

Ghost Notes FatBack

An Answer to the questions..."Ah!?...Ghost Notes?...What?...What for?...How?

Many years ago I made a recording...and I can assure you that it wasn't pleasant to hear in the studio that my Ghost Notes...weren't ghosts at all! When I found myself with this difficulty, I searched for Information about this subject to clarify my doubts and I wrote this exercise to develop this tool.

1. What are the Ghost Notes?

Many years ago I asked this question and the answer remains in my head until today: "...They are notes that you can hear, but you can't see....like a ghost!..."

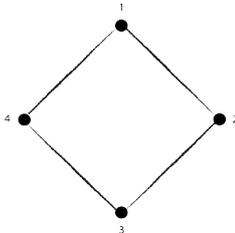
Technically, they are notes that you play considerably softer as an accented Note, on the center of the Snare Drum and approximately 2cm away from the drum Head.

Even though this description doesn't apply to 100% of the musical Situations you may encounter, it's a good reference.

2. What are they for?

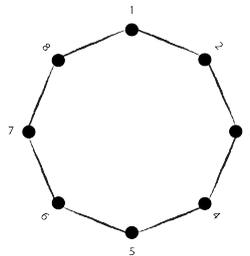
The difference in Volume between the Ghost Notes and the accents enriches the sound of the Groove, allows to highlight the accented notes and embellishes the melody.

Personally I feel, that when we incorporate 16th Notes as Ghost Notes into an 8th Note Rock/Pop Groove, the Groove sounds "rounder". The best way to explain it is with a Graphic.

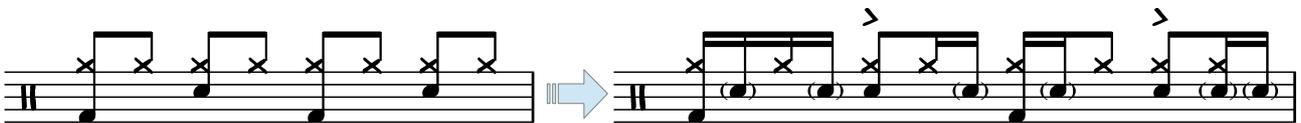


When we connect the dots (Imagining that each dot corresponds to a quarter note of a groove) The figure has strong and sharp angles

When we make the same procedure with double the amount of dots (As if we can incorporate Ghost Notes between the quarter notes of a groove). The figure has less strong and softer angles.

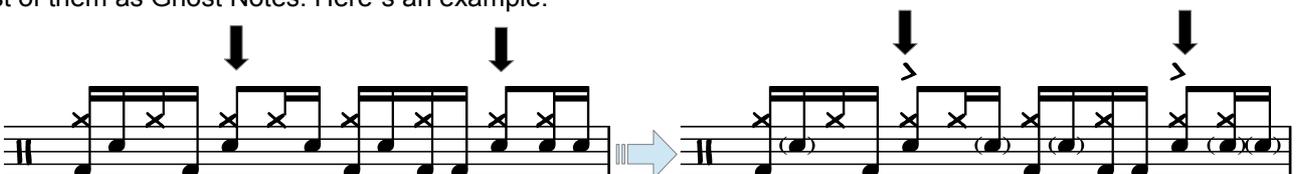


From my point of view, the same happens to a Groove on the Drumset:



3. How to know which notes are Main-Notes and which are Ghost Notes?

First of all, I should define which notes I want to highlight from the Groove with accents and by contrast, I'll play the rest of them as Ghost Notes. Here's an example:



4. How to practice them?

First of all...PLAY THEM! And with this (easy thing) I mean the concrete exercise of choosing a Groove, picking up the notes that you want to accent and by contrast playing the rest of them as Ghost Notes.

GNFB (Ghost Notes Fat-Back)

This exercise is inspired by the exercise called "Fat-Back" from Gary Chafee.

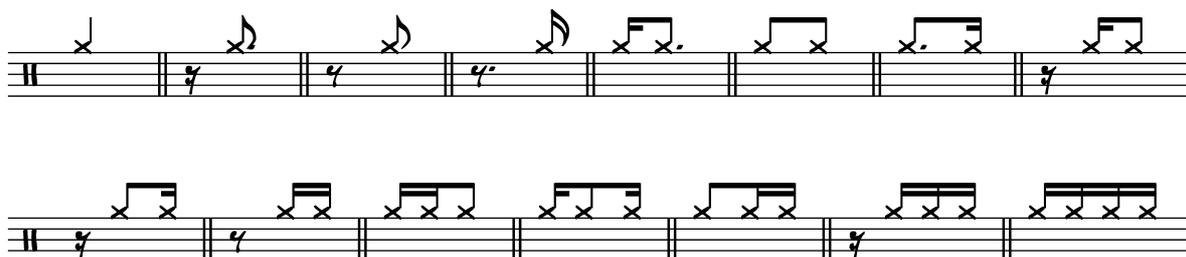
For this we combine the different 16th notes Groupings on the Hihat with a Snare Drum Base.

For this Snare Drum Base we play all the 16th Notes of the bar as Ghost Notes but only beats 2 and 4 (the Backbeat) as Accents.



Notice that the Ghost Notes – written () - should be played on the center of the Snare Drum and 2cm away from the Drum head)

We play each one of the different 16th notes Groupings on the Hihat as Ostinato :



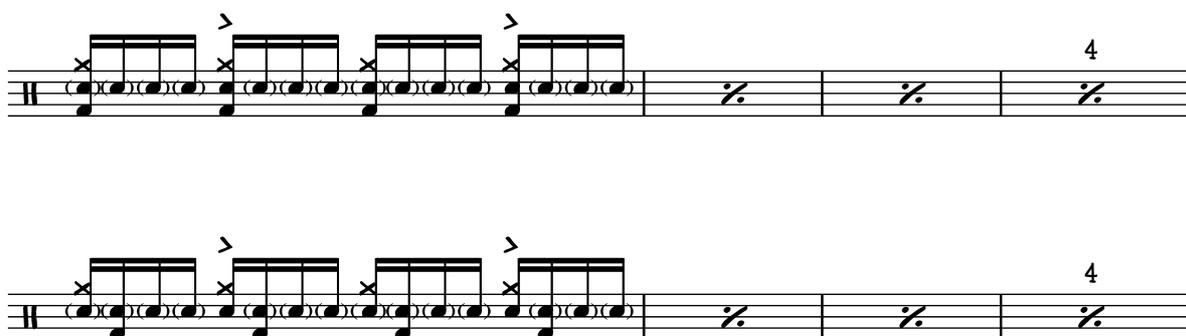
and the same 15 different groups are going to be played with the Bass Drum:



Combining them like this:

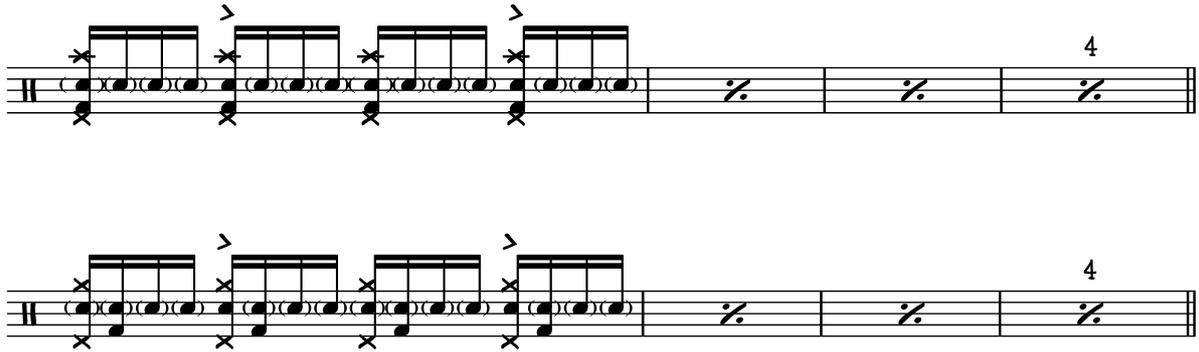
1. Set up a Metronome with the desired speed
2. Play the Snare Drum Base with the 1st 16th notes Grouping as ostinato on the Hihat.
3. Incorporate - into the Base, as explained on the previous point – the first 16th notes Grouping with the Bass Drum and play 4 bars of it. Then play 4 bars of the same Base but with the second 16th notes Grouping with the Bass Drum and so on till you've played 4 bars with each Grouping without Pauses or Breaks or Mistakes.

Here's an Example of the first 8 bars of the Exercise:



4. Then we'll play the same Snare Drum Base with the second 16th Notes Grouping as Ostinato on the Hihat and we'll repeat the procedure explained in the previous point with all the 16th Notes Grouping using the Bass Drum.

5. We can repeat the same exercise, but instead of playing the 16th notes Groupings as ostinato on the Hihat, we can do it with the Ride and close the Hihat on the beat. Here's the same example of the first 8 bars, but with the Ride and the closed Hihat.



Once we do all the steps and play all the possible combinations, I propose you take the exercise one step further!

GNFB (Ghost Notes Fat-Back)...fan level!

In real life, that when we play a song or concert or we rehearse, we should be able to play different Grooves with different rhythmic figures on the Hihat, as well as on the Ride.

Using the same Snare Drum Base and the different 16th Notes Groupings previously explained as Ostinato for the Hihat and the Ride, we'll play the 8 Lessons of the Syncopation (Ted Reed) with the Bass Drum.

To do that, we play the Rhythms written with 8th Notes as 16th Notes. Here's an example about how to do it with the first two bars of the first Lesson:



As an example, we play the Snare Drum Base with the first 16th Notes Grouping on the Hihat and we add the Rhythm of the first 2 bars from the first lesson with the Bass Drum:



Again, we can repeat the same procedure, but playing the 16th notes Groupings with the Ride and closing the Hihat on the beat:



In this way we play with the Bass Drum the 8 Lessons from the Syncopation with all the 16th notes Groupings on the Hihat and on the Ride with the closed Hihat.

I hope this Article helps to clarify this subject for you, as well as stimulating you to develop or improve your Ghost Notes.

At the end of this Article you can find a Table to help you chart and follow your progress

For more Articles or Information, you can visit www.agustinstrizzi.com. Till next time!

"If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas."

George Bernard Shaw.

Ostinato > v Bass															