

Anthony Cirone – Portraits In Rhythm

Roll Guide

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Since 10 CHOPBUSTERS from Portraits in Rhythm was so successful, I decided to follow-up with 10 ROLLTEASERS from Portraits in Rhythm, which continues to focus on Technique—because, without it, controlling snare drum rolls are very difficult.

Drum rolls are executed differently, depending on style. Drum Corps use open rolls, drum set players use buzz rolls, and classical players use open and closed rolls. To make it even more complicated, these rolls are interchangeable within these styles. For our purpose, we will be dealing with Classical Style Snare Drum Rolls.

What complicates the interpretation of rolls is the fact that composers are not consistent with notation; because of this, many decisions have to be made by the performer. The following rules and suggestions apply to all of the Etudes in Portraits in Rhythm:

1) 3 slashes indicate a closed roll, whether it is a 16th note with 1 slash, an 8th note with 2 slashes, or a quarter, half, or whole note with 3 slashes (beams count as slashes). The only exception would be a 32nd note which needs 1 extra slash. All of these refer to closed rolls.

2) There are no “diddles” in Portraits in Rhythm. For those who are not familiar with “diddles,” they are a tradition of rudimental drumming that interprets 32nd, 16th, and (sometimes) 8th notes with one slash to signify double strokes.

3) Rolls in Portraits in Rhythm should only be connected to a following note when they are joined together with a tie. Rolls in a series without ties should have a slight separation.

4) Articulations over rolls or notes are handled in the following manner: A staccato marking indicates a slight accent. A tenuto marking indicates a stronger “stress” accent. The normal accent mark is stronger than either the staccato or tenuto accent. The wedge accent is the strongest of these markings.

5) A staccato indication over a roll of short duration denotes a “crush” roll. This is accomplished by both sticks striking the drum head at the same time with short bounce strokes. Whether a quarter, 8th, 16th, or 32nd note, the length of the “crush” roll stays the same; that is, short.

6) 5 and 7 stroke grace-note rolls are played as closed rolls, not single strokes.