

# Deep Listening



“Become the drummer that other musicians want to play with.”

We all get inspiration from the drummers that influence us. When you think about your favorite songs though, I’m sure you love more than just the drum part. It could be the guitar riff, the vocal melody, or the meaningful lyrics that moves you on some level.

Along with analyzing other drummer’s parts, analyzing what the other musicians are doing in songs will help you to become a more musical drummer. Here is how I suggest you go about doing that.

Take a song that you want to analyze and listen to it **multiple times**, each time making notes on a specific instrument, its **sound**, and **how it interacts with the other instruments**. I recommend listening through headphones to really hear what’s going on. It’s okay if you don’t play any of these instruments or know much about them.

Let’s start by identifying the main instruments or elements in the song. For example, bass drums, keyboards, guitars, vocals, background vocals, and additional percussion. Each song can have its own instrumentation. You can do these in any order. Listen for specific things for each instrument. Some suggestions would be...

- \* For the drums, how do they sound, punchy and in your face or smooth and “airy”? Are the drums played behind the beat? Are they loose or tight rhythmically?
- \* For the bass guitar, how is it locking in with drums? Is the bass rhythm steady or melodic?
- \* For the guitars, are there distinguishable rhythm and lead guitars, Are the tones clean or distorted? Are the riffs choppy or do they flow together?
- \* For the vocals, are they clean or gritty? Does the melody soar in pitch or are parts of the song more monotone? When do the background vocals come in?
- \* For the additional percussion, where are they in the mix, upfront or less noticeable? Where are they panned in the stereo field?

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These are basic tonal and rhythmic questions but make note of anything that you notice about each instrument. If you know your music theory, you can also add specific scales and harmonies used. Do this with popular and not so popular songs in different styles, even ones you wouldn't normally listen to.

Put your self in each player's shoes as if you were playing that instrument. This will give you a fresh perspective on what other players need from a drummer. Doing this exercise will give you a deeper appreciation of the song the next time you hear it and having this musical awareness will help you **become the drummer that other musicians want to play with.**

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