

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



About This Book...

This book contains over 240 of the greatest drum beats and grooves ever performed. Various references and on-line drum polls were used to compile this list and some of my own favourites were included too.

Only the greatest drum beats were chosen from each of the songs featured in this book. For some songs, multiple drum beats and even famous drum fills were included also.

Explanations as to why each drum beat/performance can be considered great are given as well as where the drum groove occurs within the song.

Every single drum beat is explained in great detail and playing tips, practice advice and variations (where applicable) are given for each also.

It is my hope that drummers will be able to learn something from each of the drum beats featured in this book and incorporate them into their own playing. There is no better way to learn than copying from the masters!

I've tried to include as many musical genres, styles and era's as possible but if your favourite drum beat hasn't been included or if you think that an omission has occurred, then please email me at rob@drumstheword.com with your suggestion.

I'd really appreciate any feedback you may have to offer (both positive and negative) and any suggestions you make will be considered for the next release of this book.

Have fun playing these amazing drum beats and happy drumming to you!

Rob Litten

Drummer and Author

P.S. This book is available with a double DVD disc supplement. They include over 120 video demonstrations of the best drum beats from this book, played both slowly and at actual speed. Make sure you order your copy from www.DrumsTheWord.com.

Drum Key

A diagram of a drum key on a musical staff. The staff has a double bar line at the beginning. Above the staff, there are eight labels: 'Ride Cymbal Bell', 'Hi-Hat', 'Closed Hi-Hat', 'Ride Cymbal', 'Medium Tom', 'Ghost Note', 'Bass Drum', and 'Hi-Hat Foot'. Below the staff, there are eight labels: 'Crash/Splash Cymbal', 'Open Hi-Hat', 'Cowbell', 'High Tom', 'Snare Drum', 'Floor Tom', and 'Secondary Bass drum'. The diagram uses various musical symbols like stems with flags, beams, and notes to represent different drum sounds.

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50 Ways To Leave Your Lover by "Paul Simon"

Drummer: **Steve Gadd**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. Above the staff, the rhythm is written as: 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 + 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 + 4 + a. The staff contains notes for bass drum (x), snare drum (.), and hi-hat (x). Below the staff, the sticking is written as: L R L R L R R R L R L L R L R L R R/L R R L L.

Why It's Great

This drum groove is a firm favourite among drummers. Gadd's inimitable pattern carries the song, a snare roll with accents on the bass drum and hi-hat off-beats, showcasing his intensely musical approach to drumming.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning and during all the verses. This type of drum beat is commonly known as a Linear drum beat. A linear drum beat is simply a pattern where no two limbs play at the same time as each other. In this example of a Linear drum beat we have a line of sixteenth notes in the first half of each bar, played between the bass drum, hi hat foot, hi-hat with the left hand and the snare drum with the right hand.

Beat 1 (1e+a) is played the same for both bars. The bass drum foot and hi-hat foot are played at the same time as each other on beat 1 followed by the hi-hat, snare drum and hi-hat with the foot. The left hand plays all of the hi-hat notes that aren't foot pedal activated. This is how Gadd plays it and he certainly looks comfortable when doing so. If you do not feel comfortable playing left handed, then you can swap the hands over and play the snare drum with your left hand and all non-foot hi-hat notes with your right hand as normal. It's totally up to you.

Beat 2 is also the same for both bars and includes another line of four sixteenth notes played on the hi-hat, snare, hi-hat and bass drum, in that order. Notice how the bass drum on the 'a' of beat 2 is followed by another bass drum on beat 3. These two bass drum notes ground the rhythm onto beat 3 of both bars nicely.

In the first bar, the floor tom is struck at the same time as the bass drum on beat 3. In bar 2 this floor tom note is omitted.

Bar 1 has a line of four sixteenth notes, starting on beat 4, with the first sixteenth note (beat 4 itself) doubled into two thirty second notes, making five notes in total. Both thirty second notes are played with the right hand.

Beat 4 of bar 2 is slightly different to bar 1. The floor tom as well as another low pitched tom are struck at the same time on beat 4. If you haven't got a second floor tom then use the medium tom or any other tom tom you like. Make sure both toms are struck at the same time and not flammed.

The last part starts on the '+' of beat 4 and consists of two doubles, playing four thirty second notes in total. The sticking is RRLL and these four snare drum notes should take up the same space as two sixteenth notes.

This is a classic drum beat that can't fail to turn heads I think you'll agree!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Addicted To love by "Robert Palmer"

Drummer: **Tony Thompson**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, with a '+' symbol above each number. The notation shows a bass drum (x) on beat 1, a snare drum (x) on beat 2, a snare drum (s) on beat 3, and a snare drum (x) on beat 4. There are also '+' symbols above the staff on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, indicating hi-hat accents. The hi-hat is represented by a horizontal line with a vertical line through it, and a small 'x' at the end. On beat 3, the hi-hat line is open (no vertical line) and has a '+' symbol above it. On beat 4, the hi-hat line is closed (vertical line) and has a '+' symbol above it.

Why It's Great

Thompson lays down his pure pop-powered kick drum on beat one, followed by an emphatic open hi-hat on beat three, majestically underpinning the keyboard riff.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout all the verses. Tony keeps things ultra simple with the bass drum played on beats 1 and 3 of the bar and the snare drum on beats 2 and 4.

The right hand plays a steady eighth note pattern on the hi-hat until he adds a point of interest on beat 3 of the bar. The hi-hat opens, at the same time as the bass drum is struck, and then closes again on beat 4 of the bar, at the same time as the snare drum is struck. The '+' of beat 3 is skipped whilst the hi-hat is open.

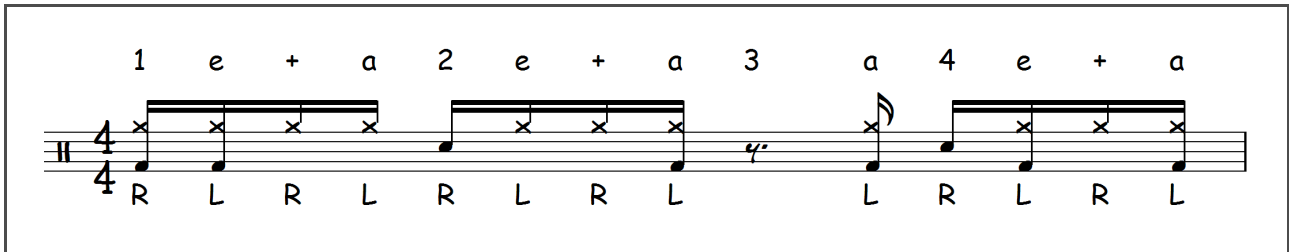
Tony does in fact play the hi-hat notes on all the '+'s of the bar (apart from the '+' of beat 3 as explained above) but they are played so quietly that they can hardly be heard. Tony chooses to accent (play loudly) the hi-hat notes on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the bar only, taking the listeners ears away from the '+'s.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Ain't Nobody by "Rufus & Chaka Khan"

Drummer: **John 'JR' Robinson**



Why It's Great

The funkier thing ever written? It's got to be in with a chance. Exquisitely edgy and subtle whilst unsettling, JR's groove here is utterly compelling. Rumour has it that he recorded the bass drum and hand parts separately in the studio making the tightness of this groove even more impressive.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and during all the verses. The hands are playing an alternating sixteenth note pattern on the hi-hat (RLRL). Starting on beat 1, the hi-hat is played for the first two beats of the bar with the right hand coming down off the hi-hat to play the snare drum on beat 2. The hands then pick up the alternating sixteenth note hi-hat pattern on the 'a' of beat 3, playing the snare drum again with the right hand on beat 4.

The bass drums on beat 1 and the 'e' of beat 1 are actually joined by the bass drum on the 'a' of beat 4 when the bar is looped. This means that three bass drum notes are actually played in a row, starting on the 'a' of beat 4 and ending on the 'e' of beat 1. Notice that the bass drums that fall on the 'a' and 'e' are played at the same time as the left hand on the hi-hat.

The single bass drums on the 'a' of beats 2 and 3 and the 'e' of beat 4 are also played at the same time as the left hand on the hi-hat. Nothing is played in the whole of beat 3 until the 'a' giving the groove masses of space and air to breath.

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

This occurs for the first time at 1:23 and during all the chorus's. This is played exactly the same as the verse drum beat except for one important and interesting difference.

The hi-hats open on the 'e' and 'a' of beat 4, each closing on the next sixteenth hi-hat note. The two hi-hat openings occur at the same time as the bass drum and are struck with the left hand on the hi-hat. Notice how the hi-hat opens on the 'a' of beat 4 with one bass drum, closes with the bass drum on beat 1 and then is followed immediately after by a third bass drum. This is a real coordination challenge but great fun to play and very satisfying!

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All Right Now by "Free"

Drummer: **Simon Kirke**

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The top staff is for the hi-hat, and the bottom staff is for the bass drum. Above each staff are four measures of counts: '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +'. The hi-hat part consists of quarter notes on every beat. The bass drum part follows a consistent pattern: a quarter note on beat 1, a quarter note on the '+' of beat 2, a quarter note on beat 3, and a quarter note on the '+' of beat 4. In the final measure of the second staff, the bass drum pattern is syncopated, with quarter notes on the '+' of beat 2 and the '+' of beat 3.

Why It's Great

Simon lays down the ultimate four-on-the-floor heavy rock beat, emphasising the power of simplicity.

How To Play It

This shows the first eight bars of the song. It's worth pointing out that a cowbell plays quarter notes over the top of the drum track throughout the tune. This cowbell was recorded as a separate track to the drums during the studio recording. A cowbell can be used instead of the hi-hat when performing live.

The hi-hat plays quarter notes and lays down a solid pulse for the bass drum to move around. The snare drum is maintained on beats 2 and 4 of the bar creating a solid backbeat.

The bass drum pattern for bars 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 are all exactly the same. The bass drum note on the '+' of beat 3 falls in between the steady hi-hat notes.

Bar 6 has bass drums on beat 1, the '+' of 1, beat 3 and the '+' of 3.

Bar 8 has the signature bass drum variation that occurs elsewhere in the track. The two bass drums on the '+' of beat 2 and the '+' of beat 3 fall in between the hi-hat notes, creating a lovely little syncopated bass drum pattern against the right hand.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Amen Brother by "The Winstons"

Drummer: **Gregory Coleman**

A musical score for a drum set, consisting of two staves. The notation is written on a five-line staff with a treble clef and a common time signature. Above the staff, there are rhythmic markings: '1 + 2 + a 3 e + a 4 + a' for the first staff and '1 + 2 + a 3 e + 4 + 1 e + a 2 + a 3 e + 4 +' for the second staff. The notation includes eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, with some notes marked with an accent (>). The first staff contains four measures, and the second staff contains four measures, for a total of eight measures.

Why It's Great

A six-second drum sample from the b-side of a chart-topping single from 1969 that created a new musical genre. This sample was used extensively in early hip hop and sample based music, and became the basis for drum-and-bass and jungle music. It has since become to be known as the "Amen Break".

A six-second clip that spawned several entire subcultures? Not many drummers can claim to have done that!

How To Play It

The famous Amen Break occurs at 1:28. This four bar pattern involves Gregory playing eighth notes on the ride cymbal throughout, apart from one crash cymbal on the '+' of beat 3 in bar 4.

Bar 1 and 2 are played exactly the same as each other with a snare drum backbeat played on beats 2 and 4 of the bar. Two extra snare drum notes are played in between the ride cymbal on the 'a' and 'e' of beat 2 and 3 respectively.

Two sixteenth bass drum notes are played straight after the second of these snare drums, starting with the ride cymbal on the '+' of beat 3. The bar ends with a quiet ghost note on the snare drum, in between the ride cymbal, on the 'a' of beat 4.

Bar 3 is played exactly the same except that only one bass drum is played on the '+' of beat 3 and not on the 'a'. The snare drum is also cleverly displaced back one eighth note to the '+' of beat 4, pushing the groove in an interesting direction.

Bar 4 has an extra snare drum played on the 'e' of beat 1 followed by two bass drum notes, played in exactly the same way as beat 3 for bars 1 and 2. As previously mentioned, the crash is played on the '+' of beat 3, after the two snare drum notes that fall in between the ride cymbals. The bar ends with another displaced snare drum backbeat, moved to the '+' of beat 4 as heard at the end of bar 3.

Little did Gregory know that what he played would be so influential but one thing is known; he was way ahead of his time considering this was recorded way back in 1969!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



American Idiot by "Green Day"

Drummer: *Tre Cool*

Musical notation for the first two bars of the chorus. The notation is on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, followed by a measure rest 'a', then 1, 2, 3, 4. The notes are eighth notes. In the first bar, the right hand (R) plays eighth notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. The left hand (L) plays an eighth note on beat 2. In the second bar, the right hand (R) plays eighth notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. The left hand (L) plays an eighth note on beat 4. A crash cymbal is indicated by a small circle with an 'x' on beat 4 of the second bar.

Why It's Great

Tre is simply doing what Tre does best in this up-tempo, foot stomping anti-national anthem. From start to finish, Tre keeps the energy levels high and the listener captivated.

How To Play It

This is the tom tom break played at the end of each chorus and occurs for the first time at 0:49. Tre moves his right hand to the floor tom for this groove where he plays eighth notes.

The left hand moves to the high tom on beat 2 and the '+' of beat 2 for bars 1 and 2. The snare drum is played on beat 4 for both bars but the right hand strikes the open hi-hat, at the same time as the snare drum, in bar 2. The left hand could be used to strike the hi-hat if more comfortable. This open hi-hat leads the drum beat back into the next verse where it closes again on beat 1 of the following bar.

The left hand plays an extra floor tom note on the 'a' of beat 4 in bar 1. This left hand floor tom note falls in between the right hand eighth notes. The bass drum stamps on beat 1, the '+' of beat 1, beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3 for both bars. This is an awesome sounding tom tom groove!

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for the first two bars of the chorus. The notation is on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, followed by a measure rest 'a', then 1, 2, 3, 4. The notes are eighth notes. In the first bar, the right hand (R) plays eighth notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. The left hand (L) plays an eighth note on beat 2. In the second bar, the right hand (R) plays eighth notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. The left hand (L) plays an eighth note on beat 4. A crash cymbal is indicated by a small circle with an 'x' on beat 4 of the second bar.

How To Play It

This is the first two bars of the chorus that occur for the first time at 0:31. Tre keeps up the energy levels by maintaining the eighth notes on the hi-hat, the snare drum on beats 2 and 4 and a crash cymbal on beat 1 of bar 1 on every repeat.

The bass drum again supports the guitar and vocal lines perfectly. Bass drums are played on beats 3 and the '+' of beat 3 for both bars and two bass drums, falling on the '+' of beat 4 and the '+' of beat 1 in bar 1 and 2 respectively.

Again, notice how the bass drum is excluded on beat 1 in bar 2 to help keep the upbeat energy to a maximum. The groove doesn't settle onto beat 1 until the two bars are repeated.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical score for a drum set, consisting of four staves. Each staff shows a two-bar pattern. Above the staves, the beats are numbered 1 through 4, with a '+' sign above each number. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests, with 'x' marks indicating specific drum sounds. The first three staves show a consistent pattern of eighth notes on the hi-hat and a snare drum backbeat on beats 2 and 4. The fourth staff shows a variation where the hi-hat is closed on beat 4 of the first bar and then opens for the rest of the bar.

How To Play It

This is the first eight bars of the song that occur just after the single snare drum note entrance. Tre creates a two bar drum beat to follow the guitars perfectly. This two bar pattern is played every time the distinctive guitar riff, played during the verses, is repeated. For the first verse, the two bar pattern is repeated three times.

The right hand plays fast but steady eighth notes on the hi-hat with a snare drum backbeat supplied on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The bass drum falls on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 1 during the first bar of each two bar pattern and then on all the '+'s for the remainder of the first bar. The bass drum skips over beat 1 in bar 2 and plays on the '+' of beat 1 instead. The long line of offbeat bass drum notes are finally resolved by playing on beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3 in the second bar, pushing the groove into the snare drum backbeat on beat 4.

Tre opens the hi-hat with the snare drum on beat 4 of bar 6 just before the bass drum stomps in bars 7 and 8. The hi-hat closes with the first bass drum in bar 7.

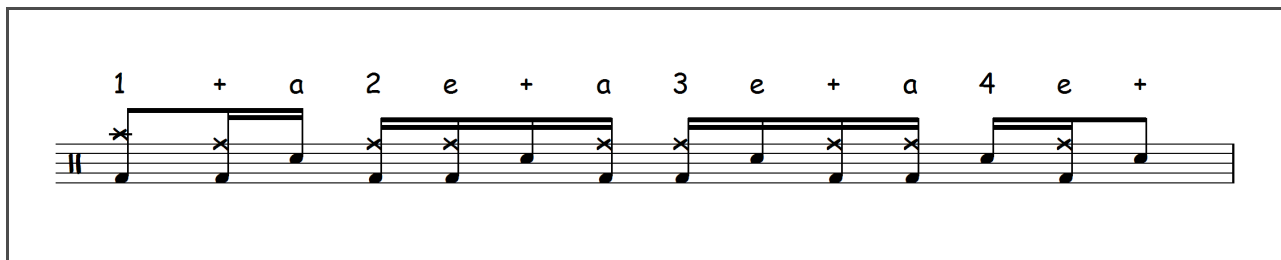
The bass drum plays quarter notes on all the downbeats for bars 7 and 8 before the snare drum and hi-hat are struck together on beat 4 of bar 8. The hi-hat is opened for the whole of beat 4 and closed again on beat 1 of the following bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Assassin by "Muse"

Drummer: **Dominic Howard**



Why It's Great

Heads turn once Dom enters with this drum beat. The energy and technical flamboyance presented here, in between lighting fast "Herta's", is simply mesmerising!

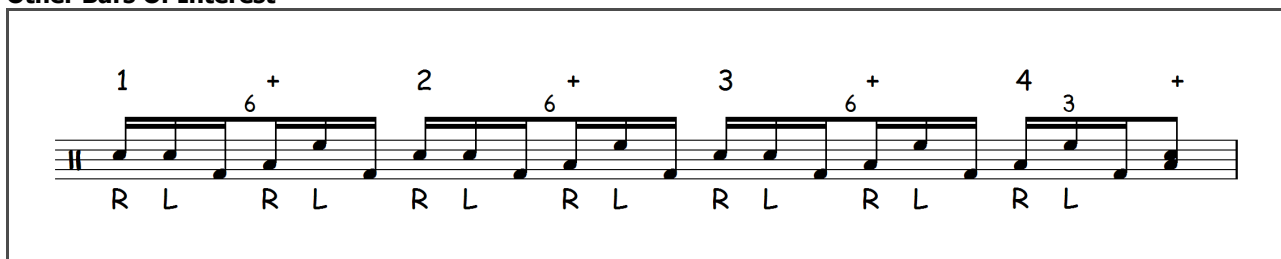
How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song when the drums enter. Dom pulls out all the stops with the intro section to this song. The right hand remains up on the ride cymbal throughout the bar and locks in with the bass drum, playing tightly together.

The groove starts with a crash on beat 1 and then a ride/bass on the '+' of beat 1. A single snare drum is played on the 'a' of beat 1. This proceeds a three note pattern that gets repeated three times. The pattern is simply two ride/bass drum notes followed by a single snare drum, played at a lighting fast tempo of course.

This three note pattern starts on beat 2 and is played three times, ending on beat 4, where the bar is resolved with another ride/bass drum on the 'e' of beat 4 and a single snare drum on the '+'.

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

Although not technically a drum beat, the drum fill that occurs at 0:22 is simply too cool to not include. This pattern is related to another idea that the great John Bonham would play, commonly known as the Bonham Triplets.

The pattern is a three note idea, two notes played with the hands (RL) and one note on the bass drum. Each group of three is a triplet that lasts for one eighth note (half a beat of the bar). Dom moves the hands, from the snare drum (RL), to alternating between the floor and high tom (still RL).

The last triplet, starting on beat 4 is played between the floor tom and high tom (same as previously), before ending the fill on the '+' of beat 4 with the snare and floor tom together. Superb!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Baba O'Riley by "The Who"

Drummer: **Keith Moon**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The pattern consists of two bars. The first bar has a bass drum on beat 1, a snare on beat 2, a bass drum on beat 3, and a snare on beat 4. Above the staff, there are four groups of notes, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and a plus sign (+). Each group consists of a quarter note followed by a quarter rest, with an 'x' above the quarter note. The second bar repeats the same pattern. The time signature '4/4' is written at the beginning of the staff.

Why It's Great

From the lurching tom fill with which he enters to the exuberant snare-led payout, Moon's flamboyance lifts this album opener to another level.

How To Play It

Occurs at 0:59 when the drums first kick in. Keith keeps things relatively simple when he first enters with this two bar phrase.

Keith famously never used a hi-hat so was constantly riding up on a crash or ride cymbal. This drum beat is no exception with Keith probably playing his right hand on some sort of crash cymbal throughout.

The snare drum backbeat is kept on beats 2 and 4 and a solid bass drum pattern is supplied on beats 1, beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3.

Crash cymbal accents are added by the right hand on beat 1 of bar 1, beat 4 of bar 1 and beat 1 of bar 2. These crash cymbals follow the piano part wonderfully and help to underline the melody in a very supportive manner.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The pattern consists of four bars. The first bar has a bass drum on beat 1, a snare on beat 2, a bass drum on beat 3, and a snare on beat 4. Above the staff, there are four groups of notes, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and a plus sign (+). Each group consists of a quarter note followed by a quarter rest, with an 'x' above the quarter note. The second bar has a bass drum on beat 1, a snare on beat 2, a bass drum on beat 3, and a snare on beat 4. Above the staff, there are four groups of notes, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and a plus sign (+). Each group consists of a quarter note followed by a quarter rest, with an 'x' above the quarter note. The third bar has a bass drum on beat 1, a snare on beat 2, a bass drum on beat 3, and a snare on beat 4. Above the staff, there are four groups of notes, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and a plus sign (+). Each group consists of a quarter note followed by a quarter rest, with an 'x' above the quarter note. The fourth bar has a bass drum on beat 1, a snare on beat 2, a bass drum on beat 3, and a snare on beat 4. Above the staff, there are four groups of notes, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and a plus sign (+). Each group consists of a quarter note followed by a quarter rest, with an 'x' above the quarter note. The time signature '4/4' is written at the beginning of the staff.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 1:15 once the vocals start. Keith varies the drum beat when the vocals enter to add another layer to his drum part.

The snare drum on the 'a' of beat 2 is added. This snare drum falls in between the crash cymbal notes on the '+' of beat 2 and beat 3.

An extra bass drum is also added at the end of the bar, on the '+' of beat 4, which then loops round when repeated into the bass drum on beat 1 of the next bar. Keith chooses to change and improvise the drum beat as the song progresses making his drum part exciting and unpredictable!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Babylon Sisters by "Steely Dan"

Drummer: **Bernard Purdie**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing four measures of a shuffle pattern. Each measure is labeled with a number (1-4) and the words 'trip', 'let', and 'trip'. Above the staff, brackets group the notes into triplets. Measure 1: Quarter note, triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: Quarter note, triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 3: Quarter note, triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 4: Quarter note, triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note. The 'let' notes are marked with a circled 'x' and a bracket, indicating ghost notes.

Why It's Great

The Purdie shuffle. A delicate, spacious groove which, combined with Bonham's 'Fool In The Rain', formed the basis for Jeff Porcaro's equally legendary 'Rosanna'. This drum beat influenced so many other drummers and simply changed the way a drummer could perform the shuffle forever.

How To Play It

Occurs at 0:46 and then continues for most of the song. This type of drum beat is known as a half time shuffle. The shuffle element is played on the hi-hat, with the right hand playing the first and third triplet note of each beat. The half time element comes from the fact that only one snare drum backbeat is played in the bar, in this case on beat 3. This single backbeat note makes the drum beat sound like its being played at half the tempo, hence the term.

The key to playing this shuffle just like Bernard is the inclusion of the ghost notes, marked in brackets. These snare drum notes are supposed to be played very quietly and with the left hand. They are played on the middle triplet note of each beat of the bar, creating a smooth flow of notes between hi-hat and snare, from one beat to the next.

The ghost note that immediately follows the snare drum backbeat on beat 3 requires control in the left hand in order to go from a loud (accent) to a quiet (ghost note). Notice how the right hand hi-hat shuffle pattern doesn't change throughout though.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing four measures of a shuffle pattern, similar to the previous one. Each measure is labeled with a number (1-4) and the words 'trip', 'let', and 'trip'. Above the staff, brackets group the notes into triplets. Measure 1: Quarter note, triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: Quarter note, triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 3: Quarter note, triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 4: Quarter note, triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note. The 'let' notes are marked with a circled 'x' and a bracket, indicating ghost notes. A bass drum note is present on the 'let' of beat 3.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:50. This is exactly the same as the previous drum beat but shows where Bernard places an extra bass drum, on the 'let' of beat 3. This gives the drum beat forward momentum, the bass drum note pushes the listener's ears into the backbeat on beat 3 in a very satisfying manner. This bass drum note is only played occasionally, and in an improvisational manner, depending on the music and what Bernard was feeling at the time of recording.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a four-beat drum pattern on a single staff. The notation is as follows:
- Beat 1: A quarter note with a '+' above it, followed by a triplet of eighth notes with a '3' below them, and a quarter note with a 'o' above it.
- Beat 2: A quarter note with a '+' above it, followed by a triplet of eighth notes with a '3' below them, and a quarter note with a 'o' above it.
- Beat 3: A quarter note with a '+' above it, followed by a triplet of eighth notes with a '3' below them, and a quarter note with a 'o' above it.
- Beat 4: A quarter note with a '+' above it, followed by a triplet of eighth notes with a '3' below them, and a quarter note with a 'o' above it.
Arched lines connect the notes within each beat, and there are 'x' marks above the first and last notes of each beat.

How To Play It

Occurs at various times but can be heard clearly for the first time at 1:15. Bernard continues to develop his trademark shuffle by opening and closing the hi-hats on the triplet upbeats, the 'let' of each beat of the bar.

This is a very subtle idea that Bernard uses and so should be played lightly and delicately. The hi-hat opens on each 'let' and then closes on the next downbeat. The addition of the bass drum on the 'let' of beat 2, as previously mentioned, is optional.

Notice that the shuffle pattern on the hi-hat is still maintained throughout though.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Back In Black by "AC/DC"

Drummer: **Phil Rudd**

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 e a 3 + a 4 e +

Why It's Great

The undisputed master of the backbeat, Phil Rudd never played a note that wasn't absolutely essential. His style is based around locking the drums in with the guitars to create a sound that is heavy but always musical. Back In Black showcases Rudd's power and economy of expression.

How To Play It

Occurs in the first verse (just before the first drum fill). The main groove in bar 1 is straight ahead rock. Heavy on the hi-hats, snare and bass drum.

The drum fill/groove section of the second bar starts on beat 2. Instead of playing the snare drum and the hi-hat together on beat 2, the snare drum is played on it's own with the left hand on beat 2 and then the right hand plays the half open hi-hat just after it on the 'e' of beat 2.

This combo left and right hand pattern moves across the bar, three sixteenth notes at a time, so that it starts on the 'a' of beat 2, the '+' of beat 3 and then finally on the 'e' of beat 4. The last two notes are both played on the snare drum.

Other Bars Of Interest

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 e a 3 + a 4 e +

How To Play It

This is the next drum fill/groove to occur in the first verse. This uses exactly the same rhythm as the first groove example above except that the right hand moves to the crash cymbal instead of the half open hi-hat.

The last two notes are played using the same orchestration, instead of both being played on the snare drum as in the first drum fill.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 e a 3 + a 4 e + a

L R L

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a double bar line at the beginning. Above the staff, there are two rows of rhythmic notation. The first row consists of numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4 with plus signs between them. The second row consists of 'e', 'a', 'e', 'a' with plus signs between them. The staff itself contains rhythmic notation: the first four measures each have a single eighth note with an 'x' above it; the fifth measure has a single eighth note with an 'x' above it; the sixth measure has a pair of eighth notes with an 'x' above the first; the seventh measure has a pair of eighth notes with an 'x' above the first; the eighth measure has a pair of eighth notes with an 'x' above the first. Below the staff, the letters 'L R L' are written under the eighth, ninth, and tenth notes respectively.

How To Play It

This final drum fill/groove occurs during the last bars of the first verse, just before the first chorus. This uses exactly the same orchestration idea as the previous example, with the left hand on the snare drum and right hand on the crash cymbal.

The last three notes of the bar start on the 'e' of beat 4, exactly where the last snare and crash cymbal combo would have fallen if they had been continued.

It's recommended that you play these last three notes using the suggested sticking (LRL) so that the right hand is then free for beat 1 of the next bar.

This drum fill is played leading into most of the songs chorus's.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Ball Room Blitz by "The Sweet"

Drummer: **Mick Tucker**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat pattern. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes 'e', '+', and 'a' are written for each measure, with an accent (>) above the '+' in each measure. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' are written under the notes to indicate which hand plays them. The pattern is: Measure 1: R, L, R, L; Measure 2: R, L, R, L; Measure 3: R, L, R, L; Measure 4: R, L, R, L. The first 'R' in the fourth measure has an accent (>) above it.

Why It's Great

This memorable slice of glam rock is powered from start to finish by the superb drumming of Mick Tucker. Crisp, smooth, tight and very moreish.

How To Play It

This drum beat occurs throughout the song. This is a deceptively tricky pattern to play. The hands play a single stroke roll on the snare drum with the accents on the '+' of each beat played by the right hand. The last beat of the bar contains an extra accent, just before the '+', on the 'e' of beat 4. This extra accent note is played with the left hand.

The bass drum on the 'a' of beat 3 is where it starts to feel different. This falls just before the downbeat of beat 4 which is then followed two notes later by another bass drum on the 'e' of beat 4. This means we have two bass drum notes on the 'a' of beat 3 and the 'e' of beat 4, either side of beat 4.

The fact that the last two hand accents start on the 'e' of beat 4 means that some careful alignment of feet and hands is required. This is a lovely little syncopated pattern and great fun to play though.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Banquet by "Bloc Party"

Drummer: **Matt Tong**

Musical notation for a two-bar drum groove. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 + a 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + a 2 + 3 + 4 +. The notes are: Beat 1: quarter note (R), eighth note (L), eighth note (L); Beat 2: quarter note (R), quarter note (L); Beat 3: quarter note (R), quarter note (L); Beat 4: quarter note (R), quarter note (L). The first two bars are identical. The notation uses 'x' marks to indicate hi-hat hits and 'o' marks to indicate snare drum hits.

Why It's Great

Matt joyously plays with the hi-hat for this song, turning an ordinary drum beat into something quite special. The man just can't leave his hi-hats alone!

How To Play It

Occurs during the chorus and can be heard for the first time at 1:01. The bass drum is playing quarter notes on all the downbeats of the bar (beats 1, 2, 3 and 4). The snare drum is played at the same time as the bass drum on beats 2 and 4 of both bars.

The right hand plays all the upbeats (the '+'s) on the hi-hat in a typically dance/pop drum style. Matt brings his left hand up to the hi-hat on the 'a' of beat 1, giving the drum beat a little push into the snare drum backbeat on beats 2 of both bars. Matt plays the snare drum on beat 2 with his right hand but the other snare drum backbeat on beat 4 with his left.

The hi-hat is opened on the '+' of beat 3 and closed again with the snare drum on beat 4. It is then opened once more, the next time the hi-hat is struck, on the '+' of beat 4 and finally closed on beat 1 of the next bar. The crash cymbal is only struck on beat 1 the first time Matt goes into the chorus and not every time the two bar pattern is repeated.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a four-bar drum groove. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 + 2 + a 3 e + a 4 e +. The notes are: Beat 1: quarter note (R), eighth note (L), eighth note (L); Beat 2: quarter note (R), quarter note (L); Beat 3: quarter note (L), eighth note (R), eighth note (L); Beat 4: quarter note (R), eighth note (L), eighth note (R). The notation uses 'x' marks to indicate hi-hat hits and 'o' marks to indicate snare drum hits.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 2:56. The same bass drum and snare drum pattern is played as before but in this groove the hi-hat pattern has been changed.

Matt plays the '+' and 'a' of beat 2 on the hi-hat before the bass drum on beat 3. The left hand then immediately plays after the bass drum, starting on the 'e' of beat 3. This is followed by a line of sixteenth notes, being played on the hi-hat up to the '+' of beat 4.

The right hand comes down from the hi-hat to play the snare drum on beat 4 itself. The hi-hat then opens, at the same time the hi-hat is struck with the right hand, on the '+' of beat 4.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Beat It by "Michael Jackson"

Drummer: **Jeff Porcaro**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff is divided into two measures. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4. Above each number is a plus sign (+). Above each plus sign is an accent (>). The notation shows eighth notes on the hi-hat for both measures, with accents on the downbeats (beats 1, 2, 3, and 4). The first measure has a bass drum on beats 1 and 3. The second measure has a bass drum on beats 1 and 2. A pick-up note on the bass drum is shown on the '+' of beat 3.

Why It's Great

Toto sticks man Porcaro is better known for his big rock beats and fine shuffles, but keeps it super tight and super clean on Beat It - a masterpiece of economy.

How To Play It

This drum beat occurs throughout the entire song. Jeff plays eighth notes on the hi-hat for both bars, accenting (playing loud) the downbeats on each beat of the bar (beats 1, 2, 3 and 4).

The snare drum backbeat is maintained on beats 2 and 4 of both bars while the bass drum follows the guitar riff. The bass drum remains simple for bar 1, being played on beats 1 and 3. The bass drum is then played on beats 1 and 2 in the second bar. This second bass drum is played at the same time as the snare drum, helping to give this note of the guitar riff extra "oomph"!

The pick up note on the bass drum, played on the '+' of beat 3, shows great musicality. This bass drum picks up the groove and propels it into beat 4 giving the groove more forward momentum towards the end of the two bars.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Been Caught Stealing by "Jane's Addiction"

Drummer: **Stephen Perkins**

Musical notation for a 4/4 drum beat. The notation is on a single staff with a 4/4 time signature. It shows four measures. Above the staff, the letters 'e', '+', and 'a' are placed over the first three notes of each measure, indicating snare drum hits. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' are placed under the notes, indicating right and left hand hits. The pattern is RLRL in each measure. The first measure has a bass drum hit on the first beat. The second and fourth measures have bass drum hits on the second and fourth beats. The third measure has a bass drum hit on the first beat. The fourth measure has a bass drum hit on the first beat.

Why It's Great

A staple of indie rock gatherings to this day, *Been Caught Stealing's* spiky, stuttering dark funk is hard to beat. Perkins' off-kilter groove shapes the whole thing.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and remains almost totally unchanged throughout. This groove is a double handed hi-hat pattern, meaning that both hands play an alternating rhythm on the hi-hat (RLRL).

The right hand comes down from the hi-hat to play the snare drums on beats 2 and 4 of the bar whilst the left hand comes down to play the 'a' of beat 2, the 'e' of beat 3 and the 'a' of beat 4.

The bass drum pattern remains steady on beat 1, the '+' of beat 1, the '+' of beats 2 and 3 and the '+' of beat 4. This bass drum pattern gives the hands a chance to play around with the snare drum, creating the offbeat fun we hear on the recording.

In order to play this like Perkins, the sixteenths have to be slightly swung. Also, it's worth pointing out that this demonstrates the album version of the drum beat and not the version Perkins plays live. When performing live he keeps his left hand on the snare drum at all times. He plays all of the left handed snare notes (all the 'e' and 'a's) quietly apart from the actual left handed snare drum notes marked above, which are played loudly. His right hand still comes down from the hi-hat to play the snare drum backbeat on beats 2 and 4.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a variation of the drum beat. The notation is on a single staff with a 4/4 time signature. It shows four measures. Above the staff, the letters 'e', '+', and 'a' are placed over the first three notes of each measure, indicating snare drum hits. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' are placed under the notes, indicating right and left hand hits. The pattern is RLRL in each measure. The first measure has a bass drum hit on the first beat. The second and fourth measures have bass drum hits on the second and fourth beats. The third measure has a bass drum hit on the first beat and an extra bass drum hit on the third beat.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:41. This little variation pops out when the guitars hold back for a bar.

The drum beat is exactly the same as the first beat above except that an extra bass drum has been added on the 'a' of beat 3. This means that two bass drums are now played next to each other. The first falls with the right hand on the '+' and the second falls with the left hand on the 'a' of beat 3.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Billie Jean by "Michael Jackson"

Drummer: *N'dugu Chancler*

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The groove consists of four measures. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above the first notes, and '+' signs are placed above the second notes. The notes are quarter notes on the first line of the staff. The '+' signs are placed on the second line of the staff. The notes are connected by horizontal lines, indicating they are played together.

Why It's Great

From the moment the drums enter you recognise the song, N'dugu's simple but solid drum beat is totally unmistakable and shapes the whole tune.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and for the majority of the track. N'dugu couldn't have played anything simpler but most importantly, makes it really groove.

Laying down fat and even eighth notes on the hi-hat with the snare drum backbeat supplied on beats 2 and 4 of the bar and the bass drum on beats 1 and 3.

This un-shakeable groove keeps the song moving forward with power and authority.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum fill. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The fill consists of four measures. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above the first notes, and '+' signs are placed above the second notes. The notes are quarter notes on the first line of the staff. The '+' signs are placed on the second line of the staff. The notes are connected by horizontal lines, indicating they are played together. In the fourth measure, there is a drum fill consisting of a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, with a slur over the notes.

How To Play It

Occurs at about 1:08 just before the first bridge. The master of understatement ensures that the drums never get in the way of the music whilst also supporting the song at the same time.

This little "drum fill" is played on the 'a' of beat 4, in between the hi-hat notes. The hi-hat is opened on the '+' of beat 4 and closed again on beat 1 of the next bar. This means that the snare drum on the 'a' is played whilst the hi-hat is open.

Continues on the next page...

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Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 1:22 just before the first chorus. N'dugu keeps the groove moving but uses the open hi-hat to build up the excitement before the first chorus starts.

The hi-hat is opened on the '+' of beat 2 and the '+' of beat 4. It then closes on the beat 3 and beat 1, both at the same time as the bass drum. Such a simple idea, reminiscent of great past funk drummers, and used to great effect here.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Black Hole Sun by "Soundgarden"

Drummer: **Matt Cameron**

Musical notation for the drum part of 'Black Hole Sun' by Soundgarden. The notation is in 4/4 time and consists of two staves. The first staff shows the hi-hat pattern with notes and rests for beats 1 through 4, repeated for two bars. The second staff shows the bass drum pattern with notes and rests for beats 1 through 4, repeated for two bars. Above the first staff, the syllables '1 + a 2 + a 3 + 4 + a 1 + 2 + a 3 + 4 e + a' are written. Above the second staff, the syllables '1 + 2 + a 3 + 4 e + a 1 + 2 e + a 3 + 4 e +' are written. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests, with some notes marked with an 'x' to indicate hi-hat strikes.

Why It's Great

Who else but Matt Cameron can play rock this slow and make it feel so good? It's the space between the notes that make Matt's beats gut-wrenchingly dramatic.

How To Play It

This is the first four bars of the song. It's worth pointing out straight away that Matt doesn't play the hi-hat pattern shown above exactly as written. He improvises from bar to bar and adds extra hi-hat notes on the 'e' and 'a' of beats quite randomly it seems. This example shows the simplified "essence" of the hi-hat, the minimum required in order to play the part if you like.

When transcribing this groove, I didn't want the improvised hi-hat notes to take focus away from the main groove, i.e. the bass, snare and open hi-hat parts. Feel free when playing this groove to add in your own sixteenth notes on the hi-hat as you see fit musically.

An open hi-hat is struck on beat 1 of the second, third and fourth bar. The open hi-hat is struck on beat 3 in the first bar. Each opened hi-hat is closed an eighth note later.

The bass drum finds a common groove for most of the bars where the 'a' of beat 2 and beat 3 are played for bars 1, 3 and 4. Another common pattern used is the bass drum notes on the 'e' and 'a' of beat 4, as shown in bars 2 and 3.

Notice the left handed double on the 'a' of beat 2 during the second bar. This pulls the listeners ears into beat 3 in a very satisfying manner.

The last two beats of bar 4 involve stepping the hi-hat on the '+' of beat 3 and beat 4 before the bass drum pushes into a double tom strike on the '+' of beat 4. Matt uses the floor tom and medium tom for this but any tom tom could be used instead.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 8 + 9 + 3 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 a 8 e + 9 e +

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

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 8 e + 9 e + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 8 + 9 e +

L R L L L R L R L

How To Play It

Occurs after the second chorus. This is the first four bars of the outro. This section is actually written in the time signature of 9/4. This means that each bar contains nine counted beats.

The best way to play this is to focus on the right hand playing steady quarter notes on the ride cymbal. The left hand can then be aligned against the right hand, either playing on or in between the right hand.

All four bars contain the three note high tom, floor tom, crash cymbal rhythm, starting on the '+' of beat 4. It is recommended that in order for this to feel more natural and comfortable you use the suggested sticking. This way the right hand maintains it's steady quarter note pattern without being interrupted, only moving to the floor tom for one note on beat 5. Of course, the left hand has to play with the crash cymbal for the '+' of beat 5 which can feel a little weird if you're not used to it.

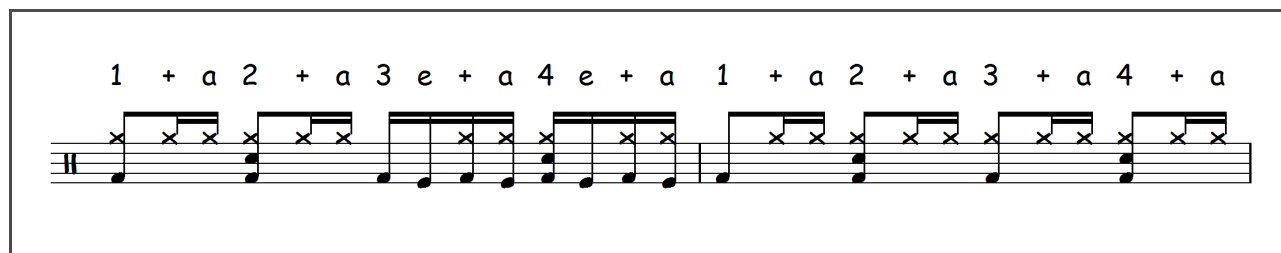
Each of the drum fills are hopefully self explanatory but it's worth pointing out that the triplet lick at the end of bar 1 starts with the right hand in order for easy and uncluttered access to the floor tom and high tom. Notice also that the drum fill in bar 2 starts just before beat 8, on the 'a' of beat 7 starting with the left hand.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Blue Monday by "New Order"

Drummer: An Oberheim DMX Drum Machine



Why It's Great

The super-gated sound and separation achieved by "Mr Oberheim" on this classic track, brought synthpop to the masses. Double bass drum in a pop song?! Whatever next!

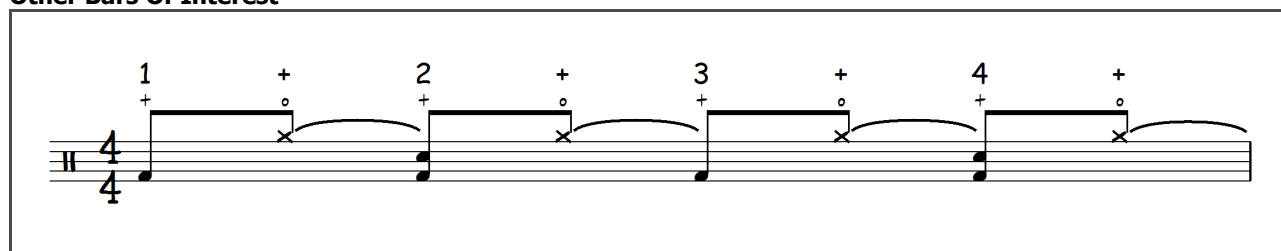
How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the track but starts with just the bass drum pattern. The bass drum is the key to getting this drum beat to sound correct. The bass drum is playing quarter notes throughout but in the first bar, starting on beat 3, opens up with a line of double bass drum sixteenth notes into beat 1 of the second bar.

Over the top of this, the hi-hat is playing a sequence of three note sixteenths starting on the '+' of each beat. A real drummer would try to play these one handed in order to play the hi-hat notes on top of the snare drums on beats 2 and 4. If this is too hard one handed, then they could be played RLR instead, with the last right hand coming down onto the snare drum on beats 2 and 4 of each bar.

Notice how the hi-hat notes are missed off of beat 3 in the first bar and beat 1 in the second bar. This gives the downbeats of beats 3 and 1 clear and uninterrupted audio space for the full power of those electronic kick drums to punch through. This also makes the drum beat unnecessarily complicated for a real drummer to play live. When I play this drum beat I include those hi-hat notes, this is so that I don't sacrifice the feel of the groove trying to play something unnatural or even unnecessary. The video demonstration of me performing this beat shows you what I mean.

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

Occurs at about 1:04 just after the dramatic cymbal and bass drum stabs. Here we see a classic example of a dance drum beat, copied before and since the world over on countless dance tunes.

The bass drum plays all four beats of the bar while the snare falls strongly on beats 2 and 4 of the bar, played at the same time as the bass drum.

The hi-hat part creates the upbeat dance effect by only playing on the upbeat '+' of each beat. The open hi-hat on the '+' then closes on the next downbeat with the bass drum.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Brianstorm by "Arctic Monkeys"

Drummer: **Matt Helders**

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The staff contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1 through 4. Above each beat, there are symbols: '+' and 'a' for beats 1, 2, and 4; 'e' and 'a' for beats 3 and 4. Above the first note of each beat, there is a '>' symbol. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' indicate the hand playing each note. The sequence of letters is: R, R, L for beat 1; R, R, L for beat 2; R, L, R, L for beat 3; R, L, R, L for beat 4.

1 + a 2 + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

> > > >

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

Why It's Great

Maybe Matt is a robot? It just doesn't seem possible to play so fast through an entire song AND create something that grooves so hard. This little number has drummers scratching their heads in wonder.

How To Play It

This drum beat occurs at the beginning of the song. Matt anchors the rhythm he plays with his hands by playing solid quarter notes on the bass drum and hi-hat foot pedal for beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the bar.

The hands are playing an alternating sixteenth note pattern (RLRL), played between the floor tom and high tom. All floor tom notes are played with the right hand and all high tom notes played with the left.

The right hand moves to the snare drum on beats 2 and 4 of the bar and then back to the floor tom for the rest of the bar. The left hand however stays up on the high tom the entire time.

The first half of the bar contains a broken sixteenth note rhythm between the two hands. The hands then play a continuous line of sixteenth notes (between the floor and high tom) starting on the '+' of beat 2, right up until the end of the bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Californication by "Red Hot Chili Peppers"

Drummer: **Chad Smith**

A musical staff showing a four-beat drum groove. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 + 2 e + a 3 e + 4 + a. The notation uses 'x' for hi-hats, a 'y' for a snare drum accent on beat 2, and 'a' for ghost notes. The groove is a 4/4 time signature with a steady backbeat on beats 2 and 4.

Why It's Great

With the drums high in the mix thanks to Rick Rubin's mixing, you can't help but admire Chad's wonderful feel and control of the drums.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and during the verses. Although Chad does improvise slightly as the song progresses, you can hear this notated version being played clearly during the first four bars of the song.

Chad plays his signature hi-hats for this groove, striking the hi-hat at the same time as his left foot bounces on the hi-hat pedal. This creates a slushy sound where many subtle hi-hat flourishes can be heard in the mix.

The snare drum maintains a steady backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar with some cool ghost notes added in between the hi-hats on the 'e' and 'a' of beat 2, the 'e' of beat 3 and a thirty second note drag (played with the left hand) starting on the 'a' of beat 4.

The ghost note on the 'e' of beat 2 is played directly after the snare drum accent on beat 2. This means the left hand has to play a loud note followed immediately after by a ghost note (quiet note). The two left handed thirty second notes are played in between the hi-hats and just before beat 1 of the next bar.

The bass drum maintains the same steady pattern throughout the verse even though the ghost note pattern does vary slightly. The bass drums are played on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 3.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Candy's Room by "Bruce Springsteen And The E Street Band"

Drummer: **Max Weinberg**

Why It's Great

The song is instantly recognisable from its sixteenth note hi-hat intro. It then bursts into life when the sixteenths transfer to the snare drum, and then explodes into the chorus with an amazing driving rhythm.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 1:09 during the chorus. This simple but driving rhythm involves straight eighth notes on the hi-hat. The snare drum is played on all downbeats of the bar (beats 1, 2, 3 and 4) and the bass drum on all the upbeats (the '+'s). Simple yet dramatic!

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This occurs at the beginning of the song and is part 1 of a two part build up to the chorus drum beat, written at the top. The first part of this build up is simply sixteenth notes on the hi-hat. They're played with alternating hands (RLRL), starting with the right hand, and an accent (loud note) is played on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the bar with the right hand.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:47. The second part to the build up has the hands move to the snare drum. They're still playing alternating sixteenth notes but now a bass drum is added on the downbeats and the right hand accents are removed. Both hands play evenly, slowly building up in volume towards the chorus.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Chameleon by "Herbie Hancock"

Drummer: **Harvey Mason**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the syllables '1 e + a', '2 e + a', '3 e +', and '4 + a' are written, corresponding to the beats. The notation includes hi-hat patterns (marked with 'x') and snare drum patterns (marked with 'a') on the 'e' and 'a' syllables. The first measure has a snare on the 'a' of beat 1. The second measure has a snare on the 'a' of beat 2. The third measure has a snare on the 'e' of beat 3. The fourth measure has a snare on the 'a' of beat 4. The hi-hats are played on every downbeat (1, 2, 3, 4).

Why It's Great

Driving fours on the hi-hat and that shoulder shrugging snare on the 'a' of beat 1. It's no wonder that *Headhunters* is the biggest-selling jazz-funk album of all time.

How To Play It

Occurs at various points throughout the song but can be heard clearly for the first time at 0:53. Harvey uses his bass and snare drum to follow the fat bass line wonderfully. The snare drum backbeat, traditionally played on beats 2 and 4, is now played on the 'a' of beat 1 and beat 4. This slight displacement of the backbeat onto the 'a' of beat 1 makes a big difference in feel.

Harvey accents the downbeats on the hi-hats (beat 1, 2, 3 and 4) whilst playing the '+' lightly. This creates a strong pulse on all four beats of the bar which, in return, emphasises the offbeat nature of the snare drum and the two bass drums even more dramatically.

The bass drums on the 'e' and '+' of beat 3 require a solid bass drum technique so if this is too much then just play on the '+' of beat 3 instead.

Mr Mason then uses ghost notes to create a really cool sounding groove, this is also part of the reason it feels so good! He plays ghost notes (quiet notes) in between the hi-hats, on the 'e' of beat 1 and 2 and the 'a' of beat 3 and 4. This effectively fills in the majority of the spaces between the hi-hats to create one smooth and silky line of notes on the drums.

Harvey improvises with this ghost note pattern by playing on the 'a' and 'e' of beats 4 and 1 respectively, more often than the 'e' and 'a' of beat 2 as heard later in the song.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a double bar line at the beginning. The time signature '4/4' is written below the staff. The groove consists of four measures. Above the staff, the measures are labeled '1', '2', '3', and '4'. Above measure 1, there are three accents: a plus sign (+) above the first eighth note, another plus sign (+) above the second eighth note, and an 'a' above the quarter note. Above measure 2, there are two plus signs (+) above the eighth notes. Above measure 3, there are three accents: an 'e' above the first eighth note, a plus sign (+) above the second eighth note, and another plus sign (+) above the quarter note. Above measure 4, there are two plus signs (+) above the eighth notes. The notes are represented by 'x' marks on the staff lines.

How To Play It

This is the main drum beat that occurs through the majority of the song and can be heard for the first time at 0:14, after the initial couple of bars of drum beat. This is the same drum beat as above except without any of the ghost notes in between the hi-hats.

Harvey starts the song with this simplified drum groove in order for it to build up into something bigger later on.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove with embellishments. The staff has a treble clef and a double bar line at the beginning. The time signature '4/4' is written below the staff. The groove consists of four measures. Above the staff, the measures are labeled '1', '2', '3', and '4'. Above measure 1, there are three accents: a plus sign (+) above the first eighth note, another plus sign (+) above the second eighth note, and an 'a' above the quarter note. Above measure 2, there are two plus signs (+) above the eighth notes. Above measure 3, there are three accents: an 'e' above the first eighth note, a plus sign (+) above the second eighth note, and another plus sign (+) above the quarter note. Above measure 4, there are four accents: two plus signs (+) above the eighth notes and two 'a' accents above the quarter note. The notes are represented by 'x' marks on the staff lines.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:15. Masey begins to develop the drum part after the drums first enter by adding embellishments and subtleties. This is the first little idea he throws in, a left handed double on the 'a' of beat 4.

These two notes are played starting where the 'a' would normally be played but at twice the rate. This is known as a drag and is used by many drummers to "drag" the groove into the downbeat, beat 1 in this case.

The 'a' of beat 4 has always been the most popular place for a drummer to use a one handed drag because there's something satisfying about "pushing" a drum groove into the downbeat of beat 1.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Chop Suey by "System Of A Down"

Drummer: **John Dolmayan**

Why It's Great

Stopping and starting a beat with millisecond precision is hard. Playing with maximum force is hard too. Doing both at the same time is really hard. We're hooked from the beginning of the tom tom intro.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the track. Here we have a tribal style drum beat on the tom tom's. played to great effect. The bass drum is playing steady quarter notes, helping to keep the band in time and allowing the hands the freedom to play over the top.

The hands move round the toms in order of pitch, starting at the top on the high tom. Try the suggested hand sticking shown above as this is the most efficient way to move around the drums. The left hand starts the group of four notes on the 'a' of beat 1.

Notice that both the floor tom and high tom are played at the same time as each other on beat 1 of the bar. The last two floor tom notes on beat 4 and the '+' of beat 4 could be played with any hands but is easiest when played using the sticking RL.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs at 0:30 right after the tom tom intro. This looks deceptively simple to play but the timing is hard to nail. Quarter notes are played on the half open hi-hat with the right hand, while the bass and snare drum fall on the downbeat and 'a' of each beat. This creates a kind of sixteenth note shuffle pattern.

Be careful with the timing of the bass drum as the foot tends to pull the second bass drum back onto the '+' of each beat, instead of pushing forward onto the 'a'.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The pattern consists of four measures, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and the letters 'e + a' above it. Each measure contains a series of sixteenth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating cymbal hits. The notes are: Measure 1: quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, eighth note; Measure 2: quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, eighth note; Measure 3: quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, eighth note; Measure 4: quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, eighth note.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 1:00 during the first chorus. One handed sixteenth notes are played with the right hand on the ride cymbal with a steady and simple snare drum backbeat supplied on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The bass drum plays a lovely sixteenth note pattern that pushes into each of the downbeats, by playing on the 'a' just before beats 1 and 3.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern, identical to the one above. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The pattern consists of four measures, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and the letters 'e + a' above it. Each measure contains a series of sixteenth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating cymbal hits. The notes are: Measure 1: quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, eighth note; Measure 2: quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, eighth note; Measure 3: quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, eighth note; Measure 4: quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, eighth note.

How To Play It

Occurs at 1:55 in the second half of the second chorus. Here we see how John builds upon the previous drum pattern (played in the first chorus) to give the second half of the second chorus more impact.

The same ride cymbal and snare drum pattern is played just as before but we now have extra bass drum notes to play. Most noticeably on the 'e' of beat 2 just after the snare drum.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Chuck E's In Love by "Rickie Lee Jones"

Drummer: **Steve Gadd**

A musical score for a drum part in 4/4 time, consisting of four staves. The notation includes eighth notes, triplets, and various accents. Above the staves are rhythmic counts: 1 3 + 2 3 + 3 3 + 4 3 + 1 3 + 2 3 + 3 3 + 4 3 +. The second staff includes the syllables '1 e + a 2 e + a 3 3 + 4 3 +'. Below the second staff is the limb notation 'R L L R R L L R R'. The notation uses 'x' for hi-hat and 'o' for snare, with '+' indicating an accent. The first staff has a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat.

Why It's Great

Steve Gadd lends his patented syncopation to 'Chuck E's In Love', married to a jazz sensibility evident in his use of buzz rolls for embellishment.

How To Play It

This is the first eight bars of the song written in their entirety. Steve Gadd plays a very loose and laid back half time shuffle pattern for the verses. This means that the snare drum backbeat is played only on beat 3 of the bar and not on beats 2 and 4, as heard in the chorus.

Gadd accents (plays louder) the hi-hat notes on beats 2 and 4 of the bar (an optional addition), thus creating a really cool sounding secondary backbeat with the use of the hi-hat. The hi-hat notes on the triplet upbeats (counted the '+'s) tend to be ghosted (played very quietly). Gadd also throws in some open hi-hat notes to move the drum groove along in bars 5, 6 and 8.

Check out the really cool "Gadd-ism" in the fourth bar where he plays some inverted sixteenth note doubles between the hi-hat and snare. The shift from eighth note triplets to sixteenth notes really grabs the listeners ears and creates a sublime counter rhythm to the rest of the groove. The snare drum backbeat moves to beat 4 of bar 8 and is also buzzed, this means the stick is pressed lightly into the snare drum to create multiple notes in quick succession.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a drum groove in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It shows a sequence of notes and rests. Above the staff, there are numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4 indicating the beat number. Above each beat number, there are symbols: 'x' for a snare drum, '3' for a triplet, and '+' for an accent. The first four beats of the first bar are: 1 (snare), 2 (snare), 3 (snare), 4 (snare). The first four beats of the second bar are: 1 (snare), 2 (snare), 3 (snare), 4 (snare). The first four beats of the third bar are: 1 (snare), 2 (snare), 3 (snare), 4 (snare). The first four beats of the fourth bar are: 1 (snare), 2 (snare), 3 (snare), 4 (snare).

How To Play It

Occurs during the second verse for the first time at 0:47. Gadd improvises throughout the entire song, adding and removing notes as he feels fit. The verses are no exception to this.

The right hand plays the shuffle on the hi-hat (first and third triplet note of each beat of the bar) and the snare drum is still played in a half time manner (only on beat 3 of the bar).

A ghost note snare drum is played on the '+' of beat 1 in the second bar. This snare drum note is played slightly quieter than the main snare drum note on beat 3. The hi-hat is opened on beat 4 of the second bar and then closed again on beat 1 of the following bar.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a variation of a drum groove in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It shows a sequence of notes and rests. Above the staff, there are numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4 indicating the beat number. Above each beat number, there are symbols: 'x' for a snare drum, '3' for a triplet, and '+' for an accent. The first four beats of the first bar are: 1 (snare), 2 (snare), 3 (snare), 4 (snare). The first four beats of the second bar are: 1 (snare), 2 (snare), 3 (snare), 4 (snare). The first four beats of the third bar are: 1 (snare), 2 (snare), 3 (snare), 4 (snare). The first four beats of the fourth bar are: 1 (snare), 2 (snare), 3 (snare), 4 (snare).

How To Play It

This variation of the verse drum groove occurs at 1:00. This demonstrates how Gadd is constantly improvising with his own beats within the song, whilst still keeping it musical.

The first bar remains the same as the bar above but another pair of bass drums are added, starting on the '+' of beat 1 and beat 2 in the second bar. The hi-hat opens with the bass drum on beat 2 and closes again on beat 3, at the same time as the snare drum.

Notice the extra bass drum at the end of bar 2, this is played just before the bass drum on beat 1 of the next bar when the pattern is looped.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a drum fill in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4. Above beat 1, the letters 'e', '+', and 'a' are written. Above beat 2, the letters 'e', '+', and 'a' are written. Above beat 4, there is a small circle with a dot inside. The notation shows a single bass drum note on beat 1, followed by a double bass drum note on beat 2, and a single bass drum note on beat 3. The snare drum is played on beats 1, 2, and 3, with the notes on beats 1 and 2 enclosed in brackets. The hi-hat is played on beats 1, 2, and 3, with the notes on beats 1 and 2 enclosed in brackets. On beat 4, there is an open hi-hat note. The left hand (L) is indicated for the snare drum notes, and the right hand (R) is indicated for the bass drum notes.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 4

L L R R L L R

How To Play It

Occurs at 2:01 just before the whole band re-joins. Although technically this isn't a drum beat, it just had to be included because of the popularity it receives amongst drummers.

This drum fill is typically Gadd in it's linear style. Linear drumming is simply playing a pattern where no two notes are played at the same time as each other. Here we see a line of sixteenth notes played in this style.

The left hand stays on the snare drum and the right hand on the hi-hat. It starts with a single bass drum on beat 1 followed by a double on the snare, a double on the hi-hat, another double on the snare, a single bass drum note and then finishing with a single snare drum on beat 3.

All the snare drum notes are written in brackets meaning they're played quietly. This helps to give the fill a slinky and dynamic edge to it.

The open hi-hat on beat 4 leads the band and drums back into beat 1 of the next bar where the whole band re-joins. This is a piece of classic Gadd drumming!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Cissy Strut by "The Meters"

Drummer: Zigaboo Modeliste

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat pattern. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the counts '1 e + a', '2 e a', '3 e + a', and '4 e +' are written. The notes are represented by 'x' marks on a five-line staff. Measure 1: quarter note on the first line, eighth notes on the second and third lines. Measure 2: quarter note on the first line, eighth notes on the second and third lines. Measure 3: quarter note on the first line, eighth notes on the second and third lines. Measure 4: quarter note on the first line, eighth notes on the second and third lines. Accents (>) are placed above the 'e' notes in measures 1, 2, and 4. A circled 'x' is placed above the first eighth note in measure 3.

Why It's Great

Cissy Strut captures the essence of New Orleans funk with Ziggy's irresistible syncopation and patented second-line rhythms, emphasising the last half-beat of the bar. Inspired by the marching jazz bands of the city that played in funeral processions, Ziggy's drumming is guaranteed to make people move their feet.

How To Play It

Occurs during the first verse. This drum beat can be thought of us being a linear style drum beat. Most of the sound sources (hi-hat, snare etc.) are struck on their own and not at the same time, creating a line of single notes that flow from the beginning of the bar to the end.

What makes this beat so great to listen too is the fact that Zigaboo plays in a quasi-swing/quasi-straight style. This means that all of the sixteenth notes have a swung lilt to them that is neither straight nor swung but rather, in between. It also makes imitating the feel of this groove particularly tricky.

The hi-hat on the 'e' of beat 3 is ghosted (played quietly) right before the second hi-hat note which is accented (played loudly). If you find the accents too hard then work on playing the basic pattern first and then try adding the dynamics in later, bearing in mind that it's the dynamics that help to give this groove it's great feel and sound.

It's recommended when learning this groove that you are able to count the rhythm written above it first, in a swung/straight manner. This will help you when it comes to placing the notes into their correct spacing within the bar. If you count it then you can generally play it!

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat pattern. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the counts '1 e + a', '2 e + a', '3 e + a', and '4 e +' are written. The notes are represented by 'x' marks on a five-line staff. Measure 1: quarter note on the first line, eighth notes on the second and third lines. Measure 2: quarter note on the first line, eighth notes on the second and third lines. Measure 3: quarter note on the first line, eighth notes on the second and third lines. Measure 4: quarter note on the first line, eighth notes on the second and third lines. Accents (>) are placed above the 'e' notes in measures 1, 2, and 4. A circled 'x' is placed above the first eighth note in measure 3.

How To Play It

Occurs during the second verse. A second ghosted hi-hat note is added on the '+' of beat in this variation creating a flow of swung sixteenth notes all the way from beat 1, up until the '+' of beat 4.

Again, if you're finding the dynamics tricky then apply them only after you have the basic pattern down.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Cold Sweat by "James Brown"

Drummer: Clyde Stubblefield

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The notation consists of eighth notes and rests. Above the staff, the rhythm is written as: 1 + 2 + a 3 e + 4 + | 1 e + 2 + a 3 e + 4 +. The first bar has a bass drum on beat 1, a snare on the '+' of beat 3, and a hi-hat on the '+' of beat 4. The second bar has a bass drum on the '+' of beat 1, a snare on beat 4, and a hi-hat on the '+' of beat 3. There are ghost notes on the 'a' and 'e' of beats 2 and 3 in the first bar, and a ghost note on the 'e' of beat 1 in the second bar.

Why It's Great

The song that arguably started funk, Cold Sweat would be nothing without Stubblefield's drums holding the tune together. The entire band follows his rhythm, effectively playing the melody line as percussion. "Give the drummer some!" shouts Brown, prompting Stubblefield to break it down, which he does without ever dropping the groove.

This is simply a master class in funky drum beat construction.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the majority of the song. The hi-hat maintains a steady and even flow of eighth notes throughout both bars.

The hi-hat in the first bar is opened on the '+' of beat 3, at the same time as the bass drum is played. It is then closed again on beat 4 on its own. The snare drum then gets played on the '+' of beat 4. This throws the listeners ear, expecting to hear the snare drum fall on beat 4. This is a classic snare drum backbeat displacement technique and is used a lot in funk drumming.

The offbeat fun continues into the second bar where no bass drum is played on beat 1. Instead, the bass drum is played on the '+' of beat 1. This is another classic technique used in funk drum beat construction where beat 1 of the second bar is not played on with the bass drum.

The final bass drum occurs in bar 2, on the '+' of beat 3 just before the snare drum on beat 4. This resolves the groove and brings it back to beat 1 of the first bar in a very satisfying manner.

There are ghost notes played on the 'a' and 'e' of beats 2 and 3 respectively as well as a ghost note on the 'e' of beat 1 in the second bar. These are really hard to hear on the recordings but can be seen clearly when Clyde performs the song live.

You really can't get funkier than this on the drums!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Come Together by "The Beatles"

Drummer: **Ringo Starr**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing the drum groove for 'Come Together'. The staff is divided into four measures. Measure 1 has two cymbal hits (marked with 'x') on the first and third eighth notes. Measure 2 has a triplet of sixteenth notes on the first, second, and third eighth notes, with an accent (>) on the last note. Measure 3 has a sixteenth note triplet on the first eighth note, followed by sixteenth notes on the second, third, and fourth eighth notes. Measure 4 has a triplet of sixteenth notes on the first, second, and third eighth notes. Below the staff, the drum parts are indicated: 'R' for right hand (snare) and 'L' for left hand (tom). Measure 1: R L R L. Measure 2: L R L R L R L R. Measure 3: L R L R L R L R. Measure 4: L R L R. Above the staff, the measures are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, with '+' signs above the second eighth note of each measure. The triplet numbers 3, 6, and 3 are placed above their respective groups of notes.

Why It's Great

Rising above John Lennon's jibe that he "wasn't even the best drummer in The Beatles", Ringo Starr chose this Abbey Road highlight to break out with a barrage of swampy rolls. A generation of aspirant drummers duly "came" together.

How To Play It

This groove occurs at the beginning of the song and during every verse. This drum beat requires a good sense of rhythm for playing sixteenth note triplets. If this is not the case then careful listening to the track will train your ear to hear the and play the triplets.

The groove starts off with two crash cymbals on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 1 (could be played lightly on the ride cymbal instead). Ringo then moves to the closed hi-hat to play a group of sixteenth note triplets, starting on beat 2 and ending on the '+' of beat 2. The last note on the hi-hat is accented and played louder than the previous three.

Mr Starr then moves to the high tom and famously, being a left handed drummer playing on a right handed kit, starts the drum fill with his left hand. This allowed him to move to the medium tom without having to cross over his left hand with his right. Start the triplets with the left hand and you'll see what I mean.

The last note is played on the floor tom giving the groove and definitive and satisfying end.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Could You Be Loved by "Bob Marley And The Wailers"

Drummer: **Carlton Barrett**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a double bar line. The time signature is 4/4. The notation consists of four measures. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, +, a, 2, +, a, 3, +, a, 4, +, a. The '+' and 'a' are positioned above the first and third eighth notes of each measure. The notation shows a bass drum (solid dot) on the downbeat of each measure (beats 1, 2, 3, 4). The snare drum (solid dot) is on beats 2 and 4. The hi-hat (x) is on the '+' and 'a' marks. There are also x's on the downbeats of each measure. The hi-hat is played on the '+' and 'a' marks, and the snare is played on the downbeats of beats 2 and 4.

Why It's Great

Forget the fact that Carlton is arguably one of the most influential reggae drummers of all time and responsible for bringing reggae drumming to the masses; this drum beat just simply grooves!

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the song. Carlton plays "four on the floor" with the bass drum, creating a strong pulse for the music to play over. The snare drum comes down with the bass drum on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

Carlton's right hand plays a one handed rhythm on the hi-hat. This rhythm is played on the '+', the 'a' and the downbeat of each beat of the bar. It pushes into each downbeat of the bar in a way that gives the song real forward momentum.

Carlton adds even more upbeat magic by accenting the hi-hat (playing slightly louder) on the '+' of each beat. This picks up the groove and really puts the emphasis on the upbeat in a very musical manner.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Da Doo Ron Ron by "The Crystals"

Drummer: **Hal Blaine**

A musical staff in 12/8 time signature. The staff contains four measures of music. Each measure starts with a bass drum note on the first eighth note. Above the staff, there are four groups of eighth notes, each group containing six notes. The first group has notes on beats 1, 2, and 3. The second group has notes on beats 4, 5, and 6. The third group has notes on beats 1, 2, and 3. The fourth group has notes on beats 4, 5, and 6. Below the staff, the letters R and L are placed under the notes to indicate the hand used for each note. The sequence of hands is R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R, L.

1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6

12
8

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

Why It's Great

This joyous and upbeat drum groove gives the song plenty of lift. Hal Blaine obviously had a whale of time putting this to tape.

How To Play It

Occurs during each of the verses. This song is played in the time signature of 12/8. This means that there are 12 counted eighth notes to every bar.

The hands play a double handed single pattern on the hi-hat (RLRL) with the left hand coming down from the hi-hat to play the snare drum backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The bass drum is played on all four beats of the bar so be careful to ensure the accurate alignment of the hi-hat, snare drum and bass drum on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Dance Of Eternity by "Dream Theater"

Drummer: **Mike Portney**

A musical score for a drum beat, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows four bars of music. The first bar is in 4/4 time, the second in 7/8, and the third in 5/8. The fourth bar is also in 5/8. The notation includes various drum symbols like snare, bass, and cymbals, along with counting numbers and plus signs indicating accents. The second staff shows a similar pattern for the next four bars, also with time signature changes from 4/4 to 7/8 and 5/8. The notation is detailed, showing note values and rests.

Why It's Great

Mike's navigation through odd time signatures is simply amazing. Always creating interesting drum parts, Mike shows the average drummer just what's possible on the drum kit.

How To Play It

This is the first four bars of the section that starts at 0:44. Somehow Mike manages to create a drum beat from what sounds like, a selection of random drum and cymbal noises.

The first and third bars are played in the time signature of 4/4, meaning that there are four counted beats to the bar (or 8 eighth notes). Bar 2 is in the time signature of 7/8, meaning that there are three and a half beats to the bar (or 7 eighth notes). Bar 4 is written in the time signature of 5/8 and so contains 5 eighth notes.

It's important to understand that the rate (speed) of the eighth notes does not change when moving from bar to bar but that the counting changes instead. The eighth notes in the bars of 7/8 and 5/8 are counted as individual beats. This is purely for ease of reading and counting and does not affect the speed at which they're played.

Bars 1 and 3 start in the same way as each other, with a crash on beat 1 and an open hi-hat on the '+' of beat 1, followed by a snare drum on beat 2 where the hi-hat closes. Three sixteenth note triplets are played on the hi-hat, starting on the '+' of beat 2, leading into the hi-hat on beat 3. These four notes are effectively played as one smooth flow of notes.

For bar 1, a bass drum is played on the '+' of beat 3, followed by a single hi-hat and then a snare drum to end the bar. Bar 2 is slightly different with two bass drums on the '+' of beat 3 and beat 4 followed by an open hi-hat on the '+' of beat 4. It closes again on beat 1 of bar 4.

Bar 2 is played in a linear drumming style, where no two notes fall together at the same time. The notes played are a splash cymbal, bass drum, snare drum, hi-hat, snare drum, hi-hat and then the bass drum and crash cymbal together, in that order. This crash cymbal could be played with the left hand, leaving the right hand free to play the crash cymbal on beat 1 of bar 3. It's up to you.

Bar 3 is also played in a linear fashion where the order of notes being struck are snare drum, hi-hat, snare drum, hi-hat again and then the crash and bass drum played together. Again, this crash cymbal could be played with the left hand, leaving the right hand free to play the crash cymbal on beat 1 of the next bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Dance With The Devil by "Cozy Powell"

Drummer: **Cozy Powell**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notation consists of quarter notes on a single line, with accents (>) above the notes. Above the staff, the letters 'e', '+', and 'a' are placed above the first, second, and third notes of each beat, respectively. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' are placed under the notes to indicate right and left hand strokes. The sequence of strokes is: Beat 1: R, L, R, L; Beat 2: R, L, R, L; Beat 3: R, L, R, L; Beat 4: R, L, R, L. The first note of each beat has an accent (>) above it.

Why It's Great

Cozy enjoyed the first of three hit singles in the '70s, thanks to an exuberant, clearly defined dance rhythm incorporating the entire kit.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning and throughout most of the song. The hands play a single stroke roll around the toms with both right and left hands throwing in accents. Any notes marked with an accent above them (an arrow symbol) should be played loudly, all other notes should be played at a medium volume.

It's all about feel and touch, the dynamics can be varied depending on what you're feeling. Cozy varied his accent choices when playing this live and improvised to add spice and flare.

The left hand stays up on the high tom all the way through this groove, it's actually the right hand that moves around the drums. Initially, the right hand moves to the floor tom to play three accent notes but then moves back to the high tom, joining the left hand, on the '+' of beat 2.

The left hand then plays accents on the 'a' of beat 2 as well as the 'e' and 'a' of beat 3. Three off beat, left handed accents in a row. The last left hand accent is immediately followed by four right and left handed accents played between the high and medium tom.

The bass drum stamps out quarter notes through this whole groove. In order to help you play this correctly, notice how the accents align with the quarter note bass drums. Ensure that all accent notes line up either side or with the bass drums accordingly.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation showing four measures of drum accents. Each measure is labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and contains the letters 'e', '+', and 'a' above the staff. The staff shows a sequence of notes with accents (>) above them. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' are placed under the notes to indicate hand placement. Measure 1: R L R L. Measure 2: R L R L. Measure 3: R L R L. Measure 4: R L R L.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:55. This drum groove continues with the single stroke sixteenth note roll idea around the drums but now moves between the snare drum and high tom.

The recorded version of this song used layered drum tracks. Cozy recorded his part on the snare drum first, playing the accents on the snare drum as shown above, but then plays the rest of the bar on the snare drum quietly in the background. The high tom part was then recorded separately, playing only the accents shown above, and overdubbed on top of the snare drum part. This created a layered drum track with the snare drum overdubbed with tom tom accents to add power and layers to the drum beat.

Seeing as Cozy doesn't have 4 arms, he chose to play the drum beat shown above when performing live.

The first half of the drum beat is on the high tom which then moves down to the snare drum, starting with the left hand on the 'a' of beat 2. The left hand on the 'a' of beat 2 is doubled. This means that two notes are played, starting on the 'a' of beat 2, instead of just the one note. If this is too much then the double can be left out and a single note can be played instead.

The same accent pattern is played for both half's of the bar, '1e' and 'a2' followed by '3e' and 'a4'. The hand accents move from RL to LR for each half of the bar. Playing these hand accents correctly is the key to replicating this drum groove.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Dani California by "Red Hot Chili Peppers"

Drummer: **Chad Smith**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, +, 2, +, a, 3, +, 4, +, a. The notation shows eighth notes on the snare line for beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. There are plus signs (+) above the first and third eighth notes of each bar. There are 'a' characters above the eighth notes on the fourth beat of each bar. The eighth notes on the fourth beat are marked with brackets, indicating they are ghost notes. There are also plus signs above the first and third eighth notes of the fourth beat.

Why It's Great

This song starts to the sound of Chad Smith pounding out one of his trademark drum grooves. More bouncing hi-hats and ghost note to delight us!

How To Play It

This is the basic groove Chad plays for the verses and can clearly be heard right at the beginning of the song. Chad chooses to improvise with the groove, adding extra hi-hat openings and occasionally missing out the the left hand drag played at the end of the bar.

Chad plays the hi-hat in his own signature style for this groove. The right hand plays steady eighth notes while his left foot bounces up and down on the pedal, at the same time as the hi-hat is struck. This creates a rather unique and cool sounding "swish" sound.

A snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4 of the bar and a left handed thirty second note drag is played at the end of the bar, starting on the 'a' of beat 4. These two thirty second notes are ghost notes (marked in brackets) and so are played quietly, starting in between the hi-hats, and just before beat 1 of the next bar.

The bass drum is played on beats 1, the '+' of beat 1, beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3. An extra bass drum is played on the 'a' of beat 2, in between the hi-hats. This little push into the downbeat of beat 3 gives the groove forward momentum.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Don't Stand So Close To Me by "The Police"

Drummer: **Stewart Copeland**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes '1 e + a', '2 e + a', '3 e + a', and '4 e + a' are written, corresponding to the four beats of the bar. The notation includes 'x' marks for cross-sticks on downbeats, '+' for hi-hat accents on offbeats, and '>' for accents on downbeats. The bass drum is indicated by a solid dot on the bottom line of the staff on beats 2 and 4.

Why It's Great

The Police's already wafer-thin punk credentials evaporated entirely the moment we heard Copeland's slippery hi-hat master class on this paedophilia-themed smash hit from 1980. Follow that, Rat Scabies!

How To Play It

Occurs during the first verse. It's worth pointing out straight away that Stewart improvises with these drum beats a lot. It's rare that you'll ever hear him play the same thing twice. Saying that though, the bar written above is the groove that he plays the majority of the time during this section of the song.

This drum groove has a very heavy reggae influence, with the accenting of beats 2 and 4 of the bar. Beat 1 is hardly felt at all. The use of offbeat accents on the hi-hat also helps to give the drum beat an upbeat/reggae feel. The right hand plays one handed sixteenth notes on the hi-hat while the cross-stick is delivered on all the downbeats of the bar, beats 1, 2, 3 and 4.

As already mentioned, the bass drum is played on beats 2 and 4 of the bar, at the same time as the cross-stick is played. An extra bass drum is played the majority of the time on the 'a' of beat 1 to help push and drive the beat forward.

Of course, being Stuart Copeland, the hi-hat is where it's at. He constantly improvises with the hi-hat, adding and moving notes, throwing in accents and opening and closing the hi-hat in interesting places. In this groove Stuart accents (plays loudly) the hi-hat notes on the '+' of beats 1 and 3. He also opens the hi-hat on the '+' of beats 2 and 4, closing it again on the following downbeat (at the same time as the cross-stick).

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the letters '1 e + a', '2 e + a', '3 e + a', and '4 e + a' are written, with '+' above the first letter of each measure. The notation includes 'x' marks for snare hits on the downbeats of each measure, and beams connecting notes across measures. There are also accents (>) and a fermata-like symbol over the 'a' of the fourth measure.

How To Play It

Occurs as written for the first time at 0:39. Here we have the drum groove Stuart plays at the beginning of the song. It's exactly the same as the beat above except no cross-stick is played on the downbeats of the bar and no extra bass drum is added before beat 2.

Again, it's worth mentioning that Stuart improvises heavily with this groove by playing the hi-hats when they're open on the 'a' of beats 2 and 4, and by adding in an extra bass drum notes on the 'a' of beat 3 for example.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the letters '1 +', '2 +', '3 +', and '4 +' are written, with '+' above the first letter of each measure. The notation includes 'x' marks for snare hits on the downbeats of each measure, and beams connecting notes across measures.

How To Play It

Occurs noticeably for the first time at 1:02 and is the basic pattern played during the chorus's. Stuart moves to the bell of the ride cymbal for the chorus giving us a real drumming treat.

This right handed bell pattern doesn't change or vary greatly and is played on beats 1, 2, 3, the '+' of beat 3 and the '+' of beat 4.

The snare drum supplies a constant backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar while the ride cymbal bell pattern plays around it gracefully. The two bell notes on beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3 push the drum beat into the snare drum on beat 4. Notice that the snare drum on beat 4 is not played at the same time as the bell of the ride cymbal.

The bass drum pattern is improvised during the chorus but the rhythm written above is the one that Stuart tends to follow the most. The bass drum on the '+' of beat 1 falls in between the bell pattern while the two bass drums on beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3 are played at the same time as the bell pattern.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Dr Feelgood by "Motley Crue"

Drummer: **Tommy Lee**

Why It's Great

Tommy Lee's earth shattering bass drum beat immediately locks horns with the riffing guitars, while his lush open hi-hat stabs provide rhythmic rock spice.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and during all the riff based verses. Tommy keeps the right hand simple on the hi-hat by playing just straight eighth notes throughout. The snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

Beat 1 of the bar is skipped by the bass drum but is instead played just before and after, giving the groove forward momentum by never actually grounding the groove on beat 1.

The two bass drums on the 'e' and '+' of beat 1 start in between the hi-hats. The second bass drum on the '+' is played at the same time as the first of the open hi-hat stabs. The hi-hat closes again on beat 2 of the bar, at the same time as the snare drum is played. The bass drum on the 'a' of beat 4 is also played in between the hi-hats.

The bass drum on beat 3 is played at the same time as the second open hi-hat stab. The hi-hat then closes again on it's own, on the '+' of beat 3.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs during the chorus and for the first time at 0:32. Tommy moves his right hand to play eighth notes on the ride cymbal for this two bar groove. He accents (plays loudly) all the downbeats (beats 1, 2, 3 and 4) by playing these notes on the ride cymbal bell. All the other notes (the '+'s) are played on the middle part of the ride cymbal.

The snare drum keeps a steady backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar while the bass drum follows the guitar melody and vocals. Both bars 1 and 2 have the bass drum on the '+' of beat 1, the 'e' of beat 2 and beat 3 itself. The bass drum push on the 'a' of beat 4 in the first bar is played just before beat 1 of the next bar, again not quite resolving the groove on beat 1 and so helping to push the song forward.

Two crash cymbals are played in bar 2, first with the snare drum on beat 4 and then with the bass drum on the 'a'. When the bar is looped back to beat 1, no ride cymbal is played on beat 1. This is so that the right hand doesn't have to rush back to the ride cymbal after the crash on the previous 'a' of beat 4.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Englishman In New York by "Sting"

Drummer: **Manu Katche**

Why It's Great

Cool, light and stylish, the drums here are beautifully orchestrated (like most of Sting's stuff), and then comes that neo-Zeppelin/hip-hop-esque break in the middle. Great stuff!

How To Play It

This is the basic groove used in the verse and occurs clearly for the first time at 0:21, once the vocals start. Manu improvises with this drum groove throughout, playing creative ideas on the hi-hat and cross-stick in the reggae style.

This groove has a rather interesting twist on the standard Reggae style drum beat. The cross-stick is played on the '+' of beat 2 and 4 for a more upbeat and bouncy feel. Usually a drummer would want to play the cross-stick with the bass drum on beats 2 and 4 but Manu resists that norm and creates something quite unique instead!

All the hi-hats are played on the '+' of each beat, helping to give the groove even more lift. He does occasionally add in the hi-hat notes on the downbeats of the bar (beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 themselves) but plays them lightly and quietly so not to draw attention away from the eighth note upbeats.

Bar 2 shows the basic fill idea that Manu returns too throughout the song. Two hi-hat notes are played with the right hand, starting on the '+' of beat 3. Two more right handed hi-hat notes are played on the following '+' of beat 4, at the same time as the two cross-stick notes are struck. Manu often opens the hi-hat on the 'a' of beat 4, at the same time as the hi-hat and cross-stick to add even more variations.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 2:30. This wonderfully bombastic section to the song adds an element of grit and rock to an otherwise very Jazzy number.

Manu plays this on the bass drum and snare drum but probably used multiple drums in the recording itself. Flams are played on beats 2 and 4 and only one bass drum is played on beat 1, the first time the bar is played. The second bass drum, on the 'e' of beat 1, is played every time the bar loops after the first bar. The bass drum on the 'a' of beat 2 precedes a single sixteenth note rest, pushing the three bass drum notes to start on the 'e' of beat 3.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Everlong by "The Foo Fighters"

Drummer: Dave Grohl/Taylor Hawkins

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a drum part. Each staff begins with a double bar line and a '11' time signature. Above each staff is a sequence of rhythmic notation: '+' for hi-hat, 'e' for snare, and 'a' for bass drum. The first two staves each have a 4-beat pattern: 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a. The third staff has a 7-beat pattern: 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a. The notation below the symbols shows the corresponding drum strokes on a five-line staff, with 'x' marks for hi-hat and solid dots for snare and bass drum.

Why It's Great

Played at lightning fast speed with control and power, Grohl shows the hi-hat who's boss. Although it was technically Dave Grohl that drummed on the album version of this song, Taylor Hawkins does an amazing job at impersonating Grohl when performing it live!

How To Play It

Occurs during all the verses and is heard for the first time at 0:32. The verses for this song have an interesting structure. Most song melodies are grouped into bars of 4, 8, 16 or 32 but Grohl wrote this guitar riff around a seven bar pattern.

The hands are playing alternating sixteenths on the hi-hat (RLRL) all the way through this seven bar pattern. The right hand comes down to the snare drum to play the backbeats on beats 2 and 4 of each bar.

A little snare drum fill is played at the end of the seventh bar on the '+' and 'a' of beat 4, played with the right and left hand respectively. The hands simply move down to the snare drum to play this drum fill, whilst maintaining the single stroke hand pattern (RLRL).

All of the bass drum notes fall with the right hand, at the same time as the hi-hat is struck. Bars 1 and 2 play the same bass drum pattern as bars 3 and 4, as well as bars 5 and 6. Bar 7 uses a different bass drum pattern, played on beat 1, the '+' of beat 1, beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3.

The hands have to be loose in order to play this groove comfortably, no tension must be present in the body to play at this kind of speed.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Everybody Wants to Rule The World by "Tears For Fears"

Drummer: **Chris Hughes** (Programmed Drums)

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a hi-hat pattern. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes are labeled: '1 trip let', '2 trip let', '3 trip let', and '4 trip let'. Each measure contains a quarter note triplet (three eighth notes beamed together) followed by an eighth rest. The first triplet note of each measure is marked with an 'x' above it. The time signature '4/4' is written at the beginning of the staff.

Why It's Great

Chris Hughes arguably programmed one of the most unique shuffles ever heard in a pop song. The quirky hi-hat part still brings a smile to most drummers faces.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the entire song. Electronic shakers were added over the top of the basic drum beat which of course is impossible for one drummer to perform at the same time as the drum beat. The groove above then is the pattern that all session drummers played when performing live with the band.

The bass drum and snare drum parts are actually quite basic. The snare drum backbeat is played on beats 2 and 4 of the bar and the bass drum, on beats 1 and 3. The synth bass line being played underneath supplies the shuffle pulse, playing on all downbeats and third triplet notes of each beat of the bar.

The hi-hat adds the spice and originality to the groove. The right hand plays quarter note triplets on the hi-hat starting on the second triplet note of beat 1 (the 'trip'). Notice how beats 1 and 2 are exactly the same as beats 3 and 4.

Quarter note triplets are equal in length to two eighth note triplets. In this drum beat, an eighth note is played on the hi-hat followed by an eighth note rest, this means that the hi-hat is played every second eighth note triplet. This has the effect of moving the hi-hat part evenly across the bar but in a way that doesn't quite line up with the bass drum and snare drum pulse on every beat.

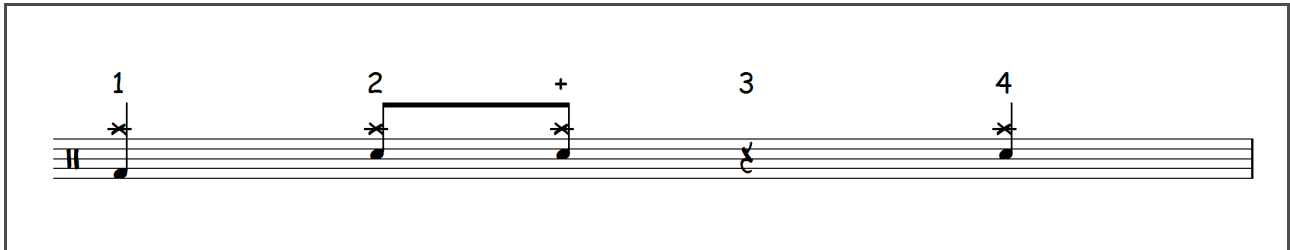
Notice that the hi-hat is played just after each bass drum and not with the bass drums. While the hi-hat does play at the same time as each of the snare drums on beats 2 and 4.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Fell In Love With A Girl by "The White Stripes"

Drummer: Meg White



Why It's Great

From Fell In Love With A Girl's flammed start to its crashed finish, Meg White stamps her trademark swagger all over this. As always, not just playing for the song but becoming an integral part of it.

Meg often gets grief for not being the best drummer in the world but we often forget how simple drum beats allow non drummers to air drum along and give beginners something to have go at. Her simplicity suited the music perfectly!

How To Play It

Occurs during the whole song. Meg often plays the right hand at the same time as the snare and bass drum due to a technical limitation in her playing. This actually turns out to be a very cool and powerful way of playing a drum beat though, adding more emphasis to each bass drum and snare drum note.

The bass drum plays with the crash cymbal on beat 1 of the bar. The two snare drums on beat 2 and the '+' of beat 2 are also played at the same time as the crash cymbals. This also goes for the snare drum played on beat 4 of the bar.

A simple drum beat but try listening to this song with tapping away, it's almost impossible to resist!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Fields Of Gold by "Sting"

Drummer: **Vinnie Colaiuta**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a double bar line at the beginning. The time signature is 4/4. The beat is represented by four measures. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are written, each followed by a plus sign (+). The notation shows a quarter note on the first beat of each measure, and a plus sign on the second beat of each measure. The plus sign is positioned above the staff, indicating a hi-hat or cross-stick sound. The quarter notes are positioned on the first line of the staff, indicating a snare drum sound.

Why It's Great

Is there any wonder why Vinnie is so busy as a studio musician? With all the chops and killer licks this man has, he makes the musically mature decision to play just one simple drum beat throughout the whole song. The secret being of course, that he plays it impeccably.

How To Play It

This one drum beat is played from the beginning of the song to the end. Vinnie plays crisp and even eighth notes on the hi-hat with his right hand throughout.

The cross-stick is played on beats 2 and 4 of the bar, at the same time as the hi-hat. The sound he gets from his cross-stick is dreamy. Great snare drum/stick choice and excellent recording techniques help to create a cross-stick sound to die for!

The bass drum follows the bass guitar part, playing only on beats 1 and the '+' of beat 2. This gives space to the groove and helps it to float through the song gracefully.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Fire by "The Jimi Hendrix Experience"

Drummer: **Mitch Mitchell**

1 + 2 a 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +
1 + 2 a 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +
1 + 2 a 3 e + 4 + a 1 e + 2 + a 3 e + 4 +
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 3 1
R L R L

Why It's Great

Fusing elements of jazz and rock, Mitchell plays manic and spirited improvised four-bar phrases, creating a dialogue between his kick/snare and Hendrix's guitar and vocals.

How To Play It

This is the first 11 bars played after the initial drum fill intro. Mitch varies the hi-hat by playing on some of the '+'s of the beat. This transcription has only included the quarter notes on the hi-hat for ease of reading. This way, the hi-hats can be used as reference points in relation to where the majority of the bass and snare drums fall (either on or in between the hi-hats)

Bars 3, 4 and 10 include some ghost notes played with the left hand, in between the hi-hat's. These fill out the groove but can be omitted if they prove to be too much of a coordination issue for your left hand.

Bars 7 and 8 use a classic snare drum pattern, falling on the 'a' and 'e' of various beats of the bar. If you're finding this tricky then try playing with eighth notes on the hi-hat instead. Then it's just a case of playing the snare drum either with the hi-hat (beats 2 and 4) or in between (the 'e' and 'a').

The sixteenth note triplets, starting on the '+' of beat 4 at the end of the tenth bar, can be played with any hand. The sticking RLRL is recommended though. Mitch really gives the drums hell on this track, some fiery drumming indeed!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Fireball by "Deep Purple"

Drummer: **Ian Paice**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a double bass drum pattern. The staff is divided into four measures, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and the syllables 'e + a'. Above each measure, there are two horizontal lines with 'x' marks indicating the timing of the double bass drum hits. The notes on the staff represent the auxiliary bass drum foot playing on the 'e' and 'a' syllables.

Why It's Great

Ian stomps out double bass drum beats and batters complex patterns with unmatched exuberance, giving his fellow Deep Purple warriors a terrific boost. Without a doubt, it's a defining moment in rock drum folklore.

How To Play It

This is the groove Ian plays during the verses, first heard at 0:13. Ian keeps the hands simple as he plays an alternating double bass drum pattern underneath. The feet are playing on all of the sixteenth notes, starting with the right foot. All the 'e' and 'a's are played with the auxiliary bass drum foot, that's the left foot for right handed (footed) players.

Over the top of this double bass drum frenzy the right hand is playing eighth notes on the ride cymbal while the snare drum plays on beats 2 and 4.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a double bass drum pattern, similar to the one above. It is divided into four measures, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and the syllables 'e + a'. Above each measure, there are two horizontal lines with 'x' marks indicating the timing of the double bass drum hits. The notes on the staff represent the auxiliary bass drum foot playing on the 'e' and 'a' syllables.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time clearly at 1:06. Ian plays various drum fills throughout the song and improvises heavily with his drum parts from start to finish. It's very rare to hear a bar with a fill in that gets played more than once!

This bar however appears in various forms throughout the song. It uses a three note rhythmic idea on the snare drum while the bass drum and ride cymbal continue with their respective parts underneath and on top.

The three note snare drum pattern starts on the '+' of beat 1, where the snare drum is played at the same time as the ride cymbal. Three sixteenth notes later (including the first sixteenth snare drum), another snare drum is played, this time in between the ride cymbal. This cycles continues up to the 'a' of beat 3 with snare drum notes alternating between falling on and in between the ride cymbal.

Ian also plays another very similar idea except that he starts the three note snare drum cycle on beat 1 of the bar instead. The snare drums for this other variation then fall on beat 1, the 'a' of beat 1, the '+' of beat 2, the 'e' of beat 3 and then beat 4, in that order.

Again, Ian improvises a lot and rarely plays the same idea twice. Exciting for the listener but admittedly a bit tricky for the drummer trying to play along!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Fool In The Rain by "Led Zeppelin"

Drummer: **John Bonham**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a shuffle drum pattern. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes are labeled: '1 trip let', '2 trip let', '3 trip let', and '4 trip let'. Each measure contains a triplet of eighth notes. The first measure has a circled note on the first beat and a plus sign above the second note. The second measure has a circled note on the second beat. The third and fourth measures have circled notes on the third and fourth beats respectively. The notes are connected by a slur, and there are 'x' marks above the first and third notes of each triplet. The time signature is 4/4.

Why It's Great

When a drummer is asked to name their top three shuffle drum beats of all time you can bet your bottom dollar that Fool In The Rain will probably be included. The groove and touch that Bonham displays on this track pours over the listener ears like honey. Nobody plays a shuffle quiet like Bonham did!

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and during all the verses. Bonham plays a shuffle pattern on the hi-hat with his right hand. A shuffle is simply the first and third triplet note of each beat of the bar.

A single snare drum note is played on beat 3 of the bar, for the backbeat, creating what's called a half time drum beat. A half time drum beat only has one strong (loud) snare drum played per bar, on beat 3 in this case. The other two snare drums notes, on the 'trip' of beat 2 and 4, are played in between the shuffle hi-hat pattern and are written as ghost notes. Ghost notes are played quietly and are written inside brackets. This means that three triplet notes are played in a row, hi-hat, snare drum and hi-hat again, in that order for beats 2 and 4.

The bass drum is played on beat 1, the 'let' of beat 1, the 'let' of beat 2 and the 'let' of beat 4. This last bass drum loops round to the bass drum on beat 1 essentially meaning that two bass drum notes are played together when the bar is looped. Notice that all the bass drum notes are played at the same time as the hi-hat.

The final piece of magic occurs on the 'let' of beat 1 where the hi-hat opens, at the same time as the bass drum and hi-hat are struck, and then closes again on beat 2 when just the hi-hat is struck.

It's funny, but you don't hear many drummers open hi-hat's on the upbeats of shuffle drum beats. It doesn't feel very natural but it sounds fantastic.

Bonham plays this groove with such feel and joy that you can't help but smile when hearing it.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Funky Drummer by "James Brown"

Drummer: *Clyde Stubblefield*

Musical notation for the first four bars of the Funky Drummer drum solo. The notation is on a single staff with a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the syllables '1 e + a', '2 e + a', '3 e + a', and '4 e + a' are written. The notes are: Bar 1: quarter note on the first line (C4), quarter note on the second line (D4), quarter note on the second space (E4), quarter note on the third line (F4). Bar 2: quarter note on the first line (C4), quarter note on the second line (D4), quarter note on the second space (E4), quarter note on the third line (F4). Bar 3: quarter note on the first line (C4), quarter note on the second line (D4), quarter note on the second space (E4), quarter note on the third line (F4). Bar 4: quarter note on the first line (C4), quarter note on the second line (D4), quarter note on the second space (E4), quarter note on the third line (F4). The notes are marked with 'x' for hi-hat and 'o' for snare. There are accents (>) on the first notes of bars 2 and 4. There are also accents on the 'e' notes of bars 2 and 4.

Why It's Great

"I want everyone to lay out and let the drummer go!" says James Brown just before Clyde Stubblefield unleashes one of the most sampled drum beats of all time. Deceptively laid back, Clyde's innovative hi-hat, bass and snare drum patterns from 1969 set a pattern for funk for decades to come.

How To Play It

Occurs during the first drum break/solo of the song. Sixteenth notes are played on the hi-hat with the right hand and subtle single sixteenth note opening's on the 'e' of beats 2 and 4. The first hi-hat opening is played on it's own whilst the second opening is played at the same time as the bass drum on the 'e' of beat 4.

The snare drum ghost notes can be tricky to line up with the hi-hat. The hardest ghost note to play is the one on the 'a' of beat 3 because it is immediately followed by the accented note on beat 4. This requires a nimble left wrist in order to play a quiet snare drum note followed immediately after by a loud snare drum note.

Remember to accent (play louder) both snare drum notes on beats 2 and 4 to create the correct feel.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for other bars of interest in the Funky Drummer drum solo. The notation is on a single staff with a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the syllables '1 e + a', '2 e + a', '3 e + a', and '4 e + a' are written. The notes are: Bar 1: quarter note on the first line (C4), quarter note on the second line (D4), quarter note on the second space (E4), quarter note on the third line (F4). Bar 2: quarter note on the first line (C4), quarter note on the second line (D4), quarter note on the second space (E4), quarter note on the third line (F4). Bar 3: quarter note on the first line (C4), quarter note on the second line (D4), quarter note on the second space (E4), quarter note on the third line (F4). Bar 4: quarter note on the first line (C4), quarter note on the second line (D4), quarter note on the second space (E4), quarter note on the third line (F4). The notes are marked with 'x' for hi-hat and 'o' for snare. There are accents (>) on the first notes of bars 2 and 4. There are also accents on the 'e' notes of bars 2 and 4.

How To Play It

Occurs after a few bars of the first drum break/solo, played as a single bar improvisation. Clyde plays a buzzed snare drum note on the 'a' of beat 2 instead of a normal ghost note as heard in the previous bars.

The left hand is pressed into the snare drum, at the same time as the hi-hat, to create the buzz effect.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Get Up (I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine by "James Brown"

Drummer: John 'Jabo' Starks

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, +, 2, +, a, 3, e, +, 4, +, a. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with various articulations like accents and ghost notes. Brackets and arrows indicate phrasing and timing relationships between notes across measures.

Why It's Great

The ultimate JB track? New boy Bootsy Collins's stuttering funk bass is the star, but Jabo's relentless and hypnotic drum pattern nails it perfectly.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the entire song apart from the bridge. Another classic drum groove from Jabo here with his trademark open hi-hat on the '+' of beats 1 and 3, leading into the backbeat snare drums.

The subtle and classy use of ghost notes is for the benefit of feel rather than sound. They can hardly be heard on the recording but you can definitely "feel" them. They fill out the groove wonderfully.

The hi-hat plays on the '+' and 'a' of beat 2, at the same time as the two ghost note snare drums written beneath them. This can be very demanding for the right hand so if proving too difficult for you then try leaving out the hi-hat note on the 'a' of beat 2 all together. This means that the ghost note on the 'a' of beat 2 would then fall in between the hi-hat notes.

The ghost note on the 'a' of beat 3 is played in between the hi-hats followed by a bass drum note on the '+' of beat 3, played at the same time as the hi-hat opens. The final ghost note on the 'a' of beat 4 brings us back to beat 1 and helps to resolve the drum beat nicely.

It should be understood that Jabo plays in a swung style. All of the sixteenth notes are slightly swung or shuffled and not played in a straight sixteenth note manner. This is tricky to explain in words because its a 'feel' thing again. You can hear it best when Jabo plays the ghost notes and hi-hats on the '+' and 'a' of beat 2. Listen out for how he swings these notes.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Give It Away by "Red Hot Chili Peppers"

Drummer: **Chad Smith**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The beat is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the first measure is labeled '1' with a '+' above it and an 'a' below it. The second measure is labeled '2' with a '+' above it. The third measure is labeled '3' with an 'e' above it and a '+' below it. The fourth measure is labeled '4' with an 'e' above it and a '+' below it. The notation consists of quarter notes on the first and third lines of the staff, with 'x' marks above them indicating snare drum hits. There are also 'o' marks above the first and third lines of each measure, indicating bass drum hits.

Why It's Great

It's what all funk-rock drumming should sound like; swaggering, groovy and dripping with attitude. This is one of Chad 'n' Flea's finest moments, the interplay between them is spot-on.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the entire song. Chad plays heavy open hi-hats with a strong snare backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

As usual, it's Chad's bass drum that's creating the magic. It locks in with Flea's bass line beautifully and plays a great little syncopated rhythm, falling on the 'e' and '+' of beats 3 and 4 effortlessly. This requires a strong bass drum foot so if this is too demanding just play the bass drum's on the '+' instead. This will still work for the groove.

Chad improvises with the drum beat later on in the song and tends to add extra snare drum notes on the '+' of beat 2, the 'e' of beat 3 and the 'a' of beat 4. The bass drum pattern is also improvised occasionally.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Go by "Pearl Jam"

Drummer: Dave Abbruzzese

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Above the staff, the beats are labeled with numbers and syllables: 1 + a, 2 +, 3 e + a, 4 +. The notation shows a steady hi-hat pattern of eighth notes. The bass drum plays on the 'a' of beat 1, the '+' of beat 2, the 'e' and 'a' of beat 3, and the '+' of beat 4. The snare drum plays on the '+' of beat 2 and the '+' of beat 4.

Why It's Great

Mr Abbruzzese didn't survive long with Pearl Jam, but his playing on 'Vs' is terrific. The pile-driving power of Go sets the tone for the whole of the album.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning and during all the verses. This drum groove contains some terrific syncopated bass drum underneath a steady hi-hat.

The right hand maintains eighth notes on the hi-hat throughout the groove while the left hand maintains the backbeat on beats 2 and 4.

The first bass drum push occurs on the 'a' of beat 1, in between the hi-hats. This moves the groove forward into the snare drum on beat 2. We then have a bass drum note on the '+' of beat 2, played at the same time as the hi-hat.

During beat 3, two bass drum notes are played in between the hi-hats on the 'e' and 'a'. The hi-hat can be used as a reference to ensure the lining up of accurate bass drum notes. The bass drum on the 'a' pushes the groove into the bars second snare drum backbeat on beat 4.

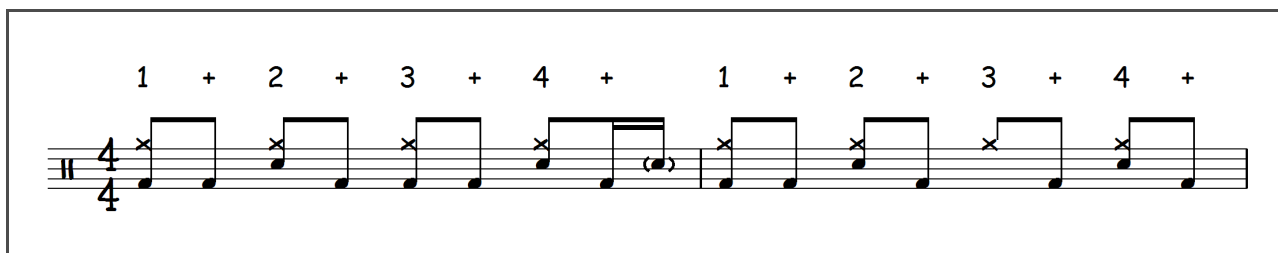
Notice how this drum groove is given lots of character and movement thanks to the musical use of the bass drum.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



God Save The Queen by "The Sex Pistols"

Drummer: **Paul Cook**



Why It's Great

This scathing Silver Jubilee tribute to the monarch is driven with compelling power and dead-eyed precision by drummer Paul Cook, the backbone of the Pistols.

How To Play It

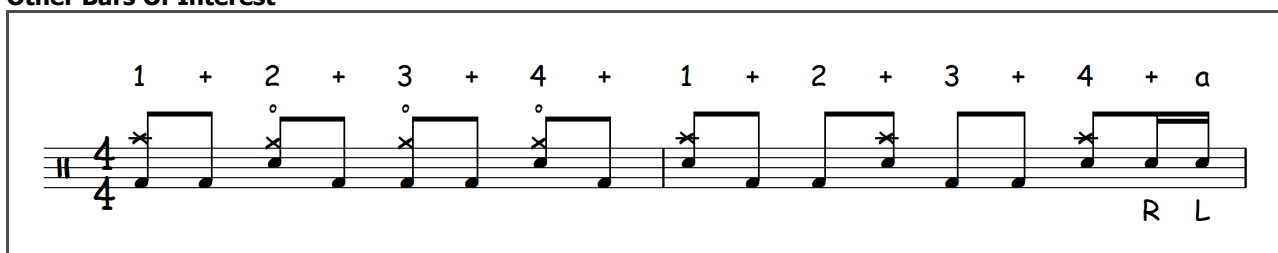
Occurs during the verse's. Paul is often dismissed as just an average drummer but his drumming on this single proves otherwise.

Paul plays quarter notes on the hi-hat, just on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the bar, and supplies the snare backbeat on beats 2 and 4.

The bass drum in the first bar chugs along with the guitars, playing on all the eighth notes in between both snare drum backbeats. The extra snare drum on the 'a' of beat 4 can be a little tricky to play due to the lack of hi-hat before it's played. The right hand will often help to stabilise and align a drummer when playing sixteenth notes on the snare. This snare drum note is played quietly, as indicated by the brackets.

The bass drum in the second bar follows the guitars exactly and plays on the '+' of beats 2 and 3 only, beat 3 itself is missed.

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:08. This drum beat shows us how to create a drum beat that also supports the underlining song melody. The first bar of this two bar pattern is played almost identically to the first bar above, except no extra snare drum is played on the 'a' of beat 4, and a crash cymbal has been added on beat 1 of the bar.

The second bar follows the guitar riff by playing a three note rhythm - crash and snare drum played together followed by two bass drums in a row. This three note rhythm gets repeated again, starting on the '+' of beat 2, before the bar is resolved on beat 4. The snare and crash are played together again on beat 4 followed by a quick sixteenth note snare drum fill, starting on the '+' of beat 4 and finishing on the 'a'.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Good Times, Bad Times by "Led Zeppelin"

Drummer: **John Bonham**

Musical notation for the first four bars of the drum part in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the following patterns are written: Bar 1: 1 + 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a; Bar 2: 1 + 2 + a 3 e + a 4 +; Bar 3: 1 + 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a; Bar 4: 1 + 2 + a 3 e + a 4 +. The notation shows eighth notes and rests corresponding to these patterns.

Why It's Great

The gaps between Jimmy Page's opening guitar stabs were a playground for Bonzo, and he used them to tickle the bass drum, pet the hi-hat and take the toms outside for a damn good kicking. Let's also not forget those multiple bass drum notes he plays, SINGLE footed remember. Amazing technique!

How To Play It

Occurs during the verse once the vocals start. The right hand is playing on the cowbell throughout the verses but the ride cymbal bell can be used instead if you don't have a cowbell handy (as demonstrated in the video supplement).

The snare drum in the first bar is played on beats 2, the 'e' of beat 2, beat 4 and the 'e' of beat 4 also. This gives a lovely contrast to the slower eighth note snare drum double played in the second bar, starting on beat 2. The use of the high tom and low tom on beat 4 and the '+' of beat 4 respectively, are a nice touch of musicality.

Its the bass drum pattern that makes this groove so special and infectious. In the first bar, Bonham plays three bass drum notes in a row starting in the quirky position of the 'e' of beat 3. The technique required to play these three bass drum notes at this tempo is really quite something!

During the second bar the bass drum notes fall in between the cowbell pattern giving the groove syncopation and movement.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for the second four bars of the drum part in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the following patterns are written: Bar 1: 1 + 2 + ta ta 3 ta ta + ta ta 4 +; Bar 2: 1 + 2 + ta ta 3 ta ta + ta ta 4 +; Bar 3: 1 + 2 + ta ta 3 ta ta + ta ta 4 +; Bar 4: 1 + 2 + ta ta 3 ta ta + ta ta 4 +. The notation shows eighth notes and rests corresponding to these patterns, with some notes grouped as triplets.

How To Play It

Occurs 24 seconds into the song. We couldn't not include this little piece of drumming genius. This is a bass drum pattern that Bonham became famous for using. They're known as the Bonham Bass Drum Triplets and involve playing the bass drum on the second and third partial of each group of sixteenth note triplets, in between the steady right hand cowbell.

This is a real master class in bass drum technique and control!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Green Onions by "Booker T and the MG's"

Drummer: **Al Jackson Jnr.**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above the first, second, third, and fourth measures respectively. The notation consists of quarter notes on the top line of the staff, with an 'x' above each note. The first measure has a quarter note on the first line. The second measure has a quarter note on the second line. The third measure has a quarter note on the third line. The fourth measure has a quarter note on the fourth line. This represents a steady quarter-note pattern on the ride cymbal.

Why It's Great

It's just so simple and yet so contagious. Quarter notes on the ride, solid as a rock and a deep, deep swing. It's much harder to play than it sounds though.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the song. This drum beat is deceptively simple to play all the way through the song without improvising, but it's this simplicity and unwavering nature that helps to give the tune it's hypnotic feel.

The right hand plays quarter notes on the ride cymbal, at the same time as "feathering" the bass drum. This means that the bass drum is played very quietly. Playing the bass drum using the heel down technique works really well for playing this.

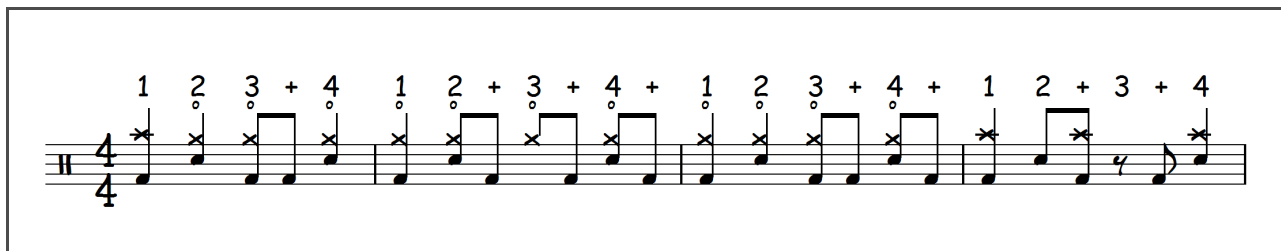
The snare drum backbeat is maintained on beats 2 and 4 of the bar with the left hand, at the same time as the hi-hat foot is stepped. Simple yet classy.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Highway Star by "Deep Purple"

Drummer: **Ian Paice**



Why It's Great

The way the drums are so tight with not just the bass but the organ, guitar and vocal make this a real example of Paice powering the band.

How To Play It

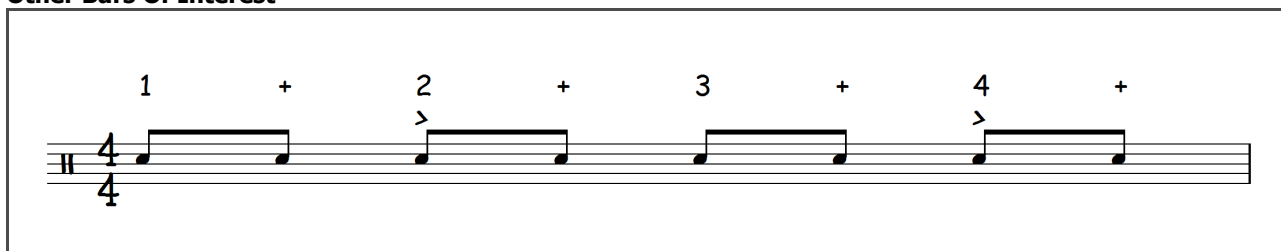
Occurs at 0:38 once the vocals start properly. This is the first four bars written in their entirety. Ian keeps things simple on the half open hi-hat by only playing quarter notes. This gives the groove drive and power, which is supported by the snare drum backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of each bar.

The bass drum moves from playing on beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3 in bar 1, to the '+' of beat 2 and 3 in bar 2. All bass drums that fall on the '+' are played in between the quarter note hi-hats so use the right hand as reference guide to help you place the bass drum notes correctly.

Bar 4 involves the stabs that follow the melody of the guitars and organ. The right hand quarter notes are interrupted in order to play the crash cymbal on beat 1, the '+' of beat 2 and beat 4. Notice how the snare drum is played on its own on beat 2 giving the right hand time to move to a crash cymbal straight after.

The bass drum is played with the first two crash cymbals of bar 4 but on it's own on the '+' of beat 3, in order to push the rhythm into the accent on beat 4. This crash cymbal is played at the same time as the snare drum instead of the bass drum previously.

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

Occurs at 0:16 after the accent notes are added to the snare drum pattern. This is the pattern Ian uses to build the song up into the first verse. The song starts with just eighth notes on the snare drum but then Paice adds an accent (loud note) on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

This groove can be played either with alternating hands (RLRL) or the right hand can play all of the eighth notes whilst at the same time, the left hand plays accents on beats 2 and 4.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Highway To Hell by "AC/DC"

Drummer: **Phil Rudd**

Why It's Great

Rudd's economical, no-nonsense approach to drumming achieved spectacular results on the tune that turned out to be then AC/DC front man Bon Scott's swansong. This is what's meant by playing for the song!

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:15 and then for all the verse's. Such a simple drum beat but played against the stomping guitar riff creates something very special indeed. The right hand is playing constant eighth notes on the hi-hat with the snare drum backbeat supplied on beats 2 and 4 of the bar. The bass drum is played on beats 1 and 3 with an extra bass drum on the '+' of beat 4, this is to help resolve the groove back onto beat 1 of the bar.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This is the first eight bars of the first chorus. The right hand plays eighth notes on the half open hi-hat all the way through, only moving to the crash cymbal for the guitar stabs on beat 1 of bars 1, 3, 5 and 7 and beats 3 and 4 of bars 2, 4 and 6. Notice how the crash cymbal doesn't interfere with the snare drum backbeat, if a crash is played on beat 4 then the snare drum is also played at the same time, in order to help keep the groove moving forward.

The bass drum plays quarter notes on every beat of the bar right up until bar 8. Bass drums are played at the same time as the snare on beats 2 and 4 for all bars. Two snare drums are played at the end of bar 7, on beat 4 and the '+' of beat 4. This second snare drum is played with the crash cymbal on the '+' to create an upbeat push to the end of the bar.

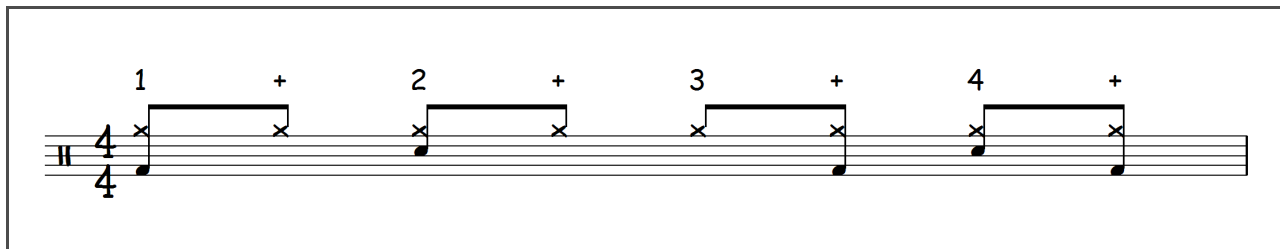
The last bar simply shows how Rudd keeps time for the rest of the band using his hi-hat foot before the next verse.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Honky Tonk Woman by "The Rolling Stones"

Drummer: **Charlie Watts**



Why It's Great

Put a stethoscope to Watts' chest and you'll hear the Honky Tonk Women beat. As deft and unflappable as the man himself, this cowbell-assisted groove epitomised his personality and drumming style.

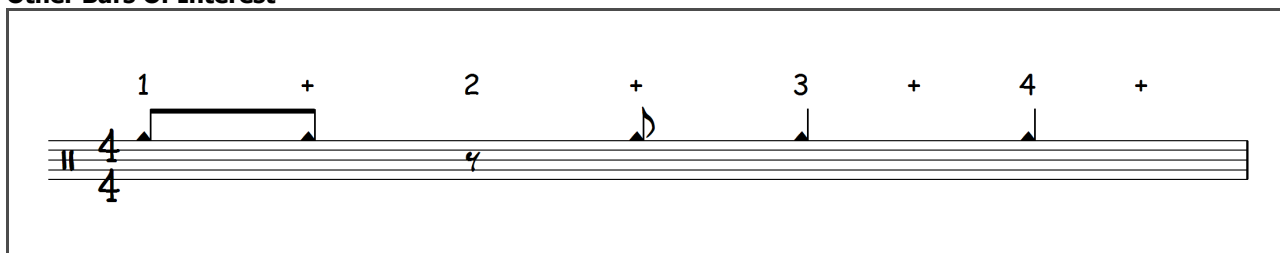
How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song just after the cowbell introduction (shown below). Charlie was the master of the understatement. His drum beats were never overly complicated and always fitted the music perfectly. Here we see an example of this with steady hi-hat notes and strong backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The bass drum plays on the '+' of beat 3 and gives the groove forward momentum. The bass drum on the '+' of beat 4 loops back into the bass drum on beat 1, resolving the bar very nicely.

It's worth pointing out that the cowbell pattern (shown below) was not played by Charlie at the same time as the drums were recorded. It was probably played by another band member whilst recording or over dubbed on top of the recorded drums later by Charlie himself.

Other Bars Of Interest



This exact cowbell pattern is played for the first few bars of the song (on top of the drum beat shown top) but then changes into a different improvised variation for the rest of the song. Charlie obviously enjoyed improvising with this basic cowbell pattern as the song progressed.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Hot For Teacher by "Van Halen"

Drummer: **Alex Van Halen**

Why It's Great

We'd heard the double bass drum shuffle before with Cobham's 'Quadrant 4' (also in this book) and Simon Phillips' 'Space Boogie' but Alex's powerhouse approach to rock shuffles, specifically in this song, brought it to the mainstream.

How To Play It

Occurs at around 0:53 just after the tom tom drum intro/solo. It's drum beats like this that make people want to learn drums in the first place! Alex is using his double bass drum to play the shuffle rhythm. The shuffle rhythm consists of playing the first and third triplet of each beat. Alex uses his main bass drum foot to play all the down beats in the bar (beats 1, 2, 3 and 4) and his secondary bass drum foot to play all the upbeats (the '+'/'let'). This double bass drum pattern is maintained throughout while the hands play over the top.

The snare drum plays a simple backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar while the right hand plays on the bell of the ride cymbal. The first and second partial of the triplet is played on beats 1 and 3 whilst the first partial (downbeat) is played on beats 2 and 4.

Alex stretches the ride cymbal triplet notes on the first and second triplet partials of beat 1 and 3 into something that can't be notated 100% accurately. The notation above still works but as you practice the beat you will find that the two adjacent triplet notes slowly move closer to the snare drum on beats 2 and 4, closer than can be notated in this example anyway. It's one of those "listen and copy" jobs.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time around 0:23. This two bar example demonstrates how Alex moves to the crash cymbals for those stabs at 0:26. The shuffle double bass drum pattern is maintained and the snare drum and crash cymbal are struck together on the '+' of beat 3 and the '+' of beat 4 in bar 1. These crash cymbal and snare drum combo's fall with the left bass drum foot. Notice also how the ride cymbal doesn't return in the second bar until beat 2 of the second bar, at the same time as the snare drum.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Hot Fun In The Summertime by "Sly & The Family Stone"

Drummer: **Gregg Errico**

Musical notation for the first two bars of the 12/8 groove. The time signature is 12/8. The first bar contains 12 eighth notes, with 'x' marks above the notes on beats 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The second bar contains 12 eighth notes, with 'x' marks above the notes on beats 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The notes are quarter notes.

Why It's Great

This is a sublime example of keeping the groove in the pocket, Gregg Errico's 12/8 pattern is the bedrock on which the Family Stone build their funky soul.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time around 0:15 and is then repeated throughout the song. This two bar phrase occurs when the verse is about to move into the chorus or a new section of the song. The whole song is played in the time signature of 12/8. This means that there are 12 eighth notes counted in every bar. Playing in this time signature can be thought of as playing in triplets.

The right hand plays constant eighth notes on the hi-hat throughout. The counting goes up to twelve but you could also count in groups of three or six if you liked (123, 123 or 123456 etc.) It makes no difference how the groove is counted.

The snare drum is played on beats 4 and 10 of both bars. The bass drum plays a swung pattern, falling on beat 1, 6, 7 and beat 12. This bass drum pattern then moves into the second bar where the bass drum is played the same as the first bar but with extra bass drums, just before each snare drum on beats 3 and 9. This gives the bass drum it's shuffled/swung feel.

The second bar continues the shuffled bass drum theme by adding in extra shuffled bass drum notes on beats 3 and 9. These bass drum notes are played at the same time as the hi-hat, just before the snare drum backbeats.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for the first two bars of the 12/8 groove, identical to the first image. The time signature is 12/8. The first bar contains 12 eighth notes, with 'x' marks above the notes on beats 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The second bar contains 12 eighth notes, with 'x' marks above the notes on beats 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The notes are quarter notes.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and during the verses. This is the basic groove Gregg chooses to play through the majority of the song.

Both bars are played exactly the same as the first bar, shown at the top of this page. The snare drum falls on beats 4 and 10, while the bass drum is played on beats 1, 6, 7 and 12.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



I Keep Forgettin' by "Michael McDonald"

Drummer: Jeff Porcaro

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a drum part in 4/4 time. Above each staff is a sequence of rhythmic notations: '1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e +'. The first staff shows a pattern of eighth notes on the snare drum (marked with 'x') and bass drum (marked with 'o') on beats 2 and 4. The second staff shows a similar pattern but with a different bass drum placement on beat 1. The notation includes various symbols for snare, bass, and hi-hat, along with dynamic markings like '+' and 'o'.

Why It's Great

This man just can't put a foot (or hand) wrong when it comes to playing great sounding grooves. His touch and feel is sublime and the bass drum placement for this track locks in with the bass guitar and melody perfectly. This is a master class in groove construction.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the verses. For the first section of the song, Jeff plays cross-stick instead of snare drum on beats 2 and 4 of each bar. For the rest of the verses, Jeff plays as written on the snare drum.

Amazingly, Jeff plays the hi-hat pattern one handed, with his right hand. If you find this too demanding then you can switch to a double handed hi-hat pattern instead (RLRL instead of RRRR). Remember, when playing a double handed hi-hat pattern that the right hand plays the snare drum on beats 2 and 4 and all bass drum notes that fall on an 'e' or on an 'a' are played at the same time as the left hand on the hi-hat.

A snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4 for all four bars and bars 1 and 2 use exactly the same bass drum pattern as each other. The bass drum for these two bars is played on beats 1, the 'a' of beat 2 and beat 3 itself.

The hi-hat is opened on the '+' of beat 4 for all four bars. It then closes again on beat 1 of the next bar. The hi-hat on the 'a' of beat 4 is skipped or sometimes just played very quietly by Jeff. The hi-hat opening in bar 1 is skipped the first time the four bar pattern is played for each verse.

Bar 2 uses a really cool and syncopated bass drum pattern. The bass drum on beat 1 is skipped and a bass drum is played on the '+' of beat 1 instead. A bass drum is then played on the 'e' of beat 2, right after the snare drum, and then on the 'a' of beat 2 and on beat 3 itself. A final bass drum is played at the same time as the snare drum, on beat 4 of the bar.

Bar 4 still skips the bass drum on beat 1, lifting the groove in the air and playing on the '+' of beat 1 instead. Three more bass drums are played on beat 3, the 'a' of beat 3 (just before the snare drum) and on the '+' of beat 4 (at the same time as the hi-hat is opened).

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Immigrant Song by "Led Zeppelin"

Drummer: **John Bonham**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes '1 + a', '2 e + a', '3 + a', and '4 e + a' are written. The notation includes eighth notes on the hi-hat, snare backbeats on beats 2 and 4, and bass drum notes on the downbeats and between the hi-hats. Ghost notes on the snare are marked with brackets on the 'a' of beats 2 and 4.

Why It's Great

Instantly recognisable as soon as the drums and guitar enter, sending goose bumps down spines to all that listen. Paige and Bonham were meant to play together. Energy, power, musicality and excitement – drumming doesn't get any better than this!

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and throughout. Bonham lays down a whole bar of eighth notes on the hi-hat whilst supplying a fat backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar on the snare drum.

An extra snare drum ghost note (marked in brackets) is played on the 'a' of beat 2 and the 'a' of beat 4, in between the hi-hats. This ghost note is to be played quietly and so requires some serious restraint as the energy of the drum beat is forcing you to play loudly.

The bass drum for beats 1 and 2 are the same as beats 3 and 4. A bass drum is played on the downbeat of beat 1 and 3 and then two sixteenth note bass drums fall before each of the snare drum backbeats, on the '+' and 'a' of beats 1 and 3. The bass drums on the 'a' of both beats fall in between the hi-hats.

The final bass drum for both beats 2 and 4 fall on the 'e', directly after the snare drum backbeats and in between the hi-hats. The bass drum follows the guitar and bass riffs exactly, creating a very powerful groove indeed!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



In Bloom by "Nirvana"

Drummer: **Dave Grohl**

A musical staff for a drum set showing a four-beat pattern. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, +, a, 2, +, 3, e, +, a, 4, e, +, a. The notation includes a crash cymbal on beat 1, a hi-hat on beat 1, a snare drum on beat 2, a snare drum on beat 3, a bass drum on beat 3, a snare drum on beat 4, and a bass drum on beat 4. There are also various rests and accents indicated.

Why It's Great

One of the greatest drum grooves to start a song ever! Furious flams and angry guitar, what's not to love?!

How To Play It

This is the first bar of the song, it gets repeated four times at the beginning and then played again whenever this guitar riff is played.

Grohl punches out crash cymbals on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 2 to match the guitar riff, playing eighth notes on the half open hi-hats in between. The last hi-hat is struck on beat 3 with the right hand, just before the first of the flams enter.

A flam is when both hands strike a drum, one slightly before the other. The idea is to play the notes as close to each other as possible without them actually falling at the same time.

Two snare drum flams are played on the 'e' and '+' of beat 3 followed by a single bass drum on the 'a'. A flam is then played on the high tom followed by a bass drum on the 'e', another flam on the floor tom on '+' and finally a single bass drum on the 'a'. This loops back to the bass drum on beat 1 with the crash cymbal, effectively meaning that two bass drum notes are played next to each other when the bar is looped.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff for a drum set showing a four-beat pattern. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, e, +, a, 2, e, +, a, 3, e, +, a, 4, e, +, a. The notation shows a consistent pattern of sixteenth notes on the hi-hat and snare drum backbeats on beats 2 and 4.

How To Play It

Occurs at 0:13 and during all the verses. After the onslaught of the intro we're treated to a simple and tasteful drum groove for the verses.

Grohl is playing sixteenth notes on the hi-hat throughout with a snare drum backbeat on beats 2 and 4. Two bass drum notes are played at the same time as the hi-hat, on beat 1 and the 'e' of beat 1 as well as on beat 3 and 'e'.

The hi-hat is played half open for the first section of the verse and then closes once the vocals start, giving Kurt room to be heard.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



In The Air Tonight by "Phil Collins"

Drummer: **Phil Collins**

Why It's Great

A Roland drum machine does its work, building tension before Collins launches a thousand imitative air drummers with a cleverly conceived dynamic snare drum entrance.

How To Play It

Occurs at 3:17. Although this technically isn't a drum beat it had to be included because of its mass appeal amongst drummers and non-drummers alike.

It consists of a simple three note pattern played between the hands and the bass drum. The hands play two sixteenth notes followed by a single bass drum note. This three note pattern is moved down the tom tom's four times up until beat 4 of the bar where two eighth notes are played on the lowest tom tom.

Because the pattern is three notes long, it moves across the beats of the bar in an interesting manner. Not quite lining up with each beat of the bar. Beat 4 of the bar is simply two eighth notes that fall on beat 4 and the '+' of beat 4.

Phil has many tom toms when playing this live but not every drummer has 5 or 6 toms! When I replicate this on my standard sized drum kit, I play high tom for the first two hand notes, high and medium for the next two, just medium for the next two, medium and floor for the next and then just the floor tom for the last two eighth notes at the end of the bar. The exact choice of toms really isn't important as long as the fill moves down in pitch.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs at 3:19 right after the drum fill entrance. This is the basic four bar pattern Phil plays for the rest of the song. A drum fill is improvised each time at the end of bar 4 and into the first beat of bar 1, creating a point of interest every four bars.

Snare drum flams are played on beats 2 and 4 of every bar. Flams are simply two notes played very close to each other but not quite at the same time.

Notice how the bass drum and snare drums follow the melody of the song exactly and how the offbeat bass drums in bar 4 keep the drum part hanging in the air until the return of bar 1. This demonstrates tasteful drum beat construction!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Jailhouse Rock by "Elvis Presley"

Drummer: **DJ Fontana**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The groove consists of four measures. Each measure starts with a bass drum hit on the first beat. Above the staff, there are four groups of notes, each labeled with a number (1, 2, 3, 4) and a plus sign. Each group contains three notes, with a bracket above them and the number '3' indicating a triplet. The notes are eighth notes. The first and third notes of each triplet are marked with an 'x' above them, indicating they are played with the hi-hat. The second and fourth notes of each triplet are marked with a 'v' below them, indicating they are played with the snare drum. The bass drum hits are represented by solid black dots on the bottom line of the staff.

Why It's Great

Fontana took the rhythm and blues shuffle, accented the second and fourth beats of the bar and created a sound that shook the whole world. Back in 1957, this had never been heard before!

How To Play It

Occurs during the entire song after the snare drum stab intro. This is a great little groove and of course has been used by countless drummers ever since.

The hi-hat plays a pattern known as the shuffle. The shuffle consists of playing the first and third note of each triplet but in this recorded example, Fontana plays in and out of a quasi-swing/quasi-straight manner. This means that the feel of the shuffle changes and almost sounds like straight eighth notes at times.

The bass drum plays on all four beats of the bar while the snare drum falls on beats 2 and 4. Deceptively simple but quite a task to emulate when played up to speed.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Kashmir by "Led Zeppelin"

Drummer: **John Bonham**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing the hi-hat pattern for the Kashmir drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a double bar line at the beginning. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 e +, 2 +, 3 e +, 4 +. The notation shows eighth notes on the first and third beats, with a plus sign indicating a hi-hat on the 'e' of the first beat and the first half of the third beat. There are also plus signs on the second and fourth beats, indicating a snare drum backbeat.

Why It's Great

Simplicity at it's finest, never has playing for the song sounded so big. Bonzo's driving bass drum pushes the song along with such class and power!

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning and throughout most of the song. Bonham lays down eighth notes on the hi-hat with his right hand. A snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4 of the bar, played at the same time as the hi-hat.

The two bass drums are played on beat 1 and the 'e' of beat 1. This second bass drum on the 'e' falls in between the hi-hats. The same bass drum rhythm is played on beat 3 and the 'e' of beat 3.

Simple. Powerful. Great.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Killing In The Name by "Rage Against The Machine"

Drummer: **Brad Wilk**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a four-bar drum pattern. Above the staff, the beats are marked with numbers and plus signs: "1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +". The notation consists of eighth notes on the snare line and quarter notes on the bass line, with a drum fill in the final bar.

Why It's Great

Brad Wilk's constant shifts in meter and dynamics are capped by the venomous freak-out that he plays in the 'F*** You, I won't do what you tell me' section that kicks in at 4:12. This drum beat could be the official soundtrack to anarchy.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:43. This four bar drum beat is like a kick up the backside when it first enters. Very reminiscent of Bonham and other great rock drummers. The drum beats simplicity is the key to it's power!

The hi-hat is played half open with the right hand and a crash cymbal is played on beat 1 of bar 1.

The bass drum and snare drum stay steady on beats 1 and 3 and beats 2 and 4 respectively. Bar 4 has a drum fill in the form of a bass drum variation on the 'e' and 'a' of beat 4. These two bass drums fall in between the steady hi-hat. A bass drum is also played in between the hi-hats on the 'e' of beat 4, straight after the snare drum.

Notice that the hi-hat isn't played on the '+' of beat 4 because a flam is played between the two hands on the snare drum instead.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a four-bar drum pattern. Above the staff, the beats are marked with numbers and letters: "1 + a 2 + 3 e + a 4 +". The notation shows a steady eighth-note hi-hat pattern with bass drum and snare drum accompaniment.

How To Play It

This drum beat only occurs at the beginning of the song. The right hand is again playing steady eighth notes on the closed hi-hat with one opening on the '+' of beat 4, at the same time as the bass drum is played. The hi-hat then closes with the bass drum on beat 1 when the bar is looped.

The snare drum supplies a backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar with an extra snare drum played on the 'e' of beat 3, which falls in between the hi-hats either side of it.

The bass drums on the 'a' of beat 1 and 3 supply forward momentum, pushing the groove into the snare drum on beats 2 and 4. Both of these bass drums are also played in between the hi-hats either side of them.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The time signature is 4/4. The beat is marked with '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +'. The notation shows eighth notes on the closed hi-hat (marked with 'x') and a single opening on the '+' of beat 4. The bass drum is played on beats 1 and 3, and the snare drum is played on beats 2 and 4.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:54 and during all the verses. This rock solid and simple drum beat can't help but make heads nod and fists punch the air. Again, the key to its feel is its simplicity.

Eighth notes are played on the closed hi-hat with a single opening on the '+' of beat 4 which then closes again on beat 1 with the bass drum when looped.

The bass drum and snare drum play the super simple pattern on beats 1 and 3 and beats 2 and 4 respectively.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The time signature is 4/4. The beat is marked with '1 e + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 +'. The notation shows eighth notes on the half open hi-hat (marked with 'o') and a snare drum backbeat on beats 2 and 4. The notes are swung, with the 'e' and 'a's placed slightly closer to the '+' than the beat itself.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 2:01. Brad sticks with playing eighth notes on the half open hi-hat and a snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4.

The whole song has an element of swing to it that hasn't been too evident until this drum beat is played. All of the sixteenth notes (the 'e' and 'a's) are played slightly swung, almost like a sixteenth note shuffle. It's a feel thing that if you're not familiar with, can be learnt best by first listening and then trying to emulate the "feel".

This swing element is really apparent when the two bass drums are played on beat 1 and the 'e' of beat 1. The 'e', played in between the hi-hats, is placed slightly closer to the '+' than beat 1 itself. This is also apparent on the 'a' of beat 3 when the bass drum is swung slightly more towards beat 4 than the '+' of beat 3.

This positioning of the bass drum in relation to the hi-hat notes either side of them is also true of the bass drum that falls in between the right hand on the 'a' of beats 1 and 2.

Notice the crash cymbal played on beat 1 on each repeat of the bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Lapdance by "NERD"

Drummer: Eric Fawcett

	1	e	+	a	2	e	+	a	3	e	+	a	4	e	+	a	1	e	+	a	2	e	+	a	3	e	+	a	4	e	+	a		
	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L

Why It's Great

Shuffling hi-hats, super economical parts and machine-gun snare fills into wig-out chorus sections add up to a spot-on hip-hop/rock crossover. Pharrell has never sounded cooler than this!

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song when the drums kick in at 0:10. Eric chooses to play the hi-hat pattern with both hands, it's simply two fast to play one handed and this lends itself well to playing the hi-hat accent notes more easily as well.

The snare drum backbeat is played on beat 2 and 4 of both bars with the right hand.

The bass drum is relatively simple in the first bar with the bass drum coming down at the same time as the right hand on beats 1, the '+' of 1 and the '+' of beat 3. The bass drum pattern is exactly the same for the second bar except for an extra bass drum that's played straight after the snare drum on the 'e' of beat 4. This bass drum comes down with the left hand on the hi-hat.

Eric throws in some rather cool accent notes on the hi-hat in the same place for both bars. The accents are played louder than the other hi-hat notes and are both played with the left hand on the 'a' of beat 2 and the 'e' of beat 3. These two offbeat hand accents add some spice to the groove!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Like Eating Glass by "Bloc Party"

Drummer: **Matt Tong**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. Above the staff, the rhythm is written as: 1 + 2 + 3 e + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 e + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 e + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 e + 4 e +. The notation includes a crash cymbal on the first beat of the first bar, followed by eighth notes on the hi-hats. The right hand (R) plays the hi-hats and the left hand (L) plays the snare and bass drums. The pattern repeats for four bars, with a small drum fill in the final bar of the fourth bar.

Why It's Great

Rising from the chattering wall of guitars at 0:25, Tong kicks into a petulant beat whose attention deficit disorder meant he never played the same fill twice. Like hearing class!

How To Play It

This is the first four bars of the verse section that starts at 0:56, when the vocals start. The right hand plays a fast and steady eighth note pattern on the hi-hats with a crash cymbal on beat 1 of bar 1.

Bars 1, 2, 3 and the first three quarters of bar 4 are played exactly the same as each other. Three bass drum notes are played in a row, starting on beat 1, the '+' of beat 1 and beat 2. These three bass drums are then followed by the first of the snare drum backbeats on the '+' of beat 2. Most drum beats have a snare backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar but this displacement of the snare drum gives the groove a quirky feel. It also locks in with the guitar melody brilliantly.

A snare drum is played in between the hi-hats on the 'e' of beat 3. Use the hi-hat as a steady reference to ensure this snare drum gets placed correctly between the right hand pattern. The snare drum is followed by a bass drum on the '+' of beat 3, played at the same time as the hi-hat is struck.

The second snare drum backbeat is played on beat 4 of the bar followed by a bass drum on the '+' of beat 4.

Beat 4 of bar 4 is slightly different and involves a small drum fill played between the right and left hand on the snare drum. Beat 4 and the 'e' of beat 4 are played with the right and left hand respectively, this then leaves the right hand free to move back up to the hi-hat to play the open hi-hat on the '+' of beat 4. The hi-hat closes again on beat 1 of the next bar, at the same time as the crash cymbal is struck.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a drum pattern in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the following rhythmic notation is written: 1 + 2 + 3 e + 4 + a 1 + 2 + 3 e + 4 +. The notes are represented by 'x' marks on the staff. The first bar contains notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. The second bar contains notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. The third bar contains notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. The fourth bar contains notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' are written under the notes on beats 3 and 4 of the second bar, respectively. There are also some additional markings like a small circle and a plus sign above the notes on beats 1 and 2 of the second bar.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time in the section starting at 1:20. Bar 1 of this two bar drum pattern is exactly the same as bar 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the previous drum beat except that two snare drum notes are played on the '+' and 'a' of beat 4, with the right and left hands respectively.

These two snare drum notes lead the right hand back onto the hi-hat on beat 1 of bar 2 where another two bass drum notes are played.

The hi-hat is opened at the same time as the second bass drum is played, on the '+' of beat 1. The hi-hat closes again on beat 2 where Matt chooses to skip the hi-hat. This might be to give his right arm a much needed rest or it might be for a musical reason, either way you can choose to exclude it as written or include it if you find it easier to play.

Bar 2 ends in the same way as bars 1, 2 and 3 from the previous example.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Like I Love You by "Justin Timberlake"

Drummer: **Pharrell Williams**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a double bar line. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 e + a, 2 + a, 3 e +, 4 e + a. The notation shows a series of eighth notes on the hi-hat, with accents (>) on the downbeats (beats 1, 2, 3, and 4). Snare drum notes are marked with 'x' and some are in brackets, indicating they are played quietly. Bass drum notes are marked with a dot and a vertical line, indicating they are played between the hi-hats.

Why It's Great

Pharrell Williams's funk-era tribute snare snaps and pops it way through this track, his hi-hat accents drive it on, while his infectious looped bass drum pattern creates a propulsive syncopated undercurrent, resulting in a near-perfect pop tune.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning and throughout the song. The right hand is playing eighth notes on the hi-hat all the way through giving the groove a solid foundation for the rest of the kit to play off. The hi-hat is accented (played loudly) on all the downbeats (beats 1, 2, 3 and 4). These loud notes can be left out if too difficult to include, especially when you first learn this drum groove.

A solid and tight snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4 of the bar while the rest of the snare notes (marked in brackets) are played quietly. All of the ghosted snare drum notes fall in between the hi-hats.

The bass drum on the 'a' of beat 1 pushes into the snare backbeat on beat 2 of the bar. This bass drum falls in between the hi-hats either side of it.

The other bass drum to look out for falls on the 'e' of beat 4, right after the snare drum. This note also falls in between the hi-hats.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a double bar line. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 e + a, 2 + a, 3 +, 4 e + a. The notation shows a series of eighth notes on the hi-hat, with accents (>) on the downbeats (beats 1, 2, 3, and 4). Snare drum notes are marked with 'x' and some are in brackets, indicating they are played quietly. Bass drum notes are marked with a dot and a vertical line, indicating they are played between the hi-hats.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:31 and is then used occasionally throughout in an improvised manner. This is played exactly the same as the first drum beat above except that a bit of musical space is given to the groove around the middle of the bar.

Firstly, the snare drum note on the 'a' of beat 2 is played a little more loudly than before but then the snare drum that is normally ghosted on the 'e' of beat 3 is left out, creating some space for the groove to breath. A very musical choice!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Longview by "Green Day"

Drummer: **Tre Cool**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, +, 2, 3, trip let, 4, +. Below the staff, the notes are labeled: R, R, L, L, R, L, R, L, L. Above the staff, there are three triplet markings (a bracket with a '3' above it) over the first, second, and fourth beats. The first triplet is over the first and second notes of the first beat. The second triplet is over the first and second notes of the second beat. The third triplet is over the first, second, and third notes of the fourth beat. The notes are quarter notes.

Why It's Great

Displaying self-restraint through the tribal pounding of the verses, Cool hit the Longview chorus like a bull ram-raiding a china shop.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and during all the verses. Tre is playing a shuffle rhythm played between both hands for this drum groove. A shuffle rhythm is simply the first and third triplet note of each beat of the bar.

The right hand remains on the the floor tom for the majority of the bar whilst the high tom is used to play the backbeat, instead of using the snare drum as you might hear with more traditional backbeats. The bass drum plays at the same time as the right hand on the floor tom for beat 1, while the left hand plays both the high tom notes in beat 2.

The left hand moves to the floor tom on beat 3 to play the middle note of the triplet, in between the two right handed floor tom notes. Another bass drum note is played at the same time as the right hand on the downbeat of beat 3 itself. This flow of triplet notes moves into beat 4 where the left hand moves back up to the high tom to play the single note before moving back down to the floor tom to play the last triplet note on the '+' of beat 4.

It's also worth pointing out that Tre plays the hi-hat on all four beats of the bar with his foot. This has been omitted from the example above for ease of reading but can be included if you're comfortable with this. Also, Tre improvises during the length of the song and doesn't always play the two high tom notes on beat 2. He sometimes moves back to the floor tom on the '+' of beat 2, as heard in beat 4.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above the first, second, third, and fourth measures respectively. Above each number is a triplet bracket containing three eighth notes. Above the first and third notes of each triplet is a small circle with a dot inside. Above the second and fourth notes of each triplet is a plus sign (+). The staff contains quarter notes on the first and third beats of each measure, and quarter notes on the second and fourth beats of each measure. There are also quarter notes on the first and third beats of each measure, and quarter notes on the second and fourth beats of each measure.

How To Play It

Occurs at about 0:50 during the chorus. Here we have a classic driving swung/shuffled drum beat, played to give the song forward momentum and energy.

The right hand plays quarter notes on the half open hi-hat while the left hand supplies a steady backbeat on the snare drum on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The bass drum emphasises the shuffle pattern by playing on the first and third triplet note of each beat but not with the snare drums on beats 2 and 4. Basically, the bass drum fills in the gaps between the snare drums.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Love Rears It's Ugly Head by "Living Colour"

Drummer: **Will Calhoun**

Musical notation for the drum part of 'Love Rears It's Ugly Head' by Living Colour. The notation is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. Above the staves are rhythmic markings: '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 e + a 2 + 3 e + 4 +' for the first three staves, and '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 e + a 2 + 3 e + a 4 e + a' for the fourth staff. The notation includes various drum symbols such as 'x' for hi-hats, 'o' for snare, and 'e' for bass drum. The first three staves end with a double bar line, and the fourth staff ends with a drum fill symbol.

Why It's Great

Calhoun's rock-solid backbeat and soulful hip-hop flavoured bass drum are melodic siblings to the bass and guitar riff. Will almost plays with his bass drum, finding new and exciting ways to add to the music.

How To Play It

This is the first eight bars of the song. All sixteenth notes are swung throughout the song. This means that all notes that fall on the 'e' or the 'a' are played slightly later than they would be played normally. It's a very subtle difference but helps to give the whole song a hip-hop, head bobbing "feel".

The right hand plays eighth notes on the hi-hat throughout the first seven bars. This steady right hand creates a reference for lining up the bass drum notes, either on or in between the right hand hi-hats.

Bars 1, 3, 5 and 7 contain basic bass drum patterns that follow the guitar and bass guitar exactly. The bass drums fall on beat 1, the '+' of beat 2 (after the snare drum) and beat 3. Notice the open hi-hat notes on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 1 for bar 5. This extended hi-hat opening closes on beat 2 with the snare drum. Bars 1 and 7 have an open hi-hat on the '+' of beat 4 which then closes again on beat 1 of the next bar.

Bars 2, 4 and 6 use the same bass drum pattern for beat 1 of the bar. The first two bass drums fall on beat 1 itself and the 'e' of beat 1. The bass drum is also played on the 'a' of beat 1. Both the 'e' and the 'a' fall in between the hi-hats. Bars 2 and 6 both have bass drums played on the 'e' and '+' of beat 3. Again, the 'e' falls in between the hi-hats.

Bar 4 has an interesting idea where Will plays three bass drums in a row starting on the 'e' of beat 3. The first bass drum is very quiet due to the heel/toe technique Will uses on his bass drum pedal. Remember that all three bass drum notes are slightly swung.

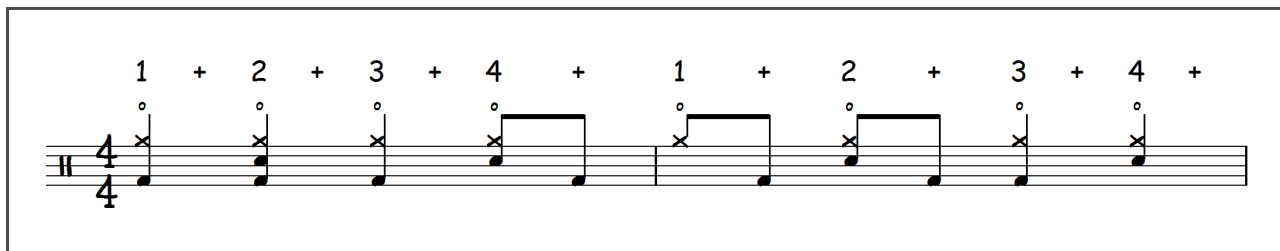
The drum fill in bar 8 is played between the snare drum and floor tom.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Lust For Life by "Iggy Pop"

Drummer: **Hunt Sales**



Why It's Great

Thanks to Ewan McGregor racing to avoid the fuzz in *Trainspotting*, everyone knows how gripping this song's drum intro is. A barrage of toms and big, reverb-laden snare, *Lust For Life* sounds like 50's rock'n'roll injected with speed and run through the 70's punk blender.

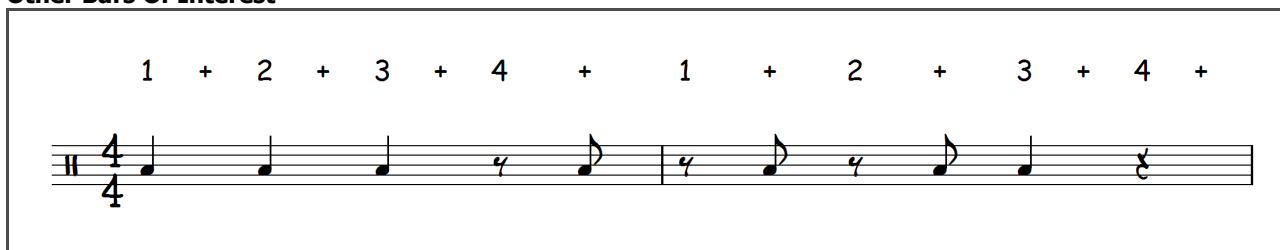
How To Play It

Occurs during the entire song. The hi-hat and snare drum are playing a simple pattern throughout. Quarter notes on the half open hi-hat with a snare drum backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of both bars.

The bass drum however follows a really cool rhythmic pattern from start to finish (shown in the example below), moving from the downbeat at the beginning of the first bar to the upbeat of each beat in the second bar. The pattern resolves itself back to the downbeat on beat 3 of the second bar.

This tune was originally double tracked with two separate drum tracks. This is obvious at the beginning of the song where you can hear the drum beat separately from the floor tom rhythm (shown below), played over the top.

Other Bars Of Interest



It's simply not possible to replicate the sheer barrage of tom toms whilst playing the drum beat at the same time, unless you happen to have four arms?! Not a problem though, the bass drum does a good job at replicating it when performing it live. This is demonstrated in the video supplement for this drum beat.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Manic Depression by "Jimi Hendrix"

Drummer: **Mitch Mitchell**

A musical staff in 3/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The pattern consists of three measures. The first measure has a bass drum note on beat 1, a snare note on the third partial of a triplet on beat 2, and a snare note on the third partial of a triplet on beat 3. The second measure has a bass drum note on beat 1, a snare note on the third partial of a triplet on beat 2, and a snare note on the third partial of a triplet on beat 3. The third measure has a bass drum note on beat 1, a snare note on the third partial of a triplet on beat 2, and a snare note on the third partial of a triplet on beat 3. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, and 3. Above the first triplet, there is a '+' sign. Above the second triplet, there is a '+' sign. Above the third triplet, there is a '+' sign. Above the first note of the third triplet, there is a 'trip' label. Above the second and third notes of the third triplet, there is a 'let' label. Below the staff, there are 'L' labels under the second and third notes of the third triplet. The notes are marked with 'x' for snare and 'o' for bass drum.

Why It's Great

Mitch brings his jazzy roots to the fore on this early Jimi Hendrix Experience 3/4 classic, sweeping the track along with an insistent ride pattern combined with snare/tom syncopations.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the song. The whole song is played in the time signature of 3/4. This means that there are three counted beats to every bar.

The bass drum and ride cymbal bell are played on beats 1, 2 and 3 of the bar creating the pulse. The snare drum notes, during beats 1 and 2 of the bar are played on the third partial of each triplet, counted on the '+'. The first snare drum note of the bar (on the '+' of beat 1) is written in brackets because it's played quietly. The second snare drum note on the '+' of beat 2 is played at a normal volume.

The two high tom notes, on the second and third partial of the triplet for beat 4, are played with the left hand. It's important that all three notes in beat 4, the ride cymbal bell/bass drum and the two high tom notes, are played smoothly into beat 1 of the following bar. This flow of triplet notes into beat 1 of every bar gives the groove it's flowing feel.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Memphis Soul Stew by "King Curtis"

Drummer: **Bernard "Pretty" Purdie**

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. Above each staff is a rhythmic pattern: "1 + 2 + a 3 e + a 4 +". The notation consists of eighth notes and rests. The first staff shows the first two bars, and the second staff shows the last two bars. The notation includes 'x' marks for hi-hats and '(.)' marks for ghost notes. The first two bars end with a bass drum on the '+' of beat 4, while the last two bars end with a snare drum on the '+' of beat 4.

Why It's Great

Purdie makes his entrance on this famous live track by rifling in with the funkier ghost notes and stingier hi-hats ever heard. He's like an unstoppable whirlwind.

How To Play It

This is the first four bars of the drums in their entirety that enter at 0:28. Bernard plays the hi-hat like a robot, solid and steady eighth notes played with his right hand.

The snare drum backbeat is supplied on beat 2 of the bar and on beats 2 and the '+' of beat 4 for bars 3 and 4. All other snare drums (marked in brackets) are played as ghost notes (played quietly).

The same ghost note pattern is played in all four bars. The ghost notes fall in between the hi-hats on the 'a' of beat 2, the 'e' and 'a' of beat 3 and beat 4 itself. A double is played with the left hand, starting in between the hi-hats on the 'a' of beat 3 and then on beat 4 itself, played at the same time as the hi-hat.

Bars 1 and 2 both have the same ending with a bass drum played on the '+' of beat 4. Bars 3 and 4 however have a different ending where an accent, or louder snare drum note is played on the '+' of beat 4, at the same time as the hi-hat is struck.

The bass drum pattern remains on beat 1, the '+' of beat 1 and the '+' of beat 3 for all four bars but notice the extra bass drum played on the '+' of beat 4 for the first two bars.

The drum beat written in bars 3 and 4 is the beat Bernard plays for the remainder for this section of the song.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Midlife Crisis by "Faith No More"

Drummer: **Mike 'Puffy' Bordin**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, +, 2, +, a, 3, +, 4, +. The notation consists of eighth notes and rests. On beat 1, there is an eighth note followed by a rest. On beat 2, there is an eighth note followed by a rest. On beat 3, there is an eighth note followed by a rest. On beat 4, there is an eighth note followed by a rest. There are also eighth notes on the '+' marks of beats 2 and 4. The pattern is: 1 (x), +, 2 (x), + (x), a, 3 (x), +, 4 (x), + (x).

Why It's Great

Showcasing the perfect ringing snare in the intro and nailing a beat of utmost solidity throughout, Puffy proves his genius once more.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and during the verses. Puffy improvises with this pattern throughout by adding extra tom tom notes, open hi-hat barks and china cymbals but this is the pattern he plays the most.

The snare drum is keeping a steady backbeat on beats 2 and 4 while the hi-hat foot steps on all the eighth notes.

The bass drum plays a lovely little pattern, pushing into beat 3 with a bass drum on the 'a' of beat 2. A floor tom flam is struck on the '+' of beat 4 but Puffy varies this and uses multiple toms live. You might like to flam between the medium and floor tom rather than just the floor tom if you like.

Mike also sometimes plays a tom tom accent on beat 1 to emphasises the downbeat of the bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



No One Knows by "Queens Of The Stone Age"

Drummer: **Dave Grohl**

Why It's Great

Big Dave, back on the drums for the first time in years, attacks the Queens' song with enormous power. There's just something very special about the way Dave plays the drums.

How To Play It

Occurs during all the verses. The first bar should be pretty self explanatory, all four notes on the bass drum are played at the same time as the right hand on the hi-hat. The snare drum plays on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The change occurs in the second bar where a triplet is thrown onto beat 3 of the bar adding an element of shuffle/swing to the groove. The snare drum is played on the third note of the triplet (counted '+') of beat 3, giving the beat a quirky ending. The hi-hat is opened on beat 4 where the snare drum would normally be played and closes on beat 1 of the next bar.

The driving force of the first bar mixed with the quirky ending of the second bar creates a real rhythmic treat!

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs at 2:59 when moving into the heavy middle eight. Something rather clever is being played here. The right hand maintains quarter notes on the crash cymbal while the snare drum plays on beats 2 and 4 of the bar but the bass drum plays quarter note triplets.

Quarter note triplets are played on every other eighth note triplet. In other words, there is a single eighth note rest in between each bass drum note. This creates a polyrhythm where the bass drum plays a rhythm that doesn't quite line up with the crash cymbal quarter notes, two different rhythms are played at the same time. In fact the bass drum takes two beats to return to the downbeat, returning to the downbeat on beat 3 in this case.

The easiest way to learn this is to take each beat at a time. Beats 1 and 3 are the same as each other with the bass drum played on the downbeat and the upbeat. Beat 2 and 4 are also the same, the bass drum is played straight after the snare drum on the second partial of the triplet (labelled 'trip' as in 'trip-let').

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



No Woman No Cry by "Bob Marley And The Wailers"

Drummer: **Carlton Barrett**

Musical notation for the main groove in 4/4 time. The notation shows four bars. Above the staff, the counts are: 1 + 2 e + a 3 + 4 e + a. The first bar has a hi-hat on beat 1 and an accent on the '+' of beat 1. The second bar has a bass drum and cross-stick on beats 2 and 4, with a hi-hat on beats 2, 3, and 4. The third bar has a hi-hat on beat 3 and an accent on the '+' of beat 3. The fourth bar has a bass drum and cross-stick on beats 4 and 1, with a hi-hat on beats 4, 1, and 2.

Why It's Great

Carlton Barrett just oozes cool with this groove. So laid back and easy, it just sounds, and more importantly, just feels so good.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the song. This show cases Carlton's famous "one drop" drum beat, now heard on countless reggae records. This drum beat is now synonymous with Reggae drumming!

Both cross-stick and bass drum are played together on beats 2 and 4 of the bar. This drum beat could be counted differently so that the cross-stick and bass drum fell only on beat 3 of the bar (the way to traditionally notate the one drop drum beat) but I decided that it would be easier to see the drum beat counted this way instead. It's simply a matter of opinion and does not change the way the drum beat would be played in any way.

Carlton plays the hi-hat in his traditionally smooth and super laid back/half swung manner. The notes aren't quite played straight but rather in a half swung/half straight style. This is easier to feel than to explain and a full understanding comes from lots of careful listening and then copying.

The hi-hat is played on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 1. Carlton accents (plays slightly louder) the hi-hat note on the '+' of beat 1. This gives the groove a lovely upbeat feel. The hi-hat is then played on beat 2, the 'e', the '+' and the 'a' of beat 2. The hi-hat is opened on the '+' of beat 2 and struck on the 'a' whilst the hi-hat is open. The hi-hat is only opened a small amount to create a hiss effect rather than a full on open hi-hat wash. This is a very subtle technique and shows great musicality. Beats 3 and 4 are exactly the same as beats 1 and 2 on the hi-hat.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for other bars of interest in 4/4 time. The notation shows four bars. Above the staff, the counts are: 1 + 2 + a 3 + 4 + a. The first bar has a hi-hat on beat 1 and an accent on the '+' of beat 1. The second bar has a bass drum and cross-stick on beats 2 and 4, with a hi-hat on beats 2, 3, and 4. The third bar has a hi-hat on beat 3 and an accent on the '+' of beat 3. The fourth bar has a bass drum and cross-stick on beats 4 and 1, with a hi-hat on beats 4, 1, and 2.

How To Play It

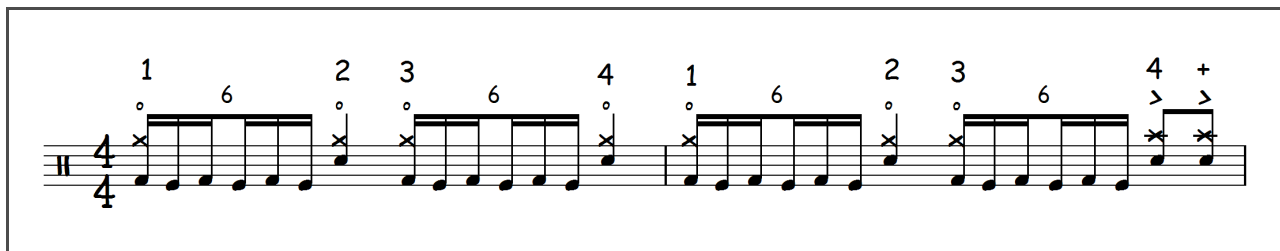
Occurs right at the beginning and then sporadically throughout. Carlton plays various hi-hat patterns throughout the song and uses this pattern at the beginning before settling into the main groove. This is played exactly the same as the first groove but the hi-hat is skipped on the 'e' of beats 2 and 4 instead.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



One by "Metallica"

Drummer: *Lars Ulrich*



Why It's Great

The use of unison sextuplets between a wall of guitars and Lars' aggressively EQ'd kick drums redefined the use of double bass drums in metal.

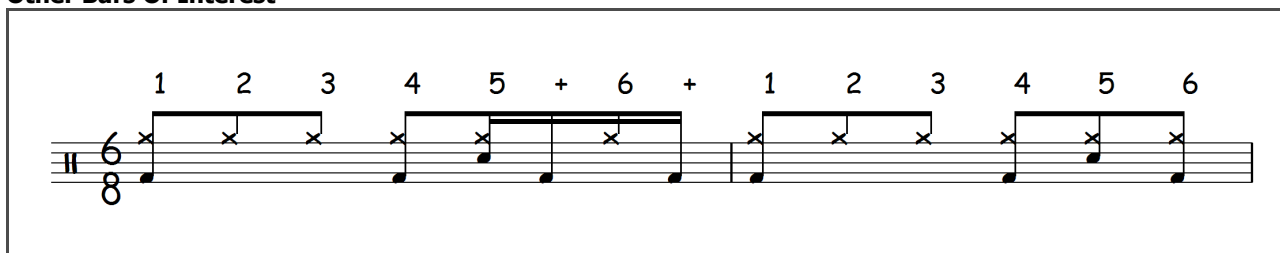
How To Play It

Occurs around 4:43 into the song when the guitars and drums play together in unison. Although technically not very hard to read, this drum beat requires some strong single strokes on the double bass drum. A double bass drum pedal will do just as well if you don't have two bass drums like Lars.

The hi-hat plays steady quarter notes on the half open hi-hat with a strong snare backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of both bars. In the second bar the snare drum and crash cymbal is played on beats 4 and the '+' of beat 4.

The bass drum sixteenth note triplets are played as smoothly and evenly as possible. The tempo might prove tricky at first. Notice that exactly six bass drums are played and the snare drum is directly after technically making it the seventh note in a row.

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

Occurs at about 1:15 but is also played clearly a bit later on once the vocals start. The first half of the song is played in the time signature of 6/8. This means that there are six counted beats to every bar.

The hi-hat is unchanging throughout, playing on each counted beat. The snare drum plays a half time backbeat pattern on beat 5 of each bar.

Notice the bass drum notes on the '+' of beat 5 and 6 in the first bar. A more solid and grounded bass drum pattern is played during the second bar.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs every eight bars once the vocals start. The band do something quite clever here, a bar of 2/4 is added at the end of every eight bar loop during the verse. This creates what can be called an "odd time signature" section in that more than one time signature is used.

What's important to realise is that the hi-hat tempo does not change. The last bar of 2/4 contains four hi-hat notes played at the same rate as the previous six. Nothing else has changed other than the way it's counted.

A simple pattern is played between the bass drum and snare/crash cymbal during the second bar of 2/4. Any cymbal can be used for the two accent notes on the '+' of each beat, a china cymbal might be nice for this job though.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Overkill by "Motorhead"

Drummer: **Phil Taylor**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a double bar line. The time signature is 4/4. The beat is divided into four measures. Each measure has a downbeat (marked with 'x') and an upbeat (marked with '+'). The downbeats are marked with a small circle above the note. The upbeats are marked with a small circle above the note. The notes are eighth notes. The first measure has a downbeat on the first line and an upbeat on the second line. The second measure has a downbeat on the second line and an upbeat on the third line. The third measure has a downbeat on the third line and an upbeat on the fourth line. The fourth measure has a downbeat on the fourth line and an upbeat on the first line of the next measure.

Why It's Great

It was Year Zero for thrash metal as Phil Taylor's blistering double bass drum performance captured here, became the launch pad for the countless metal drummers who were to follow in his footsteps.

How To Play It

Occurs right at the beginning of the song. There's not much to say about this drum beat, it's simplicity and drive speaks for itself.

The right hand plays eighth notes on the half open hi-hat, accenting all the downbeats on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4. If you feel more comfortable leaving out the '+' notes then it won't change the feel of the groove too drastically.

The double bass drum are alternating between the right and left foot. All right footed bass drum notes fall on the downbeats (1, 2, 3, & 4) as well as falling at the same time as the snare drum on beats 2 and 4. All left footed bass drum notes fall on the '+' upbeats. If you choose to leave out all the upbeats on the hi-hat then the left bass drum foot will fall in between the right hand.

Try playing this for 5½ minutes, remembering to breath of course!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Paint It Black by "The Rolling Stones"

Drummer: **Charlie Watts**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above the first, second, third, and fourth measures respectively, with a plus sign (+) between each number. The notation consists of four eighth notes on the first line of the staff, one in each measure. Each eighth note has a vertical line above it, representing a snare drum hit. The notes are beamed together in pairs for each measure.

Why It's Great

Charlie charges into the song with this tribal and energetic drum beat. Underneath it's simplicity is a groove many drummers would die for.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and during the verses. Charlie plays eighth notes on the high tom with his right hand, this is where his right hand stays throughout this section of the song.

The snare drum is played on all four beats of the bar with the left hand, on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the bar, at the same time the right hand plays on the high tom.

The bass drum is played on just beats 1 and 3 of the bar. This is how Charlie plays it live anyway. The bass drum on the original recording is almost inaudible so could have been playing on all four beats of the bar with the snare drum. It's up to you how you interpret and play the bass drum for this killer beat.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Panic Attack by "Dream Theater"

Drummer: **Mike Portney**

A musical staff in 5/8 time showing a drum pattern. Above the staff, the counts are: 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 6 +. The notation consists of sixteenth notes and eighth notes with asterisks, representing snare and crash cymbal hits, and two bass drum notes on the double bass drum pedal.

Why It's Great

Mike Portney's creates exciting and bombastic drum parts that teeter on the verge of over playing but never quite crossing that line. That's why we love him!

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song. The bar is made up from a simple three note pattern consisting of snare and crash cymbal played together, followed by two bass drum notes played on the double bass drum pedal.

This three note pattern is repeated four times as sixteenth notes, for the first three beats of the bar. The pattern is then played twice for beat 4 as sixteenth note triplets. This has the effect of sounding like the pattern speeds up at the end because the triplets are played at a faster rate than the sixteenth notes. Each group of three triplets is the equivalent to one counted eighth note (or half a beat of the bar).

The two bass drum notes within each group can be played on the double bass drum or single pedal, depending on your bass drum ability and technique. Mike plays it using his double bass drum.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 5/8 time. The time signature is written as 5/8. Above the staff, the counts are: 1 2 + 3 + 4 5. The notation shows a hi-hat playing five eighth notes, with snare drum backbeats on beat 4 and bass drum hits on beat 1 and between beats 2 and 3.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:50 once the vocals start. This section of the song is played in the time signature of 5/8. This effectively means that there are five counted beats to a bar. For the sake of easy counting, the eighth notes are now counted like beats of the bar.

The hi-hat plays 5 evenly spaced eighth notes with a snare drum backbeat on beat 4 of the bar. The bass drum falls on beat 1 and then on the '+' of beat 2 and 3, in between the hi-hats.

The hi-hat is opened on beat 5 and closed again on beat 1 of the following bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Paradise City by "Guns N' Roses"

Drummer: **Steven Adler**

Why It's Great

The beats are epic and overblown in the intro, swaggering and greasy in the main and then go double time crazy at the end. What's not to like?

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song. This stadium anthem style drum beat really gets the crowds clapping and joining in because of its simplicity and power.

The snare drum flam notes fall on beats 2 and 4 of the bar while the bass drum on the '+' of beat 3, pushes into the backbeat on beat 4. The third bar has a different bass drum pattern however, the bass drum falls on the two downbeats of beats 1 and 3.

Later in the song, Steven varies the bass drum pattern during the fourth bar and also steps eighth notes on the hi-hat pedal.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs during the verse just after Axl blows his whistle. The hi-hat is opened slightly to create a slushy sound while the snare drum supply's a solid backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

What makes this beat cool is the way Steven uses the bass drum to follow the guitar riff exactly. The bass drum on the 'e' of beat 4 falls in between the steady hi-hats and is later played at the same time with a crash cymbal. This happens for the first time at the end of the first four bars.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for drum patterns in 4/4 time. The notation is presented on two staves. The first staff shows a pattern of four beats: 1 e +, 2 e +, 3 e + a, 4 e +. The second staff shows a pattern of four beats: 1 e +, 2 e +, 3 e + a, 4 e +. The notation includes notes for snare drums (marked with 'x') and bass drums (marked with 'o').

How To Play It

Occurs at 4:50 just after the short drum solo. This style of playing, in context with the rest of the song, is known as playing in double time. This simply means that the number of backbeat snare drum notes is doubled per bar. In this case, we have 4 snare drums per bar compared to the 2 previously.

The bass drum plays a repeating two note pattern, starting on the downbeat of each beat, for the majority of the first three bars. A sturdy bass drum technique is required to pull this off.

Bass drum notes are placed on the 'a' and 'e' of beat 3 and 4 respectively, at the end of bars 1 and 2. These bass drum notes fall in between the steady hi-hat. This same bass drum pattern is played during bar 4 where the majority of the bass drums are played in between the hi-hat notes.

Notice the crash cymbals on beat 1 of the first two bars, beats 1 and 3 of the third bar and all the '+' (at the same time as the snare drums) during bar 4.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Pick Up The Pieces by "Average White Band"

Drummer: **Robbie McIntosh**

Why It's Great

Played with a nimble jazz-funk swing, this is a virtuoso performance from the tragically short-lived Scotsman.

How To Play It

This is the basic pattern played throughout the majority of the song. It's worth pointing out that Robbie does improvise, adding extra bass drum, hi-hat and snare notes to the groove. Robbie chooses to return to this basic pattern frequently though.

The distinctively funky open hi-hats on the '+' of beat 2 and 3 keep the groove moving forward. This is very reminiscent of one of funk's drumming founders, Clyde Stubblefield.

The extra hi-hat note on the 'a' of beat 2 can be played one handed but was probably played by the left hand moving up to the hi-hat. This extra hi-hat note is occasionally left out and more frequently played on the snare drum, as shown in the next example below.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

These two bars occur right at the beginning of the song and more clearly at 0:20. As we can see, Robbie starts off the song with an improvised version of the basic groove from the top of the page. This pattern follows and supports the sax and trumpet parts wonderfully!

The first bar has an extra snare drum note, in between the hi-hat notes, falling on the 'a' of beat 4. This also occurs on the 'a' of beat 2. Notice how these snare notes synchronise with the brass part perfectly.

The end of the second bar involves two snare drum notes, on beat 4 and the 'e' of beat 4, played with the right and left hand. The right hand moves up to the hi-hat after striking the snare on beat 4.

The open hi-hats and bass drum pattern are the same as the basic pattern explained at the top of the page.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for two 4/4 bars. The first bar has four measures: Measure 1 (snare on 1, hi-hat on 2, 3, 4), Measure 2 (snare on 1, 2, 3, hi-hat on 4), Measure 3 (snare on 1, 2, 3, 4), and Measure 4 (snare on 1, 2, 3, 4). The second bar has four measures: Measure 1 (snare on 1, 2, 3, 4), Measure 2 (snare on 1, 2, 3, 4), Measure 3 (snare on 1, 2, 3, 4), and Measure 4 (snare on 1, 2, 3, 4). Above the staff, '+' signs indicate hi-hat notes on beats 2, 3, and 4 of the first bar, and on beats 2, 3, and 4 of the second bar. An 'a' above the staff indicates an open hi-hat note on beat 4 of the first bar and beat 2 of the second bar. Below the staff, 'R' and 'L' indicate the right and left hands for the snare and hi-hat parts.

How To Play It

These two bars occur at 0:30. Robbie uses a variation on the previous two bar example, showing us how the hi-hat can be used to emphasise melodic parts of a song.

The first bar is exactly the same as the first bar from the previous example, except that instead of playing the left hand on the snare drum for the 'a' of beat 4, the left hand plays on the hi-hat. The hi-hat is opened at the same time the left hand strikes the hi-hat, also at the same time as the bass drum. The hi-hat then closes again the very next sixteenth note, in this case on beat 1 of the next bar.

The right hand misses out the hi-hat note on beat 1 to keep the groove floating up in the air, quite a cool effect! This hi-hat note can be put back into the groove if required though. Simply play the left hand in between hi-hat notes on the '+' of beat 4 and beat 1 of the next bar.

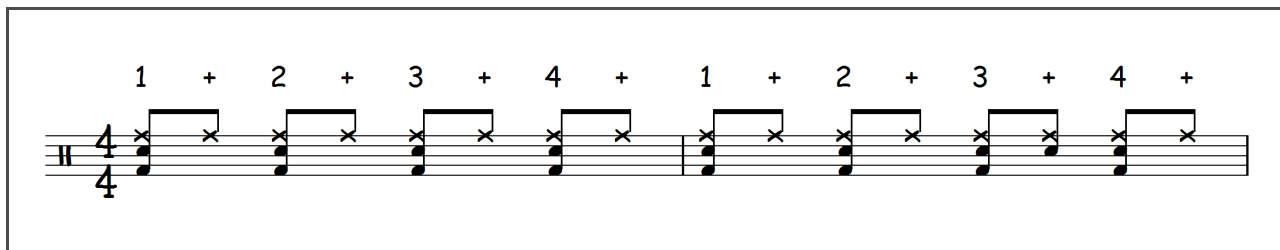
The 'a' of beat 2 in the second bar is played in exactly the same way. Look out for the open hi-hat note on the '+' of beat 4.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Pretty Woman by "Roy Orbison"

Drummer: **Buddy Harman**



Why It's Great

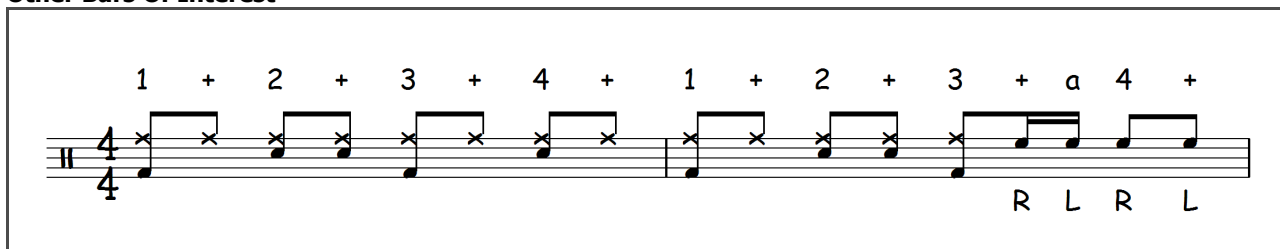
Cementing a place in our memories with its driving snare drum and helped by a certain blockbuster movie in the 80's of the same name, *Pretty Woman* is instantly recognizable from just the drum beat alone.

How To Play It

This is the drum beat played once the vocals start at 0:15. Buddy moves from the hi-hat played at the beginning of the song to the ride cymbal for when Roy enters. Playing simple eighth notes on the ride cymbal with his right hand throughout.

The snare drum and bass drum are played together on every beat of both bars. The only variation occurs at the end of the second bar where an extra snare drum is played on the '+' of beat 3. This means that three snare drum notes are played in a row starting on beat 3 of bar 2. Very simple but totally hypnotising!

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 1:06 during the middle eight. The ride cymbal is maintained with the right hand for both bars until a drum fill at the end of bar 2, starting on the '+' of beat 3. Both hands move to the high tom where the right hand plays on the '+' of beat 3 and the left hand the 'a' of beat 3. This is followed by another two notes on the high tom played with the right and left hand respectively, on beat 4 and the '+' of beat 4.

The bass drum and snare pattern changes for this section. Now the bass drum is just played on beats 1 and 3 of both bars. The snare drum however is played on beat 2 and the '+' of beat 2 in bar 1 and 2 but only on beat 4 in bar 1. The snare drum that would have fallen on beat 4 in bar 2 is replaced by the drum fill instead.

This type of double snare drum beat was used a lot in the 60's and can be heard on many recordings of the era. A classic!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Pride (In The Name Of Love) by "U2"

Drummer: Larry Mullen Jnr.

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, with plus signs between them. The notation consists of eighth notes on the hi-hat (marked with 'x') and quarter notes on the snare and bass drums. An open hi-hat is indicated by a '+' above the fourth beat of the second bar. Below the staff, the letters 'L R L' are written under the eighth notes of the final bar. The entire notation is enclosed in a rectangular box.

Why It's Great

Larry's echoing and dramatic tom tom stab match the Edge's moody guitar perfectly. Always playing for the song, Larry adds something special to this groove.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and during the verses. A Tambourine can be heard being played over the top of the drums in some parts of the verses (heard for the first time right at the beginning) that could be confused for additional hi-hat notes. This part was recorded separately and not on the hi-hat.

Larry lays down a line of eighth notes on the hi-hat with his right hand throughout both bars. A snare drum is played on beats 1 and 2 of both bars while the bass drum plays on beat 1, beat 3 and the 'a' of beat 3. The bass drum on the 'a' of beat 3 falls in between the hi-hats, just before the snare drum backbeat.

An open hi-hat is played on the '+' of beat 4 for both bars, which then closes again on beat 1 of the next bar.

Larry plays a floor tom note on the 'e' of beat 4 in the second bar. The way he does this is quite interesting. He has a floor tom set up to the left of his hi-hat so that the right hand can play the snare drum on beat 4 (rather than the left hand as heard in previous beats), while the left hand moves to the floor tom to play on the 'e'. The right hand then moves back up to the hi-hat on the '+' of beat 4, for the open hi-hat note.

If you do not have a spare floor tom then you have an alternative, as shown above and in the video supplement demonstration. Play the snare drum with your left hand, the floor tom with your right hand and then the hi-hat (as it opens) with your left hand. It might feel weird to play the open hi-hat with your left hand but at least you won't have to rush back to the hi-hat at lightning speed after hitting the floor tom on the 'e' with your right hand.

One final alternative open to you is to play a very quick double with the left hand between the snare drum and the floor tom, whilst keeping the right hand over the hi-hat. This is not only quite demanding technically but also hasn't the same powerful effect as striking each drum with two separate hands.

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The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the syllables '1 e + a', '2 e + a', '3 e + a', and '4 e + a' are written. The first three measures have a '+' above the first 'e' and an 'x' above the 'a'. The fourth measure has a '+' above the first 'e' and an 'o' above the 'a'. The staff contains notes for the right hand (R) and left hand (L) on the hi-hat. Below the staff, the letters 'R L R L' are written for each measure, indicating the hand sequence. The first measure has a '+' above the first 'R'. The second measure has an 'x' above the first 'L'. The third measure has an 'x' above the first 'R'. The fourth measure has an 'o' above the first 'R' and an 'x' above the second 'L'.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

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

How To Play It

Occurs during the chorus's, after the big snare drum fill. Both hands move to the hi-hat to play alternating sixteenth notes (RLRL).

The right hand moves down to the snare drum on beats 2 and 4 and then back up to the hi-hat to continue the rhythm, just like any other standard double handed hi-hat beat.

The bass drums fall with the right hand on beat 1, the '+' of beat 2, beat 3 and the '+' of beat 4. The bass drum on the 'a' of beat 3 falls with the left hand, just before the right hand comes down to play the snare drum.

The hi-hat is opened at the same time the bass drum is played on the '+' of beat 4 and then closes again on beat 1 of the next bar. The hi-hat note on the 'a' of beat 4 is played lightly so not to be noticed whilst the hi-hat is open.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Quadrant 4 by "Billy Cobham"

Drummer: **Billy Cobham**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat pattern. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes are labeled: '1 trip let', '2 3 +', '3 trip let', and '4 3 +'. The first measure has a quarter note on the first beat, a triplet of eighth notes on the second beat, and a quarter note on the third beat. The second measure has a quarter note on the first beat, a triplet of eighth notes on the second beat, and a quarter note on the third beat. The third measure has a quarter note on the first beat, a triplet of eighth notes on the second beat, and a quarter note on the third beat. The fourth measure has a quarter note on the first beat, a triplet of eighth notes on the second beat, and a quarter note on the third beat. The time signature is 4/4.

Why It's Great

Occurs throughout most of the song. This drum beat might not look much on paper but it's a beast of a groove. It's not the number of notes that makes it so technically interesting, its the tempo at which it's played.

The right hand plays the traditional Jazz ride cymbal pattern, albeit at a very fast speed. The snare drum plays a steady backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The bass drum is playing a double bass drum shuffle pattern. The right foot plays on the downbeats while the left foot plays on the upbeat of each beat. This double kick pattern is maintained while Billy solo's and fills over the top.

To give the illusion of even more notes being played by the kick drum, Billy plays a ghost note on the snare drum on the middle triplet note of beats 1 and 3. This simple idea creates a flow of notes between the bass drum and snare drum and has a really cool effect. Of course, played up to speed it might not seem that simple!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Raining Blood by "Slayer"

Drummer: **Dave Lombardo**

Musical notation for the first four bars of the Raining Blood drum beat. The notation is on a single staff in 4/4 time. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 e + a, 2 e + a, 3 e + a, 4 e + a. The notation shows eighth notes on the downbeats (1, 2, 3, 4) and eighth notes on the upbeats (e, a). There are 'x' marks above the downbeats, indicating hi-hat slams. There are also 'x' marks above the upbeats, indicating hi-hat slams. The notation is enclosed in a rectangular box.

Why It's Great

Tracks like this earned Lombardo his reputation as the king of thrash metal double bass drumming. But there's more to Dave than athletic footwork. Raining Blood sees him strike a balance between heaviness and groovy-ness.

How To Play It

Occurs just after the guitar and drum stab intro. The right hand is playing eighth notes on the hi-hat but Dave slams into the hi-hat so hard on the downbeats that you can hardly hear the notes on the '+' of each beat at all.

The double bass drums are alternating between the right and left foot but it's the right foot that falls with the right hand on the hi-hat every time. When practising try to ensure that the hands and feet align exactly.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for other bars of interest in the Raining Blood drum beat. The notation is on a single staff in 4/4 time. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 +, 2 +, 3 +, 4 +. The notation shows eighth notes on the downbeats (1, 2, 3, 4) and eighth notes on the upbeats (+). There are 'x' marks above the downbeats, indicating hi-hat slams. The notation is enclosed in a rectangular box.

How To Play It

Occurs when the vocals kick in. This type of drum beat is known as a thrash drum beat, the type of drum beat that Dave helped to make famous.

Dave plays fast and steady eighth notes on the ride cymbal with the bass drum and snare drum alternating underneath. This means that the bass drum is played on all the downbeats, while the snare drum plays on all the '+' upbeats.

This is a real right hand work out!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Rock And Roll by "Led Zeppelin"

Drummer: **John Bonham**

Musical notation for the drum intro of 'Rock and Roll' by Led Zeppelin. It is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The notation starts with a half rest on beat 1, followed by a quarter note on beat 2, and then a series of eighth notes on beats 3 and 4. Above the staff, there are four groups of rhythmic patterns: '3 + 4 +', '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +', '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +', and '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +'. Each group is followed by a greater-than sign (>) indicating an accent. The notes are marked with 'x' for snare and 'o' for hi-hat.

Why It's Great

The single most exciting drum intro ever still trips you up if you try to predict where the guitar riff comes in. Simultaneously clever and monstrous.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song. So here it is, the drum intro written out in full for all to study and finally understand. The key to it's quirky-ness is the fact that it doesn't start on beat 1 of the bar, as the casual listener might expect. It actually starts on the '+' of beat 3. This throws the listeners ears because they've presumed the first note they heard started on beat 1 when in fact it didn't.

Both hands play simultaneously between the half open hi-hat and the snare drum. All snare drum notes are played at a quiet to medium volume, apart from the accent notes (marked with an arrow symbol) which are played loudly.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for other bars of interest in the drum groove. It is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The notation shows a pattern of eighth notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. Above the staff, there are four groups of rhythmic patterns: '1 +', '2 +', '3 +', and '4 +'. Each group is followed by a greater-than sign (>) indicating an accent. The notes are marked with 'x' for snare and 'o' for hi-hat.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the rest of the song. The main drum beat for this song is also a classic. It uses the same hand technique as the intro, with both hands playing simultaneously between the half open hi-hat and snare drum.

Again, all snare drum notes are played quietly (marked in brackets) apart from the accent notes on beats 2 and 4 of the bar which are played loudly, creating the backbeat. This synchronised double hand pattern is a real drumming treat and has been used by a lot of blues drummers before and since!

For the majority of the song the bass drum plays on beat 1, 3 and the '+' of beat 3. Bonham does improvise with the bass drum though, changing the rhythm to fit the music as required.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Rock Around The Clock by "Bill Haley And His Comets"

Drummer: **Billy Gussak**

Musical notation for the first example of the drum beat. It is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The notation consists of eighth notes grouped into triplets. Above the staff, the counting is: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +. The first four beats of the first bar and the first three beats of the second bar have a '3' above them, indicating a triplet. The fourth beat of the second bar has a '>' above it, indicating a snare drum accent. The third and fourth beats of the second bar also have a '3' above them, indicating a triplet.

Why It's Great

Gussak's feathered bass drum and distinctive two-bar shuffle on the hoop is highlighted by a sharp snare drum accent on beat four of the second bar.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the track. Billy plays a shuffle pattern with his right hand on the hoop of his snare or tom tom. The hi-hat can be used instead of the rim of a drum if this uncomfortable for you. This is how it is played in the video supplement demonstration for this drum beat.

The shuffle pattern is simply the first and third triplet note of each beat. Because the second note of each triplet is never played, the counting is simply swung/shuffled eighth notes.

The bass drum is feathered on all four beats of the bar. This means that the bass drum is played very lightly. So that it's more felt than heard.

No snare drum backbeat is supplied until the very end of bar 2 where two sharp and high pitched rim shots are played on the '+' of beat 3 and beat 4. These two snare drum accents are played at the same time as the right hand shuffled hoop pattern.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for the second example of the drum beat. It is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The notation consists of eighth notes grouped into triplets. Above the staff, the counting is: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +. The first four beats of the first bar and the first three beats of the second bar have a '3' above them, indicating a triplet. The fourth beat of the second bar has a '>' above it, indicating a snare drum accent. The third and fourth beats of the second bar also have a '3' above them, indicating a triplet.

How To Play It

Occurs through the second verse starting at 0:28. This drum beat is exactly the same as the first example except only one snare drum rim shot is played on beat 4 of the second bar, and not two snare notes as heard in the first example.

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The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a drum pattern in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of two measures. The first measure contains four eighth notes, each beamed in a triplet and marked with an 'x' above it. Above the first triplet is the number '1', above the second is '+', above the third is '2', and above the fourth is '3'. The second measure contains four eighth notes, each beamed in a triplet and marked with an 'x' above it. Above the first triplet is the number '1', above the second is '+', above the third is '2', and above the fourth is '3'. The final eighth note of the second measure is marked with an accent (>) and an 'x' above it.

How To Play It

Occurs through the third verse starting at 1:00. This is yet another variation Billy decides to play, each time having fun with the snare drum placement.

This time, the snare drum is played on beat 4 and the '+' of beat 4. The bass drum is still being feathered all the way through underneath.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a drum pattern in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of four measures. Each measure contains a triplet of eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' above it. Above the first triplet is the number '1', above the second is '+', above the third is '2', and above the fourth is '3'. Above the first triplet of the second measure is an accent (>). Above the first triplet of the third measure is the number '3'. Above the first triplet of the fourth measure is an accent (>).

How To Play It

Occurs during the fourth verse starting at 1:15. Finally, Billy moves the snare drum backbeat to beats 2 and 4 of each bar. This gives the song new found energy half way through and helps to drive the song to the end.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



The Rock Show by "Blink 182"

Drummer: **Travis Barker**

A musical staff with a treble clef and a double bar line at the beginning. The staff contains two measures of music. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4. Above each number is a plus sign (+). The notation consists of eighth notes on the first and third lines of the staff. In the first measure, there is an 'o' above the first note and a '+' above the second note. In the second measure, there is a '+' above the third note. In the third measure, there is an 'o' above the first note and a '+' above the second note. In the fourth measure, there is a '+' above the third note. The notes are connected by beams, and there are 'x' marks above the notes on beats 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 4, 3, 4.

Why It's Great

Travis takes us on a little drumming journey here and teaches us all how to play punk/rock beats with style and class.

How To Play It

Occurs during the verse and is heard for the first time at 0:13. Travis lays down a line of eighth notes on the hi-hat, played with his right hand throughout the entire groove. The snare drum backbeat is played on beats 2 and 4 of the bar, at the same time as the hi-hat is played.

The bass drum plays a basic pattern (played fast of course) for both bars. The bass drum is played on beat 1 and the the '+' of beat 1. The same two note rhythm is played again for beat 3.

The hi-hat is opened on beat 1 of the first bar and then closed again with the snare drum on beat 2. The hi-hat on the '+' of beat 1 is skipped to let the hi-hat ring for the whole of the beat but the bass drum is still played on the '+'.

The second hi-hat opening occurs on the '+' of beat 3 in bar 2. This hi-hat opening only lasts for an eighth note and opens at the same time as the bass drum is struck. It closes again with the snare drum on beat 4.

The first hi-hat opening on beat 1 of bar 1 is skipped the first time it's played. It's only opened once the two bars have repeated and then every time after.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Rock Steady by "Aretha Franklin"

Drummer: **Bernard Purdie**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes 'e', '+', and 'a' are written above the first, second, and third measures respectively. The notation includes eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, with 'x' marks indicating hi-hat hits and 'o' marks indicating snare hits. The groove consists of straight eighth notes on the hi-hat, with snare backbeats on beats 2 and 4.

Why It's Great

Purdie's funk percolates with the bass line giving emphasis to the straight eighth notes on the hi-hat, which then opens Stubblefield-style on the upbeat before each backbeat.

How To Play It

Occurs just after the intro and then throughout the entire song. Straight eighth notes are played with the right hand all the way through this funky groove. As already mentioned, Purdie opens the the hi-hat on the '+' of beat 1 and on the '+' of beat 3, leading into the strong snare backbeat on beats 2 and 4. A classic idea for any funk groove.

We have some ghost notes falling in between the hi-hat notes to fill out the groove. Notice the ghost note that falls on the 'a' of beat 2, at the same time as the bass drum. This bass drum note really pushes the song, adding forward momentum to the groove.

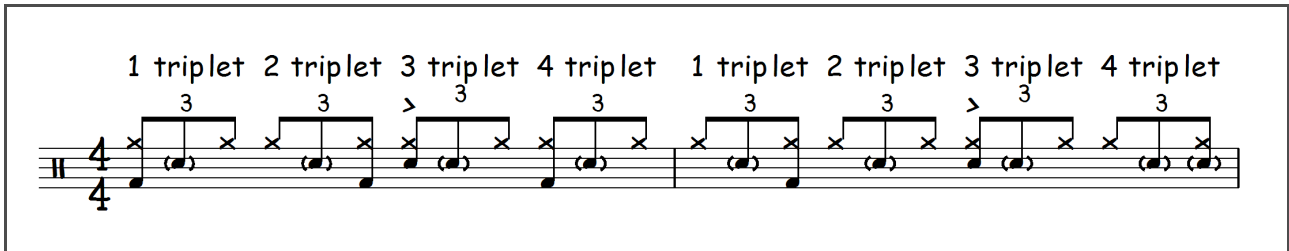
Ghost notes are played just after each snare backbeat on the 'e' of beats 2 and 4. This requires your left hand to be able to switch from a loud note to a soft note in a smooth manner.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Rosanna by "Toto"

Drummer: **Jeff Porcaro**



Why It's Great

It sounds so simple but it's so not! Few can match Porcaro for feel and this enduring pop-rock classic showcases his stunning touch wonderfully. Porcaro himself admits that he created this beat from combining the groove from Fool In The Rain by Led Zeppelin and the Purdie Shuffle, by Bernard Purdie of course (James Brown's drummer). What makes this beat extra special is the subtle and exciting use of ghost notes to spice up and fill out the groove. An absolute classic!

How To Play It

Occurs during all the verse's. This drum beat is called a half time shuffle. The right hand plays the first and third triplet note of each beat on the hi-hat. This is the shuffle part. The half time part comes from the fact that we only have one strongly accented snare drum in each bar, on beat 3 in this case, rather than the normal two snare drum notes played on beats 2 and 4 for more standard backbeats.

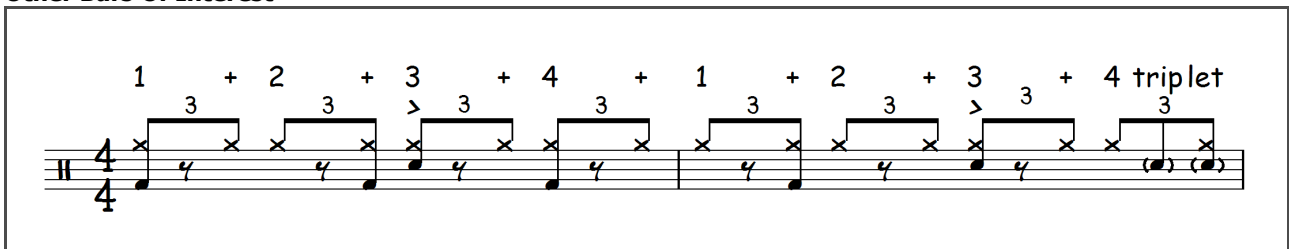
Ghost notes are played on the second partial of each triplet and are written inside brackets. They're supposed to be played as quietly as possible. Notice the ghost notes after both snare drum accents on beat 3 of each bar. These require a nimble wrist in order to play a loud snare drum note followed immediately after by a quiet note.

We also have two ghost notes played at the end of the second bar, on the second and third partial of beat 4's triplet. Notice how the right hand hi-hat lines up with the second ghost note, on the 'let' of beat 4.

It's worth pointing out that the ghost note pattern used in the song is varied throughout. Not all of the ghost notes written above are played on every repeat, Porcaro chooses to improvise with the pattern for maximum musical effect.

As a point of interest, when Jeff demonstrates this pattern he often plays a bass drum note on beat 3 of the second bar, at the same time as the snare drum. He does not play this on the recording however.

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

This is the pattern played at the beginning of the track, just before the vocals start. When the song first starts, Porcaro chooses to play this drum beat without ghost notes. This mature musical choice meant that the drum beat wasn't too busy and had somewhere to build too later in the song.

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Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This is what Porcaro plays for the first eight bars of the first chorus. The bass drum follows the melody of the song beautifully and creates a very technical part to play.

The bass drum part moves around the snare drum backbeat, following the melody and creating an independent rhythm to the steady snare drum backbeat.

Porcaro chooses to play minimum ghost notes during this section and instead focuses on the bass drum and open hi-hat parts. Notice the extended opening of the hi-hat over two beats at the end of the fourth bar.

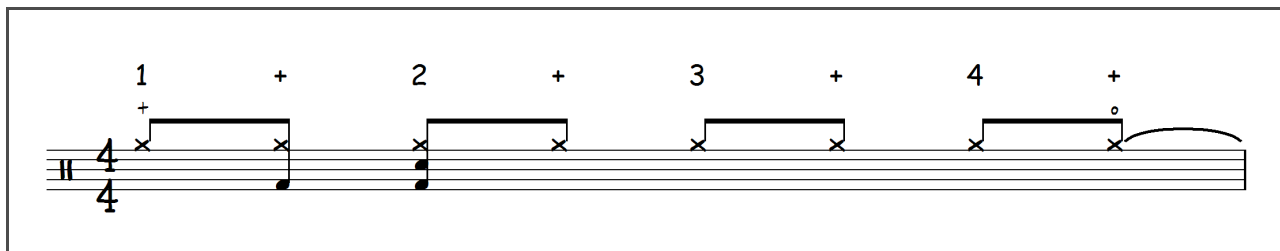
This same idea is used at the end of the eighth bar but instead opens on beat 2 and closes on beat 4, before re-opening again on beat 4.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Roxanne by "The Police"

Drummer: **Stewart Copeland**



Why It's Great

Copeland blended punk and reggae influences to create a sound that was uniquely his own. In Roxanne his hi-hat flourishes adds texture to the groove.

His use of a very simple bass drum pattern which locked into the bass guitar, also sounds very musical indeed.

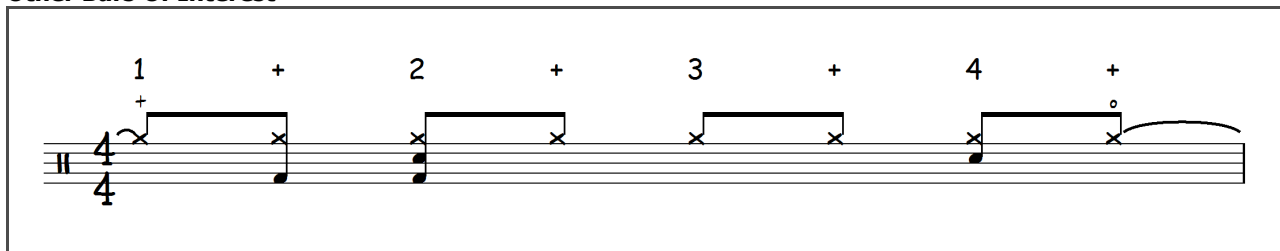
How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song up until the vocals start. The hi-hat simply plays eighth notes throughout the piece with a soft and elegant opening on the '+' of beat 4. The single snare drum on beat 2 of the bar gives the groove a half time feel.

But it's the bass drum on the '+' of beat 1 and beat 2 that makes this drum beat special. The bass drum locks in with Sting's bass guitar laying down a solid and un-shakeable foundation.

The bass drum pattern is influenced by the reggae "one drop" style of drumming where beat 1 of the bar is skipped and the bass drum emphasises only one beat of the bar. Beat 2 in this instance.

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

Occurs when the vocals kick in. Stuart chooses to build up the drum beat by adding in a second snare drum onto beat 4 of the bar. This creates a strong snare drum backbeat which pushes the groove forward.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, with a '+' sign between each number. The notation consists of eighth notes on the first and third beats, and quarter notes on the second and fourth beats. Brackets above the notes indicate that the eighth notes on beats 1 and 3 are beamed together, and the quarter notes on beats 2 and 4 are beamed together. There are 'x' marks above the eighth notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, and 'x' marks above the quarter notes on beats 3 and 4. There are also '>' marks above the quarter notes on beats 3 and 4, indicating accents.

How To Play It

Occurs during the last section of the verse before the chorus. Stuart now moves his right hand to the ride cymbal to play a steady flow of eighth notes. The right hand moves to the bell of the ride cymbal to accent beats 3 and the '+' of beat 4.

This accented bell ride cymbal pattern changes from bar to bar but this is the pattern Stuart plays the most. For example, he sometimes accents beat 1 of the bar on the bell as well as the '+' of beat 3. It's a highly improvised part played by Stuart throughout.

The left hand moves between the snare drum on beat 2 of the bar and the high tom on beat 4 and the '+' of beat 4. This tom tom pattern combined with the ride cymbal accents gives the entire groove a Latin feel. A very tasty groove indeed!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Run To The Hills by "Iron Maiden"

Drummer: **Clive Burr** (Recording) **Nicko McBrain** (Live)

Why It's Great

Just watch the hands in the crowd fly in the air as soon they hear this classic drum intro. Loved by both drummers and Iron Maiden fans alike this truly is a stomping groove. Originally recorded by Clive Burr but Nicko McBrain now does a stellar job playing this live with the band.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song. Clive plays a double handed sixteenth note pattern on the hi-hat for this groove, playing the bass drum like a heartbeat on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the bar at the same time as the right hand on the hi-hat.

The hi-hat opens on beat 4 of the bar at the same time as the bass drum is played. The hi-hat then closes again on beat 1 of the next bar, after being left open for the whole of beat 4.

In between the hi-hat opening and closing, both hands move to the tom toms for a single quick strike on the '+' of beat 4. The right hand moves to the medium tom and the left hand on the floor tom. Any toms could be used though. The hands then have to move swiftly back to the hi-hat for the next bar.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs during the chorus and for the first time at 1:12. Clive Burr demonstrates amazing speed once the chorus begins and the tempo of the song doubles up.

In the first bar a simple double handed sixteenth note hi-hat is played between the right and left hands (RLRL). The bass drum is maintained on all the downbeats of the bar and the right hand plays on the snare drum, at the same time as the bass drums, on beats 2 and 4. A crash cymbal is played on beat 1 of each two bar loop.

The bass drum is maintained on all the downbeats for the second bar also but the hands now move to the snare drum to play a figure with the guitars. The hands play on the downbeat of beat 1, the '+' and the 'a' of beat 1, using the sticking R-RL. The crash cymbal and bass drum play together on beat 2 of the bar. This same two beat figure is repeated for beats 3 and beat 4 also.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Scar Tissue by "Red Hot Chili Peppers"

Drummer: **Chad Smith**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the syllables '1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + 4 e +' are written, corresponding to the beats. The notation includes hi-hat patterns (marked with 'x'), snare drum notes (marked with 'o'), and bass drum notes (marked with 'b'). The first measure has a ghost note on the snare drum between the first and second hi-hats. The second measure has a snare drum backbeat on the 'a' of beat 2. The third measure has a ghost note on the snare drum between the third and fourth hi-hats. The fourth measure has a ghost note on the snare drum between the fourth hi-hat and the start of the next measure.

Why It's Great

Chad doesn't know how to play a bad sounding drum beat. With his trademark hi-hat lifts and ghost notes he effortlessly grooves away from start to finish.

How To Play It

Occurs clearly for the first time at 0:22. Chad is always improvising, he constantly switches his ghost notes and adds in extra hi-hat openings and bass drums to keep things fresh. This means that it's also impossible to point at one bar in the song and say "this" is the Verse drum beat or "this" is the Chorus drum beat. Instead, we have a selection of drum grooves that appear in the song to choose from.

Chad keeps eighth notes on the hi-hat throughout and maintains a strong backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar. A third snare drum is played on the 'a' of beat 2, in between the hi-hats.

The bass drum pattern also remains relatively constant throughout. A bass drum is played on beat 1 and the 'a' of beat 1, the second of which falls in between the hi-hats. The other bass drum of the bar occurs on the '+' of beat 3.

The ghost notes are the most varied part of the drum groove but the ones shown above appear to be the most popular. The first ghost note (a quiet note played, in this case, on the snare drum) is played directly after beat 1, in between the hi-hats on the 'e' of beat 1. The 'e' of beat 3 is played in the same way.

Chad also likes to play ghost notes directly after the snare drum backbeats on the 'e' of beats 2 and 4. This requires the left hand to play a loud note followed immediately after by a quiet note.

The hi-hat is opened on the '+' of beat 4 and closed again on beat 1 of the next bar but Chad is constantly bouncing his left foot on the hi-hat pedal creating all kinds of little hi-hat flurries and mini-openings.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a 4-beat drum pattern. The notation is on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 e + a, 2 + a, 3 e +, 4 e +. The notes are: Beat 1: snare on 'e', bass on 'a'; Beat 2: snare on '+', bass on 'a'; Beat 3: snare on 'e', bass on '+'; Beat 4: snare on 'e', bass on '+'. There are 'x' marks above the snare notes and 'o' marks above the bass notes.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song and clearly at 0:17. This is played exactly the same as the previous drum beat except for a few variations.

No ghost note is played on the 'e' of beat 2, after the snare drum backbeat, compared to the previous drum beat but an extra bass drum is played on the 'e' of beat 3. Chad plays the 'e' very lightly so that the emphasis remains on the second bass drum note, on the '+' of beat 3.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a 4-beat drum pattern in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a 4/4 time signature at the beginning. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 e + a, 2 e + a, 3 e +, 4 e + a. The notes are: Beat 1: snare on 'e', bass on 'a'; Beat 2: snare on 'e', bass on '+'; Beat 3: snare on 'e', bass on '+'; Beat 4: snare on 'e', bass on '+', snare on 'a'. There are 'x' marks above the snare notes and 'o' marks above the bass notes.

How To Play It

Occurs during the first chorus at 1:00. Chad plays another variation of the verse drum beat for the first chorus of the song. Keeping the two bass drum notes on the 'e' and '+' of beat 3 as well as the strong snare drum on the 'a' of beat 2.

For this variation, Chad adds in some extra ghost notes on the 'e' of beat 2 and the 'a' of beat 4. Both of these ghost notes fall in between the hi-hat.

Chad plays the whole section on a half open hi-hat but his left foot is bouncing up and down on the hi-hat pedal throughout creating subtle sounds and "swooshes".

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Scentsless Apprentice by "Nirvana"

Drummer: **Dave Grohl**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 + 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a. The notation includes a crash on beat 1, eighth notes on the hi-hat for beats 2 and 4, and a series of eighth notes on the bass drum for beat 3. There are also snare drum notes on beats 2 and 4.

Why It's Great

Another masterful performance from Mr Grohl, in a song built around his drumming. His massive authority is achieved without overplaying, the mark of a true great. And just listen to that single bass drum foot!

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning and during the verses. Dave's right hand is bashing out eighth notes on the hi-hat while the bass drum and snare drum perform all the action. Dave plays a crash on beat 1 of the bar but this is left out the first time round.

A strong backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4 of the bar with an extra snare drum flam note on the 'a' of beat 2. This is rather clever because Dave throws in this flam (played with which ever hands you feel comfortable with) in between the hi-hat notes on the '+' of beat 2 and beat 3, without missing a beat. The right hand moves back to the hi-hat on beat 3, directly after the flam, without the flow of hi-hat notes ever being interrupted.

The bass drum foot plays the 'e' of beat 2 and 4 directly after the snare drum backbeats, in between the hi-hat notes. There is also a bass drum on the 'a' of beat 4 leading straight back into beat 1. Notice how these two bass drum notes are technically played together when the bar is looped.

The bass drum notes filling the whole of beat 3 require a strong bass drum foot. The ankle needs to be used in order to play these four notes in a row, especially at this tempo. A real bass drum workout but one that will certainly improve your bass drum technique once achieved!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Seven Days by "Sting"

Drummer: **Vinnie Colaiuta**

A musical staff in 5/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth notes. Above the staff, there are two groups of five notes each. The first group is labeled '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +', and the second group is labeled '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +'. Above each note in both groups, there is a small 'x' with a greater-than sign (>) above it, indicating an accent. The notes are connected by a horizontal line, suggesting a continuous eighth-note pattern.

Why It's Great

This track is intelligent pop drumming defined. Vinnie Colaiuta makes odd time signatures groove more than we would have ever thought possible with this fantastic virtuoso, yet understated performance. Vinnie truly is a drumming genius and proves it once more with this track!

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the verses. The whole song, despite what you might think from the title, is actually written in the time signature of 5/4. This means that there are five counted beats to every bar of the song.

The right hand plays straight eighth notes on the hi-hat but uses a rather clever accent pattern. The hi-hat is accented (played loudly) every 4 notes. This means that the accent pattern moves across the beats of the bar in a very disorientating but musical manner.

The bass drum and cross-stick is playing a rhythm 5 beats long (length of the bar) while the hi-hat accent pattern lasts just 2 beats. The consequence of this is that the hi-hat accent pattern actually requires two bars for it to resolve back onto beat 1 of the bar.

This means that Vinnie created a kind of polyrhythm over the top of the steady bass drum and cross-stick pattern. A polyrhythm can be thought of as two different rhythms, played at the same time as each other but that don't quite line up.

The bass drum is played on beat 1 of each bar while the left hand cross-stick plays on beat 4. This part is the easy bit though.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a drum set. The first staff is in 5/4 time, indicated by a '5' over a '4' below the staff. It contains four measures of music. Above the first measure is the count '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +', with an accent (>) over the first note. Above the second measure is '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + a', with an accent over the first note. Above the third measure is '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +', with an accent over the first note. Above the fourth measure is '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +', with an accent over the first note. The second staff is in 4/4 time, indicated by a '4' below the staff. It contains four measures of music. Above each measure is a count: '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +', '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +', '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +', and '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 +'. Each count has an accent (>) over the first note. The notation consists of 'x' marks on a five-line staff, representing drum hits.

How To Play It

This is the first eight bars of the song in their entirety. This demonstrates some of the very subtle ideas Vinnie uses on the hi-hat to drive the song forward and to create moments of excitement.

The first point of interest occurs on the last two notes of bar 2. Vinnie doubles up the '+' of beat 5 into two notes, probably played by the right and left hand respectively.

Two crash/splash cymbals are used at the end of, and the beginning of, bars 4 and 5 respectively. The left hand probably plays the '+' of beat 5 on one cymbal while the right hand plays beat 1 of bar 5 on another cymbal. Both of these cymbal notes can be played with the right hand if you find this easier.

Bars 7 and 8 use a very sophisticated idea not for the faint hearted. Vinnie now moves the hi-hat accent to every third note, starting on beat 3 of bar 7. This creates yet another polyrhythm that moves across the bar. A monster to count but a beauty to hear when performed correctly!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Sexy MF by "Prince"

Drummer: **Michael Bland**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, +, a, 2, +, 3, e, +, 4, e, +, a. The notation includes bass drum notes (represented by 'x' marks) and snare drum notes (represented by 'o' marks). Accents (>) are placed over the first bass drum notes of measures 1, 2, and 4. The pattern consists of a backbeat on beats 1 and 3, with ghost notes on the snare between bass drum notes.

Why It's Great

Bland is super bad, James Brown-style, with his punctuating snare drum accents, subtle ghosting and his smoking syncopated 16th-note bass drum pattern.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the entire song. All of the sixteenth notes in this tune are counted and played in a swung/shuffled style, which of course adds to its appeal. Playing swung sixteenth notes helps to give the track its soulful and James Brown-esque quality.

The only two accented snare drums in the bar fall on beats 1 and the '+' of beat 2, at the same time as the bass drum notes. Although Michael varies his ghost notes, the above pattern is what he tends to play through the majority of the track.

Both bass drum and snare drum ghost notes lock into each other for the first half of the bar. While the snare ghost notes take up the space in between the bass drums on the 'e' and 'a' of beat 4.

The trick to getting this to sound super tight and authentic is to play the ghost notes on the snare as quietly as possible. Nothing should detract the listener's ears from the prominent and funky displaced snare drum backbeat on beats 1 and the '+' of beat 2!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Sing, Sing, Sing by "Benny Goodman Orchestra"

Drummer: **Gene Krupa**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The pattern consists of two bars. The first bar has four eighth notes: R (right hand), L (left hand), R (right hand), L (left hand). The second bar has four eighth notes: R (right hand), L (left hand), R (right hand), L (left hand). Above the staff, there are accents (>) over the first and third notes of each bar. Above the first bar, there are numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 with plus signs (+) between them, indicating the beat numbers. Below the staff, there are letters R and L under each note, indicating the hand used to play it. The letters are: R L R L R L R L R L R L R L.

Why It's Great

The definitive sound of the swing era, *Sing, Sing, Sing* features the first extended drum break in recorded music. Gene Krupa pounds out this unmistakable beat on his floor tom in a frenzy of pure joy. *Sing, Sing, Sing* was a smash hit and made Krupa the first superstar drummer.

How To Play It

This two bar pattern is the first and second bar of the song only. A simple single stroke roll is played between the right and left hands on the floor tom.

The bass drum is played lightly (feathered) on all four beats of the bar while the hi-hat is stepped with the left foot on beats 2 and 4 in the traditional Jazz manner.

The hand accents are what makes the rhythm come alive and should be played cleanly and precisely. The key to its performance is to play the non-accented notes quietly rather than the accent notes too loudly.

The whole song has a slight swing feel to it (as you might expect from music of this era) that can be replicated from listening to the original tune and then trying to emulate the "feel".

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Smells Like Teen Spirit by "Nirvana"

Drummer: **Dave Grohl**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. Above the staff, the beats are labeled with rhythmic notation: 1 (hi-hat), a (snare), 2 (snare), a (snare), 3 (e, +, a), 4 (+). The notation shows a steady hi-hat on downbeats, snare on the 'a' of beats 1 and 2, and a syncopated snare on the 'a' of beat 3. The bass drum plays on the '+' and 'a' of beat 3.

Why It's Great

A childhood spent pounding pillows with marching batons in his bedroom finally paid off for Grohl in 1991, when the drummer announced his arrival into our lives with a vicious bass and snare groove that dragged 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' along by its hair. Respect to the Foo Fighters, but they've never thrilled us like Grohl's début did from behind the kit.

How To Play It

This drum groove is played during the chorus's. The hi-hat is played half open on the downbeats of the bar (beats 1, 2, 3 and 4) while the bass drum and snare drum move underneath. The hi-hat is kept steady despite the syncopated snare and bass drum.

The bass drum and snare drum, played on the 'a' of beat 1 and beat 2 respectively are played just before beats 2 and 3 respectively. Make sure that the snare drum on the 'a' of beat 2 flows into the next four notes, played between the snare and bass drum smoothly and evenly.

Playing the two bass drum notes on the '+' and 'a' of beat 3 can be tricky so a good bass drum technique will be required to ensure the notes don't slur and delay the snare drum backbeat on beat 4.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum fill. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1 (e, +, a), 2 (e, +, a), 3 (e, +, a), 4 (+). The notation shows a four-note pattern of eighth notes repeated three times on beats 1, 2, and 3. The hi-hat plays on the '+' of each beat. The bass drum plays on the 'e' and 'a' of each beat. The final beat (beat 4) has a flam on the '+' and a bass drum note on the '+'.

How To Play It

This is the drum intro for the song. I simply couldn't include this song without mentioning THIS drum fill!

The drum fill is played between the snare drum and the half open hi-hat. The bar is made up of a four note pattern repeated three times on beats 1, 2 and 3 of the bar. The flam in each group of four is played on the downbeat and the hi-hat on the '+' of each beat.

Two bass drum notes are played in between the flam and hi-hat notes, falling on the 'e' and 'a' of each beat. All four notes are played evenly, moving from one note to the next.

The last beat of the bar just contains a flam on beat 4 and a bass drum note on the '+' of beat 4.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Soul Man by "Sam And Dave"

Drummer: **Al Jackson Jnr.**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, four measures are labeled with numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. Above each number is a plus sign (+). Above measure 2 and 4, there is an 'a' character. The notation consists of eighth notes on the bass line. In measure 1, there are two eighth notes. In measure 2, there are four eighth notes, with an 'x' above the first and a '+' above the second. In measure 3, there are two eighth notes. In measure 4, there are four eighth notes, with an 'x' above the first and a '+' above the second. The 'a' character is positioned above the second eighth note in measure 4.

Why It's Great

Swung sixteenth notes on the bass drum, then continuous eighths in the bridge. Not what you expect at all. Jackson puts the funk back into soul.

How To Play It

This drum groove starts at 0:08 and is played for the majority of the song. You can't get any more driving than this. The placement of the bass drum on the 'a' of beat 2 and 4, leading into another bass drum on beats 3 and 1, has been used on countless recordings to add forward momentum to a groove. You can't help but nod your head to it!

The right hand plays consistent eighth notes on the hi-hat and the essential snare backbeat is maintained on beats 2 and 4 by the left hand. A classic drum beat.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, four measures are labeled with numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. Above each number is a plus sign (+). The notation consists of eighth notes on the bass line. In measure 1, there are two eighth notes. In measure 2, there are four eighth notes, with an 'x' above the first and a '+' above the second. In measure 3, there are two eighth notes. In measure 4, there are four eighth notes, with an 'x' above the first and a '+' above the second.

How To Play It

This drum groove occurs for the first time at 0:34 during the bridge. As previously mentioned, you wouldn't expect Al to play this kind of bass drum pattern for a funk song.

Back in the day, the bass drum was feathered (played quietly) if ever played on all beats of the bar. But in this recording the bass drum is quite audible and so adds emphasis to the bass guitar part, also thumping on all the eighth notes. Both bass drum and bass guitar join forces to drive this section of the song forward.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Sour Times by "Portishead"

Drummer: **Geoff Barrow** (programming) & **Clive Deamer** (live)

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a drum groove in 4/4 time. Above each staff is a sequence of rhythmic markings: '1 e + a 2 + a 3 e + a 4 + a 1 e + a 2 + a 3 e + 4 + a'. The first staff shows the hi-hat pattern with 'x' marks for hits and '(.)' for ghost notes. The second staff shows the bass drum pattern with 'x' marks for hits and '(.)' for ghost notes. The notation is enclosed in a rectangular box.

Why It's Great

The gorgeous, ever-so-slightly woozy, comedown breakbeat fits the dark cinematic vibe of the track like a glove. Playing it 'for real' takes the utmost restraint and skill.

How To Play It

This is the first four bars of the section starting at 0:11. The right hand plays straight eighth notes on the hi-hat throughout the entire four bar example. This allows the bass drum and snare drum to move in and about the steady right hand in a syncopated manner.

The snare drum backbeat is played on beats 2 and 4 of each bar. All other snare drums (marked in brackets) are ghost notes and are played quietly.

The bass drum plays a common rhythm, just before the snare drum on beat 2 of each bar, on the '+' and 'a' of beats 1 and 3. The second bass drum (the 'a') falls in between the hi-hats. Bars 3 and 4 have just one bass drum in between the hi-hats, falling on the 'a' of beat 3.

A bass drum is also played at the end of bars 1 and 3, on the 'a' of beat 4. This bass drum flows into the next bass drum on beat 1 of the next bar before being closely followed by two more bass drum notes, mentioned above, that fall on the '+' and 'a' of beat 1.

The ghost note snare drums that fall on the 'a' and 'e' of beats 2 and 3 are played in between the hi-hats. All four bars also have a ghost note on the 'e' of beat 1, again played in between the hi-hats.

The ghost notes played on the 'a' of beat 2 and the 'a' of beat 4 (for bars 1, 2 and 3 only) are played at the same time as the first of the two bass drum notes written beneath. This is technically quite demanding because the temptation is to then play these ghost notes loudly. It's also tricky to line up the quiet left hand with the bass drum without the two notes falling out of sync with each other.

The first variation in the groove occurs in the second bar where the ghost note on the 'a' of beat 2 is 'buzzed'. This means that the stick is gently pushed into the snare drum and allowed to bounce multiple times to create a buzzing sound. A normal snare drum ghost note can be played here if this is too demanding for you to play.

The next variation to notice is the open hi-hat on the '+' of beat 3 in bar 2. The hi-hat is closed again on beat 4 with the snare drum. This is the same rhythm used in bar 4 for beat 3 as well.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Stratus by "Billy Cobham"

Drummer: **Billy Cobham**

Why It's Great

This song has the coolest bass line ever, written by Billy, with super slinky drums punctuated by 1,000,000mph toms around a huge acrylic kit.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:10 and is then repeated at various places throughout the song. When Billy plays this tune live he tends to play one handed sixteenth notes on the hi-hat. This doesn't occur in the recording until the last third of the tune. For the recorded version of the song, Billy plays straight eighth notes on the hi-hat with the snare backbeat falling on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The use of ghost notes is crucial for replicating the sound and feel of this drum beat. All gaps between the hi-hats that aren't filled with a bass drum or accented snare drum are ghosted on the snare drum. These ghost notes are marked in brackets and are played as quietly as possible. The ghost note on the 'e' of beat 4 is a little tricky to play because it is preceded by an accented snare drum on beat 4 of the bar.

The use of bass drum on the 'e' of beat 2, straight after the the accented note, is particularly effective at creating a "feel". Notice the open hi-hat on the '+' of beat 4 which then closes on beat 1 of the next bar. Cobham chooses to improvise with this pattern quite heavily as demonstrated next.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 1:19. Here we can see one variation of the basic drum beat that Cobham chooses to use. The snare drum backbeat that was previously on beat 2 has now moved to the 'e' of beat 2. The snare drum on beat 4 remains though, to maintain the pulse.

All spaces between hi-hats are still filled with ghost notes or bass drums, packing out the groove wonderfully. The open hi-hat also remains on the '+' of beat 4.

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The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern over four bars. Above the staff, the syllables '1 e +', '2 e + a', '3 e +', and '4 +' are written. The notation includes a hi-hat opening on the first beat of each bar, a snare drum on the 'e' of each bar, and a bass drum on the '+' of each bar. The fourth bar features an additional snare drum on the '+' of beat 4. The staff is marked with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 3:18. This section of the song was sampled by the British group, Massive Attack and is perhaps the most recognisable melodic section of the song.

Cobham creates another variation on the basic beat for this section. The snare backbeat is back on beats 2 and 4 but an extra snare drum has been added on the '+' of beat 4. This snare drum is played at the same time as the hi-hat opening.

Another snare drum accent is played on the 'e' of beat 3, followed directly after by a bass drum on the '+' of beat 3, resolving the offbeat snare drum note nicely.

The use of syncopated bass drum on the 'a' of beat 2 gives the groove forward momentum and motion.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Suck My Kiss by "The Red Hot Chili Peppers"

Drummer: **Chad Smith**

Musical notation for the first four bars of the song. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff shows the hi-hat pattern with notes and 'x' marks. The bottom staff shows the bass and snare drum patterns with notes and 'x' marks. Above the notes are rhythmic markings: '1 +', '2 +', '3 e +', '4 +' for the first three bars, and '1 + a', '2 +', '3 + a', '4 + a' for the fourth bar. The letters 'L L' are written below the bottom staff at the end of the fourth bar.

Why It's Great

Chad Smith, so often labelled as 'just' a rock drummer, gives a great performance on this track. Locking in with Flea with his usual flash and sloshy hi-hats!

How To Play It

This is the first four bars of the song. The right hand, when not moving to the crash cymbal on beat 1 of bars 1 and 4, plays open hi-hat eighth notes all the way through.

The bass drum and snare drum pattern is the same for the first three bars. The snare drum is played on beats 2 and 4 while the bass drum is played on beats 1, the '+' of beat 1, after the snare on the '+' of beat 2 and finally on the 'e' of beat 3. The bass drum note on the 'e' falls in between the hi-hats and really pushes the groove forward whilst locking in with the guitar and bass guitar perfectly.

Bar 4 can be thought of as a drum fill bar. The bass drum plays the same rhythm for both beats 1 and beat 3 whilst the left hand plays two snare drum notes, starting on the '+' of beat 4. The first of these two snare drum notes is played at the same time as the hi-hat on beat 4. This means that the right hand stays up on the hi-hat all the way through and doesn't come down to the snare drum at all.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 0:22. This is a typically syncopated drum groove from Chad, using the bass drum to maximum effect and locking in with the guitar and bass guitar.

The two bass drums on the 'e' and 'a' of beat 2 fall in between the hi-hats.

Notice that the snare drum is played on it's own for beat 4 of the first bar. This is to give the right hand enough time to come down hard on the hi-hat for the 'e' of beat 4. The hi-hat is opened sharply on the 'e' at the same time as the bass drum is struck. The hi-hat is not played again until beat 1 of bar 2.

The first half of bar 2 is played the same as bar 1 with an extra snare drum played in between the hi-hats on beat 3. This is followed directly after by two bass drums, starting on the '+' of beat 4, leading into a double on the snare drum. This double (played with the left hand) starts on beat 4 at the same time as the hi-hat is struck whilst half open. The hi-hat then fully opens on the '+' of beat 4 before closing again on beat 1 of the next bar. This little section at the end of bar 2 is improvised later in the song.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 1:05, this is the first four bars of this section. This four bar pattern is improvised and changed on repeats but keeps returning to the way shown above.

Again, Chad uses the snare and bass drum to follow the syncopated guitar and bass guitar melody. Bar 1 and 2 have bass drums in between the hi-hats on beat 3, a snare in between the hi-hat on the 'a' of beat 3 and then two more bass drums, in between the hi-hats, on the 'e' and 'a' of beat 4. This last bass drum on the 'a' leads into the next bass drum on beat 1 of bars 2 and 4.

A thirty second note drag is played with the left hand on the 'a' of beat 3. These two notes are played quietly, as close to the hi-hat on beat 3 as possible. Notice how bar 4 has an extra two bass drums, starting in between the hi-hats on the 'e' of beat 4, while bar 2 does not.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Sunday Bloody Sunday by "U2"

Drummer: *Larry Mullen Jr*

Why It's Great

Played to a click track and recorded at the foot of a stairwell, Mullen's military tattoo sounded like the marching jackboots of the Irish Republican Army. Just try to imagine the song without it.

How To Play It

This is the very first two bars of the song. The first thing to understand is that the drums enter on the '+' of beat 4 of a previous bar. This means the first note played on the drums isn't actually beat 1. Beat 1 is actually where the first bass drum is played.

The hands are playing a double handed sixteenth note pattern (RLRL) throughout the entire drum groove. The appropriate hands come down from the hi-hat to play the snare drum parts when required while the bass drum plays a steady quarter note pattern on all the downbeats of the bar. This gives the drum beat a very military and marching sound and feel.

Any two-note snare drum groupings starting on the '+' are played with the right then left hand, while any single snare drum note is played with just the right hand off the hi-hat. This means that the left hand remains on top of the hi-hat when any single snare drum notes are played.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Sunshine Of Your Love by "Cream"

Drummer: **Ginger Baker**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The groove consists of four measures. In each measure, the bass drum (represented by a vertical line) plays on beats 2 and 4. Above the staff, there are plus signs (+) above beats 2 and 3 of each measure, indicating the snare drum. The snare drum is represented by a horizontal line with a vertical tick mark. The first measure has a plus sign above beat 1, but no snare drum sound is shown. The second measure has a plus sign above beat 2, with a snare drum sound on beat 2. The third measure has a plus sign above beat 3, with a snare drum sound on beat 3. The fourth measure has a plus sign above beat 4, with a snare drum sound on beat 4. The numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are written above the first four beats of the staff.

Why It's Great

Mr Baker threw his rhythmic impulses into reverse on Cream's biggest hit, when he reversed the traditional backbeat and unleashed those Red Indian-style war drums. From a stomping introduction Ginger set a terrific pace, locking together with guitar and bass, emphasising the vital role of drums in any truly creative group setting.

How To Play It

This drum groove occurs throughout most of the song. The right hand remains on the floor tom at all times for this drum groove, playing simple eighth notes all the way through.

The left hand however, plays the medium tom tom on beats 1 and 3 of the bar. Thus reversing the traditional backbeat, which usually plays on beats 2 and 4 of the bar. A moment of true drumming creativeness considering it was released way back in 1967!

The bass drum plays on beat 2, the '+' of beat 2, beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3. Note that no bass drum is played on beat 1 of the bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Superstition by "Stevie Wonder"

Drummer: **Stevie Wonder**

Musical notation for the drum groove of "Superstition" in 4/4 time. The notation is presented on two staves. The first staff shows the hi-hat pattern with a swung sixteenth-note feel. The second staff shows the bass drum pattern, which is a simple four-beat pattern. Above the notation, the following rhythmic counts are provided: 1 + 2 + a 3 e + 4 + a 1 + 2 + a 3 + a 4 e + for the first staff, and 1 + 2 + a 3 + a 4 e + a 1 + 2 + a 3 + 4 e + a for the second staff. The notation uses 'x' for hi-hat hits and solid dots for bass drum hits.

Why It's Great

Superstition is instantly recognisable just from the opening drum break, performed by Stevie himself. His drumming is loose and fluid with a fat, soulful sound.

How To Play It

This is the very first four bars of the song. The hi-hat is where it's at for this groove while the bass drum simply plays on all four beats of the bar and the snare drum on beats 2 and 4.

The right hand plays a swung sixteenth pattern on the hi-hat. That means that the sixteenth notes are not played evenly but rather, are felt and counted in a swung or shuffled manner. This swung/shuffled rhythmic approach to playing soul is what gives this genre its unique feel.

If the hi-hat part is too tricky to play one handed then the left hand can be brought up to the hi-hat to play any 'e' or 'a' notes as required.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Take Five by "Dave Brubeck"

Drummer: **Joe Morello**

A musical staff in 5/4 time signature showing a drum beat pattern. The staff is divided into five beats. Beat 1 has a single note. Beat 2 has a triplet of notes. Beat 3 has a single note. Beat 4 has a triplet of notes. Beat 5 has a triplet of notes. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, 2, +, 3, +, 4, +, 5, trip let. The '+' signs are positioned between beats 2 and 3, 3 and 4, and 4 and 5. The 'trip let' label is above the triplet in beat 5. The notes are marked with 'x' for cymbal and 'y' for snare.

Why It's Great

The memorable and hooky melody of Take Five helped bring jazz to the masses in the late 50's. It was all over US radio at a time when rock'n'roll was taking hold. This song features an extended drum solo made even greater by the fact that it's played in the time signature of 5/4!

Joe Morello is criminally overlooked as a great drummer of this era but his economy and swing put him firmly on the map as one of the great Jazz players.

How To Play It

This is the very first bar of the song. The whole tune is played in the time signature 5/4. This means that there are five counted beats to every bar.

The same ride cymbal pattern is maintained during most of the tune and can be thought of as an extended version of the more traditional Jazz Ride Cymbal pattern. Extended by one extra beat.

Look out for the rather tasty snare drum ghost notes on the second and third partial of the triplet in beat 4. These two snare drum notes slide into beat 1 in a really satisfying manner.

Of course being Jazz, Joe changes this drum beat throughout the song. Joe improvises with the pattern, adding and subtracting notes to accompany the music. Sometimes only the snare drum on the '+' of beat 2 is accented and sometimes no snare drums at all are accented.

It's worth mentioning that during live performance, Joe developed a stepped hi-hat pattern for the foot. In the early days he would step the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar but in later performances added a note on beat 5 as well. A truly impressive technique to perform, especially when improvising over the top of it.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



There Is by "Box Car Racer"

Drummer: **Travis Barker**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. Above the staff, the letters 'e', '+', and 'a' are placed above the first three notes of each of the four measures. The notes are quarter notes. Above the first and third notes of each measure is an accent (>). Below the staff, the drum notation is written as: R L R rL R L IR L R L RR LL R L R L. The 'rL' indicates a flam on the first measure, and 'IR' indicates a flam on the second measure. The 'RR LL' indicates a five-stroke roll on the third measure.

Why It's Great

No where is Travis's rudimental marching band background better demonstrated than on this track. Travis lays down a great rudimental snare drum groove that will hopefully disband the myth that rudiments are boring or un-cool!

How To Play It

The groove occurs throughout the majority of the song. Travis does play extra double strokes in other sections and only plays the bass drum on beat 1 during the verse but this is the pattern he plays during the chorus and for the majority of the song.

The groove is based around a single stroke roll on the snare drum, played with alternating hands (RLRL). The bass drum falls down with the right hand on beats 1 and 3.

The first rudiment to occur (after the single stroke roll of course) are the two flams played on the 'a' and '+' of beats 1 and 2 respectively. Flams are two notes played very close to each other but not actually at the same time. The left hand flam on the 'a' of beat 1 has the right hand drop in quietly first, just before the main left hand note. The opposite occurs for the right handed flam on the '+' of beat 2. Playing flams within a single stroke roll can take a little practice and the hand order must be correct for it to flow evenly and effortlessly.

The next rudiment that occurs is the five stroke roll, starting on the '+' of beat 3. Both the right hand on the '+' of beat 3 and the left hand on the 'a' of beat 3 are doubled into thirty second notes, creating four thirty second notes in total played with the sticking RRLL. The fifth note occurs straight after the left handed double and falls on beat 4. This right handed note is accented, or played at a louder volume (just like the flams). It is followed by another accent with the left hand on the 'e' of beat 4.

Although this is quite technically demanding and requires good hand technique, I hope you'll agree with me that the rudiments can sound pretty awesome when performed like this. Get those practice pads out!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Time Is Running Out by "Muse"

Drummer: **Dominic Howard**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes 'e', '+', and 'a' are written above the first three measures, and '+', 'a' above the fourth. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' indicate the right and left hands. Measure 1: R on the first eighth, L on the second eighth, R on the third eighth. Measure 2: R on the first eighth, L on the second eighth, R on the third eighth. Measure 3: R on the first eighth, L on the second eighth, R on the third eighth. Measure 4: R on the first eighth, L on the second eighth, R on the third eighth, L on the fourth eighth. There are also '+' and 'a' symbols above the staff in measure 4, corresponding to the notes above.

Why It's Great

This is one of Muse's biggest hits but it's the drum groove that occurs at 1:46 that gets drummers so excited. Dom keeps coming up with these little gems for us all to enjoy.

How To Play It

The groove occurs for the first time at 1:46. The pattern involves single stroke sixteenth notes around the toms and snare drum, using the bass drum to help bridge gaps between the hands moving between drums.

Dom starts the groove on the medium tom so that his left hand is free to play the high tom, followed by the floor tom with the right hand. The bass drum is played on the 'a' of beat 1 so that both hands can then move to the snare drum to play a flam on beat 2.

A similar pattern is then repeated, starting on the '+' of beat 2. The hands play an alternating single stroke (RLRL) around the toms. The order of notes are medium tom, high tom and then three floor toms. The bass drum is employed once more on the 'a' of beat 3 to bridge the gap between the '+' of beat 3 and beat 4, where both hands play between the floor tom and snare drum. This is not played as a flam this time, both hands play at exactly the same time instead.

Finally the hands move to the hi-hat on the '+' of beat 4 and 'a'. The hi-hat is opened on the '+' of beat 4 and closes again on beat 1 of the next bar. This is either achieved by opening the hi-hat only once on the '+' of beat 4, or by stamping out eighth notes on the hi-hat pedal with your left foot throughout the entire groove.

The latter is how Dom plays it live but the pedalled hi-hat notes can not be heard on the album version. For the video supplement that accompanies this drum beat, I chose to leave out the stepped eighth notes with the hi-hat foot and only open it once on the '+' of beat 4 instead.

It's up to yourself then as to whether or not you choose to add the hi-hat foot throughout the full groove or just on the '+' of beat 4 at the end of the bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Tomorrow Never Knows by "The Beatles"

Drummer: **Ringo Starr**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Above the staff, four measures are marked with '1', '2', '3', and '4'. Above measure 1 is a '+' sign. Above measure 2 is a '+' sign. Above measure 3 are '+' and 'a' signs. Above measure 4 is a '+' sign. The notation consists of eighth notes with stems pointing up, and some notes have 'x' marks above them. Below the staff, the letters 'R' and 'L' are positioned under the notes in measure 3, indicating right and left hand placement.

Why It's Great

Arguably one of the most compelling Beatle's song's ever written, Ringo takes us on a trip with hypnotic cymbal white wash and elevating high tom stabs.

How To Play It

This drum groove occurs throughout the entire song. Ringo creates a truly unique drum groove for this song. His right hand stays up on the crash cymbal creating a wash of eighth notes.

The bass drum on the '+' of beat 2 occurs just after the snare drum backbeat, followed by another bass drum on beat 3 leading the groove into the high tom part.

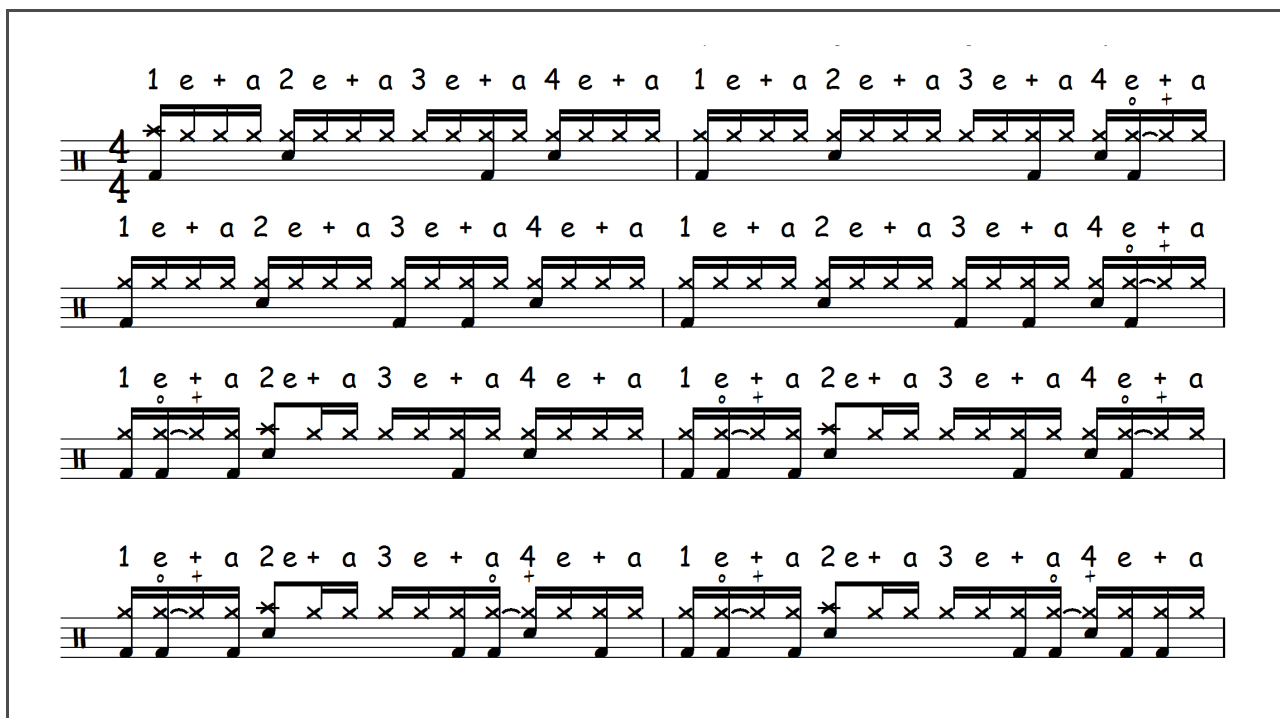
The snare drum backbeat is played on beat 2 of the bar but beat 4 is skipped. Instead, two sixteenth notes are played on the high tom starting just before beat 4, on the '+' and 'a' of beat 3. These two sixteenth notes can be played with just the left hand if desired but sound more powerful when played between two hands (RL).

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Tom Sawyer by "Rush"

Drummer: **Neil Peart**



The image displays four staves of musical notation for a drum part in 4/4 time. Each staff is labeled with a bar number (1-4) and a rhythmic pattern: '1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a'. The notation includes various drum symbols such as snare (x), hi-hat (x), and bass drum (o) notes, along with accents (+) and dynamic markings (o). The patterns show increasing complexity and syncopation across the eight bars.

Why It's Great

Proof that music can be both demanding and commercially successful! Rock's finest technician navigates changing time signatures with intricate patterns flowing one after the other.

How To Play It

This is the first eight bars of the song. The right hand plays sixteenth notes on the hi-hat throughout, only stopping for the occasional crash cymbal.

Neil slowly increases the complexity of the bass drum part as he moves through the drum beat, keeping it simple at the beginning and adding more syncopation as it progresses.

Bars 3 and 4 both have a bass drum on the 'e', straight after the snare drum backbeat. These bass drum notes are played at the same time as the hi-hat is opened. The hi-hat closes again on the next sixteenth, on the '+' of beat 4. This occurs variously throughout the eight bars with Neil opening and closing the hi-hat for a single sixteenth note, at the same time as playing bass drum notes.

Bars 5 to 8 all have a crash cymbal on beat 2, played at the same time as the snare drum. The right hand is required to move to the crash cymbal pretty quickly after playing the hi-hat on the 'a' of beat 1. If this is too quick for you to play then you could leave out the hi-hat note on the 'a' all together and just play the bass drum on it's own instead.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a 4/4 drum groove. The notation is on a single staff with a 4/4 time signature. It shows four measures. Above the staff, the counts are: 1 e + a, 2 e + a, 3 e + a, 4 e + a. The notation consists of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating hits on the hi-hat. The first measure has four eighth notes. The second measure has a quarter note followed by three eighth notes. The third measure has a quarter note followed by three eighth notes. The fourth measure has a quarter note followed by three eighth notes.

How To Play It

This beat occurs for the first time at 0:40. Peart moves to the ride cymbal for this groove playing constant sixteenth notes with his right hand.

A super fast double bass drum lick is played on the 'a' of beat 1. If you're feeling brave then you could play it with one bass drum foot like Neil does. If not, then the double bass drum pedal can be used instead.

The syncopated bass drum and snare parts on the 'a' of beat 2, the 'e' of beat 3 and the 'a' of beat 3 really give this groove a slinky feel before being resolved with two snare drum notes, on beat 4 and the '+' of beat 4.

Other Bars Of Interest

Musical notation for a 7/8 drum groove. The notation is on two staves. The top staff has a 7/8 time signature. Above the staff, the counts are: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 +. The notation consists of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating hits on the hi-hat. The first measure has seven eighth notes. The second measure has a quarter note followed by five eighth notes. The third measure has a quarter note followed by five eighth notes. The bottom staff has the same counts and notation as the top staff.

How To Play It

This beat occurs for the first time at 1:35 and is the first odd time signature section of the song. The time signature for this two bar phrase is in 7/8 which means that instead of counting 8 eighth notes, as we did in previous bars, we only count 7. It has the effect of sounding like the bar is being cut short by one eighth note because, it is!

The sixteenth notes are now counted 1+2+ etc. rather than 1e+a. This is to make clear to the counter the 7 beats within the drum beat.

The right hand doesn't change from it's previous pattern. It continues to play sixteenth notes on the hi-hat with the snare backbeat played on beat 3 and beat 7.

Only one bass drum is played with an open hi-hat in the first bar, on the '+' of beat 4. The hi-hat is then closed immediately after. In the second bar this idea is continued with another bass drum and open hi-hat on the '+' of beat 5. These two bars are then looped into one phrase.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Toxicity by "System Of A Down"

Drummer: **John Dolmayan**

A musical score for a drum part in 6/8 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff has four measures, each with a count above it: '1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6', '1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6', '1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6', and '1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6'. The second staff also has four measures with counts: '1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6', '1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6', '1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6', and '1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6 +'. The notation includes hi-hat patterns (marked with 'x'), bass drum notes (marked with 'b'), and snare drum notes (marked with 's'). The final measure of the second staff has two 'L' characters below it, indicating ghost notes.

Why It's Great

System Of A Down are famous for mixing heart felt melodies with a rock sensibility and this track is no exception. Drummer John Dolmayan gives another stellar performance, this time in the time signature of 6/8.

How To Play It

Occurs during the first verse at 0:38. The whole song, apart from one small section towards the end, is played in the time signature of 6/8. This can also be thought of as playing in triplets, as essentially the music can be counted in groups of three.

John plays steady eighth notes on the hi-hat and lays down a fat backbeat on beat 4 of each bar.

Bars 1, 2 and 3 are played exactly the same as each other, including the extra snare drum that falls in between the hi-hats on the '+' of beat 5. The bass drum is played on beat 1, the '+' of beat 3 and beat 6. A snare drum ghost note is also played on the '+' of beat 2, in between the hi-hats.

Bar 4 uses a rather clever idea where the drum beat seems to turn itself around at the end. John replaces the snare drum played previously on its own on the '+' of beat 5 with two thirty second ghost notes, played with just the left hand. These ghost notes fall just before the bass drum on beat 6 which is then followed by a new snare drum note on the '+' of beat 6 right before beat 1 of the next bar. This is a really cool and effective idea played with grace and control.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

1 2 + + 4 5 6 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 +

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

1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6 1 2 + 3 + 4 5 6

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

1 2 + 3 + 4 5 6 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 +

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

1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6 1 2 + 3 + 4 5 6

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

How To Play It

This is the first eight bars of the drum track in their entirety. Bars 1 and 5 contain the same drum pattern as each other. Flams are played on beats 2, 4 and 6 while the bass drum plays a syncopated rhythm between them. Notice the bass drums on the '+' of beats 2 and 3, that fall in between the counted beats of the bar.

Bars 3 and 4 are also the same as bars 7 and 8. John moves his right hand to the half open hi-hat to play eighth notes with a snare drum backbeat played on beat 4 of both bars. Extra snare drums are added on the '+' of beat 2 and the '+' of 5 in the first bar. The snare drum on the '+' of beat 2 is written in a bracket and is played quietly. Extra snare drums are added on the '+' of beat 2 and beat 6 in the second bar creating a cool counter rhythm to the first bar.

The bass drum for these two bars are played on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 3. The bass drum on the '+' of beat 3 helps to propel the drum beat forward into the snare drum backbeat on beat 4. A bass drum is played on beat 6 of the first bar right before the bass drum played on beat 1 of the second bar. Finally, a bass drum is played in between the two snare drums on beat 5 of the second bar.

Bar 2 involves alternating single strokes around the drum kit with a thirty second flurry of four notes, starting on beat 4. The four thirty second notes take up one counted beat of the bar, the whole of beat 4 in this case.

Bar 6 involves a similar drum fill to bar 4, with alternating sixteenth notes played around the drum kit.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Under The Bridge by "Red Hot Chili Peppers"

Drummer: **Chad Smith**

Why It's Great

The lyrics may be a little morbid but the drums are joyful. Chad keeps us guessing as to what the chorus might bring, as he slowly builds up his drum part towards the big finale.

How To Play It

Occurs at 1:50 for the first time. This four bar pattern has Chad matching Flea on the bass guitar with his bass drum foot exactly. This is in contrast to the first time this section occurs in the song where Chad makes the mature musical decision to not play any bass drum at all.

Chad keeps the eighth notes on the hi-hat throughout and plays the cross-stick on beats 2 and 4 of each bar. The bass drum falls on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 2 for bars 1 and 3 while missing out the bass drum on beat 1 of bars 2 and 4. Instead, the bass drum is played on the '+' of beat 2 and 3 for bar 2 and the '+' of beat 1 and 2 for bar 4. The bass drum on beat 3 helps to resolve the groove back onto the downbeat before opening the hi-hat on the '+' of beat 4 at the end of each four bar cycle. Very subtle and very musical!

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time in the break at 1:22. Chad keeps this section light and breezy with ghosted cross-sticks and sixteenth notes on the hi-hats.

The main cross-stick backbeats are maintained on beats 2 and 4 while two extra cross-stick notes are added on the 'a' and 'e' of beats 2 and 3 respectively. The cross-stick on the 'e' of beat 3 is noticeably quieter and so has been marked as a ghost note in brackets.

The right hand plays extra hi-hat notes on the 'a' of beats 1 and 3 for both bars, giving the groove a rhythmic lift.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Walk by "Pantera"

Drummer: **Vinnie Paul**

1 2 3 + 4 1 2 3 + 4

1 2 3 + 4 1 trip let 2 trip let 3 trip let 4 trip let

Why It's Great

Inspiring a whole legion of air drummers when performing live, this grinding and powerful beat just feels so good. Vinnie's great sound and popularity amongst drummers comes from super tight bass drum control and a real feel and groove in his playing.

How To Play It

This drum beat occurs for the first time at around 0:17 into the song. The whole guitar riff is built around a swung/triplet based rhythm. Vinnie keeps it straight, only adding in the occasional triplet to emphasise the awesome swing of the groove.

The first three bars of this four bar phrase are the same as each other. Bass drum is played with the hi-hat on beats 1 and 3, while a snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4. The snare drum on beat 2 is played with the hi-hat while the snare drum on beat 4 is played with the crash cymbal, punching with the guitar riff.

A bass drum note is played on the '+' of beat 3 which is actually counted as a triplet. This means that the whole of beat 3 is counted as a triplet and the bass drum actually falls on the last triplet note of the beat. This is what gives this section of the groove it's swing element.

Bar 4 has a really cool idea played on the bass drum. The whole of the bar is counted as triplets and the bass drum and crash cymbal play together on every second triplet note, starting on beat 1. This means that a bass drum and crash are played followed by a single rest six times through the length of the bar. This type of rhythm is called a quarter note triplet because a quarter note triplet is equal to two eighth note triplets, an eighth note and an eighth note rest in this case.

When it's played correctly, the right hand and bass drum foot feel like they're playing an even flow of equally spaced notes across the bar.

The snare drum plays on the backbeat of beats 2 and 4, in between the bass drum and crash cymbals and again on the 'let' of beat 2 and beat 4, in between the bass and crash.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This variation on the verse occurs for the first time at around 2:40. Vinnie changes the bass drum pattern for the first three bars compared to the first example above. Bar 4 is played exactly the same as bar 4 in the previous example.

The power of the quarter note triplet is unleashed once more for this section. As explained previously, the quarter note triplet is equal to one eighth note triplet and one eighth note triplet rest in length. The bass drum plays every other triplet note of the bar, every second eighth note triplet, starting on beat 1.

The hi-hat keeps a steady quarter note (not to be confused with a quarter note triplet) with the right hand and the bass drum plays around it. Notice the bass drums either side of the hi-hat on beat 2, on the let of beat 1 and on the 'trip' of beat 2.

The snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4. The snare drum on beat 2 is played with the hi-hat while the snare drum on beat 4 is played with the crash cymbal, punching with the guitar riff.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This is the drumbeat played in the chorus and occurs for the first time at 0:52. Vinnie keeps it steady on the bell of the ride cymbal with quarter notes, played with his right hand. Crash cymbals are played on beats 1 of bar 1 and 2, and beat 3 of bar 3.

The bass drum is played on beat 1 and the swung '+' of beat 3 for bar 1. The snare drum backbeat is supplied on beat 2 and 4 of the bar except that an extra swung snare drum is played on the '+' of beat 4, just before beat 1 of the next bar. The bass drum is played on beat 1, the '+' of beat 1 and beat 3 for bar 2, while the snare drum falls on beat 2 and the '+' of beat 2.

Vinnie then plays a drum fill, which changes every time the two bar pattern repeats. This is the fill he plays the first time which is simply alternating triplets on the snare drum (RLRLRL). The first right hand starts on the crash cymbal on beat 3 and then moves to the snare drum for the rest of the fill.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Walking On The Moon by "The Police"

Drummer: **Stuart Copeland**

Why It's Great

In a radical break from rock drumming orthodoxy, Copeland demonstrates his creative powers to the max during a bravura percussion performance, almost as captivating as Sting's vocals on this atmospheric 1980 hit. Cross-sticking snare rhythms, a pulsating bass drum and ticking hi-hats create a sophisticated reggae revolution.

How To Play It

This is the basic pattern Stuart plays when not improvising during the verse. Reggae drummers in general, as well as Stuart, tend to improvise a lot on the hi-hat, throwing in all kinds of cool hi-hat licks. This then, is the basic pattern Stuart plays most frequently. Most of the bars contain improvised hi-hat and cross-stick patterns (as shown below).

This is an example of a classic reggae style drum beat. A shuffle rhythm is played on the hi-hat (first and third partial of each triplet) and the bass drum plays the role of the snare drum backbeat, falling on beats 2 and 4. This reversed use for the bass drum, as a substitute snare drum backbeat, is used a lot in traditional reggae drumming.

A single cross-stick is played on beat 3 of the bar but this is also improvised during the song, as shown below. Stuart drops out of the shuffle occasionally to play single quarter notes on the hi-hat, leaving out the '+'s.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This drum beat occurs occasionally (first time at around 0:20) and is an example of how Stuart improvises with the cross-stick on the snare drum. The '+' of beat 4 (third partial of the triplet) is played to add more forward momentum to the groove.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This drum beat also occurs occasionally (first time at around 0:25) and is an example of how Stuart improvises with the bass drum. The '+' of beat 2 is played on the bass drum, to add more forward momentum to the groove.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This drum pattern occurs for the first time at around 1:27. The last triplet note of beat 4 is doubled up on the hi-hat (RL) to create a roll into beat 1 of the next bar.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This drum pattern occurs for the first time at around 2:34 and is an example of a classic reggae style hi-hat lick. It starts in the previous bar (not shown) with an accent on the '+' of beat 4 (as shown at the end of the first bar). Instead of playing the hi-hat on beat 1, it is skipped and two notes are played on the second and third partial of the triplet on beat 1 instead. This creates a really cool and syncopated flow of notes leading into the bass drum on beats 2 of both bars. Stuart plays all of these extra hi-hat notes one handed.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, with a plus sign between each number. The pattern consists of quarter note triplets on beats 1, 2, and 3, and an open hi-hat on beat 4. The first triplet starts on the first eighth note of beat 1, the second on the first eighth note of beat 2, and the third on the first eighth note of beat 3. The open hi-hat is represented by a small circle above the staff on beat 4.

How To Play It

This drum pattern occurs at around 2:45 and is yet another example of a classic reggae style lick.

The right hand plays and maintains the shuffle on the hi-hat while the left hand plays the cross-stick pattern shown. This cross-stick pattern involves playing every other triplet note starting on beat 1. This is the quarter note triplet rhythm discussed previously in this book.

Playing quarter note triplets in this way, whilst maintaining a shuffle rhythm on the hi-hat, creates a really cool poly-rhythm. This is simply an effect caused where two distinct and different rhythms are played against each other, at the same time.

The open hi-hat on beat 4 of the bar ends the pattern nicely.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Walk This Way by "Aerosmith"

Drummer: **Joey Kramer**

Why It's Great

Proving that the drum beat can be just as distinctive as any melody, you know the song as soon as you hear this classic groove.

How To Play It

The drum beat occurs at the beginning of the song. Joey plays straight eighth notes on the hi-hat with his right hand throughout the bar. A snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4, played at the same time as the hi-hat.

The bass drum is played on beat 1, beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3, all falling at the same time as the hi-hat. A bass drum sixteenth is played on the 'a' of beat 2 to push the groove into the downbeat on beat 3 of the bar. This bass drum on the 'a' falls in between the hi-hats.

Kramer creates a unique sounding groove by opening the hi-hat on beat 1 of the bar. This is a very uncommon place for the hi-hat to be opened but sounds great! The hi-hat opens with the bass drum and then closes on the '+' of beat 1, at the same time as the hi-hat is struck with the right hand.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This drum beat occurs at around 0:17 once the vocals start and also during the verses. Joey now plays eighth notes on the half open hi-hat and maintains the snare drum backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The bass drum plays on beat 1, the '+' of beat 3 and the 'e' of beat 4. This bass drum on the 'e' falls in between the hi-hats, directly after the snare drum backbeat on beat 4 of the bar.

This little line of three bass drum notes creates a cool rhythm, starting on the '+' of beat 3 and ending on beat 1.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



War Pigs by "Black Sabbath"

Drummer: **Bill Ward**

Why It's Great

You try playing that simple hi-hat sequence in front of 100,000 people without missing a beat. Not as easy as it looks!

How To Play It

This drum pattern occurs after the slower section in the time signature of 6/8 (shown below). This pattern looks very simple on paper but requires some serious restraint in order to play it.

The hi-hat foot is stepping eighth notes all the way through. Basically, Bill's left foot is keeping time. The two crash cymbal stabs that link in with the guitars, occur on beat 1 and the 'e' of beat 1. Any hand(s) you like can play these two crash cymbals. The left foot can also drop out for beat 1 if you're finding it tricky to keep the hi-hat foot going at the same time as the two bass drum notes.

A cool little point of interest occurs in the second bar where the hi-hat is struck on the 'e' of beat 3. Because the hi-hat is being stepped it should be open at the time of the 'e' anyway.

Other Bars Of Interest

How To Play It

This beat occurs at the beginning of the song and is counted in the time signature of 6/4. This groove has six counted beats per bar and can be thought of us a very slow swung half time drum beat.

The Jazz ride cymbal pattern is being played by the right hand giving it its swung element while the bass drum and snare drum fall on beat 1 and 4 respectively, giving it its half time element.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The beat is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes are labeled: 1 + a, 2 + a, 3 e + a, 4 +. The notation shows eighth notes on the hi-hat (marked with 'x') and a snare drum note (marked with 'a') on the 'a' of each beat. On beat 3, there is an additional snare drum note on the 'e'.

How To Play It

This is the drum beat that Bill plays after the guitar stabs and miniature drum solo. The right hand simply plays eighth notes on the hi-hat with a crash cymbal at the beginning of each bar.

The bass drum helps to move the drum beat forward by playing a two sixteenth note figure on the 'a' of beat 2 and on beat 3 itself. This is followed by another sixteenth note on the 'e' of beat 3, played on the snare drum, that lies in between the hi-hat notes on beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3.

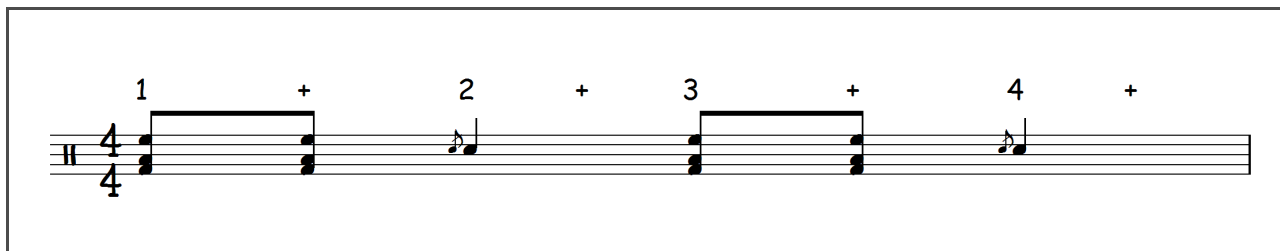
Forward momentum is also offered in the form of two more bass drum notes on the 'a' of beat 1 and 2, just before the snare drum backbeat. A surprisingly funky groove for a metal drummer!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



We Will Rock You by "Queen"

Drummer: **Roger Taylor**



Why It's Great

By multi-tracking huge kick drums and hand claps, Queen created a football stadium anthem that has penetrated all musical genres. Chad Smith played it live, Ice Cube sampled it and Queen themselves used to perform a bizarre punk version! Simple but yet very appealing.

How To Play It

This drum beat is played throughout the entire song. It is of course impossible to replicate this drum beat live to sound like the recording due to the instruments used to play the drum beat, i.e. hundreds of hands clapping and mega bass drums! This then, is the way a drummer might play it on their drum kit at home or on stage, including myself.

The rhythm is very simple, with snare flams on beats 2 and 4. High tom, floor tom and bass drum are all played together on beats 1, the '+' of beat 1, beat 3 and the '+' of beat 3. You can choose to flam the two toms to make it sound even bigger if you like. Drum choices are also optional so any tom tom's can be used to play this part. Both hands could even play on the floor tom if desired.

Try playing this drum beat through the entire song without playing a single drum fill. Not as easy as it might sound.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



What'd I Say by "Ray Charles"

Drummer: Milt Turner

A musical notation diagram for a 4/4 drum beat. It consists of two staves. The top staff shows the right hand's pattern with notes and rests corresponding to the counts: 1 + a 2 + 3 + a 4 +, 1 + a 2 + 3 + 4 +. The bottom staff shows the left hand's pattern with notes and rests corresponding to the counts: R R, R R, R R. The notation includes eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests.

Why It's Great

Ray Charles' first, apparently improvised, soul-gospel hit inspired drummer Milt Turner's overtly Latin snare, tom and ride bell groove, and it's been a mainstay of drummers ever since.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout most of the song. This drum beat is based very much on the rhythms played by Latin percussionist's but has been applied to the drum kit with skill and musicality.

The bass drum gently plays quarter notes through both bars while the snare drum cross-stick backbeat is played on beats 2 of each bar.

The right hand plays up on the ride cymbal bell for both bars and uses two sixteenth notes on the '+' and 'a' to push into the backbeats on beats 2 and 4 of bar 1 and beat 2 of bar 2. This super fast figure can be a little demanding on the right hand so try to ensure that a loose grip is used to reduce hand strain. The right hand is given a short break after each figure by missing out an eighth note after each double is played.

The left hand moves to the high tom on beat 4 and the '+' of beat 4 during the first bar. Again, notice how the right hand doesn't play on beat 4 but rather, starts again on the '+' of beat 4 to give the right hand a short rest.

The left hand plays an extra high tom note in bar 2, starting on the '+' of beat 3. The right hand plays on the bell at the same time as all three high tom notes.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



When The Levee Breaks by "Led Zeppelin"

Drummer: **John Bonham**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, e, +, 2, +, a, 3, +, a, 4, +. The notation shows a bass drum note on beat 1, followed by a hi-hat pattern (x) on the 'e' and '+' of beat 1. On beat 2, there is a snare drum note on the '+' and a bass drum note on the 'a'. On beat 3, there is a bass drum note on the '+' and a snare drum note on the 'a'. On beat 4, there is a snare drum note on the '+'. The hi-hat pattern continues on the '+' of beat 4.

Why It's Great

It's a combination of astonishing, visceral performance and incredible sound. The foot-of-the stairwell placement of Bonzo's kit gives the drums that unmatched depth and you can feel the compressors straining under the force of his devastating right foot in particular. The blues never sounded more badass!

This drum beat has been sampled by 100's of DJ's and electronic musicians the world over.

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the song. The right hand plays a steady and unflinching eighth note pattern on the hi-hat while the snare plays a backbeat on beats 2 and 4.

Bonham actually only played one bass drum on beat 1 of the bar on the original recording. Echo and reverb was then added which made it sound like there were in fact two bass drum notes. In order to replicate the way this drum beat sounds I decided to play two bass drum notes, falling on beat 1 and the 'e' of beat 1. It's up to you whether you choose to play the two bass drums, as written above, or to stick to the way Bonham originally played it with just the one bass drum note on beat 1 itself.

The other two bass drum notes are played on the '+' of beat 3 and the 'a' of beat 3, leading into the snare drum. The second of these two bass drum notes falls in between the hi-hats.

The single bass drum note on the 'a' of beat 3 also needs to fall in between the hi-hats and helps to give the groove enormous forward momentum!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Whole Lotta Love by "Led Zeppelin"

Drummer: **John Bonham**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat pattern. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the syllables '1 e + a', '2 + a', '3 e + a', and '4 e +' are written. The notation includes hi-hat notes (marked with 'x'), snare drum notes (marked with 'a'), and bass drum notes (marked with 'e'). There are also ghost notes in parentheses between the hi-hat notes. The snare drum backbeat is placed on the '+' of beat 4 instead of the traditional placement on beat 4.

Why It's Great

Vintage Bonham with the usual elements of intuitive feel, irresistible groove, musicality, power and poise all present and favourably high in the mix.

How To Play It

Occurs at 0:50 during the verse. This shows us another great example of snare drum beat displacement. In this drum beat the snare drum backbeat is moved from the traditional placement on beat 4 to the '+' of beat 4 instead.

The hi-hat maintains a steady flow of eighth notes using the right hand while the left hand plays the snare drum accents on beats 2 and the '+' of beat 4.

The left hand also plays the occasional ghost note (marked in brackets) in between the hi-hat notes. These ghost notes help to fill out the groove but its worth pointing out that Bonham varies his ghost note pattern as the song progresses. Feel free to add in your own ghost notes, as long as the strong snare backbeat and bass drum pattern is maintained then the groove will still work.

The bass drum notes on the 'a' and 'e' of beats 3 and 4 respectively, both fall in between the hi-hats and follow the guitar riff wonderfully. The snare drum on the '+' of beat 4 falls with the last note of the guitar riff completing the accompaniment. This shows a really great sense of musicality and skilled drum beat construction from Bonham.

Bonham plays the groove as always with a slight element of swing in his playing. This is more noticeable when he plays the bass drum notes on the 'a' and 'e'. Bonham had his own feel making him famously hard to emulate. It's good fun trying though!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



With Or Without You by "U2"

Drummer: Larry Mullen Jr.

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum groove. The staff contains two measures of music. Above the staff, the rhythm is indicated by numbers and symbols: '1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + a 3 e + 4 +'. The first measure consists of quarter notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. The second measure consists of quarter notes on beats 1, 2, and 3, followed by a quarter note on beat 4 with an 'x' above it, indicating a hi-hat. A small 'o' with a dot below it is positioned above the final note on beat 4. The time signature '4/4' is written at the beginning of the staff.

Why It's Great

The song builds in tension and drama until Larry unleashes one of the coolest tom tom based grooves ever. Drummers can't help but air drum along to this one, it's totally infectious.

How To Play It

This two bar drum groove occurs for the first time at 1:46. Larry lays down eighth notes with this right hand on the floor tom for both bars of the groove. This is where his right hand stays throughout.

A snare drum is played with the left hand at the same time as the floor tom on beats 2 and 4 of both bars. The bass drum drives the groove forward with a simple pattern on beats 1 and 3 of both bars.

The first point of interest occurs in the second bar where Larry plays a ghost note (quiet note) on the snare drum on the 'a' of beat 2. It can be heard (or felt depending on how sensitive your ears are) the very first time this two bar pattern is played. When this ghost note is not included, the groove tends to feel a little flat.

The second point of interest is where Larry moves his left hand from the snare drum onto the medium tom on the 'e' of beat 3. This medium tom note falls in between the floor tom notes so the hands are effectively playing RLR on beats 3, the 'e' and the '+'. Any tom can be used for this extra left handed note but it sounds best when the tom is closely tuned to the floor tom, when they're both tuned low in other words.

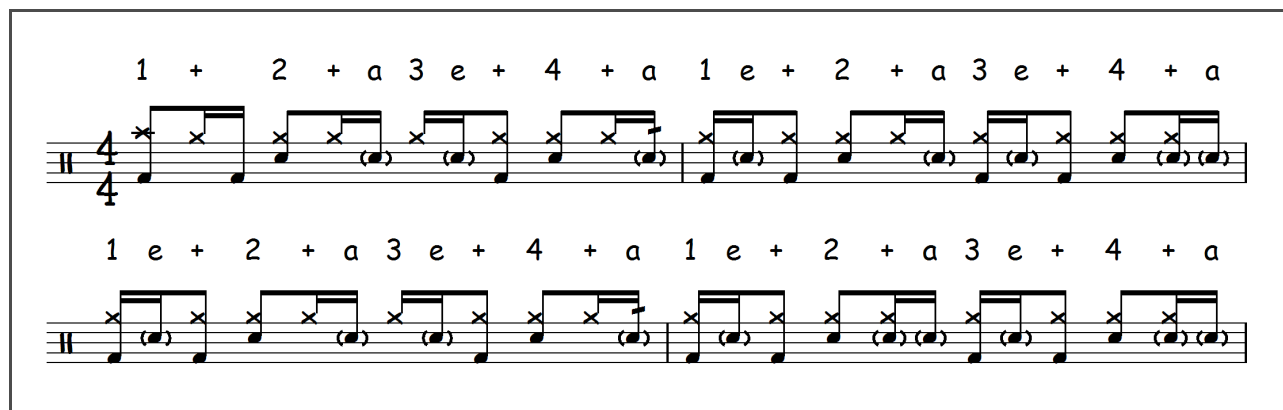
The left hand moves back to play the snare drum backbeat on beat 4. The left hand then moves immediately to the hi-hat on the '+' of beat 4 where it is opened. The hi-hat closes on beat 1 of the following bar.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Wonderwall by "Oasis"

Drummer: **Alan White**



The image shows two staves of musical notation for a drum part in 4/4 time. The notation includes eighth notes, snare drum backbeats (marked with 'x'), and ghost notes (marked with 'a'). Above the first staff, the dynamics are: 1 + 2 + a 3 e + 4 + a 1 e + 2 + a 3 e + 4 + a. Above the second staff, the dynamics are: 1 e + 2 + a 3 e + 4 + a 1 e + 2 + a 3 e + 4 + a. The notation shows a steady eighth-note hi-hat pattern with snare drum backbeats on beats 2 and 4, and ghost notes on the 'a' and 'e' of beats 2, 3, 4, and 1 respectively.

Why It's Great

Ousting bubble-permed original drummer Tony McCarroll had never seemed like a better idea than when new boy Alan White entered Wonderwall with this supple-wristed display of virtuosity.

How To Play It

This is the first four bars of the drum part that starts at 0:48. Alan keeps a steady beat on the hi-hat by playing eighth notes with his right hand. It's his left hand that does all of the work!

A recurring snare drum pattern occurs throughout the song and Alan plays the snare drum on the 'a' and 'e' that immediately follow each snare drum backbeat. These extra snare drum notes fall in between the hi-hats and are ghost notes (played at a lower volume to the snare drum backbeats on beats 2 and 4).

The first time this happens is in bar 1, on the 'a' and 'e' of beat 2 and 3 respectively, after the snare drum backbeat on beat 2. Then on the 'a' and 'e' of beat 4 and beat 1 respectively, after the snare drum backbeat on beat 4, and so on.

Of course, Alan improvises a lot with his left hand and so there are exceptions to this observation. For example, Alan doubles the snare drum note on the 'a' of beat 4 in bar 1 and bar 2 (as indicated by the small slash through the note stem). This double is played by the left hand and starts on the 'a' itself.

The other exception is where Alan plays two sixteenth notes on the '+' and 'a' of beats 4 in bar 3 and beats 2 and 4 in bar 4. The first of the two ghost note snare drums are played at the same time as the hi-hat, while the second falls in between the hi-hats.

Alan varies the dynamics of his snare drum ghost notes so often during the song that it's impossible to give a definitive ghost note pattern to play. Written above is the best approximation of dynamics that I could establish. The problem is that it is debatable whether or not some ghost notes were played louder than others. It's a feel thing at the end of the day and so is down to your own interpretation of it when playing.

The bass drum stays relatively simple throughout, playing only on the eighth notes and not in between the hi-hats. Notice the bass drum that pushes on the '+' of beat 3, in bars 1 and 3.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the staff, the notes are labeled: 1 e +, 2 + a, 3 e +, 4 + a. The notation shows a snare drum on the first beat of each measure, with ghost notes on the 'e' and 'a' parts. There are also 'x' marks above the staff, likely indicating cymbal hits or specific snare techniques.

How To Play It

This is an approximation of the drum beat played during the chorus, the first chorus starts at 1:08. Again, Alan improvises throughout the entire song on the snare drum, adding and removing doubles, drags and ghost notes all over the place!

This then is the closest approximation to the drum beat used throughout the chorus's. This is the bar played the majority of the time but with variations in the dynamics of the ghost notes. Sometimes none of the ghost notes are played quietly and sometimes just the 'e' is ghosted, the 'a' is then accented (well, played as loud as the backbeats on beats 2 and 4 anyway).

Allan also occasionally doubles the 'a' of beat 4 and adds in the extra snare drum notes on the '+' of beat 2 and 4, both of which are explained and shown in the previous example.

This is a real adventure in left hand snare drum syncopation as you might have gathered so far.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Word Up by "Cameo"

Drummer: **Larry Blackmon**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum beat. The notation includes quarter notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. Above the staff, there are 'x' marks above beat 1, and '+' marks above the second half of beat 2 and the second half of beat 3. Brackets connect the notes on beats 2 and 3, indicating a backbeat.

Why It's Great

Blackmon commands this 80's funk anthem with a watertight, computer-driven backbeat, sugar-coated by two eighth note hi-hats at the centre of the groove.

How To Play It

This drum beat occurs during all the verses. The right hand is playing quarter notes on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 with an extra hi-hat note played on the '+' of beat 3.

The snare drum backbeat is supplied on beats 2 and 4 while the bass drum plays on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 2. This second bass drum falls in between the hi-hat quarter notes and follows the synth bass line perfectly.

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a variation of the drum beat. The notation includes quarter notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. Above the staff, there are 'x' marks above beat 1, and '+' marks above the second half of beat 2 and the second half of beat 3. A 'a' mark is above the end of beat 4. Brackets connect the notes on beats 2 and 4, indicating a backbeat.

How To Play It

Occurs for the first time at 2:17. In this variation of the drum beat, Larry chooses to play quarter notes on the hi-hat to give the groove more space to breath. The hi-hat is then played on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 only.

The snare drum is still played on beats 2 and 4 and the first two bass drum notes remain the same as the first beat, shown above.

An extra bass drum is added at the end of the bar, on the 'a' of beat 4. This bass drum note is played just before the bass drum on beat 1 so this effectively means that two bass drum notes are played when the bar is looped.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



You Really Got Me by "The Kinks"

Drummer: **Bobby Graham/Clem Cattini**

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The pattern consists of four measures. Each measure starts with a snare drum note on the first beat, followed by a backbeat on the second and fourth beats. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above the first beats, and '+' signs are placed above the second and fourth beats. The notes are represented by 'x' marks on the staff lines.

Why It's Great

This heavy rock riff and tune inspired a stellar performance. The brutal snare flam entrance is worth a thousand beats on it's own.

How To Play It

This drum pattern occurs during most of the song. The right hand plays steady eighth notes on the half open hi-hat with the snare drum laying down a simple yet powerful backbeat on beats 2 and 4 of the bar.

The bass drum follows the guitar and bass guitar riff exactly. The bass drum is played on beat 1, the '+' of beat 1 and the '+' of beat 2 (directly after the snare drum). This drum groove supports the music perfectly!

Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a two-bar drum pattern. The staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The pattern consists of two measures. The first measure has a snare drum note on beat 1, followed by a backbeat on beats 2 and 4. The second measure has a snare drum note on beat 1, followed by a backbeat on beats 2 and 4. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above the first beats, and '+' signs are placed above the second and fourth beats. The notes are represented by 'x' marks on the staff lines.

How To Play It

Occurs during the break for the first time at 0:39. This two bar pattern is played between the bass drum and snare drum in a now classic, "break down" style. This type of break has been imitated a thousand times since.

The bass drum is played on beat 1, the '+' of beat 2 and beat 3 for both bars 1 and 2. A flam is played on beat 2 of bar 1 but not for any of the other snare drum notes. This was an interesting musical choice.

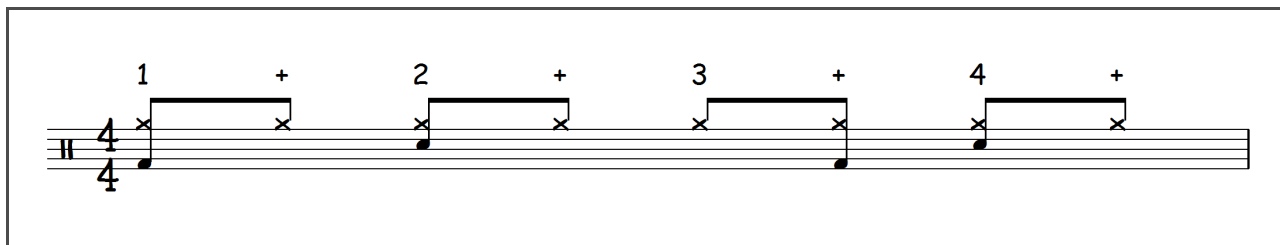
The two bar breaks exits with three snare drum notes in a row, starting on the '+' of beat 3.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



You Shook Me All Night Long by "AC/DC"

Drummer: **Phil Rudd**



Why It's Great

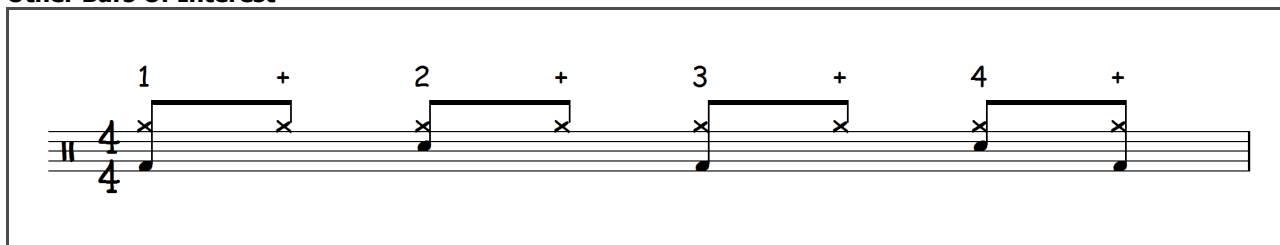
Rudd always does a thumpingly solid job, but he's god-like on possibly the greatest AC/DC song ever.

How To Play It

This drum pattern occurs during the verse's. Simple yet effective, the hi-hat is played on all eighth notes and the snare drum on beats 2 and 4.

The bass drum plays on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 3, pushing the rhythm forward and giving it loads of forward momentum.

Other Bars Of Interest



How To Play It

Occurs during the chorus. The hands play exactly the same as the verse but the bass drum pattern does change slightly.

A straighter rhythm is played where the bass drum moves from the '+' of beat 3, played in the verse, back onto beat 3. The bass drum on the '+' of beat 4 is obviously played just before the bass drum on beat 1, resolving and grounding the drum pattern nicely on every beat 1 of the bar.

Phil does play a crash cymbal with the snare on beat 2 occasionally to emphasise the guitar parts, during the chorus.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



YYZ by "Rush"

Drummer: **Neil Peart**

Musical notation for the YYZ drum pattern in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a 4/4 time signature. Above the staff, the beats are labeled: 1, +, a, 2, +, 3, +, a, 4, e, +. The notation shows a bass drum on beat 1, a snare drum on beat 2, a bass drum on beat 3, and a snare drum on beat 4. Above the snare drum on beat 2, there are two fast sixteenth notes on the '+' and 'a' of beat 1. Above the snare drum on beat 4, there are two fast sixteenth notes on the 'e' and '+' of beat 4. Above the snare drum on beat 3, there is a fast sixteenth note on the '+' of beat 3. Above the snare drum on beat 4, there is a fast sixteenth note on the '+' of beat 4.

Why It's Great

Did you know that the bell pattern played at the beginning of this song is actually Morse code for "YYZ"? Nope, me neither.

It's these little details in their music that helped to make Rush one of the most popular progressive rock bands of all time. And it's Peart's drumming that helped to make him one of the most popular progressive rock drummers of all time known as "The Professor".

How To Play It

This drum pattern occurs for the first time at 1:14. The basic pattern played on the bass drum and snare drum is actually quite simple compared to the syncopated ride bell pattern played over the top. The snare drum is played on beats 2 and 4 of the bar while the bass drum falls on beat 1, the '+' of beat 2 and the '+' of beat 3.

Neil's right hand remains on the bell of the ride cymbal throughout this pattern, only coming down to play the occasional flam or drum fill. The way to think about this pattern is that two fast notes are played just before the snare drum on beat 2 and two fast notes played just before and after the snare drum on beat 4.

The two fast sixteenth notes before the snare drum on beat 2 fall on the '+' and 'a' of beat 1. This creates the pattern RRL with the hands. No ride cymbal is played with the snare drum. This same pattern is played before the snare drum on beat 4 except that this time a bass drum is played with the first ride cymbal bell note, on the '+' of beat 3. Again, the snare drum on beat 4 is played on it's own.

Two more fast sixteenth notes are played directly after the snare drum on beat 4, on the 'e' and '+' of beat 4. This means that including the two sixteenth notes before the snare drum on beat 4, the hands are playing the pattern RRLRR.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Other Bars Of Interest

A musical staff in 10/8 time signature. The staff is divided into 10 beats. Above the staff, the beats are numbered 1 through 10, with a '+' sign above each beat except for the first and last. The notation shows a snare drum (x) on beat 1, followed by a bass drum (v) on beat 2. Beats 3, 4, and 5 each have a snare drum (x) on the '+' sign. Beats 6, 7, 8, and 9 each have a snare drum (x) on the downbeat. Beat 10 has a bass drum (v) on the downbeat. The time signature '10/8' is written at the beginning of the staff.

How To Play It

Occurs at the beginning of the song. This section could have been written in many different time signatures or broken down into smaller numbers but I found the best way to hear it is as one long bar of 10/8. This means that the whole drum pattern takes 10 counted beats before it repeats.

The hands play on the snare drum and hi-hat, at the same time as each other and follow the bass and guitar riff exactly. The bass drum is used to add pick up notes in between the hand stabs.

A very useful way to think of the pattern is as one hand stab, then 3 stabs, then 4 stabs – 1, 3, 4.

The first of these stabs falls on beat 1 of the bar and is followed by a bass drum on beat 2 of the bar. The stabs then move to the counted offbeats of the bar on the '+' of beat 2, 3 and 4.

The stabs resolve back to the downbeats of the bar on beats 6, 7, 8 and 9. The first of these stabs is preceded by a bass drum note on the '+' of beat 5.

The bar finally resolves itself with two bass drum notes starting on beat 10, which then push into the next snare drum and hi-hat stab on beat 1 of the next bar.

If you learn the guitar and bass riff off by heart then this pattern becomes a lot easier to play along too.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Fancy A Challenge?

The last few pages of this book feature some great drum beats that were going to be left out because I feared they might be a little too tricky for the average drummer to play. In the end though I decided to include them anyway as I figured it couldn't hurt to take a look, right?

These drum beats will push your drumming to the limits. Having said that, with a little practice and a positive attitude there's nothing you can't learn on the drums given enough time.

Even if you can't play these drum grooves you can always appreciate the skill and musicianship that goes into performing them. It's healthy to be humbled every now and then.

Remember, these are very difficult drum beats (some more difficult than others) so don't be disheartened if you find them too hard. If you do manage to play these drum grooves though then you're a better drummer than me.

Good luck!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



6:00 by "Dream Theater"

Drummer: **Mike Portney**

Why It's Great

These modern progressive rock giants just keep producing the goods. Great rock anthems with twists, turns and head scratchings galore.

How To Play It

This is the first four bars of the song, starting at 0:02 after the long drum fill intro. Mike plays this groove as a double handed hi-hat pattern. Both his hands are up on the hi-hat and only move down to strike the drums when required.

Bars 1 and 3 are played exactly the same as each other with single stroke sixteenth notes played on the hi-hat (RLRL). The right hand comes down to play the snare drum on beat 2 of the bar and then the left hand on the 'a' and 'e' of beat 3 and 4 respectively. A bass drum is played on the 'a' of beat 2, which falls with the left hand, at the same time as the hi-hat is opened for a single sixteenth note.

Bar 3 has a crash on beat 1 followed by an open hi-hat, played with the right hand, on the '+' of beat 1. The hi-hat stays open until beat 2 where the hands play snare drum, high tom, medium tom and crash/bass drum, in that order (RLRL).

The left hand re-enters on the hi-hat for the 'e' of beat 3, played at the same time as the bass drum, where the hi-hat opens again for a single sixteenth note. The hi-hat closes on the '+' of beat 3, at the same time as the snare drum is struck. Another hi-hat is opened with the bass drum on beat 4 of the bar and then closes again with the snare drum on the 'e'.

Bar 4 plays beat 1 in exactly the same way as bar 2 but then moves into a line of thirty second notes on the hi-hat. These are still played as a single stroke roll (RLRL).

Mike cleverly plays groups of six notes through the thirty second notes. The snare drum, bass drum, snare drum and bass drum (in that order) are all six thirty second notes apart from each other. This creates a rhythm that moves across the beats of the bar. The snare drums are played with the right hand and the bass drums are played at the same time as the hi-hat openings. The hi-hats close on the next stroked hi-hat.

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Constant Motion by "Dream Theater"

Drummer: **Mike Portney**

The musical notation is presented in four systems, each with a staff and a time signature. Above the notes are rhythmic counts and accents. The first system shows two bars in 5/8 and 6/8. The second system shows two bars in 5/8 and 15/16. The third system shows two bars in 5/8 and 6/8. The fourth system shows two bars in 5/8 and 4/4.

Why It's Great

Dream Theater created a more mainstream song with Constant Motion (if that's even possible?!) but we're still treated to a trade mark Mike special at the beginning of the song. Charging through odd time signatures with ease and confidence.

How To Play It

This is the first nine bars of the song that occur at 0:08 after the hi-hat drum fill intro. This is definitely not for the faint hearted! The odd time signatures of 5/8 and 6/8 contain 5 and 6 counted beats in each bar respectively. A bar of 15/16 is also played which can be thought of as a bar of 4/4 with one less sixteenth note at the end.

It's important to understand that the rate at which the eighth notes are counted does not change as the drum beat moves from bar to bar. The best way to navigate this section is to learn the guitar riff off by heart. Mike totally locks his drum parts in with the guitar riff.

Bars 1, 2, 3 and 4 all start the same way with Mike laying down eighth notes on the half open hi-hat and a snare drum backbeat supplied on the third eighth note of each bar. The left hand plays a crash cymbal, in between the hi-hats, after the fourth eighth note of each bar. In bars 2 and 4 this idea is extended to include another left handed crash cymbal in between the 5th and 6th eighth notes. Bar 4 is slightly longer than the second bar though and has one more crash cymbal on beat 4 before an open hi-hat is struck on the 'a' of beat 4, leading the groove back to beat 1 of the next bar.

Continues on the next page...

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Bars 5 and 6 are played exactly the same as bars 1 and 2 except that the double bass drum is utilised at the beginning. The hand parts stay the same as bars 1 and 2. A line of 4 thirty second notes are played on the double bass drum, filling up the first eighth note of the bar, followed by two more sixteenth note bass drums, which take up the second eighth note of the bar.

Bar 7 uses the same double bass drum pattern as before but the bar is ended slightly differently with a line of four notes instead, starting on the snare drum on beat 3, and then followed by three crash/splash/ride cymbal bell notes in a row. The last of these four notes is played with the bass drum. A small sixteenth note pause occurs before a snare drum is played on the '+' of beat 5 taking us into the last bar.

Bar 8 has exactly the same beginning as bar 7 but also ends differently with a line of sixteenth notes around the drums, starting on beat 3, before ending with a crash cymbal on the 'a' of beat 4. The crash cymbal on beat 1 of bar 9 follows immediately after the crash at the end of bar 8 ending this section with an extended cymbal wash.

Phew!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Oakland Stroke by "David Garibaldi"

Drummer: David Garibaldi

Musical notation for the Oakland Stroke in 4/4 time. The notation consists of two staves. The top staff shows the snare drum part with notes marked with 'x' and 'o'. The bottom staff shows the bass drum part with notes marked with 'x'. Above the notes are rhythmic markings: '1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 + a 1 + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a'. Accents (>) are placed over the 'e' notes in beats 1, 2, 3, and 4 of both bars. Ghost notes are marked with 'o' in beats 4 and 1 of both bars. The first bar has a double note on the snare in beat 1, and the second bar has a double note on the snare in beat 3.

Why It's Great

This has to be the professor of funk's craziest beat. Ridiculous on paper, but somehow he makes all those impossible ghost notes groove. And who knows where the 'one' is?!

How To Play It

Occurs throughout the track. First thing to point out is that this drum groove is not from the Tower Of Power version of the song of the same name. Also, David has a very real tendency to change the drum beat, adding extra accents and ghost notes at will.

The hi-hats are playing on the downbeat and 'a' of each beat, including where the hi-hat opens on beat 4 and beat 1 of bar 1 and 2 respectively. This could be thought of as a "dotted eighth note shuffle" if you like.

All snare drum notes are played as quietly as possible (marked in brackets) unless they're accented (marked with an arrow symbol).

What makes this drum groove so impressive is the constant switching from ghost notes to accents. Sometimes a double is played on the snare with the accent falling on the second note (the 'e' and '+' of beat 1 in the first bar). Sometimes the snare double has the accent on the first note (the '+' and 'a' of beat 3 in the second bar). And then sometimes the accent is simply played on its own (the 'e' of beat 2 in the first bar).

The only way to practice this is very slowly, one line of notes at a time. It is recommended that you work on the hands first and then add the bass drum in at a later date.

An incredible beat to play and certainly not for the faint hearted!

The Greatest Drum Beats & Grooves Of All Time!



Stream Of Consciousness by "Dream Theater"

Drummer: **Mike Portney**

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a 5/4 drum groove. Each staff is labeled with a 5/4 time signature. Above each staff, the rhythmic pattern is written as: 1 + a 2 + 3 + 4 e + 5 +. The notation uses 'x' for snare, 'o' for hi-hat, and '+' for bass drum. The first staff shows a pattern where the bass drum is on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, and the hi-hat is on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4. The second staff shows a similar pattern but with a floor tom on beat 3 and a splash cymbal on beat 3.

Why It's Great

Once more we hear Mike navigate odd time signatures with over the top exuberance and originality. The man must have four arms or something!

How To Play It

This is the first four bars of the section that occurs at 0:40, after the intro. This section of the song is written in the time signature of 5/4. This means that there are five counted beats to every bar.

All four bars involve the same hi-hat, snare drum and bass drum pattern as each other. A snare drum backbeat is played with the left hand on the '+' of beat 2 and beat 5 in each bar. The left hand comes up to play the 'a' of beat 1 and the 'e' of beat 4 on the hi-hat.

The bass drums are played on beat 1, beat 2, the '+' of beat 3 and the '+' of beat 4 in all four bars.

Mike plays bars 1 and 2 in exactly the same way as each other with a crash cymbal/splash on beat 1 and the '+' of beat 5. The hi-hat is opened on beat 3 and closes again on the '+' of beat 4, at the same time as the bass drum is played.

Bars 2 and 4 are slightly different to each other. In bar 2, the bell of the ride cymbal is struck on beat 3 followed by the bass drum played on it's own. While in bar 4, a floor tom is played on beat 3 followed by another splash cymbal, at the same time as the bass drum on the '+' of beat 3.

In bar 2 the floor tom is struck on the '+' of beat 5 while another ride cymbal bell is struck on the '+' of beat 5 for bar 4.