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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of “Coach” John Moawad. John Moawad was a professional jazz drummer, jazz vocalist, classical percussionist and timpanist prior to becoming the Jazz Studies Director and Percussion Instructor at Central Washington University from 1970-1998.



John Moawad was a “walking encyclopedia” of jazz. He amassed an enormous collection of recordings, big band and vocal jazz ensemble charts and videos. His knowledge of jazz was so extensive that he could tell you names of band members, singers, what bands they were in, the years they played, what recordings they were on and more!

From 1981-1985, I was fortunate to be the drummer for John Moawad’s, Central Washington University Jazz Band 1. During rehearsals he would often play the drums for for me to show me exactly how to interpret big band drum charts and lead a big band. He would say, “You have to learn how to drive the bus!” I literally had big band drumming lessons right there with the big band. It was the best education possible.

He taught me how to “kick the band” with many different kinds of set-ups. He introduced me to numerous recordings and would often stress the importance of playing authentically. “You have to learn to wear the hats,” he would often say—referring to listening to the great drummers and learning how to play in a variety of styles of music. He taught me the importance of dynamics and getting a good drum sound that complimented the sound of the band and style of music. John Moawad told me, “Pick a drummer you like. Get as many recordings as you can with that drummer. Listen and get to the point where you feel you have learned everything you can from that drummer. Then pick another drummer and do it all over again.”

Dedication

He had little patience for rhythmic errors saying, “Do the math on your own time. When you are in here (the rehearsal) we work on music and interpretation, not rhythms.” He taught me how to listen and accompany a soloist; how to play the ride cymbal, china cymbal and hi hats; how to play behind saxophone solis; and how to “put it to bed” with the bass drum at the end of a ballad. One of his statements about chart reading and performing was, “You have to stay focused from count-off to cut-off.” These are just a few examples of his many teachings.

John Moawad would often say, “Spread the wealth. Share your knowledge. Help your brothers and sisters.” I owe A LOT to this man and I am thrilled to be able to pass along his teachings to you.

“Garey is one of the finest drummers I’ve ever worked with, but he is probably the best drum set teacher I’ve helped produce.”

- John Moawad

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the key teachers and musicians that inspired my interest and education in big band drumming and music: my father, Burton J. Williams, for taking me to big band concerts while I was in grade school; the late Professor John Moawad for encouragement, understanding and providing a priceless education by playing drums for me in jazz band so many times to show me how it is done; Jeff Hamilton for encouraging me to pursue a jazz drumming career, teaching me some amazing brushes, how to relax, and how to get a great cymbal sound; Bruce Babad for your encouragement and support and all those great gigs!; Bob Hammer for the great compositions and arrangements; Nathaniel Paul Schleimer for making the Full Circle Jazz Ensemble come to life; Wayne Bliss for your excellent bass playing and recording skills; Eugene Bien for the tasty piano and horn arrangements; Brian Benedetti for his excellent videographer skills; and my wife, Valerie, for her unending support.

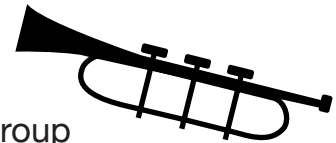
Part Two

Ensemble figures are rhythms written in or on the staff, though sometimes above the staff as well. The drummer's role is to “set-up” or “kick” these figures with fills using the snare drum, tom tom, floor tom, bass drum and crashing the cymbals, either with bass drum or snare drum. (Avoid striking all three.)

With ensemble figures the role of the drummer is to briefly stop playing time, play a fill that supports the style, dynamic and direction of the music. The fill should:

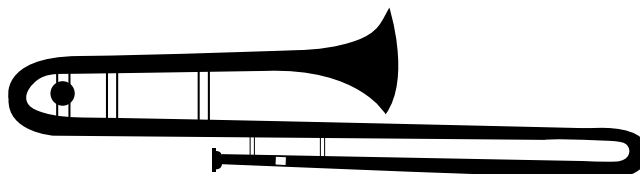
- a.) End on the beat before the figure so that the band can easily hear and feel where the figure begins and where they should play.
- b.) Support figures with crash/snare drum or crash/bass drum (avoid using all three voices at once).
- c.) The length of the set-up can relate to the length of the figure.

Short Figures = Short Set-Ups
Long Figures = Long Set-Ups



Solo Sections. Many charts contain a solo section where the rhythm section is backing a soloist in more of a combo or small group format. The drummer's role is to listen, respond to and interact with the soloist while keeping your place in the form of the music. When a smaller group of musicians are playing, the drummer has more room to add comping ideas and interact with the soloist in a “busier” manner. Choosing the right cymbals, comping behind the soloists, dynamics, etc. are all important considerations when playing behind the unique sound and range of the various solo instruments. In some cases, brushes may be more appropriate than sticks. If possible, look at the soloists if you can. We tend to listen to what we are looking at.

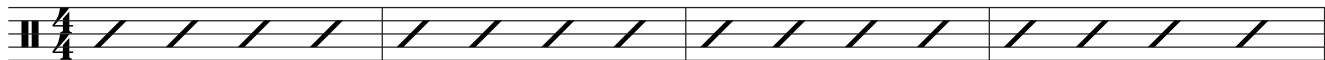
What if there is no drum chart? Get the lead trumpet music. Drummers need to work closely with the lead trumpet player for dynamics, articulations, etc. It's a good idea to compare a drum chart with a lead trumpet part to see how closely many of the ensemble figures relate to what is written on your drum chart. Attend sectionals by each of the sections: trumpets, trombones and saxophones to learn more about what they are playing. Your playing needs to be a reaction to what's going on around you. Hear the music as the audience would, one band-one sound, not just your part alone. The more musicians you are playing with, the less you need to play.



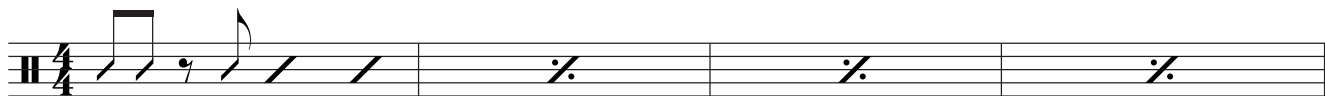
Part Three: Chart Symbols - The Road Map

Charts contain symbols and terms that we react to. The *road map* is an expression often used to designate where a chart begins, ends and the symbols and musical shorthand terms that the big band drummer needs to understand and learn. The more familiar you are with the “language” of charts, the more you can focus on listening. Following is a list of common terms, their definition and a notation symbol for each:

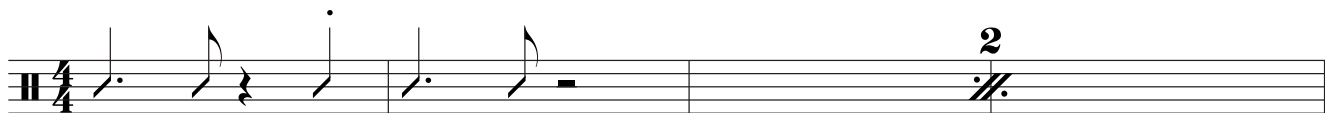
Time Slashes = Keep time while listening:



Measure Repeat = Repeat the preceding measure:



Two-Measure Repeat = Repeat the two preceding measures:



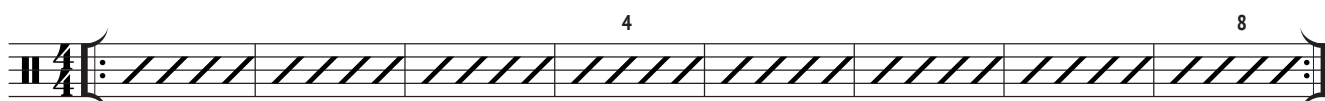
Double Bar = Phrase points in the music between sections:



Rehearsal Letters or Numbers = A, B, C, etc. or 9, 17 or 13, 25, etc. Indicate where to begin rehearsing. Often these are at the beginning of phrases:



Repeat Signs = Replay the measures between the repeat signs or repeat back to a phrase point, sometimes repeating several times:



Part Three

1st & 2nd Endings = The end of the phrase will be different the first time from the second time, indicated by the bracket over the measures in each ending. Take the 1st ending the first time through, then repeat. On the second time through take the 2nd ending:

A musical staff in 4/4 time. The first six measures are filled with diagonal lines. The seventh measure contains a quarter note followed by a repeat sign. A bracket labeled '1' spans the seventh and eighth measures. A second bracket labeled '2' spans the ninth and tenth measures. The staff ends with a double bar line.

Section Figures = Sometimes referred to as *background figures*, and are written above the staff. Play the figure on the SD or BD at the appropriate background volume:

A musical staff in 4/4 time. The first four measures are filled with diagonal lines. Above the fifth measure, the text "(Sxs.)" is written. Above the sixth measure, there is a musical figure consisting of a quarter note, a quarter rest, an eighth note, a quarter note, and a quarter rest. The staff ends with a double bar line.

Ensemble Figures = All three horn sections or the entire ensemble of horns will play the figure and it is written in or on the staff:

A musical staff in 4/4 time. The first four measures are filled with diagonal lines. Above the fifth measure, the text "Ens." is written. The fifth measure contains a quarter rest followed by a diamond-shaped symbol. The sixth measure contains a quarter note, a quarter rest, and an eighth note. The seventh measure contains a quarter note, a quarter rest, and a quarter note. The eighth measure contains a quarter note, a quarter rest, and a quarter note. The staff ends with a double bar line.

Fill = Play a fill for the suggested amount of time indicated:

A musical staff in 4/4 time. The first four measures are filled with diagonal lines. Above the fifth measure, a bracket labeled "Fill" spans the fifth and sixth measures. The staff ends with a double bar line.

Solo = Play a solo in the style of and for the designated amount of measures indicated.

A musical staff in 4/4 time. The first four measures are filled with diagonal lines. Above the fifth measure, the text "(Trpts.)" is written. Above the sixth measure, there is a musical figure consisting of a quarter note, a quarter rest, and a quarter note. Above the seventh measure, the text "Solo" is written. Above the eighth measure, the number "8" is written. The staff ends with a double bar line.