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December 2003

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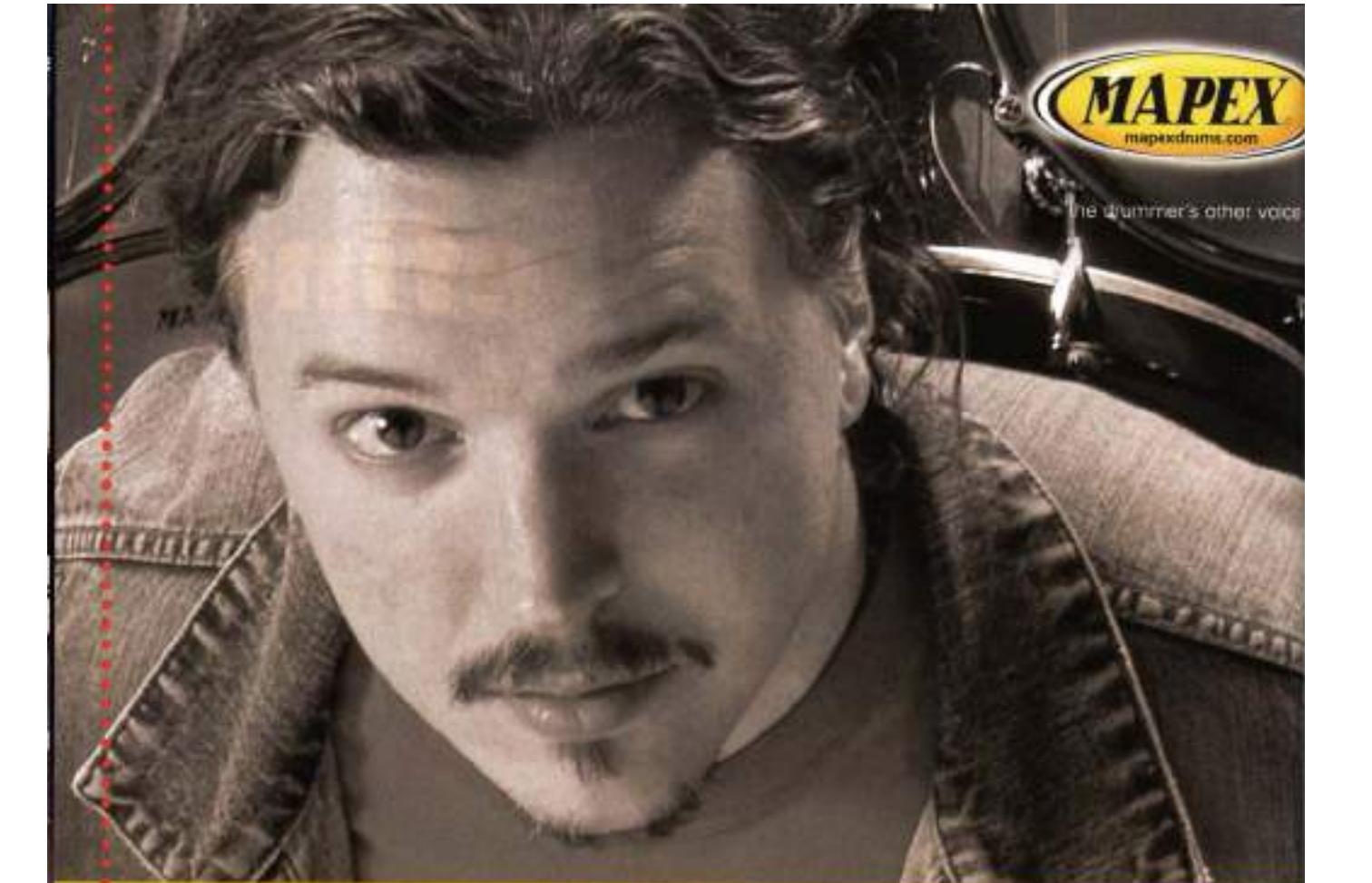
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Pearl



Editor's note: As we went to press with this issue, we learned of the passing of MD founder and publisher Ron Spagnardi. To honor Ron, and in keeping with his dedication to drumming education, we are running his last editorial as scheduled.

Why Read?

One of the questions I get asked most often by young drummers is, "Do I really need to learn how to read music?" We all know that it's possible to play the instrument without knowing the difference between 8th notes and triplets, between 4/4 and 7/8. And we can all name drummers who've achieved success without ever having read a note of music. Though, interestingly enough, many of those same players readily admit that they would have progressed faster, and their natural skills would have been enhanced, had they taken the time to learn to read.

Musical notation is the way musicians communicate, the same way we communicate thoughts, ideas, and words. Think for a moment about what you miss without an understanding of the language of music, starting with a typical issue of this magazine.

A number of *MD* departments contain extremely valuable information each month, information that simply cannot be delivered without notation. *Rock Perspectives*, *Jazz Drummers' Workshop*, *Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic*, *Off The Record*, *Strictly Technique*, *Drum Soloist*, *Rudimental Symposium*, and *Rock Charts*, among others, are valuable only to those who can interpret and practice the material. That's a tremendous amount of information that is virtually useless to those who can't read the language it's written in.

Today's drummer also has access to an enormous amount of book material. Books written by authorities on every imaginable subject related to drumming are now available. Personally, I find it hard to believe that any *serious* drummer would willingly pass up the opportunity to gain so much from this material by not learning to read music.

Do you have aspirations of making a career of drumming? Well, unless you're among one of the fortunate ones who make it big in a hot band with a record contract, where reading may not be essential, you can pretty much forget about studio work, big band playing, show drumming, theater and symphonic work, or teaching without being able to read. Are you willing to take that chance?

Yes, it's true, you *may* never need it or use it. But *without* this most basic of skills, which really doesn't take all that much time to learn, you're missing out on an awful lot. And you're placing a limit on what you could achieve career-wise over the long haul.

Hoping to find success in this incredibly competitive business without an understanding of the language it's written in is equivalent to sitting down to write a best-selling novel without knowing the alphabet. Doesn't make much sense to me.

MODERN DRUMMER

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Thank to:



KEITH MOON

After reading your September cover story and listening again to my Who albums, I am convinced that Keith Moon was the best drummer *ever*. Ed Breckenfeld's "Style And Analysis" piece was a nice touch, and I also liked your mini-interviews with Kenney Jones, Simon Phillips,

mind about Keith's kit was that he had no hi-hat! He just crashed cymbals and played double bass all night. It's funny how moments like these can affect the rest of your life so vividly.

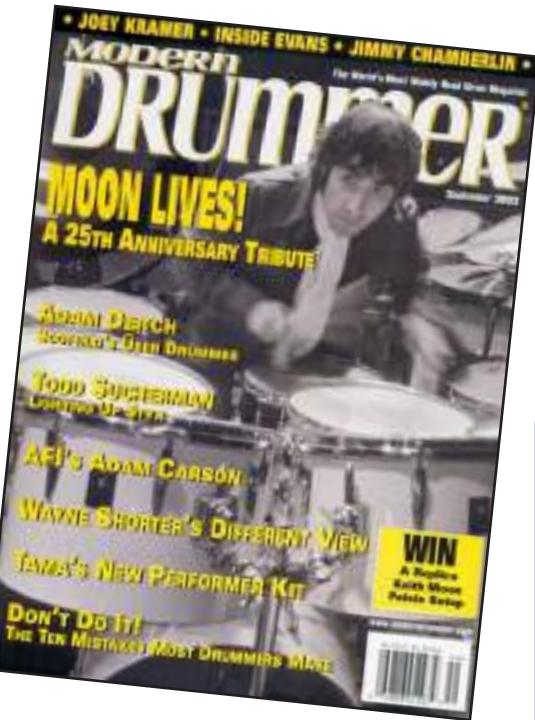
Joe Franco
New York, NY

On my bus ride home from work yesterday, I popped the new live Zeppelin CD, *How The West Was Won*, into my CD player for the first time and began to hear some of John Bonham in his prime. Then I opened my new issue of *Modern Drummer* to read the tribute to Keith Moon. I became engrossed in the two artists who, during my formative years, raised the level of rock drumming to new levels and inspired me to push for

"more." Then, as I continued reading the article, I found it punctuated with quotes from my current favorite drummer, Mike Portnoy, one of the few drummers today who (in my opinion) play with the "force of personality" that Bonzo and Moonie exhibited. That moment helped bring into focus the fun and excitement that makes me want to play drums. Talk about all the stars being perfectly aligned. Nice job!

John Smalley
Staten Island, NY

No offense, but I thought the article on Keith Moon was less than spectacular. There were no quotes from Pete Townshend or Roger Daltrey—people who actually made music with Moon. Mike Portnoy is certainly an accom-



and Zak Starkey. All three of these guys are great players, but Moonie will never be replaced. It's a tragedy that he died so young.

Sean Highkin
via Internet

I really enjoyed your Keith Moon issue! I love when you visit our heroes from the past.

The feature took me back to 1968, when I saw the Who for the first time at the Filmore East. It was the night Martin Luther King was assassinated, and the city was in chaos. Instead of playing the customary two shows, the Who did one long show. They opened with "Can't Explain," with Keith bashing and singing high harmonies. He continued to bash relentlessly for over two hours. The thing that blew my

THREE GENERATIONS OF PYLE DRUMMERS

I am married to Chris Pyle (former drummer for Royal Trux), whose father is Artimus Pyle, legendary original drummer for Lynyrd Skynyrd. Chris and I have a nine-month-old son named Cassady, who is also quite the drummer. The photo depicts three generations of drummers all playing in rhythm together—as evidenced by hand positioning. Artimus is playing congas, Chris is playing Artimus's old Skynyrd kick drum with sticks, and Cassady is playing his baby djembe. Just goes to prove that drumming is in the genes!

Jill Nicolino
Asheville, NC



plished and well-respected player, but I would rather have heard from Ringo. At least he spent time with Moon. The one redeeming element of the article was the snippet on Kenney Jones, who deserves a *ton* of credit for stepping into that situation.

Greg Slader
via Internet

ADAM DEITCH

It's great to see jam-band drummers like Adam Deitch hit the mag. Many people have never heard of "jam bands," even though it's one of the fastest-growing genres in modern music.

Keep up the good work. I look forward to seeing more of the same.

Gary Scannelli
Red Bank, NJ

TODD SUCHERMAN

Apparently, it's not only the lead singer who gets the girls. Considering the lead photo in your September feature on Todd Sucherman—showing a pair of panties hanging off of Todd's kit—it looks like some girls like drummers, too. I recently saw Styx play with R.E.O. Speedwagon and Journey, and man, did Todd *rock*.

Earl Hayes
via Internet

WAXING NOSTALGIC

Ron Spagnardi's September editorial, "Waxing Nostalgic," brought back some fun memories. I can recall several times that Johnny Carson held up a *Modern Drummer* magazine. Once was before a fun "battle" with Buddy Rich in 1978, not long after your start-up. Another was in introducing a solo by me. And then there was the time that Johnny read a letter informing him of my impending appearance at the *MD* Festival.

I've always thought that Johnny brought a lot of credibility (Ron's word) to a great new magazine. You've kept a fine standard through all the ensuing years, and you deserve much credit for that.

Ed Shaughnessy
Woodland Hills, CA

THANKS FROM TIM

When I saw Keith Moon on the September cover, I was really excited just to read his article. I was actually shocked when I came across my photo and write-up in the *On The Move* department. I've been reading your magazine for years, and never thought this would happen. Thank you so much for taking the time to review my tape and choosing me to be a part of this issue. You made my year!

Tim Fee
South Amboy, NJ

KEITH CARLOCK



I recently had the pleasure of seeing Keith Carlock perform with Wayne Krantz and Tim Lefebvre in Manchester (UK) at Band On The Wall. The venue is small, and on this occasion so was the audience: fewer than twenty people. I have to praise Keith and the band for their attitude and professionalism. Not only did they mix with us and chat quite freely before and after the gig, but they played with a fierce commitment and passion, as if to a full house. Keith was class in every sense of the word. He is a lovely bloke with time for everyone—as well as being a truly awesome performer. I will follow his career and support him as much as I can. Another gem from the US.

Mark Yates
from England, via Internet

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ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

I had to chuckle at Rick Van Horn's editorial about the joys of playing outdoors. [August '03 *MD*] I suppose that in the relatively normal climate of New Jersey, where Rick works, playing the drums outdoors in the warmer months can be idyllic and enjoyable. But down here in South Florida, it's every drummer's nightmare. Let me mention a few of my horrendous outdoor experiences as a drummer in the tropics.

Several years ago, one of my drumkits sat for two hours in an equipment van in mid-July, waiting to be set up for an outdoor concert. By the time I was able to set them up, the pearl finish on the drums had turned into "bubble wrap." The glue had literally melted in the Florida heat.

Another gig on the top deck of a cruise ship resulted in the chrome on my drums being devoured by the salt air. After six months on that gig, the drums were history. My drums have also gotten wet innumerable times in unpredictable Florida thunderstorms—which invariably happen when you're nowhere near any kind of shelter.

Needless to say, I learned the hard way about the extreme conditions in my corner of the world. My advice to drummers, no matter where they live, is to take precautions concerning your equipment if you have to work outdoors. Don't let them sit out in the heat, clean them off after playing anywhere near the ocean, and make sure you have a way to protect them if it rains. Or better still, do like I eventually did: Refuse to take any more outdoor gigs.

Ron Hefner
Fort Myers, FL

A DRUMMER'S CHECKLIST

As a recent convert to your magazine, I continue to be pleasantly surprised by the diversity and value of your articles. Gary Petersen's "A Drummer's Checklist" in the August issue deserves particular praise. Mr. Petersen managed to remind me that drumming is a lifetime's study, and the fact that I am not currently Neil Peart is not shameful. He reawakened the sense of adventure in gigging that I had

somewhat lost. Most importantly, however, he reminds us that while drumming is but a relatively small part of our lives, it is precisely these small parts that make life the sweeter. Thank you Gary, and thank you *MD*.

Mark Harris
via Internet

I just finished Gary Petersen's "A Drummer's Checklist." It was the first time I've ever had to fight back tears while reading an *MD*. I'm sure I'm not the only forty-five-year-old drummer who was moved, challenged, and refreshed with a new perspective. (Not to mention humbled.) I had my wife and daughter read it as well. After all, I couldn't be the only blubbering adult in the house.

Thanks for such a candid and soul-searching story. Gary can sign my wall anytime.

Ross Rutledge
Centralia, WA

PEARL PERFORMANCE

You recently published a letter from a reader who raved about the customer service he received from Yamaha. It reminded me of the customer service experience I had with Pearl. In 2001, I purchased a new Pearl Export kit, on which the covering began to buckle within a few months. I contacted Pearl via email and received an immediate response. Raymond Massey and Jeff Mulvihill bent over backward to accommodate me—re-covering the entire kit at no cost. They even paid for the shipping. I'm quite sure I'll continue buying and raving about Pearl drums for the rest of my life.

Jeff Bruno
via Internet

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Gold Plating

QI'd like to get all the chrome hardware on my kit (rims, lugs, and tension rods) gold-plated. Can you suggest anyone who does 24K gold plating?

Nick Timko
via Internet

AThe National Association of Metal Finishers provides a locator of their members at www.namf.org/psl/Search.cfm?ServiceID=61. You can search by type of plating and by state.

Thick Or Thin Pearls?

QI'm thinking of purchasing a new Pearl Masters Series set, but I am having a hard time distinguishing between the MMX 4-ply maple and the MRX 6-ply maple kits. The local "expert" told me the difference was so minor that they sound the same, but I doubt that Pearl would produce both sets if there was no difference. What really *is* the difference in sound and performance between a 4-ply and a 6-ply set, and what musical styles do they complement?

Steve Barry
Los Altos, CA

AWe went right to the source for this one. Pearl product specialist Gene Okamoto replies, "There have been many posts on this subject on our Drummer's Forum at our Web site, www.pearldrums.com. After you read my opinion it might be good to search our Forum for what others think.

"First—Thickness Basics 101: As drums get thinner, the shells become more flexible. Thus the energy from even a light hit goes from the head and into the shell and causes the shell to vibrate and produce a rich and full-bodied "woody" sound. But because part of the stick force is diverted into the shell, less energy is moving air, therefore thinner drums tend to be near-field instruments. That is, they're not as loud as thicker shells.

"As drums become thicker, the shells become more resistant to vibration. Thus the energy from a stick hit goes into moving air instead of the shell. Thicker shells are

therefore louder than thinner shells. But at the same time they tend to be 'colder-sounding,' because the shell vibrates to a lesser degree.

"Another sound difference is pitch. Comparing drums of the same size, as drums get thinner, the pitch goes down. As drums get thicker, the pitch goes up.

"The MMX shell is thin: 4-ply, 5-mm, with a 4-ply, 5-mm reinforcement ring. It is a sensitive instrument with a rich full-bodied sound. The MRX shell is a medium-thickness shell: 6-ply, 7.5-mm, without reinforcement rings. Based on what I described above, the MRX should be louder, which it is. But it should also be less sensitive and colder sounding, which it is *not*.

"To my ears (as well as those of the staff at Pearl USA and most of our artists), the MRX is the better-sounding of the two models. It has a wider tuning range and is louder, yet it sounds rich and full like its thinner sibling. If you have a choice between the two, in my opinion, you can't go wrong with the MRX."

Strongest Rims

QWhat would you say is the strongest snare drum rim on the market? I'm a heavy hitter and my drumhead is pretty tight.

John
via Internet

AThe strongest rims are probably those made of titanium. They're also pretty expensive. However, if you're interested, Ronn Dunnett of Dunnett Classic Snares (www.dunnett.com) sells titanium rims.

Failing that, die-cast rims are generally considered stronger than rolled-steel rims, because they are more rigid. As such, they don't "flex," and they tend to hold a drum's tuning better, even under very high tension. For that reason, die-cast rims are generally the choice for marching snares.

However, if the "strength" you seek also refers to durability under impact, then you need to consider that a die-cast rim is also more brittle than a steel rim. If hit *very* hard, it can crack or break, where a steel rim would dent.

Defending Your Space

QI've been drumming about six years, and I just played my first paying gig. In the middle of our last set, someone came up on stage and yelled "We need to have a drummer battle." I politely but firmly declined, saying it was my gig and no one was sitting in. I tried to appease him by telling him to see me after the show and we could let him come to one of our jams. So everyone just stopped while the two of us stared each other down. This never happened during all the years when I gigged as a guitar player. Is this a normal thing for drummers to deal with, and how could it best be handled?

Steve Jeffries
via Internet

AAs far as we're concerned, you did precisely the right thing. Sitting in is something that should be arranged beforehand, either before the gig starts, or at the very least on a break. No drummer with any sort of professionalism, experience, or common courtesy would "break in" to a gig the way you describe. We're a little dismayed that your bandleader (assuming you are not the leader) didn't step in and support you—bringing the club management into the picture if need be. You might want to speak to that individual about a policy for handling any future incidents. In the meantime, stick to your guns. It *is* your gig, as well as your equipment. You are under *no* obligation to allow unknown parties to have access on demand. (For more on the etiquette of sitting in, see this month's *Club Scene* on page 114.)

Tom Tuning

QI have a problem tuning one of my toms. I have a 10", 12", 14", and 16" tom setup, with clear Remo Pinstripes on top and clear Ambassadors on the bottom. The problem is that the 14" tom sounds like it's muffled—the way some people would like their bass drum to sound. I don't use any sort of muffling on my drums, and all the other toms sound wide open. Could you give me some advice on how to fix this? Is it the wood of the drums? (They're the V series by Mapex.)

continued on page 18

Bass Drum Lifter: Good Deal Or Gimmick?

Q I have a beautiful late-model jazz drumkit, with a traditional 14x18 bass drum. The bass drum has a much-touted lifter so that (according to the manufacturer's literature) "the beater can strike the middle of the head." After a couple years of playing my drums and trying to get a "real" jazz sound out of them, I've come to the conclusion that this lifter is the stupidest and most gimmicky notion I've ever heard of.

Think about it: The *first* thing you learn about playing any drum is *not* to strike the center. Why? Because doing so inhibits resonance. Why, then, would you want your beater to hit the center of your bass drum? This point hit home when I was watching some old footage of Elvin Jones. He's playing a little 18" bass drum, which is on the ground. The beater is striking in the top half of the drumhead—definitely off center—and surprise! It's the greatest bass drum sound in the history of mankind.

I took the drum off the lifter, and discovered yet *another* benefit of setting up an 18" bass drum on the floor. I can have my rack tom low and flat, maximizing stick velocity off the head, and creating a more compact and ergonomic setup.

I can't see a single reason why anyone would want to elevate his or her bass drum. It looks dumb, and it sounds bad. Whose idea was this, and how did gimmickry trump logic so that people would think they should use this feature?

Morgan Childs
Vancouver, BC, Canada

A The practice of striking a bass drum at or near its center came about largely as a result of studio recording techniques of the 1970s. As pop and rock overshadowed jazz in the mainstream of public consciousness, a lower-pitched, "deader" bass drum sound took precedence over the livelier, more resonant sound of a jazz-type drum. Part of obtaining that sound involved striking the head at its



Various drum "lifters" have been designed to allow bass drum beaters to strike the center of a smaller-diameter drumhead.

center. *You* may think that Elvin Jones' bass drum sound is the greatest in history, and many jazz drummers would likely agree with you. But most rock drummers, pop drummers, and sound engineers would heartily disagree.

It's a matter of application, not absolutes. Back in the early jazz and big-band days of the 1920s and '30s, bass drums tended to be very large—at least 24", and often up to 30". So bass drum beaters hit those drums *below* center. Drummers had to learn to control the resonance of those drums with their playing technique—taking advantage of it rather than trying to eliminate it. In the 1950s, when bebop styles (and transportation issues) led to the popularity of small bass drums, those drums were originally played on the floor, with—as you point out—the beaters hitting at a point *above* center.

As explained above, later studio techniques led drummers to *want* to hit the center of the head. As time went on, that became the accepted method, regardless of the musical style being played. So in order to sell jazz-size bass drums, the drum companies had to at least *offer* a means to hit those drums in the center.

In the final analysis, whether or not using a lifter and hitting the drum at center are desirable is up to the person playing the drum. Sound is a very personal thing. *Some* drummers must like the sound of the "lifted" small drums, otherwise there would be no sales of them.

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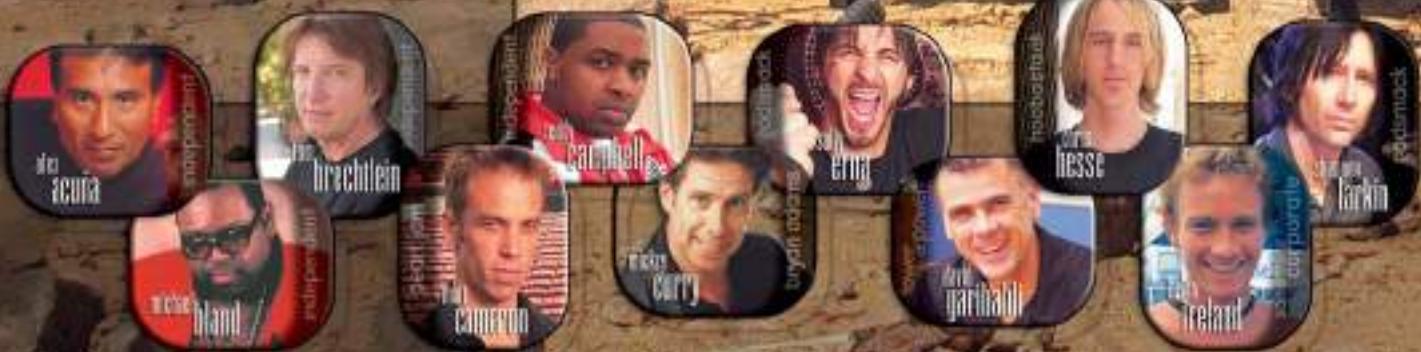
Nouveau Lug Casing

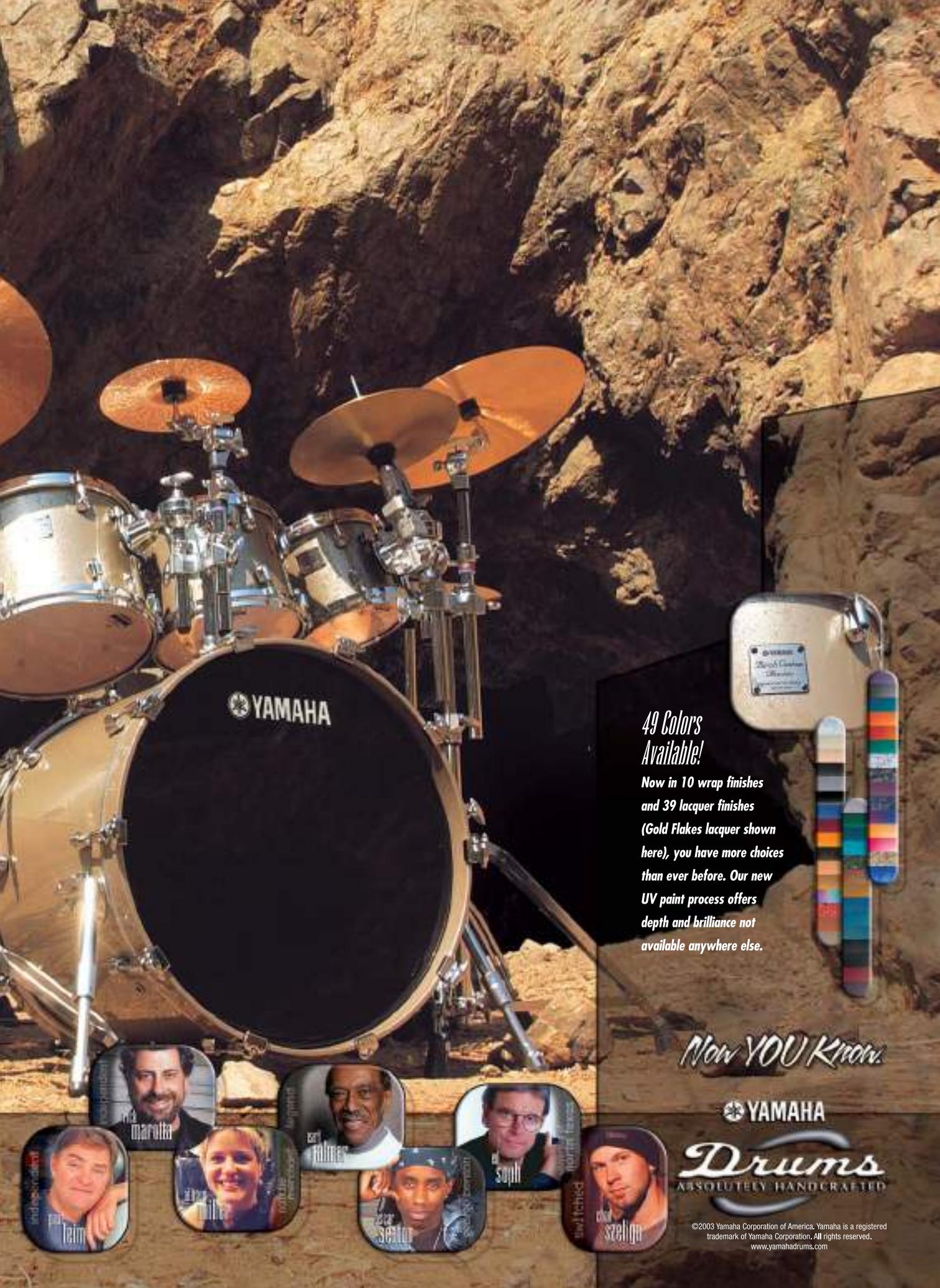
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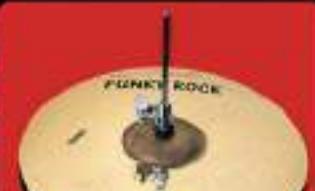
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Ride
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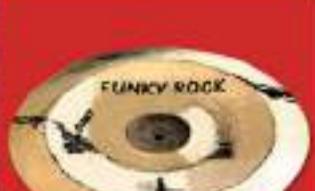
Crash
14"-15"-16"-17"-18"-19"-20"



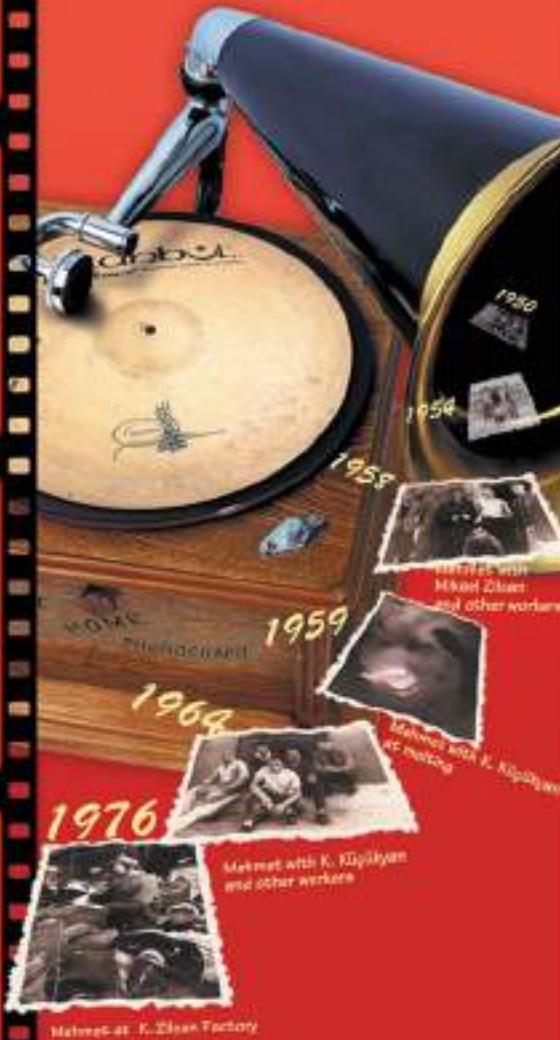
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continued from page 14

It's Questionable

Is the head defective? Or is there something wrong with the way I'm tuning (medium tension top and bottom)? Any help will be appreciated.

Brandon O'Malley
via Internet

AIn theory, if you're using the same type of heads on the drums, you should be getting similar response (allowing for pitch differences based on their sizes). If you're not, there is definitely something out of order. The trick is to discover what.

Start with the easy stuff. First, make sure that neither of the heads on the 14" drum is defective or overly worn. If it is, replace it.

Next, check to see that the heads on the 14" drum are in tune with themselves, meaning that the tension is consistent at each lug. Also be sure that the bottom head on the 14" drum is tensioned in the same relation to the top head as is the case on the other drums. Remember that the bottom head has more to do with a drum's resonance and projection than the top head does.

If the heads are properly tuned and the drum still sounds dull, there may be a problem with the bearing edges. Check this by removing the heads and placing the shell on a very flat surface, like a pane of glass or a linoleum countertop. Put a light source inside the shell, and look for light leaking out under the edge of the drum. Invert the drum and check the opposite edge. If you see light, that means the edges are not true. They'll need to be recut by a drum technician.

If the problem is neither the heads nor the bearing edges, it's possible that the drum is out of round. You can check this by using a tape measure. Measure the diameter of the shell (again with the heads off) from each lug point to the one opposite it, and from a point between each lug to the corresponding point opposite it. If the diameter is not the same all the way around, the drum is not truly circular—it is out of round. No amount of tuning can correct this problem. If the drums are still under warranty, you should check with your dealer about a warranty replacement. If not, you may need to consider ordering a replacement yourself.



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Josh Freese On Wrist Braces And Warm-Ups

Q I think you're a brilliant player. I'd like to ask you two questions. First, do you wear a wrist brace (and if so, why)? Second, do you do any warm-up exercises before playing?

Aaron Conte
via Internet

Q This may seem like an obscure question, but I'm very curious. What cymbal are you hitting in the Zildjian advertisement that featured you, with the slogan "Zildjian artist since the 6th grade"?

Hoodie
via Internet

A Thanks to both of you for your questions. First, Aaron: I do wear a wrist brace sometimes. Thank God I don't have any real wrist problems. But when I'm playing a lot, wearing a brace gives me a sense of extra reinforcement and confidence while crashing and bashing away, ya' know? It's kind of an homage to Michael Jackson fashion, as well.

Believe it or not—and I feel a little guilty admitting this—I don't do any real warm-ups or exercises. In the past few years I've started to stretch a little before playing a show, but with no real routine. I need one soon, though! I keep thinking that I'm eighteen and indestructible, but my body keeps reminding me that I'm not. (Getting older and not being

able to admit it is a funny thing.) If you get a good warm-up thing going, maybe you could write and let me know what it is.

Hoodie: The cymbal I'm hitting in that ad is a Zildjian 18" Oriental Crash Of Doom.



Tony Royster Jr.'s Snare Selection



Q What kind of snare drum do you normally use? You are my idol, and I'd like to get whatever you have.

Antip23dawg
via Internet

A Thanks for the kind words. I feel that the snare drum is one of the most vital parts of the drumset. That's why I use a variety of DW snare drums. When I'm working in the studio, I prefer a 5x14 Craviotto and a 5x13 bronze drum. For live performances, I bring out a 7x13 Edge snare drum. These are *all* my favorite. Thanks for writing, and keep drumming alive!

Brush Technique With **Jeff Hamilton**

Q You're certainly one of the finest jazz drummers playing today—especially with regard to brush playing. I've noticed that your brush strokes are often played in a side motion, as opposed to direct downward strokes. This technique is different from that of other jazz drummers I've spoken to—like Bob Rosengarden, Jake Hanna, and Joe Morello.

Would you please explain how and why you developed your style of playing brushes? Did anyone inspire this technique? Thanks for establishing what jazz drumming is really all about.

Bob Owen
Burlington, NC



A Bob: What do you mean by *one* of the finest? Seriously, I appreciate and admire anyone who is interested in exploring what these pesky little things can offer.

I employ a lateral motion in order to achieve a broader sound. An overhead stroke produces a definite staccato sound that hasn't been compatible with that of the fat-quarter-note players I've played with, such as Ray Brown, John Clayton, Oscar Peterson, and Diana Krall. The groove of each of these players seems to beg for an intense, lengthy beat to match theirs.

The lateral approach came about when I studied with John Von Ohlen. John played with that motion—and didn't seem to think too much about it. When I asked him why he played that way, he replied, "'Cause it feels good." He's right.

In 1976 I had an all-day lesson with Philly Joe Jones, and went through his brush book with him. He used overhead strokes *and* lateral sweeps to play many of the patterns from that book. After that lesson, I experimented by playing everything with lateral motions, and I liked the results.

The great thing about playing brushes is that there are many different ways to express musical ideas with them. In other words, you can learn from anyone who has spent a lot of time with a pair of brushes on a phone book or a newspaper.

Keep sweepin'!

Repeat Bar **A Classic Quote From MD's Past**

"I'm a ghoster from way back. You can play simply, which I try to do, and when you add ghost notes it kind of rounds out the groove so it doesn't sound so stiff. They make things more funky and fat."

Red Hot Chili Peppers' **Chad Smith**, August 1999



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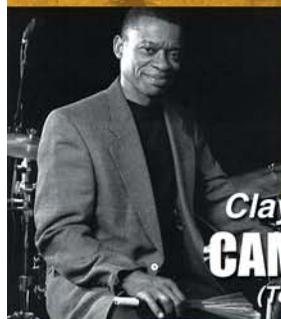
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Clayton CAMERON
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Clayton Cameron Brush
8A Sticks



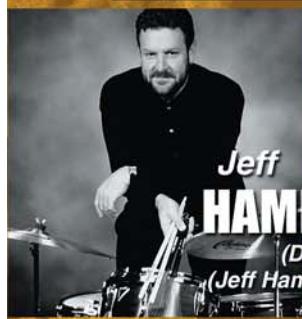
Ali JACKSON
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311's Chad Sexton

Evolving On Drums

Way before rap-metal infiltrated rock's mainstream, the LA-by-way-of-Nebraska quintet 311 laid the groundwork for that hybrid genre. In fact, their fusion of hip-hop, funk, reggae, and hard rock has been very influential since the band formed in 1990. Through innumerable musical fads, 311 has stayed true to a signature sound, while members continue to push themselves creatively. Nowhere is 311's staying power and commitment to innovation more evident than on its seventh release, appropriately titled *Evolver*.

"People sometimes get into bands for reasons *other* than the love of music, whether it's to make money, get women, or because they want to be on TV," says drummer Chad Sexton. "We put 311 together because we're music fans and musicians at heart. We see the trends that go on, but we like to think they don't affect us. Our band just tries to stay true to music we have fun playing, while also keeping our audience in mind. We want to write songs that will be exciting for our fans and affect people in a positive way. So far, that's worked for us."

With the band's heavy Beatles influence apparent on tracks like "Seems Uncertain,"

Evolver has a warmth largely missing from albums recorded since the '70s. Sexton says that's due to 311's "natural" approach to recording. "The warm sound you hear is very much an analog byproduct," he says. "We've always recorded our albums to tape instead of digitally, and we'll continue to do so as long as they *make* tape. Pro Tooled tracks don't even compare to analog."

Chad is happy with his performance on *Evolver*, but admits he doesn't find the recording process all that enjoyable. "The whole experience is very challenging for me," he admits. "But that's a good thing. I never want to go into recording an album and have it be so easy that I feel like I didn't challenge myself."

"Sometimes Jacks Rule The Realm" is a track that Chad is especially proud of. "When I was in the middle of recording, I wondered, 'Can I even *play* this?' Now that the record's done and I'm playing the song on the road, I'll sometimes think, 'Oh my God, why did I write that?'" he laughs. "These parts are *killing* me!"

Gail Worley

Zach Danziger

Boom On Film



Zach in Boomish mode, hair helmet and all.

Monica Müller

Like a musical cat, Zach Danziger has had more lives than most drummers have sticks. The New York-born drummer cut his teeth with Michel Camilo, Chuck Loeb, and Wayne Krantz, but just when his rhythmic intelligence seemed destined to make him the next chops-heavy drum star, Danziger jettisoned fusion work for his drum 'n' bass project, Boomish. Danziger then tackled soundtrack drumming on films such as *Ocean's Eleven* and *Analyze That*.

These days, when not gigging with Boomish or playing in the house band for *The Caroline Rhea Show*, Danziger uses his considerable programming skills to score films and television. His credits include *Daredevil*, *Blade 2*, and *Big Fat Liar*. How does he do it? "You have to wear clothes so you don't scare the client," Danziger says, with the same barmy sense of humor that makes Boomish such a kick in the head.

Danziger still loves to blow, but his soundtrack experience influences every note he plays. "Now that I'm into programming and production," he says, "when I play drums I'm always thinking in that way. They can loop a bar over and over again, so I might change the groove every two bars, knowing it gives them more to work with. Much of what I play is cut up and edited afterwards. It's rare that I play on a soundtrack where they keep an entire take as-is."

Describing the current Boomish direction as "Wayne Newton meets electronica" and "a vaudevillian Vegas freak show," Danziger reflects on the state of fusion drumming. "That drumming is less viable than it used to be—and at its most viable it wasn't that viable. We always looked up to Steve Gadd and all of his chops, but he really made his money by keeping a groove. He could play amazingly intricate stuff, but how often did he get to use that compared to just laying it down? So fusion was never as mainstream as I thought. In fact, the world doesn't revolve around fusion music.

"I studied and taught at Drummer's Collective in New York," Zach continues, "and when you're surrounded by drummers, everyone wants to play faster and more intricately than the next guy. Some teachers would mention that it was important to lay down the groove, but I wish they would have told me that a whole lot more."

Ken Micallef

TOMAHAWK'S John Stanier Life Beyond Helmet

While the Seattle grunge explosion flipped pop on its ear, bands like Alice In Chains, Tool, and Helmet authored the rulebook that defined modern metal. In 1999, after four albums and more than a decade together, Helmet suffered a bitter breakup that left drummer John Stanier in need of some serious downtime. "I wanted to join another band, but not right away," he admits. "I had also broken my wrist, so I wanted to take time off."

Unable to find the right project, and running out of money, Stanier parlayed his love of hip-hop music into what he calls an "accidental" career as a NYC club deejay. He did the gig professionally "six nights a week for a year and a half."

In 2000, Stanier got back on his drum throne, joining ex-Jesus Lizard guitarist Duane Denison's band Tomahawk, which also features vocalist Mike Patton and bassist Kevin Rutmanis. Earlier this year Tomahawk released its sophomore album, *Mit Gas*; a wildly diverse blend of lush, avant-

garde pop, experimental metal, and assorted weirdness that Stanier describes as "cinematic rock." "All of us, especially Mike, are nuts for soundtracks," Stanier explains. "Having that in common has a lot to do with why each Tomahawk song has a life of its own."

Stanier believes the best part of being in Tomahawk is the band's high level of professionalism. "There's no drama or drugs, and no one's missing flights," he says. "Everyone is into quality, especially when we're recording. And this band is all about control and pace. In Helmet, it was like, 'Okay, this is a riff. Go nuts!' In Tomahawk, everything has its place within the nature of the music. It wouldn't sound right for me to be filling all over the song. It would sound stupid."

While waiting for the release of *Mit Gas*, John started another band, Battles, which opened selected dates on Tomahawk's recent US tour. "Battles has three guitars, drums, and a female choir, and the material is super chal-



lenging for me to play. I don't like to think of drumming as 'a job,' even though it *is* my job and my lifestyle. I always want it to be fun and challenging. Right now I'm staying as busy as I possibly can."

Gail Worley



Evan Stone

Time, Taste, Teaching...And Tesh

Evan Stone recently celebrated his second year of playing with new-age fusion star John Tesh. According to Stone, the music requires strong navigational abilities. "Some of John's music is *very* challenging," he offers. "Some of the arrangements are not your typical 4/4 vibe, so the tricky stuff definitely keeps me on my toes. I also have to play with a click track, which I enjoy."

Evan reports that there are other challenging aspects to the Tesh gig. "I have to play behind a plexi-glass shield," he says, "which is really not fun. John feels it helps control the on-stage sound, so I deal with it. But all I hear are drums. I'm playing with great players, so I don't want to feel separated behind some wall. But that's the nature of the gig, and I have to adjust."

"In the last year, John has written more gospel stuff," Stone continues. "The show is a combination of gospel and fusion music. It's a fun mix, but I really enjoy the gospel music. I'm not a Christian, but I appreciate good songs."

Stone has a band called Salty The Pocketknife with actor Dustin Diamond, who played Screech on the *Saved By The Bell* TV series. The group plays music that the drummer describes as "progressive rock with a twist." According to Stone, "The music has a lot of odd meters and is very challenging to play." A CD will be released shortly on the indie label Sonance Records.

In his spare time, Evan teaches. A long-time student himself, the drummer says he had great lessons over the years with top players/educators like Peter Erskine, Jeff Hamilton, and Roy Burns. And then there was one particularly memorable lesson with Vinnie Colaiuta. "He sat me down at the drums and said, 'Play a rock groove.' And I asked, 'Like this?' and I kind of half-assed it. And Vinnie said, 'No, like *this*.' And he sat down and proceeded to play 1 and 3 on the kick and 2 and 4 on the snare like I had never heard before in my life—like God was coming down from the sky. I sat with my mouth open, and he said, 'Always drum like it's the last time you'll ever play.' That has stuck with me."

Robyn Flans

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Steve Fidyk

The Beauty Of Big Band

An impressive feature of Steve Fidyk's drumming on the new CD *A Perfect Match* by The Taylor/Fidyk Big Band is the wide range of styles covered. In addition to contemporary big band tunes by composer/arranger Mark Taylor, the disc features such classics as "Chelsea Bridge" by Billy Strayhorn and "Kansas City" by Lieber & Stoller.

Fidyk says he had to know some drumming history in order to approach such charts authentically. "It's so important to listen to the great drummers," Steve says. "We all stand on their shoulders when we play."

Steve not only listened, he transcribed. Some of his transcriptions of recordings by Max Roach, Roy Haynes, and Joe Morello appear in the Hal Leonard publication *Drum Standards*, and Fidyk did the transcriptions for Peter Erskine's book *The Drum Perspective*, also published by Hal Leonard.

Whereas some transcribers concentrate on solos and fills, Steve spends much of his time transcribing timekeeping. "I also transcribe the melody or solo line, and the rhythm of the piano player's comping," Fidyk explains. "That way, I see *why* the drummers played

what they played. What you do on the drums has to connect with what's happening in the band at any given moment. If you get your head out of the chart and listen to the arrangement, it will tell you what is required musically."

Fidyk says he learned a lot about the importance of dynamics and color from studying the work of Mel Lewis. Steve applies those lessons well on *A Perfect Match*, complementing each chart's structure and supplying the appropriate backing, whether aggressively kicking the full band during shout choruses or providing tasty brush accompaniment behind a piano solo.

"Playing in a big band requires that you know a plethora of styles," Steve says. "Plus you must have control of the entire dynamic range. A lot of people think that you play loud all of the time in a big band. But a lot of nuances have to come through in order to serve the arrangement and the other musicians."

For information on Steve and *A Perfect Match*, visit www.stevefidyk.com.

Rick Mattingly



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Evan Stone

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Josh Freese is on A Perfect Circle's *Thirteenth Step*.

Roger Taylor and the original lineup of Duran Duran recently played their first US shows together in eighteen years.

Corky Laing is touring with Mountain in support of their newly released DVD, *Sea Of Fire*.

David Licht is on the new Klezematics disc, *Rise Up!*



Mitch Marine is touring with Dwight Yoakam.

Atsuya Tamori is on Eastern Youth's *What Can You See From Your Place*.

Michael Brueggen is on the new, self-titled album from Supagroup.

Ricky Lawson is on the new Michael McDonald CD, *Motown*.

Herman Matthews and **Dan Needham** share drum duties on Kenny Loggins' new CD, *It's About Time*. (**Chris Ralles** is touring with Kenny.)



Glen Sobel is on Brooks Buford's latest disc, *Straight Outta Rehab*. Glen has also recently recorded with Impelliteri and Ken Tamplin. For more info, visit his Web site at www.glensobel.com.

The Misfits are back with a new line-up and new album, *Project 1950*, with **Marky Ramone** on drums.

Peter Erskine is on Elvis Costello's new CD, *North*.

After a three-year hiatus, Sunny Day Real Estate members, including **William Goldsmith** on drums, have reunited to form a new band called The Fire Theft. They will release their self-titled record shortly and then tour the US.

Mario Calire has left The Wallflowers and joined Ozomatli. He's currently working on their new recording. Calire has also recently worked with Rickie Lee Jones and Nikka Costa.

Roy McCurdy and **Omar Clay** are on Jackie Ryan's new album, *This Heart Of Mine*.

Eddie Bayers has recently been in the studio with Alan Jackson, Aaron Neville, Richard Marx, Michelle Poe, Buddy Jewell, and Clint Black.

Some amazing drummers and percussionists are featured on David Garfield's new CD, *Giving Back*, including **Gregg Bissonette**, **Lenny Castro**, **Vinnie Colaiuta**, **Steve Ferrone**, **Ricky Lawson**, **Airto**, and **Simon Phillips**.

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6. 8" ZIL-BEL, Small
7. 20" Z Custom Medium Crash
8. 19" K China
9. 19" Z Custom Rock Crash
10. 14" K Mini China
11. 9 1/2" ZIL-BEL, Large

Photo by David Clarr: © 2003 Avishai Zilgier Company

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Billy Gladstone was born on December 15, 1892.

Evans Inc. is started in Dodge City, Kansas on December 1, 1958.

Tony Williams was born on December 12, 1945.

Mitch Mitchell joins Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, and John Lennon to film *The Rolling Stones Rock & Roll Circus*, on December 12, 1968.

Cozy Powell was born on December 29, 1947.

Dennis Wilson of The Beach Boys was born on December 4, 1944. (He died on December 28, 1983.)

Peter Criss (KISS) writes and sings "Beth," one of the band's highest-charting singles (December 4, 1976).

Original Byrds drummer **Michael Clarke** died on December 19, 1993.

Happy Birthday!

Ed Thigpen (brush master): December 28, 1930	Clive Bunker (Jethro Tull): December 12, 1946	John "JR" Robinson (studio great): December 29, 1954
Dave Clark (The Dave Clark Five): December 15, 1942	Carmine Appice (rock legend): December 15, 1946	Sheila E (percussion star): December 12, 1957
Allan Schwartzberg (session great): December 28, 1942	Peter Criss (KISS): December 27, 1947	Lars Ulrich (Metallica): December 26, 1963
Alex Acuña (LA percussionist): December 12, 1944	Jim Bonfanti (The Raspberries): December 17, 1948	Marco Minnemann (Illegal Aliens/solo): December 24, 1970
Bobby Colomby (Blood Sweat & Tears): December 20, 1944	Lenny White (fusion great): December 19, 1949	Tré Cool (Green Day): December 9, 1972
John Densmore (The Doors): December 1, 1945	Buddy Williams (SNL/sessions): December 17, 1952	

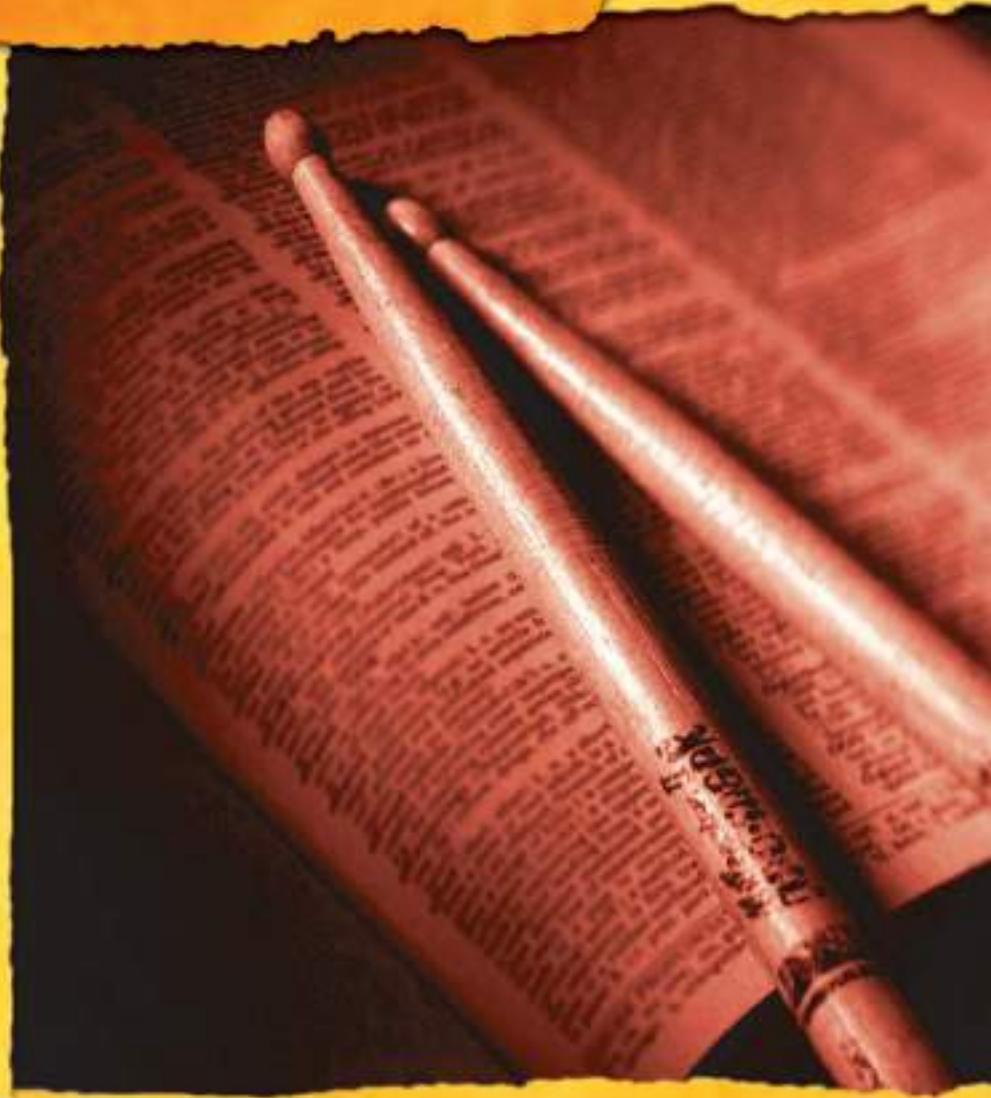


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DW DRUM ARTISTS (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): SHAWN PELTON (SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE), GREG UPCHURCH (PUDDLE OF MUDD), GERALD HEYWARD (MARY J. BLIGE), ALEX GONZALES (MAMA), CARL ALLEN (CARL ALLEN & NEW SPIRIT), GARY NOVAK (BOB BEGG), CHESTER THOMPSON (PHIL COLLINS), STEPHEN PERKINS (JANE'S ADDICTION), CURT BISCOBRA (LA STUDIO), JOEY CASTILLO (QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE).

drums
dw

Samson Drum Microphones

Sound Reinforcement On A Budget

HITS

excellent acoustic performance

affordable pricing

MISSES

clip-on mounting offers limited mic' positioning

by Mark Parsons

The folks at Samson make a wide variety of audio products, including power amps, mixers, loudspeakers, studio monitors, headphones...and microphones. Specific to our interests among the twenty or so mic's in their lineup are a handful of models directly aimed at drummers, including the aptly named QKICK, QSNARE, and QTOM (all three dynamics), as well as the C02 condenser.

The Samson drum mic's are available in three different kit configurations. For this review we were sent the 7KIT, consisting of a QKICK, a QSNARE, three QTOMs, and a pair of C02s.

The Models

The QKICK is a large-diaphragm supercardioid dynamic mic' with a fairly compact shape (2½" x 5½" overall). This includes the tailpiece, which has a stand adapter attached via a shock-reducing rubberized mount. The mic' has a metal body, weighs 13 oz., and is shaped to easily fit through a small port in a front head. The frequency response chart shows a small boost (3 or 4 dB) centered at 75 Hz and a much larger peak (12 dB) at 4 kHz.

The supercardioid QSNARE looks like a smaller (1½" x 4½") version of the QKICK, and has substantially less mass (only 5 oz.). This is due to the fact that although the finish on both mic's looks similar, the QSNARE has a plastic body. Another obvious difference in design is the clip that's attached to the QSNARE. (More on this in a minute.) The response chart shows the QSNARE as having a shallow low-end roll-off starting at 150 Hz. It's flat through the lower mids, and has a rising upper midrange with small peaks at 3.5 kHz and 5 kHz.

The QTOM is virtually identical to the QSNARE but for the name printed on the mic' body. The chart shows a similar response, with the exception of having a small boost at 200 Hz and perhaps a bit peakier treble response.

The C02 has the standard small-diaphragm condenser pencil mic' shape (½" x 6"). This

model has a cardioid pattern, which is generally better for overheads than the tighter supercardioid. The published curve shows a very flat response, with a broad, shallow boost around 8 kHz. The cylindrical body of this mic' is the same diameter as the tailpiece of the QKICK, allowing it to share the same small, rubberized mount.

The DMC100 Mic' Clip

Both the QSNARE and QTOM come with an integral clip-on mount called the DMC100. This plastic clip is very lightweight, but it seems rugged enough for the job. The clip itself has a pair of jaws that snap over the drum hoop and can be further tightened by a thumbscrew. The mic' position can be adjusted vertically over a 1½" span by means of a sliding stalk. A small but nice touch is the built-in cable clip on the back, allowing you to keep the mic' cable out of the way. In theory this is a well-designed clip-on mount, but theory and reality don't always coincide, as we'll see.



In Use

The first step in setting up the Samson mic's for testing was putting the QSNARE mic on the snare drum. From looking at the way the clip functions, this should take all of thirty seconds, including attaching the cable and securing it out of the way. The problem was that our test drum had die-cast hoops, to which the clip simply wouldn't fit no matter what I did. The hoops weren't particularly massive; it was mostly that the gap between the bottom of the die-cast hoop and the aluminum hoop of the drumhead didn't leave enough room for the clip to get a grip. When I swapped the snare for an archetypal 5x14 Ludwig Supraphonic fitted with a coated Ambassador head and flanged hoops, it was still a bit of a job to get the clip on. But eventually I got it secured.

The real issue, however, was the placement of the mic' when attached to the drum via the DMC100 mic' clip. When placed at a 45° angle, the end of the mic' ended up approximately 4" into the drumhead. That's not a problem with a floor tom. But try that on a 10" tom or auxiliary snare, and you end up with the mic' well into the playing area of the drum. Angling the mic' down toward the head to get it out of the way mitigates the situation somewhat. But this results in a microphone posi-

tion almost perpendicular to the drumhead (which is not the optimum placement) and still too far in from the hoop.

To be fair, I've had this same problem with a couple of other clip-on mounts, so maybe it's a matter of personal taste. But I suspect that some of these accessories are designed without much input from a drummer or a sound engineer. None of this is life and death, and the resulting placement might be fine for your needs. But it's something to be aware of.

When I decided to put the mic's on boom stands in order to place them where I wanted them, I discovered that this wasn't easy either. The integral mic' clip doesn't allow the mic' to be attached to a stand by the usual threaded adapter. Fortunately, the stand adapter that's connected to the rubber mount for the C02 can be taken apart and attached to the QSNARE. This is a 99¢ part, and Samson should include one with each QSNARE and QTOM mic'.

Sound

Positioning issues aside, when it comes to microphones, the most important issue is sound. Here the Samson mic's did not disappoint. When used on the aforementioned Ludwig snare drum, the QSNARE produced a very nice sound, replicating the full range of the drum from the fundamental to the snare wires. To compare it to a known quantity, it sounded similar to an SM-57, with the 57 having just a bit more upper-mid presence. You could use this microphone on a snare in any application where you'd typically use a dynamic mic' and get a professional result.

The QTOM performed in similar fashion when placed over a 10" tom. The sound was full and smooth, in the same ballpark as a Sennheiser e-604 or a Shure SM-57. We then placed the QSNARE next to the QTOM over the same drum to get a handle on the differences between them. The short story is that they're *very* similar, with the QTOM being a hair warmer on the bottom and having a tad more presence in the upper midrange. You could use either mic' for either application (snare or tom) and the difference wouldn't be perceptible in a mix. Then we placed the QTOM over a 12x14 floor tom and got just what we'd expect: a nice, smooth sound with no unpleasant surprises.

Next was the QKICK, which we placed inside a ported 22" kick drum, pointed slightly off-axis to the beater contact spot. It produced a clean, clear sound with realistic lows and very articulate attack. It had less thump on the bottom than an AKG D-112 might, but the beater attack had much clearer definition (no doubt due to the substantial boost in the 4–5 kHz region). The QKICK had less of a "pre-equalized" personality than an Audix D-6 (which has massive bottom and great attack) but it was able to approach that sound with a little carefully applied EQ. Keep in mind that the QKICK lists for about half as much as the mic's we compared it to.

The QKICK also shined on a floor tom, yielding a big, clean sound. Again, it didn't have quite the thick lows of the D-112 in this application. But the articulation of the drum was much more present when reproduced via the QKICK.

The C02s did a very good job of representing the character of the entire set when used in the overhead position. They had plenty of high-frequency extension, but they weren't "spitty," as about half the small condensers in this price range seem to be. The cymbals were well placed in the mix, and the toms sounded realistic. There wasn't tons of bottom end represented here, but that's par for the course with most small condensers typically used for this application.

Conclusion

Bang for the buck is the name of the game here. Clip issues notwithstanding, Samson has produced a line of drum mic's that can stand side-by-side with more expensive models and not give away much (if anything) in the performance department. The list prices are very reasonable, but the "estimated street prices" that the manufacturer sent me are an absolute steal. If you're looking to mike up your drumset for gigging situations, the various mic' kits put together by Samson offer a cost-effective way to do a quality job.



THE NUMBERS

QKICK	\$199
QSNARE	\$149
QTOM (3 pack only)	\$324
C02 (pair only)	\$299
7KIT (as tested)	\$799
5KIT (as above, without C02s)	\$499

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▶ HHX - PROJECTION

▶ AA - EXPLOSIVE



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▶ AA - EXPLOSIVE

▶ PRO SONIX® - PENETRATING

▶ XS20 - ADVANCED



SIGNATURE - DARING



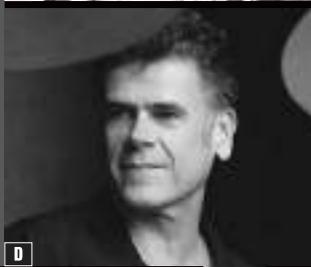
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B8 PRO - COMPLETE



C

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D

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AAX **D)** David Garibaldi - Tower of Power - Signature, HHX, HH (Hand Hammered)

E) Kevin Soffera - Seether - HH **F)** Jose Pasillas - Incubus - AAX, HHX, HH **G)** Mike Portnoy -

Dream Theater - AA, AAX, Signature, HH, HHX **H)** Shannon Larkin and Sully Erna - Godsmack

- AA, HH, AAX **I)** Tomas Haake - Meshuggah - HH, HHX, AA **J)** Mike Wengren - Disturbed -

AA, AAX **K)** Stefanie Eulinberg - Kid Rock/Melissa Etheridge - AAX, HH **L)** Dave Weckl -

Dave Weckl Band - HHX **M)** Marcus Baylor - Yellowjackets - AA, HH **N)** Ray Luzier - David Lee

Roth - AAX, AA **O)** Kris Kohls - Adema - AAX, HHX **P)** Bill Ward - Black Sabbath - AA, HH

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K



M



O



P

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▶ AA - EXPLOSIVE



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GMS CL Series Kit

A Custom Approach To The Mid-Price Range

HITS

high-end features in a mid-price kit

versatile acoustic performance

excellent new bass drum pedal

Text by Rick Van Horn
Photos by Jim Esposito

GMS is one of the best known of the small "custom" drum manufacturers. Their Long Island, New York operation has been turning out high-quality drums with innovative features for quite a few years now. Those drums are used by artists like Eric Kretz, Nathaniel Townsley, Camille Gainer, and Mario Calire.

Up until now, GSM's reputation for quality and craftsmanship came with a pretty hefty price tag. But the company is making a concerted effort to change that with their CL Series kits. In a nutshell, these kits feature GSM's design principles and features, but are manufactured overseas to help reduce labor costs. Every kit that comes in from the overseas factory is carefully hand-inspected at GSM's home base before that kit is shipped. The result is a line of drums that has a "custom" pedigree, but still falls squarely into the mid-price market.



Simple Yet Elegant

Another way that GMS keeps the cost of CL kits down is to simplify the line. The kits are offered in three package configurations, two of which differ only in bass drum size. Those two are the CL Standard and CL Fusion. Each includes 8x10, 9x12, and 12x14 suspended toms, along with a 5½x14 snare drum. The Standard kit features an 18x22 bass drum; the fusion kit offers a 16x20. The third configuration, called the City Jazz kit, includes an 8x12 rack tom, a 14x14 floor tom with legs, a 5½x14 snare drum, and a 14x18 bass drum. (Add-on toms in 7x8 and 14x16 sizes are available for all configurations.) Also simple is the choice of finishes: Natural Maple, Walnut, and Midnight hand-applied satin.

All CL drums feature 7-ply all-maple shells with precision-cut 45° bearing edges and no reinforcing rings. (Although seven plies hardly qualifies as a “thin” shell, the individual drums seemed quite light in weight.) The drums are fitted with very clean-looking, low-mass lugs, and the toms all come with suspension mounts (except for the 14x14 legged floor tom on the City Jazz set). And all of the drums come equipped with Evans heads.

Our Review Kit

Our review kit was the CL Fusion model in the Walnut finish. Cosmetically, it was attractive if not flashy. Its subdued satin finish drew praise from several observers, who commented on the kit’s “classy” appearance.

The kit came fitted with Evans G1 single-ply coated batter heads on all the toms and the snare drum, with Genera Resonant heads on the bottoms of the toms. The bass drum had an EQ1 frosted single-ply batter (with a built-in muffling ring) and a black EQ1 Resonant head. With this head setup—and given the 16x20 bass drum—the kit seemed best suited to jazz or light pop playing. So I deliberately tightened the heads up a bit to get a bright, resonant sound from the drums. And I wasn’t disappointed. The sound was clear, with good projection. The drums each responded well, although their tonality was predictably restricted to the middle and upper registers. There wasn’t a lot of fatness or bottom to their sound. (That was the case even when I lowered the head tension a bit.)

To see if I could get that fatness—and to determine how much effect an extreme change of heads would have—I swapped all the Evans G1 batters for a set of Remo Pinstripes, except for the bass drum, which got a PowerStroke 3 batter. I left all of the bottom heads alone. With this setup, the drums projected a very respectable low end and a mellower overall attack. There was no loss of volume, however. The light shells helped the sound resonate very effectively. The 16x20 bass drum wasn’t going to shake any building foundations, but it gave a good account of itself for its size. I’d speculate that the 18x22 version would very likely rattle some windows.

New Hardware

CL Series kits are available as shell packs or with optional hardware packages that include two disappearing-boom cymbal stands, a hi-hat stand, a snare stand, and a bass drum pedal. (The double tom holder for the rack toms and the clamp-on single tom holder for the suspended “floor” tom are included in the shell pack.)

GMS has only recently introduced its own line of hardware, and the results are pretty impressive. All of the stands proved sturdy and functional, but not ultra-sophisticated (which lowers cost). And while they’re all double-braced, they fall into a medium range in terms of weight and mass. The disappearing-boom cymbal stands featured one nice touch: little “stop points” on the ends of the booms, to prevent them from being mistakenly slid all the way out during set-up or breakdown.

I was especially impressed with the new GMS G1000 bass drum pedal. It’s a single-chain-drive unit, with the chain going over a felt-lined track rather than a sprocket. So the pedal is very quiet. The



black footboard, yoke, and baseplate give the pedal a sleek, space-age look. The hoop clamp is spring-loaded for easy pedal installation and removal, and there’s a side-mounted release bolt. (Nice!)

The pedal’s overall design is pretty straightforward, and its adjustment capabilities are limited to beater length, beater throw/footboard angle, and spring tension. But it felt light and quick right out of the box, and I had no trouble getting it adjusted to a very comfortable playing point. The pedal comes with a reversible plastic/felt beater.

Conclusion

The CL Series is not a low-end kit that’s been given some cosmetic upgrading to justify a higher price. It’s really more of a high-end kit that’s been stripped to the essentials in order to justify a *lower* price. It sounds and looks good, it’s extremely well made, and it comes from a company known for their dedication to quality. Who can argue with a combination like that?

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: 8x10, 9x12, and 12x14 suspended toms, 5½x14 snare drum, and 16x20 bass drum, all featuring 7-ply 100%-maple shells. Single and double tom holders are included as part of shell pack. Optional hardware package includes bass drum pedal, hi-hat stand, snare stand, and two disappearing-boom cymbal stands.

List price for drums only **\$2,000**
(same kit with 18x22 bass drum: \$2,060)

List price with hardware package **\$2,540**
(same kit with 18x22 bass drum: \$2,600)

New Zildjian Z Custom Crashes And Hi-Hats

Loud And Louder

HITS

powerful, cutting sound

visually attractive hammered design with brilliant finish

by Mike Haid

Zildjian's new Z Custom crashes and Mastersound hats have been created to be brutally abused while cutting through the loudest of musical situations. Their design features the double-layered look of spiraled, circular hammering combined with traditional lathing over the entire cymbal. New models include 14" and 15" hats, 18" and 19" Projection crashes, and a 20" Medium crash. All cymbals come in a brilliant finish, enhancing the hammering and lathing for a stylish look. Let's take a closer look at these "louder than life" cymbals.

Crashes

The 18" and 19" Projection crashes are very dense and dry in tone. Zildjian claims that these are the loudest cymbals they've ever created, and I'm inclined to agree. The cymbals also feature the largest bell Zildjian has ever put on a crash. Owing to their size and thickness, you really have to hit these babies with authority to get a full-bodied crash out of them. But considering their intended market, I don't think potential users will have any trouble there.

There wasn't much tonal difference between the 18" and 19" Projection crashes, due to their closeness in size. The 19" did work well as a crash/ride in lower-volume situations, where it offered clean stick articulation when played with the tip of the stick.



The 20" medium crash had more tonal possibilities and a more pleasant spread of sound when struck with medium force. When played harder, the explosive wash of sound was brighter and cut sharper than the 18" and 19" Projection crashes did. As a result, the 20" Medium crash was more versatile and expressive overall.

Hi-Hats

The 14" and 15" Z Custom Mastersound hats are thick and heavy, and they produce clean, brittle tones. Stick definition is bright and pronounced on both sizes. The bottom cymbals feature a "wavy edged" design to help give the hats a very defined "chick" sound. The larger size of the 15" hats produced a depth and fullness of sound that seemed to fatten up the overall groove. On the other hand, the 14" hats had more "bite," and produced a brighter, sharper tone. But both sizes have plenty of cut and are well suited for loud musical situations. They work especially well for "partially opened" washy rock grooves.

Summary

These new Z Custom models are definitely designed for heavy hitters. Due to their thickness and density, you've got to be a muscular player to really reap the rewards of their piercing tones and bombastic projection. (I can't imagine anyone ever breaking one of these babies.) These are not finesse instruments to be gently caressed, but loud, raucous cymbals to be played balls out. "No wimps allowed" certainly applies to this line of powerful metal.

THE NUMBERS

14" Mastersound hi-hats, pair	\$392
15" Mastersound hi-hats, pair	\$430
18" Projection crash	\$280
19" Projection crash	\$302
20" Medium crash	\$320

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

Quick Looks

Giovanni Series Compact Conga

Always a leader in innovation, Latin Percussion has done it again. With design input from master percussionist Giovanni Hidalgo, they've come up with the Compact Conga. It's an easily transportable practice instrument that sounds surprisingly full—and *much* louder than you'd expect.

The Compact Conga can be played on your lap or mounted in a standard snare-drum stand, making it absolutely perfect for any stage, studio, or small apartment. It features an 11" tunable synthetic head and a special aluminum alloy frame with a curved rim, making it easy and comfortable to play. It delivers traditional slaps, muted sounds, and yes, even bass tones. In fact, the design is so effective that after being on the market for only a few months, the Compact Conga won the 2003 M.I.P.A. award for most innovative percussion instrument. I can understand the enthusiasm for it. I've been having a terrific time taking the drum around everywhere I go—and watching the reaction *every time* someone plays it.

If you have any interest in learning conga rhythms, or if you want to add another color to your drumkit, you should check out the Compact Conga. At first you might be skeptical because of its small size. But once you hit it, you'll be hooked. It lists for \$179.

(973) 478-6903, www.lpmusic.com.

Billy Amendola



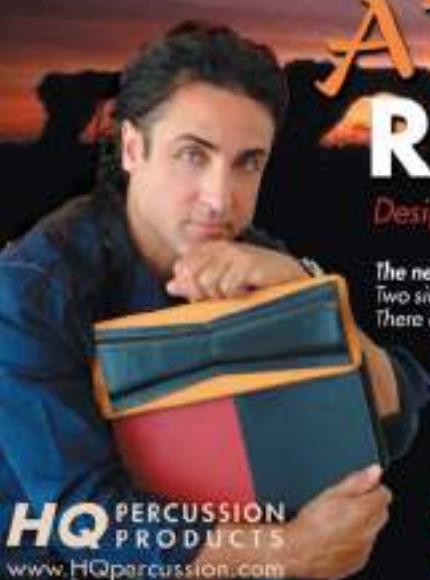
ART AND SCIENCE

REALFEEL MUCHO PAD™

Designed by Daniel de los Reyes

The new Mucho Pad has four playable surfaces. Two simulate timbales, with one being gum rubber & the other neoprene. There are also two cowbell pads (high and low).

This is where it gets cool. There is also a playable rim – a must for traditional timbale rhythms. Even cooler, the cowbell pads get higher in pitch as you move toward the center of the pad... just like real cowbells! And the non-slip bottom side of the pad can be used for conga/bongo style warm-ups, a bonus for hand drummers.



The RealFeel Mucho Pad:
Let our science help your art!



Made In U.S.A.

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www.HQpercussion.com

Tama Stagestar Drumkit

For The Mini-Me In You

HITS

toms have good projection and thick tone
compact shell sizes allow for ease in reach
easy to transport and store
high quality with a small price tag

MISSES

cymbal set and snare detract
from overall quality

by Martin Patmos

Tama's new compact Stagestar kit targets beginner students who want drums that are not considered toys, and gigging musicians who want a complete setup but must play in tight quarters. According to Tama, the Stagestar's design delivers a quality, practical set to please students and vets alike. Let's see if that checks out.

Not Your Dad's Station Wagon

Our five-piece review kit included 8x10 and 8x12 toms, a 12x14 floor tom, and a 14x18 bass drum—all with 8-ply Philippine mahogany shells—and a 5x13 steel snare drum. The drums and hardware are formatted in what Tama calls a "low-profile" design, which causes the entire kit to sit lower than standard sets.

Before I ever set up this "compact" kit, I was curious to know just how portable it would really be. I was nicely surprised. Every piece, including the hardware and the 14x18 kick drum, fit neatly into my car. No struggle, no back-breaking work, and no brain-teasing space problems for me to figure out. I just popped the drums in, and off I went.

When I did set up the Stagestar, it was for a rehearsal session in a friend's living room, which was longer than it was wide. The kit fit comfortably in the corner of a relatively small space.

Some teachers preach that drummers shouldn't be pressed up against the drums—that they should give themselves some distance to stretch out. And I admit that I sometimes have the tendency to crowd the kit. With the Stagestar, even when I was right on top of the drums,



I never felt claustrophobic. I had a serious command over the area.

Tama states that the somewhat “squashed” design of the Stagestar creates easier reach for drummers. I found this to be true. In fact, using the Stagestar was like trading in my station wagon for a tiny, two-door sports car. The “mini” look of the kit even inspired a mood of intimacy that motivated my guitarist to go acoustic and me to pull out my Lightning Rods for sound effects.

Speaking Of Sound...

What sound did these drums make when I first hit them? I’d describe it as a concentrated “pop.” I was surprised—and impressed—by their long-range projection. However, after banging on them for a while, the heads were dimpled, producing a biting “doink” that reminded me of sounds made by low-end kits from my younger days. I was confident that the Stagestar had more potential than that, so I replaced the factory-issued heads with Remo clear Pinstripes. *Big* difference. The sound was more concentrated, yet still full of thick, juicy tones. I also tightened the tension rods on the bottom heads, and adjusted the top head so that it was slightly looser than my usual playing surface. That made the sound noticeably throatier, as if I was playing sticking patterns on a gourd half-full of liquid.

The 12x14 floor tom was somewhat shorter than a “standard” floor tom, but I did not sense any change in sound depth or projection because of it. The tom came with legs, but it can also be suspended in a fusion-style setup by hanging it off the supplied cymbal stand using a clamp and tom attachment. I used the drum solely as a floor tom to prove that, even with legs, this kit could be placed just about anywhere.

The bass drum batter head had a self-muffling ring, which helped to provide a dry, quick, bottom-end punch. As such, the bass drum required minimal tuning.

Hardware? More Like “Lightware”

Not only did the drums get easier to set up and break down every time I used them, but the hardware seemed more lightweight than I’m used to. The only truly heavy piece of hardware is the Omni-Ball double tom holder (MTH500). It slides into the kick drum and allows the 10” and 12” toms to rotate and to be positioned far apart or close together, at virtually any angle. Actually, this piece would seem perfectly normal on a full-size kit; it only seemed heavy on the Stagestar because everything else felt so light.

While I was fully taken with the concept of “smaller is better,” I did sense that the kit needed an extra cymbal stand. While one stand is fine for a practice session, unless you’re using a crash-ride, you’d need to bring one or more of your own stands to a gig.

It was a good move on Tama’s part to use double-braced legs on the straight cymbal stand, since it was perhaps the lightest piece of hardware of the entire set. Initially, the drum throne didn’t look like it could support me. But once I put all the pieces together and sat down, I had no fears of it collapsing. It was sturdy and held my weight well.

The spiked feet on the bass-drum legs were effective at keeping the drum from sliding. Actually, the drum had good balance even without the spikes. I found this out the hard way when I forgot the legs and was forced to wedge the drum in between two impromptu stationary devices. Instead of rolling over in mid-session, as I thought it would, the drum remained upright and steady, needing only slight adjustments in between songs.

The bass drum pedal (HP10) has a profile of 20 mm, which makes it only $\frac{3}{4}$ as high as a standard pedal. Tama says that the pedal has the same playing feel and footboard angle as a regular-size pedal, but it still took a little getting used to. To compensate, I did what I would for any pedal that was foreign to me: I tried tightening the springs. But the final cure was to let my reflexes adjust to the pedal’s natural motion. Eventually I found the sweet spot.

The HS10R snare stand is a sturdy “low-profile” model with a swivel basket. The arms seemed to have an extra-wide space to place the snare in and have it fastened safely inside the basket. It collapsed and came together again in seconds.

Nothing’s Perfect

There were only two aspects of the Stagestar kit that screamed “low-end.” First was the accompanying cymbal set, which consisted of a 16” crash and a pair of 13” hi-hats. While beginners (and their parents) may see value in a five-piece kit “complete with cymbals,” more advanced players will not appreciate these particular cymbals. They’re part of this kit merely to make it a more attractive sales package. I’d use Tama’s cymbals only in a pinch.

The other problematic aspect of the Stagestar kit was the 5x13 steel snare. Frankly, it’s not on a par with the other drums in the kit. Again, for a beginner who needs little more than a snare-sounding target, this drum will do just fine. However, if you plan to take advantage of the Stagestar’s compactness for gigging purposes, you’d need to stick with your own snare.

Conclusion

Unlike some other mini-kits, the Stagestar offers high-quality and very compact drums, at an affordable price. Not only would I use this kit for my gigs if given the opportunity, I might consider recording with it as well (albeit with a different snare drum and cymbal set). With the Stagestar, there’s no longer any dilemma as to what drums you can or can’t take to *any* gig, no matter the size.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: 8x10 and 8x12 rack toms, 12x14 floor tom (with legs), 14x18 bass drum, and 5x13 steel snare drum. Hardware includes Omni-Ball double tom holder, a snare stand, a hi-hat stand, a straight cymbal stand, a bass drum pedal, and a throne. Cymbal package includes 13” hi-hats and a 16” crash. Available covered finishes include Midnight Blue, Vintage Red, and Black.

List price **\$649.99**

(A Silent Practice Pad Set of mesh heads and cymbal mutes is also available for \$99.99.)

(215) 638-8670, www.tama.com.

Istanbul Mehmet Marmara Series Onurhan And Emirhan Cymbals

Old Sounds With A New Approach

HITS

striking combination
unlathed/polished look

Chinas offer smart flange design

dry and colorful sounds

MISSES

splashes are a bit bell-like

Text by Robin Tolleson

Photos by Jim Esposito
Studios/Bernie Doyle

Istanbul Mehmet has taken a bold step with their Marmara Series cymbals. In a way, they've recreated an ancient sound with their foray into multi-faced, combination lathed and unlathed models. Several of the cymbals they sent for review are like fine vintage wine: dry, but with a mixed bouquet of flavors. It's too early to tell if these cymbals will be mentioned in the same breath as classic Ks of old, but they have achieved a similar sonic ambience, with a striking new look.

There are two different models of Marmara cymbals: Onurhan and Emirhan. Onurhan models feature unlathed bells and outer edges, with lathed and polished "shoulders." Emirhan models are only lathed and polished on their outer edges. I enjoyed playing the rough, unfinished surfaces on the Onurhans. That surface gives an organic, sometimes-unpredictable tone that is quite desirable.

Hi-Hats

Istanbul's 14" Marmara hi-hats are very trashy, and you know it from the first time you put your foot down on the pedal and hear them sizzle. Both sets provided a crisp flavor, with the Emirhans being slightly brighter. I preferred the dryness of the Onurhans and the very musical, somewhat dampened tone that striking on the rough, unfinished outer edge surface provided. In an ideal situation, instead of making a choice between the two models, I'd probably buy both and then mix and match them as needed.



Splashes And Bells

Marmara splashes have their own interesting characteristics. The 6" Emirhan really roars for a tiny cymbal, with an oriental trash-splash vibe. It will definitely color any sound. The 10" Onurhan had a thick mini-gong sound, making it too bell-like for my taste. I like splashes that begin to open up and shout even at a nudge, but the 10" Onurhan took a pretty hefty whack before it ever began to speak. And even then it didn't ever seem to get to a splash sound; I heard mostly attack.

If you have the musical need for bell cymbals, the 10" Emirhan produces a pure, high-pitched bell sound, while the 10" Onurhan offers a mid-range sound that's a bit more exotic. Neither is extremely loud, and they'd be lost in a wash of other drum sounds. But miked up, or played alone within a lower-volume situation, they could produce a good effect.

Crashes

Both Marmara crashes are excellent. The 16" Onurhan provides a wide, whooshing crash sound with an extended decay. And while both crashes are versatile enough to be used for riding as well as accenting, the 17" Emirhan really shines in the crash-ride role. It can be ridden to the breaking point, and still has something extra for a resounding crash or series of crashes.

Chinas

Istanbul Mehmet has put some thought into their China cymbals. Their 16" Onurhan and 18" Emirhan Chinas are made with an inverse flange. That is, if you mount the cymbal with the bell in the normal position, the flange is already turned down. (With a traditional China, one has to turn the cymbal upside-down to get that striking surface, losing access to the bell in the process.) Bravo.

The 16" Onurhan has a dry, controlled sound, with a great percussive edge on the flange. The 18" Emirhan is formidable, projecting like a larger Wuhan I once owned. It also provides several attractive riding surfaces.

Istanbul Mehmet also sent a 20" cupless China, which was not designated as either an Onurhan or an Emirhan. I'm not sure what's to be gained by not having a bell, unless it was to combine the controlled sound of a classic flat ride with the trashy sound of a China, making this cymbal exclusively a "China ride." It certainly did offer a dry, hearty riding surface, but personally I'd rather have a China that I can ride *and* that has a bell.



Rides

Speaking of rides, both Marmara rides were very responsive cymbals. The 20" Emirhan ride is quite bright and pingy, with a classy sound. But I preferred the 20" Onurhan, which is slightly darker. It also has "good brakes." After riding it a long time, you can let up, and the sound dissipates quickly, allowing you to set up a new pattern from a blank slate.

Conclusion

In terms of sound *and* looks, the Istanbul Marmara cymbals we examined are marvels. They're earthy but contemporary, they offer sonic variety, and they're very dynamics-friendly. They're also hand-made in Turkey, so they're not the cheapest cymbals around. But at least part of their cost goes toward originality and uniqueness. What's that worth to you?

THE NUMBERS

14" Emirhan hi-hats	\$460
14" Onurhan hi-hats	\$460
6" Emirhan splash	*
10" Onurhan splash	\$150
10" Emirhan bell	*
10" Onurhan bell	*
16" Onurhan crash	\$289
17" Emirhan crash	\$310
16" Onurhan China	\$310
18" Emirhan China	\$417
20" Mehmet cupless China	*
20" Emirhan ride	*
\$475	
20" Onurhan ride	\$475

*Price not determined at press time

Tama Power Metal Aluminum, Power Metal Brass, And Artwood Maple Snare Drums, HS700W Snare Stand

Variations On A Theme

HITS

Aluminum snare is bright and quick

Maple snare has warmth and depth

Brass snare offers
exceptional articulation

by Mike Haid

Tama offers a vast array of aluminum, birch, brass, bronze, copper, maple, and stainless-steel snare drums, all available in a variety of sizes. For this review we'll be examining a 4x14 Power Metal Aluminum snare drum, a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Power Metal Brass snare drum, and a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Artwood Maple snare drum. We'll also look at the new HS700W snare stand. Let's go!

Similarities In Design

All three of our review snare drums come fitted with Tama's "Mighty Hoops," which are 2.3 mm-thick triple-flanged steel hoops. Each drum also comes with ten center-mounted lugs to which the tension rods from the top and bottom hoops attach. All shell-mounted hardware has a rubber gasket between the shell and the hardware to protect the shell, decrease rattle, and increase resonance.

Each drum is also equipped with Tama's new MCS70A strainer, which features a shaft with a special rubber covering that eliminates noise when the strainer is in the off position. Finally, all three drums are fitted with Evans Genera G1 coated batter heads and Evans Resonant Snare 300 bottom heads.



Shells

Considering the similarities in hardware and heads on these three snare drums, the biggest difference in sound will come from the difference in shell material. So let's take a closer look at those shells.

The 4x14 aluminum snare features a 1 mm-thick shell that is lightweight and quite versatile in sound. Its tonal characteristics include a bright attack and a short decay. The steel "Mighty Hoops" give this drum lots of volume and projection—especially on rimshots. When tuned high, the drum is very articulate for rudimental-style drumming, hip-hop, funk, and jazz. When tuned down to a lower pitch, the drum has some beef to it, with minimal decay. It can also produce an excellent timbale-like sound with the snares turned off.

The 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 maple snare drum features a 7-ply maple shell. Our review model had a distinctive Caramel



Sunburst finish, with burnt orange around the edges fading to a natural wood finish in the center of the shell. The maple shell has a warm tone compared to the metal drums, but still has plenty of bite when tuned high. It also resonates longer (with no muffling) than the metal drums do. The 6½" depth gives this drum a large, deep sound when tuned at a medium to medium-low tension. Articulation is well defined in all tuning ranges.

The 5½x14 brass shell was my favorite of the three because of its overall versatility. The 1.5 mm-thick shell has the bright, projecting highs of the aluminum shell, along with the deeper tonal qualities of the larger maple shell. You don't get the warmth of the maple drum, but there's enough depth to the sound (especially when the drum is tuned in the medium to low range) to achieve a fatback beat. You do get more volume with less effort, and the tuning range and stick articulation are exceptional.

HS700W Snare Stand

A snare drum's performance is very greatly affected by the stability and design of the stand it's mounted on. Tama's HS700W snare stand incorporates their Omni-Ball Mounting System into the snare basket.

This allows for pinpoint angle adjustment of your snare drum. I had no trouble achieving the exact snare height and angle I desired.

The stand also features a swiveling basket with asymmetrically spaced basket arms that allow an

8- or 10-lug drum to be held without interference to the strainer, butt, or lugs. Once you achieve your desired height and angle, you then lock the basket in place with a small drumkey-operated bolt located at its base.

Another nice feature of the stand is Tama's "Escape Claws," which are rubber cushions that hold the drum in a "floating" manner. Tama claims that this design reduces playing fatigue by absorbing impact shock, and thus softening the impact on your arms and wrists.

The stand also raises to a nice height for playing standing up (for orchestra or school band). And in terms of durability, it held up well to some *serious* thrashings.



Summary

All three Tama snare drums have plenty to offer in the way of top-of-the-line construction and versatile tuning ranges. It will be up to you to decide which size and shell material is right for your drumming style and musical taste. But what a terrific choice you have!

As far as the HS700W snare stand goes, it offers many great practical and durable features for a rea-

THE NUMBERS	
4x14 Power Metal Aluminum snare	\$329.99
5½x14 Power Metal Brass snare	\$419.99
6½x14 Artwood Maple snare	\$359.99
HS700W snare stand	\$129.99
(215) 638-8670, www.tama.com .	

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Photography by Adam Wallacavage

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LT Lug Lock Tempo REF

Timekeeper Extraordinaire

HITS
programmable metronome

real-time tempo monitor

ultra-compact design

by Mark Parsons



From the same folks who brought you the original Beat Bug (and Lug Locks) comes a new tempo meter/metronome called the Tempo REF. What's a tempo meter? It's a device that measures the tempo at which you're playing—as opposed to a metronome, which tells you at what tempo to play. This is a very important distinction, especially for drummers. (More about this in a minute.)

The Tempo REF is a 1½" x 3" x 7/8" black plastic box with two buttons and an LED display on the top, along with a pair of 2.5-mm jacks and a small dial on the side. The whole thing weighs less than 2 oz. The REF comes with an earphone, a headphone adapter, an external trigger and clip, and a hook-and-loop fastener strip for attaching the REF to a drumhead.

Features

The REF can be used in a completely stand-alone fashion, which is how I used it most of the time. It has an internal trigger and an internal beeper, and can be used as either a metronome or a tempo meter without anything else (trigger or earphone) plugged into it.

As a metronome, the REF has sixty-six programmable presets, allowing you to program the count-offs for your entire set list at any tempos between 10 and 254 bpm. An audible beep can be toggled off or on, and numerical LEDs flash on at the start of each beat and go off halfway through the beat. In other words, The REF flashes (and beeps) on each quarter note, and the numbers go off on alternating 8th notes (the "&" of each beat). This comes in handy during slow tempos.

To use the REF as a tempo meter, you attach it to a drum—most likely your snare—near the rim, using a 1" square of hook-and-loop fastener material. This keeps the unit off the drumhead itself while transmitting the triggering impulse to the REF's "sweet spot." As you play, the internal trigger monitors your tempo, which is shown on the LED display. A sensitivity control lets you adjust the trigger so that accented notes are picked up and ghost notes aren't. For greater sensitivity you can plug the included external trigger into the input jack and mount it on your drum.

When it's first turned on (by pressing the left button), the REF is ready to monitor tempo. It also defaults to this mode for five minutes when the metronome shuts itself off. In addition, a "wake on tap" feature starts monitoring tempo automatically whenever the REF is tapped or otherwise senses any triggering input.

The Tempo REF is powered by a pair of coin-sized lithium batteries, which the manufacturer states will power the unit for over a year. A specific brand and type of battery is recommended, which the manufacturer sells if you can't find them elsewhere. If you replace one battery before removing the other, you won't lose your programming. This can save a lot of grief if you've loaded several dozen tempos into the REF. The unit shuts itself off after brief periods of inactivity to save battery power.

Modes

Once you wake the REF, it's in "monitor mode," and it will automatically start displaying tempo whenever it receives a pulse. While in monitor mode, if you press either button it will go into "preset mode." Holding either button down will cause it to scroll through the presets. When you get to the one you want, you release the button. After a brief pause, the REF will start to flash and beep at the tempo of that particular preset. At that point it's in "metronome mode."

During the brief pause between letting up on the button and the start of the metronome, an apostrophe appears between two of the digits on the display. At that point the REF is in "change tempo mode." Pressing either button while in this mode will change the tempo of that particular preset, after which it will go back to metronome mode and start counting time at the new tempo.

Tapping the unit (or hitting the drum to which it's attached) while it's in metronome mode will automatically send it back to monitor mode, where it will start indicating the tempo you're actual-

ly playing (as opposed to the tempo of the preset). You can keep it in metronome mode while you're playing by turning the sensitivity all the way down so that the unit won't register hits.

Pressing both buttons at once will toggle the REF between "beep off" and "beep on," after which it will default back to monitor mode.

In Use

When I first received the Tempo REF and noted all its various modes and features, I thought the device might be a little too complicated for its own good. However, reading the brief instructions with the device in hand made things instantly clear. I stuck the REF to my snare head, set the sensitivity somewhere in the middle of its range, and started pounding out a beat. The REF worked perfectly. The ghost notes didn't register, and the backbeats did—and the REF did a great job of letting me know the tempo (and consistency) of my groove.

Experimenting with the sensitivity control proved the REF useful over a wide dynamic range, from extremely hard to fairly soft. Using the external trigger added some extra sensitivity for low-volume use, but there's no way this thing is going to work with brushes. Also, the included wire clip didn't really lock the trigger in place securely. I'd go with a small piece of tape if I were going to use the REF on a regular basis.

The REF's metronome beeper is loud enough to hear prior to the start of a song, but if you want to hear the beep while playing, you're going to need an earpiece. The included earphone is a plastic budget model; a better option would be to feed the output into a pair of headphones.

Using the REF as a metronome was as easy as using it as a tempo meter. Moving between presets or changing the tempo of any given preset becomes intuitive within a few minutes' use. The fact that the unit will go from metronome to tempo meter at the drop of a hat really makes it drummer-friendly. You can dial up the proper tempo, listen for a few bars, then simply start playing. The REF will automatically go into monitor mode as soon as you hit the snare, so you can see if you're playing the proper tempo as you're playing. That, to me, is far better in most situations than being locked to a fixed click.

Attaching the REF to my snare head had less of a muffling effect than you might think. I could hear a small reduction in ring, but it wasn't objectionable for most situations. If you wanted to avoid this, however, you could use the very small, light trigger on the drum—attaching it with a tiny piece of carpet tape—and mount the REF itself on a nearby stand. The trigger is connected to the plug by a 6' cable.

Conclusion

The Tempo REF did exactly what it's supposed to do, without a lot of fuss and setup time. It's a lot of fun to have the REF running while practicing the drums, which is where I think its real value

lies. If you can get things solid prior to the gig, you won't have to worry about closely monitoring your tempo while you're performing. On the other hand, the REF would be a godsend in a situation where the bandleader wants songs started according to a metronome. You program it for whatever tempos you need, then let it monitor you as you play. Think of the arguments you could avoid!

Considering that the Tempo REF comes with an external trigger, earpiece, and earphone adapter, I think it's a very good investment to help drummers get their groove on. And for those who really don't need any metronome functions, there's the new REF 2, which has only a non-programmable tempo meter function. Such a deal, either way.

THE NUMBERS	
Tempo REF	\$99
REF 2	\$69
(800) 981-7842, www.temporef.com	



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Sevendust's
Morgan
The Alien Freak Revealed



Rose

Fans of Sevendust's melodic metal pummel know that the Atlanta quintet's not-so-secret weapon is a five-foot-ten, one-hundred-fifty-five-pound ball of frenetic energy named Morgan Rose. Over the course of four albums (which have sold 700,000 copies apiece), many grueling tours, and numerous television appearances, Morgan has revealed himself to be a drummer of insanely fluid motion and intensely propulsive grooves.

Describing himself as an "Alien Freak," which is also the name of Morgan's signa-

ture stick and clothing line (found at www.MorganRose.com), he assaults the drums as few others can. Like a drunken octopus with limbs on fire, Morgan reaches deep within himself to flail his drums into submission. As his blond dreads angrily buzz around his head, Morgan snaps his arms far behind his body and back—and SLAM!—the drums vibrate with a titanic thud. He rocks and rolls, his skinny frame jerking and jolting, arms and legs in a constant whip-like motion, head barely hanging on as his entire being trembles like a man possessed.

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Alex Solca

All this manic energy and physical determination has cost him. In one particularly mad moment, Morgan jammed his in-ear headset into his right ear, causing a seventy percent hearing loss. Other drum-related injuries include bone spurs in both heels, a broken knuckle, tendinitis in both wrists, a separated AC joint in his left shoulder, whiplash (four times), and a back that is perpetually thrown out. Can you say suffering for your art?

But Morgan's madness extends beyond his drumming. He and the other members of Sevendust were drug abusers for several years before cleaning up their act, hitting the gym, removing sub sandwiches from their diets, and generally getting their minds right. It's called maturity. And with hundreds of thousands of records sold and the big business that ensued, Sevendust is a band whose maturity has paid off.

While many of the new metal bruiser

bands have only recently discovered the pleasures of mixing melody with heavy metal spew, for years Sevendust has stacked their music high with luxurious melodies as divinated through the powerful pipes of lead singer Lajon Witherspoon. Joined by the other members of Sevendust, John Connolly (guitars), Clint Lowery (guitars, vocals), and Vince Hornsby (bass), Morgan Rose helms a mighty rhythmic beast. He not only aligns his drum rhythms with Hornsby's bass lines, but he often covers everyone else's rhythms too, constructing what he calls the "Bohemian Rhapsody" of instrumental approaches.

Through his rapid-fire bass drum blitzkrieg, Morgan burns. Like a blowtorch through butter, his bass drum lays down complicated and commanding patterns throughout Sevendust's rage. Dust songs like "Black," "Dead Set," "T.O.A.B.," and "Crucified" are lessons in manic bass drum performance. But Morgan also creates thoughtful patterns on the top of his kit, often resembling a cross between Tool's Danny Carey and The Police's Stewart Copeland.

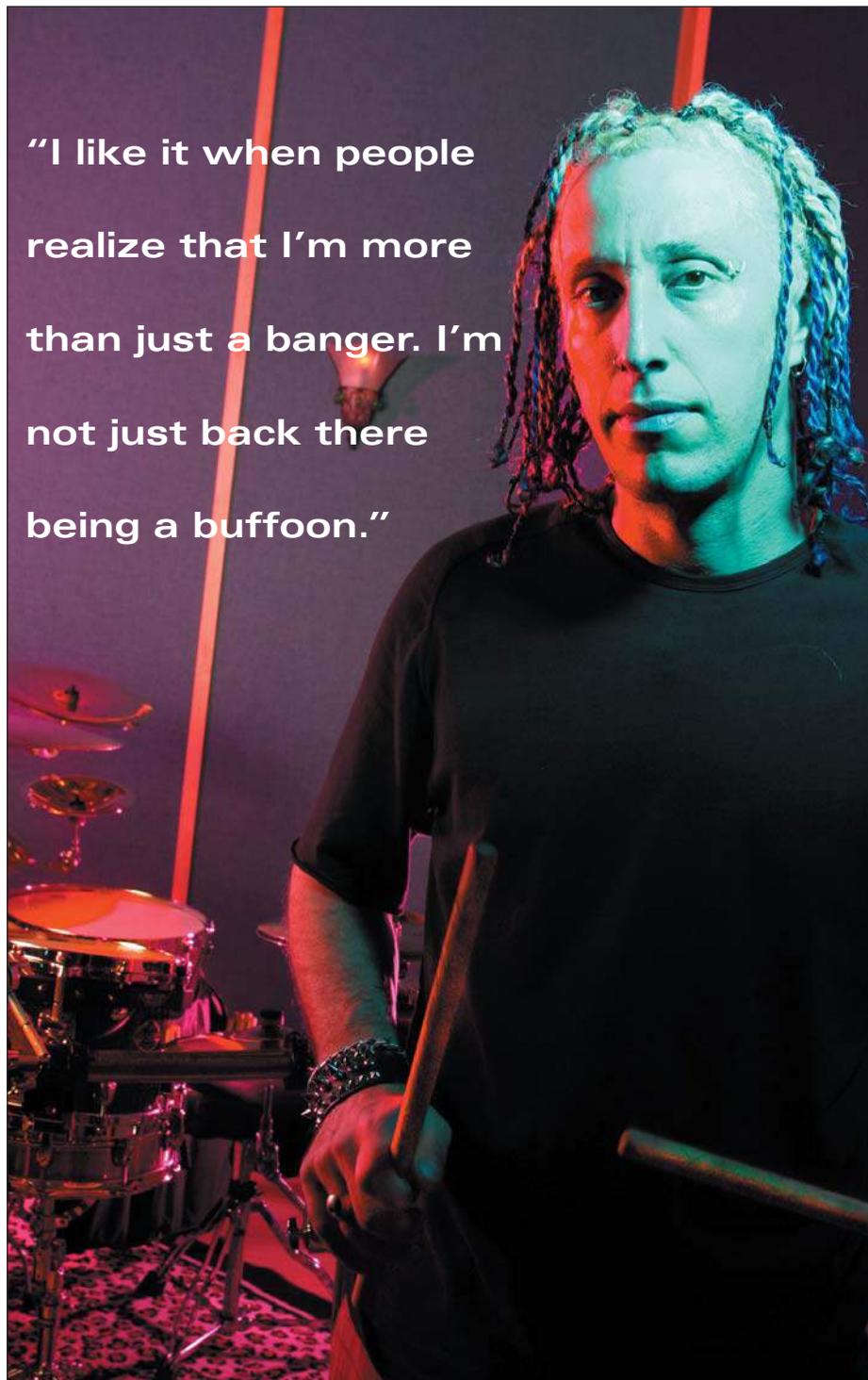
For *Seasons*, Sevendust's brand-new release, Morgan mixed and matched snare drums for different sounds. And where earlier albums found his grooves to be secondary to his unique patterns and stop-start pulse, *Seasons* reveals Morgan's desire to sound more like John Bonham. New songs like "Separate," "Enemy," "Broken Down," and "Face To Face" have a weight that eluded Morgan on previous records. The groove remains funky and hard. In fact, it's *rock* hard, fluid, and massive all at once.

The Alien Freak is still there. He's the one shaking the body and gaping at the moon. But Morgan Rose is in control.

Writing *Seasons*

MD: What does the album title, *Seasons*, refer to?

Morgan: We've cleaned up our act. We thought we were doing that earlier when actually we were getting worse, medicating ourselves to deal with being on the road. I'm thankful we were able to get through that period alive. I'm not against anyone doing what they want to do, but I OD'd in the early '90s. As for the new record, we almost called it *Seasons Of Clarity*. It's about seeing what's wrong and fixing the problems.



"I like it when people realize that I'm more than just a banger. I'm not just back there being a buffoon."



Alien Gear

Drums: Tama Starclassic (maple shells) with custom "alien freak" graphics

- A. 5½x14 wood snare (or 4x14 bronze or 5½x14 hammered-bronze)
- B. 9x10 tom
- C. 10x12 tom
- D. 14x14 floor tom
- E. 16x16 floor tom
- F. 18x22 kick

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 12" Z Custom splash
- 2. 10" ZXT Titanium Flash splash
- 3. 14" A Quick Beat hi-hats brilliant
- 4. 18" Z Custom Medium crash
- 5. 22" A Ping Ride brilliant
- 6. 6" Zil-Bel
- 7. 20" Z Custom Medium crash
- 8. 19" K China
- 9. 19" Z Custom Rock crash
- 10. 14" K Mini China
- 11. 9 ½" Zil-Bel

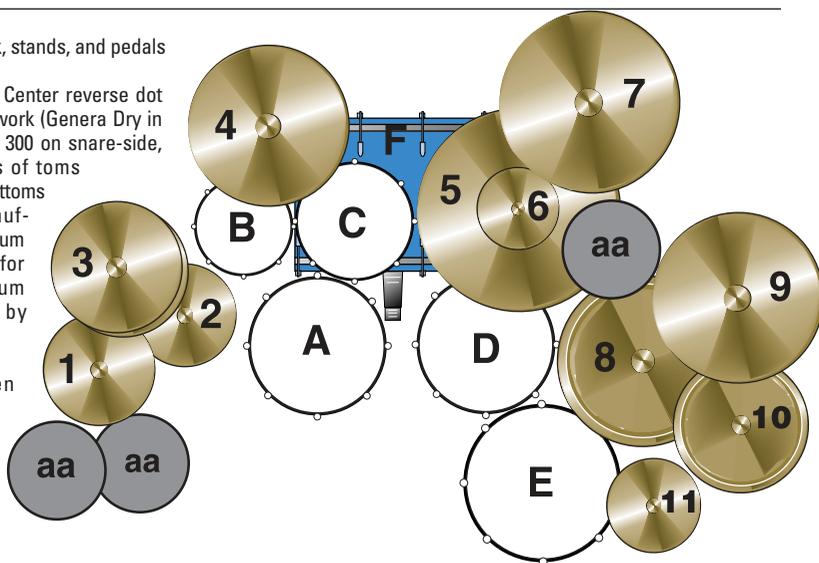
Electronics: various (see the sidebar with Morgan's tech Vicky Vignola on page 68 for specifics)

aa. pad

Hardware: Tama rack, stands, and pedals

Heads: Evans Power Center reverse dot on 14" snare for live work (Genera Dry in studio), Genera Hazy 300 on snare-side, coated G2s on tops of toms with clear G1s on bottoms (Min-EMADs for muffling), EMAD bass drum heads with EQ Pad for muffling, bass drum graphic design by Headfirst

Sticks: Vater Alien Freak model (Morgan's signature stick, 16" long with double-butt ends)



BACK TO BIRCH

morgan rose on starclassic performer

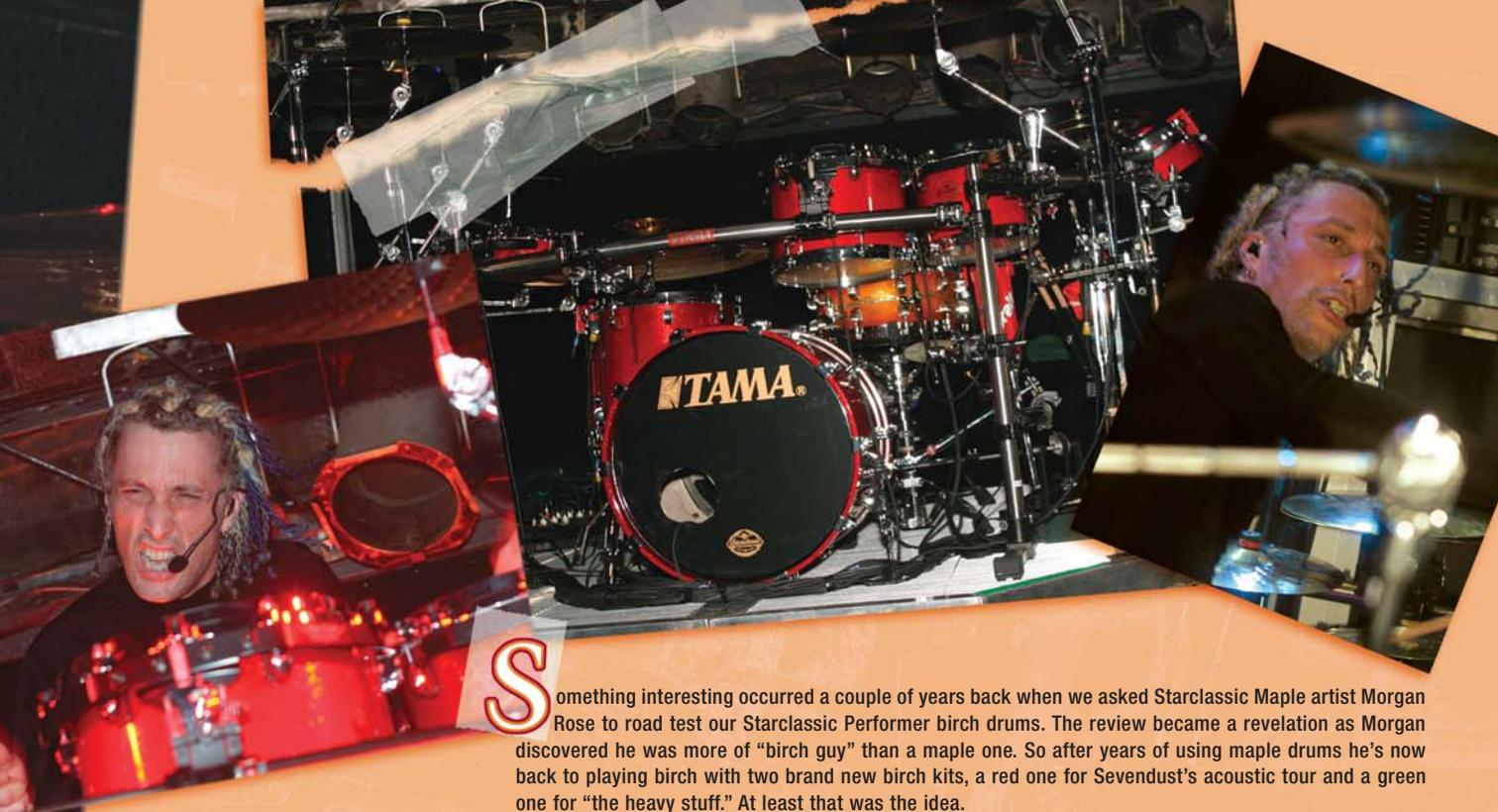


TAMA®



Hear Morgan and the rest of Sevendust on their latest release *Seasons*.





Something interesting occurred a couple of years back when we asked Starclassic Maple artist Morgan Rose to road test our Starclassic Performer birch drums. The review became a revelation as Morgan discovered he was more of "birch guy" than a maple one. So after years of using maple drums he's now back to playing birch with two brand new birch kits, a red one for Sevendust's acoustic tour and a green one for "the heavy stuff." At least that was the idea.

"For Sevendust's acoustic tour, I knew I wasn't going to need cannons as toms. To tighten up the sound, I made the toms a size shorter and got a 20" kick instead of the usual 22." However, Morgan discovered that the acoustic tour and the kit both turned out differently than expected. "The acoustic tour was ridiculous—out of control! It was supposed to be 'relax and listen to some tunes.' Instead the crowds started pitting, crowd surfing and bouncing by the second song. People said it was the heaviest acoustic tour they'd ever heard. I'm trained in jazz and am able to play material with dynamics, but I caught myself just soloing through the tunes—and the band was loving it!"

"On top of that, my sound guy and my tech were all ranting and raving about the sound of the kit. So I did one heavy show with the red kit and they said that it was just amazing. I was ready to take the deep drummed green set out, but my guys are really sold on this red one. I really don't know what I'm going to do. I got two kits because I wanted to do two different things and now it looks like the shallower toms are more my style."

Does Morgan have any second thoughts on birch drums? "No. I was pulled back into birch, now I'm with it and I'm never leaving it. Maple drums are beautiful. They sing! In the right style, they're unmatched. It took a long time for me to realize that that style is not me. If you want to be an animal, if you want aggressive drums, then you play birch."



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Morgan Rose

MD: What were some of the problems? You've changed management?

Morgan: Yes. No one really explains what happens when a band becomes successful. You hear that you're going to sell records, be ripped off, become a drug addict, hook up with lots of women, lose all the money, and end up on the street. And to that most kids would say, "Sounds good." If I was single, I could be ripped off and not care. But I have a wife and kid to take care of.

MD: You help write much of Sevendust's lyrics, and you're the band's designated

screamer.

Morgan: I'm not a singer, but I can write my type of war chant vocals all day long. John, Clint, and I wrote most of the lyrics and melodies on *Seasons*. It got to the point where someone wrote a line and someone else finished it. We're all on the same page. But I like it when people realize that I'm more than just a banger. I'm not just back there being a buffoon.

MD: What was the songwriting process?

Morgan: Clint and John would put down guitar riffs on disc and send them to me.

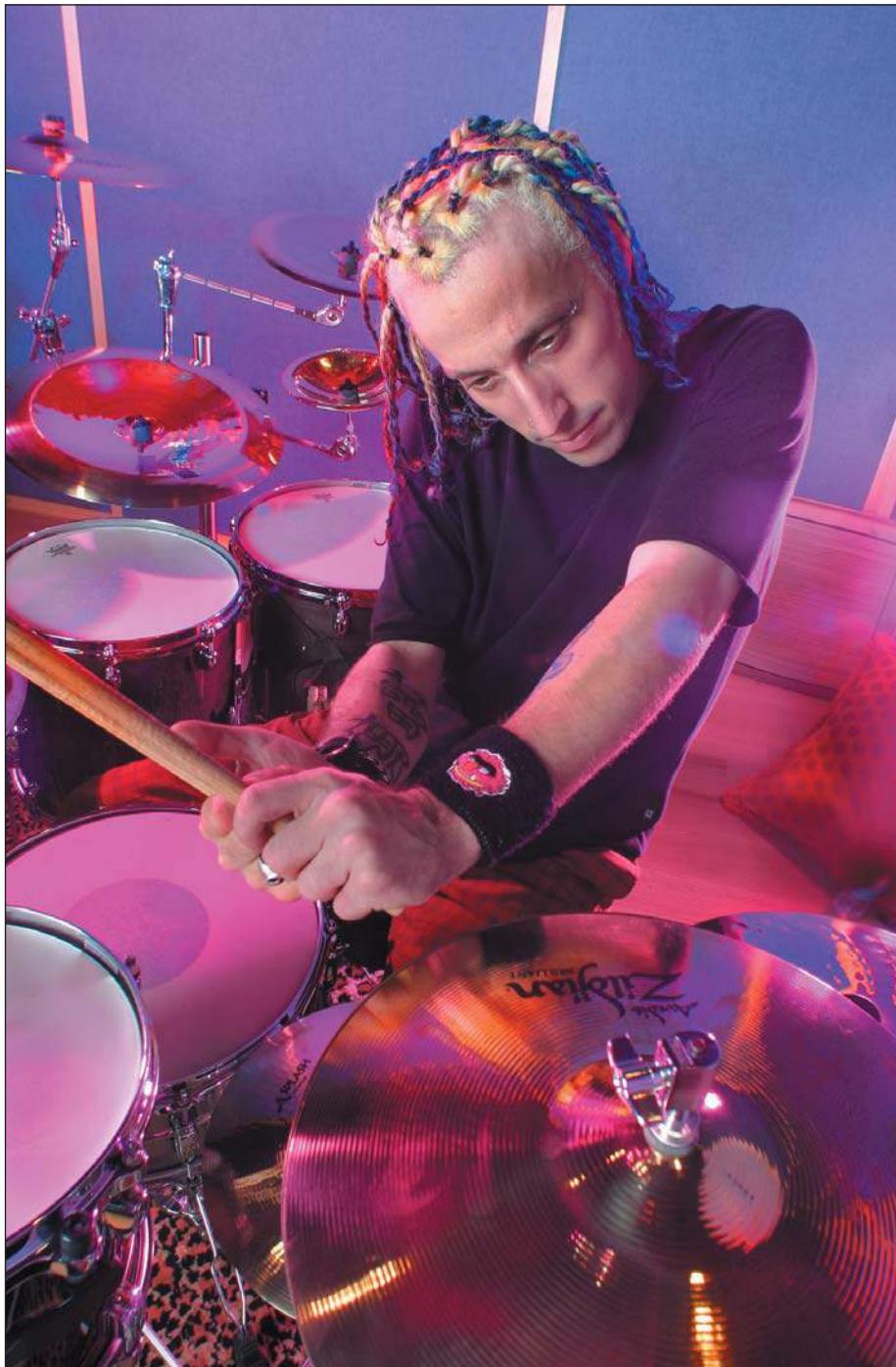
The three of us would all write for the same song and collaborate. Sometimes I would go to the studio and track the vocals, or play them over the phone, or send it to them via FedEx. I don't use Pro Tools. I'm so scatterbrained and edgy, just watching people working Pro Tools makes me want to smash it. As for the lyrics, I wrote most of them sitting in a Blockbuster parking lot. I have my kid at the house, so I'd feel guilty working there. I need to be daddy when I'm at home.

Technique

MD: You play like a mad octopus. You're very fluid and loose, and you telegraph the sticks from far behind your head. What's the evolution of your animated style?

Morgan: Terry Bozzio was the first person to influence me to play like that. When I saw Terry on Frank Zappa's *Baby Snakes* movie, he was so flamboyant and different from anyone else. Then I saw Tommy Lee.... It's a showmanship thing.

The drummer sits in the back—don't speak to him, don't hear from him. But I was a ham. I wanted to be noticed. I was a little apprehensive about doing too much and looking stupid, but then I saw Jamie Miller from Snot. He really flipped me out with his showmanship. Then people started to say we both stole it all from Shannon Larkin [now with Godsmack]. He's the



"I went into the drum booth and didn't know what to play, so I played everything.

Sometimes that works, and sometimes it doesn't."

MORGAN ROSE

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—Morgan Rose

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2. Fill out a coupon provided by the special **CRACK N' CHROME PLUS** display card at your Tama dealer (the coupon can also be downloaded at www.tama.com) and send it to: Tama, Dept. **CRACK N' CHROME PLUS** Offer, Box 886, Bensalem PA 19020. The coupon must be accompanied by a copy of a valid receipt for a Tama Rockstar RD 5 pc drum kit. For the purpose of this offer, a 5 pc kit must include at least one (1) new Rockstar RD snare drum, one (1) new Rockstar RD bass drum and any three (3) other new Rockstar RD drums. Tama Rockstar Custom RP and Tama Rockstar Custom EFX RR do NOT qualify for this promotion. Envelope containing coupon and receipt copy must be postmarked no later than January 15, 2004. Only one MT68ST to a customer.
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Morgan Rose



most incredible visual drummer out there, but I don't think we play very much alike.

MD: Didn't part of your playing style stem from an earlier joint problem?

Morgan: Yes. Back in '97 I had a cyst on my left wrist. It was excruciating. I couldn't bend my wrist at all. It was less painful to play cross-handed. When tempos are fast, I'll sometimes play 1 and 3 with the right hand on the hi-hat *and* 2 and 4 on the snare. That came from the left wrist being bad, but then my right wrist got bad. That caused me to rethink my playing style, and that's how the exaggerated whipping motion evolved. Unfortunately, playing that way was less painful for my wrist, but it screwed up my shoulder.

MD: Your style is very visual.

Morgan: A lot of guys do visual stuff now. We all look like we're out of control. What offends me is that people say I'm trying to copy Shannon Larkin; I wouldn't disrespect him that way. I actually asked him



Morgan's Tracks Of Whack

His Best

Artist	Track	Album
Sevendust	"T.O.A.B."	Animosity
Sevendust	"Crucified"	Animosity
Sevendust	"Black"	Sevendust
Sevendust	"Home"	Home
Sevendust	"Rumble Fish"	Home
Sevendust	"Dead Set"	Animosity
Sevendust	"Face To Face"	Seasons
Sevendust	"Suffocate"	Seasons

His Faves

Artist	Album	Drummer
Led Zeppelin	all	John Bonham
Missing Persons	Spring Session M	Terry Bozzio
The Police	Synchronicity	Stewart Copeland
Mötley Crüe	Dr. Feelgood	Tommy Lee
Rush	Moving Pictures	Neil Peart
Pantera	Far Beyond Driven	Vinnie Paul
Snot	Get Some	Jamie Miller
Souls At Zero	Souls At Zero	Shannon Larkin
Meshuggah	Destroy Erase Improve	Tomas Haake

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Gabriel

Morgan Rose

once if I was stomping on his style, and he said, “Dude, you have your own thing. We’re from the same boat, but we’re not the same.” I don’t know how he keeps his head on his shoulders when he plays. That amazes me.

MD: What was your technique like before?

Morgan: Banger. My arms were always above my head and I was swinging as hard as I could. It started to get more exaggerated as we began playing more shows. It was almost like acting the fool for the audience. Then it became a zone I got into before the show, which was always intense. I would be so jacked and nervous. Then on stage I would almost break my teeth gritting them so hard. It was uncontrolled excitement. That became exaggerated to the point where I would hurt myself while playing.

MD: Is that where your injuries came from?

Morgan: Some of them. Most of it was from being out of control. I blackened a few eyes just hitting myself with the sticks while playing. I still haven’t had my shoulder fixed.

MD: Does that exaggerated playing style also give your groove a certain flow?

Morgan: It’s a flow, for sure. It doesn’t feel or sound the same when we’re rehearsing the songs without it. It’s a different game. That’s why I feel weird

about doing clinics. I’ve been asked to do them for years, but I don’t know what I could teach anyone. My playing is so weird, and it’s not the same as when I’m performing with the band.

MD: It sounds like lately you’ve been trying to take care of yourself.

Morgan: My body is beat-up, but I’m also in better shape now than ever. I realized a few years back when I ran up a set of stairs huffing and puffing that I had to go to the gym and eat better.

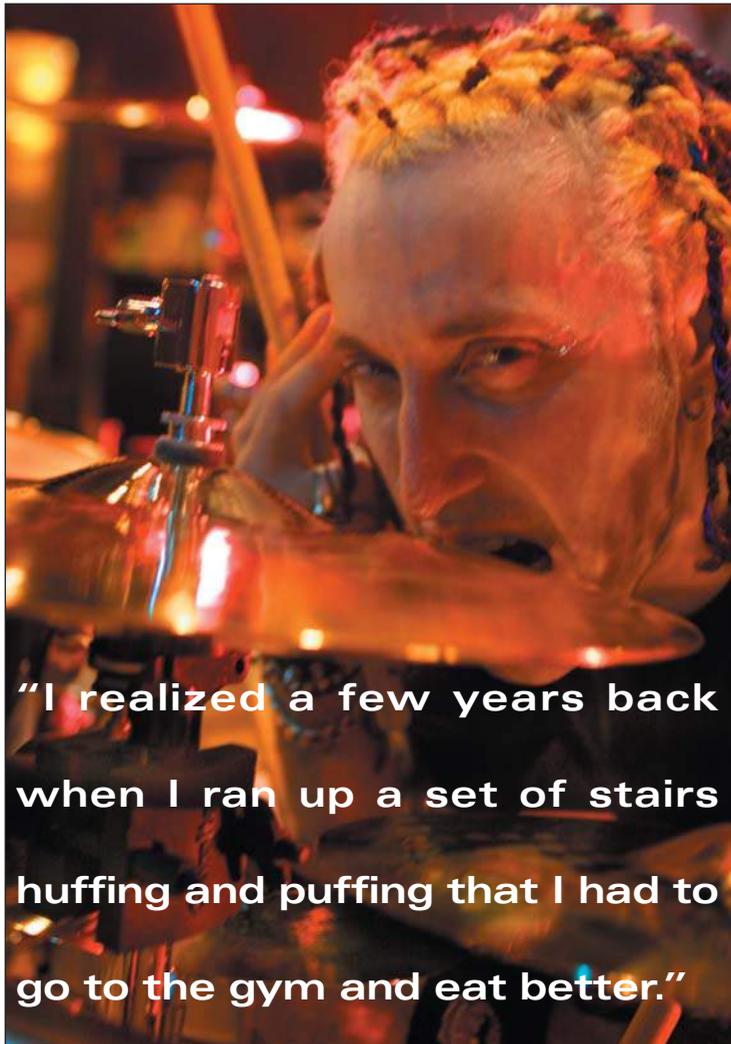
MD: Has being in better shape helped your drumming?

Morgan: Definitely. In the old days I would have had a cardiac arrest after three songs, but now I kick right past that. I stay away from the booze, dope, and getting up at noon. And onstage I never stop playing. When the guys are changing guitars, I’m playing—even between songs. It started because I couldn’t stand dead air. So I would play a beat, and then it got to the

sound like Copeland, nine out of ten guys won’t even notice. But he was definitely a huge inspiration. Anything I do on the hi-hat that’s not a straight pattern is all from him.

MD: You often play 16ths on the hi-hat, à la Copeland, but adding dense bass drum notes in unison with the bass guitar.

Morgan: That began right from the start.



“I realized a few years back when I ran up a set of stairs huffing and puffing that I had to go to the gym and eat better.”

“Black” was the first song we ever played together; when we played the groove straight it just didn’t cut it. But when I started laying it down on the bass drum, it felt much better than playing it straight. It was a pain in the ass to do it—my right foot was killing me—but that was the beginning of playing the bass drum that way. Everything that Vinnie [Hornsby, bassist] plays I play.

MD: You’ve said that your kick drum rules everything you do.

Morgan: Everybody says it’s about the bass player and the drummer. But I started to slip away and go with the guitar player. That was especially true when I heard John’s grooves on songs like “Black.” I felt too tied down playing only with the bass. Then Vinnie followed suit, and now the bass is covering all the rhythms as well.

MD: You play more behind the beat now than on the earlier records.

Morgan: I’m getting more comfortable with it. It’s a click track thing. Getting comfortable playing with a click track can change your whole style. A lot of kids try to play with a click, but they let it run them. You have to work with one enough so it becomes your friend. I have really good meter, but the click enabled me to play behind the beat. Besides, I always wanted to be the guy that made the groove sit.

MD: What advice would you give for getting comfortable with the click?

Morgan: Just play with it over and over. There’s no science to it.

point where the guitarists would play a quiet groove and we would improvise a song. Those eventually turned into parts of the set.

MD: On the early records you sounded more like Stewart Copeland, but you’ve grown more powerful and you’ve consolidated the hi-hat flourishes. Were these conscious choices?

Morgan: I try my best to not blatantly steal another drummer’s licks. It’s probably hurt me more than helped, because even if you do steal a guy’s licks, chances are they’ll never put 2 and 2 together. If I

comfortable with it. It’s a click track thing. Getting comfortable playing with a click track can change your whole style. A lot of kids try to play with a click, but they let it run them. You have to work with one enough so it becomes your friend. I have really good meter, but the click enabled me to play behind the beat. Besides, I always wanted to be the guy that made the groove sit.

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Morgan Rose

MD: Any advice for developing bass drum technique?

Morgan: The basic answer for all of this stuff is just to practice.

MD: How do you challenge your drumming now?

Morgan: I have a lot to learn. I had Deen Castronovo [Journey] over, and he ran circles around me. I need to get a little more fluid moving around the kit. I've relied on the kick drum for so long, but I need to start working on my hands.

For the new record I used a smaller kit,

and I was really flying. I've built myself around power for so long, but now it's time to back up. With my flat toms and butt-end sticks, my setup fits a guy who wants to play like Phil Rudd. But to get my hands moving, I'm practicing rudiments like paradiddles, five- and seven-stroke rolls, and flamadiddles. The diddles are my favorites.

Recording Process

MD: Your groove is massive on *Seasons*, whereas you sounded more like a hyper

Stewart Copeland on the first two albums, right down to the bell sounds and 16th-note hi-hat parts.

Morgan: I assaulted the producer on *Animosity*. I didn't want anybody telling me what to do. He wanted to simplify some of the beats, and I was like, okay, I'll give the guy a break. That was "Crucified." Then we got to the bridge, and he wanted me to cut the kick drum action and play more 2 and 4. I said okay, again. Then he wanted me to change it on the chorus as well and I said, "You know what, you've screwed with me three times on the first song," and it freaked him out. He never said another word to me about the drumming after that.

I didn't want to go through that with *Seasons*. But I didn't want somebody to take my style away from me either. It's a constant battle. The band wants me to play more, but the record label wants me to play less. [laughs]

Sounds/Production

MD: Did you use a lot of different snare sounds on *Seasons*?

Morgan: More and more as the record went along. It started out pretty typical, but then we started thinking that different snares might sound good. And we had a truckload of 'em, so there was a lot of experimentation going on.

MD: Who tunes your drums?

Morgan: It was Kenny Creswell in the studio. He's a great tech. On the first album and *Animosity*, I used Tony Adams. He's a ninja. He would tune the drums to the key of each song. For *Seasons*, Kenny and I used a lot of snares—an 8x14 Keplinger, two different 6x14 Tama birch Starclassics.... Each one sounds different. I tuned one way tight for the middle section of "Suffocate." I also used a Ludwig Black Beauty and a vintage '70s Ludwig.

For "Broken Down" I set up a giant 24" kick with a loose head in an isolated room along with two 12" splashes for hi-hats. As for cymbals, I used mostly 16" and 17" crashes. We didn't want anything that would ring too much. My live crash cymbals are 18", 19", and 20".

MD: And you're using more electronics now?

Morgan: The majority of the electronics are true sounds, mostly changing a snare drum in the middle of a song, as on

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“Enemy.” Live, my tour tech, Viggy Vignola, will set the electronics so I can trigger the different snare sounds from the recorded version. I try not to run clicks live or trigger any loops. The record is all acoustic drum sounds.

MD: The drums sound very resonant on *Seasons*, but on earlier Sevendust records the drums sounded like wooden boards.

Morgan: Terrible. I didn't get involved with the production on the first two records. I was so scared when I first heard a click track. I just focused on the playing. Every song on the first record is a first take. I was terrified about going off from the click. There's no flow. It sounds as square as you can get. The second record started to get looser, and now it feels like old hat.

Setup

MD: Your setup is reminiscent of the old Buddy Rich setup—one tom, low ride cymbal, two floor toms.

Morgan: It's closer to Tommy Lee's setup. I played one rack for years, but I recently added a 10" tom. I beat the crap

out of it immediately.

MD: It looks like you sit pretty high.

Morgan: Yeah, that's another visual thing. I have to be up high because my drums are so flat. I can't stand the old-school metal drummer setup where the drums are tilted right up in your face where the audience can't see the drummer. I set my drums as low as possible.

MD: Why do you play with double butt-end sticks?

Morgan: I never had enough power with regular sticks. I was a banger, and the tips would break. So I would always flip the sticks over and play with the butt end, and I got used to playing that way. I also like the impact sound it gives me.

Favorite Tracks

MD: You've said “Waffle” is one of your favorite drum tracks.

Morgan: Yeah, the verse pattern is unconventional. It's in 4/4, but it reminds me of a modified shuffle. I had to listen to it to know how to play it for the tour.

MD: “Rumble Fish” is another.

Morgan: That has a Vinnie Paul type of

lick. The groove has a big Pantera influence. We love Pantera. But that's the hardest song we've ever had to record. I had no problem with any other song on the album, but I struggled with that one.

MD: “Dead Set” is another one where there is so much happening rhythmically.

Morgan: That was one of the first songs that we worked on in pre-production after I told the producer to leave me alone. I play even more on that one live. I kill it! It stays away from 2 and 4 as much as possible. Obviously, it's not a radio song.

MD: You mentioned “T.O.A.B.” as another one of your favorite drum tracks. Your bass drum pattern is covering everyone else's rhythm.

Morgan: We were really pissed off when we wrote that song. Most of the song has the kick drum playing everything the guitars are playing. I went into the drum booth and didn't know what to play, so I played *everything*. Sometimes that works, and sometimes it doesn't.

MD: What are your favorite tracks on *Seasons*?

Morgan: “Face To Face” is like “Rumble

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Fish 2003.” The same idea, with the kick drum totally out of control. “Suffocate” is another favorite, one of the few songs I play double bass on that’s a real pattern. I hate the feel of the double pedal. I only use it for accents. But “Suffocate” is a pattern that I couldn’t pull off with one foot. It throws you off because the snare accent moves around.

MD: “Broken Down” sounds like a combo of Bernard Purdie and Stewart Copeland.

Morgan: That’s as hip-hop as I can get. We started with a frenetic hip-hop drum machine in the verses. I only played on the choruses. But I liked the drum machine pattern, so I incorporated that with what I think is a very Stewart Copeland-ish pattern.

MD: How did you come up with the bell/tom pattern in “Disgrace”?

Morgan: I asked Zildjian if they had anything I could incorporate into my set, and they sent me four Zil-Bels. I went crazy. At first, I was hitting them at the end of every phrase. They ring for days and are screaming loud.

Tommy Lee On Morgan’s Method

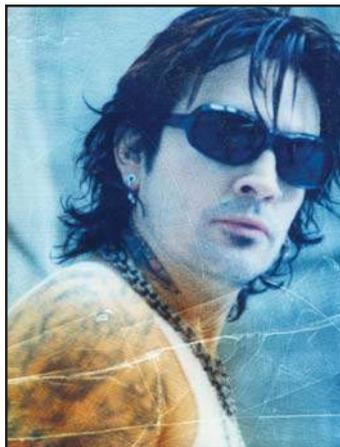
Tommy Lee was happy to give *MD* his thoughts on Morgan Rose—in between writing his autobiography and next solo record. Tommy’s also a spokesman for Buymusic.com.

“When I first saw Morgan play live I thought, This guy *crushes*. He has his own style, but I see a lot of myself in him too. He sings, he plays his ass off, and he incorporates electronics in his kit. Man, Morgan earns his paycheck. I really think he’s the backbone of Sevendust.”

As for specific Morgan tracks that Tommy likes, “His drumming on

‘Angels’ Son’ is perfect. He got heavy at the right time and mellow when it needed it. And on ‘Enemy,’ Morgan is pure hip-hop, and giving it hell. Morgan is entertaining, but there’s style to his madness. He’s amazing technically, and he’s doing what I’m trying to do—bring the drummer out from the back.

“Morgan and I are talking about doing a project with Dave Grohl and Sully Erna from Godsmack; guys who play drums, sing, and guitar. It will be really special, not just a drum wank. Yeah, it’ll be a blast.”



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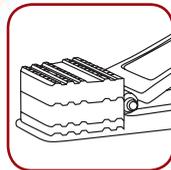
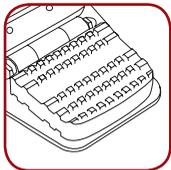
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Morgan Rose

MD: What was the process on “Suffocate”? It moves from the basic beat, to double bass drum rolls, to a half-time section, and then to treated snare rolls.

Morgan: That was another song where I played straight 1 and 3, and then half-time in the choruses. At the end of the song I do an anthem-like ending in half-time. The middle section is just a 6x14 Tama jacked up super tight. And I used regular-tip sticks that I found in the studio.

History

MD: You began drumming with your dad, who played guitar.

Morgan: Yeah, he and I were playing Hendrix when I was four. I could play time even then. We lived in New Jersey, but then moved to Atlanta when I was seven. It’s great, because my dad comes to see me play now.

MD: Did you play drums in high school?

Morgan: Yeah, in a lot of garage bands, then with a bass player, Robert Hayes. We

played some of the coolest music together. He was in a band called The Jody Grind in 1990. Unfortunately, he died in a car accident. Robert pushed me to go to Musicians’ Institute in LA. But before that I attended high school in St. Petersburg, where my grandparents lived. I was never into school, but they were—and thank God, because they instilled everything in me that is good. My grandfather was an ex-boxer. He was all about schoolwork and piano lessons.

MD: What happened at MI?

Morgan: Most of the drummers at the school blew me away. I was insecure about that, so I got to work practicing and what-not. Later on, I was told that I was one of the best players at the school, but I didn’t think so.

Terry Bozzio came and performed at the school. Seeing him really inspired me. His charisma and confidence was so attractive. He’s a ripper. And then, of course, Tommy Lee was a major influence. Spinning upside down while playing a drum solo—that would make anyone want to play drums.

MD: Then things went downhill for you?

Morgan: I met someone who was in a clique in the LA clubs. That enticed me, and I got into drugs. At the time I thought that was way cooler than school. I was almost living the life of a rock star without ever playing the music. I was hanging out with these guys, listening to Faster Pussycat and Guns ’N Roses. I then got into a band because I looked cool. They never heard me play a note. We had one rehearsal and they fired me. I was soloing through everything. I was devastated. But I had never played in a real band.

MD: What was your plan at that point?

Morgan: I got a gig with a laughing stock glam-rock band called Fairchild. I made a little name for myself around town, and never stopped. I played in different bands, and eventually met Vinnie Hornsby. I asked him to jam with me and then told him to quit his gig. He joined my band. We played for two years in a band with some other guys, but then Vinnie and I left. We hooked up with John, who was playing with The Peacedogs. He had already written “Black.” Then when Clint and Lajon joined, I knew we had something special. We played two songs at a club and the place went nuts.

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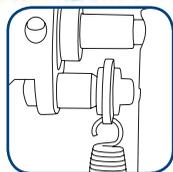
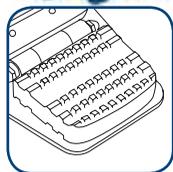
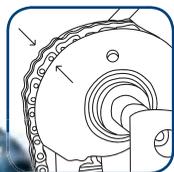
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Viggy Vignola Morgan's Sound Sculptor

Drumtech and electronics expert Viggy Vignola has worked for a wide variety of artists, including Tommy Lee, Sully Erna (Godsmack), Robert Rodriguez (Gloria Estefan), and Gerry Brown (Stevie Wonder). Here he gives the lowdown on Morgan's live electronics setup.

According to Viggy, "Using my computer rig—a Mac G4 and Sony Vaio running Propellerheads' Reason, Sonic Foundry's Sound Forge, Acid, M Audio, and Bias Peak—I peel Morgan's sounds off the band's master tapes so he can fire them off of triggers placed on the drums. He uses a different rig on tour: Propellerheads' Reason, an Akai Z4 sampler, a ddrum 3 brain and triggers, four pads, and two trigger pedals. Morgan triggers sound enhancements from the drums or from the pads, but he still plays everything live.



"When he hits the bass drum on 'Enemy,'" Viggy continues, "you hear the exact sound that's on the record. If there's a song with big drums on the chorus and lo-fi drums on the verse, I'll switch between those sounds for him. But everything is layered with the acoustic drums. I'm just enhancing Morgan's sound. Hey, if guitar players can have all sorts of effects, why can't drummers?"

The Alien Freak Reveals Himself

MD: Are there other projects you want to pursue?

Morgan: I'm still insecure about doing clinics. I only feel secure when I'm onstage with the band. I have control of my world there. But the companies I endorse are really after me to do clinics. *Modern Drummer* inquired about my doing their festival. Hopefully I'll do it at some point. I've come up with every excuse why I can't. When things slow down, it'll be time for the alien to reveal himself to some people outside of the stage.

MD: Are you surprised to see how far you've come?

Morgan: Without a doubt. I remember the day we signed our record deal, I almost started crying and was depressed. Some close friends said, "What's wrong with you?" I realized that one day I would lose my record deal and it would come to an end. It always does. It has to. But I was in that frame of mind back then, distraught and miserable. To think of how I was back then, well, it was crazy. But I'm so happy now.



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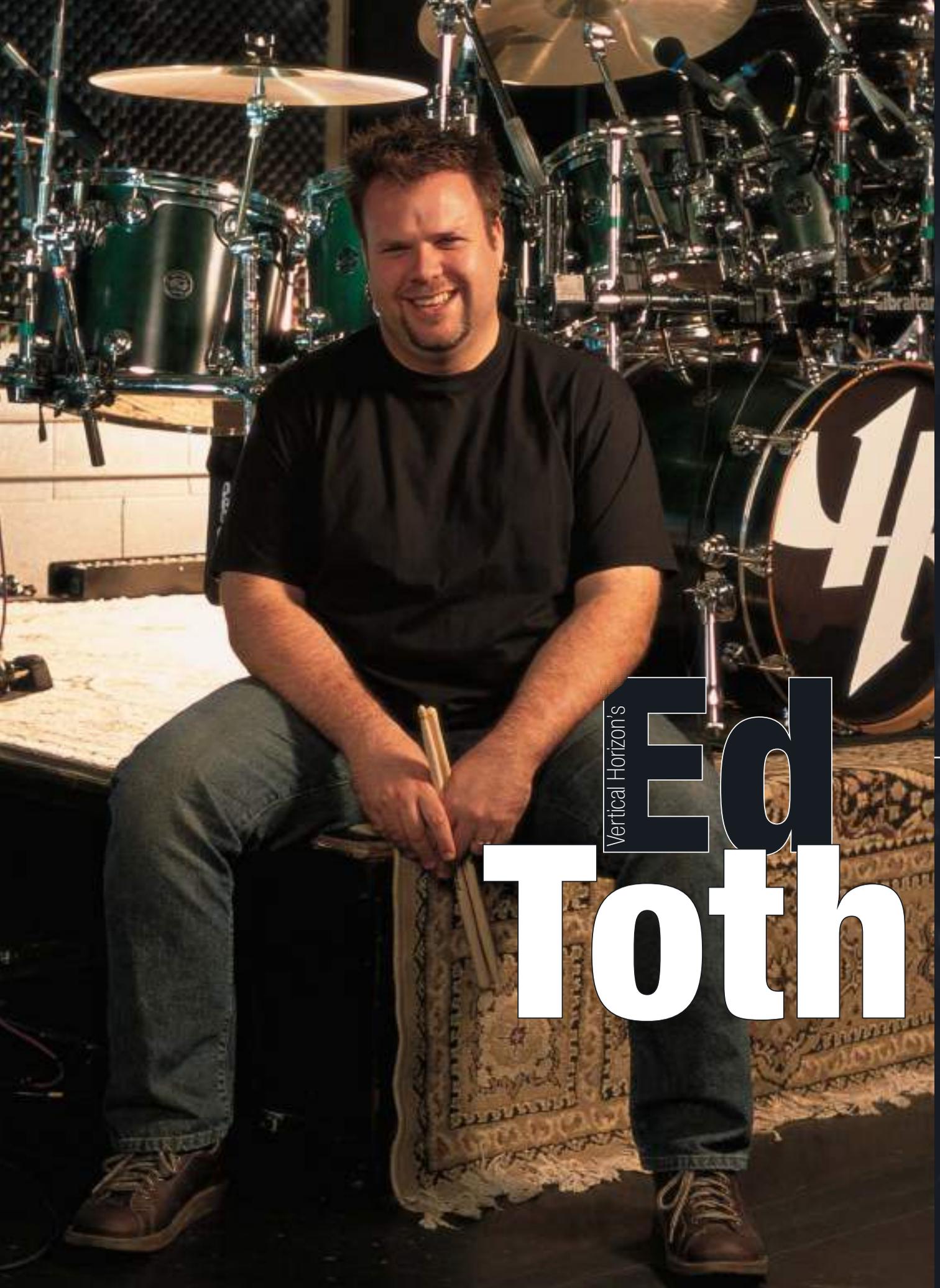
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Vertical Horizon's

Ed Toth

Ed Toth has realized his dream because one night back in 1996 he pushed himself to go out when he didn't feel like it. Toth (rhymes with "both") had spent the day working at his job at Borders Books & Music. Coincidentally, the mother of Vertical Horizon's Matt Scannell came into the store that day to make sure the group's album, *Running On Ice*, was positioned in the right place in the store. It was, and to thank Toth's boss, Scannell called later in the day and invited him and a guest to their show that night. Well, Toth didn't feel like going, but he did—and was pleasantly surprised.

At that Vertical Horizon show, Toth couldn't believe how the crowd was able to sing the lyrics to all of the songs. Plus he thought the music was fantastic. Ed then ran into a friend of his, Jason Sutter, who told him that the band was about to start auditioning for a new drummer. According to Ed, "I spent the next few weeks learning their album as if I'd written it."

A few weeks later, Toth auditioned for the group. It went pretty well, and the guys suggested that he join them on a couple of gigs before a final decision was made. Halfway into the first gig in Vermont, they invited Ed on their upcoming six-week tour. He took a leave of absence from the bookstore, but it soon became apparent that Toth couldn't juggle both. The day he was able to quit the bookstore to take a job playing music (which paid *less*) was the day he felt as though he had made it.

In September of 1996, Vertical Horizon performed two shows at Ziggy's in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the recording of which became the album *Live Stages*. But it was their major-label debut, *Everything You Want*, that solidified the group's success. The title track became the most played song on top-40 radio for the year 2000 and reached number-1 on *Billboard's* Hot 100 chart. "Everything" remained at number-1 on *Billboard's* adult top-40 chart for sixteen weeks, and the band won three *Billboard* Music awards. Their other hit, "You're A God," won a *Billboard* award for Best New Artist Modern Rock Video, and was included in the Jim Carey film *Bruce Almighty*.

Like most dedicated musicians, Toth believes that drumming was a "universal calling," that it was meant to be and nothing else could have been possible for him. Ed's father was a musician, music was always in the house, and the youngster began on the Quaker Oats boxes with a wooden spoon. At six, Ed was in the car with his parents when they passed a garage sale. The young hopeful spied a set of drums for sale and insisted they stop the car. At age eight, Ed won a local talent contest, playing along to Peter Frampton's "Show Me The Way." In the ensuing years he took many lessons, and in high school joined the marching band.

After high school, Toth took a couple of years off to gig around Connecticut with an instrumental unit called The Lawnboys. Eventually he enrolled at the University of Miami as a music education major. But Ed got the lesson of a lifetime when, at age twenty-one, he thought he'd ace the audition at Miami. "I was amazed at the seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds at the school," he says. "They blew me away. It was time to check the ego at the door and get to work."

Ed absorbed a lot in college, studying with Steve Bagby, who taught him how to swing, and Steve Rucker, who helped him with advanced independence. Toth learned a lot at Miami from watching other players and working in a variety of situations—marching band, symphonic ensemble, percussion ensemble, and a Steely Dan cover band, all the while studying piano as well. Everything Toth studied helped make him the right drummer for Vertical Horizon.

The group's new album, *Go*, takes *Everything You Want* a step further. The band is more confident, relaxed, and seasoned. The radio-friendly songs are the perfect example of how a band grows together and the music evolves. And as for the drumming, Ed Toth has matured into one of the most impressive pop drummers on the scene.

Ready To GO

Story by Robyn Flans
Photos by Alex Solca

Vertical Gear

Drums: Drum Workshop (maple shells) in emerald satin oil finish

- A. 6x10 maple snare
- B. 5x14 bronze snare
- C. 8x10 tom
- D. 9x12 tom
- E. 11x14 tom
- F. 13x16 tom
- G. 18x22 kick

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 14" A Custom hi-hats
- 2. 18" K Custom Fast crash
- 3. 8" A Custom splash piggybacked with a 6" Zil-Bel
- 4. 18" A medium-thin brilliant crash
- 5. 10" A Custom splash
- 6. 12" A Custom splash
- 7. 17" A medium brilliant crash
- 8. 20" K heavy ride
- 9. 18" A Custom Projection crash
- 10. 20" K crash/ride
- 11. 18" Oriental China Trash
- 12. 19" K medium-thin dark crash



Hardware: DW 5002AD double pedal, 5500TD Delta II Turbo hi-hat stand, Roc-N-Soc hydraulic throne, Gibraltar rack

Heads: Evans Power Center on top of 14" snare, coated G1 on 10" snare (Genera Hazy 300 snare-sides on both), coated G1s on tops of toms with clear G1s on bottoms (no muffling, open tuning), EQ4 on kick batter with Retro Screen or EQ3 Resonant on front, EQ Pad for muffling

Sticks: Pro-Mark 747 model (hickory with wood tip, natural finish), Hot Rods, Broomsticks

MD: The new CD is strong. Which are your favorite tracks?

Ed: My favorite right now is a tune called "Goodbye Again." It encompasses everything this band is about. It's a very well-written song, and I think the performance has the peaks and valleys that make a great song. It's up, it's down, there's a lot of emotion, and everything seems to be in the right place.

That song was like pulling teeth for us, though. Matt first presented it to us during the *Everything You Want* sessions, and it was a little different then. Our bass player, Sean Hurley, and I kind of looked at each other and then at Matt and said, "I don't know, man." It was kind of ballady the way Matt was presenting it on acoustic guitar, and we didn't really think it was us. So the band passed on it.

But Matt felt really strong about the chorus, so he brought it in again for the *Go* sessions. He had rewritten some of the lyrics, and the bridge was completely different, so we thought, "Why don't we give it a shot?" It was kind of a magical



thing. It was a two-take situation, and everything fell into place.

MD: On the tune "Inside," you can definitely hear your marching influence.

Ed: I have a huge marching background. I got into it in junior high school when a cousin of mine was in our high school marching band. I thought it was phenomenal, one of the coolest things I'd ever seen. So I was all ready to get into high school so I could be in marching band. I did that for the four years I was in high school.

The summer between my sophomore and junior years, I marched with a drum corps out of Bayonne, New Jersey called The Bridgemen, so I was in DCI for a



year. I was fifteen years old, traveling around the country in a bus, and I felt like I was rockin', like I was on tour! That was a great time. I also marched in college, and I've taught drum lines here and there as well. I recently went to a corps show and thought, "Wow, I miss this."

As for some specific examples of how my marching background has come into the band, I was able to sneak some stuff on the *Everything You Want* album on a song called "Give You Back." But with "Inside," the song is very cinematic, almost a Celtic, "Here I come over the hills" kind of thing. It seemed very appropriate to put some marching stuff in at the end.

MD: Do you know what the first singles off the record are going to be?

Ed: The first single is "I'm Still Here," which was recorded very quickly. It just flowed. It has a cool instrumental tag at the end of the chorus, which was fun to play, especially at the end with a China cymbal. I was determined to get a China



back on top-40 radio.

There's a song called "Forever," which is probably going to be the second single, and it was fun to record. We did it sort of backwards. Matt put down a scratch vocal with a drum loop, Sean laid down a bass track, and then I laid down the drums. I had what we were calling a "hip-hop kit," which was an 18" kick drum and a wonderful 10" snare drum that DW made for me. I put together a couple of 12" splashes for a hi-hat. It sounded so good that we ended up using it instead of the drum loop. We used the kit on "Forever," "Won't Go Away," and "I'm Still Here."

The song "Under Water" came out exactly the way I wanted it to, which is with a big-sounding kick drum. We used a 26" kick for that. I also used a pair of Pro-Mark Broomsticks, which is a cross between a brush and a rod. They're awesome. I sat down during rehearsals with them and started playing this little beat, and Matt said, "I have something that



Essential Ed

Recordings



Artist	Album
Vertical Horizon	Go
Vertical Horizon	Live Stages
Vertical Horizon	Everything You Want
Seth Horan	Notwithstanding
Rob Seals	A Revolution Of One



Favorites



Artist	Album	Drummer
Rush	all	Neil Peart
The Police	all	Stewart Copeland
The Doobie Brothers	all	Michael Hossack, John Hartman, Keith Knudsen, Chet McCracken
Tower Of Power	Back To Oakland	David Garibaldi
Quincy Jones	Smackwater Jack	Grady Tate, Paul Humphrey
Steely Dan	Aja	Paul Humphrey, Steve Gadd, Bernard Purdie, Rick Marotta, Ed Greene, Jim Keltner
War	All Day Music	Harold Brown
Pat Metheny Group	Travels	Danny Gottlieb
Pat Metheny	Secret Story	Paul Wertico, Steve Ferrone, Sammy Merendino
King Crimson	Discipline	Bill Bruford
Tears For Fears	The Seeds Of Love	Phil Collins, Manu Katché, Chris Hughes, Simon Phillips
Herbie Hancock	Headhunters	Harvey Mason
Los Lobos	Kiko	Louie Perez, Pete Thomas, Victor Bisetti
The Samples	The Last Drag	Jeep MacNichol
Marvin Gaye	What's Going On	Chet Forest

Plus anything with Carter Beauford, John Bonham, Ringo Starr, Mick Fleetwood, Larry Mullen Jr., Brian Blade, Brady Blade, Phil Collins, Ahmir Thompson, Carlton Barrett, Terry Bozzio, Vinnie Colaiuta, Stanton Moore, Matt Cameron, or Taylor Hawkins.

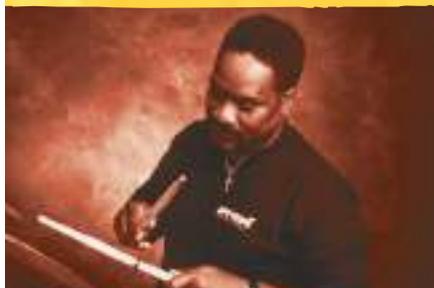
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will go with that," and he started playing the song "Under Water."

MD: Were there any other tracks that challenged you?

Ed: The first song on the record, "When You Cry," was kind of hard to get. It wasn't one of the early ones we recorded. It was somewhere in the middle. We did about six takes on that one to get it to feel right, and little changes happened along the way.

There was a lot of room for change on this album. If somebody had an idea for something that we didn't come up with during pre-production, it didn't matter, we gave it a shot. I point to John Shanks, our producer, for encouraging that attitude.

One of the things I enjoyed about the new record was that John is a rock 'n' roll guy. He was Melissa Etheridge's guitar player for a long time, and he's worked with Rod Stewart, so he was really good at helping us capture more of that vibe. No disrespect to the producers, but when I listen back to *Everything You Want*, it sounds a little slick to me. Part of that is the production and part of it is that we were a very tentative band.

The general process I followed for *Go* was to do a few takes and then do a drum comp. I'd use the take that felt the best.

But if I didn't like the fill going from the second verse into the second chorus, I'd grab it from another take using Pro Tools. I'm not thrilled with doing things this way, but the more I worked with it, the more I realized the benefits.

That said, I find it disturbing that a lot of younger bands coming up are relying on Pro Tools so much for perfection, because I think that can be a drag. I think you really need to know what you're doing first, and then you can use digital editing as a tool.

MD: Tell us about the cutting of "Everything You Want."

Ed: That song was so good on the demo that there really wasn't anything to change. Matt is really into full-on demoing of his stuff. He did the demo with an Alesis drum machine, guitar, and his vocal, and presented that to the band. We all liked it, but at first everybody favored "You're A God," which ended up being the second hit. I thought that was going to be the big one, but it turned out to be "Everything You Want."

I remember that we had a lot of fun tracking "Everything." It was one of the first tunes we recorded at Bearsville. That first recording experience for me was very much an exercise in restraint. It was like, Okay, having a lot of energy live is

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Ed Toth

like, Okay, having a lot of energy live is great, and playing different fills every night is cool. But this is permanent. What can I do to put my stamp on this, yet have it be musical and get people revved up? So I thought, Okay, how about a two-beat fill instead of an eight-beat fill?

I remember the making of that record being very fun, yet, at the end of the tracking, feeling like we got it all



wrong. I think that was just a case of nerves and the fact that it had gone down well, but not in the way we had envisioned it. We ended up revisiting a couple of the tracks with a different producer later on. I think we got a little too nit-picky with stuff, so by doing that, some of the fun got sapped out of it.

We took a break from the recording of that record, went on the road to fulfill some commitments, and then went back to it. We re-worked "We Are," "You Say," and "Finding Me." It was the first experience for everybody and we had to learn about compromise. Sean had only been in the band for about a month, so we were all learning how to be a band and make a major-label debut at the same time.

By the time we went in to do *Go*, we were able to do it very quickly. Unfortunately, after we finished it we had to sit around for a little while to wait for record company stuff to get sorted out. But that was good because I was able to spend time with my wife and our new daughter.

MD: You've started singing in concert. Is that difficult for you?

Ed: The only difficulty is figuring out the choreography of when to move the mic stand.

MD: How do you practice something like that?

Ed: I think it's just repetition. The more you do it, the more focused you become at it. I'm very comfortable around my kit, the way I sit and the way everything is set up. It's set up ergonomically for me. Someone else may not be comfortable on it, but it works for me.

I actually used to play a little differently from the way I do now. When I got this DW kit, which was after we recorded *Everything You Want*, I changed my setup. I used to play an old Tama kit that had three rack toms up front and one floor tom, because I thought I was Stewart Copeland or Neil Peart. When I got the DW kit, it had two rack toms and two floor toms, which was different for me. I had a

Gibraltar rack, which I liked and wanted to keep as part of my setup because it's very convenient.

I took the kit home and sat down with it to figure out what would be most comfortable. And then I thought to myself, the way I air drum is very different from where things are positioned on my kit. So I sat down behind an empty rack with a stool and my kick drum in place and started air drumming. I said, "Okay, my hand tends to stop here for the snare drum," so I set the snare drum up where

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Ed Toth

“My primary job in this band is to support the singer. In fact, I have to be very conscious of what the vocals are doing.”

out the toms and the cymbals.

My ride cymbal used to be set down and to my right, but I always play it up higher in the air, sort of where Vinnie Colaiuta plays his. So I put it there. It really opened up my playing. I don't have to move a lot to reach things.

MD: You're a traditional-grip guy, which isn't as common these days.

Ed: That comes from a bunch of stuff—my marching background, from when I went to school at the University of Miami, where I started playing jazz more than I had before. Traditional grip just made more sense to me, especially for jazz. Though I watch guys like Bill Stewart play with matched grip with no problem.

It was more comfortable for me to play traditional grip. When I began playing rock music, it just made sense to apply it. I was also influenced by Stewart Copeland, as I said before. After hearing him I immediately went to the basement and cranked up my snare drum and asked my father where I could get a splash cymbal. At the same time, I began to get into Neil Peart as well, and they're two completely different drummers.

MD: What did you draw from each?

Ed: From Copeland it was the idea of kick, snare, and hi-hat as an orchestra. You don't just have to sit on the hi-hat, you can open it a little bit, you can close it a little bit, and you can do five-stroke rolls on it. I learned his licks note-for-note.

One of the things I took from Neil was musicality. It really bothers me when guys talk about Neil Peart-style fills. I understand the criticism if a drummer is at a gig playing “She Loves You” and sticking in those type of fills. But what's

wrong with a Neil-type fill in general? In my opinion, he always plays musically.

I think what I got from Neil was that you could play musically and compose on the drumkit. And again, I liked all of his different sounds. He had the concert toms, which I had been into a little bit because I had been a Phil Collins freak since I was about ten. Neil had the concert toms and the closed toms, and he had a gong drum too.

Another big influence on me was David Garibaldi. In fact, the first concert I ever attended was Tower Of Power, when I was five years old. It left a big impression on me.

MD: Not everyone knows that Carter Beauford played on Vertical Horizon's *Running On Ice*, before you joined the band. He has such a unique style. Were there any challenges for you in playing that material the way he did?

Ed: I joined the band during the touring of *Running On Ice*. Playing those songs live was great because Carter and I have been influenced by similar guys, like Copeland and Garibaldi. Carter and I play very differently, but I felt a connection

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Ed Toth

with how he plays. It was okay for me to step into that way of playing. Plus I was given the green light by the band to just be me. They wanted the songs to feel similar, but they said, "You don't have to play them note-for-note like the record." But I learned the material note-for-note because I really wanted the gig.

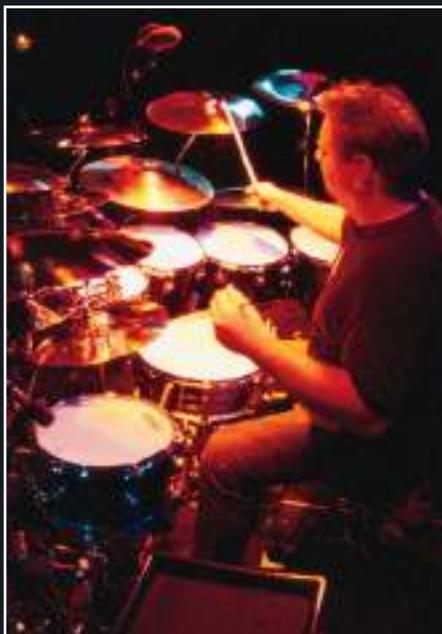
MD: What do you think this band needs from you as a drummer?

Ed: My primary job in this band is to support the singer. In fact, I have to be very conscious of what the vocals are doing. Then it's my job to drive the train and say, "Here's where we're going," dynamically and otherwise.

I love the versatility in this band. There are songs where I sit back and do my best Ringo impersonation. And then there are others where I need to be more aggressive, so I'll do my best Carter Beauford or Phil Collins impersonation.

MD: What has been a personal highlight for you since joining the band?

Ed: When I was a kid, my parents would take me to see The Doobie Brothers every year, and it would always be right around my birthday. Well, a couple of years



ago, when Vertical Horizon played at the Warfield Theater in San Francisco, I extended an invitation to The Doobies through the booking agent we share.

Doobies drummer Michael Hossack ended up coming to the gig, which was just great. I had the opportunity to thank him for the role he played in my life,

which was both a drumming and personal inspiration. My parents split up when I was thirteen, so there was a period when it was a little slow going with my dad and me. We played in a wedding band together, and even though the communication wasn't the greatest, music was the connecting thread for us.

It all started when I was eight, which was the first time I ever played a note with my dad in our basement. He started playing the guitar riff to "Dark Eyed Cajun Woman" off of The Doobies' *Captain And Me* record. I jumped on the drums and played along. I had the opportunity to explain this to Mike and say, "Thanks. Your music goes deeper for me than just, 'I played along to your records.'"

And then Mike turned around and told me that in the summer of 2000, "Everything You Want" helped him get through a rough time. He said, "I have to thank you." We became friends after that. It's amazing when you get to have those kinds of experiences.



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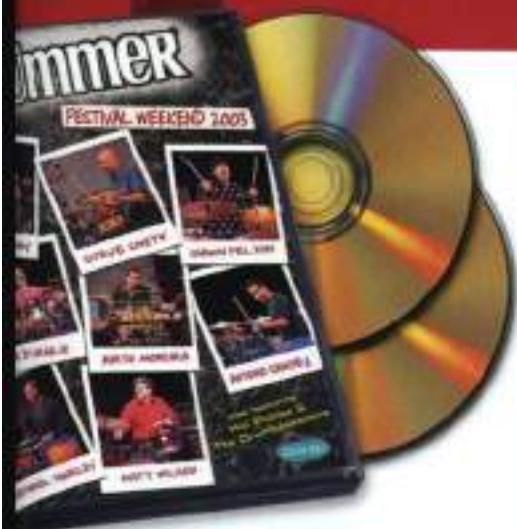
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Charles Collins And Earl Young

The **P**hilly Sound Hitmakers

by Jim Payne

We've all heard the classic tunes like "Bad Luck," "Back Stabbers," "She Use Ta Be My Girl," "You'll Never Find," "Enjoy Yourself," "Me And Mrs. Jones," and "If You Don't Know Me By Now." These are just a few of the timeless, deeply soulful hits recorded in the '70s by artists like The O'Jays, Lou Rawls, Teddy Pendergrass, Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes, and The Jacksons at Sigma Sound Studios in Philadelphia. And they were all a part of TSOP—The Sound Of Philadelphia—a virtual groove factory.

Many of the musicians who created The Sound Of Philadelphia remain largely unknown, just like the musicians from Motown, who have recently been given their due in the wonderful documentary movie *Standing In The Shadows Of Motown*.

Who were the people who created the historic Philly sound, and what was their story? There were many people involved, but the stories of two of the principle players, drummers Earl Young and Charles Collins, are typical and offer an insight into the classic sound. Here's the inside scoop on how it was done and what techniques were used to create the magic grooves behind the hits.

Charles Collins

Street Gangs And Miles Davis

Charles Collins was born in Chicago on June 21, 1954. As a teenager he grew up in the street gang culture that was prevalent in the Chicago ghetto at the time. He was not a member of the gangs, but, he recalls, "In my neighborhood you had to be down with either the Black Stone Rangers or the Devil's Disciples to survive. They pretty much left me alone when they found out I was into drums and music, so I didn't get shot and I didn't have to do anything illegal for them.

"One afternoon I was sneakin' around, getting into trouble with a few friends," Collins continues. "We snuck into a club called the Southerland over on Drexel Ave. It turned out that Miles Davis was playing there that night, and while he was doing his sound-check, we hid in the back of the club. It was a supper club, and the management didn't like the way Miles was dressed—his usual flamboyant style. Someone came in and told him he was going to have to wear a dinner jacket. And Miles said, 'Dinner jacket? I ain't wearin' no dinner jacket!' And the management just backed off. And I thought, man, that's so cool. If you can do that, play whatever you want, and call your own shots, that's for me. I'm gonna play the trumpet!

"My mom said okay, so we rented a trumpet and I started doing the warm-ups with the trumpet players in the high school band. But eventually I went into the back room, where the drummers were. Some guys were back there practicing on pads, and others were playing on their books because they couldn't afford a pad. But it all sounded good to me. I thought, I'm gonna put this trumpet down. I want to play drums. And from then on—I was sixteen—drumming was my total focus. I always had drumsticks in my back pocket and would practice all of the time."

The high school music teacher, Captain Walter Dyett, took Charles under his wing and taught him to read music and perform on the drumset. Another teacher, Charles Coleman, who also worked in the high school program, took some of the students to rehearsals and sound-checks at the Regal Theater, where Collins sat transfixed by the magic of the famous R&B artists of the day—The Temptations with David Ruffin, James Brown, B.B. King, and Gene Chandler ("The Duke Of Earl"). Drummer Red

Classic Collins Tracks

Artist	Track And Peak Chart Position
The Spinners	"Sadie" (number-7 R&B, 1974)
The Spinners	"Living A Little, Laughing A Little" (number-7 R&B, 1975)
Salsoul Orchestra	"Salsoul Hustle" (number-44 R&B, 1975)
The O'Jays	"Message In The Music" (number-1 R&B, 1976)
Lou Rawls	"You'll Never Find" (number-1 R&B, number-4 pop, 1976)
The Jacksons	"Enjoy Yourself" (number-2 R&B, number-6 pop, 1976)
Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes	"Wake Up Everybody" (number-1 R&B, number-12 pop, 1976)
Stanley Turrentine	"You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine" (number-68 R&B, 1976)
Odyssey	"Native New Yorker" (number-6 R&B, number-21 pop, 1977)
Jeanne Carne	"Free Love" (number-23 R&B, 1977)
The O'Jays	"She Use Ta Be My Girl" (number-1 R&B, number-4 pop, 1978)
Melba Moore	"You Stepped Into My Life" (number-17 R&B, 1978)
Jeanne Carne	"Don't Let It Go To Your Head" (number-54 R&B, 1978)
Elton John	"Mama Can't Buy You Love" (number-36 R&B, number-9 pop, 1979)



Sanders led the house band at the Regal, which was the Chicago equivalent of New York's Apollo Theater. Al Duncan, the well-known drummer and percussionist who played on many Chicago sessions for the Brunswick and Vee Jay labels, also played behind many of the acts at the Regal.

The Constellations,

Dionne Warwick, And New York

In a short while, Collins joined a local band and began paying his dues playing R&B gigs around town. Later he joined the Scott Brothers on the recommendation of Chi-Lites vocalist/drummer Marshall Thompson. He also played on recording sessions for Gene Chandler and Junior Wells. A Chicago vocal group, The



Jacquie Deegan

Earl Young The Pioneer

Earl Young got to Philadelphia before Charles Collins. He was born there, in fact, on June 2, 1940. And he was the first drummer to begin shaping the Philly sound.

Young was originally a doo-wop singer with The Exceptions, then began playing drums in a marching band called The Elks. His first drumset was a cocktail set, which he played standing up. Eventually he played record shops and shows with The Romeos, who later became The Chambers Brothers.

Young's recording career began in the '60s with a group called The Volcanos, who were the house band at the Uptown Theater. While playing at the Uptown he backed up Jackie Wilson and Sam Cooke, among many others. He also met Stevie Wonder, who hired him to do a tour of Japan. Earl asked Stevie about the famed Motown drummer Benny Benjamin, nicknamed Bohannon. He learned that Benjamin said, "It's not how fancy you play but how consistent you are with the time." Benjamin supposedly used big fat sticks but played relatively softly. (Earl classifies himself as an extra hard hitter but he says he never broke a head, only sticks.)

Following the Benny Benjamin tradition, Earl Young was known as an incredible timekeeper. "I'd put Earl up against a Roland 808 drum machine anytime," Charles Collins remembers. "His time was that good. He never varied." A listen to a few of Earl's major hits, "Bad Luck" or "For The Love Of Money," will immediately prove this.

Joe Tarsia, former owner of Sigma Sound and engineer on most of the Philly hits, remembers, "Earl had an uncanny sense of timing. I played shuffle ball with him in a bar one day, and you used to get double points if you could hit the thing when the light was lit. I mean I had enough trouble just hitting the thing. But Earl knew when that light was gonna light every time. His internal clock was amazing."

After the Stevie Wonder gig, Earl teamed up with guitarist Norman Harris and bassist Ron Baker and started playing in Philly clubs. Harris was the first to get into the studios, and he then brought in



Ralph and that whole Antesia music group, with Bill Salter on bass and Bill Eaton arranging and on keys. They became my mentors. They had worked for Harry Belafonte, and they exposed me to a lot of percussion. And when I played in bars in New York I had to learn some of those Caribbean rhythms. They also wrote and produced for Grover Washington Jr. ["Mr. Magic"], and they worked for Bill Withers, Roberta Flack, and Ashford & Simpson. In New York they were doing very well, and they turned me on to sessions. I did a lot of work for Atlantic Records through Ralph MacDonald. I heard all that stuff, so when I came here to Philly, I tried to incorporate that into my playing."

Goin' To Philadelphia

Eventually Charles went to Philly. Why? A woman, of course. Broken up after a separation with his girlfriend, the drummer wanted to leave New

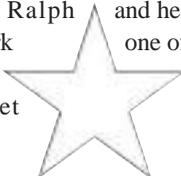
York behind for a while. "Gordon Edwards, the bass player, called me about a group called Duke Williams & The Extremes, who were based in Philly," Charles recalls. "It was a rock 'n' roll band that wanted to have an R&B feel, and that interested me. I came down, auditioned for them, got the gig, and then went on the road. We recorded here at Sigma Sound.

"Around the end of '74," Charles continues, "it was obvious that our rock 'n' roll dreams weren't going to come true. After we broke up, I started coming here to Sigma and doing sessions, playing percussion and meeting everybody. I was so lucky in terms of being in the right place at the right time. Bobby Eli, Norman Harris, and some other Sigma producers used me to play hand percussion, cabasa, and bell tree. So I would be there and I could hear the whole thing going down in my earphones. I was right next to the drummer, Earl Young, and he was very gracious. I was accepted as one of the guys."

Constellations, asked Charles to be part of their rhythm section as the opening act for Dionne Warwick, and Charles and the group ended up relocating to New York.

Dionne's drummer was the famed Ray Lucas, who had also played with King Curtis in the Apollo Theater house band in New York City in the '60s. Charles recalls, "Ray was such a sweet cat, and he had such a great touch. He could make one snare drum sound like fifty to give the music different colors. We'd do gigs back in '71 and '72 with Dionne Warwick in college gymnasiums. He taught me how to play in an auditorium and in a concert hall. Sometimes I'd go way in the back and I'd still hear his snare work, the tasty little sounds that he would do. He was very creative."

Eventually Charles subbed on the Dionne Warwick gig when Ray couldn't make it. He also began hanging out with some of the New York cats, especially Ralph MacDonald, the first-call New York session percussionist of the '60s and '70s. Charles recalls, "I met



Earl Young Sides

Baker and Young. Barbara Mason's "Yes I'm Ready" (number-2 R&B, number-5 pop, 1965) was one of their first joint efforts. Hits by The Delfonics and The Intruders followed. (See Earl Young's selected discography.) The trio became a unit, and that unit became the core of TSOP (The Sound Of Philadelphia) for over ten years.

Reading, Not Reading, And Playing The Hits

When he started in the studio, Earl was not a good reader. Norman Harris told him, "Just watch me. When I nod, make a fill." "I had no idea from bars or notes," Young recalls, "but I had great timing. I was a natural at that. I learned how to read as I went along. When I made a mistake reading I'd just say, 'A fly landed on my paper and I played that!' I considered drumming a gift. I never had a teacher. But I love to play drums. I just watched and picked it up. I wasn't trying to be great. But when I made \$100 on a gig, I decided that this is what I would do for

Artist Track And Peak Chart Position

Artist	Track And Peak Chart Position
Barbara Mason	"Yes I'm Ready" (number-2 R&B, number-5 pop, 1965)
The Delfonics	"La La Means I Love You" (number-2 R&B, number-4 pop, 1968)
The Intruders	"Cowboys To Girls" (number-1 R&B, number-6 pop, 1968)
The Delfonics	"Didn't I Blow Your Mind" (number-3 R&B, number-10 pop, 1970)
Wilson Pickett	"Engine Number 9" (number-3 R&B, number-14 pop, 1970)
Wilson Pickett	"Don't Let The Green Grass Fool You" (number-2 R&B, number-17 pop, 1971)
Joe Simon	"Drowning In The Sea Of Love" (number-3 R&B, number-11 pop, 1971)
The Spinners	"I'll Be Around" (number-1 R&B, number-3 pop, 1972)
Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes	"If You Don't Know Me By Now" (number-1 R&B, number-3 pop, 1972)
Billy Paul	"Me And Mrs. Jones" (number-1 R&B, number-1 pop, 1972)
The Spinners	"Could It Be I'm Falling In Love" (number-1 R&B, number-4 pop, 1972)
The O'Jays	"Back Stabbers" (number-1 R&B, number-3 pop, 1972)
Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes	"Bad Luck" (number-4 R&B, number-15 pop, 1972)
The Spinners	"One Of A Kind (Love Affair)" (number-1 R&B, number-11 pop, 1973)
The O'Jays	"Love Train" (number-1 R&B, number-1 pop, 1973)
Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes	"The Love I Lost" (number-1 R&B, number-7 pop, 1973)
The Three Degrees	"When Will I See You Again" (number-4 R&B, number-2 pop, 1974)
The O'Jays	"For The Love Of Money" (number-3 R&B, number-9 pop, 1974)
The Trammps	"Disco Inferno" (number-9 R&B, number-11 pop, 1977)



Earl Young with The Salsoul Orchestra

The Philly Sound

the rest of my life.”

And that he did. Earl recorded countless records, many of which were major hits. From the '60s through the '80s, if you were listening to R&B and soul, there's a good chance you were listening to either Al Jackson (Stax, Memphis), Benny Benjamin (Motown, Detroit), or Earl Young or Charles Collins (Philadelphia).

“The most fun I had in Philadelphia was working with Wilson Pickett,” Earl recalls. “He'd say, ‘Put the music away.’ B.B. King said the same thing. Pickett would come over to me and say, ‘Now Earl, this is what I want. Put it right here.’ And that's all it took.”

Young used 4A sticks and a set of chrome Fibes with a 26" bass drum to record most of his hits. “I never considered myself the greatest drummer,” he says modestly. “But I tried to be the greatest *creative* drummer.” To that end, Young was one of the first to use the disco hi-hat pattern, as well as the combination of snare and tom-tom on backbeats, which you can hear on The

Spinners' “I'll Be Around.”

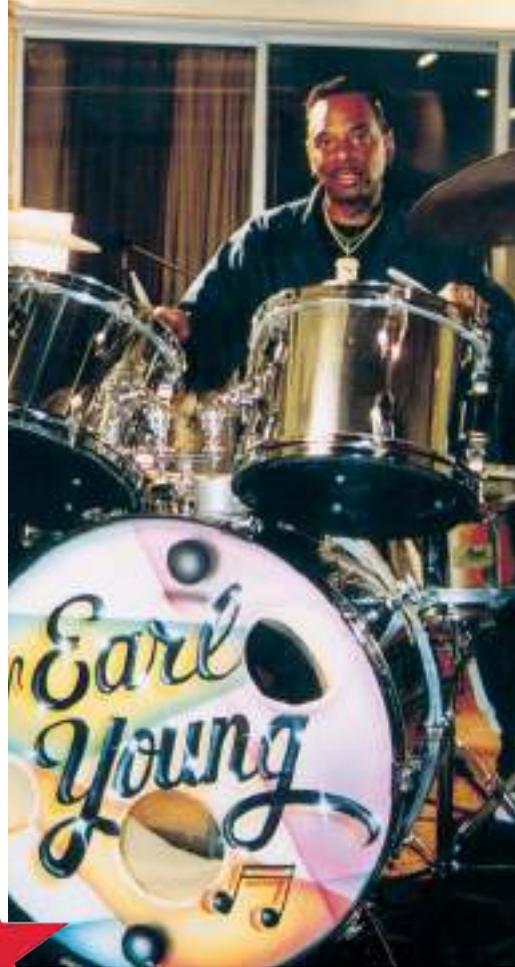
Aside from recording all the hits, Earl also kept his singing career alive when he formed The Trammps, with whom he sang *and* played. Earl Young And The Trammps will be on tour this year with The Village People, KC & The Sunshine Band, The Pointer Sisters, and Thelma Houston. In fact, Earl received two Grammys for “Disco Inferno” on the *Saturday Night Fever* album, one for singing and one for drumming. He's also very proud of the fact that his name appears on a star in front of Philadelphia's Academy of Music.

“I still got my chops,” Young says. “Art Blakey said, ‘When I can't play no more, I'd rather be dead.’ Me too. This is what I love.”

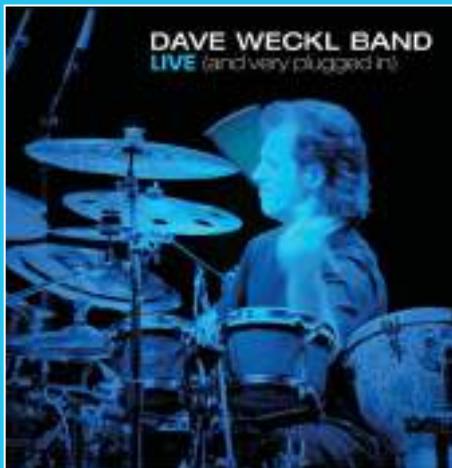
The Philly Sound

As the Philly sound took off in the early '70s with hits like “Bad Luck” and “Back Stabbers,” producers Gamble & Huff, Thom Bell, and the musicians had their hands full.

continued on page 91



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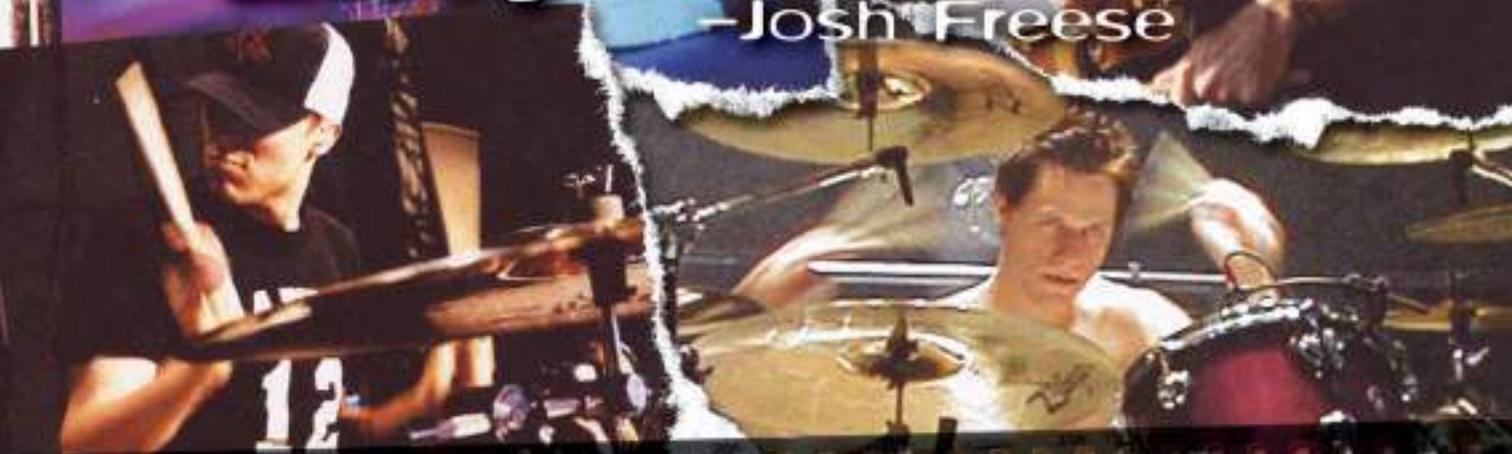


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Philly Drum Miking

Joe Tarsia was the owner of Sigma Sound Studios and the engineer on most of the classic Philly hits. He recalls how they recorded those killer drum sounds.



Leakage

"Early on I could never figure out why on some records the snare drum sounded like this [spreads hands wide] and my snare drum sounded like that [closes hands in]," Tarsia admits. "But in the early '60s, I went to a session at Bell Sound in New York, which is now part of The Hit Factory. It was a long, narrow room. The drummer was set up in the center of the room on a side wall. In the front of the room was a 'go bo' [room divider] for the background singers. At the far end of the room was the string section. And there were saxes set up in the middle of the floor in a circle around one mic'.

"This was in the days of 4-track recording," Tarsia continues, "and the engineer was opening and closing the

mic's. He opened the snare drum mic' and I thought, Well, that's close to the snare drum sound I want. And then he opened the string mic,' and in the string mic' was that big fat snare drum sound. That's the sound I wanted. So that gave me an appreciation for ambiance and the way the room acoustics add to the drum sound.

"I became very conscious of 'spill' and how to make it work for me," Tarsia says. "I learned how to get this feeling of a large room with the drums coming out of a canyon as opposed to a snare drum mic' two inches away from the drum. Leakage scares producers because they can't

control it, but I think it's wonderful."

Snare Drum And Bass Drum

According to Tarsia, "The key to our snare sound was an Altec 633 omni-directional saltshaker mic'. It's a bad PA mic' that you can use as a hammer, like a podium mic', but it sounds great on the snare. I saw them being used at Bell Sound. On the bass drum, we used a BK5 a ribbon mic'."

Tom-Toms And Overheads

"I would mike toms with dynamic microphones. For a while I used Electro-Voice RE-15s. I would mike the drums from the bottom, but you had to be careful because

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kit. You could run into phasing problems. Nothing was ever completely in phase, but we did the best we could. For overheads we used Neumann KM-84s."

Signal Processing

"I used a Cooper Time Cube when it first came out, to try to extend the length of the snare drum. But basically, I didn't use much processing. I gated the toms so I didn't hear them ring when other drums were being played. When you're miking the toms so closely, you're going to get ring no matter what. So ideally those tom mic's were essentially off until the toms were played. And I put a limiter on the bass drum because I wanted to keep the drum hot and consistent, especially if the drummer might play too dynamically."

continued from page 88

the musicians had their hands full.

Charles Collins, who started out as a percussionist, was soon playing the drumset as well. Over the course of several years he recorded many major Philadelphia hits. (See his selected discography.) Collins was partnered with bassists Bob Babbitt (who also did time at Motown after the passing of James Jamerson) and Michael "Sugar Bear" Foreman, guitarists Bobby Eli and Norman Harris, and other Philly sound regulars such as Vince Montana (vibes), Lenny Pakula (organ and piano), and arranger Bobby Martin.

"Stax was a backroom sound, very gut-bucket," recalls engineer Joe Tarsia. "As soul music goes, I would put Memphis at the top of the list. Motown, to me, was black bubble gum, but the real soul was always Memphis. And I think Philadelphia was in the middle. It was a sound that transcended the races. It crossed over.

"The genius of the Philly producers Gamble & Huff was to take black rhythm & blues music

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The Philly Sound

orchestrations,” Tarsia continues. “On one record we had fifty-four players—ten horns, eighteen strings, ten rhythm, and multiple background vocals. This was unheard of at the time. People like Barry White followed, but the Philly guys really broke ground with it, sort of like what Phil Spector did with the ‘wall of sound.’ And the Philly sound always had the driving rhythm underneath.”

Playing The Song

So how did they get that sound and feel that the whole country—and actually the whole world—was dancing to? No earth-shaking secrets, they simply played for the song.

“I pride myself on being a song player,” Charles Collins says. “That’s the bottom line. When a songwriter or producer

brings you that song, it’s intimate.

And they’re sharing it with you and paying you to help create their vision.

That’s something very personal, and I take it seriously.

“I learned to play drums by playing songs,” Collins continues. “So I listen to

the melody first when figuring out what to play. Plus I always want to know what the singer’s going to be singing, because the tempo is there. I would base the tempo on what we call here in Philly the ‘singalong,’ which is the chorus.

“A lot of times Gamble would be singing the song to us and Huff would be playing the piano. Everybody would be excited about it. You’d hear the song, you’d hear the breath, and you’d know as a drummer to let it breathe and let it be heard. It was a natural thing. I sang songs in my head as we recorded them.”

Click Tracks And Drum Charts

The long anticipated answer to the question of click tracks was short and sweet. “Click tracks?” Collins responds. “Nope, Earl and I never used them at Sigma.”

What about charts? “Thom Bell wrote everything out note for note,” Collins recalls, “including the drum charts—hi-hat, snare drum, and bass drum. We had individual charts copied by a profession-

al copyist with distinct parts to play.

They were simple, but at the same time they weren’t.

“Bell was a former singer who had studied percussion,” Collins continues. “He was classically

trained. I was nervous on my first session with him because I knew he used a lot of time changes—3/4 to 5/4 to 7/8, whatever. The first session I did with him had a bunch of time changes. He’d walk up to you and say, ‘Charles Collins! Come over here.’ And he’d play it and you’d never hear the time change. It would just flow. ‘Now Charles, I wrote this out for you, but if you want to change anything, you can.’ In the beginning I never changed anything. Then as I worked with him more I’d change some things. He wouldn’t write the fills.

“Eventually I worked my way up to Gamble & Huff,” Collins says. “Their dates were a little looser. They would usually just have chord charts. Gamble was a singer and Huff a piano player. Again, they would come in singing a song. When the disco thing got real popu-

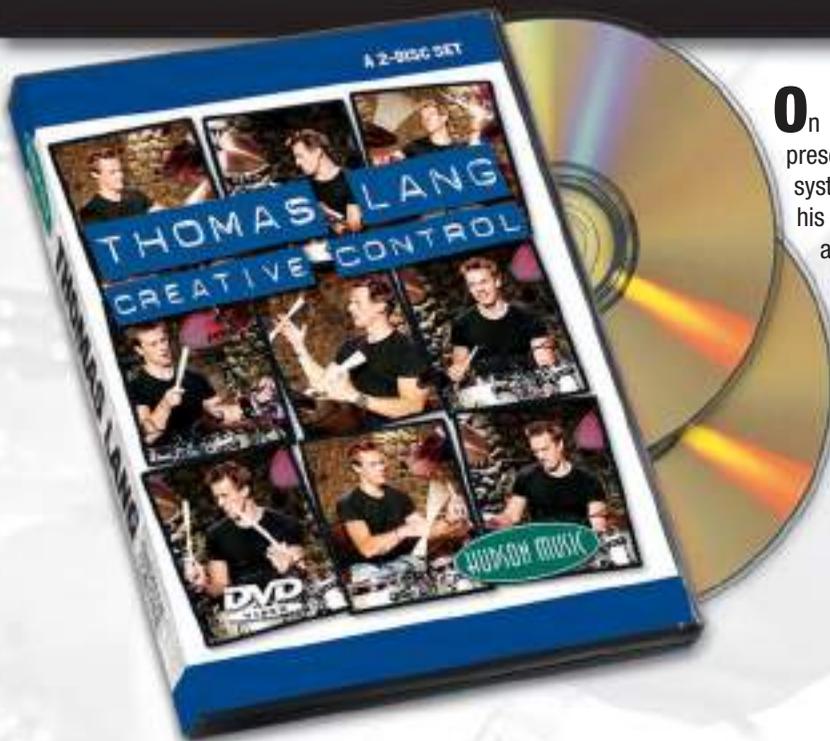
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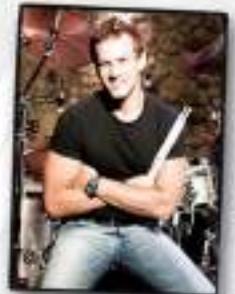


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The Philly Sound

lar, some of the producers would come in and think that as long as the tempo was 120 beats per minute, it was going to be a hit. But they *didn't* have a song."

The drummers of Philly, Charles Collins and Earl Young, didn't just play a beat, they orchestrated the song. They complemented verse and chorus with specific, subtle groove changes, and they were able to lock in a groove in unusual ways.

Who would have thought that you could play a hellacious shuffle groove using a rimclick on the snare behind a shouting Wilson Pickett on "Don't Let The Green Grass Fool You"? But Earl Young did it, and it *worked*. Most drummers would try to go all out with a louder sound palette. And check out Charles Collins' famous rim-of-the-floor-tom groove on "You'll Never Find." Engineer Joe Tarsia got so excited when Charles started playing it that he ran out of the control booth to add another mic'. "That's it!" he shouted. "Don't change a thing!"

The "Lock"

Talking about the groove in general, guitarist Bobby Eli says, "There was a lock that we had together. No matter whether it was Charles or Earl, we locked. It was like a jigsaw puzzle. It was an uncanny kind of thing that we had."

"It was personal and musical," Charles adds. "I think there was general respect and admiration for everybody. When I came in I saw guys who'd been through a lot together. They had suffered together and they were growing together. That was a hell of a lock, and I considered myself very fortunate to have slid into it. It was that natural heartbeat that all those guys had."

There *was* a lot of mutual respect between the Philly musicians, especially for the drummers. "Some drummers play so hard that they take all of the tone out of the instrument," Bobby Eli recalls. "All you hear is the 'crack.' But the Philly sound drummers had touch. They were very aware of dynamics."

Bassist Bob Babbitt said the same thing

about Benny Benjamin, the famous Motown hit-making drummer. The one thing Babbitt remembered about playing with him before he passed away was, "Benny played soft."

The Summer Of No Sun

"I call the summer of 1977 'the summer of no sun,'" Charles says. "I would come to the studio at 10:00 in the morning and I wouldn't leave until it was dark. I'm talking 8:00, 9:00, 10:00 at night. And then I had to come back the next day. We were working all the time. We did feel like the stepchildren of R&B, because we didn't get much recognition for our work. But when we came in to record, we knew that we were going to be playing on a record that would be a top-5 hit, guaranteed."

Jim Payne is a teacher, author, and performing drummer living in New York City. Visit www.funkydrummer.com.



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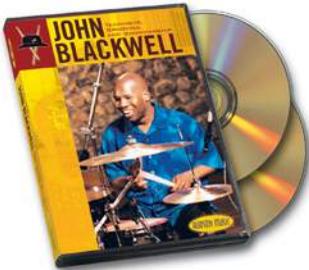
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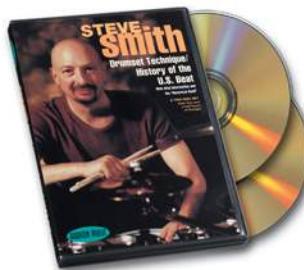
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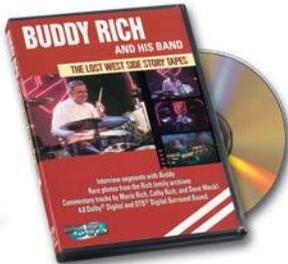
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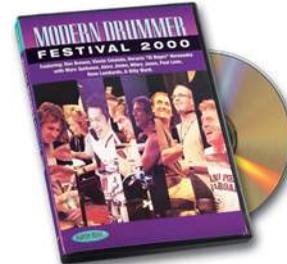
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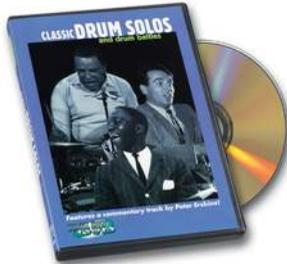
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Led Zeppelin's John Bonham

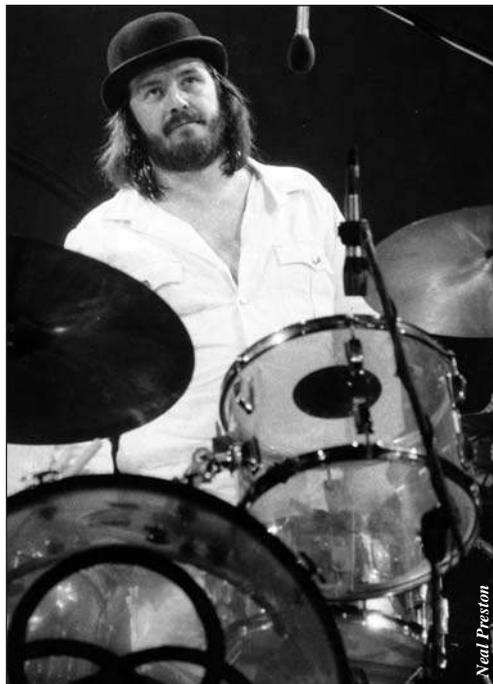
How The West Was Won, Part 2

by Ed Breckenfeld

MUSIC KEY

Open	○	R.C.	×	C.C.	×
H.H.	○	T.T.	○	S.D.	○
F.T.	○	B.D.	○	H.H.	○
w/foot	×	Add'l	×	F.T.	Note

We continue our look at the fabulous playing of John Bonham from the recent Led Zeppelin live CD set, *How The West Was Won*. Last month, in Part 1, we talked about Bonham's improvisations on his well-known drum parts. We'll see more of that this month, as we get deeper into this superb performance by one of rock drumming's all-time masters.



“Dazed And Confused”

Bonham had an uncanny knack for negotiating his way around syncopated fills in a 12/8 blues feel. Take this sequence, for example, from his entrance in this early Zeppelin gem. (This kicks in at the 1:53 point of the track.)

♩ = 121

“The Crunge”

During the extended jam middle section of “Dazed And Confused” (at the 15:37 mark), the band slips into this song, an odd James Brown tribute that contains one of Bonham's most

♩ = 246

“Moby Dick”

John Bonham’s legendary solo sees perhaps its greatest rendition on this album, clocking in at almost twenty minutes of pure drumming bliss. Bonham moves gracefully and powerfully through his repertoire, at times playing barehanded, with a tambourine affixed to his hi-hat keeping time. Here’s a smattering of different licks from the solo. (Check out how fast he’s playing these patterns!)

“Whole Lotta Love”

Here’s another example of a memorable chorus pattern (beginning at the 1:22 mark) that receives a more fully realized treatment in this live performance.

This fill from the third verse (at the 4:27 point of the song) blends back into the groove via some offbeat crash work.

Bonham’s long fill leading into the song’s ending (at the 21:05 mark) takes a syncopated turn in the second measure. This move is easier to play if the “ghost notes” on the snare are double-stroked.

“Rock And Roll”

Finally, here’s the famous solo ending to this song, extended by Bonham in this live performance. (If you want to see the classic drum intro, see the *Rock Perspectives* article on page 94 of the June 2003 issue.) Bonzo’s climatic repeating 16th-note pattern starts here as a five-note grouping, then quickly blends into four notes, and of course continues much longer than on the original studio version.

You can contact Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site at www.edbreckenfeld.com.



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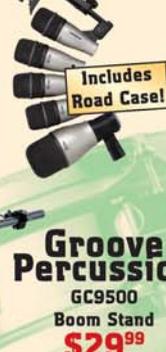
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RLRLRLR RL RL RLLRLLRRLR RL RLRLRLRLLRRRL R L R RL L

Once these ideas are flowing, look for opportunities to play songs in 5/4. Try adapting a song that you normally play in 4/4 to 5/4. Play along with a 5/4 track like "Take Five," recorded by Joe Morello with The Dave Brubeck Quartet. The play-along CD *Turn It Up, Lay It Down* includes a good tune in five to work out with.

In each case, start by grooving, then insert one-measure fills in the appropriate places, and then create a trading-fours scenario. Find a 5/4 vamp like "Take Five," and try creating longer flowing ideas—and steal some of Morello's beautiful phrases. Finally, work on soloing over a song form in 5/4. The previous examples are pretty dense; in a playing situation, incorporate dynamic con-

trast and the use of space to make your drumming as musical as possible.

I hope you take the time to ramp up this material, because next time we'll look to create more deceptive odd-time soloing ideas by developing phrases that go across the barline. Have fun.

John Riley's career includes work with John Scofield, Mike Stern, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. He has also written two critically acclaimed books, The Art Of Bop Drumming and Beyond Bop Drumming, published by Manhattan Music.



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Art Blakey

"Well You Needn't"

Transcribed by Steve DeLuca

MUSIC KEY	
Open	○
H.H.	⊗
T.T.	⊗
S.D.	⊗
F.T.	⊗
B.D.	⊗
H.H.	⊗
Wfoot	⊗
	Stick On Note
	Ghost Note
	Stick

This month's *Drum Soloist* features the energetic and inventive playing of the legendary Art Blakey. This performance is from Thelonious Monk's classic recording *Monk's Music*, recorded in June 1957, when saxophonist John Coltrane was part of the pianist's regular unit.

"Well You Needn't," one of Monk's great thirty-two-bar tunes, features Art soloing over two choruses. This is an incredibly musical and fun solo that contains many classic "Blakeyisms." For instance, note the left-hand independence figures played melodically around the drums against a steady jazz ride (measures 1–16), the quirky ideas like the muted snare effect and sticks being struck together (measures 25–30), and the use of three-beat ideas over the 4/4 pulse (measures 43–45).

The jazz ride is kept steady in bars 1–16, and the hi-hat is played on 2 and 4 throughout unless otherwise notated. The solo begins at



the 5:54 mark of the tune. (Make sure to listen to this recording, as some of the nuances of Art's playing are difficult to notate.)

Musical notation for the drum solo, showing measures 1 through 24. The notation includes various drum symbols (ride, snare, tom, hi-hat) and includes performance instructions such as "(Ride Continues)", "(Muted)", and "(Stick On Stick)".

Measures 1-4: Introduction with a triplet figure and a steady jazz ride. Measure 1 includes a circled 'A'.

Measures 5-10: Continuation of the jazz ride with melodic independence in the left hand. Measure 7 includes a circled 'A'.

Measures 11-15: Continuation of the jazz ride with melodic independence in the left hand.

Measures 16-20: Continuation of the jazz ride with melodic independence in the left hand. Measure 16 includes a circled 'B'. Measures 19-20 include accents (>).

Measures 21-24: Continuation of the jazz ride with melodic independence in the left hand. Measure 24 includes a circled 'A', a "Muted" instruction, and a "Stick On Stick" instruction.

28

32

36

40

44

48

52

56

59

62



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Roll Pulsations

The Secret To Good-Sounding Rolls

by Ron Spagnardi

A common problem that many beginning players experience is getting rolls to blend properly with the written music. The trick lies in feeling an underlying pulsation that works in accordance with the tempo of the music. Playing rolls without an underlying note pulsation of some kind often results in miscounting roll durations, or in playing too many or too few roll strokes. This creates an uneven, poor-sounding rolls. Once you're adept at quickly identifying the pulsation that fits with the tempo, counting becomes much simpler, and rolls tend to sound cleaner and smoother.

The basic concept of roll pulsation is very simple: The *slower* the tempo, the smaller the note value of the pulsation and the

greater number of roll strokes required. The *faster* the tempo, the larger the note value of the pulsation and the fewer number of roll strokes required.

Look at the following five examples. They use a whole-note roll tied over to "1" of the following measure. Above each example are the tempo ranges (approximate) in which each underlying pulsation works the best. Note how the slower tempos require a smaller note pulsation and a greater number of roll strokes (as in examples 1 and 2). In examples 3, 4, and 5, which are played at medium to faster tempos, notice the larger note pulsation and the fewer roll strokes required. Practice the examples with a metronome at the various tempo ranges indicated.

1) 32nd-Note Pulsation

Tempo Range: Quarter Note = 46-63

Written:

R L R L R L R L etc.

2) 16th-Note-Triplet Pulsation

Written:

R L R L R L etc.

Tempo Range: Quarter Note = 63-88

3) 16th-Note Pulsation

Written:

Musical notation for 16th-note pulsation. The top staff shows a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a whole note with a fermata. The bottom staff shows a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a series of 16th notes grouped in pairs, with a fermata over the final note.

R L R L etc.

Tempo Range: Quarter Note = 88-126

4) 8th-Note-Triplet Pulsation

Written:

Musical notation for 8th-note triplet pulsation. The top staff shows a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a whole note with a fermata. The bottom staff shows a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a series of 8th notes grouped in triplets, with a fermata over the final note.

R L R L R L etc.

Tempo Range: Quarter Note = 126-176

5) 8th-Note Pulsation

Written:

Musical notation for 8th-note pulsation. The top staff shows a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a whole note with a fermata. The bottom staff shows a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a series of 8th notes, with a fermata over the final note.

R L R L etc.

Tempo Range: Quarter Note = 176-208

For further practice, try the following twenty-four-bar roll solo. Be sure to practice it in each of the tempo ranges indicated in examples 1–5, with all of the five underlying pulsations.

Roll Solo

The musical score consists of six staves of music in 4/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody is a continuous sequence of notes and rests, often beamed together in groups of four. The notes are primarily quarter and eighth notes, with some half notes and rests. The rhythm is consistent throughout, with a steady pulse. The score is written for a single melodic line on a five-line staff.



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Sitting In

How To Handle Your Fifteen Minutes Of Fame

by T. Bruce Wittet

Once upon a time, clubs hired bands for six nights in a row, week after week. Your band would cultivate a regular crowd, and, after a spell, you'd discover a percentage of that crowd who called themselves drummers. Inevitably, someone from this group would ask to play a song or two with the band. This was called "sitting in." Although not as common today, where clubs book three bands a night, sitting in still survives. If you have the opportunity to sit in with a band, or if you've been confronted during a set with someone wishing to play your drums, read on. We're going to look at what you should and shouldn't do.

When you're sitting in for only a song or two, you've got a narrow window in which to make things feel good and avoid a train wreck.

If you're the host drummer, relinquishing your drum seat has its benefits. You get to hear how someone else interprets a tune, how your bandmates react, and, not least, how your drums sound. As the "sitter," you get to meet new musicians, have a good time, and maybe even give the ol' ego a workout. Unfortunately, there are also instances when everything suffers on account of the sit-in drummer. By "everything" I mean drums, cymbals, sticks, band morale, club management's perception of the band, the public's reaction to the band, and the groove.

The Invitation

If you're contemplating sitting in on a gig, it's probably for one of the following reasons.

1. You're a friend of the drummer.
2. You're a distinguished guest or specialist in some musical style.
3. You're new in town and want to meet musicians.

4. You want to have fun, test your chops, and express your creativity.

No matter what your reason, sitting in is *not* your divine right. If you haven't been invited, determine who's in charge, approach that person, and ask politely. Some "open mic" clubs ask you to sign a list. Be patient, and don't jump the queue.

Know When To Say When

Pacing is a hallowed tenet of show biz. It involves keeping the action moving by, among other things, refusing to flog a dead horse. Let me give an example of how it applies to sitting in. I was playing at an inner-city blues club. My band was motor-ing through a selection of blues standards. A drummer approached me and asked to sit in. "Come up when I signal," I told him. "Play a couple of tunes."

Once my "guest" was in the drum chair, the frozen grin on his face conveyed his conviction that he was adding value to the evening—despite all evidence to the contrary. On a Delbert McClinton tune, he adopted an inflexible shuffle, his left and right hands playing defiant dotted 8th notes in rigid sync. After a gentle guitar intro to "Stormy Monday," his entry lurched ahead like a gastritis spasm—one of many fills you couldn't tap your toe through. In addition, it became apparent that he had an agenda. While his *intent* was to capture some sort of "behind the beat" feeling, what he actually was doing was dragging the tempo.

After two tunes, I returned and clearly motioned to him: *Good job. I'm taking over.* He responded with a thumbs-up and a heads-down. Clearly, he was bent on playing another tune—two, as it turned out. Mercifully, the bandleader then called a break.

And there you have the crux. If you're the guest, *sit in*—don't squat for the night! And if you're the resident drummer, be assertive and reclaim your territory. You can't always make an accurate decision on the sitter's facility in a split second. But you can make his or her tenure short and in clearer terms than I did.

When Sitting In Can Backfire On You

Twenty years ago, I visited an intimate jazz club, rather like the current Smalls in New York City (a club that allows sitting in). Beer flowed. I asked to sit in. The bass player called out “Night In Tunisia.” At the time, my command of Latin was not up to standard. My groove was rickety and my fills were racing. As a result, things came off more like “A Night At The Kentucky Derby.” My poor showing cost me major credibility points among players who mattered. For this reason, I urge you *not* to sit in unless you’re familiar with the band’s musical style and can add something. If there’s time, discuss the groove beforehand.

Fly Like An Eagle, Watch Like A Hawk

Even if you are familiar with a particular genre, don’t expect to know it all. Let’s say the band’s playing “Every Day I Have The Blues.” Do not immediately launch into your preferred groove and expect to drag others along.

Be aware that “rock ’n’ roll,” especially of the Jerry Lee Lewis era, means different things to different age groups. Younger band-leaders want you to “rock it” with chunky 8ths on the hi-hat, whereas older ones often prefer a jazz-meets-rock lilt. Listen to the bass and guitar to help steer you right.

Watching is as essential as listening. If the leader is inanimate, you’ve got to determine who mimes the changes best and

catch him or her signaling stops. Don’t worry if you have to make feel shifts or time adjustments; doing so reveals that you are a committed listener.

How To Keep It Simple

When you’re sitting in for only a song or two, you’ve got a narrow window in which to make things feel good (and avoid a train wreck). You do *not* have time to indelibly stamp your stylistic imprint or erect a monument to yourself. Rest assured, your “special thing” will be all the more obvious if you sound confident and keep it simple.

Earlier, I mentioned a drummer shuffling with left and right hands in unison. I’d rather have heard a backbeat and mere

quarter notes on the ride. When he played a complex pattern, he created a musical jigsaw puzzle that was hard to follow—especially since he was a little off in his phrasing. I’m not denigrating the shuffle, which is a noble discipline with as many branches as a shrub. But to have the audacity to assert that you’ve found the *correct* branch is, well, suspect. If you *don’t* know the right groove, just play the bare minimum that will make the music flow and the listener tap along.

Let’s take the classic tune “Stand By Me.” The stresses in this song are a heavy pulse on 1, followed by an accent on the “&” of 2, with a rest on 3, capped by a strong 4. In effect, it’s a typical Latin *clave*.

A Well-Worn Repertoire

Once reclined in a stained soft chair in a blues club dressing room and stared at a message scribbled on a plaster wall by some weary soul: *You Must Never Play These Songs*. I’ve reprinted the list that followed, and added a few choices of my own. Despite the injunction of the original wall-writer, this is an excellent group of pop, rock, and R&B standards to have as part of your sitting-in repertoire. **T. Bruce Wittet**

“Dock Of The Bay”

“Respect”

“Chain Of Fools”

“Stormy Monday”

“Brown Eyed Girl”

“Stand By Me”

“Poor, Poor, Pitiful Me”

“With A Little Help From
My Friends”

“All Blues”

“Autumn Leaves”

“Ain’t No Sunshine”

“Summertime”

“I Heard It Through The
Grapevine”

“Proud Mary”

“Kansas City”

“Georgia”

“Satisfaction”

“Johnny B. Good”

“Hound Dog”

“Great Balls Of Fire”

“Wipe Out”

“Mustang Sally”

“Guitars, Cadillacs”

“Little Wing”

“Fly Like An Eagle”

“Sweet Home Alabama”

“Ring Of Fire”

“Fire And Rain”

“How Sweet It Is

(To Be Loved By You)”

“Crossroads”

“Tush”

“Hush”

“C Jam Blues”

“Pride”

“With Arms Wide Open”

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Club Scene

In my experience, drummers overplay this tune. They jump right in and stake out a backbeat. Here's a simpler approach: First beat: bass drum. Second beat (on the "&" of 2): bass drum. Third beat: rest. Then on 4, lay the shank of the stick against the hi-hat stand: clink. Play quarter notes on closed hi-hat with the bead of the stick throughout.

This approach has surprised a few bands. But invariably they play better. When adopted at least through the second verse, it's less "in your face," and more interesting in terms of timbre. It offers guitarists and bass players opportunities to resist the temptation to pump. And it gives you somewhere to go if you want to build the intensity of the later choruses.

If you play a jazz standard on brushes, don't feel that you have to execute your fanciest "snakes and ladders" swish pattern. In fact, don't feel that you have to execute any particular pattern. When I was active in recording, I'd tend to play incredibly simple swish patterns, with none of the fancy crossovers that define classic brushwork. Invariably it sounded fine on tape.

Consider simplifying cymbal bell and ride patterns. Constant variation of ride patterns may add interest, but we want to vary in a consistent way—if that makes any sense. Whatever we do when straying from the norm, we want to ensure that a comfortable quarter-note pulse prevails.

The Blues Jam And The House Kit

At a typical blues jam (or jazz jam, country jam, open mic' session, etc.), the house

band plays a set or two, and then yields the stage—sometimes to anarchy! Guitars wail, harmonicas howl, and vocals screech. Where's Simon from *American Idol* when you need him?

As a participating drummer, you will need to quickly come to grips with the house drummer's kit—or the dreaded house kit. Common courtesy tells us that we ought to treat the house drummer's kit as if it were our own. Don't make excessive adjustments, and by all means clear such intentions with him or her ahead of time. At the same time, remember that the drummer is likely to expect certain modifications since he or she volunteered the kit for a jam.

The house kit is a different beast. It's usually an unwanted drumset of an obscure brand, or a name-brand kit that's been ravaged. To give a common example, if it's a '70s Ludwig, the center tom mount will be stripped at the base, held in place by duct tape or even spot welding. Toms will be fitted with "clear" Pinstripes that are so gray with age that they look like an old furnace filter. The snare wires will be mangled and will not sit flush no matter how much tension you exert on them. Cymbals will be of some modest alloy and may exhibit cracks. Finally, the throne wobbles, and may not offer height adjustability.

What you cannot adjust, do not fiddle with endlessly. Find a way to strike the toms level, even if they are fixed at an awkward angle. Find a way to catch a decent rimshot on the snare. Extracting a passable sound is the name of this game. If you start whining

about a jalopy kit, the crowd will not understand, and musicians will shun you.

If You Trash, Offer Cash

In another example of what should be common courtesy, if you break something while sitting in, offer to right the damage on the spot or the next business day. Drumheads, clutches, and cymbals are likely contenders. If you know that tonight's the night you'll be sitting in, carry a stick bag. With sticks hovering in the ten-dollar range, providing your own is simple compassion. That said, you needn't feel compelled to wheel in your own throne, pedal, hi-hat stand, and so forth. Sitting in is largely about making do with available resources.

If you sit in on my kit, here's what I will expect. Never over-tighten my wing screws and nuts. If you raise the center tube on the snare stand, lock it finger tight, add a quarter-turn, then *stop!* You're securing the thing for two songs, not the next millennium. In lieu of over-tightening, make use of memory locks. *Don't* mess with my pedal throw or spring tension—at least not without asking me. If the upper portion of my cymbal rod tapers to a narrow section, do not lock a wing nut into the tapered portion. Play off my heads; don't bury the stick and leave welts. And if you break something, make my kit whole, as they say in law. That "do unto others" approach will cast you in a good light. And, if karma prevails, when I've moved on you might even snag my gig!



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The Rules Of Engagement

Making Hard Choices In A Tough Business

by Billy Ward



Paul La Raia

“I believe that, in the end, our personal integrity is everything.”

This article is about the inner conflicts that can happen in the drumming profession. You book one gig, and then some gig you *really* want comes up. How do you deal with all of this confusion? Should I cancel what I booked to go do the better gig?

I would think civilians (regular business people) respond on a purely business level of time/money/future income and act accordingly. We artists are in far more murky waters. We care about money, of course, but there’s also *art* and feeding our muse. I think we each have to constantly battle between things of “the earth” and “the heavens.”

For example, I’d like nothing more than to spend more time finishing my instructional film, which I’ve been working on. But since I’m paying for it (ouch!), it’s been placed in a secondary position throughout this past year. Yet this is the most important thing in my professional life to date—I *believe* in this sucker. But bills have to be paid, and New York City demands its pound of flesh.

All that said, let me give you a few music business scenarios that will demonstrate what I’m talking about. No personal details will be included, but they are each true.

**Scenario #1:
I Got Bumped/
I Demanded Payment/I Got Paid**

A couple of months ago, I was booked for two weeks of session work for a small-label release. The musicians were all very good, the music was cool, and the pay was acceptable. So I locked out those two weeks and accepted the work.

Less than one week before we were to begin, I received a call from the artist saying that it was off (I and the others were fired!) because the producer wanted to use “his own people.” While I’ve been ousted by bigger-name players before, I didn’t see this one coming because I accepted the statements, “You’re the best ever for this music” and “You’re my friend.”

In the phone call, the artist said, “I’ll make this up to you somehow.” (My ego was intact that week, so thank goodness I didn’t sink into an “I suck” depression.) But I was very financially damaged over this. I collected myself and wrote the artist requesting half the fee I would’ve made, commonly known in many audio and film circles as a “kill fee.” Unfortunately, I heard nothing. Did I do the right thing? Should I have just crawled away and moved on? I wrote him a second time and explained that I understood how hard it is to do the right thing sometimes. The artist responded and a compromise was reached. I received a check.

I’m sure each of us has stories like this. It’s not easy figuring out the appropriate behavior. But I believe that, in the end, our personal integrity is everything. Sometimes it costs, both emotionally and financially, to walk the higher path, whether the higher path is empathy for human foibles or taking care of one’s expectations and needs. But I believe that it truly comes back to us, though admittedly not always in the way one might hope.

**Scenario #2:
Wages Agreed Upon/
Paid Only Half/I’m A Chump!**

I was producing *and* playing on this one. After four months of hard work and

an agreed-upon fee, I was paid only half. (“It’s out of my control, Billy, sorry.”) The artist agreed to personally make up the difference in payment. (“Just give me some time.”) I took the mellow path on this one, because it seemed to me that if I pitched a fit, it would only blow up immediately. So I said, “That’s fine. Just do the best you can.”

For the next two years, I tried to pursue receiving payment without applying too much pressure. But in the end the most painful part—in addition to not getting paid—is the fact that I now have no relationship with this artist, a person I admire greatly. This one still confuses me and leaves unresolved feelings.

**Scenario #3:
I Committed/I Bailed/
Conclusion Unknown**

“I’ll always be there for you.” I’ve said those very words to artists, especially one in particular. Often, gigs for this artist are booked a year in advance. Unfortunately, I recently had to bail on one of his tours in Europe.

Twenty years ago, when I asked for advice about charging for gigs, John K. (a bass player who had worked with David Bowie and Cyndi Lauper) advised me regarding wages. He said the scale is simple: “On one side is fun, and on the other is money.” I usually follow this formula, but in the above scenario there were confusing factors. What if both gigs are fun and pay well? In this case, I followed my stomach, and my stomach said to do the tour I was offered in the US. (Besides, the US gig had a substantially longer run.)

Nonetheless, I let someone down who was counting on me. The artist gracefully understood and accepted my choice. I helped find and coach a substitute drummer. But still, I abandoned one of my heroes and friends. When it becomes time for me to repay this artist, will I recognize the opportunity and will I be able to do it willingly?

In Scenario #1, I was pro-active and directly pursued something that, without my action, might have remained in the

shadows of anger and remorse. I think that debts left unattended will usually only lead to guilt and separation. In Scenario #2, I chose to not apply that same directness because of the fragility that I perceived in the artist, yet it still got me nowhere. It’s as if the end result of separation and non-payment was pre-ordained no matter what I did. In Scenario #3, I displayed a clear double standard and, as of now, am totally relieved that my quitting was met with understanding and empathy, rather than demands that I couldn’t fulfill.

There is no single list of rules that apply to how we can best tread through our professional lives. The gray areas are abundant in the choice-making process. But, to put it simply, I think we do need to learn how to get along with people who tick us off. We need to resolve our differences and learn that negotiation, even when heated, is better than all-out conflict.

In addition to playing with many different kinds of people, being married to a wonderful woman has taught me what I call “The Rules Of Engagement.” They are:

1. Keep your voice down and control your anger.
2. Ask for what you really want.
3. Know that there are always other perspectives to your side of the argument.
4. *Listen*, and be open to learning something new in spite of your anger.
5. Don’t walk out in anger and don’t attack.
6. Try to walk the higher path. Integrity counts. It will probably pay you back many times over. You still might not get what you want, but you will feel better.

Billy Ward has worked with Carly Simon, Robbie Robertson, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Joan Osborne. His book, Inside Out: Exploring The Mental Aspects Of Drumming, was recently released by Modern Drummer Publications. Billy can be reached at his Web site, www.billyward.com.



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Introduction To Big Band

by Sherrie Maricle



MUSIC KEY

R.C.	✕
S.D.	●
B.D.	○
H.H.	✕
w/foot	✕

The art of big band drumming requires specific skills, along with an understanding of reading, independence, figures, fills, time, stylistic interpretation, and soloing. Let's take a look at each element individually.

Reading

Reading is a required skill for all serious musicians in most of today's musical environments. One way to become a good reader is to sightread a lot of music during practice sessions, and keep going even if you make a mistake. Recovering from mistakes is an important aspect of being a good reader.

One common ability shared by good readers is the immediate recognition of *groups* of rhythmic figures. Once you acquire this ability, your reaction to the music becomes instantaneous and precise. Two excellent books that can improve reading skills are *Modern Reading Text In 4/4* by Louie Bellson and *Progressive Steps To Syncopation* by Ted Reed.

The big band chart is the drummer's guide to the form of the piece. But bear in mind, drum parts are notated in many different ways. There is no standard notation that applies to every chart you'll encounter. Some are very precise and easy to follow with all the necessary information included, while others are nothing more than a basic sketch, a rhythm section lead sheet, or a copy of a horn part. Ron Spagnardi's *The Big Band Drummer* and Steve Houghton's *Studio And Big Band Drumming* offer excellent examples of variations in drum charts.

No matter what kind of chart you're given, you're expected to read the part accurately, interpret, improvise, be creative, and make the music feel good. Ultimately, the goal should be to memorize the chart so you no longer need to read it. Keeping the music in your head—not your head in the music—is the trick.

Independence

Both the Louie Bellson and Ted Reed books mentioned earlier are also primary sources for independence exercises. I suggest practicing these books within the context of a basic jazz groove, reading as follows: 1) snare drum, 2) bass drum, 3) 8th notes on the snare drum and quarter notes on the bass drum, 4) 8th notes on the bass drum and quarter notes on the snare drum. Tom-toms may also be substituted for the snare drum.

Basic Jazz Time

Rhythmic Line (from Bellson book)

Rhythm Applied To Snare Drum (Be sure to swing all 8th notes.)

Rhythm Applied To Bass Drum

Quarter Notes On Bass Drum, 8th Notes On Snare Drum

Figures And Fills

To set up or catch a written figure means to accent, support, and frame that figure in a musically appropriate manner. Doing this successfully requires going well beyond the notated figures. It requires creativity, improvisation, musical taste, and *intention*. (What is your setup supposed to accomplish?)

Figure interpretation can be loosely divided into two categories. Hits and punches usually occur during light ensemble, solo, or background sections and are played without disrupting the time flow. Fills and setups occur during "tutti" (when the entire band plays together) or shout sections. It's up to you to determine what type of hit, punch, fill, or setup is required in the arrangement.

Keep in mind that your job is to enhance, support, and set up ensemble entrances. And the way you set up the shout sections or catch the figures determines the phrasing, feel, dynamics, and style of the entire chart. Good setups make the ensemble entrances powerful, clear, and precise. Bad ones can cause a major train wreck. All fills, setups, and hits should always be *in the style* of the music being played and executed with solid time and a good feel.

Many players can read written figures, but don't fare well setting them up. Gaining this skill is a threefold process. First, find recordings of music in which you have the drum part. Listen and imitate what you hear, even if it isn't one hundred percent accu-

rate. Second, aurally identify common figures and setups on recordings (without the drum part) and memorize them. Make them part of your musical vocabulary. Third, isolate a particular rhythmic motif or phrase (perhaps from a reading exercise) and practice setting up that phrase in a variety of tempos and styles.

Your ears are a major contributor to your musical development. Copying licks is not a bad thing to do, and can in fact be a helpful step in your musical development. Some of my favorite big band drummers are Mel Lewis, Buddy Rich, Jeff Hamilton, and Dennis Mackrel. I also recommend listening to anything by the bands of Count Basie, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Toshiko Akiyoshi, and Duke Ellington.

Time

All drummers know that their primary function is to keep good time. You may have all the technique in the world, but if you can't lay down a solid groove that feels good to everyone in the band, then you're not doing your job.

Timekeeping is a skill that should develop into an intuitive ability. Good time creates a stability of feel and flow that should be established on the downbeat and stop on the cutoff. The feeling of solid time should never stop, despite whatever else may be happening musically.

Always practice time in a variety of styles and at various tempos. Practice alternating phrases of varying grooves. For example, play sixteen measures of swing into sixteen measures of samba. Finally, practice alternating phrases of time with phrases of solo (trading "fours" or "eights"). Everything should be smooth and connected, legato and seamless. I also strongly suggest practicing with a metronome.

Stylistic Interpretation

In big band drumming, you're expected to know various styles and to be aware of what type of groove is appropriate for the chart. Stylistic interpretation can be as general as determining whether the tune is in the jazz, rock, or Latin veins. If the chart requires a jazz feel, you shouldn't be playing syncopated funk fills.

The jazz, rock, and Latin categories are good starting points, but gaining an understanding of specific styles requires deeper study. Within the above three categories are numerous variations and sub-categories. For example, jazz includes Dixieland, '40s swing, bop, shuffle, and fusion. Rock includes '50s rock, Motown, funk, and hip-hop. Latin takes in samba, bossa nova, baião, rumba, mozambique, and so much more.

The following books are excellent sources for studying the more prevalent styles: *Afro-Cuban Rhythms For Drumset* by Frank Malabe and Bob Weiner, *The Art Of Bop Drumming* and *Beyond Bop Drumming* by John Riley, *Advanced Funk Studies* by Rick Latham, *Progressive Independence: Rock* by Ron Spagnardi, *The New Breed* by Gary Chester, and *Brazilian Rhythms For Drumset* by Duduka DaFonseca and Bob Weiner.

The best way to learn various styles is to make listening a part of your daily practice regime. Once you can identify and play the key styles and grooves, you should then look into the variations that fall within those styles.

Soloing

The two types of solos you may be required to play in a big band situation are the "in time" solo and the "free form" or "open" solo. An

"in time" solo can run from a simple two-measure break to soloing over the form of the tune. In the freest situations, the time can be manipulated (double-time/half-time) and the groove can change (Latin to swing), but the underlying pulse must *always* be identifiable.

If you're playing within a particular musical style, your solo should reflect and embody the characteristics specific to that style. Ideas for solos come from a lot of listening and transcribing solos off of recordings. Also, practice playing jazz standards on the drumset—melody and all!

The "free form" or "open" solo can be one of the most exciting or most frightening moments for a drummer. Here you're given an indeterminate amount of time to play something interesting and effective. Of course, the "open" solo is also the perfect opportunity to totally express your musicality, creativity, and technique in whatever manner you choose.

As a practice exercise, using rhythm, melody, dynamics, form, sound, phrasing, emotion, technique, and tension and release, select just one element and explore as many aspects of it as possible. And when the opportunity to solo arises, be sure to listen and react to the musicians you're playing with and the music you're performing.

Hopefully this article has given you enough ideas, motivation, and inspiration to look deeper into the exciting field of big band drumming. Good luck on your journey.

Sherrie Maricle is the drummer/leader of Diva, a successful all-female, New York-based big band. (See her feature on page 142.)



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Also available from Camber is the Stage Bell Mount (CSBM), which combines a staggered cymbal arm and a multi-clamp that can be attached to any stand. The CSMB may also be used to mount splash and effect cymbals around the drummer's setup. It's priced at \$37.

Finally, Camber's new 12" and 14" C4000 China cymbals are made from premium brass, which is lathed and then over-hammered to produce the low-pitched "trashy" sound

synonymous with Chinese-type cymbals. They are then coated with a micro-thin protective lacquer. The cymbals are said to be an economical sound effect for the beginner or the professional, and to exhibit exceptional durability. The 12" model lists for \$30; the 14" for \$33.

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HQ Percussion's RealFeel Mucho Pad is a multi-purpose practice pad designed by master percussionist Daniel de los Reyes. It has four playing surfaces, two of which replicate drums and two that replicate cowbells—making it particularly useful for timbale practice. One drum surface is gum rubber and the other is neoprene, providing two different feels and pitches. The two cowbell surfaces are neoprene and are constructed to represent a high and low bell, each with graduated pitch differentiation. Additionally, there is a replicated drum rim on the right side "drum" surface. The bottom side of the pad has a non-slip surface cut out to allow room for conga/bongo-type hand exercises and warm-ups. The Mucho Pad retails for \$75.95.

(800) 467-3335, www.HQpercussion.com.



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Vater has launched Rikki Rockett's Bottle Rockett. The new Players Design Series model is sized between a 5A and 5B, and features a unique handle shaped into the grip. The gradual taper and weight is said to give the Bottle Rockett outstanding rebound, response, and playability. The squared-off oval tip is designed to draw big sounds from the drums

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The Reference Shelf

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Marco Minnemann's DVD *Extreme Drumming* allows percussionists of all levels to study his cutting-edge techniques while experiencing the energy of his performance. The double-sided DVD features over four hours of musical and solo performances. Accompanists include bassist Wolfgang Schmid of Passport and keyboardist Steve Hamilton of Bill Bruford's Earthworks. Educational features include page-by-page demonstrations from Minnemann's book, independence exercises, technique suggestions, and printable lessons, drum charts, and transcriptions from Minnemann's performances. Suggested retail price is \$39.95.

(800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublications.com.



Many of the products feature recent upgrades. The USA Free Floater Snare Drum now features 6-mm key rods that are thicker, heat-treated, and designed for high-torque applications. All bass drum hoops have also been beefed up and manufactured with a special process to increase strength for high-tension tuning. Most significantly, marching shells are now made from high-quality, cross-laminated birch, with the durable cortex finish integrated into the shell. This produces what Ludwig calls their "strongest shell ever."

www.ludwig-drums.com.

Rob Cook: The Ludwig Book (Ludwig Drums)

Featuring 306 total pages, with 58 in full-color, Rob Cook's book includes a complete business history of Ludwig, which will celebrate ninety-five years of continuous production in 2004. The human side of the business is brought to life through interviews with key Ludwig employees from over the years. There is a company timeline, as well as a guide that tracks Ludwig products from the start of the company to the present. Also included is a CD ROM featuring the full Ludwig/Musser digital catalog, downloadable, printable posters, and audio files of Bill Ludwig Sr. and Bill Ludwig II performing drum rudiments and solos. *The Ludwig Book* retails for \$40.

www.ludwig-drums.com.



Pearl 2003 Education And Product CD ROM (Pearl Corporation And Adams Musical Instruments)

This CD features lessons for the beginning percussionist, resources for the percussion student and the music educator, an inside look at products from Pearl Drums and Adams Musical Instruments, and a Pearl video. It's available free at www.pearldrums.com.



Ludwig Marching Drum Catalog (Ludwig Drums)

A full-color catalog featuring Ludwig Marching Percussion is now available. It includes a full compliment of high-quality marching drums and accessories, from Free Floater and traditional snare drums, multi-toms and bass drums, to mallets, sticks, carriers, cases, and pit stands. All have been designed to meet the demands of the contemporary competitive marching band/drum corps or the middle school band.



Pro-Mark 2003-2004 Catalog (Pro-Mark)

This 84-page, full-color catalog is the most ambitious in Pro-Mark's history. Among dozens of new products being introduced are "Pro-Rounds" (round-tip versions of the company's most popular hickory models), the Johnny Rabb TX731W Autograph Model, two indoor marching snare stick models by Jeff Moore and Matt



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Hugo Pinksterboer: Tipbook Music On Paper: Basic Theory (Hal Leonard)

This latest offering from Hugo Pinksterboer's very handy *Tipbook* series addresses the subject of basic music theory. It isn't written specifically for drummers, but it is written *by* a drummer who didn't want to feel stupid when bandmates were talking about minor sevenths, transposition, or chord symbols. Especially useful are "tipcodes" printed throughout the text that give access to short sound tracks (at www.tipbook.com) that audibly illustrate most of the examples in the book. List price is \$9.95.

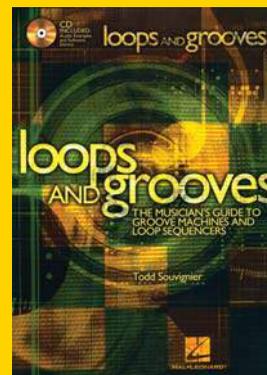
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Todd Souvignier: Loops And Grooves: The Musician's Guide To Groove Machines And Loop Sequencers (Hal Leonard)

This book is an overview of the technology and art of making music with loops. Author Souvignier (a nationally recognized expert on music technology) focuses on loop-sequencing hardware, loop-slicing software, and other aspects of music technology. An included CD provides audio examples and software demos. The package is priced at \$19.95.

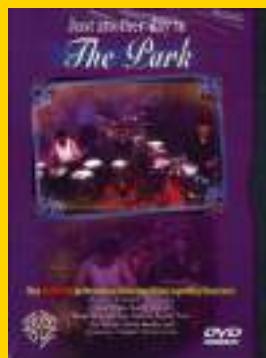
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Rick Considine: Rudiment Grooves For Drum Set (Berklee Press)

Berklee College Of Music associate professor Rick Considine uses this book to break the intricacies of drumset playing down into its basic elements: the rudiments. This book applies the rudiments to all styles of music, with fifty illustrated grooves (each reinforced by the accompanying CD). Attention is paid to how accents, tempos, style, and feel ultimately turn the rudiments into music. The book is priced at \$19.95.

(617) 747-2146, www.berkleeppress.com.



Various Artists: Just Another Day In The Park DVD (Warner Bros.)

This DVD version of the original VHS video (reviewed in the October 2003 *MD*) showcases music from Raul Rekow and Karl Perazzo's solo CD of the same name. The two percussionists explore Latin rhythms and the art of jamming, with guest drummer Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez and an all-star Latin band. DVD features include studio performances, interactive artist biographies, and a set-up-and-play clinic with Raul and Karl.

(800) 327-7643, www.warnerbrospublications.com.

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(616) 738-3190, www.blackswamp.com.

DrumBumpers, by **WEEKEND ROCKER**, are rubber-like devices designed to grip the rim of any drum and keep it from marring or scratching the finish of adjacent drums. The units fit most die-cast or flanged hoops, and work with any size of drum. The bumpers can simply be pressed onto the rim and are said to hold fast under hard playing conditions, yet to be easy to move as your setup changes. The bumpers do not alter the sound of the drum in any way. They're sold in packages of two for \$14.95.

(317) 695-8319, www.weekendrock.com.



▶ **GROVER PRO PERCUSSION** has added two persimmon concert stick models to its Silver Fox drumstick line. Persimmon is valued by concert percussionists for its fine balance, weight, and silky feel. The SF-SD-1 Robert McCormick Signature model is 17" long and .635 in diameter. It features a long taper and an acorn bead, and is recommended for full orchestral playing. The persimmon SD-2 model is a versatile percussion stick, with a .635" diameter, a short taper, and a standard ball bead. Each pair of sticks is computer-matched according to weight and pitch, as well as being expertly matched by eye for grain and appearance. Both models sell for \$15 per pair.

(781) 935-6200, www.silverfoxpercussion.com.



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UNIVERSAL PERCUSSION now offers a box set of Wuhan S Series cymbals that includes a matched pair of 14" hi-hats and an 18" crash/ride. The series is said to offer the old-world sound of hand-hammered cymbals and the shiny appearance and clarity indicative of modern cymbals. The box set lists for \$461. (800) 282-0110, www.universalpercussion.com.



▶ **LATIN PERCUSSION** has lowered the prices on its Classic Model series of premium congas, which are made of Siam oak, topped with hand-selected rawhide heads and Comfort Curve II rims, and fitted with LP Heart side plates and ProCare integrated shell protectors. The drums now range in price from \$525 to \$575, depending on size.



Also from LP is a new version of Valje traditional wood bongos. The drums retain the authentic Valje contoured shell, which is made of prime beech with a natural satin finish. They feature steel-band rims and Cuban-style steel bottoms, but have a shortened center block for more comfortable playing between the knees. Heads for the 7¹/₄" and 8⁵/₈" drums are hand-selected and matched to ensure consistency. List price is \$319. (973) 478-6903, www.lpmusic.com.



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The Rhythm Of The Blues

the art of blues drumming

by Tony Coleman

By an act of the United States Congress, this year has been proclaimed "The Year Of The Blues." The purpose of this is to educate and to focus on all of the wonderful things blues music has given the world. For *our* purposes, it makes a handy excuse to take a closer look at the deep yet often misunderstood world of blues drumming.

Blues music is an African American art form that has influenced just about every major music genre in the world. Usually when the term "the blues" is used, the first thing that comes to mind is someone crying and feeling bad. Or it's the image of an old black man or woman in the cotton fields, or sitting on the front porch, singing songs through missing teeth, a jug of whiskey somewhere close.

Well, that may be part of where the blues came from, but that's just one

image—the rural blues image. The blues is deeper than that. As much as it's about life's misfortunes, blues music can make you feel happy and get you on your feet, dancing and singing "Let The Good Times Roll" or "I Got A Sweet Little Angel." The way I see it, the blues is like this: If a poisonous snake bites you, it takes the snake venom to cure you from the bite. So if you get the blues, blues music can cure your blues. Blues is the *antidote* to the blues.

Some of the masters of the modern-day blues include B.B. King, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Koko Taylor, Etta James, and Buddy Guy, to name just a few. Though so many of these masters have left us, including Albert King, Albert Collins, John Lee Hooker, Junior Wells, Katie Webster, and Muddy Waters (the father of modern blues), the blues are here to stay.

Blues Rhythm

Too often when we speak of the blues, we focus on the guitar, the harmonica, the piano, or the singing. But very little mention goes to the most important part of blues music—or most music in general. I'm talking about the drums: the rhythm of the blues. In fact, behind every great blues guitarist or singer is a great blues drummer.

Ironically, in the world of the blues, most drummers go unnoticed because they are doing their job the right way. What I mean by this is that usually the only time the drummer gets acknowledged is when he's not performing well. If the show is "tight," the leader will probably tell everyone what a great show it was. But if it was a bad show, you'll hear about that too. Sometimes it's the drummer's fault. There can be several reasons for this.

One reason for this problem is that in most bands, everyone looks at the drums and at some point will think that it's not so hard to do. But the drum seat is the hot seat. Because the drummer is expected to read the leader's mind, he has to be ready to change the flow and the dynamics of the band without warning. Then he has to continue to look cool, as if it was all planned. I've never worked with a blues artist who performs the same song the same way all the time. This is because the blues is based on *feeling*, and at any given moment the



artist may want the music played faster, slower, louder, or softer. That's what the blues is all about. It really keeps you on your toes.

So, you have to be ready for anything when performing in a blues band. If the guitarist breaks a string in the middle of a solo and stops playing to change it, that's not a big deal. If the horns drop out or misfire every now and then, well, we can let that slide for now. But if the drummer stops during a song for any reason, help! Call the Air Force, the Army, a doctor—*somebody*. That's because everyone depends on the drummer's rhythm to keep flowing and set-

ting the groove. No rhythm, no blues. Put another way, without rhythm, you will certainly *give* everybody the blues. Ask any player what can distract their performance more than anything, and they'll say when the drummer is not playing in the pocket or isn't listening to the rest of the band.

Feeling Is Believing

Though many blues drummers have a knowledge of different blues grooves, and can identify them on paper, no one can write down a feeling. Either you've got it or you don't. It cannot be taught or duplicated. It has to be in your soul. Feeling is as natural as breathing. You don't even have to think about it.

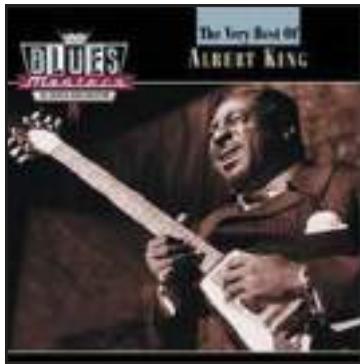
But the feel is not just the drummer's job, it's the bass player's as well. The bass player is the drummer's wingman, the other part of the puzzle to complete the picture. A good bass player should be able to play as sturdy as the drummer. If the drummer stops playing for any reason, the bass player should be able to keep right on grooving the band.

The only difference between the drummer and the bass player is that the bass player gets to play in different keys. It's always funny when the guitarist turns and tells me what key the next tune is in. I'll respond, "I can't play drums in that key," and that will bring him back to reality. It's sure to get a laugh—or cause a puzzled look on his face.

Seriously, blues drummers may not play



Albert King and Booker T. & The MG's' Al Jackson Jr.

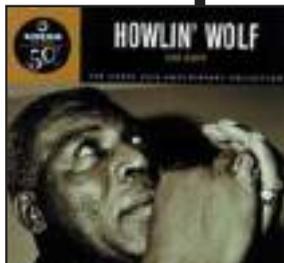


blues has gone before, we have to be prepared for *anything*.

If you go to a blues concert

sounds match the type of blues music you are playing. Try to have whatever you need to get the job done. The artist or band you are working with will really appreciate it. Be flexible. Try to be a musician who plays drums, instead of just being the drummer.

as “melodically” as jazz drummers, but I do consciously tune my drums—in thirds or fourths—because the tuning you choose defines your sound. Every great blues artist has a signature sound. When you hear it, you immediately know who it is. They never try to copy each other’s style, though they are influenced by and respectful of each other’s talents. Blues drummers should also have a signature sound and style that says who they are, just like guitarists and other musicians do.



Get The Blues!



There are so many great blues recordings that if I were to list all of them, it would take up a hundred pages in this magazine—and *Modern Drummer* would take my drums away if I tried to do that! But here’s a good place to start your search. I know that when I heard these masters’ records, it made me want to get busy learning how to be a better drummer. And each one of these drummers had a way of playing that lets you know who they are. I’m still following these guys’ leads, staying in the pocket and groovin’, swingin’, and funk’in’ the blues. **T.C.**

Artist	Drummer
Muddy Waters	Fred Below, Sam Lay, Willie Smith, S.P. Leary
Howlin’ Wolf	Sam Lay, Earl Phillips, S.P. Leary
Little Walter	Fred Below
Willie Dixon	all of the above
KoKo Taylor	all of the above
Buddy Guy	Earl Phillips
Albert King	Al Jackson Jr.
Freddie King	Steve Ferrone (pre-AWBI)
Bobby “Blue” Bland	Jabo Starks
B.B. King	Sonny Freeman, Bernard Purdie, Stix Hooper

And here are a few more blues drummers who deserve wider attention:

Harold “Peenie” Portier, Tony Braunagel, Rod Bland, “Killer” Ray Allison, George Rains, Fran Christina, Jaimoe Johanson, Butch Trucks, Buddy Miles, Kevin Hayes, Herman Earnest, Donto James, “Mean” Willie Green, Calep Emphrey, and Animal from The Muppets (though he needs to work on his shuffle).

The Blues Is Old, Your Equipment Shouldn’t Be

Your drum equipment should be as solid as you are as a player. Having an old vintage set to play may seem cool, but that’s not effective for today’s grinding tours and giant sound systems. Sometimes I play as hard as a metal drummer, in giant stadiums. Sometimes I play as quietly as a jazz drummer in a small bar. Your drums should be able to handle any situation. Since we’re taking the blues into the future, where no

today, there’s a good chance the guitarist will have four or five different guitars onstage, and will play all of them before the show is over. He’s also likely to have a million foot pedals and gadgets. This is because he’s trying to get a variety of sounds and styles for the different songs.

As a drummer, I use different snare drums for different types of blues. If it’s traditional blues, I use a regular-sounding snare. For funky, in-the-pocket blues, I use my crackin’ tight snare. For cymbals, if it’s traditional I’ll use a mellow warm ride with some sustain in it. For the funky soulful stuff, I use a dry, loud ride for more definition. The same thing goes for the hi-hats and the crash cymbals. Make sure the

Don’t Just Hear, Listen

If you want to play with different artists—in any style—you must give that artist what he or she wants. Study what their music is all about. And know how to play their songs with different feels. Don’t ever assume anything about playing the blues or take the attitude that it’s all the same. Unfortunately this is one of the problems many drummers have about this music. Let me give you an example of what I’m talking about.

I was once playing on a major jazz festival in Europe with B.B. King, and while we were doing the show, musicians from different bands were invited to join us onstage

for a jam session. There was a great drummer who I respected very much standing on the side of the stage waiting to sit in. So of course I was excited and wanted to hear him play some blues. When he finally sat down to play, it was overkill and the feel was totally lost. It was very obvious he did not understand what he should have been playing. After the jam session we were talking, and he told me he knew how bad his playing sounded. Then he looked at me and said, "Oh well, it's just the blues." I thought to myself, What a sorry attitude. If you want to play with different types of musicians, learn how to listen and be respectful of their music. To play it right, you have to be versatile and open to things you don't understand.

I once had a gig with a reggae band, playing five nights a week, five sets a night. I thought I was playing great, until the guitarist told me the pattern I was playing on the hi-hat was wrong, and it was giving the song a different feel. After checking it out I realized he was right. The problem I was

Paul Butterfield's Sam Lay



having is something many of us have been guilty of, and that is hearing the music but not *listening* to it.

You have to keep your eyes and ears wide open when you are onstage playing the blues. Sometimes you just never know what's coming next. I've learned something new about the blues from every artist I've ever played with.

Breakdown Time

One thing all blues drummers need to know how to do when performing onstage is breaking the band down. I had a singer tell me a story about this drummer she hired at the last minute who had never played in a blues or soul band. During the

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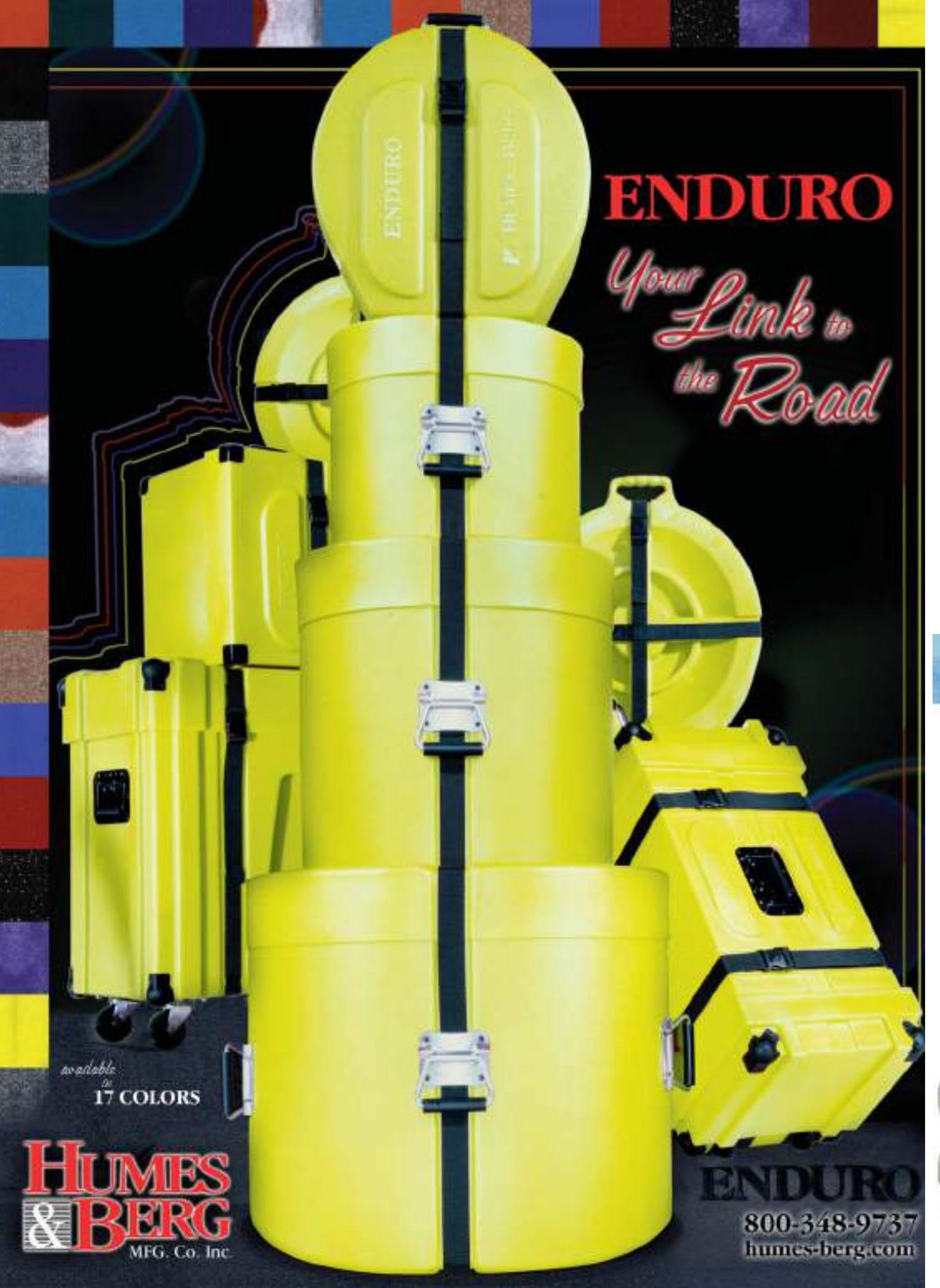
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Blues Drumming

show she tells the drummer to break it down, and he stops playing to pack his drums up. Well, that's what happens when you don't know the system of playing in a blues band.

The right way to break the band down is to hit the snare and the hi-hat on the downbeat, or a strong hit on the crash cymbal and then an immediate choke on the cymbal. (That's when you grab the cymbal to cut off its sustain.) By doing this you bring the volume of the entire band down to a whisper—but remember to keep the tempo the same, and don't lose the energy. Now you're playing with dynamics, and this makes the live performance exciting.

What A Leader Wants

I recently asked some of the great blues artists I've played with to tell me what they liked from their drummers. According to **B.B. King**, "A good drummer has to keep the foot and the shuffle on the beat. And don't solo throughout the

song when I'm playing. A good drummer keeps the time flowing all the time."

B.B. likes the downbeat on the top. He never wants the drummer to lag behind the beat. It took me a while to understand what playing on top of the beat was in a slow blues ballad. When he played an uptempo shuffle, it was easier to understand. Since B.B. is into playing all types of blues and other genres of music, the drummer has to be able to give him whatever he is feeling and be ready for anything. I have played just about every style of music there is with B.B.—jazz, funk, soul, country, rock, swing, Gospel, ballads, reggae grooves, calypso—and with every type of artist imaginable, from Pavarotti to The Red Hot Chili Peppers. B.B. might want you to play a shuffle at 100 miles an hour. He might want you to play as loud as a lion—or quiet as a mouse—and never lose the tempo.

B.B. is also a very open-minded person. He used to fly airplanes, and he is a whiz on computers. There's no stereotyping "The King Of The Blues" as just another

bluesman from the plantation. And that is what makes his blues so special.

Ike Turner, one of the pioneers of rock 'n' roll, has run some of the tightest bands in the history of R&B music. "I want the drummer to forget he is playing the drums," says Ike. "I want him to apply his *feelings* to what he's playing, to marry what he is playing. Give all of your skills to the playing. That's what I like."

Koko Taylor is known as "The Queen Of Chicago Blues." Says Koko, "I like a drummer to hold that backbeat and keep the music together. He's the one that keeps the pattern together for the whole band. I can't do nothing without a good drummer. He's got the hardest job, too. When everybody is done, he is still doing things to get ready. He has to turn all of those screws and things and put all those parts together. He really should get paid more money than the rest of the band. [laughs] I would rather have a good drummer than a good guitar player."

Bobby "Blue" Bland is the world's greatest blues balladeer—the coolest, most soulful singer on the planet. Bobby

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Blues Drumming

always had a big band with several horns, because his song arrangements are so dramatic. "Orchestrated soul blues" is what I would call it. Not the kind of blues made for jam sessions. If you did not know the music, you would not be able to hang with that band at all.

As the drummer in Bobby's band, I had to be swinging, groovin', and in the pocket. I also had to accent the horn lines along with swells and fills. Just listen to any of Bobby's early recordings, and you'll get the picture. On most of those recordings is one of my favorite soul and blues drummers, Mr. Jabo Starks. Listen to "Turn On Your Love Light" or "Don't Cry No More," then talk to me. I'm *still* trying to get those feels down. After playing with Bobby, Jabo joined James Brown's band—and everybody knows how important the drums are to JB's music.

Albert King was "The Godfather Of The Blues." The times I played with him were always a funky good time. He was to blues what James Brown is to soul. I think because he was a drummer, Albert always liked the drummer to play that funky pocket, with more of an R&B feel.

All of Albert King's music was soulful, but some of his greatest recordings were done on Stax Records and produced by drummer Al Jackson, from Booker T & The M.G.'s. Now, every drummer should know how funky Al Jackson played. Just awesome, a mix of funky soul and blues. When Albert King died, he left a void in the blues that can never be replaced.

Albert Collins was "The Master Of The Telecaster," and he was just blazing and amazing all the time. Albert was raw and funky. He liked the drums kicking the same way he was kicking. He was funky like James Brown and swinging like Count Basie, with the blues so deep in his soul you felt like he was taking you to church. He was full of passion and fire. Albert was also into the drummer pushing the groove straight ahead, and never backing away from it.

Buddy Guy takes the blues to yet another level. When he plays it's like he's somewhere other than planet Earth. You never know where Buddy is gonna go, so you have to be ready for anything. He might go from a funky moderate shuffle, to a lowdown dirty slow-burning blues, to

a blazing-hot call-the-fire-department blues shuffle. You cannot play drums with Buddy Guy and be on autopilot.

As a drummer playing with these great artists, I had to use all there is in the blues vault. Each one has their own way of playing and singing, so it's essential for the drummer to understand what each one is bringing to the table. What works for one artist doesn't necessarily work for another—though it's true that there are certain nuances that all blues drummers should know how to play. Understanding when to use them is the key.

Know Your History

There are great drummers who can play the blues. There are blues drummers who can play great drums. Then there are blues purists who only play blues well. I am a specialist in playing the blues, but I try to be as versatile as possible. I take the same attitude when playing each style: Do it right, or don't do it at all. I love playing the drums, but only if I'm doing it right. And to play the blues properly, you need to know where it came from.

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Blues music originated in the rural towns of the American south, when black plantation workers adapted work songs to a more structured format. Acoustic, often homemade instruments were used initially, but as many musicians moved to the big cities in search of work, the blues got electrified. With this new, more powerful style, hand-claps and foot stomping couldn't cut it anymore, so the drumset became a permanent part of the new sound.

Style variations evolved depending on what city musicians settled in. Dallas, Houston, New Orleans, Memphis, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Chicago became known for their own special styles of the blues. Blues drumming had to adapt to these differences, and reflected the influence that gospel, country, jazz, rock 'n' roll, soul, funk, reggae, and even rap have had on the original sound.

Keeping It Simple

No matter how much the blues evolves, a strong, steady feel is always the most important characteristic. To make the music flow, you should not think about what you are playing. Let your feelings take over. Sometimes the hardest thing for a lot of drummers to do is keep the feel consistent without playing too many drum fills. Relax. Don't hold the sticks too tight, and play from your wrist instead of your arms. You'll find it a lot easier to maintain a consistent groove without playing a lot of turn-arounds and fills, which takes away from the groove.

Don't worry, there will be times when you can stretch out and show everyone how many killer licks you can play. But laying down a good funky groove is what makes the blues the soul music it is. And honestly, playing a good solid rhythm can be just as hip as playing all over the drums. Try not to feel left out if the music doesn't need the drummer showboating like the other musicians.

As long as you keep the groove on the downbeat, you can get away with playing some accents or dropping a bomb here and there—as long as you come in with a strong downbeat, in time. And be sure you are playing with a bass player who understands the need to stay in the pocket when you make a fill. If the drummer and the bass player are moving around at

the same time, then the bottom will fall out and the groove will be lost. And while you're grooving, your kick drum should be right there with the bass line. That way the bass drum won't sound like it's fighting with the bass guitar. This is what gives the music the proper feel. It doesn't matter how fast or how slow, how loud or how quiet, just stay in the pocket.

Being in the pocket doesn't mean sounding metronomic. In fact, using a metronome or a click track in the studio can kill a groove. A metronome is great to practice with and to build up your endurance, but using it to learn how to play the right tempo can become a crutch for a drummer. If you're not careful, you can end up sounding *like* a metronome when you play.

The same thing can happen when a drummer uses a click track to record with. If you're having that much trouble keeping time, maybe you're not ready to be in the studio. In some styles of music, producers have stopped using live drummers at all, and rely on sequencers. In the blues drumming world that would never work, because of all the emotion and spontaneity involved. It would be like putting leg irons on a track runner.

Having good time doesn't mean playing "perfectly," either. As long as the feeling is there, it's okay to make mistakes. I love to hear some human elements in the music, like a drumstick hitting the rim of the drum, or the tempo moving a little bit—just a *little* bit. That's what makes blues music and drumming so real.

Check out Al Jackson playing drums on

Albert King's song "I Wanna Get Funky." At the end of the song you can hear Jackson drop the stick, pick up another one, and keep right on playing. Now you *know* they could've started the tune over. But since it sounded so good, those guys just said forget about it. And it's a great track! That's the reality of being a blues artist with some soul—being a human, not a robot. So try to have fun when you play, because playing the blues is *not* about being sad.

You Gotta Be You

Being a great drummer in any style—but especially in the blues—means playing with personality. Find something that defines your style and your sound. It can be a snare sound, a drum fill, a pick-up for the intro, or just your own unique feel. Playing or sounding just like some other drummer will not help you get the gig.

Learn how to apply the methods of blues drumming, but be true to who you are. The less you try to impress, the better you will be as a player. Don't be intimidated by other players. Just be the best player you can be. There will always be someone somewhere ready to show you and the world they are better than you are. Let that go. I think one of the reasons many blues and jazz drummers are still playing into their seventies and eighties is because they learned that lesson long ago. That comes from keeping it real, and not trying to compete with anyone. When you play the blues, "Let the good times roll."

Tony Coleman is one of the greatest contemporary blues drummers working today. His résumé is a virtual who's who of modern blues heroes, including B.B. King, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Albert King, Johnnie Taylor, Otis Clay, Albert Collins,



Buddy Guy, James Cotton, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. "Listen to T.C.," says Melvin Jackson, former bandleader for Bobby Blue Bland and current tenor sax player in B.B. King's band. "You'll see how to do what we do."

"It's really an honor and a privilege when artists like Melvin say such nice things about me," says Tony. "I will always do the best I can to make their music swing. They are the reason I know what I know about the blues."

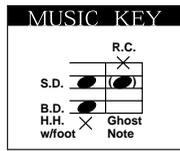
Tony's latest album as a leader is *Travelin' Man*. Currently he's leading his own band on an extended European tour. For more information, go to www.tonycolemanmusic.com.



Blues Clues

Investigating The Basic Beats

by Conor Meehan



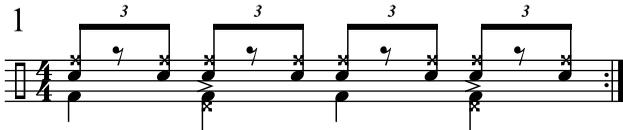
When I play in Sydney or Oslo or Osaka, I get the same feeling I used to get in Osceola, Arkansas; people are grooving on the blues because the blues are universal." This feeling that B.B. King is speaking of is what the blues is all about. The blues is an incredibly deep feeling expressed through utterly simple music. It can be dark and desperate or funny and satirical. Because of the simplicity, blues drummers and their drumming can be easily overlooked.

Beneath simple music lies simple drumming. Here are three basic blues beats.

The Shuffle

The shuffle is the most common beat associated with blues. This simple and repetitive rhythm can be difficult to master. It's demanding technically and may take a while to develop a relaxed and swinging feel, especially with the left hand. Although there are a few different kinds of shuffles, here's a basic blues shuffle groove.

Quarter Note = 95–140



This is sometimes called a "double shuffle" because of the unison right and left hands. This works well when the bass plays an 8th-note shuffle pattern (as opposed to walking quarter notes).

There are a lot of ways to practice this groove. Try playing it as written. Then try moving the 8th notes slightly—swinging them more or less. How does this feel? Notice how the balance of the beat changes as you play the 8th notes more as in this example.



This will really swing when the bass player is walking. The quarter notes in the right hand give it a more open feel. Speaking of feel, a valuable approach is to practice pushing and pulling the beat. Laying back can also feel great in walking shuffles.

There are two obstacles to overcome in developing the left hand: 1) it's hard to accent the 2 and 4 and ghost the other 8th notes smoothly and relaxed, and 2) it's hard to accent the 2 and 4 in your left hand and not accent them in the right hand and the bass drum. A good exercise to practice overcoming both of these obstacles is to play the original example with no accent on 2 and 4. Start slowly. Listen to how the bass drum and right hand sound and feel together—get them to really lock up and feel the pulse that creates.

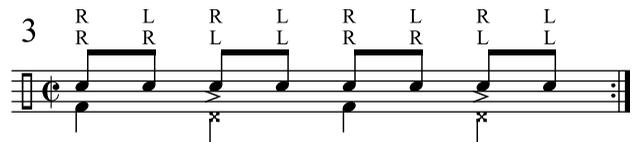
Then when you feel really comfortable with that, start accenting the 2 and 4 in your left hand and slowly increase the volume. As you hear that, listen to your bass drum and ride cymbal. They should still be laying down a solid and consistent pulse.

To hear great performances of this beat, check out S.P. Leary on Otis Span's *The Blues Never Die*, or Jim Keltner on Eric Clapton's *From The Cradle*. T-Bone Walker's "T-Bone Shuffle," Freddy King's "Sweet Home Chicago," and Buddy Guy's "Let Me Love You Baby" are all great performances of classic shuffles.

The Train Beat

This is called the train beat because it imitates the sound of a train rushing by. Just like a train, it's very fast, intense, and high-energy, and it will definitely get the people groovin'. Here are a couple of ways to play a train groove.

Half Note = 110–135



Try both stickings and decide which feels better. The train beat's fast tempo gives it a "two" feel. A solid 1 and 3 on the bass drum will lock in with the bass and anchor the groove. This beat is played at fast tempos. The fast tempo will leave less room for a real swing interpretation, but giving a little "lilt" to it can make it really swing.

Listen to Muddy Waters' classic "I've Got My Mojo Workin'" to hear great performances of this groove. To change the dynamic, as in going from a verse to a solo, one thing you can do is switch to the ride. Here are a couple of ways to approach that.



Sometimes switching from the 8th-note snare groove to the cymbal will feel kind of empty. Ghosting the "&s" of 2 and 4 on the snare as in the second example can fill in some of the space and give more continuity between the constant snare beat and the more open cymbal groove. After playing this groove for a while, this becomes almost effortless.

Slow Blues

The slow blues is another deceptively hard groove to get together. The slow tempo and space between beats makes it very tempting to play lots of notes. It's also very easy to speed up or even slow down playing this groove. While it's important to support and interact with the vocalist/soloist, remember that a solid groove comes first. Here's a basic slow blues beat.

Quarter Note = 40–65



There is a huge dynamic spectrum to take advantage of when playing a slow blues. It's common to play through wailing guitar solos and intimate piano or vocal choruses in the same tune, so it's good to have a variety of ways to accompany these. Try playing the same groove with rimclicks on 2 and 4, or by using a brush in the right hand on the snare. (You can tap or sweep with it.) And cymbal variations are cool.

Again, listen to what the bass player is doing and try to lock in with the bass drum. This groove takes a lot of focus and patience to play the right way. Listen to Sonny Freeman on B.B. King's *Live At The Regal* on tunes like "Sweet Little Angel," "My Own Fault," and "How Blue Can You Get." This is slow blues drumming at its finest.



Speaking of listening, one of the best things to do to help develop this style is to listen to and play along with as many recordings as you can find. Getting a grasp on the feeling of the blues is key to playing it right. Some great drummers to listen to are Sonny Freeman with B.B. King on *Live At The Regal* and *Live At Cook County Jail*, S.P. Leary with Otis Span on *The Blues Never Die*, Willie "Big Eyes" Smith with Muddy Waters on *Hard Again*, Fred Below with Little Walter or Buddy Guy and Junior Wells on *Chicago! The Blues Today*, Kenneth "Spider Web" Rice with Freddie King on *My Feeling For The Blues*, and Jim Keltner with Eric Clapton on *From The Cradle*. Odie Payne, Al Jackson Jr., Calep Emphrey, Chris Layton, Sam Lay, Earl Palmer, and Ray Allison are all good guys to check out as well.



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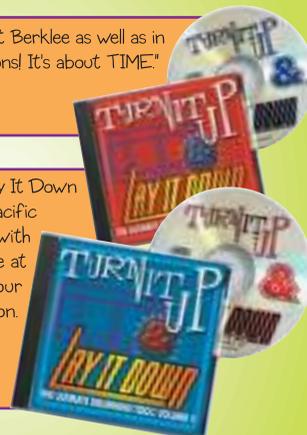
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Divas' Sherrie



Maricle



From The Female Perspective

Music makes very specific demands that have to be met. Drummer-bandleader Sherrie Maricle sensed very early on that music is a serious matter, requiring constant focus.

Only Buddy Rich was the exception to the rule. A complete natural, he made it unmistakably clear that he had been put on this planet to play drums and had come fully equipped. Gene Krupa once said to me, "Buddy doesn't have to practice or immerse himself in the learning process. Unlike the rest of us, he's a phenomenon. There's no need for him to constantly labor to get the desired result."

Sherrie Maricle is no stranger to hard work. Not easily discouraged by difficult circumstances, she is driven by an all-involving interest in drums and music. She also lives with the realization that women have to *excel* to be noticed.

There remain stereotypical, regressive attitudes, myths, and falsehoods regarding women in jazz. In an interview with bassist Melissa Slocum about ten years ago, she asserted, "The jazz field is one of the last bastions of male chauvinism in music."

We're pleased to report that the situation for women in jazz has shown clear signs of improvement since Slocum made that declaration. The personable Maricle certainly has helped upgrade things since moving into the foreground with Diva, her all-female jazz orchestra, early in the 1990s.

How and why did this improvement occur? Maricle and her colleagues set an excellent example. Diva collectively makes a major point. Woman can play and become a factor in the music.

And now there are many more musicians of promise, particularly in the emerging generation. In this bright assemblage are pianist/composer Renee Rosnes, drummers Terri Lyne Carrington and Cindy Blackman, lead trumpeter Laurie Frink, and such former and current members of Diva as trumpeters Ingrid Jensen and Liesl Whitaker, saxophonist Virginia Mayhew, pianist Roberta Piket, trombonist-composer Deborah Weisz, and bassist-composer Noriko Ueda. They and a number of others indicate that the future for women in jazz is filled with possibilities.

Story by Burt Korall • Photos by Paul La Raia

A little over ten years ago, a key positive step for women was taken by Sherrie Maricle and Stanley Kay, the music business veteran and former drummer. Kay heard Maricle play and was impressed by her range. It made him wonder if there were many other gifted female players and writers around. As Kay's idea for an all-female jazz orchestra—Diva—progressively took form, he paid close attention to more female musicians.

As it turned out, Maricle was just one of a number of women who had the interest and energy, talent and passion to move a band project forward. Named Diva's leader, Maricle explored and did key work, listening to, evaluating, bringing together, and encouraging female musicians to come forward.

A larger than expected group of talented creators here and abroad openly declared interest in what Kay and Maricle had in mind—a highly musical band that wasn't beyond the comprehension of fans and that could also hold the interest of other musicians.

Before Diva made its debut in 1992, Maricle had a variety of musical and educational experiences, including expected, typical gender difficulties. Raised in upstate New York in "a country & western household," she was drawn to music very early. Before becoming deeply involved with drums, Maricle had thought about



Sherrie'

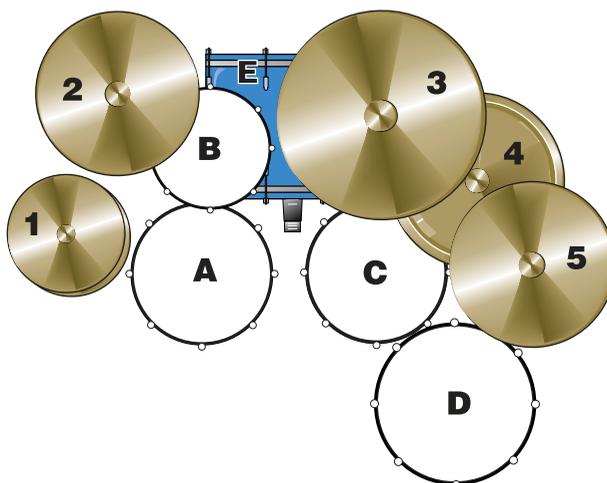
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Sherrie Maricle

playing trumpet in one of the school bands and was flatly told that “girls don’t play the trumpet.”

Maricle had an epiphany in the mid-1970s at age eleven. Buddy Rich’s Killer Force big band played a one-nighter at the

cert. But it progressively became apparent to her that the super drummer’s manner of performance, though very sharply defined, could not be duplicated by anyone. She had to move in another direction. To become a well-rounded, skillful musician, who



“I made up my mind that **drum-**
ming was
what I wanted, regardless of how

Forum in Binghamton, New York. “I had never heard anything like Buddy before,” Maricle remembers, echoing the initial response of most drummers to Rich. “It was an unbelievable experience. I made up my mind that drumming was what I wanted, regardless of how difficult it might be for a girl to be accepted.”

Maricle’s aim was to develop the kind of feeling and amazing facility essential to Buddy Rich’s playing. She did everything possible to achieve her goals. Study and practice filled her days and nights. She performed in every available circumstance. Maricle was absolutely obsessive about capturing in her own playing what she first heard Rich do during that Binghamton con-

can handle all kinds of situations, seemed the most appropriate response.

Maricle also had to find the most feasible and natural ways to express her ideas. Mel Lewis, the drummer-bandleader and former Stan Kenton star, had developed into a giant by interpreting and getting inside music without resorting to unnecessary technical displays. This approach provided the key to Maricle’s future. Lewis’s feeling for the shape and substance of music, and certainly his buoyancy, which brought a consistent edge to his performances, were most akin to what Maricle wanted in her own playing.

After coming to New York City to live in 1986, Maricle sought out the talkative,

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PHOTO BY KEVIN HARRIS

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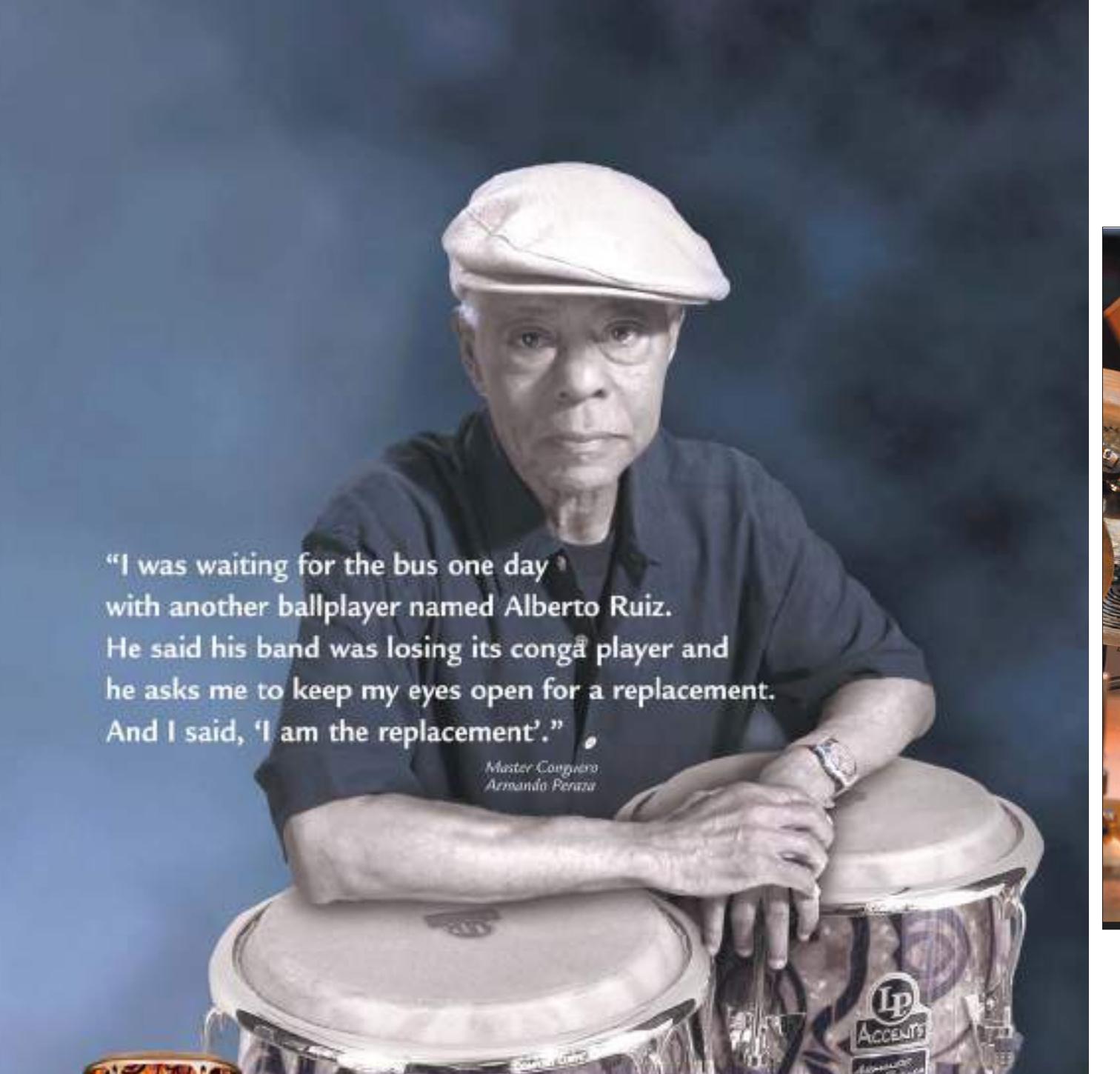
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A black and white photograph of Armando Peraza, a master conguero, wearing a flat cap and a dark polo shirt. He is sitting behind two large congas, with his hands resting on them. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“I was waiting for the bus one day with another ballplayer named Alberto Ruiz. He said his band was losing its conga player and he asks me to keep my eyes open for a replacement. And I said, ‘I am the replacement’.”

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The Heart of the Latin Beat for 40 Years



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Photo by Marnie Cohen

Sherrie Maricle

knowledgeable Lewis and studied with him for a year. She not only learned about music and how and what to play in various circumstances, but she came to know a lot about the drums as an instrument. She listened to Lewis play live whenever she

work of contemporary drummers Adam Nussbaum and Jeff Hamilton, who, like Lewis and Tough, made a case for economy in performance.

As Maricle became increasingly experienced, she allowed the music to tell her



Maricle Mile

Here's a sampling of some of Sherrie's best-recorded work.

Artist

Diva
Five Play
Maricle/Mastroianni Quartet
New York Pops

Recordings

Live In Concert
On The Brink
The Time Being
The New York Pops Goes To The Movies

could—notably with his Jazz Orchestra at the Village Vanguard in Greenwich Village—and became increasingly familiar with his records. She also paid close attention to the small and big band recordings featuring swing master Dave Tough, who knew all there was to know about playing with people.

She turned an attentive ear as well to the

exactly what had to be done. Responding positively to the essentials and subtleties of music, she came to know what fit various circumstances and what didn't.

It became progressively apparent to Maricle that she felt more comfortable expressing the rhythmic spirit of a big or small band. She avoided flamboyance and show business elements in her perfor-

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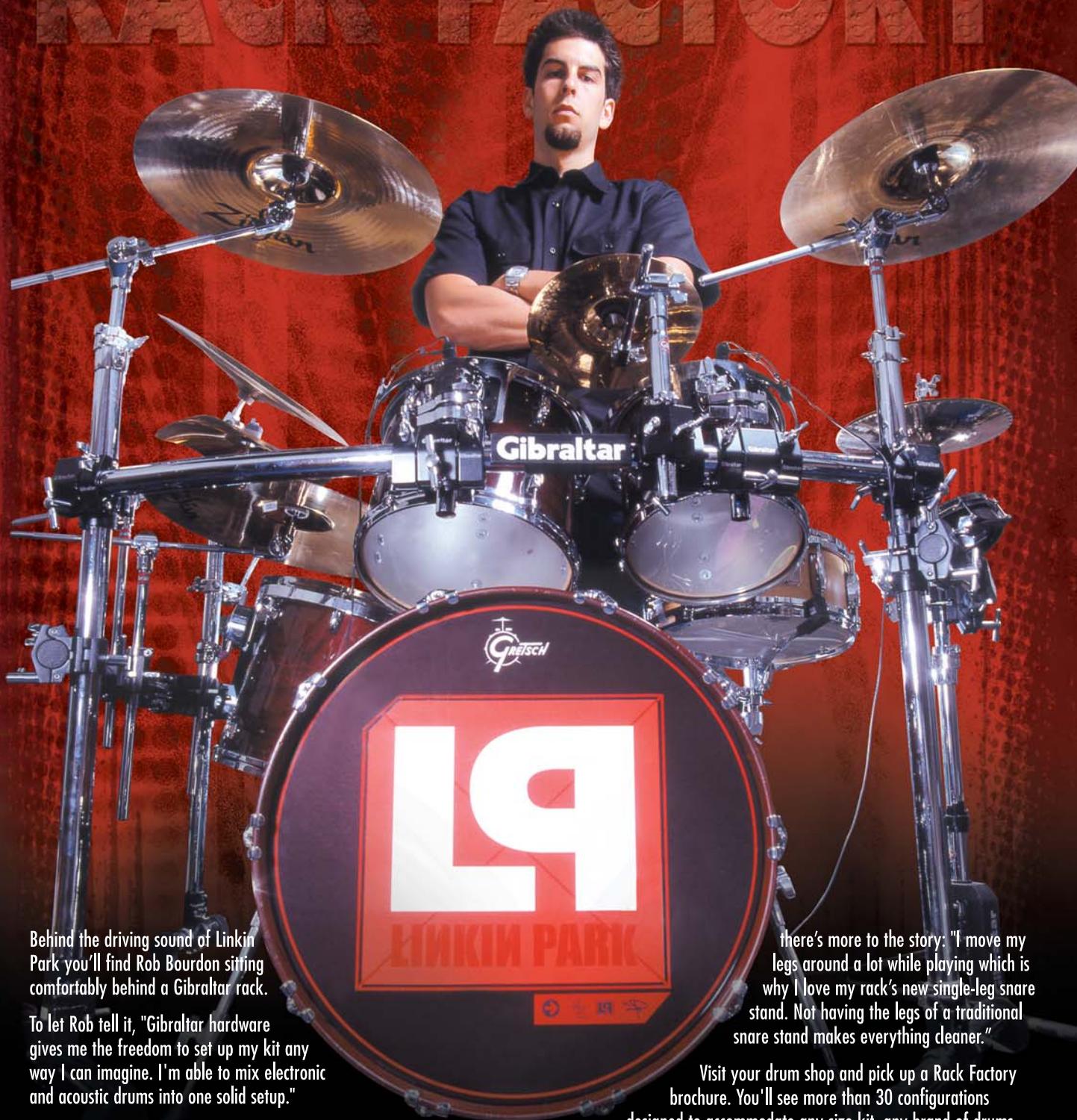
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Rob Bourdon. The driving force behind Linkin Park.

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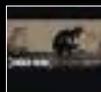
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Sherrie Maricle

mances. As her concept crystallized, she realized she took no pleasure in listening to and/or watching drummers who play fast and furiously and forget that time is the key aspect of a drummer's function.

As Maricle has grown confident over the last several years, her musical instincts and responses have proven more telling, reliable, and musical. With each passing year, she increasingly combines elements of her experience, her education, and herself in music.



Maricle's résumé and interests testify to the fact that she lives a nonstop life. She composes concert and jazz pieces. She has played in multiple circumstances, including the New York Pops under the direction of Skitch Henderson, Bucky and John Pizzarelli, Peter Appleyard, Slam Stewart, Nancy Wilson, Terry Gibbs, Lionel Hampton, and Clark Terry. She teaches privately, is on the faculty at New York University (where she earned her doctorate in jazz performance and composition), and is the education director for the New York Pops Orchestra's outreach programs. Maricle also leads an award-winning quintet, Five Play. And of course she tours and records with Diva, in the process bringing

increasing attention and respect to the cause of women in jazz.

Plans abound for the thirty-nine-year-old drummer-leader. Her agenda includes increased national and international activity with Diva. "Each year the situation gets better for the band," Maricle insists. "We've earned acceptance and have received more work here and abroad."

The reason for all this: Diva's music is vividly and freshly arranged and played with precision. The band's section and

ensemble work is highly professional and often offers surprises. And a spicy tang is added by the band's soloists. An excellent idea of what Diva can do is provided by its recent recording, *Live In Concert*.

At the outset, Diva was viewed merely as an appealing novelty. Now it's much more. The band makes a strong case for the coming of a new day for women in jazz. Maricle and Diva justify manager Stanley Kay's contention that being a woman is no longer a negative factor in the performance of instrumental jazz. Talent and opportunity are key. They have everything to do with who and what Maricle and Diva are—and will be.

For more info on Maricle and Diva, visit 

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Pacific Drums And Percussion

The Baja Connection

by Rick Van Horn

Say the words “import drums,” and most drummers will immediately assume that you’re talking about fairly inexpensive drums made in the Orient. That’s a pretty dated concept, though,

professional lines. But although the brand has only been on the market a short time, it has the advantage of a pretty impressive pedigree.

A Chip Off The Old Block

Pacific Drums And Percussion is a subsidiary of Drum Workshop, and their manufacturing philosophy is to employ processes similar to those used to create DW’s high-end lines, but reduce some of the steps involved that add cost. For example, although hand operations and personal inspections are employed wherever necessary, computerized machinery is used as much as possible to maximize efficiency and production output. The LX series features hand-lacquering, but the number of coats, as well as the sanding and buffing involved, is less than what would be used on high-end drums. In fact, everything that Pacific does is top-quality; they just don’t do as much of it per drum. The result is a moderately priced drum line with a high level of value.

Says DW marketing manager Scott Donnell, “Considering that Pacific drums use the same maple veneers, many of the same materials, and similar manufacturing processes as DW drums do, some people might wonder what the real difference is between the two. Well, a Pacific drum is not a custom drum. DW drums offer features like timbre-matching, internal rings, different choices of exotic wood types, painted finishes, and FinishPly coverings. The production processes are more involved and detailed. Part of what keeps the Pacific prices down is that we can manufacture the drums in large quantities at a time. They enjoy a simplicity factor.

“Still, to a certain extent even we were surprised at their quality,” Scott



since many major drum brands now make not only their budget and entry-level lines, but in some cases also their mid-priced professional-quality drums in Indonesia and even mainland China.

In fact, one brand of affordable yet professional-quality drums comes from the other side of the Pacific ocean—the eastern side. The appropriately named Pacific Drums And Percussion factory is located only a few hundred yards away from where the Pacific kisses the shore of sunny Ensenada, in Baja California, Mexico.

Pacific has only been in business for four years, and the Ensenada factory has been in operation only since 2002. (Prior to that time their drums did all come from the Orient.) The Ensenada factory is currently dedicated to the manufacture of Pacific’s LX and CX



David Leoncavallo (left) manages PDP operations in Mexico. Victor Ballesteros is plant manager for the Ensenada factory.



DW president
Chris Lombardi

Pacific Palette

Here's an overview of the current line of products from Pacific Drums And Percussion

LX Series Drumkits

LX drumkits feature 8-ply, all-maple shells in a choice of Crimson Red or Ultra Violet high-gloss colors, as well as Amber and Natural transparent finishes. Basic five-piece kits include 8x10 and 9x12 FAST toms, a 12x14 mounted floor tom, an 18x22 bass drum, and a 5x14 matching snare drum. Available add-ons include 7x8 rack toms, 14x16 floor toms, and 18x22 bass drums. Kits feature suspension-style tom mounts, True-Pitch tuning systems, bass drum muffling pillows, premium drumheads, wood bass drum hoops, and modular tom holders. Hardware packages include a DP402 double pedal, HH820 rotating two-leg hi-hat, an SS800 snare stand, and a CB800 boom cymbal stand. The kit shown here features an additional CS800 cymbal stand, sold separately.



CX Series Drumkits

CX kits feature all the elements of the LX series, but come in three classic wrapped finishes: Black Onyx, Blue Onyx, and White Onyx. The kit shown here features an additional CS800 cymbal stand, sold separately.



FS Series Drumkits

FS kits feature all-birch shells in a choice of Red Satin or Ebony Satin lacquer finishes. Five-piece kits include 8x10 and 9x12 FAST toms, a 12x14 mounted floor tom, an 18x22 bass drum, and a 5x14 matching snare drum. Kits feature suspension-style tom mounts, True-Pitch tuning systems, bass drum muffling pillows, and wood bass drum hoops. Hardware packages include an SP400 single bass drum pedal, an HH700 hi-hat, an SS700 snare drum stand, and a CS700 cymbal stand.



SX Series Snare Drums

Pacific's SX series offers a wide variety of types and sizes of snare drums, for a full spectrum of snare drum sounds. Drums are fitted with premium heads, hoops, and hardware, with deluxe drop-style throw-offs and butt plates. The line includes 10-ply, all-maple snares ranging from 4x10 to 8x14, including a 5x14 wood-hoop model. Also available are three chrome-over-steel models and a 5x14 hand-hammered bronze drum.



4x10 maple snare



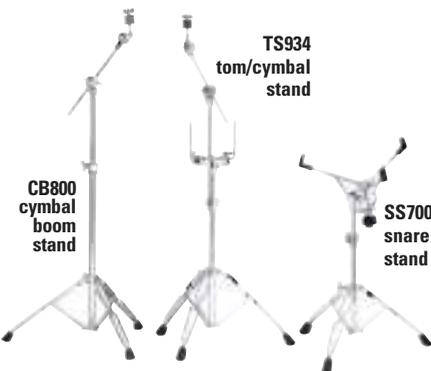
5x14 wood-hoop snare



5x14 hammered bronze snare

Hardware

Pacific offers three series of drum hardware to meet the needs of professionals, semi-pros, and students. The 900 series features heavy-gauge insulated tubing, wide-base double-braced legs, integrated memory locks, oversized feet, and captive wingscrews. The 800 and 700 series feature medium-gauge tubing, double-braced legs, and memory locks.



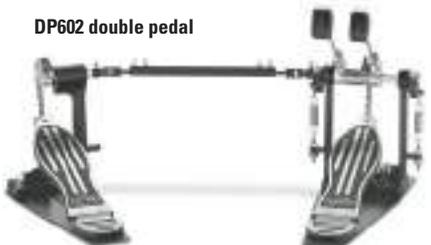
CB800 cymbal boom stand

TS934 tom/cymbal stand

SS700 snare stand

Bass Drum Pedals

Pacific's 600 series single and double pedals feature chain & sprocket drive, aluminum hinges, steel pedal plates, side-adjusting hoop clamps, and infinite stroke and spring tension adjustments. The 400 series features chain & cam drive, side-adjusting hoop clamps, and stroke and spring tension adjustments.



DP602 double pedal

Thrones

Pacific's three series of thrones are designed to fit every performance application. The seats feature high-quality foam padding for maximum comfort, while the bases feature double-braced legs for stability. The 900 series offers wide bases, threaded center posts, die-cast seat plates, and a variety of seat colors and patterns. The 800 series features double-secure bolt-through center posts. The 700 series features bolt-through center posts.



DT920B motorcycle-style throne

Super Rack System

The Super Rack System combines stainless-steel tubing, interlocking memory locks, and Techlock crossbar clamps for triple gripping security. Additional features include clamps with independent angle adjustment, textured rubber feet with built-in adjustable spurs, and a full selection of component bars, clamps, and arms for custom configurations.



Counterhoops

Pacific sells die-cast and maple-ply counterhoops as aftermarket items, in matched pairs from 8" to 16" sizes. Die-cast 18" hoops are also available.



Accessories

Pacific's accessory line includes Blue Line drum, cymbal, and stick bags, along with student snare kits, suspension drum mounts, bass drum pillows, tom clamps, pedal bags, bass drum beaters, wearables, and the mesh practice drumheads shown here.



Production Profile

Shell Construction

Pacific CX and LX drumkits start life as sheets of 100% maple veneer, trucked to the Ensenada factory from Canada and the US. The individual veneers are combined in a cross-grain fashion to create ply layers, which are then cut, glued, and placed in molds to form drumshells.

The length of each ply layer is slightly



Laying up plies for shells

different, depending on whether it's on the inside or outside of the shell. That prevents any layer from overlapping the other within the mold and creating problems. The molds "cook" the shells for about six minutes at 194° to set the glue. Pacific's custom-designed shell-molding equipment is the newest in the industry.

After the shells have cooled, a com-

puter-controlled saw cuts each one to a precise size, creating the raw edges that will be machined into bearing edges for the finished drum.

After being sanded inside and out, the shells are sorted. Those with consis-



Shell within steel mold

tently smooth and attractive grain structure will receive lacquered finishes. Shells with less attractive patterns will be covered.

The Covering Process

The material used to cover Pacific's CX series drums comes from the same Italian supplier used by Drum Workshop. Colors



Trimming edge of covered bass drum

currently available include White Onyx, Blue Onyx, and Black Onyx. The sheets of material are cut into sizes precisely determined to fit each different drum size. Each shell to be covered has a small groove cut into it, to receive one end of the material. The material then wraps around the shell and stops just at the point where it began—forming a very flat, smooth seam that doesn't overlap. This technique allows for expansion and contraction of the drumshell in different climates without ruining the look of the drum.

A special contact cement is applied to the entire surface of the shell, as well as to the covering material. Then the two are joined, using a roller press. This creates a bond that makes the covering virtually another ply of the shell. Material extending over the edges of the shell is carefully trimmed off by hand.



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Lacquering

Shells selected to become LX lacquered drums go to the painting department, where their interiors are covered with paper to avoid any overspray. Then



Hand-buffing a painted shell

each shell is primed. The primer dries overnight, then gets sanded and buffed to smooth out any irregularities.

After sanding, the shell comes back to the spray booth, where it is cleaned to remove any remaining dust. Then it is hand-sprayed with color by a skilled painter with years of experience. Colors

currently available are Ultra Violet and Crimson Red, along with Amber and Natural transparent. Prototypes are under development for bursts, fades, and other finishes.

During the spraying process, an extremely efficient ventilation system pulls out the overspray. This not only protects the workers and the environment, but also prevents any bounce-back of paint onto the surface of the drum that could mar the finish. The colored paint dries in five to ten minutes, after which two layers of clear topcoat are applied. The topcoat dries in six to nine hours. The sprayed shell finally receives several steps of progressively finer hand sanding and buffing.

Edges, Snare Beds, And Drilling

All shells, whether wrapped or painted, receive their bearing edges on one of two roller-guided routers. One cuts precise 45° bearing edges onto all toms and bass drums. The other gives snare drums their 60° edges, along with Pacific's unique, shallow snare bed, which is not more than 3/16" deep.

Every shell then moves to a computerized drilling machine, which drills all the



Shell on rollers, getting edge cut

mounting holes necessary for any given size and model of drum. The inside of every shell is then hand-sanded to touch up any burrs coming off the drill holes.



Shell on computer drilling machine

Assembly

Pacific's drum hardware is manufactured in Taiwan and shipped to the US—primarily to Los Angeles. From there it's trucked to the Ensenada factory. However, some hardware containers have been shipped directly to the port of Ensenada,

and the company is exploring the possible expansion of that system to reduce costs.

The first step of assembly is a final hand cleaning of the finished shells. Then, technicians use air guns to help them attach the lugs, rim, and other fittings. They all wear white gloves to prevent any fingerprints from getting on the polished shells and hardware.



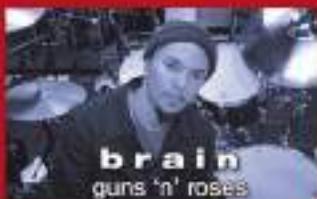
White-glove assembly of drums

The five-piece kits are carefully nested into their shipping boxes, along with a setup video featuring Tommy Igoe, a muffling pillow for the bass drum, and a pair of 5A sticks. At that point they're ready for shipment to DW's Oxnard, California headquarters, where they're mated with stands and pedals shipped from Taiwan. ●

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Pacific Drums

continues. “The kits that came in from overseas in the first couple of years were nice drumsets. But the kits made in the Ensenada factory are reaching a new level.”

The Proximity Factor

DW president Chris Lombardi comments, “The first drums rolled out of the Ensenada facility in October of 2002. We had two months of production—but then the entire country of Mexico closed down for the month of December. Since reopening in January of 2003, we’ve been continually moving forward. One of the beauties of having the factory in Ensenada is that we can respond quickly to what’s going on in the market. DW’s offices and factory are in Oxnard, California. That’s just a few hours’ drive from Ensenada. So we don’t have problems with time and distance when it comes to supervising production or making changes in the products. We’re able to experiment—putting different lines in, or revolutionizing existing ones. For example, the CX and LX kits are 100% maple, which has never been done before at their price level.”

The Pacific factory is in a building that

was once part of a large Fender guitar plant—which still surrounds it. When DW was first considering a “foreign” operation, they toured the Fender facility. “We were impressed with how fast and hard the employees were working,” says Chris, “and with the quality that they were pushing out. It was definitely *not* what some people might stereotypically think is going on down in Mexico.”

David Leoncavallo, who is DW’s operations manager for Mexico, adds, “One thing I’ve noticed—as an American working in Mexico for the first time—is that there’s an incredible amount of pride among the work force here. I think it’s a cultural element that we don’t always see in other places. Victor Ballesteros, our plant manager, has a way of using that pride to help us maintain our quality level. He asks all of his employees, ‘Would you buy it?’ That’s a core value here: Put out a product that you yourself would want to buy.”

Room To Grow

One of the most impressive features of the Pacific factory is its pristine appearance.

Everything is swept, polished, and very efficient. The factory is also very spacious, with room for additional production capacity as the company grows. “We set the bar unbelievably high when we began production,” says Chris Lombardi. “It wasn’t quantity first and then quality; it was quality first. We’re making about five hundred drumsets a month now. Our immediate goal is to get to eight hundred. And, of course, we also want to expand the product line itself.”

David Leoncavallo explains that possibilities for future product development include a four-piece kit, along with a 24" bass drum, which isn’t available in Pacific’s price range from any other manufacturer. “But we have to crawl before we can walk,” he adds. “The challenge before us right now is to increase productivity to meet the increasing demand for Pacific drums, and keep the quality in the line while we do it. We want to work better and more efficiently, not just faster. We’re pleased to say that we’re already a major player in this market, after being in existence for only four years. That’s pretty mind-boggling.”



Ronald Spagnardi



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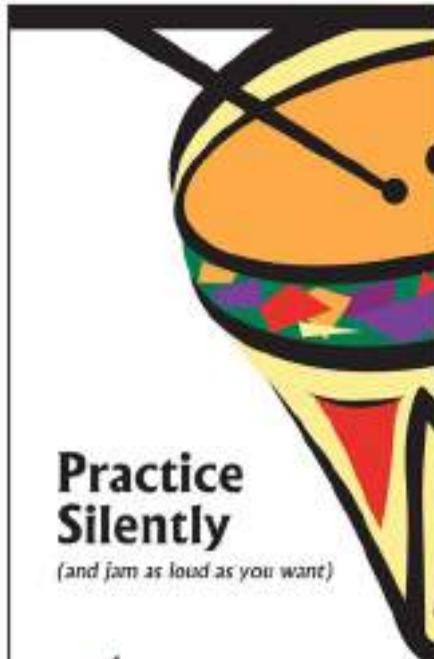


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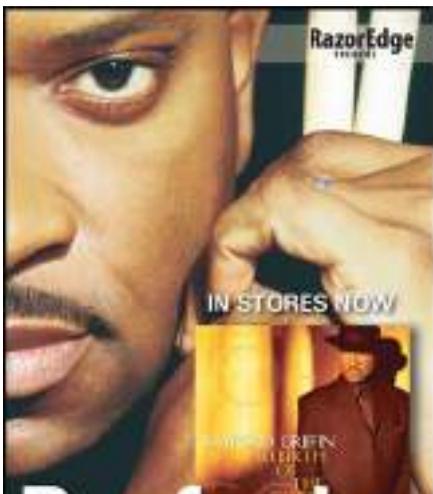
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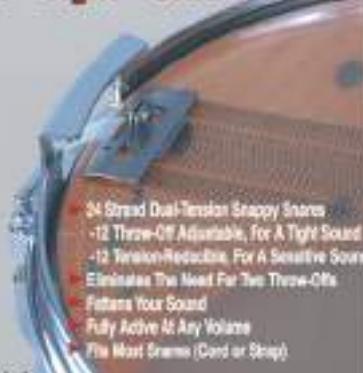
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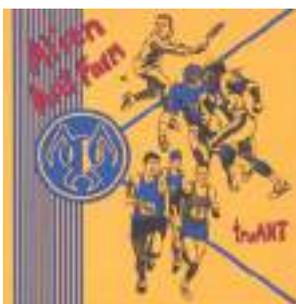
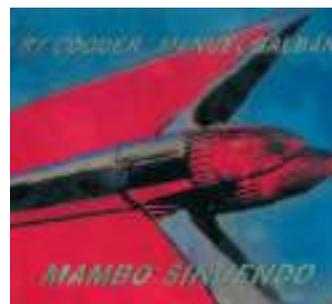
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Jaco Pastorius Big Band

Word Of Mouth Revisited (Heads Up)



Many tributes to Weather Report's revolutionary bassist have come along, but none are as meaningful and inspired as this project. Jaco's former Ft. Lauderdale employer **Peter Graves** and his orchestra, a smoking big band, bring the iconoclast's music to life. Alongside some of today's most revered electric bass players, drummer **MARK GRIFFITH** drives the outstanding group of players with a forceful and passionate swing and jazz-rock attitude. Jaco himself would have jumped all over this stuff, taking it to another dimension, as he did with this band in his early years.

Mike Haid

Ry Cooder/Manuel Galbán

Mambo Sinuendo (Nonesuch/Perro Verde)



This one's been out a little while, but we couldn't pass it by. Buena Vista Social Club producer Ry Cooder and Cuban guitarist Manuel Galban share a passion for drama and melody on a set of updated Latin-jazz/pop/exotica numbers, and trapset drummers **JIM KELTNER** and **JOACHIM COODER** are the perfect facilitators. The players create a dreamy rhythmscape on the opener, a slow backbeat with brushes under **MIGUEL "ANGA" DIAZ's** insistent conga work. Keltner shines throughout, whether steamrolling the groove behind congas and bata or holding down a freewheeling mambo drum 'n' bass groove. Very cool stuff.

Robin Tolleson

North Mississippi Allstars

Polaris (ATO/Tone-Cool)



The son of a veteran producer, **CODY DICKINSON** has been drumming professionally since he was eleven. His experience is evident on this band's third record, which mixes jam-band psychedelia, something resembling Jamaican hip-hop, Cajun blues, and country rock. Dickinson's playing suits the dense atmosphere: Like a human rubber band, he expands and hangs loose as needed. Dickinson is totally in control when opening a fat pocket saturated with pure feel. Ironically, the more aggressively Dickinson plays, the less authoritative he seems. Still, while some of these performances sound carefully choreographed, they nonetheless come across as spontaneous and sneakily complex.

Will Romano

Shane Theriot

The Grease Factor (Shohe Records)



The Grease Factor is an apt title for guitarist Shane Theriot's well-lubed new collection of instrumental funk/rock. While Theriot's hot licks blaze on top, the big New Orleans grooves of **JOHNNY VIDACOVICH** and **RUSSELL BATISTE** ooze and drip down below. (**JEFF SIPE**, **DOUG BELOTE**, and **DAVID NORTHRUP** play on one tune each.) Powerhouse Batiste handles the faster tempos and does some over-the-top phrasing on "Zodiac," and second-line master Vidacovich spreads his deliciously sloppy snare sound all over the more laid-back material, including a workout with brushes on "Woody." Theriot clearly placed a premium on getting prime, *greazy* drum performances.

Michael Parillo

Alien Ant Farm

truANT (DreamWorks)



One of Alien Ant Farm's strengths is the impeccably coordinated rhythm section of bassist **Tye Zamora** and drummer **MIKE COSGROVE**, best witnessed on the band's 2001 DreamWorks debut, *Anthology*. The Farm return for another round with *truANT*, this time boasting Cosgrove's concrete kicks on "Drifting Apart" and his happy-go-lucky shuffle throughout "Glow." Cosgrove's ghost-stroked snare and timbale interplay on the reggae-vibed "Never Meant" are clean and carefully mapped—and there's no lack of the drummer's signature splash accents. With a warmer production courtesy of the DeLeo Brothers (of Stone Temple Pilots), Alien Ant Farm have devised a commendable follow-up.

Waleed Rashidi

TAKING IT INTO THEIR OWN HANDS

Magesh, Vinx, Donald Knaack

Hype Machine is a delightful collection of drum 'n' bass-style tracks constructed by Australian **MAGESH**. The drummer's sense of humor is acute, his production pleasantly minimal, and his hi-hat licks exquisite, all of which gel in the catchy "Gregorian Chance." Often Magesh can be seen playing drums, percussion, and loops live off the floor in the included video clips. (www.magesh.live.com.au)

If you're familiar with **VINX** circa Jungle Funk (with Will Calhoun), *The Mood I'm In* will demand that you suspend disbelief. Here the vocalist/percussionist tackles standards such as "Stardust" with bare-bones accompaniment. Where Vinx really adds value is on Donovan's "Mellow Yellow," featuring drums by **STEWART COPELAND**. (Peer Southern Productions, www.vinx.com)



The liner notes to **DONALD KNAACK's** *Junk Music* read, "Tools that are no good require more skill." The "no good" refers to the myriad of junkyard items that Knaack appropriates as percussion. The "skill" is reflected in the way Knaack harnesses this clatter of diverse timbres musically without causing a cluster headache. (www.junkmusic.org)

T. Bruce Wittet



rating scale



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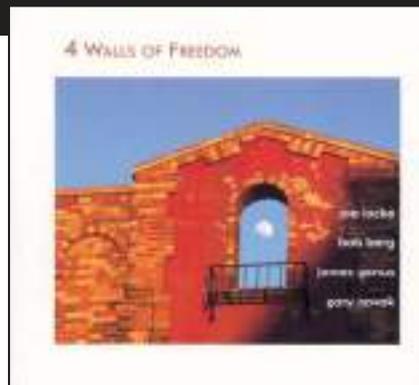
HIGH (JAZZ) STANDARDS

Drummer **JOHN HOLLENBECK** shows off a fine touch, propulsive and flamboyant in all the right spaces on the **Kenny Wheeler/Bob Brookmeyer** release *Quintet Island*. Hollenbeck doesn't so much play time as he peppers the music, putting a wild spin on Brookmeyer's "Upstairs With Beatrice." The bandleaders mesh beautifully on this date, Wheeler's trumpet and flugelhorn a perfect tonal complement to Brookmeyer's valve trombone. (Artists House)

When **GARY NOVAK** gets cooking on **Joe Locke's** *4 Walls Of Freedom*, he sounds like a well-tuned racecar skidding around the track, toying with but averting disaster at every turn. This is exciting drumming, musical too. Novak's

sterling double strokes provide breathing room between saxman **Bob Berg's** passionate phrases. (This was one of Berg's last sessions.) Vibist Locke's "4 Walls Of Freedom Suite" provides a strong musical springboard and space for all the players to stretch out. (Concord)

DRORI MONDLAK is an extremely emotional drummer who enjoys the spaces as much as the notes. Whether it's his purposefully laid-back swing on **Dave Brubeck's** "In Your Own Sweet Way" or the dynamics on the Van Huesen/Burke classic "Like Someone In Love," arrangements make the tune, and he's always arranging from the kit. Mondlak's band—**Karolina Strassmayer** on woodwinds, **Cary**



DeNigris on guitar, and bassist **Paul Ramsey**—has also backed Chico Hamilton in recent years, and they are extremely strong. (www.droidrums.com)

Robin Tolleson

Virginia Mayhew



Phantoms (Renma)



Tenor/soprano sax player Mayhew's first leap into a piano-less format hits the bull's-eye: A harmony instrument is barely missed. The roots are hard bop, but Mayhew's imaginative arrangements stretch in surprising directions. Joined by the assertive trumpet/flugelhorn of **Ingrid Jensen** and adventurous bass of **Harvie S.**, Mayhew's lyrical, discerning solo-

ing is elegant. Drummer **ALLISON MILLER** delivers commanding interplay with an "orchestral" knack. Showing strong straight-ahead, Latin, and soloing chops, Miller also grooves odd meters, as in the popping 7/8 brush work on "I Love You." Always following her ideas through with clear, compositional vision, Miller is smart and swinging. **Jeff Potter**

Satoko Fujii Quartet



Minerva (Libra Records)



TATSUYA YOSHIDA, ex of prog-punk band Ruins, attacks the drums with a bebopper's verve and a headbanger's killer instinct on this avant-garde jazz-rock CD. At times these musicians are like battling samurai, at others they're knife-wielding master chefs, making a sonic soufflé from seemingly lean ingredients. In the twelve-plus-minute "Weft" and "Caught In A Web," Yoshida breaks into solos that, upon first listen, seem very chaotic. With repeat listens, his mammoth chops and unforgiving tone reveal patterns and underscore frighteningly synchronous runs. This CD may not be for everyone, but you should check out how it all unfolds. (www.2s.biglobe.ne.jp/~Libra/) **Will Romano**

Steve Smith & Buddy's Buddies

Very Live At Ronnie Scott's, Sets One & Two (Tone Center)



Steve Smith seems to be everywhere these days, and for good reason. Smith's highly developed drumset technique allows him to flow freely through any musical style, always keeping the swing pulse within his vocabulary. On these two instrumental jazz discs (sold separately) Smith pays tribute to Buddy Rich by playing music from the Buddy book, at the famed Ronnie Scott's in London. Featuring a couple of Buddy's former sax men, first tenor **Steve Marcus**

and lead alto **Andy Fusco**, the band swings hard, as Smith explodes throughout with a controlled fire that Buddy himself would have no doubt

Steve Cunningham

Dubious Tones (independent)



On *Dubious Tones*, Steve Cunningham proves his prowess on electric guitar, lap steel, and dobro on a set of mostly original jazz and blues. *MD* scribe **MIKE HAID's** drumming keeps things flowing nicely throughout. Check out "Busted Lip" for some tasty hi-hat/snare playing, where Haid's drumming builds the groove, dropping to hi-hat for the bridge before a crackling fill in the turnaround. His supportive playing on the laid-back, soulful "Backtalk" builds to a nice climax during the guitar solo, while the danceable swing of the title track shows the group in a different light. An enjoyable release. (www.stevetcunningham.net) **Martin Patmos**

Finger Eleven

Finger Eleven (Wind-Up)



Take Papa Roach, Disturbed, Hoobastank, P.O.D.—literally any hard modern rock band—throw 'em in the musical blender, and Finger Eleven's the resulting concoction. Unfortunately for **RICH BEDDOE**, his drums—which are one of the better aspects of the Canadian act—are buried in the mix. Still, if you pay close attention you'll appreciate the funky, minimalist groove of "Complicated Questions" and the

tom-pounding intro of "Conversations." In fact, you'll find a bunch of great drum ideas on *Finger Eleven*. You just have to listen carefully.

Party Of Helicopters

Please Believe It (Velocette)



Drummer **CORY RACE** spearheads the best moments on his band's new album. Behind these moments, Party Of Helicopters achieves a successful blend of prog, punk, and pop. The up and down of Cory's hi-hat makes songs like "The Toucher" bounce infectiously, and the energy levels skyrocket every time he kicks the jams into double-time. Unfortunately, there aren't enough of these moments to make this album completely work. Dragging it down is the annoying falsetto and uninspiring lyrics of singer **Joe Dennis**, as well as the production, which leaves Cory's drums sounding weak and distant. **Mike Lang**

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BOOKS

When The Levee Breaks: The Making Of Led Zeppelin IV

by Andy Fyfe

(Chicago Review Press)

level: all, \$14.95

Hot off the heels of the recent live Zep DVD and CDs comes an analytic look into *Led Zeppelin IV*, one of the most influential albums ever (and the fourth highest-selling long-player in history). Credited with molding the heavy metal sound of the '70s, *IV* spawned the classic track "Stairway To Heaven," not to mention the rock standards "Black Dog," "Rock & Roll," "Misty Mountain Hop," "Four Sticks," and "Going To California," and one of the most copied and sampled beats ever, **JOHN BONHAM's** powerhouse intro to "When The Levee Breaks." Though this book isn't intended as a Bonzo bio, journalist Fyfe provides quite a few inside tidbits on John and the origins of the tracks. As drummers, we're once again reminded how Bonham's legacy boasts some of the finest drumming ever performed, in any genre. **Billy Amendola**



The Baby Dodds Story

As Told To Larry Gara (Rebeats)

level: all, \$13



For a candid view of the beginnings of jazz from behind the drumkit, go no further than the reissued Dodds story. It's a delightful and quick read, from talk of Jelly Roll Morton, Bunk Johnson, and Louis Armstrong to an early drummer-mentor named McMurray. ("When he made a roll, it sounded like he was tearing paper.") Both folksy and matter-of-fact, Dodds discusses being shown up or "chased" by The Kid Ory Band ("These things are what made us want to become good musicians"), life on the steamships, and his reluctant hand in developing the hi-hat with William Ludwig. Dodds confronts the reality of racism in America, as well as a drinking problem that most likely curtailed his career, but seeks no sympathy here. "With all the outfits I played, I felt that I was just as essential as any other musician," he says. Amen to that. **Robin Tolleson**



Wasabi / Fujiyama

by Akira Jimbo (Carl Fischer)

level: advanced, \$19.95 each (with CD)

These two books (sold separately) contain information taken from Jimbo's DVDs of the same names, which feature an in-depth look at his unique electronic/acoustic setup, as well as the development of his advanced solo drumming techniques. In the *Wasabi* book (only 15 pages), many of the written examples of Jimbo's method for groove and fill development ideas (17 total) are performed on the accompanying CD at brisk tempos that would be hard to follow for a beginning or intermediate reader/player. Four of Jimbo's original "one-man-band" compositions are performed on the CD as well. *Fujiyama* (29 pages) discusses proper trigger positioning and settings for acoustic drums and Jimbo's setup of electronic trigger pads within his acoustic kit. CD examples highlight the programming and development of the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic ideas written out in chart form, culminating in a structured song. The CD also includes three Jimbo compositions. The books would be most useful if studied along with the DVDs (sold separately) to get a much-needed visual of the written information. **Mike Haid**



DVDs

Steve Jordan

The Groove Is Here (Rittor/Hal Leonard)

level: all, \$24.95



Steve Jordan knows what's important about drumming—the groove. Unpretentious and always earnest, Jordan is able to talk about what makes the pocket, and the music, happen. The trio sections, with guitarist **Danny Kortchmar** and keyboardist **Bernie Worrell**, are textbook examples of tasty playing—and listening. The duo stuff—Jordan and Worrell at their audacious, focused best—is perhaps even more impressive. These players' ability to add and subtract in order to serve the music is phenomenal, as is the fullness of what they are able to concoct. Highly recommended. ((800)) 637-2852, www.musicdispatch.com



Robin Tolleson

The Clash

The Essential Clash (Epic)

level: all, \$19.98

It's not every day you get to see one of the fathers of late '70s punk rock drumming get to do his thing, unless you get your hands on this DVD. On *The Essential Clash* **TOPPER HEADON** is caught on film for your visual enjoyment—and you *will* enjoy. The experience begins with some live footage of a famed New York City concert that put them on the map here in the States, then moves into vintage videos of Clash greats like "White Riot" and "London Calling." Headon's performances are filled with angst and energy only he could create. On the live footage the tempos are rushed and the fills are a bit sloppy, but remember, this was punk in all its early, seat-of-the-pants glory. The studio videos are backed by the classic recordings that will always have their place in rock 'n' roll drumming, sometimes in the pocket when it is more of a reggae feel, other times pushing and pulling the song with only a four-piece kit. This is what a drummer sounds like when he is playing real punk rock! **Fran Azzarto**



VIDEOS

Terry Bozzio

One Man Show: Live At P.I.T. (Slam International)

level: all, \$29.95



At this point we really don't need to be convinced of Bozzio's immense talent. A little reminder never hurts, though. Recorded in 1996, this video demonstrates how Bozzio uses technique without *abusing* it. Bozzio builds intensity by employing everything at his disposal: stick control, linear phrasings, limb independence, raw creativity, compositional sensibility—and silence, which generates the kind of drama typically found in the theater.

From the pit of his humongous kit, Bozzio shows great versatility. Walls of hanging gongs and rows of Rotos and piccolo toms are tinkered with, banged, scraped, and stroked to create Asian-type melodies that are recalled at various points throughout the performance. Bozzio, as if mimicking a classically trained pianist, diddles sound blocks with his fingers, and his bare hands slide across the skins.

The only drawback here is the fact that this footage is seven years old. It begs the question: How much material (and how much gear) has Bozzio added to his one-man stage show since then? (www.terrybozzio.com) **Will Romano**



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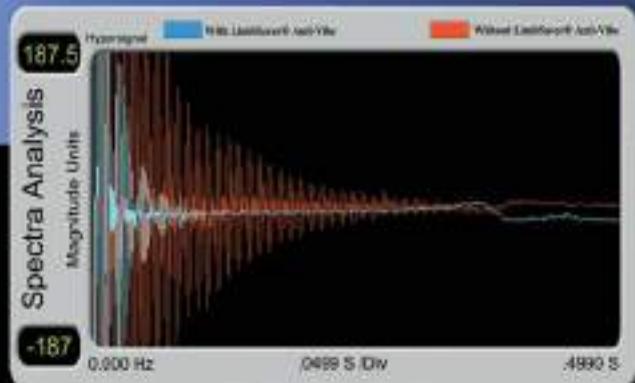
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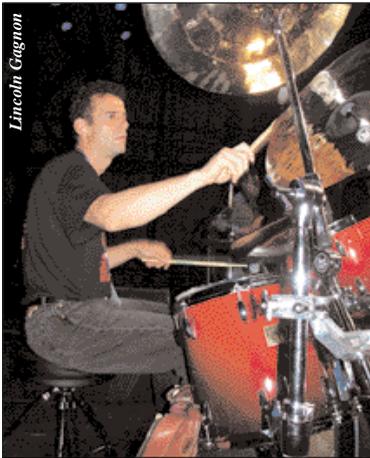
The Green Mountains of Vermont were the setting for the eighth annual KoSA International Percussion Workshop, held August 4–10 at Castleton State College. The event brought a hundred fifty drummers and percussionists together with a teaching faculty made up of some of today's premier artists and educators.

Participants came from all over North America and several foreign countries to share in the learning experience offered by this unique "drum camp." Each day began with a master class, followed by three individual class tracks. Class sizes were kept small so students and instructors could interact on a personal basis.

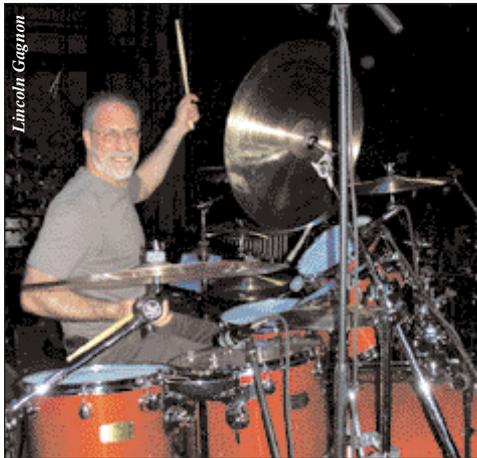
This year's KoSA theme was "There

Is No Coda," referring to the never-ending learning process that is involved in the study and performance of contemporary percussion. Led by artistic director **Aldo Mazza**, this year's faculty featured drumset artists of all descriptions, including **Will Calhoun**, **Jim Chapin**, **Dom Famularo**, Canadian studio veteran **Kevan McKenzie**, **John Riley**, **Jeff Salisbury**, and *MD* senior editor **Rick Van Horn**. Ethnic percussion was represented by Latin drummer/historian **Bobby Sanabria**, frame drumming star **Glen Velez**, Broadway and world percussionist **Memo Acevedo**, tabla master **Sandip Burman**, taiko authority **Marco Lienhard**, Brazilian and studio percussionist **Gordon**

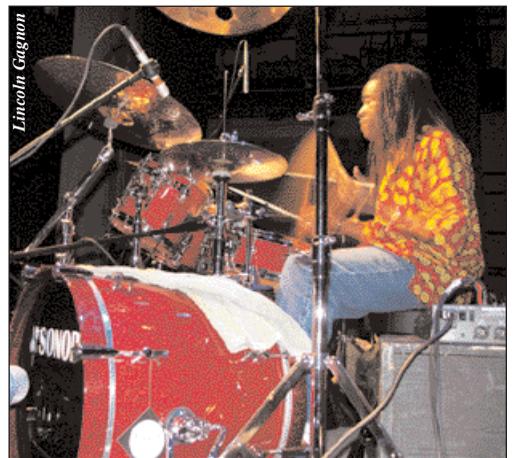
Gottlieb, Mexican drummer/percussionist **Evaristo Aguilar**, and Canadian percussion stars **Répercussion**. **Mario DeCiutiis** and **Allan Molnar** offered classes on electronic percussion and computer music technology, while **Larry Marchese** explained the capabilities of Sibelius music-notation software. Versatile educator/performer **James Campbell** presented the orchestral percussion track, while jazz vibist/marimbist **Dave Samuels**, classical marimbist **Naoko Takada**, and avant-garde mallet artist **Anders Astrand** focused on mallet techniques. The earthy, spiritual nature of the didjeridu—and the rotational breathing required to play it—were revealed by **Lou Robinson**.



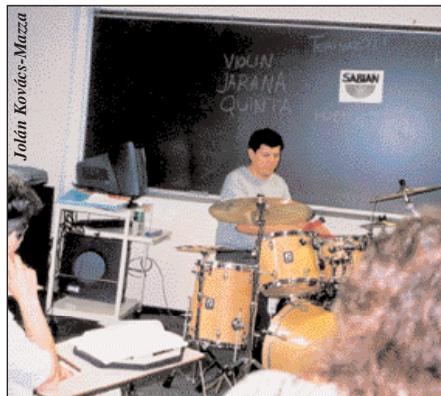
Lincoln Gagnon



Lincoln Gagnon



Lincoln Gagnon



Jolán Kovács-Mazza



Jolán Kovács-Mazza



Lincoln Gagnon

Drumset instructors at KoSA included (clockwise from top left) Canadian studio star Kevan McKenzie, the irrepressible Dom Famularo, Living Colour drummer Will Calhoun, legendary author/educator Jim Chapin, jazz specialist John Riley, and Mexican rhythm authority Evaristo Aguilar.



Lincoln Gagnon



Lincoln Gagnon



Jolan Kovács-Mazza



Lincoln Gagnon



Lincoln Gagnon



Jolan Kovács-Mazza



Lincoln Gagnon

Clockwise from bottom left: Classes in world percussion were conducted by KoSA artistic director Aldo Mazza, and by Memo Acevedo (second from right in photo). Mallet artistry was demonstrated by Japan's Naoko Takada, Sweden's Anders Astrand, and American jazz star Dave Samuels (at right in photo). Tabla master Sandip Burman explained the intricacies of Indian rhythmic structures. And Latin drummer/percussionist/historian Bobby Sanabria brought a New York City vibe to his classes and his concert performance.

The week-long program also included the KoSA Music Festival. Open to the local community as well as to KoSA participants, the Festival presented various faculty members in nightly performances. Friday's student recital gave many of the camp's participants the opportunity to demonstrate what they had learned. The entire week was capped by a faculty recital on Saturday.

Sponsors and supporters for the workshop included Asano Taiko, Australian Originals, Berklee College, drumKAT, Drum Workshop, Drummers Collective, Evans, HQ Percussion, Innovative Percussion, Latin Percussion, Ludwig/Musser, Mike Balter, *Modern Drummer*, Mountain Rythm, Paiste, Pearl, Pro-Mark, Regal Tip, Remo, Sabian, Shure, Sibelius, Sonor, Yamaha, and Zildjian.

The KoSA International Percussion Workshop offers an unparalleled educational experience to drummers and percussionists of all ages and skill levels. For information about the 2004 program, contact KoSA USA at PO Box 332, Hyde Park, VT 05655, (800) 541-8401, or KoSA Canada at PO Box 333, Station A, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 2S1, (514) 482-5554, www.kosamusic.com.

KoSA Cuba



KoSA Cuba students played in ensembles and took classes that focused on conga and drumkit playing. (Cuban drum legend and KoSA instructor Giraldo Piloto is on the kit.)

Sun, sand, congas—what more do you need for a heavenly two weeks in Cuba? Well, how about eight master percussionists with a desire to share their culture? The second annual KoSA Cuba Percussion Workshop doubled its length and expanded the accompanying Coco Fest Cuban music showcase to three weeks, from June 1 through 26. Percussion students, seasoned musicians, and hobbyists from Canada and the US took part in the series of workshops, held once again at the luxurious El Senador resort on Cayo Coco island, off Cuba's north coast. This

year's clinicians included **Giraldo Piloto**, **Julio López**, and **Jean Roberto San Christóbal** of Klimax, **Olivier Valdes Rey** of David Murray's Latin Big Band, **Adel Gomez** of Irakere, **Lazaro Arango**, and **Panga**. A band called Genes from the nearby city of Morón served as the house band for ensemble work.

Morning sessions consisted of lectures on the roots of Cuba's culture, or musical demonstrations of the building blocks of Cuban rhythm—with special emphasis on the variations of clavé.

A typical afternoon found Piloto working

with a handful of drumkit students. "There's nothing like studying this stuff at the source," said twenty-four-year-old Ray Newton, who is studying percussion at Montreal's McGill Conservatory. "It goes way beyond the music to the spirit that Piloto and the others bring to what they do." Los Angeles drummer Korey Mall added, "I have zero Latin background, so this represents an incredible opportunity to learn from these masters. I've always viewed music as a road that keeps stretching out ahead of you. You keep learning new things and finding new ways to express yourself, but

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you can never learn it all." Mall videotaped most of Piloto's lessons when he wasn't trying to master the rhythms behind the kit. "I'll be studying this stuff all winter," he laughs.

on-one master classes. "I was so lucky," she said. "I got to learn at my own pace and make notes about the things I needed to work on for the next day. The difference between learning these things here and studying at home just can't be measured. Here, you get that real Cuban vibe that you can't get anywhere else."

In the evenings, the students (and guests from Cayo Coco's various hotels) got a chance to see the grooves come together when more than a dozen artists—including Klimax, pianist Chucho Valdes, Genes, and singer Bellita Exposito Piño—performed in the outdoor amphitheater. "The concept," said KoSA artistic director **Aldo Mazza**, "is to give participants more than a strictly musical experience. We want people to understand how the Cuban culture and music come together. This allows us to open these workshops up to non-musicians and



KoSA artistic director Aldo Mazza (left) held an impromptu timbale duet with instructor Adel Gonzalez Gomez.



Klimax was one of the many top Cuban musical acts to perform at the accompanying Coco Fest concert series.

The scene was much the same in another building, where Julio López conducted conga sessions, and out in the center of the hotel's lagoon, where Jean Roberto San Christóbal led timbale lessons in an open-air building on stilts. For two days, Montreal percussion student Melissa Lavergne had the luxury of one-

beginners, as well as to expert players. Everyone who comes can get something out of it."

Sponsors of KoSA Cuba 2003 included DW, Evans, Korg, LP, Marimba One, *Modern Drummer*, Moperc, Mountain Rythym, Pearl, Sabian, Sennheiser, Taye, and Zildjian. For more information, go to www.kosamusic.com or contact Aldo Mazza, info@kosamusic.com.

Story and photos by James Hale

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Indy Quickies

Sabian, Sonor, and Pro-Mark have each made a substantial donation to **Little Kids Rock** (LKR), a non-profit music program for children. One hundred complete drumsets have been awarded to LKR, for drum classes that will begin during the 2003–04 school year.

Little Kids Rock restores music to the academic lives of kids in public schools by providing a music education program including instruments, instruction, and trained mentors. LKR, which was founded in 1996, is headquartered in San Francisco, California and serves schools throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, New York, New Jersey, and Memphis, with chapters to open soon in Boston and Los Angeles. For more information, visit: www.littlekidsrock.org.

The artist roster for the **2003 Montreal Drumfest** has been finalized. Friday, November 7 will feature a concert by **Mike Portnoy & Hammer Of The Gods**. The Led Zeppelin tribute band will feature **Daniel Gildenlow, Paul Gilbert**, and a bass player to be announced.

Saturday, November 7 will offer **Paul DeLong & The Code, Sergio Bellotti, Vera Figueiredo, Billy Ward**, a Latin trio featuring **Paoli Mejias, Javier Oquendo**, and **Marcos Lopez Ayala**, and **Tommy Aldridge**.

Sunday's show will feature the Yamaha "Rising Star" Showcase, followed by **Antonio Sanchez, Randy Cooke, Jojo Mayer, Mike Mangini**, and **Gary Novak & His Band**. For further information, go to www.montrealdrumfest.com.

The **Cape Breton International Drum Festival** has announced the dates and the first seven performers booked for their fourth annual event. The event, which is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, May 1 and 2, 2004, will be held at The Savoy Theatre in Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Canada.

Returning from last year's Festival by popular demand will be **Dom Famularo** and **Mitch Dorge** (Crash Test Dummies). They will be joined by New Jersey-based educator/performer **Neil Garthly** (Academy Of Drums), and *MD* senior editor **Rick Van Horn**. Also appearing in the Festival's popular Rising Stars local-drummers feature will be seventeen-year-old **Amber Buchanan** (the first female Rising Star), along with **Allan MacEachern** and **Charles Urich**. For more information, go to www.cbdrumfest.com.

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DRUMMER

Who's Playing What



Scotty Hawkins (Brooks & Dunn) and **Keech Rainwater** (Lonestar) are both playing Mapex



Saturn Pro kits as they tour throughout 2003.

Artists using Protection Racket bags and cases include **Tommy Aldridge** (Whitesnake), **Taylor Hawkins** (Foo Fighters), **Will Champion** (Coldplay), and drummer **Chris Sharrock** and percussionist **Max Beesley** of Robbie Williams' band.

New Drum Workshop endorsers include **Ryan Dusick** (Maroon 5), **Jeremy White** (Revolution Smile), legendary drummer/producer **Narada Michael Walden**, and New Jersey independent drummer **Bob Cianci**. Bob is also endorsing Istanbul Agop cymbals.



Iron Maiden's **Nicko McBrain** unveiled his new Premier Series Eddie tribute kit in front of over 45,000 fans at the Download Festival

in Donnington, England. The kit was custom-built at the company's Leicestershire headquarters for Iron Maiden's *Give Me Ed... 'Til I'm Dead* 2003 tour. It features eight rack toms and a floor tom in classic (unsupported) maple shells, an 18x24 Gen-X bass drum, and a 5½x14 maple snare. Custom artwork by Wayne Saunders was influenced by former Maiden album covers featuring the band's giant mascot, Eddie.



Current Meinl artists include **Ray Yslas** (Christina Aguilera),

Barry Kerch



(Shinedown),

Gomez (Reamonn), **Jörg Michael** (Stratovarius), **Roland Peil** (Sasha), and **Wolf Simon** (TM Stevens).

Regal Tip's artist roster now features **Deen Castronovo** (Journey), **Bill Rieflin** (REM), **Brandon Bittner** (Socialburn), **Jim Donovan** (Rusted Root), **David Piribauer** (Revis), **Al Webster** (Amanda Marshall/Colin James), **Eric Paul** (Big Sugar), **Dave Clark** (Gord Downie), **Angel Crespo** (Spanish independent), and **Tomek Losowski** (Polish independent).

QUICK BEATS

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What are some of your favorite grooves?

Ringo Starr on "Ticket To Ride" (The Beatles), Chris Layton on "Cold Shot" (Stevie Ray Vaughan), John Bonham on "The Crunge" (Led Zeppelin), Mitch Mitchell on "Little Miss Lover" (Jimi Hendrix Experience), Tony Williams on "Miss Mabry" (Miles Davis Quintet), and Richie Hayward on "Little By Little" (Robert Plant).

What's your favorite TV theme music?

I like *The Twilight Zone* and *Leave It To Beaver*.

If you could put together an imaginary superband, who would be in it?

Jimi Hendrix on guitar and vocals, Jack Bruce on bass and vocals, Robert Plant on lead vocals, Ian Anderson on flute and vocals, Miles Davis on trumpet, Wayne Shorter on sax, and Jordan Rudess on keyboards. Can you imagine the four-part vocals in this lineup, not to mention the jazz/rock/fusion/progressive/instrumental possibilities?



What song makes you say, "I wish I played on that one"?

The Grateful Dead's "Dark Star." Having had the Jazz Is Dead jam-band experience, I would love a stab at this classic.

What famous person would you like to hang out with?

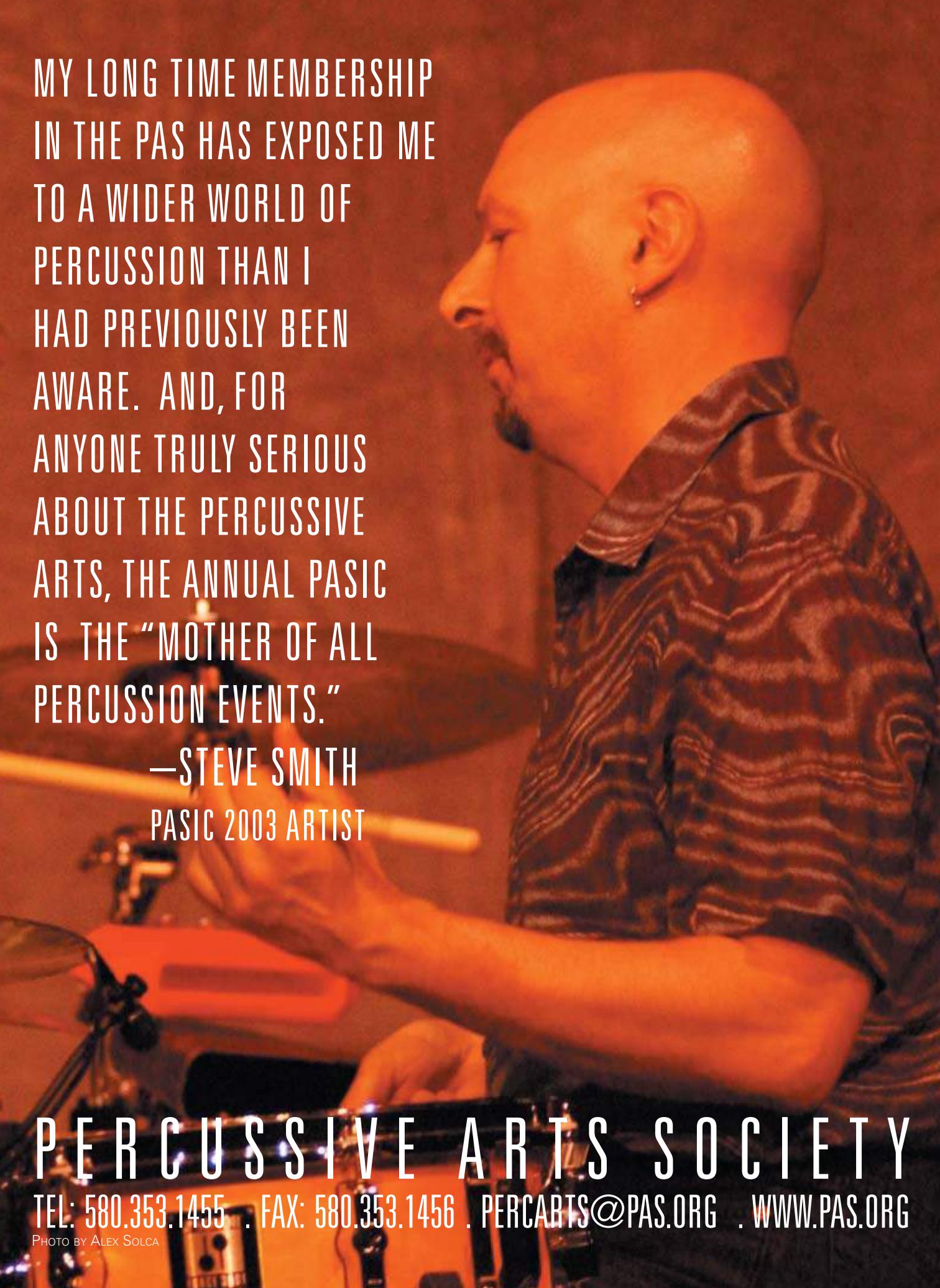
Paul McCartney, because I'm so impressed with his undeniable musical genius and his humble, down-to-earth approach to life. I also admire his dedication to important causes.

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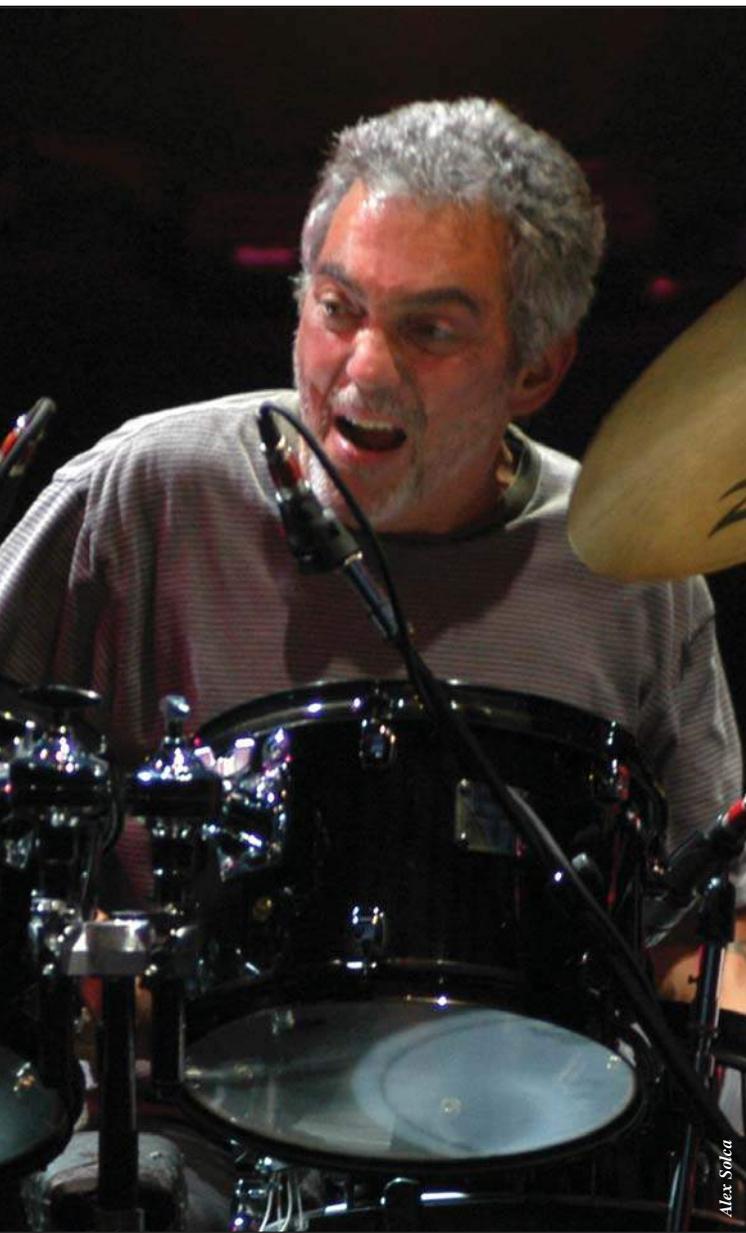
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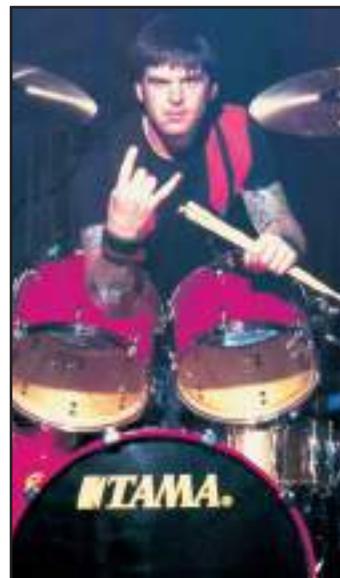
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MY RUIN



Argentine Pots And Pans

Argentine drummer Carlos Riganti plays with a group called Alas, which fuses tango with contemporary classic music, jazz, and rock. Carlos needed a kit that wouldn't overpower the acoustic instruments in the group. He also wanted his kit to reflect the sounds of pots and pans that had been heard recently in spontaneous demonstrations of direct democracy in the streets of Buenos Aires. So he created his "cacerolazo" kit—Spanish for "pot."

The 12" and 13" toms and 15" bass drum were built from old Slingerland drums, by New Jersey drummer Daryl Anderson. The snare drum is an even older 13" Ludwig. Cymbals include an 8" mini-hat created from a Sabian splash on top and a Paiste 505 splash on the bottom, an old 8" Murga cymbal, a 10" K Zildjian splash, 16" and 17" K Zildjian crashes, a 20" Zildjian K Custom ride, and a mega-hat created from an 18" Zildjian K Constantinople crash on top and a 15" A Zildjian crash on the bottom. The kit also features DW, Pearl, and Gibraltar hardware and pedals, and Remo and Aquarian heads.

Pots and pans came from local shops and the houses of friends. One pot is mounted on an LP cowbell holder and played with a pedal. An aluminum lamp with chains inside is mounted over the mini-hat. The 12" tom has a Paiste mini-gong over the top head, while the 13" tom has a bread pan—to help the timbric transition between drum and metal.

"The kit sounds joyful," says Carlos, "and evokes the first 'kits' of our childhoods—made with a little help from our mothers' kitchenware."



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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