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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most sought after abilities for drum set players and percussionists is to play two or more completely different patterns simultaneously on different voices on their instrument. Be it a drum set player playing interlocking patterns between hi-hat and snare or a conga player juxtaposing two rhythms on two drums simultaneously, this skill is a vital component of the percussive arts. Being able to execute these types of patterns is vital to a deeper understanding of the mechanics of drum set and percussion.

Breaking this down into its simplest building blocks is by far the most practical way to start understanding the mysteries of these patterns. By taking small units and piecing them together into interlocking rhythmic melodies we can soon start to develop logical and straightforward 'chunks' which can be grouped together into a larger rhythmic vocabulary.

To begin with we will start to explore simple and small 'bite size chunks' of rhythm and slowly expand out into longer phrases and time signatures. Firstly, we will work with only one single voice for each hand. Once the mechanics of that is secure, we move on to splitting each voice across two or more sounds or develop them dynamically with the use of accents. From there we will combine these with various foot ostinatos to expand it from two-way independence to three- and four-way independence. Two hands, two feet, many voices!

We will start at the very beginning, with a single quarter note and see what's possible dividing it up into sixteenth notes. (The entire book is based on sixteenth-note combinations. We may well cover triplet's, septuplet's, etc., in another volume?) As sixteenth notes, we have four possible note places, one on each of the four sixteenth note places in the quarter note. We can then choose whether we want one, two, three or four notes per 1/4 note. Imagine you have four identical slots and four identical balls. We will see how many different ways there are to populate the slots with any combination of the four balls.

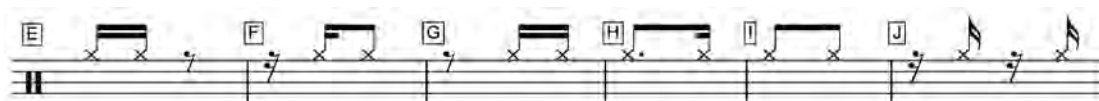
If we have one note per quarter note, then we have four possible options.

#### EXAMPLES A to D



If we have two notes per quarter note, we have six options.

#### EXAMPLES E to J



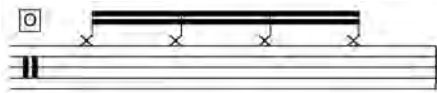
If we have three notes per quarter note, we have four options.

#### EXAMPLES K to N



If we have four notes per quarter note, we have only one option.

### EXAMPLE O



So, 15 options in all (16 if we included a whole note rest).

This 'building blocks' concept has been covered by many drum set educators over time. Most notable in recent years, Benny Greb uses the concept of 'letters' in his excellent *Language of Drumming* publication (Hudson Music) where he uses these building blocks as a springboard to generate a wide variety of rhythmic material. We however will be using them merely as a stepping-stone to generate the fundamentals of our independence exercises.

## COMBINING VARIATIONS

To start, we will use these ‘fundamentals’ to construct our first independence patterns, each of which will be one quarter note in length. There are only fifteen ‘chunks’ so it will be easy to work through all 225 ways we combine these between two sound sources simultaneously. (15 X 15 = 225).

To begin with, let’s take variation A from above for the right hand and combine this with all the other variations, A to O in left hand. This will be played on two sound sources of your choice. For drum set, the right hand can be ride cymbal or the hi-hat and the left hand can be snare drum. For percussion it could be a cowbell and a conga. Any two distinct sounds will do. If you do not have an instrument at hand, a table and book would suffice. For purposes of clarity, I will notate these on the hi-hat and snare drum lines of the staff. Also note, all the hand examples will be written with upright stems for both voices. This compresses them visually into an interlinked pattern, which is easier to understand ‘chordally.’ Each hand will only play one sound source. There’s no ‘swapping’ hands around or crossing over during the exercises.

### EXAMPLE 01 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – A in the right hand

The image displays 15 variations of a 1/4 note pattern, labeled A through O. Each variation is written on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The variations are: A (quarter note), B (quarter note), C (quarter note), D (quarter note), E (quarter note), F (quarter note), G (quarter note), H (quarter note), I (quarter note), J (quarter note), K (quarter note), L (quarter note), M (quarter note), N (quarter note), O (quarter note).

Now we can use the same method and combine our core unit B for the right hand and all the variations A to O on the left hand as below.

### EXAMPLE 02 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – B in the right hand

Musical notation for Example 02, showing variations A through O in the right hand. The notation is arranged in three rows of five variations each. Each variation is labeled with a letter in a box above the staff. The first row contains variations A, B, C, and D. The second row contains variations E, F, G, H, I, and J. The third row contains variations K, L, M, N, and O. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a 1/4 time signature. Each variation is a single measure of music, with a double bar line at the end of each measure. The notes and rests are as follows: A: quarter note G4, quarter rest; B: quarter rest, quarter note G4; C: quarter note G4, quarter rest; D: quarter rest, quarter note G4; E: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; F: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; G: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; H: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; I: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; J: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; K: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; L: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; M: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; N: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; O: quarter note G4, quarter note G4.

Next we'll have C in the right hand and all our variations A to O in the left hand. We will then continue this process through to example fifteen where we end up with variation O for the right hand.

### EXAMPLE 03 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – C in the right hand

Musical notation for Example 03, showing variations A through O in the right hand. The notation is arranged in three rows of five variations each. Each variation is labeled with a letter in a box above the staff. The first row contains variations A, B, C, and D. The second row contains variations E, F, G, H, I, and J. The third row contains variations K, L, M, N, and O. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a 1/4 time signature. Each variation is a single measure of music, with a double bar line at the end of each measure. The notes and rests are as follows: A: quarter note G4, quarter rest; B: quarter rest, quarter note G4; C: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; D: quarter rest, quarter note G4; E: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; F: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; G: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; H: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; I: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; J: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; K: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; L: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; M: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; N: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; O: quarter note G4, quarter note G4.

### EXAMPLE 04 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – D in the right hand

Musical notation for Example 04, showing variations A through O in the right hand. The notation is arranged in three rows of five variations each. Each variation is labeled with a letter in a box above the staff. The first row contains variations A, B, C, and D. The second row contains variations E, F, G, H, I, and J. The third row contains variations K, L, M, N, and O. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a 1/4 time signature. Each variation is a single measure of music, with a double bar line at the end of each measure. The notes and rests are as follows: A: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; B: quarter rest, quarter note G4; C: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; D: quarter rest, quarter note G4; E: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; F: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; G: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; H: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; I: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; J: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; K: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; L: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; M: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; N: quarter note G4, quarter note G4; O: quarter note G4, quarter note G4.

EXAMPLE 05 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – E in the right hand

EXAMPLE 05 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – E in the right hand

EXAMPLE 06 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – F in the right hand

EXAMPLE 06 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – F in the right hand

EXAMPLE 07 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – G in the right hand

EXAMPLE 07 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – G in the right hand

EXAMPLE 08 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – H in the right hand

Example 08 consists of three rows of musical notation, each row containing five measures. The first row contains measures A, B, C, and D. The second row contains measures E, F, G, H, I, and J. The third row contains measures K, L, M, N, and O. Each measure is a 1/4 note variation of a rhythmic pattern, with the letter label in a box above the first note. The patterns are: A (quarter note, quarter rest, quarter note, quarter rest), B (quarter note, quarter note, quarter rest, quarter note), C (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter rest), D (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), E (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), F (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), G (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), H (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), I (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), J (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), K (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), L (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), M (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), N (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), and O (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note).

EXAMPLE 09 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – I in the right hand

Example 09 consists of three rows of musical notation, each row containing five measures. The first row contains measures A, B, C, and D. The second row contains measures E, F, G, H, I, and J. The third row contains measures K, L, M, N, and O. Each measure is a 1/4 note variation of a rhythmic pattern, with the letter label in a box above the first note. The patterns are: A (quarter note, quarter rest, quarter note, quarter rest), B (quarter note, quarter note, quarter rest, quarter note), C (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter rest), D (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), E (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), F (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), G (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), H (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), I (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), J (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), K (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), L (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), M (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), N (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), and O (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note).

EXAMPLE 10 1/4 VARIATIONS SET ONE – J in the right hand

Example 10 consists of three rows of musical notation, each row containing five measures. The first row contains measures A, B, C, and D. The second row contains measures E, F, G, H, I, and J. The third row contains measures K, L, M, N, and O. Each measure is a 1/4 note variation of a rhythmic pattern, with the letter label in a box above the first note. The patterns are: A (quarter note, quarter rest, quarter note, quarter rest), B (quarter note, quarter note, quarter rest, quarter note), C (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter rest), D (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), E (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), F (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), G (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), H (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), I (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), J (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), K (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), L (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), M (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), N (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note), and O (quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note).