Elements of Jazz Drum Comping:

Shaping Musical Form and Dramaturgy

Jaakko Lukkarinen

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CORE ELEMENTS OF JAZZ DRUM COMPING: SHAPING MUSICAL FORM AND DRAMATURGY

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Summary of doctoral thesis

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Abstract

This artistic research project investigates the practice of jazz drum comping and its role in shaping musical form and dramaturgy within performance. The inquiry aims to deepen my ability to interpret and complement musical structures through drumming. The research consists of one peer-reviewed article *Breaking Down Five Core Elements of the Improvised Comping of Philly Joe Jones* (2024) and four artistic components – the studio recording of *One for Joe* (2022) and the concerts *Textures* (2023), *Odd Times* (2024), and *Rainbow Blue* (2025) – each of which has served as a testing ground for my theoretical and practical findings. Central to the study are what I see as the five core elements of jazz drum comping, which I first picked out from analyzing the comping of Philly Joe Jones: goosing, active accenting, structuring the form, riffing, and intuitive call and response.

Through a combination of aural analysis, transcription, improvisation, and reflective writing and research material consisting of recordings, transcriptions, books, articles, interviews and learning diaries, this thesis explores how these five elements are intuitively learnt and then assembled according to the demands of improvisation, thus adding to the musical form and dramaturgy of a jazz composition. Analyzing the elements of comping from the perspective of the 1950s Hard Bop era has provided me with tools that remain highly relevant to today's jazz drumming. The five elements have not only helped me to improve my own comping but also to interpret the comping of other drummers. Ultimately, this research highlights the drummer's role as an accompanist, and comping itself as an expressive, interpretive, and communicative act.

Keywords: comping, accompaniment, jazz drum comping, musical form, musical dramaturgy, artistic research, improvisation

Tiivistelmä

Taiteellinen tohtoritutkintoni tarkastelee jazz-rumpusetillä säestämistä, josta käytän nimeä komppaus. Tavoitteenani oli taiteellisen tutkimuksen keinoin syventää ymmärrystäni komppauksen musiikillisesta merkityksestä ja keinoista jazzmusiikillisissa muotorakenteissa. Työni tarkastelee ja havainnoi komppauksen roolia musiikillisen muodon ja esityksen dramaturgian muovaamisessa. Tutkimus koostuu yhdestä vertaisarvioidusta artikkelista *Breaking Down Five Core Elements of the Improvised Comping of Philly Joe Jones* (2024) sekä neljästä taiteellisesta osasta – studiotallenteesta *One for Joe* (2022) ja konserteista *Textures* (2023), *Odd Times* (2024) ja *Rainbow Blue* (2025) – joista jokainen on toiminut testialustana teoreettisille ja käytännön havainnoilleni. Tutkimuksen keskiössä ovat viisi säestämisen peruselementtiä, jotka tutkimusprosessini alussa analysoin jazzrumpali Philly Joe Jonesin soitosta, tutkin *One for Joe* -levytysprosessissa ja esitin tutkimusartikkelissani. Ne ovat *goosing, active accenting, structuring the form*, *riffing* ja *intuitive call and response*. Näitä viittä elementtiä olen soveltanut työni edetessä muissa taiteellisissa komponenteissa ja tätä prosessia kuvaan tässä yhteenvedossa.

Yhdistämällä kuunteluanalyysin, nuotinnuksen, improvisoinnin, pohdiskelevan kirjoittamisen, sekä tutkimusaineiston – joka koostuu äänitteistä, nuotinnoksista, kirjoista, artikkeleista, haastatteluista ja oppimispäiväkirjoista – tutkin, kuinka valitsemani tarkastelun kohteena olevat viisi elementtiä omaksutaan intuitiivisesti ja kootaan sitten improvisoinnin vaatimusten mukaisesti osaksi jazzsävellyksen musiikillista muotoa ja dramaturgiaa. 1950-luvun hard hop -aikakaudelta analysoitujen komppauselementtien avulla olen pystynyt muokkaamaan omaa komppaustani ja ajattelen niiden muodostavan hedelmällisen lähtökohdan nykypäivän jazzrumpalin taiteelliselle tekemiselle. Olen myös löytänyt itselleni uusia tapoja muiden rumpalien komppauksen analysointiin. Lopuksi tutkimukseni

korostaa rumpalin roolia säestäjänä ja painottaa komppausta ilmaisullisena, tulkitsevana ja kommunikatiivisena musiikillisena toimintona.

Avaintermit: komppaus, säestys, jazz rumpusetti säestys, musiikillinen muoto, musiikillinen dramaturgia, taiteellinen tutkimus, improvisointi

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This artistic doctoral work would not have been possible without the support of many people, both on and off the stage.

I dedicate this work to my mother, Isa Lukkarinen, who passed away on November 21, 2024, right before my third *Textures* concert. Mum's strength, openness, and final piece of advice – "Focus on your own business and take care of yourself" – continue to guide me. For both of my parents, thank you for your endless support. And by the way, dad: I think in retrospect the first Tama Swingstar drum set you got was at the very least, excellent value for money.

My deepest thanks to my supervisors: Doctor of Music, Markus Ketola and Doctor of Music, Sami Linna for their guidance, encouragement, and expertise. I'm also grateful to drummer and composer Mikko Hassinen for his enthusiasm toward my research, and for his empathic attitude and helpful musical insights.

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Finally, I'd like to thank my family – Susanna, Valma, and Lauri – for your love, patience, and support. It certainly isn't easy having a doctoral student living at home who is also trying to be a family man. You made it possible for me to pursue this journey. What more could one ask for from one's family?

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CORE ELEMENTS OF JAZZ DRUM COMPING:
SHAPING MUSICAL FORM AND DRAMATURGY

1. Introduction

This artistic research project focuses on jazz drum comping. My goal is to improve my ability to interpret musical form and shape the dramaturgy of a performance. The research consists of one peer-reviewed article *Breaking Down Five Core Elements of the Improvised Comping of Philly Joe Jones* (2024) and four artistic components: the studio recording entitled *One For Joe* (2022) and three concerts: *Textures* (2023)*, Odd Times* (2024) and *Rainbow Blue* (2025). I have used these to test out my findings and hypothesis, and the results – first discussed in the peer-reviewed article– are further discussed here in the summary. The five core elements of drum set comping, which provide a common thread throughout the thesis, are: (i) goosing, (ii) active accenting, (iii) structuring the form, (iv) riffing, and (v) intuitive call and response.

By presenting these elements and their analysis in the form of a discussion, I intend to shed light on my main research question: "How can I as a jazz drummer complement the musical form of a jazz composition and convey the musical dramaturgy of a performance?" I will discuss my research question in the conclusion by combining general observations with more personal ones made during my artistic process. These five elements have also proved useful to me outside this study, when looking at the comping of key jazz drummers to deepen my own musical understanding and approach to comping in the jazz idiom. The practical approach suggested in this summary is based on musical analysis and broader ideas that are typical of artistic research in general but also central to my musical personality. The five elements provide me with the necessary tools to analyze and describe the musical essence of any jazz drummer's comping in detail.

One of the first pieces of advice to inspire me when taking my first steps as a jazz musician was related to ensemble communication – "react more" or "communicate more". But as I followed this through, it led to further questions: who do I react to, what exactly should I react to in the music, what form should the reaction take, and why? I believe it is fair to say that as a musician gains experience, the answers to these questions may seem obvious. Often the answers are intuitive observations and even without research, it could be argued that reacting to the soloist's performance with greater rhythmic intensity makes the playing more intense, enhancing also the communicative aspects. However, this overlooks the precise details of how rhythmic intensity can be increased or what more energetic playing means from the drummer's perspective, and this is where the research comes in – looking at just how this rhythmic intensity works and what the actual rhythmic or timbral aspects of this are.

To give a better idea of the background to my research, my original intentions were as follows:

> As a drummer, I need to be part of the horizontal movement, listening and reacting quickly and musically to the rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic information produced by the other musicians. […] In order to create the best possible artistic entity, my musical goal is to listen to other musicians. As a drummer, I choose my role either as an accompanist or as an accompanist who reacts strongly to the playing of others, and if necessary, I bring my soloist skills to the music (Lukkarinen 2018a).

Now that I am in the final stages of this research process, I can revise both of these rather bold, yet naïve sentences by pointing out that, as I drummer, I must support the performance by comping its form and musical storytelling in as natural a way as possible with whatever it calls for. This generalization about the essence of jazz drums is inspired by ethnomusicologist Paul Berliner's *The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (1994) and pianist and Associate Professor of Music Robert

Hodson's *Interaction, Improvisation, and Interplay in Jazz* (2007). Both of these publications are at the heart of this inquiry. For Hodson, the drummer is responsible for the flow of the music and carries out this responsibility through defining the meter and providing a regular pulse (Hodson 2007: 30). Berliner describes the drummer's role as a natural, supportive, energetic, and conversational element of the music. He also states, in the words of jazz drummers Kenny Washington and Mel Lewis, that the drummer needs to play according to whatever the present musical situation is (Berliner 1994: e.g., 157, 390–391, 424).

Comping refers not only to accompanying the music, but also to complementing it (Berliner 1994: 515; Hodson 2007: 181; Michaelsen 2013: 120). As I see it, this means the comping drummer needs to have a very positive musical mindset, or what I have called the "welcoming element" of music (Lukkarinen 2024a: 132) for there to be fruitful interplay in the band. In the words of drummer Adam Nussbaum, this welcoming element is like "laying down a red carpet" (Nussbaum 2024). Nussbaum continues in this positive vein by emphasizing the importance of working as a "TEAM" – the letters of which also stand as an acronym for "together everyone achieves more". For me, this relates closely to how musicologist Mark Doffman also defines groove – as a shared understanding of rhythm and pulse (Doffman 2009: 84, as cited in Lukkarinen 2024a: 130). To create this understanding, like Nussbaum, he emphasizes the importance of coming together, uniting the band, and building a team.

You might argue that if a drummer is only accompanying and complementing the music, then they are simply following others in the band. However, drummers such as Mel Lewis have been described as "an ultimate team player but not a follower". Indeed, this is how the jazz drummer, educator and member of the jury for this thesis, John Riley has portrayed him (Smith 2014: 178). Comping should also involve the drummer making a strong statement of their own to respect some of the

crucial aesthetic elements of jazz. As ethnomusicologist Samuel A. Floyd notes, and the researcher Michael Borchuk aptly summarizes, bebop valued and brought musical elements such as riffing and call and response back to jazz. These act as "signifying figures" or "tropes" that embrace African American myth and ritual, to which Floyd sees comping as essentially linked (Floyd 1995: 7, 136, 264, 316; Borchuk 2002: 100). In light of this, I see comping and its elements as having a role beyond simply accompanying and complementing – a leading role which demands a strong musical opinion, standpoint, and ideology.

Keeping in mind the above views regarding comping – from the perspectives of both jazz research (e.g., Floyd) and jazz drumming (e.g., Mel Lewis) – I will now move on to discuss the research task and questions in detail, followed by a presentation of the artistic components, comping elements, musical reflections with video footage and finally a section with discussion of the results and observations. The peer-reviewed article and lead sheets of the music used in examples are also included as attachments.

1.1 Research task

As mentioned earlier, the main research question addresses the nature of jazz drum comping thus: "How can I as a jazz drummer complement the musical form of a jazz composition and convey the musical dramaturgy of a performance?"

In coming up with this question and related sub-questions, I have found that the research task, its scope, and the questions themselves have gradually evolved and adapted. To me, this process of adaptation has been a necessary and natural part of my artistic development and growth. In anticipation of this, I have found it useful to consider Assistant Professor of Art Education, Donal O'Donoghue's concerns about the relationship of artistic research to one's own profession or artistic processes. In

his article, entitled “Are We Asking the Wrong Questions in Arts-Based Research?” O’Donoghue suggests that researchers should reflect on the motives, subject matter, structure, and research questions of their work in relation to their practical experience as artists (O’Donoghue 2009: 353–352). The article is a recent finding for me. However, in retrospect I have noticed that my research on comping does indeed draw on my own experiences in everyday life as a working jazz drummer.

Considering O’Donoghue’s suggestions, I have structured the project around typical band formations I work with and which I also see as the most common in jazz history. These are the trio, quartet, quintet, and big band. The different sonic environments and musical agility of these ensembles offer various angles for my research. The task is to identify the elements of comping used by jazz drummers in these different musical and sonic environments. To elaborate on the main research question, I examine the elements of comping as an expression of form and musical dramaturgy. I view the form of the composition as a framework for comping. The form highlights the melody, harmony, and basic rhythmic structure of the composition. It also allows improvisers to interpret and express the composition in various ways. If a piece lends itself to a variety of approaches, then its form is an element that improvisers can approach from different angles (Berliner 1994: 233–234). These various approaches to the composition’s form result in what I call musical dramaturgy. This musical dramaturgy conveys how the composition has been interpreted and depends on several factors, e.g., the personalities, experiences, backgrounds, and histories of the musicians in the ensemble.

Immediately below, I will briefly present each of the artistic components, their objects of study, and their results. These I describe more fully in Section 3, to show how the elements of comping work in my playing in specific musical situations.

One For Joe: a recording with quartet ensemble (2023)

As the first artistic component of this thesis, *One for Joe* was an investigation of the style of Hard-Bop era drummer Philly Joe Jones. Because of Jones' profound influence on today's jazz drummers especially in comping and in imaginative use of drum rudiments, it seemed a good way to approach the world of artistic research. Also fundamentally inspiring into choosing Jones as the first research target was jazz drummer John Riley's investigations on how a transcription of Jones' groove and momentum oriented comping could be successfully fitted into almost any symmetrical, 12- or 8-bar phrases based jazz standard form and it would produce a solid foundation for other musician's improvisations (Riley 2004: 40)

With my original component related research question, I thought I would be able to study Jones' musicianship in far greater depth: "How does Philly Joe Jones musically communicate as an accompanist and as a soloist?" I explored this in 10 compositions that Philly Joe Jones had recorded with various artists between 1956 and 1961, performing them with the quartet of Timo Lassy on tenor saxophone, Tomi Vartiainen on guitar, and Antti Lötjönen on bass.

As my research progressed, I found myself increasingly focusing on Jones' comping, realizing it could provide elements that I could use in the later stages of my research too. It was at this point I realized I wanted to research jazz drum comping in greater depth. I also noticed that to have drummers' own perspectives on accompaniment would be a useful addition to the discussion within my research material and to the field of jazz research in general.

Breaking Down Five Core Elements of the Improvised Comping of Philly Joe Jones: a peer-reviewed article (2024)

To accompany the first artistic component, I wrote an article about Philly Joe Jones' comping. The article, published in the *Finnish Yearbook of Ethnomusicology* in December 2024, suggests that there are five elements to Jones' comping: goosing, active accenting, structuring the form, riffing, and intuitive call and response. These I had identified through both listening analysis and transcription. The purpose of the article was to use artistic research methods to contribute to the discussion on the characteristics and purpose of accompaniment.

The analysis and transcription were based on three of Jones' recordings: *Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, originally recorded in 1957 with Sonny Rollins; Wayne Shorter's jazz composition *Mama G (Nellie Bly),* recorded with Wynton Kelly in 1959; and Kenny Dorham's composition *Karioka*, recorded with Freddie Hubbard in 1960.

Textures: a concert by the Jaska Lukkarinen Trio (2024)

Textures focused on textural approaches I find useful in a saxophone, double bass, and drums trio. At this stage of my research, I became aware that composing music was neither natural nor meaningful to me, and I also wanted to move away from jazz standards after the *One for Joe* project. Standard material offers vast possibilities for research, but my research plan indicated that new jazz compositions might be an even more pertinent avenue for me to pursue, if the research aim is to gain a deeper understanding of my artistic personality as an accompanist. For this reason, I proposed collaborating with composer, arranger, and drummer Mikko Hassinen, who agreed to work with me on the subjects of my artistic research. This collaboration forced me to put into words what I was doing and thus challenge my

own understanding of jazz music. The discussions I had as drummer for the pieces that Hassinen had composed also deepened my understanding of the various research topics I was covering. In our discussion, I had to often play the drums to pinpoint the starting points and refine the goals for my artistic research. By playing these new pieces composed by Hassinen for the first time, this research was also making a cultural contribution to contemporary Finnish jazz. At the concert, I performed eight songs, six of which were written by Hassinen for my research. I also performed one jazz standard arrangement and one of my own compositions.

During the research phase, I identified eight accompaniment textures (see 2.2 below) from various jazz recordings and used these as a reference point for my comping approach to Hassinen's compositions. Although I had previously experimented with different accompaniment textures in recordings and concerts made with the Jaska Lukkarinen Trio, it was helpful to verbalize and structure them. Approaching the compositions via these accompaniment textures proved a constructive starting point for my musical expression. By observing the tension inherent in these comping textures, it was clearer how they can also give character to compositions. Another key observation was that the trio, in which the traditional accompanist-soloist arrangement is often deliberately obscured – and which is very democratic in its working methods – may have contributed to the jury's observation that there was room for improvement in my comping in terms of musical expressiveness and effectiveness.

Odd Times: a concert with a quartet ensemble (2024)

In the third artistic component, *Odd Times*, I explored comping in compositions with complex rhythms, asymmetrical time signatures, and metric modulations. The music for the concert was mainly composed by Mikko Hassinen. The quintet, with Mikko Innanen on alto saxophone, Ville Vannemaa on tenor saxophone, Kari

Ikonen on piano and Antti Lötjönen on bass, performed also one composition by pianist Kari Ikonen, and one by drummer Jeff Watts.

In the letter to the jury, I wrote that my goal was to elevate the music to a level where the time signature or complexity of the music does not become an end in itself or an obstacle to expression. Rather, the goal was to turn complex rhythmicity into a resource that supports musical form and artistic expression.

Rainbow Blue: a concert with a big band (2025)

The fourth artistic component and the final concert in my artistic research project on the elements of jazz drum comping was a collaboration with the UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra. As material for the concert, I chose the seven compositions that Mikko Hassinen had made for my previous concerts which he now arranged for the UMO. In previous artistic components, I investigated comping in the most common band setups for jazz drummers such as trio, quartet, and quintet, but the big band is a very different musical playground compared to the smaller ensembles, which tend to work more fluently and unexpectedly. It is the rule rather than the exception that this also sets certain boundaries for expressiveness and improvising when comping.

My main artistic goal for this concert was to explore the boundaries of my musical expression and my own approach to big band comping. I hoped to especially focus on how I could help and spark musical storytelling with musical standpoints. Of particular interest to me here, was how the arrangements worked in the big band context, which I had previously felt offered less freedom in terms of musical expression.

Lastly, to offer a historical viewpoint, the research task draws from remarks on the comping ideology of big band drummer Mel Lewis. Lewis is often credited with bringing the subtlety of small ensemble playing to big band music (Korall 2002: 223). In his biography, *The View from the Back of the Band*, Lewis explains that his drumming is simply a reaction to what he hears, but at the same time he's also described in the book's epilogue by John Riley an ultimate team player but not a follower (Smith 2014: 274). I interpret this last comment as an allusion to the reactive agility of Lewis's approach. His colorful and creative comping lit up the band, bringing an energy that made the band more aware of how the drums can bring a cohesive rhythmic intensity to the music (Smith 2014: 178–180, 202).

1.2 Methodology & material

I conducted my research primarily through aural analysis, transcription, and improvisation. These methods are rooted in the history of jazz, they are consistent with the artistic practices of jazz music, and they also allow for a detailed description of the processes involved (see e.g., Mertanen 2024: 9). In the early stages of my research, I found it particularly valuable to use methods that felt natural and familiar to me, in line with O'Donoghue's emphasis on practical skills (O'Donoghue 2009: 353). In this way, I have been able to develop my musicianship throughout my career by applying what I have learnt in a practical context. In other words, I did not approach my research subject with a single predetermined method but instead allowed the research itself and the practice it involved to guide me toward finding the right methods.

Listening and aural analysis have proved to be the most effective methods of gathering information. During the *One for Joe* component, the listening process began with a Spotify playlist based on Philly Joe Jones's drum solos, as transcribed

in *The Philly Joe Jones Solo Book* by drummer Joerg Eckel (2019). While going through this list, I kept a listening diary, then selected 10 compositions which became the main research material for the album and the article. I will present excerpts from this diary later when discussing *One for Joe* in greater depth. Similarly, while preparing for the *Textures* concert, I created a Spotify playlist – this time to provide examples of comping texture in jazz trios of saxophone, bass and drums.

Based on this playlist and my analysis of the textures in the recordings, I developed my own comping approach for each song that I was to then perform in the concert. For the *Odd Times* concert, I examined recording examples containing odd time signatures from different drummers and looked at how they emphasized or obscured time signatures and metric modulation in their comping. I then used these comping approaches to tackle the compositions I would then be performing in *Odd Times*. For the last concert *Rainbow Blue*, however, I took a different approach to the aural analysis; based on the comments and suggestions I received from my jury I focused this time on just analyzing my own playing during rehearsals for the performance. For this last component of the thesis, it seemed unnecessary to make another playlist; instead, I focused on what I could hear in my own textural approaches to comping and conveying musical form and drama.

In the process of writing the article about Philly Joe Jones, I chose to make a detailed transcription of the three recordings *Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, *Karioka*, and *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*. In the transcriptions I wrote down the composed or improvised melody, as well as the rhythmic comping texture of the drums and piano. This provided a visual aid – as suggested by Hodson (2017: 1) – which allowed me to observe, for example, the rhythmic elements that were or were not vertically aligned on the staff. I noticed, for instance, that the piano and drums

had comping lines that were independent but often syncopated with each other, and that each was rhythmically strong – creating a comping texture that facilitates forward motion.

The following quote comes from a learning diary entry I made early on in my study about transcription as a research tool (and improvisation too – discussed in more detail later):

> When using transcription as a research tool to analyze how musicians play – especially when improvising – I always find it useful to bear in mind the goal of the analysis. Robert Hodson asks the pertinent question of whether improvisation is a product or process and how this might affect transcription and what it actually tells us. As a drummer, I find it hard to draw the line between music as a product or process, but seeing the two possibilities does allow the researcher to see the bigger picture of the transcribed performance within the context of the musicians playing. I actually see Jones as a musician whose skills both as an accompanist and soloist are the product of a process of constant improvisation (Lukkarinen 2021a).

When writing the article, I was looking out for previous research material where comping, musical interplay, or Philly Joe Jones was the focus. From the very beginning, I found that the interviews, stories, anecdotes, and musical analysis contained in *The Infinite Art of Improvisation* by musicologist Prof. Paul F. Berliner provided a valuable guide to the material previous jazz researchers have used and how it has been analyzed. I also found that *Rethinking Interaction in Jazz Improvisation* by musician and musicologist Benjamin Givan showed how musical interplay could be analyzed in writing and the kind of detailed perspectives one can take in jazz research. Givan's article draws from musicologist Ingrid Monson's *Saying Something* and approaches the subject from an attractively practical angle. It enabled me to discuss comping interactions in terms of being dialogic or monologic, and to place my observations about Philly Joe Jones' sensitivity to the

musical direction of soloists in the context of Monson's views about drummer interaction (Lukkarinen 2024a: 131).

When it came to finding out more about Philly Joe Jones as a person, *Drummin' Men: The Bebop Years*, by music journalist and drummer Burt Korall, proved to be very rewarding. The book introduces not only Jones, but also other important drummers in jazz history, and the observations related to Mel Lewis, for example, helped me prepare for the *Rainbow Blue* concert. As mentioned above, Robert Hodson's *Interaction, Improvisation, and Interplay in Jazz* also provided me with some interesting insights. Of these perspectives the idea that accompaniment should be as improvised as the solos has shaken my own view, and I will return to this in the conclusion. As well as these above sources, I have also found vital interviews and articles in various other jazz and percussion publications, such as *Down Beat* and *Modern Drummer*.

My artistic research method of praxis improvisation is similar to what jazz researcher Marcel Cobussen (Kahr 2022: 8) describes as "doing-thinking". In my case, the doing refers to my own basic activity of playing music – again in line with O'Donoghue's ideas. Cobussen describes improvisation as a research method that opens up a field of musical possibilities, and at the same time, the attempt to keep the field open requires the acceptance of risk, misunderstanding, and failure. As such, the researcher must allow for the fact improvisation means there is no predetermined or defined outcome. In my case, this meant I prepared for improvisation by working through practice routines both by myself on the drums and together with each component's ensemble – in this way we were preparing ourselves for a number of hypothetical outcomes in the concerts, not just one.

In preparation for *One for Joe*, for instance, and knowing from various sources how important they were for Philly Joe Jones, I focused on drum rudiments – particularly the ones that Jones describes as being of vital importance to him – such as the ruff, flam, and paradiddle (Jones 1979). From interviews and drum clinic recordings I came across, it became apparent that a book of jazz-style rudiments *Modern Rudimental Swing Solos* (1935) by Charlie Wilcoxon was at the heart of Jones' technique and teaching (Washington 2019). After studying this book myself, I then went a step further and took a lesson with Kenny Washington to learn more about practicing the accented and unaccented strokes and phrases in the book. Washington is considered an authority when it comes to Jones, so this allowed me to get closer to imagining Jones' own practice routines, which I still see as groundbreaking especially in terms of how he uses rudiments to create forward motion. I also learnt different ways of orchestrating rudiments by taking a lesson with Dan Weiss, who gave me ideas for how Jones' style as described in *Modern Rudimental Swing Solos* could be applied in a more modern context (Weiss 2019).

In terms of comping, I practiced various tempos by slowing down the different comping transcriptions I had made with an application called *Transcribe*. As mentioned above, the three pieces I focused on in the article were *Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, *Karioka*, and *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*. I found transcribing and practicing Jones' comping on the original recordings to be crucial to my analysis and here the playing and writing met in what I see as a perfect example of the doing-thinking process. The "doing" part of this describes the transcribing and practicing while the "thinking" part includes writing. I also built up certain practice routines for particular tunes, such as Jackie McLean's abstract composition *Quadrangle*. To maintain the fast tempo and ensure the necessary stamina, I used the up-tempo exercise described by John Riley in *Beyond Bop Drumming* (Riley 1997: 24–29). In the exercise, I raised the half-note tempo by 2bpm over each 5 to

10 minute cycle – working my way up gradually from 140 to 160bpm. This is a very practical exercise related to particular musical features of a composition. My goal throughout the process, and especially in the preparation phase for each concert, has been to find ways of practicing which simultaneously relate to the research task, music, and compositions I am preparing for.

Besides practicing on my own with the drum set, I also made sure to rehearse with my fellow performers at least 6 to 8 times before the actual performance of each component. I wanted to allow each of the band members enough time to absorb and learn the material. I also wanted to have the room to test out and improvise various approaches. With this in mind, I recorded the rehearsals and analyzed what I heard in order to further develop the musical outcome and the artistic goals. To illustrate this in practice across all the components, let us look at how this worked in the rehearsals for *Odd Times*.

In this case, our quintet was performing a composition called *Off August Moon* by jazz drummer Jeff Watts. This has a metric modulation that felt very unnatural, new, and exciting for the whole group – shifting from a meter of 5/4 to 3/4 and back by subdividing quintuplets and triplets. This shift had to be tested out in various ways with the group. Based on the rehearsal tapes and discussions with the group, I had to test out the execution of the metric modulation by first improvising alone to ensure it was suitable for this particular composition and taking into account its original style and texture. After finding ways to execute the modulation in the Watts piece on my own, I was able to go back to rehearsing with the quintet and see how my approach worked. I recorded the rehearsal again, analyzed it and would either go back and start the process again or, if satisfied, continue on from what I had discovered thus far. In terms of working with all the groups, I also saw it as artistically necessary to organize a final dress rehearsal (with audience) before the

actual concerts in each component. The positive pressure of having an audience present made all the musicians get what I would call “the dirt out of their playing”. With this out of the way, it then meant we could all be more focused on just the music in the actual examination concert.

As well as being a visual aid for my analysis of Philly Joe Jones’ comping, careful transcription provided detailed illustrations of this in my article – clarifying how I developed the five core elements of comping. As such, transcription is thus also a good way to convey detailed information about features of musical expression at the micro level that might otherwise be difficult to explain in words alone.

As well as improvisation and transcription, the process of writing itself has also become a way of developing my practice and should also be considered as one of my artistic research methods. This became clear when writing my final assessment essay for the course Fundamental Research Concepts and Processes.

> I was surprised to discover that writing has been almost as important a research method for me as playing. I had not realized the extent to which the writing process would uncover the actual playing process nor how it would provide me with artistic insights. The effect has been somewhat mind-blowing and just goes to show that the process of inquiry is a continuous process. Writing up the results of the musical analysis for my article has even led me to consider re-recording the first component of my studies, as I now have quite a different rhythmical understanding of Philly Joe Jones from the one I had at the start – and this is after a fairly long process of writing. To me this indicates that the research process has been successful. The process of inquiry led me to different solutions from the ones I thought I would get to at the beginning (Lukkarinen 2021a).

In the process of writing this thesis, I have also become aware of the autoethnographic method and its potential for writing about personal experience within the research

context. I see similarities between this and how I have used improvisation in a doing-thinking manner, and this is mentioned in my learning diary notes.

> Perhaps the most comforting and personally reassuring aspect of autoethnography is the sense that it makes the researcher's journey and learning process actually visible – with all the successes and failures that these entail. It helps make sense of the often very personal struggle that is almost inevitably a necessary part of artistic research – that would otherwise be hard to understand. If this is mirrored by the master-apprentice idea – which is very much alive in jazz music – or the transmission of knowledge through playing, I might think that what I have learned most comes down to the personal experiences of an individual musician and the knowledge that has emerged from them (Lukkarinen 2023a).

1.3 Position as an artistic jazz researcher

In the light of jazz history, the drummer's role or even status has been to accompany other musicians. This role was at the very core of Philly Joe Jones' musicianship. The following quote – even if the observation is somewhat exaggerated – comes from an early entry in my learning diary notes and explains why there is a need for this research:

> In jazz research it seems that the artistic research done by musicians challenges the research done by non-musicians. A good example of this is how interplay has been analyzed. Often the non-musicians conclude that there is, for example, a call-response happening in a piece of jazz, where musicians see none. Interplay is certainly happening, but this might just be based on two strong rhythmical lines (Lukkarinen 2021a).

My motivation for researching the elements of jazz drum comping is not simply because I have personal experience of this, but because there is also very little existing research conducted by drummers, or even from the drummer's perspective.

As a fairly abstract research target, comping requires tools that allow actual rhythms and textures to be analyzed and conceptualized. The tools, and analysis opportunities they provide, should make it thus easier to determine the musical meaning of comping. Successful comping hopefully establishes a framework for musical communication which even if it is not at the heart of this work, has created the most intriguing challenges for me throughout my career. To broaden the perspective further, it has also been useful to see how I function as an artistic researcher in the light of criticism and the various questions that have arisen. For example, looking at other fields which are closely linked to artistic research has been useful – such as the philosophy of science (see below) – and yet at the same time I must point out that my work is by no means driven by the desire to start a philosophical discussion.

Alan Chalmers (2013: 10) aptly describes my own research position when he states that before one can observe and interpret a research target one must be able to apply "an appropriate conceptual framework and knowledge". For me, this conceptual framework is the history of jazz – but how appropriate is it in my research, and where to start with the vast amount of information on offer? Indeed, in a *Downbeat* interview from 1976, Jones highlights Chalmers' idea himself, when he points out that "scientists that experiment are qualified scientists and they come up with something valid from their experiments. But when musicians who haven't studied at all experiment, what are they experimenting with? You have to know what to use before you start to experiment (Davis 1976: 18)".

When Chalmers (2013: 4) addresses scientific processes more broadly, he points out that "seeing is believing", and this led me to wonder if "listening" could be substituted for that "seeing". I certainly found that during the artistic research process listening *was* believing. Aural analysis was certainly key here in

establishing my belief, but I was also able to deepen it with transcription as this also allowed me to “see” this belief. I could then test out my beliefs by first playing them and then going through the process of aural analysis and transcription again.

This first section has laid out the conceptual framework of the study, which draws particularly on the history of jazz. I have presented a carefully planned, critically evaluated, and personal view of why I consider accompaniment to be a meaningful topic in this context. My artistic research into the five core elements of comping and comping textures has allowed me to showcase what I encounter today as a professional drummer.

2. The five components

This summary brings together the five components of this thesis, four of which are artistic and one of which is the aforementioned peer-reviewed article. As such, this is the first doctoral thesis at the Sibelius Academy's Department of Jazz with an *article-based* written component. I chose to write an article and summary rather than a monograph for two main reasons. Firstly, it forced me to reflect on my artistic growth at every step of the way – evaluating it by referring frequently to a wide range of existing source materials (see above). Secondly, it meant I got to work on and improve my analytical academic writing right from the start of the project. In this section of the summary, I discuss the ideas and aims behind each of the five components, how I prepared for them and implemented them, and how I responded to the feedback I received afterwards.

2.1 Producing the recording *One for Joe* and writing the peer-reviewed article

The project began with one of the artistic components – recording the album *One for Joe*, and its written counterpart – the peer-reviewed article entitled *Breaking Down Five Core Elements of the Improvised Comping of Philly Joe Jones.* The album contains 10 versions of jazz compositions that Philly Joe Jones recorded with various artists between 1955 and 1961, and the article presents my views on the five basic elements of Jones' comping in terms of rhythm and texture – elements that I began testing in the album.

The album was recorded in May 2022 and jointly released in the spring of 2023 by my own label *JASKAA* and *Sibis Jazz* as part of the "Sibis Jazz Doc Series". Initially, I aimed to publish my research article in *Percussive Notes* – the peer-reviewed journal of the Percussive Arts Society, but because this would have meant

a publication date that was too late from the perspective of my studies, it ended up getting published in *The Finnish Yearbook of Ethnomusicology* on December 9, 2024. Because of the switch to a different journal, I adapted my text to appeal to a broader audience of musicians – not just percussionists. One of the advantages of this was that I adopted a more practical and approachable form of analysis, and as the research progressed, creating the album and writing the article became symbiotic processes that mutually supported each other.

As outlined in my originl postgraduate plan, the initial focus for the first artistic component was Philly Joe Jones and the 1950s' Hard Bop era. I believed studying Jones and this particular era would naturally lead into artistic research and reveal core elements of jazz drumming which I could refine and use for myself. Jones is revered among jazz musicians not only for his innovative soloing but the swing in his comping, which I have always deeply admired, and which has clearly influenced jazz drumming in general. By studying Jones my intention was to deepen my understanding of the language of jazz played on a drum set. My hypothesis was that it would guide the development of my work and any future concerts.

With the help of *The Philly Joe Jones Solo Book* by Joerg Eckel (2019), I made a Spotify playlist based on the drum solos transcribed in the book. My initial goal was to listen for songs that contained the following musical characteristics: (1) rhythmically active and energetic comping; (2) rhythmically interesting drum soloing; (3) thematically interesting and inspiring composition; and (4) clear sound quality that would ensure reliable transcription. The following are entries from my listening diary (Lukkarinen 2018b) that describe the early stages of my research.

> *Hello Bright Sunflower* (Donald Byrd), Donald Byrd, *The Cat Walk* (1961).
> - Excellent brush playing and soloing.

- Very swinging rhythm section.
- Trademark rimshot on 4 – Philly Lick

Mama G (Nellie Blye) (Wayne Shorter), Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great* (1959).
- Active comping, even exceptional.
- Good fill between trumpet/sax solos
- Interesting fours, risk/musicality/surprise factor

Quadrangle (Jackie McLean), Jackie McLean, *Jackie's Bag* (1959).
- Interesting because there's no piano in performance.
- Different, freer, and more colorful playing

I realize that my analysis was quick and superficial in these early stages of my work. This is partly because the original playlist contained over 200 compositions, and a detailed analysis would have been very time-consuming. However, the three songs cited above did end up on the *One for Joe* album, and *Mama G (Nellie Blye)* also plays a central role in the musical analysis of the article. In retrospect, these three examples contain observations that illustrate the role of the rhythm section in different ways and at the same time echo the final research question of my work. Between them, these comments describe all the aspects I was looking for: how the rhythm section plays ("very swinging rhythm section"); how the drummer comps ("active accompaniment, even exceptional"); rhythmic intensity ("good fills during the trumpet/sax solos"); and how comping adds drama to the performance ("different, freer and more colorful playing").

I compiled the playlist by following the alphabetical order of the solos transcribed in Eckel's book, which gave an unusual flavor to it – usually Spotify playlists are organized in terms of album, genre, era, or artist, but the only connecting factor here was Jones as the drummer. The musicians playing with him varied constantly,

which made me focus particularly on Jones' accompaniment and the questions it raised about variations in the feel or groove of the music. Listening analysis revealed the following: 1) The overall rhythmic feel of the performance is particularly influenced and affected by the rhythmic texture that Jones builds up with the pianist. 2) Jones stays relatively consistent in his comping style irrespective of the range of musicians he plays with. 3) Jones seems to have periods when his comping was particularly energetic, such as 1958, the fall of 1959 to spring 1960, and 1960–1961. Observations 1 and 2 proved particularly relevant and led to the research question that I would pursue for both the article and *One for Joe* recording, namely: "what are the basic elements in Philly Joe Jones' comping?"

My initial objective was to present the *One for Joe* material as a single live performance. But as my research progressed, and COVID-19 made it difficult to produce concerts, I came up with the recording as a more viable and methodologically engaging alternative. The following entry from my learning diary notes describes what was going through my mind as I switched to the idea of using a recording as my new line of artistic inquiry.

> Miles Davis's Kind of Blue record has been transcribed and played note-by-note live. Did it sound the same? No, it didn't. What was the data, result, or output? How does a recording fit the picture? What is it that a recording would need to present? How would the recording relate to the student's research? There would need to be a research-driven reason why the recording has replaced a concert performance. The recording should be an equally valid way to present research "data" (Lukkarinen 2021a).

Reframing the concert as a recording project allowed me to adopt a research framework that examines Jones specifically *as a recording artist*. The aim of conducting the recording in parallel with the writing process was to investigate Jones' musicianship and to identify the potential core elements of jazz drum

comping. While the primary objective was to articulate these elements for my own understanding, I simultaneously sought to develop a conceptual and linguistic framework through which they could be communicated to a broader audience. In addition, I aimed to put into words the kinds of musical meanings that comping represents from the perspective of a jazz drummer.

The elements identified in Jones' playing enabled me to critical reevaluate my own comping style and helped to pinpoint areas I needed to develop. In practice, using both the music and Jones' drumming as a reference compelled me to simplify my own playing, which resulted in a constructive move to emphasize timekeeping. Later on in the study I looked back on the recording and assessed it as follows:

> The recording process with rehearsals, and the session itself, served more as a performance laboratory, where I had the chance to challenge myself to get inside Jones' musicianship and go beyond the actual notes he played. The research increased my understanding of Philly Joe Jones' methods of creating musical energy. For my own playing and musicianship, I believe that the five key elements of comping presented in the article – goosing, active accenting, form structuring, riff style in solo comping, and intuitive call and response – have translated into my own playing and clarified it. Similarly, working again with Jones' soloing has structured my own soloing, deepened my understanding of the solo language of jazz drumming, and added rhythmic and dynamic dimensions to my technical skills (Lukkarinen 2023a)

My own positive assessment of the recording differed significantly from the feedback I received from the evaluation panel. When I prepared myself for the project, I believed I was fully aware of the risks involved in attempting to emulate such a revered musician. However, the drummers on the panel (Professor Jukkis Uotila, Professor Dana Hall, and John Riley) had some strong criticisms – not only of my choice of material, but also my bandleading abilities, and the way I articulated my understanding of Philly Joe Jones' playing on the recording.

To me, this response was to be somewhat expected as drummers would have an exceptionally deep connection to my research subject, and it certainly underlines the significance of Jones' legacy in the history of jazz music. The fourth member of the panel, jazz guitarist Teemu Viinikainen, responded more favorably – both to the recording itself and to its research-oriented aims – at times taking a contrary position to the other members.

I fully acknowledge the criticisms I received, particularly given that my musical expression was directly compared to Jones' highly energetic style of playing. The need for bolder musical statements is indeed one of the key aspects I have sought to develop in my subsequent performances. In retrospect, when considering the feedback in relation to the significance of the first artistic component, the studying of Jones' playing was only an initial step towards understanding both the processes and purpose of artistic research. As previously stated, the aim was not to reproduce Jones' style but to engage with it as an artistic stimulus.

However, the feedback made me acutely aware not only of the expressive shortcomings in my playing with regard to jazz as a tradition, but also of the inherent difficulty in communicating my research objectives and outcomes through performance alone. With future jury discussions in mind, I have thus been careful to clearly put into words each artistic topic addressed and their respective goals in a linking paper.[1] This has clarified what my objectives are and facilitated dialogue with members of the jury.

[1] As part of the artistic research process, this document must be provided to the jury before each of the artistic components. The paper describes the background and motives of the research, methods used, and the artistic goals.

2.2 *Textures*

The second artistic component was the *Textures* concert, where we performed as the Jaska Lukkarinen trio of drums, saxophone, and bass. This is an ensemble I have led since 2006 with Jussi Kannaste on saxophone and Antti Lötjönen on double bass. This trio has provided a platform for my personal growth and development as a band leader. We previously performed and recorded music composed by all members with some jazz standards as well. *Textures* took place on May 10th, 2023, at the Camerata Hall in the Helsinki Music Center.

While experimenting with possible research material and the feedback from *One for Joe*, I realized that performing other people's music was the most natural way for me to investigate comping. A particularly significant decision in terms of widening the scope of the project, was to invite drummer and composer Mikko Hassinen to write new pieces of jazz in response to my research themes and questions. I realized that through artistic research, I could not only produce information and participate in the discussion but also give new Finnish jazz music increased exposure. As the process developed, I realized that my discussions with Hassinen were methodologically a much better way for myself as a performing artist to communicate with the composer about my artistic goals than usually possible in traditional freelance work.

When recording *One for Joe*, my focus had been more on thinking about how Jones played, and reflecting on my own artistic practice played only a very minor part. But with *Textures*, putting my artistic goals into words made me have to think about them more and ensured that they remained the priority. Having put my artistic experience into words in the learning diary, linking paper, and course essays also meant I could incorporate aspects of autoethnographic research methodology when

preparing what to play for the *Textures* concert. In my linking paper I described the imminent concert to my jury as follows:

> Contrasts sound beautiful in the quite harsh timbral context of a trio ensemble. You can draw out the timbre almost exactly as you want. Maybe the color palette is so wide that the abundance of possibilities prevents you from grabbing the first one. Waiting. Patience. Confidence (Lukkarinen 2022a).

This particular observation after carefully going through the rehearsal recordings perhaps best illustrates how my artistic thinking would develop, as it clearly led me to the research question and artistic direction I eventually decided to pursue for the concert: "what kind of rhythmic, melodic, and timbral comping tools does a drummer use in a saxophone trio ensemble setting for creating feelings of musical tension, resolution, and rest". During the preparation phase, I compiled a playlist on Spotify much like I did for the *One for Joe* component. Based on my playlist listening analysis of I wanted to find examples of similar saxophone trios which demonstrated different textural choices made by the drummer. I found that these choices were based on considerations regarding (i) timbre, (ii) musical dramaturgy, and (iii) resolving rhythmic tension. I also wanted to test out my ideas regarding the five core elements of comping and how each of them affected texture.

I found the following six kinds of comping texture from listening to the playlist. These categories are not based on what is commonly held in jazz music or drumming circles, but more on what I found best illustrates my own personal approach to comping in *Textures*.

1) Where comping texture colors both thematic and improvised melodies and rhythmically adapts them.

- Lovano, Joe (1998), *Sanctuary Park*, *Trio Fascination Edition One*, Blue Note Records.
  Joe Lovano (tenor saxophone), Dave Holland (bass), Elvin Jones (drums).

2) Where comping texture colors both thematic and improvised melodies and rhythmically intersects them.

- Lovano, Joe (2001), *Off and Running, Flights of Fancy: Trio Fascination Edition Two*, Blue Note Records.
  Joe Lovano (tenor saxophone), Cameron Brown (bass), Idris Muhammed (drums).

3) Where comping texture is soloistic in straight-ahead jazz.

- Konitz, Lee (1961), *You'd Be So Nice to Come Home to, Motion*, Verve Records.
  Lee Konitz (alto saxophone), Sonny Dallas (bass), Elvin Jones (drums).

4) Where texture veils the meter.

- Marsalis, Brandford (1996), *The Dark Keys, The Dark Keys*, Sony Music.
  Jeff "Tain" Watts / Brandford Marsalis / The Dark Keys / The Dark Keys.

5) Where comping texture colors thematic and improvised melodies by being sparse and free.

- Holland, Dave (1986), Quiet Fire, Triplicate, ECM.
  Dave Holland (bass), Steve Coleman (tenor saxophone), Jack DeJohnette (drums).

6) Where comping texture imitates percussion instruments.

- Redman, Joshua (2007), *Zarafah, Back East,* Nonesuch.
  Joshua Redman (tenor saxophone), Christian McBride (bass), Brian Blade (drums).

I was happily surprised that Mikko Hassinen took these categories into account when composing the concert material. Our discussions also helped me refine my understanding of the various comping textures that are possible. I used the above categories as a starting point, when thinking about which textural choices I would apply to each of the pieces below – all of which are composed by Hassinen unless otherwise marked.

1) *Mindfull* – the rhythmic intensity of the composition evokes a soloistic straight-ahead jazz approach.

2) *Rainbow Blue* – the tom-tom melody imitates the congas in the *Guaguanco* rhumba that inspired Hassinen's writing. Comping of the melody is both free and in-time.

3) *Dr. Spin* – synchronization and communication between band members is required to meet the challenge of a 5/4 meter and 4/4 meter on top of one another. An approach that supports the melody but also slightly veils the meter would work well. *Dr. Spin* broaches topics that I will explore in greater depth in my third concert *Odd Times.*

4) *Rabbit, Fieldscape, & Zehov* – this slow-moving beautiful melody needs an approach where patience and confidence work in tandem with a mix of sparse and dense textural solutions using the various colors of the drum set. This approach is inspired, for example by Jack DeJohnette's use of cymbals in "Quiet Fire" on the *Triplicate* recording.

5) *Otter Village* – plenty of musical cues that can be played in any order, and which encourage horizontal thinking in drum soloing.

6) *Countdown 1234* (comp. Lukkarinen) – while the tune and energy hints at Sonny Rollin's recording of *East Broadway Run Down*, the textural approach combines Elvin Jones' high-energy drumming with ideas from DeJohnette and Tony Williams.

7) *Changes* – this last Hassinen composition in rhythm changes form has complex rhythmic alterations to the melody, and it was quite a challenge to

find a sufficiently light and groovy way to bring out the tune's positive and playful major-key color, which definitely has its place in the concert repertoire.

8) *Chelsea Bridge* (comp. Strayhorn, arr. Kannaste) – this classic standard requires patient listening, interplay, and imagination to combine the traditional ballad texture with freer sections, so that there is a sense of space and rest.

The jazz drummers whose playing I analyzed to formulate the texture categories appear to have integrated the accompaniment textures I classified in their performances in a manner that I interpret as predominantly intuitive. Of particular significance to this discussion are my personal observations regarding the efficacy of the textures I personally tested; specifically, their suitability for executing the composed material while simultaneously contributing to the overall dramaturgical development of the concert.

From the perspective of ensemble leadership, it is both plausible and pedagogically valuable to recognize that, notably in the absence of a harmonic instrument, the drums can assume a versatile and coloristic role. Using the texture categories as interpretive frameworks allows for the strategic planning of distinct improvisational starting points in accompaniment. These serve as flexible launch pads from which improvisation can evolve in accordance with the musical context and interactions with fellow musicians. I will present examples of this in Section 3 of this summary where I will bring together my findings about the elements of comping.

Within this particular ensemble configuration, the musical qualities of patience and confidence – concepts I previously identified in my practice diary – seem to be emphasized and reinforced through the musical texture and interaction. These qualities appear to function as essential elements in fostering musical cohesion and expressive unity – underscoring the importance of textural awareness and intentionality in jazz performance.

2.3 *Odd Times*

In the third artistic component, *Odd Times*, I explored comping in compositions with complex rhythms, asymmetrical time signatures, and metric modulations. The basic elements of comping presented in previous artistic components were primarily aimed at creating and maintaining rhythmic intensity and supporting the form of the composition. In *Odd Times*, I explored which factors determine the meter, and how and in which musical situations these should be expressed, emphasized, or veiled by the drummer. The concert took place on November 21st, 2024, in Helsinki Music Center's *Black Box*.

The music for the concert was again composed mainly by Mikko Hassinen. We also performed one composition by pianist Kari Ikonen and one by drummer Jeff Watts, which were chosen based on their suitability for the research framework. In fact, Watts' composition, *Of August Moon* from the album *Family*, brought together many elements of the research task with its overlapping rhythms, metric modulations and jazz approach to time signatures – this kind of jazz drumming was after all what had originally inspired the research topic. My goal was to elevate the music to a level where the time signature or complexity of the music does not become an end in itself or an obstacle to expression. Rather, the goal was to turn complex rhythmicity into a resource that supports musical form and artistic expression. The *Odd Times* concert featured Kari Ikonen on piano, Mikko Innanen on alto and soprano sax, Ville Vannemaa on tenor sax and bass clarinet, and Antti Lötjönen on double bass.

At the heart of the concert and the research process were the discussions with Mikko Hassinen and Kari Ikonen about my own goals and how the specifics of the compositions might fit with them. We found that the following factors regarding composition were particularly pertinent to my research:

- The varied use of rhythm in a composition – and the interpretation that results from it – can create a musical character for a piece in the same way as a groove based on, for instance, the *Poinciana* pattern has become a well-known musical modifier among drummers (see for example Ahmad Jamal's *Live at Pershing* recording from 1958).

- Changes in rhythm, time signature, and metric modulation are an essential part of jazz music and yet we have not explored their potential as compositional or improvisational tools in quite the same depth as, for example, harmonic variety.

- *Odd Meter* requires rhythmic counterpoint for the music to meet the rhythmic demands of a jazz aesthetic.

- Rhythmic variety is a constructive artistic element as long as the musicians feel comfortable and can still express the music effortlessly by, for example, not overly emphasizing the time signature. If the listener is less distracted by the meter, anything built on top of the rhythm can lead to a fascinating compositional world.

Below I will summarize my characterizations (taken from the linking paper) of the rhythmic goals of the compositions played at the November concert. As earlier, I will describe the rhythmic and artistic research challenges I faced when supporting the composer's intentions in each of the compositions. Unless otherwise marked (name in brackets), all but two of the compositions below were composed by Mikko Hassinen.

1) *Of August Moon* (Watts)
   Metric modulations from a 3/4 to 5/4 time signature using quintuplets are rare in jazz compositions, and for me the rhythmic complexity can result in a loss of horizontal thinking when comping: when the 3/4 time signature was slow, I needed to ensure the rhythm remained fluid; similarly, with the complex accompaniment motif in 5/4, repetition and simplicity were needed to ensure a groove.

2) *Train is Coming*
Hassinen's idea was to take "the repetition of rhythmic motifs", i.e., the typical jazz riff, but to use "an unconventional 3/2 time signature". However, I found that the 3/2 time signature and Hassinen's desired tempo for the performance caused one bar to feel like it was drawn out and made it particularly challenging to maintain a sense of forward motion.

3) *Orpheans*
In this piece, composed before we had started collaborating, Hassinen had been looking for a rhythmic layering that "not only persists throughout the piece, but involves constantly overlapping time signatures too". My solution was to find a ballad-like mood and a rhythmically calm backing that would support forward motion while also taking into account the various time signatures – in other words softening their effect by not overly stressing them.

4) *Vertex*
Here I worked out rhythmic layering which conveyed an illusion of slowing down in response to Hassinen's wish for a rhythmic motif that would convey "a sense of slowing tempo" to comp the melody . However, once I had mastered this, I then found it quite challenging to then go from comping the melody to the solos. I will come back to this in 3.2.6.

5) *Cat Towel*
This otherwise regular standard form was in Hassinen's words "constantly transformed by metric changes". These changes may have sometimes appeared, as I wrote in my linking paper, "somewhat carnivalesque, at the risk of compromising the natural rhythmic flow". My challenge was to keep the song hovering between the rhythmic stability of a groove and the rhythmic restlessness of the composition. In this respect, I was able to discover the elements that supported rhythmic fluidity in an ever-changing environment.

6) *Kääpikkäät* (Ikonen)
My idea here was to have a coordinated rubato, which is nevertheless always in time. Quarter notes were divided into two, three, four, and five note groupings and there was an irregular number of these divisions within

> each measure. The resulting complex, yet surprisingly natural and playful context made me explore what rhythmic and textural solutions accommodate Ikonen's desire for a piece that combines a rubato atmosphere with rhythmic precision. I found that I not only wanted to underline the rhythmic cells but also to create the illusion that this was an abstract groove following the rhythmic ingredients of the theme.

This concert proved to be one of the hardest of any musical situations I have been in, as I heard that my mother had passed away just two hours before the concert. However, the experience, which I cannot describe in any other way except than being present but mentally somewhere else, provided something valuable from the research perspective. It seemed that the situation caused some sort of shock where I cannot remember anything from the concert, so all the analysis is based on what I have heard and seen afterwards in the concert material.

I certainly noticed the moments where I seemed to lose focus, but I could also spot plenty of musical solutions that helped me cope. I noticed that in the rhythmically most complex compositions such as *Vertex* and *Train is Coming,* I had to trust in what I had internalized when rehearsing both alone and with the quintet. Some of the comping strategies were a set part of the research and internalized to such a point, that I was able to execute them in spite of not feeling fully present. This also made me question what exactly the role of improvisation in comping is as well. How much, for instance, is already internalized in my sense of proprioception – i.e., knowledge of my own body.

This subject has been discussed extensively from both musical and philosophical perspectives and, so without broadening the scope of this research project unnecessarily, I will briefly present three music-related viewpoints on the subject that confirm how important it is to have a highly attuned sense of one's own physical body when performing music. Pianist Eveliina Sumelius-Lindblom highlights how important this is in artistic research by linking it to philosopher

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion that the body functions as both researcher and a means of expression (Sumelius-Lindblom 2023: 132–134). Music educationalists, Heidi Westerlund and Marja-Leena Juntunen highlight a similar point, but this time in relation to the views of philosopher Emile Jaquez-Dalcroze. According to Westerlund and Juntunen, working on one's proprioception and kinesthesia through "embodied learning" can improve musicianship and musical expression (Westerlund and Juntunen 2005: 112–119; Juntunen 2024: 33). In a similar vein, but this time from the perspective of African American culture, Samuel A. Floyd discusses motor memory, guided by intuition and instinct, as something that jazz musicians rely on when improvising (Floyd 1995, 140).

I feel that my comping and musical solutions at the concert, due to the psychological challenges of my personal situation, gave me an experience in which my body (and more precisely hands) guided my accompaniment, with the conscious side of my intellect very much taking a back seat. On the other hand, this "auto-pilot" also affected the transmission of bodily knowledge that may have simultaneously stood in the way of musical expression. These two contrary aspects of the experience made me reflect on the role of improvisation in accompaniment. As Robert Hodson points out, solos are not the only thing being improvised – the comping is too. "All of the ensemble members are improvising simultaneously; the improvised saxophone melody is supported by the rhythm section's improvised accompaniment" (Hodson 2007: 7). Hodson here is referring to the 1958 recording "Things Are Getting Better" by Cannonball Adderley and Milt Jackson. And yet, while I understand the logic behind this, my previous experience has made me aware that actually not all comping is improvised from the drummer's perspective. There are perhaps whole modules of bodily movement that are physically memorized and can be recalled as elements in the kind of improvised comping that Hodson describes. Goosing, riffing, and form structuring are three such modular

elements, whereas active accenting and intuitive call and response can be described more as interactional processes.

2.4 *Rainbow Blue*

While writing this summary, I was also preparing for my fourth and final concert, *Rainbow Blue* which would take place on September 25, 2025, in Helsinki Music Center's *Black Box*. The following account is thus written during the preparation process. The name of the concert also reflects the research task – as well as being part of the rainbow, the blue also describes the sky behind it, just as good comping frames (and is also a part of) the musical color palette of a big band ensemble. The material I chose for the concert consisted of the same pieces Hassinen had composed for the previous concerts, but arranged for the UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra: "Mindfull", "Otter Village", "Rainbow Blue", and "Rabbit, Fieldscape & Zehov" from *Textures*, plus "Vertex" and "Train Is Coming" from *Odd Times*. Hassinen also wrote a new composition entitled "Prague" specifically for this concert. As mentioned earlier in Section 1, the historical premise for this research component was Mel Lewis' contention that big band drumming can be approached with the subtlety that comes from playing in smaller ensembles. This resonated with me as did the fact that, in his biography, Lewis is described by John Riley as the "ultimate team player but not a follower" (Smith 2014: 274) – this seems to strike the balance that I have also looked for in my artistic practice.

At this point, I felt the need to reassess my very first study plan's component-related research question: "How do the form and melody of a composition guide a drummer's solos?" The link between drum solos and drum comping had at first seemed unproblematic in the light of today's rhythmically complex and dense solo-like comping; and yet a soloistic approach to comping began to seem a bit of a paradox if comping means to accompany and complement. Was such a soloistic

approach really complementing the soloist – or in fact just reflecting a selfish need?

For this component, therefore, I decided to change my tack and declared this as follows, in the linking paper which I submitted to the jury for *Rainbow Blue*:

> The research task merits criticism. Mikko Hassinen, besides being the composer and arranger of Rainbow Blue, has also been a vital and insightful sparring partner for my research, alongside my supervisors. When we discussed the arrangements for the first time, he challenged my thoughts when he remarked, knowing that I also play professionally outside the scope of this research project, […] that rhythmic counterpoint or textural creativity is something I and other drummers would naturally do. Have I been changing my approach when in the research context, and why am I only letting myself do this in musical situations outside the research context? (Lukkarinen 2025a.)

Hassinen was pointing out something I had already wondered about, and which had been flagged up by some members of the jury too – research might actually be limiting the natural flow in my comping. In retrospect, I did feel that having textural concepts guide the approach in *Textures* or taking a pattern-like approach to some of the compositions in *Odd Times* may certainly have restricted what might otherwise have flowed quite naturally. How then would I ensure that my research approach would not restrict the musical flow in *Rainbow Blue*? I decided to react naturally, in the hope that this would strike the balance between facilitating and challenging the band so they would learn to react to me but also trust in what I hear and what I have to offer.

As a consequence, the original research question morphed into the following:

1. How do I make a musical standpoint?

2. How does my idea of a soloistic approach to comping take account of my main research question, where comping is seen as a way to support the form and dramaturgy of the music?

3. How do arrangements which must take into account the size of the orchestra affect a soloistic approach to comping?

4. How does a soloistic approach relate to goosing, active accenting, riffing, form structuring, and intuitive call and response (i.e., the five core elements of comping)?

5. Can textural choices serve as a launch pad into taking "a small band approach"?

6. Does my use of dynamics – especially the use of soft dynamics, brave textural choices and awareness of rhythmic counterpoint – positively force the orchestra to carefully listen to my musical intentions?

Together, these questions led me towards accomplishing what I was aiming for: from the very beginning of rehearsals – before getting into actual playing – the questions were a way in to explaining to the whole orchestra what it was I wanted. In each of the compositions, my aim was simply to find a musically expressive way of comping which would force the orchestra to listen more intensely. This resulted in positive comments from orchestra members about the project being musically exciting and challenging while sounding like fresh and up-to-date big band music. The following observations about the performances of "Rainbow Blue" and "Vertex" offer some key findings. I noticed that the textural choices explored in *Textures* helped me to facilitate the small band approach. They also served, as I had predicted, as promising launch pads not only for myself but also for other improvisations by musicians in the band. For example, in *Rainbow Blue*, I chose to play rumba guaguancó pattern that I had played in *Textures*, but this time with hands instead of sticks. This created a very soft dynamic, which meant Joonatan Rautio did not feel the need to play as forcefully as usual and could thus approach

the improvisation in his solo more freely. It also lightened the overall rhythmic feel of the band, which better suited the intimate mood of this piece.

In *Vertex,* my playing focused on softening the meter by finding a way to play that was less strictly pattern-based than it had been in *Odd Times*. This gave the piece a lighter feel, encouraged the orchestra to listen to my playing more carefully, and helped to establish a shared understanding of the rhythmic motif that gave the impression of slowing the pulse down – in sum, I was able to take a more relaxed jazz approach to this intricate composition.

One of the main research tasks for *Rainbow Blue* was to pinpoint how arrangements for a big band might limit my playing and how I would meet this challenge to keep the musical dramaturgy interesting. One way was that the arrangements themselves contained solutions that deviated from conventional big band writing. I found these accommodated my soloistic approach to comping, and I was able to transmit my intentions to a receptive orchestra. It created the kind of positive unpredictability that is more typical of playing in a smaller band and increased the musical dramaturgy in each piece – I was able to emphasize the distinctive features of each composition by textural choices which I saw as broader musical statements.

The jury complimented me on a high-quality and very professionally organized concert. They found my textural approach to the sounds of the drum set to be a crucially supportive element in the performance. They also appreciated the fact that I had learned the music by heart and was playing it without sight reading, which seemed to allow more natural comping in each piece the orchestra tackled. All in all, they found this concert as the most successful one of all the artistic components. However, the question of how to make a strong musical statement still remains unanswered. What exactly can I do to change the direction of the music, but without

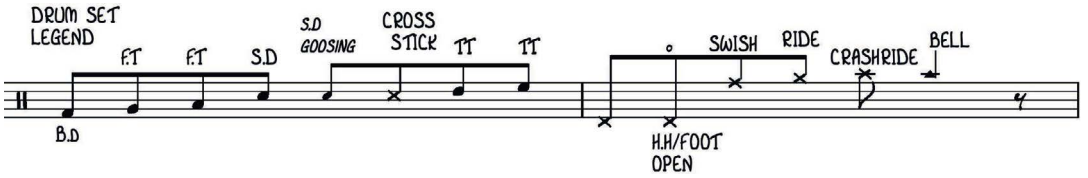
halting its natural flow, and what does that require from the whole ensemble. Also, it requires further thinking about how the core elements of comping can coexist with a soloistic approach to making musical statements.

3. Musical Reflections

In this section I will briefly review the elements of comping in light of my article, thus building a bridge back to Philly Joe Jones. I also broaden the perspective presented in the original article so that it matches my current thinking regarding the elements of comping. This should provide some background to the discussion that follows in Section 4. I begin by first presenting the five elements in 3.1, then proceed to apply them in 3.2 in practical and approachable way to actual video footage from the concerts.

Transcription excerpts from the original article are also included in 3.1 to illustrate each comping element, but the full transcriptions and a more in-depth analysis can be found in the article itself (see attached). The real-time and slowed-down audio examples of transcribed material with time codes, can be found by accessing the 2024 issue of the *Yearbook of Ethnomusicology.* Below is the drum set legend that I have used in the notation.

Table 1: Drum set legend



3.1 The elements of comping

Table 2 below summarizes the comping elements and their musical essence. Whereas goosing, riffing, active accenting, and structuring the form are generally monologic – i.e., within the drum set and without necessitating any direct interactive relationship beyond, intuitive call and response is fundamentally interactive and therefore dialogic. As such, it affects the dramaturgy of the performance by seeking for a dialogue between the drummer and soloist or drummer and ensemble. Although they have distinctive characteristics, the elements listed below often overlap and may appear in any order, depending on the musical moment or situation.

Table 2: Comping elements

Element	Essence
Goosing	Varied snare and bass drum comping motifs, which combine to create a fabric that conveys drummer's musical heritage.
Riffing	Textural sibling to goosing with emphasis on repetitive comping motifs that bring stability.
Active Accenting	Creates sharply defined dynamic contours that emerge from goosing or riffing – often used for rhythmic transitions between monologic and dialogic comping.
Structuring the Form	By making structure pronounced through shifts in rhythmic density, color, and orchestration, this is the architectural spine of comping.
Intuitive Call and Response	Dialogue triggered when drummer and soloist or ensemble intuitively exchange motifs.

3.1.1 Goosing – Variable Texture

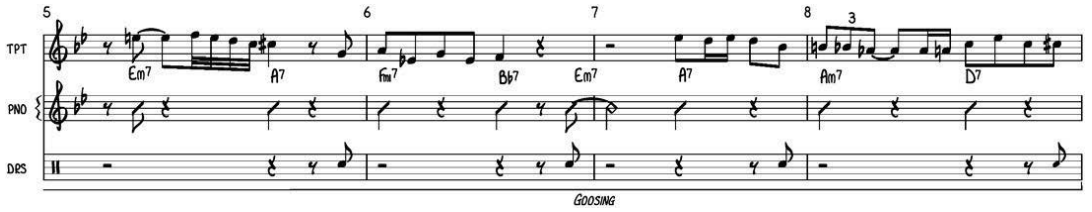
- Snare and bass drum comping texture drawing attention to the drummer's rhythmic inheritance.
- Two functions: The first function includes eight-note phrasing effecting the feel of the beat and the second function triggers monologic interaction within the drum set.

As my research progressed, I started to see goosing as an essential part of a drummer's DNA or identity – a fingerprint of the player's rhythmic inheritance. Goosing describes the varied snare and bass drum motifs a jazz drummer plays when comping. These varying motifs contrast with the comparatively static hypnotic color of the ride cymbal. Goosing stems from the jazz drummer's natural need for variation and with the basic rhythmic building blocks, it draws attention also to the level of dynamics. Goosing thus characterizes where the drummer is coming from.

Central to my conception of goosing as a comping element is its two functions. The first function highlights the drummer's eight-note phrasing and how wide or contracted the beat feels. For example, in the excerpt below where Jones is comping Lee Morgan's trumpet solo in *Mama G* (1959), it suggests a rhythmic relaxation.[2] In the article I mention how Jones' comping produces forward motion; motifs combine to create rhythmic tension which eventually resolves and then suggest rhythmic relaxation (Lukkarinen 2024a: 114).

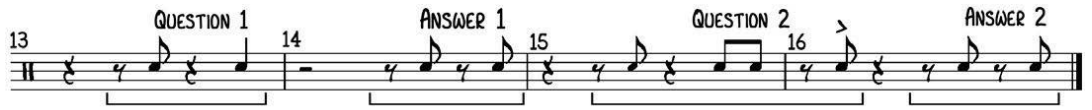
[2] Kelly, Wynton (1959) Mama G (Nellie Blye) (Wayne Shorter), Kelly Great. Apple MPEG-4 audio, Vee-Jay ltd partnership.

Transcription 1: Goosing



The second function of goosing is to set up *within* the drum set "a question-and-answer routine". The transcription excerpt I use to demonstrate snare drum goosing in the article – and also included here (Transcription 2) – illustrates this well (Lukkarinen 2024a: 116).

Transcription 2: Question-and-answer routine



As was later confirmed in my interview with pianist Danny Grissett (see pp. 80–81 below), varying the texture of a performance is something that I have found to be expected of all jazz musicians and for that reason, goosing is vitally important. I gathered from my conversations with Grissett that, while goosing may not directly serve an interactional function between musicians, the question-and-answer aspect of its second function can lead to this – especially when emphasized by active accenting.

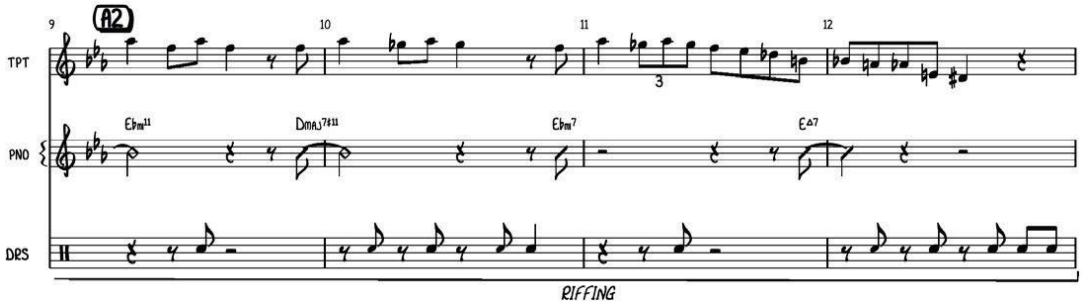
3.1.2 Riffing – Repetitive Texture

- A repetitive textural sibling to goosing clarifies the time feel and the form resulting a solid rhythmic foundation.

- Functions mostly as a steady state of comping but can have a rhythmically activating and musically expressive purpose as well.

I analyzed Philly Joe Jones' riffing and its implications in my article in saxophonist Sonny Rollins' recording of the jazz standard *Surrey with the Fringe on Top* and in trumpeter Freddie Hubbard's recording of Kenny Dorham composition *Karioka.*[3] For me, Jones' riffing brings clarity to the sense of time and form giving it a solid rhythmic foundation. The following excerpt shows 4-bar snare drum riffing behind Hubbard's trumpet solo.

Transcription 3: Riffing



Deeply rooted in the Afro American tradition, riffing establishes not only rhythmic stability but also a sense of rhythmic relaxation, insofar as it clarifies the complex form or meter of a composition – e.g., through rhythmic counterpoint. With these characteristics, it can also function as a means of musical expression, similar to active accenting. There is also much that riffing and goosing have in common too, in terms of textural similarities. However, what distinguishes these two elements is that, whereas goosing emphasizes rhythmic variation, riffing has the repetition of motifs at its core.

[3] Rollins, Sonny (1957) *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (Richard Rogers), *Newk's Time.* Blue Note 7-84001-2, compact disc; Hubbard, Freddie (1960) *Karioka* (Kenny Dorham), *Goin Up'.* Apple MPEG-4 audio, Blue Note Records.

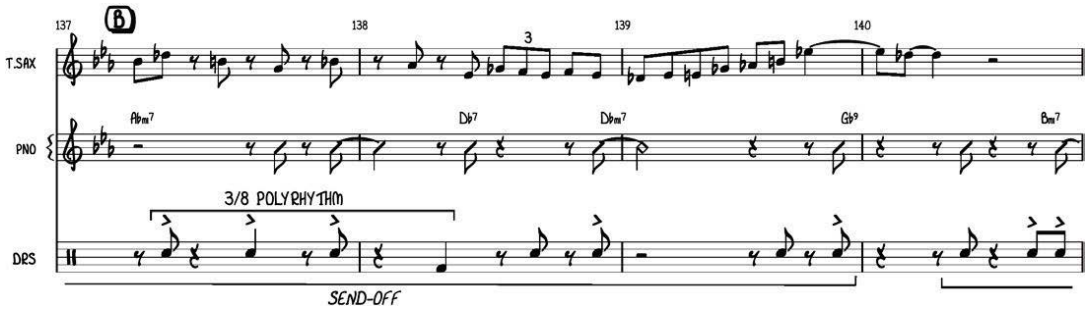
In Section 4, I will explore the fine line between riffing and pattern-based grooves, as well as why riffing may seem slightly out of place in the light of the music I performed in my concerts. Could riffing, for example become a factor that may actually hinder rhythmic development, if the rhythmic anchor point starts to become too dominant?

3.1.3 Active Accenting – Dynamic Contours

- Loud, sharp or declarative gestures that raise tension and provoke response.
- Can facilitate transitions between monologic and dialogic comping.

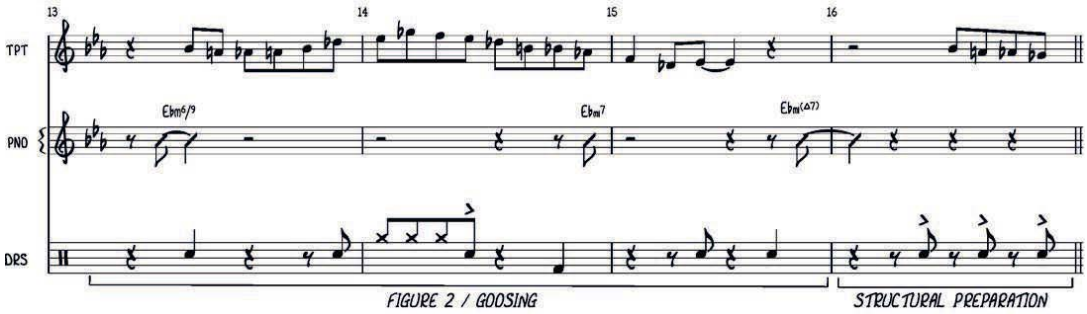
As described more fully in the article, active accenting is a seamless extension of goosing. Where this element begins and the other ends is very fluid, but active accenting represents a sudden increase or decrease in rhythmic intensity which clarifies the dynamic contours of the performance. I pictured how Philly Joe Jones' comping includes variable layers of rhythmic intensity, created by active accenting and enhanced by the use of polyrhythmic comping figures (Lukkarinen 2024a: 117–119). This is illustrated in the following transcription excerpt from the article, where Jones is comping Hank Mobley's solo on tenor saxophone in Kenny Dorham's composition *Karioka.*

Transcription 4: Active accenting



Accents not only create single moments of intensity but also add an extra dynamic layer. This stands out above the subtly varying (but comparatively undeviating) goosing texture, especially if the accents appear as continuous musical gestures. Continuous accenting can also seamlessly shift into becoming a means of structuring the form (see 3.1.4), by first hinting and then insisting at an approaching structural transition. This happens in another excerpt from the article, where Jones is comping Freddie Hubbard's trumpet solo in *Karioka.*

Transcription 5: Active accenting #2



As my research progressed, I became increasingly intrigued by just how important active accenting is in facilitating musical transitions between monologic and dialogic comping (e.g., when going from goosing into intuitive call and response). In the video examples in 3.2, I intend to show a variety of ways active accenting can do this, and in Section 4, I consider to what degree this element – according to my definition of its musical essence, and as demonstrated by Jones – is really present in my own playing.

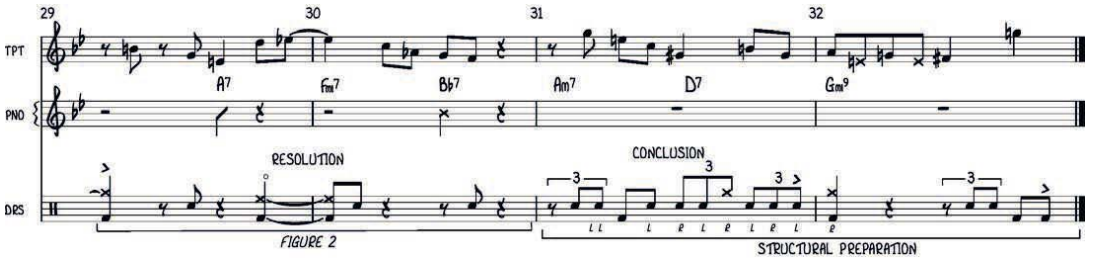
3.1.4 Structuring the Form – Architectural Control

- Uses shifts in rhythmic density, color and orchestration to mark sections of the form of a composition and keep the performance's overall architecture in mind.

- May include dialogical nuances when the drummer plays structural markers for the benefit of the music.

Philly Joe Jones paid close attention to the form of each composition he played. On a Rutgers University drum clinic tape from 1979, he says “you can’t play a 34-bar tune if it’s a 32-bar tune” (Jones 1979). Jones often adds textural density and rhythmic tension before a chorus change. We can see this preparation for structural transition in the transcription excerpt below, where Jones is comping Lee Morgan’s trumpet solo in Wayne Shorter’s *Mama G* (Lukkarinen 2024a: 123).

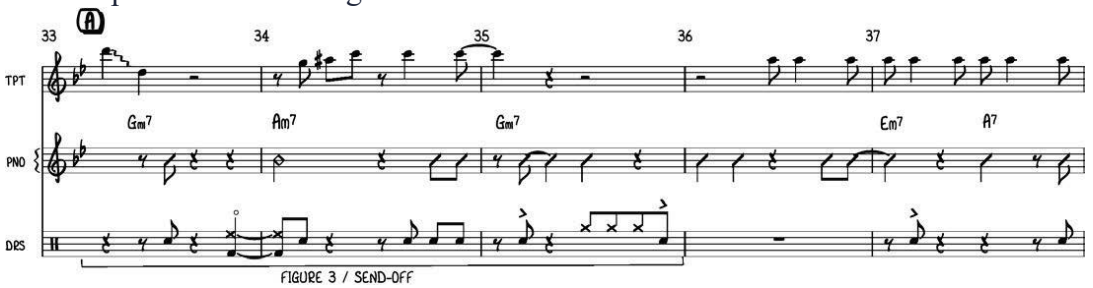
Transcription 6: Structuring the form



Berliner (1995: 219) makes similar musicological observations when he notes that a drummer plays “structural markers” to interpret the structure and its symmetrical four- and eight-bar segments – resolving the tension they create by returning to time keeping in the bar that immediately follows.

However, contrary to the way Berliner explains structural markers, Jones resolves tension in the next excerpt a full 3 bars after the chorus change, first making sure that the section has the right amount of rhythmic lift by continuing the forward motion. In the attached article I interpret this as a send-off figure (Lukkarinen 2024a: 123).

Transcription 7: Structuring the form #2



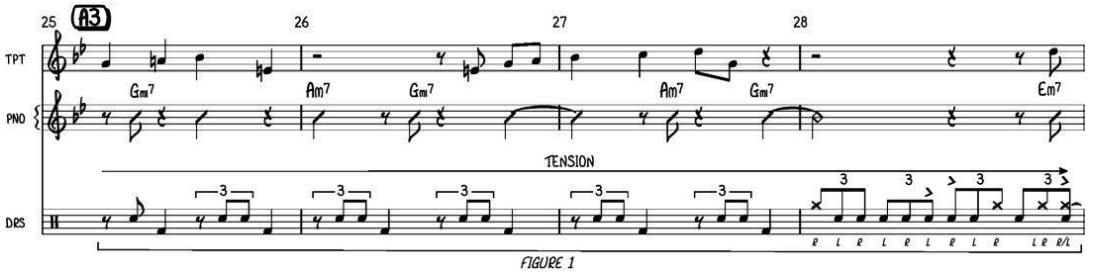
The above transcription excerpt supports my finding, that to enhance the forward motion, a drummer could extend the resolution to last one to four bars after a segment or a chorus change. This notion perhaps stems from my needing to be aware of the various possible rhythmic resolution points and textural options in Hassinen's compositions. Being able to adjust myself to their complexity.

3.1.5 Intuitive Call and Response – Triggering Interaction

- Shared storytelling through dialogic interaction affecting musical direction, where drummer intuitively exchanges motifs with other musicians.
- Intuitive by nature, this element is very much based on feel, anticipation, and embodied vocabulary.

As I mentioned earlier, one aspect of my research that particularly inspired me in was exploring the wide range of musical communication that is possible when performing. In Hard-Bop era comping (and Philly Joe Jones' especially), the intuitive call and response is, in my view, a perfect example of a sophisticated communication between soloist and drummer. Transcription 8 – again taken from *Mama G* and also quoted in my article – shows this in the innovative interplay between Jones and trumpeter Lee Morgan.

Transcription 8: Intuitive call and response



Here in bar 25 “Morgan plays a rhythmic and melodic call, which he then varies in bar 27” (Lukkarinen 2024a: 128–129). To me, these two short phrases definitely cry out for the drummer to respond, and Jones does just that, by playing the active triplet fill in bar 28.

Call and response is identified by Samuel A. Floyd as a fundamental expressive element of Afro American culture – not only related to music but to various other art forms such as theatre and poetry (Floyd 1995, 152). I have certainly found this to be true in practice and see it as being perhaps the most important comping element for musical storytelling. In Section 3.2, I highlight moments in the artistic components where using rhythmic phrases and textural choices in my comping has been an intuitive response to what I hear as a call from the soloist. It is “intuitive” insofar as I realized that in my comping, the discussion between me and the soloist is based on anticipating what the other will do or is musically asking of the other. In other words, the call and response is improvised.

3.2 Artistic use of the elements

In this subsection, I will give examples of how the elements occur in my playing. There are also examples of the comping textures I listed above (see 2.2), as and

when it helps illustrate my point. I chose examples from *Mindfull, Rainbow Blue* and *Vertex* to show how I approached comping in different-sized ensembles.

With the videos cited below, my aim is to explain and illustrate the artistic choices I make in the concerts and in my comping today. With the explanations that accompany them, I want to help the reader hear for themselves how the elements appear in my comping. The perspective of a music analyst investigating the music from outside, which I took in the article, shifts to the more subjective perspective of a performing musician.

3.2.1 Goosing, form structuring, and intuitive call and response in *Mindfull* (from the *Textures* concert).

In the following video clip from the Textures concert, my comping on Mikko Hassinen's Mindfull (sheet music attachment 1.1 p.92) includes the elements of goosing, active accenting, and intuitive call and response. As a research laboratory, the Jaska Lukkarinen Trio created a musically conversational environment where the tasks of accompanist and soloist are blurred in a positive way.

The clip begins on the composition's first melody, which I approach using the first texture category described in 2.2 – where my comping "colors both thematic and improvised melodies and rhythmically adapts them". I chose this approach, as it became apparent from the trio rehearsals that the melody needed comping that was clear, complementary, and kept the rhythmic feel light.

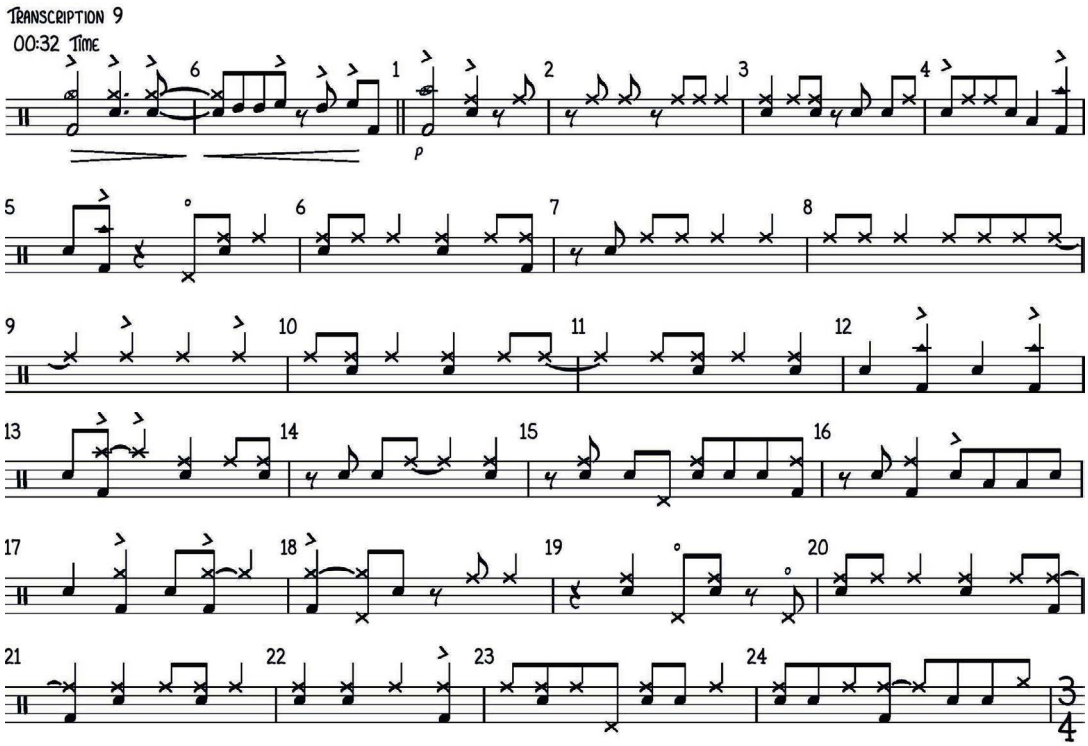
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wV7jl4o5aXI

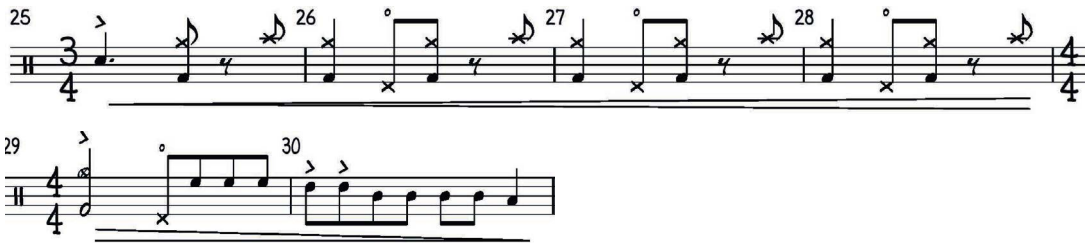
The first sixteen bars of the clip provide an example of my approach to goosing in this context. My intention is to play subtly, so as to highlight the melody through a

rhythmic interplay between the snare drum, bass drum and ride cymbal. Simultaneously I am shadowing the 4/4 meter so that the rhythmic feel remains intense yet dynamically light.

When the bass solo comes in, I convey a degree of contrast with the intro and melody by subtly changing the color through a switch to the swish cymbal. The deep raw tone of the swish fits well under the sonority of the bass. The shorter sustain of the swish means I can also play very actively without overpowering the solo with my goosing. At this point, my goosing consists of varying the snare drum texture to support the ride cymbal flow and conveys a sense of relaxation which I see as an important platform for the bass solo.

Transcription 9: Goosing in bass solo in *Mindfull* from *Textures*



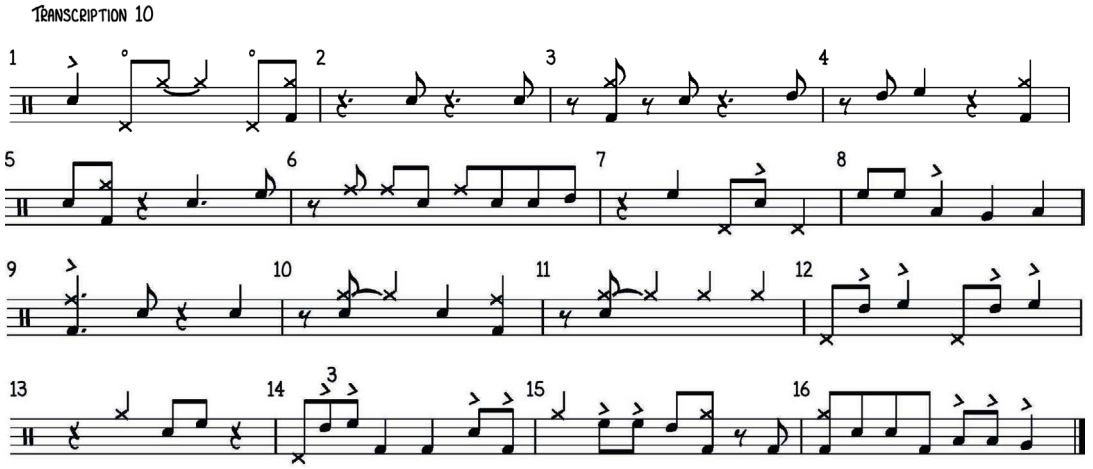


In this trio setup, Jussi Kannaste on the saxophone often takes on the role of accompanist for the bass solo, helping to structure the form and filling the sonic space. This makes structuring the form with the saxophone in bars 4–5 a priority for me too, and the anchor points help me build the horizontality of my comping phrases. This dense discussive texture was inspired by some aspects of Elvin Jones' comping in *You'd Be So Nice to Come Home to* on "Motion" by Lee Konitz. I don't mean that the rhythmic texture of my playing was exactly like Elvin Jones, but his inspiration works as a launch pad for comping and improvisation. In terms of my rhythmic inheritance, I would like to think I am much closer to Roy Haynes.

In the next video, which contains a tenor solo, my comping is influenced by the third texture category described in 2.2 as "Where comping texture is soloistic in straight-ahead jazz". At the beginning of the sax solo, I decide not to play the swish to make a textural contrast with the bass solo earlier. The following 16-bar transcription from the beginning of Kannaste's solo shows how I implement the rhythmic ideas of the melody in the composition (refer to attachment 1.1). I support the solo with a soft dynamic spreading rhythmic elements across the whole drum set with some active accents in bars 7, 8, and 12. I try to find the spaces between Kannaste's solo phrases to insert composition thematic material in to my comping. The textural changes, such as deciding not to play the ride cymbal constantly, allow me to influence and change the direction in musical storytelling. When the solo builds, I can then make the goosing texture rhythmically denser and more colorful by getting back to the ride cymbal.

https://youtu.be/MZit3i-PsJA

Transcription 10: Goosing in saxophone solo in *Mindfull* from *Textures*



I have found three intuitive call-and-response passages in this video. The first comes in bars 14–16 of the above transcription where I conclude Kannaste's melodic motive. At 00:22 in the video, Kannaste's 7/8 phrase makes me react with a 7/8 comping phrase across the drum set. I am anticipating a 7/8 repetition from him, but instead he continues with a 4/4 phrase while I remain in the 7/8 phrase. This adds a degree of tension but also splits the energy of the rhythmic flow. I notice this and get back into goosing so the rhythmic flow can maintain its intensity.

Another intuitive call-and-response passage, with textural similarities to the one in bars 14–16, begins at 00:35, when Kannaste leaves space for me to play, and I respond to his call with tom-tom fills. This sparks further discussion continuing with Kannaste's call phrase and my response which takes the form of two snare drum motifs at 00:41. After this, Kannaste plays a long solo phrase in eighth notes, which I begin to actively accent from 00:48 onwards. He notices my intentions and leaves space at 00:51 which I fill with my response which in turn becomes another

call to Kannaste, and he picks up a rhythmic idea which I played on the toms. This leads into a momentary peak where the tension gets high, and I then resolve quite clearly with my phrase at 00:56–00:58. To finish off the chorus, Lötjönen begins a bass riff which I join (01:04) to create together a rhythmic counterpoint to Kannaste, resolving in a 3/4 section at the end of the chorus.

3.2.2 Goosing, active accenting, form structuring, and intuitive call and response in *Mindfull* (from the *Rainbow Blue* concert)

The following clip from Rainbow Blue with the UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra shows how I used a "small band approach" to tackle Mindfull in a big band situation (sheet music attachment 1.2 p.94). When I listen back to this version, I find my approach to texture and activity quite different from how it is in the Jaska Lukkarinen Trio. Overall, I am playing more simply and interacting in a more traditional way due to several factors: the timbre of the arrangement, my take on the conventions of big band comping, and the way the soloists are improvising.

https://youtu.be/iCMZ-UqtAVA

The video begins from the last melody section before the piano solo. I intended to comp the melody played by the whole ensemble in a drum solo style that constantly and actively accents in and around the melody. I can hear certain rhythmic similarities in how I interpreted the melody previously for the trio, yet the big band version required more distinct underlaying of the 4/4 meter. My soloistic approach nonetheless gently forced the ensemble to listen carefully to my comping, thus take more rhythmic responsibility, and this in turn dared me to go further with the soloistic approach.

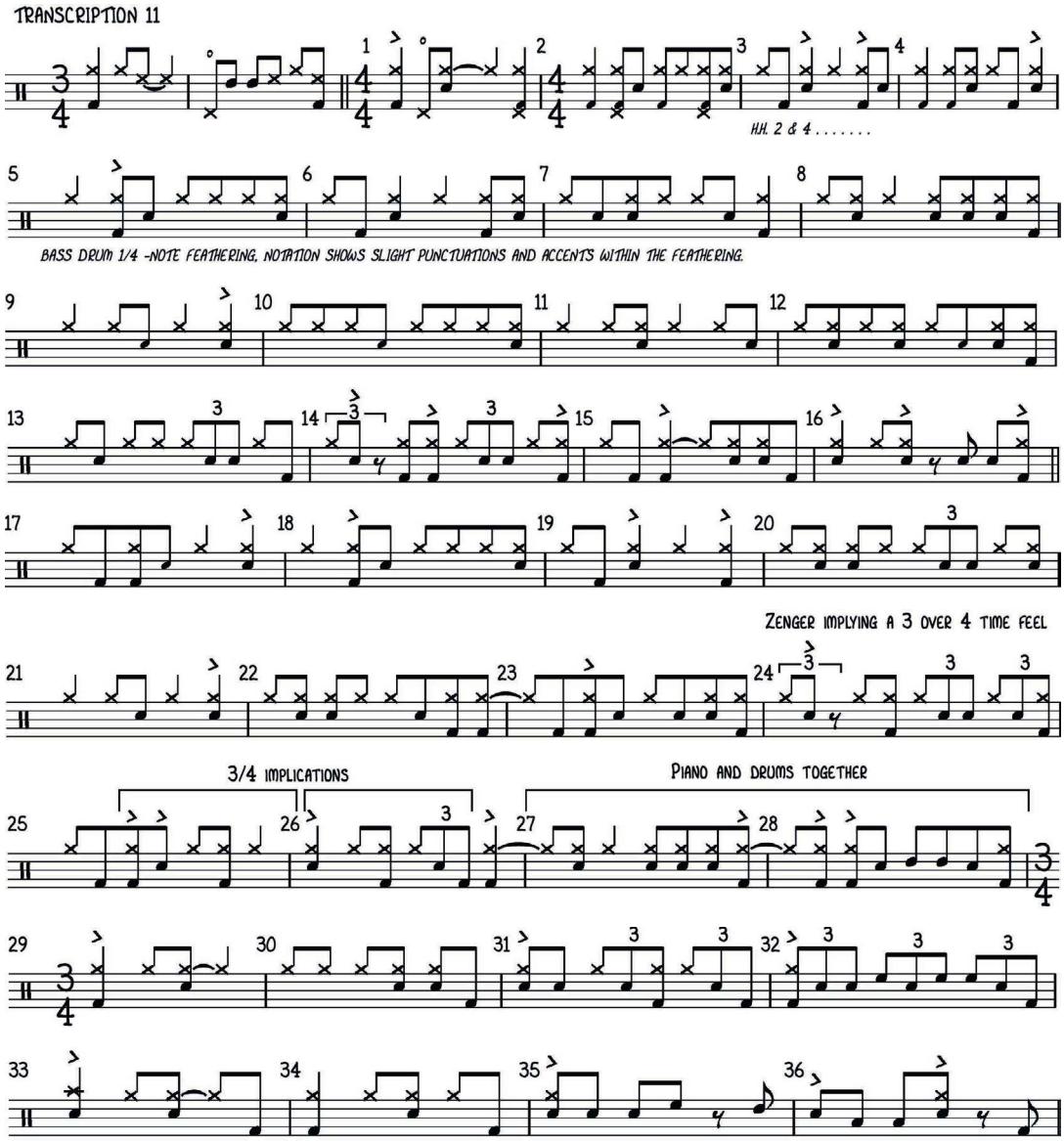
The piano solo starts with 2-feel comping – bassist Filemon Von Numers plays a steady half-note rhythm. I create a rhythmic fabric natural to brushes where goosing and eighth-note active accenting constantly overlap. The active accenting on the snare conveys the texture of the groove in a way that not only complements but also subtly communicates with Lintinen's solo on piano. This happens for example at 01:08, when Lintinen plays a distinct and classic call phrase, that I respond to subtly with simple accents.

In the Introduction (p. 4), I mentioned how Nussbaum sees the drummer's role as laying down "a red carpet" for the rest of the band. Keeping this in mind, I play a solid groove and build a broad rhythmic feel to contrast with and stand out from Lintinen's light and slightly on-top-of-the-beat phrasing. Brushes create a lighter timbre for the first melody and piano solo. Knowing there will be a solo on alto sax coming up, my comping can gradually increase and build up the storytelling inside the arrangement. In this respect, I found textural and timbral planning especially useful in the big band setting.

The next video and transcription excerpt includes Max Zenger's solo on alto saxophone, and I have changed to sticks to alter the timbre of my comping – giving a bright and positive sound from the rhythm section. Unlike the conversational and rhythmically active comping in the trio, my comping here with sticks aims to deliver a pleasant rhythmic flow with a strong quarter-note pulse locking in with the bass.

https://youtu.be/grKaWqlTjaM

Transcription 11: Comping the saxophone solo in *Mindfull* from the *Rainbow Blue* concert



The aim of my comping here is to communicate my eighth-note flow to the rhythm section. With the goosing motifs in bars 5–12 that I play with my left hand, the intention is to create a sense of rhythmic relaxation while still maintaining forward motion. For the purposes of musical storytelling, this gives Zenger the chance to

begin his solo at a calm level which is nonetheless grooving. Within the rhythm section, my aim is also to invite Lintinen on piano to join in my eighth-note flow and level of intensity so that between us we can weave a strong rhythmic texture. In terms of intuitive call and response, In the performance, I remember paying particular attention to Zenger's polyrhythmic phrase at 00:29 (the end of bar 23) implying a 3/4 metric modulation which I respond to with my own short 3/4 modulation – a phrase I often use in my comping. In bars 27–28 I then play a form-structuring comping phrase with Lintinen that leads us into the next section.

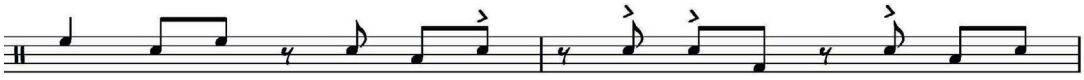
The fill at the beginning of the following A-section (00:41–00:46) resolves while moving across the bar lines for four bars, ending on the off-beat of four at 00:46. I find this kind of over-the-bar-line form structuring crucial to influencing the forward motion and musical storytelling. The intention is to create a moment of surprise which then triggers the soloist off on a storytelling journey. At 01:10, Zenger begins a flurry of triplets which provokes a similar textural thickening at my end to extend and add to Zenger's intensity. I play a distinct downbeat at the beginning of the next chorus to lead the backgrounds in, but at the same time feel a need to once more extend the forward motion across the bar lines.

In my goosing during the alto-sax solo, my snare motifs work together with the ride to add color to the texture. In other words, when I feel a need to vary the ride pattern, I emphasize the variation with a left-hand punctuation on the snare. What is missing though, are distinct and powerful active accents. By combining the goosing and active accenting elements more I could possibly be more provocative and thereby force Zenger to leave more space for me to comment, which could in turn lead to more distinct moments of intuitive call and response.

3.2.3 Imitating percussion instruments in *Rainbow Blue* (from the *Textures* concert)

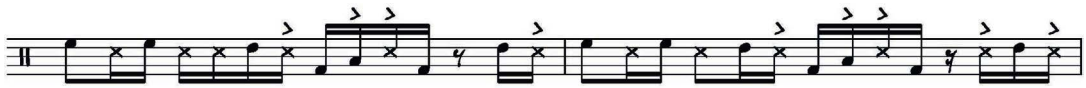
Mikko Hassinen's Rainbow Blue plays with my idea of a comping texture that imitates percussion instruments (sheet music attachment 1.3 p.99). More particularly, the composition was based on my interpretation of the rumba guaguancó – a rhythm normally played as a distinctive melodic pattern on two congas. The following example of a rumba guaguancó that can be played on the drums comes from an instructional book called *Afro-Cuban Rhythms for Drum Set* by Frank Malabe and Bob Weiner (Malabe, Frank and Weiner, Bob 1990: 39).

Example 1: Rumba guaguancó



Inspired by, for example, the Cuban rumba ensemble Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, I adapted this rhythm to the whole drum set and translated the conga melody to be played on the toms as follows.[4]

Example 2: Rumba guaguancó adaptation



When analyzing the version of *Rainbow Blue* played with the trio, I noticed that goosing requires some consideration when the drums are being used in this way. Is goosing actually the same as just playing a groove – when the groove is so clearly pattern-based like this? If not, then what is it that distinguishes goosing from playing a groove? The line between these seems ambiguous, although goosing

[4] Suggested listening *La Gitana*, *Guaguancó Matancero* by Los Muñequitos de Matanzas.

could perhaps make a pattern-based groove livelier by playing slight textural and dynamic alterations. Goosing aside, the comping elements of active accenting, form structuring and intuitive call and response all play an important part in shaping this performance of *Rainbow Blue*.

https://youtu.be/6hQ74NlQncU

The first A-section begins with the saxophone and bass playing the melody in unison. I orchestrate in line with the melody and add occasional coloring on the drum set, with the guaguancó groove only coming in at 00:29, allowing Kannaste and Lötjönen to explore freely. I begin to alter the groove at 00:52 to respond to the free improvisation and lead the trio to the second A-section starting at 01:07. The second melody requires textural alteration, so I take a denser, more active, and dynamically louder approach to prepare for the up-and-coming B-section. To create contrast and an effect on the storytelling of the composition I approach the section with a more traditional jazz texture, playing rhythmically light and dense texture through the eight-bar section. In the last A-section, we play the melody in time, so that we can once again give a new direction to the dramaturgy of the performance and prepare for the tenor saxophone and drums duet beginning at 02:09.

Wanting to maintain the intensity of the melody and highlight the simple beauty of the timbre of the drums and tenor saxophone, I open the duet continuing the rumba guaguancó groove and offer a steady counterpoint which builds a contrast to Kannaste's rhythmically sparse and melodically simple exploration. Towards the end of the example, I start to embellish the pattern with small percussive sound changes. These changes could be thought of as goosing elements in the purely pattern-based groove I mentioned earlier. These small changes build anticipation for

the storytelling and provoke Kannaste's simple melody calls at 02:44 and 02:54 to spark simple accents within my pattern as response-like motifs.

When the solo develops and the intensity of the performance grows, variations become inevitable both rhythmically in the groove and in the comping texture. For *Rainbow Blue* in the *Textures* concert, I aimed to find ways of using a single comping texture for as long as possible and to explore the factors influencing the need for musical variation. This happens slightly later in the performance, and in the next video excerpt some of these factors become apparent.

https://youtu.be/lcqgCPTtA20

When the bass eventually joins my comping of the sax solo at the four-bar B-section in the solo chorus, I momentarily change to ride – an obvious and conventional solution in terms of how I form the structure. After this short B-section, I go back to playing the guaguancó on the toms, but to add another color and give variety to the pattern I also incorporate aspects of the B-section's ride – using this textural addition to intensify the groove. After the solo, there is a natural need to add something exciting to the musical dramaturgy; so at 01:09, I signal these intentions by adding another rhythmic layer to the comping in the last eight bars of the solo – essentially displacing the groove by a sixteenth-note – and this creates the illusion of veiling the meter.

3.2.4 Imitating percussion instruments in *Rainbow Blue* (from the *Rainbow Blue* concert)

The version I performed with the UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra follows the trio version in terms of the form, but in the big band version I wanted to test the musical

effect of the rumba guaguancó pattern played with the hands (sheet music attachment 1.4 p.103). This inspired a thorough consideration of where different textural solutions should be used to serve the musical storytelling as well as the needs of the arrangement and the big band.

https://youtu.be/gCysCHLuSao

In the first two A-sections, I wanted to create a feeling of space by playing soft rolls on the toms, hinting at orchestral percussion. The soft, intensive dynamic gives the arrangement and storytelling a more personal and welcoming color to build on. During Joonatan Rautio's short tenor sax solo (which starts at 01:27), I am comping the same guaguancó pattern with my hands that I played in the trio version, and I play nuanced active accents within the pattern to keep the groove breathing. At 02:29, I make this pattern less pronounced by breaking out into a freer approach that leads the band into the next A-section. I play this last A-section freely exploring the space more in the style of congas. When we get to the bridge (03:16), I introduce sticks for four bars to underline the jazz feel of the B-section. I finish the melody by going back to the guaguancó pattern with hands to prepare for my drum solo coming next in the arrangement.

The next video excerpt begins just before the drum solo transitions into a saxophone solo. While I am soloing, the big band's role is to accompany the drums with cues that Hassinen has arranged. This is an inversion of musical roles, as these cues are intended to spark my improvisation so that the big band is now the accompanist and the drummer the soloist.

https://youtu.be/QOjHU2zzAug

I finish off my solo in a loud dynamic, still playing with hands (00:36 – 00:50). It is interesting to speculate whether there is a slight disruption to the musical narrative flow when switching from the drum solo to the saxophone solo, because I am unable to transition my solo seamlessly here. I cannot communicate my idea of how to end the solo to conductor Hassinen, and I do not have time to react to his signal to move on. However, the empty moment created by the break between solos allows for an element of surprise, to which I respond by introducing a new, more solid-sounding textural solution at 00:53. In my discussion with Dana Hall prior to the concert, referring to Woody Herman, he noted that in a big band context "the backgrounds must be earned" (Hall 2025i). By this, Hall wanted to explain how soloists need to build up strong musical statements that will earn the arranged backgrounds from conductor and the band. I would add that the soloist's statement must be dramaturgically interesting enough to "earn" or at least make it easier for the next solo to start too.

In this arrangement, I am striving to play in such a way that my solo specifically earns the background, insofar as it builds up the drama in preparation for the next tenor saxophone solo. This readiness is made palpable by my playing and is a result of my creating musical dialogue with the whole ensemble. I think the buildup and transition happen partly in the video, but I could have made the transition smoother, which would have had a better dramatic effect.

I play the comping pattern for the sax solo on the whole drum set with occasional active accents to keep Rautio aware of my level of intensity. In the big band context, I have altered the comping pattern to more of a traditional Latin Jazz groove, which I still play with a percussive approach (hinting at congas).

This happened because I reckoned the timbre of rumba guaguancó pattern would not project a clear enough rhythmic feel at the increased tempo. At 01:35, there is a simple and effective call from Rautio, which I respond to by playing a loud floor-tom accent. I find these simple moments very effective. They project cohesive intensity and understanding concerning the direction of storytelling in the solo. When the rest of the big band joins in and plays background for the solo, I feel a need to add the ride to my comping to help the band feel the groove. If I was to have only played on the drums, it would not project enough power to support the big band and soloist. In terms of form structuring, I consider the choices I make while playing the ensemble sections to be crucial.

Towards the end of Rautio's solo, I support him by increasing the volume with the ensemble phrases. I don't underline the rhythms but instead maintain a strong groove, making sure the forward motion and high intensity of Rautio's solo is not lost. Knowing that the loudest section of ensemble backgrounds is generally in the last four bars of a solo, I increase the energy of the groove and play in unison with the big band at that point (03:13) so we resolve the intensity as an ensemble.

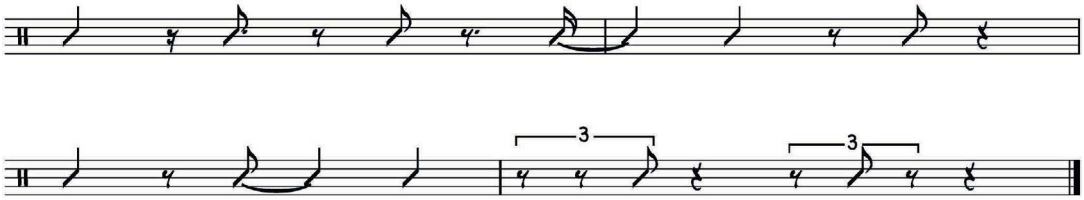
3.2.5 Comping in *Vertex* (from the *Odd Times* concert)

Mikko Hassinen composed *Vertex* specifically for the *Odd Times* concert. It features a four-bar rhythmic motif, which is intended to cause an illusion that the pulse slows down, as the 4/4 meter is veiled and becomes less distinct (sheet music attachment 1.5 p.108). In terms of accompaniment, *Vertex* has proved the most challenging composition of all the artistic components to arrange and play. Being able to distinguish between a jazz and fusion approach, for instance, was one of the broader research tasks that it brought to mind.

https://youtu.be/eGcNOZfQhOU

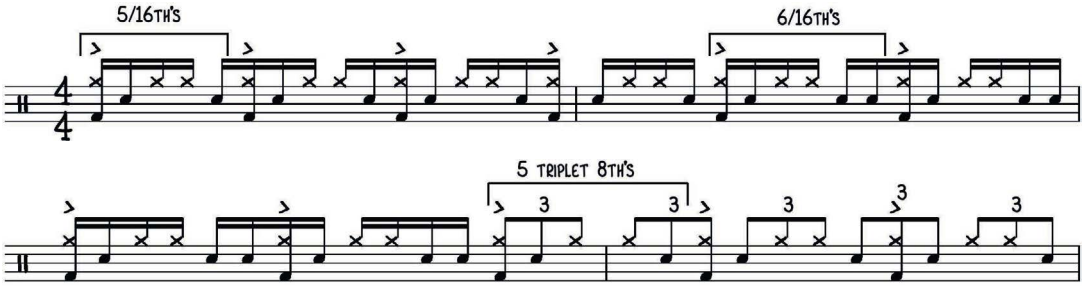
The video begins from the second A-section of the composition, where the rhythm section plays the core rhythm as below to give the illusion that the tempo is slowing down, while the two saxophones play the melody.

Example 3: *Vertex* core rhythm



My comping is based on the following pattern-based core groove, which I created for the composition at the beginning of the rehearsal process.

Example 4: *Vertex* core groove



By orchestrating across the drum set like this, my aim is to create a lively texture – at the same time as the ride cymbal delivers an effect of deceleration by underlining the rhythm – and this helps the other musicians to adapt to the illusion of deceleration. However, analysis of the video would suggest that there are moments in the melody where the rhythmic synchronization between the musicians is lost. This lack of cohesion is probably because we are not so rhythmically familiar with each other as a band. My approach seems to do the opposite of what I wanted – giving a rigid and unnatural time-feel. My goal was to find a jazz approach, and

although I manage to produce a light jazz texture due to the comping and drum tuning, the rhythmic execution is not really promoting the liveliness and openness I was seeking. After the melody, Ville Vannemaa starts playing solo on tenor saxophone (00:33), in the choruses of which I alternate between even eight comping that is improvised, and comping over the core rhythm itself. By alternating the rhythmic feel of these choruses, I was aiming to make a rhythmic contrast between the core rhythm and the more natural feel of the even eights. This would then serve as a launch pad for further improvisation.

I find the goosing in the even eight groove sections of this excerpt is what keeps the rhythmic flow alive. I am orchestrating the eighth- and sixteenth-note rhythmic material so that the patterns combine and alternate in an open way. Because of the asymmetrical solo form of eight bars in 4/4, followed by two bars of 5/4 and then a last two of 4/4, the rhythmic intensity of my phrasing tends to build as the eight-bar part nears the 5/4 section, with the effect of structuring the form very distinctly each time that transition approaches. Moments of intuitive call and response occur after Vannemaa's sixteenth-note phrase at 00:51, which I respond to by playing two triplet motifs at 00:54. Another distinct intuitive call-and-response moment happens when Vannemaa plays a dotted-quarter-note call at 01:18, which I translate into a short metric modulation.

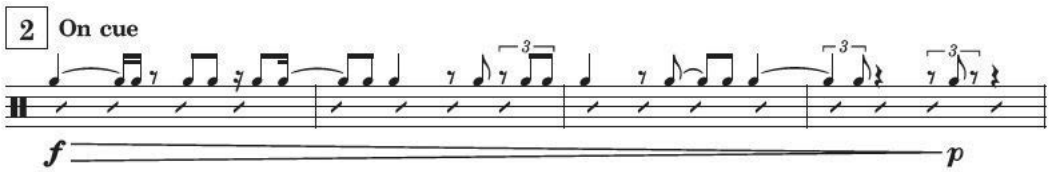
Listening back to this, it becomes obvious how the even eight groove sections provide fertile soil for improvisation and how the intensity seems to grow through the conversational elements in each. The core rhythm sections in the chorus, however, work in quite the opposite manner – the feel is tenser and less secure. As a consequence, the core rhythm here works as more of an anchor than launch pad. In spite (or perhaps because) of this, a passage begins (01:38) where Vannemaa

creates an interesting tension by repeating a flurry of notes on top of the core rhythm, but I find that we are not able to contribute to his storytelling as a group.

3.2.6 *Vertex* (in the *Rainbow Blue* concert)

At this point, after describing some of the challenges to comping and soloing in the previous clip, I think it would be informative to show how my intention to incorporate the small band approach in the big band version of *Vertex* sets a different rhythmic feel. Below is a video excerpt from the UMO performance – preceded by notation for the core bass line rhythm notation from the drum chart (sheet music attachment 1.6 p.116).

Example 5: *Vertex* big band drum chart notation



https://youtu.be/4zR3405XhaU

The video begins with a melody played by the trombone soloist Kasperi Sarikoski. In the four-bar riff, I comp with a dense groove based on sixteenth notes, which then transitions into a dotted eighth-note-based accompaniment with a distinctive backbeat. At the close of this section, a transition is made to jazz accompaniment, characterized by a jazz ride pattern with triplet divisions. By allowing for an airier rhythm, this approach avoids being as rigid as the pattern used in the *Odd Times* version. Not only can the composition breathe, but the underlying groove conveys Hassinen's intended illusion of slowing down more

effectively. In terms of form structuring, and due to the complexity of the composition, I take on the generally accepted role of a drummer in a big band, for example, clarifying turning points in the melody. As such, I try to be clear at the end of each four-bar phrase, and in ensemble passages. For instance, at 00:21, I make sure that the rest of the band's rhythm is consistent and that the unison passages in the composition come across clearly. In the short piano solo beginning at 00:56, I find a slight loss of rhythmic synchronization between the drums and piano. While Kirmo Lintinen's piano soloing is pushing to go rhythmically faster, I am comping his lines while also carefully navigating between the core groove and a dotted quarter note based polyrhythmic idea. To get the whole ensemble back on track, I therefore play a clear distinct snare drum accent at 01:07 on the down beat, a clear four bars before the next ensemble section. Throughout the melody, I aim to follow the storytelling of the arrangement by especially focusing on the execution of the dynamics written for the drum part (see notation above).

Kasperi Sarikoski's trombone solo begins at 01:40. The comping of this solo follows the core rhythm as written in the four-bar example above. The complexity of the comping rhythm introduces two dimensions related to improvisation and accompaniment. The rhythm itself is tense, which means that, unlike in a more traditional jazz environment, there is no need to enhance the rhythmic intensity further. However, the complexity of the core rhythm also makes it a challenge to establish the essential tension-release relationships – especially the moments of release – that both the soloist and I maintain a sense of forward motion. This illusion of deceleration in the core rhythm may be the greatest hindrance here, but I compensate for this by using the whole drum set to thicken the rhythmic texture and increase the volume of my comping. Based on the feedback I received from the jury, another option would have been here to leave the core rhythm to the bass and piano.

The last of the video excerpts gives some examples of provocative comping. During Jouni Järvelä's clarinet solo, I remember losing control and focus, which surprisingly resulted in one of the most intense and enjoyable moments in the *Rainbow Blue* concert.

https://youtu.be/-JofQisbA2k

Outside of the arrangement I together with conductor Hassinen deemed it musically necessary to introduce a section where the rhythmic foundation is comparatively simple. Bassist Filemon Von Numers similarly decided to incorporate a steady quarter-note rhythm right from the very beginning of Järvelä's clarinet solo (00:00). My approach at this point sounds like I am goosing a free tempo around Järvelä's phrases; I hear myself searching for a free rhythmic counterpoint to how the piano and bass are comping. My approach is also inspired by Lintinen's abstract comping phrase – as I enter into musical conversation with both the clarinetist and pianist using my accents, motifs and phrases. I go back and forth with ideas resembling a groove and a certain tempo, but interspersed with dense, free melodic sketches that comment on what the clarinet and piano are playing. At 00:59, I start to incorporate the core rhythmic idea to lead the ensemble back into the next section. Conductor Hassinen registers this, and we see him walking back to the front of the orchestra. Having established an understanding of where the down beat is, the melody is introduced for four bars at 01:16.

I remember hearing Järvelä's solo in terms of storytelling as constantly searching for something new. This leads me to intuitively move away from the pattern shifting towards a more provocative approach compared to what I offer in the trombone solo. This leaves the responsibility of the core rhythm to piano and bass, while I play on and off the beat, orchestrating the rhythm across the whole drum

set, and resulting in an intense discussion I interpret as a long section of intuitive call and response. The peak of this musical discussion and storytelling I hear at 02:00, after which I go back to the core rhythm and the next section with backgrounds comes in. To form the structure and build clear rhythmic counterpoint, I choose to accompany backgrounds in a determined 4/4 groove with a strong backbeat. I find this solution rhythmically supportive for the ensemble, but it also gives a particular meaning to the backgrounds, bringing a new rhythmical element to the musical storytelling. I also find that this helps the orchestra get back to the melody and the core rhythmic idea after Järvelä's solo at 02:55.

4. Discussion: Towards the role of musical agitator

I believed at the very beginning of this project that by revisiting and analyzing the style of jazz drummer Philly Joe Jones, I would be able to build an understanding of the core elements of jazz drumming. Based on what I expected to find, I wanted to deepen my own skill as an accompanist. During the project, however, there have been changes to the research tasks and targets. My own position with regard to artistic research has also changed from being an outsider to becoming an insider, and I find that – when combined with textural approaches – the five core elements of comping help to support the musical form of a jazz performance and the storytelling that takes place within it.

The four artistic components and the research process itself have strengthened my belief in the notion set out in my article – that these comping elements often overlap in a single phrase or passage and should not be treated in isolation from one another or in any kind of strict sequence. A drummer's awareness and responsiveness to the musical environment should enable seamless transitions between goosing, active accenting, riffing, and intuitive call and response. This fluidity is the key to expressing the form and supporting the musical storytelling of the soloist, as well as maintaining the underlying groove and forward motion. Each element can be emphasized or understated depending on the musical context, the needs of the ensemble, and the drummer's expressive intent at any moment.

Because jazz music is for example more rhythmically diverse than it may have been in the 1950s, drawing as it does on a wider range of genres, today's jazz drummers must have a wider musical toolbox at their disposal. Nevertheless, I still consider the five elements I found in my analysis of Philly Joe Jones' comping to be very trusty tools (see Section 3 above). I find that goosing, active accenting, form structuring, riffing, and intuitive call and response have helped and continue to help

me structure my comping. In the previous section, I also show how the comping elements offers a precise means for showcasing my perspective and artistic thinking in jazz research.

In terms of my own artistic development, creating a framework like this – based on Jones's playing style – helped me identify and eliminate superfluous elements from my comping. Streamlining my playing like this was an artistic choice aimed at refining my performance and improving my musical communication skills. This focus on achieving deeper comprehensibility, both in presenting my research and in communicating within an ensemble, led to a clearer understanding of how comping might bring musical form and musical dramaturgy together more effectively.

I can practice, revisit, and use the elements by following the same procedures described in Section 2. As well as using them for my own performances, I have also used the elements to teach jazz comping to my drum students. The results of similar analyses by different drummers of their comping practice have helped students, though not always directly, to develop their own understanding of the intricacies of comping. I also find that, when looking at the playing of any jazz drummer, the five elements provide a useful way to conceptualize the rhythmic and textural building blocks of their comping, as well as their musical heritage.

I have come to believe that goosing is at the very core of a jazz drummer's identity. I also believe that goosing should continue to be analyzed by a range of drummers. For example, I see similarities in goosing and the rub-a-dub playing style associated with Mel Lewis (Korall 2002: 240–241; Smith 2014: 20, 175, 190). At the same time, I think every jazz drummer already has an idea of how goosing in Elvin Jones' comping could be heard. I interpret goosing in his case as a continuous flow

of triplets, or what Lewis has called the “big fat frame around the soloist” (Sidran 1992: e-book location 1134).

To elaborate further on the topic of goosing, I had the opportunity to play with the pianist Danny Grissett in a jam session house band. While playing with him, I noticed his musical awareness and imaginative accompaniment style when it came to rhythm, melody, and harmony. Although this was not strictly part of my research, I had the chance to interview Grissett since we had not met each other before, and discuss comping in the light of my research. Grissett said that he first listens to the drummer’s comping, which he believes is built and developed from a “personal sense of rhythm and sound”. This starts with listening to how the drummer plays the ride, but apart from the cymbals, Grissett said he also listens to the internal dialogue between the snare and bass drum – for him, the primary musical element that invites interaction. Grissett’ views seem to underline my view of goosing being at the core of a drummer’s sound, and a form of question-and-answer based on an inner dialogue. For Grissett, these elements will immediately convey the drummer’s musical heritage, which in turn allows the pianist to modify the rhythmic content of their own comping in terms of the register chosen, rhythmic density and level of rhythmic interaction (Grissett 2025i).

Taking the discussion back to Hodson’s notion mentioned at the end of section 2.3, that comping is just as improvised as the solos themselves, I began to realize during the research process that goosing at its most basic level is not wholly improvised; rather it consists of a series of readymade modules that can be fitted together in a number of different ways, as and when an improvisation requires it. As mentioned earlier (Section 2.3), motor or muscle memory and proprioception both play a role in allowing these modules to be assembled in different configurations, like a

physical vocabulary. My own physical vocabulary comes from my musical inheritance which my motor memory and proprioception make audible when I play.

As soon as I begin to incorporate question-and-answer material in my goosing, this allows other players to interact with the physical vocabulary that conveys my musical heritage (as Grissett describes) and improvisation is possible – in both soloing and comping – and at this point, the other elements begin to appear. Indeed, I have noticed from observing the concerts here, that also my out-of-time free comping has a certain level of automation as well. By this I mean that I color the melodies and moods in music with dense groupings of motifs, that reveal my natural drum-set vocabulary and sticking patterns. Further research could perhaps explore whether free comping, like goosing, in fact consists of automatized modules of motor memory that are then assembled according to the improvised moment. In which case, one possible avenue to explore would be how a drummer's motor memory and embodied knowledge are triggered in improvisation, and how this discusses with our understanding of the physical aspects of drumming.

One might well ask what the difference is between a groove and goosing. For me, the groove describes the macro-level, and goosing is an element within it that makes the groove feel livelier. As hinted at by Grissett, the redolent traces of a drummer's musical heritage can be found in the vocabulary of goosing. This can help the rest of the band read the drummer – leading to a shared understanding of the piece's rhythm and pulse. As the last artistic component *Rainbow Blue* is still very close to me while writing this summary, I can remember for instance in the piece *Train is Coming*, suddenly realizing from the dress rehearsal recording what goosing element was missing from the groove to make it unstable. I chose to focus on keeping a steady beat on the ride while goosing with a sixteenth-note feel on the snare to rectify this – it made the groove airier and more supportive in the 3/2

meter. I believe that by this slight alteration in the actual *Rainbow Blue* concert, I was able to rhythmically connect better with the rhythm section and thus the whole big band – a case of being able to read each other's intentions more clearly through a natural physical vocabulary. By using intuitive goosing motifs, I could communicate more accurately and confidently my understanding of the deeper feel of the groove.

As I mentioned earlier, I have come to see riffing as a sibling to goosing, but one which emphasizes repetitive motifs rather than ones which vary. I have also wondered which of these two elements are the cornerstone to comping. Historically it seems to me that goosing evolved from repetitive riffing elements, such as the Charleston rhythm cell I discuss in my article (Lukkarinen 2024a: 116). However, one of the important findings in this thesis has been that goosing acts as the textural backdrop for comping, insofar as it identifies the drummer's musical heritage or "DNA". In this scenario, riffing can in today's jazz drumming emerge whenever needed from goosing to have a musical effect that is a "steady state", expressive or both.

Riffing was an element that seemed hard to pick out from the recordings of the concerts. One possible reason for the rare appearance of this repetitive element is that it may seem out of place in complex harmonic, structural, and rhythmic surroundings. It might well be because it is an element which like active accenting occurs most naturally and fluently in more straightforward jazz material. In retrospect, it seems I did not fully recognize the musical possibilities of riffing before writing the article. Riffing could, for example, establish a much-needed rhythmic counterpoint or communicate rhythmic relaxation.

That it was hard to pick out raises the two following questions. Are my analyses about riffing as an element inaccurate? Have I understood and internalized riffing in my own comping differently from how I have analyzed it? This also makes me wonder whether some of the material I have studied about comping has overlooked the importance of this element. This might be because comping occurs in short passages or rarely links to the rhythmic fabric (i.e., riffs) produced by other musicians.

In my jury feedback regarding the *Odd Times* concert, John Riley asked if I understood the possibilities of rhythmic counterpoint in comping. I believe riffing could provide creative ways of offering rhythmic counterpoint. Conscious use of rhythmic repetition and question-and-answer style motifs (two of the main features I describe in the article) could bring greater clarity and lead to some much-needed moments of rhythmic relaxation – especially in rhythmically complex material such as the *Odd Times*. At the same time, riffing with polyrhythmic motifs will conversely increase the rhythmic intensity and overall tension. In light of this project, riffing could be an intriguing element to explore in greater depth (e.g., how exactly does it appear in jazz drumming?)

Active accenting was, together with riffing, surprisingly hard to pinpoint from the recorded material I have of the concerts. This might be because I am often playing figures that are texturally and rhythmically dense, and any possible active accents that there are, may not be discernible in and among all the other sonic information. I see this as a possible indication that I could perhaps simplify my comping so that this element would be more evident and in closer dialogue with the goosing. Active accents can be an excellent way for a drummer to initiate a musical discussion, but if the goosing element is too dense (either rhythmically or texturally), then active accenting does not get through.

What I partially fail to answer with the concert material is whether active accents as elements appear elsewhere than in straightforward jazz comping. It seems that in any pattern-based groove, such as the rumba guaguancó, active accents might interfere with the rhythmic flow. In terms of interaction, I see examples in my comping where active accenting has the dramatic effect of launching the element of intuitive call and response. In this respect, active accenting is a vital key to the door which opens out onto a broader panorama of musical storytelling. The reflections of *Mindfull* also revealed that active accenting is often crucial to provocative comping.

Form structuring is one of the elements that has perhaps the clearest visible link to the "form" part of my research question: "How can I as a jazz drummer complement the musical form of a jazz composition and convey the musical dramaturgy of a performance?" I believe I have adopted a way of expressing the form in a way that I can musically converse about it in real time with other members of the group. I find a means to meet those needs, while keeping everyone on the same map dictated by that form – while also taking into account the stylistic framework of the composition.

In practice, the result in each of the components was as follows. The music I performed in *One for Joe* required comping where the phrases matched and supported the symmetrical form of the material in these standards. In *Textures*, a more open approach to the form helped build longer musical passages and introduced positive unpredictability as one of the core launch pads for musical expression in the Jaska Lukkarinen Trio.

In *Odd Times*, the complexity of the music required a very clear approach to form; this concert underlined the importance of negotiation between musicians in a live

performance and the various ways they achieve this. I aimed at being clear with the musical intentions of my comping within the form of the composition to ensure the group could navigate the complex rhythmic landscape.

In *Rainbow Blue* navigating the forms was something I would describe as a multidimensional process between myself, the conductor and composer Hassinen, and the various members of the big band. In for example *Mindfull* and *Vertex,* the forms were set to serve the composition and storytelling. In my comping, I aimed to communicate and complement the intensity of the soloists. In *Vertex* the open solo sections with highly complex rhythmic material required a multifaceted approach to form structuring. I needed to be open to anything that might musically occur in terms of the arrangement and play it in a way that would complement yet also challenge the soloist. Simultaneously I had to connect with the conductor so that we could lead the band forward. I see this approach of being present in the moment while also being constantly aware of what is coming next in the arrangement as another example of the drummer's interactive role. In my article, I mentioned the role of intuiting the soloist's musical direction, but after my experience in *Rainbow Blue* I would also add to this the importance of constantly being aware of the arrangement's musical direction. By becoming fully aware of both these demands, the drummer can confidently affect the musical storytelling of the performance.

As this thesis has progressed, my awareness of the influence of intuition in call and response has grown stronger – I am now more than ever aware of its presence and power when playing. At the outset of the research process, my comping was based on what I believed to be musically right, perhaps intellectually searching for the right moment, a pause, a gesture, or a call to respond to. Now it is clearer that comping is a process where all five elements overlap in a supportive musical texture of intuitive communication that builds and resolves phrases. More than

anything else, by highlighting the wordless communication between musicians, I find that this call and response is the element which has the greatest dramaturgical effect on a performance.

In my concerts, intuitive call and response was most present in *Textures*. I understand that this was largely due to the Jaska Lukkarinen Trio's natural conversational approach to making music. It was also due to the fact that we as a group have played together for a very long time and know each other's playing well.

The jury feedback hoped for more expressive musical standpoints in all of the artistic components. I see now that I was not able to find a way to build more provocative comping. This leads me to see my previous way of approaching intuitive call and response, and my role in supporting storytelling as being the reactive rather than proactive partner in the musical discussion. I also notice that my natural way of responding is to complement, even to the point that in my article I was also analyzing Philly Joe Jones as responding (like me) to a call rather than ever making a call. This reflects my own personality as a musician and the natural habits I have as an accompanist. One of the interesting personal findings of this process to my comfort and distress is that I am hardly ever the musical agitator. To build more provocative comping I would need to turn my naturally responsive role into a more provocative calling role. This could be a promising future research task for me. What is a drummer's call in the intuitive call-and-response process and how can the drummer be a musical agitator?

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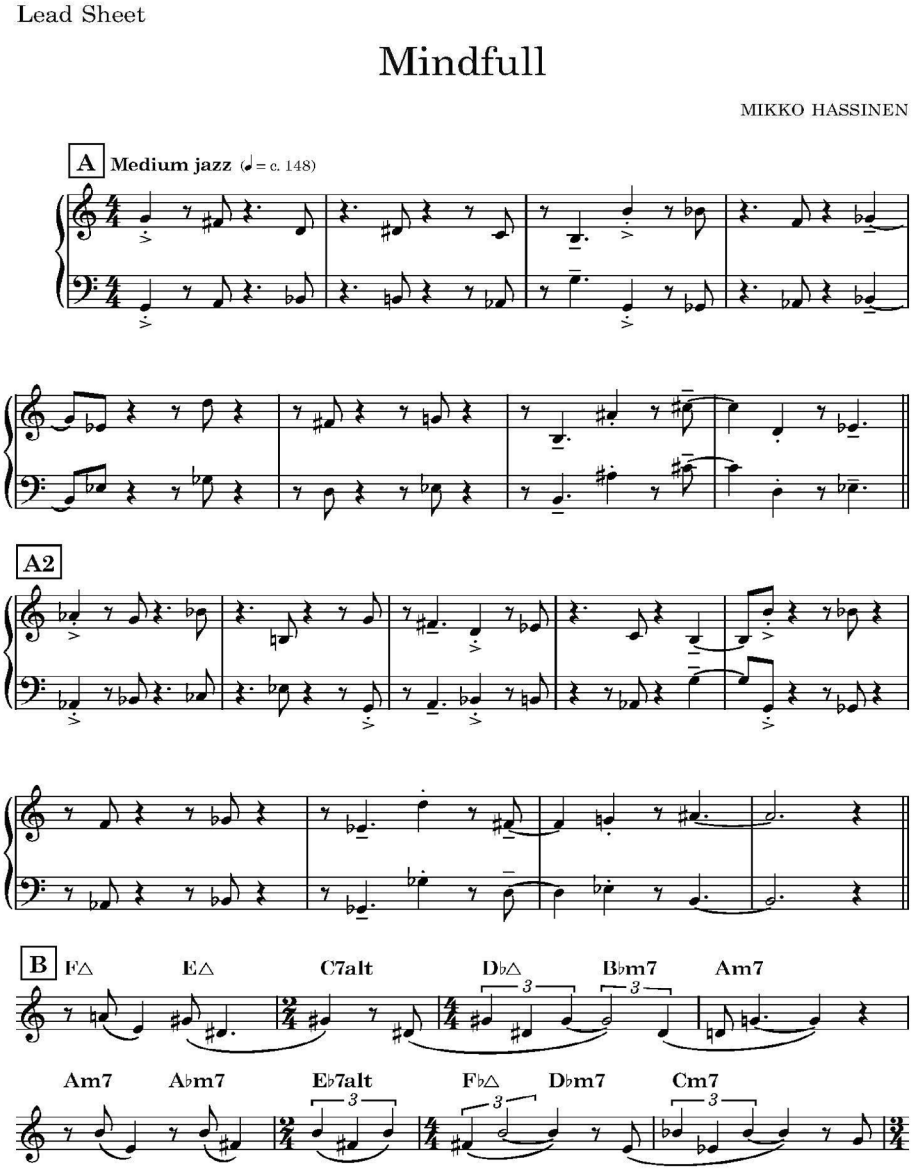
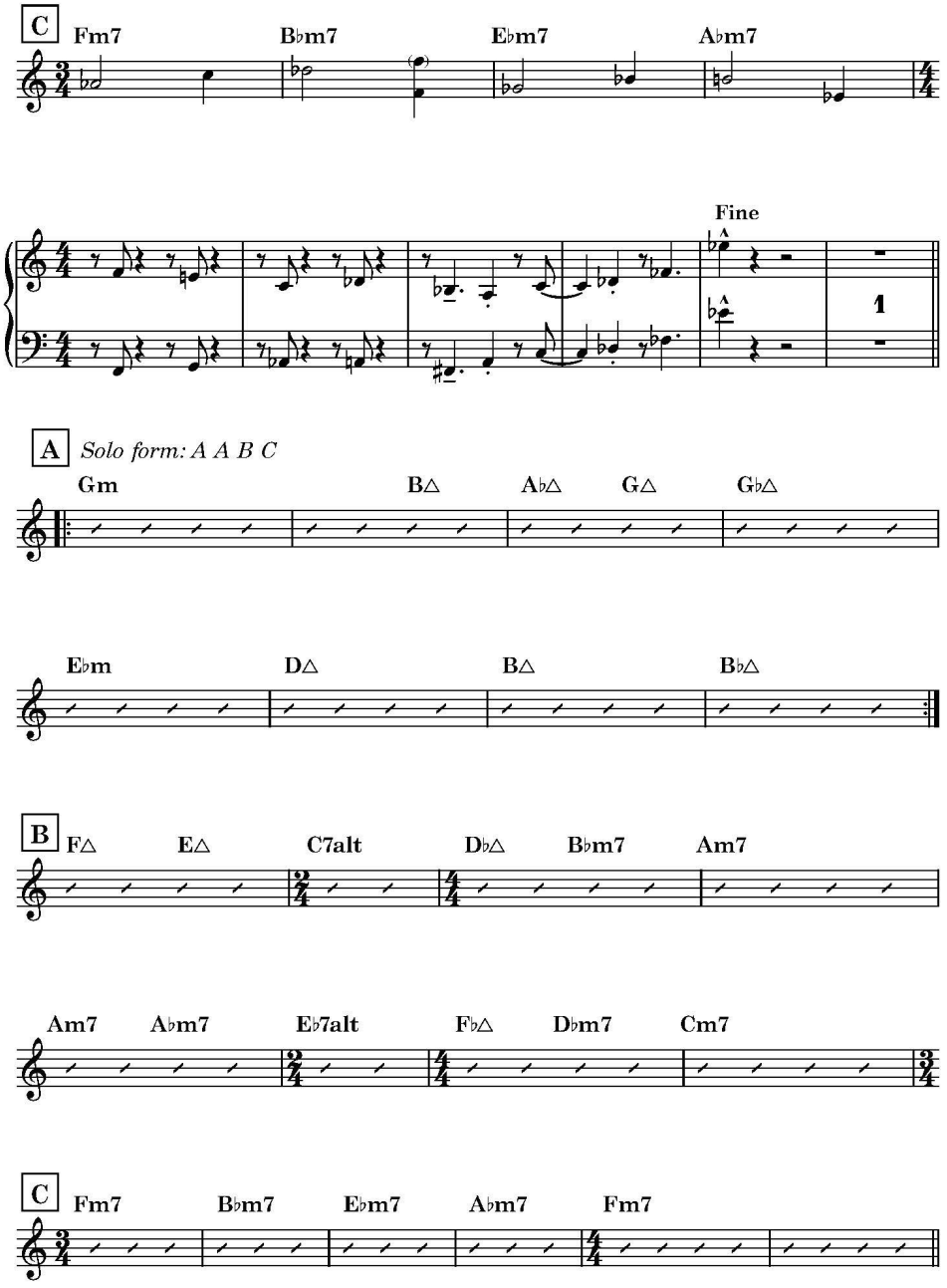
Attachments

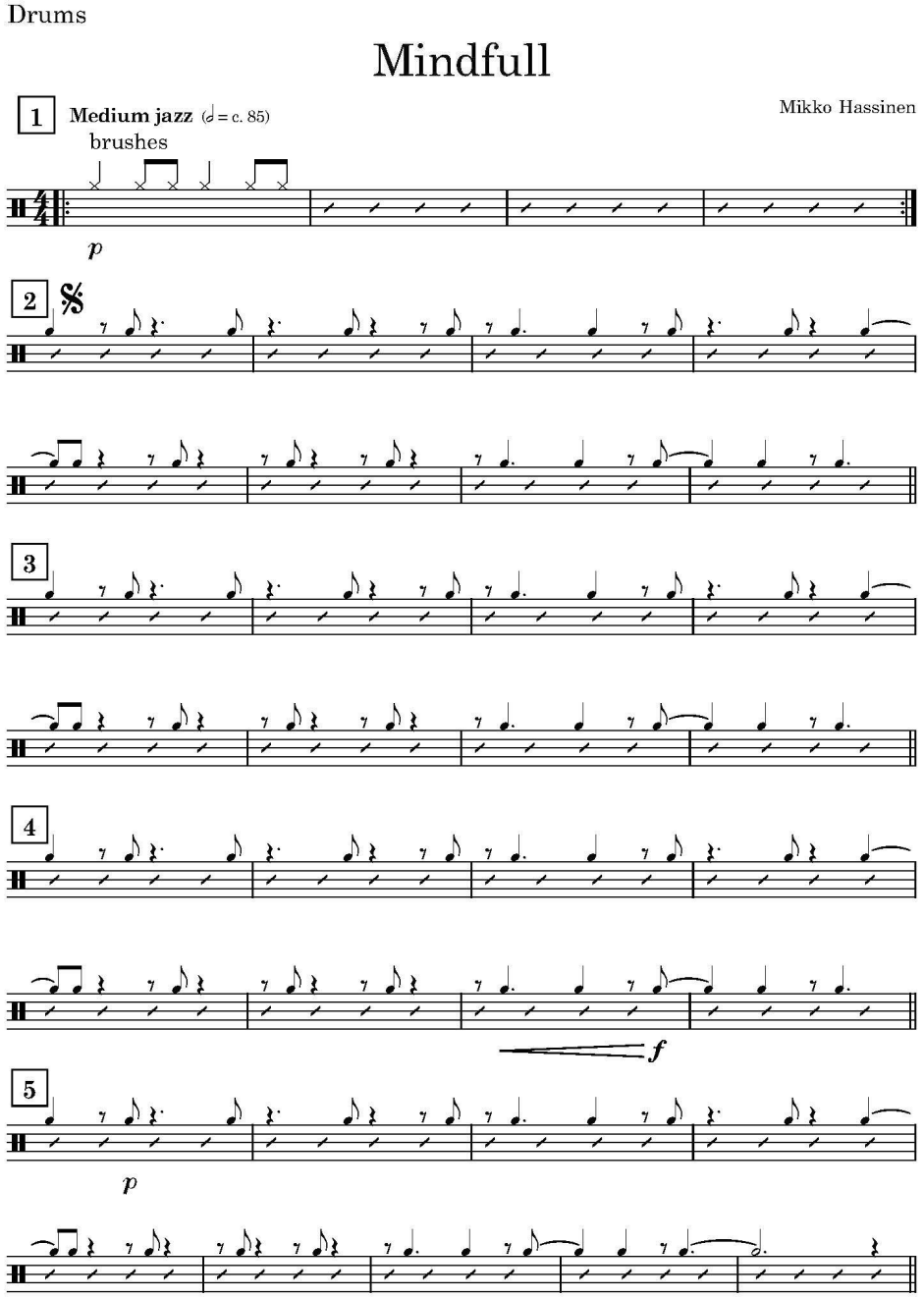
1. Sheet music

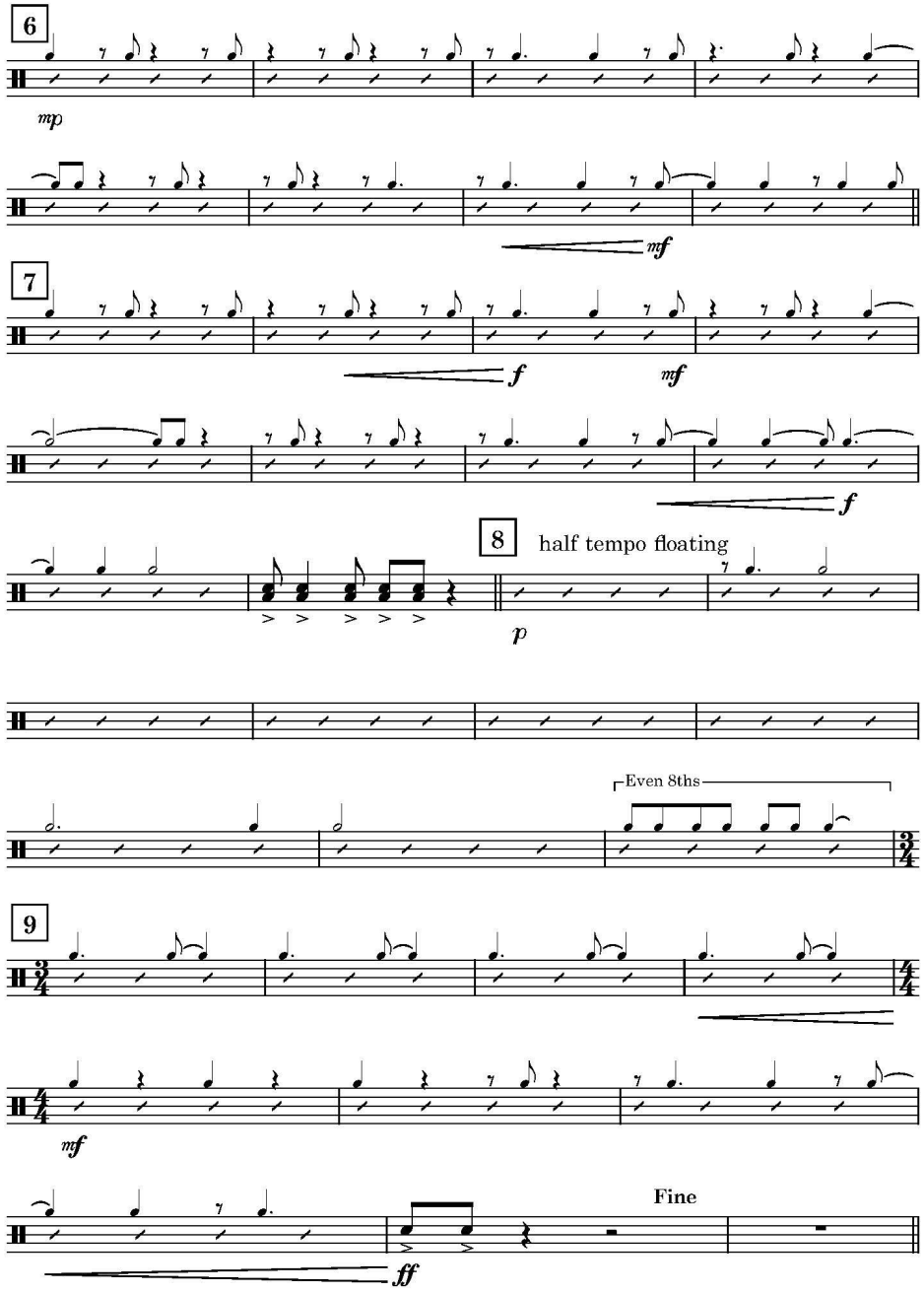
1.1 *Mindfull* trio version from *Textures*

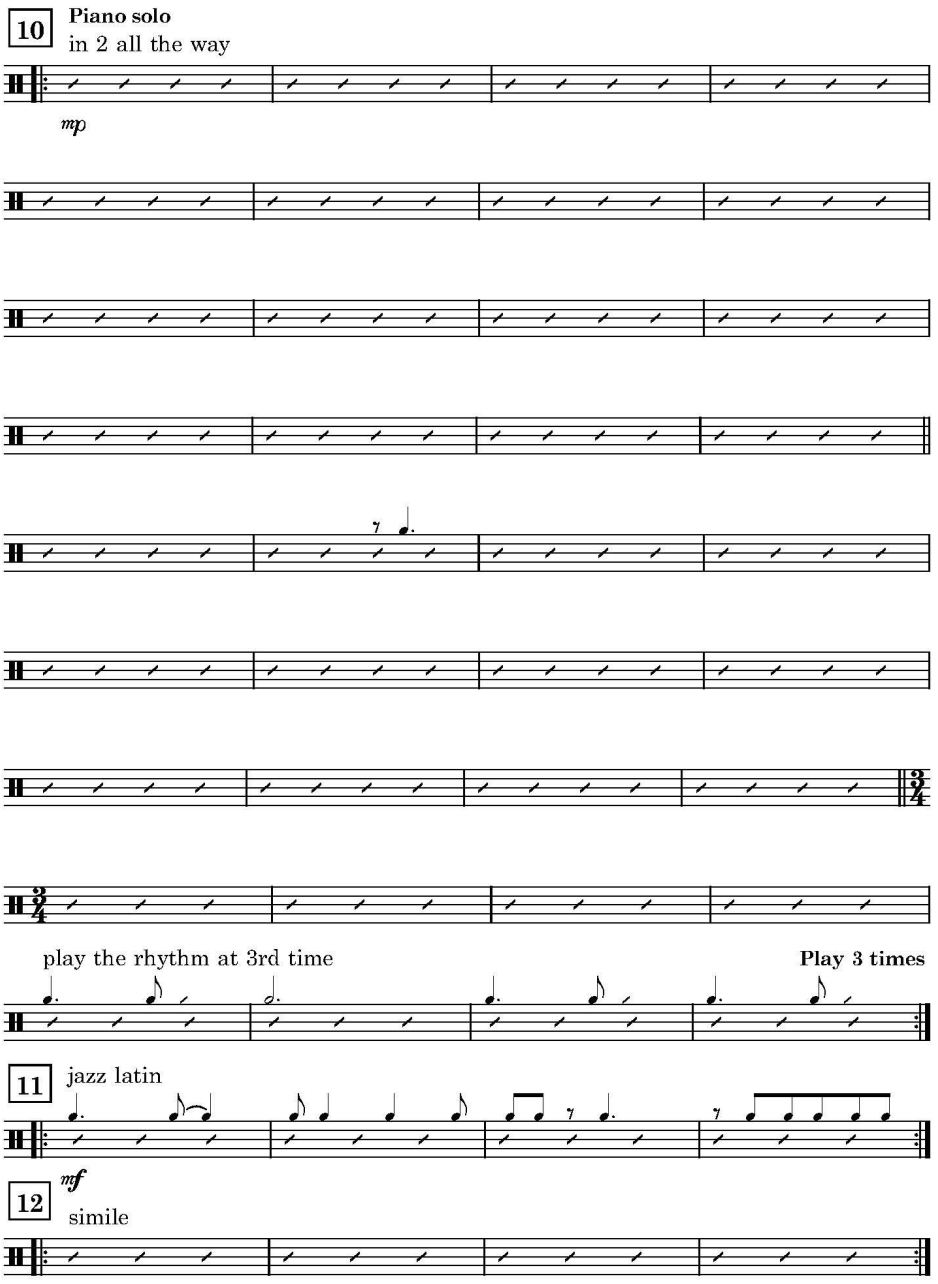


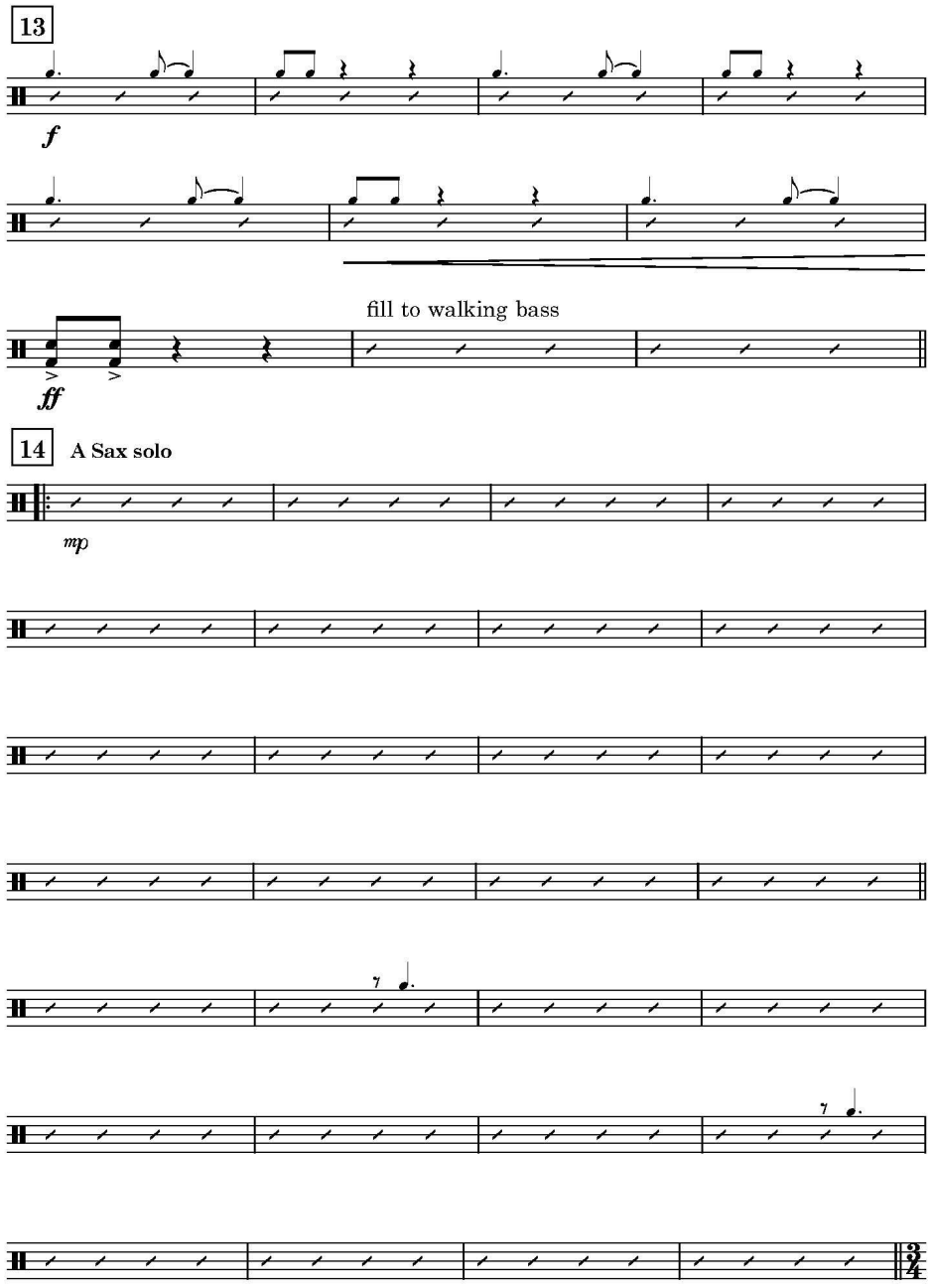

C
Fm7
B♭m7
E♭m7
A♭m7
Fine
1
A
Solo form: A A B C
Gm
B△
A♭△
G△
G♭△
E♭m
D△
B△
B♭△
B
F△
E△
C7alt
D♭△
B♭m7
Am7
Am7
A♭m7
E♭7alt
F♭△
D♭m7
Cm7
C
Fm7
B♭m7
E♭m7
A♭m7
Fm7

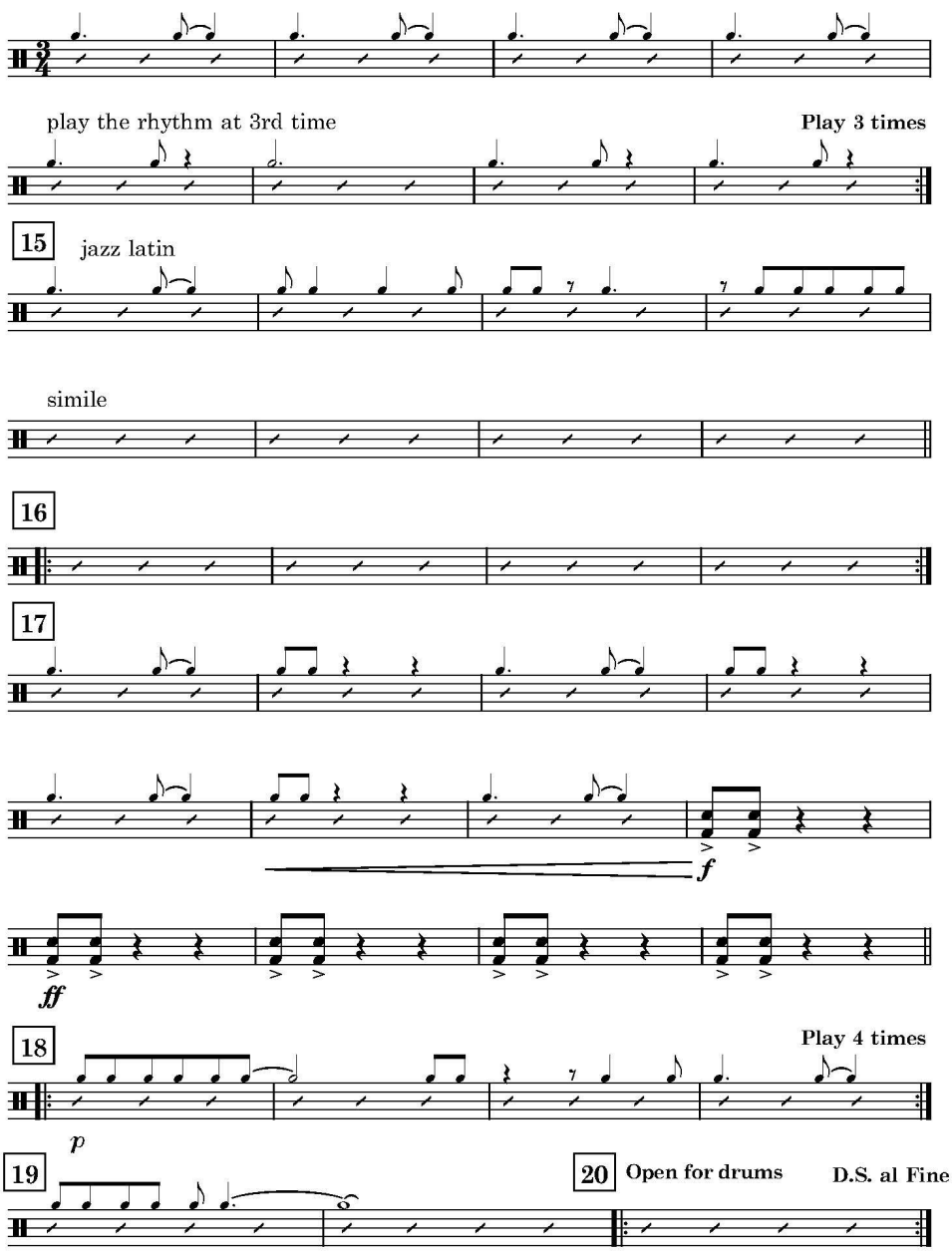
1.2 Mindfull big band version from Rainbow Blue.



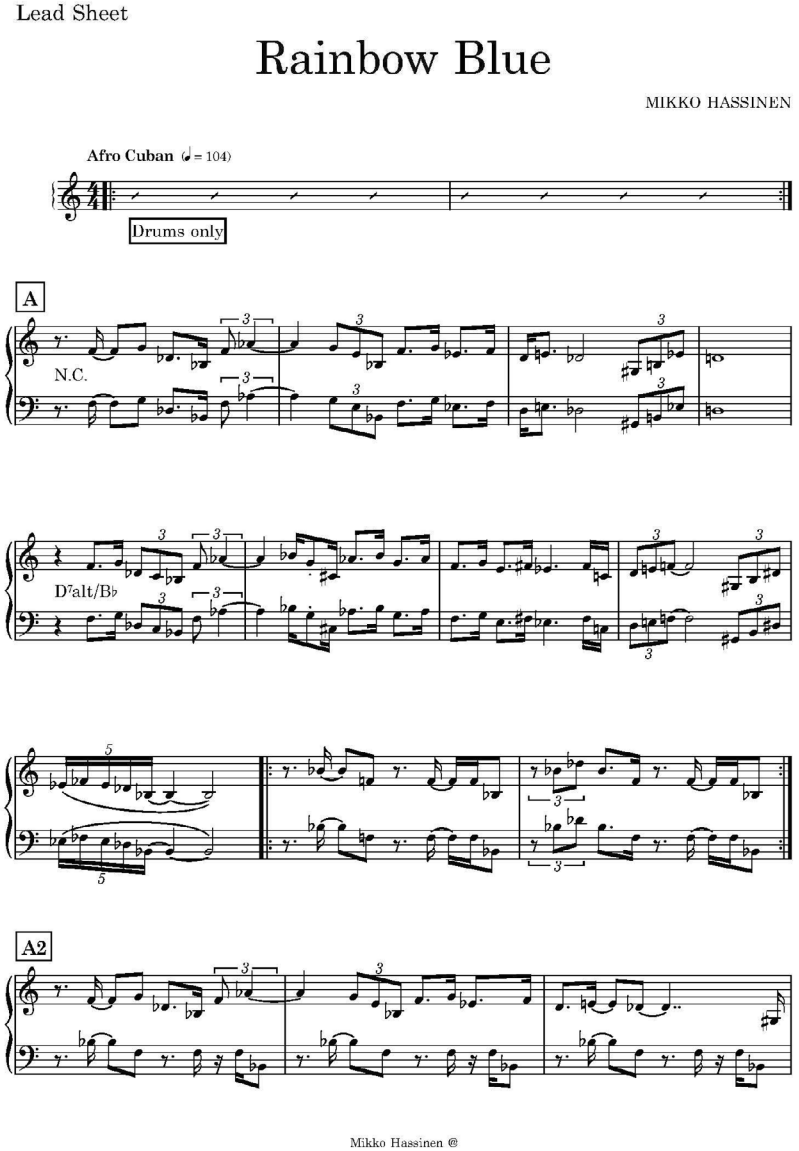

6
mp
mf
7
f
mf
f
8
half tempo floating
p
Even 8ths
9
mf
Fine
ff

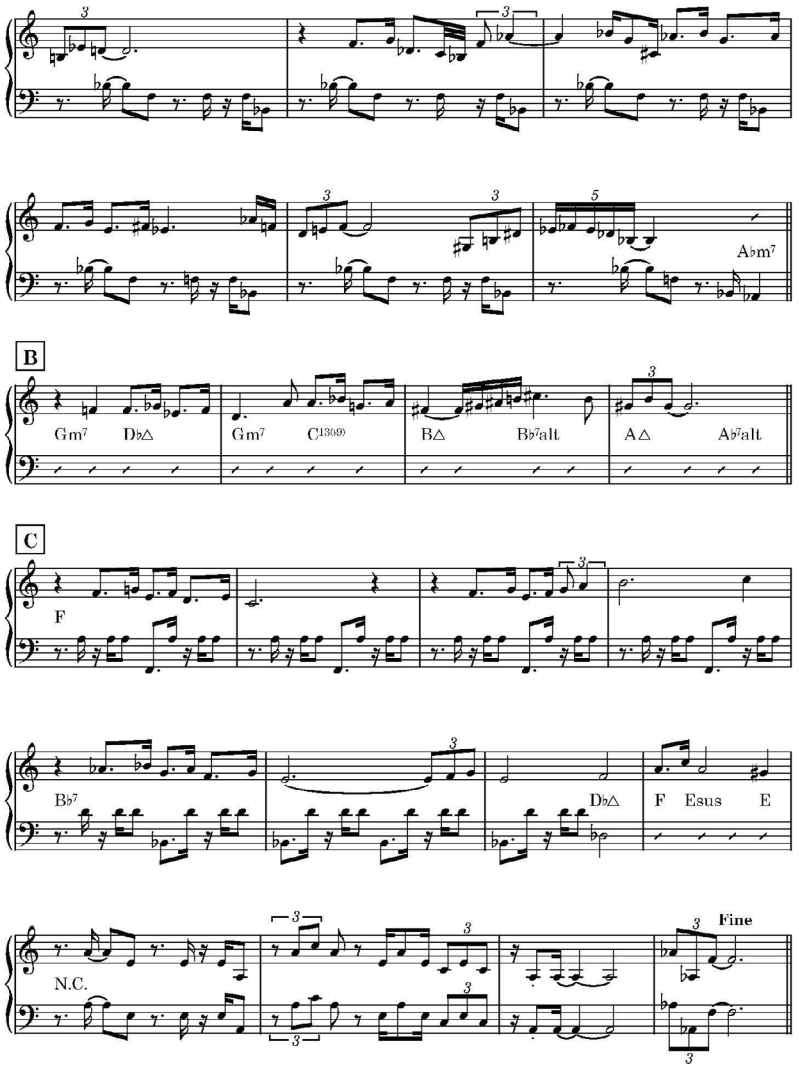

10
Piano solo
in 2 all the way
mp
play the rhythm at 3rd time
Play 3 times
11
jazz latin
mf
12
simile

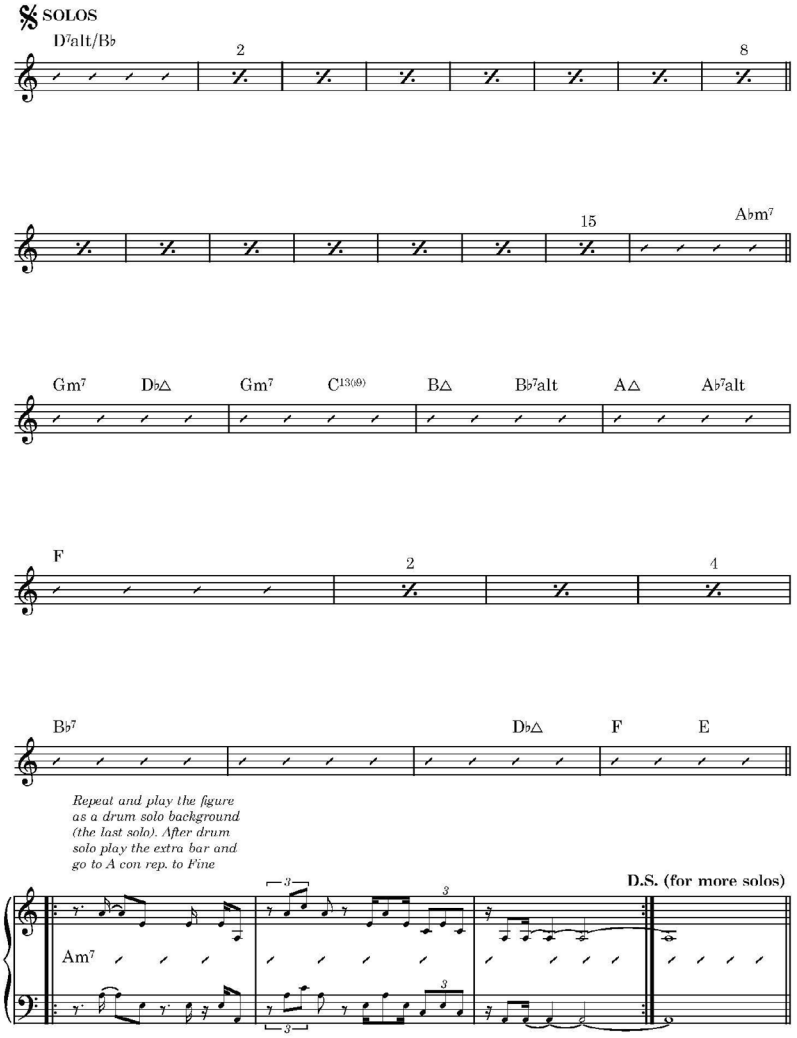

13
f
fill to walking bass
ff
14
A Sax solo
mp
7
7

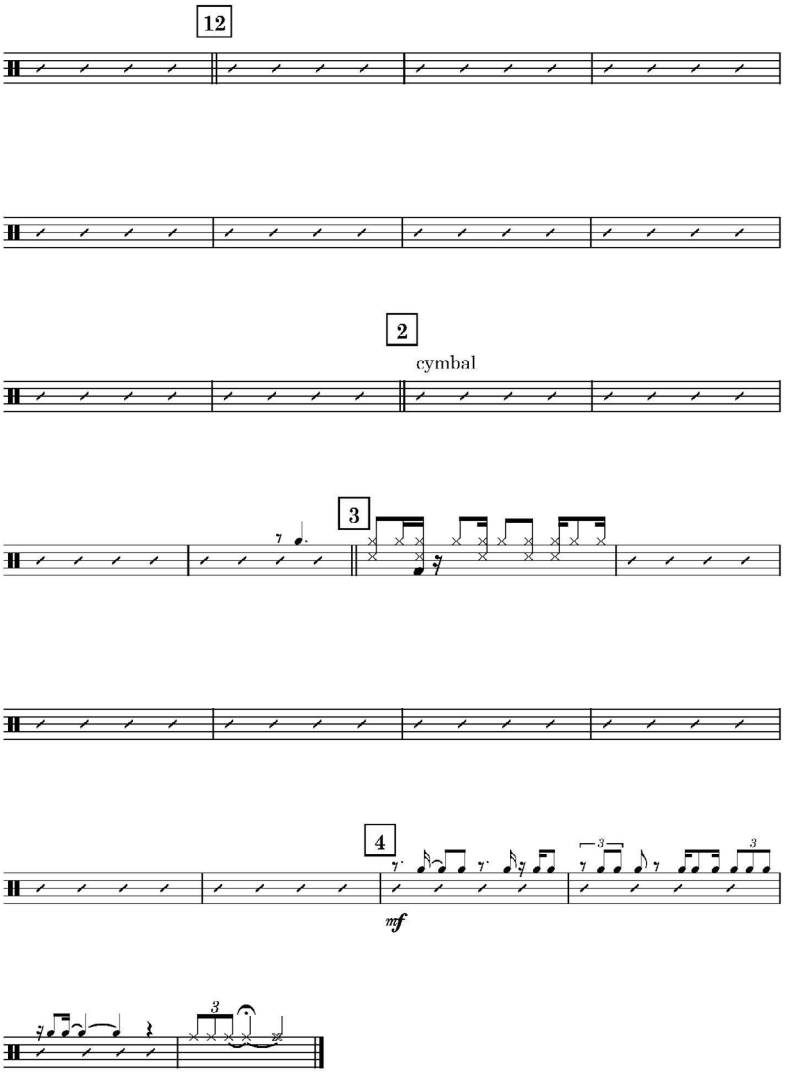

play the rhythm at 3rd time
Play 3 times
15
jazz latin
simile
16
17
f
ff
18
Play 4 times
p
19
20
Open for drums
D.S. al Fine

1.3 *Rainbow Blue* trio version from *Textures*.

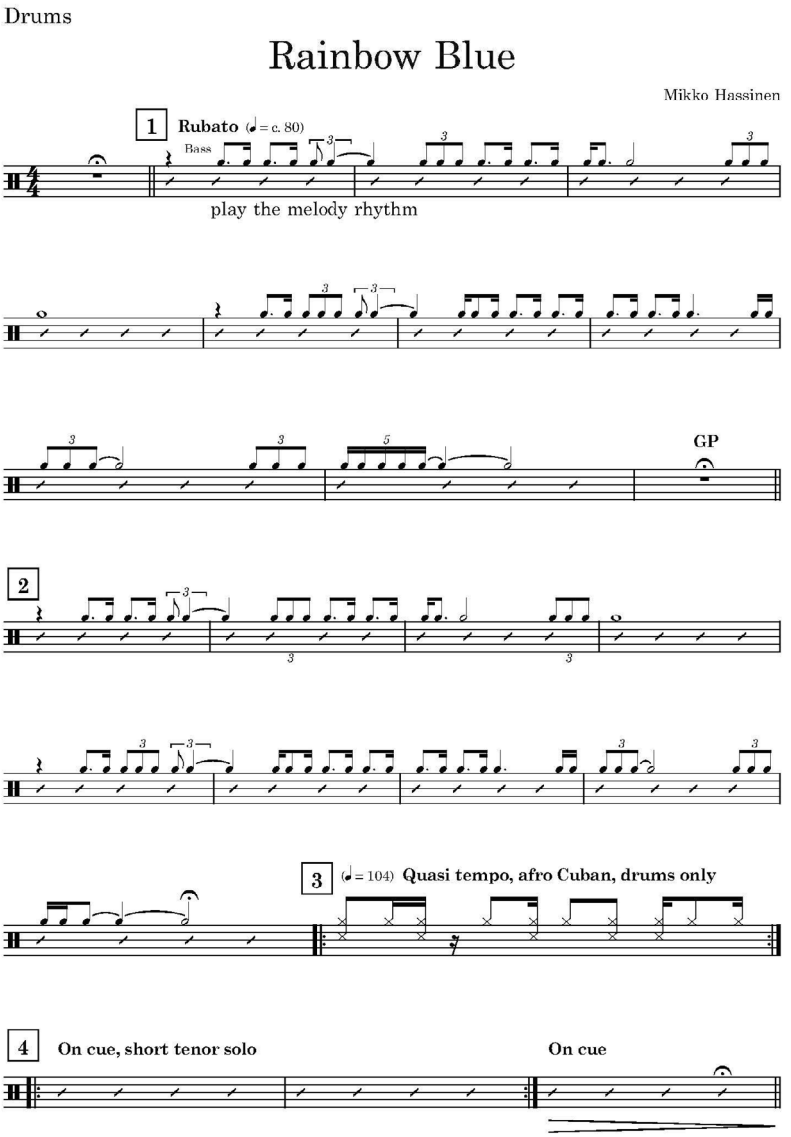


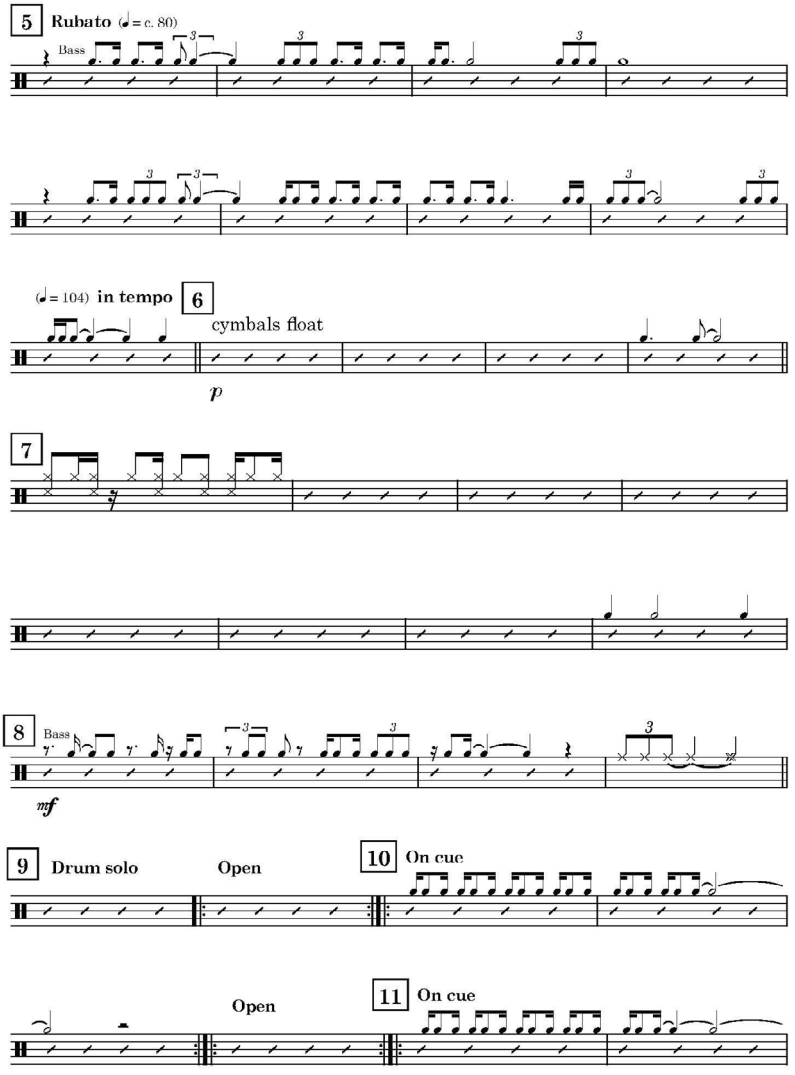

A♭m7
B
Gm7 D♭△ Gm7 C13(b9) B△ B♭7alt A△ A♭7alt
C
F
B♭7 D♭△ F Esus E
N.C.
Fine

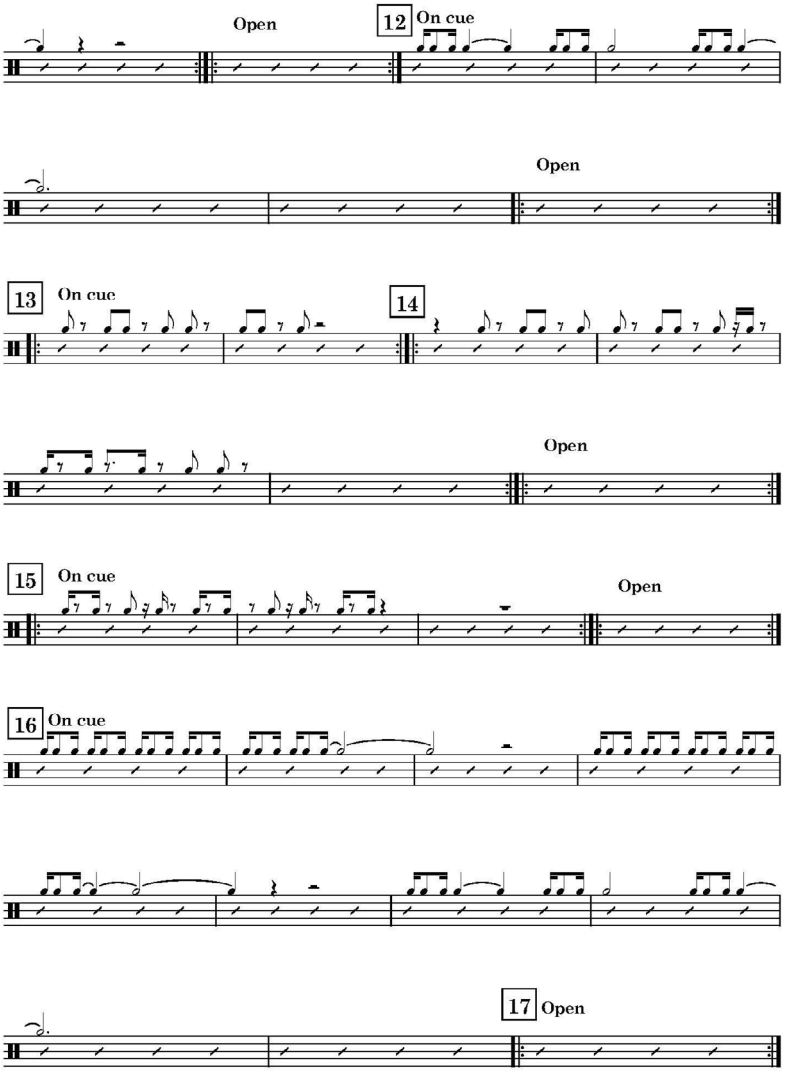

SOLOS
D7alt/Bb
2
8
15
Abm7
Gm7
Db△
Gm7
C13(b9)
B△
Bb7alt
A△
Ab7alt
F
2
4
Bb7
Db△
F
E
Repeat and play the figure as a drum solo background (the last solo). After drum solo play the extra bar and go to A con rep. to Fine
D.S. (for more solos)
Am7


12
2
cymbal
3
4
mf

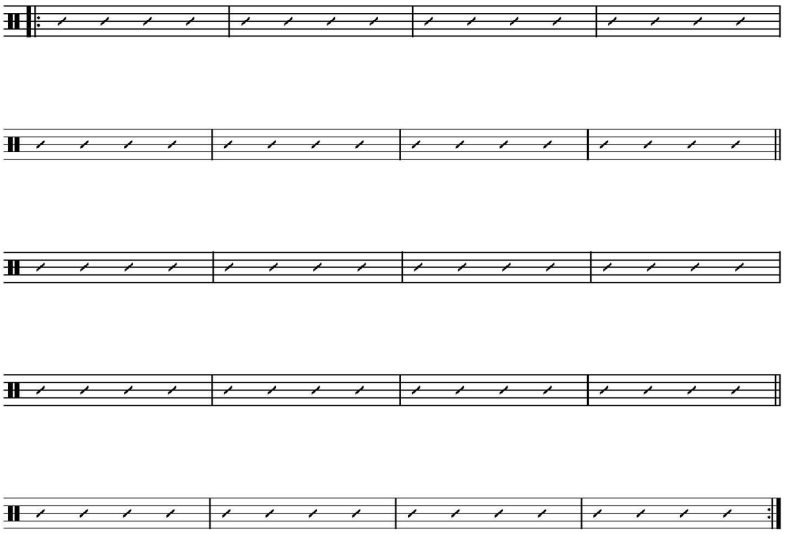
1.4 *Rainbow Blue* big band version from *Rainbow Blue*.



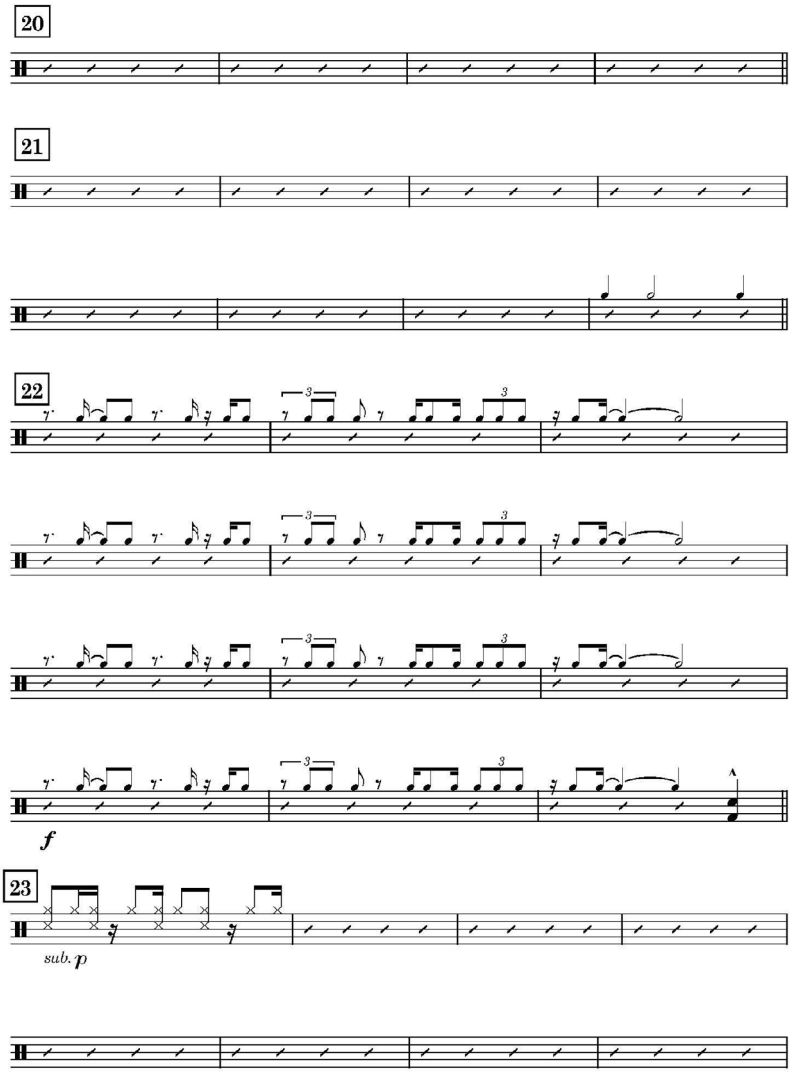

5 Rubato (♩= c. 80)
Bass
(♩= 104) in tempo 6
cymbals float
p
7
8 Bass
mf
9 Drum solo
Open
10 On cue
Open
11 On cue


Open
12 On cue
Open
13 On cue
14
Open
15 On cue
Open
16 On cue
17 Open

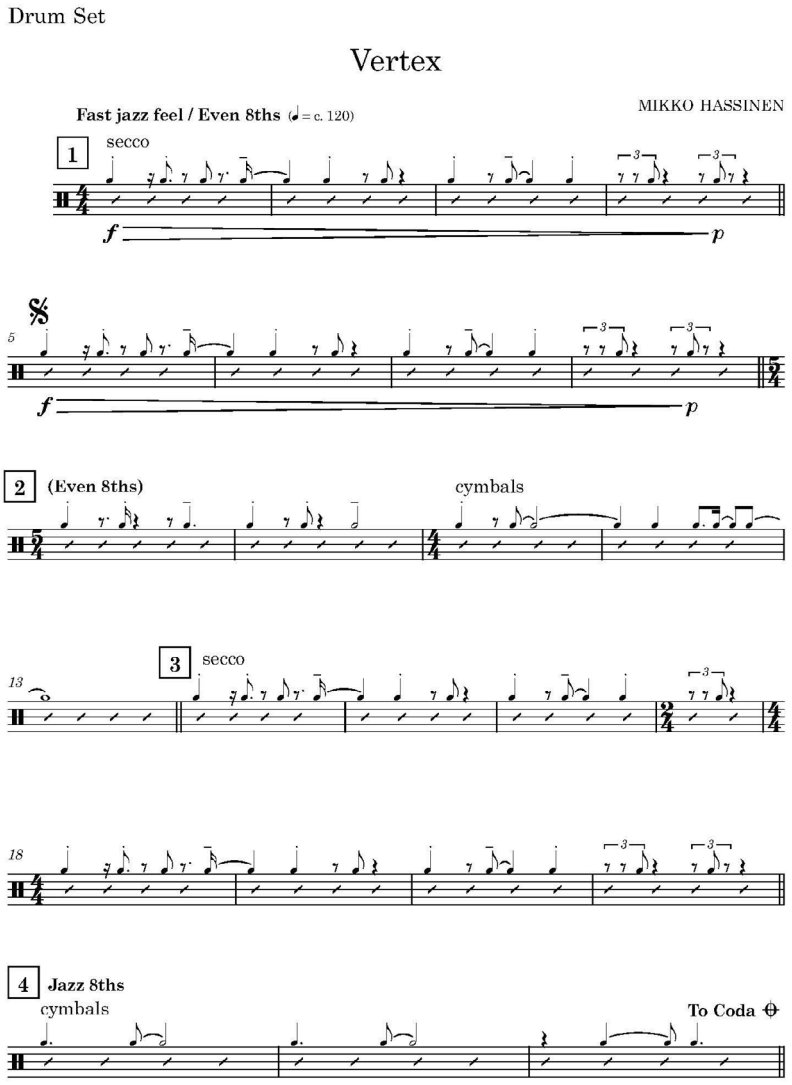
18 On cue, tenor solo

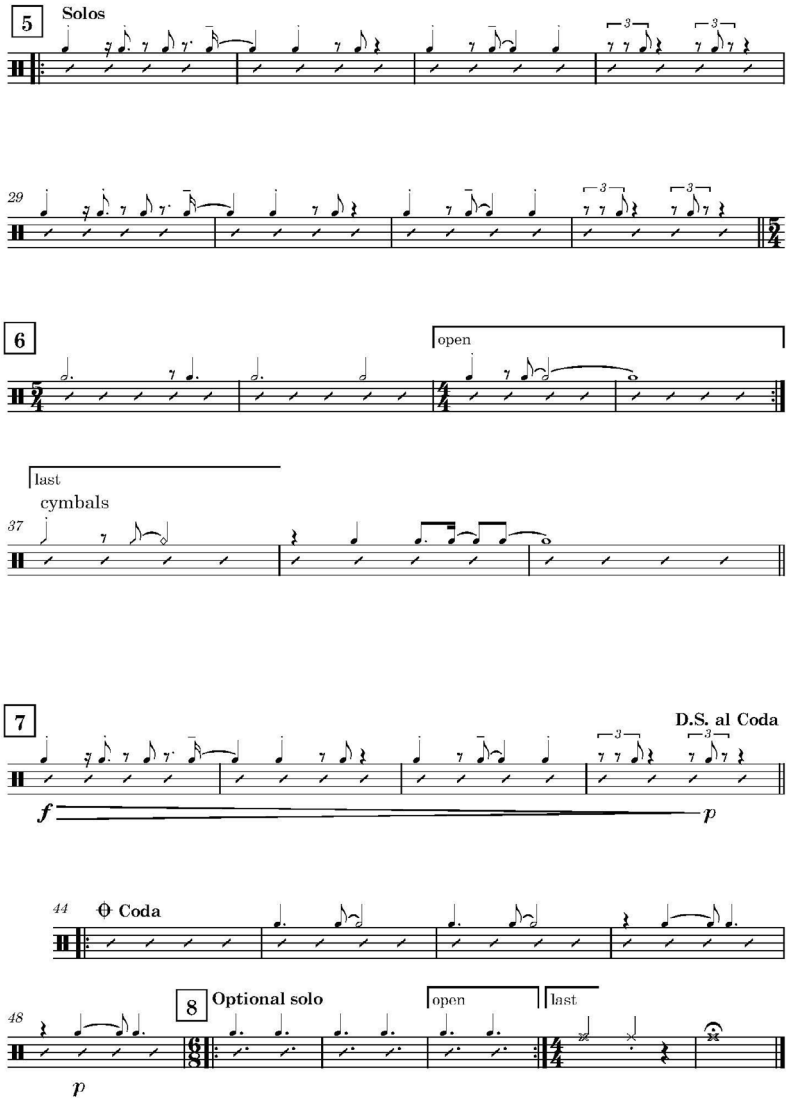


19

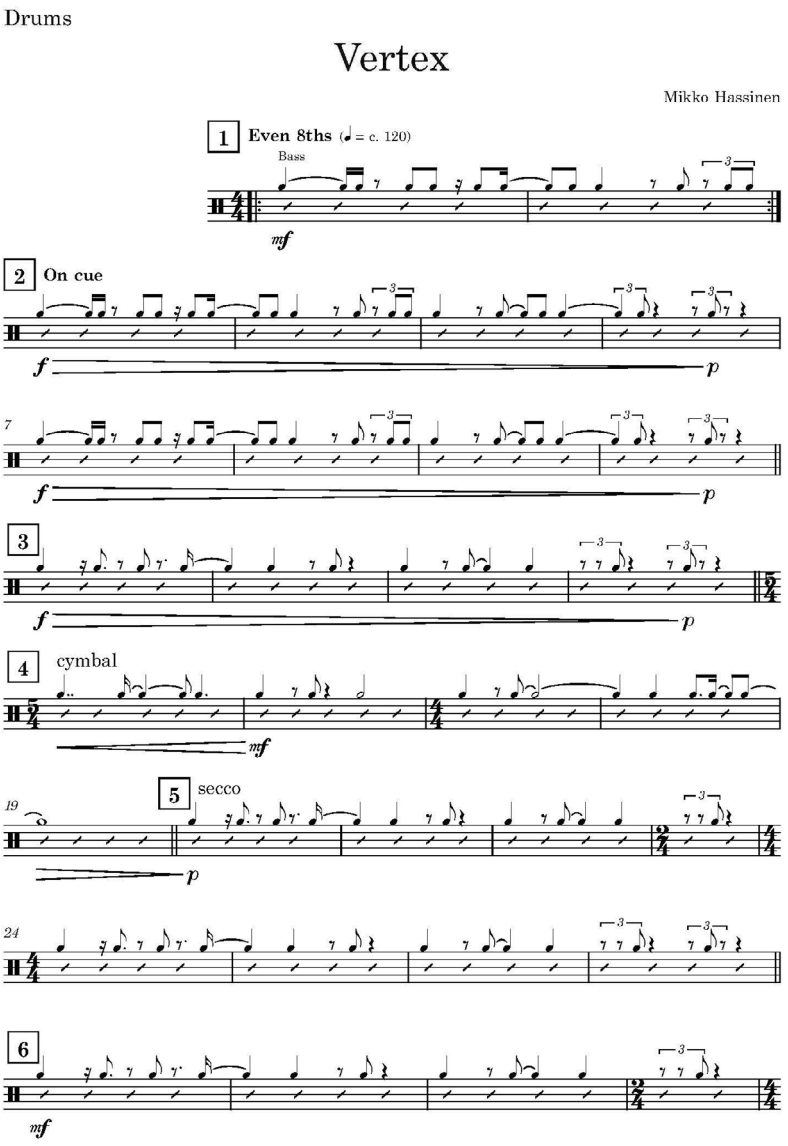

20
21
22
3
3
3
3
f
23
sub. p

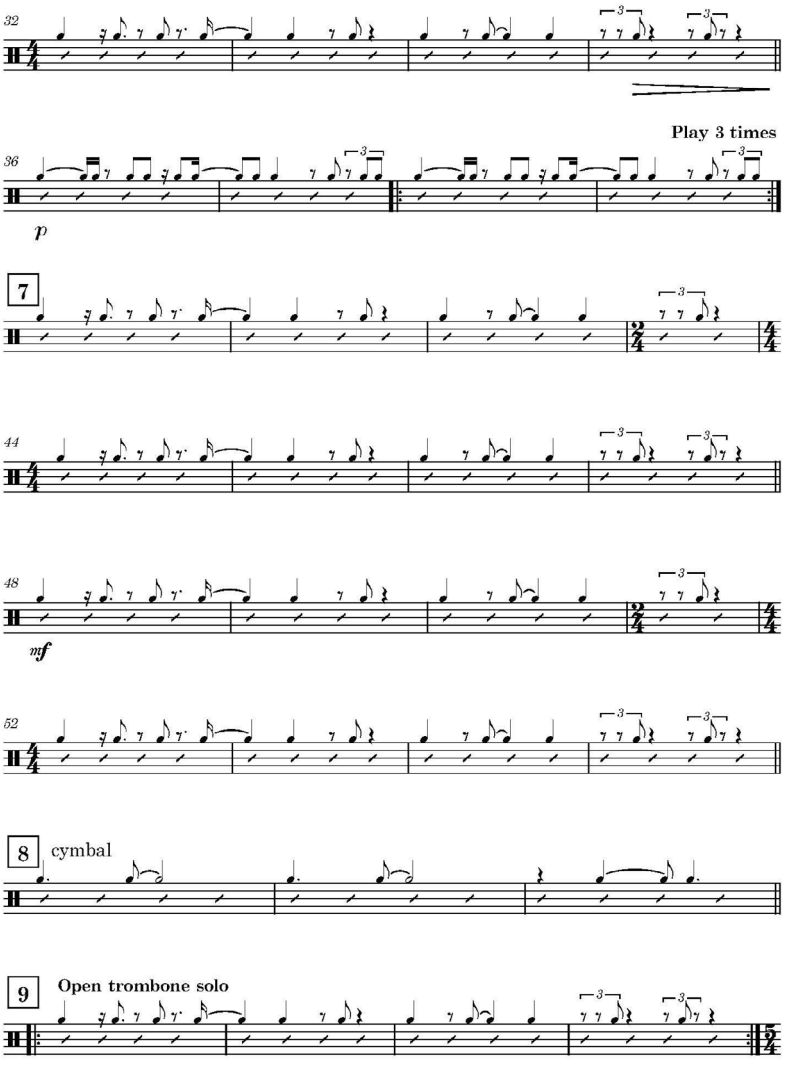
1.5 *Vertex* quintet version from *Odd Times.*

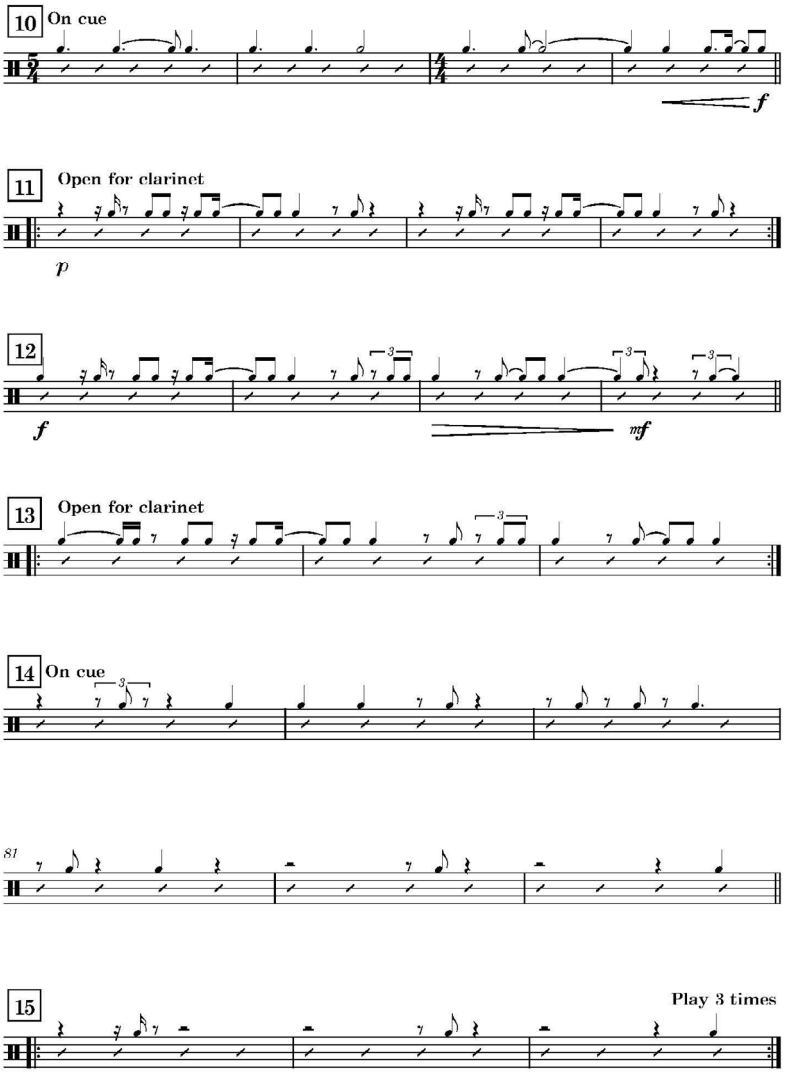


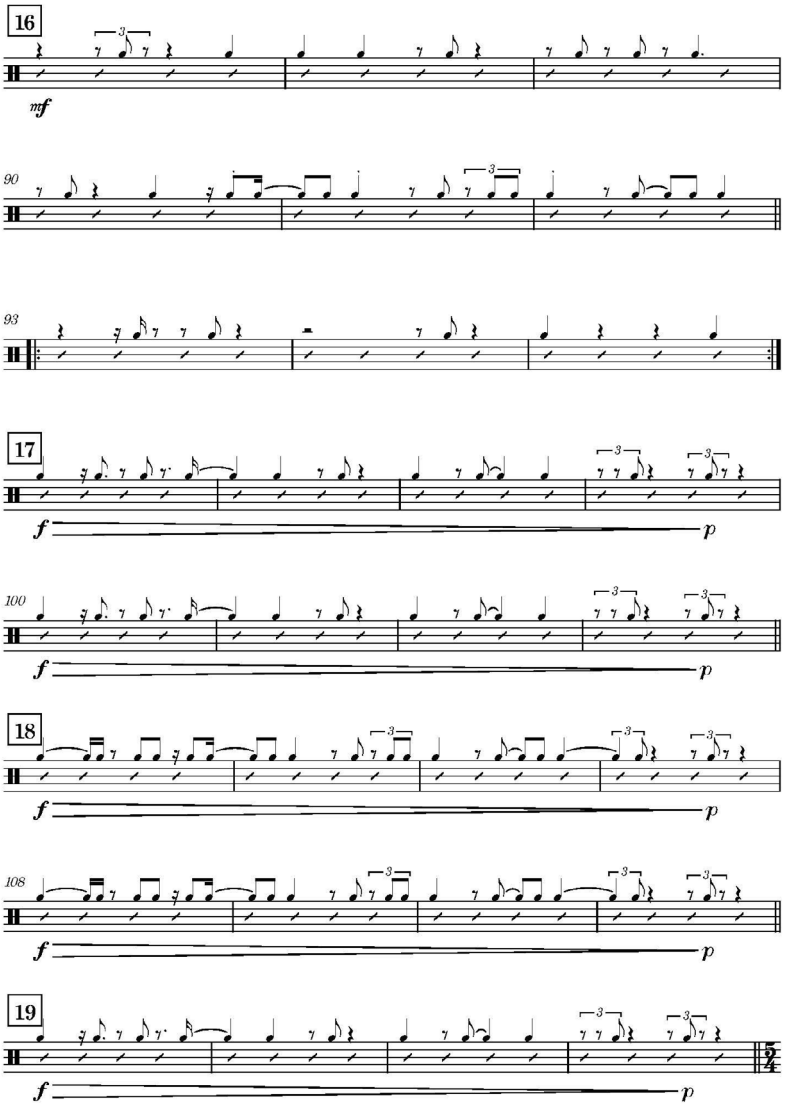

5
Solos
29
6
open
last
cymbals
37
7
D.S. al Coda
f
p
44
Coda
8
Optional solo
open
last
48
p

1.6 *Vertex* big band version from *Rainbow Blue*.




32
Play 3 times
36
p
7
44
48
mf
52
8
cymbal
9
Open trombone solo


10
On cue
f
11
Open for clarinet
p
12
f
mf
13
Open for clarinet
14
On cue
81
15
Play 3 times


16
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90
93
17
f
p
100
f
p
18
f
p
108
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f
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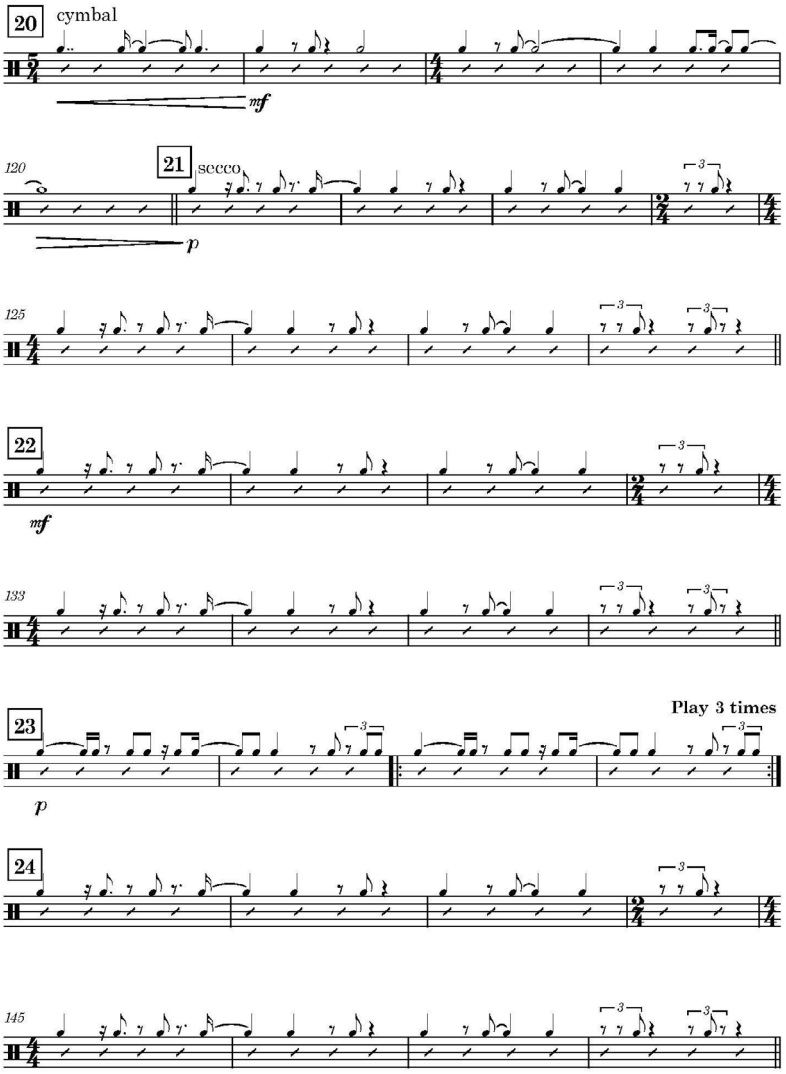
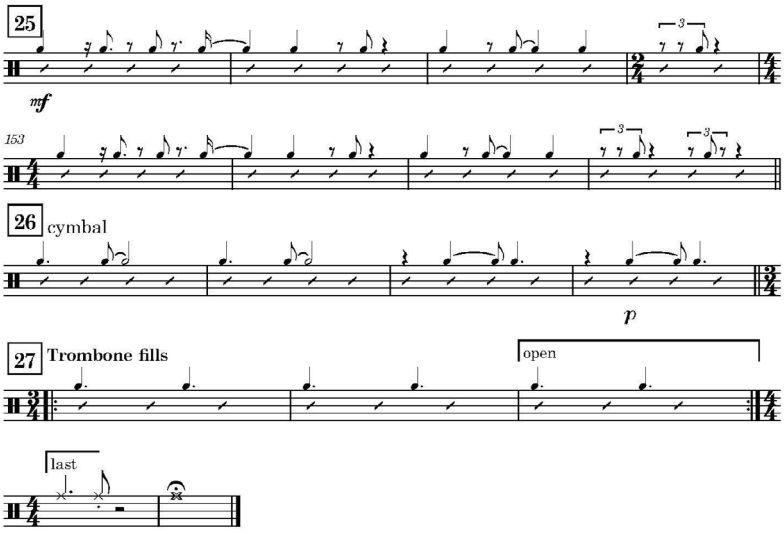
5/4


20
cymbal
mf
120
21
secco
p
125
22
mf
133
23
Play 3 times
p
24
145


25
mf
153
26 cymbal
p
27 Trombone fills
open
last

JAAKKO LUKKARINEN

Breaking down five core elements of the improvised drum set comping of Philly Joe Jones

This article examines the improvised comping of jazz drummer Philly Joe Jones (1923–1985).[1] Through my practice-based research, I have outlined five elements – goosing, active accenting, form structuring, riff-style implications, and intuitive call and response – as the core elements of Jones' comping. My aim is to offer a drummer's view on how comping is structured, how it creates rhythmic intensity and how it supports the structure of the composition. The analytical approach suggested in this article aims to develop an understanding of the musical role of a jazz drummer that, in addition to creating a groove, also includes being aware of melody and harmony. My research methods include the aural analysis of recordings, musical analysis of transcriptions, imitation by playing, and improvisation. These methods are inherent to the history of jazz and core processes of practice-based artistic jazz research, guiding the researcher "in and through the art" (Kahr 2022: 9.

I will first explore jazz drums and comping in general and then focus on Jones' musicianship and sound. From there, I will continue by analyzing his fundamental textural elements by showing how Jones accompanies the melodies in the jazz standard *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* and Wayne Shorter's composition *Mama G (Nellie Bly)*. I will then analyze the fi e core elements of Jones' comping behind Lee Morgan's trumpet solo in *Mama G*, Sonny Rollins' saxophone solo in *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, Hank Mobley's tenor saxophone solo and Freddie Hubbard's trumpet solo in *Karioka* – a Kenny Dorham composition.

[1] For their advice and assistance, I thank Andrew Gander, Aaron Goldberg, Dana Hall, Neil Heyde, Ashley Kahn, Markus Ketola, Kaarina Kilpiö, Glenn Kotche, Sami Linna, William Martin, Saijaleena Rantanen, Alex Reed, Jukkis Uotila, and Anu Lampela.

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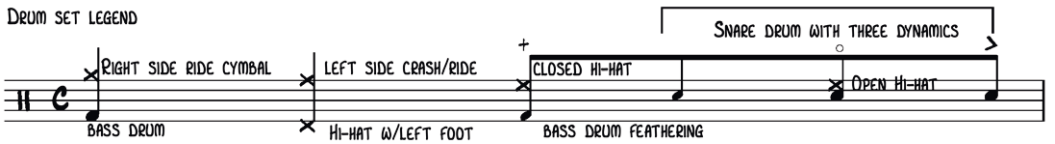
I chose these recordings because, in all of them, Jones' comping creates, with the piano, a multi-layered rhythmically active grooving texture, interpreting the harmonic form of the composition.

My research material consists of transcriptions of Philly Joe Jones' comping from recordings made between 1957 and 1960. I hear these three years as the peak of Jones' career with merely 90 recordings (Tom Lord Discography). His drumming is musically very active, structured, and always swinging, full of elements that I would like to hear in my own playing.

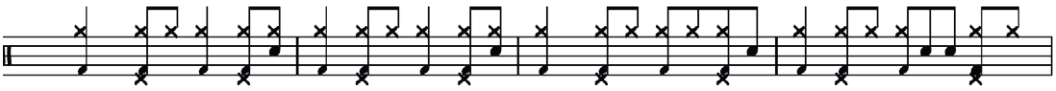
Building on my analysis, my experience as a working jazz drummer, and existing research, this article discusses musical and rhythmic aspects that should be taken into consideration when approaching comping from both the drummer's and researcher's perspectives. By providing a detailed analysis of Jones' comping strategies, my intention is to benefit the field of artistic jazz research, encourage possible comparative studies, and present a view on how to analyze improvised comping.

Overview of a jazz drummer's toolbox

The drum set legend below shows the notation of a standard jazz drum set since the 1940s bebop era of a bass drum, snare drum, mounted tom, and floor tom. The drum set also includes two cymbals and a hi-hat. The tom-toms are excluded from the legend, since Jones did not use them when comping in the material I have transcribed.



In the transcriptions, the notation of Philly Joe Jones' comping follows this 4-bar example from Lee Morgan's trumpet solo, that I will get into later.



The perception among jazz drummers today is that, when comping, the ride cymbal on the top line is the main instrument for the drummer to keep time – and

so it has been since the 1940's bebop era (Monson 2009: 54–55). Together with the bass, the ride cymbal beat defines the regular pulse. The pattern Philly Joe Jones plays with the right-handed ride cymbal is called the jazz ride pattern.[2] The pattern is triplet phrased, meaning that the eighth notes are swung. This rhythmic phenomenon is known as jazz phrasing and used in all the transcriptions included in this article. Typically for the era, the ride cymbal pattern is supported by the bass drum, which Jones plays with his right foot on all quarter notes. The style is called feathering.[3] A similar role as the bass drum is assigned to the hi-hat played with the left foot mostly on the 2nd and the 4th beat of a bar. Both feet support the regular pulse by adding rhythmic weight.

Finally, to add a conversational element to comping, Jones often plays syncopated motifs with the snare drum using the left hand. If the motifs are unaccented their role is mostly to support the ride cymbal and the feeling of groove inside the rhythm section. If there is accenting, which adds rhythmic excitement, it has more of an interactive role and possible relationship to the improvised or composed melody played by one of the other band members. The occasional bass drum accents have also a similar role.

To summarize the toolbox: in Philly Joe Jones' playing, as well as in the playing of most jazz drummers of the 1950s, the roles of the right hand, and the feet are rhythm-sustaining. The role of the left hand, sometimes together with the bass drum, is more conversational. These elements and their musical role will be discussed throughout the article.

Comping

Comping adds rhythmic variety to the time flow. This enhances the feeling of groove. The word groove is used to describe a rhythmic propulsion and vital drive (Whittall 2015), and "vital drive" could in turn be used to describe the

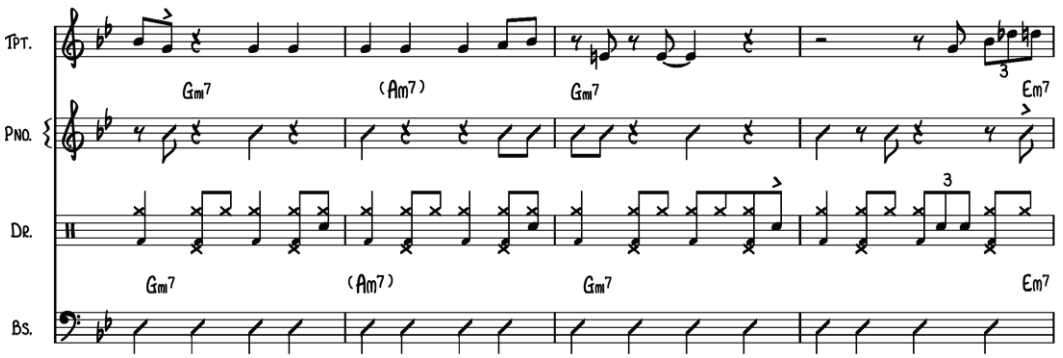
[2] In her 2019 dissertation, Colleen Clark points to the origins of the ride cymbal pattern in the functions of bell patterns in West African cultures. According to Clark, the bell pattern serves as a *rhythmic nucleus* and a ground pulse to build on. She mentions *Oriental Jazz* from 1919 by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band as the first recording on which the pattern appears – played by drummer Antonio Sbarbaro (Clark 2019: 6–8, 13).

[3] Feathering got its name in relation to earlier swing-era style of playing the bass drum, when it was played more heavily on every quarter note to support the bass. During the 1940's Be-Bop era, drummers followed Kenny Clarke's example by shifting the time-keeping role of the bass drum to the ride cymbal implying a lighter feeling of the groove, while adding occasional accents with the bass drum. The playing could then match the rhythmic needs of music that was more harmonically and melodically complex.

overall musicianship of Philly Joe Jones. The term comping, according to Garrett Michaelsen, refers to accompanying and complementing – in other words supporting the soloist (Michaelsen 2013: 117–120, Hodson 2007: 181). Michaelsen's description of comping is similarly evoked by jazz drummer John Riley, when he refers to it as a tool which allows musicians to interact as they play (Riley 1994: 17). Robert Hodson sees the functions of a jazz rhythm section as (1) defining harmony, (2) defining the pulse and meter, and (3) comping (Hodson 2007: 15). As an accompanist and the engine of the rhythm section the drummer supports the different functions, while the main roles are defining the regular rhythm (2) and comping (3).

The following 4-bar example from the beginning of Lee Morgan's trumpet solo in *Mama G* shows the basic layout of the comping transcriptions used in this article.

Time 00:51–00:55



It follows the big band score order of instrumentation, and in the transcriptions I will show the comping rhythm of the drums and the piano below the melody. My assumption before the transcription process was that to better understand how Jones creates rhythmic intensity, I would need to analyze how the comping texture of his drums interacts in dialog with the rhythmic comping texture of the two pianists analyzed in the article – Wynton Kelly and McCoy Tyner. This follows Michaelsen's description above of comping as a musical strategy to support the soloist and the melody.

To sharpen the focus of the article, I have decided not to transcribe the bass in any of the following transcriptions. Paul Chambers, the bass player on all of them, sets a strong groove and creates the rhythmic center with Philly Joe Jones. They performed together on various occasions, including three years with the Miles Davis Quintet between 1955 and 1958. I would argue that they knew each other's

rhythmic feel well and on such a deep level that the feeling of the groove they created was a natural and perhaps obvious element of their performance. In line with Hodson, I acknowledge the bassist's significant role in defining (1) the harmony of the rhythm section, and (2) a regular pulse with the drums. However, the interactional role of the bass, here as a continuous, non-variable rhythmic element with the fact that Jones and Chambers knew each other's sense of time well, is not critical to the results of my analyses. The feeling of the groove they created together was established in their various collaborations long before the material analyzed here and it would need a different focus, beyond the scope of this article, to adequately study the relationship between them.

On Philly Joe Jones, Musicianship, and Sound

Philly Joe Jones, best known as drummer for the Miles Davis Quintet between 1955 and 1958, is considered by many jazz musicians to have prepared the ground for the modern jazz drumming of today (Korall 2004: 221). What inspires my work both as a researcher and a musician is not only Jones' drumming but also the fact that through articles and interviews, one gets a picture of a very fascinating and insightful personality. It is also clear that there is room in the field of jazz research, via the practices of artistic research, for a focus on Jones' style of accompaniment and its musical impact.

Jones' life story usually only crops up "in the footnotes of the towering figures he performed with" (Mallory 2013: 3). Yet Jones' life story – full of ups and downs – is not unlike those of many musicians at that time.[4] One could argue that it was because of his lack of success as a band leader he has been somewhat overlooked in jazz research – compared to renowned drummers and Jones' idols like Art Blakey, Kenny Clarke, Max Roach, and Buddy Rich (Davis 1976: 18). Indeed, this is precisely one aspect that justifies my focus – Jones deserves recognition and study.

[4] Joseph Rudolph Jones was born in Philadelphia on July 15th, 1923. Jones was nicknamed "Philly Joe" to differentiate him from Papa Jo Jones – the older statesman of jazz drumming. Jones started with the piano but turned to drums at the age of 13. His career as a jazz drummer in Philadelphia began after being discharged from the army at the age of 21. In the late 1940s, Jones moved to New York to study drums with Cozy Cole. His career took a big step forwards when he joined the Miles Davis Quintet in 1955, and between 1953–63 he appeared on a total of 164 records. Jones' life story speaks of a creative and warm person, but unfortunately his use of drugs caused sometimes unstable behavior, and this led to him eventually leaving the Miles Davis Quintet. Jones' life took a healthier turn when he moved to London 1967 and later to Paris 1968. He moved back to Philadelphia in 1970, where he later formed *Dameronia*, a group he led until his death on August 30th, 1985.

I believe, based on my research, that Jones' approach to drums and music is a combination of organized knowledge, creativity, and feeling. A good feeling and groove are at the very heart of what could be academically called Jones' performance praxis. More practically, as Jones himself puts it: "As long as you could swing, everything was cool" (Jones, i1979).

A creative personality who, besides drums, played piano, bass, and saxophone, Jones explains his understanding of music by saying:

> When I am going to play someone else's music, I try to sit down at the piano and play through it. Then it's easy for me to play it on the drums because I see what the music is about and I see exactly what it's doing, I really like to know it (Korall 2004: 224).

He also states that he never plans what he plays, emphasizing the importance of getting a good knowledge on the instrument, good music reading skills, and technique (Jones, i1979). I believe the qualities mentioned above, together with Jones' urge to know the music, allow him to be creative and at the same time well organized. Jimmy Heath, a saxophonist and one of Jones' longtime colleagues, describes Jones' drumming and comping as meaningful and well-structured, adding that Jones understood music better than most drummers (Korall 2004: 224).

The sound of a drum set – a combination of personal rhythmic feel and the timbral qualities of the instrument – is the first musical feature one hears from a drummer. Jones was particular about how the drums should sound and how they should be played. A piece of advice given to a young drummer tells of a certain respect a musician should have for his instrument and craft:

> "You wanna get this in your head first You never beat the drum… an instrument needs to be played, not beat." Jones also stated with conviction: "Whatever the stick does, you have to make it do it" (Jones, i1979).

Knowing what kind of instrument Jones played gives a deeper understanding of how his low-tuned, dynamic, and powerful sound projects his musical expression (Gleason 1960: 29).

Jones endorsed Gretsch Broadkaster drums and can be seen in Gretsch Drums catalog photographs playing a Gretsch Bop Outfit an outfit typical to 1950s jazz drummers. The set has a 14" x 22" bass drum, 9" x 13" tom-tom, 16" x 16" floor

tom and 5.5" x 14" snare drum. With the drums he used K Zildjian Istanbul cymbals, made in Istanbul and imported to the U.S.A. by the Gretsch company. Jones' cymbal set-up included a 20" ride cymbal, an 18" crash/ride cymbal, and 14" hi-hats.

The warm and focused sound of Gretsch drums, with the dark-toned K Zildjians, served the timbral needs of many of the top jazz drummers of the 1950s. For example, Gretsch's catalog from 1954 includes jazz drummers Papa Jo Jones, Max Roach, Art Blakey, Mel Lewis, Denzil Best, and Shelly Manne. Jones appeared there for the first time in 1958, among other notable jazz drummers Elvin Jones, Charlie Persip, Art Taylor, and Chico Hamilton (Falzerano 1995: 53). However, as a touring musician and recording artist, Jones must have also played any drum set available in studios and clubs. When examining photos from the era, Jones seems to have also played Slingerland, Leedy, and Ludwig drums.

The unique Gretsch drum sound was a combination of various factors: Gretsch's maple-gum shell, produced by Jasper Wood Products, a special "round over" bearing edge that allowed the drumhead to have a lot of contact with the shell, and die-cast hoop (Cook & Sheridan 2013: 201–210). An important part of Jones' sound is also in the drumheads. Until the late 1950s, most of the drum companies used calfskin heads, and Gretsch had its own tannery facility – equipping most of its kits with Broadkaster calfskin heads. The invention of thin polyester film Mylar® drumheads in 1957 by Remo had a significant impact on the drumhead industry. Starting from the late 1950s, Gretsch Drums were equipped with Permatone heads – made for them by Remo (Cook & Sheridan 2013: 211). From Jones' sound, it's hard to tell when he's using calfskin or Mylar, but it's fair to assume that in the recordings before 1957, Jones used calfskin. After that, and considering Jones' musicianship and open personality, he most likely wanted to experiment and most certainly used Mylar.

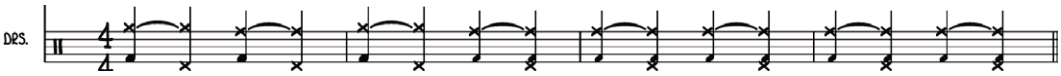
Comping the melody in *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*

The following transcriptions shed light on how Jones interprets the melodies of compositions *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* and *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*. They give an idea of how Jones rhythmically and texturally shapes the melody and structures the form. The examples also portray how Jones feels the harmonic rhythm and rhythmic intensity inside the form.

The Surrey with the Fringe on Top, a duo with saxophonist Sonny Rollins, presents a detailed example of Jones' timbral qualities such as tuning, tone, and dynamics.

These are all elements that are key to the sound projecting musical energy. With the timbral qualities, I shall focus on elements of Jones' drumming in the Intro, A2 and B sections of the 36-bar AABC form.

Time 00:00–00:04



Transcription 1. Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time***,** *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top***,** comp. Richard Rogers, Intro.[5]

Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (Rogers/Hart), Intro.

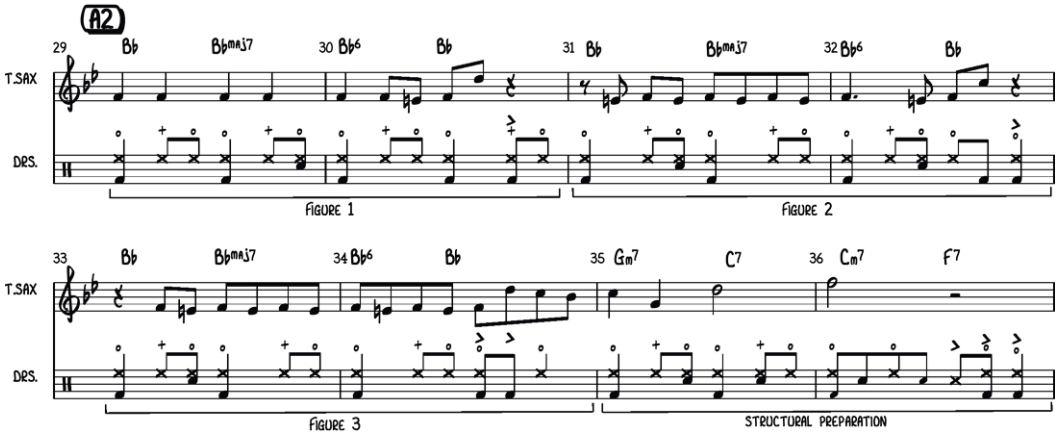
Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (Rogers/Hart), Intro, 70% speed.

In the 20-bar intro, Jones plays a texturally simple but effective pattern, as presented in bars 1–4. He plays a 20" ride cymbal on the first beat and an 18" crash cymbal on the third. Jones' bass drum sound is well heard underneath the bright-sounding cymbals. He lets Rollins fill the gaps in the melody while setting a danceable rhythmic feel with the bass drum and the hi-hat – both instruments which Jones built up a very personal relationship with (Gleason 1960: 28).

Jones' textures in the intro leave room for other timbral and rhythmic options for how to orchestrate the compositions melody later on. In the following transcription of the A2 section, Jones gets into a groove right from the beginning.

[5] Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*. Musicians on the record are Sonny Rollins (tenor saxophone), Wynton Kelly (piano), Doug Watkins (bass), and Philly Joe Jones (drums).

Time 0:28–0:36



Transcription 2. Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (Rogers/Hart), A2 section.

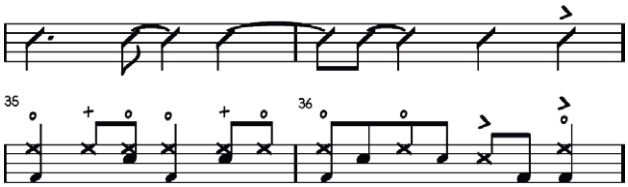
Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (Rogers/Hart), A2 section.

Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (Rogers/Hart), A2 section, 70% speed.

Jones sets a two-feel groove in the A sections by playing the hi-hat pattern common in jazz. The first four bars of the A2 section are texturally light, but in the next four, Jones adds rhythmic variety. I have divided the comping into 2-bar comping figures following the contour of melody phrases over 2 bars. Each 2-bar figure is also slightly different, and the rhythmic and textural changes in each 2-bar figure make the simple groove work. Also, the added offbeat snare drum strokes in bars 29, 31, and 33 are what distinguish the A2 section from the texturally sparser A1, where Jones mainly plays only hi-hat and bass drum. The offbeat snare give the A2 slightly more rhythmic lift.

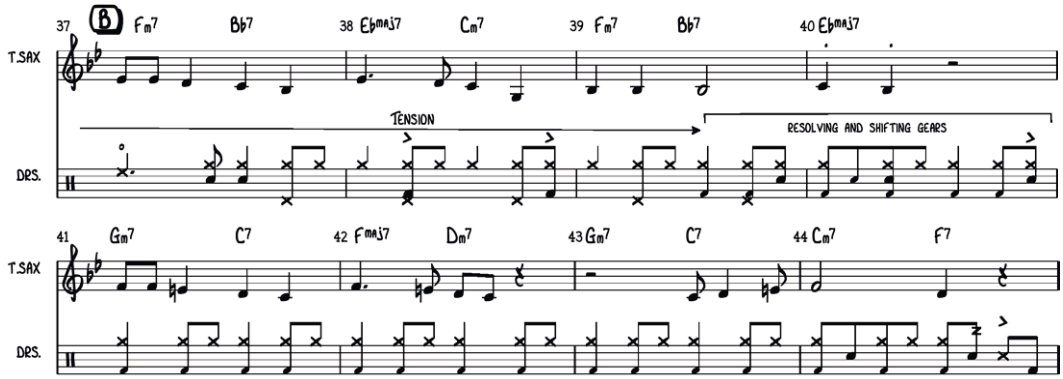
The damped bass drum on beats 1 and 3 emphasizes the two-feel groove. The slight accenting with a more open bass drum sound on beat 4 of every second bar indicates to me a second-line groove. The notion of a second line groove is even more prominent in bars 35–36 where Jones plays a drum fill leading into the B section. The syncopated snare drum rhythm and the bass drum accent on beat 4

in bar 36 follows a rhythmic idea based on playing a dotted quarter note with an accent on beat 4 in every second bar. Similar rhythmic ideas can be heard in the playing of New Orleans drummer Warren "Baby" Dodds, who is often thought of the founding father of drum set comping (Brown 1976, 211).



Jones plays this fill to create a rhythmic lift that prepares us for the following B section of the tune. I call this structural preparation. The fill has a feeling of forward motion, because of the dotted quarter note rhythm crossing the bar-line of bars 35–36. As I will show later, similar musical gestures often happen two bars before a section changes.

Time 0:36-0:44



Transcription 3. Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time***,** *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (Rogers/Hart), B section.

Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (Rogers/Hart), B section.

Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (Rogers/Hart), B section, 70% speed.

Following Jones' rhythmically uplifting second-line style of drum fill he continues into the B section with something that, to me, creates a musical surprise. In bar 37, Jones stops feathering the bass drum which changes the timbre and gives the groove a lighter feel, while also creating rhythmic tension. The surprise is that he reduces texture in a place where my default would be to increase texture and volume. Jones' choice sounds like he wants to make room for the melody, which varies rhythmically and melodically from the A sections. Jones' snare drum motifs and bass drum accents in bars 37–40, ending on the second beat of bar 40, are what hold the tension here, I feel – creating a need for rhythmic resolution which happens when Jones begins to add more weight to the groove. I would like to use the analogy of a car to explain this resolution; Jones shifts into first gear when he starts feathering the bass drum in bar 39, then changes into second with the snare drum motifs moving over the bar-line between bars 39 and 40. Finally, he gets the vehicle up to speed by playing an offbeat eighth-note snare drum accent at the end of bar 41. Jones then cruises through the B part by keeping time for 4-bars with the ride; he then plays the same fill in bar 44 (that he played in bar 36 at the end of A2) to lead into the next section.

Starting from bar 38, Jones plays a right-handed jazz pattern on the ride cymbal with dynamically even strokes that give the rhythm a feeling of continuity. The beat center is emphasized by the bass drum feathering and hi-hat, played by the left foot on beats 2 and 4. Jones plays the bass drum with a fairly loud open sound adding weight to the groove replacing the role of the bass. The bass drum sound in this recording is a clear example of Jones' using a calfskin head played with a medium hard beater (Schonberg, i1989).[6] This combination of patterns on the ride and hi-hat together with bass drum feathering create the primary identifier of Jones' pulse and beat center across all the transcribed material in this article.

Comping the melody of *Mama "G"*

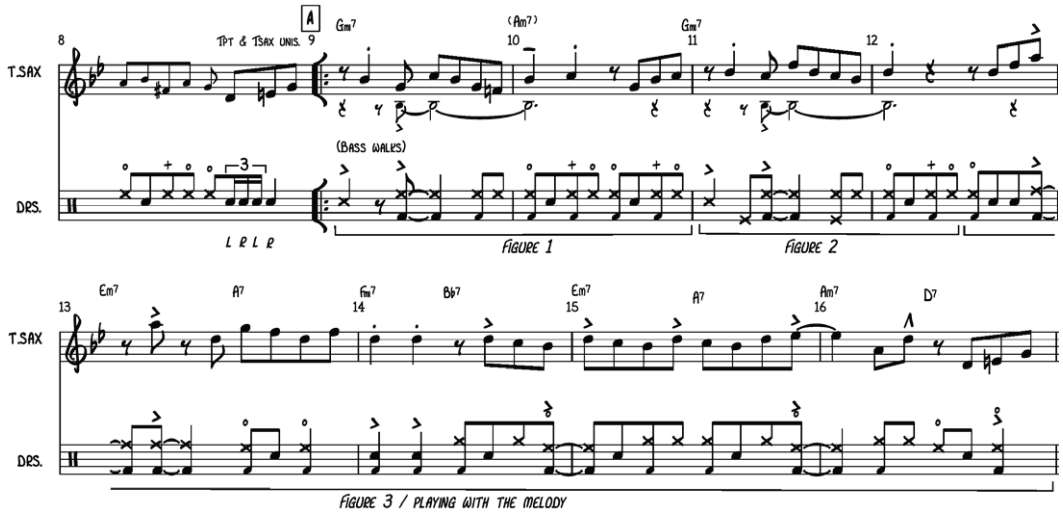
In the following transcriptions from Wayne Shorter's composition *Mama "G" (Nellie Blye)* I shall focus on how Jones creates feelings of tension and release

[6] Jones' playing is colorfully discussed by Mel Lewis in the *History of Jazz Drums* radio interview. Lewis once sat in for Jones with the Miles Davis Quintet, and according to Lewis, Davis asked him to play the bass drum louder than he was used to. Davis seems to have wanted Lewis to project the same amount of weight and energy with his bass drum as Jones. The use of the bass drum in jazz has been discussed more widely by players from different eras in a *Downbeat* article – "Drum Talk: Coast to Coast". It wasn't until the 1960s with the playing of Tony Williams and Elvin Jones, before more rhythmic variety was added to the bass drum and hi-hat.

supporting the melody that has a feeling of being rhythmically displaced.[7] This happens if one hears the offbeats of beat 3 in bars 8, 10 and 12 as offbeats of the beat one in bars 9, 11 and 13.

The harmonic rhythm of the composition shapes the 8-bar A section. The 4-bar phrase of static harmony (in Gm) is followed by a 4-bar phrase of harmonic movement (II–V progressions). The melodic lines in the intro and the A sections create rhythmic displacement where the first beat feels like the third. The melody obscures the A sections symmetric 4+4-bar harmonic construction. Jones takes a rhythmically clear approach already in the intro of the tune by playing a hi-hat pattern that is commonly used to create a swing feel. Continuing the same pattern, he builds a groove against which the displaced melody then builds tension.

Time 0:07–0:17



Transcription 4. Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, A section.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, A section.

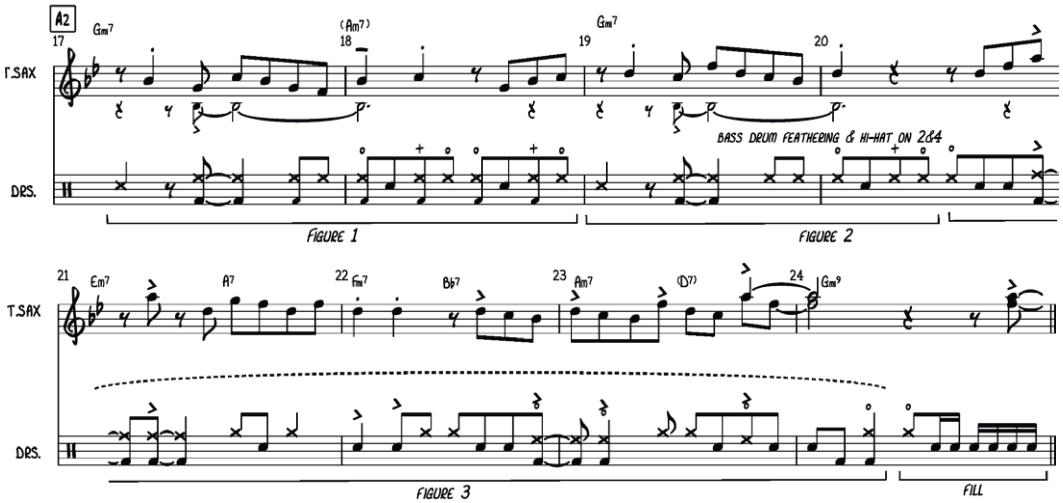
Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, A section, 70% speed.

[7] *Mama G (Nellie Blye)* by Wayne Shorter on Wynton Kelly Quintet, *Kelly Great.* Musicians on the recording are Wynton Kelly (piano), Lee Morgan (trumpet), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), Paul Chambers (bass), and Philly Joe Jones (drums).

I find that Jones divides the comping in the A section into a pair of 2-bar figures and one 4-bar figure. He accents the downbeats in bars 9 and 11 and plays against the melody. This brings clarity to the comping but also creates tension underneath the displaced sounding melody.

The tension is then released like in the B section of *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* (see above), when Jones adds weight to the groove by feathering the bass drum and accenting with the melody in bars 13-15 with the ride cymbal, snare drum, and bass drum. The color change from hi-hat to the cymbals, starting with the offbeat eighth note of beat 4 in bar 12, shapes the 8 bars of the A section like a gear shift to add rhythmic excitement towards the end.

Time 0:17–0:25



Transcription 5. Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, A2 section.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, A2 section.

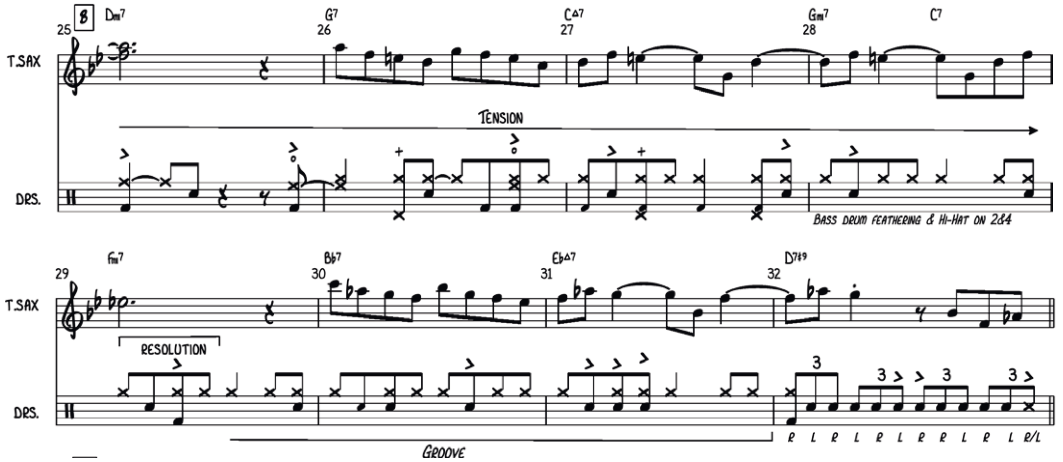
Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, A2 section, 70% speed.

In the A2 section, bars 17–20 are texturally and rhythmically like the previous A part, but in bars 22–23, Jones interprets the melody with a more aggressive rhythmic counterpoint in preparation for the upcoming B part.

The offbeat accents of beat 4 in bar 22 and beat 1 in bar 23 work against the melody accents. They give the melody a rhythmic push which I believe Jones feels is musically necessary before launching into the B section. This feeling of tension is released when Jones then ends the comping figure by accenting beat 2 in bar 24. He then leads into the B part with a 16th-note fill. The double-dashed slur inside figure 3 highlights this rhythmic flow the way I hear it.

The ensuing B section produces a bright color with the two major key centers (C and Eb), serving as contrast to the G Dorian minor of the A sections. The chord symbols here represent the chord qualities of Wynton Kelly's piano comping, which is independent of some of the melody notes. Jones accompanies the contrast with a brighter timbre and a feeling of texturally "opening up" when he switches keeping time from hi-hat to ride.

Time 0:25–0:34



Transcription 6. Wynton Kelly**,** *Kelly Great***,** *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, B section.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, B section.

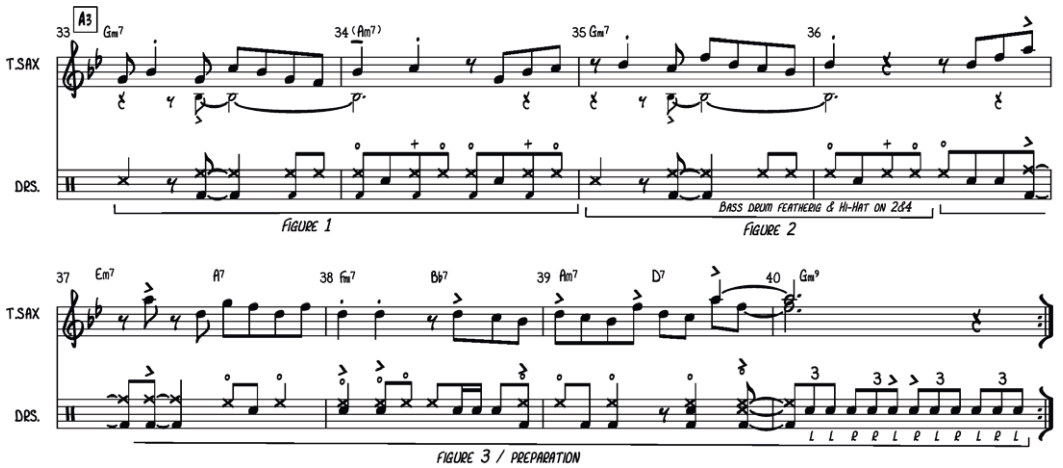
Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, B section, 70% speed.

Jones begins the B section here like the B part in *Surrey with the Fringe on Top*. Instead of adding texture, he once again thwarts my expectations by laying down a strong downbeat in bar 25 followed by an offbeat accent on open hi-hat and bass drum. This textural reduction creates a tension which he eventually resolves to

a jazz pattern on the ride, but only after an offbeat hi-hat and bass drum accent which together anticipate the melody. Along with the jazz pattern on ride, Jones plays a signature figure of his – accenting the hi-hat with the left hand on beat 4 followed by a snare drum offbeat accent on beat 1 in bar 27. This figure begins the resolution which I hear finally happening when Jones accents the bass drum on beat 2 of bar 29. After the accent, he focuses on grooving. The comping in bars 27–31 maintains a high intensity as he supports the melody's rhythmic fl w with offbeat accents on the snare between phrases of the melody.

In the following A3 section, Jones goes back to the same rhythmic idea as the previous A sections.

Time 0:34–0:42



Transcription 7. Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, A3 section.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, A3 section.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, A3 section, 70% speed.

Bars 33–36 divide into comping figures of 2 bars. In bars 37–40, Jones anticipates the beginning of the chorus and upcoming trumpet solo by adding more rhythmic variety with the snare in bars 38 and 40. He seems to play through the melody in bars 38–39 differently to the previously analyzed A2 section. Without underlining

the melody rhythm, he ends figure 3 on the offbeat of beats 3 and 4 in bar 39.[8] The structural preparation is rhythmically intense and includes a powerful triplet fill in bar 40 just before Lee Morgan's trumpet solo.

Goosing in solo comping

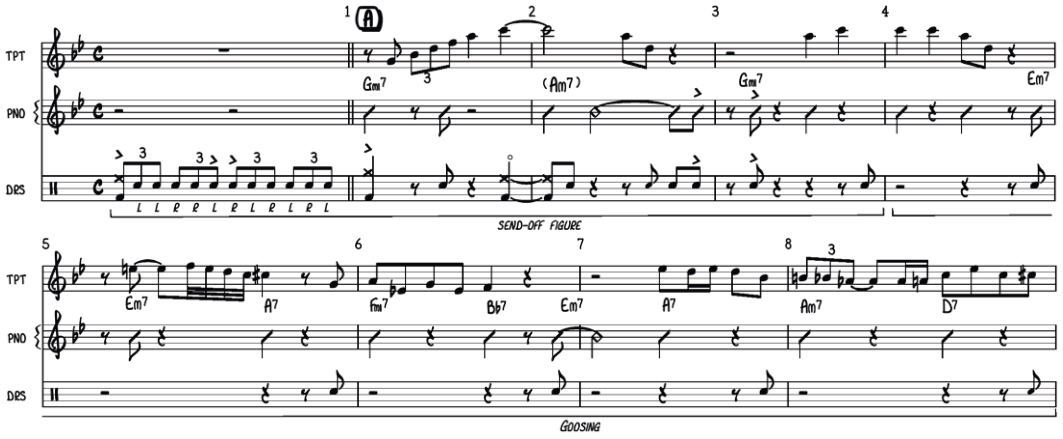
From looking at accompanying melodies, I will now turn to solo comping, beginning with "goosing the time", a term that jazz drummer and educator John Riley uses to describe Jones' comping (Riley 2003: 86–87). In its American meaning, goosing describes the moment when a driver steps on the gas, giving a little more power to their vehicle. On a personal level, I see goosing as a tool for adding a little more textural pressure in comping, to intensify the fl w of the ride and the groove. On the interactional level, goosing communicates the drummer's energy to the musicians and encourages the soloist to create.

A core element of Jones' goosing is motivic dialog – played with the snare or between snare and bass drum. In line with Benjamin Givan's ideas concerning common interaction (in his article *Re-Thinking Interaction in Jazz*), this motivic dialog can be seen in monologic terms as a question and answer routine within the drum set itself, as it does not necessarily to lead to dialog between the musicians (Givan 2016: 5–6).

The following transcription from solo comping in the A and A2 sections of Lee Morgan's trumpet solo in *Mama G (Nellie Blye)* has goosing with a clear and effective motivic dialog. The leading voice for the goosing is the snare, using three dynamics. Small grace-note notation describes a soft dynamic motif to help the rhythmic placement of the medium-volume snare-drum strokes indicated by the normal-sized notation – the main ingredients of goosing – while the accents indicate the loudest snare drum strokes and mostly end one of Jones' comping figures or phrases.

[8] I can hear similar ideas of accenting and adding texture throughout the melody in *"Straight No Chaser"* on *Milestones* by the Miles Davis Sextet.

Time 0:41–0:51



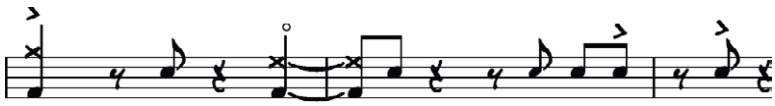
Transcription 8. Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt.solo.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt.solo.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt.solo, 70% speed.

The first 8 bars of the A section include elements of how Jones' comping conveys a feeling of forward motion; motifs are combined to create rhythmic tension which when eventually resolved creates a sense of relaxation.

The triplet fill on the snare anticipates this tension in the A section – calling for a rhythmic resolution, potentially on the downbeat of bar 1 – and yet Jones delays the resolution by playing a signature of his in bar 2, a 3-bar send-off figure to begin the solo.



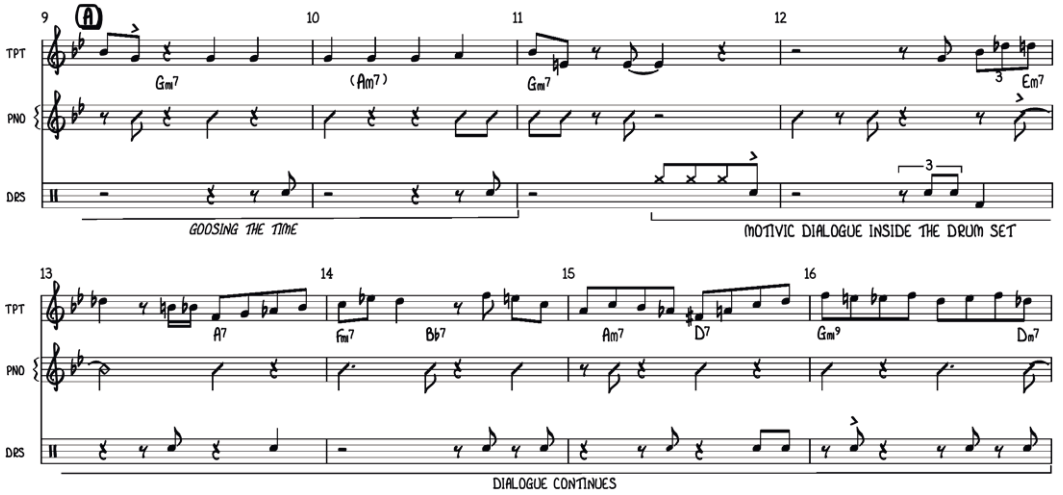
It is more the rule than the exception that a similar phrase is found in Jones' comping at the beginning of the solos. Because of its strong emphasis on beat 4 in bar 1 it creates a rhythmic lift that then seems to spark the soloist.

Jones increases the rhythmic tension with offbeat accents in bars 2–3, partly played in unison with Wynton Kelly. The rhythmic tension, created by the

preparation fill and the send-off figure finally resolves on the offbeat of beat 4 in bar 3. The simple groove-oriented offbeat motif in bars 3–8 with Jones' beat on the ride morphs into a steady groove suggesting a rhythmic feel of relaxation after the energetic send-off.

The goosing that follows in bars 9–16 creates a multilayered rhythmic texture with Kelly's motifs on the piano. The syncopated snare drum motifs intensify the groove and fill the rh thmic space left between Kelly's riff-style ideas.

Time 0:51–0:59



Transcription 9. Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye*), comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt.solo.

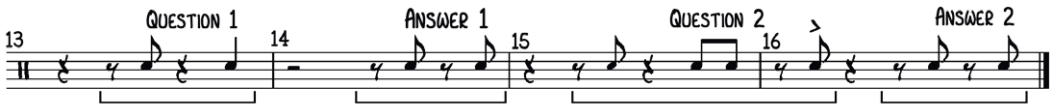
Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt.solo.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt.solo, 70% speed.

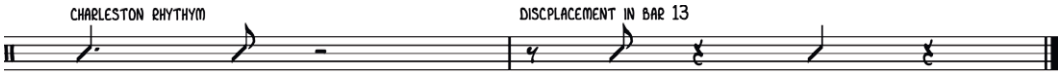
As I mentioned before, Jones' beat centers on the ride cymbal pattern. Considering today's style of jazz drumming, Jones seldom varies this ride pattern, so when he does (for example in bar 11), I want to understand why. It could be because he is simply self-conscious of it needing to vary, but I think in this case it could be an intuitive response to Morgan's solo phrase. Jones, who must be familiar with Morgan's rhythmic and melodic shaping of solo phrases, might intuitively play the variation as a subtle response to Morgan's first melodically and rhythmically

clear solo phrase.[9] Jones divides the goosing in the A2 section in the same way as for the melody of *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*. The first 4-bar G minor section splits into a pair of 2-bar figures with a ride variation on the latter.

Jones supports the II–V harmonic progressions in bars 13–16 by playing a longer 4-bar comping figure which introduces another question and answer routine. The first m tif is the question and the second is the answer.



Question 1 in bar 13 is a motif based on the Charleston rhythm. In bar 13 it is displaced by one 8th note as shown below.



As a popular dance craze in 1920s America, the Charleston not only affected the rhythm of early jazz, but all popular music (Brown 1976: 22, Säily 2007: 12–13), and it's a motif Jones uses in all the transcriptions used in this article – either in its original rhythmic shape or displaced. In bar 14, Jones plays two offbeats to create an answer to the Charleston. Together, the offbeats create a motif which he often repeats. I find it helpful to call this motif, following Säily, as a pair of offbeats (Säily 2007: 66). In bar 15, he develops this further by turning the Charleston into an over-the-bar-line motif ending on the offbeat of beat 1 in bar 16. To complete the 4-bar phrase, Jones then repeats the pair of offbeats in bar 16.

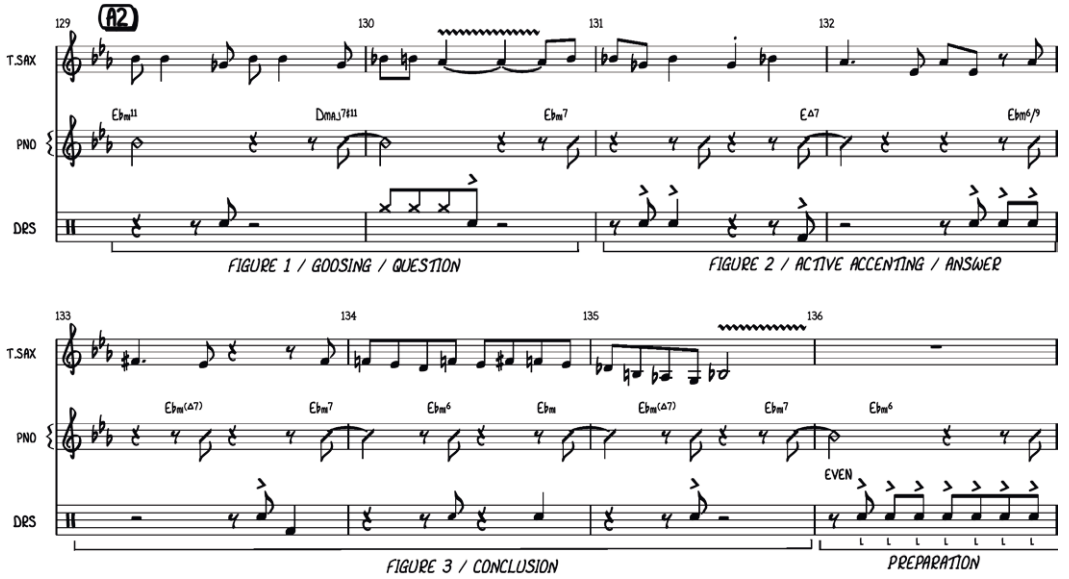
The question and answer routine is an informative way to analyze the rhythmic placement of motifs in drum set comping. As an example of motivic dialog, it can be a helpful tool for teaching jazz comping on the drums; bars 13–16 here, for instance, show how all the figures avoid resolving on the downbeats; this enhances the feeling of forward motion.

[9] I find similar ride cymbal variations ending soloists phrases or filling gaps in – for example, Miles Davis' trumpet solo in Straight No Chaser (times 2.00 and 2.57), Lee Morgan's trumpet solo in "*What Know"* (times 1.00 and 1.53), and John Coltrane's saxophone solo in *"Ah-Leu-Cha"* (time 3.00).
"*Straight No Chaser*" by Miles Davis, track 6 on Miles Davis Sextet, *Milestones*, recorded February 4th, 1958, Columbia CL1193, compact disc. *"Ah-Leu-Cha"* by Charlie Parker, Spotify, track 2 on Miles Davis Quintet, *'Round About Midnight,* recorded October 26th, 1955, Columbia. "*What Know"* by Lee Morgan, Spotify, track 4 on Wynton Kelly Quintet, *Kelly Great,* recorded August 12th, 1959, Vee-Jay ltd.)

Active accenting in solo comping

Jones' comping includes variable layers of rhythmic intensity created by active accenting, and enhanced by the use polyrhythmic comping figures I am analyzing these in the comping of Hank Mobley's tenor saxophone solo in the last A2 and B section of Kenny Dorham's composition, *Karioka*.

Time 2:42 – 2:49



Transcription 10. ***Freddie Hubbard,*** *Goin' Up*, *Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, t.sax solo.[10]

Freddie Hubbard, *Goin' Up*, *Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, t.sax solo.

Freddie Hubbard, *Goin' Up*, *Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, t.sax solo, 70% speed.

The rhythmic interplay between Jones and Tyner differs here from the interplay between Jones and Kelly. There isn't a significant change in Jones' texture, but

[10] "*Karioka*" by Kenny Dorham, Spotify, track 3 on Freddie Hubbard, *Goin' Up*, recorded November 6th, 1960, Blue Note Records. Musicians on the recording are Freddie Hubbard trumpet, Hank Mobley tenor saxophone, McCoy Tyner piano, Paul Chambers bass, and Philly Joe Jones drums.

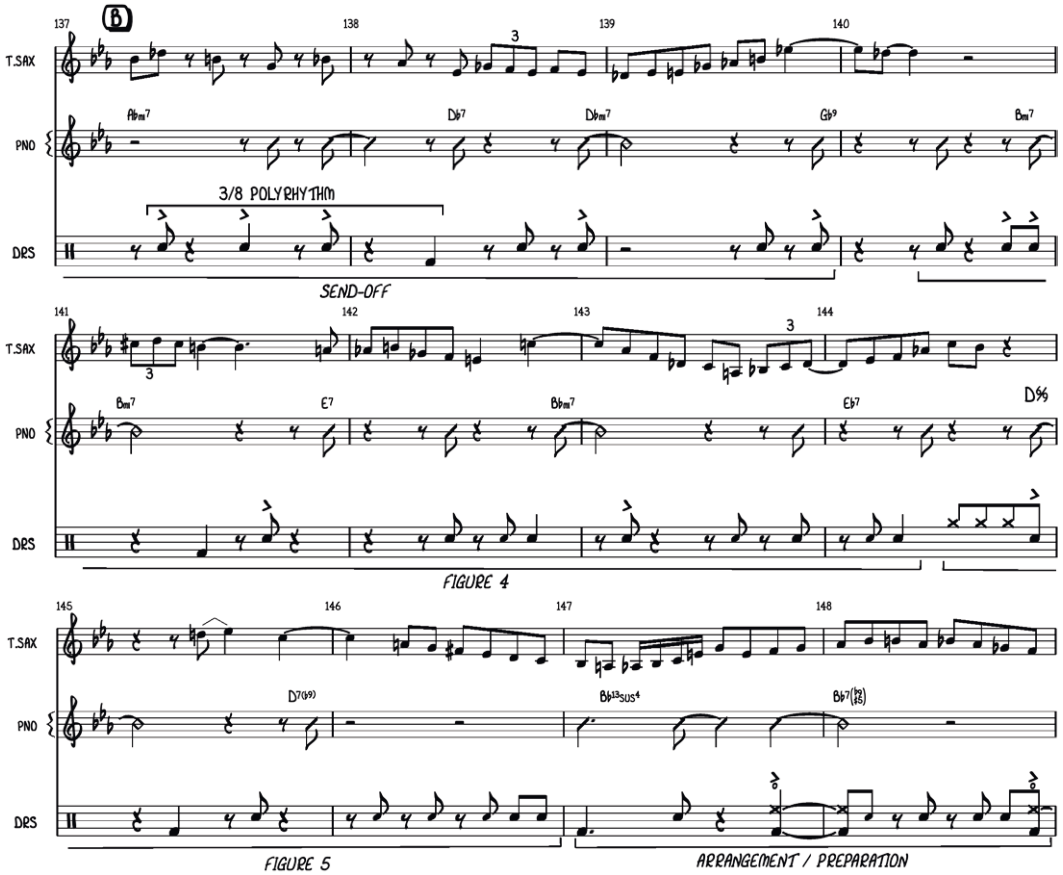
the motifs stand out slightly more because of Tyner's offbeat use of rhythm. The comping layer is rhythmically sparser compared to the layer created with Kelly. This time the forward motion comes from a spacious feeling in the groove.

The A2 section shows how well Mobley improvises singable melodies connected to the harmonic movement. Jones' accents in bars 129–132 build contrast with the 2-bar symmetry of these melodies and the harmonic rhythm of the tune. In bar 130 he plays the same ride variation as he did in bar 11 of Transcription 9. The offbeat accent motifs and especially the offbeat accent on the bass drum in bar 131 make the section stand out rhythmically and dynamically from the texture of the comping preceding this. Jones' goosing increases the level of intensity with several continuous accents.

I feel that Mobley's melody in bars 132–135 hints at a musical conclusion before going on to the next section, begging the question whether a similar conclusion should be added to the question and answer routine. Reminding myself of Jimmy Heath's previous comment on how Jones' drumming was meaningful and well-structured, bars 133–135 certainly sound like Jones is playing a rhythmic conclusion for the dialog he developed in bars 129–132. This he does again to lead the band to the next section.

My analysis of Jones' melody comping in *Surrey with the Fringe on Top* and *Mama G (Nellie Blye)* has already shown how Jones prepares for B sections. At the end of the A2 section in *Karioka*, he prepares for the B part with evenly phrased left-handed eighth notes, while simultaneously keeping the flow of triplets on the ride. This structural preparation figure is a virtuoso example of Jones' technical facility and use of the left hand. As a strong musical statement, the notes stand out and the even phrasing gives the next B section a strong rhythmic lift.

Time 2:49–3:00



Transcription 11. Freddie Hubbard, *Goin' Up*, *Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, t.sax solo.

Freddie Hubbard, *Goin' Up*, *Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, t.sax solo.

Freddie Hubbard, *Goin' Up*, *Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, t.sax solo, 70% speed.

In bars 137–139, Jones plays a 3-bar send-off figure ending with a pair of offbeats in bar 139. The accented 3/8 -note polyrhythmic idea in bar 137 stimulates the forward motion that fl ws throughout the whole 12-bar section. At the level of monologic dialog, the polyrhythm builds up the tension against Jones' steady 4/4 on the ride. As a persuasive musical statement and rhythmic deviation from the texture either side, it's quite possible that this comping figure inspires Mobley with boost of creative energy.

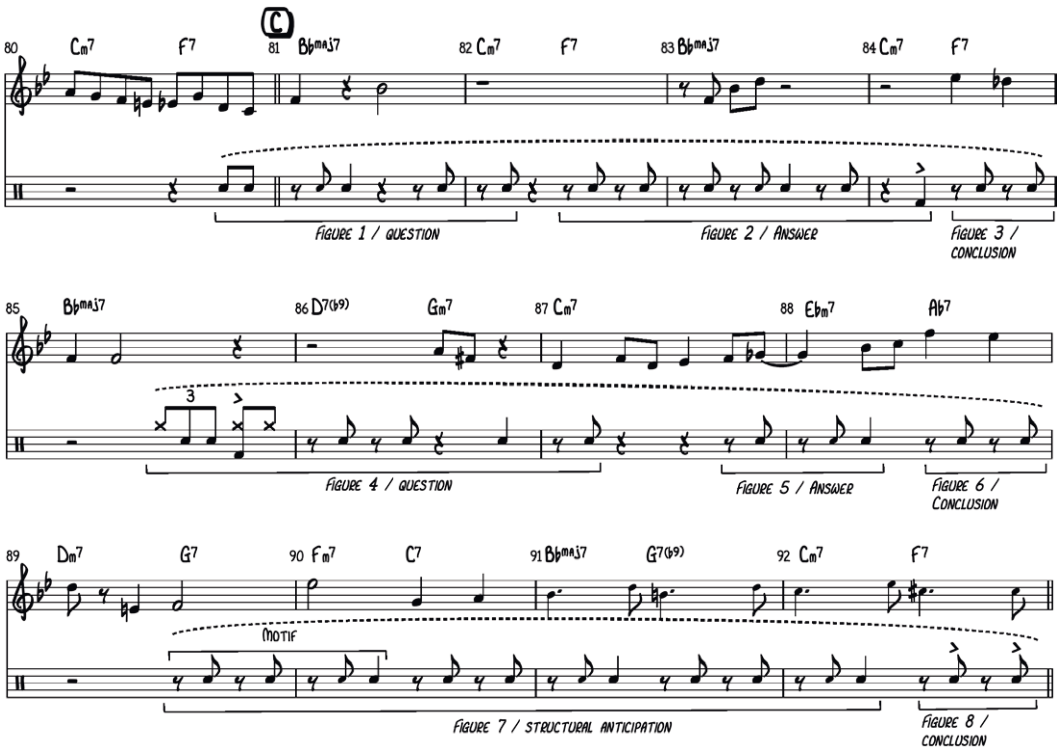
Interestingly, the B section is more difficult to analyze with the question and answer routine. One option would be to picture bars 137–139 as the question and bar 140 as the answer. However, it seems that Jones develops a rhythmic story line throughout the B section, making it unnecessary to focus on comping figures that last only 1 or 2 bars. Instead his comping is perhaps providing more of a comment on the strong harmonic movement created by II–V progressions in bars 136–146, emphasized by Tyner's consistent offbeat comping figure throughout the section. Together with the II–V progression, Jones' accompaniment is aiming at bar 147, where he and Tyner then play a rhythmic comping figure together as part of the *Karioka* arrangement.

The crucial points driving the accompaniment are bars 141 and 145 where Jones once more plays a motif based on a displaced Charleston rhythm. The bass drum accent on beat 2 and snare on the offbeat of 3 sound like a conclusion to Mobley's phrase. Equally important are the preceding offbeat snare accents on beat 4 of bars 140 and 144 while Jones plays again the same ride variation as in previous examples. If we were using baseball terms, these offbeat snare accents on beat 4 are like rhythmic pitches that are then hit by the batter on beat 2 and end up caught out on the offbeat accent of 3. The intense forward motion conveyed by this figure lies in it anticipating the downbeat landing on beat 2 to send it up again, and then catching that energy once more on the offbeat of beat 3. The figure also interacts rhythmically with Tyner's syncopated comping while also bringing it to a satisfying conclusion. By starting comping figures 4 and 5 before a bar-line, I am impressed by how Jones structures the comping, while simultaneously building a contrast to the 4-bar symmetry of Mobley's phrases.

Using the riff style in solo comping

In an interview for *Modern Drummer*, Sonny Rollins once complimented Jones for his sophisticated and inspiring playing which "provided all the elements necessary for the soloist to create" (Sriram 2008: 128). The following example from the saxophone solo of *Surrey with the Fringe on Top* illustrates what Rollins possibly means. In this example, the comping on the snare is inspired by riff-style piano comping.

Time 1:20–1:32



Transcription 12. Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, comp. Richard Rogers, t.sax solo.

Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, comp. Richard Rogers, t.sax solo.

Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, comp. Richard Rogers, t.sax solo, 70% speed.

As a pianist himself, Jones takes on the same interactive role as a piano would by exploring a rhythmic space and comping textures left free by its absence in this duo performance. As a grooving rhythmic counterpoint to Rollins' use of rhythm in the early stages of his solo, the snare's texture shows that this riff-style comping has an interactive purpose. With its two main features of repetition and rhythmic motifs (e.g., question and answer), riff-style playing brings clarity to both the structure and rhythmic feel – giving the soloist the freedom to explore.

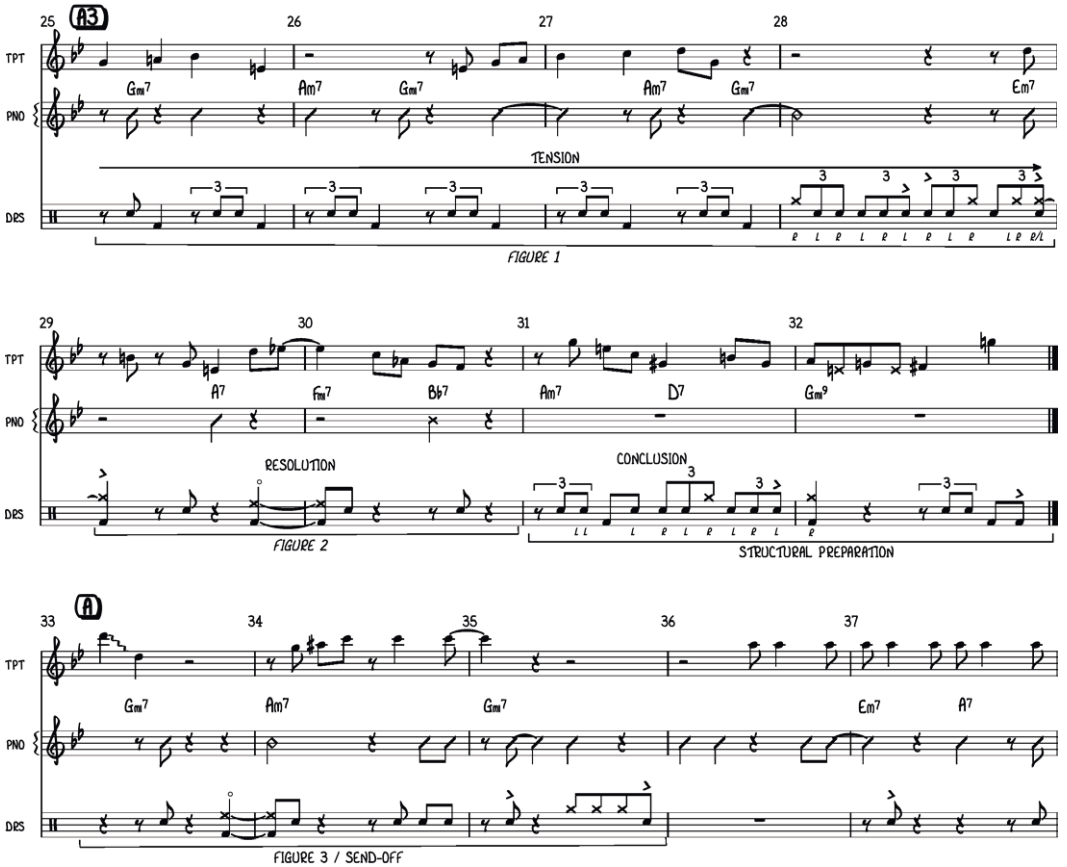
The 12-bar C section is divided into three 4-bar comping phrases in which Jones' riff-style motif builds on a repeated offbeat 8th note – represented by Figure 5 in bars 87–88. With the added offbeat 8th note on beat one, the motif harks back to the earlier displaced Charleston mentioned in figure 9. He plays the same motif with added 8th notes at the beginning of the C section in bars 80–81 and in bar 83. The comping sounds playful because of the rhythmic density and the left-hand dynamics. I also find the use of riff-style motifs creative because of their over-the-bar-line placement. With the syncopated eighth-note motif in Figure 7, Jones presents a comping phrase that is closer to what is commonly understood by riffing. The motif in bars 89–90 is repeated three times and has the same ostinato-like rhythmic shape.

Notably, none of the comping phrases begin on the one. Jones also rarely plays snare drum motifs or bass drum accents on beat 3. Playing beat 3 stresses the half-time feel and possibly weakens the sense of forward motion – the only time he does this in the above transcription is in Figure 2 (bar 83). In this case, it's a rhythmically shifted version of the same motif we see in Figure 7.

Structuring form in solo comping

Philly Joe Jones often adds rhythmic density to prepare for structural changes before a new section or soloist (Berliner 2009: 328). The A3 section of Lee Morgan's trumpet solo in *Mama G (Nellie Blye)* shows how Jones' comping builds this intensity towards the end of the final A3 section of Morgan's first solo trumpet chorus, and how it dissipates during the first five bars of the A section of the second solo trumpet chorus.

Time 1:07–1:16



Transcription 13. Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt. solo.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt. solo.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt. solo, 70% speed.

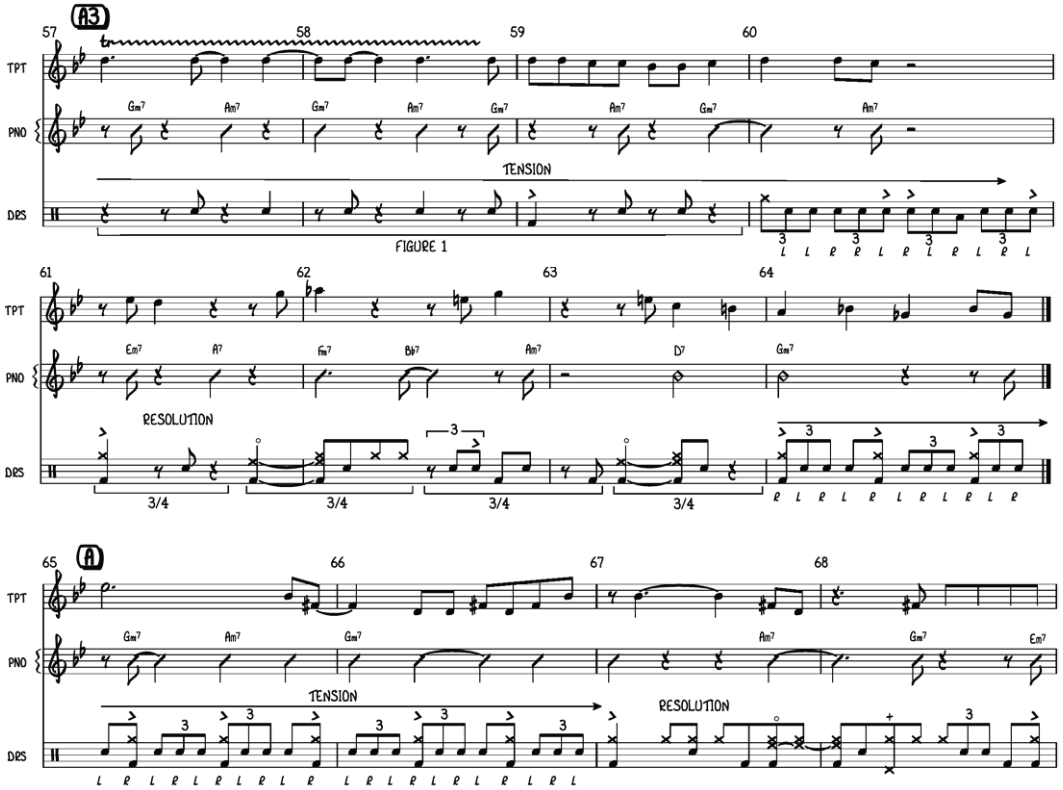
This section could also be analyzed using the ideas already presented above, however here I want to draw attention to how Jones targets the chorus change with rhythmically dense comping. His drum fills resolve tension midway through a section that leads to a chorus change, after which Jones builds up tension again then resolves it after the chorus change. I believe that Kelly expects Jones to take the initiative to lead the band into the next section by adding texture, as Kelly's comping remains sparse while Jones' becomes more active.

In bars 26–29 Jones builds the rhythmic tension across all 4 bars with a repetitive triplet motif. The tension between Morgan's bluesy melodic phrase and Jones' triplet motifs reaches its peak in bar 29, where Jones then executes a triplet fill and he resolves again in the middle of a section with his signature over-the-bar-line figure in bars 30–31. In terms of the question and answer routine, bars 26–29 are the question, and bars 30–31 the answer – ending with the triplet fill in bar 32.

However, this last triplet fill (bars 32–33) can also be seen as structural preparation for the chorus change two bars later. Jones begins the next A section in Figure 3 with the signature phrase as a send-off fill creating a 3-bar comping figure similar to that of Figure 8 (again with the ride variation), while the comping in Figure 4 sounds like a response to Figure 3.

Jones seems to feel the direction of musical energy, by the way he leads the end of Morgan's solo directly into Wayne Shorter's tenor solo.

Time 1:41–1:50



Transcription 14. Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt. solo.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt. solo.

Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great*, *Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt. solo, 70% speed.

At the end of Lee Morgan's solo, the musical energy is very high. Surprisingly, right after Morgan's 3/8 motif in bars 58–59, Jones plays an accented bass drum on the downbeat of bar 60. Accenting the downbeat in a comping figure would often diminish the sense of forward motion, unless it was part of the signature figure as in bars 62 and 68. Here, the downbeat does not diminish the sense of forward motion because of the two offbeat eighth note accents in bar 60. The entire 3-bar figure sustains the energy with active accenting right up to the end of the chorus, resolving with a triplet fill in bar 61, similar to that played for the first A3 in bar 29.

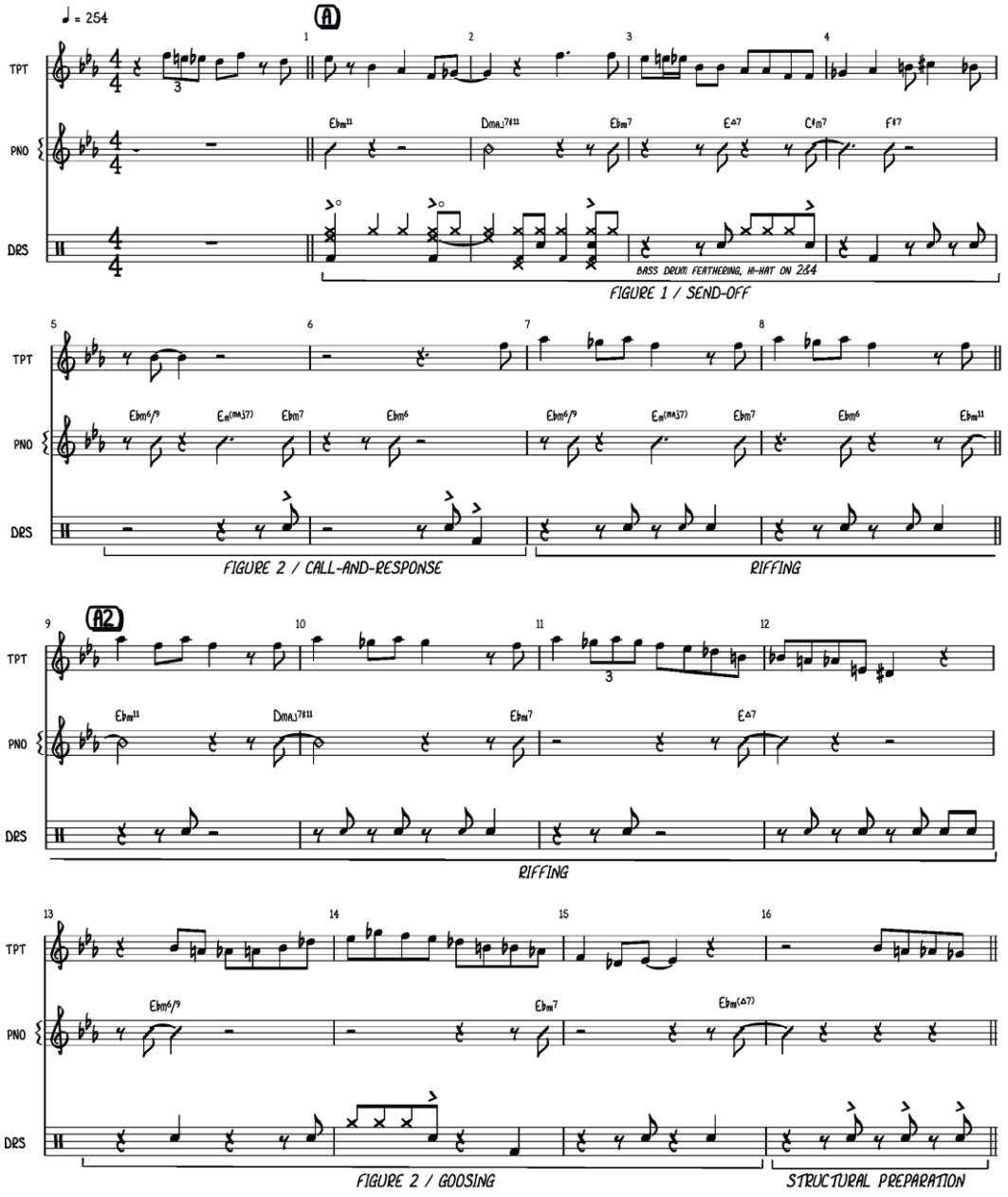
Interestingly, the signature send-off also features in Figure 2 (bars 61–63) introducing a 3/4 feel with alternating bass drum and snare. Jones possibly feels a natural need to alter the motif, which he does in bar 62 – implying a 3/4 meter within the 4/4 further adds tension, which prepares us for the tenor solo starting in bar 66. Jones continues the 3/4 time signature in bars 65–67 with an over-the-bar-line drum fill that lasts a full 3 bars and is an inspiring example of his excellent rudimental technique. The stick work in bars 65–67 is based on the Four-Stroke Ruff drum rudiment. Jones expands its typical 16th note triplet shape to fit the flow of the music. The polyrhythmic motif maintains the high rhythmic intensity at the beginning of Shorter's solo, and then Jones resolves this energy by playing the signature fill to bars after the chorus change in bars 67–68.

Intuitive call and response figures

Call and response is a foundational form of interaction in Afro-American culture and a characteristic element of Afro-American music. This has been discussed in detail by Samuel A. Floyd in his book *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its history from Africa to the United States* (Floyd 2007: 6, 37, 50). Are there motifs in Philly Joe Jones' comping figures that are obviously the result of call and response interaction with the soloist; and what distinguishes call and response from question and answer? From Floyd's cultural research and Givan's notions on interaction, I would argue that when Jones' accenting forms a dialogic relationship between soloist and drummer, it's an interactive call and response relationship; whereas question and answer occurs monologically, within and between the sounds of the drum set. From the drummer's perspective, a musically fruitful, monologic interplay of these sounds should ideally lead to a dynamic call and response between the performing musicians.

In the following transcription, Jones accents the snare and bass drums to fill a gap after Hubbard's first solo phrase.

Time 0:38–0:50



Transcription 15. Freddie Hubbard, *Goin' Up*, *Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, trpt solo.

Freddie Hubbard, *Goin' Up*, *Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, trpt solo.

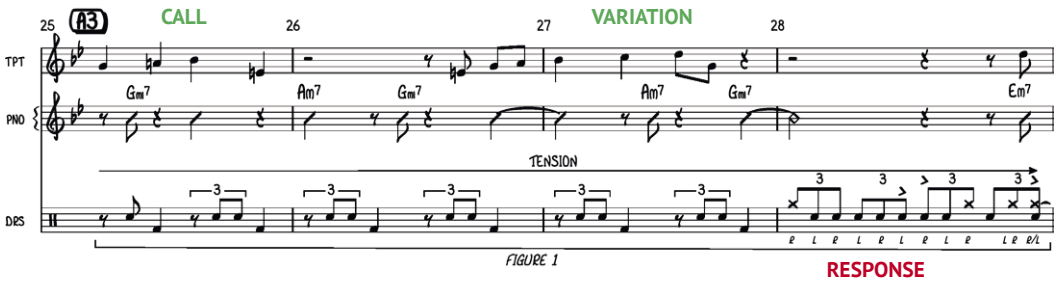
Freddie Hubbard, *Goin' Up*, *Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, trpt solo, 70% speed.

Hubbard's timing and his phrasing of eighth notes kick his solo off with high energy, to which Jones immediately adapts his comping. For four bars, Jones plays a send-off that begins with the signature figure in bars 1–2 and continues with an over-the-bar-line motif in bars 3–4. Here, the cymbal variation seems to be part of the 4-bar send-off figure.

In bars 5–6, Jones plays accents on the snare and bass drum. Due to their rhythmic placement and dynamics, the accents appear to be individual response motifs and sound somewhat disconnected from the figures either side. Hubbard continues with a repetitive melodic and rhythmic motif in bars 7–10, and Jones hints at riff-style ideas. After the riff-style motifs, Jones returns to goosing in figure 2 over 3 bars, which leads to the B section with accents in bar 16.

To give another example of call and response, I am going back to Wayne Shorter's composition *Mama G (Nellie Blye)* and the A3 section of Lee Morgan's trumpet solo. The A3, besides highlighting the structural form, also sheds light on how call and response builds both rhythmic and dramatic intensity inside a solo.

Time 1:07-1:10



Transcription 16. Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Great, Mama G (Nellie Blye)*, comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt. solo.

Wynton Kelly, Kelly Great, Mama G (Nellie Blye), comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt. solo.

Wynton Kelly, Kelly Great, Mama G (Nellie Blye), comp. Wayne Shorter, trpt. solo, 70% speed.

As mentioned earlier, there is a rhythmic flow in Jones' playing throughout this section, with tension building up, released and then building again. By refocusing on Lee Morgan's melody of the first four bars, I think we can see how this flow of tension and release interacts with Morgan's rhythmic and melodic ideas. In bar 25, Morgan plays a rhythmic and melodic call, which he then varies in bar 27. To me, these two short phrases are crying out for the drummer to respond, which Jones does when he plays the active triplet fill in bar 28.

As Jones knows the playing styles of these trumpeters well, I believe his intuition as to the musical direction of their solos is precisely what motivates the call and response between them in both these examples. For me, the most inspiring thing about this interplay is that it creates a rhythmic dialog that flows seamlessly through the A sections.

Conclusions

Through the methods of artistic research, this article offers a jazz drummer's view of comping and of the interplay between a soloist, pianist, and drummer. It suggests that the five core elements of Philly Joe Jones' improvised comping are goosing, active accenting, implied riff-style comping, structuring the form, and intuitive call and response figures. The hope is that this article encourages and inspires further comparative analyses of drum set comping strategies. Based on my analysis, I find these five elements a helpful way to work out how comping is organized and how it creates rhythmic intensity. But most inspiring of all, is that all five elements of Jones' comping work as a whole to fuse the musical expression of those playing with the composition's very structure.

For the sake of analysis and to demonstrate the results of my research, it was sometimes necessary to isolate each these five elements from the musical framework, sometimes in what might seem an unnatural way, when in fact they might well have overlapped and combined to give rise to other explanations as well. One example of this, which I have duly acknowledged, would be the first 4 bars of the A3 section in Lee Morgan's solo where there is active accenting and a call and response figure.

The five core elements help us dive a bit deeper into Jones' "meaningful and well-structured" playing, as Jimmy Heath once described it. Crucial to Jones' way of comping is his melodic and harmonic sensitivity, which must surely stem from his ability to play not only piano, but also bass and saxophone. This harmonic sensitivity in Jones' drumming has also been noted by drummer Markus Ketola, who has also maintained that Jones' groove-oriented comping correlates with harmonic rhythm and the feelings of tension and release (Ketola 2007: 32–35).

The above analyses have shown that Jones' goosing – using question and answer between snare and bass drum– emphasize forward motion. Forward motion consists of figures implying rhythmic tension, release, and conclusion often via over-the-bar-line figures. These figures synchronize around the beat center and at the same time work against the steady ride cymbal beat, enhancing the dynamism of the groove.

The goal of this article was not to explain what groove is, nor to argue that Jones' comping always creates a strong groove. What I would like to highlight, however, is that the five core elements to his comping do correspond with Mark Doffmann's lucid definition of groove as a shared understanding of rhythm and pulse where each musician's vision meets the needs of the group (Doffman 2009: 84). I believe

that my examples show that this shared understanding of rhythm and pulse also extends to a shared understanding of the composition's structure – a shared understanding of these elements drives the interactive playing of the musicians.

This interplay and shared understanding require rhythmic synchronization between all the musicians. This essential skill and element of jazz is linked to the aesthetics of the group performance praxis in jazz (Givan 2016: 3). In my examples, the synchronization builds on convincing individual rhythmic storylines. This, to my surprise, requires a very little rhythmic unison between piano and drums. More important is a shared understanding of the structure of the form, rhythm, and pulse leading to an interactional comping texture that propels the players forward.

This shared understanding is particularly apparent in the way Jones interprets the melody of *Surrey with the Fringe on Top* and *Mama G (Nellie Blye)* and how he structures the form behind Lee Morgan's solo in *Mama G*. In the duo recording of *Surrey*, Rollins' improvised melody sounds like it's leading the rhythmic intensity, and yet Jones' riff-style comping is not necessarily inspired by the exact notes of the melody – rather it's the overall rhythmic shape and intensity of the melody. The riffing brings clarity to the structure and feel of the melody, providing a solid rhythmic texture that the duo performance needs. Jones intuitively creates a rhythmic counterpoint to Rollins by riffing – which increases the forward motion, and clarity – which allows Rollins the freedom to explore.

Ingrid Monson sees melodic and harmonic sensitivity as part of a drummer's interactional processes (Monson 2009: 51). To Monson's discovery, I add, based on my analyses, Jones' intuition for the soloist's musical direction. Feeling the direction of musical energy makes Jones' drumming meaningful, another attribute mentioned by Heath. This same intuition leads Jones to riff behind Sonny Rollins and to actively accent how Mobley places his improvised melodic lines slightly behind the beat. A different approach to this musical energy is needed, however, when Jones is comping to the rhythmically precise playing of Freddie Hubbard. Here the comping synchronizes into the same flow as the trumpet without needing to do anything other than support the groove and forward motion with goosing and some rhythmic comments, delivered in a subtle call and response.

The transcriptions in this article represent only a fraction of Jones' comping. In the future, I would like to address some of the questions raised in this article in greater detail. All of the examples in this article are in the mid- to up-tempo range, and so it could be interesting to examine how tempo affects comping texture.

Also, I have only analyzed Jones in settings where the piano is the primary comping partner; it's fair to ask if there are tonal, textural, or rhythmic changes when Jones is comping with a guitarist or other harmonic instrument. It would also be interesting to see if drum solos have core elements similar to those of comping mentioned here, as analyses have so far focused more on rhythmic phrasing, texture, and stick work. For example, do structural anticipation and harmonic tension influence the construction of Jones' solos?

I would like to conclude with the trumpeter Freddie Hubbard's comment on Jones' playing:

> With some guys it's all measured. But when a drummer has no need of sectioning things off – and still nobody gets lost, and it's done with noble, majestic, and sincere intentions – it's actually magnetic. It's a door that's open to welcome people (Micallef 2003: 108).

Hubbard speaks volumes to me with his metaphor here; this research process has left me with a sense that Jones' meaningful groove and well-structured comping is a way of opening a door to understanding some of the most sincere elements of music, and to feel welcome.

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This artistic research project explores jazz drum comping and its vital role in shaping musical form and performance dramaturgy. Blending theory and practice based artistic research, the study examines how a jazz drummer interprets, supports, and interacts with evolving musical structures.

At its core are five key elements of comping—goosing, active accenting, structuring the form, riffing, and intuitive call and response—identified through an in-depth analysis of the playing of Philly Joe Jones in peer-reviewed article Breaking Down Five Core Elements of the Improvised Comping of Philly Joe Jones (2024). These concepts are brought to life through a combination of research and artistic output in four performance-based projects: One for Joe (2022), Textures (2023), Odd Times (2024), and Rainbow Blue (2025).

Drawing on aural analysis, transcription, improvisation, and reflective practice, this work demonstrates how comping is both learned intuitively and applied creatively in performance. Rooted in the Hard Bop tradition of the 1950s yet highly relevant today, the findings offer valuable insight into the drummer's role as an accompanist.

Ultimately, this study positions comping as more than rhythmic support—as an expressive, interpretive, and deeply communicative musical act.

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