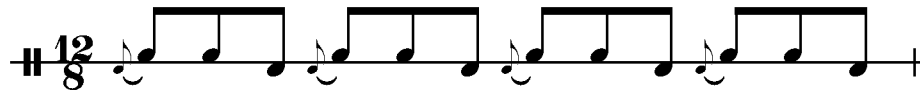
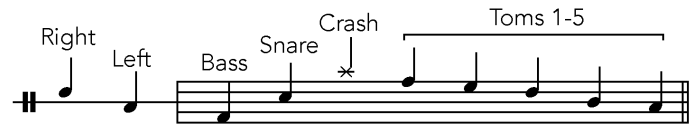


Swiss Fours

Ever since my high school drum teacher showed me how to bounce swiss triplets, I've found myriad uses

for that handy little rudiment, especially on drum set. In this lesson, I'll show you a number of drum fills that use swiss triplets along with a variation of the swiss triplet that I call a "swiss four" or "swiss fourlet". The exercises are written for five toms (refer to the key) but if you have fewer than that, then just remap them onto the drums you have. Let's get started!



In case you're not familiar with the swiss triplet, it's a non-alternating sticking for the more common "flam accent" rudiment. It's convenient for two reasons. First, because it's a non-alternating rudiment, each repetition starts on the same hand, which makes it sound the same if we have our hands on two different instruments, say a snare drum and a tom. Second, with some practice, it's not too hard to bounce this rudiment as an offset double stroke roll, which can potentially push your playable tempos through the roof!

On drum set it's often necessary to "flatten" the flams by playing the grace notes simultaneously with the opposite hand. So you should also learn this version of the swiss triplet:



Notice that both the right and left hands play two notes and then pause. This is an opportunity to use your double stroke roll – just play a wrist stroke for the first note and let the bounce stroke tap the second note. It can be a little tricky to get this going, since the wrist stroke for the right hand plays with the bounce stroke of the left, but keep at it! If you can't get this right away, don't worry – it's not necessary to be able to bounce swiss triplets to continue the lesson.

To get the "swiss four", simply play three strokes in the right hand, instead of two:

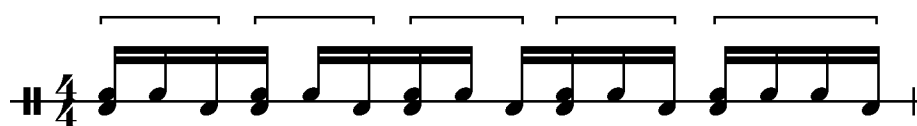


Let's flatten the flams, too. (Drum corps geeks may recognize this as an offset "eggbeater" roll.)



Again, we can bounce this with a triple stroke in the right hand (wrist, bounce, bounce) and a double stroke in the left (wrist, bounce), with the left bounce stroke coinciding with the right wrist stroke. It's worth mentioning at this point that it's a good idea to learn these rudiments left-handed as well, even though we won't be using them in this lesson.

These are kind of cool on their own, but the magic starts when we mix them up with swiss triplets and



The brackets outline four swiss triplets and a final "swiss four". This is a bit of a pain to notate (and read), so for the rest of the lesson, I'll just outline the phrasing by grouping the flags, like so:



Clear as mud? Great, because it's time to put these to work on the full kit. Let's start by planting the left hand on the snare drum while the right hand moves down the toms.



For a syncopated, melodic fill that still feels full, I recommend playing the snare drum a bit quieter than the toms. We can accentuate the syncopation even more by layering the bass drum under the right hand.



Notice that the bass drum plays three notes in a row at the end of the fill. If that's not feasible, then try dropping the second (or the second and third) bass drum notes. Of course, we could also try layering the bass drum under the left hand instead, which will give us a less syncopated, but more intense "fireworks" sort of fill.



For a coordination challenge, try dropping the snare drum and just play the bass drum in place of the left hand.



Of course, this is just one combination. Going back to our original idea, let's alter the phrasing a bit, putting a "swiss four" up front. This changes the feel of the entire fill.



As you can see, there are lots of ways you can mix and match these ideas. Try out your own variations to come up with your own signature fill using the "swiss four"!

—ARA



Andy Artz

During his twenty-five years of drumming, Andy Artz has won awards for both performance and composition. A renaissance man, he is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University with a degree in both Electrical & Computer Engineering and Philosophy. Andy has worked as a show drummer and music director for Celebrity Cruises and The Yachts Of Seabourn, and studied hand drumming and percussion with Michael Bissonnette. Andy resides in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where he is a guest artist and clinician for area schools, churches, and community ed programs. Andy currently appears with fully-costumed party band Pop Rocks, acoustic indie band Atwater Junction, and world music group The Robert Everest Expedition.

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