

# Play What the Music Calls For...Enough Said

By Jeremy Hummel

I am excited and honored to be giving a clinic presentation at this year's PASIC. Some of you may be familiar with my playing on the first two Breaking Benjamin albums. Others may have read my columns in *Modern Drummer* magazine. Over the last few years, I have become very active in the education field and try to give back as much as I have learned.

When attending my clinic in November, you will find me performing and covering topics such as the ones listed below.

## ARTICULATE THE NOTES

Emphasis should be placed on the value of each note, not how many can be played. Strive for clean rolls with equal spacing. This can be revealed by recording oneself. I have done sessions where I thought I played a note or two in a fill stronger than I actually did. Keep in mind that when playing subtle or non-accented notes, there still needs to be clarity.

## GONG AROUND THE TURNS

One of the most common things for drummers is to increase tempo when transitioning from one section of a song to another—most commonly done going from verse to chorus. While it's good to increase energy with intensity, try not to go beyond one or two bpm's at the very most. Playing with fluctuating levels of intensity, while keeping a consistent tempo, separates professionals from amateurs.

## PERSONALITY

Say you have an audition, there are ten other drummers in line for the same gig, and each will be performing the same tunes. Each person will play the same parts, but the personality and life injected into the tunes will vary. How much life and your own personality are you playing with? One can have all the technique and chops in the world, but without personality they mean nothing.

## MAKE A MISTAKE? DO IT AGAIN

Say you accidentally hit the snare on "3" instead of "2." Rather than having a frightened look that screams "I MESSED UP!" play it again the next bar and it's now a part. Your face can then casually say, "I meant to do that."

## BE A LISTENER

What may *feel* fantastically cool to play is

not always what sounds best. The excitement of playing sometimes causes us to do too much. For example, I rarely notice the drums much the first few times I hear a song. I listen to the song as a whole. What sells a good song is melody and conviction in the playing. A good drum part blends and is not forced. Usually, it's a great song that moves me, not a great drum part.

## ICING AND CAKE

This refers to the foundation of a groove. In rock music, the cake is the bass drum and snare drum, and the icing is the hi-hat or ride cymbal. Too often, drummers place the emphasis on the hi-hat and subsequently play it louder than the



bass drum and snare drum. The cake is what puts people on the dance floor. Remember: you can't have icing without the cake!

## THINK OUTSIDE THE HAT

When creating drum parts, try something other than the hi-hat for your icing. For example, the Breaking Benjamin song "So Cold" would have had a totally different vibe had I played a hi-hat groove during the verse, rather than the toms. Likewise with U2's "With or Without You."

## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

When playing with dynamics, it is helpful to use numbers as a mental or even visual

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Drumset Clinic  
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reference. For example, on a scale from 1 to 10 (10 being the loudest), a verse could be thought of as a 5, pre-chorus as a 7, and chorus as 10. This way it is easier to mentally gauge the dynamics. This concept could even be used by an entire band. Instead of asking someone to simply play "softer," one could say "try that on 4 or 5 instead of 8 or 9."

## VARIETY IS THE SPICE

Check out a variety of styles of music. A favorite method of mine is to read about a drummer or artist in a magazine and then search for them on iTunes. This way, I can first sample the music for free, and even if I do buy it but don't entirely dig it, I'm only out a dollar. It's also nice that the artist receives compensation.

## MORE AT PASIC

At my PASIC clinic, I believe there will be something from which every drummer/percussionist can benefit. I will also discuss ways to improve your timekeeping and how to come up with fresher ideas for fills. I like to treat my clinics like a workshop. Time permitting, I will be happy to answer questions. My goal is for us to have fun and to inspire you to take your drumming to the next level!

For more of Jeremy's concepts, articles, and video instruction, visit his website at [www.jeremyhummel.com](http://www.jeremyhummel.com)

**Jeremy Hummel** is a professional drummer and educator. He is a columnist for *Modern Drummer* magazine, clinician, and studio musician. Jeremy's most popular recorded works came with platinum-selling artists Breaking Benjamin. He was a co-founding member of the group and played on the band's first two records, *Saturate* and *We Are Not Alone*. During his tenure the band scored two #1 hits in the Active Rock Format with "So Cold" and "Sooner or Later." In 2007, he released a clinic DVD that combines performance and education. Jeremy currently holds down a regular Friday jazz gig and is also the musical director of an eight-piece horn band, Into The Spin. PN



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