

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



408

Fast Be-Bop
(Intro/Ending)
NC NC 2 2
(drums play time)

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

Denzil Best
(As played by Stan Getz and Dizzy Gillespie)

F bass E^b bass

(fine (on repeat))

[A] B^{b6} G^{M7} C^{M7} F⁷ D^{M7} G⁷ C^{M7} F⁷
B^{b6} B^{b7} E^{b6} E⁷ F⁷ B^{b6} F⁷ B^{b6}
B^{b6} G^{M7} C^{M7} F⁷ D^{M7} G⁷ C^{M7} F⁷
B^{b6} B^{b7} E^{b6} E⁷ B^{b6} F⁷ B^{b6}
[B] D⁷ G⁷ C⁷ F⁷
[C] B^{b6} G^{M7} C^{M7} F⁷ D^{M7} G⁷ C^{M7} F⁷
B^{b6} B^{b7} E^{b6} E⁷ B^{b6} F⁷ B^{b6}

Solo on form (ABC, rhythm changes).
After solos, D.S., play head (ABC), then
D.C. al fine (repeat before fine)

Max Roach, Paul Motian, Tony Williams



Contemporary drummers/composers



Jeff "Tain" Watts



Vodville Analysis

VODVILLE JEFF "TAIN" MATTS

A

Chords: B^{b7}, E^{b7}, C^{#7}, F^{#7}, B maj⁷, D⁷, G maj⁷, B maj⁷

Chords: E^b maj⁷, A min⁷, D⁷, G maj⁷, G⁷, B^b maj⁷, D⁷, G maj⁷, G⁷

B

Chords: C min⁷, A min¹³, F min⁷

Question Answer

Development

C

Chords: D^b maj⁷, G, F[#] maj⁷, D^b maj⁷, G, C min⁷, F[#] maj⁷

Chords: F⁷, E^b maj⁷, A min⁷, D⁷, G maj⁷, G⁷

Joe La Barbera



Sixth Sense Analysis

SIXTH SENSE

JOE LABARBERA

The musical score for "Sixth Sense" by Joe LaBarbera is presented in a system of six staves. The top two staves are for Piano (Piano) and Percussion (Perc.). The score is written in 5/4 time and features a variety of chords and melodic lines. The chords are marked with letters and superscripts: B^{b7}, E^{b7}, F⁷, and E^{7(b9)}. The score includes several color-coded lines: red, green, yellow, blue, and orange. The Piano part features a complex melodic line with many accidentals and a red line indicating a specific melodic path. The Percussion part features a complex rhythmic pattern with many accidentals and a red line indicating a specific rhythmic path. The score is marked with a "4" in the first measure of the Piano part, indicating a four-measure phrase. The score is marked with a "7" in the first measure of the Percussion part, indicating a seven-measure phrase. The score is marked with a "7" in the first measure of the Piano part, indicating a seven-measure phrase. The score is marked with a "7" in the first measure of the Percussion part, indicating a seven-measure phrase. The score is marked with a "7" in the first measure of the Piano part, indicating a seven-measure phrase. The score is marked with a "7" in the first measure of the Percussion part, indicating a seven-measure phrase.

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

A $E^b \text{maj}^7$ $E \text{maj}^{13}$ $F \text{min}^9$ $E^b 6/9/G$

OSTINATO IDEA

F^9/A $B^b 7_{\text{sus}}$ $\overset{1}{F}^9/A$ $A^b \text{maj}^{13}$ $D^b 7$

The musical score for 'Melody section A' is written in 5/4 time. It consists of two systems of piano and bass staves. The first system is marked with a box 'A' and contains four measures. The piano staff features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, while the bass staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment. Above the first system, the chords $E^b \text{maj}^7$, $E \text{maj}^{13}$, $F \text{min}^9$, and $E^b 6/9/G$ are indicated. The second system contains four measures, with the piano staff continuing the melodic development. Above the second system, the chords F^9/A , $B^b 7_{\text{sus}}$, $\overset{1}{F}^9/A$, $A^b \text{maj}^{13}$, and $D^b 7$ are indicated. The text 'OSTINATO IDEA' is written below the first measure of the first system. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots in both staves of the second system.

Melody and Bass Line section A

A

Alto Sax

Cmaj⁷ C[♯]maj¹³ Dmin⁹ C^{6/9}/E

E[♭]maj⁷ Emaj¹³ Fmin⁹ E[♭]₉/G

Ostinato line

Double Bass

1. 2.

D⁹/F[♯] G⁷_{sus} D⁹/F[♯] Fmaj¹³ B^{♭7} D⁹/F[♯] Fmin⁷ Emaj⁷(#5)

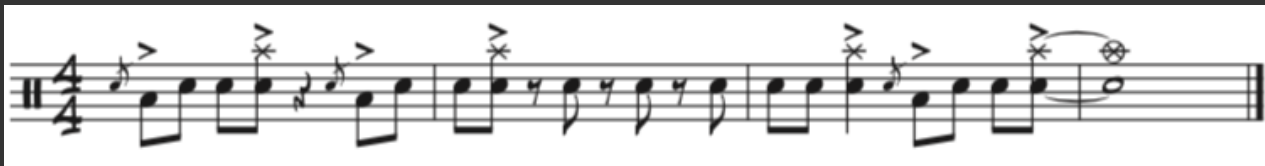
F⁹/A B^{♭7}_{sus} F⁹/A A[♭]maj¹³ D^{♭7} F⁹/A A[♭]min⁷ Gmaj⁷(#5)

D.B.

5

Simba's Song Methodology

Intro and vamp



INTRO E^b7_{sus} $E^{MAJ}7(b5)$ $D^{MAJ}7(b5)$ $A^{MAJ}7(b13)$ E^b7_{sus}

A four-measure musical notation in 4/4 time. The melody (treble clef) and bass line (bass clef) are shown. The first measure is marked with a repeat sign. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4. The bass line notes are: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F#3. The notes are grouped by measure, with the first measure being a repeat of the first three measures.

Melody section A

A

5

This musical score for Melody section A, measures 5-8, is written on two staves in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It contains measures 5 and 6. Measure 5 starts with a repeat sign, followed by an eighth note G4, an eighth rest, and an eighth note A4. Measure 6 begins with a first ending bracket, containing eighth notes B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, and B3. The second staff contains measures 7 and 8. Measure 7 starts with a repeat sign, followed by a half note G3, an eighth rest, and an eighth note A3. Measure 8 contains a 3/4 time signature change, followed by eighth notes B3, A3, and G3. The section concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

A

9

14

This musical score for Melody section A, measures 9-14, is written on two staves in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It contains measures 9 and 10. Measure 9 starts with a repeat sign, followed by an eighth note G4, an eighth rest, and an eighth note A4. Measure 10 begins with a first ending bracket, containing eighth notes B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, and B3. The second staff contains measures 11 and 12. Measure 11 starts with a repeat sign, followed by a half note G3, an eighth rest, and an eighth note A3. Measure 12 contains a 3/4 time signature change, followed by eighth notes B3, A3, and G3. The section concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Melody section A second time, last four bars

2

SIMBA'S SONG

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

$A^{MAJ} 9(b5)$ A^{b7}_{SUS} B^{b7}_{SUS} B^{b7} $D^{\sharp 9}/A$ $A^{b7}(b5)$

The musical score is for a piano accompaniment of 'Simba's Song'. It consists of four measures, numbered 25 to 28. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 4/4 in measure 25 to 3/4 in measure 26, back to 4/4 in measure 27, and finally to 7/4 in measure 28. The melody is written in the right hand, and the bass line is in the left hand. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: $A^{MAJ} 9(b5)$ for measure 25, A^{b7}_{SUS} for measure 26, B^{b7}_{SUS} and B^{b7} for measure 27, and $D^{\sharp 9}/A$ and $A^{b7}(b5)$ for measure 28. A repeat sign is at the end of measure 28. A tempo marking $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ is shown above the staff in measure 27.

Melody Section B

[B] $D^b \text{MAJ}^7$ $E^7(b5)$ B^b7 A^7 $D \text{MAJ}^7$ $G^{\text{ADD}9}/B$ $E \text{MIN}^7$ $A^b \text{MIN}^7$

NEW TEMPO

$A \text{MIN}^6$ $B^b \text{MAJ}^9$ $A^b \text{MAJ}^7$ $G^b \text{MAJ}^7$ A^b7_{SUS} $F \text{MIN}^7$

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$
3 $B \text{MIN}^{11}$ $A \text{MAJ}^7$ A^b7_{SUS}

33 Triplet quarter note becomes the new quarter note

V.101 Methodology

Drum Solo

D

41

45

49

This image displays a drum solo notation for a 4-measure phrase, labeled 'D'. The notation is presented in four staves, each containing a 4-measure phrase. The notation includes various drum symbols (e.g., snare, tom, cymbal) and rhythmic markings (e.g., accents, beams). The notation is color-coded: measures 1-2 are pink, measures 3-4 are green, and measures 5-6 are blue. The notation is also color-coded by measure: measures 1-2 are pink, measures 3-4 are green, measures 5-6 are blue, and measures 7-8 are green. The notation is also color-coded by measure: measures 1-2 are pink, measures 3-4 are green, measures 5-6 are blue, and measures 7-8 are green. The notation is also color-coded by measure: measures 1-2 are pink, measures 3-4 are green, measures 5-6 are blue, and measures 7-8 are green.

Melody

V.101

MICHELE PAZZINI

DRUM SET

F min¹¹ **D^b maj⁷**

D. S.

B min⁷ **E^b min⁷** **A maj⁷**

D. S.

D maj⁷(#5)

D. S.

F min¹¹

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 Elsen: Jazz in the Concertgebouw



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