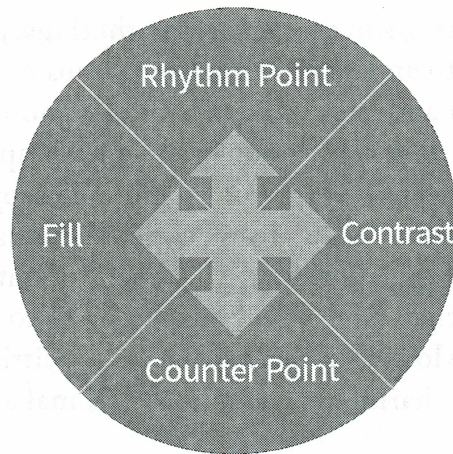


everything else that's going on. Sometimes it even gets you fired! Remember that respect for everyone on stage coupled with humility will take you far in this industry.

Making Musical Choices

What to Play



Rhythm Point

When presented with groove pulse rhythms, you have the option of copying those rhythms directly. You might choose to copy a bass line by breaking up the rhythms between the bass drum and snare drum. When you copy an idea, it shows the listener the value of that idea by saying, “This is important so pay attention.” But too much repetition can bore listeners. You must strike a balance.

Counter Point

When presented with groove pulse rhythms, you may choose to play a supportive counter rhythm that usually creates tension. Counter point must be treated with care. Audiences have limited attention spans, and music must breathe. If your counter point distracts the audience from the main theme, you will annoy them. Just like in classical music, jazz counter point is when two melodies happen at the same time and against each other.

In counter point, the rhythmic fills of the drummer play opposite the harmonic and melodic rhythms. Counter point is when all three things—drum, harmonic, and melodic rhythms—play under one groove pulse.

Fill and contrast offer the highest level of freedom *in* music. You cannot do this unless you have a clear understanding of the beat and phrasing (groove pulse rhythms), and have earned the trust of fellow players. Playing “free” music does not mean freedom *from* the music or that you are playing outside a musical construct.

In an interview about avant-garde or “free” music, the great Charlie Parker explained it like this: “If you listen close enough, you can find the melody travelling along within the