

SABIAN

EDUCATION NETWORK



DRUM SET CURRICULUM

Levels 1-9

- Level 1: B8X
- Level 2: B8 Pro
- Level 3: Xs20
- Level 4: AA
- Level 5: AAX
- Level 6: Paragon
- Level 7: HH
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PLEASE NOTE:

- This is a suggested curriculum based on many years of teaching experience by the authors. However, it is not meant to be considered SABIAN's official curriculum. It is simply a set of ideas to use as a reference, comparison, or a starting place in your own teaching studio.
- Please visit www.sabian.com/joinsen to sign up for the Sabian Education Network. Inside the teachers area of the site, you will find a discussion forum where curriculum ideas can be discussed.
- Although we consider them extremely important, we have omitted book, DVD, website and other resource recommendations here in the interest of keeping the curriculum to a concise length. Book/study materials will be discussed in the online forum.



Level 1 – B8X

NOTATION/READING: Introduction to staff, basic theory, time signature, drum set note placement. Note values: whole, half, quarter, 8th and 16th notes and their rest values.

TECHNIQUE: Basic grip/fulcrum for matched grip. Basic approach to bass drum pedal heel-down technique.

STYLES: Basic rock and pop beats and drum fills.

BEATS: Very simple quarter and 8th note beats.

FILLS: Basic quarter, 8th and 16th note fills (alternate sticking).

RUDIMENTS: Single stroke roll/double stroke roll/single paradiddle.

INDEPENDENCE and COORDINATION: Basic three-way rock beat coordination.

CYMBAL SUGGESTION: 14" B8X Hats, 16" or 18" B8X Medium Crash, 20" B8X Ride, B8X Performance Set, Basement Mix.

INSTRUMENT: Names of the cymbals. Proper cymbal technique and maintenance for hats, crash, ride. How to hit crash cymbals the right way to avoid cracking. Names of the drum set components including hardware. Stick choices: wood types (maple, hickory, oak) and popular sizes.



Level 2 – B8 Pro

NOTATION/READING: Introducing dotted 8th notes and their rests plus various broken 16th-note rhythms (8th and two 16ths) and the reverse. Dynamics introduced. Application of rudiments from Level 1.

TECHNIQUE: Intro to types of strokes: down, tap, up and full. Approach to heel-up bass drum technique without burying the beater. Development and refinement of open double stroke rolls, addition of multiple bounce/closed and single-stroke rolls.

STYLES: Rock, funk, and pop beats and drum fills.

BEATS: Intermediate quarter-note beats plus beats with dotted 8th notes and the broken 16th-note patterns. Intro to basic open hi-hat patterns.

FILLS: Quarter and 8th patterns between the hands and bass drum plus intermediate fills with 8th and 16th notes and rests.

INDEPENDENCE and COORDINATION: Intro to hi-hat foot patterns (quarter note variations).

RUDIMENTS: Multiple bounce roll/5 stroke roll/9 stroke roll/flam/drag (ruff).

CYMBAL SUGGESTION: 14" B8 Pro Medium Hats, 16" B8 Pro Thin Crash, 20" B8 Pro Medium Ride, 10" B8 Pro Splash, B8 Pro Performance Set, Garage Mix.

INSTRUMENT: Proper snare and bass drum maintenance (head change, head choice, tuning, snare adjustment, muffling).



Level 3 – Xs20

NOTATION/READING: Introducing triplets (half, quarter, 8th and 16th and their rests, plus broken 8th-note triplet rhythms). Application of rudiments from Levels 1 and 2.

TECHNIQUE: Intro to Moeller stroke/whipping and pumping motions, plus accent control. Introduction to traditional grip.

STYLES: Basic jazz time. Blues, country, and rock beats and drum fills. Intro to Latin: bossa nova.

BEATS: 12/8 blues, jazz time with feathered bass drum and hi-hat on 2 and 4, various shuffle patterns. Basic single-handed and two-handed 16th-note hi-hat beats. Basic bossa nova.

FILLS: 8th-note triplet fills and broken triplet fills with quarter notes to complement jazz time. Fills between the hands and bass drum as triplets. 16th-note fills to compliment 16th-note hi-hat patterns.

INDEPENDENCE and COORDINATION: Hi-hat foot patterns (quarter-note variations).

RUDIMENTS: Flam accent/flam drag/double paradiddle/paradiddle-diddle/flam tap/single drag tap/double drag tap/single stroke 4/7 stroke roll/13 stroke roll/17 stroke roll.

CYMBAL SUGGESTION: Xs20 Performance Set, Xs20 Rock Performance Set, Xs20 Effects Pack, Gig Mix, Club Mix, Xs20 22" Monarch.

INSTRUMENT: Proper tom-tom maintenance (head change, head choice, tuning, muffling).



Level 4 – AA

NOTATION/READING: Introducing 32nd notes and roll abbreviations. Remaining 16th-note rhythms introduced, completing all 15 variations from one to four 16th notes. Application of rudiments from Levels 1 to 3.

TECHNIQUE: Intro to the Free Stroke and finger control exercises (Gladstone method). Further development of heel-up bass drum technique including double strokes and burying the beater if appropriate for style being played.

STYLES: Rock and funk.

OPTIONAL STYLES: Heavy metal grooves with double bass. Basic gospel grooves.

BEATS: 16th-note rock and funk grooves with busier patterns between the bass and snare including various hi-hat ostinatos. More advanced grooves on the ride with bell patterns as well as open and closed hi-hat patterns. Basic half-time shuffle. More shuffle variations.

FILLS: Two-beat fills and one-bar fills with the 15 various 16th-note patterns, including fills between the hands and bass drum. Fills to include hi-hat foot ostinatos (quarter, 8th, and broken 8th notes). Introduction to basic double bass fills (2 and 2, 4 and 2).

INDEPENDENCE and COORDINATION: Hi-hat foot patterns (8th-note variations).

RUDIMENTS: Single stroke 7/Lesson 25/flamacue/ flam paradiddle/Swiss army triplet/triple paradiddle/single, double, and triple ratamacue/6 stroke roll/triple stroke roll.

CYMBAL SUGGESTION: Choices begin to vary by style. 22" AA Apollo, 21" AA Raw Bell Dry Ride, 20" AA Medium Ride, 14" AA Medium Hats, 16" or 18" AA Medium-Thin Crash or Raw Bell Crash, 18" AA Chinese, 8" AA Splash.

INSTRUMENT: Maintenance of cymbals, including cleaning and possible replacement of cymbal sleeves and felts. Addition of a double pedal.



Level 5 – AAX

NOTATION/READING: Introducing marching and concert band snare pieces. Reading a chart with repeats, 1st and 2nd ending. Symbols such as coda, D.S., D.C., etc. are introduced. Dynamic markings such as forte, piano, etc. Application of rudiments from Levels 1 to 4.

TECHNIQUE: Developing ghost note control using pull outs and control strokes (upstrokes and downstrokes).

STYLES: Swing funk grooves. Marching band and concert band pieces.

OPTIONAL STYLES: Intro to blast beats. Advanced funk grooves. Hip-hop grooves.

BEATS: Linear funk concepts, advanced hi-hat ostinato patterns with accents, swing 16th note grooves, various sticking patterns for grooves using paradiddles. Advanced bass and snare patterns with accents and ghost notes as 16th notes, 16th-note triplets and 32nd notes.

FILLS: Advanced fills including accents, linear ideas, hand and foot combinations with single and double pedal and various stickings using 8th and 16th notes, 8th- and 16th-note triplets and 32nd notes.

INDEPENDENCE and COORDINATION: Hi-hat foot patterns introducing the heel-toe splash technique in quarter and 8th notes.

RUDIMENTS: 10 stroke roll/11 stroke roll/15 stroke roll/pata-fla-fla/inverted flam tap/single flammed mill/single dragadiddle/flam paradiddle-diddle/drag paradiddle #1/drag paradiddle #2

CYMBAL SUGGESTION: AAX Praise and Worship Pack. 14" AAX Studio or Stage Hats, 20" or 21" AAX Stage Ride, 21" AAX Memphis Ride, 21" AAX Raw Bell Dry Ride, 16" or 18" AAX Dark Crash, 19" AAX X-Treme Chinese, 10" AAX O-Zone.

INSTRUMENT: Maintenance of rims, tension rods and lugs on the drums. Rims cleaned, tension rods and lugs lubricated.



Level 6 – PARAGON

NOTATION/READING: Introducing jazz and reading concepts with comping patterns. Triplet interpretation of 8th notes. Reading syncopated figures to apply to jazz time. Application of rudiments from Levels 1 to 5.

TECHNIQUE: Further development of feathering the bass drum (bass drum control), hi-hat heel-toe rocking motion. Approaches to playing swing time on the ride (circular motion, finger control). Intro to playing brushes.

STYLES: Jazz and jazz waltz. Advanced rock/progressive rock: intro to odd time.

OPTIONAL STYLES: Intro to drum and bass/electronica.

JAZZ TIME: Swing, 2-feel, 4-feel, quarter-note pulse and jazz waltz.

FILLS: Accented 8th note triplets, various sticking between the ride and snare and toms and snare. Broken triplets between hands and bass drum. Broken triplet rhythms.

INDEPENDENCE and COORDINATION: Playing time and comping between the snare and bass drums, hi-hat plays on 2 and 4.

RUDIMENTS: Continued development of all PAS 40 Snare Rudiments.

CYMBAL SUGGESTION: For rock styles: Paragon 13" Hats, Paragon Splash 'n' Stacker Pack, 19" Paragon Chinese, 16" or 18" Paragon Crash. For jazz styles: add a thinner ride such as 20" HHX Manhattan Jazz Ride, 22" HH King, or 21" HH Vintage Ride.

INSTRUMENT: Possible set up change: 4-piece kit, smaller drums, cymbals placed lower. Different head choices and thinner cymbals.



Level 7 – HH

NOTATION/READING: Reading syncopated figures with tied notes in common time and cut common time. Reading lead sheets.

TECHNIQUE: Developing good finger control for uptempo ride patterns used in samba and fast bossa nova. Developing slide/double technique with the bass drum for samba bass drum ostinato.

STYLES: Brazilian drumming including advanced bossa nova, samba, baião, batucada, partido alto.

OPTIONAL STYLES: World styles such as soca, calypso, merengue, tango, cumbia, rhumba, beguine, bolero, pasa doble, polkas, jig, tarantella, and other popular world dance styles. More difficult and faster double bass, metal, and blast beat styles.

GROOVES: Bossa nova, samba and baião foot ostinatos with improvised comping including the snare hand including the toms and cross-stick. Various paradiddle sticking applied as grooves between the ride and snare.

FILLS: Accented 8th notes with drags and flams. Various sticking patterns between the snare and toms. Broken rhythms in quarter, 8th and 16th applied over bossa, samba and baião ostinatos. Intro to fills with odd groupings: 3, 5, 7.

INDEPENDENCE and COORDINATION: Developing a smooth foot ostinato (bossa, samba and baião) with various hi-hat foot patterns including splashing technique.

RUDIMENTS: Continued development and mastery of all PAS 40 Rudiments at various tempos. Optional: Exploration of various hybrid rudiments. Applying rudiments to double bass.

CYMBAL SUGGESTION: 21" HH Raw Bell Dry Ride, 16" HH Thin Crash, 18" HH Medium-Thin Crash, 14" HH Dark Hats, 8" HH Splash, 10" HH China Kang. For lighter/world styles: 21" HH Crossover Ride.

INSTRUMENT: Expand your setup with more percussion-based cymbals such as splash cymbals or a kang. Add an extra tom; either 8" tom or 16" floor tom. (For Brazilian grooves, 8" for tamborim sounds or 16" for surdo). Common drum set sizes for this style: 10", 12", 14" toms; 13" or 14" snare and 20" bass drum. Try creating a multi-pedal setup and/or addition of second hi-hat (closed or remote).



Level 8 – HHX

NOTATION/READING: 2-3 and 3-2 son and rhumba clave, 6/8 clave. Reading broken syncopated figures with ties..

TECHNIQUE: Developing good finger and dynamic control for ride patterns used in many Afro-Cuban styles as well as snare drum control. Advanced foot techniques (a la Jojo Mayer).

STYLES: Afro-Cuban drumming including mambo, cha-cha, cascara, guaguanco, songo, nanigo, bembé, Mozambique; island styles: reggae and ska.

OPTIONAL STYLES: New Orleans Second Line grooves. Advanced R&B styles, including layered funk styles (a la David Garibaldi) and gospel grooves.

GROOVES: Various ride patterns over the Afro-Cuban tumbao bass ostinato. Reggae one-drop, steppers and rock stead. Ska grooves.

FILLS: Application of various 8th and 16th note rudiments. Various sticking patterns between the snare and toms. Broken rhythms in quarter, 8th, triplets and 16th applied over the tumbao ostinato and various Afro-Cuban grooves. Syncopated triplet fills for reggae grooves. Polyrhythmic “gospel chops” fills.

INDEPENDENCE and COORDINATION: Developing a smooth foot tumbao ostinato bass pattern with various hi-hat foot patterns including splashing technique.

RUDIMENTS: Continued mastery of all PAS 40 Rudiments at various tempos. Optional: Continued Exploration of various hybrid rudiments. Applying rudiments to double bass.

CYMBAL SUGGESTION: HHX Evolution and Legacy models can be used in many styles: HHX Evolution Performance set, 18" HHX Evolution O-Zone, 22" HHX Legacy Heavy Ride, 14" HHX Groove Hats, 22" HHX Phoenix, 19" HHX Omni.

INSTRUMENT: Expand your setup with more percussion-based instruments such as cowbells, wood blocks, mounted tambourine and jingle ring. Try grooves with 14" Hoop Crasher.



Level 9 – Artisan

NOTATION/READING: Chart reading including big band charts with sectional and ensemble figures, rhythm charts and lead charts. Odd time signature pieces, charts, and snare etudes.

TECHNIQUE: Developing melodic ear to sing song forms. Chops required to play at tempos of 300 BPM and more. Developing speed and stamina to play fast double bass grooves. Further refinement of all previous techniques.

STYLES: Advanced concepts and grooves mentioned in the previous levels, plus advancing in areas of choice such as gospel, electronica, bebop, uptempo jazz patterns. Advanced brush patterns in jazz, samba and bossa nova.

OPTIONAL STYLES: Progressive rock, extreme metal/blast beats, drum and bass.

GROOVES: Complex odd time grooves. Common polyrhythms including 6:4, 4:3, 3:4 and 2:3. Metric modulation ideas in jazz, funk, and progressive rock styles.

FILLS/SOLOS: “Table of time” studies (1-12 notes per quarter note) including groups of 5s and 7s. Learning to solo over form of a tune or a vamp. Open solo development.

INDEPENDENCE and COORDINATION: 3- and 4-voice comping ideas in jazz. Left-foot clave patterns for Afro-Cuban grooves. Advanced solo ostinatos.

RUDIMENTS: Memorization of all PAS 40 Rudiments at various tempos. Optional: Continued exploration of various hybrid rudiments. Applying rudiments to double bass and multi pedal setup.

REPERTOIRE: Developing a large library of standard and popular current tunes

CYMBAL SUGGESTION: 20" or 22" Artisan Medium Ride, 16", 17", 18" or 20" Artisan Crash, 13", 14" or 15" Artisan Hats. Research entire Big and Ugly line for personal sounds.

INSTRUMENT: Head replacement, tuning and cleaning of your drums, hardware and cymbals. Regular maintenance. Invest in drum, cymbal and hardware cases for gigging situations. Continued exploration of multi pedal setups.