

"Chapinism" to Jazz Solos

Solo applications from *Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer, Vol 1 Coordinated Independence*

By Stephane Chamberland, inspired by Jim Chapin

I had the chance to study with the great Jim Chapin during the last four years of his life. Jim passed away at 90 years of age on Independence Day (July 4, 2009). Ironically, he has been referred to as the 'Father of Independence' in the drumming world. After my four years of intense study with Dom Famularo, during a lesson he suddenly said, "Steph, you are now ready for Jim Chapin!" He picked up the phone and called Jim. Jim came and we started our first lesson. It was moving to watch him having a hard time getting out of his car, yet impressive to see him sit at the practice pad and play like he was still 20 years old. From that day, almost every month I was in Long Island taking lessons with Jim. We did technique on the pad for a long time, and ended up on the drumset working on some jazz ideas and independence. Jim wrote the amazing book *Advanced Techniques for The Modern Drummer, Volume One* and *Volume Two* and was also the author of the video, *Speed, Control, Power, and Endurance*. Jim was Sanford Augustus Moeller's (1886–1960) best student, and after his studies Jim traveled the world teaching Moeller's concepts to many of the world's best drummers.

In this article, I'll show you my personal application of Jim's first book. I came up with this idea while I was looking for a method to improve my vocabulary in solos and trading (4's, 8's, etc.) in jazz music. I felt my level of comping was much higher than my level of soloing. One day, I found the amazing book, *The Philly Joe Jones Solo Book* (transcribed by Joerg Eckel), at Steve Maxwell's Vintage Drum Shop in New York City. I became really inspired to work on solos, and to find ways to incorporate the comping vocabulary from Chapin into my phrases inspired by Philly Joe Jones.

Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer Page 41.

Removing the Ride Cymbal

Let's begin with page 41, numbers five and six. That's one of my favorite pages to start with when demonstrating this concept. Start by playing the patterns as written without the ride cymbal. The first two bars are a great start. Make sure to use a sticking that feels comfortable. Because both hands are playing the phrase now, the sticking possibilities are numerous. Try to alternate hands as much as possible. You will notice the conversation between the snare and the bass drum happening. Already we've got fodder for tremendous jazz drum solos. It's harder to play leaving more space. It's important to practice soloing without always filling-in the spaces in between our ideas. In other words, be as confident with the rests as with the actual played notes. Sing what you play and it will help you to connect more with the musical side of your composition.



Using One Hand and Displacing Around the Drums

John Riley gave me a great piece of advice to improve my technique and get more ideas out of one single pattern. "Play it with just one hand!" he said. That's exactly what we are going to do here. It will help you work on endurance, precision, and movement around the drums. Go slowly and start on the snare, then move between two drums and finally, go everywhere you want from hi tom to floor tom, from floor tom to hi tom, and create random combinations. In this second step, you can hear the melodies created by the notes of your drums. I'll also use some stick-on-stick strokes which are very common in Jazz. Here is one possibility.



Including Double Stroke Rolls

Now it's time to fill in the spaces. This will allow you to sound really big. Double stroke rolls are so important when it comes to feel and getting a fuller sound. In this next step, we will change all the singles that are not accented into double stroke rolls. The accented singles are going to stay accented. Make sure to play the doubles soft and the accents loud to create dynamics. You may also want to place the accents on cymbals or on toms but just staying on the snare is an option that also sounds good.



Putting Phrases Together

Now you can have fun doing the same thing with all the pages of the book. Some patterns will feel and sound better, so you can write down the best ones in a journal. Then, take your favorite bars and put them together in a jazz context. Use some play along tracks and find musicians to play with. I recommend practicing these ideas as trades. Start by trading 4 bars, 8 bars, 12 bars, 2 bars and even 1 bar. If you are by yourself without music you can play time in between your phrase. When you play time, stay light with the comping, and focus more on the sound of the jazz ride cymbal. Make music and have fun!

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