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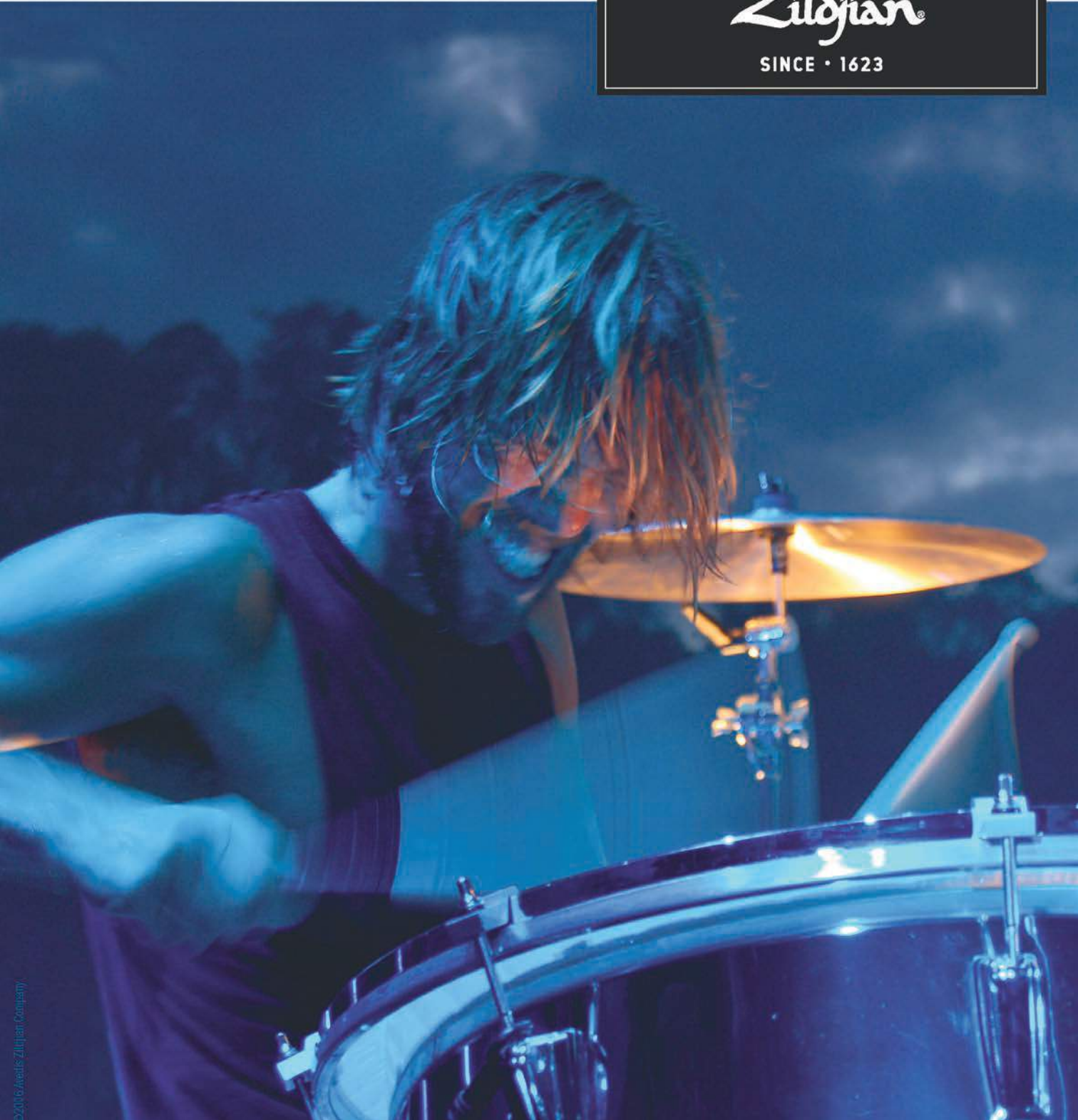
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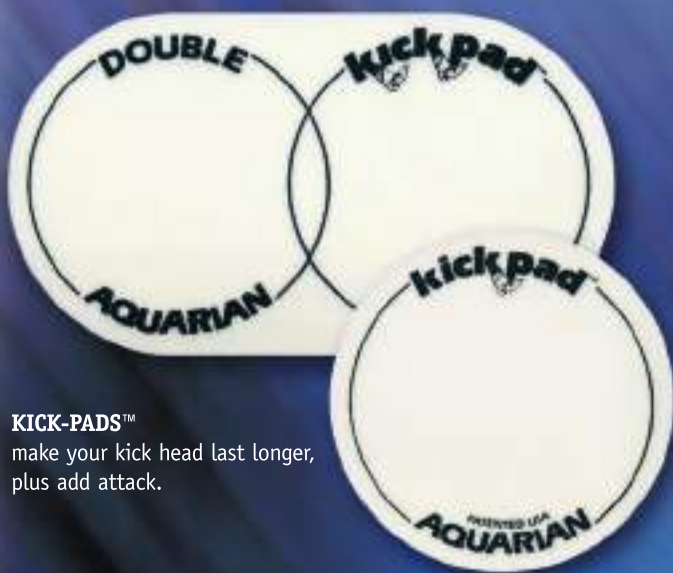
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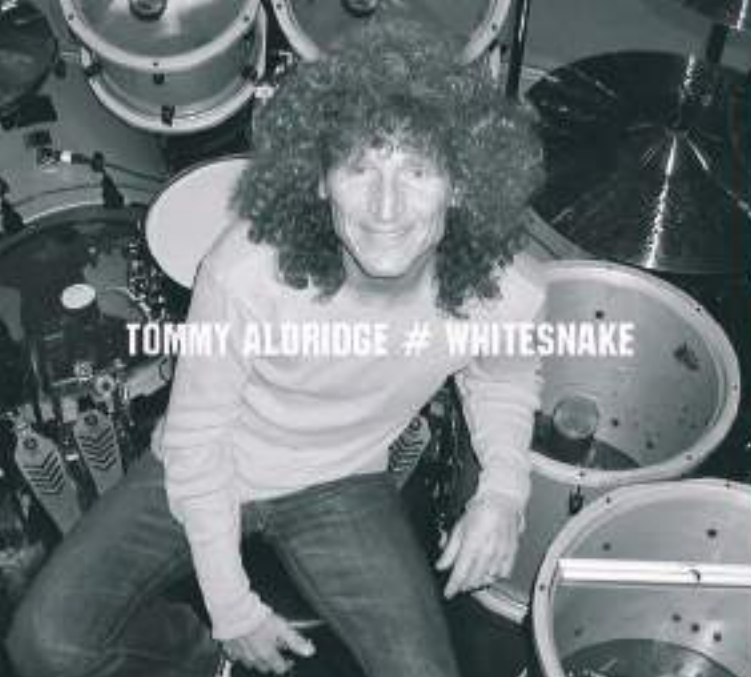
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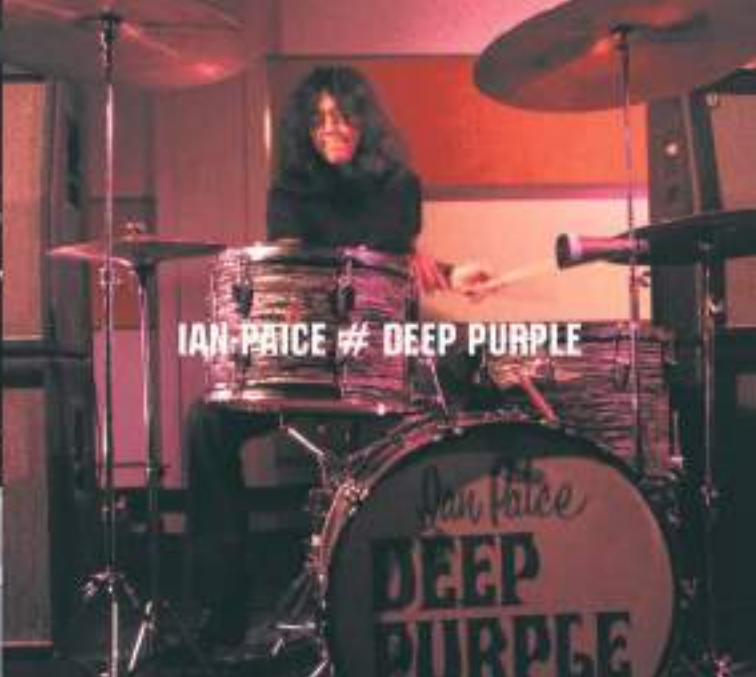
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Special *Drum Solo Issue!*

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Rush's Neil Peart is *the* most celebrated drummer of the modern age. And Neil's command of the solo is a major reason. In this exclusive first-person account, Peart tells the tale of his latest attempt to preserve his methods for history. **by Neil Peart**

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Soloing; the once *and* future bar for drumming prowess? That's a matter of debate. What we do know is, if you want to improve your soloing abilities, you need to hear from the experts. *MD* rounds up ten of the world's greatest practitioners and picks their brains. You won't read this stuff anywhere else. **by Ken Micallef**

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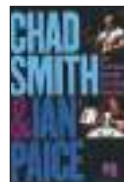
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Anatomy Of An Issue

Neil Peart loves a challenge. Whether it's bicycling across the rim of Africa (or China...or Europe), motorcycling literally *all* of North and Central America, spearheading multi-drummer tribute albums to Buddy Rich, or soloing in front of thousands every night on tour with Rush, Neil refuses to live life as a spectator. Succeed, or fail (which he rarely seems to do), Neil Peart goes for it.

So a few months back, when *MD* began hearing rumors about Neil's latest project, a DVD covering his soloing concepts, we were intrigued. If you've ever seen Rush live, you know what a highlight Peart's lengthy and impressive solo spots are. It's amazing to see how one man, armed with good technique and a creative mind, can captivate a huge concert audience.

Over the years I've had the pleasure of interviewing Neil several times. (I can't believe that our first get-together was in 1989. Our most recent was in 2002.) While I was interested in interviewing Neil again, I was actually hoping for something a bit different. As most of you know, Neil is a gifted writer, and I wondered if he might be interested in doing the "heavy lifting" this time, writing the piece himself. Well, after I pitched the concept to him, I didn't hear back for two weeks. (I figured he hated the idea.) And then, lo and behold, the story showed up! As you'll see, it's a fun and revealing look into the making of the DVD, with some solid NP soloing tips thrown in. (Thanks, Neil!)

With something as special as this Neil story in hand, the idea to make it the centerpiece of a theme issue on soloing was obvious. The only question was, could the editors here pull together enough material to make it happen? (I had no doubts!) As you'll see, this issue is packed full of soloing information. Writer Ken Micallef doggedly tracked down some of the all-time great soloists for his massive feature story. We also revisited the topic of the greatest solos ever recorded. Contributor Mike Haid headed up that huge project. And Ed Breckenfeld, our *Off The Record* contributor, went a bit crazy transcribing a *ton* of classic solo licks, many of which are spotlighted in the "great solos" feature.

As for educational columns, we reached out to our stable of artist contributors, and every one of them seemed excited about the idea. I want to thank Steve Smith, John Riley, Rod Morgenstein, Billy Ward, Stanton Moore, Jeremy Hummel, and Joe Bergamini for "taking requests" this month, writing in-depth pieces that cover the topic of soloing from practically every angle.

We hope this issue inspires you to get to your kit and *play*.

Bill Miller

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BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

MD's 30th Anniversary

I've been a reader for over ten years, and though I've meant to many times, this is my first time writing in. I just had to say congratulations, and great job on the January 2006 issue! It was absolutely packed with helpful ("Stop The Pain" and the survey of semi-pro kits), practical ("Getting Good Sound" and "Percussion As Production"), and thought-provoking ("The Future Of Drumming" and "Get A Grip") articles that were all very relevant for me and my students.

Your publication continues to grow with the times and the needs of drummers today. Thanks so much, and congrats again.

Aaron Vishria

I've been a subscriber for several years, and I've enjoyed many of your stories. But the January 2006 edition reached me close to my heart. The *Update* article on Ron Tutt by Robyn Flans was very good (although too short). And "Changing With The Times" by Paul Leim was informative and entertaining. Keep up the good work!

Eugene Pelletier

Your 30th anniversary edition alone is worth the price of a year's subscription. I can't consume the entire thing in an hour or two; I'll be chewing on it for weeks. All the articles I've read so far are extremely informative and interesting. Great job. I'll be renewing my subscription.

Bob Ball



THE FUTURE OF DRUMMING

Based on your January feature, I'm confident that the future of drumming is in good hands—and feet—not to mention sound minds. You can tell a lot about how a musician plays by the way he or she speaks. Like in a good conversation, a good drummer knows when to, and when not to.

I got a sense from most of the top "cats" that the fundamentals of being a complete drummer are being "poo-pooed" by too many aspiring players. And, as Steve Smith pointed out, culture and art are sadly in need of a re-awakening in this country and around the world. Steve Gadd once said: "In music, the ears come before the eyes." That will be as true in the future as it has always been in the past.

Marc D. White

I love your magazine, but I must say that the "Future Of Drumming" feature was a pain to get through. Having to listen to drummer after drummer rehash the old "speed bad/musicianship good" spiel was not very refreshing.

I would have loved to see some meaningful discussion of the way popular music is

heading in general, so that people could get a head start and be ready to deal with future trends. At the moment there is a revival of '80s new wave. Will the '90s be next? The future of drumming will follow the needs of the music.

Jonathan O'Keeffe

SESSION WORK ON THE WEB



Russ Miller engineers his file transfer tracks at this control console.

Rick Long's January piece on FTP methods of creating music over the Web inspired me to write. I've been doing this very thing for years. I have a trio that records improvised live music for two hours each Saturday.

Sometimes good things happen, and we post outtakes on our site. Other players from around the world have then downloaded and enhanced our mixes. I've never met most of these cyber guys, and in some cases I don't even speak their language.

I have hours of sessions from various trios and cyber jams posted. It's a wonderful way to create music with great players that I may otherwise never get to meet. I invite all *MD* readers to check us out—and participate—at www.jamlab.us. In the meantime, thanks for a great inspiring magazine since issue #1.

Kurt Angel

PROJECT UNDER COVERS

Thanks for a great magazine. I particularly love the do-it-yourself articles, since I've been building and re-covering drumsets myself for over ten years.

With that in mind, I'd like to add a word of caution regarding your December '05 article on drum re-covering. Some older Ludwig drums are wrapped with a glue that gives off combustible fumes when heated. When these fumes come in contact with the glowing element in a hair dryer or other

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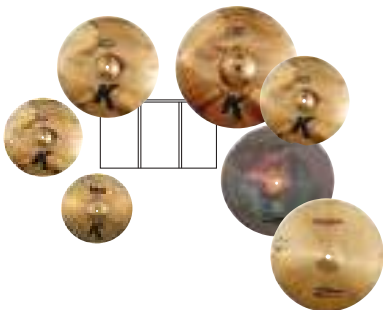


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Readers' Platform

heating element, they can create a flash fire. I've had a keystone-badged shell I was recovering burst into flames without warning. Those flames were very hard to extinguish. Had I not been more vigilant, I might have burned my shop to the ground. Please urge anyone attempting to strip older shells to be careful because of this. **Uncle Spooky**

SEMI-PRO DRUMKIT SURVEY



I enjoyed the accurate review of today's intermediate drumkits in your January issue. Now I'd like to see how the various manufacturers rank in customer service. After all, a consumer needs to be taken care of after the sale.

I know that it is largely the retailer's job to properly navigate through warranty red tape. But some drum companies drop the ball when it comes to shipping out a tiny part under warranty. **Gary Scannelli**

STOP THE PAIN

With eleven years' experience as a physical therapist, and over twenty-three as a drummer, I thought that Kevin Slater's January *Health & Science* article offered some really good ways to isolate the muscles in the hand. The section on the neck is also good as far as it goes. But there's a point I'd like to add.

If one has a pinched nerve at the cervical area, strengthening the neck muscles isn't going to make the problem go away. The problem is that the nerve is getting pinched at one or (rarely) more levels between any of five different vertebrae. This is why putting

one's chin to one's chest gives some measure of relief, since it opens up the space where the nerve exits. Strengthening the neck musculature is definitely a good thing to do, but eventually the problem is going to come back—and quite possibly get worse.

In the case of a "simple" nerve entrapment due to misalignment, properly done chiropractic manipulation should release it. If not, the problem could be stenosis, in which the space between the vertebrae narrows as a result of the bone growing where it really shouldn't, thereby entrapping the nerve.

Unfortunately, there is not an easy fix for stenosis. Anti-inflammatory medications may help, and stretching and warming up



properly is a must. But surgery is often the only way to relieve the entrapment. Of course, surgery has serious risks of its own—especially when the neck is involved—and thus is always the last resort.

Michael Engle

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Tom-Mounting Pros And Cons

As I've been researching kits for a future purchase, I've become partial to kits that don't mount their rack toms on the bass drum. Does having the toms mounted on the bass drum affect the sound? What are the advantages to having stand-mounted toms instead of bass-mounted, and vice-versa? Or is it all just looks? **Tyson Pippin**

There are those who believe that mounting toms on a bass drum puts stresses on that

drum's shell that affect the drum's resonance. However, given the fact that drummers tend to muffle the resonance of a bass drum anyway, this may be an academic point.

Most drummers choose to use or not use bass drum-mounted toms on the basis of convenience and positioning options. Drum-mounted toms are convenient; stand-mounted toms may offer more flexible positioning options. Adjusting bass-mounted toms usually involves

only the drums; adjusting stand-mounted toms also involves whatever else is on the same stand.

Some of these choices are also based on the sizes of the toms involved, and how well they fit using one system or another. It usually boils down to what works best for the individual. If you are partial to non-bass mounted toms, then by all means go with your preference.



Some drummers prefer to "fly" their rack toms from stands, as on the Tama Starclassic Bubinga kit at left. Others opt for the convenience of having the toms mounted on the bass drum, as on the Mapex Orion Maple kit above.

A 16" Ride Cymbal?

I'm hoping you can help me identify a cymbal I purchased recently from eBay. It's a 1950s-era A Zildjian 16", but it seems very heavy. (It weighs 1,550 grams.) Was there such a thing as a 16" ride cymbal? It has a 4"-diameter bell with a fairly low profile that's almost flat on top. It's also very thin at the edges, and the lathing is typical of the 1950s. Any information would be most appreciated.

Mitch Batchelor

Zildjian product communications and training manager John King responds: "At first glance, the lathing and trademark style of your cymbal seemed to peg its date of manufacture closer to the 1960s. But the profile of the bell definitely pulls it back into the '50s. That profile denotes a design that we used at the beginning of the 'ride era,' which started in the late 1940s. Before that time, suspended cymbals on the drumset were primarily used for accent crashes. The hi-hat was the primary means of keeping the pulse. But in the late '40s, artists

like Kenny Clarke, Max Roach, Art Blakey, and Louie Bellson helped to establish the ride cymbal as a viable alternative for time-keeping.

"At that time, cymbal sizes rarely went beyond 16", and this became a popular size when heavier 'ride cymbals' came into being. Lighter versions were called 'Bop' cymbals, and were very similar to today's 'crash ride' models. Heavier rides started off with the designation of 'Bounce rides.' They often had a low-profile bell to help contain the additional overtones that heavier cymbals produce. This last description best fits the cymbal you have. Even though ride cymbals eventually became larger, the heavier A Zildjian 16" medium and light ride models remained in place until the mid 1980s. Cymbal designations like 'Bop' and 'Bounce' were eventually superseded by terms like 'light,' 'medium,' 'Ping,' and 'Rock' when describing today's versions of ride instruments."



Drumset History

While doing research for a report on early jazz music, I read an article saying that the drumset was invented by slaves in New Orleans because they were not allowed to play other instruments. I don't remember where I found that article, and it seems to have been the only place I've seen this information. Is this the actual origin of the drumset?

Beckie Richter

You may be confusing some drumming history. During the slave era, slaves in almost all of America were actually prohibited from playing drums at all, insofar as their owners could prevent it. Drumming was a large part of the slaves' spiritual and social culture from Africa, and the owners wanted to stifle that aspect of their lives in order to keep them docile and manageable. The one outstanding exception was New Orleans, where drumming was allowed, with the result that African rhythms were incorporated into the diverse ethnic gumbo of that city's musical influences.

When the slaves were freed, black society in the American South continued to incorporate drumming as a part of their culture. But now it was blended with American folk music influences. The drumming spoken of thus far was done on frame drums, African-style drums, and tambourines. There was nothing resembling the modern drumset.

In the late 1800s, orchestral drums became part of theatrical "pit" bands throughout America. One drummer would play a bass drum and cymbals, another would play a snare drum, and a third would play sound effects and percussion. At the same time, the funeral bands of New Orleans used a marching bass drummer, a marching snare drummer, and sometimes a marching cymbal player.

Around the turn of the 20th century, the influences of Delta blues, Negro spirituals, second-line funeral marches, and even some classical music were boiled down in New Orleans to create

early American jazz. The jazz bands of the time found it impractical to use separate drummers. Someone (no one knows who or exactly when) came up with the idea of playing the bass drum with the foot, putting the snare drum on some sort of stand, and suspending cymbals from curved rods—thus allowing a single drummer to play all of these instruments. While no one knows who invented the very first bass drum pedal, William F. Ludwig Sr. is credited with creating the first practical and commercially successful model in 1910.

"Pit" drummers soon saw the advantages of the drumset for



This photo illustrates the transition from separate drums to the early "drumset" concept. It features a concert bass drum played with a foot pedal and fitted with a cymbal and a block that could be struck with a stick. The set also includes a snare drum on a stand, as well as a "low-boy" foot-operated cymbal device—the ancestor of today's hi-hat.

performances in vaudeville and other theatrical applications. Between those drummers and the jazz drummers that came out of New Orleans and spread across the country, the drumset was firmly established by the 1920s.

Grip Change For Fills

I'm a traditional-grip drummer, and I use the "palms down" position on my right hand for playing grooves. However, when I'm playing a fill, I have a natural tendency to switch to the "French grip." This creates no problem when I practice a certain lick or fill. But when I try to keep that same grip and move back into a groove, it doesn't feel right. It's like two separate worlds. What should I do?

Salvador Rubalcava Gonzalez

You may be spending too much mental energy on which grip to use for which style of playing. If you're comfortable grooving with your right palm down, then do that. If you tend to change your grip for a fill, so be it (as long as you don't risk dropping the stick in the process).

Grip choice, like almost everything else in drumming, is a matter of what works best for the job. Many drummers change their grips frequently, depending on what they need to accomplish. The bottom line is: Do what ultimately produces the best results.

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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Usher's Aaron Spears On Technique Tricks

A Thanks so much for showing me love with the kind words the way you did. It means a lot to know that people are actually paying attention to me and the stuff that I've been fortunate enough to be a part of.

In response to your question, I'm about to shoot you some info that I normally keep to myself. (Some of it sounds way

more complicated than it really is.) But it's not like I'm the one who made this up, so I guess it's cool to pass it on to you and all the other *MD* readers.

I like to break up my fills between my hands and my kick drum foot. A real easy rudiment that will help you to get the idea of what I'm referring to is the triplet. The traditional triplet goes: LRL RLR LRL RLR. I like to put my kick drum in the middle of what my hands are playing: LKR LKR LKR LKR or RKL RKL RKL RKL.

If I'm feeling really daring and adventurous I'll alternate my hands and play: RKL LKR RKL LKR. This gives a fairly simple fill a unique twist.

What makes these fills really sound bananas is which drums you decide to hit. Once you get the mechanics of it down, you can play around with it and create some very interesting combinations. It's all about letting your imagination run free.

You can pick up Gideon Band music from our Web site: www.gideonband.com. *The Experience* and *Foreward* are on there now. We're currently working on our new project, called *Life Stories*. Hopefully it won't be too much longer before we show up with that one.

Thanks again for writing. I appreciate *MD* for creating such a cool way to interact with the readers, and I appreciate you for taking the time to holla at me. Keep doing your thing!

Q I am a fan of yours, and I enjoy watching and hearing you play. Your style is very different, and you definitely have a sound of your own. Your playing blew me away when I saw you on the Showtime special with Usher.

What different rudiment combinations do you practice with your hands and your feet to get those amazing fills? And where can I acquire some of Gideon Band's music with you playing on it?

Kevin Belnavis

Jimmy Chamberlin's Thoughts On Ride Cymbals



Andrew Lepley

Q Your playing on albums by Smashing Pumpkins, Zwan, and The Jimmy Chamberlin Complex has been a constant source of inspiration for me. But one question has been bugging me for many years. Near the end of the Pumpkins' track "Drown" (off the *Singles* soundtrack) you play a very dynamic pattern that incorporates the ride cymbal, a flurry of ghost notes, and soft double-stroke rolls on the snare.

Could you provide some direction on conquering this pattern? Thanks for any help you can provide, and congratulations on the fantastic new Complex album.

James Buckley

A Thanks for the question and for the compliments. I'm glad you're digging The Complex.

As far as the end of "Drown" goes, the part at the very end (over the guitar solo) is just as you described it: ghosted double strokes mid-phrase. Where it gets a little tricky is that immediately preceding the ghost notes there's a press roll played in unison with the left hand on the snare and the right on the ride cymbal. This, along with the hi-hat played on all fours, is what gives the part texture.

With a groove like this I'll sometimes hit the ride and just let the stick bounce until it dies or I stop it. This can give you an almost "sizzle" or "rivet" sound when done correctly. I think the ride has so much more to offer than just somewhere to go when you're off the hat. The correct ride, in conjunction with the right-size stick, can produce a world of emotion. Thanks, and good luck!



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Judas Priest's Scott Travis

On Practicing And Head Selection

Q You are an amazing drummer. I saw you with Judas Priest at the Bell Center in Montreal this past October. Great show!

You are so tight, and you make the song sound just right. How many hours a day do you practice? Also, at the Bell Center show your drums sounded rich, with a lot of attack. What kind of drums and heads were you using? And were you also using ddrum triggers?

J.F. Preiss

A First off, let me thank you for your kind words. It's always encouraging to hear from someone who recognizes and compliments one's work.

As for practicing, while on the road it's very difficult. As a band, we don't usually do sound checks, so I normally don't even see my kit until right before showtime. Usually I'll just warm up backstage by playing rudiments and such on a chair or sofa cushion. Sometimes, the cushions actually sound and feel great! When I'm off tour, I try to practice at least a few hours a week. I also like to

stay active by playing with local bands.

I use clear Evans G2s on the tops of the toms, with clear G1s on the bottoms. The snare has an Evans Power Center batter, and

the bass drums have EMAD batters. We also use the ddrum triggers that you mentioned, along with external microphones. I hope this information helps you.



Marco Saccoli

Repeat Bar

A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"A crucial mistake drummers make is not seeing themselves as part of the song, but rather as drumming *to* the song. There's a big difference."

Ween's Claude Coleman, August 2004



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Deep Purple's Ian Paice Bringing The Magic

R*apture Of The Deep*, Deep Purple's newest offering, is proof that some bands simply get better with age. The album is a varied collection of great songs and infectious rhythms, hypnotic vocals, and amazing musicianship. And Ian Paice, the band's drummer since he was nineteen years old, says he indeed *is* getting better with age.

According to Paice, "Like most things, the longer you do it, the better you become at it. I'm more efficient when I play the drums now. I get the same volume, the same power of attack and intensity, but I work about half as hard as I used to. With drums and acoustic instruments, you can only hit them so hard. You don't get any more volume the harder you hit. Once you've gotten to 100%, that's all there is. So trying to get 110% will just tire you out. I've learned not to waste energy. I could do two sets a night now, where I would have been really hard-pressed to do that when I was in my twenties.

"There is only one thing that would stop me from continuing what I'm doing," the drummer admits. "That's if I lost the physical ability to live up to my own standards. I don't want to go out with a whimper. If I don't feel I can do it, I'll stop and just play every other week down at the pub with friends. But while I have my physical health, I don't see a problem with continuing."

Like with many of their recordings, the title track of the new album came from a jam, this one between Paice and keyboardist Don Airey. According to Ian, "Don was fiddling around with something, and I said, 'Can we add something that has a sort of Turkish or Middle Eastern flavor to the riff?' I had the idea of what the tempo should be and said, 'Just put in your mind something different from the Western way.' About two minutes later, the other guys wandered into the studio and started picking up on what we were doing. We tried to keep that Eastern way of how the riff keeps coming back in, the regularity of it, for the basis of the tune. Then [singer] Ian [Gillan] wandered in and got fired up about it. We worked on the tune for about a day and recorded it the next day."

Deep Purple will be touring extensively in support of the new release. Try to catch the band live, to experience some of that classic Ian Paice magic.

Robyn Flans



Andrew Lepley



The Black Halos' Rob Zgaljic Alive Without Control

When a band's touring schedule is as grueling as that of Vancouver rock 'n' rollers The Black Halos, you learn to overcome whatever challenges the road hands you. On a recent tour across the US, both the headlining act and second support band suddenly dropped off the lineup. "We had hurricanes and cancelled shows," says drummer Rob Zgaljic. "It was one setback after another. A lot of bands would have cancelled the tour, but we chose to continue on our own because we just love playing, especially in the States. We played all the way back home to Vancouver."

Rob admits that The Halos' nearly relentless touring not only fuels the band's outrageous live chemistry, it also keeps him at the top of his game as a player. "We play twenty nights in a row sometimes," he says. "So you can't help but become tight."

The Black Halos' latest CD, *Alive Without Control*, showcases Rob's locked-down precision and signature buzz rolls. "My biggest strength as a drummer is being solid and just being a rock behind the kit," the drummer says. "I get

the most compliments on how tight my playing is, and I pride myself on that. For The Black Halos, I concentrate on accenting the song instead of throwing in lots of fills."

Rob also loves to hit hard, and he holds a special admiration for Slayer's Dave Lombardo. "When I listen to Slayer," he says, "the aggression in Dave's drumming just blows me away and makes me want to play my drums. I've seen Slayer a number of times, and I can't stop watching him. Everything he plays is perfect."

Rob's powerhouse live drumming gets an extra punch from the massive 15" Pearl marching snare that's part of his live kit. "When I first got this drum, it was more of an aesthetic thing," Rob explains. "I've never seen anyone else play a marching snare as their regular snare drum, and I loved how it looked. But then I fell in love with how loud it is; it sounds like a cannon. For most shows, sound guys don't even mike it. I could never use it for recording, but as a live snare it's just amazing."

Gail Worley

OHM's Kofi Baker Making Ginger Proud

"I just got back from New York from the Cream reunion concert," says drummer Kofi Baker. "It was really cool. I hadn't seen my dad in seven years. Seeing him play was a very emotional thing." Of course, Baker's father is legendary Cream drummer Ginger Baker, whom he'd never seen perform in such a large setting. (In this instance, it was Madison Square Garden.)

It was Ginger who gave his son his initial education behind the kit. But with more than two decades of professional experience under his belt, Kofi has carved out quite a career for himself. After cultivating his talents throughout Europe, Kofi came to the US in the '90s and began recording and performing with a variety of artists. Today the thirty-six-year-old Baker is keeping busy in groups such as the prog-metal/fusion-jazz outfit OHM and his own ever-changing project, The Kofi Baker Band.

One of Baker's strengths lies in polyrhythmic figures and cross-rhythms, some of which can be heard on OHM's latest release, *Amino Acid Flashback* (Blacknote Records). "I've spent a lot of time practicing playing one limb in one time signature and another in a different time signature," he notes.

As for following in his father's double kick drum footsteps, Baker points out that his personal experience took some experimentation. "I started as a single kick player. My dad wouldn't let me play double bass right away. He said, 'Once you master the single kick drum, then you can go to two.' I never felt like I mastered the single kick drum, because there's so much to work on."

In 1991 Baker finally did add a second bass drum. But after a few years, he decided that carting an additional kick drum was too much hassle. So he began using a double pedal. Lately Baker is more comfortable using a second bass drum again. In his DW setup, he has a 20" on his left side and a 22" on his right—the opposite of his father's classic configuration.

When he's not playing gigs or recording, Baker runs his own drum school in southern California, where he teaches over twenty students each week. "I have regular clients as well as a lot of people who just call in and turn up," Baker says. "I have one student who's an older guy who basically comes in just to play drums with me. But he's such a nice guy, I don't mind!"

For more information on Kofi, log on to www.kofibaker.com.

Waleed Rashidi





Sigur Rós's Orri Pall Dyrason Bringing The Right Vibe

Constantly compared to Pink Floyd, Iceland's Sigur Rós is in fact a much stranger band—like Phish covering the Talking Heads' *Remain In Light*. So when Sigur Rós needed a new drummer, the band looked

for someone comfortable around string quartets, Bavarian drinking songs, and analog and digital recording technologies. Orri Pall Dyrason was the perfect fit.

Dyrason never fantasized about being Keith Moon. He was just an eleven-year-old who wanted to play vibes. "I went to a music school and asked if I could learn how to play the vibraphone," he says. "They said that I needed to learn how to play drums for a year, which is ridiculous. But eventually I really felt a passion for the drums."

Dyrason's passion for the drums never quashed his affection for the vibes. A few years ago, he found an old vibraphone in a little New York side-street shop. But Dyrason didn't stop with the vibraphone. He continued collecting odd drums and bells and chimes. Now his collection shows up on Sigur Rós's

latest, *Takk...* It's seventy minutes of Wagnerian rock influenced by Radiohead, with Dyrason adding some tasty percussion parts.

"We were playing around with a lot of different stuff in the studio and had lots of ideas on what to do on this album," says Dyrason. "I used a lot of electronic drums, and I also played around with contact microphones on my acoustic drums."

Dyrason even glued microphones to the pedals of his 20" and 34" bass drums—he opts for two drums instead of a double pedal because he has little use for speed and prefers the unique boom he gets from each drum. As for those contact mic's on the pedals, "I wanted to hear the pedal chains rattle," he says. "You can hear that 'crunch, crunch, crunch' on the second track, 'Glosoli.'"

All comparisons to Pink Floyd break down in concert. Where Roger Waters and crew in time became concerned with note-for-note replication, Sigur Rós approaches live shows from an organic place. In addition to playing drums and vibes on stage, Dyrason controls samplers that add little sonic accents. "I have small sounds that I control, and it's like they're coming out of a corner somewhere," he says. "It's a bit different, and that's good because that's life."

Jed Gottlieb



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—Terry Bozzio

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The Lynne Arriale Trio's Steve Davis Transparency Is Key

After a recent Lynne Arriale Trio gig, a fellow drummer tells Steve Davis that he barely heard him play a pattern all night that came from any drum book he'd ever seen. "If I had more time to practice, maybe I'd play more things that are in drum books," Dave replies, laughing. "But that's the joy of this gig. Short of certain arrangements where Lynne wants a particular approach, I can do whatever I want, as long as I'm adhering to the group energy."

Davis has been working with Arriale for over a decade. The trio has released several critically acclaimed albums, and generally spends five to seven months per year touring. "One thing that keeps the gig fresh for me is that Lynne and Jay [Anderson, bassist] love to play melodies," Steve says. "I'm not restricted to playing time; I can do a lot of coloring, which I love."

The group's repertoire provides Davis with the opportunity to explore a variety of styles, but he

rarely takes a standard approach to them. For example, on the trio's most recent album, *Come Together*, Steve plays very spaciouly and loose on the New Orleans funk classic "Iko Iko," and he takes a comparable approach with the samba feel of "Brazilaina."

"In the trio we use the word 'transparency' a lot," Steve says. "It leaves room for the other musicians to do stuff. It also leaves room for the audience to digest what they've heard."

When not on the road with Arriale, Davis is active as an educator. He teaches at the University of Southern Florida, and since the early 1980s he's been teaching at Jamey Aebersold jazz camps. He



has also played on more of Aebersold's instructional play-along albums than any other drummer.

Seeing Davis play live, it's obvious he's having fun. "I take music very seriously," Davis says. "But there is a very fun quality to playing jazz—a let-it-go quality. I'm trying to give listeners and the people I play with something they can hang their hat on and still have the freedom to play different things."

Rick Mattingly

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NEWS

Ed Gilroy is on Fake H's new EP. He's currently on tour with the band.

Keio Stroud is touring with Rodney Crowell & The Outsiders, supporting Rodney's latest CD, *The Outsider*. The record features **Greg Morrow**, **Eddie Bayers**, **Shannon Forrest**, **Trey Landry**, and **Chad Cromwell** on drums.

Jesse Castro plays drums (and everything else) on his self-titled debut CD. For more info check out www.jessecastro.com.

Mic Capdevielle is on the Benjy Davis Project CD, *The Angie House*.

Zach Alford has been touring with Gwen Stefani.

Charley Drayton has been on tour with Fiona Apple.

Eddie Graham is on The Darkness's *One Way Ticket To Hell...And Back*.

Billy Hart is on Mimi Fox's new double CD, *Perpetually Hip*.

Matt Thorsen is on Downtown Singapore's debut album, *Don't Let Your Guard Down*.



MD scribes on record: **Jon Wurster** is on Marah's *If You Didn't Laugh, You'd Cry*, while **Robin Tolleason** appears on *Living Room* by Ruby Slippers.

Congratulations to Audioslave's **Brad Wilk** and vocalist Selene Vigil of the band Seven Year Bitch on their recent wedding.

DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Dave Tough was born on 4/26/07, **Lionel Hampton** on 4/12/09, **Tito Puente** on 4/20/23, **Bobby Rosengarden** on 4/23/24, *Modern Drummer* founder **Ronald Spagnardi** on 4/25/43, Average White Band's **Robbie McIntosh** on 4/25/50, and **Jeff Porcaro** on 4/1/54.



Buddy Rich passed away on 4/2/87, teacher **Frank Malabe** on 4/21/94, **Cozy Powell** on 4/5/98, **Carlos Vega** on 4/7/98, Nazareth drummer **Darrell Sweet** on 4/30/99, **Claudio Slon** on 4/16/02, and Jefferson Airplane's **Skip Spence** on 4/16/99.

Pearl Drums was founded in Sumida, Tokyo on 4/2/46.

On 4/27/64, John Coltrane records the track "The Drum Thing" with the great **Elvin Jones**. (It appears on Coltrane's *Crescent* album.)

Roland Corp. was established in Osaka, Japan on 4/18/72.

Happy Birthday!

Joe Porcaro
(educator): 4/29/30

Jake Hanna
(jazz great): 4/4/31

Jim Keltner
(studio legend): 4/27/42

Clyde Stubblefield
(James Brown): 4/18/43

Steve Gadd
(drum giant): 4/9/45



Doug "Cosmo" Clifford
(Creedence Clearwater Revival):
4/24/45

Bill Kreutzmann
(Grateful Dead): 4/7/46

Steve Ferrone
(Tom Petty): 4/25/50

Max Weinberg
(Bruce Springsteen/Conan O'Brien): 4/13/51

Bruce Gary
(The Knack): 4/7/52

Narada Michael Walden
(producer/session great):
4/23/52

Denny Fongheiser
(sessions): 4/21/59

Chris Mars
(The Replacements): 4/26/61

Mike Mangini
(independent): 4/18/63

Mike Portnoy
(Dream Theater): 4/20/67



Patty Schemel
(Hole): 4/24/67

Stan Frazier
(Sugar Ray): 4/23/68

Aaron Comess
(Spin Doctors): 4/24/68

Greg Eklund
(Everclear): 4/18/70

Shane Evans
(Collective Soul): 4/26/70



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



From Birth

Hideko Mekuda Yamaha Craftsman Profile

Job Title: Wood Sanding Specialist Years Experience: 23 years

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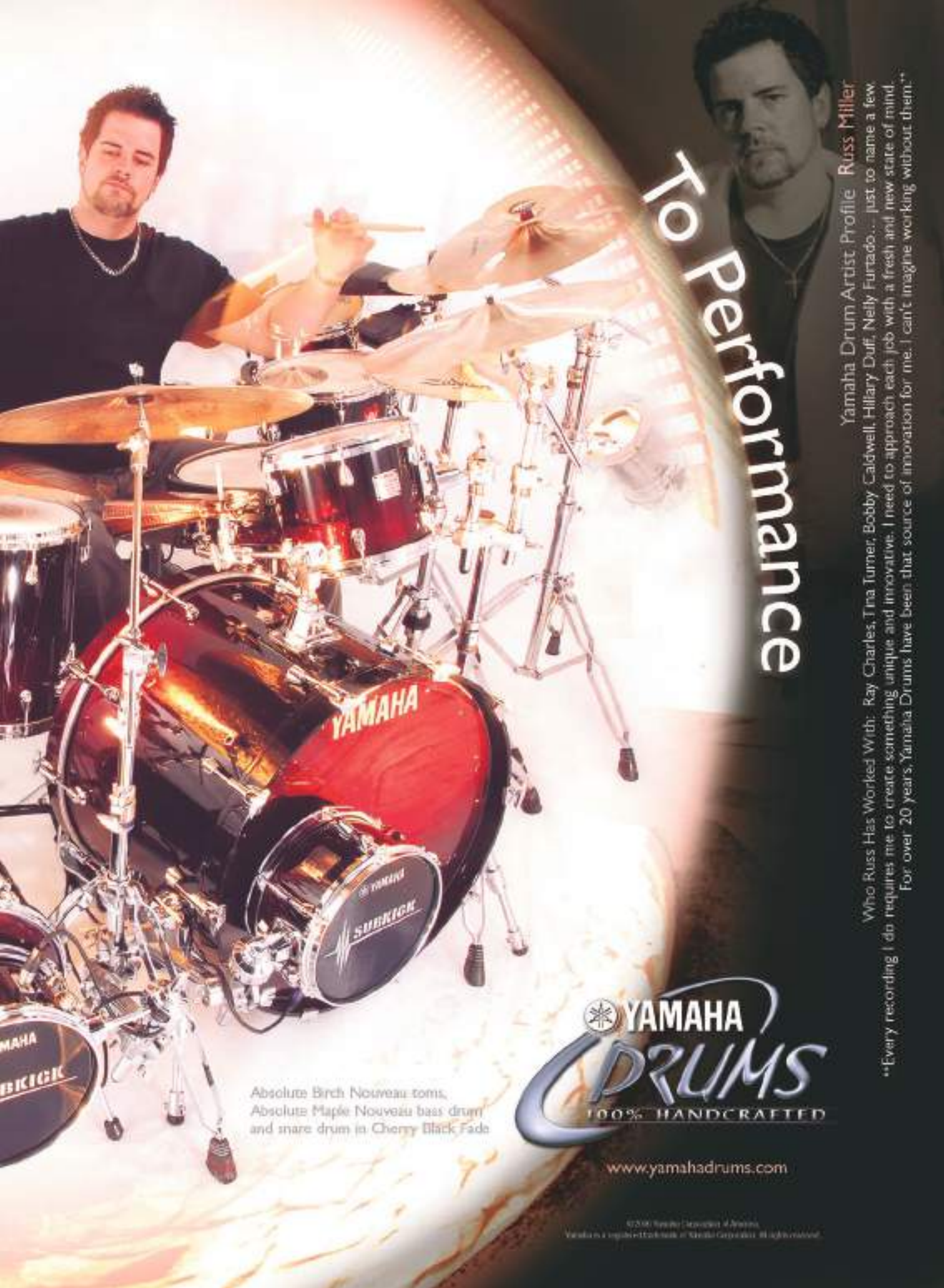
Innovation

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To Performance

Yamaha Drum Artist Profile Russ Miller

Who Russ Has Worked With: Ray Charles, Tina Turner, Bobby Caldwell, Hillary Duff, Nelly Furtado... just to name a few

“Every recording I do requires me to create something unique and innovative. I need to approach each job with a fresh and new state of mind.

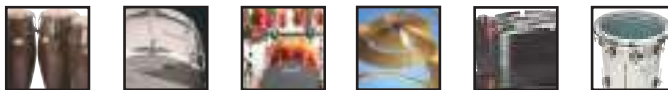
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Gon Bops California Series Congas And Bongos

Like A Fine Vintage Wine

by **Norman Arnold**

KEY NOTES

- Exceptional construction quality
- Hybrid rims combine comfort curve and Cuban designs
- Outstanding sound, especially for recording
- Wide range of finish options

The Gon Bops company was founded by Mariano Bobadilla in 1954, and the Bobadilla family made high-quality drums in their Los Angeles factory until the early 1990s. The brand then went dormant for a while. Now revived by Drum Workshop and overseen by Akbar Moghaddam (formerly of the legendary Valje Company and his own Sol Percussion), Gon Bops is once again offering top-quality Latin percussion instruments.

Conga Details

Gon Bops California Series congas are hand-made from quarter-sawn North American oak. The shells are 30" high, and they feature gently contoured bodies in the Cuban style. The hoops and lugs are well crafted and solid. The drums all have custom-sized grade-A cowskin heads. These are held in place by hybrid hoops that combine the playability elements of the "comfort curve" style and the more traditional look of the flat Cuban style. This makes the drums extremely comfortable to play.

Gon Bops offers two finish options. Lacquer Custom drums are available in six hand-painted lacquer finishes, including Aztec Gold, Candy Apple Red, Natural, Regal Blue, Solid Black, and Solid White. Lacquer Specialty finishes include virtually any

color, along with multiple-step processes including stains, transperants, bursts, fades, sparkles, metallics, mirras, and graphics. Check out the

Gon Bops Web site for all the details on that. The models we reviewed featured an Ebony Stain Lacquer Specialty finish, and they looked great.

Conga Sound

I get a chance to swat a *lot* of hand drums, and I can honestly say that in terms of pure conga tone and playability, Gon Bops are the top of the line. The drums embody that warm and inviting skin-on-skin sound that brings people into the world of percussion and keeps them there.

The quinto and conga were a great matched pair that sounded very tight and well balanced together. The tumba was a really nice addition to that pair, with a very warm yet crisp sound that made it inspiring to play. Gon





Bops also offers a super tumba that we did not get to review, but that I would guess would round out a great set of four drums.

I take all the drums that I review into my studio to record them. For the purpose of recording, Gon Bops drums are exceptional. The shells produce a very woody tonality, and that skin-on-skin effect creates an almost cracking sound. It's warm and...well...*percussive* at the same time. These are also the easiest drums on which to get a warm and perfect popping *slap* that I've ever encountered. Put a mic' in front of them and you'll sound like a star.

The Bongos

The California Series bongos are made with the same quality as are the congas, and they sound as good. The North American Red Oak used for the shells, as well as the hoop style and design, match that of the congas. However, the drums differ in the selection of heads. The 7" macho has a horsehide head; the 8¹/₂" hembra has a cowhide head. This head selection, along with what Gon Bops describes as "a special beveled bearing edge," makes both of the drums piercing and crisp,

with an underlying rich woodiness.

The sound and looks of these drums are the result of excellent craftsmanship and attention to detail. Claw hooks are widely spaced on either side to make the drums more comfortable to play in a seated position. Optional BPAD1 Bongo Pads are available to make things even easier.

The Bottom Line

The bottom line is that the only issue with these drums *is* the bottom line. They are exceptional drums, and they carry an exceptionally high price. I wish there were some magic way to make these drums accessible to beginners, because they are so easy to play, and the joy created by their sound is immediate.

Gon Bops' tag line is: "What percussion should be." I completely agree. Entry-level drums usually sound like entry-level drums. If you're a beginner shopping for drums, at least go and *play* a set of these drums so that you'll know what you're aspiring to sound like.

If you want a fine wine, you have to pay fine-wine prices. Gon Bops drums follow that same principle. But to that I say: Don't throw your money away on junk. Save twice as long and purchase only once. It'll be worth the wait.

THE NUMBERS

10 ³ / ₄ x30 quinto	\$1,259
10 ¹ / ₂ x30 conga	\$1,299
12 ¹ / ₄ x30 tumba	\$1,399
13 ¹ / ₄ x30 super tumba	\$1,379
7x8 ¹ / ₂ bongos	\$.499
(805) 485-6999, www.gonbops.com .	



Dunnett Classic Snare Drums

The Gospel According To Ronn

by Rick Van Horn
photos by Jim Esposito

KEY NOTES

- Unique construction methods and design elements
- Outstanding construction quality
- Stainless Steel drum offered surprising tuning range
- Milkwood drum combined vintage and contemporary characteristics

North America has a plethora of custom drum builders, and Canada alone has a sizeable number. Among these builders, Vancouver, Canada's Ronn Dunnett has managed to establish a pretty high profile. He's a tireless supporter of live drumming events, and he's a major force behind the popular drumsmith.com Web site. These activities undoubtedly contribute to his recognition factor. But amid all the hoopla, he also manages to create some pretty spiffy drums.

Although Ronn does build drumkits, his bread and butter comes from distinctive snare drums made of titanium, stainless steel, brass, bronze, copper, composites, and a wide variety of domestic and exotic woods. Ronn machines the shells to his own specifications and fits them with hardware of his own design.

Many of Ronn's theories about shell design, bearing edges, and what makes a drum sound a certain way fly in the face of conventional wisdom. But that's just fine with him, since it helps to set his drums apart from those of other custom manufacturers.

General Characteristics

For this review we were sent a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 Stainless Steel drum, a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 13 Titanium drum, and a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 Milkwood MonoPly drum. All came fitted with R Class chrome-over-brass tube lugs, R Class throw-offs, Hypervent I adjustable air vents, 2.3-mm triple-flange hoops, Remo coated batter heads and hyper-clear snare side heads (exclusive to Dunnett), and 42-strand snappy snare wires.

Each drum bears Ronn's signature, an individual serial name, and the date of manufacture written inside the shell. And, as befits the work of a noted custom drum builder, every construction element of our three review drums was outstanding.

Earlier, I mentioned Ronn's theories of manufacture. According to Ronn, variables of weight and mass determine the voice of a drum as much as do that drum's dimensions. More specifically, he believes that heavier drums do not produce greater volume. So his designs focus on shell thickness (or more accurately, *thinness*) and weight, combined with low-mass/minimal-contact hardware, the efficient use of lugs (eight maximum, as on all of our review drums), and undersized diameters.

Dunnett drums also feature what Ronn calls "soft" snare beds. These beds are contoured quite deeply, and are cut to run just past the lugs on either side of the snare throw-off or butt. This design is intended to eliminate snare buzz and to accommodate the use of 42-strand snares.

5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 Stainless Steel Snare





6 1/2x13 Titanium Snare



5 1/2x14 Milkwood MonoPly Snare

R Class Throw-Offs

Ronn Dunnnett designed the R Class Throw-Off to be durable, functional, and convenient—and it's all three. It's an all-metal unit that features excellent machining, fit, and finish. It operates smoothly, with a lever that's big enough to grasp easily but that isn't cumbersome.

Best of all, the entire throw-off mechanism can be rotated 180°. That means that you can select the direction in which you want the throw-off lever to move—toward you, away from you, straight out from the side of the drum, whatever—no matter how you have the drum positioned on the stand. (Lefties take note!)

Our review drums all came with original R Class throw-offs. However, by the time you read this, all Dunnett drums will be supplied with the upgraded R2 throw-off and butt end. This unit offers the features of the R Class, but adds a coupling system that allows the snare wires to be removed from the throw-off and butt without the use of a drumkey. This quick-release feature reduces the amount of time and effort involved when changing the snare-side head.

Hypervent I

The Hypervent I is an adjustable valve that allows you to determine how much air you want to escape from the drum when it's struck. You turn a small knurled knob to fully open or fully close the vent, or put it anywhere in between.

Ronn created this option because he believes that the air inside a non-vented drum acts as a pneumatic transducer, carrying the vibration of the top head to the bottom on a 1:1 ratio. Thus a drum without a vent is likely to be more sensitive and more responsive. Under conditions of more aggressive playing, where sensitivity is not an issue but sheer volume is, venting a drum will prevent the drum from "choking," and will allow it to project to its fullest capacity.

Classic Titanium

The 6 1/2x13 Titanium drum we received certainly supported Ronn's claim that his Titanium drums feature "the lightest metal shell available—period." It weighed only eight pounds (as compared to the Stainless Steel drum's ten pounds). It featured a raw titanium finish, with no lacquer coating.

The edges on Dunnett metal-shell drums are distinctly differ-

ent from those found on virtually all other metal snares. They're pretty much just the smoothed-over edge of the thin shell itself, with no added contour. Ronn Dunnnett puts it this way: "What makes a crash cymbal and a China type sound so different? The flange. When you bend something, you alter the way it resonates. That principle also applies to a metal drumshell. Virtually all metal snare drums have a flange that serves as a blunt bearing edge. Dunnett Classic drums do not have a flange. As a result, they resonate clear and clean, with full sustain. A non-flanged edge also provides for easy and precise tuning."

In this instance, I have to disagree with Ronn about the easy tuning. It took us a quite while to find the optimum combination of top and bottom head tension for this drum. The issue seemed to be the drum's depth. It wanted to be a fatback drum, and as soon as we tightened the batter head beyond a medium tension, it started to choke up. When we finally *found* the right tension combo, though, the Titanium drum had a distinctive quality: full, yet fairly warm—and *very* dry (once the drumhead ring was taken out of the equation).

The Hypervent didn't have much effect on this drum—until we found that optimum head-tension combo. After that, we heard (and felt) a much more dramatic difference between the vented and unvented response of the drum. It was very crisp and even dryer when unvented. When vented, it was brighter, and it spoke with more authority.

Stainless Steel

With its mirror-smooth finish, the 5 1/2x14 Stainless Steel drum was the very definition of "gleaming." I almost hated to handle it, owing to the fingerprints I left on the shell. (White gloves, anyone?) But that reluctance was reduced by the enjoyment I received from playing the drum.

Steel is a heavier, denser metal than titanium, so it wasn't surprising that the Stainless Steel drum produced a crisper, brighter, and more powerful sound than that of the Titanium model. Our review drum's shallower depth also contributed to this acoustic character. Surprisingly, though, the Stainless Steel drum had a wider effective tuning range than did the Titanium model. With the batter tensioned just a little tighter than medium, it could easily be a fine symphonic drum, with excellent snare response (made even more prominent when



The Hypervent I system adjusts how much air can escape from the shell.

the Hypervent was closed). On the other hand, if you wanted a bullet-through-the-brain rock *crack*, you'd just need to crank this baby up and open the vent.

The resonant character of the Stainless Steel shell gave this drum an almost timbale-like over-ring when it was played close to the rim. Actual rimshots rang for days. But this could be easily eliminated with a minimal amount of batter-head muffling if so desired.

Milkwood MonoPly

Dunnett is best known for metal-shell drums, but the 5½x14 Milkwood MonoPly drum we tested was pretty impressive in its own right. "Milkwood" is Ronn Dunnett's proprietary name for the exceptionally lightweight wood used to make this drum.

I'm partial to solid-wood drums, because they generally provide the best acoustic characteristics of wood while also offering reflectivity and projection that approaches that of metal. Depending on the type of wood and its thickness, solid-shell drums can sometimes be unexpectedly bright. But Dunnett solids are substantially thinner than other drums I've seen. They also feature reinforcement rings that are reduced in depth and diameter. The result, according to Ronn Dunnett, is that his solid-shell drums are the lightest on the market.

The Milkwood drum, with its thin shell finished in clear matte lacquer, produced a sound that was exceptionally warm and rich. It was neither too ringy nor too dry, and it responded dramatically to Hypervent adjustments. Its maple reinforcement



The original R Class throw-offs on our review drums permit 180° movement of the throw-off mechanism. All Dunnett drums now come with the R2 model shown here, which adds a snare-wire quick-release feature.



hoops helped to focus stick attack before the sound "spread out" within the main shell body. Overall, I'd describe this drum as an outstanding hybrid of vintage and contemporary characteristics.

In spite of what was said earlier about deep snare beds, at first I didn't think the Milkwood snare even *had* a snare bed. It did, but that bed was very wide and *much* shallower than that of the metal drums. The resulting amount of "flatted" bearing edge that came into contact with the snare-side drumhead was likely a contributing factor to the drum's controlled sound. Ronn Dunnett informed me that this bed was cut on this drum only, by special customer request. The same drum with a "standard" deep Dunnett snare bed might be a little brighter.

You Get What You Pay For

I could end this review with the typical "custom drums command a custom price" comment. But to be honest, Dunnett prices are surprisingly affordable, considering the drums' unique design, construction quality, and acoustic performance.

Ronn Dunnett spares no expense in the creation of his drums, but neither does he inflate his prices unrealistically to capitalize on the "custom" mantra. Just like his design concepts, this sales philosophy is an original—and very refreshing—approach.

THE NUMBERS	
6½x13 Titanium snare drum	\$995
5½x14 Stainless Steel snare drum	\$595
5½x14 Exotic MonoPly Milkwood snare drum ..	\$695
(604) 643-9939, www.dunnett.com .	



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Ford Drums

Definitely NOT Off The Assembly Line

by Rick Van Horn
photos by Jim Esposito

KEY NOTES

- Outstanding craftsmanship
- Different bearing edges on differently sized drums for maximum shell-to-head contact
- Exceptionally full tom sounds
- Cast Iron snare not as heavy as it looks

Ford is certainly a familiar name in American manufacturing—just not for drums. Nevertheless, Ford drums do exist, and they're touted as nothing less than "the Ferrari of drums" by their builders.

One of those builders is company namesake Jimmy Ford. Jimmy played with Lionel Hampton for six years, entertains guests at Disneyland Park regularly, and plays throughout Southern California with big bands, trios, and quartets. He's also a perennial favorite at custom & vintage drum shows, where he impresses audiences with his tribute to Buddy Rich.

The other builder, Jay Gaylen, has been drumming since the age of seven. But for most of his adult life he's been involved with the creation of award-winning advertising campaigns for some of the biggest brands in the country—including Gretsch and Legend drums, and Toca percussion.

Jimmy and Jay believe that they know what it takes to build drums that sing together harmoniously within a set. They also believe that no drum is right for every drummer or for every gig. So they build drums to meet each customer's needs. Drumset choices include maple or birch shells in five to ten or more plies, with or without sound reinforcement rings. Drums are available with round-peaked bearing edges cut





The "Firehouse" kit's 6x14 bird's-eye maple snare featured die-cast hoops and a small, efficient throw-off.

at 30° or 45°, and with either solid brass or cast lugs. They're finished in eight coats of high-gloss or satin hand-buffed lacquer, in any color the customer can imagine. Fades and other special finishes are available, as are classic wraps.

Custom snare drums are another specialty at Ford. In addition to a wide variety of wood-shell models, they also offer drums that feature Potyondi metal shells.

For this review Ford sent us a five-piece kit that was built for a customer who wanted to honor his father, a fallen firefighter. We were also sent a 10/5/10-mil 5½x14 cast iron snare drum, and a 5½x13 maple snare finished in olive ash burl veneer.

Between calling themselves "the Ferrari of drums" and using a slogan like "Have you driven a band lately," Ford lays the automotive analogies on a little thick. But what the heck...I'll play.

So let's take these Fords for a spin.

The Firehouse Kit

This isn't Ford's name for the kit; it's mine. What with the fire-company logo badge on each drum, and the fiery look of the finish, the set visually captures the intensity that goes along with firefighting. As such, I'm sure the drummer who ordered it to honor his father will be pleased. The finish itself is described by Jay Gaylen as "Inferno-Cinder Red Fade." It features a gold metal flake within a translucent-fade finish, as opposed to metal flake *over* an opaque finish. It's artfully done, and it reflects Ford's claim that "If you can dream it, we can do it."

The kit featured 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms and a 12x14 floor tom (with legs), all of which featured 8-ply maple shells. All of



The custom finish on our review kit is called Inferno-Cinder Red Fade.

the toms and were mounted via suspension systems. The legs on the floor-tom were adjusted by drumkey bolts, which we found to be an inconvenience. Hand-operated wing bolts would be more user-friendly.

The 18x20 kick had a 10-ply maple shell. The 6x14 snare featured an 8-ply maple shell with 10-ply reinforcement hoops. It came finished with a bird's-eye veneer, and fitted with die-cast hoops.

Ford cuts different bearing edges for different-sized drums. Jay Gaylen explains, "As drumshell size increases, the collar of the drumhead also increases, so one edge does not work for all. The bigger the collar, the rounder the edge, the more head-

to-shell contact that's required. On toms and bass drums we tend to cut an inner 45° with a 3/8" round-over, depending on the ply configuration of the shell. On snare drums we cut a sharper edge and move it toward the outer perimeter of the shell to bring out the highs, increase the sensitivity, and boost the overall projection."

The snare and toms came fitted with Aquarian Satin Finish Texture Coated single-ply batter heads and clear bottom heads. The bass drum was equipped with an Aquarian Super-Kick batter and a black logo front head.

Workmanship on the drums was excellent, helping to make tuning a breeze. I'm normally not a fan of the sound of coated single-ply heads on toms. But I was pleasantly surprised by the full-bodied sound of the Ford toms with the Aquarian heads. The drums had all the attack, clarity, and sustain that you'd expect to get with single-ply heads. But they also had excellent depth, punch, and warmth. And, just as Jimmy Ford and Jay Gaylen said they would, they *sang*, individually and as a trio. It was a truly sweet sound.

The bass drum had a more controlled character than did the toms. But that was to be expected, given the fact that Aquarian Super-Kick batter and Force II resonant heads each have built-in muffling properties. Don't get me wrong; the kick had a deep, solid, contemporary bass drum sound that would serve well in most situations (and this with no hole in the front head and nothing inside the drum). I just didn't think that that sound matched the liveliness of the toms. But that liveliness could easily be obtained from the kick drum by altering the head selection.

I was also impressed by the sensitivity of the 6x14 maple snare drum, given its shell depth. With the batter head at a medium tension, I got outstanding snare response, even at very low volume levels. The die-cast hoops helped keep that response even across the entire surface of the head, and also helped to "dry out" some of the overring. When I increased the striking force, the depth of the shell came more into play, giving an underlying warmth and fatness to the sound—but without losing the crispness.

I wasn't fond of this snare's sound when I cranked the top head up. The drum seemed to sacrifice some of its body in an attempt to achieve a "cracking" sound. But if you want a bullet-through-the-brain drum sound, you'd more likely opt for a shallower drum, and/or one made of metal. Why waste the earthy, warm characteristics of a deep-shelled maple drum?



The Cast Iron snare drum is not as heavy as it might appear.



The Olive Ash snare drum featured attractive brass hardware.

Cast Iron Snare Drum

I've played drums made from a variety of metals, but cast iron is a new one for me. The 5 1/2x14 cast iron Ford drum featured a shell made to Ford's specs by Peter Potyondi, who specializes in "exotic" metal shells.

The shell starts out at 10 mils thick, then is machined in its center to create a 5-mil shell with 10-mil "reinforcement hoops" top and bottom. The bearing edges machined into those hoops are slightly rounded to promote head-to-shell contact. The goal of this design is to provide "clarity without distortion, and far less weight than a shell that was all 10 mils thick." At 16 lbs., the drum was no lightweight, but it was considerably lighter than some thick-shelled cast-metal snares we've tested.

The iron shell was given a brushed natural finish, with the "brush strokes" clearly visible in the metal surface. This slightly rough-hewn look was offset by the gleam of chrome-over-brass tube lugs and 2.3-mm chromed-steel Superhoops. Trick's high-tech GS007 machined-aluminum snare throw-off finished the assembly.

The drum came fitted with an Aquarian Studio X Texture Coated batter head (which features a lightweight muffling ring on

the underside). This was likely done as a way of harnessing some of the iron shell's overtones. And it worked: The drum had depth, power, and a reasonably wide tuning range, but it also had a surprising "dryness." There was some overring, to be sure, but not nearly as much as with a traditional chromed steel or brass snare. And that ring could be controlled easily (if desired) with the slightest amount of additional muffling applied to the drumhead.

Olive Ash Maple Snare Drum

This 5½x13 drum featured a 10-ply North American maple shell fitted with brass tube lugs and rims and the GS007 throw-off. It, too, had an Aquarian Studio X Texture Coated batter. Its olive ash outer veneer provided a "natural wood" look with a distinctive grain pattern.

Jay Gaylen told me that this drum's shell was designed to provide "a dirtier, woodier" sound than that of the iron drum. Well, "woody" isn't much of a stretch (compared to a cast-iron drum). And I might use the term "earthy" rather than "dirty" to describe the warm, fat character of the Olive Ash drum. With its steel hoops and single-ply head, it projected a quintessential high-end maple snare drum sound, with a crispness and cut that was abetted by its 13" diameter. I wouldn't say that sound was anything *new*, but it sure was satisfying.

Conclusions

Jimmy Ford and Jay Gaylen don't lack for confidence in their products. Their Web site modestly states: "Why let a drum company's sound dictate yours? Don't settle. The drumkit of your dreams is a phone call or email away."

Jimmy and Jay also aren't shy in saying that dreams (like Ferraris) don't come cheap. Their informational brochure states, "Ford drumkits will not be found at chain stores or sold at discount. However, Ford is competitive with other high-end manufacturers who don't offer nearly as many options." Given the quality of workmanship and acoustic performance represented by our review drums, Ford's claims may be justified. Just how valuable Ford's "custom options" are would, of course, be up to the individual.

But then again, individuality is the whole point.

THE NUMBERS

"Firehouse" Drumkit	
18x20 bass drum	\$1,610
12x14 floor tom	\$970
9x12 rack tom	\$850
8x10 rack tom	\$825
6x14 snare drum	\$825
Exotic veneer adds \$800 to cost of kit, making total retail price	\$5,880

5½x13 Olive Ash maple snare drum	\$825
5½x14 Cast Iron snare drum	\$1,395
www.forddrums.com	
(714) 744-2467	

Quick Looks

Serpent Sidewinder 17

The Sidewinder is a hand-hammered B20 bronze cymbal sliced with an industrial water cutter into a dangly ribbon-like special-effects instrument. The result of such "demanufacture" is a glassy, relatively quiet, gong-like sound when crashed, and a rather familiar ping quality when ridden on.

The bell of the Sidewinder 17 (other diameters are promised soon), though of a medium size, is significantly less "bell-like" in tone than that of most standard cymbals. But it does offer a slight variation on the sound produced by hitting the cymbal elsewhere. In fact, one of the fun aspects of The Sidewinder is the subtle variety of timbres you can get by striking it in different places. You also might be pleasantly surprised at how easy it is to get a serviceable ride pattern going—brittle, but defined, and accompanied by a significant but not uncontrollable buildup of pleasantly messy overtones.

Some good time spent with this cymbal is likely to inspire unique approaches and sounds. I had the most fun playing fast sort of "double ride" patterns by striking top and bottom sections of the cymbal simultaneously, and then effecting the sound with random muffles with my left hand.

Drummers never seem to tire of playful new choices. The Sidewinder is more than a one-trick pony, and could provide your sonic palette with some very usable and distinct tones. List price is \$265.

www.SerpentCymbal.com

Adam Budofsky



Stagg Advanced Concept Drum Cases

A Space-Age Approach To An Age-Old Need

by Rick Van Horn

KEY NOTES

- Innovative design and functional features
- Extremely durable construction
- Cases are heavy
- Hardware case had fit problems

A lot of thought has been given to the design of Stagg's new Advanced Concept molded hard-shell plastic drum cases. You need only glance at their unusual shape and distinctive molded contours to get the impression that somebody planned these cases as more than just "containers." They're meant to be functional pieces of equipment in their own right.

The Shape

Most drum cases are essentially cylindrical, in order to conform to the cylindrical shape of the drums inside them. There's generally a flat section on the side that allows the case to be placed edgewise on the floor—"standing up," as it were.

Stagg cases are much more triangular, combining the cylindrical portion with two extended "corners." These corners provide the flatted edge for standing, and also reinforce the overall structural integrity of the case. That's the upside of the cases' design. The downside is that it makes the cases larger and bulkier than traditional models, which may become an issue in the trunk of a Corolla.

The Window Sticker

A list of the features offered by the Stagg cases reads like the options shown on the window sticker of a high-tech car. Let's take a look.

1. "Eminently stackable and stable due to Stagg's X-centric design." All Stagg drum cases, no matter what their size, have molded circular protuberances that mate with recesses on all other cases, locking the cases together when they're stacked. Also, instead of stacking each case in the center of the one below it, the cases stack in such a way that their "bottoms" (the more or less flat area opposite the handles when the cases are carried) are all flush. This puts the weight of the stack over the strongest part of each case, and also allows you to back the entire stack of cases up against a wall for further support. Cool idea.

2. "All drum cases are lined top and bottom. The Basic Snare case is fully lined."



Stagg cases feature a triangular “footed” design, as well as a specially contoured lid design.



The lining is a sheet of fabric over a slight amount of padding. This is a nice feature, as far as it goes. My problem is that the cases are of the “telescoping” variety, meaning that each case of a given diameter can expand to accommodate drums of different depths. With any drum that’s deeper than the completely compressed case, the lid of the case rests on the top of the drumshell. That shell is actually providing the structural support for the case.

I’m not a fan of this design, even though it does help keep manufacturing costs—and purchase price—down, since the manufacturer only has to create one model for each drum diameter. But if a case *is* going to be a telescoping model, I’d like to see a *lot* more padding or other protection against top and bottom impact for the drum inside.

3. “Convex-shaped top shell to protect against compressive force from above.” Most hard-shell cases simply stretch some material across the top of the drum in a flat fashion to create the lid. Any impact immediately bows the lid down, risking damage to the head of the drum inside. The Stagg cases can’t totally eliminate that risk, but the convex shape does “dome” the lids a little to absorb impact before the lid would come in contact with the head below.

4. “Shock-absorbent support zones to disperse external shock to the case and drums.” This is a more important structural feature—and a nice one. The shape and molded contours of the case help “spread” any impact *around* the drum, instead of allowing a localized blow. This should provide much more side-impact protection than that afforded by a traditional cylindrical case.

5. “Case tops feature Water Transport Channels to avoid liquid pooling on the top.” You may have seen the recent *MD* ad with a photo depicting rain beating down on—and pouring off of—a Stagg case. The way I see it, hard-shell plastic cases

should be impervious to rain anyway. But at least there won’t be a pool of water on the top of the case to dump on your shoes when you pick the case up.

6. “Adjustable large format buckles at the end of each strap for flexibility of shell depth.” These molded composite squeeze-type buckles are easy to operate, but it’ll take you some time to get used to having to open two buckles on every strap in order to raise the lid on the case. This is another aspect of the “telescoping” design.

7. “All drum cases feature sturdy “D” rings that allow the owner to pass a cable through for locking with a padlock, or to secure the cases to the inside of a truck for transport.” This seems like a minor feature, but it could mean the difference between going home with or without your drums after a gig. The D-rings are riveted to each case on a nylon strap, and would not pose much of an obstacle to a determined and prepared thief. But they certainly would help prevent an impulsive “grab and go” heist.

8. “Bass drum and large floor tom cases are fitted with recessed transport wheels.” Wheels are great for pulling a case on level ground, going up a ramp, or moving from a dock-level truck into the backstage area of a major venue. But they don’t help when it comes time to lift that puppy into the bed of a pickup or the trunk of a car after a gig at the local Elk’s Club.

With that in mind, this may be a good time to mention the fact that the durability of a thick molded plastic case comes with a downside: weight. For example, the 10” Stagg tom case weighed about 7½ pounds—exactly the weight of the 8x10 maple tom we carried in it. The 22” bass drum case weighed 22½ pounds—only a few pounds less than the drum we put in it. By contrast, most drum bags add very little weight to the drums they contain. But, of course, neither do they offer the protection factor of the hard case. I’m just saying that you should make an informed choice.

9. “Hardware cases feature recessed wheels, and are designed with I-beam and triangle construction for maximum horizontal and vertical strength.” In general, I liked the 40” hardware case that we tested. It was a very practical, open-topped rectangular container that easily accommodated a fair amount of stuff. The metal reinforcement inside gave it the structural integrity necessary to remain secure and rigid while being rolled or carried.



The telescoping design of Stagg’s drum cases utilizes double handles. The large rubber grips are individually comfortable to hold, but are bulky when held together.



D-rings on each case let the cases be secured with a cable and padlock.

10. "Height Extension and Stacking Tray Extensions are available for the 40" hardware case." The idea here is that if you need more vertical space for additional hardware, or you want a shelf section for cables, mic' stands, and so forth, you can add them to the basic case. The various sections lock together with rotating ATA-style clamps. And this was where I encountered some problems.

To begin with, the clamps didn't seem to lock down very securely. In some cases, the upper and lower halves of the clamps didn't align properly for optimum grip. In others, the amount of "play" that remained after the clamps were closed allowed the various case sections to slide a bit. I never got the sense that the case was going to come apart, but neither did it feel like one solid unit.

Also, while I was able to fit the vertical-space section onto the base unit easily, I was completely *unable* to do the same with the shelf unit. The molded contour of its plastic body did not conform to the contour of the base unit, so there was no way to mate the two.

These two problems reflect a need for more attention to quality control and proper fit between the components of the hardware case system.

11. "Address tag and STAGGCase model number designed into the fastening strap." This is another

thoughtful touch—although the address tag is a little hard to get out of its holder. Also, the tag is completely removable. So in terms of true security, it doesn't replace the age-old practice of painting one's name on the side of the case.

12. "The air is free." Stagg says that their cases are designed with just enough space between the top and bottom sections to provide the airflow necessary for opening or closing the cases quickly. I've used some drum cases in which a certain amount of "vacuum hold" between the sections was, indeed, a minor inconvenience, and it's thoughtful of Stagg to take this problem into consideration. However, the spacing between case sections in our test group became more pronounced as the sizes increased, to the point where the 16" floor tom and 22" bass drum case lids literally "rattled around" on top of the lower sections. A slight reduction of the space would provide a more solid-feeling case assembly in these instances.

Not On The List

A feature of Stagg cases not mentioned in their promotional material is their strap-type handles with rubber comfort-grips. Each case has a pair of these—one attached to the bottom section and one attached to the lid section. (There's a single additional handle between the wheels on the bass drum and large floor tom cases, for two-person carrying.)

The two straps come together closely when a case is fully compressed. But they'd be spread further apart if the case contained a deep-shelled drum, which might cause a carrying problem.

A different carrying problem was created (at least for me) by the rubber grips on the straps. They're fairly large, ostensibly for gripping comfort. However, I have a small hand, and I found it difficult to comfortably grasp both of the grips in such a way as to balance the weight of the case evenly between the straps. I have drum bags with strap handles that fit within a wrap-around cover, thus creating a single grip position. I'd suggest this sort of approach for the Stagg grips.



Stagg's 40" hardware case features a component system that lets you add vertical space or a second shelf. We had trouble fitting the shelf unit onto our review model.

Quick Looks

ThunderEcho Trash Kat

The Trash Kat is a galvanized garbage can fitted with a drumhead. Not a drum designed to look like a trash can, but an actual aluminum trash can—cheap metal handles, flat metal bottom, and all—fitted with a 20" 8-hole hoop, a clear, single-ply no-name head that extends past the "rim" timpani-fashion, and three floor tom-style legs.

When struck with a stick, you do hear the expected metallic sympathetic tone coming off the "shell," though the basic tone of the Trash Kat is not completely unlike what you'd get from, say, a 16" floor tom tuned up tight. It's also not nearly as loud as your average floor tom. I was actually hoping the drum would sound a little nastier, given its vibe. Charmingly, the handles were asymmetrically spaced around the drum, and leaned against one spacer but not the next, which provided just enough rattle to be annoying, but not intentionally so. I'd suggest experimenting with hanging various pieces of dangling found objects off the handles—why not go nuts with the unique aspects of the instrument?

The construction of the Trash Kat is rudimentary, with homemade wooden spacers and what look like generic brown rubber furniture leg stops separating the lug bolt receivers from the can. The drum is tensioned with a wrench, not a drumkey. The legs extend fairly high, so you could play the Trash Kat standing up quite comfortably.

Again, drummers gobble up unique sonic options. The Trash Kat might not change your world—but then again, it might. List price is \$269.77.

www.ThunderEchoDrums.com

Adam Budofsky



Case Closed

I'm impressed with Stagg's innovative approach to the design of what have, heretofore, been pretty unromantic pieces of drum gear. True, some of the positive design aspects create corresponding negative ones that must be considered. And there are some significant quality-control issues that need to be addressed (particularly on the hardware case). But based on the effort that obviously went into the initial design process, I'm confident that those issues will be dealt with in short order. All in all, I'd say that Stagg's foray into the professional drum-case market is a pretty auspicious debut.

THE NUMBERS

8" tom case	\$71.99
10" snare case	\$79.99
10" tom case	\$99.99
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12" tom case	\$99.99
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13" snare case	\$99.99
13" tom case	\$119.99
14" regular and free-floating snare case	\$99.99
14" piccolo snare case	\$92.49
14" snare case	\$99.99
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16" floor tom case	\$169.99
18" floor tom case	\$219.99
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20" bass drum case with wheels	\$269.99
22" bass drum case with wheels	\$289.99
40" hardware case with wheels	\$259.99
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Beyerdynamic Opus Drumset Microphones

Quality Sound For The Working Drummer

by Mark Parsons

Beyerdynamic has long been known as a purveyor of quality instrument microphones. (Their M-88 has been considered one of the classic bass drum mic's for over thirty years, with good reason.) Now the manufacturer has introduced their Opus series of microphones. And while these mic's were designed for the working musician and are therefore built with cost in mind, I hesitate to use the term "budget" or "value-priced" when describing them. That's because after I used them for a while it became clear they were also built with quality and reliability in mind.

KEY NOTES

- all models offer excellent value
- Opus 99/ST 99 mic'-and-stand combination is compact and practical
- Opus 53 performs much better than its price would indicate

The Opus series includes several drum-specific models. These drum mic's are available individually, or in four pre-packaged kits (designated Small, Medium, Large, and Extra-Large).

The Test Drum-Mic' Kit

We were sent the "large" drum-miking kit for review (official designation: Opus Drumset L). This consists of one Opus 99 kick mic' (and ST 99

stand), four Opus 88 clip-on snare/tom mic's, and a pair of Opus 53 small condensers for overheads. The whole kit comes in a foam-lined plastic case with cut-outs for additional mic's, should you wish to expand the miking configuration on your kit.

For the purpose of our review, we set up a drumkit in the studio and equipped it with fairly standard mic's (from familiar brands) for each application. To test the Beyer mic's, we'd replace one of the "usual suspects" with the appropriate review model. This would not only give us a quick comparison with a known standard, but also provide a reference with which the reader is likely to be familiar. We also evaluated the mic's on their *own* merits, without regard to what was previously on the stand, because "different" is not always "worse."

Here we go, from the bottom up.

Opus 99 Bass Drum Mic'

A nearsighted sound engineer could identify the Opus 99 as a kick mic' from a mile away. It's a beefy cylinder, 2" in diameter and approximately 5" long (including tailpiece). The aluminum and cast-zinc body is nicely finished in matte black. The stand mount incorporates a small elastic suspension, which should help reduce any mechanically transmitted sounds.

The Opus 99 is a hypercardioid dynamic mic', and it has what the manufacturer calls an "optimized frequency response." This means that it's not designed to be flat, but rather to have a pre-equalized response tailored for the intended application (bass drum). A quick glance at the response chart confirms this: There's a small boost around 125 Hz, a slight reduction in the lower mids (centered at maybe 400 Hz), and a good boost of 6 to 8 dB up around 5 kHz. Looking at the polar chart also reveals that while this mic' does, indeed, have a tight pattern, it's tighter in the upper ranges as opposed to the bottom end. This should result in



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HP900P (Power Glide Pedal)

HS700W (RoadPro Snare Stand)

HT730 (1st Chair Throne)



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Electronic Review

Opus 99



any shell ring picked up by the mic' being warm in character rather than harsh. But would the microphone sound like the chart looks?

We ran the Opus 99 alongside popular kick mic's from AKG and Audix (the D112 and D-6, respectively), both of which are also in the "Pre-Q'd" category. We started outside the kick drum, which gave us a chance to use the ST 99 stand. This is a simple yet clever little device. The base is a T, with a short arm extending vertically from the base. (All three arms are approximately 7" in length.) The upright arm unscrews so that the whole thing goes into the case flat. The resulting mic' height is fixed at about 8", but that's a good, functional height for the intended application. The ST 99's stability is increased by the fact that the arms are all solid (rather than pipe), with the result that the stand—though small—is heavier than it looks.

When we placed the Opus 99 a few inches in front of the resonant head of a 22" maple kick drum, it yielded a solid and clear representation of the drum's sound. The response was slightly more linear than that of the D112. The D112 had more mid-bass bloom to the sound, but it wasn't as articulate as the Opus 99 on top. Also, the Opus 99 didn't have quite as much lower-mid attenuation built into it. Subjectively, the D112 was a little "beefier," but with a little less clarity on top, while the Opus 99 was "punchier" with better attack characteristics.

It took a few moments of puzzle-solving

to get the ST-99 stand through a 5" port in the front head, but we managed to get it inside the drum and sitting on a small muffling pad. This placed the mic' in a useful position in the middle of the drum. (You could, of course, also mount the Opus on a regular low boom stand and place it wherever you liked.) Inside the drum, the characteristic traits of the Opus 99 were similar to those exhibited outside: a nice punchy sound, tight on the bottom with good beater attack on top.

When compared to the Audix D-6, the Opus 99 was in the same ballpark. But again, it was more linear than the model it replaced, with the pre-equalization effect being a bit more subdued (not quite as massive on the bottom or snappy on top).

The Opus 99 produced a tight, punchy, articulate sound from a variety of positions, which left us with a good overall impression. It generally needed no additional equalization, but it responded well when EQ was added to modify the tone. If you like the modern, pre-curved sound but you want something that's still somewhat universal in application, the Opus 99 is definitely worth a listen.

Opus 88 Snare/Tom Mic'

The Opus 88 is a small-diaphragm electret condenser, with a cardioid polar pattern. If the Opus 99 is obvious as to its purpose, the Opus 88 is more of an enigma, at least at first glance. The business end at least *looks* like a mic'—it's a small cylin-



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der about $\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter and $\frac{1}{2}$ " long. This is attached by a small gooseneck to an interesting-looking clamping arrangement, which also houses the mic's electronics. The clamp has two springs—one on either side of the mic's amp/XLR tailpiece—which put pressure on a pair of rubberized jaws. The jaws will open from $\frac{3}{8}$ " up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to clamp onto your drum hoop. In practice this worked well, enabling us to mount the Opus 88 on drums with and without suspension mounts, using both flanged and die-cast hoops. Additionally, the short arm that holds the mic pivots through a 300° arc. This, along with the gooseneck, allows you to place the mic pretty much anywhere you want (within reason).

The microphones that the Opus 88 replaced on the drumset were typical dynamics frequently used for snares and toms: Shure SM 57s and Sennheiser MD-504s and e-604s. Condensers and dynamics are different animals, so this wasn't meant to be an apples-to-apples comparison. But it does serve to illustrate the inherent differences between the two. (The dynamics were more like each other than any of them were like the condenser, so anything said about one of the dynamics used in this comparison pretty much applied to all of them.)

When the Opus 88 was used over a snare drum in a typical close-miking location (a few inches over the hoop, looking down at an angle), it exhibited an extended range

and better transient response (to pick up snare rattle, for instance) than did the dynamics. There was slightly less upper bass to the condenser—the sound was a tad less thick—but the articulation was great. Additionally, it had a higher output, which is typical of condensers versus dynamics.

Next we tried the Opus 88 over a small tom, where the results were similar: More transient information was present and perceptible with the Opus 88, it was slightly less thick-sounding, and it captured the stick attack better.

After that, we tried the 88 on a large tom, where we discovered something new: With the lower frequencies available from the source instrument, the Opus 88 actually had better extension into the low end. (It could reproduce lower frequencies.) It just didn't have the upper bass boost possessed by the dynamics.

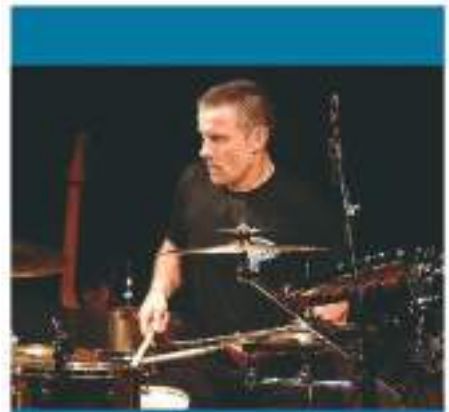
Overall, the Opus 88 sounded more "hi-fi" and clear than any of the dynamics. Yet it didn't sound so thin and clinical that it couldn't capture the beef of a tom or deep snare. Additionally, the clamping operation was not only clever in design but useful in operation. Very cool.

Opus 53

The Opus 53 looks nothing like the Opus 88, but the two models have some fundamental characteristics in common. The diaphragm housings look the same on both mic's, and judging by their sounds and response graphs, I'd venture to guess that their mic's amps are also very similar—if not identical.

Like the Opus 88, the Opus 53 is a small-diaphragm electret condenser with a cardioid polar pattern. But this model looks like a typical small-diaphragm "pencil type" condenser microphone. At $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter and just under 4" long, it's compact when compared to other models of its type. Additionally, its plastic/carbon fiber case keeps the weight down to under an ounce and a half—and also likely helps to keep the cost reasonable.

We replaced Audio Technica AT-33Rs



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Electronic Review



(older small electrets of a similar type) with Opus 53s for use as overheads. The Opus 53 has better extension in the high end. It could better pick out a hi-hat played with the foot within a dense tom pattern, for example. Yet it wasn't unduly harsh. When we used it to close-mike hi-hats, it again had a good transient response. It even worked on loud, bashing hats from a close distance, without getting overly brittle.

Just for grins we ran the Opus 53 against a similar-sized small condenser that costs seven or eight times as much, comparing them in use as overheads and on a snare drum. This was a moral victory for the \$139 Opus 53. True, the high-dollar Euro-mic' might have been a hair silkier on top, and it had a larger, rounder bottom end. But the Opus 53 acquitted itself well, yielding a very nice, musical sound in both applications. The sonic differences were nowhere near as great as the price difference.

Conclusions

All of the Opus drum mic's were winners, and all provided good value for the dollar spent. But the Opus 53 was the real sleeper here. With a street price that Beyer estimates at \$99 and a sound quality that's well into the triple digits, this mic' is a real bargain for anyone looking for a small condenser for either stage or studio.

THE NUMBERS

Opus 53 overhead condenser	\$139
Opus 88 snare/tom clip-on condenser	\$209
Opus 99 dynamic kick mic'	\$379
Opus Drumset L drum-miking kit	\$1,399

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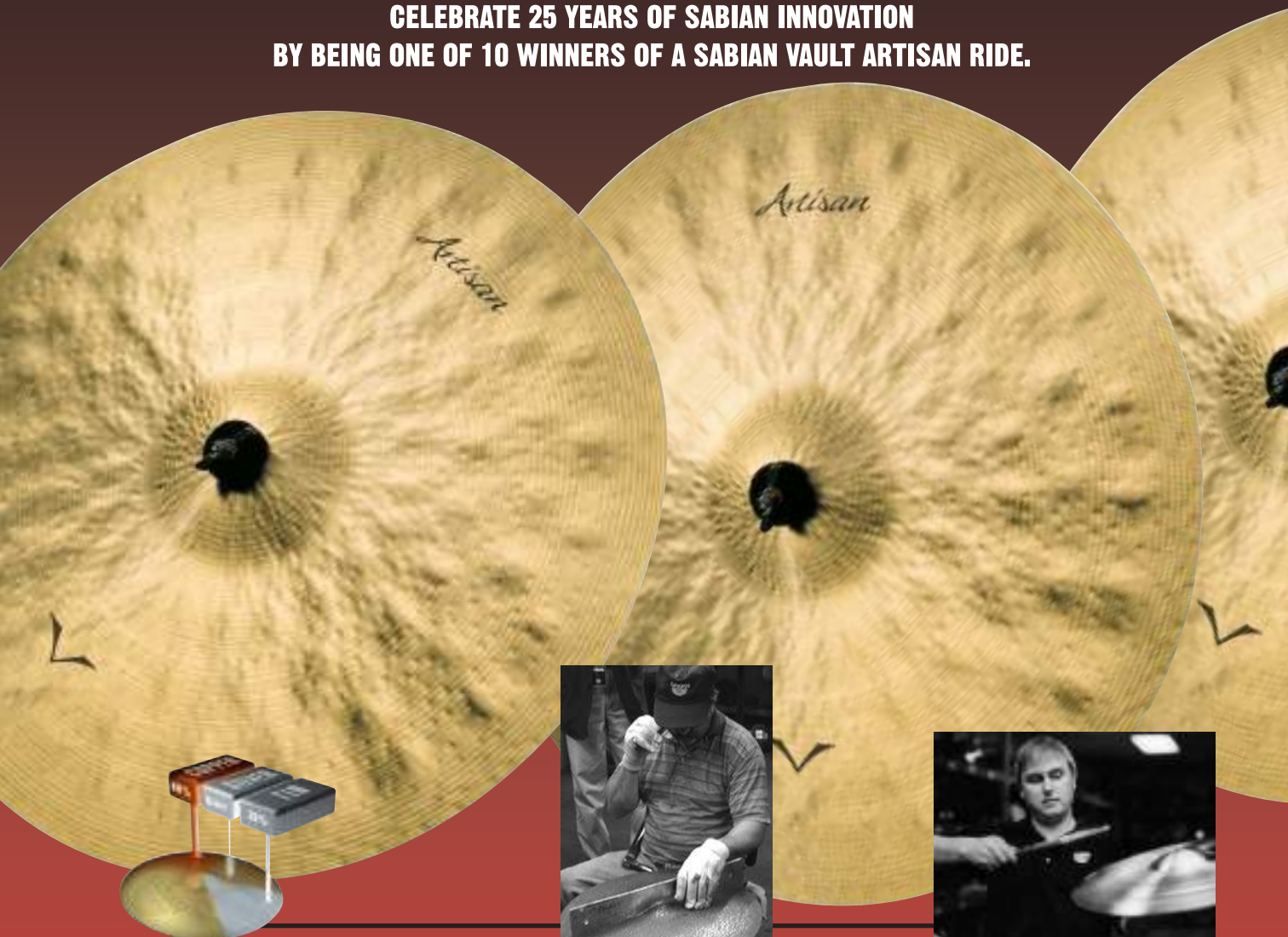
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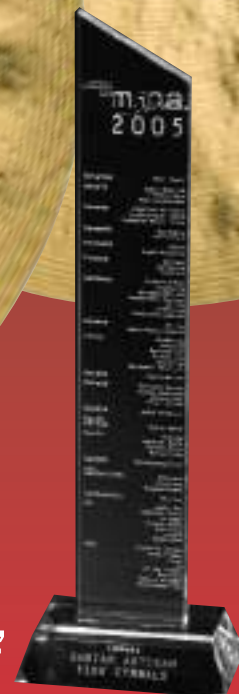
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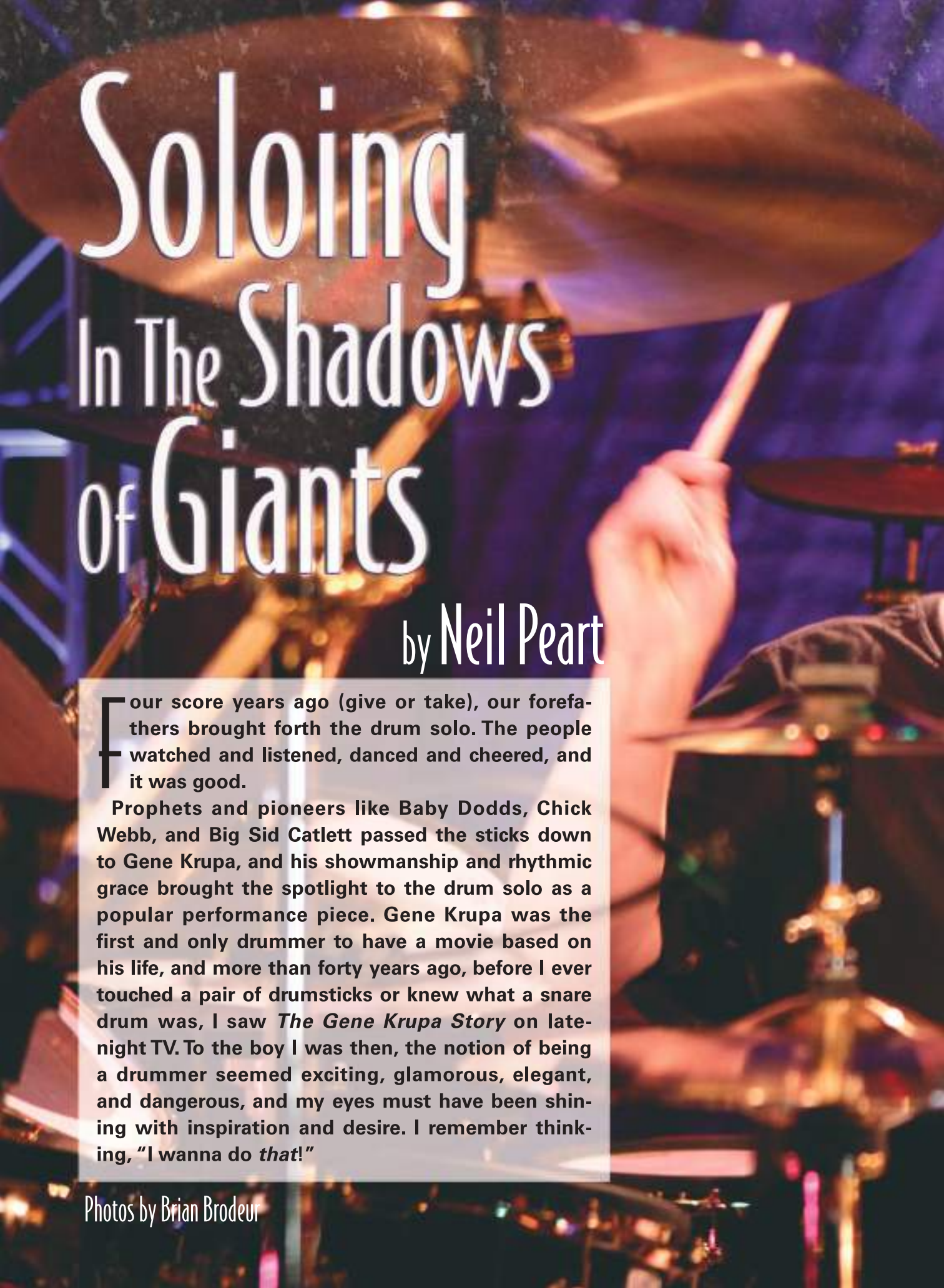
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Soloing In The Shadows of Giants

by Neil Peart

Four score years ago (give or take), our forefathers brought forth the drum solo. The people watched and listened, danced and cheered, and it was good.

Prophets and pioneers like Baby Dodds, Chick Webb, and Big Sid Catlett passed the sticks down to Gene Krupa, and his showmanship and rhythmic grace brought the spotlight to the drum solo as a popular performance piece. Gene Krupa was the first and only drummer to have a movie based on his life, and more than forty years ago, before I ever touched a pair of drumsticks or knew what a snare drum was, I saw *The Gene Krupa Story* on late-night TV. To the boy I was then, the notion of being a drummer seemed exciting, glamorous, elegant, and dangerous, and my eyes must have been shining with inspiration and desire. I remember thinking, "I wanna do *that!*"

Photos by Brian Brodeur



A few years later, when I did get a pair of drumsticks, and learned what a snare drum was, I began to get a sense of how much I had to learn. By the mid-'60s, so many giants had come before, pushing the frontiers of what had come to be known as jazz music. Buddy Rich's amazing tech-

nique and musicality had raised the drum solo to an even higher level of artistry and popular appreciation, and other inspired soloists like Louie Bellson, Max Roach, Joe Morello, Sonny Payne, Roy Haynes, Art Blakey, and Jack DeJohnette took the form in fresh, exciting directions.

And at the same time as I was starting out, drum solos began to bloom in rock music too, in concerts and recordings. Ginger Baker, Mitch Mitchell, Carmine Appice, John Bonham, Carl Palmer, and Michael Shrieve brought audiences to their feet in theaters, arenas, stadiums, and festi-

vals, and fired me with more inspiration and desire—"I wanna do *that!*"

Through the '60s and '70s, jazz remained vital and constantly changing. Its various mutations produced brilliant innovators like Billy Cobham and Tony Williams, who built a bridge between jazz and rock—a bridge that would later be crossed in both directions by Steve Gadd, Steve Smith, Peter Erskine, Bill Bruford, Terry Bozzio, Dave Weckl, and many others, all traveling with their own musical mastery and unbounded imagination.

The drum solo is a tradition handed down to us, our *heritage*, as it were, and it is a heritage worth celebrating. Giants have come before us, and giants will come after, but even while we mere mortals play in their shadows, we can be inspired to aim just a little higher every day—or every night.

Drum solos are not for everyone, of course, whether they're drummers or music lovers. But even drummers who choose not to *perform* drum solos can still enjoy and benefit from a *private* indulgence. Exploring and experimenting freely, and even just that kind of practicing on your own, can only nourish and improve your playing.

Go forth into the musical wilderness, and play well!

This text is from the DVD booklet to Anatomy Of A Drum Solo.



"The drum solo is a tradition handed down to us, our *heritage*, as it were. And it is a heritage worth celebrating."



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Anatomy Building



My first instructional video, *A Work In Progress* (1996), described how I created drum parts for new songs, then demonstrated the recording process. My directors and collaborators on that project, Paul Siegel and Rob Wallis, had already become friends of mine, first when we met at the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert in 1991, and even more so in 1994, when they filmed the recording of the two-volume Buddy Rich tribute, *Burning For Buddy*.

In the weeks leading up to the May, 1996 shoot for *A Work In Progress*, at Bearsville Studios in upstate New York, Paul and Rob and I forged a close working relationship. The three of us exchanged ideas almost daily (by fax—so last century!), and together we developed and refined our program into points for discussion and demonstration in the show. I *love* that kind of collaboration: working with creative, dedicated partners to build a piece of work that grows into something I could never have imagined, let alone made, on my own.

For thirty years I have worked that way with my bandmates in Rush, Alex and Geddy, and their reactions and suggestions for my lyric writing and drumming not only elevate the *result*, they also elevate the *process*—the pleasure of doing business.

In the years following that first instructional video, Paul, Rob, and I discussed doing another project together, but I wasn't sure what it should be about. *A Work In Progress* had covered my approach to composing and recording drum parts, so the next obvious theme seemed to be live performance—but that was such a *big* one. I decided to start with something a little more modest (if that's the right word!), by making an instructional DVD about my thoughts and methods regarding drum soloing.

Anatomy Of A Drum Solo is centered around a solo from Rush's thirtieth-anniversary tour, "R30," filmed and recorded in Frankfurt, Germany on September 24, 2004.



Our *Rush In Rio* DVD, recorded in 2002 on the tour for *Vapor Trails*, was (perhaps obviously) filmed in Rio de Janeiro. So I had titled that solo “O Baterista!” — Portuguese for “The Drummer.” (Can’t you just hear those words said so many different ways? A foreign movie with a terrified, goggle-eyed man backing away and screaming, “O Baterista!” Or a woman’s soft, sexy whisper in the darkness, “O Baterista!” Yeah...in our dreams....)

Anyway, because the centerpiece of *Anatomy Of A Drum Solo* was filmed in Germany, I called it “Der Trommler.” (You’ll guess what that means.) It’s a good example of my approach to soloing, which has built gradually over forty years of playing and performing. At the beginning of a tour, I like

to build a framework, like any other piece of music, an architecture that will give me a certain level of consistency every night, but still allow me to experiment and express myself.

“Der Trommler” was composed from many of the same pieces as “O Baterista!” — elements, or “movements,” woven together to tell a story that is historical, autobiographical, textural, and sometimes humorous. However, every tour I insist on rearranging the structure of my solo fairly comprehensively, making room for the natural, organic process of internally experimenting with new “fields of study” (as described in the DVD). Thus, over the course of a fifty-seven-show tour, the solo will always be a “nine-minute tour de force” (as Paul and Rob describe it on the

DVD package), and hopefully always be entertaining and satisfying as a *performance*, but also remain an inspiring and creative vehicle for my own explorations.

Among a few other “bonus” solos in the program, there is one from Hamburg, Germany, performed a few nights after the Frankfurt show. We included that one to demonstrate that even though my solos are tightly composed and arranged, they can still vary significantly from night to night. I gave that one the title “Ich Bin Ein Hamburger,” or, “I Am A Hamburger.” This title owes something to Popeye’s friend Wimpy, and also echoes JFK’s famous statement in the early ’60s, when he visited the newly divided city of Berlin and announced to the Berliners, and to the



“I insist on rearranging the structure of my solo for every tour.”

world, “Ich Bin Ein Berliner.”

During the “R30” tour, Paul and Rob and I got together a few times and discussed the notion of doing another project. Being in the middle of a long, hard tour, I wasn’t very interested in thinking about another major undertaking, but Paul visited me before our show in Saratoga Springs, New York, and the next week both of them

ganged up on me backstage at Radio City Music Hall. Unwilling to commit to anything, I did agree to let them arrange for some special “drum cams” for the Frankfurt show, which the band was already planning to film for a concert DVD.

Once the tour was behind me, the conversations among Paul, Rob, and me picked up in frequency and intensity. In early 2005, slowly, gradually, we began to circle around actually *doing* it. Plans were made, people were chosen for cameras and technical crews, audio recording, and photography, and the studio was booked. Finally, my plane flight was booked, and I was on my way. (Hey—wait a minute! I’m not ready....)

In mid-July, it would have been an enjoyable adventure to motorcycle or drive from my California home to New York, but there was not time. Instead, I sent my car ahead by truck to Rob’s house in rural New York. I would be

able to drive the Z8 from there to the studio, then after the shoot, drive north through the Adirondacks to my house in Quebec, and to visit family and friends in Ontario. The expense was easy to justify, trading all those airfares, taxis, airport limos—and the sheer nastiness of air travel—for a beautiful drive.

And sure enough, after flying five hours to Newark and sitting in an airport limo for almost two hours from there to Rob’s house, I was *very* pleased to be following Rob and the jovial Alfonse through the dark little roads of the Catskills.

Allaire Studios is located atop a mountain near Bearsville, New York, where Paul and Rob and I had shot the previous video at Bearsville Studios, nine years before. Allaire’s excellent recording facilities and cozy accommodations are built into a vast estate from the 1920s, once a summer residence for the family who owned Pittsburgh Plate Glass. The studio’s Web site showed spectacular views in every direction, but I never saw them—the weather was foggy and/or rainy all through our three-day shoot.

But never mind; most of our business was indoors anyway. We tried to get outside between rain showers for some of my introductory, spoken pieces, and during one of those, I felt a few fat, heavy raindrops. I kept talking, Carlos kept filming, and even as the rain’s tempo increased into a Buddy Rich single-stroke roll, no one wanted to say “cut.” Then all at once everybody seemed to realize it was absurdly hopeless, and we made a comical run for cover.

In actuality, I was wet more from sweat than from rain, sitting behind the drums and working through the solo. Each part of “Der Trommler” was dissected (even “vivisectioned,” hence *Anatomy*), and I discussed themes, textures, and techniques, while demonstrating the pieces individually.

I have to say, it was the hardest three days of work I’ve ever done.

Starting in the early morning, each day I stood or sat in front of the cameras for ten

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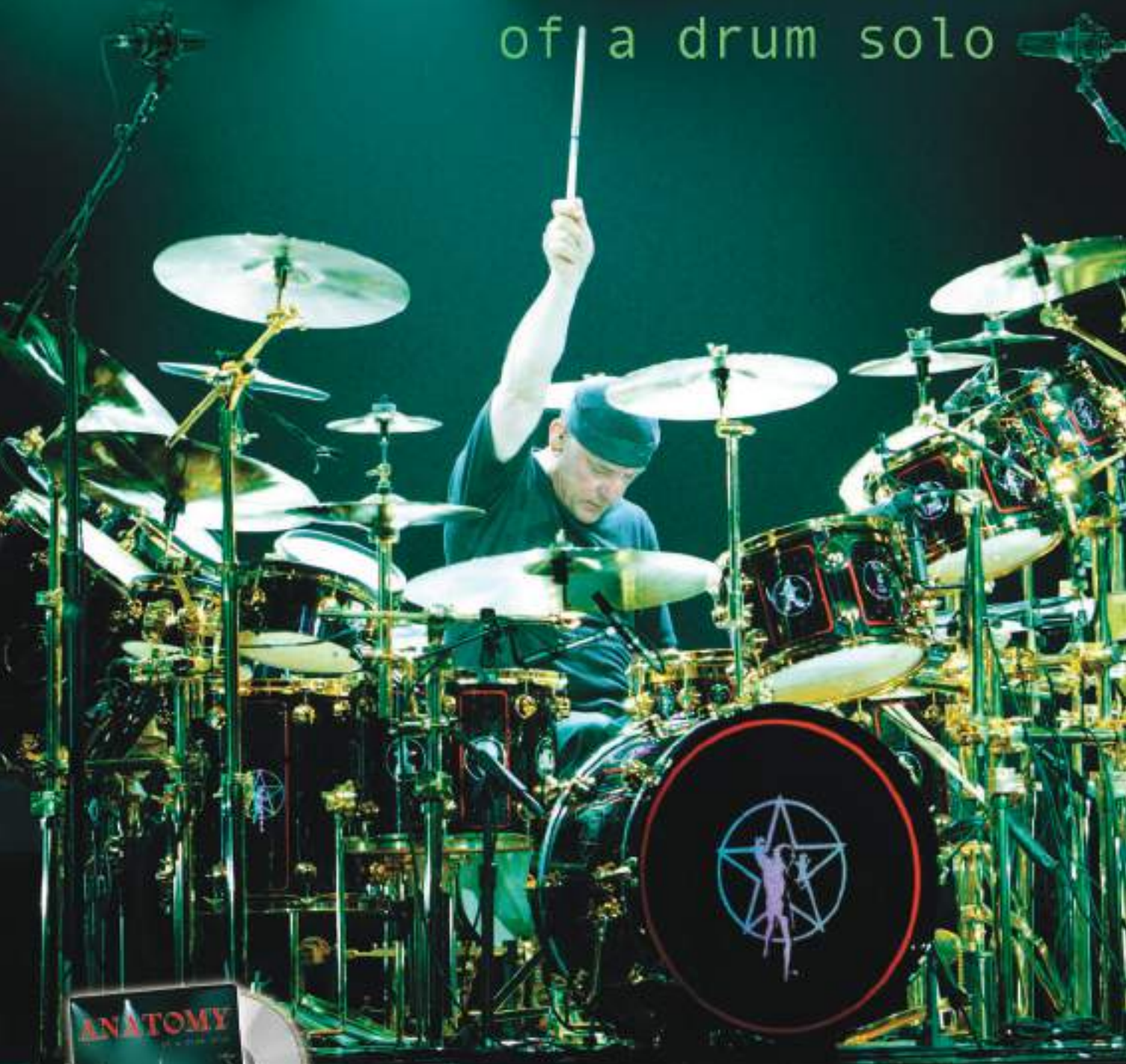
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Neil Peart



“Each part of ‘Der Trommler’ was dissected and demonstrated. I have to say, it was the hardest three days of work I’ve ever done.”

or twelve hours, either talking or drumming. There’s a joke among comedians: “Dying is easy; *comedy* is hard.” I would amend that to, “Drumming is easy; *talking* is hard.”

Wanting most of the spoken parts to be unscripted and spontaneous, I had to exert all my powers of concentration to try to speak articulately, comprehensively, and smoothly—without drooling. That is a challenge for any drummer. (You know the jokes.) I found it demanded *so* much mental energy to remember what I wanted to say, in the order I wanted to say it, and not deliver it like a robot or a zombie.

At the end of each day I felt empty and drained, and at the end of three days, I felt truly exhausted—and yet, *exalted*, in the afterglow of all that creative and performing energy. The next day I drove from the studio to my house in Quebec, speeding north over the back roads of the Adirondacks in my Z8, and it was one of the great drives of my life. I felt ragged and fatigued, yet elevated, elated.

A few weeks later, after I had steeled myself to watch the first edit (fearing embarrassment and shame), I was talking on the phone to my wife, Carrie, and grumbled, “I guess it’s going to be *okay*.” She knew that meant I was very pleased.

Working with Paul and Rob and our excellent crew of artists, technicians, and assistants had been truly collaborative, with everyone contributing his or her bit of expertise and imagination. As each shot was being set up, Paul and Rob and I gathered in the kitchen to exchange ideas for talking points and demonstrations, roughing out a basic “script.” Then off I went again—into the lights to try to *do* all that in front of the cameras.

Though difficult, the process was exciting and rewarding, truly *inspiring*. In those brief and fast-moving three days, all of us had forged a united team of people who worked toward a common goal—making the best show we could.

That being the case, of course we hope people are going to like it!

IN THIS *Issue* ALONE:

CARMINE APPICE

BILLY COBHAM

JACK DEJOHNETTE

JEREMY HUMMEL

STANTON MOORE

ROD MORGENSTEIN

STEVE SMITH

DAVE WECKL

ROB ZGALJIC

**VIC
FIRTH**
WHEN IT MATTERS, ASK FOR VIC FIRTH



Practicing The Rhythm Method

A Discussion Of Neil Peart's Drum Solos

by Joe Bergamini

MUSIC KEY

C.C. * Add'l T.T. Cow-bells
T.T. T.T. S.D. S.D. F.T. F.T. B.D.1 B.D.2
H.H. w/foot H.H. w/foot

“Ladies and gentlemen: The Professor on the drumkit!” Rock music fans all over the world have delighted at these words for thirty years. Neil Peart is not only one of the best-loved drummers of all time, he is also one of the premier soloists on the instrument. Few other drummers enjoy having their solos so eagerly awaited (some would say demanded) by his or her audience.

Neil’s approach to soloing is that of a composer. Each of his solos is constructed into an arrangement that stays fairly consistent from night to night. This is in contrast to soloists in the jazz realm, who typically improvise solos based on the melody of the song. But most drummers would agree that Neil Peart is one of the masters of the composed drum solo.

In this article we’re going to take a tour of Neil’s solos that appear on various live Rush recordings, stopping along the way to dissect some of The Professor’s signature licks.

All The World’s A Stage, “Working Man” (1976)

Although the solo that appears on this live record is from an early stage in Rush’s musical life, some of the signature elements of Neil’s soloing are present. The solo opens with some impressive snare work, demonstrating that Neil’s rudimental chops have been strong since his earliest days in Rush. Although the arrangement of this solo isn’t as complex as his later work would be, it’s still very musical. Some of Neil’s signature licks appear in this solo, including his proprietary cowbell melody, and 32nd notes and triplets between his hands and feet.

Exit...Stage Left, “YYZ” (1981)

After the success of their album *Moving Pictures*, Rush had

become a rock supergroup, and Neil had attained kingly status among rock drummers. *Exit...Stage Left* was released shortly after *Moving Pictures*, and it contains one of rock’s most legendary drum solos. The hard-to-find video version of *Exit...Stage Left* is also a wonderful document of Neil’s drumming at this time.

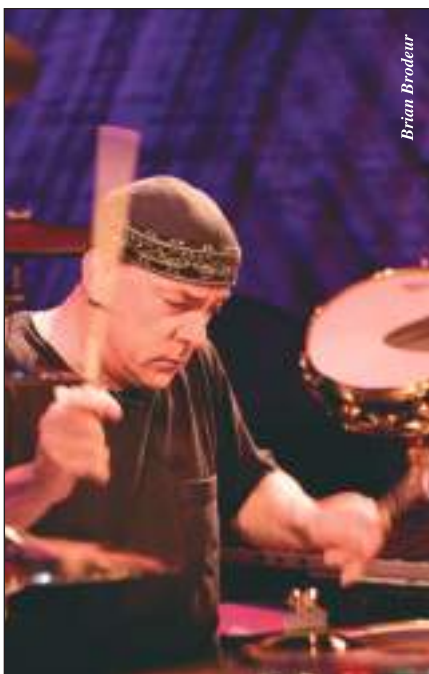
At this stage of his career, Neil placed his solos within one of Rush’s songs. For the *Exit...Stage Left* tour, the solo is perfectly placed in the middle of the tune “YYZ.” Many Rush fans still expect to hear a drum solo at this spot.

Neil begins the solo, as he tends to do, with high-energy rudimental snare work. It’s interesting to note that even though Neil is known for playing a huge kit, his snare drum technique is a featured highlight of all his solos.

At 3:15, Neil executes one of his signature hi-hat bark licks. From there, he moves to the concert toms (3:30), and then mixes in the timbales (3:44). The interplay between these high-pitched voices provides contrast to the more powerful sounds of the kit.

At 4:00, Neil plays a descending roll down the toms and launches into a memorable cowbell riff that has reappeared in most of his later solos.

Here’s Neil’s famous cowbell melody, as it appears on *Exit...Stage Left*.



1

At 5:00, Neil plays a few splash cymbal licks. The Professor is a master at choosing the most effective cymbal voices. They are never used randomly.

The solo concludes with sextuplets and 32nd notes between toms and bass drums before returning to “YYZ.”

A Show Of Hands, “The Rhythm Method” (1989)

“The Rhythm Method” is the title of Neil’s unaccompanied solo that first appeared on *A Show Of Hands*. By this time, Neil had become quite adept at using electronics, and regularly incorporated them within his solos.

The solo fades in as Neil plays the cowbell melody. At 0:50, he reaches a climax with a crossover lick between the snare and floor tom. In Example 2, R/L indicates that the right arm crosses over the left to play the snare drum, and L/R indicates that the left arm crosses over the right to play the floor tom. (A good visual display of this lick can be seen on the *Rush In Rio* DVD during the song “O Baterista.”)

Example 2 shows a musical notation for a crossover lick. It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff has a treble clef and a common time signature. The second staff has a bass clef. Above the first staff, there are four measures of music, each with an 'R/L' label above it, indicating a crossover from right to left. Below the second staff, there are four measures of music, each with an 'L/R' label below it, indicating a crossover from left to right. The notation shows eighth notes and sixteenth notes on both staves, with stems crossing between them to represent the crossover.

This version of “The Rhythm Method” continues with snare drum work played over a quarter-note bass drum pattern. At 1:29, the bass drum stops, and Neil displays his chops and dynamic control with some intricate snare patterns. Most of what you are hearing during this section is played using single strokes.

At 2:12, Neil’s “Pieces Of Eight” marimba melody appears. This melody remains in Neil’s solos today.

After a string of intense rock licks, Neil begins triggering horn/brass samples and playing between the hits (3:00).

The solo ends with a gong-drum roll and a sampled gong hit.

Different Stages, “The Rhythm Method” (1998)

Different Stages is a compilation of live cuts recorded during the *Farewell To Kings*, *Counterparts*, and *Test For Echo* tours. The version of “The Rhythm Method” that appears on this release is taken from the *Test For Echo* tour.

At the time of this performance, Neil was studying with famed educator Freddie Gruber. As a result, he had switched to traditional grip and had revamped his setup. Neil’s new setup featured the ride cymbal now in a traditional jazz position over the bass drum, which led him to eliminate a tom. (Neil’s modified approach during this period is well documented on his *A Work In Progress* DVD from Warner Bros.)

The beginning of “The Rhythm Method” on *Different Stages*

reflects the changes that occurred in Neil’s playing, as the introductory snare patterns are more subdued and swinging than on past solos. Neil also mixes electronic samples into the snare work. Again you can hear Neil seamlessly integrating electronics into a composition.

At 0:58, Neil performs Max Roach’s classic solo drum piece “The Drum Also Waltzes,” which lasts for nearly a full minute.

Then Neil’s traditional snare drum licks with bass drum underpinning return at 2:13, followed by the “Pieces Of Eight” marimba theme. From 3:08 to 3:28, there’s much more extensive use of double bass figures than in past solos.

Neil launches into a strong tribal groove at 4:10. He gradually expands on this by triggering sampled African tom voices. Neil then adds a snare drum sample on “2” and “4” with his left foot and begins to solo. During this section, he incorporates melodic ideas on the MIDI marimba.

At 5:56, Neil progresses into another signature lick: the “Scars” groove. This beat was written for the song “Scars” on the album *Presto*. Notice the double-stroke sticking and the lateral spread across the kit that is required for this groove. (You can see Neil playing this pattern on the *Rush In Rio* DVD at 1:58:29.)

Example 3 shows a musical notation for a snare drum sample. It consists of a single staff of music in 4/4 time with a treble clef and a common time signature. Above the staff, there are four measures of music, each with a '3' label above it, indicating a triple stroke. Above the notes, there are 'L L R L R L R L R L R R L L R R' labels, indicating the foot used for each stroke. Below the staff, there is a note with an arrow pointing to it and the text 'Left foot plays snare drum sample'.

Rush In Rio, “O Baterista” (2003)

The *Rush In Rio* CD and DVD contain Neil’s Grammy-nominated solo, “O Baterista.” This freestanding solo is a synthesis of some of the drummer’s most memorable ideas.

The solo opens with driving single- and double-stroke riffs on the snare drum.

Example 4 shows a musical notation for a sampled sound. It consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff has a treble clef and a common time signature. The second staff has a bass clef. Above the first staff, there are four measures of music, each with a '4' label above it, indicating a quadruple stroke. Above the notes, there are '>' symbols, indicating accents. Below the second staff, there is a note with an arrow pointing to it and the text 'sampled sound'.

At 1:53:32 on the DVD, Neil again shifts into Max Roach’s “The Drum Also Waltzes.” This particular take on the piece includes a tambourine sample played with the left foot instead of the hi-hat. (See Example 5.)

Many of Neil’s classic solo elements are present in “O Baterista,” albeit in a new arrangement. Go to 1:56:48 to see Neil apply two of the most standard licks in the rock drumming

Rock Perspectives

5

vocabulary—sextuplets and 32nd-note quads between the hands and feet.

Example 6 contains Neil's sextuplet licks as they appear in "O Baterista." And Example 7 shows how Neil voices "quads" around his kit.

After a revamped horn-hit section, Neil takes this solo to an entirely different place by playing along to the shout chorus of

Count Basie's "One O'Clock Jump." Neil played this piece during his appearance at the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concerts and on the *Burning For Buddy* CD.

No recording can take the place of experiencing music as it's being made before your eyes and ears. Neil Peart is a drummer whose place in the pantheon of drumming greats is secure. So if you get an opportunity to watch him play, don't miss it!

6

7 RL RL RL RL etc.

Neil Peart's Recorded Solos

Albums

- Caress Of Steel*, "Didacts And Narpets" (1975) Mercury
- All The World's A Stage*, "Working Man" (1976) Mercury
- Exit...Stage Left*, "YYZ" (1981) Mercury
- A Show of Hands*, "The Rhythm Method" (1989) Mercury
- Different Stages*, "The Rhythm Method" (1998) Atlantic
- Rush In Rio*, "O Baterista" (2003) Atlantic

Videos/DVDs

- Exit...Stage Left* (1981) Mercury
- A Show Of Hands* (1989) Mercury
- Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert, Tape 3* (1991) Warner Bros.
- Neil Peart: A Work In Progress* (2002) Warner Bros.
- Rush In Rio* (2003) Atlantic
- Neil Peart: Anatomy Of A Drum Solo* (2005) Hudson Music
- R30: 30th Anniversary World Tour* (2005) Anthem/Zoe/Rounder



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DRUM


SOLOS

THE FINAL

FRONTIER RETURNS

BY KEN MICALLEF

Once upon a time, any self-respecting drumset player had a ready arsenal of soloing concepts, practical applications, and verifiable solutions to please a band and dazzle an audience. Up until the mid-1980s, drum solos were not a foreign concept relegated to some Neanderthal, pre-drum machine-era Stone Age musician, but a vibrant form of self-expression that all drummers understood and were ready to exploit. But are drum solos on the way out or making a comeback?



Dum solos have at their core the religious and societal rites of ancient African drumming, which communicated messages of fervor through blinding technique and a common goal. The modern drumset player has much to learn about soloing, beginning with the first drumset soloist, Gene Krupa. Initially with The Benny Goodman Orchestra and then with his own fiery ensembles, Krupa's outstanding showmanship and passionate technique made him the first drumming superstar. Krupa influenced not only big band and jazz drummers like Buddy Rich and Joe Morello, but such rock titans as John Bonham, Keith Moon, and Bill Ward, as well as Carmine Appice and Carl Palmer, to name a few. Regarding Krupa's ability, big band great Louie Bellson offered these intimate recollections:

"Gene was studying to be a priest," Bellson recalls from his home in California. "But when he heard Baby Dodds play, he looked up to the sky and said, 'Lord, I have to take a breather. I want to play like Baby Dodds. I'll see you later.' Gene learned a lot from Baby Dodds, like how to play press rolls. But Dodds didn't really play solos, per se.

"Buddy Rich and I agreed that Gene is the one who brought drums to the foreground," Bellson continues. "He made it a solo instrument. Gene didn't have the hand facility of Buddy, but he had the showmanship down. He never tried to go overboard with his drumming. He knew what he could do and he did it well. Buddy and I would laugh that, if you had twenty drummers on the bandstand, Gene Krupa would stick out because he was a great showman. He could bring the house down with something simple."

After Krupa's showcase "Sing, Sing, Sing" solo with Benny Goodman, the drum solo became a prized moment when a drummer could express himself either over a group vamp or as a stand-alone solo vehicle. Jazz and big band drummers were not only expected to solo, but to exchange "fours" or series of bars with the other musicians. This in turn influenced rock drummers, who created some of the most memorable drum solos ever. John Bonham's "Moby Dick," Ginger Baker's "Toad," Neil Peart's "The Rhythm Method," Carl Palmer's "Tank," Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Gadd-Da-Vida," Steve Gadd's "Aja" (with Steely Dan), and Michael Shrieve's "Soul Sacrifice" (Santana) are hallmarks of drumset solo literature. Drum solos were once so pervasive that countless air drummers aped their renditions of The Surfaris' "Wipe Out." And even The Muppets' Animal and The Beatles' Ringo Starr got in on the soloing action.

But with the streamlining of radio formats and the entrance of punk rock, dumbed-down corporate rock, and programmed hip-hop, the rock drum solo seems to be facing extinction. That said, innovators like Virgil Donati, Thomas Lang, Terry Bozzio, Dennis Chambers, Dave Weckl, and Vinnie Colaiuta are taking solos to places never before imagined.

With that in mind, *MD* asked a handful of top drum soloists these simple questions: Why solo? How did you develop your soloing concept? What tools do you need to play a solo? How do you begin, build, and close a solo, and who are your favorite soloists? With their help, and *your* determined practice and exploration, the drum solo will remain a vehicle for pure drumming self-expression for years to come.

Long live the drum solo!

TOMMY ALDRIDGE

In the 1970s, no one had better double bass technique than Tommy Aldridge. His extended solo in Black Oak Arkansas' "Hot And Nasty" was an incredible feat of double bass drum prowess, with Aldridge combining single-stroke bass drum variations into the ultimate steamroller effect. Currently working with Pat Travers and Whitesnake, Aldridge spoke with *MD* from his home in Santa Ynez, California.

"I started playing solos before I could keep time. That fits my personality, no strings attached, just wham-bam, thank you ma'am. When I became more thoughtful

and tried to maximize my gifts, I found things that would work and get a reaction. I do one section where I play with my bare hands, and I guess people assume I'm hurting myself. People dig that. I try to build a solo like I would a song: Come out really heavy, grab them by the neck, then take them on a journey, trying to keep it interesting. Then you hit the chorus and lift it up and come back down and take it to the B section, then go out with both barrels blazing. I still structure my solos around that same outline.

"The twenty-six rudiments are the tools

you need. I encourage studying rudimental methodology with a metronome. I play one rudiment on the bass drum, the single-stroke roll. I don't use multi-strokes or doubles; I can't depend on the bounce. I play groupings of threes, fours, fives, and sevens on the bass drums, but they are all single strokes. There is no way you can go as fast playing RRLL as you can playing RLRL. I lead both with the left foot and with the right. Some patterns demand that you lead with one foot or the other.

"I like to open solos playing a syncopated pulse, maybe some 16th notes on the bass drums, not fast but intense. I want to have a seamless transition from the song to my solo. I might play six over four, that underlying pulse. When I was a kid I would use single quarter notes on a single bass drum, then with two bass drums I got the single-stroke roll down and it opened a lot of areas for me. I want to go from zero to sixty; I want that payoff at the end. Ultimately in a solo I want the listener and the viewer to feel like I did everything *possible*, and only then do I want it to end."



Selected Solo Discography

Vinnie Moore: *Mind's Eye*

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Joe Morello: "Take Five," Dave Brubeck Quartet, *Time Out*
Barry "Frosty" Smith: Lee Michaels, *Barrel*, *Tailface* (Smith can also be heard on Parliament/Funkadelic's *Let's Take It To The Stage*)

CARMINE APPICE

Concurrent with the soloing marvels of John Bonham, Carmine Appice made his name with such heavy '70s rockers as Vanilla Fudge, Cactus, and Beck, Bogert & Appice before graduating to superstardom with Rod Stewart. Appice's popular *Realistic Rock* books (which will soon be available on DVD) trained a whole generation of drummers to play musical solos. He also helped pioneer the modern drum clinic format. Carmine, who calls LA home, has also soloed with Ozzy Osbourne and Ted Nugent.

"I always used showmanship in my solos when I was a kid. Once I played in Brooklyn in a battle of the bands. I took a drum solo with glowing drumsticks, and we won. I entered a talent contest once, played a solo, and won a lamp—which I still own. I've always played solos, from wedding gigs to band gigs. I would play Cozy Cole's 'Topsy' and Sandy Nelson's 'Let There Be Drums,' which were both hit singles. When I joined Vanilla Fudge, I would solo before we even made it. When we started headlining in '68, the drum solo got bigger and I got a Ludwig double bass drumkit with a gong. I took more aggressive solos on that kit. I would play a fifteen-minute solo every night.

"I grew up playing jazz and rock, so soloing became part of my agenda. I listened to Gene Krupa, Max Roach, Roy Burns, and Cozy Cole. I learned Gene Krupa's and Buddy Rich's solos note for note. I had that album *Krupa And Rich*. On one track the whole ten-minute intro was Buddy and Gene trading fours. That really inspired me.

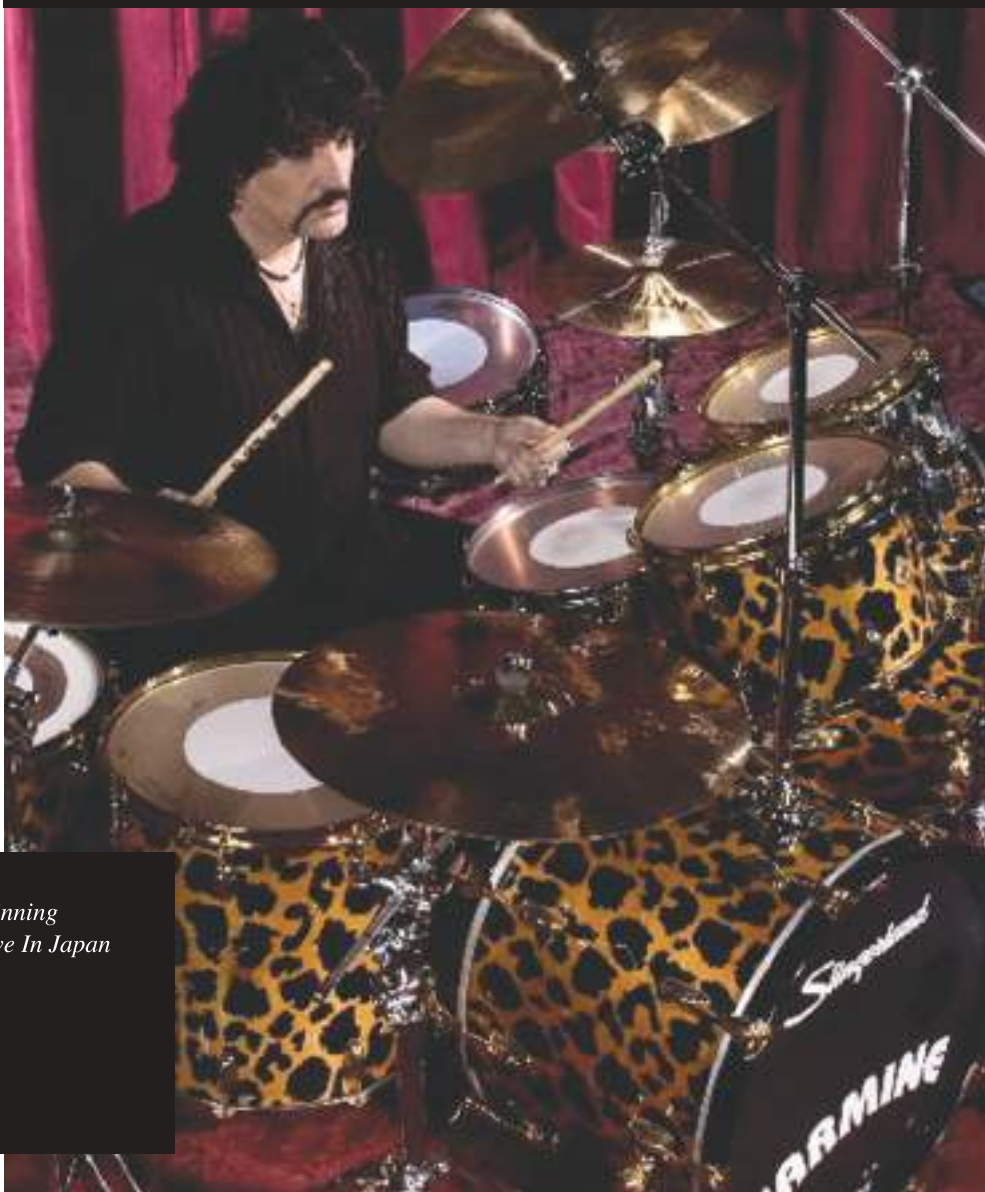
"Regarding my approach, I try not to play a self-indulgent solo. I try to play off and with the audience. I'll start with a theme and take that theme up to a frenzy. Then I'll take it down to something softer, maybe playing on the cymbal, or triplet rolls and real soft on the rims like Buddy

Rich used to do. I might play the snare drum and run the signal through a wah wah pedal. I don't follow a format. I'll do some dead stops throughout the solo to get the audience involved. I'll bring it down and then bring it back up with either fast triplets or combinations with the China cymbals, fast left- and right-hand China combinations with bass drum, gradually building it up again.

"One of the best soloing tools you can have is knowing your audience. A Jeff Beck crowd is more musical and technical. When they came to see Beck, Bogert & Appice, they wanted to see improvisation.

With Rod Stewart, I played more of an entertainment-oriented solo. If you do a technical drum solo, you may lose that audience. So I'll do more stick twirls, clapping the hands with the audience, and chanting, real dynamic stops, bigger-than-life movements on the drums with hands in the air, standing up, standing on the gong, *anything* theatrical. Rod trusted me with his audience. With Ted Nugent as well, it's more of an entertainment solo than a technical one. If you don't do that, during your solo, the audience will leave for a beer."

"One of the best soloing tools you can have is knowing your audience." —Carmine Appice



Selected Solo Discography

Vanilla Fudge: "Break Song," *Near The Beginning*
Beck, Bogert & Appice: "Morning Dew," *Live In Japan*
Travers & Appice: "Evil," *Live TNA* (DVD)

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Gene Krupa: *Krupa And Rich*
Buddy Rich: *Rich Versus Roach*

LOUIE BELLSON

A true legend of the drumset, Louie Bellson got his start with local bands in his hometown of Moline, Illinois. Bellson was a natural drummer, and soon became a featured soloist with The Duke Ellington Orchestra. He continued to make inroads through the '60s and '70s in both big band and small band formats. A pioneer of the double bass setup, Bellson performs solos that are marvels of speed, articulation, imagination, and grace.

Even when storming on his trademark double bass drums, Bellson's fluid hand movements and ceaseless creativity mark him as a tireless artist who seemingly never repeats himself. The lightness, and litheness, of his nearly perfect snare drum technique is matched by the tank-like roar

of his full-set approach.

"Why solo? Drums enhance the music via melody and rhythm. You must have drums to have melody and rhythm in the music. When I grew up, drum solos were popular and you had to play them.

"The first solo I ever heard was Lionel Hampton's 'Jack The Bellboy.' Then I got into Gene Krupa, who knocked me out. I won one of his national contests. I listened to the *sound* of these drummers' solos, then their ideas. I didn't want to copy them note for note. I picked up on some of their sounds and rhythms and played them my way. I took drum lessons from the age of three, but I was born ambidextrous. My hands and feet were always good. I played my first snare drum solo, 'Paradiddle Joe,'

when I was twelve. It was a take-off on a Gene Krupa solo.

"I usually have an introduction to my solos, eight or sixteen bars. Then I establish a theme, which lasts for thirty-two bars. I open it up for thirty-two bars or two choruses of drum solo, and then I end up with the full band playing. Sometimes the solo is marked open, and I change tempos and do everything. But in order to bring the band in, I play a cue of four bars on the hi-hat in the original time. That cue is very important. It gets them ready to play the shout chorus.

"I tell all drummers to learn how to listen and to understand dynamics. Some drummers go on at *fff* [very loud] for half an hour, which is boring. But if a soloist has a nice intro, it's like doing a stage show: You make your entrance, then you come down to a beautiful ballad or even play some brushes, and then bring it back up again for the end. Using dynamics makes everything sound better."



Alex Solca



Selected Solo Discography

Duke Ellington: "Skin Deep," *Ellington Uptown*
Louie Bellson Big Band: "Santos," *Live From New York*
Louis Bellson Big Band, *My Sacred Music*

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Gene Krupa: "Sing, Sing, Sing," Benny Goodman, *Carnegie Hall Concert 1938*
Joe Morello: "Take Five," Dave Brubeck Quartet, *Time Out*
Buddy Rich: "West Side Story," *Swingin' New Big Band*
Jo Jones: "Cute," Count Basie, *Best Of The Roulette Years*
Harold Jones: "Jumpin' At The Woodside," Count Basie,

DENNIS CHAMBERS

Though he made his mark in the '70s as the backbone of Parliament/Funkadelic, it was with guitarist John Scofield that Dennis Chambers blasted into the national drumming consciousness. Incorporating everything he had learned from Billy Cobham and Tony Williams before him, Chambers brought gritty technique, super speed, and pure fatback funk to solos that always seemed to bring fans to their feet. Chambers continues to work with jazz-rockers Mike Stern and Niacin when not recording and touring with Santana.

“Why play a drum solo? Good question. I don’t think drum solos are really that important. But you have bands where they want to feature the drummer, so then you’re in the spotlight. You play solos to be expressive, but I never cared about doing drum solos, even though I’m known for them. A drum clinic is different. In that setting, a solo is what the audience pays to see.

“Every great drummer who does drum solos knows techniques that are crowd pleasers—like when I do the cross-sticking between rack toms and floor toms and snare, or the crosses between the cymbals. Or sometimes I do things with two floor toms and my splash or China on the right-hand side.

“My speed came from playing on pillows and also sitting behind the drumkit with telephone books under my arms. That builds upper body strength and adds balance. When you see me play, my body isn’t moving all over the place. Using the telephone books helped me to be centered, and



“Every great drummer who plays drum solos knows techniques that are crowd pleasers.”—**Dennis Chambers**

gave me more strength for things such as getting my limbs to move between different drums in a millisecond.

“When I start a drum solo, I want to make some kind of musical sense out of it. I don’t just start out going nuts. Generally, I like to play the form. With John Scofield or John McLaughlin, if the solo is over a

vamp, I use other songs as a reference point. For example, I might be thinking of James Brown’s ‘Say It Loud I’m Black And I’m Proud.’ I’ll hear melodies of other songs, and I’ll even play in that tempo. That freaks the audience out even more because they have no idea where you’re coming from.”



Selected Solo Discography

Dennis Chambers: *Outbreak*, *Planet Earth*
John Scofield: *Pick Hits Live*
Also: with Santana, Mike Stern, Niacin

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Tony Williams Lifetime, *Believe It!*
Billy Cobham: “The Dance Of Maya,” Mahavishnu Orchestra, *Inner Mounting Flame*
Cobham Meets Bellson (VHS)

BILLY COBHAM



“How many notes are played in a solo isn’t important. What *is* important is the timing of those notes in order to have the most impact on the music.”—Billy Cobham

As the drummer with the groups Dreams and Mahavishnu Orchestra in the late '60s and early '70s, Billy Cobham expanded on Tony Williams' pioneering concepts with Miles Davis's 1960s quintet. As anyone who saw Cobham live during that fertile period can attest, his solos and accompaniment were a raw shock to the senses, a combination of head-breaking power and unimaginable speed expressed in odd-metered rhythms that allowed him to rage—or play as softly as a falling leaf. Cobham's unmistakable groove, which made him a first-call session player, was as tightly wound as a clock, yet flowed like a river. Cobham continued his spell in a series of solo recordings (including *Spectrum*, *Shabazz*, and *Crosswinds*) that found him composing and playing with great skill and inspiration. Cobham is still working constantly around the globe with his own bands, and he responded to our questions via email from the road.

“Playing solos should express the personality of the performer. When I play a drum solo, I'm performing based around the general musical concept in which I'm involved. I try to express myself by reflecting my personal thoughts about the piece within the short period that's provided me. It's the period when I'm allowed to express myself as the leading

element within the music.

“I found that the most natural way to develop a technique was to count the number of bars in a composition that I was required to fill with a string of rhythm patterns that I had learned from books or by trial and error. This is a one-dimensional concept that serves to open the door of drum soloing a little bit. What you really have to learn is how to coordinate all of the information you're receiving from the musical environment and assimilate it into something that really makes musical sense, not just rhythmic sense or mathematical sense.

“The drummer must learn to coordinate that incoming information while keeping time—thus developing your inner clock—and be selective about what elements in the music he chooses to present in the solo. I learned to do this by listening to Max Roach, Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, Louie Bellson, Buddy Rich, Osie Johnson, Grady Tate, and Mel Lewis, to name a few. How many notes are played in a solo isn't important. What *is* important is the timing of the notes in order to have the best impact on the music. So phrasing as well as timing and dynamics plays a major role in the development of solo technique.

“My solos often follow this form: I have certain rudimental patterns that work for me: rolls of various lengths and types—single and double strokes—triplets, and the single paradiddle. These patterns are at the heart of everything I play, so I'll most likely open my solo incorporating these patterns in a phrase that I repeat in various permutations. Once I've made a statement in some musical fashion, I close my position by coming back to the original point of the solo in some dynamic fashion. I don't mean just in terms of loud or soft. I might end a phrase by, for example, slowing down a portion of it, or changing the time signature. I like to play patterns that the band can identify to communicate to them that we should resume playing in the next few bars. That said, I don't like to play predictable riffs or patterns.

“Regarding whether I like to play the form or play more abstractly, I like to play within the melodic format, because the challenge is to remember the structure of the composition and apply your musical approach to it through the drumset. On the other hand, I feel equally comfortable playing in an abstract environment where what I envision is translated through the drums. These are two different approaches, yet they're equally valid. As you gain experience as a soloist, you begin to understand how to do this by knowing *when* to play *what*.



Selected Solo Discography

Billy Cobham: “A Funky Kind Of Thing,”

A Funky Thide Of Sings

Billy Cobham: “Danse For Noh Masque,” *Power Play*

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Elvin Jones: “Pursuance,” John Coltrane,
A Love Supreme

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JACK DEJOHNETTE

Jack DeJohnette is one of the world's most inventive and identifiable jazz drummers. Jack's work with Keith Jarrett, Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman, Sonny Rollins, Jackie McLean, George Benson, Lee Morgan, Charles Lloyd, Herbie Hancock, and Joe Henderson, and his many sessions as a leader (with Directions, New Directions, and Special Edition), offer a master tutorial in accompaniment and soloing. Ridiculously fluid and fiery, DeJohnette is an unpredictable musician who operates fully within the musical moment.

"I developed my soloing concept from playing the piano and learning song forms, and from tuning the drumset in such a way that, when I'm taking a solo, you always know what the form is. It's about the challenge of building a solo that is compelling as well as being something that communicates what you're trying to convey. I tune the toms to different pitches: seconds, thirds, and fourths, so they fall somewhere in the middle of the sonic range. If a drummer tunes the drums melodically, so you're playing rhythm *and* melody, you can play more musically. Whether I'm accompanying the ensemble or soloing, my drums always have a melodic sound to them.

"You need enough technique so you can execute your ideas. But be careful not to acquire too much technique, otherwise the technique will rule your ideas. You need to balance between spirit and imagination. You need a balance between tension and relaxation. Above all, you need to be relaxed.

"If I'm playing a song where I'm free to construct my own

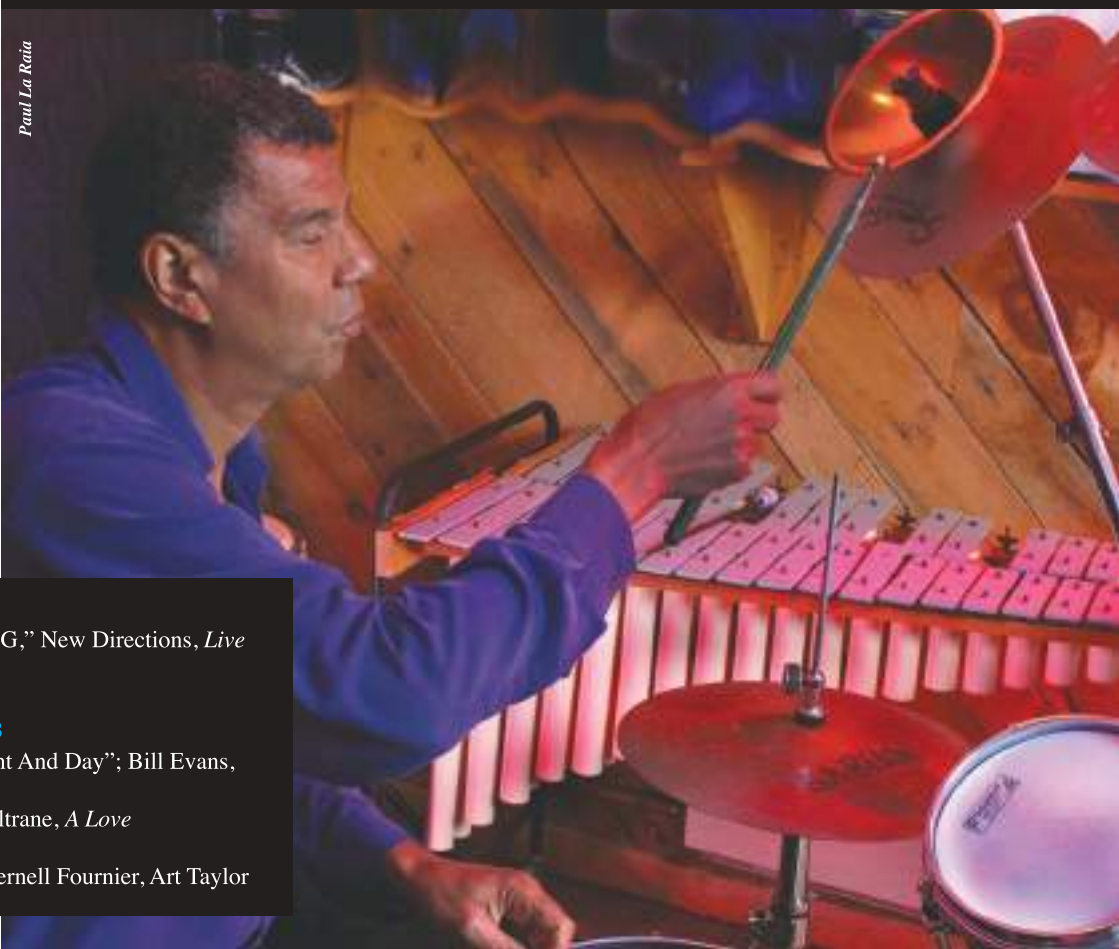
solo apart from the structure, then I can be more abstract. If it's within the song form, then I'll construct my own improvisation. If it's an Ornette Coleman-like song or a freer form, then I can go more abstract. With standards, I won't always stick to the form. I can leave it. But when I return to the form, I set it up so the other musicians can come back in. That's very important. If time is no constraint in a solo, you have to use your judgment. If you're just rambling along, then you need to set it up to bring the band back in.

"I suggest drummers get my Honespun video, *Musical Expression On The Drum Set*. On it I talk about time, brushwork, constructing a solo, and playing over the barline. I also talk about drum solos, which utilize contemporary jazz as well as a lot of different genres."



"You need enough technique so you can execute your ideas. But be careful not to acquire too much technique, otherwise the technique will rule your ideas." —Jack DeJohnette

Paul La Roia



Selected Solo Discography

Jack DeJohnette: "Salsa For Eddie G," New Directions, *Live In Europe*

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Philly Joe Jones: "Minority," "Night And Day"; Bill Evans, *Everybody Digs Bill Evans*

Elvin Jones: "Pursuance," John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme*

Also: Kenny Clarke, Art Blakey, Vernell Fournier, Art Taylor

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VIRGIL DONATI

A virtuoso who has advanced the art of drum soloing, Australia's Virgil Donati is a state-of-the-art performer in terms of power, polyrhythm mastery, odd meters, phrasing, and metronomic precision, all under the auspices of dazzling showmanship. Currently using a second tier of toms and cymbals positioned *above* his standard kit for even greater tonal and rhythmic color, Donati is an articulate and energetic spokesman for the drum solo, in all its permutations.

"Why play a solo? Why does a novelist write? Why does a painter paint? It's a way to stretch our ingenuity, which only bending the faculties of our mind and body with constant application can help us accomplish. It's a way to express a universe of rhythmic possibilities. It's a way to transcend. It's skill overcoming difficulty, and artistry triumphing over skill.

"I started soloing with my father's band somewhere between three and six years of age, studying out of Ted Reed and Joe Cusatis books. There were many rudimental patterns, syncopated snare and bass

drum exercises, and cross-sticking patterns. The ideas I developed from these formed the foundation of my early solos.

"There are three essential requirements that will help you develop the ability to improvise: a sound understanding of rhythm, good technical control, and awareness and control of dynamics. A better understanding of rhythm is a matter of becoming familiar with the smaller units of a bar: the downbeats, upbeats, and everything in between. You have to be able to place accents on different beats, without it turning your ear around. It's important that you always feel the basic pulse—usually 4/4. If you can feel that, no matter what you play and how you manipulate and bend the rhythm, it will always have a sense of groove and you'll keep your place within the structure. From here, there are so many places you can take it—layered rhythms, polyrhythms, ostinatos, etc.

"As far as planning goes, I have no pre-

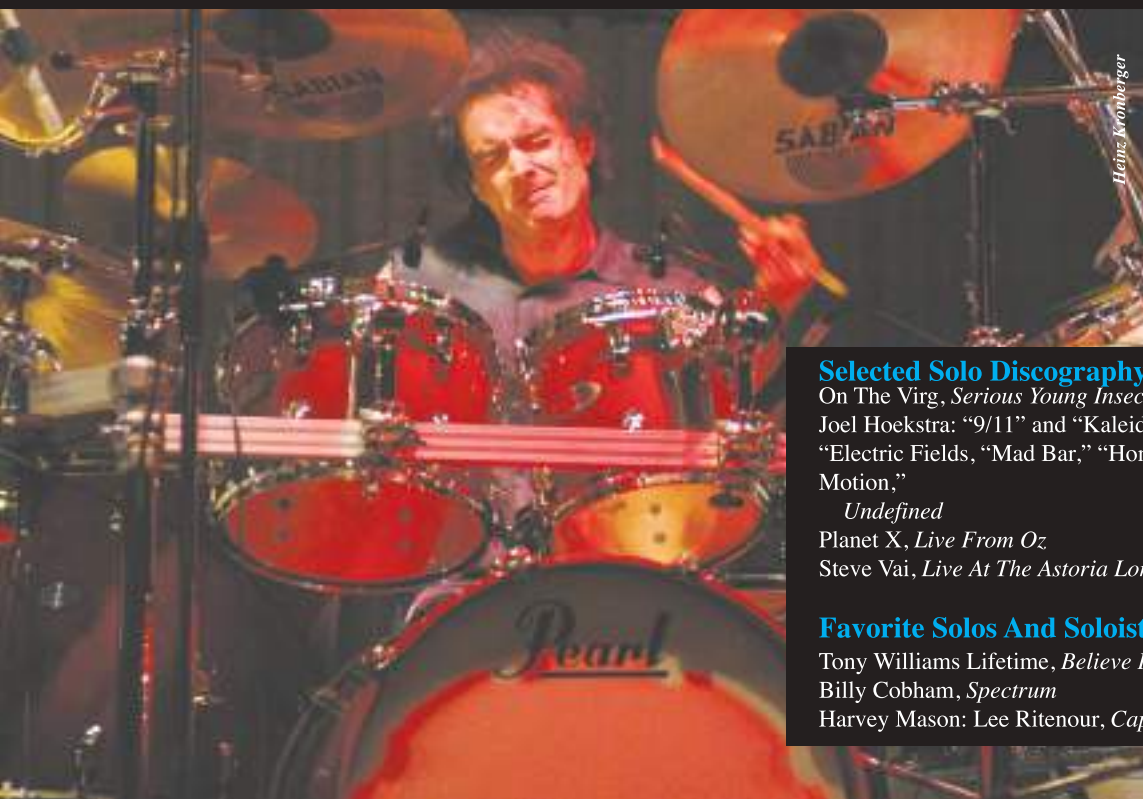


conceptions. If I'm trading fours, I try to create a dialog with the other soloists. If I'm soloing over a vamp, I like to weave in

and out of the perceived time, creating tension using rhythmic and metric means. My solos can be very abstract and freeform, but I also like to use rhythms in a way that is thematic, and develop and reprise them.

"To me, spontaneity is the essence of soloing. So to this day, I never practice solos, just *ideas*. Some things are left to chance. This can create a feeling of uncertainty and difficulty. Danger is a good teacher."

"Why play a solo? Why does a novelist write? Why does a painter paint? It's a way to transcend. It's skill overcoming difficulty, and artistry triumphing over skill."—Virgil Donati



Heinz Kroneberger

Selected Solo Discography

On The Virg, *Serious Young Insects*
Joel Hoekstra: "9/11" and "Kaleidoscope," *Moon Is Falling*;
"Electric Fields," "Mad Bar," "Homework," and "Plot In Motion,"

Undefined

Planet X, *Live From Oz*

Steve Vai, *Live At The Astoria London* (DVD)

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Tony Williams Lifetime, *Believe It!*, *Million Dollar Legs*

Billy Cobham, *Spectrum*

Harvey Mason: Lee Ritenour, *Captain Fingers*



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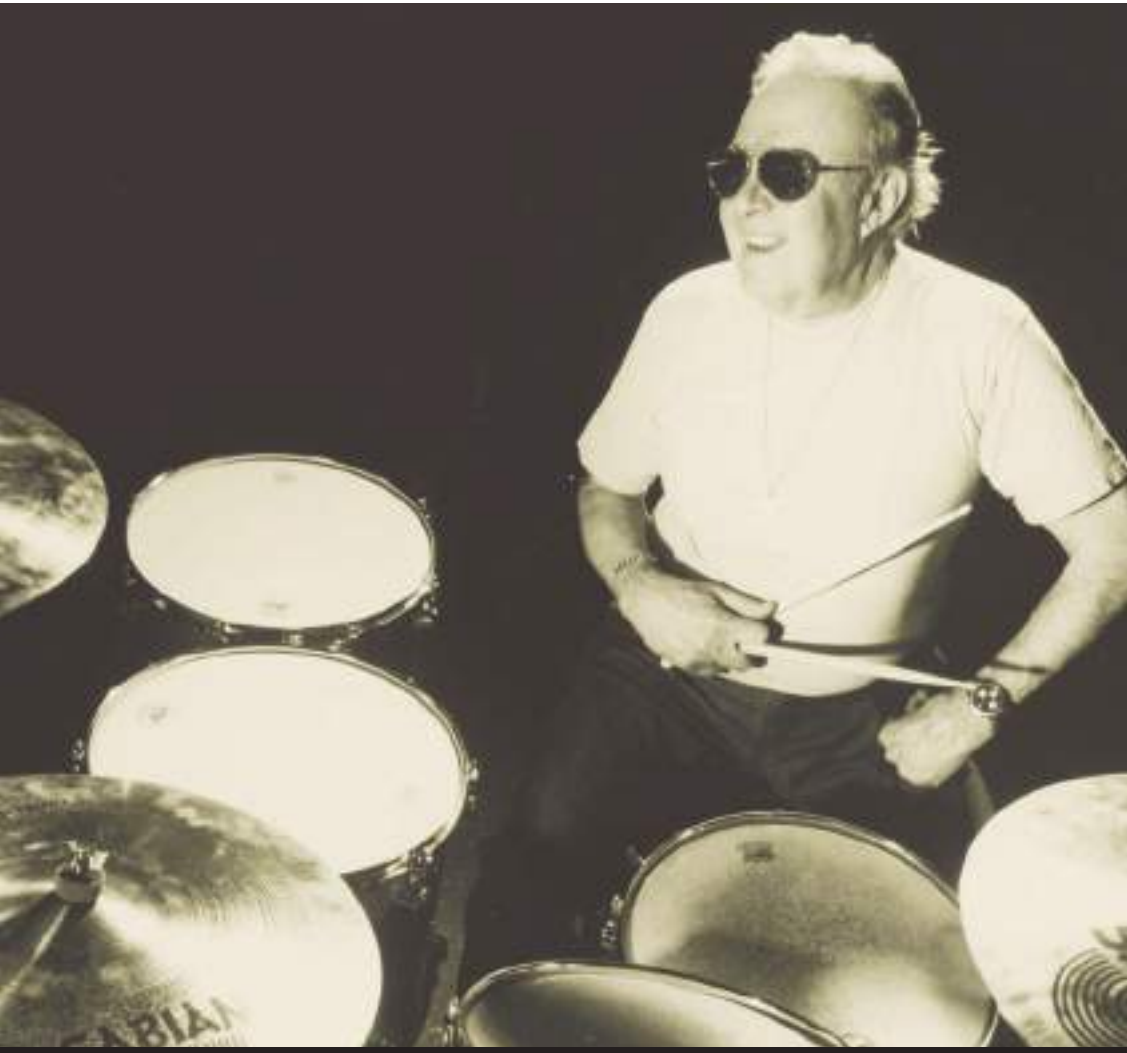
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JOE MORELLO

For many drummers, the solo begins and ends with Joe Morello's innovations in Dave Brubeck's "Take Five." Matching the technical virtuosity of Buddy Rich with the intellectual and melodic approach of Max Roach, Morello created his ultimate drum solo statement with "Take Five" and its live follow-up, "Castillian Drums." Morello's snare drum technique is precision personified and swings like mad, while his full-set concept broke new ground for drummers everywhere.

"I was a violin player until I was twelve years old. I started playing the drums listening to Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Jo Jones, and found good teachers who taught me the basics. Through playing with different people and listening, they would let me solo. It's just a matter of expressing your own voice and your own ideas. I followed Krupa a lot. I learned Gene and Buddy's solos.

"I always try to state something different when I open a solo. It depends on how you feel. After a while you understand the instrument and its tonal colors. The more experience you have, the less you have to imitate anybody when you solo. You don't look like that guy, so why do you want to *play* like him? With experience, you can do that.

A black and white photograph of Joe Morello, an older man with white hair, wearing sunglasses and a light-colored t-shirt. He is sitting behind a drum set, holding a drumstick in his right hand and a mallet in his left. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on him and the drums.

"You don't have to imitate anybody when you solo. You don't look like that guy, so why do you want to play like him?" —Joe Morello

"When I play, I do whatever comes to mind. With 'Take Five,' for example, I just played what I felt at the time. And it sold millions of copies. It was different from what Rich and Krupa had done—just one of those crazy things. It's not the usual million-note solo. I was thinking more abstractly, I didn't plan it. I had a lot of freedom even within the 5/4. Even the

band was surprised.

"When we played 'Take Five' at Carnegie Hall, we got three standing ovations—it was crazy. Later I tried to repeat that same solo note for note, and it just didn't work. It was horrible, the biggest turkey ever. You can't re-create what you've already done. Now if I play one note it's got to be real and spontaneous."

Selected Solo Discography

Dave Brubeck: "Castillian Drums," *The Dave Brubeck Quartet At Carnegie Hall*

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Gene Krupa: "Drum Boogie," Gene Krupa Big Band, *Drummer Man*

Gene Krupa: "Sing, Sing, Sing," Benny Goodman, *Carnegie Hall Concert 1938*

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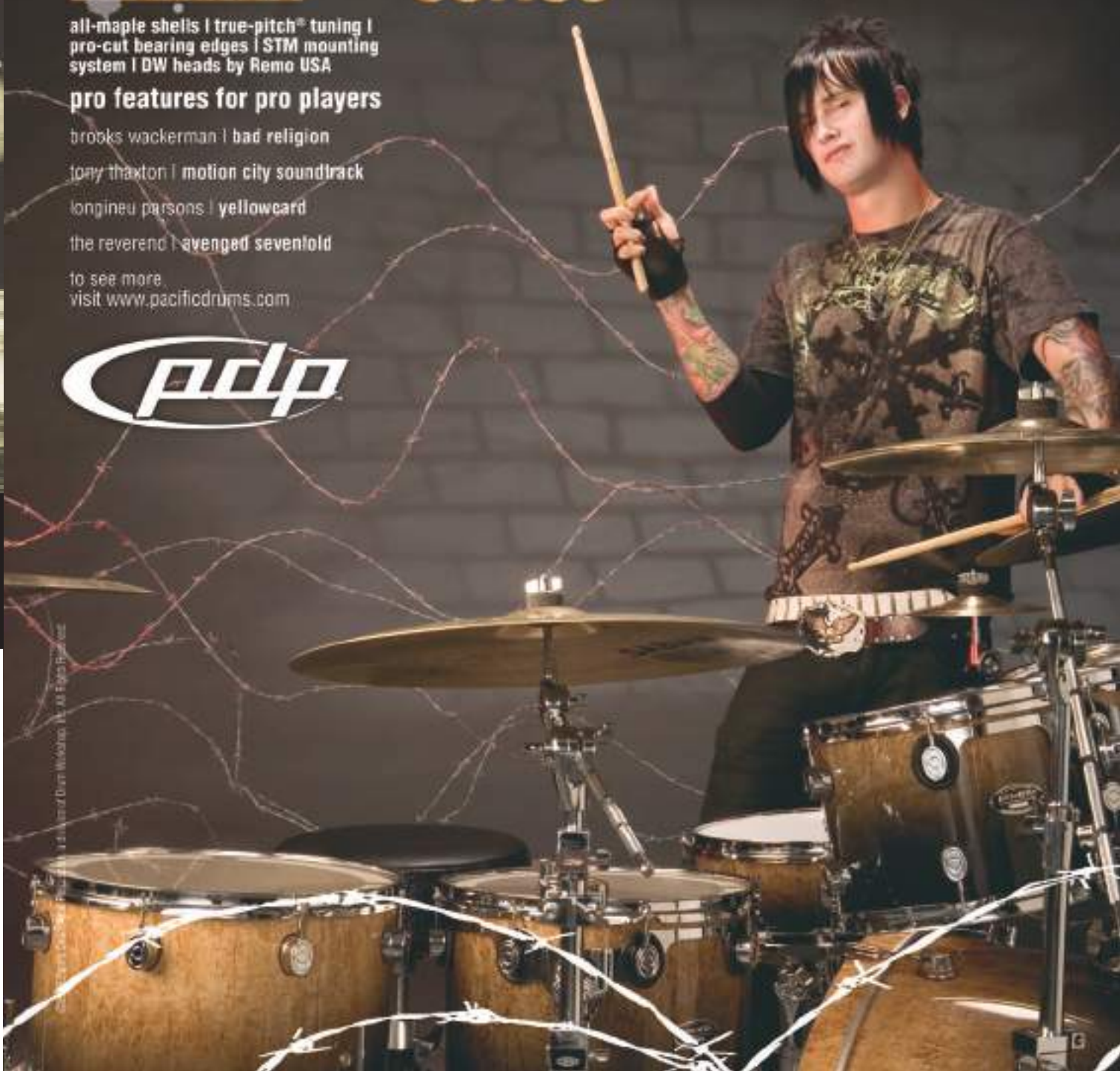
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CARL PALMER



Mike Innes

The king of prog rock with Emerson, Lake & Palmer; the dynamo of '80s pomp rock with Asia; one of the most entertaining soloists ever—Carl Palmer remains an energetic performer and staunch drum solo advocate. Currently working most of the year with The Carl Palmer Band or BPS (Baredo, Palmer, Stevens), Palmer is a fountain of drum solo wisdom—and an accomplished swordsman.

“The reason for drum solos, and what is different from any other instrument, is that drum solos are extremely entertaining. Solos from a trumpet player or sax player don’t have the physical or visual aspect that a drum solo has. A drummer is moving all four limbs. And, of course, as time has gone by, technical ability has gotten better and better. Solos have become musically interesting apart from being visually entertaining. To play a solo well and keep an audience’s attention, you have to be an extremely competent player and have a large musical vocabulary.

“My idea of playing drum solos is, I play X amount for me, and then X amount for

the audience, where I juggle the sticks or maybe throw a stick down on the drum and catch the rebound. That keeps people interested even if they don’t care about drumming. You can keep people’s attention for longer than most soloists if you play your cards right. When drummers understand that, they will understand the answer to the question ‘Why?’ Because you *can*. You can make more out of a solo than most other instrumentalists can.

“Apart from being able to play, you need average technique and a large musical vocabulary. You have to understand where solos came from, like Max Roach’s brilliant ‘The Drum Also Waltzes,’ and know that ‘Jumping At The Woodside’ by Buddy Rich on *This One’s For Basie* is an unbelievably technical solo. You have this musical approach by Max Roach and this

technical approach by Buddy Rich, and if you put those together you have someone like Joe Morello, who has both aspects. You should know *where* solos came from, who started what, and how they presented it.

“Like on any other instrument, you have to remember phrases. If you’re playing from the heart, you’ll play things you haven’t played before. However, all of us have our practiced licks. You need enough ideas so that if you start to play and it’s not happening, you have something you can fall back on that you know will work.

“My solos have a beginning, a middle, and an end, which is usually the kitchen sink. I like to have three landmarks that I can change, but work as points of reference that I would like to get to. Then the bits in between are quite experimental and off the wall. If I don’t have those landmarks, it’s good, but it doesn’t always have the architecture I like.

“With The Carl Palmer Band, I solo in ‘Fanfare For The Common Man,’ which was a big single for ELP in the '70s. It’s a shuffle rhythm, which I come off into the solo with 8th-note triplets in any combination. It’s natural to play some of the existing rhythm of the song and carry on with that and then break away. Drum solos can be boring, so you need to use dynamics. And, of course, you have to be creative. The last thing you want is for people to walk out because you’re playing something corny on the floor tom that they’ve heard a million times.”

Selected Solo Discography

Carl Palmer: “Drum Solo,” *Working Live, Volume 1*
Emerson, Lake & Palmer: “Karn Evil 9,” *Welcome Back My Friends To The Show That Never Ends*

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Louie Bellson: “Skin Deep,” Duke Ellington, *Ellington Uptown*
Buddy Rich: “West Side Story,” *Swingin’ New Big Band*
Joe Morello: “Castillian Drums,” Dave Brubeck, *Dave Brubeck Quartet At Carnegie Hall*
Buddy Rich: “Jumping At The Woodside,” *This One’s For Basie*
Max Roach: “The Drum Also Waltzes,” *Drums Unlimited*
Gene Krupa: “Drum Boogie,” Gene Krupa Big Band, *Drummer Man*



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“I always try to think about composition when soloing, as if I’m writing a piece of music right then and there.”—Dave Weckl

Combining the military precision of Steve Gadd with the full-set innovations of Gary Chester, Dave Weckl raised the bar for drum soloists the world over. On recordings by Bill Connors, Chick Corea, French Toast, Michel Camilo, and his own band, Weckl’s solos and accompaniment were so powerful as to create legions of “Weckl clones,” players who copied Dave’s mighty amalgams of stylized Latin rhythms, airy snare drum and fusion technique, mind-blowing coordination, and *meticulous* attention to detail.

“Soloing is the one place for an artist to be totally spontaneous with self-expression and communication to a listening audience, to attempt to create a musical emotion-evoking moment through the drumset.

“For me, it started from watching and listening to drummers I admired, mostly in a jazz setting. I’ll use Buddy Rich, Steve Gadd, Peter Erskine, Vinnie Colaiuta, Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, and Billy Cobham as *some* references to my inspirations. From there, it’s about exploring how to tell my own story through the drums.

“As far as the tools needed, it would

depend on the type of solo, whether by yourself or on top of a rhythm comp, over a song form, or freeform. One of the biggest tools you need is the ability to convey emotion through the drums, using all the available sounds of the kit, and your imagination, to create the sounds, and the awareness to *intend* doing just that. Having the technical ability to be able to ‘do’ is important. The more you’re able to do, the more you’re capable of.

“You also need to be clear about what you want to express. I usually work off an idea of a form for a solo, whether free or not, so there’s a beginning, middle, and end. To solo over a song form, you have to understand the form and think in more melodic terms. The more musical knowledge you have, the more musical your solos can be. Studying keyboard, harmony, and composition helps. Also, a broad knowledge of different cultures of music will give you more ideas and a broader vocabulary.

“My solos are almost

always spontaneous, reflecting the current moment. I always try to think about composition when soloing, as if I’m writing a piece of music right then and there. I may play a big loud intro with a flurry of sound and content, or it may start softly with effects, or in time. It depends on the moment. I usually go into some sort of time feel for the body of the solo, and identify the time to the listener so they have a reference point. I’ll then begin to converse with myself, a type of call-and-answer concept, using sounds and dynamic contrasts. From there it just becomes spontaneous composition.

The length of a solo is determined by many things: my mood, time available in the set, and a judgment on how long it should be to not get boring or redundant. Most solos, and how they are structured from beginning to end, will be determined by what came before and what will come after, musically speaking, in the set of music being played.

“Regarding playing for form or something else, I generally create repetitive melodic and rhythmic phrases, usually in the body of the solo, but always against some sort of ostinato time source. For example, something as simple as quarter notes on the hi-hat with the foot, or as complex as consistent triplets on two bass drums. Beginnings, and sometimes endings, can be more abstract, free of time, with clusters of sound and expression.”



Selected Solo Discography

Dave Weckl Band, *Live And Very Plugged In*
 Dave Weckl: “What It Is,” Dave Weckl Band, *Multiplicity*
 Drummers Collective 25th Anniversary (DVD)

Favorite Solos And Soloists

Steve Gadd: “Cappuccino,” Chick Corea, *Friends*
 Buddy Rich: “West Side Story,” *Swingin’ New Big Band*
 Joe Morello: “Take Five,” Dave Brubeck, *Time Out*





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— Rodney Holmes



"My finger technique came from studying jazz. I didn't want to be a jazz player, per se, I just wanted to know about the music so that I could draw from it in different situations."

— Keith Carlock



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— Ian Paice and



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only way to get fast is to practice.
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it out.”

— *Chris Adler*



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& bass is the first step to getting
into any style of music: you have
to listen to it and expose yourself
to it... I’m not trying to imitate
a machine. I’m trying to open
doors so something new can
happen.”

— *JoJo Mayer*



“The key to developing a good
groove is to really understand
what your role is as a drummer.
For me, my role is to play for the
song, not for myself.”

— *Zoro*

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MD SELECTS THE

TOP 25

DRUM SOLOS

OF ALL TIME

BY MIKE HAID

What made you want to become a drummer? What drives you to become the best drummer you can be?

For many players, it's performing or recording a drum feature of some sort. For most of us, the quality and importance of a drum solo involves the more critical, cerebral aspects of the performance—dynamics, technical proficiency, melodic phrasing, etc. Once a drummer is lured into the fascinating world of drumming, he or she embarks on a feeding frenzy, wanting to soak up every great drum solo in existence to find the most powerful exhibition of drumming excellence known to man. That's what this feature is all about.

Please keep in mind, the popularity and significance of a classic drum solo lies within the context in which it is presented. A solo may be designed to enhance a pulsating dance beat, or to express the unbridled, deep emotional soul of a complex jazz or rock experience. For the general public, the success of a drum solo usually depends on the ability of the drummer to move the listener to an emotional response. Whether one produces an irresistible urge to dance, or to beat on something, or if it just freezes the listener with its jaw-dropping technical or visual excitement, a drum solo must emit an emotion that captures the listener.

MD has compiled a list of what we consider to be the most important and "successful" drum solos in the history of recorded music. In this list you'll find many of the innovators and entertainers that brought drumming to the forefront of the American music culture, setting the stage for the amazing drum solo masters of today.



25) Vinnie Colaiuta: "Chasin' The Train"
Chick Corea Akoustic Band,
Live In Tokyo (1996)

The musical soul of Vinnie Colaiuta runs deeper than perhaps any other drummer in history. Vinnie's ability to carry on an inspiring and heady musical conversation with the heaviest of the heavyweights was proven once again during his brief encounter with jazz keyboardist Chick Corea for these historic live dates in Tokyo with Chick's Akoustic Band.

Vinnie's instinctive sense of arrangement and mastery of advanced stylistic techniques spill over on every track, but none so deeply as "Chasin' The Train," where the drummer opens with bombastic cymbal explosions amid driving accented snare and kick lines. Vinnie orchestrates the melodies, improvising effortlessly with an incredible passion and fire.

24) Carl Palmer: "Tank"
Emerson, Lake & Palmer,
Emerson, Lake & Palmer (1971)

With "Tank," Carl Palmer unleashed a blazing solo that would eventually be expounded upon in his live extended solo performances, most notably the "Karn Evil 9 (1st Impression)" solo from ELP's *Welcome Back My Friends* live set. But the "Tank" solo from ELP's self-titled debut still stands as his masterpiece.

Palmer was the "Buddy Rich of prog rock" in the '70s, with blinding hand and foot speed and precise technique that he drew directly from the Buddy textbook. Palmer's huge kit was also one of the first in progressive rock to incorporate gongs and tuned percussion. His live solos with ELP were also a visually stunning spectacle.

23) Dave Weckl: "Master Plan"
with Steve Gadd,
Master Plan (1990)

After gaining recognition for his masterful soloing abilities with Michel Camilo and Chick Corea's Elektric and Akoustic Bands, Dave Weckl released *Master Plan*, his first and most acclaimed solo recording. The title track, written by Chick Corea, features an innovative drum duet with Weckl (left channel) and Steve Gadd (right channel), giving two of jazz fusion's mightiest drummers the opportunity to showcase their talents side by side.

This Latin-flavored track features

melodic drum breaks that allowed the drummers to rhythmically complement one another, as opposed to it being a battle of technical wizardry. Weckl seemed to pay tribute to Gadd by designing the rhythmic structure of the piece to fit Gadd's innovative style—one from which Weckl has obviously built many of his own rhythmic concepts.

22) Ringo Starr: "The End"
The Beatles, *Abbey Road (1969)*

Ringo Starr, the most famous drummer in pop music history, has never been a fan of drum solos. He never rhythmically "over-indulged" on any Beatles tune, until that brief, historic moment on the *Abbey Road* LP. Ringo opened up for a mere fifteen seconds (eight bars) with a simple pulsing bass drum pattern layered with short melodic patterns on the toms.

For Ringo, less has always been more, which is why this solo became such a legendary moment in his recorded catalog. This was Ringo's only drum solo with The Beatles. And, as with everything that was "Fab Four" back in the day, the significance and popularity of this rare solo was magnified due to the unprecedented fame of the lads from Liverpool.

21) Ian Paice: "The Mule"
Deep Purple, *Made In Japan Live (1972)*

Paice was another of the great British rock drummers deeply influenced by early American jazz drummers. This was evident on his outstanding solo from the classic 1972 live Deep Purple album *Made In Japan*. Paice solos with a soulful jazzy feel, displaying relaxed rudimental technique. His smooth double strokes were his forte, as he mainly worked the core of his solo from the snare drum. (This solo also featured incredible foot speed.) Paice was one of the most exciting and talented drum soloists of the '70s rock era.

20) Terry Bozzio: "The Black Page"
Frank Zappa, *Zappa In New York (1977)*

This solo is probably the most unusual of all on this list due to the fact that it was written and orchestrated by musical genius Frank Zappa specifically for Bozzio. "The Black Page" is an exercise in odd-meter proficiency. This orchestral rock piece moves through ridiculous time changes that demand the utmost concentration to perfect, and Bozzio mastered this task.

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Top 25 Drum Solos

Heralded as the ultimate challenge for drummers, this historic drumming accomplishment defined Bozzio as a drummer's drummer and percussionist extraordinaire. More than a show of strength, speed, and endurance, this was the first solo that was a true test of classically based musical and rhythmic expertise.

19) Steve Gadd: "Nite Sprite"

Chick Corea,
The Leprechaun (1976)

With his thick, dark, close-miked sound, Steve Gadd changed the way the drums sounded in the '70s. But it was his crafty musical approach to drumming that gained him the reputation as one of drumming's all-time great innovators. Gadd set a new standard in pop drumming with his technically advanced grooves and monstrous solo breaks, especially on the Steely Dan track "Aja." But Gadd's performance on Chick Corea's "Nite Sprite" is pure musical genius.

Gadd orchestrated the entire piece with an exciting, advanced melodic design, while incorporating his now famous trademark licks into his drum solo breaks. Steve's time, feel, and facility to seemingly solo and groove at the same time may never be equaled. His ability to incorporate jazz, Latin, funk, and rock into a homogeneous style on this burning track created innovative grooves and solo concepts that drummers are still digesting today.

18) Sandy Nelson: "Let There Be Drums" single (1961)

The "surf" sound was starting to catch on in pop music in the early '60s. Sandy Nelson, a West Coast session drummer, was able to tap the market and create several instrumental drum feature hits that made their way into the top ten. He recorded "Teen Beat" in 1959, which reached number 4. Instrumental music was not typically a big seller in pop music, but Nelson incorporated the Gene Krupa "Sing, Sing, Sing" concept of the tribal tom beat with a swinging feel, added a twangy surf guitar sound—and the kids loved it.

In 1961 Nelson released "Let There Be Drums." Although this wasn't a drum solo piece, it was another instrumental drum feature that became his second, and most often remembered, top-10 hit. Nelson had another, minor hit in 1962 with "Drums

Are My Beat."

Nelson was involved in a car accident in 1963 in which he lost part of his leg. He eventually recovered and returned to performing, releasing "Teen Beat '65," which was his final recording before fading into obscurity. But Nelson proved again that the emotion of the tribal drum groove could move people and sell records.

17) Neil Peart: "Working Man/Finding My Way" Rush, *All The World's A Stage* (1976)

The first (solo) cut is the deepest for Neil Peart. Rush's drummer became a household name with rock drummers after the Rush epic *2112* recording. The first Rush live recording that followed, *All The World's A Stage*, gave drummers what they were craving—an extended solo from prog metal's new-found king.

Aptly introduced as "The Professor," Peart created a well-structured, lengthy, and diverse solo incorporating a traditional rudimental snare drum display, moving into a fast four-on-the-floor drumkit workout laced with tuned cowbell melodies leading to dense double bass "quads." The drummer also dropped in choked cymbal accents that highlighted the quick triplet and 16th-note combination fills around his massive kit. This first live solo from Neil culminates with an oriental musical phrase on the cowbells. Peart's live solos in time became even more structured and stylistically diverse. But longtime Neil fans remember *this* solo as a grand opening statement.

16) Michael Shrieve: "Soul Sacrifice" *Woodstock* (1969)

Michael Shrieve will forever be remembered as the nineteen-year-old drummer for Santana who played the energized drum solo at the legendary Woodstock music festival. "Soul Sacrifice" was a lengthy Latin rock instrumental from Carlos Santana that featured a percussion and drum solo. Shrieve's solo was jazz-influenced in the style of Gene Krupa, with lots of four-on-the-floor bass drum and rudimental snare work with cymbal accents. His hand chops were quite impressive, even by today's standards.

Shrieve's solo wasn't necessarily a groundbreaking performance. But for the thousands of concert attendees—and the

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Top 25 Drum Solos

millions more who saw it on film—it stirred enough emotion to put Shrieve in the history books as the youngest and most exciting drummer at the most important rock music festival in American history. This performance helped bring more attention to drummers—and drum solos—in rock music.

15) Billy Cobham: “One Word” The Mahavishnu Orchestra, *Birds Of Fire* (1973)

It’s possible that no other drummer save Buddy Rich had a greater impact on the art of soloing than Billy Cobham. When The Mahavishnu Orchestra exploded onto the scene in the early ’70s, it was Cobham who captured the attention of jazz and rock drummers alike with his unbelievable speed, blinding intensity, and innovative odd meter concepts.

The high-velocity “One Word,” from the second Mahavishnu Orchestra LP, *Birds Of Fire*, featured Cobham’s first double bass solo, which undoubtedly introduced a younger generation to the art of double bass drumming, rudimental expertise, and fluent odd-meter techniques. This type of soloing, with such intensity and commanding chops, had not been performed before. Cobham has continued to take the art of soloing to greater heights throughout his prolific career, but the “One Word” solo was an early innovative statement that heralded things to come from this drum legend.

14) Clyde Stubblefield: “Funky Drummer” James Brown (1969)

This is the eight-bar drum break that helped shape the world of soul, funk, R&B, hip-hop, and drum ‘n’ bass. Recorded November 20, 1969 in Cincinnati, Ohio, this seriously funky syncopated groove remains the most popular and widely sampled drum break in recorded history. Clyde Stubblefield laid down a groove so deep that the Godfather Of Soul gave him a twenty-second solo feature in the middle of this tune, and told Clyde, “You don’t have to do no soloin’, brother; just keep what you got. Don’t turn it loose, ’cause it’s a mutha.”

Stubblefield’s infectious groove is built around a 16th-note hi-hat pattern with snare and bass drum accents enforcing the repetitive horn line that dominates the track. Stubblefield never strays far from the

consistent pattern, only embellishing with occasional one-handed press roll accents on the snare. This innovative groove-based solo is all killer, no filler. Yeah, give the drummer some!

13) Ron Bushy: “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida” Iron Butterfly, *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* (1968)

The American heavy rock group Iron Butterfly released the *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* LP in July of 1968. It featured the seventeen-plus-minute side-long psychedelic track that included an extended drum solo by Ron Bushy. Within the first year of its release, *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* sold over eight million copies. It stayed on the charts for a hundred forty weeks, including eighty-one weeks in the top ten. To date, the album has sold in excess of thirty million copies.

Bushy’s simplistic solo had space, dynamics, and melodic phrases. It was played exclusively on the tom-toms with a solid four-on-the-floor bass drum pulse throughout, until Bushy eased into a tribal rhythm with a steady side-stick groove. This infamous drum solo was less than three minutes in length and was not flashy or filled with technical genius. It was, however, a catchy solo that most drummers could easily emulate, thus making it accessible to the average player. Once again, massive success through simplicity.

12) Ginger Baker: “Toad” Cream, *Fresh Cream* (1966)

Cream was one of the first British power trios. They gained success by playing electric, blues-influenced rock. And Cream’s drummer, Peter Edward “Ginger” Baker, gained personal notoriety by giving rock music its first full-fledged, lengthy drum solo. Baker was also one of the first drummers in rock to incorporate Louie Bellson’s double bass setup.

“Toad” was a musical piece created as a vehicle for Baker’s improvised solo. Ginger’s soloing technique was obviously jazz-influenced, and was closer to Gene Krupa than to Buddy Rich in terms of hand speed, with a bit of a loose, bebop attitude. His drumkit technique during the solo evolves into aggressive hand and foot combinations of 8th notes and triplets. This type of drum solo fea-



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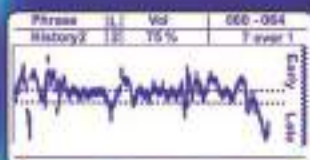
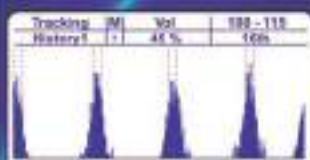
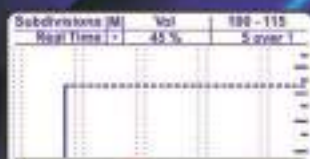
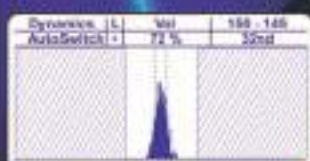
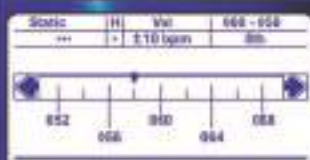
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Top 25 Drum Solos

ture began a trend in the '60s that spilled over into the arena-rock groups of the early '70s.

11) Tony Williams: "Agitation" Miles Davis, *E.S.P.* (1965)

Tony Williams bridged the gap between the early bebop drummer and the modern jazz drummer. He was a vital piece of the rhythmic puzzle that connected the sophistication of acoustic jazz with the raw energy of electric jazz/rock. The building blocks of his innovative technique came together with his work in the acoustic Miles Davis group of the mid-'60s, and then became crystal-clear with his electric Lifetime groups.

Tony took pieces of groundbreaking techniques from every great jazz drummer who came before him and molded them into his own unique, emotional style. This solo depicts a legendary drummer in transition, an evolution that would deeply influence the playing styles of an entire generation of drummers.

10) Ron Wilson: "Wipeout" The Surfaris (1963)

By 1963, the "surf sound" was in full swing in America. Who would have suspected that a group of teenage surfers from Glendora, California would create one of the most famous drumming tunes in American music history? Drummer Ron Wilson, who at seventeen was the oldest member of the group as well as their main songwriter, had written a song called "Surfer Joe." The Surfaris needed a song to put on the B side of the 45. So Wilson began playing an energetic single-stroke sticking pattern inspired by a high school marching band cadence. The rest of the band put together the guitar parts in a few minutes, and in three takes, "Wipe Out" was born.

Fun facts: The song was originally called "Switch Blade," with one of the guitarists flipping open a knife as a sound effect at the intro of the song. But the producer, Dale Smallen, preferred the less provocative title "Wipe Out." The father of one of the guitarists provided a piece of plaster-soaked wood to simulate the crack of a surfboard. Smallen provided the crazy laugh and two-word intro. On the long fade version, Ron Wilson frantically plays the

hi-hat with one stick, after dropping the other one.

Sadly, Wilson died of a brain aneurysm in 1989. But he will forever be remembered for providing the ultimate example of simple drumming genius, created by embracing the spirit and love for the sport of surfing.

9) Art Blakey: "A Night In Tunisia" Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers, *A Night In Tunisia* (1960)

Many would consider "A Night In Tunisia" with Lee Morgan and Wayne Shorter a much more interesting and innovative solo than Blakey's popular "Blues March," the 1958 piece featuring a swing shuffle augmented with a regimented military march. "Tunisia" incorporates Latin and African rhythms into the lengthy arrangement and highlights Blakey in a feverish solo.

Blakey weaves in and out of Latin- and African-based rhythms throughout the track. He was a polyrhythmic player in a similar way to Max Roach, but he had a more organic, aggressive, and open-toned sound. Blakey and Roach, both innovators in the bop-era drumming scene, have numerous solos that could easily have made this list. This is one of Blakey's best.

8) Max Roach: "Cherokee" Clifford Brown & Max Roach, *Study In Brown* (1955)

Max Roach is another innovator of jazz drumming whose groundbreaking solos are numerous. His work with the "A" list of jazz legends leaves no rhythmic stone unturned. Roach's "The Drum Also Waltzes" solo is considered a masterpiece in that he created polyrhythmic colors and textures with his hands while performing a 3/4 waltz pattern with his feet. But Roach's work with Clifford Brown on "Cherokee" exemplifies his impeccable swing time and incredible overall chops. His rhythmic ideas inside this solo are precise and articulate, as he layers polyrhythmic ideas over the uptempo swing time. Roach's burning drum battles with Buddy Rich were also a testament to his legendary status as one of the greatest jazz drummers—and soloists—of all time.



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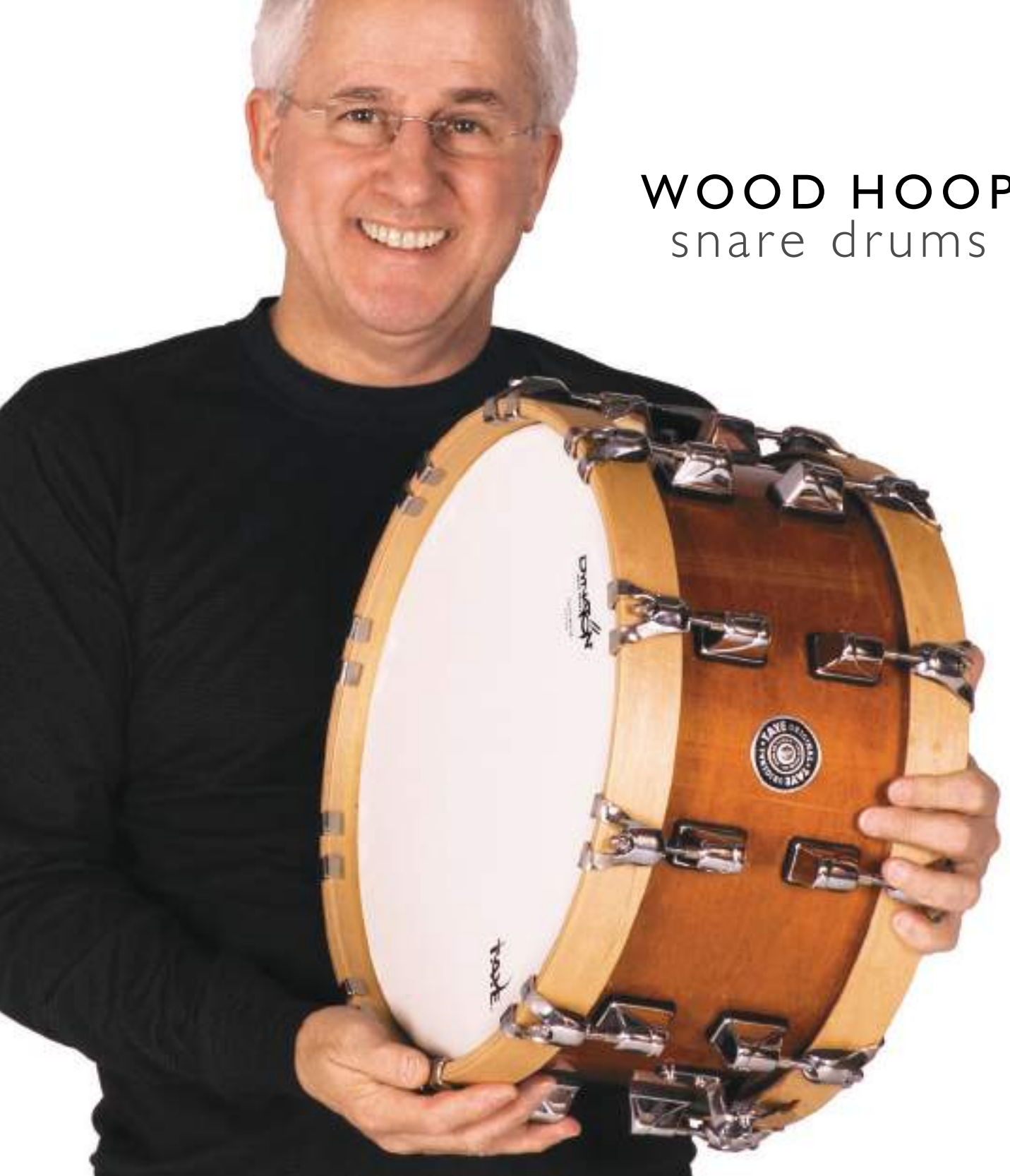
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Top 25 Drum Solos

7) Elvin Jones: "Outrance"

Michael Brecker, *Time Is Of The Essence* (1999), "Vigil," John Coltrane, *Transition* (1965)

Since Elvin Jones was involved in so many groundbreaking ensembles in which he performed countless solos throughout his career, it was necessary to dig deep into his catalog. The reason Michael Brecker's 1999 cut "Outrance" was chosen is the fact that it shows that Elvin's chops were just as fresh, dynamic, and exciting then as they were on Coltrane's 1965 track "Vigil." Both tracks highlight master horn players going one-on-one with Elvin, whose subliminal communication skills push these sax legends to their limits. Elvin's melodic sense and creative use of time and space overshadows his technical expertise, allowing his rhythmic expression in each of these solos to gracefully unravel. (Another highly regarded Elvin solo is "The Drum Thing," from Coltrane's *Crescent* release.)

6) Cozy Cole: "Topsy, Part II" (1958)

William Randolph "Cozy" Cole and his combo played the Metropole in New York in 1958 and recorded "Topsy," which became a million selling recording for the drummer. On this cut Cole laid down a danceable tribal groove on the toms that moved in and out of a swinging melody. This was the formula that got the dancers' feet moving—and sold records. Cole also displayed solid rudimental snare work within the tune in a call-and-response section with the band. Cole's articulate rudimental style would carry him through several decades of success, but "Topsy" was the hit that sealed his place in drumming history.

5) Joe Morello: "Take Five"

Dave Brubeck Quartet, *Time Out* (1959)

This jazz classic had a fresh, cool, and sophisticated sound for its time. And while Joe Morello was one of the greatest "technical" drummers of all time, this solo was not about intensity or flash. Morello played with, and around, the odd-meter melody with relaxed technique, while Brubeck's piano ostinato created a hypnotic foundation to work from. "Take Five" was one of the first odd-time jazz pieces, which made Morello's drum solo even more intriguing and impressive.

4) Louie Bellson: "Skin Deep"

Duke Ellington, *Uptown* (1952)

Because their careers paralleled each other, the flamboyant personality and high-profile drumming pyrotechnics of Buddy Rich occasionally overshadowed the amazing talents of Louie Bellson. But within the industry, Bellson was, is, and forever will be considered one of the greatest drumming talents and innovators of all time. Duke Ellington once stated, "Louie Bellson has all the requirements for perfection in his craft. He is the world's greatest drummer."

Bellson's composition "Skin Deep" became a permanent fixture in Duke's repertoire. This 1952 performance was a major drum feature for Bellson, as it displayed, in full force, his original double bass drum technique. The uptempo arrangement allows Louie to express his lightning speed and melodic sense, as he trades licks with the band and performs the exciting, first-ever recorded double bass solo. Louie's accomplishments go way beyond this innovative solo, but this is where it all began for double bass.

3) John Bonham: "Moby Dick" Led Zeppelin, *Led Zeppelin II* (1969)

John Henry Bonham is considered the greatest drummer of the rock era. Bonham made a lasting statement on Zep's second studio LP with his dynamic, varied, emotional, and creative extended drum solo piece, "Moby Dick." His signature may have been his use and command of the triplet patterns played between his hands and bass drum (also played percussively with his hands *without* sticks). Bonham's live performances of this piece were spectacular, muscular, and groundbreaking.

2) Buddy Rich: "West Side Story"

Swingin' New Big Band (1966), "Channel 1 Suite," *Mercy, Mercy* (1968)

Once Gene Krupa opened the door for drummers to steal the spotlight with extended solos, young Bernard "Buddy" Rich saw that opening and steamrolled his way into drumming history as the greatest drummer of all time. It's difficult to really single out one drum solo recording from Buddy's vast array of superhuman performances. In terms of outstanding musical arrangements interwoven with commanding drum solos,

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Top 25 Drum Solos

Buddy's "West Side Story Medley" and "Channel 1 Suite" stand out as classics. His solos were always entertaining, musical, and filled with rudimental perfection performed at blinding speed. Buddy remains the undeniable king of the drum solo.

1) Gene Krupa: "Sing, Sing, Sing" Benny Goodman Orchestra. *Live At Carnegie Hall* (1937)



Certainly not the most technically challenging solo on the list, "Sing, Sing, Sing" is nonetheless the most important drum solo recording of all time. Gene Krupa helping bring

the drummer's status from "back-of-the-band noisemaker" to frontline soloist—and brought the swing-era audience to their feet. Though "Sing, Sing, Sing" was written by Louis Prima as a vocal tune, it became a trademark instrumental piece of the swing era. And it was also the first hit song to feature a drummer playing extended solos.

Krupa's swinging, tribal rhythms, pounded out on the floor toms, created a throbbing pulse that powered clarinetist Benny Goodman's big band through the eight-plus-minute track. Krupa's showmanship, good looks, and high-energy attitude made him a superstar. His drumming on "Sing, Sing, Sing" opened the door for drummers to showcase their talents and gain the respect of fellow musicians and audiences alike.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Chick Webb: "Liza,"
Chick Webb And His Orchestra,
Spinnin' The Webb

Shadow Wilson: "Queer Street,"
Count Basie, *Classics*

Roy Haynes: "Matrix," Chick Corea,
Now He Sings, Now He Sobs

Philly Joe Jones: "Billy Boy,"
Miles Davis, *Milestones*

Jack DeJohnette: "Nardis,"
Bill Evans, *At The Montreaux
Jazz Festival*

Jeff Watts: "Chambers Of Tain,"
Wynton Marsalis,
Live At Blues Alley

Pierre van der Linden:
"Hocus Pocus,"
Focus, *Moving Waves*

Danny Seraphine: "Make Me Smile,"
Chicago

Chuck Ruff: "Frankenstein,"
Edgar Winter Group

Danny Carey: "Forty Six & Two,"
Tool, *Aenima*

Carmine Appice: "Break Song,"
Vanilla Fudge, *Near The Beginning*

Don Brewer: "T.N.U.C.,"
Grand Funk Railroad,
On Time/GFR Live

Floyd Sneed: "King Solomon's Mines,"
Three Dog Night,
Suitable For Framing

Phil Collins/Chester Thompson:
"Los Endos," Genesis, *Seconds Out*

Steve Smith: "La Do Da,"
Journey, *Captured Live*

Eric Carr: "Carr Jam,"
KISS, *Revenge*

Kenny Jones: "I'm Losing You,"
Rod Stewart,
Every Picture Tells A Story

Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez:
"On Fire," Michel Camilo,
Live At The Blue Note

Dennis Chambers: "Stagger,"
Gary Willis, *No Sweat*

Anna Torqu岸, Sweden (Cajón)

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Finish: Mat



Internal, adjustable snare wires

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SOLOS TO WATCH

13 OUTSTANDING COMPILATIONS

Here's a list of DVDs and videos that feature many drummers in a solo context. All are highly recommended.

1) **Classic Drum Solos And Drum Battles** (Hudson Music)

This DVD is the perfect introduction to some of the greatest drum solo legends in acoustic drumset history. Soloists featured include Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, Elvin Jones, Art Blakey, Joe Morello, Ed Shaughnessy, Lionel Hampton, Sonny Payne, Rufus Jones, Sam Woodyard, Cozy Cole, Chico Hamilton, and Sunny Murray. It also includes an optional commentary track by Peter Erskine. Special features offer the original theatrical trailer for *The Gene Krupa Story* motion picture from 1958.

2) **Classic Drum Solos And Drum Battles, Vol. 2** (Hudson Music)

More classic solos from Krupa, Rich, Elvin, Bellson, Hampton, Blakey, Payne, Woodyard, Mel Lewis, Papa Jo Jones, Dannie Richmond, and Barrett Deems. It also features an informative history of the drumset segment from jazz great Shelly Manne.

3) **Modern Drummer Festival 2000** (Hudson Music)

Like fine wine, these live performances seem to get better with age. Outstanding stylistic variety and incredible drumming from Don Brewer, Paul Leim, Dave Lombardo, Hilary Jones, Akira Jimbo, Billy Ward, Horacio Hernandez with Marc Quiñones, and the incomparable Vinnie Colaiuta make this an inspiring DVD.

4) **Drummers Collective 25th Anniversary Celebration 2002** (Hudson Music)

Excellent production and inspiring drumming exhibitions from Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, Steve Smith, Horacio Hernandez, and the drummers of the Collective faculty including Kenwood Dennard, Kim Plainfield, Michael Lauren, and Memo Acevedo. Lots of special features.

5) **Modern Drummer Festival 1997 (VHS)** (Modern Drummer Publ.)

Virgil Donati, John Tempesta, Steve Gadd with Giovanni Hidalgo, Bill Stewart, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Paul Wertico, Jack DeJohnette, Steve Ferrone, and a very young Tony Royster Jr.

6) **The Ultimate Drummers Weekend 10th Anniversary** (Hudson Music)

This DVD features a host of international drumming greats performing at Australia's largest festival. Drummers include Virgil Donati, Dave Weckl, John Tempesta, David Jones, Graham Morgan, Dom Famularo, Grant Collins, Sam Aliano, Gordon Rytmeister, and a host of others. Also included are workshops with Weckl and Donati.

7) **The Ultimate Drummers Weekend 11th Anniversary** (Hudson Music)

Another colossal gathering of world-class drummers, organized by Australian drummer/educator Frank Corniola. The lineup includes Thomas Lang, John Blackwell Jr., Jimmy DeGrasso, Andrew Gander, Vera Figueiredo, and several other international drumming all-stars. Special features include workshops from Lang, Blackwell, and DeGrasso.

8) **Buddy Rich Memorial Concert, Vol. 2 (VHS)** (originally released by DCI)

Recorded live on October 14, 1989 at the Wiltern Theatre in Los Angeles, this video features Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Gadd, and Dave Weckl playing superbly with The Buddy Rich Big Band. This historic

gathering produced the highly regarded drum battle between Gadd, Vinnie, and Weckl—all three in their prime and pushing each other to the utmost of their abilities.

9) **Buddy Rich Memorial Concert, Vol. 1 (VHS)** (originally released by DCI/Warner Bros.)

The other half of the October 14, 1989 Wiltern Theatre concert featured Louie Bellson, Dennis Chambers, and Gregg Bissonette soloing and performing with The Buddy Rich Band. Inspiring performances from all three drummers.

10) **Salute To Buddy Rich** (Hudson Music)

This DVD features Phil Collins, Steve Smith, and Dennis Chambers with The Buddy Rich Big Band and Buddy's Buddies. The versatile and heavily swinging pop superstar/drum legend Phil Collins is highlighted, performing the majority of material with The Buddy Rich Band. Smith and Chambers each perform two songs, including outstanding solos from both.

11) **The Making Of Burning For Buddy (VHS)**

(originally released by DCI Music Video/Warner Bros.)

In May of 1994, Neil Peart paid tribute to Buddy Rich as he and Buddy's daughter Cathy invited eighteen of the world's greatest drummers to New York's Power Station studio to record with The Buddy Rich Big Band. The list is a who's who of drumming: Max Roach, Joe Morello, Ed Shaughnessy, Billy Cobham, Bill Bruford, Simon Phillips, Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, Steve Smith, Rod Morgenstein, Kenny Aronoff, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Manu Katché, Omar Hakim, Matt Sorum, Steve Ferrone, and Neil Peart. The video documentary of the recording of these CDs, in four volumes, is highly recommended.

12) **Pete York's Super Drumming, Vol. 1**

(Music Video Dist.)

Veteran British session drummer Pete York presented a number of unique performances that showcased a variety of drumming styles and world-class drummers in the '80s. The series was shown in segments on German TV, and the recordings were also released on vinyl and CD. This DVD contains footage from the first two specials, as well as new introductions by Pete York. Louie Bellson, Simon Phillips, Ian Paice, Gerry Brown, and the late, great Cozy Powell are featured from the first special, filmed at a century-old cathedral in West Germany. Zak Starkey, Billy Cobham, Bill Bruford, and Nicko McBrain are featured from the second show, with York as the house band drummer on both. This rare gem is well worth seeking out.

13) **Super Drumming, Vol. 2**

(Music Video Dist.)

Just released on DVD, *Super Drumming Vol. 2* features drummers Mark Brzezicki, Steve Ferrone, Trilok Gurtu, Jon Hiseman, Ian Paice, Hermann Rarebell, Freddie Santiago, Ed Thigpen, and Pete York. Recorded live in Volkingen/Saarland, Germany in August 1989.



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25 Classic Solo Licks

by Ed Breckenfeld

MUSIC KEY			
Half-open	ghost note	R.C.	C.C.
H.H.			
T.T.			
S.D.			
F.T.			
B.D.1			
H.H. w/ foot	B.D.2	Stick shot	Add'l T.T.

Ever since Gene Krupa ushered in the Era of modern drum solos with Benny Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing," drummers have been putting their individual stamp on the genre. Great drum soloists can grab you with a distinctive rhythm or lick the way that a songwriter draws you in with a catchy melody or lyric.

In this special expanded *Off The Record*, we're going to look back at some famous drum solo recordings of the past to find the unique characteristic that made them stand out. It may be an explosive, climactic lick or just a cool rhythm that gets your attention. Some of these examples were from hugely popular tunes; others played important roles on well-known albums. Nowadays, recorded drum solos on big-selling albums have become a rarity. So let's take a look back to a time when drum solos appealed to more than just drummers.

"Sing, Sing, Sing," Gene Krupa (Benny Goodman And His Orchestra—1937)

This tune's riveting floor tom groove shook the music world like thunder, catapulting the drum solo into mainstream popularity for the first time. Krupa became so identified with this pattern that his own big band had tom-toms mounted on each member's music stand, so his musicians could pound out rhythms along with the master. What made this famous groove so compelling was the subtle swing feel Gene added to his accent pattern. (0:00)

1

The prototypical drum solo had to have an exciting climax, and Krupa certainly delivered, playing rimshots on his snare drum with machine gun-like precision. (8:27)

2

"Skin Deep," Louie Bellson (Duke Ellington And His Orchestra—1952)

One of the best of the big band drummers, Louie designed his solos to be a visual as well as sonic delight, each filled with a combination of innovative ideas and brilliant technique. A pioneer of the double bass setup, Bellson arranged this particular solo to fea-

ture a tradeoff section between his hands and feet. For an audience unused to double bass drumming in the early '50s, this was certainly a show-stopper. (4:57)

3

"Topsy, Pt. 2," Cozy Cole (Cozy Cole And His Orchestra—1958)

Another drummer who came to prominence during the big band era (with Cab Calloway's band in the late '30s and early '40s), Cozy Cole brought his great swing feel to this instrumental hit that crossed over to pop radio in 1958. Building on an infectious tom-tom groove à la Gene Krupa (and later emulated by Sandy Nelson), Cole employs his advanced rudimental chops for the snare drum climax. In this sequence, notice the double-stroke stickings needed to execute the tom and snare moves. (1:57)

4



“Blues March,” Art Blakey

(Art Blakey And The Jazz Messengers, *Moanin’*—1958)

Art Blakey and the aptly named Jazz Messengers were hitting on all cylinders when they recorded this late-’50s classic. Blakey’s marching band–style groove and solo is an interesting contrast to his band’s jazz improvisations, and they set this track apart from the drumming conventions of the era. Take notice of the great left-hand work in the song’s main drumbeat (measure 1), the timekeeping hi-hat and bass drum, the use of rolls and flams to bring out the march feel, and the feel switch from triplets to 8th and 16th notes. (4:36)

5

Musical notation for the drum solo in “Blues March,” measures 5 through 7. Measure 5 starts at rehearsal mark 139. The notation shows a complex pattern of eighth notes and triplets with accents and slurs.

“Take Five,” Joe Morello

(The Dave Brubeck Quartet, *Time Out*—1959)

Dave Brubeck’s revolutionary odd-time experiments produced this massive early-’60s jazz hit, one of the classics of the era. Joe Morello’s solo contains little bombast, but an incredible amount of rhythmic sophistication, as he deftly sprinkles his syncopated patterns over Brubeck’s 5/4 piano vamp. This sequence features flam work, stick shots, and dynamic control as Morello develops an interesting rhythmic theme. (3:27)

6

Musical notation for the drum solo in “Take Five,” measures 6 through 7. Measure 6 starts at rehearsal mark 175. The notation shows a syncopated pattern of eighth notes with triplets and accents.

“Let There Be Drums,” Sandy Nelson

(Sandy Nelson—1961)

Well-known to the radio-listening public of the late ’50s and early ’60s, Sandy Nelson scored drum-centric hits with a sound that combined twang-y electric guitar riffs with Gene Krupa / Cozy Cole-style tom-tom solos. Double strokes make this pattern possible. (0:08)

7

Musical notation for the drum solo in “Let There Be Drums,” measure 7. It starts at rehearsal mark 102 and features a double-stroke pattern of eighth notes.

“Snap, Crackle,” Roy Haynes

(Roy Haynes, *Out Of The Afternoon*—1962)

Sometimes the hottest lick isn’t always the fastest or flashiest one. In his solo for “Snap, Crackle,” jazz great Roy Haynes fol-

lows some fiery snare drum flourishes with this wonderfully underplayed sequence. Haynes’ use of space, syncopation, and the melodic qualities of his kit prove that drum solos can be supremely tasteful and still burn. (3:16)

8

Musical notation for the drum solo in “Snap, Crackle,” measures 8 through 9. Measure 8 starts at rehearsal mark 163. The notation shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents and slurs.

“Wipe Out,” Ron Wilson

(The Surfaris—1963)

This early-’60s surf hit from one-hit-wonders The Surfaris contains one of the most recognizable drum figures of all time. Although it’s been years since “Wipe Out” hit the charts, this classic single-stroke drum pattern is still considered a rite of passage for drummers everywhere. (0:05)

9

Musical notation for the drum solo in “Wipe Out,” measure 9. It starts at rehearsal mark 164 and features a single-stroke eighth note pattern.

Later in the song, Wilson alters his accent pattern slightly when he switches to a different tom. (0:33)

10

Musical notation for the drum solo in “Wipe Out,” measure 10. It features a single-stroke eighth note pattern with accents.

“West Side Story Medley,” Buddy Rich

(Buddy Rich, *Swingin’ New Big Band*—1966)

What else can be said about Buddy Rich, except that his prodigious soloing ability almost defied description? Buddy was considered by many to be the greatest drummer who ever lived, and few who saw him perform could argue otherwise. Soloing in 3/4 time at the climax of this famous medley, Rich ended with a flourish of alternating cymbal crashes, dashing off paradiddles (in four against three) and six-stroke rolls with masterful ease. (10:16)

11

Musical notation for the drum solo in “West Side Story Medley,” measure 11. It starts at rehearsal mark 294 and features a complex paradiddle pattern with stick directions (R, L) and accents.

Off The Record

“In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida,” Ron Bushy (Iron Butterfly, *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*—1968)

This seventeen-minute anthem for the psychedelic generation stands as a key example of '60s jam band excess. Love it or hate it, the track contains one of rock's most well-known drum solos. Ron Bushy's long, rambling, tom-laden affair contains a lot of simple and fun ideas. (6:41)

12

Musical notation for drum solo example 12, measures 122-127. It shows a sequence of eighth notes on a single staff with various accents and dynamics markings.

“Toad,” Ginger Baker (Cream, *Wheels Of Fire*—1968)

One of the great rock technicians of the '60s, Ginger Baker put his definitive stamp on the extended drum solo with “Toad.” Hugely influential to rock drummers at the time, “Toad” is a virtuosic double bass display loaded with tom-tom / double kick interplay. (9:07)

13

Musical notation for drum solo example 13, measures 107-112. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and a change in time signature from 9/8 to 10/8.

Baker's climax demonstrates his jazz-influenced chops as he adds left-hand double strokes on his snare over the obligatory double bass flourish. (13:40)

14

Musical notation for drum solo example 14, measures 133-138. It shows a series of triplets on a single staff.

“The End,” Ringo Starr (The Beatles, *Abbey Road*—1969)

The Beatles featured a drum solo near the end of their last album. Ringo, ever the consummate groove guy, acquits himself nicely with a simple Ron Bushy-style tom solo that's recorded so well it seems to jump out of the speakers. For the band that set the standards of rock songwriting, this quick feature was a nice nod of appreciation to their popular drummer. (0:19)

15

Musical notation for drum solo example 15, measures 124-129. It shows a simple rhythmic pattern on a single staff.

“Moby Dick,” John Bonham (Led Zeppelin, *II*—1969)

One of the most admired and imitated of all rock drummers, John Bonham was a powerful soloist known to stretch his drum solos to twenty minutes at live Zeppelin shows. This, Bonham's first recorded solo, was short and sweet, containing many of the ideas that he would explore live during his extended solo spots. Below are a few of his classic moves from “Moby Dick.”

Here are two ways that Bonham orchestrates a four-stroke ruff. (3:01, 3:05)

16

Musical notation for drum solo example 16, measures 155-160. It shows a four-stroke ruff pattern on a single staff.

17

Musical notation for drum solo example 17, measures 144-149. It shows a four-stroke ruff pattern on a single staff.

Here's an example of his signature bass drum double strokes. (3:12)

18

Musical notation for drum solo example 18, measures 165-170. It shows a bass drum double stroke pattern on a single staff.

And here's his legendary right/left/bass triplet barrage. (3:53)

19

Musical notation for drum solo example 19, measures 174-179. It shows a triplet barrage pattern on a single staff.

“Motorboat To Mars,” Danny Seraphine (Chicago, *III*—1971)

On their early albums, Chicago's sound was an amalgam of jazz, rock, pop, and R&B, to which drummer Danny Seraphine brought his own brand of energy and versatility. Here's a nice lick from his solo on “Motorboat To Mars,” where Seraphine shows some smooth closed-roll work and the ability to quickly change rhythmic gears. (0:38)

20

Musical notation for drum solo example 20, measures 156-161. It shows a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and various accents on a single staff.

“Dharma For One,” Clive Bunker
(Jethro Tull, *Living In The Past*—1972)

Clive Bunker drummed up a storm on the first four Jethro Tull albums in the late '60s and early '70s. *Living In The Past*, a collection of unused and live material, came out after Bunker left the band, but featured his drum solo on a performance from Carnegie Hall in 1970. Clive's blazing entrance shows off his double-stroke (measure 1) and single-stroke (measure 3) mastery. (0:58)

21

“Lopsy Lu,” Tony Williams
(Stanley Clarke—1974)

One of the seminal fusion drummers, Tony Williams left an indelible mark on the genre with Miles Davis and in his own band Lifetime. In his short solo near the end of this Stanley Clarke triplet funk classic, Tony's fiery unpredictability is in full force, as he negotiates through rhythmic twists and turns with his unique blend of power and finesse. (5:23)

22

“Frankenstein Goes To The Disco,” Billy Cobham
(The Billy Cobham-George Duke Band,
Live On Tour In Europe—1976)

Another pillar of jazz-rock fusion, Billy Cobham's explosive style caused many jaws to drop in his days with John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra. Here's one of Billy's favorite licks, from his drum solo on a live album with George Duke. This single-stroke pattern has been used by many players over the years, but never with more speed and precision than Cobham had. (3:39)

23

“Aja,” Steve Gadd
(Steely Dan, *Aja*—1977)

Legendary drummer Steve Gadd is on a short list of the very finest session musicians of all time. His discography reads like an encyclopedia. The notoriously hard-to-please songwriting team of Donald Fagan and Walter Becker gave Gadd the only drum solo in Steely Dan's catalog. And he didn't disappoint. Playing off of the song's ending vamp, the drummer unleashed some ferocious licks with unerring accuracy and groove. (7:06)

24

“My Heart Declares A Holiday,” Bill Bruford
(Bill Bruford, *Earthworks*—1987)

Finally, we have the art of soloing over a compound time signature. In the '80s Bill Bruford was no stranger to odd times, having played for years with art rock pioneers Yes and King Crimson. This track, by his band Earthworks, features an alternating 6/8-7/8 pattern. Bruford keeps a sequencer going as he solos, finishing up with a RLL-RLL sticking for the climax. His mixture of acoustic and electronic drums, odd time signatures, and strong technique was way ahead of its time, pointing to some of the drum soloing concepts that are prevalent today. (3:52)

25

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



The Known Versus The Unknown

Choosing A Solo Direction

by John Riley

Drum solos take all shapes and sizes. They can serve as musical punctuation (like the choked splash cymbal at the end of a Dixieland tune), as a connector from one section of a song to another, as a musical “chase” (like trading 4s), or as an extended showcase for a drummer.

Drummers' fortes and tastes range from technique mavens to abstract colorists to groovers. So there are many soloing approaches possible: in time, out of time, over a vamp, over the form, call & response, dynamic contrast, density contrast, polyrhythms, melodic references, exploring touch and timbre, ostinatos...the list goes on and on. That being said, however, there are two distinctly different concepts about how to actually go about soloing, as well as how one develops the ability to solo.

Planning Ahead

At one end of the spectrum are drummers who need to know exactly what they're going to play. These players improvise, think about possible licks, or transcribe until they come across phrases that they like—and they do all their experimenting in the practice room. After they've polished up a particular new phrase, they work on integrating that phrase with their existing repertoire. When called on to solo, these drummers “present” their repertoire.

Do you see a solo as a snapshot of where you are musically on a particular day, or do you see it as a definitive work of art that must stand the test of time?

Clarity is a hallmark of players who've mastered this approach. Often, the solos of a player favoring this method take a similar shape night after night, although some will continually vary the order in which they present their pre-established ideas. Neil Peart and Max Roach are prime examples. Neil's

solos are highly choreographed. Max's vocabulary is clearly defined, but his story is different every time.

Spontaneous Combustion

At the other end of the conceptual spectrum are the drummers who prefer to play “in the moment.” These risk-takers are more instinctual, and they rely to a great extent on inspiration from the people they're playing with for solo ideas. They're not particularly concerned with getting particular licks out in their solos; they trust that the connection between their ears, instincts, and limbs will spontaneously yield a musical solo.

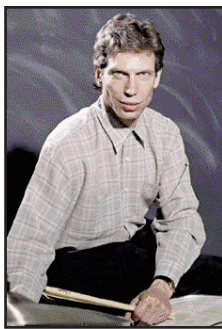
The practice routines of these drummers are oriented towards developing skills and a flow so that they can execute anything they can hear. On the occasions when everything is aligned, musical magic can occur. Jack DeJohnette is a prime example of a player in the “unknown” camp.

A Blend Of Both

The drummers mentioned above are examples of the two different soloing camps. However, very few drummers plan 100% of what they will play, and very few have the courage to be completely spontaneous. When asked about the improvisatory nature of jazz, Duke Ellington said: “Anything worth playing is thought about beforehand—whether one second beforehand or one year beforehand.”

A drummer's temperament seems to be the thing that influences how far he or she leans into the camp of the known or the camp of the unknown. What is more important to you: perfection or adventure? How do you practice? Do you prefer to sculpt and massage each note of every phrase, or do you go more for a “vibe”? Most drummers employ a combination of known and unknown material, with the proportions being determined by factors like the musical situation, the level of inspiration drawn from the other players, and the drummer's desire for perfection or adventure.

John Coltrane was known for his musical adventurousness and marathon solos. When asked if it would be possible to play shorter solos, Coltrane responded: “I suppose I could play just my highlights.” Coltrane's method is favored by many: Develop a number of known phrases or zones to shoot for, then improvise the links from one “highlight” to the next.



What Do You See?

How one views a solo can also influence the approach taken. Do you see a solo as a snapshot of where you are musically on a particular day, or do you see it as a definitive work of art that must stand the test of time?

At different points in a drummer's development, his or her focus may shift towards more order or more risk. For example, we can hear Tony Williams' approach change over the course of his career. In the 1960s he was a risk-taker, and the musical results were astonishing. Through the '70s, '80s, and '90s Tony's vocabulary became simultaneously more complex and more concrete. Even though he developed the same phrases night after night, his playing remained astounding. He kept pushing the bar higher and higher for himself by weaving his distinct vocabulary together faster, or louder, or softer, or in a quicker sequence than anyone would think possible.

What To Do

Becoming a good soloist requires practice. Record yourself to see how you really sound, not how you *think* you sound. How satisfied are you with the logic, freshness, balance, flow, and dynamics of your solos? If you sound like you're not sure what to play, try adding more known material. On the other hand, if your solos are too predictable, force yourself to take some risks. Whichever route you take, have fun!

John Riley's career has included work with such artists as John Scofield, Mike Stern, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. He has also written the critically acclaimed books The Art Of Bop Drumming and Beyond Bop Drumming, published by Manhattan Music. His latest book, The Jazz Drummer's Workshop, was recently released by Modern Drummer Publications.



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A Soloing Mindset

Don't Forget About The Music

by Billy Ward

At approximately 120 bpm: “BOOM boom boom boom boom boom DAGAdugaDAT boom boom boom boom boom boom boom boom....” This is the drum solo from Iron Butterfly’s “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida,” and it’s being sung to me by my dentist (of all people), the same week I was asked to contribute this article for *MD*. Hearing my civilian/non-musician dentist sing this solo is absolute proof that drum solos *are* musical and can affect people the same as any song can.

Solo Ingredients

Let’s get right to it: A drum solo should have some form, much like a song, because within that form or structure lays the beauty of the choices made. Repeating and non-repeating rhythms, melodies, cymbal colors, tempos, and dynamics...all of these can contribute to a beautiful solo. We should all work on solos!

I’m hoping that in addition to working on your rudiments and timing (a subject that is near and dear to my heart), you’re taking a small part of your practice time to look around for melodic bits that are interesting. This is a worthy exercise. When a melody on the toms interests you, work out all the different ways to play it with various

*Remember that **you** are the first listener—and the most important one. If you’re not enthralled with your solo, then nobody else will be!*

stickings and then, perhaps, try adding more of a rhythmic support with your feet. Can you get the hi-hat steadily going on 8th notes to support the rhythmic flow while you improvise over it? Can you repeat the tom melody with cymbals instead of toms and still keep the flow of your solo? This is all good stuff that will teach you new techniques and new ways to approach the kit.

When you find a motif that you like, stick with



T. Bruce Wittet

it each day and add more to it. Record it on your cassette recorder (or whatever you have—you *do* have a tape recorder, right?). See if you can hear something new to add or change that can make it more interesting for the listener. Remember, though, that *you* are the first listener—and the most important one. If you’re not enthralled with your solo, then nobody else will be! This is a great way to develop more personal technique on the drumset. And yep, great drum solos are difficult, certainly just as hard as working to become a great groove player. They are simply different approaches to the same thing—*music*.

My Metal Experience

While on tour with Ace Frehley’s Comet in the mid-’80s, Ace said to me, “You should do a drum solo.” After first picturing the thousands of fans applauding me during my future great rock drum solo, anxiety set in within thirty seconds. What in the world would I do? To have a drum solo that holds the attention of a heavy metal crowd? Oh God, oh God, *oh God!*

That next night, I remember approaching my solo with a jazzier’s touch because it was really all I knew how to be on the drums. I moseyed around looking for a theme. Upon finding it, I played off of it while going back to the theme occasionally. But I never understood the big-bang, chops fest-style ending that every heavy metal solo usually has. *I didn’t know how to end it!* Argh!

The second night of having a Billy solo, gui-

tarist Tod Howarth suggested, “Try some crowd participation. Have them clap along with you the way Fred Coury in Cinderella [who we were sharing our tour] does.” I tried it, but it was a failure because I simply couldn’t do it with authority. I just didn’t feel it. I really didn’t have enough courage to pull it off. It was a nightmare repeated over several nights. Finally, they looked at me and said, “No drum solo tonight.” I was so relieved! That was the end of my solo period in heavy metal land.

Good And Bad Ego

Going back to my jazz drumming days when I was in my twenties, I decided that for me, having a bit of a song form was more freeing than having no form within which to play. This still holds true for me. Even if I think the song that I’m playing isn’t so good, at least it’s a “Ferris wheel ride” in which I can get lost with my drumming. I can help “sell” that song! This is why in some of my clinics, I’ll play to a spoken word narration and make it a duet, just to get myself out of the “head” that attacks my solo playing. I am more comfortable experiencing a group-musical-moment.

Soloing takes a confidence that I simply didn’t have when I was playing with Ace. I believe confidence will grow and can be nurtured by truly loving what you’re playing. You have to *believe* it. Feel it! Become *enraptured* by your drum music. For me to become more successful at soloing, I need to have my inner self, my ego, applauding my work. Now, there’s good ego, and there’s bad ego. I’m talking about good ego—the judge that determines whether something is really great.

Back when I was twenty years old, I had plenty of self-applause and I performed solo drum concerts regularly. (Why *wouldn’t* people want to hear what I’d been working on? Ha-ha!) Now I’ve gotten away from that and gone so far to the other side, which is, to put it bluntly, trying to *not* show off too much—just play the song.

Hopefully in my coming years I will gain a healthy balance between all the juicy pleasures that drumming offers, including taking a drum solo from time to time!

Because of my perceived drum solo weaknesses, I want to make a solo drumming record someday. I mean, since it’s so hard for me to do, I’ll learn something, right? The answer is yes, I *would* learn a lot. And I truly hope to make that record, even if it’s not good enough to be released publicly.

Thank You, Terry

I think Terry Bozzio is my personal champ at drum solos. He plays melodically; in fact he *emphasizes* melody—and even harmony—within his drum performances. He’s changed the drumset as we know it, and I *love* that. He composes beautiful textures that transform me to a dreamy place that, without him, would never be there. Terry could have played a solo with Ace Frehley, and the crowds would’ve loved it. No doubt!

In addition to technique, it requires confidence and patience to play a great drum solo. Confidence can carry you through the stuttering moments when it isn’t really working perfectly. Patience will allow you to wait for the right moments to develop the path (the song) of your solo. If it is a truly great solo, the notes are being played by a discerning musical ear and backed up by technique that accomplishes what is being asked. We can’t all be Terry Bozzios, but we *can* play music that we love.

That’s it. The next time I sit down at my drums, I’m gonna play a solo!

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



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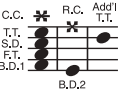
Soloing With Double Bass

Putting It All Together

by Rod Morgenstein



MUSIC KEY



The addition of a second bass drum (or double pedal) can offer you a tremendous amount of interesting and exciting rhythmic possibilities for drum solos. In terms of lifting the dynamics and intensity level of a solo, the sheer power of two bass drums is obvious. However, the second bass drum also enables the feet to play rhythmic or melodic patterns that are not possible to play with one foot. (I'm sure I'll eat my words someday, as the technical envelope keeps being pushed to incredible new heights.)

The thirty-two-bar solo included in this article is constructed using several musical concepts, namely motivic development, question/answer phrasing, and doubling rhythms with the hands and feet.

Motivic Development

A large portion of this solo is based on the rhythmic pattern in measure 2. This motif goes through a series of variations as the solo progresses. A bare-bones version of this rhythm is illustrated in Example 1.



Example 2 is the same motif at half speed.



In measure 2 of the solo, the hands and feet play the original motif (Example 1) in unison. This technique is a highly effective way to utilize two bass drums.

In measure 6, the bass drums play the motif, and the hands fill in the gaps between the cymbal crashes with 16th notes on the snare. I suggest playing this pattern hand-to-hand (RLRL) so the hands and feet match up from left to right. It's also very exciting from a visual point of view when a drummer uses alternating hands to crash cymbals.

In measures 9–12 the motif is developed on the bass drums as follows (Throughout these measures, the snare drum is playing a closed buzz roll.).

- 1) Measure 9: The motif is thinned out by dropping two notes.
- 2) Measure 10: One note is added to the truncated motif.
- 3) Measure 11: The complete motif is stated.
- 4) Measure 12: The motif is accented within constant 16ths on

the bass drums.

In measures 17–22, the half-time motif (Example 2) is used as the rhythmic framework for a series of four- and six-note licks. The four-note patterns consist of two hands and two feet, and the six-note patterns consists of either four hands followed by two feet or two hands followed by four feet. The accents in these measures are reinforcing the underlying motif rhythm.

A variation of the original motif (Example 1) is played with both hands in measure 26 over a barrage of constant double bass 16th notes. The concept of jamming with the hands over a continuous double bass onslaught is very popular and highly effective.

The alternating (RLRL) double bass 16ths continue in measure 28, while the motif rhythm is orchestrated on the cymbals. The snare drum fills in the 16th-note gaps. A similar idea occurs in measure 30, this time with the gap notes played as 32nd-note double strokes.

In measure 29, the motif continues in the left hand while the right hand switches to an 8th-note ride pattern.

The piece concludes in measure 32 with a succession of rapid-fire 32nd notes that are orchestrated with accents to bring out the motif rhythm.

Question/Answer

Question/answer is a common musical device in which one instrument plays a phrase (question), then another instrument follows by either repeating or varying the original phrase (answer). This concept occurs in measures 13–16, where the bass drums are answering rhythms played by the hands. Similar rhythms occur in measures 25 and 27, this time played with the hands over constant 16ths in the feet.

Doubling

Throughout the solo, I've included several licks and fills where the bass drums and cymbals are doubling one another (measures 1, 3, 5, 7, and 31). This technique can be incredibly powerful and full of visual impact.

Practice Suggestions

I suggest that you practice this solo in sections, or even one measure at a time, as several double bass techniques and concepts are being covered. Also, the right-hand cymbal crashes are notated on the ride cymbal, but any cymbal on the right side of your kit will suffice. Finally, pay special attention to the dynamic markings. They're what will distinguish you as a *musician*. And you should always strive to be musical in your approach. Drum on!

The musical score is divided into seven systems, each starting with a measure number:

- System 1:** Measures 1-4. Starts with *ff*, then *mf cresc.*
- System 2:** Measures 5-8. Starts with *f cresc.*, then *ff*.
- System 3:** Measures 9-12. Starts with *p cresc.*
- System 4:** Measures 13-16. Starts with *f cresc.*, then *fff* with a wedge leading to *p*.
- System 5:** Measures 17-20. Starts with *mf*, then *f*.
- System 6:** Measures 21-24. Starts with *ff* and accents (>).
- System 7:** Measures 25-28. Starts with a 'choke' instruction, then *mp cresc.* and accents (>).

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18 *mf* *cresc.*

20 *f* *cresc.*

22 *cresc.* *ff*

24

25

27

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29

31

32 *Fine*



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Indian Rhythms

An Intro For Western Drummers, Part 6: Soloing

by Steve Smith

During the past four years I've had the opportunity to perform with some true masters of Indian drumming, and I've learned new rhythms and different soloing ideas from each one. By being exposed to a drumming tradition that has evolved over centuries, I've tapped into a rich resource of rhythmic ideas, and I've been able to incorporate some of these ideas into my own drum soloing. Though the concepts are not new to Indian drummers, they are new and fresh to me as a Western drummer.



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Ganesh Kumar perform-
ing on a kanjira



Tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain

There are two basic “schools” of music in India. South Indian music, called Carnatic music, is the older form. North Indian music, or Hindustani music, has its roots in south Indian music, but it's been influenced by the music of the Middle East and Islamic culture, which is more prevalent in the northern region of India.

The Instruments

There are numerous drums used in Carnatic music, the most common being the mridangam, tavil, ghatam, and kanjira. The mridangam is a double-headed barrel drum about 1½' to 2' long, played with the hands. The “high” sounds are in the right hand, and the “low” sounds are in the left hand. The tavil is a double-headed barrel drum that is about 16" long and is played with a stick in the left hand and thimble-like hard caps on the fingertips of the right hand. This is an “outdoor” drum, and unlike the other Indian drums, can be very loud.

The ghatam is a clay pot that is tuned to a specific note. And the kanjira is a small, single-headed frame drum played with one hand, similar to a tambourine with one jingle. Both of these drums started as simple folk drums, but in recent years have become part of the Carnatic classical tradition due to the virtuosic breakthroughs of a few amazing players like Vikku Vinayakram on the ghatam and Harishankar on the kanjira. Also, the vocal percussion called konokol is considered an art form in Carnatic music.

In North Indian classical (Hindustani) music, there is one main drum, which is the tabla. The tabla is actually two drums: the low drum, called the bayan, which is played by the left hand, and the tabla, the high drum, played by the right hand. The two drums are collectively known as tabla.

The “drum solo” is usually a major feature at an Indian music concert, in both the Hindustani and Carnatic styles. These solos take a long time

to develop and can range from twenty minutes to a few hours in length. In Carnatic music there are usually at least two drummers accompanying the vocalists and instrumentalists—for example, a mridangam player and a ghatam player. Carnatic music has a long tradition of drum features that are actually “drum duets” that feature both drummers soloing, trading, and playing in unison.

Since the Carnatic style is very conducive to two or more drummers playing together, it is usually the Carnatic percussion concepts that are used as a fundamental common ground when I play with Indian drummers.

Most of the Indian drum features that I've been involved in take this form: a unison opening statement, followed by solos, then trading, and a final unison statement. Let's look at each section individually.

Unison Opening Statement

There is a repertoire of Carnatic drum compositions that most Indian drummers know. These are fixed rhythmic compositions that the drummers can use to begin and end their solos with. Because the Indian drummers have this shared repertoire, they can get together before a concert, work out a solo form in the dressing room, and go onstage and play, with no rehearsal. An analogy to the West is when jazz musicians get together for a concert, they can play without ever rehearsing by playing “standards.” For instance, if they decide on “Autumn Leaves,” “All The Things You Are,” and “Green Dolphin Street,” everyone will know the tunes. The Carnatic drum compositions are so well known that they are the Indian drummer's version of “standards.” I've learned a number of these drum compositions.

When I have a concert with an Indian drummer, first we agree on a “tala,” which is the beat cycle—in Western terms the easiest way to explain tala is the time signature—and we determine the tempo. Then we decide on a unison opening statement. This can be one composition, or we might put together more than one composition for an extended beginning.

We will keep the entire solo in time. To help us do that there is usually a person onstage who “keeps the tala” by clapping their hands in a very specific pattern,



Rick Malkin

or we clap for each other. This way it's easy for the musicians to keep their place and have their phrases end in the correct places. Once the tala is established, it doesn't change. There are no "free form" or "impressionistic" drum solos in Indian music.

Solos

Sometimes each drummer plays one long solo before the trading starts, or they may play a series of two or three shorter solos with the "secondary" drummer playing first and the "primary" drummer playing second. There is a very clear hierarchy of status and respect that the Indian drummers adhere to. The elder (and usually superior) drummer will follow the younger drummer. In the Indian world, I am always the secondary drummer, because the Indian drummers that I play with obviously know much more about their music than I do.

In the solo, I improvise on the tala using inspiration from the opening statement. As my solo builds I will finish my ideas with "tihais" (explained in Part 3) or play some Hindustani or Carnatic drum compositions in between improvisations. I'll finish the solo with an obvious tihai. The primary drummer catches the tihai, and then he solos.

His solo will build on my ideas, and he'll develop his own ideas. I try to incorporate some of these into my next solo. His solo will also be a combination of improvisation, memorized compositions, and tihais. During the soloing, if a player moves from subdivisions of four to subdivisions of five, the players will improvise strictly in the fives—without mixing subdivisions. The same rule applies if they move to sixes, sevens, or nines. It's not hip to mix subdivisions.

When the primary drummer has finished his last solo, he will start to lead the trading section.

Trading

The trading will start with the primary drummer determining the ideas and the length of the beginning trades. Most of the time the trades start with each drummer playing two cycles of the tala. If we're playing in adi tala, which is an eight-beat cycle, each cycle would be like two bars of 4/4 time. This makes the beginning trades four bars each.

After trading for a while, the primary drummer will cue to cut the trading length in half. Then the trades go on for a while with one cycle—or two bars each. During this part of the trading, it's common to trade in ascending subdivisions of the beat, starting with four-note groupings and moving up to groups of five, six, seven, nine, and then coming down to eights.

The trade lengths will be halved again and again until each player is playing only one beat each. Then we play 16th notes (or 32nd notes) together or play a groove together for a few cycles and end the trades with a tihai, which is usually not planned in advance but is cued by the lead player.

Ending

The ending is the most exciting part of the solo, and it's deter-

mined ahead of time. It's usually at least two compositions in length, called the "mora" and "korvai," which will further demonstrate the musical virtuosity and sophistication of the players. They also provide a spectacular and powerful unison ending.

Carnatic Compositions

The following are some Carnatic rhythmic compositions that you can use to play with another drummer or play on your own. The first is a rhythmic transcription of the Carnatic drum composition that kanjira virtuoso Ganesh Kumar and I used to begin our duet at PASIC 2005. I'll first write it in my "modified-Western-shorthand" notation so you can clearly see that it is a "reduction" (explained in Part 5) with a tihai at the end.

The konokol syllables in the tihai are a "stretched five." I'll explain: We've been using ta ka ta ki ta for groups of five, which implies a phrasing of 2+3. The konokol syllables for a group of five notes that is not 2+3 but is actually five even notes is: ta di ga na tom or ta di ki ta tom, which we will use for the tihai on Examples 1 and 3.

Example 1 ends with a tihai that is made up of phrases of six, but the second note is sustained, so there are in fact only five notes played. Typically the konokol syllables for this are the same as a group of five, but you "stretch" the second note, ta *diiii* ki ta tom. In the following examples there are some other new konokol syllables that are self-explanatory.

1

ta di te ri ki ta ta ka tom
R L R L R L R L R

di te ri ki ta ta ka tom
L R L R L R L R

te ri ki ta ta ka tom
R L R L R L R

ta ka ta ka tom
R L R L R

ta ka tom
R L R

ta tom
L R

tom
R

ta di ki ta tom ta di ki ta tom ta di ki ta tom dhaa
R L R L L R L R L L R L R L L R x 3

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floor (quarter notes on the bass drum, played lightly or feathered) is also effective. The samba bass drum pattern is used often as well. The possibilities here are limited only by your creativity and imagination.

Soloing Over A Rhythmic Structure

Next I'd like to talk about soloing over a clave or rhythmic structure. When I'm soloing, I like to have some underlying rhythmic structure in mind. Often it can be the 2-3 or 3-2 clave. If you're following clave while you solo, your solo will maintain some kind of continuity and structure.

When soloing in a funk context, I often think of the "1" on the bass drum and the "2" and "4" on the snare as my underlying rhythmic structure. If I include these beats (or at least hint at them) while I vary the groove or solo, it helps keep everyone dancing, and it keeps the solo musically relevant.

In doing this, you can play over the form of the tune and maintain rhythmic structure, or you can play openly over it. I try to fit any ornamentation or solo ideas into the structure of the song, the form, or at least the underlying rhythmic structure of the tune.

An Open Solo

When I'm given an open solo, it's usually in the middle of a tune and for an indefinite amount of time. Since I'm usually playing for a dancing audience, I definitely try to keep them moving and interested. I may start by simply continuing the groove, yet start varying it progressively until it gets busier than what I'd play within the tune. I usually think of it as varying the groove *a lot*—tasteful overplaying, if you will. I may continue developing the groove with tasteful business for a while until it reaches a climax, and then I may break it down to an ostinato and solo over that for a while.

While soloing openly, it's often musical to develop themes. They don't have to be complicated. They can be two- or three-note themes that you play at the beginning or the end of the measure and continue to vary throughout the measure, developing the ideas as you go. You can, in a way, accompany yourself by stating your theme at the beginning of the measure of a four-bar phrase and then soloing for the three and a half bars after the theme. Eddie Harris, the great saxophonist, used this type of soloing approach to good effect. Listen to some of his solos to hear an example of accompanying yourself within a solo.

Playing completely open can be a tricky venture. As I've said, I usually like to keep my open solos related to some kind of musical structure—either a vamp, motif, or rhythmic structure. Just remember that pure technical displays, without any musical relevance, can often be very unrewarding for non-drummer listeners.

Musical Thoughts

Remember to develop your solos over time. You don't need to say everything in the first eight bars. I consider music to be a conversation, and a solo is merely your time to speak your mind while the rest of the room listens. When everyone else stops talking to hear what you have to say, you don't need to shout the whole time, and you don't need to use your biggest vocabulary words in the first sentence.

Also remember that speed and flash aren't everything. You wouldn't necessarily want to hear an auctioneer read *Lord Of The Rings*. On the other hand, I could listen to James Earl Jones read the phone book. Tone, phrasing, taste, and space can speak volumes. Take your time and develop your statement and get your point across in an effective manner.

The way to get comfortable enough so that your solo comes off as an effective

address to the room is to get a firm grasp on the language, that language being music and drumming. The way to get a grasp on the language of music is to practice, listen, and play until you develop your own understanding of the language at hand. This will help you to more freely express yourself.

Hopefully these ideas will help you in your own solo pursuits. Take care, have fun, and remember to *be musical*.

Stanton Moore is the award-winning drummer in the band Galactic. His book/CD on New Orleans drumming, Take It To The Street, was recently published by Carl Fischer Music.



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Approaching Your First Solo

How To Prepare For The Spotlight

by Jeremy Hummel



Over the past ten to fifteen years, the drum solo in rock music has become something of a lost art. Solos used to be *expected* from the musicians in rock bands, even down to the keyboard player and his flying Moogs on each side. But these days, bands seem to be focused more on song presentation than on instrumental virtuosity. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it does limit the total

entertainment value of a performance. After all, there's a reason why the great drummers mentioned elsewhere in this issue earned their reputation as soloists. People who heard them were impressed!

If you and your band are considering adding a drum solo to your live performances, and you're wondering just where to start, this article is for you.

To begin with, let's consider exactly what makes a good rock solo. First, assuming you're going to be performing your solo in front of an audience, try to keep in mind that you want your moment in the sun to be interesting for yourself *and* the listeners. Let's face it: While we'd love to believe that everyone loves a drum solo, that isn't always the case. Try to approach the solo in the sense of taking someone on a ride or a journey. Here are some concepts to help you create your masterpiece.

Ease Into It

Start out smooth, and at a slow to medium pace. You want to lay the groundwork and have something to build on. If you come out blazing, the only way to go from there is down. Just like a car doesn't start at 60 mph, neither should your solo. (Actually, your heart is probably already at 60 mph from the adrenaline, which is precisely why it's important to relax.) I like to start out with a simple yet slick groove, just to set the tone for what's to come.

Getting to a comfortable place is key.

Incorporating a variety of styles into the solo can show others that you're more than just a "rock guy."

Starting off too strong can also cause you to lock up on your grip and not allow for maximum dexterity. Even when I'm laying down studio tracks and have to bash out a heavy chorus, I usually need to remind myself to not hold the sticks too tightly.

Make Your Own Music

How many jokes have we heard about drummers not being musicians because we "don't play notes"? Here's your chance to completely dispel this absurd untruth. All you need are three toms, or two toms and the snare, or even just one tom, the snare, and the kick drum. It's amazing how many melodic combinations are possible with just three notes. Think of how many classic pop/rock songs consist of little more than three chords.

Get your bass drum going on quarter or 8th notes, and start having a conversation between the different voices on your kit. One technique is to do some triplet patterns made up of the left hand on a rack tom (1), right hand on the floor tom (2), and then the bass drum (3). While keeping the right hand on the floor tom for the second hit and using the bass drum for the third hit, move your left hand around to different tones on each opening hit.

Use Dynamics

Subtle or timely dynamics are important when playing on any occasion. But a good rock solo usually has a moment where it breaks down to an extremely soft volume

level. This technique is usually most effective either in the middle of the solo (just to break things up) or right before you go crazy at the end.

You can play the simplest thing in the world, but if you perform it very softly before or after a more intense part, it can also be the coolest thing in the world. Also, if you can get the crowd to a point of being able to hear a pin drop, you know you're doing something right. I've even used dynamics in my solos just to get the attention of those who weren't paying attention. I'd pull the volume down so low that it was obvious that a "moment" was occurring.

Me? A One-Trick Pony?

A lot of rock drummers I've met and toured with are capable of much more than what's called for in their band's music. Incorporating a variety of styles into the solo can not only give you a break from the monotony, it also shows others that you're more than just a "rock guy." This is the time to stretch out and perform licks from other genres that you've been mastering. You know that left-foot clave part you've been working on for the last five years but can't find a place to use? Here ya go! Obviously, it's up to you to tie these things together in a tasteful way.

Audience Participation

A few years ago, my band played a home-town show upon our return from a nine-month tour. I knew going into the show that I was going to do a solo, and I wanted to get the crowd involved.

Now, back in the '80s, it was standard procedure for nearly every rock drummer to get the crowd to clap along with their quarter-note bass drum pattern. But nowadays, unless it's moshing, some of the younger generation seem to consider crowd participation as being cheesy or uncool.

Anyhow, I was in the middle of the solo and having a good time. I figured, What the heck. So I put my hands in the air and started to clap. To my surprise, people were more than willing to clap along. I then went into some 16th-note double bass patterns as the crowd kept time. It was one of the most exciting moments I've ever had onstage.

The point is: Allow yourself to have some fun. It can be contagious.

Segues Are Nice

Another idea is to do your solo in conjunction with a piece of music. For example, place the solo in the middle of a tune, in the way that jam bands like Santana and The Allman Brothers did (and still do). The tempo is already established, but you can certainly alter that, as long as you get it back to the proper speed when the band folds back in.

You could also bring the other members of the band back out at the end of the solo and "trade fours" a la John Bonham on Led Zeppelin's "Moby Dick." A fantastic exam-

ple of incorporating music into the solo is on Godsmack's most recent live DVD, *Changes*. Shannon Larkin and Sully Erna each take a seat behind a drumkit and do a phenomenal job of weaving fills between riffs from "YYZ" and "Tom Sawyer" by Rush and "Walk This Way" by Aerosmith. I was fortunate enough to witness this firsthand every night on that tour.

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Basics

of concerts, have fans that expect to be entertained aurally (by the music) *and visually* (by the action on stage). If you've got any tricks up your sleeve—stick tosses, twirling, crossover patterns, and so forth—the crowd will eat that stuff up.

Of course, if you're in a small club, you can't go tossing the stick ninety feet in the air. But be creative. Anything you present that is visually stimulating can only add to your solo. Just make sure that you can pull it off well and consistently.

Time Tested Ingredients

It's always good for solos to evolve and bring some new ideas to the table. But if you're looking for some things that have been proven to work over the years, here are a few:

1. Anything using double bass drum work is a crowd pleaser.
2. The aforementioned triplet between sound sources.
3. Single-stroke rolls that begin very slowly and accelerate to a frenzied climax. This

is sometimes referred to as “the train coming down the track.”

4. “Call & Response.” This means performing a particular pattern on one area of the drumset, then repeating the same pattern somewhere else. It's frequently done between the snare drum and the bass drum.

Be Spontaneous

Even if most of your solo is premeditated and rehearsed, there should be room left for “in the moment” events. At times, soloing involves sitting down and just playing from the heart. What you play reflects what you're feeling at that moment. I've played some things during solos that I *never* would have dreamed of doing.

A solo is sort of like a comedy stand-up routine. You know all of the topics you want to cover, but you have to leave some room open to adapt to the moment. These spontaneous moments could be placed anywhere in the solo structure, because they're subject to when the moment strikes you.

Burn Baby, Burn!

Ninety-nine percent of rock solos end with a bombastic display of speed and sound coming from everything within striking distance on your drumkit. It's the moment when speed is expected, and more actually *is* more—and better.

Wrapping It Up

Creating a drum solo isn't rocket science. But there should be a bit of structure to work with. In other words, it's important to have some landmarks along the road. Cover as much ground as you can, but assemble things in a way that utilizes smooth transitions and is tasteful.

Ultimately a successful solo is about the journey, not the destination. Everyone knows that you're going to let it all out at the end. It's what you do along the way that makes it a success.

Jeremy Hummel was an original member of Breaking Benjamin. He helped that group achieve platinum status with their second release, We Are Not Alone. He has since turned his efforts to session work and drum instruction in Pennsylvania. Jeremy can be reached at his Web site, www.jeremyhummel.com.



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Jazz Jaw-Droppers

Legendary Licks From The Masters

by Ron Hefner

MUSIC KEY

open	○	R.C.
H.H.	⊗	⊗
T.T.	⊗	⊗
S.D.	⊗	⊗
F.T.	⊗	⊗
B.D.	⊗	⊗
H.H.	⊗	⊗
w/ foot	⊗	⊗
	⊗	Stick shot

Drums are usually a supportive instrument, but every now and then the drummer takes a step forward to make a statement. Sometimes it's an extended solo; sometimes it's a series of four- or eight-bar exchanges with another soloist.

At other times, all the drummer gets is a short fill that's between one to four bars in length. This fill is often used as a device to transition to another section of the tune. But sometimes, what's played in that short space is something so amazing and memorable that it literally makes your mouth fall open.

Here are a few of these magical "jaw-droppers," from classic jazz recordings that drummers will never tire of listening to and discussing. (The minutes and seconds of the tracks are included for those who want to get right to it, but I recommend listening to the tracks in their entirety to understand the musical context.)

"Hoedown," Roy Haynes

(Oliver Nelson, *The Blues And The Abstract Truth*—1961)

This eight-bar break, which occurs after the last horn solo, contains everything that makes Haynes "Haynes." First of all, it doesn't emphasize the "1," which is a common Haynes trick. The bass drum, snare, and tom coordination in this rapid-fire barrage is astonishing, as is the flurry of ideas packed into eight bars.

Add to the mix Haynes' instantly identifiable sound—crackling snare, and tightly cranked toms and bass drum—and you've got a classic, spur-of-the-moment Haynes jaw-dropper. (Many thanks to John Riley—a great drummer and a gifted educator—for this transcription.) (3:48)

"3 Blind Mice," Art Blakey

(Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, *3 Blind Mice, Vol. 1*—1962)

This break is a true jaw-dropper, not only because it's technically difficult, but also because it's perfectly executed. In two bars, "Buhaina" rips off one of his patented elbow pitch-bends on the floor tom that's followed by a series of fast 8th-note bass drum strokes. He pulls it off with such aplomb that it sounds effortless. The other fills in this tune are classics also, but this is the one that nails the indisputable truth: Blakey was *bad*. (1:22)

"Flight Of The Foo Birds," Sonny Payne

(Count Basie, *The Complete Atomic Basie*—1957)

Due to his stick twirling and tossing, Sonny Payne is often recognized as an amazing visual drummer. But Sonny was an imaginative musical player, too. Members of the Basie band always said Sonny's fills were creative and "off the wall." This one is a perfect illustration. After the final tenor solo on this track, Sonny plays a two-bar turnaround that's totally unexpected. Rather than going with the swinging triplet flow of the tune, Sonny uses 16th notes. Whether he used double or single strokes for this break is a matter of opinion—but either way, the sticking is awesome.

This break sounds so musically "right" that it doesn't seem too technically difficult. Now sit down at the drums, and *try* to duplicate it. Drum scholars have argued for years about the sticking on this break. Technical debates aside, this jaw-dropper is a great illustration of Payne's ability to come up with unexpected fills that are both surprising and musical. (2:27)



“Hayburner,” Harold Jones

(Count Basie, *Straight Ahead*—1967)

Harold Jones, a technically accomplished and highly educated drummer with a conservatory background, is best known for laying in the perfect lick, which is exactly what he does here.

After the second chorus of this gorgeous Sammy Nestico arrangement, there’s a six-bar pedal tone interlude that leads to a classic Basie “shout” section. What Jones plays to set up this transition is quite simple, although the sticking is a little tricky. But this break isn’t about technique; it’s about perfect relaxed placement, proving that “feel” can be just as amazing as chops. You can literally hear the band responding with joy to Jones’ perfect set-up. (2:42)

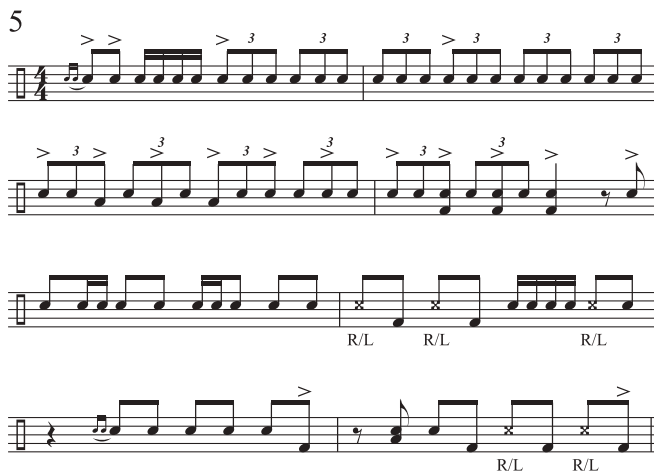


“Two Bass Hit,” Philly Joe Jones

(Miles Davis, *Milestones*—1958)

This entire album features great drumming. But the drum break at the end of “Two Bass Hit” is the one that slackens the jaw.

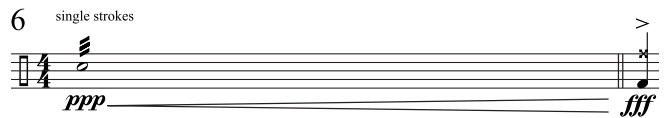
This tune is taken at a speedy tempo (240 bpm), but Philly still packs his eight bar break with ideas. His love for rudiments is evident. Using perfectly executed ruffs, as well as unusually placed accents and bass drum notes, Philly proves that rudiments can swing. (4:57)



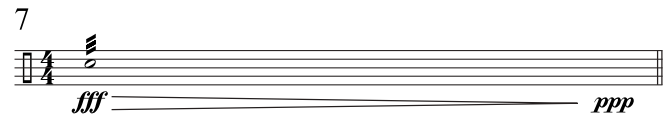
“Emergency,” Tony Williams

(Tony Williams Lifetime, *Emergency*—1969)

These next two examples aren’t breaks or fills. They’re a simple introduction and conclusion that fit perfectly with the manic mood of this early jazz-fusion record. Tony opens the tune with a seamless triple-pianissimo single-stroke roll that swells to a roar.



At the end of the piece, he does the opposite, going from triple forte down to a whisper.



“Beyond The Sea,” Don Lamond

(Bobby Darin, *Mack The Knife*—1961)

Mack The Knife isn’t a jazz album per se, but the session musicians who played on this record are some of the finest jazz players of the era. “Beyond The Sea” not only swings beautifully, but it features two of the quirkiest drum breaks of all time. Like Sonny Payne, Don Lamond was known for his off-the-wall fills. But a close listen reveals that he knew exactly what he was doing. These two jaw-droppers are amazingly dramatic. They give the impression of a high-wire artist who looks like he’s going to fall, but makes a perfect recovery! (1:31, 1:53)



The selections discussed in this article prove that a skilled drummer doesn’t need an extended solo to make a lasting musical contribution. A perfectly placed jaw-dropping break or fill can be just as effective, raising the level of excitement for the band and the listener.



Blue-Collar Ostinatos

For The Working Drummer

by Bill Donnelly

MUSIC KEY

It's Saturday night, and you're off to your weekly gig. You just finished watching Terry Bozzio's *Solo Drums* video, so you're feeling creatively charged and ready to play. But you also feel a little frustrated because you know you're not going to be playing your latest solo creation to a con-

cert audience. Instead, you're scheduled to play a local club, pounding out Top-40 hits so the patrons can forget their workweek. But you don't have to feel creatively stifled from playing the same tunes night after night. In fact, if done with taste and discretion, you may be able to put your solo chops to work at several points throughout the show.

I know what you're thinking: Solo drums don't belong on a dance gig. This is groove territory. But that's not always the case. As drumming icon Neil Peart once observed, the big band era was a time when popular music and musical virtuosity were one. Gene Krupa and the young Buddy Rich played a lot of solos, but they also had to keep their audiences dancing. So why not modernize this concept and apply it to your club gigs?

The following ostinatos and melodies are designed to do just that, and hopefully they'll inspire you to experiment with playing compositional solos that'll also keep dancers on the floor.

Bozzio-style solo ideas can be slipped into a show by using the song's groove as the ostinato. On the classic Sly & The Family Stone song "Dance To The Music," Greg Errico played time on the record, but Andy Newmark made it more of a solo live. You can combine the two.

Here's Errico's basic groove. Practice this groove with the left hand playing the snare drum.

Now try adding a rhythmic melody with the right hand. Here are two four-bar phrases that are voiced around the toms. (Be careful not to lose the groove!)

If you've worked enough weekend gigs, you've inevitably had to play a disco beat. Old disco records often ran as long as twelve minutes and relied heavily on rhythm breaks. Rather than simply repeating the groove over and over, you can use these breakdown sections as your chance to throw in some interesting solo drumming techniques.

Try playing the following disco beat with the left hand (Example 2) while voicing the melodies with the right (Examples 2A and 2B).

Swing music made a big comeback a few years ago, and most bands that include horn sections will have at least one swing tune in their repertoire. If you get a solo break in these type of tunes, try playing the basic Charleston rhythm with your feet (Example 3) while soloing around the kit with your hands.



The following eight-bar melody is based on the opening horn figures from the classic swing tune “Sing, Sing, Sing.”



Here are some additional things to consider as you practice these “blue-collar ostinatos.”

- 1) Try voicing the rhythms from a basic reading book over the ostinatos to increase your coordination.
- 2) Divide the four-measure melodies into smaller ideas or combine them to form longer phrases.
- 3) Play a four-measure melody over the ostinatos. Then improvise your own melody for four measures while keeping the ostinato steady.

As you get more comfortable with these ostinato concepts, you should extend the improvised phrases to mimic a real gig situation. Just remember to return to the original melody to frame the solo and cue the band!



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World Drummers ensemble

A Coat of Many Colors

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Taye Drums

Thinking Like A Drummer

by Rick Van Horn

Taye Drums may not yet be a household name, but they're on the right track. After thirty years of manufacturing musical equipment for established brands, the Taiwanese company introduced its own drum line in 2000.

Recognizing that their entry into the North American market would benefit greatly from the guidance of an experienced industry figure, Taye connected with noted Canadian drum builder Ray Ayotte. Ray's reputation as an innovative designer, along with his highly

original approach to doing business, meshed perfectly with Taye's desire to approach the market with something special to offer. The partnership has proved successful, as Taye drums have become a buzz among drummers and drum dealers alike.

MD recently had the opportunity to speak at length with Ray Ayotte (whose official title is president of Taye Music, Inc.) about Taye's operation and products, and about what makes the company a significant new player in the drumkit field.



Taye Originals kits are one-offs or extremely limited editions in unique sizes, finishes, and configurations. The kits are displayed on Taye's Web site, www.taye.com, and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Taye Treats

Here's a quick overview of Taye's product line.



StudioMaple:

StudioMaple drums are crafted from North American sugar maple to produce an optimum blend of highs, lows, and mids. Cross-laminated shells are thin for enhanced resonance, yet rigid and durable. Features include SuspensionRings for toms, SlideTrack tom mounts and Articulated Claw Hooks for bass drums, and 2.3-mm tom hoops. The drums are available in five premium lacquer finishes.



GoKit:

Scaled-down dimensions and ease of set-up make the GoKit the ultimate configuration for drummers on the run. The sound is "direct and articulate, fat and sustaining." The kit features basswood/birch shells for broad tone with punch. Accompanying hardware is single-braced for light weight and portability. Three lacquer finishes and one retro covering are available.



StainlessSteel Drum Collection:

Taye offers StainlessSteel model snare drums and timbales as a complement to wood-shelled models. The drums are not chrome plated. Instead, the raw metal is polished to a chrome-like sheen.

StainlessSteel drums feature an extremely thin yet rigid shell for enhanced resonance, penetration, and sensitivity, as well as wide frequency response.



TourPro:

TourPro drums blend two different woods. Basswood, which is softer than maple, has an open grain structure that diffuses and warms the sound. This is combined with birch, which has a maple-like density to tighten up what the basswood spreads out. The result is a vintage vibe, with a centered attack, a pronounced roundness, and complex overtones. Drums are available in four lacquer finishes and two retro coverings.



RockPro:

This drumset combines professional-quality features with student pricing. Constructed from a blend of select basswood and birch for a powerful sound, this kit boasts an almost infinite selection of drum configurations. Hardware includes tom SuspensionRings, a BallTilter snare stand, PocketHinge brackets, and Articulated Claw Hooks. Tough laminate wraps are available in a selection of eight finishes.



Snare Drums:

All Taye drumset snare drums, from StudioMaple to Spotlight, are also available separately. Taye has also just introduced a series of wood-hoop models.

Taye snare drums feature the SideLatch Snare Release for optimum performance. The large knurled tension knob allows easy snare tension adjustment. The unique SlipLock Tension Adjustor feature prevents loosening of snare tension.

ProX:

The ProX is a semi-pro kit offering birch/basswood shells for "a full classic sound at all dynamic levels."

Hardware includes SuspensionRings for rack toms, a BallTilter snare stand, PocketHinge Bracket, and Articulated Claw Hooks on bass drums. Four satin wood-grain finishes are available, along with Silver Sparkle and Blue Crush laminates.



Hardware:

Taye offers a variety of pre-configured hardware packs made up from selections of 6000 series heavy-duty stands, 5000 series medium-weight stands, the PSK601C double chain-drive pedal, and the PPK401C single chain-drive pedal. Hardware components are also sold separately.



Spotlight:

The Spotlight is designed to be a lightweight, affordable drumset that performs like a pro kit. It features birch/basswood shells available in three tough laminate finishes. Hardware features include a BallTilter snare stand, Articulated Claw Hooks, and sturdy but lightweight cymbal stands. A unique tom holder design can place toms extra-low within reach of youngsters.



ACS System:

The ACS Accessory Clamp System features a fully expandable multi-clamping, multi-booming solution for all accessories, cymbals, and drums.

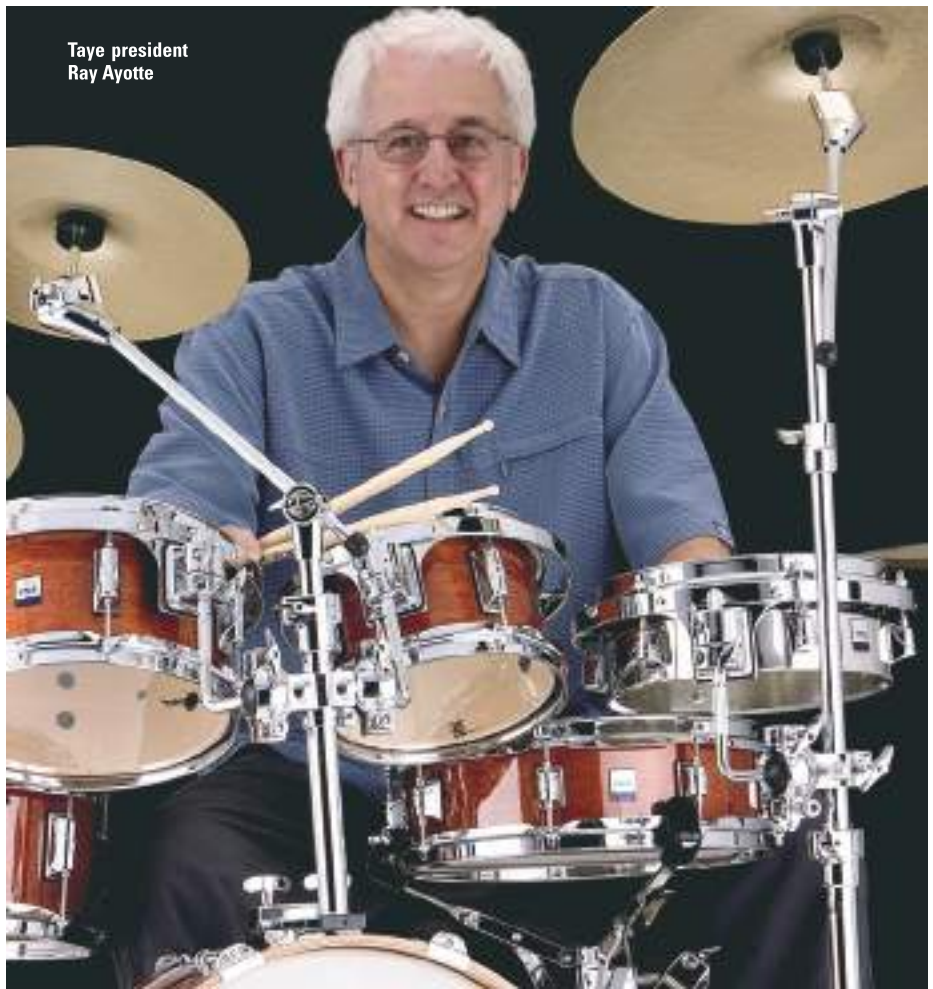
Spotlight

Then And Now

To begin, Ray gives a bit of background on the Taye organization. "The company got started in 1975," he says. "It grew into an original equipment manufacturing operation for just about anybody you can name. That's an interesting way to learn how to manufacture stuff. It also comes with a tremendous responsibility, in terms of learning what you can and can't do with your *own* brand line. You can't copy what you make for other people.

"Today, our primary manufacturing plant is in Tachia, Taiwan. There we make drum shells from scratch for all of our lines. We also have a number of plants in other locations. For example, we don't want our chrome-plating facility next to our painting facility, due to the grit generated from polishing metal parts."

According to Ray, Taye's guiding principle is to take an original approach to everything. "If you're going to be a legitimate manufacturer with a legitimate brand name," he says, "you have to find your own way of doing things. And that's not just in terms of manufacturing things, but also in terms of doing business in general. Of course, you



Taye president
Ray Ayotte



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should *learn* from what everybody else is doing, just so you know what *not* to do.”

Taye’s North American operation includes offices and warehouses in Vancouver, Canada, and in Chino, California. “In Vancouver we have a 10,000-square-foot facility,” says Ray, “with probably the largest stock of drumsets of any distribution facility in Canada. Our Chino location is exactly twice the size of the Canadian facility, but it serves ten times the market.”

As president of Taye Music, Inc., Ray is involved in both the Canadian and the American operations. Ray’s daughter, Aimée, is in charge of operations in Vancouver. Ray Tsai is the general manager in the US, and his wife, Katy Chen, oversees financial operations there.

“Everybody at Taye is computer literate,” Ray comments. “Our Web site is built by operations manager Jeremy Locke, assisted by Ray Tsai. Ray’s background is in computer science, including work in electronic manufacturing and design. That makes things interesting in terms of some of the things we’re capable of.”

Taye’s management staff takes a very

personal approach to customer service. As Ray puts it, “Drummers can pick up the phone and immediately be connected to real people at Taye. They can call Vancouver and talk to my daughter Aimée, or to Mark Miller, who does our artist relations. The same thing goes for California. When you call, you might get one of the sales guys, or Ray Tsai, or Katy Chen. If that person doesn’t have the answer you need, it doesn’t take long to find out who does. That’s pretty cool stuff, I think.”

Selling By Design

Ray Ayotte’s sales philosophy is based on a pragmatic approach. “As far as drummers are concerned,” he says, “the most important aspect of drums is great sound. That’s what sells drums to drummers, and that has to be God’s great truth. However, from a *business* standpoint, the most important thing is dealer profitability, because profit is the mother of all good things. So I have to figure out how to manufacture a drumkit that sounds as good as or better than the competition’s, for the same or lower cost. To do that I’ve got to be pretty smart in how I design, manufac-

ture, and market that drumkit.”

Among the steps that Taye has taken to make sure that their products are eminently sellable is the implementation of design and manufacturing methods that help keep consumer prices extremely competitive. Ray Ayotte heads the Taye design team, although he stresses that everyone in the company is involved in the design process.

“The number-one goal that drives our design efforts is producing good-sounding musical instruments,” says Ray. “Whatever we can do to enhance sound—or to remove impediments to sound—is our top priority.

“The second consideration is cost. We try really hard to make sure that when we change or add something to our product, we don’t do so just so we can increase its cost. It’s pretty easy to make something better—or *appear* to be better—just to attract attention. We try to use common sense when we make improvements.

“For instance,” Ray continues, “we have six lines of drums: StudioMaple, TourPro, RockPro, ProX, Spotlight, and GoKit. Every one of those lines uses the same lug casings, the same tension rods, and the same bracket for the bass drum spurs. This



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means that the quality of those items is based on what it should be for the high-end lines, and thus is much *better* than it has to be for the low-end Spotlight series. Yet because we use the same pieces right across the board, we're able to manufacture them in a quantity that keeps the per-piece price down. The effect is that the StudioMaple—a great-sounding, professional drumkit in every way—costs less than it would if we'd created a lug just for that particular line.

"Another example is our tom holder," Ray continues. "We use the same tom clamping system right across the board. We use one tom clamp as a single mount, and create a double mount by using two clamps and moving some of the parts around. That same tom clamp attaches to any floor stand that we have in order to create double tom stands, or to fly toms off of cymbal stands. So we only have to produce one clamp that does everything. The tightening screws are reversible, so you can fit the clamp in tight places if you ever get backed into a corner. It's also small, so it takes up less space, and it allows us to save money on the amount of material that we use to make it."

Just as Taye's product designs focus on maximizing performance and minimizing waste, the company tries to do the same for

marketing those products. "Most entry-level or semi-pro kits are offered basically as five-piece drumsets," says Ray. "Some offer a choice of 22" or 20" bass drums, and with some you might be able to add a tom. Our low-end Spotlight line has limited configurations, but the choices in the RockPro, ProX, TourPro, and StudioMaple lines are unlimited. You can get 18", 20", 22", or 24" bass drum sizes. You can have two kicks if you want. Rack toms are available in sizes from 8" to 16", and floor toms come in sizes from 14" to 18". And we can generally take an order and ship the same day or the next day.

"Also, because our lugs match, it's easy to mix and match our different lines for sonic purposes. You might want to have one wood type for a bass drum and a different one for the toms and snare drum. Since the lugs match, the drums will look like they're all part of the same family."

An Original Program

Speaking of how drums look, Taye has one new program that lets drummers obtain kits that look—and *are*—unique. "It's called the Taye Originals program," says Ray, "and no other company is doing anything like it. We create a Taye Original drumset, with a color and a configuration

that's different from the norm. One drumset might be yellow metallic, with some slightly green edges. It might feature a 17x20 bass drum, a 12" Go Rack tom, a 15x16 floor tom, and a 6½x14 snare drum. When it arrives in Chino or Vancouver we take a picture of one of the toms, do a little graphic of the rest of the drumset, and put it all up on our Web site, www.taye.com.

"The drumset is available only through authorized dealers. But access to the Web site is open to anyone. So a drummer anywhere might see the set and say, "Gee, I'd like that." They contact us, and we direct them to their nearest dealer to arrange the sale and shipment of the drums."

Building A Roster

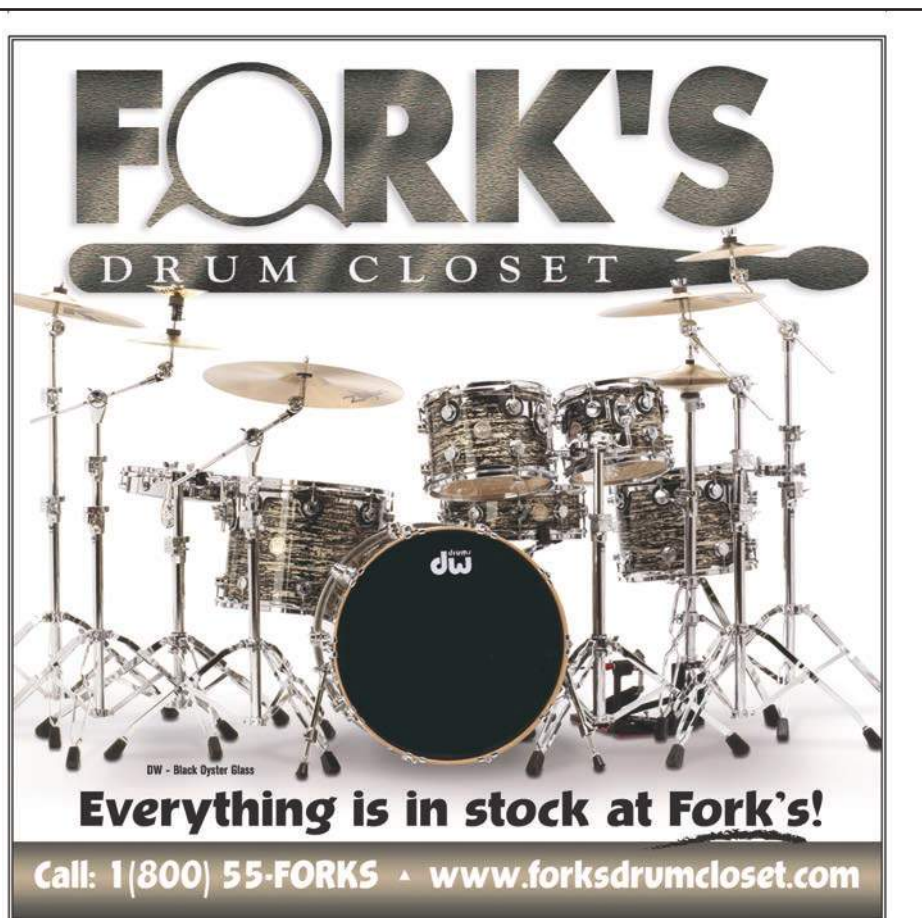
In the drumming world, the prestige of any manufacturer has a lot to do with their artist endorsers. Taye is in the process of expanding its artist roster, but plans to do so with care and integrity.

"I don't believe in going out and raiding somebody else's artist list," says Ray. "So we are growing our own, and we've got some pretty heavy hitters. Franklin Vanderbilt, who's played with Stevie Wonder, qualifies as an A-level guy, even though his name hasn't been advertised for ten years. He just appeared at the 2005 Montreal Drum Fest. Another A-level player is Yvette Preyer, who plays with Michael MacDonald. She did a clinic for us at the 2005 Cape Breton Drum Festival and took the house down. And we also have Dave Langguth, who has quite a touring and recording résumé.

"Someone who just came on board is Rich Beddoe, from the Canadian band Finger 11. Rich played a number of shows where Taye drumsets were provided—and he flipped out. He told us he absolutely had to play our drums because he loved the sound. And that's our attraction. People sit down and try our drums, and then they want to play them. We don't solicit anyone. But we've got a nice list of some pretty good players. And more are coming."

Innovation 101

Although the Taye brand is fairly new to the drum market, Taye gear has already developed a reputation for innovation. Recent advertisements in *MD* have highlighted Taye's ACS (Accessory Clamp System) hardware, which reflects this



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As editor in chief of the most respected drum magazine in the world, Bill Miller has seen some pretty unusual stunts over the years from players looking for coverage. There was that skywriting incident in '91. And then the guy who had plastic surgery to look just like Neil Peart. (Very creepy.) Yup, some people will do anything to be in MD. Honestly, though, with the thought of appearing before the most knowledgeable, dedicated readership in the business, can you really blame them?

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innovative approach.

Ray explains, “We looked at our hardware line from the point of view of a drummer saying, ‘How can I most efficiently place a cymbal over here, using a lot of the different parts that I’ve already got?’ We had a number of clamps and ratchets in our arsenal that, with only slight modifications, could be used to create attachments that could put things where they’ve never been able to go before. For example, we have a system to attach a boom cymbal arm to a floor tom leg. So the floor tom can hold two cymbals.

“As another example,” Ray continues, “one of the things that has been a challenge for the music industry is a snare stand that can be used for both sit-down and stand-up playing. A teenager who plays the same snare drum on his or her kit at home and in the concert band at school—and can’t afford two snare stands—can now use a Taye boom snare stand. It’ll accommodate a 6’ 6” player standing up, or the same player sitting on the floor. That is an innovation based on a perceived need.

“When you study some of the drumkit pictures on our Web site,” says Ray, “you’ll see that we’re putting more stuff in small places. And it’s all easily adjustable by hand. You don’t have to spend hours trying to fig-

ure out how to take something in and out. This is an area that we’re going to grow in.”

Another aspect of Taye’s design philosophy has to do with economy of materials and space. “Space should be taken up by the instruments that you’re going to hit,” says Ray, emphatically, “not by the gear holding those instruments. This isn’t always the case on drumsets today. One company offers a sliding tom mount on the bass drum that’s a wonderful piece of engineering—but takes up a *lot* of space and weighs as much as the rest of the kit. Another company has a double tom holder that doesn’t allow the toms to be positioned any closer than about four inches from the bass drum. They forgot that some drummers like to mount their toms almost touching the bass drum.

“It’s easy for a manufacturer to get wrapped up in design ideas, and to lose sight of what you need at the end of the day. You need drums that sound good and gear that works well. And you need to employ economy in materials—not just to reduce cost, but also to reduce the weight and the amount of space taken up by this stuff.”

Ray cites the recent introduction of Taye’s HH 6020 two-legged hi-hat as an example. The manufacturer claims it to be the lightest and most compact professional-level unit on the market. “It’s also the simplest and easiest to use,” enthuses Ray. “Drummers breaking their kits down at the end of a club gig often can’t see what they’re doing. On the HH 6020 you just reach underneath the footboard, give the wingnut a quarter turn, and the footplate connector pops out. The legs fold with another turn of a screw, and then they rotate so that the entire stand folds into a very small package. The set-up is every bit as friendly. The footplate finds its way into the slot and secures with a little turn of the screw. That’s one of the things that I like about all of our connections: They work with a minimum of pressure.

“We are drummers,” Ray concludes. “So we think like drummers. When you do that, the ‘different’ things we’re doing at Taye become pretty obvious.”



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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!

Justin Amaral

Building A Buzz In Music City

Justin Amaral began playing drums at the age of eleven. During the early stages of his career, he studied with a variety of gifted teachers, including a six-month stint with legendary jazz drummer/educator Alan Dawson. He also performed with The New England Grammy All-Star High School Jazz Band, and attended Berklee College Of Music, where he was taught by world-class musicians such as drummers Casey Scheuerell and Kenwood Dennard, and saxophonist Walter Beasley.

In 1999, Justin moved to Nashville, Tennessee to further his career in music. Since then, he has recorded or performed with a variety of acclaimed artists, including multi-instrumentalist Mike McEvoy (Steve Winwood, Sting), saxophonist Jeff Coffin (Bela Fleck & The Flecktones), and bassists Mike Gordon (Phish) and Derek Jones (Nickel Creek, Cirque du Soleil).

Justin has also been busy with his original project Bee Speed, a unique, high-energy trio featuring electric banjo, bass, and drums. Their self-titled debut disc fuses elements of jazz, bluegrass, and world music into a distinct and eclectic sound. Throughout the disc, Justin displays his musical dexterity as he navigates challenging arrangements ("Radio Bean"), lays down solid grooves ("Gravelyard"), and takes a few tasteful solos ("Spain," "Tropicalia"). His Mid East-inspired tune "Behold The Turtle" is also a highlight, featuring the drummer's genre-bending skills on drumkit and doumbek.

Hometown: Somerset, Massachusetts—Currently living in Nashville, Tennessee
Education: Berklee College Of Music in Boston, Massachusetts
Tools: Yamaha drums, Yamaha and DW snares, Remo drumheads, Bosphorus and Zildjian cymbals, Pearl pedals, Vic Firth sticks and brushes, Grover triangle, Cooperman frame drum, Remo Glen Velez riq, and other world percussion
Influences: Steve Gadd, Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, Zigaboo Modeliste, Harvey Mason, Al Jackson Jr., Poncho Sanchez, Airtio Moriera, Tony Williams, Manu Katché, Yousou N'Dour, Billy Martin, Zakir Hussain, and Tony Allen
More info: www.beespeed.net



Jayson Brinkworth

Western Canada's Drumming Ambassador

Accomplished drummer/percussionist/vocalist Jayson Brinkworth's résumé reads like a who's who of the Canadian country music scene. The artists he's performed or recorded with include Gil Grand, Jamie Warren, Brad Johnner, Rick Tippe, Jake Mathews, Diane Chase, Beverly Mahood, The Poverty Plainsmen, Melanie Laine, Duane Steel, and Curb Records artist Lisa Brokopis. Jayson was also nominated for Musician Of The Year at the Western Canadian Music Awards in 2003 and for Canadian Country Music Drummer Of The Year in 2004.

On the other side of his career, Jayson is co-owner of Music In The House, a music school founded in 2002 with partners Ray Bell and Shamma Sabir. At this school, Jayson teaches forty-five private students and oversees lessons for twenty others.

Jayson has also been involved with Learning Through The Arts, a national arts program administered through Canada's Royal Conservatory Of Music that's designed to reinforce curricular needs in the classroom. In this program, Jayson teaches a percussion module called FLIP (Fun Learning Interactive Percussion) to around six hundred second- and third-grade students each year.

Currently, Jayson is developing a program for sports teams and corporations that uses percussion to promote a positive team atmosphere, and he's completing a drum method book titled *Thinking Outside The Books* to help teachers cultivate the creative mind of students at all playing levels.

Hometown: Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
Tools: Jayson endorses EPEK drums, Sabian cymbals, Evans drumheads, Trueline drumsticks, Flix brushes, Mountain Rythym percussion, and Impact cases. He also uses Mapex and Yamaha hardware and a Roc-N-Soc throne.
Influences: Jeff Porcaro, Steve Gadd, Bernard Purdie, Billy Ward, Rick Marotta, Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Eddie Bayers, Billy Thomas, and Buddy Harman
More info: www.jaysonbrinkworth.com



Justin Krol

On The Road With Freshwater Collins

Twenty-four-year-old Justin Krol has been drumming for Milwaukee-based alternative rock band Freshwater Collins for the past three years. In that time, the drummer has toured across the US, playing in venues ranging from mid-sized clubs to large amphitheatres. Freshwater Collins has shared the stage with Zeppelin frontman Robert Plant, pedal steel guitarist Robert Randolph, New Orleans funksters Galactic, and southern rock band Gov't Mule. Most recently, the band signed with famed manager Mark Bliesener, who has also been affiliated with Big Head Todd & The Monsters, Lyle Lovett, and The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.

In 2005, Freshwater Collins played to enthusiastic crowds in forty-five cities in support of their newest release, *These Days Lately*. Justin's drumming on this disc perfectly complements the band's conglomerate sound. From the funky vibe of "Head Towards The Light," to the rolling 12/8 pocket of "Fair," to the driving rock of "The Find," Justin saturates each tune with a special blend of creativity, musicality, and relentless energy. The drummer's diverse style is best represented on "Housedown," as he transitions between a heavy funk verse, an open-hat chorus, and a blasting rock ending, while also throwing in a few ear-catching licks and fills.

When not out with Freshwater Collins, Justin keeps himself busy playing sessions and club dates throughout the Midwest region.

Hometown: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Education: University Of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Wisconsin Conservatory Of Music
Tools: Justin endorses GMS drums, Istanbul AGOP cymbals, and Moog Music electronics. He also uses Remo heads, DW hardware, Vic Firth sticks, and Anvil flight cases.
Influences: Vinnie Colaiuta, Lil' John Roberts, Eric Tribbet, Manu Katché, Stewart Copeland, Poogie Bell, Robby Ameen
More info: www.freshwatercollins.com

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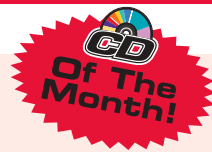
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RECORDINGS



Buddy Rich

Argo, Emarcy And Verve Small Group Buddy Rich Sessions (Mosaic)

Most will remember the incomparable Buddy Rich as the flamboyant big band drummer with Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, Count Basie, Harry James, and, of course, his own monstrous groups. This comprehensive seven-disc set highlights Rich in a more intimate setting of smaller groups from the Argo, Emarcy, and Verve recordings between 1953 and 1961: 78 tracks in all, 13 previously unreleased. Rich, a popular freelancer at the time, recorded these outstanding small-group LPs as a leader during a busy, turbulent time, after having recently suffered a heart attack. But any decline in spirit or physical stamina is well hidden within these unrelenting performances. As usual, everything Buddy plays here is a near-revelation. Many jazz standards are featured, and Rich displays inspiring brush work on several tracks. A plethora of world-class jazz players highlights this collection of various ensembles, including Oscar Peterson, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Flip Phillips, and Mike Mainieri. But the explosive sound, driving force, and undisputed virtuosity of Buddy Rich is the most captivating element throughout. Insightful, well-written biographical liner notes, as well as vintage photos of Rich, compiled in an LP-size booklet, round out this impressive, collectable package.

Mike Haid

Garage A Trois

Outre Mer OST (Telarc)

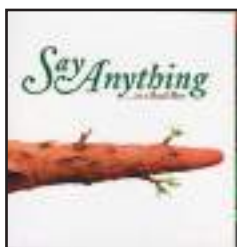


Garage A Trois, one of many projects of New Orleans drummer **STANTON MOORE**, has always held much promise and lure, with the amazing **Charlie Hunter**, outlandish **Skerik**, and potent percussion of **MIKE DILLON** along. This effort, written for a French film, features impressive composure and musicality, more than the usual flash of brilliance—and one great groove after another. Moore sounds like *Discipline*-era Bill Bruford on the opener, wide open on snare-less snare and toms. "The Machine" is great groovesmanship, second-line on top of techno and Afrobeat. Moore's funk is sly on "Bear No Hair," purposeful on "Antoine," and Bonham-goes-Bayou on "The Dwarf."

Robin Tolleson

Say Anything

...Is A Real Boy (J Records)



Landing somewhere between the playful pop of Weezer and the indie knack of The Get Up Kids is *Say Anything*, a group spearheaded by charismatic frontman **Max Bemis**. His drummer accomplice, **COBY LINDER**, supports with a full complement of dynamics, tempo shifts, and patterns. A sharp example: "Woe" finds Linder burning through a number of satisfying mutations, starting with swingy, sensitive verses, moving to half-timed scorching crashes, and carefully landing with soft ride tinkles, all within a four-minute slot. It's Linder's perfect framing for Bemis's angular songwriting and lively riffs that make these partners in rock 'n' roll crime that much more compelling of a listen.

Waleed Rashidi

On Ensemble

Dust & Sand (independent)



On Ensemble is an exciting taiko ensemble looking at new ways to apply traditional Japanese drums. Firmly rooted in tradition, its members have studied and performed in the US and Japan. Yet the compositions of **Shoji Kameda** aim to extend the environment in which these drums are heard. Be it English lyrics, throat singing, melodically rhythmic koto passages, traditional flutes, or electronic manipulation, the exciting range of taiko drums solidly supports the pieces. From the deep tones of the largest taiko, to the intricate patterns of the shime-daiko, the compositions are interesting with plenty of exciting drumming. (cdlababy.com)

Martin Patmos

Of Further Interest

Jack DeJohnette is playing some seriously strong straight-ahead on Carli Munoz' *Maverick*. (Pelosonel Q.La)



Violent Femme **Victor DeLorenzo** is on an out (but not *too* out) album by his drum-set/drumset/sax trio, Hah Ha Potato. Victor's sidekick is



Bill Curtis. It's called *Exalted Ruler*, and you should hear it. (www.myspace.com/hahapotato)

That **Zach Hill**. Where does he

find the time? The burning drummer is on yet another deviation from his Hella and Team Sleep work, playing on *They Mean US* by The Ladies. His partner in this extreme pop setting is Rob Crow of Pinback. An inspired pairing. (Temporary Residence Limited)

Chad Smith & Ian Paice is a live document of the Chili Peppers/Deep Purple drummer summit recorded in London in June of 2004. You know it's *always* nice to see these guys up-close. (Hal Leonard)



Taylor Hawkins & The Coattail Riders (Thrive)



It's saying something that Taylor Hawkins' "Cold Day In The Sun" was one of the better songs on The Foo Fighters' *In Your Honor*, because Dave Grohl is no slouch as a songwriter. Hawkins' drumming is typically madcap on this solo debut (check out the 7/4 pulse of "Get Up I Want To Get Down"), but the songs shine, successfully straddling the line between busy and hooky. The first track, "Louise," sets the tone, opening with a stuttering polyrhythm that segues into the surging chorus. Hawkins' raspy tenor (think Peter Criss) works best on mellower tunes, like the jazzy "Wasted Energy," which features tasty brushwork. All told, it's a wide-ranging and well-executed first effort.

Patrick Berkery

Jello Biafra With The Melvins

Sieg Howdy! (Alternative Tentacle/Virus 350) 



The Melvins and Jello Biafra—it's a match made in hell. Biafra seems to have given his buddies a kick in the pants in terms of faster tempos, but the Melvins ramp up speed without sacrificing heaviness. In fact, *Sieg Howdy!* largely dispenses with the band's spacey component in favor of one punishing tune after another. All of this suits **DALE CROVER** rather well. As Biafra's thin, manic voice contorts atop the mix, Crover thickens the bottom with a driving snare; thundering, practically sub-woofing toms; and a massive pair of hi-hats that sound like they've been forged from Viking steel.

Michael Parillo

MULTI-MEDIA: STUDY

BOOK **Megamatrix**

by Lewis Rainbow

level: intermediate to advanced, \$12.00 



This easy-to-follow, spiral-bound independent release focuses on the linear drumset approach (using one limb at a time) based on four-way coordination.

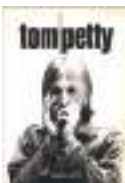
Rainbow explains that there are six ways to "pair up" the limbs using linear ostinatos. The book offers four rhythmic sections divided into 8th notes, triplets, quintuplets, and septuplets. Rainbow has taken a more simplified approach than other, more complex instructional books in order to ease into this intricate style of drumming, and the book is well designed and affordable. Unfortunately it lacks a much-needed accompanying CD to help explain and hear the quintuplet and septuplet patterns over 4/4. (www.lewisrainbow.com)

Mike Haid

BOOK **Conversations With Tom Petty**

by Paul Zollo (Inubys)

level: all, \$24.95 



Articulate, funny, and refreshingly open, Tom Petty seems truly uneasy with just one topic: **STAN LYNCH**. Petty gives the big lug of a drummer props early in the book, but only for his live work, and seems to prefer avoiding the classic Heartbreakers timekeeper—who left in 1994—after that. Reading as two in-depth interviews with Petty ("Life" and "Songs"), *Conversations* touches on the styles of **STEVE FERRONE**, **JIM KELTNER**, and **RINGO STARR**, plus TP himself, who takes the throne for the first time on his new solo LP, *Highway Companion*. ("I practiced a lot," he says, and admits to benefiting from a bit of studio magic.) Not just for drummers, but an insightful look at a triumphant rock 'n' roll career.

Michael Parillo

BOOK **Drumset Basics: Rock And Funk Grooves**

by Mike Severino (Independent)

level: beginner \$12.00 



This book is about one thing and one thing only—the backbeat. To be more specific, most of the book is devoted to variations in kick drum patterns that, when applied to a repetitive snare pattern and either quarter notes or 8th notes on hi-hat, can produce hundreds of variations. The hi-hat patterns progress logically from quarters to 8ths as the kick patterns progress into more syncopated loops using dotted notes. By the end of the book the snare is playing slightly more complicated patterns—always in the groove, against the bass drum syncopations—and it gets into some funky stuff. Beginning students will have fun, learn about reading without being intimidated by it, and hopefully get a handle on the basis of groove. (www.mikeseverino.com)

Robin Tolleason

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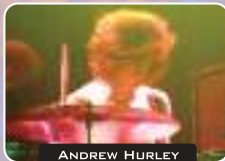
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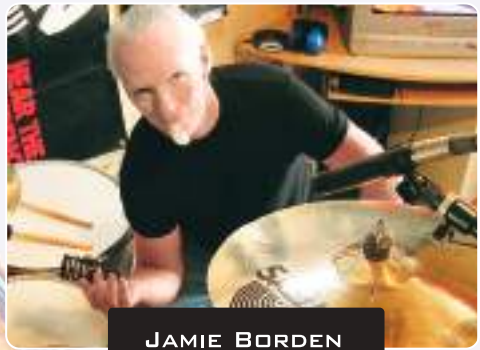
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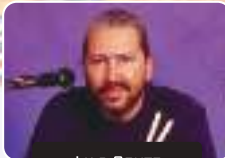
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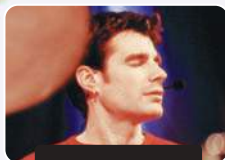
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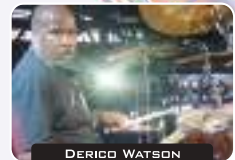
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The Drummer's Cookbook

by John Pickering (Mel Bay)

level: intermediate to advanced, \$17.95



This worthwhile 1972 reissue still holds value for rock drummers looking to develop a deep, funky rock groove vocabulary. Pickering discusses what a rock groove is, the importance of playing with the bass player, and the value of developing hand/foot independence to create your own patterns. Divided into two chapters, the 79-page book focuses 8ths on and broken 16th patterns between left hand and right foot, while the right hand plays each exercise with 8ths on the hi-hat, then again with 16ths. The accompanying CD is well recorded with an easy-to-follow content guide that features the first 110 examples of chapter one. If played correctly, these exercises can help strengthen your single bass drum technique, build a strong funk/rock repertoire, and develop your right-hand speed. Affordable price and timeless rock concepts make this a great supplement for any rock drummer.

Mike Haid



You Can Ta Ka Di Mi This!

by Todd Isler (Gerard & Sarzin Publishing Co.)

level: intermediate to advanced, \$17.95



In this 75-page text, the complex rhythmic syllable system of South Indian music is broken down into a series of logical, easy-to-digest steps. Parts one and two focus on subdividing the pulse, or tala, using 3-9 syllable vocal patterns in duple and triple feels. From there, the complexity level kicks into overdrive, with chapters on leaving space, rhythmic reductions, metric modulations, and rhythm puzzles. While no specific drumset applications are included, these sophisticated vocal exercises are a great source for the adventurous sticksman who's looking for new ways to keep his/her bandmates on their toes.

Michael Dawson

MULTI-MEDIA: PERFORMANCE

DVD Robben Ford

The Paris Concert (New Morning/inakustik)

level: all, \$19.95



Drummer **BRANNEN TEMPLE** comes out of the gate running on this hot live set from guitarist/vocalist Robben Ford's quartet. The Austin-based drummer demonstrates his musical versatility, but never lets it get in the way of the blues drummer's main job—the groove. Breathing fire and soul into every tune, he offers a Steve Jordan-esque attention to the pocket. Temple attacks the accents fiercely on "Prison Of Love," cooks up some solid funk on "Nothing To Nobody" (using great dynamics, switching to matched grip for the heavier backbeat, and cross-sticking the breakdown), and plays a great double shuffle on "Start It Up." He may be guilty of speeding at times, but I'm starting to think he's doing that intentionally, as bassist **Jimmy Earl** is right there with him, pumping it up.

Robin Tolleson

DVD Buddy Rich And His Band

The Lost Tapes (Lobitos Creek/Lightyear)

level: all, \$19.99



Recorded in 1985, *The Lost Tapes* shows the former boy wonder kicking his big band with a mastery that qualifies as a lost art. Performing favorites like "West Side Story" and "Cotton Tail," the band plays with swinging military precision, as Buddy's incredible single-stroke rolls reflect his young-kid-in-an-old-man's-body persona. What is most amazing, though, is not Buddy's technique, but the *sound* he gets out of the kit. The drums were simply an extension of Buddy's body, his every laugh, shout, and scowl reflected en masse in the drumkit's jet-drive acceleration and power.

Ken Micallef

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DVD **The Ari Hoenig Group**

Kinetic Hues: Live At The Fat Cat (Smalls Records)

level: advanced, \$16



Extracted from the same live recording sessions that produced stellar New York drummer Ari Hoenig's 2004 CD *The Painter*, *Kinetic Hues* offers a visual glimpse into some of the most dynamic and adventurous jazz performances in recent years. While *The Painter* focused on Hoenig's originals, this DVD emphasizes standard jazz repertoire, played in very un-standard ways. There are head-spinning arrangements of Coltrane's "Giant Steps," Kapar and Webster's "Invitation," and Dizzy's "Con Alma."

And on "Summertime" and "I Mean You" Hoenig takes the description "melodic drummer" to the extreme, using elbows, sticks, and fingers to replicate melodic lines with pinpoint accuracy. Truly inspirational.

Michael Dawson



DVD **Rush**

R30: 30th Anniversary World Tour (Anthem/Zoe/Rounder)

level: all, \$39.98 (Deluxe Edition), \$24.98 (Standard Edition)



The casual Rush fan will probably be happy with the wildly popular *Rush In Rio* live DVD from a couple years back. Hardcore Rush fans will want this one too, largely because the deluxe 30th-anniversary collection was filmed with much more focus on the band, and not the event. The film quality and production are pristine. The camera angles on Peart are outstanding. And the sound is superb. The band plays a polished, well-balanced selection (twenty-two songs) from their deep catalog, along with a few classic rock covers, resulting in over four and a half hours of music. Chronological interviews and rare classic video footage round out disc two. The deluxe edition also includes a two-CD set of the entire anniversary soundtrack, recorded September 24, 2004 in Frankfurt, Germany. This is a serious piece of history for Rush fans, creatively produced, and illuminating the apex of thirty years of innovation from one of rock music's most legendary success stories.

Mike Haid



Taking The Reins

New drummer-led releases

Beto Hale, *American Mythology*,
www.betohale.com

Benny Greb, *Grebfruit*,
www.bennygreb.com

Bill Ransom, *Generations*,
www.billransomusic.com

Lenny Robinson, *Songs I Like To Play*,
www.lennyrobinson.com

Jason Hann, *Rhythmsphere Vol. 1*,
<http://cdbaby.com/cd/hannjason>



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Queens Of The Stone Age *Live CD/DVD* (Interscope)

Mando Diao *Hurricane Bar* (Mute)

The Greenhornes *Sewed Souls* (V2)

Reggae

Various *Twilight Circus Presents Deeper Roots* (M)

Jazz

Manu Katché *Neighbourhood* (ECM)

Paul Motian Band *Garden Of Eden* (ECM)

Tineke Postama *For The Rhythm* (215)

Reissues

Cheap Trick *Dream Police* (RCA/Legacy)

Nina Simone *Forever Young, Gifted, & Black* (RCA/Legacy)

Eurythmics *Sweet Dreams* (RCA/Legacy)



To hear many of the artists reviewed in this month's *Critique*, be sure to tune in to



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The Steve And Manu Show

Yamaha Steve Gadd And Manu Katché Drumkits

Studio and touring legend Steve Gadd has played Yamaha drums for thirty years. To commemorate this special milestone, Yamaha has created the Steve Gadd Signature 30th Anniversary drumset—a replica of the custom kit that Steve has played for the past twenty years. Only fifty of these limited-edition kits will be manufactured, and they'll come with a certificate of authenticity personally signed by Steve.

The 30th Anniversary drumset consists of a Steve Gadd signature 5½x14 snare, a 14x22 Maple Custom bass drum, 7½x10 and 8x12 Maple Custom rack toms, and 12x14 and 14x16 Birch Custom Absolute suspended floor toms. All toms have chrome Maple Custom

style lugs with black hoops; the snare drum features black chrome aluminum die-cast hoops. List price was not available at press time.

Also new from Yamaha is a choice of black or silver lacquer finish on the lightweight and compact Manu Katché Signature Junior drumkit. The kit includes a 16x16 9-ply bass drum, a 12x13 6-ply floor tom, a 7x10 rack tom, and a 5x12 snare, all featuring Philippine mahogany shells. Yamaha's top-quality hardware, including a stand specifically designed to fit the smaller-diameter snare drum, comes standard. List price is \$1,339.

(714) 522-9011, www.yamahadrums.com.



It's Not Always About Bronze

Zildjian/Body Glove Bags, Taylor Hawkins Sticks, And Mezzo Multi-Rods



Zildjian now offers cymbal and drumstick bags designed in cooperation with the Body Glove Corporation.

The Zildjian/Body Glove drumstick bag (\$39.95) features heavy-duty nylon construction, multiple storage pockets, a shoulder strap, a handle, and tom hanger cords. Embroidered Zildjian and Body Glove logos

make a strong visual statement. The Z/BG cymbal bag (\$124.95) carries cymbals up to 22" in diameter, with padded internal separators, multiple external zippered compartments, and padded backpack straps for carrying comfort. The Z/BG cymbal rollerbag (\$184.95) offers the style and quality of the cymbal backpack, with a balanced, tip-resistant design, a telescoping handle, a semi rigid bottom, and the additional convenience of rolling.

Zildjian's Taylor Hawkins drumstick is similar to a 5B, but features a larger, more rounded tip for full tones and great projection. With a length of 15⁷/₈" and a diameter of .600", the Hawkins stick is said to be well-balanced and versatile, making it excellent for rock music. Taylor's stick carries his signature as well as his distinctive tattoo Hawk artwork. List price is \$14.40 per pair.



Zildjian's Mezzo series specialty sticks are specifically designed for lower-volume playing. The Mezzo 1 features seven birch dowels surrounding a larger center dowel to produce a bright, focused tone with a cohesive feel. The Mezzo 2 has a grouping of nineteen smaller dowels for a more delicate sound, with a softer feel. Adjustable O-rings let the player control the dowels' spread to customize the sound. Both models are 16" long, with a handle diameter of .600". They feature vibrant orange handles and sealed end caps, and they list for \$24.95 per pair.

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

Power To The People

Mapex QR Series And New Pro M Configurations

Mapex's new QR drum series is designed to provide the first-time drum buyer with an economical, full-featured drumsset. It features 9-ply, 7.2-mm basswood shells with single-point-of-contact lugs and the Mapex Isolated Tom System (ITS). Also included is a complete package of 300 Series double-braced hardware, a pair of 14" hi-hats and a 16" crash cymbal, and an instructional DVD featuring Mapex educational director Dom Famularo. Kits are available in three five-piece configurations, in Angel Wing and Onyx Sparkle covered finishes. Each configuration lists for \$726.

Also from Mapex are two new configurations in the all-maple Pro M series. The four-piece Classic configuration (\$1,829, with hardware) consists of the 20x22 bass, a 9x12 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 7x14 snare drum. It's available in new Bermuda Sparkle and Platinum Sparkle finishes. The Classic Plus configuration (\$2,229 with hardware) adds a 10x13 rack tom and a 16x18 floor tom, and is available in all nine standard Pro M finishes. As an introductory incentive, Mapex is including a padded drum bag set with the purchase of a Classic or Classic Plus kit.

Finally, Mapex has extended its "6 for 5" M Birch promotion, and has added a new "7 for 6" campaign. These promotions reward all purchasers of Mapex M Birch drumssets with a free 8" or 10" tom, plus mounting hardware.

(615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.



The QR series Fusionease configuration in Onyx Sparkle



The Pro M 4-piece Classic configuration in Platinum Sparkle

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The Vic Firth Fresh Approach Starter Pack includes *A Fresh Approach To The Snare Drum* (book/CD package) by Mark Wessels, as well as a Vic Firth Rudiment Poster that presents all forty of the Percussive Arts Society's Essential Snare Drum Rudiments. The pack also comes with a pair of American Custom SD1 maple sticks, which are light and well-balanced for the young student. The 4" playing area of the

The VICPAD9 (\$65) and VICPAD12 (\$73) practice pads feature a snare sound for practicing grooves. Both offer a soft rubber playing surface for quiet practicing and an appropriate snare drum feel, as well as a hard rubber surface for a more intense workout.

(781) 326-3455, www.vicfirth.com.



included Heavy Hitter Exactopad forces the student to place the beads of the sticks together, which is important for creating an even sound from hand to hand. List price is \$67.

Vic Firth Drumset Mutes have been improved for ease of use and durability. They're made of non-slip rubber for authentic sticking action. Bass drum mutes feature a cutout for worry-free clearance of the foot pedal chain, and they fasten quickly with three small hook-and-loop fastener attachments. There are ten individual mute sizes to choose from, as well as two pre-packs.



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The Code Of Funk by David Garibaldi
Book, Audio CD and Bonus DVD-ROM



Tower Of Power's master drummer explains his legendary approach to drumming and then lets you "sit-in" with T.O.P. by playing-along with 8 complete tracks from the band's latest album, "Oakland Zone".

Hudson Music's Multi-Media Packs are much more than just books. They're filled with a wealth of relevant information, practical exercises and new technologies— making them today's most advanced, effective and enjoyable way to improve your drumming. Also available in print-and-audio from Hudson Music: *New Method for Afro-Cuban Drumming* (Jimmy Brantly), *Anthology Volume 1* (Mike Portnoy) and *Drumming with the Mambo King* (Tito Puenté and Jim Payne). Hudson Music DVDs and Books are available at your local music retailer. For the name of a dealer near you log on to www.hudsonmusic.com. In Europe contact hudsoneuro@aol.com. Dealer inquiries: Hal Leonard Corp. (414) 774-3630.



The Full Package

Head Drums Stave-Construction Drumkits



Head Drums, known for snare drums that feature thin-shell stave construction, is now applying that construction method to the creation of full drumkits. All even drum sizes from 6" to 24" (plus 13") are available, in a wide range of wood types and shell depths.

Head Drums believes that thin-shell stave construction creates the most sensitive and resonant shells available. The six-piece Douglas fir kit pictured is made with all the drum shells built using a 3:4 ratio of height to diameter in order to ensure consistent tone and responsiveness across the whole kit. Kit pricing ranges from \$1,800 to \$4,000 depending on the number of drums and the wood species.

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Dream It, Build It, Play It

Remo Handle-Leg Connectors For Sound Shapes And Ergo-Drum System

Handle-Leg Connectors (HLC) is a new system for connecting Remo Sound Shapes together to create drumsets. Invented by ethnomusicolo-

gist and educator Dr. Craig Woodson, the HLC unit is basically a vise that holds the Sound Shapes between durable Acousticon material and is tightened with a twisting motion. The connectors come in a variety of shapes and colors.

The system is said to be easy to assemble and disassemble. Once together, the smaller drumsets can be held with one hand and played by the other, or can be placed on the floor and played with two beaters. The Handle-Leg Connectors come in several packages. Other accessory connectors are available to help create virtually any configuration.

Remo has also introduced a new world percussion line that features the Ergo-Drum System. The system, based on a Middle Eastern design, involves an ergonomic counterhoop and bearing edge for improved overall playing comfort. Fiberglass is fused

with high-impact thermoplastic to create instruments robust enough to survive any outdoor drumming activity, educational program, or professional tour schedule. The new line features Remo drumheads, Acousticon drumshells, recessed tuning, and Designer's Touch finishes. The first instrument to be released is a doumbek; other world percussion drums will soon follow.

(661) 294-5600, www.remo.com.



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The Reference Shelf



Operation: Rockenfield

by Joe Bergamini and Craig R. LeMay
(Carl Fischer)

This book focuses on the drumming technique of Queensrÿche drummer Scott Rockenfield. It contains detailed transcriptions of twenty-one songs, exclusive interviews and photos, a historical record of Queensrÿche's music, and listings of all the equipment Scott Rockenfield used on every album and tour over the band's entire career. Also included are technical recommendations and educational analysis. A CD recorded by Scott Rockenfield demonstrates his drum parts (without the band) for drummers to practice and analyze. List price is \$24.95.

(212) 777-0900, www.carlfischer.com.



Drumming Made Easy

by Harvey Sorgen (Homespun Tapes)

This complete primer DVD is intended to get new drummers playing right away. Harvey Sorgen shows beginners how to hold the sticks, and explains basic concepts of reading music and timing. He teaches four elementary grooves and exercises to help students strengthen and center themselves. List price is \$29.95.

(845) 246-2550, www.homespuntapes.com.



Classic Rock, Country, & Blues Drumming

by Levon Helm (Homespun Tapes)

This DVD reissue lets Levon Helm share his unique ideas on drumming, as well as his fascinating insights into rock 'n' roll history. Beginners and professionals alike will benefit from Levon's approach to the various feels that shape his distinctive sound. He works his way through "The Weight," "King Harvest," "Short Fat Fanny," "Up On Cripple Creek," "Life Is A Carnival," and other great tunes, with rare performances by The Band. List price is \$29.95.

(845) 246-2550, www.homespuntapes.com.

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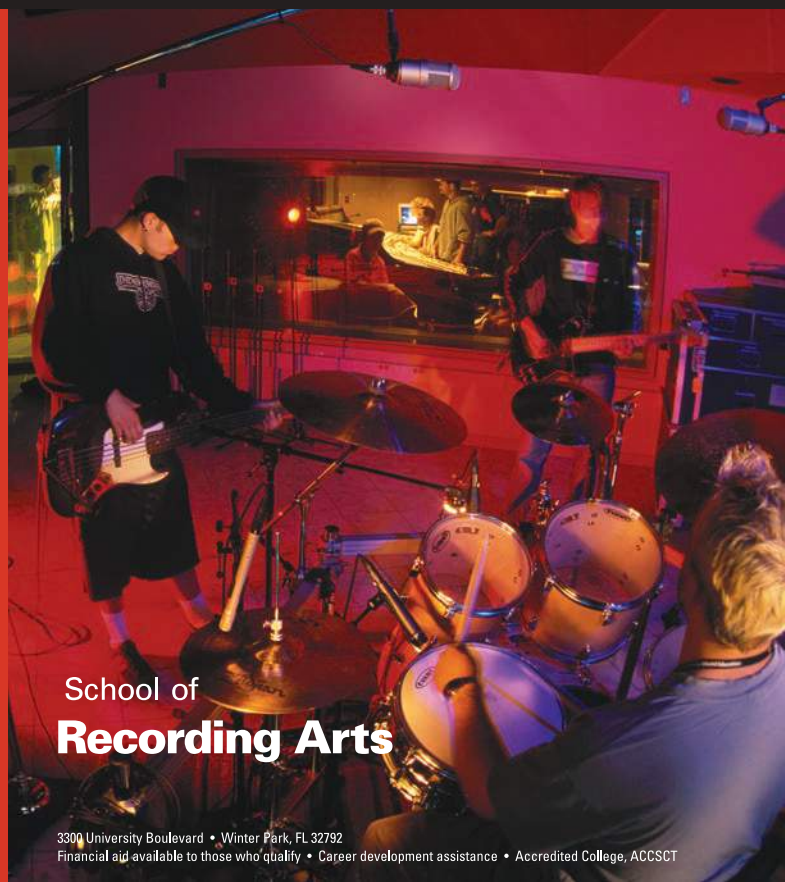
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The Naked Truth

Vater Nude Series Sticks, Chop Builder Pads, And Grip Tape



Vater has introduced the Nude Series, a line of drumsticks with no finish or lacquer. Core models include 5A, 5B, and Power 5B sizes, each available in wood (\$12.45) and nylon tip (\$12.90) versions. The unfinished sticks have a sanded grip said to be excellent for drummers who have problems with stick slippage due to hand perspiration.

Chop Builder Pads are designed to offer practicing surfaces that are suitable for any drummer's personal needs. All single-sided pads feature a non-skid rubber base and an 8-mm screw for mounting the pad on a cymbal stand. Models and list prices include: 6" Soft—\$22.95; 6" Hard—\$22.95; 12" Single-Sided Soft—

\$39.95; 12" Double-Sided (one side soft, one side hard)—\$49.95; 12" Single-Sided Split (half soft, half hard)—\$59.95.

Vater's new reusable linen-based Grip Tape is durable and absorbent, and dries quickly. Each package contains four rolls to wrap two pairs of sticks, and each roll contains two end tapes for extra security on the stick. Grip Tape is available in white, black, red, and gray. List price is \$11.95 per package.

(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.



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▶ **GUARDIAN** offers cymbal and hardware cases with durable thermoplastic exteriors. The cymbal case (\$92.59) holds up to five cymbals and features a handle and wheels for rolling or carrying. The hardware case (\$174.99) features two flight-style latches, internal security straps, and a handle and wheels.

(415) 570-0970, www.guardiancases.com.

ROLAND has partnered with **KAMAN MUSIC CORP** to create and distribute the Vic Firth Educational Percussion Rhythm Coach Virtuoso Kit. The new kit combines Roland's RMP-3 Rhythm Coach electronic practice pad with Vic Firth's 32-note bells. Also included are stand components for both units, an AC adapter for the Rhythm Coach, Vic Firth drumsticks and mallets, a detachable music rack for the bells, and peel-off letter stickers in place of stamped pitch letter names on the bell bars. A fully padded deluxe nylon traveler bag with wheels and retractable handle completes the kit.

(860) 509-8888, www.vicfirth.com.



▶ **PRO-MARK's** DK50 high-torque drumkey is designed especially for the demands of the marching market. It's said to be exceptionally strong and able to provide plenty of leverage for the toughest situations, yet to be lightweight and compact. List price is \$34.95.

(877) PRO-MARK, www.promark.com.

DOMINO INNOVATIONS has introduced two Modular Throw-off Match-Up Plate models to retrofit Nickelworks and Trick throw-offs to any DW or Tama snare drum with side-pull throw-offs, as well as to drums using Ludwig P-85 or generic Taiwanese throw-offs. The Modular Throw-Off Match-Up Plate secures the user's choice of throw-off to the snare drum by utilizing the drum's factory-drilled holes, thus eliminating the need for re-drilling the drum shell.

(405) 728-1011, www.dwsnare.com.



▶ Drum builders and vintage drum restoration specialists **BONZO DRUM COMPANY** now offer a tabletop snare stand said to be perfect for drum show vendors, in-store displays, or collectors' showcases. The stand offers rigid placement of 14" and smaller snare drums, is tiltable, and rotates for complete viewing or playing angle. List price is \$90.

(678) 779-9099, www.bonzodrums.com.

▶ Beatnik Rhythmic Analyzers from **ONBOARD RESEARCH** are designed to improve any percussionist's rhythmic and timing performance skills. Each of the Beatnik's five built-in analyzers evaluates different aspects your time. Beatnik's touch-sensitive practice pad collects the dynamics and timing of every stroke (accurate to the nearest 512th note). Its large graphic display shows real-time and history screens that instantly reveal your technical strengths and weaknesses. List price is \$189.

(214) 239-4005, www.tuners.com.



▶ **ACE PRODUCTS GROUP** has added a wheeled bass drum bag to its line of Kaces HD series drum bags. Sporting five tour-grade casters, the case is engineered to effortlessly roll in and out of nearly any venue. Features include a water- and tear-resistant 600D luggage-grade shell melded to a thick layer of ultra-dense rigid foam padding, a fleece-lined interior, self-correcting luggage grade zippers, an interior mesh pocket for storing extra drumheads, and adjustable double rubber handles to assist in navigating stairs and curbs. The 18x22 bag lists for \$169.

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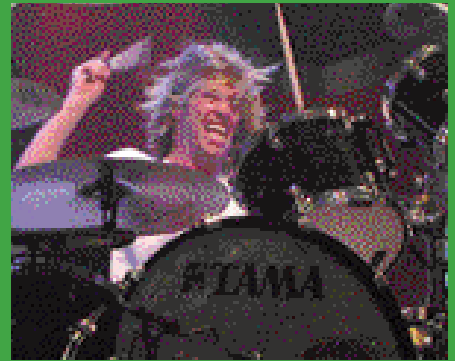
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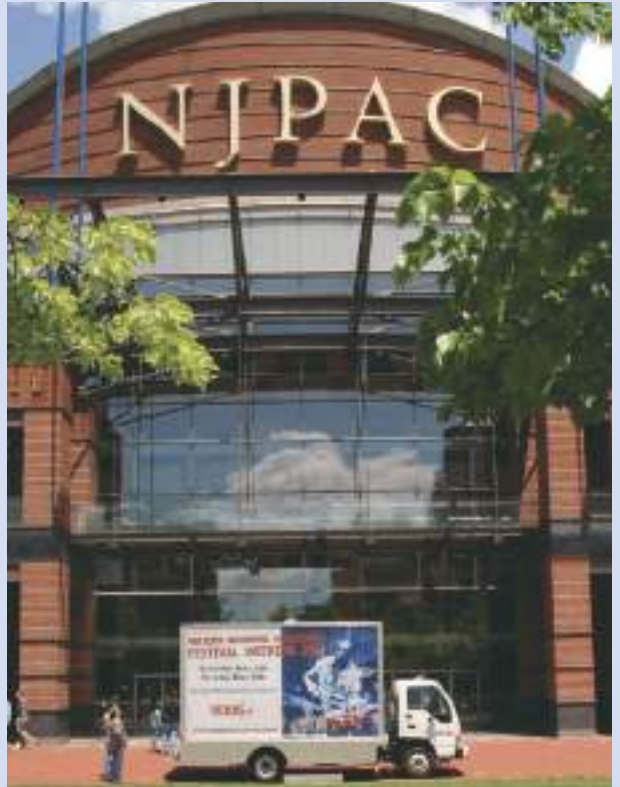
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Upcoming Drum Events

The **2006 Modern Drummer Festival Weekend** will return to the beautiful New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark, New Jersey, on Saturday and Sunday, September 16 and 17. This new fall date is intended to eliminate

travel conflicts created by the Memorial Day weekend scheduling in 2005.

Watch for future announcements of the artist lineup for 2006 in *MD* and online at www.moderndrummer.com.



The Johannesburg DrumFest 2006 will take place on April 2 at The Linder Auditorium, University Of The Witwatersrand, Parktown, Johannesburg, South Africa. Artists booked to appear include **Kevin Gibson, Michael Canfield, Georg Voros,** and **The Transvaal Scottish Drum Corps with Anthony Evans.** At least two more South African drummers/percussionists will appear, in addition to an international artist yet to be confirmed. More information is available at www.drumsperc.co.za and www.georgvoros.com.



The third annual **International Drummers For Jesus Celebration** takes place this February 24 and 25 in Dallas, Texas. Artists scheduled to appear include **Gregg Bissonette, Gerald Heyward, C.G. Ryche, Sean McCurley, Louis Santiago Jr., Carl Albrecht, Nathaniel Townsley, Bill Bachman, Terl Bryant, Keith Banks, Carlos Benson** and **Surround Sound Percussion.** The event begins on Friday with **HEADS UP**, a concert that features different styles of music. Saturday offers a day of drum clinics and teaching, as well as exhibits and sponsor giveaways. For more information go to www.drummersforjesus.com.



RMV Drums, Paiste cymbals, Pro-Mark drumsticks, Evans drumheads, and LP percussion will sponsor fourteen-year-old drumming phenomenon **Elóy Casagrande** on a two-week tour of select US drumshops in April. The Brazilian teen has performed at drum festivals throughout South America, and was chosen as the winner of *Modern Drummer's* 2005 Undiscovered Drummer contest in the under-eighteen category. Elóy's impressive performance at the 2005 MD Festival earned him popular and critical acclaim, and is featured on the recently released DVD of the event.

The **2006 Cape Breton International Drum Festival** will be held April 29 and 30 at The Savoy Theatre in Glace Bay, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia,

Brendon, and The Otarion Maritime Showcase. Cobham and studio great **Bernard Purdie** will be presented with the CBIDF "Legends" award, and drum tech-to-the-stars **Rick Faucher** (Hal Blaine, Jim Keltner, Ringo Starr) will talk about his work with these and other artists. For details visit www.cbdrumfest.com.



The eleventh annual **KoSA International Percussion Workshops & Festival** will take place August 7-13 on the campus of Johnson State College in Northern Vermont.

Canada. The roster of performers includes **Billy Cobham, Gary Husband, Todd Sucherman, Paul DeLong, Lenny Castro, Hossam Ramzy, Denny Seiwell, Paul Wertico, Dom Famularo, Sergio Bellotti & Skip Hadden, Dale Anne**

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Walfredo Reyes Jr. leads a class on world rhythms at KoSA 2005


encing with guest artists and educators. For more information, go to www.kosamusic.com/KoSA11_home.html.

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Recent Drum Events

This past December 5, Deep Purple drummer **Ian Paice** gave a master class to a packed audience of fellow drummers and fans at London's **Drumtech** drum school. Apart from



blowing everyone away with his chops, Ian took a lot of time answering questions, most of which focused on how he came up with the ideas for—and played—certain parts to Deep Purple songs.

After answering each question thoroughly, Ian demonstrated his dazzling one-hand drum roll. Then he spoke about influences, explaining how he tried not to

be influenced by other drummers *too* much, in order to have his own original sound. Ian finished on a high note by playing some “old classics” from Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple, with a band made up of Drumtech faculty and students.

Darren Suckling

The first **Kincardine Pipe Band Drummers Workshop** was held this past December 3 and 4 in Kincardine, Ontario, Canada. The workshop attracted drummers from across Canada and the northern United States. Scottish pipe drumming legend **Jim Kilpatrick** was joined by **John Fisher** of Vancouver to teach the snare drummers. Kincardine natives **Craig Colquhoun** and **Tyler Fry** taught the bass and tenor drumming, respectively.

Jim Kilpatrick has won the World Solo Drumming Championships sixteen times, and is the current Champion of Champions, a title he has won three times. Kilpatrick is also the only pipe band snare drummer to receive the MBE (Member of the British Empire), an honor given to him

in 2004. John Fisher is also known as a world-class snare drummer and a master teacher of technique. Craig Colquhoun is three-time World Bass Drumming Champion, as well as the inventor of the Hosbilt range of drums by Premier. Tyler Fry is tenor drumming instructor at St. Thomas Episcopal School in Houston, Texas. For more

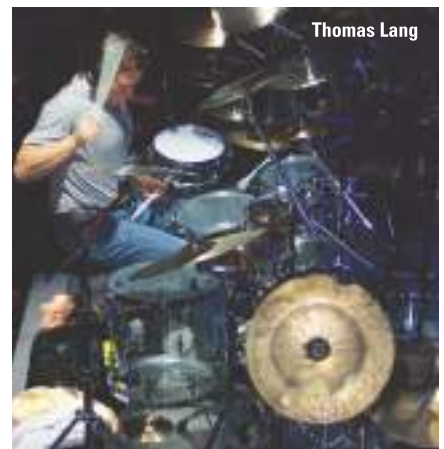
From left: Tyler Fry, Jim Kilpatrick, John Fisher, and Craig Colquhoun



information go to www.hosbilt.com, www.jim_kilpatrick.co.uk, www.tyrfry.com, and www.premier-percussion.com.

The first drum camp in Greek history was presented this past October 21–23 at **Modern Music School** in Athens, directed by German drum educator Hans-Peter Becker. One hundred Greek drummers came to study with **Dom Famularo**, **Thomas Lang**, **Jeff Bowders**, **Jannis Stavropoulos**, and **Spyros Doriaz**. The students were totally impressed by the intensity of the daily lessons and the friendliness of the drum “stars.”

The event closed with a drum concert in a downtown Athens club that featured all of the instructors in solo spots and with a band. The three and a half hours of drumming climaxed with all five drummers playing together with the band, bringing the audience to its feet. For more information, visit www.modernmusicsschool.com.



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Indy Quickies

Adam Wolfe, a senior from Cleveland State University, was recently named the winner of the **2005 Keropé Zildjian Concert Percussion Scholarship**. Undergraduate college percussionists



worldwide participated in the competition. As the winner, Adam received a \$2,500 scholarship toward his

tuition at CSU, as well as an all-expense paid trip to Zildjian's headquarters in Norwell, Massachusetts to tour the factory and select cymbals.

Vater Percussion is the official drumstick sponsor for the **D.A.D. (Drum Against Disabilities)** program, founded and led by studio/touring drummer Pat Gesualdo. The nonprofit organization is dedicated to helping children fight learning disabilities through drumming. Originally launched as a special education program in New York City schools, the program has recently expanded into schools and communities throughout the United States and overseas. More information is available at www.dadprogram.org.

Sabian, DW, Pro-Mark, and Remo recently joined to help those suffering from the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina. The group raised money through raffles tied into the recent Neil Peart 30th Anniversary Drumkit S.S. Professor Tour, as well as by selling wristbands on Sabian's recent Midwest Vault Tour.

Collectively, the coalition raised \$7,000, which was donated to the American Red Cross.

The Atlanta drumming community gathered in celebration of the new **Bosphorus Cymbals** American headquarters in Kennesaw, Georgia this past January 2. Owners Bill Norman (standing, fifth from left) and Michael Vosbein (standing, seventh from left) hosted tours of the new facility, located just a short jaunt up Interstate 75 from downtown Atlanta.



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In Memoriam

Michael Botts

Bread drummer Michael Botts died of cancer this past December 9 at Providence St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, California. He was sixty-one.



In the mid-1960s, Mike played with organist Jimmy Smith and guitarist Wes Montgomery. As his fame grew in the LA session circles, he began working with singers Bill Medley (of the Righteous Brothers) and David Gates. When Gates asked Mike to join the newly formed group Bread in the early '70s, the drummer was a perfect fit. His association with them led to hit after hit.

Mike also toured and recorded with such artists as Linda Ronstadt, Karla Bonoff, Hoyt Axton, Joan Baez, Eric Carmen, Rita Coolidge, Albert Hammond, Dan Hill, Nicolette Larson, Eddie Money, Olivia Newton-John, Quarterflash, and John David Souther. He also record-



Botts recording with Bread in 1972.

ed several film scores and children's albums.

In recent years Mike had been recording and touring with Dan Fogelberg, a collaboration that produced several albums, dozens of concert appearances, and a PBS *Soundstage* production. He'd also recently released his own album, *Adults Only*, on which he sang his original songs, often chronicling his experiences along the way to becoming one of LA's top session drummers.

Colin Cameron

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Who's Playing What

Usher's **Aaron Spears** is now a Toca percussion artist.



Pro-Mark has partnered with Drum Corps International Division III World Champions **Raiders Drum & Bugle Corps** (of Wayne, New Jersey) for the 2006/2007 season.



New Aquarian drumhead artists include **Chris Adler** (Lamb Of God), **Chad Butler** (Switchfoot), **Gary Husband**, **Brian Blade**, **Bill Wysaske** (Michael Bublé), **Tommy Clufetos** (Rob Zombie), **Richie Morales**, **Sam Loeffler** (Chevelle), and **Pat Petrillo** (Drummers Collective).

Eclectic drummer/percussionist and solo artist **Jim Brock** is endorsing Odery drums from Brazil.

Buckcherry's **Xavier Muriel** is now playing Yamaha drums.



Chris Fox (Ashlee Simpson, left) and **Yuri Ruley** (MXPX) are new Meinl cymbal artists. Meanwhile, **Tommy Lee** (Mötley Crüe) is now using



Meinl percussion.

Kram has been part of the Australian music scene for the past fifteen years as the singing drummer and main songwriter of Australian alt-rock band Spiderbait. He is now a Zildjian cymbal artist.



The University Of North Texas Percussion Department and UNT percussion coordinator **Mark Ford** are now endorsing Evans drumheads.



Now using Vater sticks and accessories are **Zachary Alford** (Gwen Stefani), **Bob Pantella** (Monster Magnet), **Jimmy Keegan** (Spock's Beard), **Max Bechard** (Near Miss), **Terry Wesley** (Mint Condition), **Angelo Collura** (LeAnn Rimes, left), **Corbett Frasz** (The Road Hammers), **Jacob**

Marshall (Mae), **John Ross** (With Honor), **Royce Shorter** (independent), **Otis Hayes III** (Body Count, right),



Jesse Hesch (educator) and **George Larson** (educator), **Nash Breen** (Armor For Sleep, left).



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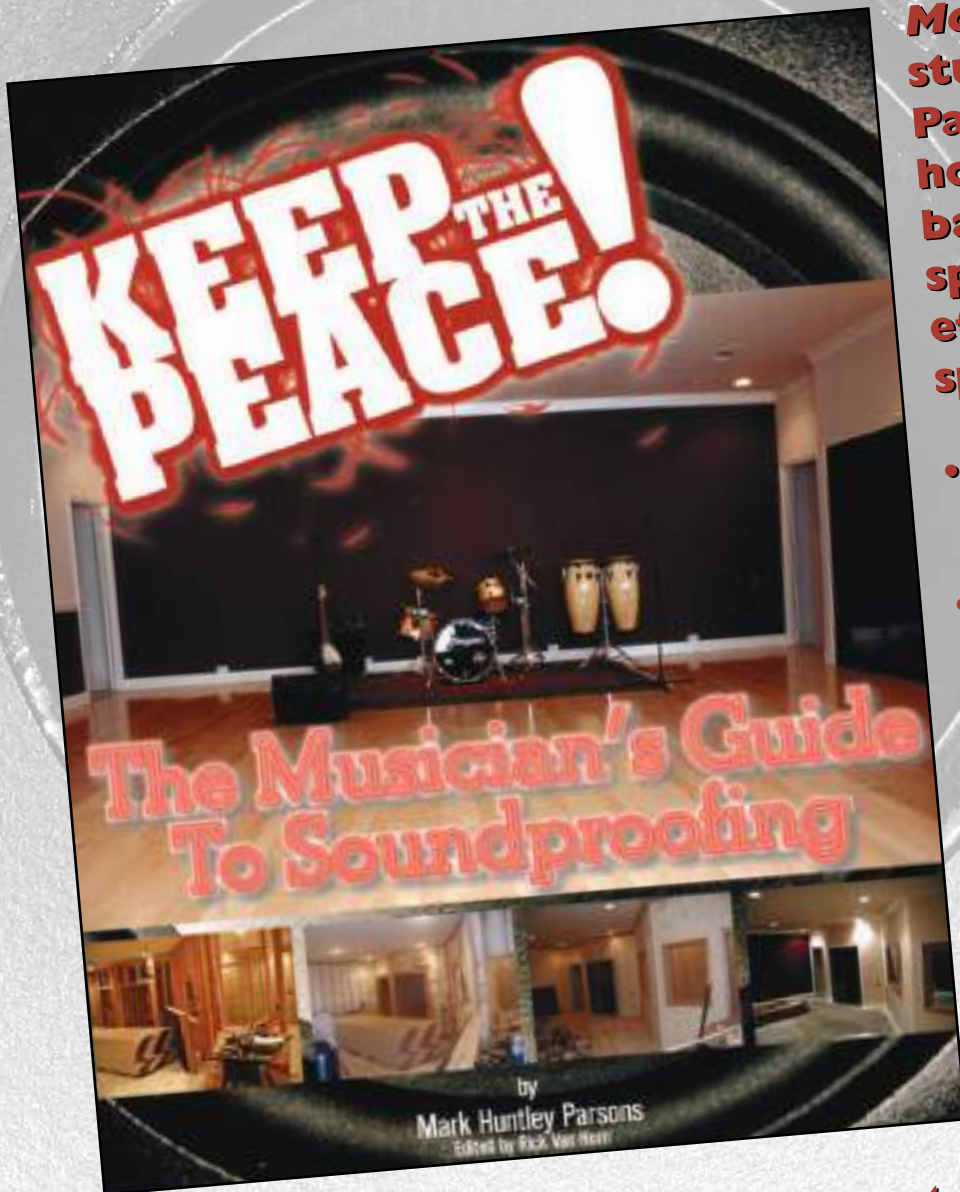
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The green kit shown here is John's most recent creation for ZZ Top drummer Frank Beard. The motorcycle theme includes chromed muffler guards around the Octoban-style toms in front, shock absorbers on the rack legs, and spark plugs substituting for wing nuts on the cymbal holders.

Other kits featuring John's artistry include (from left), Frank Beard's yellow-and-red flame kit for the 2000 ZZ Top tour, Alex Van Halen's multi-bass drum extravaganza, and a flame-and-dice theme kit for Alex Gonzalez of Mana. (For more examples, go to www.johndouglas.com.)



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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