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About the Author

Percussionist/composer **Dave Black** received his Bachelor of Music in percussion performance from California State University, Northridge. While at Northridge, he studied with notable teachers and performers such as Louie Bellson, Joel Leach, Ed Shaughnessy, Steve Schaeffer, Jerry Steinholtz and the late Nick Ceroli. He has traveled around the world with a variety of entertainers and shows, performing and recording with such artists as Alan King, Robert Merrill, June Allyson, Anita O'Day, Pete Jolly, Frankie Capp, Gordon Brisker, Kim Richmond, Victor Lewis, Jerry Hey and Steve Huffsteter.



A prolific composer and arranger, more than 60 of his compositions and arrangements have been published by Alfred Music Publishing, Barnhouse, CPP/Belwin, TRN, Highland/Etling and Warner Brothers, and many of them have been recorded. Mr. Black has written with, and for the bands of Louie Bellson, Sammy Nestico, Bill Watrous, Bobby Shew, Ed Shaughnessy, Gordon Brisker and the C.S.U., Northridge Jazz Ensemble. He has been the recipient of many awards and commissions, including 21 consecutive ASCAP Popular Composer Awards (for his contributions to the symphonic and concert repertoires) and two Grammy participation/nomination certificates – one for his performance contribution on Anita O'Day's Grammy-nominated album *In a Mellow Tone*, and the other for his contribution as album-track composer on Louie Bellson's Grammy-nominated album *Airmail Special*. In addition, many of his compositions have been used as source/background music on numerous TV shows including *All My Children*, *Coach*, *The Drew Carey Show*, *General Hospital*, *Ellen*, *Grace Under Fire*, *Nightline*, *Roseanne* and *Good Morning America*.

Mr. Black is the co-author of several best-selling books published by Alfred Music Publishing Company: *Alfred's Drum Method, Books 1 & 2* (the world's current best seller); *Alfred's Beginning Drumset Method*; *Contemporary Brush Techniques*; *Drumset 101*; *Alfred's Kid's Drum Course, Books 1 & 2*; *Living Praise*; *Cymbals: A Crash Course*; *A Jazz Diary* (chosen for the 1998-2000 National Federation of Music Club's Junior Festival Bulletin); *Drumset Independence & Syncopation*; *The Essential Dictionary of Orchestration*; and *Sound Innovations for Concert Band*. His books and music are used and performed by tens of thousands of young people all over the world. He has also written countless articles, book reviews and concert reviews for prominent magazines such as *Down Beat*, *The Instrumentalist*, *Modern Drummer*, *Modern Percussionist*, *Drums and Drumming*, *Drum Tracks*, *Grammy Pulse*, *Jazz Educators Journal* and *Music Connection*-in addition to being a featured subject in many of them.

As an active member of the Percussive Arts Society (PAS), Mr. Black served on the National Board of Directors for six years, was a member of the Sustaining Members Advisory Council, and was selected to host/chair the 1991 Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Anaheim, California. He presently serves as Vice President and Editor-in-Chief, School & Church Publications, for Alfred Music Publishing Company.

Foreword

Drumset Independence and Syncopation is a unique method that integrates independent coordination and the use of syncopated rhythms on the drumset. It explores the most common syncopated rhythms found in jazz and rock and in the process serves as a vehicle for improving coordinated independence and reading skills. It will be most useful to the jazz drummer in playing figures typically found in jazz, and in improvising short solo fills characteristically found in the jazz idiom.

Obviously, the exercises contained herein merely scratch the surface of the rhythmic possibilities. The student is encouraged to further expand his/her horizon by making up (ad-libbing) his/her own exercises, as such creativity is of utmost importance to the drumset player.

Drumset Independence and Syncopation has been written with the assumption that the student already has a basic understanding of musical notation. If the student is lacking in this area, it is recommended that he/she first study from *Alfred's Beginning Drumset Method* book or one that is comparable.

A concerted effort has been made to present this material in an interesting and musically satisfying manner. I hope you'll find the book to be an enjoyable experience in your pursuit of musical excellence.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Joel Leach and Dave Tull for their invaluable input and patience.

Introduction

Independence

Drumset independence refers to the player's ability to execute multiple rhythms involving the hands and feet in a coordinated manner. It can be as simple as playing 4-beats on the bass drum while "riding" on a cymbal, or as complex as playing 2, 3 or even 4 rhythmic patterns with the hands and feet simultaneously.

Syncopation

Syncopation occurs when there is a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent, causing the emphasis to shift from a strong beat to a weak beat. The concept of syncopation can be demonstrated by using the well-known tune "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Here is the tune in its original form:

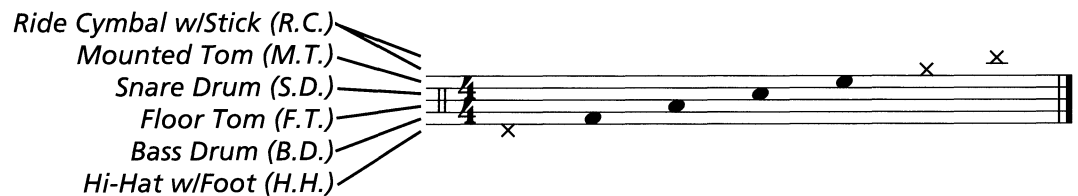


And here is the "Mary Had a Little Lamb" melody altered by syncopation to give it a so-called "swing" feel:



As you will hear, the melody was preserved but a more interesting rhythm was created to give it a "swing" feel.

Notation



The Jazz Feel

The jazz drummer's primary function is to supply *time*. And the single most important thing the drummer does to supply that time is to play what has become known as the *ride rhythm* on a cymbal. (This is almost always backed up by playing the hi-hat on 2 & 4.)

Although the ride rhythm is most commonly based on a triplet feel, the pattern used varies considerably, depending upon three factors: tempo, style and "feel."

The following example shows how the ride cymbal pattern might be affected by changes in tempo.

Tempo: Slow → Fast

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: In this book, all of the ride rhythm patterns should be played with a triplet feel (as shown in the example below). However, for those sections that incorporate sixteenth notes, the more familiar dotted eighth- and sixteenth-note ride pattern may be used in order to make the relationship between the ride rhythm and the left hand/bass drum easier to read.

Play the following basic beat in which the cymbal plays the ride rhythm, the bass drum plays on all four beats and the hi-hat plays on beats 2 & 4. Be sure to add a slight accent (>) on 2 & 4. After playing the example with the bass drum on all four beats, go back and play the example again *without* the bass drum.

Example:

*Use of the bass drum on all four beats was common in an earlier period of jazz, but is not common when playing contemporary jazz. For the purpose of this book, the author has written the bass drum on all four beats as a learning device. However, once comfortable with that technique, the student should omit the bass drum when playing basic "time."

How to Practice the Exercises

All of the exercises (except for snare drum and bass drum independence studies) should first be played on the snare drum until the rhythm becomes comfortable (as in Example #1). Next, the student should repeat each exercise incorporating the jazz ride rhythm with the right hand and the exercise with the left (as in Example #2). The hi-hat should play on beats 2 & 4, and the bass drum should be omitted.

Example #1:

Example #2:

In many of the exercises throughout the book, a *Notational Variation (N.V.)* has been included. In each of those examples, the rhythm sounds the same, but has been notated differently as shown in the following examples:

Example A:

Example B:

*In the interest of clarity, time signatures have been omitted from the top staff throughout the book.

General Practice Hints

1. Practice each exercise at a comfortable, consistent tempo.
2. Count aloud and/or clap each rhythm before playing! Don't move on until you can play the exercise at an equal volume and tempo throughout.
3. Maintain a relaxed feel while playing.
4. Learn to play along with a metronome. Jazz musicians often set their metronome to click at one-half the tempo of the tune they have in mind, and then treat the clicks as though they are playing on 2 & 4. This helps by emphasizing the importance of beats 2 & 4.
5. Play the syncopated rhythms as you move around the drumset. Use your imagination by trying several variations of each exercise.
6. Lastly, experiment using rhythms which *you* create.

CHAPTER 1

Independence

Lesson 1

(Quarter Notes, Quarter Rests, Half Notes and Half Rests)

In this lesson (and the lessons that follow), begin by playing each exercise on the snare drum alone. Next, repeat the exercise, adding the jazz ride rhythm as shown in the first two measures of Example #1.

♩ = 92 > 3 > 3 > 3 > 3 etc.

1. *Notational Variation*

2. *N.V.*

3. *N.V.*

4. *N.V.*

5. *N.V.*

6. *N.V.*

7. *N.V.*

8. *N.V.*

9. *N.V.*

10. *N.V.*

11. *N.V.*

12. *N.V.*

13. *N.V.*

14. *N.V.*

15. *N.V.*

Lesson 8

(Quarter Notes, Eighth Notes and Sixteenth Notes)

In this section (pages 54–58), the more familiar dotted eighth- and sixteenth-note ride pattern is used in order to make the relationship between the ride rhythm and the left hand/bass drum easier to read. (An alternative would be to use the triplet-feel ride rhythm, while *swinging* all eighth notes.)

Remember, at a slower tempo, the correct placement of the short, dotted note will be required. This will take considerable concentration and careful attention to the swing feel in order to make it swing.

$\text{♩} = 76$

(\downarrow \times \times γ \times \times | \times \times γ \times \times | \times \times γ \times \times | \times \times γ \times \times)

\times \times γ \times \times | \times \times γ \times \times | \times \times γ \times \times | \times \times γ \times \times *etc.*

1. $\text{♩} = 76$

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.