

Chapter 6

Rolling into Rock Drumming

In This Chapter

- ▶ Playing a drumset in the rock style
 - ▶ Figuring out basic rock beats
 - ▶ Adding some flavor to the rhythms
-

Images of Ringo Starr (you know, from the Beatles) sitting behind his drums in front of tens of thousands of screaming fans or Rush's Neil Peart wowing the audience with his 15-minute drum solo and huge drumset have stirred many people to want to pick up a pair of sticks and join a rock band. Who can blame them? Rock drumming can be both creatively stimulating and physically gratifying. And, as Ringo demonstrated to the world, rock drumming can be a whole lotta fun.

This chapter explores what is probably the most popular drumming style today. Rock music is comprised of many different styles, including rhythms from jazz, blues, Latin, and Caribbean styles. Variations among these diverse styles abound, and rock drumming encompasses everything from straight-ahead styles to progressive, rhythmically diverse approaches.

When the band The Police showed up in the 1970s, drummer Stewart Copeland broke a lot of rock drumming rules by integrating the little-known reggae style of playing complex hi-hat patterns and playing the kick drum where the snare drum would usually play. This rule-breaking not only gave The Police a unique sound but also opened many doors for young drummers like myself who were thinking (and playing) outside the box. In another example, the Dave Matthews Band drummer Carter Beauford draws heavily from the influences of the 1970s progressive rock and jazz-fusion styles in his playing. So, even if you intend to play drums only in a rock band, I highly recommend that you check out the chapters on other styles of drumming — these chapters may help you define a sound that's uniquely your own.

In this chapter, you discover the basics of rock drumming and develop the skills that you need to play most rock music. I introduce you to some basic rhythms in all the different feels that encompass the rock genre. You can even get fancy with a few grooves that make you sound like a pro. Finally, you also find out that rock drumming isn't all about bashing and banging; it's as dynamically rich and texturally varied as any other style of drumming.

Harnessing the Backbeat



Without a doubt, the backbeat is the foundation of all rock drumming. The *backbeat* is the driving rhythm that the snare drum plays. You almost always play this rhythm on the second and fourth beats of the measure. The backbeat gives rock music its characteristically driving feel. As a rock drummer, you need to play the backbeat with conviction. No limp-wristed, drop-the-stick-on-the-head stuff here. You need to really hit the drum.

Practice hitting the snare drum solidly in the center of the head. The sound should be deep and full. One of the best ways to create a driving backbeat is to play a rim-shot. As I cover in Chapter 3, you play a rim-shot by hitting the rim of the drum at the same time that your stick strikes the head. Because it makes the shell vibrate more, the rim-shot adds depth to your drum's sound.



You don't have to play loudly in order to get a great backbeat sound. With a rim-shot, you can play an almost infinite variety of dynamics and still have a good sound. You can experiment with where you hit your sticks on the drumhead to see the different sounds that you can get. As a general rule, the deepest, fullest pitch results from hitting the center of the head. As you hit closer to the edge, the sound of the drum gets thinner and higher in pitch.



Hitting the drum toward the edge creates *overtones*. Overtones are higher-pitched, “ringy” sounds that the drum makes all the time, but are usually covered up by the main tone of the drum (that is, if it's tuned properly; go to Chapter 20 for more on tuning). Hitting the drum off-center allows these overtones to ring more loudly compared to the main tone of the drum.

Mastering the Basic Beats

With the command of just a few basic rhythms, you can make your way in a rock band. The rhythms in this section cover nearly all the styles that you may encounter (and a few that you won't see very often). The key to these rhythms is creating a tight, hard-driving feel. Your backbeat should be strong, the bass drum solid, and the hi-hat smooth. And, you should play all these instruments (snare drum backbeat, bass drum, and hi-hat) in sync with one another.



Rock music (and its close relatives blues, R&B, and funk) consists of a variety of styles or *feels*. The feel basically refers to the way that the rhythm is composed and interpreted. Different feels include eighth-note feels, sixteenth-note feels, shuffle feels, and regular and half-time feels. I refer to these feels many times in the next few chapters, so I'm listing them here for easy reference. The basic drumset feels are as follows:

- ✓ **Eighth-note feel:** The eighth-note feel consists of eighth notes played on the hi-hat or ride cymbal. This feel is also called the straight eighth-note feel because you play the eighth notes straight (as written). You play the snare drum on the second and fourth beats of the measure.
- ✓ **Sixteenth-note feel:** The sixteenth-note feel is similar to the eighth-note feel except that you play sixteenth notes or variations on the sixteenth note on the hi-hats or ride cymbal instead of eighth notes. You also play the snare drum on beats two and four.
- ✓ **Shuffle feel:** The shuffle feel uses triplets as the base instead of eighth or sixteenth notes. The shuffle also uses what are called *broken triplets*. With a broken triplet, you don't play the second note (you play only the first and third notes) of the triplet. You also play the snare drum on beats two and four for the shuffle feel.

In each of the previous feels (eighth-note, sixteenth-note, and shuffle) you play a variety of rhythms on the bass drum, depending on the song.

When you play the snare drum on beats two and four, you're playing what's called a *regular-time feel*. But, the eighth-note, sixteenth-note, and shuffle feels can each be played in a *half-time feel*. The half-time feel essentially means that you play the snare drum *half* as often as in the regular-time feel. Instead of twice in a measure (beats 2 and 4), the snare drum is played only once, usually on the 3 but sometimes on the 4 (depending on the song).



Unless I state otherwise, you play all the rhythms in this chapter with a *right-hand lead*. That is, you play the hi-hat (top line of the musical staff) with your right hand and the snare drum (third space from the bottom) with your left hand. Chapter 5 has more information on playing with a right-hand lead.



With all the rhythms in this section, experiment with how much you close the hi-hat. Applying a lot of pressure to the hi-hat pedal creates a tight, “chick” sound when you hit the cymbals, while releasing that pressure slightly gives the hi-hats a fuller, louder “chshh” sound.

Practice all the rhythms and their variations one at a time until you can play them steadily and fluidly at a variety of tempos.

Eighth-note feel



The vast majority of all rock music is played with an *eighth-note feel*. This feel essentially means that the music is in 4/4 time and that you play eighth notes on the closed hi-hats. The snare generally occupies beats two and four, and the bass drum plays variable eighth-note patterns (usually playing along with the bass player's rhythm).

The rhythms in Figure 6-1 contain some of the most common bass drum patterns. Rhythms 1 and 3 are arguably the most used rock beats. In fact, if you turn on your radio or put on a rock CD, I bet you don't have to listen to more than a couple songs before you hear one of these beats (you can find a few more basic rock beats in Chapters 7 and 8).

1.		2.	
3.		4.	
5.		6.	
7.		8.	
9.		10.	

Figure 6-1:
Basic eighth-note feel rock beats.

After you get comfortable with all these variations, try playing them with the hi-hat accent patterns in Figure 6-2. You play accented notes louder than the surrounding note.

1. 2. **TRACK 1, 0:41**

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

> >

3. **TRACK 1, 0:49**

> > > >

Figure 6-2: Alternate hi-hat accent patterns for eighth-note feel rhythms.

Sixteenth-note feel

The *sixteenth-note feel* uses sixteenth notes as the basis for the rhythm. Instead of playing eighth notes on the hi-hat, you play sixteenth notes or variations based upon the sixteenth note. You still play the snare drum on the second and fourth beats. Generally, songs using this feel are slower than those that use an eighth-note feel.



At slower tempos, you play the hi-hat with your right hand (or your left hand if you play left-handed), but at faster tempos, you have to ditch the right-hand lead technique (the right hand plays the hi-hat) because these rhythms work best with alternating strokes (right, left, right, left . . .). When you play these rhythms using an alternating stroke pattern, you play the snare drum with your right hand. Because you play the hi-hat with both hands, you won't be able to hit the snare drum and the hi-hats at the same time. So to play the backbeat, your right hand has to come off the hi-hat in order to strike the snare drum.

Figure 6-3 contains some common basic sixteenth-note feel rhythms. These rhythms are written for a slow tempo. (That's why the music notates that you play the hi-hat when you play the snare drum.)

1. 1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

2. TRACK 2, 0:00

3. TRACK 2, 0:13

4.

5. TRACK 2, 0:25

6.

Figure 6-3:
Sixteenth-
note feel
rock beats
with a slow
tempo
sticking
pattern.

Take a look at Figure 6-4. Here you can see the sticking pattern for the faster tempos. Which pattern you use is determined by how fast you can comfortably play and which pattern sounds better in the song that you're playing. You should get comfortable playing each of the bass drum patterns in Figure 6-3 at both slow and fast tempos.

Figure 6-4: Sticking pattern for fast tempo sixteenth-note feel rhythms.

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



After you get fluid with the rhythms in Figures 6-3 and 6-4, try using the hi-hat accent patterns in Figure 6-5. Accent pattern 3 is very challenging, so take your time and go slowly until you get the hang of it.

1. TRACK 2, 0:37

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

> > > >

2. TRACK 2, 0:49

> > > > > > > >

3. TRACK 2, 1:01

> > > >

Figure 6-5: Alternate hi-hat accent patterns for sixteenth-note feel rhythms.

Half-time feel

The half-time feel gives a song the feeling of being slower than it is. Drummers often use this type of rhythm during verses or quieter, mellower parts of songs (see Chapter 12 for more on the parts of a song). The half-time feel can use either eighth or sixteenth notes. What distinguishes the half-time feel from the regular-time feel (grooves with backbeats on two and four) is that you play the snare drum on the third beat of the measure instead of the second and fourth. This technique makes the rhythm seem half as fast as its regular counterpart.

Figure 6-6 shows some common half-time feel grooves using an eighth note hi-hat pattern. As you can see in Figure 6-6, rhythms 5 and 6 have their backbeat on the four instead of the three. This is another interpretation of a half-time feel and is very common for the verses in rock ballads.

Figure 6-7 contains some common half-time feel rhythms using a sixteenth-note hi-hat pattern. Take a look at rhythms 4 and 5. They both have the backbeat on the four instead of three. Notice how different they sound from others. Practice each of these rhythms using both the slow and fast sticking patterns from Figures 6-3 and 6-4.

1. **TRACK 3, 0:00**

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

2.

3. **TRACK 3, 0:08**

4.

5. **TRACK 3, 0:15**

6.

Figure 6-6: Half-time feel rhythms using an eighth-note hi-hat pattern.

1. TRACK 3, 0:23

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

2. TRACK 3, 0:36

3.

4. TRACK 3, 0:49

5.

Figure 6-7:
Half-time
feel rhythms
using a
sixteenth-
note hi-hat
pattern.



After you get really comfortable playing all the rhythms in Figures 6-6 and 6-7, try switching back and forth between the half-time feel and a regular-time feel rhythm (those rhythms in Figures 6-1 through 6-5).

The rock shuffle

The rock shuffle is a fairly uncommon feel, although it was much more common during the blues/rock era of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The *rock shuffle* is simply a regular eighth-note feel with the eighth notes interpreted as a *broken triplet* (you play only the first and last notes of the triplet beat; go to Chapter 2 for more on triplets). The trick in playing this feel is to make it swing. (You can find out more about how to swing a groove in Chapter 10.) Basically, the feel should have a feeling of forward movement.

You may find the right-hand shuffle pattern somewhat challenging when you begin to play it. One good trick to getting the shuffle feel right is to play a quiet left hand stroke on the rest (the second note of the triplet) while your right hand plays the broken triplet (just tap your left hand against your leg so it doesn't make any noise). Figure 6-8 shows how you play this rhythm. When doing this exercise, concentrate on how your right hand's rhythm feels and sounds. After the rhythm becomes fluid, eliminate your left hand and see whether it sounds the same. If it does, move on to the rhythms in Figure 6-9.

Figure 6-8:
Right-hand
shuffle
pattern
exercise
(your left
hand plays
silently).



Figure 6-9 contains a few rock shuffles to familiarize you with this playing style. You see rhythms 1, 5, and 6 most often in rock music. Some rock shuffles require that you play them very fast (as in the case of early punk or speed metal styles), and you won't be able to play the broken triplet pattern with your right hand. In this case, use one of the hi-hat patterns in Figure 6-10 instead. You may also find situations in which the song calls for one of the alternate patterns even when the tempo is slow enough to play the broken triplet. Make sure that you can play all the bass drum patterns from Figure 6-9 with these two alternate hi-hat patterns (Figure 6-10).

1. TRACK 4, 0:00

1 tu tu 2 tu tu 3 tu tu 4 tu tu

3 3 3 3

2.

3 3 3 3

3. TRACK 4, 0:07

3 3 3 3

4.

3 3 3 3

5.

3 3 3 3

6. TRACK 4, 0:14

3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3

Figure 6-9:
The rock shuffle.

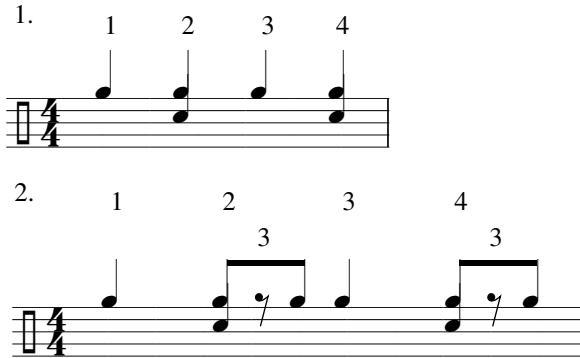


Figure 6-10:
Alternate hi-hat patterns for the rock shuffle.

The half-time shuffle feel

During the half-time shuffle feel, the snare part moves to the third beat. This shuffle is arguably the most difficult rock style to play for most people. One of the greatest half-time shuffle rhythms ever recorded is by Jeff Porcaro with the band Toto on a song called “Rosanna.” (Listen to that song if you want to hear how the half-time shuffle is supposed to sound. Chapter 11 has a transcription of the grooves used in that song.)

Figure 6-11 contains some common half-time shuffle rhythms. Practice each of these rhythms until you can play them fluidly. After you get comfortable with the basic half-time shuffle rhythms, try using the hi-hat patterns in Figure 6-12 with the bass drum patterns in Figure 6-11. When playing pattern 1, make sure that whatever bass drum rhythm you play stays a broken triplet. (Most people tend to play the bass drum with straight eighth notes instead of shuffling it.) Rhythm 3 is challenging, but after you get it, you can hear just how cool it sounds.

Country rock

As its down-to-earth lyrics and showmanship blended with the rhythms of rock, country music became hugely popular. In fact, many rock drummers found their niche in country music. You can use most of the basic rock drumming grooves exactly as they are in contemporary

country music. The feel is the same — you just need to wear different clothes. So grab yourself a cowboy hat and get used to playing with boots. You too can be a country drummer if you can play the basic rock beats in this chapter.

1. **TRACK 4, 0:21**
1 tu tu 2 tu tu 3 tu tu 4 tu tu
3 3 3 3

2.

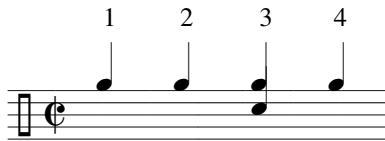
3. **TRACK 4, 0:30**
3 3 3 3

4.

5. **TRACK 4, 0:39**
3 3 3 3

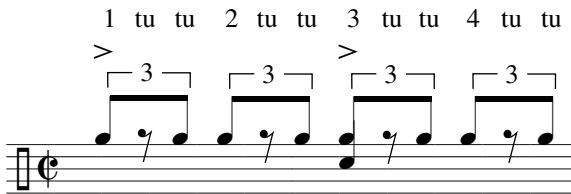
Figure 6-11:
The half-time shuffle.

1.



2.

TRACK 4, 0:47



3.

TRACK 4, 0:55

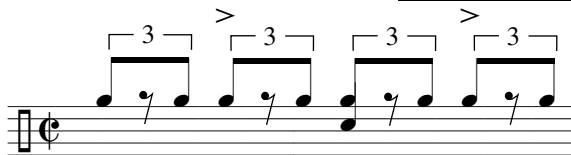


Figure 6-12:
Alternate hi-hat patterns for the half-time shuffle.

Dressing Up the Basic Beats

If you think that you have the hang of playing some basic rock patterns, you can now start thinking about adding some personality and texture to your drumming. The following exercises give you a palate from which to draw. You can use some of these rhythms as your basic groove, while others are better suited for only occasional use as fills and embellishments (see Chapter 13). The rhythms and techniques in this section are where you really get to shine as a rock drummer. Use these variations to the basic beats effectively (this often means using them sparingly) and you'll sound like a pro.

Mixing up the hi-hat

You can choose from an almost infinite variety of open and closed variations. Figure 6-13 shows a few (the “o” notates that you open the hi-hat slightly before you hit it to create a swish-type sound and the “+” indicates when you close the hi-hat with your foot to choke the swish sound off).

1. **TRACK 5, 0:00**

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

o +

2. o +

3. o +

4. + o

5. + o + o

6. **TRACK 5, 0:08**

+ o + o + o + o

7. o +

8. **TRACK 5, 0:16**

+ o

9. **TRACK 5, 0:29**

+ o o

Figure 6-13: Rock beats with open and closed hi-hat patterns.

Because you haven't used your left foot with the basic rock beats, except to keep the hi-hats closed, it may take you some time to get used to incorporating it into your playing. Just go slow and you'll get it in no time at all.

When you open the hi-hat, keep your heel on the pedal and lift your toes slightly. You're trying to make a "swish" sound. Both cymbals should still touch when they're open. The "swish" often sounds better if you hit the edge of your cymbals with the shoulder of your stick. Doing so gives you a fuller sound.



With these rhythms, you use all four limbs, and your posture is really important. Falling off balance just a bit throws off your playing. So sit up straight and lean forward slightly. For more tips on the right kind of posture to use while playing, check out Chapter 3.


Moving the backbeat


At times, moving the backbeat from its typical position on the two and four (or the three for half-time feel rhythms) can make your groove more interesting. This move is usually most effective when you do it sparingly; however, a few recent, popular rock songs use rhythms like numbers 3 and 5 in Figure 6-14 throughout the song very effectively. Moving the backbeat has a tendency to completely change the feel of the music. Figures 6-14 and 6-15 contain some grooves that allow you to get comfortable altering your backbeat placement.


Figure 6-14 contains eighth-note grooves. Notice how the snare drum beats in rhythms 7 through 12 fit in between the eighth notes of a hi-hat stroke.


The rhythms in Figure 6-15 have a sixteenth-note feel. They're written for a slow tempo with your right hand playing the hi-hat pattern.


Figure 6-16 shows you how to approach the rhythms in Figure 6-15 using an alternating stroke pattern on the hi-hats.


1. **TRACK 6, 0:00**
 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &



2. 


3. **TRACK 6, 0:08**


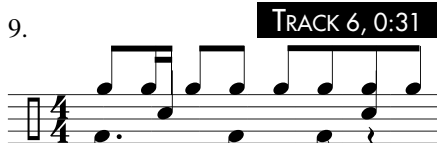
4. 


5. **TRACK 6, 0:15**


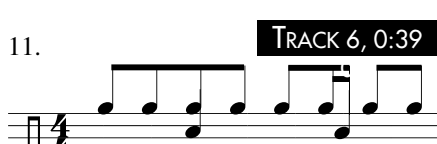
6. 

7. **TRACK 6, 0:23**


8. 

9. **TRACK 6, 0:31**


10. 

11. **TRACK 6, 0:39**


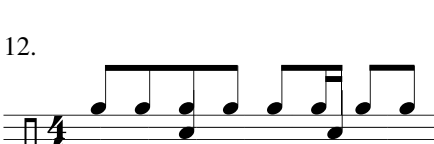
12. 

Figure 6-14:
 Eighth-note
 feel rock
 beats with
 an offset
 backbeat.

TRACK 7, 0:00

1. 1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

TRACK 7, 0:12

2.

3.

TRACK 7, 0:25

4.

Figure 6-15: Sixteenth-note feel rock beats with an offset backbeat.

TRACK 7, 0:38

5.

TRACK 7, 0:50

Figure 6-16: Another approach to the rhythms in Figure 6-14.

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

Notice how you play the first snare drum beat (written on the “a” of 1) with your left hand. Getting your left hand past your right hand in order to hit the snare drum may be tricky at first but with practice it gets easier.

Adding syncopations

More and more, rock drumming draws from other styles of music. Syncopated (notes played on the “e” or “a” of the beat) bass drum and snare drum patterns are becoming more commonplace and give the music a funky feel.

Figure 6-17 shows a few rock beats with the bass drum playing syncopation. Some of these rhythms are a bit tricky to play because you play the bass drum both between the beats of the hi-hat as well as on the adjacent beat.

1. 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

2. TRACK 8, 0:00

3.

4. TRACK 8, 0:08

5.

6. TRACK 8, 0:17

7.

8. TRACK 8, 0:25

Figure 6-17:
Syncopated
bass drum
patterns.

Figure 6-18 contains some syncopated snare drum accents. This type of playing is very common in the alternative, modern style of rock music. In each case, you play the syncopated snare beat between two hi-hat beats. You should play these additional snare drum beats slightly softer than the backbeat.

1. TRACK 8, 0:34

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

2.

3. TRACK 8, 0:42

4. TRACK 8, 0:50

5. TRACK 8, 0:58

Figure 6-18:
Syncopated
snare drum
patterns.

Incorporating fills



Fills are breaks in the main drumbeat used to mark transitions in the song. Unless you're Keith Moon of The Who, you want to use discretion when adding these breaks to your drumming. Fills are most effective when you use them sparingly and when they fit with the music of the other instruments.

In spite of their somewhat limited use (after all, you spend a lot more time playing basic grooves than fills), fills are the drummer's chance to make a personal statement. If you get really serious about drumming, you'll probably find the most joy in creating and executing innovative fills.

The world of fills is almost limitless. The fills in Figure 6-19 are some basic one and two beat numbers. Practice these fills with each of the *duple-feel* beats (that is, the eighth-note and sixteenth-note feel rhythms, both regular

time and half time). After you get comfortable with them, try *changing the orchestration* (using a different drum). For instance, play rhythm 1 on a tom-tom rather than the snare.

1. TRACK 9, 0:00

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &
L R L

2. R L R L

3. L R R L

4. L R L R L

5. R L R L R L

6. TRACK 9, 0:08

L R L R L R

Figure 6-19:
Some basic
fills in duple
feel.

The set of rhythms in Figure 6-20 has one and two beat fills for triplet-feel rhythms (the shuffles).

1. TRACK 9, 0:16

1 tu tu 2 tu tu 3 tu tu 4 tu tu

3 3 3 L L

2. L R L

3 3 3 3

3. R L R L

3 3 3 3

4. TRACK 9, 0:24

L R L R L

3 3 3 3

5. L R L R L R L

3 3 3 3

Figure 6-20:
Some basic
fills in triplet
feel
(shuffles).



You should play all the fills in Figures 6-19 and 6-20 as written until you get comfortable with them. After you're comfortable, add three bars of a groove before them to create a *four-bar phrase*. Figure 6-21 shows how to play this phrase. Try all the fills with each of the drum beats in this chapter. For more fills, check out Chapter 13.



Figure 6-21:
Creating a
four-bar
phrase with
the fills.



Chapter 7

Beating the Blues

In This Chapter

- ▶ Playing a drumset in the blues style
 - ▶ Working on some basic grooves
 - ▶ Developing the feel of the blues
-

Aaahhhh, the blues. The blues is probably one of the most loved styles of music and also one of the most fun to play. And the great thing about the blues is that you can play it successfully in no time! Of course, you have to develop a few skills, but this chapter can help you so you don't have to experience the heartache that often typifies the blues in order to really *feel* this style of music.

In this chapter, I explore blues drumming and introduce you to some of its most common rhythms and styles. I also tell you what it takes to play the blues effectively and what makes a great blues drummer great. To top it off, I also explain how to fit your playing into the most common blues song structure so that you can play the rhythms in this chapter.

Finding the Pocket and Staying in It



Blues music is all about the feel of the rhythms. Technical skill is less important than how you interpret what you're playing. When you play the blues, you want to make sure that you're *in the pocket*. Being *in the pocket* means playing the rhythm solidly and keeping it simple.

You don't want to clutter up your playing with a bunch of fills (see Chapter 13 for more on fills). Blues music also tends to have very extreme dynamic variations, so closely following the dynamics of the tune is important. When the volume is loud, you need to whack the backbeat on the snare drum; when the volume is low, you need to barely hit it.



Here are some other key ideas to remember when playing blues:

- ✓ As you play, you should lock in with the bass player. Try to match your bass drum rhythm to the bass player's. Closely watching (and listening to) what the bass player does often helps, and in most cases, a good bass player watches (and listens) to you too.
- ✓ The singer or lead guitar player often cues the dynamic changes by motioning with his or her hand or body, so keep an eye on him or her as well (you'll be able to tell when he or she wants to play louder or softer). You want to offer support to the singer as he or she pours his or her heart out.

If you really want to learn how to connect with the other musicians in the band and to play with heart and soul, playing the blues will teach you a lot. These skills easily translate to any other style of music that you may want to play. As always, watching a band play live can teach you a lot about how musicians interact and communicate on stage, so go see as much live music as you can. Doing so only improves your ability to play well with others.

Playing Blues

Most traditional blues music has a triplet feel and is written in either 4/4 or 12/8 time. Regardless of how it's written, the sound is the same. Check out Figure 7-1 and notice how both 12/8 and 4/4 time with triplets are actually the same. In fact, if the music is written in 12/8 time, it's usually still counted like it's in 4/4 time. To count this way you divide the 12/8 measure into four groupings of three. The four beat pulse lands on the one, four, seven, and ten. Take a look at the accents in the top rhythm of Figure 7-1. They correspond to the four beat pulse. All the rhythms in this chapter have this pulse.

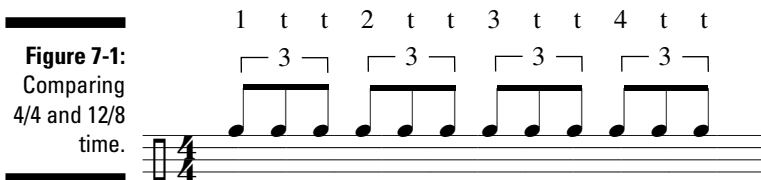
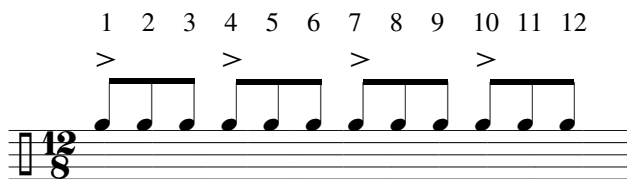


Figure 7-1:
Comparing
4/4 and 12/8
time.

Slow tempo

The basic groove for slow blues is pretty easy to play. Figure 7-2 shows this rhythm. Notice that the hi-hat plays eighth notes while you play the bass drum on the first (counted as one) and seventh beats (counted as three) and the snare drum on the fourth (counted as two) and tenth beats (counted as four). If you can play this rhythm solidly, you can play the blues.

Figure 7-2:
Basic slow blues rhythm.

TRACK 10, 0:00

The most common slow blues rhythm adds a few additional bass drum notes to the rhythm in Figure 7-2, creating a shuffle-type feel between the bass drum and the snare. Figure 7-3 shows this rhythm.

Figure 7-3:
The most common slow blues rhythm.

TRACK 10, 0:11

Of course, you can play many variations to the bass drum rhythm on the main groove that will (if used correctly) add to the song. If you listen to the rhythms that the bass player plays, they'll guide your bass drum beat. Try to match your bass drum with the bass player's groove. Figure 7-4 contains some slow tempo bass drum variations to the main groove. If you have a mastery of each of these rhythms, you can *lock in* (play along) with what most bass players play.

1. TRACK 10, 0:23

2. TRACK 10, 0:34

3.

4. TRACK 10, 0:46

Figure 7-4:
Variations
on the slow
blues
rhythm.

Medium tempo

The shuffle (see Chapter 6) rules in medium-tempo blues. Your snare drum and bass drum patterns remain the same as with the slower blues beats I describe earlier in this chapter while the hi-hat pattern changes to reflect the faster tempo. Figure 7-5 shows a bare-bones medium-tempo blues groove using a shuffle hi-hat pattern. To get used to playing this hi-hat rhythm (and to help get your right hand to play a solid shuffle rhythm), check out Figure 6-8 in Chapter 6. Playing the shuffle pattern correctly is really important in order for the shuffle to sound right.

Like the slow blues rhythms, the basic medium-tempo pattern can have a variety of bass drum patterns. Figure 7-6 shows a few.

Figure 7-5:
Basic
medium-
tempo blues
rhythm.

TRACK 11, 0:00

1.

TRACK 11, 0:07

2.

3.

4.

TRACK 11, 0:14

Figure 7-6:
Variations
on the
medium-
tempo blues
rhythm.

5.



More and more, blues players use a straight eighth-note feel (see Chapter 6 for more on this and other feels) with their music. This music is often classified as *blues-rock*, and as the name implies, most straight-ahead rock beats fit nicely. Figure 7-7 has a few blues-rock rhythms to get you started, but you can go to Chapter 6 to see more basic rock beats that you can use in blues music.

1. 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

2.

3.

4. TRACK 12, 0:00

5. TRACK 12, 0:07

6.

Figure 7-7:
Straight
eighth-note
feel blues
rhythms.

Fast tempo

Sometimes when the tempo is too fast, the shuffle hi-hat pattern (see Figures 7-5 and 7-6) is either too busy or too difficult to play. In this case, you can try a couple of different hi-hat rhythms (check out Figure 7-8).



You can also use the hi-hat patterns from Figure 7-8 for slower tempos if you choose. They give the song a slightly different feel. You should be able to play these rhythms with each of the different bass drum patterns from Figures 7-3 through 7-6.



Figure 7-8:
Hi-hat
variations
for faster
tempo.



Figure 7-9:
Basic two-
step rhythm.

For very fast blues, a *two-step rhythm* works best. Figure 7-9 is a basic two-step rhythm, which you can use in blues, gospel, and country music (see the sidebar “When the blues meets country” to find out more about the two-step). A two-step rhythm would be very easy to play, except it’s often played very fast. When playing this rhythm, make sure that the backbeats on the second and fourth beats are solid. In fact, an accent should mark the backbeats of this rhythm. The two-step rhythm is common, not only in the blues, but in gospel and country music as well.

Filling in . . . or not

Because the drums are very much a support instrument for most blues songs, fills aren’t too important. You can get by just knowing a few basic ones (see Chapter 13 for more fill ideas). The key, as in all styles of music, is to try to match your fill to the overall tune. Figure 7-10 has a couple of the most common and basic fills for the blues. Try these fills with each of the rhythms in this chapter. After you get comfortable playing them, try putting the fills in a four-bar phrase. Figure 7-11 shows you an example.

1. TRACK 14, 0:00

2. TRACK 14, 0:11

3. TRACK 14, 0:23

Figure 7-10:
Basic blues
fills.

TRACK 14, 0:34

Figure 7-11:
Four-bar
blues
phrase.

Understanding Blues Song Structure

Most blues music is in a twelve-bar form — called, what else but *twelve-bar blues*. If you end up jamming with other musicians and they say, “let’s play some blues” or “how ’bout some twelve-bar blues,” this form is what they’re talking about.

The twelve-bar structure consists of three four-bar phrases. These four bars are generally divided into two two-bar phrases in a call and response format. The singer sings a line over the first two bars (the call) and then he or she follows it with a repeat of that phrase (or something similar), or the guitar player plays a phrase to reinforce the singer’s line (the response). Figure 7-12 shows the twelve-bar blues song structure.

When the blues meets country

Traditional country music, which you don’t hear much of today on country music stations, has a lot in common with the blues. They have similar origins consisting of folk music inherited from the ancestors of people from many different areas. And both utilize some of the same types of rhythms (one of which is shown in Figure 7-9 —

commonly called the “Texas two-step” because of its association with a particular dance step). Another common country music rhythm is a 3/4 waltz feel. The following figure shows you how to play this rhythm. (To play contemporary country-rock music, check out Chapters 6 and 11.)

TRACK 13, 0:05

3

The musical notation is for a 3/4 waltz rhythm. It features a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody is composed of three quarter notes: G4, A4, and B4. The bass line consists of three quarter notes: G3, F3, and E3. A triplet of eighth notes is indicated above the melody, starting on G4 and ending on B4. A guitar pick symbol is placed above the first note of the triplet and below the first note of the bass line. A brace is shown below the last two notes of the bass line.

TRACK 15, 0:00

Call

+ Response

Figure 7-12: Twelve-bar blues song structure.

Chapter 8

Rallying Around R&B and Funk

In This Chapter

- ▶ Playing a drumset in the funk and R&B styles
 - ▶ Working on basic grooves
 - ▶ Developing the “feel” of these styles
-

Do you like the music of James Brown, Aretha Franklin, or Marvin Gaye? Maybe your tastes run more toward Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey, or Usher. Either way, you obviously have an appreciation for music with an emphasis on drumming that has a solid groove and a smooth feel, which is the essence of R&B drumming. It’s about grooving (playing the rhythm solidly) and keeping time. It’s also about rhythm and syncopation. So, if you’re ready to bring on the funk, this chapter is for you.

This chapter introduces you to the many ways of approaching R&B music on the drums, including how R&B is different from rock music and how it’s the same. You can try your hands (and feet) at playing a variety of grooves that fit this style. You can also get funky and explore some of the more intricate rhythms of funk and R&B music.

Playing R&B Grooves

R&B (Rhythm and Blues) is basically a blending of blues, rock, jazz, and gospel music and is very groove oriented. Fills (see Chapter 13) are used sparingly, and solos are almost unheard of. Your main concern when playing R&B music is to make the rhythm flow and fit the rest of the music as well as possible. R&B is much like rock music in this aspect; the differences between these two styles lie in the complexity of the rhythms that you use and the way that you interpret the rhythms.

Keeping time

Because basic R&B grooves are much like those in rock music, the rhythms in this section are similar to the rhythms in Chapter 6. In fact, you can use any of the rhythms from this section and the “Mastering the Basic Beats” section of Chapter 6 in either rock or R&B music. The biggest differences, however, are that you play these rhythms with a little more laid-back feel in R&B than you do in rock, and most often, you don’t have any accents on the hi-hats — all beats get the same volume. You treat the backbeat much the same way as you do in blues and rock — you need to play it with conviction. (Figure 8-1 contains a few basic R&B grooves with an eighth-note feel.)

Figure 8-2 shows a few rhythms that you find more often in R&B drumming, but that also work in rock drumming. All these rhythms contain snare drum strokes on all the downbeats, giving the grooves a hard-driving feel.

Sixteenth-note feel rhythms are also common in R&B drumming. In fact, they’re more common in R&B than in rock. Figure 8-3 shows a few to get you started. The rhythms in Figure 8-3 are written with a *right-hand lead* (that means that your right hand plays the hi-hat), but you can also play them with alternating (right, left, right, left) strokes (see Figure 8-4). You can find more basic rhythms in Chapters 6 and 9.

1. **TRACK 16, 0:00**
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

2.

3.

4.

5. **TRACK 16, 0:07**

6. **TRACK 16, 0:15**

Figure 8-1: Basic eighth-note feel R&B rhythms that are similar to rock rhythms.

1. **TRACK 16, 0:23** 2.

3. **TRACK 16, 0:30**

Figure 8-2:
A few more
R&B
rhythms.

1. **TRACK 17, 0:00**

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

2.

3.

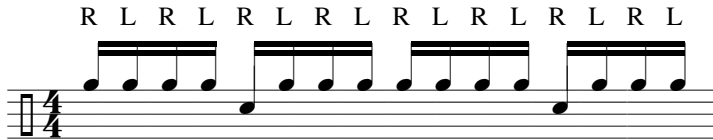
4. **TRACK 17, 0:11**

Figure 8-3:
Sixteenth-
note feel
rhythms.



In Figure 8-4, notice that you don't play the hi-hat when you hit the snare drum. Instead, your right hand comes off the hi-hats to hit the snare stroke.

Figure 8-4:
Alternating
stroke
pattern for
sixteenth-
note feel
rhythms.



Like the blues, R&B music contains a lot of shuffle-feel rhythms (see Chapter 6). Take a look at Figure 8-5 for a few examples.

Adding ghost notes



For the last several decades, R&B drumming has distinguished itself from rock and blues by incorporating a lot of ghost notes. This is the essence of R&B drumming. You play *ghost notes* very softly; they're often *felt* rather than heard in the music. They add a soft, flowing sound to the main beat. If you're gonna play R&B, you need to become fluid playing ghost notes. (Rock drummers take note: Ghost notes are a great addition to your playing, too. Try them and see what you think.)

To play ghost notes, you fill in between the hi-hat notes with very quiet notes on the snare drum. The goal is to make these quiet notes almost inaudible. (Listen to me play the rhythms from Figures 8-6, 8-7, and 8-8 on the CD to hear how it's done.) Figure 8-6 shows some ghost note patterns for eighth-note grooves.

1. 1 tu tu 2 tu tu 3 tu tu 4 tu tu
3 3 3 3

2. TRACK 18, 0:00

3. TRACK 18, 0:07

4. TRACK 18, 0:14

5. TRACK 18, 0:14

6.

Figure 8-5:
Some R&B
shuffles.

1. 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

2. TRACK 19, 0:00

3.

4.

5. TRACK 19, 0:08

Figure 8-6:
Ghost note
patterns for
eighth-note
grooves.



Want to make your R&B and rock shuffles really shine? Add some ghost notes. Not only does this addition help you keep your right-hand rhythm solid, it also sounds great, especially with the half-time shuffles. Figure 8-7 shows a few. Rhythms 5 and 6 are half-time shuffles and are written in cut time, which means you count them half as fast. For example, instead of counting rhythm 6 in Figure 8-7 “1-tu-tu-2-tu-tu-3-tu-tu-4-tu-tu,” you count it “1-tu-tu-&-tu-tu-2-tu-tu-&-tu-tu.”

1. **TRACK 20, 0:00**

2. **TRACK 20, 0:06**

3.

4.

5. **TRACK 20, 0:13**

6. **TRACK 20, 0:22**

Figure 8-7:
Ghost notes
for shuffle
feels.

Opening and closing the hi-hat

No self-respecting R&B groove is complete without an open hi-hat or two. The contrast between open and closed hi-hats creates a texture and flow that fit particularly well into R&B music. Figure 8-8 shows you a few to help you get used to playing ghost notes with open and closed hi-hat combinations.



Don't open the hi-hat too much — you want a tight “tsst” sound.

1. **TRACK 21, 0:00**

2.

3. **TRACK 21, 0:08**

4.

5. **TRACK 21, 0:16**

6. **TRACK 21, 0:23**

Figure 8-8:
Opening
and closing
the hi-hats.

Getting Funky: Exploring Funk Drumming

Funk drumming is kind of a cross between R&B and the more contemporary jazz-fusion drumming (for more on jazz-fusion, check out Chapter 9). Funk and fusion developed around the same time in the 1960s and 1970s, so you can find many similarities between the two. Each of these styles uses more complex rhythms within its grooves and often incorporates a lot of *syncopation* (the emphasis of the rhythm is on the “e” and “a” of the beat; see Chapter 2 to get a handle on counting out the beat).



The rhythms in Figures 8-9 through 8-12 are very challenging and may take you a while to get the hang of — just start out slowly, take your time, and practice to a metronome.

Incorporating syncopation

Funk grooves tend to syncopate the bass drum the most. You find both single strokes played on the “e” or “a” of the beat as well as double strokes that start or end on the “e” or “a” (for more on how to play double bass drum strokes, check out Chapter 5). Take a look at Figure 8-9 for some basic funk patterns that use syncopated bass drum beats. (You can find more syncopated bass drum grooves in Chapter 6.)

Rhythms 1 and 2 in Figure 8-9 have quarter notes on the hi-hats. The hi-hats create a strong quarter note pulse that contrasts nicely with the syncopated bass drum patterns. This approach is very common in funk drumming.



Most people tend to rush the notes in rhythms 1 and 2 because of the amount of open space (rests) in these grooves. When practicing these rhythms, set your metronome to play sixteenth notes slowly so that you can get the proper placement of the notes. Doing so keeps you from rushing the notes and speeding up as you play.

Rhythms 3 and 4 utilize eighth notes on the hi-hat. Rhythm 3 includes a double bass drum stroke (the “a” of two and beat three). At first, playing this double stroke will be challenging. Take your time and remember that most funk music is played at a moderate (not too fast) tempo of about 90 to 100 beats per minute (see Chapter 2 for more on tempo). You can hear this tempo range on the CD (track 21).

1. TRACK 21, 0:30

2.

3. TRACK 21, 0:39

4.

5.

Figure 8-9:
Some basic
funk
rhythms
using
syncopated
bass drum
beats.

6. TRACK 21, 0:48

Rhythms 5 and 6 use a sixteenth-note feel. These rhythms are played using alternating strokes on the hi-hat (right, left, right, left). Rhythm 6 has a double bass drum stroke on the “&” and “a” of beat two. Notice when you play this rhythm that the bass drum stroke on the “a” of two is accompanied by your left hand on the hi-hat. Playing this rhythm takes some time to get used to, so go slowly and be patient.

Syncopating the snare drum beats

Here’s where funk drumming starts getting interesting. Take a look at Figure 8-10 and notice how the snare drum rhythms move away from the two and four. No standard backbeats here. Instead, you play syncopated rhythms on the snare drum to give the groove an unusual feel. The most common placement for the snare drum beats (when you don’t play them on the two and four, that is) is on either the “a” of one or the “a” of three. This placement creates some anticipation in the groove and makes the rhythm particularly “funky.”

1. TRACK 22, 0:00

2.

3. TRACK 22, 0:08

4.

Figure 8-10:
Some funk rhythms with syncopated snare drum beats.

Rhythms 1 and 2 have a straight eighth-note hi-hat pattern while rhythms 3 and 4 incorporate the sixteenth-note pattern (alternating strokes). You play the syncopated snare drum beat on rhythms 3 and 4 with your left hand.

Including ghost notes

Like R&B drumming, funk tends to include a healthy dose of ghost notes. This time, however, the ghost notes occur in addition to syncopated bass drum and snare drum beats. You can include ghost notes with syncopated patterns on the bass and snare drums in a couple of ways: You can play the ghost notes at the same time as the syncopated bass drum beats or not. Figure 8-11 illustrates these two approaches.

1 e & a 2e & a 3 e & a 4e & a

1.

2.

3.

4.

Figure 8-11:
Adding ghost notes to the rhythms from Figure 8-10.

Rhythms 1 and 2 have ghost notes that you play *underneath* (at the same time as) the syncopated bass drum pattern. Rhythm 2 also includes a snare drum beat played on the “a” of one. Rhythm 3 has a double bass drum stroke that you play at the same time as both a hi-hat beat (right hand) and a ghost note (left hand). The coordination that you use to play this rhythm is similar to the sixteenth-note pattern from Figure 8-9 (see rhythm 5). The only difference is that your left hand plays on the snare drum instead of the hi-hat.

The combination of a ghost note and double bass drum stroke is one of the most difficult techniques to master in funk drumming. In fact, try to play rhythm 4 in Figure 8-11. Rhythm 4 is the same as rhythm 3 without the ghost note/syncopated bass drum combination, except this time you don’t play the ghost note when you play the bass drum on the “a” of two. Both approaches are common, but by not playing the ghost note when the bass drum plays its syncopation, you allow the bass drum beat to be heard better because its sound doesn’t compete with that of the ghost note.

Opening and closing the hi-hat

Funk drumming uses a lot of opened–closed hi-hat combinations within the groove (see Figure 8-12). These combinations often occur along with the syncopated snare drum and bass drum beats. Rhythms 1 and 3 in Figure 8-12 each have an open hi-hat stroke on the “&” of four, which lasts for one eighth note (1/2 beat). For rhythm 3, you can choose to play the hi-hat on the “a” of four or not. Each has its own feel. Rhythms 1 and 3 are very common funk grooves.

Rhythms 2 and 4 both have open hi-hats that you play on the syncopation itself and that stay open for only one sixteenth note. In rhythm 2, the open hi-hat occurs on the “a” of two and is supported by the bass drum, which you play at the same time. In this rhythm, you don’t play the hi-hat on beat three; instead, you rest. Rhythm 4 has its open hi-hat on the “a” of four. You don’t play it at the same time as a bass drum beat; instead you play the bass drum when you close the hi-hat (on beat one). Both of these approaches are very common.



Take your time with rhythms 2 and 4 in Figure 8-12; they’re very difficult. It takes some practice to open the hi-hat on the syncopation. The key to a good sound is to close the hi-hat immediately after hitting it. Look for a tight “tsst” sound that lasts only one sixteenth note (if you listen to Track 22 on the CD, you can hear how it’s supposed to sound).

1. 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

2. TRACK 22, 0:34

3.

4. TRACK 22, 0:42

Figure 8-12:
Hi-hat
embellish-
ments for
funk
rhythms.

Embracing the machine

Most new R&B and hip-hop drum rhythms are created on a *drum machine*. A drum machine is a device (not unlike an elaborate metronome) that creates the sound of a drumset or other percussion instrument without a musician actually playing it. This isn't so bad in itself, except most of the people programming these machines aren't drummers and they don't know what's really possible to play on the drums.

Therefore, many of the drum parts are unusual and somewhat awkward (read: very difficult) to play.

If you end up playing contemporary R&B or hip-hop, you'll encounter some of these bizarre drum machine parts that you'll have to interpret onto the drumset. The easiest way to do so is to choose the most important rhythms in the music.

Chapter 9

Swinging into Jazz

In This Chapter

- ▶ Playing a drumset in the jazz “swing” style
 - ▶ Working on basic jazz grooves
 - ▶ Making your grooves swing
 - ▶ Addressing the solo
 - ▶ Understanding jazz-fusion drumming
-

Jazz. Improvisation. These two words are inextricably linked in this style of music. Jazz is all about being in the moment and creating something new. It's said that jazz music mirrors society: It's a balance between individual expression and community responsibility. I don't know about that, but I do know that jazz is a whole lotta fun to play. It's one of the few styles of music where you get to improvise, experiment, and create something new.

In this chapter, I introduce you to the fundamental rhythm of this truly American art form so that you can develop the skills to play jazz rhythms and make your music swing. I also show you how jazz has blended with other styles of music to form what is called jazz-fusion. In addition, I give you some tips for playing well with others.

Getting Into the Swing of It

Most traditional jazz music, like ragtime, swing, or bebop, relies on a fairly simple rhythm consisting of a ride cymbal (played with your right hand) and the hi-hats (played with your left foot). This rhythm (see Figure 9-1) uses a triplet feel and is the precursor to the many shuffle rhythms that you find in rock, blues, and R&B music. Check out Chapter 2 for help reading drum notation and playing triplets and shuffle feel.

Jazz started out having a backbeat on the snare drum (not played nearly as loudly as the rock backbeat discussed in Chapter 6) and a constant bass drum beat played on all four beats of the measure. You can hear this beat in early ragtime music from the turn of the century (the last century, that is).

As jazz developed, the snare drum and bass drum parts slowly changed, and musicians began to use these instruments for accents and embellishments (I discuss these later in this chapter). So for most jazz music, the rhythm in Figure 9-1 can get you started.

1 2 3 4

TRACK 23, 0:00

Figure 9-1:
Basic jazz swing beat.

Occasionally, you may encounter a jazz rhythm written as sixteenth notes. You'll almost always play these notes as triplets. See Figure 9-2 for the difference between the way the jazz feel is written and the way it's played.

Written

Played

Figure 9-2:
The jazz feel, as written and played.



Swing is all about creating anticipation and forward movement in your drumming no matter how fast or slow you play. You create the swing feel two ways:

- ✓ **Concentrate on the third note of the triplet (check out Figure 9-1 to see it on beats 2 and 4).** This note is called the *pick-up beat* because it leads into the next downbeat (the beats that mark the pulse of the music. In this case, the one, two, three, and four are all downbeats). The pick-up beat is without a doubt the most important note in jazz.

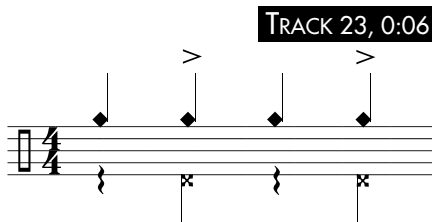
Playing or accenting this note gives the rhythm the edge and drive that people most often associate with swing music. Whether you play this note or not, just thinking about it and being aware of where it should be played allows you to *feel* it. This *feeling* then transfers to how the rest of the band and the audience hear this note.

- ✓ **Try to play just slightly on top of the beat.** This rule basically means that you anticipate the downbeat by playing each note a tiny bit before a metronome would play it. The tricky part is doing this without speeding up or getting out of time with the other musicians.

This trick isn't as difficult as it sounds because the rest of the musicians will also be playing on top of the beat. So all you have to do is make sure that you don't speed up as you play (you can guard against speeding up by practicing to a metronome. For more on metronomes, go to Chapter 20). An easy way to understand what it means to play on top of the beat is to listen to any jazz swing or bebop music.

If you use these two tips, you can play the rhythm in Figure 9-3 and make it swing.

Figure 9-3:
You can really make this rhythm swing.



TRACK 23, 0:06

Varying the tempo

You play the basic swing rhythm slightly differently when you play at the extremes of possible tempos. Take a look at Figure 9-4 to see how to interpret the basic swing rhythm at three different tempos. Notice how the pick-up beat (which is notated in Figure 9-4 as a dotted eighth note and a sixteenth note) is played closer to the downbeat as the tempo decreases. At very fast tempos, you play the pick-up beat closer to the center between the two downbeats (notated as two quarter notes in Figure 9-4). These subtle shifts will automatically become a part of your playing as you listen to and play this style of music. Most of your playing will be in the middle tempo range where the triplet rules.

Figure 9-4 consists of three musical staves, each representing a different tempo interpretation of the swing beat. All staves are in 4/4 time and show a drumset rhythm with a pick-up beat followed by two main beats. The first staff is labeled with a tempo of 60-80 and a reference to TRACK 23, 0:12. The pick-up beat is notated as a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The second staff is labeled with a tempo of 80-200 and a reference to TRACK 23, 0:22. The pick-up beat is notated as a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff is labeled with a tempo of 200+ and a reference to TRACK 23, 0:27. The pick-up beat is notated as two quarter notes.

Figure 9-4: Interpretations of the swing beat at different tempos.

Tackling different textures

Musicians often play jazz using brushes instead of sticks (for more on brushes, check out Chapter 3). Depending on the tempo, you can play a couple of different ways to create a softer, quieter sound for songs or sections where sticks are just too loud.

Figure 9-5 shows a basic slow-tempo brush groove that's a must for quiet ballads (songs with tempos under 100 or so beats per minute). The ties on the notes refer to a circular motion that you do with the brushes on the snare drum head. This motion (shown in Figure 9-5) is reflected by the stems going both up and down on the snare drum line of the figure. Both hands are moving in opposite directions (left hand clockwise and right hand counter-clockwise). In this groove, you play the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4 with your left foot, and you may play the bass drum on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4 very quietly.

For faster tempos (over 100 or so beats per minute), the rhythm in Figure 9-6 is the standard. In this groove you play the basic jazz ride cymbal pattern on the snare drum with your right hand while your left hand moves in a clockwise circle around the head. At the same time, your left foot plays the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4. This combination creates a softer, mellower version of the basic jazz groove that I describe in Figure 9-4 (the medium- and fast-tempo versions).

TRACK 23, 0:35

Figure 9-5:
A slow-tempo groove can be played using brushes.

Alternate notation: Slow brushes

TRACK 23, 0:58

Brushes

Figure 9-6: Use the brushes for medium- and fast-tempo songs when you want to be quiet.

Alternate notation: Medium-fast brushes



Brush technique is an art that you could spend a lifetime exploring. The two grooves I describe in this section are just scratching the surface of what you can do with brushes. If you want to know more about brush technique, check out Chapter 3 for some great resources.

Adding to the beat

You can make some additions to the basic swing beat in Figure 9-1 to give it some variety. The first addition, shown in Figure 9-7, adds a cross-stick snare drum beat (Chapter 3 has more on the cross-stick) on the fourth beat. You can use this technique during certain solo sections, most often during a saxophone solo. Likewise, you can put this snare drum beat on the second or both the second and fourth beats of the measure, as rhythms 2 and 3 illustrate. Rhythm 4 adds the bass drum to the basic groove. Some drummers play this pattern very softly throughout the song. Others use it only when the music calls for a four-beat pulse. You decide what suits you best.

During very quiet sections of the song, you play the main ride cymbal pattern on the hi-hat (Figure 9-8). Anyone who has heard the theme to the *Pink Panther* by Henry Mancini can recognize this very common pattern. It also works well during solos — especially bass solos. Rhythms 2, 3, and 4 in Figure 9-8 add a cross-stick snare drum beat.

1. TRACK 24, 0:00

2.

3. TRACK 24, 0:06

4. TRACK 24, 0:12

Figure 9-7:
Basic
additions to
the jazz
groove.

Expanding Your Horizons

Much of the art in playing jazz is varying the basic groove (as I touch on a little in the previous section). The exercises in this section can help you develop some more skills to add to the interest in your jazz playing. The ability to smoothly interject a snare beat here or a bass drum accent there makes playing the swing beat much more interesting for you and the other members of the band.

1. TRACK 24, 0:19

o + o o + o

3 3

2. TRACK 22, 0:26

o + o o + o

3 3

3.

o + o o + o

3 3

4. TRACK 24, 0:32

o + o o + o

3 3

Figure 9-8:
The hi-hat
rhythm
swing beat.



Practice each rhythm in the following section until it becomes fluid. Then add three bars of the basic swing rhythm (see Figure 9-1) to the front of the exercise.



When you play with others, use the rhythms in this section with an ear toward how they fit with the rhythms of the other instruments. The greatest jazz drummers listen intently to the other instrumentalists, and they can anticipate the next rhythmic phrase. They then add the embellishment that complements that rhythmic phrase. Anticipating the next rhythmic phrase isn't as difficult as it sounds. As you gain experience by playing with others and listening to other drummers, you also gain the ability to use these fills (or embellishments) appropriately.

Riding the cymbal

Have some fun with the basic swing beat by making occasional, minor alterations to the ride cymbal's rhythm. These minor changes allow you to play more musically and to complement the rhythms of the other instruments. Figure 9-9 shows you some ride cymbal variations. Remember to play the hi-hat solidly and think ahead to what you're going to play next to keep the rhythm swinging.

You can use the variations in Figure 9-9 to create phrases that travel across several measures. Figure 9-10 is a four-bar phrase with the ride cymbal pattern that uses a three-beat phrase. This pattern is great if you use it sparingly.

1. **TRACK 25, 0:00**

2. **TRACK 25, 0:07**

3. **TRACK 25, 0:14**

4. **TRACK 25, 0:21**

Figure 9-9:
Ride cymbal
variations
for the
swing beat.

TRACK 25, 0:28

Figure 9-10:
Four-bar
ride cymbal
phrase.

Adding accents

Sometimes you want to add accents to the ride cymbal pattern. Figure 9-11 shows you a few. The first pattern, with its accents on the second and fourth beats, is typically what you want to play. The second pattern is effective if you use it occasionally.

TRACK 26, 0:00

1.

TRACK 26, 0:06

Figure 9-11:
Basic ride
cymbal
accent
patterns for
the swing
rhythm.

2.

You play swinging accents on the third beat of the triplet, as you can see in the rhythms in Figure 9-12. Notice that all the rhythms in Figure 9-12 have a *tie* (see Chapter 2 for more on ties) attached to the accented note. The tie indicates that you don't play the second of the two tied notes. On rhythms 3 and 4, you can either play the note in parentheses or not.

When a composer puts a note in parentheses, she leaves it up to the musician to decide whether it's necessary or not. As you can imagine, you won't find parentheses in music very often, because most composers are very explicit about what they want you to play. Sometimes, depending on the tempo of the song, not playing them may be most effective. Faster tempos get cluttered if you add the extra note.

TRACK 26, 0:13

1.

2.

3.

TRACK 26, 0:20

4.

Figure 9-12:
Accents
played on
the upbeat
(pick-up
beat).

Incorporating the snare drum

The snare drum, with its crisp, cutting sound is a great complement to the main jazz groove. The rhythms in Figure 9-13 use single snare drum accents to add punch and to create anticipation. Notice how all the snare drum accents are played on the third triplet beat. This technique helps the rhythm to swing.

1. TRACK 27, 0:00

2.

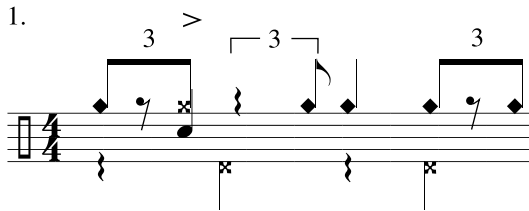
3.

4. TRACK 27, 0:06

Figure 9-13:
Single snare
drum
embellish-
ments.

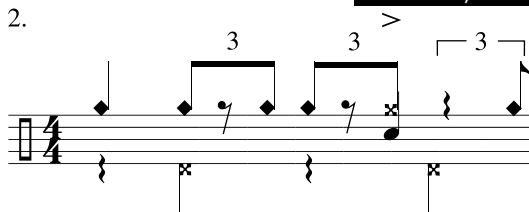


When you get used to these rhythms, try adding a little accent on the cymbal to the snare drum accent (this addition further accents the accented note). For example, on rhythms 1 and 2, you can hit the ride cymbal with the shoulder of your stick or hit the crash cymbal at the same time that you hit the snare drum accent. Although the music doesn't indicate that you play a ride cymbal at the same time as the snare drum accent on rhythms 3 and 4, you can still add a cymbal beat. Just drop the next beat. Figure 9-14 shows how you can do this.



TRACK 27, 0:13

Figure 9-14:
Adding
cymbal
accents to
the snare
notes.



Sometimes you want to play more than one snare drum accent in a measure. Figure 9-15 contains a few examples. With each of these rhythms, you want to accent the pick-up beat harder than the other notes in order to keep it swinging.

Rhythms 3 and 4 in Figure 9-15 contain a snare drum beat on the second note of the triplet. Make sure that you play this beat in its correct place. These rhythms are best played with a *crescendo* (a gradual increase in the volume of the snare drum that makes the last note the loudest).

You can also add a cymbal accent to each of these rhythms on the last note to create even more intensity.

1. **TRACK 27, 0:20**

2.

3.

4. **TRACK 27, 0:27**

Figure 9-15:
Multiple
snare drum
accents.

Including the bass drum

Most of the time in jazz music, the bass drum isn't played or else it's played very quietly. Bass drum accents can add a needed low-end push to the rhythm and add more variety and interest to your drumming. Figure 9-16 has some basic upbeat accents for the bass drum. When playing these rhythms, you may add an accent on the ride cymbal with the shoulder of your stick. Or, you can also add an accent on the crash cymbal. Either of these techniques can add more impact to the bass drum accents.

1. **TRACK 28, 0:00**

2.

3.

4. **TRACK 28, 0:07**

Figure 9-16:
Single bass
drum
accents.

Figure 9-17 adds a second bass drum beat to the first two rhythms in Figure 9-16. If you play the second beat louder with the cymbal accent, you can create a nice feel of forward movement.

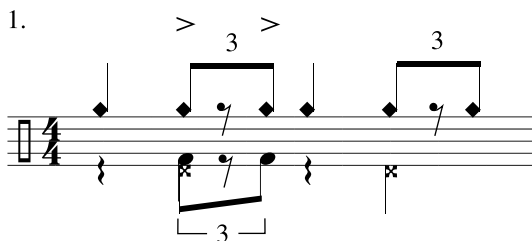
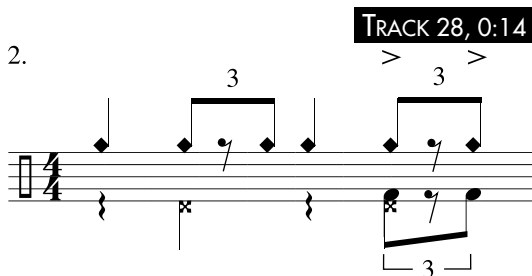


Figure 9-17:
Accents
using two
bass drum
beats in one
measure.



Mixing up your accents

If you feel like you have the hang of adding some snare drum and bass drum accents (see the previous sections), you can combine them to create additional textural interest to your drumming. Figure 9-18 has a few rhythms with which you can practice.

The next set of rhythms (see Figure 9-19) uses more complex snare drum rhythms. You play the double notes on the snare drum very softly.

If you end up playing in a situation where you read *jazz charts*, you'll often see accents marked on the music for the whole band. These accents look different than the basic "greater than" accents because they aren't part of the actual rhythm that you play. Instead, they're written for several members of the band, so they allow you to interpret the rhythm in the ways that you choose. These accents are noted in one of two ways: above the staff lines or within the staff (see Figure 9-20). Each is treated differently.

As a general rule, you play accent markings set above the staff lines as individual accents while you keep time (the basic swing rhythm). These marks above the staff lines are called section figures and are generally played by only a few instruments in the band. You can play these accent figures by adding a snare drum, bass drum, or combination snare drum/cymbal or bass drum/cymbal to the basic groove. Figure 9-21 shows some common accent figures and one way to play each of them.

1. **TRACK 29, 0:00**

2.

3.

4. **TRACK 29, 0:07**

5. **TRACK 29, 0:14**

6.

Figure 9-18:
Snare and
bass drum
accents.

TRACK 29, 0:21

1.

2.

TRACK 29, 0:28

3.

4.

Figure 9-19:
More snare
and bass
drum
accent
patterns.

1.

2.

Figure 9-20:
The two
ways jazz
music
notates
accent
figures.

TRACK 30, 0:00

1.

2.

TRACK 30, 0:07

3.

Figure 9-21:
Playing accents marked above the staff (section figures).

Whenever accents are written within the staff lines, you play them within the entire ensemble (band). You'll almost always stop playing time and set up the figure with a fill. Figure 9-22 shows how you do this.

TRACK 30, 0:15

1.

Musical notation for exercise 1. The top staff shows a melody in 4/4 time: a quarter rest, an eighth note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The bottom staff shows a drum accompaniment with a bass drum part and a snare/cymbal part. The bass drum part consists of a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The snare/cymbal part consists of a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. There are three triplet markings (a '3' above the notes) and an accent (>) above the second triplet.

2.

Musical notation for exercise 2. The top staff shows a melody in 4/4 time: a quarter rest, a quarter rest, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The bottom staff shows a drum accompaniment with a bass drum part and a snare/cymbal part. The bass drum part consists of a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The snare/cymbal part consists of a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. There are four triplet markings (a '3' above the notes) and three accent (>) symbols above the triplets.

TRACK 30, 0:24

3.

Musical notation for exercise 3. The top staff shows a melody in 4/4 time: a quarter rest, a quarter note, a quarter rest, and a quarter note. The bottom staff shows a drum accompaniment with a bass drum part and a snare/cymbal part. The bass drum part consists of a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The snare/cymbal part consists of a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. There are four triplet markings (a '3' above the notes) and four accent (>) symbols above the triplets.

Figure 9-22:
Ensemble
accent
figures.

Telling Your Story: Soloing

Because jazz is an improvisational art, you have many opportunities to stretch your creative muscles and exhibit your chops (technical skills). The *solo* is your time to tell your story and have some real fun. An effective solo can add a lot to the music, but a poorly executed one only disrupts the flow of the song.



The two most important things to remember when soloing are

- ✓ **Keep it swinging.** If you can keep the swing, it doesn't matter if you just keep time with a few accents during your solo or if you pull out all the stops and play like Buddy Rich. In either case, the audience and other musicians will respect and appreciate you (of course, the more cool licks and rolls you can add musically, the more appreciation you'll get).
- ✓ **Play musically.** The best way to do this is to match your rhythmic phrasing to the song and to the solos of the other musicians. Get to know the song structure and listen carefully to the other musicians as you play and you can choose the licks, fills, and rolls that complement them.

Making two-bar phrases

Solos typically come in two- or four-bar phrases (a phrase is just a musical idea). Many times in a two-bar phrase solo, you *trade bars* with the bass player or other instruments (in other words, you play two bars of a solo, and then the other instrument plays two bars, and so on).

The possibilities for what you can play are endless. Figure 9-23 contains some two-bar phrases to use as a starting point. After you learn the rhythm, practice by playing two bars of the basic swing beat before it.

As you get comfortable with these rhythms, try creating your own variations by combining elements from one rhythm to another.

Creating four-bar phrases

Another common solo configuration is the four-bar phrase. Figure 9-24 has a few to get you started. After you get comfortable with each of the phrases, practice them with four bars of time in between. You can combine groups of two to make eight-bar phrases.

1. TRACK 31, 0:00

L LR RL LR RL LR LR LR

2. TRACK 31, 0:08

R RL LR RLRL R RL LRLRL RL

3. TRACK 31, 0:17

R RL LRLRL LR RLRLRL RL L

4. TRACK 31, 0:25

R RLRLR RL LR RLRLRL RL

Figure 9-23:
Some two-
bar solo
phrases.

1. TRACK 31, 0:36

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

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

2. TRACK 31, 0:46

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

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

Figure 9-24:
Four-bar
solo
phrases.

Blending Styles: Jazz-Fusion

Fusion represents a blending of different styles of music. Fusion music developed out of the free-form jazz music of the 1950s and 1960s. As rock music became more and more popular, jazz musicians started incorporating some of the instruments (mostly electric guitar) and sounds used in rock into their own music. The result was both very popular and extremely radical compared to acoustic jazz music.

Traditional jazz musicians dismissed this new style as nonmusical and a corruption of their art. Despite that backlash, fusion caught on. Over the last 30 years, fusion music has taken many forms. The two most popular are as follows:

- ✓ **Jazz-fusion**, a blending of jazz with rock and Latin
- ✓ **Rock fusion**, a louder blend incorporating more of the hard edge of rock with the improvisation and experimentation of jazz

Drumming for both of these styles is very similar. The only real difference is in the way the grooves are interpreted (you hit the backbeat harder for the rock versions).



Fusion drumming can be an awful lot of fun to play. This is one style of music where you're actually encouraged to play a lot of notes, fills, and even solos! Can you imagine? At last a style of music where the drummer gets to let loose along with the other guys and gals. Sure you gotta keep the groove happening, but your wings aren't clipped — you get to soar if you want.

Playing Fusion Rhythms



Fusion drumming isn't for the timid. You need to be comfortable playing all styles of music, especially Latin and funk, and be able to play a lot of notes. You also need to be able to play the rudiments fluidly in order to handle the often bizarre sticking patterns used in fusion drumming (for more on the rudiments, check out Chapter 3 or the Cheat Sheet in the front of the book).

With fusion music, the emphasis is on rhythmic intensity. Generally, you play lots of notes in a short amount of time. The measure is filled up with densely layered orchestrations (the different drums and cymbals), often using the whole drumset within a groove.

Take your time with the rhythms in this section. They're very challenging, but if you can play the rhythms in the other chapters, you can get a handle on these as well. Even if you don't want to play fusion music, the skills that you can gain from practicing these rhythms easily translate to any other style of music.

Knowing that more (not less) is more

Filling in the spaces within the rhythm is the main idea in jazz-fusion drumming. Ghost notes are an essential component of fusion drumming. *Ghost notes* are very quiet (almost inaudible) notes played on the snare drum that add a smooth texture to the rhythm. Figure 9-25 has a ghost note pattern for you to try out (for more on ghost notes, check out Chapter 8).



To play ghost notes effectively, barely lift your stick off the head and tap it lightly. The softer you can play these notes, the better.

Figure 9-25:
A ghost note pattern.

TRACK 32, 0:00

Forgetting swing (at least for now)

With its emphasis on incorporating rock and Latin rhythms, jazz-fusion drumming rarely uses a swing-type groove. In fact, you can easily connect many fusion grooves to some traditional Latin feels. Check out Figure 9-26 to see how a samba and a nanigo (see Chapter 10 for more on these patterns) translate into fusion grooves.

Another common rhythmic structure for fusion grooves comes from unusual sticking patterns. Here's where the rudiments (see Chapter 3 for the basics on rudiments) can come in handy. Check out Figure 9-27 to see how you can use a paradiddle to create a fusion groove. Notice how the bass drum and ride cymbal (right hand) patterns are closely related. This technique is common in fusion drumming.

1. TRACK 32, 0:08

Figure 9-26:
Latin samba
and nanigo
fusion
grooves.

2. TRACK 32, 0:16

Figure 9-27:
Using
paradiddles
to create a
fusion
groove.

1. TRACK 32, 0:22

Dealing with odd meter

Fusion drumming allows you to really explore odd meters (see Chapter 2 to discover more about the meter or time signature) and unusual rhythmic phrasing. Being able to play comfortably in time signatures other than 4/4 is another important part of fusion drumming and one that makes this style of music more difficult to play than many others. Don't worry, after a while, these odd meters become almost as natural as 4/4 for most people.

To get your feet wet in a few odd meter grooves, check out Figure 9-28. These grooves introduce you to the most common odd meters: 5/8, 5/4, 7/8, and 7/4. Practice these rhythms slowly and count out loud until you get the feel of them.

1. **TRACK 32, 0:30**

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 &

2.

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 &

3.

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 &

4. **TRACK 32, 0:35**

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 &

Figure 9-28:
A few odd
meter
grooves.

Chapter 10

Looking at Latin and Caribbean Styles

In This Chapter

- ▶ Playing Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, and Caribbean rhythms on the drumset
 - ▶ Developing the feel of Latin styles
 - ▶ Interpreting traditional rhythms on the drumset
-

Latin and Caribbean music are some of the most popular styles of music today. You can find the Latin influence in pop music (Shakira and Jennifer Lopez), rock (Santana), and jazz (Chic Corea). Likewise, you can find Caribbean music in many forms, from the traditional Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers to the reggae-influenced sounds of The Police and No Doubt. Whether you want to play in a salsa band or just integrate some Latin or Caribbean rhythm into your rock or jazz playing, this chapter is for you.

Here, I introduce you to the exciting world of Latin drumset playing. You can explore many styles of Latin rhythm, from Afro-Cuban to Brazilian to the lesser-known Caribbean approach. You can discover how to interpret traditional percussion parts and apply them to the drumset. **Note:** Some of the rhythm styles that I mention in this chapter are also in Chapter 15, but those involve a variety of hand drums rather than the drumset.

Building On Traditions

The drumset is a relatively new instrument in Latin music, going back only about 50 years. The drumset parts in Latin rhythms developed out of the traditional instrumentation (congas, bongos, cowbells, and so on). You generally play the cowbell, shaker, or triangle pattern on the cymbal or hi-hat. You play the conga parts on the snare drum (with the snares turned off, which creates a high-pitched sound and gives the music a more authentic sound), toms, or bass drum. As a result, you can find many interpretations of these rhythms and a variety of possible sounds.



When Latin musicians first used the drumset, they added it to the percussion instruments in the band. Today, you may find only a drumset player and maybe an additional percussionist in a band. The drumset's role has evolved from being used to complement the traditional percussion instruments to replacing them in some cases.

The way that you approach Latin rhythms is determined to some extent by the instrumentation in the band. Most of the rhythms in this chapter work well in situations where you're the only drummer *and* where the band has another percussionist or two. As you get used to playing these rhythms with other musicians, you find ways to make them fit your situation.

Many of these rhythms have been used in Latin-jazz music, beginning in the 1950s. In many cases, they were used in their original form. However, recently, some of the more traditional rhythms have developed into their own unique styles of playing (you notice this new development most in the case of the samba, which I describe later in this chapter).

Playing Afro-Cuban Rhythms

Afro-Cuban drumming is probably the most defined style of Latin music. Because of Cuba's restrictive political climate as well as the Cubans' emphasis on education and tradition, Afro-Cuban rhythms have remained almost constant since the 1950s.

If you find yourself playing in an authentic Afro-Cuban group, you want to stick pretty much to the rhythms that this section presents. Otherwise, the rest of the musicians in the band may not appreciate your playing.

Bolero

The *bolero* is the Latin ballad. Slow-paced and romantic, the drumset part is subdued and relatively easy to play. Figure 10-1 shows some basic bolero patterns. These rhythms are orchestrated with the snare drum (second space from the top), with the snares turned off, and the tom-tom (first space from the top) covering what is traditionally the conga part. Rhythm 1 uses a simple bass drum (first space from the bottom) pattern on the one and three with the hi-hat (top of the first line) playing the traditional *afuche/shaker* part. Rhythm 2 is a little more complex, adding a more syncopated bass drum pattern, implying the *clavé* rhythm (see Chapter 17 for more on the *clavé*). (For a complete breakdown of reading drum notation, see Chapter 2.)

“What? You want me to play fewer fills?!”

Years ago, I played with a reggae band that didn't have a percussionist. My rhythms were designed to fill out the sound of the band, so I played a lot of fills and bell patterns on my drumset. When I joined another reggae band that had a percussionist playing congas, guiro, cowbell, and timbales, I found that I had to alter my

playing so that I didn't infringe on his parts. I ended up playing much simpler rhythms with a lot fewer fills. Needless to say, it took me a while to get used to the change (I admit that I was a little put-off by not being able to “express” myself the way I had when I played alone, but I got over it).

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

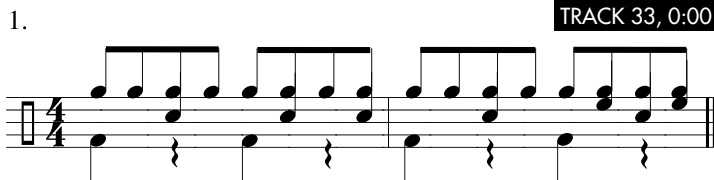


Figure 10-1:
Basic bolero
rhythms.

Cha-cha

The *cha-cha* was very popular in the 1950s and, to the untrained ear, is pretty much a faster bolero. Okay, even to the trained ear the percussion parts are virtually the same. You can play the rhythms in Figure 10-1 a little bit faster to make them fit into most cha-cha songs. If you're interested in some different rhythms, Figure 10-2 shows some common cha-cha drumset rhythms (you can also play these patterns for the bolero if you choose).



Rhythm 2 in Figure 10-2 is a little busier than the rhythms shown for the bolero. You won't really want to use this rhythm if you're in a band with a full percussion setup because it will conflict with the rhythms of the congas and other percussion instruments. This rhythm is best situated for groups with a drumset player only. Again, turn off the snare drum's snares.

1. TRACK 33, 0:25

2. TRACK 33, 0:37

Figure 10-2:
Cha-cha
drumset
patterns.

Mambo

This fast rhythm is very common not only in traditional Afro-Cuban music, but also in the jazz-Latin scene of the 1950s and 1960s. The mambo rhythms in Figure 10-3 are traditional in their orchestration. The only real difference among these rhythms is in the bass drum and cymbal parts. The snare drum and tom-tom parts remain the same. Rhythm 2 has a bass drum part that skips the downbeat of two (just like some of the bolero and cha-cha patterns). Getting used to not playing the bass drum on a downbeat can take some time. Start out slowly and take your time when learning this technique.

1. TRACK 34, 0:00

2. TRACK 34, 0:09

Figure 10-3:
The mambo.



Notice that the rhythms in Figure 10-3 are written in cut time (2/2 time). You count them “1 e & a,” rather than “1 & 2 &.” You play the snare drum with a cross-stick (see Chapter 3 for details on the cross-stick) with the snares turned on.

Nanigo

The *nanigo* is a 6/8 pattern that’s quite common in jazz-Latin music and is often the only 6/8 Latin rhythm used. Afro-Cuban music, however, has many 6/8 patterns. Take the rumba Columbia, the bembé, the guiro, and the abakua, for example. Each of these styles has its own feel and traditional approach. The difference, as they say, is in the details. In nearly all these rhythms, the traditional clavé pattern is the same and is played on the ride cymbal (many people play on the bell of the cymbal to give the pattern a more authentic sound).

You can use the rhythms in Figure 10-4 with many of the 6/8 styles of Afro-Cuban music (for a jazz-fusion version of this rhythm, check out Chapter 9).

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

1. TRACK 34, 0:19

2. TRACK 34, 0:27

Figure 10-4:
The 6/8
Afro-Cuban
patterns
(nanigo).

Playing Brazilian Rhythms

Brazilian rhythms for the drumset became wildly popular in the 1960s. Samba and bossa nova songs were part of every jazz or Latin band’s repertoire. The sultry, syncopated sound was entrancing and lent itself well to *improvisation* (making alternations to the rhythms if you choose).

Samba

The *samba* is one of the most popular Latin styles, and the samba drumset pattern is arguably one of the most used and improvised-upon rhythms in the world. This rhythm has been incorporated into rock, jazz, and R&B drumming. With its driving bass drum and syncopated cymbal pattern, all that you need is a backbeat to make the samba fit with these other styles.



Figure 10-5 offers some pretty traditional samba patterns. Rhythm 1 is the most basic, with the cymbal playing straight eighth notes and the bass drum playing quarter notes. The snare drum plays a syncopated pattern as a rim-shot or as a rim-tap. If you play the rim-shot, the sound that you want is light and high-pitched. Hitting the drum two or three inches from the rim gives you the best sound.

1. TRACK 35, 0:00

2. TRACK 35, 0:07

Figure 10-5:
The samba.

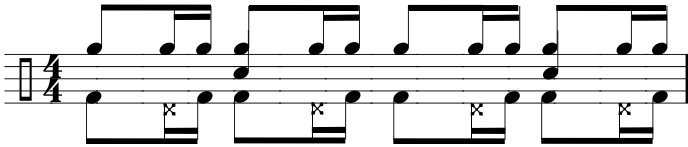
Rhythm 2 is decidedly more complex for your feet, adding a bass drum beat on the “a” of each beat. This is the most common bass drum pattern for contemporary drumset sambas (play these rhythms on the ride cymbal).

As an added treat and in recognition of the pervasiveness of the samba rhythm in rock and jazz, Figure 10-6 adds a snare drum backbeat on the two and four and creates a “rock samba” pattern (see Chapter 11 for another variation of this groove, and check out Chapter 6 for general information on playing a backbeat).

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

TRACK 35, 0:14

Figure 10-6:
The rock
samba.



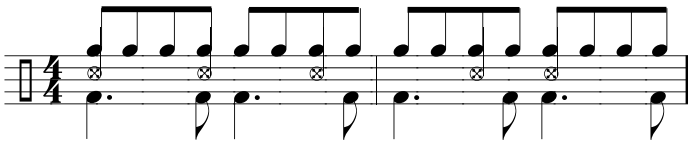
Bossa nova

The *bossa nova* developed out of the samba style of Brazilian music but it has a much mellower feel. The drumset part is very subdued and the basic groove usually doesn't have many variations. Figure 10-7 contains the quintessential bossa nova rhythm. In it, the bass drum plays a pattern very similar to the samba (only at half the speed), and the hi-hat plays straight eighth notes. The snare drum plays the traditional clavé pattern with a cross-stick.

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

TRACK 35, 0:23

Figure 10-7:
The bossa
nova.



The rhythm in Figure 10-7 will get you through almost every situation where you're asked to play a bossa nova rhythm. In case you get tired of playing the same rhythm over and over again, Figure 10-8 gives you a cool variation.

TRACK 35, 0:34

Figure 10-8:
A bossa
nova
variation.





The snare drum pattern in Figure 10-8 has been altered to reflect the rhythms of the bells rather than the clavé. Be careful not to overdo the use of this variation, though. Some musicians have a low tolerance toward drummers messing with their familiar rhythm by eliminating the clavé pattern.

Playing Caribbean Rhythms

The drumming styles of the Caribbean have been a lot less celebrated among Latin America's exports, but the sounds of reggae and calypso are some of the most familiar around. For many, reggae and calypso is the music of a laid-back lifestyle, sun-drenched beaches, and drinks with umbrellas.

The lyrics in Caribbean music are often very political in nature (reggae) and, like the rhythms from Cuba and Brazil, can be based on African celebrations (calypso). Either way, the drumset parts are rhythmically interesting and a lot of fun to play. If you're lucky enough to find a reggae or calypso band in which to play, these rhythms will help you fit right in. Of course, you can always use these rhythms with a rock or jazz band to create some variety or a unique sound (like the band The Police did in the 1970s and 1980s).

Reggae

Most people are familiar with the reggae music of Bob Marley, the laid-back, funky, almost aromatic sound of Jamaica. Reggae and its recent incarnations, particularly ska (which I talk about shortly), have been successfully integrated into rock music with the songs of The Police, UB40, and most recently, the rhythms of the band No Doubt.

The reggae style of drumming actually encompasses several different feels and musical movements. You have *one drop*, the most characteristic of reggae, the hard-driving *ska*, and *rockers*, which is more pulsating than the one drop or ska. Each of these styles has a place under the umbrella of reggae.

One drop

The rhythms in Figures 10-9 and 10-10 represent the most widely-used and familiar reggae rhythm, the one drop. The term *one drop* simply refers to the way you play the bass drum. You have one *drop* or stroke/accent on the second and fourth beats. In each of these rhythms, the bass drum plays the *backbeat* along with a cross-stick on the snare drum. Figure 10-9 uses a sixteenth-note feel, while Figure 10-10 offers a half-time shuffle feel (for more information on sixteenth-note, half-time, and shuffle feels, see Chapter 6).

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

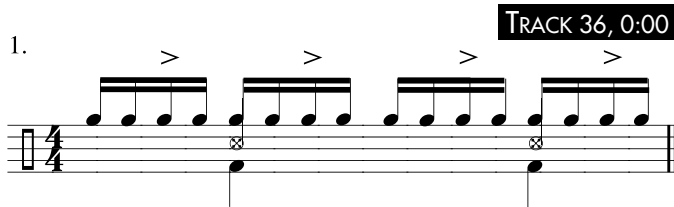
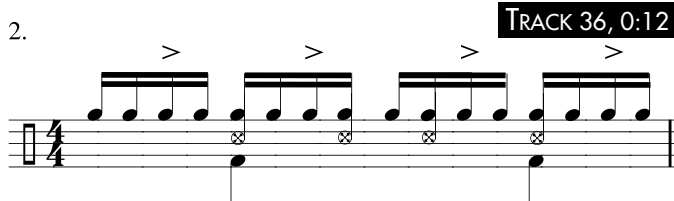
1. 

Figure 10-9:
The
sixteenth-
note
one-drop
feel.

2. 

1 t t & t t 2 t t & t t

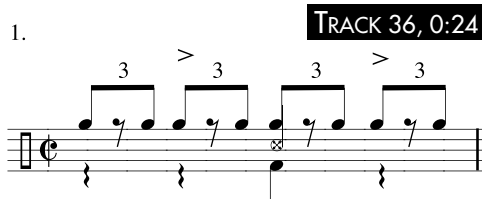
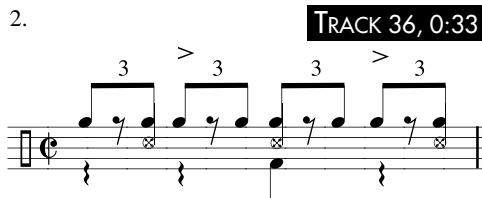
1. 

Figure 10-10:
The half-
time shuffle
one-drop
feel.

2. 

In both Figures 10-9 and 10-10, rhythm 1 is the basic one-drop rhythm. Rhythm 2 contains an added snare drum beat to add more interest to the main groove.

After you get comfortable with the rhythms in Figures 10-9 and 10-10, try using one of the hi-hat patterns shown in Figure 10-11.



As you play these rhythms, you can occasionally add a syncopated accent beat on the snare drum using a rim-shot. This addition usually occurs on the “a” of beat four. Figure 10-12 shows you how to add this accent (Figure 10-12 is written with straight sixteenth notes but you can play with a shuffle feel as well).

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

1. TRACK 36, 0:41

Figure 10-11:
Alternate hi-hat patterns for the one drop.

2. TRACK 36, 0:51

Figure 10-12:
Accent figures for the one drop.

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

1. TRACK 36, 1:01

Ska

The ska rhythm includes a lot of R&B influence. The ska basically adds an open snare backbeat to the rhythm with a slightly faster tempo. Much of the music of The Police uses a ska-type rhythm. Figure 10-13 shows you a few ska rhythms. Play them with a solid rock-like backbeat and you have the basic feel of ska.

Rockers or funk

The *rockers* style of reggae is said to have developed out of the ska rhythm. What distinguishes this feel from the other types of reggae drumming is a heavy (pounding) bass drum. Figures 10-14 and 10-15 show you a few rockers grooves. Notice how the bass drum plays steady eighth notes. The tempo of the rockers style is slower than the ska groove and sometimes even slower

than the laid-back one drop. The rhythms in Figure 10-14 use a sixteenth-note feel, while the rhythms in Figure 10-15 have a shuffle feel. You can play these rhythms with either a cross-stick on the snare drum (as written) or with a strong backbeat (like the ska rhythms in Figures 10-12 and 10-13). You can also play these rhythms using the alternate hi-hat patterns in Figure 10-11.

TRACK 37, 0:00

1. 1 & 2 &

TRACK 37, 0:08

2.

Figure 10-13:
Some ska
rhythms.

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

TRACK 37, 0:17

1.

TRACK 37, 0:29

2.

Figure 10-14:
Rockers-
style
rhythms
using a
sixteenth-
note feel.

TRACK 37, 0:40

1. 1 & 2 &

Figure 10-15:
Rockers-
style
rhythms
with a
shuffle feel.

TRACK 37, 0:49

2.

Calypso

The *calypso* is high-energy dance music. This style of music originated in Trinidad and is an integral part of the yearly Carnival celebration.



Figure 10-16 shows the basic calypso rhythm written in cut (2/2) time. You play the hi-hat pattern with alternating strokes (see Chapter 6). The tempo is pretty fast, and you have to keep the groove moving and make sure the bass drum beat on the “a” of the first beat is solid. Accomplishing this rhythm can be somewhat difficult with the hi-hat accent pattern playing its accent on the “and” of the beat, so practice it slowly until you get it.

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

TRACK 38, 0:00

R L R L

Figure 10-16:
The basic
calypso
rhythm.

After you get the feel of the basic groove, you can start adding some accents on the tom-tom and snare drum. Figure 10-17 shows you a few. Keep in mind that you want to maintain the momentum of the rhythm while you add these accents. Rhythm 1 has a snare drum beat on the “and” of beat 2. Play this beat with your right hand. Notice that the bass drum’s second beat moved to the two instead of the “a” of beat one. Rhythm 2 hits its snare accent on the “a” of beat two in the second measure. Play this one with your left hand.

1. TRACK 38, 0:08

R L R L . . .

2. TRACK 38, 0:16

Figure 10-17:
Calypso variations.

After you get comfortable playing the rhythms in Figures 10-16 and 10-17, you can add an open hi-hat pattern. This rhythm, shown in Figure 10-18, is one of the things that characterize calypso music. Becoming fluid with this rhythm takes some practice. Open your hi-hat on the “&” of beat 1 (marked with an “o”), keep it open during the bass drum beat on the “a” of beat 1, and close it on beat 2 (marked with a “=”).

TRACK 38, 0:25

+ + o o + + o o + + o o + + o o

Figure 10-18:
The quintessential calypso hi-hat pattern.

Filling It Out

Often, the fills for Latin music are syncopated. To get you started, Figure 10-19 has a few fill patterns that fit into most of the rhythms in this chapter.

1.

TRACK 38, 0:34



2.

TRACK 38, 0:45



Figure 10-19:
Some fill
patterns for
Latin styles.

3.

TRACK 38, 0:57



After you get them down, try playing each fill with each of the main grooves in this chapter. Some work better than others, but they all introduce you to playing Latin music. If you're interested in more fill ideas, go to Chapter 13.