# **Solo Secrets** Of The Left Hand And Bass Drum

by Roy Burns edited by Murray Houllif

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Roy Burns

## **Foreword**

I first met Roy Burns at a Music Educators National Conference (MENC) many years ago. I was a college percussion major and Roy was the featured percussion clinician for Rogers Drums. From the beginning of the clinic to the very end I was mesmerized by Roy's magnificent, musical drumming and, to me, his super-human technique all around the drum kit with all four appendages. Particularly intriguing was the interplay between his left hand on snare drum and toms and his right foot on the bass drum during his awesome drum solo. It was incredibly even, fast and smooth and, I realized, could be applied to any musical idiom - jazz, rock, Latin, etc..

By practicing the many exercises, solos and examples herein, you will learn how to accomplish this left hand/bass drum technique, apply it your style of playing, and improve your overall drumming and musicianship.

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Let's get started!

Murray Houllif

# **Preface**

I first saw Sonny Igoe play with Woody Herman's Big Band when I was in my early teens. He had a great left hand and great control over his bass drum. He was the first drummer that I saw who had developed the left hand and bass drum control to a high level.

The next drummer that I saw in concert was the great Buddy Rich. His control over his left hand and right foot were nothing short of amazing. It made a great impression on me and I was determined to learn this mysterious technique. I worked extremely hard in an effort to find out exactly what this amazing technique was but the beats flew by so fast that it was difficult to find out exactly what was being played.

I finally figured out some of the sticking and foot combinations. Then I developed a method for understanding the left hand and bass drum strokes so that they could be practiced and perfected.

This book is the results of those efforts.

I hope you have fun practicing this book and that it helps you to achieve your goals in drumming.

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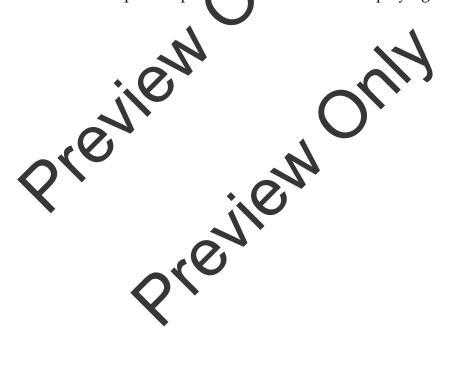
Roy Burns

# Introduction

The skill and ability to play a satisfying, musical solo or fill (fill-in) is a great asset to the drumset player. Solo ideas can come from (or are derived from) many sources, e.g. short melodic themes or motifs, rhythmic patterns, dance forms, styles of music, etc. The drummer who is better-prepared to musically and technically express his/her ideas with finesse and, if needed, speed is an asset to any ensemble.

It is with this in mind that *Solo Secrets Of The Left Hand And Bass Drum* was written. By practicing the numerous exercises and solos throughout the book in the many suggested ways, the drummer will greatly expand his/her musical vocabulary and technique, and will be better able to successfully execute any idea which may come to mind during a solo or fill situation. With regular, patient practice this book will help you toward achieving your goals in any style of music you may play.

The DVD is Roy Burn's last clinic of his illustrious career. In addition to his solo performances which provide visual demonstrations of many of the techniques and exercises contained in the book, there is also a wealth of important pointers hade on drum set playing in general.



# Hand-To-Hand Warmups

Here are 15 exercises designed to warm up the hands -- get the muscles loose and the blood circulating. Practice each exercise four or more times without stopping. Focus on relaxation. Try not to tense up. Listen carefully for a consistent sound from each stick stroke. Use a metronome for a portion of your practice period.

















# **Section One**

# Two and four measure solo phrases using eighth notes, triplets, and sixteenth notes

Practice these exercises in the following ways:

- a. Play all RH (right hand) accents on the snare drum; all LH (left hand) strokes are played on the snare drum.
- b. Play RH accents on the tom of your choice.
- c. Play RH accents on the snare drum and reinforce with the bass drum.
- d. Play RH accents on the ride (or crash) cymbal and reinforce with the bass drum.
- e. Play eighth note phrases as written (straight) or in swing style ( I ).
- f. Close hi-hat on beats 2 & 4.
- g. Play each exercise at least 4 times without stopping.

### Two Measure Solo Phrases - Eighth Notes





















### Four Measure Solo Phrases - Eighth Notes













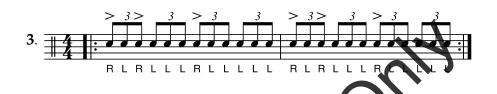




### Two Measure Solo Phrases - Triplets





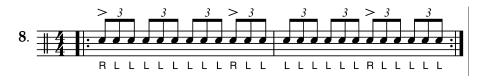








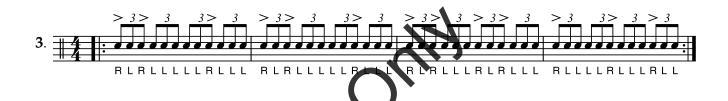




### Four Measure Solo Phrases - Triplets









### Two Measure Solo Phrases - Sixteenth Notes

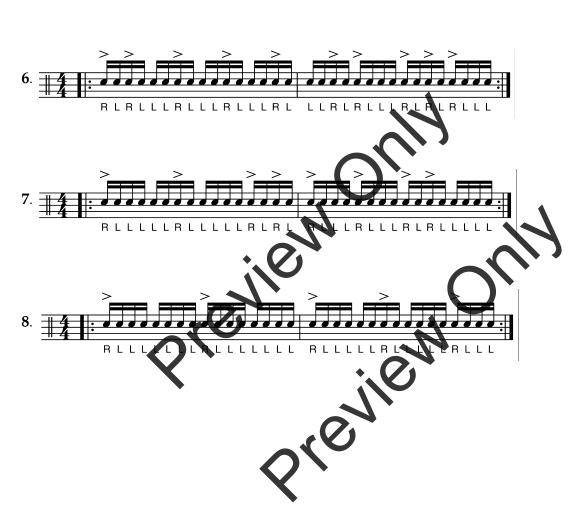










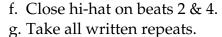


# **Section Two**

#### Left hand coordination solo exercises

The following 8 extended solo exercises will further improve your left hand coordination and your ability to focus and concentrate. Practice these exercises in the following ways:

- a. Play all right hand (RH) accents on the snare drum.
- b. Play RH accents on the tom (or toms) of your choice where possible, e.g. in Solo No. 3, you can only play single eighth note accents on the toms, not the double-stroke sixteenth notes.
- c. Play RH accents on the snare drum and reinforce with the bass drum.
- d. Where possible, play RH accents on the ride (or crash) cymbal and reinforce with the bass drum.
- e. Play eighth note phrases as written (straight) or in swing style: ( ... ).





### Solo No. 2



### Solo No. 4

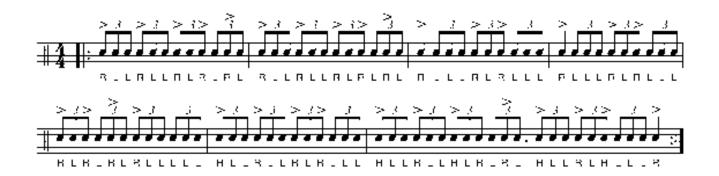


#### Solo No. 6





Solo No. 8

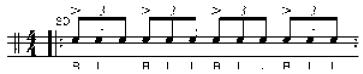


# **Section Three**

# Left hand/bass drum technique described; 30 solo phrases applying the technique

Did you ever wonder how a great drummer can achieve the sound of a left-handed roll while soloing or comping (adding short fills or rhythmic figures) behind another soloist? It is not an actual one-handed roll being played but rather the illusion of it. The secret is to insert bass drum beats in the place of a right hand accent.

#### Example 1:



Now add the bass drum (BD) in place of the right hand.

#### Example 2:



In order to develop the coordination for this technique spike the ride cymbal (RC) with the right hand and play the bass drum at the same time

#### Example 3:



Once this feels comfortable, make the motion with the right hand but stop short of striking the cymbal. In other words, hit an "air cymbal." For maximum effect strike the bass drum firmly. Now you will hear just the bass drum but the right hand will "guide" the right foot (bass drum).

When you are comfortable doing this, the bass drum foot can play the pattern without the assistance of the right hand motion (or at least with very little motion).

Example 4: B= Bass Drum





Now practice the following 30 exercises employing the techniques described in the beginning of this section.

# Two Measure Solo Phrases With Bass Drum - Eighth Notes









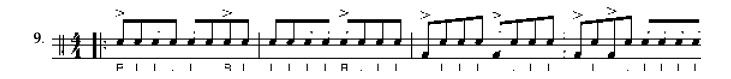








## Four Measure Solo Phrases With Bass Drum - Eighth Notes









# Two Measure Solo Phrases With Bass Drum - Triplets













### Four Measure Solo Phrases With Bass Drum - Triplets









### Four Measure Solo Phrases With Bass Drum - Sixteenth Notes









Two Measure Solo Phrases With Bass Drum - Sixteenth Notes









# **Section Four**

#### **Solos**

This section consists of 14 full-length solos consisting of anywhere from twelve to thirty-two measures without repeats. They are very rhythmic, musically exciting, and encompass many styles such as jazz, rock and Latin music. Practice them at various steady tempi (speeds) using the techniques you have already learned. For example, you may play the solos:

- a. exactly as written.
- b. swinging all eighth notes in the jazz style ( $\Gamma$   $\downarrow$   $\downarrow$ ).
- c. playing all right hand and left hand accents on the small (rack) tom.
- d. playing all right hand accents on the large (floor) tom and all left hand accents on the small (rack) tom.
- e. striking the ride or crash cymbal on all accented bass drum notes.
- f. closing the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4.

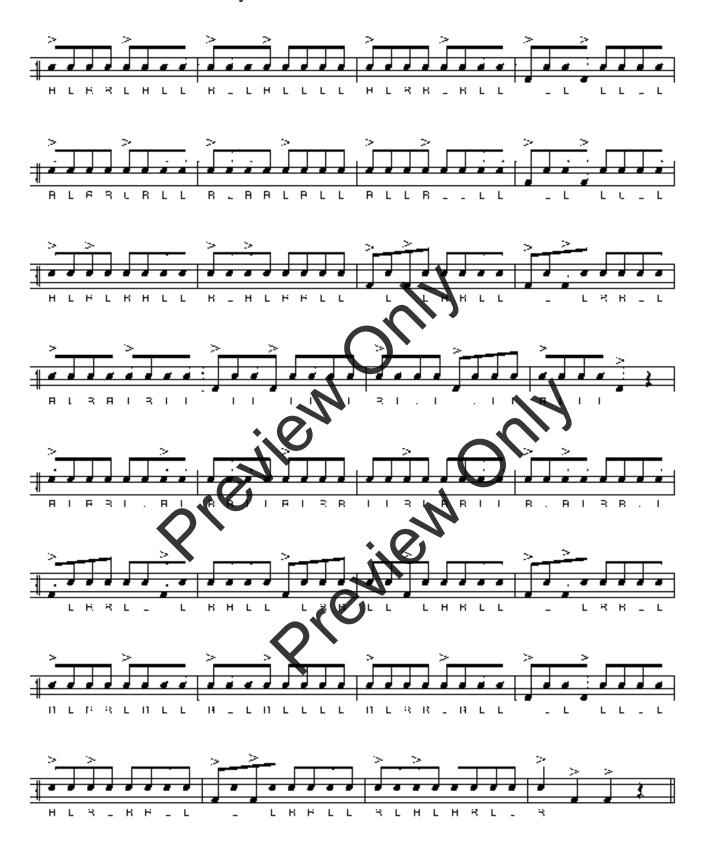
As always, concentrate on keeping steady time, using headphones, play along with a metronome click or click track. Strive to produce good tone on all parts of the kit. Feel free to vary dynamics for variety. And above all, have fun!



### 2. Ruff Rider



# 4. Paradiddles Meet Lefty



# 5. Dancing Triplets



### 6. Dynamic Doubles



# 7. Swinging Eighths



### 8. Doubled Bass



# 10. Rolling Sixteenths



## 11. Shuffling Along



### 12. Up Tempo



# 13. Finger Bender



### 14. Left Hand Swing

