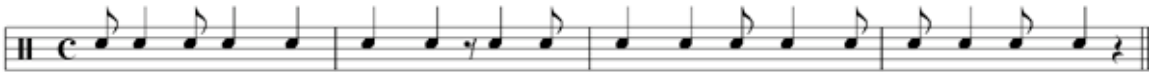
Systems For Use With Ted Reed's Syncopation
By Steve Korn

Since it's original publication in 1958, drummers have used Ted Reed's Progressive Steps To Syncopation For The Modern Drummer as an ever-expanding tool for the development of independence, coordination and technique. Using page 37 as a rhythmic etude, drummers have devised numerous systems with which to challenge themselves. The above are progressively complex examples of some of these systems.

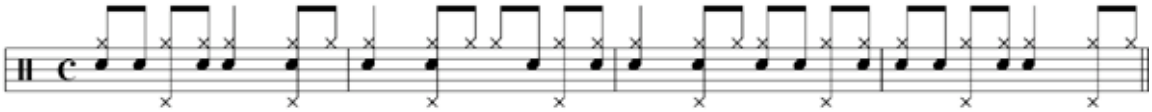
Example 1

These are the first four measures of page 37. One must first be able to read the page as written and then with a swung eighth note interpretation.



Example 2

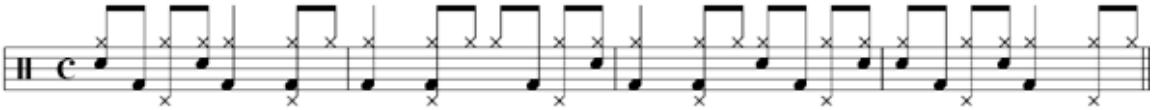
The next step involves performing the rhythm on the snare drum while keeping jazz time on the ride cymbal and hi hat. The bass drum can be "feathered" (played lightly on all four beats).



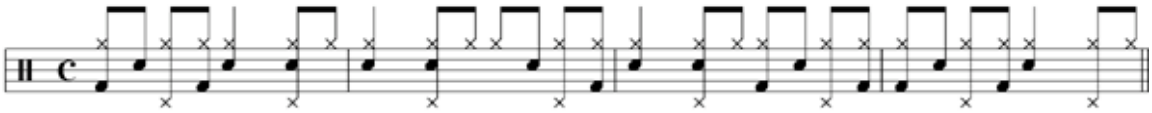
When this has been mastered, repeat the process playing the snare drum rhythms with the bass drum. The snare drum can play a cross-stick on beat four of every measure.

Example 3

When comfortable with example 2, try combining each of its steps. Play all written eighth notes on the snare drum and all written quarter notes on the bass drum.

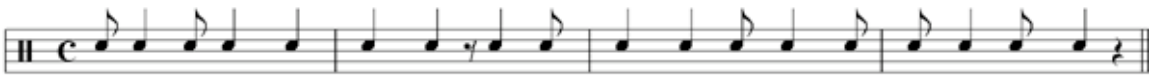


When ready, reverse the note assignments. Have the bass drum play all written quarter notes and the snare drum all written eighth notes.

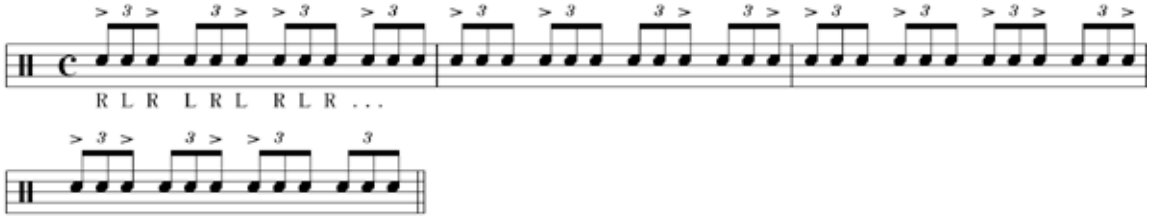


Example 4

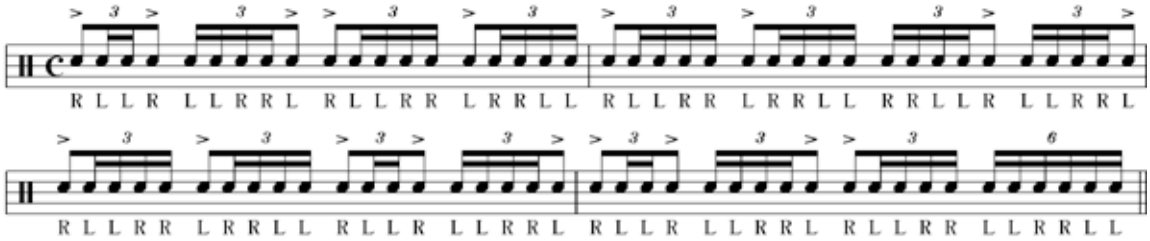
The first four measures of page 37 are:



If we use this phrase as a triplet accent pattern it will look like this:



Keep the unaccented notes low, and be sure that the accented notes are of equal strength in each hand. The next step involves replacing the *un*accented notes with double strokes. The result is:

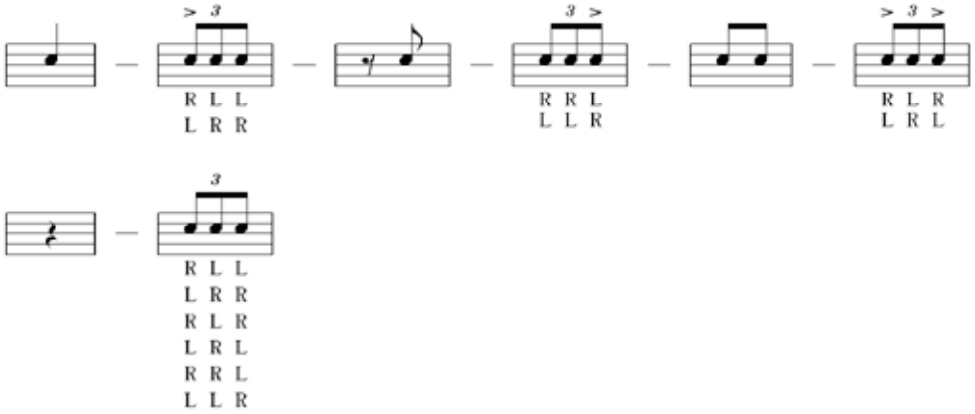


This exercise is also great for developing double strokes with brushes.

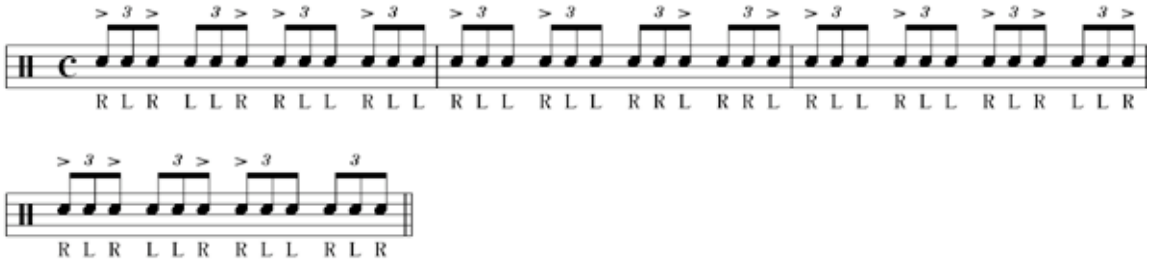
Example 5

Example 5 is similar to example 4, however the sticking patterns are different. Essentially, all unaccented eighth notes are performed as eighth note double strokes. There are some exceptions when alternate strokes can be used. The basic key is as follows:

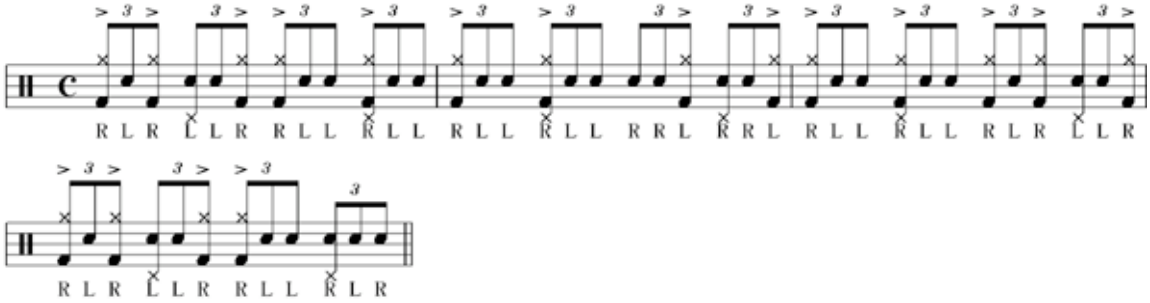
written --> becomes



Applied to the first four measures of page 37 would give us:



The next step involves applying this concept to the drum set. Play all accented notes on the ride or crash cymbal and all unaccented notes on the snare drum. The bass drum will also play the accented notes and the hi-hat will play beats two and four.

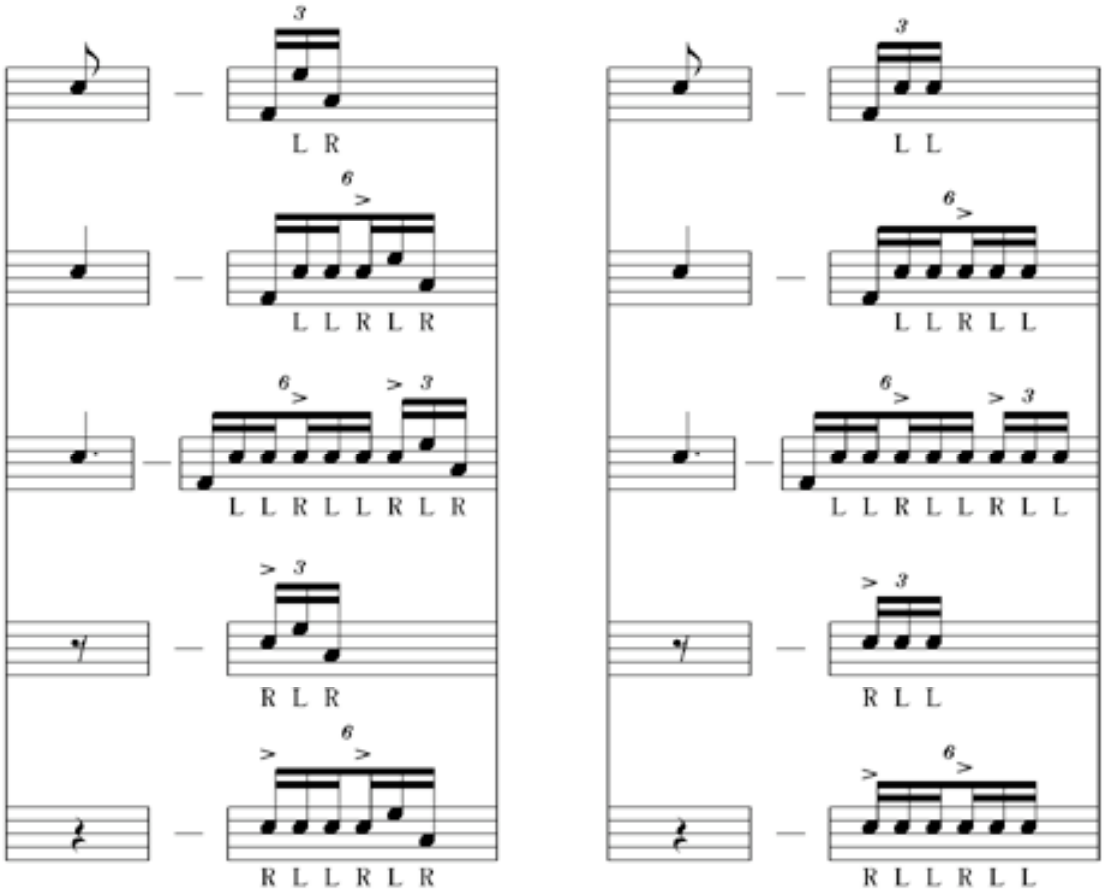
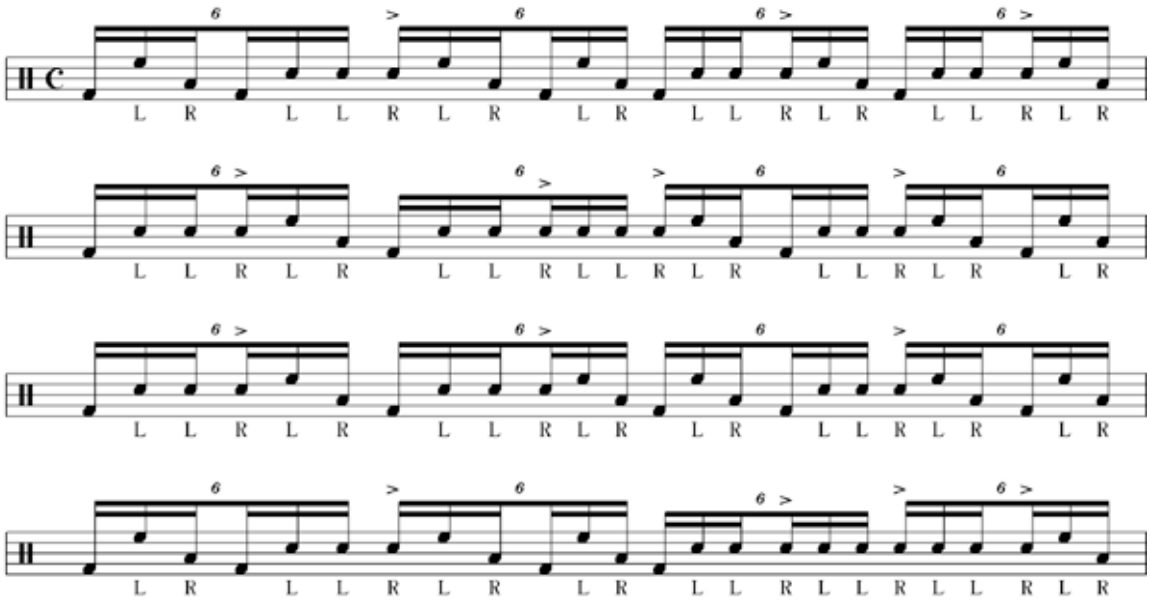


This concept also sounds great when some or all of the accented notes are played on the tom toms.

Example 6

This final example is perhaps the most complex, but contains some great developmental material. Like example 5, it has a key:

when going to a note -- when going to a rest



When applied to the first four measures of page 37, we have: