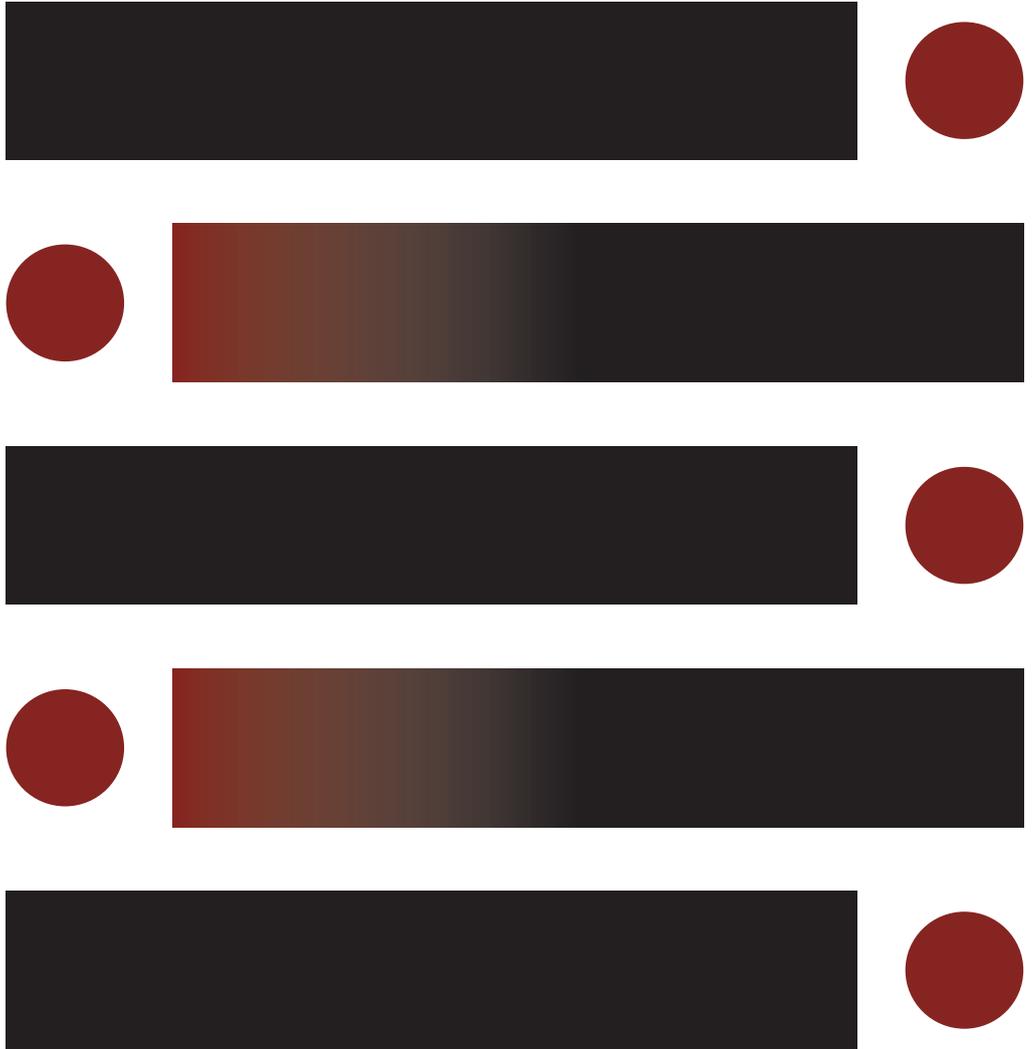


TRADING



2-Bar Fours in a *Contemporary* Time Space

by **NIC MARCY**

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“No f in k” and “Ecliptic” recorded at
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PREFACE

When great drumset musicians solo, they lay out clear and apparent ideas. The concept of a four-bar solo is almost like an extended drum fill, but with a great musician doing it, they are speaking to the melody. In jazz, the walls are down, and the open space is infinity. There are rules, and the rules keep it in an intellectual space and time. In jazz, the most important rule is the form of the tune. When listening to jazz music it may sound like a free jam, but the music adheres to specific time and space. There are many forms, but the **AABA** form is the most popular. For example, if there are 8 bars in the verse **A** section and 8 bars in the bridge **B** section, you have a perfect setup to “trade fours.” The band plays the tune, and the first soloist plays over the whole form once or twice. The next soloist plays over the form once or twice, and the drummer trades in a call and response. For example, in the **A** section the band plays four measures, and the drummer responds with 4 bars.

The intent of this publication is to move you through some nuts and bolts of time-keeping and soloing. The practice materials are based on more realistic time-keeping, very creative time, and transitioning from these spaces to soloing, which hasn't been addressed in great detail in previous books. This publication will also give you insight on developing ideas that great drumset musicians use. The book is specific in its goals for advancement in soloing and time techniques, but can be used by any drumming student who wishes to up their performance.

DRUM NOTATION KEY

Hi-Hat	Ride	Hi-Hat Foot	Hi-Hat Splash	Hi-Tom	Snare	Ghost Note	Cross Stick	Snare Accent	Stick Shot	Snare Buzz	Floor Tom	Kick Drum	Crash
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REPEATING PHRASES

The image displays three staves of musical notation. The top staff, labeled 'TIME LINE', is in 4/4 time and features a sequence of eighth notes with stems pointing up and down, and a repeat sign. The middle staff, labeled 'SOLO', is in 3/4 time and shows a melodic line with triplets and accents. The bottom staff, labeled 'COMP.', is in 3/4 time and shows a bass line with triplets and rests.

A repetition means to play your idea again. You can play an exact repetition or an altered one. The listener can quickly identify with this because it's something they've heard before.

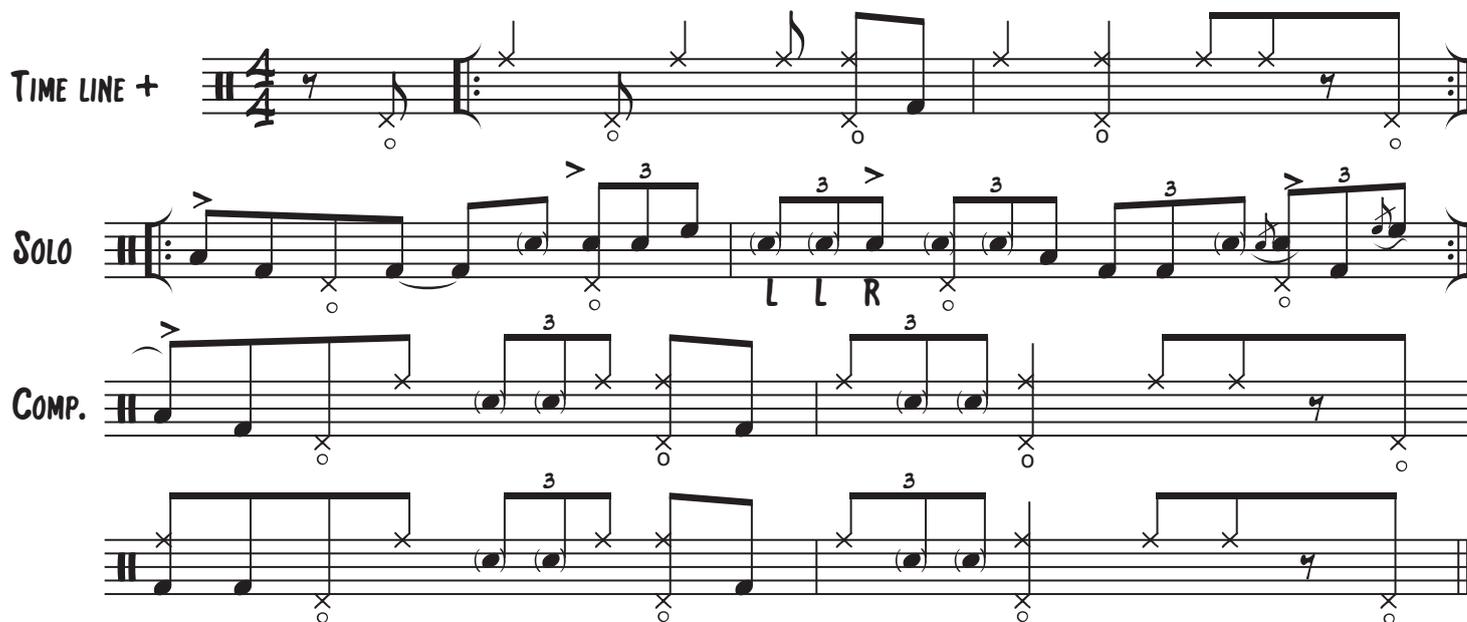
Max Roach often used this device as a theme (or thread) through his more extended solos.

*listen to Max's solo "For Big Sid."

REPEATING WORKBOX

The image shows two staves of musical notation enclosed in a black rectangular box. The top staff is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line with triplets and accents. The bottom staff is in 3/4 time and shows a bass line with triplets and rests.

FOUR “AH” KICK



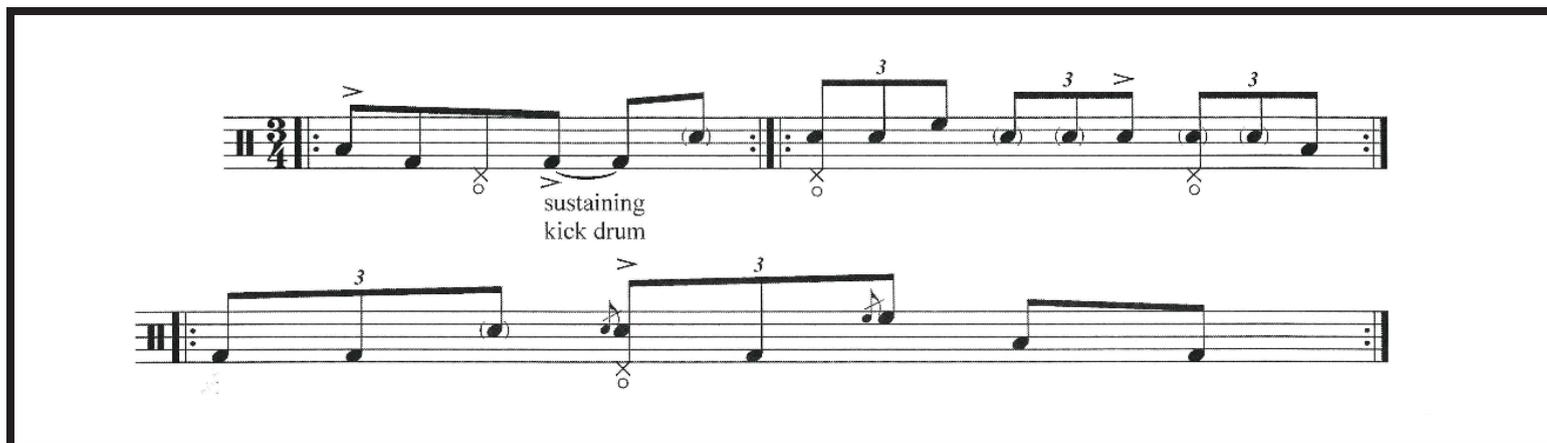
The musical score is arranged in four staves. The top staff is labeled 'TIME LINE +' and shows a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat. It features a series of eighth notes with a '7' above the first measure and a '4' above the last measure. The second staff is labeled 'SOLO' and contains a melodic line with triplets and accents, with 'L L R' written below the first triplet. The third and fourth staves are labeled 'COMP.' and show a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and accents.

The splash on the “ah” of four, in measure two, becomes a pick-up note for the repeating bars. The kick on the “ah” of four in the first measure ties the two-measure time lines together, making it swing harder. Depending on who you’re playing with, this can give the downbeat cymbal stroke a more prominent presence, “ah one,” or throw off the time a little. However, if you are working within a closed-minded team, this could result in some volatile relationships.

“Music is supposed to wash away the dust of everyday life...”

– Art Blakey

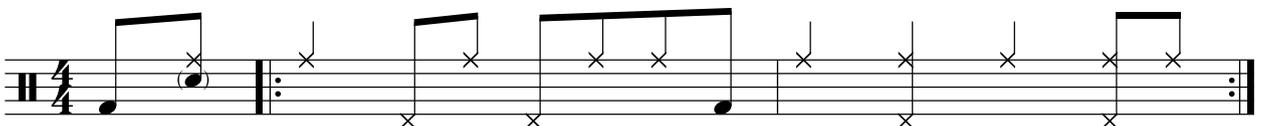
FOUR “AH” WORKBOX



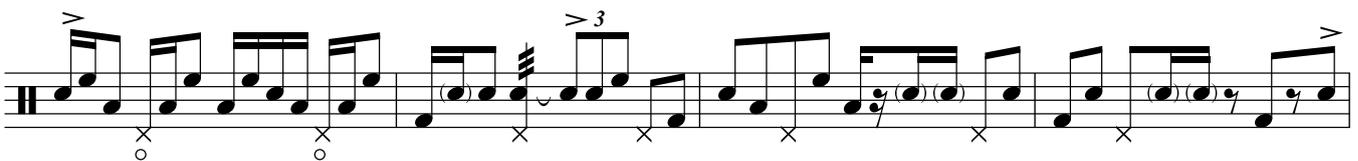
The musical score is contained within a rectangular frame and consists of two staves. The top staff is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line with triplets and accents. A 'sustaining kick drum' is indicated by a circled 'x' on the bottom line of the staff. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and accents.

MUSCLES

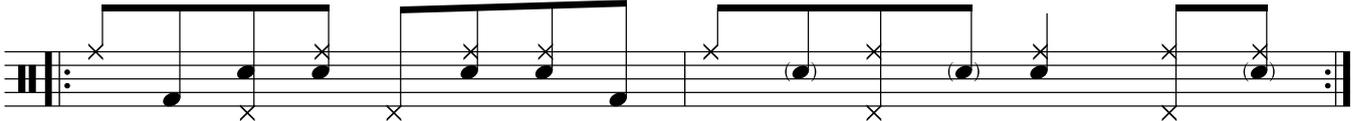
TIME LINE +



SOLO



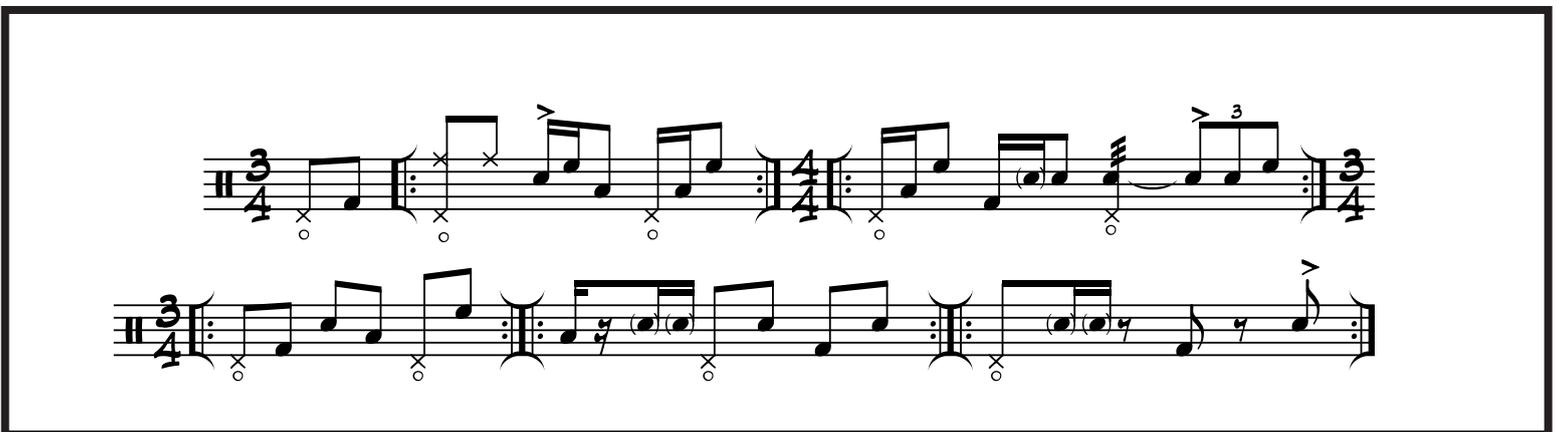
COMP.



Muscle memory can be a hindrance as well as helpful. If you played it wrong the last time you played it, most likely you're going to play the same mistake again. Your muscles are saying, "Uh, I thought that was what you wanted us to play..."

With a written performance, practicing and adhering to the desired sticking is a formula for success.

MUSCLE WORK



TRIP IN THE LINE

The musical notation for "TRIP IN THE LINE" consists of three staves. The top staff, labeled "TIME LINE +", shows a sequence of rhythmic patterns with triplets and rests. The middle staff, labeled "SOLO", features a melodic line with triplets and a slur. The bottom staff, labeled "COMP.", provides a complementary rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and rests.

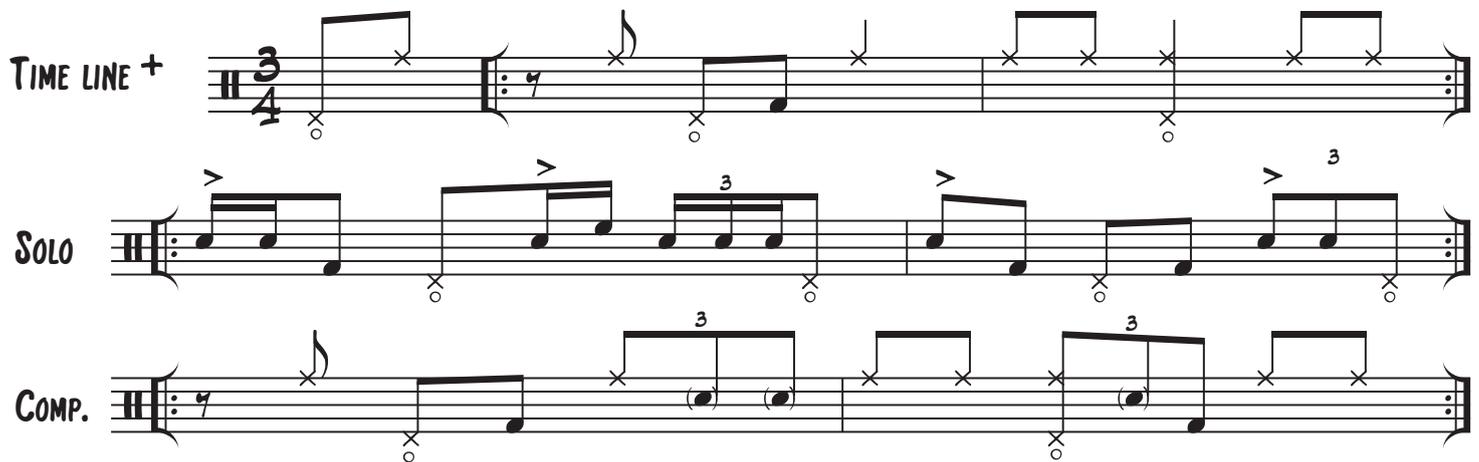
Resting a space on beat one may be a little hard to negotiate. Loop the solo until you feel the space comfortably. Space helps the solo breathe. It also makes your audience take notice. Keep your rolls open and on top of the drum head. Don't dig in; play as if you're playing on water without breaking the surface.

TRIPWORK

The musical notation for "TRIPWORK" consists of two staves. The top staff shows a melodic line with triplets, a slur, and a "SLUR..." annotation. The bottom staff provides a complementary rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and rests.

A slur is a symbol in Western musical notation indicating that the notes it embraces are to be played without separation (that is, with legato articulation). A slur is denoted with a curved line generally placed over the notes if the stems point downward, and under them if the stems point upwards.

I-RATE CHANGES



TIME LINE +

SOLO

COMP.

When swinging notes, the note is displaced from its original position, making rate changes more difficult.

Getting your feet moving in time and playing a solo over them is not only a great way to keep you honest, but will help you understand rate changing in swinging time.

RATE-CHANGING WORKBOX



No Swing

Lay down the foot ostinato, and layer the hands over your feet.



Swing

TONY WILLIAMS

Tony Williams was born in Chicago and grew up in Boston. He studied with Alan Dawson as a child, and began playing professionally at the age of 13. Williams is one of the most important and influential jazz drumset musicians of all time, as well as one of the most extraordinary prodigies in the history of jazz music. When Tony was 17, he joined Miles Davis in what was later dubbed Davis's Second Great Quintet. Davis said "Tony Williams was the center that the group's sound revolved around."



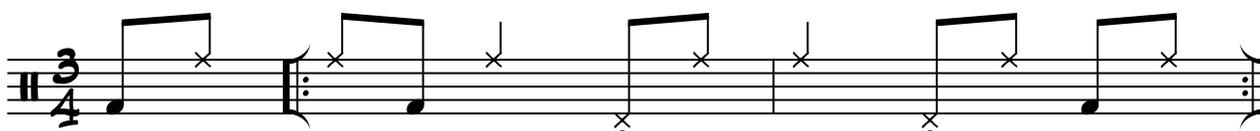
Williams was adamant about the musicality of drumming. He was one of the first to approach the drum kit like a composer. It was more than keeping time, although he slammed some of the deepest grooves ever recorded. Williams struggled with the perception that drummers were somehow less musical than other musicians and it exasperated him. Tony believed it was each musician's job to listen attentively, and to give what was needed to animate all involved. Williams never once compromised his artistic vision, and his intransigent actions weren't accepted without an inflammatory

response. He took boundless criticism from the purists. Before he passed away, Tony entered a new phase of his career as a composer of contemporary orchestral music with the release of *Wilderness*.

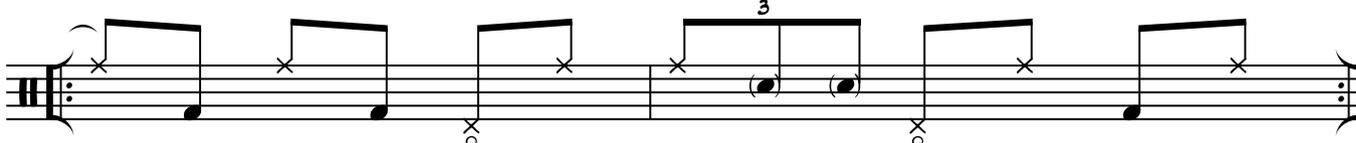
Williams lived and taught in the San Francisco Bay area until his death from a heart attack following a routine gall bladder surgery.

*Check out the Tony Williams transcription on pg. 90-91 for some great examples of Tony trading solos.

WILLIAMS' WAY

TIME LINE + 

SOLO 

COMP. 

Sonic textures, buzzes, grace notes, mordents, and flams, “oh my...”

Tony Williams was the king of ornamental enhancement.

Stick Shot - Hitting the opposite stick while it's resting on the drum head.

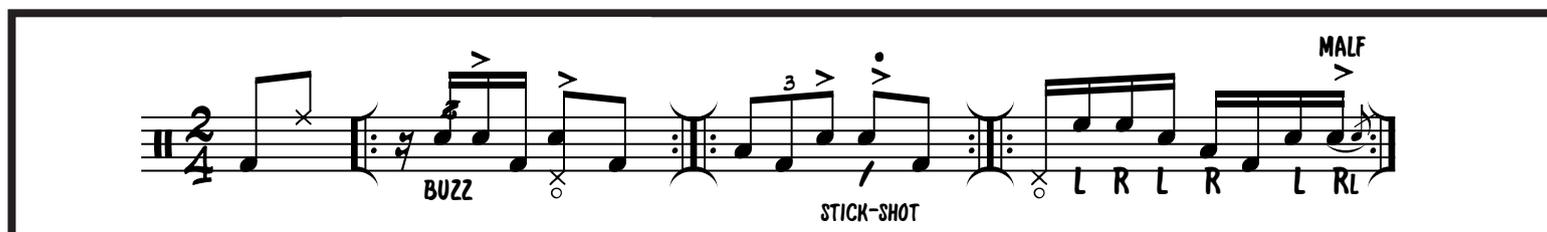
Ping-pop, rim-shot - Hitting the drumhead and rim briskly with 1-2 inches of stick over the rim.

Malf - A backward flam, whereas the high stick hits the surface before the Low stick.

Fluff - A backward ruff, whereas the diddle is played after the pulse.

Mordent - Ornament made by a quick alternation of a principal tone with the tone immediately below it.

WAY WORK



SWISS CHOCOLATES

The musical notation for "Swiss Chocolates" is presented in three staves. The top staff, labeled "TIME LINE", shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents and triplet markings, set in 3/4 time. The middle staff, labeled "SOLO", features a more complex rhythmic pattern with accents and triplet markings, including a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff, labeled "COMP.", shows a simpler rhythmic pattern with accents and triplet markings, including a triplet of eighth notes. The notation includes various symbols such as accents (>), triplet markings (3), and flat flams (x) on the toms.

“Swiss chocolates” are similar to “Swiss triplets,” except you’re using flat flams on the toms.

*Try playing the flat flams as flams hitting the floor tom slightly ahead of the high-tom. Tony Williams would build to solos like the following after playing a few solos that were more straight ahead.

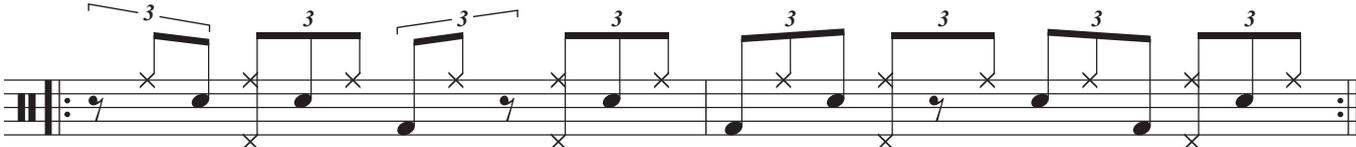
CHOCOLATE WORKBOX

The musical notation for "Chocolate Workbox" is presented in a single staff. It features a complex rhythmic pattern in 2/4 time, including accents (>), triplet markings (3), and flat flams (x) on the toms. The notation includes various symbols such as accents (>), triplet markings (3), and flat flams (x) on the toms.

JEFF “TAIN” WATTS

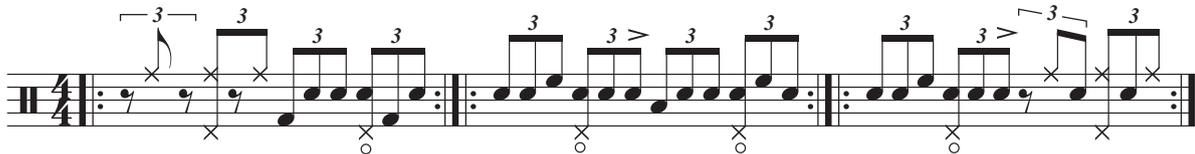
TIME LINE 

SOLO 

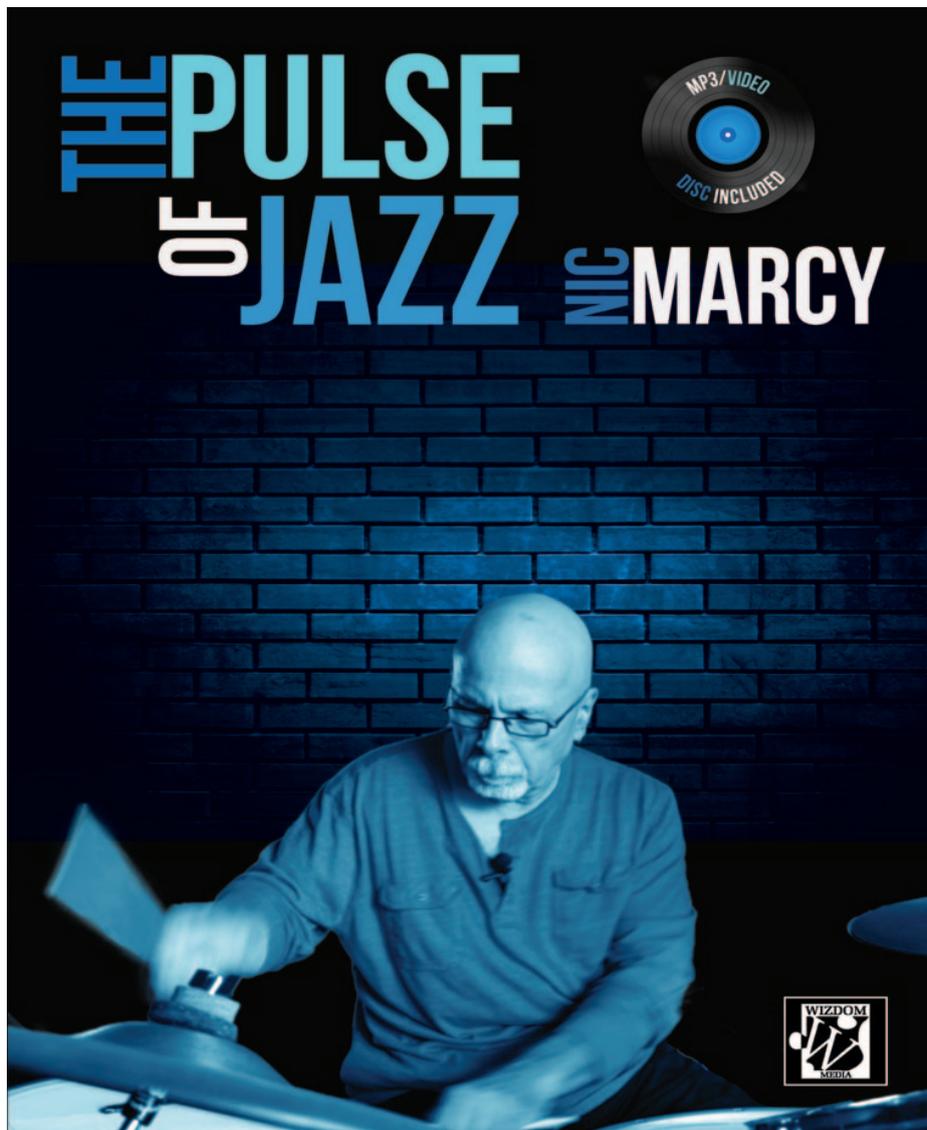
COMP. 

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Jeff Watts began playing snare drum at age four, and acquired his first drumset in his teens. As a drummer and composer, Jeff Watts is a spirited technician who uses polyrhythmic concepts and swings hard. His style, while unquestionably his own, exhibits his love for artists like Elvin Jones and Tony Williams. After his studies at Duquesne University and Berklee College of Music, he performed with Wynton and Branford Marsalis, McCoy Tyner, George Benson, and Michael Brecker. His mastery of complex rhythms and time signatures brings a sense of elegance to jazz music.

“TAIN” WORKBOX



Also from author Nic Marcy:



With *The Pulse of Jazz*, drummer/educator Nic Marcy provides a complete method for building a jazz timekeeping vocabulary. Taking a different approach from other classic jazz methods, the book provides exercises based around common timekeeping approaches from simple to very advanced (called “time lines”) and provides exercises to develop independence and comping facility with each approach. In this way, the text proceeds from the earliest forms of jazz timekeeping—such as the shuffle, the quarter-note approach, and the New Orleans “Second Line” concept—all the way up through the most modern and cutting-edge techniques employed by greats such as Antonio Sanchez and Ari Hoenig.

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