

Hello, I'm new to the group (rec.music.afro.latin), but Matthew said that snare drum rudiments have been a topic here recently and he asked if I could provide some basic explanation for those who may not have studied the snare drum. For those like me, who have served their time behind a practice pad, there's probably nothing here but a big ol' message in your mailbox. But if any of you are wondering what the hell a ratamacue is, I hope this helps.

I haven't really worked that much on applying rudiments to the bongó, but I have been working a lot on rudiments on congas, and it seems that the same principals apply. The first thing is defining what the rudiments are. They are basically tiny technical challenges that snare drummers have isolated for the sake of mastering them. They fall into several categories; rolls, flams, ruffs, paradiddles, and various combinations of these.

Rolls are basically any series of evenly spaced notes. We all play single stroke rolls on the bongó, single stroke meaning right left right left, etc. (R L R L). A very big part of rudimental drumming is the mastery of double stroke rolls (R R L L). This is one of the things that Giovanni has made really popular, and yes, I have seen him apply those rolls to bongó, it's pretty scary. I think I saw a message from Matthew that had a pretty good explanation as to how to develop doubles.

Rolls are then broken down into five stroke (RRLLR, or LLRRL), seven stroke (RRLLRRL, or LLRRLLR), nine stroke (RRLLRRLLR, or LLRRLLRRL), etc. All of these consist of a series of doubles followed by a terminating stroke that is usually accented.

The next group is flams. A flam is where you hit the drum with both hands at almost the same time. There are many ways to play flams, but in rudimental snare drum, you have a grace note (soft) followed by the primary note (louder), thus when we refer to a right handed flam, we mean IR, where there is a light note with the left hand followed closely by a louder stroke with the right. The second note should be on the beat. It's important to practice flams in both directions (IR, and rL). Then there are flam combinations such as the flam tap (IR R rL L), flam accent (IR L R rL R L), swiss triplet (IR R L, or rL L R), flam paradiddle (IR L R R rL R L L), etc.

Next we have ruffs, which are a lot like flams, except that the grace note becomes a double stroke (IIR or rrL). You could also think of a ruff as a three stroke roll. Again, they should be learned in both directions, and there are combinations such as the single drag (R IIR L rrL), double drag (IIR IIR L rrL rrL R, this one is rhythmically complex, so it's harder to explain than the others.), and the ever popular ratamacues, which I can't really explain in plain text.

Then we get the paradiddles. A paradiddle is just a sticking combination of RLRR LRLl, all evenly spaced notes, the first of every four can be accented. Then there is the double paradiddle (RLRLRR LRLl), and the paradiddle-diddle (RLRRll, or LRLlRR).

When applying these rudiments to hand drums, there are many more possibilities, such as different sounds, using different drums,

etc. The biggest challenge is to take these techniques and use them without sounding like a marching band drummer. It's taken me a couple of years

of working on them to start to hear where they are really useful, and I've only scratched the surface. If you're looking for good books on rudimental drumming, there are lots of them out there. A really great book that I've used is Mitchell Peters' Rudimental Primer. It gives a bunch of exercises for each rudiment and then uses it in a (somewhat) musical setting.

Sorry for the long post. I'm curious to see what people have to add to this.