

Introduction



Who I am, Why I Wrote This Book And How to Use it.

- **A Short Autobiography.**

My name is Colin McCowan, I'm a professional drum instructor who loves to teach and loves to play drums. I've been playing drums for as long as I can remember. I'm self-taught and I always had a knack for rhythm and percussion. While I grew up listening to mostly rock and hard rock, my tastes have evolved since then. When I started teaching I immersed myself in the history of music and drumming, as well as drumming theory and every different kind of drumming style out there. I've played in my fair share of bands and performed hundreds, if not thousands of live shows.



I believe drumming is the cornerstone to so much music that we all love, and a good drummer is essential. It's not always important to be able to play the fastest or the most technically challenging parts, what's really important is a solid sense of time and a commitment to the instrument. All music has rhythm, so having a solid rhythmic foundation helps keep a song together.

Drumming can be learned at any age and has so many benefits to the student. The coordination required to play the drums creates connections in the brain that are achieved by few other things. The math involved helps younger students have an edge in school, and the commitment required teaches personal responsibility. Anyone can benefit from learning an instrument, and drums are unique in that they use both arms and legs, strengthening muscle memory and improving overall mental health.

• Why I Wrote This Book

When I first started teaching drumming I tried to find a book to teach out of that laid out a solid curriculum to help new drummers learn to play the most important aspects of modern drumming. The goals of incoming students varied so much it was hard to find something that worked for a student looking to become a professional as well as a student who was just playing as a hobby and didn't aspire for much more. Most books either started too slow and would lose the students interest, requiring me to jump around from chapter to chapter. Other books started with basic ideas and got overwhelming too quickly for some students. I wanted a book that could work no matter how much natural talent a student had, something that was comprehensive and made sense without going into too much detail about tuning and purchasing drums and things that can be found on the internet now-a-days.

After so much searching to no avail I decided to go ahead and write my own book. Here you hold a book that starts simple enough that a total beginner can pick it up and by the end of it they will be a solid, well rounded drummer, but is also advanced enough that an experienced drummer can flip through it and find ideas and exercises that will help them advance even further. The curriculum in this book is straightforward, easy to understand, and makes sense. It lays out why you should learn what it's teaching you, and doesn't waste time on tedious counting exercises. Most new students don't want to spend weeks on just the snare drum like so many beginner books focus on. This book will provide a few basic exercises to get you started, then will jump right into full kit playing, which is what most new drummers today are interested in.

• How to Use This Book

While I am self-taught, it is my astute belief that every new drummer can benefit from at least a few lessons with an instructor. This book is meant to help someone with a very rudimentary understanding of drumming. I will not spend pages explaining how to hold the sticks, how to move your feet on the pedals (although I do recommend heel up), tune the drums or explain the names of each drum and cymbal. This is all information that can very easily be acquired from the internet, but is even better to have an instructor teach you. Having an instructor to critique your technique is invaluable, the best way to use this book is to have an instructor go through it with you, but it can be used without one as long as you have that rudimentary understanding of the basics of drumming.

Use this book as a guideline to learning the various methods of drumming and to develop a foundation that will allow you to play most types of music. This book will focus on popular rock and pop music in the first several chapters, and will graduate to more complex musical styles as it progresses, touching on blues, jazz, funk and hip-hop drumming. Practice is the most important part of learning a new instrument, I encourage you to spend time with this book until you can play well enough to start jamming along to music you like. If you organize your practice time, after you complete the first 6 chapters I recommend spending the first half of your practice with exercises, phrases and fills from this book, and spend the remaining half putting on a pair of headphones and just playing along to a playlist of your favorite music. Don't worry about trying to recreate what you're hearing, just play along in your own way. This is not only extremely enjoyable once you're able to do it well, but is one of the most effective ways of practicing.

- **Why This Book is Better Than Just Using the Internet**



The Internet has changed our lives for the better. It is an amazingly vast resource of knowledge, how-to's and guides. It's a great tool for anyone looking to learn any new craft. It does however, have it's downfalls. First, the internet is at times too vast and can be overwhelming. Trying to find a place to start on the internet can be frustrating. With so many choices it can be difficult to know what's important, where to start and what to prioritize. This book will provide you with a very clear, organized guide to learning the drums. There's no question of where to start, what to practice or how to practice; it's all laid out for you. Second, the internet contains a lot of good information, but also a lot of bad information. People's opinions aren't checked, and therefore, sometimes information that is actually detrimental to a student looking up what to practice can slip through the cracks. Everything you find in this book, when practiced, will only ever make you a better drummer. Finally, while you may find exercises on the internet, you'll seldom find audio to go along with them. Whether you're an audio or a visual learner, this book will have the content you need to learn the way that suits you best. With the data disc included that contains audio files of all exercises, phrases and fills, you can transfer audio onto your smart device and queue it up at any time if you're having trouble with something.

I'm not saying don't use the internet at all when learning drums. There is a ton of great stuff, from drum solo videos to crazy complex patterns being taught on youtube, the internet is a great resource, just don't rely solely on one thing, find a balance and you'll get to where you want to go.

Now let's get started, and throughout the learning process -

**Remember to take your time,
enjoy yourself, and PRACTICE,
PRACTICE, PRACTICE!**