

BUCKS (2024)

TN and BD play unison 1x. Match SN sticking unless otherwise notated.

1

Snare
Tenor
Bass Drums

SN
TN
BD

SN
TN
BD

SN
TN
BD

2

SN
TN
BD

SN
TN
BD

BUCKS (2024) - 2

Musical notation for the first system of 'BUCKS (2024) - 2'. It features three staves: SN (Snare Drum), TN (Tom Tom), and BD (Bass Drum). The SN staff includes a series of rhythmic patterns with dynamic markings (>) and a sequence of letters (R, L) underneath. The TN and BD staves show corresponding rhythmic patterns with dynamic markings (>).

Musical notation for the second system of 'BUCKS (2024) - 2', continuing the percussion parts for SN, TN, and BD. The SN staff includes a series of rhythmic patterns with dynamic markings (>) and a sequence of letters (L, R) underneath. The TN and BD staves show corresponding rhythmic patterns with dynamic markings (>).

FLAM HACK SENSE

Dovetailing off of “Milkbone,” an exercise that promotes healthy tap placement after an accent, “Flam Hack Sense” deals with similar control-related issues . . . this time disguised as good ol’ flam accents.

Flam accents are one of the most basic rudiments we learn in our early stages. Whether in duplet or triplet form, this versatile rudiment is accessible, comfortable to play, has a nice hand-to-hand swing, allows for a wide variety of musical applications, and pretty much no one that I’ve talked to has indicated that it’s a tricky rudiment to execute — until now!

Although this exercise consists entirely of hand-to-hand flam accents, they are presented in an ever-shifting environment of duplet and triplet rhythms that creates control issues for the player. These shifts back and forth between duplet and triplet rhythmic contexts create a rocky ride for the player, who has to speed up and slow down (on a dime) at precise locations.

“Flam Hack Sense” is split up into three sections. All three sections are loopable, and I definitely recommend keeping them on repeat until the players have the exercise more comfortably in their hands.

Letter A is six bars long with four beats of duplet rhythms followed by four beats of triplet rhythms.

Letter B is three bars long with two beats of each.

Letter C is a quick, two-bar wrap-up — one beat of each. Tricky business!

Practicing Advice and Variations

Less-experienced players will have a tough time handling the control issues that this exercise presents. Here are some variations you can try in an effort to reduce some of the associated startup costs:

- Play each section on endless repeat at a slow tempo so that all timing and control issues are exposed and can be reckoned with head on.
- Take out all flams and play the exercise as just taps and accents.
- Strip away the flam accents from all triplet versions of the rudiment and just play triplet taps in their stead.
- Do the opposite of the above: strip away flam accents from all duplet versions and replace with 16th note taps.

If you think about it, the first two notes of each change in the rhythm is where the trouble starts, and it's also where the players ought to focus their concentration.

If you’d like to add some challenge to this exercise, here are some suggestions:

- Reverse the stickings on the whole exercise.
- Rather than straight flam accents, play it through with flam drags.
- Play it through with “cheeses” (flammed and accented drags).
- Rather than hand-to-hand flam accents, play it through with only one side of the rudiment (e.g., Rlr Rlr Rlr Rlr).
- Any combination of the above!

INCLUDED AUDIO:



Full battery (104 bpm)

FLAM HACK SENSE

Murray Gusseck

A $\text{♩} = 72-112$

Snare
Tenor (6)
Bass (5)

4 *Opt. repeat*

Sn
Tn
Bs

B 7 *Opt. repeat*

Sn
Tn
Bs

C 10 *Opt. repeat*

Sn
Tn
Bs

FULCRUM FREDDIE

As far as I can remember, “Fulcrum Freddie” dates back to the early 2000s at SCV. The focus of the exercise is on clean transitions between single strokes and doubles in order to maintain an overall smooth roll sound. But more than that, it is designed, frankly, to test the mettle of any rudimental player. There is a reason this is the final exercise in this collection.

In each section of the exercise, players have to execute roll passages of varying lengths comprised of sticking variations in the following order:

1. doubles
2. singles
3. doubles-singles
4. singles-doubles

Letter A begins with short passages of these switch-ups, while letters B and C contain longer and longer strings of them.

I’ve included phrase markings to help remind the players that these slurred passages are meant to sound like one roll. We don’t want to hear the transitions from singles to doubles or vice versa.

A fairly strict two-height approach is advised, although it’s normal (if not helpful) to allow a little bit of breathing room in the heights during the roll passages. But you’ll certainly want to constrain heights in favor of achieving a smooth, unnoticeable transition from singles to doubles and from doubles back to singles.

It ain’t easy, but nothing worthwhile ever is. Good luck!

INCLUDED AUDIO:



Full battery (104 bpm)

FULCRUM FREDDIE

Murray Gusseck

A ♩ = 60-112

Snare
Tenor (5/6)
Bass (5)

5

Sn
Tn
Bs

B

9

Sn
Tn
Bs

11

Sn
Tn
Bs

FULCRUM FREDDIE *cont.*

C

The score is divided into three systems, each containing three staves for Snare (Sn), Tenor (Tn), and Bass (Bs) drums. The first system starts at measure 13. The second system starts at measure 15. The third system starts at measure 17. The time signature changes from 6/4 to 4/4 at the beginning of the second system and remains 4/4 through the third system. The notation includes rhythmic patterns, dynamic markings (accents), and articulation (accents and slurs). The drum parts are written in a standard marching band notation with stems and flags.

13

Sn
Tn
Bs

15

Sn
Tn
Bs

17

Sn
Tn
Bs

GEAR SHIFTER

“Gear Shifter” presents a particular challenge in battery drumming that I personally view as underserved, which is the ability of a single section of the battery to hold its own against conflicting parts being played by other sections.

Most of the time battery parts are rhythmically coordinated. At least, that’s what most of us are going for; right? For musical reasons, we often want the entire battery section—snare, tenors, and basses—to form a cohesive musical union in support of whatever music they’re accompanying. Parts are designed to lay well on top of one another without a lot of rhythmic conflicts like triplets on top of 8th notes or 16th notes or quintuplets on top of 16th notes, etc.

But even if we accept the above as true in most cases, how often does it happen where a particular part being played by a particular section of the battery still “rubs” a little too much against the rhythmic grain of the overall musical passage, causing one or more other sections of the battery to falter and quickly become confused or disoriented?

Most of the time when this occurs, it is only for a second or two. But I’m of the belief that the individual sections of the battery (and the individual players that make up those sections) can and should be more musically and rhythmically resilient. Marching percussion arrangers ought to be able to layer seemingly conflicting rhythms on top of each other if there is a creative musical reason to do so. After all, some music is about chaos! Surely a marching battery comprised of extremely loud membranophones should possess the option of adding its own rhythmic chaos to the mix.

How It Works



“Gear Shifter” is presented in three sections with two generic parts — Group 1 and Group 2. Group 1 is the “focus” group; Group 2 is the “control” group.

In each section of the exercise, Group 2’s job is to hold down the fort. At letter A, that fort is 8th notes. At letter B, it’s 8th note triplets. And finally at letter C, 16th notes.

Group 1 will play the role of guinea pig. Their rhythms will always match Group 2’s rhythms at the outset of a section but then “shift” into faster and slower gears by approximately one order of rhythmic magnitude. From straight 8th notes at letter A, they’ll next move to 8th note triplets, then back to straight 8ths, and then to quarter note triplets. This rhythmic waffling happens in broad chunks at first (two bars each), then shrinks throughout the course of the section to one bar each and finally to two counts of each.

While Group 1 is focusing on shifting rhythmic gears, Group 2 will be holding down that 8th note fort. There are sticking variations in Group 2’s part throughout the exercise that will add a level of challenge as they struggle not only to maintain steady 8th notes for Group 1’s exploits, but also to achieve a consistency of volume and touch through the sticking variations.

The point here is to give the various sections of the battery a chance to openly play rhythms that rub against one another while building the confidence necessary to stand on their own rhythmic two feet, so to speak. Additionally, they will also be learning to have each other’s backs. After all, Group 2 will essentially be Group 1’s lifeline.

INCLUDED AUDIO:	
	Group 1: Sn/Tn, Group 2: Bs (108 bpm)
	Group 1: Bs, Group 2: Sn/Tn (100 bpm)

Implementation

I'd like to offer some additional tips on how to go about practicing "Gear Shifter" with your group. I'd also encourage you to reread the sections of metronome usage and dynamics at the front of this book.

Metronome Usage

As you will surmise when looking at the exercise, a metronome will be a pretty vital element for keeping all of this together. However, it's important to state that the ultimate goal would be not using a metronome at all! Since the point of the exercise is rhythmic self-reliance, the ultimate test of this will be to shut the met off, effectively kicking the birdie out of the nest so it can "figure it out" on the way down.

But getting to that stage will be a process, and I'd recommend starting with the met in traditional form on quarter notes. However, don't wait too long until you start experimenting with some of the other met techniques outlined on page 6, especially the drop-click and whole or half note click approaches. Any of these alternative met techniques should help forge a clearer path to self-reliance.

Mix and Match

There are plenty of possibilities for how to assign the groups to the various sections of the battery. Here are four to start with:

Snares	Tenors	Basses
Group 1	Group 1	Group 2
Group 2	Group 2	Group 1
Group 1	Group 2	Group 2
Group 2	Group 1	Group 2

Lastly, don't feel the need to progress through all sections of the exercise right away. Letter A will be hard enough for a while. The other sections of the exercise will feel more accessible when the time is right.

Dynamics

Along with the alternative met techniques described previously, I'd most certainly recommend lowering the overall volume levels of each group. This should provide more headroom, introduce some much-needed calm in the midst of the rhythmic calamity, and give the players (and instructors) a better ability to hear what is going on.

This can be done creatively. For instance, you could have Group 1 playing at *p* or *mp* while Group 2 plays one level louder (*mp* or *mf*, respectively). In this way, the control group is louder than the focus group, which should be particularly helpful for Group 1.

One other related tip here: You can try having Group 2 (the control group) keep the "fort" rhythms (e.g., 8th notes at letter A) going during the "4 for nuthins" in between reps. In this way, the control group will become an even stronger, more consistent source of time to aid in Group 1's progress.

Once Group 1 is holding its own, switch the dynamics around and have Group 2 play one level softer than Group 1. This will be a larger leap of faith for Group 1 and thus present an additional level of challenge.

I.D.A. (“*Inverted Double Attack*”)

ATTENTION ALL CITIZENS!

THE INVERTED DOUBLES ARE HERE. TAKE SHELTER IMMEDIATELY!!

END OF TRANSMISSION

A great way to strengthen your double-stroke roll is by exaggerating the second note of the double. So says conventional wisdom. I’ve found that by switching the traditional sticking pattern of RRLR RRLR to start on the second note (i.e., RLLR RLLR) is not only helpful to the cause, but it also allows some creative possibilities via the use of internal dynamics.

The exercise on the opposite page is one such pattern. As you will see, the sticking never varies. However, the accents create a fun little melody in addition to a nice physical challenge for the hands.

This one is definitely designed to be played fast, but as with anything else in this book, start slowly in order to gain mastery with the concepts first.

I’ve included two different unison bass drum variations. The A variation is a duplicate of the snare and tenor parts, while the B variation is designed for faster tempos where the reality of typical bass mallet sizes (along with the low rebound factor of the heads on larger drums) will likely be prohibitive. As for when to switch from A to B, that’s up to you. It would probably be somewhere around 150 bpm, if not slower.

This exercise is an excellent candidate for using the whole-note metronome technique outlined on page 6. With fewer metronome clicks, the accents will become a more important tool for navigating the time. In turn, this will fortify the concept of the exercise even more (striving for strong doubles by leaning towards the second note).

INCLUDED AUDIO:



Full battery w/ Bass A (120 bpm)





Full battery w/ Bass B (160 bpm)


I.D.A. "Inverted Double Attack"

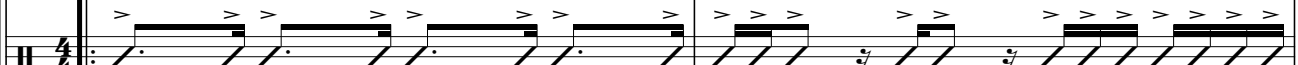
Murray Gusseck


$\text{♩} = 100-172$


Snare 
 R | I | R R | I | R R | I | R R | I | R R | R L L r r L L r r L L R R L L R


Tenor (5/6) 
 R | I | R R | I | R R | I | R R | I | R R | R L L r r L L r r L L R R L L R


Bass A (normal) 
 R | I | R R | I | R R | I | R R | I | R R | R L L r r L L r r L L R R L L R

Bass B (skeleton) 
 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

Sn 
 R | I | R R | I | R R L L r r L L R | R | I | R R L L r r L L R R L L R R

Tn 
 R | I | R R | I | R R L L r r L L R | R | I | R R L L r r L L R R L L R R

Bs A 
 R | I | R R | I | R R L L r r L L R | R | I | R R L L r r L L R R L L R R

Bs B 
 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

SINGLE-DOUBLE-TRIPLE

We've all played and taught variations of "8 on a Hand" and "Double Beat," two of the most basic staples of the marching battery technique diet. They focus on big, smooth, repetitive motions that serve to warm up the drumming muscles as well as the ears and minds.

The first exercise of this collection combines the two basic exercises into one and adds a third element—three-stroke patterns—to complete this legato stroke happy meal. There are optional repeat bars in place if you want to loop individual sections.

Where this version departs from the traditional forms is in the added A/B/C variations of each section of the exercise. They are:

Snares and Tenor Variations

A) Single hand — This is the traditional approach.

B) Double-stop — Add a significant physical challenge by playing all notes as double-stops (i.e., right/left hand unisons). The two extra bars of alternating 16th notes in the A section are reduced to 8th notes in this variation.

C) Fill-ins — This variation adds taps in the spaces between the notes of the base rhythms to create nearly continuous 16th notes throughout the exercise.

Bass Variations

A) Unison — Self-explanatory. All bass drums play the single-hand part together in unison.

B) Split — Melodic bass drum part.

More on the Variations

The provided variations are a nice way to break up the monotony associated with the traditional forms of these exercises. Each variation of the snare and tenor part creates its own unique physical challenge, and all variations are usable on top of one another, giving you the ability to mix and match for any number of reasons.

A) Single hand

This is definitely the best starting point for all sections. The exercises will feel familiar this way, and regardless of the number of subsequent variations, you'll always get at least a decent warmup. This variation should be home base for all sections.

B) Double-stop

Players getting bored? Play every note with both hands in unison. Poof . . . boredom gone. A physical challenge will overcome boredom every time. This variation will quickly acquaint each player with his or her own technical ceiling, and most will quickly realize those are low ceilings indeed. (For what are likely obvious reasons, no double-stop variation is provided—or recommended—for basses!)

It is a good idea to start slow and low with this variation. Consider the physical demands called for at letter C and choose your tempo accordingly. Remember, the slower the better in terms of getting comfortable, assimilating the material, and gaining mastery.

C) Fill-ins

This variation turns each single-hand part into a two-handed, two-height sticking pattern. For the singles (letter A), they become 16th notes played in alternating fashion with a single break at the end of bars 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8. The break serves to allow switching between right- and left-hand lead.

The doubles and triples (letters B and C) become a more involved sticking exercise with this variation. However, rather than allowing the players to get caught up scrutinizing stickings, it's more important that they simply recall the traditional "single-hand" form of the exercise. These original rhythms are now represented by accented notes with the opposite hand plugged into the rhythmic gaps.

This variation holds many keys to unlocking the secrets of the double beat universe. Anyone old enough to remember the way lines used to play these rhythms before the days of the audible metronome may recall the sound of overly compressed 16th note pairs accompanied by bloated spaces in between, resulting in some very strange rhythmic interpretations. Put simply, the reason for this is that it was more convenient to play it this way. It's not as if there were meetings before rehearsal about it—it's just human nature. We humans don't like to work harder than necessary and playing these rhythms accurately is hard work!

What this variation aims to do is bring this challenge into stark relief. Once the missing notes are added, one cannot help but try and bring the rhythms into balance with clean, even-sounding 16th notes. The work required by the hand playing the main accented part is subsequently much more significant using this approach.

You can also experiment by having the soft "filler" notes played up and at the same volume as the accents. This adds even more challenge to the part, as it creates the self-evident goal of achieving uniform 16ths throughout all measures. The players will have to really reach for it in order to execute this perfectly.

Mix and Match

One of the benefits of having all these variations is the ability to mix it up. Personally I don't view it as important to create a routine whereby each section rotates around their three variations (or two for the basses) with every single repetition. That can get just as monotonous as having no variations.

Rather, work each variation separately until there is a decent level of comprehension. Once the variations are "in the hands," then you can start to have fun by assigning different variations to different sections of the battery. The table below contains some sample scenarios.

Look for the **INCLUDED AUDIO** (🔊) icons alongside certain scenarios for included recordings.

Snares	Tenors	Basses	
Variation A (single hand)	Variation A (single hand)	Variation A (unison)	🔊 124 bpm
Variation A (single hand)	Variation B (double-stop)	Variation B (split)	
Variation B (double-stop)	Variation C (fill-ins)	Variation A (unison)	
Variation B (double-stop)	Variation A (single hand)	Variation B (split)	🔊 116 bpm
Variation C (fill-ins)	Variation B (double-stop)	Variation B (split)	
Variation C (fill-ins)	Variation C (fill-ins)	Variation A (unison)	

SINGLE-DOUBLE-TRIPLE

Murray Gusseck

A $\text{♩} = 60-120$

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-5. The score includes parts for Snare A (single hand), Snare B (double-stop), Snare C (fill-ins), Tenor 6 A (single hand), Tenor 6 B (double-stop), Tenor 6 C (fill-ins), Bass-A (unison), and Bass (5) B (split). The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 60-120$. The notation shows rhythmic patterns with right (R) and left (L) hand indicators.

Musical score for the second system, measures 6-10. The score includes parts for Sn A, Sn B, Sn C, Tn A, Tn B, Tn C, Bs A, and Bs B. The notation shows rhythmic patterns with right (R) and left (L) hand indicators. An "Optional repeat" sign is present at the end of the system.

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SINGLE-DOUBLE-TRIPLE cont.

B

Musical score for Snare (Sn A, Sn B, Sn C), Tenor (Tn A, Tn B, Tn C), and Bass (Bs A, Bs B) drums. Measures 11-14. Includes rhythmic notation and stick directions (R for right, L for left). Snare parts feature various rhythmic patterns with accents. Tenor parts include stick directions and some plus signs. Bass parts are simpler rhythmic patterns.

Musical score for Snare (Sn A, Sn B, Sn C), Tenor (Tn A, Tn B, Tn C), and Bass (Bs A, Bs B) drums. Measures 15-18. Includes rhythmic notation and stick directions. Snare parts feature various rhythmic patterns with accents. Tenor parts include stick directions and some plus signs. Bass parts are simpler rhythmic patterns. An "Optional repeat" sign is present at the end of the section.

SINGLE-DOUBLE-TRIPLE cont.

C

19

Sn A

Sn B

Sn C

Tn A

Tn B

Tn C

Bs A

Bs B

23

Optional repeat

Sn A

Sn B

Sn C

Tn A

Tn B

Tn C

Bs A

Bs B

SHORT SHORT LONG

DUPLE



TRIPLE

