

Drumset Duets

By Stephane Chamberland

Using two drummers in a band has been common for a long time. Recently, such artists as the Joshua Redman Double Trio in jazz and the pop album *Where the Light Is: John Mayer Live in Los Angeles* used this concept for fun and variety on stage. Other bands like Genesis, the Allman Brothers, King Crimson, the Doobie Brothers, the Grateful Dead, and Stuff had fun with this two-drummers approach. I believe this has to do with the groove and the many possibilities two drummers can produce together. Like two guitars, one can play the background chords while the other is comping. We can apply the same concept with two drummers: One can keep a steady groove while the other drummer solos. It can also serve other purposes, such as using more sound sources or adding more textures to serve the music.

Playing with other musicians is the ultimate goal of studying drumming. A couple of years ago, I was looking for a great drum method to help my students improve their listening skills while learning new drum beats. I use two drumsets in my studio, and I felt it was a must to use this setup as much as I could for the benefit of the students. I am able to play with the student not just for demonstrations but also to develop the student's ears.

In a band, we need to be able to listen to ourselves, as well as to the other musicians, to be fully aware and best serve the music. This skill is essential to develop for all musicians. We drummers also need to focus on many different sounds at the same time because we are playing multiple sounds even when we perform the simplest drumbeat. At that time, I was studying with my mentor, Dom Famularo, in New York and he showed me this incredible book, *Drumset Duets*. It was an old version that was not distributed anymore, but Dom was still using it with his students because of the efficiency of this amazing work. I am really honored to have been able to work with him on many educational projects and books throughout the years. When we create a new book, we always make sure that it fits into a special curriculum we use with our students and then promote it to many other drummers around the world. I was blown away by the impact that this concept has made.

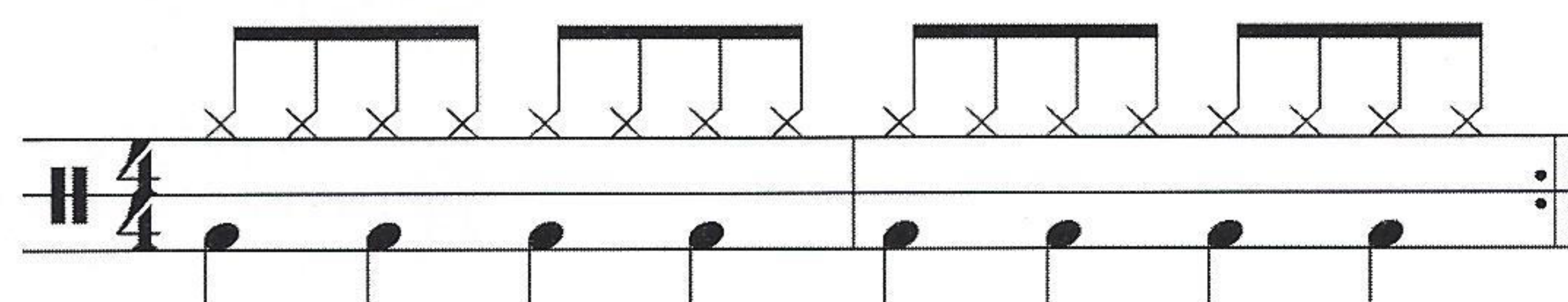
Imagine two drummers each playing a groove that together creates a more complex sound. We explored two different styles, rock and funk grooves, and added more ghost notes as we progressed through the book. Dom also suggested using different hi-hat patterns to push the independence to the next level for more advanced students. I am now able to use this book as soon as my students learn their first drum groove, and then I begin playing with them. I always say, "Listen to your part, then my part, and then try to hear the groove we both play. Make sure all the notes we play together match." Now it's not just playing an exercise, we are playing music, the same way you will in a band with other instruments. I found what I was looking for!

LET'S TRY IT

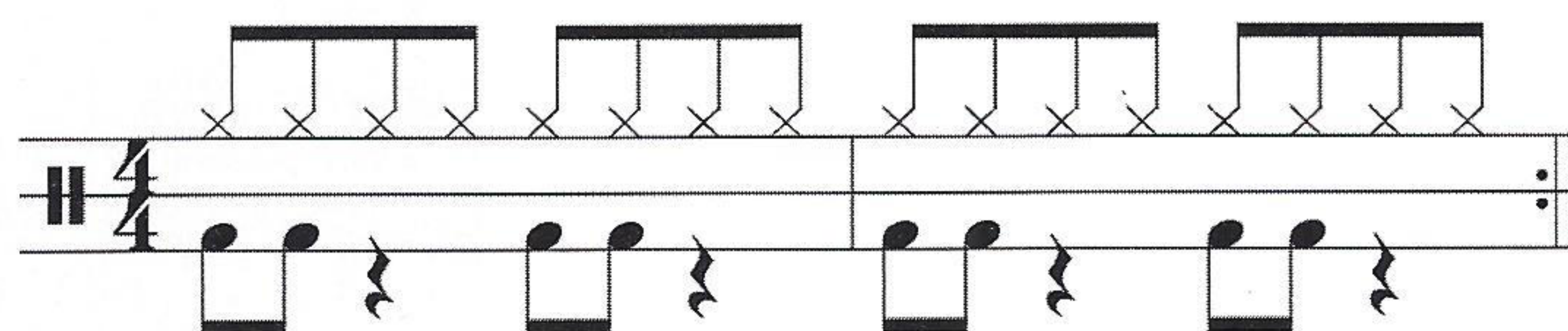
Let's start by trying one exercise. This is a great warm-up. The first drummer will be drummer A and the second drummer will be drummer B. Make sure before you start playing the snare and bass drum notes that you practice the togetherness of your hi-hats. Make sure all the notes fall evenly with your drummer friend. Listen to your part, then to the other drummer's part, but most important, listen to the final groove.

Drummer A

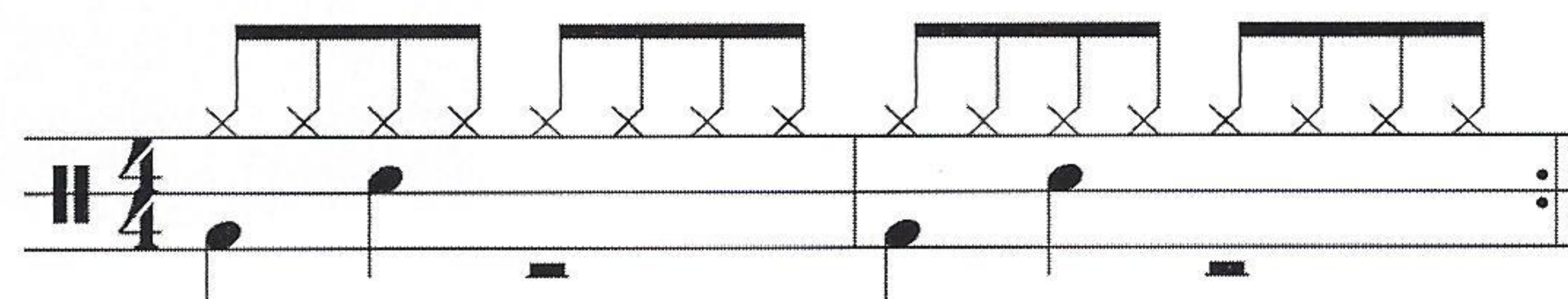
1a



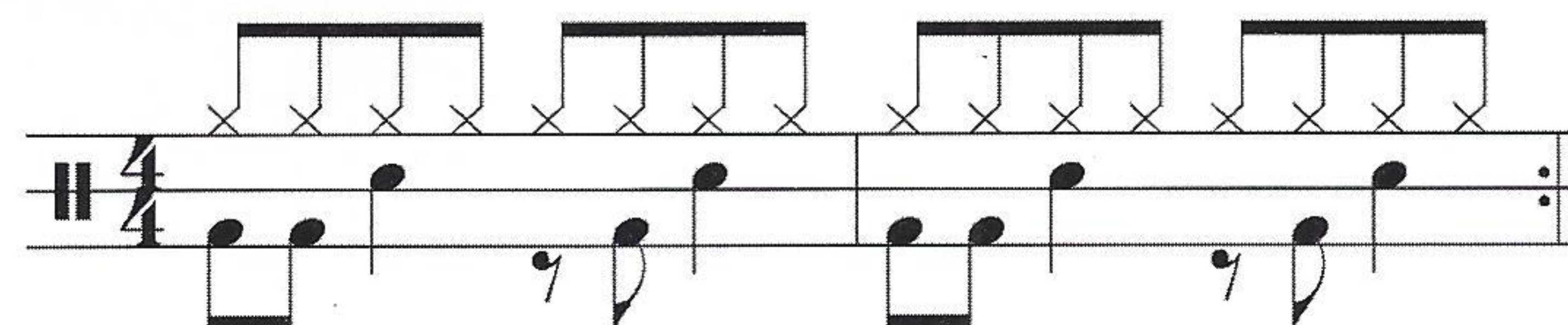
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3a

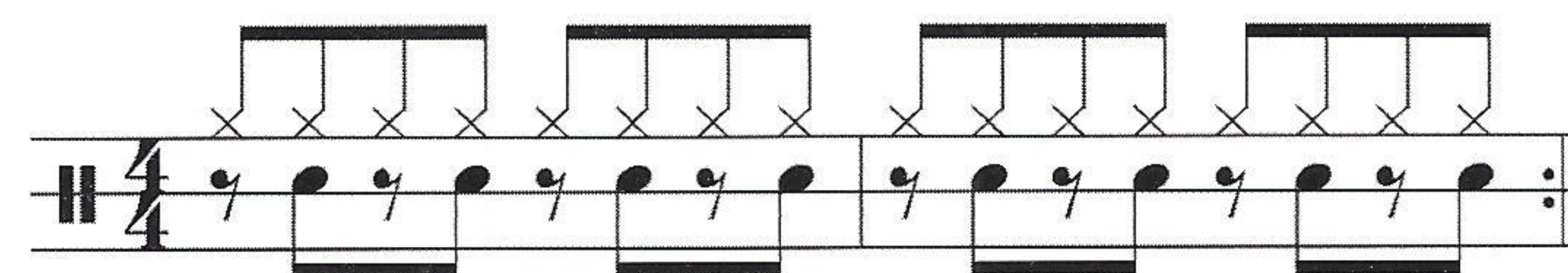


4a

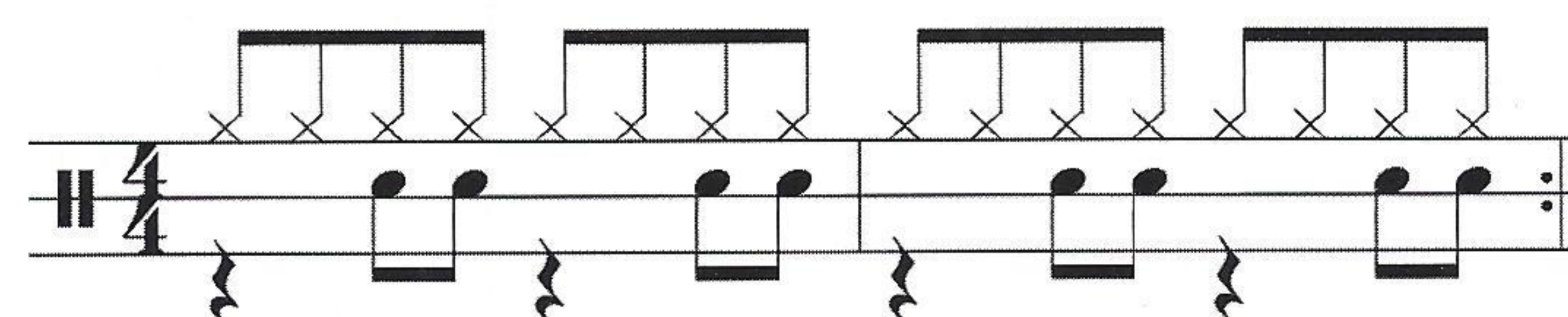


Drummer B

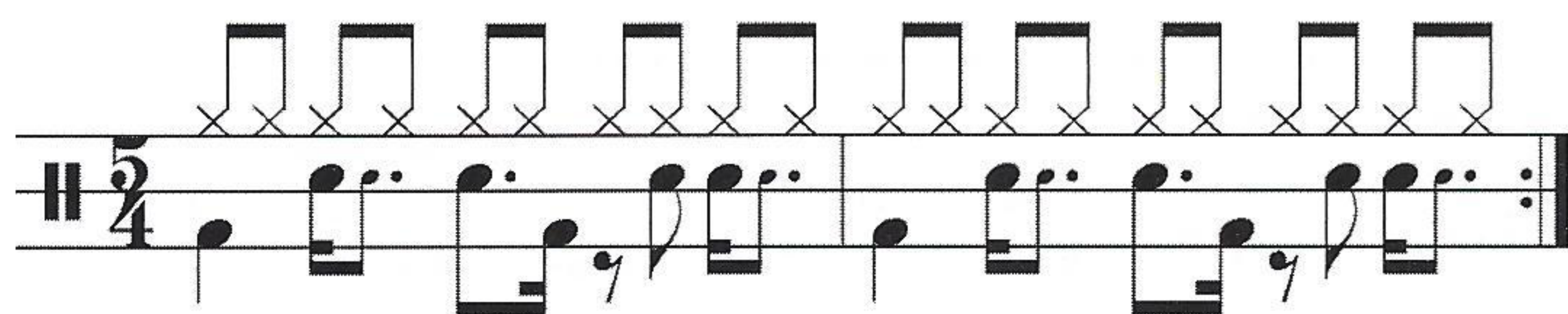
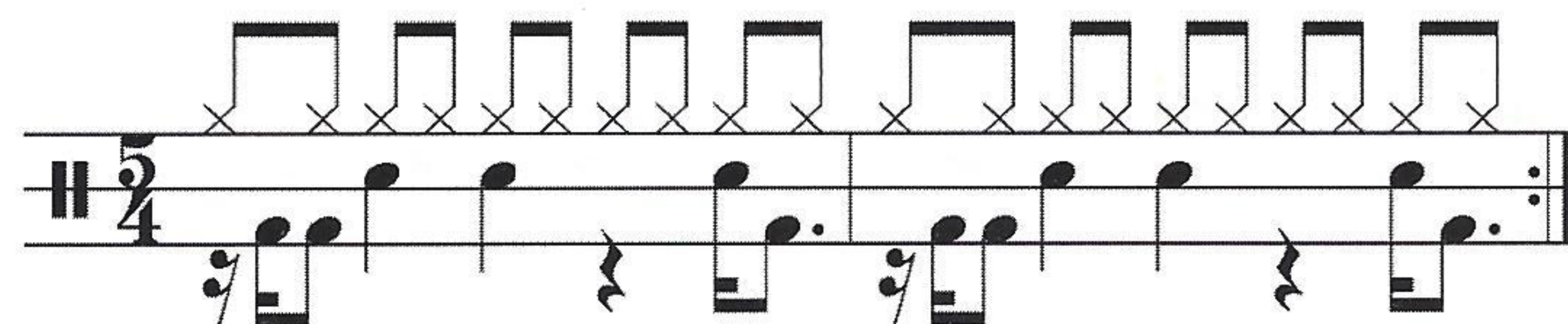
1b



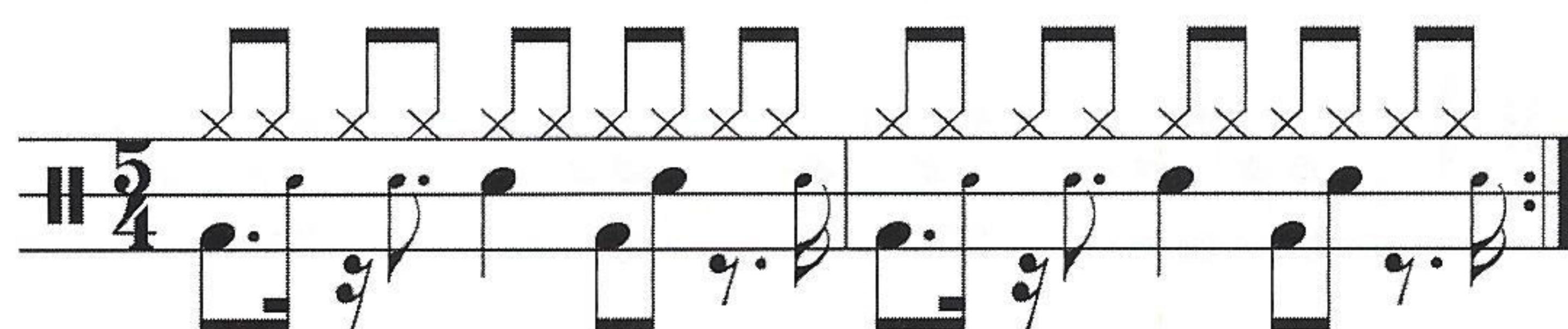
2b



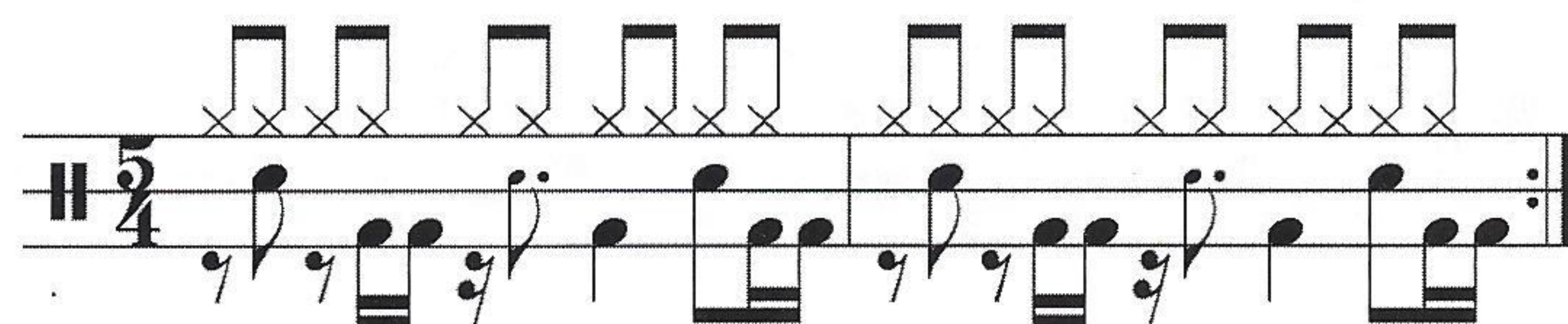
11a

Drummer B
9b

10b



11b



CREATING FORMS

The next level for an even more fun and challenging experience is to create guidelines and establish a form. Start with four bars of groove together, then drummer A takes a four-bar solo while drummer B continues playing the groove; then come back to the groove together and repeat the process, this time switching roles.

You can also push further by taking a blues form of 12 bars. Explore a standard A A B A form. Add a solo section that you can call C: A A B A C A. As you can see, the possibilities are endless.

I really hope that this article will inspire you to learn more about drumset duets for your own evolution, for your students, and maybe for your own band. We need to think outside the box and explore new ideas to challenge ourselves every day. It's your turn to use it and write your own drumset duets. Remember, music is an international language that connects us. This is a small world! Record a video of you and a friend playing the exercises from *Drumset Duets* and post it on YouTube to share with the world. Good luck in your journey!

For more info about *Drumset Duets*, visit: www.wizdom-media.com and www.alfred.com.

Stephane Chamberland is a drummer, clinician, educator, and author. He is an independent solo artist that has been playing and recording with countless musicians around the world and with his own jazz bands. Steph has presented clinics and master classes in schools, camps, festivals and music stores in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Taiwan, and China. He maintains a busy private teaching schedule at his studio in Quebec City, The Wizdom Drumshed, and also teaches regularly via Skype. 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). For more info visit www.stephanechamberland.com. **PN**

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