

Proficiency on the drumset is a must for any percussionist. It requires dexterity, coordination, concentration, balance, and above all, musicianship. Today's percussionist not only needs to be able to understand the basic physical requirements of playing the drumset, but he or she needs to be able to read standard drumset notation. The ability to read and notate music will enable the aspiring musician to pursue his artistic goals, not only in the studio, but in live performance as well.

Basic Drumset Notation

The following legend provides a brief overview of the placement and notation of drumset percussion instruments on the standard five line staff. However, please be advised that some composers and arrangers choose to notation the "hi-hat with hand" on the fourth space of the staff and all of the toms on lines rather than spaces.

Legend: Drumset Notation



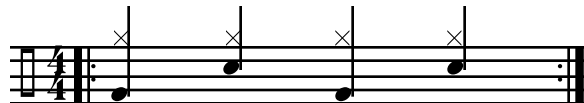
There are several methods of notating music for the drumset. In some instances, the per-cussionist may see a difference in stem direction. As you can see example 1.1, the hands use upward stem direction and feet use downward stems.

Example 1.1: Drumset Notation, Opposing Stem Direction



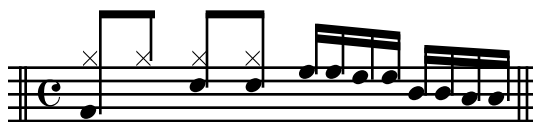
In example 1.2, all of the stems are notated in the same direction.

Example 1.2: Drumset Notation, Similar Stem Direction



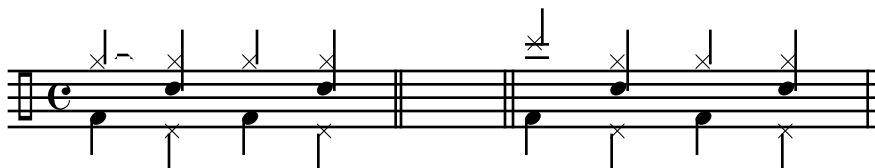
This also includes the notation of tom-toms (Example 1.3)

Example 1.3: Drumset Notation, Tom-toms and Stem Direction



Crash cymbals are notated using an unattached tie (beat 1, example 1.4.a) *or* the use of a higher placed ledger line (beat 1, example 1.4.b).

Example 1.4.a: Crash with ties Example 1.4.b: Crash on ledger line



For the following exercises, all of the stems will be notated in the same direction.

Drumset Exercise Sheet #1

For the following exercises, the percussionist should count rhythmic syllables while performing and repeating each selection. The counts/syllables are placed at the top of each exercise, above the appropriate note. The use of a metronome is strongly recommended.

The left foot/hi-hat will not be introduced until the next series of exercises. Concentration and counting each beat is essential. Make sure that your left foot stays stationary during each exercise.

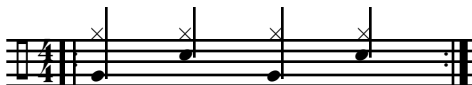
Drumset Exercises 1-10

Repeat each exercise for 2 sets of 20.

1st time: R.H. on the H.H.; L.H. on the Snare
2nd time: L.H. on the H.H.; R.H. on the Snare

Ex. 1

Count: 1 2 3 4



Ex. 2

Count: 1 2 3 4



Ex. 3

Count: 1 2 3 & 4



Ex. 4

Count: 1 & 2 3 4



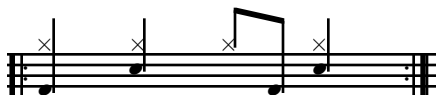
Ex. 5

Count: 1 & 2 3 & 4



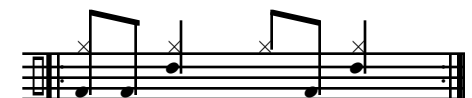
Ex. 6

Count: 1 2 3 & 4



Ex. 7

Count: 1 & 2 3 & 4



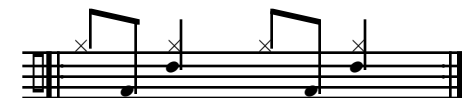
Ex. 8

Count: 1 & 2 3 & 4



Ex. 9

Count: 1 & 2 3 & 4



Ex. 10

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

