




## Sound Enhanced

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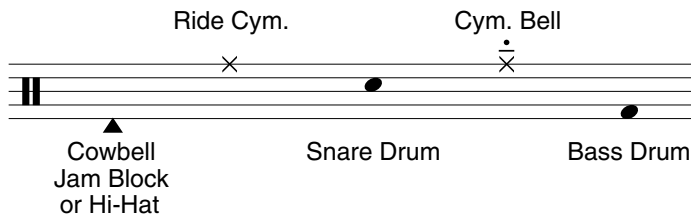
# Left Foot Son Clave Ostinato

BY ROB LEYTHAM

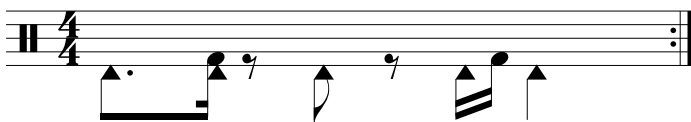
**R**emember when all you had to do with your feet on the drumset was play the bass drum and hi-hat? Then, about twenty years ago, a second pedal was added next to the hi-hat pedal so you could play double bass patterns on a single bass drum. Now the bar has been raised again, with drummers like Horacio Hernandez, Akira Jimbo, Alex Acuna, and Gregg Bissonette playing a Jam Block or cowbell with the left foot. It is becoming more common to have three pedals on the left side, creating greater independence and challenging patterns.

When students come to me wanting to learn how to develop this independence, I give them a series of exercises. These clave ostinato exercises can be practiced with the left foot playing either cowbell, Jam Block, or hi-hat.

Key



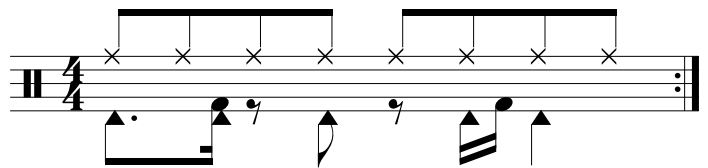
1. Learn the ostinato with the left foot playing the 3:2 son clave. We will keep the bass drum simple by playing it on the "ah" of 1 and the "ah" of 3.



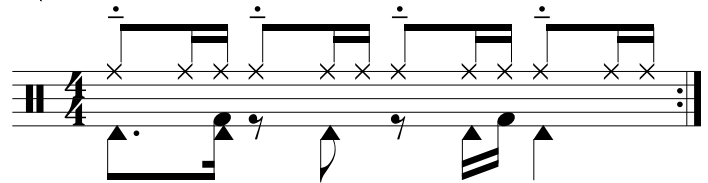
2. Practice each of the following ride cymbal patterns over the foot ostinato. Start with the straight eighth-note pattern at a slow, workable tempo. When that is comfortable to play, then practice the two sixteenth-note ride patterns, adding the bell of the ride cymbal where notated to create a nice groove.



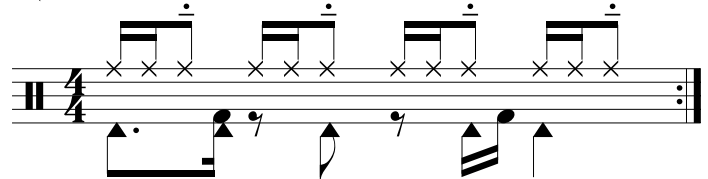
2a



2b



2c



3. While playing Exercise 2, play the following rhythms with the left hand on the snare drum. Repeat each pattern four times before trying to play the twelve measures straight through.

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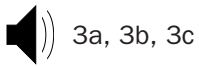
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(Note: In the Sound Enhanced section of the PAS Web site, MIDI file 3a is the following example played with pattern 2a; MIDI file 3b is the following example with pattern 2b; and MIDI file 3c is the following example with pattern 2c.)



4. Once that is mastered, turn those rhythms into a solo. Keep playing the 3:2 son clave ostinato with the feet and play alternating sixteenth notes on the snare drum. The rhythm patterns from Exercise 3 will be played as accents on the six-

teenth notes. Accents that fall on a beat or an “and” are played on the floor tom with the right hand. Accents that fall on an “e” or “ah” are played on the high tom with the left hand. All unaccented notes are played on the snare.

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5. Continue playing the foot ostinato under alternating sixteenth notes. Move your right hand to either the bell of the ride cymbal or a cowbell, keeping your left hand on the snare. Practice each of these sixteenth-note hand stickings over the 3:2 son clave foot ostinato.

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L  
 R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L  
 R L R L R L R R L R L L R L R L L  
 R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L L  
 R L R L R L R R L R L L R L R L L  
 R R L L R L R L R R L L R L R L L  
 R L L R L R L R L R R L R L R L L  
 R R L R L R L L R L R R L R L R L L  
 R L R L L R L R L R R L R L R L L

Once you feel that you have the control to play each of these exercises, practice the 3:2 son clave ostinato with rhythms found in Ted Reed's *Progressive Steps to Syncopation* or Gary Chester's *The New Breed*, and with stickings in George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control*. Have fun discovering the new drum grooves and solo ideas that this ostinato will create.

**Rob Leytham** is a private drum instructor at Antioch Music Center in Kansas City, Missouri, and an instructor of snare drum and drumset at Missouri Western State College. He has written many articles for *Modern Drummer* magazine and five books for Mel Bay Publications: *Rock Drumming and Soloing Methods*, *Jazz and Blues Drumming*, *Progressive Rock Drumming and Soloing Methods*, *Rudimental Drum Set Solos for the Musical Drummer*, and *Ostinatos for the Melodic Drum Set*. Visit Leytham's Web site at [www.robleytham.com](http://www.robleytham.com).

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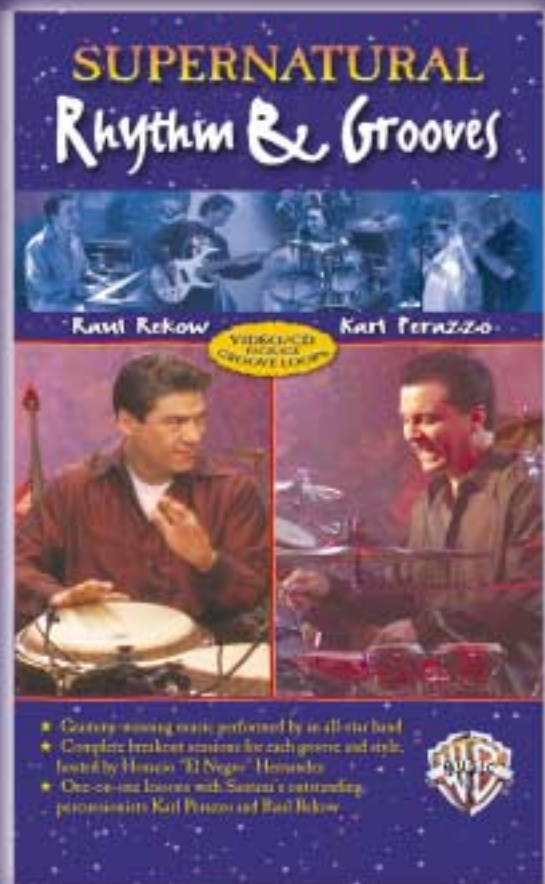
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