

**YAŞAR UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**PROFICIENCY IN ARTS PROGRAMME**

**PROFICIENCY IN ARTS THESIS**

**TRANSCRIBING TONY WILLIAMS:  
THE METHODOLOGY AND ITS USE IN JAZZ  
PEDAGOGY**

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**2019 İZMİR**

**PhD/PROFICIENCY IN ART THESIS JURY APPROVAL FORM**

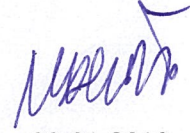
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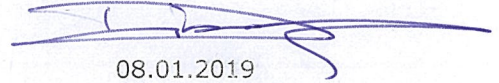
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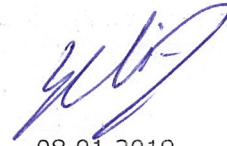
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## ABSTRACT

### TRANSCRIBING TONY WILLIAMS: THE METHODOLOGY AND ITS USE IN JAZZ PEDAGOGY

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2019

The importance of apprenticeship in a jazz musician's educational journey has been well-documented in interviews and biographies of jazz musicians. The sideman of Art Blakey and the Jazz messengers, Miles Davis, among others, frequently mention the importance of their time spent with the master innovators of jazz. They regard their time performing with elder musicians as a part of their formal education. With the passing of the older jazz masters, and the emergence of jazz education in the 1950s, one of the most effective ways of learning the nuances of a successful jazz performance has been through a method called *transcribing*.

Due to the non-academic, oral tradition of jazz pedagogy, as well as the ever-changing nature of jazz music, there has been very limited scholarly research into the study of the jazz drum set within a college curriculum.

The purpose of this study is to explore the transcribing methodology, and its placement in jazz curricula, through the music of Tony Williams. I will also explore the current trends of transcribing in jazz pedagogy through a set of interviews with jazz educators.

In order to show the possibilities of transcription methodology, I will select several examples of Williams' recorded performances in which he demonstrates his main innovations: the Five Note Ride Cymbal Technique, and application of the rudiments on the drum-set. I will explore the transcription process, and its role within a university jazz curriculum through interviews with leading jazz educators. I will develop series of exercises that will focus on developing technical efficiency in performing the transcribed material.

**ÖZ**

**TONY WILLIAMS TRANSKRİPSYONLARI:  
METADOLOJİ VE CAZ PEDAGOJİSİNDE KULLANIMI**

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2019

Birçok caz müzisyeninin biyografisinde ve röportajlarında, usta çırak ilişkisinin eğitim esnasındaki önemi üzerinde sıkça durulmuştur.

Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Jazz Messengers gibi ünlü grupların üyeleri, caz müziğine yenilik getiren büyük ustalar ile zaman geçirmenin ve bu yetişmiş müzisyenlerle performans sırasında beraber olmanın formal eğitim kadar etkili bir süreç olduğunu düşünmüşlerdir.

İşte bu bağlamda 1950 lerde başlayan caz eğitiminde Transkripsiyon, nüansları öğrenmek ve başarılı bir caz performansı yapabilmek için en iyi öğrenme metotlarından birisi olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Caz'ın doğasında olan sürekli değişim ve gelişim sebebiyle, geleneksel dinleme ve çalma tekniği ile öğrenilmesi caz baterisi ile ilgili müfredat çalışmaları sınırlı sayıda kalmasına sebep olmuştur.

Bu çalışmanın amacı ise; Tony Williams'ın müziği doğrultusunda transkripsiyon metodunun ve caz müfredatındaki yerini araştırmaktır. Bunların beraber caz pedagojisindeki güncel transkripsiyon metotlarını eğitimciler ile yapılan röportajlar ile ele almaktadır.

Transkripsiyon metotlarındaki olasılıkları göstermek için Williams'ın performans kayıtlarında ki örneklerde gözlemlenen buluşları Beş Nota Ride Zil Tekniği, ve bateride rudiment tekniğini uygulamak olarak özetleyebiliriz. Bu çalışma bağlamında geliştirilen bir seri egzersizler ile teknik verimliliği arttırmayı hedeflemektedir.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

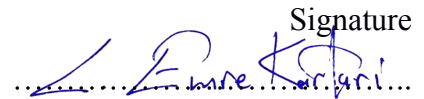
I would like to thank Dr. Paolo Susanni, Howard Curtis, Dr. Mehmet Can Özer, Dr. Zibelhan Dağdelen, Dr. Zehra Sak Brody, Dr. Selin Uluğbay, Dr. Taylor Barnett, Dr. Charlie Kinzer, Dr. Tony Garcia, Leia Carter and Ayca Kartari for their patience, support, and input during my studies. I would also like to give my sincere thanks to my drum students at Yasar University, Batuhan Toyhan, Görkem Görmüş and Efe Bezircioğlu, as well as all other students I've had the pleasure to work with. They have been a constant source of inspiration.

İzmir, 2019

## TEXT OF OATH

I declare and honestly confirm that my study, titled “Transcribing Tony Williams: The Methodology and its Use in Jazz Pedagogy,” presented as a Master’s/PhD Thesis, has been written without applying to any assistance inconsistent with scientific ethics and traditions. I declare, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that all content and ideas drawn directly or indirectly from external sources are indicated in the text and listed in the list of references.

Lacin Emre Kartari

Signature  
.....

January 8, 2019

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# DRUM KEY

Drum Set

The musical notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The notes and symbols are as follows:

- Measure 1: HI-HAT (x), RIDE CYMBAL (x)
- Measure 2: HIGH-TOM (quarter note), SNARE (quarter note)
- Measure 3: FLOOR TOM (quarter note), BASS (quarter note)
- Measure 4: HI-HAT/FOOT (x), HI-HAT/FOOT (x)
- Measure 5: CRASH (x)

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Transcribing: A Method of Study in Jazz Education**

Through listening and transcribing a previously recorded performance, the jazz student can capture the subtleties within that performance that are either very difficult or outright impossible to notate through sheet music. The current music notation system has been adopted and remained essential to many music programs. It is convenient, because it is the current system that enables jazz groups to perform together as an ensemble. It also provides a certain tangible sense of objective that gives the teacher and the students a sense of accomplishment. However, the rhythmic, timbral, and interaction of the ensemble, in a music involving improvisation, does not translate as easily to notation.

In the Charlie Parker transcription book “The Omnibook”, the transcriptions do not include detailed articulations. In the introduction to the Omnibook, editor Jamey Aebersold states that:

*“Only a minimum of articulations have been put in this book. We feel that jazz, being an aural art form, is often times best imitated by listening over and over, and then playing the notes the way you hear it on the record. This might seem like the long way to do it, but experience has proven reliable. After all, who would object to listening anyway? listening is what music is all about.”* (Aebersold, 2009:02)

From this explanation, we can conclude that Aebersold believes from his experience that the student will have more of direct connection to performance if the student, when learning the piece, figures out the transcription by using the transcription and the recording of the original recording together at the same time.

These subtleties are not only necessary for a correct interpretation of the music, but they are of the utmost importance for a successful performance of jazz music. The certain energy brought on by the rhythmic subtleties in a jazz performance that are too difficult to notate is commonly described by jazz musicians as the “swing feeling”.

## **Tony Williams**

Tony Williams was an innovative, groundbreaking percussionist throughout his lifetime. Through his close association with Miles Davis, he became internationally well known in the jazz music scene. After leaving the Miles Davis quintet, he was able to collaborate with world's leading jazz and rock musicians, both as a leader and sideman, which enabled him to further develop his vocabulary, his knowledge, and the possibilities he imagined for the drum set. His innovations not only surpassed the drum set as an instrument, but his concepts also brought significantly new possibilities to the performance and composition of jazz.

Williams' innovations were imaginative, rhythmically complex, and physically and conceptually demanding. The technically demanding nature of his performances, the proficiency of the other musicians he was performing with, and the experience of performing — interacting — together with these musicians over the course of years, made learning or recreating a similar level of performance from a jazz ensemble on a drum set very difficult. Although Williams' performance has been studied and dissected by jazz musicians over the years, there has not been an academic study published which directly focuses on helping percussionists develop a similar technical proficiency, with exercises based on his works.

In the following study, we will look at the methodology of transcribing through the music of Tony Williams.

# 1. THE INCONSISTENCY OF THE JAZZ EIGHTH NOTE

In the article “What is Jazz Rhythm”, David Liebman states that,

*“In jazz after tone, it is what I call “time feel” that most expresses an artist’s unique conception. The manner in which the player rhythmically phrases is to an even larger degree more revealing than the actual melodic and harmonic content.”* (Liebman, 2018)

Here Liebman suggests that the rhythmic phrasing can be more intricate than the pitch and timbre of an instrument.

## 1.1 Intricacy of Rhythmic Execution, Idiosyncratic to the Instrument

Liebman continues to point out that,

*“In order to master the subtleties of playing convincing and swinging eighth notes it is necessary to understand various aspects that play a role in their execution. It is important to remember that though there are technical variables which are peculiar to each instrument in the actual playing of eighth notes, the effect is still the same. So though a pianist must for example figure out the proper finger movement to articulate eighths compared to a saxophonist’s use of the tongue striking a reed or the string player’s plucking, the goal is still the same which is well placed eighth notes. It’s understood that from the standpoint of being an instrumentalist, each musician must discover and practice the intricacies of execution which are idiosyncratic to their instrument.”* (Liebman, 2018)

In this article, Liebman notes that one of the reasons for the inconsistency of the jazz eighth note interpretation is due to the technical variables of the chosen instrument. This concept could also be applied to a closer, micro-level observation of the mechanical workings of playing the drum set. The drummer’s chosen angle of the drums and cymbals, the individual setup of the drums, the technological advances, or trends in the hardware of the drum set, drum head, and sticks and mallets, all play a role in how the drummer interprets their swing eighth notes.

## **1.2 The Interpretation of the Eighth Note Through the Experience of the Listener**

Liebman states that the experience of the eighth note is still open to interpretation through the experience of the each individual listener. However, all interpretations of swing eighth note share a common rhythmic “lilt”. He states that,

*“What is swinging or not is to some extent a matter of taste and acclimation. That which swings to the novice versus the educated listener may be entirely different, but even among so-called experts, the feeling of swing is so personal and subjective as to seem to be beyond discussion (though there is indeed much intense discussion about what does or does not swing). However, I think we could generalize that a feeling of swing has a drive or momentum in balance with a feeling of relaxation and effortlessness. There is a ‘lilt’ or bounce to the music that is beyond words.”* (Liebman, 2018)

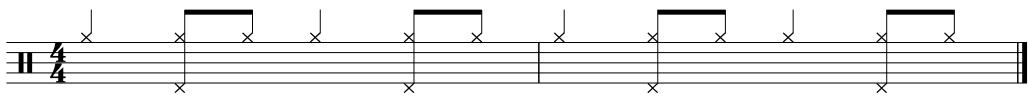
In the jazz history text “Jazz Styles” by Mark Gridley, a successful jazz performance is described as achieving what he calls “the swing feeling”. He lists the contributing factors to the swing feeling as consisting of a rhythmic lilt, constant tempo, cohesive group sound, an abundance of syncopated rhythms, swing eighth note pattern, and the spirit of the performance. (Gridley, 2014:09)

## **1.3 Interpretations of the Jazz Ride Cymbal Rhythm**

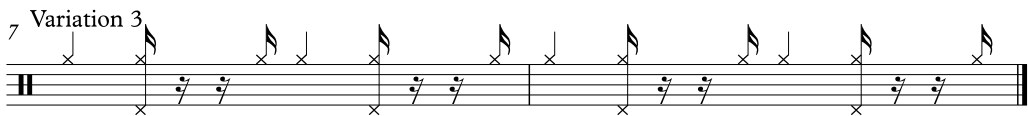
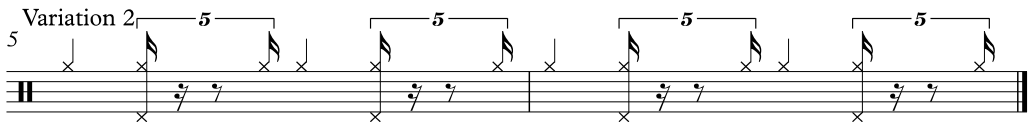
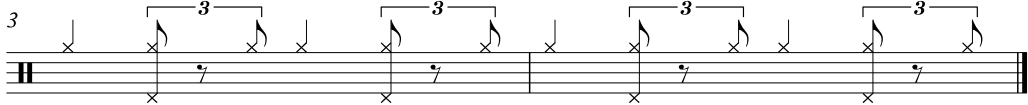
An example of a rhythmic lilt, or “accent”, of various jazz drummers can be explained by their individual understandings of their ride cymbal pattern. The following figure demonstrates the standard jazz ride cymbal pattern as it is most commonly notated, versus how it truly sounds when it is interpreted by jazz drummers.

Figure 1

Jazz Ride Pattern as it is most commonly notated:



How it can sound in performance:



The differences between the rhythmic feels of the same ride cymbal pattern among jazz drummers can vary widely when compared to each other.

It would be very difficult to read or notate a particular jazz drummer's feel if they interpreted a jazz ride cymbal beat in the feel of "quintuplets". To keep notation straightforward, it is commonly accepted that the traditional swing interpretation is simply expressed as: eighth note = SWING. The actual interpretation is left to the individual musician.

Another aspect of performance that is difficult to notate but plays a crucial role in expression is the timbre of the instrument. In terms of percussion, the tightness of the heads of the drums not only effects the pitch, but it also effects the rebound of the drumsticks, which then affects the performance.

We can conclude that the majority of musical insight gained from a transcription happens through the process of following the initial steps of listening and copying the musical phrase. The act of writing the passage down becomes a method of further study.

## 2. PASSING ON THE TORCH

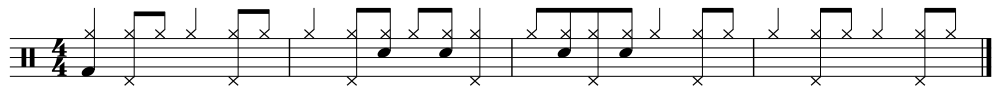
As we look back and dissect the history of jazz, we see a direct lineage moving through each period. Although jazz music changed almost every decade along with the cultural and technological changes of the times, it always borrowed from the generations before it.

### 2.1 Absorbing from Jimmy Cobb

In the following articles, we can observe the musicians Williams lists as direct influences on his own process. Although he does not necessarily list the specific musical influence of the musicians, drummers Max Roach, Art Blakey, and Jimmy Cobb are among those mentioned as influences.

In the following exercise listed in the book “Beyond Bop, Uptempo Studies” by John Riley, he lists the following exercise as a phrasing used by Williams:

Figure 2



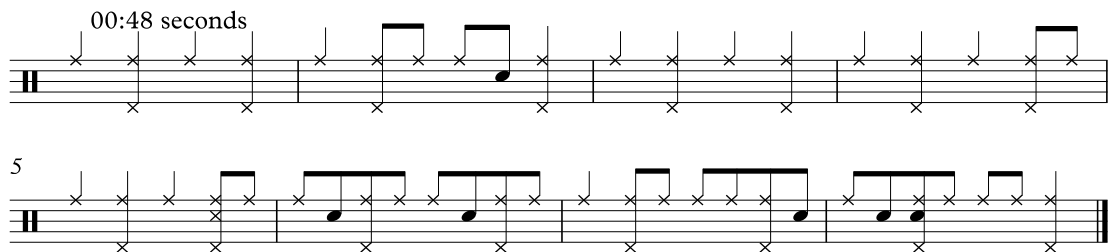
*“Finally, here is a type of uptempo cymbal phrasing that Tony Williams uses, Tony’s great technique allows him to play this five-note pattern, which actually increases the load on your ride hand. Use this phrasing to add variety, but don’t expect any rest. The notes on the snare drum help ‘goose’ the ride cymbal along.” (Riley, 1997:60)*

Although Riley implies that Williams is known for the five note ride technique, we can observe drummer Cobb playing the five note ride technique in his recording of “Smokin’ at the Half Note”, originally by Wes Montgomery. For his performance on this recording, Cobb’s playing has been described as “deft” and “assertive” by reviewer Stuart Nicholson. This description is not only an accurate description of the rhythmic consistency of his performance, but also an articulation of the attack and the timbre on his cymbals and drums are reflected as well. The following is a transcription of the track “Unit 7”. The transcription starts at the



beginning of the piano solo and at :48 seconds into the track. Within the last two measures of this phrase, we can see that Cobb plays a five note ride cymbal pattern:

Figure 3



In this example, we can observe the sound of the drums and cymbals very clearly. Since Williams listed Cobb as an influence in earlier interviews, we can conclude that there is a very strong possibility that Williams has transcribed this from Cobb's earlier recordings by comparing the similar five note ride method, as well as the similar tone quality, and tuning on their instruments.

## 2.2 Passing on to Chris Dave

In the following interview with drummer Chris Dave, we can see that he has spent time transcribing Tony Williams. When transcribing, Dave has paid attention to understanding the role of the drum set in an ensemble. This is a similar goal that Williams also mentioned in his interviews on transcribing.

*MD: As a student you played along with Tony Williams on Miles Davis's 'Footprints,' among other records. Did you ever try to sound exactly like Tony or clone yourself after a drummer?*

*Chris: I just did the regular things. I bought all the albums, tried to learn all the stuff I liked about the album. I memorized it and tried to take little things I was trying to figure out. I was more of a fan of those drummers at first, then I would study, but I was never in the position to sound like them. I had ADD when I was young. [laughs]*

*MD: But you transcribed Tony Williams?*

*Chris: I did, but I was trying to understand how he and Ron Carter or he and Herbie Hancock related on those Miles Davis records. I would listen for hours and try to understand. I would get into the vibe of emulating, but I really wanted to use it in ways that I liked, personalize [the influence] to what I was playing at the time.*

*Sometimes you might not be with a group of friends who are playing a Tony Williams type of song; you're just trying ideas to learn.” (Micallef, 2017)*

The following transcription has been taken from Dave’s performance with Erykah Badu — on the piece titled “The Other Side of the Game” from the VH1 Soul Stage performance. The two fills that Dave played from the piece at the time markings 4:32 and 4:58 show a highly unusual time modulation.

Figure 4

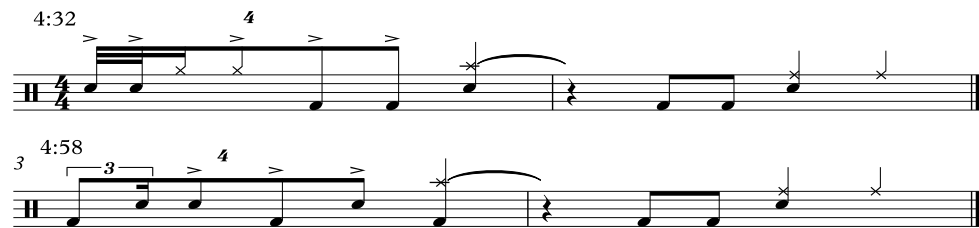


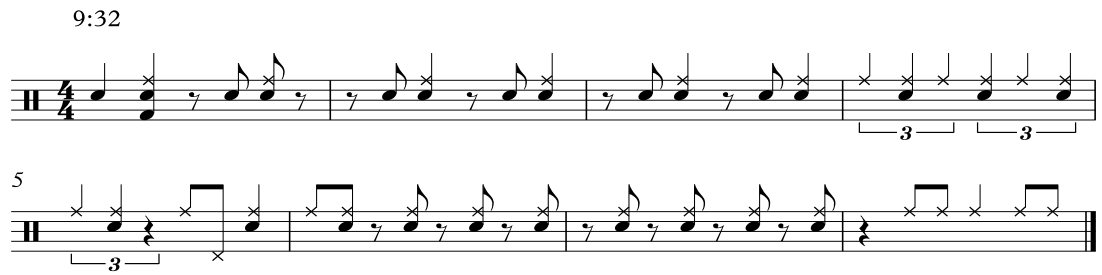
Figure 5



In this time modulation, we can see that Dave uses a modulation of playing four beats over three beats. A more simplified version of this modulation can be seen in Figure 5.

This kind of rhythmic modulation is common in Williams’ playing. In the following example, Williams creates a similar time modulation feeling in his recording with Miles Davis, on “All Of You” from the My Funny Valentine Recording. In this excerpt at the 9:32 time marking, Williams sets the band up for a brief time modulation that occurs with quarter note triplets. This idea of a brief moment featuring a time modulation is a direct influence on Williams. The following figure shows the modulation with Williams:

Figure 6



### 2.3 Similarity of Timbre, Decision to Play the Same Model Instruments

In the following photo, Figure 7, taken sometime between 1955 and 1957 by Jon Persson, we see that Tony Williams is using a five piece Gretsch drum set with two Zildjian K cymbals: a 22" ride cymbal, a 16" or 18" left side ride cymbal, and 14" hi-hats. His drum sizes seem to be a 12"x8" tom, a 14"x14" floor tom, a 18"x14" or 20"x14" bass drum, and a 14"x5" snare drum.

Figure 7



In the following interview from the “Modern Drummer Magazine” in 1978, Williams gives a detailed account of his first drum set purchase, and his ideal drum sound:

*“WALD: What was your first set of drums like?”*

*WILLIAMS: An old Radio King set. It consisted of a very large bass drum, 28 or 30 inches, and a 16" tom that was mounted on the bass. It was a very old type of set, probably made in the early forties. There was also a snare and a hi-hat. The hi-hat cymbals were almost all bell. The bell used up more space than the flat section. They were only about 12 or 13 inches, with this huge bell – about nine inches. I got rid of those pretty quickly.*

*WALD: When did you move up to the big time sets?”*

*WILLIAMS: I had the Radio Kings for about three years. My father had bought them for me. I got my first job at eleven or twelve years old, and it paid pretty well – for a kid. Thirty dollars for three nights work, and steady work, too. I saved twenty dollars of each weeks pay, and with the help of my mother, I bought my first Gretsch set.*

*WALD: The start of a long association, right?”*

*WILLIAMS: Yes, right from the beginning. I was working at a club in Cambridge, Massachusetts and I bought a silver sparkle set, the exact same outfit that Max played. I haven't played anything other than Gretsch since.” (Wald, 1978)*

From this interview, we can conclude that Williams was influenced by Max Roach in his first drum set purchase. He was unhappy with drum sets that reflected the sound of other eras, especially with larger drum sizes.

The interview in “Jazz Times” by Ashley Khan, Jimmy Cobb lists his drums and cymbals as:

*Drums: “I use what they called in the '50s a bebop set. When I started out it was with probably a 20-inch bass drum, which, when the bebop thing came in, I went to an 18-inch. I use a 5-inch snare, an 8 x 12-inch tom tom and the floor tom is 14 x 14-inches. For a long time I played Pearl drums, which are nice drums. Then I was with Slingerland, but they went out of business or something. I haven't heard nothing from them recently. Now I've been getting overtures from DW. So at home I got a Slingerland set, two sets of Pearls and a set of DWs. What determines which one I use is what sounds good in a room. On this new album with Cobb's Mob I used the Pearls.”*

Cymbals: *“Most of the time I’ve been getting along with Zildjians, just using a small 18-inch on the left—that’s a K. I got that from Mel Lewis after somebody stole a set of drums from me. I used to get K’s when I was advertising for Gretsch drums. But since [I shifted over to Slingerland] I’ve been dealing with Avedis upstate. So, I have a 20-inch Avedis ride, and the hi-hat is As.”* (Khan, 2003)

From this statement, we can conclude that both Jimmy Cobb and Tony Williams were using very similar brands of drums and cymbals for a number of years.

In the following photo, Figure 8, we can see Cobb playing on a similar model instrument.

Figure 8



This is more than coincidence, since there were a contained number of drum companies active during the decades when the two musicians were both active. The following timeline has been taken from the website [vintagedrumguide.com](http://vintagedrumguide.com), written and compiled by Marc Thompson:

*“1951 - Geo. H. Way is put in charge to merge Conn's interests in Leedy and Ludwig & Ludwig to form Leedy& Ludwig*

*1953 - Cleveland Rogers sell Rogers and Son Co. to Henry Grossman, of Grossman Music, who moves the company to Covington, Ohio*

*1954 - Geo. H. Way leaves Conn, purchases the factory operated by Conn's Leedy and Ludwig Div. in Elkhart, IN and reopens George H. Way Co.*

*1954 - Bud Slingerland buys Leedy Co.'s dies and patents from C.G. Conn Co. for \$90,000US.*

*195? - Mid 50's Gretsch switches from 3-ply shells (made in the Brooklyn factory) to 6-ply shells made by Jasper Wood Products, Jasper, Indiana. About this same time, Gretsch began painting the interior of the shells silver. Prior to that the interiors were natural.*

*1955 - Conn Co. sells Leedy and Ludwig inventory to Indiana Music after the knob tension drum fiasco.*

*1955 - early - Leedy& Ludwig cease operations. Conn sells Ludwig & Ludwig name with all designs and patents and tooling to W.F. Ludwig, Jr. for \$90,000US.*

*195? - Henry S. Grossman buys the Rogers Co. from Cleveland Rogers*

*1957 - Gretsch celebrates 75th anniversary with a "Diamond Jubilee Edition" catalogue. Special sets were covered with "Anniversary Sparkle" pearl. About the same time Gretsch sponsored "Gretsch Drum Nights" at Birdland.*

*1957 - Geo. H. Way Co. begins producing Aristocrat and Spartan model snare drums*

*1957 - Geo. H. Way Co. begins producing bass drums and tom toms 1959 - Slingerland moves from Chicago to Niles, Illinois*

*1961 - John Rochon, pres. of Camco, buys controlling interest in Geo. H. Way Drum Co.-Camco expands from hardware into drums.*

*1962 - Geo. H. Way loses control of George H. Way Co. to Camco Drum Accessory Co. of Oaklawn, Illinois due to debt owed Camco*

*1962 - Camco moves all production from Elkhart, Indiana to Oaklawn, Illinois.*

*1962 - Geo. H. Way goes to work for Rogers for a short time*

*1963 - (approx.) Geo. H. Way starts G.H.W. Drum Co.*

*1965 - Slingerland discontinues Leedy as its second line drums*

*1966 - Rogers is purchased by Columbia Broadcasting Company, Inc. (CBS)*

*1966 - Fibes Drum Co. comes into being in Farmingdale, NY through the efforts of Bob Grauso and John Morena.*

*1967 - Fred Gretsch, Jr. sells Gretsch to Baldwin Piano Co. who moves operations to Arkansas.”*

As we can observe, just within those two decades, there were a number of drum companies active. These companies mentioned in the timeline are Gretsch, Fibes, Rogers, Slingerland, Camco, Leedy & Ludwig, and Ludwig & Ludwig. Out of these companies, Williams decided to stay with Gretsch, like his heroes Jimmy Cobb and Art Blakey.

#### **2.4 The Closest Method to Apprenticeship**

According to saxophonist and jazz educator David Liebman, the practice of transcribing is directly related to the master and apprentice relationship of studying an art form (Liebman, 2018). The meaning of “apprenticeship” is described as a form of study where a young person is employed by a master craftsmen for a low wage in return for providing food, lodging, and formal study of a craft. Some apprentices would live together with the master craftsmen. In the transcribing method, the student selects a section or the entirety of a chosen phrase, and through repeated listening and trial and error, performs the piece in its entirety on their instrument. Therefore, transcribing becomes the closest process to having the master craftsmen leading the apprentice, and the closest means by which one could approach playing along the same passage with the same qualities. Transcribing is now a commonplace approach in the practice methods of most young jazz musicians, regardless of the instrument.

### 3. DEFINITION OF TRANSCRIPTION FROM THE JAZZ MUSICIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Since the act of transcribing is rooted deep within, as will be discussed further in the jazz educator interviews, the musical and educational experience of jazz musicians will oftentimes be referred to in other terms than transcribing. In the following interview with Tony Williams, the word “copying” is used instead “transcribing”. He may have not written out the transcription; however, the act studying by mimicking or “copying” is still present.

#### 3.1 Tony Williams on Transcribing

Dr. Dave Goodman, in his doctoral thesis, *TONY WILLIAMS' DRUMSET IDEOLOGY TO 1969*, establishes that Williams possessed an autotelic personality and utilization of learning techniques associated with heutagogy. This trait allowed Williams to begin a learning process by transcribing according to his own instinct.

Williams himself states here:

*“When I was a kid, for about two years I played like Max Roach. Max is my favourite drummer. I don't know if I've ever said this clearly and plainly, but Max Roach was my biggest drum idol. Art Blakey was my first drum idol, but Max was the biggest. So I would buy every record I could find with Max on it and then I would play exactly like him – exactly what was on the record, solos and everything. I also did that with drummers like Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, Jimmy Cobb, Roy Haynes, and all of the drummers I admired. I would even tune my drums just like they were on the record. People try to get into drums today, and after a year, they're working on their own style. You must first spend a long time doing everything that the great drummers do. Then you understand what it means. I've found that not only do you learn how to play something, but you also learn why it was played. That's the value of playing like someone. You just can't learn a lick. You've got to learn where it came from, what caused the drummer to play that way, and a number of things. Drumming is like an evolutionary pattern.”* (Mattingly 1984:13)

In this statement, Williams describes the desire to copy the sounds of a musicians he admired. Although he does not use the word “transcribing”, he is describing the same process. Williams listened to the music of Max Roach, Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones,



Jimmy Cobb, and Roy Haynes, enough that he copied not just the notes, but also tried to achieve a similar timbre with his instruments by tuning the drums in a similar way to what he had heard in the recording.

### **3.2 Benefits of Hearing the Rest of the Ensemble During Transcription Process**

Since, in most cases, musicians transcribe from a recorded medium like an mp3 or cd, musicians do not have the luxury of completely isolating the instrument during the transcription process. Through repeated listening, the transcriber will hear the ensemble as a whole. Although we may assume that this is a disadvantage, in the following interview Williams explains the importance of understanding how the transcribed part fits in with rest of the ensemble.

In the following interview, Williams describes the importance of analyzing through careful listening, and comparing the recorded output of a percussionist on several different recordings in order to get a full understanding of the purpose of that particular percussionist's vocabulary. He also talks about listening enough to understand how the drummers he was listening to *interacted* with the others in the group.

*“I would listen to one drummer on many records and watch what he did at certain points in the music, during different songs and with different bands. I did that with every drummer that I admired. You find out what the guy plays and what he doesn't play, so that eventually you can picture like a graph of tendencies. At the end of a chorus, maybe three drummers do one thing, while another group will do [something similar] at the beginning of a chorus or during four-bar breaks. You get this overview of what everybody does. That's how I did it.*

*My goal when I was a kid was to play like Max Roach or Art Blakey or Philly Joe Jones. By playing exactly like they did on the records and by playing along with the records, I found out why they played what they played. That's as important as what's being played. You get a genuine feeling for what the meaning of something is, not just 'oh, you can play it.' It's not enough just to be able to play a figure. You've gotta have a feeling for it. You've gotta know why it came about. Then you can play it with more conviction. With all of those things, that's how I developed my playing.*

*Well, I couldn't do what I do unless I had really wanted to play like Max Roach or Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, Roy Haynes, Louis Hayes and Jimmy Cobb. If I didn't do that, I wouldn't be sittin' here. I don't think that it's that important for me to have my own voice. I think that it's important to play the drums. I think the drums are more important than I am. So it's important for me to play the drums and make them sound as good as those guys do. If I can't do that, then I'm not doin' anything. I'm not playing the drums.*

*My love for the instrument caused me to want to play it really beautifully. The only way I could do that was to go to the guys who played it and made me feel 'God, I wanna play just like that.' That was my goal. All I ever wanted to do was sound like those guys. It just so happened that in doing that for awhile I developed something else because I was able to hear that there were certain things that they weren't playing.*

*I realized that nobody was doing certain things in certain situations, so I would. But I couldn't have done that if I hadn't wanted to play genuinely, with all my heart, like those other players. So that's what's important to me. I tell people all the time, you gotta play like somebody before you can play like yourself. Guys get a drum-set and they want their own style. It's stupid. Your own style ain't that important if you can't make the music sound good. The drums are important. You're not." (Taylor, 163)*

Again, the word “transcribing” is not used. However, an intense desire to sound exactly like a chosen musician is apparent. In the following statement, Williams further states the importance of truly absorbing the transcription by analyzing the piece, rather than simply replaying it verbatim:

*“When you learn to express ideas that have been around, then you can express yourself....For years and years I played the drums because I wanted to play like someone else. I used to be upset because I couldn't play something like Art Blakey or like Philly Joe Jones or Max Roach. I would hear them play something and I'd work on it and work on it. If it was a Max Roach record I would play no more or no less than what he played on the record. I wouldn't add anything, but I would play everything that he played so that I'd get a sense of why he played it. What happened two bars before that made him play that, or what is coming up that he's setting up? Or something just happened and he's reacting to it.” (Tolleson 1986:38)*

#### **4. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

Because of a general lacking of academic studies in jazz music, the main resources for observing Tony Williams will be through his audio and video recordings, as well as his interviews.

My study will develop exercises and etudes that will help students absorb his vocabulary, and reach a technical proficiency enabling the students to pinpoint several of Williams' innovations, and musically move beyond the transcribed material. Through transcribing his performances and permutating the exercises based on the transcriptions, I will introduce possible extensions to the original ideas, which can be developed into a further study of its own. It would require a much more in-depth study to carefully analyze and dissect every innovation put forward by Williams.

The techniques that are covered in this thesis are provided as an example for the student to develop his or her own ideas from a transcribed material.

For the study of the five note ride cymbal technique, I will be using Appendix Four from Dr. Goodman's Thesis. In this Appendix, Dr. Goodman gives a stylistic overview of Tony Williams' recordings through 1969. He lists the pieces he has recorded in terms of "feel" and tempo marking. I will use this Appendix to choose different "feels" of pieces that increase in tempo, and practice the five note ride cymbal technique by playing along with the chosen pieces. By using this technique, we are not just using the pieces as a glorified version of a metronome, but by having Williams' cymbal sound in the background as we practice, we will get a closer image of the desired sound.

Due to the different abilities of each musician, it is impossible to expect the same results from every individual. My hope is that this study will be inspiring to the practicing drum set student, and that it may help the student to begin a study of their own.

In the following statement, Mr. Williams states that in the actual performance of jazz improvisation, music itself takes on a life of its own, and all preparations for technique do not apply:

*“...playing jazz drums you have to know how to play the [ride] cymbal beat and you have to know how to coordinate that with the hi-hat and coordinate that with the bass drum and the left hand. When you have to know how to do these things, it’s not concept. I don’t have a concept. I just know that each limb I have has a certain function. The only way I learned how to do that was by playing this jazz beat [on the ride], ching-a-ding, ching-a-ding, ching-a-ding, ching-a-ding. I can play that beat constantly without ever stopping it. I can play a whole bunch of other stuff with my left hand and never change that. I can play that beat constantly through all this other stuff. Now to be able to just do that is an accomplishment. If you can do that, you’ve learned a lot [about playing drums]. It’s like being hypnotized. You get into this trance and then things start speaking to you. Your body parts start speaking to you. Your feet and hands start telling you things that they can do.*

*If you’re just playing beats, you don’t get this trance thing that I’m talking about. And again, it’s not a concept. It’s not about how to play rhythms and stuff. It’s about how to play the drums. It’s how to play music. That’s what I try to teach when I have taught. I show students how to do that. The guys that have actually done it come back months later after they’ve worked on it and understand what I was actually saying and thank me. If you can do that, you’ve accomplished a lot towards really playing the drums. I don’t mean beats or rhythms. I’m talking about you being at one with the instrument.” (Ferriter 1990:37)*

In this article, Williams talks about a “trance-like” feeling during which the musician is in the direct act of making music. In this state of making music, all of the previous transcribed material just becomes a preparation for the performance itself. As such, the exercises discussed in this thesis, or any other jazz exercise book, will guarantee neither a successful musical performance nor a technical revelation. This thesis is more of a theory for the jazz musician to consider; however, it is not a guarantee of a successful musical performance.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

In the article put forward by Liebman, titled “Why Transcribe”, he states that the transcription process is a three part process. In the first part, the student is expected to learn the musical selection by listening only, and away from the instrument. The student is expected to sing back the selection by voice, imitating the sound as closely as possible to the original musical instrument it is played on. Once the student is able to fully sing the solo along to the recording, memorized, then the student can begin the second part of the transcription: to learn the piece on their own instrument. Once the student is able to perform the piece by memory, not only instrument, then they can begin the final part of the process. The third and last part of the transcribing method involves writing it down, choosing the sections that may be of interest, and developing exercises along to it.

I will transcribe the selected musical passages using the program Amazing Slow Downer. I will write variations of the selected passage. I will also write exercises which will give the performer the facility to not only perform the transcribed passages in verbatim, but also develop a more complete absorption of the material and inspire further vocabulary.

Some of the exercises will combine Williams’s vocabulary with exercises from previously published materials for drum set study. In such exercises, the original work and its purpose will be observed in comparison to the new exercise.

The material covered will be divided into several sections. The first section will be on Williams’ interpretations of up-tempo accompaniments, and the five note ride cymbal technique. The second section will reflect his use of rudiments around the drum set. In both sections, transcribed examples of other drum set players who have influenced Williams’ style will be observed. Also, in each section, technical exercises that may have influenced Williams will also be provided.

The following books will be used to develop the exercises: “Four Way Coordination” by Marvin Dahlgren and Elliot Fine; “Master Studies” by Joe Morello; and “Art of Bebop” and “Beyond Bebop” by John Riley. Specifically, Riley’s up-tempo studies will be combined to incorporate up-tempo performances of

Williams. Williams' use of the single stroke roll will be performed using concepts from Morello's studies.

The following recordings will be used for transcribing Williams:

"My Funny Valentine and More, 1964" with Miles Davis, and "Jack Knife" with Jackie Mclean.

## 6. TRANSCRIPTION EXERCISES

In the following chapter, we will look at several different ways of creating further study out of an existing transcription.

### 6.1.1 Creating Further Study Through Permutating Musical Ideas: Note Groupings

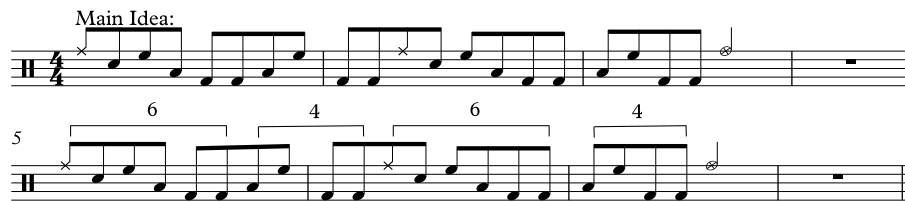
For this study, we will be using Tony Williams' solo in "Seven Steps To Heaven" on the album "My Funny Valentine and More, 1964" by Miles Davis. This short idea, Figure 9, was taken from the 1:57 time marking in the piece.

To create a further study and to absorb the material, I have divided the idea into six- and four-note groupings. In the following example, Figure 9.1, we can take a closer look at the sticking of this idea:

Figure 9



Figure 9.1



From the sticking, we can see that Williams is playing a combination of double paradiddle and paradiddle, substituting the bass drum for the last two right hand strokes. In other words, he has taken a part of the double paradiddle rudiment: RLRLRR and paradiddle, RLRR, and grouped them together on the drum set. Williams has taken the vocabulary of Dawson's Rudimental Ritual from a single surface to apply them on the drum set.

From that idea, we can develop this approach and further apply them on the drum set. The following exercise is based on this idea of applying paradiddle and double paradiddle, and using all possible combinations over three and four measures.

This idea can be developed further into other combinations by using other amalgamations of rudiments, and a different order of drums and cymbals.

Figure 9.2

The musical score for Figure 9.2 is a 33-measure exercise in 4/4 time, written on a single staff with a drum clef. The exercise consists of a sequence of rhythmic patterns using eighth notes, with brackets above the notes indicating groupings of 4 or 6 notes. 'X' marks are placed above certain notes to indicate cymbal accents. The exercise is divided into measures 1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-16, 17-20, 21-24, 25-28, 29-32, and 33.



Figure 9.3

### 6.1.2 Creating Further Study Through Permutating Musical Ideas: Alternating Order of the Limbs

A further exploration of Williams’ idea can be possible through switching the order of the limbs. This exercise is inspired by Williams’ study of the book “Four Way Coordination”. In the following exercise, we have rotated the limbs from the original order of limbs in order to create a new application of paradiddle and double paradiddle. We have rotated all the limbs in clockwise rotation, so Right Hand becomes Right Foot, Right Foot becomes Left Foot, Left Foot becomes Left Hand, and Left Hand becomes Right Hand. In Variation 1, the sticking turns from RLRLBB

and RLBB to BRBRHH and BRHH. In Variation 2, this sticking turns by one clockwise rotation into HBHLL and HBLL.

Figure 10

Original line:

Variation 1

5

Variation 2

9

Variation 3

13

By using this method to vary Williams’ ideas, we can vary the rudimental sticking in turn, and apply them to the drum set in nontraditional, unorthodox ways.

## 6.2 The Five Note Ride Stroke Technique

In Williams’ first recording with saxophonist Jackie McLean, he uses what we will call the “the five note ride technique.” In this technique, Williams uses five notes in a row when time keeping is patterned. This pattern was performed with the right hand on the ride cymbal. Later, with Miles Davis, he developed this technique into faster sections. In the following chapter, we will observe Williams’ performance of the five note technique at various tempos, and combine this technique with John Riley’s up-tempo studies from his “Beyond Bop” book.

In the following transcription of Williams’ performance from Jackie Mclean’s “Vertigo” album recorded in 1962 and 1963, we can observe the five note ride

technique in action. In this transcription, in measures 8-9, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19-20, 21-25, 32, 33, and 36, he uses this technique in the ride cymbal.

When the placement of Williams' five note ride technique is examined in this transcription, we can see that he has the freedom to start the five note combination from any down beat within the measure. For example, in measure 8, the five note pattern starts on beat 4, in measure 12, the pattern starts on on beat 3, on measure 13, the pattern starts on beat 2, and on measure 22, the pattern starts on beat 1.

By using Williams' transcription of "Vertigo", we will develop further study by combining coordination and permutation exercises.

Another aspect observed in the "Vertigo" recording is that Williams is using the same setup as his heroes from the same era, Jimmy Cobb, Philly Joe Jones, and Art Blakey. Although the model of the setup is difficult to deduce from the recording, Williams uses a four-piece drum set with two cymbals.

Figure 11

The musical score is written for guitar in 4/4 time. It consists of nine staves of music. The first staff is in 4/4 time and contains six measures. The subsequent staves are numbered 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 31, and 35, each containing four measures. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and includes various guitar-specific notations such as 'x' for muted notes and 'acc' for accents.

## Five Note Pattern Exercises

The following example shows four possible five note pattern exercises, over two bars. Each example shows the five note pattern starting on a new down beat. Exercises shown in Figure 14 will be based on exercise 1 as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12

exercise 1

3 exercise 2

5 exercise 3

7 exercise 4

In the following exercise, we will combine this exercise with John Riley's uptempo exercises from his book, "Beyond Bebop". We will combine the previous ride cymbal pattern exercises with the Riley coordination exercise.

The first example will be combined with the first five note ride cymbal pattern exercise as shown below. It is assumed that from the written snare drum and bass drum part, the student will add a hi-hat with their foot on beats 2 & 4, and play the original jazz ride cymbal pattern. In the example, we will use the the first five note ride cymbal pattern with hi-hats played on all four beats.

The figures shows the original exercise as taken from Riley's book "Beyond Bop".

The figures also show this exercise in its complete form, combining it with the first five note ride cymbal figure from prior figures. This exercise can be varied indefinitely with other possible ride cymbal pattern combinations.

Figure 13

The image displays a musical score for a drum set, consisting of eight staves. The first staff is marked with a 4/4 time signature and a double bar line. The notation uses various rhythmic symbols: quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests. The patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1: Quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest.
- Staff 2: Quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest.
- Staff 3: Quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest.
- Staff 4: Quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest.
- Staff 5: Quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest.
- Staff 6: Quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest.
- Staff 7: Quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest.
- Staff 8: Quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest, quarter note on the snare, quarter rest, quarter rest.

Figure 14

The musical score for Figure 14 consists of eight staves of music, each representing a four-measure phrase. The time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Accidentals, including flats and naturals, are used throughout the score. The staves are numbered 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 33, indicating the starting measure of each phrase. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The music is written in a single system, with each staff containing four measures of music. The notation is precise, showing note heads, stems, beams, and accidentals. The overall structure is a sequence of eight four-measure phrases, each starting at a specific measure number.

Figure 14.1

The image displays a musical score for Figure 14.1, consisting of eight staves of music. The music is written in 4/4 time, as indicated by the time signature on the first staff. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The score is divided into measures, with bar lines clearly visible. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The subsequent staves are numbered 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, and 36, indicating the starting measure of each line. The music features a mix of rhythmic complexity, with some measures containing multiple beamed notes and others featuring rests. The overall structure is a continuous sequence of measures across the eight staves.





Figure 14.3

The image displays a musical score for guitar, presented in 4/4 time. The score is organized into eight horizontal staves, each representing a different measure or section of the piece. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and rests. The music is written on a six-line staff, with some notes extending to the top or bottom lines. The measure numbers 4, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, and 36 are placed at the beginning of their respective staves. The overall structure suggests a sequence of musical phrases or exercises.

Figure 14.4

The image displays a musical score for guitar, consisting of eight staves of music. The music is written in 4/4 time, as indicated by the '4' over the '4' in the first staff. The notation includes a variety of rhythmic patterns, such as eighth-note runs, quarter-note chords, and sixteenth-note figures. Measure numbers 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, and 36 are clearly marked at the beginning of their respective staves. The score is presented in a clean, black-and-white format, typical of a printed musical manuscript.

Figure 14.5

The musical score for Figure 14.5 consists of nine staves of music, each starting with a measure number. The time signature is 4/4, and the key signature has one flat. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and beamed eighth notes. The staves are numbered 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, and 33, indicating the starting measure of each line. The music is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The notation includes stems, beams, and flags to indicate the precise timing of the notes.

Figure 14.6

The image displays a musical score for a single instrument, likely a guitar, in 4/4 time. The score is organized into six horizontal staves, each beginning with a measure number: 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21. The notation includes a variety of rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Many notes are accompanied by an 'x' symbol, which typically indicates a muted note. The music is written on a single-line staff with a clef that resembles a soprano clef. The overall structure consists of six measures per staff, with a double bar line at the end of the final staff.

### 6.3 Rudimental Technique

One of the most important musical influences on Williams was his teacher Alan Dawson. Williams recalls,

*“I met Mr. Dawson when I was nine years old. He went out of his way to encourage me, help me and to see that I had opportunities to develop my meager skills. For example, on Saturday nights he would drive one hundred miles out of his way to pick me up in Roxbury, drive to Cambridge to let me perform with his trio and gain valuable experience, and then return me safely home before returning home himself to Lexington. I was twelve years old. Every drummer, local and worldwide, knew of his legendary speed, precision and control. Mr. Dawson didn't only teach me to play the drums, he taught me how to conduct myself as a musician and as a man.”* (Anderson, 1996)

Williams also states,

*“What I basically got from Alan was clarity. He had a lot of independence, but so did other people. I get this question about independence a lot, even from drummers, but they can't even be clear about their ideas. I mean you hear them play something, and you say, 'What was it that he played?' Or if they hear themselves back on tape, they say they thought they played good but that it didn't sound like that. So the idea is that when you play something for it to sound like what you intended, not to have a 'maybe' kind of sound. So that's what I got from Alan, the idea that you have to play clearly.”* (Anderson, 1996)

In the book “The Drummer's Complete Vocabulary as Taught by Alan Dawson” by John Ramsay, Dawson's study and the knowledge of the rudiments is evident. Included in the exercise is a snare drum solo called “Rudimental Ritual”, which combines all the rudiments in a 4 or 8 bar phrase, in a continuous piece. We can assume that Williams' introduction to the rudiments came from Dawson.

*“After a year and a half of study with Dawson, Williams decided to dedicate himself to a high volume of practice, claiming to have practiced eight hours a day, every day from 1956 to 1962.”* (Taylor,163)

These were formative years in Williams' development. Along with studying rudiments and reading with Dawson, Williams continued to transcribe his heroes.

Combining his rudimental studies with transcribing the drummers he admired, Williams stated that he began to hear things in his playing that hadn't been used before:

*"I guess I was aware that I was playing differently, but it was more of a thing that I was aware of a need, like if you see a hole, you think you can fill it. There were certain things that guys were not playing that I said, 'Why not? Why can't you do this?'"* (de Barros 1983:15)

This period of experimentation in rudimental study and transcribing may have led to his major innovation, applying rudiments around the multiple surfaces of the drum set, instead of the single surface of the snare drum. We will now compare a rudiment-heavy solo of Philly Joe Jones' to a solo of Tony Williams'. Both of these solos are essentially using similar sticking patterns.

## **7. THE USE OF TRANSCRIPTION-BASED STUDY IN A JAZZ CURRICULUM**

The following research includes several interviews with active jazz educators to get a deeper understanding of the use of transcription-based studies in university-level jazz curricula.

NASM, also known as the National Association of Schools of Music, is a specialized, professional accrediting agency. The purpose of the agency is to establish threshold standards of achievement in music curricula without restricting an administration or school in its freedom to develop new ideas, to experiment, or to expand its program.

The following excerpt detailing their requirements for a jazz studies program has been taken out of their 2018-2019 accreditation handbook. While a comprehensive knowledge of jazz is expected, there is very little information about which of the topics in jazz outweigh others. All aspects, whether it is pedagogy, performance, composition, or history, are all given an equal significance. Specific levels of required musicianship on the part of the students are left to the individual institutions to determine.

### **7.1 NASM Jazz Studies Requirements**

The following is an excerpt of NASM Jazz Studies Requirements:

*“Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies*

*Jazz and jazz studies are part of the larger musical heritage, and thus are normally included in undergraduate music studies in one or more areas such as general musicianship, repertory, music history, and theoretical studies. Jazz may be emphasized in degree programs such as those in performance, composition, music education, and music history.*

*The Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies, however, is intended to produce a comprehensive professional competence in jazz. When an institution is adequately staffed and equipped to offer specialized courses to prepare students for careers in fields requiring combinations of jazz performance, composition, and arranging skills, the offering of the Bachelor of Music degree with a major in jazz studies is justified.*



*Baccalaureate degrees in performance, composition, and music education with a jazz emphasis should be structured according to the standards outlined for those degrees. In these circumstances, the standards for Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies shall be used as guidelines as appropriate to the specific major emphasis of the curriculum.*

### *1. Curricular Structure*

*a. Standard. Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in jazz studies as indicated below and in Standards for Accreditation VIII.*

*b. Guidelines. Curricula to accomplish this purpose that meet the standards just indicated normally adhere to the following structural guidelines: study in the major area, including performance studies, ensemble participation, studies in composition, arranging, and improvisation, independent study, field experiences, and recitals, should comprise 30–40% of the total program; supportive courses in music, including basic musicianship studies, 20–30%; general studies 20–30%. Studies in the major area and supportive courses in music normally total at least 65% of the curriculum.*

*2. Specific Guidelines for General Studies. Studies in electronic media, African-American studies, and the business aspects of music are particularly appropriate for the jazz musician.*

*3. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all degree programs):*

*a. Comprehensive capabilities in various jazz idioms, including the ability to perform, improvise, compose, arrange, and score; and knowledge of jazz history and literature, including the cultural sources and influences of jazz.*

*b. Ability to work as a performer and composer/arranger with a variety of jazz and studio music idioms in various settings and with various sizes and types of ensembles, including the ability to produce the appropriate expressive style of the music being created or presented. Independent studies, internships, field work, and similar experiences are strongly encouraged.*

*c. Opportunities to hear fully realized performances of the student's original compositions and/or arrangements; public presentation is an essential experience.*

*d. Solo and ensemble experiences in a variety of settings. A senior recital is essential, and a junior recital is recommended.” (NASM Handbook, 2018)*

From the above excerpt, it is clear that the specific expectations of a jazz performance major are left to the institutions.

## **7.2 INTERVIEWS**

Due to the lack of specific, standardized expectations of a jazz major, the following interviews were individually conducted with Dr. Taylor Barnett, Dr. Charles Kinzer, Dr. Anthony Garcia, and Mr. Howard Curtis.

They were chosen to discuss a variety of pedagogical views on the role of transcription in the university-level curriculum, as well as the standardization of a performers' level in the curriculum.

### **Question 1: What are the requirements for your Bachelor level jazz graduates?**

#### **Dr. Kinzer:**

“My expectation would be a recital type of project. Sort of a capstone kind of a project. Where a student would show proficiency, exactly what level is an open question. Certainly proficiency in improvising over tunes from the stand repertoire of jazz. Which would maybe include at least one or two tunes with complex tonal harmony. They would show that they are able to improvise without a lot of wrong notes.”

#### **Dr. Barnett:**

“Well there is a repertoire, a common repertoire that jazz musicians need to have internalized. There is a repertoire of songs and also a vocabulary of improvisational language that is a common language that they need to have so people can play with each other and work together.

“And the way you learn that language is transcribing, that can take the form of listening and copying or listening and writing it down. Learning it through a more regimented way. Thats one of the most important thing is being familiar with this common language or ‘licks’ — for the lack of a better word, for this common language.

“Different jazz programs will articulate specifics but not all jazz programs do. It wouldn't be the same across them. But there Are going to be some song forms and some actual repertoire that every jazz school will be required to have. For instance you would need to be able to play the 12 bar blues in all keys, the Major blues, the basic blues, the V-VI turn around at the end. This is what we call the jazz blues, like the piece ‘Tenor Madness’, and the minor blues. You will find this in all schools. And the most common standards like Autumn Leaves, Green Dolphin St... I could probably list 25-50 songs that basically every student graduating with a jazz degree is going to know.”

**Mr. Curtis:**

“For reading, they certainly should be able to read and interpret musically, on the very high-level, a Sammy Nesticochart. (See Figure 20) They should display for me a groove and a display certain patterns to end the music without destroying the groove. With brushes, they have to be able to go through a tempo on the level of Barry Harris, ‘Curtain call.’ They should be able to negotiate fast tempo keep time and play brakes, exactly as what Luis Hayes does on the record. He's able to play time and play fills, and go back to playing time. They should be able to do that. With rudiments, they should be able to go through all 40 rudiments. (See Figure 21) And play a solo on the level of Wilcoxon past solo number 121. (See Figure 18) Markovich snare drum solos, Tornado, Stamina would be appropriate level. (See Figure 16)”

**Dr. Garcia:**

“I guess in a word we want them to be able to create...Our curriculum is designed to allow them to perform and create written and unwritten music and it's a facet of trying to make it a living in this business. But everything in the curriculums stems from that. We encourage the entrepreneurial spirit. That could be the only way of making a living. But the bottom line is what they decided to be either a side man or a bandleader they need to be able to play written and unwritten music. ...Then of course there's the potential that they may be teaching formally or

informally....You're going through this introspective dialogue with your peers and mentors that you should be better prepared to instruct it.”

### **Summary of Question 1:**

From the answers of these four educators, we can come to the conclusion that although the NASM handbook requirements can be vague, the educators have clear expectations of their students, which align with their teaching philosophies. Dr. Barnett and Mr. Curtis outlined their curriculum. Mr. Curtis gave a technical requirement for his percussion studio, while Dr. Barnett gave requirements for tonal instruments. Dr. Garcia noted that jazz major curriculum should also be equipped for pedagogy as well as performance.

### **Question 2: At which point should a jazz major start transcribing, and at which point should they stop?**

#### **Dr. Kinzer:**

“I think at introductory improv class. That's a part of what I've always done when I have taught improv classes here. So I think jump in do it right away. As soon as we can find a recorded solo they can imitate on their instrument. They need to understand meter and key, and scales. I would want them to write it down. In applied lessons, we do it after they have laid a foundation in classical. Then we study jazz articulation. Getting the swing and those ideas out there. At that point I encourage them to transcribe. If we had a jazz program, I would have them transcribe in the first semester. We would do it in their instrumental lessons, and also in an improv class.”

#### **Dr. Barnett:**

“They should start transcribing from very early on.

“I don't think you ever grow out of it (transcribing) but I think there is a period from when you're a beginner though being a proficient player where you are doing the most amount (of transcriptions).”

**Mr. Curtis:**

“As soon as they have the basics, again before you try to do any transcription you have to do you know the fundamentals and the basic ideas. But certainly a student can start transcribing right away. Maybe they will not be able to do what Elvin (Jones) did on resolution but they can start practicing basic things. You are setting a standard for was to follow. In terms of went to cut off, I think Michael Brecker was studying until the very end. I think anyone who is intellectually curious about music, I look at the stuff as being in it for life. It would be hard for me to see when you would cut off, certainly you can cut back. As soon as you put yourself out in the workforce, I’m not sure if transcription is that much necessary unless you really want to analyze something.”

**Dr. Garcia:**

“If they are jazz musicians, as soon as they want to grow, they should start right away. They don’t even need to know all their scales, if they can write just the rhythms to show the activity. It (the transcription process) never stops. The reason it never stops is you are tuning yourself to be on stage so you can recognize the different rhythms, dynamics, pacing, thematic development on the bandstand in real time.”

**Summary of Question 2:**

In the above statements, all four educators agree that the transcription process starts toward the beginning of the student’s music education. According to Mr. Curtis, and Dr. Kinzer, students should have the basic fundamentals first. According to Dr. Garcia, students don’t even need to fully know their scales before transcribing. By using his method of transcribing the rhythms only, they can go ahead and begin the transcription study by focusing on the rhythm, as well as the shape and motivic development, of the solos.

**Question 3: What is the most effective transcription process?**

**Dr. Kinzer:**

“It’s important to acknowledge that different students learn in different ways. Initially, you want to jump in to it and try to have some success. If one student felt comfortable playing a twelve bar blues solo, and left the writing to the end, I think that would be ok with me. Usually with myself, to save time, I go ahead and write it down. I’ve done it both ways. Some students struggle with the whole thing all at once but maybe they can learn the first lick. Maybe we don’t even get to the whole 12 bars. Anytime I worked with students, taught them how to do this, I have a pretty flexible approach. Later, when they get more disciplined, I’ll make them aware that a lot of professional musicians like David Liebman recommends memorizing and seeing it through before writing it down. But I find a lot of students don’t want to write it down. They’re not equipped with a notation ability to write it down. Some of them don’t want to do that. They’re missing something when they don’t write it down. I think there’s something really magical that goes on when you memorize. And then play along with them, and I’ll force myself to think just the changes while I’m playing along with them. I’ll maybe write the solo down and then do what I have to do to memorize it. I think this is the best thing for me, and then go back and try to just think about the chords changes and crawl into the sound of Stan Getz or somebody like that. There is something at the very end of the process where it seems like it’s you who is doing it. You were the guy who made recording I can’t describe what it is but it’s made me a better player every time I’ve done that. So I know there’s something to all that.”

**Dr. Barnett:**

“Ideally, it is listening to the recording so much that you can sing it very accurately, along with the recording, before you start to write it out. I think the best order is, listen to it enough so you can sing it from memory. Then learn to play it. Then write it out. I think the reason for that is, you are internalizing the sound of it first. It’s the same way of learning how to speak. We improvise all the time when we are speaking. We didn’t learn to write and read first, then learn how to speak. It’s just the way we learn things... The theory is an explanation is things you’ve already

heard. ‘So that’s why that goes like that’. That is the best way. The writing out process is helpful because you might notice somethings about the solo that you wouldn’t of noticed just from hearing it.”

**Mr. Curtis:**

“Well, there is natural approach where you just listen enough until you can play it. You don’t write anything down. Then there is fabricated transcription, where you listen to a point where you can write the rhythms down. In that kind of transcription, I’m not so concerned with orchestration. In other words, if you hear a the ride cymbal and snare drum played together, (but it’s difficult to differentiate between the two) I just write to rhythms out and pretend everything is on the snare drum line. Once that rhythm is correct, then I go back and orchestrate... You can use this process for all instruments. All of the great transcriptions on any instrument, I think rhythm is the most important thing. Whether you’re talking about Elvin (Jones) or Gene Ammons... The rhythm pronounced in so much a part of what’s happening. Some people are taking Charlie Parker’s Omni book (see Figure 18) and they approach to these transcriptions on the snare drum. And they figured out that (Charlie Parker’s solos) sounds a lot like Max Roach.....When the transcription (writing down) has been done the work has just really started. What you done is you’ve taken somebody else’s notes and you put it down on paper. Now again keeping to the idea of what this music is all about, strong emphasis on individuality, strong emphasis on spontaneous composition, once you have those ideas down, I think it’s really important now Student figures out how to take elements of that transcription and incorporates to their own playing. So you can use as much or as little from the transcription as possible. But it’s not enough to just transcribe it and put it on paper, And play along with the recording. It’s just like we know when we learned the alphabet that’s just the beginning. Now you have to form words with these letters, now we have to read the letters in a book, now we have to construct our own sentences with these letters. It’s the same thing with these transcriptions. Now you figured out the letters you have to be able to use them. You have to learn how to put

them in sentences with the idea being that that you would take those ideas and create your own ideas out of them.”

### **Summary of Question 3:**

For this answer, Mr. Curtis defines the transcription process differently from Dr. Barnett and Dr. Kinzer that he considers the real work of transcribing to be made after the transcription process is done. For his definition of transcribing, the student must absorb the vocabulary and understand the transcribed material to be able to use for spontaneous composition.

The following questions have been posed to Dr. Garcia and Dr. Barnett on the standardization of the transcription process within a jazz curriculum.

### **Question: So none of it (the transcription process) is set in stone yet?**

#### **Dr. Barnett:**

“No, It’s not set in stone. It will be an interesting process to see this music become canonized like the way classical music was. The classical piano, or violin, they have a standardized system for grading a difficulty of a piece. For instance, if the piece is a grade 6, that means certain things, like playing in a certain register. They haven’t gone this far with jazz but it’s beginning to become more codified as the music is being taught more in conservatories.

“This an argument that is introduced when a jazz department is introduced in a university. What are the standard of grading of the jazz department? That’s what they would like to see.

“That doesn’t exist right now. But it’s slowly overtime, will be more common as people are leaving these handful of oldest jazz programs like Berkley, New England Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music, University of Miami, University of North Texas. There are certain schools that put out ton of people (\*jazz graduates) that go on and get teaching work elsewhere, and that begins to disseminate. But it’s still kind of regional. What they consider to be standard tunes, and standard skills



that all jazz graduates are required to learn will be very different at University of Texas. For example, they will be required to perform a lot more Stan Kenton and kind of Fusion Music than a school like New England Conservatory. At the New England Conservatory they will more interested in the music of George Russell, free jazz, more interested in that. So, These school have their own identities, and what they require will be more regional.”

**And these are not standardized either?**

“No, it’s not. But some people make the argument of ‘Well, I’m trying to find my own sound. So I don’t want to have too much influence from other people so I don’t want to transcribe too much because I’m trying to find my own thing.’ If that person has already transcribed a lot, they may have a point. But If they haven’t transcribed a bunch, I always tell the students, ‘Stop trying to invent jazz from scratch. Learn what’s been done, and then what you’re going to find is you will be developing your own sound through that process.’ For example, ‘I just love the way Clifford brown plays these kinds of things, but I just love Freddie Hubbard’s time feel. What if I played the vocabulary of Clifford Brown, but with the time feel of Freddie Hubbard?’ And they can do this over time. The students who don’t transcribe, I find that they don’t have the vocabulary and they play something very corny. It’s like they are trying to invent jazz from scratch.

“There is the challenge for the teacher is to not squash their creativity and enthusiasm for something.

“There is only so much standardized transcription you can assign because people are not standardized. If I say to the student, ‘you can’t transcribe any Freddie Hubbard until you check out Louis Armstrong.’ However, the student feels ‘but the Freddie Hubbard is the only reason why I’m here.’ Using your judgement here is very important. There is a time and a place for using different artists to transcribe, so you can get the most out of it. I think the most important part of the transcription process is, ‘What were they thinking? How did their playing fit the song form, How are they building their solo, is there some kind of a theme in there?’ Once you can understand that, then you can apply their creative process to your own improvisations, and that is the real trick. For example, Miles is echoing the last

phrase that the previous soloist ended their solo with. Miles is echoing that and building the rest of his solo out of that rhythmic motive. You can do that same thing at a gig or rehearsal by hearing somebody play something and start your solo with that idea and build on it. So you would be taking the Miles Davis transcription and using that thought process instead of the actual notes.”

**Question: Do you think it would be beneficial for schools to come to an agreement on what should be expected from a student at minimum, or is it a waste of time?**

**Dr. Garcia:**

“I think practically it will be a waste of time. I think within VCU history, there was a discussion on students learning of the same level learning the same tunes, on all instruments including the drums. The idea came and left several times. If we can't agree on that, it would be impractical to accept that it could be adopted by a region of schools. I think that is fine. There are some students who would like to sound play in a band like Kneebody, for them learning how to write a Basie big band chart may not be useful. If they are good players already, they may not need to go to school if they are already working. I don't think any standardization is possible. I'm immensely curious about how teachers are grading what they study. Jazz is a very young curriculum, just a few decades old. It's very interesting to me as I travel, to see what other people are doing. I see that its wide ranging and nobody agrees on anything. I don't think they are right or wrong but we should be able to see what is out there and see what is the possibility for our students. But any kind of standardization would be impossible.”

**So this is like a business?**

“It's very much a business. So you have to deal with the finances. The tuition for undergrad is skyrocketing. Unless we find more scholarship money we will be struggling. We are not alone. I've talked to various universities and the well known universities are doing very well but their bench is not as deep as it used to be. The schools that are not as well known, their bench is gone.

“It makes sense to borrow tens of thousands of dollars for majoring in biology, but it doesn’t make sense for music, performance in particular.

“So the whole institution of the music performance degree is going to face that harshly.”

## CONCLUSION

After transcribing and spending time absorbing the music of Tony Williams, we can agree that the study of Williams' music is essential to the jazz student. His use of time modulations, rudiments on the drum set, and his approach to up-tempo playing are common techniques among today's drummers. His contributions are not only historic, but also essential to the performing jazz percussionist. However, because of the ever-changing format of jazz music and its education, any kind of standardization on transcription-based study will always be contingent on the aesthetic and the teaching philosophy of the instructor.

The higher education in jazz studies in the United States is still privately funded. The survival of these jazz departments will depend on demand of the public paying for higher education in jazz studies. Due to this, jazz departments in the United States must address the validity of jazz education in today's music industry demand. Additionally, jazz music itself is still changing along with the today's music scene and changing technology. For jazz departments to stay relevant — and thrive — universities must address the rapidly-changing music industry. Although the music of Tony Williams is essential for all jazz percussionists, it is at the mercy of the listeners and the students, who need to be able to absorb it (transcribe it), to make it relevant in the context of today's music. University institutions will have to acknowledge that, in order to move forward, they will need to turn to musicians like Chris Dave, who show us that it is possible for musicians to reinterpret the concepts of older generations through their own music: the music of today.



Figure 16

# Stamina

Snare Drum Solo

Mitch Markovich

$\text{♩} = 132$

R L R R R L L R L L R L L R L L R L L R L R R  
*ff pp ff pp*

R L L R L L R L R L R L R L R L R L R R R L R L  
*ff pp*

L R R R R R R L R R L R R L R R L R R  
*ff pp ff*

L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L  
*p ff p ff p ff*

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L  
*p ff p ff*

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L  
*p ff p*

R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L R L R L R L  
*ff p*

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Figure 17

# Confirmation

1

By Charlie Parker

VERVE 8005

$\text{♩} = 208$

(4-bar Intro)

The musical score for 'Confirmation' by Charlie Parker is presented in 8 staves. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various chords and rhythmic markings such as triplets and accents. The chords are: Staff 1: F, E $\phi$ , A7, D-, G7, C-, F7; Staff 2: Bb7, A-, D7, G7, G-, C7; Staff 3: F, E $\phi$ , A7, D-, G7, C-, F7; Staff 4: Bb7, A-, D7, G-, C7, F; Staff 5: C-, C-, F7, Bb, Bb; Staff 6: Eb-, Ab7, Db, G-, C7; Staff 7: F, E $\phi$ , A7, D-, G7, C-, F7; Staff 8: Bb7, A-, D7, G-, C7, F.

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(turn page)

Figure 18

# A Cool Breeze

Drums

by Sammy Nestico

LIGHT ROCK -  $\text{♩} = 160$  - SWING 8THS

9

25

41

53

57

*mf*

FLUGELS

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SN70109




Figure 19


## PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL DRUM RUDIMENTS

ALL RUDIMENTS SHOULD BE PRACTICED: OPEN (SLOW) TO CLOSE (FAST) TO OPEN (SLOW) AND/OR AT AN EVEN MODERATE MARCH TEMPO.

### I. ROLL RUDIMENTS

#### A. SINGLE STROKE ROLL RUDIMENTS

1. SINGLE STROKE ROLL \*   
RLRLRLRL

2. SINGLE STROKE FOUR   
RLRL RLRL  
LRLR LRLR


3. SINGLE STROKE SEVEN   
RLRLRLR  
LRLRLRL


#### B. MULTIPLE BOUNCE ROLL RUDIMENTS


4. MULTIPLE BOUNCE ROLL 


5. TRIPLE STROKE ROLL   
RRRLLLRRRLLL


#### C. DOUBLE STROKE OPEN ROLL RUDIMENTS


6. DOUBLE STROKE OPEN ROLL \*   
RRLRLRL

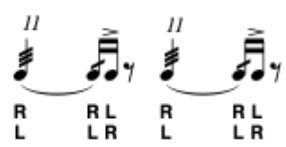
7. FIVE STROKE ROLL \*   
RRLRL RLRLR


8. SIX STROKE ROLL   
RLRLRL RLRLRL


9. SEVEN STROKE ROLL \*   
RLRLRLR RLRLRLR


10. NINE STROKE ROLL \*   
RLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRL

11. TEN STROKE ROLL \*   
RLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRL


12. ELEVEN STROKE ROLL \*   
RLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRL


13. THIRTEEN STROKE ROLL \*   
RLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRL


14. FIFTEEN STROKE ROLL \*   
RLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRL


15. SEVENTEEN STROKE ROLL   
RLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRL

### II. DIDDLE RUDIMENTS

16. SINGLE PARADIDDLE \*   
RLRLRLRL

17. DOUBLE PARADIDDLE \*   
RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

18. TRIPLE PARADIDDLE   
RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

19. SINGLE PARADIDDLE-DIDDLE   
RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL



\* These rudiments are also included in the original Standard 26 American Drum Rudiments.  
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Figure 20

**Wilcoxon's**  
**132nd**

Applying Twenty-Six Rudiments 73

5 str. 7 str. Flamacue 5 str. Single Paradiddle  
R R L L R R L L R R L R L R R R R L R R L R L L

Flam Taps Single Rat-a-ma-cue Double Rat-a-ma-cue  
R R L L R R L L R R L R L L L R L R R R L R L R L

Flam Paradiddle-diddle Flams  
R L R R L L L R L L R R R L R L R L

Drag Paradiddle No. 2 3 str. Ruff Triple Rat-a-ma-cue  
R R R L R R L R L R L L L R L L L R R R L R L

3 9 str. 9 str. 25th Rudiment  
L L L R L R R L L L R R R R R R L R R L

Double Paradiddle 7 str.  
R R L R L R L L R L R L R R L R L R L L R L L R R L L R R L

Single Drag Flam Accent Drag Paradiddle No. 1  
R R L L R R L R R L R L R L L L R R R R L R R L

15 str. Long Roll  
L R L L R R R R L L R R L L R R R

10 str. 11 str. 7 str. Double Drag  
R L L R R R L R L L R R L R R L L L R R L L

Single Rat-a-ma-cue Single Drag Single Strokes  
R L R L L R L R R R L L R R L L R L R L R L L

7 str. Fl. Taps Flam-a-cue Single Drag  
R L R L R L R L R L L R R R L L R L R L R R L L R

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## **BIOGRAPHIES**

Biographies can be found at the following links:

Dr. Charlie Kinzer

<http://www.longwood.edu/directory/profile/kinzercelongwoodedu/>

Dr. Taylor Barnett

[https://arts.vcu.edu/music/faculty\\_type/taylor-barnett/](https://arts.vcu.edu/music/faculty_type/taylor-barnett/)

Dr. Antonio Garcia

[https://arts.vcu.edu/music/faculty\\_type/antonio-garcia/](https://arts.vcu.edu/music/faculty_type/antonio-garcia/)

Howard Curtis

<https://musicians.allaboutjazz.com/howardcurtis>

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## **BRIEF CURRICULUM VITAE**

Emre Kartari is an Adjunct Instructor of Jazz at Virginia Commonwealth University and Longwood University, where he teaches Small Jazz Ensemble and Jazz History.

Born into a family of musicians and artists in Ankara, Turkey, Emre moved to the United States when he was nine years old. Soon after, he began to study drums, which led to studying jazz percussion with T. Howard Curtis and receiving his Bachelor's degree from VCU. He holds an M.A. in jazz performance and composition from New York University and received the Barney Josephson Award in 2003; he is continuing his D.M.A. studies with Howard Curtis. While in New York, Emre studied with Adam Nussbaum, John Riley, Tony Moreno, Billy Hart, and Jamey Haddad. He has performed and/or recorded with Dena DeRose, Darius Jones, Trevor Dunn, Paul Pieper, John D'earth, Howard Curtis, Paul Langosch, Anthony Pirog, Chris Whiteman, Mike Richmond, Randy Johnston, Houston Person, and David Liebman.

Kartari has toured and performed extensively with the spoken-word hip-hop group Jazz Poets Society. His first CD as a leader, *Perpetual Anxiety*, which features Grammy Award-winning bassist Mike Richmond, is released in Turkey under the Dogan Music label. He performed and recorded with his own quartet *Origin*, featuring David Liebman, John D'earth, and Howard Curtis. *All About Jazz* editor John Kelman called *Origin* "a recording that engages the head and the heart long after it's over." He has also performed and recorded for the rock band *Brindley Brothers*, the electric jazz group *Signals*, featuring Paul Pieper, and the trio *Big Girl*, featuring Darius Jones and Trevor Dunn.

As an educator, Kartari worked with the New York Pops Mentors in Music program from 2003 through 2005. In 2009, with the support of the American Embassy in Turkey, he formed Turkey's first accredited, state-funded jazz program at the Ankara State Conservatory. In 2011, he became the Director of Jazz Studies at Yasar University in Izmir, Turkey, directing the VCU Izmir International Jazz Camp in 2012 and 2013. He formed the group *Sazli-Cazli*, featuring VCU alumni Taylor

Barnett and Kevin Simpson, to perform along with Turkish musicians for state-sponsored tours in Turkey in 2015 and 2016.