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 PLAY BUTTON SYMBOLS
 

Scattered throughout this book you will find play button symbols. Exercises and examples with a play button symbol can be seen being demonstrated in additional video content. You can choose to watch the video and follow along in the book for a quick overview of the material or skip around to hear specific examples. Visit www.TrapDrummer.com as well as www.ThisIsTorch.com for additional bonus content relating to Trap style drumming.

Introduction

I'm proud to present to you the *first ever* instructional book on learning how to play Trap style beats on the drum set, *Trap Style Drumming for the Acoustic and Hybrid Drum Set!* This book dissects and explains the elements found in Trap grooves and provides exercises for application on the drum set. Through the guidance and support of family, friends, colleagues, mentors, and students, I was able to manifest four years of research, trial and error, and experimentation into what I believe is the most concise and comprehensive learning tool for Trap style drumming currently available.

My goal is that this book will inspire you to explore the rhythmic possibilities Trap style drumming has to offer. Above all, my wish is that you will discover your own musical individuality within this style and apply these rhythms to your drumming in your own unique way. I sincerely hope you enjoy working through this book as much as I did putting it together!

WHY I DECIDED TO WRITE THIS BOOK

Trap, like all styles of music, carries with it a specific vibe, sound, vocabulary, and set of musical tendencies. As a drummer, I was drawn to the challenge of trying to replicate the rhythms and sounds of Trap beats on live drums. This process is commonly referred to as "reverse engineering," a term popularized by drumming pioneers JoJo Mayer and Johnny Rabb. Due to its rhythmic complexities and the technical challenges it can present, playing Trap can literally feel like man vs. machine. Therefore, I created this book to serve as a guide and learning tool to help with the challenges of learning this style.

This book started out as just a series of scattered notation of rhythms and groove ideas. When I first heard the intricate snare fills, dicey hi-hat rhythms and unconventional snare and kick combinations of Trap beats, I recognized what I felt was a unique and relatively uncharted rhythmic vocabulary that could be explored and applied to the drum set. Upon further research, it came as a surprise that I couldn't find a single drum book, instructional DVD or any other learning materials available on Trap style drumming. To compensate, I began jotting down my own notes on scrap paper while transcribing, dissecting and categorizing hundreds of Trap beats. As my collection of notes grew, I began organizing my notated rhythms into a series of exercises inside a notebook and began to use it as a personal learning tool and guide during practice sessions.

As I became more proficient with playing Trap beats, I began performing Trap music locally around New York City as well as releasing video content on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter (follow @thisistorch and @trapdrummerofficial). I found myself often being approached by other drummers during shows or through social media who wanted to know more about the techniques I was using.

I realized other drummers were interested in learning the approaches I was using on how to play styles like drum 'n' bass and Trap music. I decided I wanted to share some of the techniques, concepts, tips and tricks that I had developed over the years and compile them into a book. From that point on, I

made it my personal mission and responsibility to manifest this book into reality so that other drummers could have a specialized learning tool and guide for playing this style. Like most forms of electronic or programmed music, Trap has been considered an unconventional style to play on the drums. Now it has its own specialized and conventional method book!

BOOK DESIGN AND CONCEPT

This book teaches my personal approach to Trap style drumming and the techniques I have developed. I was inspired tremendously by good friend and mentor, Johnny Rabb, and his book entitled *Jungle/drum 'n' bass for the Acoustic Drum Set*. I consulted with Johnny often during the writing of this book, and he graciously offered the use of his book as a reference and guide.

In my opinion, there is no better way to learn electronic style beats and vocabulary than the system Johnny Rabb presents in *Jungle/drum 'n' bass for the Acoustic Drum Set*. In Johnny's book, he makes use of what he calls "rhythm fragments" which are short quarter-note long chunks of beat combinations that are meant to be strung together to create endless possibilities for grooves. It's a system labeled alphabetically and numerically that provides a quick at-a-glance visual and allows for creative practicing and beat-making on the fly.

I've chosen to adapt and integrate a similar rhythm fragment system as well as a "modular measure system" as the basis for many of the exercises in this book. These exercises are designed to be fun and challenging, and are intended to put you into a creative zone. These exercises are considered *open-ended concept* exercises, because they employ the use of rhythm fragments and modular measures as improvisational devices. By practicing these exercises, you will develop the skill to easily improvise your own original Trap style beats on the drum kit.

You can think of this book as a "*choose your own adventure*"-style drum book. Other than a simple set of playing instructions and notated grooves, you will have the freedom to choose how *you* will play and navigate through the exercises. The beauty of presenting a book in this format is that the possibilities are endless. Quite simply, no two drummers will play through this book in the same way!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is designed to be read both front to back as well as jumping from section to section. If this is your first time going through this book, I recommend moving through it from front to back to help with establishing a strong foundation with this material. Once you have completed your first pass through the entire book, I encourage you to explore this material further by jumping from section to section. For example, the ostinato section of this book (Chapter 10) can be used in conjunction with any open-ended concept exercise in this book, and will give you endless combinations of beats to experiment with. I recommend having a pen/pencil and a notebook with staff paper nearby so you can write down all of your ideas.

WHAT IS TRAP MUSIC?

Trap music first emerged from southern United States during the 1990s. Trap music's cultural origins come primarily out of Atlanta, GA as well as the music scenes of Houston, TX, and Memphis, TN and is considered a sub-genre of southern hip-hop, also known as "Dirty South." The sound of Trap is meant to be a reflection of the dark and grim lifestyle of hood life, referring to a "trapped" life that is hard to escape involving gang violence, violence in the hood, gentlemen's clubs and dealing illegal drugs in the drug den or "trap house." In fact, artists have described the sound as the feeling of being "trapped" in a dark dungeon. The vibe of traditional Trap music can come across as having a dark and bleak or even a spooky or creepy type of ambience; think of the theme's from soundtracks such as *The Twilight Zone* or the *Halloween* movies.

Trap music is known for its characteristic bouncy feel, which is typically in half-time and can range widely in tempo from between 95BPM and 190BPM. Some of the musical elements in Trap feature crisp and grimy sounding rhythmic snares and claps, melodically pitched "dive-bombing" drum fills, deep and boomy sub-808 kick drums, and "twitchy" clusters of double- and triple-timed hi-hats which are also referred to sometimes as "dancing hi-hats." Other elements in Trap production can include anything from multilayered melodic hard-lined synths to ethereal or "dream-like" sounding synth tones, and often times a symphonic or cinematic use of orchestral, brass, and woodwind instruments.

In recent years, another sub-genre that has risen in popularity is Trap EDM. Trap EDM is known for fusing elements of dub, house, and techno sounds, with TR-808 sounds and vocal samples for a new electronic dance Trap blend. Trap EDM tracks also tend to use arrangements with builds and drops with similar characteristics to dubstep style tracks. A popular distinction made between the two is that traditional Trap is considered *rap music* while Trap EDM is considered *dance music*.

WHERE CAN YOU HEAR TRAP?

The *sound* of Trap has been in mainstream music since the early 1990s with southern hip-hop and later evolved into what it is today. As I write this book in 2018, Trap music is officially everywhere! You can hear the 808s of Trap music booming down the block in vehicles passing by as you walk down the street. If you go out to a club, it's likely that the DJ will be playing Trap music. You can hear the Trap sound in commercials all over the internet, radio, and in television. Even in the rehearsal studios I frequent, I find myself outnumbered by producers creating Trap music.

The Trap sound has been embraced by EDM producers worldwide who use the sounds in their productions. In fact, there are countless loop and sample packs available for purchase that feature the sample libraries of many notable Trap producers that are currently being used by EDM producers around the world. Trap started off as an underground hip-hop movement primarily out of Atlanta, GA, but has now officially made its way around the globe and, finally, into this book.

CHAPTER 1

PRE-TRAINING - THE 3:2 & 2:3 RHYTHMS

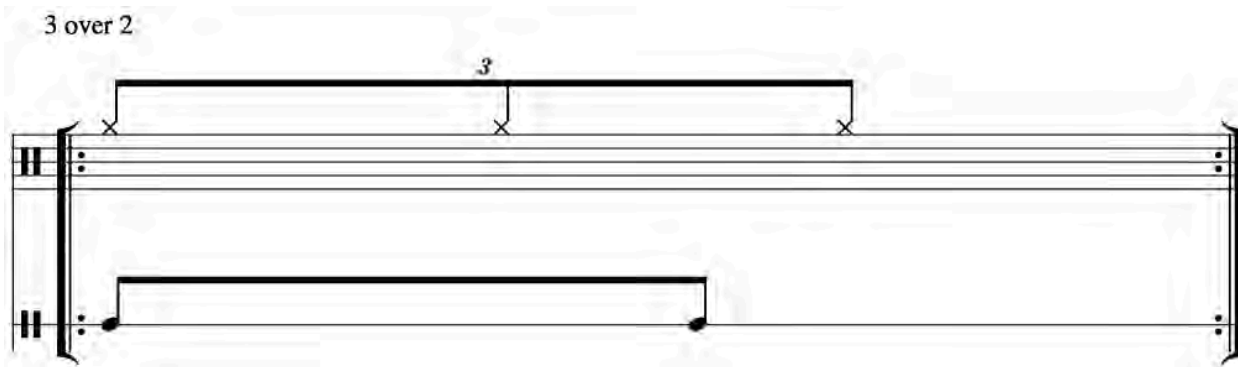
Gear needed for this chapter: Hi-Hat, Snare, and Bass Drum.



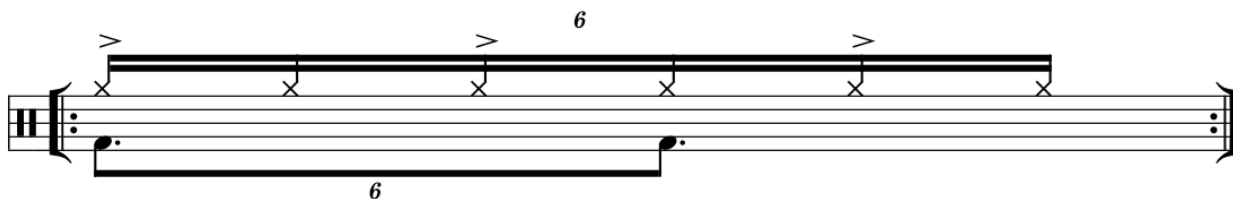
Before we venture into the complex rhythms of Trap style drumming, we first need to understand the core rhythms in Trap music. Some of the most common rhythms in Trap involve duple and triple subdivisions shifting back and forth as well as combining in polyrhythm. In this chapter, we will cover rhythms 3:2 (3 over 2) and 2:3 (2 over 3). The following pages feature rhythmic breakdowns and exercises that will help develop the foundation needed for learning Trap grooves.

THE 3:2 RHYTHM Ⓜ

Here is the 3:2 rhythm represented as 8th-note triplets stacked above 8th-notes on a grand staff:



As shown below, the 3:2 rhythm can be broken down by subdividing the 8th-note triplets into 16th-triplets. The accented notes represent the “3” part of this rhythm. The “2” part of this rhythm is created simply by lining up one note below the first of every three 16th-triplet notes. This creates a “3” on top of “2” stacked rhythm:



This is how you will be seeing this rhythm written in the following exercises:



Remember to practice this rhythm very slowly at first to get the feel and coordination down. When you feel more comfortable, you can move on to the exercises on the following pages.

3 over 2 Exercises

3 over 2

Exercise 1 - Kick Doubles

Exercise 2 - Snare Doubles

Exercise 3 - Kick Off-Beats

Exercise 4 - Snare Off-Beats

Exercise 5 - Alternating Off-Beats

Exercise 6 - Doubles & Off-Beats

Exercise 7 - Paradiddle Pattern