

SEPTEMBER 2023

# DRUM CHANNEL.COM

LEARN FROM THE BEST NEWSLETTER

# ALEX ACUNA

DRUM CHANNEL EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

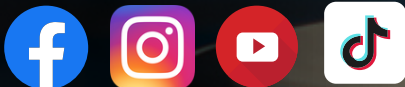
FEATURED COURSE  
JP BOUVET

ON THE AIR  
DC PODCAST, LIVE STREAMS  
INCREDIBLE INTERVIEWS  
SONG BREAKDOWN

ROLAND & RICHIE  
GAJATE-GARCIA  
LATIN RHYTHMS  
IN A POP ENVIRONMENT

COMING SOON

JAKE REED, GREGG BISSONETTE,  
RAFAEL MOREIRA TRIO FT. THOMAS LANG  
THOMAS PRIDGEN



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# FOUNDER'S DOWNBEAT

In doing this month's Downbeat, it is important to remember that before every downbeat, there is an upbeat, and nobody knows that better than Alex Acuña and his teacher, Efrain Toro. They both have life-changing courses on DC.

Alex teaches you "Authentic Latin Rhythms on the Drum Set" and a unique course called "Rudiments on Congas," so drummers have a shortcut to being a Conguero. At least a pretty good one! Something you do not want to miss is one of my favorite DC concerts filmed live, capturing a magical moment with the Acuna-Hoff-Mathisen Trio. Alex said he has not felt like that since playing with "Weather Report." That says it all!

Efrain Toro is said by Alex, Terry Bozzio, and others to be a genius of rhythm. I wanted to mention that his courses "Linear to Harmonic" and "Efrainizaion" will open your mind to new concepts. Check these out, and you will see why we say, "If you are serious, so are we."

Also, check out Richie and Roland Gajate-Garcia's Masterclass on Using Latin Rhythms in a Pop Environment on page nine, where we've included a transcription for you to practice along with. This incredible father-son duo will inspire you to try new ideas.

Finally, JP Bouvet's new course on Drum Set Improvisation is here. He will help you master the art of spontaneous rhythm. Enjoy!

*Don Lombardi*



## Keeping Time

### LIVE SHOWS

SEPT 2 | 9:00 AM PT | THOMAS LANG LIVE!  
SEPT 9 | 9:00 AM PT | THOMAS LANG LIVE! FT. JP BOUVET  
SEPT 12 | 5:00 PM PT | LOMBARDI LIVE! FT. JP BOUVET  
SEPT 16 | 9:00 AM PT | THOMAS LANG LIVE!  
SEPT 23 | 9:00 AM PT | THOMAS LANG LIVE!  
SEPT 30 | 9:00 AM PT | THOMAS LANG LIVE!

### COMING SOON

#### COURSES

JAKE REED  
GREGG BISSONETTE  
SCOTT PELLEGRAM

#### CONCERTS

RAFAEL MOREIRA TRIO FT. THOMAS LANG  
THOMAS PRIDGEN CONCERT

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When you join the exclusive Drum Channel family, you will learn from the best Drummers and Educators in the world and get access to interact with them. If you have never played before or want to become a pro we are here to help you achieve your goals.





FEATURE

# ALEX ACUÑA

From Alex's early days with Weather Report (appearing on albums *Black Market* and *Heavy Weather*) to his Acuña-Hoff-Mathisen DVD, Alex continues to be one of the most respected drummer/percussionists in the world. The list of artists he has played with is too long to list but some examples include Paul McCartney, Whitney Houston, Carlos Santana, Elvis Presley, Diana Ross, The Temptations, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, and many, many more. Please enjoy this Drum Channel exclusive interview!

## How did you get started playing music?

In the very small town where I was born, Pativilca, Peru, which is on the outskirts of Lima, music was around my home 24/7. My father was a musician and a teacher. My five older brothers were musicians as well. We would play in many different bands on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. We would get up at 5 am and start playing at 6 am with a marching band. We would play in the outskirts of Pativilca for the parties of the towns. We played all different music for that. Marching, Peruvian music orchestrated for big band, and all kinds. By 11 am, we were playing in the park. Around 2 pm, we would play before the soccer match, and then we would play in the middle of the match for about 15 minutes. We would have dinner around 5:00, and then in the evening, around 9 pm, we would play in the club for dance parties.

Music, and really all kinds of music, is what revealed God to me. My parents didn't play some of the music I was listening to. There was a shop owner who had a radio. I would hang out around there from noon to 2 pm, listening to national radio. They played music from everywhere - Cuban, Peruvian, ethnic music, jazz, classical, and everything. Music became one genre for me. It was just *music*. Brazilian, South American, European, American Jazz - everything was music for me.

I discovered Tito Puente's top percussionist from his first album, recorded in 1955. Someone was selling the record on the street. I didn't even have a record player, but I saw the timbales and congas on the album cover and thought, 'Wow, this has to be amazing.' I bought the record and got a record player to listen to it. One of the first tunes where he's playing with the timbales is amazing. He was playing the rumba clave, and I thought he was playing in 3 or 6, not in 4, because I was just listening. I developed licks around what I heard. I ended up playing those phrases on the Weather Report album on the drums.

Vinnie Colaiuta called me when he heard the tune I played on Weather Report and said, 'Alex, what are you playing there? It sounds amazing!' I told him it was a phrase on 3 that I learned from listening to Tito Puente a long time ago when I heard his record. By listening and not knowing the metrics of the song, inspiration came, and it became phrases and music.

### **How did you make the leap to Las Vegas to play with Elvis Presley, Diana Ross, and The Temptations?**

I moved to San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1965 and lived there for nine years, immersing myself in all kinds of cultural music. During that time, I heard this drummer with Aretha Franklin. It was Bernard Purdie. I started following him - his time, his precision, his sound. He really became my teacher. This became preparation for me to come to Las Vegas to play with Diana Ross and The Detroit Sound.

With Elvis, I played percussion. Elvis never had a percussionist before, but his conductor said he had to use me, and Elvis said okay.

With The Temptations, I was playing drums for Olivia Newton-John, who had just come from Australia. I was the house drummer at The International in Las Vegas. When The Temptations came on, I switched to playing the congas. Don Elias was in the audience. He came to see The Temptations. In those days, The Temptations had a drummer, Norman Roberts, who played like Tony Williams but played the funk like Bernard Purdie. When Don Elias saw me playing with Olivia and then The Temptations, he thought to himself, 'This guy was playing drums with Olivia, and now he's playing congas with The Temptations.' He only knew of two guys who did that. One was Walfredo Reyes Sr., but Walfredo was 7 feet tall, and the other was me. He waited to talk to me after the show. The history of my life changed after that. I started playing jazz with him after that, and then he recommended me for Weather Report.

### **How important is it to be able to play all kinds of genres?**

Being able to play a lot of genres will give you a longer career. There might be some styles of music that you won't be able to play anymore at 70 years old. You must have all kinds of avenues. I love to keep healthy physically, mentally, and especially spiritually. I practice every day. I never went to school to study music until I became a father at 22 years old. Before that, I just played out of the gift that God gave me. I didn't have a proper education until I arrived in Puerto Rico and started studying in the conservatory and learning the rudiments. I had already been playing drums and recording for 12 years before that. I came to the United States and played the drums without knowing the rudiments. When I got into the conservatory, I loved studying. Every single bar and rudiment is precious to me. Even today, I feel like I am just discovering things. Music challenges me, which I love, and I embrace it. You have to embrace your gift by recognizing what will happen to you as you maintain and sustain your gift and entertain at the same time - entertaining yourself and the people you are working with and being thankful to the Creator of everything.

### **Any final thoughts on playing through inspiration?**

I met Buddy Rich in 1964 in east LA. I asked him how he developed such impeccable playing, speed, and dexterity. He said, 'It's natural.' That was huge for me to hear him say, 'It's natural.' That's how I started playing. I didn't know the rudiments in those days. I just played.



# ALEX ACUNA ON DRUMCHANNEL.COM

## RUDIMENTS ON CONGAS

Alex Acuña is one of the masters of combining Latin percussion and the drum set, while being fully accomplished at both. In this unique series of 13 lessons, he shows you how the rudiments can be applied to congas, giving every drummer a foundation for becoming a well-rounded percussionist.



[Start Course](#)

## AUTHENTIC LATIN RHYTHMS ON THE DRUM SET

In this course, Alex takes you through nine lessons covering Cha Cha Cha, Bolero, Salsa, Son Montuno, Caribbean Rhythms, African Rhythms, Samba, Rumba, Tango, Meringue and Mambo.



[Start Course](#)

[APPLYING LATIN RHYTHMS TO THE DRUM SET LIVE MASTERCLASS](#)

[EXPANDING YOUR RHYTHM MASTERCLASS](#)

[ACUNA-HOFF-MATHISEN TRIO IN CONCERT](#)

[LOMBARDI LIVE! FT. ALEX ACUNA](#)

[ALEX ACUNA, PER MATHISEN, JAN GUNNAR INTERVIEW](#)

[ALEX ACUNA & EFRAIN TORO PERFORMANCE](#)

[TERRY BOZZIO & ALEX ACUNA DRUM JAM](#)

[ENILDO RASUA WITH TERRY BOZZIO & ALEX ACUNA](#)

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## DRUM SET IMPROVISATION WORKSHOP CREATE YOUR OWN INFINITE FLOW

- COURSE ONE: THE RLLK SUBSET
- COURSE TWO: THE SWUNG DOWN-UP METHOD
- COURSE THREE: QUICK INVERTED DOUBLE GROOVES

 WATCH NOW

NEW

## NEW RELEASE: **JP BOUVET** COURSE

JP Bouvet's highly anticipated drum set improvisation workshop is here! With three comprehensive courses and a whopping 20 lessons, JP will guide you through the intricate art of drum improvisation. Whether you're a beginner looking to test the improvisational waters or a seasoned drummer seeking to refine your skills, this workshop is your ultimate ticket to mastering the art of spontaneous rhythm.

### COURSE OUTLINE

- **Course One - The RLLK Subset**
  - Making RLLK Useful
  - The 4-2 Down-Up
  - 2 Measure Examples
  - The Magic 2
  - Going Over Barline
  - Alternate Patterns and Next Steps
- **Course Two - The Swung Down-Up**
  - Triplet Notation Crash Course
  - Getting Started with the Swung Down-Up
  - 2 Measure Examples
  - Adding Kick Drum
  - Adding Left hand Accents
  - Adding Space
  - Adding Singles and Other Patterns
- **Course Three - Quick Inverted Double Grooves**
  - 4's and 2's with Inverted Doubles
  - Adding Kicks and the Magic 2
  - Strong Beat Snare Accents
  - Locking in the Backbeat
  - Switching Between Groove Modes
  - Mixing with the RLLK Subset
  - Tying all 3 courses together

### GET TO KNOW JP BOUVET

**Favorite Vacation Destination?**

Small town France

**When are you most creative?** Morning

**Favorite song?** Off the Cape by Childish Japes

**Dream Collaboration?** Ethan Iverson

**If you weren't a drummer, what instrument would you focus on?** Piano

**Hidden Talent?**

Pretty sick at ping pong. Can juggle.

**Starbucks order?** Flat white

**Favorite Food?** Japanese food in general

**Favorite Treat?**

An afternoon espresso and croissant

**What time do you go to bed?** 10:30 PM

**Words of wisdom to share with upcoming drummers?**

Show up and work on your career for 8 hours a day, 5 days a week.

**Book recommendations?**

Siddhartha, by Herman Hesse



# PRACTICE ROOM



## JP Bouvet The RLLK Subset

### Lesson 1: Making RLLK Useful

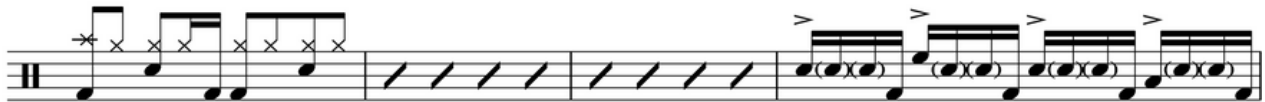
#### 1 RLLK Basic Orchestration



#### 2 Basic R.H. Orchestration



#### 3 Using As A Fill In A Four-Measure Phrase

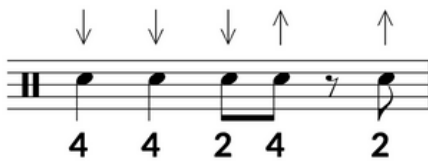


### Lesson 2: The 4-2 Down Up

4 = R(LL)K

2 = R(L)

#### 1



#### 1b Tom Orchestration



# PRACTICE ROOM

2

2

Musical notation for exercise 2, left staff. It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter. Above the notes are arrows indicating direction: down, down, up, up, down. Below the notes are the numbers: 4, 2, 4, 2, 4.

Musical notation for exercise 2, right staff. It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter. Each note has an accent (>) above it. The notes are beamed in pairs: (quarter, quarter), (quarter, eighth), (quarter, quarter).

3

Musical notation for exercise 3, left staff. It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter. Above the notes are arrows indicating direction: down, down, up, up, up. Below the notes are the numbers: 4, 2, 4, 4, 2.

(alternate notation)

Musical notation for exercise 3, right staff (alternate notation). It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter. Above the notes are arrows indicating direction: down, down, up, up, up.

Musical notation for exercise 3, left staff (beamed notes). It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter. Each note has an accent (>) above it. The notes are beamed in pairs: (quarter, quarter), (quarter, eighth), (quarter, quarter).

Musical notation for exercise 3, right staff (beamed notes). It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter. Each note has an accent (>) above it. The notes are beamed in pairs: (quarter, quarter), (quarter, eighth), (quarter, quarter).

4

Musical notation for exercise 4, left staff. It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, quarter. Above the notes are arrows indicating direction: down, up, up, up, down. Below the notes are the numbers: 2, 4, 4, 2, 4.

Musical notation for exercise 4, right staff. It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, quarter. Each note has an accent (>) above it. The notes are beamed in pairs: (quarter, quarter), (quarter, eighth), (quarter, quarter).

5

Musical notation for exercise 5, left staff. It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, quarter. Above the notes are arrows indicating direction: down, up, up, down, down. Below the notes are the numbers: 2, 4, 2, 4, 4.

Musical notation for exercise 5, right staff. It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, quarter. Each note has an accent (>) above it. The notes are beamed in pairs: (quarter, quarter), (quarter, eighth), (quarter, quarter).

6

Musical notation for exercise 6, left staff. It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, quarter. Above the notes are arrows indicating direction: down, up, up, up, up. Below the notes are the numbers: 2, 4, 4, 4, 2.

Musical notation for exercise 6, right staff. It shows a five-measure sequence on a single staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are: quarter, quarter, eighth, quarter, eighth, quarter, quarter. Each note has an accent (>) above it. The notes are beamed in pairs: (quarter, quarter), (quarter, eighth), (quarter, quarter).



# LATIN RHYTHMS IN A POP ENVIRONMENT

## ON DRUM CHANNEL


This hour-long Masterclass features **Richie** and **Roland Gajate-Garcia** as they explore playing various rhythms with different feels in a pop environment.

**Topics include:**

- Using a Hybrid Kit
- Adapting Percussion to Drums
- Playing on a TV Show
- Percussion Duo
- Playing Shaker with Drum Set
- Playing Congas in Pop vs. Latin
- Slap Tone Technique
- Traditional Salsa Style
- Timbales Applied to Drum Set
- Congas Applied to the Drum Set
- Playing Percussion and Drums
- Cha Cha Cha Groove




## PRACTICE TIME


LLR 143


Richie & Roland Gajate-Garcia

### Using Latin Rhythms In A Pop Enviornment

**1** Timbale Patterns On Drum Set




©43:51  
R B R L B B R L B B R B B




R B R L B B R L R R B R

**2** Basic Tumbao On Conga & Drum Set

H T S T H T O O H T S O O H O O




©45:21  
L L R L L L R R L L R R L R R



R B R L B B R L B R R B B

**3** Cha Cha Cha Groove



©51:03  
R L B R R L B B R L B R R L B B

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