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CD audio examples performed by Rich Lackowski.
Instructional photos by Larry Lyttle.



This book is designed to help you get “on the beaten path,” that is, to help you play the beats and solos that our mighty drumming forefathers play on the songs we love. You will learn everything you need to know to go from the first thought of “I want to play the drums” to playing some of the most legendary beats and solos ever recorded! Many books claim to do this very thing, but what sets this book apart from the rest is that here, you will learn by playing along with the greatest drummers in the world—all types of famous drummers from a variety of musical styles—and you’ll learn how to play the beats that they perform on some of the most famous songs ever recorded. This book explains what these drummers play on their songs by breaking it down in a way that gets you to learn to read music and start developing your own ideas into beats, fills, and solos.

I believe that drummers learn by mimicking their heroes. Sure, beats grow and change and morph into original ideas, but all drummers—from aspiring beginners to seasoned professionals—are naturally inspired by what other drummers are playing. The proof is in all those people you’ve seen air drumming along to some key part in a song. Many of these people have never sat behind a drumset or even held a drumstick, but the drum beat and the framework of the song somehow gets them to raise their arms in the air and act out their interpretation of a moving drum passage. It’s

basic human instinct. When writing this book, I wanted to guide this natural instinct in a way that logically feeds you information as you need it so you can accelerate the process of learning how to play your drumming heroes’ beats.

I know when I first started playing the drums, even though I had just begun taking group lessons on the snare drum in school, that the *real* learning happened when I got home and threw down my boring class snare drum book that our teacher assigned to us. I put on the headphones each day, sat behind my drum kit, and tried to mimic the beats and fills that the drummers were playing on my favorite songs. Through trial and error, I was eventually able to play the songs and at least fake my way through the more difficult parts.

In this book, I will accelerate this process of trial and error, and guide you through the things that every drummer needs to know in order to play the drums. This book can be used with or without a teacher. Although you don’t *need* a teacher to use this book, it would benefit you to go find a drum teacher in your area and take lessons. A teacher will get you to practice if nothing else, but they will also correct any bad techniques you may be developing before they become hard-to-break habits.

Now let’s get started and begin our journey On the Beaten Path!

Icons Used in This Book

The following icons are used throughout this book to help you learn valuable information and to become a better drummer.



TIP: This icon is shown near helpful tidbits of advice.



TOOL: This icon is shown near key concepts or tools that will help you play the drums with more expression and personality.



TERM: This icon is shown near explanations of key music notations and concepts.



Deep Purple has rotated through numerous lineup changes since forming in 1968, but only one member, drummer Ian Paice, has played with the band every step of the way. Paice was one of the first to bring jazz-inspired technical chops into heavy rock drumming, and he's inspired countless drummers to pick up the sticks and rock.

"Smoke on the Water"

FROM DEEP PURPLE'S *MACHINE HEAD* (1972)

Deep Purple drummer Ian Paice is hailed by many as one of the greatest classic rock drummers of all time. This is the band's most well-known song and houses some amazing drumming by Paice. In fact, this is probably one of the world's most well-known rock songs of all time! This example will introduce you to the two-handed hi-hat rock groove. Let's start by playing alternating strokes on the hi-hat. Start with your right hand and alternate your hands "R-L-R-L."

Original transcription (0:17):

♩ = 115

Track 11

Now, let's continue to the next part of the beat. In this section, Paice adds a snare hit on beats 2 and 4. Play this with the same alternating sticking as in the previous example (R-L-R-L), but move your right stick from the hi-hat to the snare drum on beats 2 and 4. This may be a bit tricky at first, but stick with it until you can play it smoothly and comfortably.

Original transcription (0:26):

Track 12

Next, let's add in the kick drum by playing steady eighth notes with your right foot. Notice that you'll be simultaneously hitting the kick drum with every note you play with your right hand.

Original transcription (0:34):

Track 13



Aerosmith is the best-selling American rock band of all time, having sold over 150 million albums worldwide. Throughout their entire 40-plus-year career, Joey Kramer has played the drums on all of the band's 21 Top 40 hits and nine No. 1 *Billboard* chart-topping singles. Kramer is a true legend of rock 'n' roll, and one of the most influential drummers of all time.

"Sweet Emotion"

FROM AEROSMITH'S *TOYS IN THE ATTIC* (1975)

The beat on this song is provided courtesy of Joey Kramer, legendary rock-solid drummer for Aerosmith since 1970. This is the first beat in which we will incorporate an open hi-hat using your foot.

Original transcription (0:36):

Track 17

Let's start by playing eighth notes on the hi-hat, the snare on beats 2 and 4, the kick drum on beat 1 and the "&" of beat 3, and an open hi-hat on the "&" of beat 4. To get the open hi-hat in the right place, you'll need to lift your left foot off the hi-hat pedal as you simultaneously hit the hi-hat with your stick on the "&" of beat 4, and then stomp your foot back down on the pedal as you simultaneously hit the hi-hat with your stick on beat 1.

Now, let's play the same beat, but this time, let's add a kick drum hit on the "&" of beat 4. This will be a bit tricky at first since you're stomping your right foot on the kick pedal at the exact same time you're lifting your left foot off the hi-hat pedal. Start slowly and be patient. This may take some time to master, but stick with it and remember—practice makes perfect!



Sit up straight and balance your body directly over your throne so that you maintain your balance as you move your feet.