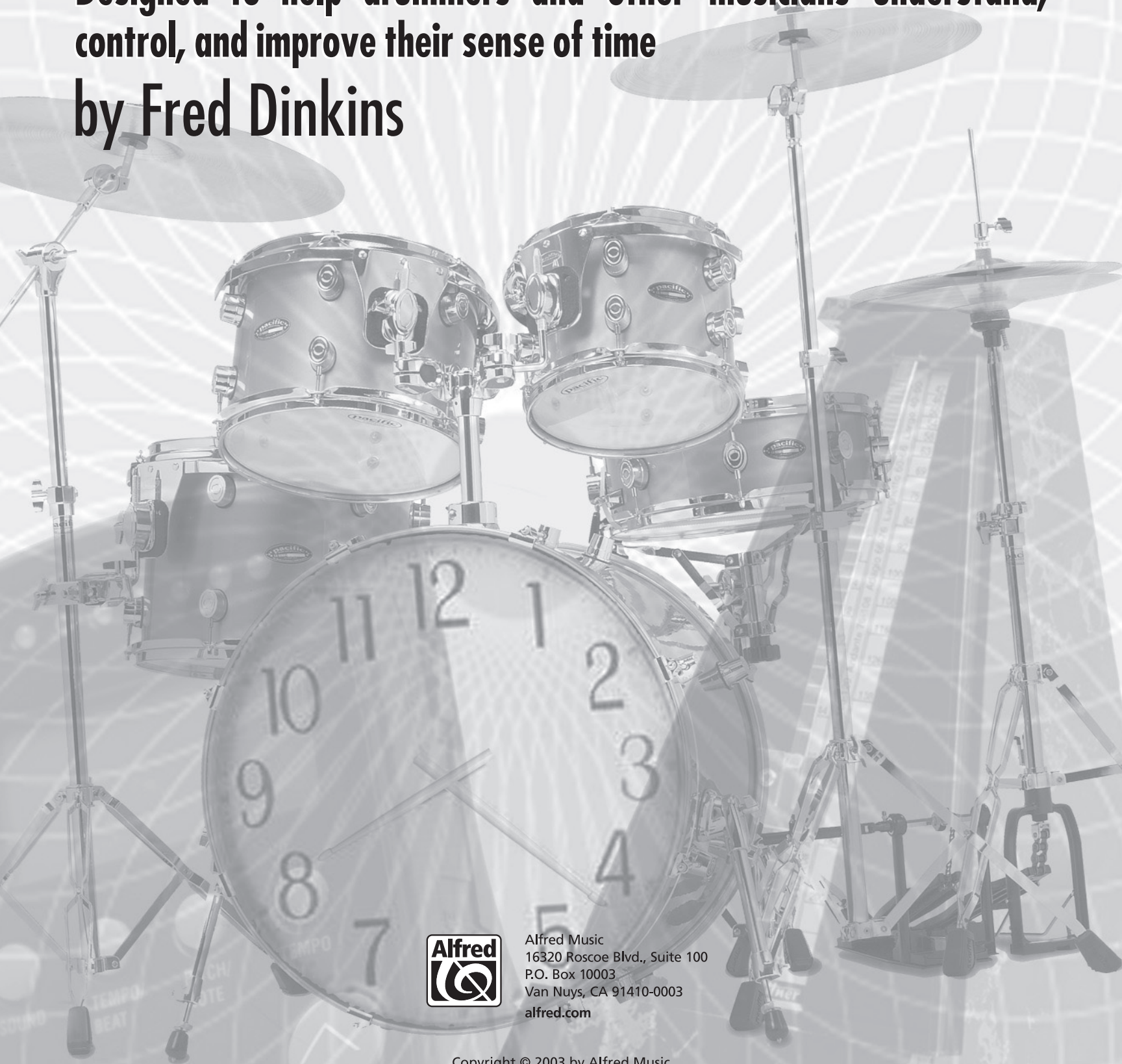


It's About Time

Designed to help drummers and other musicians understand, control, and improve their sense of time

by Fred Dinkins



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Foreword

by Harvey Mason

Fellow Musicians,

The *It's About Time* method is a guaranteed solution to time problems. Many years ago, I experimented with this concept and found it to be a proven method for improvement and confidence. Fred has worked tirelessly to perfect this approach and he has finally produced this book, which I fully endorse. If used consistently, *It's About Time* will cure rushing, dragging, and confidence problems and will provide stability to your musical vocabulary. This method will definitely work!

Harvey Mason



Fred with Harvey Mason

About the Author



Fred Dinkins was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and at the early age of six began swinging his first pair of sticks. By the age of 13, he began his professional career playing with various gospel acts.

In 1982, he moved to Los Angeles, California, with his family to expand his musical education. Shortly thereafter, Fred became a teacher at the world-famous Musicians Institute, Percussion Institute of Technology (PIT). His unique style of teaching good time-keeping and grooving has earned him recognition as one of PIT's most sought-after teachers and clinicians.

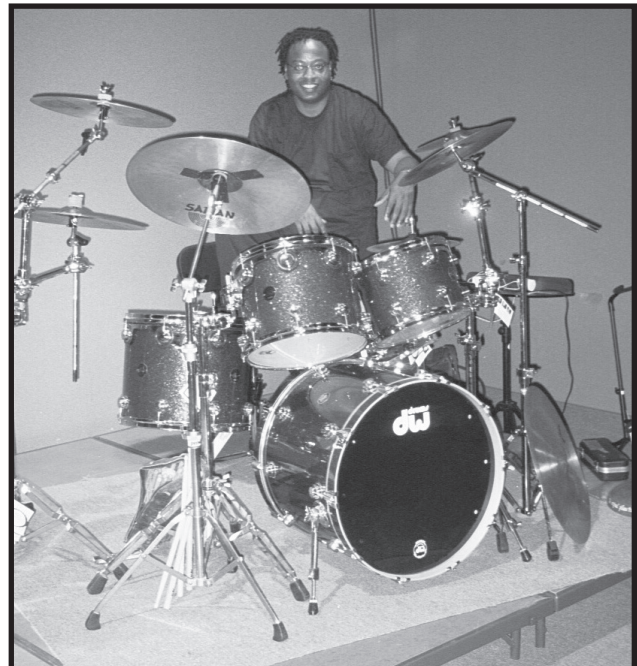
Fred has performed with saxophonist Sam Riney, gospel great Andrae Crouch, the Emotions, Edwin Hawkins, Kurt Whalum, Paul Jackson Jr., Norman Brown, Barbara Morrison, Hugh Masakela, and many others.

Fred's recording credits include Tramaine Hawkins' Grammy-nominated and Dove Award-winner "What Shall I Do" from *The Joy That Flood My Soul* album, the O'Neal Twins' Grammy-nominated *Blessed Boulevard*, and Debbie Allen's Broadway musical ballet soundtrack *Soul Possessed*.

Some of his video and television credits include *Blackstreet*, *You Are My Joy*, *The American Dream*, *Documentary of the Jackson 5*, Jerry Lewis's 1998 *MD Telethon*, *Good Morning America* with the Emotions, Sinbad's *Funkfest in Aruba* for HBO, Verdine White's *Rhythm of the Earth* bass instructional video, and *Dick Clark's 50th American Bandstand Anniversary* with 2002 Taste of Honey seen on VH1. He was also the drummer and producer of *The Emotions Live*.

Throughout the year, Fred tours with the Emotions as drummer and musical director, Denise Williams, and other artists. When home, he can be found teaching at PIT or in a session at Intersound Production Studios working for producer John Barnes, as well as on numerous other projects.

You can contact Fred via his Web site at: www.freddinkins.com.



Chapter 1

Grooving With Independence

The most common obstacle in developing good time is the lack of a strong independence vocabulary. It is essential to develop good independence between all four limbs and your voice. The slightest delay or anticipation in any one limb can cause the time of any beat to “stutter” or “hiccup,” which will in turn cause a hesitation or disruption in the groove. The best way to avoid these disruptions and develop good independence is to perform as many limb combinations as possible. This takes a good amount of practice but, in time, the communication between the brain and muscles becomes more familiar, and the movement between limbs becomes more natural. This increases your independence vocabulary causing the hesitations and delayed reactions among the limbs to lessen. Developing a good independence vocabulary is the first step towards improving time and groove.

There are many books and videos that focus only on the development of independence. I recommend that you practice with as many of these materials as possible. The more independence mastered by your brain, muscles, and limbs, the better.

The Fifth Limb

The first step to building your independence vocabulary is developing what I like to call the Fifth Limb. In a fun way, your ability to vocalize while playing can be considered an additional “limb” to your hands and feet, simply by counting the subdivisions out loud while you play each exercise. Though this may seem weird to do at first, do not take it lightly. Counting out loud will assist you in developing an internal clock and will help build a foundation for your independence vocabulary.

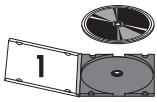
Choosing what to verbalize depends on the tempo of the groove but, in most cases, the smallest or basic subdivision is the best. For example, if the tempo is very fast, vocalizing all the sixteenth-note subdivisions may not be feasible; however, in a slow tempo, it works perfectly.

The following exercises are to help you strengthen your Fifth Limb. While playing, you have to think of the basic subdivisions of the groove while verbalizing the specific subdivision shown above each exercise. Remember to practice ALWAYS with a click or metronome. On the CD, I perform one example of each subdivision type, so you can get an idea of what it should sound like when you first practice these exercises.

1. Sixteenth-Note Subdivision Grooves

For the following exercises, it is best for you to THINK all the sixteenth-note subdivisions (such as 1-e-&-a 2-e-&-a 3-e-&-a 4-e-&-a) but to VERBALIZE only what is indicated.

a) Quarter-Note Grooves


1.  Voice → 1 2 3 4

2. Voice → + + + +

3. Voice → e e e e

4. Voice → a a a a

5. Voice → e a e a e a e a



Sixteenth-Note Subdivision Grooves (continued)

As in the previous exercises, it is best for you to THINK all the sixteenth-note subdivisions (such as 1-e-&-a 2-e-&-a 3-e-&-a 4-e-&-a) but to VERBALIZE only what is indicated.

b) Eighth-Note Grooves

1. Voice →

2. Voice →

3. Voice →

4. Voice →

5. Voice →