

Half-time feel funk: the “Syncopation” section

Using Progressive Steps to Syncopation, by Ted Reed; basic orchestrations

Play through the long syncopation exercises in Reed (pp. 37-44, old ed.), applying the following orchestrations with the bass drum and left hand on snare drum, adding a basic cymbal part with the right hand.

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First line of Syncopation Exercise 1, as it appears in the book:

1. Snare drum on 3, everything else on bass drum. If there's a rest on 3, play the closest note to 3 on the snare:

2. First half of measure on BD, last half on SD:

3. Alternating:

4. Alternating with every measure starting on bass drum:

5. Play short notes (8th notes) on snare drum, long notes (*tied* 8th notes, quarter notes, dotted quarter notes) on bass drum, plus basic cymbal part:

6. Short notes on bass drum, long notes on snare drum:

7. Scheme changes every measure: First note of the measure always on bass drum; if it's a long note, use method 1 above, if a short note, use method 2.

Here are the same orchestrations, using the first line of Syncopation Exercise 2:

As written:

Musical notation for the first line of Syncopation Exercise 2, showing a four-measure phrase. The top staff contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff shows a bass line with quarter notes.

SD on 3, everything else on BD:

Musical notation for the first line of Syncopation Exercise 2, showing a four-measure phrase. The top staff contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff shows a bass line with quarter notes. Above the staff, 'x' marks indicate the placement of the snare drum (SD) on the third beat of each measure.

First half on BD, second half on SD:

Musical notation for the first line of Syncopation Exercise 2, showing a four-measure phrase. The top staff contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff shows a bass line with quarter notes. Above the staff, 'x' marks indicate the placement of the snare drum (SD) on the first two beats of each measure.

Alternating:

Musical notation for the first line of Syncopation Exercise 2, showing a four-measure phrase. The top staff contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff shows a bass line with quarter notes. Above the staff, 'x' marks indicate the placement of the snare drum (SD) on the first and third beats of each measure.

BD always on first note of measure, alternating after that:

Musical notation for the first line of Syncopation Exercise 2, showing a four-measure phrase. The top staff contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff shows a bass line with quarter notes. Above the staff, 'x' marks indicate the placement of the snare drum (SD) on the first and third beats of each measure.

short notes on SD/long notes on BD

Musical notation for the first line of Syncopation Exercise 2, showing a four-measure phrase. The top staff contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff shows a bass line with quarter notes. Above the staff, 'x' marks indicate the placement of the snare drum (SD) on the first and third beats of each measure.

short notes on BD/long notes on SD

Musical notation for the first line of Syncopation Exercise 2, showing a four-measure phrase. The top staff contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff shows a bass line with quarter notes. Above the staff, 'x' marks indicate the placement of the snare drum (SD) on the first and third beats of each measure.

First note of each measure on BD, which sets long/short scheme:

Musical notation for the first line of Syncopation Exercise 2, showing a four-measure phrase. The top staff contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff shows a bass line with quarter notes. Above the staff, 'x' marks indicate the placement of the snare drum (SD) on the first and third beats of each measure. Brackets above the staff indicate the long/short scheme for each measure: 'bd short/sd long', 'bd long/sd short', 'bd short/sd long', and 'bd long/sd short'.