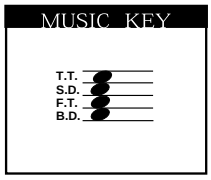
The "Third Hand" Concept

Using Your Bass Drum To Spice Up Fills

by Ted Bonar and Ed Breckenfeld

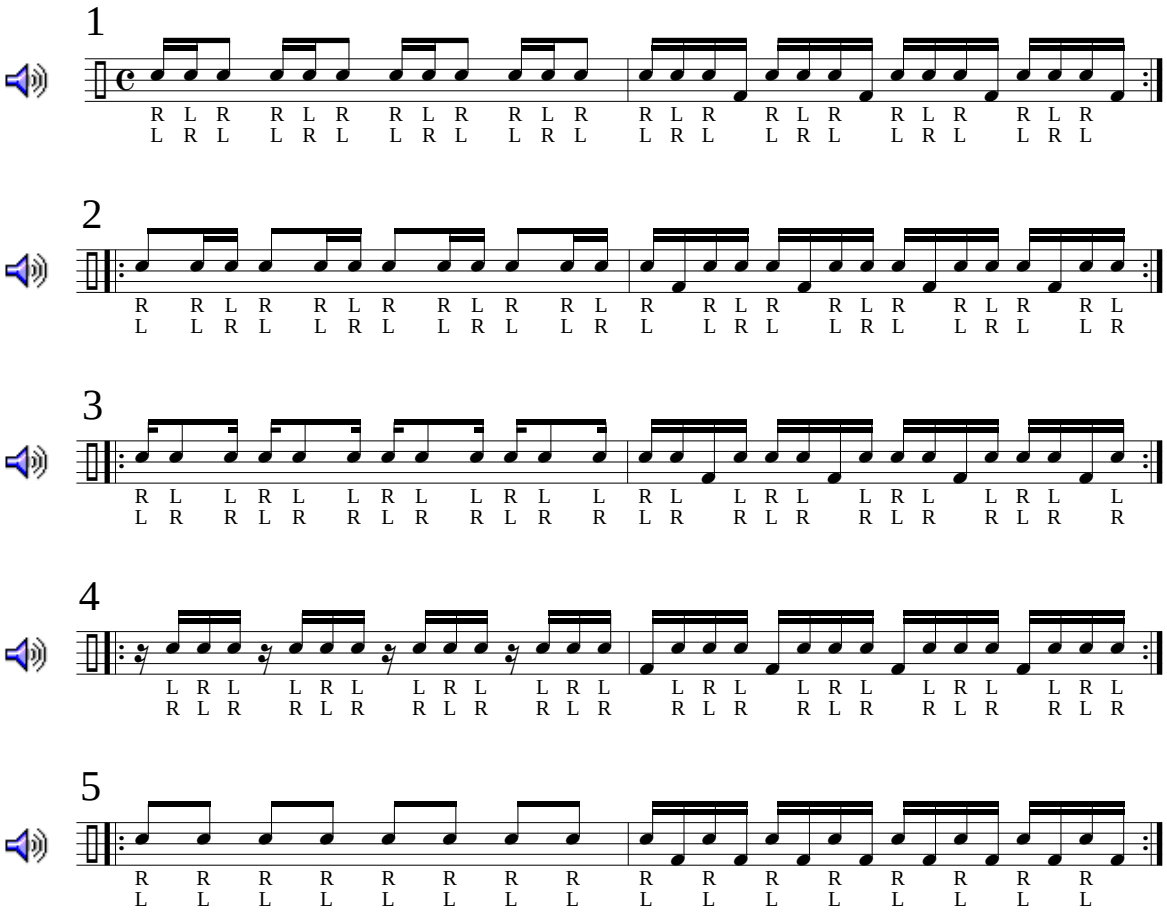


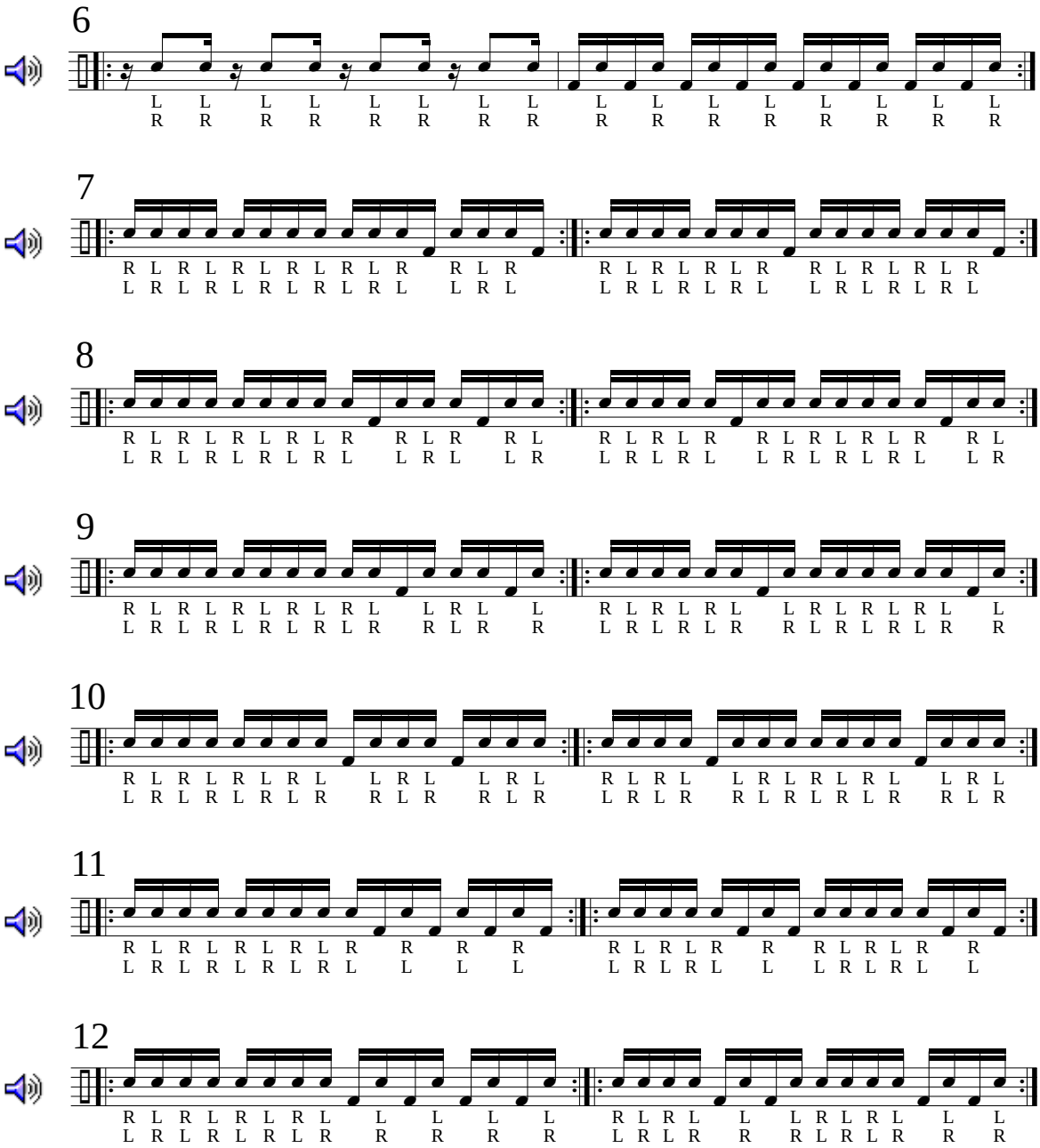
Many drummers feel frustrated when it comes to creating new ideas for drum fills. As a developing drummer, it's sometimes easier to rely on playing similar sticking patterns over and over rather than trying to find fresh ways to play the same rhythms. One simple way to come up with new ideas is to incorporate the bass drum into your fills.

Utilizing the bass drum within even the simplest pattern will break up the sound and texture of a fill. It will certainly add a new voice to your stock patterns. Some drummers think of this process as adding a "third hand" to their drumkit arsenal.

The following examples use some common rhythmic patterns (in the first measure), and then the "holes are filled" with some added bass drum action. Some of these patterns will be simple to play, and some will be surprisingly "clunky" at first. In order to make *all* of these patterns sound as smooth as possible, we recommend you play them slowly and with a metronome in order to keep a consistent rhythmic pulse. (For you advanced players, work through these patterns playing quarter notes on the hi-hat)

Click on the icon next to any exercise to hear the sound!





Now it's up to you. Go ahead and re-examine your own favorite fills and see how adding a bass drum here and there can freshen them up. This may give you an entirely new vocabulary on the set!

See the July 2000 Modern Drummer for the complete lesson.

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