

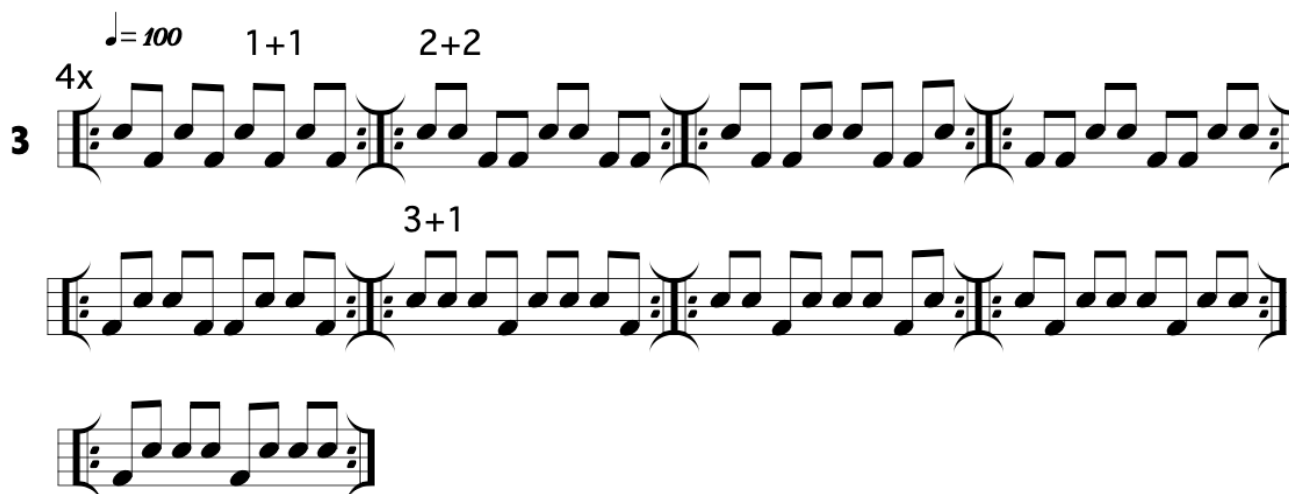
CHAPTER 1 (continued)

It's necessary to develop the ability to play running lines of eighth notes between your snare drum and bass drum against the cymbal and hi-hat pattern, so now I'm going to demonstrate a series of combinations of 1 note with the hand, 1 note with the foot, 2 notes with the hand, 2 notes with the foot and 3 notes with the hand, 1 note with the foot.

$\text{♩} = 100$ 1+1 2+2

4x

3



Notice that when I play these running lines of eighth notes, the spacing of my snare drum and bass drum has the same kind of triplet swing feel as the way I play the cymbal pattern.

Here's one more phrase to check out: 2 notes with the hand and 1 note with the foot.

2+1

4



Once you are comfortable with this collection of 1+1, 2+1, 2+2, and 3+1, the next step is to improvise with these ideas. While thinking in four-bar phrases, add rests inside the combinations and try to create a flowing melodic line between your snare drum and bass drum, like this:

$\text{♩} = 180$

5



CHAPTER 3 (continued)

emulation. My teachers and other musicians gave me all kinds of eye-and ear-opening advice and encouragement. Playing in bands allowed me to see just how thoroughly I had assimilated the music. I continue to develop in exactly the same fashion today; I am most dedicated and most focused on developing the things I am most curious about in this moment.

Musical Signals

We've all had the experience of playing a song with a band and having one of the other musicians play a reference to another song. I know when that happens it makes me feel good because it's an indication that that musician and I have enjoyed listening to the same recordings. He plays a quote from one song inside another song, and that sends a signal that influences how I play the music. I may recall the way the song that the quote came from went and have that shape my accompaniment of him because I know he likes that kind of song.

This kind of communication is not a one-way street. It's not just guitar players sending signals to drummers, or saxophone players sending it to drummers. Drummers can send these signals to the other musicians as well. We do this by playing phrases that they might have heard in their favorite recordings. So, like the simple coordination stuff we started with, I'd like to give you a collection of classic jazz phrases that will help you improve your movement around the drums and will give you lots of ideas for creating interesting solos.

Vocabulary

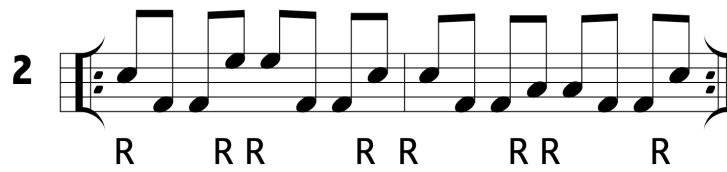
The first phrase is a two-measure phrase that Max Roach often played. It's in sixteenth notes: six notes on the high tom, six notes on the snare, a paradiddle on the floor tom, a paradiddle between the snare and floor tom, then four notes on the snare, four notes on the high tom and four notes on the snare.



What I particularly like about this phrase is the way it changes direction. Max was a master of elegant hand combinations. His movements are most efficient—always moving on the easy hand. He incorporates the paradiddle in the middle of the phrase to help him change direction.

CHAPTER 3 (continued)

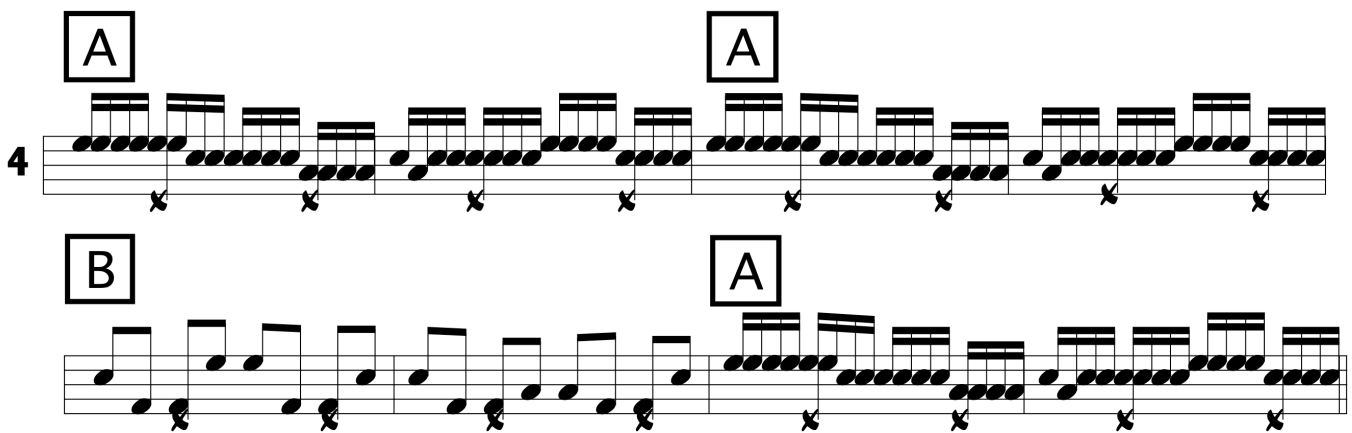
The next phrase is a much simpler one, but it was played by many of the greats. It's an eighth-note phrase broken up between the snare drum and bass drum.



Now if I combine that phrase with the first phrase, you get something like this:



In this example I was thinking in double time: 1234,1234,1234,1234. Let me play it again, thinking regular time.



I hope you noticed the way I organized those two phrases. I played the first phrase twice, the Max Roach phrase, then I played the phrase with just the right hand once. I concluded the story by repeating the first phrase again and that tied a nice bow on the entire phrase by giving it a clear symmetry. In fact, many songs have a similar kind of construction where they play a phrase and then they repeat that phrase. Then they play a new phrase and conclude by coming back to the first

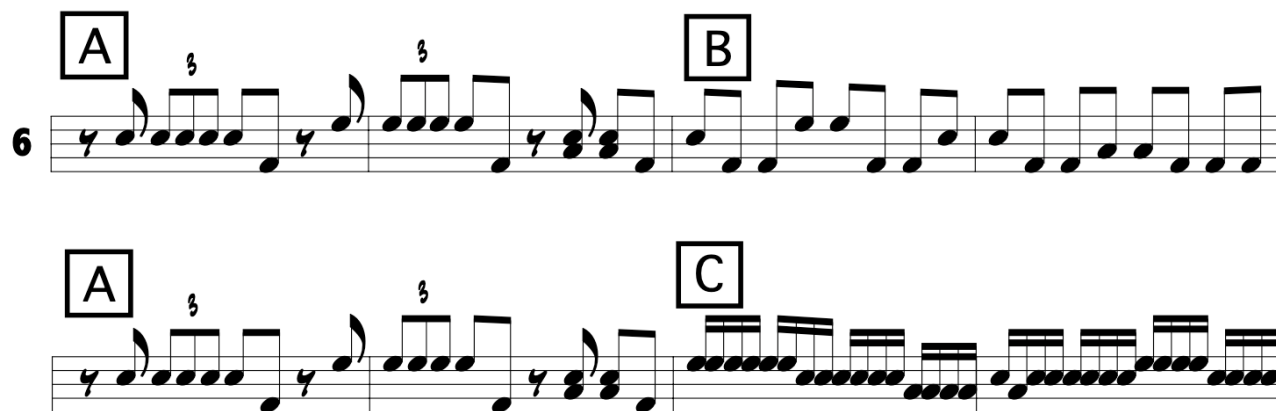
CHAPTER 3 (continued)

phrase. This structure is referred to as AABA. The first phrase is called A, and A is repeated. The new phrase is called B, and we conclude with a final repetition of A. This is a very logical structure, and it's really useful to help us communicate our ideas.

The next phrase is based on eighth-note triplets, and it unfolds across the barline by suggesting the idea of playing in 3/4 over 4/4.



That's a phrase that Max Roach played, that Art Blakey played, that Roy Haynes played, that Philly Joe Jones played, and it can be integrated with the first two phrases as well.



Iowa Day of Percussion, 2010

CHAPTER 4: Musicianship

Lessons Learned on the Bandstand

We've discussed technique, we've discussed groove and we've discussed creativity. Musicianship is really the assimilation of all those components and the integration of them with a band. So, in addition to having good time and fluid movement, making good judgments about what to play is the final piece of the puzzle.

As a student at North Texas, I was really stimulated by my teachers and the other students. The only down side of being there was that Denton, Texas wasn't a stop on the touring schedule of many bands in those days. I can count on one hand the number of times I got to hear one of the legends play live. There was a club in Dallas called Mother Blues which occasionally booked jazz acts, and I was excited to learn that Dizzy Gillespie was set to do a couple nights there. To be honest, at age 19 I didn't really know much about Dizzy except that he was a jazz icon, so I should go hear him. The music I was most captivated with at that time was the music of John Coltrane with Elvin Jones, Miles Davis with Tony Williams and the contemporary bands like Tower of Power and Weather Report. Bebop wasn't really on my radar screen yet.

Anyway, I made a reservation to see Dizzy on his second night at Mother Blues. Some of my schoolmates went the first night and returned to tell me how great the concert was and that they especially loved Dizzy's drummer Mickey Roker. This made me anticipate the concert even more.

So I went to the club and when I checked in the doorman said, "You're John Riley? We've been trying to reach you because we heard you are a good jazz drummer. Mickey Roker got suddenly ill and can't play tonight, so you've got to play with Dizzy." As I said, I didn't know Dizzy's music and nearly died on the spot.

Well, I met Dizzy on the bandstand and he was really relaxed and kind of joking around; this was comforting. Before the first tune he announced to the audience that they were in for a very special evening because he was introducing a new talent that he just discovered—and I hadn't played a note!

Dizzy turned his back to the audience and said to me: "We're going to start with 'Con Alma.' Do you know it?" I said, "No." He said, "No problem. It's in 12/8, whatever that means to you." We played "Con Alma"; I have no idea what it sounded like, but it felt really easy to me. Afterwards, Dizzy turned to me and said, "We're going to play 'Salt Peanuts.' Do you know it?" I said, "Sorry, no." He said, "That's OK. It is a fast swinger. You start it, whatever tempo you like." The rest of the night proceeded in the same fashion. I'm certain I didn't sound anything like Mickey Roker, but Dizzy was really encouraging. After the gig he gave me his number and told me to look him up if I ever get to New York.

CHAPTER 4 (continued)

So what's the point of my telling this story? My point is that the truly great musicians understand how, and make adjustments, to play together. Dizzy knew that it would be easier for him to hear just what I was capable of and adjust his playing to that reality than it would be for me—the young, inexperienced, aspiring post-bop drummer—to adjust. Dizzy could have made me look like a fool on the bandstand by playing things that I couldn't deal with, but he knew that that would be no great accomplishment for him, that it would not make pleasant listening for the audience and that it would depress me to no end.

The lesson from Dizzy is this: Musicianship means seeing the big picture and doing everything you are capable of to make the music as a whole sound as good as possible.

As my experience with Dizzy showed us, it's really helpful to have an appreciation and understanding of the challenges the other musicians are going through when they are playing. That information will inform you how to accompany them.



With Dizzy Gillespie at Mother Blues, Dallas, Texas, 1974