

FOUNDATIONS FOR DRUMMING

Reading and Technical Exercises for The Elementary to Advanced Student

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FOUNDATIONS SERIES FOR BAND

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Introduction

Foundations for Drumming is the first in a series of methods for the aspiring percussion student. This method is designed to be easily integrated with students at an elementary or secondary level; it is designed to be used in a private or classroom setting; and it is designed to grant the instructor the flexibility to incorporate it as he/she deems best.

The objective of this method is to improve this student's ability to read and perform rhythms of varying complexity; to develop and refine this student's technique; to develop this student's mastery and application of the rudiments of drumming; and to be a source of learning throughout this student's course of study. To achieve the aforementioned, this method is divided into two distinct sections. *Section One* addresses: Reading and Rhythmic Exercises, Sticking Exercises, and Duets. And *Section Two* addresses: Accent Exercises, Open and Closed Roll Exercises, Rudiments, and Etudes.

It is not expected that a student must complete all of the exercises in *Section One* before commencing with *Section Two*. Therefore, it is encouraged that a student work on both sections simultaneously. Because not all students are alike, it is up to the discretion of the instructor as to when, and how to incorporate the exercises in either section. Regardless of how one proceeds, with diligent practice of the material presented, students will greatly improve their technique and reading ability.

Section One

Reading and Rhythmic Exercises

The most common expectation of drummers is that they perform rhythms accurately and in time. Unfortunately, developing an understanding of timing, and how rhythmic patterns correspond is difficult to teach, let alone be understood by the student. Hence, it is developed over time, for it is a concept that is not ascertained just through lecture and demonstration, but more so, through practice until it is internally and instinctively felt.

However, there are some steps an instructor may employ to cultivate a student's understanding. From the outset of this section, the student should always count aloud while playing. Moreover, while counting aloud, he/she should begin subdividing as soon as possible. In doing so, the student will begin to develop strong cognitive skills as it pertains to timing, rhythmic feel, and the relationship between up and down beats. In addition to subdividing aloud, the student should incorporate the use of a metronome. Instituting a metronome not only helps the student to develop a strong sense of timing, but also helps the student to develop rhythmic feel by correlating the difference between up and down beats.

Sticking Exercises

The purpose of the sticking exercises are to refine the technical skill of the student by developing his/her strength, endurance, and fluidity of motion through the art of rebounding the stick. To gain the most out of these exercises, begin by reminding the student that the stick is an extension of one's arm and that the use of his/her fingers will be necessary when performing multiple rebounds, especially at faster tempos. The repetitive nature of practicing these exercises has a number of benefits.

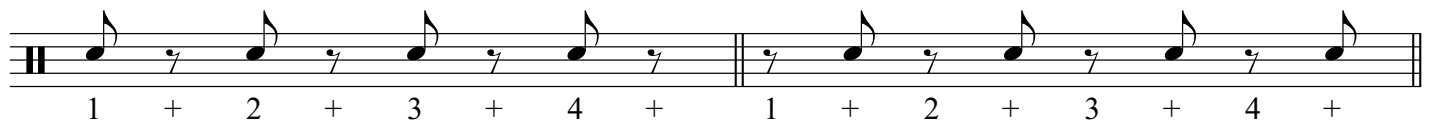
First, it permits the student to study his/her hands to ensure that proper position and technique is being put into practice. Second, performing in this manner assists in developing the student's muscle memory and hand strength. Third, once the aforementioned is adequately demonstrated, the student can begin to increase the tempo of the exercises and focus on the task of rebounding the stick.

As the student practices these exercises, I would recommend that he/she strive to perform each at a metronome marking of at least 80 to the quarter note. Please note that except for the sticking exercises, all others should be performed hand to hand. It is this author's contention that too often students neglect practicing hand hand and thereby inhibit their development of this integral technique. Lastly, it is encouraged that students continue to practice any combination of these exercises as part of their daily warm-up.

Duets

The intent of the duets are to serve two purposes: to introduce students to performing with dynamics and with another musician. While studying the etudes, students should master both lines at the designated metronome markings. Moreover, the instructor may wish to consider having students perform either part with snares off, on a field drum, concert tom, etc., to expose students to listening to another musician performing on an instrument of a different timbre. Thus, enlightening students as to how dynamics are relative to the instrumentation being performed.

Introduction to The Single Eighth Note and Rest



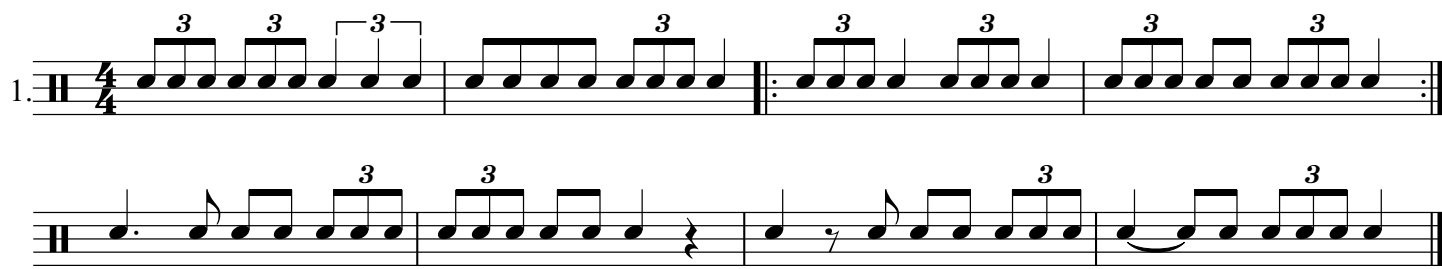
One Eighth Note is Half a Beat



One Eighth Rest is Half a Beat of Silence

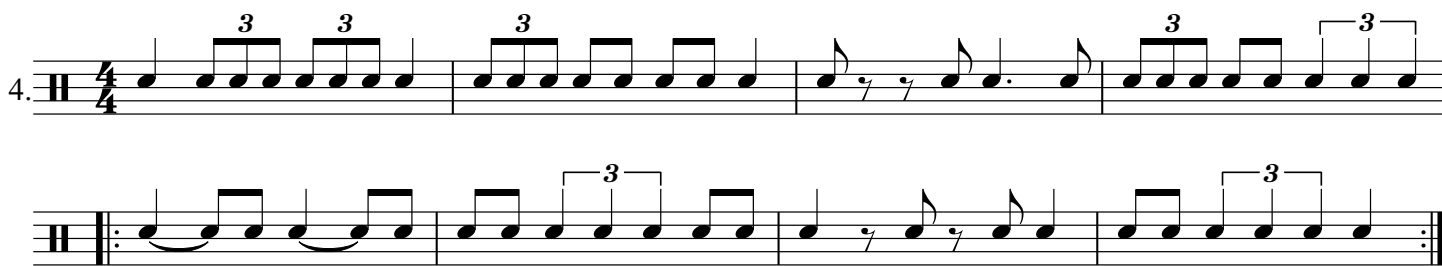


Triplet Exercises

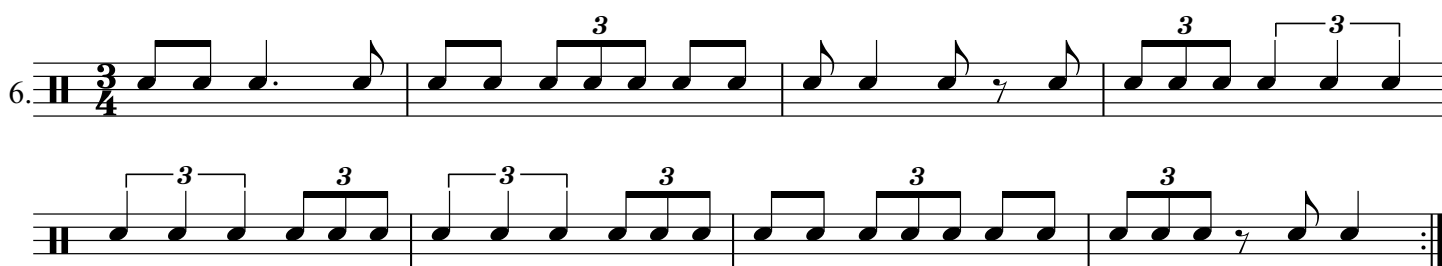
1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

Sixteenth Note Sticking Exercises

1. 
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

11. 
R L L L L R R R R L L L L R R R

2. 
L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

12. 
L L L L R R R R L L L L R R R R

3. 
R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

13. 
R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L

4. 
R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L

14. 
R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L

5. 
R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L

15. 
R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R

6. 
L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R

16. 
L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L

7. 
R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R

17. 
R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L L

8. 
L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L

18. 
L L L L R R R R R R R R R R R R

9. 
L R R R L R R R L R R R L R R R

19. 
L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L

10. 
R L L L R L L L R L L L R L L L

20. 
R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R

Duet 5

♩ = 110

Part I

Part II

f *p*

f *p*

Measures 1-2 of Duet 5. Part I and Part II are in 4/4 time. Part I starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a piano (p) dynamic. Part II starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a piano (p) dynamic. The score shows two measures of music with various note values and rests.

3

Measures 3-4 of Duet 5. The score shows two measures of music with various note values and rests.

5

mf

mf

Measures 5-6 of Duet 5. The score shows two measures of music with various note values and rests. The dynamic is marked mf.

7

3

3

3

3

Measures 7-8 of Duet 5. The score shows two measures of music with various note values and rests. The dynamic is marked mf.

Odd Time Signature Exercises

1. 

2. 

3. 

Section Two

The Rudiments of Drumming are essential variations of drum rolls, paradiddles, flams, drags, and ruffs. During the hundreds of years of its development, various educators, and/or professional associations, have debated what are the most important to learn. For instance, in 1935 the National Association for Rudimental Drummers (www.nard.us.com) created their list of 26, and in 1984 the Percussive Arts Society (www.pas.org) issued its *40 International Rudiments* (which includes all 26 presented by NARD). The rudiments presented in this method are a combination of both, and were chosen based upon this author's observations of how frequently these rudiments are performed in symphonic, concert, and marching band literature for the elementary through high school student. Therefore,

[d]aily practice of...the Rudiments of Drumming is one of the most important mediums whereby ambitious players can quickly and thoroughly acquire a high degree of technical proficiency on the snare drum...Too much stress cannot be placed upon the mastery of these rudiments, for without such a mastery, a performer on the drums is seriously handicapped, particularly when playing drums in a legitimate fashion (H. S. Whistler, p. 1, "Reviewing The Rudiments", Rubank, Inc., 1946).

All of the rudiments presented in this section are grouped into three parts. After the rudiments of each part are presented, a series of short exercises follows which incorporate the rudiments presented, and with the expectation that students will practice each with Open and Closed Rolls. These exercises are then followed by two etudes that include the rudiments just introduced, along with many of the rhythmic concepts covered in section one.

The purpose of the Etudes is to present a longer work for the student to develop, perform, and demonstrate his/her own interpretation. Each has no strict metronome marking as with the duets. Instead, a tempo marking is indicated with the expectation that the student will explore the various tempos under a given marking and determine which he/she thinks best fits the etude. Furthermore, unlike with the rudimental exercises, the indication of which rudiment is to be performed is purposefully left out. Thus, students are expected to determine how they wish to perform the rudiments in the etude by experimenting with how certain stickings better enhance the phrasing of a given work. Thereby, encouraging students to seek what best reflects their own artistry.

Accent Exercises

Performing dynamics at differing tempos is a technique that takes time to master and must regularly be practiced to maintain. The accent exercises presented are intended to aid the student to achieve the aforementioned. It is recommended that these exercises be practiced in stages with the objective to perform each accented note at a dynamic of *forte* and every other at a dynamic of *piano* (one should experiment with different combinations after mastering the aforementioned).

To start off, have students perform these exercises with both hands striking the drum simultaneously. Next, have them perform each hand to hand. Regardless of how these exercises are performed, students should keep their hands close to the drum and avoid sounding staccato.

The last stage is to introduce students to the *Double* and *Buzz Strokes* in preparation for the following Open and Closed Roll Exercises. Here, students will perform the exercises hand to hand. But instead of playing the accented notes with a dynamic of *forte*, students will perform a *Double* or *Buzz Stroke*. Students should aspire to feel comfortable performing both strokes in either hand; to not accentuate either stroke

when performing them; and to not sound staccato, but to smoothly connect either stroke to the following note.

As with the sticking exercises, it is highly recommend that students strive to practice these exercises at a metronome marking of at least 80 to the quarter note, and to incorporate these with the sticking exercises as part of their daily warm-up routine.

Drum Roll

In order for a drummer to sustain a sound, he/she must do so via the drum roll. There are two types of drum rolls: Open (*Double Stroke*) and Closed (*Buzz Stroke*). The Open Roll is most commonly performed in a marching band setting or with rudimental snare drum solos. Whereas, the Closed Roll is most commonly performed in a symphonic setting or with solos that are stylistically of this genre.

The Open Roll is performed by doubling each hand in succession (RR, LL, etc.). It is the amount of doubles performed that determines the type of roll (e.g. 5, 7, 9, etc.). Thus, this roll is achieved by delivering the stick to the drum in a fashion much like throwing a ball. What is difficult to develop is a feel for the rebounding stick at various tempos; to determine the amount of force needed to perform this roll at various dynamics; and to ensure that the doubles of either hand are indistinguishable from each other.

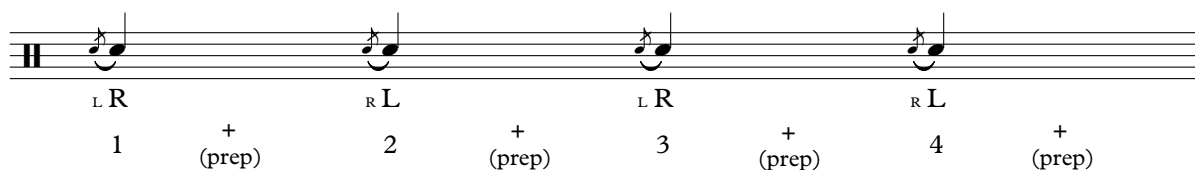
Conversely, the Closed Roll is performed by creating multiple rebounds when striking the drum. This is achieved by pinching the stick between the thumb, index, and middle fingers, thereby creating a *Buzz* sound when striking the drum. The difficulty here is developing the appropriate amount of pressure between the fingers when striking the drum to not inhibit the sticks from rebounding; thereby, enabling both

hands to blend into a smooth sustained sound. And like the Open Roll, it is the tempo, and/or dynamic, that determines the speed and pressure required to perform this roll.

Regardless of which roll is being performed, it is ever so helpful for the student to correlate either to a specific rhythmic pattern. Doing such aids the performer to properly space and time the roll to the tempo of the music. The following roll exercises are to develop said technique. Here it is also recommended that the student use a metronome and track his/her progress. Moreover, the student should always make every effort to ensure that both hands produce a blended and balanced sound when performing these exercises.

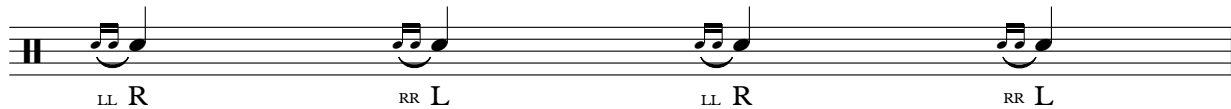
Flam

The Flam is performed by having both sticks strike the drum in succession. Unfortunately, this simple explanation does not adequately convey the difficulty in properly executing it, nor how it is impacted by the tempo, dynamic, and/or style of the work being performed. To begin, raise both hands above the drum, keeping the grace note hand lower than the primary note, and then let gravity do all the work (make sure that the grace note hand always lands first and that it's always softer than the primary note). This technique is aided by counting aloud while subdividing. In so doing, when one counts the up beat he/she should prep his/her hands for the next Flam. Therefore, the right hand will be raised above the left for a Right-Handed Flam, and conversely the left hand will be raised above the right for a Left-Handed Flam.



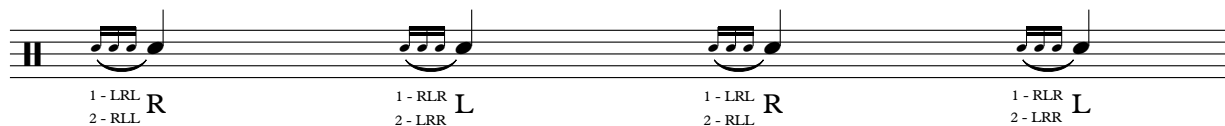
Drag

The same principles of performing the Flam apply to the Drag. Therefore, like the Flam, the execution of the grace notes will be affected by the tempo, dynamic, and/or style of the music. Moreover, the grace notes should be clearly heard and never buzzed. And, as with the Flam, one should continue to subdivide to prepare his/her hands; again making sure that the grace notes are always softer than the primary note.



Four Stroke Ruff

Unlike the Flam and the Drag, the Four Stroke Ruff is performed in a different fashion. Yet, like both, the execution of the grace notes are affected by the tempo, dynamic, and/or style of the music. Furthermore, subdividing is essential to preparing one's hands to ensure that the grace notes are always performed softer than the primary note. As a means to help the student conceptualize how to perform this rudiment, have the student count and perform the grace notes as sixteenth note triplets; eventually having the student perform the grace notes on *Ta* instead of on *And*. Below are examples of two different sticking patterns one may employ when performing the Four Stroke Ruff.



Rudimental Exercises I

1. 13 Paradiddle 9 5 5 9

Paradiddle 5 9 5 9 7

2. Paradiddle 5 9 5 5 Paradiddle 9 5

3. 13 13 Paradiddle 9 5

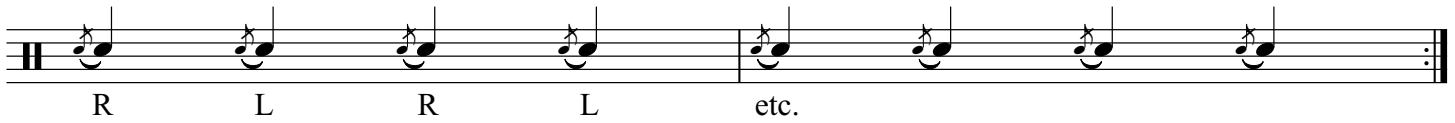
13 13 9 5 7

4. 3 3 3 Double Paradiddle 13

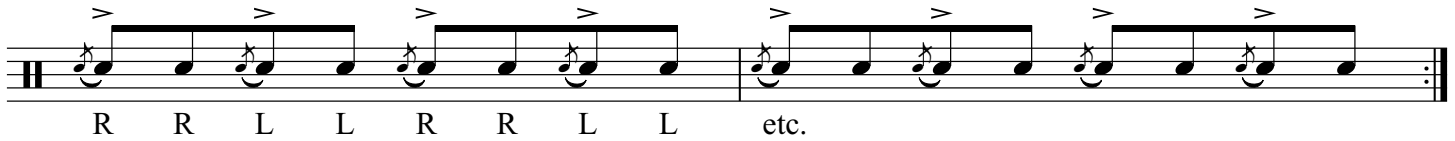
Double Paradiddle

9

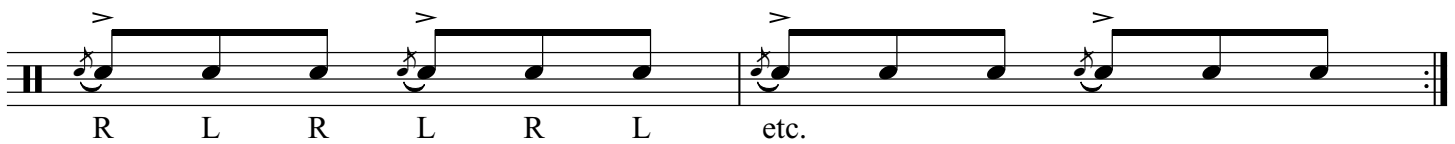
Flam



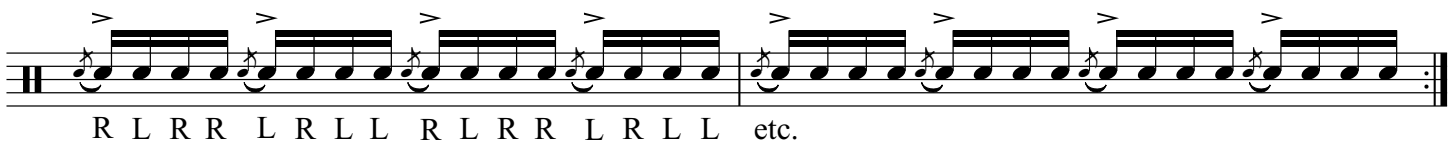
Flam Tap



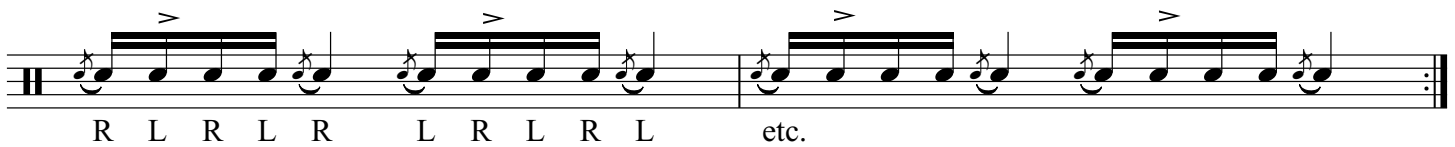
Flam Accent



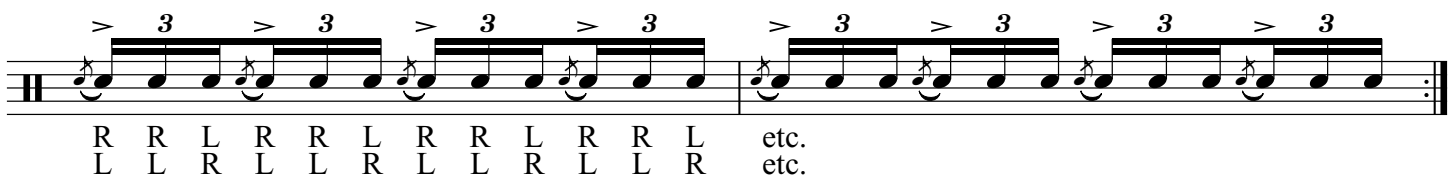
Flam Paradiddle



Flamacue



Swiss Army Triplet



Etude 3

Moderato



f

* Play All Rolls Open

mf

ff

The musical score for Etude 3 is written for a single melodic line in 4/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The piece is divided into several measures, each containing various musical notations. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *ff* (fortissimo). Articulation includes accents (>) and slurs. Triplets are indicated by a '3' over a group of notes. The score includes a performance instruction: '* Play All Rolls Open'. The notation is presented on a single staff with a repeat sign at the beginning of each measure.