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Popular Play-Alongs

Part: 4: Dance-Rock by Donny Gruendler

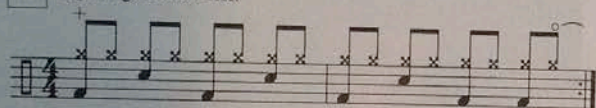
MODERN DRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

MUSIC KEY			
Open	O	R.C	C.C
H.H.	X	X	**
S.D.			
B.D.			

In the last three play-along articles (July and October 2012 and January 2013), we focused on developing the proper performance technique, groove vocabulary, and sound to play alongside Top 40, pop-punk, and synth-metal tunes. In this month's installment, we're taking a look at a dance-rock chart titled "Hella Drums." (MP3s and PDFs are available at moderndrummer.com.)

This tune has a twenty-four-bar AAB form, with each letter representing an eight-bar phrase with a particular melody, chord structure, and groove. The A section features a two-bar straight-8th groove with a tightly closed hi-hat and an occasional opening on the "&" of beat 4.

A Light, tight closed HH:



The B section uses the same drum pattern, but now the hi-hat is opened slightly on each 8th note, for a looser, more sloshy sound.

B Light, sloshy half-open HH:



Performance Notes

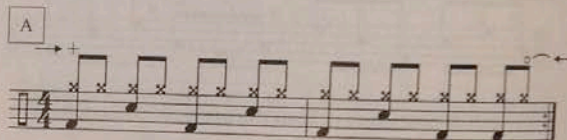
The bass drum pattern should be played very forcefully, with a staccato articulation and a dynamic of forte (loud). You can accomplish this by using the plastic side of the beater and burying it into the head. Use your entire leg and foot to make each stroke.

Unlike in the previous play-alongs, where the snare was hit with rimshots, you'll want to play in the center of the head for this song. Many drummers use the center-of-the-head stroke because it provides an open, full, and round tone. When the drum is miked, this stroke can sound even more powerful than a caveman-like rimshot. By avoiding the high-end attack produced by a rimshot, the microphones and compressors are better able to do their work. The engineer can turn up the snare in the overall mix without adding the piercing qualities of a standard rimshot.

Most drummers think it's easier to strike the snare in the center than it is to play a rimshot, but it actually takes a great

deal of accuracy and concentration. This stroke is less forgiving than a rimshot and can sound very uneven when not executed properly. Be sure to hit the drum in the exact same location for each backbeat. And you might want to consider flipping the stick around so that you're striking with the butt end, which will produce an even bigger, fatter sound.

In the A section, we're going to use a new articulation on the hi-hat by playing with the tip of the stick on top of the cymbals. The 8th-note pattern should be played evenly, at a dynamic of mezzo piano (medium soft). Using the tip of the stick on the top cymbal will give you a very precise, controlled sound. The hi-hat opening on the "&" of beat 4 should be played as an accent and should be followed immediately with a foot stroke on the downbeat.



To articulate the sloshy hi-hat sound in the B section, play the 8th notes evenly and forcefully at a dynamic of mezzo forte (medium loud). Use the middle shoulder of the stick, about an inch below the tip. Not only will this differentiate the sound of the grooves between sections, but it will also add a bit of excitement as the song builds.

Talk-Down

The song's twenty-four-bar AAB form is preceded by a four-bar drum intro, which uses the same groove as the A section. Since the drums start the tune, be sure you're playing solidly, in terms of both sound and time, from the first bar, or else the song and the groove will sound unsettled.

In order to build properly into the B section, play a slight crescendo on the hi-hat in bars 13 through 16 of the A section.

There's an ensemble figure on the fourth beat of the second ending of letter A and in the fourth bar of letter B. This figure should be orchestrated between the snare and crash cymbal.

A slight variation occurs in the last A section, which consists of a synth-and-drums breakdown. This part should also receive a unique sonic and rhythmic treatment. One option is to play the ride cymbal and alter the bass drum pattern on beat 3.

A Breakdown



Making Music

You could play thousands of intricate groove variations and fill permutations in this chart. But the most important thing to focus on is making it all the way through the song by playing musically appropriate grooves with stylistically correct sounds. Best of luck, and have fun!

Intro ♩ = 115

The chart consists of the following sections:

- Intro:** A single staff with a tempo marking of 115 and a series of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating a specific playing technique.
- System 1:**
 - A:** A staff with eighth notes and 'x' marks, followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign.
 - Repeat 1:** A staff with diagonal slashes, labeled with a '1' and '(8)' below it.
 - Repeat 2:** A staff with diagonal slashes, labeled with a '2' and '(16)' below it.
- System 2:**
 - B:** A staff with eighth notes and 'x' marks, followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign.
 - Repeat:** A staff with diagonal slashes, labeled with '(8)' below it.
- System 3:**
 - A:** A staff with eighth notes and 'x' marks, followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign.
 - Repeat 1:** A staff with diagonal slashes, labeled with a '1' and '(8)' below it.
 - Repeat 2:** A staff with diagonal slashes, labeled with a '2' and '(16)' below it.
 - Fill:** A staff with a single note and a 'Fill' label below it.
- System 4:**
 - B:** A staff with eighth notes and 'x' marks, followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign.
 - Repeat:** A staff with diagonal slashes, labeled with '(8)' below it.
- System 5:**
 - B:** A staff with eighth notes and 'x' marks, followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign.
 - Repeat:** A staff with diagonal slashes, labeled with '(8)' below it.
 - Fade out:** A staff with diagonal slashes, labeled with 'Fade out' below it.



Donny Gruendler is the director of performance programs at Musicians Institute in Los Angeles and the creator of Hudson Music's download series *Seeing Sounds* and *Private Lessons*. He has performed with DJ Logic, Rick Holmstrom, John Medeski, and Rhett Frazier Inc. For more info, visit donnygruendler.com.

