Percussion Studies

Legato Coordination Exercises

This two-page 32-exercise study focuses upon hand-to-hand independence. Freely borrowing from aspects of drum set *bossa nova* rhythmic patterns, these exercises are best realized with brushes.

The printed right-hand figures express sustaining legato motions, executed with connecting horizontal gestures; first as a continuous sweeping pulse and then with guiro-like rhythmic strokes. The left hand, in contrast, provides a more articulated voice, with occasional sweeping legato gestures.

For the last six exercises, the two feet are engaged to create more complexity with challenging 4-part independence.

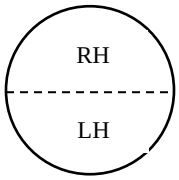
To extract further investigative coordination options, try the following changes in approach to these exercises:

- employ a range of tempos (and dynamics)
- the direction of arrows (sliding gestures) can be reversed in one or both hands (begin with RH)
- the designated lines/rhythms can be assigned to opposite hands
- the rhythm of quarter-note & two eighth-notes can be reversed (i.e., two eighth-notes & quarter-note)
- the right hand brush can be removed and substituted with a small shaker – playing eighth-notes
- the right hand (without brush) can play a small shaker – utilizing a sixteenth-note pattern

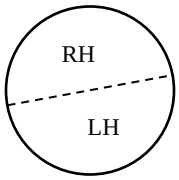
The concept for these exercises originated in drum set orientation where the right-hand brush is assigned to the head of the floor tom and the left-hand brush (or stick employed in cross-stick fashion) assigned to the snare drum. However, any two surfaces could be used for the hands, preferably utilizing surfaces having considerably textured faces. Substituting sticks for brushes is an option, provided that suitable surfaces are obtained (even fingers alone could be employed). Regarding the use of bass drum and hi-hat for foot-operated components, simple foot tapping or employment of other foot-operated instruments could suffice.

Regarding notation, arrows indicate directional change for sweeps. Ties (or non-ending ties) indicate sustaining horizontal movement. Staccato marks indicate vertical, articulated taps. Some left-hand ties resolve with a staccato mark and some do not. Tied notes ending with a staccato mark require a quick lift/tap sequence. Those tied notes that do not end with a staccato mark do not require a tap, but a simple, light lifting of the brush before executing the next note or rest.

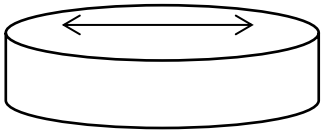
Imagine the snare drum divided in half, with the right hand playing "above" the left hand.



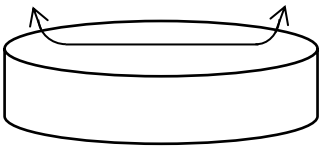
Some may find it convenient to angle the dissection line to provide ergonomic comfort.



Continuous sweeping pulse without lift:



Guiro-like lifting strokes with slight lift:



Slide-tap in same hand, if ending with staccato:

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Drum set or
individual surfaces

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S. Hemphill

Brushes on drumheads or sticks on any surface having some friction. Maintain legato feel (*bossa nova*–like).

R. Hand / slide, continuous contact (never lifting)

Line 1

L. Hand / tap (staccato notation)

Line 2

Line 3

Line 4

R. Hand / slide, with slightly lifting-separating contact

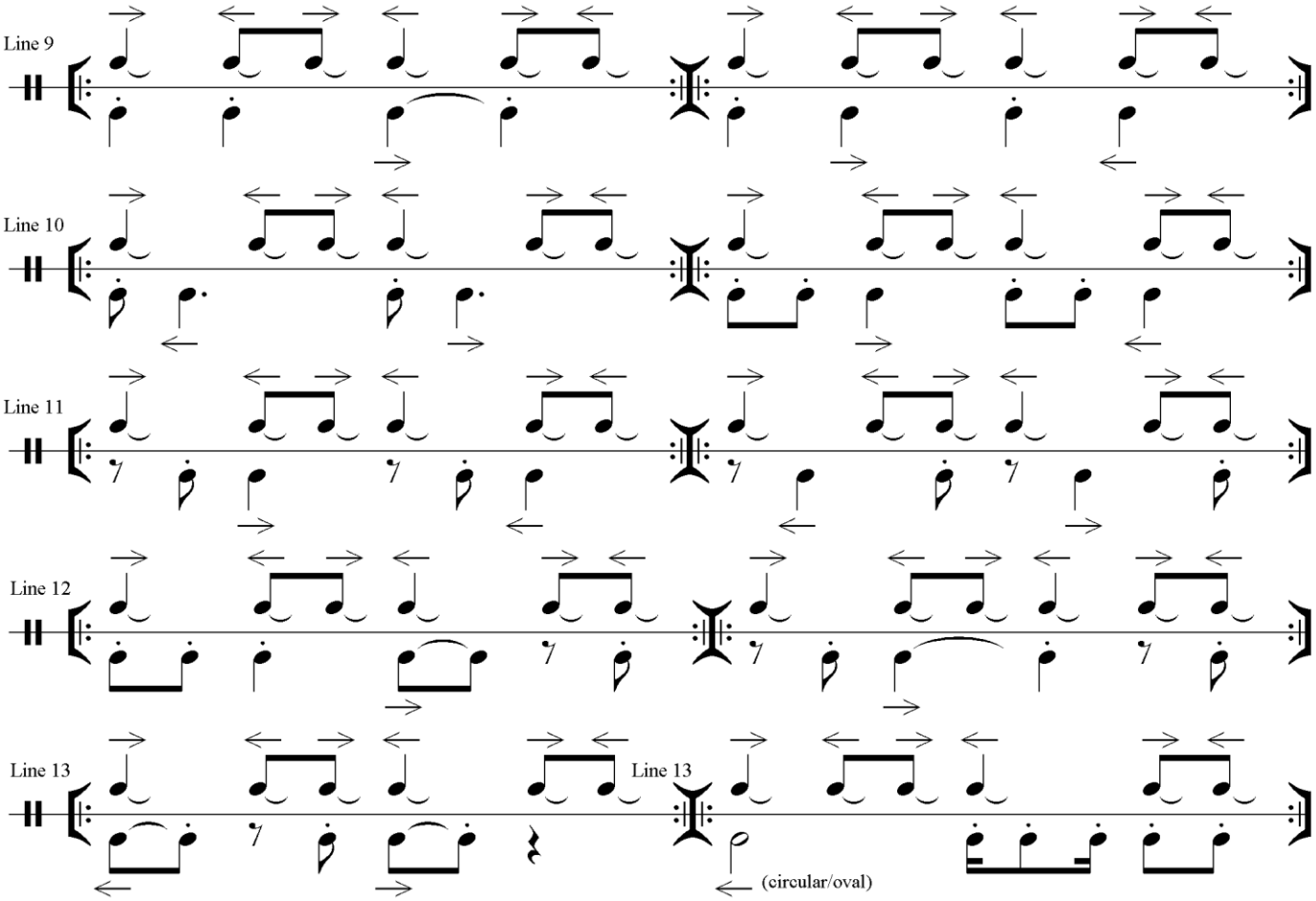
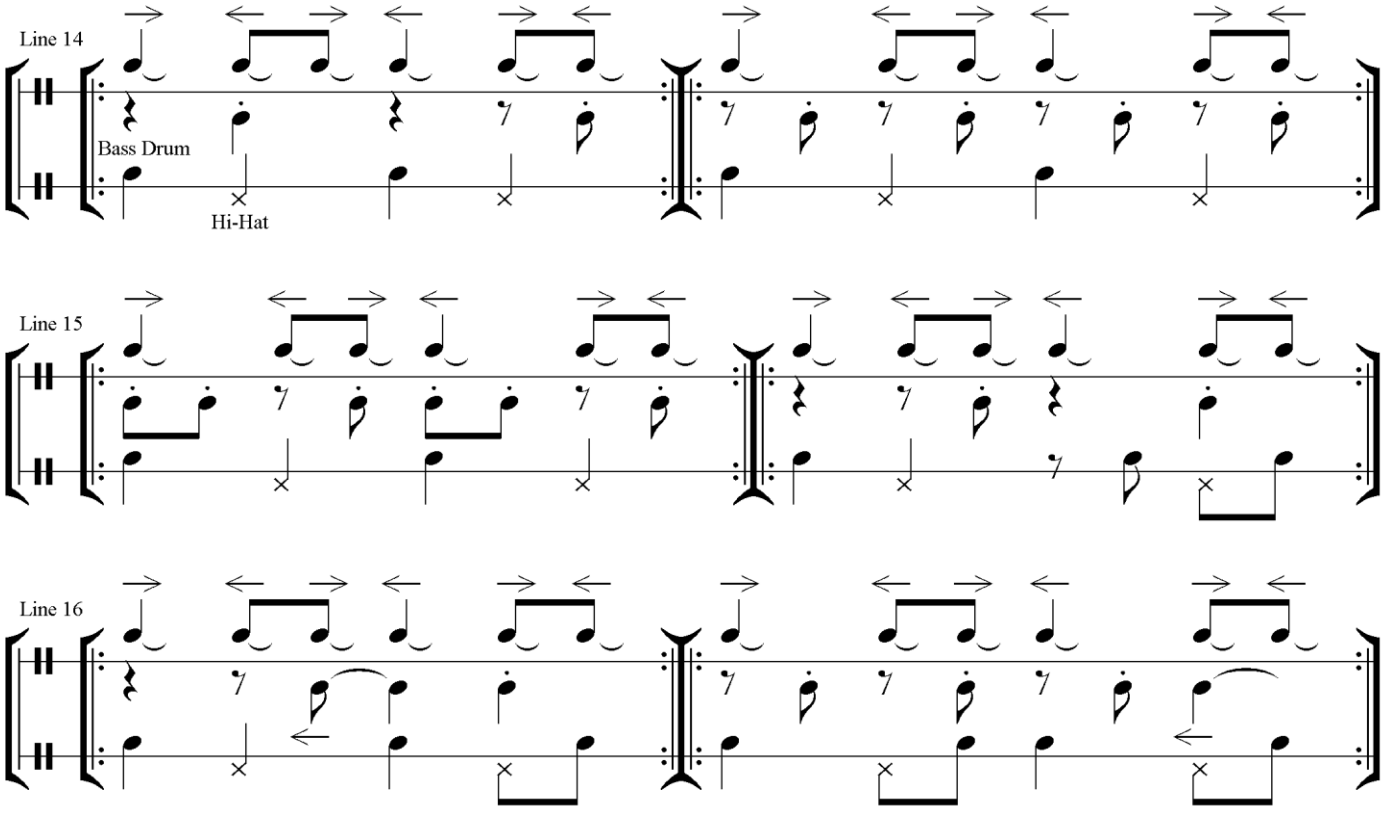
Line 5

Line 6

BOSSA NOVA STYLE - R. Hand / slide, with slightly lifting-separating contact

Line 7

Line 8



Add feet: bass drum & hi-hat or simple foot tapping…