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# PREFACE

As a kid, household chores were a tough sell. But there was one big exception—my dad was a drummer. Bounding downstairs when he had a gig, I would haul his Rogers Holiday kit to the car and pack everything with immense accomplishment. I was a drummer on the make!

My dad grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts and like Joe Morello a few years earlier; he studied with the great George Stone. Every two weeks he rode a bus to Boston and made his way to the Stone Drum and Xylophone School on 61 Hanover Street. It was right next door to an old burlesque theater!

Under Stone, my dad worked through *Stick Control* and before it was published, *Accents and Rebounds*. He amassed a collection of exercises in Stone's own hand. Years later I would sift through those cryptic notes wondering what it all meant.

When I started drumming, my dad through his time with Stone, made me aware of good technique, precision, coordination, control, movement and balance. I was too young to understand, but I was joining the Stone lineage! My training took me through two conservatories and some amazing teachers but a feeling something was missing dogged me. I just didn't know what.

Rummaging through bins one day in a music store, I found *It's Your Move* by Dom Famularo. As I flipped through the pages it hit me: here it finally was! In his book, Dom revealed the connection between Stone, Moeller and Gladstone, the three masters of motion and natural drumming. Together they comprise the total spectrum of drum technique, which in turn is our heritage.

Soon after, a trip to Dom's studio was a necessary part of visiting family. Driving to Bridgeport and riding the ferry across the Sound to quaint Port Jefferson, I entered Dom's studio and began learning the techniques of natural motion. There were many late nights at a practice pad but my benchmark was always the joy of playing and complete freedom at the kit that all great drummers own.

It's been a long road from the boy mulling over Stone's penciled notes to performer and teacher, but a question has developed along the way: how do we achieve total freedom and control at our instrument?

I offer this book as one answer to that question. Understanding motion and balance as central to freedom and control, this book is itself a journey... to creative expression, to *Drumming In All Directions!*

I dedicate this book to:

Dominick Dieni—My dad and the drummer before me.

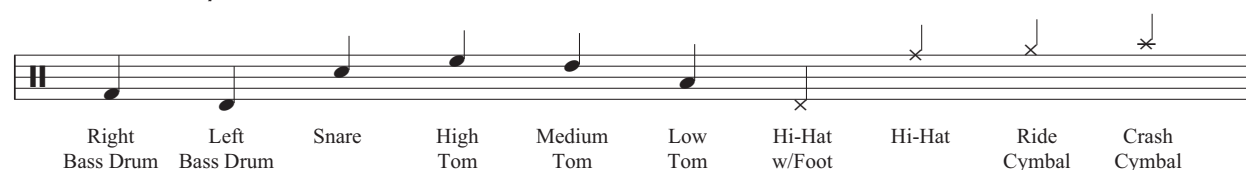
The teachers who guided me to a higher understanding of music, movement and balance: Warren Myers, Alan Dawson, Fred Hinger, Jack Van Geem and Dom Famularo.

My students, who have taught me so much.

And all you who will journey into the world of the masters of motion!

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## Drum Set Key



# COORDINATION BREAKDOWN

## Crash and Burn

You're grooving hard and suddenly—BANG! A cool idea pops into your head. You even feel it in your body. Warp speed, limbs steal it and in a dance of awesome precision, throw it out into the world!

Or maybe this happens...

Your limbs tangle in an uncooperative mess and it all backfires. That idea—your little nugget of musical genius—crumbles like an old cookie.

What a feeling, huh?

You know it's about coordination, but what do you practice? Wrestling a vague coordination problem, we can forget our goal—creative freedom; even complete connection to the music! How do we practice that?

A good question! Let's first get straight with our terms...

## What Is Coordination?

Drummers often use *coordination* and *independence* interchangeably. They're not the same! When interdependence is added to the mix, the descriptions often dissolve into poetic abstractions. This helps nobody. Let's look at these three concepts and find practical, drummer-based definitions.

A good general description of coordination is the ability to use our four limbs in a relaxed and efficient way regardless of any groove or pattern. Coordination breaks down into 3 basic levels, each concerned with greater degrees of control:

**Level 1: Control of individual limbs** and integration of like limbs.

We first learn control of each limb, without connection to the others.

We usually start with hands playing solo, then work on integrating them into a single functioning unit. Next, we follow the same path with the feet—individual control and then integration into a cohesive unit.

**Level 2: Independence** – control of two or more limbs playing together.

Independence is control beyond the integrating of like limbs. The spectrum runs from any limb combination playing the same rhythms to any limb combination playing different rhythms.

Traditionally, drummers work on Independence by playing one pattern against another until the combined result is dialed into our muscle memory. We might assign any limb combination to these patterns. Once pattern A can be played against pattern B, we've achieved independence. But only with those 2 patterns! Now we must practice pattern A with pattern C and so on. Eventually we might have 20 or 30 different pattern combinations at our disposal to express ourselves in whatever style of music we play.

Maybe you see the limits of independence? We want connection to the music. We strive for unhampered creative control so we can follow the music through its every ebb and flow. That's really the definition of complete expression. How can we do that with 20 or 30 coordination patterns? There must be something beyond independence!

**Level 3: Interdependence** – control of any limb combination pattern moving fluidly to any other limb combination pattern. All limbs are working together, completely at the service of musical expression!

Independence and interdependence are similar, but different types of limb control:

Independence is about *fragmentation*: We approach music by figuring what limbs play which composite rhythms and how to piece it all together.

Interdependence is about *integration*. We approach music with the complete picture in mind. The limbs understand how to work together and create the whole. It's the final development of coordination!

OK, so you're grooving hard and suddenly...BANG! With independence, your limbs work as separate units piecing together the whole of your idea. With interdependence, your limbs are an integrated unit. They understand how to work together to realize your idea.

I don't know about you, but integration is where I want to go! So how do we get there?

## **From Motion-Balance to Creative Freedom**

There's a natural progression of single limb coordination and like limb integration through independence to interdependence. That progression is based on control. Control is the beginning of our journey to creative freedom!

This brings me back to: What is coordination? If coordination is control, than what kind of control are we talking about?

Control is a combination of *Motion* and *Balance*.

*Motion* refers to the natural motion techniques of George Stone and Sanford Moeller. Free stroke and Moeller technique are about making relaxed throwing motions and using the rebound energy of the stick or beater.

*Balance* is our ability to remain in a position or move to other positions while retaining relaxed control.

We now have a more nuanced definition of coordination:

*Successful coordination occurs when techniques of natural motion incorporate proper balance of the body at the kit and an overall relaxed approach.*

There's a dance-like relationship between motion and balance, each affecting the other within an ever-changing musical fabric. I call this symbiotic relationship *Motion-Balance*. It's the foundation of coordination!

Without motion-balance, coordination is hampered and is more like a math problem. The furthest we can go is a compromised independence—figuring how one pattern fits into another, how one limb plays against another. We likely encounter familiar problems of groove, feel and time. Or put another way—problems of creative expression!

With motion-balance, coordination transforms into a dance between all limbs, a dance beyond independence to interdependence.

Perhaps you now see a shortcoming in the hands first, feet second approach to learning drums? We often view the hands and feet as separate animals with different techniques. In order to achieve motion-balance, we must use the same techniques of natural motion and balance for all limbs!

## Enter Drumming In All Directions

*DID* abandons the usual fragmented approach of traditional independence studies. By starting with motion-balance, it embraces integration at the outset!

Instead of coordinating pattern combinations, *DID* starts with coordinating limb-motions. There are 50 limb-motion combinations, 50 ways that all 4 limbs combine into alternating motions. These are progressively ordered in the *Limb Matrix* and include 2-limb motions, unison pairings; 3-limb and 4-limb motions.

The motions are brought to life, challenged and developed by a series of *Control Workouts*. Each workout takes a specific figure I call a *Rhythm-Melody* and carries it through 15 exercise variations. The rhythm-melodies are figures elemental to all music!

By combining the limb motions in anything you might play with patterns fundamental to any music you might play, *Drumming In All Directions* will transform your playing by developing motion-balance.

You'll apply what you've learned in a more creative setting with *Groove Melodies* based on the control workouts. Finally, you'll push your control even further by adding timekeeping ostinatos and ride patterns to the limb motions.

Using this fundamental motion-balance approach, you'll develop the proper muscle memory and playing experience to build a solid coordination technique. If your drumming reflexes are tuned to these basic limb motions, music is easier to play because all music has these motions!

As you develop motion-balance, playing becomes effortless and fun. You'll feel the groove from brain to body. You'll achieve a new freedom of expression that's like flying by the seat of your pants—You'll be drumming in all directions!

Questions? Comments? Contact me at [www.daviddieni.com](http://www.daviddieni.com)



# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

## The Control Workouts

The exercises are organized in routines called *Control Workouts*. These in turn are divided in two parts: control workouts in duple time and control workouts in triplet time.

Both parts contain four workout groups. The routines in each group are based on a unique rhythm-melody carried through a 15-exercise variation grid.

The two-bar exercises comprising each routine are notated on a one-line staff. Lead limb/s play notes above the line; secondary limb/s play notes below the line. Limbs trade places at the end of each bar: secondary limbs become lead limbs. This ensures equal limb development!

## The Limb Matrix

The limb matrix is a progressive ordering of all possible limb motions. It's our key to practicing the control workouts and achieving motion-balance.

There are 3 versions of the matrix, each one focusing on a specific area of coordination: 4-limb motions, 3-limb motions with a 1-limb ostinato, 2-limb motions with 2-limb ostinatos.

Depending on the matrix version, limbs are notated as follows: hands are R, L and H. The feet are r, l and f. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following Limb Matrix chapter.

Arrows are used to depict limb motions. Lead Limbs are left of the arrow, secondary limbs right of the arrow. *Lead limbs* initiate the motion and *secondary limbs* follow.

The following 2-limb motion is right hand to left hand alternating:

**R → L**

Limb Unisons are shown with multiple letters. The following 3-limb motion is right hand alternating with left hand-right foot unison:

**R → Lr**

## Putting It All Together

Control workouts are performed with the motion variations of the Limb-Matrix.

Consider 2-limb motion 1A from the 4-Limb Matrix: **R → L**

Let's use this motion to play exercise 10 from Duple Time Control Workout 1.1:

Example 1



If lead right hand plays notes above the staff line and secondary left hand plays notes below, the simplest way to play the exercise is both hands on snare drum. In the second bar, the pattern switches to a left hand lead.

Example 2



# THE 4-LIMB MATRIX

The 4-limb matrix contains 50 limb combinations, abbreviated as follows:

R = Right Hand                      L = Left Hand  
r = Right Foot                        l = Left Foot

The limb combinations are divided into 4 groups: *2-limb motions*, *unison pairings*, *3-limb motions* and *4-limb motions*.

There are 3 coordination levels within the 2-limb motions, unison pairings and 3-limb motions:

*Level 1: Side-to-side alternating* of same limbs. Right hand to left hand, right foot to left foot. This is the most natural of the three limb motions.

*Level 2: Upper to lower body alternating* between limbs on same side of body. Right hand to right foot, left hand to left foot. This is a less natural motion.

*Level 3: A crisscross motion* from upper to lower body. Right hand to left foot, left hand to right foot. This is the least natural of the three motions.

4-limb motions are an exception to the above. The resultant feel is more like level 2- up and down alternating.

The following examples are from the 4 groups of the 4-Limb Matrix:

- 2-Limb Motion, Level 1: **r → l**  
Right Foot alternates with Left Foot
- Unison Pairing, Level 2: **LI → Rr**  
Left Hand – Left Foot Unison alternates with Right Hand – Right Foot Unison
- 3-Limb Motion, Level 3: **R → Lr**  
Right Hand alternates with Left Hand – Right Foot Unison
- 4-Limb Motion, Level 2: **L → Rrl**  
Left Hand alternates with Right Hand – Right Foot – Left Foot Unison



In Example 6, both hands play cymbals on 8th notes. 16th notes are split between snare and 3 toms with a clockwise motion, always starting on snare.

Example 6

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

Let's change the above voicing by alternating streams of 16 notes from snare-high tom-low tom to snare-medium tom-low tom.

Example 7

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

Example 8 retains cymbals on 8th notes. The drums are in a more broken pattern, starting with toms and moving to both hands on snare. LH plays high tom only; RH plays low tom only.

Example 8

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

Example 9 adds more complexity: medium tom plays when the 16th-note streams are long enough to include another tom after the high tom.

Example 9

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

Examples 8 and 9 use broken patterns where each hand plays a specific tom. Another option is to maintain the melodic shape of the pattern. This means the hands cross each other as they travel across the kit.

Example 10

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

These are just a few of the many ways the hands can be voiced across the kit. The feet are much simpler!

## Voicing the Feet

The most common way to voice the feet is right foot on bass drum, left foot on hi-hat. Another is both feet on double pedal. I recommend using a double pedal for the control workouts, as there is no better way to promote limb equality. When more comfortable, your left foot will have the option of switching from double pedal to hi-hat during the workouts.

### Two Important Points:

- Limb voicings are played through an entire workout, not just one exercise! The constant variation of the workouts means the voicing changes across the 15 exercises. You'll have the challenge of navigating these changes while maintaining the voicing.
- When the control workouts are played with ostinatos, the principles of hand voicing remain the same.

Let's consider voicing examples from each matrix. All examples involve the feet.

### Voicing Examples: 4-Limb Matrix

*Unison Pairing, Level 2: L l → R r*

Ex. 13 • Workout 2.2 – Part II



*L – snare; R – ride cymbal; l – hi-hat; r – bass drum*



*L – snare; R – low to high tom; l & r – double pedal bass drum*



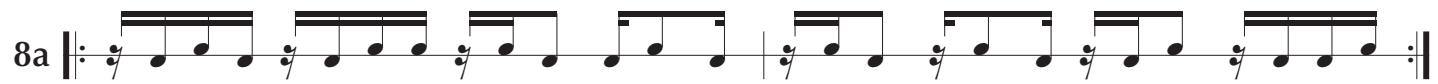
*L – snare to high tom; R – low to medium tom; l & r – double pedal bass drum*



## Duple Time 1.2



## Groove Melodies 2



# Groove Melodies 4

7a  Musical notation for exercise 7a, staff 1. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

b  Musical notation for exercise 7b, staff 2. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

8a  Musical notation for exercise 8a, staff 1. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

b  Musical notation for exercise 8b, staff 2. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

9a  Musical notation for exercise 9a, staff 1. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

b  Musical notation for exercise 9b, staff 2. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

10a  Musical notation for exercise 10a, staff 1. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

b  Musical notation for exercise 10b, staff 2. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

11a  Musical notation for exercise 11a, staff 1. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

b  Musical notation for exercise 11b, staff 2. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

12a  Musical notation for exercise 12a, staff 1. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

b  Musical notation for exercise 12b, staff 2. It features a sequence of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, repeated across the staff.

# Triplet Time 3.4

This musical score consists of 15 staves, each containing a sequence of 15 triplet exercises. Each exercise is a pair of eighth notes beamed together, with a '3' above them indicating a triplet. The exercises are arranged in two groups of 15 on each staff, separated by a vertical bar line. The first group contains 12 exercises, and the second group contains 3 exercises. The exercises are numbered 1 through 15 on the left side of each staff. The notation is consistent across all staves, showing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in a triplet.