



Development Trends And Prospects Of Drum Performance In Jazz Art

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role and prospects for the development of the drum in music, particularly in jazz art. Every musician has a unique set of instruments suited to their individual style. Dixieland jazz and rockabilly are characterized by the smallest drum kits, while in genres such as metal, fusion, and progressive rock, drummers typically use much larger sets that include a wide range of components: in addition to the main drums—two hi-hats, additional cymbals (china, splash), and more. For metal and hard rock, musicians often use a double pedal connected by a cardan shaft, which alternately strikes one or two bass drums. Furthermore, the constant evolution of the drum kit is not only linked to musicians, designers, and musical styles but primarily to advancements in the technology of instrument creation.

Keywords:

drum, jazz, cymbals, hard rock, fusion, pedal, bass drum, musical styles, hi-hat, creativity, performance.

INTRODUCTION

A drum set is a collection of percussion instruments (drums, toms, and others) played simultaneously by a drummer. It is used in rock bands, jazz and pop ensembles, and orchestras, and occasionally appears in symphonic, wind, and chamber orchestras.

The drum set has changed significantly over time and continues to evolve and improve. These transformations have been influenced by popular music styles, famous musicians, instrument designers, and the development of instrument manufacturing technologies.

At the end of the 19th century, jazz emerged, and around 1890, drummers in New Orleans began adapting their drums for stage performances so that a single performer could play several percussion instruments at once. Early drum kits were known under the short commercial name "trap kit." These sets featured a bass drum pedal without a return spring—once struck, it did not return to its original position. In 1909, however, F. Ludwig

designed the first bass drum pedal with a return spring. [1]

LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

In 1920, Gretsch popularized the use of laminated wood technology for manufacturing drum shells. The first shells were made of three layers; later, this technology was improved. In the early 1940s, the company changed the structure and joining method of shells—an approach still used today[2].

In the early 1920s, the "snowshoe" pedal—two small cymbals mounted on a foot-sized board—became popular. Around 1925, drummers began using "low boy" or "sock" cymbals: paired cymbals mounted on a short rod, operated with the foot. In 1927, the first "high boy" or "hi-hat" appeared, which allowed drummers to play using the pedal, sticks, or a combination of both.

By 1918, the first Ludwig "Jazz-er-up" drum set appeared on the market. The kit included a 24"x8" bass drum (with a beater and wooden block attached), a 12"x3" snare drum, and a hanging cymbal.

Drummers began using adjustable tom-toms and stands to attach different instruments to their kits. In 1931, Ludwig and Slingerland began producing cast drum hardware.

In 1935, Gene Krupa, drummer of Benny Goodman's orchestra, became the first to use Slingerland's "standard" four-piece drum kit. With his developed performance skills, Gene Krupa became the first drummer to perform as a full-fledged soloist in an orchestra[3].

Between the 1940s and 1960s, jazz-rock drummers began adding a second bass drum to their sets, introducing major innovations. Around the same time, Chick Evans and Remo Belli independently replaced animal-skin drumheads with plastic ones. These new drumheads allowed for more accurate tuning and were not affected by changes in weather or humidity, providing greater convenience during performances.

Between 1962 and 1964, Ringo Starr, as a member of The Beatles, appeared on American television on The Ed Sullivan Show, resulting in Ludwig's drum production doubling.

The next stage (1970–1980) was marked by the rise of hard rock. Drummers began searching for new expressive tones for their kits, using non-resonant plastic coatings, increasing drum depth, and adding new drums to their sets.

Thus, the drum's tone became louder and more expressive. Recording technology for drums developed rapidly. Drum synthesizers and drum machines appeared, but they could not replace the sound and energy of live drummers.

The first double bass drum pedal was released by Drum Workshop in 1983. Drummers no longer needed two separate bass drums; a single bass drum with a dual pedal was sufficient.

In 1990, Pearl and Tama invented the RIMS mounting system, which allowed toms to be attached to stands without drilling additional holes in the shells. This innovation helped avoid unnecessary vibrations and extra holes in the drum body.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The drummer's main task during a performance (alongside the bass and rhythm guitar) is to establish the rhythmic foundation of the musical group. Typically, drummers use repetitive rhythmic patterns based on alternating between the low, deep sound of the bass drum and the high, sharp tone of the snare. In addition to maintaining rhythm, drummers emphasize and decorate changes in musical phrasing—primarily using cymbals. Crash and roll techniques are particularly effective in this regard.

The evolution of the drum set has occurred over time. Its development has been influenced by famous musicians, changing music styles, instrument designers, and, of course, technological innovations in instrument making.

A standard jazz drum kit usually consists of:

a bass drum and three tom-toms (floor, low, and high);

a pair of cymbals controlled by a foot pedal (hi-hat);

a crash and a ride cymbal for accenting and maintaining rhythm.

Every musician has their own setup tailored to their playing style. Dixieland jazz and rockabilly use minimal drum kits, while genres like metal, fusion, and progressive rock employ extensive setups with extra hi-hats, additional cymbals (china, splash), and more. Metal and hard rock drummers often use double pedals connected by a cardan shaft, striking one or two bass drums alternately. There is also a "cocktail drum" variation, which allows for standing performances.

The constant development of the drum kit is driven not only by musicians, designers, and genres but, above all, by innovations in instrument-making technology.

After jazz emerged in the 19th century, New Orleans drummers needed to adapt their drums to new performance conditions so one musician could play several instruments simultaneously.

Max Roach (1924–2007), one of the pioneers of modern jazz drumming during the bebop era of the 1940s, played a key role in this evolution. From the Swing and Bebop periods onward, jazz continued to develop throughout the 20th century. Over time, rhythmic freedom became increasingly prominent, though earlier styles were preserved and adapted in later periods.

The rhythms and use of percussion instruments in jazz, as well as the art form itself, are the result of broad cultural blending in various regions. One of the earliest influences occurred when the Moors invaded Europe, creating intersections between French, Spanish, and African cultures, which likely facilitated musical and rhythmic exchange. While the direct influence is unclear, African rhythms profoundly shaped the overall fusion that gave rise to jazz.

African music and improvisation contributed key features to jazz, especially in drumming—such as using non-pitched instruments to create tonal qualities, imitating the human voice through instruments, and layering rhythmic patterns on top of one another. This last feature, known as polyrhythm, remains central to jazz aesthetics.

Clave—a rhythmic pattern used to track time and highlight beats in a composition—originated in Africa, where it divided time into groups of three beats, emphasizing only a few of them. The Cuban version of the clave, derived from African traditions, consists of two measures: one with three beats and the other with two. These can be played in either order—“2–3” or “3–2.”

Within jazz bands, early rhythmic patterns known as “comping patterns” incorporated elements of the clave. “Compiling” refers to the act of supporting other musicians, often soloists, by repeating or reinforcing rhythmic and harmonic structures.

This rhythmic culture is most strongly associated with Cuban music. The fusion of French, African, Spanish, and indigenous Cuban traditions produced many influential musical forms, including the clave, which later contributed to Latin jazz.

Latin jazz is distinguished from other jazz forms by its use of even-note rhythmic

groupings instead of the “swing” feel typical of traditional jazz. The clave has a strong influence here as well, and composers must understand how Afro-Cuban percussion instruments interact logically. The rhythms of traditional Cuban music—not those of the wider Caribbean—formed the foundation of Afro-Cuban jazz.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, American military drummers, both soldiers and musicians, provided many techniques and instruments to early jazz drumming. Influential performers such as Warren “Baby” Dodds and Zutty Singleton used traditional military grips, instruments, and rhythmic phrasing based on short rhythmic groupings typical of military bands. These rhythmic structures remained essential in early jazz and beyond.

Although this performance aesthetic differed significantly from African traditions—being stricter in timing and metric conventions—military drumming also incorporated duple and triple meters, influencing jazz rhythm structures.

CONCLUSION

The equipment of early jazz drummers—cymbals, bass, and snare drums—played an essential role in the development of the drum set. In fact, the technique of striking cymbals together while simultaneously playing the bass drum led to the creation of today’s central drum component: the hi-hat.

Military techniques and instruments undoubtedly influenced early jazz drumming. However, the melodic and metric elements of jazz were more easily observed in dance bands of that era.

Black drummers likely drew inspiration for their technical skills from trumpet and drum performances, adapting these methods to 19th-century dance ensembles, which enriched musical life. Enslaved Africans learned traditional European dance music, performing rhythmic variations of their own culture at their masters’ balls—particularly the French quadrille, which strongly influenced jazz and jazz drumming.

Musicians performed not only European repertoire but also African and Caribbean

dances. One such dance, the conga, gave rise to new forms of entertainment and music for public enjoyment.

Another major influence on jazz was the blues, which expressed the daily struggles of enslaved people. Unlike work songs, blues music celebrated emotion and self-expression. Its musical foundation was rooted in Africa.

The rhythmic structure of blues became a basis for many of jazz's achievements. Although its instrumentation was limited to a few melodic instruments and vocals, its emotional depth and rhythm were crucial. Two primary elements—syncopation and polyrhythm—became defining traits not only of jazz but of countless later forms of American music.

From the sources reviewed, we can conclude that the drum holds an essential place in jazz and pop-jazz performance. Its gradual perfection through the centuries traces back to the fusion of Western traditions with African folklore, which gave birth to this free and expressive musical art form. Today, ongoing modifications of percussion instruments continue to elevate performance mastery in the jazz genre.

References

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