

## **Ben Falle**

Ben Falle is a 23 year old professional musician, performing regularly throughout Perth with neo-soul singer Natasha Mousuff, the Chris Foster Trio, the award winning Johannes Luebbers Dectet, and many other original jazz and contemporary groups. In 2005 Ben graduated from WAAPA with a BMus Jazz, majoring in performance, and is now a part time Principle Study lecturer at the renowned institution. Ben has performed with world class Australian jazz artists Joe Chindamo and Jamie Oehlers, and international free-jazz artist Marilyn Crispell, and as a 5 year member of WAYJO has performed with other Australian stars such as James Morrison, Kate Ceberano, Rhonda Burchmore, Grace Knight and David Campbell. As the 2007 winner of 'Australia's Best Up & Coming Drummer', Ben is an in-demand performer and educator in the Australian music scene.

### **The Role Of The Drummer:**

The role of the drummer in a jazz ensemble is that of the time keeper and to supply rhythmic energy and interaction with the soloists.

### **Time Keeping:**

The two most common types of jazz time keeping on the drums are the '4 feel' or 'walking' as it's commonly known, and the '2 feel' . Time keeping in jazz drumming is allocated to the ride cymbal. The common ride cymbal rhythm is as follows:

(swung 8ths)                      |    |    |    |    |    |  
                                     x   x x   x   x   x   x

### **The '4 feel'**

The '4 feel' time keeping will use this ride cymbal rhythm along with the hi-hat playing on 2 and 4 with the foot, and the bass drum feathering (playing lightly to be 'felt, not heard') on all 4 quarter note beats. The left hand is free to improvise with or 'comp' (accompany) on the snare. In a '4 feel' the bass is playing on all four quarter notes.

### **The '2 feel'**

The '2 feel' is a reduced form of the '4 feel' where the emphasis is on 2 beats to the bar, the minums/half notes. In this feel the drummer will change the ride cymbal and bass drum rhythm. The ride cymbal will now be as follows:

(swung 8ths)                      1   +   2   +   3   +   4   +  
                                     |           |   |           |   |  
                                     x .        x   x .        x

The bass drum will play on the 1 and 3 of the bar. The hi-hat does not change, it will still be playing on 2 and 4. In a '2 feel' the bass is predominantly playing minums/half notes.

Time keeping in jazz is not like the time keeping of the popular styles of today where a pattern is more or less repeated as a constant, rather, jazz drummers use techniques like those mentioned, as a starting point for creating **a layer of rhythmical information and excitement.**

\* The bass player has more control over whether a '4 feel' or '2 feel' is being played. If a drummer is playing a '4 feel' pattern, but the bass player is playing a '2 feel', the general feel will be in 2, and vice versa.

### **Rhythmic Energy & Interaction With Soloists:**

Being free of harmonic responsibilities, the drummer is expected to be the supplier of rhythmic energy, interest and interaction with the soloist. Listening carefully to the soloist, having good jazz phrasing vocabulary, and having good physical co-ordination/independence are essential tools to successfully playing behind a soloist. Along with the aforementioned 'comping' from the snare drum, the drummer will also use the tom-toms, hi-hat and bass drum in the same manner, as well as varying the ride cymbal rhythm. A good jazz drummer will use all of the sounds available to them on the drums to interact with and support the soloist, and use techniques such as poly rhythms and other rhythmic illusions to create interest. These skills are best learned by listening to a lot of jazz and paying attention to what the drummer is doing not just in terms of what is being played physically, but how what is being played is contributing to the solo and how the drummer outlines the form of the tune.