

Developing Independence with the Half-Time Shuffle

By Stephane Chamberland

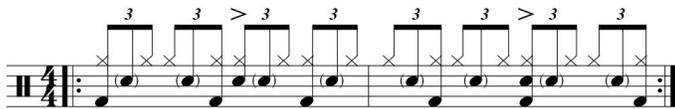
When someone says, “shuffle,” I instantly think of Bernard Purdie with the Purdie shuffle on Steely Dan’s “Babylon Sisters,” or Jeff Porcaro and the song “Rosanna” with Toto, or Steve Gadd and his famous way to orchestrate the shuffle ride by transferring one note to the hi-hat with his left foot. I also think about blues and B.B. King or Stevie Ray Vaughn. When I was studying with the legendary Jim Chapin and we were going through his book, *Advanced Technique for the Modern Drummer, Vol. 1*, he had me play the exercises not only with a jazz ride pattern but also with the shuffle ride pattern. For me it was a revelation to learn jazz and shuffle, and that brought me to understand what the feel and importance of subdivisions are.

HALF-TIME SHUFFLE GROOVES

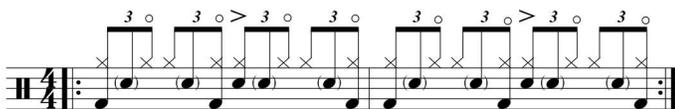
Half-time basically means that we are playing the snare drum on 3 instead of 2 and 4. This has the effect of creating the feel of a slower groove, but it actually remains at the same tempo. We can apply this concept to other styles as well. The ghost note in these grooves will embellish the feel, and you need to make sure you play them very softly. The accents are supposed to be loud, and the bass drum should also be present in the balance. You should also try to get small accents on the hi-hats that fall on the beat.

Let me share with you two of my favorite half-time shuffle grooves:

Jeff Porcaro half-time shuffle:

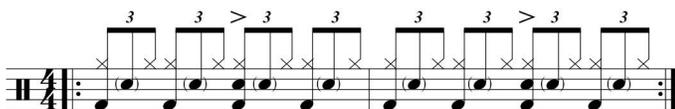


Bernard Purdie half-time shuffle:

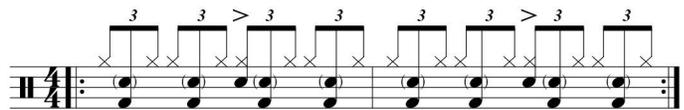


As you can see, these two grooves from these renowned drummers have one thing in common; the same hand patterns. When I first started practicing those grooves, it was a challenge to get the coordination and independence going, so I began playing the hand pattern only and then started displacing single notes on the bass drum.

Let's start by playing a bass drum on every downbeat:



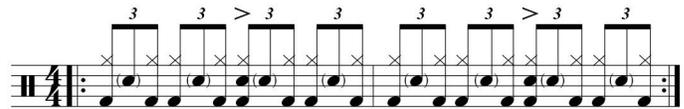
Now, on the second note:



Now, the third:

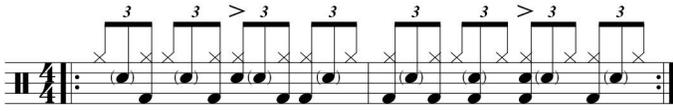


Now, let's play two notes and follow the same logic:



The goal is to develop good independence and be able to improvise on the bass drum wherever you want. Check this out: I wrote two ideas for bass drum improvisation under this fabulous half-time shuffle hand pattern:





Make sure you align each stroke perfectly with the others so you don't hear flams. You are looking for what Joe Morello would have called "flat flams": two notes that are played exactly at the same time.

CONNECT WITH THE MUSIC

I strongly recommend doing more research about not only the grooves but the music as well. The complete process should be: learn from books and exercises, practice them until you feel comfortable, listen to the music related to the grooves and style, play with some play-along tracks and, even better, find some fellow musicians and play some of this repertoire for yourself. You will realize that once the cycle is complete, you have a much better understanding of the feel, and you'll understand why we are playing what we play on the drums.

Play with passion and share it with the world!

Stephane Chamberland leads his own jazz band and has played with many artists including the Christian Pare World Ensemble, Kabir Kouba Band, Roxane de Lafontaine, Mathieu Fiset Trio, the Phonethemental Band, the T.A.M. Band, the What's Up Band, Flavia Nascimento Brazilian Quartet, the Tone Call Band, the Tree Spirit Band, Yann Brassard, the Black Coffees Band, the Rosheen Celtic Band, Trois Fois Jazz, the K-Lo Band, The Sadhana Jazz Band, Les Jumelles Barabé (TV Show *The Voice in Quebec*), the Private Club Band, the Fat Cats Band, and many more. As a clinician, he has presented hundreds of clinics and master classes in stores, schools, camps, and festivals in the U.S., Canada, Taiwan, Brazil, and China over the past ten years. Stephane maintains a busy private teaching schedule on Skype and in person in Quebec City, Canada, and New York City. Stephane has studied drumset with many renowned teachers from around the globe including Dom Famularo, Jim Chapin, Rick Gratton, Robby Ameen, Jeff Salem, Paul DeLong, Joe Bergamini, John Favicchia, Aldo Mazza, Eduardo Guedes, Claus Hessler, and Frank Belluci. He attended the Manhattan School of Music to study with John Riley and Bobby Sanabria, and also studied at the Conservatory of Music in Quebec City. He is the co-author of the books *The Weaker Side*, *Drumset Duets*, and *Pedal Control* with Dom Famularo and Joe Bergamini (Wizdom Media/Alfred Publishing) and has worked on the book *Drumset for Beginners* (Alfred Publishing) with Paul Hose and Jim Farey. He is a contributing writer for *Modern Drummer*, *Drums Etc.*, *Canadian Musician*, *Percussive Notes*, and *Classic Drummer* magazines. For more info visit www.stephanechamberland.com or www.facebook.com/stephanechamberland. **PN**

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