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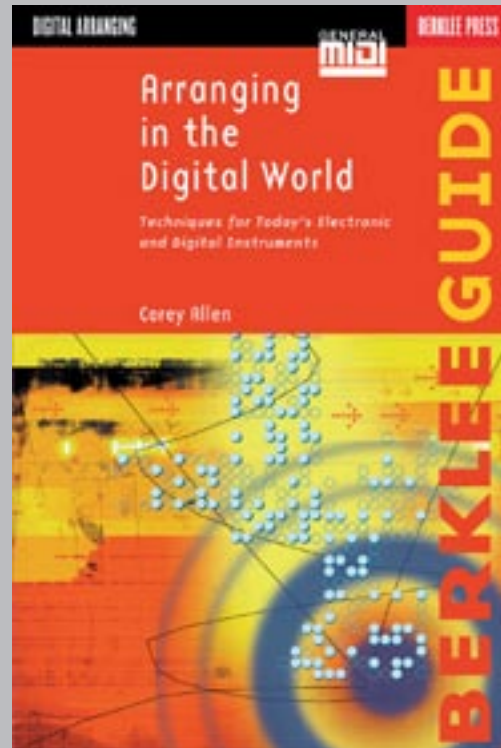
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**Arranging in the Digital World**  
Corey Allen

Chapter II  
Style and Instrumentation

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# CHAPTER II

## Style and Instrumentation

**S**tyle and instrumentation go hand in hand. Each style of music implies a specific instrumentation. One naturally expects to find a drum set and an acoustic bass in a jazz combo, or a five-string banjo in a bluegrass band. Conversely, you would not expect to hear a bagpipe in a string orchestra. As an arranger, one of your most important jobs is to know which instruments are typically used in any style of music.

To develop your instrument awareness, listen carefully to various styles of music and take notice of—even take notes on—which instruments are playing. Let me get you started by listing a few styles and their most standard instrumentation:

- **Pop:** Rhythm Section (piano, synthesizer, bass, guitar, and drum set), Background Vocals, Strings
- **Jazz:** Rhythm Section, Brass, Background Vocals
- **Rock:** Rhythm Section, Brass, Strings, Background Vocals
- **Latin/Brazilian:** Rhythm Section, Background Vocals, Brass, Percussion, Strings
- **Country:** Rhythm Section, Background Vocals, Brass, Strings
- **Orchestral:** Strings, Woodwinds, Brass, Percussion

### RHYTHM SECTION

The rhythm section is used in almost every form of popular music and is usually comprised of piano/keyboard, acoustic or electric bass, acoustic or electric guitar, drums, percussion, or some variation thereof. Of course, how these instruments are played individually and in an ensemble vary from style to style. Let's take a look at each instrument individually and then learn some of their typical *licks* in a few common styles.

## Writing for the Rhythm Section

### DRUM SET

The drum set or “trap set” is actually a collection of different drums and cymbals arranged so they can all be played by one player.

Although there are many variations, the customary configuration is:

- **Bass Drum:** played by the drummer’s right foot, used mostly for accenting beginnings and endings of phrases and important melodic events.
- **Snare Drum:** has metal wires along the bottom skin that gives it its unique sound. Originally a marching drum, it’s the highest-pitched drum in the set and is played with either sticks or brushes. Used mostly for keeping time and accenting strong melodic points.
- **Hi-Hat Cymbal:** played by the drummer’s left foot as well as with sticks, used mostly to accent beats 2 and 4.
- **Ride Cymbal:** played with either sticks or brushes, it’s used to keep time with a steady rhythmic *ostinato*.
- **Crash Cymbal:** used mostly for emphasis and to punctuate phrases. It is usually played with sticks.
- **Floor Tom-tom:** pitched a little higher than the bass drum, played with either sticks or brushes, used mostly for fills into a new phrase.
- **Mounted Tom-tom:** usually mounted on the side of the bass drum, it’s pitched a little higher than the floor tom-tom and played with either sticks or brushes. Used mostly for fills into a new phrase.

Figure 2.1 indicates the keys on your keyboard that correspond to the drum sounds listed above in the General MIDI sound set.

Since the GM sound set was designed to be a “common denominator,” you’ll probably discover other drum sounds which are not part of the GM soundset that may sound more appealing. Be sure to write down their *patch number* so you’ll be able to find them in a hurry if you need to.



## DRUM SET PARTS

The role of the drummer first and foremost is to keep time. Good drum parts indicate where phrases begin and end, emphasize important melodic notes, and use varying backgrounds in different sections by slightly altering the beat pattern or using brushes in one section and sticks in another. Example 2.1 illustrates the drum set notation that will be used in this book. The clef used in this example is for non-pitched instruments.

Ex. 2.1.

Ride  
Bass Drum  
Hi-Hat (foot)  
Hi-Hat open closed  
Snare  
Snare rimshot  
Clave  
Cow Bell

## Swing

In a swing style, the drum set's most common rhythmic pattern is:

**1** *Swing*

Ex. 2.2.

mm = 120

The ride cymbal plays the familiar ding-ding-a-ding, ding-a-ding rhythm while the hi-hat keeps time on beats 2 and 4. Sometimes the hi-hat plays the ride cymbal's rhythm and alternates between a *closed* and an *open* sound.

An (o) written above a hi-hat note indicates that the note is to be played open. A (+) written above the hi-hat note indicates that the note is to be played closed.

**2** *Swing with Hi-Hat*

Ex. 2.3.

mm = 160

The bass drum and snare drum are left to punctuate important points in the melody and mark the beginnings and ends of phrases.

**Bossa Nova**

In a bossa-nova style, the drum set's most common rhythmic pattern is:

**3** *Bossa Nova Drum Pattern*

Ex. 2.4.

mm = 132

*Note:* If this pattern were played on a real drum set, it would be executed entirely by the drummer's feet.

**Jazz Waltz**

In a jazz waltz style, the drum set's most common rhythmic pattern is:

**4** *Jazz Waltz Drum Pattern*

Ex. 2.5.

mm = 130

### Samba

In a samba style, the drum set's most common rhythmic pattern is:

**5** *Samba Drum Pattern*

Ex. 2.6.

mm = 76

### Pop

In a pop style, the drum set's two most common rhythmic patterns are:

**6** *Pop-Style Rhythm 1 Drum Pattern*

Ex. 2.7.

mm = 86

Notice the middle line of this drum part. Rather than a notehead there is an x with a circle around it. That means play the rim of the snare drum. Playing an attack on the rim of the drum gives the note a more metallic sound.

**7** *Pop-Style Rhythm 2 Drum Pattern*

Ex. 2.8.

mm = 86

## CHAPTER II: Style and Instrumentation

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