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HISTORY OF RUDIMENTS

WHAT ARE DRUM RUDIMENTS?

Similar to the snare drum, rudiments were originally developed in military bands. According to the book *Camp Duty Update* (Hessler), rudiments are “an excerpt from a military call with definite rhythm, definite sticking, definite structure (accents) and a defined nomenclature.” *Encyclopedia Rudimentia* (Bloom) defines them “as a short pattern of strokes”.

However, a good analogy is to consider them as the drumming equivalent to scales and arpeggios learned by students of piano and guitar. As G.B. Peters describes; “The names of the rudiments seem to be made up of some foreign language that only snare drummers know. In actuality the names of the rudiments are often a phonetic representation of what the rudiment is supposed to sound like”.

HISTORY

Rudiments originate in Europe, where they started to be developed hundreds of years ago. They can be traced back to Swiss mercenaries who were armed with long polearms. Using those weapons in unison required a lot of coordination. The resulting sound of drums (when played in close formation) was used to communicate commands. These patterns became the basis of the snare drum rudiments.

Military scholars agree that the earliest record of rudimental fife and drum relates to the battle of Sempach in 1386 when the Swiss military used them to convey commands and tempo to their rank and file. This form of military instruction was then adopted by the French before spreading across Europe where they formed the basis for many other rudimental systems.

Rudiments first appeared in print in the book *Orchesographie* written by the French cleric, Thoinot Arbeau in 1588. Within a century of its publication, the French adopted it as part of their national music curriculum. Furthermore, the French folklore dance, Le Rigodon is cited as one of the cornerstones of modern rudimental drumming. In fact, at least five French military manuals appeared between 1870 and 1900, beginning *École du Tambour - Drum School -* (Carnaud).



SINGLE PARADIDDLE

As crotchets (quarter notes):

Two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a sequence of notes with accents: R down, L up, a triplet of three notes, and a quarter rest (4). The second staff shows: R down, L up, R tap, R tap, L down, R up, L tap, L tap.

As quavers (eighth notes):

Two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows eighth notes with accents: R down, L up, a triplet of two notes (2), a quarter rest (+), L down, R up, a triplet of four notes (4), and a quarter rest (+). The second staff shows eighth notes with accents: R down, L up, R tap, R tap, L down, R up, L tap, L tap.

As triplet quavers (eight note triplets):

Two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows eighth notes with accents and triplet markings: R L tah 2 L R 3 tee R L tee tah | L R tah 2 R L 3 tee L R tee tah. The second staff shows eighth notes with accents and triplet markings: R L R R L R L L R L R R | L R L L R L R R L R L L.

As semiquavers (sixteenth notes):

Two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows sixteenth notes with accents: R L + a L R + a R L + a L R + a. The second staff shows sixteenth notes with accents: R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L.