ELVIN JONES: DEFINING HIS ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO JAZZ

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ABSTRACT

In the early 1960s, Elvin Jones brought about radical changes to jazz drumming that continue to impact the wider tradition of jazz performance. Unfortunately, existing literature has had limited success in revealing the essence of Jones's accomplishments. This thesis attempts to remove some of the mystery surrounding Jones by explaining the essential contributions that he made to jazz. These include: expanding the function of time-keeping by introducing a system of cymbal phrasing, integrating the function of all four limbs to express one musical idea over the entire drum set, and expanding the role of a jazz drummer in an ensemble setting. This study is realized through an examination of the existing literature on Jones, his performances, selected recordings from 1948-1965 (by Jones and other contemporary drummers), video materials, and performance as a research tool. In addition, specific recordings are transcribed to support an analysis of Jones's drumming method.

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This thesis is, in many ways, the result of several decades of musical exploration. In 1973, I moved to Toronto from Galt, Ontario to study jazz performance and ethnomusicology at York University as an undergraduate. At that time, both programmes were quite new. In fact, York's jazz programme was the first of its kind in Canada. Professor Robert Witmer was one of my teachers in both fields of study. Professor John Gittins taught jazz theory and I studied jazz drumming privately with Jim Blackley. For me, it was a wonderful period of learning and discovery. These three individuals gave me the necessary tools and encouragement to realize a professional career in music performance. Some thirty years later, Bob Witmer graciously agreed to oversee my re-entry into the academic world, and more specifically to be the supervisor of this thesis. The opportunity to do research under his guidance triggered my decision to undertake graduate work after so many years of performing and recording. I cannot thank Bob enough for his knowledge, insight, patience and overall support of my efforts. Similar appreciation goes to Michael Coghlan, Chair of the Music Department, whose wisdom and encouragement helped me solve various problems along the way. Thanks also to William Westcott, who seemed genuinely excited by the project, Larry Licht, whose ongoing interest and passion for jazz made him the ideal choice for my 'external' examiner, Rob Bowman, Chair of the Graduate Programme in Music, and Tere Tilban-Rios, who helped me through all the bureaucratic aspects of completing the thesis. Many

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There has been much written about jazz drummer Elvin Jones, a pivotal figure in jazz history. In the early 1960s, he brought about radical and fundamental changes to the basic concept of jazz drumming that continue to have profound implications for various fields of jazz study and performance. Writers have widely acknowledged his importance, though with different points of emphasis. For example, both Ollie Wilson and Ed Pias position Jones as an important link between the earlier 'bop' and later 'free' schools of jazz percussion style (Pias 2004, Wilson 2003).[1] Paul Berliner places Jones as a leader in the 'polyrhythmic school' (Berliner 1994:332), while Frank Kofsky regards Jones as a socio-musical revolutionary: "Elvin's ideas have been crucial to the success of the jazz revolution in its ascendant phase" (Kofsky 1973:204).[2] These four articles are but a small part of an expansive range of literature that variously

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[1] It is dangerous to suggest that Jones's style is an intermediary development that somehow links pulse-based jazz drumming to 'free' playing. While Jones's style may be full of expression, there is no indication on any of his recordings that he is striving toward departing from pulse-based rhythm. In my view, free players do not represent a further development of Jones's style, but rather a radical departure from it. Certainly there have been drummers (most notably Jack DeJohnette) who have expanded Jones's approach dramatically, but within the realm of pulse-based music. It is to the work of these musicians that Jones's drumming provides a link.

[2] Much of Kofsky's published work on Elvin Jones and John Coltrane was developed with the notion that their music was central to 'the jazz revolution' of the 1960s, which Kofsky perceived as being a key part of 'black nationalism'. It is evident from reading the full text of Kofsky's interviews that neither Coltrane nor Jones appreciated being asked to publicly associate their music with such themes.

emphasizes disparate aspects of Jones's life, seemingly everything from the socio-political contexts of his music to the tuning of his bass drum. There are instructional method books featuring transcriptions of his improvised solos and fills (Kaufman 1993, Riley 1997), scholarly articles that attempt style analysis (Kettle 1966, Kofsky 1977b), interviews (Hennessey 1966, Kofsky 1978, Mattingly 1998, Nolan 1973, Taylor 1982), 'fan-generated' websites (containing a range of information from biographical and discographical data to articles written from a stance of 'hero-worshipping') and Internet chat groups.

While there seems to be general agreement that Elvin Jones made significant contributions to jazz drumming, in my view no one seems to have effectively documented what these contributions are or provided a comprehensive analysis of the key elements of his style. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that none of the existing articles are broad enough in scope to embrace one of the central themes defining Jones's significance: that his achievements have impacted many areas of the disciplinary matrix of jazz,[3] including performance, methodology, analysis, historiography, pedagogy, and ethnography.

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[3] Scott DeVeaux applied Thomas Kuhn's term 'disciplinary matrix' to jazz in his book *The birth of bebop: a social and musical history,* stating: "I would argue that fundamental change in music must similarly be understood as social and cultural as well as musical. The proper analogy for a paradigm in jazz is not musical style, but something like Kuhn's 'disciplinary matrix': the sum total of practices, values, and commitments that define jazz as a profession" (DeVeaux 1997:44). My interpretation of the term 'the disciplinary matrix of jazz' refers to the entire range of jazz-related activities, including: jazz studies, jazz performance, jazz history, jazz pedagogy, jazz recording, jazz marketing, and others.

This thesis will attempt to remove some of the mystery surrounding Elvin Jones by clearly identifying and explaining the essential contributions that he made to jazz drumming and to various other fields related to jazz. It also seeks to provide a much-needed practical analysis of Jones's accompaniment style. The prime function of jazz percussion has always been accompaniment and therefore Jones's most important contributions are to be found in that aspect of his playing. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an 'Elvin Jones drum method', I hope that this project will not only make a contribution to the field of ethnomusicology and jazz studies, but will also be of some use to students of jazz percussion. To this end, some elements of my analysis will be applicable to 'performance methodology'.[4] This thesis makes no attempt to provide a biography of Jones. This kind of information is widely available elsewhere.[5]

The Limitations of Existing Research

Much that has been written about Jones seems to do little more than praise and mystify his drumming, whether intentionally or not. While it can be argued that the drumming of Elvin Jones might present a bigger challenge to the listener than the drumming of more conservative players, part of the problem in producing a useful style analysis (or even providing a simple, but accurate verbal description of Jones's style)

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[4] This term refers to the collected skills, technique, knowledge, experience and responsibilities associated with playing jazz.

[5] A concise, informative biography of Jones can be found online at the website of the European Jazz Network: <http://www.ejn.it/mus/jones.htm>

might lie with the limitations of the research methods used. To date, most of the investigation seems to have been largely based upon two typical approaches:

1. interviewing Jones (and/or fellow band members)
2. studying Jones's recordings (and/or 'live' performances)

Some writers, like Frank Kofsky, have undertaken both approaches, while many others have produced articles based on only one of the above. While these exercises have usually proven to be effective for studying many jazz artists, in the case of Elvin Jones there have been obstacles blocking both avenues of research.

Although it is unfortunate that 'talking to the source' is no longer an option,[6] Jones had, throughout his career, offered little information to his many interviewers on matters of his drumming method. He may have perceived himself as something of a 'jazz philosopher', more concerned with discussing broader issues surrounding his music than technical details of performance. This is not to suggest that Jones did not put a great deal of thought into the development of his style, or that he was incapable of explaining it, but rather that he had little to say *publicly* about its inner workings. Instead, Jones preferred to talk about the more autobiographical aspects of his playing: the effects of various childhood experiences, the influence of his family on his music, his relationship to various bandleaders and side-musicians, his role as drummer in any given band, his ongoing pursuit of being a better person, and so on. Even when interviewed by fellow drummer Art Taylor, there are no questions put forward about style or technique. The closest Taylor comes to the subject is when he asks Jones how his drums are tuned

[6] Elvin Jones died on May 18, 2004.

(Taylor 1982:223). Drummer Peter Erskine has suggested that ultimately there is a strong relationship between Jones's truth seeking and the mechanics of his drumming:

> The remarkable thing about Elvin is that he represents an almost seismic break in the tradition. It's hard to figure out where his language came from. But the stronger influence became this incredible philosophy and passion that he brought to the music. (Schudel 2004:B09)

Certainly Jones's collected short comments from various interviews do speak volumes about *contextual* issues framing his music: how he viewed himself as an artist, his life goals, his vision of jazz music and the music business, his struggle to survive in 'the jazz world', and so on. However interesting and useful such biographical and contextual information might be for certain types of research, in my view most interviewers have been left ill-equipped to explain the *methodology* of his drumming.

Attempts by some researchers to persuade Jones to be more revealing about his technique have generally failed. In a 1973 interview, Frank Kofsky tries a number of times to initiate some discussion with Jones on the origins of his style. The artist makes a few general statements, but nothing that reveals his style tactics. Jones states: "It was just a reaction to what was going on. However, a style just seems to develop and I just reacted to whatever I heard; that's my style, I suppose" (Kofsky 1978:82). Later in the same interview, Kofsky asks Jones about the impact of Coltrane's group on the development of his style:

> *Kofsky:* Did you find, during that period, that your idea of time and pulse was changing as a result of that group; that you were beginning to hear time kept a different way? . . .
> *Jones:* I didn't feel it in that concept. I knew it was happening, but I just didn't feel it—hindsight, that's what it is. I didn't feel it that way.
> *Kofsky:* You weren't aware of it, then at the time.

> *Jones:* Well, I was aware that things were happening, and I was aware of what we were doing—very, very much aware. But I didn't think of it in that way, that's all.
> *Kofsky:* What's your feeling now, in retrospect? Do you feel that that was a new way of sensing time and playing?
> *Jones:* No. (Kofsky 1978:85-86)

Jones's response to Kofsky belies the considerable amount of thought the drummer must have put into his unique concept of accompaniment. However 'naturally' Jones feels his approach may have developed over time, it *does* represent a 'new way of playing' (as witnessed by its impact on fellow musicians and the inability of writers to describe it). In fact, Jones's responses to Kofsky seem to reflect a resistance to the interviewer's persistent line of questioning and perhaps reveal how Jones felt about Kofsky personally. In any event, it is clear that Jones did not want to pursue the matter further with Kofsky. While other interviewers have been able to elicit more information from Jones on a range of topics, from early biographical details to the reasons he left Coltrane's band in 1966, Jones, for whatever reason, consistently avoided discussion on the workings of his drumming.[7]

The second line of research, studying Jones's recordings, has been problematic for many researchers due primarily to the perceived complexity of Jones's drumming. African American music historian Leroi Jones[8] has said: "There is no way to describe Elvin's playing" (Meredith 2001). Even jazz pianist Hank Jones had trouble discussing

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[7] Jones's reticence extended to his drum clinics. I attended four of his Toronto master classes, spread rather evenly between 1975 and 2000, and at none of them did he respond directly to specific questions about his style.

[8] a.k.a. Amiri Baraka.

his brother’s style: “There’s just no way to describe his playing. Elvin is the only one who could explain what he’s doing” (Lees 2000:72). For many, there seems to be just too much going on all at once to allow effective description. On this issue, Jones stated: “I knew I was doing the right thing. I also knew that it sounded complicated, but it was only an appearance of complication   it wasn’t really” (Mattingly 1998:25).

Part of the problem here is that many of the recently published articles and transcriptions are concerned only with Jones’s recorded *solo* work.[9] In my view, Jones’s main contributions to jazz are not found by studying his drum solos but (as stated earlier) by investigating his *ensemble* work, or to be specific his ‘swing feel’[10] accompaniment of others. However impressive his drum solos may be, they, like the drum solos of other players, seem to have had little impact on the larger tradition of jazz drumming. After all, the main function of drummers (and bass players) in jazz, beyond participating in the ensemble’s opening and closing statements of the melody (i.e. the ‘head in’ and the ‘head out’), has customarily been to support the solos of other band members. Commonly referred to as ‘playing time’, this vital function represents the main musical activity of most jazz drummers. By comparison, little time is devoted to playing drum solos, a pursuit commonly acknowledged by professional drummers to be of much less

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[9] Several of Jones’s drum solos have been transcribed and discussed, most notably in magazines such as *Down Beat* (Kettle 1966), *Modern Drummer* (Riley 2004), and in Robert Kaufman’s book *The Art of Drumming* (Kaufman 1993).

[10] This term, also known as ‘triplet feel’ or ‘jazz feel’ refers to the rhythmic effect created by placing/feeling the downbeats and upbeats of an eighth-note line on the first and third beats respectively of an eighth-note triplet.

importance than accompaniment. Some writers seem to agree, including Kofsky who comments on the importance of effective accompaniment:

> A drummer whose solo efforts are consistently outstanding but who is unwilling or unable to provide the proper rhythmic foundation for the remaining members of the group has the same usefulness in a jazz context as a fifth wheel. And especially in the case of Elvin Jones, it is the consummate skill and sensitivity that he displays as an accompanist that has won him the renown he deservedly enjoys. (Kofsky 1977a:15)

Therefore, much of my analysis will focus on determining how Jones expresses *pulse*[11] and *rhythm* in an ensemble context.

If most writers find Jones's drumming overwhelmingly difficult to comprehend and virtually impossible to explain, then perhaps some vital element is missing from their research method. It is worth noting that few of the aforementioned writers are skilled jazz drummers.[12] Therefore, most writers do not have access to the valuable 'insider' information (or emic perspective) one acquires through years of playing the drums in jazz groups. In the case of Elvin Jones, I have found this to be precisely the kind of knowledge that, together with information gleaned from the other avenues of research, is required to understand his method. This is not to suggest that I subscribe to the elitist 'insider doctrine' concept described by Robert Merton: "you have to be one in order to understand one" (Merton 1972:15), where *one* could be replaced with *a jazz drummer*,

[11] Pulse can be defined as the non-varying stream of fundamental units (beats) that define or measure the temporal passage of music. For example, for jazz performed in 4/4 time the quarter beat is the fundamental unit that delineates the pulse.

[12] Brown, Riley and Taylor are professional percussionists. Frank Kofsky was inspired to learn to play the drums after hearing Elvin Jones perform and apparently began to teach himself. But Kofsky viewed this as a hobby, a source of entertainment, not a research tool.

but rather that much of what I have come to understand about the drumming of Elvin Jones only revealed itself through years of performance as a professional jazz drummer and drum set teacher.[13] After all, according to Merton I would be viewed as both 'insider' (jazz drummer) and 'outsider' (not an African American). John Baily touts the value of 'hands on' experience in his article "Learning to perform as a research technique in ethnomusicology":

> The importance of this as a research technique, for direct investigation of the music itself, must be emphasized. One understands the music from the "inside", so to speak. This means that the structure of the music comes to be apprehended operationally, in terms of what you do, and, by implication, of what you have to know. It is this operational aspect that distinguishes the musical knowledge of the performer from that of the listener without specific performance skills. (Baily 2001:94)

Ethnomusicology has a significant history of performance as a research tool. Baily provides two examples of such research: A. M. Jones's work on African drumming in the 1930s (Jones 1934) and John Blacking's work on various aspects of African music in the 1960s and 1970s (Blacking 1967, 1973, 1977). Using performance as a research tool enables the other, more academic methods to achieve better results.

Writers who have not had the benefit of performance experience have produced most of the existing literature on Jones. As a result, we are left with an assortment of colourful descriptions of Jones's style that, with few exceptions, strike an informed

[13] To be clear, I did not learn to play the drums in order to undertake this study. I have been playing the drums since I was seven years old. However, not until I reached a certain skill level as a jazz drummer was I able to fully comprehend the workings of Jones's style. I am not suggesting that this is the *only* route to understanding Jones's method, but that this happens to be the route I followed for some thirty years, and the one which has given me the confidence to write this paper.

reader as superficial and sometimes even misleading. Leonard Feather refers to Jones's "thermodynamics" (Feather 1976:150). David Hunt writes about "daring looseness and frenzied patterns" plus a popular theme used by many authors: "complete independence of all four limbs" (Hunt 1970). In the *New Grove Encyclopedia of Jazz online*, Ollie Wilson describes Jones's style as featuring "simultaneous metrically contrasting rhythms" (Wilson 2004). Charles Keil (who does self-identify as a drummer) describes Jones as one "who likes to lay back his tap as far as it will go" (Keil 1966:66). Even Frank Kofsky, who had considerable exposure to Jones performances, both 'live' and on record, states that "Jones's style involves the superimposition of one or more additional meters, usually involving some ternary division of the beat . . . on top of . . . the basic pulse of the piece in question" (Kofsky 1977b:14). Descriptions of Jones's style by others have included vague phrases like 'wide time feel', 'fat beat', 'deep groove', 'layers of cross-rhythms', 'intricate polyrhythmic subdivisions' and so on. Some of these colourful expressions do actually have meaning in the 'jazz lingo'.[14] However, none of these descriptions reveals anything about the mechanics of Jones's approach. Such metaphors are generally too subjective and seem to refer to perceived aesthetic characteristics of certain sophisticated elements in Elvin Jones's performance style. In fact, they tell us more about the writers' limitations than Jones's achievements. Worse still, they promote the notion that the drum accompaniment of Elvin Jones is strange, abstract, difficult to describe and perhaps impossible to explain.

[14] For example, many jazz fans and players know from experience the sound and effect of a 'wide time feel' as opposed to a 'tight time feel' on the drums.

To be fair, certain recent works have yielded somewhat improved results. Paul Berliner's *Thinking in jazz: the infinite art of improvisation* (Berliner 1994) has made some inroads into describing Jones's approach through the use of transcription.[15] In *Beyond Bop Drumming* (Riley 1977) drummer/author John Riley provides some transcriptions of selected drum solos with a few brief comments, and Jim Blackley's method book *The Essence of Jazz Drumming* (Blackley 2001) contains drum exercises clearly influenced, in part, by Jones's work with Coltrane. Still, these recent additions to the literature neither define Jones's contributions to jazz nor inform the reader about the workings of his style.

Chronological Range of Study

Although Jones's active recording and performing career spanned more than fifty years (from the late 1940s until a few weeks before his death on May 18, 2004) and produced a discography comprising more than four hundred individual sessions,[16] he is

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[15] However, Berliner offers a 'play by play' description of transcribed events frozen in time, rather than looking at larger rhythmic systems. Berliner also unintentionally reveals the danger of relying solely upon visual information, instead of the actual sound and feel of the passages. His section titled "The personalization of drum vocabulary patterns" (pp. 620-22) attempts to show that Jones's approach is based upon using Max Roach's cymbal pattern combined with Philly Joe Jones's "manner of breaking up the triplet figure". In this case, I suggest the possibility that Berliner is over-manipulating the data.

[16] Of the many Elvin Jones discographies available, Tom Lord's *The Jazz Discography* (Lord 2004) currently contains the most comprehensive list of Elvin Jones recordings and session information.

best known to jazz fans and music scholars for his work with the John Coltrane quartet in the period 1960-1965, and it is this body of work that has been the focus of most of the existing publications.[17] This is not surprising; it was during his tenure with Coltrane that Jones's dynamic drumming style reached its full maturity. Furthermore, the popularity of this band's recordings and international concert performances disseminated Jones's unique style to a wider, global audience. While this dissemination has continued to new generations of jazz fans, scholars and musicians, (as a result of continued interest in both Coltrane's 1960s recordings and more recent releases by Jones's own groups), it seems that few researchers have paid much attention to Jones's earlier (pre-Coltrane) recordings. Bill Meredith, who interviewed Jones, acknowledges the significance of Jones's work with Coltrane, but also stresses the need to look beyond this period:

> The primary focus of Jones' 50-year career usually boils down to his years (1960-1966) with saxophonist John Coltrane, the legendary bandleader who died suddenly of liver failure in 1967 at age 40. Even the drummer admits that those were the seminal years that shaped the musician he is today, as Coltrane led his band into uncharted melodic, rhythmic and harmonic territory through vision and what Jones calls "sink or swim" improvisation. For most of his thirties, Jones was able to craft a new drumming style to accommodate Coltrane's giant steps . . . Yet to pigeonhole Jones' career by only the Coltrane years is a mistake. Over hundreds of albums, his recording resume includes Tony Bennett, Ornette Coleman, Chick Corea, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Bill Evans, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock, Freddie Hubbard, J.J. Johnson, Quincy Jones, Wynton Marsalis, John McLaughlin, Charles Mingus, Oregon, Art Pepper, Sonny Rollins and Wayne Shorter. (Meredith 2001)

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[17] Elvin Jones joined the John Coltrane Quartet in 1960 and remained the resident drummer until leaving in 1966. The band reached its height of popularity following the release of *A Love Supreme* in early 1965 (Coltrane, 1995).

While many of Jones's above-mentioned recording projects occurred *after* he left Coltrane, it is through studying his pre-Coltrane recorded output from 1948-1960 that one can trace the initial development of Jones's innovations. In addition, these early recordings reveal that many of the drumming style elements associated with Coltrane's 1960s recordings were, in fact, already formed and part of Jones's approach years before he joined that band. Subsequent to leaving Coltrane's group in 1966, Jones enjoyed a long and successful career leading his own bands, but his drumming style did not seem to develop further. Thus, the eighteen-year period from 1948-1965 offers the optimum time frame for examining Jones's main contributions to jazz and, as such, provides the chronological parameters for this study.

Method of Investigation

The research for this project included five inter-related activities:

1. Attending some of Jones's performances and clinics (spanning 1976-2001);
2. Collecting and studying Jones's recordings and films plus selected recordings of contemporary drummers;
3. Transcribing and analyzing selected recorded performances;
4. Practicing and performing discovered concepts and other findings;
5. Reading available literature on Elvin Jones (and on a variety of other, related topics).

Clinics and performances

Attending 'live' performances affords the researcher a different perspective than the study of literature, recordings and videos. There are obvious advantages to an experience that involves both *hearing* and *seeing* the performer, especially at close range. One becomes informed of the interplay among the musicians in the band, the communication between performer and audience, the energy generated by the performers, the environment in which the music is being performed (social and physical) and a host of other features. Furthermore, the *visual* aspects of a musical performance can often reveal certain elements of technique that are difficult to discover when only *aural* information is available.[18]

The first time I attended an Elvin Jones performance was in April 1976 at Ronnie Scott's jazz club, London, England. The last time was in 2001 in Toronto, Canada. In between, I attended a number of concerts, club dates and clinics, mostly in Toronto. Occasionally there were informal 'backstage' conversations with Jones at some of these events (but never on the subject of his drum technique). Although I did not experience Jones performing with the John Coltrane Quartet, hearing and watching him play over a

[18] For example, one of the identifying features of Elvin Jones's drumming is that his ride cymbal is heard prominently throughout the wide dynamic range of most 'live' performances. This can be difficult to achieve using conventional ride cymbal technique. Whenever necessary, Jones maintains this relative dynamic balance by turning the drum stick around and striking the cymbal with the 'butt end' of the stick. Because this is an unorthodox approach to playing the cymbal in jazz, the researcher would not likely discover this technique from just an aural experience.

twenty-five year period afforded me the opportunity to witness firsthand that his *concept* of accompaniment had not changed since his work with that group.

Recordings

Much of my research activity involved the study of audio recordings and performance videos. Sample audio recordings were gathered with a view to creating a manageable collection that would provide adequate representation of the development of Elvin Jones's style. The resulting compilation features approximately one hundred sessions that span Jones's career, beginning with *Billy Mitchell Quintet* (Mitchell 2003) in 1948, and culminating in 1997 with Joe Lovano's *Trio fascination: edition one* (Lovano 1998).[19] My collection has an emphasis on recordings from the period 1955-1965. This is for two reasons:

1. Jones did not start to record on any regular basis until he moved to New York. In the seven-year period between his first Detroit recording session in 1948 and his first New York session with Miles Davis in 1955 (Davis 1973) there was only one other Detroit session, currently unavailable;
2. I stated earlier that Jones's style had reached full maturity by the mid-1960s. Arguably, it reached its zenith on the Coltrane recording *A Love Supreme* (Coltrane 1995), released in early 1965.

[19] The list of collected recordings is in Appendix A.

One of the considerations in choosing recordings for this study was to hear Jones in a variety of settings, including his work:

- as a side musician;
- as a bandleader;
- in large groups;
- in small groups;
- with a variety of bass players;
- in 'permanently organized bands' (e.g., J. J. Johnson's group, the John Coltrane quartet, etc.);
- in 'put-together' session bands for various leaders (e.g., Herb Geller, Lee Konitz, Sonny Rollins, Ornette Coleman, etc);
- performing diverse repertoire material.

The discography of collected Jones recordings is both sufficient in size and broad enough in scope to serve my research.

In addition to the Jones collection, over fifty representative 'small group' recordings by fifteen contemporary jazz drummers were also collected and studied for the purpose of stylistic comparison to Jones. The list of names includes: Ed Blackwell, Art Blakey, Frank Butler, Jimmy Cobb, Frankie Dunlop, Vernell Fournier, Louis Hayes, Roy Haynes, Billy Higgins, Philly Joe Jones, Connie Kay, Shelly Manne, Paul Motian, Dannie Richmond, and Max Roach.[20] These players were all actively performing and recording at the same time as Elvin Jones and were some of the most prominent jazz

[20] The Selected Discography of Contemporary Drummers is in Appendix B.

drummers of the day. In order to make effective comparisons with Jones's fully developed approach to accompaniment, recordings were chosen from the late 1950s to the early 1960s. Furthermore, specific tracks were selected that generally fit the same idiomatic parameters as the Jones samples analyzed: performances are in 'swing feel' (as opposed to 'Latin' or even eighths), 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures, and at moderate to fast tempos (not ballads).

While each of these drummers has a distinctive style, collectively they display common characteristics in their accompaniment method that are much less prevalent in Jones's approach. Listening to the sample recordings listed served to illustrate that Elvin Jones's style was indeed a radical departure from that of his contemporaries.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide an individual style analysis for all fifteen of these drummers, so a single representative from this group has been chosen to compare with Jones. For a number of reasons Billy Higgins emerged as the best choice:

- The performance and recording career of Higgins closely parallels that of Jones chronologically;
- Higgins's style is typical of traditional bop drumming and it is this style from which Jones's approach so radically departs;
- Both Higgins and Jones played drums, at different times, in the John Coltrane Quartet. Jones replaced Higgins in 1960;[21]

[21] Coltrane had made a recording with Billy Higgins on September 8, 1960 (Coltrane 1988a). On October 24, 1960, Coltrane made another recording (Coltrane 1988b) featuring some of the same songs, but with his new drummer Elvin Jones. A comparison

- Both Higgins and Jones were members of ground-breaking jazz groups: Higgins with Ornette Coleman (1958-1960, Jones with Coltrane (1960-1965);
- Both Higgins and Jones recorded for many of the same leaders, including: Coltrane, Steve Lacy, Ornette Coleman, Sonny Rollins, Wayne Shorter, Clifford Jordan, Grant Green and others.

The styles of Jones and Higgins are examined and compared in Chapter II.

The study of Jones's performance videos provides important additional data, different than that gleaned from attending 'live' performances or studying audio recordings exclusively.[22] Video technology allows repeated viewing of specific actions, thereby revealing technical aspects of style. In other words, videos reveal the *look* of Jones's drumming, and studying the look of his playing helps to explain the *sound* of his style.

Transcriptions

Transcriptions of Jones's *solo* work have appeared occasionally in a variety of scholarly and popular articles.[23] However, with regard to Jones's *ensemble* work there is a dearth of transcriptions. All transcriptions included in this study are my own.

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of these two recordings illustrates some of the changes Jones had already brought to jazz drumming by 1960.

[22] The list of films and videos is in Appendix C.

[23] One of the best of best examples is Rupert Kettle's short analysis of four solos that appeared in *Down Beat* magazine in 1966 (Kettle 1966:17-19).

The quest for improved rhythmic notation systems has a long history and the ongoing problem seems to be that as one finds ways to improve accuracy by incorporating more detail, the resulting transcription becomes increasingly clumsy and difficult to decipher. However, in-depth transcription analysis is not the main enterprise of my research. Rather, the function of transcription here is to give visual support to various observations made from the analysis of recordings and applied performance experience. For this reason, and to promote readability, I have chosen to employ standard European notation, but with some modifications.[24]

Transcription can aid the process of style comparison by providing a permanent visual record of sound to marry with the aural information gleaned from recordings. Having complex drumming preserved in a 'frozen', visual format provides an unchanging reference for basic information: *when* things occur, *what* components of the drum set are involved. Formulas and patterns are often exposed. But, *how* and *why* rhythmic events happen are usually not revealed by transcription alone. John Brownell makes this same point in his work on studying the *process* of drum set improvisation: "It is a major contention of this thesis that the . . . basic structural units of drum set improvisations cannot be identified solely by an examination of transcriptions of recorded performances" (Brownell 1994:15).[25] One should never lose sight of the fact that music exists as *sound*,

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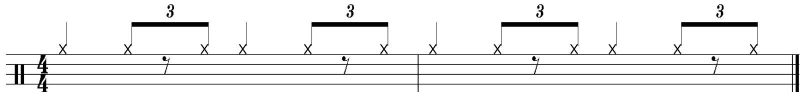
[24] My notation system is explained in Appendix D.

[25] Brownell was interested in studying the physical movements of a drummer as a framework for rhythm, not just the sonic results of those movements.

and not as *notation.* The latter is a tool used to provide a static, re-useable visual representation of the former. Furthermore, such visual representation has built-in limitations. As Paul Berliner states:

> Finally, all transcriptions, no matter how detailed, comprise reductive representations of the original recordings. Especially elusive are essential rhythmic and timbral features of jazz performance and the ever-changing blend of its composite harmonies, the complexities and subtleties of which staff notation can only portray to varying degrees. (Berliner 1994:510)

When employed alone, even sophisticated rhythmic transcriptions of jazz drumming accompaniment yield a limited amount of information. They can even mask some of the unique characteristics of style that are clearly audible on the source recordings. For example, the basic 'swing' jazz ride cymbal pattern, commonly known as the 'ride cymbal beat' and played by almost every jazz drummer since the 1920s, can be represented as follows:



The triplet notation serves to indicate that the eighth notes are 'swung' (as opposed to being 'even').[26] However, no two drummers who play this cymbal rhythm sound exactly alike. Every player has a unique interpretation of this pattern, rhythmically, tonally and dynamically. Some players can be identified just by how they express this pattern on the

[26] This notation is prescriptive (not descriptive). While in the world of jazz performance it represents a standard approach to notating the 'ride cymbal beat', it fails to accurately portray the intensity and duration of the individual beats.

ride cymbal.[27] Thus, transcriptions can tell us that Max Roach, Billy Higgins, Sid Catlett, Connie Kay, Philly Joe Jones, Buddy Rich, and many others shared this same pattern on the ride cymbal. However, this notation does not inform us about the individual sound or 'feel' generated by these drummers. In fact, as Paul Berliner points out, the rhythmic parameters of 'swing' are quite wide:

> Within the realm of beat subdivision, myriad nuances of phrasing in between an even eighth-note subdivision feel, a dotted-eighth and sixteenth-note feel, and a triplet eighth-note feel are associated with the dynamism of swing. (Berliner 1994:152)

The use of accent markings can help delineate some of the dynamic differences from one player to the next, but the effect is limited. Therefore, in order to make the best sense of the transcriptions in this thesis one should ideally have access to the source recordings for aural reference.

In his dissertation on jazz drummer Big Sid Catlett, John Hutton describes what rhythmic transcription *cannot* do. His comments apply equally well to this project:

> It is beyond the scope of notation to describe the nuance by which Catlett performed incredibly delicate dynamics, rhythmic displacement that was not quite precise—but exactly in the right place—or the emotional character effused in his accompanying. Although technically possible to determine empirically the precise dynamic level of every note, and the exact rhythmic anomalies in his note placement, the aesthetic experience of his performance would continue to elude the researcher—the aesthetic experience can be achieved only through listening to the music itself. (Hutton 1991:160-161)

In spite of these limitations, the transcriptions in this study do help to explain much about Jones's style. The largest (and most ambitious) transcription in this paper represents the

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[27] Drummer Connie Kay often interpreted this pattern closer to an even-eighths feel, while Philly Joe Jones often played it closer to a dotted-eighth and sixteenth-note feel. In each case these traits make it possible to identify the drummer almost immediately.

full-length 1964 recording of "Bessie's Blues", including all instruments, performed by the John Coltrane Quartet (Coltrane 1987). This performance was chosen because it clearly illustrates all the elements of Jones's accompaniment style during the peak musical period of his residency with the Coltrane quartet. The inclusion of the entire performance is an attempt to provide as complete a contextual performance framework as possible.[28] The other transcriptions focus more on the specific activity of the drummer. In addition, transcriptions of some Billy Higgins performances are included for comparative analysis with Jones.[29]

Three computer software programmes were employed in the pursuit of transcribing selected performances for analysis:
Spark,[30] *Transcribe!*[31] and *Sibelius*.[32]

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[28] My approach to full score transcription is somewhat similar to the style used by Berliner in his transcription of the Miles Davis Quintet recording of "Bye Bye, Blackbird" (Berliner 1994:678-727). Even though all the instruments perform in swing feel, I have opted, like Berliner, to use conventional even beat subdivision for all instruments except the drum set (where 'triplet notation' is employed). In my transcriptions, all upbeats are vertically aligned through all instruments, whether triplet notation has been used or not. Unlike Berliner, my transcription focuses more on the activity of the drummer than on the other instruments and the relative degree of detail I provide for each instrument reflects this focus.

[29] The complete set of transcriptions can be found in Appendix E.

[30] *Spark* is a digital editing programme for audio files.

[31] *Transcribe!* is a programme that affords one the opportunity to hear recordings slowed down without any change in pitch.

[32] *Sibelius* is a music notation programme that also allows audible playback of the notation using MIDI controlled sounds.

Practical Performance

I have already discussed the value of practical performance in researching Elvin Jones. Over a period of many years, the experience of physically trying to play the drums in a similar fashion to Jones helped me discover the inner workings of his accompaniment method. My professional career has allowed me to experiment with applying elements of Jones's style to a wide variety of jazz performance situations. This kind of experience revealed the impact that Jones's approach can have on fellow musicians and the music being performed. Furthermore, as certain elements of Jones's style became a natural part of my own technique, I began to understand the connection between some of his philosophical comments, expressed in various interviews, to the practicalities of his technique.

Articles and Interviews

Some of the limitations of the existing literature on Jones have already been discussed. Ultimately, the most useful articles for my research proved to be the published interviews. Through these one can receive at least some sort of information 'directly' from Jones.

Length of Investigation

An important attribute of this project is the duration of the research. I have been studying Elvin Jones, in varying degrees of intensity, for some thirty years. To be sure, the early years of investigation were not spent preparing to write this thesis. I simply became interested in his drumming style as one of several helpful models in the course of my own development as a jazz percussionist. The formal organization of the research, and my focused attention upon it, is a much more recent event. However, in hindsight I can state that it has *required* these many years to gain an understanding of Jones's concept and therefore to be suitably prepared to write this thesis. My point here is that effective jazz research can sometimes take a very long time.

CHAPTER II

IDENTIFYING JONES'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO JAZZ

To fully appreciate the many contributions Elvin Jones made to jazz, it is helpful to begin with a broad overview of Jones's achievements before exploring a more detailed list of his actions. A macro view of what Jones accomplished can be expressed in two general statements:

a) He revolutionized jazz drumming by introducing an expanded, yet integrated approach to 'time-keeping' and accompaniment;

b) He broadened the role (and therefore the responsibilities) of jazz drumming dramatically by bringing the drum set's function, with expanded rhythmic and interactive participation, into a position of greater musical prominence within a small ensemble, sharing dialogue with the horn(s) and other instruments.[33]

The full realization of these two broad achievements can be heard on a number of John Coltrane's recordings, including the 1964 project *A Love Supreme* (Coltrane 1995), particularly in the section titled "Resolution". The playing is strong and aggressive, with Jones's drumming positioned 'up front' (both aesthetically and sonically), in constant

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[33] While other drummers before Jones enjoyed prominent musical positions in various small ensembles, each of these players was typically the leader (or co-leader) of the group (e.g., the Clifford Brown-Max Roach Quintet, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, Shelly Manne and His Men). Since Jones did not lead his own group (beyond being the leader on a recording session) until after he left John Coltrane, his efforts to expand the role of the jazz drummer seem that much more compelling. While not all drummers have followed Jones's lead, Jones's efforts made the notion of 'drums up front' not only acceptable, for many bandleaders it became desirable.

dialogue with the saxophone. *A Love Supreme* rather quickly became an icon of modern jazz and to date remains Coltrane's bestselling recording.[34] Its significance for this study is twofold: it is one of the best examples of Jones's fully matured accompaniment style, and arguably it marks the end of that style's development. Following this release, Coltrane continued his explorations in jazz improvisation through subsequent recordings, looking to the music of other cultures for inspiration, trying to move ever forward. Jones's style, however, had perhaps reached its highest point of sophistication.[35] Part of Coltrane's quest following *A Love Supreme* involved abandoning pulse-based rhythm, facilitated by adding 'free' drummer Rashied Ali to the group. While Jones never openly stated that he did not like the new approach, nothing he played during the rest of his life indicated that he had ever developed an interest in performing 'free' jazz. It is clear, however, from a 1966 interview (conducted just one week after he left Coltrane) that Jones was uncomfortable playing with Rashied Ali:

> I don't really know why John brought him in. There was some suggestion that it was to get an Eastern influence—but I don't see it . . . I don't think Ali has been further east than New York. (Hennessey 1966:24)

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[34] Both the recording's significance and its popularity have been discussed by many writers in the forty years since its creation, some extolling its spiritual virtues, others writing about its social and political contexts, while a few talk about the music itself. The most thorough work on the subject is Ashley Kahn's *A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane's Signature Album* (Kahn, 2003). Although Kahn provides much information in great detail, he stays away from attempting descriptions of Jones's drumming style, preferring to provide detailed commentary on contextual issues surrounding the Coltrane quartet.

[35] There seems to be no evidence on any of Jones's subsequent recordings of either technical advancement or conceptual development. In fact, the essential characteristics of his approach seem set in place by his work with Coltrane.

Thirty-five years later Jones offered a bit more insight into his frustration with Coltrane's two-drummer concept:

> Well, that affects the direction of the music, which I didn't have any problem with, per se. But if I had to play with another percussionist or in a drum corps, I always believed in the precision of the drummers. They don't necessarily have to be playing the same thing, but it has to be precise. I didn't feel it was precise, it's as simple as that. (Meredith 2001)

The additional recordings he made with Coltrane (before leaving the band less than a year later) demonstrate that Jones had reached a stylistic plateau, albeit a high one.[36]

While "Resolution" is a fine example of Jones's style at its peak, "Bessie's Blues" on the album *Crescent* (Coltrane 1987), recorded six months earlier, reveals more clearly all the details of his accompaniment *method* in a single performance. For this reason, "Bessie's Blues" has been transcribed in its entirety and serves to support much of the discussion of style. "Bessie's Blues" displays five individual elements or processes that make up Jones's concept of ensemble accompaniment, i.e., his approach to playing time in 'swing feel':

1) **Phrasing**: organizing the quarter-beat pulse into longer, more musical phrases[37] played primarily on the ride cymbal and generally conceived in lengths of two and four bars;[38]

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[36] The final Coltrane studio recordings with Jones include *Ascension*, *Sun Ship*, *Om*, and *Meditations*, all recorded in 1965.

[37] Some readers may be confused by my use of the word 'phrase' to represent rhythm organized into cells of uniform bar lengths. However, the word 'phrase' (and 'phrases' and 'phrasing') has become a common term in jazz drumming performance and pedagogy. It is used widely in jazz literature (Kettle 1966, Berliner 1994) and drum method books (Riley 1997, Blackley 2001). The description of 'phrase' provided in

2) **Four-limb integration**: utilizing the rest of the drum set to fill out and support the cymbal phrases, thereby reintegrating the function of all four limbs to express one idea (as opposed to the concept of 'four-limb independence');[39]

3) **Triplet grid foundation**: building both phrases and supporting fills using an internalized grid of eighth-note triplets;

4) **The drum set as one instrument**: being willing to utilize all the components of the drum set to express the accompaniment phrases (as opposed to the traditional approach that has somewhat pre-determined roles for the ride cymbal, hi-hat, snare and bass drums);

Grove Music Online, can be applied equally well to jazz rhythms as to melodic lines: "A term adopted from linguistic syntax and used for short musical units of various lengths; a phrase is generally regarded as longer than a MOTIF but shorter than a PERIOD" (Anonymous 2004). Berliner describes how drummers create phrases: "Similarly, in constructing more complex figures, drummers achieve individual expression by arranging basic rhythmic elements in different schemes of repeating and non-repeating units to create phrases of differing lengths overall" (Berliner 1994:327). The concept of two-bar phrases has been commonplace in jazz percussion pedagogy for decades: students are taught to master a series of two-bar phrases in the pursuit of learning to express pulse in larger groupings. While I have chosen to continue the trend of using the word 'phrase' in discussing jazz rhythm, I invite any reader who remains troubled by this usage to substitute the word 'cell'.

[38] The notion that a jazz musician would organize a performance into a continuous series of strict two-bar and/or four-bar units might seem counter-intuitive at first, but in fact, Jones uses the basic harmonic form of the music simply as a conceptual framework to package a remarkable vocabulary of shorter rhythmic ideas.

[39] The term 'four-limb independence' refers to a drummer's ability to perform a unique rhythm or function with each one of the hands and feet simultaneously.

5) **Expanded dynamic range**: using wider dynamics (traditionally reserved for soloing) overall, playing the drums louder in support of the ride cymbal (than the customary balance heard in the style of other contemporary drummers).[40]

Individually, each one of these five elements represents a departure from the accepted 'bop' (or 'hard bop') approach used by almost all of Jones's contemporaries during the 1950s and 1960s. Collectively, these five elements constitute a revolutionary new method of jazz drumming accompaniment. In Frank Kofsky's view, Jones's work with Coltrane embodied the first new development in jazz drumming in a long time:

> Between the inauguration of the bebop concept of playing 'time' in the 1940s and the formation of the John Coltrane quartet that included Elvin Jones and McCoy Tyner in 1960, no fundamental alterations had occurred. (Kofsky 1977a:22)

Before taking a closer look at each of the five style elements, one can readily discern the innovative nature of Jones's method by comparing it to the general 'bop' (or 'bebop') approach taken by other contemporary drummers. Ollie Wilson provides a brief, but effective description of 'bop' drumming style in *The New Grove Encyclopedia online*:

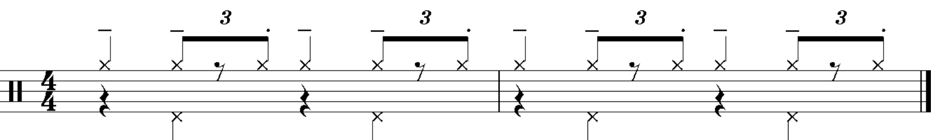
> In bop drumming a repeated rhythmic pattern is maintained only on the ride and hi-hat cymbals, the remaining instruments being used to mark the main structural divisions of the performance, to articulate the solo improvisation, and to interject

[40] It may be this fifth element (i.e., drums louder in relation to the cymbal) that is largely responsible for some of the misguided observations that have been made regarding Jones's style. If one listens to (or hears) only the drum fills that support the cymbal phrases, and not the core phrases themselves, then some of the peculiar descriptions listed earlier seem to have more relevance.

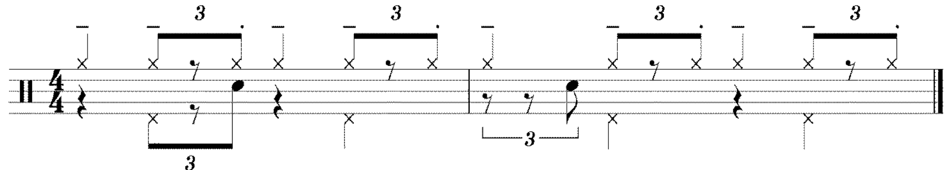
> counter-rhythmic [hyphen added] motifs against the prevailing regular pulse. (Wilson 2004)

Wilson's description can be expanded into a hierarchical list of defined characteristics. Until the style of Elvin Jones became widely known, the generally accepted concept for 'modern' 4/4 'jazz drumming accompaniment' was (and for many, still is) constructed as follows:

a) Steady time maintained on the ride cymbal, with little or no dynamic variation, using the well known 'jazz ride rhythm' accompanied by the hi-hat played on beats two and four.[41]



b) Crisp, impromptu 'shots' (beats) and/or figures played on the snare drum to complement the improvised line played by the soloist.



c) Variable bass drum function, dependent upon the drummer's training, performance experience and the requirements of the musical style determined by a particular ensemble and/or composition.[42]

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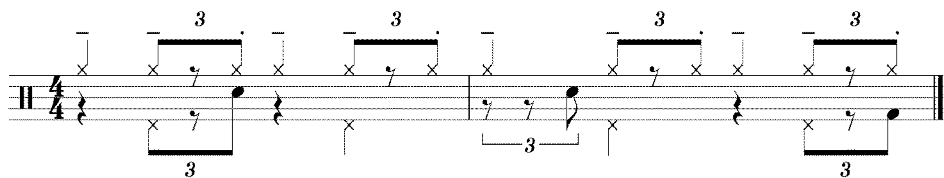
[41] Please refer to Appendix D for an explanation of drum set notation.

[42] By the late 1950s there were three general approaches to the bass drum:



Jones introduced a style built around expanding the timekeeping vocabulary of the ride cymbal (generally either quarter notes or the basic ride rhythm) into a much larger series of rhythmic phrases. The most significant difference between 'bop' style drumming and that of Elvin Jones is that the ride cymbal function in the former is lacking in variation and dynamics. Any departure from the basic ride cymbal pattern in the 'bop' style can be regarded as ornamentation rather than a part of the basic timekeeping. Two short transcription samples follow that illustrate the fundamental stylistic differences between the 'new' approach of Elvin Jones and the 'bop' style represented by the drumming of Billy Higgins.[43] These samples point to issues of semiotics in musicology: in an effort to clearly illustrate the actual assembly of rhythm in each drumming style, how the function of the drummer's limbs relate, the dynamic range and so on, I have found it useful to employ a different approach to notation for each drummer. In 'bop' drumming, the ride cymbal has a constant, but independent function from the rest of the drum set, whereas in Jones's method all four limbs are used to support the cymbal line.

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i. playing a soft quarter-beat pulse (in tandem with the bass player's walking line), employed by most big band drummers and many small group players.
ii. using the bass drum for accents only (a style associated with Kenny Clarke and early bebop).
iii. dividing comping patterns between bass drum and snare drum (an approach developed to a high musical level by Max Roach and others).

[43] John Coltrane hired Elvin Jones to replace Billy Higgins in 1960.

Therefore, I have used 'note stem direction' as a means to illustrate this difference in approach. The wider dynamic range in Jones's style is demonstrated through the use of accents and two noteheads.[44]

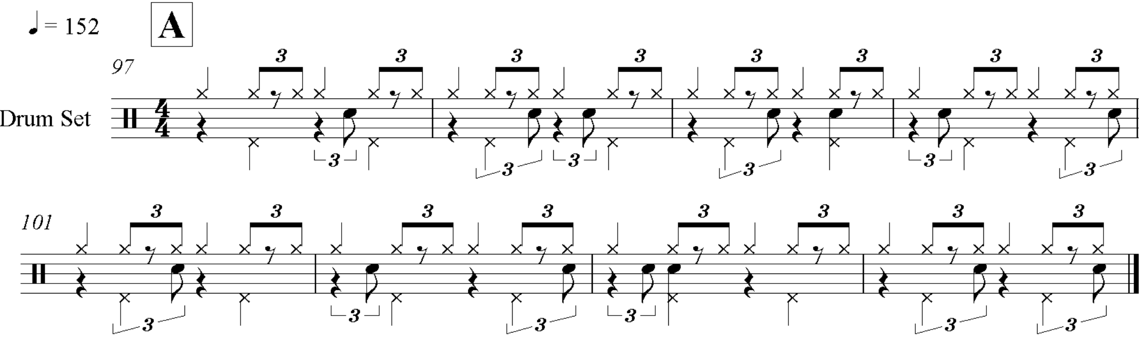
Table 1 facilitates a quick comparison of the two samples by providing a parallel listing of information and observations.

[44] Please refer to Appendix D for a more detailed explanation of how accents and noteheads are used in my transcriptions.

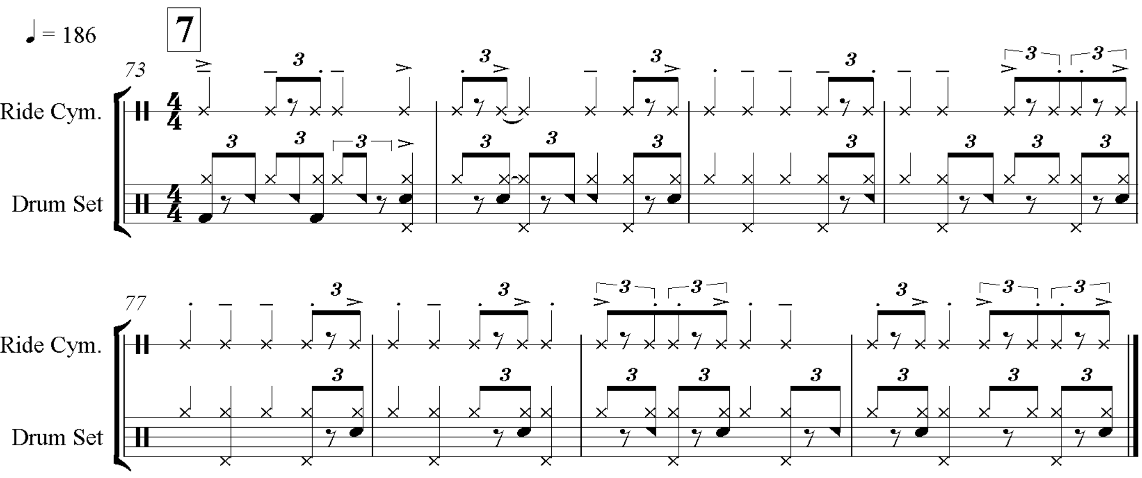
Table 1: Reference details for *Examples 1* and *2*.

Example	***1***	***2***
Drummer	Billy Higgins	Elvin Jones
Song Title	Hocus Pocus	Bessie's Blues
Date	December 21, 1963	April 27, 1964
Section Transcribed	Drum accompaniment to the first 8 bars of Lee Morgan's trumpet solo	Drum accompaniment to the first 8 bars of John Coltrane's sax solo
Source	Lee Morgan, *The Sidewinder*. (Morgan 1989)	John Coltrane, *Crescent*. (Coltrane 1987)
Elements of style	- Constant ride cymbal pattern, no cymbal phrasing evident. - Hi-hat on 2 and 4. - Snare drum 'shots' independent of the cymbal line. - No significant dynamics in cymbal line or snare drum.	- Cymbal phrases evident. - Drums fill out cymbal phrases using eighth-note triplets. - At least four dynamic levels evident, indicated by two sizes of note-heads plus accents.
Notation attributes	- Cymbal line is notated separately from the drums, to display its separate time-keeping function from the snare drum 'comping'. - Snare line is extracted to a separate staff below to reveal snare drum 'shots'.	- Everything played on the drums is notated as a singular rhythm to display how the drums support and fill the cymbal line. - The cymbal line is extracted to a separate staff above to reveal the cymbal phrasing.

Example 1. “Hocus Pocus” bars 97-104: Billy Higgins



Example 2. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 73-80: Elvin Jones



Example 2 reveals much, in just eight bars, about Jones’s approach. The upper staff (‘Ride Cym.’) contains only the extracted ride cymbal line, allowing for easy recognition that there is a lot more going on here than in the basic ride pattern of bop style. In addition to the varied patterns of rhythm from one bar to the next, there is a much wider dynamic range in Jones’s ride cymbal playing, expressed here in four levels

through the use of different note-heads and accents.[45] There is evidence of phrase construction (which will be analyzed in detail in the next chapter). The lower staff (Drum Set) shows how the entire drum set is integrated into the cymbal line and how Jones uses the 'eighth-note triplet grid' as the framework for filling and supporting this line.[46]

Through the period 1957-1960 John Coltrane had hired a variety of drummers for recordings under his own leadership, including (in chronological order): Art Taylor, Albert 'Tootie' Heath, 'Philly' Joe Jones, Louis Hayes, Jimmy Cobb, Connie Kay, Lex Humphries, Ed Blackwell and Billy Higgins. When Jones replaced Higgins in 1960, it seems that Coltrane had found the 'right drummer' to facilitate the expression of his musical ideas.

The unique style of Elvin Jones had such an impact on the other musicians in Coltrane's quartet, and therefore the overall sound of the band, that Coltrane re-recorded some of the same material that had featured Higgins. For example, the song "Mr. Day" was recorded with Higgins, McCoy Tyner and Steve Davis on September 8, 1960 and then again with Jones (replacing Higgins) on October 24, 1960. While the full impact of Jones's style on the music cannot be described in transcriptions (one does need to hear the recordings) some of the changes that Jones brought to the band are visually evident in the paradigmatic transcription of the two separate performances of "Mr. Day", provided in Appendix E. The performances of the melody section are particularly good for drum

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[45] The four levels of dynamic accenting are fully explained in Chapter III.

[46] Jones may be regarded as one of the few jazz drummers who consistently exhibits a strict adherence to '12/8 feel' in playing 4/4 time (and similarly a '9/8 feel' in 3/4 time). This approach is discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.

style comparison because the other three instruments have the same specific parts to play in both versions. *Example 3* demonstrates how Higgins and Jones take very different approaches to stating the basic rhythmic figure of the composition with the bass player. Higgins plays the figure on his snare drum, matching it to the bass part, while maintaining the steady ride cymbal pattern with the hi-hat on beats two and four. By contrast, Jones expands upon the string bass figure rhythmically, tonally and dynamically by introducing phrasing and wider dynamics into his line and assigning different beats to various components of the drum set.

Example 3. “Mr. Day” bars 25-36: Comparing the approaches of Higgins and Jones to the same rhythmic arrangement.[47]

[47] In all transcriptions in this thesis, unless otherwise stated, and whether eighth-note triplet notation is employed or not, all the music is in ‘swing feel’. The conventions for full score notation are fully explained in Appendix D.

Example 4 contains the second, repeated chorus of the melody. It demonstrates that, even when presented with a fixed rhythmic motif in the composition, Jones takes a creative approach to accompaniment.

Example 4. “Mr. Day” bars 37-44: Comparing the approaches of Higgins and Jones to a rhythmic arrangement

In the above example, Jones uses the hi-hat pedal to fill the empty beats within the bass figure. By choosing the hi-hat for this function (with its short and high pitched sound) Jones enhances the overall effect of the figure and provides a change in support for the second chorus of the melody. Higgins maintains one approach throughout both choruses.

Examples 5-7 demonstrate that Jones's approach involves much interplay with the other players, unlike the more conservative style of Higgins. Jones seems to construct his accompaniment in relation to the saxophone line, the bass figure and the piano accompaniment, while still fulfilling a timekeeping role for the band. *Example 5* represents the first eight bars of the initial melody chorus. It details how Jones builds his accompaniment on top of the bass figure but also in relation to the piano comping.[48] The recording demonstrates, better than the transcription, how Jones's use of dynamics relates to the varying intensity of Coltrane's melody statement.

[48] In this composite transcription the arranged piano part is taken from the recording featuring Elvin Jones. Pianist McCoy Tyner takes practically the same approach on the Higgins version.

Example 5. "Mr. Day" bars 25-32: Jones's accompaniment constructed in relation to the other instruments

In the above example, Jones manages to enhance both the rhythm of the bass figure (throughout the eight bars) and certain upbeats[49] in the piano accompaniment (in bars 26, 28, 30 and 32). *Examples 6-7* contain the final four bars of each melody chorus respectively. In both examples, the arrangement requires the bass to shift for two bars from the rhythmic figure to a 'walking bass line', then back to the figure for the final two bars. Jones clearly alters his playing to accommodate these changes.

Example 6. "Mr. Day" bars 33-36 (last four bars of the first melody chorus): Jones alters his approach to accommodate the bass switching from the rhythmic figure to a walking line

In bars 33-34 (above) Jones provides both timekeeping with the bass line plus rhythmic punches (assigned to the snare and bass drums) that fill around some of the quarter notes

[49] In jazz, upbeats are generally eighth notes that precede downbeats (pulse beats). In swing feel, upbeats are associated with the third beat of an eighth-note triplet, but never the second (middle) beat.

and tied upbeats in Coltrane's melody line. By adding these beats, Jones creates a sort of 'echo effect' within the saxophone melody line. In *Example 7*, Jones takes a different approach to the last four bars of the second chorus, perhaps because he knows that a solo will follow. Here Jones chooses to build the intensity of his accompaniment with more filling, signaling the end of a section, while still providing a timekeeping function.

Example 7. "Mr. Day" bars 45-48 (last four bars of the second melody chorus): building to the end of a section by filling

The foregoing examples (*3-7*) serve to show that, overall, Jones's approach to accompaniment involves much more musical interplay with the other musicians in the band than the basic timekeeping style of bop drummers.

A study of the complete transcriptions of "Mr. Day" and "Bessie's Blues" (found in Appendix E) in tandem with repeated listening to the source recordings has led to the

realization that the five aforementioned elements of Jones's accompaniment style are part of a unified and systematic approach. These elements are both inter-related and inter-dependent.

A closer investigation of these five elements follows in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF ELVIN JONES'S ACCOMPANIMENT STYLE

Time Signatures

Outside of short rubato introductions, almost all of Jones's recorded performances within the period 1948-1965 are in tempo and feature compositions in either 4/4 or 3/4 time signature.[50] While Jones applied his accompaniment concept to both time signatures, the bulk of his work was developed and performed in 4/4. Therefore, the following analysis will focus first on his accompaniment in that time signature. Much of what Jones achieved in his 4/4 playing was applied directly to his work in 3/4. This is not to downplay the significance of his work in 3/4   in fact, Jones's approach to 3/4 timekeeping introduced radical conceptual changes to the 'jazz waltz' concept   but rather to facilitate a consistent development of style analysis. Discussion of his approach to accompaniment in 3/4 will be held in reserve until the end of this chapter.

Phrasing

The central contribution that Jones made to jazz drumming is his system of playing time using phrases. As Jones has stated: "The connection of logical rhythmic

[50] There is one notable exception: Coltrane's "Alabama" (Coltrane 1989). The melody is played rubato and the solo section is played in tempo.

phrases to each other is always my aim" (Kauffman 1993:90). All other aspects of his accompaniment relate to, and expand, this vital concept. In my view, it is the adoption of this approach by modern (post-Jones) jazz drummers that has enabled them to play more 'musically', i.e., to contribute more than basic timekeeping to the improvised performance. The challenge of hearing and 'playing time' in larger units using a variety of phrases, and the challenge it creates for other musicians to play along with it, have become common aspects of learning to play jazz. In other words, while still an advanced aspect of jazz percussion, most of the proficient jazz drummers playing today employ Jones's phrasing concept, at least to some degree, and most jazz musicians who play other instruments expect the modern jazz drummer to be equipped with such elements of Jones's method.

To comprehend both the depth of Jones's phrasing system and how it operates, one needs to try to identify the processes that Jones underwent during performance to create and implement these phrases. In order to identify these processes, one needs to gain a working knowledge of his drum set mechanics, i.e., how he uses the various components of the drum set. One also needs to be aware of the various contexts framing Jones's performances: the repertoire, the individual styles of the musicians he worked with, certain musical goals of Coltrane and/or Jones and perhaps the socio-political climate of the day. Although this paper focuses on the *mechanics* of Jones's accompaniment, some of these contextual matters frame part of the discussion in Chapter V: "The Chronological Development of Jones's Style".

The best approach to understanding Jones's mechanics, I think, is to start by examining what we hear on Jones's recordings in 'real time', without the aid of computer editing software and other devices. After all, the artist constructs the performance assuming that the audience will receive the information more or less 'naturally', i.e., at the tempo it was played and with the same sonic equalization that was used in the recording studio. In this way Jones's sophisticated style is received intact, allowing the listener to hear the accompaniment phrases the way Jones conceived and expressed them.[51]

The Role of the Ride Cymbal

Listening to Jones perform (on his recordings and in person) one is struck almost immediately by the prominence of his ride cymbal. In terms of balance within the ensemble, it seems to be consistently in the foreground of the music, clearly audible at all times regardless of the dynamics of the rest of the band. Jones made sure of this, often resorting to using the butt-end of the stick for more power when necessary. Jones has commented on his use of the ride cymbal:

> I always try to sustain some kind of continuity with the cymbal. That's where the consistency really is, because we no longer use a strong 4/4 bass beat, or that

[51] While the use of technology (in this case the software programme *Transcribe!*) to slow down and filter "Bessie's Blues" aided in the exercise of transcription, it also interrupted the continuity of Jones's phrases by displaying sounds out of balance and sounds that cannot be detected at tempo (without filtering specific frequencies). In fact, such technology can lead one away from the musical idea that the artist was actually intending to express.

> rigid, up-and-down, 2 and 4 on the hi-hat. So the emphasis is on the consistency of the tempo and, of course, on the continuity of that cymbal. That provides what would be the clave [the central pulse] in a Latin orchestra. (Kahn 2003:101)

The listener's attention is fixed, not just by the volume of his ride cymbal, by what he chooses to play on it. Instead of the usual statement of quarter-beat pulse or the common ride cymbal pattern, Jones offers a line comprised of eighth-note phrases that feature both rhythmic and dynamic variation. These phrases are rhythmically designed in the same fashion as those of a melodic soloist: using eighth notes and/or quarter notes, placed on downbeats and/or upbeats. In the absence of pitch capability, Jones infers a certain musicality to his phrases by accenting over a much wider dynamic range than is heard in the drumming of his contemporaries or predecessors. To a large degree, Jones expresses his phrases primarily, but not exclusively, on the ride cymbal. The other components of the drum set are employed in two distinct ways:

1. To express certain key, accented beats of the phrase. Jones often assigns such vital beats to the snare or bass drum;
2. To support the phrase by creating a full background rhythm, at a lower volume than the phrase itself, using beats from the eighth-note triplet grid.

The prominent role of the ride cymbal in Jones's drumming follows from a historical precedent. By the time he began learning to play the drums in a jazz context (in the 1940s) the employment of the ride cymbal as the primary component for expressing the pulse had already been well established and was the foundation of the bop style. In his article on the development of the drum set, T. Brown states:

> Approximately ten years after the introduction of the hi-hat, big-band drummers began to play the ride cymbal to accompany soloists . . . and in ensemble work (Jo Jones on Basie's "Honeysuckle Rose", 1937, Decca 1141). (Brown 2004)

Therefore, it was logical for Jones to exploit the ride cymbal as he expanded the existing method of timekeeping. However, unlike bop stylists, where the role of the ride cymbal and hi-hat is distinct from that of the other drum set components, Jones used the entire set to express his phrases. He certainly conceives of the drum set as one instrument:

> It is one instrument, and I would hasten to say that I take that as the basis for my whole approach to the drums. It is a single musical instrument of several components. Naturally, you've got tom-toms scattered around, and the snare drum is in front of you, and the bass drum is down there, and you have cymbals at different levels. But all in all, just as a piano is one instrument, a drumset is one instrument. (Mattingly 1998:26)

The rhythmic variation in Jones's improvised cymbal line seems to turn 'time-keeping' into a more musical enterprise for both drummer and other band members. The function of Jones's ride cymbal goes far beyond delineating *pulse* for the band, and in so doing gives more flexibility to the soloist and other supporting instruments. Jones's phrases usually contain three-beat figures and occasionally five-beat figures,[52] often tied over bar lines, thereby removing the compartmentalization of rhythm into individual bar-long units. This latter phenomenon often occurs in the more traditional jazz drumming styles where rudiments (associated with marching band music) play a larger role.

By formulating his phrases in a minimum length of two bars, Jones remains consistent with other rhythm based musics embraced by jazz players, such as Brazilian

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[52] Rhythmic figures composed of quarter notes and/or eighth notes that have a duration of three pulse beats (three-beat figure) or five pulse beats (five-beat figure).

and Cuban music, where the rhythmic patterns are also two bars in length. Two-bar phrases also seem to be the minimum size required to resolve Jones's rhythmic statements of call and response. Furthermore, Jones's phrasing system is structurally consistent with the rate of harmonic change in the compositions he played. During his years with Coltrane (the period in which Jones fully realized his phrasing concept) the repertoire of songs performed at medium to bright tempos typically fell into three main categories:

1. blues (usually twelve bars long with harmonic changes occurring at intervals of two and four bars);
2. modal compositions (usually thirty-two bars long with harmonic changes usually occurring only every eight or sixteen bars);
3. 'standards' (usually show tunes or pop songs re-arranged for jazz performance, thirty-two bars long with harmonic changes occurring more frequently than in the other two categories).

From 1960-1965, the proportion of blues and modal compositions in Coltrane's active repertoire increased while the number of standards decreased. This meant that Jones, now routinely confronted with longer stretches of music with little or no harmonic change occurring, was given the opportunity to play something more engaging (than the basic ride pattern) in his timekeeping. Furthermore, the solos that Jones accompanied became longer, particularly in live performances. While Jones's developing style of phrasing

helped make this possible, Coltrane's aggressive and exploratory approach to improvisation *demanded* more variety from the drums.[53]

In addition to the rhythmic variation evident in Jones's cymbal line, an additional feature is the overall increase in dynamic range. Conventional bop cymbal playing exhibits minimal changes in volume, as a means to promote steady expression of the pulse. Generally, all quarter beats (pulse beats) are played at one volume and all skip beats (upbeats) are played at a second volume, usually softer than the quarter beats. The goal of most bop drummers is to have a dynamically consistent sound on the ride cymbal. By contrast, Jones used accents within the cymbal line to give extra power to upbeats, giving a feeling of forward momentum to the rhythm and adding more colour to his cymbal playing. Beyond these aspects, Jones has commented on the importance of cymbal tonalities:

> Take, for example, the subtleties of the cymbals; there are endless possibilities for changing the color and tone of music through the cymbal tone range. And you can apply rhythmic patterns of tone on, say, just two 20 inch cymbals—there are no two cymbals that sound alike. (Nolan 1977:14)

Example 8 represents the extracted cymbal line from three choruses (nine through eleven) of "Bessie's Blues". Many of the aforementioned elements of Jones's cymbal style are evident in this transcription. The line has been organized into two-bar phrases. Chord changes are included so that these phrases are presented in the context of the basic

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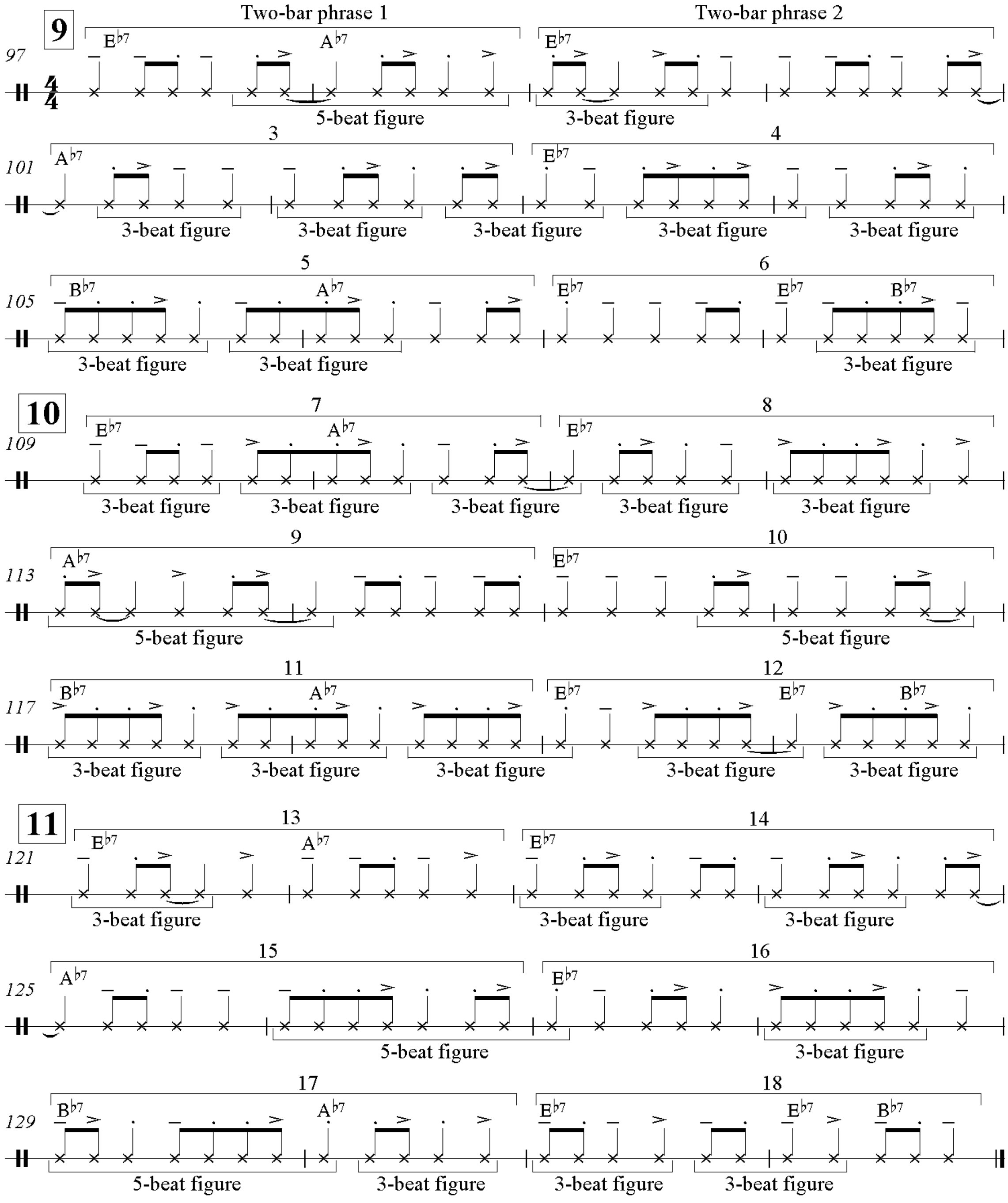
[53] In his article "Two Coltranes", Kernfeld comments on changes in Coltrane's approach during the period Jones worked with him: "By the early 1960s, timbral contrast had become an established stylistic device . . . By 1965, tone seemed to have surpassed all other musical qualities in importance" (Kernfeld 1983:60).

harmonic structure of the song. I have also indicated several examples of three-beat and five-beat rhythmic figures. Some of these figures have appeared in jazz drumming instruction books, including Jim Blackley's *The Essence of Jazz Drumming* (Blackley 2001) and John Riley's *Beyond Bop Drumming* (Riley 1997), and have become part of the collection of teaching materials for many instructors. Lists of the various three-beat and five-beat figures that Jones employs in *Example 8* (and generally in all his playing) appear on page 92 and 93 respectively. While these figures can be derived simply by arranging quarter notes and eighth notes in various mathematical combinations, it was Jones who fully exploited their use as a part of time-keeping on the ride cymbal, not only rhythmically but dynamically. Accents are used to indicate his expansive use of dynamics on the ride cymbal. One of the features of Jones's three-beat figures is that usually two of the notes are highlighted by stronger accents, providing something of a two-over-three emphasis. This feature is exhibited by almost every three-beat figure indicated in *Example 8* (and in other examples). To a certain extent, this trait serves to help identify such figures within a phrase, but this approach alone does not represent an exact method. For example, one could easily argue that in bar 121 the three-beat figure starts on beat two of the bar, and not beat one, as indicated. Both versions contain two emphasized beats. The figure begins on the downbeat of the bar, when a harmonic shift occurs. Beyond this, there is nothing to determine absolutely the starting point of the figure in bar 121. However, in this particular case it does not really matter. The important point is that, either way, a three-beat figure does exist within the phrase.

Example 8. **“**Bessie’s Blues” bars 97-132: The ride cymbal line accompanying the final three choruses (thirty-six bars) of Coltrane’s solo. (The triplet notation has been removed for clarity, but the feel remains ‘swing’)



Reading, playing or singing this cymbal line, even in isolation from the context of the solo it is accompanying, and without the input of the other players, offers a sense of the 'melodic' quality in Jones's phrases. One also observes that there is much variation from one bar to the next. Perhaps the most startling revelation is that each of the eighteen two-bar phrases contained in this thirty-six bar sample is unique and never repeated.

I have organized the wide dynamic range evident in Jones's ride cymbal line into four distinct levels (three of which are present in *Example 8*) based upon aural evidence and visual observation of his method. This subdivision is in keeping with longstanding principles of ride cymbal technique, although in a newly extended form to accommodate Jones's style. Playing the ride cymbal involves a particular hand motion that allows only two basic ways to strike the cymbal:

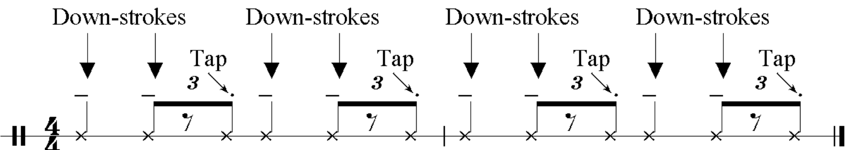
1. down-stroke;
2. tap.[54]

Both the down-stroke and the tap begin from a position of rest: the stick is held an inch or two above the cymbal. The former is a full movement involving raising the stick up and then down to strike the cymbal with enough force to produce a louder, stronger, 'fatter' sound than the latter. Following contact with the cymbal, the stick is allowed to return to the resting position. The down-stroke produces solid quarter beats or downbeats. The tap,

[54] My use of the word 'tap' is consistent with the world of performance, but should not be confused with the meaning that Charles Keil and other writers use. In his article "The Theory of Participatory Discrepancies: a Progress Report", Keil uses the word 'tap' to refer to the overall approach and feel a drummer uses in playing the ride cymbal: ". . . we recorded and measured my versions of Kenny Clarke and Elvin Jones taps on the ride cymbal" (Keil 1995:10).

by contrast, is achieved by allowing the stick to drop lightly from the resting position onto the cymbal. Following a tap, the stick either returns to the resting position or is raised as the starting motion of an ensuing down-stroke. Taps are usually associated with the lighter 'skip beat' of the ride cymbal pattern and other unaccented upbeats. In this thesis, the conventional drum notation symbols for down-stroke (-) and tap (·) are employed.

Example 9. The notation of 'down-stroke' and 'tap' in the conventional ride cymbal line



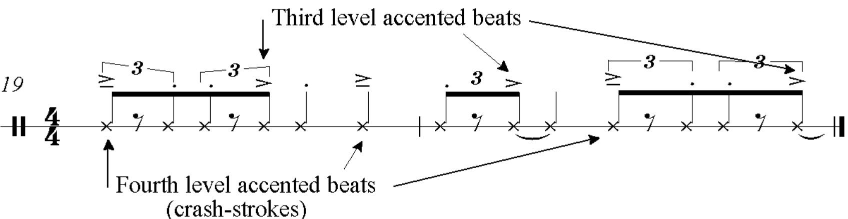
This hand technique has been widely used for decades by most jazz drummers, including Elvin Jones. In the bop style of drumming (and in previous styles) these two strokes are quite sufficient to produce the required range and consistency in sound, duration and volume on the ride cymbal. Learning the required technique to play the down-stroke and tap remains a fundamental part of jazz drumming instruction today. Before Jones, the only other designated cymbal sound was a loud 'crash', reserved for special effects or fills and produced simply by hitting the separate 'crash cymbal' hard enough to achieve the desired result. There is no specific technique in jazz drumming associated with producing a cymbal crash.

Elvin Jones employed these same two traditional strokes, but by using a very physical approach to playing the cymbal, he widened the parameters of volume between them. This approach gave his cymbal line much more contour and overall 'character'.

Jones added an identifiable third, louder stroke (technically an accented down-stroke) enabling him to achieve the dramatically expanded dynamic range that set his ride cymbal sound apart from all other contemporary drummers. In addition, Jones used this louder accent in new rhythmic locations. A unique characteristic of his cymbal style is the occasional accenting of upbeats, adding contrast to his timekeeping while propelling the music forward. The third, louder stroke is represented by an accent symbol (>).

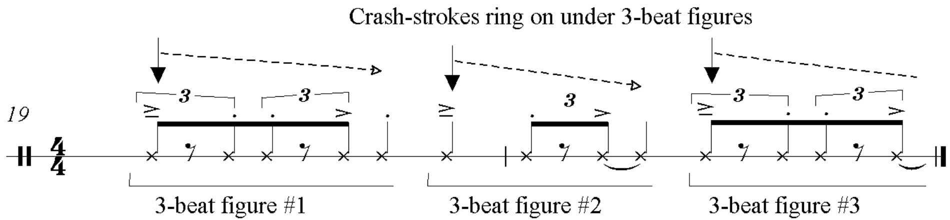
Jones also employed his own version of a ‘crash-stroke’, played on the ride cymbal, achieved by striking the edge of the cymbal with the shank of the stick rather than the tip. The resulting sound was not necessarily louder, but it produced a long lasting and lower-pitched tone that by these characteristics seemed to sound more forceful than the other three strokes. Most of his contemporaries avoided such an effect on the ride cymbal, preferring to maintain shorter, more precise sounds. Jones’s fourth stroke, a long and lower-pitched crash, is indicated by the symbol (≥).

Example 10. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 19-20: The notation of Jones’s third and fourth level accented beats in the ride cymbal line



In effect, Jones had four distinct cymbal sounds (although the 'crash' stroke does not occur in *Example 8*).[55] *Example 11* demonstrates how Jones uses his crash-stroke to indicate the beginning of three successive three-beat figures. The effect produced is that the crash-stroke not only clearly delineates the starting point for each figure, it also initiates a long, low 'wash' sound that continues as a background tone underneath the remaining beats.

Example 11. "Bessie's Blues" bars 19-20: Three-beat figures

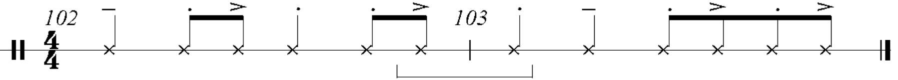


Another unique feature of Jones's cymbal line (evident in *Example 8* and elsewhere) is that many of the beats falling on the pulse (i.e., any of the four quarter beats in a bar) are played as light taps, often barely audible. In bop style, beats that fall on the pulse are routinely played as long, full down-strokes. However, Jones's videos and live performances suggest that some of the accenting patterns in his cymbal phrases are likely dictated by his technique. Jones is a very 'physical' player. He appears to use considerable energy and hand motion to execute his accented beats. At medium to fast

[55] There are, of course, subtle levels of expression, intended or otherwise, within each of the four ranges mentioned above, put into play by exerting a bit more or a bit less energy into any stroke. But attempting to notate these would render the transcription unreadable and therefore impractical for this thesis.

tempos there is usually insufficient time to complete two such heavy strokes within the space of a single quarter beat. In *Example 12* Jones ends Bar 102 with a heavily accented upbeat and follows it with a light tap for the downbeat of Bar 103.

Example 12. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 102-103: Accentuation dictated by technique



Physically, he can do little else. He manages this soft tap following the heavy stroke by allowing the stick to bounce. A louder or stronger attack would require too much energy and hand motion to complete it in time for the downbeat of Bar 103. There are many similar examples throughout “Bessie’s Blues”.

To some extent, Jones’s energetic approach to playing the cymbal helped create, through technical limitation, his characteristic series of alternating loud and soft beats. The role of technical limitation, however, should not be overstated. In Jones’s approach, the strength of the accented upbeats so overshadows the following downbeats that the latter serves little or no supportive function anyway, and could be left out altogether. In fact, most of these lightly tapped downbeats are only audible during analytic listening (with the recording slowed down and certain frequencies amplified). During casual listening to his recordings, the accented upbeats sound as if they have been tied over the bar line to the following downbeat. This is one of the key effects that give Jones’s cymbal phrasing its characteristic strength and forward momentum.

Redefining Independence: Four-limb Integration

While Jones seems to use the ride cymbal as the primary instrument to state his timekeeping phrases, the cymbal line alone does not reveal the whole story. In fact, he employs the ride cymbal in conjunction with (and not independent of) the other drum set components. In developing this approach, Jones created a unified concept that totally integrated the function of all four limbs into the expression of flowing rhythmic phrases. This integration redefined the role of 'four-limb independence'. With Jones, it became a musical tool to serve his phrasing concept, rather than a technical goal of drum set performance.

This aspect of his style is highly significant because it allows complex rhythms to be expressed clearly and smoothly on the drums. However 'busy' or 'polyrhythmic' Elvin Jones's playing may seem to some listeners, at any given moment he is actually using all four limbs to play and support just one musical idea. Yet it is this integration concept that seems to have gone unnoticed by most drummers, drum teachers, and jazz scholars.

The goal of progressive jazz drummers since the advent of bebop in the 1940s, still in place today, has continually been to develop four-limb independence, not four-limb integration. The primary method book of the day (first published in 1948) was Jim Chapin's *Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer, Volume 1: Coordinated Independence as applied to Jazz and Bebop.* The book offers a long series of one-bar exercises designed to "develop a measure of coordinated independence between the

hands and feet in executing rhythmic figures against the standard cymbal rhythm" (Chapin 1948:1). The cymbal pattern never varies in the entire book. Volume 2, entitled *Independence, the Open End* and published some years later, promoted total 'independence' as the ultimate goal of drum study. To this day, both volumes are widely used as jazz drumming instruction books. Jim Blackley's method book *The Essence of Jazz Drumming* (Blackley 2001) makes use of cymbal phrasing exercises and to some extent Jones's concept of filling and supporting phrases using the eighth-note triplet grid.

Part of Jones's integrated approach involves using the various drum set components to add more emphasis to certain accents in the phrases. In some instances, Jones assigns a prominent upbeat in the phrase solely to the snare drum or bass drum, and not to the cymbal at all. Jones has commented on his philosophy of making the entire drum set available for timekeeping:

> It's just as effective for keeping the same pulse going as just using one component–but it's not conventional. The conventional thing is to use the hi-hat for the after beat and use the bass drum for the underlying 4/4 or 3/4 rhythm to keep the steady pulsation . . . I just think you have to use all of the drum set all of the time. (Nolan 1977:13)

Furthermore, Jones's decision to widen the dynamic range of the drums in support of the ride cymbal, with the top of this range being generally louder than that of any of his contemporaries, facilitated Jones's efforts to position the drummer more 'up front' musically, allowing him to engage in dialogue with the soloist more directly. This aspect of style was established before he joined the Coltrane band, apparently at the urging of his brother. Jones explains:

> Also my brother Hank [a jazz pianist] told me to make my sound more definite, make it louder. You see, he made a few remarks about what I was doing in my left hand and wanted to know what it was that I was playing before, so I just played a little louder and made it come out more. That's an overall feeling that I like to have when I am playing, to make the rhythmic sound blend with the harmonic. (Kofsky 1978:82)

Much like the concept of 'stroke and tap' on the ride cymbal, Jones seems to have at least two dynamic levels in mind for each of the other components of the drum set. At tempo, many of the lighter beats on the snare drum act as eighth-note triplet fills, chatter-like, often barely audible or ghosted.[56] The louder snare drum beats are used more sparingly, reserved for highlighting accented notes in the phrase. Jones rarely uses the bass drum to delineate the pulse. This fact alone sets him stylistically apart from many of his predecessors (Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Jo Jones, Max Roach and others) known to 'feather'[57] quarter beats on the bass drum. Elvin Jones used the bass drum for accenting in a similar fashion to the snare drum, employing two distinct dynamic levels. Furthermore, Jones was able to deliver a broad range of sounds from his bass drum by using both 'clean' and 'choked' pedal strokes, at various volume levels. The former

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[56] The computer software *Transcribe!* was employed to slow down the recording and to emphasize cymbal frequencies, revealing more of the softer beats than can be discerned at tempo. The transcription of "Bessie's Blues" is an attempt to display all the beats Jones actually played (including those that are audible only when computer processing is used).

[57] This term refers to a bass drum pedal technique whereby the quarter-note pulse is played so softly on the bass drum that it is essentially *felt* more than *heard*. It may have originally been developed (out of necessity) by big band drummers who could not easily abandon their technique of keeping time on the bass drum when adapting their playing to smaller and quieter groups (where pounding out quarter beats on the bass drum was deemed inappropriate). However, other drummers learned the technique as a means of supporting ('fattening', 'widening') the sound of the string bass, particularly in groups where the bass is not amplified. Currently, it is learned as an optional technique.

stroke causes the beater to hit the bass drum head cleanly, then immediately return to the resting position (much like a down-stroke on the ride cymbal). The latter stroke involves maintaining contact with the head after striking it (commonly known to many drummers as 'burying the beater' into the drum head). Such action produces a muffled, 'choked' effect. It is useful to think of the sound of Jones's bass drum as being either 'open' (the head allowed to resonate) or 'closed' (the head not allowed to resonate).

In addition to dynamics on the drums, Jones is conscious of using variety in drum tonalities:

> There is a wide range of tone possibilities within each drum—the range is vast—and you can vary the sound and tone simply by stroke intensity at different points on the drum head. I don't know if others can hear the tone variations possible with each drum, but I know I hear it. (Nolan 1977:14)

Jones does not use the hi-hat pedal in the traditional bop fashion (to mark beats two and four), nor does he play it as loudly as many of his contemporaries. Instead, Jones uses the hi-hat in the same role as the other drum set components, although without such a dramatic range in dynamics, to accent certain beats in a phrase and/or to fill out and support the phrase.

The tom-tom and floor-tom are barely used at all in "Bessie's Blues".[58]

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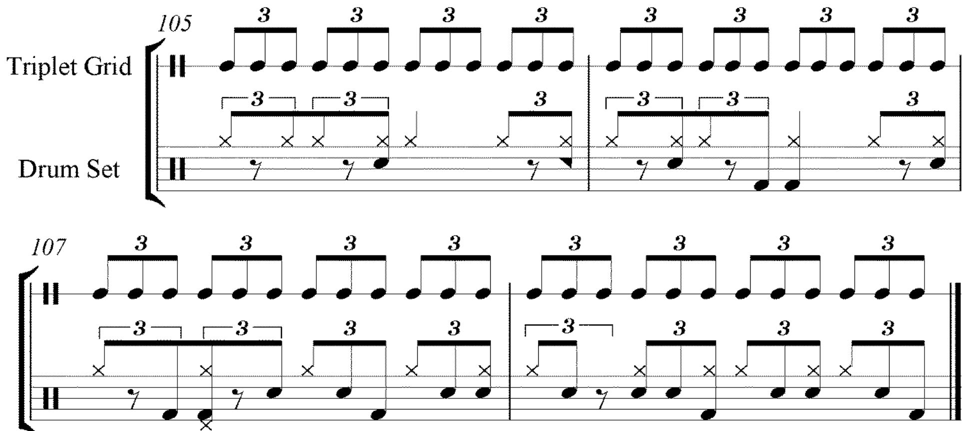
[58] Jones makes greater use of the tom-tom and floor-tom in his accompaniment on some other performances, including "Impressions" (Coltrane 2001). But for the most part he uses these drums very sparingly, except when soloing.

The Triplet Grid: The Foundation of Jones's Style

One of the main features of Jones's style is that from the outset of a performance he offers a thicker, more diverse layer of accompaniment than that of other drummers, regardless of the soloist's actions. It is on top of this layer that Jones interacts with the soloist, choosing either to increase density by filling out his phrases (by using other parts of the drum set), or to decrease density by simplifying the phrase, thereby leaving more space for the soloist.

To create this layer of sound Jones employs not just the usual quarter-beat pulse as the underpinning of his timekeeping, but the full eighth-note triplet grid. While most jazz drummers relate their notions of 'swing feel', i.e., the rhythmic positioning of downbeats and upbeats, to eighth-note triplets, Jones goes further by building his entire accompaniment style on a strict adherence to the full triplet grid. While the resulting feel from this approach is better appreciated aurally than visually, *Example 13* displays four bars from "Bessie's Blues" and illustrates how every beat Jones plays fits neatly into the grid.

Example 13. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 105-108: Adhering to the eighth-note triplet grid



The success of Jones’s ‘thicker’ or ‘busier’ approach to timekeeping is due directly to his reliance on the eighth-note triplet grid. The grid serves to lock everything into place. By feeling the time as a steady stream of full triplets, there is no room to alter the placement of the quarter beat. For example, a device such as playing ‘on top’ of the time (whereby the quarter beat is expressed in a position slightly ahead of where other band members play it, to create energy in the time feel) is not readily available to Jones. With such a consistent, ‘up-the-middle’ time feel, Jones’s drumming always sounds and feels relaxed, regardless of how texturally thick it might become. Drummer Charlie Persip has commented on Jones’s use of triplets:

> It makes you hold back; you can’t rush triplets . . . Elvin gets into all kinds of triplet feelings against the rhythms that he plays that may be in four. Amazing, man! And that’s what makes his music sound so complex. At the same time, it’s like a whole mass of rhythm coming at you, but because it’s so triplety, it is always relaxing. (Berliner 1994:153)

Phrase Methodology

The complete organization of Jones's phrasing system is evident in his performance on "Bessie's Blues". Studying both the complete transcription in Appendix E and the recording reveals:

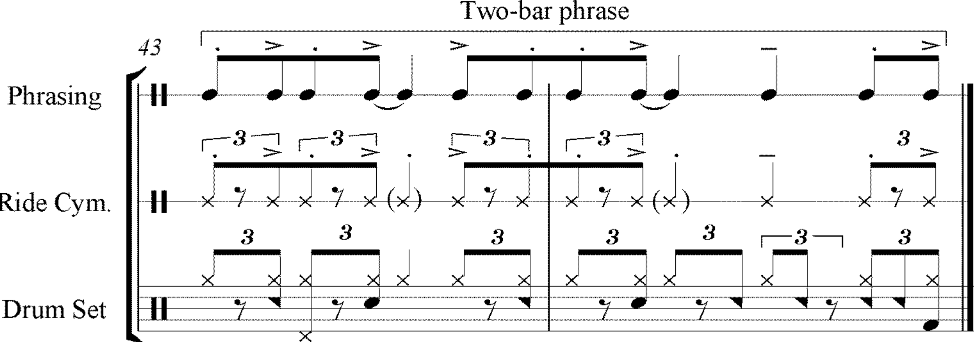
1. his method of phrase construction;
2. his vocabulary of two-bar phrases;
3. the process that he goes through, while performing, to put his phrasing system into play;
4. the source elements that he uses to construct his phrases.

During performance Jones seems to initiate actions on the drum set by either *selecting* a phrase (consciously or unconsciously from a list of preformed possibilities) or *constructing* a phrase (through combining shorter bits of rhythm). It is not possible to prove that Jones does one and not the other; he likely does both. Once he has the phrase in mind he then decides how best to express it on the drum set, choosing which beats to accent and which components of the drum set to assign these accented beats to. These decisions seem based (at least in part) upon musical dialogue with both the soloist he is accompanying and the other group members.

By analyzing transcriptions of his drumming, one can work backwards to arrive at the originally conceived phrases. *Example 14* offers a short demonstration of this process. The transcription features three staves. The middle one is the ride cymbal line, including the accents. This represents what Jones actually plays on the cymbal, although some of

the taps following accented beats are almost inaudible. The lower staff is the complete drum set, showing two dynamic levels for the snare and bass drums (but no accenting on the cymbal). The top staff represents the phrasing I have extracted from the two lower staves. These phrases form the essential rhythmic line the listener actually hears, the message Jones wants to deliver. In other words, the top line is his 'music'; the lower lines show how Jones has distributed this musical line around the drum set.

Example 14. "Bessie's Blues" bars 43-44: Phrase extraction



Jones's phrases are comprised of downbeats (falling on the pulse) and/or upbeats (falling on the third beat of an eighth-note triplet). The middle beat of the triplet rarely comes into play, except as supporting 'filler'. Phrase extraction encompasses all the aforementioned details of Jones's style, including four-limb integration, ride cymbal hand technique, use of the triplet grid and particularly the various levels of dynamics (four on the ride cymbal, two on various drums). It essentially involves recombining the information contained in the two lower staves of the transcription to create the single top line of phrasing. The first

step of this process is to examine the rhythm and accenting of the middle staff (Ride Cym.). Since Jones seems to use the ride cymbal as the main instrument for expressing his time-keeping, this line represents the framework of the phrase. The second step involves examining the lower staff (Drum Set) to find phrase beats that have been distributed around the drum set. There are precepts that determine whether or not a specific beat is actually part of the phrase, part of the triplet filling that supports the phrase, or part of an actual 'drum fill'. These precepts are:

1. Down-strokes (-) and accented down-strokes (>) falling on a pulse beat (whether a quarter note or an eighth note) are incorporated into the phrase unchanged.
2. A down-stroke (-) falling on an upbeat, played on a component of the drum set other than the ride cymbal (e.g., a strong snare drum stroke) usually functions as an accented beat in the phrase.
3. A tap-stroke (·) retains its 'softer beat' function in the phrase except when it falls on the pulse immediately following an accented upbeat. In this case, the tap-stroke is replaced by that upbeat.
4. When the second and third beats of an eighth-note triplet are played consecutively (usually on one or more of the drums and not the ride cymbal) they function as filling within the phrase.[59] An exception to this occurs when

[59] Two consecutive beats played within an eighth-note triplet require the stick to be bounced and are therefore produced by one 'double stroke'. The dynamic result of this

consecutive beats are played so forcefully that they are part of a drum fill, and not part of regular time-keeping.

In *Example 14* three separate accented upbeats, two played on the snare drum and one on the bass drum, are key elements in the expression of Jones's phrase. By placing them on weak (or 'moving') beats and playing them rather loudly, together with a strong cymbal stroke, each one has the potential effect of replacing the following downbeat. By following the two snare drum upbeats with a barely audible light tap on the subsequent downbeat Jones ensures this outcome.[60] The placement of these accented beats and the lack of anything perceptible following them gives the illusion that they are tied to the next downbeat.

The upbeat played on the bass drum functions differently. While strong enough to act as an accented note in the phrase, it is followed by a full down-stroke on the cymbal. Therefore, the upbeat does not simulate being tied over to the following downbeat.

The remaining, lighter snare drum beats in *Example 14* are employed as 'triplet grid chatter' to fill around the phrase, maintaining a dense, but quiet, layer within Jones's accompaniment.

Generally, while Jones uses the cymbal to state much of the phrase, any singular upbeat played strongly using any component of the drum set registers as a vital part of the

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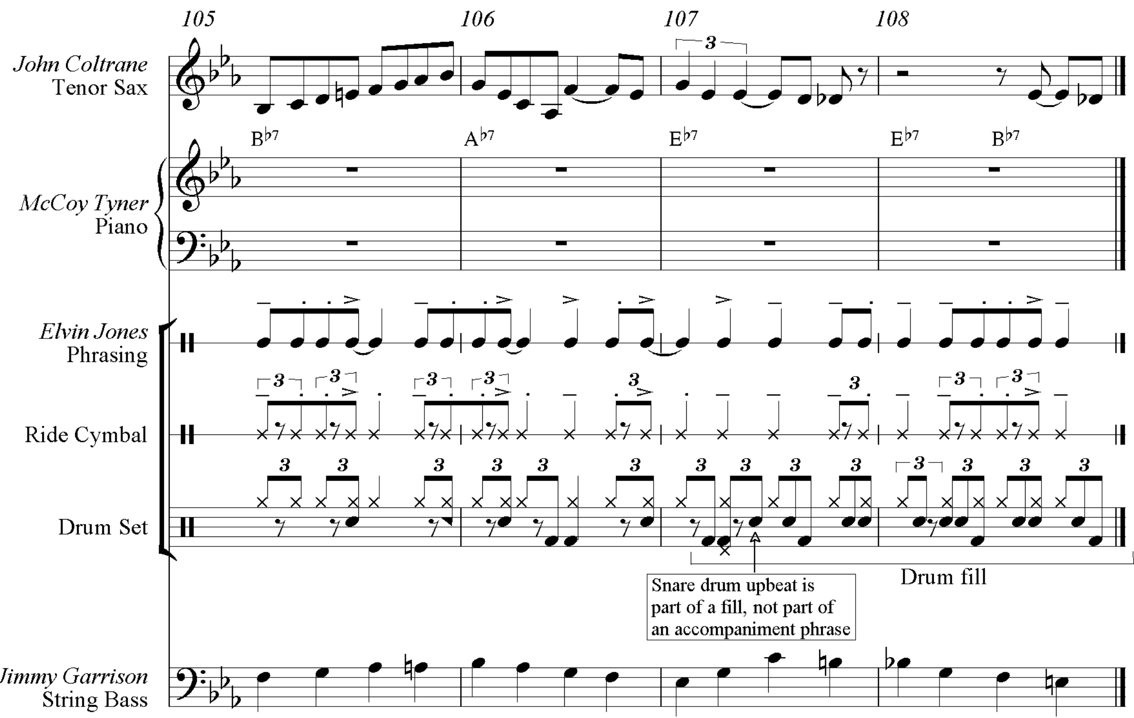
action is that the first beat will always be slightly louder than the second. Since the initial stroke falls on the middle beat of the triplet, it does not qualify to be part of a phrase.

[60] In fact, these particular taps are only distinguishable by mechanically slowing down the recording and enhancing certain cymbal frequencies.

phrase. There are exceptional situations. *Example 15* illustrates a passage where the snare drum played prominently on the upbeat (or the 'and') of two in bar 107 does not warrant inclusion in the top line as part of the phrase. This upbeat is part of a drum fill that Jones plays both to highlight the end of a chorus and to respond to the opening left by Coltrane between saxophone statements. During the first bar of this drum fill there is a visible shift in emphasis from the ride cymbal to the drums. It appears that Jones relegates the cymbal to expressing only quarter beats in order to concentrate on executing the complex drum fill.

Example 15. "Bessie's Blues" bars 105-108: Drum filling as a function of 'call and response' and as a means to highlight the end of a chorus

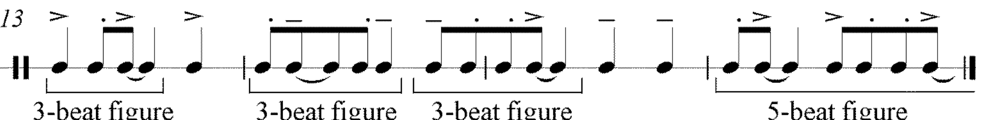


Jones's Vocabulary of Phrases

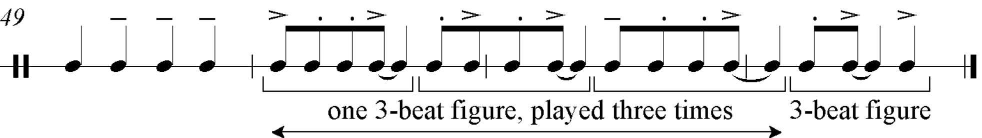
In Appendix E, the top phrasing line for the entire performance of "Bessie's Blues" has been included as an integral part of the transcription. This line has made it possible to discover and assemble Jones's phrasing vocabulary (presented in Appendix F). "Bessie's Blues" yields seventy-one unique two-bar phrases. A study of other Jones recordings in the discography, particularly those from the period 1960-1965, yielded the same list plus an additional five two-bar variations. The collection of seventy-six phrases provided in Appendix F is a testament to the remarkable imagination and versatility inherent in Jones's accompaniment style. Furthermore, the recordings reveal that Jones utilizes virtually his entire phrase vocabulary for almost every performance.

While Jones occasionally composes longer, four-bar statements most of these are formed by linking a pair of two-bar phrases in tandem. There are only seven instances in "Bessie's Blues" where it is clear that Jones has composed a complete four-bar rhythmic idea. These are displayed in *Examples 16-22.* Five of the seven feature a row of four eighth notes straddling the centre bar line. In each case, these eighth notes are part of a three-beat figure. In fact, *Examples 16-22* serve to illustrate just how much Jones relies on three-beat figures in the construction of his phrases.

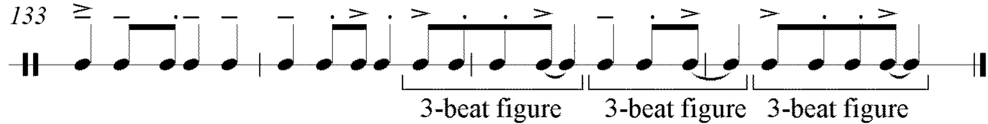
Example 16. "Bessie's Blues" bars 13-16: four-bar phrase



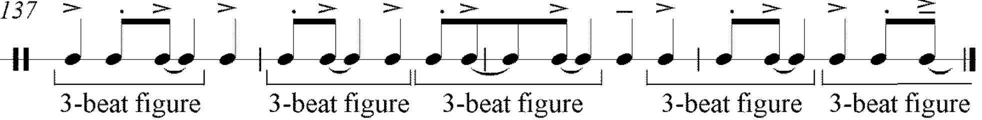
Example 17. "Bessie's Blues" bars 49-52: four-bar phrase



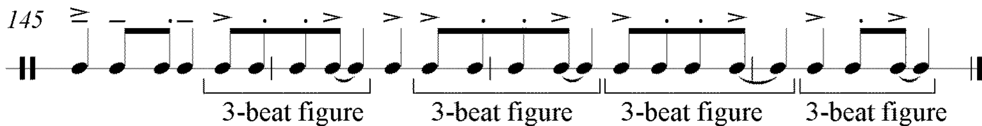
Example 18. "Bessie's Blues" bars 133-136: four-bar phrase



Example 19. "Bessie's Blues" bars 137-140: four-bar phrase

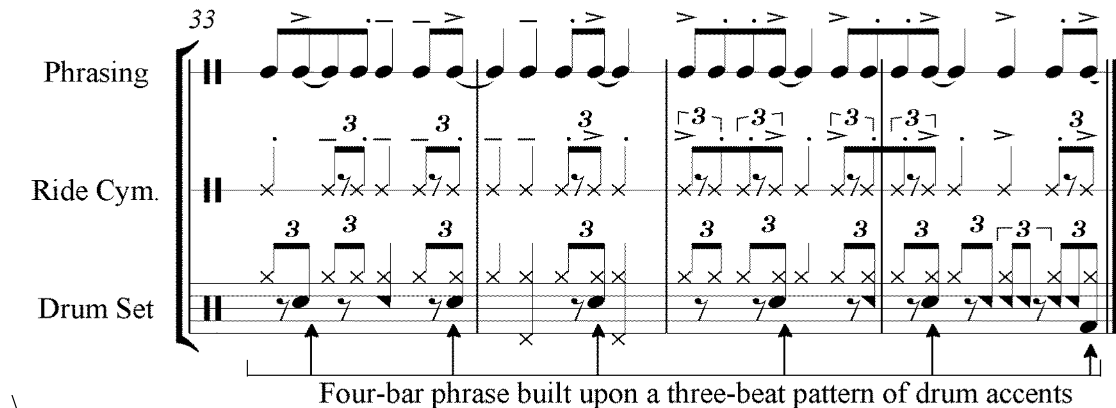


Example 20. "Bessie's Blues" bars 145-148: four-bar phrase



In *Example 21* Jones exploits three-beat groupings again, but with a different approach. This time the four-bar phrase is delineated by the snare drum and (for the final beat of the pattern) bass drum actions. While the ride cymbal also catches these 'shots', the cymbal line does not indicate the shape of the phrase.

Example 21. "Bessie's Blues" bars 33-36: Four bar phrase built upon snare drum accents



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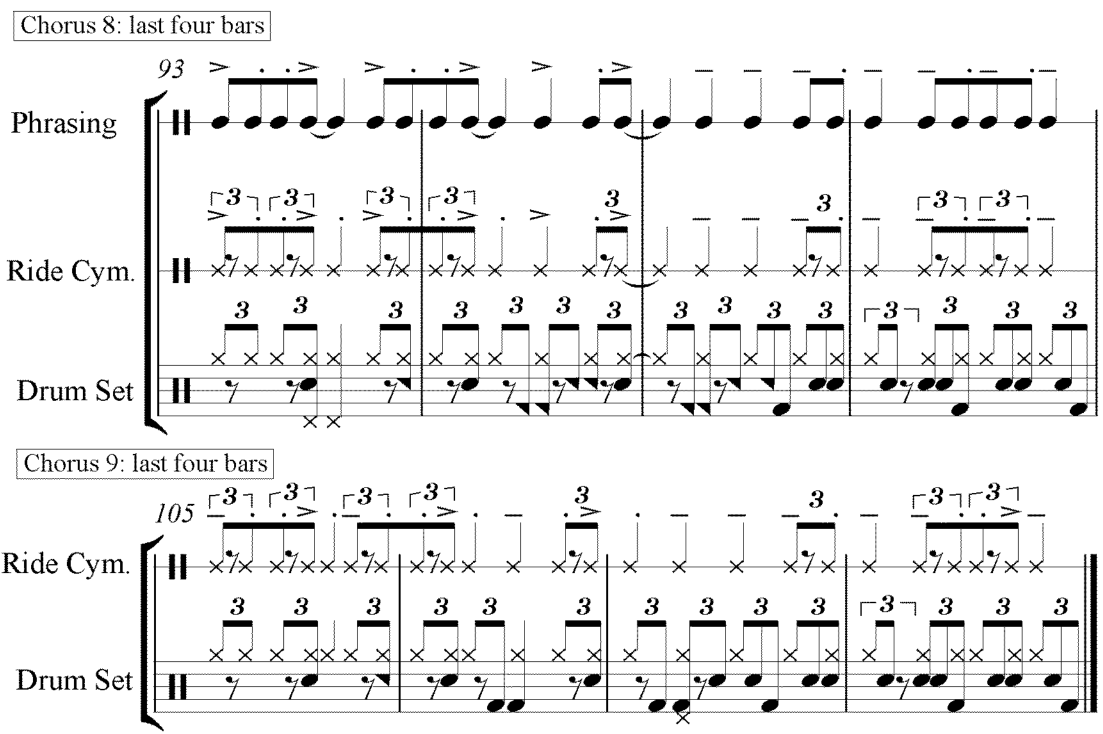
Example 22 displays a four-bar phrase that Jones duplicates in the last four bars of two consecutive choruses. In both performances, his method of filling out the phrase around the drum set is virtually the same, offering convincing evidence that he has remembered this four-bar pattern conceptually as one complete idea.

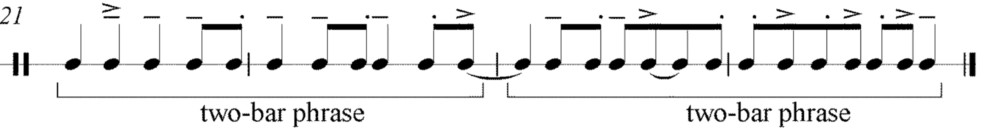
Example 22. "Bessie's Blues" bars 93-96, 105-108: Two similar performances of one four-bar phrase



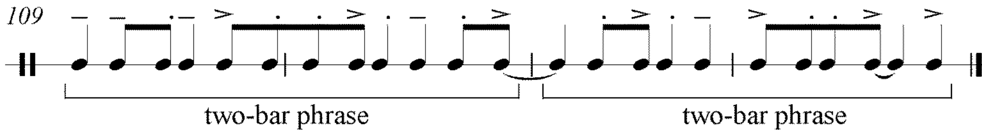
In *Example 22* Jones uses the same snare drum spacing (every three beats) as he does in *Example 21*, although in *Example 22* he begins the pattern later by one quarter beat.

In contrast to *complete* four-bar phrases, there are several examples of *pseudo* four-bar phrases in "Bessie's Blues" where individual two-bar phrases seem to have been tied together. *Examples 23-25* serve to demonstrate this process and to support the notion that Jones usually conceives his phrases in lengths of two bars, often linking such phrases together.

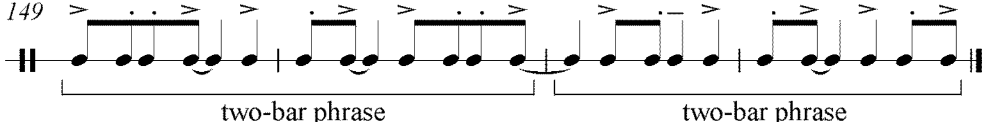
Example 23. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 21-24: Two-bar phrases tied together



Example 24. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 109-112: Two-bar phrases tied together



Example 25. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 149-152: Two bar phrases tied together



Examples 23-25 do not *prove* that Jones was thinking in groups of two bars. It is impossible to be that conclusive. However, they do show that the two ‘halves’ comprising each of these four-bar segments stand alone as individual two-bar phrases. For this reason they have been included as part of the phrase list in Appendix F.

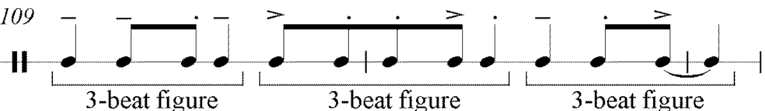
The Ingredients of Phrase Construction

Previous examples have shown that Jones makes use of both three-beat and five-beat figures in phrase construction. He makes much greater use of the former, perhaps because such figures are shorter and therefore will readily fit into more places within a two-bar phrase. Jones seems to be alluding to his use of such figures, which he refers to as clichés, in his comments to Mike Hennessey:

> You can get bogged down in clichés; I don't see how you can avoid them. But it is a matter of how they are put together. and every cliché in music was once a good lick. That's why it becomes a cliché. Even if you have to play clichés all the time, there's enough variety to give you a good vocabulary and endless possibilities of variation. (Hennessey 1966:24)

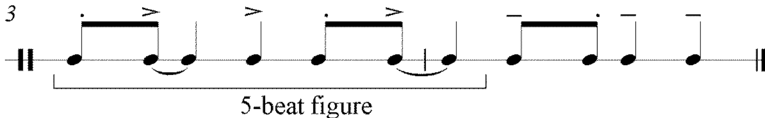
Example 26 shows a two-bar phrase built entirely of three-beat figures. Jones maximizes expression by varying the dynamic accenting from one figure to the next.

Example 26. "Bessie's Blues" Bars 109-110: Two-bar phrase comprised of three-beat figures.

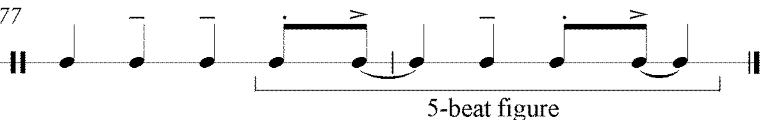


Examples 27-28 show one five-beat figure used to begin and end, respectively, two separate two-bar phrases.

Example 27. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 3-4: Five-beat figure starting a two-bar phrase.

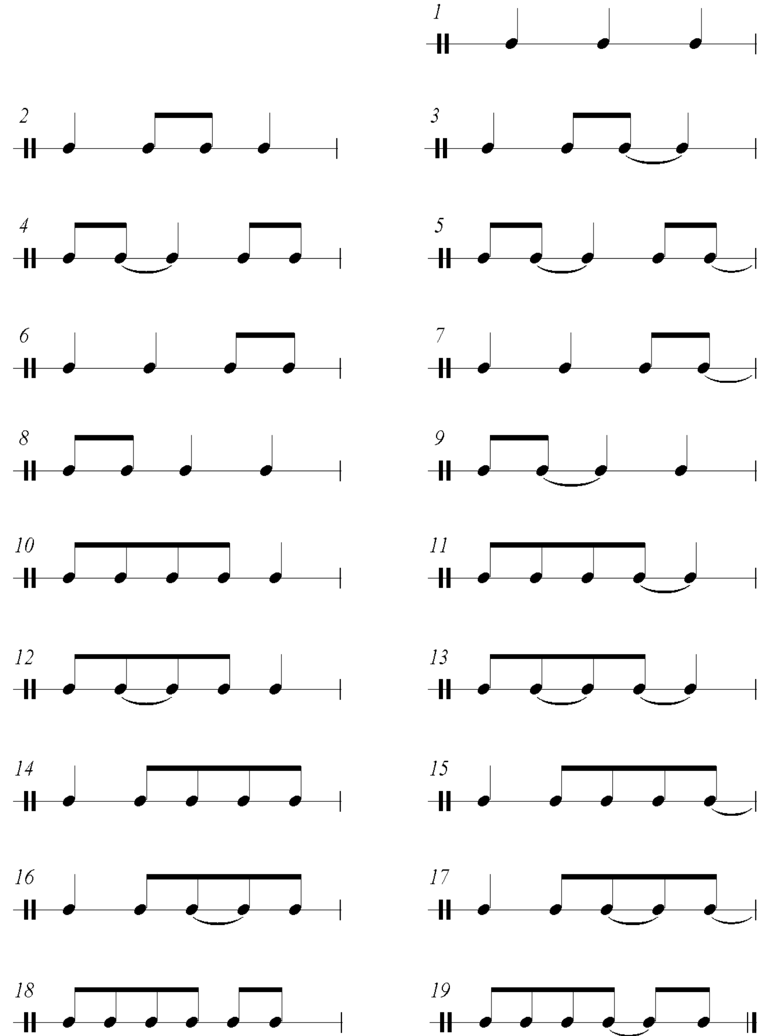


Example 28. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 77-78: Five-beat figure completing a two-bar phrase.



Examples 29-30 each display a list of the *basic* (unaccented) three-beat and five-beat figures respectively that Jones uses throughout “Bessie’s Blues” and in other performances. These figures represent the prime building blocks of Jones’s phrases.

Example 29. “Bessie’s Blues”: Nineteen 3-beat figures



Example 30. "Bessie's Blues": Eight five-beat figures

There are other possible figures and rhythmic permutations, but the focus here is on the ones played by Jones.[61]

Jones might repeat any one figure several times in a performance, but he rarely expresses it the same way twice. The methods he uses to maintain such diversity include:

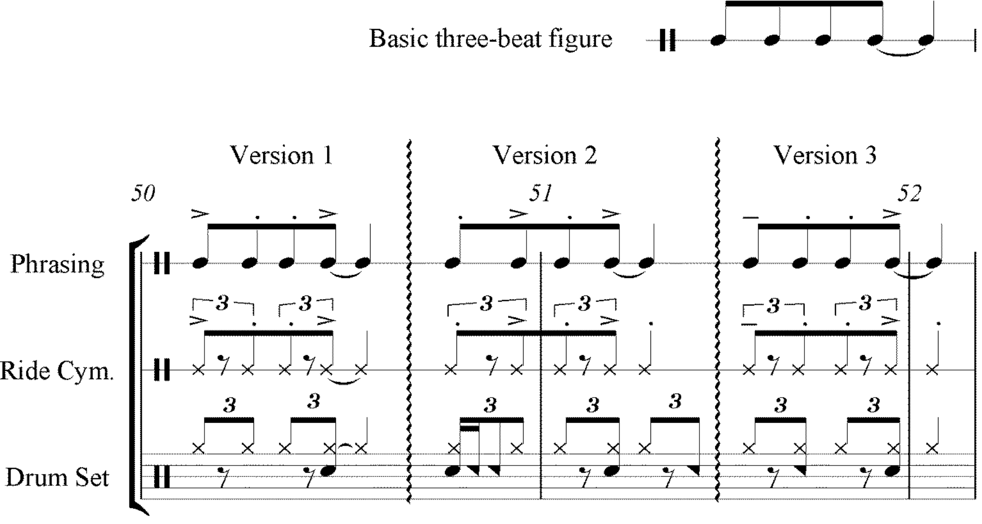
1. varying the dynamics by changing accenting patterns;
2. assigning key beats of the figure to different components of the drum set;
3. choosing diverse parts of the triplet grid to include/exclude as part of the rhythmic fill supporting the figure.

Example 31 demonstrates all three methods as applied to one three-beat figure (i.e., figure 11 from *Example 29*). There are three unique versions of the figure itself, created by altering the pattern of accents. Jones expresses the shape and dynamics of each version

[61] Jim Blackley's drum method book *The Essence of Jazz Drumming* (Blackley 2001) contains more extensive lists of three-beat and five-beat figure variations.

using the ride cymbal. The defining beat of this figure is the tied upbeat (the ‘and of two’). In all three versions, Jones highlights it with a snare drum accent. However, in each case the triplet grid filling surrounding this accent is very different.

Example 31. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 50-52: Variations in the expression of a single three-beat figure



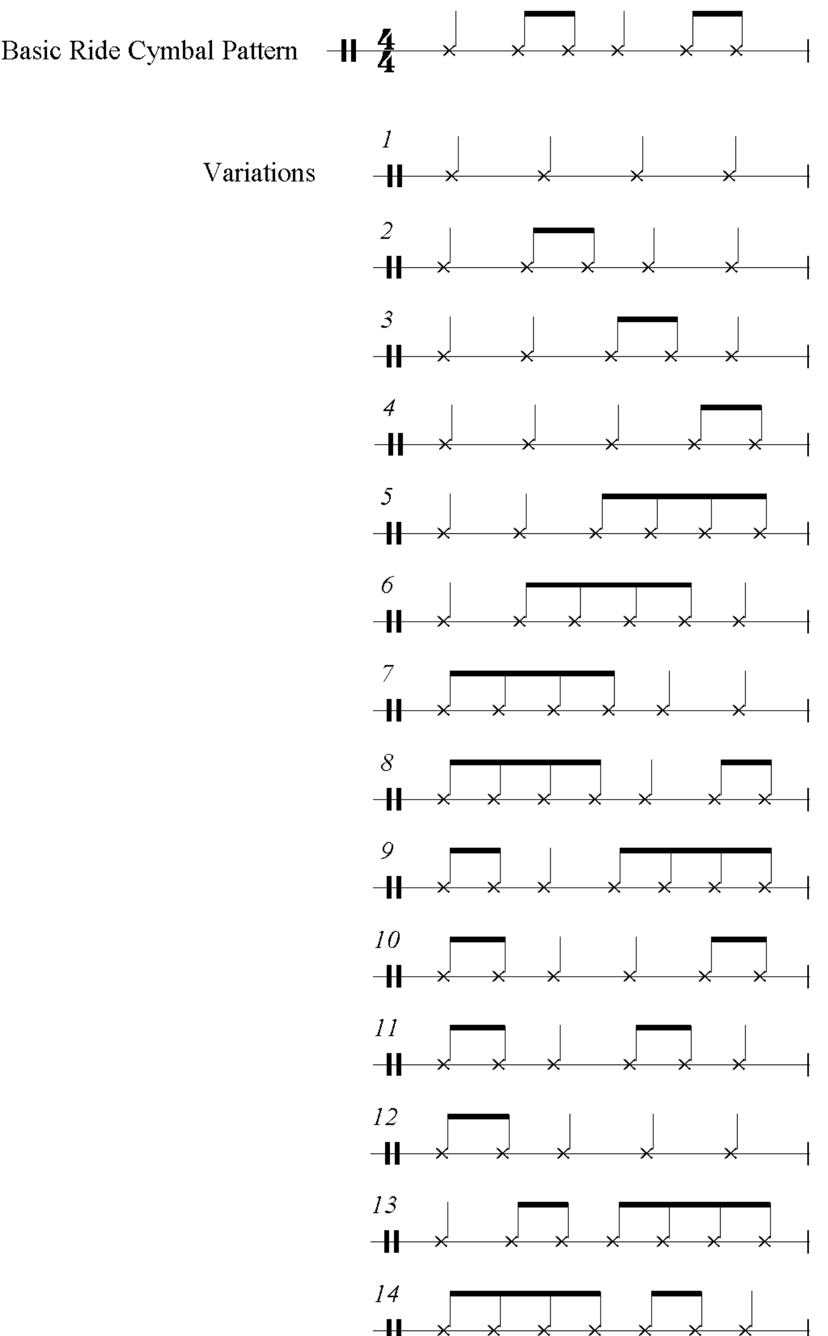
In the above example, the use of repetition combined with displacement (of the three-beat figure) generates *rhythmic* interest and the changes in accenting create *dynamic* interest. Finally, the variety in the triplet grid filling surrounding each figure adds *both* rhythmic and dynamic energy. There is a lot going on in just one two-bar phrase.

The Construction of Rhythmic Figures

There is evidence in “Bessie’s Blues” that Jones constructs his rhythmic figures by drawing upon a separate resource: an inventory of single-bar variations of the fundamental ride cymbal pattern. Given the enduring role of this pattern in jazz drumming history, experimentation with it seems a logical first move for Jones in his quest to expand timekeeping and accompaniment.

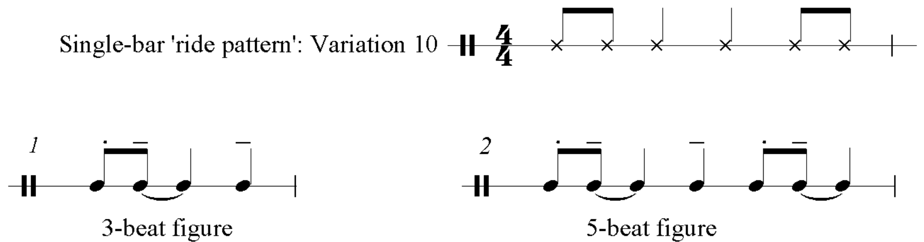
Example 32 lists all the one-bar variations evident in Jones’s performance of “Bessie’s Blues”. It is worth noting that he has utilized every possible rhythmic variation (using downbeats and upbeats) of the ride cymbal pattern for this one performance.

Example 32. **“**Bessie’s Blues”: one-bar variations of the basic ride pattern



By adding ties to certain upbeats in these variations, it is possible to derive every three-beat and five-beat figure played by Jones. *Example 33* demonstrates this process. One variation of the ride cymbal pattern (number ten from the list above) yields two of Jones's most oft-used figures.

Example 33. Deriving three-beat and five-beat figures by adding ties and accents to one variation of the ride cymbal pattern



In *Example 33,* the three-beat figure derives from using only part of Variation 10, while the five-beat figure is derived by tying the last eighth note over to the next downbeat.

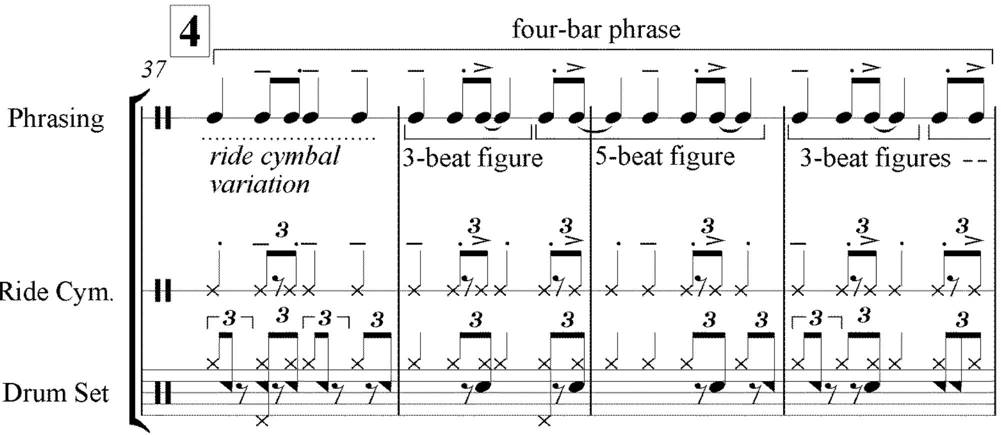
There is a possible hierarchy to the three levels of rhythmic organization discussed in this chapter:

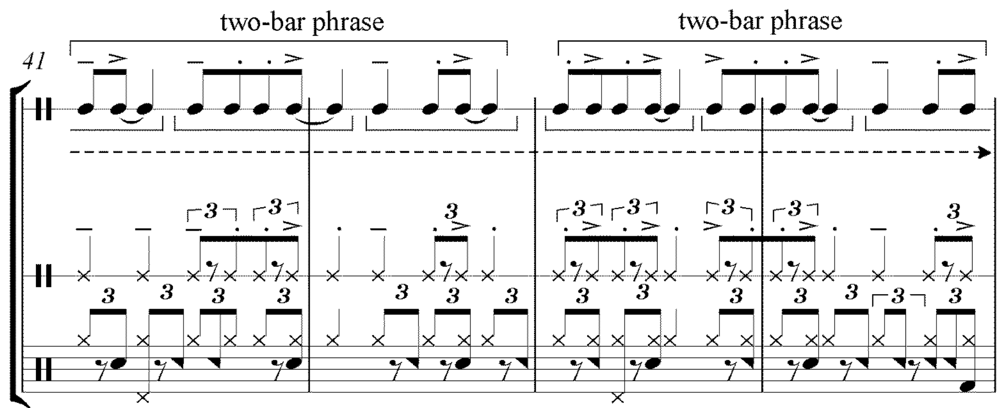
1. phrases (two-bar and four-bar) are comprised of
2. figures (three-beat and five-beat) which are created by adding ties and accents to
3. single-bar variations of the ride cymbal pattern.

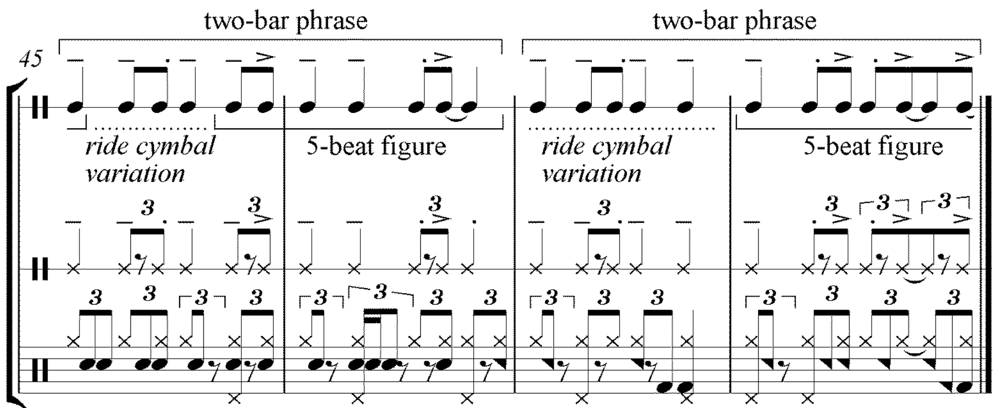
Example 34 highlights how these three levels operate within the phrasing line. It also demonstrates how particular parts of the phrases are assigned to various components of the drum set.

In addition to being raw material for the creation of rhythmic figures (number three in the above hierarchy), Jones occasionally uses a ‘ride cymbal pattern variation’ as a sort of timekeeping ‘breather’ between episodes of three-beat and five-beat figures and as a framework for passages that have a lot of filling on the drums. Such cymbal variations are generally devoid of the heavy accenting that usually occurs in his three-beat and five-beat figures. In *Example 34*, three such incidents are indicated with dotted lines (in bars 45 and 47).

Example 34. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 37-48 (fourth chorus): the components of Jones’s phrase construction





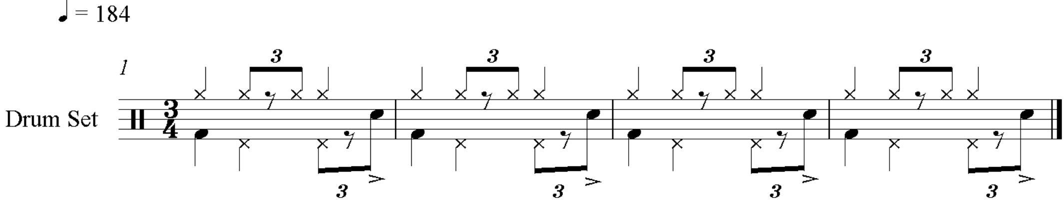


Accompaniment in 3/4 Time

A significant portion of Coltrane's concert repertoire in the 1960's consisted of compositions in 3/4 time signature, including "My Favourite Things" (Coltrane 1988c), "Spiritual", "Greensleeves" (Coltrane 1997), "The Inchworm" (Coltrane 1963), Afro-Blue", "Your Lady" (Coltrane 1989) and others. Prior to joining Coltrane Jones had minimal experience playing jazz in 3/4. In fact, in the chronology of recordings collected for this thesis Jones's earliest performance in 3/4 does not occur not until 1959, following a long series of albums made with various leaders. On Tommy Flanagan's trio album *Lonely Town* (Flanagan 1959) the melody to "Glitter and be Gay" is stated in 3/4, then the trio switches to 4/4 for the soloing. Coltrane's 1960 recording of "My Favourite Things" is Jones's first recorded performance completely in 3/4.

While the bulk of jazz has always been performed in 4/4, experimentation with 3/4 had occurred years earlier. Fats Waller's famous "Jitterbug Waltz" was popular by the early 1940s. Randy Weston composed and performed a number of jazz songs in 3/4, including "Pam's Waltz" (Weston 1969) and "Little Niles" (Weston 1957), recorded in 1955 and 1956 respectively. Sonny Rollins's "Valse Hot" (Rollins 1963) was also recorded in 1956. Perhaps the most significant project contemporary with Elvin Jones was Max Roach's 1957 recording *Jazz in 3/4 Time* (Roach 1976), where every song on the album is in 3/4. On this project, Roach's accompaniment involves more-or-less the same one-bar 'jazz waltz' or 'swing waltz' rhythm for every song. *Example 35* illustrates this style.

Example 35. “Blues Waltz” bars 1-4: Max Roach’s jazz waltz concept



In “Blues Waltz” Roach has applied some of his 4/4 bop style jazz drumming conventions to 3/4. He plays a steady timekeeping pattern on the ride cymbal and hi-hat. The snare drum, usually used to express improvised comping beats, is employed on the third upbeat of each bar, as part of Roach’s jazz waltz pattern. Similarly, the role of the bass drum has been relegated to playing beat one of every bar. The reason for this rather conservative approach may simply be that in 1957 jazz in 3/4 was still considered something of a novelty and not yet part of the jazz mainstream. Roach’s style may have set some sort of precedent for jazz drumming in 3/4. Certainly, Roach maintained his jazz waltz approach for many years, in spite of other developments in the music.[62]

In this context, Jones’s drumming in 3/4 is groundbreaking because he does not follow Roach’s stylistic precedent at all. Instead, Jones applies all the attributes of his own 4/4 concept to accompaniment in 3/4. *Example 36* illustrates how Jones uses his vocabulary of three-beat figures, along with all the other elements of his style, to

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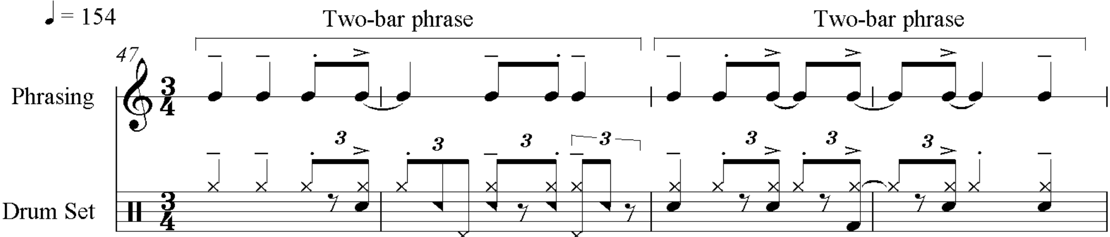
[62] Roach’s politically charged 1961 recording of “Garvey’s Ghost” on *Percussion Bittersweet* (Roach 1966) features very progressive arranging, Latin percussion, soloists playing harmonically free at times plus avant-garde vocals. Yet, Roach uses the exact same jazz waltz rhythm for his drum part as he does on his 1957 recording of “Blues Waltz”.

construct phrases in two-bar lengths in his accompaniment on Coltrane's 1961 recording of "Greensleeves". Organizing his timekeeping in multi-bar units (as opposed to Roach's single-bar units), together with the wide dynamic range he achieves through accenting, allows Jones to create similar tension (and release) characteristics using three-beat figures in 3/4 that he does in 4/4.

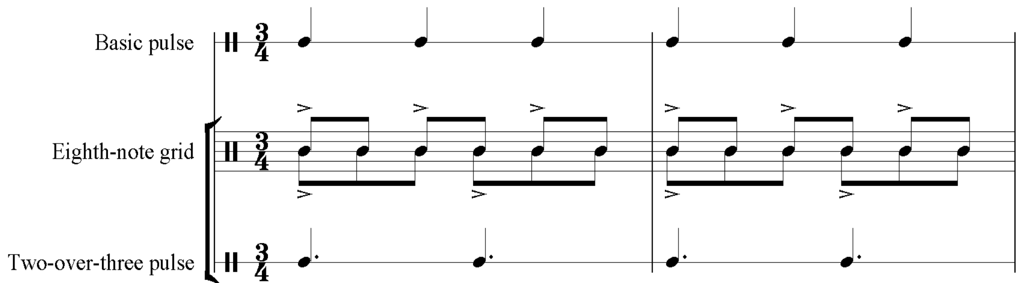
Example 36. "Greensleeves" bars 47-50: Jones's accompaniment to the first four bars of the melody



During his tenure with Coltrane, Jones developed his 3/4 method further. In my view, the main contribution he made to jazz drumming in this time signature is his particular concept of feeling the pulse, not as three beats to the bar but as two. In the music of many cultures around the world, the notion of subdividing a bar of 3/4 into two halves is hardly a revelation, particularly where the rhythm is structured in even eighth notes.[63] *Example 37* shows how a basic 'two-over-three' pulse can be easily generated by grouping the six even eighth notes of each bar into two groups of three.

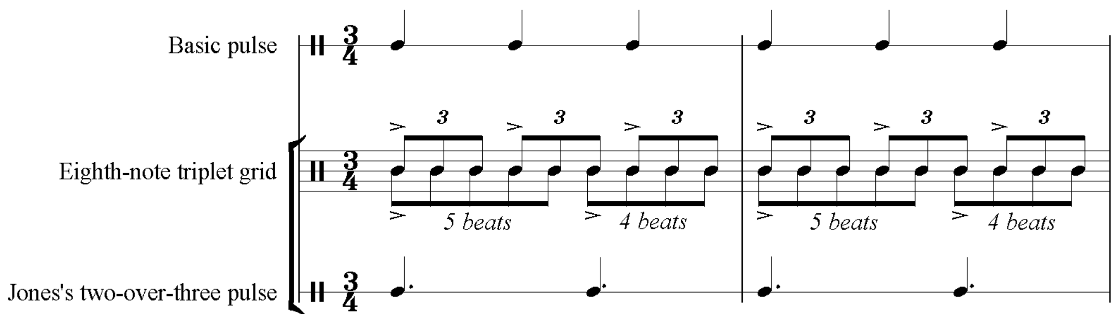
[63] For example, sesquiáltera meter, common in Spanish and Hispanic Latin American music. "*Sesquiáltera* features the thoroughgoing juxtaposition (vertically and/or horizontally) of compound duple (6/8) and simple triple (3/4) meters over the span of six eighth-note beats" (Schechter 1999:474).

Example 37. Generating a ‘two-over-three’ pulse for two bars



In the 1950s, however, the few jazz tunes that were played in 3/4 were performed in swing feel, as jazz waltzes with clearly three beats to the bar. However, Jones’s conception of a two-over-three pulse is not based upon the rhythmic division described above. His approach is necessarily different due to his reliance on the eighth-note triplet grid. With nine eighth notes to the bar (instead of six), it is impossible to divide a bar of 3/4 into two equal halves. Jones’s method requires him to award five eighth notes to the first half of a 3/4 bar, but only four to the second half. This unequal rhythmic division creates the characteristic ‘push-pull’ or ‘tension-and-release‘ effect evident in Jones’s drumming on such performances as “Afro-Blue” and “Your Lady” (Coltrane 1989). *Example 38* illustrates Jones’s unequal division of the bar:

Example 38. Jones's system of creating a 'two-over-three' pulse in 3/4 time signature



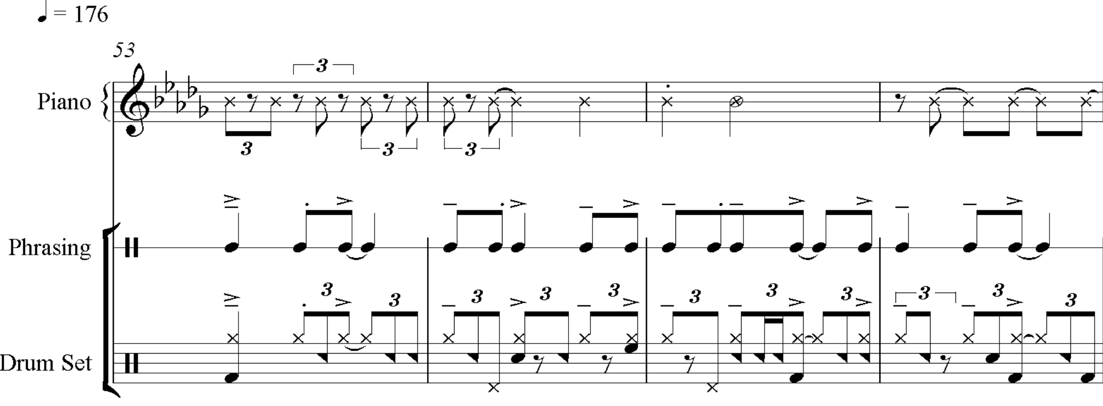
The significance of the unique 'feel' described in the above example cannot be overstated. Fully developed by the early 1960s, it became the basis for much of Jones's subsequent playing in 3/4. Jones often enhanced its effect by emphasizing the two key division beats, usually with the bass drum. His accompaniment on Coltrane's "Your Lady" represents the peak of his 3/4-style. Within this one performance, the focus of Jones's accompaniment method shifts back and forth between phrasing (in two-bar and four-bar groups) and repeating the two-over-three rhythm (to create power). Regardless of which direction he chooses, everything he plays is supported with fills that fit the eighth-note triplet grid.

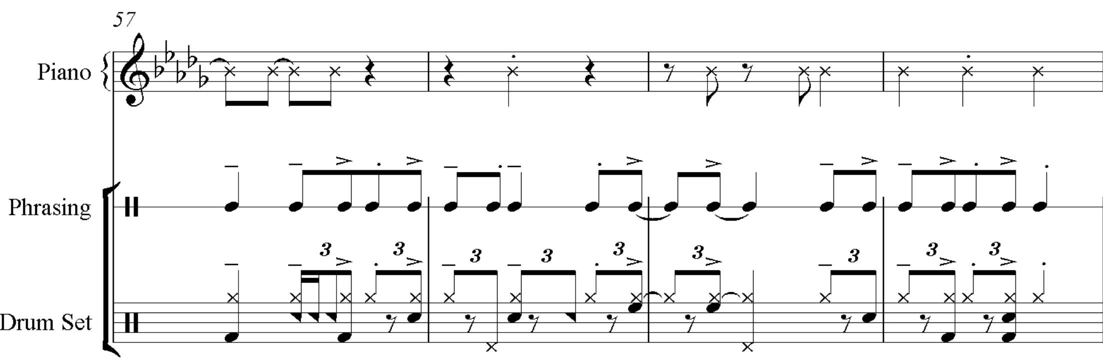
Example 39 demonstrates the two-over-three approach. It is one of the few times in Jones's work with Coltrane that the ride cymbal maintains a steady, unchanging pattern. In this situation the ride cymbal part is aligned with the bass drum figure. Each component of the drum set has a specific part in filling out the two-over-three pulse. In bars 41 and 43, the rhythm of the saxophone melody matches the two-over-three pulse.

Example 39. "Your Lady" bars 41-48: Jones's use of the entire drum set to fill a two-over-three pulse anchored by the bass drum and ride cymbal

During the rhythm section interlude, Jones switches back to his phrasing approach, as illustrated in *Example 40*. In this section, Jones seems to be constructing four-bar phrases. So dense is his triplet filling that it almost overshadows the core phrases that the filling supports.

Example 40. "Your Lady" bars 53-60: Jones switches from his two-over-three concept to phrasing in four-bar groups





CHAPTER IV

THE CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF JONES'S STYLE

John Coltrane's quartet recordings from 1960-1965 continue to attract the attention of jazz fans, professional musicians, music students and writers. The successful individual careers of pianist McCoy Tyner, bassist Jimmy Garrison and drummer Elvin Jones that followed this period were certainly launched by the fact of their membership in Coltrane's group.[64] The freedom of expression and interplay that Coltrane encouraged (perhaps demanded) among the musicians has been discussed elsewhere in articles and interviews. Therefore, it is not surprising that some writers have taken the position that the unique instrumental style exhibited by each quartet member developed somehow as part of the Coltrane experience.

In the case of Elvin Jones, the recordings collected for this project indicate otherwise. Although Jones developed his accompaniment style to its peak level during his membership in the John Coltrane quartet, he had apparently formulated the style at least a decade before joining Coltrane's band.

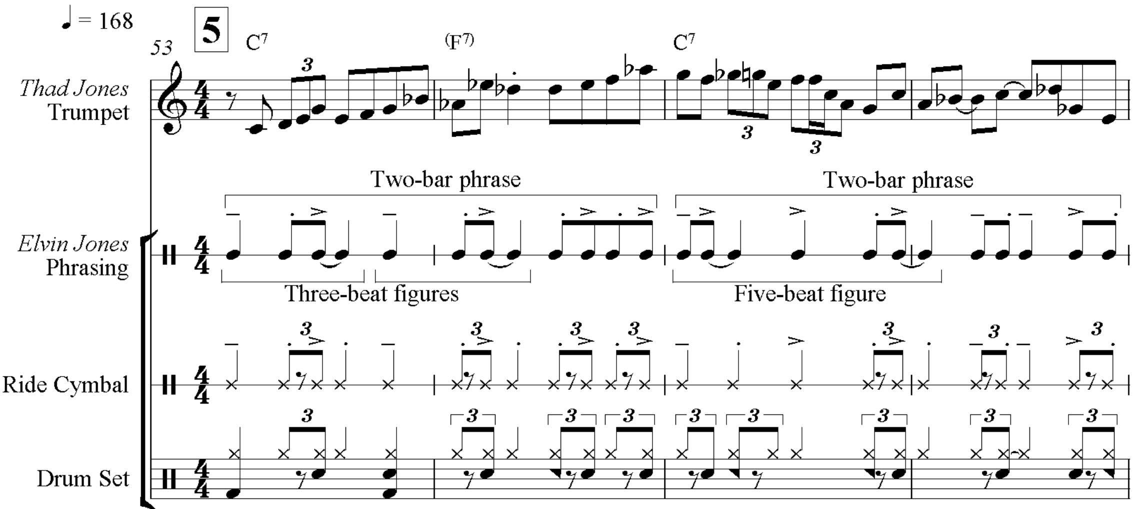
The Billy Mitchell Quintet recording of "Compulsory" (Mitchell 2003) from Jones's first known recording session contains most of the drummer's style characteristics heard on later Coltrane recordings. Although listed in several

[64] By 1962, all three musicians had been awarded recordings under their own leadership by the *Impulse!* record label.

discographies as occurring in 1948, this session may have actually taken place a year later.[65]

Regardless of the exact date of the session, the performance of "Compulsory" is remarkable. Even though the melody is arranged as a 'shuffle blues' with the drums playing a strong backbeat, Jones seems to move away from this rhythm toward his own style of accompaniment increasingly with each successive solo. *Example 41* demonstrates his support for the second one of the performance, a trumpet solo by Thad Jones. It reveals the drummer's use of cymbal phrasing, complete with accenting and dynamics, and his method of assigning certain upbeats of the phrase to the snare and bass drums. There is also evidence of three-beat and five-beat figures in his phrase construction.

Example 41. "Compulsory" bars 53-56: Jones's accompaniment to the first four bars of the trumpet solo



[65] Jones was not discharged from military service until 1949, so unless the recording was made while he was in Detroit on leave, it is likely that the recording session did not occur as early as 1948.

Although the trumpet solo only lasts one twelve-bar chorus, Jones's accompaniment displays the above-mentioned characteristics throughout.

This is not the case for his accompaniment to the tenor sax and vibraphone solos. There Jones seems to be playing in a style best described as moving in and out of a shuffle rhythm, with some cymbal phrasing occurring here and there. This observation, however, should not lead to the conclusion that Jones's style at the time of this recording was still at some primitive or uncertain stage of development (*Example 41* proves otherwise), but rather that Jones was already a very sensitive accompanist who could adapt to each soloist's individual style. Furthermore, unlike the full-blown exploratory music of Coltrane yet to come, Jones was playing arrangements that called for a variety of 'feels' and approaches. Having such a range in technical ability and music sensibility was one of the drummer's goals from the outset. In a 1966 article, based on an interview with Jones, Mike Hennessey states:

> He said his style evolved naturally, without his consciously trying to be "different," but that he always had a definite idea of the way different pieces should be played and felt that the drums should complement the soloist and blend with the rest of the group. (Hennessey 1966:24)

Clearly, the style Jones later employed with Coltrane was already formed and being used early in the drummer's career.

Upon hearing the Billy Mitchell recording for the first time, it seems remarkable that Jones played as strongly and openly as he did. This was not typical of supportive jazz drumming in the late 1940s. However, the Billy Mitchell group was a 'working band', in fact the house band at the Blue Bird Club in Detroit. As a member of this ensemble (until

1951), Jones played jazz steadily with a stable of highly skilled musicians and with a variety of guest artists, including Miles Davis, Sonny Stitt, Tommy Flanagan, Pepper Adams, Barry Harris, Kenny Burrell, Milt Jackson, Lou Hayes and Yusef Lateef.[66] It seems likely that this musical environment allowed Jones to develop his unique method without much restraint. In an interview with drummer Art Taylor, Jones discusses his work at the Bluebird Club and the all-night jam sessions that occurred at the River Rouge Restaurant in nearby Del Ray:

> That was a really nice period and it contributed a lot to my development in the music business and to my awareness of the need for a great deal of self-discipline...I look on that period as a valuable part of my education. I really had the chance to play as much as I wanted, the way I wanted to and with people who had the same thing in mind concerning their instruments. I heard some of the best solos and had some of the most emotional experiences I've ever had in my life during that time. Everybody would come there. (Taylor 1982:222)

In the same interview Jones comments on the supportive social environment of his early years in Detroit:

> There was a great interest and an undercurrent of support for the music all over Detroit and that area. Everybody loved the music. They loved to see a young cat develop, to follow his development and to encourage and support him. (Taylor 1982:219)

Pianist Tommy Flanagan, originally a Detroit musician, describes Jones's drumming style with Billy Mitchell's Blue Bird Club band:

> It seemed to me that Thad and Billy were already fully developed, and Elvin was playing not far from the way he does now. He was always an interesting part of the band because no one else in Detroit was playing like that, and the more you play with him the more you CAN play with him. (Bjorn & Gallert 2001:131-132)

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[66] A description of Jones's early career is provided in *Before Motown: a history of jazz in Detroit, 1920-60* (Bjorn & Gallert 2001:129-133).

Flanagan's comments and the recorded evidence on "Compulsory" make it clear that Jones's approach, from the outset of his career, represented something new and unique in jazz drumming. Coltrane certainly noticed it whenever Elvin Jones was called to substitute for Philly Joe Jones in the Miles Davis band. In fact, Elvin Jones recalls that Coltrane offered him a position in his group before it had actually been formed, presumably because Coltrane was interested in Jones's new approach:

> I had occasion to substitute for Philly Joe Jones once or twice. During this time John was thinking about forming his own group and he asked me if, and when, this happened would I consent to play with him. And I told him I certainly would and when the time came he only had to ask me. (Gross 2004)

With most of the elements of his style already in place on his first recording, we are left with the obvious question: how did this method originate? Jones has provided, in various interviews, the names of several musicians who apparently inspired and influenced him:

> . . . the people in the business who were my heroes, and still are   Jo Jones, Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Kenny Clarke, Art Blakey, Roy Haynes, Max Roach, and Philly Joe Jones   and make sure you mention them all. (Hennessey 1966:24)

Before Jones's career began, he was particularly enamoured of Sid Catlett's drumming:

> I was in the army air corps when I first heard . . . what I thought was some of the greatest music that I've ever heard in my life, on a recording. I heard Dizzy Gillespie, and Big Sid Catlett was the drummer, who I tell you was just amazing. And they played Dizzy's composition called Salt Peanuts, and Sid Catlett played an eight-bar introduction with brushes. And I never heard anything so beautiful, so precise, so musical, that I was completely enraptured by that. From that point on, I've listened to every record I could possibly get . . . I've been fascinated from that point on. I've never lost that enthusiasm. (Gross 2004)

There were other drummers that attracted Jones's attention:

> Sonny Greer. Those recordings he made with Duke Ellington during the late '30s and early '40s. Papa Jo Jones . . . playing the cymbal pattern on "One O'Clock Jump." That was the most beautiful sound I'd ever heard in my life. Then, of

> course, there was Chick Webb. There was a record this music enthusiast played for me, because he knew I wanted to play drums, and it was "Liza." The introduction was an eight-bar drum solo, and in those eight bars I could hear everything that Max Roach or Gene Krupa or Buddy Rich became. (Meredith 2001)

Burt Korall has suggested that the style of Jones (and other drummers) was made possible because of the drumming of Roy Haynes:

> The diminutive, self-contained drummer was crucial to establishing what the late drummer-teacher-percussion historian Charlie Perry called "the new thing in jazz drumming." Haynes did this by coming up with so many things first. As an accompanist relating to other instruments and as a soloist, he paved the way for Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, and others who bear collective responsibility for moving the instrument into relatively unexplored regions... (Korall 2002:158)

Undoubtedly all of the aforementioned musicians, and likely many more, inspired Jones in some way. However, there is nothing evident in the drumming of Roy Haynes or any of the other drummers listed that resembles the unique style employed by Jones on "Compulsory". It seems that Jones's approach began with Jones:

> I grew up with the old methods and learned them, and then I had to reject them. Not really reject, but rather I chose to use the parts of them that suited me, which isn't actually a rejection. I think it's an improvement. It adds more responsibility to the drummer, but it also offers greater opportunities. When approached properly, it broadens the musical scope of the player. (Mattingly 1998:25)

Following his first Detroit session, Jones performed on a long list of diverse recordings for various leaders until he joined Coltrane in 1960. While there are only minor developments in Jones's style evident on the recordings during this period, he had one experience that may have been pivotal in the eventual development of his two-over-three concept and other rhythmic superimpositions that appeared later in his drumming

with Coltrane. In 1957, Jones heard a tape recording of a Haitian drummer that impressed him very much:

> I thought he was five people, listening to him. This really intrigued me, so from that point in time I began to pursue African traditional music. The quest led me to [music of African] pygmies and [of the sub-Saharan] Dogon. There's a lot of music in the Belgian Congo, and these were tremendous sources of inspiration. (Kahn 2003:115)

Whatever seeds were planted by this experience, there was no *immediate* change in his style. In fact, the years 1948-1960 represent an era of music performance in Jones's career that is quite distinct from his activity with Coltrane. It is useful to divide Jones's career into three chronological sections:

1) the pre-Coltrane years, 1948-1959;
2) the Coltrane years, 1960-1965;
3) the post-Coltrane years, 1966-2004.[67]

The Pre-Coltrane Years: 1948-1959

Following his first recording in Detroit with Billy Mitchell, Jones moved to New York to further his career. At first Jones's style was met with some resistance by musicians who found it hard to play with. When asked if he lost work because of his approach, Jones responded:

> Well, I'll put it this way: My telephone didn't ring as often as it could have. But one never knows, maybe they just didn't know about me. I don't think it's that

[67] This thesis is concerned only with the first two periods.

> important now, but at the time...It's hard for a young person when you feel that what you're doing is correct, but you're not fully accepted. (Mattingly 1998:26)

In spite of this perception, in the years leading up to 1960 there were many leaders who hired Jones for recording sessions including: Miles Davis, J. J. Johnson, Art Farmer, Thad Jones, Kenny Burrell, Paul Chambers, Bobby Jaspar, Sonny Rollins, Pepper Adams, Red Rodney, Steve Lacy, Tommy Flanagan, Herb Geller, Jimmy Forrest, Curtis Fuller, Julian Priester among others.[68] These diverse recordings collectively illustrate a much wider range in Jones's accompaniment than is found in his later work with Coltrane. Jones is heard sometimes employing his phrasing approach, other times not. Some of the performances feature dense triplet filling while in others the comping seems sparse. There is both brush and mallet work. Jones's drumming is often very strong and prominent, other times it is quite restrained. In spite of the fact that some musicians found Jones's drumming difficult to play with, it seems likely that the various leaders who hired Jones were attracted to his compatibility and sensitivity as much as his unique drumming method. Certain performances on recordings from this pre-Coltrane period highlight both the wide range and various stylistic aspects of Jones's accompaniment and are therefore worth noting.

Following his first session, the next chronological opportunity to hear Jones is several years later on a Miles Davis session recorded in July 1955 (Davis 1973). Of the four tunes recorded, three are slow: Jones plays brushes and the drums are very low in the mix. Although the remaining song "There's No You" is faster (♩=M.120), Jones gives a

[68] These recordings are listed in Appendix A.

relatively conservative performance with little or no evidence of cymbal phrasing. Jones does make use of the triplet grid as the foundation for his comping and fills, and he adds some drive to his cymbal work by emphasizing the skip beat on the cymbal, often doubled with a snare drum shot. There are any number of factors that might explain why his approach is more reserved on this session. One possibility is that Davis may have given Jones specific directions on how to play. Another factor is that, unlike the earlier Detroit session, this is not a working, rehearsed band. Jones may not have felt as comfortable with the material. On the other hand, the overall feel of this date is somewhat subdued and perhaps Jones simply played in a style he felt appropriate for the music and the mood. Whatever the reasons, there is nothing on this recording that comes close to the spirited performance on his earlier Detroit session.

On J. J. Johnson's recording *J is for Jazz* (Johnson 1996), recorded a year later in July 1956, Jones's drumming more closely resembles the style of his first session, perhaps more refined. There is evidence of cymbal phrasing at various times during the horn solos. It is interesting to note that at faster tempos, Jones reverts to a more conventional bop-style approach, using the basic ride cymbal pattern with no variation. This is the case on "Overdrive", performed at ♩=M.312. At an Art Farmer session in November, 1956 the same approach is used on "Reminiscing" (Farmer 1995), performed at ♩=M.312. One might be tempted to conclude that at this point in his development Jones does not yet have the technique to negotiate cymbal phrasing at such a fast tempo. However, it is interesting to note that just three months later on another J. J. Johnson

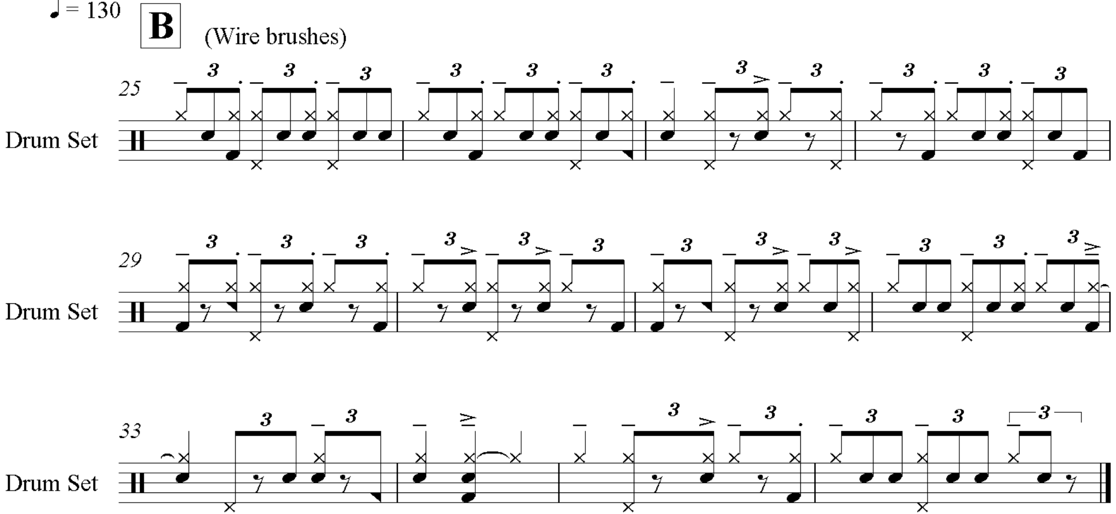
recording, *Live at Café Bohemia 1957* (Johnson 1991), Jones does use cymbal phrasing in his accompaniment on both “Bernie’s Tune” and “Dailie Double”, performed at tempos of ♩=M.320 and ♩=M.304 respectively. Clearly technical limitations have nothing to do with Jones’s choices in accompaniment style for fast tempos. Instead, this points to Jones’s desire to let the musical situation dictate his approach. Furthermore, at this time Jones was a full-time member of the J. J. Johnson quintet. An established, working band, this quintet likely had specific arrangements that called for certain individual approaches to accompaniment.

“Like What Is This?” on *The Cool Sound of Pepper Adams* (Adams 1992), recorded in November 1957, exhibits Jones performing in a style almost identical to his later work with Coltrane. He uses cymbal phrasing, with lots of dynamics in the cymbal line, and full triplet filling on the drums. Two other songs from this album, “Bloos, Blooze, Blues” and “Settin’ Red” demonstrate two completely different approaches to drum accompaniment on a twelve-bar blues. On the former Jones plays a straight ride cymbal pattern with the skip beat emphasized. On the latter Jones uses cymbal phrasing supported with triplet filling throughout.

“Beaubien” on *Pepper Adams with Jimmy Knepper Quintet* (Adams 1958), recorded in March 1958, features Jones playing a steady shuffle rhythm with bass drum accents from beginning to end. Jones rarely played a shuffle on his recordings. On “Adams In The Apple” (from the same session), the melody section features Jones playing the hi-hat cymbals very dynamically, using phrasing supported by the snare drum.

Tommy Flanagan's recording *Lonely Town* (Flanagan 1959) presents Jones in a piano trio setting playing arrangements of songs from the Broadway show *On the Town*. Of particular interest is the song "Glitter and be Gay", the first recording in 3/4 time by Jones. While only the melody is performed in 3/4 (the arrangement switches to 4/4 for the piano solo), Jones's performance on brushes displays most of the elements of his later 3/4 work with Coltrane. Even though the arrangement calls for anything but aggressive drumming, Jones's 3/4-style moves far beyond the jazz waltz approach of Max Roach (where the bass drum marks the downbeat of every bar). After playing the 'A' section of the melody rather conservatively, Jones opens up his approach for the 'B' section. *Example 42* demonstrates that while the quarter-beat pulse is quietly delineated by the ride cymbal, Jones uses triplet filling throughout, assigning beats variously to the snare drum, bass drum and hi-hat.

Example 42. "Glitter and be Gay" bars 25-36 (the 'bridge' of the melody)



The Coltrane Years: 1960-1965

By the time Jones joined Coltrane in 1960, he had considerable performance and recording experience to draw upon. As Jones stated in 2001:

> I felt that all the experiences I'd had prior were to prepare me for my experience with John Coltrane. The way he played his music, it was so open that it was possible to do anything with it you could imagine. (Meredith 2001)

His style had already been formed years earlier but the bands he played with, as good as they were, did not seem to provide the necessary environment for significant further development. Jones's association with Coltrane made it possible for the styles of both drummer and saxophonist to reach their fully developed state. In a 1973 interview, Jones commented on the importance of his involvement with Coltrane:

> I don't think you can talk enough about Coltrane and that period we were in, because it was historic. It certainly was one of the most significant things that ever happened to me. Thank God I had that association. I think it gave me such a clear insight into myself and my approach to music. I know it didn't happen when I was playing with other people. I'm not saying it wouldn't have, but I know it didn't. That Coltrane group gave me a whole new universe of possibilities to explore as well as my full capacity as a musician. I think it's a beautiful thing when you can be in a situation where you can use all the knowledge you have and apply that in a context that works. (Nolan 1977:13)

CHAPTER V

LONG-TERM EFFECTS IN THE FIELD OF JAZZ STUDIES AND JAZZ EDUCATION

Elvin Jones's contributions to jazz extend far beyond the practicalities of jazz drumming. The effects of the changes he brought about and disseminated through the performances and recordings of the John Coltrane quartet (in the early 1960s) are still being felt today in a variety of jazz fields, including performance methodology, history, analysis, pedagogy, ethnography, and others. Many of these effects overlap and are felt in more than one field of study.

Performance Methodology

It seems that almost all modern jazz drummers now make use of cymbal phrasing, and it is now regarded as an integral part of the basic concept of jazz drumming by all but a few players. This has taken some time to develop since the 1960s. For many years, following his work with Coltrane, Jones's approach was considered a separate style, a departure from the norm. At present, while many players still use the 'bop' style that preceded Jones's approach, the earlier style is now regarded as just that: an 'earlier style', usually reserved for specific music from the pre-Coltrane era. In other words, to varying degrees the use of Elvin Jones's phrasing has become part of the 'mainstream' approach to jazz drumming, while earlier approaches have been categorized and added to the

growing list of specific styles.[69] This list includes: ‘Dixieland’, ‘swing’, ‘bop’, ‘hard bop’, ‘Afro-Cuban’, ‘Brazilian’, ‘fusion’, ‘funk’, ‘free’, ‘acid jazz’ and others.

The introduction of ride cymbal phrases into performance as a concept for expressing time immediately changes the nature of rhythmic ‘feel’ from a somewhat vertical pulse to a more horizontal one. These are not necessarily abstract notions. They are certainly better understood through comparative listening to the source recordings rather than just visual inspection of the transcriptions. Furthermore, ‘vertical feel’ and ‘horizontal feel’ are not absolute conditions in either style. In the more conventional approach (i.e., playing the ride cymbal pattern constantly) there is certainly some degree of forward momentum or horizontal flow generated both by the structure of the pattern itself (which employs the moving, unstable upbeats of two and four) and by the steady repetition of this pattern while other aspects of the music are changing around it. However, there is much more horizontal flow in the time using cymbal phrases and the fills that support them. One of the features of Jones’s phrasing is his ability to re-work one rhythmic idea by using accents and tied notes, producing many new phrases. *Example 10* demonstrates how one phrase can be varied, using Jones’s system of ties and accents, to produce a broad range of rhythms and sounds. The list of variations is by no means exhaustive.

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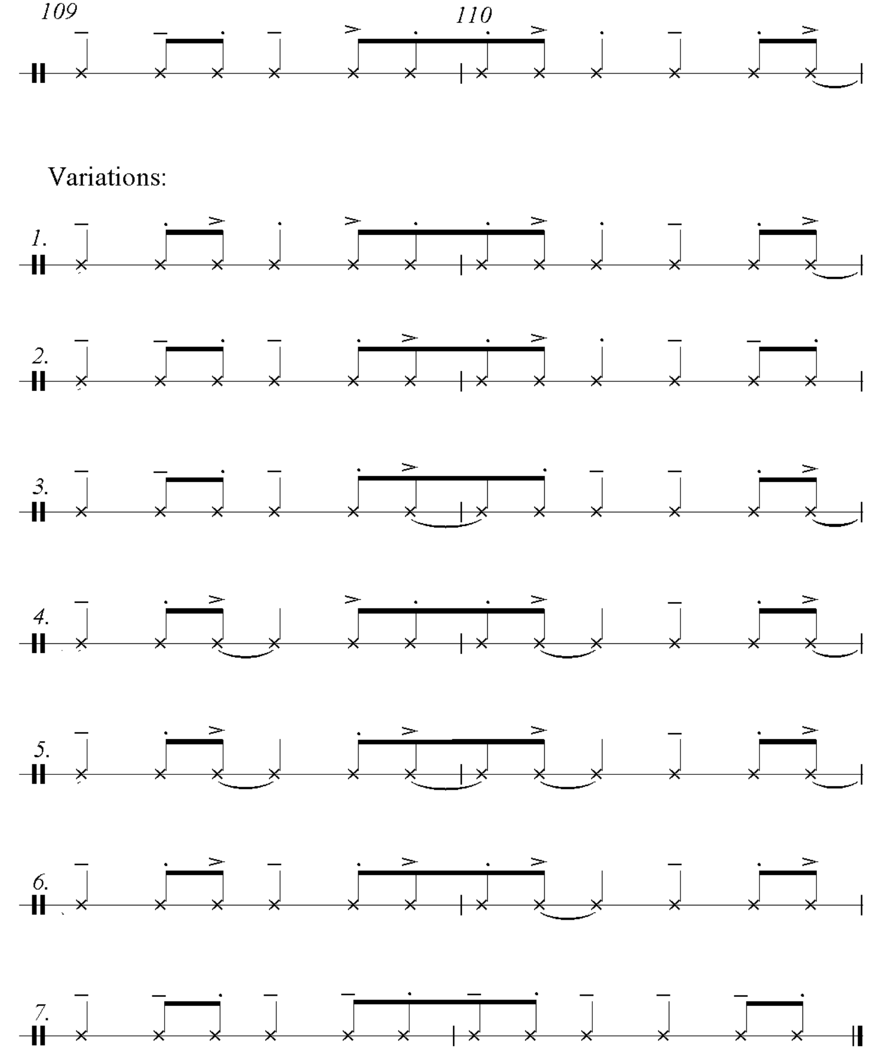
[69] For some individuals (see page one), Jones’s style still occupies a sort of ‘no-man’s land’, situated between ‘post-bop’ and ‘free’ playing, viewed as a unique way of drumming that stands apart from the mainstream development. I regard this view as a misunderstanding.

Example 43. “Bessie’s Blues” bars 109-110: Sample variations on a two-bar cymbal phrase



Wider dynamics, both on the cymbal itself and on the drum set, together with a seemingly endless list of possible variations of rhythmic phrases all help to achieve increased variety and flexibility. Certainly, the jazz drummer’s ‘vocabulary’ has been greatly expanded by Jones. Playing through the various two-bar phrases that Jones uses

on “Bessie’s Blues” also reveals that each unique phrase has a slightly different feel from the others. This points to a need for an examination of the effects of various phrases on the soloist who is being accompanied. Questions arise regarding the extent of impact these phrases have on mood, or energy, and to what extent the soloist can be (or is willing to be) affected.[70]

I stated earlier that the second main contribution Elvin Jones made to jazz was that he expanded the role of the drummer with regard to ensemble work. He not only changed the relationship between soloist and drummer, but also the relationship between each band member and drummer. With a more prominent position in the shaping of music (as it is being improvised and performed) the drummer now has increased responsibilities. Steady timekeeping is no longer a goal, but an assumed skill that is the starting point upon which additional activities can be built. These may include entering into dialogue with the soloist and other comping instruments, leading the performance into new directions rhythmically and dynamically, or even ‘laying out’. All modern jazz drummers should feel indebted to Elvin Jones for these things. However, not all musicians embrace the idea, or enjoy the concept of having loud, prominent drums in jazz performance. In this regard, Jones’s work with the Coltrane band added another model to the list of options for how drums can operate in a small ensemble. His approach is now an established, accepted one that bands may or may not adopt. The further a drummer goes towards emulating Jones (with cymbal phrasing, louder drums in relation to ride cymbal,

[70] Finding the answers to these kinds of questions is beyond the scope of this thesis, but certainly more research of this type needs to be done if we are to fully understand the contextual dynamics of ensemble jazz performance.

increased dynamics, and so on) the stronger the other musicians in the band have to be in order to play effectively. Jones's style has also become synonymous with certain repertoire and there is now an expectation that all freelance jazz drummers will be capable of playing in that style as a jumping-off point for the performance of certain compositions. Some jazz artists want their drummers to copy Elvin Jones as much as possible. Guitarist Sonny Greenwich is an example of an artist who expects the percussionist in his band to emulate Jones's style as a standard approach from which the performance will develop (Greenwich 2001). While this outlook is not shared by a majority of players and does not represent the broader impact that Jones's contributions have had on jazz playing, Greenwich is not alone in this view.

Elvin Jones's work with Coltrane opened the door for other drummers to further develop Jones's ideas and expand their applications. Jack DeJohnette, by way of example, has taken Jones's phrasing system and gone further in the direction of opening up time-keeping by adding much more space between the phrases, giving the illusion to some listeners that the pulse has occasionally been entirely abandoned. This approach is well documented on several Keith Jarrett trio recordings. Many drummers, including myself, have applied Jones's phrasing system to jazz 'feels' other than swing, particularly even-eighths music (Elmes, 2001). The result is a much more open, spacious feel in the time. It seems that most modern jazz drumming styles are directly related to the work of Jones.

Context and Analysis

There are a number of musicological considerations that arise due to the changes Elvin Jones brought to jazz. The importance of context cannot be overstated, and there are different contexts to be studied. One is the context of the John Coltrane quartet. Given the central role of Jones's drumming style in that band, one needs to acquire an understanding of Jones's approach in order to penetrate the seeming complexity of Coltrane's music. Much research has been done on the music of John Coltrane without taking the role of Elvin Jones into account. White has done extensive work on isolated Coltrane solos through transcription and analysis (White 1978) and there are only two sentences mentioning Jones in Kernfeld's article on Coltrane in *Grove Music Online*:

> In the quartet, Tyner often kept time and established tonal centres with chordal oscillations, thus freeing Jones to create swirling masses of drum and cymbal accents. Jones (later, Ali) and Coltrane frequently engaged in extended colouristic duets. (Kernfeld 2005)

There is no mention of any influence the rhythm section might have had on Coltrane's improvisations. Surely many of the characteristics of Coltrane's saxophone solos in the 1960s were the result of interplay with Jones's drumming. While it is unlikely that a single researcher can cover every aspect of any music study, it would seem prudent to include as many factors in one's research as possible. Coltrane's music not only made it possible for Jones to develop his sense of longer cymbal phrases and wider dynamics, it seemed to require it. Coltrane wanted a drummer who could provide a strong, unfailing foundation for his own saxophone explorations. He constructed his quartet around a

central, powerful duo of saxophone and drums. Piano was to provide more of a background harmonic role than usual. Bass was to operate as a foundation for Jones's drumming. Perhaps for the first time in his professional career, Elvin Jones was free to play drums the way he had always wanted to.

There are other historical contexts to be considered that go well beyond the particulars of the Coltrane band. It seems clear that Jones's style reached its maturity in the early 1960s (while a member of the Coltrane quartet) but it is more difficult to establish exactly when it first emerged. There is indication that his cymbal phrasing and use of the triplet grid already constituted the foundation of his playing much earlier. Both items are evident on recordings made with other groups in the late 1950s, including bands led by J.J. Johnson (Johnson 1987), Bobby Jaspar (Jaspar 2000) Sonny Rollins (Rollins 1987a, 1987b) and others. However, if it was not fully developed when Jones joined the John Coltrane quartet in 1960, it was in the creative environment of this band that Jones's method quickly reached maturity.

There were also social and political contexts operating in the 1960s that served as a backdrop for Elvin Jones's drumming. African American nationalism was a prominent social theme, and the Viet Nam War was a contentious socio-political issue. Kofsky's book *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* (Kofsky 1973) attempted to shed some light on these subjects. However, in his separate interviews with Coltrane and Jones, Kofsky was unable to engage either of them in any lengthy discussion of his view that direct connections exist between social issues and the power of their music.

This leads to yet another context, and one that only researchers who are also jazz musicians can fully understand: the separate society that jazz musicians seem to live and work in. Paul Berliner discusses this in a general way (through the inclusion of musicians' statements culled from several interviews) in *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Berliner 1994) and Howard Becker uses it as one of the central themes in *Outsiders: studies in the sociology of deviance* (Becker 1973). For some players, the initial desire to become a jazz artist may involve wider, more social concerns than just a love of the music. The same qualities that enable a person to be an artist, including high levels of creativity and sensitivity might, in some instances, lead to an inability to cope with various political and social pressures. In other words, many artists (at least for a period) seem to find escape from these issues by focusing on music. Furthermore, many jazz instructors and clinicians have taught that the successful performance of jazz requires a mind completely free of any social or political baggage.[71] With regard to politics in music, Jones stated:

> I think musicians should devote their energies and talents to music; they can achieve more that way . . . I enjoy listening to good music and trying to play it. But I'm not a musical politician. (Hennessey 1966:25)

With this in mind, it is not surprising that Kofsky (Kofsky 1973) could interest neither Coltrane nor Jones in accepting his political agenda with regard to their art. Regardless of one's viewpoint on these issues, with regard to Elvin Jones more research

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[71] This idea has been a recurring theme expressed during numerous jazz clinics (that I attended) featuring such artists as Barney Kessel (circa 1975), Jim Hall (circa 1976), Brian Browne (circa 1980), Elvin Jones (circa 1985), Oscar Peterson (circa 1990), and Nick Brignola (circa 2000), to name only a few. The topic often arose in response to the question: "What do you think about when you are playing?"

is needed to determine what impact these (and other) socio-political aspects had on jazz music in the period leading up to and including the 1960s.

The importance of being able to play the music under investigation cannot be overstated. Much of what has been discussed in this essay concerning Elvin Jones's main contributions to jazz was revealed only through playing the drums. The fact that many people who have written books and articles (that attempt to explain Jones's style) do not play the instrument serves as the most likely reason that their efforts have limited results. In his book *Bebop: the music and its players*, Thomas Owens, an accomplished jazz saxophonist, seems generally perceptive about Jones's drumming, yet he makes colourful comments that do not go far enough to explain style:

> But usually his swinging beat drives forward inexorably and unerringly. It sings out bell-like from his ride cymbal while a thunderous barrage of drum phrases churns all around it non-stop. (Owens 1995:190)

In the above quote, the words "thunderous barrage of drum phrases" are not very illuminating. These same words could be used to describe the free-drumming style of Rashied Ali, yet there is little correlation between the drumming styles of Jones and Ali.

While learning to perform has been a part of ethnomusicological research for many decades, the process has often involved relatively short-term instruction and/or participation in performance. However, the insights I have been able to gain about Jones's approach, through playing the drums, came after many years of experience as a professional jazz musician combined with many years of close listening to the subject music. A few casual lessons on a drum set would not have yielded the same quality of information.

Jazz Pedagogy

An understanding of Jones's methodology impacts the teaching of jazz drumming in several areas. The application to pedagogy is not necessarily in teaching students how to play 'like' Elvin Jones, but rather to make use of the broader aspects of his approach that have enhanced jazz drumming generally. His integrated phrasing provides an approach to learning jazz rhythm that is both musical in concept and natural in execution. The physical motion (technique) required to execute his cymbal phrases, and the very rhythmic nature of these phrases (i.e., they often play around the pulse, rather than state it overtly) work together to promote a strong inner sense of pulse.[72] The location of this inner pulse is somewhere deep in the chest area.[73] Once established, this feeling of inner pulse builds confidence in the student drummer, enabling him/her to explore 'open rhythms' (where the pulse is felt, but not necessarily expressed) on the drums. It is central to developing the capability to play jazz rhythms with consistency and flexibility. While Jones's drumming employs a consistent 12/8 density, there are momentary miniscule tempo shifts throughout his playing that prevent rigidity in feel. This 'looseness' or flexibility in Jones's drumming is not achieved through sloppiness, but rather from

[72] The conventional approach to cymbal playing inadvertently promotes the feeling of time as an external affair, located somewhere in the hand, wrist or arm that plays the ride cymbal. One of the functions of the ride cymbal is to provide the pulse for the band. See *Transcription I.*

[73] This concept relates to the idea of 'centering' (located in the stomach) found in various Asian philosophies.

playing ‘off of’ a steady internal pulse. Again, this is something that can be best experienced and understood by playing the drums. No amount of transcription analysis or listening to recordings is likely to reveal this important aspect of Jones’s approach. The notion of internalized pulse is important for all instrumentalists and vocalists, not just drummers.

Jones’s use of the triplet grid to underpin all his playing (in ‘swing feel’) validates the current pedagogical use of the eighth-note triplet grid as a theoretical tool for illustrating how ‘swing’ operates. The fact that his literal use of this grid (in forming phrases and fills) results in such flowing, musical statements on the drums suggests that the triplet grid may be the best model for teaching ‘swing’ to all instruments.[74] While musicologists, theorists, and music teachers continue to debate over the triplet grid’s ability to accurately represent the actual rhythm produced by jazz players, Elvin Jones turns the situation around by using this same grid as his constant source for rhythmic design. As a teaching tool, the triplet grid provides an identifiable, central rhythmic position for ‘swing feel’ that can be recognized both visually (through notation) and aurally. Once the student masters this feel the concept of moving to a relatively ‘looser’ (closer to even eighths) or ‘tighter’ (closer to dotted eighth and sixteenth) triplet feel is much easier to comprehend. It is also easier to play these feels because there is a clear, solid, centrally located basic triplet feel to relate these variations to. Elvin Jones’s

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[74] Some jazz teachers, particularly of wind instruments, still prefer to teach students to practice in ‘even eighths’, then for performance simply ‘roll the eighth notes’ (i.e., move toward ‘triplet feel’) as necessary to achieve ‘swing’.

approach even bolsters the argument for using the eighth-note triplet grid as a foundation for building a 'jazz rhythm theory' (with regard to how 'swing feel' operates).[75]

Perhaps the single most important concept that must be embraced in order for a student to achieve any of the above skills is Jones's notion of the drum set as a single instrument:

> This is the way it should be approached and studied and listened to, and all of the basic philosophies should be from that premise. If you learn it piecemeal, that's the way you're going to play it. You have to learn it in total. (Mattingly 1998:26-27)

This is certainly an important issue to Jones. In the same interview, he goes on to offer advice to all students and teachers:

> I think that people who intend to learn how to play this instrument have to start regarding it for what it is. Until then, they're never going to be able to listen to it properly; they won't be able to hear the total picture. So that should be of primary importance to all teachers and instructors from now on, into the future. We must take the correct look at the instrument so that we can begin to develop ways of using it properly. (Mattingly 1998:27)

Ethnographic Follow-up

It is not always possible to reach a consensus of thought in the academic world, especially concerning the ideas expressed in a research essay. Scholarly work seems destined for argument. However, many of the ideas expressed in this thesis resulted from practical aspects of performance and can therefore be validated (or denied) by other

[75] To date, only Jim Blackley's method book *The Essence of Jazz Drumming* includes some of Jones's phrasing concepts (Blackley, 2001).

player members of the jazz community, particularly jazz drummers. When dealing with ideas that have the potential of becoming teaching materials, consensus becomes more important and can pave the way for further development and practical application. Therefore, this study points to a need for more ethnographic follow-up in all academic jazz research.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

There is general agreement in the realm of jazz research that Elvin Jones has made major contributions to the art form of jazz. The many articles, tributes, reviews, interviews, websites and so on that have been created about Jones since the early 1960s demonstrate his lasting impact in a variety of study fields. His body of work with the John Coltrane quartet in particular continues to attract the attention of scholars and journalists. Yet, the utility to musical scholarship of some of the literature on Jones might be called into question because few researchers have been able and/or willing to sort out the nature of what Jones's important contributions are. The source of this problem might lie in the perceived complexity of his drumming. Jones's style involves playing the drums louder (in relation to the cymbal) and with a wider dynamic range. As a result, some listeners might focus on the drum fills and not the cymbal phrases. Without hearing how both fit together, the drum fills can sound angular, disjointed and certainly complex. In spite of the disjointed way in which some listeners might receive the sound of Jones's drumming, in actual fact his accompaniment style involves an innovative concept of four-limb integration (as opposed to four-limb independence) that enables him to use all four limbs, and therefore all of the drum set components, to express a single musical idea. The importance of this concept, to performance, pedagogy, and to jazz research cannot be overstated. Yet, it seems to have gone unnoticed by all. As a result, many writers have had limited success in unpacking Jones's approach to accompaniment. Jack Cooke's

short article in *Jazz on Record* is quite informative until he attempts to describe the workings of Jones's method. At that point, his article becomes a well-intentioned, but misleading interpretation of style. Using only the relative *volume* of cymbal versus drums, Cooke tries to explain the *function* of each:

> What he did, essentially, was to reduce the cymbal beat, which in the work of other drummers was a primary factor, to a subsidiary status and make what had been until then the subsidiary patterns—designs and accents used to vary the basic beat, feed the soloist and generally decorate the drumming—into the dominant rhythmic force in his playing and the decisive factor of style. (McCarthy 1968:161)

While perhaps providing a reasonable description of the aesthetics of Jones's sound, in my view Cooke unfortunately describes the workings of Jones's playing in reverse. As outlined earlier, the main element of Jones's style is his use of cymbal phrases, supported by the drum fills. The drums may be louder (and as a result the cymbal seemingly quieter) but the *function* of the cymbal is anything but subsidiary to the drums.

In my view, in order to penetrate the apparent complexity of Jones's drumming the researcher needs to do more than listen to recordings, analyze transcriptions, and study video materials. In many areas of music research, some of the key elements can only be discovered through personal performance. Knowledge obtained in this fashion can provide a feeling of empowerment, as if some sacred truths have been unearthed. For example, the 'internalization of pulse' that Jones's method makes possible (perhaps inevitable) can only be experienced if one uses his approach to playing the drums. More importantly, it is this personal 'hands on' (not to mention 'feet on') activity that drives home the significance of such concepts for various fields of study, including performance

methodology and pedagogy.[76] While it is not possible for everyone to spend several years at the drum set working on advanced jazz drumming techniques, it should be possible for researchers to engage the views of other practitioners (of the music being studied) as part of their normal fieldwork. Furthermore, when the subject artist is not available for comment (or is not very forthcoming with stylistic details when asked, as in the case of Elvin Jones being interviewed by Kofsky) then perhaps the next step is to interview other associated artists. This activity, coupled with all the other musicological pursuits (comparative transcription analysis, close listening to recordings, watching the artist perform, and so on) should lead to the most valuable results.

Jones's most significant contribution to jazz is likely his concept of organizing and expressing the pulse in phrases, the one outstanding feature of his style that has been adopted by players worldwide as a required tool of jazz drumming. It seems that Jones's approach reached its maturity by 1965 and since that time he did not develop it further to any significant degree. While he continued to perform, almost until his death in 2004, in the same style that he did with Coltrane almost forty years earlier, others have since utilized his phrasing system in a variety of new ways.[77]

On the other hand, some other aspects of his style seem to be reserved by modern drummers for specific kinds of jazz playing or special moments within a performance. In particular, Jones's concept of playing the drums rather loudly (in relation to the ride

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[76] Internalized pulse is vital to attaining proficiency in jazz performance on any instrument.

[77] Jones's phrasing system has successfully been applied to different 'feels' (swing and even eighths) and various time signatures besides 4/4 and 3/4, including 5/4, 6/4, and 7/4.

cymbal) seems to be employed only as a means to add strength or drive to particular sections of a performance, often used only as a reaction to a soloist who has increased volume and intensity. The constant filling and support of the cymbal phrase with eighth-note triplets, a hallmark of Jones's style, seems to have been relinquished by drummers who have developed other ways to make use of the cymbal phrasing system on its own. For example, Jack DeJohnette often employs an 'edited' form of Jones's cymbal phrasing, with more ties and more space between beats, resulting in a style where there is less direct statement of the pulse than in Jones drumming.[78] Other drummers (myself included) use Jones's vocabulary of cymbal phrases for time-keeping, but without the same degree of drum set support, resulting in a style less dense than Jones, but one that features similar rhythmic variation in the expression of pulse.

Jones's expansion of the drummer's role in small ensemble jazz playing has certainly endured. If anything, that role has continued to expand. Furthermore, the list of requirements for becoming a jazz drummer capable of taking on this front line position in the music increased dramatically due to Jones's work in the 1960s. Building on what he achieved, other players continue to add to this list.

However revolutionary Jones's approach was in the 1960s, its adoption by other drummers did not happen immediately. If his main contributions to jazz were fully formed and on display soon after he joined the Coltrane band, few listeners were in a position to appreciate the changes he had introduced. Many jazz musicians were not

[78] Any recording of Jack DeJohnette playing with the Keith Jarrett Trio will serve to illustrate this style.

familiar with Elvin Jones's drumming until the Coltrane quartet had released several top-selling recordings and eventually became the leading jazz group of the day. Although Jones had been developing his style for years, to the uninitiated it seemed to have come out of nowhere, and many drummers were ill-equipped to fully appreciate what they heard. To many players, Jones's approach simply 'broke the rules'. Some percussionists, intent on adopting his approach, but without an understanding of its inner workings, soon became frustrated by their inability to sound anything like him. Many drummers became caught up in the energy and excitement surrounding the music of the Coltrane band but failed to incorporate the important tecnical aspects of Jones's style. Others who did figure out what Jones was doing technically could not seem to translate this knowledge into effective musical accompaniment in an ensemble setting. The lesson here is that there is much more to any great artist's style than the collected individual elements that comprise it.

A student of jazz drumming can never sound exactly like Elvin Jones simply because the student is *not* Elvin Jones. Issues of personality, life experience, physique, concept of self and personal goals are all factors contributing to style. However, regardless of how difficult it may be for the performance student and/or researcher to gain insight into these factors, in my opinion it is important to acknowledge their impact in order to gain a better understanding of an artist's style.

The enduring contributions of Elvin Jones are certainly entrenched in the sophisticated approaches to ensemble accompaniment used by almost all current jazz drummers. Yet, somewhat ironically, Elvin Jones stands apart from these players. His

music still sounds fresh, his power yet to be achieved by another drummer, and although almost every jazz percussionist today employs stylistic things originally provided by Jones, nobody sounds remotely like him. After all the changes he brought to jazz drumming, and after most of these changes have become part of every drum student's homework, thus far Elvin Jones remains the sole player in jazz history who could play like Elvin Jones.

APPENDIX A:

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY OF ELVIN JONES

The following discography represents the list of recordings selected for this project. It is an attempt to create a manageable collection of recordings that best illustrates:

- the development of Elvin Jones's style over time;
- the diversity of the bands with whom he played and recorded.

There are ninety-eight recordings presented in *chronological order by session date*. Where one recording contains more than one session date, the earliest date determines placement in the list. The information for each entry is provided in the following sequence:

- Name of leader
- Date of publication and/or manufacture of the album
- Song title(s) (only where specific songs were selected for examination and others ignored)
- Album title
- City of publication and/or manufacture of the album
- Label and product number
- Session location and date

Mitchell, B. (2003). *Billy Mitchell Quintet* [CD recording]. New York: Savoy SV0188 (Recorded in Detroit, MI: 1948).

Davis, M. (1973). *Collector's Items* [LP recording]. New York: Prestige 24022 (Recorded in New York, NY: July 9, 1955).

Johnson, J. J. (1996). *J is for Jazz* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Mosaic CL935 (Recorded in New York, NY: July 24, 25, 27, 1956).

Farmer, A. (1995). *Farmer's Market* [CD recording]. Japan: Prestige VICJ-23745 (Recorded in Hackensack, NJ: November 23, 1956).

Jones, T. (1999). *Mad Thad* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Period OJCCD-1919-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: December 24, 1956, January 6, 1957).

Burrell, K. (1995). *Blue Moods* [CD recording]. New York: Prestige 7088 (Recorded in New York, NY: February 1, 1957).

Jones, T. (1997). *The Complete Blue Note/UA/Roulette Recordings of Thad Jones – Disc II* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Mosaic 72438-19531-2-9 (Recorded in Hackensack, NJ: February 2, 1957).

Jones, T. (1999). *Olio* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Prestige OJCCD-1004-2 (Recorded in Hackensack, NJ: February 16, 1957).

Johnson, J. J. (1996). *Dial J.J. 5* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Mosaic CL1084 (Recorded in New York, NY: January 29, 31 and May 14, 1957).

Johnson, J. J. (1991). *Jay Jay Johnson Quintet: Live at Café Bohemia 1957* [CD recording]. Switzerland: Fresh Sound Records FSRCD-143 (Recorded in New York, NY: February, 1957).

Chambers, P. (1996). *Paul Chambers Quintet* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP724385244124 (Recorded in Hackensack, NJ: May 19, 1957).

Jaspar, B. (1995). *Tenor and Flute* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Riverside OJCCD-1788-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: May 23 and 28, 1957).

Flanagan, T. (1999). *Overseas* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Prestige OJCCD-1033-2. (Recorded in Stockholm: August 15, 1957).

Rollins, S. (1987). *A Night at The Village Vanguard - Vol.1* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP746517-2. (Recorded in New York, NY: November 3, 1957).

Rollins, S. (1987). *A Night at The Village Vanguard – Vol. 2* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP746518-2. (Recorded in New York, NY: November 3, 1957).

Adams, P. (1992). *The Cool Sound of Pepper Adams* [CD recording]. New York: Savoy SV-0198 (Recorded in New York, NY: November 19, 1957).

Rodney, R. (1991). Red Arrow, Box 2000, Ubas. On *Fiery* [CD recording]. Japan: Savoy SV-0148 (November 24, 1957).

Lacy, S. (1990). *Reflections: Steve Lacy plays Thelonious Monk* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Prestige OJCCD-063-2 (Recorded in Hackensack, NJ: October 17, 1958).

Adams, P. (1958). *Pepper Adams with Jimmy Knepper Quintet* [LP recording]. England: Metrojazz E-1004 (Recorded in New York, NY: March 25, 1958).

Flanagan, T. (1959). *Lonely Town* [LP recording]. Japan: Blue Note GP3186 (Recorded in New York, NY: March 10, 1959).

Geller, H. (1959). *Gypsy* [LP recording]. New York: ATCO-LP33-109 (Recorded in New York, NY: June 9-10, 1959.

Jones, T. (1997). *The Complete Blue Note/UA/Roulette Recordings of Thad Jones – Disc III* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Mosaic 72438-19531-2-9 (Recorded in New York, NY: October 24, 31, 1959.

Forrest, J. (1999). *Black Forrest* [CD recording]. Chicago: Delmark DD-427. (Recorded in Chicago, IL: December 10, 12, 1959).

Fuller, C. (1996). *Slidin' Easy* [CD recording]. Hollywood: United Artists UAL4041 (Recorded in New York, NY: December, 1959).

Priester, J. (1995). *Keep Swingin'* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Riverside OJCCD-1863-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: January 11, 1960).

Coltrane, J. (1988). *Coltrane's Sound* [CD recording]. New York: Atlantic 1419-2 (Recorded In New York, NY: October 21, 24, 26, 1960).

Coltrane, J. (1988). *My Favourite Things* [CD recording]. New York: Atlantic SD 1361 (Recorded in New York, NY: October 21,24,26, 1960).

Coltrane, J. (1988). *Coltrane Plays The Blues* [CD recording]. New York: Atlantic 1382-2. (Recorded in New York, NY: October 24, 1960).

Harris, B. (1990). *Preminado* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Riverside OJCCD-486-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: December 21, 1960 and January 19, 1961).

Jones, E. (1999). *Philly Joe Jones & Elvin Jones Together* [CD recording]. Narberth: Rhino Collectables COL-CD-6264 (Recorded in New York, NY: February 2, 1961).

Coltrane, J. (1980). *Africa/Brass* [LP recording]. Universal City: Impulse MCA-29007 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: May 23, June 24, 1961).

Jones, E. (1986). *Elvin!* [LP recording]. Berkeley: Riverside OJC-259 (Recorded in New York, NY: July 11, December 27, 1961 and January 3, 1962).

Konitz, L. (1998). *Motion* [CD recording]. New York: Verve 821553-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: August 29, 1961).

Coltrane, J. (1997). *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings - Vol. 1-4* [CD recording]. New York: Impulse! IMPD4-232 (Recorded in New York, NY: November 1-3, 5, 1961).

Jones, E. (1974). *Elvin Jones - The Impulse Years* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: ABC-Impulse ASH 9283-2 (Compilation of selected recordings made in various locations from November 5, 1961 to 1968).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 2* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded at The Olympia Theatre, Paris, France: November 18, 1961).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 3* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Paris, France, November 18, 1961, Stockholm, Sweden, November 23, 1961 and Berlin, West Germany, December 2, 1961).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 4* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Copenhagen, Denmark: Nov. 20, 1961).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 5* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Helsinki, Finland, November 22, 1961 and Baden-

Baden, West Germany, November 24, 1961).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 6* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, November 27, 1961 and Stuttgart, Germany, November 29, 1961).

Coltrane, J. (1987). *Ballads* [CD recording]. Alsdorf, Germany: Impulse! 254607-2 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: December 21, 1961, September 18, 1962, November 13, 1962).

Lateef, Y. (1991). *Into Something* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Prestige/New Jazz OJCCD-700-2 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: December 29, 1961).

Coltrane, J. (1963). Inchworm. On *John Coltrane* [LP recording]. Impulse! A(S)21 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Aril 11, 1962).

Coltrane, J. (2001). Impressions. On *The Very Best of John Coltrane* [CD recording]. Toronto: Impulse 3145499132 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: June 20, 1962).

Coltrane, J. (1988). *Duke Ellington & John Coltrane*. Universal City: Impulse! MCAD-39103. (Recorded in New York, NY: September 26, 1962).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 7* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Copenhagen, Denmark: November 22, 1962).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 8* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Copenhagen, Denmark, November 22, 1962 and Graz, November 28, 1962).

Coltrane, J. (1993). *Afro Blue Impressions* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Pablo 2PACD-2620-101-2 (Recorded in Europe: 1963).

Coltrane, J. (1980). *John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman* [LP recording]. Universal City: Impulse MCA-21903 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: March 7, 1963).

Woods, J. (2003). *Conflict* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Contemporary OJCCD-1954-2 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: March 25-26, 1963).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 9* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Philadelphia, PA, possibly June 10, 17, or 24, 1963 and Copenhagen, Denmark, October 25, 1963).

Evans, G. (1988). *The Individualism of Gil Evans* [CD recording]. New York: Verve 833 804-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: September, 1963).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 10* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Copenhagen, Denmark: October 25, 1963).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 11* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Stuttgart, Germany: November 4, 1963).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Live 'Trane Underground, Vol. 12* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Stuttgart, Germany: November 4, 1963).

Coltrane, J. (1989). *Live at Birdland* [CD recording]. Toronto: Impulse! MCAMD 33109. (Recorded in New York, NY: October 8, November 18, 1963).

Coltrane, J. (1986). *Creation* [LP recording]. England: Blue Parrot AR 700 (Recorded in San Francisco, CA: February 23, 1964 and in New York, NY: April 2, 1965).

Henderson, J. (1991). Punjab, Serenity, El Barrio. On *The Best of Joe Henderson* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP7956272 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: April 10 and November 30, 1964).

Coltrane, J. (1987). *Crescent* [CD recording]. Toronto: MCA/Impulse! MCAMD-5889. (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: April 27, June 1, 1964).

Green, G. (1995). *Solid* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP724383358021 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: June 12, 1964.

Shorter, W. (1987). *JuJu* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP7-46514-2. (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: August 3, 1964).

Green, G. (1999). *Talkin' About* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP724352195824 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: September 11, 1964).

Coltrane, J. (1995). *A love supreme* [CD recording]. New York: Impulse GRD-155 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: December 9, 1964).

Shorter, W. (1987). *Speak No Evil* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP7465092. (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: December 24, 1964).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 1* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in New York, NY: March 19, 1965).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 2* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in New York, NY: March 26, 1965).

Green, G. (1977). *I Want To Hold Your Hand* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP724385996221 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: March 31, 1965).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 3* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in New York, NY: April 2, 1965).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 4* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in New York, NY: May 7, 1965).

Green, G. (1990). *Matador* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP7844422 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: May 20, 1965).

Coltrane, J. (1988). *The John Coltrane Collection: A Retrospective* [CD recording]. Austria: Deja Vu 5037-2. (Recorded in Juan Les Pins, France: July 25, 1965).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 5* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Antibes, France: July 27, 1965).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 6* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Paris, France: July 28, 1965).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 7* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in La Tour, Belgium: August 1, 1965 and Chicago, IL: August 15, 1965).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 8* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Seattle, WA: September 30, 1965).

Coltrane, J. (1976). *John Coltrane Featuring Pharoah Sanders: Live in Seattle* [LP recording]. Toronto: Impulse! 2027-9202. (Recorded in Seattle, WA: September 30, 1965).

Young, L. (1987). *Unity* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP7-84221-2. (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: November 10, 1965).

Hines, E. (1991). *Once Upon A Time* [CD recording]. New York: Impulse A-9108 (Recorded in New York, NY: January 10-11, 1966).

Hines, E. (1992). *The Indispensable Earl Hines, Volumes 5/6* [CD recording]. New York: RCA 66499-2 07863 (Recorded in New York, NY: January 17, 1966).

Rollins, S. (1974). East Broadway Rundown [LP recording]. Toronto: Impulse! 9027-9121 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: May 9, 1966).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 9* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Newport, RI: July 2, 1966 and New York, NY: July 21, 1967).

Coltrane, J. (2004). *Late Trane: Unreleased Recordings 1965-1967, Vol. 10* [CD recording]. Montreal: privately owned recording (Recorded in Tokyo, Japan: July 18, 1966 and Long Island, NY: August 14, 1966).

Jones, E. (1999). *Heavy Sounds* [CD recording]. New York: Impulse! 314547959-2. (Recorded in New York, NY: June 19-20, 1967).

Jones, E. (1974). *Live at the Village Vanguard* [LP recording]. Munich: enja 2036 (Recorded in New York, NY: March 20, 1968).

Jones, E. (1987). *Puttin' It Together* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP7842822. (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: April 8, 1968).

Coleman, O. (1971). *Love Call* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Blue Note BST-84356 (Recorded In New York, NY: April 29, May 7, 1968).

Jones, E. (1992). *The Ultimate Elvin Jones* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Blue Note BST-84305 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: September 6, 1968).

Adams, P. (1996). *Encounter!* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Prestige OJCCD-892-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: December 11-12, 1968).

Newborn, P. (1997). *Please Send Me Someone to Love* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Contemporary OJCCD-947-2 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: February 12-13, 1969).

Newborn, P., Brown, R., & Jones, E. (1991). *Harlem Blues* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Contemporary OJCCD-662-2 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: February 12-13, 1969).

Jones, E. (1972). *Live at The Lighthouse* [LP recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note BN-LA015-G2 (Recorded in Hermosa Beach, CA: September 9, 1972).

Jones, E. (2004). Keiko's Birthday March. On *Newport '73*. New York: private recording (Recorded at the Newport Jazz Festival, 1973).

Pepper, A. (1977). *The Trip* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Contemporary S7638 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: September 15-16, 1976).

Brown, R. (1986). *Something for Lester* [CD recording]. Tokyo: Contemporary VDJ-1555 (Recorded Los Angeles, CA: June 22-24, 1977).

Wallace, B. (1983). *Big Jim's Tango* [LP recording]. Munich: enja 4046 (Recorded in New York, NY: November 30 and December 1, 1982).

Jones, E. (2004). *Drum Clinic 1984* [CD recording]. Stockholm: privately owned recording (Recorded in Stockholm, Sweden: 1984).

Jones, H. (1993). *Upon Reflection* [CD recording]. France: Gitanes Jazz-Verve 514898-2 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: February 25-26, 1993).

Lovano, J. (1998). *Trio fascination: edition one* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP724383311422 (Recorded in New York, NY: September 16-17, 1997).

APPENDIX B:

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY OF CONTEMPORARY DRUMMERS

The following discography features selected recordings by fifteen drummers contemporary with Elvin Jones. All selections are from the period 1957-1963. The list is subdivided by drummers' surnames, organized alphabetically. The recordings for each drummer are presented in *chronological order by session date*. Where one recording contains more than one session date, the earliest date is used to determine placement in the list. The information for each entry is provided in the following sequence:

- Name of leader
- Date of publication and/or manufacture of the album
- Selected song titles (only those deemed appropriate for stylistic comparison to Jones)
- Album title
- City of publication and/or manufacture of the album
- Label and product number
- Session location and date

1. Ed Blackwell

Coltrane, J. (1982). Cherryco, Focus On Sanity, The Blessing, The Invisible, Bemsha Swing. On *John Coltrane & Don Cherry - The Avant-garde* [CD recording]. New York: Atlantic 790041-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: June 28 and July 8, 1960).

Coleman, O. (1961). Blues Connotation, Humpty Dumpty, Folk Tale. On *This Is Our Music* [LP recording]. New York: Atlantic SD-1353 (Recorded in New York, NY: July 19, 1960).

Dolphy, E. (1974). Bee Vamp, The Prophet, Aggression, Like Someone In Love, Number Eight (Lotsa Potsa). On *The Great Concert of Eric Dolphy* [LP recording]. Berkeley: Prestige P-34002 (Recorded in New York, NY: July 16, 1961).

2. Art Blakey

Mobley, H. (1987). Remember, This I Dig of You, Dig Dis, Split Feelin's, Soul Station, If I Should Lose You. On *Soul Station* [CD recording]. New York: Blue Note CDP7465282 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: February 7, 1960).

Blakey, A. (1992). It's Only A Paper Moon, Dat Dere, The Chess Players, Lester Left Town, Sakeena's Vision, Ping Pong. On *The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Art Blakey's 1960 Jazz Messengers* [CD recording]. Stamford, CT: Mosaic MD6-141 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ and at Birdland, NY: various session dates from March 6, 1960 to May 27, 1961).

Blakey, A. (1987). Down Under, Children Of The Night, Arabia. On *Mosaic* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP7465232 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: October 2, 1961).

Blakey, A. (1969). Bu's Delight, Reincarnation Blues, Shaky Jake, Moon River. On *Buhaina's Delight* [LP recording]: Blue Note 84104 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: November 28, 1961).

3. Frank Butler

Land, H. (1969). Speak Low, Delirium, Smack Up. On *Grooveyard* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Contemporary S7550 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: January 13-14, 1958).

Land, H. (1969). One Second Please, Sims A-Plenty, Little Chris, One Down. On *The Fox* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Contemporary S7619 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: August, 1959).

Pepper, A. (1969). Smack Up, A Bit Of Basie, How Can You Lose, Tears Inside. On *Smack Up* [LP recording]. Berkeley: Contemporary OJC-176 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: October 24-25, 1960).

4. Jimmy Cobb

Kelly, W. (1989). Kelly Blue, Keep It Moving, Old Clothes. On *Kelly Blue* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Riverside OJCCD-033-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: February 19 and March 10, 1959).

Davis, M. (1988). So What, Freddie Freeloader. On *Kind of Blue* [CD recording]: Columbia VCK40579 (Recorded in New York, NY: March 2, April 22, 1959).

Pepper, A. (1969). Whims Of Chambers, Bijou The Poodle, Softly As In A Morning Sunrise, Rhythm-a-ning, Gettin' Together. On *Gettin' Together* [LP recording]. Berkeley: Contemporary S7573 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: February 29, 1960).

Davis, M. (1969). Walkin', Bye Bye Blackbird, All Of You, No Blues. On *Miles Davis in Person Friday Night at the Blackhawk, San Francisco Vol. 1* [LP recording]. New York: Columbia LE10018 (Recorded in San Francisco, CA: April 21, 1961).

5. Frankie Dunlop

Monk, T. (1981). Epistrophy, I'm Getting Sentimental Over You, I Mean You, Jackie-ing, Off Minor, Rhythm-a-ning, Hackensack, Well You Needn't. On *April in Paris / Live* [LP recording]. Berkeley: Milestone M-47060 (Recorded in Paris, FR: April, 1961).

Monk, T. (1963). Monk's Dream, Bright Mississippi, Five Spot Blues, Bolivar Blues, Bye-Ya. On *Monk's Dream* [LP recording]. New York: Columbia CS8765 (Recorded in New York, NY: October 31, November 1-2, 1962).

Monk, T. (1989). Rhythm-a-ning, Evidence, I'm Getting Sentimental Over You, Jackie-ing. On *Live At The Village Gate* [CD recording]. Paris: Xanadu FDC5161 (Recorded in New York, NY: November 12, 1963).

6. Vernell Fournier

Jamal, A. (1985). But Not For Me. On *Ahmad Jamal At The Pershing* [CD recording]. West Germany: Vogue 651 600049 (Recorded in Chicago, IL: January 16-17, 1958).

Jamal, A. (1981). Autumn Leaves. On *Poinciana* [LP recording]. Scarborough, ON: Cadet CA-719 (Recorded in Washington, DC: September 5-6, 1958).

Jamal, A. (1977). Valentina, Tempo For Two, Hallelujah, You Came A Long Way From St. Louis, Who Cares. On *Listen To The Ahmad Jamal Quintet* [LP recording]. Chicago: Chess-Argo LP673 (Recorded in Chicago, IL: August 15-17, 1960).

7. Louis Hayes

Adderley, C. (2000). Spontaneous Combustion, Hi-Fly, Bohemia After Dark, Straight No Chaser. On *The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in San Francisco* [CD recording].

Berkeley: Riverside RCD-1157-2 (Recorded in San Francisco, CA: October 18 and 20, 1959).

Lateef, Y. (1970). Hazing, Rip De Boom, Teef, Sassy Ann. On *Contemplation* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Vee-Jay VJS-3052 (Recorded in New York, NY: April 26, 1960).

Adderley, C. (1993). Teaneck, One Man's Dream, Unit 7. On *Nancy Wilson and Cannonball Adderley* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Capitol CDP077778120421 (Recorded in New York, NY: June 27 and 29, August 23-24, 1961).

Adderley, C. (1990). The Weaver, Work Song. On *Nippon Soul* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Riverside OJCCD-435-2 (Recorded in Tokyo, Japan: July 14-15, 1963).

8. Roy Haynes

Haynes, R. (1970). Reflection, Sugar Ray, Sneakin' Around, Our Delight. On *We Three* [LP recording]. Berkeley: Fantasy QJC-196 (Recorded in New York, NY: November 14, 1958).

Nelson, O. (1972). Hoe-Down, Cascades, Yearnin', Butch And Butch, Teenie's Blues. On *Blues and the Abstract Truth* [LP recording]. Willowdale, ON: Impulse! 9027-5 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: February 23, 1961).

Haynes, R. (1974). Snap Crackle. On *Out of the Afternoon* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Impulse! AS-23 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: May 16 and 23, 1962).

9. Billy Higgins

Coleman, O. (1959). Invisible, The Blessing, Jayne, Chippie, The Disguise, Angel Voice, Alpha, When Will The Blues Leave?, The Sphinx. On *Something Else! The Music of Ornette Coleman* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Contemporary S7551 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: February 10 and 22, March 24, 1958).

Coleman, O. (1992). Ramblin', The Face Of The Bass, Free. On *Change of the Century* [LP recording]. New York: Atlantic 1327 (Recorded in Hollywood, CA: October 8, 1959).

Coltrane, J. (1988). *Like Sonny* [CD recording]. New York: Roulette CDP 793901-2 (Recorded in Los Angeles, LA: September 8, 1960.

McLean, J. (1983). Five Will Get You Ten, Sundu, A Fickle Sonance, Enitnerrut, Lost. On *A Fickle Sonance* [LP recording]. France: Blue Note BST84089 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: October 26, 1961).

Gordon, D. (1987). You Stepped Out Of A Dream, The Backbone, McSplivens. On *A Swingin' Affair* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP7841332 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: August 29, 1962).

Morgan, L. (1989). Hocus-Pocus. On *The Sidewinder* [CD recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note CDP7841572 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: December 21, 1963).

10. Philly Joe Jones

Pepper, A. (1969). You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To, Red Pepper Blues, Jazz Me Blues, Star Eyes, Birk's Works. On *Art Pepper Meets The Rhythm Section* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Contemporary S7532 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: January 19, 1957).

Davis, M. (1989). Dr. Jekyll, Two Bass Hit, Milestones, Straight No Chaser. On *Milestones* [CD recording]. New York: Columbia PC9428 (Recorded in Hackensack, NJ: February 4, March 4 1958).

Griffin, J. (1974). Hot Sausage, Sunny Monday, Terry's Tune, Little John. On *Way Out!* [LP recording]. Japan: Riverside SMJ-6067M (Recorded in New York, NY: February 26 or 27, 1958).

Hubbard, F. (1976). Hub Cap, Luana, Osie Mae, Earmon Jr. On *Here to Stay* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Blue Note BN-LA496-H2 (Recorded in Englewood Cliffs, NJ: April 9, 1961).

Evans, B. (1986). You And The Night And The Music, I'll Never Smile Again, Interplay, You Go To My Head, Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams. On *Interplay* [CD recording]. Tokyo: Riverside VDJ-1546 (Recorded in New York, NY: July 16, 1962).

11. Connie Kay

Jackson, M. (1988). The Late Late Blues, Bags & Trane, Three Little Words, Be-Bop, Blues Legacy, Centerpiece. On *Bags & Trane* [CD recording]. New York: Atlantic 1368-2 (Recorded in New York, NY: January 15, 1959).

Jackson, M. (1993). Statement, A Thrill From The Blues, Put Off, Sonnymoon For Two. On *Statements*. New York: Impulse! GRD-130 (Recorded in New York, NY: December 14-15, 1961.

12. Shelly Manne

Rollins, S. (1988). I'm An Old Cowhand, Come Gone. On *Way Out West* [CD recording]. Berkeley: Contemporary OJCCD-337 (Recorded in Los Angeles, March 7, 1957).

Coleman, O. (1968). Tears Inside, Mind And Time, Compassion, Giggin', Rejoicing, Endless. On *Tomorrow is the Question!* [LP recording]. Los Angeles: Contemporary S7569 (Recorded in Los Angeles, CA: January 16, February 23, March 9-10, 1959).

Manne, S. (1964). The Sicks Of Us. On *2-3-4* [LP recording]: Impulse! A-20 (Recorded in New York, NY: February 5, 8, 1962).

13. Paul Motian

Evans, B. (1987). Autumn Leaves, What Is This Thing Called Love?, Peri's Scope. On *Portrait in Jazz* [CD recording]. Toronto: Riverside OJCCD-088 (Recorded in New York, NY: December 28, 1959).

Evans, B. (1976). How Deep Is The Ocean?, Beautiful Love. On *Spring Leaves* [LP recording]. Berkeley: Milestone M47034 (Recorded in New York, NY: February 2, 1961).

Evans, B. (1973). Solar, Milestones. On *The Village Vanguard Sessions* [LP recording]. Berkeley: Milestone 47002 (Recorded in New York, NY: June 25, 1961).

14. Dannie Richmond

Mingus, C. (1972). Moanin', Tensions, My Jelly Roll Soul, E's Flat Ah's Flat Too. On *Blues & Roots* [LP recording]. New York: Atlantic SD-1305 (Recorded in New York, NY: February 4, 1959).

Ervin, B. (1977). Git It, Little Jane, The Book Cooks, Poor Butterfly. On *The Book Cooks* [LP recording]. New York: Bethlehem BCP-6025 (Recorded in New York, NY: June, 1960).

Sims, Z. (1971). Jive At Five, I Cried For You, Bill Bailey, Goodnight Sweetheart, There'll Be Some Changes Made, I've Heard That Blues Before. On *Down Home* [LP recording]. New York: Bethlehem BCP-6027 (Recorded in New York, NY: June 7, 1960).

Mingus, C. (1989). Folk Forms No. 1, Original Fables Of Faubus, All The Things You Could Be By Now If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother, Reincarnation Of A Lovebird, MDM, R&R. On *The Complete Candid Recordings of Charles Mingus* [CD recording]. Stamford, CT: Mosaic MD3-111 (Recorded in New York, NY: October 20, November 11, 1960).

15. Max Roach

Roach, M. (1976). Blues Waltz, Valse Hot, I'll Take Romance, Little Folks, Lover, The Most Beautiful Girl In The World. On *Jazz in 3/4 Time* [LP recording]. Los Angeles, CA: Trip TLP5559. (Recorded in New York, NY: March 18, 20-21, 1957).

Roach, M. (1960). It's You Or No One, Jodie's Cha-Cha. On *Deeds Not Words* [LP recording]. New York: Riverside RS-3018 (Recorded in New York, NY: September 4, 1958).

Roach, M. (1966). Garvey's Ghost, Mama, Praise For A Martyr. On *Percussion Bittersweet* [LP recording]. New York: Impulse A-8 (Recorded in New York, NY: August 1, 3, 8-9, 1961).

Ellington, D. (1986). Very Special, REM Blues, Wig Wise. On *Money Jungle* [LP recording]. Hollywood: Blue Note BT85129 (Recorded in New York, NY: September 17, 1962).

APPENDIX C:

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY OF ELVIN JONES

Byron, T. (Producer). (2002). *Masters of American Music Series: The World According to John Coltrane* [DVD recording]. East Stinson, Inc., Tony Byron/Multiprises in association with Taurus Film, Munich, and VideoArts, Japan. Distributed by BMG 72333, 80067-9.

Crohn, B (Producer). (1985). The Coltrane Legacy [Videocassette recording]. New York: Jazz Images Inc., Video Artists International.

Gleason, R. J. (Producer). (1995). *John Coltrane: Ralph J. Gleason's Jazz Casual* [DVD recording]. Los Angeles: Rhino Home Video R2 2581 (Filmed for WNET in San Francisco, CA: December 7, 1963).

Gray, E. (Producer). (1986). *Different drummer: Elvin Jones* [Videocassette recording]. New York: Edward Gray Films.

APPENDIX D:

EXPLANATION OF NOTATION METHODS

The transcriptions contain as much useful information as possible while remaining simple enough to promote readability and maintain the appearance of rhythmic flow.

All instruments are notated in concert key (non-transposed) and, with the exception of the bass, in the register that translates to actual sound.[79]

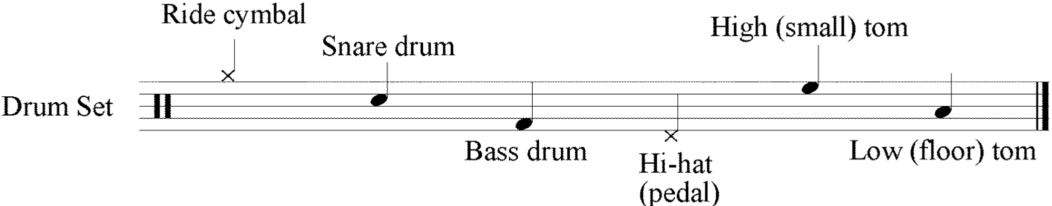
After exploring several existing approaches to transcribing rhythm, including M. L. Stewart's excellent system for jazz notation (Stewart 1982),[80] and in consideration of the intended descriptive nature of my transcriptions, I decided to use conventional modern drum set notation, but with slight modifications. While there is still no universally accepted approach to *locating* the various drum set components in the staff, my choice in this matter follows the plan used by some other writers, including Berliner[81]:

---

[79] In keeping with standard practice, the bass is notated one octave higher than it sounds.

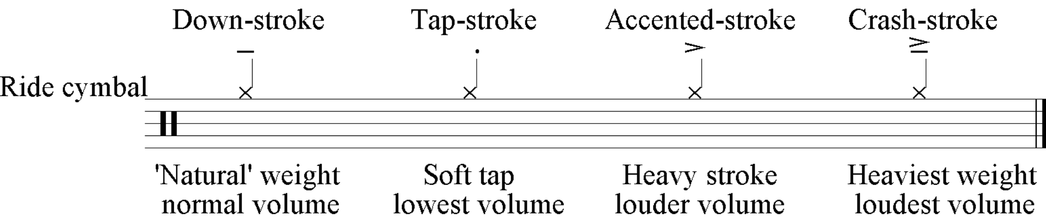
[80] Stewart proposes a jazz notation system involving a new version of the 'grid' (represented by a framework of vertical dotted lines indicated above and below the conventional five line staff, showing the location of pulse beats and a midway point between them) in conjunction with conventional notation (used to place the music with rhythmic accuracy, relative to the pulse lines, onto the staff).

[81] My drum notation system is *similar* to the proposed 'standardized' system of Weinberg, described by R. Witmer in his article on notation (Witmer 2005), but differs with regard to location of the ride cymbal and the hi-hat.



I have introduced three modifications to the above drum set notation that attempt to enhance the ability of my transcriptions to impart characteristics of individual style. The first two adaptations relate to the wide dynamic range Jones employs on both the ride cymbal and the drums.

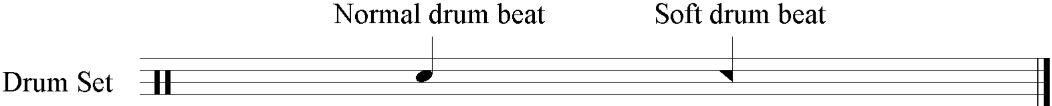
The four dynamic levels evident in his cymbal technique (as explained in Chapter III) are designated in the transcriptions using the normal 'line' and 'dot' markings found in many drum method books, plus two additional accent symbols:



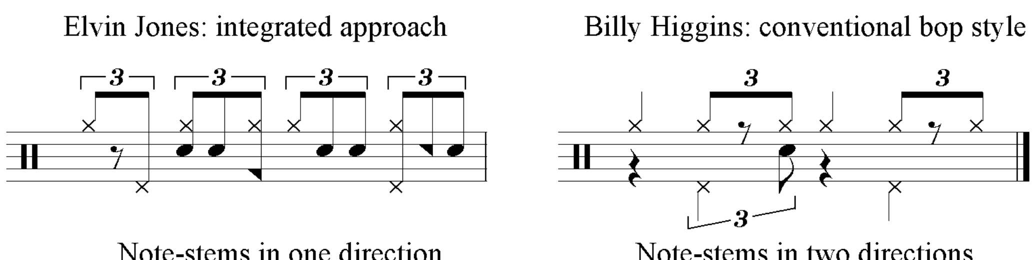
The second modification deals with the two categories of drum filling used by Jones:

1. Normal beats, clearly heard;
2. Soft beats, often barely audible, sometimes played in a series 'chatter-like' on the snare or bass drums.

A standard note-head is used for the first type while a non-conventional triangular note-head is used to represent the latter:



The third modification involves using note-stem direction as a means to distinguish the approach of Jones from that of other drummers. The integrated drum set concept of Jones is represented by using one (upward) note-stem direction for everything he plays. The conventional approach of other drummers is reflected in the conventional two-line style of notation: upward stems for timekeeping on the ride cymbal and downward stems for activity on the drums and hi-hat.



Unless otherwise stated, all the music is in ‘swing feel’. The drum set staff employs eighth-note triplet notation, but the staves for other instrumental parts and extracted lines do not. Regardless, all downbeats and upbeats for each instrument are aligned throughout the transcriptions. While this approach occasionally produces some

unusual note spacing, it facilitates analysis of the rhythmic interplay between drums and the other instruments.

The *chord symbols* represent the basic, underlying form of the composition and not the actual voicings or substitute chords played. They are included as a harmonic guide. The *piano part* represents (as much as possible) a reconstruction of the actual notes played.

A few additional notation details are included with individual transcriptions.

APPENDIX E:

TRANSCRIPTIONS

The transcriptions are presented here in the order they are first mentioned in the text.

1. **Hocus Pocus**, bars 97-128: Billy Higgins's drum accompaniment to the first chorus of Lee Morgan's trumpet solo. On *The Sidewinder*. Blue Note CDP7841572

2. **Bessie's Blues**, complete performance: all instruments. On *Crescent*. MCA/Impulse! MCAMD-5889.

3. **Mr. Day**, bars 25-48: paradigmatic transcription of Billy Higgins and Elvin Jones, plus all other instruments, performing two choruses of the melody. On *Like Sonny*. Roulette CDP 793901-2 and *Coltrane Plays The Blues*. Atlantic 1382-2.

4. **Blues Waltz**, bars 1-24: Max Roach's drum accompaniment to the first chorus of the melody. On *Jazz in 3/4 Time*. Trip TLP5559.

5. **Greensleeves**, bars 47-62: Elvin Jones's drum accompaniment to one of John Coltrane's soprano saxophone statements of the melody. On *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse! IMPD4-232.

6. **Your Lady**, bars 29-64 (one melody statement plus one sixteen-bar interlude): all instruments (piano rhythm only). On *Live at Birdland*. Impulse! MCAMD 33109.

7. **Compulsory**, bars 53-64: Elvin Jones's drum accompaniment to Thad Jones's one-chorus trumpet solo. On *Billy Mitchell Quintet*. Savoy SV0188.

8. **Glitter and be Gay**, bars 9-52: Elvin Jones's drum accompaniment to the melody section. On *Lonely Town*. Blue Note GP3186.

“Hocus Pocus”

Notes on the transcription

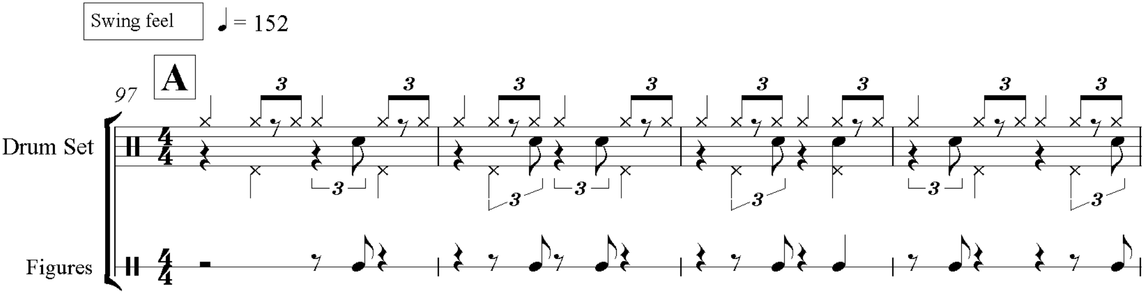
Billy Higgins’s drumming during Lee Morgan’s two-chorus trumpet solo represents the conventional ‘bop style’ approach to jazz drumming accompaniment. It illustrates that in this style the prime function of the drums is to provide solid, consistent timekeeping with little dynamic range. Interaction between drums and the soloist is limited to snare drum (and occasionally bass drum) comping and played as ‘shots’ throughout the performance.

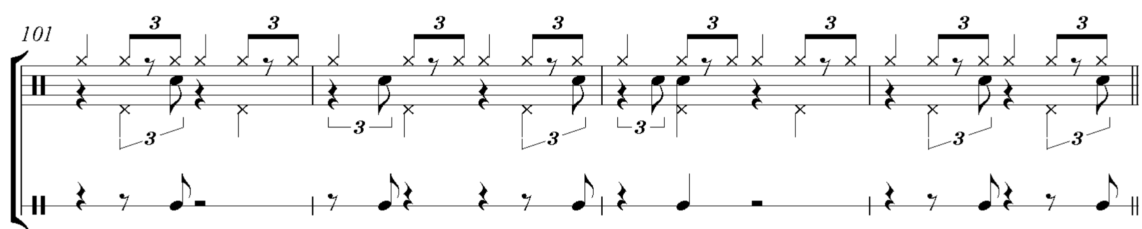
The lower line represents an extraction of these beats and serves to reveal that they are not formulated in phrases (unlike the approach of Jones), but rather are interjected episodically.

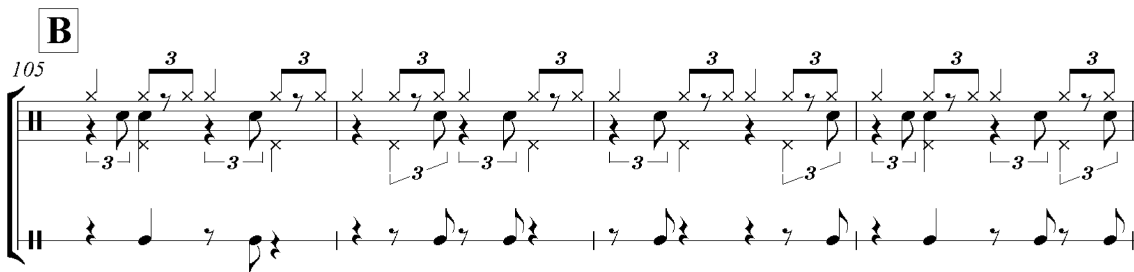
Hocus Pocus

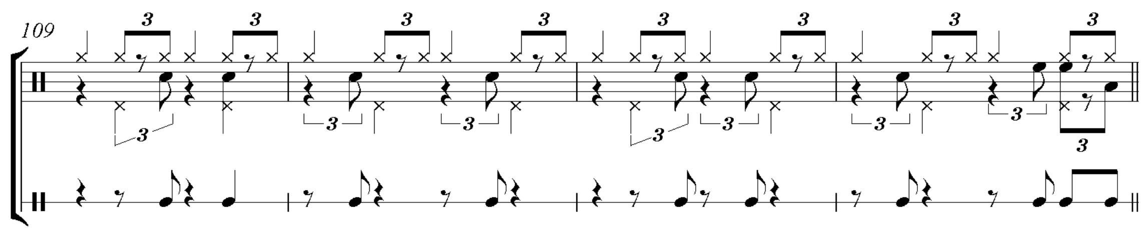
Billy Higgins's drum accompaniment to the first chorus of Lee Morgan's trumpet solo

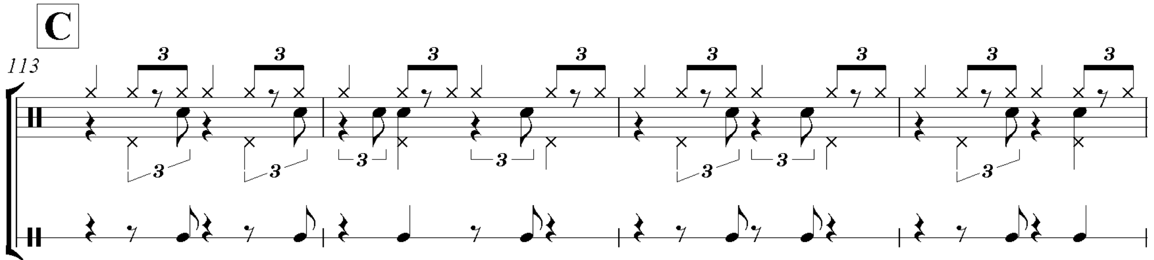
[from Lee Morgan, *The Sidewinder*. Blue Note CDP7841572, Dec. 21, 1963]

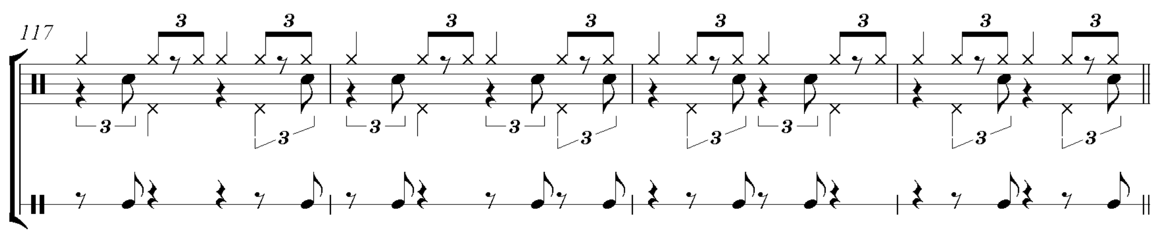









C
113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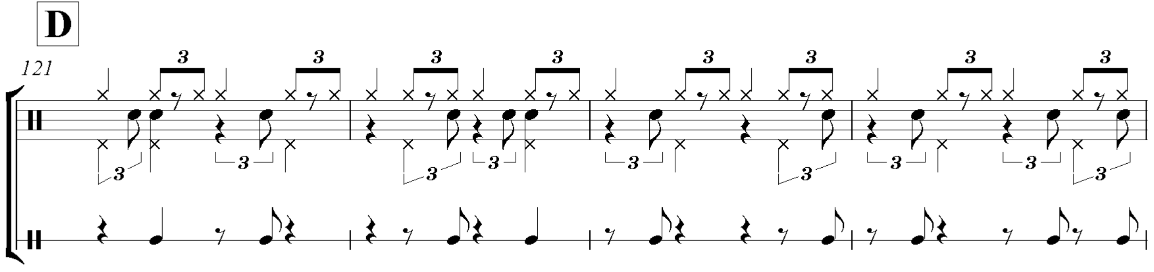
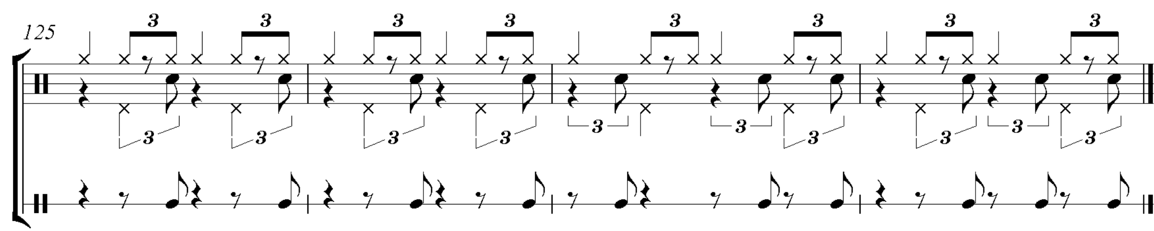

D
121


125

“Bessie’s Blues”

Notes on the transcription

The complete thirteen-chorus performance of Bessie’s Blues displays all the main elements of Jones’s style. It affords an overview of how Jones’s approach to accompaniment functions and develops within the total group context. The degree of interaction between drums and the other instruments is displayed through the various stages of the performance: opening melody statement, piano solo, saxophone solo and re-statement of the melody.

There are three staves of drum notation:

1. *Phrasing*: This line represents the phrasing system explained in Chapter III;
2. *Ride Cym.*: The ride cymbal line in triplet notation, including accents;
3. *Drum Set*: Everything that Jones plays on the drum set notated on a single staff.

As stated earlier (in Appendix D) the chord symbols are included to provide the basic harmonic framework of the composition. They do not account for chord substitution and momentary disagreement between the players. This is important because the musicians move away from this basis harmonic structure as soon as the two choruses of melody statement are completed. Furthermore, there are several sections in the bass part where Jimmy Garrison departs rather dramatically from a typical ‘blues bass line’, usually on occasions where either Coltrane or Tyner are employing substitute scales

and/or chords. In isolation, sections of his part seem to contain unlikely note choices. However, in these sections, Garrison seems to be searching for notes that will fit with what the others are playing. Regardless of his intentions, I have attempted to transcribe the notes that he plays.

I have attempted to reconstruct the piano performance, but the important information for this research is the rhythmic placement of the chords. While I have tried, as much as possible, to ascertain how McCoy Tyner would divide his accompaniment voicings (to Coltrane's solo) between left and right hands (bass clef for left hand, treble clef for right hand), this is simply conjecture.[82]

I have tried to make the transcription 'user friendly', although this has resulted in many instances of enharmonic spellings. Where melodic and/or harmonic devices occur (for example, substitute piano voicings played a semitone above or below the actual key area) I have chosen to notate these passages relating to the original key of E^b rather than insert a new key signature.

---

[82] I leave it to any interested piano players to decide which notes would be assigned to the left and right hands. These decisions vary from one pianist to the next. The lack of decisive information in this regard does not impact upon the usefulness of the transcription for this thesis.

Bessie's Blues

Swing feel

[from John Coltrane, *Crescent.* Impulse MCAMD-5889, April 27, 1964]

9

Ten. Sax

B♭7 A♭7 E♭7 E♭7 B♭7

Piano

Phrasing

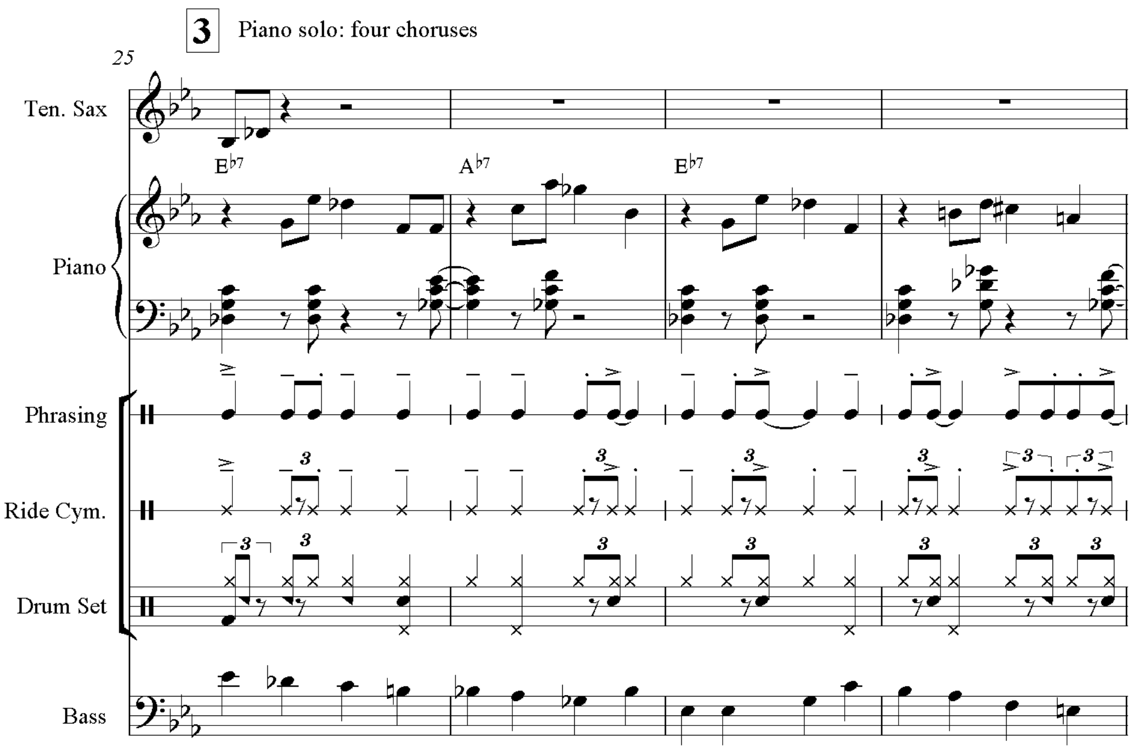
Ride Cym.

Drum Set

Bass

17
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

21
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass


3
Piano solo: four choruses
25
Ten. Sax
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

29
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

33
Ten. Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7

37
4
Ten. Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7

41
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

45
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

47
Ten. Sax
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

5
49
Ten. Sax
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

53
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

57
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

61
6
Ten. Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

65
Ten. Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

69
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

7
Tenor sax solo: five choruses
73
Ten. Sax
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

77
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

81
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

85
8
Ten. Sax
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

89
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

93
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

97
9
[Piano drops out]
Ten. Sax
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

101
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

105
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

109
10
Ten. Sax
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

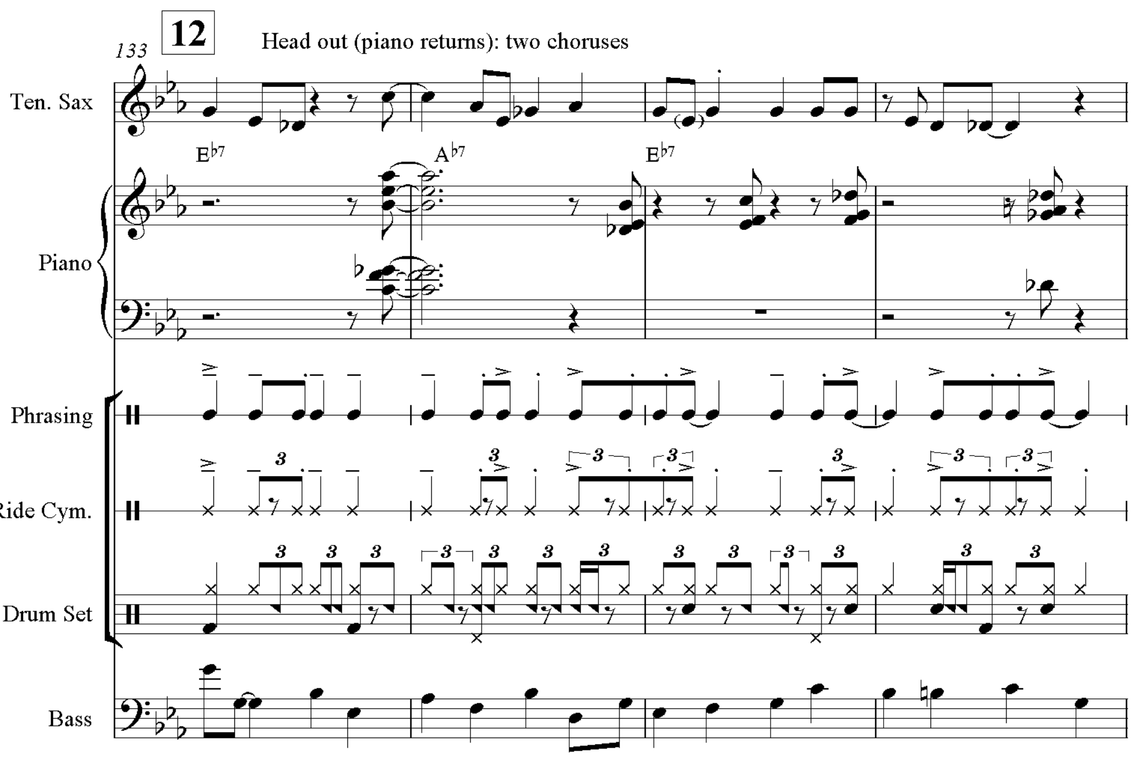
113
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

117
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

121
11
Ten. Sax
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

125
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

129
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass


133
12
Head out (piano returns): two choruses
Ten. Sax
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

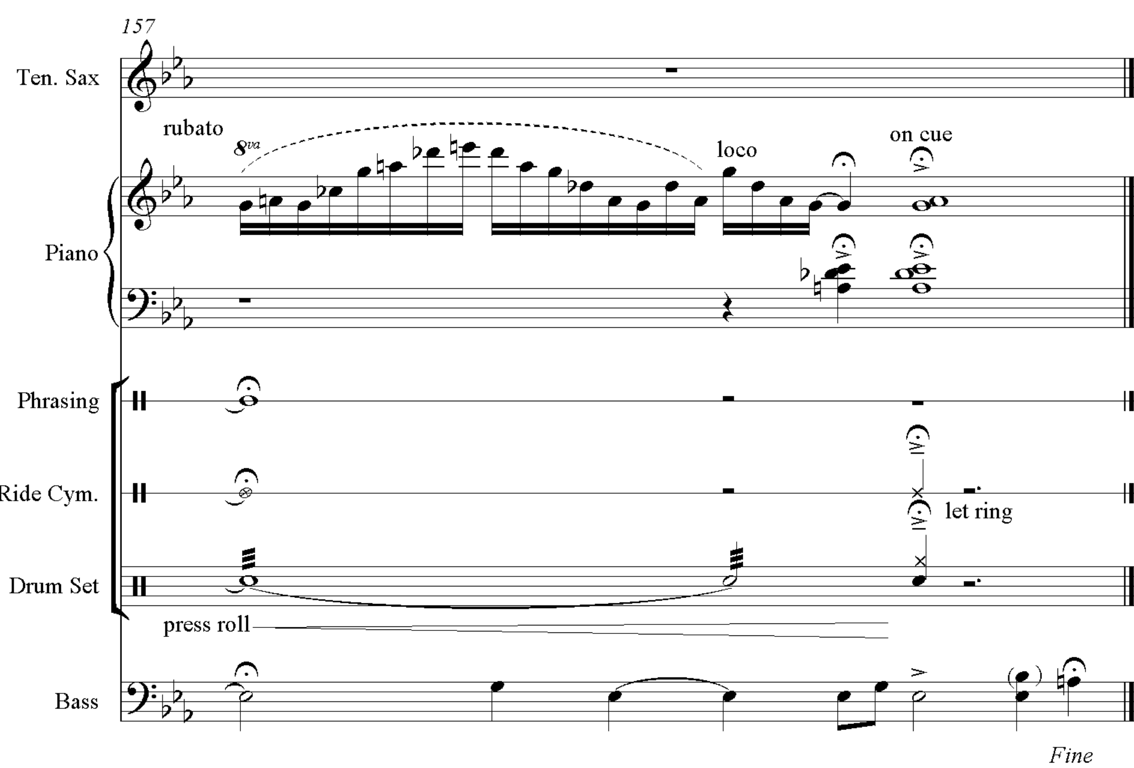
137
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

141
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
B♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

145
13
Ten. Sax
E♭7
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

149
Ten. Sax
A♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass

153
Ten. Sax
B♭7
A♭7
E♭7
E♭7
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
Drum Set
Bass


157
Ten. Sax
rubato
8va
loco
on cue
Piano
Phrasing
Ride Cym.
let ring
Drum Set
press roll
Bass
Fine

“Mr. Day”

Notes on the transcription

The following paradigmatic transcription represents two separate recorded performances of “Mr. Day” by Billy Higgins and Elvin Jones, made with the John Coltrane quartet approximately six weeks apart (September 8, 1960 and October 24, 1960 respectively). The Jones version can be regarded as a remake of the Higgins recording.

The arrangement is essentially the same for both performances: two introductory choruses of bass, the first one solo, the second one with drums added.[83] The twenty-four bar transcription presented here begins at the third chorus with the full band playing. The melody is stated twice by the tenor saxophone (over two twelve-bar choruses). The transcription ends following the melody statement. Beyond this point, the two drummers are accompanying different saxophone solos.

While it is clear that each instrument has a particular rhythmic part to heed during the melody, this transcription reveals that even under such restrictions Jones’s style is much more dynamic than that of Higgins.

---

[83] The saxophone melody and the piano part are from the Jones version. In the Higgins version, there are minor differences in both Coltrane’s phrasing of the melody and Tyner’s voicings in the arranged piano part, but these variances are not significant enough to limit the value of comparing the two drummers’ performances.

Mr. Day

Paradigmatic Transcription of Billy Higgins and Elvin Jones

[from John Coltrane, *Like Sonny.* Roulette CDP 793901-2, September 8, 1960 and John Coltrane, *Coltrane Plays the Blues.* Atlantic 1382-2, October 24, 1960]

33
Tenor Sax
B7
A7
F♯7
Piano
Billy Higgins
Drum Set
Elvin Jones
Drum Set
Bass

37
4
Tenor Sax
F♯7
Piano
similar...
Billy Higgins
Drum Set
Elvin Jones
Drum Set
Bass

41
Tenor Sax
B7
F♯7
Piano
Billy Higgins
Drum Set
Elvin Jones
Drum Set
Bass

45
Tenor Sax
B7
A7
F♯7
Piano
Billy Higgins
Drum Set
Elvin Jones
Drum Set
Bass

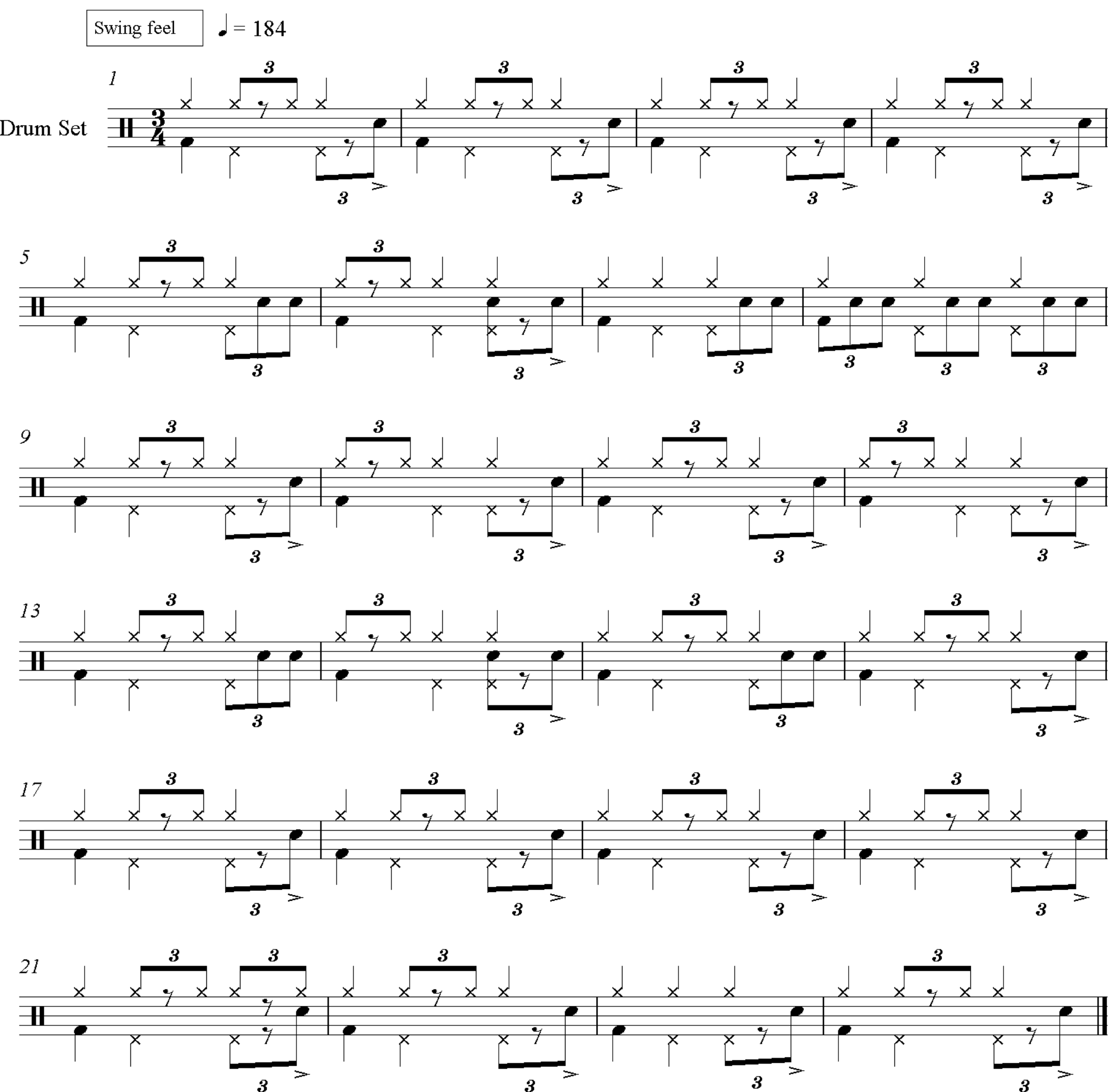
“Blues Waltz”

Notes on the transcription

This 1957 performance demonstrates Max Roach’s ‘jazz waltz’ approach to 3/4 accompaniment. Rhythm is organized into one-bar units, as opposed to longer phrases. Every bar is framed by playing the bass drum on ‘beat one’ and the snare drum on the ‘upbeat of three’. The hi-hat routinely plays beats two and three of every bar. While there is additional, varied activity on the snare drum, this operates as background filling, independent of the ride cymbal line.

Blues Waltz

Max Roach's drum accompaniment to the first chorus of the melody
[from Max Roach, *Jazz in 3/4 Time*. Trip TLP5559, March 18, 1957]



“Greensleeves”

Notes on the transcription

This sixteen-bar transcription begins approximately one minute into the performance and represents one complete statement of the melody. Elvin Jones’s accompaniment to Coltrane’s soprano sax line bears no stylistic resemblance to the jazz waltz rhythm introduced by Max Roach some years earlier. Where Roach seems to regard 3/4 as a separate kind of jazz rhythm, Jones does not. Instead, Jones’s approach to 3/4 features all of the same characteristics as his 4/4 accompaniment, including his reliance on the eighth-note triplet grid, two-bar phrasing, wide dynamics and his assignment of beats to various components of the drum set.

Greensleeves

Elvin Jones's drum accompaniment to one sixteen-bar statement of the melody
[from John Coltrane, *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse! IMPD4-232, November 3, 1961]

“Your Lady”

Notes on the transcription

This song is structured in two alternating sections: a rhythm section vamp/interlude (piano, bass and drums) and a melody statement (soprano sax, bass and drums). Pianist McCoy Tyner does not play when Coltrane states the melody and Coltrane does not play during the interludes. The transcription begins at bar twenty-nine, where Coltrane enters with the melody for the first time (following the introductory vamp) and continues until the end of the subsequent vamp/interlude.

The focus here is on presenting Jones’s accompaniment style in 3/4 at the peak of its development. The extracted phrasing line is included. The piano part contains only the rhythm of McCoy Tyner’s accompaniment.

Your Lady

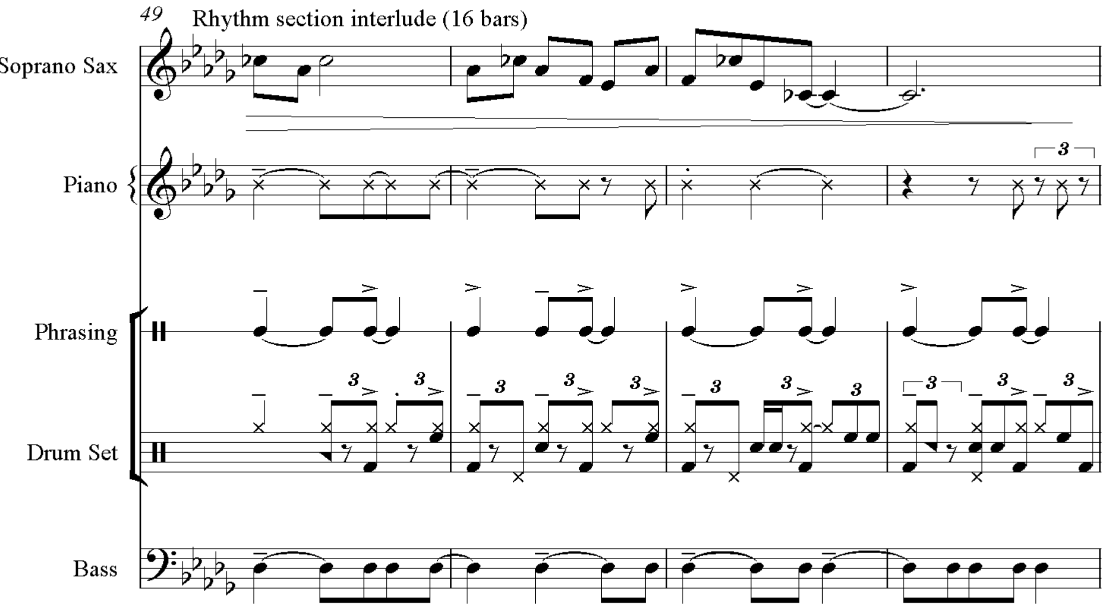
Elvin Jones's drum accompaniment to one chorus of the melody plus 16 bars interlude

[from John Coltrane, *Live at Birdland*. Impulse! MCAMD 33109, November 18, 1963]

37
Soprano Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Drum Set
Bass

41
Soprano Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Drum Set
Bass

45
Soprano Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Drum Set
Bass


49
Rhythm section interlude (16 bars)
Soprano Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Drum Set
Bass

53
Soprano Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Drum Set
Bass

57
Soprano Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Drum Set
Bass

61
Melody returns ...
Soprano Sax
Piano
Phrasing
Drum Set
Bass

“Compulsory”

Notes on the transcription

Recorded in 1948, “Compulsory” is a blues in the key of C. It is one of four songs from the earliest known Elvin Jones session. The transcription features Jones’s accompaniment to the one-chorus trumpet solo by his brother Thad Jones.

The three staves of drum information (explained in the notes to “Bessie’s Blues”) serve to show that early in his career Jones was already organizing his timekeeping into phrases and using the eighth-note triplet grid as a foundation for filling.

There is no notation for the hi-hat pedal. Despite repeated listening, with and without electronic filters, it was impossible to detect if or when the hi-hat was played.

Compulsory

Elvin Jones's accompaniment to Thad Jones's trumpet solo.

[from Billy Mitchell, *Billy Mitchell Quintet*. Savoy SV0188, 1948]

“Glitter and be Gay”

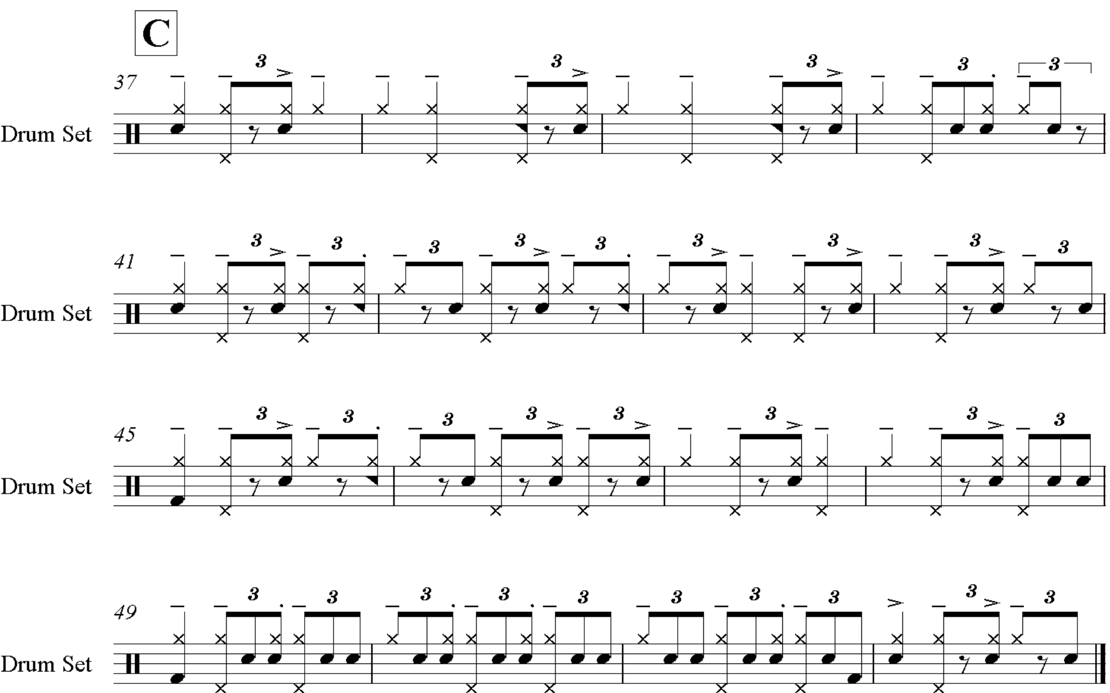
Notes on the transcription

Recorded in 1959, “Glitter and be Gay” represents Elvin Jones’s first recorded performance in 3/4 time. Of particular interest is the extent to which Jones’s approach to accompaniment in 3/4 differs from that of Max Roach.

Glitter and be Gay

Elvin Jones's drum accompaniment to the melody

[from Tommy Flanagan, *Lonely Town.* Blue Note GP3186, March 10, 1959]


C
37
Drum Set
41
Drum Set
45
Drum Set
49
Drum Set

APPENDIX F:

LIST OF TWO-BAR PHRASES

The following list represents Jones's extensive vocabulary of two-bar phrases. The material has been organized into six categories, based upon the various ways (types of notes and combinations thereof) that Jones chooses to begin a phrase:

1. a single quarter note
2. two quarter notes
3. three quarter notes
4. four quarter notes
5. two eighth notes
6. four eighth notes

The first category begins with phrases that most closely resemble the basic ride cymbal pattern. Subsequent categories contain phrases that move further afield. The goal of this arrangement is to facilitate the easy comparison of phrases. It is not my intention to suggest that these categories reflect how Jones might have organized his vocabulary.

There are seventy-six unique two-bar phrases presented here, reflecting all the rhythmic variations heard in "Bessie's Blues" and on other Jones recordings listed in the discography. The dynamic accenting heard on the recordings has been incorporated here. However, Jones had alternate ways of expressing many of these phrases, including:

- employing different accenting structures.
- tying phrases that end with an accented upbeat to the downbeat of the following bar.
- starting phrases earlier, tied to the last upbeat of the previous bar.
- linking phrases together to produce longer phrases.

While the addition of such variations would expand the list dramatically, it is the collection of *core* rhythmic phrases that is of interest here, not every possible permutation of each phrase.

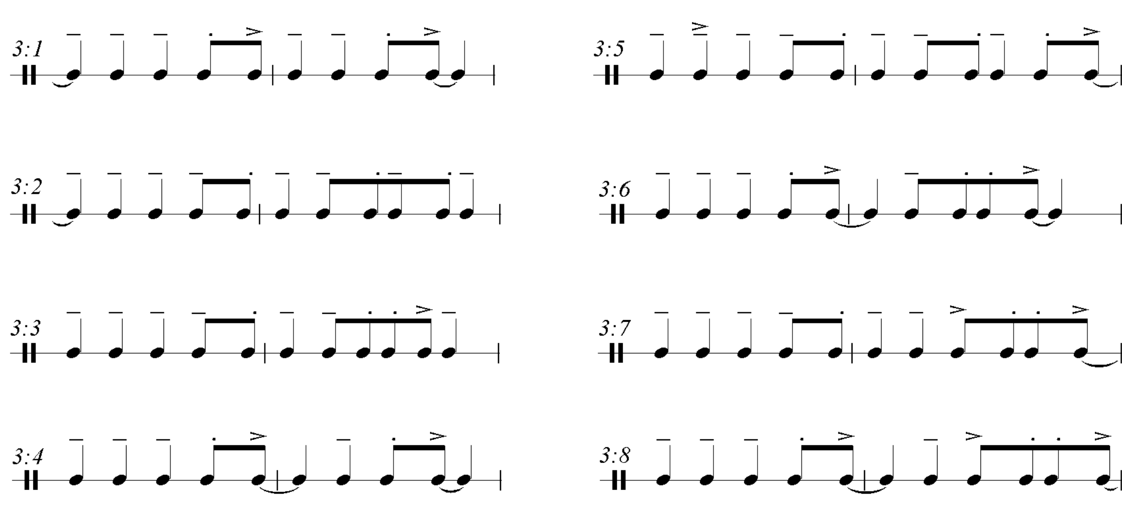
For phrases in which a row of eighth notes occupies beats two and three of the bar, I have intentionally 'beamed' across the 'mid-bar seam', in keeping with notational conventions in jazz drumming pedagogy.

List of Two-bar Phrases

1 Phrases that begin with a single quarter note

2 Phrases that begin with two quarter notes

3 Phrases that begin with three quarter notes



4 Phrases that begin with four quarter notes

4:1

4:2

5 Phrases that begin with two eighth notes

5:1

5:2

5:3

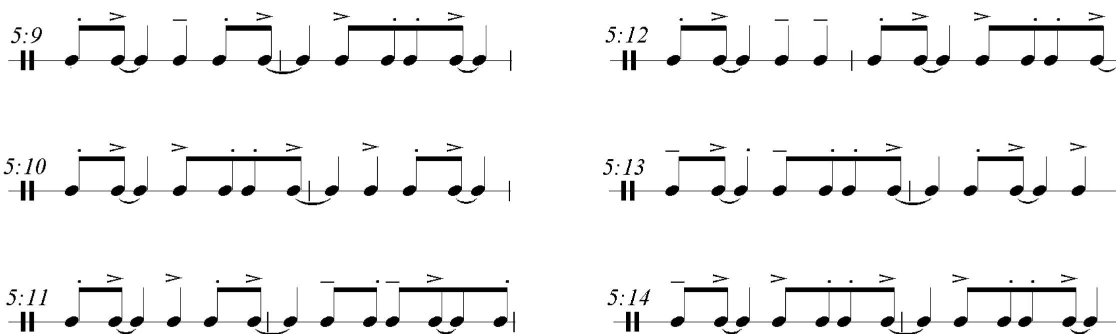
5:4

5:5

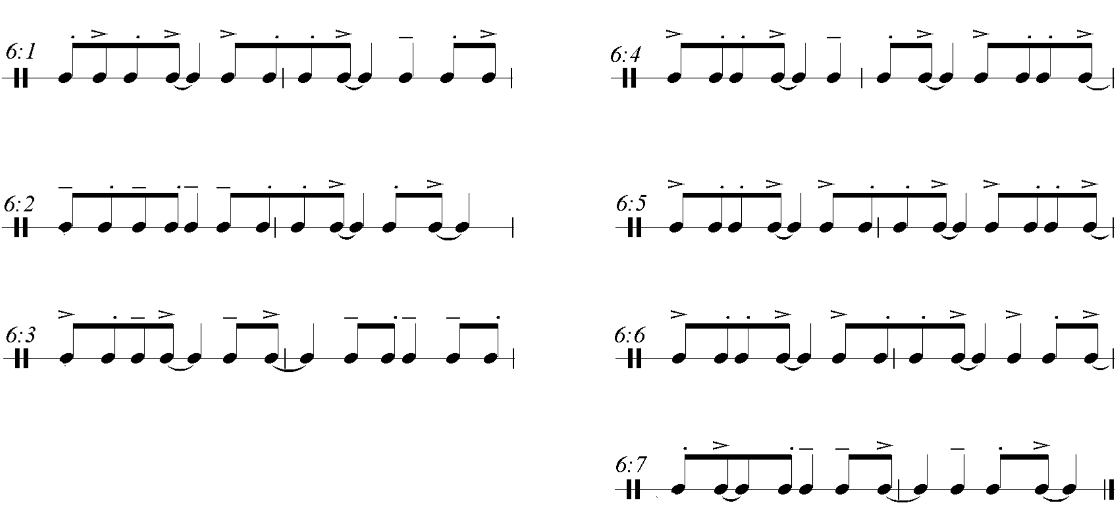
5:6

5:7

5:8



6 Phrases that begin with four eighth notes



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