

About The Author

Scott's musical training began at the age of four when he began taking drum lessons from a local percussion instructor. At the encouragement of this instructor he became involved in the drum and bugle corps activity. Before his fifth birthday, Scott joined the Red Knights Drum and Bell Corps and later graduated to the Royallaires Drum and Bugle Corps. Scott remained with the unit until he joined the Blue Devils Drum and Bugle Corps at age 18. He was a marching member in the Blue Devils snare line from 1976 through 1979. He became a member of the Blue Devil staff as a percussion instructor from 1978 through 1989 and later rejoined the organization in 1994 as Director of Percussion and Percussion Arranger.

During his time away from the Blue Devils, Scott was hired as Director of Percussion and Percussion Arranger for the Santa Clara Vanguard Drum and Bugle Corps from 1991 through 1993, after one year as percussion consultant in 1990. Scott is also the former percussion arranger for Riverside Community College, as well as many drum corps and marching bands in the United States, Japan, and throughout the world.

Personal awards include seventeen DCI championships, fourteen DCI High Percussion titles, two WGI championships (Independent World and Scholastic A), three DCA championships, two DCA High Percussion titles, ten DCE championships, nine DCE High Percussion titles, nine High Percussion titles in Japan, and 1977 DCI & PASIC Individual Snare champion.

In 2012 Scott was very honored to be inducted into both the DCI Hall Of Fame and WGI Hall Of Fame, and in 2015, the World Drum Corps Hall Of Fame.

Although the primary focus of his teaching career has been in the Drum Corps idiom, Scott has taught privately and arranged percussion scores at the elementary, junior high, senior high, and university levels.

Scott's judging assignments have included numerous marching band and percussion competitions throughout the world, including PAS Championships, WGI Championships, South African Championships, Indonesia Championships, and the Bands of America Grand National Championships.

Scott is one of the most sought after Marching Percussion clinicians in the world today. He has held numerous percussion clinics throughout the United States, Japan, Canada, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Scotland, South Africa, South Korea, Indonesia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Australia, Italy, and China.

Scott's current endorsements:

Drums and hardware: System Blue

Sticks and mallets: Promark

Cymbals: Zildjian

Drumheads: Evans

Hand drums and Accessories: Meinl

Drum pads: OffWorld

Table Of Contents

Why CHOPS?	4
Terminology, Technique and Practice Tips	4

Exercises

#1 - Legato	6	#16 - Buzz	31
#2 - Accent Tap	7	#17 - Singles	32
#3 - Double Beat	8	#18 - Single With Accents	35
#4 - Triple Beat	9	#19 - Herta	36
#5 - 16th Note Accent	10	#20 - Flam Accent	38
#6 - Stick Control	11	#21 - Flam Accent Grid	39
#7 - Triplet Accent	12	#22 - Flam Taps, Patty, Inverts	40
#8 - Paradiddle	14	#23 - 5/8 Flams	41
#9 - Paradiddle Pyramid	16	#24 - Flam Drags	42
#10 - Paradiddle Diddle	18	#25 - Flam Drag Sticking	44
#11 - 16th Diddle / One Height	20	#26 - Flam Diddles, "cheese"	45
#12 - Triplet Diddle / One Height	22	#27 - Cheese Stickings	46
#13 - 16th Diddle / Two Heights	24	#28 - Flam 5's	48
#14 - Triplet Diddle / Two Heights	26	#29 - Flam a Diddle Diddle Inverted	50
#15 - Modulation Rolls 3, 4, 5	28	#30 - Grid	51

Solos

#1 - <i>Young Double Stops</i>	52
#2 - <i>Buzzy</i>	54
#3 - <i>Quick Sticks</i>	57
#4 - <i>True is the Tide</i>	60
#5 - <i>Wild Card</i>	62
#6 - <i>Scotty Snare Drummer</i>	64
#7 - <i>Revenge</i>	66

Why CHOPS?

- my story -

I am often asked, "How did you get your chops?" It's an excellent question. This book goes beyond the obvious answer (PRACTICE!), providing insight into tools I have used to develop the skills required for rudimental chops.

CHOPS... for Today and Beyond includes 30 snare drum exercises - all of which I have used during my career. There are also 7 contemporary snare solos. These exercises and solos are designed to challenge drummers at any level. I also have included "Chop Stories" - personal experiences that helped me develop my chops starting at a young age, as well as things I do today to maintain my chops.

Terminology, Technique and Practice Tips

- balancing what's "right" with what's "right for you" -

- practice tips: tempos, check patterns and muscle memory -

Tempos: The best way to work through any exercise or solo is to start slow and increase the speed as you feel more comfortable, remembering the important factor is your quality of sound. With that said... in order to build your strength and endurance chops, I also think it is important to push yourself and your tempos just beyond what you can handle.

Check Patterns or Primers: During your practice sessions, work to play the correct timing, or interpretation, of each rhythm. One effective method is to play along with a check pattern (also known as a primer) on a metronome or with a friend. For example, when practicing a 16th or 32nd note exercise, set your metronome to play a straight 16th note rhythm - and listen to make sure the timing of your 16th or 32nd note rhythms line up perfectly with the check pattern. You can do the same with triplet based patterns.

Muscle Memory: Drumming is a physical exercise. While practicing obviously helps develop the muscles we need to drum, it also develops the connection between our muscles and our brain - which is called muscle memory. One of the best ways to build muscle memory is to work one hand at a time. This will give you a good understanding of what it takes for each hand to perform the particular rudiment or pattern (the brain part), which in turn helps you train the hand (the muscle part). Practice with each hand individually, focusing on heights, grip and touch, until the pattern feels natural. Then put it together. Repeat this often and I guarantee you'll develop the muscle memory needed to play with a consistent sound quality.

- stick heights -

Heights is the term used to describe how high the bead of the drumstick comes off of the drumhead after a stroke. It's an important technique component, as it controls volume. At the forte level all accents should be played between nine and fifteen inches. The normal tap height should be anywhere from two to four inches.

However, remember this is just a guideline - so feel free to customize your heights to fit your needs (both look and sound). If you can play higher, play higher. If you want to play taps at a 1" height, go for it. Also remember that working with a variety of heights will help you develop control - an important tool as you work to expand your drumming vocabulary.

- grip: bounce a ball and turn a knob -

Match grip, right or left hand, mimics bouncing a tennis ball:

From a standing position, bounce a tennis ball from waist height straight down to the ground, catching it with the same hand. Practice using the same wrist and hand motion when striking a drum or pad with match grip.

Left hand traditional grip mimics turning a doorknob:

Locate a waist-high, round doorknob and turn it with your left hand. Notice that you don't use your whole arm to open the door. Instead, you simply rotate your wrist. Grab a stick and practice using the same rotating wrist motion.

- touch -

The word **touch** is used to describe the velocity of a stroke. Can you play two notes, both at a 15" height and create different volumes? Of course you can – you just have to change the velocity, or force, behind the stroke. That velocity is determined by your **touch**. Your goal while practicing should be to control both your heights and touch – which will create consistent volume levels and produce a good quality of sound.

- technique: the bottom line -

We've talked about three technique components - grip, heights and touch. Should everyone use the same technique? The answer is yes and no. Let me explain...

As a solo performer, I have discovered a variety of techniques that produce a good sound, which has resulted in comments like: "Come on Scojo, your right pinky is coming off the stick during fast rolls!" As a solo artist, I'm not trying to match my look or sound with anyone else. If my pinky finger comes off the stick, it's because that technique helps me achieve speed while producing the desired sound.

I've also seen techniques very different from my own that also produce a great sound. For example, I've always taught that the left hand thumb, index finger and the stick should never separate if you're using traditional grip. Then I witnessed a pipe band drummer in Australia using only his thumb on top of the stick. As a result, his index finger, thumb, and stick bounced all over the place, and yet he produced a great sound and had an impressive vocabulary. That technique definitely worked for him.

What technique should you use if you are in a drum line? Learn the technique used by the ensemble and work to produce the same sound as the rest of the players. Remember that from a judge's perspective, if more than one drummer is playing a unison passage with their fingers coming off the sticks the same way at the same time, all while producing a good quality of sound, the feedback I'd give would be, "Great job – that technique works for you!"

The bottom line: Technique (grip, stick heights and touch) are a means to an end (unison look and good sound quality). If you are a solo artist, you should adopt the technique that results in a good sound quality. But if you are part of a drum line, that technique should achieve both a unison look and good sound quality. And regardless of the technique you choose... use this book to develop your chops!

#1 - Legato Strokes

by Scott Johnson

The exercise consists of ten staves of music in 4/4 time. Each staff contains rhythmic notation with notes and stems, and a sequence of letters (R or L) below indicating the hand used for each stroke. The exercise includes various patterns of eighth and sixteenth notes, some with triplets. The final staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

This is a great way to loosen up the muscles.

- Start slow and work up to faster tempos.
- Use a full vertical stroke for the entire exercise, letting the stick rebound/bounce back up after each stroke.
- As the tempos increase, the heights should be lowered as needed to maintain a good quality of sound.
- After you've warmed up, push yourself. Working to perform extreme heights at faster tempos will help develop your chops.

Goal: Create a consistent sound from hand to hand, and loosen, or warm up, the muscles.

#10 - Paradiddle Diddle

by Scott Johnson

The exercise consists of 10 staves of rhythmic notation. Each staff contains a sequence of notes with accents (>) above them. The notes are labeled with 'R' for right hand and 'L' for left hand. The time signatures vary across the staves: 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 7/8, 4/4, and 4/4. The patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1: 3/4 (R R L R R L), 4/4 (R R L R R L R), 3/4 (L L R L L R)
- Staff 2: 4/4 (L L R L L R L), 3/4 (R R R L L R R R L L), 4/4 (R R R L L R R R L L R)
- Staff 3: 3/4 (L L L R R L L L R R), 4/4 (L L L R R L L L R R L), 3/4 (R L R R L L R L R R L L)
- Staff 4: 4/4 (R L R R L L R L R R L L R), 3/4 (L R L L R R L R L L R R), 4/4 (L R L L R R L R L L R R L)
- Staff 5: 4/4 (R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L R L L R R L R L L)
- Staff 6: 5/4 (R L R R L R L L R R L R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L)
- Staff 7: 7/8 (R L R R L R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L)
- Staff 8: 4/4 (R L R R L L R L R R L R L L R R L R L L R R L R L L R R L R L L R R)
- Staff 9: 4/4 (L R L L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R R L R L L R R L R L L R R)

This exercise is good at breaking down what each hand has to do to successfully play the rudiment.

- Try saying it while you play it - "par-a-did-dle-did-dle"
- Again, height control is the key.

**Goal: Maintain the same sound from right to left - for both your taps and accents.
Choose your heights and keep them consistent through each repetition.**

#23 - 5/8 Flams

by Scott Johnson

R R R R R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L L L L

R L L L R L L L R L L L R L L L L R R R L R R R L R R R L R R R

R L L L R L L L R L L L R L L L L R R R L R R R L R R R L R R R

R L L L R R R L R L L L R R R L R L R R R L L L R L L L R R R

R L R R R L L L R L R L L L R R R L R L R L L L R R R L L L R R R

R L L L R R R R L L L R R L L L R R R L L L R R R L L L R R R

R L L R R R L L L R R L R R R L L L R R R L R R R L L L R R R

L R R R L L L R R L L R R R L L L R R R L L L R R R L L L R R R L

L R R L L L R R R L L L R R R L L L R R R L L L R R R L L L

Another exercise for your flam chops.

- Some people call this exercise inverted flam accents. Regardless of the name, I call it difficult!
- It is easy to delay or drag the accent following the taps. Work to keep the rhythm precise, and have fun squeezing in those grace notes.
- I would recommend starting with 3 inch tap heights and 8 inch accents heights.

**Goal: Maintain the same sound from right to left – for both the accents and taps.
Choose your heights and keep them consistent through each repetition.**

Chop Story

- getting loose -

It goes without saying that it is important to loosen up your arm, wrist and hand muscles at the beginning of your practice session. How long should you warm up? Well...until you're loose.

It can take more or less time depending on your age, experience and body type. I've found that the older I get, the longer it takes to warm up – partly due to age, but also because I don't drum every day like I used to.

When I need to get ready for a clinic or video shoot, I've discovered that the best way to get loose is to play along to music - making up my own rudimental warmup licks. My go-to song is Journey's "Don't Stop Believing". The tempo is around 120 beats per minute, and I know when I can play 8 bars of 16th notes with each hand without tightening up, I'm ready to go.

Using a metronome is another option, but when I warm up to music I get to be creative - coming up with phrases and licks that work with the music. And sometimes I discover new ideas – all while warming up! So give it a try and have fun. After all, there's nothing better than a classic rock song with a little rudimental snare drum accompaniment!

Scotty Snare Drummer

(Written for Scott Johnson at age 14 / Feb. 19th, 1972)

♩ = 144

6 2 3 4

p *f*

5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14

15 16 17 18 19

20 21 22 23

24 ♩ = 100 *slow* 3 3 ♩ = 120 *faster*

pp *mf*

26 ♩ = 100 *slower* 3 ♩ = 132 *faster* 28 ♩ = 132

mf *f* *pp*

29 ♩ = 144 30 31 32

ff *ff-mf*

33 34 35 36 38 2 2

p cresc. poco a poco *mp* *f* *ff*

40 41 6 42 43

fff