

Exploring The Swiss Army Triplet, Part 2

by Chet Doboie

As we talked about in Part 1 of this two-part series, the Swiss Army triplet comes out of the tradition of Swiss Basel Drumming. The natural application for this rudiment is triplets, but fantastic things can be done by applying it in a 16th-note context. As you'll soon see, in the context of 16ths, this rudiment creates a three-over-four feel. And when accents are added, a very interesting texture is created: a rhythmic counterpoint of flams, accents, and non-accents. And again, this all happens while we're superimposing three over four.

Movin' The 16th Swiss

This exercise is a brother to exercise 2 from Part 1. (It may be helpful now to refer back to Part 1.) Be certain to understand exactly where the Swiss Army triplets and inverts appear in the context of this exercise, and study the "turn around" figure that occurs in the fourth count of each measure.

The exercise consists of three staves of music in 4/4 time. Each staff contains two measures of music. The first measure of each staff features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a single eighth note. The second measure features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a single eighth note. The rhythmic patterns are as follows:

Staff 1: R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L

Staff 2: R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L

Staff 3: R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L

Swiss 16ths With Accents

This accent exercise can be overwhelming at first. I've divided it into three modules (A, B, and C) to facilitate a more comfortable means to digest these patterns. It's advisable to count while performing this material. This will be a key factor in bridging the gap between exercise and performance.

The exercise is labeled 'A' and consists of three staves of music in 4/4 time. Each staff contains two measures of music. The first measure of each staff features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a single eighth note. The second measure features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a single eighth note. The rhythmic patterns are as follows:

Staff 1: R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L

Staff 2: R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L

Staff 3: R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L R R L L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L

B

R LLR LLR LLR LLR LLR L RRL RRL RRL RRL RRL

R LLR LLR LLR LLR LLR L RRL RRL RRL RRL RRL

R LLR LLR LLR LLR LLR L RRL RRL RRL RRL RRL

C

RL RRL RRL RRL RRL RR LR LLR LLR LLR LLR LL

RL RRL RRL RRL RRL RR LR LLR LLR LLR LLR LL

RL RRL RRL RRL RRL RR LR LLR LLR LLR LLR LL

The Swiss Army triplet has much to offer us in terms of technical development, stimulating new ideas for our personal vocabulary, and opening up new improvisational freedom. I recommend applying this rudiment to multi-surface applications on the drumset and on marching tenors. You'll love what you discover.

See the June 2000 Modern Drummer for the complete lesson.