

Handbook for Percussion Students

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Written for my percussion students at Canberra Grammar School.

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Chapter 1

Required Equipment

This is an outline of the equipment that percussion students are expected to own for bands and ensembles at CGS. My suggestions for brand or model are given in brackets. Students should have their own mallets for each instrument and their mallets and bag should be named.

Complete Optimum Percussion Percussion Pack

The following pack has everything for the highschool percussionist. It's available from Optimum Percussion or the CGS music department.

1. Innovative Percussion IP902 'James Ross' xylophone/glockenspiel mallets
2. Innovative Percussion IP240 marimba mallets (set of 4)
3. Innovative Percussion medium-hard timpani mallet
4. Drumsticks (Vic Firth 5A or SD1)
5. Large Optimum Percussion stick bag

Alternatively you could build up books and mallets as you go.

First Lesson

1. Drumsticks (Vic Firth 5A)
2. Book: *Primary Handbook for Snare Drum* - Garwood Whaley
3. Book: *Shazam!* - John Pollard
4. Rubber practice pad (stays at home)

5. Metronome (BOSS DB-30)

Beginning band

1. Good quality stick bag
2. Xylophone / Glockenspiel mallets (Innovative IP902)
3. Timpani Mallets (Vic Firth T3 “Staccato”)
4. Book: *Funny Mallets, first book for Xylophone and Marimba* - Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic
5. Practice Glockenspiel for home (or other keyboard percussion instrument)

Intermediate band / Percussion Ensemble

1. Set of four yarn wrapped vibraphone / marimba mallets (Innovative Percussion IP240)
2. Concert snare drum sticks (Vic Firth SD1)
3. Book: *Funny Marimba Book 1* - Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovich
4. Book: *40 Intermediate Snare Drum Solos* - Ben Hans

Drumset: Band / Percussion Ensemble / Big band

1. Sticks and brushes for drumset according to tastes and interests
2. Book: *Rhythm Section Drumming* - Frank Corniola
3. Drumset (*optional*) (Yamaha Stage Custom with Zildjian ZBT cymbal pack)

HSC Music

1. Specific sticks and mallets for exam repertoire
2. Set of four marimba mallets (Innovative Percussion IP240)
3. Set of four vibraphone mallets (Innovative Percussion RS251)
4. Students preparing marimba repertoire for HSC exams need access to at least a 4 octave instrument for practice.
5. Motivated students wanting to continue percussion at university level should consider participating in pretertiary percussion at the ANU in addition to the ensembles at school.

Instruments

Practice Glockenspiels can be hired from music department at a cost of \$110 per semester (retail value \$200). A keyboard percussion instrument for practice is a *requirement* for percussionists in concert band or percussion ensemble. Intermediate/advanced students should consider hiring a xylophone or marimba. These are available in Canberra from Gary France (<http://www.garyfrance.com>).

Chapter 2

Warmups and Rudiments

This chapter contains some warmup exercises from lessons written out in full and rudiments for snare drum. To start a practice session you might do three or four warmup exercises and practice five or six rudiments.

2.1 Warmups

Here's a few ideas for warmups:

- 100 single strokes in each hand (that's 25 groups of 4 single strokes).
- 100 single strokes, both hands in unison.
- 100 alternating strokes.
- Buzz roll at *mf* for 1 minute.
- Buzz roll from *pppp* to *ffff* and back again over 2 minutes.

2.2 The 40 Standard Rudiments

Rudiments are short phrases which are the basic elements of military style snare drum playing. Many exciting and musical snare drum solos are virtuosic combinations of the rudiments¹ and they can also be found in concert snare drum parts and drumset playing. These 40 rudiments were chosen as standards by the National Association of Rudimental Drummers (USA) and the Percussive Arts Society [5]. The following pages are reprinted from the Percussive Arts Society website where the original is available for download².

¹See Wilcoxon's book of rudimental drum solos [9]

²<http://www.pas.org/Resources/rudiments/rudiment.pdf>

PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL DRUM RUDIMENTS

ALL RUDIMENTS SHOULD BE PRACTICED: OPEN (SLOW) TO CLOSE (FAST) TO OPEN (SLOW) AND/OR AT AN EVEN MODERATE MARCH TEMPO.

I. ROLL RUDIMENTS

A. SINGLE STROKE ROLL RUDIMENTS

1. SINGLE STROKE ROLL *



2. SINGLE STROKE FOUR



3. SINGLE STROKE SEVEN



B. MULTIPLE BOUNCE ROLL RUDIMENTS

4. MULTIPLE BOUNCE ROLL



5. TRIPLE STROKE ROLL



C. DOUBLE STROKE OPEN ROLL RUDIMENTS

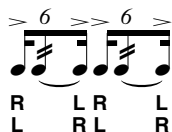
6. DOUBLE STROKE OPEN ROLL *



7. FIVE STROKE ROLL *



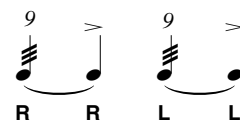
8. SIX STROKE ROLL



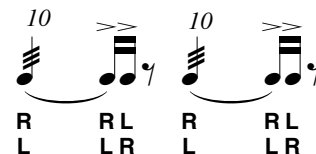
9. SEVEN STROKE ROLL *



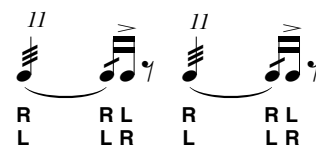
10. NINE STROKE ROLL *



11. TEN STROKE ROLL *



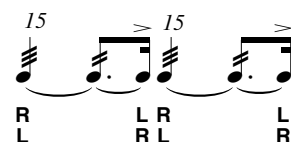
12. ELEVEN STROKE ROLL *



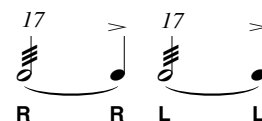
13. THIRTEEN STROKE ROLL *



14. FIFTEEN STROKE ROLL *



15. SEVENTEEN STROKE ROLL



II. DIDDLE RUDIMENTS

16. SINGLE PARADIDDLE *



17. DOUBLE PARADIDDLE *



18. TRIPLE PARADIDDLE




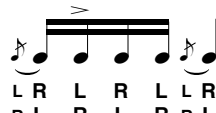









19. SINGLE PARADIDDLE-DIDDLE


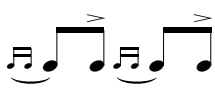





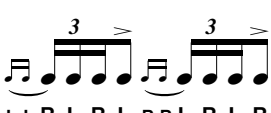




PAS INTERNATIONAL DRUM RUDIMENTS PAGE 2

III. FLAM RUDIMENTS

20. FLAM * 
L R R L
21. FLAM ACCENT * 
L R L R R L R L
22. FLAM TAP * 
L R R R L L L R R R L L
23. FLAMACUE * 
L R L R L L R R L R L R R L
24. FLAM PARADIDDLE * 
L R L R R R L R L L
25. SINGLE FLAMMED MILL 
L R R L R R L L R L
26. FLAM PARADIDDLE-DIDDLE * 
L R L R R L L R L R L R R R
27. PATAFLAFLA 
L R L R R L L R L R R L
28. SWISS ARMY TRIPLET 
L R R L L R R L R L L R R L L R
29. INVERTED FLAM TAP 
L R L R L R L R L R L R
30. FLAM DRAG 
L R L L R R L R R L

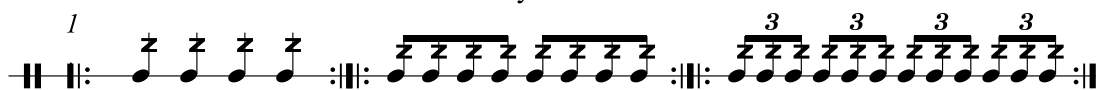
IV. DRAG RUDIMENTS

31. DRAG * 
L L R R R L
32. SINGLE DRAG TAP * 
L L R L R R L R
33. DOUBLE DRAG TAP * 
L L R L L R L R R L R R L R
34. LESSON 25 * 
L L R L R L L R L R R R L R L R R L R L
35. SINGLE DRAGADIDDLE 
R R L R R L L R L L
36. DRAG PARADIDDLE #1 * 
R L L R L R R L R R L R L L
37. DRAG PARADIDDLE #2 * 
R L L R L L R L R R L R R L R R L L
38. SINGLE RATAMACUE * 
L L R L R L R R L R L R
39. DOUBLE RATAMACUE * 
L L R L L R L R L R R L R R L R L R
40. TRIPLE RATAMACUE * 
L L R L L R L L R L R L R R L R R L R L R

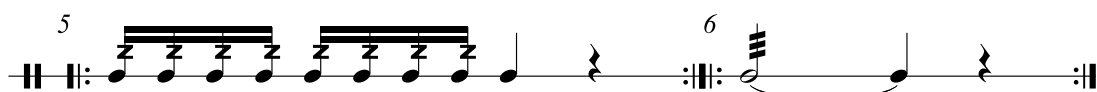
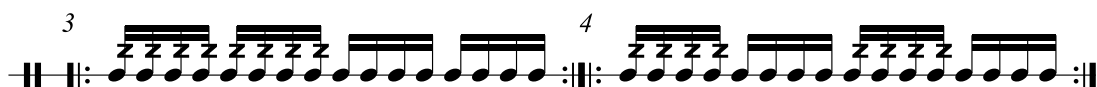
2.3 Roll Builder

A roll is a sequence of *buzzed* strokes that blend together to seem like one continuous sound. A great way to get better at rolls is to practice buzzed strokes! In these exercises I've written buzzed strokes in different rhythms. Experiment making the buzzes as long as possible and as short as possible. I've also written bars with a mixture of buzzed and non-buzzed strokes. Make sure you play the non-buzzed strokes *without* making a buzz sound! It's tricky, so be careful!

"z" means a buzzed stroke! Play each bar 4 to 16 times.



Make sure the buzzed and non-buzzed notes have different sounds!



Phew! A roll! We made it!

2.4 Counting

You *must* count out loud when you practice. I count very loudly when I practice and I'm supposed to be grown up and serious and everything. Figure 2.1 shows some basic rhythms with the counting written in. Remember that '+' is pronounced "and", 'e' is "eee" and 'a' is "ah".

There are two reasons to count:

1. Reinforce our internal steady pulse.
2. Express rhythms without letting co-ordination get in the way.

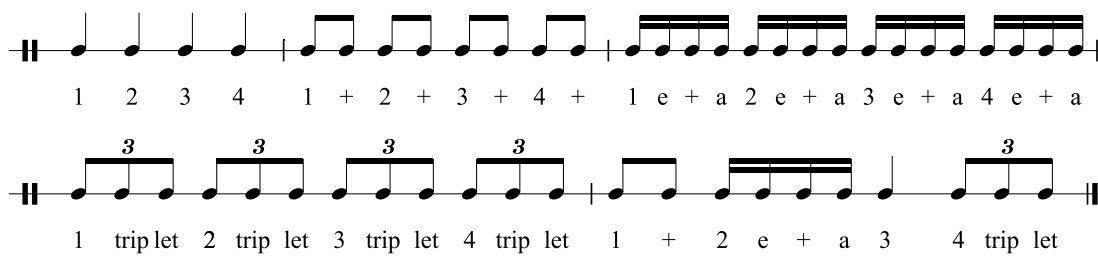


Figure 2.1: Counting basic rhythms.

Chapter 3

The First Lesson

In “the first lesson” on any new instrument there is a lot of technical knowledge to get the hand of; how to hold the instrument, how to play basic notes, what not to do, etc. Since percussionists learn many instruments we have lots of “first lessons”! Even professional percussionists often have “first lessons” to learn something about percussion instruments from other cultures or musical traditions.

This chapter has some key knowledge about the instruments that percussionists are expected to play in high school bands, orchestras and other ensembles.

3.1 Snare Drum

3.2 Timpani

Timpani are large drums that are tuned to specific notes. Many timpani parts can be played on two drums and only advanced repertoire requires a set of four. Modern concert timpani have a pedal that stretches the skin evenly over the rim so that the player can quickly and accurately tune to a particular note.

The main challenges of playing timpani are tuning, co-ordination and tone production (making a great sound!). Co-ordination is tricky because the drums are large and players have to move a long way to strike different notes. It takes a bit of practice to move between drums while playing without ending up in a tangle.

To make a great sound we focus on making the drum vibrate as freely as possible. It’s best to strike the drum about 10cm in from the where the skin is stretched over the rim. Make sure that the mallet bounces back freely when you strike the drum.

Tuning can be a bit scary and it takes some practice. Most timpani (including those at CGS and CGGS) have a balanced pedal where a big spring inside the base pulls the skin down and moving the pedal adjusts the balance between the spring and the skin. Other

pedal systems have a lever on the pedal that locks it in place (Be careful with this kind since the pedal will spring back when the lever is pushed in!!). Timpani also have a gauge with movable markers to help tune a lot of notes during a concert. Since the gauge is movable, you usually can't rely on it to be terribly accurate.

When you're tuning timpani at concert band, you will want to take the lowest note you have to tune and listen to that pitch played on marimba. Start with drum tuned as a low as it goes (heel to the floor). Strike the drum softly and listen to the pitch rise as you *slowly* push down with your toes. Stop when you feel it's the same as the pitch you heard. If it's not, try to figure out if it's too high or too low and adjust very slowly. When you're learning you might have to do this quite a few times just to be happy with one note, so be patient with yourself and keep trying.

It takes a long time for percussionists to be good at tuning timpani because our other instruments don't require constant attention to tuning like brass or woodwind instruments do. So be patient.

3.3 Keyboard Percussion

3.4 Concert Bass Drum

3.5 Cymbals

3.6 Tambourine and Triangle

3.7 Other Accessories

Chapter 4

Snare Drum Pieces

4.1 Introduction

The pieces in this chapter could be performed in a recital or studio concert. Pieces with a single line are for snare drum. Pieces written across two or more lines are for multiple drums, you could try playing them across the drums in a drumset.

4.2 Due to Rothman

$\text{♩} = 80$

f *p* *f*

p *f*

pp *mf* *pp*

f *p* *pp* *ff*

4.3 March

$\text{♩} = 112$

f *p* *f* *mf* *mp*

7 *p* *pp* *edge of drum*

12 *pp* *centre of drum* *f*

17 *f*

21

♩ = 88 **A**

5

8 **B**

11

14

18 **C**

23

26 **D**

30

33

Chapter 5

Drumset Patterns

5.1 How to practice this chapter

This chapter contains patterns to play on drumset in a variety of styles. Each pattern is contained in one or two bars of music surrounded by repeat signs. There are two steps involved in learning each of these patterns. The first is to learn the coordination: practice *really* slowly and carefully and make sure to play it correctly. The second step is learning to play it *fluently*. Practice the pattern over and over for several minutes and avoid changing the tempo (use a metronome). Do this at a variety of tempos (use a metronome). Did I mention that you should practice with a metronome?

Drumset music is usually written on a five line staff just like we use for melodic instruments. Usually solid noteheads in spaces are used for the drums and crossed noteheads at the top of the staff are used for cymbals. There is only a loose standard for this notation so pay attention to the instructions in any other books you use. The key to my notation is given in figure 5.1.

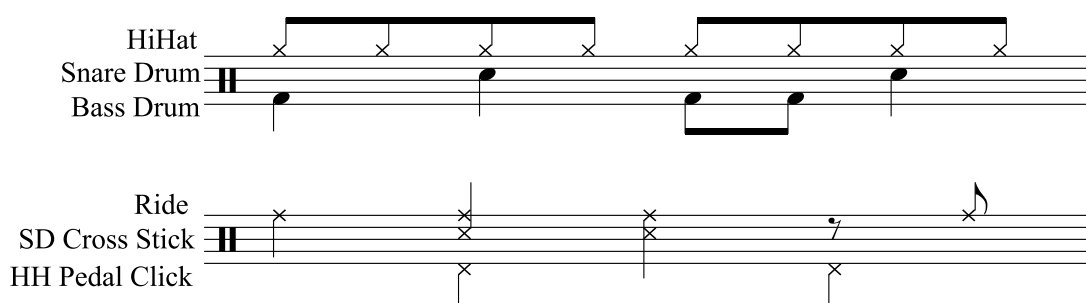
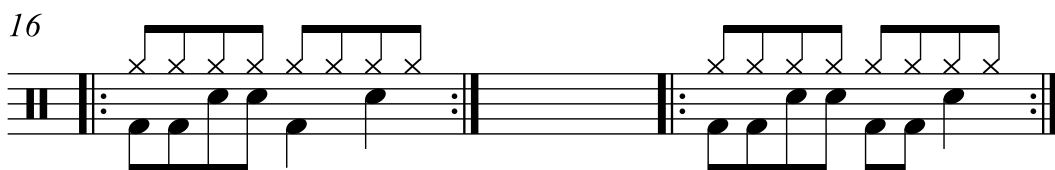
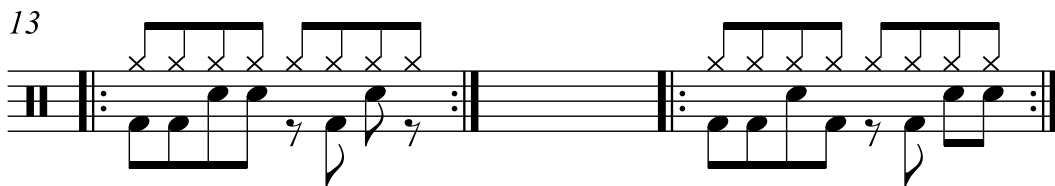
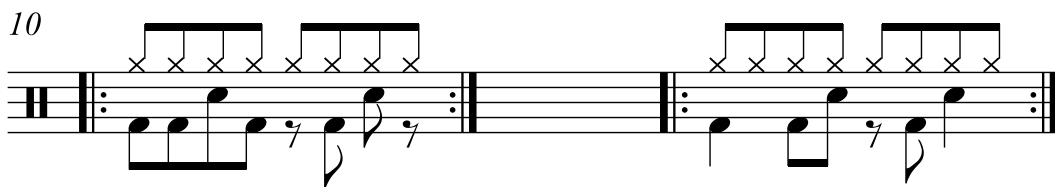
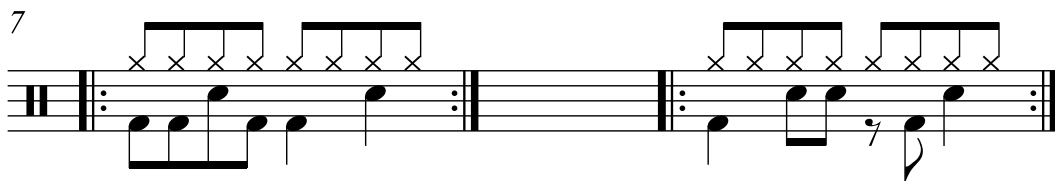
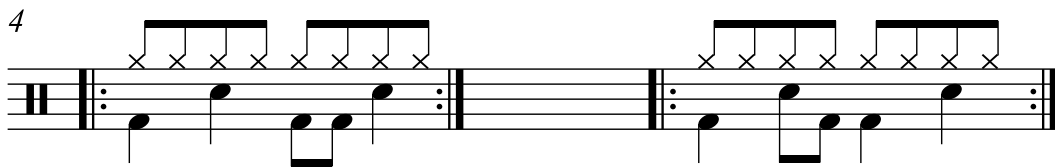
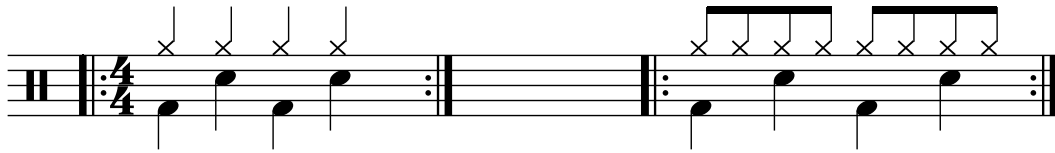
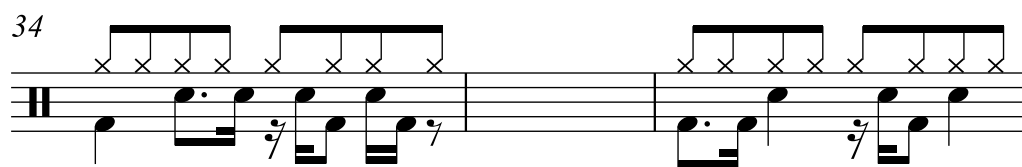
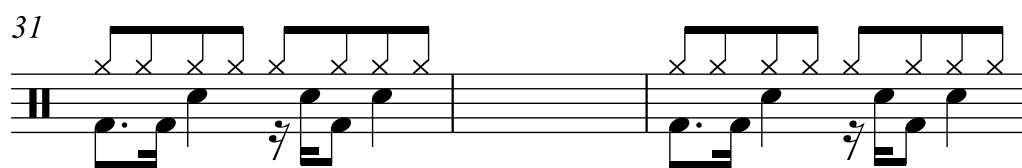
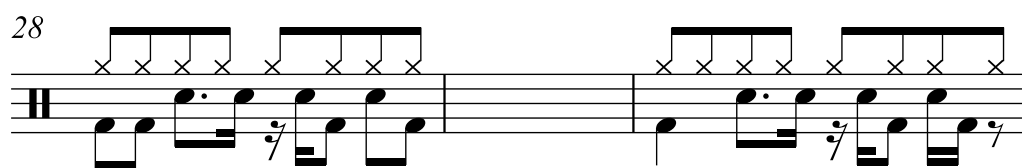
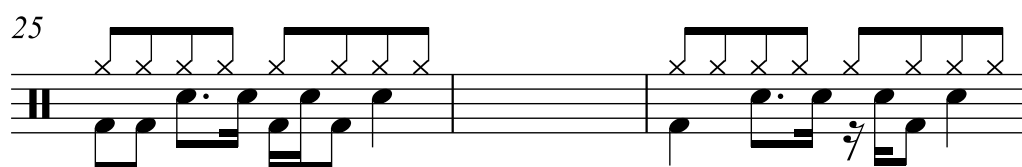
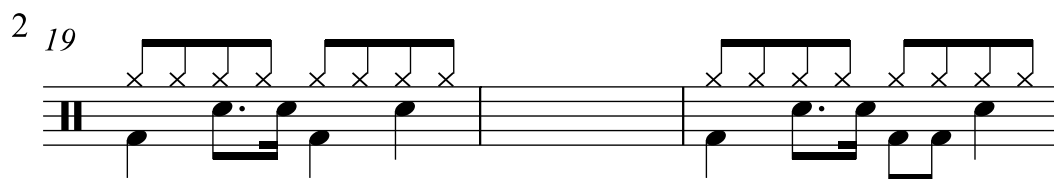


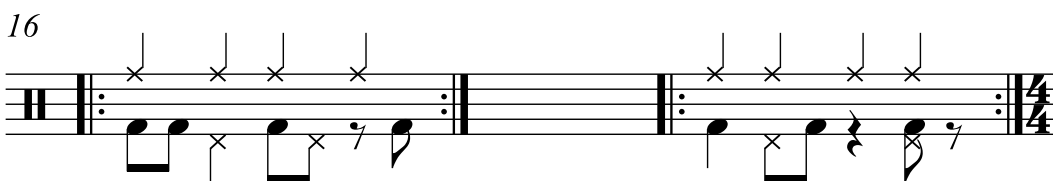
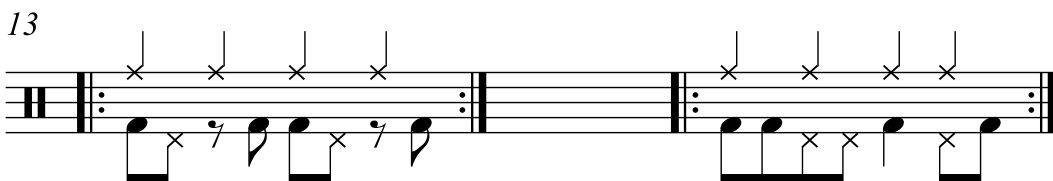
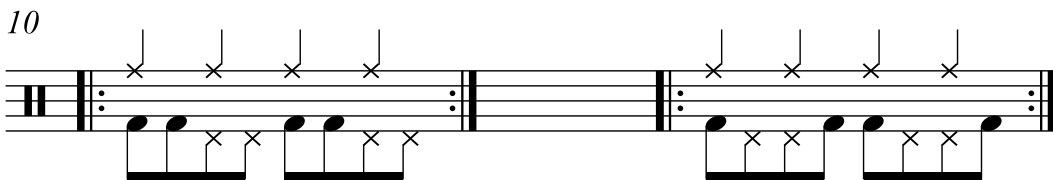
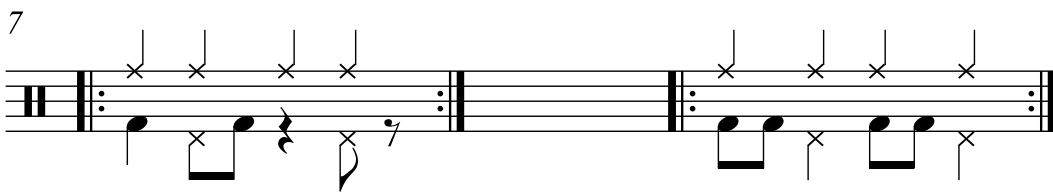
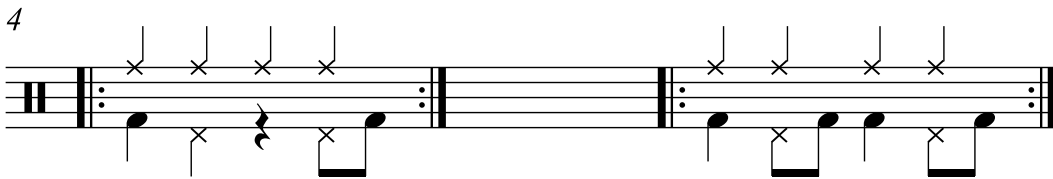
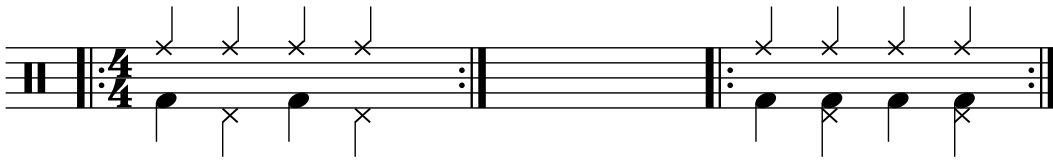
Figure 5.1: Key for drumset staff notation

5.2 Basic Patterns

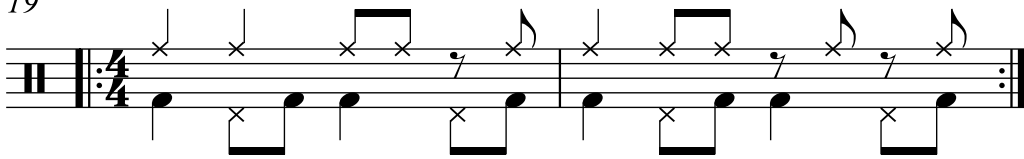




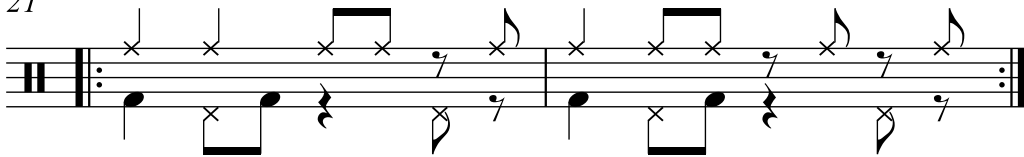
5.3 Patterns for Feet



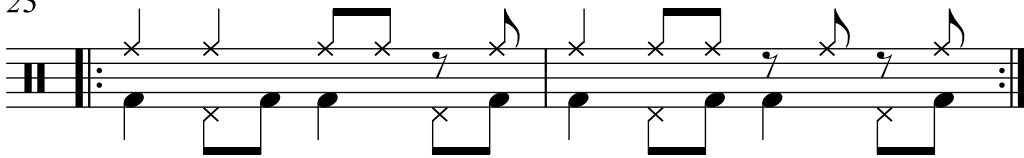
2 19



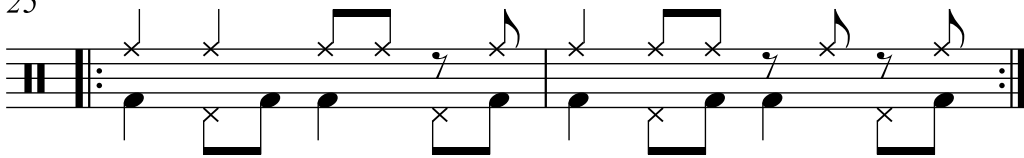
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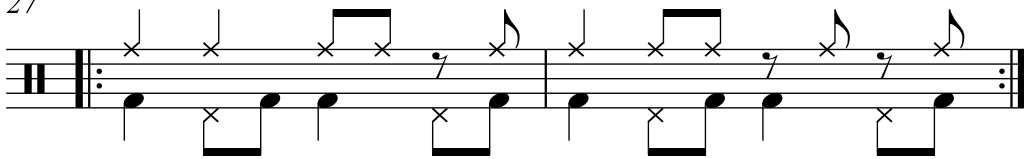
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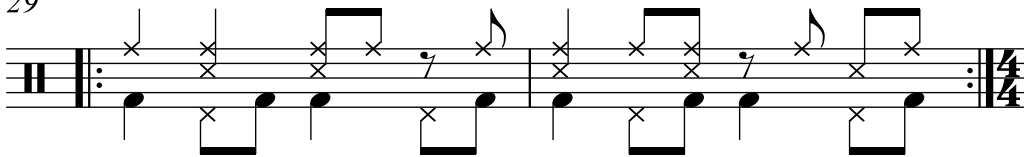
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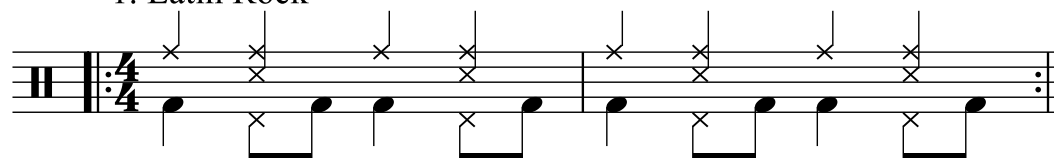
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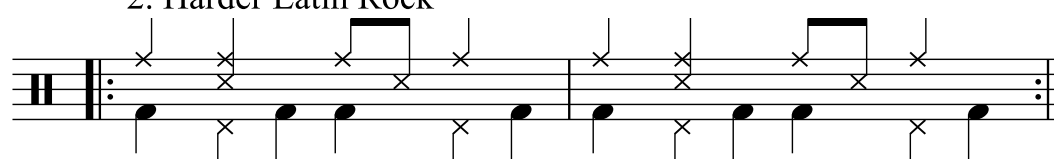
5.4 Latin Drumset Grooves

Latin styles can be very tricky to play on drumset. The rhythms on the ride cymbal, snare drum and bass drum interlock in ways that we aren't used to hearing in traditional western styles. These rhythms also make these styles fascinating and exiting to play. The following patterns start very simply but move towards developing four way independence between hands and feet. The advanced patterns will require more than a bit of practice to master.


1. Latin Rock



2. Harder Latin Rock



3. Latin Rock with Groovy B.D. (Tumbao)

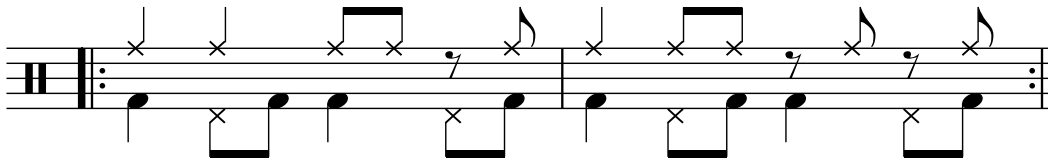


The image displays three musical staves, each representing a different Latin drumset groove. Each staff begins with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff, '1. Latin Rock', shows a simple pattern with 'x' marks on the top line (ride cymbal) and solid notes on the bottom line (bass drum). The second staff, '2. Harder Latin Rock', introduces a more complex pattern with eighth notes and 'x' marks. The third staff, '3. Latin Rock with Groovy B.D. (Tumbao)', features a 'tumbao' pattern on the bass drum, indicated by a solid note followed by a quarter rest, with 'x' marks on the top line.

The bossa nova is a very famous style that emerged in the late 1950s. Around the same time that South American music was introduced to North America and the rest of the world. Antonio Carlos Jobim is one of the most famous composers in this style. Check out the Getz/Gilberto recording of "The Girl from Ipanema" for the classic bossa nova sound.

The son clave pattern in the left hand interlocks with the cascara rhythm in the right. This kind of complex playing is typical of salsa music.

9. Cascara Ride Pattern



10. Clave + Cascara (advanced)

11. Clave + Cascara + Tumbao B.D. (advanced)

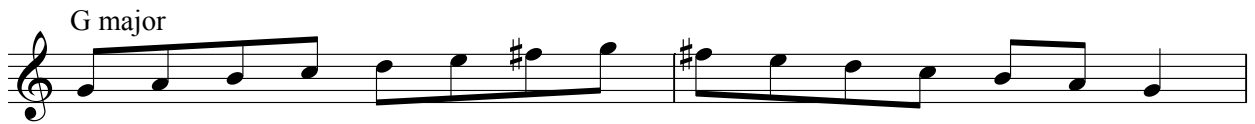
Chapter 6

Keyboard Percussion Exercises

6.1 Major Scales

Here is a reference for the major scale in all twelve keys. When scales are given to you in lessons, you are expected to memorise them. Eventually, you should be able to play scales in all twelve keys with no hesitation.





Chapter 7

Keyboard Percussion Pieces

7.1 J.S. Bach - Two Part Inventions

Invention 1

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

BWV 772

The musical score for J.S. Bach's Invention 1, BWV 772, is presented in two staves (treble and bass clef) in C major, 2/4 time. The score is divided into five systems, each containing two staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The first system shows the initial measures, including a treble staff with a half note G4 and a bass staff with a half note F4. The second system continues the melody in the treble staff and the bass line in the bass staff. The third system features a treble staff with a half note G4 and a bass staff with a half note F4. The fourth system shows a treble staff with a half note G4 and a bass staff with a half note F4. The fifth system concludes the piece with a treble staff ending on a half note G4 and a bass staff ending on a half note F4.

2

The image displays a musical score for J.S. Bach's Two-Part Invention No. 2, measures 13 through 20. The score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass. Measure 13 begins with a treble staff containing a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a half note and a quarter note. Measures 14-15 show a treble staff with a half note and a bass staff with a half note. Measures 16-17 show a treble staff with a half note and a bass staff with a half note. Measures 18-19 show a treble staff with a half note and a bass staff with a half note. Measure 20 ends with a treble staff containing a half note and a bass staff with a half note, followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Invention 08

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

BWV 779

4

7

10

13

16

Public Domain

2

The image displays a musical score for J.S. Bach's Two Part Invention No. 2, measures 19 through 31. The score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass, in G major (one sharp). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into five systems, each containing three measures. The first system (measures 19-21) shows the right hand playing a series of eighth notes and the left hand playing a series of eighth notes. The second system (measures 22-24) shows the right hand playing a series of eighth notes and the left hand playing a series of eighth notes. The third system (measures 25-27) shows the right hand playing a series of eighth notes and the left hand playing a series of eighth notes. The fourth system (measures 28-30) shows the right hand playing a series of eighth notes and the left hand playing a series of eighth notes. The fifth system (measures 31-33) shows the right hand playing a series of eighth notes and the left hand playing a series of eighth notes, ending with a double bar line.

7.2 Bela Bartok - Study for the Left Hand

Allegro, ♩=110-132

f *f molto marcato*

8

sf

14

f

20

sf

26

p

32

Measures 32-37. The right hand plays a melody of eighth notes, with an accent (^) over the eighth note in measure 36. The left hand plays a steady accompaniment of eighth-note chords. Measure 37 ends with a repeat sign.

38

Measures 38-43. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand plays eighth-note chords. Measure 40 has a *pp* dynamic marking. Measure 43 ends with a repeat sign.

44

Measures 44-49. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand plays eighth-note chords. Measure 48 has an accent (>) over the eighth note. Measure 49 ends with a repeat sign.

50

Measures 50-54. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand plays eighth-note chords. Measure 52 has a *ppp* dynamic marking. Measure 54 ends with a repeat sign.

55

Measures 55-58. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand plays eighth-note chords. Measure 57 has a repeat sign. The piece ends with a double bar line in measure 58.

7.3 J.S. Bach - Praeludium 1

Das Wohltemperierte Clavier I

Prelude 1

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

BWV 846

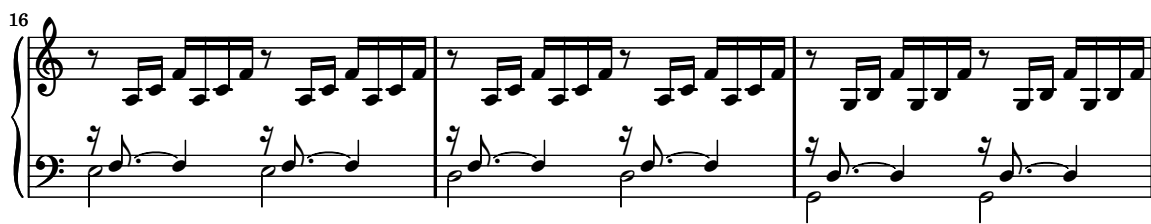
♩ = 60

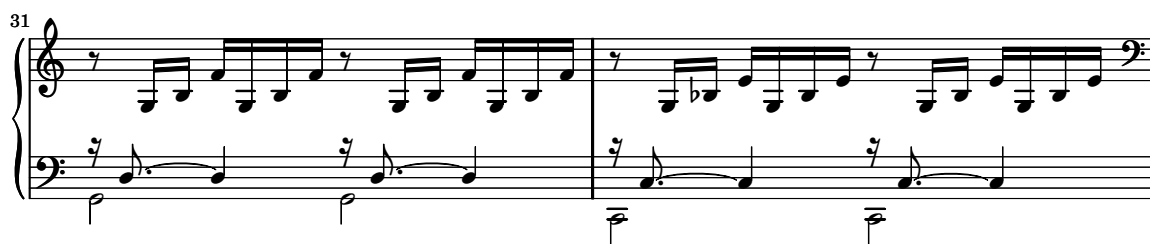
4

7

10

2





Appendix A

Syllabuses

A.1 Percussion - Level 1

A.1.1 Course Length 1 Semester, 17 Lessons.

The goal of this course is basic technical proficiency of the percussion instruments commonly encountered in concert bands and orchestra at high school level. Students will also play solo repertoire suitable to their level and present one piece in a soiree (junior school only), recital or another performance (must be arranged with the percussion teacher in discussion with the Head of Music).

The technical requirements are split as follows: Snare Drum, Keyboard Percussion, Timpani, Accessories and Drumset. Although students are often interested in playing some instruments more than others it is expected that all students have a basic level of technical understanding on all of these instruments.

All students are expected to improve their music reading on both pitched and non-pitched instruments.

A.1.2 Technical Requirements

1. *Snare Drum*

Can set up a drum to the appropriate height and understands the snare strainer mechanism. Holds sticks correctly and is able to control the volume of strokes. Single Strokes, MM55, 8 strokes per beat; Paradiddles and Double Strokes MM60, 4 strokes per beat; Buzz Roll; Flam; Drag.

2. *Keyboard Percussion*

Students may play on either Xylophone, Marimba or Glockenspiel. Holds sticks correctly and can control the volume of strokes. Can play scales one octave up and down

in C major, F major, B flat major, E flat major, G major, D major, A major.

3. *Timpani*

Can tune two drums to a perfect fourth. Can tune a drum to match a note played on marimba or piano in the correct register. Holds the sticks correctly and plays in the correct area on the drum. Can play a basic timpani exercise. Can mute a drum with each hand while holding a stick.

4. *Accessories*

Understands the correct mallet or stick used for each instrument. Is able to hold or approach each instrument correctly and produce a good sound. Can play a basic exercise on each instrument. Instruments: Bass Drum, Crash Cymbals (pair), Suspended Cymbal, Triangle, Tambourine (with skin), Shaker.

5. *Drumset*

Can sit at the drumset and can adjust the instruments so that right foot is on the bass drum pedal and left foot is on the hihat pedal, the snare drum and hihat is at the right height. Can play a basic rock beat and understand drumset notation.

A.2 Drumset - Level 1

A.2.1 Course Length - 1 Semester, 17 Lessons.

The goal of this course is basic technical proficiency on drumset in various styles. Students will also work on a solo or ensemble piece suitable to their level and for presentation in a soiree (junior school only), recital or another performance (must be arranged with the percussion teacher in discussion with the Head of Music).

The technical requirements are split between snare drum for hand coordination and technique and drumset for hand and feet coordination and technique. Since reading music is a vital skill for participation in ensembles and for lifelong appreciation of musical instruments all students are expected to improve their music reading.

A.2.2 Technical Requirements

1. *Snare Drum*

Can set up a drum to the appropriate height and understands the snare strainer mechanism. Holds sticks correctly and is able to control the volume of strokes.

Rudiments: Single Strokes, MM55, 8 strokes per beat; Paradiddles and Double Strokes MM60, 4 strokes per beat; Buzz Roll; Flam; Drag.

2. *Drumset*

Can sit at the drumset and can adjust the instruments so that right foot is on the bass drum pedal and left foot is on the hihat pedal, the snare drum and hihat is at the right height. Understands drumset notation. Can play a basic rhythm in the following styles: Rock, Punk, Jazz (Swing), Bossa. Can control volume and tempo of each rhythm.

3. *Time Keeping and Ensemble Playing* Understands the form of a basic rock song. Can count in and play with a small ensemble while holding tempo.

Appendix B

Buying Percussion Instruments

We can learn a lot playing only on the instruments at school but after a while, all percussion students will want to have a few instruments of their own. The key things to remember with percussion instruments is they're often played with other musicians, so you will have to transport them. This means that quality of construction is important and rugged cases are vital. Also, quality instruments will pay for themselves in the long term enjoyment they will provide. Information about sticks and mallets to go with these instruments can be found in chapter 1.

B.1 Drumsets

B.1.1 Acoustic Drums

It's great to have a drumset to practice at home, start a band and play gigs. Acoustic drumsets are available as cheaply as \$500 but for a quality instrument expect to pay about \$2000. Pearl, Yamaha, Gretsch and Tama make great kits in this price range.

Quality cymbals are especially important. Drumsets are usually bundled with a cymbal 'pack' which contains a pair of hihats, crash and ride cymbals. If you can afford it, upgrade to a decent pack like the Zildjian ZBT Pack. Cheap, flimsy cymbals are a waste of money.

If you are ever planning to move the drumset further than down the hall you need cases. Buy cases when you buy the drumset.

B.1.2 Electronic Drums

Electronic drums have lots of cool sounds, a futuristic vibe and, best of all, they're no louder than a practice pad. The trade-off is in sound, feel and volume. They might have hundreds of cool electronic sounds, but can't match the expressive range of normal drum sounds available

on an acoustic kit. The drums and cymbals feel like practice pads which causes problems for beginning students who rarely play a real drumset. If you want to play with a band or other ensemble you would need a heavy concert loudspeaker system to match the tone and volume of an acoustic drumset.

Nonetheless, the fact that they are quiet makes them perfect for apartments or small houses and for late-night practice. Beginners should avoid electronic drumsets if possible. Intermediate and advanced players can find them useful, usually in addition to an acoustic kit for rehearsals and gigs.

Roland and Yamaha make good quality electronic drumsets starting at about \$1700 with a sweet spot around \$2500. As with acoustic drumsets, cheaper electronic drums sound and feel cheap.

B.2 Keyboard Percussion Instruments

All percussion students in concert bands and other ensembles are expected to have a basic level of skill on keyboard percussion instruments. Regular practice is required to build melodic reading skills and an co-ordination on these instruments. So, students are *required* to own or hire an instrument to practice. For motivated students wanting to play more interesting pieces, a xylophone or marimba could be more appropriate.

For the absolute beginner, I would recommend hiring a practice glockenspiel from the CGS Music Department for one or two semesters and then hiring a compact xylophone. Students who have played piano before might want to go straight for the xylophone. Once students are ready for four mallet pieces and perhaps want to study music as a subject at school I would recommend hiring or purchasing a marimba.

B.2.1 Glockenspiel

Practice glockenspiels are available from \$100 to \$200 (See Figure). At this price they are extremely good value for beginning students. The only exception is if a student has had several years study of piano, in which case they should jump straight to a xylophone or marimba.

More expensive glockenspiels are not useful to the student.

B.2.2 Xylophone

Xylophones are make a great keyboard instrument for primary school or early high school students. Folding wooden instruments with a three octave range are available for around \$2000. These instruments have a great sound and can be set low for smaller bodies. There



Figure B.1: A percussion kit including practice glockenspiel and drum pad. These are available to hire from the CGS Music Department for \$110 per semester.

is a great range of beginning to intermediate repertoire for xylophone. Advanced repertoire includes arrangements of George Hamilton Green's ragtime xylophone pieces [3].

The standard range for a xylophone is 3.5 octaves. Some professional models have 4 octaves but the lower notes are not commonly used.

B.2.3 Marimba

Marimba is the keyboard percussion instrument with the widest solo repertoire. Serious high school percussion students should consider purchasing or hiring an instrument. Marimbas have range in between 4 and 5.5 octaves. 5 octaves is the professional standard and 4.3 octaves is the standard for student instruments, older instruments might only have 4 octaves. Instruments are available with cheaper narrow and more expensive wide bars.

Adams, Yamaha, Musser and Korogi produce great instruments at a variety of price ranges. 4.3 octave student instruments are available for around \$4000. 5 octave instruments start are available for between \$10000 and \$20000 depending on the brand and the quality of the bars. Professional concert instruments cost \$20000+.

Look for instruments with a frame and resonators that fold or disassemble. This makes the marimbamuch easier to move. Consider purchasing cases at the time of purchase.



Figure B.2: A folding 3.5 octave xylophone made by Bergerault. Xylophones like this are available for hire from Gary France (<http://www.garyfrance.com>) for \$360 per semester.



Figure B.3: A 4.3 octave marimba made by Adams. Marimbas like this are available for hire from Gary France (<http://www.garyfrance.com>) for \$750 per semester.

B.2.4 Vibraphone

Vibraphone has a great solo repertoire and also has a well-defined place in the jazz tradition. Yamaha, Musser and Adams manufacture great instruments. Yamaha instruments are the easiest to order with prices starting around \$5000. Again, narrow and wide bar instruments are available with wide bars having a better tone. Instruments are available with and without the electric motor which powers the “vibrato” effect that gives the instrument their name. Since the motor is not commonly used in modern vibes playing it is not essential. As with marimba, it is useful to have a folding frame and good cases.

B.3 Accessories

Concert accessories like tambourine, triangle, bass drum beaters and triangle beaters are useful to percussionists who play in bands or orchestras outside of school, for example, the Canberra Youth Orchestra or Australian Youth Orchestra. Optimum Percussion can provide advice and prices for these items. Students buying accessories should invest in specific cases for each instrument.

Extra instruments for drumset like effect cymbals, cowbells, wood blocks and electronic sample pads are great fun. Since there are good, inexpensive instruments in this category I encourage intermediate to advanced students to buy and play with anything that they find interesting.

B.4 Hand Percussion

Hand percussion instruments like djembe, congas, bongos and cahon are great fun to play in small ensembles. Congas and bongos also have a roll in latin jazz music played in big band while djembe has a deep tradition in west African countries. Cahon is a relatively new instrument from south America evolving from wooden shipping cartons, it has great bass and slap tones allowing drumset-like playing.

Djembe and cahon are probably the most exciting and accessible hand percussion instruments¹. While all of these instruments can cause bruising to new players’ hands, bongos are the most difficult to get used to and hardest to master.

¹Even though I say this, I prefer congas.

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