

## **Modern Multi-Tenor Techniques**

by Julie Davila

The art of tenor playing has changed drastically over the last ten years. Although there are many great tenor players, there are not a lot of publications available to learn and practice the skills needed to acquire knowledge of tenor technique. The following exercises are intended to familiarize players with some basic concepts and techniques used when playing tenors. Part One utilizes some fundamental exercises aimed at developing dexterity, motion and flow. Part Two contains exercises that incorporate beginning scrapes and crossovers.

### **Grip**

Proper grip used in tenor playing is a form of matched grip. There are three schools of thought regarding matched grip. German grip is the palm faced down and the top of the hand flat. French grip utilizes the thumbs up and palms to the side technique. The commonly used American grip is mid-way between French and German. It is the American grip that is recommended for accurate tenor technique. This technique was adapted for tenors to better execute proper playing positions, flow from drum to drum, and increase dexterity of crossover and sweep techniques.

### **Playing Position**


Executing proper playing position is essential in producing good sound quality and developing a consistent smooth motion when traveling from drum to drum. When playing tenors, you want to play approximately two to three inches from the rim. This is the area that will produce the best tone quality for each hand. Try to move in a straight line from the inside drums to the outside drums. Use the momentum of the bounce or rebound of the stroke to travel from drum to drum, playing area to playing area.


### **Understanding Groupings**


A quick way to learn basic efficiency on tenor drums is to visualize the drums in groupings. Practicing different directions and stickings within the separate groupings is the first step in understanding tenor technique. Each of the following exercises in Part One are prefaced by a brief description of how the drums are grouped for that particular exercise and in what direction the player will move around the drums.


### Scrapes and Crossovers


Part two is a beginning approach to learning scrapes and crossovers. It is important to start slow and concentrate on maintaining proper grip and playing position before increasing the tempo. Parenthesis around any note denotes a crossover. The note inside the parenthesis indicate which hand crosses on top. It is important to maintain good sound quality throughout the rhythmic passage regardless if there are scrapes, crossovers or sweeps. These exercises are brief examples of scrapes and crossovers. There are unlimited combinations of patterns and stickings around the drums. Experiment and have fun!


**1. 2 drum groupings / Downs / Across / (8 8 16)** 



**2. 3's around with Z pattern (8 8 16)** 



**3. 16th Accent Tap / Timing Exercise (4 2 1)** 



**4. Diddles and Rolls Across the Drums (triple base)** 