



By Stephane Chamberland

Developing a Musical & Creative Improvisational Facility

Part 2

Stretching the Phrase

Stretching and compressing a phrase is also a really cool concept that I first learned from John Riley. We will be using different subdivisions but will keep the same note order and sounds. Check out Ex. 1.

Putting Phrases Together

Now, we enter a world of infinite possibilities. While playing these phrases, make sure to keep track of where the one is. To help, try counting out loud. I will put some phrases together. Check out Ex. 2.

Playing Clockwise or Counter-Clockwise on the Drums

By changing the displacement without changing the rhythms, you will extend your vocabulary and make your ideas much more original. Try moving from the snare to the floor tom or the opposite. You may also just move randomly and surprise yourself with cool melodies.

Dynamics

Dynamics are like the shades of colour that a painter uses to express herself. As drummers, dynamics are extremely important. I recommend playing all the phrases again from very soft to very loud. It's all about the range of expression. After seeing a clinic by Mark Guiliana in New York City, I was inspired to practice as soft as I could to gain more control of my sound. Try it and I am sure this will become a very important part of your routine as well.

Repetition Is the Key

Developing our listening skills is crucial – being able to listen to yourself, then others, and finally, both at the same time. You want to be aware of what you are playing in the moment and the best way to practice your awareness is to repeat the phrase you just improvised.

Use all the concepts we talked about to then bring the phrases to the next level. The power of intention is big in this musical game. Mean what you play and play what you mean.

Ex. 1

Ex. 2