

Warren Benson

The Drum Tutor

A Primary Tutor for Snare Drum



Edited by
Robin Engelman
and Gordon Stout

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by

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and Gordon Stout*

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“Man reveals himself in rhythm,
the emblem of his temporality.”

- Octavio Paz

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Introduction

My father heard them while strolling along a side street in Brussels. Like an animal sensing something in the wind, he stopped, alerted. Then, even with his stiff leg, he ran at a quick pace over to the *Grand Place*. There, in leopard skin hats, drummers from the Congo filled the city square with the rhythm that was the pulse of my father's life.

My father wrote The Drum Tutor in the early years of his teaching. Many students have used his drum techniques over the years. Two students, Robin Engelman and Gordon Stout, encouraged publication of The Drum Tutor as an important contribution to the percussion pedagogical record. My family is grateful to Robin and Gordon for their tireless work to bring The Drum Tutor to book form.

My father was an inveterate traveler, and when I was a child, our family lived in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Recently, I went back. While walking through streets of the town, I heard them. I called my daughter to come quickly, and we ran as fast as we could to see Indians from the hills drumming and dancing in the *zocolo* town square.

--Kirsten Benson Hampton

Forward by Warren Benson

This Drum Tutor is addressed to those who aspire to become (or help to develop) a well schooled snare drummer. It suggests how to play rather than what to play. All standard material has been treated with as fresh an eye and ear as possible. This includes not only the physical aspects of performance, but the problems of rhythmic notation, reading and counting, along with suggestions for the presentation of materials to the uninitiated or advanced student. It is an attempt at that elusive item: the immediately useful self-instructor/teaching manual addressed equally to the practical interest of the student and the clinical interest of the teacher.

The Drum Tutor is not meant to be read from front to back with all items fully digested before the succeeding pages are approached; the format is that of an encyclopedia.

The student should not become discouraged by the fact that many solutions to technical problems seem to do little but lead to more problems. They should not be considered “more” but rather “other” problems. Through these “other” problems real solutions can be found that may a) eliminate the original difficulty, or b) suggest a different approach to its solution. Either of these is the desired end. It’s rather like the old joke that suggests that if one is suffering from a relatively simple malady, one should let it develop into a more serious form for which a cure more readily exists. Sometimes things must get worse before they can get better. Perhaps while the student is concentrating on this “other” problem the original may die from lack of attention. The process of self-analysis, diagnosis and therapy require that both the student and teacher combine the qualities of a practicing physician with those of a research scientist.

How to Use The Drum Tutor

1. The Drum Tutor will be useful for students (beginners or advanced) as a self-teacher, as well as for teachers who have some theoretical and/or practical knowledge of the techniques of snare drum playing.
 2. All sections are complete within themselves (i.e., The Drum Tutor should not be used by beginning on page 1 and progressing consecutively to the final one). See the suggested lesson plans for teaching sequences and the correlation of material. *Eds. Note: the lesson plan was not found among Warren's papers.*
 3. Problems of execution most often encountered are discussed and analyzed, and workable corrections are given that have been proven themselves in a teaching situation. Valuable time can be saved by having the student play while the teacher talks, correcting him as he goes. On the command "stop," the student should "freeze" in position, so that bad FORM (or whatever) may be seen, evaluated and corrected. The student can then compare this "freeze" position with the "ideal FORM" and correct it accordingly.
 4. A beginner (teacher or student) should examine the Table of Contents so that the manner in which the material is covered will be known so that specific details be viewed in their relationship to the "whole picture."
- The variations of the basic techniques should not unduly trouble the beginner; rather he should develop the entire range of basic techniques, returning to the variations only after the completion of these basic techniques.
5. An advanced student will find that by covering all the material he will be able to use the technical studies as review material, and to continue development of his technique based upon a familiar foundation.

The basic technique of the snare drummer has traditionally focused on a certain set of rhythmically varied stick patterns. In the United States, these have been codified as the “Standard 26 Rudiments” as established by the National Association of Rudimental Drummers (NARD). These represent a generally accepted standard for technical accomplishment.

It must be stated, however, that they do not represent the only standard upon which critical evaluation of a snare drum technique may be made, nor do they constitute the only foundation for the ensemble performer.

Traditional solo materials include figures outside the “Standard 26” and ensemble performance (orchestra, band etc.) include few, if any of them. These figures do, however, offer a valid approach to physical control. If thought of in these terms, they can be taught easily and quickly in a progressive order. There exists a wealth of drill material literature which utilizes them. Mastery of these traditional sticking patterns should provide the player with sufficient technical control for the development of more specialized techniques as required by the ensemble media.

What are the demands of any literature for any player? What are the techniques that will satisfy these demands?

The concern in The Drum Tutor is the Rudiments of Playing, not “Playing of the Rudiments”.

Discussion and analysis of the Long Roll: Open to Closed may imply that this characteristic figure be taught open to closed (slow to fast). Traditionally, this has been the proper teaching procedure for the instructor and the examination routine for the student. However, introducing the student to that end of the long roll that is the most removed point from the sustained sound (which is the ultimate goal) may unnecessarily delay his entrance into ensemble performance. *Eds. Note: Or curb his enthusiasm!* Without the ability to produce a sustained tone, the student will find most ensemble music of the band or orchestra variety out of his reach technically. The few exceptions

notwithstanding, students generally find the development of the open to closed long roll a difficult and unnecessarily prolonged experience. If one of the objectives of study is to gain sufficient technique to play in a large ensemble, it would seem wise to investigate methods of acquiring the basic techniques that produce results quickly without sacrificing the traditional goals of clarity, control, precision and disciplined performance.

Co-Editorial Forward: by Robin Engelman

Warren began The Drum Tutor sometime in the late 1950's. It was then typed and partially edited by Terry Hulick, Warren's longtime student, whose handwriting appears on mimeographed copies and on note papers containing Warren's handwritten questions and suggested revisions. Warren's ideas about how snare drums are played were probably coalescing when I arrived at Ithaca College in 1957, because my first snare drum lesson with him was on the four basic roll faults.

I believe The Drum Tutor to be complete except for a few rudiments that seem to be missing; perhaps Warren thought he'd made his point. There were also questions about the precise order of the material. There were ambiguous notations that suggested the Roll Texture (Density) pages may have been intended for the main body of the Text, but Gordon and I thought it best to put those on their own. They seemed more advanced and not quite in line with the progression of the text.

Warren's Forward suggests he intended a broader scope for The Drum Tutor, but I think the goals and ideas in his forward can be rationalized with this version, however close or distant to his intentions it may be.

Warren wrote, "It's messy and has some omissions, but basically, this is it: 'How to do it all by yourself in Antarctica'."

Editor's Note: by Robin Engelman

Warren was a brilliant scholar, composer, percussionist, poet and an inspiring educator who by deduction, strove to discover and convey the essence of everything he taught. He was also an early mentor to the NEXUS percussion ensemble, and produced its first concert in 1971.

Warren believed the essential techniques for percussion instruments were simple and few in numbers. Once analyzed and understood, an intelligent, reasonably coordinated person could apply them.

The Drum Tutor was begun during Benson's tenure at Ithaca College, in Ithaca, New York. It is a compendium of the lessons he gave to music education students and percussion majors during the 1950s and early 1960s. As Warren said, "The Drum Tutor does not tell one how to play a snare drum, but how snare drums are played."

After 12 one-hour weekly lessons, the music education students were required to play the 13 Essential Rudiments of the National Association of Rudimental Drummers (NARD) as well as the "Downfall of Paris," "Three Camps" and other drum solos in the Ancient or Open Style. Warren also taught basic techniques for the other percussion instruments but he considered the snare drum to be the most appealing to young percussionists and the most useful instrument for a beginner's technique and for ensemble playing.

Warren begins his Drum Tutor by explaining how snare drum sticks should be chosen by their shape, size and pitch -- "the beginning of ear-training." He explains the grip and how physical laws govern how sticks bounce. He explains the development of human growth from the largest to smallest muscles and how that growth comes to influence a drummer's technique.

Thus, The Drum Tutor is not a series of progressively difficult etudes. As Warren states in his forward, "The concern in The Drum Tutor is the Rudiments of Playing, not Playing of the Rudiments".

Warren never completed his Drum Tutor. He left his multi-course teaching position at Ithaca College to teach composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and for years the manuscript, a rough and complicated mixture of typewritten or pen-and-pencil pages, remained filed away. His last draft ended with the “down-up-taps” applied to some of the 13 essential rudiments. This technique for teaching rudiments is common knowledge and both Gordon Stout and I felt that this incomplete part of The Drum Tutor need not be published; the heart of Warren’s unique ideas lie in the pages offered here.

In November of 2003, during a dinner in Columbus, Ohio given the night before Warren was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame, the subject of The Drum Tutor and its unpublished state arose. Gordon Stout, like me a former student of Warren’s, was present and said for years he’d been using ideas from The Drum Tutor to teach his students. Gordon and I then promised Warren we’d edit his Drum Tutor for publication.

I want to thank Gordon Stout for his dedication to this project. Gordon’s first act was to create a Table of Contents and from there on, it was fairly easy going. I want to also thank the Benson family, in particular Kirsten Benson Hampton, for their dedication to this project. Through work together our friendship has grown and so too has our appreciation for Warren’s life and work. Warren died in October of 2005 just as Gordon and I were reaching the conclusion of our editing.

My advice to teachers and students is to study this unique document. There is much within The Drum Tutor which will shed light on how we play snare drums.

Robin Engelman
Founding Member of NEXUS
Former Adjunct Professor of Music, University of Toronto
Member Hall of Fame Percussive Arts Society
Banff School of Fine Arts Donald Cameron Medal
City Of Toronto Arts Award

Editor's Note: by Gordon Stout

The years 1970-1976 at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, were wonderful years for me in many respects, not the least of which was the opportunity to develop a relationship with Warren Benson and the NEXUS percussion group. Yes, I received two degrees from Eastman, studied percussion with John Beck, and composition with Joseph Schwantner, Samuel Adler and Warren Benson. But here I will speak of the Benson/NEXUS connection, which directly led to my involvement in the publication of Benson's The Drum Tutor.

My composition lessons with Warren were much more than lessons about writing music. For instance, one day in a lesson when I hadn't written anything new, he introduced me to the music of Toru Takemitsu. Warren invited me into his studio, put on some wonderful and new music, turned out the lights, and invited me to listen. On other such occasions, our talks would turn to percussion. He showed me his unpublished snare drum method text, and I immediately felt a strong connection and affinity with its ideas and pedagogical concepts. I have used them in my teaching ever since.

Warren was responsible for presenting the first NEXUS concert, and I was lucky indeed to be at that performance at the Eastman School of Music's Kilbourn Hall. It was truly a magical evening, one that will always be in my memory. I have since become friends with all the members of NEXUS. Sometime after coming to Ithaca College -- I already knew that Warren Benson was the first professor of percussion at Ithaca -- I learned that Robin Engelman was a graduate of Ithaca, as well as a student of Warren's.

So it makes perfect sense that Robin and I are involved in this project. I am very proud to be a part of it, continuing my friendship with Robin, and paying homage to Warren Benson, my teacher and friend.

Gordon Stout
Professor of Percussion, Ithaca College



1996 NEXUS 25th anniversary concert, Kilbourn Hall, Eastman School of Music. Left to Right; Bill Cahn, Russell Hartenberger, Warren Benson, Robin Engelman, John Wyre, Bob Becker.

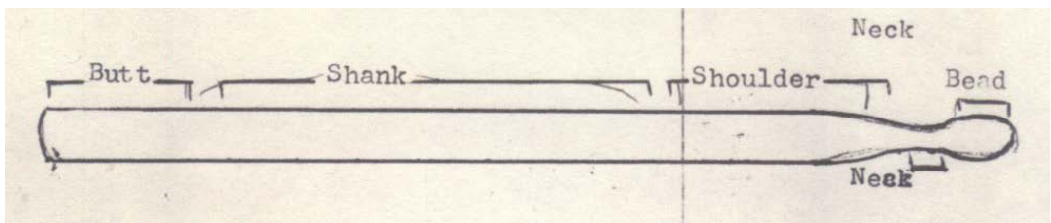
1. THE STICKS AND PRACTICE PAD

The selection of a pair of snare drum sticks is a most important first lesson for the student; given a desired size, this offers the student an opportunity to exercise critical judgment with regard to shape (weight), size and pitch.

SHAPE

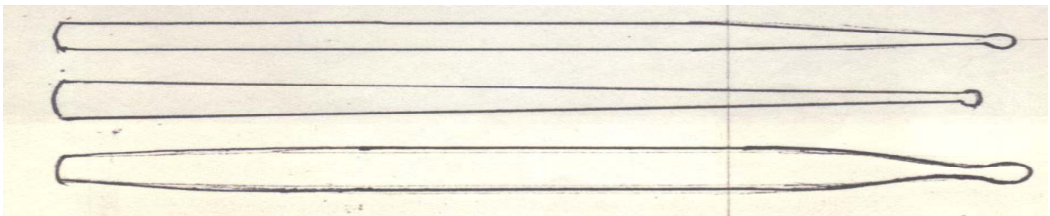
As leverage will prove to be an important issue in the snare drum playing technique as presented here, the distribution of weight in sticks of any size should be the first consideration. This weight distribution determines the shape of the stick.

Parts of Snare Drum Stick



1. Butt and shank circumference the same.
2. Shoulder length short (quick taper to neck).
3. Neck should be of no appreciable length.
4. The Bead should be round or olive shaped, and of good size.

These shapes do not meet these requirements in one or more ways.



SIZE

Given a specific use, a particular size of stick may be chosen to fit the particular instrument at hand; but for “general” purposes, a stick of approximately 15-16 inches in length and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in diameter has been found to be the most practical. (This size is known as a “1S” or “2S” in the United States.) This size allows for the widest range of performance possibilities and ease of control, especially for inexperienced players.

Eds. Note: Benson preferred the Premier “H” drum stick because its bead was almost round and measured $\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter relative to the shank’s $\frac{5}{8}$ inch diameter.

PITCH

The shape and size desired now determined, the student’s critical judgment will be required in selecting his own particular pair of sticks. The student may proceed in the following manner:

1. Concentrate efforts on sticks of one model number.
2. Select sticks for straightness and grain characteristics
 - a. Sight along stick length, or roll a few inches on flat surface, eliminating from further consideration all those that are warped.
 - b. Check grain for evenness and straightness, avoiding:
 - i. knots, which weaken the stick
 - ii. heavy grain circles on the bead that may split off.
3. Select sticks for identical pitch. (Both sticks must sound EXACTLY the same.)
 - a. Tap beads on a hard surface separating them into two groups according to their pitch relationship (i.e. high and low or tick and tock).
 - b. When all sticks are separated, repeat above test with one of these groups, again separating them according to pitch relationship.
 - c. Continue in this manner until an EXACT pitch pair is found.

It is necessary that each stick is held in exactly the same manner and tapped with the same motion and force on the same spot as all others so that the true stick sound may be heard.

4. Following the procedure, several pairs of sticks may be found. Choose the pair in which the individual sticks most nearly match in weight.

In view of the many factors involved, it is advisable to select more than one pair of sticks at a time. For those students not located near a large music store, a shipment of sticks on approval (for selection) may prove workable.

Eds. Note: Benson convinced an Ithaca, NY music store to order large quantities of Premiere 'H' drum sticks and to allow his music education and percussion performance students to conduct all the preceding tests. Throughout the years, hundreds of Benson's students rolled and tapped drum-sticks on the glass counters of Hickey's Music Store.

The importance of listening for specific items, discriminating between what sounds and what one wants to hear, begins with stick selection. This should be considered Lesson No. 1 for the student -- the beginning of ear training. Evenness of sound (color/timbre) can only proceed on the basis of matched sticks.

PRACTICE PADS

Practice pads assume many shapes and sizes (e.g. solid rubber blocks, solid wooden blocks, wooden blocks with rubber or cork playing surfaces, miniature mounted drum heads, heavy china dinner plates, especially prepared practice drums, tunable wooden boxes, all with or without adjustable stands.)

Selection of a practice instrument should be made on the basis of sound and resilience characteristics. That is, it should be resonant and it should not hinder the sticks' natural tendency to rebound. Also, it should be adjustable with regard to the height and angle of its playing surface.

2. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS OF FORM

The instrumentalist's problem is that of relating himself to his instrument. Direct contact with the resonating chamber (instrument) is the condition of the wind instrument players. The pianist, violinist, harpist and percussionist have a less direct contact. The violinist and percussionist in particular have the additional problem of a threefold consideration: the player, the resonating chamber, and the playing implement (bow, stick). These three considerations will be presented one at a time in order that the function of each be understood, and that they may be combined in the most efficient manner, and developed to produce the most satisfying musical result.

The percussionist is faced with a three dimensional technique at all times:

- i. The height to which the stick is raised in playing.
- ii. The lateral distance separating the hands.
- iii. The distance of the stick forward from the body involved with the rising and falling of the hand.

As the circular area (the drum head) at which the strokes are aimed is rather large (approximately 13-15 inches in diameter) and the movements of the whole arm (or the greater part of it) offer many possibilities for height, width and distance variation from the body while swinging through space, it is important that the amount of space available be limited to that which is necessary, efficient and natural for the production of a variety of tones and speeds.

The question then posed is: How do we limit that area in space in which the percussionist will operate? It is limited by giving it a shape, and a form that will allow for the maximum musical effect desired, while using the minimum amount of motion necessary to gain the effect.

In sports such as tennis, golf and baseball, where a natural arm swing in three dimensions is used, certain techniques are classified under the heading of FORM. In each of these sports, much care and effort is expended to develop

what is called a “grooved swing” -- a stroke that is always made the same way, with the same motions and preparations. A golfer must develop a swing so that he can depend on the facing of the club head and position of the feet in relation to the ball to determine the distance the ball will travel both forward and up. The same stroke with a 9 iron and a 3 iron will loft the ball differently, for greater or lesser distances, as desired. A tennis forehand stroke will be the same whether the ball is hit directly at the receiver or at some distance from his forehand side; The receiver’s footwork will put him in good position to return the shot using the conventional forehand stroke motion with greater or lesser force, as needed.

Batters in baseball in a hitting “slump” spend time in the batting cages under the scrutiny of coaches and other experts, so that the “hitch” in their swing or fault in their stride or stance may be discovered and corrected.

In each case, something like an “Ideal Form” exists; and all players continually strive to develop this ideal, perfect form. It is doubtful that any one has seen an “Ideal Form,” but most would admit that they know what it is and would recognize it if they did see it -- or feel it -- and continue to work on it.

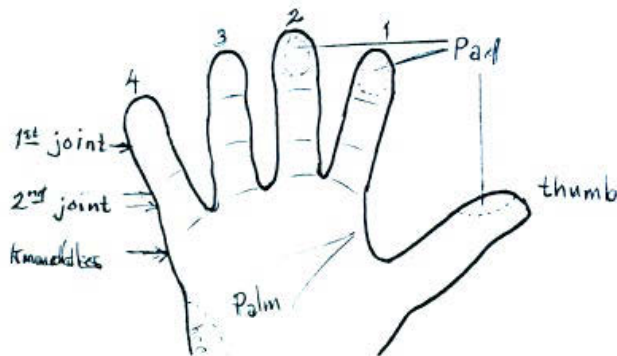
Considering the placement of the object which is to be hit in each case (drum or ball), the particular stroke used exists within an ideal form as a necessary, natural and efficient technique. Each FORM, then, serves to define the possible spatial area to be used.

3. PREPARATION FOR PERFORMANCE

HOLDING THE SNARE DRUM STICKS

Where and how the sticks are held are items of equal importance. The weight distribution within the stick can only produce the desired leverage when the sticks are held in a manner calculated to exploit the former and control the latter.

Leverage is determined by the distribution of stick weight in the hand. It is, therefore, necessary to observe what happens as the distribution of weight in the hand changes so that one can find the proper distribution in order to produce the desired leverage. Only then can one achieve maximum result with minimum effort.



A general statement regarding where one holds the stick i.e. “three inches from butt” is not sufficient. Given the variety of sticks that may satisfy the requirements of good weight distribution as discussed, it is necessary to consider each matched pair as individual cases.

The Snare Drum Technique presented here presupposes a considerable amount of help from the sticks, and so a poorly balanced stick may prove more difficult to control than necessary.

Accurate determination of any holding procedure necessitates identifying the parts of the hand.

FINDING THE PIVOT POINT

1. Place practice pad surface level with floor and slightly below the waist. (This is only a temporary position; an exact placement of the playing surface can be considered only after body, arm, and hand positions have been determined.)
2. Using both hands, pick up one stick gently in this manner:
 - a. Bead in LH, extreme butt in RH.
 - b. Use pads of thumb and second finger only.
3. With stick parallel to playing surface position bead 4-6 inches above it. (Take care that your shoulders remain square.)
4. Maintain RH position; lift bead another 4 inches.
5. Keeping RH in place, drop bead allowing stick to strike the playing surface and bounce freely. (It will probably not rebound due to the existing weight distribution.)
6. Continue in a similar manner, moving the RH thumb and second finger, or pivot point, to a position slightly closer to the stick shoulder each time.
7. Observe that as this pivot point moves toward the stick shoulder, the differing weight distribution produces a change in the number and timing of the initial stroke and its free rebounds. (With any drop and rebounds an accelerando and diminuendo will be evident.) As the pivot point continues toward the shoulder, the number of rebounds will reach an optimum that will begin to decrease when the weight distribution begins to favor the butt end of the stick.

8. Continue this test (moving pivot point toward stick shoulder) until that point is found that produces the most free bounces with the most gradual *accelerando* and *diminuendo* in sound.
9. When this place is found, mark it. (A small cut on the stick at this point will provide the student with an easily felt mark each time the sticks are used for performance.)
10. This procedure should be followed with both sticks. (The pivot point for a traditional grip will be in the soft flesh at the base of the “U” formed by the thumb and first finger, but will be the same distance from the butt end as it is on the other stick.)

HOW TO HOLD THE STICKS

For the snare drummer, as for the violinist, attention to proper hand position is basic to the development of maximum control with a minimum of effort. The inherent qualities of weight distribution and (by the determination of the pivot point as discussed) leverage of the drum stick must be exploited to the player’s greatest advantage. This begins with the placement of the fingers around the pivot point. Step by step development of a fine technique will always be dependent upon this premise.

Procedure (practice pad not necessary):

1. With the LH pick up one stick by the butt end.
2. Extend the RH in a handshake position.
 - a. Thumb is at side of hand.
 - b. Fingers are together, slightly but comfortably curved, and relaxed.
3. Turn RH palm up. Place the stick across the palm at approximately a 45-degree angle, extending from the first joint of the first finger to the middle of the heel of the hand.

4. Retaining control with the LH, close the RH fingers (second, third and fourth) around the stick making certain that the pivot point lies on the first joint of the second finger.
5. Bring the thumb into gentle contact with the stick on this pivot point.
 - a. First and second fingers contact the stick at the first joint.
 - b. Stick retains contact with heel of hand.
 - c. Finger curvature: first finger very little, second finger more, third finger still more, fourth finger most.
6. With the RH assuming control of the stick, turn RH palm down and check these items one at a time.
 - a. Hand will extend straight from forearm, with no angle at the wrist from either a top or side view.
 - b. Position of pivot point (between thumb and second finger).
 - c. First joint contacts and finger curvature.
 - d. Back of hand is parallel to floor.
 - e. Inside of hand is conically shaped.
 - f. The line of the stick crosses the line of the knuckles (extending from first joint of first finger to middle of heel of hand).
 - g. Butt end of stick is visible.
7. Adjust thumb position so that it contacts the under inside quarter of the stick.
 - a. This provides for lifting the stick (thumb and second finger) as well as pushing it down (weight of first finger).
 - b. The thumb and second finger contacts are now sufficient to both rotate the stick upon its own axis as well as twirl it around its pivot point -- providing maximum playing control.
8. Repeat this above procedure with the LH.

Eds. Note: This will result in a matched grip, something that was first beginning to gain favor at the time this Drum Tutor was written.

BODY AND ARM POSITION

Stance

The snare drummer performs most efficiently in a standing position. To achieve the maximum result it will be necessary to stand relaxed, allowing the weight of the body to distribute itself between the feet. **A fluid playing style will come into being only through a relaxed and controlled posture. Neither military stiffness nor casual slouch can be allowed. Grace without “flash” should be the main consideration. Grace is posture.**

Body, arm and hand position must be related to the proper holding of the sticks as described previously so that the stick can continue to function around its pivot point.

Body Position:

1. Take sticks in the manner described previously.
2. Stand erect.
 - a. Head up.
 - b. Shoulders back.
 - c. Feet slightly apart and centered under the body.

Arm Position:

1. Let arms hang naturally from the shoulders.
2. Raise the forearm until the hand is slightly below elbow level; the elbow remains in place.

Hand Position:

1. Turn the palm so that back of the hand is parallel to the floor.
2. The stick heads should meet.
 - a. Sticks form a 90-degree angle with each other.
 - b. The center of the body bisects this angle.

PAD POSITION

With the body, arm and hand positions established in relationship to one another, an exact placement of the playing surface of the drum or practice pad can now be considered. This placement must be one which yet again allows the stick to function naturally and efficiently around its pivot point.

Given this consideration it will obviously be necessary to preserve the body, arm and hand positions as described. It is, therefore, the playing surface that must be adjusted to accommodate the physical considerations of each performer rather than the body, arms and hands being adjusted to an arbitrary height for placement of the practice pad.

In preparing to adjust the pad height and placement, observe the following check points:

1. Body weight is evenly distributed between the feet.
2. Arms hang naturally from the shoulders in a continuous downward curve from the shoulders through the forearm and wrist on to the stick head. There are no sharp angles or any changes of direction in this downward curve.
3. The palm of the hand is parallel to the floor.
4. The stick crosses the line of the knuckles.
5. Butt end of stick is visible.
6. Sticks meet at a 90-degree angle.
7. Center of body bisects this angle.
8. The stick pivot point is between the thumb and the first joint of the second finger.
9. The inside of the hand is conically shaped.

Adjust the playing surface of the drum or practice pad so that the center of the playing surface is located directly under and touching the beads of the sticks as they meet. This is the performer's **Playing Stance**. The student should practice assuming this playing position.

Common errors encountered in this Playing Stance.

1. symptom:

Elbows are angled out from the side of the body or protruding beyond the line of the performer's back ("chicken wings").

diagnosis:

There is no smooth curve to the arm line.

correction:

Observe arm hang with careful regard for a smooth continuity of the downward curve of the line from the shoulder to the stick bead.

2. symptom:

Sticks meet at less than a 90-degree angle.

diagnosis:

Butt end of stick under wrist (stick does not cross knuckles).

correction:

Butt end of stick must be visible, extending from center of heel of hand (stick line must cross knuckle line).

diagnosis:

Reaching too far forward for playing surface (arms are straight).

correction:

Stand closer to practice pad.

3. symptom:

Sticks meet at more than a 90-degree angle.

diagnosis:

Stick parallels knuckle line (usually because the thumb is too far under the sticks).

correction:

Locate the thumb pad on the under inside quarter of the stick -- stick line must cross knuckle line.

diagnosis:

Elbow too far out (or too high, if so the shoulders will probably be “hunched” as well).

correction:

Bring elbow closer to body. (Let upper arm hang naturally from shoulders -- get shoulders down).

diagnosis:

Standing too close to pad.

correction:

Step back until angle narrows to 90 degrees.

diagnosis:

Elbows too far back.

correction:

Stand further from pad.

diagnosis:

Pad too low.

correction:

Raise pad and step back.

diagnosis:

Hand (at base of thumb) is too close to body, and/or hand turned in.

correction:

Straighten wrist line and step back.

ARM MOTION

Now that the general considerations of form have indicated the most efficient playing stance, control of the playing space within which a percussionist operates has begun. How, then, should we move the arms?

Examining the development of muscular coordination and control in the early stages of human growth will show that movements begin and are refined, as a rule, from the trunk of the body to the extremities, from the larger to the smaller. It will be noted also that most daily activities, i.e. shaking hands, opening doors, eating and drinking, lifting and placing, etc., use the whole arm with the action beginning in the upper arm and proceeding to the hand and fingers in turn. By means of this almost constant use of the same muscle

movement patterns, muscle tone, control and flexibility would seem to be self-maintained with no set of additional, special exercises needed for these and similar activities.

In view of this, it would follow that the desired technique for swinging a drum stick through space should take advantage, as much as possible, of whole arm movements. It serves no purpose to educate a highly specialized set of muscles to perform a special technique when other muscles in daily use might do it just as well or better. In addition, as it is desirable that these arm movements be graceful, it is necessary that they be relaxed and natural with little or no muscle conditioning required to begin or continue the technique.

To repeat: Considering the placement of the objects to be struck (the drum, pad, or anything else), the particular stroke used exists within an ideal Form as a necessary, natural and efficient technique.

Consideration of a specific literature will demand a more specific approach to the control of Form.

(Eds. Note: Perhaps Benson was referring to the demands of multiple percussion, which would dramatically alter a players form as compared to playing as here, a practice pad. RE)

4. THE RUDIMENTS OF PLAYING

The basic technique of the snare drummer has been traditionally focused upon a certain set of rhythmically varied stick patterns. In the United States, these have been codified as the “Standard 26 Rudiments” as established by the NARD. These represent a generally accepted standard for technical accomplishment.

It must be stated, however, that they do not represent the only standard upon which critical evaluation of snare drum playing technique may be made nor do they constitute the only technical foundation for the ensemble performer.

Our concern here is the Rudiments of Playing, not Playing of the Rudiments.

(Eds. Note: This same concern has been expressed in almost identical words by rudimental drumming legend John S. Pratt.)

Traditional solo materials include figures outside these “Standard 26” and ensemble performance (orchestra, band, etc.) include few, if any of them. These figures do, however, offer a valid approach to physical control for these reasons:

1. They can be taught easily in a progressive order.
2. There exists a wealth of literature utilizing them which is available as drill material.

Mastery of these traditional stick patterns should provide the player with sufficient technical control for the development of more specialized techniques as required by the several ensemble media.

(Eds. Note: After the demise of the National Association of Rudimental Drummers (NARD), the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) undertook the selection and compilation of snare drum rudiments. In 2005, the original 26 NARD rudiments appeared in the PAS international list of 40 drum rudiments, though some under new names. (See “Rudiments in Rhythm” by James Campbell. (Meredith Music Publications, 2002.

Though NARD's 26 still appear in the PAS 40, the names have been changed. See Rudimental Rolls (p. 46-47).

What are the demands of any literature for any player and, what are the techniques that will satisfy those demands? Any musical performance assumes a control of the principles of sound and silence, within which the elements of loud and soft, long and short, operate.

For the snare drummer, loud and soft have an obvious connotation of size of stroke: loud=large, soft=small.

Striking the snare drum, loud or soft, produces a short sound. A long sound can, at best, be imitated by a rapid succession of short sounds whose dynamics and rhythmic evenness create the illusion of length.

Dynamic demands will dictate the spatial dimensions of performance, further defining the “form” of playing. What is the dictate of length? The speed demanded by long note simulation will demonstrate the need for a most natural stick action. Holding the stick in the manner discussed allows for this, and includes in its premise two functions:

1. A technique which with one motion produces one short sound.
2. A technique which with one motion produces two or more short sounds.

We shall call number one the “**Manufactured Stroke Technique**” and number two the “**Bounce Stroke Technique**.”

These two techniques will be presented separately for editorial clarity but it is to be noted that they must be studied simultaneously. (See Teaching Sequence, p. 56.)

As a specific delineation of the playing area has yet to be arrived at, we shall begin with that technique that concerns itself primarily with dynamics -- stroke size.

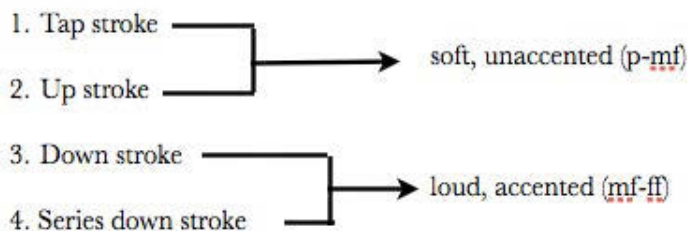
5. PLAYING TECHNIQUES

THE MANUFACTURED STROKE TECHNIQUE

The manufactured stroke technique consists of only four strokes that allow controlled performance of all loud and soft, accented and unaccented, short sounds. Each of these single strokes must be developed independently from the others. Great care must be taken to observe continually the check points given as follows for each stroke, because the strokes

1. Proscribe the limits of the playing area specifically defining the “form” of playing.
2. Anticipate the movements required for all strokes and single stroke patterns.

These four strokes are named:



Preliminary Procedure

1. Assume playing stance (see p. 10).
 - a. This stance with the stick head on the playing surface will be the position of the sticks, arm and hand at the moment of impact of any of the four strokes.
 - b. This stance requires that the stick heads be poised 2-4 inches above the playing surface, and is called Position 1.

- c. The check points for Position 1 are the same as the playing stance with the addition of the following:
 - d. The bead of the stick is 2-4 inches above the center of the playing surface, interrupting the downward curve from shoulder to stick bead.
2. The student should make a final check of all of these items for correct playing position before continuing.

The Tap Stroke

1. Assume Position 1.
2. Drop hand (not wrist!) gently, allowing the bead of the stick to strike the playing surface, as if using a smaller hammer.
3. The hand returns to Position 1 after sound is made.

No other part of the arm moves; the forearm does not change its angle to the floor.

The Up Stroke

1. Assume Position 1.
2. Make a Tap Stroke.
3. After sound is made,
 - a. allow the stick bead to continue rising past Position 1, leading the forearm until
 - b. the forearm is almost perpendicular to the floor, and the stick bead has gone slightly past the crest of the curve it has been describing.

There should be no motion allowed of the shoulder; the angle of the wrist-forearm does not change from that which exists with the forearm in Position 1.

This position (forearm and stick raised) will be called Position 2.

The Down Stroke

1. Assume Position 2. (Do not make sound before moving forearm.)
2. Drop (or pull) the forearm suddenly and quickly (the hand and stick following) allowing the wrist to stop when it has fallen into Position 1.

There should be no motion allowed of the shoulder in preparation for or performance of this stroke.

3. The stick bead will strike the playing surface after the wrist has stopped its motions. (And, due to the speed of the forearm's falling dead weight, will produce a loud sound.)

The Series Down Stroke

1. Assume Position 2.
2. Make a Down Stroke
 - a. Allow the forearm and stick to return to Position 2 after the sound is made.

Manufactured Strokes Check Points

1. Tap:
 - a. Stroke begins in Position 1.
 - b. Forearm does not move before, during or after stroke is made.
 - c. Hand remains in Position 1 after the sound is heard.
 - d. Drop hand gently from 2-4 inch height.
2. Up:
 - a. Stroke begins in Position 1.
 - b. Forearm does not move before sound is heard.
 - c. The elbow does not move before, during or after the stroke is made.
 - d. The player's shoulder does not move before, during or after the stroke is made.

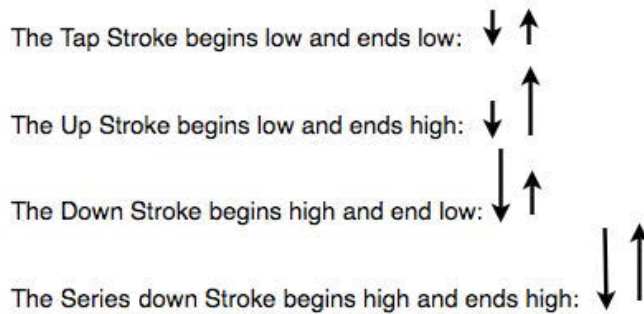
- e. The forearm-wrist angle remains the same in Position 2 as in Position 1.
- f. The hand remains in Position 2 (as preparation for a Down stroke to follow in that particular hand).

3. Down:

- a. Check correctness of Position 2 before executing stroke.
- b. If both sticks were in Position 2 simultaneously they would still meet at a 90-degree angle.
- c. Position 2: the stick is only slightly past a perpendicular angle to the floor.
- d. Do not move shoulder, head or body trunk in the execution of this stroke.
- e. The forearm drops hard and quickly to produce sound; it does not float into Position 1.
- f. The wrist drops only so far as its placement in Position 1, the stick and hand only continue to fall to produce the sound. (Imagine a shelf upon which the wrist can land, forcing its sudden stop in proper position).
- g. The stick remains in Position 1 after the sound is heard. (This stroke is for isolated accented strokes.)

4. Series Down:

- a. The check points for the Down Stroke as above apply for this stroke except for (g): Instead, the stick remains in Position 2 after the sound is heard and the stick has been correctly returned to this position. (This stroke is for the consecutive execution of accented strokes with the same hand.)



It is extremely important that the student develop a “grooved swing” for these four motions. They are the only arm and hand motions used in the playing techniques to be presented. They must be developed at the beginning with great care and attention to detail (independently of each other) before any attempt is made to combine them. The beginner must practice one hand at a time, one stroke at a time.

After a reasonable “grooved swing” has been developed for each stroke, refinement of the smaller, less specially developed muscles of the hand and fingers should begin. This refinement can begin through the use of these four isolated strokes.

In the execution of these strokes, particular attention should now be given to the strength with which the fingers grip the stick at the moment it strikes the playing surface. This is not to suggest any variation to the placement of the fingers around the pivot point, but rather whether the stick is held with a tight grip or a loose one.

A tight grip will help to produce a stiff looking and feeling stroke, allowing for no stick resonance, a staccato stroke.

A loose grip produces a more fluid looking and feeling stroke, allowing for natural stick resonance, the snare drummer’s legato stroke.

6. PRELIMINARY EXERCISES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF "M" TECHNIQUE

After the student has developed a reasonable "grooved swing," these Manufactured ("M") strokes should be combined in these steady-pulse preliminary exercises.

Preliminary M Stroke Exercise 1

This exercise is for the development of the individual hands through the execution of the four M strokes, in varying sequences at a steady pulse rate.

1. Establish a metronome marking of MM=55.
2. Count the pulses from 1-8.
 - a. Execute with one hand (R or L) the M strokes -- one stroke per pulse -- in this sequence:
pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
stroke: D t t t t t t u
 - b. Repeat this sequence sufficiently to establish its comfortable, smooth execution.
 - c. Execute items (a) and (b) with other hand.
3. Count a pulse group of 1-7.
 - a. Execute with one hand the M strokes -- one stroke per pulse -- in this sequence:
pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
stroke: D t t t t t u
 - b. Repeat this sequence sufficiently to establish its comfortable, smooth execution.
 - c. Execute items (a) and (b) with other hand.
4. Count a pulse group of 1-6.
(Continue as above)
pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6
stroke: D t t t t u

Preliminary M Stroke Exercise 2

This exercise is for the development of coordination between the hands through the execution of the M strokes in varying sequences at a steady pulse rate. It presents the further application of the first principle of stroking as begun in Exercise 1.

1. Establish a metronome pulse of MM=55.
2. Count pulses from 1-8.
 - a. Execute with alternating hands the M strokes -- one stroke per pulse -- in this sequence:
pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
hand: R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
stroke: D t t t t t u t D t t t t t u
 - b. Repeat this sequence to establish its comfortable, smooth execution.
3. Count the pulses from 1-7.
 - a. Execute with alternate hands, the M strokes (one stroke per pulse) in this sequence:
pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
hand: R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
stroke: D t t t t u t D t t t t u t
 - b. Repeat this sequence to establish its comfortable, smooth execution.
4. Count the pulses from 1-6.
 - a. Execute with alternate hands, the M. strokes in this sequence:
pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6
hand: R L R L R L R L R L R L
stroke: D t t t u t D t t t u t
 - b. Repeat this sequence as needed.
5. Continue in this manner (decreasing the number of pulses by one at each step) until each pulse is a Series-down stroke (see next page).

Preliminary M Stroke Exercise 2 (Summary)

(repeat)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
D t t t t u t D t t t t u t

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
L R L R L R L R L R L R L R
D t t t u t D t t t u t

1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6
R L R L R L R L R L R L
D t t t u t D t t t u t

1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5
L R L R L R L R L R
D t t u t D t t u t

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
R L R L R L R L
D t u t D t u t

1 2 3 1 2 3
L R L R L R
D u t D u t

1 2 1 2
R L R L
Du t Du t

1 2
L R
Du Du

In each step of this exercise, it is the number of strokes being executed at a steady pulse rate that changes, not the number of strokes per pulse.

The beginner should not attempt a speed of more than MM=60: the considerations of form are of primary importance. This is a form exercise, not a speed drill.

Both of these exercises may be practiced (but only after the stroking motions are comfortable and smooth) with these variations:

1. All strokes staccato.
2. All strokes legato.
3. D strokes staccato -- t, u=legato.
4. D strokes legato -- t, u=staccato.

7. PLAYING TECHNIQUES

THE BOUNCE STROKE TECHNIQUE

The bounce stroke technique consists of only two strokes that allow for controlled performance of all figures requiring two or more soft, unaccented sounds with a single hand motion.

These two strokes are named:

1. The Tap-bounce stroke
2. The Up-bounce stroke

These strokes are variations of two already presented in the M Stroke Technique: Tap Stroke & Up Stroke (see p. 19). The Down and Series down strokes are not used in the Bounce Technique.

THE TAP-BOUNCE STROKE

1. Assume position 1 (with stick beads 4 inches above playing surface).
2. Use a legato stroke (very loose grip, with fingers 1, 3, 4 slightly off stick).
 - a. Drop hand (not wrist!) gently, allowing the bead of the stick to strike the playing surface.
 - b. Rebound naturally until all further stick motions (rebounds) stop.

If the stick is being held properly (both hand position and pivot point correct) the stick should bounce in the same manner, with the same rate of accelerando and diminuendo in the sound.

- c. The hand returns to Position 1 after all sounds have stopped.

Practice this stroke one hand at a time, taking plenty of time between each stroke in order that all considerations of form are observed.

CONTROLLING THE NUMBER OF BOUNCES PER STROKE (HANDS SEPARATELY)

Execute a Tap-bounce stroke as above, but:

1. Return the hand to Position 1 after four sounds have been heard (the stroke proper and three rebounds), therefore stopping any further sounds (but preparing the hand for the immediate execution of any type of stroke but a Down stroke).
2. Return the hand to Position 1 after three sounds have been heard (the stroke proper, and two rebounds) stopping further sounds.
3. Return the hand to Position 1 after two sounds have been heard, (the stroke proper, and one rebound).

THE UP-BOUNCE STROKE

The student should not attempt this stroke until he can execute #3 above (return hand to Position 1 after two sounds) with facility.

1. Assume Position 1 (with stick beads 4 inches above playing surface).
2. Execute a Tap-bounce stroke immediately as above in #3 but:
 - a. Allow the stick bead to continue rising past Position 1, leading the forearm until
 - b. The forearm is almost perpendicular to the floor, and the stick, hand, and arm are in Position 2.
 - c. The stick remains in Position 2 ready for the immediate execution of either a Down stroke or a Series-down stroke.

Practice this stroke slowly with one hand at a time, taking plenty of time between each stroke, in order that all considerations of form are observed.

In the exercises to follow, these new strokes are identified with these letters:

1. t = Tap-bounce stroke.
2. u = Up-bounce stroke.

8. PRELIMINARY EXERCISES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF "B" TECHNIQUE

After the student has developed a reasonable "grooved swing" for these two stroking variations, they should be combined with the M strokes in these steady-pulse Preliminary Exercises.

Preliminary B Stroke Exercise 1

This exercise is for the development of the individual hands through the execution of the strokes in varying sequences at a steady pulse rate.

1. Establish a metronome speed of MM=55.
2. Count pulses from 1-8.
 - a. Execute with one hand, the strokes indicated -- one stroke per pulse -- in this sequence.

pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 stroke: D t t t t t t u
 sound:



The stroke and rebound should produce two sounds in quick succession (with a spacing of approximately 4 to 2 between hand motion and tap sounds).

pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 sound:



not!

pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

stroke: D t t t t t t u

sound:



Remember that the D is a single loud sound. D is never, at this point, a bounced stroke.

Be careful that u is no louder (or softer) than t.

3. Repeat this sequence to establish its comfortable, smooth execution.
 - a. Execute this sequence with other hand.
4. Count pulse groups 1-7.
 - a. Execute with one hand the strokes indicated - one stroke per pulse - in this sequence.

pulse: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

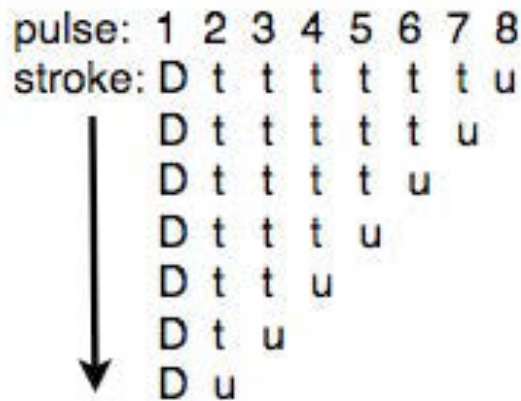
stroke: D t t t t t u

sound:



- b. Repeat this sequence to establish its comfortable, smooth execution.
- 5. Continue in this manner (decreasing the number of pulses by one at each step) until two strokes remain: D, u. (Remember D is never bounced!).

Preliminary B Stroke Exercise 1 (Summary)



In each step of this exercise, it is the number of strokes being executed at a steady pulse rate that changes, not the number of strokes per pulse.

The beginner should not attempt a speed of more than MM=60. This is a form exercise, not a speed drill.

Preliminary B Stroke Exercise 1 (Variations)

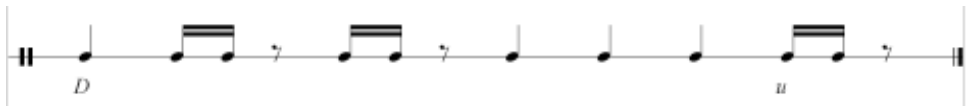
The student is encouraged to invent his own sequential patterns (using all the strokes so far presented) such as those on the following page.

Eds. Note: Play them with one hand and then with the other hand, taking care that all strokes are given equal time.

first — any number — last
 pulse: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
 stroke: D t t t t t u



D t t t t t u



D t t t t t u



D t t t t t u



THE LONG ROLL

The long roll is the percussionist's sustained tone. It is not, obviously, a truly sustained sound, but is rather an imitation of one produced by a rapid succession of sounds whose dynamic and rhythmic evenness create the illusion of length.

Among teachers, the long roll has perennially been considered to be the foundation stone of the snare drummer's technique. Among laymen, the long roll represents the most familiar and spectacular achievement of any budding or accomplished percussionist. Among non-percussionist teachers, the long roll stands as one of the most difficult rudiments to present in spite of the apparent simplicity of its construction. The simplicity of this well known but misunderstood pattern (two strokes with each hand performed in alternation as rapidly as possible) is disarming. Rudiments with more complicated rhythmic and stick sequence patterns than found in the roll generally demand and receive more careful study and preparation from the teacher.

Consequently, this provides the teacher with more corrective resources for these complex patterns than he has for the roll. Yet it is in the command of the long roll techniques that the student gains the wherewithal to handle the other figures with utmost control in their execution.

The execution and control of the two main types of stroke (M and B), which have been presented, will be gained more easily in the roll than anywhere else. Their development can be logically pursued and then applied within the framework of the long roll.

Preliminary B Stroke Exercise 2 (the beginning long roll)

This exercise is for the development of the coordination between the hands through the execution of the B strokes as applied to the long roll.

1. Assume Position 1 (stick heads 2-4 inches above playing surface).

2. Execute with right hand a Tap-bounce stroke. Allow the stick to rebound freely until all sounds stop.
3. Execute with left hand a Tap-bounce stroke. Allow the stick to rebound freely until all sounds stop.
4. Continue in this manner alternating the hands slowly. All sounds must stop before the next stroke is made.
5. Increase gradually the speed of the hands, retaining all sounds with each stroke in each hand.

As speed increases, the last few bounces from one hand will continue as the other stroke begins to sound.

6. Increase hand speed further. With more speed, the last few sounds of each stroke will be cut short by the hand's quicker return to Position 1, as preparation for a new stroke begins.
7. Stop these last few bounces from sounding by preparing for a new stroke (return to Position 1) as soon as the opposite hand's stroke has begun to sound.
8. Continue this gradual accelerando until only two sounds from each stroke are heard. (One hand motion equals two sounds.)

An ideal roll could be illustrated in this manner with evenly spaced sounds grouped two per alternate hand motions:

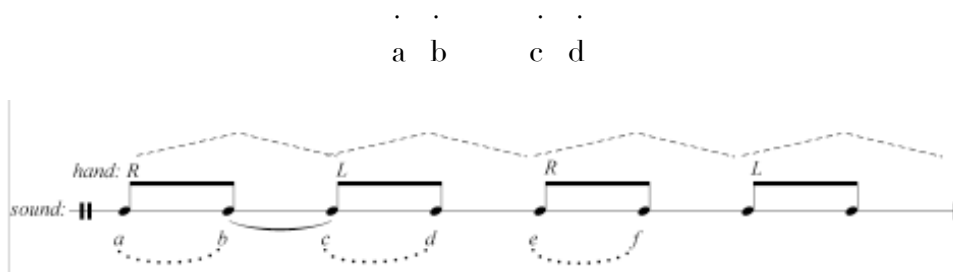


The distance in time between b-c is exactly equal to the distance between a-b, c-d, and all other successive sounds.

ROLL FAULTS

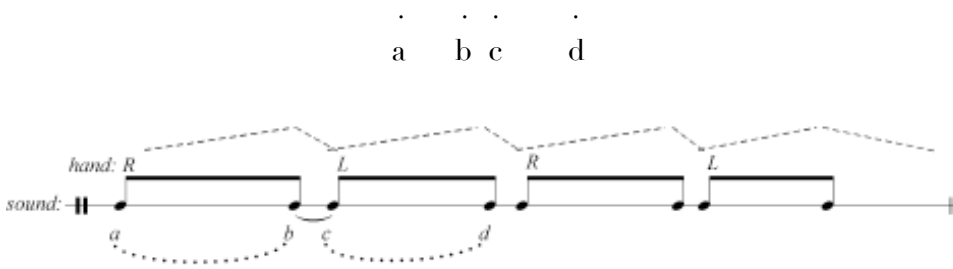
There are four common Rhythmic Roll Faults. They are listed below, along with an analysis of their specific problems and a capsule diagnosis and solution.

Roll Fault 1



- problem:** distance between b-c is too large or distance between a-b is too small.
- diagnosis:** hand speed is too slow for bounce speed or bounce speed is too fast for hand speed.
- solution:** retain bounce speed, increase hand speed or retain hand speed, decrease bounce speed.

Roll Fault 2



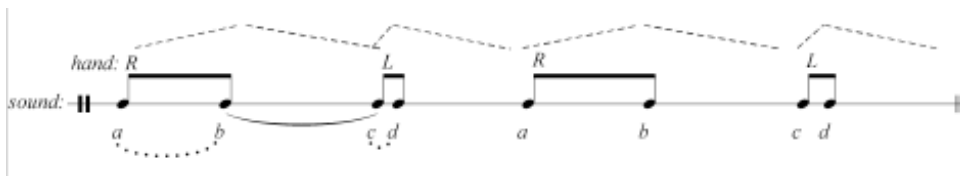
- problem:** distance between b-c is too small, or distance between a-b is too large.
- diagnosis:** bounce speed is too slow for hand speed, or hand speed is too fast for bounce speed.
- solution:** retain hand speed and increase bounce speed, or retain bounce speed and decrease hand speed.

Roll Fault 3



- problem:** distances a-b-c-d good, but inconstant d-a.
- diagnosis:** hand speed uneven.
- solution:** even up hand speed (will probably result in Roll Fault #1).

Roll Fault 4



- problem:** distance from c-d not consistent with a-b; b-c.
- diagnosis:** L strokes quicker than R.
- solution:** retain hand speed, slow quick bounce speed, or retain hand speed, increase slow bounce speed (will result in Roll Fault #1).

Students should refer to the section on “Controlling the speed of bounces per stroke” (see p. 39) in their attempt to correct their own particular Roll Fault.

The free drop from Position 1 is easier for the beginner to control and should be preferred to the varied force method for changing stick rebound speed.

Increasing bounce speed

The development of the bounce technique as applied to the long roll involves an analysis of the stroke and rebound to discover what elements control its dynamic and speed potential.

If we take a ball and drop it to the floor from a specific height several times, we will discover that (all things being equal) it rebounds to a point somewhat lower than the original point each time but always rebounding to the same point. Similarly, it will take the same amount of time to rebound to this point and will strike with the same amount of force and, upon falling back to the floor, will hit with the same amount of force each time, this second force being somewhat less than that of the original drop.

Pursuing this with a freely falling ball, we will see that by raising the height of the drop, we will increase the amount of time it takes for the ball to strike, rebound and hit again. Conversely, we will observe that by lowering the drop point, we will decrease the amount of time consumed. Greater height will cause the ball to strike with greater force and a lesser height will cause the ball to strike with a lesser force.

For the following exercises, it is sufficient to note that in view of these principles, it is still of extreme importance that the student concentrate on the considerations of form as presented so that “all-things-being-equal” has validity in application. To put it simply: execute each type of stroke exactly like every other one of its type.

Controlling the Speed of Bounces per Stroke

Control of the speed of a stick's rebound will be of as great importance to the student as his ability to control the number of them. When executing the long roll, the student will find this latter consideration of even greater importance. (see Roll Fault p. 36-37).

Increasing the speed of bounces

1. From Position 1 gradually lower the drop point and allow the stick to fall and rebound freely in hand.
2. From Position 1 gradually increase the force of the initial stroke (move hand more quickly) and allow the stick to rebound only to the point that a stationary hand position will allow. (Pressure toward front of hand, first finger.)

Decreasing the speed of bounces

1. From Position 1 gradually raise the drop point and allow the stick to fall and rebound freely.
2. From Position 1 gradually decrease the force of the initial stroke (move hand more slowly) and allow the stick to rebound as freely as possible. (No pressure at front of hand.)

Controlling the Speed of Bounces per Stroke (Summary)

1. H- = faster rebound H: Position 1 (height)
2. F+ = F: Force (speed)
3. H+ = slower rebound
4. F-

Long Roll Check Points:

1. Even hand speed
2. No accents
3. Even bounce speed
4. One hand motion = two sounds

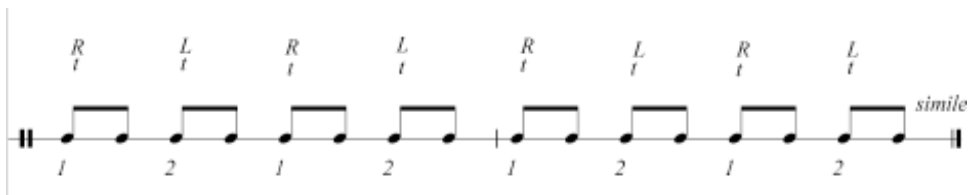
A free drop from six inches produces a stroke and rebound, which, by projections, produces 240 sounds per minute. Therefore, a single hand speed of MM=120 should produce an ideal Rudimental Roll, since this ideal Rudimental Roll is produced with one hand motion producing two sounds. A comfortable bounce roll fulfilling these check points should result at a hand speed of c. MM=120.

ROLL DRILLS

The following roll drills should be used by the student after a comfortable bounce roll has been developed. They are for the further coordination between the hands through the execution of the B strokes as applied to the long roll.

Roll Drill 1

1. Establish a comfortable long roll (hand speed c. MM=120)
2. Count each hand stroke in sequence 1-2:



3. Count each hand stroke in sequence 1-2-3:



4. Count each hand stroke in sequence 1-2-3-4:



5. Continue counting in groups as above (adding a count at each step) until a sequence of 1-8 is established.
 - a. Repeat each sequence sufficiently to establish its smooth execution.
 - b. There should be no breaks in the flow of the roll between counting groups.
 - c. There should be no accents heard on any of the counts in any sequence.

Roll Drill 2

1. Establish a comfortable long roll (hand speed c. MM=120).
2. As in Roll Drill #1, count a sequence of 1-8:



attaca step 3

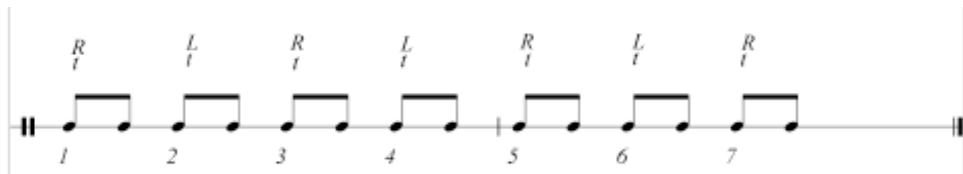
(2nd time: step 4)

3. Play eight counts hand speed only (no rebound):



repeat step 2

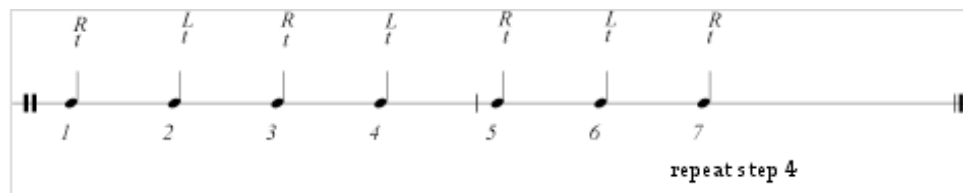
4. Count each hand stroke in sequence of 1-7:



attaca step 5

(2nd time: step 6)

5. Play seven counts hand speed only (no rebound):



6. Continue counting as above (a sequence of tap-bounce strokes followed by a like number of t strokes) dropping one count at each step, until a sequence of 1-2 is established.
 - a. Repeat each sequence sufficiently to establish its smooth execution.
 - b. There should be no break in the flow of the hand strokes between counting groups.
 - c. There should be no accents heard on any of the counts in any sequence.

Roll Drill 3

1. As in Roll Drill #2, count a sequence of 1-8.
2. Play full count of eight t's and begin a series of eight t's but substitute a rest for the eighth single stroke:



attaca step 3

3. Play full count of eight t's and begin a series of eight t's, but substitute a rest for the seventh and eighth single strokes:



- Continue as above playing a full count of eight t's followed by a series of t's the number of which will decrease by one at each step until a single one remains:



Keep the hands moving through rests but do not make sounds.

- Repeat this drill in the same manner, but begin with a sequence of seven t's alternating with seven t's.
- Continue in this manner through a series of two t's alternating with two t's.

Notice that the odd sequence's t strokes begin on the hand opposite from the one that began the series of t strokes:

The student may, of course, repeat any step of this drill to insure its smooth execution before continuing.

Roll Drill 4

- As in Roll Drill #3, count a sequence of 1-8.
- Play full count of eight t's and one single stroke t but omit rest as before and begin immediately another series of eight t's.



Repeat this sequence sufficiently to establish its smooth execution.

3. Play full count of seven t's and one single stroke t but omit rests and begin immediately another series of seven t's.

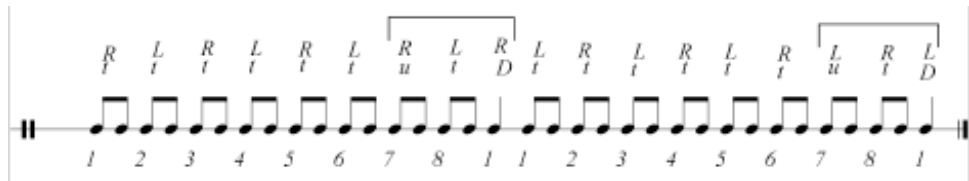


Repeat this sequence sufficiently to establish its smooth execution.

4. Continue in this manner of alternating sequences of t strokes with one single stroke, through a count of 1-2.

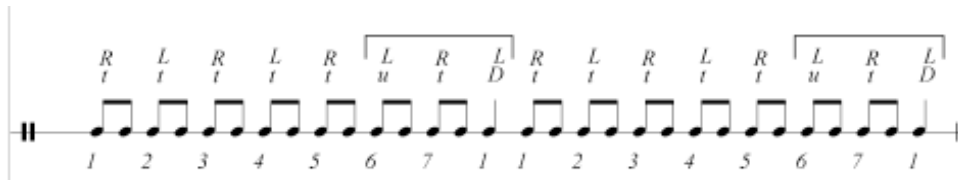
Roll Drill 5

1. As in Roll Drill #4 count a sequence of 1-8.
2. Execute sequence of eight counts as in Roll Drill #4 with this stroking variation:



Repeat this sequence to insure its smooth execution.

3. Execute a sequence of seven t strokes and one single stroke with this stroking variation:



Repeat this sequence to insure its smooth execution.

4. Continue in this manner executing Roll Drill #4 with this stroking variation at each step.

RUDIMENTAL ROLLS

1. In rudimental-exhibition performance, the roll is a rhythm. A rudimental solo is a march-like movement based upon the roll and single stroke patterns traditionally known as Rudiments. They are in 2/4 or 6/8 time.

Eds. Note: Today snare drum solos containing rudiments can be more complex in form and structure than was common when The Drum Tutor was written.

2. The hand speed of rolls is equal to the subdivision of the pulse.
3. Therefore, a rudimental roll is a sustained sound with a rhythmic background.
4. Rudimental rolls almost always end with an accent.
5. They all end with the strokes u t D, and should be thought of as a slight crescendo.
6. They differ only in how many strokes precede their final u t D. (See Roll Drill #5).
7. They are traditionally designated by the number of sounds each particular length roll produces. These sounds are traditionally called “strokes;” however, strokes in this context (i.e. rolls) should not be confused with strokes or stroking motions as applied to hand movements.

A table of the NARD Rudimental Rolls is presented below along with their rudimental time values for both 2/4 and 6/8.

	+ + + + + +	+ + D	2/4	6/8
a)				
b)				
c)				
d)				
e)				
f)				
g)				
h)				
i)				

**This “3 stroke” roll is a term not used traditionally in Rudimental terminology. This figure is better known as a “drag” or “ruff.”*

The “10 stroke” roll is the only even-numbered one listed by the NARD. Notice that it ends with two accents -- one before, the other on the pulse -- and is stroked differently from the others.

Eds. Note: NARD is no longer relevant but the rolls listed above exist and have existed in manuscripts since the 19th century: “America’s NARD Drum Solos,” (Ludwig Music Publishing Company, Cleveland, 1955), contains the “Standard 26 American Drum Rudiments” compiled by the National Association of Rudimental Drummers founding members in 1933-34. Rudiment No. 8 is the Ruff and No. 9 is the Single Drag. In the PAS list, the Ruff is called “Drag” and the Single Drag is called “Single Drag Tap.” The word “Ruff” does not appear in the PAS List of Rudiments.

ROLL NOTATION

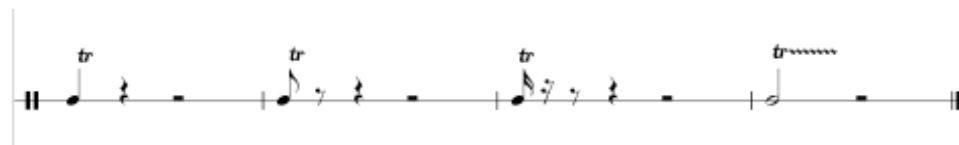
Roll notation is generally confusing, misleading and inconsistent. These two methods of notation are the most frequently encountered:

1.



- a. The slashes through the note stem may be considered an attempt to be mathematically correct.
- b. The slashes through the note stem may be confused with an abbreviation.

2.



- a. Unusual in Rudimental work.
- b. Most often found in “concert” work, particularly for timpani.

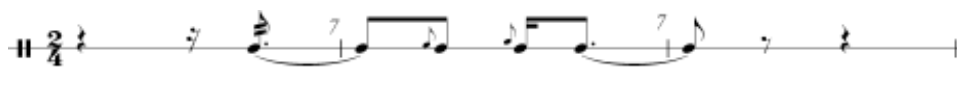
3. Rudimental Rolls are frequently written out in this manner:



4. In some cases the desired number of strokes is indicated:



5. Rudimental Rolls are, however, most often executed in a manner alien to their notation, no matter what form it takes.
 - a. Both examples 3 & 4 above will be executed as if notation were:



Eds. Note: Contrary to what Benson wrote here, seven stroke rolls are frequently performed as eighth notes, having a triplet background.

6. Few people writing Rudimental solos bother with a very exact notation of these short roll patterns. The most notable exception at present is Field Music Director John S. Pratt from West Point.

Eds. Note: Benson referred here to Pratt's "14 Modern Contest Solos," (Belwin/Mills Publishing Corp., 1959), a work Benson promulgated by having it included in the New York State Music Teacher Association's list of required snare drum literature. Pratt retired from the West Point band in 1969.

All short rolls should be practiced so that the student will be able to begin and end any of them with either hand. In strict Rudimental performance, however, the seven, eleven and fifteen stroke rolls always begin with L (ending R).

Short Rolls in Series

1. A series of seven, eleven or fifteen stroke rolls will always begin L, which is called "non-alternation."

2. A series of five, nine, thirteen or seventeen stroke rolls will begin first with one hand and then with the other.

In any type of performance other than a rudimental-exhibition style, a roll is to be as sustained a sound as possible and must be of a particular duration. Its execution has nothing to do with tempo or meter. The roll's quality in such a case is dependent upon its rhythmic and dynamic evenness.

THE LONG ROLL: OPEN TO CLOSED

While in rudimental performance and/or in certain practice situations during the development of the long roll, it is desirable to hear each tap of the stick separately and clearly; in general, ensemble performance calls for the long, smooth sound of the sustained tone. The study of the Long Roll: Open to Closed provides the student with practice material for this purpose. For the beginner, however, the purpose of the rudiment is to provide for the further development of both the M and B techniques. The Long Roll: Open to Closed is the traditional method of presenting the long roll. It is not given in this text for that purpose. Instead serves a twofold function: first, as a useful rudimental figure for hand dexterity; and second, as an exercise for the further development of the desired smooth, light sound of the sustained tone. It is this latter consideration that will ultimately be the more important to the student performer.

Before proceeding to an actual step-by-step procedure for teaching this rudiment, let us observe what happens when most beginning percussionists attempt to play the long roll from open to closed as it is usually presented. From this observation we will determine the problems and present solutions, in their order of importance. The complete presentation will be given in a summary (see p. 60-61).

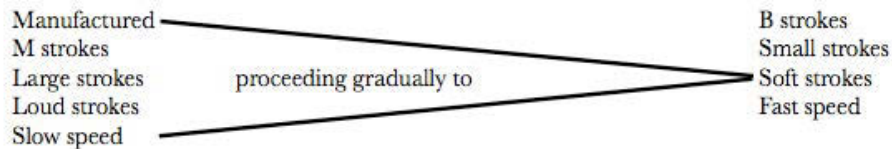
Beginning with two slow, large, loud manufactured strokes with each hand (RRLRLRLRLRL, etc.) the student is told to gradually accelerate until he has reached a rate of speed beyond which he cannot continue. At this point he

must begin to bounce the second stroke of each hand (as a rebound) in order to continue the accelerando to a closed roll speed. It is at this point that several things can be observed:

1. a skip to a much faster speed than the rate of accelerando up to that point would justify;
2. a skip to a lesser dynamic level than the rate of diminuendo up to that point would justify;
3. a combination of 1 and 2 or
4. a complete breakdown of the roll -- an interruption that momentarily (or permanently, in some cases) halts the open to closed progress of the roll.

None of these items is desirable. The “ideal performance” of the open to closed long roll should proceed smoothly, without interruption or any perceptible speeding up and/or dynamic change off line with the established rate of accelerando and diminuendo. This “ideal performance” is presented as a diagram below.

Fig. 1



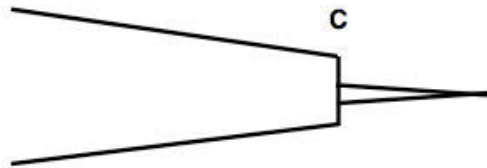
Four elements are present in this diagram:

1. type of stroke
2. size of stroke
3. stroke dynamics
4. stick speed

They are equally important because they are so interrelated, each one dependent on all the others. The progress of the roll from one end of the diagram to the other brings two more considerations that are the result of these elements of dynamics and speed; namely, the rate at which these

elements change and inter-react -- the fate of diminuendo or crescendo in sound and the rate of acceleration or deceleration in stick and hand speed. Were we to diagram the beginner's first attempt it would look like this:

Fig. 2



From these diagrams, and observance of the student, we note that the distortion of the “ideal performance” (Fig. 1) diagram occurs when the student approaches his maximum speed for M strokes and attempts to continue the progress of the open to closed process with B strokes. His problem is a “C”(change).

Fig. 2 would indicate that the student's most obvious fault is his inability to match the speed of his M stroke with that of his B stroke. He cannot manufacture them at the same speed that he can bounce them slowly; his fastest M stroke is too slow for his slowest B strokes. They do not meet at the same speed. This speed distortion, then, is our immediate problem: without the acquisition of an acceleration technique the problem of dynamic control is not pertinent; we must either speed up the M strokes or slow down the B strokes. While it is obvious that to do both would be the best possible solution to our problem, we must begin with one or the other.

Control of the B stroke has been presented elsewhere, and should be further developed (decelerate more) as the student's first step toward the development of the Long Roll: Open to Closed.

The acceleration of the M stroke is the more difficult of the two parts of our solution to the “break” in our Long Roll: Open to Closed. The beginning student may suffer from a lack of that particular kind of coordination needed to play the snare drum roll. What coordination he does have, he is using to its fullest when the maximum speed for the M strokes is reached, and he is therefore probably not very relaxed. With speed as the prime concern at this point (as it should be), it is also probable that details of good form (i.e. hand position, posture, etc.) are being overlooked, and consequently, sacrificed. This single-mindedness of purpose will undoubtedly cause the beginner to use more effort and motion (occasionally less) than is necessary or useful. Either too much or too little motion compounds the difficulties.

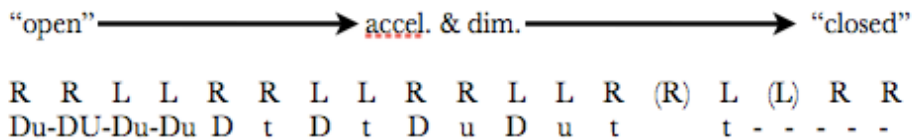
The starting point is clearly in evidence. The mastery of a fast, accurate M stroke technique cannot be gained unless these conditions are relieved through emphasis on, and application of, good form habits. In order for the student to relax, he must first clean up the formal considerations that may have been disregarded. This can only be done when the motion used (stroke size) is limited to the minimum but sufficient amount necessary to produce the desired strokes at the desired speed. In order for the motion to be reduced to this minimum, the problem of coordination is greatest in importance and can only be achieved through thoughtful preparation of each stroke in turn.

To achieve maximum M speed will require that the student concentrate on these items in the order listed.

1. Correct form (grip, hand position, posture, etc.)
 - a. Prepare strokes (see below)
2. Relax:
 - a. Reduce motion (stroke size)

When beginning at the “open” end of the Long Roll: Open to Closed, the strokings gradually change in the following manner:

OPEN TO CLOSED HAND SPEED CHART #1



Relaxation will be possible and more in evidence once these considerations of coordination, stroke size and good form are met. It can be assumed that with proper stroke size and motion control -- operating within good form -- greater speed for the M strokes will result. As a result of this approach to the problem and its solution, within a relatively short period of practice time the student will have a faster or sufficiently fast M stroke speed equal to that of his slowest B strokes. Now that further control over the M and B techniques as applied to the Long Roll: Open to Closed is being developed (i.e., M-faster, B-slower), the student has taken the first step toward the necessary matching of sounds produced by each technique at point “C” (Fig. #2, p. 52). This control of M and B stroke speed does not, however, solve the entire problem of this rhythmic distortion. The other half of the solution concerns the hand speed required for both the M and B techniques at “C.” The student must be able to manufacture two strokes with alternating hands (RRLL, etc.) at the same hand speed tempo as he can execute Bounce strokes with alternating hands. Fig.#3 represents this part of the problem:

Fig. 3



This hand speed at “C” is really the more important factor for the beginner: until the hand speed tempi match, the speed of the resultant sounds (as well as their dynamics levels) cannot be considered.

The M-B Tempo Match Exercise.

1. Establish open roll in tempo of fastest M strokes.
2. Count hand speed tempo in sequence 1-8.

stroke: D u D u D u D u D u D u
 MM: -|| count: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 simile attacca3.

3. On return to “one” begin B strokes at same hand speed tempo. Count in series 1-8.

stroke: t t t t t t t t
 B: -|| count: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 attaca 4.

4. On return to “one” commence M strokes. Continue alternating full count or “eight” double M strokes (D u) with full count of eight B strokes (t) at same hand speed tempo.

This exercise should also be used with other count sequences.

The ability of the student to match his M and B techniques in this manner represents a real solution to the problem encountered at “C.” This solution, however, has within it another problem of considerable difficulty. Its success depends upon the performer’s ability to know precisely the one tempo at which he can successfully execute both M and B strokes at the same hand

speed. If he should miscalculate in the gradual *accelerando* from open to closed and arrive at “C” with a tempo for the M strokes that is slower than the slowest tempo for B strokes he can execute, there is still no solution. There is still a break at ”C”. The student should continue to develop control over both the M and B techniques so that there will exist many tempi at which strokes may be executed.

The extent of this desirable overlap will be easily seen on the student’s Long Roll: Open Closed Hand Speed Chart #2 (see p. 57). The “M-B Tempo Match Exercise” given should be practiced at all these tempi.

Eds. Note: This, then, turns “C” into an AREA, rather than a specific point, at which M strokes can become B strokes.

Teaching Sequence

The student should now begin to keep a written record of his progress in control of the M and B techniques with regard to the resultant hand speed tempo each requires. This record should be kept as follows.

B Technique

1. Establish smooth comfortable Long Roll; count hand speed as in Roll Drill No.1-2 (i.e. “1-2-1-2” etc.)
2. Slow down roll speed as much as possible (sounds must still be rhythmically even B strokes); continue counting hand speed as above.
3. Stop playing but continue to count in the tempo established by this slowest possible, rhythmically even B technique (#2 above).
4. Check this tempo with a metronome and record it. This is the B hand speed tempo.

There is a natural physical limit to how slowly any stick will bounce in a free drop-free rebound manner.

M Technique

1. Commence a slow M stroke “open” Roll (i.e. RLLRR, etc.); count first of each two strokes with each hand as in Roll Drills #1-2.
2. Accelerate strokes until maximum speed for two M strokes with alternating hands is reached. Continue counting.
3. Stop playing but continue to count in the tempo established by this maximum M technique speed.
4. Check this tempo with a metronome and record it. This is the M hand speed tempo.

There is no natural physical limit to how quickly two M strokes can be made with alternating hands.

Below is a chart to record progress toward matching the hand speed tempi of the M and B techniques.

OPEN TO CLOSED HAND SPEED CHART #2

As soon as the student can match the tempi of his M and B techniques (as indicated on his progress chart) the following exercise should be used.

DATE	Hand Speed of M	Hand Speed of B
	quarter note = 96	quarter note = 160
	quarter note = 110	quarter note = 140
	quarter note = 120	quarter note = 120
	quarter note = 132	quarter note = 112
	quarter note =	quarter note =

Although the student may have the facility to execute M and B strokes at the same arm motion tempo, until this time he has been doing so as separate operations. This exercise, requiring the shift from one technique to the other at an equivalent arm motion tempo, focuses attention on the next

characteristic listed in Fig. #1 (p. 51): stroke size. This characteristic will be abbreviated as H, meaning the height from which the stroke is made.

The development of a fast M technique has required the diminution of H, which has probably been coupled with an increase in the amount of stick-to-palm contact: (M+ with H-). The development of a slow B technique has required the augmentation of H, coupled with a decrease in the amount of stick-to-palm contact (B- with H+). When M+ and B- can meet at an equivalent arm motion tempo, the change from one technique to the other requires a change from one stroke size to another, therefore presenting the student with another problem at C.

Problem: The H (height) of M and B is not equivalent at C.

Diagnosis: M+ with H+ (fast strokes with big size).

Cure #1:

1. M+ size must increase, grip must decrease.
(M+ with H-) must become (M+ with H+): fast strokes-big size.
and/or
2. B- size must decrease, grip increase.
(B- with H+) must become (B- with H-): slow strokes-small size.

Cure #2:

1. Increase H of M+ using loose grip, which will produce (M+ with H+).
(Watch form!)
and/or
2. Decrease H of B+ using a firm grip, which will produce (B- with H-).

This second cure is more theoretical than practical because, as stated earlier (Controlling Speed of Bounces, pg. 39), a free drop from H- can only produce B. Therefore it becomes apparent that the solution of the problem created by M+ and B- not meeting at an equivalent H can only be accomplished through application of Cure #2 above. (Increase H of M+ using a loose grip).

The final characteristic contributing to the break at C in the Long Roll: Open to Closed is one of loudness. The loudness of the stroke sound is dependent upon stroke size. That is all loud sounds are made with large motions, and all soft sounds would require small ones. Therefore, the M technique is on the loud side, while the B technique lies opposite some middle ground at which they must meet in this Long Roll: Open to Closed.

The student must strive to produce softer sounds using the M technique and louder sounds using the B technique at an equivalent arm motion tempo. The following exercise will be useful toward that end.



1. Forte and 2. Piano.

Dynamic level must match for both techniques.

The student will need to discover for himself those particular combinations of stroke size and grip required to execute this study at all combinations of speed and dynamics. (fast-loud; fast-soft; slow-loud; slow-soft). Other counting sequences may be used as well.

After control over a steady dynamic level has been accomplished, the following variation of this exercise should be used. (All tempi!).



1. Piano....crescendo.....poco.....a.....poco....a....Forte
2. Forte.....diminuendo.....poco.....a.....poco...a....Piano

For the advanced student, these variations will be useful:

1. Piano....crescendo.....Forte....diminuendo.....Piano
2. Forte.....diminuendo....Piano....crescendo.....Forte

Repeat all of the above.

Other counting sequences may be used as well.

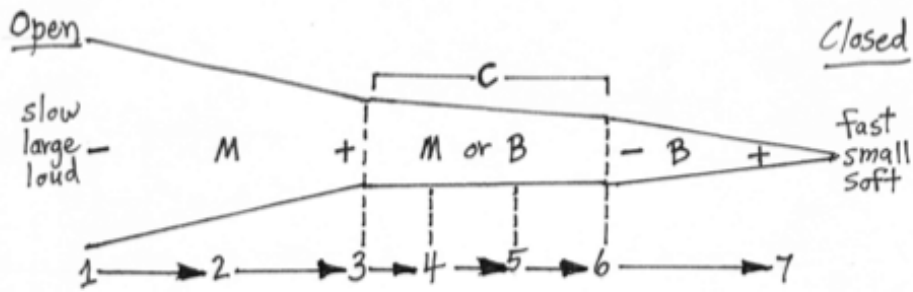
The student should note which of these characteristics he has the least technical overlap so that additional attention to its further development may be made, and he can use what overlap does exist in this weaker characteristic for his target at c. Because of this particular characteristic's more limited margin for error, it must be used as that point in the Long Roll: Open to Closed around which the other characteristics must change.

Long Roll: Open to Closed: Summary

1. Commence open roll (two slow, large, loud M strokes with alternating hands).
2. Accelerando to M+ tempo.
3. Count arm motions, assign them rhythmic value.
4. Change to a high, gentle free drop (and rebound) with loose grip maintaining arm motion tempo (i.e. B- tempo).

5. Remain at this speed until comfortable, rhythmic roll using B strokes with alternating hands is firmly established.
6. Continue acceleration of arm motion tempo (continue to lower H).
7. Increase arm motion tempo until roll is completely closed (two fast, small, soft B strokes with alternating hands).

OPEN TO CLOSED HAND SPEED CHART #3



9. ROLL TEXTURE (Density)

While in rudimental-exhibition performance and certain practice situations it is desirable to hear each individual tap of the stick in the execution of the long roll, the ensemble performer must have at his command a sustained tone with control of a wide variety of dynamics (loudness) and textures (rebound speed).

Texture is a term used to indicate the inner quality of the individual parts making up the roll, referring to the texture of cloth as having a tight or loose weave.

It is best explained as a relationship between “arm stroke tempo” (AST) and stick rebound speed/number (B) (i.e., the number and speed of rebounds allowed for each alternating arm stroke). It is sometimes referred to as a roll density.

There are four basic combinations of arm/stick speed:

1. Slow arms-slow sticks (few rebounds): AST-/B-
(This is the basic rudimental/exhibition style roll.)
2. Slow arms-fast sticks (many rebounds): AST-/B+
3. Fast arms-fast sticks (many rebounds): AST+/B+
4. Fast arms-slow sticks (few rebounds): AST+/B-

It is control over these four combinations that will provide the student with the facility to perform the Long Roll: Crescendo-Diminuendo (see p. 68).

Eds. Note: These should not be confused with the “four common roll faults” (see p. 36-37).

After the student has developed the Long Roll: Open to Closed, that he will have at his command the necessary control for the variations of roll texture so important to the ensemble performer.

The concept of variations in roll texture can be introduced by means of the exercises to follow.

ROLL TEXTURE EXERCISES

1. Duplet Texture
 - A. Establish smooth, comfortable long roll (AST c.120).
 - i. Count arm strokes “1-2.”
 - ii. Keep grip loose so that sticks bounce slowly (i.e., 1:2 ratio).
 - B. Tighten grip slightly allowing for a greater number of rebounds per stroke. (Do not change AST!)

2. Triplet Texture
 - A. Establish smooth comfortable long roll (AST c.120).
 - i. Count arm strokes “1-2.”
 - ii. Keep background tempo, but increase AST so as to execute triplets on each pulse.
 - iii. Keep grip loose so that the sticks bounce slowly (i.e. 1:2 ratio)
 - B. Tighten grip slightly allowing for a greater number of rebounds per stroke. (Do not change AST!)

3. Quadruple Texture)
 - A. Establish smooth comfortable long roll (AST c.120).
 - i. Count arm strokes “1-2.”
 - ii. Keep background tempo, but increase AST so as to execute four alternating strokes per pulse.
 - iii. Keep grip loose so that the sticks bounce slowly (i.e.1:2 ratio).
 - B. Tighten grip slightly, allowing for a greater number of rebounds per stroke. (Do not change AST!)

4. Quintuple Texture
 - A. Establish smooth comfortable long roll (AST c.120).
 - i. Count arm strokes “1-2.”

- ii. Keep background tempo, but increase AST so as to execute five alternating strokes per pulse.
 - iii. Keep grip loose so that they sticks bounce slowly (i.e.1:2 ratio).
- B. Tighten grip slightly allowing for the maximum number of rhythmically and dynamically even rebounds per stroke. (Do not change AST!)

These four basic texture variation exercises should be practiced at other tempi, both faster and slower (e.g., 92, 116, 132, 157) and at all dynamic levels so that the student can discover those particular combinations of arm stroke tempo and rebound speed/number necessary to produce the most effective and useful sustained sound at any particular dynamic level.

Using exercises as a basis, a summary of some possible combinations follows below. It will become apparent that not all of the combinations possible will result in a desirable or useful sustained sound. The most suitable combinations have been marked with an asterisk.

MM	92	92	92
rebound speed/number	closed	closed	closed
volume	FF	MF	PP
stroke rhythm	<u>duplet</u> triplet quadruple quintuple*	<u>duplet</u> triplet quadruple* quintuple	<u>duplet</u> triplet* quadruple quintuple

A few general observations are given below so that the student will have some criteria upon which to base his critical judgment concerning the usefulness of the various possible combinations.

<p>92 open duplets PP</p>	<p>=</p>	<p>The individual sounds that result are too easily analyzed by the ear and will not give the impression of a sustained sound; there are too many gaps in the sound.</p>
<p>152 closed FF quintuplets</p>	<p>=</p>	<p>The arm stroke tempo is too fast to allow for an even dynamic to exist between the initial stroke and rebounds; the performer has to work too hard for its execution and the resultant sound will probably be jerky and nervous.</p>

In general, the following considerations will be found regarding the relationship between AST stick rebound speed/number and loudness desired.

1. At low dynamic levels, the hands move slowly and many rebounds are allowed by means of a loose grip with no force (closed): slow arms-fast sticks: AST-/B+ = PP.
2. At high dynamic levels, the hands move quickly with few rebounds allowed through a firm grip with force (open): fast arms-slow sticks: AST+/B- = FF.

The performer must be able to control the roll's dynamic level without affecting its texture.

Through systematic approach suggested, some observations can be made regarding roll texture in relation to dynamic level as required by the Long Roll: Crescendo-Diminuendo. (see p. 68).

As the AST and rebounds of a concert roll may have no relationship to the prevailing tempo, the student with a background primarily of the rudimental/exhibition style, will find it difficult to adjust this AST to produce the best (most useful) tone at the proper dynamic level regardless of the prevailing stroke speed. Exercises such as the following should be used to help “get the feel” of sudden shifts in AST as required in concert performance:

2/4

AST: a. $\overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ Fast Tempi
 b. $\overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ $\overset{3}{\text{♩}}$ To Be Avoided!
 c. $\overset{6}{\text{♩}}$ $\overset{6}{\text{♩}}$ Slow Tempi
 d. $\overset{6}{\text{♩}}$ $\overset{6}{\text{♩}}$ Slow Tempi

a. ♩ = 60
 b. ♩ = 94
 c. ♩ = 120
 d. etc.

a. pp
 b. p
 c. mf
 d. etc.

Five staves of musical notation. The first three staves are in 6/8 time, and the last two are in 5/8 time. Each staff shows a sequence of eighth notes, followed by a slur over a final note with an accent. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns and slurs.

mm = 120

Musical staff in 4/4 time. It begins with four eighth notes with sharp signs. This is followed by a roll exercise consisting of two groups of six notes each, each group containing three right-hand (R) and three left-hand (L) notes. The word *simile* is written at the end of the roll.

(fast arm-firm grip-many rebounds per stroke)

Musical staff in 4/4 time. It begins with four eighth notes with sharp signs. This is followed by a roll exercise consisting of two groups of six notes each, each group containing one right-hand (R) and five left-hand (L) notes. The word *simile* is written at the end of the roll.

(fast arm-loose grip-few rebounds per stroke)

Musical staff in 4/4 time. It begins with four eighth notes with sharp signs. This is followed by a roll exercise consisting of two groups of six notes each, each group containing two right-hand (R) and four left-hand (L) notes. The word *simile* is written at the end of the roll.

Musical staff in 4/4 time. It begins with four eighth notes with sharp signs. This is followed by a roll exercise consisting of two groups of six notes each, each group containing three right-hand (R) and three left-hand (L) notes. The word *simile* is written at the end of the roll.

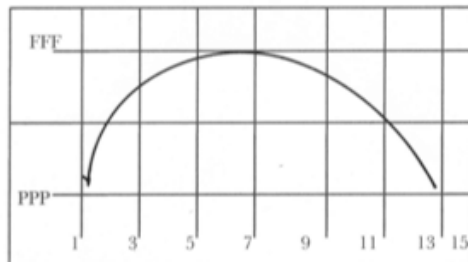
The faster the single strokes that lead into the roll, the greater difficulty encountered at the commencement of the roll.

THE LONG ROLL: CRESCENDO-DIMINUENDO

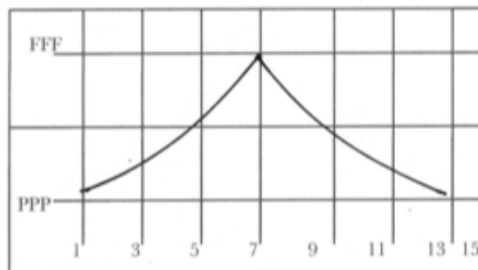
It is the Long Roll: Crescendo-Diminuendo that separates the professionals from the amateurs: a tight smooth long roll that begins PPP and crescendos for a slow 8 or 10 counts to FFF and returns with an equal number of counts to PPP.

The problem is twofold:

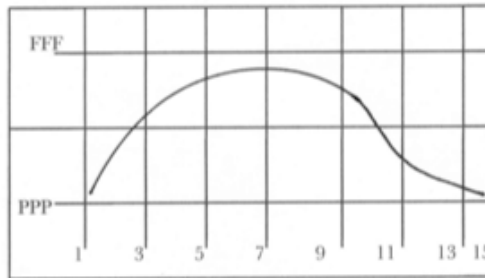
1. The crescendo and diminuendo must be steady and equivalent as in the following diagram.



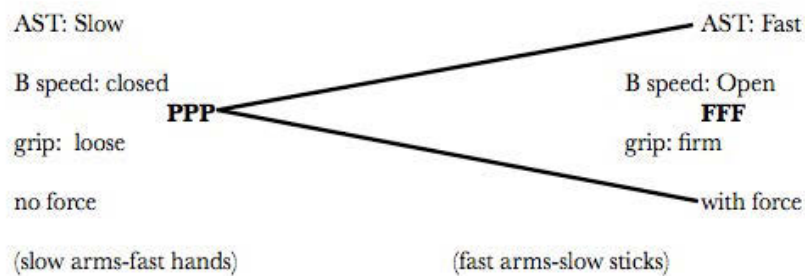
It should not appear as this:



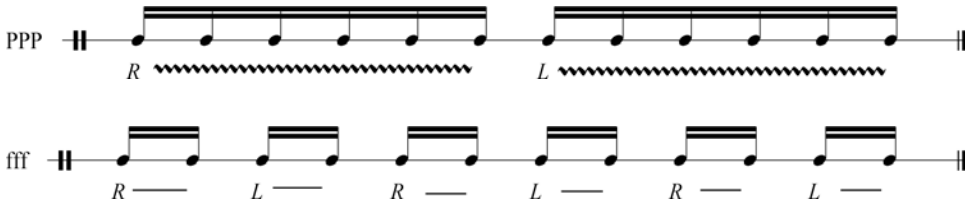
nor should it appear as this:



2. The texture of the roll should not change from PPP to FFF. It will be necessary for the performer to gradually change from the slow stroke-fast rebound speed used for PPP to a fast stroke-slow rebound technique necessary for FFF so that the texture remains consistent throughout the entire process. This process is rather the opposite of that required for the Long Roll: Open to Closed, in which the AST increases as the rebound speeds become faster and softer.



This variation of AST is necessary because at low dynamic levels the stick should be allowed to rebound many times with a very gradual diminuendo in dynamics. With more force required to produce a louder sound, the stick will not be able to (nor expected to) rebound many times and the diminuendo of the rebounds will be very sudden.



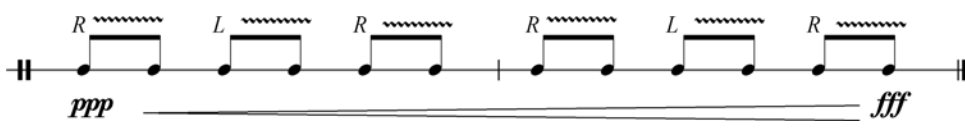
The AST must increase in an effort to match the fortissimo rebound speed with the pianissimo rebound speed.



Were the AST to remain constant from pianissimo to fortissimo the texture of the roll would change drastically from a tight, closed pianissimo to a loose, open fortissimo.



Or the texture would be excessively open for pianissimo:



Neither of these is in the best interests of ensemble performance.

The problem concerning the evenness of the crescendo will require (as always) that the student exercise his critical aural judgment so that the sound being produced is the desired one.

As a first step toward understanding and executing the necessary adjustment of AST in the Long Roll: Crescendo-Diminuendo, the following exercise should be used.

(Also reverse 5-4-3-2-)

At first it may be best to separate the two halves of this process and practice them as individual items (i.e., crescendo only with increase in AST; diminuendo only with decrease in AST). When the two processes are then joined, the student should be more aware of the rounded rather than pointed peak that exists at the height of the dynamic level before the diminuendo begins.

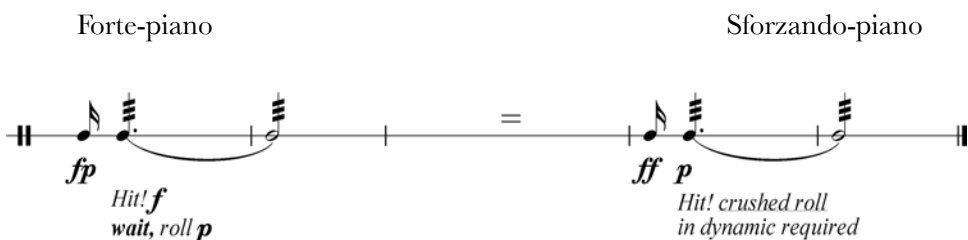
The student should also devise exercises combining all AST/B as required for sudden dynamic changes:

Any two figures may be combined for subito changes.

The diminuendo molto (usually indicating a very rapid but not abrupt dynamic change) would be performed:



Forte-piano (a common form of subito change) would be executed:



Although these two symbols are often used interchangeably and indiscriminately, the student should be aware of both symbols and that they both will be used by any one composer (or group of composers) to indicate different things. The performer should have at his command a technique for each of them.

In Rudimental-Exhibition work the roll is a rhythm using the established tempo as its basis; in ensemble performance the roll is a sustained tone requiring an arm stroke probably (and preferably) unrelated to the prevailing tempo.

After the student has developed the open to closed process of the long roll he will have at his command the control necessary for the variations of roll texture so important for the ensemble performer.

It must be kept in mind that notation of a roll using traditional symbols is inexact. These examples should be viewed in the same manner as that of an architect's first draft: the notation represents only a general idea.

The execution of the texture exercises will focus attention on the long roll as required by the various ensemble media. Remember, in ensemble playing, the roll is a duration of time not dependent upon, nor influenced by, the prevailing stroke speed or dynamic level.

Eds. Note: Benson's manuscript ends at this point.)

Warren Benson

1924-2005

Warren Benson was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society's Hall of Fame in 2003, reflecting his pioneering work in percussion and his contributions to music as composer, conductor, lecturer, writer and humorist.

A native of Michigan, Benson attended Cass Tech High School. While there he studied percussion and horn and played in the High School All-City Orchestra, along with select performances of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. As an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, he was asked to teach percussion, and moonlighted playing drums in jazz bands. In 1946, he was invited to become timpanist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, playing under Ormandy, Reiner, Goosens and Bernstein. Benson completed both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music theory at the University of Michigan.

From 1950-1952, Benson was awarded two successive Fulbright Teaching Fellowships to teach at Anatolia College in Greece, and returned to serve as Professor of Percussion and Composition for 14 years at Ithaca College. From 1967-1993 he was Professor of Composition at the Eastman School of Music, during which time, from 1986-1988, he also served as Distinguished Meadows Visiting Professor at Southern Methodist University. In 1994, after a distinguished 50-year teaching career that included honors of the Alumni Citation for Teaching Excellence, the Kilbourn Professorship for Distinguished Teaching, and being named University Mentor, Benson was appointed Professor Emeritus at the Eastman School of Music.

Benson wrote a dozen works for percussion, ranging from "Three Dances for Solo Snare Drum," "Streams" and "Symphony for Drums and Wind Orchestra" in his early writing years, to one of his last works "Drums of Summer" in 1997. Many of these works have been recorded, including by the United States Marine Band.

Benson was also a pioneer in founding the Ithaca Percussion Ensemble, one of the first ensembles of its kind to be formed and to tour. Later, Benson brought together and nurtured the percussion ensemble, NEXUS, and experimented with percussion ensembles ranging from the formal to “junk bands” of school and community children playing pails and tin cans. Benson often experimented with “color” in his works, writing for percussion ranging from drums to flower pots.

Benson wrote more than 125 works and was largely self-taught in composition. Over 80 major artists and ensembles commissioned his works, including the Kronos Quartet, the New York Choral Society, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the International Horn Society and the United States Marine Band. His music has been performed in more than 50 countries and 30 works have been commercially recorded.

In addition to the Fulbright fellowships, Benson was awarded residencies at the McDowell Colony, a John Simon Guggenheim Composer Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts composer commissions and the Diploma de Honor from the Republic of Argentina. In addition to his induction into the Percussive Arts Society’s Hall of Fame, he was elected to the National Band Association Academy of Excellence, and was a founding member of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles. He is listed in the first edition of *Who’s Who in the World of Percussion*, as well as thirty other biographical dictionaries including *Who’s Who in America* and *Grove’s Dictionary of Music*.

Benson was a student of cultures, and drew on language and literature in his work. He read widely, set poetry as lyrics and published a book of humorous verse “And My Daddy Will Play the Drums” in 1999. The Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School houses Benson’s archive and his bio-bibliography by Alan D. Wagner is published by Edwin Mellen Press.

Robin Engelman

Robin Engelman studied percussion and composition with Warren Benson at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. After graduating he played in symphony orchestras and in 1968 was appointed principal percussionist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra under Seiji Ozawa. In 1971 Engelman became a founding member of NEXUS, playing with them until 2009 when poor eyesight compelled him to resign. His compositions are widely performed and he is well known for his articles on the history of military drumming. In 2002 he was the artistic director for the historic three-hour Drummers Heritage Concert produced for the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Columbus, Ohio. The concert, now a successful DVD, featured many of the world's legendary field music performers.

Gordon Stout

Gordon Stout is a Professor of Percussion at the School of Music at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York, where he has taught percussion since 1980. A composer as well as percussionist who specializes on marimba, Stout has studied composition with Joseph Schwanter, Samuel Adler and Warren Benson, and percussion with James Salmon and John Beck.

As a composer/recitalist, Stout has premiered many of his original compositions - several of which have already become standard repertoire for marimbists worldwide - as well as works by other contemporary composers.

A frequent lecturer/recitalist for the Percussive Arts Society, Stout has appeared as a featured marimbist at 12 PAS International Conventions (PASIC). Stout was on the jury of the 1st and 2nd Leigh Howard Stevens International Marimba Competitions (1995 and 1998), the 2nd and 3rd World Marimba Competitions in Okaya, Japan (1999) and Stuttgart, Germany (2002), and the International Marimba Competition in Linz, Austria (2006).

The Drum Tutor

A Primary Tutor for Snare Drum

Warren Benson



warrenbenson.com

The Drum Tutor, written by Warren Benson in his early years of teaching, captures essential techniques for percussion instruments, particularly the snare drum. Benson considered the snare drum the most useful instrument for beginner's technique and ensemble playing.

Edited by two of Benson's former students, Robin Engelman and Gordon Stout, who continue to use these methods in their playing and teaching, The Drum Tutor documents Benson's unique ideas and passion for "the Rudiments of Playing, not Playing of the Rudiments."



Robin Engelman



Gordon Stout