



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

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

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

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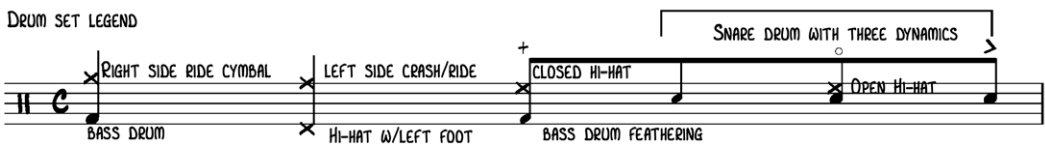
I chose these recordings because, in all of them, Jones' comping creates, with the piano, a multi-layered rhythmically active grooving texture, interpreting the harmonic form of the composition.

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

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

## Overview of a jazz drummer's toolbox

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



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



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

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

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

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

## Comping

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

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

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

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

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

**Time 00:51–00:55**

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

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

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

## On Philly Joe Jones, Musicianship, and Sound

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Time 00:00–00:04**



**Transcription 1.** Sonny Rollins, *Newk's Time*, *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, comp. Richard Rogers, Intro.<sup>5</sup>



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



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

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

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

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



## Time 0:28–0:36

The transcription shows two systems of music. The first system covers measures 29-32, and the second system covers measures 33-36. Chord symbols are written above the saxophone staff. The drum set part is shown in a simplified notation with 'x' marks for snare and 'o' marks for bass drum. Brackets below the drum set part label sections as FIGURE 1, FIGURE 2, FIGURE 3, and STRUCTURAL PREPARATION. A circled 'A2' is placed above measure 29.

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



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



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

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

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

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



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

**Time 0:36-0:44**

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



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



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

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

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

## Comping the melody of *Mama "G"*

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

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

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

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

Time 0:07–0:17

The image shows a musical score for transcription 4, consisting of two systems of music. The first system covers bars 8 to 12, and the second system covers bars 13 to 16. The top staff is for Tenor Saxophone (T.SAX) and the bottom staff is for Double Bass (D.B.S.).

**System 1 (Bars 8-12):**

- Bar 8: T.SAX has a melodic line starting with a triplet. D.B.S. has a hi-hat pattern with notes marked 'L R L R'. Chords: Gm7.
- Bar 9: T.SAX continues the melodic line. D.B.S. continues the hi-hat pattern. Chords: Gm7.
- Bar 10: T.SAX continues the melodic line. D.B.S. continues the hi-hat pattern. Chords: Am7.
- Bar 11: T.SAX continues the melodic line. D.B.S. continues the hi-hat pattern. Chords: Gm7.
- Bar 12: T.SAX continues the melodic line. D.B.S. continues the hi-hat pattern. Chords: Gm7.

**System 2 (Bars 13-16):**

- Bar 13: T.SAX continues the melodic line. D.B.S. continues the hi-hat pattern. Chords: Em7.
- Bar 14: T.SAX continues the melodic line. D.B.S. continues the hi-hat pattern. Chords: A7.
- Bar 15: T.SAX continues the melodic line. D.B.S. continues the hi-hat pattern. Chords: Em7.
- Bar 16: T.SAX continues the melodic line. D.B.S. continues the hi-hat pattern. Chords: A7.

Additional markings include 'TPT & TSAX UNIS.' above bar 9, '(BASS WARLES)' above bar 10, and 'FIGURE 1', 'FIGURE 2', and 'FIGURE 3 / PLAYING WITH THE MELODY' below the bass staff.

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



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



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

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

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

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

**Time 0:17–0:25**

The transcription shows the saxophone and drum parts for the A2 section of 'Mama G'. The saxophone part (top staff) has a melodic line with notes and rests. The drum part (bottom staff) shows various patterns labeled as Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and a Fill. Chord symbols like Gm7, Am7, Em7, A7, Bb7, and D7 are indicated above the staff. A note 'BASS DRUM FEATHERING & HI-HAT ON 2&4' is written above the drum staff in bar 20.

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



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



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

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

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

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

### Time 0:25–0:34

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



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



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

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

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

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

**Time 0:34–0:42**

The image shows a musical transcription for transcription 7. It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 33 to 36. The top staff is for T.SAX (Tenor Saxophone) and the bottom staff is for DRS (Drum Set). Measure 33 is marked with a box containing 'A3' and a key signature change to Gm7. Measures 34, 35, and 36 have chord changes to Am7, Gm7, and Gm7 respectively. The DRS part shows a rhythmic pattern with accents on the snare and bass drum. Brackets under the DRS staff label the first two measures as 'FIGURE 1' and the last two as 'FIGURE 2'. A note below FIGURE 2 says 'BASS DRUM FEATHERS & HI-HAT ON 2&4'. The second system covers measures 37 to 40. The top staff is for T.SAX and the bottom staff is for DRS. Measures 37, 38, 39, and 40 have chord changes to Em7, A7, Cm7, Bb7, Am7, D7, and Gm9 respectively. The DRS part shows a more complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and accents. A bracket under the DRS staff labels this section as 'FIGURE 3 / PREPARATION'. Below the DRS staff, there are letters 'L L R R L L R L R L L' under the triplet markings.

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



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



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

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

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

## Goosing in solo comping

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

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

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

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<sup>8</sup> I can hear similar ideas of accenting and adding texture throughout the melody in “*Straight No Chaser*” on *Milestones* by the Miles Davis Sextet.



**Time 0:41–0:51**

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system (bars 1-4) features a trumpet line with notes and rests, piano accompaniment with chords (Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Em7), and a drum set line with a triplet snare fill (L R R L R L R L R L) and a 'SEND-OFF FIGURE' in bar 2. The second system (bars 5-8) continues the trumpet line with notes and rests, piano accompaniment with chords (Em7, A7, Fm7, Bb7, Em7, A7, Am7, D7), and a drum set line with a 'GOOSING' pattern.

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

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

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

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

A close-up of the triplet snare fill on a single staff, showing three eighth notes beamed together with an accent mark (>) over the first note.

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

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

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

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

**Time 0:51–0:59**

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 9 to 12. Measure 9 is marked with a circled 'A'. Chord symbols are Gm7 (measures 9-10), (Am7) (measure 10), Gm7 (measure 11), and Em7 (measure 12). The piano part features a steady eighth-note groove. The drum part has a ride cymbal pattern with syncopated snare accents. Annotations include 'GOOSING THE TIME' under measures 9-11 and 'MOTIVIC DIALOGUE INSIDE THE DRUM SET' under measures 11-12. The second system covers measures 13 to 16. Chord symbols are A7 (measure 13), Fm7 (measure 14), Bb7 (measure 14), Am7 (measure 15), D7 (measure 15), Gm7 (measure 16), and Dm7 (measure 16). The piano part continues with eighth-note patterns. The drum part maintains the groove with snare accents. The annotation 'DIALOGUE CONTINUES' is centered under measures 13-16.

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



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



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

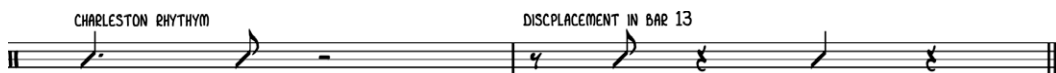
As I mentioned before, Jones’ beat centers on the ride cymbal pattern. Considering today’s style of jazz drumming, Jones seldom varies this ride pattern, so when he does (for example in bar 11), I want to understand why. It could be because he is simply self-conscious of it needing to vary, but I think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

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

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



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



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

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

<sup>9</sup> I find similar ride cymbal variations ending soloists phrases or filling gaps in – for example, Miles Davis’ trumpet solo in *Straight No Chaser* (times 2.00 and 2.57), Lee Morgan’s trumpet solo in “*What Know*” (times 1.00 and 1.53), and John Coltrane’s saxophone solo in “*Ah-Leu-Cha*” (time 3.00).

“*Straight No Chaser*” by Miles Davis, track 6 on Miles Davis Sextet, *Milestones*, recorded February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1958, Columbia CL1193, compact disc. “*Ah-Leu-Cha*” by Charlie Parker, Spotify, track 2 on Miles Davis Quintet, *Round About Midnight*, recorded October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1955, Columbia. “*What Know*” by Lee Morgan, Spotify, track 4 on Wynton Kelly Quintet, *Kelly Great*, recorded August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1959, Vee-Jay Ltd.)

## Active accenting in solo comping

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

Time 2:42–2:49

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system covers measures 129-132. The second system covers measures 133-136. The third system covers measures 137-140. The notation includes tenor saxophone (T.SAX), piano (PNO), and drums (DRS). Chord symbols are provided for the piano part. The drum part includes specific rhythmic figures labeled as 'FIGURE 1 / GOOSING / QUESTION', 'FIGURE 2 / ACTIVE ACCENTING / ANSWER', 'FIGURE 3 / CONCLUSION', and 'PREPARATION'. The piano part includes chord symbols such as E7m11, Dm7#11, E7m7, E7, E7m7/9, E7m(Δ7), E7m7, E7m6, E7m, E7m(Δ7), E7m7, and E7m6. The drum part includes a 'PREPARATION' section with a sequence of eighth notes.

**Transcription 10.** *Freddie Hubbard, Goin' Up, Karioka*, comp. Kenny Dorham, t.sax solo.<sup>10</sup>



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Time 2:49 – 3:00

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 137-140) features a T.SAX line with a circled 'B' above measure 137, a PNO line with chords F#m7, D67, D#m7, Gb9, and Bm7, and a DRS line with a 3/8 POLYRHYTHM section. The second system (measures 141-144) includes a 'SEND-OFF' label, a T.SAX line with a circled '3' above measure 141, a PNO line with chords Bm7, E7, Bbm7, Eb7, and D6/9, and a DRS line. The third system (measures 145-148) is labeled 'FIGURE 4' and 'FIGURE 5', with a PNO line showing chords D7(b9), Bb7sus4, and Bb7(b9) and a DRS line with 'ARRANGEMENT / PREPARATION' written below it.

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



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



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

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

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

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

## Using the riff style in solo comping

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

Time 1:20–1:32

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a saxophone staff and a snare drum staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The first system (measures 80-84) includes a circled 'C' above measure 81. The second system (measures 85-88) includes a '3' above a triplet in measure 86. The third system (measures 89-92) includes the word 'MOTIF' above measure 89. The snare drum staff features various rhythmic patterns, some with accents and slurs, and is annotated with 'FIGURE 1 / QUESTION', 'FIGURE 2 / ANSWER', 'FIGURE 3 / CONCLUSION', 'FIGURE 4 / QUESTION', 'FIGURE 5 / ANSWER', 'FIGURE 6 / CONCLUSION', 'FIGURE 7 / STRUCTURAL ANTICIPATION', and 'FIGURE 8 / CONCLUSION'. Chord symbols are placed above the saxophone staff: C<sub>m</sub>7, F7, B<sub>b</sub>m<sub>3</sub>7, C<sub>m</sub>7, F7, B<sub>b</sub>m<sub>3</sub>7, C<sub>m</sub>7, F7, B<sub>b</sub>m<sub>3</sub>7, D<sub>m</sub>7, G7, F<sub>m</sub>7, C7, B<sub>b</sub>m<sub>3</sub>7, G7(9), C<sub>m</sub>7, F7, B<sub>b</sub>m<sub>3</sub>7, G7(9), C<sub>m</sub>7, F7.

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



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



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



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

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

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

## Structuring form in solo comping

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

Time 1:07–1:16

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with three staves: TPT (Trumpet), PNO (Piano), and DRS (Drum Set).

- System 1 (Measures 25-28):**
  - TPT:** Measures 25-28. Chords: Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Em7.
  - PNO:** Measures 25-28. Chords: Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Em7.
  - DRS:** Measures 25-28. Labeled "TENSION". Features triplet eighth notes and sixteenth notes. Rhythmic notation: R L R L R L R L R L R L.
  - FIGURE 1** is indicated below the DRS staff.
- System 2 (Measures 29-32):**
  - TPT:** Measures 29-32. Chords: A7, Fm7, Bb7, Am7, D7, Gm9.
  - PNO:** Measures 29-32. Chords: A7, Fm7, Bb7, Am7, D7, Gm9.
  - DRS:** Measures 29-32. Labeled "RESOLUTION" and "CONCLUSION". Features triplet eighth notes. Rhythmic notation: L L L R L R L R L L.
  - FIGURE 2** is indicated below the DRS staff.
  - STRUCTURAL PREPARATION** is indicated below the DRS staff.
- System 3 (Measures 33-37):**
  - TPT:** Measures 33-37. Chords: Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Em7, A7.
  - PNO:** Measures 33-37. Chords: Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Em7, A7.
  - DRS:** Measures 33-37. Labeled "FIGURE 3 / SEND-OFF".

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

**Time 1:41–1:50**

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 57-60) features a trumpet solo (TPT) with a circled 'A3' above measure 57. The piano (PNO) accompaniment consists of chords: Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Am7. The double bass (DES) part shows a rhythmic pattern with accents and a 'TENSION' marking. The second system (measures 61-64) shows the trumpet solo continuing. The piano accompaniment has chords: Em7, A7, fm7, Bb7, Am7, D7, Gm7. The double bass part includes a 'RESOLUTION' marking and a 3/4 time signature. The third system (measures 65-68) continues the trumpet solo. The piano accompaniment has chords: Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Em7. The double bass part includes 'TENSION' and 'RESOLUTION' markings, along with rhythmic notations like 'L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L' and '3/4'.

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



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



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

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

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

## **Intuitive call and response figures**

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

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

Time 0:38–0:50

♩ = 254

**(A)**

TPT

PNO

DRES

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12

13 14 15 16

FIGURE 1 / SEND-OFF

FIGURE 2 / CALL-AND-RESPONSE

RIFFING

FIGURE 2 / GOOSING

STRUCTURAL PREPARATION

Chords: Ebm11, Dma7#11, Ebm7, E#7, Cm7, F#7, Ebm6/9, E#(m#3)7, Ebm7, Ebm6, Ebm6/9, E#(m#3)7, Ebm7, Ebm6, Ebm11, Ebm11, Dma7#11, Ebm7, E#7, Ebm6/9, Ebm7, Ebm(4)7

Drum notation: BASS DRUM FEATHERING, HI-HAT ON 2&4

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



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



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

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



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

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

**Time 1:07-1:10**

The image shows a musical transcription for three instruments: Trumpet (TPT), Piano (PNO), and Drums (DRS) across measures 25 to 28. Measure 25 is circled and labeled 'A3'. The trumpet part has a 'CALL' label above measures 25-26 and a 'VARIATION' label above measures 27-28. The piano part has chords Gm7, Am7, Gm7, Am7, Gm7, and Em7. The drum part has a 'TENSION' label above measures 25-27 and a 'RESPONSE' label below measures 27-28. The drum part includes triplets and a specific R/L pattern: R L R L R L R L R L R L.

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

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

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

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



## Conclusions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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