

Multiple Bounce Roll

“Multiple bounce” is the term endorsed by the Percussive Arts Society, for the sound that has historically been called the “buzz”, “crush”, or “press” roll. The appropriate application of this sound depends on the desired roll texture, dynamic, and type of snare system employed.

In orchestral percussion, multiple bounce rolls are used when the tightest (most closed) roll texture is desired; primarily at very soft dynamic levels. Playing on a drum with a multiple snare system consisting of various cables and wire snares produces a silky smooth sound at extremely soft dynamics and an over-pressurized sound at louder dynamics – due to the distinct articulation of the cable snares. Because of the limited utility of the multiple bounce roll on cable snare systems, many orchestral percussionists play most of their piano-forte bounce rolls as triple bounce rolls, because of its more open sound, especially at louder dynamics. After developing an excellent multiple bounce roll and triple bounce roll, it is beneficial to master a seamless transitions between them in order to produce a full sounding (non-pressurized) roll on various cable and wire snare systems. Such technique is also valuable for drumset players and orchestral percussionists.

Whenever using a drum set-up with exclusively a wire snare system, the multiple bounce roll can be used throughout a wider dynamic range due to the less articulate sound of wire snares.

Technical considerations.

Grip. Form a cradle or fulcrum between the thumb, forefinger, and middle finger. All fingers should be cradled together although only the skin of the thumb, forefinger, and middle finger with touch the stick. As in most orchestral snare drum playing, allow a minimal gap (1/8-1/4 inch) between the thumb and forefinger, as a wider gap creates an imprecise fulcrum that leads to inconsistencies such as excessive fulcrum movement and an uneven bounce rhythm. Initially, the stick should pivot from the fulcrum via primarily an arm stroke and the wrist should remain in a relatively fixed position with minimal motion throughout. Later, more wrist flexibility can be introduced once the potential of just the arm motion and stick rebound are fully realized.

If you desire the most delicate and efficient fulcrum possible, experiment with angling the thumb forward so that only the tip of the thumb touches the stick, rather than the entire pad of the thumb.

Playing area is approximately one inch from the rim, directly above the snares. Stick tips should be within one inch.

Bounce duration. Initially, strive for the longest possible bounces by applying more forefinger/middle finger pressure to the stick at the beginning and then quickly releasing some pressure to maximize the duration. Allow the stick tips to come to rest on the drumhead at the conclusion of each bounce to overlap bounces, a continuous sound, from hand to hand. Later, at faster tempi, strive to overlap the hands before the distance between the bounces begins to change (become too closed) so as to produce absolutely equidistant and equal dynamic attacks. This is the key to a great multiple bounce roll sound.

The predominant feeling is one of pressing the stick tips into the drumhead. Whereas the predominant feeling of a triple bounce roll is one of lifting the bounces off the head so as to avoid accents on the first note of each triple bounce. Practice producing different amounts of pressure; the proper amount, too much (overly closed), return to the proper amount, too little (too open), and return to the proper amount. This back and forth method will help you understand each physical and acoustical variable.

