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Introduction

The purpose of this book is to give you the necessary tools to develop an authentic musical language on the drum set based on melodic content. The exercises and concepts provided here are designed to inspire creativity and challenge you to reach new levels of awareness and musical ability. Focusing on the melodic themes and phrases keeps the exercises rooted in a musical context rather than focusing only on independence or technical exercises. Using themes and melodies to develop strategies for comping and soloing helps to connect to the phrasing, form, and foundation of the music.

How To Use This Book

This book will help you develop your own concepts for *what* to play while playing time and soloing. The techniques introduced in Chapter 3 will give you the keys to create your own improvisations over the context of a phrase, form, tune, or style. Any one of the phrases in Chapter 4 can be developed using the concepts in Chapter 3. Furthermore, any of the phrases or melodies in the book can be applied to the comping steps and/or improvisation steps laid out in Chapters 1 and 2.

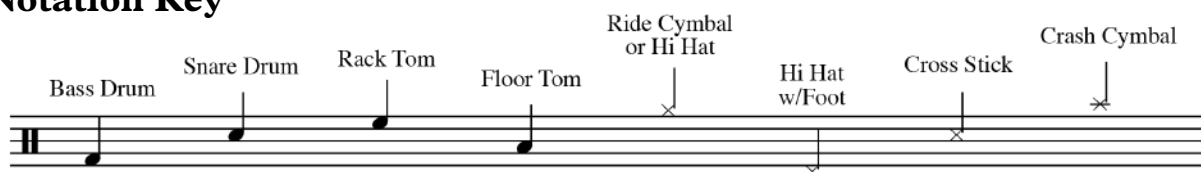
Pick one tune a week from the “Categorized Jazz Standards” list found in Chapter 6. Find five recordings of that tune (possibly from the “Recommended Listening” list) and learn how to sing the melody. Once you can sing the melody and have identified the form, you can create your own exercises based off of that melody. You can take a 1- or 2-bar theme from that melody and play it using the concepts in Chapter 3, or you can take the whole melody through the comping and improvisation steps in Chapters 1 and 2. Pretty soon, you will start to build up a repertoire of material that is rooted in the tradition through listening, but is innovative and fresh through your own improvisational approach. This is a tried and true way to develop authentic jazz language, in a realistic musical context, and will have you playing musical time and solos with thoughtful phrasing over the form relatively quickly.

* All of the eighth notes in this book should be played with a triplet “swing” time-feel unless otherwise noted. This is especially important in exercises with a ride cymbal beat, because the ride beat defines the swing feel for the whole band.

Videos, Recordings, and Play-alongs

Download links are available for recordings of each of the tunes presented in Chapter 5. These recordings are available as performance examples with drums, as well as play-alongs with the drums removed. There are also video performances of each of the tunes with the drums, so you can see how I approach playing this music. These are all available at www.waynesalzmänn.com.

Notation Key



Five Comping Steps in 4-Bar Phrases

(First 4 bars of "Between the Beats")

Step One: Sing - Listen to the included recording of this tune, and learn how to sing the melody.

Musical notation for Step One: Sing. The staff shows the melody in 4/4 time. Chords B \flat , B \flat 7, E \flat 7, and A \flat 7 are indicated above the staff.

Step Two: Snare Drum - While playing time with the ride cymbal, hi hat, and *feathering* the bass drum, play the melody on the snare drum with the left hand.

Musical notation for Step Two: Snare Drum. The staff shows the melody on the snare drum in 4/4 time.

Step Three: Two Voices - While playing time with the ride cymbal and hi hat, play the melody with the snare drum and bass drum. Pay close attention to the contour of the melody and the length of the notes.

Musical notation for Step Three: Two Voices. The staff shows the melody on the snare and bass drums in 4/4 time.

Step Four: Ride Cymbal - While playing 2 & 4 on the hi hat, play the melody on the ride cymbal with the right hand. Use the snare drum and bass drum to "support" the ride cymbal melody. If there is space or long notes in the melody, play quarter notes in the space to keep continuous time with the cymbal.

Musical notation for Step Four: Ride Cymbal. The staff shows the melody on the ride cymbal in 4/4 time.

Step Five: Space - While playing time with the ride cymbal and hi hat, use the bass drum and snare drum to comp in the spaces between the melody notes.

Musical notation for Step Five: Space. The staff shows the melody on the bass and snare drums in 4/4 time.