

Using Ted Reed's "Syncopation" to create Elvin Jones Style Triplet Fills (SVDL56)

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Welcome to the first lesson of a three-part series on Elvin Jones Triplet fills. In this series, I am going to teach you how to create hi-energy Elvin Jones style triplet fills using rhythms from Ted Reed's book, "Syncopation". This approach was first developed jazz drumming legend and teacher, Alan Dawson. Here's my spin on it. Let's get started.

Here is a typical four bar syncopated pattern from the book. We'll use it to demonstrate how this concept works.

♩ = 120

4 Bar Syncopated Pattern

1.

To begin, we will turn each measure into accented triplets. Here's the key to the sticking patterns: If a quarter note is written you will play a triplet with an accent on the first note using a RLL sticking.

2.

If an eighth note rest is followed by an eighth note you will play a triplet with an accent on the last note using a LLR or (R)LR sticking. When you use the RLR sticking, the first right hand note will be played softer than the second one. NOTE: The goal with this sticking approach is to never play more than two consecutive left hand notes.

3.

If two eighth notes are written you will play a triplet with an accent on the first and last note of the triplet using a RLR sticking.

4.

If a quarter note rest is written you will play an unaccented triplet using a RLR or LRL sticking.

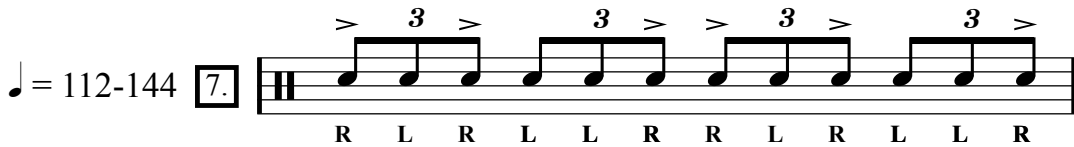
5.

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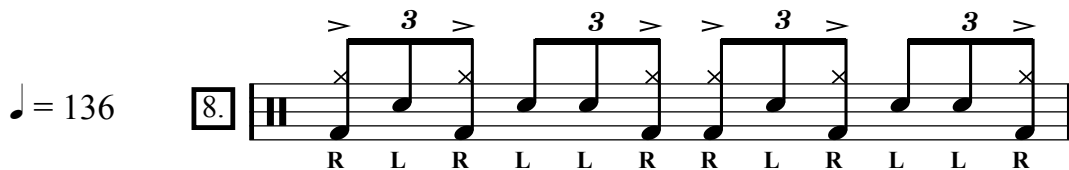
Let's take the first measure from our 4 bar syncopated pattern and turn it into Elvin Jones style triplets.



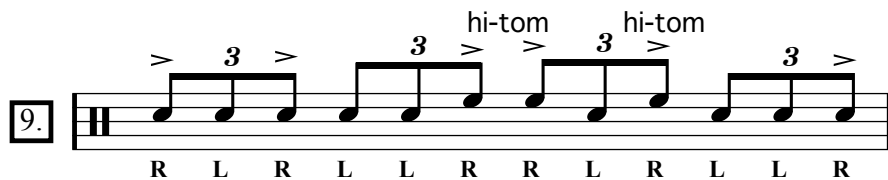
Start by writing out a full measure of eighth note triplets, then add the accents and stickings as described in examples 2 - 5. Practice the pattern until you are totally comfortable playing it and it becomes muscle memory.



Next, we'll move the pattern around the set. To start, we'll play the right hand accented notes using the ride cymbal and bass drum. Play them with an aggressive feel and make sure they're the lead parts in the pattern. Play all of the left hand notes softly on the snare drum.

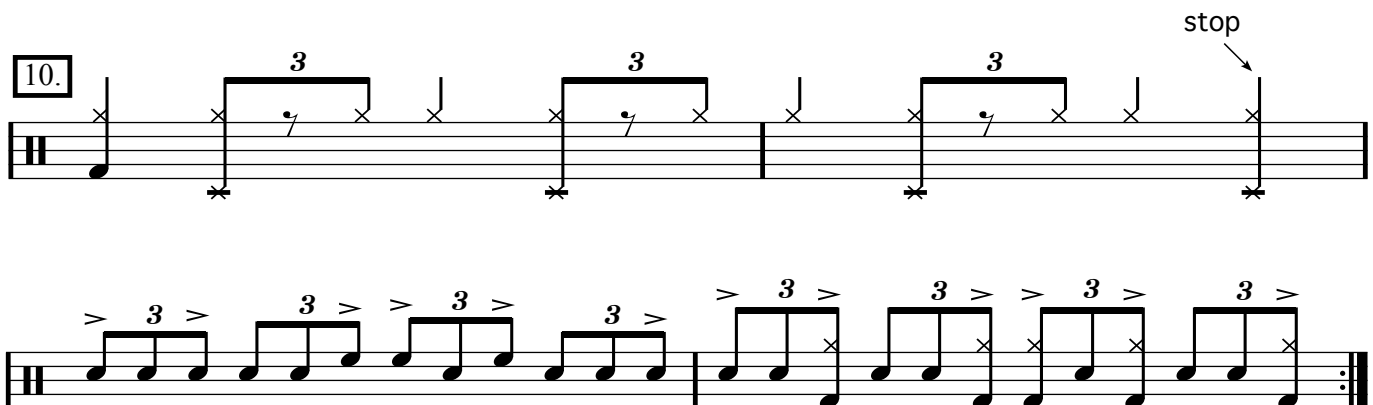


For this example your right hand will move between the snare drum and hi-tom



Now we'll use the two previous examples to create a two-bar fill and play it from two bars of a swing time feel. NOTE: To make smooth transitions into the fill from your time feel, stop your jazz ride pattern with a quarter note on beat 4 of measure two.

♩ = 156



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Now, we'll turn our 4 bar syncopated pattern into triplets using the Elvin Jones stickings. Remember to practice the pattern until it becomes muscle memory. Notice the right hand (r) sticking at the beginning of measure three. This was used to avoid playing more than **two consecutive** left hand notes.

♩ = 144

11.

R L R L L R R L R L L R | R L L R L R L L R R L L

(R) L R L L R R L L R L L | R L R L L R R L R L R L

Next we'll play the 4 bar triplet pattern using the ride cymbal and bass drum.

12.

For our last example we'll mix it up a bit and play the phrase as a 4 bar fill from 4 bars of a swing time feel.

♩ = 152

13.

hi-tom

lo-tom

hi-tom

Well, that wraps up this lesson. I sure hope you enjoyed it. Check back next month for the 2nd lesson in this series.