



Jazz Drumset for Middle and High School Bands

CLINICIAN:

Steve Fidyk

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SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

Jazz Drummer's Workshop Clinic Handout

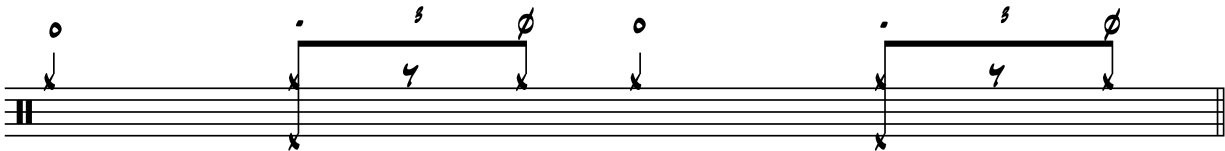
by Steve Fidyk

Texas Bandmasters Association
San Antonio, Texas
Friday July 24, 2015
4:00 p.m.



Jazz Hi-Hat and Ride Cymbal Fundamentals

An essential key to creating a complete hi-hat sound is for the top and bottom cymbals to always touch. Try resting your left foot on the pedal board and slightly lift your toes to help raise the cymbals. This provides a small opening between both cymbals which is enough to make a sound. If you lift your toes a little more, the hi-hat sound will be louder.



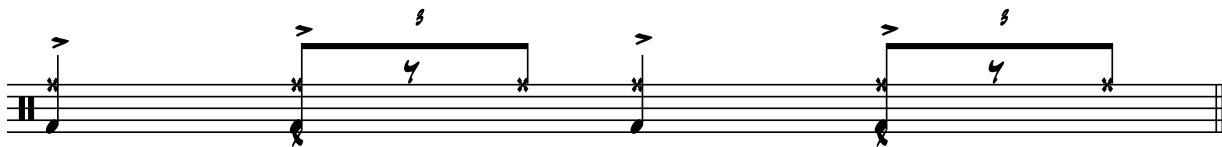
- Beats 1 and 3 are open with both cymbals still touching.
- Beats 2 and 4- the cymbals are closed. This is achieved with your left foot or by using your left hand from underneath to mute the cymbals.
- The “a” of 2 and 4, the cymbals are half open- a tension between closed and open.

To create a swing feel on the hi-hat cymbals, each sound should *lead* to the prominent, open beats of 1 and 3.



The ride cymbal (or top cymbal as it was originally called) is used for backing jazz soloists and for loud ensemble accompaniment. For modern music, a good ride cymbal will have a balance of stick attack, a clear bell sound, and overtones or ring.

The ride cymbal is the most important element for achieving a good flowing swing feel. Accenting the quarter note pulse within your ride pattern can help “lock in” your three remaining limbs when playing time. Knowing where the quarter note is and how it relates to the rhythms you are playing will help develop solid time, regardless of what style of music you are playing.



-Steve Fidyk



Improve Your Bottom Line

Part 1: Bass Drum Comping in 4/4 by Steve Fidyk



Drummers depend on the bass drum to help drive the band and provide depth to their time feel. Throughout the 1920s and '30s, the bass drum was the "solid four" time-keeper of the rhythm section. Many modern jazz drummers use the bass drum to attain a softer, feathering pulse in union with the acoustic bass. A dynamically controlled quarter-note pulse on the bass drum, played in sync with a walking acoustic bass line, can help expand an ensemble's sound and reinforce the swing feel. The bass drum can also be used as an accent texture for stressing ensemble rhythms or as a third hand to execute patterns that are generally played on the snare drum or toms.



THE TECHNIQUE

To achieve a round tone and a consistent swing pulse with the bass drum, it's essential to have control of the heel-down foot technique. This approach works particularly well when you're playing rhythms at a softer dynamic range (pp-mp). I find that when

my foot is resting on the pedal as I improvise, I have greater control and an improved sense of balance.

THE SOUND

I achieve my bass drum sound by tensioning the batter head until there are no wrinkles around the perimeter. For the resonant head, I start by matching the pitch with the batter side, and then I tighten each lug approximately a half turn to produce a somewhat higher tone.

For dampening, jazz legends Joe Morello and Buddy Rich would put a 3" felt strip against the inside of the batter head. Swing drummer Dave Tough placed torn newspaper inside his bass drum shell. Mel Lewis would tape a piece of paper napkin to the edge of the batter head to help decrease the overtones. Experiment with your sound to find something that supports the music you're playing.

THE EXERCISES

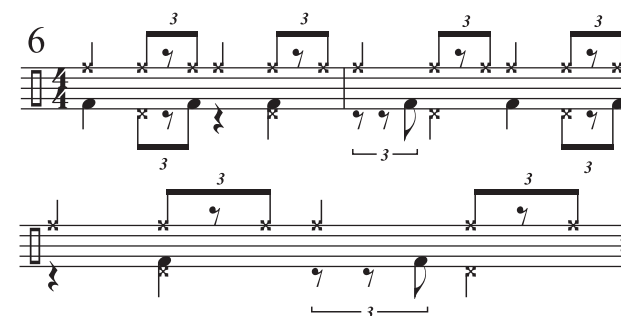
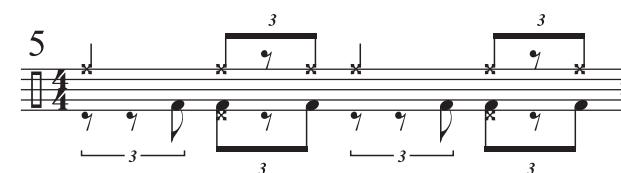
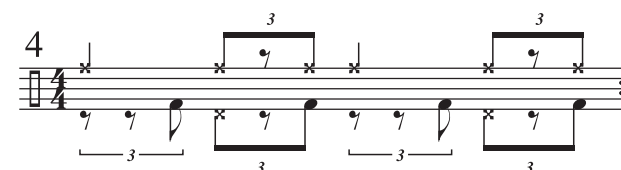
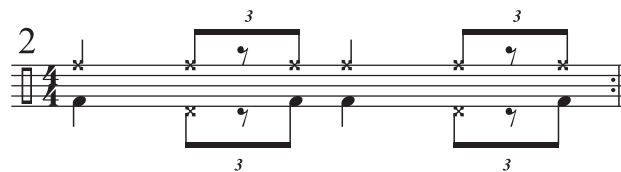
In this article series, we'll examine repetitive riff-style bass drum comping rhythms, first in 4/4. (Future articles will explore ideas in 3/4 and 5/4.) The phrases included here are intended to help you develop balance between your bass drum foot and your upper appendages.

As a starting point, center your attention on the ride cym-

bal, hi-hat, and bass drum, and keep the instruments balanced dynamically so that they sound like one entity. As you practice the following pattern, focus on keeping the bass drum beater rebounding off the head at approximately 2" for a soft, feathered pulse.



Now try playing the following bass drum riffs in conjunction with the ride cymbal and hi-hat.

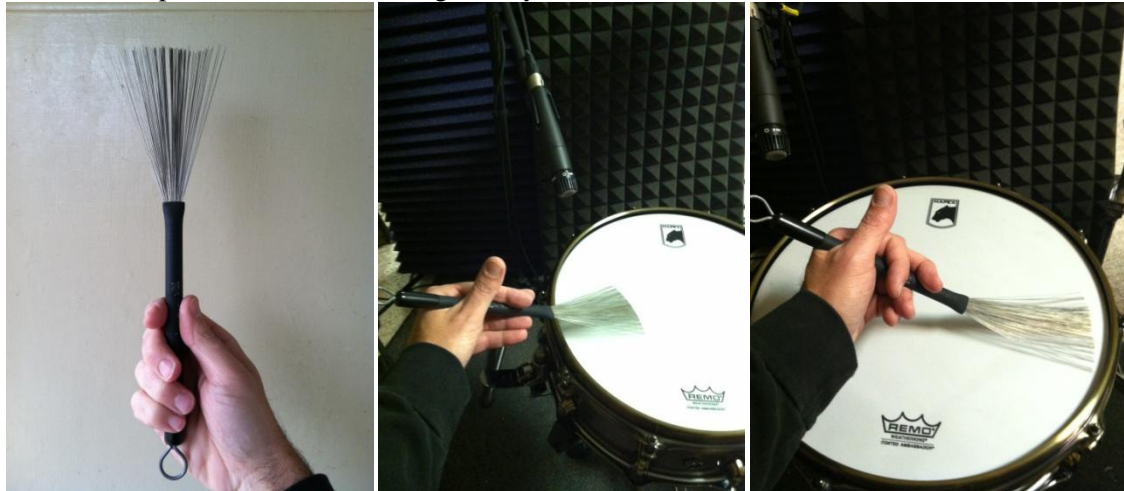


Wire Brush Technique

A brush can produce staccato and legato sounds... For a staccato sound, snap the brush toward the drumhead and draw the sound from the instrument by striking and then lifting the fan. For a legato sound, sweep the fan across the head in a circular motion. The brush fan pivots across the head with a flowing motion controlled by the fingers, forearm, and wrist. This technique produces a *swish* sound.

The right brush is held like a drumstick with a combination of wrist and fingers.

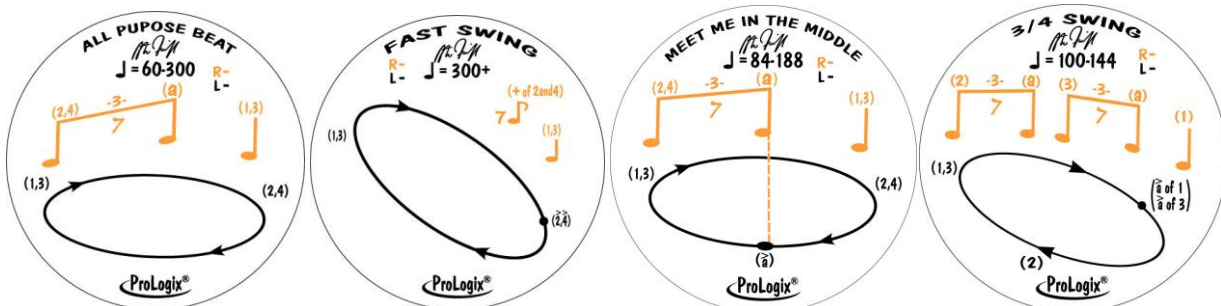
For the left hand, the index and middle fingers are positioned on top of the brush handle as the ring finger acts as a bumper underneath. The fingers stay in constant contact with the handle at all times.



Right Hand Hold

Open position (beats 1 and 3) Closed position (beats 2 and 4)

The open and closed positions (above) refer to the movement of the fingers when performing legato quarter note sweeps on the drum head.



Spending time practicing brush beats with recordings can help you gain confidence when improvising with musicians on the bandstand. The goal is to create brush beats that swing and sound dynamically balanced hand to hand. My overall brush concept is based on moves that Joe Morello showed me. I also listened a great deal to Jeff Hamilton, Ed Thigpen, Shelly Manne and Philly Joe Jones.

-Steve Fidyk

Below are nine significant tips that recap many of the ideas presented throughout the text. Keeping these in mind before and during a sight-reading session can help you lead a band while performing any new arrangement.

Tips

- ✓ The time, feel, and dynamics for the entire band are influenced by the drummer.
- ✓ To help improve your time, practice with a metronome or drum machine, as this experience will help you become a more reliable reference point for the band.
- ✓ It is necessary to listen to the music you are performing in order to better understand the style and musical concept.
- ✓ Always have a pencil in hand at rehearsal, as the conductor or band director will more than likely give road-map instructions. Mark these directions clearly on your part so you don't get lost when reading.
- ✓ As you sight-read, look for the double bar which helps mark the end of a musical phrase. Knowing the number of measures in a phrase gives you the freedom to listen to each section of the ensemble.
- ✓ The key to solid articulation when playing the drumset is to listen as you sight-read. Your approach to playing articulations should complement the ensemble. By reading these signs, you can bring clarity to the longer phrases you play.
- ✓ As you play your fills, keep the concept of the song in mind. Remember, your band mates should be able to feel and understand the fills you play. If not, they'll probably have difficulty with each of their entrances.
- ✓ Looking at the conductor's score can help answer questions regarding dynamics, phrasing, style, and articulation that are not clearly represented on the drum part.
- ✓ Have fun as you sight-read any new piece of music.