

Developing the Jazz Band Percussionist Part II Suggested Patterns and Practice Materials

by *Marvin Sparks, Jr.*

In Part II, I will present some easy patterns, concepts, and songs you can use to develop your concept. Remember, your goal is to create original parts which are based on a solid foundation.

We will use "Zion" from Lauryn Hill's "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" for our study.

Here are some basic concepts to remember:

- * Practice with your full set-up.
- * Learn the basic patterns and sounds for each instrument.
- * Most fills happen at the end of phrases. (4, 8, and 16 bars)
- * Fills can enhance or support elements in the music. (a lyric, an instrumental lick, etc..)

We will group these patterns into "sound choices" which were discussed in "Part I."

- * Drums (verses and breakdowns)
- * Metals (intros, bridges, ending vamps)
- * Shakers (verses and breakdowns; slow songs)
- * Wood (verses, breakdowns, and interchangeable with metal sounds)

Congas

One of the most important conga patterns to master is "tumbao." This pattern and its variations can be used for many grooves within various musical styles.

Timbales

Timbales can be grouped with "drum, metal and wood sounds." Develop a set-up with a main cowbell, a cha-cha bell, jam block, and tambourine using either 2 cowbell mini racks or a percussion table. If you have electronics they can be used effectively in with this sound source area.

Shakers

Shakers are great for verses and are used on many recordings. Invest in different shakers to add variety in your sound choices.

Use the following format when making your sound choices and patterns.

- * Intros/Bridges: Metal Sounds/Timbales
- * Verse: Congas/Shakers
- * Out Chorus: Metal Sounds(unless soft)
- * General Rule: Metal Sounds for loud passages(Forte);
- * Congas and shakers for soft passages (piano)

ZION by Lauren Hill

The image displays musical notation for the song 'ZION by Lauren Hill', focusing on percussion patterns. It is divided into three sections:

- Intro (timbales):** Shows a shaker pattern (represented by a shaker icon) and a guitar intro pattern (represented by 'x' marks on a staff).
- Verse:** Shows a shaker pattern and a guitar pattern. A double bar line with repeat dots indicates a section.
- Variation 4th Bar:** Shows a shaker pattern with the rhythm notation 'R R L L R L' below it.
- Tumbao:** Shows a shaker pattern.

Suggested Practice Music

- * Lauryn Hill, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill"
- * Luther Vandross, "Secrets"
- * Earl Klugh, "Midnight in San Juan"
- * Joe Henderson, "Double Rainbow – The Music of Antonio Jobim"
- * The Latin Real Book Sampler CD
- * Juan Formell y los Van Van, "Edicion Especial"
- * Los Munequitos De Mantanza, "Rumba Caliente"
- * Marvin Gaye, "I Want You"

Suggested Books/Videos

- * Chroma (Live w/Dennis Chambers and Mino)
- * Bobby Sanabria videos
- * Ed Uribe Afro-Cuban and Brazilian Manuals (2 separate books)
- * Dr. Mark Sunkett, "Mandiani Drum and Dance"
- * Airto DCI Videos (all great for set-ups and concepts)

There are many books, videos, and recordings so invest in a library of information. Remember keep playing, seek out a good teacher/mentor and have fun in the process. The key to becoming a good percussionist while playing with a band is developing taste through education.