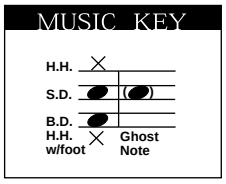
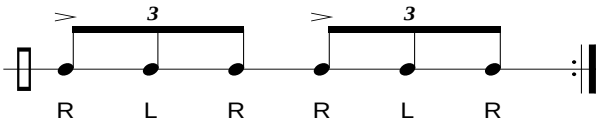
The Half-Time Rolling-Triplet Shuffle

by Ed Breckenfeld



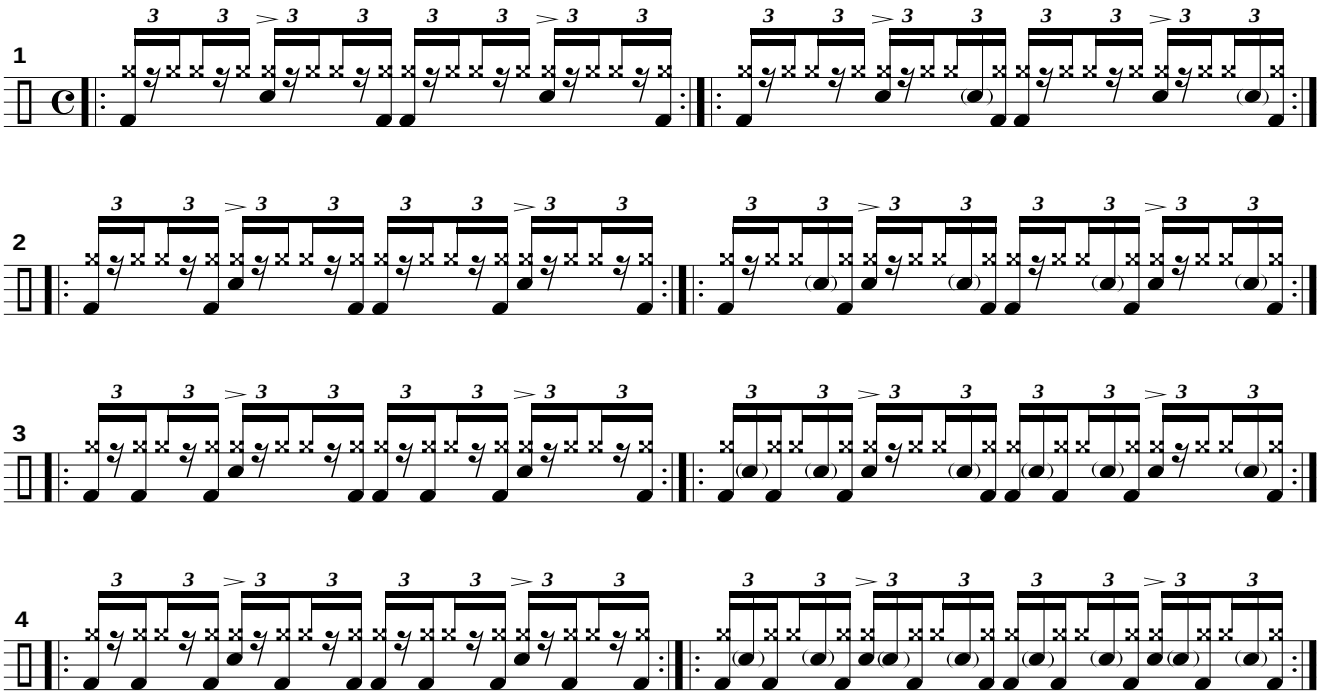
In my last article (December 2000 MD) we looked at the 4/4 backbeat shuffle, which is used extensively in blues, rock, jazz, and country drumming. We added "ghosted" snare notes to the shuffle to achieve a continuous rolling-triplet effect.

This month we're going to examine the half-time version of the shuffle. This takes us in a funk, hip-hop, and pop direction. We'll also be adding the same triplet effect to these grooves. The following sticking pattern forms the basis for the rolling-triplet shuffle:



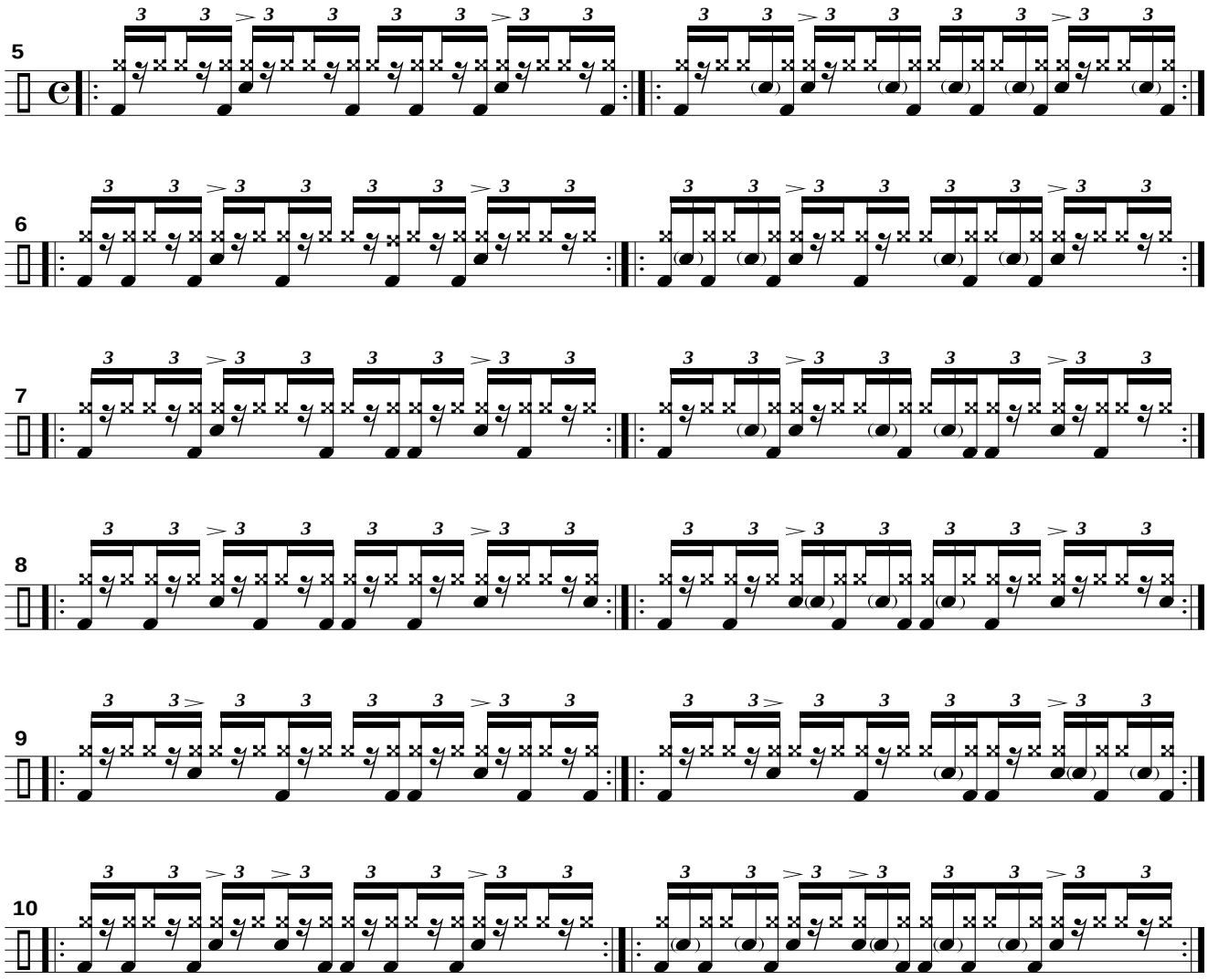
Try the above pattern with the right stick on the closed hi-hat and the left stick on the snare drum. (Left-handers invert the stickings.) Adding an accent to the beginning of each triplet will deepen the groove.

Below are some standard half-time shuffle patterns. On the left is the basic version and on the right is the same beat with ghosted snare notes added. As the number of notes increases with each pattern, you'll see the rolling triplet begin to develop. Keep the ghost notes very quiet so that they blend with the cymbal part. This brings out the triplet effect. At the same time, the backbeats should be slammin'. The greater the dynamics, the deeper the groove. For now, play these beats on the hi-hat.



The rolling-triplet effect has become completely continuous by the last pattern. However, this many ghost notes may scare your bandmates!

Here are some half-time shuffles that are a little more practical. Once again, the ghost-note version of each is on the right.



See the March 2001 Modern Drummer for the complete lesson.

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