

JOST NICKEL'S FILL BOOK

A SYSTEMATIC & FUN APPROACH TO FILLS



67 MP3
FILLS
AND 20
VIDEOS
ONLINE

Switch & Path Orchestration
Moving Around the Kit
Clockwise & Counterclockwise
Step-Hit-Hi-Hat
Hand & Foot Roll
Cymbal Choke
Stick Shot
Flam Fills
Blushda
Diddle Kick



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Book Insert: Reading-Text Exercises



Switch Orchestration, Path Orchestration, Diddle Kick, and More

To start this book, I would like to show you some different ways fills can be expanded upon through *orchestration*^(*), *dynamics*, and *doubling* up on strokes. In this way, you can create completely new sounds from motifs you have already learned, but they will hardly be recognized in the same way. You'll play many different fills through clever modification, rather than just by changing the figure. The best way to get to know these principles is to take a simple figure; the motif for the fills in this chapter is **R L F**, which is very manageable and quite simple.

Fill (Original figure: R L F)



The original figure is three sixteenth notes long, so we'll call it a **3-note grouping**. Play this *over one bar*.

Example 1 (3-note grouping over one bar with the underlying rhythm in line 2)



R = right hand
 L = left hand
 F = foot

Tip

From time to time you should make the underlying rhythm clear to yourself. How this is accomplished is explained at the beginning of this book on *pages 6 and 7*.

Next, play the 3-note grouping as a *two-bar fill*. The 3-note grouping continues until the end of the two bars.

Example 2 (3-note grouping over two bars)



^(*) *Orchestration can be defined as spreading the beats out across the individual parts of the drum kit.*

Count out loud!

In the *preliminary notes*, I explained how I keep track of the fill by making the rhythm especially clear and internalizing it. This is written on *pages 6 and 7*. **It's really important—please read it!**

Now we get to the orchestration of fills. The figure **R L F** stays the same throughout *Chapter 1*.

Switch Orchestration

Three instruments are used in the *Switch Orchestration*^(*): you only play the 3-note grouping with the floor tom, hi-hat, and bass drum. In principle, the following happens: the right and left hands swap or “switch” instruments.

In the first exercise, the *right hand* (RH) plays the floor tom and the *left hand* (LH) the hi-hat. The placement remains the same over the *whole two bars*.

Switch Orchestration 1.1 (Preliminary Exercise 1 | RH = floor tom | LH = hi-hat)

R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L
[3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] (+ 2)

Switch: Now swap the hands: the *right hand* still begins but now plays the hi-hat, whereas the *left hand* plays the floor tom. Therefore the hands are crossed over each other so the right hand is positioned over the left hand.

Switch Orchestration 1.2 (Preliminary Exercise 2 | RH = hi-hat | LH = floor tom)

R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L

Practice Tip

You should always practice alternating fills and grooves. Think about the *musical form* in blocks of four or eight bars.

When your fill is a bar long, play three bars of groove and one bar of fill (3+1), or seven bars of groove and one bar of fill (7+1).

Let's assume your fill is two bars long—then you're either playing two groove cycles plus two bars of fill (2+2), or six bars of groove plus two bars of fill (6+2).

^(*) Find out more about *Switch Orchestration* in **Jost Nickel's Groove Book** (ISBN 978-3-943638-90-5).

Path Orchestration 1

The idea of *Path Orchestration* is that you go to a pre-determined “path” on the set with both hands, with the hands playing a different number of pre-determined instruments.

For example:

The *right hand* plays a loop on *three* instruments: snare drum, rack tom, and floor tom.

The *left hand* plays a loop on *two* instruments: snare drum and rack tom.

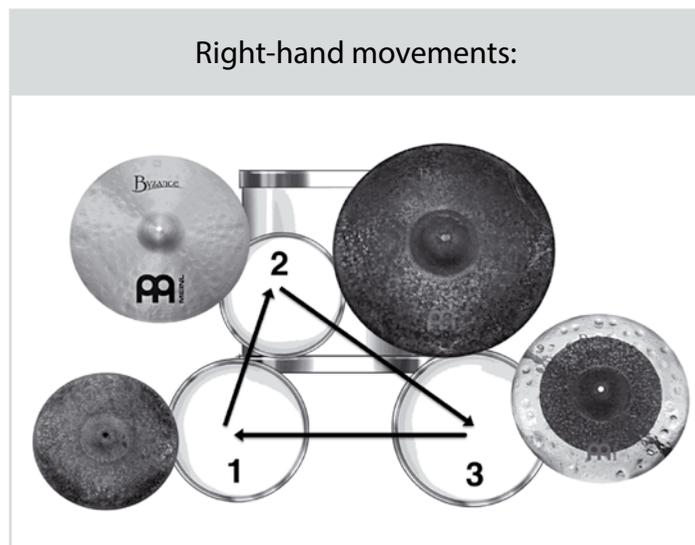
Due to the different number of instruments, you will get some very interesting orchestration.

The 3-note grouping remains unchanged and is **R L F**.

Here is clarification of the orchestration of the right hand. The left hand is left out of the following example so you have a clearer view of what the right hand does.

Path Orchestration 1.1 (Right hand: snare drum, rack tom, and floor tom)

R L F R L F R L F
[3] [3] [3]



By playing the right hand on three different instruments, the orchestration repeats itself after *three* rounds of the 3-note grouping.

Here is a preliminary exercise so that you feel comfortable with the path in the right hand.

Play the 3-note grouping over two bars, where the right hand—as described earlier—keeps alternating between snare drum, rack tom, and floor tom, while the left hand stays on the snare drum, for the moment. From the **gray markings**, you can see where the orchestration starts from the beginning.

Path Orchestration 1.2 (Preliminary right-hand path exercise)

R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L F R L
[3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] [3] (+2)

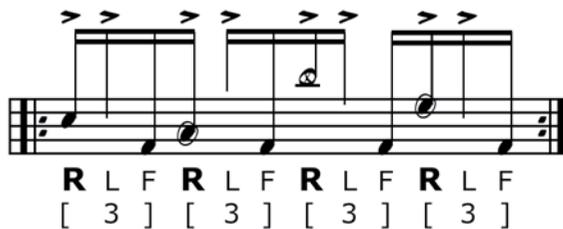
Path Orchestration 2

Next let's extend the *Path Orchestration*. The *right hand* now plays a path over *four* instruments: snare drum, floor tom, ride cymbal, and rack tom.

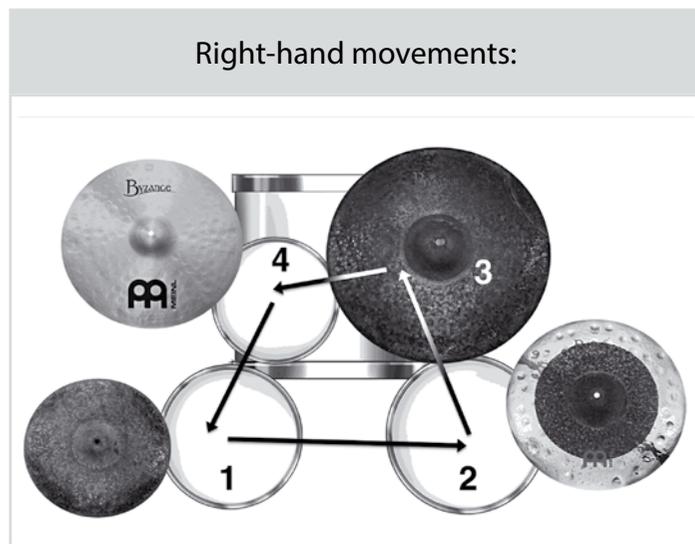
The *left hand* plays a path on *three* instruments: snare drum, hi-hat, and rack tom.

Here's clarification of the *right hand's orchestration*. The *left hand* is left out of the following notated example so you have a clearer view of what the right hand does.

Path Orchestration 2.1 (Right hand: snare drum, floor tom, ride cymbal, and rack tom)



As the right hand plays *four* different instruments, the orchestration repeats itself after *four* rounds of the 3-note grouping.



Here is a preliminary exercise so you feel comfortable with the path of the right hand.

You play **R L F** over two bars, where the *right hand*—as previously explained—always alternates between snare drum, floor tom, ride cymbal, and rack tom, while the *left hand* stays on the snare drum. From the **gray markings**, you can see where the orchestration starts from the beginning.

Path Orchestration 2.2



Now let's move to the orchestration of the *left hand*. This repeats itself after *three* rounds as the left hand only plays *three* different instruments (snare drum, hi-hat, and rack tom).

