

# LINEAR TIME PLAYING

## FUNK & FUSION GROOVES FOR THE MODERN STYLES

***BY GARY CHAFFEE***



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# INTRODUCTION

If the adage "a teacher should be judged by his students" is true, Gary Chaffee is a master teacher. His list of students reads like a "Who's Who" in the Drumset World, including: Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Smith, Casey Scheurell and on and on. His "Patterns" books first published in 1976 opened up new windows for all drummers to look through and this, his first new publication in 17 years, will again change the sound and mind set of today's and future generations of drumset players.

I had the pleasure of meeting Gary when he was a 15-year old high school student. I was immediately impressed with not only his percussive talents, but also his thirst for knowledge, as well as his ability to take an idea and develop it in his own unique way. Taking a small idea and expanding upon it, just as the great composers took a small motif and turned it into a symphony, is a concept Gary has shared with his students. Because of this creative outlook, all of his students sound like themselves, instead of being clones of their teacher.

I believe this book and audio will open your eyes, ears and four limbs to an expanded world of percussion playing and, of course, I am personally proud to not only be Gary's publisher, but if the adage quoted above is true, I am even prouder that he was one of my students.



## *Dedication*

*This book is dedicated to Pat Chaffee Mock,  
the nicest person I have ever known,  
and the best friend anyone could have.*



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# INTRODUCTION

It was over ten years ago that I first introduced the linear phrasing concept, (see Patterns-Time Functioning). At the time, I saw it as being a relatively small, simple, and practical way of developing some interesting ideas. Through the course of working on the material myself (as well as with my students), I have come to realize just how large linear actually is. For all practical purposes, it's endless. This is because linear is nothing more than a "way" of playing. When you play in the linear style, it doesn't matter what you play, as long as nothing hits together. That's it. Linear has no layering, no points where two or more voices are sounding at the same time. Most other types of time feels (cymbal ostinatos, stickings, etc.), have lots of layering. That's why linear "sounds" different, and that's really its value.

As the years have passed, the linear style has gained a great deal of popularity, and is widely used by many top players. In fact, it's difficult to pick up a drum magazine these days without seeing some article where sixteenth notes or triplets are being grouped in various ways:

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L  
 5 5 3 3 4 8

This is really what the linear phrasing concept was all about; how you could take various sequences of notes and group them together in different ways.

The materials in this book represent some of the ideas I have developed over the years of working with the linear concept. Consider them as a kind of introduction. As you work through the examples, you will begin to understand how the linear concept works, and the kinds of options you have with it. Eventually, you will begin to develop your own linear style.

In the process of becoming players, we all learn beats that we continue to use as our normal, everyday, take to the bank feels. However, in new musical situations, you want to be able to create feels that specifically fit each tune.

There are numerous examples of grooves, (Dave Garibaldi's "Oakland Stroke," "Down to the Nightclub," "What Is Hip," Jeff Porcaro's "Rosanna," Steve Gadd's "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover," as well as his infamous 32nd note half-time feels), that have become classics. And in almost all cases, these grooves were not normal feels, but were rather unusual and different, which is exactly why we liked them!

There's nothing wrong with playing a straight 4/4 rock and roll beat. In fact, it's an art to be able to do this well. But it is also an art to be creative, and to be able to make up new ideas. This is how time playing grows.

This book is not about playing beats. It is about developing time feels. In the way that I think of these terms, a beat is a specific pattern of events that is repeated more or less without variation. A time feel, on the other hand, is a more general statement of the time which is modified and developed as the tune progresses. In most playing situations, the arranged parts of the tune, (the head, background figures, etc.), are fixed, and this is where playing a specific pattern is more of a necessity. However, on the blowing sections, (which are by nature more improvisatory), you're going to want something that is flexible, and able to adapt to what's going on in the solo.

The purpose of this book is to teach you how to develop such skills in the linear style. In a very real sense, the concept that's involved here is theme and variations. The theme is the basic pattern you use to establish the feel. The variations are those things you do to the pattern to enhance, color, and modify it. There are many such variations available in the linear style, and we will be working with a number of these.

## **Book Layout**

The materials in the book have been broken down into two sections:

**Basic Exercises:** The exercises in this section are designed to help in developing some of the basic technical skills necessary for linear playing, including such things as voice coordination, dynamic balance, accenting, and the like.

**Ideas:** The second section of the book deals with the development of time feels in the linear style. A wide variety of examples will be shown, including regular 4/4 feels, half-time feels, feels on the set, shuffle feels, as well as feels in odd meters. It is important to understand that the purpose of these examples is to demonstrate some of the many ways in which linear feels can be developed. Although you should definitely try and master the materials in the book, the real reward will come when you can take the ideas that these materials are based upon, and make up grooves of your own.

**SYNCOPIATED TRIPLET EXERCISES**

These exercises use various combinations of syncopated triplets.

mm ♩ = 108-132

1a. RH

b. LH

2a. RH

b. LH

3a. RH

b. LH

4a. RH

b. LH

# BASS DRUM THEMES

In these next two examples, a simple bass drum figure is used as the starting point. Work out each line separately at first. Then try combining and mixing them to create longer phrases.

Bass Drum Theme #1



mm ♩ = 92

Version 1



Version 2



Version 3



Version 4



(R L)

Here's another example that uses a very simple bass drum line with a 2-4 snare drum accent. Play these figures with a hip-hop/shuffle feel.

mm ♩ = 80

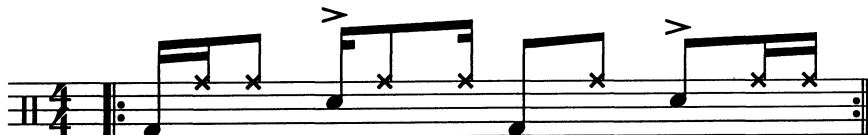
Bass Drum Theme #2



Version 1



Version 2



Version 3



Version 4

