

Eight Dynamics

Beginner Variation

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TenorLine

5

Tenors

PURPOSE: This exercise focuses on the basic velocity stroke and simple movement around the drums while changing heights.

The idea is to use the same exact technique and stick velocity, regardless of the stroke height.

1) STICK MOTION:

- All strokes in this exercise should begin legato. In the cresc and decresc measures, make sure the stick height changes gradually over the entire measure. A very common tendency is to decrescendo too quickly. It takes some control to gradually decrease the stick height.
- Be sure that the sticks always move in a vertical path, no matter what drum is being played.
- Wrist/hand angle should be maintained throughout; DO NOT rotate the hand/wrist to strike the outer drums.

2) SOUND QUALITY:

- Make sure that the quality of sound is consistent regardless of the stick height. Some common areas of error:
 - Pounding the very last note of the crescendos.
 - Playing one hand louder/softer than the other.
 - Letting the sound die out; Always put velocity into the stick!
 - Playing outside of the playing zones; use the simple split pattern to not only focus on the velocity stroke, but playing and maintaining proper playing zones as well.

3) RHYTHM AND TIMING:

- How perfect is your eighth note rhythm? Be sure to place every note!
- Some common areas where mistakes occur:
 - First two notes of the exercise: The first note defines the exercise starting point and the second note defines the tempo. You MUST internalize the tempo before you start so that these two notes are the 'perfect' distance apart.
 - Hand-to-hand transfers: It's very common for players to warp the rhythm when switching hands. The key here is to think of the exercise as a steady stream of eight notes while "ignoring" the fact that you are switching hands.
 - Switching drums: Often times, tempo (and volume) will/can fluctuate when playing a split pattern.
Be sure to practice the exercise on one drum first, then play the split pattern, changing nothing but the drum you're hitting.

4) VARIATIONS

- Play exercise with all variations in stick height
- Double the length of each measure
- Halve the length of each measure
- Play the exercise as all double stops, checking that the stick motion from left to right is the same.
- Switch drums 1 & 3 and 2 & 4 (i.e. Right hand plays drums 3 then 1)

Apply and think about all the concepts discussed here as you progress to the intermediate and advanced variations.