

MAX
ON
SWING

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MAX
BACON

Premier

THE
PREMIER
BOOK
CO., LTD.

MAX ON "SWING"



MAX BACON

MAX ON "SWING"

By
MAX BACON

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FOREWORD

It is no exaggeration to say that there are scores of books published on the subject of drums and drumming. Many of them are useful and of great assistance: some of them are excellent. And they cover between them practically every phase of their subject. I say "practically every phase," because—so far as I can discover—there is yet no book available which deals with the work of the modern "swing" drummer.

In the past year or so, the ultra-rhythmic type of "swing" work has made such rapid forward strides that it has become a style of first importance to every enthusiastic percussionist, be he professional or amateur. So much can be said concerning this fascinating way of handling the rhythm that it cannot be dealt with in the mere confines of one section of a general work on drumming.

I thus feel that no apology is needed for placing yet another book upon—I hope—the library shelf of the keen drummer. I am supported in this belief by the hundreds of requests I receive for the information which is now placed on paper.

If dedications were in fashion, I would have liked to dedicate this little volume to my many would-be pupils, especially those living outside London who have paid me the compliment of being willing to travel long distances for lessons. I only wish I could have met them all and thanked them personally. Unfortunately the exigencies of "the job," with its attendant rehearsals, recording sessions and broadcasting, leave a hard-worked drummer without even a few moments to relax.

So this book must be to all of you my apology and my thanks. I ask you to accept it in place of the lessons we would willingly have had together. I have tried to write as if I were speaking to you, in as personal a manner as possible. I want you to feel that the book is for *you*—to help you, I hope, towards a better understanding of your work and improvement in performance.

FOREWORD—continued

If it should succeed in the accomplishment of these objects for you, then I shall be more than satisfied.

In conclusion, I should like to express my great appreciation for the valuable help extended to me by my good friend Geoffrey Clayton on the editorial side of this book.

MAX BACON,

London.

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MAX ON "SWING"

CHAPTER I

We are going to have a long talk, you and I, about modern drumming. That being so, let us have a clear understanding at the beginning. I hope to make you into a real "swing" drummer before we part company; and later on I shall give you plenty of examples to keep you busy.

But first of all, there are a few things I *must* tell you. So let me beg of you not to skip these first pages. Upon your clear understanding of them definitely depends your ultimate success. So draw your chair up to the fire, put on a comfy pair of slippers, and let us get down to it!

Drumming for the dance orchestra—or "jazz band," as it was called then—arrived with a bang in this country some good many years ago. And a very loud bang it was, too! Every known kind of noise-producing object was pressed into the service of percussion, from the motor horn to the bath tub. Those were the real days of the survival of the loudest: there were no special orchestrations as we understand them now and almost every number was "busked."

At that time the jazz drummer was in his hey-day. Placed in front of the band, he was framed in a kind of arch from which suspended all his weird utensils and gadgets. So long as he ran fairly wild and contributed more than his share to the general din, the evening was considered a success. Rhythm there was, of a kind; but the whole performance remained very rough and ready.

Still, every healthy infant is noisy whilst he grows ; and the child, modern syncopation, soon passed from the nursery stage. All worth-while musical movements go through a period of transition and the new rhythmic form was no exception. For a short time, the records of that great pioneer, Paul Whiteman, together with the arrival in the flesh of Art Hickman's Band, showed the public in this country the possibilities of the new musical idiom. They saw what could be done with carefully *planned* rhythm.

I might tell you, I got one of the greatest thrills of my life when I heard the restrained choke cymbal work of Harold Macdonald, Paul Whiteman's drummer, at the London Hippodrome.

Noise for its own sake was at a discount and melody came into its proper position in the band. Mind you, rhythm was by no means lost in consequence. The drummer was encouraged to think what he was going to do next, instead of merely beating about the jazz bush. And when the director had got him to realise what was expected, he retired to his rightful place as a member of the rhythm section. For a considerable number of years after that, our drummer remained essential, but not prominent. Like every other specialist, he got his chance, on the xylophone and the vibraphone ; but for general purposes, he merely became part of the solid rhythm.

But during the last few years, a definite change has been taking place, which has brought the drummer back to his position of former importance. Not indeed, as a noise-merchant once more—those days are gone for ever—but as the acknowledged leader of a super-rhythm section which was to control the pulse of the whole band.

So important was the beating of this pulse considered that a new name had to be found for it. And that name was SWING. I cannot imagine a better name, for to me it conveys everything that is expressed in the ultra-modern rhythm. And before we go any farther, I want to pass this feeling on to you ; because, until you learn *what* it is that we are to do, it is no use attempting to learn *how* it is to be achieved.

What, then, is this "swing," which is the very essence of successful rhythmic playing to-day ? Is it rhythm ? It is more than rhythm. *It is the very pulse of rhythm*—that which beats within rhythm to give it life. Unless the essential swing is there, the rhythm will cease to inspire : it may even cease to exist.

Swing is a very elusive thing ; but there is no mistaking it when you hear it. It is a sense of rhythmic balance which moves the whole band as one unit. It is a steady sweeping movement, like the swing of the pendulum of a grandfather clock. To and from : to and from. *That* is swing ; and until a band gets the knack of swinging together, that band will not be a success. The expression of the rhythm is of the same type that you see in that super swing acquired by skilled skaters, dancing upon ice—large regular sweeps.

Mind you, this swing is very difficult to acquire at first. It does not come all at once, even to the best musicians. I have often heard a bunch of well-known players get together for amusement and—experienced though they are—it will be quite a while before they begin to swing as a unit. In the same way, it sometimes happens that a band noted for its swing will lose it for a time. Lack of concentration, or over-tiredness is generally the cause. But when once you get "into" the swing of the rhythm, you will find that you keep it, for the simple reason that a rhythmic movement, with its regular pulse, is the easiest to maintain.

What is the best way to acquire swing, you may well ask. First and foremost, it is a question of temperament : you must *like* it when you hear it and you must *want* to do it yourself. As you know, most dance drummers have become such because they were "drum-minded" ; they had it "in" them to become drummers. In just the same way, you must have it in you to feel that swing behind the rhythm. As I say, it is a question of temperament. It is, of course, partly what we call a gift. You must have the gift of a drumming mind. But it can most definitely be acquired by those who *will*.

There are several ways of helping yourself to get swing into

your work. First and foremost, you must listen to those bands who are known to excel in this. Compare them with others and notice the difference. Then try and analyse their work and discover how this difference is produced. By this means, you will find yourself gradually "soaking your system" in swing until it enters your very blood and becomes part of you. Having thus acquired it, the best way to produce it is to play easily. Do not be strained or forced. And to do this, you must, of course, have a certain amount of technique.

I must needs address myself to drummers who only have a little technique, as well as to those more advanced; so I am going to run through a few "practice points" very shortly, by way of refreshing ourselves on these all-important matters. I want you to have full command of your instrument. Remember that your drums must be part of you and you must master them, just as you do when you ride a horse. It is no good letting the servant be the master! Remember that the drummer has a very important part to play in swinging the band: and a poor drummer cannot swing a band, even if it is a good one.

And the reverse of this is equally true. Whilst I am on that subject, I must emphasise again that a swing band must work as a team. One bad, careless, or "sloppy" player will ruin the swing of a whole band. A good drummer cannot swing a bad band. The team *must* swing together. The rhythmic "sixth sense" of swing must be common to all of them and shared by each member. It is an atmosphere which surrounds the band like a cloud. So long as it covers the whole unit, that unit will swing together. But let the cloud shift, even from one member, and the swing will be lost by all.

I have said before that swing and rhythm are different, and I have done my best to make this clear to you. But they differ in yet another way; and that is in the matter of tempo. Rightly or wrongly, it has always seemed to myself that swing ceases after numbers of a certain tempo, or speed. Beyond a definite pace, the "pulse" is too fast for real swing

and there is really nothing but rhythm. That ever-famous classic, "Tiger Rag," is an outstanding example of what I mean. Nobody, with the best will in the world, could try to play that with swing. It is much too fast. All one can do is to keep it in strict tempo and rhythmic. Thus—if my theory is correct—it means that the only possible swing tempos lie between the extremely slow and the very fast. Your own sense of rhythm will tell you that this should be so. It is very difficult to perform any rhythmic movement either in "slow-motion" or in a rush, without a break in the steady swing. Imagine two people sitting on a see-saw. If they work it very slowly, there is a pause at the end of each "beat." If, on the contrary, they swing at great speed, they never even reach the end of a beat; or at the best, the whole movement is carried through in a series of jerks. And that is not swing! So I think you will agree with me on this all-important matter of tempo.

It may seem to some of you that I have talked at great length on the subject of swing itself, but I make no apology for doing so. I am definitely convinced that one must first realise "what" before one tries to learn "how." I hope, however, that I have made my own ideas clear to you. If so, we can safely pass on together to the next point in our discussion.

CHAPTER II

Now, "swing" off our minds, the next thing I am going to talk to you about is practice. Before anything else, let me tell you a story about a drummer.

How keen
are you?

This drummer was no different from all others. He was young; in fact, he was hardly more than a boy. He was an amateur and—like all boys—he was madly keen on drumming. Quite near where he lived was a band, and he used to follow that band around wherever it went, always standing watching the drummer. He even asked to be allowed to carry the drummer's kit! There came a time when the manager of the band had to put out a second unit; and naturally he looked about for the necessary instrumentalists. Our boy got to hear about this in the way that boys will; and, taking his courage in both hands, he went to the manager and applied for the job. Much to everybody's surprise, he got it, and what is more he held it for exactly one week! He got the sack because he was so bad.

Crestfallen and disillusioned, he went home with his tail between his legs. But he was by no means beaten. He had borrowed the price of his outfit and he was jolly well going to see he got his money back! He went into the quietest room he could find and put in a month of real hard practice. At the end of that month he was before the manager again.

"Look," said he to the manager, "I wish you could give me another trial. When I took the job over I was not feeling at all well and I am convinced that I could do much better for you than I did at first."

The manager was a sport, and he re-instated him. It speaks volumes for the month's practice that the boy held the job from then onwards until the band completed its contract.

The above is an absolutely true story. I know it is true, because I was the boy . . . I tell you that story for two reasons, simply because I want to make you understand that nobody will become a drummer without practice; and the second reason is that it is not the slightest use practising unless you want to become a drummer.

I am very serious about this, because neither of us wants to waste the other's time, do we? So I would repeat, here and now, and with all earnestness, that if ever you are to become a good drummer, you must not only practise, but continue to practise and you must keep your practice regular. Practice, to be effective in any way, must be absolutely regular. After all, practice is only the formation of a new habit; and the way to form a habit is to repeat a thing until it becomes a habit. And the way to repeat a thing is not just spasmodically when you feel like it, but all day and every day until you do it unconsciously. It then becomes so much a part of you that actually you don't know when you are doing it. As I say, the object of all practice is to create a habit.

You must, therefore, set aside a certain time each day and you must keep that time for practising. Don't let anything interfere with it if you can help it. In fact, I might say to you, don't let anything interfere with it even if you *cannot* help it. You have just got to make up your mind that that section of the day is set aside for your work, and anything which interferes with it is going to be ignored. Fifteen minutes a day—every day—at the same time every day—and without missing a day—is a hundred times better than six hours on a Sunday because you happen to feel like it, or because it is raining and you can't go out. If you are not prepared to face this fact, then you may as well give up the idea of becoming a good drummer, or a good musician of any kind, for the matter of that.

If you will not practise, then it is no good reading this book on drumming, as the whole idea of this book is to give you certain things to work up for yourself. No book will make you a drummer—it must be in you to start with, and then

practice will bring it out. If you possess a gift in this way, you will become a drummer; if you keep your practice regular, you will become a good drummer. If you have a real gift of drumming and keep your practice regular, then you will become a great drummer. But unless you do all these things, and keep on doing them, then I would rather advise you to sell your kit and go in for breeding rabbits, or something else where *you* don't have to do the work.

Now, practice is divided into several parts, and I think we had better discuss each of these parts separately.

First of all, there is the actual work you do yourself, or the practice proper. Let us have a look at the best way to deal with this. I have told you that practice to be effective must be regular, and I repeat this now so as to bring it more fully into your mind. By far the most satisfactory way is to make a plan of when you will practise, absolutely to the hour you have set apart for this. My own personal opinion is that practice is best divided into two periods of the day with a fairly long interval between them. Make up your mind what you are going to practise in the early period, and work on it thoroughly and to the exclusion of everything else. When you are satisfied with what you have done, then stop work and do something else. In this way, you will let that work sink into the sub-conscious part of your mind and you will gradually absorb it into your system. Later on, when you begin the second period of your practice, start right away with the work you were doing earlier in the day. You should notice an immediate improvement as soon as you begin to play. This means that the habit that you are trying to get yourself into is already beginning to form and that the work done in the morning has not been wasted. As soon as you have had a run through the previous work and improved it a little, you can go on to something else. All practice should be conducted on these lines; that is to say, begin your next practice with a short run through the material which was being studied in the previous period.

The next thing to remember about actual practice is that

you must concentrate when you are doing it; think all the time of the work which is occupying you to the exclusion of everything else. It is no good putting in half an hour's practice simply for the sake of saying to yourself that you have done thirty minutes, if all the time your mind is occupied wondering whether it will be fine on Sunday or what will win the 2.30. You may find concentration is rather an effort at first, but it will soon become easier as you go along. It is better to do fifteen minutes real concentrated practice than thirty minutes in a hap-hazard way. You see, if you practise in what we call a "sloppy" manner, you may form habits all right, but they are pretty certain to be bad habits; and all that means a lot of extra practice to undo them and get rid of them, with the consequent waste of time which this involves. And for the very same reason, you should never practise when you are tired. If you do, it will only require a greater effort to concentrate, and you will become still more tired, and immediately your practice is wasted. The human machine is like an electric battery—it cannot do anything productive when its energy has run out. The moment, therefore, you find yourself not thinking of what you are doing is the moment to stop practising, for the time being at any rate. Then, when later on you come back fresh to your work, you will be able to give it your undivided attention to the exclusion of everything else.

The next part of your practising should consist to a great extent in listening to the work of others, and noticing what they do and how they do it. Take every opportunity you can of studying the work of a good drummer. Ask yourself, when you hear an effect that pleases you, exactly how that effect is produced. Think over the particular beat in your mind, and see if you can discover how you would do it yourself; then do your best to discover how it was done by the performer you heard. Try and reason with yourself why the performer should use that particular beat at the place he did. Ask yourself whether it was the most suitable beat to use there, and whether it was in

Stop, Look
and Listen

keeping with the type of number being played. This is very important, because one of the greatest secrets of successful drumming is the ability to put in the right thing at exactly the right place. You must always feel in your mind that a particular type of number or a particular passage in that number definitely calls for such-and-such a treatment, or such-and-such a beat. Always be on the look-out for new ideas in the work of others, and try to introduce them into your own work. When you have done this, examine them very carefully and see if you, yourself, cannot improve upon them; remember that there is nothing as yet so good which is not open to improvement. Always remember that styles and fashions in drumming have to be set by somebody: there is no reason why you should not be the one to start a new fashion. You are just as likely to do it as anybody else; and providing you make yourself the recognised authority, you are certainly just as entitled to lead as others. So never be frightened of trying out new ideas; if you have carefully examined them and you don't like them, then do not hesitate to scrap them at once. It is only by experiment that we find the right thing; and remember that all the above definitely comes under the heading of practice, because it is part of your training to make you a better drummer. It is what I would call "mental practice" and it is just as important as the actual work you do when you sit down with your sticks.

The next stage in your practice work is an understanding of the music which you are going to help to make.

Plan in Music Now, in this, dance musicians are in an extremely fortunate position because, broadly speaking, they deal entirely with the type of music which is built up of definite phrases of a known number of bars and a certain amount of repetition, and which never varies very much. If you will consider a moment, you will see exactly what I mean. The main-stay of the average programme is the ordinary fox-trot; and the chorus is the principle part of that number. In nine cases out of every ten, the fox-trot is built up on a definite basis of thirty-two bars. These bars are

divided into four groups of eight; and these eight bar phrases never vary very much in their form. The average fox-trot chorus lays out something in this manner:

The first eight bars consists of the main melody phrase.

The next eight bars are usually a repetition of the first eight bars.

The following eight bars are what we might describe as the "middle bit" and consist of an extra or different type of phrase, put in to divide the chorus and for the sake of variation.

The last eight bars are simply the first eight bars repeated once more, finishing off with a suitable ending or the repetition bars.

As I say, this arrangement holds good for the majority of fox-trot choruses; so before going any further, let us examine it a little more closely. You will notice that at the end of every phrase there comes a natural "break." This is a break in the melody itself and the drummer expresses it by means of the pick-up beats which he uses on the last beat previous to the opening of the next phrase. In a thirty-two bar chorus, the main breaks appear on bars seven and eight, fifteen and sixteen, twenty-three and twenty-four, and thirty-one and thirty-two. You thus have a most important part of your number easily divided up into little groups for you, all of them following the same rule, and without any element of surprise in them. You will have no difficulty whatsoever in thinking ahead and in knowing what is coming next. This is one of the greatest possible helps for maintaining a good swing and for keeping your rhythm absolutely steady.

You will find upon examination that all other sections of dance music come under certain known groups of bars in this manner. For instance, the verse of a fox-trot will consist of either eight, sixteen, twenty-four or thirty-two bars. It does sometimes happen that there may be a little extra bit tacked on to the verse, but in any case, this will be in addition to the ordinary lay-out of eight, sixteen or thirty-two bars. This little extra bit will always be an even number of bars—

four, eight, or twelve; so it is perfectly easy for the dance drummer to anticipate just what is coming next, and to understand the plan upon which his music is built up.

Exactly the same rule holds good for waltzes, as waltz choruses are invariably sixteen or thirty-two bars; and

Look Ahead the breaks occur at the same places, namely at the end of every quarter of the whole chorus. Similar also is the plan used for writing quick-steps, one-steps, tangos, six-eight numbers and those in three-two tempo. Thus you are covered for the main portion of every dance number. Naturally, in a special orchestration, there will be various linking-up passages and so on (such as introductions, etc.) which do not come under this rule; they are dependent on the arrangement made by the orchestrator himself, and vary with each individual number. As orchestrations of this nature are always the subject of special rehearsals, there is no need to worry on that account. The point I am trying to put to you is that a dance drummer can always look well ahead, because he knows from the very nature of the type of tune which he is playing, that it always conforms to a given plan and a given length. This makes rhythm-work very considerably easier, because there are no surprises of any description which might interfere with the smooth running of the swing of the rhythm.

I think I have said everything necessary about the general principles of practice and observation. If you will carefully note and take to heart all the remarks I have made on the subject, I am very certain that, not only will you find your own practice much easier and more interesting, but also you will get much more benefit out of your work.

CHAPTER III

The next thing we come to is the all-important question of our kit. Most of you will have your equipment of drums already; but I am going to give you a list of what it is absolutely essential you should possess. Here, then, is the very minimum necessary for the work of a swing drummer:

The Question of Kit

A bass drum, with separate tension, which should not be smaller than 26 in. by 12 in. and can with advantage be larger than this.

A pair of spurs.

A bass-drum pedal, with a medium-hard beater.

A snare drum.

A snare drum stand.

At least one cymbal and a strong holder for it.

A foot-cymbal pedal with a pair of cymbals.

A pair of sticks.

A pair of wire brushes.

These are the absolute necessities of your kit. You can, of course, enlarge this to any extent so far as your needs, your taste and your pocket justify. There are many other things which are very desirable, and which drummers in certain jobs must, of course, have. Extra cymbals and holders, a cow-bell, one or more tom-toms, preferably of the tunable type, and a trap table, trap rail, or a trap console come under these headings. But, as I say, these extras largely depend on the needs of the individual.

Whilst I am on the subject of kit, I would always like to advise you to get the best you can afford, even if it means that you have to go without something else. The best always pays in the long run. When I say "the best," I am not necessarily referring to the decorative finishes which are so popular to-day, but rather to the type of model you are going to use. So far as finish is concerned, that again must be a

matter for individual choice. The only thing I would very strongly recommend is that you go in for chromium-plating, or some equally everlasting finish wherever possible and whenever you can afford it.

You have, as I say, such a wide range of choice in the matter of your kit, that it would only be a waste of time and space for me to give you a list of all the various types of instruments you *could* buy. You will find this information in the catalogue of any firm of repute; and for me to fill up pages with technical descriptions would not make you any better a drummer. As we go on, I shall only recommend the types of instruments which I personally prefer. But there is no need to let this influence you unduly: you choose what you like best and the kit that makes you feel the most comfortable.

Let us now examine each portion of the kit bit by bit; we will take it in the order we are most likely to use it for the moment.

In these days of precision instruments, you have a very wide choice when purchasing a snare drum, and you will certainly be able to find something to suit your pocket. I personally favour the type of instrument possessing the following points. I like my snare drum to have both internal and external snares, the former acting on the inside of the batter head whilst the latter, of course, are in their usual position on the snare head. This type of drum gives you the maximum snap without too much overtone ring which is present in some instruments. Furthermore, the use of these two sets of snares in various combinations gives you a very complete range of tones. Another most convenient point about a snare drum is the little internal damper which is now fitted to certain models. This damper controls the tone by a slight pressure on the inside of the batter head, and renders you absolutely independent of weather conditions or changes of temperature. I shall have more to say about this later. Get a drum where the flesh hoops are made of metal in preference to those made of wood (the flesh hoops, of course, are those hoops round which the

The Snare Drum

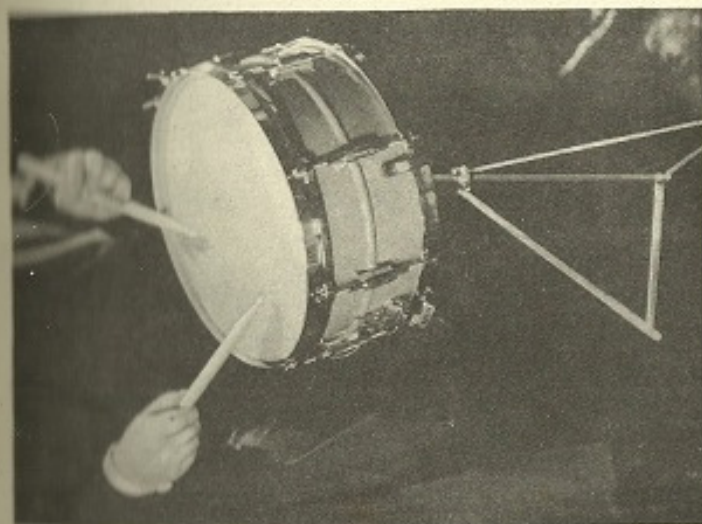


Fig. 2

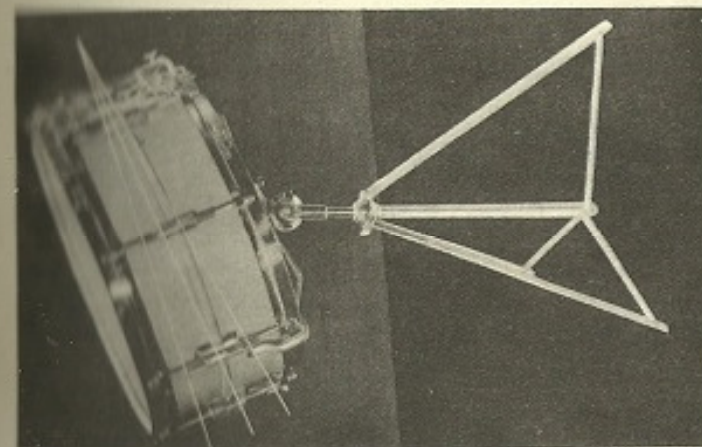


Fig. 1

drum heads are lapped). It is, by the way, a very good tip to have a snare-drum head already lapped at home by you, in case of an emergency. The counter hoops, which are the hoops which come right outside and secure the flesh hoops to the shell of the drum, should be of the type known as the "floating head," or "floater head," as some people call it. The advantage of these is that they are right clear of the flesh hoop, and do not in any way damage the head or cause it to wear. The snares are of importance, and care should be taken to see that the snare fittings ensure their laying straight on the head of the drum and also that no snare touches another. It is generally best to use the type of snare fitted by the actual manufacturers, because they know what most suits the particular model.

When you have bought your snare drum, take care of it just as you would any other well-made piece of apparatus. Do not keep it in a damp place, but at the same time endeavour not to keep it too near a fire or anywhere where the temperature might be very high. I was once asked by a very keen amateur whether it was necessary to slacken the heads of the snare drum when one had finished playing; I need hardly assure you that such is not only unnecessary but it is most inadvisable. I just mention it here in case anybody else should have the same idea in mind. When you tighten the heads of your drum, you should go round each rod in a clock-wise direction, tightening up each one a little and gradually continue until the heads are at the tension required. Remember to keep the snare-head slightly looser than the batter-head and don't forget to have the slightest smear of oil or vaseline on the screw threads of the fittings. By these simple precautions you will prolong the life of your snare drum and moreover it will not let you down at some inconvenient moment.

Snare-drum sticks are made in various kinds of wood, but of course, hickory is best for the dance drummer. The shape, the length and the weight are purely a matter of individual taste. I, myself, use a medium heavy stick weighing 2 oz., 15½ in. in length

Snare-Drum
Sticks

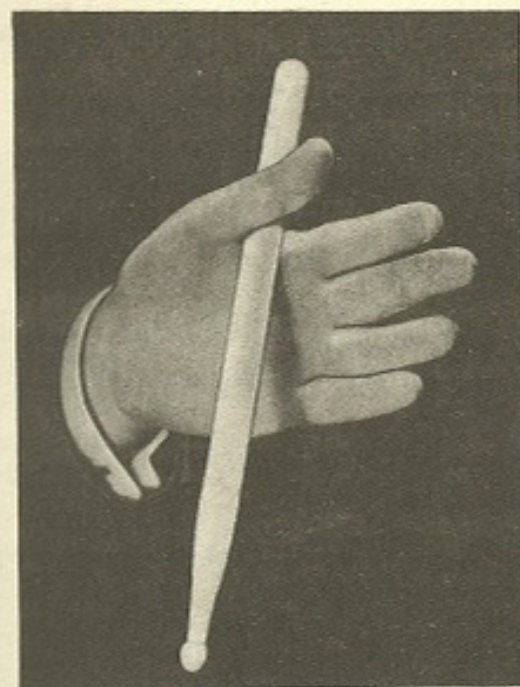


Fig. 3

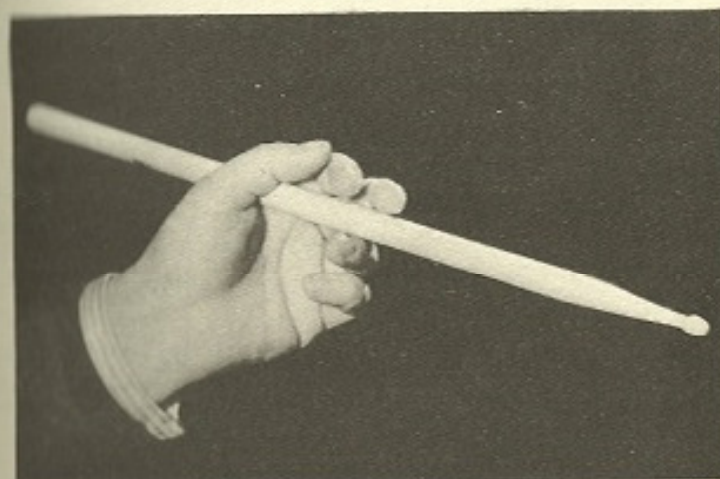


Fig. 4

and having a medium taper. But I repeat, you will be happier with the stick to which you have generally been accustomed, and any stick within reason that feels the most comfortable to you is the one to use.

The next most important thing is the position of the snare drum, both as regards the angle in relation to the ground, and the place in front of yourself. In certain cases the usual playing angle varies: as, for instance, when you are playing a Rumba. I am giving you an illustration of the angle I, myself, use for general work; but provided that you keep the angle of the drum within the indicated limits on the diagram, you may vary this position to suit your own personal convenience. You will see in FIG. 1 the position to which I refer.

Now notice the position of the drum with regard to your body. It is essential that you sit so that you feel comfortable; The arms must not come upwards in what I call a "begging dog" attitude. Take particular note of the height of the drum from the ground and its relation to yourself when seated, as well as the position in front of you. (FIG. 2).

The next thing to note is the correct "hold" of the sticks. Here again, there is a fixed rule for each stick, but you have a certain amount of latitude as to exact balance, etc., within that rule.

The left stick should be held in the fleshy part of the join between the thumb and the first finger, about two-thirds of the way up (that is two thirds of the way from the "acorn"). It should then be allowed to drop naturally on to the side of the third finger, which is curved inwards towards the palm. Some people allow the stick to rest on the middle joint of their finger; but I, myself, find that I seem to get better control by letting it lay on the joint nearest to the tip. The first and second fingers then curve in towards the centre of the palm over the stick naturally and to lie loosely on it. FIGS. 3 AND 4 will, I hope, help to make the above clear.

The right-hand stick is held a little nearer to the end away from the tip. The stick is simply laid diagonally across the palm of the hand and the fingers curled under, so as to cover it

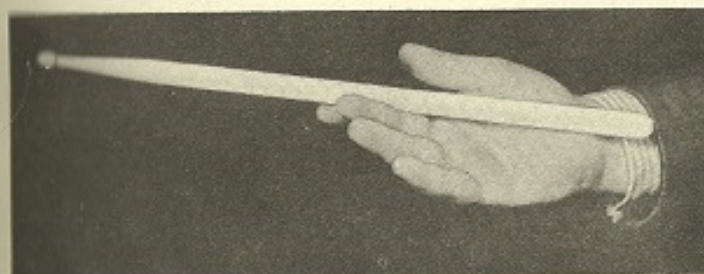


Fig. 3

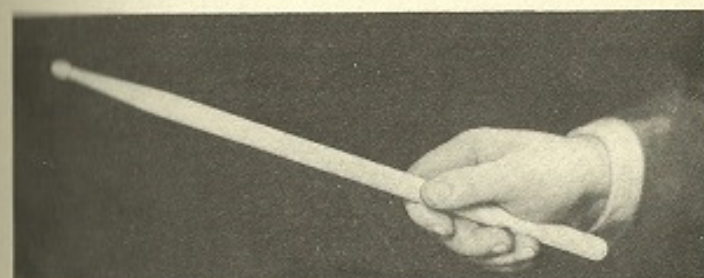


Fig. 4

loosely and easily. A certain amount of control should be felt by the tip of the little finger towards the end of the stick; and the ball of the thumb and the side of the middle joint of the first finger should make themselves felt against the stick. Look at FIGS. 5 AND 6, and you will see what I mean.

The elbows should not be tucked into the ribs, but should be in an easy position a little way away from the sides of the body. The whole point of such a position and the grip of the sticks is to ensure that you are thoroughly easy and not in any way stiff, yet at the same time that you have perfect control in every way possible. Will you please note particularly the position of the elbows in FIG. 7.

Now, I have very often been asked what is the correct position on the head for the sticks to roll. My answer to this is that there is no actual correct position, and that it is again a matter for individual

The Roll choice. Some drummers play with their sticks apart, others use them close together. One drummer will play towards the top of the drum, another with equally good results on the lower part of the head. If you are playing on a dual-snare drum, always be careful to avoid that portion of the head which lies over the actual internal snares. I, myself, play in the position shown in FIG. 8, rather near to the body. But you will notice from the dotted lines that I do not necessarily keep the sticks in one position, but move them over a certain area. I do this more or less naturally, because I am trying to express the swing of the music by my own swing of the body, which causes the sticks to move inside the area shown. I attach a great deal of importance to this easy swaying, provided it is not overdone; it helps you to feel the swing of the piece and prevents you from being stiff or starchy.

In other words, be as natural and easy as possible. If not, your position is wrong.

Having decided upon the easiest position in which to play a snare drum, the next best thing to do is to begin playing it! It is at this point that I think a little checking up of a few rudiments wouldn't do us any harm: don't you agree with



Fig. 7

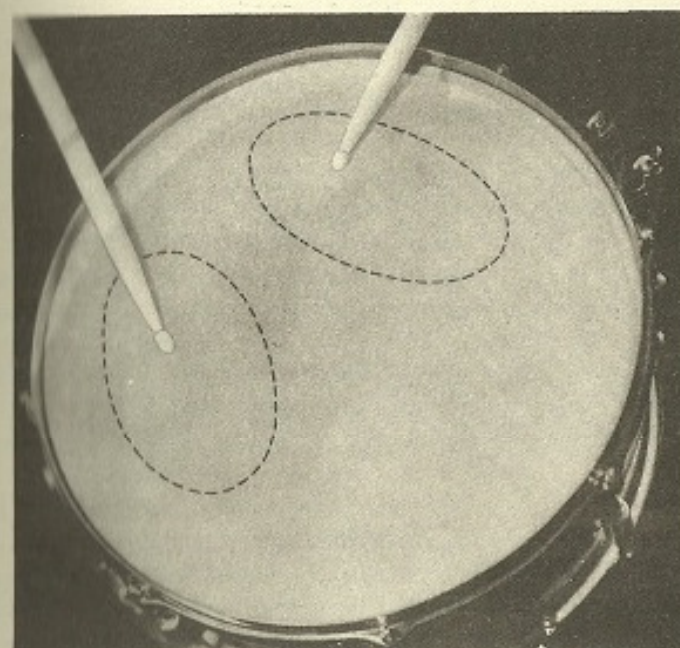


Fig. 8

me? The object I have in my mind is for you to be sure that you are striking the head cleanly and with a good snap, bringing the stick clear away from it without any tendency to loiter about on the vellum. This ability to strike the head cleanly and to get cleanly away is most important, because it is the only method by which it is possible to produce good tone. Will you, therefore, examine yourself very closely to be sure that you are on the right lines. The actual bounce of the stick plays a leading part in a good roll. By "bounce," I mean the natural rebound of the stick after it has struck the head. When starting to practise a roll (LL—RR), you deliberately strike the head twice with each hand, using a wrist action with each blow. But as the roll quickens, you strike the head once (one wrist action) and let the stick bounce once (one rebound)—making two "notes" or "taps" with the left hand; and you repeat this process with the right hand. When playing a roll which gradually increases in speed, the change-over from the "two-strike" to the "strike-and-bounce" technique *must not be noticeable*.

Please do not raise an objection to going through these rudiments once more: there are definite reasons why I wish you to do this. The exercises which follow are the best that have ever been devised for giving the drummer *absolute control*, and that is where they are so useful to the swing percussionist. True, they were originally intended for 2/4 march tempo only. But I do not hesitate to remind you of them as the finest method for general practice. Whenever any of them, or any part of them, is used in *our* work, I will give you the practical application later.

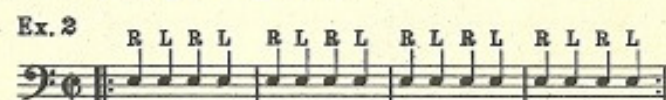
I would be very glad, therefore, if you would now do a little separate practice with each hand. Whatever you do with the right hand, you ought to be able to do equally well with the left, so that both hands are under your complete control, because most drumming is done from the wrist. You will naturally find it more difficult at first to control the left hand because, you see, most of us are right-handed. But this is one of those essential

Practice
Suggestions

things which you must absolutely be able to do—*absolutely*! Please, therefore, practise the following exercise very slowly, very steadily and very evenly until you are satisfied with yourself.



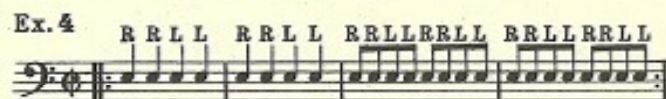
Now, please, practise example 2. You will see that this is similar to the first example, but the odd beats (beats 1 and 3) are now taken by the right hand.



When you are satisfied with the above, I think you might put in a little time practising the roll. I suppose I need hardly mention the fact that the roll is made up of two beats in each hand alternatively, thus:



When you are satisfied with this, then try the roll beginning with the right hand instead of the left, thus:



I want you, please, to work these two rolls up to a steady speed, keeping them dead even. If you are the least bit uncertain, will you remember for the moment that evenness is very much more important than speed; so please keep at it and make of your roll the very best job you know. If you make a mistake, hesitate or stumble, then stop at once and go

back again to the beginning and work up your roll once more. It is only in this way that you will ever get an even crisp roll. If you wish to be satisfied with your roll, it must conform with the following description. It must be dead even, at whatever speed you play it. Every beat must be of equal length and the intervals between each must also be of equal length. *There must be no accent on any beat.* When you are playing a roll which gradually increases in speed, all the above holds good. But in addition, the speed-increase must be dead even in pace and must work up gradually and smoothly. Once again, there must be no accented beat, nor must there be any break or jerkiness. The effect must be just like an express train—gradually and evenly working up a steady speed. If this is quite clear, we can now carry on.

We will next, I think, practise the five-stroke roll, the seven-stroke roll and the nine-stroke roll, for all of which I give examples below. Remember, the five-stroke roll consists of five bounces, the last of which must be brought off with a good definite "snap," to mark the end of the roll. The hand that begins the roll also finishes it.



In the seven-stroke roll there are, of course, seven bounces; and the roll finishes on the opposite hand from which it begins.



In the nine-stroke roll, there are nine bounces. The roll begins and ends on the same hand.



Make sure that you get these off pat. Generally speaking, you will not need a longer roll than the nine-stroke roll; but it will be good practice for you if you try to increase the length of these and make them into eleven-stroke, thirteen-stroke and so on. Next, just check up on a few more rudimentary beats such as the flams, the paradiddles, etc. I am giving you examples below, and I would ask you to work these up in the same way that you did the roll, until you are quite certain of your control over them. I have marked each of these examples in the ordinary manner and then in the reverse: that is to say, starting with the right hand, and then starting with the left hand, as I want to work them up so that you can play either with absolute ease. I have not necessarily followed the ordinary conventional method of giving these rudiments. Where necessary I have adapted them to show how they form the basic technique of some dance rhythms. They will be more useful to you thus.



- (a) is the ordinary paradiddle, and, as in the roll, should be practised slowly, gradually increasing speed.
- (b) is the same as (a) with the addition of accents, which please note carefully, and which occur in the first beat of each group of four.
- (c) is an exercise introducing the flam. This, as you all

know, consists of a grace-note preceding the beat proper.

Now have a short practice at the single stroke roll. I have given you an example of this below and marked it for practice beginning with the left hand, and also with the right hand. I want you to get both this and the double stroke roll perfectly smooth, just as if it was one long note, and *I want no accent in either roll*. I repeat, this is very important, and if you find yourself going wrong, stop at once and start over again. It is only by this method that you will really pull yourself together and bring perfection to your work.



Wherever possible, you should always practise on the snare drum itself. It sometimes happens, however, that permanent rolling on a snare drum is not the very best way to make yourself the life and soul of any household nor to endear yourself to its inhabitants. I have known it before now to be the cause of very much broken crockery, and a considerable amount of unusual language. Should your own surroundings be likely to induce any of this, then the only thing for it is to make use of a practice pad. If you do this, then you should be very careful to have the pad at the correct angle, in the same way as you would the snare drum itself. It is possible to obtain a pad which is set at the correct angle, so that all you need do is to lay it upon a chair in front of you. Another method of practice is to play the beats on your own knee. To do this, the left leg should be crossed over the right, as illustrated in FIG. 9. In any case, I recommend this method for frequent use, because it gives a very good command over your work. Furthermore, all you need to put in a little practice is a pair of sticks, which is sometimes very convenient.

Here is another exercise which I want you to practise very

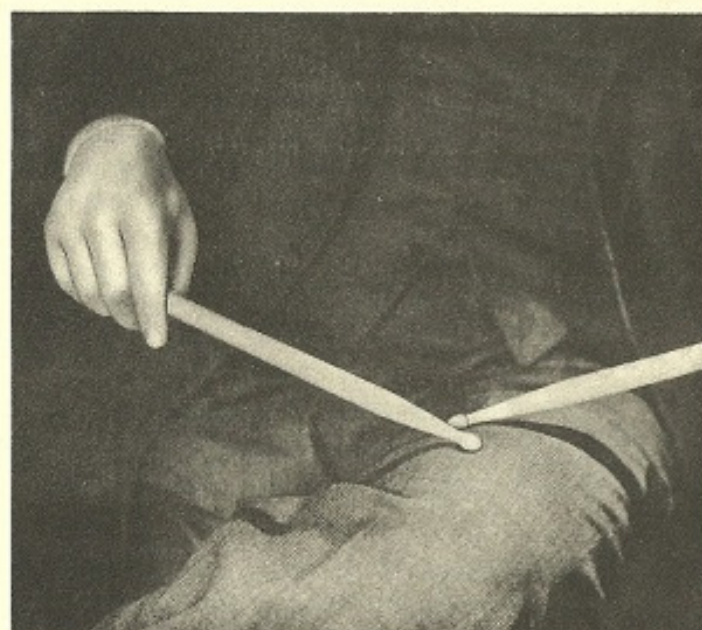


Fig. 9

carefully, simply to get perfect control over each stick *by itself* and without necessarily having in mind any work with the other stick. I want you to play single beats with each stick at a very steady pace, gradually increasing that pace until you get it from four in a bar up to eight in a bar. Do this first with the right hand, and then with the left hand as shown in the examples below. Actually the musical notation of the first example is not perfect because it does not give you the intermediate stages. What I want you to do is to begin as shown in the first two bars and gradually to work up the pace until you finish as shown in the last two bars. Will you try this with each hand, please? When you are happy with this, practise the second example, paying particular attention to the value of the dotted notes. Then try the third example, with both sticks together, i.e., striking the head at the same time. Each beat is made by both sticks *at once*.

Ex. 10
No 1

No 2

No 3

Together

Pay particular attention to the value of the dotted-note examples. You must give these notes their correct values. I want them to sound as they would if you were playing "Pop goes the Weasel" and *not* of even length, as in "The British Grenadiers."

It is a good thing to test the clearness and snap of your roll by occasionally practising it with the snares thrown off. That remark applies almost to any exercise; so would you, please, do this from time to time.

Some drummers attempt to damp their snare drum by making use of a piece of cloth or handkerchief laid on the head. I do not advise this for several reasons. First of all, the pressure of the cloth or the handkerchief is quite considerably heavy and it cuts out all the ring; and a snare drum without a suspicion of ring is absolutely toneless. Moreover, this method of procedure is based on quite a mistaken theory, because you are simply trying to do by mechanical means what you should be able to perform yourself; and any damper which lies *on* the head of the drum and depends upon gravity for its pressure is bound to be useless because it is not under any other form

of control. I, myself, have not used a damper of this nature for years.

If, however, you must use a damper, the only kind you can possibly use is the internal type which works by pressure on the interior of the batter head. The point about this method of damping is that it is instantly adjustable for pressure and at the very best it only just barely touches the drum. You should not use any other mechanical means of tone control on the snare drum.

CHAPTER IV

We next come to the bass drum. As I told you when we were discussing kit in general, the size of the bass drum which is generally best suited for average work is not less than 26 in. by 12 in.

The
Bass Drum

Naturally, this is guided to a certain extent by the work you are doing or the size of band with which you generally play, and also, not unnaturally, by your pocket. But do not get a bass drum which is too small because it will not, in any circumstances, be really satisfactory and give you that tone which is so necessary. Perhaps I need hardly mention that separate tension to the heads goes without saying these days.

Whilst, as I said, a certain slight suspicion of a ring gives life to a snare drum, the reverse holds good in the case of the larger member of the drum family. A bass drum should not possess any ring whatsoever; and one of the difficulties with a new instrument is that it does have a certain amount of ring about it. The cure in this case is to use a damper or dampers. Before applying these, we have to make up our mind as to the type of tone we wish to produce from the instrument: we can then set about doing our best to get that tone exact. We do not want a very heavy boom, nor do we want a dull thud. The tone I want you to get is a definite beat with just sufficient overtone for the actual "note," as it were, to hold itself on for the length of the beat which may be necessary. When you have nothing but a thud, you only get a staccato note; on the other hand, beats which simply boom merge into each other in one long note and give a very muddy effect. This causes an entire loss of rhythm, whereas the staccato beats are not strong enough to give proper balance. Thus we arrive at the question of correct damping. There are various

contrivances to produce this; and like every other piece of percussion apparatus, they have been greatly improved by the evolution which has taken place during recent years. In the early days, a rod or anything which extended parallel with the actual head of the drum, was fixed, or clipped, or screwed on to one of the hoops and a mixed collection of cloths of various kinds was pushed or wedged between the head and the rod.

It was all very well so far as it went, but it did not go very far; half the evening was spent adjusting these owing to changes of temperature, and the other half in pushing them back into position when they fell out. After that, somebody had the brain-wave of fixing them by a kind of clip; but even this was not satisfactory, because the whole affair was not sufficiently rigid or reliable. The result was that an enterprising firm put upon the market the ordinary round damper—a very useful and ingenious article. Briefly, the damper consists of a round felt pad fixed on to a rod, which is itself connected to the hoop by means of a screwing clip. Using this clip as the centre, the rod itself can describe an arc on the head of the drum and be screwed into any desired position within the circumference of that arc. In addition to this, the pad can be screwed and locked so that it exerts any given amount of pressure upon the head. These adjustments ensure rigidity and freedom from trouble, and they also permit of an infinite variety of tones to suit the drum, the performer and the atmospheric conditions in which he happens to be working at the time. Moreover, if necessary, more than one of these dampers may be used.

The very latest idea in damping the bass drum, however, consists of the application of the internal control idea to that instrument. As in the case of the snare drum, the damper works on the inside of the head upon which the playing is done and gives a truer tone effect, because the pressure can, in consequence of the position of the damper, be so very much lighter. Sometimes there is a damper on each head.

The internal control is adjusted by means of one small screw which can be manipulated even during performance, a

fact which is of no little convenience. The internal control is further handy because it never has to be removed and consequently is always ready for use or adjustment at a moment's notice. Although at the time of writing these words, internal damping for bass drums is quite a new feature by certain leading firms, there is no doubt that it will gradually become more or less universal. In any case, I imagine it is to be certain that the firms in question will fit it to all their better-class bass drums. If you are not the lucky possessor of one of these drums, then the best thing for you to do is to produce the required tone by means of one or more of the round type of dampers described above.

Tension your bass drum up very tightly: some drummers recommend that it be brought right up to the note C. By this means and with the use of dampers, you will obtain exactly the right tone.

During the course of an evening's work the foot must beat the bass drum by means of the pedal a great number of times. I have not as yet worked out how many, but it must run into thousands! That being the case, we must definitely look for a pedal which is going to give us the least effort to manipulate.

The reader has a very wide choice in the modern pedals of to-day, both as regards price and type. Most of the modern pedals are very good indeed, and show an unbelievable improvement on those of a few years back. In choosing your pedal, there are two things for which you must definitely look, and unless you are satisfied that these are present, then you should not purchase the pedal. One of these is the all-important ease of action of which I spoke above, and the other is that feature which is known as self-alignment. This simply means that the pedal must be able to adjust itself to any unevenness of the floor and particularly to the fact that when it is screwed on to a drum, it will be slightly raised from the floor; and in consequence, unless there is a certain amount of correct "give" with the pedal, the latter will wobble about unevenly between the flat floor and the hoop. This will not only cause a great

The Foot
Pedal

deal of discomfort, but it will throw the beating angle out of the true and will actually cause the drum itself to wobble. There was a lot of trouble with the old style of pedal which used to kick up badly at the heel, particularly when one had to play with the drums on a carpet. So look out very carefully for this particular feature, and if necessary test your prospective purchase in actual operation on a drum.

When fitting your spurs to the front of the bass drum, be careful to place them so that the front is raised off the floor to the same extent as the pedal causes the back to be. In this way, you are certain of your bass drum not only being level, but also, with the right type of pedal, of its remaining absolutely rigid and without wobble.

Let us now see what we can do to improve our control over the bass drum. The most modern style is to play four beats in a bar in a fox-trot. In the early days of jazz, it was also the fashion to play four beats to the bar, varying them with syncopated beats. After a while, this was dropped in favour of two in a bar, the two being played on beats one and three, together with the type of beat which is shown below:

Bass Drum
Practice

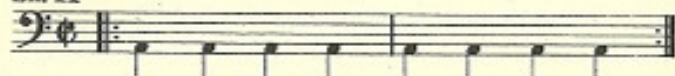


After a few years of this kind of thing, the bass-drum beat returned to the old-fashioned four-in-a-bar and there it has stayed. This became more general with the increasing popularity of the "hot" style of playing; and if you think it out for a moment or so, you will find that it is not at all unnatural for the drummer instinctively to play four in a bar. Go and watch some good orchestra performing, and have a look at any instrumentalist, particularly those in the front row, such as the trumpet and the saxophone players at their work. As you know, they all beat time as they play; and

you will find that, as a rule, every "hot" instrumentalist beats four in a bar with his foot. Then what is more natural than for the drummer to do exactly the same thing, transferring his beats by means of the foot pedal on to his instrument itself?

Most fox-trot numbers to-day are, as I say, played at four beats to the bar; the best practice, therefore, to give you complete control is to do a little work with the foot pedal, only beating a slow and very steady beat of four beats to the bar in ordinary common time. Will you, therefore, be so good as to do this next, as shown here.

Ex. 11



Having dealt for the moment with the work of the right foot, the logical order seems to be that we should turn our attention to the other one now. So let us see what choice we have in the matter of foot-cymbal pedals.

Generally speaking, these come into two classes: those which operate near the ground, and the type where the actual cymbals are separated from the pedal itself by means of a tall rod or stand about three feet high. So far as the low type is concerned, some are made of wood, but most are now made of metal, and more or less fold up. They do not differ very greatly in price, so that you may be guided entirely by your own preference. I believe I am correct when I say that the metal type, but made of a similar pattern as the old wooden type, is the more popular. The main points to look for when purchasing are sturdiness of build, ease of action, a comfortable "feel," and some contrivance whereby the pedal is prevented from slipping about the floor.

The taller type is popularly known as the "High-Hat" cymbal pedal. The advantage of this particular kind is that, whilst it is, of course, operated in the usual way by the foot, it brings the cymbals to a level where they can be employed

for hand work also. It serves a double purpose; and if you can only afford the one type of cymbal pedal, then I suggest you get a High-Hat model, because a little later on I am going to show you how to employ this in combination with the hands.

Opinions differ again on the question of the best type of cymbals to be used in conjunction with the pedal. The ideal is, of course, a pair of Zildjian cymbals, but they are rather costly. If you feel you can run to these, then by all means get them because you will never begrudge having done so. They should be of medium thickness. If, however, you do not feel disposed to go to this expense, then any reasonably good quality cymbals will serve. You can get a very good effect by using an ordinary cymbal for the top and the lower one consisting of a cup cymbal. I do not recommend the employment of two cup cymbals for the simple reason that separate use is to be made of the top cymbal later, as I mentioned above; and for this purpose, it must be larger than the lower one. A pair of cup cymbals must, of course, be equal in size. The size of the cymbals should be 10 in. for the lower and 11 in. for the top.

I am going to give you a couple of simple exercises which employ the bass drum and the foot cymbals. You may think that all this is unnecessary and ridiculous, but you must believe me when I tell you that it is not so. My own personal teaching experience has taught me to realise that it is fatal to leave out any point which does not make tuition absolutely complete. Many of you already know much of that which has gone before, and a great many of you may be actually putting it into your work. To these I would say, you must remember those people who are taking up this book with the idea of learning *everything* there is to be known about swing dance drumming, and it is only fair to them that I should leave nothing open which might give rise to any doubt as to what is correct. So do not grudge the time taken in looking over these exercises: it will do none of us any harm to run through them, and to make quite sure that we ourselves are on the

right lines. In Exercise 12, I am giving you an example of four-in-a-bar on the bass drum with the after-beats taken by the cymbals. I want you, please, very carefully to note the accent on these after-beats which, whilst being very marked, should not be too heavy.

Ex. 12



In the next example, we are going to play four-in-a-bar, both on the bass drum and on the cymbals. Please note your after-beat accent as before. I repeat, I do not want these too heavy—they must be more in the nature of a kind of "stress" on the particular beat. I should be glad if you would try these two exercises over very carefully, please.

Ex. 13

Cymbal



Well, you have been very patient up to now, but I am certain that we shall both be rewarded by this particular virtue. Having checked up on all this essential material, we are going to start right away into the actual swing work. So, back we go to the snare-drum; but in the examples which follow, I want you to play everything together with its pedal and cymbal pedal accompaniment, unless I remark to the contrary at any point. By doing this, you will become accustomed to playing pedal work automatically, when you will thus be free to concentrate on the manual part of the performance.

Just before I conclude, I want to give you a picture showing you what, in my opinion, is the correct and the most comfortable position for both feet in relation to the rest of the body and the lay-out of your kit. Will you please study FIG. 10.

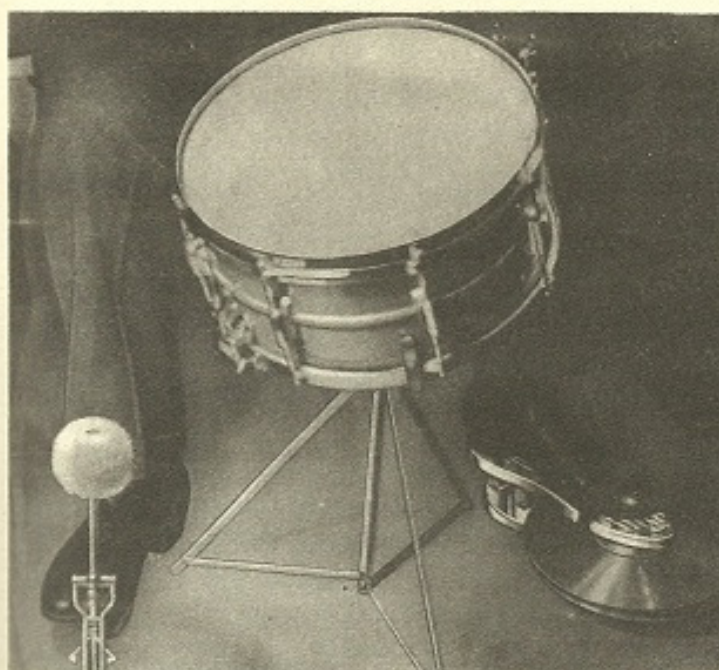


Fig. 10

CHAPTER V

The swing drummer must, first and foremost, get these two golden rules well into his head. And not only into his head, but into his playing as well. Copy them out if you like, and fix them up in a prominent position where you can't fail to see them. Here they are:

Two Rules

1. Do the right thing in the right place.
2. A simple thing well done sounds very much better than a complicated thing performed badly.

If you will but get these into your system, you will find that your drumming immediately improves, and that this effect is definitely noticeable by your leader. There is absolutely no point in putting in a beat, quite irrespective of whether it is suitable to the particular passage or piece or not, just because you happen to fancy it, or because you have just finished learning it. Mint sauce is a most excellent thing if it is used in its right place—with roast lamb; if you use it with roast beef, it doesn't make the mint sauce bad: it is merely in its wrong place. Do you see what I mean?

And how often have I not heard a drummer who was getting along quite nicely and keeping a good steady swinging tempo, suddenly decide that he would like to put in a very showy beat? Waiting for his opportunity at the next break, off goes our drummer friend into some kind of complication which needed at least a fortnight's practice before it was wished on a long-suffering leader. You can imagine the effect! It is an unfortunate thing that good playing for a couple of hours does not usually call as much attention to itself as does one mistake which only takes a couple of seconds: so think this

out before you start something of which you are not quite certain.

All beats used in swing drumming are merely complications, or buildings-up, of primary basic beats. If you were to get them down on paper and take them to pieces bit by bit, and were to strip them of all their trimmings, you would then come down to the bare bones of one or other of a series of foundation rhythms of quite a simple type. So what I propose to do here is to go the reverse way about it; I am going to take one or two of these basic beats, bit by bit, and build up on them, until we get some quite complicated beats. Thus you will see exactly how beats are constructed, and furthermore, you will know how to set about composing and inventing your own. It will make it much more simple, too, when you are trying to examine the work of anybody else if you realise this method of structure; that is why I told you earlier on in this book that it was very necessary for you to analyse everything, and examine just how it was brought about.

In putting these beats down on paper for you, I am going to use an unorthodox method of writing them; when I say that this method is "unorthodox," or not usual, I simply mean that it does not conform with the old-fashioned method of teaching people how to play a drum. This is really a very good thing, because the old style always left you wondering which hand you were going to use to play a particular beat in a bar. So in all examples where it is actually possible, I am going to separate the two hands on the printed music stave. I shall place the left hand towards the top of the stave and the right hand on the lower portion. My reason for this is simply that the modern style of drumming is not necessarily made up of "hand-to-hand" beating, like the older school was. You will notice this for yourself as we proceed: in fact, in some examples you will see that we use both hands at once. In order to make the examples as simple as possible to the eye, and to avoid confusion, I am leaving out the part for the bass drum and the foot cymbal, but in all the exercises which

follow I am taking it for granted that you will play four beats to the bar on the bass drum and two after-beats on the cymbals, unless I tell you to the contrary anywhere. As I mentioned a little earlier, the object of this is to ensure that your foot-work becomes automatic so as to leave you free to concentrate on the snare drum. I am particularly anxious that, whatever else you may do, you do not become automatic or mechanical on the snare drum. Never play a snare drum as if you were wound up and guaranteed to give so many beats to the second: play it as if you liked it, as if you enjoyed playing it, and try to *look* as if you enjoyed playing it, too! You can't hope that anybody will take pleasure in listening to you if you wear a permanent frown or set your jaw, and appear as if the whole thing were a real effort. So, as the photographer says, "look pleasant please and smile a little!"

All the examples given below are to be taken at a medium slow tempo. First of all I want you to play two bars with the right hand only, thus:



Then I want you to play the same thing, but to add a "crush" roll with the left hand on the after-beats (beats 2 and 4). I want to explain this crush roll rather in detail here, because it is used a considerable amount in swing drumming. The actual effect sounds like a kind of stifled bounce so far as the roll is concerned and it is produced as follows. Immediately the left-hand stick strikes the head, it is pressed, as it were, into the head itself, thus crushing down or choking the natural tendency of the stick to bounce. You will, of course, produce a bounce, but the tone of that bounce will be very different. Please look at the example:



Now I am going to give you the next variation, building up on this basic beat. You will see that we are going to play four beats in the bar with both hands. This time you perform the ordinary single beat with your right hand, and four crush rolls in a bar with the left. I want you to note particularly the accent, or extra stress, which is to mark the after-beat. Here is your example:



So far, so good. But I think we would like to add a little more interest and life to this particular beat so as to get it more swingy. In order to do this, I have taken the next step forward by varying the right hand. Note carefully, please, the dotted notes and be sure that you give them their proper correct value. Practise this example until you are absolutely certain of it.



I take this opportunity of reminding you that you are still playing your four-in-a-bar on the bass drum, and your after-beats with the foot-cymbal pedal. I am now going to add still further life to the last example by building it up in two more stages. Practise very carefully exercises 18 and 19 and pay particular attention to the accents.



I don't want you to think that this progress is too slow. Believe me when I tell you that this is the only way to set about becoming a real swing drummer, whatever nonsense you may have read or heard to the contrary elsewhere. I, myself, had to build up my own work in just such a manner as you and I are doing together now.

I think that we will pause a little time now in an attempt to develop the same work in the left hand. You remember exercise 10? If not, then glance back at it, and read again the remarks which go with it. As before, I am going to reverse the work of the two hands with a slight alteration in the right; and the following three examples have that distinct object in view:



Please note the after-beats only play the crush rolls in these examples; and I want you to mark the slight accent clearly. But I also want you to play crush rolls in all right-hand beats in Exs. 21 and 22, by way of an alternative.

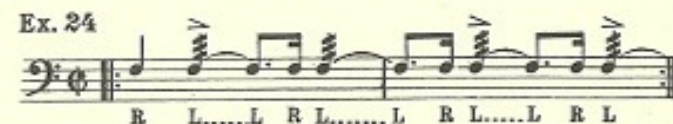
The above rhythmic beats can be used in almost any swingy fox-trot as basic beats: that is to say, as foundation beats upon which you can build up. Later on, I shall give you others based on them. These will not be *instead of* them, but in *addition to* them, as accompanying beats for hot solo choruses, or rhythmic last choruses. I have told you to practise these

beats at a medium slow tempo, for the simple reason that they are suitable for numbers of this type. Generally speaking, they are unsuitable for faster numbers; there are other methods of producing the same, or similar, effects in quicker numbers of this type, and I shall deal with these later on.

In this next section, I wish you, please, to continue the foot-work just as before. In the examples which follow, I shall have to return to the conventional method of notation, because of the length of the rolls which occur in them. It is impossible to separate the rolls for both hands, as I expect you realise. Please look at example 23.



Now, this is the ordinary after-beat roll and is useful for practice and control only. I would not advocate it as it stands for rhythmic work. But see how, by the simple addition of just one beat, the whole thing is lifted rhythmically and made very much more interesting:



I want you to make this roll as close as you possibly can: in fact, it has got to sound like a continuous "buzz." Accent the beginning of the roll and start on the left hand and finish on the left hand, not forgetting of course, to produce a good snap to mark the finish. Now you will see why I was so anxious for you to be sure of your five-, seven- and nine-stroke rolls. You realise, of course, that the slower the number is, the longer becomes the roll; and the quicker the number the shorter the roll. You will notice that I have marked the correct hands in this example, and that the note played in between the rolls should be played with the right hand.

Alternatively, when you practise this with the roll starting with the right hand, the extra note will then be played on the left hand. You might practise this exercise "in reverse" straight away.

Example 24 was an example of an after-beat roll. Let us now see what we can make of an on-the-beat roll, thus:



Be careful in the above to "snap up" the last beat of the roll, bringing it off smartly with a strong accent. Here is the same roll with the addition of the extra note used in the previous example:



Now remember, I want a very good accent on the last beat of this roll, too.

Here is another type of roll, which has the advantage of giving additional lift to your work. Strictly speaking, this is not really a legitimate roll, judged by old-time methods; but we are dealing with swing drumming which itself consists of special effects; and I am going to show you the best way to produce these particular effects. I am very much afraid that if anybody should say that they are not useful in legitimate work, or when one is on the march, then I am sorry—not for ourselves, but for those people who imagine that this type of swing drumming takes place when an army is marching!

The drag roll is suitable both for the medium-tempo number and the fast type; and you should be able to perform it with either hand. We are going to try, first of all, with the left hand, and I want you to follow the examples very carefully, of course. First of all look at example 27 which you will see is an ordinary four-in-a-bar played by the right hand. Note the accents.

Ex.27



Now we are going to add the left hand on the after-beat. To produce the effect I require, you must drag the left-hand stick across the drum-head with a sweeping motion, as shown in the accompanying illustration.

This dragging effect must be carried out for the full value of beat 2, finishing up on the very beginning of beat 3 by one snappy tap. Then take your stick back in preparation for exactly the same movement on beat 4, finishing, of course, with your final snappy tap on the first beat of the next bar. Please study the illustration very carefully and follow that by trying to put it into practice upon example 28. Realise, of course, that the hand producing this drag roll holds the stick loosely enough for it to "bounce a roll for itself" between the first and last position of the hand. When this is perfect, the same "buzz" effect should be heard as mentioned after example 24.



Fig. 11

The picture (FIG. 11) shows you the exact position for the start and for the finish of the drag roll with the left hand and also shows you the sweep of the stick across the head. Please look at this figure, and then try example 28, trying to produce the same effect.



Now let us vary this a little in the right hand so as to give an added lift to the rhythm.



Just as you have done previously, I want you to work the drag into a real "lilty" rhythm. The type of rhythm required is best produced by playing eight beats to the bar with the right hand, thus:



Now, the above is a good swing rhythm for almost any fox-trot except the type known as the "sweet melody" variety. At that stage of the performance when you feel that the band has really got going and is working up for a real hot swing, then you "swing out" on this rhythm yourself, and see how well it works in.

Now will you please reverse the hands in examples 28, 29 and 30.

A very great improvement to rhythm, and also one which gives a very marked variety, is the use of the "Rim Shots" rim of the snare-drum by striking it with the stick.

The rim-shot, so far as the right hand is concerned, is produced by dropping the wrist slightly and by taking a little firmer grip of the stick with the hand (so that you feel the stick against the lower part of the thumb and the palm of the hand) and then by striking the rim and the drum-head at the same time cleanly with the stick. On exactly how much rim you use and how much drum-head, or whether you use the rim only or the amount of pressure used and the position of the stick where you strike the rim, depends the quality or tone of

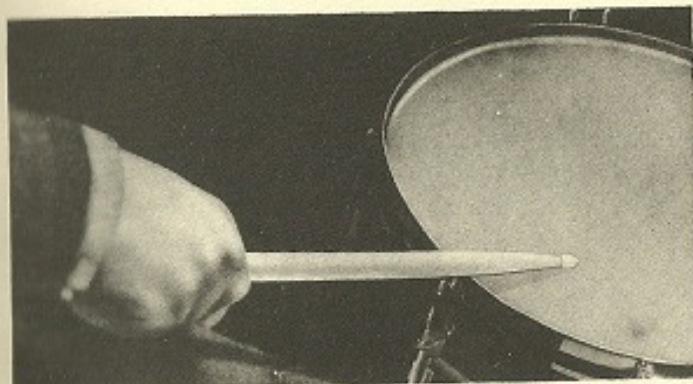


Fig. 12

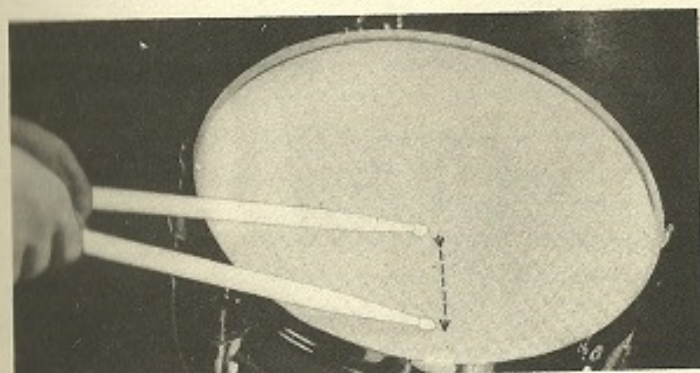


Fig. 13

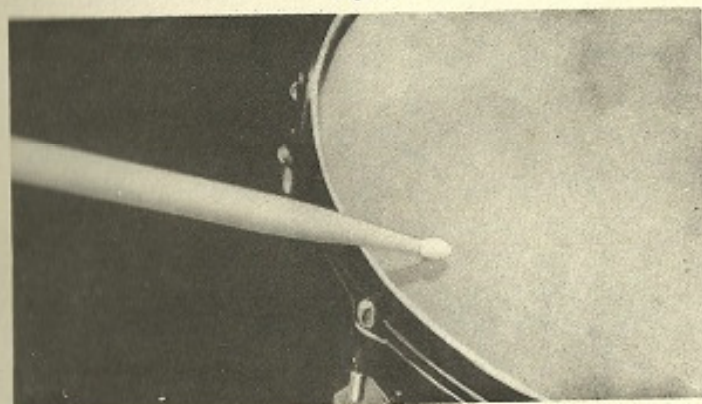


Fig. 14

the beat produced. A great deal of this is impossible to describe on paper, and I must leave it to your own sense of what sounds best in the right place. In the beat I am going to show you just now, I strike the rim three inches up the stick, as you will see in the illustration; but I suggest that you experiment for yourself, and find out exactly what different effects you can get and remember just the best way of producing these. Remember to get a good clear rim shot in example 31, which is exactly the same as example 30, except for the rim shot on the after-beat. FIG. 12 is an illustration of the rim-shot referred to above, and here is the example mentioned.



The right-hand drag roll is produced across the head of the drum in a reverse manner from the left-hand one; that is to say, you move from the centre towards the rim of the drum in a right direction. This is because, by this means, the stick is always in its best position on the drum-head to produce the accents at the points on which they come. The fullest tone is in the centre of the head. Look at FIG. 13, and you will see the starting and finishing positions for the right-hand drag roll, together with an indication of the part of the drum covered.

The drag roll played on the "on" beat (i.e., starting on beats 1 and 3) is very useful for extremely fast numbers. It is very appropriate also for rhythmic and for hot choruses; and in places like these it forms an excellent background rhythm. Here is an example:



Now let us vary this by the addition of an extra note:



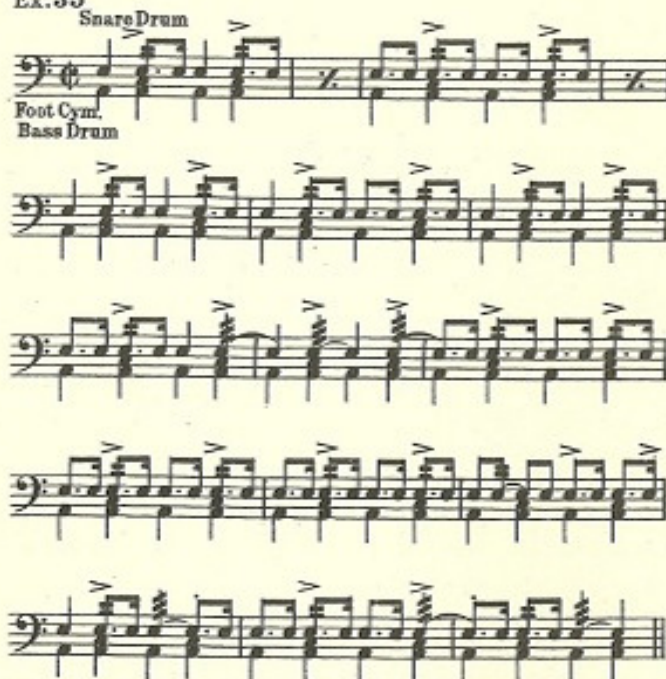
Now, there is nothing very complicated about a roll in which one or more accents are introduced. It is simply a long steady roll with the accents stressed where they are marked in the music, or where you feel they should come if you are not playing from music. One of its advantages is that it is very useful in fast numbers. In order to obtain these accents, all you want to do is to crush in the roll at the points where they occur. When you are practising the accented roll, I want you to try it both ways: that is to say, work it out to get the accent on the left-hand beat, then on the right-hand beat. Here is an example:



I think I have now given you sufficient material for the moment for you to be able to construct quite a passable chorus. So, I suggest that you put on your gramophone and accompany a chorus, making use of what you have already been shown. Take what you think are the most suitable rhythms, and blend them together into a good snappy rhythmic accompaniment, and one which is absolutely suitable to the music you are following. You must vary them, adapt them, and improve them as seems best to you. I cannot tell you everything that could be done in any particular phrase or chorus: it is quite impossible for me to give you all the combinations of rhythms that might occur, because they run into millions. There does come a point in every kind of tuition where your own creative sense begins and the work of the teacher leaves off: this is just such a position. But what I can do is to give you an example of half a chorus (16 bars) in which I have made use of the type of material I have already

given you. So before you start to work out your own chorus, I suggest that you run through the example below, just to see how the linking up of this various material works out. It will be very good practice for your sight reading. But, let me beg of you, do not use this example as a "stock phrase," to be employed with thankfulness whenever you are hard up! It is only an example: so please treat it as such. It might be possible to attempt a chapter—nay, a whole book—on extemporising from a printed drum part. But this would surely be a task not worth attempting, for no drum part contains the essence of any piece. The interpretation lies within the artist himself—and not in any words of mine.

Ex. 35



The sign Z means play the bar exactly as in the previous bar

CHAPTER VI

If there is any one thing which is more important than anything else in the structure of music and particularly rhythmic music, that one thing is accents—their correct playing, and their correct placing.

The whole of swing drumming definitely depends on this business of correct accenting; and it is so important, that unless you understand it and get it right, you will never be a good swing drummer.

After all, when we come to think of it, it is accent which puts the sense into any sound of any description, or any collection of sounds. Take speech, for instance: the very same thing applies in the spoken word as it does in the musical sound. This is so much so, that an alteration of accent on a couple of sentences composed of the very same words will alter the sense of each sentence. Let me give you an example. Suppose we take the following sentence: Jack says, "*Henry* is a fool." Now it is very clear in this sentence that the man who has been described as a fool is Henry. Very well: now let us look at the same sentence but with a different accent. "*Jack*," says Henry, "is a fool." Now here you have exactly the same words in exactly the same order; and yet, this time it is Jack who is in the unfortunate position of being a fool. Instead of reading those sentences, speak both of them aloud, as if you were talking to somebody else, and accent them in such a way that you make it clearly understood in each case which is the man speaking and which is the man who is being called a fool. You will see that in order to do this, you have but to change the accent, although you do not alter the order of the words one bit. Now, do you see how important it is that accents should be correct? I mention this at the particular

stage I am doing here, because from now on, accents are going to play an increasingly important part in the production of rhythm in the examples which I am going to give you; so please make absolutely certain that you clearly understand the above. And I need hardly ask you to do me the favour of paying particular attention to *all* the accents as they are marked in the examples; if you do not, these examples will sound quite different, and you will wonder why they are not effective and good swing style. And the answer will not be because of any fault of my own.

You will remember that I told you in an earlier stage of our studies that music was split up into various phrases of an even number of bars. Well, as you know (because your musical sense will tell you so), these phrases themselves can be split up again into a still smaller number of bars, the minimum being two. The successful performance of a chorus depends upon three main things:

1. *Correct phrasing.* This gives smoothness and point to the whole thing.
2. *Keeping the rhythm steady through a phrase.*
3. *The correct linking-up or joining of each phrase.* On the well-accented and smooth blending of each phrase depends the smooth running of the whole of the chorus. If this is not done, then the performance sounds jerky and uneven and detached. It is for this reason that definite lead-in beats are used at the end of phrases. These are also sometimes called "pick-up beats" or "lift beats"; and these names indicate exactly the purpose of this type of beat. It is to link the chorus into one smooth whole and at the same time to mark the phrases by giving each one a lead-in to the next one, thus lifting up the rhythm. Pick-up beats can be produced by any legitimate means with the correct use of accents and clean forceful playing where they appear. One favourite method is the use of the bass drum to force these

Lead-in
Beats

beats home. This is generally done by continuing the work of the foot pedal on the bass drum, but at the same time supplementing it by striking the head of the bass drum with the right-hand snare-drum stick.

When this idea first began to find favour, it took the shape of quite an elementary lead-in thus:

Ex. 36 Right S.D. stick on B.D. head



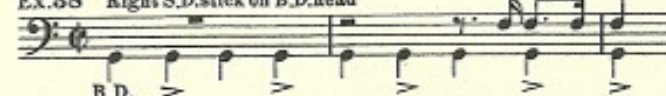
This advanced a little, as you see below:

Ex. 37 Right S.D. stick on B.D. head



and then this was followed by:

Ex. 38 Right S.D. stick on B.D. head



About this time, the Charleston beat began to make itself popular; and this was used as a lead-in to a great extent. Here is an example of it:

Ex. 39 The 'Charleston' beat. Right S.D. stick on B.D. head



A further improvement in this type of pick-up beat and a more modern one is shown below:

Ex. 40 Right S.D. stick on B.D. head



Now, remember, that these beats are all struck as indicated with the snare-drum stick on the bass drum, but the pedal



I want you to note the accents very carefully as they fall, and remember to mark them clearly. And now, as usual, I want you to go back a little and reverse the hands for these examples, starting with your right hand, and in due course playing your rim-shots with your left hand. You produce this rim-shot in exactly the same way as you did with the right; and I want you to aim at getting precisely the same tone as you did with the other hand. By the way, try the effect of playing four-in-a-bar with both Bass Drum and Foot Cymbals in this example.

Next let us try a crush in the place of the rim-shot. I want this to be a small, very clean and very neat crush. Here is an example:



Our next step is to get a little more syncopation into the whole thing, and particularly so far as the actual rim-shots are concerned:

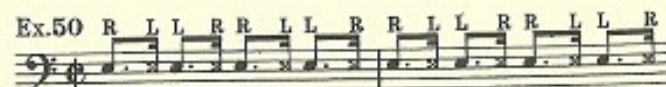


The work of each hand is most important in the above example; and as the accents and rim-shots fall in varying positions and with varying hands, I want you to bring them out cleanly and accurately, making a very definite job of this passage. In other words, I want you to play it without any hesitation, just as if you were very certain of it indeed. We will now take a more advanced version of the above:



The above passage is a really good useful swingy rhythm which can be employed almost right through any jig chorus. That being so, you will naturally take every step to become thoroughly familiar with and thoroughly accustomed to it. By the way, whilst I am on the subject of these examples, I don't want you just to stumble through them to see "what it is all about," and then immediately to forget them. Whenever I tell you that they are a good solid beat which can be used in your practical work, then I expect you to take the trouble to master them and get them into your system in such a way that they become absolutely part of you, and so that you don't have to think or make any conscious effort when you wish to produce them. Although they are described here merely as examples, they are solid working beats which are going to stand you in very good stead and add to your repertoire.

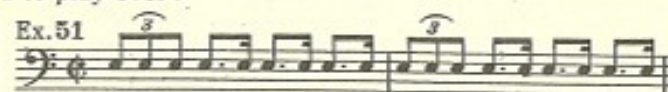
Now we come to a different type of effect. It is more brilliant and decidedly more showy; but at the same time it is more difficult. It is well worth your while to give it very careful study, however, because it is the beginning of the more complicated types which are to follow. It has got to be studied and practised very carefully, because unless you produce it correctly it sounds very bad; so do not hurry the practice of it, and do not attempt to include it into your repertoire until you are absolutely sure of it. It is an effect which produces three distinct tones. First of all let us look at it in actual music.



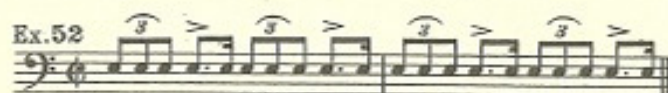
You will see that there are four rim-shots in each bar, and that these are played by the left and the right hand alternately. I want you to produce a different tone in the rim-shots of each

hand. You will thus get the drum-head tone and two rim-shot tones, making three in all. The left rim-shot has to be played 1 in. from the tip of the stick, as illustrated in figure 14; and the right rim-shot, 3 in. from the tip of the stick, as shown in figure 12. The accents in each case are produced on the rim-shots, which must come out clear and snappy.

We will now begin, I think, to introduce the triplet into jig time. The triplet is more suited to this time than to any other, and it is particularly appropriate when used in conjunction with the jig rhythm. Here is a simple example which I would like you to play over:



I want you to regard the above simply as an exercise and not as a particularly valuable beat. But in example 52, I have elaborated this so as to make it into quite a useful playing beat. Please look at it:



Now let us try this very effective beat, which is made up of alternate bars of dotted crochets and triplets. Please practise this example very carefully.



In order to get a little more "bite" and accent into the above, we will add rim-shots on the triplets, thus:



We will now add still further accents by the use of rim-shots in the first bar:



Notice carefully these extra accents, produced, as I say, by means of the rim-shots and see what a great improvement this makes to the whole passage. I want you to practise example 55 until you have got it off absolutely "pat"; it is a very useful stock rhythm, although in reality it is quite simple.

Retracing our steps a little, and leaving the triplets for a couple of examples, will you please examine the new rhythm below:



Now, this is the type of beat which you could safely run through most of a chorus in jig time. But personally, whilst I am all against chopping and changing rhythms about in very short passages, I am definitely not in favour of running one particular beat all the way through thirty-two bars. You will remember what I told you earlier about the division of the average fox-trot chorus? Well, you should endeavour to match your beats with these same divisions in the melody. For instance, you can, if you like, play one beat right through the first sixteen bars. You should then make a change for the next eight bars; but you may return to your original beat, or a slight variation, for the final eight bars of the chorus. In this way your rhythm plot will match the melody plot of the composer, and does not sound uninteresting and monotonous. We will now examine example 56, but using a different type of beating; I refer to the paradiddle arrangement of the hands as shown below:

The Paradiddle



The object of this is to enable you to produce your two-tone rim-shots and to get the same three-tone effect that you produced with example 50. The whole tone of this example sounds very fine when you have brought it to perfection. Furthermore, it is an exceedingly flashy and showy beat—it *looks* very good indeed. Although it may strike you as being a little complicated at first, it is quite easy to perform when once you have got it off pat. Please practise it very carefully, because it is well worth the trouble.

Here is another good stock rhythm for jig chorus work :



I want you to note that each of the left-hand beats in bar 2 is played in the manner known as "ghost" notes. A ghost note simply means a very quiet beat indeed. What you have got to do is to bring your stick to the head of the drum and barely to touch it; you more or less suggest the note rather than actually play it, simply making the slightest possible sound.

I want you now to study example 59.



It is absolutely necessary in the above that you should play the last two rim-shots with the right hand. Pay particular attention, therefore to the arrangement of the beating which brings the hands into the correct rotation for doing this.

I want you, please, by way of a variation, to play examples 53, 54, 58 and 59 not only with the foot cymbals on the after-beats, but also with four beats in a bar with both pedal and cymbals.

Now we arrive at a rhythm which is popularly known as the "riding" rhythm. Occasionally, on some orchestrations, and particularly American orchestrations, you will find the words "ride

The "Riding" Rhythm

it" over the last chorus. This simply means "let it go all out"; and the term has probably been used because it rather describes the attitude of the band, who swing up and down and sway their bodies exactly the same way as if they were, in fact, riding a horse at a good pace. The drummer himself joins in this riding movement, because in playing the rhythm which I give you in example 60, his hands and arms swing back and forward from the elbows in just the same way as if he were holding the reins. Look at the example, please.



You will see that there is a strong accent on the after-beats. When you play this rhythm, the sticks are dragged backwards and forwards across the drum-head away from you and then towards you. When you push them away from you, you make a sort of digging movement, as if you were trying to push them right down into the drum-head; and this forward digging movement must come on the accented after-beat. It is a peculiar effect and one that is rather difficult to describe; but if you will study the example and then play it, pushing out from the elbows in the way I have tried to explain above, you will get exactly what is meant by this good forceful beat.

CHAPTER VII

We can now turn our attention to another very important portion of the drummer's equipment for producing rhythmic passages: the cymbal. Cymbals Not unnaturally, one has had to answer a great number of questions regarding the best cymbals to use for dance work, the make, the price, how to choose them, and so on. May I, therefore, open this section by giving you a few brief hints.

First of all, let me say that a cymbal is a very peculiar thing; you "never can tell" with a cymbal. By this I mean that, although there are naturally qualities of cymbals and makes which you would examine first if you want the best, there is always that interesting possibility that you might happen to pick up just exactly what you wanted in a most unexpected way. For instance, I, myself, once found a curious-looking second-hand cymbal which I managed to secure for the modest price of 5s. That cymbal had a perfectly marvellous recording tone and it just so happened that it was exactly suited to the work for which I required it. But this kind of thing is rather the exception than the rule. Still, one gets a fancy for a particular cymbal and within certain recognised limits, it is quite legitimate to be guided by this fancy. I have my own ideas about cymbals, and I very often try to add to my collection without success for the simple reason that other drummers share these views with me. Here is a case in point. Some little time ago there came over to this country a very famous American Band, including an equally famous American drummer. I went several times to hear him and greatly admired his work. Amongst his equipment, I was particularly struck by the tone

of a certain cymbal. It was quite an ordinary cymbal, worth perhaps a couple of pounds or so but—oh, that tone! I asked the drummer whether he would care to dispose of the cymbal and he smiled very knowingly at me when he replied in the negative. He had got hold of an extra special find in the cymbal line and he knew it; and what is more, he knew that I knew it. At the time, I thought that life would not be worth living unless I possessed this cymbal; and eventually I finished up by offering him a ten-pound note for it. The drummer still smiled; and a week or so later he returned to America—and the cymbal went back there with him. It was a great disappointment to me.

However, things like the above only happen once in a while.

When it comes to the normal run, and we have to purchase a cymbal, then there are other methods. First of all, let me say very definitely indeed that if you can only afford one cymbal, then by all means go for the very best: do without something else for the time being rather than have only one cymbal which is not the best that money can buy. The best cymbals for dance work to-day are the Zildjian cymbals. There seems to be a certain amount of misunderstanding about cymbals manufactured by the Zildjian family, owing possibly to views and information which have been made public by people who are not in possession of the real facts. Zildjian cymbals are made, and have been made, by one Turkish family for centuries; you can always tell them, because the name is stamped right into the cymbal and none is genuine without that name. You will not find the name on any but a genuine Zildjian cymbal, because misuse of it would render the culprit liable to prosecution. The Zildjian family possess a certain secret in connection with the manufacture of cymbals and this secret has been handed from father to son for generations. So far as we understand it, it is not chiefly the correct proportion of the metals used, but it is a question of the exact degree of heat employed at the fusing point of these metals; on that appears to depend the superiority of cymbals manufactured

Only the
Best

under this name. Zildjian cymbals are manufactured in two places: the K. Zildjians in their original birth-place at Constantinople, and the A., or Avedis Zildjian, by the senior member of the family, who possesses the secret process and is using it in the United States of America. The reason for his removal of the manufacturing of this product to another country was two-fold. In the first place it was connected with the high import duty on foreign instruments, obviously to be avoided if they were manufactured in the country itself. In the second place, it occurred to this particular Mr. Zildjian, and not without considerable reason, that if he manufactured these cymbals in America, he would be in close personal contact with some of the most important drummers in the world using his product, and could thus manufacture them to a specification more nearly approaching their own ideal, by working directly to their requirements. This seems a very logical view-point; and it is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that the Avedis Zildjian cymbals are the very best which can be procured for dance work.

If, as I say, you can only afford one cymbal, then buy a 12 in. Avedis Zildjian. This should not be of the thick type such as is used for orchestral work, nor should it be, in my opinion, of the extreme "paper-thin" kind manufactured and recommended in some quarters. The reason against the very thick type is that, for the style of work to which you are going to put it, it does not answer quickly enough. The case against extreme thinness is that this type of cymbal is inclined to respond so very quickly that when we are using it for "choke" cymbal work, it gives hardly any "tone" on the choked beat. We must look for a cymbal which strikes the happy medium between these two, and you find it in the medium-thick cymbal, perhaps very slightly on the thin side.

If your pocket allows you to run to more than one cymbal, then you should next possess yourself of an 11 in. cymbal, slightly thinner than your first, and of a little higher pitch. In this case, your first 12 in. cymbal may, with advantage, be just a shade thicker than it would be were you only using one.

If you can still go to another, then you may indulge in the extra luxury of a 10 in. or 11 in. paper-thin instrument; there are many fine effects possible with cymbals of this nature. In choosing a cymbal, there are several things to look for.

The first is, generally speaking, to find one which takes your personal fancy: what may suit one person may not necessarily be liked by another. You might have to look through 2 or 3 dozen before you find your ideal; but this is rather an extreme possibility. At any rate, you should not merely grab the first that is offered you, but should take an opportunity of going quietly and carefully through the stock available. I, myself, have well over a dozen cymbals which I have bought at various times as my fancy took me. Next, you want to examine the cymbal for the thickness of which I spoke earlier. Do not judge this by the edge alone, because very often cymbals taper towards the edge. Slide it between your fingers and thumb and see whether it also appears to be of a reasonable thinness further towards the centre. Here is another point which I have always found as a good guide, speaking personally. Examine the shape of the cup of the cymbal: I have always found that the flatter (or less dome-shaped) is the cup, the better is the tone of the cymbal. I have been informed by people who should know that this actually has nothing whatever to do with the tone. That may be so; and therefore, I have no hesitation in stating this contradiction here. All that I do say is, that in my own experience, I have noticed that cymbals having the best tone have so happened to possess a flatter cup; but this, of course, may be pure chance. Lastly, perhaps, I need hardly remind you to take the final precaution of looking once again for the manufacturer's name on the cymbal itself. It has been the desire of musical instrument manufacturers for

a very long time to produce something which would hold the cymbal firmly on its arm and which would avoid any other metal in contact with the metal of the cymbal, and yet at the same time would allow it to move or rock freely. In the old days, drummers

were up to all sorts of dodges with pieces of cloth, felt, springs and rubber to achieve this desired effect. Most of the attempts were unsatisfactory because they did not last long. There has now been produced a very effective little gadget which seems to solve the problem permanently and in a satisfactory manner. It consists of a cup which fits easily on to the top of the cymbal post and is retained in this position by a leather loop preventing it falling down. The cup itself is provided with a thick felt washer and the whole thing is fitted on to the cymbal and left permanently there. In no case does the cymbal itself come into contact with any other metal. This cup is so excellent, and to my mind so very essential a thing to have, that I have illustrated it for you in FIG. 15, and advise you to possess the necessary number for your own cymbal outfit.

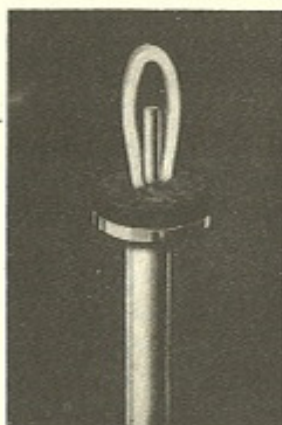


Fig. 15

There are many different views on the position in which the cymbal should be placed in relation to yourself and to the rest of your kit. None of these is wrong provided that you choose a position where the cymbal is available absolutely instantly and where it does not interfere with any other working part of your outfit. Should you place it on your bass drum, you must have

Position

it so that it can be got at in a flash; but you must be careful that it does not interfere with easy access to such things as your temple blocks. Nothing sounds worse than an accidental cymbal crash at the wrong place. Some people like a cymbal fixed to their snare-drum stand by an extra attachment. Very good, so long, again, as it is easy to get at, and does not interfere with the snare drum, nor yet entail any risk of overturning that instrument. In other words, speed of access is everything.

There is very little to be said on the subject of striking a cymbal to obtain a crash, except to mention that it must be a clean crash. Therefore, strike your cymbal about the centre of your stick with a sharp, *glancing* blow, getting the stick clear of the cymbal as soon as it hits it. Do not strike straight down on to the cymbal, leaving your stick so that the cymbal touches it more than once: in this way, you would only get an untidy "sizzling" crash, which was not clean. Nor must you strike the cymbal too near the tip of your stick. It is obviously thinner there, and will not bring out the full tone of the cymbal. Choke or stop the crash with the left hand, preferably with the fingers under and the thumb on the top of the cymbal. You realise, of course, that the length, or duration, of the sound of the crash is decided by when you choke the cymbal with the left hand.

Upon the exact position of the hands and the sticks depends the fascinating tones which may be obtained when beating the cymbal in rhythm. A great deal of information concerning these tones and the method of producing them is impossible to place accurately on paper; so the reader is advised to experiment as much as possible in this section for himself, and whenever he gets an effect which particularly pleases him, to remember how it is produced so that he can bring it up again whenever he wishes.

Let us first of all take the position of the hands for the first style of rhythmic beating. In the first place, the stick should be held in the left hand in the position shown in FIG. 16.

Rhythmic
Cymbal Playing

The inner joint of the thumb holds the stick against the palm of the hand, and the thumb itself should be bent slightly inwards to support the stick. The thumb and stick would then be underneath the cymbal with the fingers of the same hand on the top, in such a way as to allow the stick to lie inwards about half-an-inch from the edge of the cymbal; it should not be right up against the edge. Figs. 17 and 18 should make this amply clear, I think.

The beating of the cymbal is, of course, produced by the right hand, so the entire cymbal control is in the care of the left hand. You should, therefore, be very particular to follow these directions accurately, and to make sure that everything is being done in the proper manner.

The right hand holds the stick as usual, but the grip of the forefinger and thumb is just a little bit firmer. The little finger acts as a kind of buffer to control the rebound of the stick. Notice this hold and the general position of the hand, as shown in FIG. 19.

When playing, tilt the cymbal slightly away from you; that is to say, the portion nearest your hands should be higher from the ground, as shown in FIG. 20.

Now, although the left-hand fingers are raised for open beats, the cymbal still touches the palm of the hand slightly during these beats. I might mention that this is so much the case that when I have been playing for a long evening, I have quite a noticeable mark running across the palm of my left hand. I have mentioned that there are so many different ways of producing different tones with a cymbal that personal experiment is necessary. A great deal has to do with the individual, and not a little with the formation of his own hand. If one has a thin hand, the tone will show quite an appreciable difference from that produced by a hand more generously covered. With a fuller hand, the actual flesh forms a damper for the cymbal and will influence its tone; so I urge you to experiment for yourself. You know the type of tone you are striving to obtain; so what you must do is to try various methods of producing it until you get exactly that which

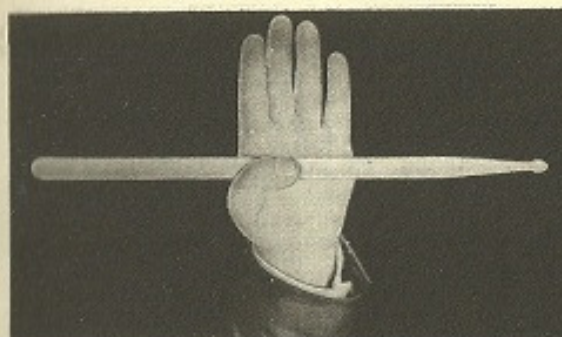


Fig. 16



Fig. 17

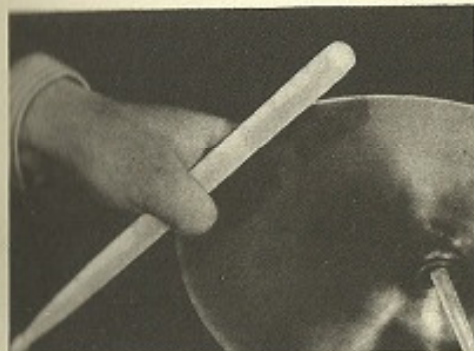


Fig. 18

satisfies you. Just one word of warning: don't strive for a tone that you may have heard on a record. Most likely it was obtained from a cymbal that would be useless except in a recording studio!

We will now examine the method of producing what I call the ordinary open and closed cymbal beating in rhythm. I have explained to you that this is very difficult to describe exactly on paper; nevertheless, by careful examination of each of the examples which follow, together with the description accompanying them, you will be able to produce exactly the effect required. You will notice in example 61 and onwards, I have made use of two tones and used two signs to mark them. The notes over which there are a cross are the closed cymbal tones; that is to say, your left hand grips the cymbal completely, as before described, and damps the sound. The other notes with an "o" above them are the open cymbal beats; and on these, the fingers of the left hand are raised slightly, and pressure upon the cymbal is generally slackened. First of all practise each beat separately, simply in order to gain control and to understand just what we are doing. So will you please try the closed form of beat given in the following example:



Very good. Now try the open beat in just the same way.



You must produce four separate beats in each bar; and I think you may find that this is not quite so easy as it looks at first sight. As soon as you are satisfied with both these examples done slowly, I want you to repeat them, gradually increasing the tempo until you get them as fast as you can, keeping each beat clean. Be careful in example 62 to choke



Fig. 19

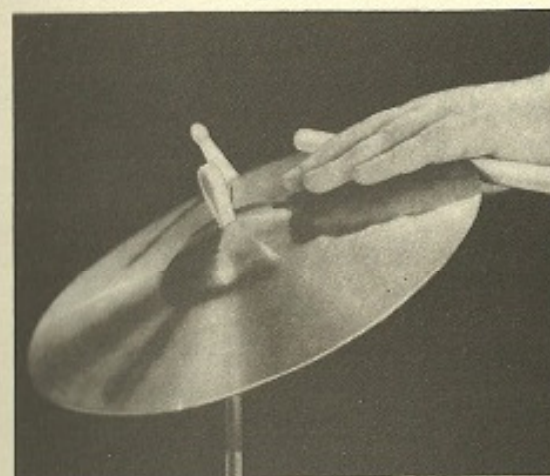
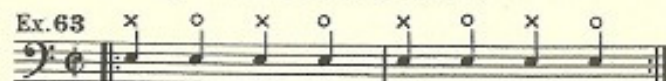


Fig. 20

at the end of each beat. In order to produce the correct type of beat in this exercise, you will find that your hands are working in contrary motion against each other. That is to say, as your right hand comes down and strikes the cymbal with the stick, the fingers of your left hand rise in the opposite direction. It is this reversed motion of the hands which makes control rather difficult at speed; in view of the fact, however, that this is a very important piece of technique to acquire, you should spare no pains over this exercise. Do not take the hand right off the cymbal unless you wish the note to be prolonged for a considerable duration; if you move the hand too far away, you will get a confused sound. The top, or fleshy part of the palm nearest the roots of the fingers should remain in contact with the cymbal.

Let us now try to combine these beats:



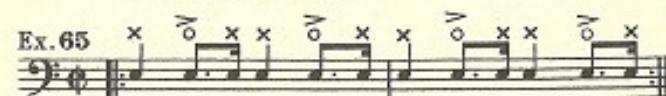
Just as before, the hands work against each other on the open beats and these are choked cleanly off immediately before the next closed beat. Now I want you to look very carefully at the next example:



Although this may appear at first sight to be exactly the same as example 63, nevertheless, there is a very distinct difference which you will notice when you have followed the instructions below. You produce this phrase in the following manner. (Bar 1) Beat 1 is played in the usual way, just as you produced it in example 63. Beat 2 is also struck and produced in the usual manner for open beats, but you hold it open until you come to beat 3. At the *exact point of attack*, or beginning of beat 3, you strike the beat with the right hand, *at the same time* choking with the left hand. The hands will then come down upon the cymbal together. From beat 4

and onwards, the open and closed beats operate in pairs in just exactly the same way as I have explained above. You will see that I have marked these groups with ordinary musical ties; you must be particular in seeing that the left hand produces its open beat for the *full duration* of time shown in the music on each open note: I trust that this is quite clear to you.

Let us next try to put the above into practical use. We will examine a simple rhythm with accents on the after-beats.

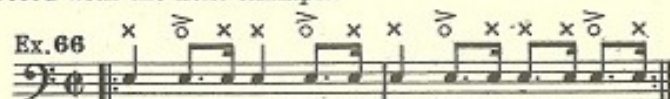


You will observe in this case that no notes are tied, and that each one is a separate unit. Play the rhythm and produce the effect *exactly* as shown in the musical notation; no other effect will do.

It may occur to you from now onwards that quite a number of these rhythmic beats on the cymbal seem the same as those I have been giving you on the snare drum. This seems a suitable opportunity to explain that, whilst this is very probably the case, it is a question of individual style. You see, a musician who has cultivated an individual method of expression is generally known by his own style, and this individuality is bound to show, whatever instrument he may be playing upon. In just the same way a painter is known and his work recognised by his own peculiar style; it does not matter whether he is painting a landscape or a portrait: his style will still be recognised through both pieces of work. One has very often had a great deal of amusement with friends, by putting on new gramophone records, and picking out individual artists by some personal trick of theirs or by their general style of playing. And so it is with these rhythmic beats. Whatever instrument is used to produce them, they are my own individual style, and as such I must naturally offer them to you.

Building Up

Having, I hope, made the above quite clear, we will now proceed with the next example.



You will see that the above example is nothing more nor less than an amplification of example 65. Both these examples show the first method of playing an after-beat and are good and handy to have in your repertoire. I remind you once again of the absence of ties, joining an open to a closed note; thus the open beats are to be cut to their value exactly as shown. Always take particular care to see whether these ties are present or not, and play the music exactly as it is in this example, not forgetting the accents. Now let us go on to a more modern type of after-beat. We will take this in two stages, examining first of all the mere bare-bones of the effect. These are shown in example 67.



You will see that in this beat we have made use of the holding-over of the open beat until the actual contact of the stick for beat 2. Choke beat 1 simultaneously with the production of the after-beat. In order to produce the necessary length of sound in the first beat, you will lightly withdraw the contact of the left stick from the lower face of the cymbal. Slide it the merest trifle towards the edge, at the same time balancing the stick, as it were, on the thumb. The fleshy part of the palm (as explained before) remains in certain contact with the cymbal, but experiments by you, yourself, must decide exactly how much.

Now examine the finished beat in example 68.



The procedure is exactly the same as that used in example 67, but the after-beat duration has been split into two in order to produce the proper rhythmic effect, or the necessary "lift." Be very careful to make your accents clean and neat and to make the closing of the beat and the striking of the next beat exactly match, with a strong accent on the after-beat.

Now here is another example on similar lines to the previous ones.



This is, as a matter of fact, a basic beat. It can be used as it stands; but it also can be built up into something more elaborate, and we are going to do this next. I want to impress upon you again that all these beats can be built up in hundreds of different ways. I can only give you a few examples here, and the rest is up to you. Ten minutes experiment with a basic type of beat should produce numerous variations, most of them good. For obvious reasons it is quite impossible to go on simply printing lists of variations; in any case, you will never exercise your own inventive power, or produce an individual style if all you do is to copy exactly anything I may give you, and get me to do all your thinking for you.

Meanwhile, first of all play example 69 exactly as it is written and note the ties as previously. Now look at the next example:



You will see that this is an elaboration of example 69; furthermore it is a combination of open notes which are tied on to the next closed beat and also those which are cut off sharp. So follow the musical notation exactly, and play just what is written. Our next example is another variation of the same beat, constructed with the object of producing greater swing.



Now let us look at the following :



This is a beat where the constant contact of the cymbal with the fleshy part of the palm is exceedingly useful; you will remember that I spoke about this a little earlier on. Your open and your closed beats are being played in pairs (of each) and great attention should be paid to the production of the open beats. The open beats have to be clearly marked as such, but they must not make too much of a sizzling sound. The fingers of the left hand remain open all the time during the production of each pair of open beats (that is to say, each beat is not choked by the left-hand fingers separately); and this is where great care has to be exercised in controlling the beats properly, so as to make them two distinctly separate beats without any slurring over.

Jig Rhythm of the Cymbal

I think we ought now to examine a few examples of pure jig rhythm, formed by using the principles we have been discussing in this chapter. Look at this one :



The value of examples like the above lies in the correct placing and the correct playing of the accents. Will you, therefore, note these accents very carefully and also pay attention to the fact that the open notes of these examples are cut off *before* the following closed notes and not tied over to them. Now examine the next example which is nothing more nor less than Ex. 73 entirely reversed.



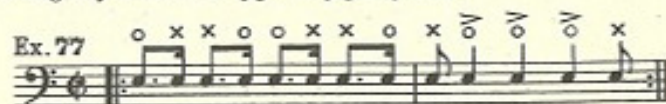
You will see that the closed and open notes are reversed and this causes the accent to appear at different positions in the bar; on the other hand, you will observe that the accent still falls on the open notes. I will now give you a four-bar phrase in rhythmic sequence which is a good all-round useful jig rhythm. Notice once again, that the accents fall on the open beats.



And here is another useful sequence on similar lines :



Go through both of the above very carefully indeed so as to make sure that you are quite clear in your own mind regarding the position of the open and the closed beats. I remind you once again of the clean cutting-off of the open beats before the next closed beats which follow them. Here is a slightly different type of jig rhythm :



Please practise this carefully and notice the particular form of syncopation which appears in bar 2.

And now, as I say, with this material and my descriptions and illustrations telling you how to produce the effects required, I think you have plenty upon which to set to work and from it to build up your own ideas and elaborate mine. That being the case, we will now turn our attention to the second type of cymbal playing.

In the first style of playing cymbals, the left stick had a sole duty—the task of producing the open note, whilst the right hand was entirely responsible for the actual beats struck. We are now going to use the left hand in such a manner that, whilst it continues to be responsible for the choking of the beat where necessary, it is also going to play its part in striking a certain number of these beats as well as the right hand. The left-hand stick must now be held in a different manner from the previous method. Hold the left hand up with the palm towards your body. Now, place the left-hand stick so that the tip is pointing towards the left, and the butt end towards the right, across your body. Hold the stick in such a way that the tips of fingers two and three touch it and support it about a third of its length from the butt end, so that the rest of the stick continues its journey towards the left, being held firmly by the roots of the thumb and forefinger. You will see an illustration of this in FIG. 21, and I would be glad if you would study it.

The position is, in fact, much similar to that used for holding a pen when writing in the right hand except, of course, instead of the forefinger and second finger touching the pen, it is the second and the third finger.

The stick is now placed underneath the cymbal, keeping the position indicated, the palm upwards and the thumb on the top of the cymbal. The exact position of the two sticks in relation to each other is shown in FIG. 22.

The thumb must always be in the position to grip the cymbal steadily; because, whilst it is the raising and lowering of the

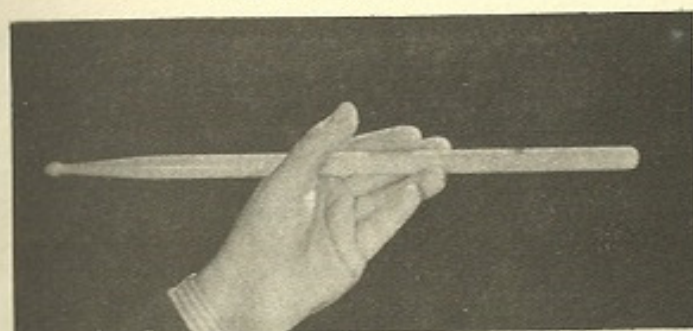


Fig. 21

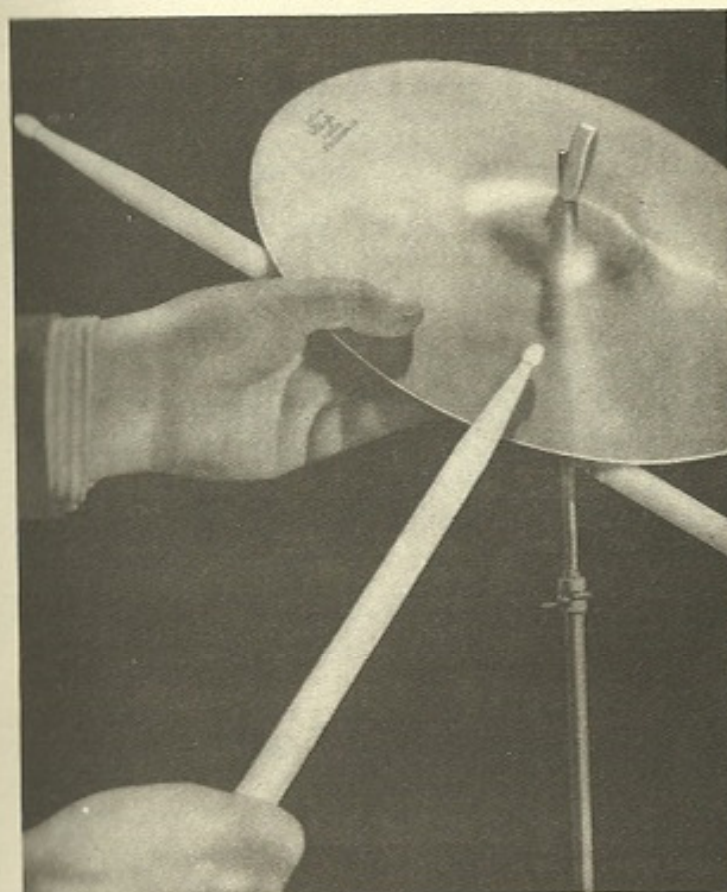


Fig. 22

fingers and the stick of the left hand which is responsible for the beat, it is the thumb which is responsible for keeping the "whole outfit" together.

The best thing for us to do is to get ourselves accustomed to the control of alternate beating with the left and the right hand; so will you look at example 78.



Practise this example very slowly at first, making quite sure that you are in control of each beat. Produce the right-hand beat in the ordinary manner as before, and the left-hand beat by dropping the stick as if it were on a hinge between the thumb and the cymbal, and bringing it up again exactly on the beat by the pressure of the fingers below it. As soon as you are thoroughly familiar with the actual technical side of producing this, I then want you to practise it till you get it right up to a good steady speed. You will be greatly helped in this by sloping the cymbal in the correct manner for the easier production of these beats. FIG. 23 shows you this.

Rhythms produced by this particular method of beating are generally most suitable for fast numbers. That being the case, you should always examine these examples with the idea in your mind that as soon as you are familiar with them played slowly, you will have to work them up to good speed for use in their proper place. So will you examine example 79 on these lines, playing it first of all slowly and noting carefully which hands take the beats and then producing it at a good steady speed.



Triplets

We will now pass on to an example making use of the triplet:



It is very necessary to practise this until you can work it up into a really fast tempo. As a matter of fact, as soon as you get enough technique to produce these examples at speed, you will find them very much easier than when they are done in, as it were, slow motion. You see, the very rhythm of the

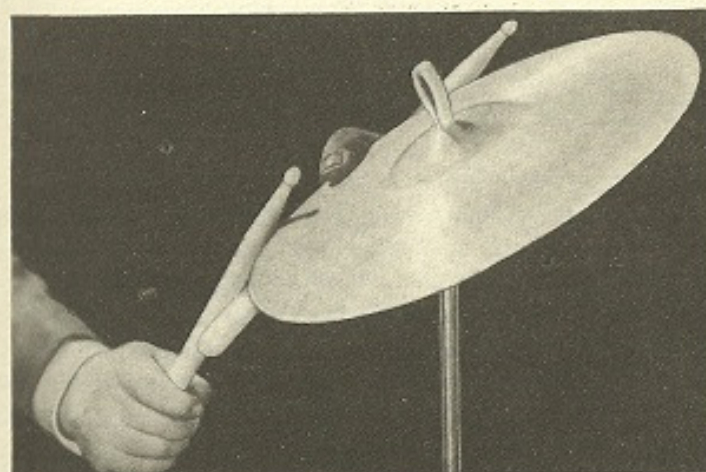


Fig. 23

number helps the beat over, and makes it easier to produce when it is done up to its proper tempo.

Example 80 is a rather interesting choice. It is the actual beat used in the number "When Gimble hits the Cymbal," Brunswick record No. 01501(a), which appears after the phrase "Now then, Goopy Geer, Play that piano by ear." I know there was a great deal of interest shown in this particular beat at the time, because I got over a hundred letters about it when the record was produced!

Practical Use

I am now going to give you a complete eight-bar example :



The object of this is to avoid giving you several little phrases, and also to help you to realise how these phrases are joined together so as to form one complete passage. This will aid your own work in linking up various beats and blending them smoothly. As a matter of fact, the above example would prove very useful to a drummer in a stop chorus, where the rest of the band is only playing on the first and fourth beat in each bar.

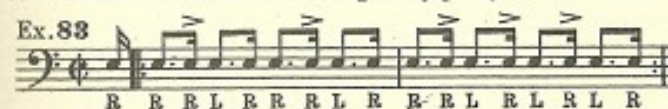
Now, at first sight these eight bars may convey nothing to you, but simply represent a confused jumble of beats in your mind. Before you examine them as a whole, you have got to split them up into their various phrases and consider these separately. So, beginning at bar 1, take this passage two bars at a time, studying them carefully. Each two bars represents a small phrase; and you will notice on the last beat of each second bar, that the beat lifts up or carries the phrase on to the next bar for the beginning of the following phrase. This is an excellent example of what correct phrasing means, and I particularly want you to study it from this

view-point. Notice also how the accents help the expression of the phrasing. I don't want you to be in a hurry examining this example: there is too much in it for that. The first thing you have got to do is to memorise the rhythm: don't worry about playing it on your cymbal for the moment. Get it into your head in sections of two bars at a time; this will help you to express it properly when you come to the actual playing. This passage is well worth all the time you care to give it.

Let us now examine one or two jig rhythms in this second method of cymbal beating. These, of course, follow the ordinary tempo of the jig rhythm and conform to the style associated with it.



Notice carefully which hands are used in the above, and observe that the accents are taken with the right hand. You should try to produce a very slight amount of ring on each accented beat; you will produce this by a little easing up of the pressure in the left hand, particularly where the thumb is concerned. Here is another good jig rhythm:



Once again, give a slightly open ring on the accented beat, and be careful to follow the accents and phrasing exactly. I will give you a final example just to show how variations can be obtained on more or less similar ideas.



The usual remarks apply to this. And once again I would impress upon you that variations are so numerous that to give you any more at this point would merely turn this chapter into a kind of musical dictionary. Think out, therefore, for yourself other good beats based on the above.

Regarding the foot-work during the cymbal beating, you should use the pedal at the ordinary four-in-a-bar, but the cymbal on the after-beat only. You can change if you like and try the variety of using four foot-cymbals as well as four bass-drum beats; but whatever you do, make up your mind at the beginning of the passage and stick to it. Don't chop and change during a passage! So far as the jig rhythms are concerned, you should use the foot cymbal four-in-a-bar.

CHAPTER VIII

We now come to the consideration of the ever-popular wire brush; and first of all it would be well to
Wire Brushes examine the kinds which are available to us.

These are three in number: the collapsible wire brushes, where the wires themselves can be drawn into the handle, the rigid type with wooden handles, and the rigid type with aluminium handles. Each individual drummer should use the type to which he is already accustomed, and not necessarily change over to any other type because of any remarks of mine which may follow, or on account of any personal preference which I, myself, may have. Actually, I use the wooden handle type, because they appear to me to be well balanced and not too heavy. They further give me the impression of being more like an ordinary snare-drum stick. Another point in favour of the rigid type of brush is that the spread of the wire is not usually so great as in the other kind; this is an advantage when you are "swishing" the brushes to and fro across the drum head, because they do not take up so much individual room, thus leaving more space for movement.

So far as the holding of wire brushes is concerned, they are gripped more or less like an ordinary snare-

The Hold drum stick for the usual type of playing. And

I am going to get you to play with the wire brushes in very much the same manner as you would with the ordinary snare-drum sticks. The only difference is, of course, that where you get a roll with the snare-drum sticks, you will produce a "swish" with one or other of the brushes. This swish is produced by drawing one or other of these brushes in

a cross-ways direction over the head of the drum. Here are two illustrations (Figs. 24 and 25) showing the areas covered by both.

The beats are produced with wire brushes in just the same way as they are with the ordinary snare-drum stick. As with sticks, the hands often play together; so in some of our examples, to make the position quite clear, we will again separate the work of the two hands. As before, the left hand appears at the top of the stave and the right hand at the bottom.



The above example is just a simple little rhythm. Now, I want you to help the expression of swing in this by the movement of your own body, in exactly the same way as dancers do. I don't mean to say that you have got to sway about in an exaggerated fashion; but let your arms and wrists and hands work freely, moving the wire brushes gracefully across the drum head in such a way that the accents are played towards the centre of the head. As a matter of fact, you will find this type of thing very much easier to play in this way than if you did it in a stiff and stilted manner.

You will, of course, find that wire brushes have not so much natural bounce as the ordinary hickory stick; so you want to help the staccato or snappy effect by the manner in which you attack each beat. Strike the drum-head cleanly, and bring the brush away smartly. To use rather an Irish expression, "let your hands be on the tips of their toes all the time."

Just as in previous basic beats, example 85 can be varied almost indefinitely. It is given you to use as it stands and also as a pattern or plot upon which to build up other similar

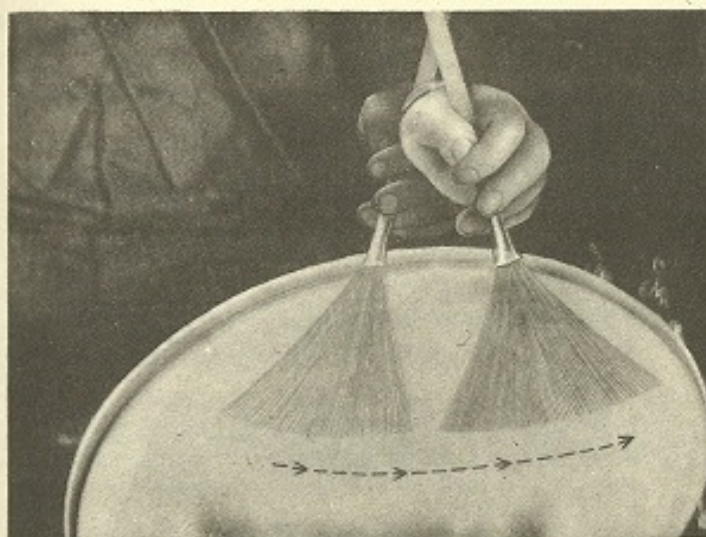
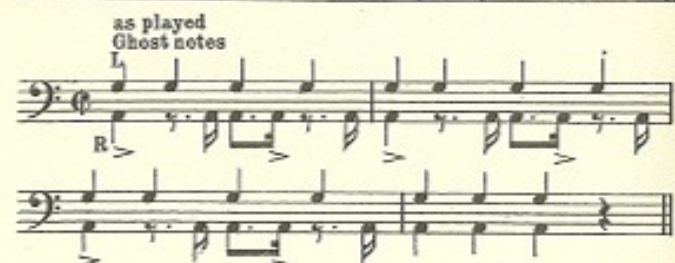


Fig. 24



Fig. 25

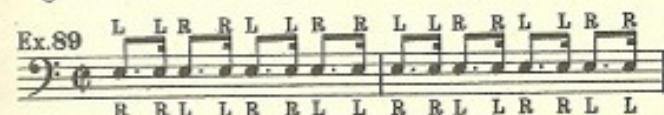
rhythmic variations. I think it will only be necessary for me to give you a couple more examples in this style, just as a hint showing you what can be done with a little experimenting.



Regarding example 87, you will notice that the left hand plays "ghost" notes in the manner previously described for use with snare-drum sticks. That is to say, the merest touch is necessary with the left-hand brush, just to indicate the beat and no more. By the way, in case this example should appear awkward in its split-up form at first sight, I have placed the ordinary conventional manner of writing above it. Jig rhythms produced with the wire brushes are extremely effective, particularly in solo or vocal choruses; they are capable of producing a very fine swing indeed. Here is an example of the ordinary jig rhythm which I would like you to practise both ways: that is to say, starting with the left hand and then afterwards with the right hand, so as to give you complete control.



Now try the same thing, playing two beats with each hand, and practising by starting first with your left and then with your right hand.



The next example represents a very fascinating jig rhythm indeed; note carefully the accents, put all the expressive swing you can into your movement when playing, and you should produce a very fine rhythm.



I have told you that the swishing effect produced by the wire brushes takes the place of the ordinary roll with the hickory stick. Try a few of these. The first thing to do is to see that your hands are well separated, and that the brushes are not liable to interfere with each other in their course across the drum-head. When playing the swish with the left hand, the actual effect itself should begin towards the centre of the drum-head, and your arm should carry the brush away with a swing towards the left side of the rim, in a sort of paint-brush movement. You must be particular to accent the beginning of each swish very definitely. Here is an example which I should like you to try; you will notice that in this and other examples which follow, I have used a special musical sign to indicate the notes upon which the swish is to be played.



Having studied this example as it is written, I would now like you to reverse your hands, playing the eight beats with

the left hand, and producing the swish with the right hand. Start your swish in the centre of the drum-head as before, and carry your hand with a swing away to the right. It is very necessary for you to learn control of this effect so that you can produce it with either hand equally easily. The next example shows you a swish produced at the on-beats of each bar, starting in the first and third beats. Practise this exercise both ways so that you can produce the swish with either hand, as before. Notice that the accents are still on the after-beats.



♦ = 'swish' the wire brush

Now with the added semi-quavers which you will notice, example 93 is extremely effective in a very snappy number. Note the accents very carefully.



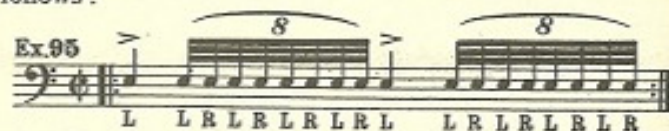
♦ = 'swish' the wire brush

Example 94 is another very useful rhythm for jig work. Once again I call your particular attention to the accents, because the correct interpretation entirely depends on them. In a later example, you will see the only difference is in one accent; so this proves how careful one must be. (Ex. 99).



Slow Tempo

In numbers which are played at a slower tempo, a very steady open roll with the wire brushes is extremely effective, as follows:



In the above example, see that you get a good accent on beats 1 and 3 and a very clean, even, single-brush roll on beats 2 and 4. Please practise this until you have got it absolutely under control, when you can then consider the next example, which is a rhythmic interpretation of Example 95 and a great improvement thereon.



The next effect to which I would like to call your attention is a wire-brush style of playing somewhat similar to the drag roll with the snare-drum sticks. The only difference is that the beats themselves are a little more "open," or more definitely separated from each other. We call this effect the "feathering beat," and, as I say, it is a kind of one-handed roll.



To produce this feathering beat, part of the wire brush does not actually leave the head at all. Starting with the right hand at the outside of the drum, you leave about one-third of the wires on the drum-head and tremble the hand, as it were, towards the centre of the drum, causing, by this vibration of the hand, eight distinct beats to be played. Please practise this, until, as with the other effects I have shown, you have it absolutely under your control.

We will now try a continuous swish, which may be compared with a continuous roll. You must move your right hand to and fro across the drum-head, without lifting the wires off the vellum. You move right to left, left to right, and so on, with an oval movement covering the area illustrated in FIG. 26.

You will remember that when we had a continuous roll with the ordinary sticks, we both agreed that accents in their

correct places were very necessary to give point and meaning to the roll. You will also recollect that we produced these accents by crushing the sticks, as it were, into the drum-head. Very good: you produce your accents in the continuous swish in very much the same manner, by exerting extra pressure at the points at which they come. Please examine example 98:



You will observe that the right hand is producing the continuous swish spoken of above. I want a good strong accent on the after-beats (beats 2 and 4) and a slight attacking accent on beats 1 and 3. Will you kindly note I have marked the heavier accent in the ordinary way, whilst the accent mark pointing upwards represents the slight stress necessary on the other beats.

Here is another very excellent effect with wire brushes in jig time. You will not only find it particularly good for this type of number, but also for that particular kind known as the "Hill Billy." Will you please study the example carefully, as before.



Here, again, we have an effect which is very useful for soft choruses or vocal refrains. All the same rhythms which I have given you previously can be used in this type of work, with the exception of those which introduce the swish effect. In the usual manner, choke the cymbal with your left hand, and produce the beats with your right; and I am giving you an illustration (FIG. 27) showing the correct tilt of the cymbal, and the position of both hands.

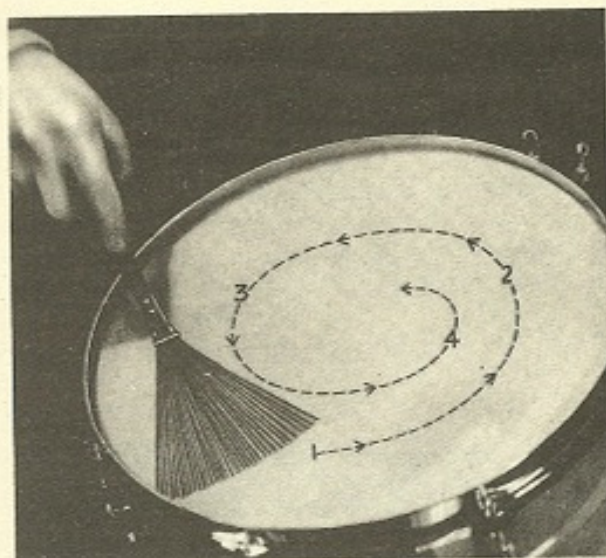


Fig. 26

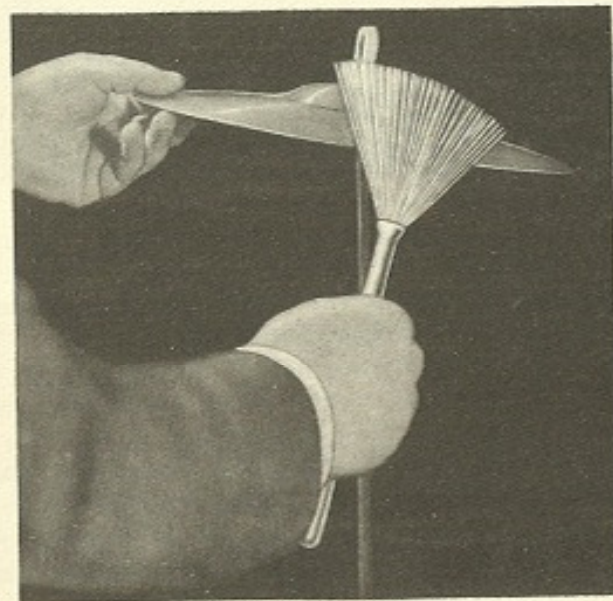


Fig. 27

I am giving you one example just to show you the type of rhythm which is typical of this kind of work. Please notice carefully the open and the closed beats, which are marked in the previous fashion:



O = open Cymbal X = choke Cymbal

You can, of course, also produce a roll effect on the cymbal with the wire brush. This is simply done by leaving the cymbal open in the left hand, and thrusting the wires of the right-hand brush right into the cymbal and moving them rapidly up and down. FIG. 28 will show you the position,

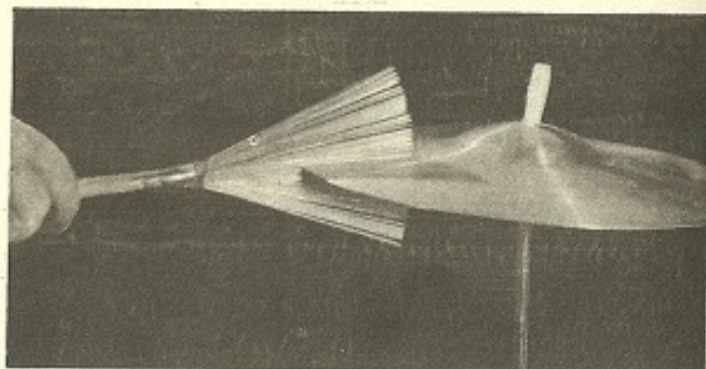


Fig. 28

and I think I need hardly explain the procedure, which is more or less self-evident.

Very attractive and showy effects can be obtained by using two or more cymbals of different tones, in conjunction. This style of work is particularly appropriate for medium-paced and slow numbers and is extremely effective in vocal choruses. Moreover, it is, as I say, a most showy style of playing and you would do well to consider it for inclusion in your repertoire. In the three examples I am giving you below, I have only written for two cymbals; but, as soon as you have grasped the idea from these, it will be a simple matter for you to expand it on the lines suggested above.

First of all, place the cymbals in front of you: one a little to your right and the other a little to the left. All the time, your left wire brush is playing its part on the snare-drum and your right hand is to move from cymbal to cymbal, with a sweeping motion in front of your body. Sway slightly from the hips to help this motion as you pass from one to the other of the cymbals. Do not place these instruments too near to you, or the effect will be spoilt by looking cramped. You want to reach *very slightly* forward to touch the cymbals, with your arm stretched out to *nearly* its full length. This shows the sweep of the arm and helps it to display the rhythm. Remember once again, all cymbal work in the following effects is done by the right hand *only*.

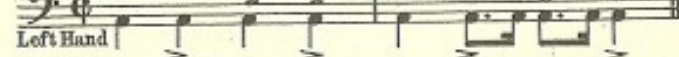
Here are your three examples.

Ex. 100⁴

(a) X = Cymbal

Right Hand

Left Hand



In these three examples, it is the top line which is to be played by the right hand. (I have made this change simply for convenience in reading these special passages.) Notice, as usual, the special sign for the cymbal; and you will see that the two tones have been written on two separate parts of the stave, so that you shall be quite clear which is which. The lower line is to be played by the left-hand brush on the side drum. Example (a) is meant as an exercise only. Example (b) is, in itself, a very good rhythm and one that you can employ to great advantage. Example (c) is a little bit tricky, and you want to examine it carefully before you attempt to perform it as a whole. First of all, take it two bars at a time. Notice the pick-up linking the end of bar 4 to the beginning of bar 5; and also the same type of link at the end of bar 8, to bring you back—of course—to the beginning of the passage on the repeat of bar 1. Remember what I told you regarding the importance of these pick-up beats and practise the whole passage until you can play it as one complete unit.

I think I have given you enough in this section to show you the possibilities of the wire brushes for rhythmic work. As we have proceeded together further into the question of the production of swing, I feel that it has not been so necessary for me to elaborate the examples, nor to give you so many of the varied possibilities which a basic rhythm opens up. You will realise, of course, that from the material in this section, you can definitely build up a series of very fascinating and attractive rhythms which will greatly increase your repertoire and enhance your performance.

CHAPTER IX

We now come to the consideration of a series of different rhythmic effects from the ordinary "bread-and-butter" fox-trot. For the first of these, let us examine that very fascinating rhythm, the Rumba. What an astonishing lift and swing it has, you cannot possibly hope to understand until you have heard a real native band at its best.

Some time ago I had the very good fortune to play at Monte Carlo opposite Don Aspiazu I have no hesitation in saying that some of the Rumba rhythms obtained by this combination were an absolute revelation to me; the majority of these could not possibly be put down on paper, and particularly the rhythms produced by the artist who played the bongos.

In a complete Rumba band, there are usually five or six different instrumentalists who are responsible for the rhythm alone; rhythm is definitely the thing of paramount importance in the Rumba. So far, however, as concerns the type of combination in which we are likely to operate, we have, as a rule, to do the best we can with one drummer actually on the drums and—if we are lucky—then we may enlist the help of some other members of the orchestra for the rest of the effects. Apart from the work we are going to produce on our drum outfit, I will just describe the rhythms possible to obtain with, and the method of operation of, the claves and the maracas.

The claves are two simple-looking pieces of wood rounded and polished and pierced at the ends, in length about 6 in. The performer on the claves plays one definite rhythm and that one rhythm only, right through the Rumba. This is the actual "key rhythm" of this particular dance.

The claves must be held and manipulated in a certain manner

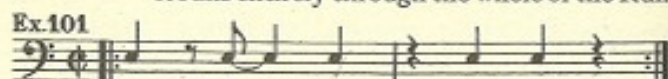
in order to produce their full tone value. This latter is of a particularly piercing quality, not unlike one of the higher notes of a xylophone. The left-hand clave is more or less balanced across the tips of the fingers with the hand cupped beneath so as to form a resonator. The fingers should not grasp the wood firmly, but only sufficiently to ensure that the instrument shall not slip from the hand. Here is an illustration (FIG. 29) of the correct hold.

The right-hand clave is then used to strike the left one at the point of greatest resonance. Examine FIG. 30.

Assure yourself by experiment that you are producing the maximum tone by the method described above.

You may now turn to example 101 and make yourself familiar with the clave rhythm. I repeat, this is the only rhythm played on these instruments and it runs entirely through the whole of the Rumba.

The Key
Rhythm



Now regarding the maracas. The original native instruments bearing this name are a type of small dried pumpkin with actual seeds inside. When mounted firmly upon handles and gripped in the hands and moved, these seeds rattle and produce a peculiar high-pitch "stinging" type of swish. The whole apparatus is usually decorated in a variety of colours. Commercial maracas are produced in this country with the round portion made of a material similar to bakelite and containing small shot to produce the required effect. These serve equally well and will last longer.

The maracas are held rather loosely between the finger and the thumb and during manipulation the wrist must be kept loose and supple. Please examine FIG. 31 showing the correct hold :

To play the maracas, the right hand is swung across the body as shown in the FIG. 32.

A slight accent will be produced on the "1-2-3-4" beats of

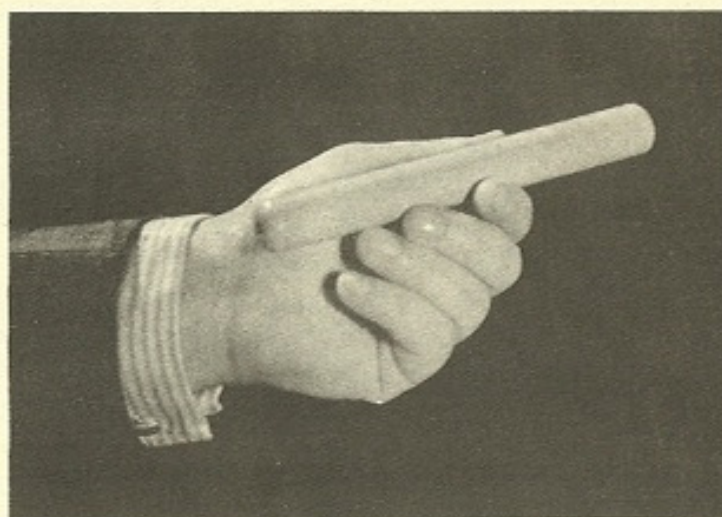


Fig. 29

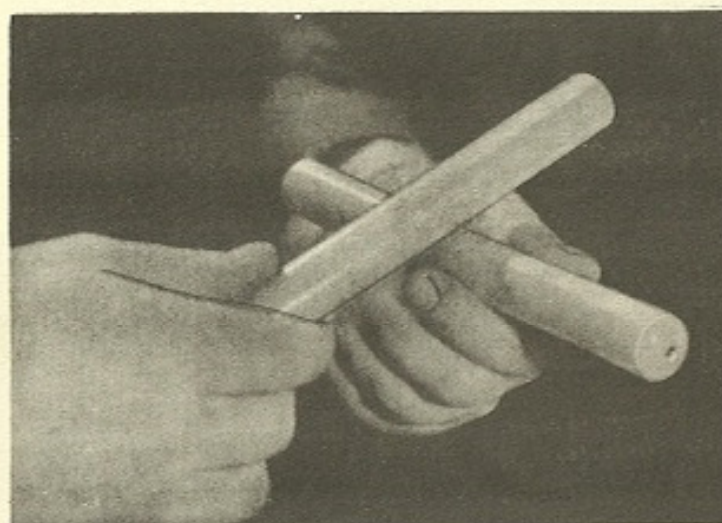


Fig. 30

the bar; and the swish effect in between the beats (i.e., 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and — the "ands" being the swishes). The left hand is thrown outwards, away from you and slightly upwards, in order to produce an extra "bite" on the accented notes shown below in example 102. FIG. 33 is an attempt to show you something which is rather difficult to produce in a single picture; but I trust that it will give you the idea.

Maracas Rhythm

Now the rhythm which it is required to produce by means of the manipulation of the maracas is found below:



The method of producing this rhythm is shown in the next example by the splitting-up of the hands:



This rhythm must run in a strong, steady, well-accented and continuous swing. Whilst you are playing it to yourself, count aloud in the following manner, and you will be helped to realise just the effect required:

1-and 2-AND 3-and 4-AND; 1-and 2-AND 3-and 4-AND; 1-and 2-AND, etc., etc.

The capital ANDs correspond, of course, with the accented beats in example 102, played by the left hand.

There are, naturally, one or two variations of this particular type of rhythm; but it is very much better that the maracas and the claves rhythms should be constant and steady and not vary in any way, otherwise, confusion will only arise. Variations can be left to the drums.

It is extremely difficult to put down on paper some of the effects which can be produced when playing the drums for the Rumba as I, myself, learnt them from my Cuban drummer friend. I am going to try to do this later; but meantime, I

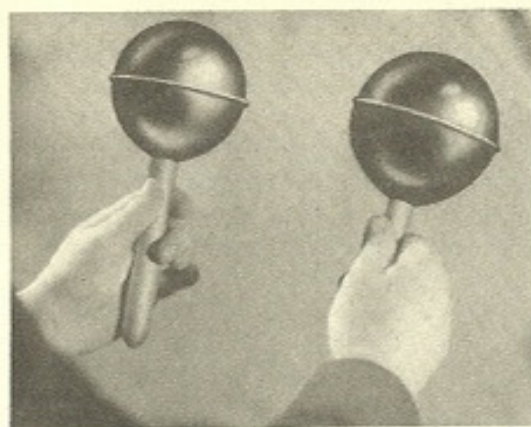


Fig. 31

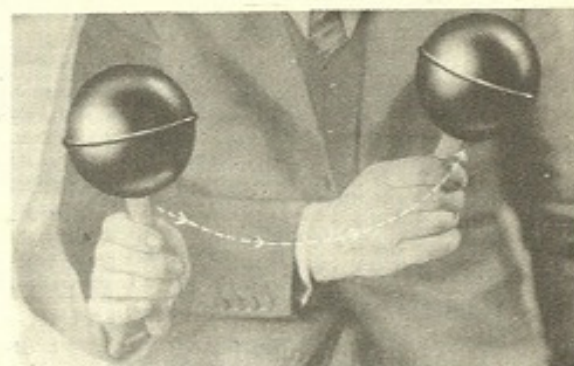


Fig. 32

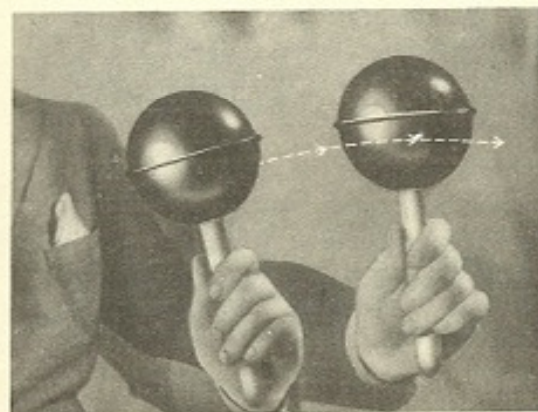


Fig. 33

think we might with advantage examine a simplified version of the whole thing which will stand you in very good stead for any general Rumba work you are likely to be called upon to do.

The first thing to do is to throw off your snares and to make perfectly certain there is no rattle whatsoever in your snare-drum. Throughout the playing of any Rumba, the snares must always be out of operation.

Actually, the Cuban rhythm is composed of beats produced at the centre of the head which alternate in varying combinations with rim-shots. For the effect we are now about to produce, the snare-drum is left at the usual angle, and your sticks held in the usual manner. First of all, here is the simple normal rhythm :



Will you kindly practise this, paying particular attention to the hands marked and also noting carefully in this, as in the examples which follow, the special sign used to denote which are the rim-shots. Now examine a variation, which improves the above rhythmically.



Here is another more advanced beat ; and I want you to take particular note of the short roll appearing therein.



I am going to give you a four-bar rhythm to practise so as to show you the continuity of the Rumba beating. Here is your example :



Do not try to study this example as a whole at first. Take the first two bars together, which, by the way, you will notice are exactly the same. Then take the last two bars ; and when you are quite familiar with each of these phrases separately, you may try them together.

Next we make use of a further and slightly more elaborate version. Notice the right-hand drag roll in this and also the fact that rim-shots are produced by both hands :



I do not recommend the use of the cymbal to produce the Rumba rhythm, because it is not very effective. But in view of the fact that there are times when the cymbal rhythm might be appropriate, I will give you an example for the sake of completeness :



Please note the open and choked beats produced in the usual way ; but I also want to tell you that no stick is held in the left hand. The examples above will, in my opinion, give sufficient basic beats for you to build upon ; but if, on the other hand, you decide merely to employ the beats shown here, you will still have quite enough of this type of beat at your disposal for your ordinary work in this rhythmic idea.

We will now turn our attention to a method more nearly approaching that used by the actual native musician, and one which gives a great variety of tone-colour.

**The Cuban
Style for the
Snare-Drum**

The first thing to do is to place your snare-drum in an absolutely horizontal position as shown in FIG. 34.

The sticks are now going to be used in quite a different manner from that in which any other effect is produced; so I want you please to follow the directions given here very closely indeed. The left stick is placed across the drum-head with the tip towards the rim exactly as shown in FIG. 35.

The right stick, whilst being held as usual, also takes a more or less normal position on the drum-head as shown in FIG. 36.

By the correct manipulation of the sticks in this position, and in conjunction with the description of the beats given below, very many different tone-colours can be produced; even five or six are possible. In order to simplify the actual writing in music of these, I have more or less confined them simply to rim-shots and ordinary beats in each hand; but you may experiment with various pressures, and different degrees of rim-shot beatings; and by doing this you should obtain for yourself quite a number of different effects. Remember how you produce these and then introduce them in an appropriate manner at the right places.

In order to produce a beat in the left hand, lay the stick on the drum-head as shown in the illustration and lift the taper head up in such a manner as if the butt end were hinged on to the drum. On pushing this taper end down smartly so that it falls back into position, you will get a type of "choked" rim-shot effect. This is the method employed in using the left-hand stick in the following examples. The right hand alternates its position between striking the open beats in the middle of the drum-head, and producing rim-shots in the ordinary manner.

The rhythms which follow are written in ordinary musical notation, backed up where necessary by descriptive material to explain exactly the type of beat and effect it is desired to



Fig. 34

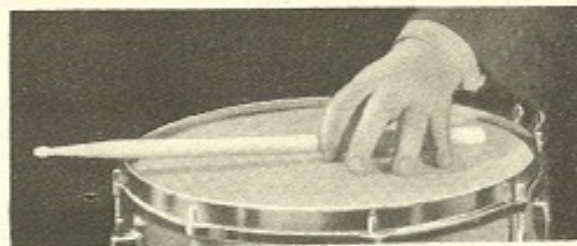
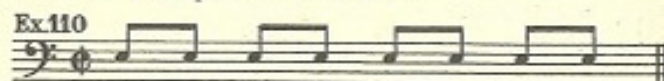


Fig. 35



Fig. 36

produce. The example below merely indicates the basic rhythm of the examples which follow:

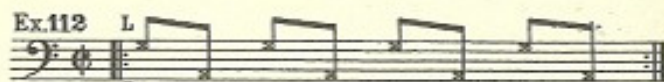


Now examine example 111; you will see I have divided the hands by a simple method, taking the left hand at the top of the staff and the right as before in the lower portion. Please notice the sign used for rim-shots: as usual, these are marked X, and the open beats will be marked O.



X = rim shot, O = 'open' beat

In the above example, you will see that it is the left hand that plays all the rim-shots; and I remind you that these are to be produced by the lifting and dropping of the left-hand stick in the manner described before. I will just make it quite clear here that whilst the tip end of the stick is raised, the butt end always remains in contact with the drum-head. Now please examine the next example:



X = rim shot

In this you will see that rim-shots are produced by both hands.

What I have shown you up to now are nothing more nor less than actual exercises in Rumba beating in order to familiarise you with the rhythm and to enable you to get control. We are now going to make use of this knowledge and build up some real rhythms with the varying combinations possible by these beats and the effects already used.

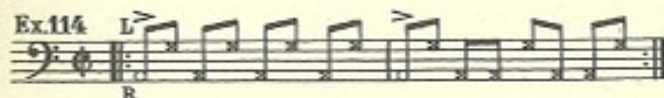
From now onwards you will have to concentrate very much and study the examples most carefully, **The Real Stuff!** because they are really the most complicated we have examined together as yet.



X = rim shot O = 'open' head

Now the above example may be described as our first attempt at a real rhythm, and it offers you a very great chance to get varying tone effects; so let us have a look at it together. First of all bar 1. On the first beat, the right hand strikes the open centre of the head. On the second beat, the left hand makes a rim-shot, using the hinged action from the centre as I explained to you previously. On beat 3 the right hand makes a rim-shot, and this must be produced very near the tip of the stick. At beat 4 the left hand performs exactly the same action as it did on beat 2. If you do this correctly, you will get a different type of rim-shot with both hands, and thus you will see that you will be able to produce three distinct tone-colours in this passage. I want you to go through this example and experiment as much as you like until you actually find yourself able to produce it in this way to your satisfaction.

I invite your particular attention to the next example, which is an extremely good rhythm for Rumba work. The accent should be very well marked on the open beats which, of course, are produced in the centre of the drum-head with the right hand. Play this rhythm and all others until you absolutely know them off by heart: this is the only satisfactory way to perform them. If you are at all strained or awkward, or have any appearance which leads people to think that you, yourself, are working them out in your mind, the whole effect will be lost.



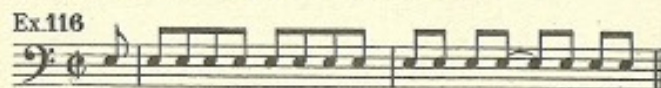
I call your particular attention to the fact that the second bar is not like the first bar, although it might appear to be so at a casual glance.

Now examine this :

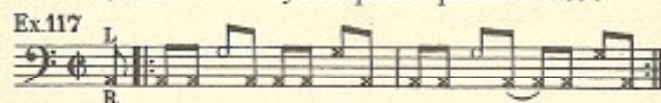


Here is another extraordinarily good rhythm. You will notice that we are making more use of the open beats in the centre of the head and I remind you that they should be very well accented. I am, by the way, leaving out the accents wherever possible on the examples which follow so as not to make the reading of the musical notation appear too confused ; but I naturally expect you to put them in, because a passage without accents is simply meaningless.

I think we will now examine the same type of beat, but in a form giving a different effect. The method of producing it changes, because we are going to make a different use of the left stick in order to produce further tone-colour. Before we attempt to do this, we have got to make ourselves familiar with the actual rhythm which we are going to produce. So I will just give you the rhythm itself on one line, for the purpose of committing it to memory. You might whistle this over to yourself, or beat it out on the table with your fingers, until you know it *absolutely by heart*. Here it is :



Now then, here is the rhythm put to practical use :



You will notice that all the beats in the right hand are rim-shots ; on the other hand, the left-hand beats are alternately open and rim-shots. Furthermore, the left-hand beats are all on the after-beat itself (beats 2 and 4). The beats are produced in the left hand as follows : For open beats, hold the stick flat on the drum-head in exactly the same way as you did before ;



Fig. 37



Fig. 38

then, raise it off the drum-head and strike the latter in the centre with the tip, as shown in FIG. 37.

For the rim-shot in the left hand, take the stick over to the original Rumba position, and drop it smartly down on the head for the actual beat, letting the butt strike the head at exactly the same time as the tip strikes the rim for the rim-shot. *It is essential that the stick is dropped flat on the head so that there is only one sound and no suspicion of a double note whatsoever.* FIG. 38 should help to make this clear.

Before you attempt to play example 117, examine these illustrations and read carefully through the instructions, so as to make yourself thoroughly familiar with the production of the beats before putting them to practical use in a passage.

When you are satisfied that you have done the above, you may then tackle exercise 117. Notice carefully that all the right-hand beats are rim-shots, whilst the left-hand beats in between are the open beats and the rim-shots described above. Take particular notice of exactly where the open and the rim-shots come in the left hand, and practise this until you can play it slowly at absolutely even tempo. After that, work it up to a good speed, but always remember to keep a steady tempo.

We will now try a further variation. The object of this is not, in any way, to alter the original basic rhythm as shown in example 116, but merely to vary the amount of tone-colour possible, and to add to it. In order to produce this extra colour, we are going to make use of a cow-bell. You should, therefore, place one in a position which is convenient to your right hand, but in such a way that it does not interfere with the snare drum at all. Here is your example :

Cow-Bell
Added



x = rim shot o = 'open' head A = cowbell

You will notice that this example is exactly the same as the last one, so far as the arrangement of the hands is concerned ;

and I told you also, of course, that the rhythm itself is in no way altered. Instead of the right hand playing rim-shots throughout, it strikes the cow-bell, and the left hand plays alternate open beats and rim-shots on the after-beats, just as it did in exercise 117. Get this rhythm off very clearly, because it is extremely effective.

We will now produce four different tone-colours (still working on our original rhythm example 116). In order to do this, naturally we produce two in each hand. Although these are merely open beats and rim-shots with either hand, the actual tone-production of them will vary, because of the difference in holding the sticks. Here is your example :



If you examine the above carefully, you will see that the left hand continues to do exactly what it has been doing in the two previous examples, but the right hand varies its beating with open beats and rim-shots in groups of three (except of course, where the tied notes come in the second bar). As before, the accents are not shown in the printed music in order to avoid confusion ; *but I want you to accent all the left-hand beats whether they are open or rim-shots.* The above beat will strike you as rather complicated at first ; but it is only a question of getting used to it. As a matter of fact, the correct performance of the passage is more a knack than anything else, and you will acquire it by careful practice. I do urge you to go through it slowly until you have got it off by heart at an absolutely steady pace. Then you can increase the speed at regular intervals, so long as you keep the actual pace steady. I want you to be able to perform it at full speed without showing any conscious effort and without feeling it.

Here is another thing concerning the Rumba which you should know. It sometimes happens that a band plays a fox-trot chorus, but treats it in the Rumba style ; this is especially liable to happen

Fox-Trots
as Rumbas

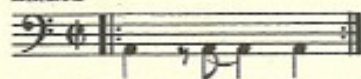
on the last chorus of any number which is suitable for such treatment. In these cases, there is a definite finish to round a chorus of this nature off; and actually this finish should be played by the whole band. It is played on the last two bars of the chorus: that is to say, on bars 31 and 32. Here is the part that you, yourself, should be playing:



Notice that, with the exception of the very end of the second bar, all the beats are rim-shots. When you come to the last four open beats in bar 2, these should be played very carefully, finishing with a strongly accented loud beat on the extra beat marked at the very finish.

A word on the use of the foot-pedal in the Rumba. The after-beat foot-cymbal is not generally used at all. There are three ways in which you can play beats for the bass drum. The first is exactly the same as in the first bar of the claves rhythm, thus:

Ex.121



The above is extremely effective, and if you possibly can, you should learn it off and make use of it. If, however, you are disinclined to do this, then you may beat as follows:

Ex.122



But until you are familiar with the work of the hands, it is better that you should not be worried by thinking about what your foot is doing. In these circumstances, therefore, it is quite in order for you to beat the ordinary four-in-a-bar.

In conclusion, I would say that the Rumba beats do not make any pretence of being easy; in fact, they are really the

most difficult beats that you will probably have to tackle at all. But, whilst the rhythm is extremely complicated, it is equally extremely fascinating, and it is well worth the trouble to acquire in the correct manner. I, therefore, urge you to study everything I have said to you very closely and very patiently; let there be no skipping of the instructions. I do assure you that it is definitely well worth while to acquire a good Rumba rhythm; but I equally warn you against trying it out anywhere until you are absolutely certain of it, and can perform it mechanically and without the slightest worry.

CHAPTER X

We now come to the brief consideration of two other rhythm formations, one in a different musical time.

The Tango Neither of these is at all complicated, nor are there many varieties which are available, even if we were to consider them necessary.

The Tango is not often used these days, and the old-style Tango appears to have gone out entirely. I am taking it for granted, however, that you want to be as complete a drummer as you can, and therefore, I am going to give you a basic rhythm in four bars, and also an ending. If you work round these two on the general lines shown therein, then you should have quite enough material at your disposal to see you through any Tango work which may be necessary. Here is your example :



The main thing to tell you about this is that we must have plenty of light and shade in it. Your accents are rather heavy, particularly on beats four and one of each bar. The notes over which dots have been placed should be played in a very snappy and definite manner, to contrast with the rather heavy playing of the other beats; the effect is one really very much of matching the "breathing" phrasing of the

accordions which are such a prominent feature of the Tango rhythm. As regards the actual ending, no variation is needed, from the ending which follows :



Once again, you rather follow the method of phrasing that the accordion players employ. You know how, on the last bar, they work up a big crescendo on beat 2 and then die away suddenly to nothing: well, I want you to get exactly the same effect by using the cymbal. Strike it with an open beat, let it ring for a moment with force, and then damp it out with your hand.

Now we come to the waltz. Although, in the sense of which we are speaking of swing in this book, it cannot be said that anything very spectacular can be done in three-four time in this direction, yet nevertheless, there is a fine natural swing in a properly played waltz. When working out your own part, you cannot elaborate it very much and it is generally better to keep to the more simple type of beat. In example 125 below, you will examine the ordinary basic beat :



Notice that there is a drag on beat 1 in the bar in order to help to emphasize the very well-accented beat necessary with the foot pedal on the bass drum. So long as you keep this dead steady, you will at least be playing for safety. On the other hand, experiment coupled with your own ingenuity will enable you to vary these beats; but be very careful exactly where you vary them. What I mean by that is, a series of elaborate beats for the mere sake of showmanship in a very quietly played waltz number will not be at all popular. But

you must use your own discretion entirely in the matter. Bear in mind that the employment of the wire brushes in waltz work is extremely effective, particularly the "feathering" beat for beat 1 of the bar, which has been described previously. If a waltz has a brilliant finish, then you may with advantage snap out the first beat of every bar of the last four bars by the use of the foot cymbal. Where you are given a written part in the waltz, when it becomes the question of a special arrangement of the number, then keep to that written part absolutely and don't vary it at all.

You will find the remarks contained in this chapter are of necessity on the brief side; but we are simply dealing with two particular kinds of number and I am including them in this book for the sake of completeness. There would be no point in expanding this information further simply in order to discuss at length something which can be dealt with in the space we have given to it.

CHAPTER XI

We have now arrived at a stage where we can discuss, more or less briefly, I think, all those various effects,

Various Effects tone colours, etc., which go to the make-up of the versatile drummer. It is not really necessary to give you a great deal of information about these things; but I would, nevertheless, like to say a few words concerning them. I refer to such apparatus as High-Hat cymbals, temple blocks, cow-bells, and the general paraphernalia of the effects and colour department of the band.

Most of the odds and ends and "gadgets" which from time to time become popular and then drop out in the

Fashion same sudden way as the latest slang expression does, are more or less novelties and have as their object, not so much the alteration of rhythmic effect, as the alteration of the tone colour which can be obtained with existing rhythms. Now, we have already examined pretty fully all the principal rhythms which it is necessary you should have in your repertoire; and, I repeat, the various apparatus which is, from time to time, introduced as a novelty, does nothing more nor less than alter the tone colour by which these rhythms can be produced.

It does not need a great deal of intelligence, for instance, to realise that the rhythms which can be produced on a cow-bell can also be produced on one or more temple blocks; and what may hold good for a temple block is equally suitable for the rather old-fashioned wood block. In fact, many of these new ideas are merely adaptations of old ones which have gone out of fashion: everybody is always on the look-out for something new. As an enterprising drummer, you should experiment

with anything which makes a noise; and, within reason, anything which gives you new and interesting effects may legitimately be introduced into your kit. In fact, you may well happen upon something which causes quite a little sensation and enhances your reputation in no small manner.

It is particularly amusing and interesting to discover the various unlikely products which are useful for effects when performing in front of a microphone, for record-making purposes or broadcasting. A perfectly good effect on a legitimate instrument in the ballroom may, for record uses, have to be produced by hitting a piece of newspaper or striking your empty snare-drum case, or something equally unlikely. Even cymbals sound quite differently on records from their tone "in the raw." I tell you that experiment and experience are the only things which can help you in this direction; and therefore, really, the correct use of your traps is more or less up to you personally.

I would like to make a note of one or two of the more useful sidelines, because there are certain effects which can be produced with very great advantage on these. First of all let us deal with the High-Hat cymbal. This piece of apparatus is, as you know, nothing more nor less than a pair of foot cymbals with an extended rod, so that they come up to the level useful for any hand work upon them which may commend itself to the drummer. In the ordinary way, they are played with the left foot and produce exactly the same effect as would an ordinary pair of foot cymbals on the ground level; and in this manner they may perfectly well be used throughout an evening's performance. But there are endless other possibilities with them, as you will find if you take the trouble to experiment following the one or two hints I give you below. I cannot possibly do more than indicate to you the various effects which can be got upon them; and that is why I urge you, after reading what follows, to get together with a pair yourself and see what the three of you can do.

The High-Hat Cymbal Pedal

The High-Hat cymbal can be used for all effects which are possible on after-beats, because—as I told you—this apparatus is only an after-beat cymbal with a long neck. My own personal preference is for a pair of Avedis Zildjian cymbals, an 11 in. on top and a 10 in. underneath, rather than those of the cup type, particularly if we are to use them for any other effect than the ordinary foot-cymbal beat. They can be put to very good use in the ordinary course of your work and especially in last choruses of any number where the orchestra is playing "all out." In some choruses, I recommend the use of wire brushes. You will play with your right-hand wire brush upon the cymbal, whilst you play four beats in the bar with the bass drum, and four beats in the bar on the snare-drum with your left-hand wire brush. And in spite of the fact that you are beating a special beat on the actual cymbals themselves, you will, with your left foot, use them in the ordinary after-beat way by playing two beats in a bar (the after-beats, of course) on these same cymbals. Have a look at the example below, which gives you the work of the right hand on the cymbals and the left foot on the same cymbals, but which, in order to avoid confusion, has left out the four-in-the-bar with the right foot and the left hand:



Do not spend any time wondering if there is a particular trick in producing this beat, because there is not. No Catch in it! Play the after-beat with your foot in the ordinary manner and play the right-hand beat exactly as shown, and you will get the desired effect without any trouble at all; don't go worrying about it. If you are in the slightest doubt when first practising, then before you put the hands into work at all, just play two bars of after-beat cymbal work so as to get the foot going. Here is another

example of a useful rhythm on very similar lines to those we have worked through earlier in the book, showing an additional improvement :



FIG. 39 shows you the correct position for both hands when playing with the wire brushes.

Now regarding sticks, you use exactly the same beat as in the last two examples, but you control with your left hand by placing it on the cymbal and use it as a sort of extra muffler in addition to the choking effect which the foot gives you. FIG. 40 shows you the correct hold of the cymbal closed, and FIG. 41 shows you the same thing with the cymbal open.

As before, you play four beats with the foot pedal, and the after-beat with the cymbals. For quiet choruses, beat on the top cymbal, very near the tip of the right-hand stick. You might, please, practise examples 126 and 127 this way. But when it comes to the last chorus, where everybody is playing "all out" then you can play four-in-a-bar with your foot pedal, and release the hold of the cymbal with your left hand and play four-in-a-bar on the snare-drum with that. Play the same two rhythms again with your right hand on the cymbal, but shift the stick so that you strike the cymbal about a third of the way up the stick (away from the tip), thus putting more force into your playing. And when you play like this you want to go "all out." Crush the left-hand stick into the head of the snare-drum, and play in a thoroughly snappy and "peppy" manner.

The next effect possible with the High-Hat cymbals is one which is extremely flashy and, properly done, gives you a chance to exhibit a good turn of showmanship. Imagine that you are leading into a break on the lines of the following example :

Good
Showmanship



Fig. 39

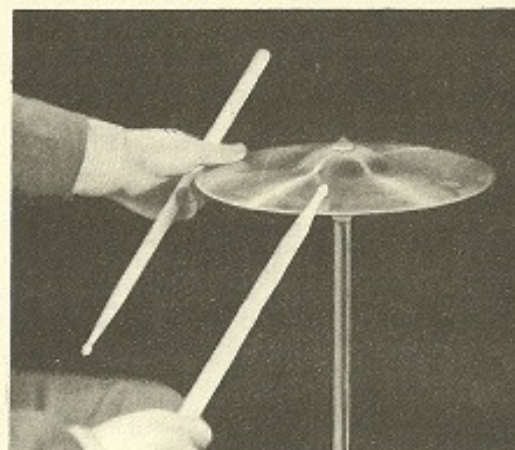


Fig. 40



Fig. 41



Now as you know, the beats which I have marked "A" and "B" should be brought out very strongly and definitely to mark the break's introduction. Here is a new method of producing this. On beat "A," start off with the High-Hat cymbals half open, and play a hand-to-hand six-beat roll on the cymbals. On beat "B" where the normal seventh beat of such a roll would be added to finish it, stop beating and let the arms come away smartly from the cymbal in opposite directions by throwing them off in an upward direction, so that the sticks point outwards from your body. At the same time, snap down the pedal controlling these cymbals with a good strong beat and back this up by a very snappy beat on the bass drum with the foot pedal. This will give an enormous amount of lift to the break which follows.

It has been suggested to me that I might, with advantage, include in this chapter a list of breaks obtainable by various means. After careful consideration, I do not agree with this, for the following reasons: First of all, breaks themselves are so very individual in character that what is useful to one man is really no good to another. Then again, any particular breaks which were merely copied by anybody desirous of increasing his repertoire might be entirely out of place in the outfit with which he was playing: they might not suit the general style of the band. Further, it is a risky thing giving an isolated break "on its own"; people are rather apt to take these things literally and exactly as they are written and introduce them into a number in which they might not be suitable. Finally, one of the great risks with breaks is that they are so liable to go out of fashion very quickly. Somebody thinks out a good idea and immediately

everybody else works it to death, so that for very novelty's sake it has to be dropped rather quickly, because it is, in a sense, over-plugged.

Therefore, so far as breaks are concerned, you really want to work out these for yourself and be ready to Be Individual! snap up the idea of the moment. Run it as hard as you can before it gets stale and then drop it and forget about it. You have got plenty of material in this book to supply you with a good backing and foundation for breaks and to give you ideas for new ones and the rest is simply a matter of your own powers of observation. A break is nothing more nor less than a kind of technical flash and you will generally find on examination that it is merely a question of some novel twist in accents and general ideas. I will, however, break my resolution and give you just one or two breaks, by way of hinting to you how to set to work on their construction. In the example which follows, you will find a couple of two-bar breaks, the second of which is to be played on the cymbals.

Ex. 129



And here are a couple of four-bar breaks and one of two-bars, which will, I trust, interest you.

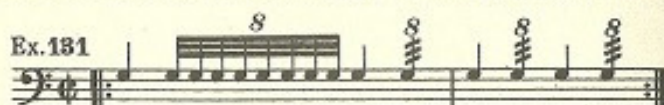
Ex. 130





Break (b) in the above example will, I believe, be of special interest to many of you, because it is the actual break used by myself in the Hylton record of "Ellingtonia" (Decca, Concert Series 13, No. F.3764).

The increasingly popular temple blocks in sets of four have fully justified their introduction and look as though they are likely to remain for some considerable time. When purchasing a set of these, be careful that you get a really good resonant set and that the holders attaching them to your bass drum are well insulated and strong, so that there shall be no slipping of these instruments. They are particularly good for oriental numbers and slow numbers. You remember the rhythm I gave you a little earlier on for slow numbers? I will just repeat it here:



Well, by playing this beat on various temple blocks, you can produce a lot of tone colours—even as many as four, if you wish. To experiment with the various tones, example 132 gives you an idea of what can be done if playing on two blocks; or you can use one block for beats 1 and 3, and two entirely different blocks for beats 2 and 4.



Don't forget that felt sticks or felt beaters are particularly useful for temple blocks and also that you can produce very novel effects by using these beaters for cymbal work.

I repeat, it is impossible for me to go into everything that might be produced on such things as wash-boards, etc., for they are always changing. It has taken me twelve years to get my own knowledge, and it would not be possible for me to get it down into the space of even twelve chapters on this rhythmic style alone.

The familiar highly-decorated little Chinese tom-tom is always a useful accessory, not only for the necessary creation of atmosphere for oriental numbers, but also for getting a good "lift" into pick-up beats and leads in. It has, of course, one characteristic high-pitched tone which places certain limitations upon it. A development from this is the extremely useful tunable tom-tom, particularly if you are disposed to go in for more than one. In reality like miniature timpani, many fine effects are obtainable on these instruments, particularly in sets of three. These tom-toms can be tuned to a definite note, or pitch, by means of miniature timpani handles. Useful, of course, in numbers where a wealth of eastern atmosphere is to be desired, they are particularly suitable for employment in conjunction with the bass drum for lift-, or pick-up, beats. Good rhythmic effects can be obtained, very much akin to the work of the temple blocks; and a series of rhythmic beatings with the right hand, whilst, at the same time, the left hand damps and releases the tom-tom head by the pressure of the open palm, is very effective, if not overdone. Tunable tom-toms are also very useful in slow numbers.

There is one thing you ought to remember about breaks and special effects and that is this. It sometimes occurs, particularly in a special orchestration, that the arranger will put in something which he particularly wants to be played—a special kind of rhythm, a particular beat, or what-not. Well, you must *absolutely* follow these printed musical instructions to the very letter, to

at the right time: that is to say, to do it naturally, from habit and without thinking about it. It would not be considered good style for a girl to go shopping in an evening frock; and the excuse that it was a most exclusive and expensive model would not make it any the better. So remember that there is a place for everything; and a thing only becomes good if it is in its right place. The very same thing out of place is merely bad, although that thing itself has not altered in any way.

The first step in acquiring style is to acquire knowledge; and the next step is the ability to put that knowledge into practical use in your work. It is no use "knowing all about" something if you can't do it yourself. And the only way to achieve this is by patience and practice. When you read an instruction or examine an exercise, don't just say to yourself, "yes, I see," and pass on to the next one. People don't listen to your playing with their eyes. When you think you "see," get out your drum at once and try and *do*. After the first ten minutes, when it has been brought home to you that you cannot "do" at all, then sit down and practise for an hour until you can. Then, when you can perform that particular effect without thinking about it, style will begin to show itself of its own accord. Style is only apparent in work when the work is produced without effort; and this is particularly true of anything done with the hands.

So it boils down to the same old story: there is no quick way or dodge by which a difficult thing can be learnt. The quickest way is to get hold of the right instruction and then to practise it until you have created a habit—in other words, until you can't help doing it correctly. All habits are the result of doing things so many times that they become subconscious; so whilst we are practising, we may as well form a few good habits. It is, by the way, a curious thing that a habit is more quickly formed when it is practised at the same time each day. Try therefore, if you can, to plan your own day in such a way

Knowledge
Plus Ability

Habit

that your practice is absolutely regular as regards the period of the day. Remember also what we discussed earlier: that a little practice each day—at the same time—is worth much more than larger periods at odd intervals. Make a rule for yourself and get down to it properly; it is the only way with *anything* which is worth while. Try to practise twice a day with an interval between; and do not practise when you are tired.

Don't try to do too much at a time and don't attempt the more difficult until you are certain of the easier. Remember, a simple effect, well done, sounds ten times better than an elaborate one "fluffed." If you don't believe this, then ask your leader. And be patient: don't expect a miracle to happen just because you have read a page of this book and bought a new pair of sticks. It is very hackneyed to say that Rome was not built in a day: but the fact remains that it wasn't. The most difficult things suddenly come to one in a flash; and it generally happens that you "get" an effect just as you were about to sling your drum through the window and to kick the cat. It is the man who will stay the course who cashes in at the winning post. And, coming down to the practical side, you will soon find the financial benefit of acquiring a good style. The trouble of having done so will slip away forgotten and you will agree that it has been well worth it all—and more. If you don't do this, somebody else will and you will find yourself left. Things are always moving all round one and it is necessary to keep pace with them. Remember you can't stand still: you either go forward or you go backward. That being the case, you may just as well move forward as you have *got* to shift.

One or two hints on this business of doing the right thing at the right time. The first thing when playing a passage is: don't try to put all you know into one chorus. Don't mix it. I do not mean to suggest by this remark that you should just sit back, think up one beat and then proceed to drowse through the evening

Well Worth
While

Restraint

in a thoroughly "corny" fashion. What I want is this: select three or four suitable beats and work on these during one chorus. Notice what the others are doing, particularly the piano, the guitar and the bass, and try and make your work dovetail with theirs. Choose rhythms which are suitable, not only to the type of piece, but also to the way it happens to be played at the moment. Remember what I told you about dividing a chorus into groups of sixteen, eight and eight bars; and don't forget to link up each phrase so that the thirty-two bars are blended as one whole. If you try to put everything you know into one passage, the result will sound confused and muddled. The essence of good taste is restraint.

Bear in mind that there are certain types of number where it not only pays to be monotonous, but where you must, in fact, emphasise one particular rhythm. Such types are particularly the "Hill-Billy" and the Oriental number. In the latter, the correct employment of tom-toms playing an insistent rhythm is very effective, whereas in the former, the whole orchestration will probably give you a definite cue as to the type of rhythm you are to employ. But at all times use your discretion and cultivate that discretion by listening to and examining the work of well-known artists who are recognised authorities.

Finally, I would like to wish you luck with your work and to hope that the discussions we have had together between these two covers have proved helpful. Many of you will probably have gone through the whole of this book fairly rapidly: I now suggest that you return to the beginning and tackle its contents page by page.

Using
Discretion

Good Luck!

SUPPLEMENT

An Easy Way to Read *and* to Understand Musical Notation.

It is—or it should be—the aim of every artist to improve his work. To do this, he will naturally try to learn everything he can concerning it. The fact that you are reading this book goes to prove that you wish to learn something to make you a better drummer.

It has often caused me surprise to find out how many of my students could not read music. It seemed so strange to me that anybody should wish to follow a profession and yet would not take the small trouble to master the language in which it is described. The reading of music is so simple, if properly explained, that it does not speak much for the good intentions of a drummer who will not bother to learn it. Moreover he can hardly grumble if he is passed over in favour of one who has taken that extra trouble.

What would you think of a man who applied for the post of, say, an interpreter of Russian, if he said: "Oh yes, I can speak the language all right, but I can't read their peculiar writing"? It is just the same, you see. And a dance drummer, particularly one who does not wish to play timpani, xylophone or vibraphone, has a very easy job in front of him: he has only to learn a very small portion of the musical "sign-language" to make him fully competent to read any part set before him.

With the idea of assisting those who would learn just what is necessary and no more, the following pages are offered. They are written in as simple a way as possible and all technical

terms have been avoided, at least until they have been explained first.

This explanation of printed music is intended simply for *dance* drummers who do *not* wish to play the xylophone, etc., that is to say, who are not going to play any instrument which can be made to produce a "tune" or a melody. It deals only with those things which are likely to come your way in the course of an evening's dance work. If you wish to carry on further into the reading of music later on, then there are many excellent books available and what you have learnt here will help you to understand them all the more quickly.

The object of musical "notation" (or musical signs on paper) is to convey to the artist the part to be played. That being so, musical notation is of one kind only. Unlike a spoken language, it is the same in every country. A Frenchman can read music printed in England and composed by an Italian. Musical signs are read from left to right, line by line, in the same way as ordinary print. Printed dance music gives you the following information:

1. The name of the piece you are playing.
2. What it is (i.e., a waltz, fox-trot, etc.).
3. Who wrote it.
4. Who published it.
5. How it is played (i.e., fast, slow, etc.).
6. How many "beats" you count (i.e., if it is in "waltz time," "fox-trot time," etc.).
7. What instruments you play it on (i.e., snare drum, bass drum, cymbal, etc.).
8. The piece of music itself, as the composer means you to render it.
9. When you are to play.
10. When you are to keep silent.

Music is a succession of sounds arranged in a definite order. These sounds can be altered in two ways:

1. By alteration of Pitch.
2. By alteration of Length.

Alteration of pitch merely means that some sounds are higher than others: there is a difference which your ear recognises. If you arrange these sounds in an agreed order, you produce a melody; if you arrange the same sounds in another order, you produce a different melody.

Alteration of length is the second principle in musical sounds. You know well enough that every musical sound, or note, is not the same length. If you whistle the tune of the first line of "Rule, Britannia" to yourself, you know that there is a long note on "Rule," a shorter one on "Bri-" and two little ones on "tannia." As we have agreed only to deal with dance drumming, we need not trouble ourselves about alteration in pitch, as we are not going to play melodies. But we must take particular notice of alteration in length, or we shall find ourselves playing the wrong thing at the wrong time.

In order to arrive at the value of these differences of length we must first understand something about musical time. Musical "time" is simply the swing behind a piece of music which enables you to follow the "beat" or "pulse" running through it. You hear people speak of "March Time," "Waltz Time," and so on; and if I placed a baton in your hand, you would find it quite easy to "beat time" with it, thus:

March Time:

ONE, two; ONE, two; ONE, two; etc.

Waltz Time:

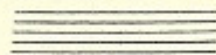
ONE, two, three; ONE, two, three; etc.

Fox-trot Time:

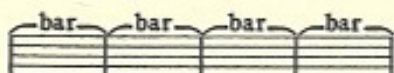
ONE, two, *three*, four; ONE, two, *three*, four; etc.

You recognise from the above that musical time is divided into little groups, in the same way that ordinary time is divided into seconds, minutes and hours.

The groups in musical time are referred to as bars. Your music is written between five lines thus:



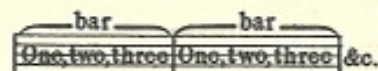
and the groups are divided thus:



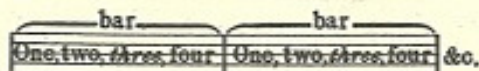
Musical time is divided into beats, or measures of time. Or according to what you are playing depends how many of these beats are contained in each bar. Let me explain. You will remember that "waltz time" was counted: ONE, two, three; ONE, two, three? This means that three beats go to each bar. And in fox-trot time, four beats go to each bar (ONE, two, three, four; ONE, two, three, four).

We might represent these bars with their beats something after this fashion, for the moment:

Waltz Time:



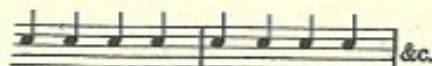
Fox-Trot Time:



That, of course, is no way to write music, as you will see if you look at a printed piece. What next? Well, we take as a basis of dance-music writing the most commonly used time: that is four beats in a bar, or one-quarter of a bar for each beat. Now, we have to have a sign of some kind for each of these beats. So we use the sign for a quarter of a "note," which is

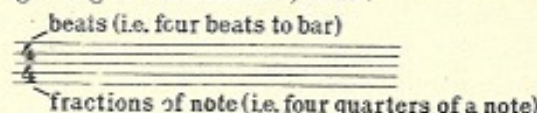


The fox-trot music, with four quarters, or beats, in a bar, would then look like this:



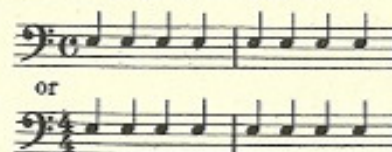
This is the most common time, as I stated above. As one of the most important things is to tell the artist what time he

is playing in, this information is always put first in the music, at the beginning of the first line, thus:

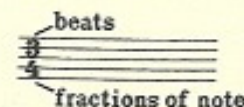


(At the very beginning of each set of five lines, you will see the sign F . This is the sign for the bass "Clef" or part of the lower music register. As it is only useful in regard to difference of pitch, you may ignore it for the present).

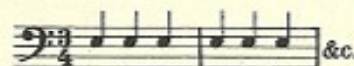
Common time is sometimes written C and sometimes C instead of $\frac{4}{4}$. This is only an abbreviation for the word "common." Our music with 4 beats in a bar, each beat being a quarter note, will now look like this:



Now let us look at waltz time (ONE, two, three; ONE, two, three) in the same way. In waltz time, there are three beats in a bar, each beat consisting of a quarter-note. So the time signature for waltz time is



Properly written, waltz time looks thus:

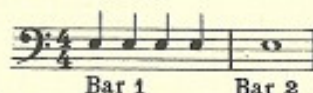


there are other kinds of time we will deal with later. Meanwhile let us examine this "note." We are already familiar with the 4 quarters of the note which go to make up a whole bar of common time. That being so, a whole note must itself, being four quarters, also make up a whole bar of common-time: and this, in fact, is the case.

The sign for a whole note is :



and this occupies the length of time taken by four common-time beats. Thus bars 1 and 2 in the example below are the same value in length of time.



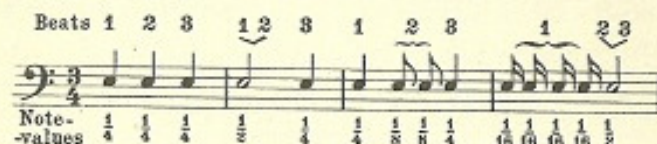
I will now give you a table, or list, showing you all the divisions of this note together with the musical signs which represent them :

Printed Sign	Value in "Notes"	Name
	1 note	Semibreve
	$\frac{1}{2}$ note	Minim
	$\frac{1}{4}$ note	Crotchet
or	$\frac{1}{8}$ note	Quaver
or	$\frac{1}{16}$ note	Semiquaver
or	$\frac{1}{32}$ note	Demi-semiquaver

You will see by studying the above that the time-value (or beat-value) of is the same as or or or or

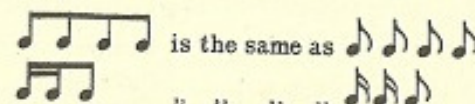
—and so on. Each note can be split up into many parts, provided that all these parts when added together do not come to more than one whole note. A shilling can consist of twelve pennies, or one sixpence + four farthings + four pennies + two half-pennies. Or four three-penny pieces are *exactly* a shilling: no more and no less. Neither eleven pennies nor twenty-five half-pennies are a shilling. In exactly the same way, a note may be split up into as many pieces as you like in a bar, provided that the total adds up to one note: no more and no less.

We can now look at waltz time again. Here are some bars written in that time (3 beats in a bar, each beat $\frac{1}{4}$ of a note in time value).



Each of these bars is correct, because each adds up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of \circ .

(Note.—Signs for $\frac{1}{8}$ note and under in value are often joined together when several follow each other. This is simply for convenience in reading as well as in writing).



and so on.

Here is a picture which will help you to fix the signs for the different note-values firmly in your mind. Just as an inch can be divided, so can a note. But, just as all the pieces must be correct to make up a whole complete inch, so must all the "note-pieces" be there to make up a whole complete bar.


INCHES	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{1}{16}$	$\frac{1}{32}$
NOTES	1	2	4	8	16






We next come to one or two more simple signs showing *length* in any musical note.

A dot . placed after any note increases its length by one half. Thus the two signs and occupy the same length of time, when played, as + . Again, is equal to + in length of time; and so on.

EXAMPLE

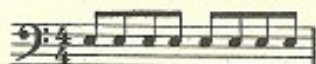


The next sign is called a tie, and is written thus: . It is used to join, or tie two notes together. Two notes so joined last for the same length of time as their joint value. In other words:

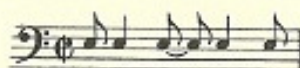
 sounds for as long as  or ; i.e., one half-note
 " " " " "  or ; i.e., one whole-note
 and so on.

EXAMPLE

Don't be afraid of tied notes: they are not as hard as you think they look. I used to worry over them, too. But one day, many years ago, too, a "straight" drummer-pal of mine gave me a tip which made everything clear in a flash. I pass this on to you. When you strike a bar in common time which looks difficult, just divide it into eight in your mind, thus:



Then all you have to do is to place your eight "pieces" over the bar you stumble over; and your placing of ties in the right positions is solved. Thus






might look most difficult. But imagine it this way (and count as you play) and all your difficulties will go. In counting, emphasize the numbers in big type and just whisper those in small type.



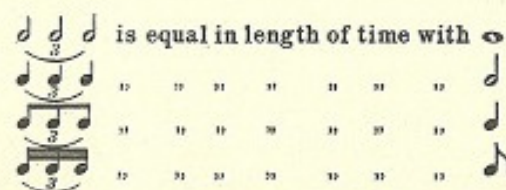
Here is a longer example, showing a tie from one bar to another.




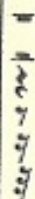






It sometimes happens that a writer of music wishes to have a different division of a note than the quarters, eighths, etc., which we have been discussing. This particularly happens with the quaver, or eighth-note (). Instead of dividing it into two parts, it may be necessary to cut it into three portions.

In this case, these portions are written down thus: ; and this is called a Triplet. You need never feel any confusion over the sign for triplets because the mark  or 3 always appears over them. (Or under them).

Other divisions of the note can also be split into three parts in just the same way. Here is a list of the signs used:

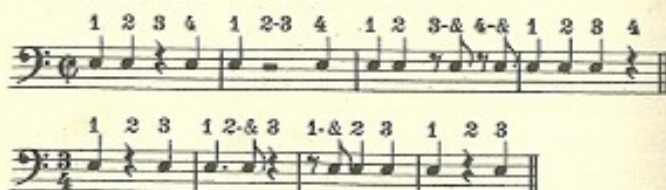


As I mentioned above, music is divided into periods of sound and periods of silence. Just as there are signs to show you the length of a sound, so also there are other signs which indicate the length of a silence. Here is a list showing you these silence-signs, together with their corresponding sound-signs:

Sound	Silence	Value in Notes
		1
		$\frac{1}{2}$
		$\frac{1}{4}$
		$\frac{1}{8}$

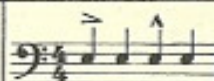



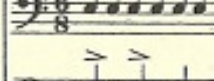
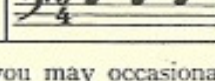
These periods of silence are called "rests," and occupy the same length of *time* as the sound "note" which corresponds with them.

EXAMPLES

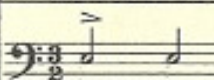

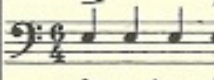


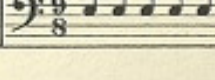


We have spoken about fox-trot "time" and waltz "time," each indicating so many beats in a bar. Now, all music is made up of various "times" of this nature, each one consisting of so many beats in equal divisions, or bars. This is what gives music its proper swing. In order to mark this swing still further, some of the beats in each bar are accented. That is to say, they have a stress, or emphasis, placed on them.

I will now give you a complete list of the "times" you are most likely to meet with in normal dance work, showing you their time-signature, a specimen bar in each time and where the accents fall. The sign — means a strong accent and the sign \wedge means an accent, but not quite so strong. Remember, in the time signatures, the top figure shows the number of beats in the bar and the lower one shows the value of each beat in relation to a whole note (i.e., $\frac{1}{2}$ th, $\frac{1}{4}$ th, etc.).

Musical Sign	Accents	"Popular" name
$\frac{4}{4}$ or C or C		Fox-Trot time
$\frac{2}{4}$		March or One-Step time
or $\frac{3}{4}$		
$\frac{3}{4}$		Waltz time
$\frac{6}{8}$		Six-eight (One-Step) time
$\frac{3}{4}$		Spanish One-Step or Passo Doble time

Other times you may occasionally meet with are given in the following list :

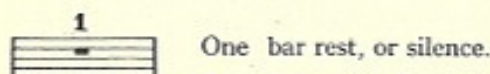
Musical Sign	Accents	Name
$\frac{3}{2}$		Three-two
$\frac{3}{8}$		Three-eight
$\frac{6}{4}$		Six-four
$\frac{12}{8}$		Twelve-eight
$\frac{9}{4}$		Nine-four
$\frac{9}{8}$		Nine-eight

We have been speaking about notes and portions of notes of varying length. It will, of course, be obvious to you that by tapping a drum once with a stick you only produce a short sharp sound, and this sound does not vary in length. The only way to vary the length of a sound on a drum is by rolling. To indicate this, little lines are put through the stems of the notation thus: \sharp or \sharp or \sharp . Three lines mean a closer, or quicker roll than two, and two indicate a quicker roll than one.

In common time, \sharp means roll for the whole length of one beat and stop at the *end* of that beat. \sharp means roll for the whole length of one beat but stop at the *beginning* of the next beat, bringing the stick off with a smart finish right at the beginning of the second beat. If a composer wants a certain definite number of beats in a roll to cover a certain length of time, he will indicate it thus:



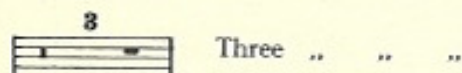
A few more signs which are in frequent use are given here, together with their explanations.



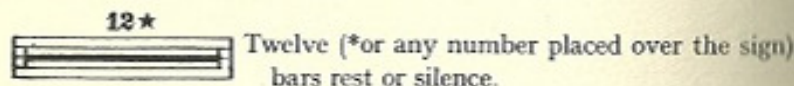
One bar rest, or silence.



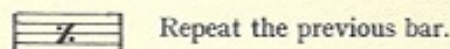
Two bars



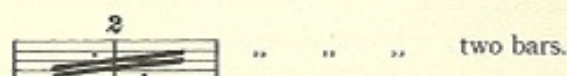
Three



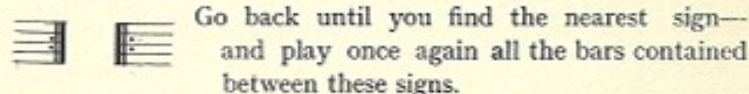
Twelve (*or any number placed over the sign) bars rest or silence.



Repeat the previous bar.



.. .. two bars.



Go back until you find the nearest sign—and play once again all the bars contained between these signs.

D.S. \times Means go back to the sign \times and repeat that portion from this sign onwards.

D.C. Repeat the music from the beginning.

\oplus When this sign is reached (on repeating a piece) the repetition is to be stopped and a cut made from the sign to the CODA or finishing phrase.

\frown When placed over a note or rest means that this note or rest is prolonged, or "held on" beyond its proper value.

f loudly.

ff very loudly.

P softly.

PP very softly.

mf medium-loud.

dim decrease or *diminish* in tone, becoming softer.

or \rceil

crese Increase in tone, becoming louder.

or \llcorner

Other signs, or musical terms and their meanings, can be obtained from any good book on the rudiments of music or from a reliable drum tutor.

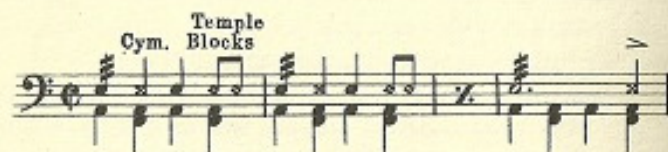
Drum music is written on various portions of the five lines, generally as follows:

MAX ON "SWING"



Any change need cause no confusion, because the snare-drum part is usually written with the tails up and the part for the "foot-instruments" with the tails down.

Various signs such as ♩ ♪ ♫ etc., are sometimes used to denote instruments other than the snare drum, but their meaning is generally indicated at the beginning of a piece thus:



Although they are not the usual oval black or open notes, their time-value can always be recognised by their "tails" or stems.

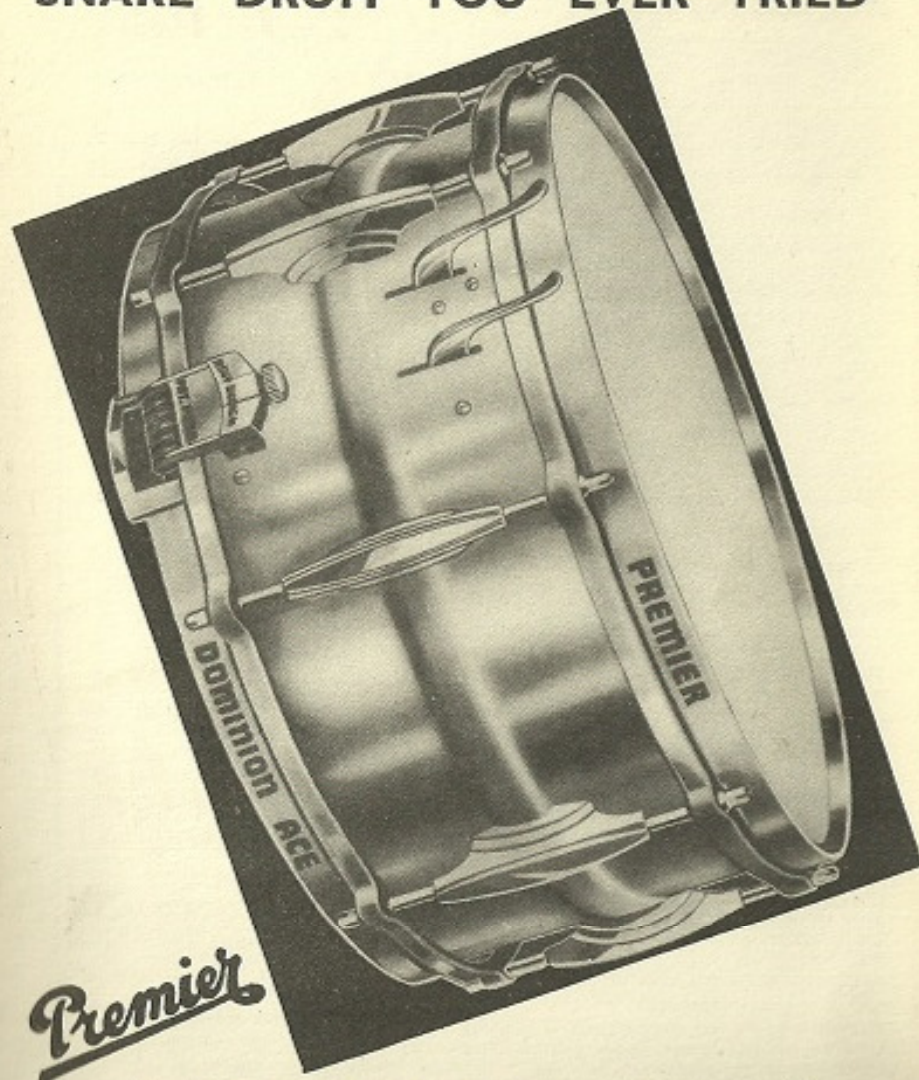
The above should put you well on the way to being able to read what music you require easily.

As I said before, my object is not to give you a complete musical training (far from it in the confines of a few pages!); but to make you not only read music, but also understand what you are reading.

For this reason I have tried to give you these few notes in as simple and non-technical language as possible.

Those who wish may always go deeper into the subject.

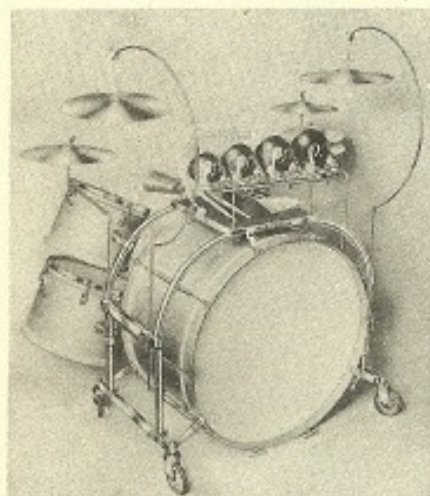
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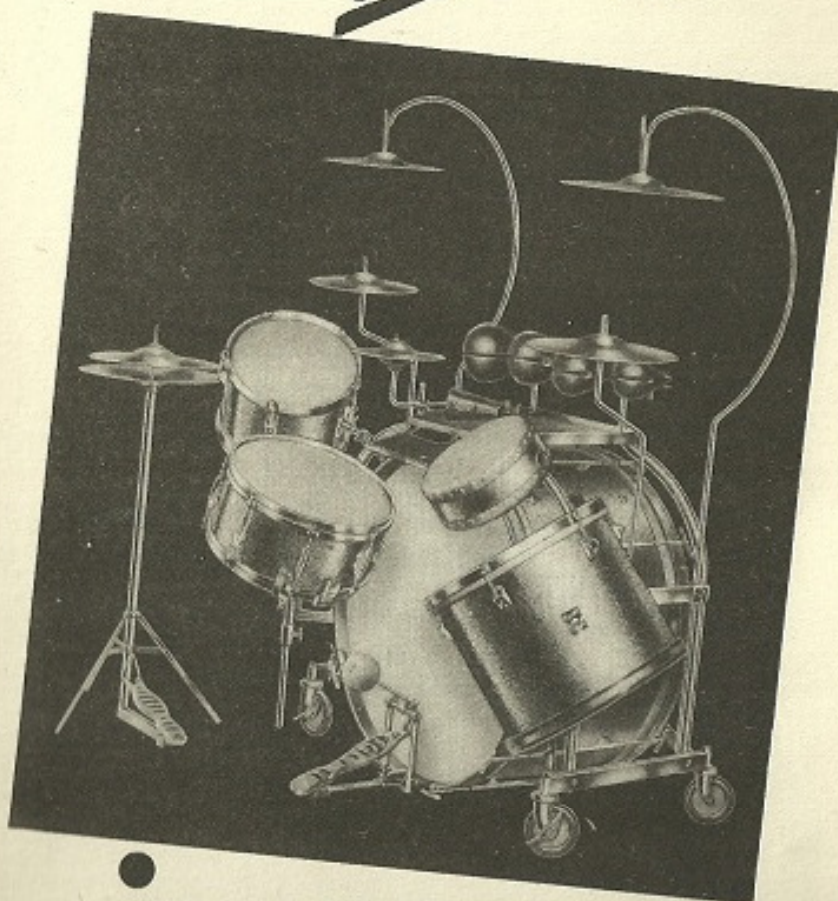
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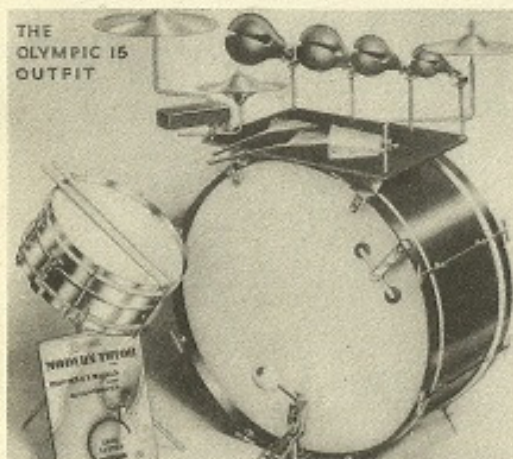


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