

THE LANGUAGE OF DRUMMING BOOK

A System for Musical Expression

**BENNY
GREB**

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How To Use This Book

HOW TO...

1. Don't just play the through exercises, but also read the text. (Like you are doing now. Great! Continue...) The text holds keys to create much more material than is actually notated on the pages. Especially in the last chapters, there are some footnotes that include clues to how a new principle or variation can be applied to transform other exercises in the book. If all these other variations were written out, this book would have been ten times its current size. Through these hints, I was able to strip down the page count without throwing out a single idea. Be sure to give these footnotes a try, because they will make you feel like you suddenly have a *Language of Drumming Book 2* in your hands.

2. Although this book is full of notation, I don't want you to merely consume. When you are through with one page, instead of going on with the next one, I want you to stop for a second and think some very important thoughts that separate the good player from the great. Here are some examples:

“What is the essence of this?”

“What would I do with this?”

“What else can I do with this?”

3. Expanding on this concept: Because we use a print medium here, what mostly gets translated is the *what*—the *what to play* for this or that exercise. But music happens largely in the *how* you play it. This is what I actually love about books. We get a lot of information, but the true character of the *how* is up to us. So it is your choice, and really a matter of your personal quality standard, if you manage to turn the exercises on these pages into something that has groove, dynamics, and all the other parameters that make up good music. So, broaden your perspective. When you realize you're focused on a certain technique, step back, play it again, and also listen to how it sounds. Or when you're looking at stick height and listening to your dynamics, also remind yourself about your body posture. This is what will help you to get the most out of this material, and it will turn you into your own best teacher.

When you analyze your playing, ask yourself: “How can I do this better?” “How did it feel?”

Always remember: Practicing an exercise until it sounds good is a low standard. We have to practice until it feels good (and then you'll realize it sounds even better!).

4. I think I already covered this, but just to make sure: Please note that on most of the exercises that feature drumset applications always show a basic ostinato to showcase a possible environment for the ideas. However, I kept these ostinatos very basic, so it gives the reader a quick entry to the exercise, as well as a clear, uncluttered appearance notation-wise. Please don't stop there. These are merely suggestions to get you started and inspire different ideas to come to life.

5. Also, on the pages that contain exercises, you will find boxes that let you write down the date and tempo as you practice. I know that when you really work with this book and make progress, there won't be enough space in these boxes. If so, then use an extra page, or, even better, write a practice diary. However you do it, I recommend you document your practice—so maybe look at those boxes as more of a constant reminder to do so.

...USE...

Actually use it! Use all of it!

I know this might sound simple, but it has a huge impact.

Did you know that of all the books sold worldwide, about 90% of them are not read past the first chapter? What a waste, right? I guess if we did a survey including drum books we would find even lower numbers. Do you own a drum book that you never worked through? Some exercises you never even tried? Some text you've never read? I know you do. You are not alone—I do. First of all, it's hard to really stay at it, and there also can be this psychological effect: “I own this book” equals “So now I *have* this material.”

The bad news is we don't have anything unless it is really a part of us—unless we really do it, and do it repeatedly. A habit. Our musical capabilities are habits, and habits take quite some time to develop. And it gets even worse! Sometimes you'll work on something and think, "Oh yeah, I've got this," and then when you want to access the same stuff a month later, there's a huge question mark above your head. Almost anything gets unlearned when it is not practiced regularly.

The point I want to make is this: Really make use of all of the ideas in this book, and keep them fresh. The fact that you've read this already tells me that you are different. Well done. I now invite you to get the most out of this book by taking *what* is in here and putting your *how* to it.

...THIS BOOK...

is yours. Now make the content truly yours.

How To Use The CD

On the CD you'll find some practice tracks that can be divided into four categories. (Track list is on page 93.)

Guide Tracks:

These should be more than a "demonstration" of an exercise, but provide a nice backing track for practicing different incarnations of the alphabet, words, or syntax—no matter if it's just clapping the rhythms, or using it as a guide for rudiments or drumset applications.

Call and Response:

On each of these tracks, you will hear rhythms for you to repeat. This is basically a review/test to see if you can play and feel all the material in the corresponding chapter. It will also challenge your focus and your ability to listen and react quickly—one of the most important things for us musicians! Again, after you are through with the rhythms themselves, immediately use them to test your agility for the more advanced applications.

Jam Track:

Here a bass guitar will play along with you.

Warm-up to Burnout:

This is basically the alphabet a few times in a row, but every time it repeats, the tempo is 10 bpm faster. In the fourth bar of every letter you will also hear a rim click that plays what is about to follow. This way you don't have to memorize the alphabet to get through this. These tracks are useful as a reference that guides you through the alphabet in different tempos. They should also be applied to every incarnation of the letters in this book.

One version might be great for you to focus on accuracy while going through the rudiments and/or as a bass drum part. Another version might be perfect for a workout with singles on the right hand. Whatever you use it for, it will make the alphabet audible with a click in such a way that you can find out which incarnation of the alphabet is playable for you, up to what tempo. You can use this at first to train accuracy with the click, then continue until you get to a tempo that pushes you to your maximum speed, until you have to drop out. Whatever you do with it, it's just there to give you a wide range of tempos for a wide range of different applications. For some exercises, some tempos feel very slow, but for others, the very same tempo makes perfect sense. I recommend you making full use of this phenomenon and really getting to know your repertoire in this way.

Have fun with this great tool. It honestly helped me a lot.

CHAPTER 1: *Letters*

Part B - SNARE AND PAD EXERCISES



Guide Track: 1-8



Call and Response: 27-34



Warm-up to Burnout: 43-48



Time Letters

SNARE AND PAD EXERCISES / BINARY A-P

Now let's apply the Rhythmic Alphabet to the pad or snare drum.

Instead of clapping the letters like in the warm-up, simply go through the alphabet and play each letter with your sticks on the pad or snare drum.

Do this in three steps:

1. First do it with your stronger hand.
2. Then with your weaker hand, and finally...
3. With both at the same time (try to avoid flammng).

DATE:	TEMPOS:



DATE:	TEMPOS:

Q - - -

U

R

V

S

W

T

X

Ghosting Letters

BINARY A-P

DATE:	TEMPOS:

Ghosting Letters. Finally! I get asked about exercises for ghost notes all the time. Here is a system that should get you to a point where you don't have to worry about it anymore (at least technically). This deals with playing the alphabet as ghost notes on the snare while keeping a backbeat on 2 and 4.

The exercises are arranged in two columns. The left column contains letters A through H, and the right column contains letters I through P. Each exercise is represented by a small icon with the letter and a dot, followed by a musical staff. The staff shows a backbeat on beats 2 and 4, and ghost notes for the letter on beats 1 and 3. The letters are arranged in two columns: A-I on the left and J-P on the right.

GHOSTING LETTERS / TERNARY Q-X

DATE:	TEMPOS:

Next let's look at ghosting with the triplet alphabet—which will provide you with countless shuffle groove variations!

If you had problems getting these patterns up to speed, remember to play the ghost notes very low. This will help you to relax and get a good transparent sound when there is a big difference in the dynamic between ghost notes and backbeat.

Hi-Hat Words

THREE, FIVE, and SEVEN

This is a hi-hat accent version of all the previous groupings. It's very useful vocabulary that adds some spice even in straighter or slower grooves.

3 1st Position

Musical notation for 3 1st Position. It shows a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The pattern consists of four groups of eighth notes, each starting with an accent (>) and followed by a 'C H I O' label. The groups are: 1) eighth notes on G4, A4, B4; 2) eighth notes on A4, B4, C5; 3) eighth notes on B4, C5, D5; 4) eighth notes on C5, D5, E5.

3 2nd Position

Musical notation for 3 2nd Position. It shows a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The pattern consists of four groups of eighth notes, each starting with an accent (>) and followed by a 'C H I O' label. The groups are: 1) eighth notes on A4, B4, C5; 2) eighth notes on B4, C5, D5; 3) eighth notes on C5, D5, E5; 4) eighth notes on D5, E5, F5.

3 3rd Position

Musical notation for 3 3rd Position. It shows a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The pattern consists of four groups of eighth notes, each starting with an accent (>) and followed by a 'C H I O' label. The groups are: 1) eighth notes on B4, C5, D5; 2) eighth notes on C5, D5, E5; 3) eighth notes on D5, E5, F5; 4) eighth notes on E5, F5, G5.

5 1st Position

Musical notation for 5 1st Position. It shows a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The pattern consists of four groups of eighth notes, each starting with an accent (>) and followed by a 'C H I O' label. The groups are: 1) eighth notes on G4, A4, B4, C5, D5; 2) eighth notes on A4, B4, C5, D5, E5; 3) eighth notes on B4, C5, D5, E5, F5; 4) eighth notes on C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

5 2nd Position

Musical notation for 5 2nd Position. It shows a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The pattern consists of four groups of eighth notes, each starting with an accent (>) and followed by a 'C H I O' label. The groups are: 1) eighth notes on A4, B4, C5, D5, E5; 2) eighth notes on B4, C5, D5, E5, F5; 3) eighth notes on C5, D5, E5, F5, G5; 4) eighth notes on D5, E5, F5, G5, A5.

7 1st Position

Musical notation for 7 1st Position. It shows a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The pattern consists of four groups of eighth notes, each starting with an accent (>) and followed by a 'C H I O' label. The groups are: 1) eighth notes on G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5; 2) eighth notes on A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5; 3) eighth notes on B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5; 4) eighth notes on C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5.

7 2nd Position

Musical notation for 7 2nd Position. It shows a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The pattern consists of four groups of eighth notes, each starting with an accent (>) and followed by a 'C H I O' label. The groups are: 1) eighth notes on A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5; 2) eighth notes on B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5; 3) eighth notes on C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5; 4) eighth notes on D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6.

DATE:	TEMPOS:

Also practice these examples on the ride cymbal by playing the accents on the bell  and the unaccented notes on the bow of the cymbal. 

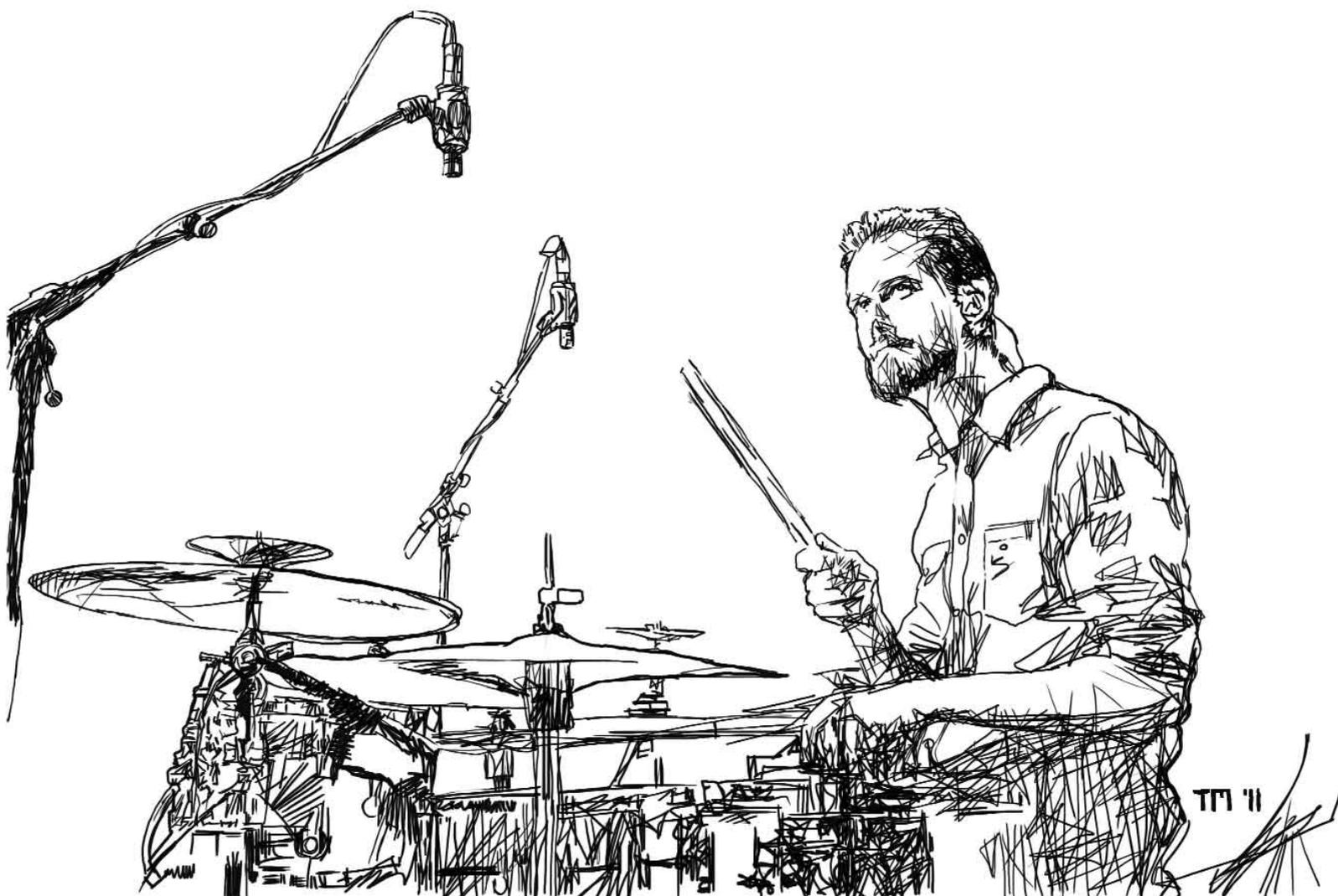
Words Recap Sheets

Let's put all that we've learned together into a more practical context. So far we played the words starting in different positions. Now let's breathe more life into them by mixing them together. You'll find numbers like 31 or 52 between the barlines. The big number represents the grouping to play, while the smaller number represents the position it should appear in.

I couldn't possibly write out all the different ways that you can play this, but here are some exercises to start with:

1. Play as grooves utilizing the three variations from this chapter (BD,LH,RH: each limb plays the specified rhythm while the other limbs keep time).
2. Play as a snare drum etude by utilizing the rudiments and stickings of this chapter
3. Play as grooves, but make every fourth bar as a fill by applying the rudiments and stickings ideas.
4. Play in ternary subdivision.

This is also a great thing to do together with your bass player. If your bass player learns the rhythms in this book, you can read/play these patterns together as a rhythm section, and make use of the jam tracks on the CD.





WORDS RECAP SHEET 1

DATE:	TEMPOS:

OPTIONAL FILL BAR

A musical staff with four measures. The first three measures each contain the number 8 with a subscript 1. The fourth measure contains the number 8 with a subscript 2. A bracket above the fourth measure is labeled "OPTIONAL FILL BAR".

OPTIONAL FILL BAR

A musical staff with four measures. The first three measures each contain the number 8 with a subscript 3. The fourth measure contains the number 5 with a subscript 1. A bracket above the fourth measure is labeled "OPTIONAL FILL BAR".

OPTIONAL FILL BAR

A musical staff with four measures. The first three measures each contain the number 5 with a subscript 2. The fourth measure contains the number 7 with a subscript 1. A bracket above the fourth measure is labeled "OPTIONAL FILL BAR".

OPTIONAL FILL BAR

A musical staff with four measures. The first three measures each contain the number 7 with a subscript 2. The fourth measure contains the number 8 with a subscript 1. A bracket above the fourth measure is labeled "OPTIONAL FILL BAR".

OPTIONAL FILL BAR

A musical staff with four measures. The first three measures each contain the number 8 with a subscript 2. The fourth measure contains the number 8 with a subscript 3. A bracket above the fourth measure is labeled "OPTIONAL FILL BAR".

CD Track List

-
- 01 **Guide Track:** Binary Letters Exercise - slow
02 **Guide Track:** Binary Letters Exercise - fast
03 **Guide Track:** Ternary Letters Exercise - slow
04 **Guide Track:** Ternary Letters Exercise - fast
-
- 05 **Call-and-Response Letters:** Binary (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) slow
06 **Call-and-Response Letters:** Binary (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) fast
07 **Call-and-Response Letters:** Ternary (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) slow
08 **Call-and-Response Letters:** Ternary (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) fast
09 **Call-and-Response:** Words (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) slow
10 **Call-and-Response:** Words (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) fast
11 **Call-and-Response:** Words (2-Bar Call, 2-Bar Response) slow
12 **Call-and-Response:** Words (2-Bar Call, 2-Bar Response) fast
-
- 13 **Guide Track:** Words Recap Sheet #1 - slow
14 **Guide Track:** Words Recap Sheet #1 - fast
15 **Guide Track:** Words Recap Sheet #2 - slow
16 **Guide Track:** Words Recap Sheet #2 - fast
17 **Guide Track:** Words Recap Sheet #3 - slow
18 **Guide Track:** Words Recap Sheet #3 - fast
-
- 19 **JAM TRACK:** Words Recap Sheet #1 - slow
20 **JAM TRACK:** Words Recap Sheet #1 - medium
21 **JAM TRACK:** Words Recap Sheet #1 - fast
22 **JAM TRACK:** Words Recap Sheet #2 - slow
23 **JAM TRACK:** Words Recap Sheet #2 - medium
24 **JAM TRACK:** Words Recap Sheet #3 - slow
25 **JAM TRACK:** Words Recap Sheet #3 - medium
26 **JAM TRACK:** Words Recap Sheet #3 - fast
-
- 27 **Call-and-Response Binary Combinations** (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) slow
28 **Call-and-Response Binary Combinations** (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) fast
29 **Call-and-Response Binary Combinations** (2-Bar Call, 2-Bar Response) slow
30 **Call-and-Response Binary Combinations** (2-Bar Call, 2-Bar Response) fast
31 **Call-and-Response Ternary Combinations** (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) slow
32 **Call-and-Response Ternary Combinations** (1-Bar Call, 1-Bar Response) fast
33 **Call-and-Response Ternary Combinations** (2-Bar Call, 2-Bar Response) slow
34 **Call-and-Response Ternary Combinations** (2-Bar Call, 2-Bar Response) fast
-
- 35 **Guide Track:** Syntax, Binary - slow
36 **Guide Track:** Syntax, Binary - fast
37 **Guide Track:** Syntax, Ternary - slow
38 **Guide Track:** Syntax, Ternary - fast
39 **Guide Track:** Syntax Revisited, Binary - slow
40 **Guide Track:** Syntax Revisited, Binary - fast
41 **Guide Track:** Syntax Revisited, Ternary - slow
42 **Guide Track:** Syntax Revisited, Ternary - fast
-
- 43 **Warm-up to Burnout / Binary Letters** - slow (60-90 bpm)
44 **Warm-up to Burnout / Binary letters** - medium (100 -140 bpm)
45 **Warm-up to Burnout / Binary Letters** - fast (150-180 bpm)
46 **Warm-up to Burnout / Ternary Letters** - slow (60-100 bpm)
47 **Warm-up to Burnout / Ternary Letters** - medium (110-140 bpm)
48 **Warm-up to Burnout / Ternary Letters** - fast (150-200 bpm)