

The "Fishing" Exercise

-Bob Adney 7/22/93

Drumset is one of the most improvisational of all instruments. By nature you make it up. The following keeps that in mind. The exercise is simple, yet some exciting results can be the reward with simple creativity on your part.

Rules

Any rhythmic idea will work (begin with short ideas, 3 and 4 note patterns)

*Maintain the **same sticking** throughout the exercise*

For the first example we will use one of the rudiments known as the Single Stroke Four.

We will think of a rock style beat and insert this rudiment on the 4th pulse to create a fill. Play several measures of time (rock beat) and then play the single stroke 4 on a fourth beat, continue to play several more measures of time and do this again. Although this rudiment can be played with either hand we will begin this sticking with a R so the last note is played with a L allowing time for the R hand to go back to a cymbal or hi hat to continue playing time.

"No big deal you say I can already do this and I have." Well, your right this is not too big of deal, the "fishing" part comes next. As we continue remember to keep the same rhythm and always keep the same sticking. (Single stroke 4 and begin with your R.) Keep doing what we were but lets go around the set in a clock-wise motion. Play the fill (single stroke 4) first on the snare drum, you have already done this (do it again.) Now lets play that same rhythm on the mounted tom-tom then return to your beat. Play the fill again but on the lower mounted tom, return to the beat and then finally play the fill on the floor tom. This would represent a simple routine in that you explored the possibilities of our rhythm (single stroke 4) around the different drums on your set, in a clock-wise motion.

Each drum you moved this rhythm to represents a slightly different problem. If you're playing time (right hand) on your hi hat and playing the fill on the snare drum this will feel one way. But doing the same idea and moving your fill to the floor tom represents a slightly different feeling because you have to move to the floor tom and then back to the hi hat. You are traveling a greater distance, which takes more time/effort and yet you are not allowed to stretch the beat at all. You will want to study your movements so that you are able to be as efficient as possible. Remember the shortest distance between two points is a straight line! This should also make you analyze your actual set-up. Do you have the drums set up and adjusted to meet your needs and yet facilitate the different combinations of drums you are about to encounter?

As we go through some of the following routines keep these thoughts in your mind. Are you moving efficiently, are the drums set up to allow you to move freely?

Some additional ideas

Move one = Move one note of your pattern to a new drum. In our example of the single stroke four this would be beginning on the SD and moving clockwise. Begin with a rock beat play for several measures and then play the first 3 notes of the pattern on the SD and move the 4th note to the next mounted tom-return to your rock beat, play for several measures and then play the first 3 notes on the mounted tom and the 4th note on the lower mounted tom, because you are to maintain the sticking this will create crossing of your left over right. Continue to repeat this segment of the routine several times until you are moving through this variation with ease. General *rule of stick*-always cross over, not under. The next segment of this routine would be to play 3 notes on the lower mounted tom and then play the 4th note on the floor tom. Remember to return to your rock beat and play for several measures. The last segment of this routine would be playing 3 notes on the floor tom and the 4th note on the SD. With that being played you would have made a complete cycle of that pattern being played in a clockwise motion around all of your drums.

Move 2-move two notes of your pattern to the next drum, play your rock beat and then play the first 2 notes on the SD and the last 2 on the mounted tom, the next segment would be 2 notes on mounted tom and the last 2 notes on the lower mounted tom. By now you should have the idea, the next segment would be 2 notes on the lower mounted tom and the last 2 on the floor tom. The last segment would be 2 notes on the floor tom and the last 2 notes on the SD. Don't forget in between these licks you should be playing your rock beat. Watch yourself to see that you're moving with ease. Make sure the fill rhythm doesn't mutate because of the way you are dividing the notes on the drums. Keep the same sticking throughout.

Move 3 --Play 1st note on SD and the following 3 on the tom...etc.

4 Notes/Four Drums (4 Notes/Three Drums)

Other basic permutations include the same **Move 1,2, 3 and 4 Notes/Four Drums** but in a **counter-clockwise motion**. (Begin on the floor tom)

What's happening? You are taking a standard rhythm (rudiment) and you are in finding all possible patterns of that rhythm on your drums, and at the same time learning how to become more efficient. Many drum set students will probably experience 1 or 2 segments that they have not done before and additionally you may encounter 1 of those licks as being something you would like to continue to work with. Although this has already been a pretty wordy lesson, during my private lessons this is not at all the case. I merely tell the student to play a rock beat and on the 4th quarter play this rhythm and now lets see what it sounds like when we move last note (move 1) to the next tom. Then I point at the lower mounted tom and say "now try this one." It is all pretty easy and yet challenging. As the basic format is understood the sky is the limit as far as what the permutations are. By creating your own scheme and using the rhythm of your choice you start the hunt, you are fishing and I hope you get a "keeper."