

Groove Concepts for Fusion-Funk Music

By Stephane Chamberland

I began playing with the Carl Mayotte Fusion Quintet in 2018. We have recorded four albums since 2018 and have had the chance to release a play along series for drum and bass with Hudson Music in 2023. Creating the charts was challenging but also an amazing learning experience. In this article I want to share some of the grooves I play in the song "Cocotte" that is available on the Hudson Music web site as a separated track, or the entire book available on the Hudson Music app. I think it's a great idea if you want to use these grooves as exercises. You can create form and also learn from the concepts to create your own grooves.

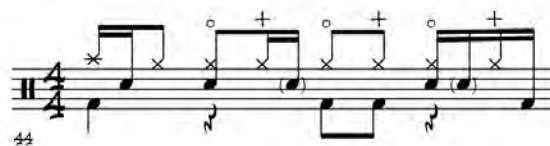
Orchestrating the melody on the toms

During the intro, I am orchestrating part of the melody on the toms in a way that will support the music and I am also adding some ghost notes on the snare to create shapes. I was inspired by Dave Weckl for this one. You can actually move your hi-hat hand onto the floor tom without changing the rhythms and it will make the groove sound bigger. You'll notice my right hand is on the floor tom and it's the left hand only that is moving around the toms, keeping the snare on 2 and 4. I have written the groove as straight 16ths, but we are going to swing the 16ths. This is a concept you can apply to many other grooves as well. You want to work this groove up to 91 bpm but start slowly.



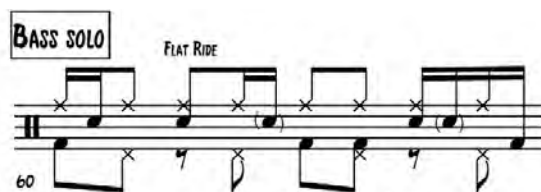
Opening the downbeats on the hi-hats

Another concept I used is opening the hi-hats on the downbeats when I play 8th notes. Don't forget we are still swinging the 16th notes. I was inspired by Dennis Chambers to do that and I always felt it brings a strong pulse to the groove. In this example we start with a crash cymbal but make sure not to repeat it. Stay on the hi-hats when you repeat. The bass drum here follows the bass guitar line and the steady 2 and 4 on the snare makes a clear understanding of the feel. The ghost notes are again added to make the beat funkier and add dynamics. Compose a groove, open the hats on down beats and add ghost notes. Magic!



Playing the left foot hi hats on upbeats

I like keeping my left foot hi-hat on the down beats, but in this song I shifted it to the upbeats to lift the music even more. You can use both here. I can only do this when my hand is keeping time on the ride. If you want to insert some left foot hi-hats while keeping time on it, it's possible but it's a totally different approach. In this case, by putting the right hand on the ride, it frees my hi-hat for these variations. You can splash the hi-hat like we did with the first groove or keep it closed and tight. I put my foot far up on the plate to feel the pedal more and get a tighter sound. When it comes to my cymbal choice, I used an 18" Sabian, 'Ed Thigpen' Signature ride for this track. Flat rides were more popular in the 90's but I like to bring this sound back in my playing.



Adaptation is the key

Adapting is the key to your personal sound and expression. This is the step we fear to take sometimes but I encourage you to play the song with my original groove to inspire you to create your own. In the book, you have a version with click, and one with no click, to work on time and listening. Have fun!

From the book: *The Ultimate Jazz Fusion Play-Along Drum Edition*

The Music of Carl Mayotte, Song: "Cocotte." Album: Pop de ville vol.1

Courtesy of Hudson Music www.hudsonmusic.com www.stephanechamberland.com

Link to the track: <https://hudsonmusic.com/product/cocotte-drums/>

Link to the book: <https://hudsonmusic.com/product/the-ultimate-jazz-fusion-play-along-for-drums/>

Check out Stephane's drummer profile page at moderndrummer.com

