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*CD audio examples performed by Rich Lackowski.
Instructional photos by Larry Lytle.*



This book picks up where *On the Beaten Path: Beginning Drumset Course, Level 2* leaves off. It is designed to help you get “on the beaten path,” that is, to help you play the beats and solos that our mighty drumming predecessors play on the songs we love. You will learn everything you need to know to go from the first thought of “I want to play the drums” to playing some of the most legendary beats and solos ever recorded! Many books claim to do this very thing, but what sets this book apart from the rest is that here, you will learn by playing along with the greatest drummers in the world—all types of famous drummers from a variety of musical styles—and you’ll learn how to play the beats that they perform on some of the most famous songs ever recorded. This book explains what these drummers play on their songs by breaking it down in a way that gets you to learn to read music and start developing your own ideas into beats, fills, and solos.

I believe that drummers learn by mimicking their heroes. Sure, beats grow and change and morph into original ideas, but all drummers—from aspiring beginners to seasoned professionals—are naturally inspired by what other drummers are playing. The proof is in all those people you’ve seen air drumming along to some key part in a song. Many of these people have never sat behind a drumset or even held a drumstick, but the drum beat and the framework of the song somehow gets them to raise their arms in the air and act out their interpretation of a moving drum passage. It’s

basic human instinct. When writing this book, I wanted to guide this natural instinct in a way that logically feeds you information as you need it so you can accelerate the process of learning how to play your drumming heroes’ beats.

I know when I first started playing the drums, even though I had just begun taking group lessons on the snare drum in school, that the *real* learning happened when I got home and threw down my boring class snare drum book that our teacher assigned to us. I put on the headphones each day, sat behind my drum kit, and tried to mimic the beats and fills that the drummers were playing on my favorite songs. Through trial and error, I was eventually able to play the songs and at least fake my way through the more difficult parts.

In this book, I will accelerate this process of trial and error, and guide you through the things that every drummer needs to know in order to play the drums. This book can be used with or without a teacher. Although you don’t *need* a teacher to use this book, it would benefit you to go find a drum teacher in your area and take lessons. A teacher will get you to practice if nothing else, but they will also correct any bad techniques you may be developing before they become hard-to-break habits.

Now let’s get started and begin our journey On the Beaten Path!

Icons Used in This Book

The following icons are used throughout this book to help you learn valuable information and to become a better drummer.



TOOL: This icon is shown near key concepts or tools that will help you play the drums with more expression and personality.



TERM: This icon is shown near explanations of key music notations and concepts.

"On the Road Again"

FROM WILLIE NELSON'S *16 BIGGEST HITS* (1998, ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON THE *HONEYSUCKLE ROSE* SOUNDTRACK IN 1980)

"On the Road Again" is one of the most popular country songs of all time. Drummer Paul English, who has played with Nelson since 1955, lays down a standard country "train beat" by playing an accented two-handed pattern on the snare and playing the kick drum on beats 1 and 3.

Original transcription (0:25):

♩ = 220

Track 1

Let's start by playing the standard train beat. This groove is slightly swung, which means it's not played with ultra-precise eighth notes, and it's also not quite swung like a swing beat. Instead, it falls somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. Play the kick on beats 1 and 3 while playing continuous eighth notes on the snare, alternating left and right hands. Be sure to accent beats 2 and 4. Go ahead and give it a try.

Sometimes drummers add an extra eighth note in the train beat, just to give it a slight variation, which keeps it interesting.

Track 2

Another common variation in the train beat is adding an additional accent to the "&" of beat 1 or, in this exercise, to the "&" of beat 3.

Track 3



First and second endings

First and second endings are used in music notation when a section of music is played the same all the way through except for the ending. Instead of writing the music out twice with only the ending of the section changing, the use of first and second endings make it easier to notate and easier for the musician to read.

"The Devil Went Down to Georgia"

FROM THE CHARLIE DANIELS BAND'S *MILLION MILE REFLECTIONS* (1979)

Similar in feel to "On the Road Again" but much faster, this is a good example of a *train beat*, competently played by drummer James Marshall. This lesson features an eight bar excerpt and is notated using first and second endings. When you get to the repeat sign (first ending), go back to the opposite facing repeat sign which, in this case, is at the beginning of the transcription. When you finish playing the third measure the second time, skip the first ending and jump straight to the second ending, which adds an accent on the "&" of beat 3. Go ahead and give it a try!

Track 4



Original transcription (0:21):

♩ = 276

BASIC FUNK BEATS

"Groovy Lady"

FROM THE METERS' *FUNKIFY YOUR LIFE: THE METERS ANTHOLOGY* (1995)

Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste is one of the funkier drummers on the planet. If you would like to play funk music, do yourself a favor and buy this album. It's loaded with some of the best funk drumming ever played, as demonstrated in this excerpt from "Groovy Lady".

Original transcription (Intro):

♩ = 98

Track 5



Let's start by playing sixteenth notes on the hi-hat by alternating each stick, starting with your right hand. Hit the snare on beats 2 and 4 with your right hand. Play the kick on beats 1 and 3, on the "&" of beats 2 and 4, and on the "ah" of beats 1 and 3.

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

Now, add in the accents on beats 1 and 3, and the additional kick drum hits on beats 2 and 4 and you'll be playing the funky beat just like Zigaboo plays it on the recording!

"Doodle Loop (The World is a Little Bit Under the Weather)"

FROM THE METERS' *FUNKIFY YOUR LIFE: THE METERS ANTHOLOGY* (1995)

This tune also features some funky playing by Zigaboo Modeliste and showcases some of his beautifully syncopated kick drum playing.

Original transcription (Intro):

Track 6

$\text{♩} = 86$

Let's start by playing eighth notes on the hi-hat, the snare on beats 2 and 4, and the kick drum on beats 1 and 3, and on the "&" of beats 2 and 4.

Now, let's play the same groove as in the previous lesson, only this time, we'll add kick drum hits on the "ah" of beats 1 and 3.

Finally, play the same groove as in the previous lesson, but this time, remove the kick drum hit on beat 3. Start slowly and gradually increase the tempo as you feel comfortable.



Widely acknowledged as the innovator of second-line funk playing, Zigaboo Modeliste is without a doubt one of the most influential, creative, and soulful artists to ever live. This highly acclaimed drummer and New Orleans legend has written and recorded over 200 songs with The Meters, spanning 30 national and international album releases. He's touched many with his incredible playing and will forever be considered the king of funk drumming.

"One Love / People Get Ready"

FROM BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS' *EXODUS* (1977)

Carlton Barrett masterfully incorporates accented notes and a bouncy hi-hat feel on this timeless tune.

Track 16



Original transcription (0:02):

♩ = 151

Let's start by playing and repeating a basic one-drop rhythm by hitting the hi-hat on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, and playing a rim click and a kick drum hit together on beat 3.

Sometimes, reggae drummers embellish the beat a bit by varying the hits on the hi-hat. The bouncy feel that they achieve is similar to what we learned when playing a swing beat. Start slowly and gradually increase the tempo as you feel comfortable.

In this next exercise, we'll play a very common reggae drum fill followed by a simple one-drop rhythm. To play the fill, hit a rim click on beat 1 and on the last note of the triplet that starts on beat 2. Then, hit the snare on beat 4 with the snares turned off so it sounds like a high-pitched rack tom or a timbale.

Finally, let's put it all together, adding the rack tom to the fill, and play this one-drop reggae groove just like Carlton Barrett plays it on the recording!

“Money”

FROM PINK FLOYD'S *THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON* (1973)

The Dark Side of the Moon is one of the most popular albums of all time. It was in the *Billboard* charts for an unprecedented 741 consecutive weeks and over 45 million copies of the album have been sold to date. Drummer Nick Mason plays along with Roger Waters's famous bass groove that is in $\frac{7}{4}$. That means there are seven beats to a measure, and the quarter note gets the count.

Original transcription (0:26):

Track 36

Let's get comfortable with the $\frac{7}{4}$ time signature by playing this simplified version of Nick Mason's groove.

Add crash cymbal hits on beats 1 and 7, and an extra kick drum hit on the “ah” of beat 3, and you'll be playing the groove just like Nick Mason plays it on the recording!

“I Never Loved A Man (The Way I Love You)”

FROM ARETHA FRANKLIN'S *I NEVER LOVED A MAN THE WAY I LOVE YOU* (1967)

Drummer Gene Chrisman plays a wonderful groove in $\frac{3}{4}$ on this tune, sung by the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, on her first single with Atlantic records. In this groove, there are three beats to each measure, and the quarter note gets the count.

Original transcription (1:05):

Track 37