

The Big Band Drummer - Roles and Expectations

2020 - Mr. Nic Addelia

What role does a Jazz Drummer play??

-Four most important facets, in descending order

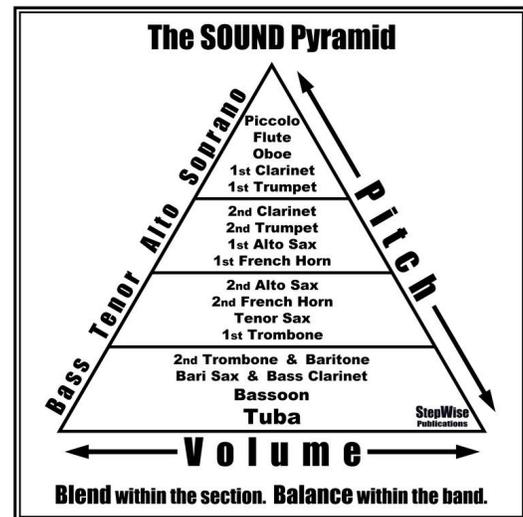
1. ABILITY TO KEEP STEADY TIME

2. Supporting the rhythm section (and the full band) by playing with appropriate style and energy level
3. “Setting up” and/or “kicking” the band with hits and rhythmic figures
4. Fills and/or improvising - while important, these are the LEAST important of these four ideas

The “Pyramid of Sound” applied to Drum Set

Imagine... in ROCK/POP music, the SNARE/BASS is on the bottom of this (loudest/most important), while the CYMBALS are on the top (quietest/not as much presence needed). **In JAZZ music, these levels are reversed - RIDE CYMBAL AND HI-HAT are at the bottom and need to be the loudest, as they are the foundation of the music.**

SNARE/BASS, etc., is now at the top of the pyramid, and does not need to be as loud or as present in the music.



Practicing comping concepts using Ted Reed’s “Syncope” (attached)

While maintaining a standard swing groove (Spang-a-lang on the ride cymbal, 2+4 on hi-hat, good accents and balance between limbs), perform the written rhythms, one at a time, on the snare drum with the left hand. Make sure that the notes line up *perfectly* with the rest of your limbs. If a rhythm is not lining up, stop, slow it down, and isolate limbs as needed.

1. Same rhythm on the same line as many times in a row as possible.
2. Once comfortable----move on to next rhythm & move between two lines fluidly

Groove Examples

Just a few sample grooves to get you started in the world of drumming... if your band director tells you that a song is “_____” style (insert name from below), these grooves will usually work in a pinch.

*****These are all just GUIDELINES. Modify and adapt as you grow. Cymbals can be swapped out, rhythms can be adjusted, experiment with snare vs. cross-stick, etc... have fun!*****

SWING IN 4
ON RIDE

Musical notation for a 4/4 swing groove on the ride cymbal. The top staff shows a steady eighth-note pattern: x | x x x | x x x | x x x |. The bottom staff shows a snare drum pattern: c | x x c | x x c | x x c |. The 'c' represents the cymbal and 'x' represents the snare.

SWING IN 2 (2-FEEL)
ON HI-HAT, LITE

Musical notation for a 2/4 swing groove on the hi-hat. The top staff shows a pattern: o | x x x | o | x x x |. The 'o' represents the hi-hat and 'x' represents the snare. The bottom staff shows a snare drum pattern: c | x x c | x x c | x x c |. There are plus signs (+) under the snare notes in the bottom staff.

BOSSA NOVA

Musical notation for a Bossa Nova groove. The top staff shows a steady eighth-note pattern: x | x x x | x x x | x x x |. The bottom staff shows a snare drum pattern: c | x x c | x x c | x x c |.

SAMBA
ON RIDE BELL

Musical notation for a Samba groove on the ride bell. The top staff shows a pattern: x | x x x | x x x | x x x |. The bottom staff shows a snare drum pattern: c | x x c | x x c | x x c |.

FUNK - TRY SWINGING 16THS FOR A HIP-HOP SHUFFLE!
USE 2 HANDS ON HH IF TOO FAST... THEN MOVE RH TO SNARE ON B. 2 & 4

Musical notation for a Funk/Hip-Hop Shuffle groove. The top staff shows a steady 16th-note pattern: x | x x x x x | x x x x x | x x x x x |. The bottom staff shows a snare drum pattern: c | x x c | x x c | x x c |.

Recommended Resources

Books

“**The Art of Bop Drumming**” - John Riley - one of the best books for drummers ready to kickstart their jazz “careers” in school and beyond - for beginners & pros alike.

“**Stick Control**” - George Lawrence Stone - Page 5 is a great hand warm-up.

“**Syncopation**” - Ted Reed - pages 32-36 are full of rhythms you can add to your “comping exercises” with the left hand while you play swing time on the kit.

“**The Drummer’s Complete Rudimental Vocabulary as Taught by Alan Dawson**” - John Ramsay - Great info throughout, specifically walks you through “Syncopation” permutations as mentioned with the previous book. Need the previous book as well. **ADVANCED!**

“**Latin Jazz Guide**” - James Dreier - Fantastic resource to learn all things Latin. Other books go more in-depth, but you can’t beat this for a (still quite dense!) one-stop shop.

YouTube - Lot of high quality AND low quality stuff on here. Surf with caution. I recommend videos by the channel “Drumeo” and the content creator Stephen Taylor.

<http://vicfirth.com/education-resource-library/> - Great place to explore. Tons of clinics, walkthroughs, groove examples, inspiration for classical and jazz percussionists alike.

Sticks

-Wood tip (darker sound)

-Small barrel tip or thin teardrop tip (more cymbal clarity vs. sphere, which is good for drums but not as good for cymbals)

-Thin, with a slight taper (less rebound, but more control and clarity)

My preferred choices: **Vic Firth** 7A, SD4 (combo), 8D, AJ1 (American Jazz Classics)

Recommended Listening List (from attached packet)

While this entire list is full of incredible, important artists, its length is a little overwhelming! :)

I recommend the following artists to give you a more clear starting point:

Max Roach (Absorb 100% of his work - near-perfect model of jazz drumming)

(The rest of these in alphabetical order, not necessarily order of importance)

Art Blakey (Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, “Moanin”)

Lionel Hampton (vibes, but you must know this side to succeed!!)

Roy Haynes (his earlier work with Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk)

The Headhunters (name of the group - tons of great drummers, esp. Ziggy Modeliste)

Elvin Jones (played with Wayne Shorter and John Coltrane, check out “Witch Hunt”)

Philly Jo Jones (John Coltrane’s “Blue Train” and Miles Davis’s “Milestones”)

Pat Metheny (guitarist, but has solid groups and fantastic drummers, esp. Antonio Sanchez)

Tony Williams (all great, but definitely check out Miles Davis’s “Four and More”)

Where are we going next?

Snarky Puppy (Jazz/Funk/World/Rock/Folk/Hip-Hop/R&B- check this group out)

Donny McCaslin (Jazz/Rock/Ambient/Surf-Rock - weird but cool stuff, great drummer)

Chris Potter (Forward-thinking sax player with great backing bands)

Nate Wood (Drummer, tons of awesome projects)

Gilad Hekselman (CRAZY guitarist, awesome drum and guitar duet stuff)

Christian Scott (trumpet player with very interesting “modern jazz” sound)

Esperanza Spalding (low-intensity jazz with a vocalist / some hip-hop influence)

The only way to truly grow is to *continue listening*. Jazz (or any music) does not exist in a vacuum. It is a growing, evolving thing, and you can evolve with it and become a better player if you continue to listen. Spotify, YouTube, local library, ask your teachers!

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Shevelia - my current jazz trio project: shevelia.weebly.com - search “Shevelia” on Youtube.