

Snare Drum

The Moeller Book

Publisher's Note

We introduce herewith the fruits of our labors in the direction of instruction in standard and authentic rudimental drumming as essentially applied to the martial music or field music, but with ample proof that it is the foundation of all snare drumming and necessary in the proper execution of modern band and orchestra music, as well as that of the military band and drum corps.

In this edition we are not going into an exhaustive and confusing treatise, but are giving an adequate and positively correct school for the modern drummer. If mastered, it will prepare him or her to perform properly any duty he or she may be called upon to perform that is identified with the profession.

We have selected and had the good fortune to secure a man with the proper qualifications for compiling such a book for us, a man who has not invented any new system of drumming or discovered any mystic hitherto unknown way of making the roll. He is convinced, after years of professional drumming and research, that the one and only school is the one set down by George B. Bruce in 1862 for the U.S. Army. This system is the one that has been used by every country where drummers have become proficient, for generations. These books are years out of print and those still in existence are literally worth their weight in gold. The book we hereby submit is founded entirely on that school. It is with satisfaction, pride and perfect confidence that we hand it to you for your guide in all snare drumming.

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LUDWIG *Masters*
PUBLICATIONS

Self Instructor

THIS BOOK is as near to a successful self instructor as can be written. However, the author does not wish any one to be misled into the belief that he can become a first class drummer without demonstrations on the drum by some proficient performer on that instrument. The author has had years of experience in teaching all kinds of pupils and knows well the questions they all ask and the bad habits they all fall into and has answered these questions in the text and warned against the pitfalls. The student who will read carefully every line and practice faithfully every exercise will make remarkable progress and be better without any teacher at all than to be schooled by the general run.

The book contains everything necessary fundamentally but is not padded with a lot of puzzling deadwood.

Here we have for the first time in any publication a print from a moving picture taken of the action of drumming. Enough is given to convey a correct idea of the style. The style, or movement, or swing is the same all the time. The moving picture is a most wonderful help in showing form. We can copy from it the form of our great athletes and dancers. The slow moving pictures we see in the theatre are invaluable to students of motion. Therefore we adopt this modern scientific way of showing the movements in drumming. The only thing that can be modern about drumming is the way of teaching the same old thing such as the moving picture to educate the eye and the phonograph to educate the ear. The beats and rudiments are elemental and unchangeable, they have always been the same and always will be. The principal ones, as many as necessary, were named years and years ago and these names and beats and systems were sufficient and satisfactory for our great drummers of our great leaders of the past and present and yet we find books being circulated with these beats or rudiments incorrectly given and renamed. Is this thru ignorance or egotism? Lucky and happy is the drummer who has been able to ferret out the standard, authentic school from the published mass of conflicting individual ideas. Drumming is not easy, it takes lots and lots of practice but the proper system is not extremely intricate and discouraging.

Comprehensibility and transferred understanding and knowledge of the teachings of the real authorities, George B. Bruce and Gardner A. Strube,—authority conferred by the U. S. Government—is sought in this book. With no bid for personal applause but for thanks to these men and to the men who handed it to them in such perfect shape and those who have followed them, the truth is here told and you will know it. You will not have to admit that the book may be right because you can't understand it.

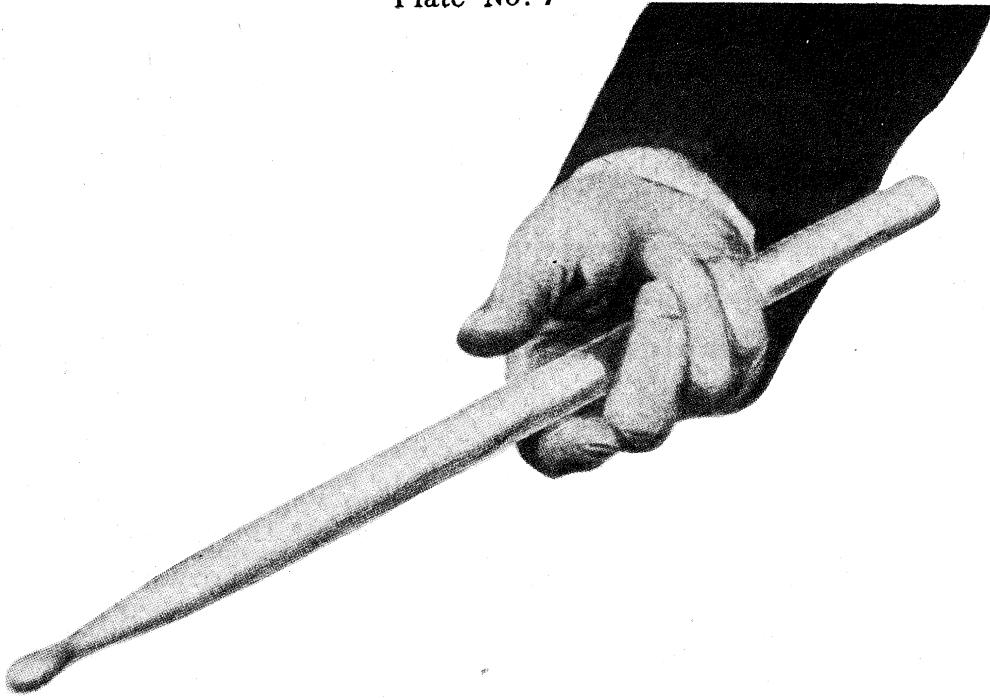
Confidence

NO success can be obtained without confidence. This holds true in drumming. The drummer is so all important that he must virtually lead. He is supposed to follow the conductor but more than any other instrument he must anticipate. He must know the tempos and not wait entirely on the conductor for them. The baton comes down and the tempo is set before it comes down again and no instrument can set it like the drum. In country organizations they sometimes beat one measure "on the outside" to give the tempo before the start to play. It is done in the country. No drummer can start fearlessly into a new tempo without his confidence. Again, a drummer needs confidence in his ability and schooling to accept a prominent position. He may have made good in his own town but if he has not traveled and had varied experience he will lack that intrepidity. He is not sure that other drummers will not find fault with his work and criticise his schooling or method. He may go to some drummer more or less known and throw himself on his mercy, give him money and follow his teachings minutely and still be found fault with. Sooner or later he will become aware that no one drummer knows it all or has invented any new system that all bow to. He will seek the truth from all sources until he has that confidence in himself that criticisms run off like the water from the duck's back. This will humiliate his accusers and he will rise by means of their knocks. Soon his reputation will precede him and he is the censor and not the censored. All drummers have not the opportunity or wish to roam around. The author, however, found himself in a position and with a desire to collect data from here, there, and elsewhere on the standard system, and is faithfully stating here what what can be confidently relied upon.

Holding the Sticks*

If there is any one thing more important than the rest, it is the holding of the sticks. The following illustrations clearly show the hold which has proven its superiority through practical use for as many years as we can find trusty record. The illustrations are so clear that words are unnecessary, but the attention might be drawn to the fact that the right stick is held almost entirely with the little finger as in Plate No. 7. When the stick is placed on the drum the other fingers are closed around the stick, but very lightly, if touching it at all. This gives a most powerful and safe grip, but not rigid, and at the same time anatomically correct, allowing a comfortable hang to the arm, preventing stiffness, cramp and fatigue.

Plate No. 7



*An incorrect manner of holding the sticks has become so general that the pupil may be led by the vast majority in spite of all we can say. For his welfare and our substantiation we refer to such fine works as:

John Flocton's Method for the Side Drum—JEAN WHITE, Boston, Mass.

Tutor for Side Drum—HENRY POTTER, London, Eng.

Otto Langey—Tutor for Side Drum—(Eng. Edi.)—HAWKES & SON, London, Eng.

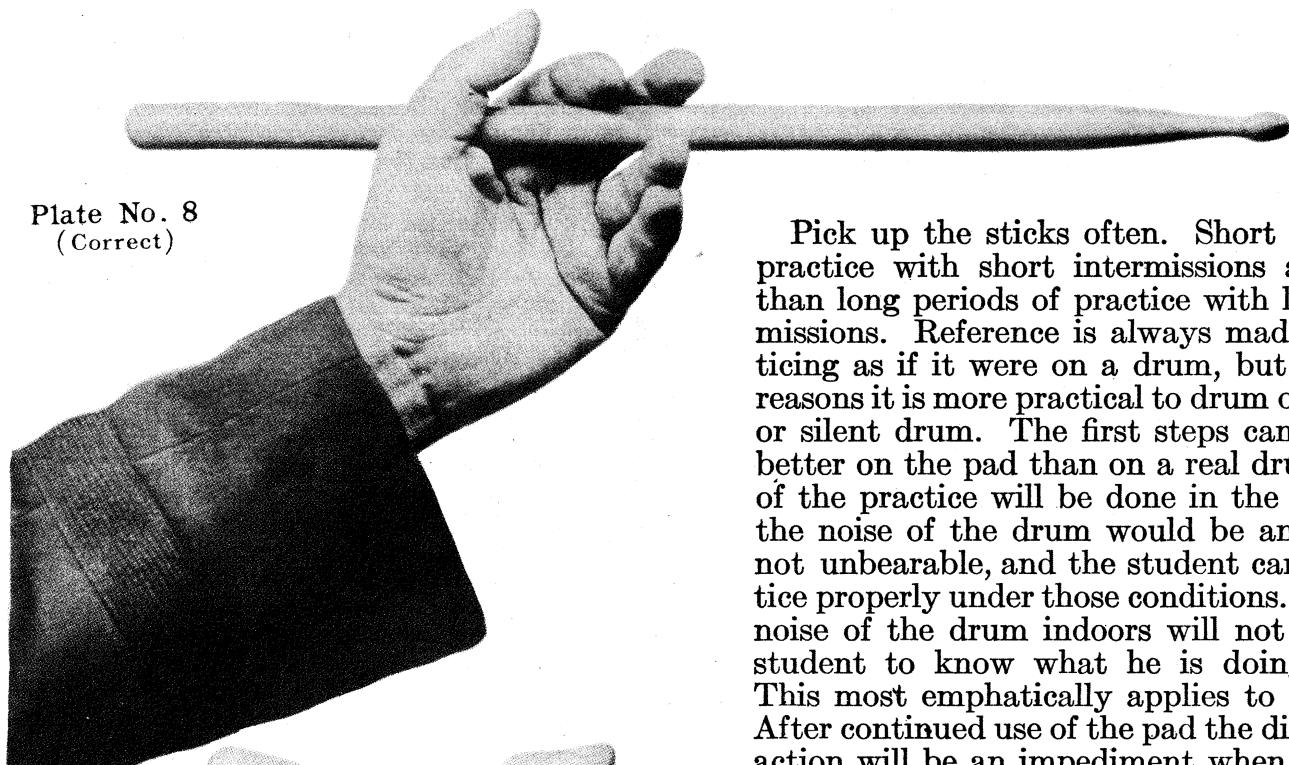
Trommel Shule by Adolph Deutsch—CARL MERSEBURGER, Leipzig, Ger.

Das Gesammtgebiet der Schlaginstrumente—H. KLING, Hanover; LORUS OERTEL, Musikverlag, Hamburg, Ger.

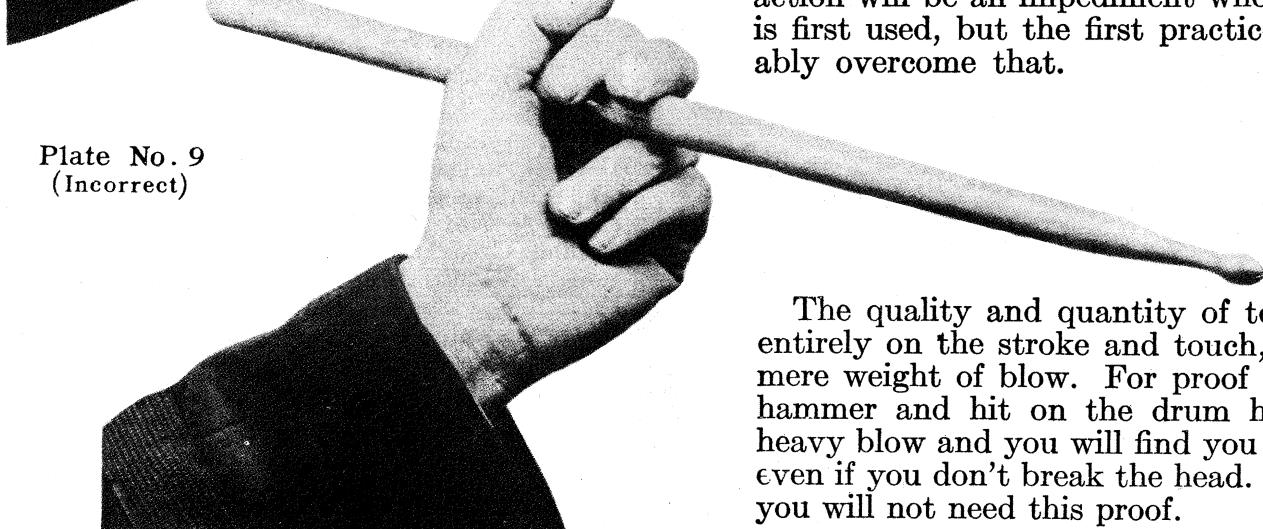
Instruments a Percussion—G. PARES, CHEZ HENRY LEMOINE ET CIE, Paris, France.

Methodo Popolare per Tamburo—G. MARIANI, EDIZIONI RICORDI, Roma, Itali.

The left stick is grasped between the thumb and first finger. The pressure on the drum head is made with the first finger, the second finger acts more as a guide. The third finger is the one under the stick and is used to pick it up. Plate 8. In beating rapidly where the bounce is utilized, either in the roll or any rudiment, there must be a looseness. This, of course, applies also to the right hand, but the firmness of the hold at the point between the thumb and first finger of the left hand and by the little finger of the right hand is maintained in order to retain the power and not let the stick slip. In the heavier beating, single strokes, accents, etc., more grip is taken on the sticks but no rigidity. Always think of relaxed muscles. When they become contracted you cannot drum. Plate 9 shows incorrect position.



Pick up the sticks often. Short periods of practice with short intermissions are better than long periods of practice with long intermissions. Reference is always made to practicing as if it were on a drum, but for many reasons it is more practical to drum on a "pad" or silent drum. The first steps can be taken better on the pad than on a real drum. Most of the practice will be done in the home and the noise of the drum would be annoying, if not unbearable, and the student cannot practice properly under those conditions. Again the noise of the drum indoors will not allow the student to know what he is doing himself. This most emphatically applies to the corps. After continued use of the pad the difference of action will be an impediment when the drum is first used, but the first practice will probably overcome that.

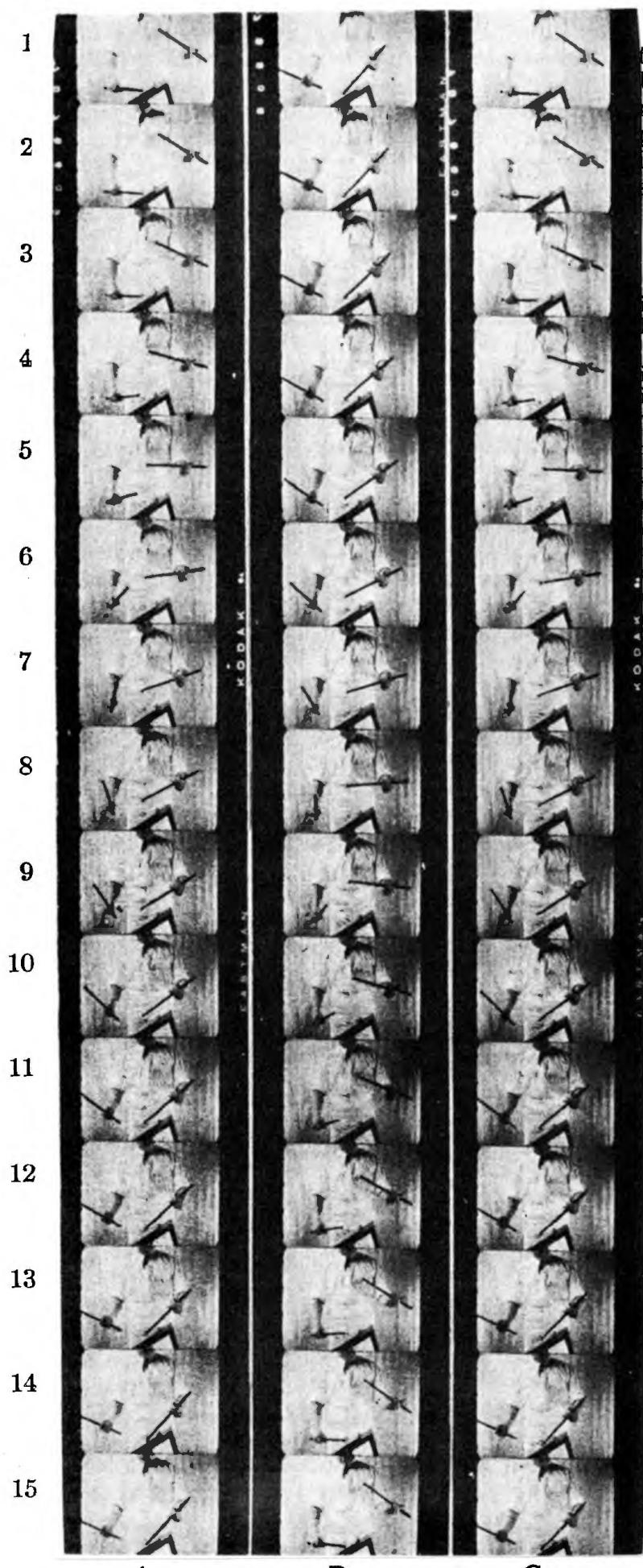


The quality and quantity of tone depends entirely on the stroke and touch, not on the mere weight of blow. For proof take a tack hammer and hit on the drum head with a heavy blow and you will find you get no tone even if you don't break the head. It is hoped you will not need this proof.

Many drummers in as many places have spoken to me of the famous Tommy Mills, and likened his touch on any instrument to that of electricity. Get this idea and it will help you. The world knows that there can be no universal authority on drumming, in fact there is no place where such a title can be conferred or won. There must be one CORRECT method of drumming, the same as in anything else, but where will you find one man who knows it all? The author has endeavored to meet as many as possible of the recognized drummers throughout the country, and the teachings on which the majority of them coincide are what are given you here, not the mere notion of the author. Mr. William E. Dean, of New York City, is a remarkable exponent of the foregoing manner of holding the sticks, and the following explanation of the stroke. Mr. Dean learned it in the state militia drum corps of New York, when they had excellent drum majors for teachers.

Right Hand Left Hand

Plate 10 Single Stroke



In Plate No. 10 the method of striking the drum is shown instantly and precisely. Utilizing the motion picture film in this manner of exposition is an innovation and precludes every chance of misunderstanding while providing a superior mode of self instruction.

The Right Hand

Ignore the left hand for the present, allowing it to hang at ease, and concentrate on the right hand, observing that only in the pictures.

Standing up to your pad, place the right hand in position as No. 1, Column A. The fist remains in about the same location during the stroke. Revolve the right forearm to the right as in Column A. This throws the knob of the stick upward, No. 8-A, and then outward, No. 15-A. Complete the stroke by revolving it back to the left, as in Column B, and the knob of the stick will take its original position on the head, No. 15-B. Continue to rotate the forearm as instructed, the knob of the stick touching the pad each time it comes down with one clean tap and snapping away instantly. Keep this fanlike motion going steadily but not rapidly, holding the stick firmly with the little finger, the other fingers only lightly closed around it, and avoid rigidity. Continue the stroke, slowly, according to your perseverance and patience. At first the wrist will necessarily be more or less stiff, but as the movement becomes natural and a little speed is acquired a nice loose wrist must be developed.

The Left Hand

Take position of No. 1, Column B. Let the right hand hang at ease, concentrating on the left observing that only in the pictures. Rotate the left forearm to the left as in Column B, which will raise the knob of the stick to position shown in No. 15-B. Rotate it back to the right, Column C, and the knob will take its original position on the head. Carry on as per instructions for the right hand. No less than one week should be allotted to this simple exercise and two weeks is advised.

Combining the Right and Left Hands

After completing the above it will be perfectly easy to combine the two hands, that is, strike the pad or drum alternately with a perfect single stroke motion. Take the position of No. 1, Column A, and rolling both to the right, tap with the left stick ten rolling both the left, tap with the right stick. This produces perfectly the simple motion for the single stroke roll, ruffs, etc.

Always stand while practicing to be a real rudimental drummer. It is easy enough to sit down to play any time, but to stand up and drum after practicing in a lazy sitting position is difficult if not impossible. Drumming either on a pad or drum with the technique taught in this book, the feet properly placed and the body erect, is a stimulating and beneficial physical exercise.

The motions pictured in the plates are all exaggerated for the benefit of the student, but he is urged to practice them as he sees them here at first, to attain perfection. When the beats are being closed the big swing will have to be greatly diminished retaining, however, the exact style of motion.

EXPLANATION OF NOTATION

Notes with their stems pointing upward are to be played with the left hand, and those with their stems pointing downward are to be played with the right hand.

Now that you have learned how to strike a drum you may study when and with which hand to strike it or in other words learn a routine or system which is rudimental drumming.

The Da-Da Ma-Ma, or the long roll, has always been the first lesson and will be here, but a few preliminary exercises in preparation for this all important beating has proven itself of great value as a means of saving time and a help to better execution. The Da-Da Ma-Ma, or long roll, is two strokes with one hand, then two strokes with the other hand, with the same lapse of time between each stroke. This causes the mind to shift so often from one hand to the other that the correct hold and stroke is sure to be neglected as it has not yet become natural and still needs thought; hence these exercises.

PRELIMINARY EXERCISE No. 1

Set the metronome at 126 for your cadence and tap strictly with it the following exercise.



Don't get in a hurry, but when you feel that you can conscientiously do so, you may set the metronome ahead a little. Remember, that in drumming haste is made slowly. Remember, that if you can keep out of bad habits you save all that time you would have to spend going back and breaking them up. When you feel right in your four strokes set the metronome back to 126 and proceed to the next exercise.

PRELIMINARY EXERCISE No. 2



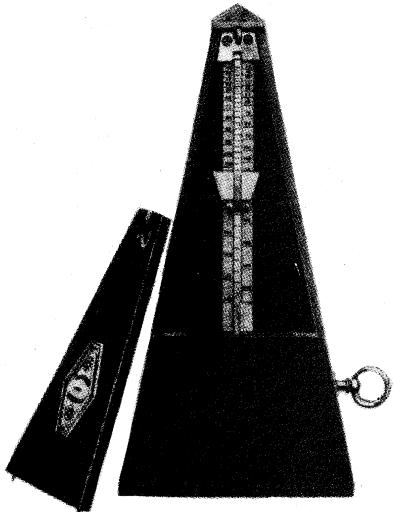
PRELIMINARY EXERCISE No. 3

Play this the same as No. 2. with all clean, solid, even taps, except that stress or accent is put on the third. The difference is not made by letting down on the first two but by adding to the third. As the student tries to acquire speed he will find that it is natural for his first stroke to be the strongest particularly when he gains that speed where the second stroke becomes practically a bounce. The next exercise is valuable in having a tendency to overcome that irregularity by cultivating the weaker taps. Don't let the accent interfere with the perfect cadence.



The first three weeks of the practice is all important and monotonous as well. In fact, if they have not bored the learner, he has not been a strict self teacher. Three weeks are mentioned for the foregoing will probably be accomplished in that time.

The metronome is a mechanical contrivance for beating time with precision. The main feature is a pendulum which gives a decided click at the end of each swing or strikes a bell if so desired. The bell can be adjusted to strike on every swing or every second, third or fourth. The motive power is supplied by a spring and works similar to a clock. Behind the pendulum is a scale on which the different tempos are indicated and by sliding a weight up or down on the pendulum until it coincides with a marking will cause the pendulum to swing in the tempo indicated at that point.



The use of the metronome is highly recommended for the student of drumming as a perfect rhythm is a drummer's greatest asset. The beginner can set the tempo very slow for his exercises and gradually increase as he improves. This keeps him from running away and also shows his progress from time to time.

After much patient and faithful practice has been given to this exercise and the metronome has been discreetly advanced and evenness of tone and time are positively accomplished, proceed again and take the third exercise, but convince yourself that without the proper foundation no amount of practice will avail you anything. When you think you are good be careful and practice a little longer before advancing and you may even convince yourself that there was room for improvement.

THE DA-DA MA-MA OR THE ROLL

You are now prepared to intelligently practice the Da-Da Ma-Ma roll and your muscles are cultivated and under control and you are on a safe road, but continue that holding back, you are nowhere near the finish.

You perceive that the roll consists of two beats with one hand, then two beats with the other. This alternation when done with evenness of tone and time produces the roll. There is no other roll except the single roll which is very important. You will see that the Da-Da Ma-Ma is the same as the third preliminary exercise with the first beat of each hand left out. We leave out the first beat to keep the accent on the second one.

Practice slowly and with precision as before, very gradually increasing the tempo, letting it increase itself so to speak. Hold on to that accent on the second tap as long as possible, for it will die out soon enough and come down even with the first. When your speed requires the bounce to be used as a second stroke, it is very apt to be weaker than the first stroke, and that is what we are striving to overcome and get an even roll which many drummers have not.

Practice the following slowly—metronome 108—remembering the accent on the second beat, but not overdoing it. Very gradually day by day allow the pace or tempo to increase; don't push it.



The closing of the roll is invariably illustrated as follows, but this might confuse an inquisitive student, for he would see it was erroneous. This does not convey a meaning of gradual increase in tempo but rather a sudden doubling of the time at given points. Such as breaking from quarters to eights, and eights to sixteenths, etc.



The proper form of notation, according to the present way of writing music, would be about as follows—



This might be visualized as follows:



The belief that "anyone can beat a drum" is discouragingly popular, and if anything could be said or done to rid the layman of this idea a great deal of benefit would be derived. They are not always convinced to the contrary by the drummers they meet. Bruce said: "Without this rudimental instruction we can only have indifferent players, comparatively ignorant of the nature of the very instrument they play upon." A man who pretended to be a drummer was asked if he was interested in rudimental drumming, and he replied: "No, you cannot use it. Of course, I started that way, but I only had a few of the rudiments." Here was a man condemning something of which, he admitted in the same breath, he knew nothing.

Whenever you find a drummer of the rudimental school, you will be convinced of his faith in it, and he will talk with enthusiasm and intelligence. You can not find a rudimental man who does not show interest and love for his drum. He has respect for it, he knows it is an instrument capable of responding to all the feeling and skill of the talented performer. For the desecrator it merely grunts rub-a-dub-dub.

The rudiments are a means of expression as the vocabulary of the orator, as necessary as grammar to the writer.

The most ridiculous idea regarding drumming is that the rudiments were made to play quicksteps on the street and the army duty. This is exactly backwards. The false notion was conceived thru rudimental drummers always doing this work, but THEY WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO COULD DO IT. The difficult quicksteps and the army duty are the highest class of drumming; they bring the drum from the position of metronomic accompanist to that of solo instrument. The drummer of the ensemble uses the rudiments to scientifically render the taps, accents and phrasings indicated. The camp and field music is an arrangement of the rudiments in a manner effective and pleasing to the ear, and when accompanied by the fife or pipes is surpassing for spirit and the lessening of fatigue to the marching column. It demands the highest degree of ability in execution and its perfection and historical associations make it classic.

The fact that this class of drumming calls for the rudiments does not mean that it is the only place where they can be used, any more than that the scales and chords used by the violin in the concerto are not used in the common dance.

The drum student is storing up future happiness and proficiency for himself directly in keeping with his seriousness and thoroughness. A determination to understand the true value and nature of the drum by means of the following studies is a start in the right direction.

DOUBLE-HARNESS (Cont.)

The musical score consists of six staves of music, each with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notation is primarily composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with various rests and dynamic markings. The first four staves feature a mix of eighth and sixteenth note patterns, with some notes having grace marks and others having stems. The fifth and sixth staves show a more continuous flow of sixteenth notes, with some notes having stems and others having grace marks. The notation is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The music is presented in a two-line staff format, with the top line for the upper harness and the bottom line for the lower harness.

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