

R I T M I C A

J. E. GRAMANI

A unique approach to rhythmic development

Presented by Rogerio Boccato

"The 'Ritmica' system, as taught by Rogerio Boccato, required that I perceive rhythm, meter, counterpoint, and sub-division in a whole new way. It was the most exciting rhythm-pedagogy breakthrough that I have ever encountered". Benjamin Toth, Professor of Percussion
The Hartt School, University of Hartford

The purpose of this program is to develop a deeper concept of rhythm as a MUSICAL element, moving beyond arithmetic and counting to something that is more melodic and intuitive. Directed to all musicians (instrumentalists, vocalists, composers and conductors, from both classical and jazz backgrounds), "Ritmica" is a unique approach to rhythmic development and rhythmic ear training.

The focus of this course is COUNTERPOINT instead of vertical relationships between different lines. Something different and more musical arises out of combining independent rhythmic parts in a way that emphasizes their independence: as voices, each one with its own characteristics and personality, happening simultaneously.

Using various types of rhythmic exercises this program will work on the students' ability to concentrate, improving inner discipline, flexibility, helping students to adapt his/her attention to new kinds of associations and relationships. In this way, the musician can overcome arithmetical challenges, "de-conditioning" his response to rhythm, leading to a more fully aware musical execution.

This program is based on the book "Ritmica" (1988), written by José Eduardo Gramani (1942-1998), a prominent Brazilian professor, composer and violinist. Most of the exercises were created by putting together irregular rhythmic elements against regular rhythmic sequences, and exploring the contrast between them. These exercises are difficult to master using only traditional arithmetical thinking and lead the student to perform the tasks in a MUSICAL way.

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Generally, the exercises are based over the following ideas:

- Rhythmic series against ostinatos;
- Rhythmic motifs in odd meters (5 and 7) over a regular pulse;
- Binary subdivisions over ternary subdivisions;
- Alternation of various meters/time signatures over a regular pulse;
- Rhythmic “melodies” with various meters/time signatures over ostinatos.

The Author

José Eduardo Gramani (1942-1998) was a Professor, composer, concert master of the Campinas Symphony Orchestra, and director of many chamber music groups. As a composer, Gramani dedicated his work to the rescue of the Brazilian musical heritage, especially that of the rabeca, a traditional Brazilian fiddle.

Rogério Boccato had the privilege of studying this material with Professor Gramani himself at The State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) for eight semesters during his undergrad work, and has been teaching it since 2000 in Brazil and the US.