



PRESENTS
JAZZ WORKSHOP SERIES



Drum Master Class

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In my life I have been fortunate enough to study with some of the best and more knowledgeable music teachers in the world. This collection of notes would not exist without the intellect and passion that moved these great artists toward finding the best tools to “pass the information on”. All the exercises are credited. Very humbly, I am adding a few exercises of my own

ALWAYS PRACTICE WITH THE METRONOME

Posture mistakes

- Sit on the front part of the chair
- Knee should form a 90 degrees or more angle for legs. An angle <90 would prevent your leg to move comfortably
- Hand/wrist/forearm **should** be AS STRAIGHT AS POSSIBLE
- Elbows should not be tense
- Back should not be bent. Lower back should be straight, yet relaxed
- Do not over squeeze hands on stick

Time

Swing pattern is driven by quarter notes

Find space for the eighth notes. Listen and analyze how drummers articulate the eight notes.

First practice from 40bpm on.

Flam exercise (as explained by Tony Arco, possibly from Alan Dawson)

“Make the metronome swing” exercise (as explained by Ben Street)

1. Cymbal beat balanced with other components
2. Snare (practice quarters as the faster subdivision first, then triplets and eighths...)
3. Hi Hat – 3 techniques: heel down, bouncing toes, alternated
4. Bass Drum – feathering on each quarter

Sound

- 1) hit the centre of each drum, unless you choose to do otherwise
- 2) ride is played at 1/3 (or little more) from the edge (find the sweet spot)
- 3) find the sweet spot for cross-stick
- 4) practice rim shot

Along with the many resources available to work on your coordination (Syncopation, Jim Chapin, The Art of Bop Drumming etc. etc.), it’s also useful to employ these simple, yet creative exercises to increase your proficiency

Melodic Approach to coordination

#1

- Sing a 2 or 4 bar simple drum melody
- Play your phrase on the set
- Now play cymbal beat while playing your phrase (left hand) on set
- Resolve any coordination issue you may find
- Emphasize natural accents and be aware of point of rhythmic tension/release of your phrase
- Work on orchestration and sound

#2

Take a standard tune – Learn to sing its melody (listen to singers recordings)

- Play the beat and sing melody
- Play the melody
- Play around the melody
- Solo while you sing

Alan Dawson's use of Stick Control (attached)

Comping

The Eight Bar Exercise (as taught by Tony Moreno. Originally from Elvin Jones!!!)

Play 7 bars in 4/4 keeping the cymbal traditional swing pattern and phrasing with bass drum and snare as if you were comping (not soling)

On the eight bar, break the swing pattern and play a more “modern” phrasing, always keeping comping..

Resolve the eight measure on the end of 4

Write down 8 cymbal variations to be played during this exercise.

Rhythmic Awareness

- Bembe Exercise (as taught by Danilo Perez)

While standing up play the bembe pattern in 6/8 using the sticks as clave

Stomp your feet on the first note of each of the implied triplets

Now stomp your feet on the second note of each of the implied triplets

Now on the third note

Keep playing the bembe while changing the position of the feet

- Tony Moreno had me working on a book called “Rhythmic Matrix”, written by guitarist Miles Okazaki.

Practice

Routine

Being able to carry out long practice routines may be something you could be interested on. The key is to design a program of studies that contains a number of different and diverse topics in order to make your practice time efficient and well balanced. For example, let's suppose to allot 1 hour for each topic:

#1 - Purely technical work – hands technique (rolls, rudiments, marches, speed and control on pad and/or snare). This way your hands are ready for the day ahead

#2 – Quantitative work on the drumset: on this second hour you should work on a particular topic that requires simply time and repetition. Patterns, technical exercises on the set, accessible independence exercises such as Syncopation for example. This boosts your will because after two hours you have already played a lot of drums.

#3 – Qualitative/Intellectual work – while still mentally fresh you could work metric material, difficult readings, rhythmic awareness or advanced independence. It's time to get stuck, time to use your brain, time to deal with the more “nerdy” material. After all, you have already done a lot of work, you can take your time to understand now...

#4 – Transcription and copying. Study the style of your favorite drummers (see below how you could do it). Transcribe, listen, repeat. Stick to one drummer at the time and be thorough.

#5 – Styles: Brazilian, Funk, Latin, Drum&Bass you name it. On your 4th hour you can explore other styles using a method, listening to records

#6 – Play along: take one of your playlists (see below) or play along an album. Forget about everything you just studied, now it's time to play.

Practicing with music

Playlist

Make yourself playlists organized according to tempo and/or genre (ex.: a playlist for medium tunes, or a playlist for latin tunes for example). Each playlist should be 40/50 minutes long, so you have enough time to work on a given topic, but at the same time one playlist can be integrated into a practice routine.

Suggestions:

Play a recording on headphones

Listen, then take off headphones and try to imitate with and without a metronome

If you are playing along a record, it is generally advised to use a loudspeaker. It allows you to listen better to your own sound and, specially, it forces you to “adjust” your volume to the source of sound, a necessary skill for all drummers.

RESOURCES

(not by any mean are these exhaustive lists – they are just meant to give you a direction)

Drum Books

- Jim Chapin book (advanced technique for modern drummer)
- Ted Reed – Syncopation
- John Ramsay – The drummer’s complete vocabulary as taught by Alan Dawson
 - >rudiments (rudimental ritual)
 - >12 ways of working with Syncopation
- Gary Chaffee- Pattern series (4 books)
 - >technique, rhythm, sticking, linear
- Bob Moses - Drum Wisdom (advanced!)
- Charles Wilcoxon-marches

A few artists to keep in mind

Miles Davis: Working, Steaming, Relaxing, Cooking, Milestones, Kind of Blue, 4 And More (1964 concert), Round Midnight, 7 Steps to Heaven... and many more 1950s-1960s

Quintet of Clifford Brown and Max Roach - anything

Thelonious Monk: Brilliant Corners, anything

Sonny Rollins: Saxophone Colossus

McCoy Tyner: Inception, the Real McCoy, Today And Tomorrow, Reaching Fourth

Chick Corea: Now He Sings Now He Sobs, 3 Quartets

Herbie Hancock: Invention and Dementia

Coltrane: Blue Train, Giant Steps, Crescent, Love Supreme, Soul Trane

Ahmad Jamal: Ahmad’s Blues, Poinciana

Art Blakey: Caravan, Ugetsu, Moanin

Charles Mingus: Mingus Ah Oh, Pithecanthropus Erectus, The Clown, Mingus

Mingus Mingus

Charlie Parker

Horace Silver: Capo Verdean Blues and

Duke Ellington

Fletcher Henderson

Remember to always listen to singers, as they are the melody specialists. As drummers, we need to pay special attention to melodies. Even if we are not

trained singer, is very useful to learn to sing and to keep track of a melody in our head while we play. Learn the arch of a melody, the lyrics, and how it dictates the form of a tune. Never get tired to listening to these artists:

Ella Fitzgerald
Billie Holiday
Sarah Vaughan
Carmen McRae
Dinah Washington
Betty Carter
Joe Williams
Frank Sinatra

Suggested Readings

Ted Gioia: History of Jazz
Delta Blues
Art Taylor: Notes and Tones
Black Music by Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka)
Lewis Porter book on Coltrane
Beyond Category (book on Duke Ellington)
Lost Sounds (amazing book on Afro American recording industry)

Documentary

Ken Burns series on jazz

Videos

Jack Dejohnette

If needed, more material on metric studies, rudiments, technique, independence, Latin and Brazilian rhythms will be supplied in class.

HANDOUTS

Handout #1 – Danilo Perez’ enlightening drill on 6/8

Handout #2 – A solo reading from seminal book “Advanced techniques for the modern drummer” by Jim Chapin

Handout #3 – A second reading from Chapin’s book. I once had a very interesting lesson on this book with Nasheet Waits. It’s funny how this book can be explored at different levels of comprehension.

Handout #4 – Excerpt from George Stone’s Stick Control. Will be employed according to Alan Dawson guidelines for soloing purposes.

Handout #5 – The “always modern” idea of resolution point theorized first by visionary drummer Bob Moses. A must-know in my opinion.

Handout #6 – My transcription of a Roy Haynes trading.

score

6/8 Rhythmic Independence Exercise

Danilo Pere

The image shows a musical score for a 6/8 Rhythmic Independence Exercise. It consists of four systems, each with two staves (treble and bass clef). Each system is labeled with a circled number: #1, #2, #3, and #4. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and beams, designed to develop independent rhythmic control in both hands.

Solo Exercise I A

The musical score for Solo Exercise I A is presented in six systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system features rhythmic notation with 'x' marks, while the bottom staff contains a melodic line with notes and rests. The piece begins with a common time signature (C) and a fermata over the first note. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accents, and dynamic markings.

easy bounce

-3-

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "easy bounce". The score is written on six staves. The top staff is a drum set part, indicated by a drum set symbol (a circle with an 'S' and a cross) and a common time signature (C). The notes are represented by 'x' marks on a five-line staff. The second staff is a melodic line in treble clef, starting with a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one flat (Bb). It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets indicated by a '3' below the notes. The third staff continues the melodic line, with a first ending bracket labeled '1' and a second ending bracket labeled '2'. The fourth staff has a double bar line followed by a repeat sign and the word "fine" above it. The fifth and sixth staves continue the melodic line, with triplets and a final double bar line. The score concludes with the notation "D.S. al fine" and a drum set symbol.

25 R R L L R L L R L L R R L R R L

26 R R L L R R L R L L R R L L R L

27 R R L L L L R R R L L L R R

28 R R L L R R R L R R L L R R R L

29 L L R R L L L R L L R R L L L R

30 R R L L R L L L R R L L R L L L

31 L L R R L R R R L L R R L R R R

32 R R L L R R R R L L R R L L L L

33 R L R R L R R L R L R R L R R L

34 L R L L R L L R L R L L R L L R

35 R L R R L L R L R R R L L R L

37 R L R R R L R R R L R R R L R R R

38 L R L L L R L L L R L L L L R L L L

39 R L R R L L L R L R L L R R R L

40 R L R R L R R R L R L L R L L L

41 R L R R L L L L R L R R L L L L

42 L R L L R R R R L R L L R R R R

43 R L L R L L R L R L R L L R L L R L

44 L R R L R R L R L R L L R R L R

45 R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R

46 L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L

47 R L R R L L L R L R R L R R R L

the eight points

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Once you accept the 8/8 flow as a useful concept, the next logical conclusion is that there are eight points in the bar that you can resolve to: the four upbeats and the four downbeats. For some reason, the way music has been taught in this country, people learn to think that the 1 is the most important beat in the bar. In fact, it's not the most important, and in some ways, as a resolution point, it might even be the least important. I feel that you should be able to resolve equally well to any one of the eight points. By "resolve" I mean that you can start a phrase somewhere before any given point and have it land naturally and easily on that point.

The way to master the eight points is not an intellectual process, but is best achieved by becoming familiar with how they feel. They each have a distinctly different feeling. There is as much difference between 4 and the & of 4 as there is between the color blue and the color green. This leads back to attitude. One of my concepts of music — which I apply to all instruments and all music — is that every note should be played for a reason. When I play an & of 4, I play it because it has a certain feeling, and it is my conscious choice to play that feeling.

One of the basic rules of any kind of communication is to choose your subject matter. Know what it is that you want to get across. For example, if I were giving a speech, I wouldn't have a sentence about politics, and then a sentence about baseball, and then a sentence about ice cream: I would choose one topic. Perhaps I would say different things about the topic from night to night. One night I could be very abstract; another night I could be funny; another night I could be sad or serious. But my audience would always know what my chosen topic was, because I would stay with the topic I chose.

The same is true with the resolution points. It is important to realize that, because they each have a unique feeling, jumping randomly from one to another is like changing topics in a speech. This is not to say that you can never use more than one point at a time, or that you can't use combinations of points, but again, you must know exactly how each point feels, and you must consciously choose to use that feeling.

Let me now bring up something which makes this easier: Although there are eight points in the bar, there are really only four different feelings. Although there *is* a difference between the 1 and the 3, these points *feel* very similar. Likewise, the 2 and the 4 have a similar feeling, as do the & of 1 and the & of 3, and the & of 2 and the & of 4. I am going to give you a methodology for working on each of the eight points, but because of the similarity of feeling, I am going to first discuss them in groups of two.

1 and 3

To me, the 1 and the 3 are anchors. They tend to stop forward motion, almost like putting a stake in the ground. They tend to give a feeling of reaching the end, and for that reason, I tend to use these the least of all resolution points. Ironically enough, they are the ones that almost everybody seems to be able to do.

2 and 4

These are very valuable resolution points. They are where the "swing" resides. These are the beats that you snap your fingers on or clap your hands to. These are the beats that make it swing, and resolving on these beats is very effective.

The & Of 1 and The & Of 3

To me, these feel like an elbow in the ribs; they have kind of a jerky feeling that wakes you up. They also remind me of a contraction; they have a "pulling in" kind of motion. They are very effective because they tend to propel the music.

The & Of 2 and The & Of 4

These are the opposite of the previous feeling; they are like an expansion rather than a contraction. They are a stretching — a leaning forward. There is a famous Miles Davis

composition called "Four" that is based on the & of 2 and the & of 4.



If I had to pick one point that is the most important, I would pick the & of 4. But again I stress: Don't skip any of them. They are all important.

METHODOLOGY FOR MASTERING THE EIGHT POINTS

In the following pages, we're going to deal with each resolution point individually. To do that effectively, we will work with two-bar phrases. Let's look at the reason for that. The idea behind a resolution point is that it gives you an element of repetition that is necessary for groove. We do not necessarily need something that repeats in every bar, however, because we are not just hitting these points, but rather, we are resolving to them. One bar doesn't really give you enough room to resolve. In order to have enough room to make a resolution, most of the time we're going to want at least a two-bar phrase. It could, in fact, be longer than a two-bar phrase, but in this book we will focus on two-bar phrases because they are so basic and common to music.

I feel that it is very valuable to visualize music whenever you can. You should not just hear it, but also see it. When working from a resolution point, start by visualizing a two-bar phrase with a "grid" of 8th notes, which you will use as your framework.



The next step is to zero in on one of the points. For the moment we will pick the & of 4 in the first bar, and we will mark that point with an accent. (Note: In actual practice, the resolution point does not necessarily have to be the loudest note in the bar, but more about that later.)



So, you are now visualizing a two-bar phrase of 8th notes, and one of the notes has been chosen as your resolution point.

The ability to internalize the 8/8 framework with a resolution point in it is the key to freedom on the drums. Working off of a point will give you the element of repetition that is necessary for groove, but it will also allow you all the freedom you could ever want. In other words, that one point — in this case, the & of 4 — is always going to be there, and that's enough to give your playing the cohesion it needs. Around that point though, you can be playing different things all the time. The things that lead to or follow that point can be constantly changing.

There is another advantage to using a point: It can help you keep good time. Some people have trouble with rushing or dragging, and one of the reasons is that it is very difficult to memorize pure pulse. After a few minutes, it can become a shade faster or slower. Granted, few people have metronomically perfect time; nevertheless, you want it to be as close as possible. A resolution point helps with this by serving as an "aural landmark." After hitting the point consistently for even one minute, it starts to become inevitable. You become so used to hearing the point in its exact spot in the phrase that, if you should get even a little off it, you will immediately be aware of it.

We are now going to apply these concepts to each of the eight points. Since we are dealing with two-bar phrases, we have a choice of putting each point in the first bar or the second bar. Therefore, we are talking about 16 possibilities, and we will deal with each of the 16 in the following pages.

Handwritten musical notation for a drum set, consisting of four systems of staves. Each system is numbered 1 through 4. System 1 shows a snare drum line with 'x' marks above it. System 2 shows a bass drum line with 'L' and 'R' markings. System 3 shows a hi-hat line. System 4 shows a cymbal line. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, accents, and dynamic markings.

ROY HAYNES "TRADING" FROM "WHEN SUNNY GETS BLUE"

ON JAKI BYARD "OUT FRONT" (1961)

TRANSCRIPTION BY PAOLO ORLANDI