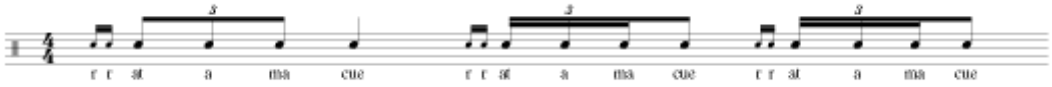
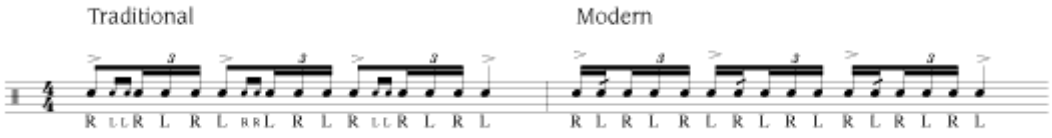
My Favorite Rudiment

by Dr. John Wooton

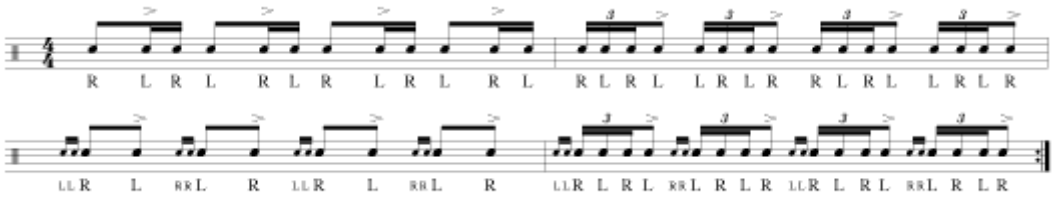
I have always had a special in my hearts for ratamacues. They are fun to play and fun to manipulate. When all my friends were trying to see how many flams they could play within an eight bar phrase I always preferred the smoothness and speed of drag rudiments, especially "ratamacues." There are single ratamacues, double ratamacues, and triple ratamacues. I love them all. Ratamacues got their name by way of onomatopoeia. By the way the rudiment sounds.



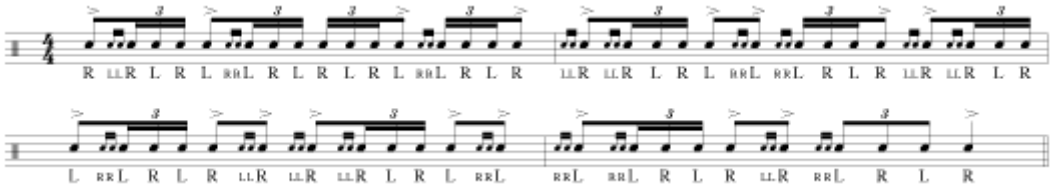
The traditional way to write ratamacues or any drag rudiments is with grace notes. The spacing and interpretation of the grace notes is left up to the performer. The more modern way of writing drag rudiments is with a slash on a sixteenth note. This literally tells you that the "grace notes" are thirty second notes. However, the performer may choose to interpret them in a more slurred or chopped style.



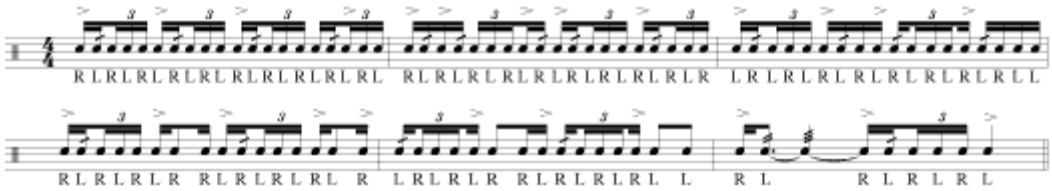
Below is an exercise that isolates each part of the single ratamacue. It is very important that there is a clear distinction between the accents and the taps. The more contrast, the more appeal. All of the diddles should clearly be two notes ... no more, no less.



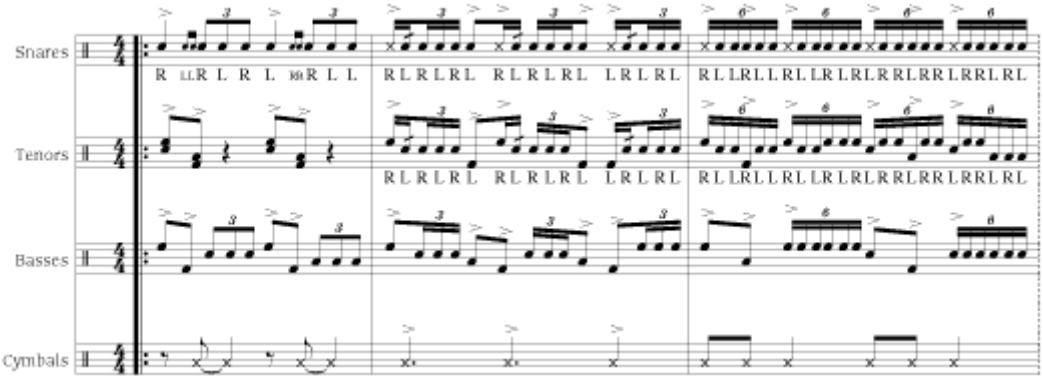
Next is an exercise incorporating single, double, and triple ratamacues.



Now the fun begins. By incorporating beat shifting and accent shifting you find that ratamacues can be used in less traditional ways. Below is an exercise that may give you a few ideas of how you can use ratamacues in these situations. They are not just for breakfast anymore.



Finally, I would like to leave you with a street beat incorporating my favorite rudiment and my favorite visual, backsticking.



Dr. John Wooton

John Wooton is currently the Director of Percussion Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi. From 1988 to 1992 John served as Percussion Coordinator/Pep Band Director for University of Iowa Bands. A native of Lafayette, Louisiana, John received degrees from The University of Southwestern Louisiana, The University of North Texas and The University of Iowa. As an instructor and/or performer, John has been associated with five P.A.S.I.C. Marching Percussion Forum champions. He marched snare drum for four years with the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps from Rockford, Illinois (1981 - 1984). During those years John held the Drum Corps Midwest Individual Snare Drum title, and placed in the top ten D.C.I. Snare Drum Individuals three consecutive years. From 1987 - 1989 John served as Percussion Caption Head for the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps. For the 1991 and 1992 drum & bugle corps season John served as Program Coordinator/Percussion Arranger for the Night Express Drum and Bugle Corps form Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Dr. Wooton is presently serving as a member of the Percussive Arts Society Marching Committee.