

Chapter Eleven: Fills

In this chapter:

Sixteenth and thirty-second notes fills

Sextuplets based fills

Most of my students have more trouble coming up with interesting fills than with grooving (or so they think); so I've compiled a list of sixteenth, thirty-second, triplet and sextuplet notes based fills for your learning pleasure.

Before we get to the double bass drum fills that are in this chapter I suggest a preliminary exercise that will help to build a richer and more musical vocabulary.

In chapter four we played two bar phrases. Bar one with the hands and bar two with the feet. Try going over the first bars again. This time play a one bar beat then read the first bar with the hands. That's your loop.

Orchestrate your hands around the drums.

If you play with enough confidence, these simple bars will sound like great musical fills.

Notice what we often do in this book. We take an exercise that was constructed for one purpose and use it elsewhere. This method shows you how musical phrases can be interpreted as grooves, fills and reading exercises.

So, to get you started, this reading bar:



can be interpreted on the drum set in the following manners:

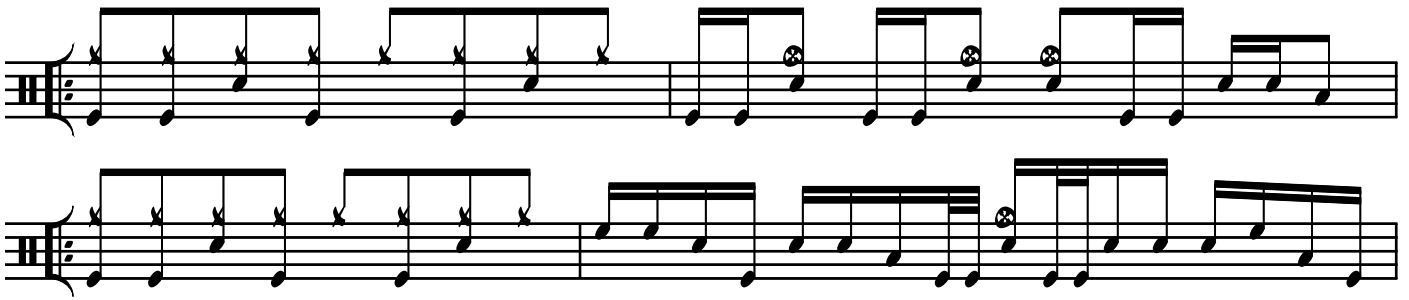
Five staves of musical notation, each representing a different drum interpretation of a reading bar. The notation uses various rhythmic symbols such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and beams, along with specific drum set symbols like 'x' for cymbals and circled 'x' for hi-hats. The first four staves show variations in the placement of these symbols, while the fifth staff includes circled 'x' symbols, indicating hi-hat use.

In a similar fashion, this reading bar:

A single staff of musical notation showing a reading bar with a series of eighth notes and beams, representing a specific rhythmic pattern.

can be orchestrated around the drums in many ways. Here are five of them:

Five staves of musical notation, each representing a different drum orchestration for a reading bar. The notation uses various rhythmic symbols such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and beams, along with specific drum set symbols like 'x' for cymbals and circled 'x' for hi-hats. The first four staves show variations in the placement of these symbols, while the fifth staff includes circled 'x' symbols, indicating hi-hat use.



The same can be done with any phrase ever constructed. You can use the one bar phrases found in chapter four as a starting point. Remember, it is not about how many phrases you tackle as it is about how many variations you can come up with using the same phrase. Out of these variations, find the ones that sound good to you and add them to your personal collection of fills.

And now back to the fills you will find in this chapter.

How I came up with them is not important although I will explain some construction methods I used.

Where I used them, if ever, is also not important because it is a personal matter.

What is important is for you to practice them with a beat before and a beat after. This way the fills relate to music. You learn how to apply them in "the real world" right from square one. You can use any beat you want. Don't get stuck with the same beat that I offer. The reason I almost always print the same beat is because I want you to concentrate on the fill and not on a beat that keeps changing with each exercise.

Aspire to play the fills (along with anything else that you will ever play or say) with as much conviction you can generate. Believe in what you are saying. Don't try selling anything to anyone. Be yourself. Fills are not an opportunity to show the masses what you are worth or how many hits you can fit in one second period. Don't get flashy or cocky.

Practice the fills so many times that you'll be able to hear the music they contain. Your fills should sound musical, not like an exercise.

If you find yourself thinking about a fill technically before you are playing it, you don't know this fill well enough and you are not truly speaking the language of music yet.

Knowing something is being able to spit it out in relation to a musical phrase when the circumstances call for it.

Fills should not be played to show off what you can do on the drum set. They should accompany the music being played and serve the song.

Once you get them into your system, when the time is right, they'll come out of you in a musical setting that will be appropriate.

At this point, take a break and pat yourself on the back because what you just played was something musical and not a pattern that you ripped off a book.

In other words, use "my fills" to stimulate your creativity. Analyze my playing and understand how the fills were structured and what sound and ambience they produce. Then inject your personality in.

Don't be afraid to experiment.

Orchestrate them around the kit anyway that sounds good to you. Interchange parts and come up with your own ideas by expanding the concept that a specific fill is based upon.

You will find recurring themes in my fills. Many of them started out as combinations between the feet and the hands. Some fills were created to answer a musical need while others were mathematically engineered.

At first I used a lot of two and four stroke combinations. These fills sound very symmetrical. To make them sound more interesting, I use the dotted quarter note cycle. Later on, I started experimenting with odd combinations of five and seven stroke cycles within a sequence of either sextuplet or thirty-second notes. These fills are asymmetrical. They pull you away from the quarter note pulse and that is their magic... when executed with conviction.

So here is a compilation of my personal arsenal of fills. I leave it up to you to analyze their structure, if you so desire. They are in no particular order so feel free to start anywhere you like. Remember that the way the fills appear here, they are just patterns. Using them at the right time in the context of a song will make them musical.

My Personal Arsenal Of Sixteenth and Thirty - Second Notes Fills.

The image displays ten numbered musical staves, each containing a sequence of rhythmic patterns. The patterns are primarily composed of sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often grouped into beams. The first seven staves (1-7) show a progression from simple eighth-note patterns to more complex sixteenth-note runs. Staff 8 features a dense sequence of thirty-second notes. Staff 9 and 10 include some notes with circled 'x' marks, possibly indicating specific articulation or bowing techniques. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat).

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Musical staff 30: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes: four quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C5) with stems pointing down, followed by four eighth notes (D5, E5, F5, G5) with stems pointing up, and finally four eighth notes (A5, B5, C6, D6) with stems pointing up.

31



Musical staff 31: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes: four quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C5) with stems pointing down, followed by four eighth notes (D5, E5, F5, G5) with stems pointing up, and finally four eighth notes (A5, B5, C6, D6) with stems pointing up.

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Musical staff 32: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes: four quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C5) with stems pointing down, followed by four eighth notes (D5, E5, F5, G5) with stems pointing up, and finally four eighth notes (A5, B5, C6, D6) with stems pointing up.

33



Musical staff 33: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of notes: four quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C5) with stems pointing down, followed by four eighth notes (D5, E5, F5, G5) with stems pointing up, and finally four eighth notes (A5, B5, C6, D6) with stems pointing up.

My Personal Arsenal of Sextuplets Based Drum Fills

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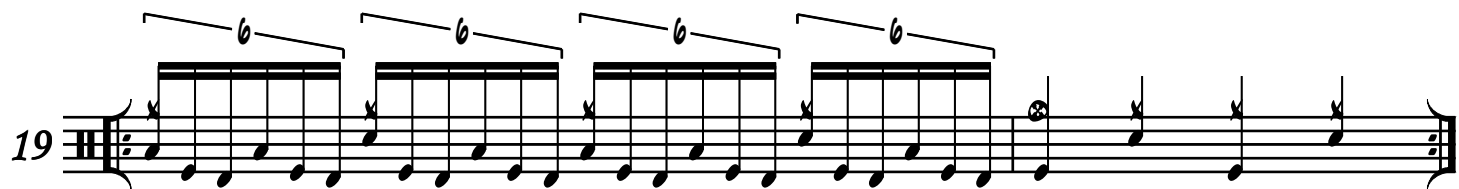
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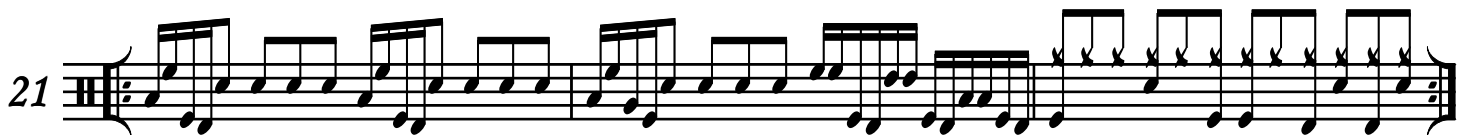
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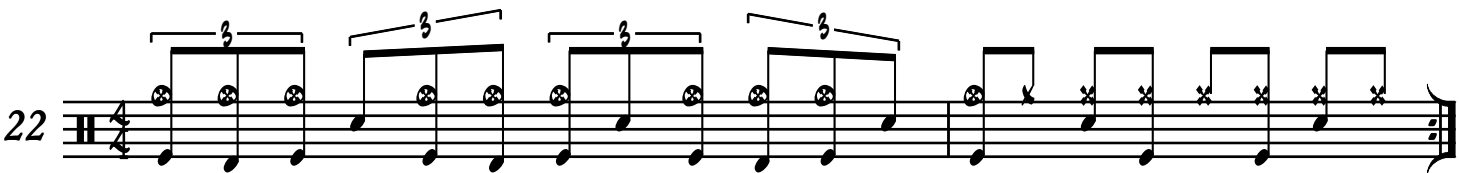
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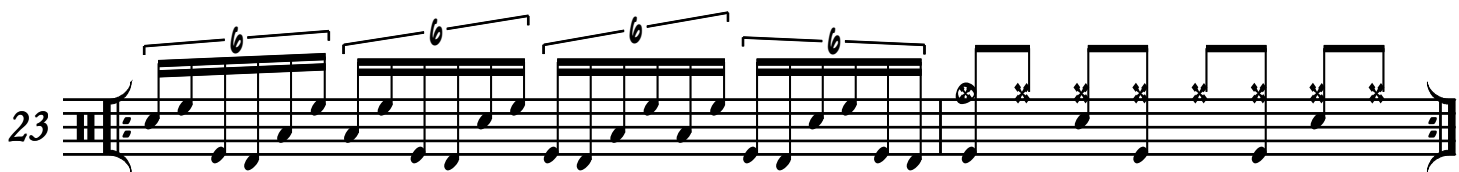
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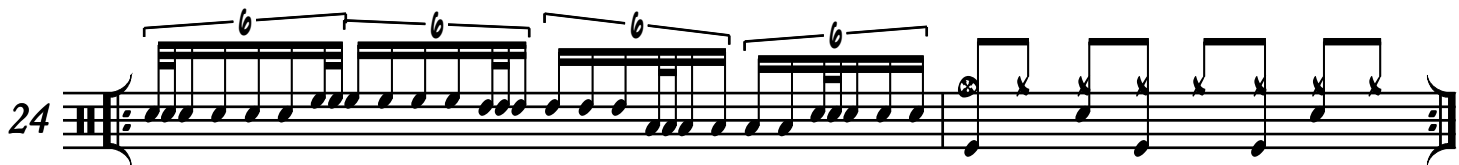
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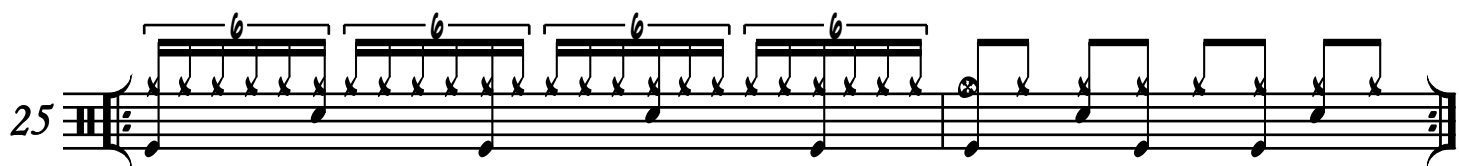
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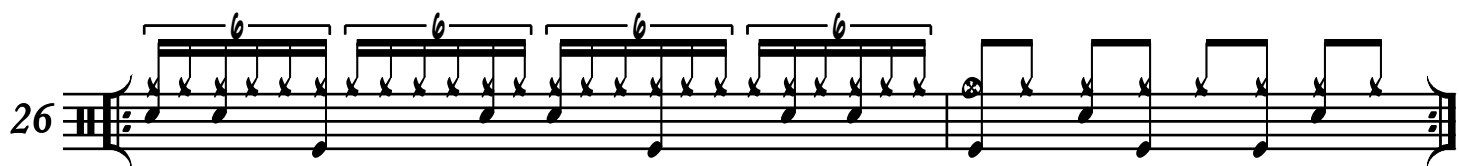
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