



LEARN FROM THE BEST™ **NEWSLETTER**
SEPTEMBER 2024

VIRGIL DONATI

NEW DOCUMENTARY
INSIDE THE REHEARSAL ROOM

MASTER THE RUDIMENTS

ADAM KUNS BREAKS DOWN THE
40 ESSENTIAL RUDIMENTS

ON THE AIR

LESSONS, PERFORMANCES,
INTERVIEWS, MASTERCLASS



SUPPORT@DRUMCHANNEL.COM

COMING SOON

ADAM KUNS, AL VELASQUEZ

FOUNDER'S DOWNBEAT



How did the Drum Channel Academy, offering lessons from the world's greatest drummers, get into Entertainment? It wasn't planned that way, but as I had drummers come out to document their teaching methods, which many of them had proven over a lifetime of experience, they often asked if they could bring out a bass player, rhythm section, or their entire band. Of course, I said yes and was excited about the opportunity to document these drummers as players and performers.

As you know, our mission on Drum Channel is to teach you How to Play, What to Play, and Why to Play it. The Why to Play includes roundtables, one-on-one interviews, and performances and includes some of the most valuable lessons on the website.

This month, we are featuring episode 53 of Entertainment Documentaries, Virgil Donati's band rehearsals at Drum Channel. This gives you a real look at what happens before a live performance.

Be sure to check out Drum Channel's entire Entertainment section. It features over 80 live performances, 50+ legendary documentaries, and hundreds of hours of amazing content. It's the perfect place to kick back and get inspired.

We are also featuring the Rudimental Crash Course, which, as the title suggests, is a quick review showing the basic motions and sticking patterns of all 40 rudiments. They are explained in depth in Chad Wackerman's Course, The Murray Spivack Method (Hand Technique).

If you have any suggestions or questions, feel free to email me at donlombardi@drumchannel.com. Your input is always welcome!

Don Lombardi

Did You Know?

Virgil Donati is largely self-taught, having begun drumming at the age of 2 and performing in his father's band by the age of 3. At just 16, he was already touring internationally with the Australian band Taste, marking the beginning of his professional music career.

Learning the rudiments is often compared to learning the alphabet in language; they form the foundational vocabulary for drummers. Mastering rudiments not only improves technical control and speed but also enhances a drummer's ability to express creativity and adapt to various musical styles, making them essential for any serious drummer.

SEPTEMBER 2024

NEW WEEKLY PLAYALONGS

Wed, September 4
Punk

Wed, September 11
Medium Funk

Wed, September 18
Slow Disco

Wed, September 25
3/4 Jazz Waltz

VIRGIL DONATI

"When we argue for our limitations, we get to keep them... don't be one of those!"

Virgil Donati achieved multi-platinum success with his band Southern Sons while at the same time pushing progressive and fusion boundaries with Loose Change and On The Virgin his early years. He has recorded and toured with Planet X, Steve Vai, Allan Holdsworth, Tony MacAlpine, Kiko Loureiro, Bunny Brunel, Scott Henderson, Steve Walsh, and the Virgil Donati Band, amongst many others.

interview.

Join **Virgil Donati** in an exclusive Drum Channel documentary as he takes you behind the scenes of his band rehearsals for his March 2024 tour. Watch as he performs tracks from his acclaimed albums, In This Life and Ruination, and rehearses some new original material. Donati delves deep into his live performance approach, showcasing his gear and offering invaluable insights into his preparation process. From his meticulous lifestyle choices, including nutrition, hydration, and creative routines, to the details of his rehearsal techniques, this documentary provides a comprehensive look at what it takes to be a world-class drummer.

Band: Chris Clark (Keys), Andre Nieri (Guitar), Junior Braguinha (Bass), Virgil Donati (Drums)



Drum Inspiration: Billy Cobham,
Steve Gadd, Vinnie Colaiuta,
Terry Bozzio...

Who were your major drummer influences early on?

Billy Cobham was a very influential drummer with the explosion of the fusion scene in the mid-70s and a pivotal drummer in my early days. It was a combination of Billy Cobham and Steve Gadd. It's hard to really pick one. I would also include Terry Bozzio and Vinnie Colaiuta. They were all big influences and inspirations in those days. It would be unfair to just focus on one because I didn't really focus on one. I just soaked in as much as I could from all these guys. They had such unique voices and helped shape my ideas. Drumming was evolving so fast at that time, and they all had something very important to add to the drumming vocabulary. I would listen, transcribe, and play along with them, trying to give the music my voice. With time, it then eventually became my own thing. I wasn't explicitly trying to copy them, but I was learning from them. I'd always adapt and take what I learned from them and find a way to express it, and not necessarily playing what they played but just being inspired by the ideas and the creative powers.

Rim Shots on the Toms!

I love rim shots on toms when there is a need to express dynamics at various extremes. The rim gives it the feeling of more intensity, but that attack you get is also beautiful. I love that combination.

Clear Emperors to Ambassadors

I switched to Ambassadors when I went into Simon Phillips Studio to record the Moon Baby's record about 20 years ago. I was still playing premier drums at the time, just before I switched to Pearl. We went in, and Simon was engineering the record, and we were getting sounds, and he said, you know we should try some ambassadors here. It might give it a little more life, a little more purity. I was open to trying anything at the time. And I said, "Yeah, let's put on some ambassadors," and never looked back.

"We're playing some pretty scary stuff."

Pulse Drumsticks

Pulse drumsticks are my new signature stick with Techra. Techra is an Italian company based in Italy. They are made of a very high grade of carbon fiber. My choice to go away from wood was not because I don't think wood's great. It's beautiful. It's a natural material. It feels great. It was more inspired by the need for consistency of feel. Because wood can vary from stick to stick, it can vary from batch to batch, along with the weight and density of the wood, and that can be frustrating. The more sensitive your hands become over the years, the more you feel like you need to have something that's consistent and feels good. The touch, which comes with time and a deep connection between the stick and the drum, is why the consistency of the carbon fiber sticks is so important.

Are you rehearsing to a click?

Yes. The material we will play on this tour is about 50-50 click and non-click tracks. We're playing some pretty scary stuff, and it's a useful tool. We're living in a digital age, and we've got tools at our disposal that our forefathers' musical fathers never had. Who knows what they would have done with it? But it's at our disposal, and we use it if it can help us. It gives me an option to also insert certain elements that might be part of a recording or something that we can't actually play, like loops or sound effects or something, so I have some of those in there and a couple of keyboard things when everyone's soloing and we still need that support of some harmonic support, and that's it. On our first tour, I was the only one with a click. It was remarkably tight. I mean, they can do it without, but as we're evolving, and they've got in-ears now, they feel we should have it to ensure we're locked in.

Taking care of yourself...

I've got my little strategies that I've developed over the years. I use certain supplements to help readjust, like melatonin and magnesium. Magnesium is a good nutrient for the muscles and body processes. It also has a calming effect, so taking a dose before bed can have a profound effect. I also eat real food. It's important to read labels and look at what you're taking in. It's not like I need something else to be occupied with - researching diet and nutrition - but it's an important part of our life. So it's wise to invest a bit of time in it.

A photograph of Adam Kuns, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a black t-shirt with a white logo, playing a drum set. He is holding a drumstick in his right hand. The background is dark with red lighting.

ADAM KUNS

RUDIMENTAL CRASH COURSE

Adam Kuns has been a professional educator and performer for 20 years. He holds a JazzStudies degree from California State University, Northridge, and has studied with Gregg Bissonette, Alex Acuña, Chad Wackerman, Dick Weller, and Dave Elitch. In addition to his drum set experience, he has taught and arranged with many DCI, WGI, and high school marching programs such as Dark Sky Percussion, Watchmen, Catalyst Percussion, VelvetKnights, and Royal High School. He has been a staff instructor for Drum Channel since 2013.

RUDIMENTAL CRASH COURSE

These 40 essential rudiments make up the foundation of everything that we play on the drums. There are other hybrid rudiments, but these 40 will give you the foundation to play them all. You will learn the specific motion for each rudiment and what parts of your hands to focus on with each lesson. The Hand Technique course with Chad Wackerman will also help you perfect each one of these rudiments. It doesn't matter what level you are at; it's important to have these all under your belt so that you can be well-rounded and apply them to everything you play.

LET'S GO!

Adam Kuns

Rudimental Crash Course

Start

Introduction





ADAM KUNS

Q & A



ADAM KUNS



Where were you born?

Northridge, CA

Favorite vacation destination?

Yosemite National Park

When are you the most creative (morning or night)?

Absolutely most creative and productive at night

Dream collaboration?

8-Bit Big Band

If you weren't a drummer, which instrument would you focus on?

I would spend way more time playing my Hammond B3 organ.

Book recommendation?

The Redwall Series by Brian Jacques

Hidden talent?

I have a photographic memory, which is great for sight-reading music and remembering music.

Coffee Order?

Venti Mocha Frappuccino

Favorite food?

Marshall's Bodacious BBQ

Favorite treat?

Snyder's Hot Buffalo Pretzel Bites

What time do you go to bed?

1 AM

Do you have any words of wisdom to share with up-and-coming drummers?

Spend more time getting the basic things really, REALLY good than anything else.

Most important takeaway from the Rudimental Crash Course?

Doing the basic motions for all of these *slowly* is critical for getting *faster*.

Favorite Rudiment?

I feel like you can play basic paradiddles in a million different ways and add flams, accents, and drags to them to really make them versatile.

How much practice time should I devote to rudiments every day?

If you did a solid 10-15 minutes every day on the rudiments, by the end of two months, you would not recognize your own drumming.



Virgil Donati Dotted Eighths In 5/8

1 R.H. 8th Note Groove with Dotted 1/8 H.H. Foot

Musical notation for exercise 1, showing a right-hand 8th note groove and a dotted 1/8 H.H. foot pattern in 5/8 time. The notation consists of two staves: the top staff for the right hand and the bottom staff for the left hand. The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note groove, while the left hand plays a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, creating a syncopated foot pattern.

⌚ 1:00

2 H.H. Foot Transition, 1/4's Over 5/8 To Dotted 1/8 Notes

Musical notation for exercise 2, showing a transition from a half-hat foot pattern to dotted 1/8 notes over a 5/8 time signature. The notation consists of two staves: the top staff for the right hand and the bottom staff for the left hand. The right hand plays a half-hat foot pattern, while the left hand plays a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, creating a syncopated foot pattern.

⌚ 3:50

3 H.H. Foot 5/8 Ostinato, R.H. X-Hat Dotted 1/8 Notes

Musical notation for exercise 3, showing a half-hat foot 5/8 ostinato and a right-hand X-hat dotted 1/8 notes pattern in 5/8 time. The notation consists of two staves: the top staff for the right hand and the bottom staff for the left hand. The right hand plays a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, while the left hand plays a half-hat foot pattern.

⌚ 4:48

Virgil Donati Dotted Eighths In 7/8

1 R.H. 8th Note Groove with Dotted 1/8 H.H. Foot

Musical notation for exercise 1, showing a right-hand 8th note groove and a dotted 1/8 H.H. foot pattern in 7/8 time. The notation consists of two staves: the top staff for the right hand and the bottom staff for the left hand. The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note pattern with accents, while the left hand plays a dotted eighth note followed by an eighth note, creating a 'dotted eighth' feel. The exercise is divided into three measures.

© 1:20

Musical notation for exercise 1, showing a right-hand 8th note groove and a dotted 1/8 H.H. foot pattern in 7/8 time. This is a continuation of the exercise from the previous block, showing the same rhythmic patterns across three measures.

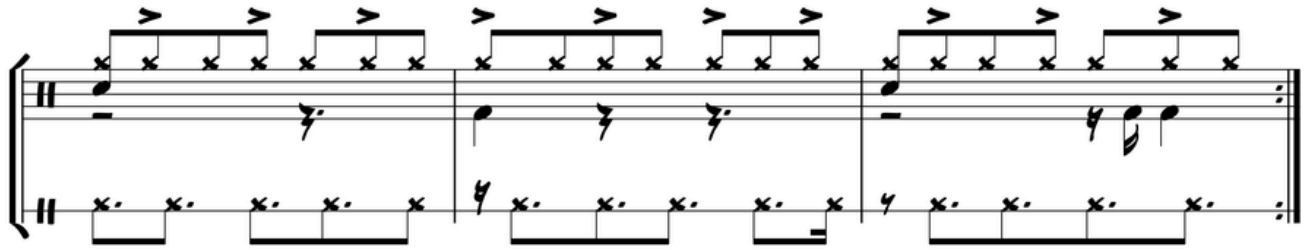
2a Variation - R.H. Plays 2-2-3 Subdivision

Musical notation for exercise 2a, showing a variation where the right hand plays a 2-2-3 subdivision. The notation consists of two staves: the top staff for the right hand and the bottom staff for the left hand. The right hand plays eighth notes in a 2-2-3 subdivision pattern, while the left hand continues with the dotted eighth note pattern. The exercise is divided into three measures.

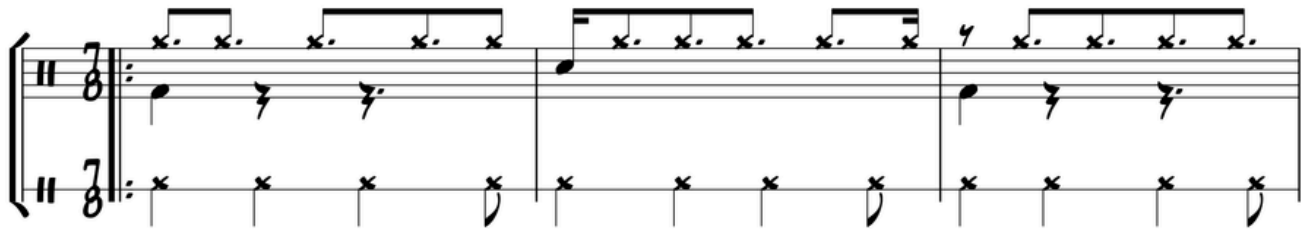
© 2:12

2b Variation - R.H. Plays 1/4 Accents Across 7/8

Musical notation for exercise 2b, showing a variation where the right hand plays 1/4 accents across 7/8. The notation consists of two staves: the top staff for the right hand and the bottom staff for the left hand. The right hand plays eighth notes with accents on every second eighth note, while the left hand continues with the dotted eighth note pattern. The exercise is divided into three measures.



3 R.H. Plays Dotted 8th, H.H. Foot Play 7/8 Ostinato



© 2:50



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Rhythmic Facility Course



THE **JAZZ MINISTRY** PERFORMS "THE SAUCE"



CAMILLE BIGEAULT'S FULL MASTERCLASS: THE POLYRHYTHM ODYSSEY



INTERVIEW WITH **MATT GARSTKA** AND **JOSHUA DE LA VICTORIA**



SIMON PHILLIPS' DOUBLE BASS DRUM TECHNIQUE: LEADING WITH RIGHT OR LEFT?



SECRET FLOOR TOM DAMPENING TRICK WITH **DON LOMBARDI**

Don Lombardi

**Quick Guide to
Setting Up and
Tuning Your Drums**

Lesson 7

Secret Floor Tom
Dampening Trick



"SHADE OF JADE" BY **THOMAS PRIDGEN** AND **BIG TRIPPIN'** | LIVE AT DRUM CHANNEL

