

PREFACE

This revised and extended edition presents a comprehensive study of measured double-stroke rolls in "quarter" time, 6/8, and cut time. Rolls are, by far, the greatest single problem faced by drummers; indeed, many professionals as well as students never completely overcome the problem. In the initial stages of learning to roll the problem is basically technical. I would estimate that it takes an average student about two years before he or she is able to execute rolls with control and finesse. But even as the technical aspect is being developed, there still exists the problem of reading rolls from written music. I have seen numerous drummers with a well-developed technical facility for playing open and closed rolls in breaks and solos, who are virtually incapable of reading comparatively easy roll rhythms from a drum part. I am not speaking of drummers unable to read rhythm. For instance, a drummer who can read quarter-notes and eighth-notes at a fast tempo may not be able to read the same rhythms if they were augmented in part with rolls. Moreover, many arrangers are unaware of the subtle and inherent difficulties involved in playing certain roll passages; consequently they may write rhythmic figures with rolls which are extremely awkward to execute. Certain other problems also exist, but by the time the reader completes this book and masters the various exercises, he or she should be well on the road to overcoming many of the fundamental problems involved in the reading and playing of rolls.

There are two methods for teaching rolls. One is the press roll approach, where the student is able to produce a sustained roll in a comparatively short period of time. Rolls produced in this manner, however, initially sound sloppy and uneven. As the student progresses, it is expected that he (or she) will develop a finer skill to execute these rolls in a smooth and even manner. Proponents of this approach assert that for all practical purposes, since the press roll is the roll that is often used at the drum set as well as in orchestral playing, students should be trained early in their studies to think of a roll simply as a continuous and smooth sound for a given length of time.

The second method for teaching rolls is based upon the rudimental or traditional approach, which requires a student in the early stages of learning to play a precise number of "open" double strokes when reading a written roll. As the student's technical prowess increases, he (or she) is able to play the open doubles at an increasingly greater speed. Eventually the student will reach a maximum speed with open doubles, at which point the closed or press roll comes almost naturally. It takes an average student anywhere from one to two years to play a smooth closed roll through the rudimental approach. Although this method is initially tedious and time-consuming, its advocates claim that as an end result the student gains much greater control and overall technique than in the press roll approach. Moreover, this greater control with open doubles and its resulting machine gun-like sound on the snare is extremely useful when it comes to playing solos at the drum set. Besides, it's the measured open double-stroke roll which is used in marching music. When these open doubles are played on a snare drum, from a distance it sounds like a closed roll.

In general, this author tends to agree with the advocates of the latter method, and the approach that is notated on the following pages is basically a traditional or rudimental one. All exercises are presented as "measured" rolls, with a predetermined number of double strokes for each beat. The two approaches, however, are not mutually exclusive. Teaching the press roll can be initiated and incorporated at an early stage, in combination with the approach that I have chosen to illustrate. In fact, the exercises in this study not only can be played as written, with a predetermined number of double strokes per beat, but they can also be played with press rolls. It should be noted that the same exercises could even be played with alternating sticking, thereby providing the reader with the opportunity to develop his single-stroke rolls.

The exercises in this book are presented with a limited number of dynamic marks, which are just on the pages of reading rolls. Extra dynamics can be pencilled in by the teacher (or the reader themselves) wherever they feel it would be helpful. There is, however, a special final page included with this revised edition which presents roll exercises replete with all types of dynamic markings. **Musical Studies For The Intermediate Snare Drummer** and **Intermediate Duets For Snare Drum** are two books which include roll studies within a highly musical frame-work. Each of these two publications have exercises that contain a wealth of dynamics, and I highly recommend that the reader play through each of those studies.

For a further study of rolls in all their ramifications, I recommend the books:

**ROLL CONTROL
ROCK AND ROLLS (Featuring The "Inside" Story)
BASIC TECHNIQUE AND BEYOND
READING, RUDIMENTS, AND MARCHING CADENCES**

Note: The metronome markings at the top of the pages approximate the tempos at which the music should be played in order to achieve a closed roll. However, the metronome tempos should be thought of as final goals to be achieved only after the music has been developed slowly, in a clean and even manner with open doubles.


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I have chosen to begin this new edition by first presenting two pages of open drags. Since an open drag consists of a double stroke on one hand you can think of longer measured rolls simply as consecutive hand-to-hand drags. By developing the drag on each hand it will be excellent preparation for playing measured rolls of any duration.

IMPORTANT: You will usually see drags written in a *closed* form, but for the purposes of this study I have chosen to notate drags with a slash across a 1/16 note.





















As usually written As written for this study

Ex: 

OPEN DRAGS USING 32ND NOTES

<p>Ex:1 As Written As Played</p> 	<p>Ex:2 As Written As Played</p> 
<p>Ex:3 As Written As Played</p> 	<p>Ex:4 As Written As Played</p> 

EXERCISES WITH OPEN DRAGS

1. 	2. 	3. 	4. 
5. 	6. 	7. 	8. 
9. 	10. 	11. 	12. 
13. 	14. 	15. 	16. 
17. 	18. 	19. 	20. 

FOUR-BAR EXERCISES WITH OPEN DRAGS

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10. 

ROLLS – NINE STROKES TO A BEAT (WITH THE 1/4 NOTE REPRESENTING THE BEAT)

A nine-stroke roll is played simply by doubling each of four 1/16th notes, producing eight 32nd notes to a beat. The ninth stroke is the immediate next note that the roll ends on.

Ex:1

(Remember, a nine-stroke roll has eight strokes; the note it ends on constitutes the ninth stroke.)

Instead of notating 32nd notes, sometimes the nine-stroke roll is indicated in a shorter form with an extra slash across each 1/16th note.

Ex:2

(As sometimes written) (As played)

Most often, however, the nine-stroke roll to a beat is notated in its shortest form, with three slashes across the stem of a quarter-note.

Ex:3

(As usually written) (As played)

Important: Notice the tie from the quarter-note roll to the next quarter-note. You must end a roll on the note it is tied to. The tie can be written in either of two ways — under or over the noteheads.

SUMMARY

(As sometimes written) (As usually written) (As played)