

TUTORIAL #6: IT'S ALL ABOUT RHYTHM

When we consider that there can be no heartbeat without rhythm, no breath without rhythm, no dance without rhythm, no music without rhythm, then why is rhythm the most neglected and misunderstood aspect of most musicians' vocabulary and music and dance institutions?

I am continually confronted by musicians with heavy duty degrees whose rhythmic vocabulary is shocking. Granted they can play any be-bop head put before them, but their ability to develop solo lines of quality and rhythmic impact are seldom realized. Instead they produce long and boring horizontal lines which represent nothing more than running the changes. It is time for teachers and institutions to realize that rhythm is the foundation of all music and dance. Unfortunately, these music departments seem more interested in how many substitutions they can bring to a given chord.

Those in positions of influence must wake up, for their students are being sadly misguided by their misplacement of priorities. When you listen to the works of *Bird* and *Leonard Bernstein*, or view the dance of *Bo-Jangles* or *Fred Astaire*, can there be any doubt about the importance of rhythm?

JB