



YAMAHA

Educator Series

PERCUSSION



Robert Breithaupt

Robert Breithaupt is a professor of music, department chair of jazz studies/music industry and director of the noted percussion program at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. Bob has performed with outstanding artists such as Monty Alexander, John Faddis and Terry Gibbs, and is the drummer for the Columbus Jazz Orchestra. He has published many articles and is the author of the textbook "The Complete Percussionist," and is featured in the instructional video, "Snare Drum Basics." Bob is the vice president of Columbus Pro Percussion, Inc. and is one of today's most recognized percussion educators, presenting clinics in the United States and abroad as an artist/clinician for the Yamaha Corporation, Zildjian Cymbals and Zildjian Drumsticks. He is also a member of the board of directors of the Percussive Arts Society.

Communication with Young Drum Set Players

By Robert Breithaupt

Playing the drum set is a demanding task for a person of any age, but especially for the young student. The drummer is expected to keep time, play all nuances, and often perform unfamiliar musical styles. With this in mind, it is critical that a conductor communicate with the drummer in a positive and informative way. Many record companies have operated for years under the adage, "People don't know what they like...they like what they know." This applies to drummers as well. A drummer who likes a musical style understands what it takes to make the style come alive. Young players must be comfortable in four basic styles: rock, latin, swing and ballads. Since drummers generally learn aurally (by ear) as well as visually (by reading music), it is helpful to present both a musical and written example for each style. The following is a collection of basic styles and techniques which should be helpful to educators as well as young players.

Example 1: Rock

Basic Rhythmic Feel: Strong "back-beat" (beats 2 & 4); underlying eighth-notes; bass drum coordinates with, and supports the bass guitar part. Basic groove can be created with bass drum and snare drum.

Aural Example: This one is easy...your students will provide you with the examples!

Hi Hat
Snare Drum
B.D.

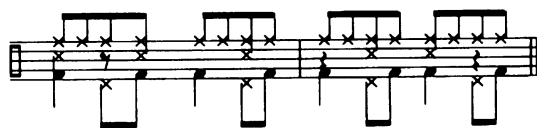


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Example 2: Latin

Basic Rhythmic Feel: Generally in two (cut-time); left hand traditionally plays "clave" rhythm as ostinato; bass drum plays ostinato; right hand plays repetitive figure to complete the pattern; emphasis on the "down beats" (1 & 3) rather than "up-beats" (2 & 4) as in basic rock and swing.

Aural Example: "Girl from Ipanema," "Blue Bossa"



Example 3: Swing

Basic Rhythmic Feel: Generally in four, sometimes in two and other meters. Rhythmic emphasis on beats 2 & 4; ride cymbal pattern in one hand, snare drum plays support figures for ensemble, improvises or plays ostinato; basic 2 & 4 on hi-hat, all four beats on bass drum or support in coordination with snare drum. A basic groove is created with a ride cymbal and hi-hat.

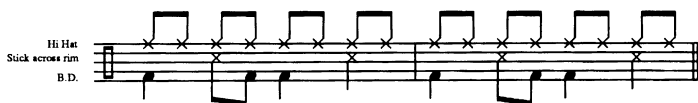
Aural Example: "Satin Doll," "Take the A Train"



Example 4: Rock Ballad

Basic Rhythmic Feel: Slow, eighth-note feel; ostinato bass drum which coordinates with bass player. Generally beats 2 & 4 played with stick being struck against the rim while the butt end of the stick is held against the middle of the head.

Aural Example: "If," "Evergreen," "We've Only Just Begun"



Example 5:

Basic Rhythmic Feel: Slow, in four; brushes generally used. Underlying feel may be duple or triplet feel which may be implied in the brush pattern.

Aural Example: "Misty," "Stardust"



PLEASE NOTE: THESE ARE BASIC EXAMPLES. THERE ARE LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF VARIATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THIS FUNDAMENTAL LIST.

The standard or traditional ballad, will generally require the player to perform on brushes. The key to successful brush playing is to keep the brushes IN CONTACT with the head as much as possible. Keep both brushes on the head, moving in a semi-circle, with one brush going clockwise and the other going counter-clockwise. One must then move the brushes to support the feel or pulse of the music.

Learning to play rhythmic figures with one limb while maintaining a basic pulse with another can be a frustrating experience for the young drummer, but is a key element to drum set performance. If the drummer experiences coordination problems while attempting the previous exercises, isolate the four limbs individually. Start with one limb and add the patterns of the other limbs one at a time. If this still presents problems, add the limbs in different combinations. Remember, initial speed is not necessary, but rhythmic accuracy is. Your knowledge of styles and coordination techniques are valuable assets when dealing with that sometimes difficult, occasionally spectacular, and always critical member of the ensemble: the drummer!!!

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