
Contents

Foreword by Dr. John (Mac Rebennack)

Part One 1900 - 1945

CHAPTER 1	New Orleans Brass Bands	double drums style	4
CHAPTER 2	Traditional Jazz	early drum set style	19

Part Two 1945 - 1970

CHAPTER 3	Rhythm and Blues	modern drum set style	39
CHAPTER 4	From R&B to Soul and Funk	drum set style	55

Part Three 1970 - 2000

CHAPTER 5	From Traditional to Modern Brass Band	double drums modern style	75
CHAPTER 6	Modern Second Line	drum set style	91

Part Four Drum Technique

CHAPTER 7	Main Elements of Second Line Drumming	107
CHAPTER 8	Exercises	113

Index

Contents in detail

Contents	iii
Contents in Detail	iv
Foreword by Dr. John (Mac Rebennack)	xiii
Author's Note	xiv
Acknowledgments	xvi
About the author	xvii
Introduction	xviii
Second Line	xviii
- the followers	xviii
- the music	xviii
- the 20st century	xviii
origins of Second Line drumming	xix
- brass music	xix
- set of drums	xix
- rhythmic DNA	xix
Legend	xx
key	xx
abbreviations	xx
background info	xx
about the CD	xx

Part One 1900 - 1945 1

the city of New Orleans	
- charismatic capital	1
- African rhythm traditions	1
- the end of the 19th century	2

CHAPTER 1

New Orleans Brass Bands

double drums style

New Orleans brass bands	4
double drums	4
- bass drum	4
- cymbals:	5
'coat hanger'	5
- bass drum legends	5
- snare drum: time roll	5

- rim 30
- cowbells 30
- the hi-hat 30
 - sit-down bands 30
 - 'hi-hat' 30
 - Chick Webb's hi-hat 31
 - Dodds and the hi-hat 31
 - use of hi-hat 32
- brushes 32
- song structure: out chorus 33
- Joe Watkins 33
- travelers 34
- photographs 34
- early jazz and dixieland 35
 - dancing: use of tempo 35
 - time 36

Part Two 1945 - 1970 37

- introduction 37
 - funeral, 1962 37

CHAPTER 3

Rhythm and Blues

modern drum set style

- introduction 39
 - evolving jazz 39
 - cymbals 39
 - the rhythm section 39
 - timing 39
- new directions 40
 - bebop 40
 - rhythm and blues 40
 - riffs 40
- rhythm and blues in New Orleans 41
- drums in New Orleans rhythm and blues 41
 - bass drum 41
 - snare drum 41
 - shuffles 41
- New Orleans R&B bands 42
- Latin American influence in rhythm and blues I 42
 - Afro-Caribbean rhythm elements 43
- drum patterns 44
 - rumba pattern 44
 - rumba boogie piano 44
- early rumba boogie recordings with rumba drum patterns 46
 - drum set and conga 48
- Latin American influence in rhythm and blues II 48
- drum patterns: cascara 48
- drum patterns: conga accents 49
 - timing 50
- Latin American influence in rhythm and blues III 50
 - the Cuban clave and the New Orleans two-beat 50
 - snare drum: clave patterns 51

- 1950's Second Line pattern	51
- "three-two" pattern	51
- three-note bass rhythm	52
varying on the clave	52
Mardi Gras Indians	53
- music	53
- influence	53
- Carnival/Mardi Gras rhythm	54

CHAPTER 4

From R&B to Soul and Funk

drum set style

studios	55
- studio sound	55
- 'funky'	56
Earl Palmer	56
- style	56
- use of drags	57
- jazz background	57
- setups	57
- drum patterns: double time	59
- snare drum: time on snare	59
- Little Richard	59
- Drum Village	60
dancing: tap dance	61
timing: mixed timing	61
- Charles "Hungry" Williams	61
- bass drum:	62
Cornelius "Tenoo" Coleman	62
rock and roll	62
- 1958	63
Ed "Boogie" Blackwell	63
John Boudreaux	64
song structure: eight-bar blues	64
- "rawmp and frolic"	65
tambourine	65
AFO Records	65
- influence	66
drum patterns: grooving	66
- James Brown Beat	67
Robert French	67
Smokey Johnson	68
June Gardner	69
Zigaboo Modeliste	69
drum patterns: funk	70
The Meters	70
Second Line on record	71
dancing: the Popeye	71
travelers	71

Part Three 1970 - 2000 73

alive	73
necessity	73
street scene: Second Line crowds	74

"Iko Iko variations	95
modern sounds	95
- modern brass bands	95
- international acclaim	96
Johnny Vidacovich	96
- Astral Project	96
the 1990's	97
Herlin Riley	97
The Dirty Dozen	98
Goin' Back To New Orleans	99
Herman Ernest III	99
- "Iko Iko" variations	99
Zigaboo Modeliste	100
Raymond Weber	100
Idris Muhammad	101
Big Easy Fantasy	101
Adonis Rose, Shannon Powell, Gerald French	101
second lining on the world wide web	101
travelers	101
rhythm heritage	101
- Peterc Erskine	102
- Dave Weckl	102
- restraint	102
- Backbeat	103

Part Four Drum Technique 105

the old hole	105
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER 7

Main Elements of Second Line Drumming

technique and style	107
- accent on the 2nd bar-4th beat	107
- rolls on the snare drum	108
- melodic drumming	109
- use of timing	109
- attitude	110
rhythm patterns	110
- Second Line rhythm patterns	110
- Afro-Caribbean rhythm patterns	111

CHAPTER 8

Exercises

relaxation	113
chapter 1 New Orleans Brass Band	113
double drums traditional style	
two-piece rhythm section	113
- positions	117
'coat hanger'	117
- independence	117
- sound effects	117
- cymbal	118
- how to make your own coat hanger	118

time roll	118
- hands	119
- variations	119
play-a-long	119
cadence	119
- sticking	119
- press roll sticking	120
'drag shot'	120
chapter 2 Traditional Jazz	120
early jazz drum set style	
choked cymbal	120
four-beat	121
- more dynamics	121
cross phrasing	121
- fig. 2-4b ("Dark Town Strutters Ball")	121
fig. 2-5a / b and 2-6	122
again dynamics	122
fig. 2-13a / b (hi-hat)	122
fig. 2-14 (brushes)	122
fig. 2-15 (Joe Watkins)	122
chapter 3 Rhythm and Blues	122
modern drum set style	
fig. 3-2 (Chr. Columbus)	122
fig. 3-3 (N.O. shuffle)	122
fig. 3-4b	122
fig. 3-7 ("Tipitina")	123
fig. 3-8 ("Jock-A-Mo")	123
fig. 3-11 ("Everybody's Whalin'")	123
fig. 3-12 ("When I Meet My Girl")	124
chapter 4 From R&B to Soul and Funk	124
fig. 4-1 (Palmer shuffle)	124
use of drags	124
fig.4-2b (Palmer drags)	124
fig. 4-4 ("Feel So Good")	124
fig. 4-5b ("Let The Good Times Roll")	125
fig. 4-6 ("Who's Been Fooling You")	125
fig. 4-9 (Drum Village)	126
tap dance	126
fig. 4-11 ("Don't You Just Know It")	126
fig. 4-12 ("Roll On")	126
John Boudreaux	127
fig. 4-16 ("One Big Mouth")	127
fig. 4-18 ("Trick Bag")	127
fig. 4-19a ("Big Chief P.1")	128
fig. 4-19b ("Big Chief P.2")	128
relaxation	128
The Meters	128
- fig. 4-23 ("Look-Ka Py Py")	128
- fig. 4-24 ("Yeah, You're Right")	128

fig. Part Three ("Poinciana")	129
chapter 5 From Traditional to Modern Brass Band	129
double drums modern style	
fig. 5-1 ("Tain't Nobody's Biz-ness ...")	129
fig. 5-4b ("J. C. Whoopin' Blues")	129
fig. 5-5 (Dave Bailey)	129
double drums modern style	129
- play-a-long	129
fig. 5-8 (basic Dirty Dozen)	131
fig. 5-10 ("Blue Monk")	131
fig. 5-11 (basic Rebirth)	131
fig. 5-12 ("Big Chief")	131
fig. 5-13 ("I'm Walking")	131
fig. 5-15 ("Tuba Fats")	131
fig. 5-16 ("Mercy Mercy Mercy")	131
chapter 6 Modern Second Line	132
drum set style	
fig. 6-1 ("Street Parade")	132
fig. 6-2 ("Junko Partner")	132
fig. 6-4 ("Blow Wind Blow")	132
fig. 6-5 ("Qualified")	133
fig. 6-7 ("Iko Iko")	133
fig. 6-8 ("Sissy Strut")	133
fig. 6-9 ("Sidewalk Strut")	133
fig. 6-11b (fill w. drag shots)	133
fig. 6-12 ("Keep On Marching")	133
fig. 6-13 ("Fun In The Sun")	133
fig. 6-14 ("Here Comes The Big Parade")	133
fig. 6-15 ("How Do Y'all Know")	133
fig. 6-16 ("Lazy")	134
fig. 6-17 and 18 (Erskine and Weckl)	134
"out chorus"	134
Notes	136
Glossary	141
Bibliography	146
Books and methods	146
Video's	146
Records and CD's	146
Web sites	147
Photo credits	148
CD contents	150
Index	151

Foreword by Dr. John (Mac Rebennack)

This book is essential to any drummer interested in New Orleans drumming: it covers the fundamental second line and funk styles. *SECOND LINE* begins with the traditional brass band use of the bass drum and cymbal, where the various snare players play “on the clave” and other syncopated feels. The book then explains the evolution of two-beats, time rolls and sock cymbals, into the early forms of jazz, as played by the great drummers like Paul Barbarin, Zutty Singleton and Baby Dodds. These cats majorly influenced the shape of rhythm to come.

There’s a great understanding in Aukes’ writing, of Earl Palmer’s massive contribution to the rhythm and blues and rock and roll of New Orleans, beginning in the 1950’s and ‘60’s. *SECOND LINE* shows many of the innovations of Charles “Hungry” Williams, John Boudreaux, Smokey Johnson, Zigaboo Modeliste and so many more, that contributed to the New Orleans funk scene and great brass band revival.

I personally checked this book over with many of the drummers written about, like Smokey, Idris Muhammad and Herman Ernest. It gives powerful examples of each one of them. *SECOND LINE - 100 years of New Orleans drumming*, follows the branches of the trees of New Orleans drumming straight from the roots.

New York, January 28, 2000
Mac Rebennack



Dr. John and the author

Author's Note

floating on top of the rhythm

The main ideas for writing this book popped up in my head while handling my beater & coat hanger and playing my kit. Many times I had experienced the rhythmic force, catalyzed by drumming a solid two-beat or a New Orleans shuffle. I felt how “everybody just floats on top of that rhythm,” as a New Orleans trumpeter once expressed. And its power lay not so much in my personal interpretation, as it lay in the music itself: in the rhythms I made use of and the patterns I chose. Only when I realized how old some of these rhythm patterns were - some over seventy years - I started wondering: where does this all come from, how did these old guys do that?

I first focused my research on the music and the musicians, on stage and on record. Thanks to digital technology and CD mail order services, analyzing old records is made a lot easier now than it used to be when I only had my worn out LP's. I learned to recognize those snare and bass drum patterns in the classic New Orleans brass band, jazz and R&B albums. Many hours I spent under the headphone, trying to transcribe that Earl Palmer fill in “Let the Good Times Roll” (Shirley & Lee), which is, I admit, impossible. But, even after fifty times of repeating: whenever “Let the Good Times Roll” is on, and I hear Lee Allen's sax solo coming up, introduced by Palmer's fill, I still can't help but smile and shout.

jazz archives

I tried to play the drum parts that I deciphered. Tried to loosen up on my grip and capture that feel, and get some of that rhythm language into my musical speech. Finally, I went down to the source of this music and visited The Crescent City in 1994. Thanks to taped interviews with early jazz musicians, housed at the Tulane University Hogan Jazz Archives, I could listen to what drummers themselves had explained about their music. From the way these men talked about their contributions - hearing the humor and irony in their speech - I learned how New Orleans musicians did not think highly of themselves, never thought they were doing “anything special”. I learned about their tradition of music of the people, played for and among the people.

I took lessons from three drum authorities to show them my chops and check my thoughts: John Vidacovich, Fred Staehle and Barry Martyn. Only after I heard them say: “Well ..., yeah. You got it.”, could I go home relieved. Back in Holland I realized how little had been written about New Orleans drumming up until the 1990's. And since I did not find any book on the historical development of the City's drum styles, I decided to write my own.

groove evolution

About the groove evolution of the first three decades (1890 - 1920) historians still speculate as no recorded proof exists of how early brass bands played. The development of early New Orleans drumming, as presented here, is based on post WWII drum knowledge. The drum technical descriptions of the authentic two-

beat style first turn up in interviews with 1950's R&B / jazz drummers, who were, in turn, describing the brass band and early jazz roots of their own style of playing. In interviews with the city's jazz veterans themselves about the pre-war period, these theoretical terms are never mentioned. The early drummers talked about who-played-with-who and who-was-best, rather than how-exactly-did-you-play. Those were the days when street parades were almost a daily routine. So why describe a phenomenon in words that could be experienced in the street every day? Want to know about second line? - follow the second line! However, in the available early jazz and brass band recordings one notices the techniques described by the 1950 drummers.

Although brass band (two men) drumming and (one man) drum set playing influenced each other mutually during the first decades - drummers often doubled in both ways of playing - this book stresses the early influence of brass band drumming on drum set playing. I believe the supposed line of influence given here, explains how the black (two men) brass band style supported the inflow of Afro-Caribbean percussion structures and percussionists approach characteristic of all New Orleans drumming. However speculative as it may appear - research is ongoing - reading about the early concepts of drum set playing certainly will give you an insight into all that was to follow.

SECOND LINE shows how a two-men percussion set turns into a one-man drum instrument, and how the early three part rhythms - on bass, snare and cymbals - structures the subsequent drum styles, up until this very day. Therefore SECOND LINE is a history book all right, however not designed to be studied on your desk but to be played from, from your music stand. Historical discussions aim not to conclude but to appetize your interest in New Orleans, "old music" and styles-that-have-been.

attitude

The Drum Technique part helps you work on the examples, but also tells you to adapt the elements of Second Line drumming to your personal style of playing. For SECOND LINE does not want you all to play strictly second line music now. Take from these pages what is useful for your own rhythm section work, either swing or rock type. Get some of that rhythm language into your own musical speech.

The two styles of Dixieland and funk have never before been explained within one and the same method. SECOND LINE does just that. These chapters reveal that Dixie and funk drum roots are more strongly entangled than is usually recognized. SECOND LINE will show you how to improve upon your hip groove ability, but likewise it takes traditional jazz drum techniques as a serious means of expression. Or even: improve your groove ability by taking traditional drum technique seriously, and vice versa, revive your traditional drum technique by adding a touch of clave syncopation. Keep your music alive, just like New Orleans drummers have demonstrated us time and again.

This book on New Orleans drumming explains rather little about showing off in solos; just one solo is transcribed, in chapter 5. Crescent City drummers used to be more concerned about other, more essential matters like comping: what does the song want, what does the music ask for, and how can I send the soloist. "Play for the benefit of the band" is a typical New Orleans musicians attitude, preached and practiced for over a hundred years. An attitude that has never lost its meaning. Modern drummers, especially those from the 21st century, should play with a quality that machines and computers cannot equal: play with attitude. After all, it is "the rhythm" that "keeps everybody afloat," not necessarily the drummer.

Acknowledgments

Without the generous help, effort and support of numerous people, *SECOND LINE* would have remained just another popped up idea in my head.

I am particularly indebted to Bruce Reaburn, curator of the Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University New Orleans (and drummer), for introducing me to the jazz archives, for his improvements to the manuscript and for keeping me from historical omissions. I am deeply grateful to Mac Rebennack for his comments on and additions to the R&B chapters and for honoring me with a foreword. In New Orleans my thanks go to John Vidacovich, Fred Staehle and Barry Martyn for their teachings on modern, R&B and traditional drumming; Dr. Karl Koenig for his *Sonic Boom* publication on drummer interviews in the Tulane University Jazz Archives; George Buck, Jr. of Jazzology Press for his assistance; to Jerry Brock of the Louisiana Music Factory for his help and that nice snapshot; Dirty Dozen drummer Terence Higgins for his support and assistance; and Donna of Donna's Bar & Grill.

Herman Ernest and Peter Erskine took the trouble of checking upon their transcription parts; Stefan Kruger and Jan Laurens Hartong proof read the Afro-Caribbean rhythm parts.

I am indebted to Sparky Nielson and Nicole of Dream Street Management (Dr. John) for their care; Gerard van Bezey for his teachings on the technique of brushes; Adam Olivier, the Nestor of New Orleans musicians in Holland, for his heartwarming support and for the use of his rare brass band recordings; Americana expert Berry Selles for his support and companionship; pianist Johan Bijkerk for the use of his jazz library; Marc van Nus for his rare early jazz recordings; Pim Gras and his team of the Dutch Jazz Archive; the staff of the library of the Enschede Conservatory of Music; Helmut and Petra Rinne of MONOLA in Buckeburg for their services; Marc van Kempen (Transmaere - Enschede) and Henk Kleinhout for their editing; Reinhard Penning and Leen Hoogenboom for their advise on the layout; Piet Schreuders for his cover layout; Eddy Determeyer, Maarten Aalbers and Trevor Up Simon for their suggestions and advise; Eric Poorterman for his comments on the manuscript. An early concept version was read by B. Selles, A. Read and P. Drayer; their remarks were very constructive.

I am very lucky to have met John Benson and his team of Music Press Distributors. Mr. Benson introduced me to a man who believed in the project, even when it took three more years to finish it, my publisher Mr. Bob Barnhouse. Thank you both very much.

Two men deserve special thanks for their day-to-day assistance and support. In the process of turning a vague dream into a real book I could always depend on the computer expertise, layout experience and never ceasing patience of Sietze de Leeuw. Ton Ouwehand was my right hand, whenever and whatever. He knows about the jazz world, its inhabitants and their ego's. His guidance and humor were a great stimulance.

I want to say thanks to the musicians with whom I could refine my Second Line playing and who urged me to start writing about it: Ruud Ouwehand, Johan Plomp, Jan Voogd, Joris Bijleveld and Andrew Read, Wil Maas and Gustav van de Coevering, Raymond Nijenhuis and Piet Drayer, Gerlo Hesselink, Sietze de Leeuw and Kees Eijkel.

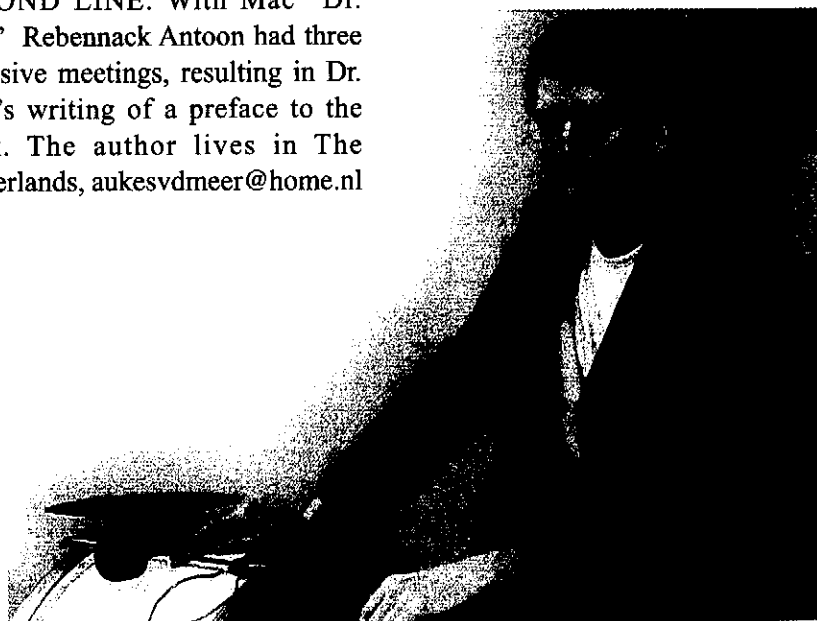
And then there is family and friends to be hugged for simply being there: my grandfather, the late Lense Boer, who first showed me how to play on the rims of the drums (Dodds' style), while I - age 11 - thought that was forbidden by Ringo Star; my parents who could so gracefully dance the waltz; Coos, Leo, Stef and Rein and my wife and children, Thea, Thomas and Eva, who let me borrow their precious time.

About the author

Drummer, arranger and former tapdancer Antoon Th. Aukes (1954) is an accomplished performer and teacher of vintage drumstyles, specializing in Second Line drumming. Among others he performed internationally with “Tiny” Moore (ex Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys), Santiago Jimenez Jr. (Texas conjunto master), Tim O’Brien (Americana master) and “Sax” Gordon Beadle (W.C. Handy-award nominee). Antoon’s contemporary Second Line bass drum playing may be heard on the Nueva Manteca album Congo Square (2002), on which he makes a brief guest appearance.

After finishing his studies at the music conservatory in 1982, Antoon has been active as a music educator since, covering a widespread field of teaching facilities, from schools to universities, from classes to individuals. Since 1986 Antoon teaches music at the Concordia Arts & Culture Centre in Enschede, where he lives.

Mr. Aukes has been studying New Orleans drumming ever since Dr. John’s Gumbo album came out in 1972. He started writing on SECOND LINE in 1995. An important part of the book’s research took place in New Orleans, where Antoon took drumlessons from Johnny Vidacovich (jazz), Fred Staehle (R&B) and Barry Martyn (trad. jazz). As described in the Author’s Note, he also researched the Hogan Jazz Archive at the Tulane University in New Orleans. In 1999, Mr. Bruce Reaburn, curator of the Hogan Jazz Archive, read and annotated the first manuscript of SECOND LINE. With Mac “Dr. John” Rebennack Antoon had three extensive meetings, resulting in Dr. John’s writing of a preface to the book. The author lives in The Netherlands, aukesvdmeer@home.nl



Acknowledgments

Without the generous help, effort and support of numerous people, *SECOND LINE* would have remained just another popped up idea in my head.

I am particularly indebted to Bruce Reaburn, curator of the Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University New Orleans (and drummer), for introducing me to the jazz archives, for his improvements to the manuscript and for keeping me from historical omissions. I am deeply grateful to Mac Rebennack for his comments on and additions to the R&B chapters and for honoring me with a foreword. In New Orleans my thanks go to John Vidacovich, Fred Staehle and Barry Martyn for their teachings on modern, R&B and traditional drumming; Dr. Karl Koenig for his *Sonic Boom* publication on drummer interviews in the Tulane University Jazz Archives; George Buck, Jr. of Jazzology Press for his assistance; to Jerry Brock of the Louisiana Music Factory for his help and that nice snapshot; Dirty Dozen drummer Terence Higgins for his support and assistance; and Donna of Donna's Bar & Grill.

Herman Ernest and Peter Erskine took the trouble of checking upon their transcription parts; Stefan Kruger and Jan Laurens Hartong proof read the Afro-Caribbean rhythm parts.

I am indebted to Sparky Nielson and Nicole of Dream Street Management (Dr. John) for their care; Gerard van Bezey for his teachings on the technique of brushes; Adam Olivier, the Nestor of New Orleans musicians in Holland, for his heartwarming support and for the use of his rare brass band recordings; Americana expert Berry Selles for his support and companionship; pianist Johan Bijkerk for the use of his jazz library; Marc van Nus for his rare early jazz recordings; Pim Gras and his team of the Dutch Jazz Archive; the staff of the library of the Enschede Conservatory of Music; Helmut and Petra Rinne of MONOLA in Buckeburg for their services; Marc van Kempen (Transmaere - Enschede) and Henk Kleinhout for their editing; Reinhard Penning and Leen Hoogenboom for their advise on the layout; Piet Schreuders for his cover layout; Eddy Determeyer, Maarten Aalbers and Trevor Up Simon for their suggestions and advise; Eric Poorterman for his comments on the manuscript. An early concept version was read by B. Selles, A. Read and P. Drayer; their remarks were very constructive.

I am very lucky to have met John Benson and his team of Music Press Distributors. Mr. Benson introduced me to a man who believed in the project, even when it took three more years to finish it, my publisher Mr. Bob Barnhouse. Thank you both very much.

Two men deserve special thanks for their day-to-day assistance and support. In the process of turning a vague dream into a real book I could always depend on the computer expertise, layout experience and never ceasing patience of Sietze de Leeuw. Ton Ouwehand was my right hand, whenever and whatever. He knows about the jazz world, its inhabitants and their ego's. His guidance and humor were a great stimulance.

I want to say thanks to the musicians with whom I could refine my Second Line playing and who urged me to start writing about it: Ruud Ouwehand, Johan Plomp, Jan Voogd, Joris Bijleveld and Andrew Read, Wil Maas and Gustav van de Coevering, Raymond Nijenhuis and Piet Drayer, Gerlo Hesselink, Sietze de Leeuw and Kees Eijkel.

And then there is family and friends to be hugged for simply being there: my grandfather, the late Lense Boer, who first showed me how to play on the rims of the drums (Dodds' style), while I - age 11 - thought that was forbidden by Ringo Star; my parents who could so gracefully dance the waltz; Coos, Leo, Stef and Rein and my wife and children, Thea, Thomas and Eva, who let me borrow their precious time.

Introduction

Second Line - the followers

The term Second Line, given as title to this book, is an authentic New Orleans expression with more than one meaning to it. Originally it pointed towards the followers of a funeral parade. Returning from the graveside ceremony, New Orleans brass bands would play happy, up beat music. The melodies and rhythms they played were so infectiously joyful that the street crowds, gathered from everywhere, couldn't help but join in the celebration and follow that band. Such is no wonder, for you see, it is absolutely great to dance to Second Line music. There is such a natural sway to it, your limbs seem to step by themselves. To me it always feels as if the rhythms and the tempos were tailored to the size of my body. If you have not yet experienced this sensation, jump to page 9 for your first dance lesson. Soon you will be second lining around your room.

- the music

Eventually, roughly after World War II, "Second Line" became an indicator for the happy New Orleans music itself. Either jazz or R&B, as long as it had that New Orleans sense of rhythm, it was recognized as Second Line music. For although Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Dejan's Olympia Brass Band, Fats Domino, Dr. John, The Meters, The Neville Bros., Harry Connick, Jr. and The Dirty Dozen Brass Band represent a kaleidoscope of styles, they are all connected by the one element: The Rhythm.

That loose, strolling, syncopated feel instantly identifies New Orleans Traditional Brass Band music, Early Jazz, Rhythm and Blues, Soul, Funk, Southern Rock, Mardi Gras Indian music, Modern Brass Band music and many more. New Orleans rhythm was never just a trendy beat or a snappy pattern, connected to a certain style or decade. The Crescent City conceived and developed nothing less than its own rhythm language. SECOND LINE serves as an introduction to that language: it puts the different New Orleans jazz and R&B styles into chronological order, describes the Second Line groove evolution and describes its relation with jazz and rock rhythms on the one side and Afro-Caribbean rhythms on the other.

- the 20st century

The history of Second Line rhythm is rich and long, spanning over a hundred years. Based on the 2/4 street beats of early 20th century brass bands, the rhythms blended with clave syncopation, developed into jazz, branched out into R&B and funk and, along the way, injected the grooving of rock and roll, Motown, James Brown, fusion and new brass funk. Along the years, bands, music, crowds - everything changed, but fact is the phenomenon is still there. Reaching the 21st century, New Orleans brass bands still second line, gathering crowds of followers. And during all those years they inspired the subsequent generations of drummers, who grew up strolling and dancing to their rhythms in the street.

origins of Second Line drumming

- brass music

Second Line drumming was first conceived by the bass and snare drummers of the city's legendary early brass bands. In the last decades of the nineteenth century the style of brass music was widely popular throughout the US. Bands in New Orleans, however, did not sound like the others. The black New Orleans brass bands had a compact orchestral sound, with varied melodic-rhythmical interplay. Their drummers were not just "time keepers" for the wind instruments but revealed a more self-conscious and percussive way of playing - an approach unheard of by white drummers outside of The City. The development of this new rhythm concept paralleled the initiation of a new and potential rhythm vehicle: the drum set.

- set of drums

When your modern drum set was still an assembled set of drums, back in the 1890's, it consisted of no more than a bass drum, a snare drum and one or two cymbals with an additional woodblock and Chinese tom-tom. With the passing decades the drum set has grown to huge proportions with numerous tom-toms and waving fields of cymbals. The technique of handling the sticks has altered and the music styles have multiplied. Nevertheless the most essential drum groove after one hundred years is still: the three-layered pattern of

- downbeats on the low bass drum
- answered by accented back beats on the high snare drum
- both connected by the intertwining metal cymbal.

This pattern has such a natural logic to it, we tend to forget that some time, some people came up with its formula.

- rhythmic DNA

During the initial period of the new drum set, or trap set as it was called, bass drums, snare drums and cymbals were common instruments in American-European orchestras and much used by the glorious brass bands marching everywhere. Although the military brass band style in general supported the new drum set with its basic instrumentation (bass-snare-cymbals) and playing techniques (press rolls, rudiments), the greatest musical affect on how to apply these drums & cymbals came from the performing of one particular type of marching band: the black brass bands in New Orleans. When those Crescent City street drummers sat down behind their prototype drum kits, they converted their parade-style rhythms to the drum set. By doing so they provided us with the rhythmic "key" for that all time basic downbeat-backbeat pattern on bass, snare and cymbal - the rhythmic DNA to all the various 20th century drum styles. One can say that the main root of drum set playing is to be found in New Orleans Second Line drumming.