

# **INSIDE BUDDY RICH**

**by Jim Nesbitt  
in collaboration  
with Buddy Rich**

A study of the master  
drummer's style and technique.  
With detailed, annotated  
transcripts of his recorded  
works, including the 1966  
WEST SIDE STORY solo and  
other solos, breaks and fills.

**U.S. \$15.00**

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## INTRODUCTION

This book is meant to be a celebration of Buddy Rich. If it helps you learn anything from him, beautiful; you're celebrating too.

There's only one rule: Be Yourself. This means primarily that you should have fun and use your imagination to create what you can out of what you find. It also means don't try to just copy, because you'll only waste your own soul and maybe hurt yourself physically besides.

Remember these are improvisations -- Buddy didn't get them out of a book. Think of them as outpourings of emotion.

The book tries to get inside Buddy to see how his motors run. It's scary in there, but not as scary as what's happening outside with his hands and feet. What's happening outside is driven by what's happening inside, so inside is where you try to look. To use a phrase of Buddy's, it's "where all the hatchin' starts."

Study rhythmic structure and dynamics first; find different ways of thinking and apply them to your own playing. If you improve, you will have done it yourself, from within. Zen Buddy Rich.

## TRANSCRIPTS/RECORDINGS

The transcripts are detailed in hopes of conveying something of Buddy's spirit, for the aid especially of those without the recordings. If you have the recordings, by all means use them; they are far and away the best way to enjoy the book. There's a list at the back.

## INTERVIEW

The bold italicized comments in the book are Buddy's, made during conversations at Disneyland in September 1983. There's no claim to exclusivity; he has made most of the same points, in one form or another, to other interviewers.

## POST-OP

Buddy has always said that he has strong recuperative powers, and they were never more evident than in 1983. In February he collapsed on tour and underwent quadruple heart bypass surgery at the university hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Recovery was at first slow and painful, and he says he wondered if he'd be able to play again.

But eight weeks to the day after the operation, he opened in London, playing better than ever. He brought the band along, too; kicked it mightily, raised its fervor a few notches and had himself a whole mess of great shouting.

In September 1983, the band played Disneyland, where Buddy graciously consented to the private taping, transcribing and publication of his performances during those nights. The transcripts, slugged "Post-Op," are here and there in the book, but mostly toward the back. They show a small part of what he did.

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Q. What do you want to be in your next life?

Buddy: *I want to come back as Bruce Lee.*

# I. Elements of Buddy's Style and Technique

## The Dotted-Quarter

The dotted-quarter (♩. = ♪♪) lies at the heart of Buddy's playing. It's just about everywhere, forming the basis for accents and patterns.

With a foot ...



With the hands ...



Together ...



Syncopated ...

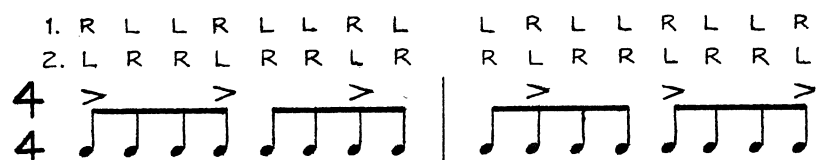


... and so on, in endless variations.

It's a natural way for the hands to play. With alternating strokes (also called hand to hand), they get equal action, sharing accents and softer strokes in between ...



It's also natural with one hand taking all the accents and the other tapping in between ...



Natural is not thinking about the strokes in between. Just let them happen. Think about the accents, the count, whatever.