

Essential double bass drumming

Alfred Berengena

Method to improve your control & speed

Easy, Mid & High Level



DINSIC
Publicacions Musicals

Thanks to: Monica Vega, Manuel Früh & Trival Art Music

Essential Double Bass Drumming

First edition: April 2005

Cover design: Alfred Berengena
Photography by: Gene
Edition Audio CD: David Fernández

Layout: DINSIC GRÀFIC

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Santa Anna, 10, E 3a, 08002 - Barcelona

Printed in: Balmes, Servei Integral de Fabricació de llibres
Av. Barcelona, 260 - Pol. Industrial El Plà
08750 - Molins de Rei (Barcelona)

National book catalogue number: B-13.045-2005

ISBN: 84-95055-99-6
ISMN: M-69210-299-1

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DISTRIBUTION: DINSIC Distribucions Musicals, S.L.
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I have felt for many years that double bass drumming is one of the least analysed and least studied techniques.

You will have seen hundreds of books on playing the snare drum, on independence...Yet there are very few on double bass drumming. As for me, I studied using my own system, which I've been using in my teaching for over ten years.

You may notice that this method is unlike any other, since my intention has always been to make learning fun and uncomplicated, while still getting the best results, fast.

My system is based on exercises for coordination, independence and speed. And the way to use this system is simply playing away, gaining expertise through each new exercise. The book is aimed at getting the best results as simply as possible. You won't find it difficult to understand what is in it, and it will prove very useful for you, and not just in learning or improving those difficult double bass drum combinations: it will also enhance your independence, control and rhythmic stability.

You will find some combinations that you won't be able to put to use in songs, since they are for helping you to progress through the exercises – as with the ones in which the snare and the hi-hat play together. However, you will also find lots of combinations that you will be able to apply in music. You will also achieve total stability in keeping both the right and the left bass drum as the guide. And you will learn to use double drumming on both bass drums, since if you can do double drumming with your arms you can do it with your feet too.

None of this would have materialised without all the people I've played with over recent years, and more particularly without my students: with them I've been able to see in detail which system is the quickest and most practical for making progress, with double drumming and with everything else in the drumkit.

This is not one of those books you can work your way through in a month or two. It starts at a very basic level and ends up very complicated indeed. Don't let this put you off though: you can get a lot out of it, and you can also use it as a book to consult or as a library of double bass drumming rhythms.

I hope it will prove as useful for you as it has been for me and my students, and that when you get to the end you will see that mastering double drumming in playing the drums is more useful than you thought.

Alfred Berengena

Introduction

Essential Double Bass Drumming is a method for improving technique, control and speed, for advanced and beginner drummers alike. The book is divided into 3 sections:

Easy Level: Intended for drummers just starting on double drumming, or for those who have the basics and wish to go further and improve their speed, sustain and control.

Mid Level: Intended for drummers who have mastered the basic, standard rhythms and wish to go further, extending their technique and rhythmic progression.

High Level: Intended for drummers with advanced double bass drumming technique using both the right foot and the left foot.

The right tempo for each chapter (e.g. *100 – 180) is shown just after the chapter heading in the table of contents.

In studying each chapter, it is very important to go through these steps:

1. Positioning the bass drums

Before starting work on double drumming, and even though it might seem trivial, it is very important to grasp the basics of how to position the bass drums to make sure that the pedals are acting in a regular, stable way, thus getting the best performance, speed and stability in playing them.

The bass drums must always be arranged in the same way in front of you. The front ring should be between 1.5 and 3 cm from the ground at most – never more than three centimetres, since otherwise the drumhead would be slightly tilted, which would reduce the rotation path and hinder the responsiveness of the pedal. The drumhead must be tuned the way you like it, the tension depending on the type of drumhead you use. The higher the tension the greater the rebound, but the sound gets higher too, so you have to find the right trade-off between those two factors. If you use a trigger set-up, the tension can be increased slightly because the acoustic sound is not so critical when you are using a sound module.

2. Adjusting the pedals

This is the most important factor. The two pedals must be adjusted in exactly the same way, since otherwise you would have to adapt to the imbalance between them, which would slow you down a lot in your progress with this method. Double pedals are usually more complicated to adjust, particularly if they are entry-level ones – there is normally a great loss of speed in the left pedal, though adjustments can be made. The back-stroke of the beaters is vital for good performance. When the double pedal keeps the two pedal beaters at the same height with the pedals off, the back-stroke balance is right. Even so, press both pedals all the way down: the travel of the two beaters should be the same. So if the two beaters are still aligned when both pedals are down, the pedal back-stroke is properly adjusted. Then all that remains to be done is to adjust the tension of the springs. It is very important for both pedals to have the same type of spring, since otherwise the same tension setting would give different spring pressures.

3. Positioning your feet

Your feet must be aligned with the pedal. If your heel goes in or out, perhaps the bass drums are not properly positioned, or maybe you have got into a bad habit.

You should never play flat-footed, since that way you will never get up to top speed in the exercises.

The right position is playing with the tip of your foot, with your heel lifted up around two centimetres.

If you have followed all these steps properly, and if you have good pedals, the pedals should never come away from your feet when playing fast. If they do, I'd advise going through the steps explained above again.

I hope this method will be as useful for you as it has been for me. Thanks, and happy pedalling!

Alfred Berengena

Easy Level I

Track 1 & 2

Bass drums in 8th notes, hi-hat in quarter and 8th notes, and the snare in progression.

Drum notation for Easy Level I, Track 1 & 2. The notation is arranged in eight systems, each with a five-line staff. The first system includes a 4/4 time signature. The notation uses 'x' marks for hi-hat patterns, solid dots for bass drum patterns, and vertical lines for snare patterns. The patterns are consistent across the systems, with the hi-hat playing a steady quarter-note pattern, the bass drum playing eighth notes, and the snare playing a progressive pattern. The systems are numbered 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 29 on the left side of the staff.

Easy Level 2

Track 3 & 4

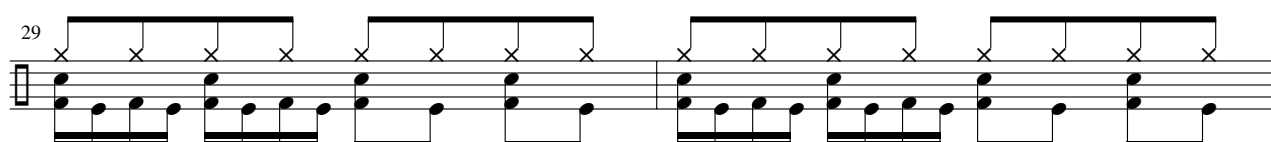
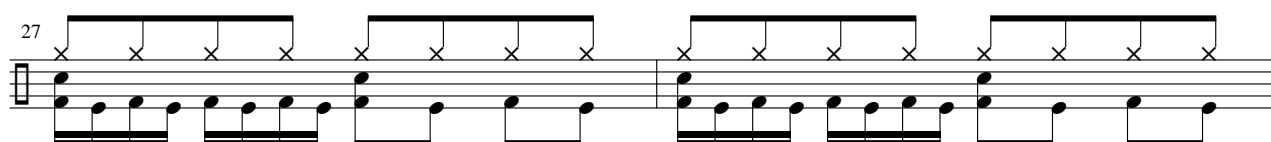
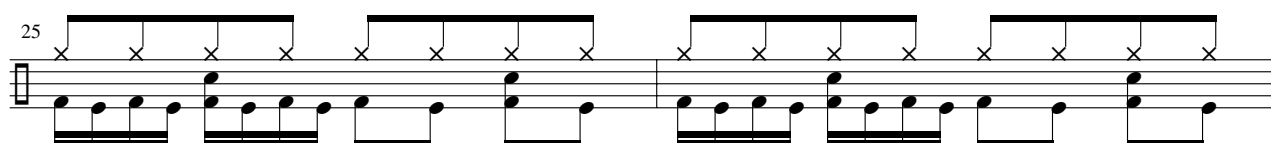
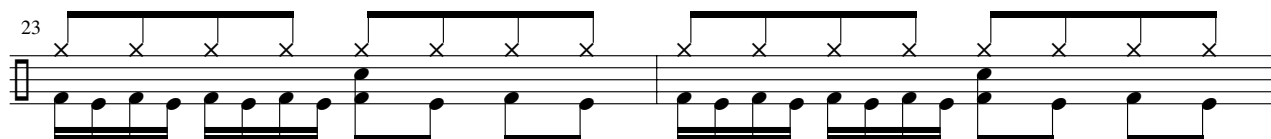
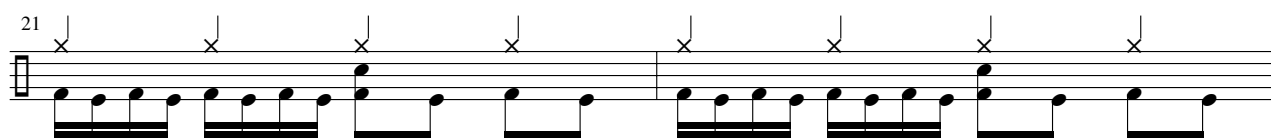
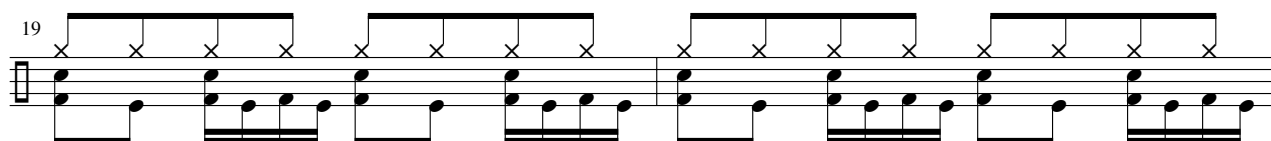
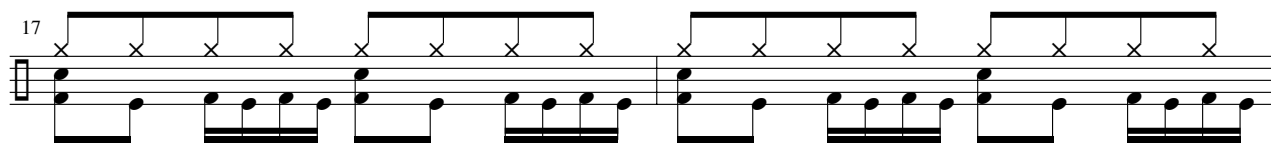
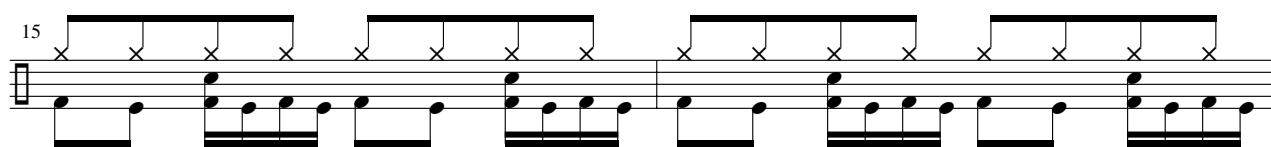
Bass drums in 16th notes, hi-hat in quarter notes and 8th notes, and the snare in progression.

Mid Level I

Track 21 & 22

Combinations with bass drums in 16th and 8th notes, hi-hat in quarter notes and 8th notes, and snare in progression.

1 3 5 7 9 11 13



High Level I

Track 33 & 34

Bass double drumming in 8th notes, hi-hat in quarter notes and 8th notes and the snare in progression.

The drum notation is presented in eight staves, each containing four measures. The notation is in 4/4 time. The pattern is consistent across all staves, with the bass playing a double drumming pattern in 8th notes, the hi-hat playing a pattern of quarter and 8th notes, and the snare playing a progression.

Staff 1: Measures 1-4. Bass: 8th notes (double drumming). Hi-hat: Quarter notes. Snare: Progression.

Staff 2: Measures 5-8. Bass: 8th notes (double drumming). Hi-hat: Quarter notes. Snare: Progression.

Staff 3: Measures 9-12. Bass: 8th notes (double drumming). Hi-hat: Quarter notes. Snare: Progression.

Staff 4: Measures 13-16. Bass: 8th notes (double drumming). Hi-hat: Quarter notes. Snare: Progression.

Staff 5: Measures 17-20. Bass: 8th notes (double drumming). Hi-hat: Quarter notes. Snare: Progression.

Staff 6: Measures 21-24. Bass: 8th notes (double drumming). Hi-hat: Quarter notes. Snare: Progression.

Staff 7: Measures 25-28. Bass: 8th notes (double drumming). Hi-hat: Quarter notes. Snare: Progression.

Staff 8: Measures 29-32. Bass: 8th notes (double drumming). Hi-hat: Quarter notes. Snare: Progression.

High Level 2

Track 35 & 36

Bass double drumming in 16th notes, hi-hat in quarter notes and 8th notes and the snare in progression.

The drum notation is arranged in 10 systems, each with a bass drum staff and a snare drum staff. The bass drum staff shows double drumming in 16th notes, and the snare drum staff shows a progression of quarter and 8th notes. The notation is in 4/4 time and includes a key signature of one sharp (F#).

System 1: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

System 2: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

System 3: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

System 4: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

System 5: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

System 6: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

System 7: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

System 8: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

System 9: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

System 10: Bass drum staff has 8 measures of double 16th notes. Snare drum staff has 8 measures of quarter notes.

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