

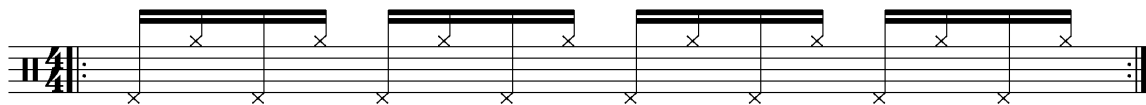
# “VINNIE HATS”

By Bryan Valeriani

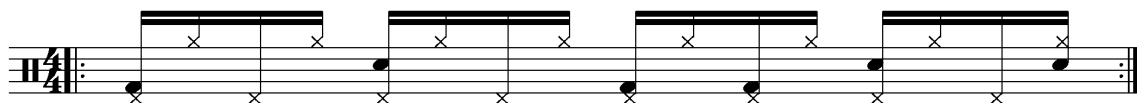
Like so many drummers, Vinnie Colaiuta has been a source of great inspiration and motivation for me. The following technical challenge centers on an idea I saw him perform several years ago. It’s a deceptively simple pattern that once developed will allow you to easily play fast 16ths on the hihat with the added benefit of a unique sound and relaxed feel.

The basic pattern consists of playing a pedaled hihat with the left foot, followed by a right hand hihat stroke. If you are playing in a sixteenth note subdivision, the foot is simply playing 8<sup>th</sup> notes and the right hand is doing the “E”s and “A”s. The tricky part about this is that you ***do not want to hear an open hihat sound when you do this pattern!*** This continuous closed hihat sound can be achieved by keeping foot pressure on the pedal for a slightly longer amount of time when you close it. With some practice you’ll soon feel what your foot needs to do!

Here’s the basic pattern...



Once this becomes comfortable, the process of developing the necessary coordination can begin! Start by playing simple snare and bass combinations alongside the “Vinnie Hats”...



As your comfort increases, play as many different bass and snare patterns as possible in order to further develop the required coordination. Benny Greb’s “Alphabet Approach” can be very helpful in this regard.

The pattern can also be applied to rates other than 16ths. Try it in conjunction with an 8<sup>th</sup> note triplet groove...



Also, be sure to add ghosted notes and accents to your groove patterns. Adding the "Vinnie Hats" to the basic "Funky Drummer" groove is a good start...



Of course, you can (and should) try applying the "Vinnie Hats" concept to all types of groove styles. Here is an example of applying it to the standard "Bossa Nova" groove:



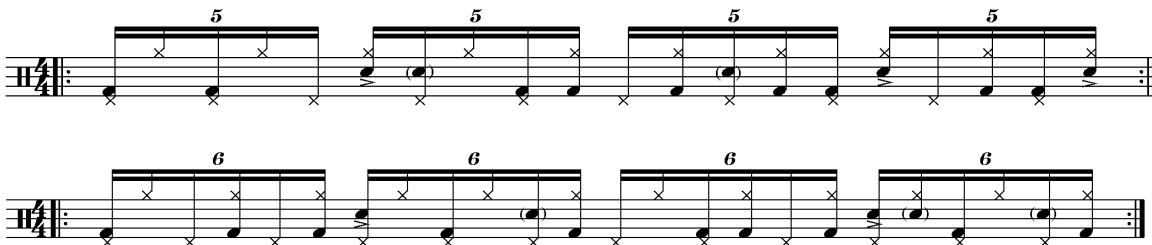
This concept can make a quick "Partido Alto" style easier to execute as well...



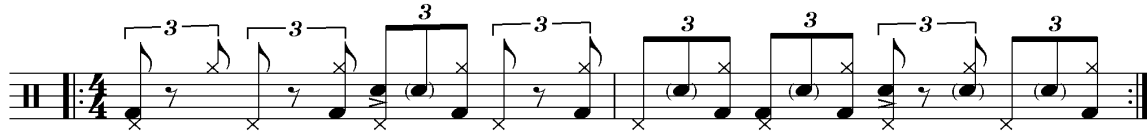
Faster "Drum and Bass" stylings can be experimented with too...



To further develop this technique (and your rhythmic vocabulary) try applying the concept to different rates such as 16<sup>th</sup> triplets, quintuplets, septuplets etc.



Shuffled rhythms can also benefit from the different lilt that the “Vinnie Hats” pedaled note provides...



When these examples feel good to play be sure to experiment! Try moving the right hand to an alternate sound such as your ride, toms, snare. Or try doing double strokes with the right hand instead of singles. There are loads of sonic possibilities! Be creative in your application of the “Vinnie Hats” and in so doing you’ll be rewarded with some interesting musical ideas. Thanks Mr. Colaiuta!

Now go practice!

***Bryan Valeriani is a professional drummer and drum instructor based near Ottawa, Ontario Canada. He endorses SONOR drums and is a member of the Vic Firth Private Teacher program. Visit his website: [www.drumhead.ca](http://www.drumhead.ca)***