

ACADEMY LESSON 18

5 METERS TUNES BASED OFF THE RATCLIFF BEAT

IN 1992 I GOT THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE JOHNNY VIDACOVICH AND ZIGABOO MODELISTE GIVE A JOINT CLINIC AT THE PASIC CONVENTION THE ONE TIME IT WAS HOSTED IN NEW ORLEANS. I SHOWED UP EARLY WITH BELLS ON AND JOHNNY INTRODUCED ME TO ZIG FOR THE FIRST TIME. AT THE TIME I CARRIED AROUND A NOTE PAD AND I TOOK NOTES FROM THE CLINIC. DURING ZIG'S PORTION OF THE CLINIC HE TALKED ABOUT WHERE HE GOT HIS IDEAS FOR "CISSY STRUT". HE TALKED ABOUT STANLEY RATCLIFF AND HOW STANLEY WAS THE FIRST GUY THAT ANYONE SAW IN NEW ORLEANS PLAY RLRL ALTERNATING 16TH NOTES ON THE HI-HAT. ZIG TALKED ABOUT HOW HE TOOK THAT GROOVE HOME AND DEVELOPED IT INTO "CISSY STRUT". I LATER CAME TO REALIZE THAT THE RATCLIFF BEAT IS ALSO THE FOUNDATION OF SEVERAL OTHER BEATS THAT ZIG PLAYS WITH THE METERS. RUSSELL BATISTE HAS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT STANLEY WAS THE FIRST GUY TO PLAY THE MAMBO BASS DRUM PATTERN UNDER A FUNK GROOVE. THE GREAT EARL PALMER HAD PLAYED THE MAMBO BASS DRUM PATTERN BUT WITH THE BACK BEAT IN A DIFFERENT PLACE. CHECK OUT FATS DOMINO'S "I'M WALKIN'".

ONCE YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THE RATCLIFF BEAT YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO EASILY MODIFY IT INTO EACH OF THESE OTHER BEATS. YOU WILL ALSO SEE HOW THE RATCLIFF BEAT IS THE FOUNDATION OF EACH OF THESE. LET'S START OFF BY CHECKING OUT THE RATCLIFF BEAT.

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

HERE'S OUR FIRST ZIG GROOVE BASED OFF THE RATCLIFF BEAT. THIS IS THE BEAT TO "GROOVY LADY". IT'S BASICALLY THE RATCLIFF BEAT VERBATIM, BUT ZIG ADDS THE BASS DRUM ON 2&4.

GROOVY LADY
MAIN GROOVE
97 BPM 3

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

NOW WE CAN MORPH THE RATCLIFF BEAT INTO "HEY POCKY WAY" BY TAING AWAY THE BACKBEAT ON 2&4, SLOWING THE BEAT DOWN A BIT, SWINGING IT A BIT AND MOVING THE HANDS FROM THE HI-HAT TO THE SNARE.

HEY POCKY
WAY 83
BPM 5

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

ONCE YOU GET COMFORTABLE WITH BEING ABLE TO PHRASE THIS RLRL BEAT IN BETWEEN STRAIGHT AND SWING, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO EASILY APPLY THIS FOUNDATION TO OTHER BEATS. HERE'S THE BEAT TO "FIRE ON THE BAYOU". HOPEFULLY YOU CAN START TO SEE HOW THIS BEAT IS RELATED TO THE RATCLIFF BEAT.

FIRE ON
THE BAYOU
97 BPM 7

R L R L R L R L R L R R R L R L R L R L R L R L R R R

NOW HERE'S THE BEAT TO "JUNGLE MAN". THE BASS DRUM PATTERN IS DIFFERENT. TO ME THIS BEAT APPEARS TO HAVE ITS ROOTS IN SMOKEY JOHNSON'S "IT AIN'T MY FAULT". CHECK THE TUNE OUT AND COMPARE. THERE IS NOW A LESSON IN THE WRITTEN LESSON SECTION ON "IT AIN'T MY FAULT". BUT YOU SHOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO SEE HOW THIS BEAT IS RELATED TO THE RATCLIFF.

JUNGLE MAN
MAIN GROOVE
 87 BPM

9 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

AND NOW FOR THE "PIECE DE RESISTANCE" (SAID WITH HEAVY FRENCH ACCENT). "CISSY STRUT" WAS MISUNDERSTOOD FOR YEARS. MANY PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS PLAYED WITH ALL RIGHT HAND ON THE HI-HAT. ZIG ACTUALLY PLAYS THIS BEAT WITH TWO HANDS ON THE HI-HAT AND THE FOUNDATION OF THIS BEAT IS THE RATCLIFF BEAT. HE JUST TOOK IT HOME, ADDED HIS ACCENTS, LEFT HIS SPACES AND PUT HIS OWN "ZIGABOO-NESS" ON IT AND CAME UP WITH "CISSY STRUT". ONCE YOU ARE COMFORTABLE WITH THE RATCLIFF AND HOW TO PHRASE IT, THIS BEAT SHOULD MAKE A LOT MORE SENSE.

CISSY STRUT
A SECTION
 88 BPM

11 L R R R L L R L/R L/R L R R R L L R L/R L/R

IT'S IMPORTANT TO PLAY ALL OF THESE WITH A FEEL THAT IS IN-BETWEEN THE CRACKS (IN-BETWEEN STRAIGHT AND SWING). PRACTICE THE IN-BETWEEN THE CRACKS EXERCISES IN "TAKE IT TO THE STREET" AND "GROOVE ALCHEMY" SO THAT YOU CAN ADJUST YOUR FEEL AS NEED BE.

MAKE A PLAYLIST OF THESE 5 SONGS AND LISTEN TO THEM ON REPEAT AND PLAY THEM SEVERAL TIMES A DAY UNTIL YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH EACH OF THEM. TRY TO MATCH YOUR IN-BETWEEN THE CRACKS PHRASING TO ZIGABOO'S PHRASING ON THE RECORDS.

FOR MORE ON ZIG AND TONS OF OTHER FUNK STUFF PLEASE CHECK OUT ZIG'S DVD "ZIGABOO MODELISTE: THE ORIGINATOR OF NEW ORLEANS FUNKY DRUMMING" AND MY "GROOVE ALCHEMY" BOOK AND DVD AS WELL.

HAPPY SHEDDING, STAY FUNKY AND HAVE FUN! SM