

DAILY DRUM LESSON

by Wojtek Deregowski

December 2020

“Improvisation over a rhythm”

Drummer being a band member very often has to put their playing in certain frames. Tempo, dynamics, style, groove and its feeling, certain unique parts... It's very important for these borders not to limit our musicality and creativity. In this lesson I'm gonna show you a great concept of developing this aspect of our craft. You'll learn how to better feel the phrase and boost creativity by improvising over a certain rhythm.

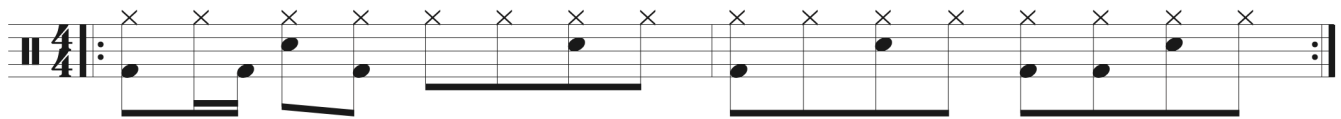
Let's start with thinking of a rhythm that's gonna repeat every couple bars. It's useful to imagine the whole band performing the accents in between which you'll have a space to improvise.

BASIC RHYTHM



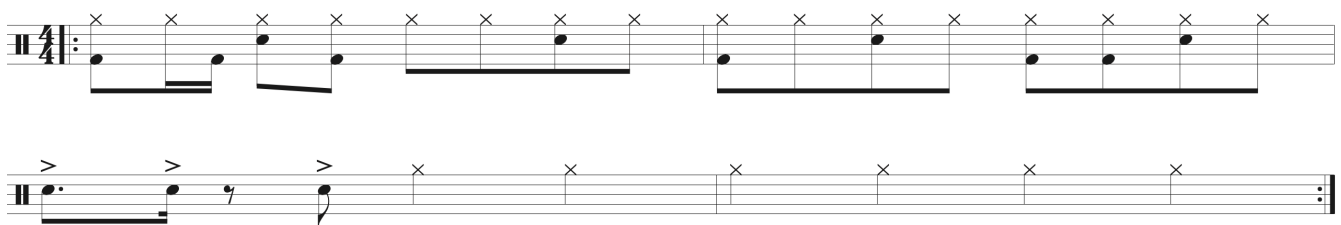
To get familiar with the rhythm and understand it faster I advise to place it within a simple groove. The rhythm appears at the beginning of a two bar phrase.

NOTATION 1 (0:00) - BASIC GROOVE WITH THE RHYTHM



Another exercise loop is going to last for 4 bars. We add two bars of improvisation to the previous exercise. But let's assume that we use only kick, snare and hi hat which is gonna limit us but also force to think more creatively. In the improvisation part start with very simple modifications like changed bass drum, more hi hat or simple fill at the end of the phrase. Only once you feel more comfortable I recommend to try changing orchestration of the rhythm itself which will allow to approach this exercise with even more musicality.

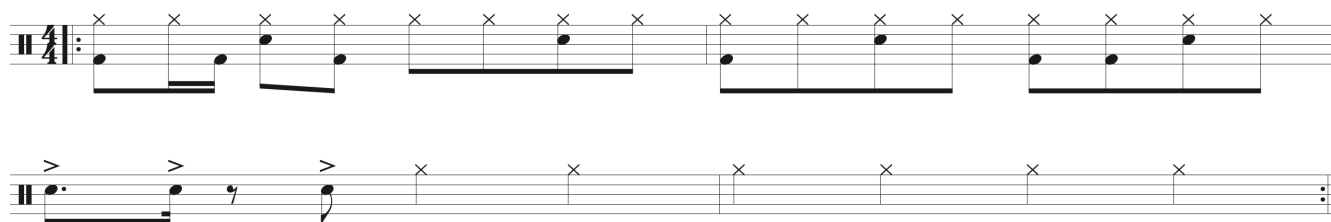
NOTATION 2 (1:00) - KICK SNARE HAT IMPROVISATION



Next step is to spread the improvisation part on the whole drum set. Now you have more sounds to use so try to make it interesting. Remember as long as you stay in time and keep the given frames every idea may be good. Don't get discouraged when something is not working - repeat it in the next loops until you get the idea right! I strongly recommend to record your performance and listen back to it freshly after the practice session.

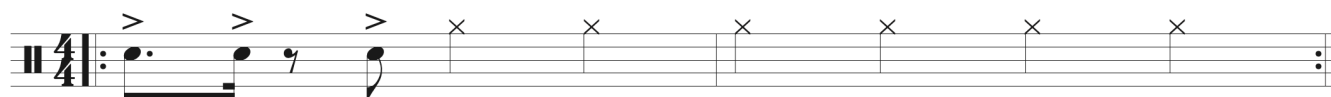
This usually gives us far more information since we change perspective from the player to audience. Then it becomes clear what sounds good and what still needs to be improved.

NOTATION 3 (3:39) - FULL KIT IMPROVISATION



Again I recommend to orchestrate accents differently - you have more instruments to use now. It's also a frequent idea for the drum solo during the show - repeating rhythm accented by all the musicians and some space for the drummer to express themselves and to go crazy on the drums!

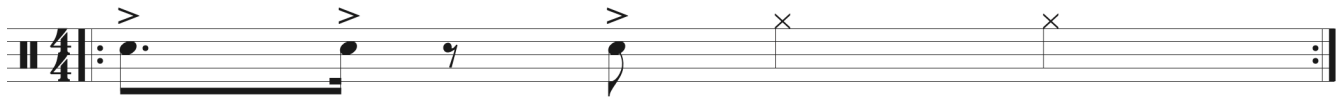
NOTATION 3 (6:58) - NON-STOP IMPROVISATION WITH THE RHYTHM



The given exercise is just the part and example in the wider concept. I recommend to think of new rhythms, set them in different places in a phrase (like in the middle of the second bar...), lengthen, shorten the phrase, set yourself some new limits and frames you're gonna creatively obey... Be creative also in building these exercises!

There are many possibilities like creating a one bar groove using the rhythm.

NOTATION 4 (8:13) - GROOVE BASED ON THE RHYTHM

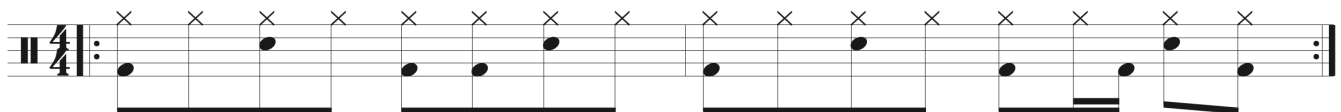


In spite of the crazy things we may play everything is set within one concept. It's also a frequent way of practicing for me - basic rhythm, building a groove based on it, improvisation over the groove. It all allows to open our minds even wider, develop our musicality and gain a complete freedom in playing the drums.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE 1

Place the rhythm I shown you in the lesson at the end of the phrase (instead of the beginning) and follow all the steps I took.

Now our basic groove will look like this:

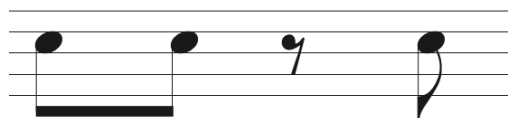


WEEKLY CHALLENGE 2

Take all the steps from the lesson with the following rhythm. Place it within the phrase as you feel comfortable.



For beginner practicing - easier rhythm:



WEEKLY CHALLENGE 3

Think of a rhythm (different from the one shown in the lesson) and follow all the steps I took - from playing the rhythm as the bass drum in a groove to building an improvisation over the accents.

Record your takes and send them to me to get my feedback!

WEEKLY CHALLENGE 4

Trade ideas with me by playing the video attached to this lesson! There are couple places where you can do that - from 1:00 to 6:58 - in different tempos with different concepts. When I play groove - you improvise. When I improvise - you play groove, simple as that!

Feel free to record video and put it together with mine!



Wojtek Deregowski

wojtek.dailydrumlesson@gmail.com