



Drum Set Fundamentals

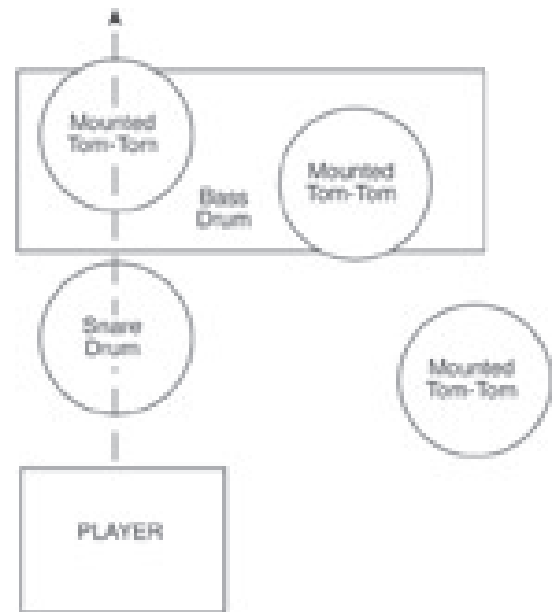
by
Bob Breithaupt

THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF THE DRUMMER

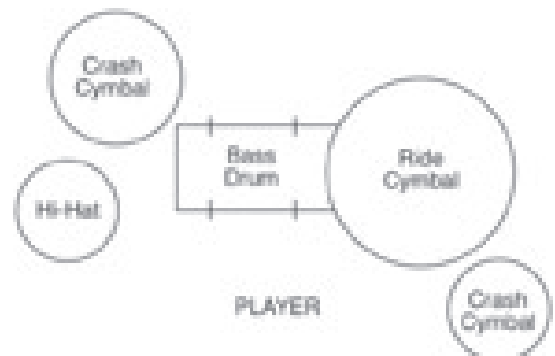
- To play steady, confident time in any style
- To support dynamics within the ensemble
- To outline the tune form, beginnings and endings, etc.
- To compliment the soloist and/or ensemble

THE FUNDAMENTAL SET-UP OF THE DRUM SET

- Placement of the body in relation to the set
 The body should be square to the set, where you can draw a line “through” the player , across the snare drum and over the first mounted tom, creating a balanced set-up. Setting up “off-center” can create a balance problem, placing the majority of the set to one side of the player.



- Height and angle of drums and cymbals
 The height and angle of drums and cymbals should promote natural strokes and set-up. Wide differences in height between drums cause the player to have to work very hard to produce even the most basic motions. Severe angles of cymbals do not promote natural rebound and strokes. DO NOT allow the set-up of a famous drummer be the only consideration in how your drums are set!



Fundamentals



Track

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THE FUNDAMENTAL STROKE OF THE HANDS AND FEET

The wrist is the primary element in the drum stroke

- The bass drum stroke—heel up and heel down
- The hi-hat stroke—heel up, heel down, rocking



THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF THE LIMBS

In Swing: Basic time is created through the ride cymbal and hi-hat



In Rock: Basic time is created between the snare drum and the bass drum





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A FUNDAMENTAL COLLECTION OF DRUM SET BOOKS AND RECORDINGS

This is a very basic list of books and recordings which should be helpful in addressing fundamental concepts in both swing and rock styles. The suggested recordings are primarily directed toward swing style, as the typical young player has a general understanding of the rock style.

BOOKS

Contemporary Country Styles, by Brian Fullen (Alfred, publisher)

Drum Sessions, by Peter O’Gorman (Neil A. Kjos, publisher)

Essential Styles, Vols. I & II, by Steve Houghton/Tom Warrington (Alfred, publisher)

Linear Time Playing, by Gary Chaffee (Warner Brothers, publisher)

Progressive Steps to Syncopation, by Ted Reed (Warner Brothers, publisher)

RECORDINGS

James Brown: *20 All-Time Greatest Hits* (various drummers); Polydor

Miles Davis: *Kind of Blue* (Jimmy Cobb, drums); Columbia

Miles Davis: *Milestones* (Philly Joe Jones, drums); Columbia

Miles Davis: *Four and More* (Tony Williams, drums); Columbia

Max Roach: *Live at Basin Street* (Max Roach, drums); Mercury

Fats Domino: *The Best of Fats Domino* (Earl Palmer, etc., drums); EMI

Art Pepper: *Art Pepper+11* (Mel Lewis, drums); Contemporary

Buddy Rich Band: *Big Swing Face* (Buddy Rich, drums); Pacific Jazz

Various: *Rock Instrumental Classics* (various drummers); Rhino



Glossary of Drum Set Styles

Standard Commercial Rhythms

by
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50's Rock

60's Rock

"Soul"

Basic Disco

"Funky"

Square Dance



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Waltz

Jazz Waltz

Shuffle

Swing

Dixieland

Be-bop



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As an Educator, You Should Help Your Students...

or

As a Serious Drummer, You Should...

1. Know the most logical set-up of the drum set.
2. Understand the placement and function of the rhythm section.
3. Generate relaxed techniques, adequate to play fast *and* slow; loud *and* soft.
4. Develop a concept of “good” sound, appropriate for various styles.
5. Define the “role” of each limb for creating basic grooves in a variety of styles; the relation of feel and balance on the set.
6. Understand basic tune forms and how to support those forms.
7. Support the soloist through various, simple “comping” techniques on drums; learn to “sing” various articulations and apply to the set.
8. Create a visual and aural image as a fine drummer as young athletes see themselves as “superstars.”
9. Study masterful drummers in addition to the “masters.”
10. Construct logical, musical drum solos, while keeping in perspective that this point is last on the list!