

THIS LESSON IS EXCERPTED FROM

A FRESH APPROACH TO THE
DRUMSET



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ABOUT THIS LESSON:

Lesson 25 is the beginning of the “Jazz” section of the book. On this lesson, you’ll learn the very basics of playing time in a jazz swing style, some basic jazz fills and some technique exercises that will help develop your feel in triplet based time signatures. Lessons 26-29 gradually introduce other important topics when learning to play in the jazz style: comping, setting up ensemble figures, playing a jazz waltz and ballad (with brush fundamentals).

The playalong chart included on Lesson 25 is called “Swingin’ Easy” – which is kind of patterned after an old school Basie type chart. Notice how each section of the tune has a slightly different dynamic and feel. Most of it is pretty laid back, but the final chorus of the tune is much heavier and should be played with strong backbeats.

If you’re just starting out learning the swing style, focus on your time keeping. Listen closely to the bass player and lock in tight! No need to get too fancy with a lot of fills – much of the role of the drummer is just to lay down solid time. As you gain experience, you can certainly play around with left hand comping, varying the ride pattern and adding more fills. Listen to how Donny Gruendler plays the chart in the “with drums” version... He certainly adds his own style to the tune, but it never distracts from the rest of the musicians.

Good luck and have fun!

Mark Wessels

Oops – just noticed that the end of the first line has a repeat sign that shouldn’t be there. Gotta fix that for the next print run. Sorry about that!

LESSON 25

Style Essential: Jazz Swing



Jazz incorporates many different musical styles – from ragtime to bop. The swing style is fundamental to many other jazz styles and incorporates some of the most basic elements: a triplet feel, syncopation and improvisation.

Unlike most rock feels which rely on a heavy bass drum and snare backbeat, jazz is built upon the ride cymbal pattern.

- 1** Practice the jazz ride while you count triplets out loud. When you've achieved a consistent feel, add the left foot hi-hat on 2 & 4.

COUNT: 1 & a 2 & a 3 & a 4 & a

Jazz drummers often incorporate a "heel-toe" rocking motion with the left foot to play repetitive 2 & 4 hi-hat chicks. Another common technique involves bouncing the leg in the heel-up position.

2

In a jazz style, very soft "feathered" bass drum quarter notes are sometimes used to reinforce the walking bass line. The bass drum should be only loud enough to be "felt, but not heard." Play heel down with an open tone.

Practice the first two swing patterns with play-along track A until you can develop a relaxed sound and feel.

- 3** Sometimes jazz drummers add a count 4 cross-stick to reinforce the 2 & 4 feel.

4

Another common jazz groove uses an open hi-hat sizzle on 1 & 3, closing on 2 & 4. Play along with tracks B & C – 16 measures on the hi-hat groove, then move to the ride.

Technique Focus: Triplet Accent Patterns

Triplet accent patterns are useful for fills in the jazz swing style. Practice each measure separately until you're comfortable, then mix and match to create 4 or 8 count accent patterns.

Extra PRACTICE

- Add soft "feathered" bass drum quarters and a left foot hi-hat on 2 and 4.
- Play the accents around the drums
- More accent patterns are located on page 97.

Jazz Fills



A basic fill can be used to connect musical phrases or to lead one phrase into the next. Play your fills with a triplet subdivision, upbeat emphasis and a lighter approach – and keep the 2 & 4 hi-hat going during the fill.

Rhythms in jazz are typically written with “straight” eighth notes for simplicity. In a standard jazz fill, you should SWING the 8th note rhythms.

For instance, this rhythm



should be played:



Here are a few sample fills in a jazz style. Start with 3 bars of time, then play the fill in the 4th measure. Come up with your own fills by taking any syncopated 8th note rhythm and move it between the drums and cymbals.

1 2 3

L R L R R L

4 5 6

R L R L R L R L R L R L L R R L R L R L R L R L R L

Technique Focus: Swing Accent Patterns

Another helpful technique for coming up with new fill ideas is to use accented swing patterns. Once you’ve mastered these exercises, try swinging the 8th note accent exercises in the Appendix on page 96.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

“SWINGIN’ EASY”



This short jazz tune with the hi-hat groove in the intro and ends with a heavy back beat on the final “shout” chorus.

mp *mf* *mp* *f*

Sax solo Play 16

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