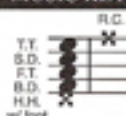


The Hi-Hat

Not Just 2 And 4 Anymore

by Steve Hass

MUSIC KEY



American jazz has changed quite a bit in the past thirty years. Putting emphasis on 2 and 4 is still a part of the basic timeline, however, it doesn't always have to be stated on the hi-hat. Today's drummers are using the hi-hat as another voice for improvisation in addition to keeping time.

So what happens if we change the timeline a bit? While touring with jazz guitarist John Scofield, I experimented with different hi-hat patterns that extended over four- to sixteen-bar phrases or over an entire thirty-two-measure drum solo. Two of my favorite hi-hat patterns involve playing upbeat and dotted quarter notes. Dotted quarter notes are especially fun because they create an artificial three feel over a straight 4/4 swing pattern.

Basic Patterns

To begin, let's play the swing pattern on the ride with the following left-foot patterns.

Basic Independence

Now play the figures in Example 3 using the following methods, while playing the previous foot patterns. (Note: Example 2 is a three-bar phrase, therefore it won't resolve evenly every four bars. So count carefully.)

1. Play the figures with the bass drum and left hand separately.
2. Designate everything larger than an 8th note to the bass drum, and 8th notes or lesser note values to the left hand.
3. Come up with your own orchestrations.

3 swing 8ths

Advanced Independence

After you've mastered the previous exercises, try playing the following figures over the left-foot patterns. The objective is to be able to divide more complex figures between the kick and snare so that your left hand and bass drum become fully independent.

4

Improvising

Once you're comfortable playing basic figures over Examples 1 and 2, try improvising over the left-foot ostinatos within different song forms. I've included a short thirty-two-bar solo over the standard tune "If I Were A Bell," which outlines the melody. In a live situation, I don't play an entire solo using only this concept. Instead, I continue onto other ideas that free up my left foot to be included in the improvisation. As you're working on these concepts, remember to keep the ride cymbal swinging. Have fun, and let me know your thoughts.



Steve Hass is a versatile drummer who's toured and/or recorded with John Scofield, Ravi Coltrane, Manhattan Transfer, Suzanne Vega, and many others. His debut solo CD *Traveler* is available through his Web site, www.stevhass.net.



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