

History of the U.S. Beat Listening List 1904 - 1979

Here are some listening suggestions for each genre and period that I touched on in the program. These will get you started if you haven't investigated or heard the early years of a certain style. I generally like to hear the formative years of a music style before the genre becomes diluted and overly commercialized. Included are suggestions of individual recordings and selected compilations which I feel best represent a style. I'm also including listening suggestions for some other significant forms of US Music that we didn't have time to cover in the program.

— Have Fun, Steve

Artist's Name - Album Title - Drummer - Label - Recording Date

MARCHING BAND/RAGTIME (LATE 1800s-1917)

Various - Anthology of Jazz Drumming Vol. 1 1904-1928 - MJCD 804 (French label) 1904-1928

This collection includes examples of early marching and ragtime music as well as the early New Orleans styles. This series has fantastic liner notes by French drum historian Georges Paczynski. James I. Lent gives a great performance on the first track, the Ragtime Drummer, recorded in 1904. There are many other noteworthy performances that cover the early New Orleans drumming conception with Baby Dodds, Tony Sbarbaro, Zutty Singleton, etc.

James Reese Europe - James Reese Europe/featuring Nobel Sissle - IAJRC 1919

Europe led a very popular band in the early 1900s that played using the pre-swing, marching band/ragtime conception.

EARLY NEW ORLEANS JAZZ (1900-1930)

Various - Anthology of Jazz Drumming Vol. 2 - MJCD 805 (French label) Sept. 1928 - July 1935

This collection includes examples of early New Orleans playing and the beginning of Swing. Most of the early greats are on this collection: Paul Barbarin, Ray Bauduc, Sonny Greer, etc.

Various - The Engine Room - Various - Proper Records (English label) 1917-1948

An amazing four CD collection that covers early New Orleans jazz through Swing and Bebop featuring all of the greats, e.g., Dodds, Big Sid, Ray Bauduc, Krupa, Payne, Rich, Jo Jones, Manne, Lamond, Haynes, etc.

King Oliver - King Oliver's Jazz Band with Louis Armstrong - Baby Dodds - Jazz Archives no. 13 (French label) 1923

This recording is full of influential Baby Dodds performances.

Baby Dodds - Baby Dodds - American Music Records 1944

This is a classic recording of Baby Dodds in the studio playing solos and talking. His words of wisdom are profound and timeless. Also included is Baby performing with Bunk Johnson's Brass Band.

BIG BAND SWING (1930-1945)

Various - Anthology of Jazz Drumming Vol. 3 - MJCD 806 (French label) Feb. 1936-Nov. 1937

This collection includes excellent examples of Swing playing from the masters, e.g., Chick Webb, Gene Krupa, Cozy Cole, Dave Tough, etc.

Various - The Engine Room - Various - Proper Records (English label) 1917-1948

An amazing four CD collection the covers early New Orleans jazz through Swing and Bebop featuring all of the greats, e.g., Dodds, Big Sid, Ray Bauduc, Krupa, Payne, Rich, Jo Jones, Manne, Lamond, Haynes, etc.

Count Basie - Count Basie/Ken Burns Jazz - Jo Jones & Sonny Payne - Columbia 1932-1957

An excellent collection of Basie and the swinging drumming of Papa Jo Jones and Sonny Payne.

Benny Goodman - Benny Goodman and his Orchestra - Gene Krupa - Bluebird 1935-1938

Classic Swing recordings with Gene Krupa on drums.

BEBOP (1940s-1950s)

Various - BeBop Spoken Here - Various - Proper Records (English label) 1943-1949

A four CD set that is a very good history and overview of bebop with excellent liner notes. All of the main bebop drummers are included: Kenny Clarke, Max Roach, Shelly Manne, Joe Harris, Art Blakey, Shadow Wilson, Stan Levey, Roy Haynes, etc.

Buddy Rich/Max Roach - Rich vs. Roach - Buddy Rich/Max Roach - Mercury 1959

This is an essential recording for all drummers. Rich vs. Roach features two master drummers at the top of their game. One of the unique aspects of this session is you hear both drummers playing the arrangements, backing the soloists and then going head to head with "drum battles." Each drummer has a different playing conception so neither "wins." You'll hear monstrous chops from Buddy and beautifully lyrical phrasing from Max. I listened to and played along with this record hundreds of times during my early years, equally absorbing the influence of both drummers.

EARLY LATIN JAZZ (1930s-1940s)

Various - Cuban Latino Jazz 1930/1949 - Various- Jazz Archives (French label) 1930-1949

This collection documents US jazz artists like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie and others in the early years of experimenting with Cuban rhythmic influences. Some of the innovative drummers who first incorporated the "latin/jazz" ideas into their playing are on this set, e.g., Kenny Clarke, Buddy Rich, Dave Tough, etc.

HARDBOP (1950s)

The evolution of bebop takes us to two styles that are often referred to as "Hardbop" and "West Coast" or "Cool Jazz". They are extensions of bebop, but the hardbop grooves more and the cool jazz has a relaxed feel.

Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers - Moanin' - Art Blakey - Blue Note 1958

Miles Davis - Milestones - Philly Joe Jones - Columbia 1958

Moanin' and Milestones are classic examples of hardbop featuring some fantastic drumming by Art Blakey and Philly Joe Jones.

WEST COAST JAZZ (1950s)

Stan Getz - West Coast Jazz - Shelly Manne - Verve 1955

Art Pepper - Art Pepper Meets the Rhythm Section - Philly Joe Jones - Contemporary 1957

These recordings by Stan Getz and Art Pepper are essential examples of the so-called "West Coast Jazz" conception featuring swinging but very "cool" playing.

Cannonball Adderly - Somethin' Else - Art Blakey - Blue Note 1958

Miles Davis - Kind Of Blue - Jimmy Cobb - Columbia 1959

Somewhere between the styles of Hard Bop and West Coast Jazz lies Somethin' Else and Kind Of Blue — two indispensable classics. These two recordings are great to play along with to feel a strong swing pulse.

RHYTHM AND BLUES (1940-1954)

Various - The R & B Box - Various - Rhino Records 1943-1972

An important six CD collection featuring many foundational Rhythm and Blues artists and the drummers that played on their records: Panama Francis, Earl Palmer, Connie Kay, etc.

Various - Rock Before Elvis - Various - www.hoyhoy.com 1947-1953

For the diehard research enthusiast, go to www.hoyhoy.com and order Rock Before Elvis for an incredible overview of the years 1947-1953.

Wynonie Harris - Rockin' The Blues - Various - Proper Records 1945-1950

Rhythm and Blues artist, Wynonie Harris, helped set the stage for Rock 'n' Roll. This four CD set features the drumming of Panama Francis, Clarence Donaldson and others. For a single CD check out Bloodshot Eyes: The Best of Wynonie Harris on Rhino.

ROOTS STYLES

The US Roots Styles, Gospel, Blues and Country, started adding drums to their recordings in the late 1940s or early 1950s.

GOSPEL (1920s-1950s)

Various - Testify/The Gospel Box - Various - Rhino 1942-1996

Testify is a three CD box set providing an excellent overview of Gospel Music along with detailed historical liner notes.

Various - Jubilation/Vol. 1 (Black Gospel) - Various - Rhino 1937-1972

For a single CD overview of Gospel Music check out Jubilation Vol 1.

BLUES (Late 1800s-1960s)

Various - Blues Masters/The Essential Blues Collection - Various - Rhino 1927-1982

This great five CD set includes Jump Blues (which is basically Rhythm and Blues), Chicago Blues and Texas Blues. Many of the early blues session drummers are on this collection: Fred Below, Elgin Evans, Earl Phillips, S. P. Leary, Odie Payne, etc.

Muddy Waters - Muddy Waters/His Best, 1947-1955 - Various - MCA/Chess 1947-1955

This collection illustrates the development of blues recording from the pre-drumming era to the addition of the drumset. The primary early Chicago Blues drummers are on this collection: Fred Below, Elgin Evans, Francis Clay, etc.

COUNTRY (1930-1960s)

Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys - The Essential Bob Wills 1935-1947 - Various - Columbia 1935-1947

Bob Wills was the first Western Swing artist to add the drumset to his music. His first drummer, Smokey Dacus, who was a New Orleans style drummer, became the first "Country" drummer.

Various - Classic Country Music/A Smithsonian Collection Vol. 1-4 - Various - RCA 1955-1969

This is a consummate collection of Country Music featuring Buddy Harman on many of the tracks. Harman has distinguished himself as being the first Nashville Country Music session drummer. This series is available as separate discs or a box set.

BOOGIE WOOGIE (1920s-1940s)

Boogie Woogie piano playing is the instrumental foundation of early Rock 'n' Roll. In the 50s, some guitar players copied the "inbetween to straight 8th" rhythm of the boogie woogie piano players and by the mid-50's some drummers were also playing this rhythm. Eventually, this caused the popular drum beats to shift from swing rhythms to a more "straight 8th" feel.

Various - The Best of Boogie Woogie Vol. 2 - Various - Jazz Archives (French label) 1935-1942

This compilation offers incredible solo piano playing as well as exemplary band tracks during a time when many jazz groups added Boogie Woogie numbers to their repertoire. The drummers include Jo Jones, Ben Thigpen, Kenny Clarke, Zutty Singleton, Lee Young, etc.

ROCK 'N' ROLL (1954-1959)

Bill Haley and his Comets - From the Original Master Tapes - Various - MCA 1954-1956

This collection is a superb example of the early "swing feel" Rock 'n' Roll. Excellent performances from session drummer Billy Guesak as well as Comets "band" drummers Dick Richards and Ralph Jones.

Little Richard - The Georgia Peach - Various - Specialty 1955-1959

On The Georgia Peach, all the important Little Richard hits are included with drumming from session-master Earl Palmer and Richard's road drummer Charles Connor. You can hear the transition from swing-feel rock 'n' roll to the straight 8th feel in this collection. Little Richard was one of the primary Boogie Woogie piano players who influenced this rhythmic shift. Check out Earl Palmer on Lucille for one of the earliest examples of "straight 8th" rock 'n' roll drumming.

Elvis Presley - Elvis' Golden Records - D. J. Fontana - RCA 1956-1957

This is a fantastic collection that features Elvis' drummer, D. J. Fontana. Check out D. J. on Jailhouse Rock, one of the tunes that has a struggle going on between D. J.'s swing feel and guitarist Scotty Moore's straight 8ths.

Various - The Sun Story - Various - Rhino 1954-1959

This collection of early Rock 'n' Roll serves as a "greatest hits" record for Sun session drummer, J. M. Van Eaton, who plays on more than half of the 20 tunes. Check out Van Eaton's swingin' "inbetween" feel on Raunchy and his beat on Great Balls of Fire.

Various - Max Weinberg Presents: Let There Be Drums, Vol. 1 The 50s - Various - Rhino 1954-1961

Let There Be Drums is a "must have" collection of early rock 'n' roll drumming featuring Panama Francis, Cozy Cole, Earl Palmer, Jerry Allison, Fred Below, Sandy Nelson, etc.

Earl Palmer - Backbeat/The World's Greatest Rock 'n' Roll Drummer - Earl Palmer - Ace (English label) 1956-1959

I love this collection of groovin' Earl Palmer tracks taken from his numerous New Orleans and LA sessions. Some of the artists featured include Fats Domino, Etta James, Lloyd Price, Ritchie Valens, with Earl providing a rockin' beat for all of them.

ROCK (1960s)

The Beatles - Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band - Ringo Starr - EMI 1967

Ringo composes perfect drum parts on this and every Beatles record. His drums have a great sound and his feel has a strong swing factor. Many of the Beatles tunes are based on swing or shuffle feels. For instance, using Sgt. Pepper's as an example, there are four "swing" tunes: With A Little Help From My Friends, Getting Better, Fixing A Hole, and When I'm Sixty-Four.

Jimi Hendrix - Axis: Bold As Love - Mitch Mitchell - Reprise 1967

Axis: Bold As Love is my favorite Hendrix record. Mitch Mitchell sounds like a "jazz/rock" drummer playing some great compositional parts and improvising beautifully as he supports and interacts with Hendrix.

Cream - Wheels of Fire - Ginger Baker - PolyGram 1968

Ginger Baker plays unique parts with a deep groove and stretches out on the live performances on this half-studio, half-live double disc.

Led Zeppelin - Led Zeppelin - John Bonham - Atlantic 1968

The first Led Zeppelin record gives us a clear picture of Bonham's swing feel and blues drumming roots. Like many of the 1960's Rock drummers, Bonham plays a combination of innovative parts and great improvising.

JAZZ (1960s)

Miles Davis - Four & More - Tony Williams - Columbia 1964

Four & More is an amazing recording of young Tony Williams playing his new concept of jazz drumming. Tony had a profound influence on the world of jazz drumming with his loose, musical, and virtuosic approach. I played along with this record hundreds of times when I was a student at Berklee. This record is now available as The Complete Concert 1964/My Funny Valentine + Four & More.

John Coltrane - A Love Supreme - Elvin Jones - MCA Impulse 1964

This is a landmark recording in US Music history and an incredible example of Elvin Jones' unique and influential drumming.

Miles Davis - Miles Smiles - Tony Williams - Columbia 1966

After a couple of years of playing with Miles, Tony's ideas mature. Using over the barline phrasing, bursts of colors, use of the hi hat as another voice, Miles Smiles truly distinguishes Tony as a "master at work."

FUNK (1970s)

James Brown - Star Time - Various - Polydor 1956-1984

A comprehensive collection of 71 James Brown tunes on four discs. (For a single disc collection check out James Brown 20 All Time Greatest Hits!) All of Brown's drummers are on this set, from Nat Kendrick, Clayton Fillyau, Melvin Parker, to "Jabo" Starks, Clyde Stubblefield and many more.

The Meters - Funkify Your Life/The Meters Anthology - Zigaboo Modeliste - Rhino 1969-1977

Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste is required listening if you want to hear some serious funk drumming and this Meters Anthology is a great collection.

Aretha Franklin - Young, Gifted and Black - Bernard Purdie/Al Jackson - Atlantic 1971

This is a soul/funk classic with deep pocket drumming from Bernard Purdie, Al Jackson and Ray Lucas.

JAZZ/ROCK (Mid 1960s-1970s)

Steve Marcus - Count's Rock Band - Bob Moses - Collectables 1969

Steve Marcus, who plays sax in this program, was one of the first jazz/rock pioneers. Through his work with musicians like Larry Coryell, Herbie Mann, and Gary Burton, Marcus helped blaze a trail that many would soon follow. Bob Moses plays drums on this record and you can get a sense of early jazz/rock, which in this case, sounds like Coltrane meets Hendrix.

Tony Williams - Emergency! - Tony Williams - Verve 1969

This could be considered the first "fusion" recording — a true blend of jazz virtuosity and improvisation combined with the energy and sound of rock. Emergency! features John McLaughlin on guitar and Larry Young on Hammond B3. Also check out their second record, Turn It Over, which included Cream's bassist Jack Bruce on a couple of tunes.

Mahavishnu Orchestra - The Inner Mounting Flame - Billy Cobham - Columbia 1971

Billy Cobham became the most influential drummer in the world shortly after the release of this record and their 1973 follow-up, Birds of Fire. Billy's powerful combination of a highly developed matched-grip technique and his double bass drum/multi-tom set-up, with innovations like left handed ride, the "upside-down" china cymbal and blazingly fast "roundhouse" fills left the drumming world — in every genre — forever changed.

Return To Forever feat. Chick Corea - Hymn Of The Seventh Galaxy - Lenny White - Polydor 1973

Lenny White is burning on this early fusion landmark recording. His approach is loose and funky with over-the-top chops.

Herbie Hancock - Thrust - Mike Clark - Columbia 1974

The funkier jazz/funk ever recorded. Mike Clark is brilliant on this classic recording, mixing jazz and funk in a way that has never been matched.

Mahavishnu Orchestra - Visions of the Emerald Beyond - Narada Michael Walden - Columbia 1975

This has been a particularly influential recording for me. I love the way Narada plays on this record and have modeled much of my rock and jazz/rock playing on Narada's concept of funk/rock/fusion playing.

Tony Williams Lifetime - Believe It - Tony Williams - Columbia 1976

Believe It is the classic Tony Williams rock/jazz recording which was supremely influential to me and many other drummers from my generation. This is now available in a single CD package called Tony Williams Lifetime/The Collection, which is a combination of Believe It and the follow-up recording, Million Dollar Legs.

John Abercrombie - Timeless - Jack De Johnette - ECM 1977

Timeless features a well matched trio of John Abercrombie on guitar, Jan Hammer on Hammond B3 and Jack DeJohnette on drums. I have been highly influenced by Jack's playing on this record and I love the concept of the group. They play "JAZZ/rock," with the emphasis on the jazz — a very unique recording.

Brecker Brothers - Heavy Metal Bebop - Terry Bozzio - Arista - 1978

Before Terry Bozzio reinvented himself as a "solo drummer" he had already created much of the double bass drum vocabulary and playing concepts that many contemporary players are now using. To me his double bass drumming was an extension of the work of Ginger Baker, Billy Cobham and Narada Michael Walden, but he took it even further than they did. This live record features some of Terry's best playing and it influenced my double bass playing.

Steps - Smokin' In The Pit - Steve Gadd - NYC 1979

After Billy Cobham, the next most influential drummer on the scene was Steve Gadd and Smokin' In The Pit is a great example of why. His "studio perfect" playing, with superhuman time, chops, groove, and execution was a revelation to drummers in the 70s and early 80s.