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MP3s
Included on
Disc for All
Examples in
Part 2

Introduction

This book is about a deeper understanding of foot movement on the drumset. Years of learning, performing and teaching has been the basis of this information. The power of great foot execution adds an intensity to modern music that has revolutionized modern drumming. Simply put, *Pedal Control* is about controlling the pedal! It is about you achieving the ability to play whatever idea your heart and mind dictate!

The objective of this book is to focus on the most-often neglected part of the drummer's body: the feet. Page by page you will better understand your potential and the need for this workout.

Exercises from *It's Your Move* have been used for foot development in Part 2 of this book. Years of teaching have shown excellent results with our students for greater pedal control.

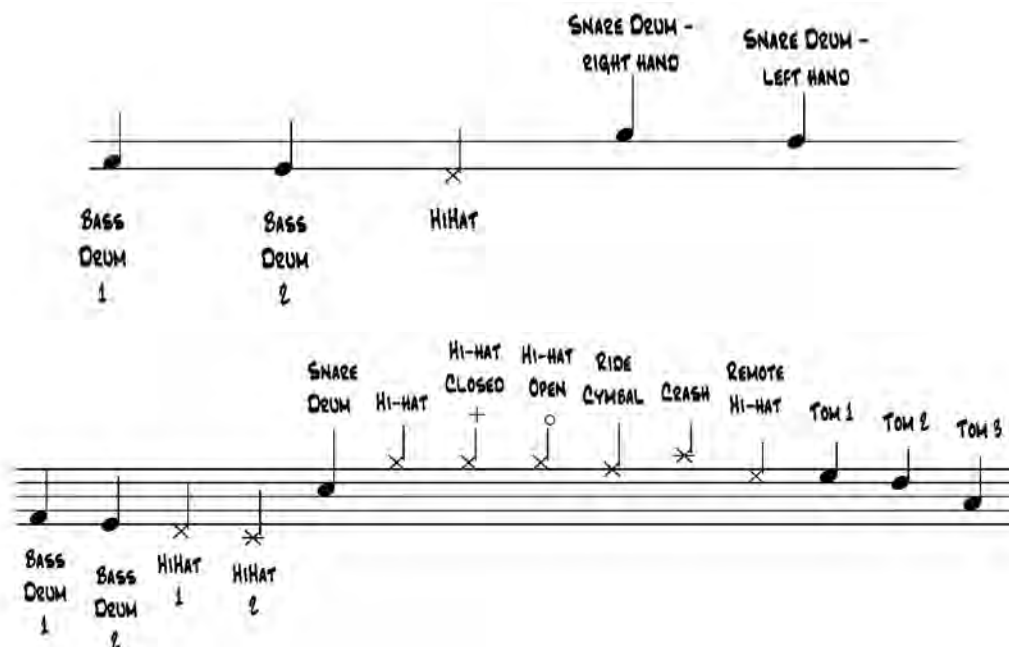
Dom Famularo and Joe Bergamini

Key

There are three formats for notation used in this book:

1. A single-line staff (for exercises involving one sound source only)
2. A double-line staff (for basic coordinated patterns with hands and feet)
3. A full 5-line staff (for full drumset notation).

The single-line staff is self-explanatory and requires no key. The other two staves are explained below. The drumset notation on the 5-line staff conforms to the PAS Standard for drumset notation.



Pedal Setup

In addition to developing your muscles to play the pedals, you must also analyze your setup. Your goal is to find the optimum position for your body in terms of relaxation and comfort, to minimize any roadblocks on the way to having complete technical freedom with your feet. Here are some aspects of this to analyze:

Distance from the Kit:

The distance you sit from the pedals has a tremendous effect on your playing. Look for the most relaxed position of your leg, and tailor your setup to this position. For most people, the thigh and lower leg create an angle slightly greater than 90 degrees when they are relaxed (Fig. 1). This position eliminates stretching and tension. Sitting too close to the drums (Fig. 2) causes the drummer to “pull back” and stretches the muscles of the upper thigh. This can be very fatiguing over time. Some drummers get into this position by trying to set all their drums up under them, instead of at a relaxed distance. Someone sitting too far from the pedal (Fig. 3) is wasting energy stretching their leg muscles and wasting work in the lateral direction as they try to play the pedal.



Fig. 1: Relaxed leg position



Fig. 2: Sitting too close



Fig. 3: Sitting too far away

Posture:

Your posture is a key factor in your playing, and not just for the obvious reason that bad posture can cause back problems. Your posture dictates how much air you can take into your lungs when you breathe. When you are sitting up straight, you can expand the lungs fully and take deep breaths. Maximum air intake means maximum oxygen getting to your bloodstream, which in turn leads to greater energy and endurance. On the other hand, when you slouch, you stop that precious extra air from entering your lungs because slouching compresses the chest cavity, stopping the lungs from expanding fully. Maintaining good posture on a long gig may seem difficult because many people slouch when they are tired (which compounds their tiredness!). However, good posture can (and should) be learned and turned into a habit. The best way to check your posture is to make a video recording of yourself in various performance and practice situations, and to set up a mirror to the side of your kit to observe your body position.

Balance:

Closely related to posture is your balance, or weight distribution, while sitting at the kit. Are you leaning to one side when you play? This indicates an uneven distribution of weight on your feet, which will make it difficult to play even patterns with the feet. When sitting on your throne, try to find a natural and comfortable position to sit. Don't sit all the way back, with your entire backside on the seat. This encourages slouching, and causes the front edge of the seat to dig into the underside of your thighs while you play. It will also cause you to lean backwards when you play double-foot patterns. By the same token, be careful not to sit too far forward on your seat. This may cause you to lean forward. If you lean forward, you need to counterbalance the weight of your body with your legs. Thus, when you go to play two pedals, that balance is disrupted, which can cause unevenness in your playing.

Take the time to experiment with every position. You will know when it is correct. Trust your instincts.

Angle of Pedals:

When relaxed, most people sit with their feet positioned like this (Fig. 4):



Fig. 4: Relaxed foot position

As a general rule, you want your setup to conform to your relaxed body position. When setting up your pedals, try to retain the same relaxed angle of your feet. Ideally you'd want to place the pedal directly under your relaxed foot position.

The following photo shows the feet at a greater angle. This position, for most people, would add tension and should be avoided (Fig. 5).

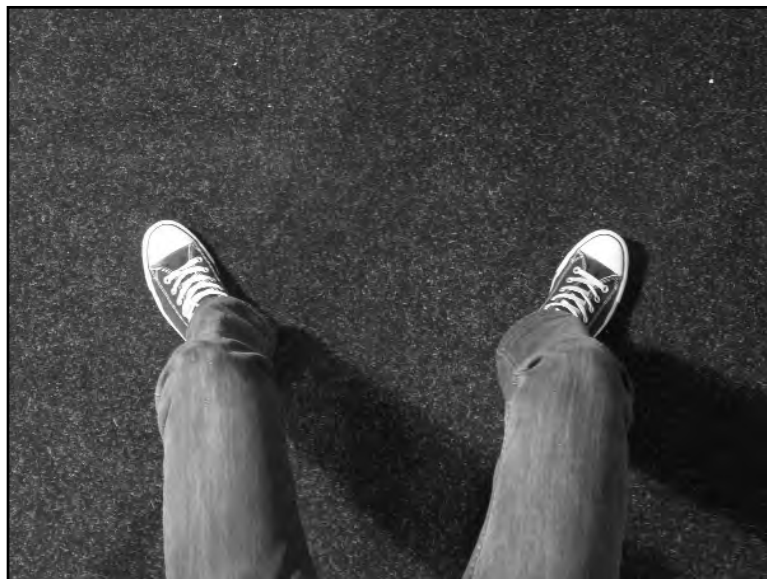


Fig. 5: Tense foot position

So in essence what we are saying is to set up your pedals so they basically sit under the relaxed natural position of your feet. The following photos illustrate this.

Feet Heat

In this solo your hands and feet play all in unison. The precision and accuracy of playing feet and hands together is the main focus of this exercise. Control comes first; speed will follow later. Everything played by the hands is played at the same time with the feet. This can assist in perfecting your balance (sitting position) and overall approach to the drums. The section entitled Play Together began work on this concept. This solo takes things one step further by adding flam patterns.

The solo is played in unison with hands and feet. It is written for snare drum and bass drum, but you could substitute other sounds instead. Each sound combination will create different colors and effects when played over the sound of the feet. Use alternating strokes in this exercise, and be sure all the flams are crisp and clean. After spending 20 minutes on this exercise, feel the heat in your feet! That's where you want to be!

The musical score for "Feet Heat" is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 84-132 BPM. It consists of four systems of two staves each. The first system shows a steady eighth-note pattern. The second system introduces a flam pattern (a snare drum stroke followed by a bass drum stroke) on the second staff. The third system features triplets of eighth notes on both staves. The fourth system continues with triplets and includes a flam pattern on the second staff. The notation uses standard musical symbols for notes, rests, and triplets.

Pedal Control

Feet Heat #2, in 7/8, presents you with some interesting combinations and a three-bar phrase length.

$\text{♩} = 280$

The musical score is written for a single staff in 7/8 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 280. The piece consists of four measures. The first measure contains a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second and third measures continue this pattern, with the third measure ending with a three-bar phrase. The fourth measure concludes the piece with a final cadence. The score includes various rhythmic notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, along with dynamic markings like accents and slurs.



Hats on Feet

Having incorporated two hi-hats into our playing, one on each side, both Joe and I have opened up our sound options to a whole new level. With both hi-hats closed and your feet on the bass drum pedals, play this solo, noticing that right hand and foot are together, and left hand and foot are together. The sound that is created adds a whole new dimension of power to your playing. Be sure not to flam the sound—the unison notes must be played perfectly together. There are some flams involved; these also must be played crisply and cleanly.

The musical score is written for a drum set, featuring a complex solo. It begins with a tempo marking of $\bullet = 84 - 120$. The score is organized into five systems, each consisting of two staves. The top staff of each system represents the hi-hats, and the bottom staff represents the bass drum pedals. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The hi-hat part is characterized by a consistent pattern of eighth notes, often with a 'flam' (a note followed by a rest) and sometimes with triplets or sextuplets. The bass drum part features a similar rhythmic structure, often mirroring the hi-hat patterns. The score is marked with '3' and '6' above certain groups of notes, indicating triplets and sextuplets, respectively. The overall feel is that of a fast, intricate, and powerful drum solo.