

Bonham Bass Drum Triplets

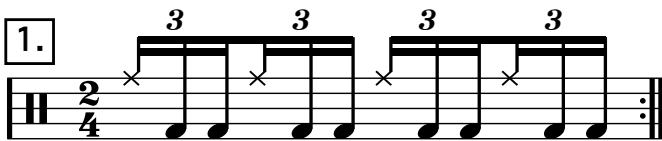
(Expanded Version)
(SVDL4)

By John Xepoleas

In this lesson, you'll learn how to play triplets with the bass drum. It's a technique used by many rock, funk and R&B drummers, but made famous by John Bonham in 1968 when he played what's now referred to as, "Bonham Triplets, on the Led Zeppelin songs "Good Times Bad Times" and "I can't Quit you baby".

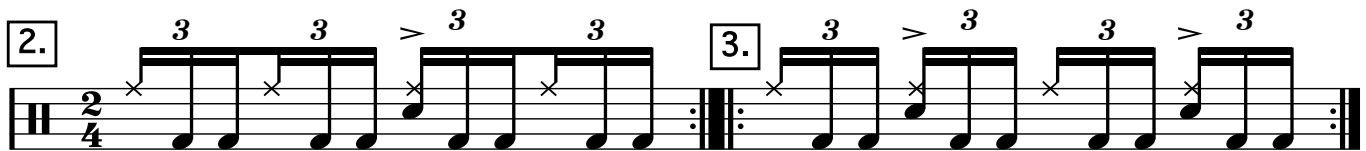
Start by playing the first example slowly (8th-note = 60 bpm). Keep an even triplet feel between the bass drum and hi-hat. When you become comfortable with the pattern, increase your tempo.

♩ = 60 - 140



1.

Now add the snare drum part.

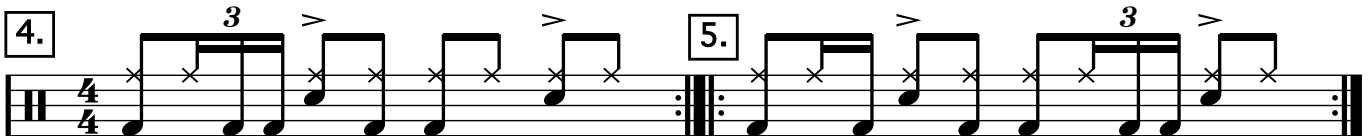


2.

3.

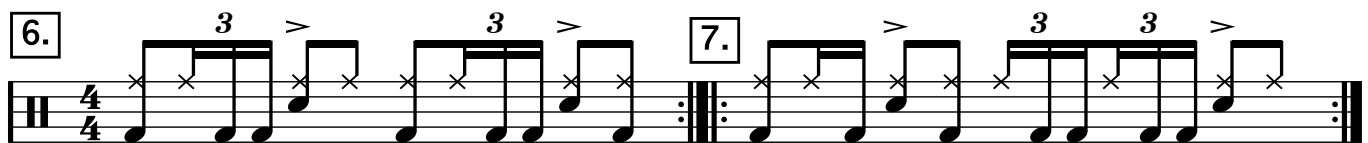
Here are a few nice sounding grooves that incorporate the "Bonham Triplets". They sound best played at a quarter note = 69 - 84 bpm.

♩ = 69 - 84



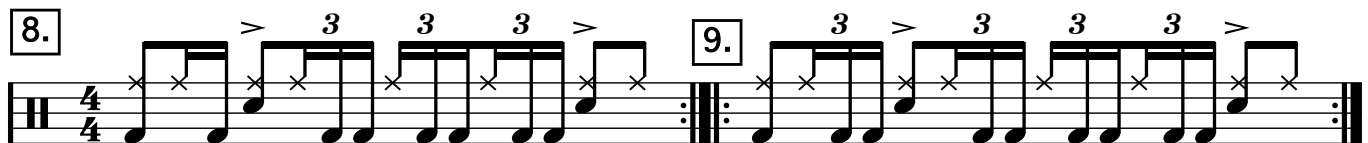
4.

5.



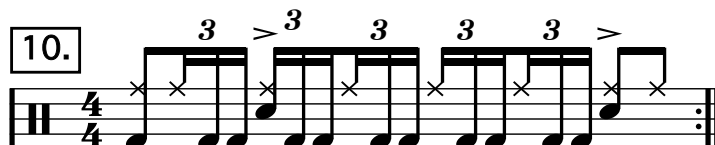
6.

7.



8.

9.



10.

Bonham Bass Drum Triplets - Page 2

The following examples use the triplet pattern in the snare as well as the bass drum. Play the unaccented () snare drum notes softly as ghost notes. Play the accented snare drum notes with a strong solid backbeat.

Examples 11 and 12 are musical notations in 4/4 time. Example 11 shows a sequence of notes: a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), and finally an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>). Example 12 shows a similar sequence: a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), and finally an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>). Both examples include repeat signs at the end.

Example 13 is a musical notation in 4/4 time. It features a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then another triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), and finally an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>). The notation ends with a repeat sign.

Here are two examples where the hi-hat only plays on the "and" of each beat.

Examples 14 and 15 are musical notations in 4/4 time. Example 14 shows a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), and finally an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>). Example 15 shows a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), and finally an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>). Both examples include repeat signs at the end.

Now we'll apply the bass drum triplets to a 12/8 time signature. You can hear Bonham use them quite a bit toward the end of "I can't quit you baby".

= 138 - 160

Examples 16 and 17 are musical notations in 12/8 time. Example 16 shows a sequence of notes: a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), and finally an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>). Example 17 shows a sequence of notes: a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), and finally an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>). Both examples include repeat signs at the end.

Example 18 is a musical notation in 12/8 time. It features a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then a triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), then another triplet of eighth notes on the snare (marked with 'x'), followed by an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>), and finally an eighth note on the snare with an accent (>). The notation ends with a repeat sign.