot at Drum Channel Studios. On the DVD, you'll find additional information and playing examples of the FUNdamentals philosophy and exercises in this book.



Program Overview

FUNdamentals of Drumming for Kids is exactly what it sounds like: a fun way of introducing the basics of drumming to children who are between the ages of 5 and 10. Although there have been many programs developed for teaching music theory to children, few cater to younger age groups. This has resulted in a lack of educational techniques and lesson plans for kids.



That is...until now.

The unique approach used in this book to teach young children the basics of percussion utilizes a combination of rudimentary rhythmic lessons and basic drumming exercises. By using a combination of enjoyable and familiar learning techniques, children are able to gain a better understanding of rhythm and the basic philosophies of playing drums. Each step in this program is designed to develop practical and applicable musical skills.

FUNdamentals

Most introductory drum lessons for children involve reading and a series of rigid rudimentary exercises that are repeated over and over in a monotonous fashion. This repetitive process ultimately results in muscle memory and can work well with older children, but it is not likely to captivate and hold the attention of younger students. Many of them lose interest due to an inability to establish a relationship between the exercises and making music. They are unable to comprehend the end result, because the material is not presented in an appropriate manner for their age group. More often than not, this inability to make that crucial connection results in the child abandoning the instrument before he or she even has a chance to get started.

The *FUNdamentals of Drumming for Kids* program uses a variety of teaching techniques that mimic a curriculum taught in an elementary classroom. These exercises present drum theory in a fun and familiar way by using flash cards, counting exercises, clapping, shape recognition, sound interpretation, motion mimicking, and more. You may notice that we have also **highlighted** important words, numbers, and phrases throughout the book to help introduce students to the vocabulary of drumming.

FUNdamentals of Drumming for Kids = Age-Appropriate Music Theory

Note: This book is not just a music manual. It is an activity book full of breathing room and space. Children should be encouraged to use it like a workbook by taking notes, doodling, and creating their own fun while the program progresses. When they complete the book, they will have a diary of FUNdamentals that they can look back on and be proud of.

HISTORY OF DRUMS

The drum is a member of the percussion family of instruments. It creates sound by being struck with some type of object, like a rounded stick, and the playing surface is often some type of stretched skin. Drums are the world's oldest instruments and have remained relatively the same for thousands of years.

The first drumming was done by clapping or by slapping hands on the chest and thighs. The first musical rhythms were performed using these methods. Instruments were later created so that drummers could play louder.



The first drums were made from hollowed-out logs covered in animal skins. They were played by hand or with a drumstick or mallet. These drums were used to communicate and entertain. Early cultures played drums to celebrate victory in battle and during ritual dances. Tribes played drums to share messages between villages. You might say that the drum was the world's first cell phone!

Drums were also used by armies to give commands during war. Roman legion drummers played pounding rhythms, called cadences, that told the soldiers what to do and where to go. During the American Civil War, drummer boys would march with the soldiers, playing a special parade beat to help keep them in step.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, people began putting different kinds of drums together. This formed the drumkit, which was also called the **trapset**. It is a group of percussion instruments that are set up to be played by one person. The basic drumset includes a **bass drum**, a **snare drum**, **tom-toms**, a **hi-hat**, and **cymbals**.

The earliest drummers were tasked with keeping time for the other musicians. As music evolved, so did the drummer's job. In time, drum rolls and fills became integral parts of songs. In the 1930s, drummers used small drumkits for playing jazz and ragtime music. In the 1940s, drummers started using larger drumsets to **swing** in big band orchestras. The best players of this era included Chick Webb, Jo Jones, Gene Krupa, and Buddy Rich.

Over the years, different kinds of music have changed the drumset and how it is played. In the 1960s, rock 'n' roll drummers often played long solos. In the 1970s, drummers began to show off at concerts by placing their drumsets on raised platforms, lifting them high in the air. Electronic drums and drum machines came along in the 1980s, and computer-based drum software followed in the 1990s.

Today there are many different kinds of drummers. But no matter what type of drumkit or music they play, they all have the same job: to keep the beat!