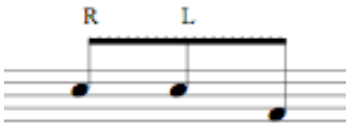
Linear Phrasing – Part 1

Linear phrasing is a concept I learned while studying Gary Chafee's 'Patterns' books and has proved invaluable down the years. The easiest way I can describe it is to use groups of notes split up between the hands and the bass drum with no two notes playing at the same time.

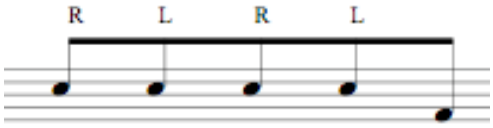
It may seem a purely mathematical approach at first glance but really encouraged my creativity. I'm going to break down in six easy steps how I use these phrases as drum fills and for me the key aim is to try and achieve a feeling of freedom with them.

The first 2 phrases look like this…

a) Group of 3



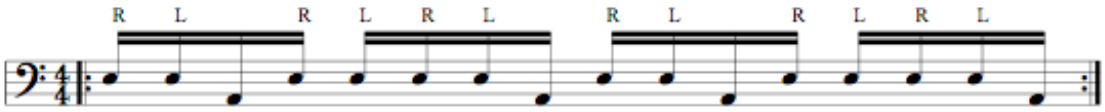
b) Group of 5



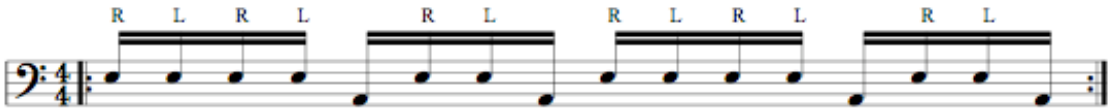
I started out practising these at first keeping both hands on the snare.

Once comfortable with the individual phrases, you can combine then in 16th notes like this…

c) Combination of 3 and 5 (repeated to create a bar of 4/4)



continued….

You can also turn the phrase around….

d) Combination of 5 and 3 (repeated to create a bar of 4/4)