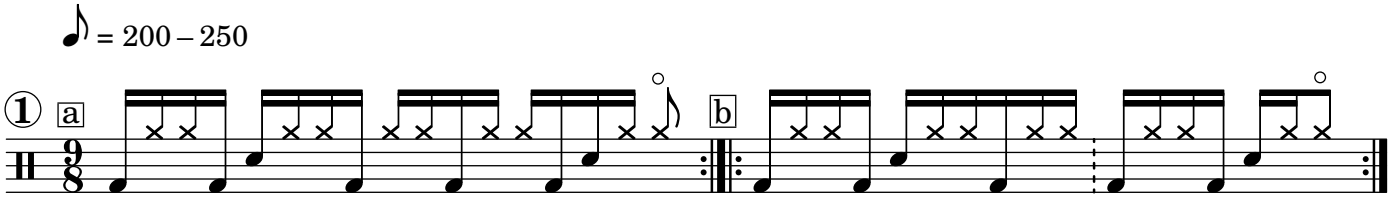
Beelzebub

"Beelzebub" is the first song on the first solo album by drumming legend Bill Bruford. It was written and recorded in 1977, and released on his eponymously named band's debut record *Feels Good To Me* in 1978. Bruford composed the piece and played vibraphone, in addition to drum kit. We're going to explore the main groove in $\frac{9}{8}$.

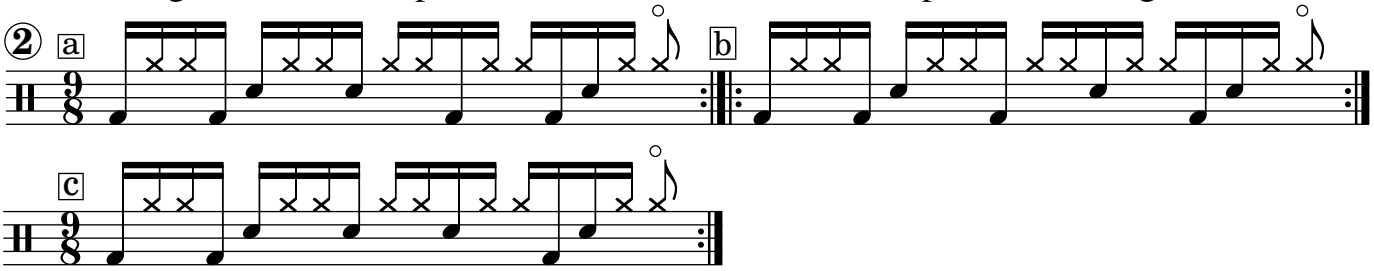


Looking at letter a, you might detect inverted and backward paradiddle patterns, but it's more important to notice the hi-hat is always played as doubles.

It's also important to recognize the snare backbeats fall on 2 and the '&' of 4. The bass drums in the middle of the measure hint at 3:4. The hi-hat will step closed on the downbeat of 1.

① a – You can count this in 9, but it might be easier to think of it in 5, without the '&' of 5.
① b – Bruford's original intent was to have two halves of nearly equal strength, and he divides it into 5 and 4.

Substituting snare drum in place of bass drum in the middle portion of the groove.



a – Bass on 'a' of 2 becomes snare
b – Bass on '&' of 3 becomes snare
c – Both above bass drum hits become snare hits

You can use any and all of the above snare patterns for the variations on the next page.

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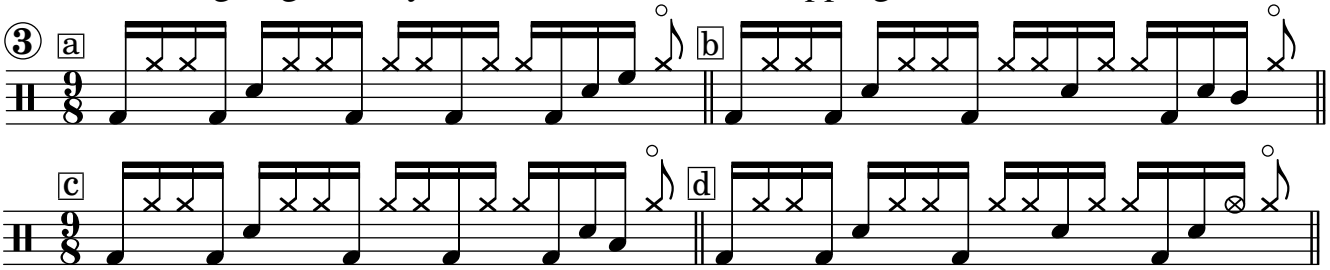
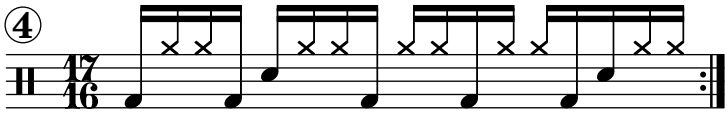
Sound source substitutions for the ‘a’ of 4. We’re going to use toms and the bell of the ride for these substitutions. This will cause us to have to play the open hi-hat at the end of the measure with our left hand.

You can play these on other sound sources as well, depending on your kit configuration. You can play each measure multiple times, or treat all the examples as a 4-bar phrase, playing each one once and going directly into the next without stopping.



a – first rack tom
b – second rack tom
c – floor tom
d – bell of ride

By removing the open hi-hat at the end and turning the 8th note into a 16th note, we are now in the time signature of $\frac{17}{16}$. This really places an emphasis on the hi-hat doubles throughout the bar and creates a very circular and organic groove, since there’s no more space at the end.



Let’s take the ‘snare-hat-hat’ ending to the previous example and play that twice in a row. This adds three 16th notes to the $\frac{17}{16}$ groove, extending it to $\frac{5}{4}$. Using the ② a example here results in a repeated $\frac{5}{8}$ pattern. This is quite effective, with two bass hits followed by two snare hits.