

# **Syllabic Language for Rudimental Drummers**

## **Vocal Drumming**

# Preface

## Vocal drumming? Why?

### Reasons and goals

- Increase efficiency in the process of learning to play the drum
- Enhance efficiency when studying new drum compositions and thus being sooner able to play them by heart
- Provide an easy method for drummers to explain their music among them, even in case of existing linguistic barriers

### Efficient Learning

Didactic and mathetic are the sciences, and the masters tell us:

- Trigger and use as many senses as possible.
- Activate as many of the brain's perception centers as possible.

The more senses triggered during a learning process, the greater the retention rate:

- **Hearing 20%** (Auditory)
- **Seeing 30%** (Visual), **i.e. 50% accumulated**
- **Saying 20%** (Auditory and communicative), **i.e. 70% accumulated**
- **Doing 20%** (Kinesthetic), **i.e. 90% accumulated**

Thus, **saying** increases the retention rate as much as **hearing**, and even as much as **doing**! A syllabic language for (rudimental) drummers would therefore not only be of advantage, it appears to be a necessity. Then:

### If you can say it you can play it!

f p

2/4

f p f p f

fRra di da Rrra di da RrradidadaTidaTiTi Ta di da Rrra di da Rrra di da RrradidadaTidaTiTi Ta

### A well-known example – Forgotten beginning

At a rehearsal, the leader says: "**Celanese one, two...**", but gets interrupted by a drummer shouting: "**Damn! How was that beginning again?**"

Instead of recapping the first bar in a bothersome way with **Right five stroke roll, left inverted flam tap, right inverted flam tap, left inverted flam tap, right inverted flam tap, left inverted flam tap, right inverted flam tap**, the leader simply answers: "**fRra gdi gda gdi gda gdi gda**", and one, two, three, four, everybody is playing

ff p

2/4

## Basics

	<b>Right</b>	<b>Left</b>
	<b>a</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>CH Notation</b>	Over the line	Under the line
<b>FR Notation</b>	Under the line	Over the line
<b>GB Notation</b>	Over the line	Under the line
<b>US Notation</b>	R	L

## Strokes

	<b>Not accented</b>	<b>Accented, mf, f, or ff</b>
<b>Tap</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Flam</b>	<b>fl</b>	<b>fL</b>
<b>Inverted flam tap</b>	<b>gd</b>	<b>gT</b>

## Rolls

	<b>Not accented</b>	<b>Accented, mf, f, or ff</b>
<b>Roll without flam</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>Flammed roll</b>	<b>fr</b>	<b>fR</b>

## Writing

Whole notes	da di da di da	(Five taps: R L R L R)
Half notes	da di da di da	
4 <sup>th</sup> notes	da di da di da	
<b>8<sup>th</sup> notes</b>	<b>da di da di da</b>	
<b>16<sup>th</sup> notes</b>	<b>dadidadida</b>	
32 <sup>nd</sup> notes	dadidadida	<b>Spaced</b> <b>Not spaced</b>

Whole, half, and 4<sup>th</sup> notes as 8<sup>th</sup> notes. Several spaces would take too much place.

32<sup>nd</sup> notes as 16<sup>th</sup> notes. It is impossible to articulate 32<sup>nd</sup> notes sequences (patterns) in tempo. (Except maybe for mouth-tongue-acrobats.)

**Dynamics**    **Small letter = pp, p, and mp** (non-accentuated notes only)  
**Capital letters = mf, f, ff, and accentuated notes** (also in pp, p, and mp)

**No letters under bar lines unless there is a slur (legato) over it.** (Rolls)

## Syllables

<b>Strokes</b>			<b>Tap</b>	<b>Flam</b>	<b>Inverted flam tap</b>
	<b>Right</b>	<b>Not accented</b>	<b>da</b>	<b>fla</b>	<b>gda</b>
		<b>Accented</b>	<b>Ta</b>	<b>fLa</b>	<b>gTa</b>
	<b>Left</b>	<b>Not accented</b>	<b>di</b>	<b>fli</b>	<b>gdi</b>
<b>Accented</b>		<b>Ti</b>	<b>fLi</b>	<b>gTi</b>	

<b>Rolls</b> (w/o flam)	<b>Number of strokes:</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	etc.	
	<b>Right</b>	<b>Not accented</b>	<b>ra</b>	<b>rra</b>	<b>rrra</b>	<b>rrrra</b>	<b>rrrrra</b>	<b>rrrrrra</b>	<b>rrrrrrra</b>		<b>rrrrrrra</b>
		<b>Accented</b>	<b>Ra</b>	<b>Rra</b>	<b>Rrra</b>	<b>Rrrra</b>	<b>Rrrrra</b>	<b>Rrrrrra</b>	<b>Rrrrrrra</b>		<b>Rrrrrrra</b>
	<b>Left</b>	<b>Not accented</b>	<b>ri</b>	<b>rri</b>	<b>rrri</b>	<b>rrrri</b>	<b>rrrrri</b>	<b>rrrrrri</b>	<b>rrrrrrri</b>		<b>rrrrrrri</b>
<b>Accented</b>		<b>Ri</b>	<b>Rri</b>	<b>Rrri</b>	<b>Rrrri</b>	<b>Rrrrrri</b>	<b>Rrrrrrri</b>	<b>Rrrrrrrri</b>	<b>Rrrrrrrri</b>		
R = mf, f, ff or accentuated		<b>1r</b>	<b>2r</b>	<b>3r</b>	<b>4r</b>	<b>5r</b>	<b>6r</b>	<b>7r</b>			

Flammed rolls	Number of strokes:		3	5	7	9	11	13	15	etc.	
	Right	Not accentuated	fra	frra	frrra	frrrra	frrrrra	frrrrrra	frrrrrrra		frrrrrrra
		Accentuated	fRa	fRra	fRrra	fRrrra	fRrrrra	fRrrrrra	fRrrrrrra		fRrrrrrra
	Left	Not accentuated	fri	frri	frrri	frrrri	frrrrri	frrrrrri	frrrrrrri		frrrrrrri
		Accentuated	fRi	fRri	fRrri	fRrrri	fRrrrri	fRrrrrri	fRrrrrrri		fRrrrrrrri
f = flam		f+1r	f+2r	f+3r	f+4r	f+5r	f+6r	f+7r			

## Pronunciation

Syllable	Meaning	Accentuated (Yes/No)	Pronunciation as in (*)
<b>a</b>	Right	(**)	paradiddle \ 'ə \
<b>i</b>	Left	(**)	paradiddle \ 'i \
<b>da</b>	Right tap	No	<b>da</b> capo \ 'də \
<b>di</b>	Left tap	No	paradiddle \ 'di \
<b>Ta</b>	Accentuated right tap	Yes	<b>ra</b> tamacue \ 'tə \
<b>Ti</b>	Accentuated left tap	Yes	<b>ti</b> mpani \ 'ti \
<b>fla</b>	Right flam	No	<b>fla</b> macue \ 'flə \
<b>fli</b>	Left flam	No	<b>fli</b> cflac \ 'fli \
<b>fLa</b>	Accentuated right flam	Yes	<b>fla</b> macue \ 'flə \
<b>fLi</b>	Accentuated left flam	Yes	<b>fli</b> cflac \ 'fli \
<b>gda</b>	Right inverted flam tap	No	<b>gda</b> ble \ 'gdə \
<b>gdi</b>	Left inverted flam tap	No	<b>gdi</b> er \ 'gdi \
<b>gTa</b>	Accentuated right inverted flam tap	Yes	<b>gta</b> way \ 'gdə \
<b>gTi</b>	Accentuated left inverted flam tap	Yes	<b>gta</b> ctic \ 'gti \
<b>ra</b>	Right roll	No	<b>ra</b> tamacue \ 'rə \
<b>ri</b>	Left roll	No	<b>tri</b> plet \ 'ri \
<b>Ra</b>	Accentuated right roll	Yes	<b>ra</b> tamacue \ 'rə \
<b>Ri</b>	Accentuated left roll	Yes	<b>tri</b> plet \ 'ri \
* Pronounce bold letters only.			
** Emphasize 'a' resp. 'i' when pronouncing accentuated notes.			

## Examples of rolls

<b>rra</b>	rr = Not flammed and not acc. (no f and no R) 5 stroke roll, a = right
<b>Rra</b>	Right (a), accentuated, mf, f or ff (R) 5 stroke roll (2r) without flam (no f)
<b>rri</b>	Left (i), not accentuated 5 stroke roll (rr) without flam (no f)
<b>Rri</b>	Rr = Accentuated, mf, f or ff (R) 5 stroke roll, i = left (Without flam as there is no f.)
<b>rrra</b>	rrr = 7 stroke roll, a = right (No R = not accentuated, and no f = not flammed.)
<b>frrrra</b>	f = flammed, rrrr = not accentuated (no R) 9 stroke roll, a = right
<b>fRrrra</b>	Right (a), flammed (f), accentuated, or mf, f or ff (R) 9 stroke roll (4r)
<b>fRrrri</b>	Left (i), flammed (f), accentuated or mf, f or ff (R) 9 stroke roll (4r)

## Examples of Possible Use

Beginnings of Solos	Scores	Syllabic Language
<b>Celanese</b>		fRra gdi gda gdi gda gdi gda
<b>dr Drummler</b>		fRra gdi gdadi RiTa gdi gda
<b>Dr Grien Hund</b>		fRra gdi gda gdi gda RriTaTi
<b>Pumperniggel</b>		fRra fla fLifLa gdi gda
<b>Walliser</b>		frradidaflifLadidaflifLa gdi gda

Finals of Drum Solos	Scores	Syllabic Language
<b>Final of 7</b>		frra rridadi RraTiTa
<b>Celanese</b>		frra rridadiTaTi Rra
<b>dr Drummler</b>		frra rridaTi Ri Rra

## Rudiments as in "Wirbel" (SDFA')

## Syllabic language

Tap/Single stroke roll



**da di da di da di da di da di da di**

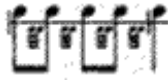
da = tap (d), right (a); di = tap (d), left (i)

Long roll



**da da di di da da di di dadadidi**

3 stroke roll



**da ra ra ra ra**

ra = right (a) 3 stroke roll (1r)

Paradiddle

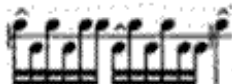


**TadidadaTidadidiTa**

Ta = accentuated tap (T) right (a)

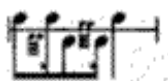
Ti = accentuated tap (T) left (i)

Double paradiddle



**TadidadidadaTidadidadidiTa**

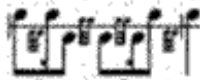
Single drag tap



**da radi rida**

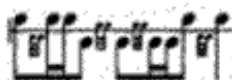
ra = right 3 stroke roll (1r), ri = left 3 stroke roll

Double drag tap



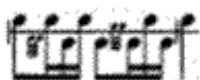
**da radi ri rida ra**

Triplet reveille stroke



**da radadi ri ridi da ra**

Single ratamacue



**da radidadi ridadida**

5 stroke roll from hand to hand



**da rri rra rri rra**

rri = left 5 stroke roll without flam (2r, no f)

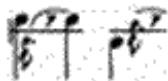
rra = right 5 stroke roll without flam

6 stroke roll right/left



**da rrida rrida**

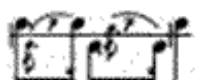
7 stroke roll right/left



**da rrra /di rrrri**

rrra = right 7 stroke roll (3r) / rrrri = left 7 stroke roll (no flam)

8 stroke roll from hand to hand



**da rrradi rrrida**

9 stroke roll from hand to hand

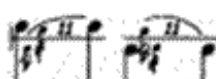


**da rrrri rrrra**

rrri = left 9 stroke roll (4r)

rrra = right 9 stroke roll

11 stroke roll right/left

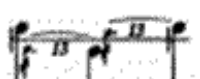


**da rrrrra /di rrrrri**

rrrrra = right 11 stroke roll (5r)

rrrrri = left 11 stroke roll

13 stroke roll from hand to hand

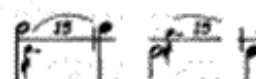


**da rrrrrri rrrrrra**

rrrrri = left 13 stroke roll (6r)

rrrrra = right 13 stroke roll

15 stroke roll right/left



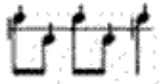
**da rrrrrra /di rrrrrri**

rrrrrra = right 15 stroke roll (7r)

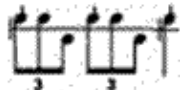
rrrrrrri = left 15 stroke roll

## Rudiments as in "Wirbel" (cont.)

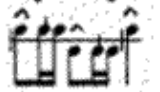
**Flam**



**Swiss army triplet**



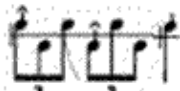
**Stroke of 3**



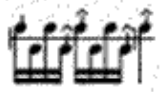
**Inverted flam tap**



**Patafla** (aka Flam accent)



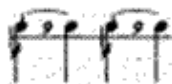
**Pataflafla**



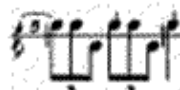
**Flammed 5 stroke roll**



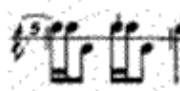
**Flammed 9 stroke roll**



**6/8-time marching rudiment**



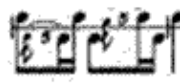
**2/4-time marching rudiment**



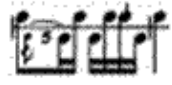
**Lesson 25**



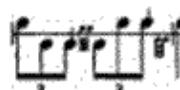
**Final of 7**



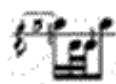
**Millwheel stroke**



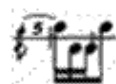
**Märmeli stroke**



**Flammed charge stroke**



**Flammed charge stroke triplet**



## Syllabic language

**fla fli fla fli fla**

fla = right flam, fli = left flam

**fla da di fla da di fla**

**Ta fladaTi flidiTa**

Ta = accentuated tap (T) right (a)

Ti = accentuated tap (T) left (i)

**fla gdi gda gdi gda**

gdi = left (i) inverted flam tap (gd)

gda = right (a) inverted flam tap (gd)

**fLa di da fLi da di fLa**

fLa = accentuated (L) right (a) flam

fLi = accentuated (L) left (i) flam

**fLadidaflifLadidaflifLa**

*(Missing accent on the first flam!)*

**frra frra frra**

frra = flammed (f) right (a) 5 stroke roll (2r)

**frrrra frrrra**

frrrra = flammed right 9 stroke roll (f + 4r + a)

**frra da di fla da di fla**

**frradadi fladadi fla**

**da radida radida**

**da rridadi rradida**

rri = left 5 stroke roll without flam (no f)

rra = right 5 stroke roll without flam (no f)

**da rridadidafladida**

**da di fli ri da fla ra**

**frradiflida**

**frradiflida**

# Summary

da = right stroke  
di = left stroke

da di

da di da di

da di da di

da di da di da da di di

da di da di da di da di da da di di

100 BPM? -Don't even think of it.

'fl' as in flam

fla fli fla fli fla fli fla fli fla

fla gdi gda gdi gda gdi gda

Accent = CAPITAL LETTER (L, T)

fLa fli fLa gdi gTa gdi gTa

pp, p and mp = small letter  
mf, f and ff = CAPITAL LETTER (L, T)

fLa gdi gda gdi gTa gTi gTa

fLa gdi gda gdi gTa gTi gTa

fLa radi Rra Rrradidadida fRrrra gdi gda RrrrraTidadi RrrrrraTadidida Rrrrrra



# Four practical examples (Swiss notation with syllabic language)

**1**

f p f p f p

fRra di da Rrra di da RrradidadaTidaTiTi Ta di da Rrra di da Rrra di da RrradidadaTidaTiTi Ta

**2**

f p f p f p

fRra fli fla Rrra fli fla RrradidafLifLadiTafLi fla fli fla Rrra fli fla Rrra fli fla RrradidafLifLadiTafLi fla

**3**

f p f p f p f p f p f p ff

fRra gdi gda fRra gdi gda frradidafLidadiLadi fla gdi gda fRra gdi gda fRra gdi gda frra rridaTi RraTi Ta

**4**

f p f p p p f p f p ff

fRra flidida frradidafLifLa frra radi ri riTa Ra gTi gda fRra flidida fRra Rridadi frra rridaTi RrrraTi

# Examples 1 and 2 in French notation

1

Example 1 consists of two systems of music. The first system has three measures: the first measure is in 9/16 time with a forte (*f*) dynamic, the second measure is in 2/4 time with a piano (*P*) dynamic, and the third measure is in 9/16 time with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system has three measures: the first measure is in 9/16 time with a forte (*f*) dynamic, the second measure is in 2/4 time with a piano (*P*) dynamic, and the third measure is in 9/16 time with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics are: fRr.....a di da Rrr.....a di da Rrr.....a di da da Ti da Ti Ti Ta di da Rrr... and ...a di da Rrr.....a di da Rrr.....a di da da Ti da Ti Ti Ta.

2

Example 2 consists of two systems of music. The first system has three measures: the first measure is in 9/16 time with a forte (*f*) dynamic, the second measure is in 2/4 time with a piano (*P*) dynamic, and the third measure is in 9/16 time with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system has three measures: the first measure is in 9/16 time with a forte (*f*) dynamic, the second measure is in 2/4 time with a piano (*P*) dynamic, and the third measure is in 9/16 time with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics are: fRr.....a fli fla Rrr.....a fli fla Rrr.....a di da fLi fLa di Ta fLi fLa fli fla Rrr... and ...a fli fla Rrr.....a fli fla Rrr.....a di da fLi fLa di Ta fLi fLa.

# Examples 1 and 2 in GB notation

1

Example 1 musical notation. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature, and a 9/16 time signature. It contains a melodic line with dynamics *f* and *p*, and lyrics: fRr.....a di da Rrr.....a di da Rrr.....a di da da Ti da Ti Ti Ta di da Rrr... The second staff continues the melody with dynamics *f* and *p*, and lyrics: ...a di da Rrr.....a di da Rrr.....a di da da Ti da Ti Ti Ta. The notation includes slurs, accents, and a 2/4 time signature change.

2

Example 2 musical notation. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature, and a 9/16 time signature. It contains a melodic line with dynamics *f* and *p*, and lyrics: fRr.....a fli fla Rrr.....a fli fla Rrr.....a di da fLi fLa di Ta fLi fLa fli fla Rrr... The second staff continues the melody with dynamics *f* and *p*, and lyrics: ...a fli fla Rrr.....a fli fla Rrr.....a di da fLi fLa di Ta fLi fLa. The notation includes slurs, accents, and a 2/4 time signature change.

# Examples 1 and 2 in US notation

## 1

Example 1 consists of two staves of musical notation. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 9/16 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four measures of music. The first two measures are in 9/16 time, and the last two are in 2/4 time. The second staff continues the piece, also starting with a treble clef and a 9/16 time signature, and ending with a double bar line. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). Lyrics are written below the notes.

Staff 1:  
*f p*  
 rrll R L R llrrll R L R llrrll L R R L R L L R L R llrrll  
 fRr.....a di da Rrr.....a di da Rrr.....a di da da Ti da Ti Ti Ta di da Rrr...

Staff 2:  
*f p*  
 R L R llrrll R L R llrrll L R R L R L L  
 ...a di da Rrr.....a di da Rrr.....a di da da Ti da Ti Ti Ta

## 2

Example 2 consists of two staves of musical notation, similar in structure to Example 1. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 9/16 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four measures of music. The second staff continues the piece, also starting with a treble clef and a 9/16 time signature, and ending with a double bar line. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). Lyrics are written below the notes.

Staff 1:  
*f p*  
 l rll R rL l R llrrll R rL l R llrrll R L R rL l R L R rL l R rL l R llrrll  
 fRr.....a fli fla Rrr.....a fli fla Rrr.....a di da fLi fLa di Ta fLi fLa fli fla Rrr...

Staff 2:  
*f p*  
 R rL l R llrrll R rL l R llrrll R L R rL l R L R L l R  
 ...a fli fla Rrr.....a fli fla Rrr.....a di da fLi fLa di Ta fLi fLa

<sup>i</sup> Swiss Drummers' and Fifers' Association