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Preface

My decision to write **Drum Basics** was taken as a result of having failed to find in my many years as a drum teacher a comparable book which I could have worked through with my students. It can generally be said that there is no single book that you can work through and that will teach you to be a good and versatile drummer. You need various books covering different styles, reading, basics, independence etc. There are hundreds of drum textbooks on the market which deal with certain aspects of drumming, and which really do go into great detail, but more often than not these dedicate only a few pages to the basics, technique and rudiments, the assumption being that these have already been learnt and can be applied at any time.

Most of the time, however, this is simply not the case.

It is of fundamental importance that students go through the basic training so that they develop a sound technique, enabling them to play strictly in time, and so that they can play effortlessly and be creative.

Creativity is paramount in each and every musician's approach to playing, but to be able to play what you feel and think your fingers, arms and legs first have to do what you want to express.

As you also do not want to exert yourself more than necessary, because this would again restrict the creativity and flow of your playing - you have to make sure that you have complete command of the areas of technique, reading, independence of your limbs and the basic terms and signs in music.

Technique can be compared with sport. There isn't just some technique or other that will ensure success. There are a multitude of different variations, each one of which can produce the result desired. What most people don't think about is, "How do I learn this technique properly?" If you don't get you very far just having some hero or other, watching his hands and then simply copying him. Learning this properly is often a very long process. Technique must be practised virtually every day and above all it must be checked time and time again. Learning a certain technique also involves several steps. It's not enough just to pick up the sticks and to practise 2 right, 2 left for hours on end, hoping that sometime or other you'll be able to play a double stroke roll. You might succeed but it is purely and simply a waste of time.

Let's return to sport again, for instance the hundred-metre sprinter. Let's have a look at his training programme. We see that he doesn't only run 100 metres to get faster, but that he does gymnastics, stretching, body-building to develop the muscles that are important for his discipline, he videos his running and analyses his body's movements and much more besides. The same is true for footballers, tennis players etc. A marked difference in performance can also be observed in the sportsman who plays in the national



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league and has worked out his training programme down to the last detail and the sportsman who just trains once a week and then perhaps plays 2 hours tennis or kicks the ball around on the football field. A further important reason why a sportsman can actually achieve a higher standard is his training and his coach. He is the one who right from the start tells the tennis player, for instance, how to hold his racket properly or shows him the correct movements when serving, and he's always there observing and correcting him. Why do ballet dancers have mirrors everywhere? So that they can watch themselves and correct themselves as well.

All of this applies to playing the drums too. The movements involved in a double stroke roll are very complex and have to be acquired through hard work. The hand is not made for playing the drums and we have to teach the fingers, wrists and arms to perform the movements important for playing the drums and to exercise and stretch the muscles involved.

What you need for this is a good teacher and a carefully worked-out plan. After a certain period of time you have to become your own teacher at home and to watch yourself in the mirror. As I mentioned before, there are various techniques, beginning with different ways of holding the sticks, then different movements for striking the drum, etc.

If you want to achieve results in the shortest time possible it's important that you acquire just **one** technique and work on it and that you don't change everything around every six months just because Mr. X is "the latest and the greatest" and holds the sticks that little bit differently.

Technique is merely your tool, nothing else

Mr. X certainly didn't become famous because of his technique, but because he was able to be creative with it.

In this book I'm going to present a technique which is very easy to learn and which employs movements which we are already familiar with. I'll explain the function of the fingers, wrists and arms, show you exercises for stretching and building up your strength and I'll accompany you right up to the double stroke roll and the single strokes.

The two movements involved here are the basis of all the rudiments and are later merely combined in the different rudiments.

Once you have mastered this technique you will have acquired a solid foundation on which you'll later be able to base your drumming. Those who go over to this technique will very soon notice that their movements are more economical and that their timing improves as well.

Reading is also very much underestimated by most drummers. It's not simply a matter of pure reading but much more actually understanding rhythm. You don't have to become a perfect sight-reader but a basic awareness of notation is essential if you later want to stand any chance of actually being able to communicate with the musicians you're playing with. Each one-measure/bar reading exercise should be seen as a fill on the drumset and be played exactly in time, and even when playing it on the practice pad you should make sure that this is the case. Once you understand and recognise complicated rhythmic relationships and polyrhythms you'll find it easier to integrate these into your playing.

Drum Basics is designed not only for self-study and for working through with a teacher, but also for the complete novice and as a reference book for the advanced student.

I hope you have great fun with it.

System of Counting:

The most common time signature in our music is the 4/4 measure/bar.

And what does the time signature 4/4 mean?

- $\frac{4}{4}$ = denotes the number of beats (the pulse) per measure/bar.
- $\frac{4}{4}$ = denotes the value of each beat or pulse = what kind of note gets one beat.

4/4 means then that you've got 4 beats per measure/bar and the quarter note/crotchet gets one beat.

$\frac{4}{4}$ = $\frac{4}{4}$

With regard to the beat there are actually three different ways of counting.

1. **One part counting** you count the beat like this: 1-2-3-4 etc.
2. **Two part counting** you count the next smaller note value which has twice as many beats as the main beat, like this: 1-and-2-and-3-and-4-and- etc.
3. **Four part counting** you count the next smallest note value which in relation to the main beat has got four times as many beats, like this: 1 e + d - 2 e + d - 3 e + d - 4 e + d etc. (pronounced: 1 uh-er-duh..).

And there again when reading rhythms, we use the three methods of counting – one, two and four part counting – in three different ways.

1. We keep counting the smallest unit to be found on our sheet of music all the way through – in our example it's the 1/16 note – i.e. we use four part counting throughout.

1 e + d 2 e + d 3 e + d 4 e + d 1 e + d 2 e + d 3 e + d 4 e + d

2. We count the note value we play in 4/4 time using one part counting for the quarter note/crotchet, two part counting for the eighth note/quaver and four part counting for the sixteenth note/semiquaver.

1 + 2 e + d 3 4 1 2 + 3 e + d 4

3. We count the main beat throughout using one part counting – in our example it's the quarter note/crotchet.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Exercise  16

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e.g.: doubling of the mass (stick) = **doubling** of W_{kin}
 doubling of the speed = **quadrupling** of W_{kin}

This means that it is far more important to work on moving properly so as to increase your speed than it is to use very heavy sticks.

You should take note of the following points, each of which represents one link in the chain leading to our goal, in order to learn these movements properly (each of these points is important!!):

Hand Position:

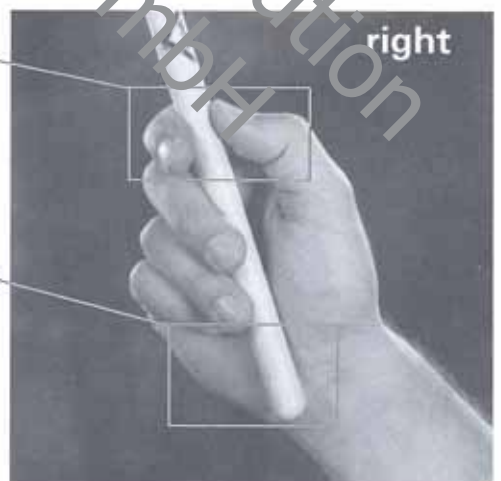
Our hand position, with the back of the hand facing upwards and the palm towards the drum, results from wanting to cover the greatest possible distance and to exploit anatomical features. The most natural movement for our wrist is vertically up and down (like waving to someone). What we have to do now is optimise this movement with regard to speed and distance.



Holding the Sticks:

We've already seen that the stick is held between the first and second joints of the index finger and the thumb.

Anyone picking up a stick for the first time holds it like a knife or a hammer, which means it is usually positioned between the second and third joint of the index finger, thereby totally restricting the movement of the fingers with the stick. But here as well we want



Socket between the first and second index finger joints.



The force of the thumb is exerted vertically on the index finger.



The stick lies in the hollow of the hand forming one line with the forearm.

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Seven Stroke Roll

1. Seven Stroke Roll as Sixteenths

a) Accent on the last stroke:



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

b) Accent on the first stroke:

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

2. Seven Stroke Roll as Thirty Seconds

a) Accent on the last stroke:

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

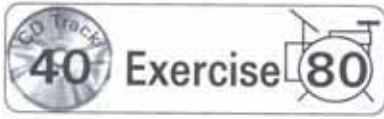
b)

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

c) Accent on the first stroke:

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

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