



# Creative Groove Arrangement Techniques



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## **Creative Drum Groove Arrangement Techniques**

Confident Drummer Series

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# Creative Drum Groove Arrangement Techniques

A great feature of every musical drummer is creativity. Being creative means a lot of different things, but we can boil it down to the ability to come up with rhythmic solutions that fit the musical situation at hand.

It could be a section of a song, a drum solo or an arrangement of a drum part.

Sometimes we are asked to create a beat from scratch but in my experience it's at least as important to be able to come up with variations on a given rhythm.

The music we play is often based on simple grooves, yet over the course of a song we are required to play them in at least a few different versions, in order to make everything sound musical and professional.

Many times we don't even need to change the Snare Drum and Bass Drum pattern between verse and chorus, but we may want to switch things up a bit and add layers of sound and colors to create variations that perfectly serve the song.

This is something producers and musicians who program drum arrangements know very well, and that paradoxically as drummers we don't invest enough time into.

That's why I came up with a method to arrange drum beats based on 3 approaches, that allow us to master this area of drumming.

The reason to focus on different angles, one at the time, is that by doing so we can internalize each concept and learn how to apply it to any groove we want to arrange.

I think these 3 approaches cover a lot of what's necessary in order to arrange drum parts in a creative way:

- Focusing on Depth. We stick to the essential version of the beat we want to arrange and we work on it by tweaking parameters like the dynamic level, the orchestration on the drum set, the amount of shuffle feel, the use of Hi-Hat nuances and ostinatos, playing ahead or behind of the beat, and so on.

The groove gets deeper as we add layers of complexity and we apply different parameters.

- Focusing on Density. Here we keep the groove intact in terms of Hi-Hat/ Snare/Bass Drum combinations, but we add all sorts of embellishments, accents, ghost notes and cymbal variations.

The more ideas we include the thicker the groove gets.

- Focusing on Width. In this approach we develop a basic Snare Drum/Bass Drum beat, starting with the most essential version.

We gradually add Hi-Hat, Snare Drum and Bass Drum notes and variations, making things more and more complicated and interesting as we keep going.

The challenge here is to add layers without compromising the possibility to play all the solutions included in each previous version.

The beat shrinks or expands based on how many notes and layers we choose to play or not to play.

Here we are going to focus on evolving a groove using the Depth and Width approaches.

We are going to explore 2 very simple drum beats and practice them in 12 steps, making them deeper and wider and trying to make them groove as they keep expanding.

To make the most of this study you can use the following guidelines:

- Practice 1 version at the time.

- Play 4 bars of each example and then move on to the next without interruptions.
- Start at a comfortable tempo like 90 bpm, and then repeat at more extreme tempos, both slower and faster, like 60 bpm and 140 bpm.
- Apply the learned approach to at least one more beat created by you.

Of course you can even experiment with Density as explained above. And also with mixing all of these concepts and inventing the most original beats.

This is a very interesting topic and we are going to talk a lot more about it.

For now, have fun with these exercises!

# Evolution Of A Groove - Depth

Groove



♩ = 50-160 bpm

*Dynamic Level: p*  
*Closed Hi-Hat*  
*Cross Stick*



*Dynamic Level: mf*  
*Slightly open Hi-Hat*  
*Ghost Notes*



*Toms Orchestration*



*Dynamic Level: ff*  
*Hi-Hat Open and accented*  
*Rim Shot*



*Dynamic Level: mf*  
*Shuffle Feel*  
*Slightly open Hi-Hat*  
*Cross Stick and*  
*Rim Shot on Snare*



*Dynamic Level: f*  
*Ride Bell and Floor Tom*  
*Orchestration*



*Half Swing feel  
Slightly open Hi-Hat*

7)

*Tight Swing feel  
Closed Hi-Hat  
Snare Drum Ahead  
of the Beat*

8)

*Dynamic Level: mf  
Hi-Hat embellishment  
Behind the Beat*

9)

*Dynamic Level: ff  
Open Hi-Hat  
Ahead of the Beat*

10)

*Ride and  
Hi-Hat Ostinato*

11)

*Dynamic Level: f  
Shuffle Feel  
Hi-Hat Ostinato*

12)

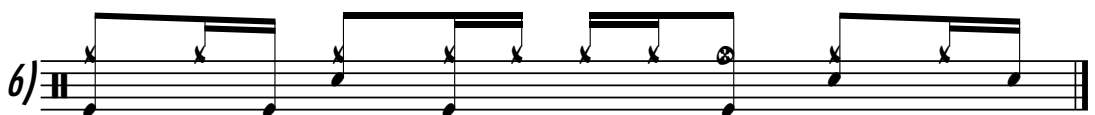
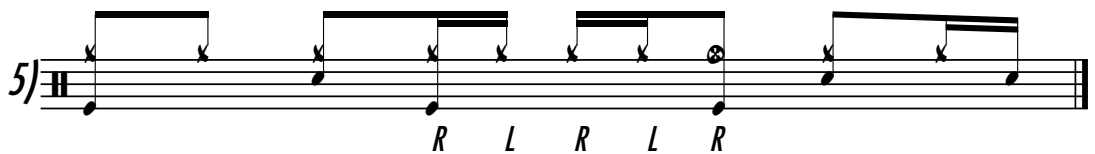
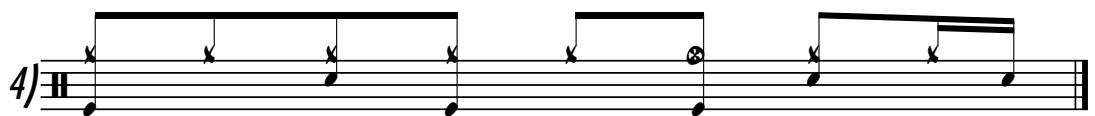
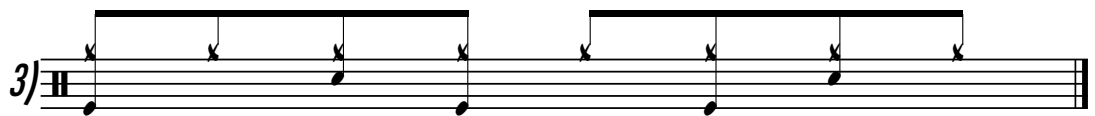
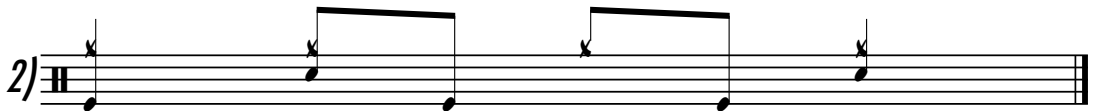


# Evolution Of A Groove - Width


Groove

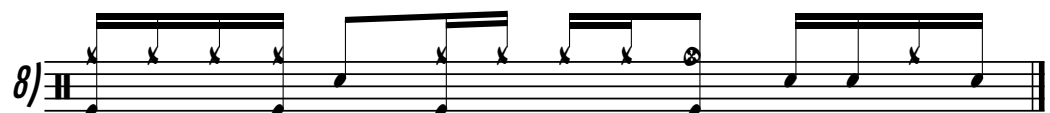


♩ = 50-160 bpm

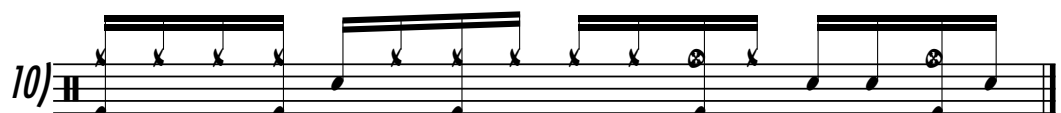


## Evolution Of A Groove - Ampiezza

7)   
*R L R L R*

8)   
*R L R L*

9) 

10)   
*R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L*

11) 