

IN SESSION



HOW TO SOUND GREAT ON RECORDS

FREE EXCERPT



Eugenio Ventimiglia

**CONFIDENT
DRUMMER**

Confident Drummer

Free Resources

In Session

How To Sound Great On Records

- FREE EXCERPT -

Confident Drummer Series

by Eugenio Ventimiglia

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Recording drums is now an opportunity available to anyone. Thanks to the abundance of free information and the reduction of entry costs for computers, microphones and audio devices, it's almost inevitable to sooner or later end up experimenting with this dimension of making music with our instrument.

It's no longer about being able to afford it, but instead knowing how to do it.

I belong to a generation that was fortunate enough to learn invaluable lessons through direct experience in the field.

Unfortunately that is almost entirely missing today. We all play at home, by ourselves or at the most in front of a camera: rehearsals, concerts and records, once part of a musician's everyday life, are now the exception.

What's missing the most is actually working in a recording studio with producers, songwriters and sound engineers.

Years ago, to help fill this gap, bring awareness among drummers and provide an opportunity to gain hands-on experience, I created a drum clinic, called 'In-Session - The Drummer in the Recording Studio'.

A touring, mini recording studio, which purpose was to allow drummers to have a go at the studio session experience.

The results were so mind-blowing, and the students were so inspired and motivated, that I decided to organize the materials and methods used in the clinic into a focused program that everyone can reproduce at home.

The result is this course, which is aimed at drummers who are eager to learn and want to understand the mechanics of working in the recording

studio, so that they can then utilize the internalized tools to freely create and express themselves.

In a word, become studio session masters.

The program is structured in three phases:

- Awareness: The first part of the method is dedicated to discovering how a recording studio works, how records are made, what happens during a session, how to work with a producer, and a whole series of additional fundamental skills: how to create a drum part, how to handle the pressure of a performance, how to set up professional headphone or monitor mixes, and so on.

- Experience: Then it's time for the more hands-on chapters, containing studio drumming technical exercises that deal with how to generate a great performance (sound, accuracy, groove).

The essence of the method, however, is the section focused on recording scenarios, which covers the four contexts in which session drummers work, with actual studio session simulations: click only productions, sessions that use loops and samples, sessions with preproduction demo tracks and also live in the studio productions, all as if working with a real producer.

- Growth: To wrap it up, the third part of the method covers tools to optimize growth: how to use editing without compromising the truth of our performance and our musical personality, how to set up our own Home Studio, how to choose drums and cymbals, how to use a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation), how to work with takes, and how to process sounds and mix like a good sound engineer.

In total it's 180 pages of materials, and more than 2 hours of video content, in which you are going to find all the solutions you need to become an outstanding session drummer, who can effortlessly handle every aspect of working in a studio.

All video demonstrations included in the method are available in two versions: the recording of the performance of each exercise and then the

screen recording inside Pro Tools.

The reason is that visual feedback is an additional powerful tool to improve accuracy and timing (as explained in a dedicated chapter).

In this free excerpt we are going to focus on exercises from the Production Simulator section, where we dive into actual studio session simulations, working with a producer who gives us tracks to record, charts, comments and directions to follow.

Since one of the most common scenarios in the studio today is to record using preproductions that include electronic loops and samples, we are going to study four variations on this theme, to simulate four hypothetical requests of the producer.

Practicing the exercises included in this booklet will instantly boost your studio drumming skills.

The Production Simulator chapter, the practice chart, the audio files, as well as the table of contents of the method, are included in this 14 page PDF.

Each example is linked to its video demo, which you can access by clicking on the links or the transcription.

If you want to check out the whole 6 minute video demo on YouTube, click HERE.

To find out more and to buy the method you can visit the dedicated page here:

'In Session - How To Sound Great On Records'

Production Simulator: Loops

One of the most common scenarios in the studio today is to record using preproductions that include electronic loops and samples, or even consist exclusively of these elements, so that the parts actually performed by a musician are just the drum tracks.

Compared to the situation with just the click, this scenario is both more difficult and easier:

- It's harder because considering the density of notes the acceptable margins of error are much smaller and we have to be extremely precise.
- It's easier because there is a much greater quantity of rhythmic references, which are useful both for accurate note placement on the grid and also to inspire us, allowing for more spontaneous playing.

To prepare for a variety of different scenarios we are going to use three loops: the first at 80 Bpm, the second at 90 Bpm and with a shuffle feel, and the third at 110 Bpm.

For each we are going to simulate four requests. The first three will be exclusively verbal, without charts and also somewhat abstract.

The last one will be a short sixteen bar arrangement, with drum scores based on either note-for-note transcriptions or charts with figures and accents to be interpreted, so as to cover both music notation approaches.

Scores and arrangements are intentionally different, to simulate the various contexts and requests we happen to have to deal with:

- As for the 80 Bpm loop, we are asked to play a note-for-note drum part, to which we will have to adhere in detail.
- In the case of the 90 Bpm loop, we are given a simple chart without any written beat, to be played with a free approach while interpreting the figures.
- With regard to the 110 Bpm loop we have a mix of the two approaches.

Each request from the producer presents a different challenge. Spoken instructions relieve us from having to read a score, but can cause misunderstandings as they are more prone to subjective interpretation.

In contrast, arrangements leave less room for doubt about what to do, but they challenge our ability to adjust to external suggestions without compromising our style and feel.

As we can hear, in this scenario I chose to mute the click completely in the demos mix, to allow for a more detailed focus on what is happening between the drums and the loops.

The visual feedback obviously remains unchanged.

Lastly, let's pay attention to the way in which drum part variations influence the musical meaning of the piece.

As we perform and then listen back to the various versions, the central role of the drums in directing where the music goes will be more and more obvious.

The track is the same, yet using very diverse rhythmic arrangements makes it feel like listening to different songs.

This will be even more evident in the next chapter, but here we can already appreciate the importance of the interaction with producers, songwriters, and arrangers to define a drum part that gives the music the desired meaning.

At the following link we can download all the files we need to practice: in the folder we will find ready-to-use Mp3 files, both with and without the click, and also high quality WAV files to import and loop in a DAW, if we have the chance to use this setup.

[Production Simulator - Loops.](#)

I also recommend checking out the Confident Drummer Blog article '[Improve Your Improvisational Skills - 5 Jam Along Loops](#)', where we can download additional free loops to which the same concepts can be applied.

LOOP 3 - 110 BPM:

In this last example we focus on a modern and very dense loop, which leaves little room for additions and deviations from an exactly on the beat performance.

Shakers, cymbals, Bass Drum patterns, a Snare Drum marking the second beat, and a mixture of electronic percussions create a rhythmic fabric full of groove.

On top of that nothing but a pad and a not particularly punchy synthesized bass, whose rhythmic pattern can be ignored.

Let's see the producer's requests:

-1- Song structure based on free grooves and improvised fills every four bars, alternating four measures on the Hi-Hat and four on the Toms, while sticking to basic grooves. All of this two times, for a total of sixteen bars.

Video Demo Loop 3 - Version 1.

Video Demo Loop 3 - Version 1 (Pro Tools).

Producer's comments:

- Beats at times too busy.

-2- Sixteen bars of a four on the floor beat, played loudly, with sporadic embellishments, and no fills.

Laid back approach to timing, slightly behind the beat.

Video Demo Loop 3 - Version 2.

Video Demo Loop 3 - Version 2 (Pro Tools).

Producer's comments:

- At times too many embellishments.
- Dynamic level could be even louder.

-3- Sixteen measures of an unusual, creative groove, completely different from what one would expect. Try alternating a couple of different ideas.

Video Demo Loop 3 - Version 3.

Video Demo Loop 3 - Version 3 (Pro Tools).

Producer's comments:

- Pretty cool ideas.
- A few inconsistent Snare Drum hits.

-4- Sixteen bar arrangement with chart including both note-for-note sections and also parts to be interpreted.

Respect all requests regarding grooves to play and figures to highlight.

Play a simple improvised solo, in measures number 9 to 12. Pay attention to the staccato at the end.

Video Demo Loop 3 - Version 4.

Video Demo Loop 3 - Version 4 (Pro Tools).

(Also reachable by clicking on the chart and link on the next page).

Producer's comments:

- Ok.

Loop 3 - Arrangement

♩ = 110 bpm

Hi-Hat Closed

R L R L



*Interpret
the Figures*

*Embellish
the Grooves*

Fill

Drum Solo

Hi-Hat Open

Contents:

- Introduction	p.7
- How a Recording Studio Works	p.12
- How Records are Made	p.16
- What a Drummer is Expected to do in a Studio Session	p.21
- How to Work with a Producer	p.26
- The Questions to Ask Yourself Before Recording	p.29
- How to Handle Performance Pressure	p.32
- Live Vs Studio Drumming	p.37
- How to Create a Drum Part, Interpret and Arrange a Song	p.39
- How to Quickly Write Down a Drum Chart	p.44
- Monitoring and Listening Optimization	p.47
- Studio Drumming Technique Exercises	p.53
- Click and Timing Methods	p.68
- Using Visual Feedback to Improve	p.91
- Recording Scenarios: Click, Loops, PreProduction, Live	p.102
- Production Simulator: Click Song	p.104

- Production Simulator: Loops	p.108
- Production Simulator: Session Song	p.119
- Editing and Creating Composites	p.138
- The Complete Studio Drummer Toolbox	p.145
- Troubleshooting and Tips	p.147
- The Chain of Sound	p.150
- How to Choose Drums, Heads, Cymbals, Beaters and Tuning	p.153
- How To Set Up Your Home Studio	p.159
- How to Choose and Use a DAW	p.167
- Sound Engineering Crash Course	p.171
- ProTools and Garage Band Session Templates	p.182
- Must Have Additional Resources	p.183