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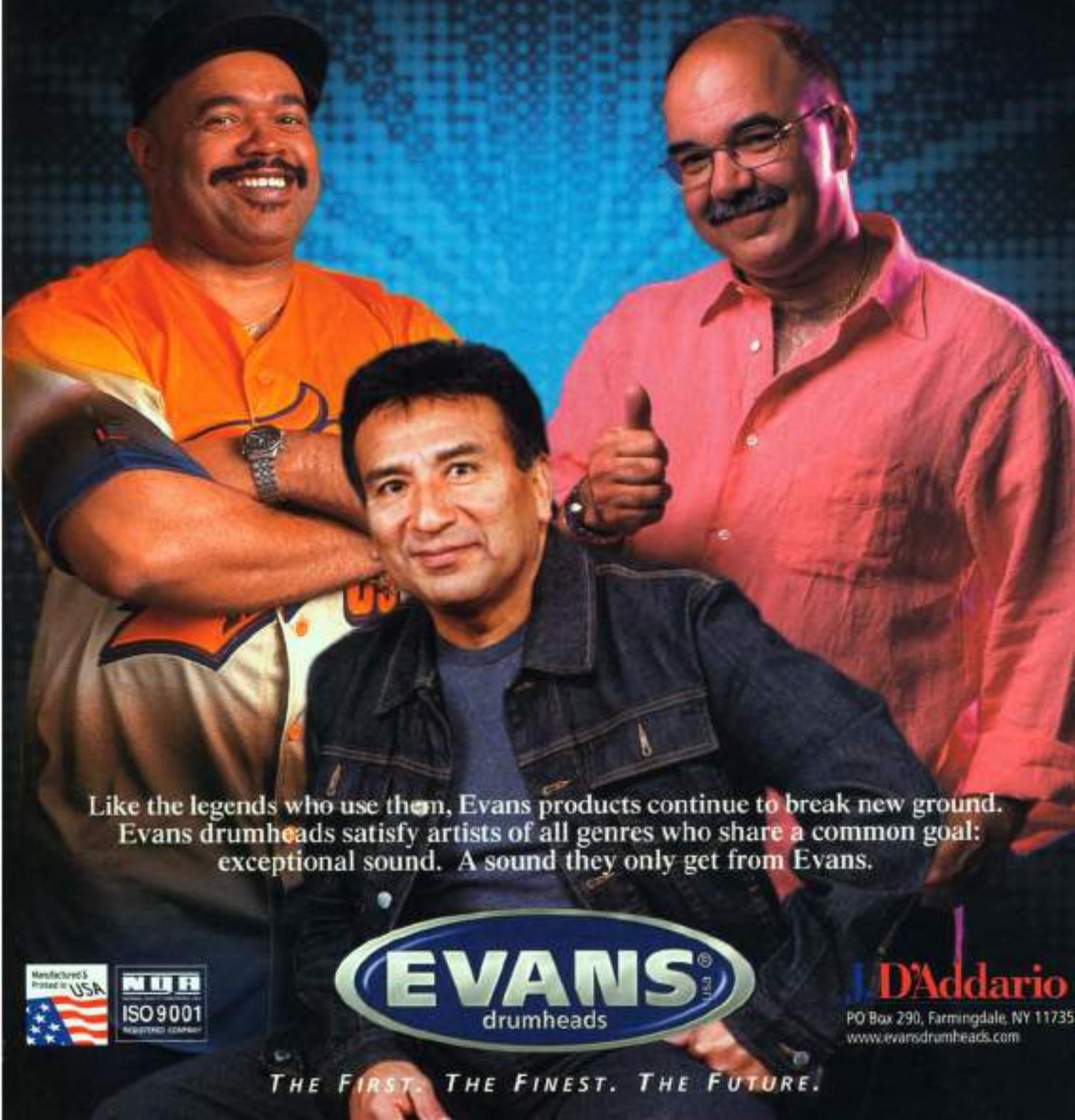
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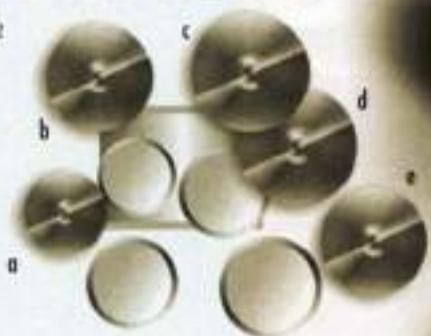
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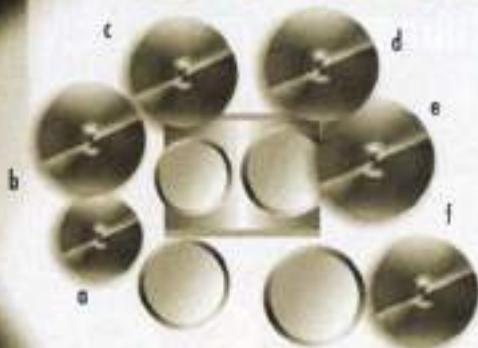
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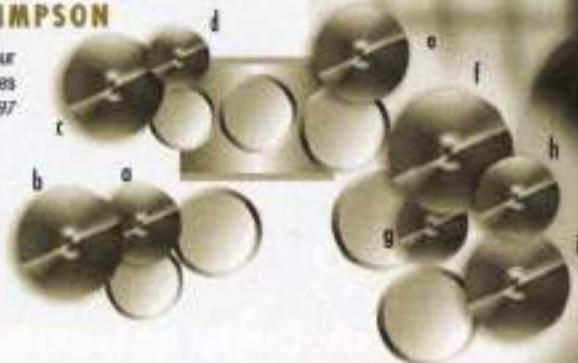
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More On Automatic Renewal

Back in November of last year, I spoke in depth in this column on the subject of automatic renewal for *Modern Drummer* subscribers. I also requested that readers drop me a note with their thoughts on the matter. After that editorial appeared, I was *bombarded* with emails from subscribers overwhelmingly in favor of the automatic renewal system. For those who may have missed my initial remarks, let me again explain how it works.

Simply put, rather than receiving an extensive series of renewal notices to remind you that your subscription is about to expire, your subscription would *automatically continue*, unless, of course, you choose to cancel it. You would be given no less than thirty days' advance notice that your subscription is up for renewal, and the option to renew or cancel would be offered at that time. Should you decide to renew, you'd be sent a bill, and upon payment, your subscription would continue uninterrupted. Should you decide to cancel, no further bills would be sent, and your request would be promptly honored. It's as simple as that.

Automatic renewal is beneficial for us at *MD*, and for you as well. It's expensive for us to design, print, and mail out a series of up to five renewal notices to thousands of subscribers. This money could better be used to expand the magazine's size, quality, and editorial coverage. From a subscriber's viewpoint, the annoyance of repetitive renewal notices, duplicate reminders, phone calls, and the confusion of payments crossing in the mail could all be eliminated. The entire process would become more cost-effective, and much more efficient for everyone.

Though an increasing number of publications are gradually converting to automatic renewal due to its obvious efficiency, we're also aware that many subscribers may not wish to make the conversion. Therefore, automatic renewal will be offered as an *option* only. In essence, it's your choice. Look for an announcement of our new "Preferred Subscriber Service" option on the next renewal notice you receive. If you wish to take advantage of the program, simply agree to the offer on the notice provided, and drop it in the mail. We'll handle the rest.

My thanks to all of you who wrote in favor of the automatic renewal system. We think it will make life simpler for everyone, and we're hopeful that many of you will choose to take advantage of it.

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SCOTT PHILLIPS



I've been reading *MD* since its beginning, and have been a subscriber most of that time. I enjoy your magazine's fresh and innovative approach to the instrument, the industry, and

the artists. I hope you will receive the following comments with an open mind.

In reference to your recent article on Scott Phillips: I believe you have done your readers an injustice. NBC news recently had music critics on their morning show praising Creed (Scott's band) as very special because they are a Christian band. The first page of your article on Scott mentions the band's many successes, but blatantly leaves out this very important fact about the group.

Isn't there enough liberalism in our media? The interview never gives Phillips the chance to discuss the band's message or to embark even lightly on his own personal views on the topic. I believe (especially in light of the events of Sept. 11, as Ron Spagnardi's own editorial page makes clear) that your readers deserve and need to hear about groups like Creed who offer hope, love, and (dare I say) the gospel to their listeners.

Eric Stretz
via Internet

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Your Web site *rules*. To be able to hear and download music (for free!) featuring drummers that we read about, and to have mp3s that go along with the lessons in *MD*, is awesome. You have given drummers around the world a way to really grasp what we're reading about in the magazine, in order to improve our drumming and musical knowledge. Thanks for being such an instructive and inspirational organization.

Casey Anderson
Mt. Hood, OR

RECYCLING TIP

I was happy to see the subject of recycling drumheads addressed in the February 2002 issue. While it is unfortunate that recyclable drumheads do not exist (yet), the editors did a fine job of suggesting ways to

reuse old heads. I'm happy to say that the column inspired me to discover a way to not only reuse old heads, but also to silence my kit at the same time.

I took my set of old heads and traced their outline onto some scrap carpet foam (the multi-colored foam you find under wall-to-wall carpeting). It's easy to come by and very cheap. I cut out the foam circles with scissors and used a glue gun to permanently fix the foam circles onto the old heads. I even cut out a few triangles and threaded them to lay across my cymbals and between my hi-hats. Now it is a simple matter of changing my batter heads if I need to practice at home in my tiny apartment. Best of all, I silenced my entire kit for under five dollars!

Kevin Still
via Internet

SCARY COVERS

I'm writing to let you know why I won't be renewing my subscription to *MD*. I've learned a great deal about drumming from your magazine, and I've appreciated the stories about how many drummers "made it." I've learned who to listen to for inspiration and instruction. I own many CDs and videos that you recommended, and I thank you.

However, it has been on my conscience a lot lately that I should not be bringing evil influences into our home. The cover of your January issue with the drummer of Slipknot was just that. My wife alerted me to get rid of it because it would scare our baby daughter. The pentagram shown recently on the front of the Anthrax drummer's bass drum is a symbol for Satan worship. And Blink-182's drummer, whom you covered a few issues back, is in a band that has taught teens everywhere that running around naked is cool.

You don't need to sell out to cover what is popular. Good drumming will sell itself. My young students watch my Louie



Bellson videos over and over, as though each time was their first.

It hurts to say goodbye, but I'm disappointed that my favorite magazine would scare my daughter. It's my conviction that I shouldn't have anything in my home that I would have to hide from my family.

John Broderick Jr.
Dalton, MA

The fact that there is life—and perhaps even talent—behind Joey Jordison's mask doesn't change the gruesome reality of the picture staring back at me. I am not suggesting that you should leave Joey—or any other deserving drummer—out of the spotlight he or she may deserve. But how about a picture of Joey's *real* face if you *must* feature him on the cover. The makeup and masks may add to Slipknot's live show or give personality to the band, but it is not essential to the music. *MD* is a publication about drums and the art of drumming—not image. At least give us a break on the images of death, when all we want to do is to read about our passion.

Matt Derry
Cleveland, OH

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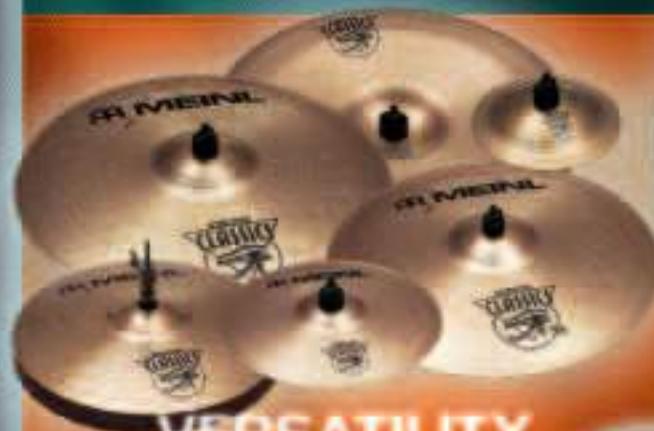
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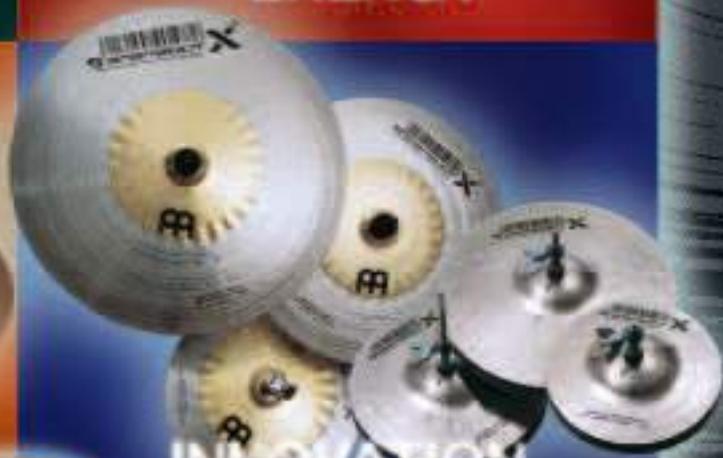
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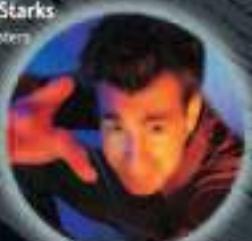
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Peter Erskine On Timekeeping

Q Am I imagining it, or do drummers get blamed for everything from speeding up songs to playing too loud? Do you feel it is the sole responsibility of the drummer to maintain the meter? I've been thrown out of a lot of bands, supposedly for slowing down and/or speeding up songs. Yet when I have fellow musicians in the audience listen, they say that the meter sounds fine! This is driving me insane. I've spent years practicing to a metronome. Do you think that this can have an adverse effect on my meter...by my becoming a "slave" to it?

Also, I have problems with volume. I'm currently playing in a band that covers Aerosmith, Jimi Hendrix, and Creed tunes. We can't play very loud because we play in a small bar with a small audience. I've been drumming for thirty years, and I still can't figure out how to play these songs with feeling and energy at low volume levels. I end up having to use pencil-thin sticks and muffling my drums so much that they sound more like boxes. Any ideas?

Glen Hanseler
via Internet



Heinz Kronberger

A Your question reminds me of the old joke: "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean that some people don't like you." Having said that, I'll do my best to answer your question—with the caveat that, not having heard you play, I cannot accurately gauge what's going on in the rhythm section of your band.

I don't believe that drummers "get blamed for everything from speeding up to playing too loud," though we might receive our fair share of blame or credit for any number of musical (or non-musical) occurrences. But the drums *are* at the core and heart of any band's rhythmic and dynamic structure. So, whether or not the drummer might be the "culprit," he or she *can* effectively steer or "police" the music towards its "right" place.

Every musician in a band *must* be responsible for playing in time (and in tune). And *every* musician must learn how to play effectively in an ensemble. The best way to accomplish this is to *listen* while playing (as opposed to concentrating only on one's own musical challenges). Concentration is vital. And, certainly, training to the accompaniment of a metronome is a very good idea.

The only way you can accurately determine whether or not the other musicians you're working with have a valid complaint about your time is to tape-record rehearsals, gigs, and concerts, and then

listen back to the tape. If you're speeding up, you'll hear it. Likewise, if you're playing too loud, the tape won't lie. You can then make the appropriate adjustments. Musicians who work in studios do this all the time. It's a good idea for "live" musicians to record themselves and pay attention to the results as well. If you hear that the problem lies elsewhere in the band, try a friendly get-together with those players. Listen to the tape, and discuss (in a non-challenging way) the best solution to the problem. Keep in mind that no one plays "bad" on purpose, and that we all have tendencies to speed up or slow down, because we're human.

Your question is timely, in that I'm currently working on a book called *Time Awareness For All Musicians* (to be published by Alfred Music at the end of this year). Much of the book details the musical thought processes that most drummers employ to effectively play or honor the space between the notes of a tune. It's an attempt to put one's finger on that ephemeral and elusive thing known as "feel." In short, I can advise you: Use your ears as much as your feet and hands, and you should be in good shape.

Concerning part 2 of your question: I'm not sure *what* the answer is regarding the best possible way to play "cocktail versions" of Aerosmith tunes. A smaller drumkit (with smaller cymbals?) might help. Or you could go the "Unplugged" route and play with a stick replacement like multi-rods, Blastix, or Rüte sticks. Maybe some music was just meant to be played loudly. And maybe, just maybe, some music was meant to be played softly, too. Good luck, and have fun.

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Aaron Comess' Cracking Snare



Q I'm a huge fan of Spin Doctors' music, and particularly of your drumming. I was wondering how you got the "crack" in your snare sound on every second beat "2" on the song "Two Princes"? It sounds like it could have been a triggered sample or some other special effect. Thanks for the inspiration.

Peter Dent (New Zealand Army Band)
via Internet

A Your kind words are much appreciated. The "crack" in "Two Princes" was a combination of a couple things. I played a Brady piccolo snare drum with a coated Remo Ambassador head tuned tightly. We also compressed it going to tape, which brought out the "crack" a bit. The main thing is the way I struck the drum, hitting the rim as well as the center of the drum on every back-beat. This technique really makes the snare drum *pop*.

Repeat Bar

A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"For a period of time I was an engineer in a studio. I learned that, sure, you can fix stuff and make something work for the general listener's ears. But drumming that's really *musical* goes way beyond that."

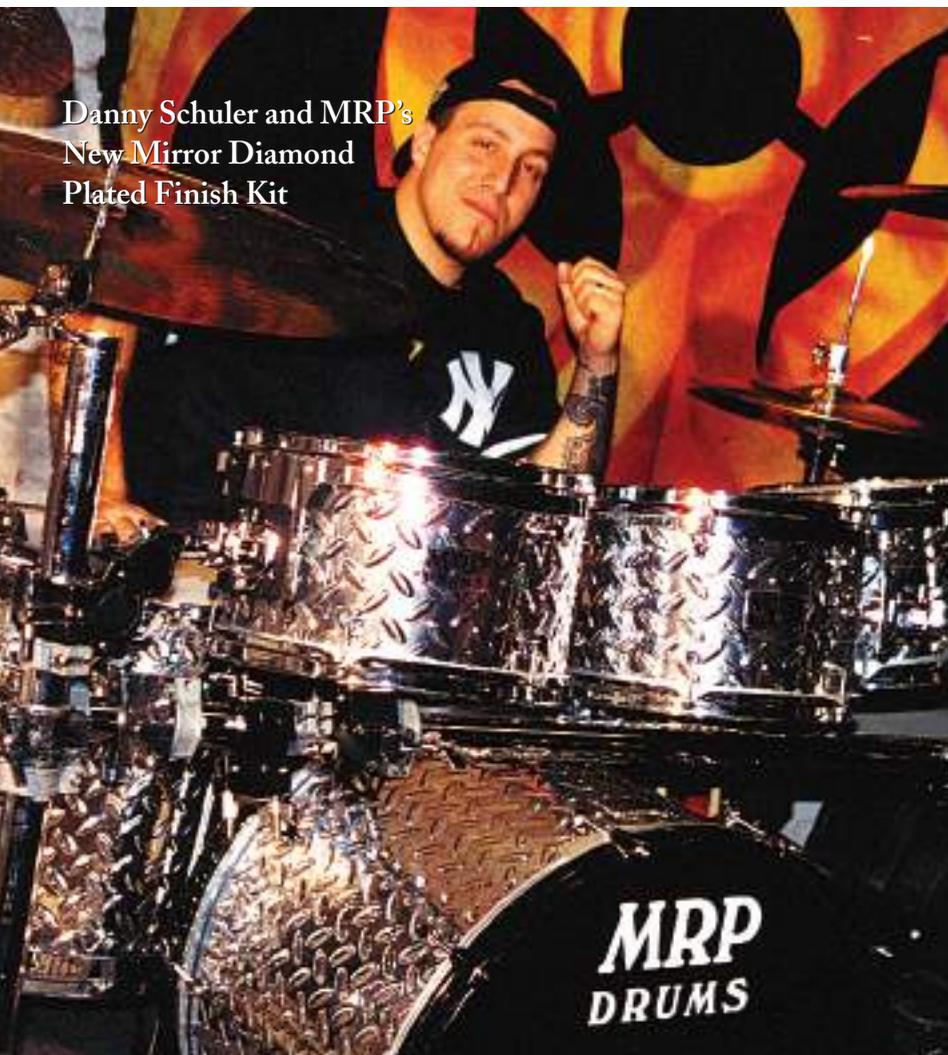
Better Than Ezra's **Travis McNabb**, April 1999



Would you like to ask your favorite drummer a question? Send it to Ask A Pro, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Or you may email rvh@moderndrummer.com. We will do our best to pursue every inquiry.



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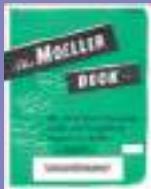
WWW.VICFIRTH.COM

The Moeller Book

Q John Riley's March feature on the Moeller stroke piqued my interest in this technique. But I can't find Sanford Moeller's book in any music store. Can you tell me who publishes it?

Guy Stevens
via Internet

A The Moeller book is published by Ludwig Music Publishing, 557-67 East 140th Street, Cleveland, OH 44110.



Yamaha Drumkit Care

Q I recently purchased a custom Yamaha kit: 22" Maple Custom Absolute bass drum, 10", 12", 16" Birch Custom Absolute toms, and a 14" Anton Fig signature snare drum with wood hoops. The drums have been from the East Coast to the Rocky Mountains...from humid, summer air to cold, dry winter air. After just a few months, the metal rims on the toms and the wood rim on the snare drum are not as symmetrical as they were when I bought them. The drums have not taken any falls (I have nice padded cases, anyway), nor do I hit rimshots. I gig a lot in a variety of situations, so the drums are required to be in all sorts of weather. Are they becoming warped, or is it natural for the rims to change over time? What can I do to keep these beautiful drums from warping or getting ruined?

Ryan Sapp
Boulder, CO

A We referred your question to Yamaha drum product manager Dave Jewell. He replies, "First of all, thank you for purchasing Yamaha drums. You can expect years of enjoyment with them. But first you have to take some necessary steps to make sure they'll last a lifetime.

"Wood is an organic material that expands and contracts with climate and humidity changes. The Air-Seal System we use to make our shells greatly reduces their sensitivity to such changes, and we do warranty your shells from

going out of round for a period of three years. However, you still need to take as much care as possible when traveling in different climates. The best thing you can do is allow the drums to adjust gradually to temperature changes. For example, don't take them out of a cold vehicle and immediately set them up on stage in a warm environment. Let them sit in the bags for a while in the new room, to let them 'warm up' more slowly.

"Also, with as much traveling as you seem to be doing, I suggest that you invest in hard cases. You may never have dropped your drums, but you can't guarantee that nothing can happen to them when they're traveling from town to town in the back of a van.

"Finally, while you may not hit rimshots on your toms, I find it hard to believe that you don't hit any on your snare drum. The 19-ply maple hoops on the Anton Fig snare drums are designed to take rimshots. (Just watch Anton on *Late Night* sometime and you will see.) If your hoop is going out of round, its more likely attributable to the climate changes than to rimshots. However, we do offer a six-month warranty on these hoops, as well as a one-year warranty on the metal Dynahoops that are on your toms. If you feel these have gone out of round, please contact the authorized Yamaha drum dealer that you purchased the drums from and we'll do everything we can to take care of these drums for you."

Swapping Pedal Drive Systems

Q I recently purchased a Pearl Eliminator P-2002C chain-drive double pedal. I enjoy the pedal a lot, mainly because of how easy it is to change cam configurations. But I'd like to be able to swap the chain drive for a belt drive (which Pearl makes for the P-2002B pedal). I have searched countless Web sites, including Pearl's own, and I have not been able to figure out for sure if this is an item I can purchase separately or not. Can you provide any information?

Jason Fritz
via Internet

A According to Pearl product specialist Gene Okamoto, the Eliminator pedal can be converted from chain drive to belt drive by simply substituting the BCA-1 belt for the chain. Included with the belt is a longer keybolt that you'll need to use. Conversely, a belt-drive Eliminator can be converted to chain drive by purchasing the CCA-5 chain (which comes with a shorter keybolt). Either parts package can be purchased through any authorized Pearl dealer.

Old Ludwig Drumheads

Q I recently found some great drumheads in a friend's music/junk shop. They're from at least as far back as 1970, and he only had two heads: both 16". The box says they're "Ludwig Weather Master CT-Batter, db-750 weight medium." When

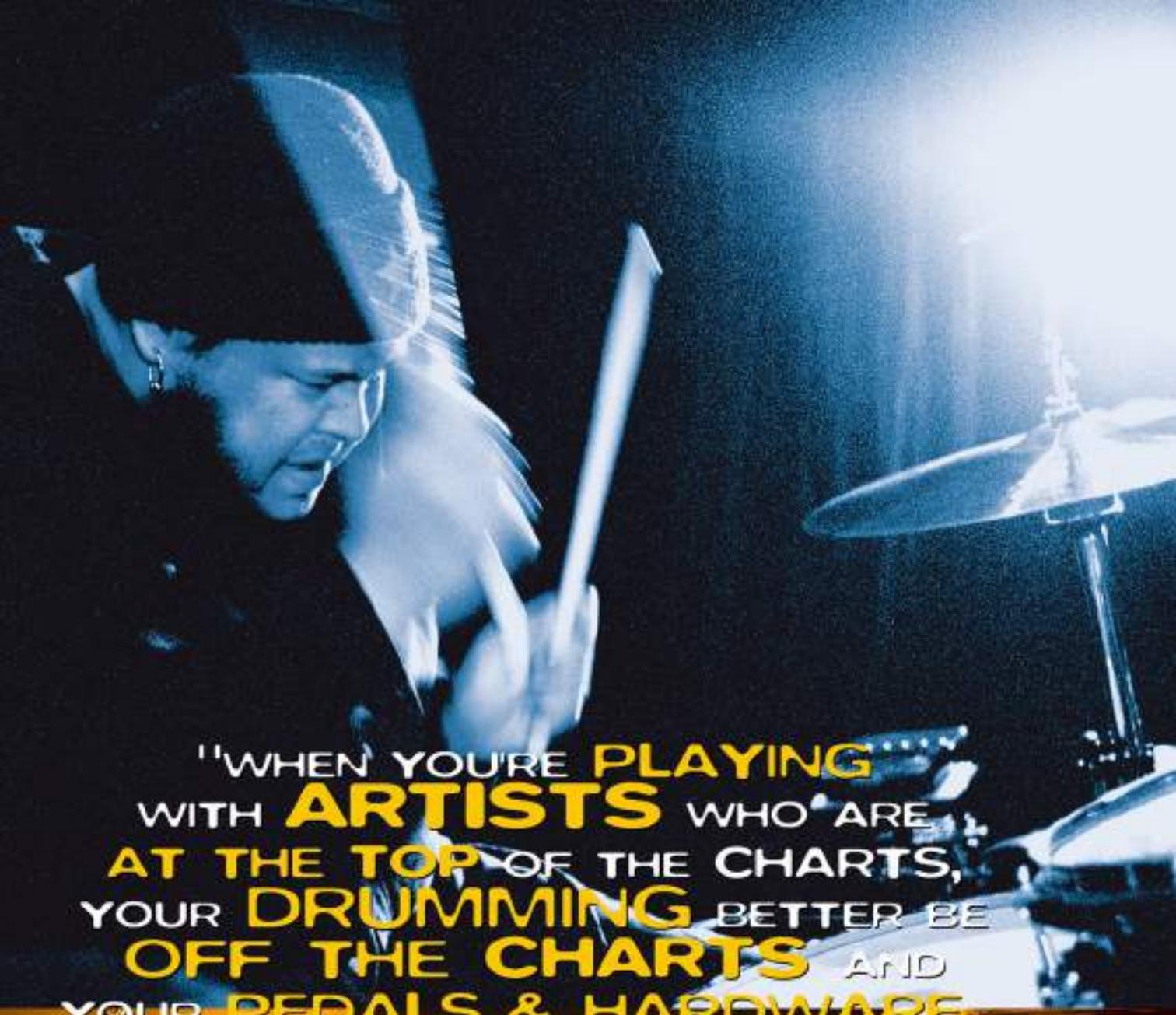
Al Foster's Ride

Q My favorite drummer, Al Foster, played a Paiste cymbal in the mid-1970s to late '90s that had one rivet and sounded just like my Paiste 22" Sound Creation Dark ride. Is this the cymbal he played? Of course, it is always the player, not the equipment. But I just have to know!

Tom Killian
via Internet

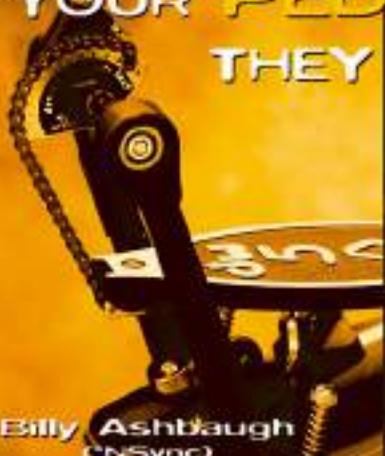
A According to Paiste artist relations director Rich Mangicaro, you are correct: That *was* the cymbal.





"WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING
WITH **ARTISTS** WHO ARE
AT THE TOP OF THE CHARTS,
YOUR **DRUMMING** BETTER BE
OFF THE CHARTS AND
YOUR **PEDALS & HARDWARE...**
THEY BETTER BE **DW.**"

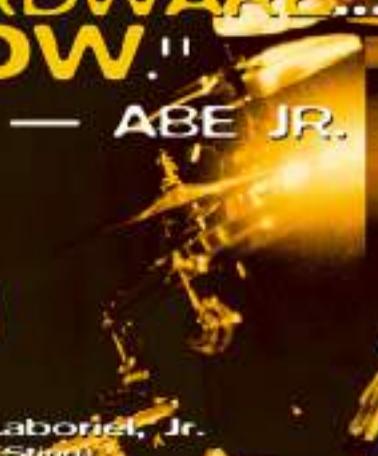
— ABE JR.



Billy Ashbaugh
(NSync)



Kerry Griffin
(Mandy Moore)



Abe Laboriel, Jr.
(Santitas)

Carter Beauford
(Dave Matthews Band)

Nigel Olsson
(Elton John)

Steve Sidelnik
(Madonna)

Jim Bogios*
(Sheryl Crow)

Adrian Passarelli
(Nelly Furtado)

Adrian Young*
(No Doubt)

*pedals only

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dw

I put these heads on my floor tom, I *loved* the sound. Is there any place I can find heads from this series in other sizes?

Charlie
via Internet

A Ludwig marketing manager Jim Catalano replies, "The Ludwig Weather Master Heads from the late 1960s or early '70s were made of a material called thermo-

lene plastic. The description in the catalog from 1971 reads as follows: 'db-750A medium multi-purpose weight, milk white, sensitive head, designed for use as a batter head only. Ideal for concert. The playing surface is coated with Ludwig's formula Ruff Kote finish.'

"Heads marked as CT batter are more for toms. Those heads were discontinued long

ago. The equivalent Ludwig Weather Master heads today are the medium coated batters. These are 7-mil single-ply heads made in our Monroe, North Carolina factory. The 14" rough white coated model number would be L3314. The smooth white version would be model number L3214. These are standard production heads available at any Ludwig dealer. The heads feature the patented Headlock system, which mechanically locks the Mylar head material into the aluminum retaining hoop."

Bass Drum-To-Floor Tom Conversion

Q There are lots of conversion devices on the market today to turn a floor tom into a jazz-size bass drum. But someone told me that you could convert a standard-size bass drum into a really loud floor tom if you wanted. How could *that* be done?

Matt Kreutz
via Internet

A A bass drum can be turned into a floor tom simply by installing floor-tom-style leg brackets on the side of the shell, so that the drum can be inverted to stand like a floor tom. If the drum is 20" or smaller in diameter, it may be possible to exchange the wood hoops for metal drum rims (as used on normal toms). Otherwise, you'll probably need to put spacers between the leg brackets and the shell in order for the legs to "clear" the thicker wooden bass drum hoops. Depending on the diameter and overall weight of the drum, you may need to use four legs instead of the traditional three of a floor tom.

Jimmy Chamberlin's kit includes an 18x20 bass drum inverted for use as a floor tom.



Gene Ambo

"On The Road Again" with the Willie Nelson Family



Photo by Danny Clinch

Billy & Paul English of the Willie Nelson & Family Band and many others are rediscovering the joy of playing authentic Istanbul Agop handmade cymbals from turkey.

istanbul
Agop Handmade cymbals from Turkey.

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"Bags are what you carry your groceries home in, Protection Racket make cases and they don't come any better than this!"

Jason Bowld
(Pitchshifter)



PROTECTION RACKET

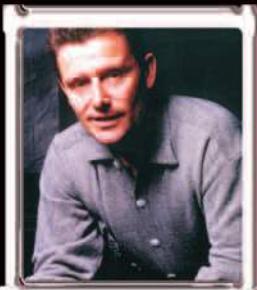
DRUM CASES

Nic France
(Annie Lennox)



" I joined Protection Racket back in 94. Numerous Tours & clinics have been & gone, and my cases are still going strong, they have never let me down!"

Carl Palmer
(E.L.P/Asia)



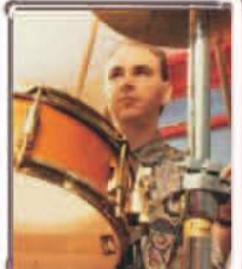
RHYTHM READERS AWARDS

BEST DRUM CASES

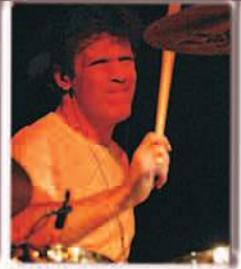
1 PROTECTION RACKET

Tough, lightweight & supremely pleasing to the eye, Protection Racket's excellent range of drum cases continue with the favour of the rhythm reader at large. Versatile & convenient, Protection Racket cases are what the best drummers want in every right case.

2. HARDCASE 3. LE BLOND



Chuck Sabo
(Natalie Imbruglia)



Gary Husband
(Independent)

Charlie Morgan
(Elton John)

Derrick McKenzie
(Jamiroquai)

Neal Wilkinson
(Independent)

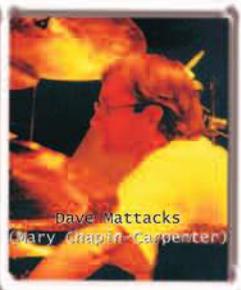
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Feel safe in the knowledge that when you purchase Protection Racket drum cases you join a list of some of the worlds leading drummers who have also chosen Protection Racket products.

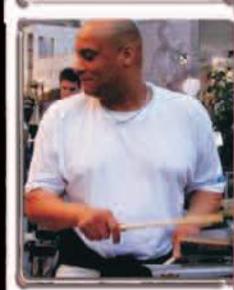
Geoff Dugmore
(Dido)



Mel Gaynor
(Simple Minds)



Dave Mattacks
(Mary Chapin-Carpenter)



design quality reliability choice confidence
NOTHING COMES CLOSE



Marko Djordjevic

Yugoslav Folk & Fusion

Marko Djordjevic brought the crowd to life at the JohnnyraBB NAMM concert/party last summer in Nashville. The Yugoslavian-born player won over the drum enthusiasts with his mix of impressive chops, quick thinking, and sheer joy of playing. It was clear to all in attendance that this guy is going to be a drumming star.

Djordjevic began studying with Miroslav Karlovic at an institute for adult learning in Belgrade at the age of twelve. He was also influenced by some of the older students there, who, surprisingly, were into some of the same artists that students in the West are. "The first solo I ever learned was Steve Gadd's 'Nite Sprite,' from Chick Corea's *Leprechaun* record," Marko says. "They also got me into the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Return To Forever. I was soaking up all of that stuff and trying to catch up to them."

An American drummer performing in Belgrade, David Moss, pointed Djordjevic towards the Berklee School of Music. Once he finished his studies in Belgrade, Marko decided to audition for the famed US music school. The young drummer so impressed the Berklee top brass that they gave him a full scholarship.

At Berklee, Djordjevic started Sveti, an instrumental group that blends Eastern European folk melodies and rhythms with hard-edged funk and fusion rhythms. They recorded their first CD in 1995, and the group has continued with a somewhat shifting lineup. "The latest incarnation is special," Djordjevic says. "The musicians playing in Sveti right now are not only young and enthusiastic, they're also seasoned because of all of the great work they've done."

Last summer Djordjevic toured Europe with Jonah Smith and recorded the second Sveti CD, this one featuring rising-star bassist Matt Garrison. "This music best represents me as a musician and performer," Marko admits, "especially the concept of taking my Yugoslav roots of traditional music and using them as a basis for composition and drumming. I think that's the mystery ingredient in my playing." Djordjevic has also been busy lately recording with Chris McDermott, Bree Sharp, Billy Voss, Amit Heri, and others, and he teaches at the Long Island Drum School.

"My interests are wide and varied," Marko says. "It's working out that I'll get called to play a hard-rock gig and a free-jazz gig in the same week, which I love. There's so much to be thankful for, especially when it comes to two things in my life—music and people. That's what it all revolves around."

Robin Tolleson



STEVIE DI STANISLAO

Playing For The Song

On the West Coast, the name Stevie Di Stanislaio is quickly becoming well known in the pro-drumming community. It's not surprising, when you look at what he's been up to recently. Stevie has toured Europe with Carl Verheyen (guitarist with Supertramp), played rock shows in front of 40,000 fans with Joe Walsh, conducted NAMM show product demos for Roland V-Drums, produced independent film scores, and formed a new band of his own with Frank Simes (musical director for Don Henley).

Stevie D., as the drummer has come to be called, certainly enjoys a busy career, but there are highlights that shine through the mix. One of these is his work with the legendary David Crosby in the band CPR. In this band, Stevie not only contributes a solid pulse, he sings, co-writes material, and records every track.

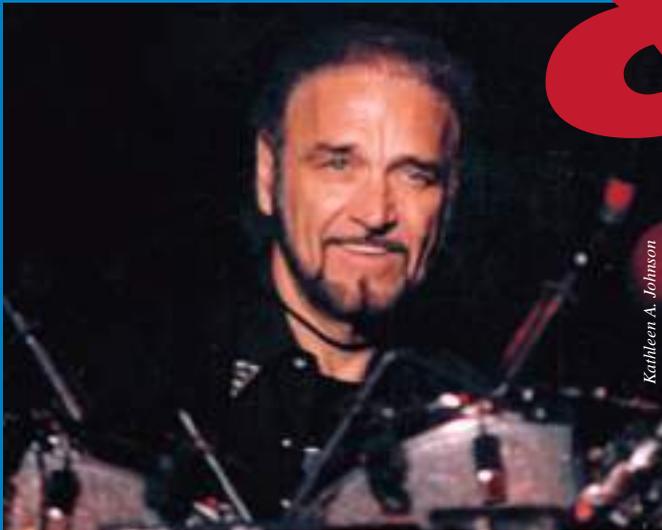
When asked about Stevie D., Crosby relates, "Technically and artistically, Stevie's the best I've ever played with. It's because he 'gets it.' He doesn't just play the drums, he plays the song." Crosby believes that there are two types of drummers, "Groove drummers and flash drummers. Stevie is a groove drummer. He's friendly, not an egotist, and curious, and he wants to learn. This is what makes him a pleasure to work with."

What's next for Stevie D.? Like many pro drummers today, Stevie is moving away from the "hired gun" status and focusing on his own band. When asked about his new project with Frank Simes, Stevie comments, "We met at a club gig in Pasadena one night and got on just great." The two musicians remembered how great it felt to play together and quickly decided to form their own project. "We've already written several songs and are shopping for a bassist," Stevie says. "The goal is to create a power trio with a blues base, something like Zeppelin meets Hendrix, with King's X-style harmonies."

Whenever Stevie D. puts his mind to something, results happen. It will be interesting to hear the new band's upcoming CD, and to see what gig he pops up on next.

Rick Long

★★★★★ Paul & Billy English



Kathleen A. Johnson



Willie Nelson's Solid Support

Throughout the twists and turns of his mythical musical lifetime, Willie Nelson has displayed the rarest of artistic traits—flexibility, which seems to distinguish Nelson's intimate musical "family" as well.

Among Willie's family members are drummers Paul and Billy English, brothers in arms with backgrounds steeped in versatility. Older brother Paul first jammed with Nelson in the mid-'50s and became his regular drummer a decade later. He's been behind the kit ever since. "I played my first gig with Willie—and I'll play my last one with him," he says.

Billy English has played drums in

a variety of settings, including a stint in Kenneth Copeland's gospel swing band. He's been a part of Nelson's lineup for nearly twenty years. The younger English is a musical chameleon, as comfortable playing percussion as he is behind the kit. Paul even fills in on bass on rare occasions.

Playing behind Nelson, who has been known to wander from the regularity of a show's format, requires that performers be able to step outside the safe confines of structure. "The first thing Willie told me when I joined the band was, 'Don't count—play with a feel,'" Paul says. "You

have to get counting out of your way to play with Willie," Billy agrees. "No one plays exactly like him. He plays each song with his own feel, and you've got to be able to pick up on that and go with it."

Nelson's recent move to a softer, "unplugged" type of live setting necessitated marked changes in both brothers' rigs. Paul previously played a ten-piece kit, but currently operates with brushes and a single snare drum, a prospect that might prove unnerving to a lesser drummer. "Playing one drum eliminates any crutches you might have," he says. "You can't hide. If you make a

mistake, it shows up, which isn't necessarily the case if you're playing a bigger set."

Billy's percussive preferences have also assumed a lighter texture. "This setup requires a softer approach," he says. "I use shakers that have more of a legato-type sound. I still play bongos, but I don't use my timbales, because they're too loud." He has a slew of other instruments at his disposal, including triangles, blocks, vibraslaps, and a rainstick. According to Billy, "It's the music that dictates which instruments I play."

John Dauphin

Asa-Chang & Junray Tabla Tokyo Style

With the booming sound of the Macintosh startup chord resounding through Club Asia, the hip concert locale in the popular shopping district of Shibuya in downtown Tokyo, two barefoot, pajama-clad men stroll onstage and take their seats, Indian-style on the floor. Before one is a traditional tabla set, before the other is a bongo, which seems to be undergoing an electro-encephalogram, connected to a machine that sits between the two men with a red LED strobing right and left like a robot eye.

The band, Asa-Chang & Junray (*junray* means pilgrimage), consists of Asa-Chang, former bandleader for Tokyo Ska Paradise Orchestra, playing his custom "tabla-bongo," and U-Zhaan playing the traditional tabla. "Junraytronics," their PA system, contains all the tracks and effects Junray uses during their performance. It was created by programmer Hidehiko Urayama.

Asa-Chang says his tabla-bongo is an adaptation of the Indonesian

"dandud" bongo that emerged in Jakarta as an approximation to the stylistically complex Indian tabla. Asa-Chang's token style has become a method of using tabla to paint over spoken word. This emerged as a spin on the custom of Indian musicians singing tabla bols in duet with drummers. Asa-Chang says his vision is to embody *kidoairaku*, the Japanese word meaning the range of human emotions of joy, anger, sorrow, and relaxation.

Junray's concerts are tranquil, yoga-like, with compositions governed more by improvisation than time-based progression in the songs. Asa-Chang and U-Zhaan gaze about, eyes aglow in the surreal, dim yet vivid blacklight, seemingly oblivious to the fact that they are performing in front of hundreds of onlookers.

For more information, visit www.rhythmatism.com.

Christopher Arnold

MIKE FASANO

Finding His Own Niche

When Warrant drummer Mike Fasano graduated from high school, he skipped college and signed to a three-month cruise-ship gig. "I was playing in an all-purpose lounge band—cha-chas, rumbas, waltzes, and 'I Just Called To Say I Love You,'" he says. "I could play drums, but I didn't know how to play *any* of that." Luckily, the ship's big-band drummer took Mike under his wing and showed him the ropes. "That turned out to be the best thing I ever did," he admits. "I learned how to play, traveled the world, and made money." Now when asked where he went to school, Mike replies, "Princess Cruises University."

After four years at sea, Mike's close friend Matt Sorum convinced the drummer to stay land-locked. "Matt was playing with Guns N' Roses at the time and said, 'You're a good drummer; you need to stay in town. If you're out on those ships for four months at a time, you can't audition for Madonna or whoever.'" Mike took Matt's advice and started climbing the ladder of LA's closely knit music scene, recording and touring with former GN'R guitarist Gilby Clarke and playing in his own band, Dad's Porno Mag. In January 2000, he got the offer to join the resurging heavy metal outfit Warrant.

When Mike isn't on the road with Warrant, he stays busy as one of LA's premier drum techs, a job he literally fell into after working as Sorum's tech on sessions for GN'R's *Spaghetti Incident*. "From that," Mike says, "I became a different option to the other drum tech/rental guys in town. Maybe all of the time I spent fooling around with different heads and drums over the years is what's helped me. I can go into sessions and understand what's going on with the music and what the bands need."

Mike's teching résumé includes artists such as Blink-182, Green Day, Goo Goo Dolls, and Mick Fleetwood. In addition to his technical expertise, he also owns an extensive collection of drums, including classic Ludwigs and Gretsches, DWs, and his favorites, Pork Pies, which he rents out for use on sessions.

"This is the greatest job I could do," Mike says. "But I wouldn't be a good drum tech—and I wouldn't get work—if I wasn't a drummer first."

Gail Worley



Lamb Of God's **CHRIS ADLER** Drumming Religion

Double bass demon Chris Adler has been grabbing the attention of metal fans recently with Lamb Of God's current release, *New American Gospel* (Prosthetic/Metal Blade). Adler calls the group's music "pure American metal." Faithful to that label, Lamb Of God has been performing on the *Metallennium* tour along with several other major metal acts.

"I feel fortunate to be in a position to play drums every night and to receive such a positive response," Adler says. "It's a special thing to meet people at shows and have them tell me they've been influenced—or began playing drums—after listening to me play. I have a

hard time thinking of myself in that position, but being able to return that favor is the true magic in all of this.

"I get the most satisfaction from writing material and being able to spend time practicing," Adler states.

"Those two things are often very hard to come by on the road. In my case, the most effective practice method has been sheer determination. I have an electronic kit at home that has

helped my timekeeping a great deal. But the fast bass drum work comes from me convincing myself that I can do it and then busting my ass behind

the kit until it's what I've been hearing in my head. Dinner is usually cold by the time I'm satisfied."

Adler is a superb double bass drummer, and explains his setup: "I added a second bass drum early in

my playing, not knowing that double pedals existed. But I've stuck with two drums ever since. There's a feel to two bass drums that cannot be duplicated with a pedal. I've tried several dou-

ble pedals and kept none." Adler explains that there's more to playing metal music than meets the ear. "There are the physical

demands, and there are the business pitfalls that surround any real band. But the most challenging aspect of it all for me is constantly pushing myself and moving forward. Learning, applying, and composing has been my focus from the start, and if I lose that determination, not only will my playing suffer, but I'll lose interest. When I look back on this time, I want to know that I was the best I could be for my band—and, more importantly, for myself. I owe it to myself to constantly push my own boundaries, for however long it takes, and despite whatever hurts that day."

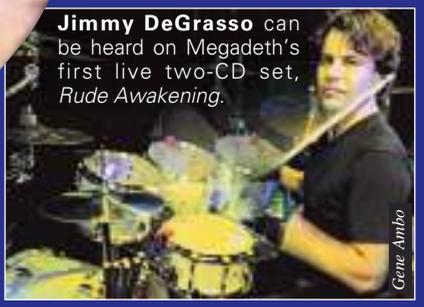
Mike Haid



NEWS

Vinnie Colaiuta has teamed with Robben Ford and Jimmy Haslip in a configuration called Jing Chi. See the review in this month's *Critique*.

Jimmy DeGrasso can be heard on Megadeth's first live two-CD set, *Rude Awakening*.



Mighty Mighty Bosstones drummer **Joe Sirois** and guitarist Nate Albert have a new band called The Brakes. Look for them on tour promoting their new CD, *Osaka*. For more info go to www.fenwayrecordings.com.

Joey Kramer has two CDs and a CD-ROM version of *Drum Loops And Samples* available on EastWest. Check them out at www.soundsonline.com.

Amir Ziv is in the studio working on Droid's second release for Shadow Records. Ziv is also recording with Cyro Baptista's *Beat The Donkey*. In addition, Amir has become a staff member at The New School Jazz Program, where he teaches the so-called first-ever live drum 'n' bass ensemble.

Steve Hass is on Christos Rafalides' *Manhattan Vibes* CD.

Julio Figueroa co-wrote and played on two tracks for the Michael Jackson video *Rock My World*. He also co-wrote the music for the CBS TV show *Prime Dining*. In addition, Julio has been touring with Grammy-winning Latin artist Nydia Rojas in support of her last two records, *Si Me Conocieras* and *Nydia*, both of which Julio played on.

There is a recently released B-52's compilation called *Anthology: Nude On The Moon* featuring lots of great drummers, including **Sterling Campbell**, **Sonny Emory**, **Steve Ferrone**, **Yogi Horton**, **Charlie Drayton**, **Leroy Clouden**, and **Zachary Alford**.

Eric Singer, **Clem Burke**, **Brian Tichy**, and **Brent Fitz** are on Gilby Clarke's latest CD, *Swag*.

Brady Blade is playing drums and percussion on The Indigo Girls' new album, *Become You*. He is currently on tour with the group.



Jim Donovan is on the new Rusted Root CD, *Welcome To My Party*.

The band will be touring throughout 2002. **Alan Evans** is on Soulive's new CD, *Next*.

Atom Willard is on tour with Moth.

Nick Menza is set to release a solo project, *Life After Deth*.

Rob Halford is finishing up work on the sophomore disc from his band Halford, which features the drumming of **Bobby Jarzombek**.

Pearl players inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame 2002 include The Talking Heads' **Chris Frantz**, Tom Petty's **Steve Ferrone**, and The Ramones' **Marky Ramone**. The ceremony was held this past March 20.

Walfredo Reyes Jr. performed on drums with Robbie Robertson And The Native American Dancers at the opening ceremony of the 2002 Winter Olympics this past February.

Check out **Billy Martin's** latest project, *illy B Eats*, at www.amuletrecords.com/illyBeats/illyUpdates.htm. You can also hear illyB on the new Medeski Martin & Wood disc, *Uninvisible*.

Gregg Bissonette, **Kirk Covington**, **Roger Friend**, **Steve Reid**, and **M. B. Gordy** are on MacLaren's *The Big Bang*.

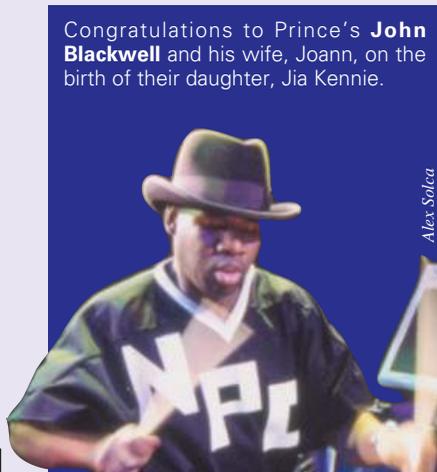
Dave Keel is on Riddlin' Kids' *Hurry Up And Wait*.

Nick Gigler is on *Destination Unknown* by Mest.

Pete Maloney is on Dishwalla's *Opaline*.

Radiohead's **Phil Selway** is on *7 Worlds Collide*, a star-studded live disc by Neil Finn

Congratulations to Prince's **John Blackwell** and his wife, Joann, on the birth of their daughter, Jia Kennie.



(Crowded House, Split Enz).

Congratulations go also to Diamond Rio drummer **Brian Prout**, who recently wed

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

In June of 1991, **Carmine Appice**, **Ginger Baker**, **Alex Van Halen**, **John Bonham**, **Buddy Rich**, and **Gene Krupa** are inducted into The Hollywood Rockwalk Of Fame.

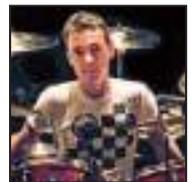
Chick Webb died in June of 1939.

R&B drummer **Yogi Horton** died on June 8, 1987.

Tito Puente died on June 1, 2000.

On June 22, 1963, the Surfaris release "Wipe Out," one of the great rock instrumentals of all time, featuring **Ron Wilson's** classic drum solo break.

Neil Peart replaces original Rush drummer **John Rutsey** on June 29, 1974.



Happy Birthday!

Remo Belli (June 22, 1927)

Vic Firth (June 2, 1930)

James Gadson (June 17, 1939)

Charlie Watts (June 2, 1941)

Bernard Purdie (June 11, 1941)

Mick Fleetwood (June 24, 1942)

Ian Paice (June 29, 1948)

Frank Beard (June 11, 1949)

Joey Kramer (June 21, 1950)

Bun E. Carlos (June 12, 1951)

Peter Erskine (June 5, 1954)

Doane Perry (June 16, 1954)

Mickey Curry (June 10, 1956)

Zoro (June 13, 1962)

Steve Shelley (June 23, 1962)

Eric Kretz (June 7, 1966)



SOUND FOR SOUND.



Chad Smith

Years playing – 32

Band – Red Hot Chili Peppers

Concerts – Lost count after 5,216

Last tour – 24 countries

200,000 Air Miles

Favorite venue – Red Square, Moscow, Russia

Largest attendance – 350,000 Woodstock '94

Musical influence – My brother, Bradley Curtis Smith

1 Sonically Matched cymbal set



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Milton Worthington

Years playing – Almost a whole year

Band – Sooky & the Insomniacs

Concerts – Brother's high school dance

Last tour – Hometown

48 kilometers on the family van

Favorite venue – Churchill Boy's Academy

Largest attendance – Almost 90

Musical influence – Chad Smith

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Sabian HHX Evolution Series Cymbals

A Look At Weckl's Wonders

HITS

cymbals achieve loud, clear response with little playing effort

good mixture of light and dark tones

O-Zone cymbals have killer sound

MISSES

12" splash is less powerful than smaller models

by Will Romano

Want cymbals that play themselves? Sabian makes this seductive offer as they unveil their new HHX Evolution series, designed with Dave Weckl. Dave has made a career out of minimizing effort to maximize sound. Accordingly, Sabian says that the HHX Evolutions' "total response" feature—a result of a secret process that "goes above and beyond the HHX hammering process"—creates glassy, shimmering tones that can be achieved without making drummers break a sweat.

The HHX series, first reviewed in the May 2001 *MD*, debuted as a progression of the HH line with an added "X" factor, or "tone projector." The Evolution cymbals, made of B20 bronze (20% tin and 80% copper with traces of silver) take that progress one step further. Sabian touts the new series as offering brightness and cutting power plus a new added sensitivity that eliminates the need for players to "dig" to get a great tone.

We were given the entire Weckl series for review: every brilliant-finish splash, crash, ride, Effeks, and hi-hat, all based on The Maestro's specifications. Let's find out if Sabian's claims were mere boasts or a slice of reality.

Extra Shimmering Ride

Well, there is some truth in advertising. The first cymbal I tried was the 20" ride, and I was immediately impressed by its power to resonate. Sporting a so-called "jumbo hammered" surface and beautiful brilliant finish, the ride produced a clear, audible stick attack sound. It also possessed great dynamics. The spread was loud (but not too loud) and dark (but not too dark). Playing quarter notes on the unlathed bell was like rush hour at a railroad crossing: the ring was clear and strong—and I didn't have to bang very hard to achieve it.



When I used nylon-tipped sticks, my job became even easier. "Hidden" highs were revealed, and additional high and low overtones washed over me. The HHX "tone projection," coupled with the multi-hammered surface, contributed to the extra shimmering vibrations. I was beginning to think that Sabian was right: These cymbals do "play themselves."



magnified the true nature of these cymbals. When I quick-flicked the 7" splash, an ear-piercing crack chipped away at my senses. This ranks among the best splashes I've played. The 10", in all its brilliant-finish glory, gave a similar quick response.

They both cut through an electrified band with a celestial airiness that was appropriate for soft *and* hard situations.

Crashes And Effeks

Save for their pitches, the 16" and 17" crashes were nearly identical to one another. They were powerful yet colorful, with a decay that didn't linger. Featuring "medium" rather than "jumbo" hammering, these two cymbals had less "shimmer" than the ride. But they had great resonance, perhaps because of their raw, unlathed bells.

The versatile 18" crash, while darker than the smaller models, still reached the highs well enough to be your go-to cymbal—without seeming too intrusive or raising eyebrows on stage. When I played on the unlathed bell, I got a clear "ding" that would help to make this a workable crash-ride. I also found that different sticking patterns gave me a nice jazzy-sticky feel when played on the main surface.

The 17" Effeks cymbal is a different story. Its lathed surface features a slightly inclined outer lip with multiple ridges, "stitched" hammer marks, and three metal rivets that spin and jiggle, making the cymbal very sensitive to the slightest touch. It produced freaky, prickly knocks when slapped with a bare hand. However, I was a bit disappointed by the sound it produced when a stick was used. The hissing decay occupied the lower frequencies, and the cymbal's natural tone nearly got lost in the overall mix of the band. I think this cymbal would serve best in a folk or avant-garde context, where every nuance can be appreciated. If that was its purpose, then Sabian hit the mark.

Special Sounds

The radically designed 16" and 18" O-Zone crash cymbals really rang my bell, so to speak. They're paper-thin, trashier than fifty dropped garbage cans, and more sonically charged than an F-16. The cymbals look like lumpy hubcaps, thanks to a series of circular cutouts (six on the 16", eight on the 18") and a lathed surface.

When I smacked the 16", it produced a "woosh" and a very loud pop. And despite its lack of density, when I tapped it lightly it racked me to the core with its wavering decay. The 18" amplified these traits and had an even greater gust-of-wind spread, no doubt due to the holes. I wasn't putting much effort in, but I was getting a lot of sound back.

The raucous sounds continued with the Evolution splashes. With one exception, they were categorically brusque. (Look it up.) That may be a funny thing to say about a splash, but the Evolution line's innovative approach to cymbalmaking has

Surprisingly, the 12" splash was significantly different. It behaved less like a splash and more like a muted China. To get a point of reference, I compared it to a 12" splash of my own (a non-Sabian). I found that while the Evolution model didn't match the sonic qualities of its siblings, it did have just as much punch as the cymbal I've used for years. So even the meekest Evolution splash was still no wimp.

Hi-Hats

Let's start with the similarities first. Both the 13" and 14" sets had a heavy lathed bottom with a medium-weight, lightly-hammered top. Both produced a great "chick" sound when played against the ride or the 18" "crash-ride." When played open, they created a booming wash that simply sizzled. (This was especially true of the 14" hats.)

The 13" hats, by virtue of their size, had a tight-bodied tone without being clunky, which I felt could work great for pop and jazz bands. With the 14" hats, I was impressed by the constant, dry stream of noise they created, even when played closed. I had no trouble making myself heard when I played in an unmiked setting. And when I put my arm into it, look out! These are very versatile cymbals that would be right at home in any setting from a pop act to a medium-heavy rock band.

The Verdict

In most cases, Sabian has achieved what it set out to do: give drummers greater tone projection with more sensitivity. Dave Weckl himself debuted the new models in a performance with his band at the recent NAMM show in California. Comments about the cymbal sounds were almost universally enthusiastic.

Says one Sabian spokesperson, "This is the most durable, musical cymbal metal ever created." Well, while this is perhaps hyperbole, Sabian has certainly hit upon something unique.

THE NUMBERS

13" Hi-Hats	\$404
14" Hi-Hats	\$458
7" Splash	\$131
10" Splash	\$149
12" Splash	\$176
16" Crash	\$276
17" Crash	\$301
18" Crash	\$324
19" Crash	\$353
20" Ride	\$375

(Crash prices include Effeks and O-Zone models.)

(506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com



Headliner By Meinl Darbukas And Doumbeks

For A Dash Of Middle-Eastern Flavor

HITS

excellent construction quality

aluminum "jingle" darbuka produces unique sound

affordable price range

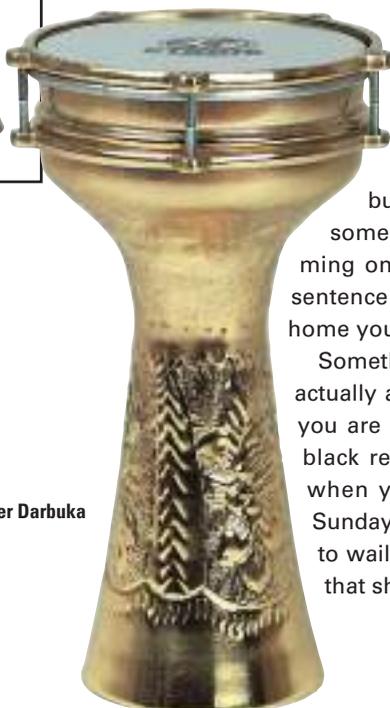
by Norman Arnold



Plain Aluminum Darbukas



Hammered Aluminum Darbukas



Brass-Plated Copper Darbuka

Okay, here's the "short attention span" review of the Headliner By Meinl darbukas and doumbeks: These drums totally *rock*. If you're in the market for some new colors for your percussion palette, run, don't walk to your nearest dealer and grab some.

Enough said. Feel free to turn to the Anton Fig cover story. Or you can read on for more enticing details.

Darbukas

When the drums showed up I pulled them out of the box and started wailing away immediately. They sounded fantastic. All of them. I didn't tune or adjust them in any way. Come to think of it, I still haven't.

The Plain Aluminum model is very well made. It's extremely light in weight but solid and sturdy. It produced a great low tone, with an equally good high, ringing, sharp crack when hit towards the edge. This wide tonal range is exactly what you want in a darbuka. The synthetic heads give a very punchy, almost rubbery sound.

The Hand-Hammered Aluminum "jingle" model is essentially a darbuka with a row of tambourine jungles inside the drum, mounted about an inch under the head. It produces a fabulous sound—very ethnic. (It was my personal favorite.) The low tone it produces along with the jingles is great. When hit closer to the edge, its natural ringing worked with the jingles to make the sound really sing.

The third darbuka had a hand-hammered, brass-plated copper shell. Very solid and noticeably heavier than the aluminum model, it produced a much tighter and more focused sound. That sound was crisp and bright, with fewer overtones than the aluminum drum produced. This model is more expensive than the aluminum drum, and ships with a spare head and a very light carrying case.

I had some friends over and we sat around jamming on these drums. We were all very impressed at how well the drums blended together. Still, within a group, the bright, tight sound of the copper drum really stands out. The small size and lightweight design made the darbukas perfect for young kids too, as evidenced by some neighborhood youngsters who also enjoyed jamming on them. (Show your significant other the previous sentence when you spend all the grocery money to bring home your new set.)

Something to be aware of: Aluminum drums tarnish. It's actually a totally normal process, but the point is that when you are done playing the drums you might end up with a black residue on your hands and clothes. So remember, when your mom comes over after church wearing her Sunday best, screams, "Ooooh, *darbukas*," and proceeds to wail away on your drums, you might want to warn her that she could get a little dirty. Just a heads-up.

Doumbeks

The Headliner By Meinl doumbeks were as impressive as their darbuka cousins. The drums fit comfortably between your knees when you're sitting, and can be played tucked under your arm as well. They're very comfortable and easy to play. The rounded edge of a doumbek is much softer on the hands than that of a darbuka. It's kind of like a "comfort curve" built right into the design. The lugs are inlaid into the metal, and thus are not even noticeable. The rounded rim helps with the traditional style of playing: using the fingers and finger snaps. But it is equally good for getting a slap, as you would get on a conga.

The first doumbek is an Aluminum model with a copper finish. It comes with a carrying bag and an extra head. It had very solid construction and was a pleasure to play.



Aluminum Doumbeks with Copper finish



Hand-Engraved Doumbek

The Hand-Engraved Copper doumbek looked so cool that at first I didn't want to hit it. I just stared at the engraving. The drum could stand alone as a great design piece. Ah, but it was even more fun to play. The thick shell produces a dry sound and a sharp attack.

Both drums were very tight and focused, with loud open tones and a great ring at the edges. They sounded great in the group as well.

I had a chance to record all of the doumbeks and darbukas in various ways in the studio: mic' on top, mic' near the bottom, and mic's top and bottom. The drums all performed very well. They sounded huge yet still very punchy.

Conclusion

The Headliner By Meinl darbukas and doumbeks offer excellent workmanship and playability—at pretty surprising prices. They have a wide range of uses, from jamming with the kids, to playing with the pros, to exhibiting at the art gallery. They're perfect for a trip to your local drum circle, and they sound great in the studio. I'm a fan.

THE NUMBERS

Aluminum-Shell Darbukas

Plain Aluminum, 7½x13⅓ \$ 42
Hand Hammered (with tambourine jingles), 8x14⅓ .. \$ 62

Copper-Shell Darbukas

Brass-Plated, Hand-Hammered Shell, 7½x14¾ \$140

Aluminum-Shell Doumbeks

Copper-Finished Shell, 8½x17⅞ \$145

Hand-Engraved Shell, 8½x17⅞ \$200
(doumbeks include carrying bag and spare head)

☎ (305) 418-4520, ✉ goMeinl@aol.com

Quick Looks

Kaces 3 Drum Bag Pre-Packs

If you're like most *MD* readers, the reason you play drums is to hone your skills enough to lead to jams with friends, playing parties, playing out, paid gigs, and maybe even that dream of a lucrative record deal, complete with every fantasy you've ever had. Along the way, you need to protect your set when you take it on the road—no matter how short or long that road is. Ace Products' Kaces 3 line of drum bags might be just what you need.

Reviewed here are two different five-piece pre-packs of nylon bag models. (A lower-priced vinyl line is available.) Buying the bags in pre-packaged sets rather than individually saves you money. However, the packs are just for drums; you'll need cymbal and hardware bags to complete the setup. These, too, are available from Ace Products.

The Fusion pack consists of bags for a 6½x14 snare, 10x10 and 10x12 toms, a 12x14 floor tom, and an 18x22 bass drum. The Standard pack features bags for a 6½x14 snare, 10x12 and 11x13 toms, a 16x16 floor

tom, and an 18x22 bass drum.

Features for all bags include weather-resistant Cordura outer shells, tear-resistant linings, thick high-density padding over sewn inner linings to cover seams, reinforced double-stitched edges, heavy-duty luggage-grade zippers, and rubber handles on extra-long carrying straps. All the bags have their sizes listed on a small white tag outside. This can be a real time-saver when you're breaking down quickly; you can grab the right bag for each drum with no confusion.

The bags are well designed functionally and ergonomically. The zippers work perfectly, water sheds rapidly off the covering fabric, and sufficient room is left inside for mounts or legs on the toms, throw-offs on snare drums, or spurs on bass drums. Without such room, bags can be hard to put on and take off of some drums. The bass drum bags have a 12x9 outer side pocket for small goodies you might need to bring along.

All the bags have non-slip ergonomic



rubber handles around extra-long carrying straps. This feature proved helpful when I was lugging around an extra-heavy drum, since it prevented the strap from gouging a crease into my hand. The bass drum bag has both a standard handle and a longer shoulder strap.

Kaces backs their bags with a one-year warranty, a user-friendly Web site, and a toll-free number. Suggested list prices are \$292.75 for the Fusion set and \$312.75 for the Standard set. (Street prices are usually lower.) All in all, these bags are a good value for your hard-earned cash—and highly recommended.

☎ (800) 950-1095, ✉ www.aceproducts.com.

Russ Barbone



Istanbul Mehmet Pop And Rock Models

It Ain't All About Jazz

HITS

Sultan series hi-hats are articulate and expressive

Turk ride has great stick response and clarity

by Chap Ostrander

In this year's January issue I reviewed a number of jazz-oriented cymbal series from Istanbul Mehmet. This Turkish manufacturer also has several varieties of cymbals for the pop and rock markets. Let's take a look at these additional models.

Sultan Series

Sultan series cymbals feature bands of lathed and unlathed surfaces. The bell, along with a 2" band in the middle, is unlathed. The rest of the top is lathed. The underneath is fully lathed. My impression of this series is that it would be especially good in recording situations.

20" ride: The ride has a low-profile bell with a nice, clear sound. The unlathed zones have a dry quality to them, offering more control when ride patterns are played there. Stick response is fine, encouraging you to go for patterns you might not otherwise try. Mallets produce a deep, dark tonality.

16" crash (985 grams): The crash is quick and responsive, with dark undertones and lots of control. If you want to use this cymbal as an alternate ride, you have the zones to work with.

14" hi-hats (top 1,075 grams, bottom 1,255 grams): I really loved these hats because they were so articulate and expressive. There was lots of wash when I played them open, but clear definition when they were closed. Very concise and satisfying!

10" splash (260 grams): The splash was fun in that it, too, provided control over the sound. A little dark and funky, it responded well when struck, then died out quickly.

Empire Series

These are cool-looking cymbals! The top is lathed on the outer ring, while the inner ring and bell are essentially raw—except for "stripes" of lathing about every quarter inch. The underside is totally unlathed.

20" ride: No weight was indicated, but I'd judge this ride to be a medium-thin. It had a dark sound, with moderate stick response. The outer lathed ring produced a low pitch with some high overtones. The inner circle was pitched higher, but had more low overtones. A mixed series of overtones built up while I played, but stayed under control.

I was able to get a lot out of this ride. Even played quietly, it had lots of cut and definition. When I used mallets with it, it sang

Sultan Series





Empire Series



Turk Series



Radiant Series

with lots of power. The bell was moderately sized, and it required a strong shot to really get the sound out.

14" hi-hats: This is a good overall set of hats. They produced a great wash when played half-open. The distinctive pattern of lathing rings offers a variety of stick-sound choices on the top cymbal. Versatile and musical.

Turk Series

The Turk series is raw and earthy. There's only 1/4" of lathing on the outer edge of the top surface, and the hammering stops about 1/2" from the top edge.

20" ride (2,760 grams): This heavy ride has great stick response and clarity. It's not as dark as I would expect a raw cymbal to be, due to its weight. A dark under-wash built as I played, but it never got out of control. The bell was pingy and clear. Overall the sound was very expressive, with lots of cutting power.

14" hi-hats (top 1,105 grams; bottom 1,100 grams): These days, bottom hi-hat cymbals are generally significantly heavier than top cymbals. But the Turk hats had a very pleasing sound even though they were nearly the same weight. The raw finish gave them some dryness, and the weight gave them lots of definition. They were dark and driving, with great penetration.

Radiant Series (Murathan)

This series of cymbals is unlathed but polished to a brilliant finish. The look is like a plate of gold after a rain.

21" Custom Rock Ride: From its relatively low pitch and quick buildup I'd figure this to be a medium-thin cymbal. The bell is large, but it has a low profile. There's also a channel pressed into the cymbal about a quarter inch from the edge. Maybe it has something to do with containing the sound.

When I played an aggressive ride pattern, a gong-like roar built up underneath it. The bell sound was rather dark, owing to the weight. The strongest bell sound came from striking with the shoulder of the stick.

18" China: This is one *hot* cymbal, with quick stick response. When played in the bell-up position, I could ride on it without too much buildup. The sound was fairly light and airy, and I could hear the distinct stick beats. (I'd be interested to hear this puppy with some rivets installed.) When I hit the edge, however, a great gong-like "kang" issued forth, and all the hot lows came out in a great wash. The bell was high and clear.

When I played the China in the inverted position, the sounds were slightly different. Riding in the middle produced more of

a wash, mixing the edge and center textures. I could even strike the inside of the bell for a tight, pingy sound. I also tried mallets on the China, and there seemed to be no end to the wall of sound that I got from it.

14" Custom Rock Hi-Hats: Compared to other, standard-weight cymbals, these seem lighter, with a lower pitch and a darker nature. They didn't come individually marked for top or bottom use, so I took a shot and put the slightly heavier one on the bottom. The resulting chick sound was distinct, but I could still hear some of the overtones of the cymbals hitting each other when I clamped them together with my foot.

I'm using the bell sound on my hi-hats more and more. The bells on this set encourage that. There was also a nice wash between the two when I played them half-open.

When I switched the top and bottom cymbals, I discovered that the cymbal I had used first for the bottom had a line around the outer edge, just like the ride. With this configuration the overall hi-hat sound was cleaner and better-behaved. The chick sound was clear and without the extra overtones I had heard before.

8" Bell Cymbal: I struck the bell cymbal on the bell portion—which constitutes most of its surface area—and got a clear, cutting tone with a slight bit of under-wash. When I struck the edge, I got a clear pitch followed by a rich, shimmering set of overtones. This is a great little instrument for accents and the occasional tone that cuts through whatever else is happening. But it's not something to be overused.

Wrapping Up

It's good to know that Turkish cymbal manufacturers are as interested in variety as we drummers are. With their Sultan, Empire, Turk, and Radiant lines, Istanbul Mehmet offers a wide range of sounds and performance characteristics beyond those of traditional jazz cymbals. Short of arena-level thrashers, there should be something for just about anyone. Check 'em out.

THE NUMBERS

Sultan Series	
20" Ride	\$390
16" Crash	\$240
14" Hats	\$405
10" Splash	\$140
Empire Series	
20" Ride	\$390
14" Hats	\$405
Turk Series	
20" Ride	\$390
14" Hats	\$405
Radiant Series (Murathan)	
21" Ride Custom Rock	\$498
18" China	\$380
14" Custom Rock Hi-Hats	\$475
8" Bell	\$140

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Taye StudioMaple And RockPro Drumkits

An Impressive New Kid On The Block

HITS

excellent workmanship on both series

StudioMaples offer pro-quality acoustic performance

outstanding value for the price

MISSES

RockPro bass drum beater should be upgraded

by Mark Parsons

Taye drums (pronounced “tie”) may *seem* like yet another newcomer to the ranks of drum manufacturers. But the fact is that the company has been building drums imported under the brand names of several major manufacturers for over twenty-five years. Now, under the guidance of Canadian drum guru Ray Ayotte, they’re selling drumkits under their own name.

Taye currently offers five series of kits: StudioMaple (maple shells, lacquer finish, slide-track tom mount), TourPro (basswood shells, lacquer finish, slide-track tom mount), ProX (basswood shells, lacquer finish, regular tom mount), RockPro (hardwood shells, covered finish, regular tom mount), and Spotlight (hardwood shells, covered finish, lightweight tom mount). All but the Spotlight series feature suspended rack toms. A dizzying array of package configurations is available in each of these series, and the drums are also all available individually. Selection is the watchword at Taye.

We were sent two kits for review: a five-piece StudioMaple in a natural lacquer finish, and a six-piece RockPro with a metallic-silver covered finish. Let’s take a look at each one individually.



StudioMaple Kit



StudioMaple Drums

The all-maple shells of the StudioMaple series are manufactured in-house by Taye. Toms up to 13" are 6-ply, larger toms and kicks are 7-ply, and snares are 10-ply. All of the drums are made without reinforcing rings.

Fit and finish were very good across the board. The kit's natural maple glossy polyurethane finish was very nicely done. Bearing edges were likewise—very smooth and clean.

With the exception of the snare drum (which used ten double-ended lugs), all of the drums used the same lugs, including the kick. Taye's lug is a small, low-mass design attached to the shells with isolation gaskets. The rack toms were suspended on RIMS-type mounts.

To my surprise, the drumheads were also made in-house by Taye. Top heads on the toms and the snare were single-ply white-coated models. The bottom tom heads were fairly thin (8 mil) clear models, and the snare had a clear snare-side head. The bass drum batter was a clear head with an integral muffling ring. The smooth white front head was unported (no hole), and also had a muffling ring.

The Hardware

Ray and the boys have obviously been hard at work here, because instead of the expected generic stands and pedals, the Taye hardware shows some serious innovation. For example, the "slide track" tom mount permits approximately 6" of smooth forward/backward travel, resulting in a kick-mounted double tom holder that allows almost infinite position adjustability. An added bonus is the built-in cymbal boom mount.

The large-diameter hi-hat stand features pivoting legs, a twist-ring tension adjustment, a very clever quick-release

clutch, and smooth action. The bass drum pedal also features a sturdy and smooth design, incorporating a double-chain drive and a nifty beater with an adjustable angle of attack.

The rest of the stands were of the same ilk: large, sturdy, double-braced models that functioned smoothly and precisely. The only downside is weight: All of this big, gleaming, chrome-plated tubing is not exactly made of helium. However, when used as the name implies (in the studio), this stable hardware—with almost no attendant mechanical noises—will be a boon.

In Use

Hmmm...let's see. Thin, all-maple shells. Precision edges. Suspension mounts. Quality heads. The StudioMaples certainly have it all...on paper. But does the "theoretical" translate to "reality"? In this case, yes.

The short story is that the StudioMaples are a great-sounding kit. I was very impressed by the kick, right out of the box. The tone was deep and resonant, with the damped heads supplying just the right amount of control. You may want to tighten things up a bit for certain types of recording, but I really liked this drum wide open. The toms, likewise, had lots of round sustain, which was complemented by the good articulation of the coated single-ply heads.

The snare had an excellent woody tone, with good sensitivity and good projection. Rimshots might have gained some horsepower were the drum equipped with die-cast hoops. But they were certainly strong enough, and die-cast hoops might have reduced one of this drum's strong points: its versatility. This snare had a very wide tuning range, sounding good wherever I placed it on the tonal scale. (It particularly excelled

at a very useful middle-of-the-road tuning.)

The side-drop throw-off proved smooth and functional in use, making it easy to adjust the snare tension with the snares engaged. All told, this was a very musical and universal drum that would work in a wide variety of settings.

Conclusion

There are a lot of nice drums being made these days. So how does a new company compete? In Taye's case, look no further than their motto: "Better drums...for less money." Such slogans are usually just marketing hype, but in this instance I'd have to say that it rings true. The Taye StudioMaples are pro-quality drums that perform as well as anything you're liable to come across. But the price....

During the review period a drummer friend of mine played the kit, and expressed his admiration. Naturally, he asked me what it cost. I hadn't read the paperwork yet, but I'm pretty familiar with the market, so I took an educated guess and said, "Probably retails for about \$2,500." We both thought that was a pretty good deal. After I'd read the paperwork a few hours later, I called him back. "Try \$1,995." We both agreed that that was an *amazing* deal.

If you're on the lookout for a pro maple kit with all the trimmings, but you're a little short on the long green, give the StudioMaples an audition. I can confidently predict that you won't be disappointed.

RockPro

This is Taye's "value-priced" line, one step up from their entry-level/student series. Even so, there's an obvious family resemblance to the StudioMaples. The kits share the same lugs, suspension mounts, snare and tom hoops, and snare throw-off. (This uniformity of fittings and appointments is one thing that helps keep costs down for Taye. They don't have to pay for different tooling to make different fittings for each drumkit series. Logical, eh?)

The hardware on the RockPro kit is lighter than that on the StudioMaples—medium-duty versus heavy-duty—although the configuration of stands is the same. Ditto for the pedals: similar quality, but simpler and lighter in construction. The bass drum claws and hoops are more generic, and the toms ship with clear heads.

The biggest difference between the two kits, of course, is the shells. The RockPro uses a combination of basswood and "other hardwoods," and the resulting shell is a bit thicker than Taye's maple drums. And the shells are covered, rather than lacquered. Our metallic-silver kit looked quite nice. In fact, the quality of construction on the kit was high in all respects.

In Use

The interesting thing about conducting this review was that we had two kits that were almost identical but for their shells and finish, side by side in the same room. This meant that we

could immediately judge the performance of the RockPro against the admittedly stiff standard set by the MapleStudio kit.

The results were pretty darn impressive. No, the RockPro drums didn't have quite the depth of tone, warm sustain, or projection of their maple-shelled (and *far* more expensive) siblings. But taken on their own they offered a very pleasing sonic quality and would acquit themselves very well in a wide variety of situations.

I've seen imported kits in this price range where the use of two-ply heads was virtually mandatory in order to get any body from the drums at all. Not in this case. Using the supplied heads, the RockPros put out a very respectable sound. The kick had good body and depth, the toms were all melodic, with decent sustain, and the snare was sensitive and cutting.

The hardware also performed well, and for the jobbing drummer the lighter-weight (yet still double-braced) stands might in fact prove preferable to Taye's heavier stuff. I did have one minor complaint about the bass drum pedal. The pedal's action was fine—smooth and fast—but the beater had a large, cylindrical felt head. This seemed to give the impact of the beater on the head a somewhat mushy feel. It wasn't optimum for the drum sound, either. So I swapped it for the more modern design of the StudioMaple kit's beater. Much better: improved balance and a punchier sound. The difference in cost between these two beaters can't be more than a few dollars, so I'd suggest that Taye make the upgrade. The kit really is nice enough to deserve it.

Conclusion

When the previously mentioned friend asked about the price of the RockPro drums, I looked hard at the review kit. I saw a six-piece kit, with an attractive and durable laminate finish. I saw a full hardware package (you can mount three cymbals on these babies) with stable, smooth, and functional stands, mounts, and pedals. I saw high-quality heads, hoops, and lugs, and suspension mounts on all four toms. It was built to a price point, certainly, by virtue of the shell material. But it was still a well-built kit that looked and sounded good enough to be used with pride on any stage or session. "Probably lists for \$1,200," I ventured, "with a street price of around a grand or a little less."

Once again Taye fooled me. The retail price of our review kit is \$795. At that price these aren't just "better drums for less money." They're a steal!

THE NUMBERS

StudioMaple configuration: 18x22 kick drum, 8½x10 and 9x12 suspended rack toms, 14x14 floor tom, and 5x14 snare drum. All maple shells, with natural maple lacquer finish. Heavy-duty, double-braced hardware package includes boom cymbal stand, straight cymbal stand, snare stand, hi-hat stand, bass drum pedal, and slide-track tom holder with cymbal boom.

List price:\$1,995

RockPro configuration: 16x22 kick drum, 8x8, 8½x10, 9x12, and 11x14 toms (all suspended), and 5½x14 snare drum. Basswood/hardwood shells, with metallic-silver covered finish. Medium-duty, double-braced hardware package includes boom cymbal stand, straight cymbal stand, snare stand, hi-hat stand, bass drum pedal, and traditional tom holder with cymbal boom.

List price:\$795

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For the past four years, Anton Fig has been hard at work conceiving and creating his first solo effort, *Figments*. Thanks to a bank loan (so he could record a good portion of it at home with Pro Tools) and his consistent work on *The Late Show With David Letterman*, Fig's been able to complete the album. But it's been a challenge fitting in work on the album along with his various session commitments and the weekly grind of the show.

With the help of such friends as Blondie Chaplin, Ace Frehley, Sebastian Bach, Chris Spedding, Chris Botti, Paul Shaffer, Tony Cedras, Richie Havens, Ivan Neville, Randy Brecker, and far too many others to mention, Fig has turned out a multi-layered, textured, and colorful CD. (It's now available on his Web site, www.antonfig.com.) If you think you know what Anton is about from seeing him play on TV, well, this record is going to totally blow your mind.

For Fig, the CD is a dream realized, as was his coming to the United States from his native Cape Town, South Africa at just seventeen years of age. Growing up in South

Africa had its musical pros and cons. There weren't concerts and there certainly weren't any videos. But the young drummer did have records at his disposal. The emergence of a rather unique approach was the result of these "limited" circumstances.

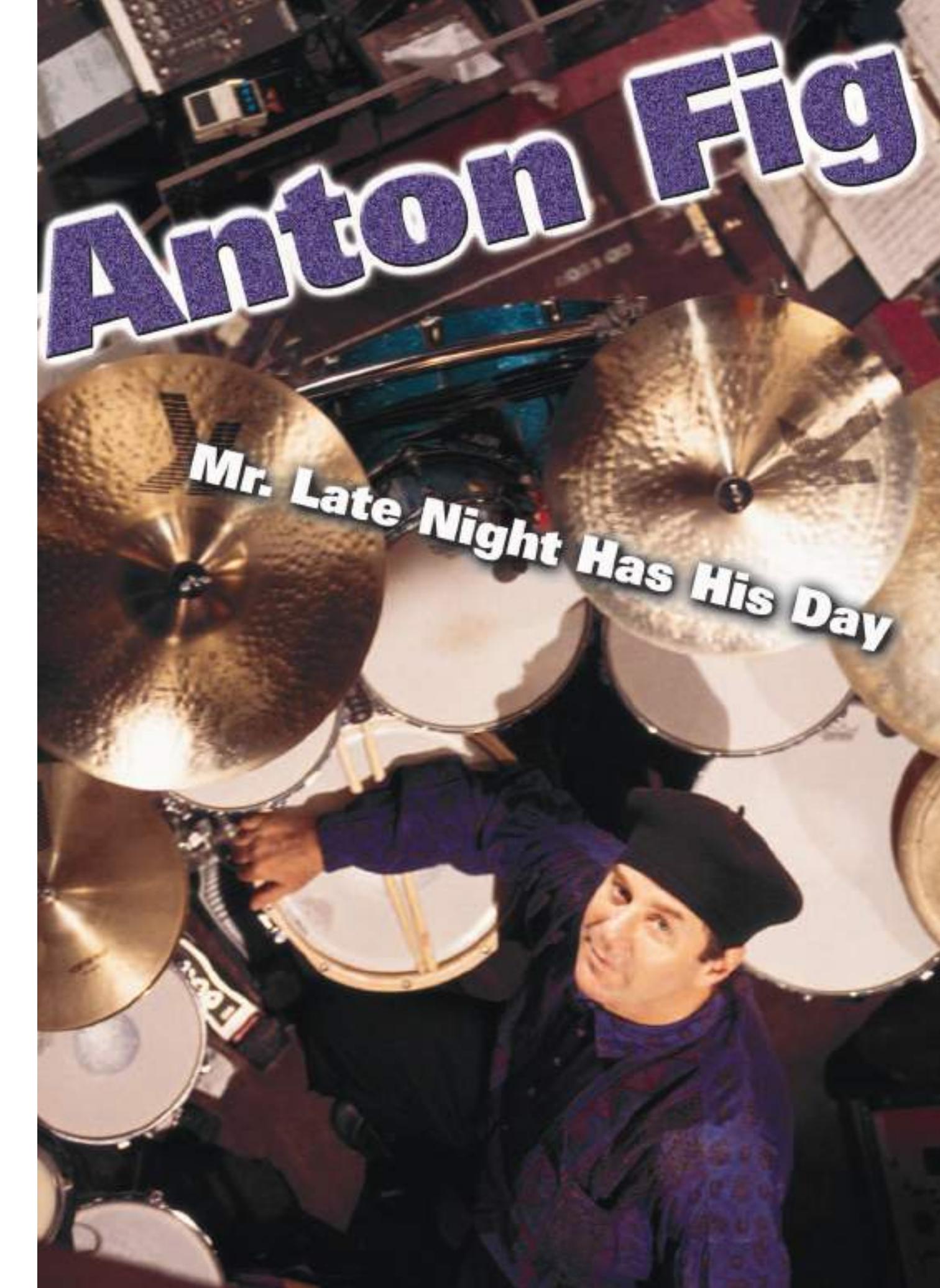
Anton didn't have any teachers in his area that he could study with, so a lot of his early development was on his own. He did have very supportive parents, who built a playroom for him so his bands could rehearse at their house. Fig's parents also facilitated his move to the United States, where he attended the New England Conservatory of Music.

Thrust into a completely different culture, Fig recalls it as "a bizarre time in my life. The first thing I realized was that I didn't understand the humor at all. I'd watch a TV sitcom and wouldn't get it. I'd hear people laughing on the laugh track, but I wouldn't know why. At that point I went into full survival mode, immersing myself in the University and studying and practicing nonstop."

"I've done so many sessions where I walk in, play the basic track, and go away. I wanted to do something of my own from start to finish."

Story by Robyn Flans • Photos by Paul La Raia

Anton Fig

A high-angle photograph of a drummer, Anton Fig, wearing a dark blue patterned shirt and a black beret. He is positioned behind a drum kit, looking upwards and to the right. The kit includes several large brass cymbals and white drum heads. The background shows a stage setting with various pieces of equipment and cables.

Mr. Late Night Has His Day

After graduation Anton saved a little money from gigging in Boston and then moved to New York, where he knew he wouldn't get work immediately.

For about a year, the drummer lived in a loft with a sax player he knew from Boston. He sat in everywhere he could and began to get hired for some weddings and bar mitzvahs. Anton's first regular gig was with a signed band called Topaz, and while that group didn't go anywhere, one of the members introduced him to rockabilly revivalist Robert Gordon, with whom he began to work.

It was from there that the snowball effect began: Gordon's producer was also producing Joan Armatrading, so he hired Anton. At that session he met

Marcus Miller, as well as early Letterman show bandmembers Paul Shaffer, Hiram Bullock, and Will Lee. Fig then played on Paul Butterfield's last record along with Shaffer, and then an Ace Frehley record with Lee. Shortly after that, Shaffer and Lee went to a Robert Gordon gig and saw Anton play live.

After forever asking Shaffer for the opportunity to sub on the Letterman show with no luck ("I came to the conclusion he was never going to call me"), Fig finally got his chance when the show's original drummer, Steve

Jordan, got extremely busy. It wasn't long after this that Jordan exited the position and Fig got the job.

For fifteen years, Anton has entertained TV viewers by playing a *huge*

amount of music with the band and with a myriad of guest artists. He's also had the opportunity to perform at some of the largest events in music, including the annual Rock 'N' Roll Hall Of Fame induction ceremonies and the recent Concert For New York.

While Fig loves being on the popular show and has no plans of leaving, he's had something gnawing at him—to make his own record. And now with *Figments*, listeners are going to be surprised at the depth of this fine musician.



MD: With all the music you play, why was a solo record necessary for you as a drummer?

Anton: First of all, I think of myself not as a drummer, but as a musician. I'm not a prolific songwriter, but I like to sit down and mess around on keyboards or guitar and write. Over the years I've collected a bunch of songs and wanted to record them and be involved in the whole process of making a record, from the genesis of it to its completion. As a drummer, I've done so many sessions where I walk in and play on the basic track and go away. I wanted to do something of my own from start to finish.

MD: What have you learned from the experience?

Anton: It's taken a lot of commitment through the good and the bad. For the most part, the record has sounded really good to me, but there have been days when it hasn't. But even when it was tough going, I had to persevere because it was all up to me.

When you make a record, there are

equipment problems, problems with dealing with people on a producing level, and even problems with getting people interested in doing it. I found if I stopped working on the record, the recording process came to a screeching halt. If you're in a band and you don't feel like working, they can do guitar solos or vocals that day. If I didn't work, the record didn't progress at all. Most of the time I really wanted to be there, but there were times when I had to force myself through hard patches in order to get a small part of the record done.

MD: Can you address some of those rough patches?

Anton: The tough times included the learning curve of the equipment, which I had someone help me with. The equipment would go down, which messes up the creative process because all of a sudden you have to stop and be an engineer.

Then there was booking the musicians. I was basically cold-calling a lot of people. I knew them and they knew me, and while a bunch of people agreed to do it, there were

a few I never heard back from. I didn't mind when people declined, but I didn't like it when I didn't hear back at all.

There was one instance where I approached a huge American icon—whose name I won't mention—about being on the record. I played the demo for this person and they said, "Sure, I'll do it for you." I asked if the key was right, and they said yes. So I said that I would work up the song and then get back to them. Well, I did that, but when I went back to the artist, they said they had no recollection of ever having had the conversation with me. It was very embarrassing because it happened in front of a few other people. "What? I said I would play on your record?" It was horrible. Those were the kinds of setbacks that I had to work through.

MD: I know this isn't a drum record, per se, but are there any particular tracks that had a drum focus?

Anton: Playing the drums on the record was a completely secondary experience. It was about supporting the songs. That said,

Fig's New Tones

Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom Absolute in blue sparkle finish

- A. 10" mini timbale
- B. 4x10 Peter Erskine Sopranino model snare
- C. 6x14 Anton Fig model snare (maple shell with wood hoops)
- D. 8x10 tom
- E. 8x12 tom
- F. 9x13 tom
- G. 14x16 tom
- H. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 13" K/Z hi-hats
- 2. 14" Oriental China Trash
- 3. 18" K Custom Dark crash
- 4. 16" K Custom Dark crash
- 5. 20" K Custom ride
- 6. 13" Oriental Trash hi-hats
- 7. 20" A China High
- 8. 8" K splash on top of 10" K splash

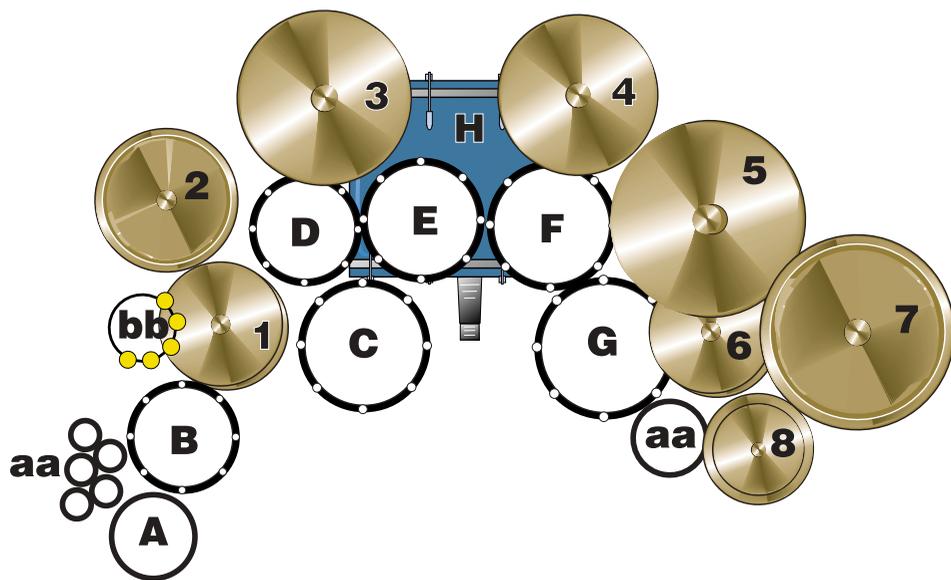
Electronics: ddrum triggers (not on snare drum)

aa. ddrum pads

Percussion: Rhythm Tech

bb. mounted tambourine

Hardware: Yamaha stands, rack, and double pedal (very loose tension) with plastic beaters, DW two-legged hi-hat stand



Heads: Remo coated CS on snare batter (medium tension, muffling ring) with Diplomat on bottom, coated Ambassadors on tops of toms (medium to loose tension, no muffling) with clear Diplomats on bottoms, PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with coated Ambassador on front (very loose tension, no hole in front head, small pillow slightly touching both heads for muffling)

Sticks: Vic Firth Anton Fig model

there's a song called "Home" that's in 6/8 and then goes into 4/4, and I changed the backbeat on the 6/8 part so it's not so common. It has the effect of the snare coming in where you don't expect it.

There's another song, "January/February/March," that is a very typical South African/Cape Town groove. It's not

difficult to play, but it's a matter of getting all the right elements in place. I tried to stay true to how that music sounded when I was growing up in South Africa.

One of the first songs I wrote is this big, heavy metal, half-time tune called "No Where You Go." I got Sebastian Bach and Ace Frehley to perform on it, which was

fun. I don't know if any of these could be called stellar drum performances, but I think the drums serve the song on these tracks.

MD: As a session player and even with what you do on the Letterman show, playing for the song is what you do.

Anton: It's the most important thing. I recorded each instrument separately on my record, so none of the musicians played together at the same time. But I worked very hard to make it sound like everyone was interacting.

I had rough demos of the songs, which had clicks on them, and I took those into the studio and recorded my drum tracks along to them. Once I got home I would adjust the drum tracks on the computer so they sounded good to me. Sometimes the parts required a lot of editing, and sometimes they didn't need anything. Then I would record the next instrument, having the musician play to my completed drum track and demo. Then I would fix those tracks. I would never go to the next instrument until everything was right with what I had.

There were two songs that I re-did the drum tracks on at the end of the process, because I wasn't happy with them—"No Where You Go" and "No Where You Go II."

MD: What weren't you happy with?

Anton: They just sounded dead. Then I had the interesting experience of playing to what everyone else had recorded. That was great because I could respond to what they were doing.

On "Inside Out," Ivan Neville sang lead and I played two sets of drums. I played a little Yamaha cocktail set to get a loop-type effect, and then I played my regular drums. I did the little kit first, just playing to my sequence of the song and a guide vocal. I knew the songs very well and had an idea of what I was going to play, although the songs took on a life of their own.

MD: How was it producing Paul Shaffer?

Anton: It was great. Paul is the ultimate sideman. I'm so used to him being my bandleader, but he was totally there with an "I'm here to serve you" vibe. He's really inventive and very encouraging, and he brought a lot of stuff to the table. He put down some really nice organ and piano in a very short time.

Then I did a song called "3/4 Folk,"

Lee On Fig Low-Frequency Reflections

As one of New York's premier bassists, Will Lee has played (and sometimes sung) with many "A list" artists, either on sessions or as part of David Letterman's house band for the past twenty years. First on NBC in the early '80s, the group, led by Paul Shaffer, was called The World's Most Dangerous Band. But since '93, when the show moved to CBS, the band has been called The CBS Orchestra.

Anton Fig and Will Lee trace the beginning of their relationship to the early '80s, when Fig was just starting out in New York. Working together in the Letterman band since '85, Anton and Will have earned the reputation as being one of the tightest rhythm sections in the business. In this short Q&A, Lee talks about his cohort, the man of whom he says he is a fan.



Anton and Will Lee on the Letterman set circa 1986

MD: What are your first recollections of Anton?

Will: Working with him on Ace Frehley's album. His playing was spectacular on that project. So after that I did my best to recommend him for the show. Plus, besides the fact that he could play his butt off, he was a very reliable guy, which was something that was really needed about that time on the show. We weren't getting that from a few of the guys. Attitudes were starting to emerge.

MD: Besides reliability, what's the job description for the drummer on Letterman?

Will: You have to be focused, you need a sense of humor, and you have to be able to play different styles.

MD: As a bass player, what makes you happy with a drummer?

Will: It's always nice to play with someone who has a right foot I can follow. I've been playing for so long that I've been exposed to some interesting time feels over the years. But lately, because of the intense competition, the standard of excellence among drummers has gotten much better. It's made my job more like floating on my back than crawling uphill.

I also love a guy who is confident without being cocky. Anton has that going for him. And he has a great sense of humor, even though the real Anton is a very shy cat.

MD: What specifically does he bring to the Letterman band?

Will: He's so versatile. You're not going to find a guy who can play South African music as well as he does, not in this country anyway. You're not going to find a guy who plays better rockabilly, heavy metal, or Dixieland than Anton.

I think Anton plays the best when he has to direct the band. When Paul takes off to do something else, he'll have a keyboard player cover his parts. But the person who drives the bus has to be somebody who knows the ropes. In those instances Anton becomes the leader of the band, and he has to be very demonstrative in his playing. Those are some of the most incredible moments from him.

I also like to go out and see him play with other people, like in the South African band he has. I got to see him a lot with Robert Gordon, with Chris Spedding on guitar and Tony Garnier on bass, and that was an amazing experience. They had such a strong band direction.

MD: What will people be surprised by when they hear Anton's new record?

Will: They're going to be surprised by his musicianship and harmonic knowledge. After all, we only think he's a drummer, but he's actually a complete musician—and a very trained and astute musician at that. The record is in heavy rotation in my house right now. There are some tearful moments and a lot of magic on it. It's a great record.

which is more African, with Richard Bona, who is an incredible bass player. He put the bass on and then I asked him to sing what I call “gibberish.” I had a melody but no words, and he does a style of singing that sounds like some exotic French thing, even though there were no specific lyrics. I kept that. And then I got Amit Chatterjee to sing some Indian syllables. I then blended their parts together to make it sound like a duet.

“January/February/March” was interesting to put together, because it’s a traditional South African song. I brought in some South African musicians to capture that feel.

MD: Can you explain what traditional South African music is?

Anton: The closest thing I can compare it to is what Paul Simon did on *Graceland*, if you took Paul’s parts away. The drums are usually pretty simple. The syncopation comes more from the bass, which is almost like a lead instrument. Then there are contrapuntal guitar lines on top of that.

The influence in Cape Town is from whites, blacks, and also Malay people, because the Cape was established as sort of a halfway house when the Dutch went to India for spices. So all sorts of people settled there. The music is an interesting mix of these different cultures.

MD: It sounds as though this record has consumed your life.

Anton: It has. It’s been my baby. The record has been going on for such a long time—three or four years—so the songs mark a big passage in my life. Some of them have actually changed and taken on different meanings, like “When The Good Die Young,” which I wrote with Chip Taylor for a children’s chorus. It’s about someone dying early. But since September 11, it means something else to me.

MD: During the making of your record you were executing your job as Letterman’s drummer. After fifteen years, how do you keep it fresh?

Anton: First of all, it’s one of the best jobs

in the world. I get to play with a lot of great people, I have national television exposure, I get to play every day, I get a regular paycheck, it takes very few hours out of my day, and it doesn’t preclude me from doing a lot of outside work. About the only thing I can’t do is go out on the road for extended periods of time.

In terms of keeping it fresh, even on the best gig in the world, where let’s say you’re playing for 20,000 people every night, you’re going to get bored on some nights. It’s impossible not to. So not every show is a stellar show. But I think with us, staying motivated comes down from the top. Letterman certainly has enough money to retire if he wanted to, but he works hard. And so does Paul. He leaves no stone unturned. He checks every single instrument and gets everything right. So when the rest of us see Letterman and Paul working like that, it filters down to us.

MD: You’ve gotten to back a lot of different artists on the show. But have there been





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Anton Fig

any particularly difficult ones to work with?

Anton: There's no time for that. When we play with artists, they come on and they're nervous. They just want to be portrayed as best they can, and it's our job to make them feel as comfortable as possible.

After we do our two shows on Thursday night, we're given the music for the following week. I go home and make my own charts of the songs. We're expected to know how to play them when we come in. We only get about forty minutes to rehearse with an artist, and sometimes Paul doesn't want to play it too many times, depending on who the artist is. If it's someone like Tony Bennett, you wouldn't play a song a million times. I remember Sammy Davis didn't want to rehearse at all. We ran the tune once, he did it fantastically, and then we did it on the show. It's up to us to learn the song fast and not burn out the artist.

Going back a few years, I remember we had James Brown on the show and he was trying to explain to me what beat he wanted. Unfortunately, I couldn't understand what he was saying. He was trying to explain a shuffle he wanted, and he actually sat down at the drums and sort of played it. It had all these accents. I had to decipher what he meant and get it together in a very short amount of time. Thankfully, it turned out really well.

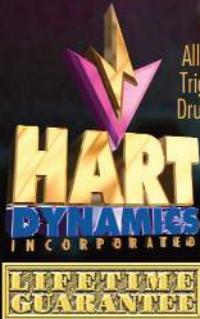
Back when we were at NBC, Miles Davis came on, which was probably my biggest musical thrill. I showed up for rehearsal, and he had a huge drum machine on a table with a velvet cover, as if, "Here's the great machine." Then I was told to try to play with it. But it wasn't sounding good. Then they took the drum machine away and said, "Why don't you go to brushes." I was terrified, thinking the next thing would be, "Why don't you stop playing."

It was Christmastime, and the tune was "We Three Kings," which is in 3/4. We were told that when Miles put his hand down, we should go into a funk thing. When he put his hand down again, we'd go back into the 3/4. So I asked Miles, "What do you want me to play?" And he walked up to me and growled, "RRRR, RRRRR, RRRR." That was his musical direction.

MD: What did that communicate to you?

Anton: I'm not sure. I sort of got a feeling,

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though. He started to play and I remember thinking, "This is no time to be nervous. I've worked my whole life to have an opportunity like this." I felt like I was sitting in the eye of a hurricane. It wasn't a loud piece or anything, but I felt like everything was swirling around me. Well, we played the song and it came off pretty good.

I went over to Miles after the show. I hadn't met him past that brief exchange. I

told him where I was from and that my son had just been born, and I showed him a picture. Then he said to me, "You've got a good feel for them drums." I was thrilled. I then left the room as soon as I could just in case he was going to say, "But..." [laughs] I've carried that memory with me, though. Whenever I've struggled on a session, or someone wasn't satisfied with what I was doing, I'd just think, "If it was good enough for Miles..."



Anton Tracks

These are the recordings Anton says best represent his playing.

Artist	Recording
Anton Fig	Figments
various	Concert For New York City
various	Bob Dylan 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration
Joan Armatrading	Me Myself I
Ace Frehley	Ace Frehley
Ace Frehley	Frehley's Comet
Spider	Spider
Warren Zevon	My Ride Is Here

And these are the ones he listens to for inspiration.

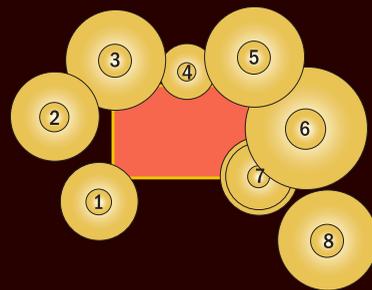
Artist	Recording	Drummer
Beach Boys	Pet Sounds	Hal Blaine
Miles Davis	Live-Evil	Jack DeJohnette
Tony Williams	Believe It	Tony Williams
Weather Report	Mysterious Traveler	Ishmael Wilburn
The Who	Live At Leeds	Keith Moon
Jimi Hendrix	Electric Ladyland	Mitch Mitchell, Buddy Miles
McCoy Tyner	The Real McCoy	Elvin Jones
Bob Marley	all	Carlton Barrett
Miroslav Vitous	Freedom Jazz Dance	Jack DeJohnette
Booker T. & The MG's	all	Al Jackson

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6. 22" K Custom Ride
7. 12"/14" Oriental Remote Trash Hats
8. 18" Oriental China Trash

Zildjian

Anton Fig

MD: Ray Charles has a reputation for chewing up and spitting out players.

Anton: I've played with him on the show and at the Rock 'N' Roll Hall Of Fame, and I've never had a problem. First of all, you have to watch his feet. He conducts with them. I remember the first time I played with him on the Letterman show. I couldn't see his feet, so I actually got a camera monitor so I could. Paul hipped me to that.

Sometimes an artist might not be playing completely in time, so you have to go with them. You can't fight them on it; you blend along with them. The drummer's job is to hold everyone's place and create a platform for everyone else. And within that you have to find ways to decipher what the artist wants.

MD: You've done some incredible gigs. But what was it like playing at Madison Square Garden for the Concert For New York, the show that honored the victims of September 11?

Anton: The Concert For New York was an amazing experience. The Letterman band was the house band at the Garden, which is a great place to play. But honestly, I felt a little

guilty, because I was having such a great time and having so many of my childhood dreams come true. I played with David Bowie, Eric Clapton, James Taylor, Mick Jagger, and Keith Richards, and I felt really at home on the stage with all those people. I felt I could do their music with some degree of conviction and authority.

I think the biggest rush I got was playing with Jagger and Richards. I recorded one of Mick's solo records a few years ago, and I played with Keith once or twice, but playing with them together just felt amazing. And then I had to switch gears for James Taylor, playing at a different dynamic level to get into the pulse of his music. It all felt really good. There was a lot of joy involved in that show, but many other emotions—and a lot of tears—at the same time.

MD: What have been a couple of recent sessions that you've enjoyed?

Anton: One was John Phillips' record, *Phillips 66*. It was nice because we recorded it the old way, where everyone was playing together. The drums were in a different room, but it was a collective take all at the same time. We didn't use any click tracks

either, so it was totally organic music.

MD: Given that we have different technology today, what are the pros and cons of recording "the old way" now?

Anton: When you do that, you get ensemble playing. Everyone has to execute their part well and together. That's the reason people don't record like that a lot of the time. But what you do get is the ability to instantly know when the take feels right, and you get an interchange among people who are immediately reacting to each other. It's like making music without a net.

Nowadays people go in and put their parts down separately, which is how I did my record. But I did that because I couldn't get everyone together at the same time. That way you can go in and get each instrument really right before moving on. But when I cut my teeth coming up in New York, we would do rhythm section dates where they would go for drums, bass, and perhaps rhythm guitar, all at the same time—and we didn't play with click tracks. We had to get a really good take.

One of the positive aspects of the new technology is recording goes much faster



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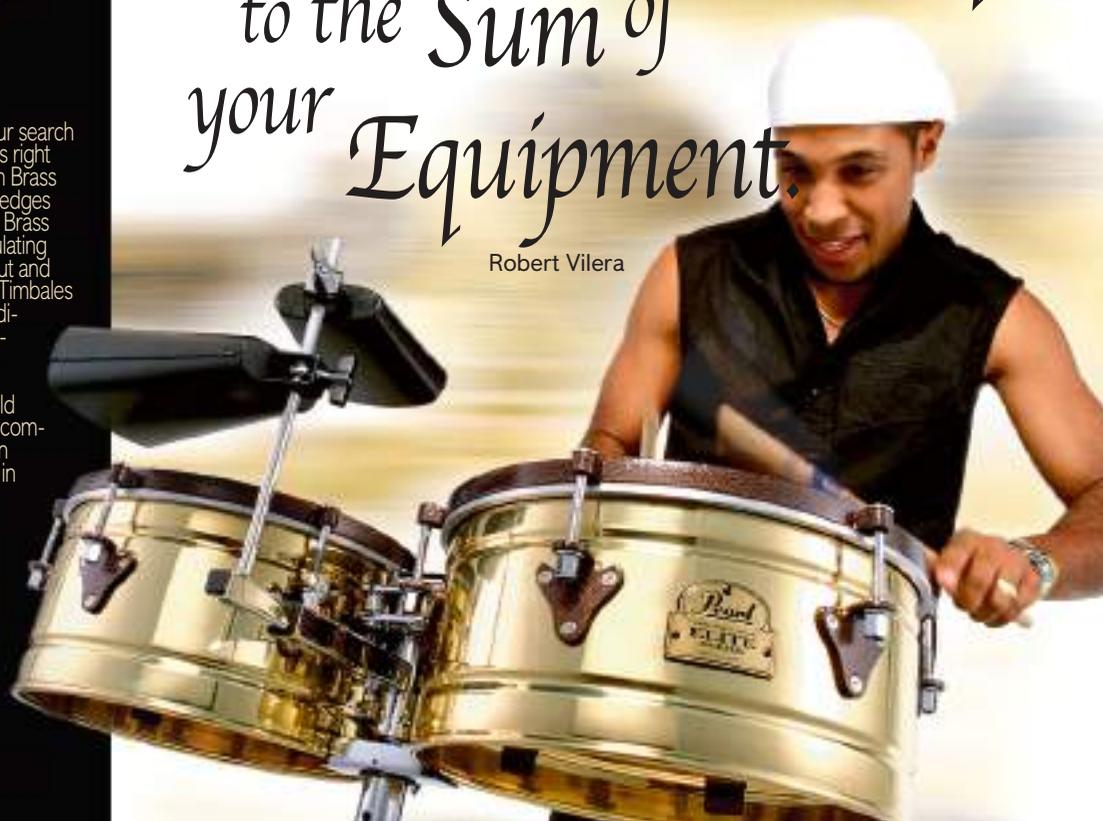
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Robert Vilera



because you can play a couple of takes, plopping them into Pro Tools, and if there's a note out of place, it's easily fixed. But that can become assembly-line music.

I did a record with Chip Taylor recently that was an ensemble kind of date. The drums were set up in a garage and we just played. We never did more than two takes, and the record came out *great*. You hear so much music that is over-produced these days. People forget about the heart of just sitting down and playing.

I also did a Warren Zevon record recently, where Warren came into town with his Pro Tools files and gave me free rein to do what I wanted, although he guided me at points. I got to put the drums on and edit them myself and then put on different layers of percussion.

MD: That had to be creative.

Anton: Absolutely. Don't get me wrong, great records are being made today. I'm not saying you have to record like they did in the '60s. But I think every musician should have a healthy diet of playing the old-fashioned way as well as using the new technology.

MD: Do you have time to woodshed, or is it something you even want to do anymore?

Anton: It's definitely something I want to do. I have a practice space right next door to the Letterman show, so if there's another band on the show that we're not playing with, I'll go next door for half an hour and practice. But I don't sit in a room for five or six hours a day and practice any more, although I wish I did.

MD: Why?

Anton: When you feel a little more on top of your game, you play with more confidence. You feel that you can handle more. I would like to be able to play all kinds of music to the best of my ability, and that requires a certain amount of dedication to the instrument.

MD: What specifically would you practice?

Anton: I continue to work on coordination exercises to free up my hands and legs. I always work on my timing, and practicing with a metronome is good for that. That said, the feel is the most important thing, and music doesn't have to be perfectly in

time to feel good.

I have a saying that I mention at my clinics: Time + Heartbeat = Feel. Your heartbeat is the way you feel about a piece of music. If you surge in the chorus or pull back in the verse, it's your own organic experience. Feel is the most important thing, though, because you can play the same song with many different interpretations. If Levon Helm plays a song, it's going to sound completely different from the way Carter Beauford plays it.

You can have all the chops in the world, which is great as long as you know when to use them. I feel it's important to have reserve power, which you don't use unless the song calls for it. Practicing gives you those reserves.

MD: Although you were self-taught in South Africa, is it true you had lessons a little later?

Anton: When I came to America, just as I was about to turn nineteen, I went to the New England Conservatory and studied with Vic Firth. I did two or three months one summer with Alan Dawson too. I studied snare drum, timpani, and mallets with

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Anton Fig

Vic, and played in the orchestra. In the jazz department, I studied with the late Jaki Byard and played in his big band. I also studied with George Russell and played in his big band. In fact, I played in his big band with Tony Williams at Carnegie Hall when I was still in college.

Russell brought me down for the rehearsals and then said I could do the show, with Tony center stage and me back with the band. Playing that show along with Tony was amazing. I felt like I was completely under Tony's centrifugal force and I was getting thrown around wherever he wanted to go. I was swimming for my life.

He was actually very generous, because there was a spot where he and I traded fours and he made it easy for me. I was totally out of my league, but it was an incredible experience.

Later on, I did have a good relationship with Tony. I played with him on the Letterman show on two occasions, and he called me once to ask about my cymbal setup. I was very flattered. He was supposed to sub for me on the show, but he passed away the week before.

MD: Do you still study with teachers?

Anton: I think it's important to continue

studying. There's always something to learn. From time to time I'll get a feeling inside that I need to learn something new, so I'll go to a teacher and let him show me a few things. About two or three years ago I had some lessons with drum guru Freddie Gruber, who teaches people like Dave Weckl and Steve Smith.

I really enjoyed studying with Freddie. He didn't tell me how to play a paradiddle or some specific technical thing. He mostly focused on playing in a seamless manner. It has to do with how to sit correctly, how to have the bass drum beater bounce off the head like you would bounce a basketball. It was a lot about action and reaction, being comfortable, and using the right motion.

MD: Let's touch on your equipment.

Anton: I've been with Zildjian from before I was known, and I've continued my relationship with them. I think they make great cymbals for whatever style of music you play. There's so much talk about how great vintage gear is, but in my opinion that doesn't apply to cymbals. Modern cymbals sound better to me than old ones. People talk about their prized old Ks, and that's cool. But I think most of the old cymbals are totally uncontrollable. Today's cymbals

have as much personality as those older ones, but they also have a bit more control. I prefer a lot of impact sound and a fast decay. I find that works best for all of the styles I have to cover.

As for sticks, I've used Vic Firth's for years. I'm very fond of them. And I've been with Yamaha for a long time too. I'm now using their Maple Custom Absolute series, which are incredible drums. They're somewhat lighter in weight, which I feel gives you a better sound than heavier drums. Yamaha also made a signature snare drum for me, which is a maple-shelled 6x14 drum with wood hoops. They tell me it's their best-selling snare drum. I think it's a fantastic drum because it has a lot of bottom as well as a nice high-end crack.

MD: So what's next in the adventures of Anton Fig?

Anton: Well, after spending so much time on my record, I'm back to focusing on my playing. I'm really enjoying revisiting the drums again, and in some ways I feel as though I'm reacquainting myself with the instrument. It's funny how good it makes you feel. Drumming is the lifeblood of everything for me.



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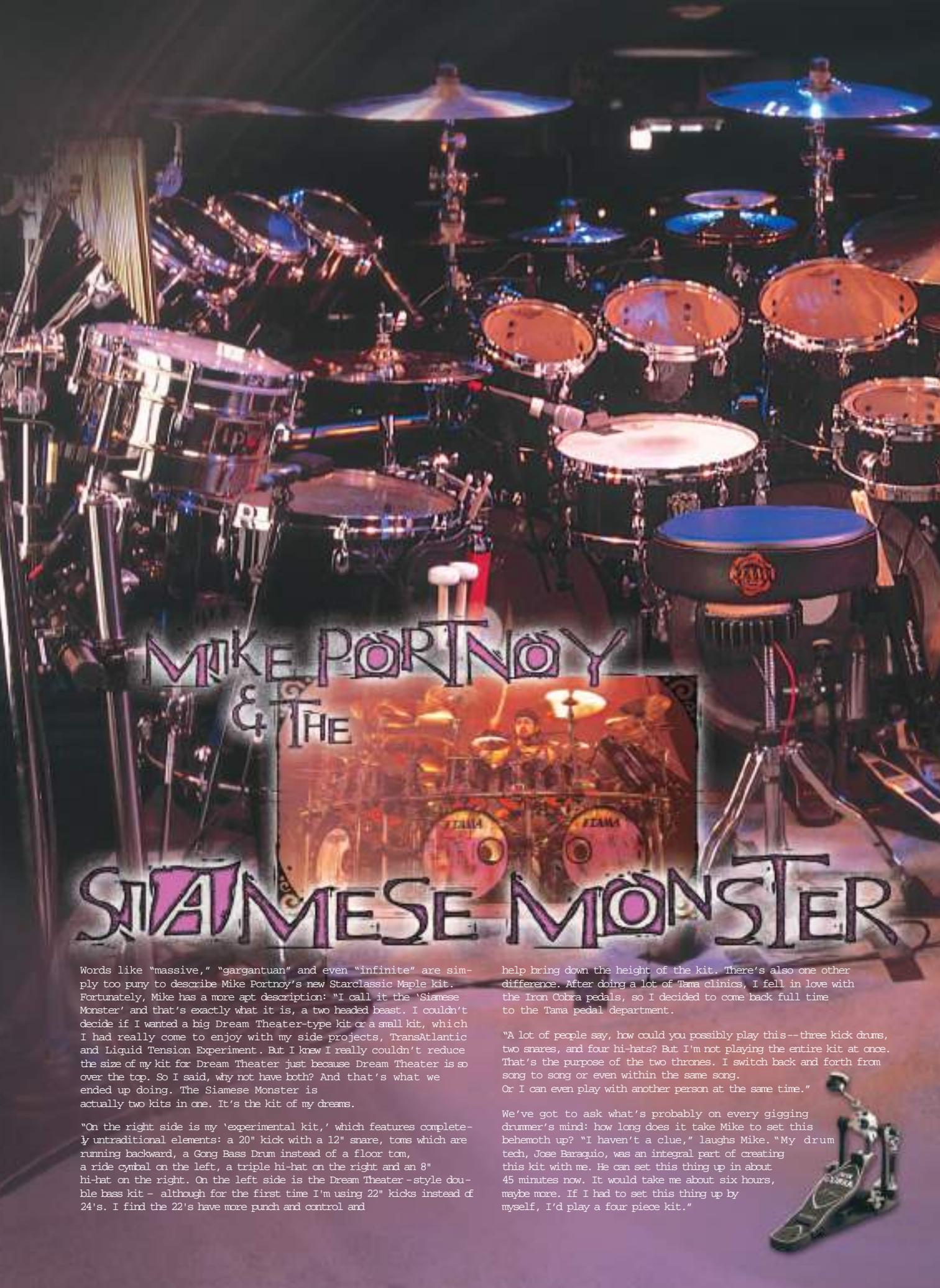
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MIKE PORTNOY & THE SIAMESE MONSTER

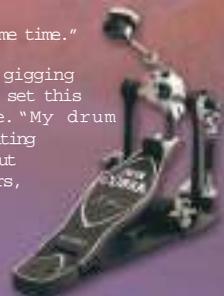
Words like "massive," "gargantuan" and even "infinite" are simply too puny to describe Mike Portnoy's new Starclassic Maple kit. Fortunately, Mike has a more apt description: "I call it the 'Siamese Monster' and that's exactly what it is, a two headed beast. I couldn't decide if I wanted a big Dream Theater-type kit or a small kit, which I had really come to enjoy with my side projects, TransAtlantic and Liquid Tension Experiment. But I knew I really couldn't reduce the size of my kit for Dream Theater just because Dream Theater is so over the top. So I said, why not have both? And that's what we ended up doing. The Siamese Monster is actually two kits in one. It's the kit of my dreams.

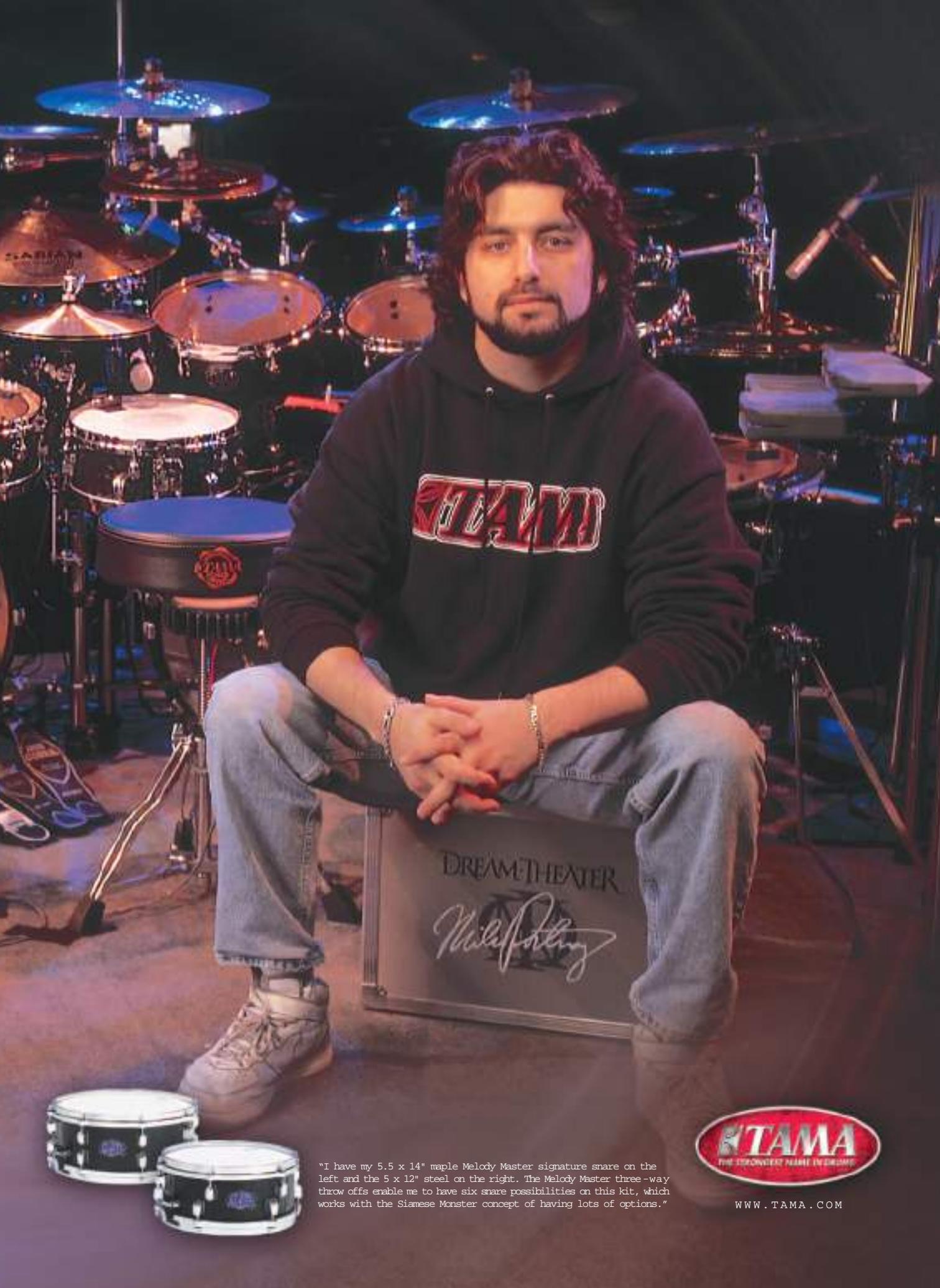
"On the right side is my 'experimental kit,' which features completely untraditional elements: a 20" kick with a 12" snare, toms which are running backward, a Gong Bass Drum instead of a floor tom, a ride cymbal on the left, a triple hi-hat on the right and an 8" hi-hat on the left. On the left side is the Dream Theater-style double bass kit - although for the first time I'm using 22" kicks instead of 24's. I find the 22's have more punch and control and

help bring down the height of the kit. There's also one other difference. After doing a lot of Tama clinics, I fell in love with the Iron Cobra pedals, so I decided to come back full time to the Tama pedal department.

"A lot of people say, how could you possibly play this--three kick drums, two snares, and four hi-hats? But I'm not playing the entire kit at once. That's the purpose of the two thrones. I switch back and forth from song to song or even within the same song. Or I can even play with another person at the same time."

We've got to ask what's probably on every gigging drummer's mind: how long does it take Mike to set this behemoth up? "I haven't a clue," laughs Mike. "My drum tech, Jose Baraquio, was an integral part of creating this kit with me. He can set this thing up in about 45 minutes now. It would take me about six hours, maybe more. If I had to set this thing up by myself, I'd play a four piece kit."





TEAM

DREAM THEATER
Mike Portnoy

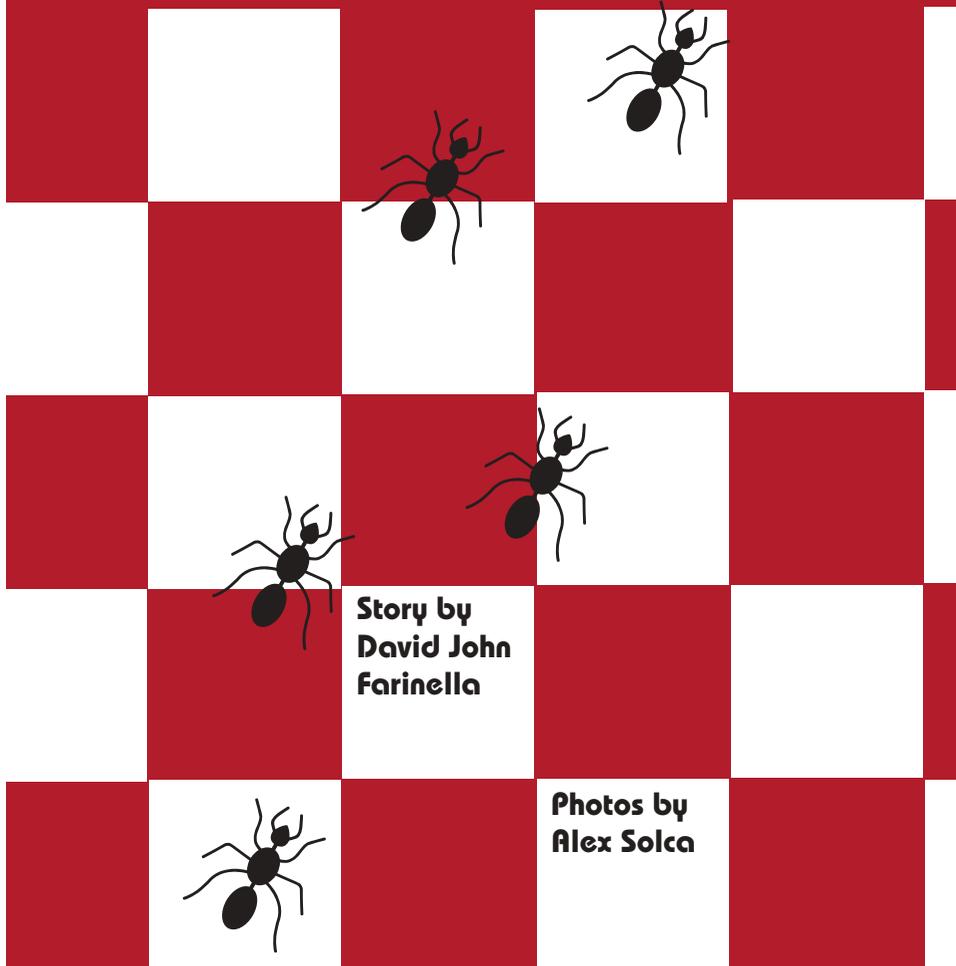


"I have my 5.5 x 14" maple Melody Master signature snare on the left and the 5 x 12" steel on the right. The Melody Master three-way throw offs enable me to have six snare possibilities on this kit, which works with the Siamese Monster concept of having lots of options."



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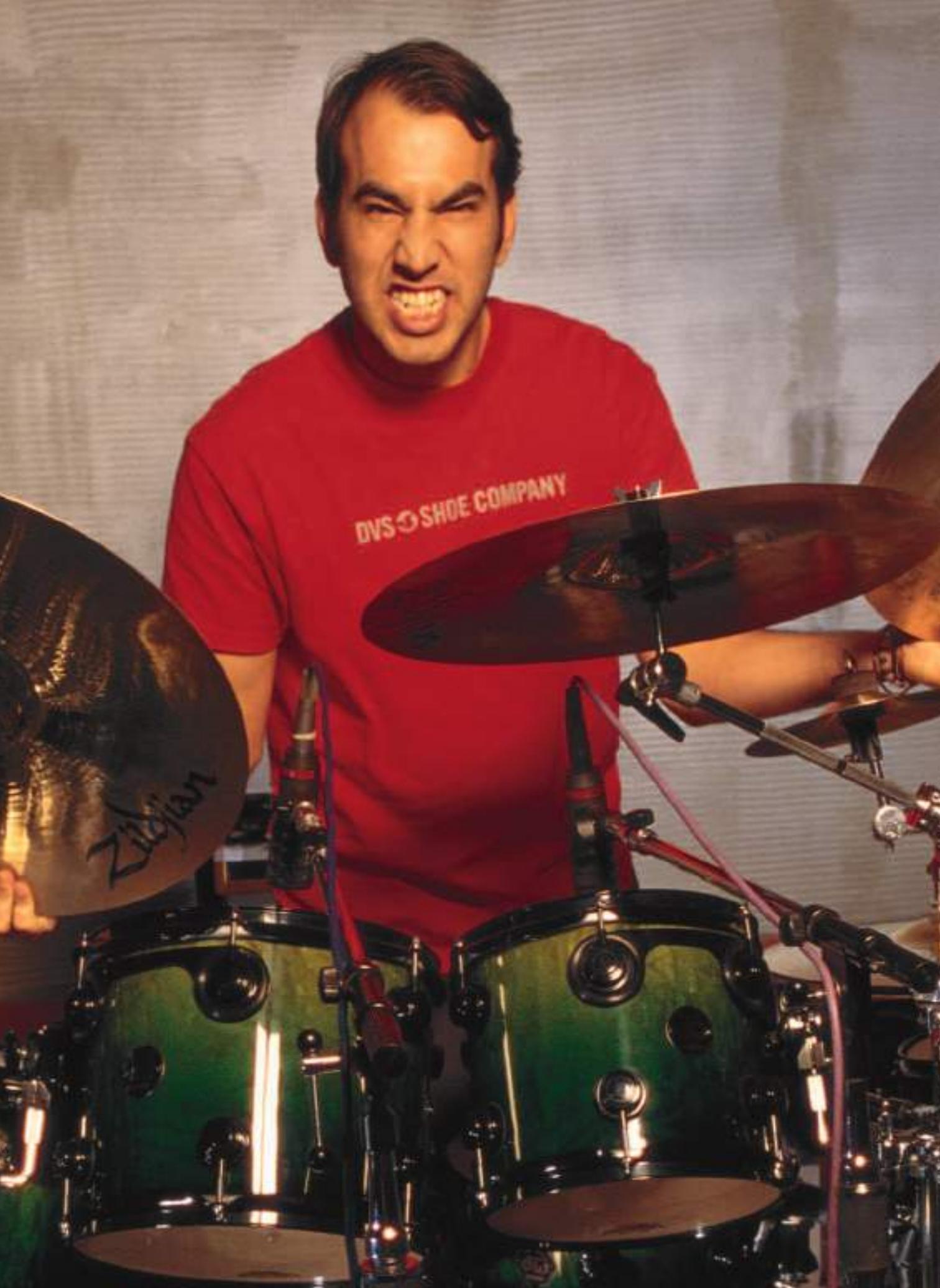
Alien Ant Farm's
Mike Cosgrove
Drummer For Life



Story by
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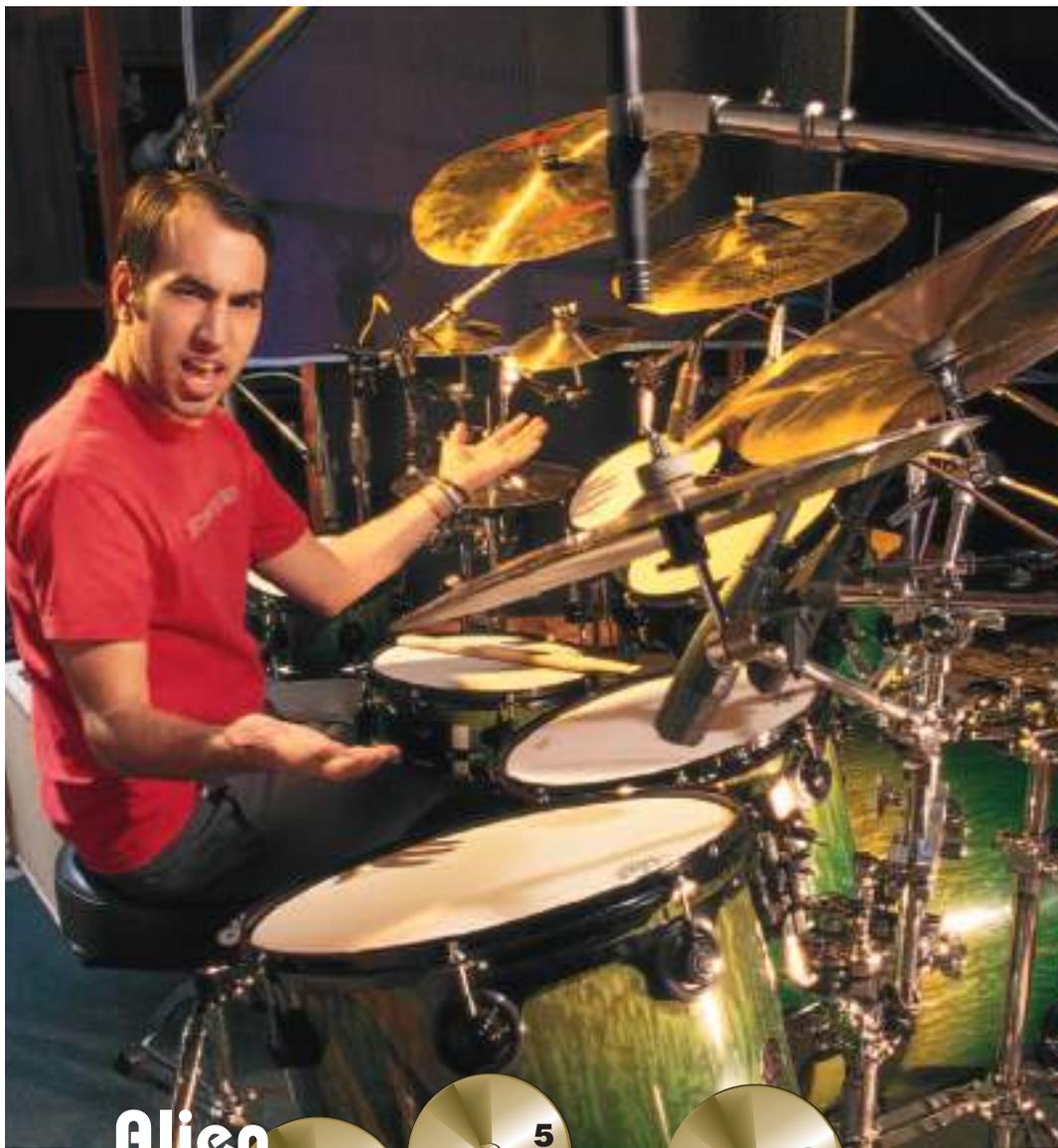
"This is the difference," Alien Ant Farm drummer Mike Cosgrove says as he looks around the exclusive Foundation Room at the House Of Blues in Los Angeles. "We're playing here." Mike is reminded that it was just last year that the band was playing the slightly less prestigious Hollywood club Coconut Teaser, way down Sunset Boulevard. "Yeah, we've come ten blocks," he replies with a laugh.

In just a year, Alien Ant Farm has been able to take the great leap that those ten blocks symbolize thanks to a platinum debut album (*ANThology*), a pair of hit songs ("Movies" and the Grammy-nominated "Smooth Criminal"), and a relentless touring schedule. Yet this isn't an overnight success story. Alien Ant Farm, which features Cosgrove, vocalist Dryden Mitchell, guitarist Terry Corso, and Tye Zamora on bass, spent five years writing, practicing, and playing shows up and down the California coast before they even got a major-label nod.

"We worked," Cosgrove asserts. "From the moment of conception, we were writing our own material and recording it. We also did things like go through trash dumpsters to find stuff to soundproof our rehearsal space." Apparently it wasn't a question of how *hard* it would be to make it in the music business, but simply how long it would take. "We were just going to attack it," Cosgrove insists. "We kept thinking that we were going to make it no matter what. I guess we were too dumb to quit."

It's that same kind of devotion that has driven Cosgrove to become a highly respected young drummer, considered by many to be one of the top up & coming players today. Even a cursory listen to his work with Alien Ant Farm reveals great technique, inventive ideas, and an ability to support the song.

Cosgrove picked up his first kit, a Tama Rockstar, when he was twelve years old. While he spent hours practicing along to his metal heroes, Mike also started playing in the garage with friend Billy Meyer of



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- B.** 5x13 maple snare
- C.** 9x10 tom
- D.** 10x12 tom
- E.** 12x14 tom
- F.** 14x16 tom
- G.** 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1.** 13" A Custom hi-hats
- 2.** 8" K splash
- 3.** 10" A Custom splash
- 4.** 20" Oriental Crash Of Doom
- 5.** 18" A Custom crash
- 6.** 20" A Custom Projection ride
- 7.** 18" China (high)
- 8.** 16" A Custom crash

Percussion:

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snare), clear Ambassadors on bottoms of toms, clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter, coated Ambassador on front (bass drum heads tuned loose, a DW pillow for muffling)

Sticks: Zildjian Vinnie Colaiuta model (hickory with wood tip)





the band The Color Red. "He got his first guitar the same time I got my first drumset," Cosgrove recalls, "and we would jam

together." Billy's dad taught them the rock 'n' roll standards "Black Magic Woman," "Wipeout," "Walkin' The Dog," and "Roll

Over Beethoven."

"At that time I was only into metal," Cosgrove says. "There I was, wearing my



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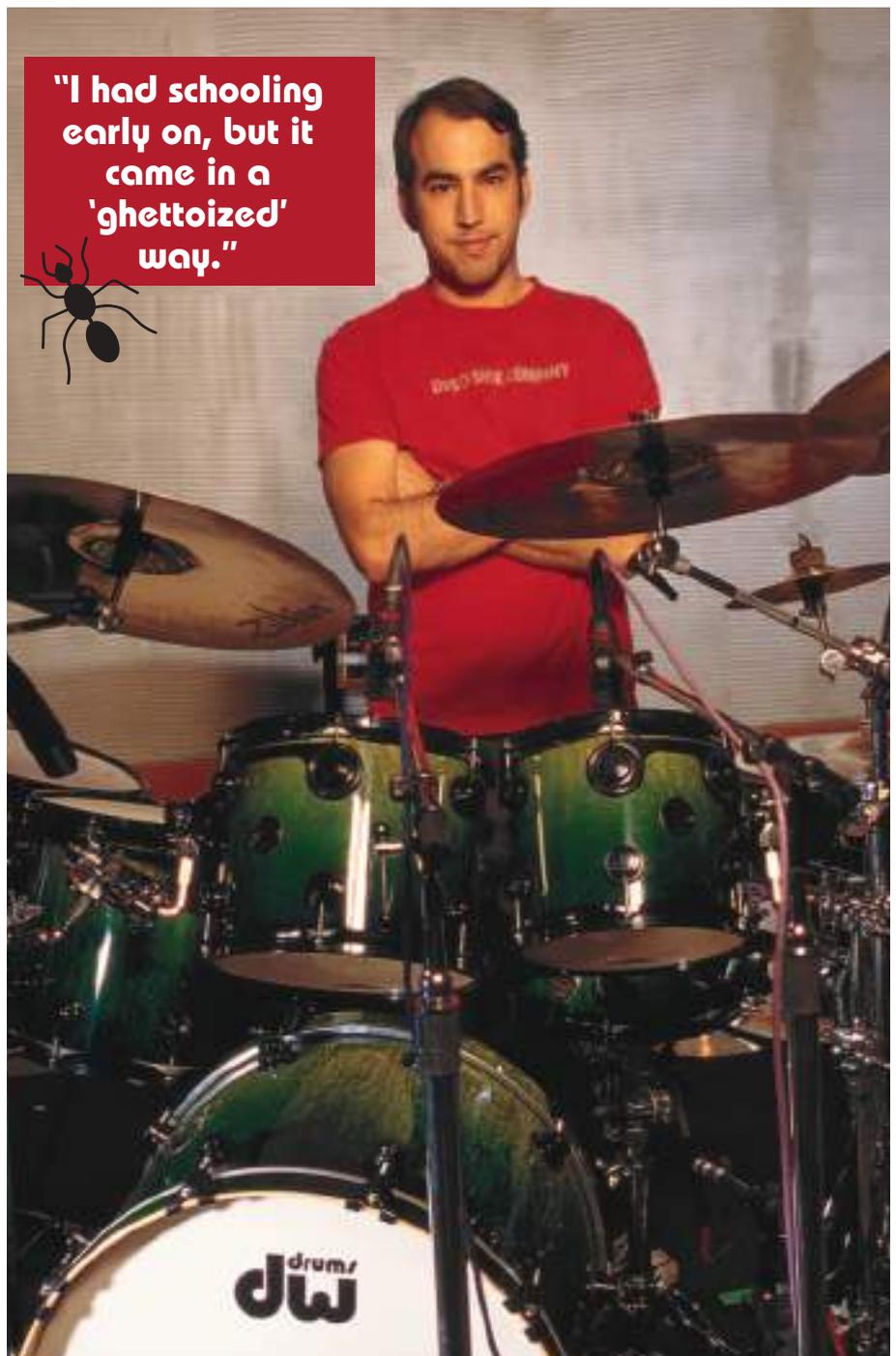
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Mike Cosgrove

"I had schooling
early on, but it
came in a
'ghettoized'
way."



leather jacket and metal T-shirts, and going to my friend's house every day after school to play these old rock 'n' roll tunes. The music seemed simple, but the goal was to play it correctly and make it sound right. I was in the eighth grade, and I'd only been playing a year or two, but that was the challenge—to make that material sound right. So I had schooling early on, though it came in a 'ghettoized' way."

Even as he was learning the basics by sitting behind a kit, Cosgrove knew there

was much more knowledge to be gleaned. "I could play basic rock songs and covers in a garage band," he says. "But then I got to the point where I felt like I had no finesse. I just didn't have any touch." So Cosgrove turned to a pair of teachers, Jay Laskowsky and Rick Steed, to further his technique. Steed taught him the standard rudiments, as well as how to read music and how to keep solid time. "It was like a crash course," Mike says, "because I hadn't gone to school."

Cosgrove also did his homework, buying just about any drum book he could get his hands on. "I haven't gotten through all of them," he points out. "It's not like I worked them front-to-back and consumed them all. But I did go through them at my own pace." He's quick to add, "It wasn't like I was some nerd stuck in a room. I was just very passionate about drumming. I kept at it."

The Cosgrove educational program hasn't stopped yet. Indeed, the drummer continues to study. Over the years he's turned to books like *The Sound Of Brushes* by Ed Thigpen, *Mel Bay's Complete Modern Drumset* by Frank Briggs, and *The Art Of Drumming* by Bob Kaufman. "And *Modern Drummer* has been one of the most important parts of my library," Mike asserts. "I pull out all of the educational sections and photocopy them. Then I put the copies into folders and take them on the road with me to give me something to work on."

Apparently Cosgrove practices all of the time. Even when Alien Ant Farm has a rare week off, he'll pull out albums such as Sting's *Ten Summoner's Tales*, Steely Dan's *Aja*, or Erykah Badu's *Mama's Gun* and work out the patterns. "I'll pick out a cool beat or fill and really try to get inside of it," he says. "And that stuff will filter into my playing and make it into our music in some way."

Keeping that practice routine helps the drummer when the band is on the road. "Sometimes when we're out playing these thirty-minute sets," Cosgrove says, "like on the *Warped* tour or for radio shows, you barely get time to touch your drums. So it's tough to keep your chops up. But that's part of the challenge. You have to pull from all of the stuff you work on when you're home, because that can be the only time you have. You have to practice."

Cosgrove was able to dedicate so much time to learning the drums in his youth because of his supportive family. In fact, when he was playing in one of his first bands—a metal outfit—his mom wanted to come to the shows. "I was like, 'No, you can't come,'" Mike says with a laugh. "I was fifteen years old, and I couldn't be cool with my mom at the show. So she would say, 'Can I come if I buy you a new piece of gear?' Well, I wanted new stuff,

so my mom started coming to the gigs! My birthday and Christmas presents always seemed to come from Zildjian, Remo, and DW."

Though he would get the basics as gifts, Mike worked hard to earn enough money to buy his first DW kit. "I got my first job," he explains, "took out a loan, and ordered the kit." The drum store told him it would be six weeks, but it turned out to be much longer. "I ordered all custom stuff," he says. "It was my first real kit, and I wanted it the way I wanted it. I had to wait, but it

was worth it. When I got the drums home I remember thinking, Oh my God, this is the best thing in the world."

Cosgrove was nineteen when he bought that kit, two years before the conception of Alien Ant Farm, although all of the bandmembers knew each other. In fact, they played in each other's bands, but not as the quartet they are now. "We all knew each other and how capable we were," Mike says. "We were in pretty good bands that were doing good things, but it just wasn't exactly what each of us wanted. So we

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Mike Cosgrove



wasn't just interested in showing what I could do as a drummer. I wanted to be involved in everything, from the writing and performing to the producing."

Alien Ant Farm learned from that first experience and applied those lessons to the sessions that would become their breakout record, *ANThology*. Cosgrove also got a hand from the Drum Doctor, Ross Garfield. "Ross has so much experience helping drummers with their gear in the studio," Mike explains. "He's been involved in every type of session—big and small. I could tell him the different drummers and tracks that I liked and he knew exactly what they used."

finally got together, talked, and found out that we were very compatible musically. Plus we got along as friends."

One of the first songs the newly formed band wrote together was "Wish," (which is included on *ANThology*). It gave them a lot of confidence. They continued to write, coming up with a collection of ten songs that the band would eventually record with local producer Jim Wirt. They released that material themselves on a disc called *Greatest Hits*,

which helped build a huge buzz around the band. (That debut record went on to win the best independent album award at the 1999 LA Music Awards, which led to Alien Ant Farm's major-label deal.)

Though he'd been in the studio before, those first AAF demo sessions were different for Cosgrove. He kept his eyes open. "I really wanted to learn what to do and what to play to make the songs as good as they could be on record," he says. "And I

Though Cosgrove's main kit is a DW, he utilized a number of different snare drums on the album. On "Smooth Criminal," Mike used a DW with a copper shell. He turned to an Aytte for the excellent side-stick sound on the song "Orange Appeal." And on "Wish" he used a Tama snare that Garfield calls "The Terminator." "I loved the sound of that drum," Mike admits, "but I didn't want to use it on every song. I wanted some different textures."



Cosgrove also changed kits for the song “Happy Death Day.” “I used a vintage Ludwig kit that Ross brought in,” he remembers. “Apparently Lenny Kravitz and a lot of other artists have used it. But I wanted that older tone for the tune, and Ross set it up right.”

During the tracking sessions, Cosgrove had the opportunity to work with legendary LA percussionist Lenny Castro on the song “Attitude.” It’s turned into Cosgrove’s favorite track on the album. “The song started from this little harmonic thing that was only a bridge,” Mike says. “When I heard it I immediately wanted to do a kind of New Orleans snare-type groove, the type of thing Carter Beauford does. I also thought the tune had a Seal or Sade feel to it. I wanted to give it a great feel that also had an open quality to it so that the music and the melody could really sing.”

Playing with Castro was a great experience for Mike. “I had my ideas and conveyed them to Lenny,” he explains, “and he was able to play exactly what I had in mind right away. It was amazing. He really added so much to the feel of that track.”

Where “Attitude” offered Cosgrove a chance to excel as a musician, songs like “Sticks And Stones” and “Courage” allowed him to pay homage to some of his heroes. “On ‘Sticks And Stones,’ I would say I was going for a Stewart Copeland type of thing,”

he admits. “But it’s also kind of like a Vinnie Colaiuta thing. I’m not trying to say that I’m as good as Vinnie or Stewart. I played a couple of accent things that those drummers might do—if they were having a

sary to deviate from what’s gotten them to the limelight. “People think we must be sick of playing ‘Smooth Criminal,’” Mike says, “but I love playing that song. It’s so much fun. It grooves. Same with ‘Wish.’”

Ant Tracks

These are the recordings that Mike listens to for inspiration.

Artist	Recording	Drummer
Sting	Ten Summoner’s Tales	Vinnie Colaiuta
Steely Dan	Aja	Steve Gadd, Paul Humphrey, Jim Keltner, Ed Greene, Rick Marotta, Bernard Purdie
Dave Matthews Band	all	Carter Beauford
Tower Of Power	all	David Garibaldi
Ben Folds Five	all	Darren Jesse
The Headhunters	Return Of The Headhunters!	Mike Clark
Tool	all	Danny Carey
Fiona Apple	When The Pawn Hits...	Jim Keltner, Matt Chamberlain



bad day,” Mike says with a laugh.

On “Courage,” Cosgrove was going for another Carter Beauford approach. “I played that type of syncopated hi-hat groove on the verses that he does,” Mike says. “It’s broken up and unpredictable. I thought that was a good approach for the tune, because I didn’t want everybody to know what was coming. I didn’t want to play it too straight.”

Even as Alien Ant Farm has spent the majority of the last year on the road—moving ten blocks down Sunset Boulevard in the process—the band hasn’t felt it neces-

We’ve been playing it forever, but it’s a blast to play. I enjoy our music.”

And he loves working with his bandmates. “I get just as much of a kick listening to the guys doing their parts as I do pulling off my own,” he says. “Alien Ant Farm is the first band I’ve been in where I really feel proud of what we’re doing, because I feel we’re original.” He pauses and then starts to laugh, “Okay, so we have a hit record by covering a Michael Jackson tune. Oh well.”



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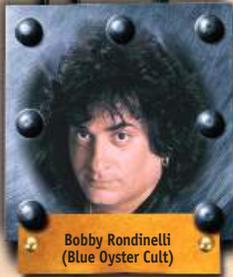
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(Clinician)



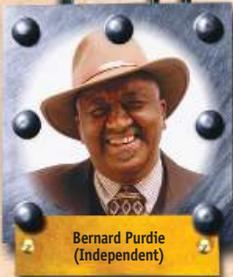
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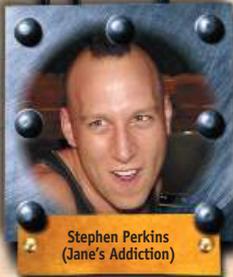
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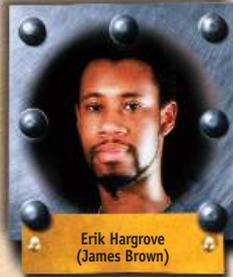
Bobby Rondinelli
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Stephen Perkins
(Jane's Addiction)



Erik Hargrove
(James Brown)

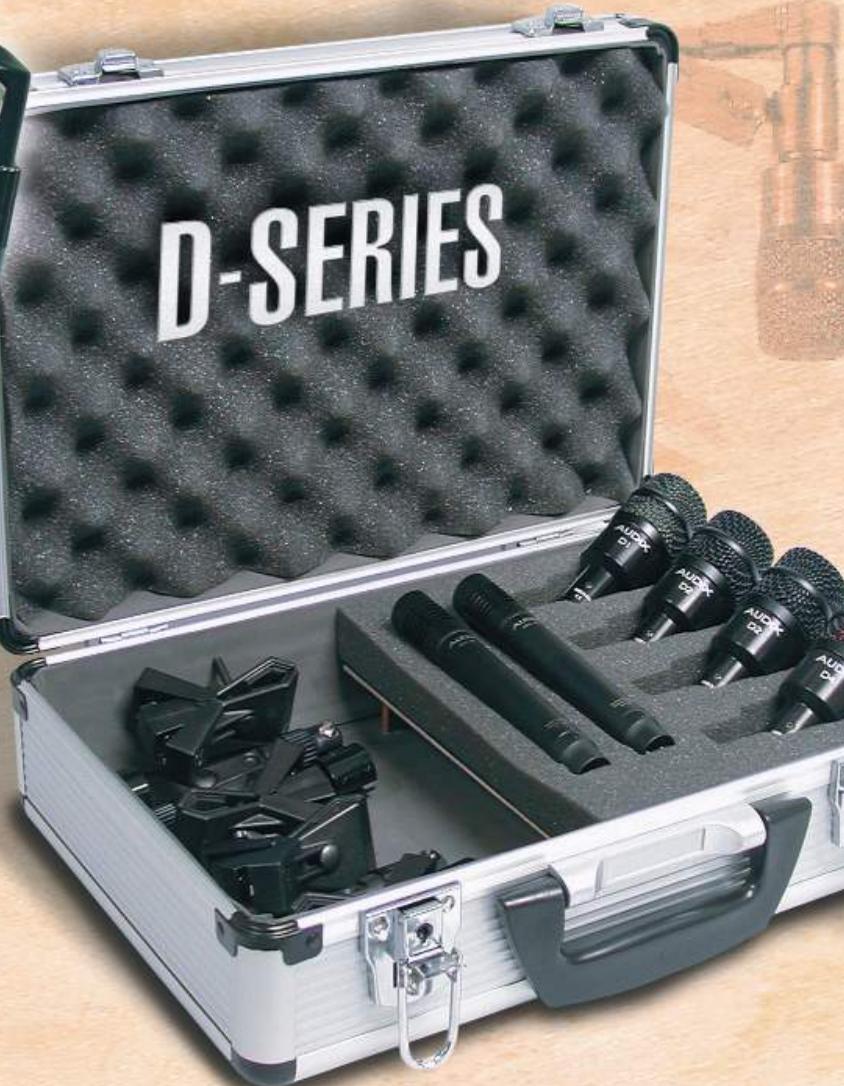


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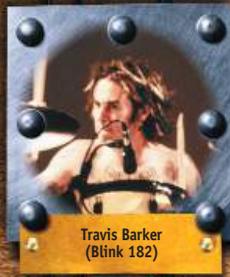
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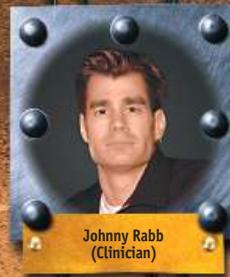
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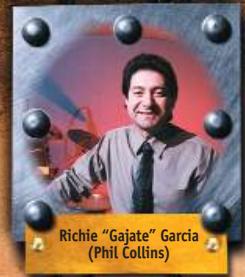
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(Blink 182)



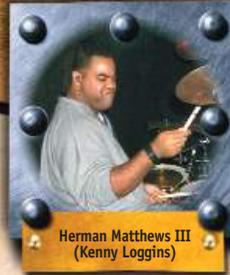
Johnny Rabb
(Clinician)



Richie "Gajate" Garcia
(Phil Collins)



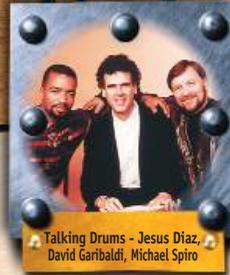
Vicki Randle
(Tonight Show Band)



Herman Matthews III
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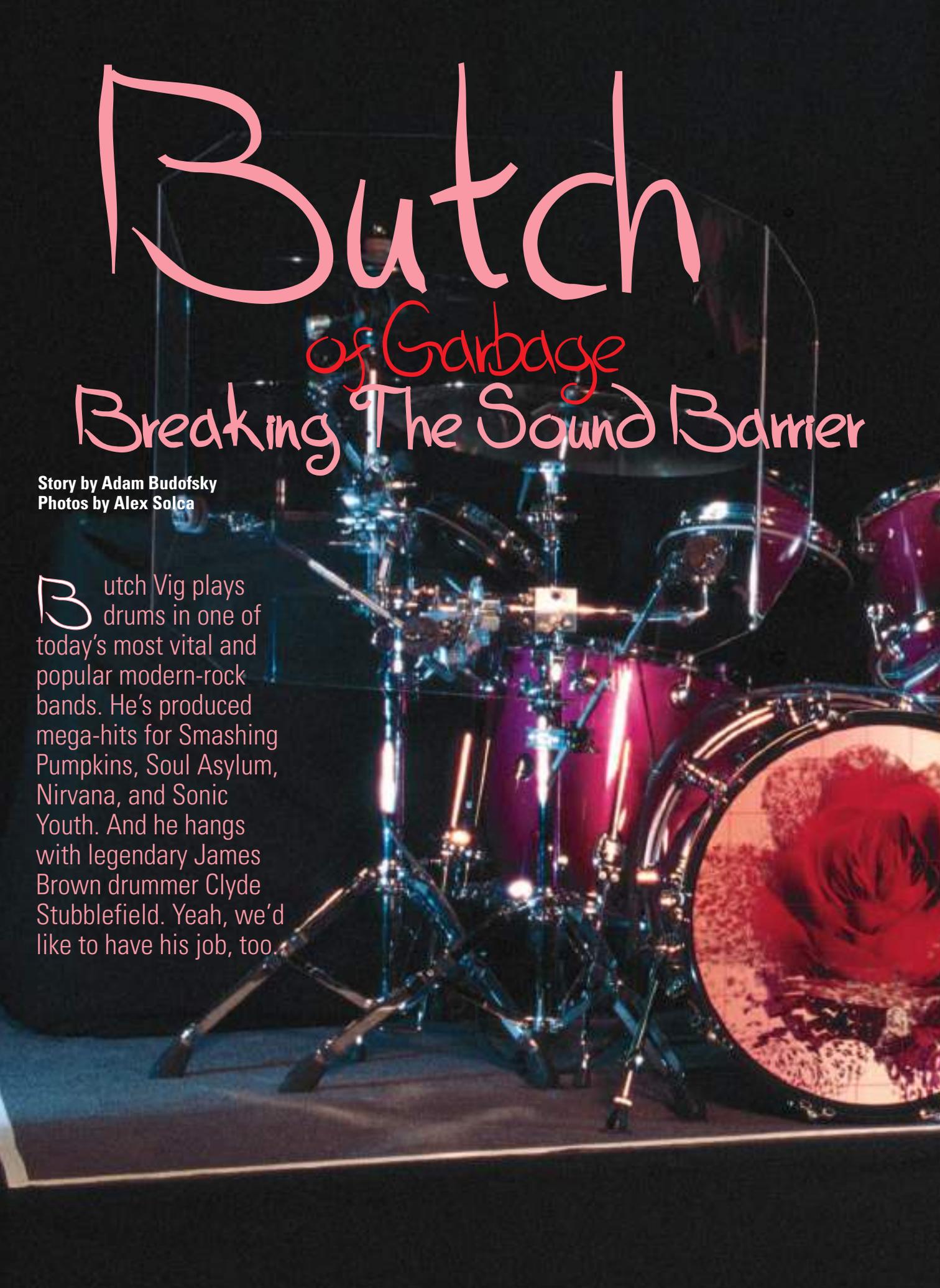


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FOR A DEALER NEAR YOU CALL:



Butch

of Garbage

Breaking The Sound Barrier

Story by Adam Budofsky
Photos by Alex Solca

Butch Vig plays drums in one of today's most vital and popular modern-rock bands. He's produced mega-hits for Smashing Pumpkins, Soul Asylum, Nirvana, and Sonic Youth. And he hangs with legendary James Brown drummer Clyde Stubblefield. Yeah, we'd like to have his job, too.





Other instrumentalists have explored the outer reaches of sound forever. Try this: Compare Eric Clapton's tone on "Layla" to Tom Morello's on "Killing In The Name" by Rage Against The Machine. Now A/B Keith Emerson on ELP's "Karn Evil 9" with Roger Joseph Manning on Beck's "Cold Brains." It starts to look like us drummers, endlessly debating things like birch vs. maple shells, have been fretting over shades of gray.

Of course, electronic drums were supposed to drag drum sounds into the modern world. To be sure, e-drum pioneers like King Crimson's Pat Mastelotto and studio heavy Jim Keltner have significantly extended our sonic boundaries. But whereas other instrumentalists largely define themselves by their tone, drummers have mostly viewed electronics in pragmatic terms. We can play a wedding date with vastly different "virtual" kits for each song. When pressed for our ultimate drum sound, though, most of us still say something like, "Bonzo on Led Zeppelin's 'Kashmir.'"

When it comes to sounds—any sounds, not just drums—Butch Vig spurns any allegiance to "the way it's supposed to be." Vig is aggressively open-minded and sonically obsessive, willing to go to any length to realize what's in his head. Just ask Todd Confessore ("T" to friends),

drum tech with Garbage. "There have been many times in concert when, in the thirty seconds between songs, Butch will go into the ddrum brain and start tweaking his sound." T chuckles at the thought. "Now, he's spent a year in the studio with that drum sound. It sounds *amazing*. Yet, he'll still tweak it. He's *producing* in between songs."

Confessore has hit the nail on the head. Just as rhythm and melody dovetail on any great pop song, with Butch Vig, his dual roles of producer and player conspire to create some of the freshest, tastiest drum performances in modern music.

Vig's priorities were set early in his musical career. In college, he began creating abstract soundtracks to friends' art films, reflecting his taste for everything from avant-garde classical composers like Morton Subotnick and Edgard Varèse to electro-pop pioneers Kraftwerk. "But then," Butch says, "I would go home and play drums along with Rolling Stones or Beatles records."

Think about that the next time you hear a Garbage song on the radio. Beyond the deceptively simple drumbeat you'll likely hear precise and unusual sonic details most drummers wouldn't trouble themselves to create. But to Butch Vig, such details are no trouble at all. They're simply part of the plan.



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Rhythm lives.

Butch Vig



Hardware/Software

Butch Vig's Garbage Setup

Drums: Drum Workshop

- A. 6x14 snare
- B. 9x12 rack tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 10" A splash
- 2. 14" Quick Beat hi-hats
- 3. 18" K Custom Dark crash
- 4. 22" A Custom ride
- 5. 19" A Custom medium crash
- 6. 18" Oriental Trash

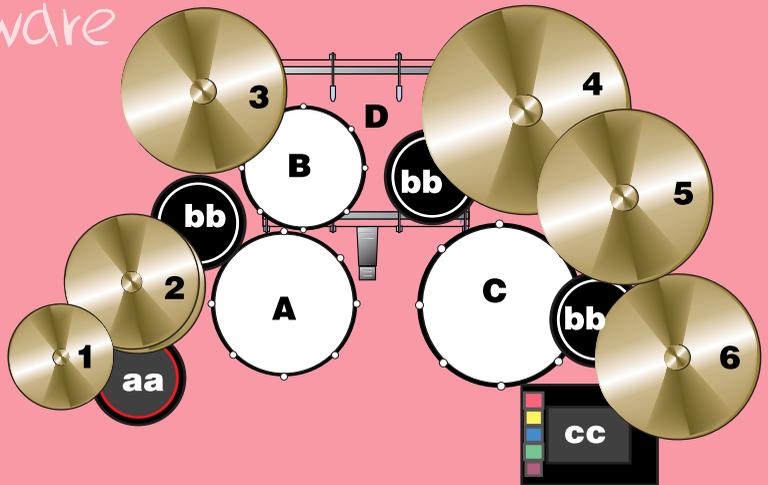
Electronics: ddrum, Behringer

- aa. ddrum snare pad
- bb. ddrum tom pad
- cc. ddrum 3 brains, Composer Pro MDX2200 (two-channel compressor/limiter)

Hardware: DW 5000 series pedals and 9000 series stands

Heads: Remo coated CS Reverse Dot on snare batter, coated Emperors on tom batters, clear Pinstripe on bass drum batter

Sticks: Pro-Mark American Hickory 5A Natural



MD: Given that you record Garbage in your own Smart Studio, do you ever find yourself overanalyzing parts to the point where you have to consciously stop working on them?

Butch: Oh, yeah. [laughs] I think because we love sound so much, there's a tendency to fill everything up. *Beautiful Garbage*, our latest album, was the first time we consciously tried to leave space. If we got to the point where we got what we wanted, we stopped. Our last album, *Version 2.0*, was very layered. On the new album, a

song like "Silence Is Golden" is heavy, but there are not a lot of parts in the song. It's actually pretty simple in its approach.

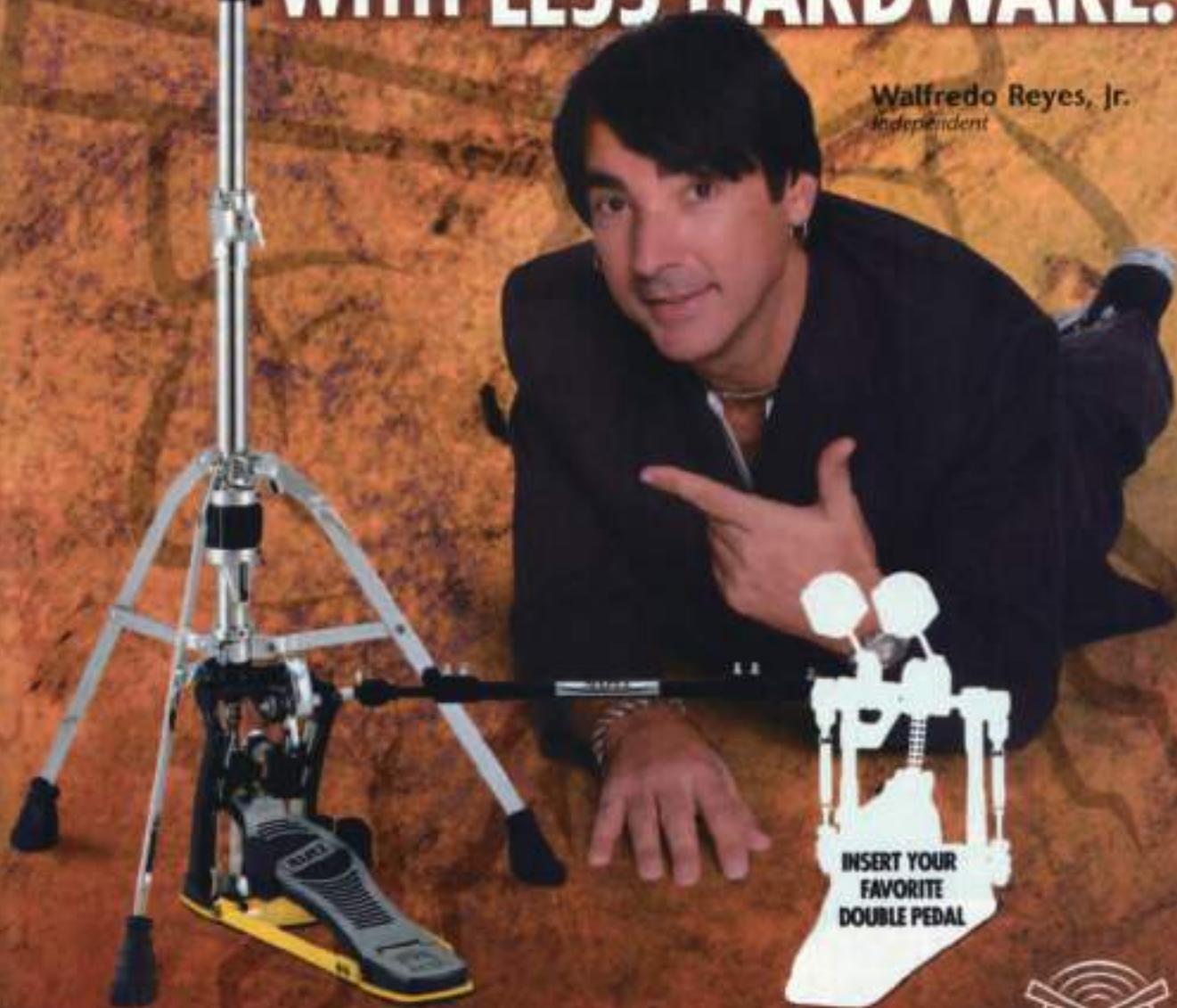
MD: "Can't Cry These Tears" has a lot of air in the mix.

Butch: That was a conscious homage to Phil Spector and The Ronettes, or The Shangri-La's. Someone gave us the Phil Spector box set a while back, and we were listening to those songs and going, God, they still sound amazing, both from a songwriting and a production standpoint. So we tried writing something in that style.

Early on, the working title of that song was "Spector 6/8." I came up with the basic chord progression and programmed the rhythm into the Akai MPC sampler. Then I played live drums along with it to try to duplicate it. By the time we got around to producing the final track, I wasn't happy with the way the drums sounded. We had Matt Chamberlain come in to play drums on a couple of tracks, so I asked him to play on that song too. He totally nailed it. The final performance is a combination of Matt, some of the stuff that

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Butch Vig

I did, and some programming. There's also some samples, some reverb, and other effects, and the drums are kind of chopped up in spots. I think on the verses we ran a drum loop of Matt playing through a compressed fuzz pedal. Then we put it all together so it made sense. The part is simple if you listen to it, but sonically it takes some detours.

Matt also played on "Cup Of Coffee," which I'm trying to play live now. It's difficult because his pattern is very chopped up, not a typical 4/4 groove. We wanted something a little odd. There's sort of this organic drum 'n' bass part in the verse, the way the kick and snare are all chopped up, and all the little grace notes he did. It's been eye-opening for me to try to play it

live. But it's also kind of liberating being forced to come up with a pattern that's close to the record but different from what I would normally play.

Matt played on one other song, but we haven't finished it yet. It's called "Confidence." Shirley [Manson] didn't have any lyrics for it, but the music is great. Matt put down a bitchin' funk groove on it.

MD: Your songs are so rich in detail, and as you suggest, there's a lot of altering done to original drum parts. Do you consider how you'll play these songs live?

Butch: When we made the first record, we never intended to tour. Once we finished the record, it *was* hard to duplicate it live.

Consequently, I don't think the tour we did for the first album was that strong. We weren't very comfortable with how we were

approaching the songs live. When we went in to do *Version 2.0*, I think some of that live playing filtered into how we approached the recording. When we came out for the big *Version 2.0* tour, we decided to strip the songs down and rebuild them, without worrying about having them sound *exactly* like the album. Shirley has such a strong presence that it gives us a lot of leeway sonically in terms of how we arrange our songs live.

MD: Playing through a huge P.A. affects the sound anyway, right?

Butch: One thing that I've found is that a lot of the subtleties that you hear on the record, you can't hear live. Things like dotted notes on the ride or grace notes on the snare, or if I've got a subtle loop I'm introducing in the bridge, a lot of times when it's in a huge P.A. and the kids are moshing, you don't hear that stuff. It's also harder to mix live when you have more information going on. That's why we strip



Team Spirit

Butch Vig has produced some of the

Dave Grohl of Nirvana



Dave made such a big difference between the demo sessions for *Nevermind*, which I worked on at Smart, and when I recorded the album. He hits the drums harder than anybody I've ever worked with—and tempo-wise he's rock solid. Dave's so easy to work with too. He really did elevate the vibe for the band, and not just musically. Kurt Cobain and Krist Novoselic had a gas hanging out with him. They had a lot of fun while making *Nevermind*. There were some difficult days and a couple of songs that were hard to capture. But for the most part it was a great experience working with them.

It's a shame in a way that Dave's not drumming as much anymore. It's obvious he loves writing songs. There's maybe an analogy to me here: He's produced his own stuff, he's a writer and guitar player, and it's music—not just drumming—that turns him on. It would be great to see him playing some more drums, maybe even on somebody else's records.



Jimmy Chamberlin of Smashing Pumpkins



Jimmy is part of what made the Pumpkins sound the way they did. He and Billy Corgan developed almost a sixth sense of communication in terms of the push/pull that they had with the rhythms. And sometimes it was in the same bar. The top of the bar might push and the back of the bar might pull. It's something you can't really define. But if I heard a new track they were working on without being told it was them, I swear I could tell just by the rhythm guitar and drums. It's the way they play off each other.

Jimmy has incredible dynamics and feel. I rarely used click tracks with the Pumpkins. There are points where it speeds up or slows down, but that's part of the feel, and to me it always worked with the song. One of my favorite songs of theirs is "Hummer," from *Siamese Dream*. At the end it goes into a sort of free-form, almost jazzy outro, where he's riding the hats and the ride cymbal, with the little grace notes on the snare. We had to do a lot of takes to get the one that we wanted, but it's basically a live take. An amazing performance.



things down and slowly build them back up; simple ideas often translate better in a big room.

MD: What about physically pulling off difficult parts you've literally created with editing and effects?

Butch: It can be difficult. There are some things that I can't reproduce live, like that break in the middle of "Shut Your Mouth," with all that cut-up stuff. I remember the day I did that. It was just sort of a straight pattern, and without even listening to it I started dropping beats in other spots. I didn't even know where the 1 was. It took me about ten minutes. Then I just ran through that section, and it was pretty messed up. But it had a much more interesting...it's more of a breakdown section. Live I trigger an echo that has this sort of phased-out sound, which we did on the record. Drum-wise, I play a straighter groove through there. I think it still works fine. I actually tried notating the recorded

version, and it was like some insane piece of music. [laughs] After a couple hours of working, I said, Screw it, I'm just going to play a groove!

MD: Today's editing technology allows us to do amazing things with drum tracks. There's a running debate whether this has improved the state of drumming in general, or whether it promotes mediocre performances, since everything can be "fixed in the mix" now.

Butch: "Get the Pro Tools guy to make everything perfect."

MD: Right. How do you feel about this?

Butch: I think sometimes songs need that if you want them to sound really tight. I remember when I used to make records purely analog. I used to do a lot of tape editing. I'd cut drum tracks together, I'd shave snares if they would come out of a fill and drag the track. I'd cut a quarter inch of tape out and pull it forward—crazy stuff. I spent a lot of time early on trying to

get performances good.

The people who played on a lot of records in the '50 and '60s were *great* musicians. These days it's pretty easy to get into a rock band. You don't have to have the most amazing technical prowess in the world. But that's also cool. It just depends on whether you want the record to sound really tight or you want to have a looser feel. I've seen some bands live that are terribly sloppy, though their records are super tight. I don't know if that's the best way to approach it. Sometimes you want to find more of a middle ground.

MD: If we have the ability to fix our performance, isn't it human nature to want to fix it every single time?

Butch: Well, on *Beautiful Garbage* about half the songs were fairly scrutinized. We went through the tracks and made stuff pretty locked in tight. And not just the drums. We made sure that Daniel Shulman's bass playing was tight, and Duke [Erikson] and

greatest drummers of the post-punk generation. Here are his thoughts.

Steve Shelley of Sonic Youth



Steve's integrated himself into Sonic Youth in such a way that, like with the Pumpkins, the four of them communicate without speaking. I like Steve's approach to drumming because it's sort of orchestral. A lot of times he'll do these ambient, washy swells. It's not like he's playing a 4/4 drum groove all the way through the song. Sometimes he will play it straight, but so much of what they do veers into abstract territory. "Teresa's Sound-World," from *Dirty*, is just an amazing performance by the band. The drums have this orchestral pulse to them. The approach that he took to that song makes the song so powerful, so dynamic. It's one of my favorite tracks on the record. I think that's something that a lot of young drummers should listen to, in addition to 4/4 rock drumming or the new metal bands. There's so much that can be said for creating soundscapes with the drums as much as keeping a straight groove going.



Sterling Campbell of Soul Asylum



Sterling is an awesome drummer. He was great to work with. He's really on top with the hi-hat, it's got a great push. It gives the music, even the stuff that's laid-back, an aggressive feel. He was a charm to work with on *Let Your Dim Light Shine*. The day we finished doing all the basic tracks, the band was sort of hanging out and partying, and I was listening to stuff just to make sure everything was cool. I got to the song "Misery," which I thought was one of the key tracks, and for whatever reason, even though I'd been listening to it for three or four days, I decided there was something wrong with it. It was around midnight, and everybody was getting ready to go home, but I said, "I think we should re-cut 'Misery.' It feels too draggy, it needs to be more snappy." Everybody was like, "Huh?" I said, "Sterling, the kit is still set up down there. It needs to be like 3 or 4 bpm's faster. You've got to play it a little more aggressively." I think that was the last thing on his mind. His girlfriend was there, and he had had a couple glasses of wine. But he totally nailed it in one take.



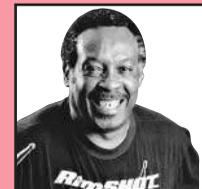
Matt Chamberlain Freelance Mastermind



Matt is a great player with a wonderful feel, and he's a really nice guy. We were on tour right when *Beautiful Garbage* came out, opening for U2, and I came down with a bad viral infection. Under doctor's orders I had to take a month off. I finished the last show at Madison Square Garden in New York, but the band had more shows in Europe. I had called Matt the night before, and he flew out and sat through the set. Over the next couple of days we booked a rehearsal studio and listened to live tapes, and Matt took notes. Then he had to play my parts on my kit, basically the same way I do. I think it was a little weird for him to get used to the setup. We use loops and sequencers in some songs, and I trigger the ddrum brain from my DW kit, with pre-sets for each song. Matt totally saved our ass, otherwise we would have had to cancel a dozen shows.



Clyde Stubblefield James Brown's Funky Drummer



Clyde's a total charmer, and a great guy to work with. He lives in Madison, Wisconsin, and he records in our studio with his own band. He put out an album last year, and he played on a couple tracks from our first record. He just came in and put down some grooves, and we sampled them and cut them into our tracks.



Clyde is an amazing drummer. A kit could be set up, all out of tune, and he'll start playing and it'll just sing. His grace notes, his hi-hat, and his snare just sound so cool. I've tried to watch him to figure out how he does it so I can duplicate it. But I'm a white boy from Wisconsin, and I can't get that funky soul groove happening the way he can.



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Butch Vig

Making Garbage Sound Beautiful

Center stage tech Todd "T" Confessore knows what Garbage should sound like better than just about anyone.

MD: You're doing some unique things with Garbage live.

T: If you were on stage while the band was playing, and the PA wasn't on, you wouldn't hear anything. Everybody in the band is using in-ear monitors, and there are no guitar or bass amps or speaker cabinets; everything is done with pod [amp modeling] units. The only thing that you hear on stage is Shirley's voice and cymbals. It's almost creepy.

MD: So how do you control the cymbal sounds?

T: During rehearsals for the second record in '98, I noticed the cymbals were bleeding through Shirley's vocal mic'. When you go to these TV shows there's always a see-through partition around the drums. But Butch's drumkit is muffled, so there was no need for me to go overkill with the glass thing. So we created what we call "orbs," which are quarter-inch plexi sheets that have been heat-molded so there can be slight bends in them. We mount them on the drumkit with drum hardware. On one side they wrap around the rack tom, crash, and hi-hats. On the other side they wrap around the ride all the way to the last crash. You could sleep on the stage with this band playing.

MD: You mentioned that the drums themselves are "muffled."

T: It's a typical four-piece kit. The only difference is all the drums are filled with packing peanuts, because we're using them to trigger samples from a ddrum 3 brain.

MD: What sounds are you triggering?

T: We use the DW drums acoustically in the studio, and then we take the final sounds

from each song and burn them into a sound file. Those sounds are then dumped into the ddrum 3. At that point Butch assigns those sounds wherever he wants them on the kit. As we play live, each and every song can sound exactly how it sounded on the record.

Butch has the ddrum 3 brain where a second floor tom would be. The sounds for each song are programmed as a set, so in between songs, he just scrolls to the next song on the setlist, and all the sounds automatically reassign themselves to the drums.

pretty nutty.

MD: Does Butch play to a click live?

T: Yes, I run that.

MD: How would you describe Butch as a drummer?

T: It's interesting. When I first came to work for the band during the second record, I was a fan, but I figured he was going to be a less than stellar drummer—you know, a producer who, to be in the band, is playing drums. I was taken aback by how wrong I was. As a drummer I'd say he's much more than what people would think.



MD: You have two equipment rigs, correct?

T: We have two complete sets of everything, because Garbage tours so extensively. So we have three brains within the two sets of gear: I have a main one that I carry with me personally, and we have a backup for each rig.

MD: Tell us about the finish on the drums.

T: We had two kits made for us by DW in a beautiful custom finish. Those guys really look after us. They took all the colors from the album cover design, which is a digitally distorted rose, put them into the computer, and did this blend over a crazy flake sparkle. It's

Butch caught hepatitis in the midst of touring with U2. When he was able to play again, he hadn't been behind the drumkit for seven weeks. So I was very curious to see how he would be playing. And I have to say that he came in here ready to play drums. He's probably playing with more feeling and power than I've ever seen him play with.

Butch just really understands the voicing of a song and where to play something and where not to. I think he has a better overall feel of that from being someone who creates the songs. He definitely looks at the big picture.

Steve [Marker] would work on the guitars or whatever. But about half of the cuts are pretty loose. We left some of the live playing from the original tracks in, so you can hear me sort of dragging the snare every now and then, and some fills are a little

funky. Some of the drums we recorded initially had more of a lo-fi quality, especially when we recorded them to tape. They had this hissy, thumpy sound.

But some of the playing just sounded better when it was loose. Sometimes we would

tighten up a track, but then it didn't feel the same. So we went back and left it the way it originally was. It was the same with Shirley's singing. On *Version 2.0* we always worried about phrasing and pitch and exactly where everything was in the mix. It's much rougher-sounding on this record, a lot rawer, especially on some of the quieter songs like "Drive You Home" and "So Like A Rose." "Silence Is Golden" is the same. That was pretty much a one-take vocal.

MD: Trying to keep up with new music software can be maddening. How aware of the new technology do you feel you need to be?

Butch: To be honest, Billy Bush, our engineer, keeps up with that more. I used to be much more that way, but I'm more concerned with the songwriting and the overall vibe, what's going on within the band or within the song. One of the great things is that we're pretty tight with some of the people at Pro Tools, and they sent us a lot of new plug-ins, especially when they were beta-testing. So we would get things very early on and get to play with them. We'd tell them what we liked and didn't like. Any time we'd get a new thing, we'd plug it in

and use it that day.

The one thing that I wanted to explore more when we started the record was options for triggering stuff live. I'm still using a ddrum setup, which has worked well. But there are some things I wish I could change in the software and the editing capabilities. Though I don't know if there are any better systems out there.

MD: The area of technology is relatively new to drummers. Do you feel it's something your average drummer should learn more about? Or should we just practice our paradiddles and let the engineer worry about it?

Butch: Well, twenty years ago I'm sure people would say practice, practice, practice. But it depends on what you are doing. If you are interested in drums and you're into hip-hop, you probably want to get a drum machine, or a turntable, and learn what you can do with drums from that perspective as well as physically playing them.

I think it's good for young drummers, or any drummer, to understand what he or she can do with the technology. You don't have to use it purely as a tool to edit your drums and make them perfectly in time. You can

do so many things in terms of arranging songs, changing sounds, and using effects to do things that are impossible to do live.

You have to keep an overview of what you think is best for the song, whether in the studio or live. But you can use the technology to come up with cool grooves or vibes—something that will just blow people's minds. Now, you don't have to embrace the technology, or even use it. If you want to play from a purely organic standpoint, that's cool too. But it makes sense to at least be aware of what's possible.

MD: Have you always been fascinated with sound?

Butch: Definitely. I began playing drums in junior high, and I played in the high school band. I went to the film school at the University of Wisconsin, and I ended up doing a lot of electronic music soundtracks for my fellow film students. I got very interested in experimental sounds and cutting up tape. The instructor there had all these old Arp and Moog synthesizers, but there were no keyboards. So in order to get a sound, you had to go to a big ol' Moog, turn on an oscillator, and plug a patch cord into a filter. He was very old-school and didn't want

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Left to right: Marc Quiñones - LP Tito Puente Bronze Timbales, Roman Diaz - LP Valje® Armando Peraza Series™ Bongos, Ruben Rodriguez - Bass, Pedro "Pedrito" Martinez - LP Batas, Vocals, Bobby Allende - LP Galaxy® Giovanni Series™ Congas



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Photo by Martin Cohen

Butch Vig

people to come in and play "Switched On Bach" [Wendy Carlos's popular electronic classical album]. So in order to make musical pieces, it was very different from traditional playing. I learned so much in those four semesters. I did a lot of soundtracks,

the studio I might totally change the approach to songs, but to this day, I still consider myself a 4/4 rock drummer.

MD: Did you study drums?

Butch: I never sat down and worked on learning how to play complicated jazz pat-

drummers should come to the situation prepared with?

Butch: Typically what I've found, especially with new bands, is that they never get to clearly hear what they sound like. A lot of young bands have pretty crappy-sounding

"Don't get too focused on the drums. Of course you're concerned that other drummers are listening to the tracks. But the song is still the most important thing."

and I got interested in what you could do with sound, versus just playing the drumkit or guitar or piano.

MD: At the same time, though, you were still playing more conventional drums. What drummers were you into?

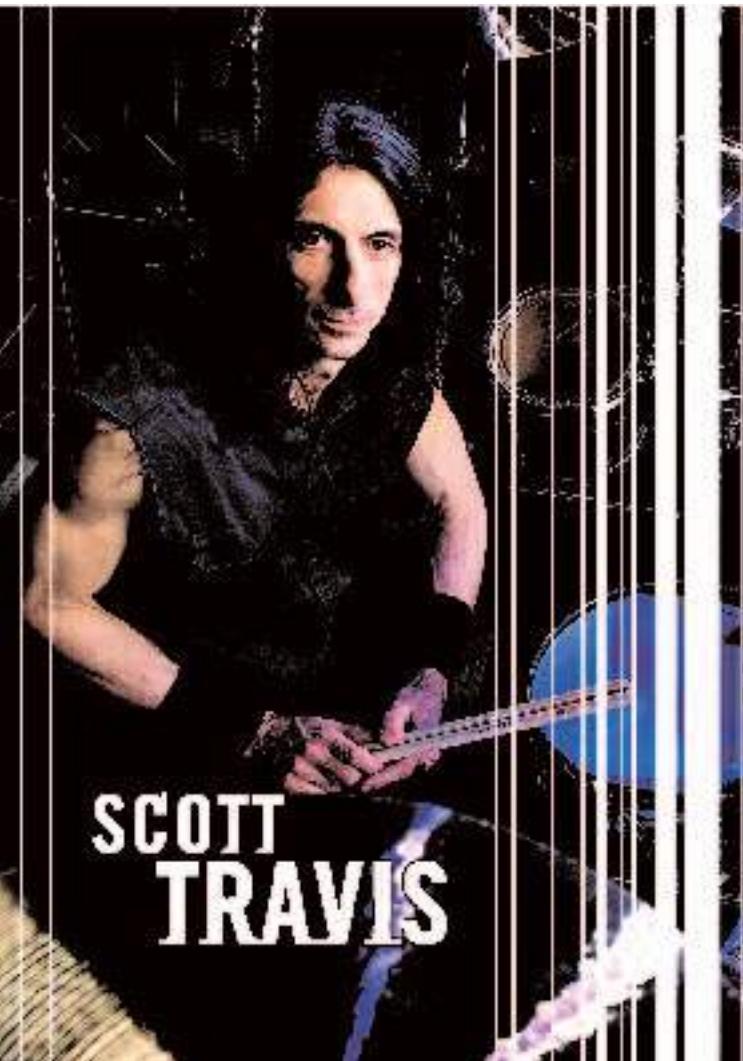
Butch: Well, I wanted to be Keith Moon, but he was one of a kind. I sort of model almost all my drumming style on 4/4 rock drummers like Ringo or Charlie Watts. I love Paul Thompson from Roxy Music too, and Mick Fleetwood is a great drummer. In

terms or things like that. That's probably why I defaulted to playing 4/4 stuff. My drumming style is pretty straightforward. Now I almost look at drumming as secondary to producing and writing and engineering. Those things just interest me more than worrying about getting my chops up to the point where I could be a session drummer.

MD: As a producer, you've seen your share of young drummers come into the studio. What are some of the things that you think

rehearsal rooms, with maybe one wedge stuck up in front of a singer to hear the vocals. So they'll come in, and maybe some of what they are playing is too busy. It's like they haven't sat down and listened to exactly what the bass player or singer is doing. Then sometimes it's a matter of simplifying the tracks. That becomes obvious when they hear it played back for the first time in the studio. If your parts are getting in the way of something, then you have to simplify.

Sometimes timing is a problem. But other



457
I was completely satisfied with the first generation silver footboard Iron Cobras. So when the Tama people told me about the newer incarnations, I thought it was probably like the old detergent/new detergent gimmick. I mean, how much better could they be? But I was surprised and very impressed with the new designs. The new Iron Cobras are definitely smoother and faster. As a matter of fact, the new models are so smooth and fast I can play my trademark Priest tune, 'Painkiller,' with just one pedal...just kidding."

"I've used Tama pedals since the 1980's. As a matter of fact I still have my old Pro-Bents somewhere. Those were super durable pedals and I never broke a thing on them. And I've never broken anything on my Iron Cobras either; not even a spring. Between Judas Priest and Racer X—especially Racer X—the Iron Cobras have certainly withstood a lot of notes."

Beekles "smooth" and "durable" are there any other reasons Scott Travis likes Iron Cobras? As a matter of fact, there is: "Since they're black, they go nicely with whatever you're wearing."



SEE US ONLINE AT WWW.TAMA.COM

times, even if a track speeds up or slows down a little bit, if it feels good, that's part of what makes the song work, and you should just leave it.

Also, a lot of young bands will come in with their own drumkit, which is not necessarily going to sound good in the studio. And they'll be very partial to it. They may think it's the exact sound they want. But once you put microphones up, it might sound like crap. So you might have to radically change it, find a different snare drum or even a different kit.

Don't get too focused on just the drums. You have to keep an overview in terms of what the song is. Of course you're concerned that other drummers are listening to the tracks—and listeners obviously relate to great grooves and great drum sounds. But the song is still the most important thing.

MD: How do you tell musicians they have to change their sound?

Butch: It's a matter of trying to gently educate them without crushing the vibe. You want to help them, and you want to keep their enthusiasm up. Because I'm sympathetic to drummers, I push them but I try to go easy on them. I try to make them feel as

comfortable as possible.

MD: What if the drummer is simply not cutting it?

Butch: Well, that's not a very fun position to be in for anyone. Years ago, with one of my own bands, someone was kicked out of a session by the producer, and it totally messed with our heads. It was very difficult to overcome. But it's a situation you have to understand. If it doesn't feel good, then obviously there's a problem that needs to be fixed. Now, if I come into a rehearsal that doesn't sound good, I don't immediately go, "Look, the drummer sucks. You've got to hire a new one." I know a lot of producers do that because they don't want to waste the time. But I have a tendency to go every extra mile I can for the musicians in the band to get their performances down. If that means more editing on my part, or taking more time and being more patient with them, then I do that. If the chemistry is good between the members of the band, I'd rather keep them psychologically together. That's by far the most important thing for a successful recording.



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"Iron Cobra Pedals Are So Smooth I Can Play 'Painkiller' With One Pedal."

Photo: Bob Trudy. Iron Cobra set. Iron Cobra
bicycles. Power. Illinois. 1980.

All Iron Cobra pedals
are standard with a
lifetime warranty.
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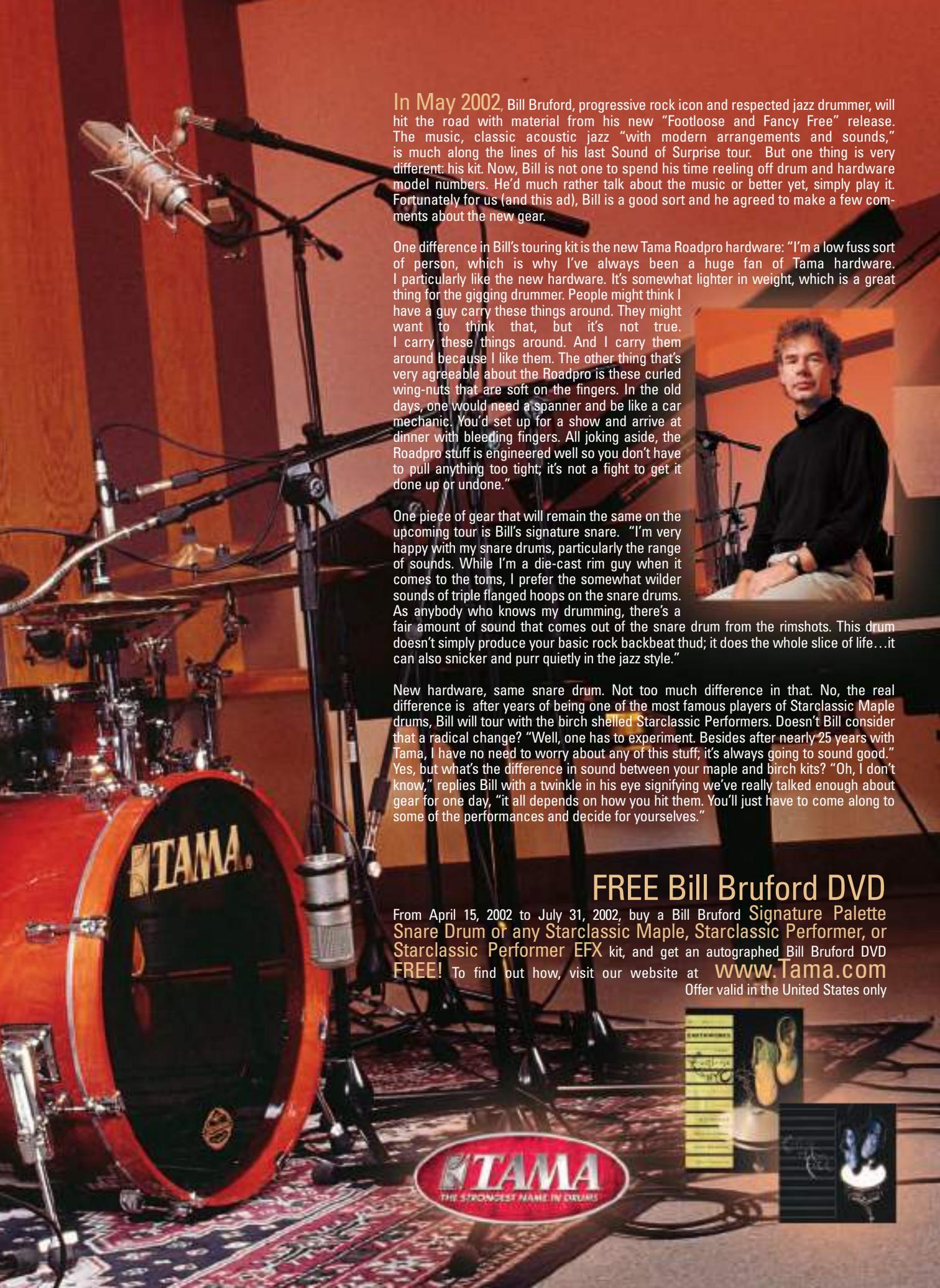
**FREE
CASE**

A photograph of Bill Bruford, a renowned drummer, in a recording studio. He is wearing a black turtleneck and is captured in a moment of concentration, with his right hand resting on a cymbal and his left hand near his ear. The drum set is a vibrant red color with chrome hardware. The background features a wall with a purple and white geometric pattern and a wooden panel. The overall lighting is warm and focused on the drummer.

Bill Bruford

Birch Drums

*Footloose
and
Fancy Free*



In May 2002, Bill Bruford, progressive rock icon and respected jazz drummer, will hit the road with material from his new "Footloose and Fancy Free" release. The music, classic acoustic jazz "with modern arrangements and sounds," is much along the lines of his last Sound of Surprise tour. But one thing is very different: his kit. Now, Bill is not one to spend his time reeling off drum and hardware model numbers. He'd much rather talk about the music or better yet, simply play it. Fortunately for us (and this ad), Bill is a good sort and he agreed to make a few comments about the new gear.

One difference in Bill's touring kit is the new Tama Roadpro hardware: "I'm a low fuss sort of person, which is why I've always been a huge fan of Tama hardware. I particularly like the new hardware. It's somewhat lighter in weight, which is a great thing for the gigging drummer. People might think I have a guy carry these things around. They might want to think that, but it's not true. I carry these things around. And I carry them around because I like them. The other thing that's very agreeable about the Roadpro is these curled wing-nuts that are soft on the fingers. In the old days, one would need a spanner and be like a car mechanic. You'd set up for a show and arrive at dinner with bleeding fingers. All joking aside, the Roadpro stuff is engineered well so you don't have to pull anything too tight; it's not a fight to get it done up or undone."

One piece of gear that will remain the same on the upcoming tour is Bill's signature snare. "I'm very happy with my snare drums, particularly the range of sounds. While I'm a die-cast rim guy when it comes to the toms, I prefer the somewhat wilder sounds of triple flanged hoops on the snare drums. As anybody who knows my drumming, there's a fair amount of sound that comes out of the snare drum from the rimshots. This drum doesn't simply produce your basic rock backbeat thud; it does the whole slice of life... it can also snicker and purr quietly in the jazz style."

New hardware, same snare drum. Not too much difference in that. No, the real difference is after years of being one of the most famous players of Starclassic Maple drums, Bill will tour with the birch shelled Starclassic Performers. Doesn't Bill consider that a radical change? "Well, one has to experiment. Besides after nearly 25 years with Tama, I have no need to worry about any of this stuff; it's always going to sound good." Yes, but what's the difference in sound between your maple and birch kits? "Oh, I don't know," replies Bill with a twinkle in his eye signifying we've really talked enough about gear for one day, "it all depends on how you hit them. You'll just have to come along to some of the performances and decide for yourselves."



FREE Bill Bruford DVD

From April 15, 2002 to July 31, 2002, buy a Bill Bruford Signature Palette Snare Drum or any Starclassic Maple, Starclassic Performer, or Starclassic Performer EFX kit, and get an autographed Bill Bruford DVD **FREE!** To find out how, visit our website at www.Tama.com
Offer valid in the United States only



MD's

2002

Product

Extravaganza

Gearheads of the world: This is your issue!

For the third straight year, *MD* is presenting a major pictorial dedicated exclusively to the instruments and equipment that we all dream about and drool over. Most of what you see here is fresh from the display floor of the recent NAMM trade show in Anaheim, California. And it doesn't come any newer and hotter than that!

Photos by Alex Solca



Exotic wood finishes over jarrah ply shells distinguish Australia's **Brady** drums. Shown here are drums finished in turtleback (left), rosegum (middle top), banksia (right top), and palisander (right, second from top). (011) 61-8-9497 2212, www.bradydrums.com.



The **Cadeson Impact** kit comes with 6-ply maple shells, an 18"-deep bass drum, suspended "fast"-size toms, and zinc-finished hoops for a unique look. (686) 286-6866, www.cadesonmusic.com.



Drum Solo drums are made of Eco Timber harvested in accordance with certified environmental procedures. The exotic snare drums shown here vary from a 6" segment-shell zebra wood drum on top to a 15" cherry drum on the bottom. (415) 898-2647, www.drumsolo.cc.



Private Reserve finishes from **Drum Workshop** feature woods so rare—and production so limited—that each kit will come with a certificate signed by DW's John Good documenting its exclusivity. (805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.



Fibes offers maple kits in six "Crusin' Colors," which are reproductions of 1950s-era car colors. Bass drums have white hoops for a classic "two-tone" effect. (512) 416-9955, www.fibes.com.



GMS created this elaborate setup to demonstrate their custom construction and finish work. During 2002 they'll also offer 15th Anniversary snare drums with $\frac{1}{16}$ "-thick hammered copper shells and brass bearing edges. (631) 293-4235, www.gmsdrums.com.



The beautiful **Gretsch** Renown Maple series kit features 6-ply toms and bass drums (with 30° bearing edges) and 10-ply snare drums (with 45° bearing edges).

Gretsch's 75th Anniversary Gretsch-American snare drum line includes the Harvey Mason Broadcaster Grand Old Flag model, the Vinnie Colaiuta Custom God Bless America model, and the Custom Stars And Stripes model. For each Mason and Colaiuta model sold, Gretsch will make a donation to the New York City Relief Fund. (860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.



Ludwig's Accent Custom series offers natural finishes, double-braced hardware, a top-quality bass drum pedal, and a wood snare, all at an entry-level price. Also new is their "brass on brass" Black Beauty snare drum with brass die-cast hoops, brass tube lugs, and a simple and efficient strainer. (219) 522-1675, www.ludwig-drums.com.



The Saturn Pro series from **Mapex** now has a thin “shell within a shell” design and new finishes. New to their Precious Metal snare line is a Phosphor Bronze model. There are also new finishes for the Orion line, a thinner 6-mm shell for their ProM series, and tattoos (!) that can be attached to their entry-level V series kits. (615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.



Orange County Drum & Percussion created this clear acrylic kit for Limp Bizkit's John Otto. It's fitted with runway strobe lights inside. The company has also become known for their multi-ply and vented snare drums. (714) 564-0667, www.ocdrum.com.



Danny Carey's most recent tour kit featured **Paiste** Custom Cast drums made by Jeff Ocheltree out of Paiste Signature Bronze cymbal alloy. Jeff also makes Spirit Of 2002 and Phantom Steel metal snare drums. (800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com.



Peace Drums' pro-level Paragon 9-ply maple kit features Peace's Lug Integrated Floating Tom Suspension (LIFTS). It attaches to the drums' tube-style lugs, taking the strain off the tension rods. The Manhattan stand-up kit has also been introduced. (626) 581-4510, www.peacemusic.com.tw.



Pearl's Masters series now allows drummers to choose from four hardware colors to complement their kits (chrome, black chrome, satin chrome, and gold). It also features stainless-steel tension rods. In addition, Pearl has new signature snares from Tico Torres, Eric Singer, and Ian Paice. (615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.



This "Loop Kit" from **Pork Pie** features a gong-bass-style 20" head on an 18" bass drum for a big sound. Small toms, an 8" wood snare, and 10" and 12" brass snares complete the kit. (818) 992-0783, www.porkpiedrums.com.



Premier's new Modern Classic snare drums were designed with input from top UK drummer Steve White. The line features all-new construction, and includes sizes from 10" through 14". (856) 231-8825, www.premierpercussion.com.



Remo has a new process for creating denser, stronger, and more resonant Acousticon shells. They've also created a new series of snare drums with real metal outer surfaces bonded to the Acousticon material. A nickel-silver-surfaced shell is shown here. (800) 525-5134, www.remo.com.



Sonor is high on their Force 1001 kit, which they say offers exceptional value at a starter-kit price. The kits feature basswood shells, 200 Series hardware, and three covered finishes. (804) 515-1900, www.hohnerusa.com, www.sonor.de.



The Starclassic Exotix kit from **Tama** features eight inner plies of bubinga and one outer ply of Hawaiian koa, inlaid with genuine abalone. The limited-edition kits come with an Earthtone goatskin front head on the bass drum and Evans heads everywhere else, and are equipped with brushed-nickel die-cast hoops. Tama has also debuted a 6 1/2x14 Kenny Aronoff Trackmaster snare drum. (215) 638-8670, www.tama.com.



TAYE considers their Pro-X kit to offer mid-price quality at entry-level pricing. The series features basswood-blend shells, gloss lacquer finishes, suspension tom mounts, and double-braced hardware. (909) 628-9589, www.taye.com.



This RPM (Radial Pressure Management) snare drum from **Trick Percussion** features a specially vented aluminum shell said to provide better air escape and return, preventing a vacuum between the heads that can choke the drum. (847) 519-9911, www.trickdrums.com.



Yamaha says that their new Oak Custom drums offer a precise-yet-powerful sound, with excellent attack. The kits feature 6-ply 100% oak shells (7-ply bass drums), some new tom sizes, 17"-deep bass drums, and three glossy and four matte finishes that accent the distinctive grain structure of the wood. Snare drums feature an adjustable "fan-type" snare unit under the batter head in addition to regular snares on the bottom head. (714) 522-9011, www.yamahadrums.com.



Action Drums from Newsound (a Taiwanese musical instrument company) feature beautifully finished maple shells and well-designed hardware and tom mounts. (011) 886 4 2496-5551, www.newsound.com.tw.



Bleifuss Handcrafted Drums are custom-made by designer/craftsman Paul Bleifuss. Their logo badges are laser-engraved on thin plates of wood. (619) 846-6577, bleifusshandcrafted@multimusicent.com.



Maryland Drum Co. snares include 8-ply maple drums with Time Piece vintage finishes (foreground) and a black brass snare with anodized aluminum lugs. (410) 584-2539, www.marylanddrum.com.



Arbiter's Flats Lite kits employ ABS plastic technology to reduce weight and cost. The company also offers their original steel-frame Flats kit. (877) 553-5596, www.arbiterdrums.com.



The diminutive Hip Hop Kit from **Canopus** features a 16x18 bass drum, a 9x10 rack tom, and 11x12 and 12x13 floor toms. The company also offers brass- and chrome-plated snare wire sets. (011) 81-35376-7367, www.canopusdrums.com.



Pacific Drums And Percussion now offers wood-, phosphor bronze- and steel-shelled SX series snare drums in sizes from 10" to 14" for use as primary or auxiliary models. Two sets of mini-timbales and after-market packs of Chameleon mesh practice heads are also available. (805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.



The Custom Series from **Basix** drums features all-birch shells and toms suspended from the bottoms of their lugs. The line stresses value and affordability. (847) 498-9850, www.basixdrums.com.



This **Dunnett Classic** titanium snare was commissioned in memory of drummer Mark Bingham, who battled the terrorists on United Airlines flight 93 during the 9/11 tragedy. Dunnett specializes in handcrafted snare drums of titanium, stainless steel, and wood. (604) 643-9939, www.dunnett.com.



RMV Instruments of Brazil offers kits made of Brazilian maple and other indigenous woods, as well as Original Vintage synthetic drumheads designed to sound like calfskin on drumsets and surdos. (011) 55 11 6404-8544, www.rmv.com.br.



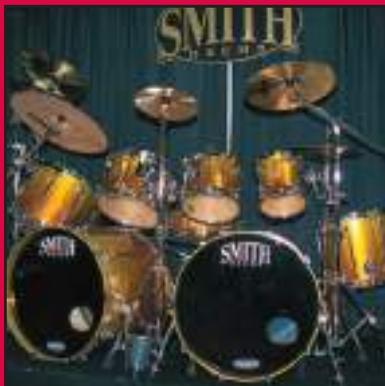
Carbon-fiber drums with custom finishes are the specialty of **Rocket Shells**. They also offer snare drums with veneers of walnut, birch, or maple over the carbon-fiber shell. (916) 334-2234, www.rocketsHELLS.com.



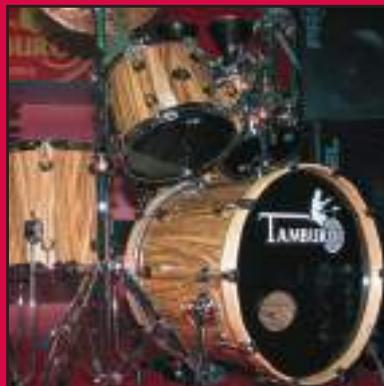
Sunlite has upgraded their pro-level, all-maple Stage Series with the addition of a tom suspension system. The basswood Top Gun series now has upgraded stands. (626) 448-8018, www.sunlitedrum.com.



Concert-quality steam-bent solid maple drumshells for do-it-yourself drum builders are available from **Vaughncraft Percussion**. (785) 255-4500, www.vaughncraft.com.



This gold-sparkle fade kit illustrates the finishing capabilities of **Smith Drums**. It's a paint job, not a wrap. (203) 696-1290, www.smithcustomdrums.com.



Italian manufacturer **Tamburo**, distributed in the US by Proel USA, is offering drums with stave shells and gorgeous stain finishes. (915) 591-5848, www.proelgroup.com.



As the name implies, all the drums on **Whitney Drums'** Nesting Penguin kit nest into the bass drum for easy portability. Also available is the Sidekick Penguin, which utilizes a specially designed bass drum pedal to play the bottom head of the floor tom, eliminating a bass drum entirely. (805) 452-4163, www.whitneydrums.com.



This checkerboard-finish kit from **Spaun** is an eye-catcher. The company also offers carbon-fiber snare drums. (909) 971-7761, www.spaundrums.com.



Thumper Custom Drums builds kits with unique finishes like this "blue diamond" look. They also do drum restoration, refinishing, and repair. (530) 336-6555, www.thumpercustomdrums.com.



The Black Dawg series of Vintage Classic metal snares from **Worldmax** has been expanded with new models. The line was a winner last year in the *Not So Modern Drummer* Snare Drum Olympics. (615) 365-3965.



The Versa series from **Bosphorus** was designed in conjunction with Ignacio Berroa to work in jazz, Latin, and other musical styles. The line includes a 20" ride, a 20" flat ride, and an 18" crash. (770) 205-0552, www.bosphoruscymbals.com.



Meinl's new 8", 10", and 12" Alien Hats were designed by Marco Minnemann for the Generation-X Series. The new hats are said to produce very sharp and cutting sounds. Also new are 21" medium rides and Soundwave hi-hats in the Byzance and Amun series. (714) 521-9880, gomein@aol.com.



The **Turkish Cymbals** series illustrated by the cymbal on the left is so new it doesn't have a name yet. It features an unlathed bell and outer edge, and provides a very tight sound. Cymbals in the new Violent series are intended for use in high-volume applications. (011) 90 212 292 1886, www.turkishcymbals.com.



The Agop Signature series from **Istanbul Agop** features dark-sounding hi-hats and a 21" ride. In addition, the company's **Alchemy** series has become a stand-alone brand that now includes the Profile machine-hammered series. They're pro-quality cymbals priced 40% lower than Istanbul Agop's hand-hammered models. (201) 599-0100, www.istanbulcymbals.com.



Paiste has expanded their Innovations series with a 21" heavy ride (shown here) and a 19" heavy crash. The cymbals feature the 2002 alloy and are produced in a way that offers professional sound and affordable pricing. (800) 472-4783, www.paiste.com.



The **Wuhan** line now includes Shining (S) Series models (bottom) said to offer certain qualities of dark, jazzy cymbals, but with additional brightness and penetrating power. Also new are Rock models within the original Wuhan Western-style cymbal range. (800) 282-0110, www.universalpercussion.com.



Nostalgia, Radiant, and other exotic hand-hammered cymbal models are offered by **Istanbul Mehmet**. (800) 282-010, www.istanbulmehmet.com.



In addition to their new HHX Evolution series (created with Dave Weckl, and reviewed in this issue), **Sabian** has introduced a 21" HHX Groove Ride to complement the company's Groove Hats. Other new models include 20th Anniversary 16" AA thin crashes and 20" HH medium rides, Jojo Mayer Fierce Crashes, and limited-edition Artist Performance Sets. (506) 272-2019, www.sabian.com.



In celebration of the tenth anniversary of **Zildjian's** A Custom cymbal series, ten new models have been added to the line, including a sizzle ride, three medium rides, five Fast crashes, and three Mastersound hi-hats. (781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.



A balafon and a huge "master talking drum" are among the ethnic instruments available from **A Touch Of Africa/Out Of Africa**. (They also win our award for longest company name!) (818) 709-3715, www.madingo.com.



Lawton Percussion offers American-made African-style gourd instruments, including a two-surfaced guiro and shekeres that feature sleigh bells in place of traditional beads. Also offered are bamboo claves, which produce a higher, warmer sound than rosewood claves do. (805) 473-9389, www.lawtonpercussion.com.



In addition to new Professional and Marathon series congas, Free Ride bongos, ceramic ibos, and other new percussion items, **Meinl** offers a 4½x13 steel-shell Drummer Timbale. It attaches to any ¾" mounting post or L-rod, for use in drumset and percussion setups. (305) 418-4520, GoMeinJB@aol.com.



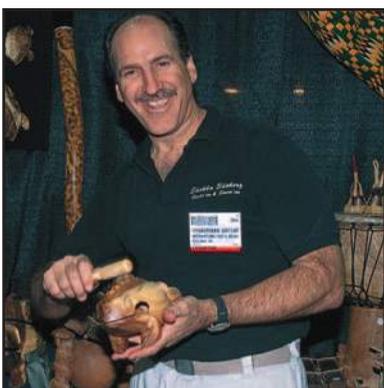
Caribbean Rhythms offers congas and bongos made from recycled oak rum barrels. Their Artisan series features artwork depicting religious and cultural themes of the Dominican Republic. (847) 382-3210, www.barringtonmusic.com.



Latin Percussion (LP) introduced several new instruments, including bronze-shell Tito Puente Tribute timbales, a wood-rim tambora, and rectangular-bodied One Shot shakers designed by Danny Reyes to eliminate the "ghost note" problems of conventional shakers. (973) 478-6903, www.lpmusic.com.



Mountain Rythm—best known for their African-style drums handcrafted in Canada—also offer 10" stave-shell snare drums made of birdseye maple and purpleheart. (905) 764-6543, www.mountainrythm.com.



International Art & Sound offers a wide assortment of ethnic instruments, including Shakka Shakerz, Rhythm's Edge djembes, a new all-wood gong stand, and the Percussion Frogs shown here. They're a combination of a percussive rasp and a temple block. (541) 552-0307, www.shakerman.com.



Tired of lugging around your timpani? Well, **Orpheus Music** has come up with their Tour Timps, portable kettle drums that sound great and can fit in your trunk. The drums come in standard timpani-head dimensions, but their flat-bowl design allows them to pack up tightly into cases. (210) 637-0414, www.orpheusmusic.com.



Pearl is expanding their hand percussion range with Primero fiberglass bongos and timbales, along with Elite brass timbales, heavy-duty Bala Bells cowbells, and the PFG-20 Fiber Guiro. (615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.



This unique cajon, fitted with an oversized kalimba in front and drumheads on either side, is from **Rhythms Exotic Afro Percussions**. The company also offers a ceramic combination udu-guiro designed with Richie "Gajate" Garcia. (408) 246-1002, www.afrorhythms.com.



Timba offers authentic Cuban-style bongos and congas made in the US. New cherry models are shown here. Drums come with cowhide heads available in five different thicknesses to suit the player's choice. (877) 926-9865, www.timbapercussion.com.



Do you have a penchant for slit drums, frame drums, and cajons? Well, **Schlagwerk Percussion**, from Germany, manufactures beautiful wooden percussion instruments of all types. (714) 538-1285, www.salwender.com.



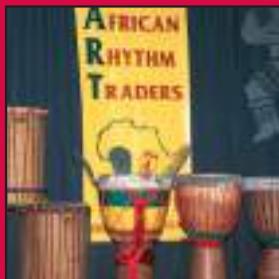
Toca has a new design for their Everyone's Drumming series of djembes and ashikos. Their "It's A Cinch" rope tension tuning system features small balls attached to the ends of the ropes at each tuning point. One quick pull on the balls, and the head tunes right up. (860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.



Unusual truncated congas mounted on a unique flexible-position stand are new from **Sol Drums & Percussion**. Also new are Talking Shakers—tiny wooden cylinders with goatskin heads. The pitch of the shaker changes as the heads are squeezed by the player's fingers. (415) 468-4700, www.soldrums.com.



This 67½"-diameter, 300-pound monster illustrates the full line of Wuhan gongs, distributed by **Universal Percussion**. (800) 282-0110, www.universalpercussion.com.



African Rhythm Traders import authentic djembes, udus, and other West African instruments from the Ivory Coast and Guinea. (503) 243-1860.



Overseas Connection specializes in importing African percussion instruments of all shapes and sizes. (303) 465-9595, www.overseasconnection.com.



Genuine Caribbean-made steel drums (pans), along with stands, cases, sticks, and accessories for steel-drum playing are offered by **Trinidad & Tobago Instruments**. (954) 392-6975, www.steelpanstil.com/tti.



Contemporanea is a new company offering imported Brazilian percussion. (877) 484-4962, www.brazildrums.com.



Rhythm Roots sells African-style instruments made in Indonesia. They feature high-quality rope and other components, along with custom artwork. (949) 646-4409, www.rhythm-roots.com.



Vaughncraft Percussion's Tetherflex Mounting System allows blocks and bells to "float" for improved resonance and projection. The company also offers tambourines, log drums, Brazilian tamborims, and chimes. (785) 255-4500, www.vaughncraft.com.



Authentic Japanese Taiko drums made of wood and fiberglass are available from **Mishimaya Gakki**. (011) 81 258 24 1536, misimaya@seagreen.ocn.ne.jp.



The extensive line of chimes from **Treeworks** includes the Multi-Tree Classic model. It also features a triangle and a finger cymbal. (877) 372-1601, www.treeworkschimes.com.

Adams Musical Instruments offers Dutch-made timpani and Cloyd Duff signature mallets. www.adams.nl.

Rhythm Fusion offers ethnic percussion instruments from the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. (831) 423-2048, www.rhythmfusion.com.

A wide selection of Mark Tree bar chimes for drumset, percussion, and orchestral use is offered by **Spectrasound**. (818) 764-7690.

Boomwhackers tuned percussion tubes from **Whacky Music** were back for their second show. The colorful plastic tubes can be played by virtually anyone for percussive/melodic fun. (928) 282-3860, www.boomwhackers.com.



A&S Poly-Lite drum cases feature heavy-duty construction and thickly padded foam lining. The company also offers customized ATA cases that can be designed to fit a drummer's entire kit. (818) 509-5920, www.ascase.com.



Calzone Cases' X Series, an affordable ATA-style case made of a durable composite material, is 30% lighter than wood. (These are the cases that Mike Portnoy uses for his "Siamese Monster" kit.) (203) 367-5766, www.calzonecase.com.



Drum Workshop's 9000 Series Titanium pedals feature design improvements and unique metal composition. Only five hundred single and double pedals will be made. DW now also offers drum bags, as well as special tension rods called Tunerz designed to lock in tuning on all types of drums. (805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.



The Gregg Bissonette seat bag from **Ace Products Group** unfolds over your drum throne, allowing easy access to sticks, brushes, mallets, etc. Also available are Kaces Crash Pad drum rugs, djembe bags, and conga and cymbal bags with wheels. (415) 492-9600, www.aceproducts.com.



Danmar's Tom-Kick conversion unit converts 14"- to 20"-diameter toms up to 18" in depth for use as bass drums. (The drum shown here has one above *and* below it, for display purposes.) Also available are stick holders with colorful fabric and faux-fur coverings. (949) 756-8481, www.danmarpercussion.com.



E-Pad Systems makes 9" and 12" round tabletop and stand-mounted pad units in addition to their strap-on portable knee pads. Also new is the SP-1 stick bag, which has a pocket specifically designed to hold a knee pad, and the Deluxe stick bag, which can hold a 9" round pad. (818) 788-4335, www.epadco.com.



Celebrating fifty years in business, **Anvil Cases** has introduced their 50 Series cases, which are durable yet lightweight ATA flight cases with very plush interiors. The manufacturer recommends these for collector and antique instruments. (626) 968-4100, www.anvilcase.com.



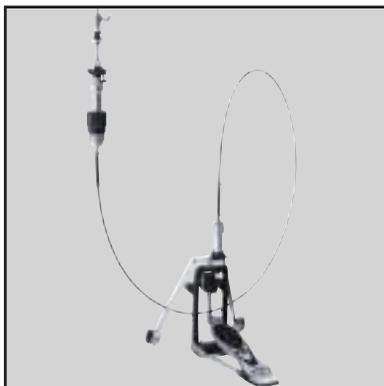
DrumFrame's EZ model is designed to accommodate players who want the benefits of a reclined playing position but don't care for a rack setup. The EZ only places the drummer, bass drum, hi-hat stand, and snare drum in a recumbent position, allowing the drummer to use his or her existing stands on the floor. (860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.



Gibraltar's Rack Factory is a versatile and eye-catching rack series that allows you to position your kit in seemingly limitless ways. (860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.



You'll find a bag for every drumset and percussion item in **Humes & Berg's** Galaxy series, including these large hardware bags. They're fitted with wheels, are surprisingly lightweight, and have many compartments. (219) 397-1980, www.humes-berg.com.



Pearl hardware innovations include the smooth new RH-2000 Eliminator cable remote hi-hat and the S-2000 snare stand, which adjusts to hold drums from 10" to 16" in diameter. (615) 833-4477, www.pearldrums.com.



The Elite Air line from **XL Specialty Percussion** is designed so that drums don't touch the sides of the cases when carried or stored. Also available is a Deluxe rolling cymbal case with a fold-away handle. (260) 637-5684, www.xlspec.com.



New Combo Tom Bags from **Impact Industries** use less material to carry two rack toms than would be used by two separate bags, making them 20%-30% less expensive. They're available in all four of the company's bag series, in twelve different sizes. (715) 842-1651, www.impactind.com.



A new British-made bag line called **Protection Racket** is being distributed in the US by **Big Bang Distribution**. The bags feature fleece linings and some clever design features. (800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com, www.protectionracket.com.



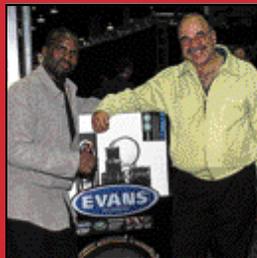
Modern Case Company's Impresario cymbal case features plywood construction, a telescoping handle, casters, and separators. The company also has a nifty cymbal bag with a detachable stick bag. (800) 344-7027, www.moderncase.com.



SKB has a full range of sturdy, high-quality cases. Their Roto-X series of drum cases, Trap-X accessory cases, and Cymbal Vault cymbal case have many innovative features designed with working drummers in mind. (714) 637-1252, www.skbcases.com.



Beato stresses the American-made quality of the company's bag line. (310) 532-2671, www.beatobags.com.



Evans says their Ratchet Key makes accurate tuning a snap. The company has also been touting their EMAD bass drum heads, shown here with Will Kennedy and Peter Erskine. (631) 439-3300, www.evansdrumheads.com.



Wire snare sets for marching drums and concert percussion are new from **Puresound Percussion**. (310) 966-1176, www.puresoundpercussion.com.



Besides traditional wood drumsticks, **Cappella** offers a full line of accessory products, including new aluminum practice sticks, shown here on a 12" reversible Pro Pad practice pad. (609) 448-1153, www.cappelladrums.com.



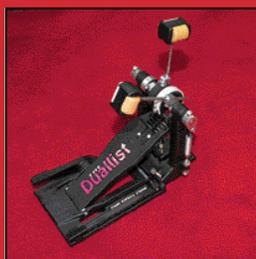
RealFeel multi-practice pad systems for marching tenor drummers have been introduced by **HQ Percussion Products**. Two configurations are available. (314) 647-9009, www.HQPercussion.com.



Sticks Grip offers artistic yet functional options for eliminating stick slippage. (800) 808-3171, www.sticksgrip.com.



Case Core's Coffin Case is without a doubt one of the freakiest yet most durable stick cases on the market. The stick-holding area lifts up, allowing for easy access during performance. (818) 767-3511, www.coffincase.com.



The **MacRobert Corporation's** Dualist twin-action single pedal has been upgraded with stronger components and new factory settings for greater speed. The company also has new distribution contact information in the US. Phone/fax: (323) 417-4964, www.thedualist.com.

Axis Percussion offers their famous bass drum pedals, along with a complete series of Vortex Series snare, cymbal, and hi-hat stands. (310) 549-1171, www.axispercussion.com.

Grip Peddler offers traction- and comfort-promoting floorboard pads for a wide variety of bass drum pedals. (949) 361-9999, www.grippeddler.com.

Pro-Tec International makes a complete line of drum bags and cases. (714) 441-0114, www.ptcases.com.



Metro-Plus and Deluxe Metro-Plus units from **Educational Music Accessories** take an audio-visual approach to drum instruction, using pads with lights as well as sounds to guide and inspire the student. A model is also available for conga instruction. (949) 481-5873, www.educationalmusicaccessories.com.



Along with other useful accessories, **Percussive Innovations** makes removable/reusable Tone Control Rings. The amount of dampening can be adjusted on each drum simply by varying the pressure that's applied to attach the ring to the head. (949) 400-4419, www.percussiveinnovations.com.

Roc-N-Soc was on hand to display their extensive line of traditional and unusual drum thrones. (828) 452-1736, www.rocsoc.com.

Prices for high-tech Scan-Beat bass drum and hi-hat pedals from **Scan-Bloc Trading & Mfg.** have been lowered significantly. (707) 963-8363, www.scan-beat.com.



The **johnnyraBB** folks now offer TrueGrip models: sticks that have an unlacquered grip area for a natural wood feel, but a lacquered upper half for greater durability. Sticks are available in 7A, 5A, 5B, and 2B sizes. Also available are lightweight plastic brushes called Dusters. (731) 658-2160, www.johnnyrabb.com.



New offerings from **Pro-Mark** include (from top): Broomsticks (made of real bundled broomstraws), new concert bass drum beaters, Performer Series extra-soft marimba mallets, Accent brushes, Bill Molenhof vibe mallets, Hilary Jones and Ian Paice Autograph sticks, and Mambo timbale sticks. (800) 233-5250, www.promark-stix.com.



Regal Tip's Thai Sticks offer several variations on the theme of bundled-dowel "alternative" drumsticks, including a Fan Thai and an oversize model called the Typhoon (designed in conjunction with Barenaked Ladies drummer Tyler Stewart). Also new are X-series sticks in 5AX, 5BX, and Rock-X models, which are 1/4" longer than the standard versions. (716) 285-2710, www.regaltip.com.



Vater's new Sugar Maple series (top) offers drummers the lighter feel of maple wood. They're available in seven models. Also new are Player Design sticks, including models from John Blackwell and Joey Heredia. (781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.



New **Vic Firth** products include a Tony Royster Jr. signature stick, Scott Johnson and Ralph Hardimon signature marching tenor sticks, four new models in the Rute (doweled stick) series, and Blades spatula-shaped plastic sticks "for use on all percussion membranes." (781) 326-3455, www.vicfirth.com.



New Artist Series drumsticks from **Zildjian** include models for Greg Hutchinson, Travis Barker, Mike Mangini, and Kozo Suganuma, as well as a Steve Houghton Utility Brush.

Of Special Note



The latest model from **Ahead Drumsticks** is a Joey Jordison signature stick. (800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com.



Primarily focused on the concert and marching markets, **Innovative Percussion** introduced Christopher Lamb signature concert snare sticks, as well as new Field Series timpani mallets. (615) 333-9388, www.innovativepercussion.com.



Nick Menza Signature "Menzanators" are new from **Unigrip**. (800) 474-7068, www.unigrip2000.com.



New models from **Trueline** include Daniel Glass and Charlie Waymire signature sticks, along with a 5A Rocker available in Natural Grip and Classic finishes. (802) 485-4900, www.trueline.com.



Applied Microphone Technology's B-811 condenser microphone operates without a transformer and has an extremely flat frequency response, which is contoured for overhead configurations. AMT states that when used in pairs, this model accurately reproduces cymbal sounds. (908) 665-2727, www.Appliedmic.com.



Audix Corp. has come out with a nifty mini mic' clamp called the D-Clamp, which easily attaches to congas, drums, and various percussion instruments. It has a flexible gooseneck for easy positioning. Also new from Audix is their ADX20-D miniature condenser microphone. (503) 682-6933, www.audixusa.com.



Beyerdynamic's new Opus 67 dynamic and Opus 87 condenser microphones have been designed for miking drums and percussion in a live setting. The 67 has high SPL capability and is excellent for toms, snares, congas, and bongos. The 87 has a wide frequency response and is best suited for snares and toms. (631) 293-3200, www.beyerdynamic.com.



Tactile Sound Monitors from **Clark Synthesis** are compact transducers that attach to drum thrones and provide the "feel" of low-frequency impact (to replace on-stage monitor cabinets). Three models are available for different applications and prices. (303) 797-7500, www.clarksynthesis.com.



Randall May International has added a specially configured version of the Electro-Voice EV868 mic' to their line of internally mounted drum microphones (distributed by DW). Bass drum and tom versions are available. (805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.



Shure Microphones has two strong contenders on the budget drum-mic' kit market. Their PGDMK4 features one PG52 kick mic' and three PG56 snare/tom mic's. Their PGDMK6 kit adds two PG81 mic's for percussion and overhead miking. (847) 866-2200, www.shure.com.

Of Special Note



Ac-cetera has an entire line of mic' clamps, including their recently redesigned M1-E5 model. It's 5" long and will bend in any direction. (412) 344-8609, www.ac-cetera.com.



AKG Acoustics offers several drum-mic' pre-packs. The AKG Emotion features one D 440 kick mic', four D 440 multi-purpose mic's, and a protective case. (615) 620-3800, www.akg.com.



Want to really *feel* your kick drum? The **Guittammer Company's** ButtKicker 2 is smaller, more responsive, and less expensive than the original, yet still uses their patented transducer technology. (888) 676-2828, www.thebuttkicker.com.

Sennheiser's HD 280 Pro headphones—made for people who move around when they listen to music—are perfect for drummers. Based on their popular 604 model, these new cans have very good clamping, which holds them in place. (860) 434-9190, www.sennheiserusa.com.

The CX-506 clip-on condenser mic' from **SHS Audio** is designed for drum and percussion miking. Its specially tailored frequency response provides natural reproduction of the instruments, and its polar pattern isolates unwanted sound.



Ddrum's upgraded ddrum4 SE features signature sounds by Simon Phillips, Kenny Aronoff, Dennis Chambers, and Mel Gaynor, as well as mesh heads, chokeable two-zone cymbal pads, and a new hi-hat triggering interface. (727) 519-9669, www.clavia.com.



Drum Tech's Electro Acoustic kit features mesh pads backed up by more foam padding than other manufacturers use in order to create a more drum-like feel. Kits will be shipped shortly with round cymbal units, replacing the wedge-shaped units shown here. (413) 538-7586, www.drumtech.com.



The Prodigy is **Hart Dynamics'** entry-level electronic pad kit. It features mesh heads and is compatible with most sound modules. (850) 654-1455, www.hartdynamics.com.



The RMP-1 Rhythm Coach Pack from **Roland** combines a mesh V-Practice Pad with the RM-2 Rhythm Coach sound module. The module provides twenty-eight drum sounds, an onboard metronome with human voice count and training exercises, and inputs for kick and snare triggers and a play-along sound source. (323) 890-3700, www.rolandus.com.

Alfred Publishing has recently come out with several new drumset and percussion titles, including *Peter Erskine's Drumset Essentials, Volume 1*, a step-by-step guide that covers such topics as technique and musicality. Alfred's *Handiguide* series features pocket-size books covering how to tune and set up your drums. (818) 891-5999, www.alfredpub.com.

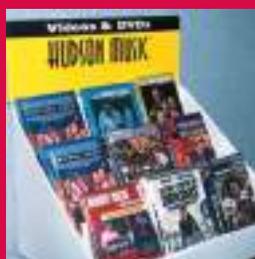


Berklee Press has several new titles for 2002, including their *Practice Method For Drumset* (a series that corresponds to instructional materials for other instruments), *Instant Drumset*, and *Turntable Technique: The Art Of The DJ*. (617) 747-2146, www.berkleepress.com.



Hal Leonard has four new books for drummers, including *The Primary Handbook For Snare Drum*, *Play Drums Today* (with CD), *Play Drums Today Songbook* (with a CD that contains ten rock and pop favorites), and *The Drummer's Guide To Shuffles*. (414) 774-3630, www.halleonard.com.

Hudson Music has amassed an impressive collection of video and DVD releases, including their most recent DVD efforts, *The*



Lost West Side Story Tapes (Buddy Rich), Tommy Igoe's *Getting Started On Drums*, and Mike Portnoy's *Liquid Drum Theater*. (888) 796-2992, www.hudsonmusic.com.



Mel Bay offers several new instructional drum books, including a drumset book in their "First Lessons" series, authored by Frank Briggs. (636) 257-3970, www.melbay.com.



Q Up Arts has introduced some very hip loop/sample packages, including *Voices Of The Aztecs* (ancient sounds of the Earth), *Increased Velocity* (futuristic sounds), *Voices Of Native America*, and *Bun E In A Box* (featuring Cheap Trick's beloved sticksman, produced by Steve Albini). (801) 486-8225, www.qupart.com.



Reel Drums, distributed by Wave Distribution, is a collection of performance-oriented drum loops that are arranged in song format. The package includes over twenty-five sessions of 24-bit drum tracks, all performed by master drummer Joe Franco. (Yes, you'll hear some cool double bass beats here!) (973) 728-2425, www.reeldrums.com, www.wavedistribution.com.



Volume II of **Rhythm Tech's** popular play-along CD *Turn It Up, Lay It Down* is now available. The company also offers single- and double-row bar chimes with oak frames. (914) 636-6900, www.rhythmtch.com.

Instructional book/CD packages from Carmine Appice, Marco Minnemann, Matt Savage, and David Garibaldi & Talking Drums are all available from **Warner Bros. Publishing**. (800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublishing.com.



Big Fish Audio's latest project, *The London Orchestral Percussion CD-ROM*, features four discs jam-packed with over 2.5 gigabytes of finely recorded orchestral percussion samples. A huge selection of instruments are included. (818) 768-6115, www.bigfishaudio.com.

Carl Fischer Music now offers *Killer Grooves*, a book containing the personal favorite grooves of thirty well-known drummers. (800) 762-2328, www.carlfischer.com.

Coda Music Technology's popular music-scoring program, *Finale*, has been upgraded. *Finale 2002* allows the user to do things like automatically create an entire orchestration from any melody, as well as create printed practice lessons in seconds. Also, the note-entry system has been simplified. (952) 937-9611, www.codamus.com.

Sibelius Software has enhanced their music notation program. *Sibelius 2* features over two hundred new improvements, including new color graphics, more powerful advanced tools, and a new look and feel that makes operating the program much easier. (888) 474-2354, www.sibelius.com.



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Danny Carey
Lateralus

by Ed Breckenfeld



Kevin Willis

MUSIC KEY

Open	O	R.C. bell	C.C.
H.H.	X		
S.D.	X		
F.T.	X		
B.D.	X		
H.H. w/foot	X	2nd B.D.	Add'l Toms Note

The long-awaited third album from prog-rock metal masters Tool provides a spotlight for the prodigious talents of Danny Carey. The drumming on *Lateralus* has it all: imagination, dynamics, power, flash, and an unmistakably *human* feel. Danny cruises through Tool's odd time signatures with the mind of a mathematician. Let's check out a few examples.

"The Grudge"

This verse pattern divides itself into a 6/8-4/8 compound time signature. The hi-hat work spices it up.

"The Patient"

After a moody mid-song pause, Danny re-enters with this blazing double-bass sequence.

"Schism"

This beat locks note-for-note to a Justin Chancellor bass riff.

The song ends with a ferocious double-bass pattern.

"Ticks & Leeches"

Tom-tom grooves abound on *Lateralus*. With the snares off in the intro of this tune, Danny creates a tribal effect, albeit a frantic one in 7/4 time!

"Lateralus"

The title track features another compound time signature: a descending 9/8-8/8-7/8 cycle. Danny has the uncanny ability to

make this kind of thing groove.

"Reflection"

Here's another third world-sounding tom intro played with the snares off. (This one's in 4/4 time for a change!)

"Triad"

Finally, here's an amazing polyrhythmic pattern that builds to the climax of the song.



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Understanding The Language Of Music

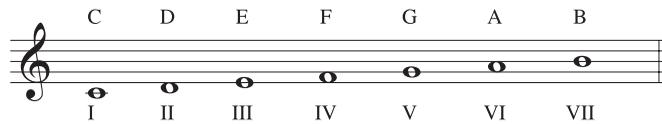
Part 9: Roman Numerals And The Circle Of 5ths

by Ron Spagnardi

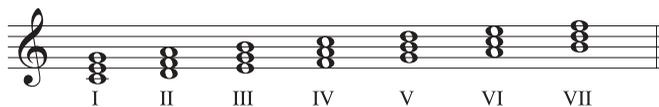
The Roman numeral system in music offers an easy method of identifying chords and chord progressions in every key. Here's how it works: The Roman numerals I through VII simply refer to the degrees of a scale. Since there are seven notes in a scale, the first seven Roman numerals are used.

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Look at the C scale below and notice how Roman numerals I through VII relate to each degree of the scale.

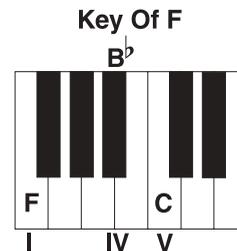
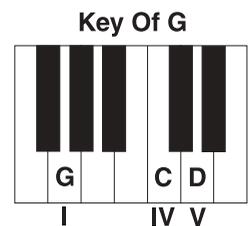
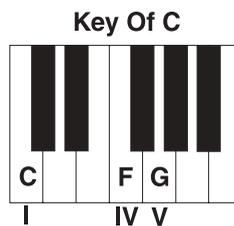
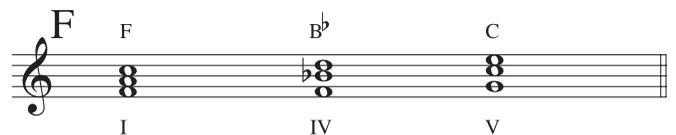
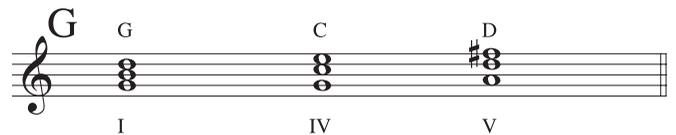
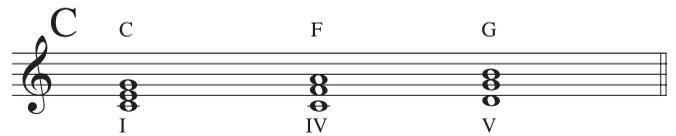


When we build a three-note chord on each degree of the C scale, we end up with the seven diatonic chords in the key of C major. (We'll delve more deeply into the resulting quality of these diatonic chords [major, dominant, minor, and diminished] next month.)



The beauty of the Roman numeral system lies in the fact that it is not limited to any particular key. In other words, the I chord is I in every key, IV is IV in every key, V is V in every key, etc....

Notice in the example below that C, F, and G are the I, IV, and V chords in the key of C. In the key of G major, the I, IV, and V chords are G, C, and D. In the key of F, the I, IV, and V chords become F, B^b, and C.



The following chart offers a bird's-eye view of the essential I, IV, and V chords in every key. Try them all on your keyboard.

Key	I	IV	V
C	C (C, E, G)	F (F, A, C)	G (G, B, D)
G	G (G, B, D)	C (C, E, G)	D (D, F#, A)
D	D (D, F#, A)	G (G, B, D)	A (A, C#, E)
A	A (A, C#, E)	D (D, F#,A)	E (E, G#, B)
E	E (E, G#, B)	A (A, C#, E)	B (B, D#, F#)
B	B (B, D#, F#)	E (E, G#, B)	F# (F#, A#, C#)
G^b	G^b (G ^b , B ^b , D ^b)	B (B, D#, F#)	D^b (D ^b , F, A ^b)
D^b	D^b (D ^b , F, A ^b)	G^b (G ^b , B ^b , D ^b)	A^b (A ^b , C, E ^b)
A^b	A^b (A ^b , C, E ^b)	D^b (D ^b , F, A ^b)	E^b (E ^b , G, B ^b)
E^b	E^b (E ^b , G, B ^b)	A^b (A ^b , C, E ^b)	B^b (B ^b , D, F)
B^b	B^b (B ^b , D, F)	E^b (E ^b , G, B ^b)	F (F, A, C)
F	F (F, A, C)	B^b (B ^b , D, F)	C (C, E, G)

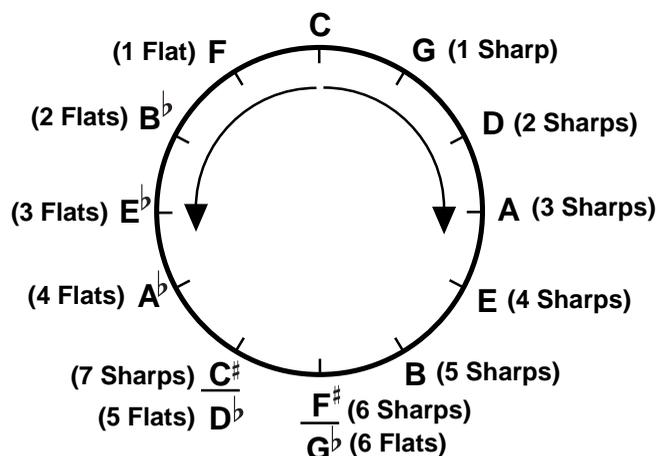
Not only does the Roman numeral system help us memorize chord changes to different tunes, it's also invaluable in transposition (playing the same tunes in different keys). Once you're adept at converting scale degrees to Roman numerals, transpositions to other keys are quick and easy to make.

The Circle Of 5ths

The Circle Of 5ths diagram below demonstrates chords that move in intervals of a 5th. Look at the example. The arrows indicate that the circle can move clockwise or counterclockwise. Moving clockwise, the circle moves in intervals of a 5th towards the sharp keys. Each time you move up a 5th, another sharp is added.

As you move counterclockwise, the circle moves in intervals of a 5th downwards towards the flat keys. Each time you move down a 5th, another flat is added.

These natural progressions are very common in rock, pop, and jazz harmony because they are extremely strong chord progressions.



Spend this month absorbing all of the material presented here. Be able to identify the I, IV, and V chords in every key. Then practice the I, IV, V progression clockwise through the Circle Of 5ths.

C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, C#, A^b, E^b, B^b, and F.

Then try the I, IV, V progression counterclockwise through the Circle Of 5ths.

C, F, B^b, E^b, A^b, D^b, G^b, B, E, A, D, and G.

Next month, in part 10 of our series, we'll further explore the subject of diatonic harmony.



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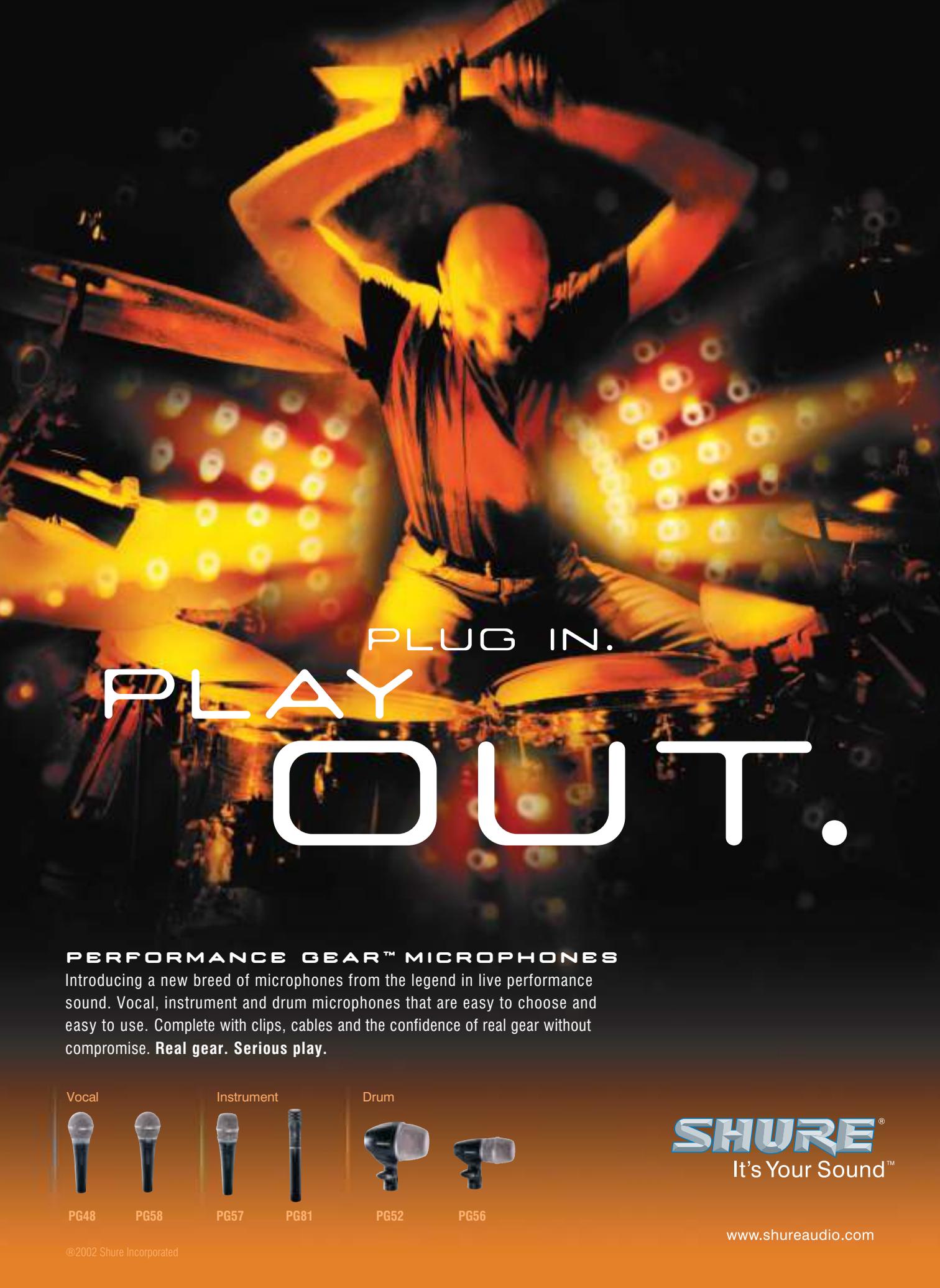
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More Mirror-Image Exercises

by Rod Morgenstein

MUSIC KEY

This month's column continues the "mirror image" concept presented in my last *Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic* (April '02 MD). That is, one hand moves around the drumset in a clockwise motion while the other moves counterclockwise. The

examples presented here will strengthen the weak side of your body while improving your overall independence and coordination.

Examples 1-6 have only one stroke played per drum or cymbal surface. Play each exercise several times using each of the stickings.



1

2

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

3

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

4

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

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 R L R L R L R L R L

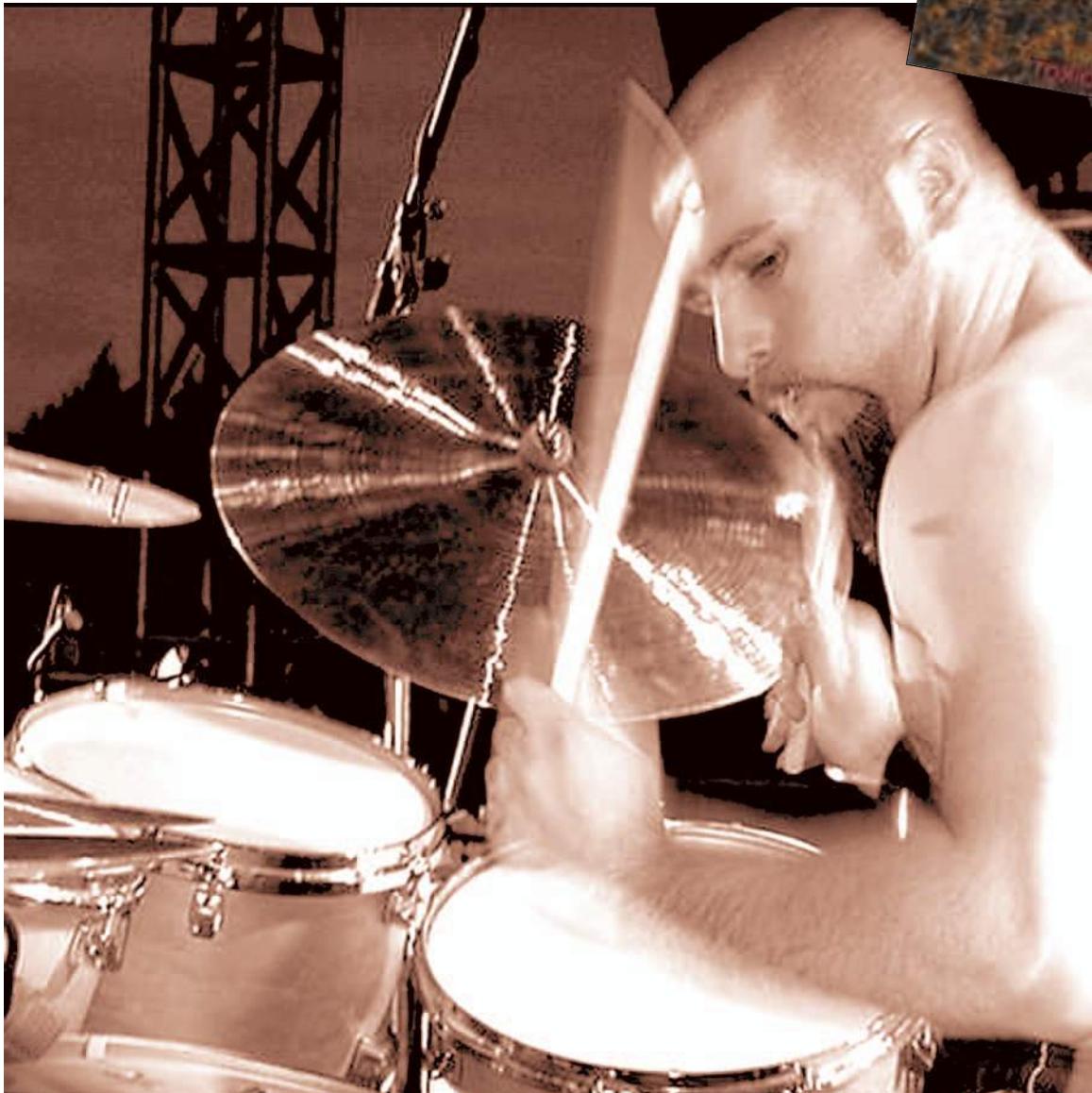
6

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 R L R L

System Of A Down's John Dolmayan

"Chop Suey"

Transcribed by Joe Bergamini



MUSIC KEY

Half-Open	∅	C.C.	R.C.
H.H.	×	×	×
T.T.	●	●	●
S.D.	●	●	●
T.T.	●	●	●
B.D.	●	●	●

Add'l Toms

System Of A Down is a very interesting band, mixing elements of thrash and metal with haunting melodies and dynamic interludes. The song "Chop Suey" illustrates this as it shifts between a soft guitar setup to a heavy, driving intro, and then to an almost

comically fast stop-time verse—with whispering in the rests!

Drummer John Dolmayan effectively navigates the mood of this complex song. The drums on this album are mixed very clearly, making it easy to follow the chart. They enter with a melodic motif on the toms, which sets up the first verse.

The most challenging aspect of this song is the fact that

Dolmayan changes the time feel with each section. The quarter-note pulse stays constant throughout, but the drums shift to half time (snare drum on beat 3) in the choruses, when he switches to the ride cymbal for a lighter, airier feel.

After the first chorus, John goes back to the intro groove, but then shifts to triple time (!) for one bar before the second verse. The backbeats wind up on the “e” and “ah” of every beat, and sound like a fast punk beat. He shifts again after the second chorus, going

to double time to accommodate the bridge (snare on the “&’s” of each beat). Each of these shifts considerably alters the time feel.

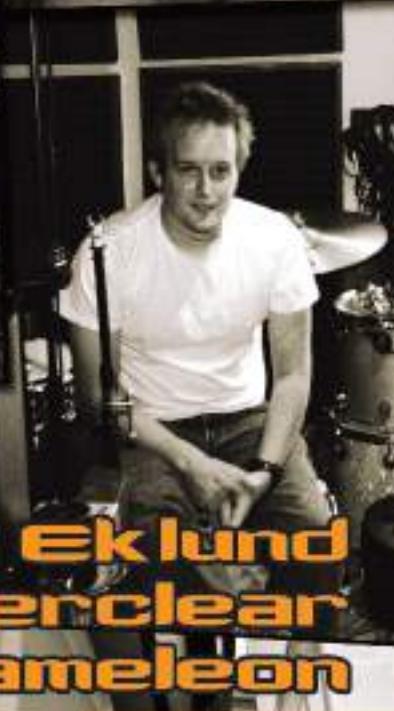
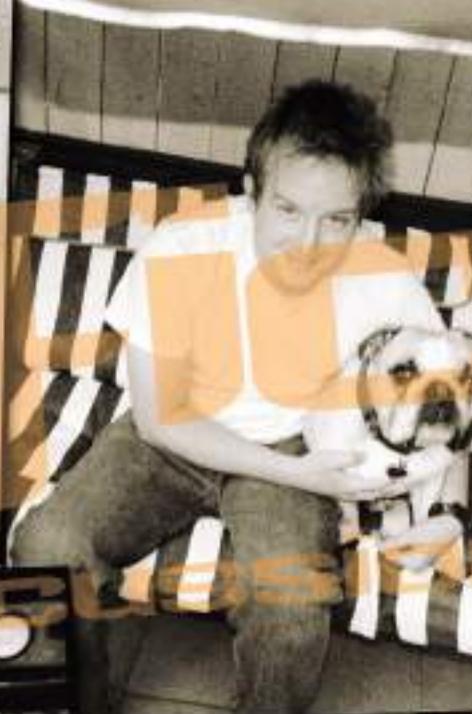
You might want to listen to this track a few times before trying to play along, in order to get the hang of these feel shifts. Also pay attention to the ride choices John makes. He plays time on a loose hi-hat, ride cymbal, and even a crash cymbal at different points in the tune.

This is a challenging chart. Have fun with it.

The drum chart is written on a grand staff with a common time signature (C). It features various time signatures: 4, 3, 2, and 3/4. The chart includes a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth notes, quarter notes, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and accidentals. There are also symbols for snare (x) and hi-hat (o) sounds. The chart is divided into sections by bar lines and includes dynamic markings like '(No Cr.)' and '2'.

"Chop Suey"

The musical score for "Chop Suey" is presented in two systems, each with a guitar part on top and a drum part on the bottom. The guitar part consists of a series of eighth-note chords, many of which are marked with an asterisk (*). The drum part features a complex, syncopated pattern with various note values and rests. The score includes several measures of rests, indicated by a circled 'X' (∅) above the staff. The final two systems of the score are marked with "(No Cr.)" and feature a double bar line followed by a percentage sign (%), indicating a section where the drum part is not to be played.



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"Chop Suey"

The musical score for "Chop Suey" consists of seven staves of music. The first staff shows a melodic line with four asterisks above it, followed by three measures with a double bar line and a slash. The subsequent six staves feature a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with asterisks above the notes indicating specific accents or techniques. The final staff includes a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3' above it.



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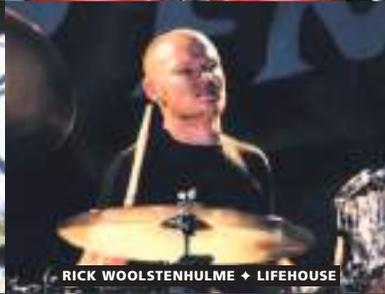
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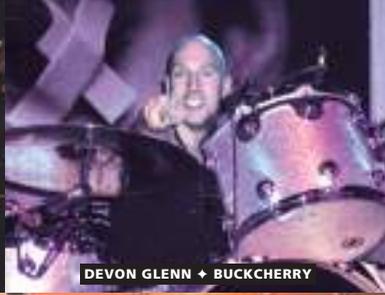
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Accent Control

Part 1: 8th Notes

by Ron Spagnardi

Accents add color and dynamic variation to drumming, making them an essential aspect of every drummer's technique. The patterns presented in this two-part series will improve your ability to execute accents with varied stickings, increase the fluency of your weaker hand, refine balance between your hands, and stimulate solo ideas for application on the drumset.

Practice tips: Repeat each of the following patterns at least ten times before proceeding. Practice each using all of the recommended stickings. Be sure to make a noticeable distinction between all accented and non-accented notes.



Sticking Variations

a) R L R L R L R L
 b) L R L R L R L R
 c) R R L L R R L L
 d) R L R R L R L L

Once you've mastered the various patterns with each of the above stickings, practice all of the material the following four ways:

1) Add the bass drum to all accented notes.

2) Play all accents as rimshots along with the bass drum.

3) Play all accented notes as flams.

4) Play all exercises on the drumset using alternate sticking. (Play all non-accented notes on the snare drum, right-hand accents on the large tom, and left-hand accents on the small tom.)

One-Bar Patterns

1

a) R L R L R L R L
 b) L R L R L R L R
 c) R R L L R R L L
 d) R L R R L R L L

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

2
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Accent Control

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Two-Bar Patterns

1

a) R L R L R L R L
 b) L R L R L R L R
 c) R R L L R R L L
 d) R L R R L R L L

2

3

4

Ian Paice Signature Snare

In case you've ever wondered where the term "Heavy Metal" came from, here's the origin, Ian Paice.

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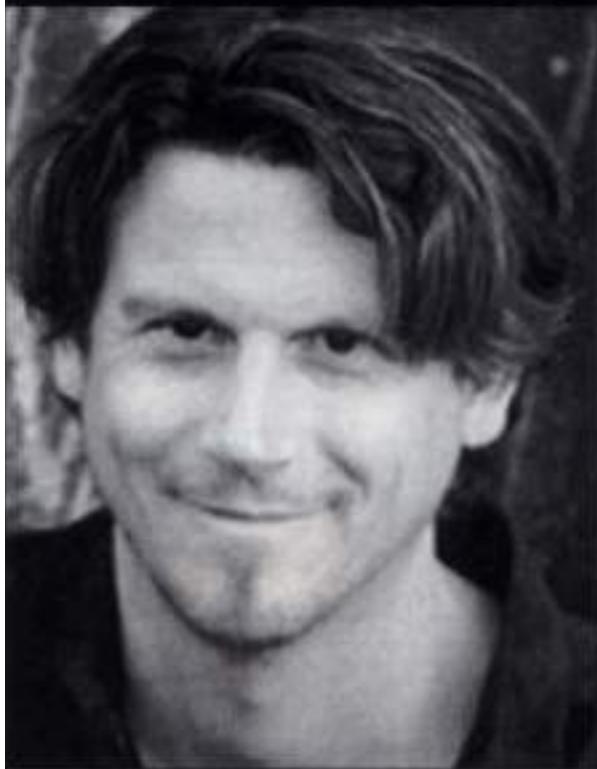


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Accent Control

Sixteen-Bar Solo

Finally, here's a brief solo using many of the accent patterns previously studied.

a) R L R L R L R L
b) L R L R L R L R
c) R R L L R R L L
d) R L R R L R L L

In Part 2 of this series, we'll look at playing accents with triplets.

This material is excerpted from the book Accent Control, by Ron Spagnardi. It's published by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc.



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RECORDINGS

9 Bobby Previte & Bump Just Add Water... (Palmetto)



In the past *MD* has hailed drummer **BOBBY PREVITE** as a rarity and trailblazer. With this ensemble jazz outing, Previte once again tops himself by taking command, laying it down, and gettin' jiggy. Previte attacks odd meters with swinging, imaginative phrasing, and drives these catchy melodies with syncopated snare patterns and delightfully funky grooves. It's all fluid—no over-bloated passages here, even amid the band's collective improvisations. Previte, who composed and arranged all but one of the tracks, perfectly enhances and contrasts the very essence of each tune through his bold, brash, and sometimes subtle performances. An engaging, rare achievement.

Will Romano

5 Concrete Blonde Group Therapy

(Manifesto)

Concrete Blonde's reunited original lineup serves up some quirky tunes for the real draw here—Johnette Napolitano's signature voice. Her brawny, dramatic vocals made "Joey" a hit in 1990 and spawned a generation of imitators. The best example of that spirit here is the opening track, "Roxy," a weird and catchy declaration of love to art rockers Roxy Music. (Ironically, Roxy drummer **Paul Thompson** played on "Joey.") James A. Mankey's aggressive, atmospheric guitars are a highlight, and **HARRY RUSHAKOFF**'s boxy drumming is solid, if not particularly exciting. By not reacting to the passion of the others, he misses ample opportunity for drama.

Linda Pitmon

7 The Cancer Conspiracy The Audio Medium (Big Wheel Recreation)

The pensive, almost Windham Hill-like piano piece that opens *The Audio Medium* gives no warning of the stormy music to follow. As the piano gives way to disconcerting odd-time riffs and mounting dynamic tension, it's quickly clear that you're on a strange and wild journey. Drummer/saxophonist/keyboardist **GREG BEADLE** mixes some furious single strokes into his minimal, often ride-driven beats. Then his piano returns, and the music begins building to an unnerving white-noise climax. Listen to this suite-like LP in one sitting; there are plenty of records that are faster, louder, harder, darker—but not many that are *creepier*. (www.bigwheelrec.com)

Michael Parillo



6 Greg Ellis Kala Rupa (Narada)

West Coast percussionist **GREG ELLIS** has steeped himself in the rhythms of India, the Middle East, and North Africa, and his debut recording welcomes the listener to grooves and patterns from the other side of the globe. Using exotic instruments such as the riq, the tabla, and the udu, Ellis paints sonic landscapes that become a fusion of disparate elements. While this is certainly a Westerner's interpretation of some very ancient Hindi and Arabic traditions, the vocals by **Azam Ali** bring authenticity to the project. We can only hope that learning to hear the sounds of these cultures will help us come to appreciate what we often think of as "foreign." (www.vasmusic.com)

Bill Kiely

8 Rye Coalition On Top (Tiger Style)

Rarely does one encounter an album that encourages the volume knob be twisted fully clockwise. Rye Coalition's *On Top* demands it. With the ambient microphones cranked, drummer **DAVE LETO**'s work is deftly captured with a dirty, warm openness that complements the act's shambled-by-design songwriting. Key examples include the lazy, washy cut "Freshly Frankness" and the Bonham-esque intro of "Heart Of Gold, Jacket Of Leather." Aiming squarely between the straight-ahead drive of Rocket From The Crypt and the loose breakdowns of Fugazi or Jesus Lizard, Leto's precise knack bleeds the true blood of unadulterated, pummeling rock.

Waleed



DOS NEGROS

8 John Patitucci Communion (Concord)

This aptly titled record is a happy marriage of some of the brightest talents in contemporary Latin, classically influenced, and neo-bop jazz, including **Branford Marsalis**, **Chris Potter**, and **Brad Mehldau**. The cross-cultural percussion team of **MARC QUIÑONES** and **HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ** churns out silky Afro-Cuban grooves while propelling beautiful sax and scat leads. In "The Sower," Hernandez flirts with a balls-out solo, though ultimately, and tastefully, bows to restraint. It's not the bass-and-drums extravaganza some might expect, but the sway and continuity of these songs is soothing—a result mindless doodling would never allow. **BRIAN BLADE** also appears.

Will Romano



7 Giovanni Hidalgo & Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez Traveling Through Time

Like a triple-x video, *Traveling* abandons exposition and gets right to the hot stuff. No grand concepts here. But the mind-blowing workouts within will make drummers salivate. It's a self-produced hour of duets/solos from two cutting-edge Latin masters. Giovanni defines modern conga playing with his limitless textures and wild time "displacements," while Horacio's drumset groove is astonishing. And yes, you'll hear El Negro's fabled left-foot cowbell clavé outlining inspired chops soloing. Torrid stuff! You may want to hide it in the sock drawer.

(www.elnegro.com, www.giovannihidalgo.com)

Jeff Potter

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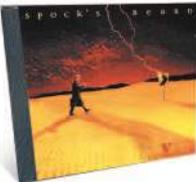
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8 Spock's Beard V and There And Here (Radiant)



Drummer **NICK D'VIRGILIO** supports Spock's Beard's rummage-sale prog-rock/power-pop freakchild with unerring good taste, graceful technique, and imagination. Throughout their new studio album, *V*, and live collection *There And Here*, SB maintains Kansas as their stylistic reference point, while including the gentle sci-sounds of Genesis and the art rock of Yes, along with Night Ranger bombast and Rush power riffs. The energetic D'Virgilio matches every organ finger-fest and synth ejaculation with blazing tom rolls, roller-coaster grooves, and delicate cymbal trills. A lesser drummer would be daunted by Spock's stylistic mayhem. But Nick not only cruises, he bruises, and at warp speed.

Ken Micallef

8 Adam Nitti Evidence (Renaissance Man)



On *Evidence*, fusion bass extremist Adam Nitti gets funky and explores a more soulful style than on his past recordings. Each track lays well with its chosen drummer. **DAVE WECKL** and **TOM KNIGHT** explode with fiery performances on the more uptempo tracks. **APT. Q258 (JEFF SIPE)**

and **DWAYNE HOLLOWAY** are assigned the slower funk and swampy grooves, which they perform with just the right amount of sludge. **FORREST ROBINSON** closes the set with a mellow, open, jazzy track that shows his sensitivity. A great variety of grooving fusion drumming with the accent on soulful funk. (www.adamnitti.com)

Mike Haid

8 ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead (Interscope)

Blending the experimentalism of Sonic Youth with the spontaneous intensity of Fugazi and the dirty, jangly pop sensibilities of Superchunk, Texas's ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead offer an effective blast of extreme, spazzed-out highs mingling with subtle lulls. **CONRAD KEELY**'s stickwork meshes cohesively with the rest of the ensemble, while the waltzy/four-beat contrasts of "Relative Ways" paint serene pictures of a more calculated performance element, instantly commanded by the heavy, washy ride pattern. Topped with plenty of cool, airy room reverb, with large doses of ambient drum miking, Trail Of Dead's cathartic self-titled collection is an experimental rock delight.

Waleed Rashidi

7 Rob Garcia Place Of Resonance (CAP)



ROB GARCIA wields his sticks like a quill, drumming like a discerning composer. Which he is. This leader's compositions exude a gentle lyricism with strong melodic heads stated in sunny flute/tenor harmonies. There's excellent soloing throughout, and it's a welcome treat to

hear jazz flute play a leading role. Garcia's unobtrusive drumming and sensitive cymbal work caress the form, and when the time is right, he kicks in swing power. It's said that writing is about *taking out* what's not needed; Garcia's understanding of this has wisely carried into his drumming. (290 Riverside Drive, Ste. 11-D, New York, NY 10025)

Jeff Potter

VINNIE!

9 Vinnie Colaiuta/Robben Ford/Jimmy Haslip Jing Chi (Tone Center)



Long gone from Sting's band, **VINNIE COLAIUTA** has started reappearing as a session ace on records by everyone from African singer Richard Bona to trumpeter Chris Botti. Vinnie's style remains inimitable, but sessions don't always allow him to strut his mighty stuff. *Jing Chi* solves that with a variety of grooves and moods that this super-trio proceeds to detonate. The menu

includes *Believe It*-styled fusion meltdowns, math-rock free-funk, "Cold Sweat" R&B, ambient space jazz, stadium blues rock, and turbocharged reggae. Vinnie's closing "Aurora" is a blast of balls-out metric-modulating hard rock, proving that, yes, the doctor is still in.

Ken Micallef

8 Kimo Williams And Kimotion Tracking (Little Beck Music)

Baseball historians claim Ted Williams was so locked in at the plate that he could count the stitches on a pitched ball. Similarly, it appears Vinnie Colaiuta feels time elapsing in slow motion, which allows him to carve it into an infinite number of jaw-dropping variations. Bassist/composer Kimo Williams' demanding large-group compositions give him plenty to work with—and lots of solo space. It's a restless stylistic mishmash—let's call it symphonic fusion—that leaves few genres unexplored. Vinnie leads the way with his deep groove and a bottomless well of ideas that only he could pull off. (www.kimotion.org)

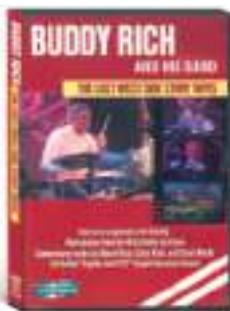


Michael Parillo

D V D S

10 Buddy Rich The Lost West Side Story Tapes (Hudson Music)

level: all, \$39.95



BUDDY RICH swings hard on this live recording before a studio audience from 1985. The original tape was lost, found, and then painstakingly restored, finally arriving on DVD today. As concert recordings go, this is a really good one, with classic material, excellent playing, and great sound. And with seven cameras focused on Buddy and the band, you don't miss a thing, whether it's a group shot or a close-up of Buddy's flying sticks.

It's a great show to watch straight through, with the advantage of being able to easily jump to all the solos for jaw-dropping scrutiny. Buddy never ceases to amaze; every drummer should see at least one video of him to fully appreciate his technique, and this one doesn't leave much to be desired.

Martin Patmos

MR. LATE NIGHT ANTON FIG



In the Groove

(VH0199) Video \$39.95

Anton shares his own tips and ideas on making music and for surviving in the professional world. He talks about time, communicating through music, nuances of different styles, constructing a beat for a song and what it takes to play on the *Late Show*. (75 min.)

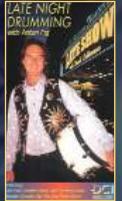
(MMBK0058CD) Book and CD \$19.95

The book and play-along CD offers a variety of tunes in different styles. CD tracks are mixed with and without the drums and Anton includes valuable tips and pointers on each musical example.

Late Night Drumming

(VH0208) Video \$14.95

A close-up look at one of TV's most popular drummers. Anton's versatility on the "Letterman gig" shows in rare studio footage of him performing with the Paul Shaffer Band, Will Lee and Sid McGinnis. Includes a special Top Ten List from Dave and a unique drum performance by the *Late Show* host himself. (30 min.)



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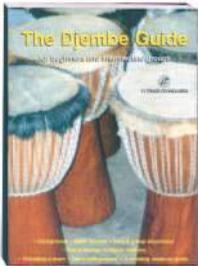
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B O O K S

7 The Djembe Guide by Ianto Thornber (Mel Bay)

level: beginner to intermediate, \$24.95 (with CD)



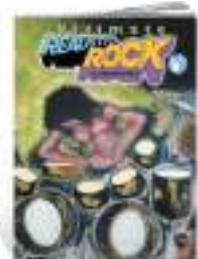
Ianto Thornber has spent years studying the art of playing the West African djembe, from his home base in England and during several extended visits to Africa. This book translates Thornber's direct, first-hand experience with African drummers and craftsmen into a clear, well-articulated delivery of all the essentials: the historical background, the proper playing technique, a wide range of basic exercises and rhythms, and even an illustrated how-to chapter on building and tuning a drum. Thornber's passion for acquiring a solid foundation from his teachers results in a bonus for readers of this workbook; you will not only

be introduced to basic strokes and multi-part rhythms, but you'll come to understand the challenge and thrill of group drumming, complete with bell, djun djun, and shaker parts. With excellent photographs and a well-produced instructional CD, this straightforward workbook is essential for students of West Africa's most popular drum.

Bill Kiely

8 Ultimate Realistic Rock by Carmine Appice (Warner Bros.)

level: all, \$24.95 (with 2 CDs)



Master rock drummer **CARMINE APPICE** releases yet another updated edition of his classic *Realistic Rock* drum method book. New material includes 7/8 and 9/8 sections, hand and foot combination patterns, and play-along tracks on the accompanying CDs. Carmine's kit has a great sound, and the play-along tunes are simple and fun to play with. There are a couple of minor problems, including several eight- and sixteen-bar exercises that begin on one page and end on the backside of the same page. (It's unnecessarily difficult to play, read, and turn pages at the same time.) But hey, it's close enough for rock 'n' roll.

Mike Haid

7 Best Of Steely Dan: Drums And Vocal transcribed by Scott Schroedl

(Cherry Lane/Hal Leonard)



level: intermediate to advanced, \$18.95

Though this book could benefit from the inclusion of a few more tunes, it is, to our knowledge, the only Steely Dan drum book in print. For this reason alone it should be applauded. But there's more. Transcriber Schroedl underscores the beauty, fury, and subtle details of the featured songs. We're made aware, seemingly for the first time, of the near-constant hi-hat foot pattern in "Peg," awed by **STEVE GADD**'s monstrous and dynamic performance in "Aja" (arguably the greatest studio drum solo ever), and treated to **JEFF PORCARO**'s elegant yet simple straight shuffles. Some might argue that the feel of these performances, not the actual notes written, are what made these songs great (**BERNARD PURDIE**'s silky touch in "Babylon Sisters," for instance). Perhaps. But this book, which also includes some Donald Fagen solo material, gives us another chance to examine the inner workings of these time-tested classics.

Will Romano

7 Inside The Hits by Wayne Wadhams

(Berklee Press/Hal Leonard)

level: all, \$29.95



Inside The Hits might not offer drum lessons per se, but it certainly provides enough fascinating information to keep any drummer happy. Throughout, author Wayne Wadhams dissects more than sixty of the most memorable hit songs since the beginning of the rock 'n' roll era.

(There are sixty pages alone dedicated to The Beatles; did you know *Revolver* was one of the first recordings to use close-miking on the drums?) Through interviews with the artists, producers, and engineers who were "there," drummers can learn the inside scoop on the recording techniques and drum parts on hits like Paul Simon's "Kodachrome" (**ROGER HAWKINS** on drums), The Police's "Every Breath You Take" (**STEWART COPELAND**), and "Superstition" by **STEVIE WONDER**. *Inside The Hits* is an informative, captivating read.

Billy Amendola

V I D E O S

8 Jae Sinnett Musical Drumming Concepts (J-Nett Music)

level: all, \$18.95



In this 68-minute live performance video, **JAE SINNETT**—a drummer/composer who has shared the stage with jazz greats Randy Brecker, Branford Marsalis, and Chuck Mangione—focuses on listening skills and melodic phrasing. Sinnett leads his trio through a number of original jazz compositions, including "Six And Smith" and "Twist & Jarrett" (odes to, respectively, Steve Smith and Keith Jarrett), which feature odd-time grooves, different swing feels, and a high level of interplay between the drums, bass, and piano. In a brief practice interlude, Sinnett further illustrates that drummers should always be thinking in musical terms by playing singles, doubles, and triplets while singing counter-rhythms in time. While more pointers on how to listen to other musicians would've been helpful, Sinnett's show-don't-tell approach underscores the instinctual, not the instructional. This is a welcome addition to any drummer's video library. (www.jaesinnett.com)

Will Romano

To order any of the books or videos reviewed in this month's *Critique*, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call **Books Now** at (800) BOOKS-NOW (266-5766) or surf to www.clicksmart.com/moderndrummer. (A handling charge may be added, according to product availability.)



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Matt Goldberg

In the seven years he's been playing, Matt Golberg has focused on developing technique and control within his own personal style. Lately he's been studying odd-time playing, which suits the music he's playing very well. That music is made by Wallop, a Ft. Lauderdale-based band that Matt says "is formed of a rare blend of talented and dedicated musicians focused on making music that has its own personality and integrity, yet still has broad enough appeal to capture a wide audience."

A lofty goal, perhaps. But Wallop has already taken their brand of power rock with a prog sensibility on tour with bands like Cypress Hill, Cracker, Soul Asylum, and Better Than Ezra. Their self-produced CD, *The Johari Window*, is chock-full of interesting rhythms and melodies—and a good dose of solid yet distinctive drumming.

Matt cites Danny Carey, Horacio Hernandez, Dennis Chambers, Dave Weckl, and Josh Freese as major influences. He plays a Tama Starclassic Maple kit with a Mapex Brassmaster snare and Zildjian cymbals. He plans to integrate Latin and Moroccan percussion and triggered sounds into his kit to further expand his abilities and musical style.

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

Lori Peters

Twenty-eight-year-old Lori Peters hails from Kenosha, Wisconsin, where she's been drumming for fifteen years. For the last two of those years she's been the driving force of Ardent Records recording artists Skillet (www.skillet.org).

Skillet is a worship band known for passionate lyrics and intense performances in support of their message. But you might not peg them that way at first listen. "Our style is driving rock with a dash of industrial and a pinch of pop," says Lori. "In 2001 we did a fifty-five-date tour in support of our CD, *Alien Youth* [www.ardentrecords.com]. It was my first full-length recording, which has always been one of my goals. But there's nothing like playing live in front of Skillet fans—or Panheads, as we call them. So we've got extensive touring plans set for 2002, including the Parachute Festival in Australia and New Zealand and ten 'Acquire The Fire' youth conferences. We average about 150 shows per year."

With influences like Chad Gracey, Matt Cameron, Larry Mullen, and Dale Baker, Lori's playing with Skillet combines power, musical creativity, and technology. "I hit triggers in every bar," she says. "Some of them fire loops, others trigger kick and snare sounds. I have eleven Pintech and Roland triggers on my DW acoustic kit, along with Zildjian cymbals and an ESI sampler."



Chris Massey

Impressionistic jazz drummer Chris Massey was first influenced by Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, and Jimmy Cobb. But while at Berklee College Of Music in the late 1970s he discovered modernists Paul Motian, Jon Christensen, Jack DeJohnette, and Bob Moses. "Those guys spoke a completely new language," says Chris. "The colors and modality they introduced, coming from the jazz tradition, were really new and exciting."

After leaving Berklee in 1980, Chris moved to New York City, where he performed with the likes of Bill Frisell and other artists creating "new and unusual music." Since then his musical travels have taken him all over the world. He was recently featured on *Forever Sharp And Vivid* (Lolo Records), a cooperative trio with saxophonist David Cast and guitar texturalist David Torn, and on *Have We Told You*, featuring poet Robert Creeley

and bassist Steve Swallow along with Cast and Torn.

An endorser for Paiste cymbals in Switzerland (where he resides) along with Vater sticks and Aquarian heads, Chris constantly seeks new sounds and ways to express rhythm and harmony as color and texture. Be it avant-garde, blues, or jazz, his approach is the same: attention to detail, with one eye on jazz history and the other looking to the future.



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Fantasy And Truthfulness

A Hard Look At The Business...And Yourself

by Billy Ward

Want to be a star? Limos, chicks, great monitors, free drums, lots of money, mints on the pillow, laundry service, free Nikes? Do you still believe in this dream? “I’ll practice. I’ll get good enough. I’ll work on my hair and my waistline, and then I’ll get in a band and reap all the rewards!” Oh, if it was only this way.

Sorry, It’s A Fantasy

I hate to say it, but the music business is a nasty place. Some of the people that control the flow of the business are not particularly kind. They’ll cheat you or take advantage of you if it suits them. One of the reasons that they can get away with these shenanigans is that there are too many of us willing to kill our mothers just to fulfill the dream of being on that big stage. Share a room with four others? No problem. The gig only pays so much? Great. Rock on!

I feel you have to look beyond these dreams of stardom and come up with a healthy goal. In fact, my goal remains to play in the moment and to be completely

has to deal with bad monitors?), the fans, the free Diet Coke—doesn’t matter. I’m over it already.

If you’re fifteen years old and have only played at a school dance, you probably have a nightmarish story about the music business. Here’s one of mine. I once worked with an artist who called me a week before we were to leave on a tour of China to tell me he was going to do the tour with a different drummer. (Actually, he had a manager call me at 2:30 in the morning to leave a message on my service.) And I thought this artist was one of my friends! I had even planned my family’s vacation around the trip. I thought that this guy was a mammal, a warm-blooded, creative, and sensitive person. Well, I found out otherwise.

How about that band you’re in and that recording you’re planning? You’ve all saved money, booked the studio time, and hired “Mr. Snazzy Guy,” a producer who has



Gail Ann Dorsey

life, and we have to try to overcome them without receiving lasting scars. And that’s tough to do.

Truthfulness

The other side of the equation in working (and surviving) in this business is truthfulness. In fact, it’s an important tool for getting better. Accept no deceit! That means no deceit in business affairs, but more importantly in personal affairs *and* in musical affairs. You especially don’t want to lie to yourself about your playing. Listen to yourself harshly. The notes have to be right. Make the music special.

Here are a couple of questions you might want to ask yourself about your playing. Remember, be honest.

Q) Is it hard to control yourself in the studio? Can you resist the urge to play all of your “cool” ideas?

A) What I’ve found is, in time, when you listen to sessions you’ve done, the sessions that you played more of your “great new ideas” on will be the ones that you can’t stand. The sessions on which you simply “played the music” will be good.

Bonus tip: I speak a lot about incorporating alternative sounds (shaker mallets, rods, etc.) into drumming. But if you aren’t comfortable with these types of tools, you

My self-respect has nothing to do with who I’m playing with or how impressive my résumé is. All that matters to me is how I’m playing today.

sympathetic to the music. That may not sound like much, but actually, it’s a lot. If you’re dreaming of earthly rewards, it’s likely that you’ll be bitterly disappointed. On the other hand, loving art and striving to be a wonderful artist can lead to a very complex and fulfilling life.

My self-respect has nothing to do with who I’m working with or how impressive my résumé is. All that matters to me is how I’m playing *today*. The rest of it—the press, the lights, the bad monitors (I wonder if U2

worked with a few name artists. He says he’s going to make you sound great. But once the recording begins, everyone in your band except you gets psycho and does so many drugs that they couldn’t tell a great take if it bit them on the butt! And you’re stuck there, wondering what’s up with all the new tempos. You’re spending your downtime in this expensive studio planning on quitting the band and wondering how it all went wrong.

I apologize if this article seems too negative, but sometimes bad things happen in

should stay away from using them in a pressure studio or gig situation. It's your bottom-line musical habits that stand out. You can't stop them or control them. They are exposed, audible to all, and obvious—just like the color of your eyes.

Q) Can I play to a click and make it feel great? How exactly "on" the click do I have to be?

A) The better, real-record-making producers don't watch a screen to check your timing. They do, however, have a very highly developed sense of beat and time. Beats and timing are a large part of what hit records are all about. You don't have to be dead on the click (don't stop trying, of course), but you do need to play exactly the same way with the click from measure to measure for a track to be considered a keeper.

For example, if you're consistently behind a bit with your backbeats and it feels good, that's fine. But if one measure is behind and another measure is some other way...well...chances are good a worthy producer will feel it and want a better take (or a better drummer).

That said, please keep in mind that it takes a rhythm section to make a groove, even though all fingers get pointed at us drummers when things aren't feeling right. I'm convinced that part of being a great drummer is the ability to recognize what's wrong with a group's feel and to be able to correct it, maybe by drumming differently, by changing the headphone cue mix, or by making a verbal suggestion to one of the other players.

A Happy Ending?

Some folks are more interested in "making it" than in playing well. If that's your goal, music will be an awful business. Believe me, it takes a great love of music to survive. Honestly, do you put *all* of your effort into playing great? If your answer is yes, then you have a chance—and only a chance. That's the ante in the poker game that is this business.

Be well—and *play* well.

Billy Ward is a successful session and touring drummer who has worked with Carly Simon, Robbie Robertson, Richard Marx, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, Bill Champlin, and Joan Osborne. Billy can be reached at his Web site, www.billyward.com.



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The Joy Of The Journey

by Steen Jorgensen

No one will ever ask us to record with a top-ten band or to tour with Britney. But we go on anyway.

If you listen closely between the syncopated rhythms of Steve Gadd, the innovative solos of Terry Bozzio, the superhuman speed of Buddy Rich, and the fiery attack of Elvin Jones, you'll hear the simple paradiddle practiced over and over by us aging, unheralded amateur drummers. While the big companies try to sell us on their new ultra-thin ungawood tom-toms, with Planet Mongo cymbals and purple sticks that catch fire on every third beat, we toil away trying to get our bass drum speed past 200 bpm, and struggling through the triplet accents in *Syncopation For The Modern Drummer*.

No one will ever ask us to record with a top-ten band or to tour with Britney. But we go on anyway. We improve by the inch, though it feels like a mile. Bozzio's independence is a fantasy we'll

never realize no matter how hard we practice. Rich's lightning speed is just a blurred blip on a video that we'll never attain. Our chances of copying Steve Smith's

fluidity are about the same as winning the lottery.

It's not the glossy ads in *MD*, nor the videos put out by our heros. It's not the constant stream of new gadgets promising to improve our hand speed, foot speed, flam attack—whatever. We work at this instrument because, even without the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, drumming is its own reward.

It's risky to speak for the multitudes. Still, I suspect that there are thousands of us out here who pursue drumming simply for the love of it. We know there's no real promise of a career that will take us away from our daily grind. We devote thousands of hours to listening, taping, studying, reading, and swearing. Many of us are self-taught—not by choice, but simply because we live in small communities where qualified instruction is sadly lacking. So we buy the videos, struggle with the books, and work out the bugs in solitude—frequently to the detriment of personal relationships and the angst of our

once-friendly neighbors.

We join the percussion section of the local community band to improve our reading. And even though we favor jazz, we take a weekend gig playing bluegrass. We sit in on a jam session, trying to make sense of ska. With our self-taught knowledge, we try not to drop the ball when the big band leader hands us our chart for the all-important audition, or when the bar band asks us to play a merengue. Am I doing it right? Who do I ask? How would Gadd play it? Will *anything* I learned from those Steve Houghton videos stick?

Some, like me, have been doing this for over forty years. And guess what? It's still a blast! Just when I begin to think it's not fun anymore, someone comes up with a whole new thing, and it's off to the practice room again to get it down. To get that fantastic feeling when the little bass drum/snare drum figure you've been working on all week finally comes together. When your single-stroke roll begins to fly like greased lightning. When you hit the sweet spot on that jazz gig, where the group is swinging so hard, your heart skips a beat because you know *you're* the one making it happen.

We look and listen in awe at our heros. Without them, mediocrity would be the standard. We take from them what we can manage, and leave the greatness where it belongs. We rejoice in knowing that there's a place for *all of us* in this fraternity. Superior talent is rewarded with steady work and lucrative endorsements. But we reap benefits too, simply by moving towards our own level of excellence. As Dom Famularo once said, "Drummers are a breed unto themselves. We never hesitate to share what we know. Ask any drummer what that triple-paradiddle accent pattern was, and he'll show it to you in super slow motion."

What propels us into action is sheer love of the instrument. It's the joy we feel sitting behind our drums and sharing a musical experience with fellow musicians. By the final hour...sure, we'll still have miles and miles to go. But oh, the joy of the journey!





Paul Doucette
Matchbox 20



Frank Briggs
Author - clinician



Jarrod Montague
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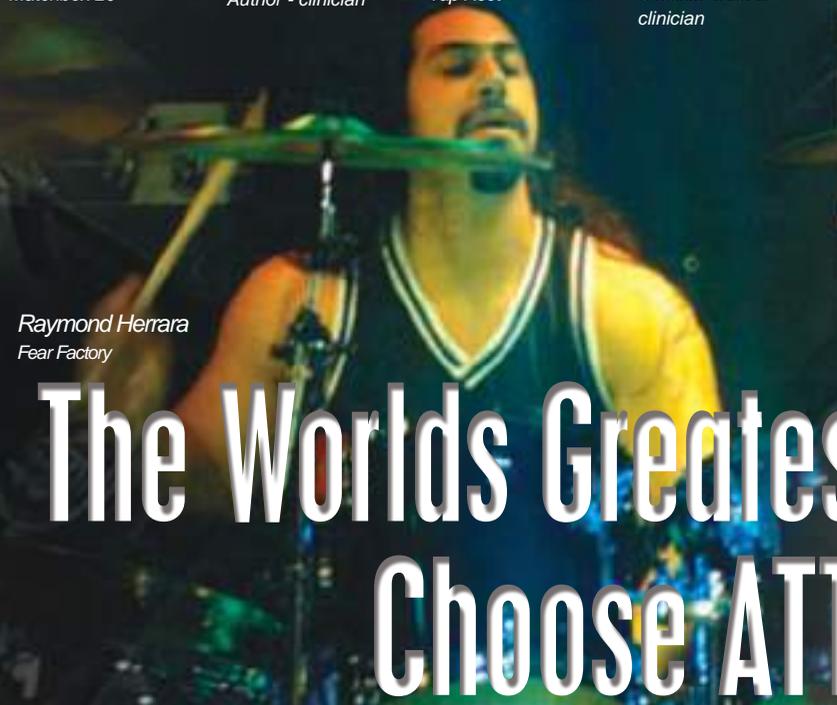
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Drumming And Burnout

by Chris Lee

You arrive at the gig about thirty minutes before everyone else, and begin setting up your kit. Just as you're tightening the last bolt, the rest of the band begins to trickle in. Once everyone has tuned up and plugged in, you begin the soundcheck. Everything seems to sound normal. Not spectacular, but okay. Everyone knows that something is not quite right, but they just shrug it off. After all, it's only a soundcheck. Everything will fall into place once the crowd is here, just like it always does.

The first set begins and you play every lick, every fill, and every cymbal crash the same way you have always done. You're in perfect tempo with everyone else...just like always. Nevertheless, something doesn't *feel* quite right. The music doesn't seem to have the energy that it normally does. And even though the crowd seems to be enjoying the show, the other bandmembers know that something is wrong.

There is a band meeting at the end of the night. As everyone is trying to decide what was wrong, they begin to slowly look in your direction—and with good reason. Even though your playing was correct and

your bandmates quickly turn and give you that worried look that drummers always hate to see.

We all have “off nights,” but you know that your problem is much deeper than that. As you pack up and drive home in disgust, a chill crawls up your spine. You suddenly realize, “I’ve lost my feel.”

So what is this thing called “feel”? How can we define that extra little bit of individuality and energy that gives a drummer the ability to make everyone in the room want to get up and dance? Can it be taught or developed? Or are you born with it? Drummers and other musicians have debated these questions for years. And even though we may never agree on whether feel is pure instinct or acquired through experience, I think most of us will agree that it can be lost—especially when we’re going through periods of great distress.

With any other profession, and maybe even with any other musical instrument, it's possible to put aside feelings of depression and anxiety and still be able to perform. But it's different for drummers, since our ability to provide the heartbeat of the music is so often an outpouring of our own emotional state. (I remember reading an article that said the legendary Gary Chester always knew if something was wrong with one of his students by the way they began playing during the lesson.)

So how do we get our groove back when we don't feel like performing? Sometimes our positive emotional state, and thereafter our desire to perform again, can be recovered by following a few common-sense suggestions.

Get a medical checkup. A lack of energy for playing and for life in general can sometimes be traced to a physical problem. Your body may be trying to tell you that something is wrong. Sometimes a change in diet, exercise, or lifestyle can lead to

in tempo, it was totally mechanical and rigid. You tell the others that you just weren't feeling well, and that things will come together next time—after insisting for thirty minutes that nothing is wrong.

But the same thing happens again at the next gig. Only this time you begin making silly mistakes, such as speeding up, slowing down, or playing too loud as you try not to sound mechanical. This time there is no denying that something's wrong, as

As you pack up and drive home in disgust, a chill crawls up your spine. You suddenly realize, “I’ve lost my feel.”

more energy, and thus to a desire to play again.

See a therapist. There's a common misconception that only crazy or weak people go to a therapist, but nothing could be further from the truth. If some tragedy in your life is affecting your ability to play, a good therapist can help you work through any feelings of depression and anxiety. And besides, no one will ever know you're seeing a therapist if you don't tell them.

Concentrate on the present moment. I know this is easier said than done. But as you walk into the concert hall or club, start telling yourself that nothing exists outside of those walls—at least at that particular moment. The only things that exist are you, the crowd, the band, and the drums. In other words, you're making a conscious effort to block any feelings concerning the outside world and only concentrating on the task at hand. This is another skill that a good therapist can help you develop.

Find a new playing situation. Okay, maybe there *is* nothing wrong with you, emotionally *or* physically. Maybe it's the playing situation itself that's causing you to lose your enthusiasm. Drummers have a unique lot in life. We can't just get up on stage and perform as solo artists the way other musicians can. Drum clinics and festivals are the obvious exceptions. But unless you have the talent and notoriety to tackle one of those gigs, you'll always have to find other people to play with.

Ideally you should look for a musical situation that is suited to your talents, and will hopefully challenge your abilities on a regular basis. But all too often a drummer can find him or herself in a situation where there is no room for creative expression, as far as the drums are concerned. The drummer is then regulated to the role of time-keeper, pounding out nothing but a basic 2 and 4 beat over and over.

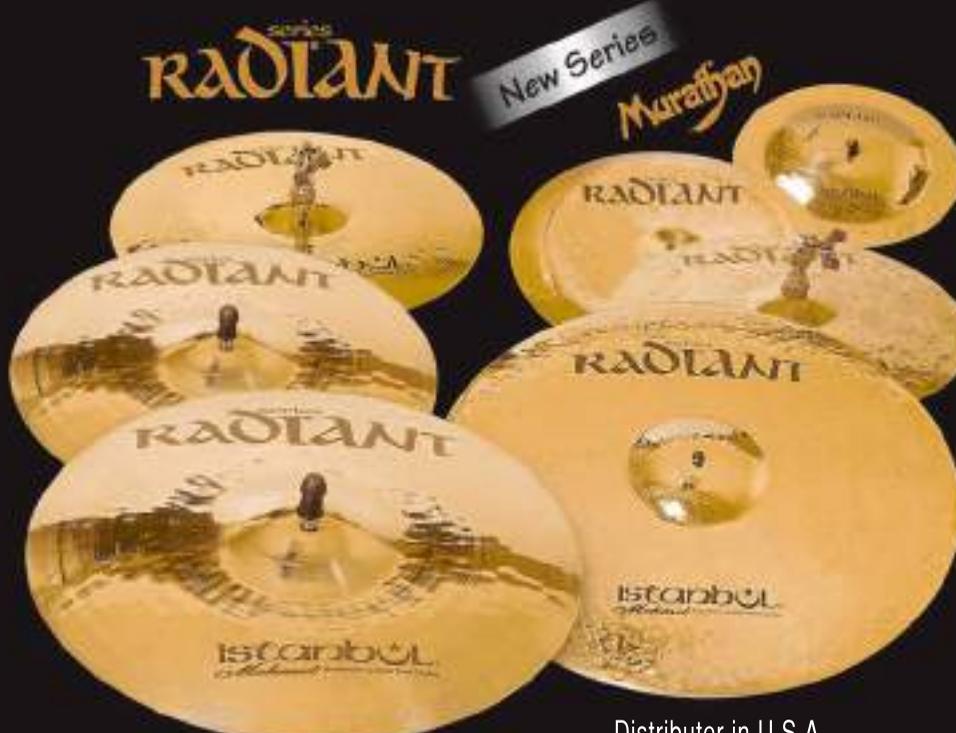
If the less-is-more approach appeals to you, then so be it. But if you constantly feel a nagging desire to step outside the basic rhythm—especially when the bass player is churning out a funk rhythm with dotted 8ths and 16ths—the less-is-more approach becomes stifling. This, in turn, leads to a lack of enthusiasm. In such cases your only alternative may be to encourage your bandmates to buy a drum machine, and then take your leave. Thereafter, finding a new playing situation can awaken a

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Take a break, at least for a while. It may sound drastic, but if all else fails, maybe its time to simply stop playing. Let's face it: Being a working drummer is hard work. What with hauling the drums around, setting them up, keeping them clean and tuned, and tackling minor hardware problems that always occur at the worst possible time, it all hardly seems worth it when the music is not happening. So give yourself a rest. Pack away your gear for a little while.

Chances are, in a few months you'll pass a music store, find a great deal on an old crash cymbal, and feel the stirrings of inspiration. You'll pull your set out of the closet, and even though you're a little rusty, at least the excitement will be back. You probably won't possess the same level of ability you had when you quit, but sometimes development is one step back and two steps forward. Within a few months, with your newly acquired sense of enthusiasm, you'll probably be playing better than you ever did before.



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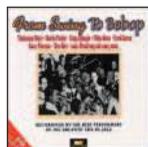
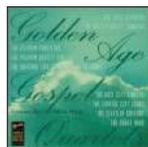
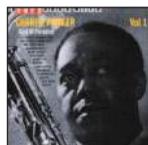
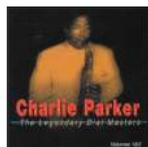
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Roy Porter

West Coast Bebop Pioneer

by Burt Korall



Roy Porter at an all-star jam session in 1952, including Dexter Gordon and Jimmy Heath (foreground), and Milt Jackson and Percy Jones (right, rear).

Roy Porter (1923–98) arrived in California in May of 1944. A hipster with small-town overtones, he had been with a few bands and had served briefly in the Army. But he had also been to New York, where he became excited by bebop, the controversial new music being created at that time in America's largest city.

Virtually round-the-clock performances with like-minded musicians ultimately paid major dividends for Porter. He became the first drummer on the West Coast to grasp the essentials, possibilities, and implications of

Texas, where he studied journalism and played with The Wiley Collegians. That band included such future jazz luminaries as trumpeters Kenny Dorham and Russell Jacquet and organist/arranger/composer Wild Bill Davis.

One of the drummer's first important jobs was with Milton Larkin's band, out of Texas. He joined the organization in 1943 at the Rhumboogie, a well-known club in Chicago. The band (with the excellent blues guitarist T-Bone Walker) then toured the east, finishing up at the now legendary Apollo Theater in Harlem.

"I got around a lot in New York—uptown and downtown," Porter told me. "Because something fresh was happening in the music, I began getting into the new, different grooves on drums. When I got to LA, I talked to the cats about what I had heard and felt while in the Apple. Chico Hamilton, Lee Young, and Oscar Bradley were the baddest drummers in Los Angeles. But they didn't hear or respond to what was happening the same way I did. They were tied to the swing

"Roy Porter was one of the first bebop drummers. He was listening early and heard what was going on." —Terry Gibbs

bebop and the emerging modern drum style.

Porter was raised in Colorado, where he fell in love with music. Before World War II, he attended Wiley College in Marshall,

style.”

Howard McGhee, the inventive trumpeter, was Porter’s mentor. “Maggie” had brought modern jazz to California from the east. Young musicians gathered around him and learned about the new music.

When Porter joined McGhee’s group in 1945, the leader offered some advice: “You’ve been to New York and know what’s going on,” he said. “Go ahead. Play your ideas. Drop your ‘bombs.’ Just don’t mess up the meter!”

Porter’s conception of how drums should be played was based on what several New York drummers were doing. These adventurers were in the process of freeing the instrument, evolving techniques that complemented what was being played by the horns and the other rhythm section players. The drummers who set the pace on the instrument wanted to add to the timekeeping function, bringing new colors and a sense of liberation to performances.

Max Roach was the drummer *everyone* was talking about and listening to. Max had developed a strikingly relevant rhythmic approach to the innovations of such key modernists as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Shadow Wilson, J.C. Heard, Art

Blakey, Stan Levey, Shelly Manne, Roy Haynes, and others were developing along the same lines. What they did fit the timing, tempos, thrust, and character of modern jazz.

Porter was particularly affected by Art Blakey. He remembered, “Art took an interest in my future. He showed me how to practice and how to play certain things. He also made some suggestions about style. ‘Get off that hi-hat, man!’ he insisted. ‘We’re not doing that anymore. Let your cymbal speak for you!’

“Art could swing you to death! He had all this natural talent and his own concept. He hadn’t studied; he came up the same way I did—learning by playing.”

Porter was also very impressed with Ike Day, a young drummer in Chicago. “I saw and heard Ike when I worked in a club there with Dexter Gordon,” he said. “Ike could have become one of the giants on the instrument if narcotics hadn’t killed him. He was totally ambidextrous and could play anything he heard or had in mind. He was very much his own man.”

Big Sid Catlett meant a lot to Porter as well. Gene Krupa and Chick Webb had initially fired him up about drums back home in Colorado. But Catlett remained an inspira-

tion because the big man kept growing and adapted so well to all kinds of music.

Pianist Russ Freeman, who worked with Porter in Howard McGhee’s band—which often included Charlie Parker—says, “Roy felt good to play with. He had a stable sense of time, and he enhanced what was going on in the music. Though not the most subtle drummer, he had a lot of spirit, energy, and drive.”

Because Porter played, recorded, and hung out with local and visiting boppers, he became increasingly adept at his job. He and Charlie Parker were close during the genius saxophonist’s visit to California (1945–46). They worked and made records together.

Porter’s most widely known work on records was done with Parker on Dial. He played on the March 26, 1946 session that included such recordings as “Moose The Mooche,” “A Night In Tunisia,” “Ornithology,” “Yardbird Suite,” “The Gypsy,” “Lover Man,” “Be Bop,” and “Max Is Making Wax.” Porter may never have risen to the levels set by the key innovative drummers in New York. But he was idiomatically appropriate, his time was firm, and his energy permeated his performances.

Clora Bryant, an excellent trumpeter who

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Roy Porter

became interested in bop in the mid-1940s, arrived in LA as a teenager. She instantly became fascinated with Porter and the other "experimental" musicians. She speaks with authority about Porter and what was going on in LA—particularly on Central Avenue, where a lot of the contemporary jazz was played. "The way Roy dropped bombs, establishing a little bit of a line of his own, excited the young drummers out here," she says. "Roy couldn't read a note. He did what came naturally and went his own way, looking for his own soul. And players responded to him.

"What I remember most about Roy is his big band," Bryant continues. "He put it together in 1948. It was the first of its kind in LA, and it gave young musicians a center of interest. Some people had major problems with the band's intonation. But its great spirit made up for that."

An auto accident in New Mexico involving Porter and several of his sidemen marked the beginning of the end for the drummer's promising band. There just wasn't enough work, locally or on the road, to support an unusual ensemble of that size. The dream was deferred, then finally put aside. If you're

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Roy Porter

curious about the band, it can be heard on a Savoy LP collection titled *Black California*.

Other records made during the last five years of the 1940s further define Roy Porter. Try the foreign import *Steady With Teddy*, on the Cool & Blue label. The CD gives you a good idea of what was going on in West Coast jazz between 1946 and 1948. The set features Porter, tenorists Teddy Edwards and Dexter Gordon, Howard McGhee, pianists Hampton Hawes, Jimmy Rowles, and Dodo Marmorosa, and bassist Red Callendar, among others.

The years separating Porter's arrival in LA in 1944 and his 1953 arrest in San Francisco for heroin possession and use were the most musically productive of his life. However, like many musicians during the so-called bebop period, he became addicted to hard drugs. His 1953 bust and subsequent incarceration saved his life. When in prison, he kicked his habit, learned to read and write music and songs, studied theory and harmony, and improved his skill at the piano. A song he wrote following his release from prison, "Lonesome Mood," became a monster hit for The Friends Of Distinction in 1969.

Although Porter's life changed for the better, he wasn't really free. He turned to alco-

hol to compensate for having purged drugs from his system. He also fought recurring health problems.

When asked about the paths he had taken during his turbulent career, Porter expressed few regrets. Other than the drug involvement and not having given himself over more completely to intense study of music and his instrument, the scrappy drummer felt his musical experiences more than made up for the errors he had made.

During the last years before his retirement, Porter most often was involved with commercial musicians and bands. Other than occasional gigs with Benny Carter and a few other musicians from his jazz past, he no longer was part of the world in which he had first made his reputation.

Roy Porter retained his old hustler charm and warmth until he passed away. He talked a lot about his jazz experiences, particularly his time with Charlie Parker. He often reminisced about his past at colleges and music conventions and on Los Angeles jazz radio stations. His health continued to decline in his last years. But he retained a positive attitude and hip sense of humor. To the last he projected the buoyancy that was found so engaging by his fellow musicians—and by more than a few foxy ladies.



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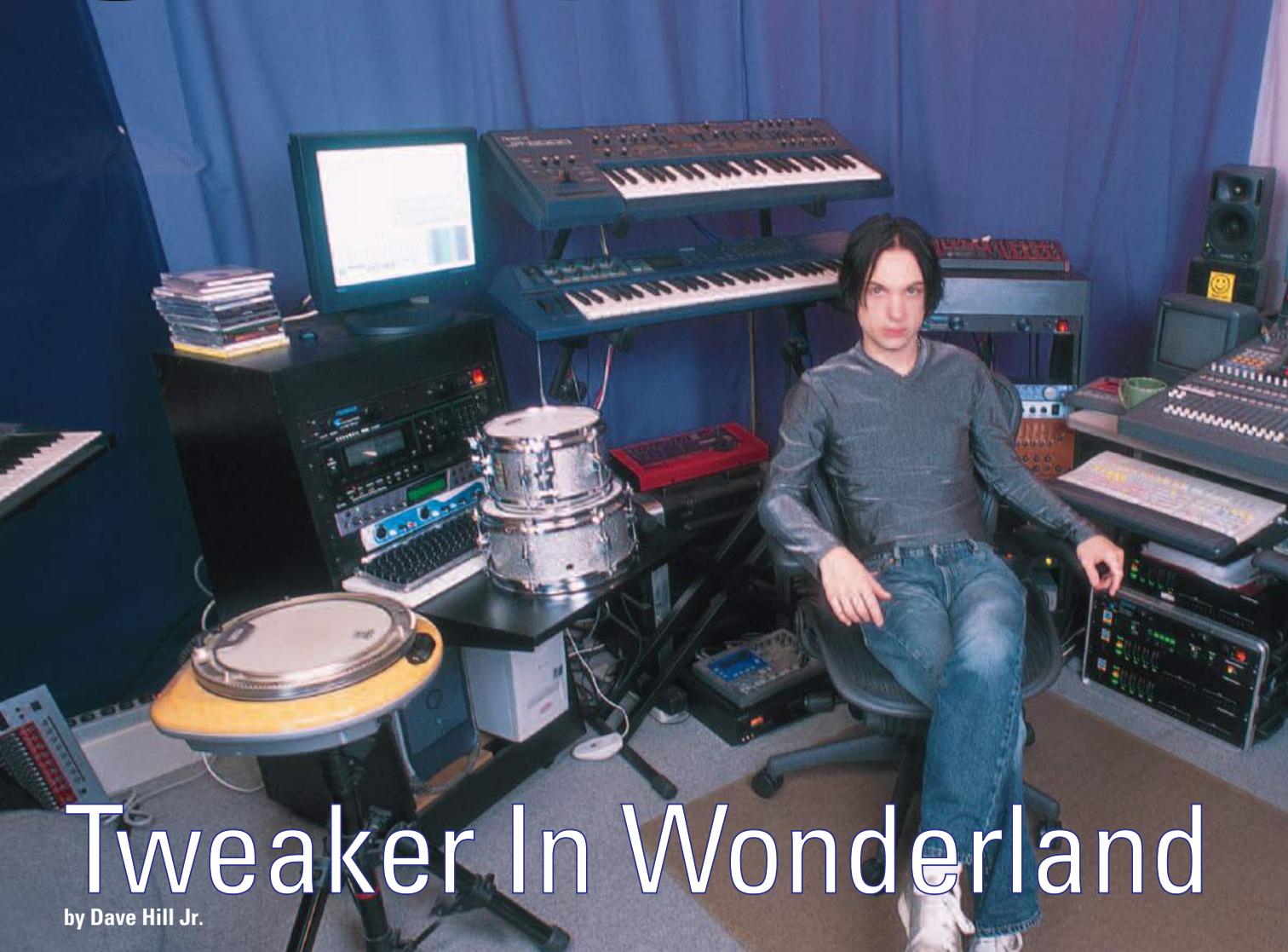


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CHRIS VRENN



Tweaker In Wonderland

by Dave Hill Jr.

Peering from behind stacks of synths, samplers, drum machines, effects boxes, and an enshrined Power Mac rig, ex-Nine Inch Nails drummer/programmer Chris Vrenna scrutinizes his latest batch of synthesized drum loops. As he listens, he warms his hands around a steaming cup o' joe. It's not his first cup, mind you. It's merely the day's first brew of dark-roasted rocket fuel, which empowers Vrenna to explore his newest solo moniker Tweaker, and to do just what that name says.

Vrenna's newest release, *The Attraction To All Things Uncertain* (Six Degrees Records), is more than an adventure into

electronica. Rather, it's a musical story about a fictitious boy named Elliot. Elliot is the subject of a painting Chris identified with while conceptualizing what was to become his next Tweaker record. The album is full of quirky and unusual electronic percussion loops, thoughtful vocal performances by artists like David Sylvian (Japan), Will Oldham (Palace), and Craig Wedren (Shudder To Think), and riffing industrial-style guitars over—what else?—Chris's big drum groove.

As lights on various pieces of equipment flash red, yellow, and green, Chris pours another cup and talks about plans for a tour

and, of course, more music. "It all starts with the rhythm for me," Vrenna says. "I may program something new using samples of my own drums or electronic sounds, or I might physically play [and record] something that I'm inspired to work with." The work Chris has been up to may include any number of projects, from recording Tweaker to composing the soundtrack to Electronic Arts' *American McGee's Alice [In Wonderland]*, or big-league remixing, like U2's "Elevation Remix" and Rob Zombie's "Return Of The Phantom Stranger."

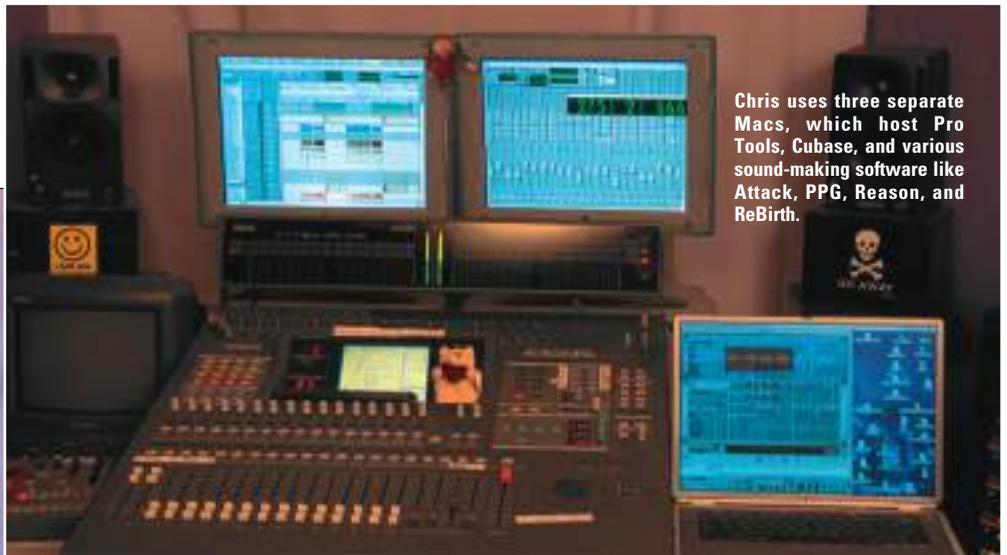
Vrenna's studio sprawl takes up two spare adjoining bedrooms in his rustic,

authentically decorated 1930s Spanish

NVA



house in Los Angeles. The control room and drum/overdub room are both coated in purple, Vrenna's favorite color. Chris has installed his own brand of mood lighting for visual effect, as well as removable sound panels for sonically shaping the room. Also breaking up the acoustics is Chris's proudly displayed action figure collection, which sports 6" KISS and Beatles members in various stages of dress, as well as the complete talking Simpsons family line.



Chris uses three separate Macs, which host Pro Tools, Cubase, and various sound-making software like Attack, PPG, Reason, and ReBirth.

"If I'm feeling the need to be creative, I make myself a martini and turn on my fully functional disco ball and strobe light set," Vrenna says with a smirk. "When I'm in hard edit mode, though, I turn on the 200-watt bulb directly above my board and make another pot of coffee."

Chris's studio is like a tech junkie's chemistry set. Though the drum room features a Yamaha Recording Custom kit and a Club Jordan cocktail set always miked and ready to go (Chris uses a Pearl kit at times, too), it's also full of knobby synth gear, effects, and drum machines. "I am an acoustic drummer, but I'm also a gadget junkie," Chris confesses. "My first studio was my kitchen while I was living in an apartment in New Orleans. I was asked to do a piece for this compilation record called *Flyin' Traps*, and I was sort of forced to work with what I had at the time. I only owned a couple pieces of gear: a Roland R-70 drum machine, a sampler, a Nord 1, a Mackie mixer, and a Mac."

Chris also explained how different his New Orleans scenario is from his new LA home, where gear and space are plentiful. "Now there are so many options available that I will often challenge myself by limiting my choices for a given tune or session. If I want to distort a drum loop, I have at least a hundred choices to make that happen. If I'm looking for a synth bass sound, I have at least twelve synth module keyboards, plus a sampler with a collection of bass samples. And then there are the software options. At the end of the day, does it really matter which one I use? So I make arbitrary rules, like for this song I'm only going to use this,

that, and one other piece of gear. [Chris points to a synth, a sampler, and drumKAT.] These limits actually give me creative freedom."

Now more than ever, Vrenna relies on his home studio as a complete recording, mixing, and overdub facility with the capacity to record live drums. And though he may rent the occasional Manley compressor or Neve mic' pre-amp, Vrenna remains self-sufficient and ready to produce. Chris mentions that he may expand his studio to include some unused garage space. But for now he looks right at home manipulating his conglomeration of gear, brewing another pot of coffee, and dialing up another sound to tweak.



For more info on Chris Vrenna, check out www.sixdegreesrecords.com/artists/tweaker/, www.tweaker.net, or www.girlieaction.com/tweaker.



NAMM Show Concerts

Every year the musical-instrument industry gathers to show its wares to dealers at the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) trade show. But not all the excitement happens on the show floor. There are always lots of exciting after-hours events. This year's show in Anaheim was no exception, with several major performances sponsored by percussion-instrument manufacturers.

Shure Musical Roots Show

The Anaheim House Of Blues was packed on Thursday, January 17 for Shure's Musical Roots Concert, a benefit that raised \$60,000 for the cause of hearing conservation. The money will go to charities including H.E.I. (The House Ear Institute), H.E.A.R. (Hearing Education and Awareness for Rockers and Ravers), and HAMF (Hearing Aid Music Foundation).

The event featured Living Colour (with **Will Calhoun** on drums) and guest appearances from **Sheila E** and **Stewart Copeland**. Also honored was the winner of Shure's Musical Roots contest, The Twigs.



Will Calhoun



Sheila E

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Sabian's Drums Along NAMM

The 2002 edition of Sabian's long-running "Drums Along..." events kicked off with the company's newest high-profile endorser, **Dave Weckl**, performing with his own band. Playing on a kit that now includes several ethnic drums as well as his new Evolution Series cymbals, Dave astounded onlookers with his musicality and precise yet fluid technique.

Solid timekeeping and the power of the groove were the order of the day when **Steve Ferrone & Friends** took the stage. The Friends included David Garfield (keys), Ernest Tibbs (bass), '80s-era Santana vocalist Alex Ligertwood, and the always-exciting **Richie "Gajate" Garcia** on percussion. Moving easily from sambas to Steely Dan's "Babylon Sisters," and from The Meters' "Cissy Strut" to a power-ballad version of "Strawberry Fields," Steve anchored the band with his trademark grin and impeccable feel.

Who got the funk? **Zoro & The LA All-Stars**, that's who. Featuring former members of Earth, Wind & Fire and performing hits by that group, the band set the night on fire with its syncopated power and tightness. Zoro provided a rock-

solid foundation for the band to build on, and **Richie Garcia** added percussive color.

The closing set featured **The Joey Heredia Trio**. Sparked by Joey's trademark Latin/funky vibe, the band blazed into the night, leaving the audience smiling as they made their weary way back to their hotels.

Additional support was provided by Audix, Evans, Remo, and Vater.

Yamaha's Third Annual Groove Night

On Saturday night Yamaha Drums took over the Galaxy Theater in Santa Ana for an evening that was all about the groove. A stellar lineup of Yamaha drummers performed with a band made up of some of LA's finest musicians—including legendary percussionist **Ralph MacDonald**, and a guest appearance by bass star Will Lee. **Rick Marotta** did double-duty as emcee and performer.

Each drummer on the program played one number with the band. That's not a lot of time to "get into" the feel, and several of the drummers were playing tunes in very different styles from those they're known for. Yet each drummer met the challenge, lifting the musicianship to greater and greater heights as the night went on. By the conclusion of the show, the crowd was cheering at the sheer intensity of the inescapable groove.

Additional support was provided by Zildjian, Paiste, Sabian, Remo, Evans, Latin Percussion, and Shure.



Dave Weckl



Richie "Gajate" Garcia



Steve Ferrone



Zoro



Rick Marotta



Joey Heredia



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Also appearing (but not shown) were Peter Erskine, Chris Parker, Russ Kunkel, John "JR" Robinson, Marcus Baylor, and Dave Weckl.

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Vic Firth 50th Anniversary Reception



Modern Drummer senior editor Rick Van Horn presents Vic Firth with a congratulatory plaque commemorating Vic's fifty years with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.



A talented jazz group anchored by Peter Erskine provided the entertainment.

Dozens of top drummers and percussion-industry figures gathered at the Catal restaurant in Anaheim on January 17 to honor Vic Firth for his fifty years as timpanist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Entertainment was provided by a jazz quartet featuring Peter Erskine (who later vacated the drum chair for a stellar roster of "sitters-in"). Presentations to Vic during the evening included a congratulatory plaque from Modern Drummer Publications, presented by MD senior editor Rick Van Horn.

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Vater Endorser Dinner

During the Anaheim NAMM show, Vater Drumsticks hosted a dinner to honor their endorsing drummers and percussionists. Said Chad Brandolini, Vater artist relations director, "We don't just think of our endorsers as people who use and represent Vater products, but as some of our best friends. It was a blast to see a diverse range of artists having such a good time and talking about everything from drums to recipes. You won't find that kind of love at any guitar event!"

Artists in attendance included Ken Jay (Static-X), Brooks Wackerman (Bad Religion), John Wackerman, Dusty Watson (Dick Dale), Allen Shellenberger (Lit), Jota Morelli (Al Jarreau), Raul Rekow (Santana), Karl Perazzo (Santana),



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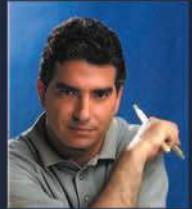
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Guitar Center Drum-Off

Guitar Center's annual Drum-Off finals took place recently at the House Of Blues in Los Angeles. The event combined performances by the six regional winners with those of top industry professionals as part of Drum Day LA.

Marco Minneman's opening performance got the crowd amped and ready for the competitors to take center stage. Finalists included Zach Mangan (17) from Rochester, Minnesota, Wes Korner (23) from Spring, Texas, Scott Morehouse (28) from Long Island City, New York, Royce Shorter (17) representing the Pacific Northwest, Jimmie Adams III (23) from the Bay Area, and Christopher Coleman (22) from Bedford Heights, Ohio.

This year's judges included "JR" Robinson, Randy Castillo, Brain, Julio Figueroa, Stephen Perkins, Butch, Pat Torpey, Hilary Jones, Will Kennedy, Ginger Fish, Kenny Aronoff, and Jeff Tortora. They evaluated the competitors on originality, technique, dynamics, timing, groove, feel, and continuity.

Christopher Coleman's soul-filled performance ultimately earned him the title of "Best Up And Coming Drummer In The Nation." In addition to the Drum-Off title, Coleman won a complete Roland V Session drumkit (courtesy of Roland) and a 2001 Jeep Liberty (courtesy of Sabian). Following the competition, the audience was treated to performances by Josh Freese and Travis Barker. The festivities closed with a jazz-filled set by Bill Bruford and his band Earthworks.



Best Up And Coming Drummer Christopher Coleman

Northeast Vintage & Custom Drum Show

The sixth Northeast Vintage & Custom Drum Show will be held in the Knights Of Columbus Hall in Meriden, Connecticut on May 5. A diverse array of vendors and manufacturers will be present, and a consignment area is available. Booths are available for a small fee. John Aldrige is engraving a custom Ludwig Black Beauty snare drum as this year's door prize. The venue is handicap-accessible. Call John Shaw at (781) 405-4477 for details and directions.

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What are some of your favorite grooves?

I like just about anything John Bonham played with Led Zeppelin, particularly the way he approached the blues. Ringo Starr is also another favorite of mine. "Get Back" really gets me, along with just about everything he did. Elvin Jones with John Coltrane, Tony Williams with Miles Davis, and Mel Lewis with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra played some grooves that were heavily influential to my musical education and heart. Milton Banana, who played on Elis Regina's records, was one of my favorite Brazilian cats, along with Airtio.

What are some of your favorite grooves that you've recorded?

It's hard to pick a favorite, because so many tracks are special to me. I like what I played on Paul McCartney's "Back Seat Of My Car," Astrud Gilberto and Stanley



Turrentine's "Wanting Things," James Brown's "Funky Side Of Town" (Jimmy Madison was mistakenly credited for the track), and Danny Peck's "Strange Weather."

What drummers are you currently digging?

I love Joey Heredia's playing. And Gregg Bissonette is a consummate musician. Jorge Rossy, who plays with Brad Mehldau, is very inventive. I feel he's a great addition to the jazz world. I also like Troy Luccketta of Tesla for his approach to rock drumming.

In Memoriam: Brian Kaye

The percussion industry is saddened by the death of Brian Kaye, general manager and artist relations director for Bosphorus Cymbals. Brian died on Sunday, January 13.



Bosphorus president Tash Tasova comments, "Brian's dedication to the company—and to the whole music industry—makes his passing a loss for all. Although we will miss Brian tremendously, his commitment will always reside at Bosphorus Cymbals."

Brian was particularly involved in the development of jazz great Jeff Hamilton's signature Hammer Series cymbals. Jeff says, "Brian's love of music and the business came from an energy that affected everyone around him. He didn't 'beat around the bush' with anyone when it came to closing a deal. But there were no jokes when he talked about music that had touched him."

Galactic's Stanton Moore says, "I considered Brian a good friend. He was a loyal supporter of music and would go out of his way for the drummers and musicians he believed in. I don't think he'd ever have believed how sorely he'll be missed."

Erik Hargrove, currently drumming for James Brown, adds, "Brian helped me stay focused on my career as a musician. He motivated me to concentrate on the Who, What, When, Where, How, and Whys of the business. May God bless him."

Donations in Brian's memory may be made to the Milagro Foundation for underprivileged and disadvantaged youth (attn: Mary Novasic), PO Box 9125, San Rafael, CA, 94912-9125, (415) 460-9939, www.malagrofoundation.org.



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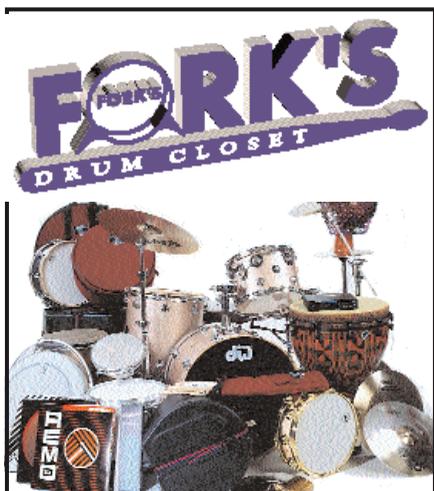
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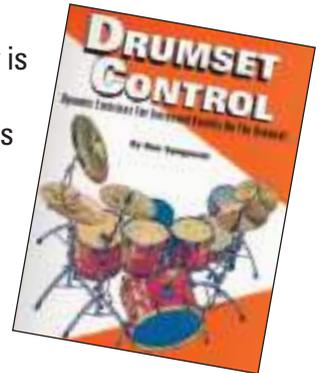
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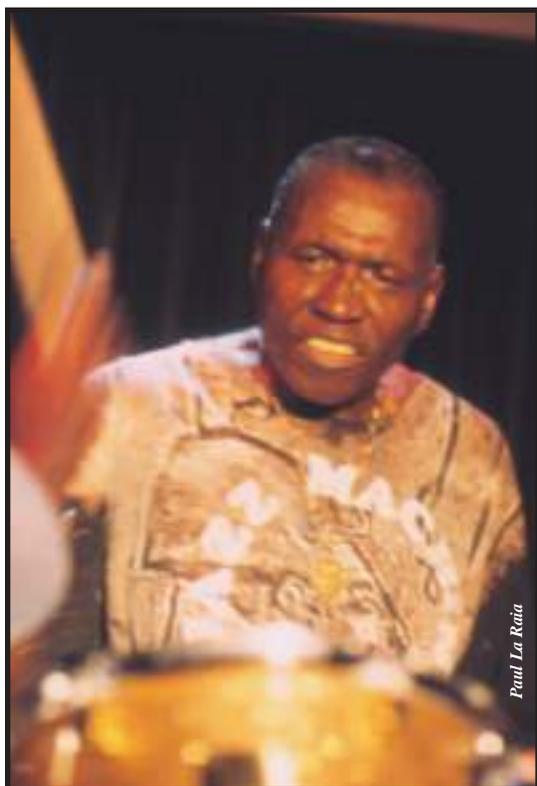
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drumkit of the **month**



Elsa Wilkens Lobo

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Elsa Wilkens Lobo

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.



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