

31

DYNAMICS VS. EVEN

Everyone always talks about how important it is to get your eighth and sixteenth notes even, but what's missing in a lot of this talk is dynamics. The differences in individual volumes in a line are what gives a groove or a line its life and really affects the feel. Here's a simple exercise to get you working on dynamics in your right-hand technique.

5

8 10 7 8 10 7 9 10 7 10 9 7 10 8 7 10 8

Here's the same exercise played with a swing feel.

6

8 10 7 8 10 7 9 10 7 10 9 7 10 8 7 10 8

This deceptively simple exercise is meant to be played as slow as necessary to execute the details. First of all, you should play these notes *legato*. That means absolutely no gaps in between the notes. In the first exercise, the first eighth note of every pair is soft, and the second eighth note is always louder (not loud). In the second exercise, the first eighth note of every pair is soft and long, and the second eighth note is always short and louder. Don't try to kill the loud note, just play the first note really soft so that you can start exploring the other end of the volume spectrum. After working on dynamics for a while, you'll discover that getting everything even will be easy.

32

MIRROR, MIRROR...

Watch yourself practicing in a mirror. Once you get over how good you look, unnecessary finger movement (especially in the left hand), technique flaws, and bad technique in general really jump out at you when you're watching from a different perspective.