

HOME STUDIO HINTS

CABLE CAPERS

So, I talk a lot about getting your signal flow right and making sure you have a good signal path into your DAW for the best quality recording. I often speak about getting your computer improved for better use and I am known for pulling all my gear apart and rewiring the lot a little too often. So, as I think about doing that again, it makes me consider the cables, the many dozens of cables, that run around my studio and why I keep putting off upgrading them all. After all, your system is only as strong as the weakest point and I am sure that for many of you, that weakest point is the cables that tie it all together.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Now, I could harp on all days about spending unmitigated amounts of money that is probably not even yours to spend on the highest quality cabling and the best connectors and having everything made up to a standard that would make the guys at NASA want to drop by and have a look, but you don't need to go that far. What you do need to realise is that as you add more components to your setup, you are going to add more cables and the signal path is going to get more contaminated by unwanted noise. So, it may seem like a good idea to take the new mic preamp you just spent a thousand dollars on and hook it up with a couple of five dollar leads, because, after all, who wants to spend money on leads when you have just dumped all your hard earned cash on a lovely new preamp? Well, that is all well and good, but if you are going to go and behave like that, you might as well save your

money and forget the nice new preamp to begin with. This method will never solve the problem that your new leads are going to create.

RESPECT YOUR EQUIPMENT

Your gear sits in your studio and works hard to create a good sound for you, so why not give it the respect it deserves and buy it a little present? Going beyond the absolute cheapest cables you can find will not kill you and will only serve to improve your setup for now and into the future. A good quality lead may seem a little expensive when there are so many cheaper built ones available, but it will last the test of time and give you far better results. Take into consideration not only the connectors that are being used, but also the cable that is between it. Get the right lengths to suit your requirement and if there is nothing available, look into custom made leads. Just because something has the word 'custom'



involved in it does not mean it is going to leave you feeling robbed and penniless. There are a number of local businesses that will make cables to your specifications for not much more than many pre-made leads and they will usually be to a much higher quality and will suit your purpose. And you know what that means? No more chaining dodgy connectors together to create a

ratty sound solution to a problem that is so much easier fixed.

By Rob Gee

BANGIN' THE TUBS

FLESH OUT YOUR FILLS

It's always fun when someone gives you a cool idea to have a muck around on. I thrive on these encounters where I might pick up another lick I can use or manipulate to put my swing on it. So here's a concept that some of you might get something out of. My plan is to show you my train of thought when it comes to something like this and how you can do the same thing to any fill. Keep up, this will go fast but really, as always you should take your time.

METHOD

Firstly we have a two beat pattern in 16th notes (FIGURE A). The sticking is LRRLLFFR with an accent on the first and last notes. We're also going to focus on the last beat of the pattern on its own (FIGURE B) – LFFR. The logical thing here is to practice the pattern using only the hands on the snare repeatedly at a slow tempo till you are relaxed and comfortable, leading with the left hand (FIGURE C). You could reverse this and lead with the right hand if you wanted to.

Next we are going to mix up the pattern by throwing the second part of the pattern (FIGURE B) in at random. What you get is the same idea but with a twist (FIGURE D). At Figure E we have move the accents on to the toms. Right hand goes on the floor tom and the left hand goes on the rack tom. You could also just split the kit in half and use any drum on the right or any drum on the left. At this point you have a reasonably slick sounding fill but let's keep going.

Say you want to use it as a fill and come straight back in to the groove – you'll need a bass drum on beat one (FIGURE F). Now you can put the starting left hand onto the crash to complete the idea. This time I actually left the last note as a floor tom. Sounds cool with three deep sounding drums at the end leading to a crash. Now you're ready to try it with a groove (FIGURE H).

Now, so far we've only approached the concept as a fill to play with a groove, but what about actually using it as a groove. Now, we're cooking with gas!

By moving all right hand strokes to the ride cymbal and all left hand strokes to the hi-hat, you get a cool sounding groove. To make it really useable though, I've left the backbeat in on the snare (FIGURE I).

FORMULA

So there you have it. This is my approach to this type of concept!

- Pattern on snare
- Add accents
- Add accents on toms
- Mix the pattern up
- Use as a fill
- Use as a groove

You can do this with any concept and maximise even the simplest of ideas. You'll have more fun! Enjoy!

By Adrian Violi

www.thedrumchannel.org