

## Feathering the Bass Drum | Drum Lesson with John Riley

Original Link

Feathering the bass drum is a concept created in the early ages of Jazz.

In the early days, pulse of the song was dictated between the Tuba and the Bass drum in the rhythm section. Because of the limited dexterity of the Tuba, the bass drum was played on 1 & 3 while tuba was 2 & 4. Later along the line, the upright bass started to overtake the tuba as the bass in the rhythm section. Because of the increased dexterity, The upright would play on all four beats. The role of the bass drum at this point became less about maintaining the pulse as much as it was used to marry the bright, metallic sound of the swinging ride to the woody sound of the upright bass. In essence, it was used to contrast the metallic with the wood by creating a bridge between the two by acting as an undercurrent.

Feathering is done by lightly ghosting the bass drum on each quarter note. The player should take great care to make sure the ride cymbal is well synchronized with the bass at this point, which can be done by practicing it much louder and reducing the volume once they are synced.

Earlier drummers like Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Max Roach would often play the bass drum much louder than more Bebop-era drummers would. Jim Chapin said the reasoning for this was that most early jazz drummers didn't trust the bassists and so developed a strong foot to maintain control of the tempo.

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Follow up questions:

1. When did feathering stop being a big part of jazz?

## Jazz Drumming with John Riley | Interview

source

John Riley started out playing drums around 8 or 9, mimicking the drummers he had heard on the radio. He originally wanted to go to school for Jazz, but his father wanted him to be a Doctor or Veterinarian. As a compromise, he went to school for classical percussion.

Most of his teaching skills came from the philosophy that all of the people who came to learn from him were already on their way somewhere. It was just his job to give them the tools to guide themselves where they needed to go. Greats like Bill Stewart were under his tutelage.

Perhaps the most important takeaway was why we study the old jazz drummers. He talks about how we learn to speak from our parents, we start off mimicking the words they say but it isn't until later that they derive any meaning to us. A family of doctor's would have a different language than a family of chefs. Music is unique in that you can choose your parents, you get to choose whose words you mimic until they have meaning. It's because of this that learning music by going back and actively listening to artists, mimicking their feels and fills, is the best way to learn jazz. Tracing back the history of any genre in some way shape or form derives from what the drummers in the 1940's and 1950's were playing. He talks of a legend where the rock beat, the straight forward eights instead of swung, was happened upon on accident by a piano player when a drummer messed up a small portion. From then on out, rock was invented which led to Funk and Hip Hop. In the same way that rock drummers should study early rock from John Bonham, Carmine Appice, and Ringo Starr, everyone should go back and learn from the greats.

There was one other note he discussed where, while reading is often important, it is only supplemental in learning from jazz. This corroborates something from Jazz 101 by John Szwed where listening to old jazz is like reading a textbook. It's is the musical version of reading.

## A Brief History on Jazz Drumming

The first American form of music, creolized from the Afro-Cuban rhythms that were brought up to New Orleans from Cuba and the swing style of ragtime. It was an instrumental genre until someone started singing to it.

The history of jazz drumming is obscure. Somewhere between New Orleans and New York... I have no idea what I'm talking about.

Jazz can be split into several different eras.

1. Pre-Jazz (ragtime)
2. Swing
3. Big Band (1930's-1940's)
4. Bebop (Late 1940's)
5. Hard bop (1960's)

The drummers of these eras are Louis Bellson, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, Max Roach, Jo Jones, Papa Jones, and I'm sure there are others.

The big change from big band to bebop era was marked by a growth in intelligence. Starting out at Minton's club with Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie (is that true?), Chick Corea (i don't think they were involved), Thelonius Monk, and Sonny Rollins (I don't think they were involved either). Big band's touted extravagance but they were a luxury not many could afford.

The distinctive style of bebop required a much denser knowledge of music theory. At Minton's club, the jam sessions were often dangerous by nature. Everything was up tempo, and the players would try and confuse each other in an effort to

see if each person could adapt. Drummers played with time, keyboardists would change keys spontaneously. Charlie Parker even was kicked out at the beginning of these sessions for inadequate knowledge of theory.

In the ragtime era, the bass part was covered by the tuba (I think), but due to the difficulty and lack of dexterity, the kick drum alternated with the tuba parts to create the pulse of the song. This is why the drum style of ragtime alternated the kick drum and the hihat. When double-bass subbed in for the tuba, endurance and dexterity was no longer an issue and the bass was used instead to improve the attack of the double bass (there's probably a better reason). Leading into the Bebop era, drummers stopped would periodically "drop bombs," putting more force behind the bass drum.

## Questions

1. What is the actual story here? How do you tell an engaging story about the history of a subject?

The story is how the style and techniques of drumming evolved throughout the different periods of music history, specifically jazz history. It's about how the different drummers influenced one another and the cultural influences that shaped the performances during each era.

2. What are the actual eras? What are the time periods of each era? What is distinct about each era?
3. Where do the drummers of each era belong?
4. How did each of the drummers influence each other?
5. Why was there a shift from Big Band to bebop? What was happening during that time in history that necessitated smaller ensembles?
6. Why did the kick drum double up with the double-bass? And why did it alternate with the tuba?
7. Who was the first to start dropping bombs?
8. How did the drum style evolve throughout the eras? What part did each limb and instrument play?

Good information to start.

And this one

A further question from this resource, did big band jazz evolve as a mixture of the classical music of the whites combined with the blues/ragtime music of the african americans?

The supply demand curve is shifted by: - Bonuses - Scarcity - Urgency - Guarantees - Naming

An offer is a coating for an underlying package. It is a way of presenting to a unique niche a proposition that you may solve their problems for them.

How can I disentangle the *value* of something from financial insecurity? Like in creating this offer, how can I focus on the underlying asset in a way that makes me indifferent to the financial outcome and instead approaches this as a genuine desire to help others grow and succeed? How can I see it less as a manipulative urge to coax money out of people and instead see it as a way to share a common joy and spread my love for drums? How can I create more content around this in a way that feels genuine?

The purpose of stage 4 meditation is to overcome strong dullness by slipping into a state of stable dullness, overcome resistance to pain by treating it objectively and using it as a focus during meditation, and cultivating meta-cognitive introspective awareness by becoming more aware of the movements of the mind.

Monkey mind is also a problem at this stage, where trying too hard to force attention on the breath will cause focus to inevitably slip. It's important to recognize when this is happening and respond to it by expanding the area of focus to reduce the tension. The main problem here is *endurance of focus*, you're training the mind to focus on the breath for longer periods of time, so it's important to find that middle ground which creates relaxed effort. Overstraining the mind leads to losing meta-cognitive, introspective, and overall awareness and leads to a loss of focus.

Pain becomes an object of focus at this time. Various pains will begin arising—both physical and emotional—as a product of the stillness. This is the mind's attempt at creating gross distractions to try and move our attention away from the object of focus. For physical pains, it's important to remain objective of these pains. Pains from physical ailments should be distinguished from those that distinctly arise during meditation. As an example, a known arthritis should be dealt with through the care of a physician, and any accommodations needed to prevent exacerbation of the pain during the meditation should be done. Recurring pains during each meditation should be made note of and allowed to persist during the meditation, and preventive care should be provided (in the form of pillows or other positional aids) prior to each sit. Neglecting to accommodate these pains is neglecting the diligence required for meditation. But aside from these recurring pains, a number of pains or itches with unknown origins may occur during meditation. It's important to treat these pains objectively, trying not to allow them to distract them from your focus. If they become overbearing, intend to focus on them instead, allowing them to become your primary focus. Doing so helps to strengthen the focus and overcome dullness and distraction. When focusing on it, become aware of the subtleties of the pain. Where does it originate? How would you describe the pain? Is it itching? Tingling? Radiating? Strong? Blunt? Sharp? Using these neutral adjectives helps to create a distance,

observing the pains without identifying with them. Inevitably, the pain itself will subside as our resistance to it falls away. When it does so, return to the breath. Doing this practice over and over again will train the mind to stop resisting physical discomforts and instead just alert you to their presence.

During this stage, it's also possible for emotional traumas to come back up again. It's important not to identify with these feelings and instead allow them to flow through you as...idk

## Questions

1. Is it true that stable dullness should be achieved during this stage? What is the difference between stable, subtle, and strong dullness and how they can be detected?
2. How are subtle and strong dullness overcome? Is it simply a matter of focus and intention?
3. He begins to talk about how physical pain is a symptom here, yet I feel like I've hardly experienced this. Why? Or at least, I have experienced it yet have neglected it?
4. A lot of the stuff I'm writing feels like I'm just recalling the book without having understood or truly experienced any of it. How can I put more of this into my own words? Most of it seems like I haven't actually attended to these things diligently, so I can't speak from experience. Makes sense why I haven't progressed as far as I'd thought.
5. Who am I describing this to? I feel like I'm just rewriting the book without understanding what I'm trying to convey?

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