

SYSTEMS

Book 1: Drumming Technique and Melodic Jazz Independence

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Audio examples of all the systems in this book are available for download at:

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CHAPTER 2 HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Melody pages 1–4, in Chapter 16, consist of fairly traditional rhythms that don't use the second note of the triplet. These pages are notated as eighth notes and can be played with a straight or swing feel, depending on the system being used.

Melody pages 5–8 include rhythms using the second note of the triplet. Not all of the melody pages are to be played with each system, so I've indicated in the descriptive text before each system which melody pages should be used.

After the descriptive text, I've included a notated example of the system combined with the first few bars of melody page 1. This will show you how the system and melody fit together. Here are the first two measures of melody page 1.



If the system is to be used with any of melody pages 5–8, there will be a second notated example of the system combined with the first two bars of melody page 5.



Preceding the eighth note and triplet melody pages, I've included what I call "partial pages." These two pages contain systematic groupings of two, three, and four notes. The first partial page is written using eighth notes and corresponds to melody pages 1–4. The second partial page uses triplets and corresponds with melody pages 5–8. These two pages contain the basic rhythmic building blocks used in the subsequent melodies. Practice the partial pages with the systems first. (If a system only uses melody pages 1–4, there's no need to practice the second partial page with it.)

In general, you'll get more benefit by mastering short ideas instead of memorizing long phrases. This will allow you to improvise new ideas by piecing together short phrases to create longer

ones. This is similar to learning a new language, where it's more important to learn words, from which you can create your own sentences, rather than just memorizing entire phrases. The best way to practice the systems is to begin by repeating one bar of the melody at a time, then two, and then four. I don't recommend playing the melody pages from beginning to end unless you want to practice sightreading.

It's also important to be aware of how you're playing the systems. Ask yourself, "Is my time consistent? Are the dynamics of the different components of the drumset equal with each other and with themselves?" Repetitive practice will make you aware of inconsistencies in your playing that you hadn't noticed before. You can then isolate these problems and improve on them.

As you're working on these systems, always use a metronome or play along to your favorite recordings. Also, keep a record of your maximum tempo for each system. Your top speed will vary from page to page and, in some cases, from bar to bar. Noting your tempos will help you keep track of your improvement and give you a suggestion of what tempo to begin with during your next practice session.

When you start working on a new system, begin extremely slowly, and then work your way up in increments of four beats per minute. Once you've mastered a melody page with one system, move on to the next page using the same system. Different measures of the melody pages will need to be worked on at different tempos, depending on how technically challenging they are. Start at 52 beats per minute, and work your way up. Don't be discouraged if you've been working with two bars of a melody at 100 BPM but can only play the next two bars at 70 BPM. That's how it's supposed to work.

MUSIC KEY	
H.H.	R.C.
T.T.	C.C.
S.D.	
F.T.	
B.D.	
H.H. w/ foot	rim click

CHAPTER 3 HAND WARM-UP SYSTEMS

A good way to warm-up your hands and improve technique is to accent the rhythm of a melodic line while playing different subdivisions and stickings. More than one possible sticking exists for some of these systems, so explore different options to find what works best for you.

You can orchestrate each of these examples in a few different ways:

- 1) Play all accented and non-accented notes on the snare.
- 2) Play the accented notes on the toms (playing whichever tom fits best within the sticking) and the non-accented notes on the snare.
- 3) Play the accented notes with a cymbal and the bass drum together, while the non-accented notes remain on the snare.

Play 2 and 4 on the hi-hat for each of these warm-ups.

Hand Warm-up 1

Alternate eighth notes while accenting the line (melody pages 1–4).

1

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

Hand Warm-up 2

Alternate triplets while accenting the line (melody pages 1–8).

2A

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

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

2B

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

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

Hand Warm-up 3

Alternate sixteenth notes while accenting the line (melody pages 1–4).

3

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

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

Hand Warm-up 4

Play the melody with the right hand and bass drum, while filling in triplets on the snare. The left hand will do the bulk of the fill-ins, with the right hand being used only when more than two fill-in notes are to be played. It may be helpful to write out several sticking options for this example in order to avoid playing more than two consecutive notes with one hand. Repeat this system starting with the left hand. The first four bars of melody pages 1 and 5 are used as an example here (melody pages 1–8).