

GEORGE AND TED'S *Excellent* *Adventure*

by Albe Bonacci



If there are two drum books that I think every drummer should own, they are *Stick Control* by George Lawrence Stone and *Progressive Steps to Syncopation* by Ted Reed. I've worn out two or three copies of each. They are two of the most creditably famous drum books of all time.

In this installment, we will be looking at the first few pages of each in combination with one another. This is, perhaps, well-charted territory for drum teachers and students around the world, but I think I may have a fresh take on things.

Let's start with the first 13 hand patterns in *Stick Control* combined with non-repeating figures in *Syncopation* for the bass drum from page 33 and/or 34. Here is line 1 and 2 from *Stick Control* (singles) with line 1 from page 33 of *Progressive Steps to Syncopation*. Let's put the hi-hat on the quarter-note pulse.

(Ex. 1)

Then, we move to the double strokes in both starting positions, but this time we'll use line 10 from *Syncopation*. For a more diverse and challenging foot pattern, simply move on to pages such as 37, and so on, but it is important to feel the body sync up, so I recommend repeating patterns to start.

(Ex. 2)

Now, we are into paradiddle stickings. Numbers 5 through 8 are paradiddles in different positions.

Here is line number 6 from *Stick Control* with number 3 from *Syncopation* while still stepping quarter-note hi-hats:

(Ex. 3)

So, you probably get the idea. Continue through the first 13 hand patterns while adding in, and mixing up, foot patterns from page 33. Now, some random orchestration ideas on the kit, such as:

(Ex. 4)

(Ex. 5)

(Ex. 6)

(Ex. 7)

(Ex. 8)

(Ex. 9)

Points to consider:

1) For beginning students, start by playing the first five *Stick Control* exercises with just quarter-note kicks and then left foot hi-hat on quarters, then kick and hat alternating in both directions like this:

2) Watch out for flaming limbs. Start slow until things start to sync.

3) Make sure to be thorough. Play each *Stick Control* exercise with each *Syncopation* exercise.

4) Orchestration. Dare to think for yourself.

5) You may notice that the two pages referenced aren't reprinted here. There are two reasons for this: 1) space and, more importantly, 2) so that you, the readers, either get out and dust off your copies or you make a purchase at your local music store. These are must-own books.

6) For more advanced players, or for a different twist, swing the exercises (some work better than others). For Example:

You are not only playing a challenging warm up, you are forming the building blocks of grooves. In this case, a jazzy-type shuffle groove.

I hope these will be fun and challenging exercises that are the foundation to open-minded and musical drumming, while, once again, reminding us how monumental these two texts are.