

# Rudiments and the Grid

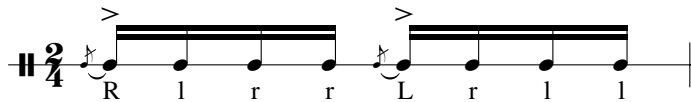
BY AARON GUIDRY

**M**arching percussionists constantly look for ways to expand their technique and create new rudimental combinations. Variations such as inverting the rudiment, playing it off the left, adding ornaments, and using reverse traditional grip are just a few of the creative options available.

One of the ways to create variations on a rudiment is to add new elements. These additions can result in the combination of two or more rudiments forming a hybrid. Some hybrids have become very popular in contemporary rudimental drumming.

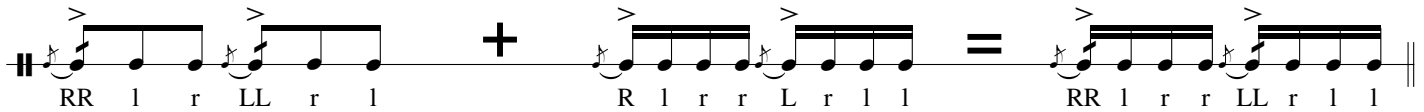
To demonstrate the creation of hybrids, consider the flam-paradiddle. Assume the time signature of 2/4 and begin every flam paradiddle, in sixteenth-note form, on the quarter-note pulse. The first note is an accented flam, followed by three unaccented taps.

Example 1



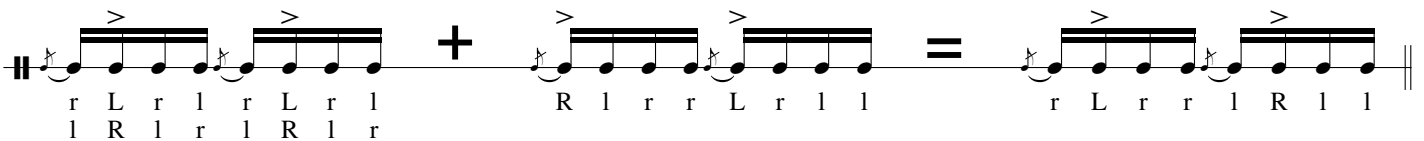
By adding one or more of three common elements—the drag, the accent, or the flam—four hybrids are created. Placing a drag on the first note of the grouping combines a cheese/stutter and a flam paradiddle.

Example 2



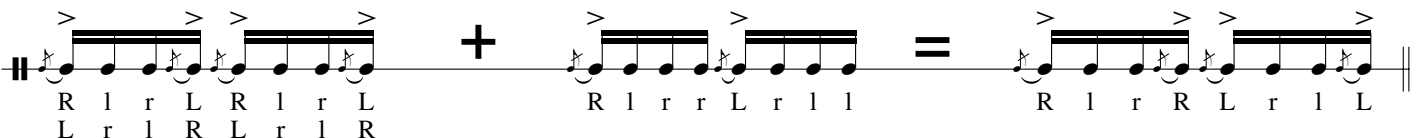
Adding an accent to the second note of the grouping creates a hybrid of a flamacue and a flam paradiddle. Note that the accent on the flam is generally removed from this hybrid to stay true to the technique of a flamacue.

Example 3



Inserting a flam on the last note of the grouping utilizes the pataflafla concept.

Example 4



## COLLEGE PEDAGOGY COMMITTEE CHAIR SEARCH

Applications are being accepted for the chair position of the PAS College Pedagogy Committee. Among the many responsibilities, the chair will facilitate and coordinate the activities of the committee by examining and addressing topics and issues related to the committee and the Percussive Arts Society.

Applicants should send a letter of interest and a current vita to Michael Kenyon, Executive Director, Percussive Arts Society, 701 NW Ferris Avenue Lawton, OK 73507  
Deadline: May 1, 2003

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Applications are being accepted for the chair position of the PAS Contest/Audition Procedures Committee. Among the many responsibilities, the chair will facilitate and coordinate the activities of the committee by examining and addressing topics and issues related to the committee and the Percussive Arts Society.

Deadline for applications: March 1, 2003

Applicants should send a letter of interest and a current vita to Michael Kenyon, Executive Director, Percussive Arts Society, 701 NW Ferris Avenue, Lawton, OK 73507.

Finally, all four of these rudiments can be combined to produce one hybrid.

Example 5

These are a few of many hybrid forms of a flam-paradiddle. A characteristic of the modern rudimental drummer is the ability to create a hybrid and build seemingly endless variations on it. The question of how one can develop new variations must be considered.

Through an approach called a *grid*, every variation possible on a rudiment, hybrid or not, can be systematically created. Gridding adjusts the order of elements within the rudiment, creating new technical combinations (what your hands are physically doing) and mental combinations (what your brain is thinking in relation to the pulse). An example of the gridding process can be demonstrated utilizing the flam accent in triplet form.

The flam accent offers two elements that can be altered: the flam and the accent. By moving both elements to different counts within the triplet, variations are formed. A nine-unit chart consisting of three rows and three columns can be created by displacing the accent horizontally and the flam vertically.

Example 6

ACCENT →

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Your hands appear to be playing only three different technical combinations: flam-accent-tap, flam-tap-accent, or accented flam-tap-tap. The other six patterns are essentially one of those three, but displaced in relation to the beat.

Although the technical combination of flam-tap-accent is identical in the hands as accent-flam-tap and tap-accent-flam, it is not the same thing to the brain. In this grid, for every one technical combination there are two mental combinations. Example 7 groups the combinations accordingly by letter.

Example 7

ACCENT →

Rudiments containing three or more elements can undergo the grid process as well. This can be executed in several different ways. The following approach creates a three-element grid utilizing the flam drag in triplet form.

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Goals \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Personal statement (optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

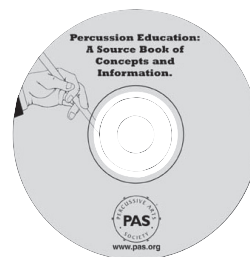
Major instruments (instruments that you have or are seriously studying) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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The difference between the flam-accent grid and the flam-drag grid is the addition of a drag. The concept of gridding transfers an isolated element to all notes of the given rudiment. Since the flam-accent skeleton or base is identical to the flam drag, we can create three separate flam-accent grids.

Place a drag (the element not shared) on the second note of the triplet (common flam-drag form) in the first grid, a drag on the third note of the triplet in the second grid, and a drag on the first note of the triplet in the third grid. Utilizing this method, three nine-unit grids are created, collectively identified as the flam-drag grid. The combined total of 27 units is broken down into nine technical combinations, each having two mental combinations. The grid and groupings are shown in Example 8. A rudiment containing four or more elements can be gridded in a similar fashion.

Example 8

**ACCENT →**

Diddle on the second note of the triplet      Diddle on the third note of the triplet      Diddle on the first note of the triplet

**F  
L  
A  
M**

A1 B1 C1 I2 G2 H2 E3 F3 D3  
D1 E1 F1 C2 A2 B2 H3 I3 G3  
G1 H1 I1 F2 D2 E2 B3 C3 A3

The next step in the gridding process is to create exercises that develop the technical and mental concepts so they can be performed within a musical context. Every rudiment presents individual challenges and each variation will have technical and mental issues to be addressed.



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The techniques necessary to play a particular rudiment should be isolated with general exercises first. Those exercises can then be applied to the specifics of each technical combination. After the technical combinations are controlled, then the mental combinations can be developed in a similar manner. To illustrate three applications of a grid, the next example utilizes the single paradiddle.

The paradiddle grid is created using two elements: the accent and the sticking. The paradiddle is unique in that the sticking can be considered an element because it does not alternate continuously. The two rights or the two lefts can be moved to other counts, just as the accent can. By moving both elements, a sixteen-unit grid is created consisting of four technical combinations, each with three mental combinations. Example 9 shows the grid and appropriate groupings.

Example 9

ACCENT →

STICKING ↓

A1 B1 C1 D1

D2 A2 B2 C2

C3 D3 A3 B3

B4 C4 D4 A4

The first application of a grid concentrates on the technical combinations, focusing on the accent-tap issues. A generalized exercise, shown in Example 10, aids in developing accent-tap control.

Example 10

4/4 R r r r L

3/4 R L

2/4 R L

4/4 R R L L

That concept, applied to each of the four technical combinations, create specifically tailored exercises, as illustrated in the next example.

Example 11

4/4 R r r L l l R r r L l l

4/4 R l r r L r l l R l r r L r l l

4/4 r L r l R l r L r l R l

4/4 r L r r l R l l r L r r l R l l

4/4 r R r l L l r R r l L l

4/4 r l R r l r L l r l R r l r L l

4/4 r r R l l L r r R l l L

4/4 r l r R l r l L r l r R l r l L

Each technique combination can be played consecutively, in any order, as illustrated in Example 12. In this exercise, the accent shifts within the paradiddle, but the paradiddle sticking always starts in the same place.

Example 12

Example 12 consists of three staves of rhythmic notation. The first staff is in 4/4 time and contains four measures of eighth-note paradiddles with accents on the first and third notes. The sticking patterns are: R l r r L r l l R l r r L r l l, r l R r l r L l r l R r l r L l, r L r r l R l l r L r r l R l l, and r l r R l r l L r l r R l r l R. The second staff is in 4/4 time and contains two measures of eighth-note paradiddles with accents on the first and third notes. The sticking patterns are: R l r r L r l l r l R r l r L l and r L r r l R l l r l r R l r l L. The third staff is in 5/4 time and contains two measures of eighth-note paradiddles with accents on the first and third notes. The sticking patterns are: R l r r l r L l r L r r l r l L r l r r and L r l l r l R r l R l l r l r R l r l l. Each staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

The next application focuses on mental combinations. It is important to understand how the brain perceives what the hands are doing. Starting a technical combination on any count within a pulse focuses on that concept. The technical combinations must be controlled prior to attempting the mental side of gridding. By isolating each technical combination individually, exercises can be created. Example 13 illustrates an exercise derived from C1 in Example 9.

Example 13

Example 13 consists of two staves of rhythmic notation. The first staff is in 4/4 time and contains six measures of eighth-note paradiddles with accents on the first and third notes. The sticking patterns are: r l R r l l r L l r, r l R r l l r L l r, r l R r l l r L l r, r l R r l l r L l r, r l R r l l r L l r, and r l R r l l r L l r. The second staff is in 7/8 time and contains six measures of eighth-note paradiddles with accents on the first and third notes. The sticking patterns are: r l R r l l r L l r, r l R r l l r L l r, r l R r l l r L l r, r l R r l l r L l r, r l R r l l r L l r, and r l R r l l r L l r. Each staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

The mental combinations can also be played consecutively in a similar fashion as the technical combinations. Example 14 demonstrates how D1 from Example 9 can be used to create such an exercise. Unlike Example 12, the accent is always in the same place within the paradiddle, but the beat shifts where the paradiddle sticking starts.

Example 14

Example 14 consists of three staves of rhythmic notation. The first staff is in 4/4 time and contains four measures of eighth-note paradiddles with accents on the first and third notes. The sticking patterns are: r l r R l r l L r l r R l r l L, r l r l L r l r R l r l L r l r, R l r l r R l r l L r l r R l r, and l L r l r l L r l r R l r l L r l r R l. The second staff is in 4/4 time and contains two measures of eighth-note paradiddles with accents on the first and third notes. The sticking patterns are: r l r R l r l L r l r l L r l r and R l r l r R l r l L r l r l L r l r R l. The third staff is in 6/4 time and contains two measures of eighth-note paradiddles with accents on the first and third notes. The sticking patterns are: r l r R l r l r R l r l r R l r l r r l r l L r l r l L r l r R l r l L r l r R l and l L r l r l L r l r R l r l L r l r R l. Each staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Combining the technical and mental combinations, the applications of grids are further explored. For example, insert the four paradiddle technical combinations into the mental combination of A2 from Example 9. The paradiddle sticking of R l r r / L r l l



will always start on the second sixteenth note of the beat (the mental application), but the accent will change within the paradiddle (the technical application). In Example 15 the hands are doing the same thing as in Example 12, but mentally, everything is offset one sixteenth note. The brain must displace the accent within the already displaced paradiddle.

Example 15

The image shows three staves of musical notation for Example 15. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a time signature. The first two staves are in 4/4 time, and the third is in 6/4 time. The notation consists of rhythmic patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes, with accents (>) placed above specific notes. Below the notes are drum rudiment patterns using 'l' for left hand and 'r' for right hand. The first staff has a pattern: l R l r r L r l l R l r r L r l l r L r r l R l l r L r r l R l l r l R r l r L l r l R r l r L. The second staff has: l R l r r L r l l r L r r l R l l r l R r l r L l r l r R l r l L r l r. The third staff has: l R l r r l R l l r l R r l r l L r l r r l r l r L r l l r L r r l r l r l r. Each staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign (two dots and a slash).

Examples 10–15 are basic exercises that function as a guide in developing variations with other grids. More advanced exercises can be created to expand the technical facilities and mental concepts. The goal is the development of the skills needed to recognize and perform the variations in a musical setting. It is the performer’s responsibility to develop and apply the products of gridding to practice and performance. The most useful application is the development of control and understanding of the rudiments, which leads to consistency in playing. By working on consistency of each technical and mental combination, one may take complete ownership over the rudiment.

The gridding process creates literally hundreds of combinations based on standard and hybrid rudiments. Although possibilities seem endless, gridding provides a logical approach to determine a finite number of variations. Naturally, a rudiment with more elements will have more technical and mental combinations. The paradiddle grid has sixteen units. The flam paradiddle grid, consisting of three elements (the accent, the flam, and the sticking), creates a 64-unit grid. Add a drag (four elements total), and the grid has 256 units. Gridding provides the opportunity for realizing creative potential of the rudiments and prepares the performer for many of the challenges in contemporary rudimental drumming.

**Aaron Guidry** is currently performing with the Cirque du Soleil production “Mystere.” He received his BME from the University of Louisiana at Monroe and his M.M. at West Virginia University. He has also performed professionally with the African drum and dance ensemble Azaguno, and was a featured snare soloist with the U.S. touring cast of *Blast!*

PN

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