

TRIBUTES FOR SNARE DRUM

30 CONCERT SNARE DRUM

SOLOS



by **TED ATKATZ**

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About Tributes

I wrote the etudes in this book using three different methods: 1. basing the etude on a specific piece of music; 2. writing an etude in the style of a composer / performer; 3. recording an improvisation in the style of a composer and transcribing and editing. I find snare drum playing to be the most interesting and engaging when the performer can attach melody to the rhythms, either real or imagined! I encourage performers of these etudes to research the composers that are referenced here (where applicable), and to create their own melodies to help to give contour and line to the music.



Tributes Notes

#1 For Dmitri - Dmitri Shostakovich wrote incredible music for orchestra, and often utilized the snare drum to drive the action. There were many themes of war and unrest that reflected his life in Russia, and it seems that any time you hear the snare drum in a Shostakovich symphony, there's some unrest going on! I've always loved the opportunity to let it rip when playing snare drum on his music, and this etude would certainly fit well in one of his symphonies. For me, the key idea is to give the music rhythmic drive and energy without rushing!

#2 For Mitch - Mitch Peters was the former Principal Percussionist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and later the orchestra's Principal Timpanist. He also preceded me as percussion teacher at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California. Mitch wrote a great deal of music for percussion, including *Yellow After the Rain* for marimba, which was the first four-mallet piece that I worked on. His etude books for snare drum cover a lot of musical ground, and his writing in odd meters inspired this etude.

#3 For Aaron - Aaron Copland's music was some of the first orchestral music that grabbed me. *Fanfare for the Common Man* is undeniably epic. Copland was especially kind to percussionists: if you are a percussionist playing Copland, you've probably got a fun part to play. This etude makes use of some of his themes that you probably have heard.

#4 For Franz - Do composers ever think when they write something that it might be pretty hard to play? Sometimes I wonder. Franz von Suppe may not have realized it, but his *Pique Dame Overture* has a very challenging snare drum part. How are we supposed to play these short rolls at breakneck speed? There are many ways to do it; I'll "cheat" if I have to!

#5 For Rolf - I had the distinct pleasure of performing with the YouTube Brass Ensemble in 2009. We performed Susato's *Danse Bergeret* at ABC's television studios in New York City, and it was a blast. Rolf Smedvig, trumpet player in the renowned Empire Brass, was the only person to ever call me "Teddy Boom-Boom Alcatraz." I'm used to my last name being butchered, so anytime you get a drum solo on national TV, it's reason to be thankful!

#6 For Johnny - After a performance of the music from *Pirates of the Caribbean*, I wrote this etude, which is directly inspired by that driving, energetic music by Klaus Badelt and Hans Zimmer. I dedicated it to the movie's hero, Johnny Depp, who seems to have adopted his movie persona for good (the makeup hasn't come off!).

#7 For Claude - I love the French impressionistic music of Claude Debussy. He made excellent use of percussion in his orchestral works; *Fetes* and *La Mer* are works that stand out. Often his writing is designed to create rhythmic ambiguity for the listener, but at other times it's very precise.

#8 For Leonard - Leonard Bernstein will be remembered as the best American orchestral composer of all time (sorry John Williams and Copland fans, he wrote lyrics too!). In one of my first concerts with the Chicago Symphony, I found myself onstage with the Green Hornet (my custom-made snare drum) playing music from Bernstein's *On the Waterfront*. I broke a calf drumhead in the second rehearsal, so clearly I had to contain my energy for the performances. Bernstein's music draws you into its intensity and drama, and I took the bait.

#9 For Marley - I fell in love with Reggae music as a teenager, and my favorites were Steel Pulse, Black Uhuru, and Bob Marley. I love the swing and syncopation of the music, and how the backbeat is more often played by the bass drum than the snare. Give a listen to *Is This Love* from Bob Marley and the Wailers and you'll see where the rhythms in this etude come from.

#10 For Sheezy - I grew up in New York City, and when I was a teenager in the 80's, rap was becoming a big deal. Instead of buying rap records, I would sit at the stereo on Friday nights and move between the two stations that played rap and hip-hop, WBLS and KISS FM. I would have the tape deck (old technology!) ready to go, and when I heard a song that I liked, I would press record and create a mix tape. I was obsessed with this music, and I would practice drumset with my headphones on and one of my rap mix tapes playing. So, to re-explore my "roots," I wrote this etude to be played along with Jay-Z's *H to the Izzo*. Parents who don't approve: my deepest apologies.

#11 For Hideki - Western music is conventionally written in four-bar phrases, as are many of the etudes in this book. I wrote this etude in five-bar phrases, and used five beats to the measure. Coincidence? Ask Godzilla, former Yankee great.

#12 For Will - Will Hudgins, percussionist of the Boston Symphony, was a very influential teacher to me. He taught me the standard of playing required of an orchestral percussionist; he also taught me how to have a strong inner rhythmic pulse.

#13 For Bruford - I went through a phase in childhood where progressive rock dominated my Walkman playlist. Bands like Rush, Yes, and King Crimson were among my favorites, in part because their music played with rhythm, odd meters, and syncopation. Bill Bruford, who played drums for Yes and King Crimson, was a master of hemiola, and his sound was unmistakable. Play this etude along with *Heart of the Sunrise* by Yes.

#14 For Fripp - A high-quality cassette tape of King Crimson's *Discipline* was given to me by a saxophone-playing friend of mine at New England Music Camp. We were about 14, and I thought this kid was pretty sophisticated to be listening to this complex music. To this day, I'm still trying to figure out what prompted Robert Fripp, guitarist of King Crimson, to write parts like he did. *Frame by Frame* was my favorite song from this cassette, and his playing mesmerized me.

#15 For Tom - Tom Gauger was my teacher at Boston University. He was a percussionist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra for 45 years, and his bass drum and tambourine playing were the best! Tom had great style and presence; he was the musician that all of us aspired to be. I was always on my best behavior around Mr. Gauger; it wasn't that he demanded it, but he inspired it with his effortlessly elegant demeanor. He taught me discipline (at least a little), and musicianship, and how to laugh at yourself!

#16 For Cage - *Living Room Music*, written by John Cage, leaves lots of room for creativity and improvisation, but rhythmically it is precise, and difficult to perform accurately. The second movement has all four players speaking the lines from a poem, and the pervasive rhythm was the inspiration for this etude.

#17 For Pyotr - Playing symphonies written by Tchaikovsky is always memorable because of the reaction from the audience at the end of the concert. Tchaikovsky's music always elicits an enthusiastic response, probably because the music is so emotional! I remember playing a run of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony with the Chicago Symphony. I played the bass drum, which only plays during one movement, but when it enters, it makes a huge impact (pun intended).

#18 For Maurice - Some of my favorite music to play in the orchestra is the music of Maurice Ravel. *Bolero* has the most prominent snare drum part, but pieces like *Alborada del Gracioso*, *Daphnis* and *Chloe Suite #2* are equally fun to play. Playing snare drum on *Bolero* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim was an unforgettable experience, particularly the remote-control camera that wheeled up close to my drum for the live television broadcast! I've never liked R2D2 since.

#19 For A.C. - My first percussion teacher was Andrew C. Lewis, who I studied with in New York City, sometime after he graduated from the Juilliard School. He was a highly versatile musician; he played classical, jazz and rock music, and he also composed his own. Our lessons would consist of half an hour of stick technique on the practice pad and half an hour of drumset, in which he'd teach me to groove (almost) as hard as he did. Eventually, Andy introduced some music for mallet instruments, and he taught me how to read music. Most importantly, Andy was a model musician to me; he was able to play any type of music that fulfilled him.

#20 For Blaine - If you are not continuing to learn to play your instrument, you are missing an opportunity. When I work with my students, I notice the things that they do differently from me, and if they do it well, I don't hesitate to do it their way! Some students are brimming with confidence about their playing; others need to be convinced that they are great players. I admire those players who are still trying to find their style and their confidence, as I was certainly one of them.

#21 For Abel - Alan Abel was such an important teacher for me. He taught me technique on the snare drum, how to be analytical about my playing, and how to make good musical choices. But probably the most inspiring part of lessons was watching him play the drum. The man has hands! Once in a lesson he gave me a demonstration of four-stroke ruffs from slow to fast. I still remember the speed and control he displayed. The goal here is to play your grace notes so as not to be late to the principal note.

#22 For Mike - Mike Werner is my colleague at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. He is an incredible snare drum player; he has developed techniques of practice and performance that I never could have dreamed up. Currently the Principal Percussionist of the Seattle Symphony, he has created a life of music, family and recreation for himself (maybe not in that order) that should be the model of how to live. I look forward to hearing Mike play this etude!

#23 For Stewart - As a teenager I was obsessed with the band The Police. They took over the pop music world in 1983-84, but even before that their drummer, Stewart Copland, was creating a unique drum style and sound. He brought such energy and excitement to his playing, while being really attentive to the music he was a part of. I tried to learn all of his parts on the drumset, and his style of playing had a big influence on me.

#24 For Shaun - I learn more from my students than I ever could have imagined. Percussionists do things in their own way, and each player has different strong and weak points in their playing. Shaun Tilburg is the former Principal Percussionist of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, and he continues to pursue his passion for being an orchestral performer in the United States. I wrote this etude to challenge the highly developed snare drum chops that he developed while playing in marching bands in Texas as a teen.

#25 For Jacques - Jacques Delecluse has written a great deal for the snare drum, and his etudes are performed throughout the world, and often asked for on auditions. What I noticed when I began working on his snare drum music was the sense of melodic line and musicality. Instead of treating the snare drum as a single-toned instrument, he wrote in a way that evokes many sound colors. His writing was a big inspiration for this book, as I tried to create etudes in which a melody could be heard. Some are obvious, and some will require your creativity to come up with one!

#26 For Gustav - When it comes to dark orchestral music, Gustav Mahler stands alone. I think the connection between Mahler and heavy-metal music is closer than we realize. In my first years with the Chicago Symphony, the orchestra played Mahler's Fifth Symphony throughout Europe while on tour. Exploring so many European cities for the first time was unforgettable, and playing for music audiences in places like Berlin was an honor. I played the snare drum part, and the dirge-like funeral music in the first movement sticks with me like a ghost!

#27 For Gioachino - Gioachino Rossini wrote a lot of music that we all know, mostly because music from his opera overtures has been used on Looney Toons cartoons and Family Guy. It's perfect music for ironic humor, because it's so darn beautiful! It's got that Italian elegance from a bygone era. I was inspired by an old Road Runner cartoon to write a drum solo to be played during the *Overture to La Gazza Ladra*. Listen for a couple of minutes and you'll hear the theme for you to play along with (it's fun).

#28 For Igor - When I was about 13 years old, my father took me to Carnegie Hall in New York City to see the Philadelphia Orchestra perform Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. I remember watching the timpanist, and how it sounded like he was playing rock music! Twenty-five years later, I played the piece in Carnegie Hall with the Chicago Symphony, and after that performance was sure that it was my favorite piece of orchestral music in the repertoire. Without Stravinsky's masterwork, so much music of the 20th century would not have been possible.

#29 For Watkins - Andy Watkins studied with me for a short time before winning a position as percussionist with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra. He was an excellent student, in part because he worked so hard on his own to be fully prepared for any musical challenge. He is living proof of what strong drive and dedication can do for you.

#30 For Jill - My wife inspires me every day. She challenges me to be better, as a musician and as a person. She inspired this highly challenging etude.

For Dmitri

Solo #1

♩ = 152-168

Musical score for 'For Dmitri' Solo #1, measures 1-19. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of five staves. Measure numbers 1 through 19 are indicated above the notes. Dynamics include *ff*, *mf*, *mp*, *f*, and *p*. There are several triplet markings (3) and accents (>) throughout the piece.

For Rolf

Solo #5

♩ = 68-76

Musical score for 'For Rolf' Solo #5, measures 1-31. The score is in 6/8 time and consists of six staves. Measure numbers 1 through 31 are indicated above the notes. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *p*, *fp*, and *f*. There are several triplet markings (3) and accents (>) throughout the piece.

For Fripp

Solo #14

♩ = 144-152

Musical score for 'For Fripp' Solo #14, measures 1-30. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. It features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *pp* (pianissimo). The piece includes several triplet markings and a *ff* (fortissimo) section starting at measure 23. The score is divided into five systems of six measures each.

36

For Shaun

Solo #24

♩ = 78-84

Musical score for 'For Shaun' Solo #24, measures 1-15. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The dynamics range from *mp* (mezzo-piano) to *f* (forte). The piece includes several triplet markings and sixteenth-note runs. The score is divided into five systems of three measures each.

For Igor

Solo #28

♩ = 126-132

Musical score for page 40, measures 1-22. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It features various dynamics including *p*, *mf*, *f*, *pp*, and *ff*. There are also accents and slurs. Measure numbers 1 through 22 are indicated above the notes.

For Igor

Solo #28 / pg. 2

Musical score for page 41, measures 23-74. The score continues on a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It includes dynamics such as *f*, *p*, *pp*, *niente*, and *mp*. There are also accents and slurs. Measure numbers 23 through 74 are indicated above the notes.