

# BEGINNERS' GUIDE TO DRUMS

## PART 5: CREATIVITY ON THE DRUMSET

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So you want to get into playing the drums, do you? Well, this is where you find yourself getting creative on the kit for the very first time...



ONCE YOU'VE GOT THE BASIC GROOVE GOING, YOU CAN MIX IT UP WITH YOUR OWN BEATS AND FILLS.

Now that you've got some basic beats going and you are playing along to some music, we need to look at ways of developing your own ideas. In part four we covered the basics of music theory. We will now take this a step further by using all of the drumset and by taking some chances.

As mentioned in part four, drum music is quite simply a visual representation of what happens and when. But we only used the hi-hat, snare and bass drum last time, so it was very simple. If we are going to use the rest of the kit, we need some new symbols to represent the different parts of the kit. Check out the drumset notation diagram shown on Page 72.

### LEARNING TO READ

Over the years I have looked at the ways other musicians read music, and for the most part they use sounds rather than numbers and

letters. When being creative, it is easy to say everyday words that evoke the rhythm you want to play. Please look at the chart diagrams on Page 72 before we carry on.

As you can see in the top example (quarter notes), it has the correct count, 1 2 3 4. At the side, I have written a one-syllable word – 'DRUM' – so you can count to this rhythm in two ways. Either 1 2 3 4, or drum drum drum drum. The other examples follow the same principle. Remember from Part Four that the 'e' sign can also be written as '+', so 1 e 2 e 3 e 4 e is exactly the same as 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +.

Just below the quarter notes, we have the eighth notes, counted as 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +, or Monday Monday Monday Monday. Then we have the sixteenth notes, counted as 1 e + A 2 e + A 3 e + A 4 e + A, or Caterpillar Caterpillar Caterpillar Caterpillar. Next are the two sixteenth notes and an eighth note, counted as 1 e + (A) 2 e + (A) 3 e + (A) 4 e + (A). – this

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new type of count is explained shortly – or counted as Saturday Saturday Saturday.

With all the types of count we've come across so far, you are striking a part of the drum kit each time you say a letter or number. For example, 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +. But when you count using a circled symbol, it is, in effect, a missing note, or a silent note. So the word 'Sat-ur-daa-aay' – although it spans four units – only has three 'hits', because the fourth unit is silent. So Sat-ur-daa(aay) becomes 1 e + (A).

### SAY AND PLAY

The same principle follows for any of the other examples with an underline in the word. Now move down the list so that you can get used to saying the words. If you can say it, you can play it! Let's have a look at a rhythm using the numbers and letters to count it (see Example 1).

The result is a little difficult for a beginner to read and can sound a bit mechanical, but by using everyday words to evoke the rhythm, it is a lot easier to 'hear' and better for experimenting around the drums.

### SPICING IT UP

Let's now have a bit of fun with the rhythm by playing it around the drums (see Example 2). The 'Blackcurrant' on snare, the 'Monday' on hi tom, the 'Caterpillar' on the mid tom, and the last 'Monday' on the floor tom (see Example A). Now let's play this pattern between our snare and bass drum (see Example B).

OK, for a little diversion, let's play the drums on this round in the same way as Example A (see Example C).

Now that you understand the concept, you can start mixing up words and experimenting on your own, eg Saturday Monday Saturday Caterpillar, and so on. There are thousands of variations to be played out of this simple idea, and very soon you will be making up your own beats and fills. So off you go! And remember, have fun! ♦

## NEXT MONTH

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### DRUMSET NOTATION

