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THE ZILDJIAN TIMES

Mike Mangini model sticks set world speed drumming record; Mangini along for the ride



THE ZILDJIAN TIMES

Roy Haynes studied by the Smithsonian for longevity



Tré Cool model sticks credited for bringing home the Grammy for Green Day

Green Day needed lit a fire in the Staples Center on February 10th, 2005, with their pyrotechnics and politically charged lyrics in their Grammy Award winning rock album.



Zildjian Sticks missing from set of MTV's "Meet the Barkers", Travis questioned

From MTV.com: Travis Barker explains the author that you can't judge a book by its cover. The look, presence and ferocity of these "Black-100" drumsticks isn't often mistaken for official Zildjian whether you're a Grammy...

THE ZILDJIAN TIMES



THE ZILDJIAN TIMES



Cindy Blackman reunites with Lenny Kravitz

Miami FL, Lenny Kravitz and long time touring drummer, Cindy Blackman have been reunited for Lenny's blistering summer tour. Cindy was the backbone of Kravitz's band for over ten years.



Dennis Chambers awarded Doctorate from Berklee cites his sticks as part of the curriculum

At the ceremony Dennis Chambers received an honorary Doctor of Music Degree. Chambers has played with Bill Evans, George Duke, the Brothers Wood, Jilly Jagan, Steely Dan and Nocturne, to name a few. He has released three albums as a bandleader and currently is the drummer for Carlin Souza.

What do all of these newsworthy Artists have in common? The answer is world-class talent and remarkable personal achievements. They have also all designed Zildjian Artist Series drumsticks. We invite you to log on to Zildjian.com to get the full story on these front-page Artists and their groundbreaking sticks.

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Alex Solca

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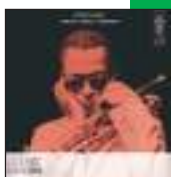
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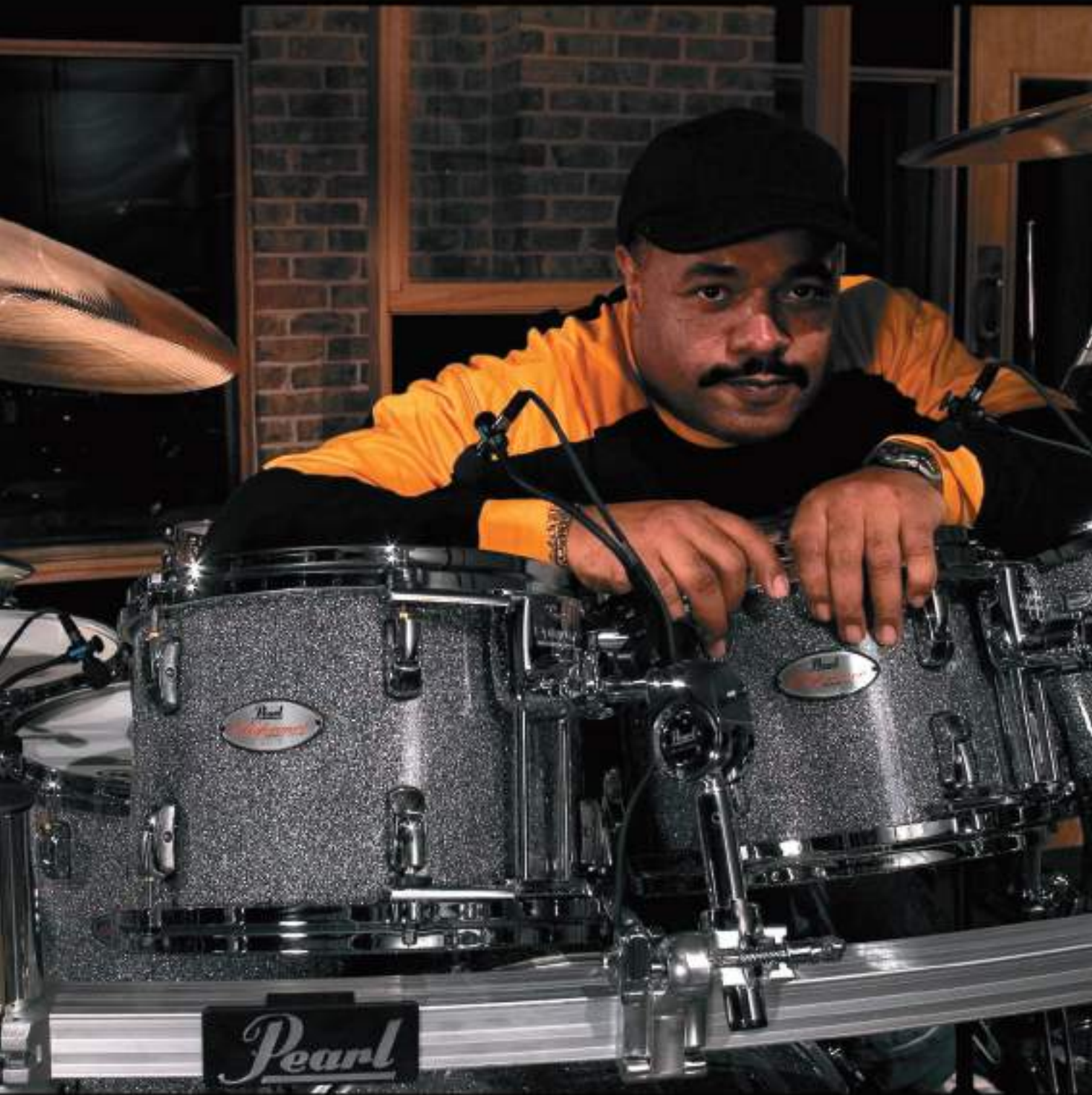


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Dennis Chambers in the studio with Reference Series. Shown in #194 Granite Sparkle.



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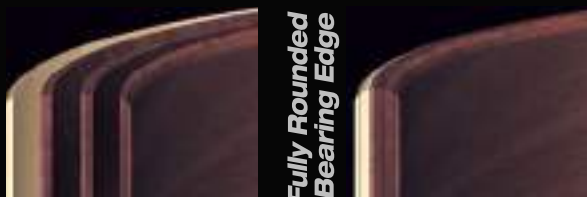
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A Time To Help

As I write this, the staggering photos and reports of devastation wrought by hurricanes Katrina and Rita have waned. In their place are more personal reports on the devastation of individual lives. Some people are finally returning to their homes, only to discover that there is virtually nothing to return to. Others who are more fortunate may still have a dwelling, but have lost a lifetime's accumulation of personal belongings and memorabilia.

Among those whose lives have been so dramatically impacted are thousands of drummers, many of whom have been left without the means to pursue their livelihood. This includes drummers of all professional levels. Floodwaters don't discriminate between street musicians and recording stars.

Basements in New Orleans are still under water. Whole towns on the Mississippi coast are simply gone. One of those is Waveland, which was home to the owner and employees of the Hot Sticks drumstick company. When last we heard, they were all living in tents on the grounds of the Hot Sticks factory a short distance inland.

Modern Drummer has been barraged with messages from readers around the country asking how they can help. One reader suggested that he had usable equipment in his garage that he would be willing to donate, if only he knew where to send it. Others asked where to send funds specifically to help drummers get back into their homes—and back onto their gigs.

Recovering from Katrina and Rita will be a lengthy and ongoing process. Over the coming months, *MD* will continue to present information about ways that readers can help their brothers and sisters in the stricken areas. We're pleased to report that the percussion industry has already taken steps in that direction. The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC), the Percussive Arts Society (PAS), and the Five-Star Drum Shops have joined together in a campaign to involve drum manufacturers, distributors, and consumers in fund-raising projects through the Five-Star network. Efforts will be made to provide music, sticks, mallets, and instruments to players in need. For additional information, go to www.playdrums.com (PMC), www.pas.org, or www.fivestardrumshops.com.

Other organizations that are undertaking their own relief efforts are listed below. More can be found by searching the Web. *Modern Drummer* urges you to go to these organizations and offer whatever help you can. We've long spoken about "the community of drummers." If ever there were a need for that communal spirit, it's now.



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RELIEF ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Tipitina's Foundation, New Orleans:
www.tipitinas.com.

The Recording Academy,
Musicares Hurricane Relief Fund:
www.Grammy.com.

Preservation Hall historic jazz club, New Orleans: Donation by phone is preferred at this time. Call (888) 229-7911. Or send a check to: New Orleans Musicians Hurricane Relief Fund, PO Box 9081, Miramar Beach, FL 32550. www.preservationhall.com.

The American Federation Of Musicians, Gulf Coast Relief Fund: Checks and money orders should be made payable to the Gulf Coast Relief Fund and sent to AFM Gulf Coast Relief Fund, 1501 Broadway, Suite 600, New York, NY 10036. Online donations should be possible shortly at www.afm.org.

Jazz Foundation Of America:
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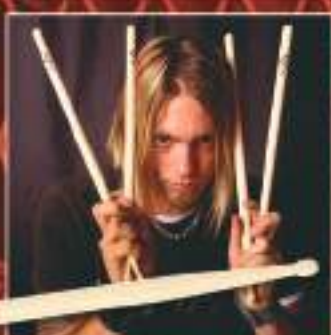
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RINGO

What a great idea! “21 Top Drummers Ask Ringo....” The three reasons why I’m a drummer today—Carmine Appice, Dino Danelli, and Ringo Starr—all in one article. I couldn’t put it down!

The ultimate compliment came from Mark Hudson when he said, “Ringo plays to the song.” After all, isn’t that what it’s all about? Ringo embodies something I always say: “It’s easy to play hard, but it’s hard to play easy.” I have to go...I must read this again!

Lou Vecchio Jr.

MD’s November cover story on Ringo was outstanding. However, one minor omission was the Christmas record that Ringo did with The Roundheads. It features some classic Ringo drumming, including the finest version of “The Little Drummer Boy” that I’ve heard. I think Ringo captures what God would have wanted to hear on the drums.

Anthony Scuderi



MD FESTIVAL WEEKEND 2005

Kudos to writers T. Bruce Wittet and Mike Haid, and to photographer Andrew Lepley. Their combined coverage of the MD Festival in your November issue looked and read like the very best kind of travelog—the kind that makes you feel like “you are there” while you’re reading, and at the same time makes you kick yourself because you weren’t there at the time.

What an event, what a lineup, and what a venue. When do tickets go on sale for the 2006 show?

Allen Montserat

HELPING HANDS

I get your magazine here in the UK every month. It recently dawned on me that my little Web site may be of some assistance to drummers that have grip issues, be it from arthritis (I have that) or other conditions that may make their hands weak. The site covers my own personal experience, and it also has tips on adapted grip and homemade help. There are also videos dealing with grip modification and applied rudiments, as well as a link to my other site (site A) dealing with some of my own drumming history (mp3s and video too).

The Web site can be found at <http://markwhitedrummer.tripod.com>. It’s nothing flashy, but it is a place where I can upload some experience from my thirty years on the kit.

Mark White

PAUL JOHN JR.

Paul John Jr. is a talented guy, playing with a super-hot artist. I’ve heard him play with Alicia Keys, and he’s solid, tasteful, and expressive.



Paul shared a lot of valuable information in his November interview. But the thing I liked best was his comment about not going out on tour until he knew he was ready spiritually and mentally, as well as musically. That’s great advice.

Sam Matherton

BLUES DRUMMING

Mike Sandler’s “Beyond The Beats” article on blues drumming in your November issue gave a great overview of what we try to do. I had all of my bandmates read it. Keep up the good work.

Freddie G.

U GODDA WANNA

I recently saw a drummer who truly inspired me. I approached the bandstand as the band was playing Melissa Etheridge’s “The Only One.” Nothing seemed unusual, until I realized that the drummer had no bass drum—and was in a wheelchair. About that same time, the band kicked into Metallica’s “Enter Sandman.”

I’ve been a gigging drummer for over thirty years. I’ve met many players at all levels. But this drummer’s sheer desire to play said it all: U Godda Wanna (which happens to be the band’s name). The drummer’s name is Kevin Laverty, and I believe he manages the band as well! They can be reached at www.Ugoddawanna.com.

Michael Waugh



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ESSENTIAL LISTENING: FUNK



Regarding your piece on essential funk LPs, I agree with some of author Jeff Schaller's choices (Sly Stone, The Meters, James Brown, Parliament), and I could see some of the others, based on the drummers involved (The J.B.s, the Motown Singles, Dyke & The Blazers). The remaining three seemed pretty obscure.

But how do you talk about essential funk albums and not include David Garibaldi with Tower Of Power? And where was the work of Bernard Purdie? These guys established playing styles emulated by thousands of drummers since. **Frank Webertson**

KUDOS TO LEWIS NASH

This past August, my son, Steve Renko, was selected to attend an invitational student jazz camp. Twelve students from across the nation received instruction from John Clayton, Jeff Clayton, Bill Cunliffe, Terrell Stafford, and Lewis Nash. While Steve was attending the camp, his prized ride cymbal (a.k.a. “The Franchise”) was stolen. Seeing how upset Steve was, Lewis Nash offered to send him a replacement cymbal. That cymbal arrived this past October 6.

In a world of sometimes selfish artists and performers, it's very gratifying to see this busy man interrupt his schedule to help a fellow drummer. Lewis's act of kindness is exactly the type of example that aspiring musicians need to emulate as they progress through life.

Mitch Renko

How To Reach Us

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 New! Matt Sorum Artist Series Drumstick

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Building Stamina For Heavy Drumming

I've recently gotten into heavy metal music, and I'm working on getting my hands and feet up to speed. But I've been having trouble with my energy level. It feels like I don't have enough "oomph" in me to pull off some of the double kick licks. How do drummers like Joey Jordison, Jason Bittner, and others manage to keep up that kind of speed and stamina? Do exercises and/or running have noteworthy benefits?

Phil Feurtado

Most of the drummers noted for their speed and stamina achieved those abilities through long hours of practice over many years. There's no magic formula. Many drummers who perform in highly "athletic" formats do, indeed, include an exercise regimen in their practice schedule. Running is considered great for building stamina, but must be done properly in order to avoid injury to feet and leg muscles that would be counterproductive to your drumming goals.

Most high-speed double bass drummers we've interviewed focus their developmental efforts on the bass drums. Virtually all of them espouse the same method: Start slow, work up to higher speeds gradually,

and play for long periods of time at your highest comfortable speed in order to build stamina.



Conga Stands

I recently purchased a quinto and conga set. What are the advantages and disadvantages of basket stands versus bracket-mounted double stands? Has there been any documented incidence of shell damage or bracket separation from the use of hanging stands by heavy-handed players?

Muhaimin Abdullah



Basket or hanging stands tend to be used by percussionists who prefer to play standing up. This is especially true of those who are playing multi-percussion setups (with timbales, bongos, bells, blocks, and other percussion "toys") and need to be able to move quickly from instrument to instrument.

Most congueros who play only congas prefer to play them while sitting, with the drums directly on the floor. This allows a tighter placement of multiple congas, and also allows the player to hold the lead drum (usually a quinto) between the knees for greater control.

Drums placed on the floor can withstand greater impact than drums mounted on brackets or within basket stands. Too much impact on a bracket-mounted drum could, theoretically, pull the bracket bolts out of the shell, or at least bend the bracket. Too much impact on a basket-mounted drum is likely to cause marring of the shell and potential bending or breaking of the basket legs or connecting bolts. High-end stands from the major manufacturers (like the LP models shown above) are designed to avoid these problems. You're more likely to encounter them with lower-priced, less heavy-duty models.



Replacing Bottom Heads

Is it really necessary to replace the resonant or bottom heads on toms and bass drums regularly? It would seem as though a resonant head that has been mounted for some time would be well broken in and would have reached equilibrium, as far as stretching goes. I personally find that the heads are easier to tune as they get older. Am I missing out on something by not replacing my resonant heads? If I spend the money to get replacement heads, would I notice a significant difference in sound?

Kemper J. Maas

When (and even whether) to replace bottom heads is a matter of choice and application. Any plastic film will degrade and lose its resiliency over time. With high-quality professional heads, this can be quite a long time. However, if those heads are on the bottoms of drums that are being heavily pounded, they go through more movement (as a result of being pushed by the air inside the drum when the top head is struck) than will heads on drums that are played more softly. That movement can cause them to "wear out" a little sooner.

The general rule is: If you're happy with the sound of your drums using the current heads (assuming that you change the top ones as they wear out), there is no particular reason to change the bottom heads. However, if you find that even with new top heads the drums aren't giving you the resonance, projection, and tunability you need, then you should consider replacing the bottom heads as a possible remedy.

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How Old Are These Drums?

I bought a set of used DW drums from my drum teacher. I think the finish on them is called Gray Slate, but I'm not sure. My real question is about the stamps on the inside of my toms, which read simply: "1945." Is this stamp a production number indicating that mine was the 1,945th set made? Or is it a date, like newer DW drums are stamped with?

Andrew Butler



DW customer service supervisor Brandon Pierce replies, "Your kit appears to have been made between 1993 and 1995. The black and gold badges were used from the late 1980s to the mid '90s, and the Gray Slate finish first came out around 1993. The stamped '1945' is definitely a production number, although it does not necessarily refer to the 1,945th set made. It usually refers to a sales order number for that particular kit."

QUESTIONS FOR MD'S DRUM EXPERTS?

Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.



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Steve Smith

On Seat Height And Snare Angle

Q I've been watching your *Drumset Technique/History Of The U.S. Beat* DVD for ideas and inspiration. I've noticed that you sit fairly high, and that your snare drum is angled forward quite a bit—especially compared to your previous instructional videos. Inspired, I raised my seat so my thighs slope down almost like yours, and I angled my snare as well.

To be honest, it feels pretty weird. I'm assuming that the purpose for your seating position is to accommodate the snare angle and the rebound/Moeller technique. How long did it take you to get used to this setup? And as far as the seat goes, how high is too high? Any other pointers you can give me would be great.

Alex Figueroa

A Sitting higher and angling my snare forward was a slow, step-by-step process that developed naturally over a few years' time. As a result of studying with Freddie Gruber, my traditional-grip hand technique improved. I realized that I couldn't get the rebound I wanted with the snare tilted toward me, so I made it

flat. Eventually, even that didn't feel right, so I started to angle it forward. I actually started drumming by playing this way, so it was a return to my original technique—with a lot more insight and refinement. (My first two videos, *Steve Smith Part One* and *Part Two*, have recently been re-released on DVD. Included in the bonus footage are some photos of me playing snare drum in high school where you can see this.)

Raising my seat level was largely the result of developing the "constant release" bass drum pedal technique that was taught to me by Freddie Gruber. (That approach is demonstrated on *Drumset Technique/History Of The U.S. Beat*.) I needed to sit up a bit higher to make that work.

Instantly changing your seat height and snare angle is likely to feel awkward. Do things gradually. As your technique changes and improves, make the setup adjustments that feel natural to you.



Alex Solera

Talkin' Pre-Amps With

Chris Vrenna

Q I've gotten heaps of really useful info out of your columns on home recording. I do have a problem, however. I recently came across a bargain deal on a MOTU 896. I have quite a large kit, and I'd really like to utilize all sixteen channels on the MOTU when I track my drums. So now I'm wondering what to do about pre-amps. Should I fork out for a 16-bus mixer? Get two more affordable 8-bus mixers? Run the essentials (kick, snare, toms) through an 8-bus mixer, and the rest direct into the interface?

I really want to make the most of the recording that our band is due to embark on. Your advice will be much appreciated.

Ash from Australia

A Thanks for the kind words about my column. I'm glad some of the suggestions are helping you. I can see that you've already done your research and are weighing the many options for recording. The MOTU 896 is a great interface choice, but to record sixteen tracks at once on one 896, you'll have to use its eight analog inputs and its eight ADAT optical digital inputs simultaneously. Knowing this will narrow your mic' pre/console choices.

If you choose to buy one 16-bus console, you'll need to look at models that can send eight analog and eight digital bus signals



simultaneously, so that you can match the 896's inputs as I described earlier. I did a little Internet searching for a 16-bus console that would meet your needs, and I found only one affordable option. That's the Tascam DM-3200 digital console, which looks like a great board. "Affordable" doesn't mean cheap, though. Internet prices seem to be about \$3,000 US.



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The 3200 has sixteen mic' pre's with EQ and dynamics, as well as inserts. Eight ADAT optical ins/outs are standard, but you'll have to buy Tascam's add-on 8-channel analog card to get the eight analog busses. They also offer a new firewire interface card to link directly to your computer, so no interface is required. There are other 16-bus digital consoles, depending on how much you want to spend.

The second option you mentioned was to buy two "cost-effective" mixers. There are many choices of 8-bus digital consoles. Since every console will differ in options and features, there are a few questions to ask yourself as you compare models from various manufacturers to see which will fit your needs best. These include: How many mic' pre-amps do you need and how many come on the mixer? Do you need—and are there—built-in analog inserts to accommodate the use of additional outboard gear? Are there any included bus out I/Os, or will you need to buy your specific I/O (analog and TDIF)? How much are the cards, if needed? (These I/O cards can vary widely in price.) And, ultimately, how much do you want to spend?

Some consoles are designed to cascade together at the system level to enable users like you to buy multiple mixers of the same brand and model. Whatever brand and model you choose, you'll need two mixers: one whose eight busses are set up for analog outputs, and the other whose eight busses are set up with ADAT optical outs.

Perhaps a more cost-effective option is to buy one digital 8-bus console that will act as your additional mic-pre's and your ADAT optical digital line into the 896's digital inputs. With one 8-bus digital console, you would be able to use however many pre-amps it comes with, as well as the onboard EQ/dynamics/inserts, and sum them all to your eight busses, which will feed the 896. The 896's eight analog inputs have mic' pre-amps with phantom power and trim control, but that's all. I looked to see how you might go about using any outboard EQs or compressors (which typically come after the pre-amp in the audio chain) with the 896, but couldn't find any info. This last point may or may not affect your decision.

There is one last idea that may work—and would also only require buying one console.

Mixers usually come with some amount of built in analog sends (I've seen four to eight) that are usually used for patching in outboard effects processors during mixing. You could use these analog outputs to send separate signals into the 896's analog TRS inputs, rather than the mic' inputs. The way I think you could pull this off would be to patch a mic' into one of the console's mic' inputs and set any processing you'd like. Next, designate one send (let's use "send one," for example) and patch it into analog input one on the 896. Then, turn on the "send one" switch, find the send level fader or knob for this channel, and turn it up. This will increase the level going out the "send one" jack and into the 896.

Follow this same procedure, picking one specific channel and assigning it to the next unused send. As long as you don't assign any of these same channels to one of the eight busses, you may be able to have as many analog outs as you have sends. However, I've never actually tried this experiment, so get a second opinion from a pro audio technician before you try it yourself. I hope this helps you in your quest.

Repeat Bar

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R&B Session Great Earl Young, December 2003



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Mudvayne's Matt McDonough RE-ENERGIZED



When *MD* caught up with Mudvayne's Matt McDonough, the drummer began our conversation about the band's latest album, *Lost And Found*, in typically *atypical* fashion: "It's best to leave it somewhat ambiguous, but this album kind of completes a trilogy for the band, which we had envisioned even before we were signed. We had a clear idea of what we were going to use as inspirational resources—ideas like dealing with one's responsibility for one's happiness. What we played wasn't really the point; going into the learning and the experiencing of it *was*."

McDonough famously loves talking about Mudvayne's music in such terms. Still, you can't be as monster a drummer as he is without spending long hours shedding "mommy-daddies." And in fact, when the band started work on *Lost And Found*, the drummer found himself reinvigorated by the physicality of drums. "I practiced more than I had in years," Matt relates. "I started analyzing my technique, and I really got into how I strike the drums and how much energy I use to be more demonstrative."

Matt says he also began to examine his left-foot double kick work. "Unless you practice on your own, with music like ours—where I'm not playing constant double bass patterns—you lose leg strength. I was getting disappointed with myself in that area. So I really started focusing on that."

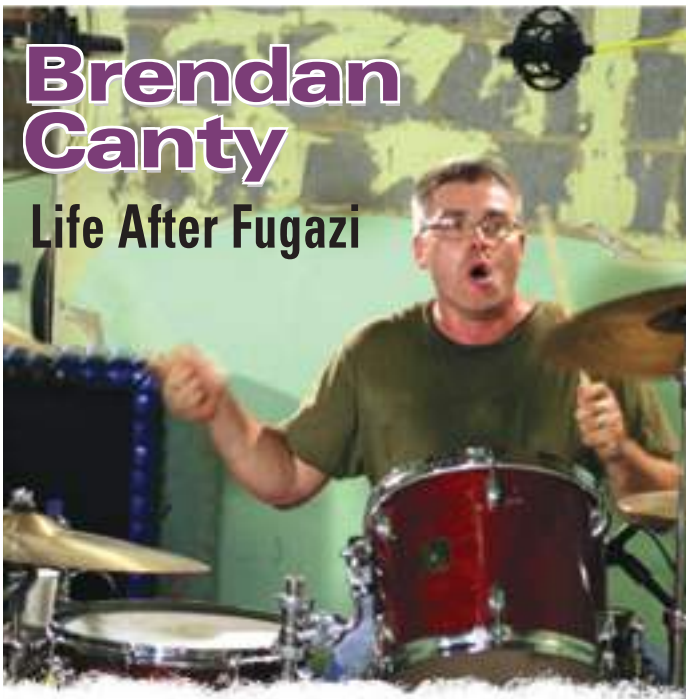
While analyzing his technique, Matt had a revelation. "I use my left foot in double-kick situations differently from other people," he explains. "I'll play parts with both feet that other drummers will play with one. That includes a lot of slower things. I think it's for efficiency. I've always thought that I can get more follow-through and projection if I play things with both feet."

Matt and his band's constant efforts of refinement and redefinition clearly paid off in 2005. *Lost And Found* debuted at #2 on Billboard's top 200 chart, Mudvayne's appearances at Ozzfest continuously brought the house down, they scored two big hits—"Happy" and "Forget To Remember," the latter the lead single from the *Saw II* soundtrack—and they closed the year headlining the Masters Of Horror tour, which also featured Sevendust. As of press time, new dates were still being added to the tour, so keep an eye out for the hard-working band playing live in your neighborhood.

Adam Budofsky

Brendan Canty

Life After Fugazi



"I really didn't mean to stop playing drums," laughs Brendan Canty. The Washington, DC-based drummer is referring to the four years (and counting) that his band, seminal post-punk legends Fugazi, has been on hiatus.

Following the release of Fugazi's 2001 album, *The Argument*, the pressures of raising a family and playing in one of rock's hardest-touring bands simply became unworkable for Canty. "I was pretty burned out after fourteen years of non-stop touring," he says. "It was also really hard with an increasing number of kids. When we were having our third child I realized, 'You know, this is just *not* going to get any easier.'"

Though off the road, Canty has been as busy as ever. When he's not producing and mixing records for artists like Ted Leo and Mary Timony, he's doing scoring and sound editing work for television. Canty is also the producer behind the critically acclaimed and conceptually fascinating *Burn To Shine* film series (www.trixiedvd.com) in which bands—Wilco, Shellac, Weir War, and others—are filmed performing in about-to-be-demolished buildings.

While his drumming has taken a backseat to these ventures, Canty has by no means set aside his sticks for good. In a match made in alternative rock heaven, Canty recently hit the road for short runs as part of Hüsker Dü/Sugar frontman Bob Mould's touring band. The connection was made when Mould relocated to DC a few years ago, which led to Canty drumming on half of the singer/guitarist's current album, *Body Of Song*.

Canty is quick to point out that playing with Mould has had a positive affect on his drumming. "I feel like I'm playing differently because I'm not competing with myself and the whole Fugazi milieu," says Canty. "There's just not as much expectation to play everything exactly as it is on a Fugazi record. I think I can kick back a little bit on some of Bob's stuff and it's okay."

As for his plans to get back into "the Fugazi milieu," Canty is open-minded, if slightly cautious. "I could see it getting back into some sort of mode," he says. "But there are certain things that I won't give up, like my kids. I mean, the crossing guard and I talk every day. He's going to miss me if I go out on the road for too long."

Jon Wurster

Jeff Sipe

The Timeless Art Of Jamming

From his early days in Atlanta with the musically experimental and always unpredictable Col. Bruce Hampton, the irrepressible journeyman Jeff Sipe has been perfecting the art of jamming for many years. He is now beginning to reap the fruits of his labors.

Sipe, who was chosen to replace Steve Gorman in The Black Crowes last year as they regrouped for a highly anticipated reunion tour, was notified the night before leaving to go on tour that Gorman had decided to re-join the group. The ever-optimistic Sipe simply says, "It was a very positive experience, and they were very nice about the whole thing. In the end, I feel it was cosmically meant to play out that way."

Sure enough, the stars were in Sipe's favor, as shortly after parting with The Crowes he was called to play with legendary Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh. "What I largely overlooked in The Dead's music ended up being pretty fascinating during the rehearsals," says Sipe. "Their music is actually quite complicated, and Phil's forte is conducting the band with a unique modal approach to his instrument. With him, there are no wrong notes or

ideas. The freedom was tremendous."

Sipe has also been busy recording live albums with Grease Factor, Sipe/Hanson/Hellborg, and The Art Of The Jam Band, as well as his own debut studio release, *Timeless*, which reveals a focus on melody, texture, and subtle expression. Sipe sums up the project this way: "I wanted this recording to be a musical offering, like a prayer. I wanted virtuosos who would play sensitively, offering a timeless expression, back to the creator, in appreciation of the beauty of life and the opportunities given."

In regards to the art of jamming, Sipe explains, "With Grease Factor and the other recent live projects, the music is totally improvised. It's never rehearsed and never discussed, except for which keys the players favor. It's hard to find musicians who are willing and able to abandon all preconceptions and who can listen well to everyone in the group. But when you find that special group of players, the heavens open up and it becomes a magical thing."

Mike Haid



Michael Weintraub

Jim McCarty

Shape Of Things To Come

When Jim McCarty held the drum chair in The Yardbirds in the mid to late '60s, he was in a band of almost incomprehensible importance in rock history. Before he left in 1968, McCarty had the opportunity to back future rock guitar gods Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, and Jeff Beck, as each was a member of the seminal rock band in the early stages of their careers. "I was at the right place at the right time," says the drummer today, modestly.

"My drumming in that band was about being part of the song structure and not overplaying," McCarty insists. Almost forty years later, The Yardbirds are back together and revisiting some of the greatest rock 'n' roll songs of that period, such as "For Your Love," "Shapes Of Things," and "Over Under Sideways Down." The driving beat behind it all was the steady McCarty.

"Music has always been the most natural and creative way of communicating for me," says McCarty, who now resides in France. Over the past few years the drummer has been involved with world music projects and experimenting with music for healing purposes. "I am currently composing a CD of instrumental chants and working with some Indian drummers," he says. "It's always been a

dream of mine to do this."

McCarty's career has taken many turns since his departure from the British supergroup. In 1968, he formed Renaissance with Keith Relf, the lead singer of The Yardbirds, who recorded two albums before a complete lineup change. Since then McCarty has spent his time touring with various

blues bands and working on his "dream projects," as he puts it.

For now, it's back to business with the group that gave McCarty his start. "I still play the old parts," he says. "But now I have thirty-five years of experience behind the kit to add to it."

Chris DiGirolamo



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Rick Mattingly

THE KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS' Fred Young Big Boss Man

The Kentucky HeadHunters achieved much of their early success through covers of country classics infused with blues, rock, and soul. The band takes a similar approach on their latest album, *Big Boss Man*, which includes covers of country songs by Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, and Roger Miller, along with tunes by Bob Dylan and The Beatles.

Drummer Fred Young especially likes the feel the band got on the title track, a Jimmy Reed blues classic that was also a staple of Elvis Presley's live shows. "When we get in a groove like that, it comes out sounding kind of like ZZ Top," Fred says. "I went for the kind of thing Mitch Mitchell did with Hendrix."

The HeadHunters' take on "Walkin' After Midnight" has a somewhat jazzy sound, with Fred emphasizing the ride cymbal, while "I'm Down" is driven by a powerful rock groove. On "Take These Chains From My Heart" Fred went for a spacious sound, only playing the hi-hat in between snare and bass hits. "That left a nice hole for the snare," Fred explains. "The

snare drum I used sounds really good when you leave a space like that. It's the same snare drum I've used on most of our records: an old eight-lug, wood-shell Ludwig Pioneer model. The rest of the drums I used on this album belong to my nephew, John Fred. It's a new Ludwig kit with a 26" bass drum, a 14" rack tom, and 16" and 18" floor toms. They're so smooth to play compared to what I'm used to playing live."

Anyone who's seen The HeadHunters in concert undoubtedly recalls Fred's kit, which is made up of old wood-rim marching drums from Fred's high school band. "Acoustically, I wouldn't give you five cents for them drums," Fred admits. "But they sound real fat through the PA. To get that sound, we have to tune them down to where they don't have any ring and I don't get much response. So it's nice to play a kit in the studio that I can tune to where the tone opens up."

Rick Mattingly



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Buddy Williams has been doing *The Color Purple* on Broadway.

Kenney Jones (Small Faces, The Faces, The Who) is back on the charts again, but this time with his own band, The Jones Gang, earning the highest debuting song on the Billboard Top-200 singles chart with their song "Angel."



Tony Escapa is touring with Ricky Martin.

Matt Johnson, Anthony Riscica, and *MD*'s very own **Michael Dawson** are all on Shane Gamble's *Behind The Blue*. For more go to www.shanegamble.com.

George Purviance is on Agent Sparks' recently released debut, *Not So Merry*.

Chad Cromwell plays drums on Neil Young's newest album, *Prairie Wind*, with **Karl Himmel** on percussion.

Anton Fig is on new records by Oz Noy and Frank Black, and he's also been doing gigs with such units as The Rekooperators, The South African All-Stars, and Booker T & The MGs.

Brazilian singer, composer, and multi-instrumentalist **Curumin** (a.k.a. **Luciano Nakata Albuquerque**) just released a record called *Achados e Perdidos*. When performing live, he sings and plays drums and ukulele, combining Afro-beat and samba rhythms with a modern twist.

Jamie Dawson is on The Thieves' new album, *Tales From The White Line*.

Ben Dusseault is on Throwdown's newest release, *Most Precious Blood*.

Swiss Chris is on tour with John Legend.

Marvin "Slam" Hammett is on tour with The Backstreet Boys.

Laurie Jenkins is on tour with Howie Day.

Donald Barrett is on Josh Kelley's latest, *Almost Honest*. He's also touring with Kelley. In between road dates, Barrett's recording with David Foster for Renee Olstead's upcoming sophomore release. For more on the drummer, go to www.donaldmusic.com.

Tim Horner is on Mark Sherman's *One Step Closer*, featuring Joe Lovano.

Alexis Fleisig (Girls Vs Boys) is on Bellini's *Small Stones*.

Larry Crockett and **Brady Blade** are on Eric Bibb's *A Ship Called Love*.

John Sparrow (The Danglers) has been playing percussion with The Violent Femmes on tour.



Billy Kilson, Vinnie Colaiuta, and **Peter Erskine** are on Chris Botti's latest, *To Love Again*.

Congratulations to **Tobias Ralph** and his wife, Regina, on the birth of their child, Atticus.

Congratulations to Tati and **Gustavo Meli** on the birth of their son, Ciro.

DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Chick Webb was born on 2/10/09. **Baby Dodds** passed away on 2/14/59, **Karen Carpenter** on 2/4/83, **Tony Williams** on 2/23/97, and **Keith Knudsen** on 2/8/05.

On 2/26/45, Count Basie records *Avenue C* with **Shadow Wilson** on drums.

In February of '71, **Elvin Jones** performs with **Ginger Baker** and his group Airforce at London's Lyceum Theatre.

On 2/17/79, Blondie (with **Clem Burke** on drums) hits number-1 with "Heart Of Glass."



On 2/23/87, **GMS Drums** puts out their first line of custom drums, the Grand Master series.

On 2/23/04, Queensrÿche's **Scott Rockenfield** officially opens his company, RockenWraps.



Mick Avory
(The Kinks): 2/15/44

Harvey Mason
(session giant): 2/22/47

Joe English
(Wings): 2/7/49

Nigel Olsson
(Elton John): 2/10/49

Happy Birthday!

Hal Blaine
(session great): 2/5/29

Jerry Shirley
(Humble Pie): 2/4/52

Pat Wilson
(Weezer): 2/1/69

Robin Bachman
(Bachman Turner Overdrive):
2/18/53

Ron Welty
(The Offspring): 2/1/71

Manny Elias
(Tears For Fears/Julian Lennon):
2/21/53

Johnny Rabb
(independent): 2/29/72

Scott Phillips
(Creed, Alter Bridge): 2/22/73

Vinnie Colaiuta
(drum giant): 2/5/56

Teddy Campbell
(American Idol): 2/24/75

Gregg Field
(jazz great): 2/21/56

Cyrus Bolooki
(New Found Glory): 2/27/80

Jerry Marotta
(studio): 2/6/57

Taylor Hawkins
(Foo Fighters): 2/10/68



To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.





RMV X5/Special Edition Drumkit

Brazilian Bargain Beauty

by Kevin D. Osborne

KEY NOTES

- Brazilian maple blends the best of birch and maple sounds
- carbon fiber lugs and suspension mounts
- attractive lightweight hardware
- welding on rims is a little rough

RMV drums have been in the US market for a relatively short time. But the company has been making drums in Brazil for thirty years, so they know what they're doing. They make their own drumheads, shells, hoops, lugs, stands, and pedals, as well as create their own finishes. RMV calls this style of soup-to-nuts in-house manufacturing Sonic Optimization, a methodology with the goal of making drums with the best sound possible. Some of the unique aspects of RMV drums include the wood used for the shells, the material used to construct the lugs, and the textured, black, lightweight stands.

We were sent RMV's new X5/Special Edition model. It comes with an 8-lug 5 1/2x14 snare, a 16-lug 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 suspended rack toms, and a 13x14 floor tom. Finishes available are Incandescent Fade WrapArt, Black-To-Silver Sparkle



Fade WrapArt, Red Satin See-Thru, and Blue Satin See-Thru. The set we received for review featured a sunburst-style Incandescent Fade WrapArt finish. The contrast between the wrap and the black hardware created a stunning visual effect.

Shells

The wood used in the construction of RMV drums is Brazilian maple (also known as bapeva), which is harder and 18% denser than North American maple. RMV feels that the sonic characteristics possessed in different degrees by maple and birch—depth, warmth, clarity, and projection—can all be achieved using this one wood.

Up to now RMV has offered two main non-reinforced shell designs: thin (4 mm) and thick (6 mm) shells. The thin shells, called Stage-Style, have a low pitch and a dark tone. The thick shells (Stadium-Style) are higher pitched with brighter tones.

In order to offer drums with a sound that blends the best of thin and thick drums—and offer them at a reduced price—the X5/Special Edition kit features 5-mm X5 Street-Style drumshells. These shells deliver a sound that falls between those produced by the thick shells and the thin shells: round, but with a bite. According to RMV, this allows the drums to project better in high-volume, contemporary playing situations.

I took the snare apart to examine its shell construction more closely. The shell is made slightly undersized in relation to the head, so that only the plastic head itself makes contact on the bearing edge. The hoop is not in contact with the shell at all. This results in more head vibration being transferred to the shell. The bearing edges were sharp and uniform, with most of the cut to the inside of the drum at a 45° angle.

Hardware

The standard hardware package for the X5/Special Edition kit includes two boom cymbal stands, a snare drum stand, a hi-hat stand, the tom mounts, and a chain-drive bass drum pedal. Every stand has its own bag to store and carry it in, which is a very nice touch. Even the bass drum pedal has its own bag.

I was impressed with all the stands. They're easy to adjust (even from a seated position) and light to carry. Yet as light as they are, they're still solid and sturdy. The ratchet cymbal tilters



have fine teeth that offer plenty of precise adjustment. The top nuts on the cymbal stands are round rubberized units that spin off and on easily while still holding the cymbals on securely.

The snare stand goes quite low, but can adjust up to meet the needs of longer-legged drummers. Its basket tilter utilizes the same ball & socket adjustment found on the tom arms, as well as a large grip to tighten up the basket. The large rubber feet hide hefty metal spurs that can slide down to keep the stand firmly anchored on a drum rug.

The hi-hat uses a chain and lever combination that delivers smooth operation. Spring tension is adjustable to give you whatever amount of resistance you're comfortable with. The action has a solid feel, and the large rubber feet hold the stand in place. The clutch traps the cymbal between a lower round nut and a piece that locks in place with a drumkey-tightened bolt. This is easier than fidgeting with holding and twisting two adjustment nuts and a locking nut that will only come loose later. The thumbscrew holding the clutch to the hi-hat rod did loosen up under my constant stomping, but this is nothing new to hi-hats.

The bass drum pedal footboard is black with a cool orange design at the top and bottom. (The hi-hat pedal sports the same look.) The pedal offers only basic adjustment options. But it's a very functional unit that was sturdy underfoot and had a smooth feel to it.

The suspension tom mounts grip the toms around four tension rods, using rubber gaskets to dampen vibration. This provides solid but flexible support, allowing the drums to move and resonate freely as they're struck. The bracket that receives the L-rod is made of a fiber composite material, which saves weight without sacrificing strength. The tom-holder arms feature ball & socket adjustments, making the toms easy to position.

There's about a 50/50 split of wing bolts and drumkey bolts used





flexibility to the drum. Since there's more space between the tension rods, there's more room for the head to vibrate.

The bass drum had lots of punch. It was very bright, without an excessive amount of low end. But it did possess plenty of presence and projection. This drum will be heard loud and clear, with no mis-

taking that it's a bass drum with an attitude.

The toms were very quick to respond, with a solid attack that could be heard clearly along with the tone. Every stick impact was clear and well defined. You should have no complaints about the toms sounding muddy through the PA or on a recording. The 8x10 tom has a faster decay than the other toms, which isn't unusual considering its size. The 9x12 mounted tom is more full-throated, with a singing tone. There's time to hear the stroke come back at you off the bottom head.

I've saved the best till last. For its small size (13x14), the sound produced by the floor tom was remarkable. When you get around the set to this drum, you know you've arrived! The legs are equipped with large isolation feet, which sustain the drum's vibration. As a result, the attack and the tone were powerful, whether I played the drum with a stick or a mallet. The small drum sounded deep and sonorous, with finality to its pitch and punch. Yet at the same time, it invited, begged, and teased me to keep playing it. It was hard to stop.

on this drumset, with wing bolts being mostly used on the stands and the drumkey bolts on the tom mounts and adjustments.

The drums are fitted with lightweight 1.6-mm black rims. I noticed that the rims were a little rough at the point where they were welded together. I doubt this is a structural issue, and it doesn't really detract from the cosmetics of the set. But it wasn't something I expected.

RMV's innovative black lugs are made from injection-molded carbon fiber, fitted with steel lug nuts, tension rods, and screws. The lugs are light yet strong enough to bear the tension of the head on the drum. Each lug is attached to the drum using a vibration-dampening rubber gasket, one screw, and a positioning pin. This reduced mass lightens each drum and allows it to vibrate more.

Sonic Optimization

Now let's talk about sound, starting with the snare drum. When I tuned it to a medium head tension, there was a lot of ring around the edge, with plenty of snare buzz. The sound was much tighter and more defined at the center. Tightening the snare-side head cut out some of the ring but added a boxiness to the sound. Cranking the batter head up brought out a crack and muffled the ring and buzz significantly.

This drum had a nice snare snap to it. It has eight tuning points instead of ten, which, in my opinion, can impart some

Conclusion

"Punchy" seems to characterize the X5/Special Edition drumset as a whole. The X5 Street-Style shells are designed to deliver pitch, tone, attack, and projection that falls between the low, dark, fat, long-sustain sound of thin shells and the high, bright, dry, short-sustain sound of thick shells. Between the crack of the snare, the attack of the toms, the presence of the bass drum, and the tone and power of the floor tom, this kit has an overall sound that will complement and cut through any musical group you care to play with. And it will do it at a price that won't put you in debt.

THE NUMBERS

X5/Special Edition drumset \$1,495
Includes 5 1/2x14 snare, 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 mounted toms, and a 13x14 floor tom. Hardware pack includes two boom cymbal stands, a snare drum stand, a hi-hat stand, tom mounts, and a chain-drive bass drum pedal.
(818) 753-7811, www.rmvdums.com.

Quick Looks

RockenWraps

RockenWraps are the brainchild of Scott Rockenfield, a founding member of prog band Queensrÿche. Scott wanted his kit to stand out, so he created laminated designs on a plastic material that could be applied to his kit to customize the look. Scott's designs became popular with other drummers who saw his kit, and those drummers expressed interest in getting some for themselves.

Along with his own designs, Scott is branching out with designs by other artists, including David Bollt. Customer photos or artwork can also be turned into unique finishes for a small setup fee. And whether you order a stock finish or a custom one, the plastic material is cut to match the sizes of your drums when the order is received.

The concept behind RockenWraps is very simple. You remove all the hardware from your drum, including the air vent grommet. (RockenWraps offers polished chrome replacement air vents with threads on both halves.) You then wrap the new material around the shell. A built-in adhesive strip keeps it in place at the overlap. Once the material is secure, you drill out the existing holes, put the hardware back on, and you're done.

I applied a wrap to a snare drum that belongs to my son. RockenWrap's instructions are very clear, including recommending the use of sharp tools for cutting and drilling. The instructions also stress the need for a light touch when drilling, so that nothing is forced. The most important instruction, however, is the need to exercise *patience*. You don't want to rush a job like this. It's much better to take the time to do it right while you have the chance. In my case it definitely paid off: The drum looked great and my son was thrilled with the results.

One of the best things about RockenWraps is that you get almost instant gratification. Their wraps go right over your existing finish, causing no damage to that finish should you want to return to it in the future. The company also offers RockenHedZ graphic bass drum heads. These heads can match your kit covering, or can be created from custom artwork that you supply.

The visual aspect of a RockenWraps finish knocks you out when the hardware is replaced and the drums are put together. This is *not* your father's White Marine Pearl. If you want to walk on the wild side with designer-style finishes, RockenWraps certainly deserve a look. They are available in many large music stores, or you can order factory-direct. Pricing ranges from \$25.99 for 6" and 8" drum sizes to \$79.99 for a 20x26 bass drum. Stock-design RockenHedZ range from \$59.99 (18") to \$89.99 (24").

(425) 485-3527, www.rockenwraps.com.

Chap Ostrander



Stagg Classic Series Cymbals

New Name, Old Sounds

by Mike Haid

KEY NOTES

- exceptional quality in affordable price range
- versatile flat rides for various jazz applications
- brilliant, explosive crash cymbals
- not all the cymbals in the series are sonically matched

Once a drummer becomes aware of the seemingly limitless palette of cymbal choices on today's market, it becomes clear that making the right selection for one's distinctive style and sound may involve different brands, models, and price points. To any given drummer, certain inexpensive cymbals may sound similar to, or better than, expensive ones, and vice versa. In these cases, beauty is indeed in the ear of the beholder.

This brings us to our review of the new Classic series from Stagg. These cymbals were created to fill a void in the company's crash and ride lines by offering models reminiscent of early Turkish-made cymbals used by many historic jazz players.

Some cymbal snobs may turn up their noses at the thought of playing anything less than high-end, brand-name cymbals. If you fit this category, then you're missing out on the possibility of finding some impressive sounds at some equally impressive (read: affordable) prices.

All Stagg cymbals are made from B20 cast bronze (80% copper/20% tin). They're initially stamped, then machine- and hand-hammered into shape. Then they're hand-lathed for weight dispersion and basic sonic characteristics. Senior craftsmen do the hammering and lathing in the latter part of the manufacturing process to confirm the sound, timbre characteristic, and thickness of each particular plate.

Quite impressive, in my opinion. But let's do a serious soundcheck and see what this new line of cymbals might have to offer your sonic palette. Our review set consisted of 15" medium-thin, 16" thin, 17" medium-thin, 18" medium-thin, 18" thin, and 19" medium-thin crashes, along with 18" and 20" flat rides.

Sonic Performance

I began my evaluation by considering all of the cymbals as a sonically matched set that would complement one another in overall tonality and timbre. But as I began to compare the combined tonalities and sonic similarities, this proved not to be the case.

The 16" thin crash, 18" medium-thin crash, and 18" thin crash did, indeed, match up well with both flat rides to create a somewhat early-Turkish "jazzy" sound. The

18" flat ride had a nice dry resonance, with minimal sympathetic overtone build-up and exceptional stick definition. The 20" flat ride had similar dry characteristics, but also had a subtle trashy wash that allowed for dark, dirty accents when the cymbal was pushed a little harder with the shoulder of the stick. The unique underlying trashy quality of the 20" flat ride worked very well with both 18" crashes, which possessed a similar trashy wash.

Both flat rides, along with both 18" crashes, would work well in low- to medium-volume jazz settings. The 18" flat ride would be best suited for lower-volume settings, such as light jazz. The 16" thin crash had a dominant Oriental trashy tone, with a quick response that opened up nicely when gently grazed, even with brushes. This cymbal actually had more of the overall bright, explosive characteristics of a splash than of a crash.

The 18" thin and 18" medium-thin crashes were my favorite crashes due to their ability to respond with a sensitive, mid-to-bright tonality and a slight wash when struck gently. They opened up beautifully when struck with medium force, and they reached a crescendo of bright, full-bodied brilliance when struck forcefully. These would be great all-around crash cymbals for any musical style or volume situation.



The 15", 17", and 19" medium-thin crashes were much heavier and thicker-sounding than the other models in our test group. At low volumes, they were a bit dull and unresponsive. They sounded best when struck with enough force to let them open up and deliver a shimmering, brilliant, full-bodied crash. So although the 17" and 19" crashes weren't sonically compatible with the rest of the Classic models, they might still be very useful and full-sounding for loud applications.

The 15" medium-thin crash was the odd man out. It had a bright tone and an underlying trashiness that came across almost like a splash, but it was too thick and lifeless at low volume to be effective in that role. Yet neither was it large enough, volume-wise, to be an effective crash.

Conclusions

The majority of Stagg Classics are good-looking, great-sounding cymbals that would be useful for various applications. In comparing the flat rides to other manufacturers' high-end cymbals of similar size and design, I felt that the Staggs measured up in terms of character and versatility.

Something I found interesting is that the list prices of the smaller Stagg cymbals are much lower than the prices of similar high-end name-brand models, while the prices for larger crashes and flat rides are very similar. Still, the pricing for those larger Stagg cymbals is certainly not out of line, and they're well worth the cost.

I held off mentioning that Stagg cymbals are made in China until now so that cymbal snobs might pay more attention to their excellent acoustic qualities than to their place of origin. The geographic location where a cymbal is made should have little relevance to the selection process. As long as it sounds good to your ear, it's a winner.

If you feel that you understand the sound characteristics that identify quality cymbals—no matter where they come from or what their brand name is—then you should give the Stagg Classics a chance. You may be pleasantly surprised.



THE NUMBERS	
15" thin crash	\$145
15" medium-thin crash	\$150
16" thin crash	\$160
16" medium-thin crash	\$200
17" thin crash	\$210
17" medium-thin crash	\$240
18" thin crash	\$250
18" medium-thin crash	\$290
19" thin crash	\$320
19" medium-thin crash	\$370
18" flat ride	\$340
20" flat ride	\$485

(615) 793-8787, www.emdmusic.com.

Schalloch Linea 100 Congas, Bongos, And Djembe

A New Entry At The Entry Level

by **Norman Arnold**

KEY NOTES

- better heads than are usually found on drums in this price range
- surprisingly good overall sound performance
- congas lack some skin-on-skin "woodiness"

Schalloch percussion has been available in Europe for several years, but is just now making serious inroads into the US market. The company offers four hand drum series, beginning with the entry-level Linea 100.

Congas

Linea 100 congas are available in 10" quinto, 11" conga, and 12" tumba sizes. All the drums are well made, using Siam oak. Our review drums came in an attractive blue fade lacquer finish, which was offset by a matte black finish on the hardware. The rims, which feature a curved design, are set well below the level of the heads.

This makes playing the congas easy on the hands. The bottoms of the drums are fitted with metal caps to protect them when playing on hard surfaces. The buffalo-hide heads are of fairly good quality.

The drums came with fully adjustable basket stands. It was easy to assemble everything quickly and get all three drums positioned at a comfortable level. Once the drums were mounted in the stands, they produced a very warm sound. It was easy to get a variety of tunings and tones. As with many entry-level drums, the area in which sound quality was sacrificed was the skin-on-skin "woody" sound that naturally occurs with higher-end drums.

Bongos

The bongos are equally well made. They also feature black hardware, including curved rims similar to those on the congas. With their 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " sizes, the bongos felt very comfortable when played between the knees. There is also an available double-braced stand for use when standing.

The drums responded well—especially when I cranked up the pitch. The thin buffalo-hide heads produced a crisp crack that was pretty impressive for entry-level drums.

The bongos are sold individually and in a set with the quinto and conga, which makes for a very good combo deal.

Djembe

The djembe is made in the same style as the congas and bongos. It features a 12"-diameter head on a 21"-tall shell. A rubber bottom cap protects the bottom of the drum (and the floor).





The sound of the djembe proved to be resonant and lively. The goatskin head was not too thick, so it responded well to a lighter touch. I kept the head tuned fairly loose, and it provided a very interesting range of sounds...almost bohdran-like. It also recorded very well. I used the drum on a session, and it had great low end.

The djembe proved to be an outstanding performer—especially for its price. If you were to mount the djembe with the conga/bongo set, you'd have a full-range setup that looks and sounds really good.

Conclusion

Most entry-level hand-drum lines are critically lacking when it comes to the quality of their heads. Consequently, it's virtually impossible to get a decent sound from the drums. The Schalloch Linea 100 series is a pleasant exception.

Musicians Friend is the sole US distributor for Schalloch percussion. They're an online and phone-order operation, and their regular prices are generally well below the list prices shown in the Numbers box below. They also list "sale" prices on most items, which can make the Schalloch drums reviewed here even better values.



THE NUMBERS

10" quinto/11" conga set, with basket stands	\$471.45
12" tumba, with basket stand	\$257.25
10"/11"/12" set, with basket stands	\$709.00
6 1/2" and 7 1/2" bongos	\$103.95
Conga/bongo set, with stands	\$754.40
12" djembe	\$345.45

Drums are available in Natural, Brown, Wine Red, Vintage Sunburst, and Blue Fade lacquer finishes.

(800) 391-8762, www.musiciansfriend.com.



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Beato Pro 3 And Pro 4 Drum Bags

A Joint Venture In Value

by Rick Van Horn

KEY NOTES

- Pro 3 bags feature excellent design and construction quality
- all bags offer outstanding affordability
- Pro 3 hardware bags need internal stiffening
- Pro 4 bags have limited applications

Fred Beato's name has been synonymous with high-quality, innovative drum bags for many years. Tom Shelley's Universal Percussion is equally well known for the design and distribution of quality products that are manufactured offshore for exceptional affordability, such as Wuhan cymbals, Attack drumheads, and Cannon hardware.

Not long ago, Fred and Tom got together in a joint venture. Fred would design a line of drum bags that would meet the needs of contemporary drummers. Tom would arrange to have Fred's designs manufactured in China, where low material and labor costs could help make the resulting bags more affordable in the US market.

The bags resulting from this joint venture have been dubbed the Beato Pro 3 and Pro 4 series. Between them, the two lines offer a wide range of sizes and features.

Pro 4 Series

Although it's out of numerical sequence to do so, I want to start with the Pro 4 series. These are economy bags designed to provide minimal protection at minimal prices. They're made of a strong, water-repellant nylon material, using extra-heavy thread. The insides feature a soft, scratch-resistant surface, but no padding. Each bag features heavy plastic piping at the edges, as well as a heavy-duty zipper. For what they are, they're well designed and well constructed.

However, the only way I'd recommend these bags for serious gigging purposes is if you handled your drums yourself, and then only if you loaded them in and out of a car from the trunk and seats. I wouldn't feel comfortable loading them into a van or pickup truck, where the loaded bags would likely slide on the metal floor of the vehicle and bump into one another. I don't think the fabric would wear well against such sliding, and the drums would not be protected from any impact.

On the other hand, if you tend to leave your drums in a storage area or a rehearsal space, the Pro 4 bags would make excellent "dust cover" containers. This might make them especially appealing to student drummers who keep their drums at home. The bags are also inexpensive enough to be used as "case liners" within ATA-style road cases, making the drums easy to pull out of the road boxes.

Pro 4 bags are available in five-piece Standard and Fusion sets, for drums only. No cymbal or hardware bags are offered in this series.

Pro 3 Series

The Pro 3 series is, in a word, impressive. These heavy-duty Cordura bags are well padded to protect their contents. Each drum bag comes with a shoulder strap, heavy-duty zippers, and a separate circular compartment for accessories (perfect for spare heads). In a nice design touch, two side handles and a third handle perpendicular to the



Pro 4 Bags



Pro 3 Bags

others provide carrying options. Heavy-duty webbing is used to reinforce the bags where the handles are attached. Drum bags are sold individually or in Standard and Fusion drumkit sets.

Pro 3 hardware bags are extremely well designed. I particularly liked the way the zippers open around the top perimeter of the bag, allowing the top flap to be pulled back out of the way, exposing the bag's contents in a "trunk-like" manner. Top carrying straps have a padded grip; a handle at one end is covered with rubber for comfort.

At the other end of each hardware bag is a set of built-in wheels, making transport very easy. My only complaint with the bags is that the bottoms, though stiffened, are not rigid. So if you put a load in the bag and start to wheel it away, the bag sags in the middle. This problem can be reduced somewhat by keeping the hardware within the bag extended enough to run from top to bottom, providing internal support. A solid bottom would be even better, but that might increase the cost factor beyond the "affordable" range that the bags now enjoy.

Pro 3 cymbal bags come in two versions. The basic model is a no-frills padded bag with one interior compartment, one smaller compartment, strong web handles, and a shoulder strap. The Deluxe model offers five internally divided spaces, one outside cymbal compartment, and a large outside pouch that also contains four drumstick sleeves and a zippered accessories compartment. The bottom of the bag is reinforced with a wide base and plastic feet. This is a really nice cymbal bag!

Pro 3 stick bags are available as one- and two-pair marching stick quivers, and also as six-, six-plus-, and twelve-pair traditional bags. Each is made in the same manner as the drum, hardware, and cymbal bags, with excellent construction and a reasonable amount of padding.

A Word About Value

For as long as I've been writing columns and reviews for *MD*, I've preached that an investment in drum equipment

should be protected by an investment in cases or bags. The problem comes when the first investment exhausts the drummer's budget, eliminating the possibility of the second investment—at least right away. The new Beato bags should help solve that problem.

Now, I don't believe that anything is a value simply because it's inexpensive. It must also have the quality and functionality required to do the job it's designed to do. By that definition, the Beato Pro 4 bags would be valuable as dust covers or extremely light-duty carrying bags for drums. But they would not serve well for serious gigging drummers.

THE NUMBERS

Pro 4 Series Bags

Pro 4 five-piece Fusion set	\$48.95
Pro 4 five-piece Standard set	\$49.95

Pro 3 Series Bags

9x10 drum bag	\$31.95
11x12 drum bag	\$33.95
12x13 drum bag	\$35.95
5x14 drum bag	\$33.95
6x14 drum bag	\$34.95
12x14 drum bag	\$44.95
16x16 drum bag	\$47.95
16x22 drum bag	\$71.95
18x22 drum bag	\$73.95
Five-piece Fusion set	\$179.95
Five-piece Standard set	\$185.00
Cymbal bag	\$28.95
Deluxe cymbal bag	\$54.95
Marching Stick Quiver (one pair)	\$9.00
Marching Stick Quiver (two pairs)	\$12.95
Stick bag (6 pairs)	\$9.00
Stick bag (6+ pairs)	\$10.50
Stick bag (12 pairs)	\$12.00
25" hardware bag with wheels	\$65.25
36" hardware bag with wheels	\$72.25
47" hardware bag with wheels	\$79.75

(800) 282-0110, www.universalpercussion.com.

On the other hand, the Pro 3 series offers drum, cymbal, hardware, and stick bags that should more than meet the needs of any drummer playing out locally. And when that functionality is combined with the bags' impressively low prices, *now* we're talkin' value.



FROM BIRTH..

YUICHI KUROMATSU

Job Title: Spray Booth Specialist
Years Experience: 5 years

“No matter which type of shell or color I am painting, many things have to be considered to ensure that the finish is absolutely perfect. I analyze the wood grain, scrutinize the thickness of the colored paint and clear lacquer, and examine the overall balance of the final product. I create each instrument knowing that its life will far exceed mine. So, in a way, my pride and passion will live for many years after I am gone.”

Recording Custom in Solid Black

ARTISTS IN THE KNOW



TO PERFORMANCE

INSPIRATION

Dave Matthews Band depends on Carter's inspirational grooves to deliver their high energy shows night after night. But what inspires Carter?... His drums, of course. One beat at a time.

Did you know...
At Yamaha Drums, we have ALWAYS created and lacquered ALL of our own shells AND made our own hardware.

Yamaha quality from Birth to Performance, from our hands to yours... who makes your drums?

“My drums and I have enjoyed countless gigs together the world over, and I believe the distinctive sound and feel of Yamaha drums not only inspire my fans and bandmates but also generations of musicians everywhere.”

CARTER BEAUFORD

Who Does Carter Play With?
Dave Matthews Band



WWW.YAMAHA-DRUMS.COM

JON FARRISS

The Return Of INXS

Considering the hoopla that surrounded the hit TV show *Rockstar: INXS*, drummer Jon Farriss was very focused and eloquent when we sat down in the studio for this interview. The show—a weekly “elimination” format that culminated in the hiring of a new lead singer for the band—was running them ragged. It was a huge time commitment, not only on camera, but behind the scenes. Meetings, off-screen deliberations, and time spent agonizing over the crucial decision that would affect their entire future left little time for their *main* job—recording their first album in nine years.

Nonetheless, just days before the introduction of new lead singer J.D. Fortune, as chaos reigned behind studio doors, Jon was super composed. How was it possible?

“I think just by virtue of being Australian,” Farriss offers, “and being from a very down-to-earth place, I’m able to keep all of this in perspective. We were also raised very well and by great parents, with politeness, manners, and respect—a wonderful upbringing. And now I have a fiancée who also keeps me totally on track.”

Farriss says he’s happy to feel productive again. INXS, the supergroup featuring his two brothers—Andrew and Tim—along with Gary Beers, Kirk Pengilly, and lead singer Michael Hutchence—quickly won international attention in 1983, when they hit American shores to play the US Festival in California. That year, they also had their first top-30 hit, “The One Thing.” By 1985, the band was opening the Live Aid concert. The following year, “What You Need” rose to number-5 on the charts. And in 1987, they proved the ongoing quality of their music when “Need You Tonight” hit number-1. At the core of the band’s sound was Jon Farriss’s drumming, the perfect mix of ballsy rock swagger and danceable groove.

The group’s popularity only grew in 1988, when they had *three* top-10 singles—“Devil Inside,” “New Sensation,” and “Never Tear Us Apart.” The band remained hot into the next decade, scoring a few more hits. Then, in 1997, Michael Hutchence was found dead in his hotel room, an apparent suicide. Though some mystery still surrounds the singer’s death, for INXS, the music stopped.

Story by Robyn Flans

Photos by Alex Solca



Despite the agony, the confusion, and the extended time for introspection, the members of the band *had* to make music. With various interim lead singers—Jimmy Barnes, Terence Trent D’Arby, and Jon Stevens—INXS performed sporadically. In 2001 the band received the prestigious honor of being inducted into the Australian Record Industry Association Hall of Fame. It was an interesting time for INXS. They weren’t putting out new material, yet their classic songs were living on, being sampled or re-recorded by several groups, creating chart-topping hits, once again proving the band’s longevity.

Sitting down with Jon Farriss, we journeyed through the history, the discs, the sadness, and the hopes and expectations for the future with their new album, *Switch*, and their current world tour.



MD: Why drums?

Jon: I always had an innate attraction to the drums. I grew up in a house that was very musical. My mother and father were always playing records, and it was great music—Motown, Sergio Mendez, The Beatles, stuff like that. And having two older brothers who were also interested in music influenced me.

One of the earliest memories I have is seeing drums on television and having a toy drum. I loved the whole idea of it. I went through the toy drums and toy drumsticks and pots and pans, and my dad finally brought home a pair of drumsticks when I was five. He said, “See what you can do with these.” For my birthday, he bought a little drum, which was like a tambourine without jingles, and he built a stand for it on top

of a stool. I had that drum for about a year.

I would play along to *With The Beatles*—I still have that record—and to Brazil '66, Diana Ross, and whatever else my mom and dad had.

MD: Did you ever have a lesson?

Jon: I did a little later on, when I was twelve. At that point I'd been playing drums for quite a while, so we thought maybe it was time to have a guy look over my technique. Of course, the first thing he said was, “No, no, no, you're doing it all wrong.”

I came out of that lesson with a totally

messed up head. I lost all my confidence, and it took me six months to get it back. But I did learn some things, like the proper rotation of the wrists.

I learned mostly by doing. For instance, once I started to get serious about performing with microphones and getting thunder claps out of the kick drum, I learned how to underplay things and not fill in all the holes. I learned how to play concisely when there was a huge amount of volume coming from the PA system. It was time to get really savvy about what I was playing.

A lot of things came together for my



Drums: Pearl Masters Custom

- A. 4x14 black brass snare
- B. 10" Remo RotoTom
- C. 12" Remo RotoTom
- D. 9x13 rack tom
- E. 16x16 floor tom
- F. 18x18 floor tom
- G. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 17" AA El Sabor crash
- 2. 15" HHX Groove Hats
- 3. 20" Signature Explosion crash
- 4. 14" HHX hi-hats
- 5. 21" Signature crash/ride with rivets
- 6. 19" Vault crash
- 7. 18" AA Chinese
- 8. 21" Signature Rod Morgenstein Tri-Top ride

Percussion: Latin Percussion

- aa. mounted tambourine
- bb. Ridge Rider cowbell

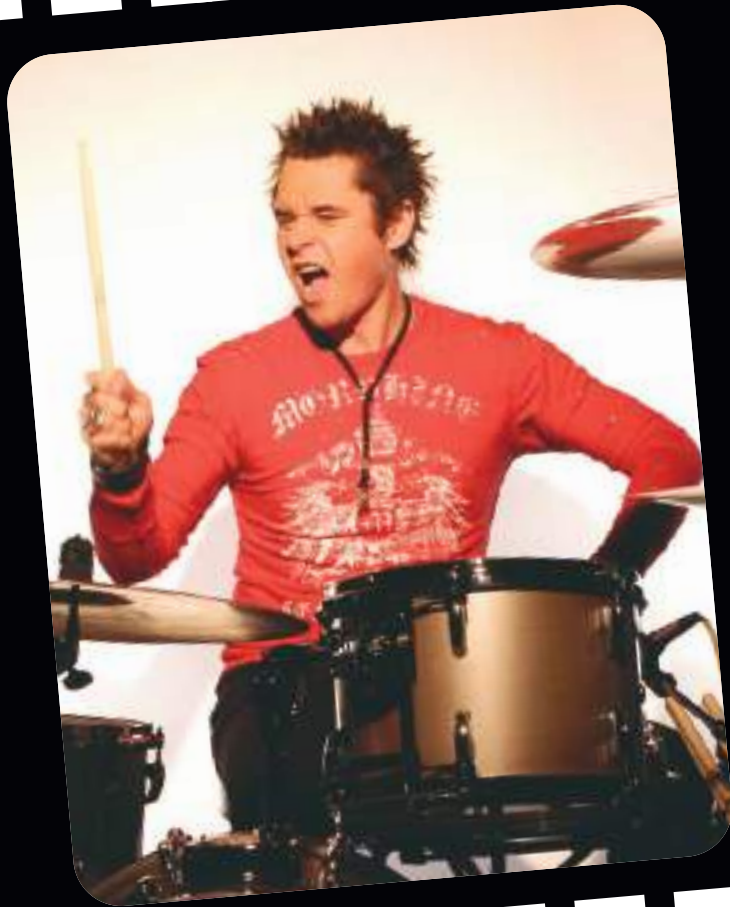
Hardware: Pearl, including an Icon rack and Eliminator bass drum pedal (loose spring tension)

Heads: Remo Ambassador on snare batter (tuned tight for live work, varies in studio depending on song), Pinstripes on RotoToms, Ambassadors on toms, PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with smooth white on front (loose tension, minimal padding)

Sticks: Pro-Mark 2B model (hickory with wood tip)

Electronics: Akai MPC2000x2 and EMU E6400 samplers (to be upgraded to Macs for '06 tour)

*Not shown in photos



playing when I began working more. I focused on my posture, balance, seat height, snare height, and how all of that affected my spine. Tai Chi also helped a lot with the flow and recovering from crossing arms over from left to right, keeping a circular motion, and being relaxed and trying to draw that magic from somewhere.

While my initial exposure to drum lessons wasn't very positive for me, I've remained open to suggestions from others, like producers and other musicians. And I've always watched other people play. I taught myself to play by watching drummers—looking at them and listening to them. What are they doing? Why are they doing that? *How* are they doing that? I've also learned a lot by recording, listening to how you can push or pull a beat or be a bit faster on the snare and more laid back on the hats.

MD: Did you play with your brothers early on?

Jon: Well, when I was about six, I started piano lessons at the same time as my brother Andrew. I did that for about a year. Andrew continued on, and Tim was learning flamenco guitar. I got a little frustrated with the lessons and just continued on, teaching myself the drums. Eventually, when I was ten, our family moved to Sydney, which is like moving to LA or New York. There Tim met Kirk Pengilly, so at the age of ten, I played in my first band, which was Tim and Kirk's first band. That was called Guinness. [laughs]

I think playing with other people at such an early age helped me to understand about keeping time. A lot of young drummers don't have the opportunity to play with other musicians, and they don't understand that their tempos are fluctuating, or they don't know when to stop filling every space with a whole bunch of crap. By playing along with music and playing with

other musicians, I could understand my role in a band.

MD: What music were you playing?

Jon: The first song we played was "Who'll Stop The Rain?" by Creedence Clearwater Revival. At that time there was also Deep Purple, The Stones, and The Beatles. Then after a couple of months, they kicked me out of the band because I was too young. I mean, I had to be in bed by 8:30! I was four years younger than them, which is a pretty big difference at that age. But I met kids at school that I played with, and Andrew and I used to jam in the garage. And when I was fourteen, I joined an already established club act doing weddings and corporate stuff. I was able to make money, so I could actually buy some decent drums.

It wasn't until I was sixteen that I actually played with Andrew, Tim, Kirk, Gary, and Michael. The band was originally called The Farriss Brothers; the name INXS came later. But there we were, the



six of us, in 1977. That's incredible to think of now. Here we are, twenty-eight years since I've joined this band. I still find that quite hard to get my head around.

MD: I guess you like it.

Jon: I like it when things are going well. Obviously, '97 wasn't a good year for us. In fact, it was horrible. My mom had died a few years before, after a battle with cancer. That was the start of the downhill slope. And then I was separated from my wife in '97, which led to a divorce. That was terrible. And then Michael.... It's been a slow crawl back.

MD: How do you recover from such devastation?

Jon: I remember driving home from our rehearsal space after hearing Michael had died, and I was in shock. It was some months after that that I sat down and started to go through the grieving process. I found it was cathartic to play our music. I had never reflected back on what we had accomplished as a band, or on our achievements. I was always moving forward. I would never sit around and play our

records. But I had an extraordinary catalog of videos, TV show performances, and other live performances we had done, and, at that point, I found it helpful to listen and watch what we had created.

And then it hit me: "That's it, it's all over." INXS was the one thing in my life that I loved. It was my primary love, my baby, everything I had worked for. It was also an identity for me, because that's all I had ever really known. It was a psychological journey to find ourselves as individuals and then see if we could collectively come together in INXS again.

We experimented with a few singers, but nothing seemed exactly right. Then, a year and a half ago, we were in a business meeting, saying, "We've got to do *something* about this." We were ready, and decided to search the world for a singer. And then it occurred to us: Why not make a TV show while doing it? We thought it would put us back out there, and remind people of what we once were—we had sold over thirty million albums. So we approached Mark Burnett about the show.

MD: How has the process of selecting a

new lead singer on the TV show been for the band?

Jon: It was tough for those competing, and for us. It's been a weird experience. I'll always remember it fondly, but mostly I will be grateful to be out of this psychodrama of indecision.

Obviously, the first half of the season was really just up to the performances. If someone didn't have the right voice for us, we just moved along. But then we had to get into more particular areas, things like songwriting, performance abilities, personalities, how they work under pressure, how they deal with television, how they deal with cameras, and how they deal with being given songs. The whole "reality" part of it allowed us to see how the vocalists treated each other.

MD: The band chose J.D. Fortune as its new vocalist. What feels right to you about him?

Jon: I play drums around the vocal—accents and things. J.D. has great ideas for syncopation, and he's great with the funky stuff and the rock stuff. It's quite amazing. Since we've had him in our camp, we've

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Jon Farriss

been down to the studio every day, having him lay his vocals on all the songs we've been writing. We've all been bursting into fits of laughter, because what he's doing has been so good. I've also been doing some songwriting with J.D. He came up with an idea on the acoustic guitar that he played for everybody the other day, and Guy Chambers, our producer, said, "Okay, let's learn it." In about ten minutes, Gary had our sounds up, the whole band was playing, and J.D. was singing. It was the first time we recorded all six of us at once. It was very exciting. I felt, "This is what it's all about!" I hadn't had that feeling in many years. It was all very magical. There is something quite divine happening here.

MD: Precisely why did you choose J.D.?

Jon: It feels right. The minute he walked off the stage—after he was selected and performed with us—we locked the door, and it was just the six of us. People were knocking on the door, "Let us in!" And we were saying, "Go away." We opened up a

hits record, and I'd like you to talk about your favorites.

Jon: In terms of performance on stage, I love "Suicide Blonde," because it's a really great tempo. The backbeat is strong, and then Andrew's harp sample comes in and is so cool. And then, of course, the funky guitar part kicks in. I usually get the gooseys [goosebumps] on stage with that one.

MD: Do you recall creating that track?

Jon: Yes I do. A lot of times, Andrew would have a body of music and Michael would be toying around with melodies and lyrics. Quite often we knew a track had a lot of excitement even before it was a complete piece of work. We'd go out and record it and Michael would be at the microphone just singing things over it, coming up with ideas.

I also like "Disappear," which I wrote while I was living in Hong Kong. I moved there in '87, and Michael had just moved there as well, because he had lived there as a kid. It was a new experience for me, a

**“AFTER LOSING MICHAEL,
I WASN'T COPING VERY WELL.
WE ALL WENT THROUGH OUR OWN
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LY PULLED TOGETHER. WE'RE
TIGHTER NOW THAN
WE'VE EVER BEEN.”**

couple of bottles of champagne and got into a circle, and it was really organic.

J.D. genuinely wanted to be in this band. He really was a fan, and he's very energetic and willing to do what's going to be the right thing for us. I feel it. I've spent a fair amount of time with him, and I've sort of taken him under my wing. He has a bit of magic in him, and he really is a lead singer. And the girls are crazy over him, too.

MD: We've talked about your early years and the new singer, but let's talk about the music. I've brought along your greatest-

totally foreign culture. We wrote "Disappear" together there. It was written on one of those little computers. I played it on a Korg keyboard and put it straight onto tape, and then the band just copied what I did.

From time to time, we emulate exactly what's on a demo. Then sometimes we totally deconstruct it, like on "Heaven Sent," the second song on *Welcome To Wherever You Are*. It's a pretty uptempo song, but it had originally been a ballad written on an acoustic guitar.



JON FARRISS
INXS
American Hickory, TX2B, Wood-tip



TEDDY CAMPBELL
Queen Latifa
American Hickory, TXSD9, Wood-tip



FRED YOUNG
Kentucky Headhunters
Japanese White Oak, PW5A, Wood-tip

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Jon Farriss

MD: Of course we have to talk about "Need You Tonight," your huge hit.

Jon: That was a really great side of INXS that was captured. We were trying to explore areas that weren't too cliché. We were really starting to get down to our funk side. We had explored a lot of our rock side by that time. But I'd always been into the funky thing and encouraged everyone to get funkier.

"Need You Tonight" is an interesting song because it's not your standard form. It also has a kind of cool, quirky, funky, dry, in-your-face sound. That was a rhythm box with some samples of snare sounds all squished together. I said, "Go for it." I don't mind having a machine play, because I can actually play something around it live, moving around that real quantized rhythm machine.

MD: What do you do when you perform the song live?

Jon: I run the original sequence and play along to it, so it's a bit rockier. But "Need You Tonight" was an unusual song for us to open an album with and to release as a first single. The record company actually wanted us to remix *Kick* totally. They weren't happy with it. But we just said, "We're not

KICK IT!

FARRISS ON RECORD



Artist	Album
INXS	INXS
INXS	Underneath The Colours
INXS	Shabooh Shoobah
INXS	The Swing
INXS	Listen Like Thieves
INXS	Kick
INXS	X
INXS	Live Baby Live
INXS	Welcome To Wherever You Are
INXS	Full Moon, Dirty Hearts
INXS	Elegantly Wasted
INXS	Switch



HIS FAVES

Artist	Album	Drummer
Coldplay	A Rush Of Blood To The Head	Will Champion
David Bowie	Heroes	Dennis Davis
Keane	Hopes And Fears	Richard Hughes
The Verve	Urban Hymns	Peter Salisbury
The Rolling Stones	Some Girls	Charlie Watts
Talking Heads	Remain In Light	Chris Frantz
The Beatles	Abbey Road	Ringo Starr
Radiohead	OK Computer	Phil Selway
Radiohead	Kid A	Phil Selway
Steely Dan	all	various
Led Zeppelin	all	John Bonham
Pink Floyd	Wish You Were Here	Nick Mason

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Jon Farriss

changing it.” And, of course, it shot straight to number-1.

Another song to mention is “Original Sin,” which was a great step for us because we had just finished a tour off the *Shabooh Shoobah* album in '83. We'd met Nile Rodgers, who had been a huge hero to us for years. We loved Chic and the whole disco and funk period. He came to our gig in Toronto, and we told him how much we loved his work and how much we'd love working with him. And he said, “Let's get it together.”

So we went to New York to the Power Station to record with Nile. He had just finished a wave of amazing things, like David Bowie's “Let's Dance,” and I remember him telling us about this new girl, Madonna. It was a very exciting time. “Original Sin” was the one song we did with him, and then we went off to a recording studio in Oxford called The Manor, where we recorded *The Swing*. “Original Sin” was our first number-1 hit in Australia, and it did very well in Europe, too.

MD: “Never Tear Us Apart” has such a great groove to it.

Jon: It's a very pretty song, and it was very clever the way Michael and Andrew wrote it. We recorded that in Australia, and it was on the *Kick* album. It was a very easy song to play because it had holes in it, so all I had to do was think “tasteful.” The bottom line for me is, it's *always* about the song. I play drums to help make a song great. Besides, no one is writing songs to make my drumming sound great.

MD: Speaking of feel, you filled in for Toto when Simon Phillips was ill a few years ago.

Jon: They have a very different feel from INXS. But I really enjoyed it. INXS and Toto were doing a tour together in Belgium for six weeks, doing five and six nights a week in the same arena with a sixty-piece orchestra and a forty-piece choir. About four days into the concert dates, Simon fell ill and was bedridden. When I got the call, it was like, *wow*. I had twenty-four hours to learn their songs. I listened to a live CD and just winged it.

The first night was, “Whoa, I just got away with that one.” The second night was a lot more comfortable. And by the third night, it was, “Yay, this is great.” I've become very close buddies with Steve Lukather, and Simon and I have kept in touch. It was a great honor to play with them.

MD: Looking at yourself objectively, what would you say are your strengths and weaknesses as a drummer?

Jon: My main strength is understanding that less is more. In fact, over the years I feel my playing has become more focused. As for a weakness, at this point I guess I might say stamina. It's a challenge to play a long rock show on an extensive tour—playing like a twenty-year-old when you're forty-four. There I am, slamming my 2Bs down with the force of a pile driver on my snare hundreds of times a night.

MD: Speaking of that, I notice you wear gloves when you play.

Jon: Over the years, I've had to put lots of Band-Aids on my fingers because they get torn up. It's all very messy. And it seems

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Patrick Hallahan **My Morning Jacket**

Nick Jeff **Terror**

Ryan Pops **The Get Up Kids**

Yayo **Lila Downs**

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that when you're on tour, your hands never get a chance to heal. Gloves solve that problem and make it much easier on the hands. They also help me hold onto the sticks, since my hands get all slippery when I'm sweating. I'm able to loosen my grip because of the gloves, and I don't get cramps in my hands. So thanks to a few golf companies who make these all-weather gloves, I can stay dry.

MD: Tell us a little about the new album.

Jon: There are some rock tracks, but there are also some dark, keyboardy-style and edgy tunes, but with pretty melodies on top. We've done things like that in the past, like on "Don't Change." There will be some fun, funky, cool kind of INXS-style songs, too. And there are some Motowny feels in there as well.

MD: Is there one particular song you'd like to talk about?

Jon: There's one called "Hot Girls," which is awesome. It's sexy and it's fun. We always include heavy songs on each album, where the lyrics are poignant and really say something. But at the same time, INXS has always been about celebrating the good things, kicking back, and having a good time. There's often a bit of tongue-in-cheek humor in our music, and this record is no different. "Hot Girls" is one of those.

MD: What about your part? How do you get it to feel sexy?

Jon: It's just yours truly, very simple and funky Jon Farriss.

MD: Finally, what's it like working in a band with your brothers?

Jon: It's made us very close. From time to time we drive each other against the grain. But if there are ever any issues, we let them go and just move on. It's actually better than it used to be. After losing Michael, I wasn't coping very well, personally, and we all went through our own thing. But the band has really pulled together. We're tighter now than we've ever been.

MD: I don't know how you emotionally survive something like that.

Jon: Well, I didn't, for a while. But now I'm happy and well, and things are really good. Best of all, INXS is back.

 To hear Jon with INXS, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.



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**NATE
MORTON**

**ROCK
STAR**





N

ate Morton is a rock star. He doesn't just play one on TV.

One of the most talked about groups of '05 was the house band for the TV reality series *Rock Star: INXS*. Yes, the basis of the show was to find a new lead singer for '80s supergroup INXS. The vocalists were all talented, and host Brooke Burke looked *amazing*. But it was the house band—and in particular drummer Nate Morton—that captivated the TV viewing audience.



Story by Billy Amendola

Photos by Alex Solca

MD spoke to the rising drum star right before the season finale, and then again shortly after J.D. Fortune was picked as the new lead singer for INXS. Before all of the attention that the *Rock Star* gig generated, Nate was a working pro pounding the skins for Vanessa Carlton and Natalie Cole, and on 2003's *American Idol* tour.

Nate was born in Nashville, Tennessee on December 30, 1971. His love and appreciation for drums began at a young age. Later on he began taking drum lessons—in addition to piano lessons. “I played piano from the age of eight up until I was in eighth grade,” Nate explains. “When I wanted to take drum lessons, my mom said, ‘I’ll get you drum lessons as long as you keep taking piano lessons,’ which, in retrospect, was a brilliant move on her part. And I said sure. So, that was our deal. I took piano lessons *and* drum lessons.”

In his later years, Nate would graduate from the Berklee College Of Music, where he would

come in contact with some pretty well-known classmates. “John Blackwell, Lil’ John Roberts, and Abe Laboriel Jr. were all there at the same time,” Nate says. “Abe was graduating the year I went there. Thank God, because I was thinking, Why on earth is *that* guy in school? [laughs] He was so good he made me mad—I hate him. [laughs] Seriously, I love Abe. He’s *such* a monster player.”

To be reminded of what a monster *Nate* is, you’ll be able to catch him again later this year when *Rock Star* returns for another season. And you can hear Nate with the *Rock Star* band, along with all the singers who competed on the show, on their live performance CD, *Live At The Mayan Theater*, as well as on the *Rock Star: INXS* DVD.

So for everyone who’s been emailing and writing letters about who the drummer from *Rock Star: INXS* is, we proudly introduce Mr. Nate Morton.

Nate's TV Kit

Drums: Pearl Masters Custom in sunrise fade finish

- A. 3x13 piccolo snare
- B. 6½x14 Steve Ferrone signature snare (with diecast hoops)
- C. 9x13 rack tom
- D. 16x16 floor tom
- E. 18x18 floor tom
- F. 18x24 kick
- G. 16x20 auxiliary kick (played with slave pedal of Pearl Eliminator double pedal)

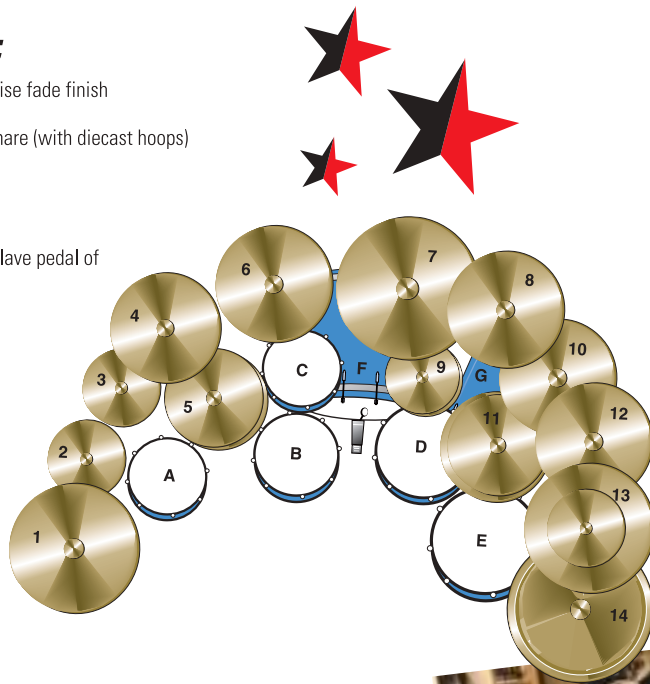
Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 20" China Trash
- 2. 12" Trashformer
- 3. 12" K splash
- 4. 17" K medium crash
- 5. 16" hi-hats (K Fast crash top, Z Custom crash bottom)
- 6. 18" K Dark thin crash
- 7. 22" K Custom ride
- 8. 18" K Custom Session crash
- 9. 12" A Custom Mastersound hi-hats (on remote)
- 10. 18" K medium crash
- 11. 17" K thin crash/16" China Trash
- 12. 18" A Custom Session crash
- 13. 20" Crash Of Doom/12" A Custom splash (on top, upside down)
- 14. 20" Z China

Hardware: Pearl, including rack and Eliminator double bass drum pedals (strap drive, fairly loose spring tension)

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador on snare batter (medium tight, no muffling), coated Ambassadors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors on bottoms (tuned fairly low, no muffling), PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with Ebony on front (loose tension, minimal muffling)

Sticks: Zildjian 5B model (hickory with wood tip)



MD: Let’s start our conversation by talking about the show. How did it come about?

Nate: I had been working with Vanessa Carlton, and when the show came around I had just finished doing the *American Idol Live* tour for about three and a half months. When I finished the tour, I got a call from a friend named Derek Frank, who is a well-established bass player in town. He said, “Hey, Mark Burnett is putting together a new TV show, and I got a call to put together a band to audition.” This was December ‘04, and the audition was going to be the following month. There were several people who would have to “check off” on the list

to approve the band, so the auditioning process wasn’t officially finished until May. It took a while before they said, “Okay, *this* is the band.”

MD: What did the audition require?

Nate: At the first audition we played an INXS tune—I

believe it was “Need You Tonight.” Then we played a tune that we had rehearsed, Lenny Kravitz’s “Are You Gonna Go My Way.” After that they said, “Okay, now we’re going to play a tune for you and you’re going to have fifteen minutes to learn it and play it.” We did a couple of tunes that way. One of them was fairly straightforward: “Hard To Handle” by the Black Crowes. The other was a tune that we had heard, but had never actually learned, “Tempted” by Squeeze. It’s a great groove tune with a lot of chord changes. We sort of negotiated our way through it. That was the initial audition.

MD: Was this with the actual band that you were playing with on the show?

Nate: No. The way it happened was, as opposed to calling twenty-seven drummers, twenty-five bass players, twenty-eight guitar players, and so on, the producers called potential MDs [musical directors] and said, “Assemble a band for this audition.” What they ended up doing was choosing the musicians they wanted from each individual band that auditioned.

MD: And Derek, the guy who recommended you for the gig, didn’t get chosen?

Nate: For whatever reason, Derek didn’t get the gig. But I owe him a great debt of gratitude.

MD: So once everyone was picked, what then?

Nate: We played an event for the CBS promotions department. Then we did another event where we played for the publishing companies who own the rights to many of the tunes that we would be doing on the show. It was basically a gig saying, “If you allow us to use these tunes that you control, here’s the band that’s going to represent them.” If we had gotten up there and sounded horrible, I don’t think we would have been able to get the rights to some of the songs.

MD: Did you have to play for INXS?

Nate: Yes, we did. In fact, I believe they were at one of the events we played for the CBS people. They also played at the event.

MD: Were you familiar with them before all this?

Nate: Certainly. I was a fan. I used to have a drumset that consisted of an acoustic kick drum, an acoustic snare, and four electronic pads that went across the top of my kick drum, just like Jon Farriss’s old setup. I actually mentioned that to him, but he had



Nate Morton

nicer electronic pads than I did. [laughs]

MD: So how did things with the show develop from there?

Nate: Well, we basically went to a hotel here in LA and held auditions with the top sixty contestants. They were flown in from around the world. That initial sixty was narrowed down to fifteen over the course

of about a week. They sang, we played, they sang some more, and we kept on playing. [laughs] It was a pretty intense auditioning process. We were playing pretty much all day for six days, one vocalist after another.

MD: Meanwhile, you guys must have been getting tight as a band.

Nate: Oh, sure. And it was fun for me because the band is a collection of terrific musicians. The guys in the band are *happening*.

MD: Let's go through what a typical day on the show was like.

Nate: Our call time for a concert-show day was 9:00 A.M. Concert-shows were taped

on Sundays. We would show up and do a band soundcheck, where we'd play down the set once. Then the contestants arrived and we'd do the contestant's soundcheck and run-through.

We would tape the results show on Wednesday mornings, the day it would air. As for rehearsals, the performance show was preceded by rehearsal days with the contestants on Fridays and Saturdays—generally taking all day. The results show was preceded by a rehearsal day on Tuesdays. So we worked every day except Mondays and Thursdays.

MD: When the cover songs were picked to be performed by the vocalists, did you read charts or did you listen to the record?

Nate: We got pretty efficient at learning material. Plus, over the course of twenty-plus years of playing and learning tunes, I've developed a sort of shorthand in my brain as to how to remember tunes. When I hear them, I'm usually okay with being able to play them after having heard them only a couple of times.

MD: Can you read charts if you have to?

Nate: Yes. I did learn to read and I have read on the job—although I have to admit that, more often than not, I'm relying on my ears to learn tunes. Having said that, when I played with Natalie Cole, she had a book that included two hundred charts, and on any given night her set list could include any seventeen of those tunes. So the idea of memorizing two hun-



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Nate Morton

dred pretty intense big band charts with horn hits and figures that you've got to set up and so on, is a little difficult. I had to read my butt off on that gig.

MD: Are you hitting the drums any differently for TV transmission? Do you have to play softer, or harder?

Nate: I play as I normally would. There are times when I'm hitting the drums as hard as I can, but then there are times when dynamically I'm playing as softly as possible.

I think the important thing is to be able to play at any dynamic level. This is something I learned from watching Abe, who has so much power and can generate such a huge level of volume on the instrument. But at the same time—and in the same song—he can play as quiet as a whisper.

MD: Let's go back to the beginning. Who made you want to play drums?

Nate: I wanted to play drums before I



knew about any drummers. Interestingly, one of the first exposures I had to drumming was from marching bands. My mother and father are graduates of Tennessee State University, which is historically a black college and has a marching band.

And those marching bands go out there and just kill the halftime show. My first introduction to drumming was seeing those performances.

When I was about four years old, I would strap a box around my neck with a

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Nate Morton

belt or something, and I'd march around the house pretending to be in a marching band. It sort of progressed into me building makeshift drumsets out of things around the house.

MD: Did your parents play in the marching band?

Nate: No, they didn't play at all. They just took me to the games. My father plays the radio and CDs. [laughs] When I think back to my earliest memories, I remember the music that was on in my home, which was Earth, Wind & Fire, Jimi Hendrix, Stevie

Wonder, The Doobie Brothers, Grand Funk Railroad...that's what I grew up listening to. And from that, as I said, I started building drumsets out of boxes and stuff that my mom would have thrown in the trash. After my parents got tired of picking up all of my trash in the living room, they bought me a Muppets drumset. It's probably why I always list Animal among my influences. As a kid I watched him playing on *The Muppets Show* and I thought he was amazing. After I decimated the Muppets drumset, my parents bought me a real drumset.

MD: How old were you at the time?

Nate: I was six. By that point I was listening to drummers and I was aware of one in particular: Peter Criss. Like many kids at that time, I was obsessed with KISS. I used to play to *Kiss Alive 2* all day. And with all due respect to Peter, the drumming on that record is fairly straightforward. So in terms of being a beginner, it's an easy record to listen to and hear exactly what the drummer is doing.

MD: And then you feel good because you're able to play along with it.

Nate: Absolutely. It's like when I teach. I'll have a student learn the first drum groove: "boom, bat, boom, bat, boom, bat, boom,

"I remember seeing the video for Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit.' I heard that ridiculously huge opening drum fill, and it was a turning point for me.

boom, bat." And then, as they're looking at me sort of puzzled, saying, "This is goofy," I grab a Van Halen record, put it on, and say, "Hear that? He's playing the groove you just learned."

MD: When did you start serious lessons?

Nate: I started in high school. I also started playing in a band at that time. The lessons that I had prior to that were with a guy near where we lived in Ohio—Mr. Davis, who taught me all of the rudiments. Grant Menefee, from Baltimore, was my first "real" drumset instructor—and that was when we had moved to Maryland. I started studying with Grant in the eighth grade. That was the beginning of my serious drumset studies.

MD: What was your first band like?

Nate: In high school I was in a band called Akamilli. We were primarily influenced by

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the hardcore bands of the day—Minor Threat and Fugazi—and ska bands like The Specials and English Beat. We were in there somewhere. Just because I say we were influenced by them doesn't mean we sounded as good as any of them. [laughs]

Akamilli would play anywhere there was room to set up and have people watch. We would publicize these "concerts," and we had a little fan base. It was very exciting. I reflect back on it like we were stars. [laughs] My wife teases me about it to this day.

The leader of Akamilli was a guy named Dave Sitek, who is now in a band called TV On The Radio. I owe a lot to him. Akamilli was the first time I was actually on stage playing drumset and had my peers and classmates going, "You guys are great. This is a great band!" It was very encouraging.

MD: And having supportive parents helped.

Nate: Definitely. I can't thank them enough for being so supportive. I also want to thank my instructor, Grant Menefee. He said to me, "You could actually make a living doing this."

MD: How did you end up at Berklee?

Nate: Grant was a Berklee alum, and he basically said, "This is the school I went to, and maybe you should look into it." I did, and I *loved* it. Going to Berklee is probably the single best thing I ever did to further my career. It's a school where anything and everything you could want to learn is available to you. For example, entering Berklee, I knew I wanted to improve my Latin playing. Well, all you have to do is find the instructor who kills on that stuff. When I was there it was Ed Uribe. So my first two semesters I studied with Ed. My second two semesters I really wanted to improve my straight-ahead jazz playing, so I studied with John Ramsey. There's also a great music library at the school.

MD: Let's talk about some of your influences.

Nate: Well, this is interesting because drummers I like aren't always drummers I play like. For example, I think that the greatest drummer walking the face of the planet right now is Vinnie Colaiuta. He's the most complete drummer I've ever heard. He has as much facility as anyone walking around today carrying drumsticks, but Vinnie has the ability to turn it off and

just sit in the pocket for a two-hour set. That's not an easy thing to do. I don't have that much facility, so it's not hard to *not* play a lot of stuff. [laughs] But for a guy like Vinnie, who does have a lot of facility, it must be hard not to play. So he's very much the top of the list for me.

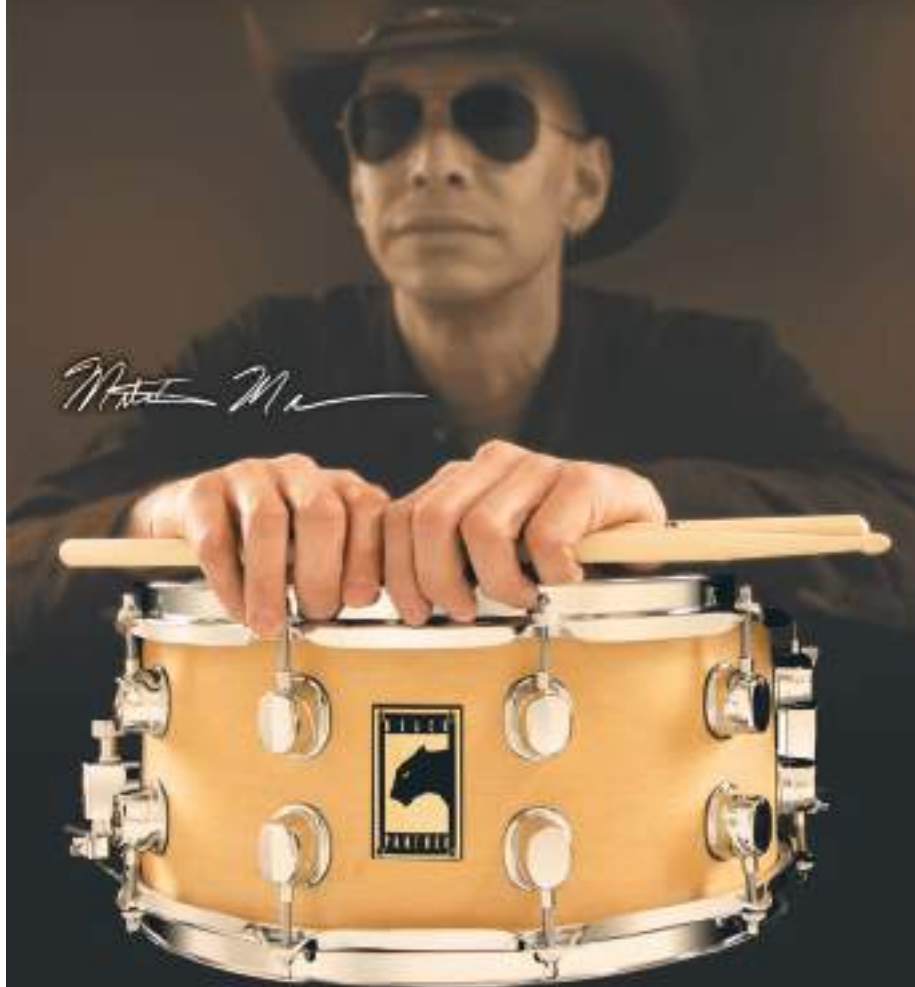
When I see Vinnie play, I don't even know what he's doing half the time. When he goes into Vinnie mode, it's almost like watching a movie where the sound and the picture aren't lined up. That's what I feel like when I'm watching him, because what

I see doesn't make sense with what I'm hearing.

Like I said earlier, I love Abe's playing. I'm not sure there's a more passionate drummer out there. I love *everything* he plays. There could be a two-bar drum break, and Abe could hit a floor tom once in that space, and the weight of it would fill the entire two bars. He's amazing like that.

When I was in school, anything that had Dennis Chambers' name anywhere near it, I had to immediately buy. In fact, I really wanted to be "that" guy. At Berklee, I was

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Nate Morton

really into a lot of jazz-fusion. That is, until I realized how much chops you really need to be able to do that! [laughs] And before I forget, another drummer that I have to add to my list is Omar Hakim.

It's interesting, but of all the guys I just named, when I was in college I didn't want to play *like* Omar—this is after I went through my fusion stage—and I didn't want to have a style *similar* to Omar—I wanted to *be* Omar. He's the reason I started growing dreads, because I wanted to have long hair like he had at the time. I

really wanted to be him. He was a very big influence.

MD: What was it about his drumming that you liked so much?

Nate: The fluidity with which he played. I liked the fact that he was just as comfortable playing with Weather Report as he was recording with Sting. That was it for me. And he continues doing that to this day—playing on new pop recordings as well as playing in a jazz and fusion context. So for me, he was very much “the guy.”

MD: Are you happy with the choices

you've made as a player?

Nate: Yes. It's funny, but I can remember being in school, back when I was trying to be the next great fusion guy, and seeing the video for Nirvana's “Smells Like Teen Spirit.” I heard that guitar intro and then one of the best opening drum fills in existence. I was pretty much mesmerized by it, and thinking back, that was a turning point for me. It curtailed my fusion pursuits and made me look more to playing songs.

Dave Grohl is interesting. He was a very influential drummer to me at that time especially, because Nirvana ushered in a whole new sound of mainstream music. The paradigm after Nirvana was, it's cool if the guitar player only plays three chords, as long as the groove is slamming.

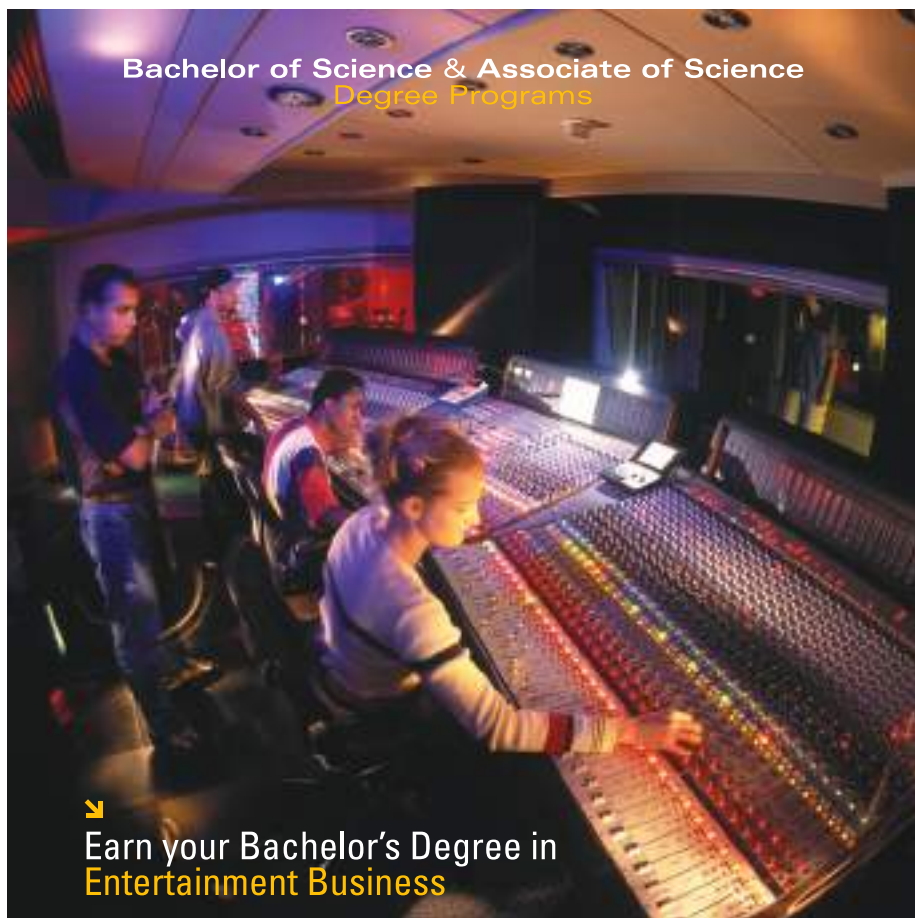
After I heard songs like “Teen Spirit,” I started listening to Pearl Jam and other bands that were popular at the time. Then, when I would put on my fusion records, the music all sounded the same to me. It furthered my desire to want to learn to play 2 & 4 pop songs.

At that point I started going back and checking out Peter Frampton LPs that I had—I still had a record player at the time. I checked out Michael Jackson's *Off The Wall* and all the old Stevie Wonder and Earth, Wind & Fire records.

I have to admit that to this day I still enjoy the opportunity to go out and do a gig where you're *supposed* to play a lot of notes. But there are so many different paths that people take, and there are so many different styles and kinds of drummers. But I definitely fancy myself as being into playing songs. And I will admit that it is something of a challenge. It's something that I have to constantly keep present in my mind.

I am very fortunate and blessed to be able to play great tunes with the best musicians. And as far as I'm concerned, the guys in the *Rock Star* band are phenomenal. I have a blast playing with them!

For more on Nate, visit www.n8drums.com.



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Dafnis Prieto

Havana Rising

story by Ken Micallef
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GIGS

Michel Camilo
Herbie Hancock
Arturo Sandoval
Steve Coleman
Henry Threadgill
Eddie Palmieri
Chico O'Farrill
Dave Samuels
Chucho Valdes

In the summer of 1999, Cuban drummer Dafnis Prieto arrived on the Manhattan music scene like a bullet speeding toward its target. At first playing with a select group of avant-garde, jazz, and like-minded Cuban musicians intent on re-imagining US jazz with a bold Afro-Cuban flavor, Prieto soon found himself working with musicians from all styles. Upon hearing of his blazing, fully formed style, it's easy to understand why.

At a recent performance with pianist Michel Camilo at the Blue Note, Prieto more than held his own with the mighty Santo Domingan pianist—considered a breakout gig for such drummers as Dave Weckl and Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez. The songos and montunos displayed in Camilo’s complex music seemed like child’s play for the tiny drummer with the burning eyes.

Playing with a light, compact feel that was enforced with incredible speed, rhythmic invention, thrilling dynamics, and much implied forward motion, Prieto's drumming was impossibly quick and fun. When it came time to solo, he was the mouse that roared, coming up with endless variations with waves of press rolls, abrupt, agitated time patterns, and soaring full-set tom figures that had the texture and tone of fluttering fingers rippling a conga drum roll. All this was underpinned by Cuban rhythms crisscrossing the music with the clave as its base.

Nothing short of intoxicating, Prieto injected Camilo's music with something new, a near visionary style that was all Cuban and all jazz, all at once. Prieto's speed, complexity, and agility, coupled with his deep grounding in Cuban folkloric, classical, and jazz music, gives his drumming an unheard of spark and potency.

Earlier in the year, the thirty-year-old Prieto had performed similar feats all over the city, playing not only with leaders of every musical stripe, but with his own trios, quintets, and "small" big band. This classically trained drummer and percussionist is raising the bar for drumming, and he is also an ambitious composer whose songs have been performed by the Lincoln Center Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra. He has received numerous international commissions (twenty as of this writing) to write for jazz, chamber, big band, Afro-Cuban, percussion, film, and dance projects. This is in addition to his ongoing drumming duties with a long list of stellar musicians, among them Jane Bunnett & The Spirits Of Havana, Henry Threadgill, Eddie Palmieri's Afro-Caribbean Jazz Orchestra, Chico O'Farrill's Afro-Cuban Jazz Project, Arturo O'Farrill & Riza Negra, Dave Samuels & The Caribbean Jazz Project, Peter Apfelbaum & The New York Hyrogliphics, D.D. Jackson, Kip Hanrahan, John Benitez, Ed Simon, Steve Coleman, Roberto Occhipinti, Chucho Valdes, Claudia Acuna, Roy Hargrove's Havana Crisol, Andrew Hill, Herbie Hancock, and Arturo Sandoval.

When Dafnis Prieto was a child in Santa Clara, Cuba, the comparsas, or carnival bands, would rehearse outside



his front door. Growing up in a predominantly black neighborhood, Prieto was exposed to Cuba's incredible musical legacy literally from the street up. Young Dafnis would follow the comparsas all over town, soaking in the sights and sounds. Soon he was playing guitar and bongos in a local social club, where he learned the native son, guaracha, and rumba rhythms.

When Dafnis was fifteen, he enrolled at the School Of Fine Arts in Santa Clara, where he was exposed to the music of John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman. For his graduation ceremony, Dafnis assembled a group and composed and per-

formed an avant-garde piece. The group consisted of four horns, bass, trapset, timpani, and whistle. "It was a rather revolutionary concept at the time," he later told a reporter.

Around this time Dafnis worked with the innovative Cuban funk group Columna B. Today, listening to their fascinating merging of intricate funk with all manner of Cuban rhythms is *still* a revelation. Imagine hearing the Tower Of Power rhythm section or the early Headhunters imbibing hot-headed cocktails of burning danzons, claves, and cascarras. Later, Dafnis would move to Havana and attend the National School

Of Music, where he would study classical music and learn jazz on the side. Before leaving school, he would tour European jazz festivals with Jane Bunnett.

After arriving in New York, Prieto's first gig was with avant-garde composer Henry Threadgill. Soon word got out, and the calls started coming in. Innovative Latin bandleader Eddie Palmieri has called Dafnis "extraordinary" and "a rhythmic stimulus." This can be heard on Dafnis's debut recording, *About The Monks*. Performing his own compositions, Dafnis's quintet plays some impos-

sibly complex music that flows like water.

One of Prieto's trademark compositional tricks is to join seemingly opposing rhythms together, practically side by side. This gives his music a roller coaster feeling, a constant up-and-down trajectory that's exhilarating. *About The Monks* encompasses French/Haitian percussion (on the tune "Tumba Francesca"), cascara and clave with a tumbao feel ("Ironico Arlequin"), modern dance ("Mechanical Movement"), and multi-instrumental, carnival-like drumming ("Conga En Ti"). Currently recording his

New Absolute Quintet—a group of violin, cello, drums, Hammond organ, and keyboards, which plays a kinetic blend of drum 'n' bass, free jazz, folk, and funk—Prieto seems bound to extend the innovations of Latin drumming that began with Chano Pozo and run through the current crop of Latin American and Cuban drummers currently shaking up American music. Prieto is a powerhouse, and his ascendancy is certain.

MD: Your performance with Michel Camilo at the Blue Note almost seemed *too* easy for you. Given that you've played some very complex music both as a leader and an accompanist, what is the challenge of his particular music?

Dafnis: The hard thing for me about his music is that I never had the experience of approaching a trio in Latin music with that kind of style. The way of approaching the drums in past trios I've worked with was a little more open. There wasn't as much structure and as specific a sound as Michel wants. Michel works very specifically in his tunes; he knows what he wants sound-wise from the drummer and the whole trio.

He has his own conception.

When you play with different people, there are different poles. You have to adapt yourself to the poles of different musicians. I never played with a piano player like him with his kind of pole. It was just different. That was a challenge because I wanted to make the music tighter with the piano and the bass within his conception.

MD: Did Camilo ask that you listen to the old records with Weckl, Joel Rosenblatt, and El Negro?

Dafnis: For me, it was a challenge to adapt *my* style to Michel's music. It's all about the music, so if the music needs it I will do it.

With the direction I took early in my career, I went for a different way of playing. So for this, I had to come back to that

style of playing. I was into that approach for ten years. The sound with Michel, Paquito D'Rivera, or Arturo O'Farrill is very specific. I feel good playing it, but that sound represents another era to me.

MD: As far as understanding Cuban drum technique, did you learn that on the streets, or when you went to school?

Dafnis: What I learned in school was all classical technique, the real technique of drums—not even trapset, but playing snare with two different techniques, American and German, along with all the classical percussion. But, of course, I played more Cuban street music at home in Santa Clara. The Cuban tradition had nothing to do with school. That information came from the

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Dafnis Prieto

streets, hanging out.

Eventually I played with a group called Columna B. The whole idea of that group was to do our own music, and not so much the traditional Cuban way of constructing and writing music. I was eighteen when we first started playing together. We got a lot of information from Steve Coleman, as well as open ideas from Ornette Coleman. We carried our tradition with us. How it comes out just comes from the way you manipulate the information.

MD: The Cuban musical language is very involved.

Dafnis: Even in my company with my bands, I don't want to play like "Manteca" [the classic 1940s Afro-Cuban jazz song written by Cuban conguero Luciano "Chano" Pozo González and Dizzy Gillespie]. I wouldn't want to do that even if I loved "Manteca."

Columna B was a special moment for me to develop as a drummer. It was a chal-

lenge to create a fusion of all different styles. We wanted to be original, so we had to find our individual voices.

I researched different rhythms from Cuba, Yoruban rhythms, rumba, and rhythms from Nigeria and Ghana. Back

you'll hear a lot of rhythms. Even if you don't know all of them, the rhythm will stick in your mind and you'll develop something from it. You find yourself playing that rhythm in a different way. People who know that rhythm will hear me and

say, "Wow, you were playing some kind of Santeria rhythm," but I don't really know what it is.

MD: So you're not playing literal sons or danzons? They're more stylized.

"There are many kinds of drummers, with many kinds of techniques. But you have to play good snare drum in order to play good drums."

then I was checking out Ornette and John Coltrane and the Afro-Cuban tradition. Since then I have more information and I've gone deeper into African music. I have actual transcriptions of some of the rhythms from Ghana, like Adowa, the Ashanti antelope dance traditionally used as funeral music and in ritual ceremonies.

MD: I imagine playing the Cuban rhythms was second-nature to you.

Dafnis: Yes, but some of the things I play now come more intuitively. Meaning, if you go to a Santeria party, for example,

Dafnis: Yes. Now I'm also playing rhythms like Mozambique or comparsa, which is like the carnival rhythm that you play in the parade. I play that on "Conga En Ti" on my CD *About The Monks*.

MD: What do you practice when you have time?

Dafnis: I do different things. I might just let go and improvise. Then I'll work on things that may come into my improvisations that I have difficulty with. Sometimes I might have an idea, but I can't get it to go from my brain to my limbs. I want to be



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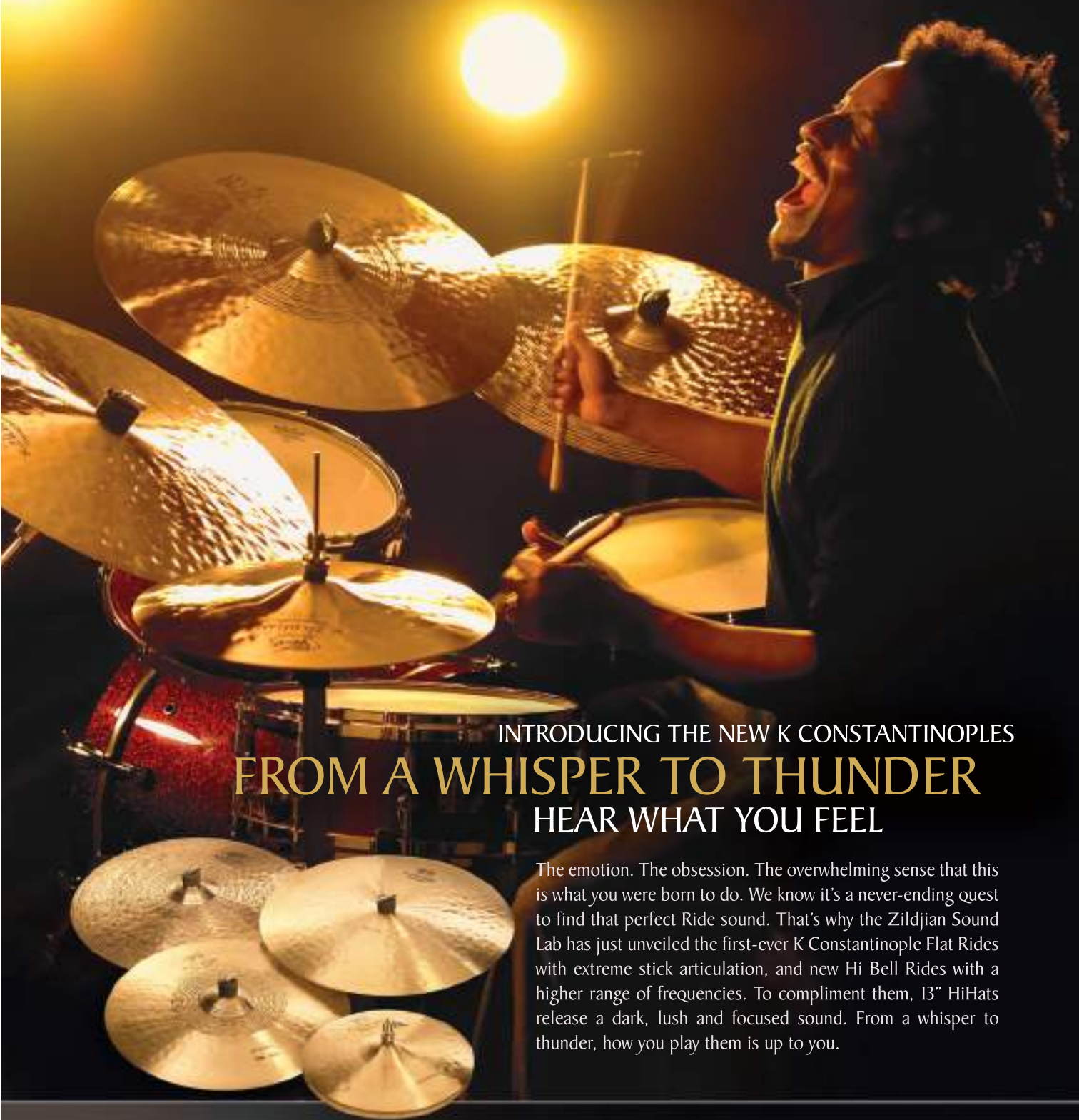
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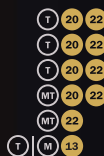




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Dafnis Prieto

able to think of something and play it automatically. To immediately be able to reproduce whatever I'm thinking of or feeling is my goal.

MD: Your playing is so fast and light, and you have such a mastery of Cuban rhythms, stylized or not. Do these rhythms just come easier for a Cuban?

Dafnis: They are not easy. To get my technique going, I practiced *Stick Control* on the whole set. I would pick a pattern like the clave and play that with my right hand, while dividing *Stick Control* paradiddle

variations between my left hand on the snare drum and my right foot on the bass drum. And I would play the hi-hat on beats 1 and 3. There are so many variations.

For me, the foundation of a heavy groove or of a great drummer are the subdivisions. It's how you subdivide the rhythm that's important. If your subdivisions are strong, your rhythms are going to be strong. I always practice subdividing, just taking a pulse or a beat and dividing the pattern into triplets, then fours, fives, sixes, sevens, nines, all in the same beat with the clave.

MD: That is standard practice for American jazz drummers, but I'm not sure if I've ever heard of doing that with the clave. But it makes sense.

Dafnis: It's the same. And then you can do the same thing with the cascara rhythm. For me it's not even what information you have, it's what you *do* with the information. Books are just information, and most of it is raw content. It depends on the level of who is using it.

I'll take Jim Chapin's book [*Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*] and change things around to the way I think would be a better challenge for me. I'm not interested in being Jim Chapin. I'm not interested in sounding like anybody else. I want to sound like myself. So I try to find myself in the information I'm dealing with. That's how I deal with every method book. I also try to work on what I have trouble with.

MD: How would you do that?

Dafnis: I'm always thinking of music. Sometimes I just sit at the drums and let my mind fly. I go on a journey, and whenever I find a rhythm that is really good for me, I just stick with it and write it down or record it and think of different ways to develop it.

MD: Was your technique already proficient before you studied classical music?

Dafnis: No. I went to the school in Santa Clara when I was ten years old. That's when I learned how to use a pair of sticks. Before that I was playing guitar and hand percussion, mostly bongos and some conga. But I knew the rhythms then. When I was eight years old, I found myself playing the bongo pattern with my hands and singing the clave with my mouth. [He demonstrates, playing the bongo pattern on the table while playing the clave by tapping his tongue against the roof of his mouth.] This is actually why I went to the school! The professor saw me doing that in one of our shows and told my mom she should bring me to the school.

MD: How long was the school term?

Dafnis: I was in Santa Clara for four years. We didn't have a lot of distractions. We had the time and place to practice.

MD: Were you expected to play classical music as an adult?

Dafnis: Some of those musicians are now playing in Cuban salsa bands, some are doing Latin jazz, and some are playing in the symphony. The average Cuban musi-

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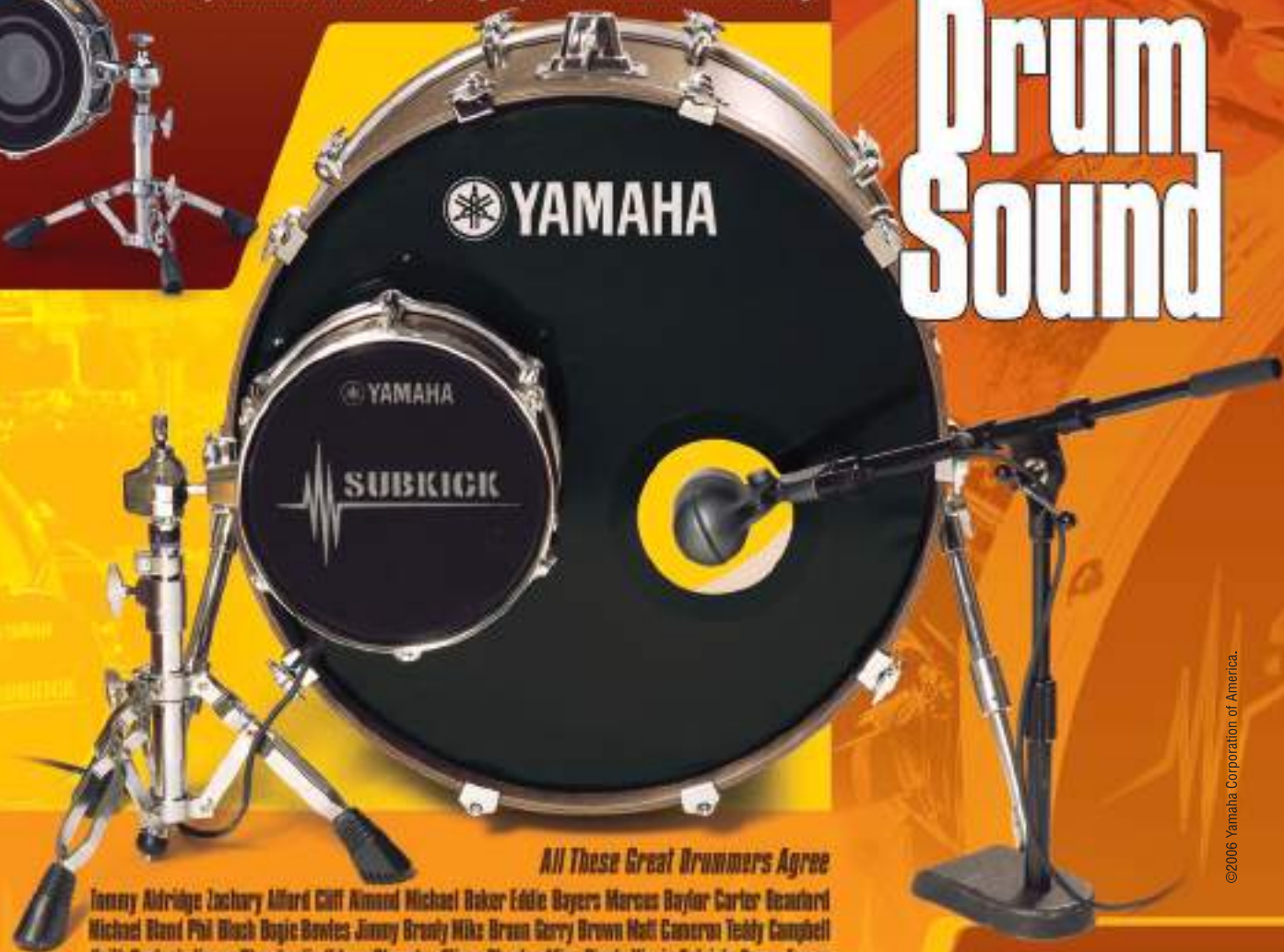
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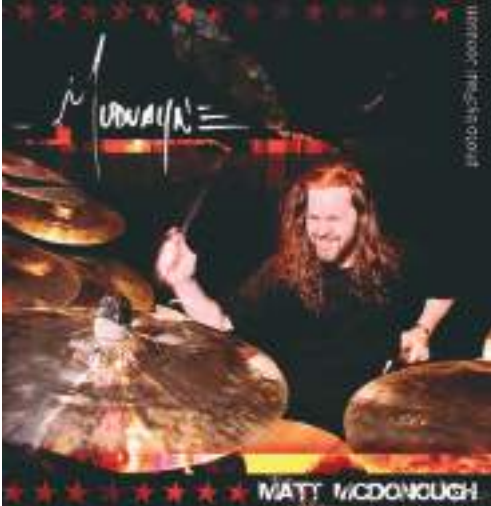
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Dafnis Prieto

cian is pretty advanced. The reason there are so many good Cuban musicians now is because after the Cuban revolution in 1959, they brought all the Russians and East Europeans to Cuba. They taught us the Russian technique for classical music, which is really good training. And we already had a strong music culture in Cuba. The musical level of the Cubans plus the Russian technique is a perfect match.

MD: Coming out of that school at such a young age must have given you your speed and technique early on.

Dafnis: Yes, I did a lot of snare drum work. I think that the snare is the most important part of the drumset. There are many kinds of drummers with many kinds of techniques, but you have to play good snare drum in order to play good drums. I played a bunch of different pieces from books by Buddy Rich, Podemski, Morris Goldenberg, and a piece called "The Train," which had a lot of press rolls. I play it in a piece with my wife, Judith Sanchez-Ruiz, who is a dancer.

MD: Some Latin American drummers play jazz with more of an older-style swing feel, like Buddy Rich. But your jazz playing is more modern for a Cuban drummer.

Dafnis: Buddy Rich was an influence, but I listened to a lot of Elvin Jones and his completely different style—Jack DeJohnette and Tony Williams, too. Then I

got into Doug Hammond, who is way different from Buddy Rich. He did some records with Dave Holland and Steve Coleman. He's very melodic and intricate. It's not about the technique.

MD: I have read that you also liked Steve Gadd.

Dafnis: I did listen to Steve Gadd, mostly at the beginning of my career. Then I went more in the direction of Elvin Jones, looking for a more spiritual approach.

MD: Do you think of yourself as a drummer or a percussionist?

Dafnis: I'm more a drummer than a percussionist, even though I wanted to incorporate it all into one thing. That's one of the reasons I don't use percussion in my band.

MD: Your drumming also has a great sense of flow. What can you recommend to drummers wanting to achieve that kind of effect?

Dafnis: Well, one of the things I teach is to go from Latin to swing without stopping. Try to make it as smooth as possible, without big accents. Try to make the change seamless. What will help you do that is practicing the different groupings, from 8ths to 16ths to triplets. All that will come together.

MD: Is playing left foot clave or being ambidextrous part of your playing?

Dafnis: No. I wouldn't be able to swing



Prieto's Picks

Artist

Dafnis Prieto
 Dafnis Prieto
 Peter Apfelbaum & The New York Hieroglyphics
 Arturo O'Farrill
 Bebo Valdés
 Steve Coleman & Five Elements
 Caribbean Jazz Project
 Eddie Palmieri
 Henry Threadgill
 Henry Threadgill
 John Benitez
 John Zorn
 Columna B
 Jane Bunnett
 Hilario Durán And The Cuban All Stars
 Papo Vasquez
 Elio Villafranco

Album

New Absolute Quintet
 About The Monks
 It Is Written
 Live In Brooklyn
 Bebo de Cuba
 Lucidarium
 The Gathering
 La Perfecta II
 Up Popped The Two Lips
 Everybody's Mouth's A Book
 Descarga In New York
 Voices In The Wilderness
 Ritmo & Soul
 Enclave
 Killer Tumbao
 Carnival In San Juan
 Incantations-Encantaciones



ended up being a ten-minute piece in two movements. It was sixty pages long all written out. It's called "Echo Dimensions."

Arturo O'Farrill's Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra at Lincoln Center performed one of my pieces, "Song For Chico." I also wrote a piece for trumpet and classical percussion called "Trail Of Memories" for the New Trumpet Consortium. I have commissions from the Painted Bride in Philadelphia, and I also received a Chamber Music America Grant for new works.

MD: How does your approach to the drums change when playing with your trio, a small big band, a chamber piece, or dancers?

Dafnis: I change the focus of what I'm doing at the moment. When I'm playing with dancers, I try to hear what's needed in their movement. I try to see the movement before the sound. That comes from my eyes.

Playing with a trio is very different from a quintet. In a quintet you can approach it strongly sound-wise. In a trio it's only three voices, so you're able to hear the details. That is completely different from a

His Faves

Artist

John Coltrane
 Pat Metheny
 Steve Coleman
 Miles Davis
 Branford Marsalis
 Wayne Shorter
 Pancho Quinto
 Yoruba Andabo
 Los Munequitos de Matanzas

Album

A Love Supreme
 80/81
 Black Science
 Miles Davis Quintet 1965-68
 Dark Keys
 JuJu
 En El Solar La Cueva Del Humo
 El Callejon De Los Rumberos
 Live In New York

Drummer

Elvin Jones
 Jack DeJohnette
 Marvin "Smitty" Smith
 Tony Williams
 Jeff "Tain" Watts
 Elvin Jones
 Pancho Quinto
 Pancho Quinto
 Jesus Alfonso, Agustin Diaz, Gregorio Diaz

with my left hand. These days I play mostly matched grip, but when I go into swing I play traditional.

MD: How has being a composer improved your drumming?

Dafnis: It has made me *much* better. It's made me more conscious of the music, any music.

MD: Who are the major influences on your composing?

Dafnis: Hermeto Pascoal, Egberto Gismonti, Steve Coleman, and Henry Threadgill. There are probably some Cuban influences in there too, like Irakere and Los Van Van. And from the classical world, I like Stravinsky and Rachmaninoff.

MD: You've been commissioned by many groups and venues to write music.

Dafnis: I'm also a recipient of the Meet The Composer Van Lier Fellowship. That's really great; they just gave me \$8,500! If you're good, they will help you.

MD: What do you have to produce for that?

Dafnis: I have to write for Chamber Music America, who gave me the grant. But it's all good.

MD: What do you have to produce for the various commissions you've received?

Dafnis: For the East Carolina University Meridian Arts Ensemble, I wrote a brass quintet—plus drums. I wrote that—scored the horns with no improvisation—and it

quintet, where one horn is soloing and everyone else is accompanying. You have to adapt yourself to a different line.

MD: What holds all these different musics together for you?

Dafnis: I try to stimulate the music—any music I'm playing—with my drumming. If I'm going to play with Henry Threadgill, I have to really put my mind into that conception and what sounds I am dealing with. I have to consider the sound he wants and the sound I want, and that won't be the same as with Eddie Palmieri. Every group is different. I try to integrate my voice into the leader's music.

MD: The liner notes on your solo disk,

Dafnis Prieto

About The Monks, refer to “scary rhythms” in “Ironico Arlequin.” What are the “scary rhythms”?

Dafnis: I had a harmonic pattern going through the bass line, and it switches a few times with the melody and the rhythm. There’s a combination of information there. [Dafnis sings melodic lines.] I created a kind of tension and release bass line.

MD: What is the meter of “Tumba Francesca”? It’s hard to pin down.

Dafnis: That is 12/8. For Cubans, the way we feel 6/8 is in 12/8, really. We also feel

6/8 in 4/4. [Sings three-over-four line.] In that song I put two claves with a space in the middle. [Sings clave with downbeats dividing the pattern.] It goes from 3/2 to 2/3 clave, starting on the second beat.

MD: What are the clave alterations the liner notes mention in “Trio Absolute”?

Dafnis: They go into seven and five. It involves different groupings of clave in combination with the harmony.

MD: What are the different patterns in “Conga En Ti”?

Dafnis: They’re all separate drums, no

drumset. It’s more like repinique. I played congas, cowbell, snare drums, toms, and even a Chinese trumpet, all recorded one at a time, I was playing mostly conga or comparsa rhythms.

MD: What advice can you give to drummers who want to gain an understanding of Cuban drumming and rhythms?

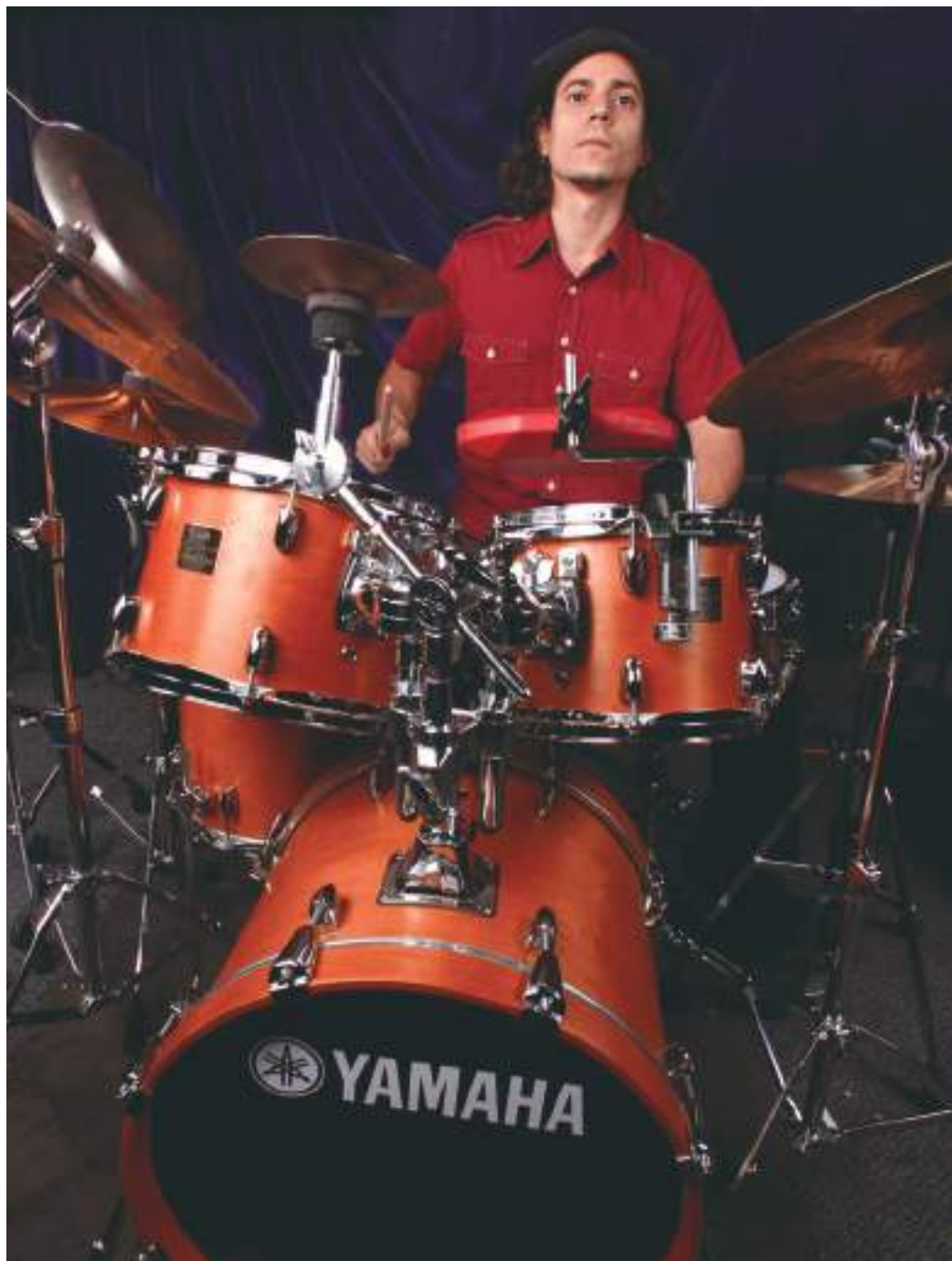
Dafnis: Try to use less information and you’ll get more out of it.

MD: Do you mean play fewer notes?

Dafnis: No. It’s like I said earlier: It’s about understanding fluidity and changing from one thing to another within a groove to where it doesn’t sound so obvious. That’s a good approach.

These days, when people think Latin, it’s always the same rhythm. [Dafnis excitedly plays an overt “Latin” rhythm on the table.] There’s more information today about Cuban patterns than the *songo* pattern popularized by Steve Gadd and Dave Weckl. It was like talking to Elvin Jones. For him, swing was as much spiritual as it was technical. For me, it’s about the fluidity of going back and forth between Latin and swing and Afro-Cuban. Create a pulse, and play all those rhythms inside of that beat and try to make it as musical as possible.

There are drummers who play great funk, but they don’t swing. You can play swing the same way you play funk. But you have to go deep enough into the other style to become comfortable. I’m still listening to the older musicians, the masters. And I’m always trying to improve myself—my playing, my influences, and my hearing.



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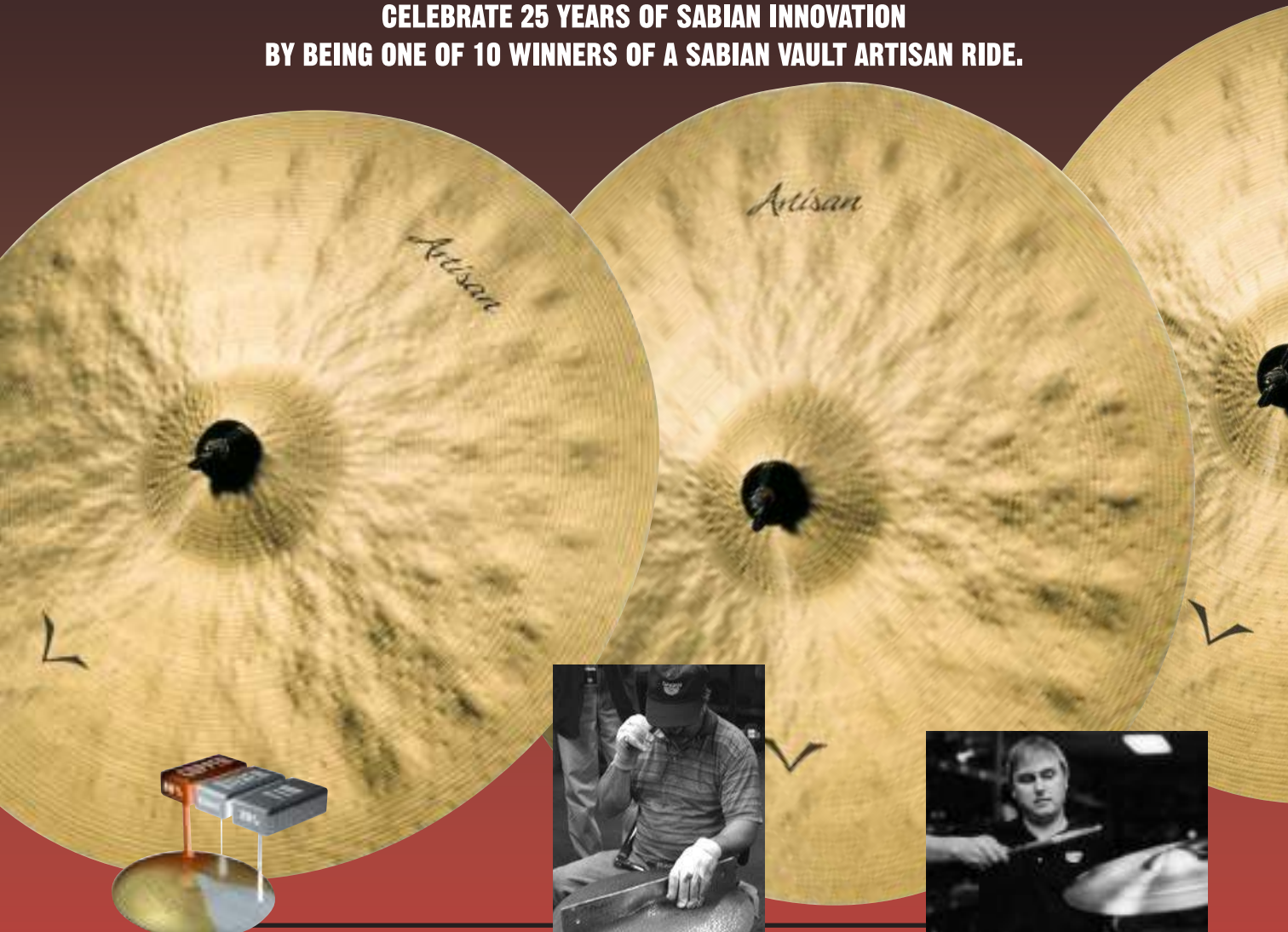
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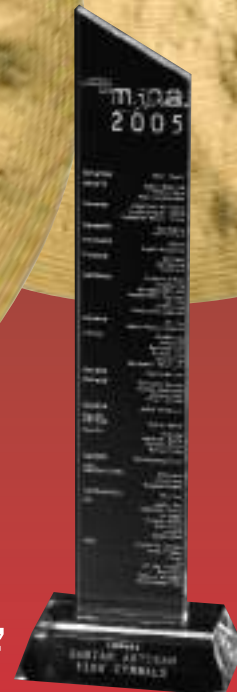
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Getting The Most Out Of Your First Time In The Studio

“**Y**ou don't hit 'em hard, do you?” That question, asked of me by a recording engineer, is what I remember most about my first studio session. It was the fall of 1985 and I was recording with my band, Psychotic Norman. (Hold the laughter, okay?) I'd just finished what I thought was a very impressive and powerful spin around my kit that I reasoned would serve two purposes: A) to help the engineer get a good, meaty drum sound and B) show him that he was working with the new John Bonham. His query not only caught me completely off guard, it did significant damage to my confidence. A few off-handed comments about my busy playing and poor-sounding drums ensured that I spent the rest of the session second-guessing myself and hoping

that I wouldn't screw up too badly.

Advance preparation, I found out that day, is paramount to a successful recording session. If you're in a young band about to lay down a handful of songs for the first time, chances are you're on a very tight budget with only enough money for a few days of recording time in a professional studio. Studios and engineers cost good money, and the less prepared you are equipment- and performance-wise, the more time you'll waste and the less material you'll get recorded.

So, with the help of a few top-notch drummers, producers, and drum techs, I'm going to see if I can't help you avoid some of the common pitfalls that can cause first sessions to get bogged down and lead to what I call Humiliated Drummer Syndrome.

Story by Jon Wurster

Pre-Production: Homework/Roadwork

"The best experiences I've had with bands were when there was a long period of rehearsal and pre-production," says producer/engineer John Agnello, who's worked on albums for Dinosaur Jr., Jay Farrar, and Burning Brides. "This way the band knows the material really well by the time they're in the studio. Another thing that works well is having a band tour on their new songs. Ever notice that most bands want to go back and re-record their record after the months they spent touring on it? That's because the feedback you get playing in front of an audience is better than anything else. It's like having a room full of producers."

One small caveat: If you're going to record while on the road, give yourself a day off before entering the studio. I learned this the hard way back in the winter of '94, when Superchunk played its way out to Pachyderm Studios in Canon Falls,

Minnesota to record our fourth album, *Foolish*. While performing our new songs live every night for two weeks was very beneficial, getting up at 8:00 A.M. (after getting to sleep at 3:00 A.M. after the tour's final show) and heading straight to the studio was not. Rest is a good thing.

"Oh Come On, We All Started And Stopped At The Same Time!"

I learned something else making that album: Don't try to record too many songs. Superchunk could not afford to book three days of recording time at Pachyderm, yet we tracked a whopping seventeen songs. The idea was that we'd have a bunch of extra tunes left over for B-sides and compilation tracks. The problem with this plan was that it didn't allow us enough time to get really good takes of several of the songs. If a take sounded "okay," it was on to the next one.

It still annoys me that Superchunk's

best-selling album contains, in my opinion, some of my most lackluster performances. If you're realistic about the amount of material you want to get down, you'll have more time to work on overdubs, vocals, and mixing.

The Tape Never Lies

While it's good to have a certain amount of spontaneity when recording, you'll want to hammer out your drum parts before you record. There's nothing worse than hearing a playback of a song in the studio and realizing that that cool, complex kick/snare/hat pattern you're so proud of sounds completely inappropriate in relation to what the bassist and guitarist are doing. Frustration sets in and the session ends up getting derailed as you try to come up with a new part that works better.

The best way to avoid this scenario is to record and listen to your rehearsals before going to the studio. This way you'll know what works and what doesn't. Any kind of



"At one point in my first studio experience, I had a four-bar drum fill intro, and I really wanted to show off. The engineer stopped the tape and said that my fill sounded like 'a wheelchair going down a flight of stairs.'"

—Glenn Kotche (Wilco)



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“One of the best pieces of advice I ever received was from Steve Jordan. We were having trouble getting a good take, and Steve took me aside and said, ‘I can hear you thinking during these takes. Try to stop thinking and just play the song.’”

—Jon Wurster (Superchunk)

portable recorder will work. Just make sure the mic’ is picking up a good amount of kick and snare (in addition to the other instruments), because these drums are the most crucial to your foundation.

Simplicity Is Your Friend

When listening to your rehearsal recordings, one thing will become obvious pretty quickly: The old “less is more” adage really is true. “I find with most inexperienced drummers, they play busier because it’s easier to fill up all the spaces than to play a simple groove with a really good feel,” says Agnello. “Better drummers don’t have to play that much. By not filling up all the spaces, you get to hear what the other guys are doing.”

Wilco drummer Glenn Kotche agrees: “At one point in my first studio experience, I had a four-bar drum fill intro to one of the songs, and I really wanted to show off what I could do. The engineer stopped the tape after the intro and said that my fill sounded like ‘a wheelchair going down a flight of

stairs’ and suggested that I simplify things a bit. That was my first realization that it’s better to treat those situations as a cool way to set up a song instead of a ‘look at me’ opportunity. I’m all for coming up with creative drum parts that can give the song a unique quality and freshness, but that is completely different from a flashy or busy drum part.”

Timing Tips And Tools

Another thing that will become apparent when you listen to your practice tapes is your ability to hold a steady beat. Music, especially rock ‘n’ roll, is meant to swing and fluctuate to some degree. But when a drum track drastically speeds up or slows down, it can ruin a song. Most drummers can tell the same horror story: A producer stops them in the middle of a take to inform them that their time is all over the place and that they’ll need to play with a click track. If you’ve never done it before, playing along with a metronome or click track within the confines of your own pri-

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—Joey Heredia

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vate practice space is hard enough. Now imagine how tough it would be if you had to do it in front of four increasingly annoyed bandmates and a professional recording engineer while that studio clock is ticking away. No fun, indeed.

Working on your time takes...well...time, but it's well worth getting it together before entering the studio. "I would recommend any young drummer out there practice with a click, and really train themselves to play along with it," says Michael Bland, whose drumming credits include stints with Prince, Chaka Khan, and most

monitor, give or take a couple. This is particularly useful for those songs that can swing a little more and don't require an iron-clad tempo.

Learn From The Masters

It also helps to listen to recordings of drummers who combine good time with great creativity. When it comes to straight-up rock drumming, one of my favorite examples of exciting yet solid playing is session great Andy Kravitz's performance on Urge Overkill's 1996 hit "Sister Havana." Here, Kravitz strikes the perfect



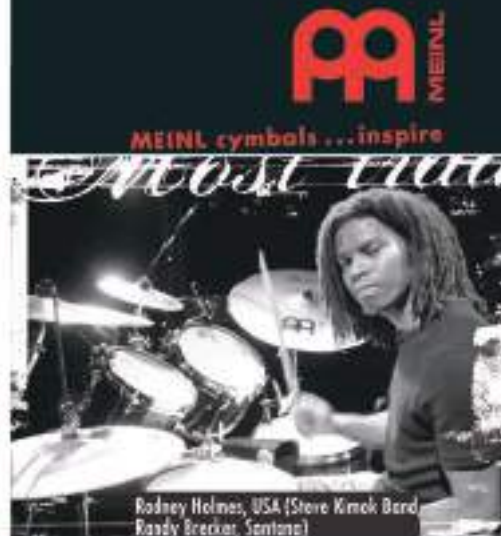
"I find with most inexperienced drummers, they play busier because it's easier to fill up all the spaces than to play a simple groove with a really good feel." —John Agnello, producer

recently, Soul Asylum. "Treat the click like it's an instrument and not a harsh judge, and you'll find yourself playing not only in time, but comfortably."

A great non-click timekeeping tool I've had good luck with is Lt. Luglock's Tempo Ref, a device that functions as a sort of drumming speedometer. Here's how it works: A pick-up attached to your snare drum sends a signal to a small, nearby LED monitor each time the drum is struck. The monitor flashes the tempo (in beats per minute) at which you're playing. Your job is to keep the same number of bpm on the

balance of dead-on timekeeping and flamboyant fills, which pushes the song to higher, more exciting levels while managing to sidestep the "look what a great drummer I am" area Kotche mentioned.

For further examples of the "less is more" approach, check out recordings featuring drummers like Jim Keltner (Bob Dylan, Brian Wilson, John Lennon), Steve Jordan (Keith Richards, Sheryl Crow), Charley Drayton (B-52's, Divinyls), and Matt Chamberlain (David Bowie, Kanye West, Wallflowers).



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Okay, so it's the night before your band's recording session. You've done your homework and gotten all your parts and patterns in order. But what about the parts of your drumkit? If at all possible, spend some time the night before the session making sure your kit is in good working order. Remove any dust that might have built up inside the drums, put on new heads and tune them, and clean up your cymbals.

Setting aside a couple hours to get your drums in recording-ready condition will not only save you time, it will earn you points with the engineer. He will appreciate that you've made his job of getting a good drum sound a lot easier.

Heads And Tuning

Let's take a moment to address the subject of heads and tuning. There are myriad brands and types of drumheads on the market, and some lend themselves to recording better than others. While a thick, multi-ply head might be just what you need to get through a string of live gigs, it isn't always what you want for the studio. Thinner, single-ply heads like Remo's Ambassador, Aquarian's Classic Clear, and Evans' G1 tend to offer a brighter, livelier sound and are generally preferred by recording engineers.

"The way I would start would be clear Ambassadors on the bottom and coated Ambassadors on the top for toms," says New York-based master drum tech Artie Smith. "Depending on how aggressively the guy or gal hits, there's always [Remo's 2-ply] Emperors or coated Pinstripes. On heavy-duty brass and bronze snares, a 2-ply head gives positive results. These heads dry up the drum enough, but still have enough ring without killing it. They last longer—less work, more filling.

"For wood and small-diameter snares," Smith continues, "I'll stick with coated Ambassadors. For kick drums, generally I would prefer starting with a coated Ambassador. If it's modern rock, I would use a [Remo] PowerStroke 3 on the batter side and then something with a small hole on the front."

Agnello seconds the notion that the way you hit the drums will dictate your head needs. "I once had a young drummer insist on using Emperors on all his drums," says Agnello, "and then he played so busily that

he couldn't hit the toms with any velocity or get any sound out of the toms at all." Suffice it to say, if you've got the time and money, it's a good idea to experiment and see what heads work best for your particular situation and playing style.

If you can swing it, bring along at least



"Treat the click like it's an instrument and not a harsh judge, and you'll find yourself playing not only in time, but comfortably."

—Michael Bland (Soul Asylum)

one new spare head for each tom and two for your snare (or *snares*—it's a good idea to have an extra snare or two on hand for the sake of variety). It's also wise to have some dampening devices like Moon Gels or duct tape at the ready, just in case. Bring a blanket or a pillow to stuff inside the bass drum.

As far as general rules for tuning: "Basically, I tell people, 'You turn the tension rods until they sound good,'" laughs Smith. "But if you were to loosen all the heads and start from scratch, start with the bottom head and tune that until the drum starts resonating. If you start getting some tone out of it, you're in the ballpark. Then you can follow any kind of 'timpani 101' type of tuning where you cross rods to get



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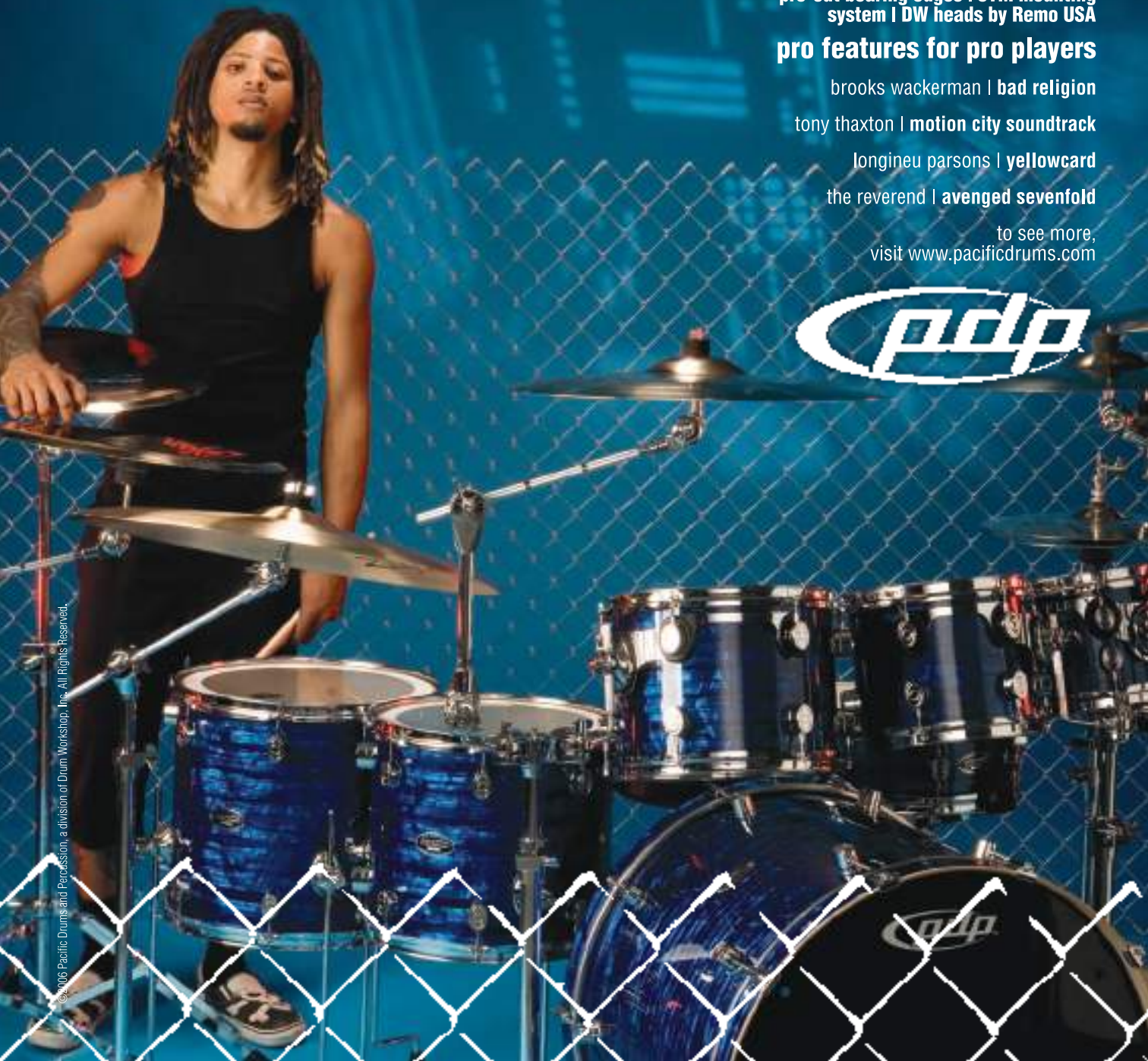
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the head on evenly, and then from there it's, as I call it, 'salt to taste.'"

The Big Day: Getting Sounds

On the day of the session, try to get to the studio at least an hour before your bandmates. This will give you plenty of time to set up your drums and acquaint yourself with the tracking room. It will also allow you to get to know the engineer—the person who'll be helping you sound your best. It can be beneficial to bring along a CD of some of your favorite drum sounds. Your sound will, of course, be *you* playing *your* drums, but this way you can give the engineer an idea of what kind of sound you're going for.

Getting "that sound" can be a breeze, or it can be like pulling teeth. "There's a period of time where the drums are getting hit to get sounds," says Smith. "And by the time you get the whole kit up and running, it can take anywhere from ten minutes to ten hours to get a drum sound." If you're in the ballpark tuning-wise and the engineer has good microphones and good mic' placement, it shouldn't be too much trouble.

When banging on the drums to get sounds for the engineer, make sure you hit them the same way as when you're actually playing a song with your bandmates. Some drummers have a tendency to hit the drums much harder once the record button has been pressed and the adrenaline starts to pump.

Getting Comfortable

Your comfort level in the studio is very important. A lot of people don't like recording studios because they offer little in the way of creative atmosphere or vibe. Studio lights are usually florescent, and the whole atmosphere can be pretty sterile.

That said, you'd be surprised how a few candles, some incense, and a couple boxes of Christmas lights can change a depressing room into a den of creativity. (Make sure to check with the engineer or studio owner before you redecorate.)

"Hey, Why Does Todd's Bass Sound Like A Frog Fart?"

A common complaint made about the recording process is how unnatural it can feel. Due to sound separation issues, there's a good chance you won't even be in

the same room with your bandmates. As a result, you'll be listening to their instruments through headphones, and this can take some getting used to. "Playing with headphones is just something you have to conquer through experience," says Bland. "Nobody likes it, especially the bass player, because there's no prominent low-end response. The best way to deal with it is to suffer through it and realize early on that it's never gonna sound like it does at rehearsal—ever. So don't take all day trying to get your headphones perfect. Just get what you need and try to lay down the track. The quicker you do this, the quicker you can be in the control room and listening in a much better environment."

One thing you can do to make the headphone experience a little easier is to get a pair of studio isolation headphones. (MetropHones, Direct Sound, GK Music, and Vic Firth all manufacture these.) While these outside noise-reducing headphones are a little pricey and don't deliver a whole lot of low end, they will allow you to hear everything—especially the drums—with minimal bleed-through from your live drums and cymbals.

What to put in those headphones is a matter of personal preference. "I usually like a good balance of everything," says Kotche. "I want to be able to hear all of the music; even the peripheral parts can inform you in a way that helps your feel, time, or part construction." Word of warning: Often times there will be one bandmember whose time is a little...um...*questionable*. Trying to get a good drum take when someone else is rushing is a bummer. If this is happening, just turn off that instrument at your headphone box or discretely ask the engineer to take it out of your mix.

Laying One Down

If all has gone well, you've gotten a good drum sound and a reasonable headphone mix, and you're ready to record a basic track. Now...*relax*. One of the best pieces of advice I ever received was from Steve Jordan when he produced a session I played on. We were having trouble getting a good take of one particular song, and Steve took me aside and said, "I can hear you thinking during these takes. Try to stop thinking and just play the song." It was great advice. I knew my part inside and out, but I was concentrating so hard on

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executing it perfectly that my performance was stiff and the song had no natural flow.

It will probably take a few initial run-throughs for you and your bandmates to feel comfortable with this whole process, so don't worry if you don't strike gold right away. "I think everybody in the room is feeling some insecurity at this point," says Brian Paulson, who's produced records for Wilco, Slint, and Beck. "I don't think that's something you can really avoid unless you're cocky and have an ego the size of Mt. Fuji. You just have to realize that everybody around you is feeling as vulnerable as you are."

"That's Not What I Just Played...Is It?"

When you come into the control room to listen to a playback, try to take a seat at the mixing board so you can really concentrate on the track. Make sure the playback volume is at a reasonable level, not earsplittingly loud. Ask for a playback where the drums are the loudest instrument so you can make sure you didn't hit a rim or mic' or make a flub that will stand out when it comes time to mix. For ultra-close inspection, sometimes the engineer will play the drum track by itself; this can be very disconcerting, because every minute detail of your performance is laid bare.

"When the engineer plays back the soloed drum pass, I always say that he's running it through "The Humiliator," jokes Kotche. "The drums aren't going to be soloed on the record, they'll blend with other instruments and voices, and the way you phrase a groove or fill may not sound right without those other instruments in the mix as a reference. Use the soloed playback as one tool, but not the only tool."

Knowing When To Say "When"

Getting that first song down is usually the biggest, most stressful hurdle. If it goes well, everyone is happy and the session rolls right along. When you get stuck on a song, well, that's when problems can start. "After three or four takes you can start to get diminishing returns," says Paulson. "All the life and spontaneity happens in the first three takes, and then it kind of falls apart. But then interesting things can start happening further down the road."

Here's where the number of songs

you've chosen to record comes into play. If you're only recording a handful of songs, you'll be able to do more takes. If you're recording a whole album's worth of songs, you've got to know when a take is as good as it can be and move on to the next song.

Perspectives On Perfection

Perspective is key when it comes to signing off on a drum track. Just about every drummer I know is critical of his or her playing on records. Somehow it's just never good enough. If you're a perfectionist, it's hard to not want to keep trying to get a better take.

"You have to do what's right for your band given the time frame and budget that you're working with," says Kotche. "You don't want to settle for something that doesn't live up to your standards. But at the same time you don't want to strip away any of the good mistakes or 'happy accidents,' which often give a take the personality that makes it something special."

"The 'perfect take' does not exist, in my opinion," says Bland. "I do sessions for some folks, and they're perfectly satisfied with the feel and content of the track. For others, I'll do multiple passes with different fills, patterns, and ideas and leave it in their hands to get what they want through editing."

The "Genie In The Bottle"

It was bound to come up: that word, "editing." The recording process today sure is different from how it was back in October of 1985. At that time a drummer was required to "nail the take"—that is, to play the whole song in its entirety with no, or minimal, mistakes. Because of drum and cymbal bleed-through, it was nearly impossible to fix a track by "punching in" over an existing performance like you can with a guitar or bass. If an engineer wanted to move a late bass drum thwack, he had to do it by cutting up the tape with surgical precision. Today, thanks to computer-based recording and editing programs like Pro Tools, repairing a weak snare hit, finessing an out-of-time bridge, or even cutting and pasting together an entire drum track is just a few mouse clicks away.

There is, of course, a downside to this technology. The easier it is to compile or sculpt a good drum track via Pro Tools, the less crucial it is for a drummer to be able to

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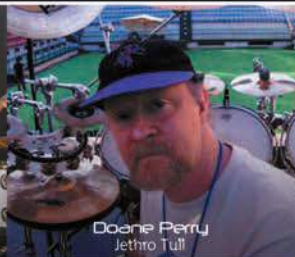


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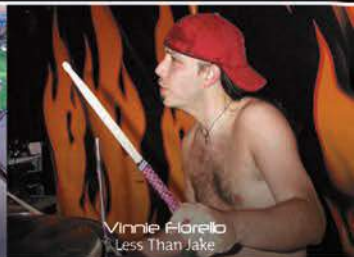
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The Hives



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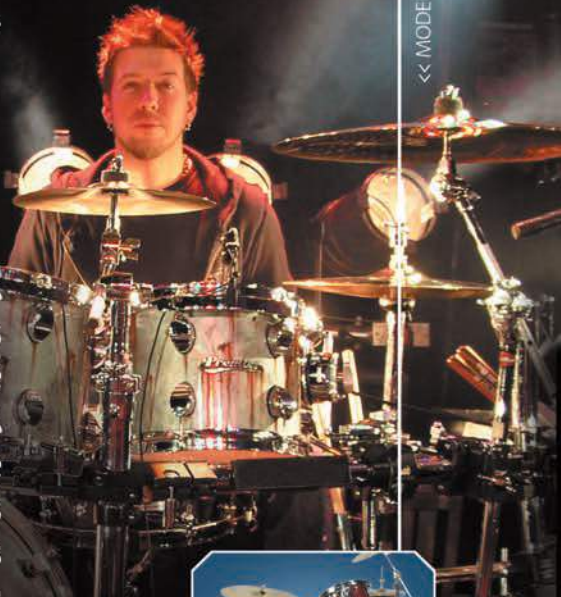
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play well in the studio. "I think Pro Tools has enabled all of us to get lazy," says Agnello. "Musicians don't have to be able to play anymore and producers don't have to produce. We've all heard the stories about drummers playing a few bars of each section. And then a few days later, they come back and the track is done."

"I know that a lot of musicians look at Pro Tools as a genie in a bottle," says Kotche. "It is possible to create a good drum take using technology. But why would a band want to waste time and money repairing drum tracks when they could be moving onto another song? If you're efficient and quick in the studio, you'll be doing a better job and you'll be creating a better studio vibe. Keep in mind, too, that there's something slightly magical about a true performance as opposed to a cut-and-paste drum track. It's difficult to put into words, but my experience has taught me that something gets lost with the cut-and-paste methodology."

Staying Positive

As mentioned earlier, there's a possibility of your session going south—in terms of productivity and morale. This "under the microscope" kind of pressure can fray nerves and bring out the worst in people. Just try to remember that you're all on the same team and you're all striving for the same result: a great-sounding recording.

"Keeping a positive vibe going in the studio when everything seems to be falling apart is not easy," says Bland. "Bandmembers can butt heads a lot, but hopefully there's a producer or some other impartial party to say, 'Alright, let's take a break and let everybody clear their heads.' Usually, when people return after that, they're more likely to be able to troubleshoot effectively until they figure out why something isn't happening."

"You Can Barely Hear My Second Floor Tom!"

Once you've finished your basic tracks and overdubs, try to allow yourself a day between recording and mixing—it'll give your ears a well-needed rest before diving into this sometimes long and tedious process. You'll want to be there for mixing, if for no other reason than to be assured that the drums will be at what you find to be an acceptable level. Different engineers and

producers mix things differently, and I've worked with a few that are just not "drum people"—they tend to bury the drums under the other instruments. Conversely, some engineers go too heavy on the drums and put them so high up in the mix that it's distracting. Ultimately it should come down to what serves the song best.

"Good mixing is a constant compromise," says Bland. "And it's relative: What sounds good to you might sound like crap to someone else. The most valuable advice I can give to any drummer who finds him or herself in a situation in the studio where the engineer has you under-mixed, at least in your opinion, is to nudge them a bit and see if you can get *some* of what you're listening for. Chances are you'll never get everything you're listening for, because there's only so much sonic space available."

Perspective comes into play here, also. Try to imagine what you would think of the mix if you weren't involved in the project. "It's funny when you go back and listen to a record that you're not involved in," says Paulson. "You realize there are a lot of records where the drums are disappearing, and there are a lot of records where the guitars are disappearing, and you don't think about that when you listen to them just as a record. You think of it as a *song*, not, 'Dammit, those drums are getting eaten by those guitars.'" Again, it should all come down to what's best for the song.

The Wrap Up

Well, that's a lot to chew on, huh? Yes, the recording process can be intimidating, but it can also be an incredibly enjoyable and rewarding experience. One of the proudest moments in your musical journey will come when you hear the final mixes of the songs you've worked so hard on. If you prepare in advance, do your homework, and keep a cool head, there's no reason why you shouldn't have a fun, creative, and productive session.

Oh yeah, one more thing to keep in mind, courtesy of the engineer of my first session: "Drums sound best when you hit 'em hard!"

Jon Wurster is the long-time drummer in the highly acclaimed band Superchunk. He's also recorded with Jay Farrar, R.E.M., Rocket From The Crypt, and Alejandro Escovedo.



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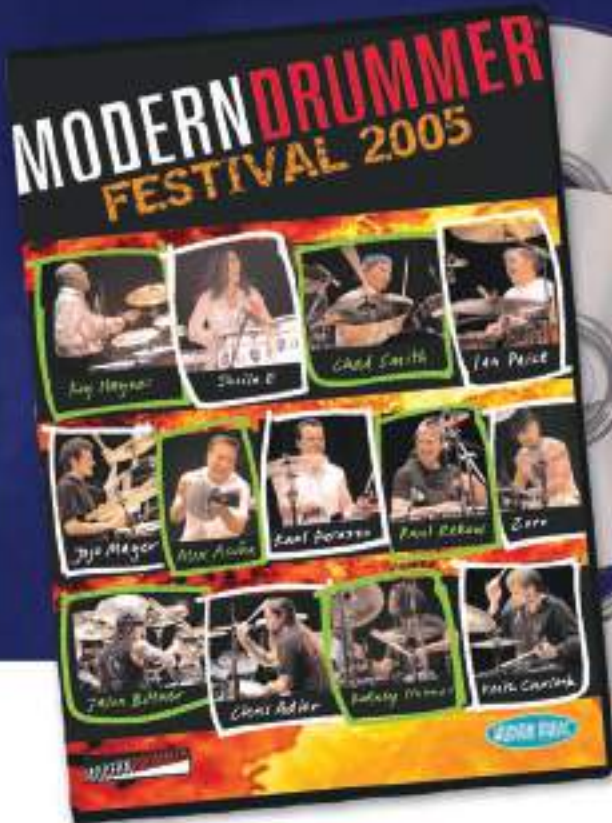


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Modern Jazz Giant Jeff "Tain" Watts Style & Analysis

by Michael Dawson

MUSIC KEY			
open	○	F.T.	●
H.H.	⊗	R.C.	⊗
T.T.	⊗	Rim	⊗
S.D.	⊗		
F.T.	⊗		
B.D.	⊗		
H.H.	⊗	Rim-	Add'l
w/ foot	⊗	click	T.T.

Jeff "Tain" Watts is arguably the most innovative and influential drummer to have emerged on the modern jazz scene in the last twenty-five years. His hard-hitting and highly interactive style strikes a perfect balance between the intellectual and the visceral, imbuing complex polyrhythms and barline-blurring phrasing with a deep sense of swing.



But unlike many other jazz drummers of his generation, who often mimicked the sounds of Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, and other bebop predecessors, Tain was not an imitator. While he had immersed himself in jazz at Berklee, Tain's background in classical percussion and R&B/fusion drumming armed him with a different vocabulary from which to build his style. As he stated in his November '99 *MD* cover story, "Whenever there's a break, I have to think of something to play besides Philly Joe Jones." As a result, Tain stood out among his peers, with a powerful and dynamic style that's steeped in jazz tradition but that's distinctly unique.

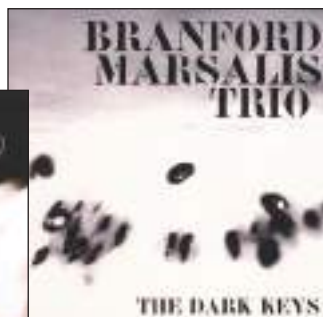
In this article, we're going to take a look at how Tain's sound and style evolved over the years, and how he expanded the rhythmic vocabulary of modern jazz drumming through his adventurous use of polyrhythms, extended phrasing, beat displacement, and other time-altering devices.

The Early Years

Ironically, growing up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Tain had very little exposure to jazz. His earliest musical experiences were through his older brothers' Motown and fusion records and through his school music program, where he studied classical percussion. It wasn't until he enrolled at the Berklee College Of Music in Boston (after a brief stint as a classical percussion major at Duquesne University) that he began to dig deep into acoustic jazz.

While at Berklee, Tain befriended up & coming saxophonist Branford Marsalis, which led to the drummer joining the highly acclaimed band of Branford's younger brother, trumpet prodigy Wynton Marsalis. As a result, Tain, who had only a few years of jazz study under his belt, was launched to the forefront of the "Young Lions" neo-bop revival.

Tain exploded on the modern jazz scene with his powerful and dynamic performance on trumpeter Wynton Marsalis's debut release. For this session, Tain splits drum duties with Tony Williams, and the master drummer's influence is evident. Like Tony, Tain used big drums and washy cymbals. He also borrowed a few of Tony's signature ideas, such as open flams, a chomping left-foot hi-hat, and powerhouse fills. But despite the influence of Tony, this early recording reveals several sophisticated and unique rhythmic concepts that Tain would continue to explore throughout his career.



“Father Time” (Wynton Marsalis—*Wynton Marsalis*, 1982)

The opening track of Wynton’s debut release transitions through several moods and feels, including a solo section that features the following polyrhythmic Afro-Cuban pattern. As you listen to the track, notice how Tain gradually builds the intensity of the groove by adding quarter-note triplets in the left foot, then by shifting his right hand to the ride cymbal. (2:08)

1 R.H. on rim 3 3 3 3

♩ = 185

“Twilight” (Wynton Marsalis)

On the album’s closing track, Tain’s late-period Tony Williams influence is apparent with the following unexpected quarter note–triplet break that extends over the barline. (1:25)

2

♩ = 102

Tain continued to explore adventurous polyrhythmic ideas and over-the-barline phrasing in Wynton’s band. By the time they recorded *Standard Time Vol. 1* in 1987, the quartet had developed a codified rhythmic system that incorporated odd-note groupings, beat displacement, and rhythmic illusions within complex arrangements. (For a detailed analysis of several of the arrangements, check out John Riley’s award-winning book *Beyond Bop Drumming*.)

“Foggy Day” (Wynton Marsalis—*Standard Time Vol. 1*, 1987)

On the tune “Foggy Day,” Tain takes a cue from Marcus Roberts’ piano solo and launches into a series of offset quarter-note triplets that are grouped in fours (measure 2). The tension that’s created by this polyrhythmic phrase is intense, making the resolution in the fourth bar all the more powerful. (3:15)

3

♩ = 112

The Middle Period

During his seven-year tenure with Wynton, Tain did much to increase the level of rhythmic sophistication in his playing. But it wasn’t until he left Wynton’s group to join Branford Marsalis’s quartet that his style became fully realized.

With Branford, Tain made adjustments to his approach to fit the

open and organic vibe of the group’s adventurous music. While his tuning continued to favor round, full sounds, Tain began using smaller drums, lighter sticks, and darker cymbals. Similarly, Tain’s feel shifted away from the big, washy sounds of Tony Williams to a more groove-based, bouncy approach reminiscent of Billy Higgins and Ed Blackwell.

At the same time, Tain’s comping reflected an Elvin Jones/Roy Haynes influence, as it became more interactive and unpredictable. Producer/trombonist Delfeayo Marsalis aptly described this new sound as the “stumbling drum technique.”

These next three examples are taken from recordings of Branford’s piano-less trio, demonstrating a few more of Tain’s classic time-displacing techniques.

“Roused About” (Branford Marsalis Trio—*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, 1991)

On bassist Robert Hurst’s composition “Roused About,” Tain ends the “head” of the tune with an extended three-note phrase that flows over the barline. Check out how he begins the figure three bars before the end of the melody (measure 2) and continues into the first bar of Branford’s solo. Also, notice how Tain keeps the intensity level high for three additional measures before settling into a groove. (0:48)

4

♩ = 206

R R L R R L

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

sax solo

R L R R L

3 etc.

“The Dark Keys” (Branford Marsalis Trio—*The Dark Keys*, 1996)

Another device that Tain uses to great effect is rhythmic illusion, which involves superimposing a contrasting feel or time signature over the original groove. During the intro to this track, Tain creates a half-time bongo-beat feel. But instead of emphasizing beats 1 and 3, he displaces the pattern by beginning on beat 4. (0:07)

5

♩ = 106

About midway through the tune, Tain sets up another rhythmic illusion by accenting every third beat with the bass drum (see Example 6 on page 100). These three-beat accents become the basis for a strong shuffle illusion in measure 7. (4:21)

6

Tain returns to the offset half-time feel a few minutes later. But instead of alluding to a swing feel, he slams out a punching back-beat groove. (6:21)

7

The Bandleader

While he has remained a member of Branford's quartet and is a first-call sideman for a variety of artists, Tain has become increasingly active as a bandleader in recent years. His four solo records showcase not only his incredible skills behind the kit, but also his adventurous compositional abilities. The next two examples demonstrate ways that Tain has incorporated some rhythmic "tricks" into his tunes.

"Wry Köln" (Jeff "Tain" Watts—*Citizen Tain*, 1999)

In this quick-shifting number, Tain conducts his band through a syncopated ensemble line that ends with a wicked metric modulation. In the fifth bar, the three-note figure sets up the modulation, as the dotted quarter note becomes the pulse for the hard swing feel of the next section. (1:34)

8

"...Like The Rose" (Jeff "Tain" Watts—*Detained At The Blue Note*, 2004)

"...Like The Rose" contains another dotted-quarter note metric modulation. In this fusion-inspired tune, Tain shifts from a driving 6/4 feel to a funky 4/4 groove. (7:00)

9

"Muphkin Man" (*Citizen Tain*)

This final example appears in Tain's medium-tempo swinger "Muphkin Man." Toward the end of the track, Tain trades solos with pianist Kenny Kirkland over the tune's unusual 28-bar form. As you're playing along, notice how Tain uses quarter note-triplet ideas to extend his phrases across the barline. Also, check out how Tain anticipates his second solo by beginning the rolling triplet figures in the last measure of Kirkland's solo. (4:00)

10

The examples included in this article focus on only a few of the challenging and inventive concepts you can find in Tain's innovative drumming. There's a wealth of additional ideas for you to explore on the recordings discussed here, and on many others. Some of my favorites include Wynton Marsalis's *Black Codes (From The Underground)* and *Live At Blues Alley*, Branford Marsalis's *Requiem, Contemporary Jazz*, and *Footsteps Of Our Fathers*, Kenny Garrett's *Songbook* and *Simply Said*, Michael Brecker's *Two Blocks From The Edge*, Joey Calderazzo's self-titled disc, and Tain's 2002 release *Bar Talk*.



To hear some of these tracks, tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.





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Seether's John Humphrey

Karma And Effect

by Ed Breckenfeld



Emmett Lollis Jr.

MUSIC KEY

open	R.C.	C.C.
H.H.	Bell	
T.T.		
S.D.		
F.T.		
B.D.1		
	B.D.2	Add'l
	T.T.	

South Africa doesn't usually come to mind when you think of heavy metal, but the band Seether might change that. Half of the band hails from that country (the other half is American), and they're quickly becoming an alt/metal force with their smash second album, *Karma And Effect*. Ex-Nixons drummer John Humphrey fits in perfectly, supplying heavy firepower when necessary while also stepping back to support the band's softer melodic side. Let's see how he does it.

"Because Of Me"

Out of the gate, John's driving intro groove sets the proper hard-edged tone for the entire album. The open hi-hat at the end of the first measure is a well-placed detail. (0:19)

1

Later in the track, John plays this speedy fill that features some nice phrasing between sticks and pedals. (1:52)

2

"The Gift"

Seether explores 12/8 time on several of the album's tracks, and John's complete control of this flowing time signature is evident throughout. (1:46)

3

"Burrrito"

John's clever intro lick kicks off another heavy drumbeat. This one incorporates a flam accent into the mix. (0:00)

4

When the song shifts to the verse, a tom groove is the perfect choice to create a darker mood. (0:23)

5

"Given"

The unusual offbeat hi-hat pattern in this 12/8 song adds an ear-catching polyrhythm to the verses. (0:15)

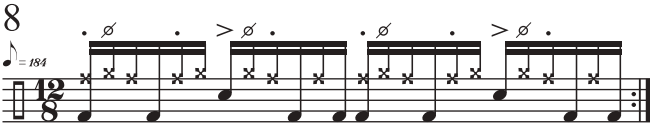
6

Later, John whips off an explosive fill to propel the band into the song's bridge. (2:21)



“World Falls Away”

The album's coolest drumbeat occurs leading into the breakdown of this track. The alternating ride cymbal pattern and the off-beat hi-hat notes are the highlights of this linear groove. (2:52)



You can reach Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.



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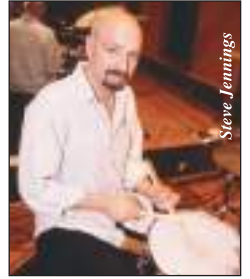
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Indian Rhythms

An Intro For Western Drummers, Part 4

by Steve Smith

As I've mentioned in my previous articles, the repetition of a rhythm three times in a row is a regular part of Indian music. Therefore, when playing with Indian musicians I've found it necessary to be very familiar with how to play common rhythms three times in a row and have them resolve to beat 1. By common rhythms, I'm talking about phrases of "3s" up through and including phrases of "10s."



Starting the rhythms in the exact place so they resolve to beat 1—without adding or subtracting any notes—requires math and memorization. I've done the math for you in this lesson; it's up to you to memorize where the phrases start.

In addition to these rhythms being helpful when playing with Indian musicians, I've also found them to be very powerful ways to end musical phrases when playing with Western musicians. The difference is that while the Indian musicians know what you are doing, the Western musicians don't—but they usually like the sound and feel of the rhythms.

I've written these rhythms in a series of two-bar phrases. It's easier for us Western musicians to read two bars of 4/4 rather than one bar of 8/4. But I want you to count the two bars as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and memorize the rhythms and where they start in the eight-beat cycle. Most of the time, when Indian musicians are playing in what sounds like 4/4 time, it is really 8/4 time, or what they call "Adi Tala"—an eight-beat cycle. As Western music has names for certain scales or modes, like Ionian, Lydian, etc., Indian musicians have names for the beat cycles. For example, Khanda

Tala is a five-beat cycle, and Misra Chapu Tala is a seven-beat cycle.

I've written the rhythms in Western notation, which for "3," "4," "5," "7," and "8" isn't a problem. When we get to "6," "9," and "10," the rhythms *look* different depending on where they fall in the measure, even though they're the same rhythm repeated three times in a row. This is a potential problem in that the written notation becomes difficult to read. Since Indian music is an oral tradition, I usually take that approach, learning where the rhythm starts and then playing it three times in a row, resolving to beat 1.

The phrasing that I've written for the "6s," "8s," "9s," and "10s" are standard ways for Indian musicians to phrase these "numbers," though they are slightly unusual for Western players. However, I find them interesting, and I like the way they sound. They're a good example of how learning Indian rhythms can expand your playing vocabulary.

The "8" is subdivided 3+5 (with the 5 phrased 2+3), the "9" is 2+2+5 (with the 5 phrased 2+3), and the "10" is 3+2, 2+3. Note that in the "8s" and "10s" the (LL) are ghost notes that can be played with the left hand.

3x3
count: 1 2 3 4 5 6

ta ki ta ta ki ta ta ki ta dhaa

R L L R L L R L L R

3x4
1 2 3 4 5

ta ka di mi ta ka di mi ta ka di mi dhaa

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

3x5
1 2 3 4 5

ta ka ta ki ta ta ka ta ki ta ta ka ta ki ta dhaa

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

3x6
1 2 3 4

ta ka ta ki ta ta ka ta ki ta ta ka ta ki ta dhaa

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

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Double Bass Drumming

Part 15: Hand/Foot Independence

by Rod Morgenstein

MUSIC KEY

S.D.
B.D.1
B.D.2

When making double bass an integral part of your drumming palette, it's extremely important to develop independence between the hands and feet. And to advance beyond the realm of a handful of cliché beats and fills, you have to go a step further and push your coordination and independence to new levels.

The exercises that follow contain all the possible 16th-note variations for one quarter note of music on top of a double bass ostinato (Example A). Each exercise has several sticking patterns, some of which are more challenging than others. As you practice, notice how each sticking affects the feel when played over the double bass lick.

Here's the ostinato.

A

R L R L R L R L R L

And here are the 16th-note combinations voiced on top.

1

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

2

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

3

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

4

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

5

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

6

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

7

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

8

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

9

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

10

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

Put Some Sauce On It!

Improving Your Groove, Feel, And Pocket

by Albe Bonacci

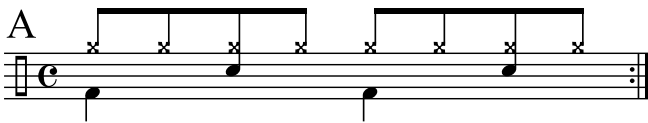


MUSIC KEY			
	H.H.	R.C.	Bell
×	×	×	×
●	●	●	●
●	●	●	●

Slang terms are often used in music but are rarely broken down and defined. For instance, what is a groove? Is it a beat? Is it time? Or is it a rhythm?

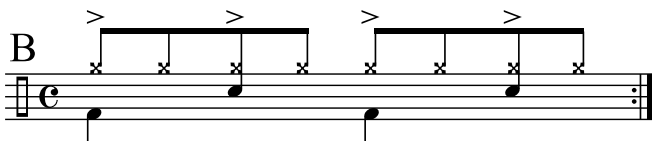
Let's say a groove is a rhythm. Now, what is a rhythm? My dictionary defines rhythm as "an ordered recurrent alternation of strong and weak elements in the flow of sound." This definition translates perfectly to drumming, especially in regards to groove. I firmly believe that a good groove uses a unique combination of strong and weak sounds depending on the style and tempo.

For example, here's a simple beat we all play.

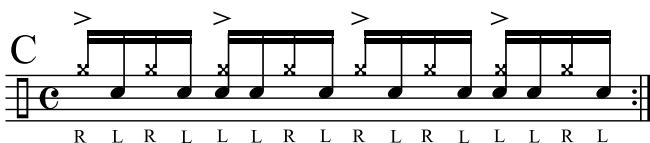


Now let's "put some sauce on it" and make the beat really groove by adding some strong and weak sounds. First, play rimshots on the backbeats (2 and 4). This can take some time to develop consistently. But it will make the snare drum really pop, even at low volumes.

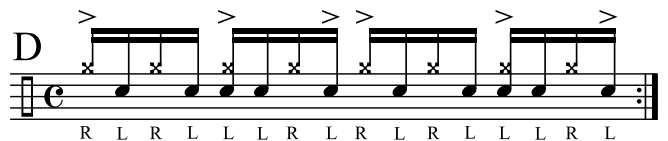
Next, let's give a little shove to the hi-hat on the quarter-note pulse. Again, this is a technique issue involving playing a down stroke for the accents and an upstroke for the unaccented strokes. Also, try using the shoulder of the stick for the accents and the bead for the taps. This should give your beat a more moving yet secure sound. It looks like this:



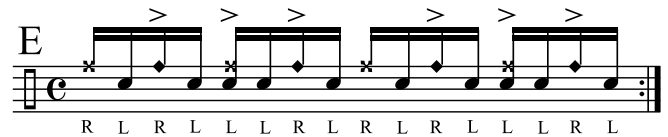
Now let's create a few 16th-note ostinatos that apply the same ideas. Here's the first. Be careful with the sticking. There are three lefts in a row with an accent—or rimshot—on the middle note.



The next ostinato contains an added accent on the "ah" of beats 2 and 4, giving the beat a little forward momentum.



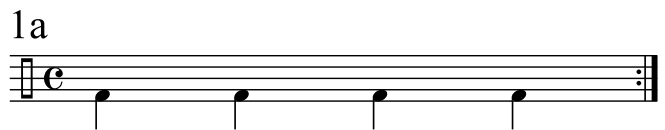
For the next example, move the right hand to the ride cymbal and play the offbeats on the bell. (You can also play the offbeats on a China cymbal, a cowbell, or a floor tom.)



When playing the ride, don't leave your hi-hat foot idle. Try playing it on 2 and 4, as quarter notes, or as offbeats. Also experiment with splash sounds. Get creative and think up your own ideas.


Now let's add the bass drum. Try combining each of the previous ostinatos with the following figures.


Bass Drum Group 1




Bass Drum Group 2

2a 

2b 

2c 

2d 

Bass Drum Group 3

3a 

3b 

3c 

3d 

3e 

Bass Drum Group 4

4a 


4b 

4c 


4d 

Here are two more ostinatos with some bass drum figures already added. Combine these ostinatos with all of the previous bass drum patterns. In doing so, you'll increase your coordination while improving your feel.

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

F 

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

G 

Remember, a rhythm needs to contain strong *and* weak elements. Without this variation, there is no pocket and certainly no groove. Have fun, and don't forget to "put some sauce on it."

Albe Bonacci has recorded for television, radio, and film, and with such songwriters as Jack Segal, Diane Warren, and Desmond Child.





4) Septuplets:



The following are two examples of how you can apply some of the previous ideas to the set. Notice how the sound changes by using the paradiddle.

Triplets:



Quintuplets:



These fills will strengthen your sense of time while adding excitement to your playing. Be sure to experiment and have fun with them. Good luck!



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The Heart And Soul Of Jazz

10 Must-Have Albums For Drummers

by Vince Giantomasi

Thousands of recordings have been made since modern jazz came into its own in the late 1940s. Many of them have had a profound effect on drummers. To list them by order of importance would be impossible, and even narrowing the field down is subject to intense debate. It's not impossible, however, to compile a list of must-haves for any jazz drummer's collection. Here are ten recordings you'll definitely want to check out.

The Soul Of Jazz Percussion

(Riverside Records 95-B and S-8)

This is a great compilation album that has never been reissued on CD, even though all of the cuts come from albums that *are* available in that format. Some of the greatest jazz drummers of all time are showcased here, on fourteen short clips.

Max Roach and Philly Joe Jones have two selections each on the album. Roach is heard with Sonny Rollins in two-bar exchanges followed by a complex solo, taken from Rollins' *Freedom Suite*. Max is also heard on a tune called "Conversation" from his own album *Deeds, Not Words*.

On "Tribal Message," an original by Philly Joe Jones from his *Drums Around The World* album, you hear a dramatic portrayal of an African drum message as it would be sent from village to village. On this recording, microphones were set up in various spots in the studio and switched as the message was repeated. At first the sound is faint, as though coming from a village some distance away. The message grows nearer each time it repeats. This is a clever device, making the piece one of the most representative recordings of how drums were used by Africans



as a communication tool. Philly Joe Jones appears on another cut with a master solo on a tune from his *Showcase* album.

On *Johnny Griffin's Big Soul Band*, Charlie Persip solos behind the band on "Meditation." His extraordinary fills between the figures are a master study on big band drumming. The fourth cut on side one of the LP has Elvin Jones soloing on a cut from Barry Harris's *Premiado*. It is both explosive and inventive.

Louis Hayes, who was the regular drummer with the famous 1960s Cannonball Adderley Quintet, shows his talent on Nat Adderley's LP *Work Song*, exchanging breaks with cellist Keter Betts. Track 6 on side one of the LP features a young Albert "Tootie" Heath in an eight-bar exchange with tenor saxophonist Clifford Jordan on "Spellbound."

The next cut features Kenny Clarke, who was the original drummer with The Modern Jazz Quartet. Kenny plays an intriguing Latin-esque beat in the opening of "Caravan" from *Thelonious Monk Plays Duke Ellington*.

Side two of *The Soul Of Jazz Percussion* begins with Art Blakey's incredible solo on the title tune of Bobby Timmons' *Soul Time*. Blakey was one of the most influential bandleaders of the jazz era. With his Jazz Messengers, he produced more albums that have become jazz classics than any other drummer of his time.

Jimmy Cobb does a fine job of soloing on the title tune of Bobby Timmons' *Easy Does It*. Next, Art Taylor, one of the most sought-after drummers of the late 1950s and early 1960s, solos and drives the band out with a Clark Terry tune from *Top And Bottom Brass*.

The album concludes with two younger players of the day. Ben Riley trades fours with Johnny Griffin on an excerpt from Griffin's *Change Of Pace*. And Billy Higgins exchanges with vibraphonist Dave Pike on a piece from *It's Time For Dave Pike*.

Although the *Soul Of Jazz Percussion* LP is rare and hard to find, it's definitely worth some browsing in used record stores or online. But be careful. There are several

other, very different albums out there with the same title.

Rich Versus Roach

(Mercury 826 987-2)

In the spring of 1958 Buddy Rich and Max Roach got together for Mercury Records to do battle. Rich had recorded drum battles before with the incomparable Gene Krupa, who was a big band stylist himself. Now he was facing a young, aggressive bebopper known mainly for his work with the famed Dizzy Gillespie/Charlie Parker bands and with trumpeter Clifford Brown in their Clifford Brown/Max Roach ensembles.

Each drummer was to use a group of five players, which they had hand selected. Rich chose John Bunch (piano), Phil Leshin (bass), Willie Dennis (trombone), and Phil Woods (alto sax) for his group. Roach selected Stanley Turrentine (tenor sax), Tommy Turrentine (trumpet), Julian Priester (trombone), and Bobby Boswell (bass)—electing not to use either a piano or a guitar.

The recording was made in stereo with the Buddy Rich Quintet on the left channel and the Max Roach Quintet on the right channel. Tunes included "Sing, Sing, Sing," a Gigi Gryce original called "The Casbah," jazz standards "Sleep," "Yesterdays," "Limehouse Blues," and "Toot, Toot, Tootsie Goodbye," and a Charlie Parker number called "Big Foot." Rich and Roach added a number they called "Figure Eights," where each drummer exchanged a chorus of four bars followed by three choruses of alternate eight-bar solos.

Who won this drum battle? You'll have to listen to the album and determine that for yourself.

Drums Around The World

(Riverside RLP 1147 - OJCCD 1792-2)

On *Drums Around The World*, producers Orrin Keepnews and Bill Grauer allowed Philly Joe Jones the opportunity to record an album using a concept he had been developing for some time. Philly had appeared on more than twenty albums for the label, and he called on an all-star cast to

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join him in this effort. They included trumpeters Lee Morgan and Blue Mitchell, trombonist Curtis Fuller, alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley, tenor saxophonist and writer/arranger Benny Golson, baritone saxophonist Sahib Shihab, Herbie Manne on flute and piccolo, Wynton Kelly on piano, and either Sam Jones or Jimmy Garrison on bass.

The original LP contains seven tunes; the CD reissue adds a previously unissued mono recording of “Stablemates.” Philly Joe presented two of his own brilliantly written tunes: “Blue Gwynn,” which employs a strong Afro-Cuban flavor, and “The Tribal Message” (as mentioned above). The balance of the recording includes two of Golson’s tunes (“Stablemates” and “Land Of The Blue Veils”), standards “Carioca (‘El Tambores’)” and “Cherokee,” plus a tune created for Philly Joe by Tadd Dameron, “Philly J.J.”

Time Out

(Columbia CL1397)

The Dave Brubeck Quartet’s 1959 album *Time Out* is a major jazz milestone. It contains “Take Five”—written in 5/4 time—which “crossed over” into the mainstream and became the best-selling jazz single of all time. The tune was the brainchild of drummer Joe Morello and alto saxophonist Paul Desmond. The quartet also included Dave Brubeck on piano and Eugene Wright on bass.

This album is packed with tunes all written in odd time signatures, at which Joe Morello was a master. Included are “Blue Rondo A La Turk” (written in 9/8 time) and “Everybody’s Jumpin’” and “Pick Up Sticks” (written in 6/4).

Drums Unlimited

(Atlantic Records SD 1467)

In 1966 Max Roach recorded *Drums Unlimited* for Atlantic Records. Among its six cuts, Max pays tribute to “Big Sid” Catlett on “For Big Sid” (based on Catlett’s “Mop Mop”), and to W. C. Handy, who wrote the popular “St. Louis Blues.” Max uses several time signatures very effectively in the unusual arrangement. On “Nommo,” a tune inked by bassist Jymie Merritt of Jazz Messengers fame, Roach exhibits exceptional brushwork. The tune also features superb solos by Freddie Hubbard, James Spaulding, Ronnie

Mathews, and Jymie Merritt.

The first tune on the album, “The Drum Also Waltzes,” is not your traditional waltz. We hear Roach soloing in a rhythmic fashion against an ostinato created by playing the 1 on the bass drum and the 2 on the hi-hat, with a steady heartbeat effect. Notice the tightly tuned sound of his small tom as he solos around the kit.

The album’s title track (along with “For Big Sid”) features Max’s soloing skills. The stereo recording was done with separate microphones on the rack toms, floor tom, and snare drum (not commonplace in 1966), allowing the listener to clearly hear the exceptional skills of one of the leading jazz drummers of the day.

Gretsch Drum Night At Birdland

(Roulette Jazz)

In the 1960s, the Gretsch Drum Company enjoyed the distinction of having their drums endorsed by most of the greatest bebop drummers of the day. On April 25, 1960 at New York City’s Birdland, Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, Charlie Persip, and Philly Joe Jones participated in what is now regarded as one of the greatest nights in jazz drumming history. The other musicians who are heard on the album are Sonny Red on alto saxophone, Charles Majeed Greenlea on trombone, Tommy Flanagan on piano, and Ron Carter on bass.

The album’s five tunes are “Wee Dot,” “Now’s The Time,” “Tune Up,” “El Sino,” and “A Night In Tunisia.” The CD liner notes by Kenny Washington give a detailed account of the individual tunes and what each player is doing. Kenny’s descriptions alone are worth the price of the CD.

The Big Beat

(Milestone 47016)

This is a compilation album showcasing tunes from other albums by Art Blakey, Max Roach, Elvin Jones, and Philly Joe Jones. The LP was released in 1971 and reissued on CD in 1991.

The album includes the Art Blakey tunes “Caravan,” from *Caravan—Art Blakey And The Jazz Messengers* (Riverside 9438-OJCCD-038), and “High Priest” and “Theme,” both taken from *Ugestu* (Riverside 9464-OJCCD-090).

There are three cuts from the classic release by Max Roach, *Deeds, Not Words*

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Essential Listening

(Riverside 1122-OJCCD-304). The cuts from this unusual album include "Conversation," "Jodie's Cha-Cha," and "Larry Larue." Roach incorporated the use of tuba as a melody instrument on this album, as played by Ray Draper, who worked with Max's group in 1958 and 1959.

Elvin Jones' tracks on *The Big Beat* come from his first album as a leader, *Elvin!* On the original LP the drummer is joined by his two brothers, Hank (piano) and Thad (cornet). The tunes excerpted for *The Big Beat* include "Lady Luck," "Buzz-At," "Pretty Brown," and "Four And Six." All show Elvin Jones at his best.

Also included on this compilation are five cuts from two of Philly Joe Jones' albums. From *Showcase* we hear "Battery Blues" and "Gone, Gone, Gone." From *Drums Around The World* we have "Stablemates" and "Carioca."

All of the tunes on *The Big Beat* are representative of the exceptional work of the great artists it features.

A Night At Birdland With The Art Blakey Quintet, Volumes 1 & 2

(Blue Note CDP 7 46519 2
and CDP 7 46520 2)

The two volumes of *A Night At Birdland With The Art Blakey Quintet* are considered to be among the best live dates ever recorded. Taped at Birdland on February 21, 1954, they exhibit Blakey's early work with a group that would become The Jazz Messengers. Art is joined by co-leader Horace Silver on piano, along with trumpeter Clifford Brown, alto saxophonist Lou Donaldson, and bassist Curly Russell.

Joe Morello

(Bluebird - BMG)

Joe Morello displays his melodic genius on this self-titled compilation CD. The recordings were made in 1962 at Webster Hall in New York City, and seven of the tunes were previously unreleased. Producer George Avakian assembled an all-star cast of players that included Phil Woods, Gary Burton, Doc Severinsen, Clark Terry, Bob Brookmeyer, Bill Crow, Hank Jones, Al Cohn, and John Bunch. Morello displays his driving style and excellent brush

techniques with the big band. The drum solo on "It's About Time" is especially noteworthy. This is another CD that's difficult to find, but it's well worth the effort.

Shelly Manne & His Men At The Black Hawk, Vols. 1 Through 5

(Contemporary - OJCCD
656, 657, 658, 659, 660)

Shelly Manne was the quintessential model of style and good taste in jazz drumming. Although he was extremely versatile, he is best known as a founding member of the West Coast "cool" genre.

These five volumes were recorded live on three successive nights in September 1959 at the famed Black Hawk jazz club in San Francisco. Joining Shelly are tenor saxophonist Richie Kamuca, trumpeter Joe Gordon, bassist Monty Budwig, and pianist Victor Feldman.

Special attention should be paid to the style and ease with which Shelly Manne leads this quintet. He was one of the most musical drummers ever, as these recordings demonstrate.

Don't Stop Here

The ten albums presented here were selected for their musicality and technical merit. As such, they provide a great foundation for aspiring jazz drummers who want to improve their skills. Hopefully, our list will allow readers an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the works of some of the greatest jazz drummers of all time.

But don't stop here. There are hundreds of other jazz recordings that have influenced scores of drummers over the years. Be sure to investigate as many as you can. The more you listen, the more you'll learn.



To hear some of these tracks,
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Toontrack DfH Superior And Superior Custom & Vintage Sample Libraries

Giving A Whole New Meaning To "Plug In And Play"

by Stuart McConaghy

Recording live drums can be a real pain in the neck, especially if you're on a budget. First you have to buy or borrow all the microphones you need. Then there's the bother of dealing with mic' placement and muddy sound, since most rooms aren't optimal for drum recording. And, if you're not lucky, you'll have the sound of the neighboring Interstate traffic leaking through the walls onto your tape. Yuck!

KEY NOTES

- high-quality, dynamic sounds
- simple to use
- included templates for use with existing e-drum sets
- no stand-alone mode; needs host software

Electronic drums provide a solution, but most of their built-in sounds are...well...not very acoustic. Here's where some nice blokes from Sweden, collectively known as Toontrack, come to your rescue.

DfH Superior

DfH Superior is the big brother to Toontrack's popular Drumkit From Hell sample set, which gained recognition for its pristine sound quality and attention to detail. Superior offers five complete drumsets (Sonor, Premier, DW, Fibes, and a '67 Ludwig), more snares than a studio drummer can schlep, and an abundant collection of cymbals in all shapes and sizes. To round things off, Superior also includes a full setup of percussion instruments and toys, as well as a Yamaha cocktail kit.

Altogether, DfH Superior contains close to 85,000 (you read it right) individual samples, covering all of

the included drums and cymbals, each played at different velocity levels and with different striking tools (including sticks, brushes, and multi-rods on drums and cymbals, and felt, wood, and plastic beaters for the bass drums). Some of the snare drums feature additional snares on/off settings.

Of course, all of this sample depth translates into a huge installation. You'll need 40 gigabytes of available hard disk space to accommodate it. The installation went smoothly for me. But be warned: It is very time-consuming. Copying close to 40 gigs of data from nine DVDs to your hard drive can take a few hours.

After installation, DfH Superior is available as a total of three VST or AudioUnit plug-ins, which means it needs a VST- or AudioUnit-capable host program such as Garageband, Logic, or Cubase in order to run. Pro Tools users shouldn't worry, though. DfH Superior can also be used as a ReWire slave in those programs that can't use VST or AU plug-ins. I tested it as a plug-in on a Mac G4 (running OS X 10.3.9 using Ableton Live 4 and Apple Logic Pro 7 as my plug-in hosts), and also as a ReWire slave inside Live 4 and Pro Tools M-Powered 6.9.

DfH Superior works with the computer's memory, using it as a cache for storing samples. The most commonly used samples of a kit are loaded into memory in advance, to prevent hard disk access and possible system lag. Toontrack recommends keeping the cache on for sequencing (non real-time) work, but turning it off for real-time playing and triggering.

A nice touch is that DfH Superior is split into three parts: Cocktail, Drummer, and Percussionist. This keeps load times down and goes easy on the system's memory needs. A downside to this, however, is that because of this split, you'd have to load the entire Cocktail and Drummer plug-ins if you wanted to use, for example, the cocktail kit's 8" snare drum sound with the Sonor drumset. I would have preferred a bit more flexibility there.

Also, while I'm complaining, it would have been nice to be able to pick and choose sets in the installer—like installing only the Premier set, with a DW snare and a select cymbal setup—instead of



Electronic Review

exactly a spring chicken, although it's probably close to what the average musician has at home. More up-to-date computers will show better results.

DfH displays an option at startup, which lets the user choose a General MIDI (GM)-compatible kit layout. So Standard MIDI files play back with the appropriate sounds.

All instruments can have their own dedicated virtual output. This means that you can assign bass drum, snare, toms, hats, or

anything else on your kit to their own dedicated channels inside the host's virtual mixer, and use different effects and equalizer settings on each one. The most practical application of this is EQ, by which each part of the kit becomes moldable and adaptable to your song. But using different compression levels and adding atypical effects can emphasize different parts of the kit in different sections of the song. Now there's nothing standing in your way (other than personal taste) of putting different

delays on your bass drum and hi-hats, and putting phasers on your toms.

What I particularly liked was the ability to control the "microphone leakage" effect. Turning it off altogether when building tracks saved a lot of system resources while still enabling me to hear the kit in its full glory. Turning the leakage back on at the end of the production was like turning on the Christmas lights at Rockefeller Center. The kit, which already sounded beautiful, became three-dimensional.

No Allen Wrench Required

Towards the end of writing this review, I found myself running out of superlatives to describe DfH Superior, and I sort of wished that I could find more fault than I already had. Well, my wish came true.

During the testing, Toontrack issued an upgrade to the core software that... well...didn't work at all! All of a sudden I couldn't start DfH, and all existing projects I had used DfH for would crash the software upon opening. But—and this goes to show how dedicated these Swedes are—a bugfix was issued a mere couple of days later.

All in all, Toontrack has made an amazing sample collection: well thought out, meticulously executed, and simple enough to be used by folks who have little computer recording experience. Beyond my nit-picking, I couldn't find serious fault with DfH Superior or the Custom & Vintage collection. The price is more than right, and I wouldn't hesitate to use these collections on my own projects. In fact, I'm not giving my review copies back!

THE NUMBERS

DfH Superior\$299

Superior Custom & Vintage Collection\$299

System requirements: 40 GB free hard disk space, DVD Drive, at least 1024 x 768 screen resolution.

Minimum capacity:

WinXP/ME/98, PIII/Athlon 500 MHz, 512 MB RAM

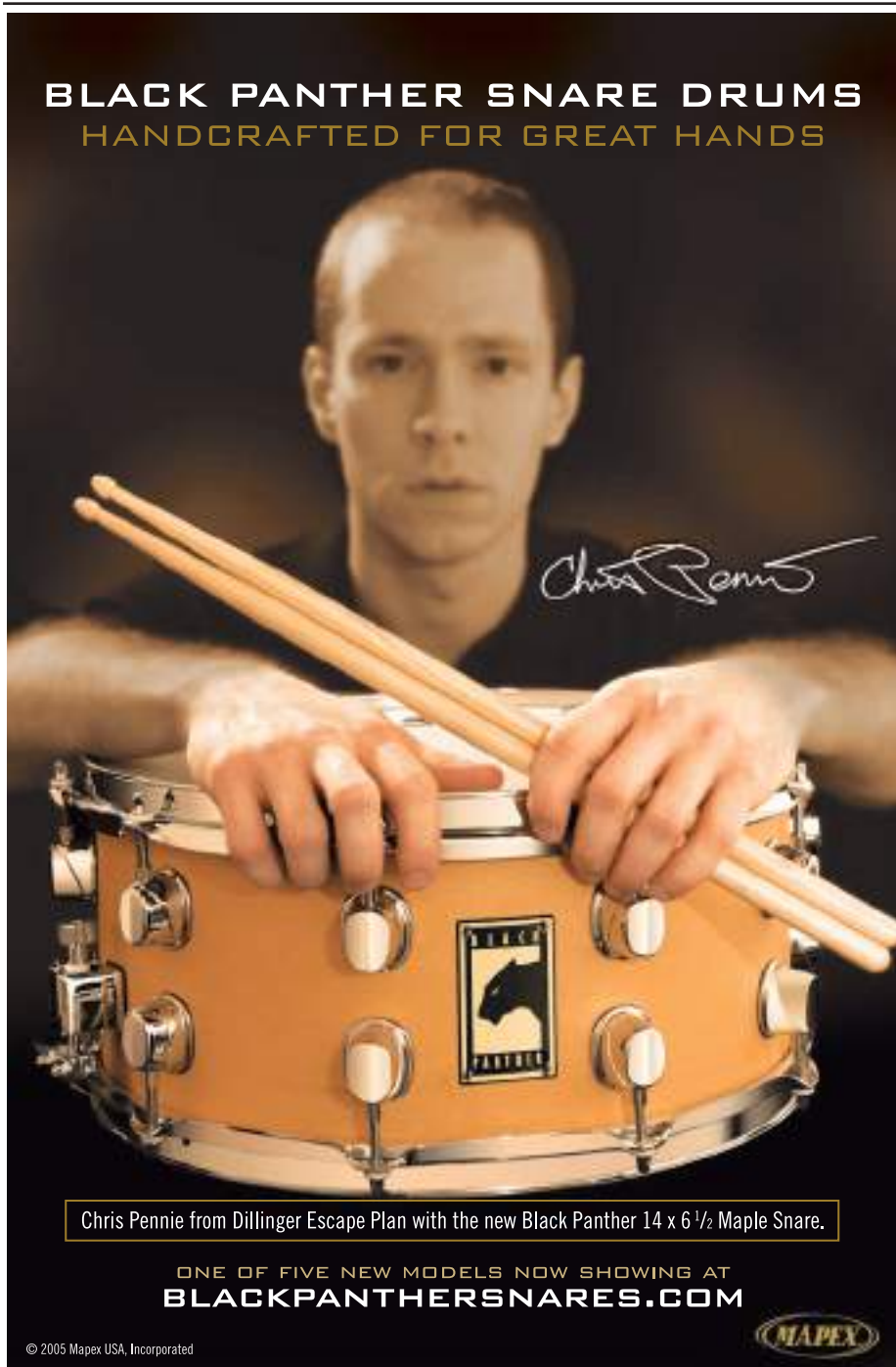
Mac OS X 10.2 or higher, G3 500 MHz, 512 MB RAM

Recommended capacity:

WinXP, PIII/Athlon 1.8 GHz, 1.5 GB RAM

Mac OS X 10.2 or higher, G4 733 Mhz, 1.5 GB RAM

Toontrack, www.toontrack.com; distributed through EastWest SoundsOnline, www.soundsonline.com.




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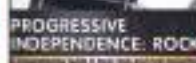
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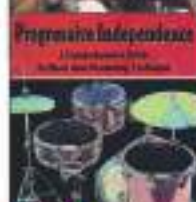
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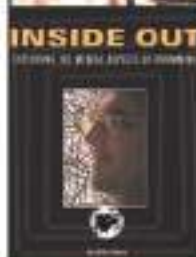
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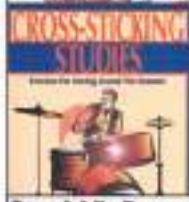
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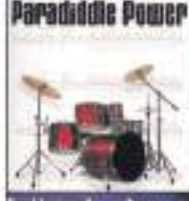
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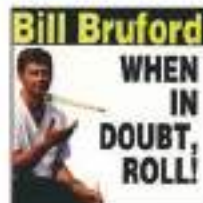
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The Make-It-Yourself Practice Pad Kit

by Ray Haynes

Practicing on one's drumkit at home can be a difficult proposition. You may not have the space to set up your complete kit. Or you may have volume issues with your family and neighbors. Or you may find that if you practice on your drums, you're tempted to play more for fun than to focus on real study and technical improvement.

One answer to the above problems is a practice pad kit. There are several good ones on the market, but they can be pricey. Plus, they all require a bass drum pedal and a hi-hat stand to create a complete kit. However, if you have even rudimentary woodworking skills, you can make a perfectly functional and totally complete practice pad kit for a good deal less money. All it takes is the materials, a plan, and a little time.

I've provided a plan here. My kit design can be built very roughly, or finished with loving care. That depends on your personal needs and desires. Any woodworker will see variations and possibilities to suit his or her available materials and skill.

Materials

I created my pad kit by sawing up old $\frac{3}{4}$ " chipboard shelves into several $2\frac{3}{4}$ "-wide strips to make legs and feet, and $8" \times 4\frac{3}{4}"$ pieces for the assemblies that held the playing-surface circles and served as tilters (which I call "head clamps"). If I were buying new material I'd use $1" \times 3"$ dressed pine for the legs and feet and $\frac{3}{4}"$

ply for the head clamps. The wooden disks for the playing surfaces need to be $\frac{1}{2}"$ to $\frac{3}{4}"$ plywood. In addition to the wood, the design requires screws, bolts, glue, and other items that will be mentioned as we go along.

Creating The Kit

The easiest components of the kit to make are the six stands. The snare drum, three toms, crash, and ride stands are all the same except for their respective leg heights. Cut the legs first and label them with a felt-tip marker. I like my ride only a couple of inches higher than the snare drum, but you might want a higher leg. Remember, it's easier to cut a bit off later than it is to make a new assembly.

Make six feet and six heels. Round the ends if you like (feet: one end, heels: both ends). I assembled these using 2" Phillips-head screws in holes drilled to suit. I also glued them using woodworker's glue. First I screwed the foot to the leg with two screws (creating an L-shape), then I screwed the heel to the leg and foot with three more screws (creating a T-shape).

I did *not* position the heels flush to the legs and feet. I put the heels $\frac{3}{8}$ " lower than the feet on all the pieces, for two reasons. First, it provided a better grip on a carpeted surface. Second, it tilted the legs toward the player, for better balance.

I made the head clamps by cutting twelve boards to 8" x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", and then gluing and screwing them in pairs to either side of a $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " spacing piece (creating a U-shaped assembly). I used two screws from one side and a middle screw from the other in order to avoid cracking the center spacer. I also placed a scrap piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ " lumber at the open end of the U, just to keep everything square during the assembly phase.

The next step was to drill two holes in each assembly for the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " carriage bolts that will hold the head clamps to the tops of the legs. These holes were drilled with one higher than the other on the head clamps, but at the same height on the legs, in order to affect the tilt of the pads toward the player. (See the diagram.) It's worth making a plywood template to clamp in place for this operation, to make sure the holes in all the assemblies are drilled uniformly.

Then I cut six 12"-diameter disks for the cymbals, snare drum, and floor tom. I cut 10" and 11" disks for the two rack toms. (Circular disks were easy for me to cut on a band saw, but if your tools will only allow straight cuts, an octagonal shape works fine.) The drum versions of these were glued and screwed to the tops of the head clamps. (The cymbal pads weren't—more about that later.) Next, I straddled the open ends of the head clamps over the tops of the legs, matched up the holes, and inserted the carriage bolts. I added split washers and wing nuts and secured each assembly. This gave me six free-standing wooden stands holding tilted practice pad disks.

Topping The Pads

The hard part for me was scrounging up suitable rubber to put on top of the drum-pad disks. Some possibilities include old rubber conveyer belts, solid-rubber car mud flaps, and used computer mouse pads. My ideal is the old mud flap from a large truck, made of $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick rubber. Do a little detective work in your area, and you may

Cutting List for $\frac{3}{4}$ "-thick chipboard (all measurements in inches)						
Item	Foot	Heel	Leg	Playing Surface	Pedal Ftbrd	Pedal Heel
Snare	9 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	12 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	23 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	12" Diam	---	---
Small Tom	9 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	12 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	30 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	10" Diam	---	---
Med Tom	9 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	12 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	30 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	11" Diam	---	---
Floor Tom	9 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	12 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	23 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	12" Diam	---	---
Ride Cymb	9 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	13 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	30 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	12" Diam	---	---
Crash Cymb	9 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	15 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	36 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	12" Diam	---	---
Hi-Hat	16 x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	30 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	12" Diam	9 x 4	3 x 4
Bass Drum	14 x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$	10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	---	---	9 x 4	3 x 4

find any number of suitable possibilities. Attach your material to the wooden pads with a silicone adhesive that will stick to the rubber. You might also want to tack the pad down toward the outside, just as reinforcement.

The one drum pad to be fussy about is the snare drum, since this is where most of the technical work is done. My suggestion here is to buy one proper "factory made" practice pad. Use a short $\frac{1}{4}$ " bolt to mount it from underneath the wooden snare-pad disk.

The Cymbal Pads

When it came to the cymbals, I didn't want them to be rigid. So I didn't screw the pads down to the head clamps. Instead, I drilled a $\frac{1}{2}$ " hole in the center of each head

clamp spacer, and I pushed a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " carriage bolt up from underneath. This was secured with a large flat washer, a split washer, and a regular hex nut on the top of the spacer, leaving a good length of the bolt sticking up. I put a couple of regular cymbal felts on the bolt, which lifted the cymbal pads up off the head clamp assembly enough to give them some freedom of movement. A standard wingnut topped the bolt to keep the cymbal pads from bouncing off. If you wanted even more cymbal realism, you could attach a circular block of wood at the center of each pad to simulate a bell. Just remember to use a bolt long enough to penetrate the pad and this extra block in order to secure the cymbal on the stand.

I topped the cymbal pads with vinyl

And For The Mechanically Challenged...

For drummers lacking the time, patience, or skill to make their own practice pad kit, here's a quick list of some ready-made models.

Drum Workshop

Smart Practice Go Anywhere Practice Kit

Portable five-piece pad set that includes two 8" pads for tom and cymbal, two 10" pads for snare and floor tom, one bass drum pad, a stand, and all mounting hardware. A carrying bag is available. (Pedal not included.) List price: \$199.99

www.dwdrums.com



E-Pad!

EXP Practice Kit

A four-piece practice kit that combines E-Pad!'s Enduraflex practice pads with a tubular rack for stability and positioning flexibility. Kit includes rack and pads only. List price: \$382.75

www.epadco.com

Gibraltar

GP05 Free-Standing Pad Kit

Built from an elliptical leg base assembly. Includes four 8" rubber practice pads with mounting arms and one rubber bass drum pad. List price: \$274.50

GP08 Rack Practice Kit

Rack includes one 30" horizontal bar, two 30" vertical bars with T-Leg assemblies, and four GPRMC multi-clamps. Pads include four 8" rubber practice pads with mounting arms, and one bass drum pad. List price: \$409.50

www.kamanmusic.com



Remo

Five-Piece Practice Pad Kit

Includes four tom/snare practice pads and one bass drum pad on an adjustable frame. List price: \$315.00–\$399.00

Thomas Lang Practice Pad Kit

Includes one 13 1/4" pad, four 8" pads, and two bass drum pads designed to be used with a double pedal. The 8" and 13 1/4" pads consist of circular steel baseplates and interchangeable surface pads. Modular system also includes an angle-adjustable snare-pad stand, a drumstick holder, and a case with wheels.

List Price: \$999.00

www.remo.com



flooring material to make them durable and resistant to stick impact. But in terms of feel, leaving them as bare wood would have worked as well.

Bass Drum And Hi-Hat Pedals

To create the bass drum pedal, I first cut a baseplate of 3/4" chipboard. I determined the angle at which I wanted the pedal footboard to be in its "down" position (as if hitting a bass drum), and I cut a block of wood at the proper length to act as a stop point for the downward movement of the footboard. I screwed this block to the baseplate from underneath.

Next, I cut the pedal footboard and heel piece. I screwed one side of a 3" hinge under the back end of the footboard, and with the footboard in its "down" position against the stop block, I screwed the other side of the hinge down to the baseplate. I chamfered the heel plate (cut one edge at an angle) to sit over the knuckle of the hinge, and screwed it down to the baseplate with two screws.

The footboard was held in its "up" position by a piece of sponge rubber that I glued to the baseplate. It was placed under the footboard, just about where the ball of my foot would be. More sophisticated return-spring methods could be designed later; this worked well enough to allow for the involvement of my bass drum foot in practice sessions.

The hi-hat pedal was created in the same way as the bass drum pedal. I did give it a longer baseplate, however, in order to accommodate the leg that held the hi-hat cymbal pad.

It Works

I'm quite pleased with my practice pad kit design, and I'm happy to share it with *Modern Drummer's* readers. The photo shows how simple the thing is. At the time of this writing, two of my students are doing all their practicing on kits I made them (until their parents can face the thought of a drumkit in the house). If you build one, email me at rayhay@alphalink.com.au to let me know how it turns out. Good luck!



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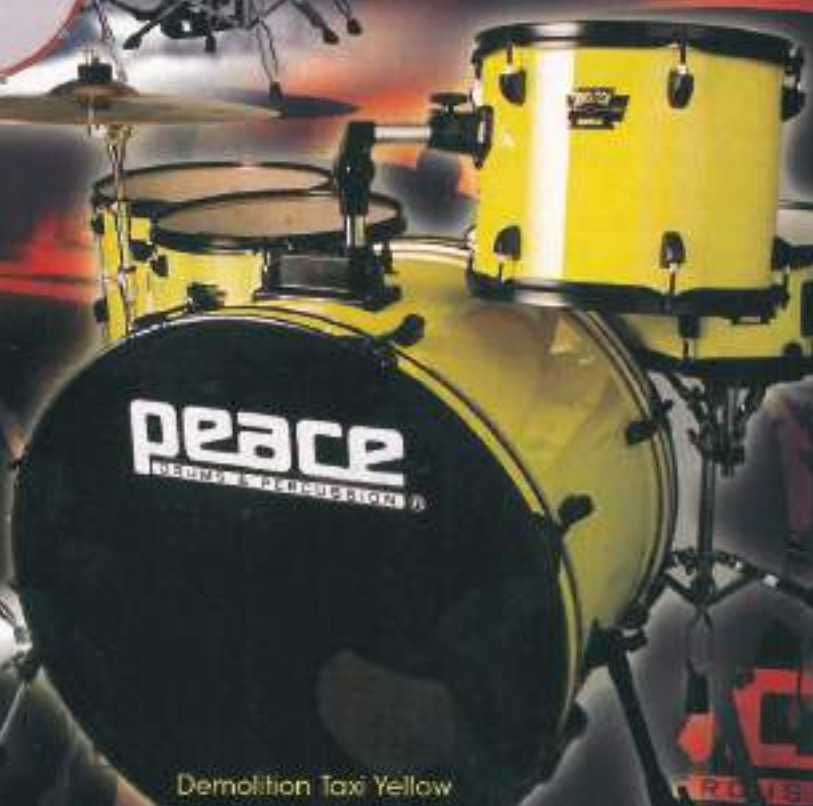


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Is There Still Power In A Union?

Deciding Whether Joining The AFM Is Right For You

by Bobby Borg

Many aspiring drummers and percussionists don't know that music unions even exist, let alone what they do. You should know that the American Federation of Musicians was established specifically to secure and enforce fair wages and good working conditions for musicians. Additionally, the AFM and AFTRA (American Federation of Television And Radio Actors) provide a variety of benefits packages, as well as health and retirement funds. Though the music business may often seem like the Wild West, with no apparent guidelines, regulations, or support for musicians, the union may offer some hope. Whether becoming a union member makes sense at this time in your career or not, you'll nonetheless find the information provided here extremely useful.

The American Federation Of Musicians

Founded in 1897, the American Federation of Musicians is one of the oldest entertainment labor organizations in existence today. Like any other labor union, the AFM is based on the idea that through "strength in numbers," or as they put it, "collective empowerment," musicians will have a stronger voice in the workplace.

The AFM is 120,000 members strong and includes artists from every field of musical endeavor. Smitty Smith and all the players in the *Tonight Show* band are AFM members, as is Anton Fig and the whole CBS Orchestra. Metallica and Lars Ulrich are booked on AFM contracts, as are Joey Kramer and Aerosmith. The list of famous AFM members could fill this magazine.

The AFM has 360 branch offices, called "locals," in cities throughout the United States and Canada. These include The Professional Musicians Union Local 47 of Los Angeles and The Associated Musicians Local 802 of Greater New York City. Since each local is run autonomously, the benefits they offer may fluctuate slightly

from branch to branch depending on membership strength.

Major Union Benefits

Though the AFM provides a variety of benefits to its members, the most significant is that they bargain with thousands of employers—record companies, broadcasting and cable companies, motion picture companies, theaters, symphony managements, circuses, and theme parks—to establish fair wages, good working conditions, and fringe benefits. The union enforces these rules and regulations, and it collects payment defaults by the employer when necessary. Here are some of the specific categories they regulate:

Live performances. This includes performance rehearsals, cartage (the cost of transporting your drums and percussion instruments), travel expenses (such as air travel and hotels), travel time (the time it takes to go back and forth from each gig), personal mileage on your vehicle (when using your own car or van to get back and forth to gigs), per diems (daily allowances for food), and holiday payments scales (for performing on New Year's Eve and other holidays).

Recording sessions. This includes major-label recording sessions and some smaller label sessions, as well as live concert recordings, plus television and radio performances, including all commercial advertisements.

Video taping. This includes live concert performances, promotional video shoots such as for MTV and VH1, and performances on live television such as *The Tonight Show*, *Conan O'Brien*, *Saturday Night Live*, and *David Letterman*.

Motion picture performances. This includes on-camera appearances (for instance, the filming of a bar or concert scene in a movie) and off-camera appear-



ances such as a studio recording for a movie soundtrack.

The union also provides health care and retirement benefits for qualifying members. Through the union's health care programs, you will receive medical and hospital benefits (subject to availability at your local branch). If you've ever been sick or injured and incurred costly hospital bills, then you know how important insurance is. Your local may also provide dental plans and prescription drug benefits for qualifying members. And though retirement may seem like a long way off, it's comforting to know that money will be waiting for you—even if you're no longer working in the music business. (You can contact the AFM's nationwide pension department at [800] 833-8065.)

Other Union Benefits

Now that you have a good idea of some of the major benefits you get from joining the AFM, let's take a look at some of the other benefits you receive.

The AFM will monitor the recordings on which you perform and collect residuals if they're used in film, television, and commercials. These payments are called "new use" payments.

Your membership entitles you to special fund payments—additional payments paid to you based on the number of union recording sessions on which you perform in one year.

Your name will be registered in the union's job referral database, offering you new employment opportunities.

The AFM provides limited legal supervision and career development to its members.

In case of problems on the road, or if you have questions about contracts or what you should be paid, the AFM provides 24-hour telephone assistance.

AFM members have access to discounted recording and rehearsal studios.

Insurance for theft and damage to your drums and other instruments is also provided through membership in the AFM. ("The AFM has done a great job at making insurance affordable," says drummer Kenwood Dennard, who has worked with Sting, The Manhattan Transfer, and others.)

By joining the AFM, you'll receive trav-

el discounts, health club discounts, credit card options, loan programs, and mortgage programs.

The AFM also offers you a subscription to their monthly newspaper, *International Musician*, which will keep you up to date on all industry happenings.

Requirements For Membership

In order to receive all of the AFM benefits we've discussed, you'll need to meet certain qualifications. Note that the rates discussed below are subject to change, and they vary from one local to another.

To become a member, you must pay a one-time registration charge of approximately \$200, and about \$180 per year in membership fees.

Members are required to work "union gigs" only. A union gig means that the person or organization for which you work must be a signatory to the union. Your employer is required to pay you at least minimum-scale wages. Your employer must also report all of the gigs in which you work to the union, and make an additional contribution towards your pension and health care fund.

To qualify for a pension, your employer's contributions (typically 10% of the

union's suggested minimum scales) must total \$1,500 each year for five years. You can begin collecting early retirement benefits at age 55, or you can wait and collect higher benefits at the full retirement age of 65.

To qualify for health care, your employer's contributions must reach a minimum dollar amount, usually within six-month periods (from April to September, and October to March). Since contributions and health benefits vary considerably depending on the job performed and on your local union, contact your local branch office for specific details.

You are required to pay union dues of approximately 2.5% of the suggested minimum scale for live performances, and 4% of the suggested minimum wage for recording sessions. Contact your branch office for local rates.

You are encouraged to attend monthly local meetings to discuss current union events, to meet other union members, and to offer input for future policy development.

So, Is Joining The Union Right For You?

Now that you have a good idea of what the AFM provides, and what some of the member requirements are, is joining right

Union To The Rescue

A group of ska musicians from Los Angeles who had only been in the union around three months played a New Year's Eve gig in Florida—and drove there to do it. The group received a bad check for the show, and subsequently their van broke down in Texas on the way home. They got in touch with the AFM, who was able to pursue their claim, help them get their van fixed, and coordinate the whole mess through Local 23 in San Antonio, Texas. Though the band had to endure a lecture from the union about their poor business practices, they seemed to actually welcome it—after all, they were no longer stranded thousands of miles from home. By the way, the promoter subsequently settled up on the bad check. The AFM pursues claims less dramatic than this throughout the country every day.

In another instance, an artist who performed with her band on *Late Night With David Letterman* believed that since her musicians were being paid by Letterman's television production company via the union, she wasn't responsible for paying them for the job as well. She was wrong; under the collective bargaining agreement for video taping, the American Federation of Musicians stipulates that musicians shall receive payment when taped for television appearances. This fee is in addition to the standard wage musicians should receive from their employer for a live performance. As it turns out, all of the musicians in the artist's band were paid. Note: Musicians are also paid "reuse" payments for reruns of a taped performance. The AFM monitors, collects, and pays musicians for these uses.

for you? Keep in mind that the union is most beneficial when you're working union gigs often. This is how you'll qualify for the major benefits, such as the health care and pension funds, and receive the union's assistance in collecting payment defaults. However, there are some things to keep in mind....

Many employers are not union-affiliated, nor are they willing to comply with union requirements. Note that the union's strengths lie mostly in major venue performances, major-label recordings, and television, theatre, orchestral, and motion picture work. "I'm no longer an active member of the AFM," offers Kenwood Dennard. "I requested to change my status to inactive member. This way I maintained a good relationship with the union without having to pay dues. I became an inactive member because I wasn't doing enough of the gigs the AFM specializes in to fully benefit. I was doing more live jazz and pop gigs."

It is not considered "good standing" to accept any non-union gig. Though the union is known to occasionally turn a blind eye and allow you to perform non-union gigs, they may still require you to pay dues

for the job performed. Unions are known to review performance listings in local magazines to police members who are not complying with this rule. Members who are not in good standing may be subject to expulsion.

The musician's job referral database made available through the union is said by many musicians not to be very effective. The competition among members to get the gigs offered is fierce, and unless you're calling your local union office 24-7, there aren't too many gigs that will come your way.

Take The Next Step

Regardless of whether or not you feel that it's time to become a member of the AFM, be sure to at least talk to a representative at your local branch. (You can reach them at [800] 762-3444 or at www.afm.org.) Mark Heter, former head of the division of touring, theaters, booking agent agreements, and immigration matters for the American Federation Musicians in New York City, adds these final words: "Membership is a participatory experience. AFM membership goes beyond paying dues and being taken care of by the union.

By joining, you become a vital part of the union itself, and acquire the empowerment to make positive changes in your own life. Membership is a commitment, not only for the member's personal benefit, but also towards the betterment of everyone else in the union, to make things better for musicians. There is spiritual and personal satisfaction to be found by becoming engaged in the labor movement. The union is here to serve you."

Bobby Borg is the author of The Musician's Handbook: A Practical Guide To Understanding The Music Business, published by Billboard Books. For more information, contact Bobby at

<http://bobbyborg.com> or e-mail to: bborg@earthlink.net.



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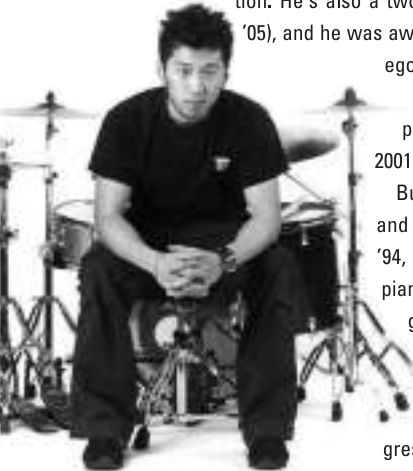
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Joe Babiak

Have you seen this name before?

The name Joe Babiak has been popping up throughout the drumming community over the past few years. In 2000, Joe placed third in the Midwest region of Guitar Center's annual Drum Off competition. He's also a two-time winner of the Heat Strokes Drum Contest ('04, '05), and he was awarded an Honorable Mention in the over-eighteen category of *MD's* 2005 Undiscovered Drummer Contest. You



may also remember his distinctive lime green and purple custom GMS kit that was featured as *MD's* August 2001 *Kit Of The Month*.

But there's more to this drummer's story than contests and flashy kits. Although he's only been drumming since '94, Joe began his musical life at age five, first studying piano, then moving on to trumpet. Because of that background, the transition to drums came easily. And since taking up drums, Joe has played in a variety of settings that run the stylistic gamut from punk to pop.

Joe's current band, Parallel Minds, is a progressive rock trio that features his dexterous and dynamic drumming talents. Canadian label Unicorn Records released their disc, *Colossus ADEA*, in 2005. You can also catch Joe tub-thumping with award-winning rock guitarist Michael Angelo Batio, or laying down funky grooves at the popular Chicago nightclub The Bamboo Room. In addition to performing, Joe teaches privately, and he's an avid songwriter and composer.

Hometown: Arlington Heights, Illinois

Education: 2003 music business graduate of Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Ill

Tools: Custom designed GMS and Tama Starclassic Performer drumsets, Sabian and Zildjian cymbals

More info: www.joebabiak.com, www.parallelmind.com

Ricky Loreck

Finding common ground

Chicago-based drummer Ricky Loreck leads a drumming double life. On one hand, he's a founding member of hard-hitting modern rock band Blackout. Blackout has been tearing up the Midwest rock scene, sharing the stage with such national acts as the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Queens Of The Stone Age, Trapt, Shinedown, Cold, and Collective Soul. They also appeared at the Whiskey A Go-Go in West Hollywood, California for CrüeFest, a benefit concert for Mötley Crüe frontman Vince Neil's late daughter, Skylar Neil. In Blackout, Ricky pounds through raging riffs and soaring vocals with powerful, solid grooves and in-your-face energy that never loses steam.

When he's not touring with Blackout, Ricky spends most of his time in Chicago's hottest dance clubs, providing live percussion for a variety of the scene's top DJs, including Bobby D, DJ Speed, DJ Markski, and Shawn Edwards from VH1 and *Pepsi Smash*. He's also performed for the touring car show Hot Import Nights, and he appeared with German DJ Steve Murano for his first US appearance at the House Of Blues.



Hometown: Elgin, Illinois

Tools: Ricky recently became an endorser for Orange County Drum & Percussion. While he's waiting for his kit to be built, he uses Ludwig drums and a Pearl Chad Smith signature snare. He also uses LP timbales, congas, and bongos, Pearl and LP cowbells, Sabian AA cymbals, Puresound snare wires, ddrum triggers, an Alesis DM Pro module, DW hardware, Vater red wood beaters, Vic Firth sticks, and Evans heads.

More info: www.rickyrocks.com, www.blackoutmusic.com

Jose Duque

Blending borders and crossing boundaries



What do you get when you combine the subtlety of French impressionism with the rhythmic flare of South American culture? Try the recent release, *Gathering In Blue*, by Venezuela-born drummer/composer Jose Duque's RumbaTres. On this disc, Duque combines his Latin American musical upbringing with his acquired tastes for the understated within six original compositions, plus one from guitarist Chris Weisman. Each composition is as reflective as it is propelling, without being forced or melodramatic. The opening track, "Horizonte," will be featured in an independent DVD, entitled *Submission*, by Premier Snowskate Productions.

Duque, who has also been busy performing with Canadian flamenco guitarist James Cohen and world fusion/contemporary jazz group Randy Armstrong Trio, as well as teaching at the Portsmouth Music And Arts Center, has a colorful and expressive approach to the drumset that makes his compositions all the more inviting.

Hometown: Caracas, Venezuela—currently living in Portsmouth, NH

Education: 1997 graduate of the Berklee College Of Music in Boston, MA

Tools: Fortune and Gretsch Catalina Club drumsets, Zildjian, Sabian, and Wuhan cymbals, LP cowbells, LP Giovanni Hidalgo portable conga, Gonalca cajon, Evans drumheads, Vic Firth Peter Erskine signature sticks

More info: www.zumbaotrio.com

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RECORDINGS

Miles Davis

Round About Midnight:
Legacy Edition (Columbia Legacy)

While a reissue of this classic Miles Davis album might not turn the head of every jazz fan, it should, thanks to a second CD of previously unreleased live tracks from the same period. While **CONNIE KAY** lends subtle brush support on a live recording of the title track from 1955, the rest of the second disc contains a concert recorded in California in 1956, and features Davis's now legendary quintet of the time. The recording is excellent, and you can clearly hear **PHILLY JOE JONES'** precise, supportive, and swinging playing. The round thump of his bass drum, crisp snare sound, and simmering ride keep the excitement of the evening escalating, especially on jazz standards "Walkin'," "Woody 'N You," and "Salt Peanuts," which highlights Joe. An excellent document of the Davis group at this time—Philly Joe fans will want to check this out.

Martin Patmos

**Every Time I Die**

Gutter Phenomenon (Ferret)



Every Time I Die are putting the rock back in metal-core. The title of their fourth album is a term that was used to describe rock music in the '50s, and the guys are fans of The Black Crowes, Thin Lizzy, and other purveyors of the classic rock riff. The band also dig helter-skelter arrangements, arty oddness, and hummable melodies. Indeed, there's a lot going on here, especially when it comes to **MIKE "RATBOY" NOVAK's** creative drumming. Whether he's bashing away with metallic fury, laying down super-catchy grooves, or whipping up a storm of weirdness, Novak nails it—and complements the vocal and guitar shenanigans, too. A compelling listen.



Jeff Perlah

Leo Kottke/Mike Gordon

Sixty Six Steps (RCA Victor)



There's already lots of percussion in the meetings between Leo Kottke's acoustic guitar and Mike Gordon's sharp-voiced bass, but the duo nevertheless adds **NEIL SYMONETTE** to the mix for their second LP. The drummer/percussionist makes this a fuller, livelier album than Kottke/Gordon's 2002 debut, *Clone*, choosing carefully from a playground of instruments that includes a warm-sounding, fat-toned kit. Symonette weaves a shaker through the musical spaces and favors a cross-stick on the snare that nestles beautifully next to the guitars. *Steps* was recorded in the Bahamas, which helps explain its breezy, let's-have-a-fruity-drink feel, heavy on island textures with hints of bluegrass and mellow funk.



Michael Parillo

Taking The Reins

New drummer-led releases

Peter Ulrich, *Enter The Mysterium*,
www.citycanyons.com

Gunnar Waage, *Phase Of Matter*,
<http://www.vortex.is/azteka/>

Tom Losowski, *C.V.*,
<http://www.tlosowski.republika.pl/>

Bujo Kevin Jones, *Tenth World*,
www.motema.com



Lighting The Fuse by Mike Haid
**Zawinul Syndicate, Weather Report tribute,
Dave Weckl Band**



At seventy-two, legendary jazz keyboardist Joe Zawinul is still passionately embracing his multi-cultural, electronic-fused musical journeys with a spirited international lineup. On the double-disc *Vienna Nights*, his Syndicate features energized Algerian drummer **KARIM ZIAD** and blazing American **NATHANIEL TOWNSLEY**. (www.bhm-music.de)

On *Mysterious Voyages: A Tribute To Weather Report*, masterful instrumental innovators tastefully perform WR classics and symbiotic original compositions, honoring

fusion's still-reigning royalty. All-star drummers include **CARRINGTON, CHAMBERS, COLAIUTA, COVINGTON, DENNARD, FERRONE, HAKIM, LAKE, MINNEMANN, NUSSBAUM, RICKMAN, SERY, and WILLIAMS** (Tony, that is). (Tone Center)

On *Multiplicity* **DAVE WECKL** continues to perfect his unobtrusive, well-oiled, friendly fusion sound. Easy-to-digest funk/Latin/jazz arrangements with few surprises are infused with Weckl's always-impressive, advanced drumming skills. (Stretch)

Transplants

Haunted Cities (LaSalle/Atlantic)



Transplants, unlike drummer **TRAVIS BARKER**'s more established act, Blink-182, rarely stick to an overriding style. Yet that allows Barker to showcase all sorts of amazing approaches. On "Not Today," featuring Cypress Hill's Sen Dog, Barker busts out crisp, powerful beats that complement the song's punk/rap grit. Then, on "Apocalypse Now," the drummer navigates a techno-y, politically charged romp with drum 'n' bass beats, clanging percussion, and whirlwind rolls. And as **Rob Aston**'s vocals and **Tim Armstrong**'s instrumentation steal the show on "Gangsters And Thugs," Barker's catchy rhythms and experimental chops push things in the right directions. Transplants hardly find a permanent sonic home, but their type of wandering works quite well.

Jeff Perlah

Nicholas D'Amato's Royal Society

Nullius In Verba (Buckyball)



Wayne Krantz's singular guitar voice, honed through years of live work with his own NYC trio, dominates this offering from electric bassist Nicholas D'Amato. "Ratio" has a laid-back, in-the-moment feel, aided in part by the album's stark, lo-fi production. Drummer **JOHN O'REILLY**'s loose snare and playful energy provide ample support throughout the disc's predominantly groove-based fusion writing. O'Reilly takes a fearlessly jagged solo over the odd-metered, melancholy ostinatos of "Extracted," all octopus arms and uninhibited bombast. His spirited playing lacks any self-consciousness, sporting an often missing but welcome ingredient amongst similar highbrow jazz-rock sessions: the element of fun.

Ilya Stemkovsky

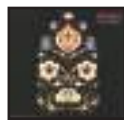
OK Go Oh No (Capitol)



Three years after their groovin', head-bobbing self-titled debut, OK Go have returned with *Oh No*, a decidedly sturdier affair. There's more gusto emanating from the entire ensemble this time around. Drummer **DAN KONOPKA** in particular digs in a little harder, with washy crashes and a satisfying if sometimes looser approach to the overall beat. The subtle tom hits on the chorus of "Here It Goes Again" break things up nicely without much fuss, and the dead kit on "Oh Lately It's So Quiet" elicits a late-'70s radio pop ambience that feels just fine here. Fun, funky, and familiar, OK Go get the party started with *Oh No*.

Waleed Rashidi

Dungen Ta Det Tugnt (Kemado)



Channeling The Small Faces and early Jimi Hendrix, Sweden's Dungen are a psychedelic hybrid of instrumental burn and shimmering pop songcraft. Drummer **FREDRIK BJORLING** summons Keith Moon and Mitch Mitchell in equal doses, his booming, wide-open drums chugging with pointed ride cymbal power on Zeppelin-worthy opener "Panda" and the cacophonous bounce and jumble of "Festival."

Leader/guitarist **Gustav Ejstes** handles the rest of the drumming, and though more of a grunt-and-groin player, he gets the job done.

Ken Micallef

Collapsar Collapsar (Escape Artist)



Complex linear riffs and rhythms are what these guys are about, but with the raw sound of some underground act. The trio, made up of two guitarists and drummer **BRETT JUDICE**, navigates complicated and unpredictable structures with ease. The instrumental material holds together quite well, however, loaded with interesting ideas and dark moods. Judice focuses his playing on bass and snare patterns, which can be quite interesting at times and feature plenty of speed and aggression when necessary. Often the drummer mirrors the complex guitar lines, setting up and supporting their odd rhythms while holding things down. The group's raw-progressive approach is fresh, strong, and invigorating, and will have you counting along in no time. (www.escapeartistrecords.com)

Martin Patmos

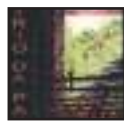
Trio Bobo (VideoRadio)



Trio Bobo is a wonderful example of less being more—and for that matter, the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. It's amazing hearing these three musicians—drummer **CHRISTIAN MEYER**, guitarist **Alessio Menconi**, and bassist **Faso**—orchestrating on the spot, listening, feeling, playing off each other like an electric version of the Keith Jarrett Trio. Meyer's instinctive, understated style—with a feel that's part Stewart Copeland and part Brian Blade—fits well with his dramatic use of sounds. Opener "Drama In Jamaica" flows from light reggae-funk, to avant-garde space, to high-grade rock, and it all sits well in the pocket. "Faso Tabarin" is a classy one-minute marvel, "Acid Bobo" is a celebration of inside-outing, and "Calcutta's Joy" is a playful wink at fusion pioneers like Mahavishnu Orchestra.

Robin Tolleson

Trio Da Paz Somewhere (Blue Toucan Music)



Individually, they've backed legends. But these ace players shine brightest in their base of fifteen years. Rich, lyrical, and fueled with intricate yet seamless rhythms, the group brings effortless interplay to Brazilian jazz. On *Somewhere*, acoustic guitarist **Romero Lubambo**, bassist **Nilson Matta**, and ace drummer **DUDUKA DA FONSECA** put their sensual spin on standards from both worlds. While odd choices like "Ding Dong The Witch Is Dead" and the 3/4 maracatu groove on "Take Five" could have smacked of gimmickry, the trio's treatments are surprisingly winning. Duduka delivers irresistible groove and remarkable touch and musicality; check out his brisk, popping brushwork on "Bebel (Samba Novo)." Pure class. (www.bluetoucanmusic.com)

Jeff Potter

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Jazz

The Ripple Effect

Hybrids (Golden Beams)

Steve Lehman

Demian As Posthuman (Pi)

Sherrie Maricle & The Diva Jazz Orchestra

TNT: A Tommy Newsom Tribute (Lightyear)

MULTI-MEDIA

Terry Bozzio And

Chad Wackerman D2: Duets Volume Two (DW DVD)

level: all, \$39.95



Frank Zappa drumming alumni Terry Bozzio and Chad Wackerman are captured live in the studio here, performing their improvised acoustic drumset duets for Drum Workshop's recently created production company. The ageless duo demonstrate dynamic, musical, attentive communication skills as they orchestrate melodic, rhythmic, percussive soundscapes and display advanced compositional skills within a highly evolved rhythmic context. Creative, multiple camera angles and digital 5.1 surround sound add to the artistic flavor of this excellent production. Bozzio and Wackerman also discuss their improvisational concepts, drumkit setups, and musical influences. Caveat: DW inserts shameless promo footage. **Mike Haid**

Niacin Live In Tokyo (Eagle Vision)

level: all, \$11.98



This unlikely trio comes *close* to making magic happen on this seemingly low-budget concert production. Though charismatic, omnipresent **DENNIS CHAMBERS** and animated rock bass legend **Billy Sheehan** provide an emotionally powerful backdrop for this instrumental progressive/fusion performance, Hammond B3 organist **John Novello** doesn't provide enough sound, energy, or improvisational skills for the rhythm section to explore its true potential. Most of the time, Chambers seems...well...bored. Occasionally he unleashes some deadly chops, but inevitably he slips back into a fairly reserved mood. Maybe it's that the music sounds and feels too controlled, organized, and inside-the-box for a live fusion performance. Regardless, *something* is missing here, keeping this DVD from being a must-have. **Mike Haid**

Independence Part II:

A Giant Step by Chris Brien (independent)

level: intermediate to advanced, \$59.95



Australian drumming whiz Chris Brien crams a lifetime of advanced drumming knowledge into this three-disc set, sharing five hours of countless exercises in a variety of styles. Brien has effortlessly mastered his ten (!) Sonor Giant Step pedal setup, some of which are hooked up to Latin percussion. His personable and relaxed teaching approach is easy to follow as he discusses and performs his multi-layered groove concepts and four-way independence exercises. Tons of special features, downloads, and bonus footage make this a worthwhile investment for drummers interested in advancing to the super-chops level. (www.chrisbrien.com) **Mike Haid**

Of Further Interest

A few cool DVD/CD packages came down the pike recently. Devo's *Live 1980* is a dual disc—video on one side, audio on the other—documenting the band in full “Whip It”—era regalia. A quarter century later, drummer **ALAN MYERS'** playing seems almost as unique and intense as his band's infamous videos. (MVD)

Speaking of unique and intense, **ZACH HILL** and Spencer Seim, aka Hella, have dropped *Concentration Face/Homeboy* on us, a swell live-in-Japan DVD/studio CD two-fer. Zach's non-stop hand-foot seizures and

Seim's wall-of-noise guitar nearly freeze the Japanese kids lucky enough to get close to the stage. But it's the super-distorted studio stuff on the CD that really makes a statement. (Kill Rock Stars/SAC)

Finally, The Dead Kennedys' debut album, *Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables*, featuring the drumming of **TED** (Bruce Slesinger), has been reissued with an excellent companion documentary. (Manifesto)

Poncho Sanchez

Fundamentals Of Latin Music For The Rhythm Section (Cherry Lane)

level: all, \$24.95



This is a no-nonsense, totally pro look at the Latin rhythm section, hosted by the supremely qualified Poncho Sanchez. A great learning tool, *Fundamentals* is a must-see for anyone interested in forming or polishing up a Latin band. Sanchez has led his own “little big band” virtually ever since his tenure in vibist Cal Tjader's group in the 1970s. Here he begins with mambo, explaining the role of congas, bongos (played by **Sal Vasquez**), cowbells, and timbales (courtesy **George Ortiz**). The players explain how each instrument relates to the others, and how the different parts blend together. In addition, the evolution and role of the bass guitar is explained by **Rene Camacho**, emphasizing the tumbao. And as they move on to cover Afro-Cuban 6/8, cha cha cha, and merengue, pianist **David Torres** shows how different soloists in the band are given specific montunos and comps to solo over. **Robin Tolleson**

Cream

Royal Albert Hall, London May 2-3-5-6, 2005 (Rhino)



This reunion of one of rock's seminal trios is unfortunately a case of lost opportunity. **GINGER BAKER** delivers an uneven performance on this double DVD set, dropping beats, fumbling cues, mismanaging trademark parts (such as the snare rolls in “Deserted Cities Of The Heart”), and generally sounding tired. Baker does groove hard on “Born Under A Bad Sign” and “Rollin And Tumblin,” then wastes his own “Pressed Rat And Warthog” with sloppy timing. Oddly enough, his performance of “Toad” is better than the original, Baker bashing his toms with a newfound logic that evades the rest of the set. **Ken Micallef**

Maroon 5

Live Friday The 13th (Octone/J Records)



If you want to know what all the hype is about with Maroon 5, check out this live DVD/CD. Filmed and recorded beautifully in both picture and 5.1 sound (with the drums mixed up front), the two-disc set features a recent live performance at the Santa Barbara Bowl, as well as behind-the-scenes footage. Regular drummer **RYAN DUSICK** (who hasn't been performing with the band due to an injury) is shown in the early bonus footage, as well as watching the band from the sidelines while tour drummer **MATT FLYNN** does a stellar job executing Ryan's beats and grooves. A big part of Maroon's sound is beat-driven and groove-oriented, and Matt really

lays into it, making the band feel good on every track—especially “Sweetest Goodbye,” where he lays it down nicely with just a shaker and kick before slamming into a full beat. Great work by all involved.

Billy Amendola



To hear many of the artists reviewed in this month's *Critique*, be sure to tune in to

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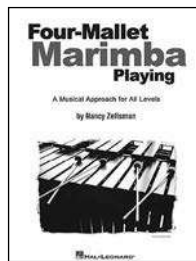


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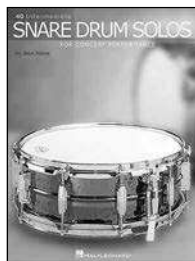


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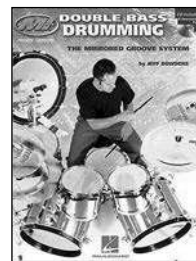


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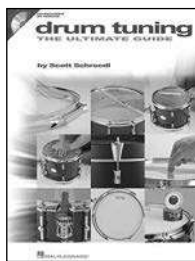


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From The Old Country

Two Companies From Italy Are Currently Offering Unique Custom Drums

Di Berardino Drums

Di Berardino Drums are claimed to offer "unique sonorous, technical, and aesthetic characteristics." A special cable tuning system allows both heads on a drum to be uniformly tuned in less than ten seconds, from the top of the drum. A quick-release head system is also employed.

Drums are available in two series: Prestige (stave construction) and Classic (ply). Shells are 8 mm thick, with 45° bearing edges. All standard drum sizes are available. Gloss or satin transparent finishes allow the grain of the wood to show through. Colors include ebony, red, yellow, emerald green, and Prussian blue; custom colors are also available. The finishes are offset by the gold-plated wheels involved in the cable tuning system. Toms and snares feature 5-mm steel rims tapered toward the inside; bass drums come equipped with maple hoops. Toms come with Remo Ambassador batters and Diplomat resonant heads. The bass drum is fitted with a PowerStroke 3 batter and an Ebony front logo head.



The snare drum features a special snare system that utilizes twenty coiled strands supported by a center coil that passes from one side of the strainer to the other. This is said to ensure a clean sound even at low dynamic levels.

www.diberardinodrums.com.

Drum Art Snare Drums And Drumsticks



Drum Art snare drums are hand-crafted by percussionist/builder Silvano Biancucci. Shells are made of 3 cm-thick solid wood staves, joined together using a peg made of the same material. This construction method is said to make the shell a "strong, powerful resonance box, able to greatly amplify the snare head vibrations." Different sounds are achieved according to the types of wood used. Those woods include olive, maple, walnut, padouk, cherry, imbuja, and pine.

Drums also feature MicronTune precision strainers, solid aluminum lugs designed to favor

shell vibrations, stainless-steel tension rods, and plastic rod spacers. All (except one signature model) feature Purecusson snare wires. Available dimensions include 12", 13", and 14" diameters, and 4" through 8" depths.

Drum Art also offers precision-crafted drumsticks in five different models. Four models are offered in hickory and maple; one model is available in ebony, palisander, rosewood, and other exotic woods.

www.drumart.it.



Decisions...Decisions Peace Paragon Pro Choice Drumkits

Peace Drums is offering their Paragon Custom kits with a new Pro Choice option. Drummers can create their kits from Paragon 9-ply hard rock Canadian maple shells, in any color, size, and configuration they can think of.

(626) 581-4510, www.peacedrum.com.

Kilt Not Included Premier HTS 350 Pipe Band Snare Drum

Premier Percussion's new HTS 350 pipe band snare drum has been designed to offer student players the performance and projection of Premier's high-end HTS 700 pipe band snare. The HTS 350 features the HTS 700's 6-mm/6-ply shell construction, but with a "downsized" 7x14 birch shell for reduced weight and improved carrying comfort. The HTS 350 is said to offer this comfort without compromising on sound quality, snare response, or articulation.

The HTS 350 also incorporates Premier's "free floating" shell design, which the manufacturer says eliminates sound restriction and heightens projection, tone, and clarity. The drum is available with a wide selection of finish options, and comes fitted with new Cybermax drumheads by Remo. List price is \$805 for standard finishes and \$940 for premium finishes.

(781) 659-4969, www.premier-percussion.com.



Getting Personal With Dennis Zildjian Dennis Chambers Artist Collection Stick Bag

Zildjian and Dennis Chambers have combined to create an Artist Collection stick bag that reflects Dennis's style and personality. The bag features a repeating DC pattern, as well as a large DC on one side and Dennis's signature embroidered on the other. The vibrant yellow color is reminiscent of Dennis's favorite kit.

For drummers who prefer to lean their bag against their floor tom, two loops are designed to secure a drumstick across the open bag to prevent it from collapsing. The carrying handle, shoulder strap, hardware, and tom ties are all finished in black. List price is \$39.95.

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



Death Of The Click Track? The Laser Metronome

The makers of the Laser Metronome believe that their new timing device may force click tracks into obscurity. Instead of a blinking light or audible signal, the Laser Metronome swings a laser beam back and forth at the desired tempo, providing a timing reference much more like that of a human conductor. By following a continuous visual cue, musicians have more freedom to let their time "breathe" a bit, without feeling like they're fighting a click track.

For studio use, the Laser Metronome is capable of communicating via MIDI, and is usually slaved to the recording hardware. For live performance or rehearsals, the Laser Metronome has a program mode with forty-eight storage locations for tempos, which can be cycled through using a standard footswitch. List price is \$129.99.

(978) 270-3193, www.lasermetronome.com.



Tie That Sound In A Bow Nady Ribbon Mic's

Nady Systems has added four new models to its line of ribbon mic's. In addition to the original RSM-2 (\$249.95), the line now also includes the RSM-1 (\$199.95), RSM-3 (\$359.95), RSM-4 (\$399.95), and RSM-5 (\$379.95). All five models offer the sound of a classic ribbon (velocity) mic', but each is designed differently for better suitability in specific applications. The RSM-4 is particularly recommended for miking instruments; the RSM-3 is a great ambient mic'; the RSM-1 and RSM-5 are best for use in applications requiring a compact mic'. The original RSM-2 is well suited for all-purpose ribbon-mic' applications.

All models feature a low-tension aluminum ribbon design and "large, mellow" audio reproduction, with extended low and high ends. They also are said to have fast, accurate transient response, ultra-high SPL capability, and "overall stunning realism." According to Nady, the affordability of the entire RSM Series could allow studios to acquire all five models for about the same cost as most competitive single units.

(510) 652-2411, www.nadywireless.com.



The Reference Shelf

Take It To The Street: A Study In New Orleans Street Beats And Second-Line Rhythms As Applied To Funk

by Stanton Moore (Carl Fischer)

This book/CD package is a follow-up to Stanton Moore's



DVDs *A Traditional Approach To New Orleans Drumming* and *A Modern Approach To New Orleans Drumming*. The book is an instructional guide to New Orleans street beats. In it, Moore teaches the reader how to "play between the cracks," bring more originality, inflection, and variation to a groove, and infuse a

Crescent City flavor into linear drumming. With *Take It To The Street* drummers will learn how to apply the cultural flair of second-line, mambo, guaguanco, shuffle, and samba rhythms to their funk technique. List price is \$19.95.

(212) 777-0900, www.carlfischer.com.

Brazilian Rhythms For The Drumset

by Henrique C. De Almeida (Carl Fischer)

This instructional book/CD package offers an in-depth look at Brazil's bossa nova and samba rhythms, including their cultural origins and their role in Brazilian society. Henrique



C. De Almeida offers written and audio instruction, providing drummers with the tools they need to successfully incorporate these styles into their own drumset techniques. One CD contains examples of the grooves; the other offers a play-along session with The Brazilian Jazz Project. List price is \$29.95.

(212) 777-0900, www.carlfischer.com.

Drumming Up New Houses

Spectrasonics New Orleans Strut Benefit Loop Collection



Spectrasonics has released the *New Orleans Strut* mini drum loop collection to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina. All sales proceeds will go to Habitat For Humanity's effort to build homes for hurricane victims in New Orleans and Mississippi (www.habitat.org).

The loop collection includes grooves by **Abe Laboriel Jr.** (Paul McCartney), **Alex Acuña** (Weather Report, Whitney Houston), **Billy Ward** (Joan Osborne), **Gregg Bissonette** (Ringo Starr), **John Ferraro** (Steve Morse, Aaron Neville), **Bob Wilson** (George Benson, Herbie Hancock), and **Eric Boseman** (Liquid Grooves, Justo Almarino). Included are authentic jazz, blues, Cajun, zydeco, funk, and second-line feels.

Drumkit loops, brush loops, and unique percussion loops (oil cans, refrigerator lids, and spoons) are included. None of the performances have been released before.

The loop library is available in several formats, including Groove Control activated S.A.G.E. format for Spectrasonics, Stylus RMX groove instrument plug-in, Apple Loops format for Apple GarageBand/Logic users, and also as standard audio loops in AIFF/WAV formats, which can be used in nearly any audio application.

This special New Orleans benefit collection is available exclusively via Internet download through Spectrasonics' Web site: <http://techshop.spectrasonics.net>. Because of its large size (approximately 100 Mb per format), a broadband Internet connection is required. The price is \$25.

www.spectrasonics.net/neworleans/color.

Solid Sounds

Luka Percussion Solid-Shell Drumkits

Luka Percussion now offers solid-shell drumkits in maple, oak, beech, and ash. Each shell is crafted from a cross-section of a log, and all of the shells in a given kit are made entirely from the same tree. LuKa currently offers drums from 8" to 22" in diameter, in all conventional depths. A five-piece kit has a street price near \$4,750 US, with delivery in six to eight weeks.

(514) 295-1981, www.LuKaPercussion.com.



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www.thecdseller.com.

GIGSKINZ offers the GSDRUM5 standard five-piece drum bag set. The bags are crafted with Gigskinz' water-resistant high-carbon fiber style material, and they feature plush fur lining to protect their contents. The GSDRUM5 bags also feature a Gigskinz dragon screen on the side for a stylish look. Each bag comes with a lockable zipper, a high-tech rubber carrying handle, and a padded shoulder strap. List price is \$159.99.

▶ www.gigskinz.com.



The Clash *London Calling*

Topper Headon (dr, vcls), Joe Strummer, Mick Jones (gtr, vcls), Paul Simonon (bs, vcls)

Though their first two albums certainly made an impact in their native England and among some converts in the States, global domination seemed quite elusive for the Clash in 1979, especially considering their being widely hailed as “the only band that matters.” To add insult to injury, the band was heavily in debt and had just split with their long-time manager, who had in turn taken the keys to their rehearsal space/ headquarters with him.

Never ones to throw in the towel when the going got tough, The Clash responded by hunkering down in the upper room of a London auto shop and hammering out the songs that would comprise the bulk of album number three. When the band moved to Wessex studios and began recording with legendary eccentric producer Guy Stevens, they knew their very future was on the line. They emerged with *London Calling*—a blister-

ing nineteen-song musical manifesto that stands as a serious contender for “greatest rock and roll album of all time” honors.

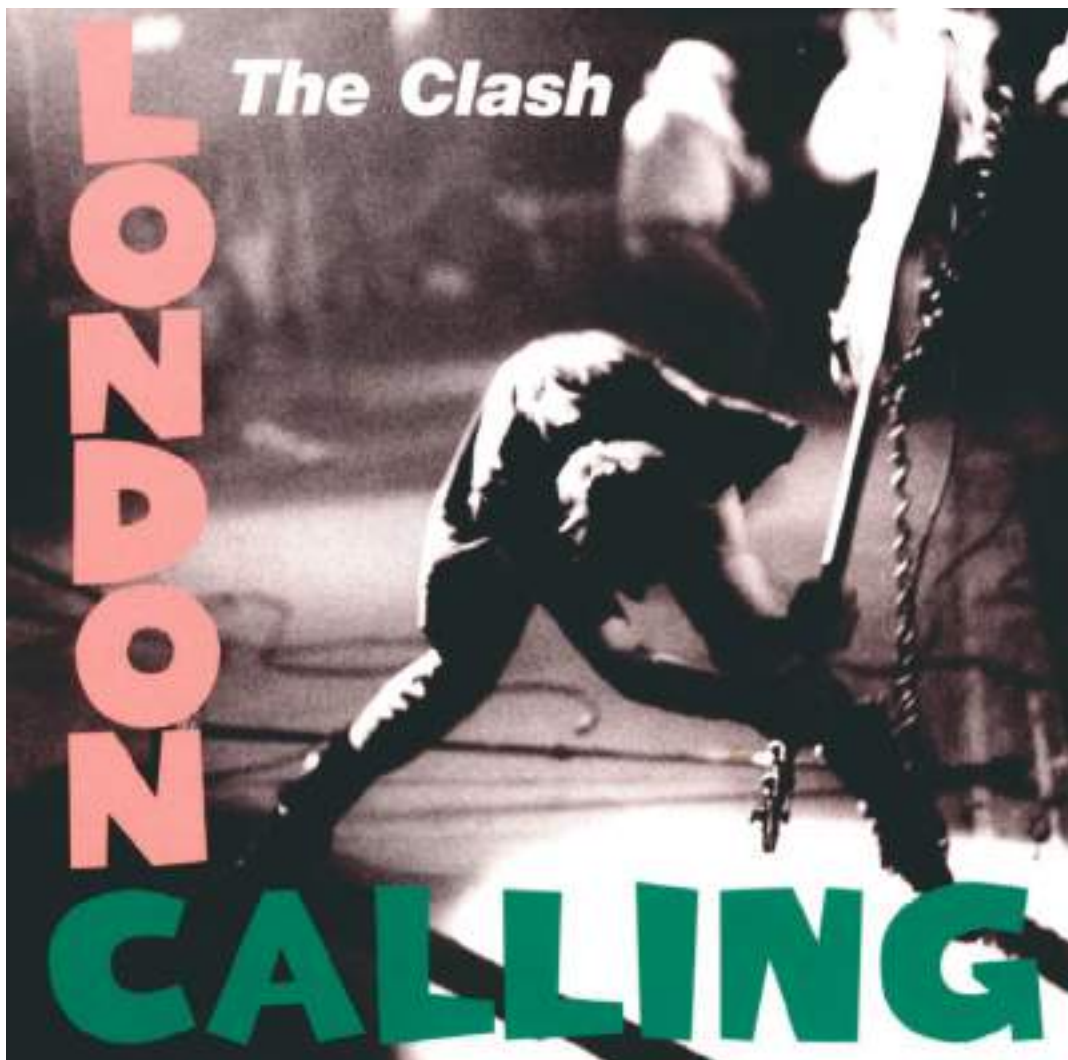
Three things immediately impress upon first listen to *London Calling*—the crisp, timelessness of its sound (thanks in large part to engineer Bill Price); the incredible variety of musical styles it shows the



Clash tackling; and the extraordinary confidence the band displays throughout. Much of the credit for The Clash’s evolution from three-chord punk purveyors to world-class rock band rests squarely on the shoulders of drummer Nicholas “Topper” Headon. Although Clash founders Mick Jones, Joe Strummer, and Paul Simonon had often expressed a profound love for reggae, ska, rockabilly, and Motown, it took the arrival of Headon (just after the release of their self-titled debut album) to carry them to the level where they could actually *execute* such disparate styles. Headon’s performances on tracks like the barnstorming rocker “Clampdown,” the R&B-flavored “Train In Vain,” and the ska-infused “Revolution Rock” show why he must be considered not only one of the foremost drummers to emerge from the punk/new wave scene, but one of the best and most versatile rock drummers of all time.

Sadly, Headon would find himself dismissed from The Clash in mid-’82, but not before writing and recording—almost single-handedly—the band’s biggest single, “Rock The Casbah.”

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UP & COMING

30 SECONDS TO MARS'
SHANNON

Ba



As LA-based rock band 30 Seconds To Mars brings its emotionally exhilarating, aurally bombastic, sweat-drenched set to a close at New York City's Irving Plaza, lead singer Jared Leto announces that the band will shortly be signing merchandise in the lobby. Fifteen minutes later, enthusiastic fans surge and press against the table stacked with T-shirts and CDs that separates them from Jared and his bandmates. There's no doubt that Leto's poster-boy good looks and high profile as an actor in films such as *Requiem For A Dream* and *Fight Club* gave this band a jump-start on popularity before the group proved it was the real deal musically.

To that end, there's an equal swell of passionate fans gathered around Jared's brother, drummer Shannon Leto. From snatches of overheard conversation, many of his admirers are fellow drummers waiting for a chance to swap tips with a player they consider a primary inspiration.

JARED LETO

MUSIC INSTINCT

story by Gail Worley
photos by Paul La Raia

Shannon Leto

Entirely self-taught, Leto is a fluid, Bonham-inspired hard hitter with the frenetic energy of Morgan Rose and an explorative, adventurous side that has drawn comparisons to Josh Freese. Leto's feel for what works within the song may sound technically calculated, but the drummer will be the first to tell you it's all done through instinct and emotion.

Asked why he's waiting to meet

Shannon, a teenage fan wearing a 30 Seconds To Mars T-shirt immediately responds with, "I'm a drummer. For three years I've *worshipped* this band, and I've listened to and analyzed the beats that Shannon creates, building the framework of the music. I am continually in awe of him." Another fan, holding a pair of sticks he hopes Shannon will sign, says, "Since I quit drum lessons, everything I know I

learned from Shannon. Listening to his rhythms gives me ideas and makes me want to drum. Shannon has been the most influential musician in my life."

Shannon's skill level, artistic sensibilities, and disciplined work ethic also impressed studio legend Bob Ezrin, who produced 30 Seconds To Mars' 2002 self-titled debut. "Shannon is one of the most inventive drummers I've worked with," Ezrin offers. "He isn't satisfied with simply adding a beat; his drum parts are an integral part of the *orchestration* of the record. He's also a great live drummer who is lots of fun to watch, with a presence and energy level that are mesmerizing."

The Leto brothers have played music together since they were quite young. (Shannon began playing drums at age eight.). But they got serious about 30 Seconds To Mars in 1996, when bassist Matt Wachter joined the group. "We started playing out because we wanted to share the experience of our music," says Shannon. "And to *really* share that, we wanted to make a record."

After being courted by several labels, the band signed to Virgin Records in 1999. 30

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Seconds To Mars' first album drew a heavy influence from classic progressive rock bands like Pink Floyd, with a healthy dose of synth-rock thrown in to complement the songs' space-age themes and Jared's intense vocal delivery. With the addition of new guitarist Tomo Milicevic, the group's 2005 sophomore disc, *A Beautiful Lie*, swaps most of the heavy keyboards for multiple layers of guitar, all buttressed against Shannon's immense backbeat.

Speaking of *A Beautiful Lie*, Shannon is most excited about the amount of creative freedom afforded the band in the studio. "Our producer, Josh Abraham [Velvet Revolver, Korn, Linkin Park], helped us strip the songs down and get more to the point," he explains. "Because all my brother and I know how to do is write seven- to twelve-minute songs. But overall, he was fairly hands-off on the production. I'm really grateful to be in a band where we can write and play the type of music we want. It took three years to record *Beautiful Lie*, and so much has happened within the band growth-wise during that time. The record is all about the exciting possibilities we see for our music going forward."

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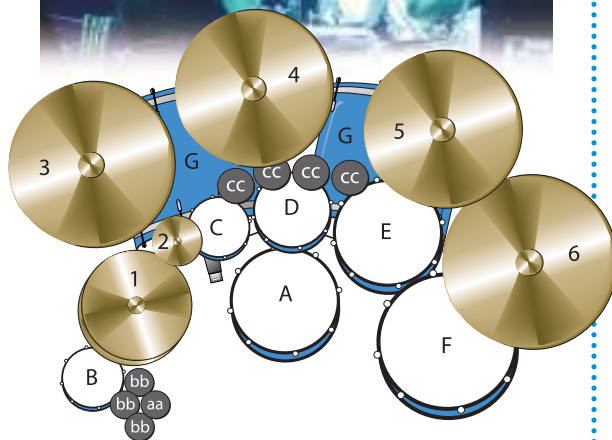
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Shannon Leto

MD: As a self-taught drummer, how did you develop your chops?

Shannon: Honestly, I just watch, listen, pick things up, and incorporate what works for the song naturally, just from listening to so much music growing up. As a kid, I went through a couple of years of listening to records through my headphones and drumming along. But I'd get frustrated because I wanted to do my own thing.

I was never much for school or studying, and I've never watched any instructional DVDs or had formal lessons. When I'm playing drums, I really go on feel and what seems right, what the best groove is for the song, and how the guitar or the vocals move me. Then I plant what I feel should be planted within the song. For the past several years I've learned to be a bit more patient and really figure out what I'm going to do ahead of time. That shows up on *A Beautiful Lie*, because I wanted to make things a little simpler and easier to groove with. Our first record was all about the emotional purging I was going through, whereas this one is a little more controlled.

MD: Have you been in a situation where a lack of formal training put you at a disadvantage?

Shannon: Yes. Before 30 STM got off the

ground, I was doing a little jazz workshop at a community center in Virginia. I've always been in touch with the feeling of playing, but I wasn't great at reading music. I did one season with them, and the next time I went up to audition they had sheet music for me. I went in there and the song they had for me to play was "Owner Of A Lonely Heart." I was so embarrassed that I didn't know how to read it. Obviously, I didn't get the gig. When I was playing in that workshop, although I'd never studied jazz, I knew what to do from listening to the drummers from Spyro Gyra and Steely Dan, so it worked out—until I had a chart in front of me.

MD: Since you've learned so much by listening, who are some of your favorite drummers?

Shannon: There are so many—and for so many different reasons. I love the groove that John Bonham sets. With Stewart Copeland, I love all of the intricacies that he puts in his songs and his reggae-type feel. I love how spontaneous Keith Moon was with his drumming. With Nick Mason from Pink Floyd, I love the space he allows in a song and the way he just lets the song breathe. I love Lars Ulrich's early stuff,

what he did on *Kill 'Em All* was insane. The Cure's drummer, Boris Williams, who played on the albums *Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me* and *Disintegration*, had a great tone. I also liked his choices and his overall creativity.

I also like some jazz drummers and studio cats like Jim Keltner and Steve Gadd, who both drummed on tracks from Steely Dan's *Aja* and Donald Fagen's *Night Fly*. Another band that I'm a huge fan of is Yes, and I love both Alan White and Bill Bruford's playing. They're different, but their mastery of odd time signatures and the crazy layers of sound they add during the recording process is amazing.

MD: What's your triggering situation live? Are you using fewer electronics now than you were a few years ago?

Shannon: I still love electronics. I love the sounds that we create, and I use a lot of electronics so I can play everything live. I have eight pads throughout my kit, and each one of them triggers a sound we came up with. I like to use the electronics along *with* my acoustic drums because it makes the music a little bigger. I'm not a fan of playing to tapes or to a loop. Right now I want to trigger everything, because I think it

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makes the music less robotic. I don't want to be a slave to technology and have to worry about the tape malfunctioning. It does take a lot of practice to learn to do things organically and not rely on a tape, DAT, or Pro Tools.

MD: You must practice a lot.

Shannon: Oh, yeah. But I'm *really* bad at practicing on my own, because I get bored, so I need to have the band around me. I do a lot of my practicing with the band in rehearsals, which go for six or seven hours a day—no exaggeration—whether it's all of us or just me with our guitarist or bass player or with Jared singing and playing guitar. Rehearsing that much has helped to build up my stamina and make my playing more precise.

MD: You've played Sonor drums for years. Do you have a favorite drum or a favorite part of your kit?

Shannon: I love the tone of my snare drum, which is a 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x14 wooden Sonor Designer series. When I'm riding on the rim, doing these weird little things that I do, I love the twang-y sound it makes. The drum holds up really well and takes such a beating, because I beat the hell out of my drums. That snare drum is also *really* versatile; I can tune it low and it sounds great or I can tune it high and it sound amazing. It's just a great, versatile drum.

MD: You were very fortunate to work with producer Bob Ezrin on the band's first CD. What did you learn from him about playing drums?

Shannon: I learned *so* much from Bob. When I met him I'd been listening to *The*

"I DO A LOT OF MY PRACTICING WITH THE BAND IN REHEARSALS, WHICH GO FOR SEVEN HOURS A DAY. REHEARSING THAT MUCH HAS HELPED TO BUILD UP MY STAMINA."

Wall nonstop for years, so I thought he'd be this hippie guy with a free-flowing attitude—but he was the complete opposite of what I expected. [laughs] I met him in a restaurant in LA, and he walked up wearing an Oxford shirt and khaki pants and he was very put together. At the same time, his musicianship and the way he thinks about music blows my mind. After talking to him for a while, it makes sense that he produced *The Wall*.

The most important thing Bob taught me was to keep a groove going. Let me make a reference to the song "Fallen," from our first record. It was on the upbeat and then he came in and said, "Why don't you just try to play it more 2 and 4?" We went back and forth on that for a while. Finally I played it the way he suggested. I ended up falling in love with that song, and now it's one of my favorite songs to play live.

That was the first time I ever took anyone's suggestion about how to play something, and because I did, that tune just grooves a little bit more. Instinctively I want to go all over the place. Bob taught me to be more in the pocket.

MD: Often, you're all about off beats, where you avoid hitting 2 and 4 in the

same measure on the snare. Why is that?

Shannon: I like the offbeat stuff because it goes with different instruments during different parts of the song, making them more interesting to play. I like to play with the vocals and add a couple of beats, *and* I like to add a couple

of beats with guitar changes or with the bass change. There's something to be said about playing 2 and 4, though, because it gets people's heads moving. There's a time and place for everything, and I just try to tastefully put the beats where they belong.

I don't think that 30 Seconds To Mars sounds like any other band, and that can be a double-edged sword. But we're only doing what we know how to do. I want to create music that our band is in love with and that we enjoy playing. What comes next is pleasing our audience. We've always been into taking risks and challenging ourselves. Jared does that with the films he makes, and we do that with our songs. As far as making our music more pop or more radio friendly, that's not going to happen.

It makes me feel good when fans that are also musicians tell me I'm a source of inspiration to them. That definitely reinforces the desire to be more educated about what exactly it is that I'm doing. Then again, the mystery is cool to me as well. I love abstract art and I'm a big fan of progressive rock, because it's the mystery of things that I'm really in love with.



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ProgPower USA VI

ProgPower USA VI, held September 16–17 at Earthlink Live in Atlanta, featured ten top progressive metal acts from eight countries. The event began with melodic thrash metal from Denmark's Manticora. Drummer **Mads Volf** displayed solid double bass work with strong single-stroke fills. Next up, Circus Maximus, from Norway, played impressive, technically advanced prog metal, with **Truls Haugen** contributing fluent chops and excellent dynamics.

Israel's Orphaned Land mixed Middle Eastern rhythms with progressive metal melodies. **Avi Diamond's** versatile, technically adept drumming stood out as a rhythmic highlight. Next, Norway's Conception provided powerful melodic metal, with hard-driving **Arve Haimdal** laying down a strong groove and rock-solid time.

Day one closer Angra, from Brazil, combined native rhythms with traditional prog metal to create a truly original sound. The amazing **Aquiles Priester** displayed speed, power, advanced polyrhythmic techniques, and ambidextrous hand skills.

Day two started off with Stride—the only American band of the festival. **Matt Kanzler** brought a relaxed, in-the-pocket groove to their blazing traditional prog metal. Then Symphorce, from Germany, played melodic prog metal. **Sascha Sauer** provided comfortable, flowing chops with notable double bass work.

Another German band, Pink Cream 69, offered classic melodic metal. **Kosta Zafirov's** strong groove was reminiscent of original Judas Priest drummer Dave Holland. Swedish dark metal masters Therion then displayed a gothic approach, complete with operatic vocals and the heavy grooves of **Petter Karlsson**.

The festival concluded with Finland's Stratovarius. The band's traditional style was powered by **Jorg Michael's** thunderous double bass drumming and precision grooves.

Most drummers shared a huge double bass kit supplied by festival sponsors Pacific Drums And Percussion, Sabian cymbals, Evans drumheads, and Shure microphones. ProgPower is a rare chance

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Story and photos by Mike Haid



Truls Haugen of Circus Maximus



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Meinl Drum Festival

The first Meinl Drum Festival took place this past September 10 at Meinl's headquarters in Gutenstetten, Germany. Approximately 1,000 enthusiastic drummers and percussionists from all over Europe enjoyed a day full of drums and drumming. Performing artists included **Ron van Stratum**, **Amel Serra**, **Benny Greb** (Jerobeam), **Phil Maturano**, **Roland Peil** (Fanta 4), **Johnny Rabb** (Super Action Heroes), **Mike Terrana** (Rage), **Shauney Baby** (Hilary Duff), and **Thomas Lang**.

In addition to the performances, the day featured hands-on workshops offered by percussionists **Mark Essien** and **Charly Boeck**. Guided tours of Meinl's fully operating cymbal factory were conducted, and the full range of Meinl cymbals was available for testing. Exclusive video footage of the festival is on www.meinlcymbals.com. The next Meinl Drum Festival will take place on September 9, 2006.



Thomas Lang



Johnny Rabb



Benny Greb



Amel Serra



Shauney Baby



Mike Terrana

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Concert For Lissa

This past September 10, a large segment of the musical community gathered at Phoenix, Arizona's Celebrity Theater to assist photographer Lissa Wales with her staggering medical bills as she battled leukemia. The event was spearheaded by **Troy Luccketta**, drummer for Tesla.

The evening's roster included drummers **Carmine Appice** (Vanilla Fudge), **Billy Ashbaugh** (ex-NSYNC), **Jimmy DeGrasso** (ex-Megadeth), **Dom Famularo**, **Steve Ferrone** (Tom Petty), **David Garibaldi** (Tower Of Power), **Ken Mary**, **Dom Moio** (Cinco De Moio), **Mark Schulman** (Cher), **Denny Seiwell** (ex-Paul McCartney), **Danny Seraphine** (ex-Chicago), **Chad Smith** (Red Hot Chili Peppers), and **Ian Wallace** (ex-King Crimson). The night also saw performances by Glenn Hughes (Deep Purple), Nils Lofgren, Brandon Reid Allen, Jeff Keith and Frank Hannon (Tesla), Ronnie Montrose, and David Ellefson, who all came to give from their hearts.

Many of the performers spoke of Lissa, offering their regards and support. Prerecorded messages from Paul McCartney, **Ringo Starr**, and **Zoro** (ex-Lenny Kravitz) were also played. At the end of the evening, concert promoter Danny Zelesko displayed a framed set of gold and platinum Chicago albums, created as a gift for Lissa from Danny Seraphine. It included the inscription "We are each of us angels with only one wing. To fly we need only embrace each other."

When Troy Luccketta was thanked for putting on the event, he said, "This was a *God* thing. I'm not capable of doing such an event on my own. I just called Lissa's friends. We all stepped up to the plate for her."

Robert Tuozzo

Editor's note: Sadly, Lissa could not attend the concert. She suffered a relapse the same day, and passed away on Saturday, October 1. However, Lissa was aware of the efforts made on her



Danny Seraphine

Phyllis Luccketta



Denny Seiwell

Phyllis Luccketta



Jimmy DeGrasso

Robert Tuozzo



Robert Tuozzo

A display set of gold and platinum Chicago albums was presented in Lissa Wales' honor by Danny Seraphine (holding plaque at left). Also shown are Carmine Appice, Troy Luccketta (foreground), and Billy Ashbaugh.

behalf. Even as she dealt with her own final struggle, she expressed her appreciation for the love and support of her friends in the drumming community.

Contributions to Lissa's expense fund may be made by a bank transfer to Wells

Fargo Bank, account #7140221818. Additionally, checks in Lissa's name may be mailed to her sister, Mary Wales Long, at 27231 N. 71st Place, Scottsdale, Arizona 85262.

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Alex Acuna



Sheila E.



John Blackwell



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In Memoriam

Mana "China" Nishiura

Mana "China" Nishiura, drummer for Japanese metal band DMBQ, was tragically killed in a three-vehicle accident involving the band's tour van near the Delaware Memorial Bridge (between New Jersey and Delaware) this past November 4.

China joined DMBQ in 2004, when they offered her an opportunity to be part of their first American tour. DMBQ's punk theatrical style is radically different from that of Shonen Knife,

the Japanese pop act for whom China served as touring drummer from 2001 through 2004. Her great energy and vitality in Shonen Knife's live shows made her an instant favorite with all their fans. China was also a well-known session drummer in Japan, where she was respected for her drumming skills and her ability to play many styles.



China Nishiura on tour with Shonen Knife

Hurricane Relief Update

Now that the immediate life-threatening factors of the Katrina/Rita tragedy have subsided, the lengthy and overwhelming process of rebuilding has begun. The following foundations have established support networks either directly to school districts to assess student and school needs, or to professional musicians and individuals in need of assistance.

Individuals seeking to donate instruments or support the purchase of instruments for schools and displaced students are encouraged to contact **Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation** at www.mhopus.org or call (818) 784-6787. Percussion instruments used in school band and orchestra are needed. Accessories, sticks, and mallets are not being requested at this time. The foundation also accepts cash donations.

The Tipitina's Foundation is accepting donations of many types (including cash) in support of New Orleans-area musicians. Visit www.tipitinasfoundation.org for more information or call (828) 216-3960.

MusiCares at www.grammy.com/musicares or (877) 626-2748 is accepting cash donations to provide direct assistance to professional musicians. Donated dollars will go to assist fellow musicians and take care of their most basic needs.

Yamaha and its employees are doing their part not only to contribute to the enormous task of recovering from Hurricane Katrina, but to restore the music to America's Gulf Coast communities. In the days immediately following the storm the company's employee-based charitable program, Yamaha Cares, collected and matched individual cash donations by its employees to the American Red Cross. Employees at the Yamaha Music Manufacturing plant in Thomaston, Georgia

loaded a company tractor-trailer with infant supplies and necessities for delivery into the disaster zone.

One Yamaha artist who lost everything is drummer Adonis Rose (Nicholas Payton, Harry Connick Jr.). Similarly, Ray



Fransen's Drum Shop—the home of frequent community percussion clinics and drum provider for the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival stages—suffered significant damage. Yamaha Drums has made a special appeal to fellow drum artists on their behalf, and is collecting donations. (714) 522-9011, www.yamaha.com.

A Modern Drummer 30th Anniversary iPod Shuffle

To help commemorate MD's 30th anniversary, we're giving away twelve custom-made Apple iPod Shuffles, one per month for the next year.

That's right, only twelve of these little beauties exist, and you could be the proud owner of one of them.

The tiny iPod Shuffle can hold up to 120 songs, offering totally skip-free playback. It fits neatly in the palm of your hand, and looks very cool around your neck. The stylish MD 30th Anniversary logo complements it perfectly.



For the entry form and official rules, visit www.moderndrummer.com and click on the image of the iPod. Complete the required information, and you could be the next winner of this unique prize.
It's as simple as that!

Indy Quickies



Steve Gadd recently received an honorary doctor of music degree from **BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC** for his outstanding contributions to contemporary music. The degree was presented at Berklee's 2005 Entering Student Convocation. Steve told the assembled students, "This is probably my only chance to get an honorary degree, because I'm not the greatest student in the world. But I love music. I found one thing that I loved and I just kept on doing it. And if I can do it, I believe you all can do it. Welcome aboard."

Following the ceremony, Steve, as well as co-honorees Abe Laboriel Sr. and Patrice Rushen, joined Berklee upperclassmen on stage for an exhilarating performance.



On this past September 16th, the Al Ginter Percussion Team, headed by drum event organizer Serge Kieffer, invited international drummers throughout the world to Luxembourg for the sixth annual **AGP DRUMMER DAY IN LUXEMBOURG**. The event featured Luxembourg's **Joel Heyard**, Germany's **Rainer Kind** (Guildo Horn) and percussionist **Roland Peil** (Sarah Brightman), Brazil's **Vera Figueiredo** (solo artist), and **Jojo Mayer** (from Switzerland by way of the US). Support was provided by Sabian, Premier, Vic Firth, and Evans.

Toni Cannelli (in foreground) leads 800 drummers, with **Mark Shaw** (left) and **Heather Dowd** next to him.



Hundreds of drummers took part in the re-opening of the famous Sheffield (UK) City Hall music venue this past October 13. Nearly 800 schoolchildren played a piece composed and led by **DRUMMERS ALLIANCE** founder **Toni Cannelli**. Cannelli also conducted a drumkit demonstration with drummers Heather Dowd and Mark Shaw. Other drumming acts included The Mugenkyo Taiko drummers and local samba bands. See www.tonicannelli.com for details about Drummers Alliance.

Who's Playing What



New Vater artists include **Gerry Brown** (Diana Ross/Stevie Wonder), **George Saccal & Armando Cabrera** (deSol), **Mark Castillo** (Bury Your Dead), **Tommy Johnson** (Bobaflex), **Shane Addington** (Fivespeed), **Nash Breen** (Armour For Sleep), **Luke Buckbee** (Since The Flood), **Danny Burger** (Remembering Never), **Patrick Keeler** (The Greenhorns) **George Larson** (educator), **Matthew Gittelson** (educator) **Dwight Smith** (Engelbert Humperdinck), **Amanda Krantz** (Paperboy Jack), **Rob Mahoney** (Bane), and **Jordan Mallory** (Number One Gun).



Bay Area drummer **Steve Bowman** (Luce, ex-Counting Crows) is a new endorsing artist for San Francisco Drum Company.



Maria Martinez is now supported by DW and Pacific for individual clinics and World Beat Rhythms events.



Eric Trujillo (Mambotet) and **Jose Espino** (Conjunto Colores) are playing Meinl percussion. **Jay Skowronek** (Maxeen), **John Barry** (Stretch Arm Strong), **Daniel Svensson** (In Flames), and **Jaska Raatikainen** (Children Of Bodom) are new cymbal endorsers.

New Pro-Mark endorsers include **Zach Hill** (Team Sleep/Hella),

Elóy Casagrande (MD Undiscovered Drummer winner from Brazil), **Caesar Griffin** (Joss Stone), **Paul Hawley** (Hot Hot Heat), **Matthias Bossi** (Sleepytime Gorilla Museum), **Randy Lane** (No Address), and **Vincent Jackson** (The Greyhounds) **Todd Sucherman** (Styx).



Tom Brechtlein, **Ari Hoenig**, **Adam Deitch**, and **Tris Imboden** (Chicago) are endorsing accessories and instruments by Factory Metal Percussion.



Aaron Spears (Usher) and **Big Mike Clemons** (Israel, New Breed) are using Impact cases and bags.



Canadian session drummer **Dan Bodanis** is endorsing DC California Drums.

Spaun Drums has added **Ernesto Martinez** (Reik, Quijote) and **Dave Gentry** (Trigger Point) to their artist roster.



Jazz drummer **Lewis Nash** is now playing Zildjian cymbals.

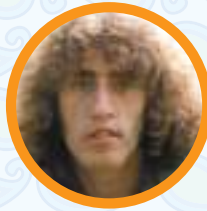
New Bosphorus artist **Ron Krasinski** is rehearsing with a show head- ed for Broadway called *Ring Of Fire*, about the life of Johnny Cash.



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- Michael Lardie, Great White, (Keyboards, Guitar)
- Simon Kirke, Bad Company, (Drums)
- Jerry Rennino, The Monkees, (Bass)
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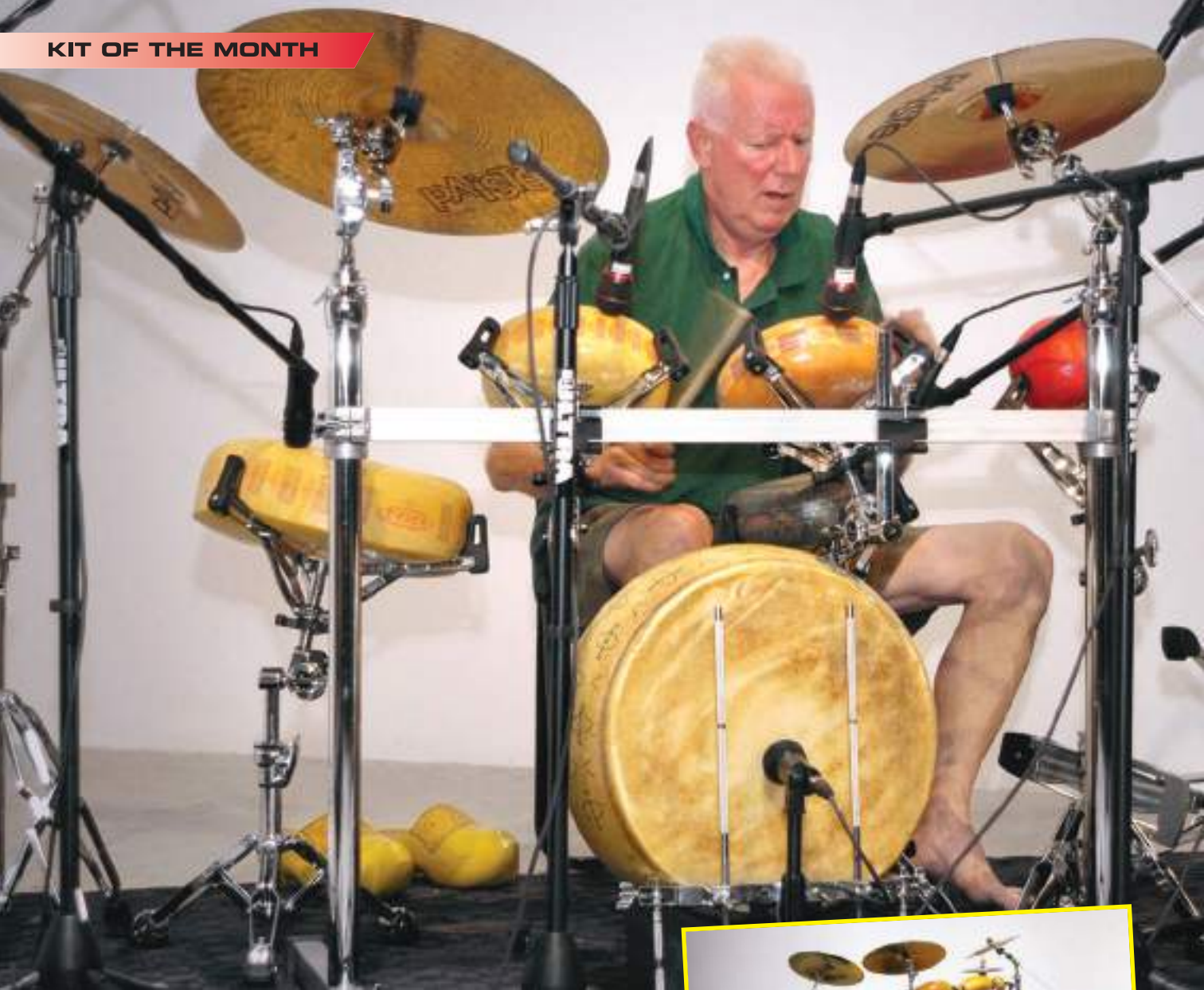


When he was young, MD associate editor Billy Amendola didn't get much respect. John Bonham once threw a ride cymbal at Billy when he caught him sneaking into his dressing room at the Fillmore.

But eventually Billy earned a serious spot in the New York studios himself, and now he counts many drumming legends among his personal friends. That's the level of inside access Modern Drummer magazine is famous for.

(Incidentally, Billy caught that cymbal, eventually using it on eleven top-10 disco hits in 1979 alone. True story.)

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That's Pretty Cheesy

Cheese Kit Diptych is a drum/art installation by artist Walter Willems. It was created specifically to be played by world-renowned Dutch improvisational jazz drummer Han Bennink. The artwork consists of two drumkits—one made of full rounds of real cheese, the other made of hollow plastic cheese replicas used for store displays.

The work is considered a collaborative piece with Bennink, inspired by his animated style of drumming and his ability to drum on any available surface. The piece was considered incomplete until played by Bennink at a public concert held recently at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in Toronto, Canada. It was part of the exhibition *Demons Stole My Soul: Rock 'N' Roll Drums In Contemporary Art*. Check www.mocca.toronto.ca.

Ingredients for the drumkits included gouda, grana padano, maasdam, and edam cheeses, plastic cheese replicas, Pearl drum hardware, Paiste cymbals, and Tibetan wool & silk carpets.

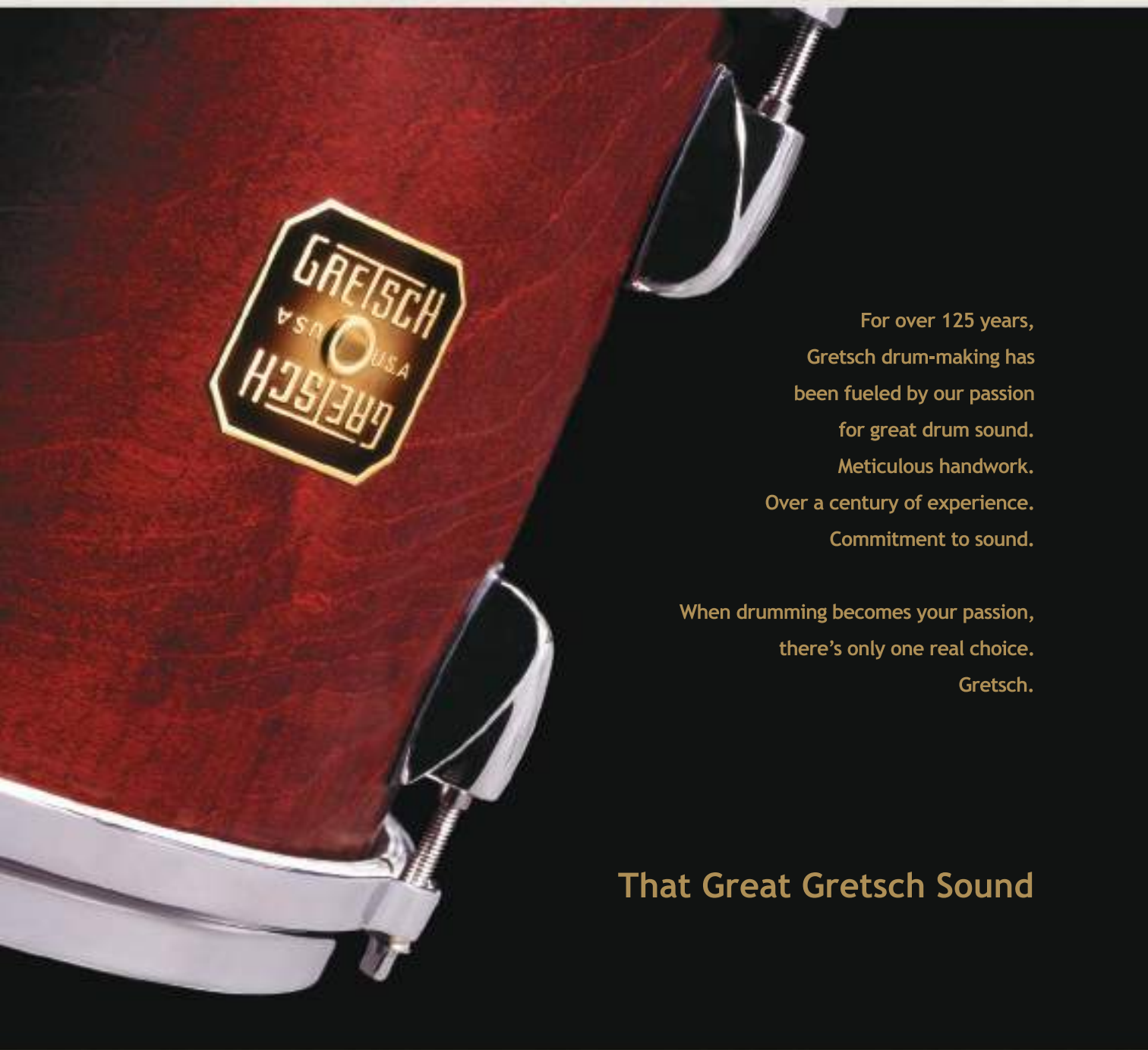


PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides or high-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos 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: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.



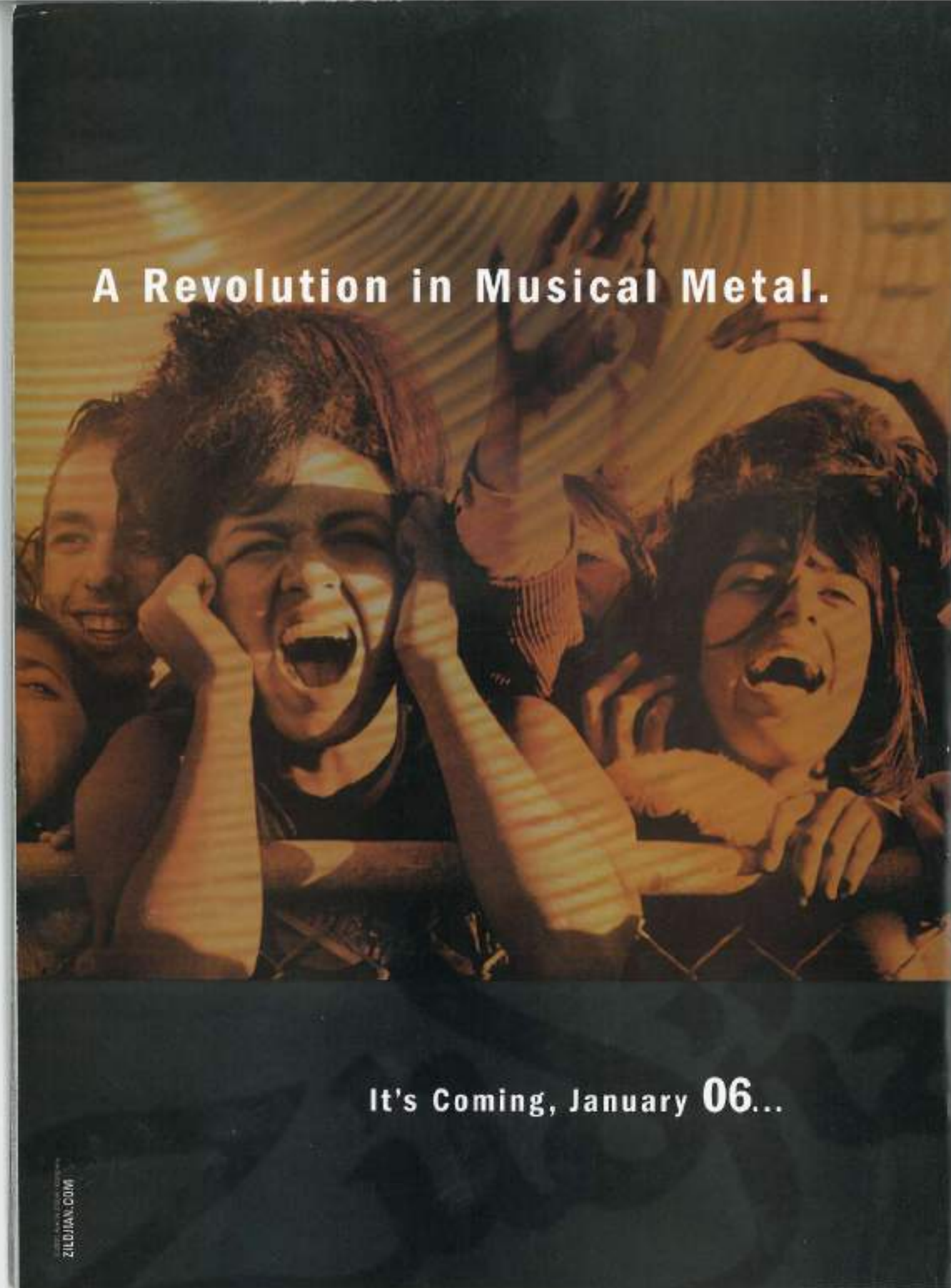
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That Great Gretsch Sound

A group of young women are shown in a close-up, energetic scene, likely at a concert. They are cheering and shouting with their mouths wide open. Some have their hands raised in the air. The lighting is warm and dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights, creating a sense of excitement and intensity. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a stage or concert setting.

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