

10 Comping Etudes for Jazz Drum Set

Volume 1: Quarter and Eighth Notes

By Eric A. Binder
Foreword by Joseph Farnsworth

Contact: ericbinderjazz@gmail.com

ISBN: 978-1-68489-614-1
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INTRODUCTION

To “Comp” means to accompany. As a drummer, we accompany ourselves, the rhythm section, and most importantly, the soloist. The idea of the drummer comping between the snare drum and bass drum, while playing the “spang-a-lang” cymbal beat on the ride, with 2+4 on the hi-hat, became popular during the Bebop era, with drummers Kenny “Klook” Clarke and Max Roach. During this time, the drummer’s role grew to being an equal participant in the group improvisation. The drummer was now improvising ideas in a supportive, contrapuntal way, between the hand and foot. Comping in support of the music.

The dialog between the snare and bass drum better supported, and stimulated the dialog between the drummer and soloist. As the complexity of the melody and harmony developed, the comping style of the drummer did as well.

The coordinative aspect of comping as a drummer can be challenging. Balance is key. The ride cymbal should always be on top, driving the bus. The hi-hat on 2+4 supports the feel of the ride beat. The dialog between the snare and bass drum should sit underneath. As the rhythmic complexity of the ideas increase, the coordinative difficulty also increases.

We practice this coordination not to regurgitate these ideas while playing, but to gain the facility necessary to articulate the ideas being created within the music. What we play **MUST ALWAYS SERVE THE MUSIC.**

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

“10 Comping Etudes for Jazz Drum Set” will be presented in three volumes. Each volume will feature ten comping etudes which are “melodies” between the snare and bass drum. This first volume features quarter notes and eighth notes exclusively. Over the course of ten etudes the rhythmic ideas become more complex.

You will notice that there are no metronomic markings or dynamics. This is because each etude is meant to be used as a multi-purpose exercise, played at varied tempos, and dynamics.

Please remember, these etudes are not meant to be mimicked as comping ideas. They are to be used to gain the facility and coordination necessary to comp freely, without hesitation.

ONE

The musical score is written for a drum set and piano. The drum part is on a single staff with a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a snare drum hit on the first beat, followed by a triplet of eighth notes on the snare drum in the second and third measures. The piano accompaniment consists of six staves. The first two staves are in the right hand, and the last four are in the left hand. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The first measure of the piano part includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The score concludes with a double bar line at the end of the sixth piano staff.

RIDE AND HI HAT CONTINUE...