Composing with the view of a drummer

A research dedicated to the study of how to compose with the use of the drum-set

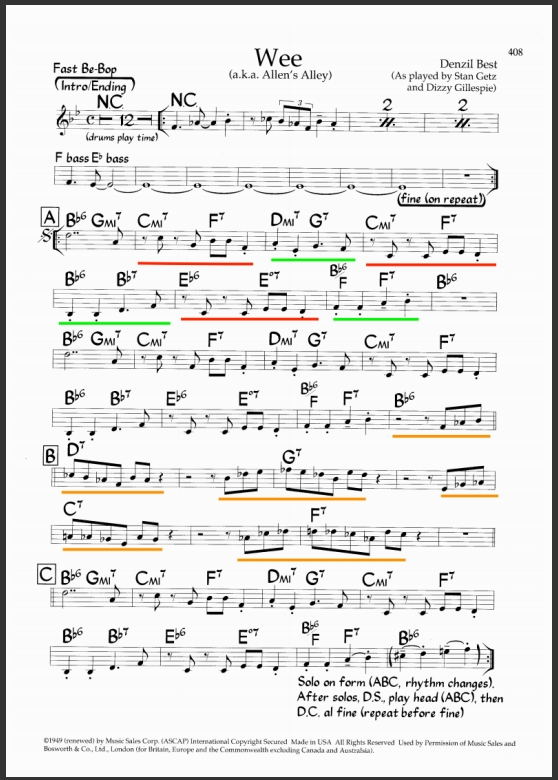
RQ: How can I develop as a composer and which techniques can I use by starting a composition from the drum-set?

Contents of my research

- A history of several drummers as composers
- Contemporary drummers/composers
- Composing from the drums-set, my own practice and development
- Reflection and feedback

A history of several drummers as composers

Denzil Best



Wee

(a.k.a. Allen's Alley)

Denzil Best

(As played by Stan Getz and Dizzy Gillespie)

408

Fast Be-Bop

(Intro/Ending)

NC

(drums play time)

F bass E♭ bass

(fine (on repeat))

A

B

C

Solo on form (ABC, rhythm changes).

After solos, D.S., play head (ABC), then D.C. al fine (repeat before fine)

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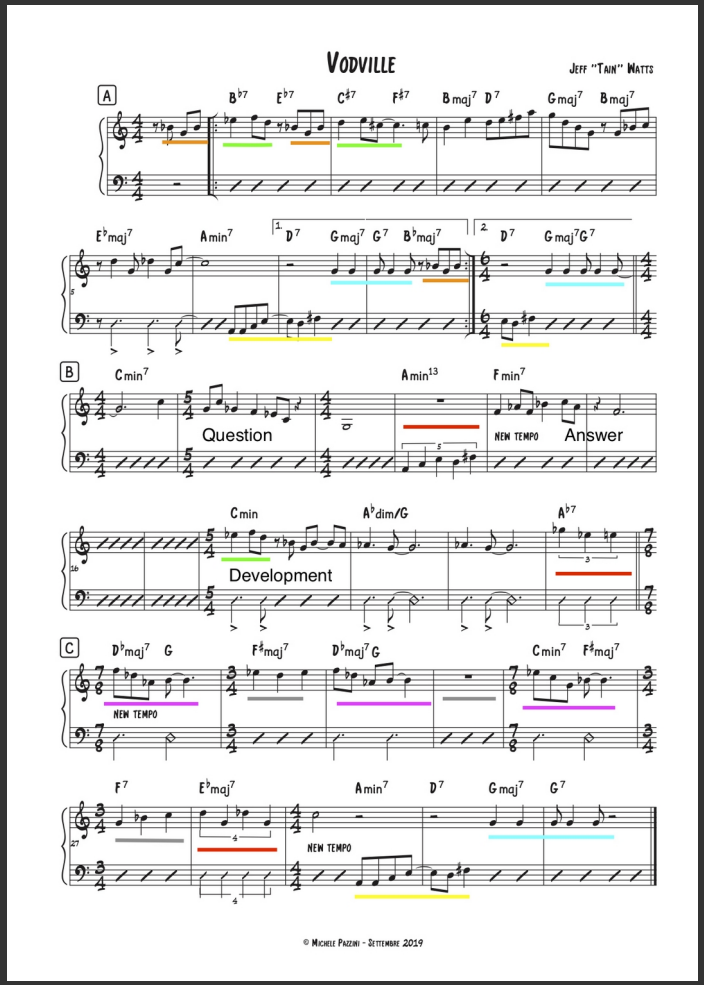
Max Roach, Paul Motian, Tony Williams

Contemporary drummers/composers

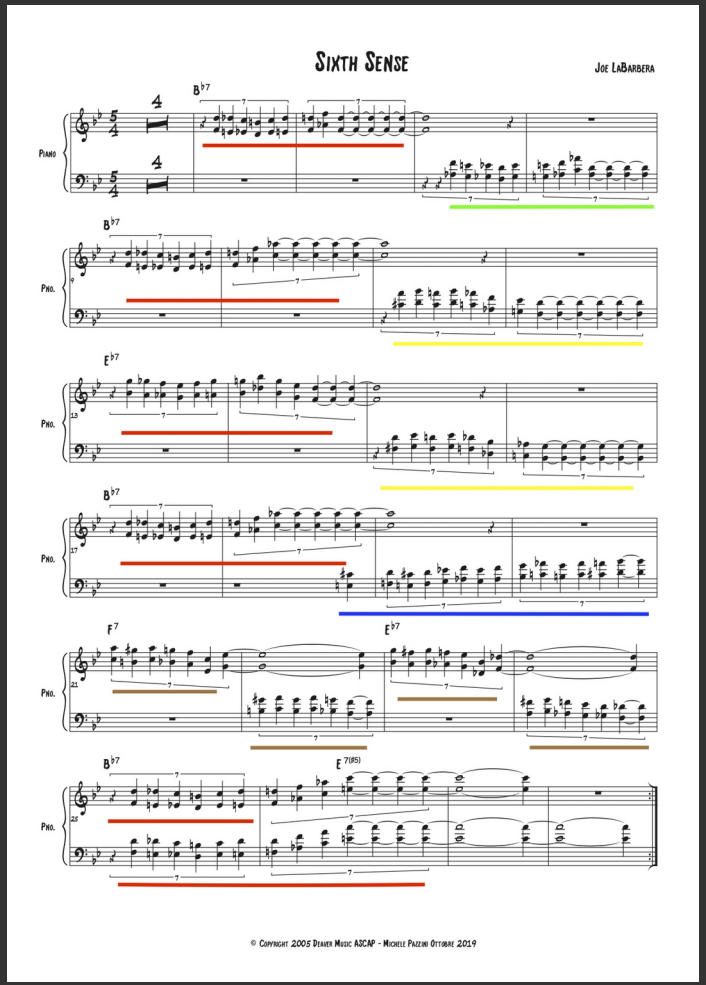
Jeff “Tain” Watts

Vodville Analysis



Joe La Barbera

Sixth Sense Analysis

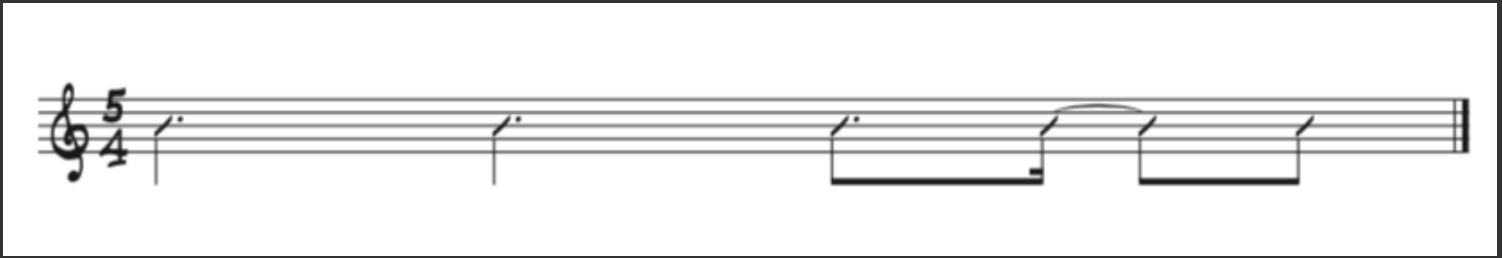


Composing from the drum set, my own practice and development

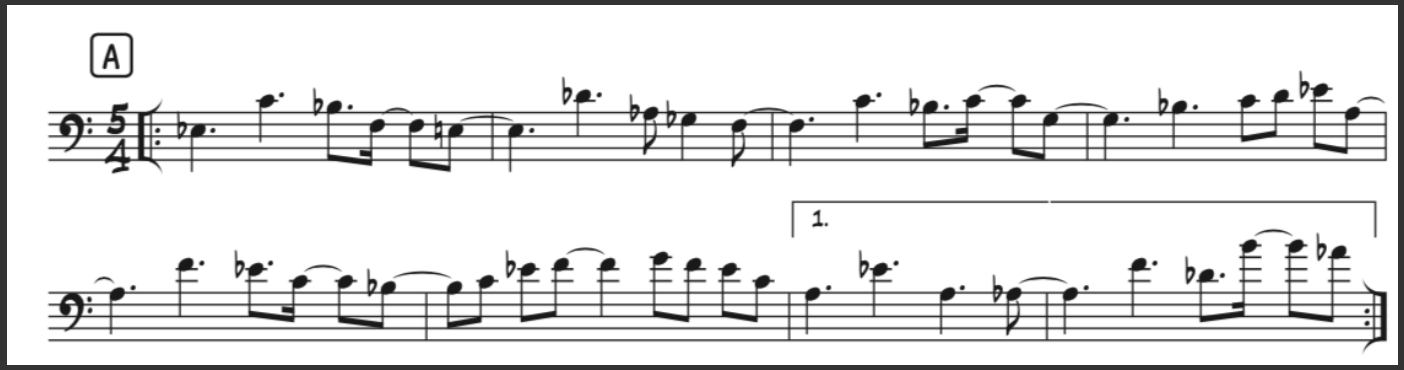
- Something Different
- Simba's Song
- V.101

Something Different Methodology

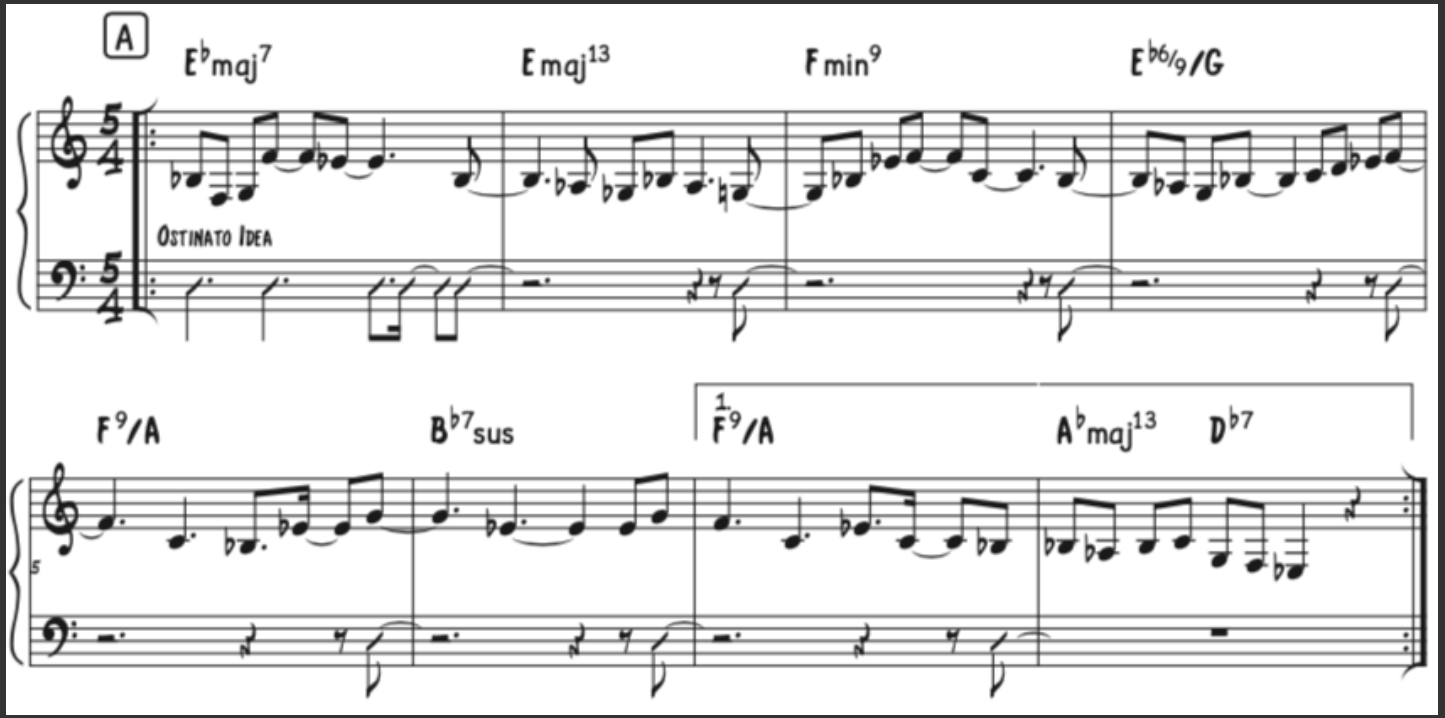
Pattern



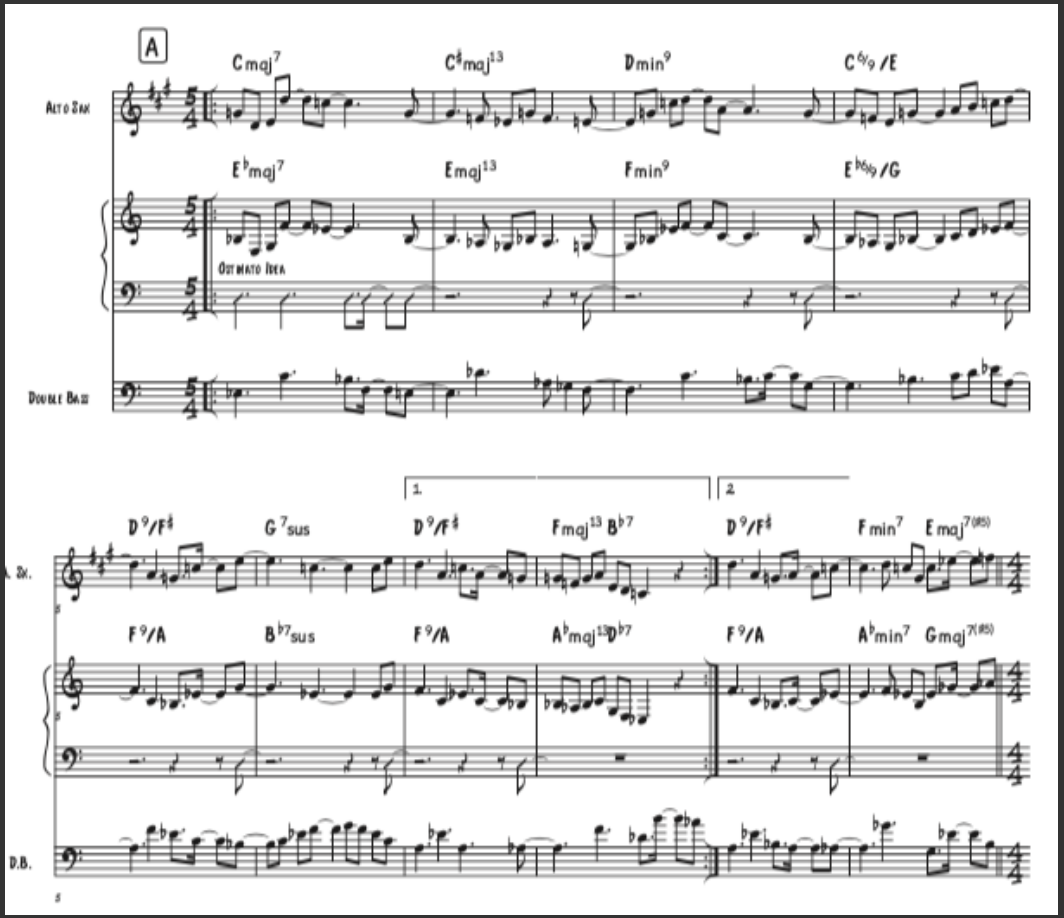
Bass line



Melody section A

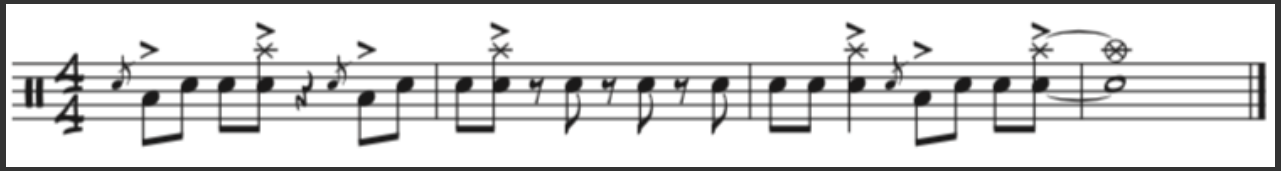


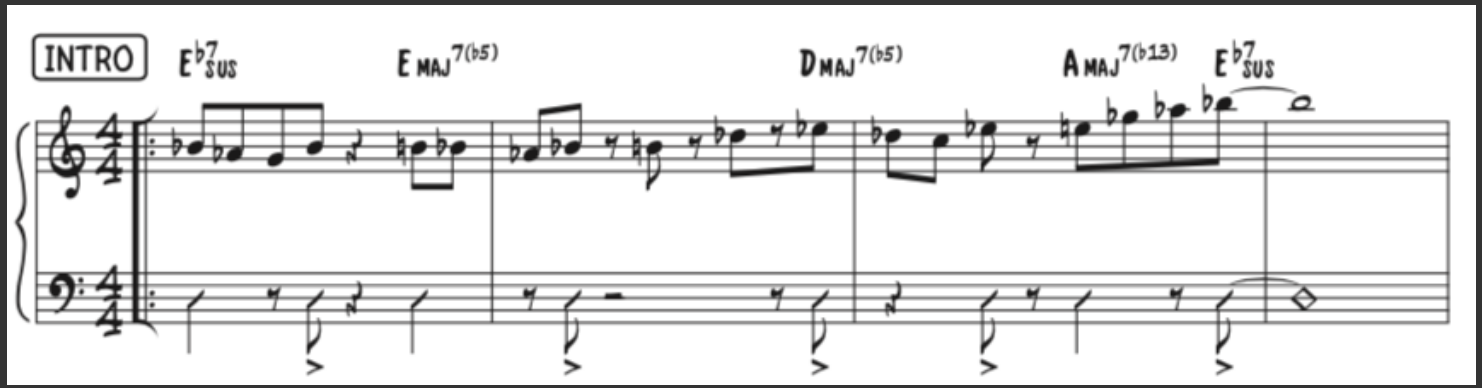
Melody and Bass Line section A



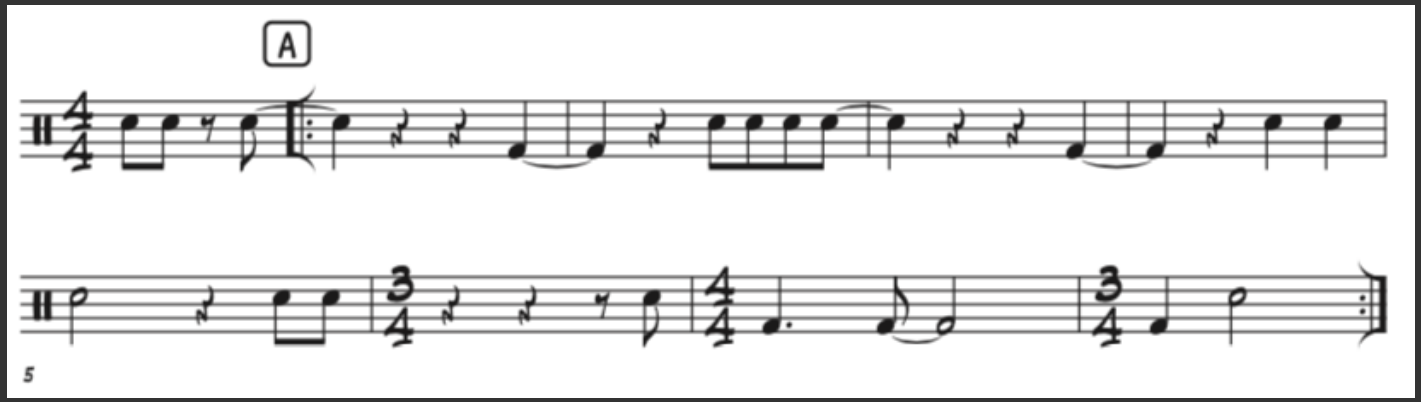
Simba’s Song Methodology

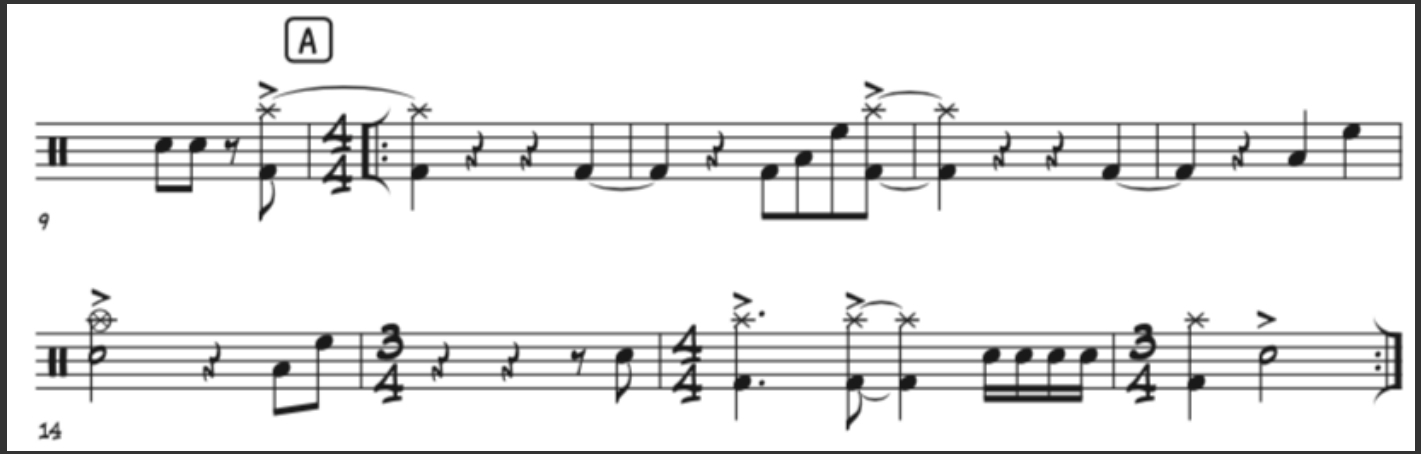
Intro and vamp



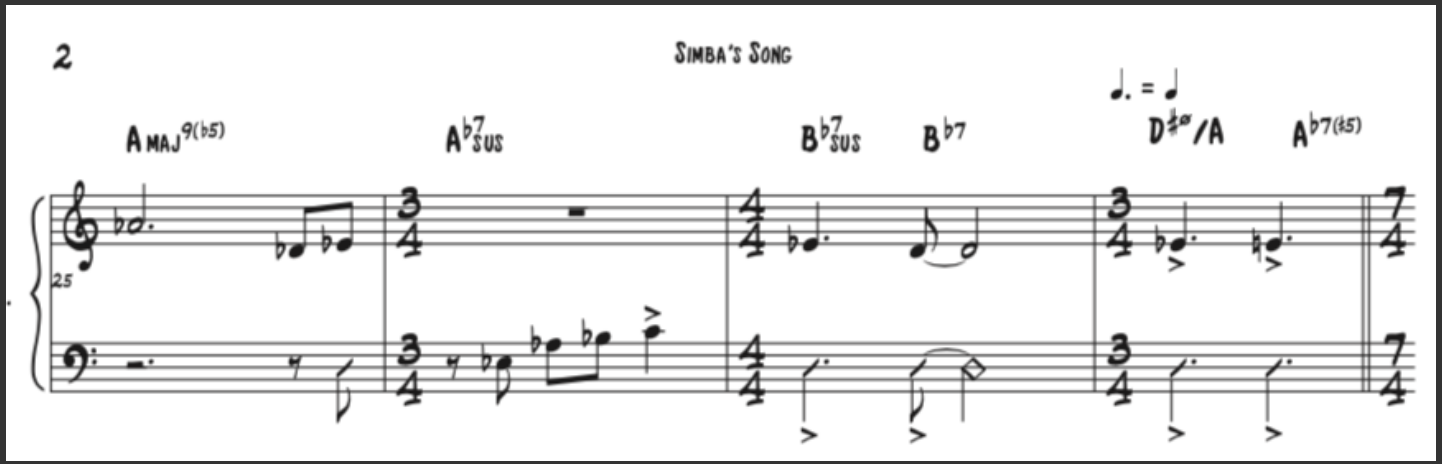


Melody section A

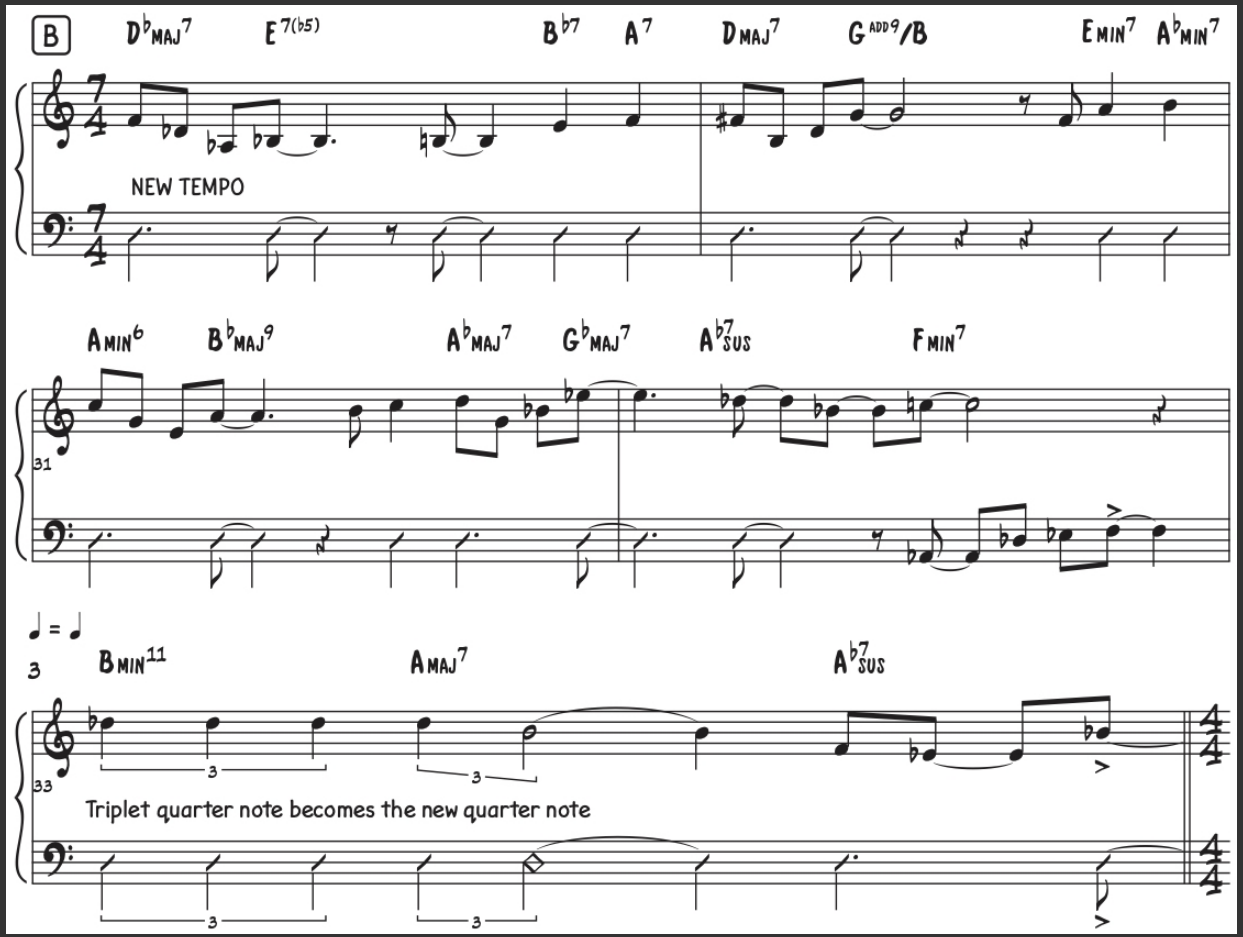




Melody section A second time, last four bars

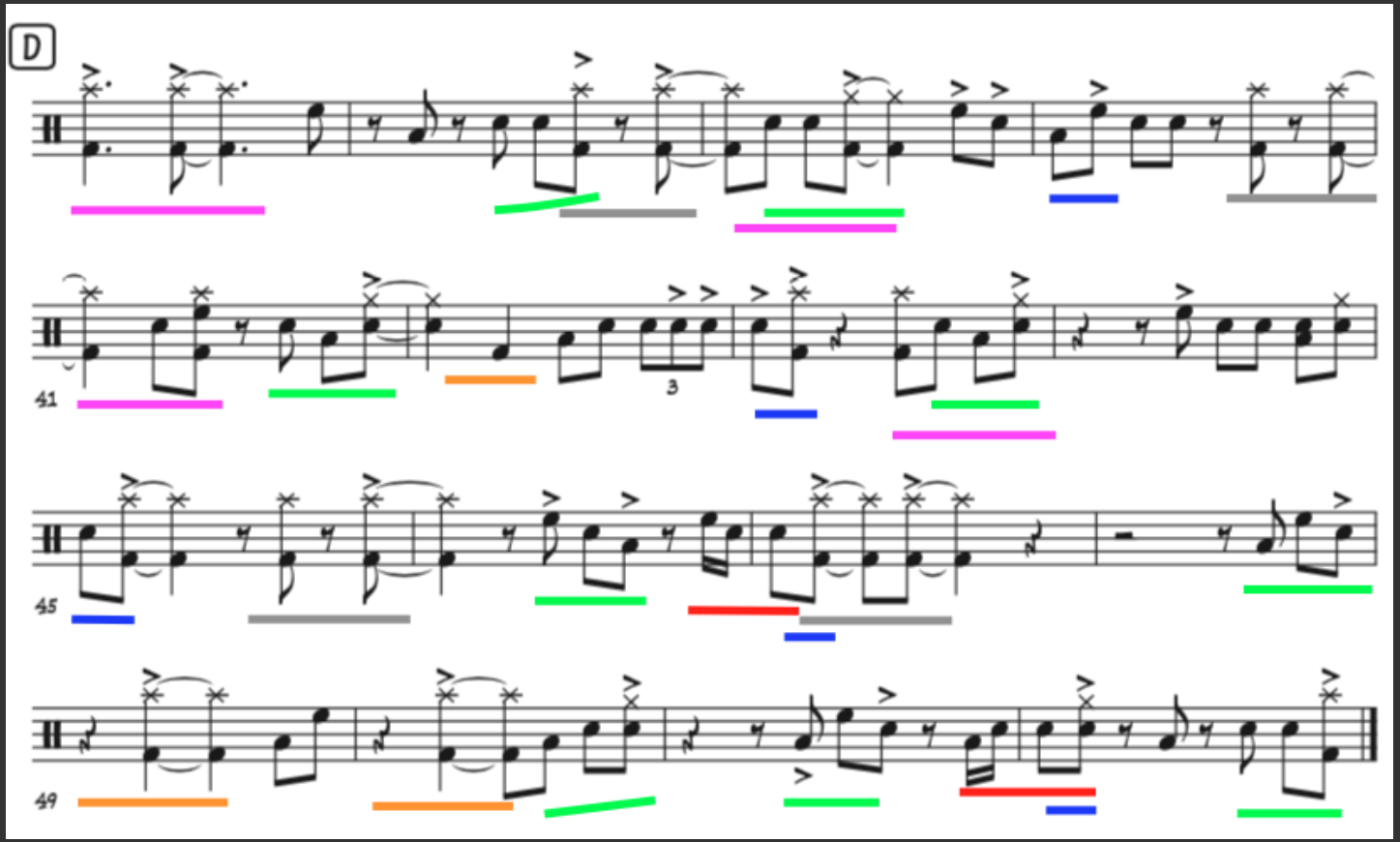


Melody Section B

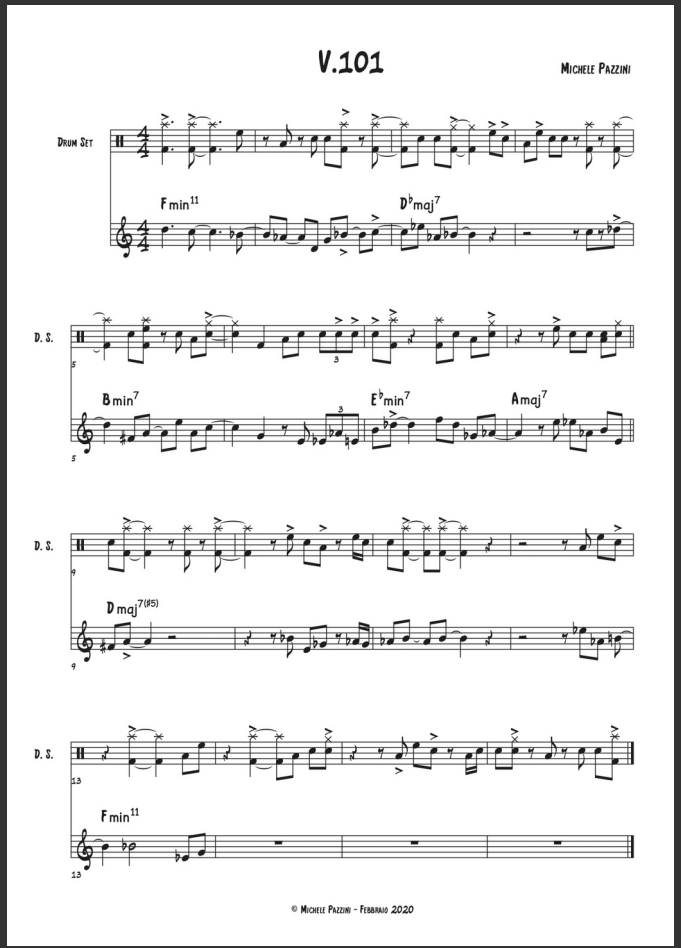


V.101 Methodology

Drum Solo



Melody


V.101
Michele Pazzini
Drum Set
Fmin11
Db maj7
D. S.
Bmin7
Eb min7
Amaj7
D. S.
Dmaj7(#5)
D. S.
Fmin11
© Michele Pazzini - Febbraio 2020

Conclusions

- Composing exclusively from the drums, my skills as a composer has definitely developed.
- My new compositions are more complex and different compared with my old pieces.
- I always wanted to write songs taking into consideration concepts that I needed to practice on drums.
- Starting from the piano I would never be able to integrate elements such as odd rhythms, rhythmic modulation and advanced melodies.
- Besides that, with this research I came across that I should seriously thinking to improve my piano and harmonic skills.

Ed van der Elsken: Jazz in the Concertgebouw

With special thanks to

My research supervisor Jarmo Hoogendijk, master circle leader Yvonne Smeets, my main subject teachers Eric Ineke, Stefan Kruger and Felix Schlarmann, and my colleagues Luka, Federica and Simon for playing the new tunes and being part of my quartet.