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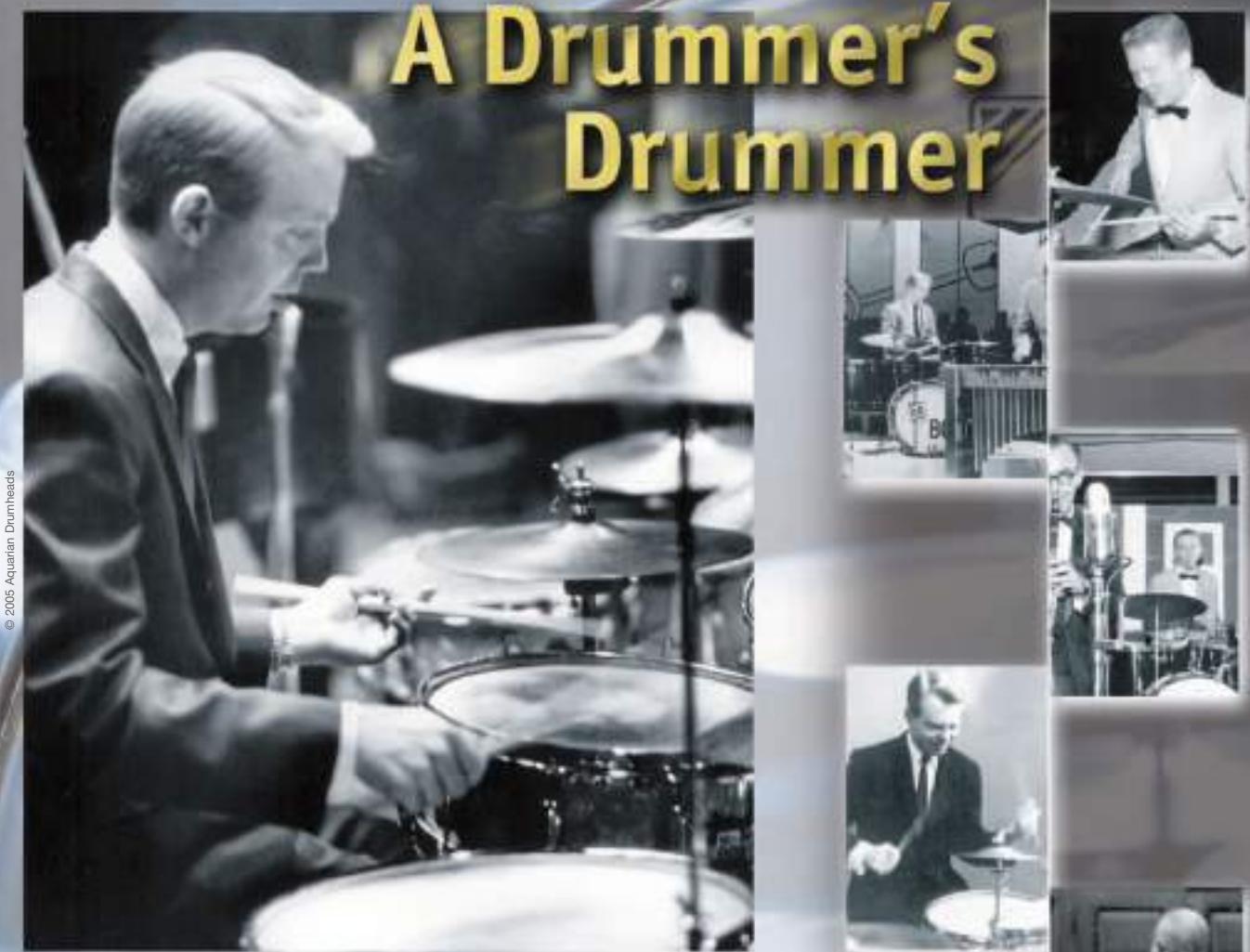
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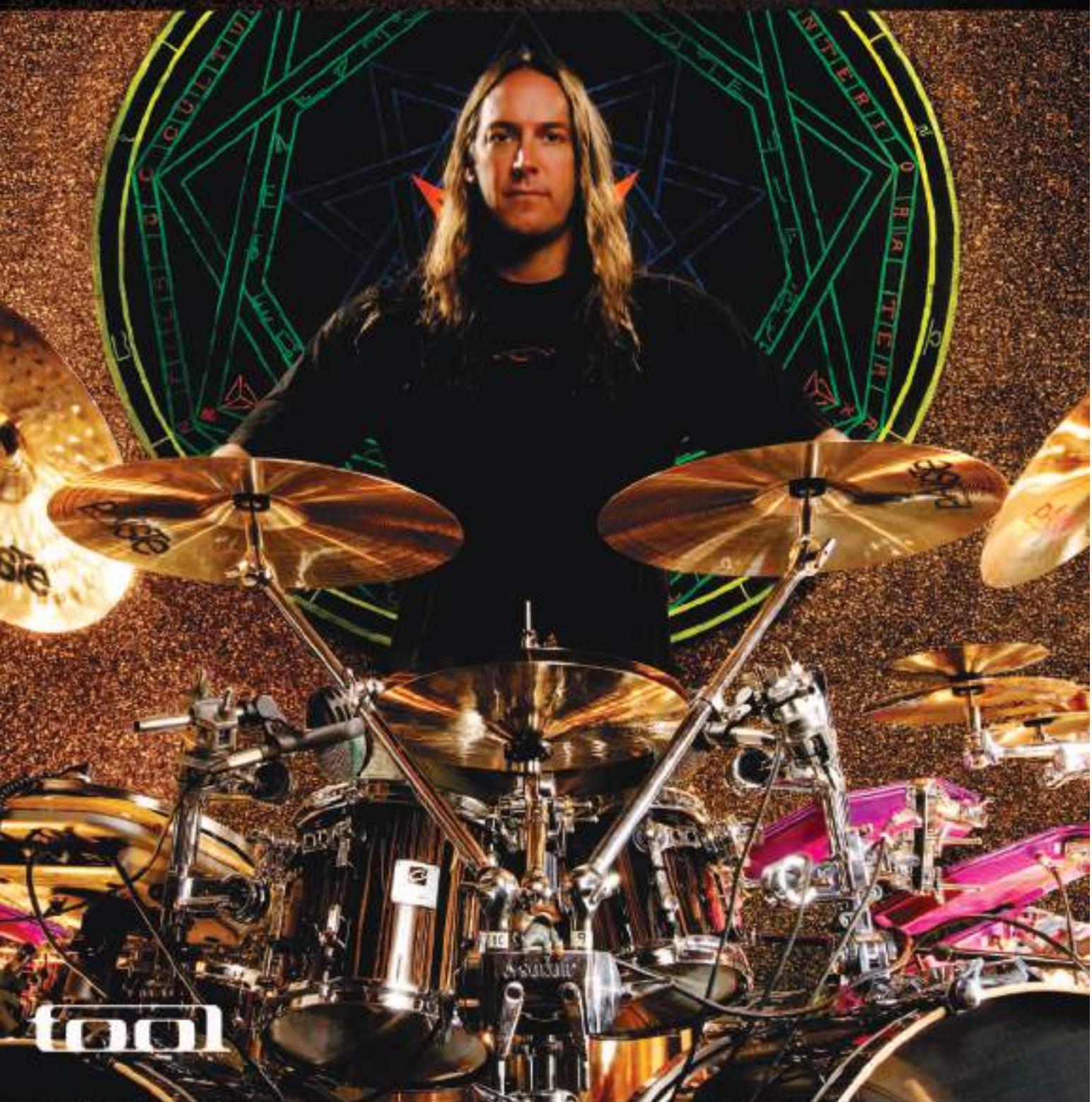
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Contents

Cover photo by Alex Solca

Volume 30, Number 7

58

44 MD's 2006 Readers Poll Results

New categories, new faces, new layout—same great way to find out who rates in the minds of MD's readers.

58 Tool's Danny Carey

Making real art sometimes requires real heartache—and one or two scary nights staring into the abyss. Tool have once again invested their all in a new album, and drum fans around the world are obsessively analyzing the results. **by Ken Micallef**

72 CTA's Danny Seraphine

When Danny Seraphine was asked to leave Chicago, the band he helped kick to stratospheric chart success in the '70s, he was thrown for one heck of a loop. Today he's at peace with the episode—and once again burning it up on the kit. **by Robyn Flans**

86 Kenny Garrett/Suicidal Tendencies' Ronald Bruner Jr.

Ronald Bruner Jr. has never been afraid to walk right up to musicians he wants to play with—famous musicians—and state his case. And with his one-in-a-million energy and chops, he usually ends up with the gig. **by Michael Dawson**

128 Sleater-Kinney/Quasi's Janet Weiss

After playing with two of the most highly regarded bands on the indie scene for a decade, Janet Weiss has recently taken her drumming to a whole new level of invention and aggressiveness. **by Billy Amendola**

72

Alex Solca

86

Alex Solca

106 A Different View Chick Corea

His stature as one of the most important keyboardists and leaders in jazz history would alone warrant a drum-centric discussion with Chick Corea. That he's a killer drummer himself only makes his comments that much more vital. **by Ken Micallef**

110 Woodshed Simon Phillips

When Simon Phillips' new studio isn't being used by its famous owner as a practice space, hot new projects—like Toto's latest—are being recorded there. **by Mike Haid**

22 Update

Rebel Meets Rebel's

Vinnie Paul

Manu Katché

Will Calhoun

NOFX's

Erik Sandin

Tony Bennett's

Harold Jones

WIN!

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Pro-Mark, **Puresound**,
Rhythm Tech,
and **Hudson Music**

98





34

Education

- 100** Rock 'N' Jazz CLINIC
Groove Is In The Heart:
A Discussion With Yamaha's
2006 Groove All Stars
by Billy Amendola
- 112** OFF THE RECORD
Avenged Sevenfold's The Rev:
City Of Evil
by Ed Breckenfeld
- 114** IN THE POCKET
Essential Grooves, Part 2: Funk
by Tommy Igoe
- 116** JAZZ DRUMMERS' WORKSHOP
A Musical Application Of Quintuplets,
Part 3: Making Them Groove
by Ari Hoenig
- 118** DRUM SOLOIST
Paul Motian: "Liza"
transcribed by Daniel P. Raimi
- 122** BASICS
Fresher Fills:
Creating Magic Moments In Music
by Jeremy Hummel
- 124** HEALTH & SCIENCE
Back Safety: It's Every Drummer's Responsibility
by Michael Bafuma, RN

142



Departments

- 8** AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW
Creating A Monthly Miracle
by Rick Van Horn
- 10** READERS' PLATFORM
- 12** IT'S QUESTIONABLE
Mini-Timps...Or Not? • Hi-Hat Positioning Problem • Cable-Length Question • "La Grange" Intro Fill
- 18** ASK A PRO
Joey Jordison's Tour Snare • Keith Carlock On Drumkit Setups • On The Record With Kenny Aronoff
- 142** CRITIQUE
- 158** SHOWCASE
- 162** DRUM MARKET
Including *Vintage Corner*
- 166** BACKBEATS
Congo Square Katrina Benefit Project • Don Alias In Memoriam • and more
- 176** KIT OF THE MONTH

Equipment

- 30** PRODUCT CLOSE-UP
Ddrum USA Custom Shop Kit And Black Canyon Snare Drum • Sabian HHX Legacy Cymbals • Meinl Cajons • Vater Nude Series Sticks And Monster Brush • Longo Solid-Shell Snare Drums • Orion Strondo Series Cymbals

- 148** NEW AND NOTABLE



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Let's Do The Time Warp Again

The publishing world is subject to a somewhat disorienting sense of timing. To illustrate what I mean: I'm sitting in my office in early March, writing an editorial for the July issue, which will be read by most *MD* readers some time in late May. Should any of those readers feel moved to comment on my editorial, those comments would likely be received by us in early June, and might find their way into the *Readers' Platform* department of the October issue (which the readers would see in late August).

Confused yet? Well, folks, it all has to do with production scheduling.

Our goal at *MD* is to produce, each and every month, a publication that contains the highest-quality editorial content, the most interesting artist and product photos, and the sharpest and most accurate drumming transcriptions we can possibly achieve. In order to accomplish that, our content needs to be edited, enhanced with graphics, laid out, proofed, corrected, and transmitted to a printer. Those steps all require a certain amount of time. Printing that information onto the finished pages, and then binding those pages into the highly portable, reader-friendly format that you have in your hands takes more time. Shipping or mailing the finished magazine to dealers and subscribers adds even more time.

All these segments of time add up to what's called the "production schedule" for *MD* (or any other magazine). And because of that production schedule, we ship our issues in advance of their calendar months, in order to give them time to reach some of the far-flung corners of the world where avid *MD* readers reside.

The process may not be as fast as you'd like. (Heck, it's not as fast as *we'd* like.) But, as is often the case with creative endeavors, time is a critical ingredient to the quality of the finished product. To that end, we subscribe to the principle espoused by Billy Crystal as "Miracle Max," in the classic film *The Princess Bride*: "Don't rush me, Sonny. You rush the Miracle Man, you get rotten miracles."

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**SPECIAL SOLOING ISSUE**

The March *MD* was tremendous—and then along comes the April issue with all the soloing articles. It just keeps getting better! Those articles will provide information and inspiration to drummers of all ages for years to come. **Randy Charles**

In your "Top 25 Drum Solos" feature, the author calls the solo in Frank Zappa's

"The Black Page" "an exercise in odd-meter proficiency... [moving] through ridiculous time changes." I can assure you that the meter is nothing more complicated than good ol' 4/4. While it seems to the casual listener that the meter changes, the rhythms that are heard are actually (to adapt Zappa's own words) "statistically dense" polyrhythms. **Charles Smith**

If Clive Bunker's "Dharma for One" solo from Jethro Tull's first album, *This Was*, had appeared on one of Tull's later, more popular recordings, I'm sure it would have been included. **John Governale**

STAGG CASES REVIEW

Thanks for Rick Van Horn's review of Stagg cases in your April issue. I would like to respond to a couple of Rick's comments, regarding issues that probably would have been *less* of an issue if our flyer was more informative.

While our triangle design is super strong (as Rick suggests), it also addresses the frequent use of suspension mounts on toms. With traditional round cases there is always the question of whether a 12" case will hold a 12" drum with a suspension mount. With Stagg cases, just aim the mount toward one of the two corners of the case.

In regard to having two buckles per case, that design accounts for the fact that drummers inevitably stick other stuff on top of the drum inside the case, often making one side higher than the other. Having separate straps and buckles allows the user to adjust for this.

Rick didn't feel that our D-ring system would impede a determined thief. He may not have been able to see that the



I was surprised not to see Peter Criss's solo on "100,000 Years" from *KISS Alive*. There's no telling how many drummers were created from that particular solo. **Mark Watts**

I'm a sixteen-year-old English drummer. I've been drumming for four years, and I've always had trouble playing solos in my school's jazz band. As soon as I saw the cover of your brilliant April issue, I took the magazine into my drum room and started going through the different solos. Together with my drum teacher, I worked up my speed and creativity. Due to your magazine, I now have a huge solo in the middle of one of our jazz songs. Thanks! **Ian Lewis**

I would like to commend everyone involved with *MD*'s April drum solo issue. It's a classic.

Just as a footnote: Michael Shrieve was my student around the time he played his soon-to-become-famous drum solo on "Soul Sacrifice" with Santana at Woodstock. Mike Haid is correct in his observation that "[Shrieve's] hand chops were quite impressive, even by today's standards." By the age of nineteen Michael had spent many hours working on his overall technique. I thought *MD*'s readers might be interested in some of the books we were working with during that period, because they're just as effective today.

We worked with *Stick Control* (always with bass drum and hi-hat keeping time), and with Charles Wilcoxon's *Wrist And Finger Control For The Advanced Drummer*. We also used a book by one of my teachers, Roy Burns (with Lew Malen), *A Practical Method For Developing Finger Control*. **Peter Magadini**

nylon strap holding the D-ring has a steel strap within it to address that exact issue.

Although Rick wasn't fond of our double-handle design, one of the reasons for it is that the player can pick up and carry two cases in each hand, using one handle from each. Also, that design makes nesting the cases easier.

Finally, the published telephone number is actually our fax number. Our "public" phone number is (615) 793-8787.

Dick Markus
President, EMD Music Inc.

DROPPED BEAT

The photos of Jason McGerr in the May 2006 *MD* were incorrectly credited. The photographer who took the shots is Autumn de Wilde.

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Mini Timps...Or Not?

The accompanying photo is from the Library of Congress American Memory presentation *William P. Gottlieb: Photographs From The Golden Age Of Jazz* (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wghtml/wghome.html>). It originally appeared on page 8 of the January 29, 1947 edition of *Down Beat*.

The photo shows Ray McKinley playing what appears to be mini timpani, the likes of which I've never seen. The badge that's visible in the foreground looks somewhat like Leedy's. Could MD's Harry Cangany shed light on these drums?

Paul C. Fraunfelter
Library of Congress
Washington, DC

Harry Cangany responds, "There were no mini timpani from any American manufacturer—at least none that were published in catalogs. It looks as though there are two, or perhaps three, different sizes of bowls and heads. Since there are eight

drums, perhaps they created an octave. The tuning on the side reminds me of Arbiter's recent Auto-Tune system. I don't think what appears to be a Leedy badge really is one. It looks to me like a hole with a reinforcement.

"Ray McKinley used Slingerland drums at the time the photo was taken, before he went to WFL. (The tube lug on the bass drum in the photo looks like Slingerland to me.) Slingerland didn't even have regular timpani in the '30s, while WFL, Leedy, and Gretsch did. I would guess that Ray had these drums built for a specialty number. I wouldn't be surprised if Ray contracted the legendary New York City drum craftsman Bill Mather to have the bowls made by Gretsch, and then fit them with custom top hoops and conventional 16" and 18" calf heads. Of course, a lot of this is merely speculation."

Hi-Hat Positioning Problem

I love to use my double bass drum pedal, but unfortunately the slave pedal pushes my hi-hat stand to the left, creating a huge gap between my snare drum and my hi-hat cymbals. This makes playing the hi-hat difficult and awkward.

I've tried switching the snare drum stand and the hi-hat stand, as well as moving around the double bass drum pedal, but nothing seems to work very well. Do you have any suggestions that would make my setup more comfortable?

Sally Behan

There are, essentially, four solutions to your problem. The simplest one (though not by any means an easy one) is to adapt your technique in order to get used to playing the hi-hat at the further distance. This may feel awkward and frustrating at first, but most drummers do adjust (with time and practice).

Another option is to switch to larger-diameter hi-hats that would bring the edges of the cymbals back closer to you. This may or may not be an option in terms of cost and/or how such larger hats would work in your music.

A purely mechanical solution (again involving cost) is to employ a cable-remote hi-hat with a short cable, and use a multi-clamp to offset the upper section (which holds the cymbals) from the lower section. Thus the foot pedal/tripod section is placed to the left of the slave bass drum pedal, but the upper section and cymbals can be positioned where they had been originally when you played a single pedal.

One other option is to extend the rod connecting the two pedals enough to position the slave pedal to the left of your hi-hat pedal. Many drummers use this setup, including Billy Ward. It allows him to position the hi-hats where he likes and still use a double pedal.



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Cable Length Question

After playing many gigs, my bandmates and I pooled some money to buy equipment for our home studio. We now have a Presonus Firepod for PC recording, two Sennheiser E 602 and two E 609 mics, one Shure SM57 mic, two Rode NT-2A mics, four A.R.T. MPA Gold mic pre-amplifiers, and a batch of 25'-long mic cables.

Once we installed all the stuff, we discovered that the mic cables don't reach the preamps installed in the other room. We tried all possible positions for the drums and the hardware, but nothing seems to work. Cutting holes in the walls is not an option.

We were told that cable length affects signal quality, so we're a bit afraid to get longer ones. Is there anything extra we need to get for the connection, or should we just stick to longer cables?

John Pournaras

Our response comes from *MD*'s resident expert on studio situations, drummer/engineer Mark Parsons. Mark replies, "The easy answer is to simply use longer cables. Going from 25' to 30' or even longer won't make a significant difference. (Keep in mind that 100' snakes are pretty much

the industry standard at professional concerts.) If you're on a tight budget, instead of buying all new cables, you can hook two cables together to create the length that you need.

"Cable quality is at least as important as quantity. Try to get decent cables with good shielding. The higher the shielding percentage, the better. Braided shielding is generally better than spiral, which is better than foil. And if your area is subject to a lot of radio frequency interference (RFI), keep in mind that 'quad'-type mic cables—though a bit more costly—are better at resisting outside interference.

If induced noise over long cables becomes a concern, there is another option available. Place your mic preamps in the room with your equipment, and use longer (balanced) cables to connect these to your recording setup. This works very well because the "line level" signal coming out of your mic preamp is a much stronger signal than that coming from a microphone, and can stand up to much longer cable runs."

"La Grange" Intro Fill

I'm trying to duplicate the intro fill from the ZZ Top classic "La Grange." Can you provide a transcription of that fill?

Ken Barker

We tossed this challenge to our ace transcriber, Ed Breckenfeld. He replies: "This great drum fill has been a mystery since Frank Beard played it on ZZ Top's *Tres Hombres* album in 1973. Due to the tremendous speed of this lick (which happens at 1:10 into the track), everything seems to smear together, making it very hard to decipher. Frank clearly uses both sticks to sweep twice around his kit—from snare to rack tom to floor tom—in the feel of two quarter-note triplets. But the big question is: How many bass drums are involved in this move?"

"Due to the low tuning of Frank's toms, many drummers have assumed that the fill is a double-bass lick. However, if you play it at the original tempo with all quads (that is, two stick strokes alternating with two bass drum strokes), you wind up with too many notes in the measure. If you reduce the fill to triplets (two stick strokes against one bass drum note), it sounds a lot closer to the original—except at the very beginning of the pattern.

"After many listens and attempts to play Beard's fill, I've settled on the transcription below. Because the first grouping sounds somewhat different from the rest, I think



John A. Douglas

ZZ Top's Frank Beard

that Frank started it as a double bass lick, and then transitioned into triplets—either by design, or in an attempt to squeeze it all into the measure. Whatever he was going for, it's truly a classic, and well worth some head-scratching analysis."

Questions For MD's Drum Experts?

Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer,
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Please include your full name with your question.



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Joey Jordison's Tour Snare

Q I've been playing drums for eleven years, and I'm a total gear freak. I have a question regarding Slipknot's *Subliminal Verses Live 9.0* album. Based on the sound characteristics on different songs, it seems as if you used two different snare drums. I figure that one was your signature model, but is the other one a maple snare?

I would appreciate if you could let me know the model, specifications, and even the tuning of your snare

drums while on tour. Any other setup info would be great, too.

Rob Sheppard

A The snare on 9.0 is my Signature model all the way through. I never used a maple drum.

The drums are Pearl Masters series, with 8x10, 10x12, 11x13, and 13x14 rack toms, 16x16 and 18x18 floor toms, and two 18x22 kick drums. The kit was mounted using Pearl's Icon rack system and hardware.

Keith Carlock On Drumkit Setups



Q I love listening to you with Steely Dan and Oz Noy. And lately I've been watching you on the *MD Festival 2005* DVD. Besides being totally blown away by your performance, I was also left curious at the way you have your floor toms angled away from you (like your snare is), and how your rack toms are parallel to the ground.

I've tried playing with my drums set up like yours, but I found it difficult to hit all the toms

while playing at fast tempos, and I felt like I lost a great deal of finesse. It also seems easy to accidentally hit the tom rims instead of the heads. How did you come upon your unique setup? And how do you play so fast and smooth with your toms angled like that?

Mark Martinelli

A Thanks for listening to the music, and for your questions. As my hand technique changed over the years, I started to experiment with different ways of setting up the drums to find the setup that would give me the most comfort and the best sound. The angles you ask about happened very gradually over time. I sit fairly high, and I like the rack toms to be as low as possible on the bass drum. This gives me the sensation of sitting above the drums. That's why having the toms flat works for me.

Angling the snare drum forward has a lot to do with the fact that I play with traditional grip. The angle helps me to get better rimshots for backbeats, as well as more controlled grace notes. Since the floor toms are generally the same height as the snare, it made sense to put them at the same angle, facing away from me.

There are no rules with this stuff. Drumkit setup is a very personal thing. We all have different body structures, and we move differently. That's something that makes each of us unique. So the most important thing to remember is to do what makes sense to *you*, and that allows you to play as effortlessly as possible. If you're not getting good results with a setup similar to mine, then it may not be right for you. I have a hard time playing more conventional setups, so I guess we're even!



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On The Record With Kenny Aronoff



Q I've been mad about rock 'n' roll drums since about 1964, and I agree with John Fogerty when he said that you are the best rock 'n' roll drummer in the world today.

I'd like to put together a collection of your recent work. What CDs or DVDs have you played on in their entirety in the past few years that you'd recommend? **Keith Ostler**

A First of all, thank you so much for the compliment. I'm amazed by how many great drummers there are working today, so needless to say I'm humbled and flattered by your comment.

I often get hired to play only a couple of tracks on an album. Sometimes it's being recorded in stages, and I can't be there for every session because of my schedule. Or there may be several producers working on the same project, and they like to use the drummer they work with on a regular basis. As a result, although I played on about thirty CDs that were released in 2005, for example, there were many on which I didn't play on every track.

Some CDs from recent years that I *did* record all of the songs on include Joe Cocker's *Respect Yourself*, The BoDeans' *Homebrewed*, Philip Sayce's *Peace Machine*, *Fused* by Tony Iommi & Glenn Hughes, and Krystal Meyers' self-titled release. DVDs include John Fogerty's *Premonition*, Melissa Etheridge's *Lucky Live*, and The BoDeans' *Homebrewed*.

CDs from the past few years that I play many but not all of the tracks on include Trey Anastasio's *Shine*, Willie Nelson & Friends' *Live And Kickin'*, Michelle Branch's *Hotel Paper*, Alanis Morrisette's *So-Called Chaos*, John Fogerty's *Déjà Vu All Over Again*, Melissa Etheridge's *Lucky*, Andy Griggs' *Freedom*, Ashlee Simpson's *Autobiography*, and John Mellencamp's *Words & Music: John Mellencamp's Greatest Hits*. For a complete list visit my Web site, www.kennyaronoff.com.



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Vinnie Paul Rebel Forever

As the drummer for two now classic metal acts, Pantera and Damageplan, Vinnie Paul has clearly leaned toward the heavier side of the rock spectrum. With his latest project, Rebel Meets Rebel, featuring vocalist David Allan Coe, bassist Rex Brown, and Vinnie's late brother, Dimebag Darrell, on guitar, the drummer is certainly maintaining ground he's covered in the past.

But listen a little closer and you'll discover that Rebel Meets Rebel offers a bit more than the standard brute force you might have come to associate with Vinnie's playing. "People ask, 'Is it a country record or is it a metal record?' I say, 'It's a *fun* record,'" Vinnie insists. "It's something that music has been lacking for years. This thing's the real deal."

RMR's self-produced debut album (released on Vinnie's own label, Big Vin Records) was recorded over a four-year period, during Coe's visits to the band's Dallas hometown. According to Vinnie, right from the start, the players were open to anything. "We had no clue where to go," he admits. "Dime, Rex, and I worked together for so many years, it was just like clockwork with us. But we just didn't know where to go with David. So he was like, 'Man, just start on a groove.'" And that's exactly what they did, quickly assembling their first song, "Nothing To Lose," the introductory track on the album.

"No question, we were trying to have a hillbilly side to it," Vinnie says. "But we were kicking up the metal one hundred percent. So, like on 'Lose,' it's not a regular thrash beat. I came up with that double-timed hi-hat thing that really helped the whole song chug."

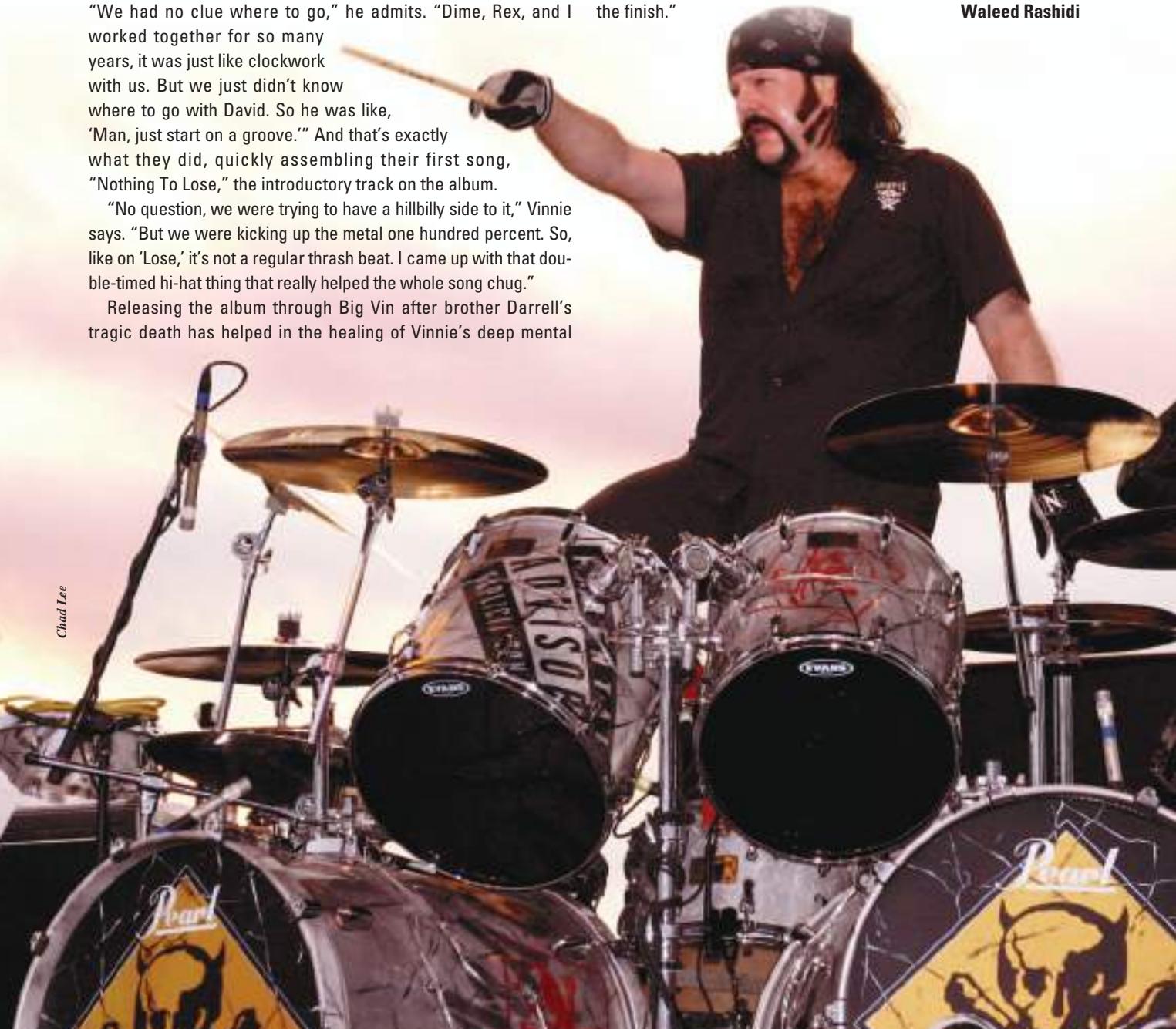
Releasing the album through Big Vin after brother Darrell's tragic death has helped in the healing of Vinnie's deep mental

wounds. "Working on this record," Vinnie says, "I feel like I'm still working with him. It's been like therapy and really good for me. And this record will add to Dime's incredible legacy and ensure that he lives on forever. I feel good about that."

For those seeking the Vinnie Paul sound, Pearl has just introduced a slammin' new signature snare, an 8x14, 6-ply maple shell in a snakeskin finish with Superhoop IIs and custom spiked tube lugs. Apparently this is one loud drum. According to Pearl, it's the only snare drum to come with a warning label.

And for those seeking playing tips from Vinnie, he's quick to compare drumming to an athletic event. "You need to stretch," he insists. "You need to warm up every night before every show, and you have to pace yourself, because you want to finish as strong as you started. You've got to be especially strong at the end of a show, because that's what people are going to remember. They always remember the start, and they always remember the finish."

Waleed Rashidi



Manu Katché

A Softer, Gentler Dynamic

It's been at least fifteen years since Manfred Eicher, founder of the German record label ECM, pulled his sedan over to the shoulder of the Autobahn, smitten by the drumming coming from the radio. He paused until the DJ called out the tune and artist.

The next day, the famed producer of dreamy Euro jazz purchased rocker Robbie Robertson's first solo album and listened once more to the track "Somewhere Down The Crazy River." Then, after checking the liner notes, he phoned one of his longtime artists, Jan Garbarek, with the name of a drummer to consider for the famed Norwegian saxophonist's next album. That release, *I Took Up The Runes*, was Manu Katché's entry into the ECM fold, and it's finally led this year to his own album on the label, *Neighbours*.

As it turns out, the stylish and articulate master of stadium rock with Sting and Peter Gabriel sits well in the milieu of legato jazz. On *Neighbors*, label mates Garbarek and legendary Polish trumpeter Tomasz Stanko joined Manu, creating instrumental music that, although defined by jazz sensibilities, will appeal to pop fans.

Manu reveals a delightful looseness on *Neighbors*. Instead of resorting to his trademark tom passes like on Gabriel's "In Your Eyes," he's more apt to set up a chorus with a fluttering press roll. Manu admits, "I didn't try to be 'Manu Katché the drummer.' I acted more like a melodic instrumentalist."

Instead of embracing the trashier default cymbals of jazz, Manu kept with his regular setup, including his sparkling Zildjian 21" ride and splashes. "I love the combination of these cymbals and their overtones in a quieter jazz context," Manu says. "The only change I made to my normal setup was adding a flat-ride sizzle cymbal."

The plentiful drum overtones apparent on the disc are a result of Manu's switch to Yamaha's Oak Custom line. "Often, I'm hitting the tom on the head *and* on the rim," Manu says. "Ordinarily this chokes a drum, but with the oak drums I always get the harmonics, even if I'm not hitting the drums in the perfect spot but near the edge. I love that. And the bass drum has no muffling. When you strike it with the right touch, it's beautiful. When you hit too hard, you 'shock' the drums and lose the sub-bass."



Although the French drummer recently turned up in Idaho, where he joined a Nashville session team recording with Christian artist David Lubben, most of Manu's work is closer to his Paris home. "I'm not touring around the world with big star acts," he explains, "so I'm available, and people have the opportunity to do projects with me. But I'm finally doing my own stuff and I'm still learning. As long as you learn, you enjoy."

T. Bruce Wittet

Will Calhoun

Exploring Native Lands



Will Calhoun has been contemplating the making of his latest album and DVD package, *Native Lands*, for quite some time. When Living Colour went on hiatus in 1995, he decided to travel to various places he had been with the band, but which he never had time to investigate musically. So he went to places like Morocco and Brazil and began documenting and videotaping his experiences. Will also conferred with many musicians during his travels.

While he was away, and upon his return, Calhoun worked with an incredible list of artists, including Mos Def, Stanley Jordan, Pharoah Sanders, Marcus Miller, Kevin Eubanks, Nana Vasconcelos, Buster Williams, Cheikh Tidiane Seck, Wallace Roney, Antoine Roney, Orrin Evans, John Benitez, and Gregg Marret. Many of these performances became integral parts of Calhoun's album.

Will says he had a specific vision for this release. "I think I was able to make a complete piece of art this time, not just a record," he says, proudly. "I also wanted to have a good time making the record. I set it up as an open-door policy, so whoever was in New York at the time would come to record."

Calhoun says that the recording process was fast. "Afro Blue," "Nefertiti," "Tateich," "Native Lands," and "Dorita," for instance, were recorded very quickly, live. "Afro Blue," in particular, is among Will's favorites, since he grew up listening to that Mongo Santamaria classic.

Another highlight for Will was working with percussion master Nana Vasconcelos when he was in Brazil. "Nana was someone I'd wanted to record with almost my entire life. He would always tell me Living Colour was great, and I'd say, 'Yeah, but we have to do something together.' Finally, when I was in Brazil, I decided to call him. He said, 'You have to come to my house.' When I told him I was making a record and wanted him to do it with me, he said fine. So I booked the studio, and Nana was amazing. It was incredible watching him perform. He is a total master."

Calhoun tells us that he's been performing the music from *Native Lands* with various combinations of musicians, so keep an eye open for Will live. And congratulations are also in order: Will was recently presented with the Teachers College Black Graduate Expo 2006 Visionary Leader Award. And Living Colour fans will be thrilled to know that a new record is in the works.

Robyn Flans

NOFX's Erik Sandin In Wolves' Clothing

Had it not been for a group of aspiring punk rockers, NOFX's Erik Sandin might not have been featured in the pages of this magazine. "When I was a kid," recalls Sandin, "I knew some older kids from the neighborhood who were into punk rock, and they were like, 'Hey man, we're starting a band. Do you want to play drums?' I was like, 'Okay, sure, sounds good!' Now, it could just as easily have been, 'Do you want to play the harmonica?' I just wanted to play music."

Fortunately, Sandin got his chance to play music—and drums. Twenty-three years later, he's an influential drummer on the current punk scene. With his rapid, single-pedal kick drum rhythms and tom runs, Sandin's propulsive patterns have kept NOFX's crowds moving at a furious pace all over the globe for over two decades.

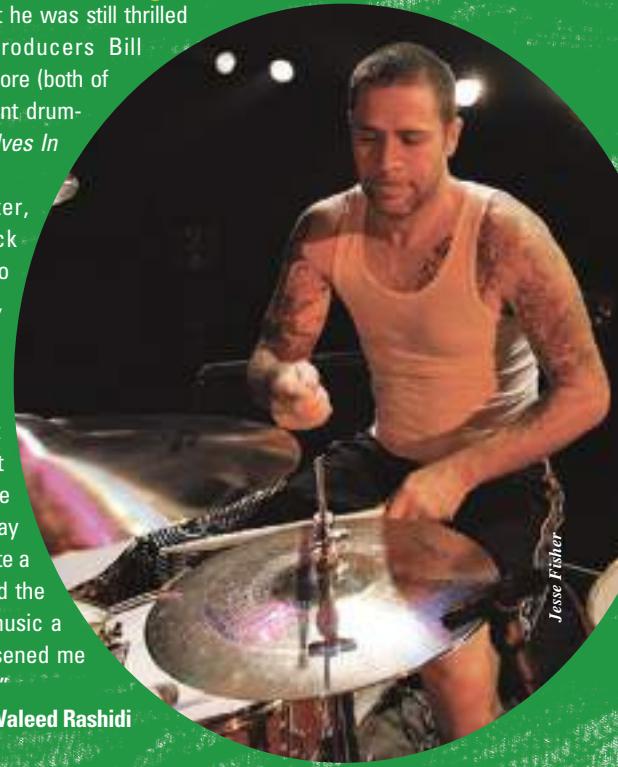
Sandin says his up-tempo pulse was influenced by drummers like Don Bolles of The Germs, Earl Hudson of Bad Brains, and Bomber Manzullo from RKL. "Bomber started firing the foot really fast and repetitively," Erik explains, "and I was like, 'That's awesome.' So I worked on my bass drum technique, getting it really solid and quick. You really need to have that together for this kind of music."

With eleven albums under his belt (one of which, 1994's *Punk In Drublic*, went gold), Sandin has quite a bit

of recording experience. But he was still thrilled recently to work with producers Bill Stevenson and Jason Livermore (both of whom happen to be excellent drummers) on NOFX's latest, *Wolves In Wolves' Clothing*.

Despite his speedy meter, Sandin recorded to a click track for the first time two albums ago. This time around, his approach changed. "Before I did this recording, I was playing dead on with the click," Erik says. "I made it a point to really nail it. But Stevenson and Livermore were like, 'You know what, play to the click. But if you fluctuate a little in front or a little behind the beat, it'll actually give the music a more natural feel.' That loosened me up and made things more fun."

Waleed Rashidi



Jesse Fisher

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Harold Jones Back With Bennett

spent a decade on tour with Natalie Cole after working on her *Unforgettable With Love* album, and even made *Swing When You're Winning*, a standards album with Britain's biggest pop star, Robbie Williams.

"That was the first time I'd seen that many young girls outside a recording studio," Jones recalls of the sessions at Capitol in Los Angeles. "And I thought it was a beautiful thing, him doing standards. Anything we can do to pass the music on, I think is good."

Jones insists that the Bennett gig isn't too different from what it was years ago. Many of the same songs make the set list, and the bandleader's style toward the drummer hasn't changed. "Tony's kind of like Basie: He'd never tell you what to do. But if you don't get it after a while, he might ask you, 'Why don't you try this?'"

The drummer certainly knows something about the Count. Jones spent a solid five years with the Basie orchestra in the late '60s and early '70s, earmarked by the recording of the classic *Basie: Straight Ahead*. The leader

boasted of his young drummer in the album's liner notes, telling Leonard Feather that, "A great drummer can mean everything to a band. Harold has really pulled us together."

After picking up a lifetime of lessons from Basie, Jones has matured into a consummate sideman. "I don't try to shove everything into a song that I can," he shares. "I try not to step on anybody." Jones left out one important aspect of his playing: He swings like crazy.

When asked why he brought Jones back into his band after thirty years, Tony Bennett was brief and to the point. "Louie Bellson once told me that he had asked Count Basie who he thought the best drummer was. And Count Basie said, 'Harold Jones.'" **Chris Kornelis**



Harold Jones' golf game is reportedly a lot better now than the last time he was in Tony Bennett's band. But that's just one of the changes the drummer has been through in the thirty years he's been away from Bennett. Jones has appeared on Grammy-winning albums like B.B. King's *Live At The Apollo*,

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DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Philly Joe Jones was born on 7/15/23, **Alan Dawson** on 7/14/29, and **Eric Carr** on 7/12/50.

On 7/2/41, **Gene Krupa** and his band, along with Roy Eldridge and Anita O'Day, record "Rockin' Chair."



On 7/3/69, Led Zeppelin (with **John Bonham**) plays the Newport Jazz Festival in Newport, Rhode Island.

On 7/20/03, **Zildjian** introduces the world's first Titanium coated cymbals.

On 7/9/97, **Roland** introduces the V-Drums (V-Pro Set).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Louie Bellson
(drumming legend): 7/6/24

Michael Shrieve
(ex-Santana): 7/6/49

Bill Berry
(R.E.M.): 7/31/58

Joe Morello
(jazz great): 7/17/28

Roger Taylor
(Queen): 7/26/49

Paul Geary
(Extreme): 7/24/61

Rashied Ali
(free-jazz giant): 7/1/35

Simon Kirke
(Bad Company): 7/28/49

Jack Irons
(ex-Red Hot Chili Peppers,
solo): 7/18/62

Ringo Starr
(The Beatles): 7/7/40

Andy Newmark
(studio great): 7/14/50

Evelyn Glennie
(percussion great): 7/19/65

Denny Seiwell
(Wings): 7/10/43

Tris Imboden
(Chicago): 7/27/51

Jason Bonham
(rock independent): 7/15/66

Butch Miles
(big band master): 7/4/44

Leon "Ndugu" Chandler
(R&B great): 7/1/52



Johnny Jai Johnson
(Allman Brothers): 7/8/44

Stewart Copeland
(The Police): 7/16/52

Dino Danelli
(The Rascals): 7/23/45

Marky Ramone
(Ramones): 7/15/56



Chet McCracken
(Doobie Brothers): 7/17/52

Chad Gracey
(Live): 7/23/71

Mitch Mitchell
(Jimi Hendrix): 7/9/47

Bobby Previte
(jazz independent): 7/16/57

William Goldsmith
(The Fire Theft): 7/4/72

Don Henley
(Eagles): 7/22/47

Bruce Crump
(Molly Hatchet): 7/17/57

Brad Hargreaves
(Third Eye Blind): 7/30/72

Will Champion
(Coldplay): 7/31/77

NEWS

Joey Jordison has been confirmed as the drummer for the touring lineup of Ministry.

Chad Gracey is on the new Live release, *Songs From The Black Mountain*, which includes the radio hit "The River."

Johnny Kelly is on the upcoming Type O Negative DVD, *Symphony For The Devil (The World Of Type O Negative)*.

Jeremy Haynes, **Joey Oscar**, **Tony Royster Jr.**, **Thomas Pridgen**, and **Eric Moore** are a few of the drummers featured on the DVD *Shed Session Vol. 1*. For more info check out www.gospelchops.com.

Kenny Garrett's **C-Will** (a.k.a. Courtney Williams) has released a solo CD, *Frustrated*. Check out www.cwill1.com.

Matt Flynn is now the full-time drummer of Maroon 5.

Spencer Smith is on the recent release by Panic At The Disco, *A Fever You Can't Sweat Out*.

Tommy Clufetos can be heard on the new Rob Zombie CD, *Educated Horses*.

Albe Bonacci is on Ron DiBuccio's *The Key* and Nadine Zahr's *Underneath The Everyday*.

Joe Babiak is touring with Kill Hannah.

Dennis Chambers can be heard on *Boston T Party*, featuring Jeff Berlin, Dave Fiuczynski, and T Lavitz. He's also on Mike Stern's first full-length DVD, which captures a 2004 concert.

John Mahon (percussion) and **Nigel Olsson** (drums) are currently in the studio with Elton John, working on his latest album, *The Captain And The Kid*, a sequel to Elton's classic LP *Captain Fantastic*. Mahon can also be heard on releases by Joss Stone and B.B. King.

Simon Phillips is on four tracks of Joe Satriani's new album, *Super Colossal*. **Jeff Campitelli** plays on the rest of the album.



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



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Ddrum USA Custom Shop Kit And Black Canyon Snare Drum

Look Ma...No Wires!

by Kevin D. Osborne
photos by Jim Esposito

KEY NOTES

- Drumset is custom built to the customer's specs
- Rack toms are well matched sonically
- Beautiful finish

Drum is well known for their electronic drums, but they've only recently entered the market with acoustic drums. They've done it in a big way, though, with drumkit lines made of ash, maple, birch, mahogany, and even acrylic.

One has to ask: What does a manufacturer of electronic drums know about making acoustic drums? When I asked ddrum's Kevin Packard that question, he told me that the artisans designing and producing the drums have thirty years of custom drum manufacturing experience. This gives ddrum the expertise necessary to produce high-quality drums—including a twenty-step manufacturing and finishing process, as well as lots of hands-on attention.

ddrum's top-of-the-line series is called USA Custom Shop. As the name implies, these drums are made to the customer's direct specifications. Our review kit came as a shell pack, with no hardware other than the rack tom suspension mounts and floor tom legs. So we'll be focusing on drum construction, appearance, and sound.



The Marionberry Candy-Lacquer finish combined a deep, natural-wood stain with thousands of tiny sparkles.

Construction

USA Custom Shop drums feature shells made of Canadian maple, with 5-mm, 6-ply toms and 8-ply snares and bass drums. Our review set included 7x8, 8x10, and 8x12 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, an 18x22 bass drum, and a 5½x14 snare drum.

The insides of the lightweight shells feature four coats of clear finish/sealer that are sanded and buffed by hand. According to ddrum, this smooth, sound-reflective surface allows the warmth of the maple to come through.

The bearing edges on the USA Custom Shop toms and snare are not as sharp as others I've seen. Ddrum feels that too sharp a bearing edge results in a drum that is too resonant. So they combine shell construction and bearing-edge design to produce what they believe is a musical balance of articulation, tone, attack, *and* resonance. The bearing edge on the bass drum is a little more rounded than that of the toms, to help create and project lower tones.

The drums all have die-cast hoops, classic tube lugs, and tension rods fitted with a locking star washer in addition to the normal flat washer. Suspension mounts on the rack toms attach to four of the tension rods, with rubber grommets all around to isolate the drums from the mounts. The drums are fitted with oversized machined air vents, which I find much more attractive than the pressed-in grommet type.

The tension rods on the bass drum have rubber washers to keep them from slipping out of the claws. I'd like to see some felt or rubber on the claws themselves (where they contact the hoops) to protect the finish and help isolate the claws from the drum. There were, thankfully, proper hoop protectors at the point where the bass drum pedal attaches. I hate to clamp a pedal directly to a beautifully finished hoop.

Appearance

Speaking of finishes, the one on our review kit was flawless. Called Marionberry Candy-Lacquer, it's a deep translucent red, with sparkles imbedded in the high-gloss lacquer. You can see the wood grain through the color, while still experiencing the effect of the thousands of tiny sparkles, which present a subtle shimmer as you move around the kit. I haven't seen anything like it before, even on kits that have a spray-on sparkle lacquer finish. (None of them let the wood grain show through.)

Another clever feature about the kit is the design of the bass drum hoops. They came with the same finish as the kit on the outside and over one edge, and a natural wood finish on the inside and over the other edge. This means you can flip the hoop around to get either a matching hoop edge



or a contrasting edge. Pretty slick!

One small item that bothered me was the stick-on badge, which looked like it could be peeled off. Kevin Packard told me that a screw-mounted badge is in the works to replace it.

Sound

The ten-lug maple snare, with its die-cast hoops and a Remo coated CS batter head, produced a classic snare sound, with all the warmth you would expect from a wooden drum. Whether I played it with a light touch or an aggressive attack, it generated the same full snare response. The snare also had a good volume range that would allow it to be heard above the rest of the band. Rimshots on this drum seemed to almost transform it into a metal snare. That's an advantage when it's time for accents and dynamics—to say nothing of making those backbeats come through loud and clear.

The toms came equipped with Remo Emperor batter heads and Ambassador resonant heads. The Emperors were only moderately resonant but provided plenty of slap and attack. Replacing the Emperors with Ambassadors yielded increased resonance. Since USA Custom Shop drums are custom built, you can specify your favorite heads.

My impression of the sound of the three rack toms is that they belong together. Each produced the same sound *character*, but in its own unique range (more like a chorus than three separate toms). Whether I played lightly with finesse or more intensely, the tonal response remained audibly melodic, with a clear and tightly focused pitch.

Attack and resonance were nicely blended, with neither one overshadowing the other. I doubt that the sound of these toms would get lost in the mix, as other toms sometimes can. A slap of the stick on the head gets a solid response of attack, pitch, and resonance. You can't ask much more from a drum.

The 14x16 floor tom seemed very big considering the shallow low depths of the rack toms. A drum with a slightly smaller diameter and an even shallower depth might be a better complement. But again, these drums are custom, so you'd order what you like.

As for the overall performance of the floor tom, it had lots of



Die-cast hoops and an efficient and clean-looking drop-away throw-off are features of the USA Custom Shop snare.

The feet on the ddrum kit's floor tom legs aren't very pretty. But they provide minimal floor contact in order to maximize drum resonance.



depth and resonance. Whether I tuned it up or left it low, the same balance of attack, warmth, and sustain was present.

An interesting side note regarding the feet for the tom legs: They have about the *least* stylish design I've ever seen. In fact, they looked like large, solid, black rubber corks. However, since the tom legs are bent slightly at the bottom in order to contact the floor at an angle, the utilitarian design of the feet lets only a small edge actually touch the ground. Less floor contact means more vibration retained in the drum, thus promoting resonance.

There was a distinctive focus to the sound of the bass drum. It had plenty of low end, but each stroke could be heard clearly. The front head came with no hole cut into it. Instead, there were twenty small pinholes around the edge of the *batter* head (which also was equipped with self-muffling strips). This means that the air inside the drum resonates against the front

Something Extra

In addition to the USA Custom Shop kit, we received a 6½x14 snare called the Black Canyon model. This beautiful drum comes with wood hoops, classic metal claws, and tube lugs. The Canyon Grey finish employs a covering called TourTuff. It's an impact-proof Masonite material that is chemically bonded to the outer shell, making the wrap an additional ply of the drum rather than just a piece of plastic taped to its surface.

Ddrum's Kevin Packard challenged me to smack the TourTuff covering with a stick so that I could see how indestructible it was. After whacking it several times, I could neither see nor feel any damage at all. I was impressed. TourTuff coverings are available as an option on the USA Custom Shop Drums.

The sound of this wood-hoop snare was, not surprisingly, very "woody"—even when the drum was tuned up high. Its sound was very controlled, retaining its woody character whether I played it soft or hard.

The wood hoops themselves were impressive, standing up to rimshots very well, with little effect on the wood or even the finish of the hoop. Rimshots added a slight ring to the drum, without sounding metallic. While this drum might not be appropriate for all applications, its clear, clean, woody sound would make it a nice concert or studio drum. List price is \$1,117.20.

head, and then bounces to the *rear* of the drum, where it escapes in a controlled manner, leaving the drum ready for the next beat. Overall, the drum had a nice, low combination of "thump" and "boom," without any excessive ring or echo.

Wrap-Up

The ddrum USA Custom Shop series offers high-end kits tailor-made to the desires of each customer. You call the shots in terms of drum sizes, finish, heads, and so forth. This sort of customization doesn't come cheap. Still, once your kit is completed, you'll have a one-of-a-kind instrument that fits your style and sound.

THE NUMBERS

USA Custom Shop Maple Drumset In Marionberry Candy-Lacquer

5½x14 snare drum	\$967.20
7x8 rack tom	\$624.00
8x10 rack tom	\$738.00
8x12 rack tom	\$806.00
14x16 floor tom	\$1,320.80
18x22 bass drum	\$2,059.20

Rack toms feature suspension mounts, the floor tom comes with legs, and the bass drum comes with spurs. No other hardware is included. The sparkles in the Candy-Lacquer finish represent a 12% upcharge; standard lacquer kits are slightly less expensive.

(813) 600-3920, www.ddrum.com



The 6½x14 Black Canyon snare comes with wood hoops, classic metal claws, tube lugs, and a Canyon Grey TourTuff veneer finish.



Rockin' new finishes, huge bass drum sound,
toms that project, and a snare drum that flat out cuts.

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Sabian HHX Legacy Cymbals

Seduced By The Dark Side

by Mike Haid

KEY NOTES

- Well-matched family of dark, washy cymbals
- Unique, innovative O-Zone ride
- Cymbals would work well for most jazz applications

Long ago, in a galaxy far, far away (well, actually, about four years ago, in Canada), Sabian's cymbal artisans got together with master drummer Dave Weckl to design the HHX Evolution line of cymbals. This was a series of bright, expressive models tailored to Dave's high-energy playing. Notable among them were O-Zone crashes, with an innovative circle-of-holes design that gave them a futuristic sci-fi look, as well as a trashy sound with quick response and a warm wash.

Over the ensuing years, Dave began to hear the call of a darker side of his sound. It was seducing him, if you will, to create a warmer, jazzier cymbal. Last year he met again with the Sabian craftsmen, and after a painstaking trial-and-error process, the Legacy series was born. The universe of Sabian cymbals suddenly became a more intriguing place for jazz drummers to explore. And unity and harmony prevailed between the Evolution and Legacy series in Dave's cymbal collection.

I love happy endings, but this story is not yet finished. Let's take a deeper look into these dark plates.

Hammer Time!

The Evolution and the Legacy series are cast from the same B20 bronze, and they're both part of the HHX family. Yet the Legacy models offer a warmer, darker, and trashier overall sound. The big difference is in the hammering of the cymbals. The hammering on Legacy cymbals is much more complex than it is on Evolutions. What's more, that hammering varies greatly from model to model.

The complete Legacy line consists of five ride cymbals (20" O-Zone, 20" and 21", 22" heavy, and 22" heavy with rivets), two crashes (17" and 18"), two splashes (10" and 12"), and a pair of 14" hats. Let's break it down.

Hats And Splashes

The 14" Legacy hats are dry, dark, and thin-sounding, with loose, warm stick articulation. The top cymbal is fairly thin and light, while the bottom hat is a little heavier. These are not crisp-sounding hats, but keep in mind that the entire Legacy line is designed to have a warm, subtle sound. The amazing—and very positive—aspect of these hats is that they have a fat, rich "chick" when played with the hi-hat pedal. The warm tone of the hats fits perfectly with the rest of the cymbals.

The large oval hammering used on the hats can also be seen on the 10" and 12" splashes. Thus, the splashes have the same subtle warmth that the hats do. They also have a sharp attack and a quick decay when struck firmly, but they offer a nice, mellow wash when played softly. There's a sweet, cohesive tonal balance between them.



Crashes

The hammering on the Legacy crashes is multi-faceted. There are large oval hammer marks on the top and bottom of each cymbal, with numerous small hammerings layered over the larger ovals on the top only.

These babies proved to be the sweetest-sounding crashes I've ever laid my sticks on—in any given jazz setting, and at any volume. Their deep, rich wash was spectacular, and the sensitivity and dynamics of sound projection could go from a whisper to a roar without getting overbearing.

The tonal qualities of the 17" and 18" sizes seemed perfectly matched, with the 18" being predictably deeper in pitch. In a low-volume jazz setting you could easily get away with using the 18" as a crash/ride. There is just the right amount of explosive attack that cuts through the wash when struck sharply. I used these cymbals in the studio to record a medium-volume jazz tune, and they had just the right attack to accentuate the kicks without becoming harsh or brittle.

Rides

The Legacy line gives you plenty of options when it comes to ride cymbals. It includes 20", 21", and 22" sizes, in a variety of descriptions.

Two 22" heavy rides are offered. The only difference between them is that one is equipped with three small rivets, placed close together. Both of the 22" rides produced solid stick definition, as well as a subtle wash that built slowly and simmered beneath the more defined attack, without ever getting in the way. The riveted 22" was my favorite of all the rides. It had *mucho* character. Depending on where I struck it, I found various tones and colors that blended together well. The regular 22" heavy ride didn't have as much character, and it seemed a bit too heavy compared to the rest of this well-balanced line of cymbals.

Where the hammering on the 22" rides is very similar to the multi-faceted hammering I described for the 17" and 18" crashes, the hammering on the 20" and 21" rides is similar to that on the hats and splashes: larger oval hammerings on the top and bottom. This created dry, washy, trashy overtones that were almost evenly balanced in volume with the dark yet defined stick articulation. There's also a 2"-wide unlathed strip in the center, on the underside of the cymbal, to help break up the overtones and create more defined stick definition in the center of the cymbal. This is thoughtful engineering.

The 20" and 21" rides seemed best suited for medium- to low-volume jazz. I preferred the 20" to the 21", because it seemed to have a bit more definition in the stick articulation, and it blended very well with the overall tonality of the crashes. The 20" and 21" also worked well as crash/rides. The 22" rides are a little too heavy for that purpose.

The O-Zone Layer

The 20" Legacy O-Zone ride is, without a doubt, the most interesting ride cymbal I've ever played. It's got the dirtiest, nastiest,

trashiest sound that you'd ever want to ride on. It's certainly an acquired taste, and is obviously a specialty item. But man, there is some *serious* character oozing out of this ugly duckling.

Taking a cue from the design of the Evolution O-Zone crashes, the O-Zone ride has five large holes covering half of its surface. And while you might think that you'd have to take extra care not to land in a hole when playing this cymbal, that's not likely to be a problem. Because the half of the cymbal without the holes is heavier than the half with them, the cymbal naturally rotates into a position that puts the "solid" riding surface toward the player (assuming even a slight tilt on the stand). The O-Zone ride generates just enough stick definition to cut through its heavy wash, thus qualifying this beast as a ride. It also has the same large, oval hammering as the 20" and 21" rides. This trashy treat is sure to be a conversation piece on any gig.

Conclusion

The Legacy series is a thoughtfully designed and well-balanced line of jazzy-sounding cymbals. And although it's not designed to be an all-purpose line, experimentation often becomes the mother of invention. So don't pigeonhole these cymbals until you try them.

Dave Weckl conceived the Legacy models to blend with the HHX Evolution series, thus offering the bright and dark side of the HHX spectrum. And this they do, remarkably well. They would undoubtedly do the same with brighter-sounding cymbals from other manufacturers. So if your playing style calls for a broad range of sounds, adding Legacy models to the cymbals you already play will likely give you one big, happy, musical family.

Congratulations to Sabian and to Dave Weckl for creating another innovative line of exceptional-sounding instruments. In this case, I must disagree with George Lucas and Yoda. The dark side can, indeed, be a beautiful place.



The unique design of the Legacy O-Zone ride provides equally unique sonic performance.

THE NUMBERS

10" splash	\$193
12" splash	\$228
14" hi-hats	\$594
17" crash	\$389
18" crash	\$420
20" ride	\$483
20" O-Zone ride	\$483
21" ride	\$532
22" heavy ride	\$575

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

Meinl Cajons

Thinking Outside The Box

by Norman Arnold

KEY NOTES

- Quality workmanship
- Wide variety of sonic options
- Cool looks



From left: Ash Front Snare Cajon, Cherry Front Snare Cajon, Premium Fiberglass Front Guitar String Cajon, and Micah-Burl Front Guitar String Cajon

The cajon is a Peruvian instrument, developed in the 19th century. The Spanish word "cajon" translates as "box," and that's essentially what the original cajons were. But Meinl has transformed the traditional cajon into a truly modern and versatile instrument.

The variety of choices for sounds in Meinl's cajon line is significant, including adjustable snares and front plates, as well as built-in sizzle effects. Let's take a look at the various options.

Snare Cajons

Meinl offers three choices for Snare Cajons. The Ash Front Cajon (CAJ1SNT-M) has a rubber wood resonating body and an American white ash front plate. The box has a rubber seat surface on the top, as well as four stable rubber pads for feet.

The Ash Front Cajon has a resonant low end, and can also produce a variety of slap sounds. The front plate can be adjusted by using a Phillips screwdriver to tighten or loosen the plate. This, in turn, alters the space between the top corners of the plate and the resonating body. This changes the amount of high slap that's created when the top edges are played.

The Cherry Wood Front (CAJ2RO-M) model has a cherry wood front and a body made from red oak. This cajon has the same adjustable top corners as the Ash Front model. The sound is warm and versatile. Meinl also offers a Snare Cajon (CAJ1BKSP-M) with a premium fiberglass front plate. We didn't receive that model for review.

All three Snare Cajon models are equipped with the same fully adjustable snare wires and the same mechanism for applying the amount of snare effect. A knurled knob on the player's right side can adjust the rattling range between light and sensitive to very loud. It can also be turned completely off with a quick twist, letting the cajon produce an open sound. Putting the snares back on requires only a slight turn to get the mechanism moving in the right direction. As a result, snare adjustment is so easy that it can be done effectively at just about any place in a song.

Guitar String Cajons

Two Meinl cajons have a built-in adjustable sizzle effect created by the use of a guitar string touching the front plate. The strings run from the top to the bottom and can easily be tensioned with an Allen wrench (provided). The looser the string, the more vibrant the sizzle. There's a nifty holder for the Allen wrench on the inside of the cajon, so you'll never have to go looking for one in your gig bag.

The Micah-Burl Front Cajon (CAJ3MB-M) has a beautiful front plate and is exceptionally smooth to the touch. The Premium Fiberglass Front Cajon (CAJ7NT-BK) looks great, and it sounds sharper on contact than the wood models do. The bright sound of the guitar string on the fiber-



This cutaway view shows the snare mechanism inside the Snare Cajons.

glass surface also stands out a bit more.

Both models have black rubber seat surfaces on top and rubber pads on their bottoms, and both are comfortable to play. The front plates are adjustable in the same way as on the snare models.

Cajon Bag

I'm the type who always makes sure my belt matches my shoes. I really don't like showing up for a gig looking like I've raided my Aunt Lily's attic for all her old suitcases to hold my gear. So you can imagine my delight when I saw that Meinl offers bags for their cajons. The Professional bag (MCJB) that was provided for this review is well made, and comes embroidered with a cool Meinl logo. The Deluxe model has a layer of synthetic fleece inside for extra protection.



Professional Cajon bag

Conclusion

All of the cajons we tested featured outstanding construction quality and attention to detail, from the exceptionally smooth lacquered finishes to the beveled edges and well-recessed screws. A surgeon who happens to be a closet cajon player wouldn't need to worry about scraping or cutting up his hand on any of these surfaces. And they all produced unique yet completely applicable—and musical—sounds.

High marks all the way around.

THE NUMBERS

Ash Front Snare Cajon (CAJ1SNT-M)	\$285
Cherry Wood Front Plate Snare Cajon (CAJ2RO-M)	\$369
Premium Fiberglass Snare Cajon (CAJ1BKSP-M)	\$369
Micah-Burl Guitar String Wood Cajon (CAJ3MB-M)	\$235
Premium Fiberglass Guitar String Cajon (CAJ7NT-BK)	\$235
Professional cajon bag (MCJB)	\$.94

(877) 88-MEINL, www.meinlpercussion.com

Quick Looks

Vater Nude Series Sticks



Vater has always been known for responding to the requests and suggestions of players. In this spirit, they recently introduced their Nude series of sticks. The new sticks have no finish or lacquer. They're left with their "bare" sanded finish.

Now, most drummers have a pretty good idea of what works best for their grip. For some, it's tacky; for others, it's dry. If you're the sort of player who is constantly losing sticks while playing due to sweat, unlacquered sticks may well reduce the risk of slippage.

Vater started the Nude series with their most popular stick models: 5A, 5B, and Power 5B. (More models will likely be added in the near future.) The 16" x .570" 5A is a good all-purpose stick with just a slight bit of extra weight at the tip. The 5B has basically the same length and contour, with a larger diameter (.605") and tip. The Power 5B has a slightly larger diameter than the 5B (.610"), and is half an inch longer. The sticks are available with either wood or nylon tips. The ones I tried displayed Vater's usual high level of quality.

The unvarnished truth is, if slippage from sweat is a problem for you, these sticks may be the answer. The wood-tip models list for \$12.45; the nylon-tip versions go for \$12.90.

Chap Ostrander

Vater Monster Brush



You say you want a really fat backbeat? Or you need to keep the volume down *most* of the time, but still get a reasonable response when you smack your 16" crash? How 'bout an absolutely killer Nashville "train" beat for that country boogie tune?

The Vater Monster Brush (designed in conjunction with Vater artist La Frae Olivia Sci) may be just the ticket. Physically, it's a handful—literally. The black plastic handle is wrapped around a 1½"-diameter bundle of wavy polymer bristles, giving a pretty good impression of a plastic whisk broom. But those bristles provide enough heft to create a respectable popping backbeat and a decent cymbal crash when the Monster Brush's adjustable O-rings are extended toward the front, and enough brightness on a drumhead to generate a very wide, "brushes on steroids" sound when those rings are pulled back to broaden the spread. (The polymer strands should also provide good durability.)

The sheer size of the Monster Brushes takes a little getting used to. (Traditional grip is pretty much out of the question.) But once you have them under control, they're likely to become a go-to tool for when you need a "different" sound that doesn't necessarily have to be a "wimpy" one. (Just be sure to leave plenty of room in your stick bag.) Monster Brushes list for \$27.95.

(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com

Rick Van Horn

Longo Solid-Shell Snare Drums

A Labor Of Love

by Rick Van Horn
photos by Jim Esposito

KEY NOTES

- Outstanding construction quality
- Different shell types provide distinctive sounds
- Cherry shells are exceptionally sensitive



4 1/2x14 walnut shell, with walnut reinforcing hoops, S-8 throw-off, and clear natural urethane finish



5x14 walnut shell, with walnut reinforcing hoops, Nickel piston throw-off, and clear natural urethane finish



5x14 cherry shell, with cherry reinforcing hoops, Stealth throw-off, and mahogany stain urethane finish

As a drummer since childhood, Neil Longo absorbed musical influences from his various drum heroes. As a drum builder, he absorbed influences from closer to home. Neil's father and grandfather were both carpenters, and they instilled in him a love and respect for wood crafting. Neil combines his loves for drumming and woodworking into the creation of custom-made solid-shell snare drums. He bends the shells out of hand-picked and prepared woods, using equipment that he designed and built himself.

Since each drum is custom-made, the selection of hardware fittings, snare throw-off, drumheads, and snare wires is largely up to the customer. However, Neil has his own opinions about quality components, which he gladly shares with his customers—usually to their advantage. So let's take a short look at Longo drums.

General Characteristics

Neil provided us with seven different snares to try, including a wide variety of shell materials and finishes. Workmanship on all seven was outstanding. The hand-bent shells were all in round, with bearing edges that were true and smooth.

Six of the drums had vintage-style tube lugs, with the other having a generic cast model. All but one were fitted with 2.3-mm rolled steel rims, with the exception having a die-cast rim.

None of the drums featured glitzy finishes; for the most part they had fairly natural-looking wood stains. One drum had a yellow stain, and two had what Neil calls a Paprika stain.

Colors like these are a matter of personal taste, but the finishing jobs themselves were outstanding.

Neil fitted all of the drums with Remo coated Ambassador batters, and all but one with Diplomat thin snare-side heads. All were equipped with German steel snare wires. Throw-offs varied, and will be indicated below.

One By One

For the purpose of our test, we tensioned the batter and snare-side heads of each drum as identically as possible. We went for a general-purpose tension, somewhere just above medium-tight. Our object was to eliminate drumhead tension as a variable when comparing the sounds of these seven drums. (Obviously, a player would fine-tune each drum individually to suit his or her taste and application.) Here's a breakdown of descriptive details and test results on a drum-by-drum basis.

4 1/2x14 Walnut Shell

Walnut Hoops, Clear Natural Urethane Finish

This drum was fitted with what Neil Longo calls an S-8 snare throw-off, which is a snap-lock, drop-away model I haven't seen before. It features a completely exposed snare-tension knob at the bottom of the mechanism that makes adjustments very easy. The snap-locking lever isn't at all quiet when switching the snares from "on" to "off," but it's very secure in the "on" position, making it a good choice for heavy hitters.

In terms of sound, this drum was crisp and clean, with a nice, woody character. Owing to its depth, it had a reasonably high pitch without sounding "cranked-up." It also had good snare sensitivity.

5x14 Walnut Shell

Walnut Hoops, Clear Natural Urethane Finish

Big brother to the 4 1/2x14, this drum is otherwise identical except for the use of a Nickel piston throw-off. It also sounded essentially the same, with the slightly lower pitch you'd expect from the half-inch deeper shell.

5x14 Cherry Shell

Cherry Hoops, Mahogany Urethane Finish

This deep and rich-looking drum came with a Stealth drop-away throw-off. It features a very clean look, and it operated with a smooth and quiet action.

This was the one drum in our group that had an Ambassador snare-side head rather than the thinner Diplomat model. Even so, it proved to be the crispest and most sensitive of all the drums in our group. It had great snare response, all across the drumhead. It also sounded deeper and warmer than the walnut drums, with a rich, full tone—especially at higher volume. This drum turned out to be my favorite.

5x14 Cherry Shell

Cherry Hoops, Paprika Oil Finish

This was the one drum that wasn't fitted with 2.3-mm steel rims. Rather, it came with die-cast hoops. It was also different in the throw-off department: It came equipped with the Trick G007 machined aluminum model, which has become quite popular with custom drum builders for its smooth and reliable action.

Like the previous cherry snare, this drum had outstanding sensitivity and a great overall tonality. The die-cast hoops produced extra-penetrating rimshots.

5x14 Cherry Shell

Walnut Hoops, Paprika Satin Lacquer Finish

This drum was fitted with the S-8 throw-off. It also differed from the other cherry models in our group by virtue of its walnut reinforcing hoops. And that seemed to make a big difference, because this drum lacked the edge-to-edge sensitivity that impressed me about the other cherry models. It was actually a little ringy at the edges of the head. On the other hand, it offered a killer firecracker-like pop in the middle, with lots of cut.

5x14 Birch Shell

Birch Hoops, Yellow Urethane Finish

This is the one drum in our sample that didn't feature tube lugs. Instead, it came with more generic-looking "bow tie" cast lugs. It was fitted with the S-8 throw-off.

When tensioned to match the other drums in our group, this drum still sounded "loose." It was a sound that might work for a "fatback" situation, but otherwise the drum cried out for more tension. When we provided that tension, the sound became classic birch, with a fairly dry and controlled "gated" character. The drum wasn't particularly sensitive across the head, but there was a great sweet spot in the middle where it spoke with full-throated authority.

7x14 Cherry Shell

Cherry Hoops, Natural Oil Finish

This deep-shelled snare came with the Trick throw-off. It also came with that cherry-shell sensitivity—though not so much at the edge of the head, which is to be expected considering the depth.

What I didn't expect—considering the depth—was the pitch of the drum. It wasn't as low as some 7" drums I've played. That cherry-shell brightness and crispness kept it up in the mid ranges. What the depth of the shell did give the drum was more body. The result was a very clean, crisp, and full overall snare-drum sound. Nice.

Conclusion

My examination of the Longo snares taught me two things. The first is that Neil Longo knows how to make well-crafted, high-quality instruments. The second is that I really like the sound of cherry-shell snare drums. Of course, the whole point of Longo Drums is to have Neil make what you like. So if you're thinking about having a snare drum created to your own personal specs, you might want to give Neil a call.



5x14 cherry shell, with cherry reinforcing hoops, die-cast rims, Trick G007 throw-off, and Paprika stain natural oil finish



5x14 cherry shell, with walnut reinforcing hoops, S-8 throw-off, and Paprika stain satin lacquer finish



5x14 birch shell, with birch reinforcing hoops, generic cast lugs, S-8 throw-off, and yellow stain urethane finish



7x14 cherry shell, with cherry reinforcing hoops, Trick G007 throw-off, and natural oil finish

THE NUMBERS

Prices vary depending on size, shell materials, fittings, and finishes.

Prices shown for the review drums are representative figures only.

4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Walnut, walnut hoops, clear natural urethane finish . . . \$795

5x14 Walnut, walnut hoops, clear natural urethane finish . . . \$795

5x14 Cherry, cherry hoops, mahogany urethane finish . . . \$749

5x14 Cherry, cherry hoops, Paprika oil finish . . . \$809

5x14 Cherry, walnut hoops, Paprika satin lacquer finish . . . \$809

5x14 Birch, birch hoops, yellow urethane finish . . . \$725

7x14 Cherry, cherry hoops, natural oil finish . . . \$745

(570) 788-5820, www.longodrums.com

Orion Strondo Series Cymbals

These Brazilian Beauties Speak In Many Tongues

by Will Romano

KEY NOTES

- Ride's bell created layered, controlled performance
- Hi-hats had good overall playability
- Trashy 18" Rock crash
- Cutting, wet crashes worked well together

Orion is a Brazilian company that has been hand-hammering cymbals for about four years. It's a subsidiary of MultiAlloy Metals, which supplies the mining, railway, and oil industries, among others. As a cymbalmaker, Orion has developed eight lines, which are currently used by Brazilian musicians from beginners to world beaters. The company has recently begun serious exporting efforts to North America, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Orion's Strondo series attempts to court a mainstream market by offering rock and heavy rock cymbals. For our review we were sent two pairs of hi-hats, three rock crashes, and one heavy ride—all of which came in a heavy-duty Orion gig bag. The name "Strondo" is a variation of estrondo, which means sharp noise or boom in Portuguese. Would these cymbals live up to their name, and would Orion be a worthy competitor to other cymbal makers around the world? Let's take a look.

21" Heavy Ride

The 21" heavy ride was a winner, right off the bat. I played it at various dynamic levels, and I'm convinced that this cymbal could work as well for jazz or pop drummers as for its intended demographic: rockers. I was most impressed with its performance at lower volumes: The sound remained uniform. This may seem like a small point, particularly in the technologically modern age of cymbalmaking, but all of the overtones and brightness were increased or reduced only by the degree of my own aggression—which is the way it should be.

The cymbal's sound is enhanced by haphazard-looking abrasions that litter the top, and what looks like grooved, rotary-belt skid marks riddling the bottom. (We were informed by Marcos Tachikawa, Orion's marketing and product development manager, that these machine-like marks were, in reality, made by hand and hammer.) This design feature has a dual purpose. The main one is that hammering on both sides of the cymbal ensures sonic consistency. Secondly, marks such as these enhance the cymbal's visual appeal. It's hard to tell just how much these marks contribute to the overall sound, but I certainly didn't notice any ill effects because of them.

The bottom line? The 21" heavy ride had good stick definition and a protruding, buffed bell made for layered, controlled, and cutting overall sound. The bell's projection was fantastic, creating no unwanted hiss or build-up. This was no doubt a by-product of the duality of the buffed bell and dull "riding" surface.

I especially had fun playing the ride while using offbeat accents on the hi-hats, either via stick or foot. (The "chick" of the hats was not smothered. More about that in a moment.) In fact, I'd say that the ride cymbal's playability improved my performance. I simply did not have to dig deep to bring out a "tick," "ping," or "ding."



Rock Crashes

Our review batch included 17", 18", and 19" Rock crashes. Orion states that these cymbals are geared to heavy-hitting rock drummers. Accordingly, I suspected that they would be clear, loud, and cutting. They were. Their properties were enhanced by what appeared to be sideswiped welts on the surface of the cymbals, put there to ensure brightness and sonic control.

The one thing I couldn't foresee was the physical effect these cymbals had on my body. The first time I played the Strondo crashes, I felt a sharp stinging sensation shooting through my hands and arm. The cymbals were so responsive, I had to adjust my playing style slightly to make sure I was hitting the cymbals on their "sweet and safe spots" to avoid that wonky feeling in my hands. Despite this, I enjoyed using the cymbals and was quite taken by their vibrancy.

The 17" and 18" sizes were surprisingly different in texture. While the 17" boasted bright and cutting qualities (with a relatively quick decay), the 18" was noticeably dull and trashy. I had the feeling that there were multi-layered firecracker blasts hidden under the surface, just dying to get out. But the sound was inexplicably masked by a rush of darker tones. They were so dark, in fact, that I decided at one point to use the 18" crash as a China, offsetting the heavy ride's loud "tick."

The 19" crash was the clear standout. It just made me feel good to play it, especially when I accompanied it with a snare blast. The overtones were not overbearing, the decay was not too long, and the pop, while loud, did not stick out like a sore thumb in the musical mix. It was loud without being oppressive.

In one test session I set up all three crash cymbals straight across the front of my kit, and played them as an "ensemble." I played dynamic fills, dividing beats between the snare, toms, and cymbals. A cutting, near-lethal wash lingered shortly, but then quickly evaporated. It sounded absolutely amazing: crisp and loud, with lots of wetness. At one point I thought I was listening to recorded, processed drums. This prospect might turn off some readers, but it's just one example of how professional these cymbals sounded when played.

In case you're wondering, Orion makes even heavier cymbals—dubbed heavy crashes. We weren't sent any for review, and I can only imagine the shock to my hands. I am a heavy hitter, and I still found that the Rock crashes suited my playing style just fine.

Hi-Hats

When I played the 14" and 15" hi-hats, I found that my motions were very fluid. I was never fighting the cymbals to get the sound—any sound—that I wanted. These hats had some of the clearest "chick" sounds I've ever experienced. As I indicated earlier, this worked well when mixed with the 21" ride. That solid, clear "chick" could be heard even amid the wash of crashes and ride.

Just as the 21" ride had done, these hats inspired me to play better. Because I felt so at ease, I was throwing in accents liberally, with very little arm movement. The slick playing surfaces of the top cymbals (which appeared to be more prominent on the 15") gave me sonic and tactile signals that seemed to spur my hand technique—which, in turn, inspired me to play everything from straight 8ths to swing patterns.



The 15" hi-hats feature a notched bottom cymbal for improved air escape.

If you're a rock drummer, the 15" hats will be the ones to check out. The 14" hats were lighter, and perhaps even a bit tinny by comparison. I concluded that this was due to design differences between the two.

The 15" bottom hat sports spaced indentations that

Orion maintains make the hats "faster and crisper, with better air escape." Whether this is true or not, I did hear a difference in the volume level and overall attack of the 15". It also seemed to have more stick response, as if it took to receiving the tips of my sticks more easily than the 14" hats did.

Conclusion

Strondo cymbals are forged with B8 bronze, which is an alloy noted for its crispness, clarity, and projection. That alloy certainly lends itself to the intended purpose of this new line. I could replace any of the cymbals that I use—cymbals made by better-known manufacturers—with the Strondos, and not lose anything in terms of tone, clarity, or volume.

There really aren't too many things "wrong" with this series. It all comes down to a matter of taste. Estrondo may mean boom in Portuguese, but in any language, these cymbals are explosive.

THE NUMBERS

17" Rock crash	\$200
18" Rock crash	\$213
19" Rock crash	\$235
14" hi-hats (pair)	\$312
15" hi-hats (pair)	\$384
21" Heavy ride	\$365

(305) 667-1441, www.orioncymbals.com



From Birth

Hideko Mekuka Yamaha Craftsman Profile

Job Title: Wood Sanding Specialist Years Experience: 23 years

"Yamaha Drums has always been innovative in their finishing processes. A lot of these innovations come from incorporating the same lacquering and buffing techniques used on our world renowned pianos. The sanding process is one of the most important steps in preparing for the paint finish. Having perfectly smooth shells for the painting process is why each Yamaha drum is as beautiful as a piece of art."**

Innovation

Whether recording in the studio, performing live, or creating new sound sources, Russ has chosen Yamaha Drums as his tools of innovation on various recordings that total sales of more than 26 million albums.

Did you know...

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

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

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."
For over 20 years, Yamaha Drums have been that source of innovation for me. I can't imagine working without them."**



Absolute Birch Nouveau toms,
Absolute Maple Nouveau bass drum
and snare drum in Cherry Black Fade

 **YAMAHA**
DRUMS
100% HANDCRAFTED

www.yamahadrums.com

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MD's 2006 READERS POLL RESULTS

HALL OF FAME CHARLIE WATTS

Jay Blakesburg

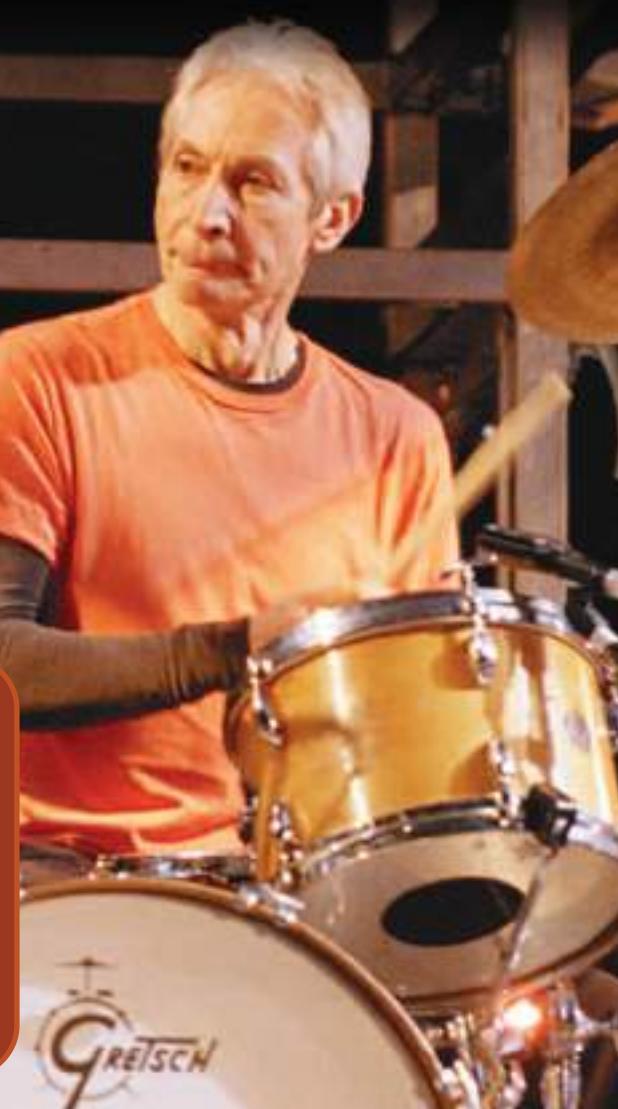
The 2006 MD Readers Poll results are most notable for a multi-generational perspective. New and impressive young players were recognized alongside drumming stars who've repeatedly given evidence of why they merit that status.

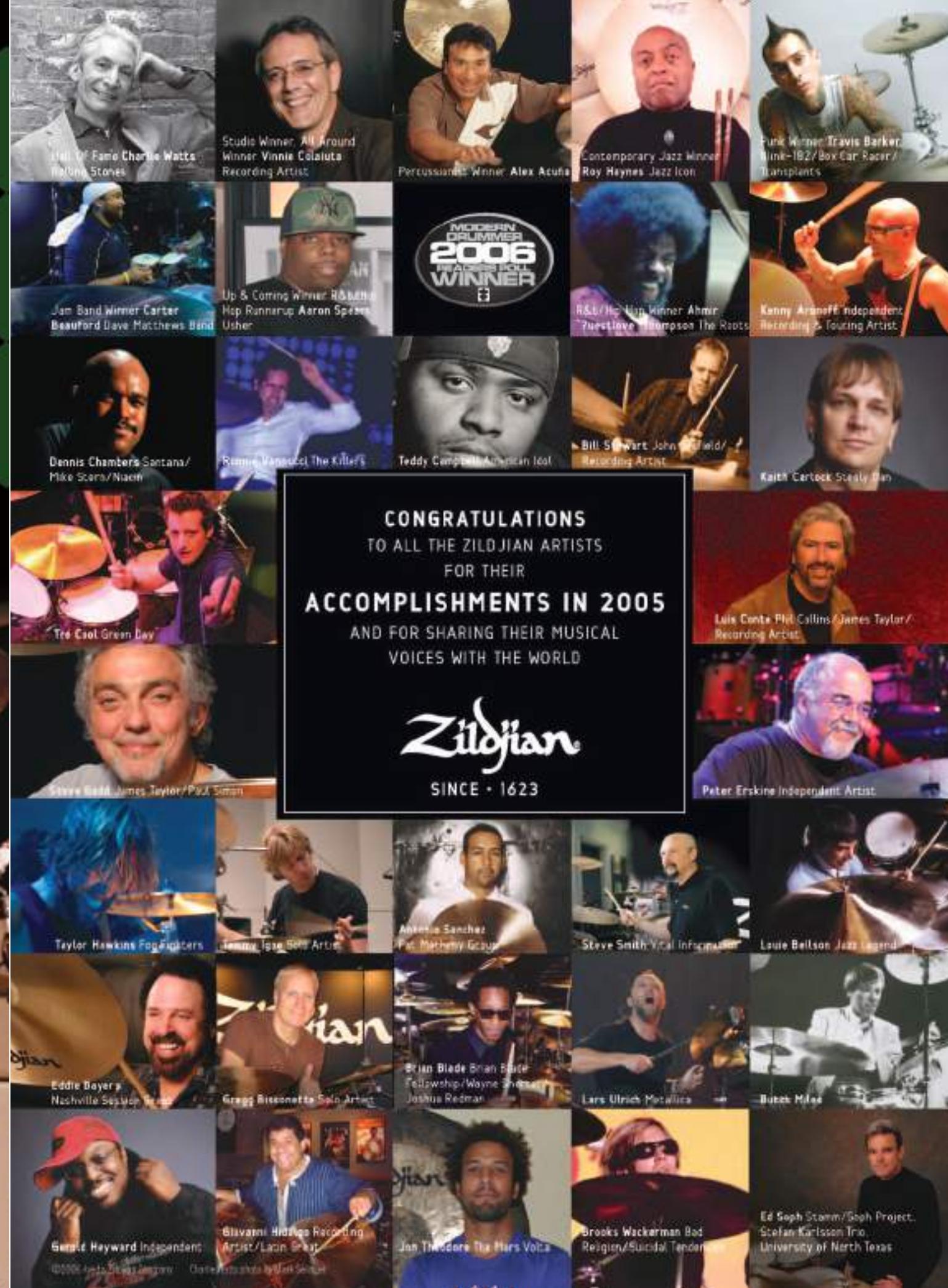
This year's ballot included a number of new or revised categories designed to offer a better reflection of current musical styles. Voters responded positively, since it gave them an opportunity to single out their favorite artists more specifically. As a result, this year's poll received votes for more than nine hundred different drummers. Here are the results.

Nobody—and we mean *nobody*—has been at the top of the rock 'n' roll drumming ladder as long as Charlie Watts has. Charlie and The Rolling Stones burst onto the scene in the mid-1960s, as the gritty antithesis to the bouncy Merseybeat of The Beatles. And while the stellar career of the lads from Liverpool was over by 1970, The Stones just kept on rolling. They continued to build on their blues-based foundation, survived changes in personnel and in musical trends, and earned the moniker of "The World's Greatest Rock 'N' Roll Band"—a title they reaffirmed with heavy touring in 2005 behind their hit CD *A Bigger Bang*, as well as a Super Bowl halftime appearance this past February.

Through it all, The Stones have been powered by the unflappable, dapper, and indisputably solid Charlie Watts. There's a poetic irony to the way Charlie is revered by most rock drummers, since his personal taste runs to jazz and big band. But Charlie knows—oh boy does he know—how to establish a rock groove. And his unique feel, signature patterns (including the famous missing-beat hi-hat ride), and instantly recognizable sound are as distinctive and important today as they were forty-plus years ago.

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 2005: Stewart Copeland | 1991: Art Blakey |
| 2004: Mike Portnoy | 1990: Bill Bruford |
| 2003: Simon Phillips | 1989: Carl Palmer |
| 2002: Steve Smith | 1988: Joe Morello |
| 2001: Dennis Chambers | 1987: Billy Cobham |
| 2000: Dave Weckl | 1986: Tony Williams |
| 1999: Roy Haynes | 1985: Louie Bellson |
| 1998: Ringo Starr | 1984: Steve Gadd |
| 1997: Terry Bozzio | 1983: Neil Peart |
| 1996: Vinnie Colaiuta | 1982: Keith Moon |
| 1995: Elvin Jones | 1981: John Bonham |
| 1994: Larrie Londin | 1980: Buddy Rich |
| 1993: Jeff Porcaro | 1979: Gene Krupa |
| 1992: Max Roach | |





**CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL THE ZILDJIAN ARTISTS
FOR THEIR
ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2005
AND FOR SHARING THEIR MUSICAL
VOICES WITH THE WORLD**

Zildjian

SINCE • 1623



Vinnie appeared on more than thirty recordings last year, for such diverse artists as Barbra Streisand, Faith Hill, Joe Cocker, Michael Bublé, LeAnn Rimes, Chris Botti, The Backstreet Boys, and Destiny's Child—to say nothing of the *Visions Of An Inner Mounting Apocalypse* tribute album to The Mahavishnu Orchestra. Can you say, "Busy, busy, busy"?

STUDIO

VINNIE COLAIUTA

2. Kenny Aronoff
3. Josh Freese
4. Steve Gadd
5. John "JR" Robinson

ALL-AROUND

VINNIE COLAIUTA

2. Keith Carlock
3. Josh Freese
4. Steve Smith
5. Steve Gadd

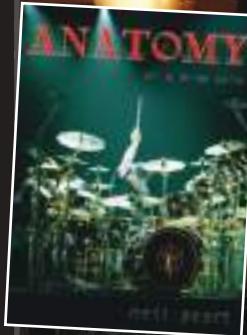
Go back and look at Vinnie's "Studio Drummer" credits. When you're the first-call drummer for everyone from Barbra Streisand to a Mahavishnu tribute, you've pretty much got the "All Around" thing covered.

ROCK

NEIL PEART

2. Chad Smith
3. Taylor Hawkins
4. Josh Freese
5. Ian Paice

A 30th Anniversary tour, a top-selling Rush DVD, and a drummer-wowing educational DVD on soloing brought Neil back to prominence among rock drumming fans.

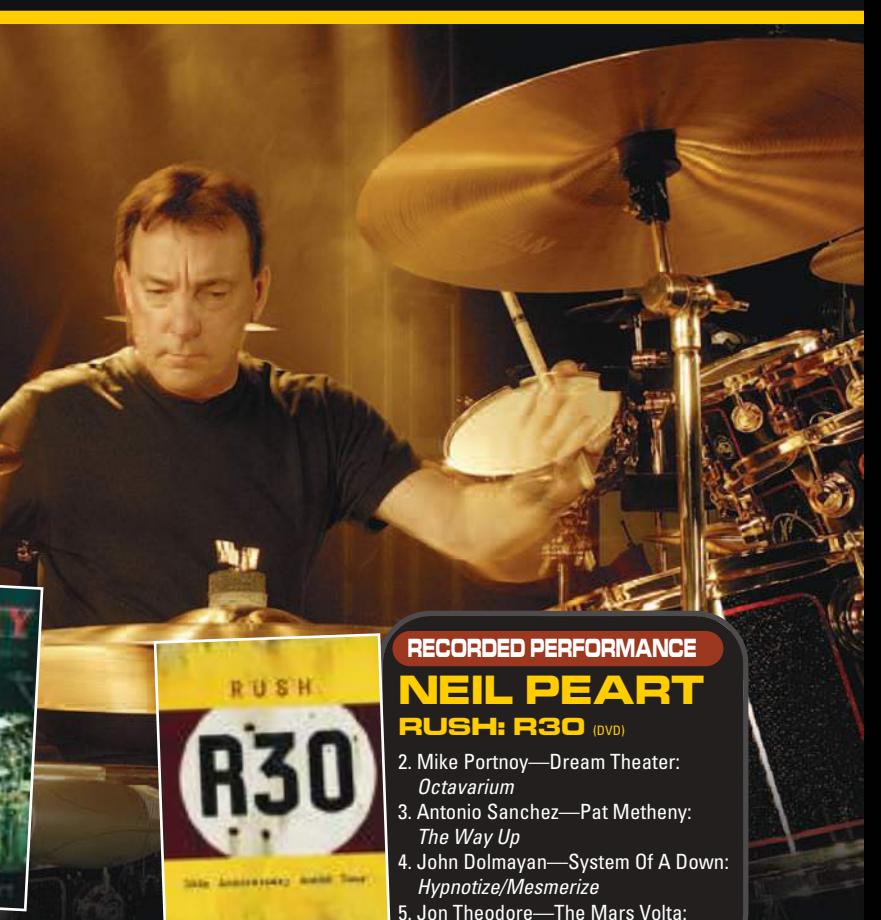


EDUCATIONAL DVD

NEIL PEART ANATOMY OF A DRUM SOLO

2. Stanton Moore: *Take It To The Street: A Traditional Approach To New Orleans Drumming (and) A Modern Approach To New Orleans Drumming*
3. Various Artists: *Modern Drummer Festival Weekend 2005*
4. Gregg Bissonette: *Musical Drumming In Different Styles*
5. Ed Soph: *Musical Time: A Step-By-Step Approach To Playing Musical Time In A Jazz Rhythm Section*

You don't earn a reputation as rock drumming's greatest soloist unless you know what you're doing around the kit. Neil shares that wisdom on this production.



RECORDED PERFORMANCE

NEIL PEART RUSH: R30 (DVD)

2. Mike Portnoy—Dream Theater: *Octavarium*
3. Antonio Sanchez—Pat Metheny: *The Way Up*
4. John Dolmayan—System Of A Down: *Hypnotize/Mesmerize*
5. Jon Theodore—The Mars Volta: *Scab Dates*

This five-star performance DVD showcases Rush on their 30th Anniversary Tour, with pristine production and outstanding views of Neil's drumming. What's not to love?

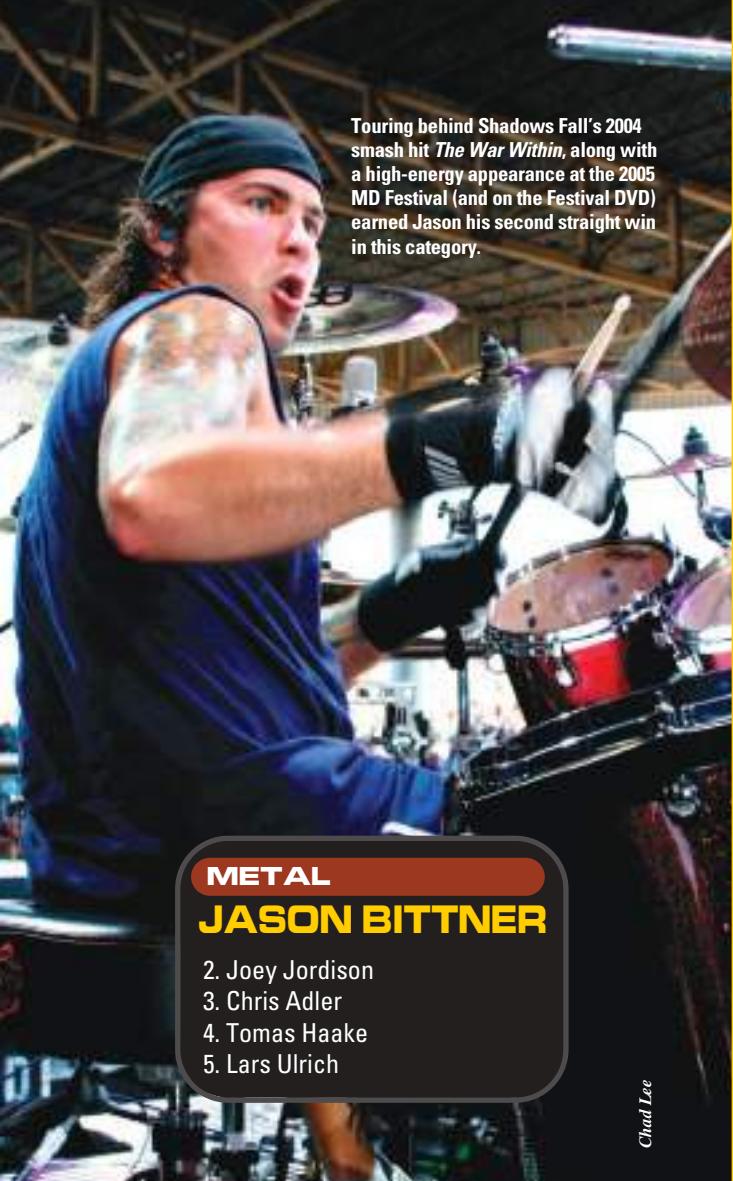
ALEX ACUÑA
KENNY ARONOFF
GREGG BISSONETTE
J.D. BLAIR
TERRY BOZZIO
DANNY CAREY
JACK DEJOHNETTE
JOHN DOLMAYAN
SHEILA E
JOSH EPPARD
PETER ERSKINE
DOM FAMULARO
STEVE GADD
DAVID GARIBALDI
TOMAS HAAKE
GERALD HEYWARD
TOMMY IGOE
STEVE JORDAN
ABE LABORIEL JR.
THOMAS LANG
JOJO MAYER
JASON MCGERR
ZIGABOO MODELSTE
STANTON MOORE
NIGEL OLSSON
STEVE SMITH
AARON SPEARS
CLYDE STUBBLEFIELD
JON THEODORE
AHMIR "QUESTLOVE"
THOMPSON
CHARLIE WATTS
DAVE WECKL
ZORO



DEMAND PERFECTION,
These Winners Do



vic firth
WHEN IT MATTERS, ASK FOR VIC FIRTH



Touring behind Shadows Fall's 2004 smash hit *The War Within*, along with a high-energy appearance at the 2005 MD Festival (and on the Festival DVD) earned Jason his second straight win in this category.

METAL
JASON BITTNER

- 2. Joey Jordison
- 3. Chris Adler
- 4. Tomas Haake
- 5. Lars Ulrich

Chad Lee



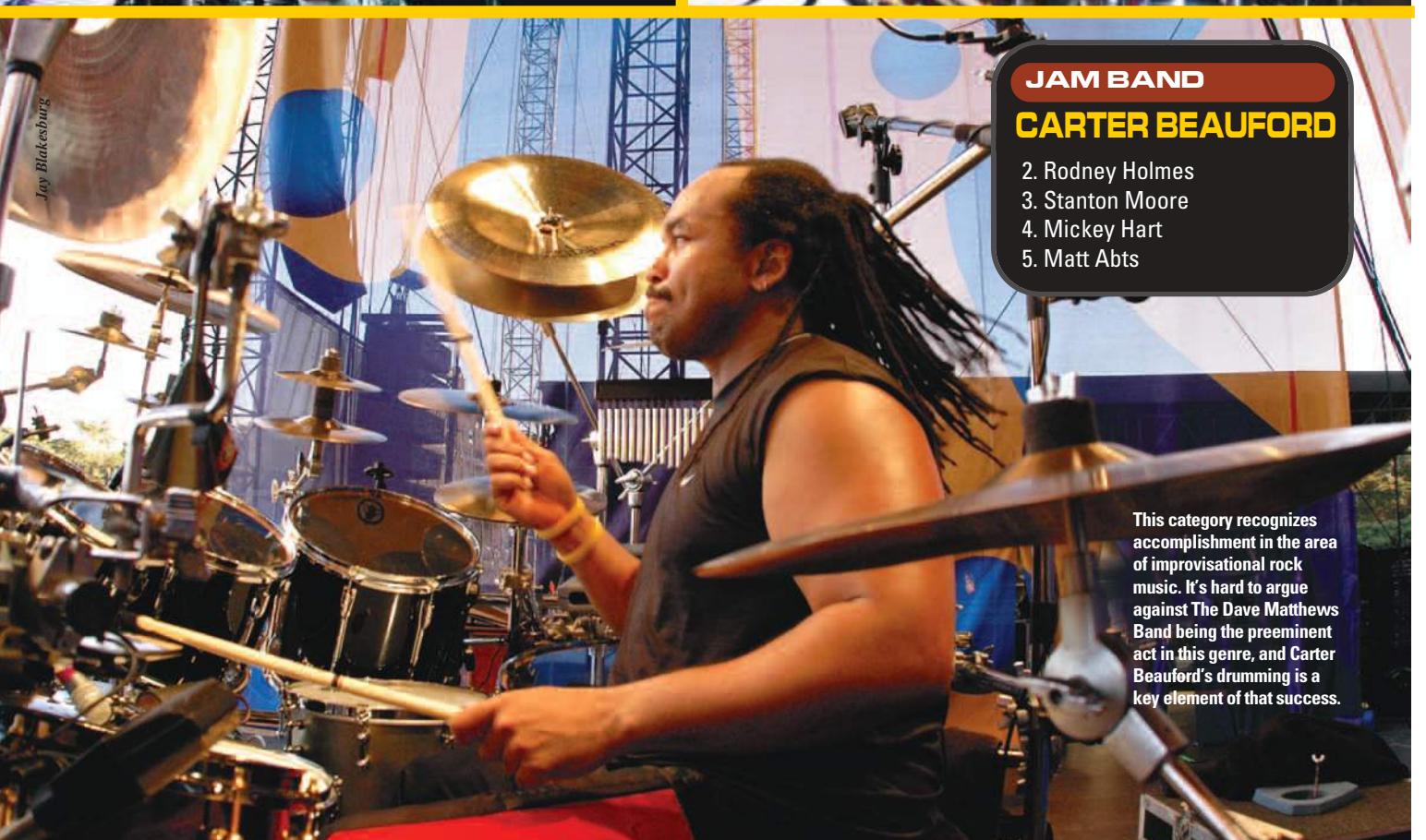
A Blink-182 greatest-hits release and a new Transplants CD (*Haunted Cities*) reaffirmed Travis's status as punk's reigning skin basher.

PUNK
TRAVIS BARKER

- 2. Tré Cool
- 3. Josh Freese
- 4. Brooks Wackerman
- 5. Bill Stevenson

JAM BAND
CARTER BEAUFORD

- 2. Rodney Holmes
- 3. Stanton Moore
- 4. Mickey Hart
- 5. Matt Abts



This category recognizes accomplishment in the area of improvisational rock music. It's hard to argue against The Dave Matthews Band being the preeminent act in this genre, and Carter Beauford's drumming is a key element of that success.

2006 READERS POLL RESULTS

HALL OF FAME

CHARLIE WATTS

ROCK

1. NEIL PEART
2. Chad Smith
3. Taylor Hawkins
4. Josh Freese
5. Ian Paice

METAL

1. JASON BITTNER
2. Joey Jordison
3. Chris Adler
4. Tomas Haake
5. Lars Ulrich

PUNK

1. TRAVIS BARKER
2. Tré Cool
3. Josh Freese
4. Brooks Wackerman
5. Bill Stevenson

PROG

1. MIKE PORTNOY
2. Danny Carey
3. Jon Theodore
4. Terry Bozzio
5. Josh Eppard

R&B/HIP-HOP

1. AHMIR 'QUESTLOVE' THOMPSON
2. Keith Harris
3. Gerald Heyward
4. Teddy Campbell
5. Aaron Spears

RECORDED PERFORMANCE

1. NEIL PEART-Rush: R30 (DVD)
2. Mike Portnoy-Dream Theater: Octavarium
3. Antonio Sanchez-Pat Metheny: The Way Up
4. John Dolmayan-System Of A Down: Hypnotize/Mesmerize
5. Jon Theodore-The Mars Volta: Scab Dones

EDUCATIONAL BOOK

1. STANTON MOORE: TAKE IT TO THE STREET A Study Guide In New Orleans Street Beats And Second-Line Rhythms As Applied To Funk
2. Henry Adler (revised by Ted MacKenzie): Buddy Rich's Modern Interpretations Of Snare Drum Rudiments
3. Tommy Igoe: Groove Essentials: The Play-Along
4. Rick Latham: Advanced Funk Studies (25th Anniversary re-release with CDs)
5. David Garibaldi: The Code Of Funk

EDUCATIONAL DVD

1. NEIL PEART: ANATOMY OF A DRUM SOLO
2. Stanton Moore: Take It To The Street: A Traditional Approach To New Orleans Drumming (and) A Modern Approach To New Orleans Drumming
3. Various Artists: Modern Drummer Festival Weekend 2005
4. Gregg Bissonette: Musical Drumming In Different Styles
5. Ed Soph: Musical Time: A Step-By-Step Approach To Playing Musical Time In A Jazz Rhythm Section

TRADITIONAL R&B

1. STEVE JORDAN
2. John Blackwell
3. David Garibaldi
4. Zigaboo Modeliste
5. Clyde Stubblefield

POP

1. ABE LABORIEL JR
2. Larry Mullen Jr.
3. Kenny Aronoff
4. Josh Freese
5. Nigel Olsson

JAM BAND

1. CARTER BEAUFORD
2. Rodney Holmes
3. Stanton Moore
4. Mickey Hart
5. Matt Abts

TRADITIONAL JAZZ

1. JEFF HAMILTON
2. Peter Erskine
3. Louis Bellson
4. Ed Shaughnessy
5. Butch Miles

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ

1. ROY HAYNES
2. Jack DeJohnette
3. Bill Stewart
4. Brian Blade
5. Billy Kilson

FUSION

1. DAVE WECKL
2. Steve Smith
3. Dennis Chambers
4. Vinnie Colaiuta
5. Jojo Mayer

STUDIO

1. VINNIE COLAIUTA
2. Kenny Aronoff
3. Josh Freese
4. Steve Gadd
5. John 'JR' Robinson

COUNTRY

1. PAUL LEIM
2. Eddie Bayers, Jr.
3. Trey Grey
4. J.D. Blair
5. Tommy Wells

PERCUSSIONIST

1. ALEX ACUNA
2. Luis Conte
3. Sheila E.
4. Giovanni Hidalgo
5. Karl Perazzo

UP & COMING

1. AARON SPEARS (Usher)
2. Berry Gordy
3. The Reverend (Avenged Sevenfold)
4. Ronnie Vannucci (The Killers)
5. Jason McGerr (Death Cab For Cutie)

ALL AROUND

1. VINNIE COLAIUTA
2. Keith Carlock
3. Josh Freese
4. Steve Smith
5. Steve Gadd

CLINICIAN

1. DOM FAMULARO
2. Steve Gadd
3. Virgil Donati
4. Terry Bozzio
5. Thomas Lang



congratulates
the 2006 Winners
who choose our
drumheads
to help them
sound their best.

remo.com



PROG

MIKE PORTNOY

- 2. Danny Carey
- 3. Jon Theodore
- 4. Terry Bozzio
- 5. Josh Eppard

Dream Theater's 2005 *Octavarium* added a post-hard-core edge to their theatrical heavy rock. Mike Portnoy's legion of fans obviously approved.

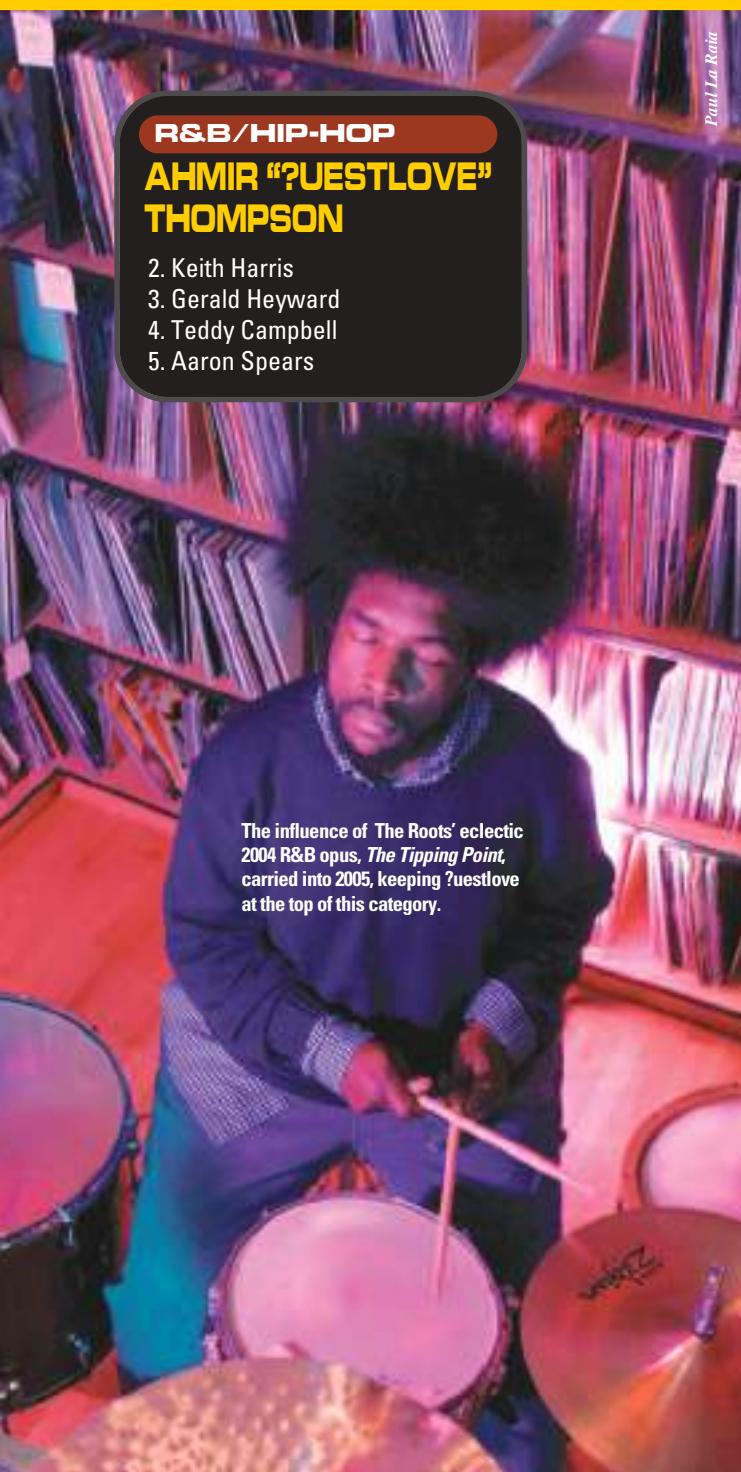


R&B/HIP-HOP

AHMIR "QUESTLOVE" THOMPSON

- 2. Keith Harris
- 3. Gerald Heyward
- 4. Teddy Campbell
- 5. Aaron Spears

The influence of The Roots' eclectic 2004 R&B opus, *The Tipping Point*, carried into 2005, keeping Questlove at the top of this category.



Paul La Riva

TRADITIONAL R&B

STEVE JORDAN

- 2. John Blackwell
- 3. David Garibaldi
- 4. Zigaboo Modeliste
- 5. Clyde Stubblefield

Steve Jordan's backbeat has been an elemental ingredient on dozens of hit recordings. But his work—as drummer and producer—on John Scofield's *That's What I Say: John Scofield Plays The Music Of Ray Charles* last year displayed an unparalleled combination of taste, groove, and soul.



Rob Shanahan

Alex Solis

UP & COMING

AARON SPEARS (USHER)

- 2. Benny Greb
- 3. James "The Rev" Sullivan (Avenged Sevenfold)
- 4. Ronnie Vannucci (The Killers)
- 5. Jason McGerr (Death Cab For Cutie)

Aaron came out of the Gospel scene, with the popular act Gideon. He broke big on Usher's 2004 release *Confessions*, and gained drummer recognition on the tours that followed. He also lent his talents to the 2005 *American Idol* summer tour.

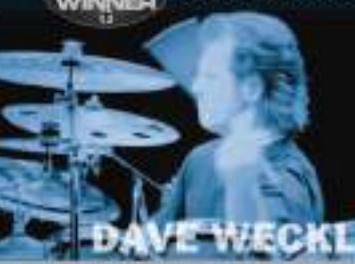


Thank You Voters

Congratulations Winners



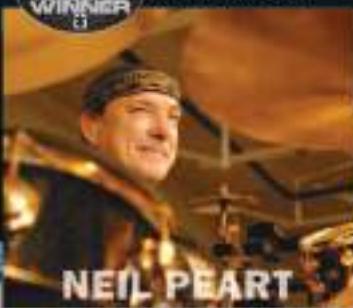
#1 FUSION



DAVE WECKL



#1 ROCK

EDUCATIONAL DVD:
Anatomy of a Drum SoloRECORDED PERFORMANCE:
Rush: R30 (DVD)

#1 PROG

RECORDED PERFORMANCE:
Dream Theater: Octavarium

#1 CLINICIAN



DOM FAMULARO

JOJO MAYER

FUSION

EDUCATIONAL DVD:

Modern Drummer Festival Weekend 2005

CHAD SMITH

ROCK

EDUCATIONAL DVD:

Modern Drummer Festival Weekend 2005

KARL PERAZZO

PERCUSSIONIST

EDUCATIONAL DVD:

Modern Drummer Festival Weekend 2005

TERRY BOZZIO

PROG

CLINICIAN

DAVID GARIBALDI

TRADITIONAL R&B

EDUCATIONAL BOOK:

The Code of Funk

RAUL REKOW

EDUCATIONAL DVD:

Modern Drummer Festival Weekend 2005

KEITH HARRIS

R&B/HIP-HOP

JOHN BLACKWELL

TRADITIONAL R&B

ZIGABOO MODELISTER

TRADITIONAL R&B

MATT ABTS

JAM BAND

JACK DEJOHNETTE

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ

ED SHAUGHNESSY

TRADITIONAL JAZZ

JOSH EPPARD

PROG

TOMAS HAAKE

METAL

VIRGIL DONATI

CLINICIAN

BILLY KILSON

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ

JIMMY 'THE REV' SULLIVAN

UP & COMING

www.sabian.com**SABIAN**

BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

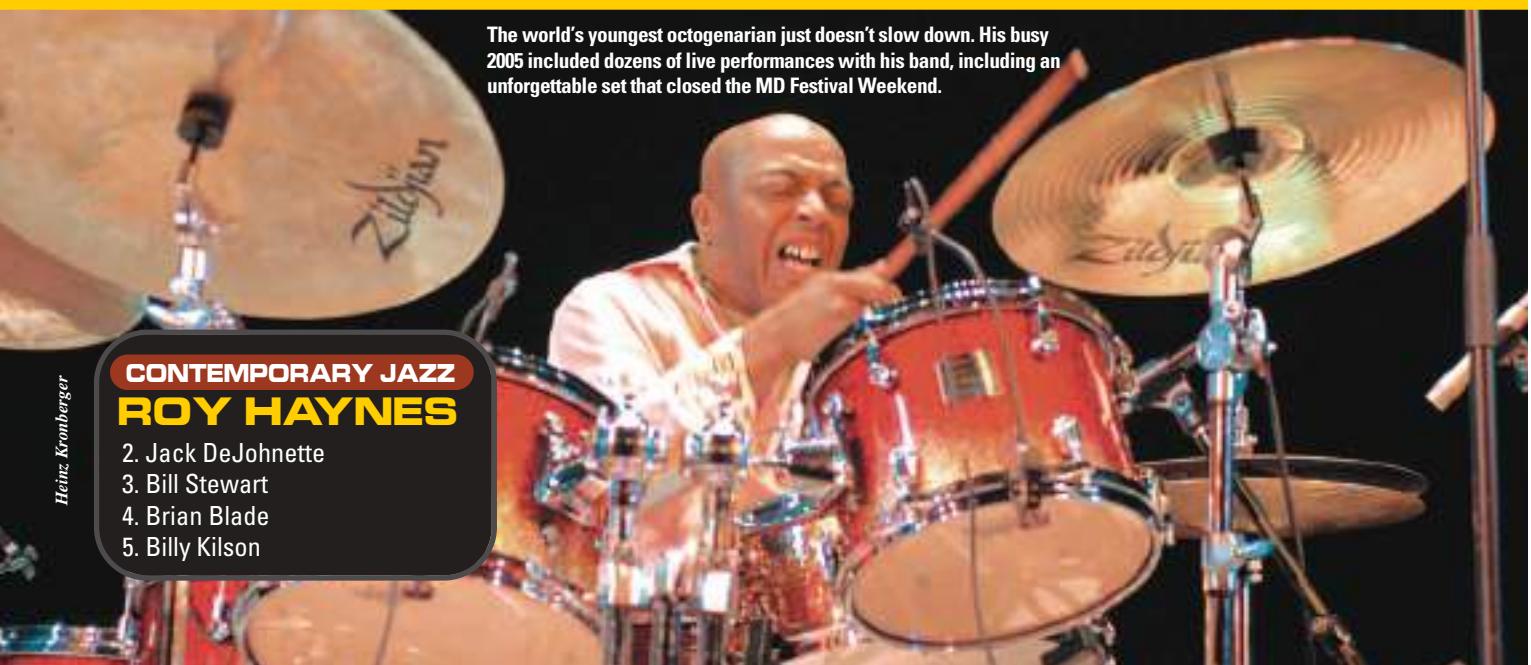


You don't record and tour with the world's most successful pop composer/performer unless you have something special to bring to the music. Abe Laboriel does just that with Paul McCartney, and poll voters this year confirmed it.

POP

ABE LABORIEL JR.

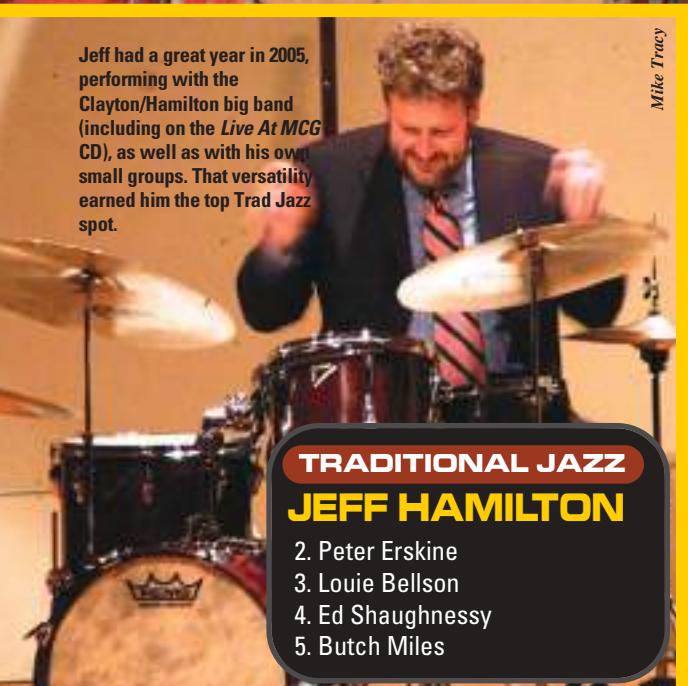
2. Larry Mullen Jr.
3. Kenny Aronoff
4. Josh Freese
5. Nigel Olsson



CONTEMPORARY JAZZ

ROY HAYNES

2. Jack DeJohnette
3. Bill Stewart
4. Brian Blade
5. Billy Kilson



Jeff had a great year in 2005, performing with the Clayton/Hamilton big band (including on the *Live At MCG* CD), as well as with his own small groups. That versatility earned him the top Trad Jazz spot.

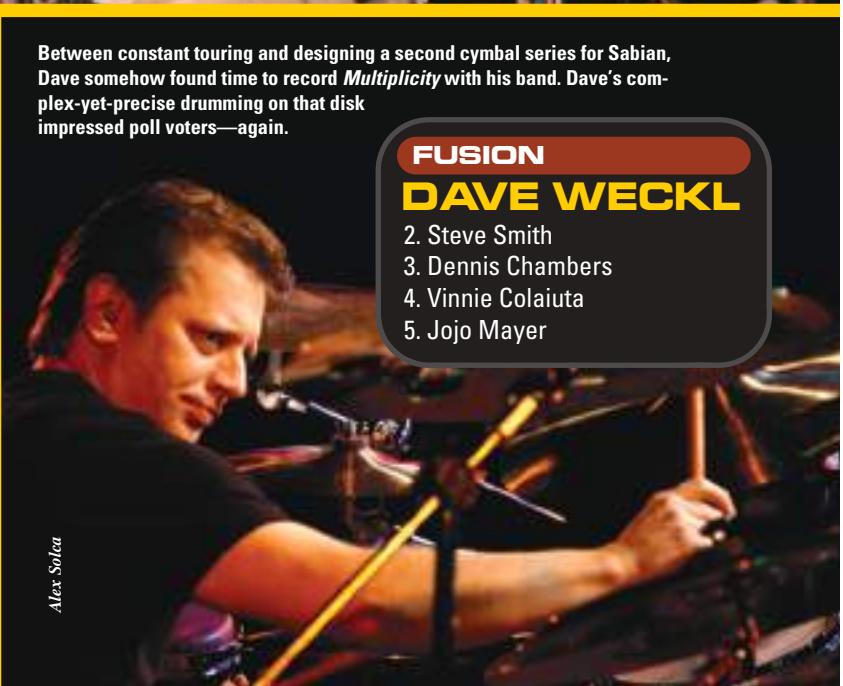
Mike Tracy

TRADITIONAL JAZZ

JEFF HAMILTON

2. Peter Erskine
3. Louie Bellson
4. Ed Shaughnessy
5. Butch Miles

Between constant touring and designing a second cymbal series for Sabian, Dave somehow found time to record *Multiplicity* with his band. Dave's complex-yet-precise drumming on that disk impressed poll voters—again.



Alex Solca

FUSION

DAVE WECKL

2. Steve Smith
3. Dennis Chambers
4. Vinnie Colaiuta
5. Jojo Mayer

HERE'S TO THE WINNERS.

pro•mark®

Rock
Neil Peart
Ian Paice

Metal
Jason Bittner
Chris Adler

Punk
Bill Stevenson

Progressive
Mike Portnoy

R and B / Hip Hop
Keith Harris
Teddy Campbell

Pop
Larry Mullen, Jr.

Jam Band
Carter Beauford

Traditional Jazz
Ed Shaughnessy

Country
Tommy Wells

Up and Coming
Benny Greb
The Reverend
Ronnie Vannucci

Educational Book
Rick Latham

Educational DVD
Neil Peart

Recorded Performance
Neil Peart
Mike Portnoy

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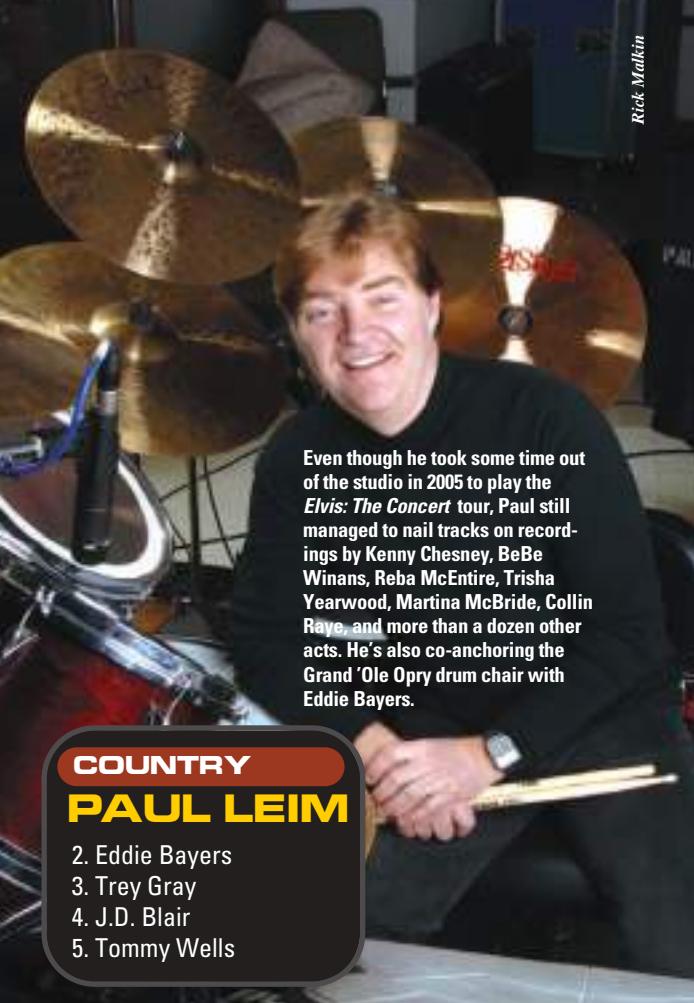
Oak so strong,
they should be
randomly tested.



You'd think they were on steroids. They are strong. They have endurance. They have a very unfair advantage. And no one else offers them. Crafted from Shira Kashi™ White Oak found only in the mountains of Japan, our Japanese Oak sticks produce a fat cross stick sound, and a bright cymbal sound for the almost unnaturally long life of each stick.

© Pro-Mark Corporation

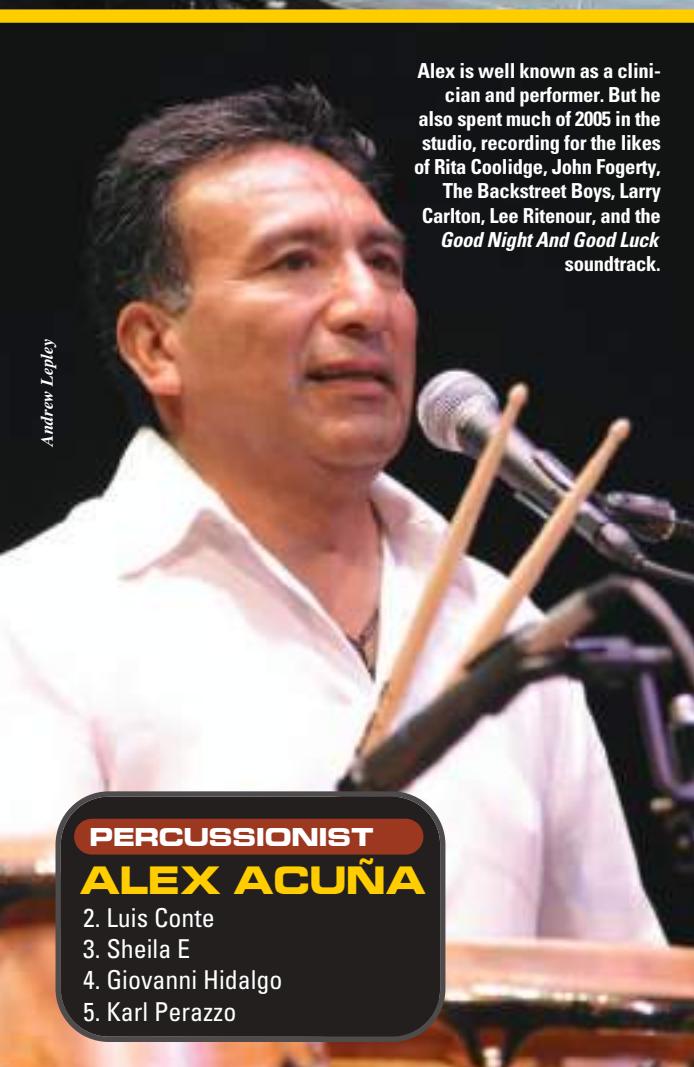
pro•mark®
promark.com



Rick Malkin

COUNTRY PAUL LEIM

2. Eddie Bayers
3. Trey Gray
4. J.D. Blair
5. Tommy Wells



Andrew Lepley

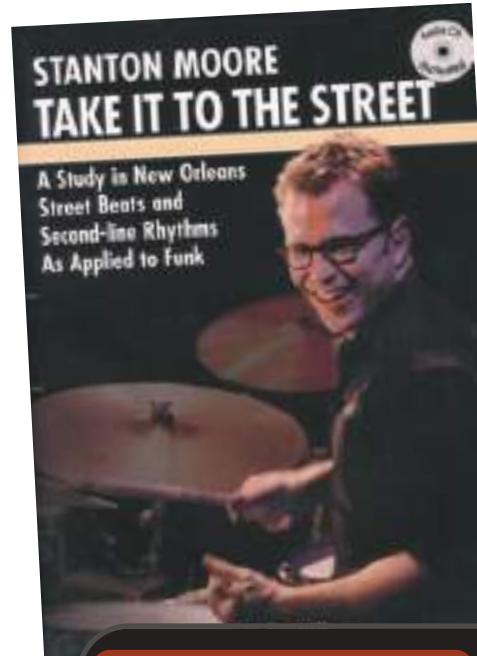
PERCUSSIONIST ALEX ACUÑA

2. Luis Conte
3. Sheila E
4. Giovanni Hidalgo
5. Karl Perazzo

Drumming's ambassador to the world hosts more events, does more educational appearances, and inspires more drummers in a year than most clinicians would do in a career. We'd just like to have his frequent-flyer miles.

CLINICIAN DOM FAMULARO

2. Steve Gadd
3. Virgil Donati
4. Terry Bozzio
5. Thomas Lang



This is the workbook companion to Stanton's popular DVDs on New Orleans Drumming.
You saw the movie...and read the book.

EDUCATIONAL BOOK STANTON MOORE TAKE IT TO THE STREET

(Carl Fischer)

2. Henry Adler (revised by Ted MacKenzie): *Buddy Rich's Modern Interpretations Of Snare Drum Rudiments*
3. Tommy Igoe: *Groove Essentials: The Play-Along*
4. Rick Latham: *Advanced Funk Studies*
(25th Anniversary re-release with CDs)
5. David Garibaldi: *The Code Of Funk*

READERS POLL SUBSCRIPTION GIVEAWAY

In appreciation for the participation of MD's readership in this year's poll, three ballots were drawn at random to determine the winners of a free one-year subscription to MD.

Those winners are

Andrew Hoxter of Wynnewood, Pennsylvania,
Marcus Suarez of West Palm Beach, Florida,
and **John Grywa** of Franklin Grove, Illinois.
Congratulations from Modern Drummer!



PROPS!

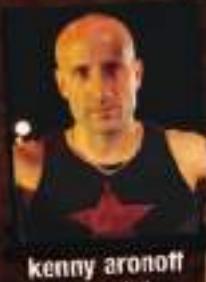


mike portnoy
dream theater
#1 prog
#2 recorded performance
octavarium



jason bittner
shadows fall
#1 metal

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS AND RUNNERS-UP IN THE
2006 MODERN DRUMMER'S READERS POLL



kenny aronoff
independent
#2 studio
#3 pop



john blackwell
prince
#2 traditional r&b



rodney holmes
steve kimock band
#2 jam band



taylor hawkins
foo fighters, styx, hawkwind
& the cocktail ladies
#3 rock



john dolmayan
system of a down
#4 recorded performance
dynotrac/mastertrac



keith harris
back yard babies
#4 r&b/hip-hop



lars ulrich
metallica
#5 metal

AND THANKS TO ALL DEDICATED DRUM ENTHUSIASTS WHO VOTED FOR THEIR FAVORITE PLAYERS!



THIS IS PERCUSSION

MEINL PERCUSSION CONGRATULATES ITS
2006 MD READERS POLL WINNERS



Kenny Aronoff, USA
Studio #2, Pop #3



Keith Harris, USA (Black Eyed Peas)
R&B #2



Luis Conte, USA (Phil Collins)
Percussion #2



Trey Gray, USA
(Brooks and Dunn)
Country #3



Clyde Stubblefield, USA
(James Brown)
Traditional R&B #5

Win FREE MEINL gear, go to meinlpercussion.com

MEINL cymbals ... inspire



**MEINL CYMBALS CONGRATULATES ITS
2006 MD READERS POLL WINNERS**



Chris Adler, USA (LAMB OF GOD)
Metal Drummer #3



Rodney Holmes, USA
(Steve Kimock Band)
Jam Band #2



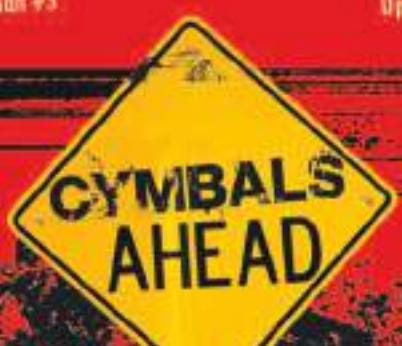
Thomas Lang, Austria
Clinician #5



Benny Greb, Germany
Up and Coming #2



Jason Bittner, USA
(Shadows Fall)
Metal Drummer #1



**CYMBALS
AHEAD**

» meinlcymbals.com



DANNY CAREY

10,000 DAYS... AND BEYOND

STORY BY KEN MICALLEF

PHOTOS BY ALLEN SOLCA

When *Modern Drummer* last spoke with Danny Carey in his Los Angeles studio, the six-foot-plus drummer was surrounded by a cabal of questionable objects. An enormous "Enochian magic board" sat behind his drumset, cobwebbed skeletons and a large geometric grid hung from the ceiling, dinosaur mobiles and a hundred-year-old sword cluttered a coffee table. But five years after the mighty mayhem of Tool's *Lateralus*, Danny Carey is spending more time in the light than in the dark (his once murky studio is now the band's Apple Mac-equipped rehearsal space), with enough extracurricular projects to shake a magic wand at.

"It's been a brutal ride finishing *10,000 Days*," a re-energized Carey says from Tool's management offices in Hollywood. "Thank God we knew there was a payoff at the end. But it was a long process. Every time one of us would bring in a riff or a song idea...that idea is like your little baby, and then you'd just see it drawn and quartered. It can be a disheartening process. But the beauty of it is that ninety-five percent of the time the idea evolved into something much better than how you first envisioned it. It was a sacrifice worth making, and we all know that. That's what makes us a band."



10,000 Days is the most tension-filled, dynamically intense, and undoubtedly complex Tool album of their thirteen-year career. Playing more like a single organism than four heavy metal heads slamming the same humongous riff, Tool used their time off to experiment and learn, resulting in an album of winding instrumental pieces, cyclical themes, and multiple drum solos.

Vocalist Maynard James Keenan, guitarist Adam Jones, bassist Justin Chancellor, and Carey used various paths of self-exploration to create their most jaw-dropping work to date. "The theme of the album is growth and communication," Carey explains. "But we're more cynical this time than on our last couple of records. We're angrier about the state of affairs worldwide. A threat you can't escape is running through all our lives."

While the other members of Tool worked on their individual parts, Carey got busy recording with electronic marauders Skinny Puppy (2004's *The Greater Wrong Of The*

Right) and working around town with fusion revivalists Volto! To blow off steam, Carey also joined the NBA Entertainment League, where he plays with fellow basketball fanatics George Clooney and Lil' Bow Wow.

Carey developed new recording methods for *10,000 Days*, such as filling the studio with helium (?) and playing his self-designed Mandala electronic pads for sampled effects. Carey's recent tabla studies have also affected the band's music, as has his distinct lack of individual practice. And by playing a set of Designer Series Sonor drums that were built to his exact specifications, Carey was able to express his drumming soul as never before.

But certain nagging questions remain. Will Carey ever record a solo record, cut his own instructional DVD, or tour as a solo/clinic artist? Honest to a fault, he will answer your questions. But whatever you do, don't ask Danny about "those monkey show clinics." He just might tell you the truth, or cast you out into a barren wasteland for *10,000 Days*.

MD: *10,000 Days* is a very different record from *Lateralus*. The music is more cohesive and repetitive and less riff-oriented. It's heavier and more dynamic. What was the thinking behind the songwriting?

Danny: Well, we're all really products of our environment. *10,000 Days* is a throw-back to the *Opiate* and *Undertow* records, when we were mad about everything. Those feelings are inching back to the surface again, and it's good for the music. When we're on the road in Europe, there are these beautiful, serene, compassionate places like Holland. But when is the last time you heard a decent aggressive band come out of there?

CIRCULAR RHYTHMS, EXTINCT SOUNDS

MD: The rhythms on the new album are very circular, as if at times Tool meant to create trance music.

Danny: Especially on the longest song, "Wings For Marie." That's about seventeen minutes long, and we definitely went for a cyclical thing. Maybe my tabla training is rubbing off on the rest of the band. The second part of that suite is called "10,000 Days." They were written as one piece.

MD: A couple of tracks sound like you're using sticks on tablas, very electronic sounding.

Danny: They were samples of tablas played with fingers. There's one song

where I play real tabla with my hands, but most of the time, because of the difficulty of switching back and forth between instruments and just keeping up with the band volume, it's impractical to play real tablas. So I use samples. I play them on my new Mandala pads with sticks.

MD: Tell me about your new pads.

Danny: I've used a prototype of these pads most of the time in my set. They've replaced my old Simmons SDX pads. I'm running a program called Battery from Native Instruments that manages all my samples. I run that through an Apple Mac G5. A Firewire audio device runs out of that into the mains of my mixer. For a drummer, it's the best MIDI interface you can have. It's zone intelligent, meaning it knows exactly where the stick hits the pad, besides just reading volume, which is something most other pads don't have. I can apply that to any parameter I want. I can make it pan left and right, open a filter, increase volume, or pitch bend, just by hitting the pad on different parts of the surface.

MD: It sounds like you're playing Octobans on the record.

Danny: Those are the Mandala pads with Octoban samples. I sampled a set of the old, clear Octobans like Billy Cobham used to play. I also loved Stewart Copeland's Octoban work. That was prime time for me.

Speaking of Stewart, I got to have lunch

with him recently. It was a dream come true for me. It was funny. He would talk shit about Sting. But when I tried to criticize Sting, Stewart would defend him like a brother. He's a character.

MD: Is your setup generally the same as it appears on your Web site, DannyCarey.org?

Danny: I still use the Wave drum, but now I have the Mandala pads. And I have a great new Designer Series kit from Sonor. I designed the shells out of specific woods and thicknesses, and it turned out amazing. The wood is from the South American rainforest. It's called Aniba Ayahuasca Rosaeodora. It is a drag, though, because there was this bird, the diving petrel, that nested in this tree and it was one of the last of those trees in existence. So this bird may become extinct because I had to have that wood. Well, it's worth it as long as everyone gets to hear me play these drums.

MD: And we all thought you were an earth-lover. You're no tree-hugger.

Danny: I love the earth so much that everyone on the planet needs to hear this music. [laughs]

MD: Tool is a loud band. Do you record full-out in the studio?

Danny: Oh, yeah. It's cranking Les Pauls played through Marshall stacks. It's not so important to record that way. But it is important to play at that volume when we're all in the same room writing together.

My drumkit is really loud too. I've



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Danny Carey

always felt that thick-shelled drums, like the kind I'm using, sound best when you hit them hard. Then you can hear a little bit of the wood. You're not just hearing the plastic head vibrate.

MD: You don't believe a thinner shell resonates more?

Danny: In the low end it does. But that's why I designed my Sonor kit the way I did. My smaller toms have very thick shells. On my 8" tom, the shell is over an inch thick. Then as the drums get larger, from 10" to 14" and 16", the shells get thinner. That way the bigger drums reverberate and resonate the low end better, but the small drums still cut through.

MD: How thick are the bass drum shells?

Danny: The bass drum thickness is around $\frac{3}{8}$ "—not real thick, but enough to generate a heavy fundamental. The kick drums function in a different way; the toms are very critical. You really want a strong fundamental on the bass frequency.

MD: *Lateralus* was a powerful recording, but *10,000 Days* is a major progression. What kind of experimentation went into the recording?

Danny: I've learned a few tricks for capturing dynamics. One of the things I learned to do to better record the high end was to completely flood the room with helium so the air is thinner than oxygen. It just created this transient high end for the

cymbals to cut through better. Helium is lighter than air, so sound waves can travel through it quicker.

MD: Did that affect the band on some subliminal level?

Danny: I suppose it did, but we rehearsed the songs so many times before we got to that point that it was almost all muscle memory. We have moments of improvisation in the songs, but the arrangements are charted out and set in stone before we go into the studio.

LETTING MAGIC FLOW

MD: There are some very literal-sounding Black Sabbath and King Crimson references on the album, even more so than in the past.

Danny: They are not literal, but Adam has definitely been influenced by those bands. Bill Bruford, Michael Giles, and Pat Mastelotto, all the drummers who played with Crimson, have had a big affect on me as well. But Adam actually did a record with Robert Fripp recently, so I'm sure that influence is pretty major.

MD: Did you practice anything in particular leading up to the album?

Danny: The beat on "Rosetta Stoned" came from a practice session. In one section my feet are playing in five and my hands are playing in six over the top. That was something I practiced. It's one of those



**"I'VE NEVER HAD SUCH
A SENSE OF FREEDOM
AS I HAD MAKING THIS
ALBUM. I FELT LIKE I
COULD PLAY WHATEVER
I WANTED."**

beats that had its own melody, so when I laid it on the guys it was easy to come up with a riff. The harmonic and melodic part of it came together really quickly.

MD: A few tracks have eight- or four-bar drum solos.

Danny: "Rosetta Stoned" has a little of that going on, as does "Vicarious." "Jambi" has a section where I'm soloing with other things going on. That gives me time to shine. I felt like I could play whatever I wanted through this whole record. I've never had such a sense of freedom as I had on this album. I was putting more emphasis on playing the songs rather than playing drum parts. I found it to be a little healthier way to look at it.

MD: Were any of the songs written from the drums?

Danny: We all come in with our rhythmic ideas, but then those ideas tend to get twisted around. What you end up with is a four-way composition.

MD: I hear a lot of odd meters on the record, including 5/4, 3/4, and 11/4.

Danny: There actually is one song that's in four pretty much the whole way through. But it sounds odd because the phrasing is a five-beat phrase, which cycles around. After the first sixteen bars, I drop into a straight 4/4 beat and it becomes apparent. There's a lot of five and six on the record. "Rosetta Stoned" is mixed up between five,

six, and eleven—we went with the magical numbers there. We worked on that song a long time.

MD: Will the band have any problems performing this music live?

Danny: Before we go into the studio to record, we play everything over and over again. It keeps it real. I think it would be neat to throw together things that would be impossible to play live, but we've never done it that way. We let the magic flow in the improvisational parts.

TECHNIQUE & TUNING

MD: When you performed at the MD Festival last year, you really displayed your power and speed on the kit. How does one acquire and maintain those traits?

Danny: Relaxation is the key. When I was younger, I tried to play fast and I would tense up. You have to be relaxed and calm, and you have to "hear" what you want to play in your head before your hands can do it. If it's not in your head first, then your hands can't do it. Even if you can, it will be some mechanical nonsense that no one

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Danny Carey

is going to want to hear anyway. Your spirit has to be involved. I wouldn't even suggest playing fast if you aren't feeling it in your heart.

MD: Why do you continue to use two bass drums instead of a double pedal?

Danny: I think two bass drums sound better. I like the reverberation of a drum being hit when it has a little more time to recover. When you use a double pedal, there are times when you're overplaying the head. I think it just sounds rounder and fuller when you use two kick drums as opposed to one.

MD: As fast as some drummers play,

they're definitely choking the head.

Danny: Oh, definitely. And you're not going to get the depth of tone that you would out of two kick drums. It's just physically impossible.

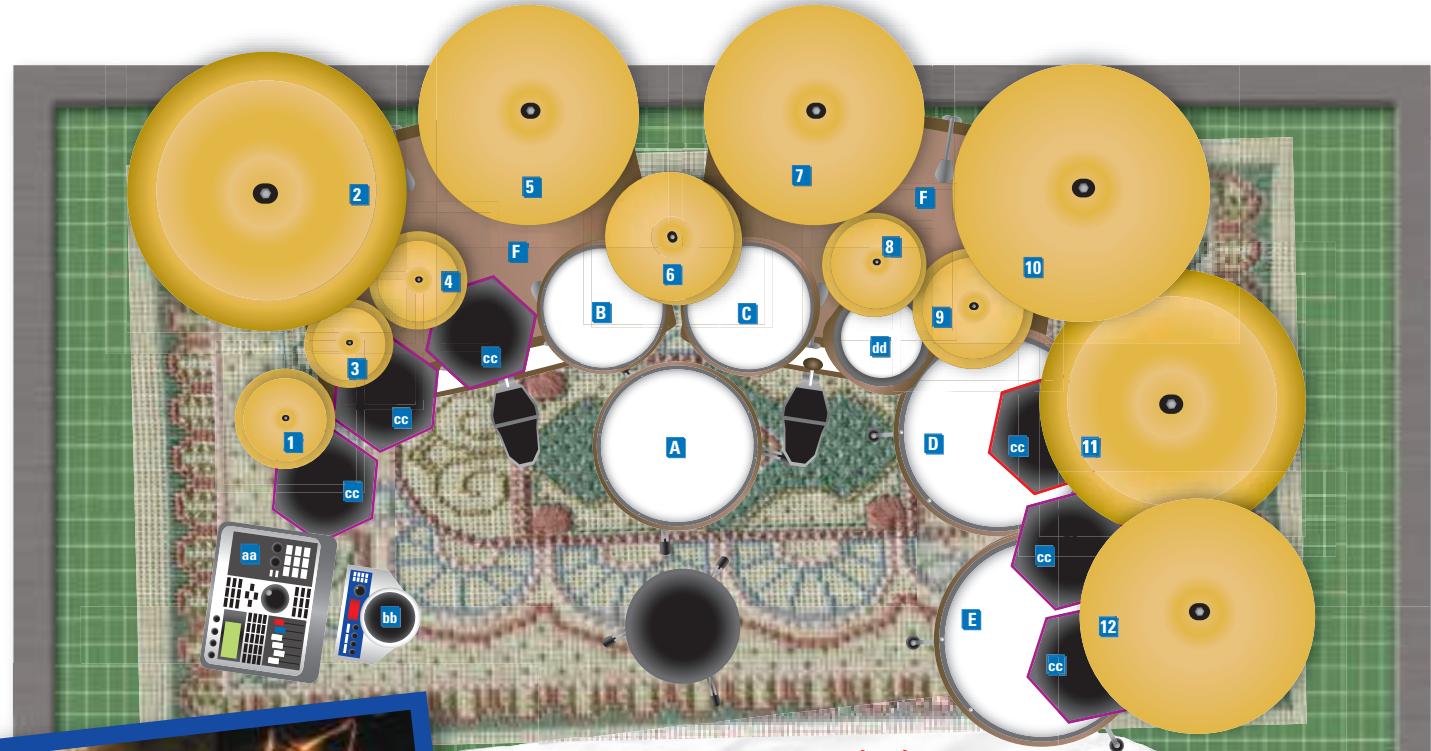
MD: There seems to be a lot of players who make decisions like that based on concerns other than musicality.

Danny: A lot of solo work is just not musical to my ear. A lot of these wicked drummers, who can do these crazy "monkey show" clinics, pretty much every one I have ever seen suck when they play in a band. Well, *they* don't suck so much per-

sonally, but the music sucks. It just doesn't move me. The tunes are based around their licks rather than focusing on melody or harmony. That said, it's interesting that a human can develop their skills to such a level. But to me that doesn't take any imagination. It's just practice for the sake of practicing.

MD: Why do you generally play with the snares off?

Danny: I do that about half the time. I just really like the sound with the snares turned off. It's not quite so intrusive on the high end. I do like to go back and forth, for



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- C. 10x10 rack tom
- D. 16x14 floor tom
- E. 18x16 floor tom
- F. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste

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- 3. 5" Accent Bell on top of 8" 3000 Bell
- 4. 8" Signature splash on top of 10" Signature splash
- 5. 18" Signature Full crash
- 6. 13" Signature Sound Edge hi-hats
- 7. 18" Signature Power crash
- 8. #3 Cup Chime on top of #1 Cup Chime
- 9. 12" Flanger Splash

- 10. 22" Signature Dry Crisp ride
- 11. 22" Signature Thin China
- 12. 20" Signature Power crash

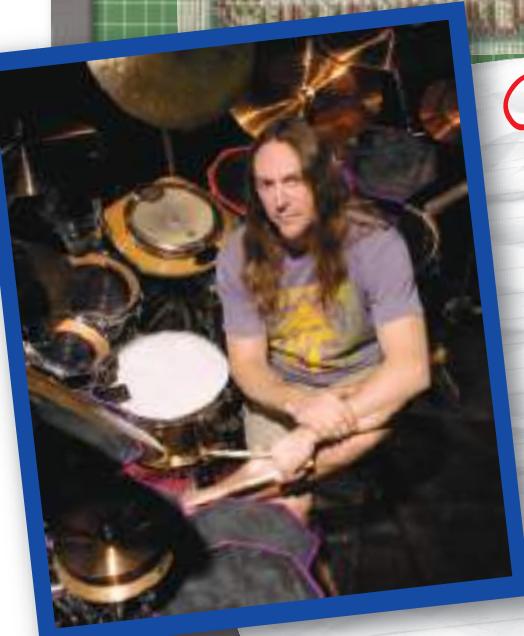
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- bb. Roland HPD-15 Handsonic
- cc. Mandala pad
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Heads: Evans Power Center on snare batter with Hazy 300 snare-side, EC2s on tops of toms with clear G1s on bottoms, EQ3s on bass drum batters with Retro Screens on front

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instance, turning the snares off for a verse and turning them on for a chorus.

MD: How do you tune such a unique set of drums?

Danny: The bottom head is usually higher. On the toms, the difference is maybe a fifth or fourth higher. On the floor toms, it's not quite as much, maybe a third.

MD: Are your top heads generally loose or tight?

Danny: Fairly tight. I'm going for definite pitches, and I like the drums to sing. I love sustain. I usually try to tune them to the triad of the song we're recording. Ninety percent of Tool songs are in D, so I tune the toms to D, F, and A. I try to hit the pitches of the triad because, when they're in tune with the song, they sound bigger and fuller. If they're out of pitch, the sound of the drums doesn't seem to sing as much with the band.

PRACTICING...

BY NOT PRACTICING

MD: How have your tabla studies evolved? Is that something you've studied heavily?

Danny: I haven't been able to study as much as I've wanted to. I still see my teacher, Aloke Dutta, and he's always pushing me in the right direction. But it's more a matter of being disciplined so I can really schedule the practice. With what I want to do on tabla, it's mainly about developing your hand strength, and then the rest of it is just being creative. I've been trying to do as much as I can on the hand part.

MD: Did using different hand muscles for tabla affect your stick work?

Danny: Not really. But playing tabla did make me look at my stick technique differently. It's taught me to relax a lot more. It's also helped me with my speed and stamina.

I used to think that drumming was about really strengthening your hands. But it's more about being able to *relax* your hands to where the force is coming from your center all the way to the tips of your fingers. Having your arms, forearms, and wrists relaxed allows the power to be transferred right to the tip of the stick. It's a challenge to be that limber and that coordinated.

MD: Have you worked on your drumset playing a lot since *Lateralus*?

Danny: I find that I become insensitive to

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Danny Carey

songs if I start practicing exercises too much. I've put a lot more time and emphasis on playing and interpreting music and being sensitive to the other three members of the band. I'm trying to do justice to those magical moments that happen when we're in the room together. That's the most important thing to me.

So I hate to say it, but I hardly practice at all outside of practicing with the band. It's worked for me, though. I'm more a part of the music when I approach it that way.

MD: How do you stay open to those "magical moments"?

Danny: Everyone has their own sort of meditation, for lack of a better word, that they do. It's not about thinking as much as it is about *not* thinking, just trying to empty your cup so you have somewhere to go. The most important thing to me is to not bring any mental baggage to the table when we're practicing or composing. Let the music speak for itself. It's not so much about you, it's about the music and the energy that's happening in the band.

MD: Were you able to capture more of that magic on this album than on *Lateralus*?

Danny: I think we've grown and gotten better at listening to each other—not that

the process has gotten any easier. Everyone is just that more passionate about it.

MD: So is it safe to say that *10,000 Days* is the result of friction, not contentment?

Danny: Oh, my God, yes. One song, "Jambi," is in 9/4. We had the beginning of it; that was no problem. But when it came time to figure out the arrangements for the bridge and all the solos, everybody had a million ideas, and we tried one after the other before finally hitting the magical one that everyone agreed on. It was torturous. But it's funny, now that song is one of my favorites on the album.

GOING VOLTO!

MD: You've been performing classic fusion material with Volto! How has that affected your drumming in Tool?

Danny: It's allowed me more freedom. The emphasis in Volto! is completely on improvisation. There is lots of room to wail away. Playing fusion music has prepared me in the best way possible for those moments in Tool when I get to shine. And it's fun playing with Kirk Covington. He's such a great drummer, and he plays the keyboards like a drummer. My time has definitely improved playing with those

guys, too.

MD: How so?

Danny: Just from locking in with someone whose time is so good. When you play with musicians like that, a vibe happens. It solidifies your inner clock a little more.

MD: You and Tool certainly sound more like one unit than ever.

Danny: We really locked together this time. We were well rehearsed and didn't use a click track for a single thing. We never used a click on *Lateralus* either. "Triad" was done to a click, because we constructed that in the studio. We turned on the click to count off the tunes, and then we turned it off.

MD: The reign of the click is indicative of the entire state of the music industry.

Danny: You get spoiled with it. It's painful to hear myself speeding up and slowing down at times. But then once the songs are put together, you realize, "That's okay. It breathes." It's like The Beatles: Tunes speed up and slow down, but that gives the music life. It sounds real and organic. And that's a rare thing in music these days.

MD: What songs do you play in Volto!?

Danny: Billy Cobham's "Stratus" and

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"Red Baron," and a couple of Tony Williams songs off of *Believe It!* And we do some blues stuff, like Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Texas Flood." We're getting ready to learn Mahavishnu Orchestra's "Birds Of Fire," and we also want to learn some Weather Report. We play out once a month around town at places like the Baked Potato, the Knitting Factory, or La Ve Lee.

MD: Will Voltol! record?

Danny: Yes, hopefully in the fall. We'll do it at Tool's studio space. The originals will be a collaborative effort.

COOKING WITH TONY

MD: At this point in your career you're a well-respected musician, you make a lot of money, and you're very successful. Where do you want to take your music and drumming in the future?

Danny: I can't really see my path changing far from where I am now. When I look at the record we've just completed and the success we've had, I see a logical progression from album to album. I enjoy what I do, so I'm going to keep playing and listening. That's my main goal. I'm happy with the process.

MD: Is there music you're particularly

DANNY TRACKS

Carey's Best Recordings:

Artist	Album
Tool	10,000 Days
Tool	Lateralus
Tool	Aenima
Tool	Undertow
Tool	Opiate [EP]
Skinny Puppy	The Greater Wrong Of The Right
Adrian Belew	Side One
Pigmy Love Circus	The Power Of Beef



His Favorites:

Artist	Album
Tony Williams	Believe It!
Led Zeppelin	Physical Graffiti
Billy Cobham	Spectrum
Shakti	A Handful Of Beauty
Kraftwerk	Trans-Europe Express
Return To Forever	Romantic Warrior
The Who	Live At Leeds
Sex Pistols	Nevermind The Bollocks
Japan	Tin Drum
Weather Report	Heavy Weather

Drummer

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John Bonham
Billy Cobham
Zakir Hussain
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Danny Carey

enjoying now?

Danny: I'm still digging Skinny Puppy. I got to play on their last record, and that was a good time. I like their electronic experimentation, samples, and textures. I look forward to doing a little more electronic experimentation in that way. I've got all my modular synthesizers set up in the studio and I use those to get samples and different sound design things.

MD: Will you do a solo album?

Danny: As soon as I get the time. There's so much going on with Tool, Volto!, and Pigmy Love Circus, which I really enjoy playing with as well. It's all good fun. That said, I do plan on recording a real Danny Carey solo record. It will be rock music, with lots of drumming for sure. But I'll want to experiment with a lot of electronics and samples as well.

MD: What keeps you inspired and centered?

Danny: My friends and family. I can't ever be a jerk or they'll just knock me down. They keep everything real for me. Most of my friends I've had for years, and they're a checkpoint that is undeniable. They keep me in line.

MD: What do you think you'll be doing ten years from now when you're fifty-four?

Danny: The same thing I'm doing now, hopefully. Tool will do a few more records. In our case, ten years is two records. [laughs] I'd like to have completed a drumming DVD by then, because there are some concepts I'd like to cover. A lot of companies have expressed an interest in putting it out—probably for eighty percent of the profit. When I do make a DVD, I'll make it with friends, the people who created the Tool videos. And I'll sell it on my Web site.

MD: One last question: If you could sit down with one drummer, living or dead, who would it be and what would you ask him?

Danny: Tony Williams. I heard he was a good cook. I'd ask him where he got his favorite recipes.



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Dave
Dominguez



The Road Back

story by Robyn Flans
photos by Alex Solca





It's not often in a career as a journalist that you feel as though you've reached the core of someone's being, as though you've been given an honest look into someone's soul. It's rare that an artist will be so open and self-analytical that he'll give you a true picture of what he's been through. Well, in the following interview, Danny Seraphine bares his soul.

Danny Seraphine was my first cover story for *Modern Drummer*, in the December '78/January '79 issue. Like millions of fans around the world, I loved Chicago. Their music was an innovative fusion of rock and jazz, featuring tight horn arrangements in a rock setting and great songwriting. At the center of it all was a drummer with inventive chops and a swing sensibility.

So, years later, when I heard that Seraphine had been fired from the band, I was *shocked*. And the reasons I'd heard seemed absurd—that his playing wasn't up to snuff, that he was difficult to get along with, that there might have been substance abuse. It was hard to imagine the man who'd played on such classics as "Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is," "I'm A Man," "25 Or 6 To 4," "Saturday In The Park," "Feelin' Stronger Every Day," and so many other classics not being "good anymore."

Today, it's difficult sitting with Danny, hearing a story of betrayal and personal agony. But he's the perfect example of how one endures, self-investigates, points the right fingers (even at himself), and gets through it. Listening to him tell the story of his recent and reclusive years was upsetting. But I also had a sense of relief knowing that the musician I always admired was speaking from the heart and was finally emerging from what was obviously a terrible time in his life.

"I went from one lifestyle to another," Seraphine says of his firing. "I was in a great band, and then I wasn't. It was as if the Lord had flicked a switch and said, 'Guess what? Your life is changing.' I went from one extreme to another, from being with seven guys 24/7 for twenty-three years, to being alone."

Now it's chapter three for Danny Seraphine, and he's getting back to what he loves most. "I came to the realization that God gave me a talent and I was squandering it," he says. "You can make the argument that, after all I've done, I don't really need to prove anything with my playing. But it's not about that. It's about my soul and my self-expression. And really, drums have always been what I'm about. I *needed* to get back to the drums."

MD: So, where have you been?

Danny: I've been back in LA for almost three years now. But twelve years prior to that, I was hiding in the mountains of Colorado.

MD: What happened?

Danny: My firing disillusioned me and hurt me so deeply that it took me a long time to have the courage to come back. It really shattered my confidence and broke my spirit.

My firing just happened the way it happened. I'm not saying the guys in the band are the worst people in the world. But it went down in a very bad way, a way in which it should never have gone down. And I'm not saying I shouldn't have left the band, but I wasn't treated the way you treat somebody after twenty-three years of brotherhood. It really shook my foundation, and it was a big part of a tumultuous change in my life.

Shortly after the band fired me, I got divorced, so my whole family fell apart, everything. I'm not saying that I didn't have a hand in it. We always play a part in what happens to us. I was a taskmaster, a tough person to get along with at times. But I was all for the band—I ate, slept, and drank Chicago. The band was my life.

MD: What were the grounds on which they fired you?

Danny: They said it was my playing. In the

back of my mind I knew there was something else, but they were pretty much unified in that story, so initially I thought maybe it was true. At that time I was really running the business side of the band, and it's quite possible I was distracted to the point where my playing wasn't up to the standard it had been.

But look how the band changed. They went from cutting-edge rock, expanding the boundaries of rock 'n' roll and jazz, and fusing the two, to being a hit-ballad act. That was a tough transition for me, going from having complete musical freedom to no freedom at all, almost like having to play with a hand tied behind my back.

That said, it's a challenge to play simply and leave space. That was the good part about going in that direction. But my firing was portrayed as a problem with my playing, even though in the back of my mind I knew it was a power struggle between certain members and me. I think they put an ultimatum to the rest of band that it was "either him or us." They didn't like having a drummer running the band.

MD: Did they come to you first with an opportunity to change?

Danny: It was done in a strange way. I got a phone call from Howard, our manager, saying, "The band has decided they want to use a studio drummer on the next album." I said,

"What?" We just had this big comeback album after Peter Cetera left. I engineered the whole comeback and we did *Chicago 19*. "Look Away" was the biggest song of the year on radio, and I played on the whole album, so when they said they wanted to use a different drummer for the next record, it floored me. Immediately I thought there was something more to it. But Howard said, "No, you're going to get paid the same royalties and no one is going to know you didn't play on the record." And I said, "Well, I'll know, and I really don't like that."

There had been an occasion on *Chicago XVII* where Jeff Porcaro had played on the record. But that was a David Foster production decision. I didn't take that very well either. But this time I think they hoped my reaction would be that I'd quit.

I flew to LA and had a sit-down with them, and they said, "We just want to get the old Danny back." So I thought, "Okay, they must be right. Maybe my playing has gotten inconsistent and I've lost focus because I was so into the business." But I looked at Jason Scheff and said, "This last album sold almost two million units. We've had five Top-5 hits, and my playing hasn't seemed to hurt that." And he said, "Well, we've discussed this, and we've come to the conclusion that the record was a hit in spite of your playing."



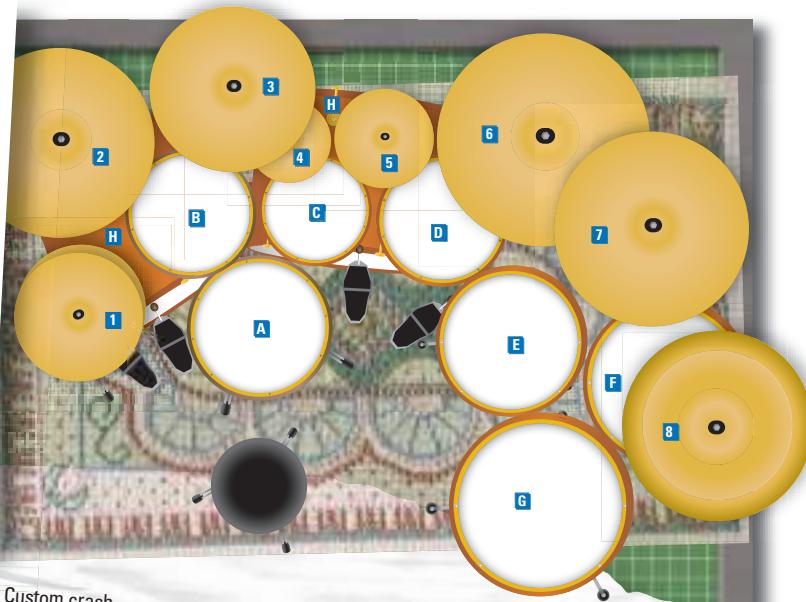
Danny's Kit

Drums: DW in "Santos rosewood" finish

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- B. 4x13 piccolo snare
- C. 8x10 rack tom
- D. 10x12 rack tom
- E. 14x14 floor tom
- F. 14x16 floor tom
- G. 14x18 floor tom
- H. 16x18 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 13" A Mastersound hi-hats



- 2. 18" A Custom crash
- 3. 16" A Thin crash
- 4. 8" A Fast splash
- 5. 10" A Fast splash
- 6. 20" K Pre-Aged Dry Light ride with three rivets
- 7. 17" K Custom Session crash
- 8. 18" ZHT China

Hardware: all DW, including a Sidekick auxiliary bass drum pedal attached to the 14" floor tom

Heads: Remo FiberSkyn FA on snare batter with Diplomat snare-side (tuned medium-high), FiberSkyn FAs on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors on bottoms (tuned to fundamental pitch of shell), FiberSkyn FAs on bass drum batters with DW logo head on front (moderate tuning)

Sticks: Pro-Mark Danny Seraphine signature model (similar to a 5A, hickory, and with a wood tip)

Danny Seraphine

I haven't forgotten that to this day. Talk about devastating. But I took it to heart, went back to Colorado, and found a good drum teacher. They started recording the album without me, and I was woodshedding like crazy, taking what they said very seriously. I thought, "Okay, I'll step out of the business. We have great managers now. I don't have to be so hands-on. I'll focus on the music. These guys are my brothers, and they must know something I don't."

I worked my ass off, practicing like crazy, and when you work that hard, your playing improves. The next gig was a corporate gig in Phoenix, and it went well. My drum tech, Mike Murphy, said after the gig, "You're better than ever." But the vibe with the band was so strange. It was like a Fellini movie. Backstage in the dressing room, they were walking around with headphones, listening to takes from the new album and talking about it behind my back. It was a nightmare. This whole utopian brotherhood that I had known had turned into an ugly situation, developing right in front of my eyes. I had come back from Colorado feeling good about my playing. But something still wasn't right.

MD: What had you worked on with the teacher?

Danny: Independence. I went through the Chapin book, which is a wonderful book. I worked on my jazz chops, my reading. When I study, I try to get into the fundamentals, and that gets me practicing everything. It solidifies my foundation as a musician and helps my confidence.

So I got back to Colorado, and on Mother's Day, 1990, I got a phone call from Howard—and he was almost in tears. He said, "Danny, I feel so bad about this, but the band had a meeting behind my back and they voted you out of the band." It didn't really surprise me, but....

MD: Why didn't they call you themselves?

Danny: It was gutless. But I do want to say that I wasn't exactly an innocent bystander. I was very tough. I ran the band with an iron fist, so to speak, and I could be difficult. Everything was for the band, and I have to say I was usually right. But nonetheless, I was difficult.

MD: I need you to address something else I had heard through the years—that there was a substance abuse problem.

Danny: With me? Oh God, no. That's so far from the truth. The first time I tried cocaine I was in New York, and I got so sick that I was bedridden for a week. So you can put that

rumor to rest. I have a very low tolerance for drugs and alcohol, which was a blessing for me. I was always the designated driver for the band. I was the guy who was straight all the time while some of the others were partying. I'm glad that you brought that up, because there's nothing further from the truth.

Once I was fired, the lawsuit began, and it brought me to my knees. I got so despondent over the band firing me that I became hard to live with—plus there had been cracks in the foundation of my life from other things I had done during the years with the band—and that's when my divorce happened. It was terrible timing. It also cut me off at the knees in the lawsuit, and I had to settle for a lot less than I should have. But that being said, I lived a wonderful life in Colorado for fifteen years on royalties. But I missed playing.

MD: What did you do with your time?

Danny: I skied and fly-fished, and that's okay. I also got into business quite a bit and produced a couple of Broadway plays. I also developed some artists in Colorado, but they never saw the light of day because of record companies. The main thing, though, was that I healed.

MD: How do you heal from something like that?

Danny: It takes time. You learn to accept the things you can't change. I'm still not completely healed. It's still painful. It's not a thing where, "Oh, I hate them and wish them bad." For instance, I think Tris Imboden [Danny's replacement in Chicago] is a class act and a great guy. He's a great drummer and I've heard that their new album is really good, so I'm glad.

Chicago was like my family, and the main guys—Walter [Parazaider], Lee [Loughnane], Jimmy [Pankow], and Robert [Lamm]—were like brothers to me. Walter and I were on the outs at the time I was fired, which might have been part of the whole thing, but I'm okay now. Everything happens for a reason. I'm a fatalist and I believe that it was supposed to happen.

Obviously I needed to get to know myself a lot better, and maybe I needed to be humbled, even though I'd always tried to keep myself grounded with the reality of where I came from—the streets of Chicago, Italian, and that whole thing. But when you're in a super-popular group, it's kind of hard to keep yourself completely grounded.

Things happen for a reason, and I'm sure there was some karma coming to me. I wasn't dishonest, and I didn't steal, but I was merce-

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nary and tough for the cause of Chicago. So I believe it happened for a reason. And maybe the most good that came of it was for my benefit, because I feel like I'm a much better person because of it. And today I feel like I'm a better drummer because of it, because I'm more stable and more settled. I think there are aspects of my playing that are better.

MD: What aspects?

Danny: My time. My concept is deeper. And because I had the fifteen-year hiatus, my body is intact. I have the body of a younger man with the mind of an older man. It feels good to be playing again, and the response has been overwhelming.

MD: Let's talk about your new band.

Danny: It's called CTA—California Transit Authority. I know it sounds like revenge, but it's not really. [When Chicago debuted, it was called CTA, Chicago Transit Authority, but they changed the name to Chicago after the first record.] I always loved the name CTA.

When Marc Bonilla and I first talked about having this band, we were excited. We're all from California now, but the band has the same spirit as CTA—it's about the music, all music. It's not about image, or the front man,

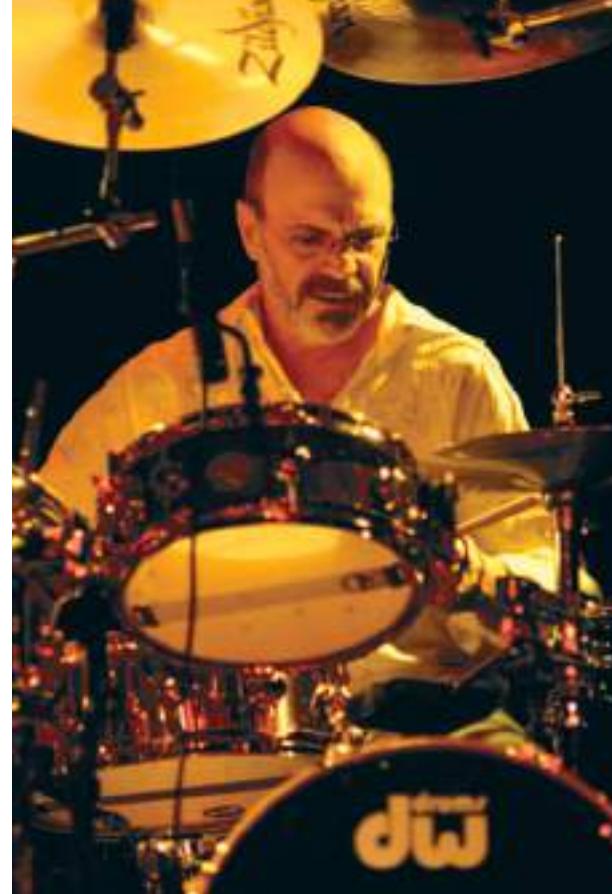
or the lead singer. It's about the musicianship.

MD: How did this come together?

Danny: I sat down with Gregg Bissonette, who is a really strong supporter of my playing. He, [bassist] Bob Birch, and [guitarist] Marc Bonilla, as well as Don Lombardi at DW, have been very supportive. Don has been the main man behind the scenes as far as trying to get me back to music. It's been a wonderful support system. In fact, it's been Don who has urged me to get back to work and told me that people really missed me.

Frankly, I thought I'd been forgotten. Not 'Oh, poor me,' but I just assumed I was forgotten. At that point I had pretty much given up drums. They were just sitting in my garage with mounds of dust on them. My drums were gently weeping, so to speak.

Don put together an impromptu jam session at Gregg's house, and I got to meet all these great guys who were telling me that I had made an impact on them. I jammed with them, and we played "South California



Purples" [from the first Chicago album, *Chicago Transit Authority*].

Then, at Marc's urging, I got a call from drummer Troy Luccketta about a benefit he

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"Look for the copper-colored end caps."

Danny Seraphine

was organizing for photographer Lissa Wales. He asked if I would like to participate. Marc said he'd put a band together and they'd learn a couple of Chicago tunes. So I said sure. Marc came up with an instrumental version of "Make Me Smile," which is really cool. We did that and "25 Or 6 To 4." When we came out to take a bow, I had my head down, and as I lifted my head up, I realized the whole place was standing. I almost cried. It was really emotional. I never thought I'd experience that again. It's not an ego thing, it's a spiritual part of connecting with an audience.

On January 27 we played our first real gig at the Canyon Club in Agoura Hills, and, again, there was an overwhelming reaction. There's no brass in the band—it's two guitars, two keyboards, bass, drums, and vocals—the guitars and keyboards are covering the brass parts, which really sets us apart from Chicago today. We do "Introduction," "South California Purples," "Mississippi Delta City Blues," a lot of the Terry Kath stuff. We also do a couple of the hits, "I'm A Man," "25 Or 6 To 4," "Feelin' Stronger Every Day," and some cool instrumental things like "Approaching Storm," things I never thought I'd ever be able to play again. This is the material I missed playing with the

Seraphine Sides

Best Recordings

Artist	Album
Chicago Transit Authority	Chicago Transit Authority
Chicago	Chicago V
Chicago	Chicago VII
Chicago	Chicago II



Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Art Blakey	Indestructible	Art Blakey
Jo Jones	all	Jo Jones
Buddy Rich	all	Buddy Rich
Shelly Manne	Shelly Manne, Vol. 2	Shelly Manne
Shelly Manne	Shelly Manne, Vol. 3	Shelly Manne
Shelly Manne	Shelly Manne, Vol. 4	Shelly Manne
Philly Joe Jones	Philly Joe's Beat	Philly Joe Jones
Elvin Jones	And Then Again	Elvin Jones

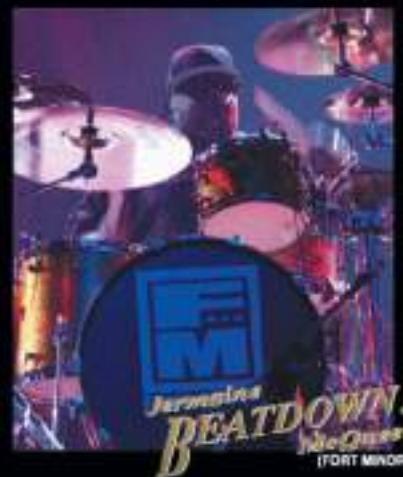
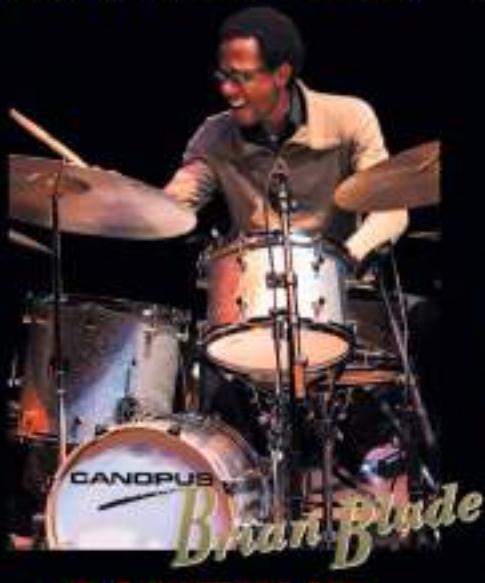
band, like the 19/8 section of "Introduction."

Playing "Introduction" again is so cool, and to play it with Marc's fiery guitar is like a rebirth for me. It's filling a musical void, because Terry Kath [original Chicago guitarist] and I were musical soul mates. You can hear it in the way we jammed together and how we moved. I could speed up, and Terry would come with me, and vice versa. He'd go into an odd time and I'd pick up on it and go with him—maybe a six against four thing—and it was so cool.

When Terry died, I lost that. My life felt empty musically. But with Marc, I have that feeling again. We're doing this music with a fresh interpretation without brass, which makes it a little edgier. It's a great foundation for the band, which will evolve on its own. We're getting ready to go into the studio.

I also recently flew up to Ashton, Oregon and spent three days woodshedding with Steve Smith. All these years I've been in the mountains fly-fishing and hiding out, Steve's been woodshedding, and he is amazing. To

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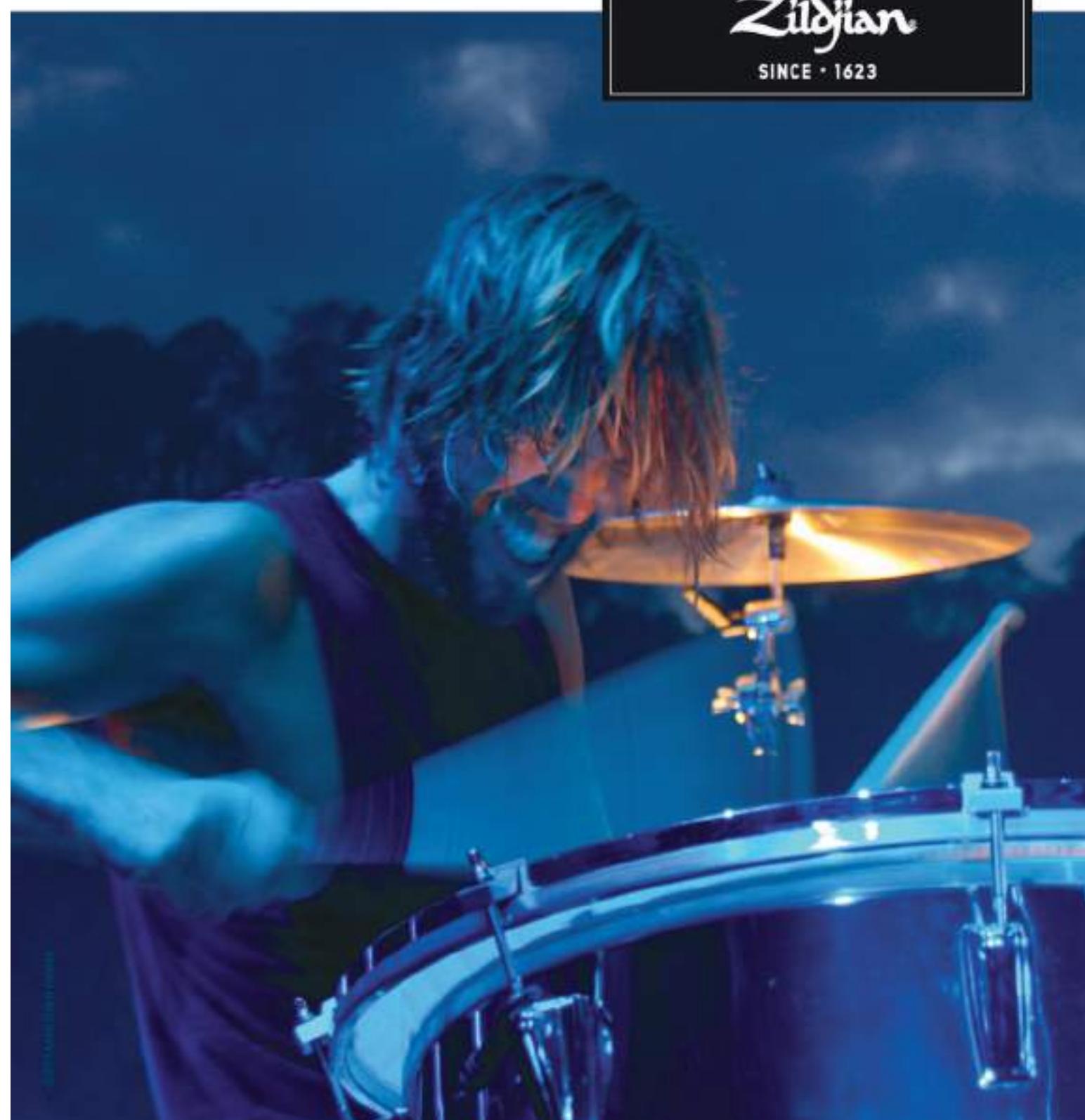
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Danny Seraphine

me, Steve's the best all-around drummer in the world. I know there are cats with incredible chops, most of which Steve can play, but he can play them with an incredible feel. He's a true musician.

That old saying, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing," is still true for me. It's not that I don't admire the chops cats, but a lot of that doesn't move me. So Steve and I hung out, talked a lot, and woodshedded from eleven in the morning 'til six or seven at night.

MD: What were you doing?

Danny: He showed me a lot of his tricks, which was really cool. He also showed me the constant-release foot thing up close, and I'm working on that. And he showed me a lot of the hand techniques he's learned and developed.

When I was leaving town, Steve called me at the airport and said, "You know, you inspired me so much when I was young, that for me to now be able to give something back feels good." What a thing to say, because it was a *great* thing for me. I'm at a point now where I want to learn. I'm practicing two to four hours a day, reading and working on techniques and warm-ups and getting ready to gig more.

MD: What does this new band need from you?

Danny: My goal is to be better than I've ever been. My own fear is that I'll disappoint the Gregg Bissonettes and the Steve Smiths of the world—and the fans. So I'm working hard. I'm now in a wonderful band that is building a nice buzz, and I'm very excited. If it doesn't make it, I'm fairly wealthy, so I can survive it money-wise. But there are some things in music that I want to do before they throw dirt on me. So I guess you could say I'm back—no, I'm back with a *vengeance*. I feel like an animal that's been let out of a cage.

MD: What actually prompted the move back to LA?

Danny: Initially I realized that I had to be in LA if I wanted to do any justice for the artists I was trying to develop. But also, in the back of my mind, I knew I was going to find a way back to playing. I also have grown children in LA and three grandchildren. I like being a grandfather. There's a certain amount of respect that comes with it, like my grey beard and grey hair. I love it. It's my badge of courage, so to speak.

And my baldness is something I no longer

try to hide, which God knows I did for so many years. I'm more comfortable this way than the years I had that hairpiece, which people said looked so good. It's still a foreign object on your head, which the wind could blow off at any time. [laughs]

MD: What are you playing these days?

Danny: DW made a beautiful new set of drums for me—with two 18" bass drums. I wanted it to be totally different, and I love the feeling of playing an 18" bass drum because it still sounds big, but I feel very limber and light on it.

I have a drum setup similar to Tony Williams—three floor toms, 14", 16", and 18". And I'm using one of those DW Sidekick pedals, which strikes the bottom

going to need to make a plastic head that sounds as good as calf." He took that as a challenge. Now, years later, Remo has been able to duplicate the sound of calf. I called him to say, "Thank you for giving me my sound back."

MD: When you woodshed these days, what are you working on?

Danny: Steve showed me his workout routine, and it's very good. It's on a practice pad, along with a double pedal pad and a hi-hat. I set a tempo on the metronome and do 8th notes with my hands and feet, together. Then I go to triplets at that tempo, alternating from one hand to the other—8th-note triplets going hand-to-hand with the feet, and then going to 16th-note triplets with the hands, keeping the



Smith On Seraphine

Steve: Chicago was one of my favorite bands when I was in high school. I was into jazz early on, so by the time I heard Hendrix, Cream, Chicago, Blood, Sweat & Tears, and ELP, I could relate to the drummers in those bands as "jazz-rock" musicians.

I bought all of the early Chicago records and used to practice to them all the time. It seemed perfectly natural at that time for drummers to play rock music with a jazz approach. I learned many of the beats for Chicago tunes, and they used a lot of odd-time bars in the arrangements. By playing along to the records, I learned some great beats and started to get comfortable with odd times.

As with all great bands, each individual member is crucial to creating the overall group sound. Danny's musical personality in Chicago was exactly what the group needed. He played the music with a strong, swinging feel, he came up with very interesting drum parts, and, of course, his fills were always exciting and contributed to the jazzy sound of the band.

Recently Danny Seraphine asked drumming great Steve Smith for a few lessons, to help fine-tune his playing. Smith, one of the busiest drummers on the planet, doesn't usually have time for students. However, for Danny Seraphine, one of Steve's early heroes, he made the time.

MD: What did Danny bring to Chicago and how did he influence you as a youngster?

head of a floor tom. It's very cool, because it gives you another bass drum color. I like a big kit because it's like being a painter with many colors to choose from. I have a lot of cymbals, too—Zildjians. I love them. I'm not the kind of player who says, "I'm going to play every one of these drums and cymbals to justify them." For me, each of those instruments is up there to give me options.

For heads, I'm using Remo FiberSkyns. I met Remo Belli early in my career, when Chicago was doing our second album. I was actually using calf heads on the first two records! I met Remo, who said, "I can't have you playing calf heads." I said, "Well, you're

8th-note triplets with the feet. Then I'll do paradiddles with hands and feet.

I'm really working on my feet for soloing purposes, to take it to the next level. And I'm still working on hand technique, including the constant release that Freddie Gruber showed Steve. I'm probably six months away from incorporating it into my playing, but when I do, watch out.

I think I'm the kind of drummer who can really incorporate technique into my playing, just as Steve and Gregg have. I'm also working on reading, because I want to do some big band drumming. Reading is really important. But then I'll break into stuff I love to

play. That's a problem, because I really do have to fight to stay focused. I can really get scattered. And Steve warned me not to try to do too much at one time, because then you don't really grasp anything.

MD: When you look back on the body of music you've recorded with Chicago, if you had to take three songs with you to the pearly gates, which would they be and why?

Danny: I would have to say "Make Me Smile," because it really defined me, that whole thirteen-minute ballet. I was really studying Buddy Rich at the time and I was really inspired by him. I was always thinking, "How would Buddy play this?" I think you can really hear his influence in the first two records—the musicality. Buddy was the best

funny, but I heard the tune on XM radio the other day. They played the entire thirteen-minute piece. It was great to hear it again. I'm really proud of that performance. So I guess it would be number one.

"Beginnings" had a really good drum part. People don't talk about it much, but it's a very melodic, emotional, fiery drum part. There were also some ballads that were cool to me. But I really love "Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?" I was able to walk the line between rock 'n' roll and swing. It was difficult because I had to be subtle. I knew if I played the swing beat on top, it wouldn't work. So I played quarter notes on the hi-hat, kind of a Ringo "With A Little Help From My Friends" vibe, but I

After it all went down, Robert called and said, "Do you really want to know what happened?" And I was so mad, I just swore and hung up the phone. I regret that I did that because, yes, I would like to know why.

I guess if I had anything to say to them, it would be, "Don't feel bad. I'm sorry that it happened the way it did, and yes, it hurt. But I don't wish bad on anyone."

Chicago will always be my band, no matter what anybody says, and no matter what any legal documents say. I don't mean that as an affront to Tris, because I really respect and admire him. He's a wonderful guy and he's handled himself with total class. But I honestly think that when people think about Chicago in the future, they'll remember my contribution.

When Danny left the band, I'd say Chicago was past its creative peak, and it was probably time for him to move on anyway. Most successful bands have a creative arc and then a decline—if they don't break up before that decline. Even though some bands stay together after their creative peak, I think it can be a musically stagnant experience for any original members still in the band. It's great that Danny is ready to get back to playing now.

MD: What did you guys work on together?

Steve: First of all, I really don't teach, because my schedule is so crazy. But when Danny called, I was interested in getting together with him. I wanted to "give back" for all the listening pleasure that I experienced growing up, listening to him playing with Chicago.

Danny was interested in learning some of what I learned from Freddie Gruber. Freddie isn't teaching these days—he turns *eighty* in May. I wanted to be able to pass on those ideas. Danny wants his drumming to go beyond what he did with Chicago, which is similar to how I felt when I left Journey.

We started with his hands. I gave him some details to work on to help improve his grip and help

"Right now Danny's playing sounds every bit as good as it did during Chicago's peak."

him to develop more fluid and relaxed motions. Because we both grew up playing in the '60s and inspired by jazz drummers, quite naturally he plays with an approach close to mine, so I was helping him to fine-tune it. He wanted to learn the Freddie Gruber "constant-release" bass drum technique, so we got into that. Most of this is addressed in my Hudson Music DVD, but Danny wanted me to teach it to him personally.

We also got into many traditional practice materials, like the Charlie Wilcoxon books—which are great for your hands and for using the rudiments in a swinging way—and Ted Reed's *Syncopation*, as applied to jazz coordination and getting familiar with figures he'll see on big band charts. I feel those are very important books to go through to develop a strong foundation, especially since he's interested in playing some big band music.

Even though Danny plays on a pro level, he hadn't gone through those books and developed his

reading or jazz independence, both of which are very important for him to address in order to accomplish what he wants with his drumming. It was also very good for me to get back to some of those old books and exercises, which I hadn't done for years. Now I'm actually enjoying working on some of those books again myself.

Danny is a lot of fun to be with, and we had a ball hanging out, playing drums, listening to music, watching DVDs, going out to eat, and catching up. He and I have known each other since 1983, when I rented his beautiful Hawaiian beach home for a two-week vacation after a Journey tour, just before my first Vital Information tour. I rented his home because it was right on the beach and there was a drumset there that I could practice on!

Right now Danny's playing sounds every bit as good as it did during Chicago's peak. He is focused and on track to make some great strides forward.

at setting up and leading into a horn line, and I did a lot of that.

"Make Me Smile" was the first time anything like that went out to the masses, a hit song with a big lead-off drum fill, which was kind of a Buddy Rich lick. And I used a piccolo snare then that got a really cracking, unique sound. And those fills at the end—all of them were inspired by Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa.

We rehearsed "Make Me Smile" in Atlanta for a week, and we recorded it in sections. But I had time to really think about what I wanted to say. There's another 6/8 drum fill in the tune that is very Buddy Rich. It's

swung the bass a little more.

I actually saw the band perform one time during my days in Colorado, and they had cut the 5/4 section out. I wondered why; that was the most unique part of the song. They went into something else. I told [Keyboardist/vocalist] Robert Lamm, "Put that back."

MD: So you've had contact with them?

Danny: Well, with Robert. He's the only one I've talked to, and only on a couple of occasions. He's the only one who has made any kind of effort, but he's very uncomfortable about it. I know he feels bad about what happened. But it's over and done with. I would love to understand it better some day.

MD: What advice would you give to other musicians who might experience a loss of a gig or something that feels like betrayal?

Danny: Therapy helps, spirituality helps, but most of all, *don't stop playing*. That was the big mistake I made. Don't relate your self-worth to someone else's lack of confidence or faith in you. There's usually more to it than what they're telling you anyway.

It's hard to do, but the goal would be to use the bad experience to make you better. Adversity can set up sweet success. Don't let anything defeat you. Look at me now. I'm loving what I'm doing. I don't know where it's all headed, but I'm enjoying the ride.

Danny Seraphine Chicago's Early Years

by Ed Breckenfeld



MUSIC KEY	
open	B.C. Bell
H.H.	C.C.
T.T.	*
S.D.	()
F.T.	●
B.D.	●
Ghost note	Add'l T.T.

In the late '60s and early '70s, Danny Seraphine's drumming with Chicago reflected the musical upheaval of the times. Rock and jazz were merging in unique and interesting ways, and bands like Chicago were sprinkling jazz into their rock sound.

Seraphine had the mindset of a rock drummer, driving his band with energy and power, but his playing revealed the soul of a jazz musician. He took a jazz drummer's approach to rock, improvising wherever he could, and pushing his creative side to the forefront. But he could also lock into a straight-ahead beat when the song called for it. Here are a few highlights from Danny's studio work with Chicago from 1969 to 1972.

Chicago Transit Authority (1969) "Beginnings"

Danny Seraphine established his unique drumming personality right off the bat on this early Chicago hit. Look at this ad-libbed sequence from the quiet interlude after the song's first chorus. (1:29)

Following the second chorus, Danny plays one of his signature four-bar breaks. Similar short solos appeared on other cuts from the early Chicago catalog, and they're always beautifully composed, containing interesting rhythmic and melodic ideas that build to a powerful climax. (3:02)

"I'm A Man"

Seraphine's opening beat for Chicago's version of this Spencer Davis classic is a busy workout that contains a flowing, repetitive fill. This groove sets the stage for the percus-

sive nature of the track, as claves, cowbell, and tambourine enter one by one. Eventually, Danny simplifies his pattern to let the hand percussion take full effect. (0:20)

Chicago II (1970) "West Virginia Fantasies"

This track is an example of Danny's straightforward side, as he locks into the following groove and stays with it. His no-changes, no-fills approach sets the perfect mood for this short 3/4 instrumental from the second Chicago album. (0:00)

"Now More Than Ever (Make Me Smile)"

This is Seraphine's most famous short solo, not only because it received tons of radio airplay, but also because it stands the test of time as one of rock's most classic drum breaks. From the stutter-step opening to the 16th-note triplet climax, it's a virtual clinic on dynamic solo design. (0:44 on the album version, 2:36 on the single version)

"Wake Up Sunshine"

During the bridge of this track, Danny shows an eye for detail, as he places two unexpected snare notes on beat 1 and answers them with two ride cymbal notes on beat 3. It's a subtle, alternating effect that only a drummer would pick up on. (1:21)

Chicago III (1971) "Sing A Mean Tune Kid"

The opening track of the third Chicago album features another funky groove from Seraphine. His unpredictable,

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Danny Seraphine

syncopated pattern fits right in with the R&B flavor of Robert Lamm's electric piano part and Terry Kath's wah-wah guitar. (0:25)



"Free"

The ending chorus of this hit song contains one of Danny's coolest grooves. The wonderful left-hand snare work in this pattern helps generate excitement under the band's defiant vocal, "I just wanna be free!" (1:35)



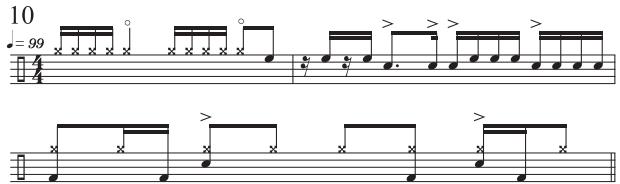
Chicago V (1972) "Now That You've Gone"

Here's the melodic tom-tom beat that opens this track from Chicago's fifth album. Notice the paradiddle-diddle sticking that enables Danny to pull off this move. (0:00)



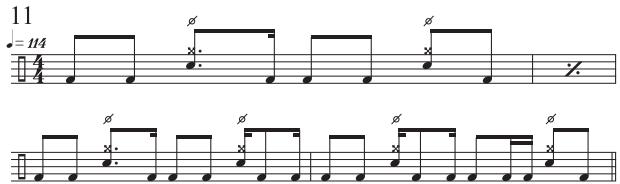
"Dialogue (Part One)"

This song's unusual structure uses a long, slow dynamic build to enhance its vocal message. Seraphine avoids crashing after his fills until the very end to maintain the building tension of the track. Here's his entrance fill and sparse opening groove. (0:33)



"Saturday In The Park"

As one of Chicago's most famous hits, this song contains an amazing drum track that's brimming with Danny's personality. It's hard to imagine any drummer being able to fit as many ideas into a pop single today. Check out the kick drum part from the song's re-intro. (2:30)



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BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

Ronald Bruner Jr.

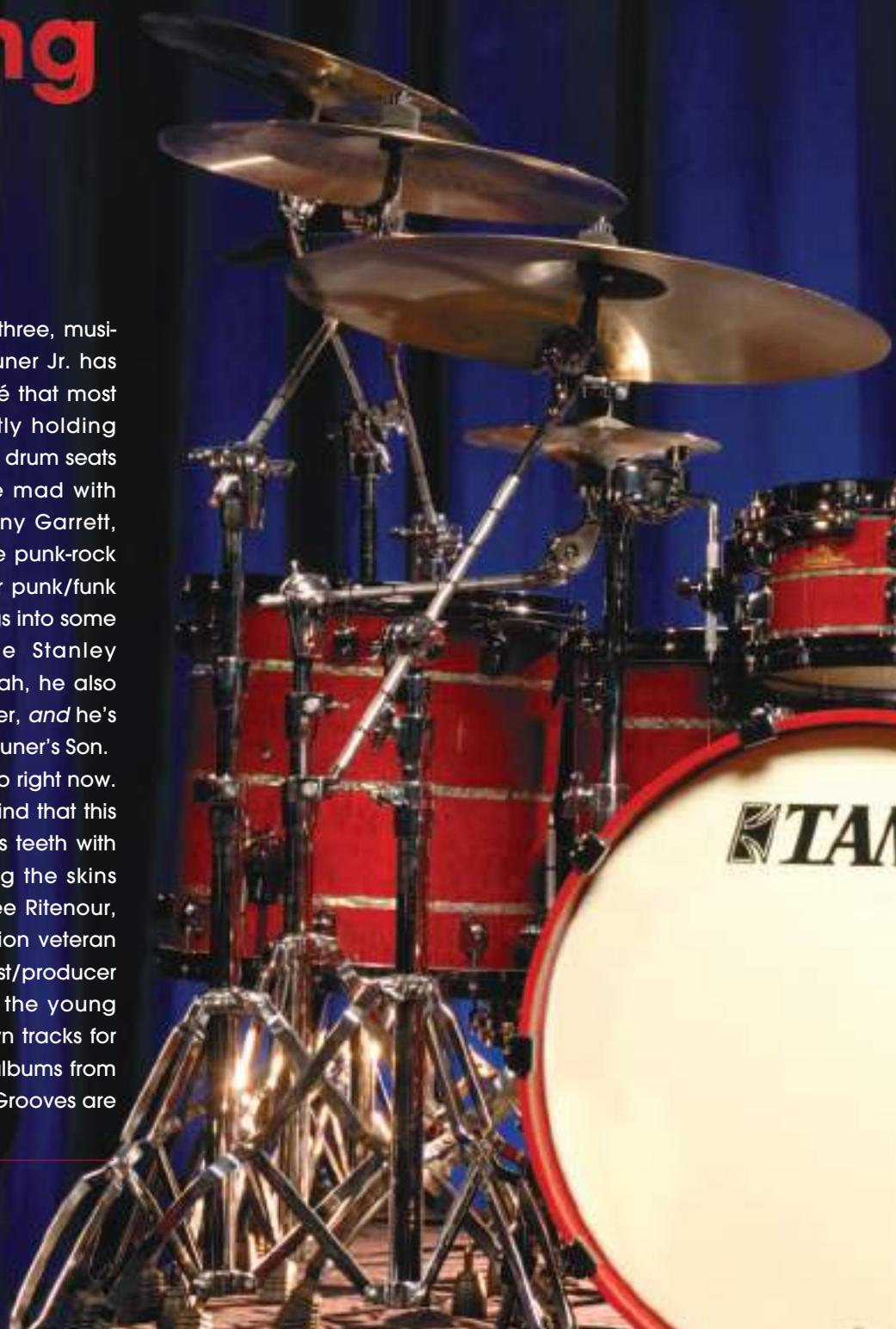
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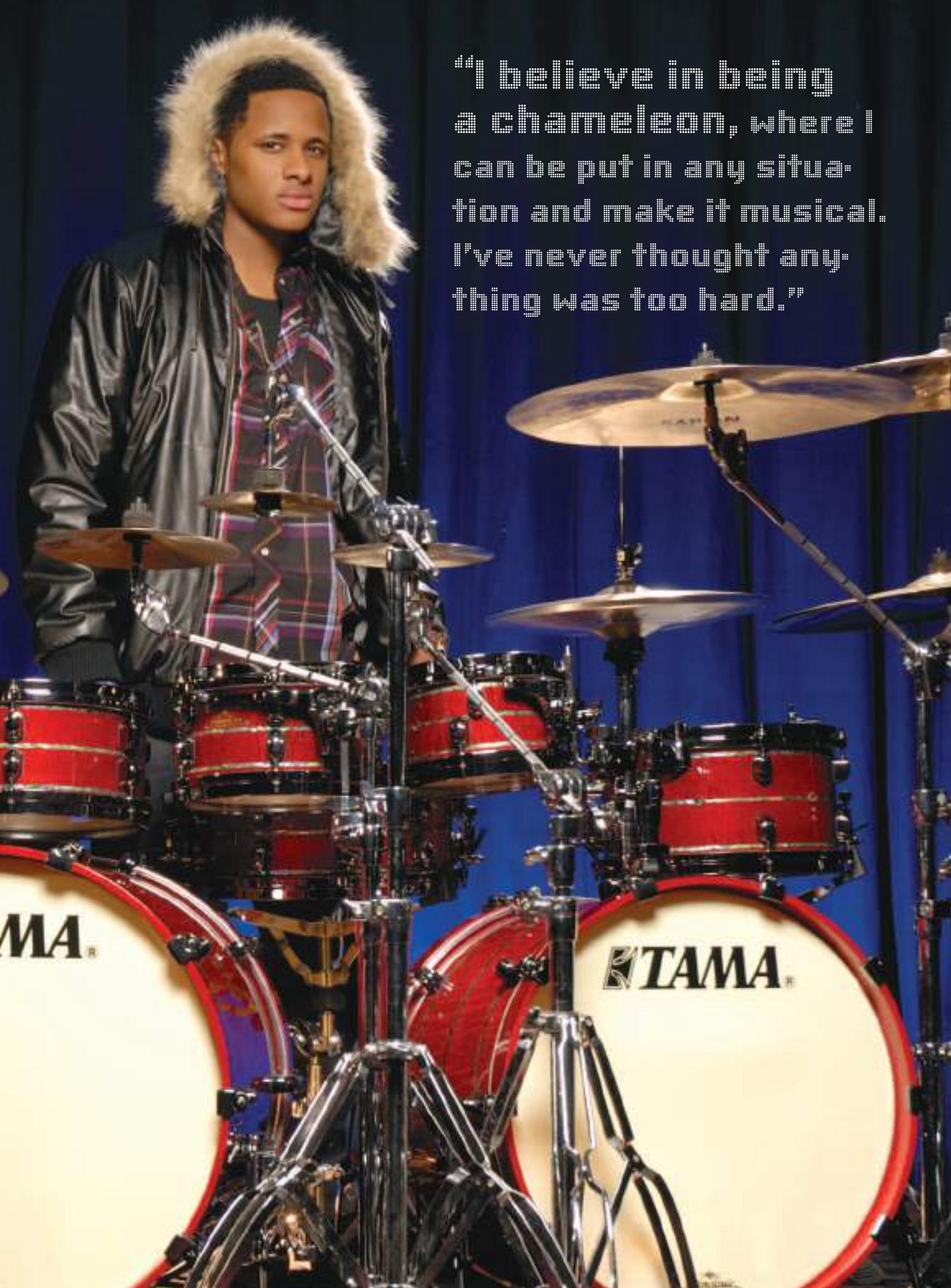
RAlthough he's barely twenty-three, musical chameleon Ronald Bruner Jr. has already amassed a résumé that most drummers would die for. Currently holding down three of the most challenging drum seats in all of music, Ronald burns like mad with modern jazz saxophone star Kenny Garrett, thrashes his heart out with hardcore punk-rock icons Suicidal Tendencies and their punk/funk offshoot Infectious Grooves, and digs into some serious fusion stylings with the Stanley Clarke/George Duke Band. Oh yeah, he also sings with his own R&B project, Bruner, and he's leading a fusion band called Ron Bruner's Son.

But that's just what Ronald is up to right now. Dig back a little further and you'll find that this modern-day super drummer cut his teeth with many other major artists, manning the skins with contemporary jazz guitarist Lee Ritenour, R&B vocalist Raphael Sadiq, LA fusion veteran Michael Landau, and master bassist/producer Marcus Miller. Miller even invited the young drummer into the studio to lay down tracks for his 2005 release, *Silver Rain*. (New albums from Suicidal Tendencies and Infectious Grooves are also due for release later this year.)

Story By Michael Dawson

Photos By Alex Solca





"I believe in being a chameleon, where I can be put in any situation and make it musical. I've never thought anything was too hard."

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Bruner grew up in a tough neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles, and life wasn't always easy. But regardless of the challenges presented by the outside world, inside the family found solace in faith and music.

Ronald's father, Ronald Bruner Sr., is a full-time professional drummer who has played with many top R&B artists, including The Temptations, The Supremes, Diana Ross, Howard Hewitt, and Jody Watley. Ronald Sr. was, and still is, a major influence in his son's musical life. Says Ronald Jr., "Other than God, my father is the biggest influence in my life and my drumming. He shaped the direction of the music that I was into and what I was playing." He also taught his young son about ambition.

Once Ronald Jr. took up the drums, he

already had his mind set to reach the top. In addition to his father's guidance, Ronald sought out many of his drumming heroes to exchange ideas. By the time he was in high school, Ronald was rubbing elbows with some of the top drummers in Los Angeles, including Stephen Perkins, Will Kennedy, Dennis Chambers, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Billy Higgins.

Ronald also came in contact with many of jazz's most prominent artists through his experience playing with The Los Angeles Multi High School Jazz Band. That group, funded by the Thelonious Monk Institute, brought together some of the top young players from the Los Angeles area to play events such as the Playboy Jazz Festival alongside heavyweight artists like Wayne Shorter.

So at a very early age, Ronald was primed for success. But that doesn't quite explain how this energetic drummer was able to gobble up some of the most revered gigs in contemporary music. *That's* where we'll begin.

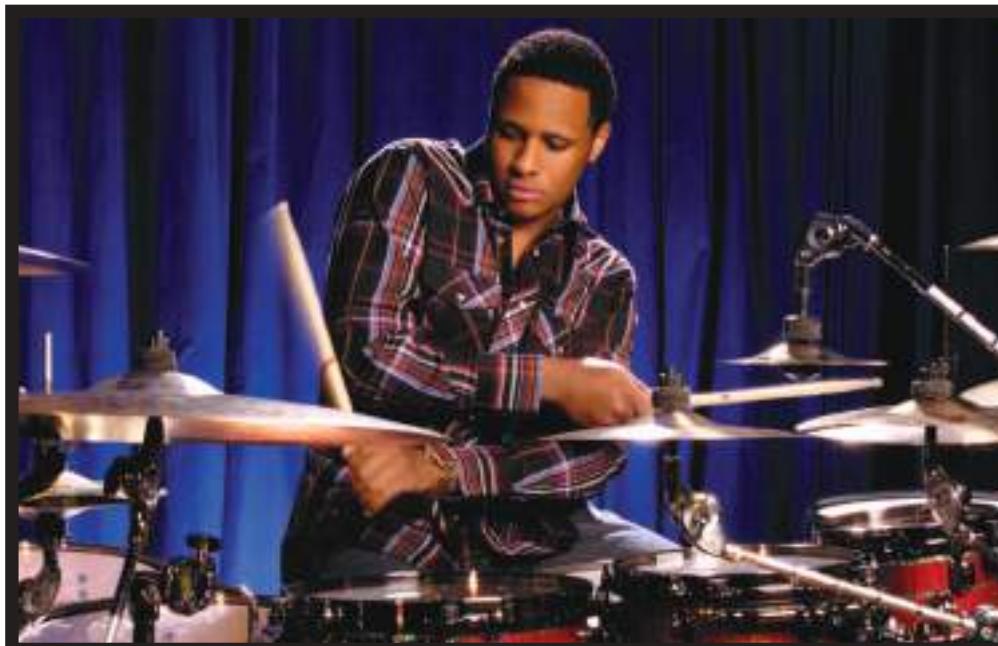
MD: How did you get the gig with Kenny Garrett?

Ronald: My father always taught me to be aggressive. He told me, "Whenever you want a gig, go for it! Walk up to whomever you respect and talk to them. Just be straightforward and honest." So when Kenny Garrett came to LA sometime between '98 and '99, I walked up to him and said, "Hey man, let me play." I went back every night saying the same thing. Then one night after the band finished, I got bold and hopped on the drums and started playing. Kenny eventually came out and played with me. After that, he got my information to call me for some gigs.

Unfortunately, at that point in my musical maturity, I was really underdeveloped. So after only a couple of gigs, he fired me. But my mother kept telling me, "You're going to get that gig back. That gig is yours. You're going to do what it takes to get it back." So, I went into the shed, came back two years later, and I've been playing with him ever since.

MD: How did you get called back?

Ronald: I showed up at one of his gigs and he invited me up to play. I ended up playing the rest of the set.



MD: Does he give you any specific directions?

Ronald: Just to be myself as musically as possible. He's very open—as long as whatever ideas I throw out there are musical and make musical sense. That's what he's all about.

MD: There have been some incredible players in Garrett's drum seat. Did you research the guys who played with him

before?

Ronald: When I was in high school, I was listening to Kenny's records, so I was already a heavy-duty fan before I met him. I was already studying the great cats that he had used before me: Chris Dave, Marcus Baylor, Jeff "Tain" Watts, and Brian Blade. I was checking out the components that they had that Kenny wanted, to see if I could add them to my playing.



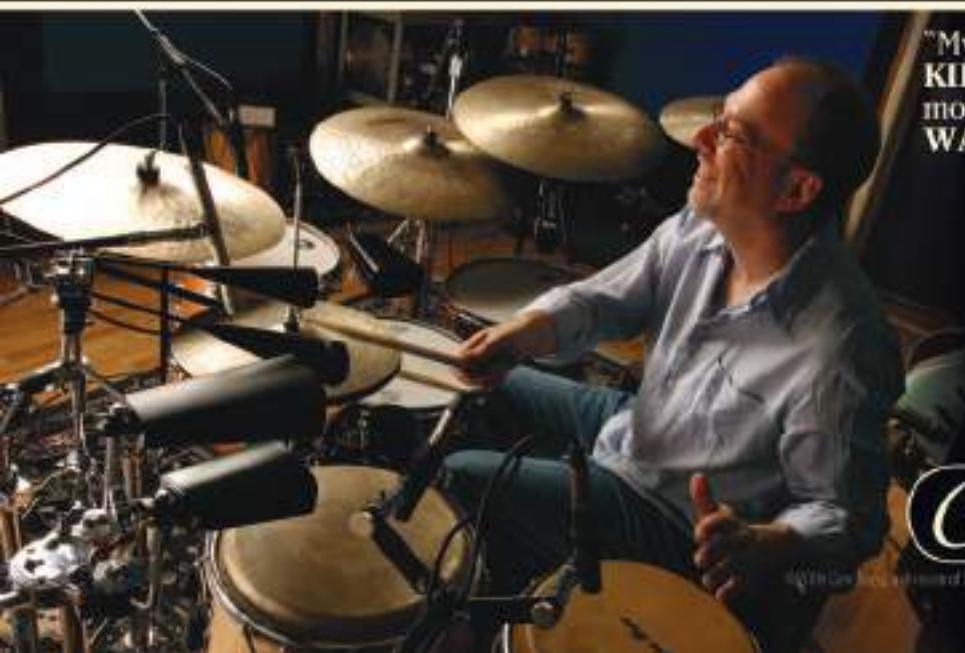
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Ronald Bruner Jr.

MD: How did the gig with Suicidal Tendencies come about?

Ronald: I was playing a funk gig with this group called The Polyester Players. I did that gig for a couple of years. Then one night the guitarist from Suicidal Tendencies came out to a show because one of his friends was playing keyboards in the band. After the show he walked up to me and was like, "Hey man, I dig your energy. We're looking for a drummer." When he told me it was for this band Suicidal Tendencies, I was like, "Man, I've heard of them dudes! For sure." So I've been playing with them ever since.

MD: That's a completely different gig from Kenny Garrett. How did you prepare for that situation?

Ronald: I studied the music and listened to the records. You just have to know what side of music you're on and understand how the drums work for each type. Thankfully, my father always taught me that no style of music is too hard to do. It's all a concept. I believe in being a chameleon, where I can be put in any situation and make it musical. I've never thought anything was too hard. So for the Suicidal gig, I started listening to cats that were playing in that style, to see

what their vibe was all about. And I started playing like that.

MD: Did you already have your double bass playing together before this gig?

Ronald: I had been taking lessons with Will Kennedy, and he taught me to get off of the double pedal. He was real avid about, "Let's stay single tonight."

MD: So you're doing the Suicidal gig with single bass?

Ronald: Yeah. I was playing double bass when I was doing the Guitar Center Drum-Off and stuff like that. But when I started taking lessons with Will, I stopped. It wasn't until this year that I got back on the double bass drum pedal. Now I only use it to embellish rhythms.

MD: What have you learned from the Suicidal gig?

Ronald: I've learned how important it is to keep your body in shape. [laughs] That's an *intense* gig. I've learned so much about how to keep the motion of the music going forward by being fast *and* heavy. It's a great cardio workout!

MD: Did you have to work on anything specific to get your speed together?

Ronald: I came up trying to play fast, so it wasn't really a tough gig to step into. I just

took what I had learned from shedding to Dennis Chambers and Billy Cobham and incorporated it into that music. So if one of their songs called for a 64th-note solo, I was already down.

MD: Let's talk about practicing...

Ronald: Six hours a day, baby!

MD: You practice for six hours every day?

Ronald: Yeah. For most of 2005, it was six hours a day.

MD: When you first started playing, what did you practice?

Ronald: When I first started, I was *really* into Chick Corea's *Elektric Band* and John Scofield's *Loud Jazz* discs. Those were the two records that I started with.

MD: Did you play along with them?

Ronald: I used to go nuts with Weckl and Chambers, just playing along with the records. To this day, I *still* know all that stuff. A couple of months ago, I actually pulled the records out again to see if I remembered everything.

MD: So you were learning the records note for note?

Ronald: Yeah. I was playing them verbatim. I used to listen to Dennis Chambers do these crazy bizarre licks, and I was like, "Man, how'd he do that?" But I just kept

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Bruner On His Sound

MD: Do you use the same kit for all of your gigs?

Ronald: I try to stay consistent. To me, it's all about a sound. All of the greats have a sound, and I think I have a sound. My snare drum and floor toms are what I'm really into. So when you hear me on a record you'll hear those two sounds and say, "That's Ronald." I try to keep things very consistent and identifiable.

MD: Do you use the same kit with Kenny Garrett as you use with Suicidal?

Ronald: I play the same kit when I can. A lot of times I have to play whatever's at the club. But when I come home, I use my standard kit with two racks and three floors. And I use that same setup

when I'm playing with Suicidal.

MD: You don't change your tuning from gig to gig?

Ronald: No. I tune for attack rather than tone. I like my drums to smack. I'm not into ringing, open-tone toms, like what Weckl pioneered. That's an incredible sound, and he's got it down to a science. But I'm into attack, almost like a full kit of snare drums.

MD: How do you tune your drums to get that sound?

Ronald: I tune my kit a little more jazzy than other cats who play fusion. I tune my rack toms a little higher to focus on the highs and mid frequencies.

MD: How do you tune your drums high and not get a ringing sound?

Ronald: For the toms, I keep the bottom heads fairly loose and the top heads tighter. For my bass drum, I like a little bit of a jazzy tone. So I tune it kind of high, especially the batter head. And both heads on my snare are cranked pretty high.

It's all about having an identifiable sound. If you don't have a sound, you're not sticking out. Your drums are an extension of your personality. And you can tell how a cat is going to play by their personality. I'm a loud, crazy dude, so my drums sound loud and crazy. That's just who I am. It's important to know who you are and put that on the drumset.

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Ronald Bruner Jr.

trying to do those things until whatever I played sounded similar.

MD: When did you start taking formal lessons?

Ronald: I never took formal lessons. I started learning drums from my father, but it wasn't anything formal. He was like, "Here, check this out. Listen to this record. What do you think about this?" My father used to set me up to discover stuff on my own.

Here's an example of one of my father's lessons: Every Saturday we'd go to the drum shop in Hollywood. The whole way to the shop and the whole way back, he'd play a new fusion tape for me, like something by Chick Corea, Spyro Gyra, Michel Camilo, Dennis Chambers, Billy Cobham, or other cats. He'd also put the case on the dashboard so I could see what the cassette looked like. Then, maybe a day or two later, he'd take a Walkman, a pair of headphones, and whichever tape we were listening to,

and leave it on the kitchen table. When I'd get home from school, I'd see that. And I'd be like, "Oh, snap! That's that tape from Saturday!" So after I finished my homework, I'd grab the tape and start shedding to it. That was my father's lessons. And that's how I got started.

After that I got a chance to shed with Will Kennedy. We'd set up two kits and just play for a couple of hours. He'd be like, "Okay. I hear what you're doing, but how can we flip it this way?" He was more about concepts.

I also used to hang out with Stephen Perkins when I was about fifteen. He would have me come over to his house and just go nuts on the drums. We'd just play. After that, I started hanging out with Dennis Chambers. I would go to his soundchecks and he'd let me sit in.

Then I started shedding with Vinnie. I used to go to Vinnie's soundchecks, and

Stanley Clarke

The Legendary Bassist On Ronald

MD: When did you first hear Ronald play?

Stanley: When I was doing the music for a TV show called *Big Time*, they needed to shoot a small jazz band of young guys. We auditioned about 125 kids that day. There were three people that impressed me and Ronald was one of them. He was pretty relaxed with his playing, and he had a tremendous amount of chops. But he was also very wild, almost to the point of being out of control.

But I kept him in my head. I said, "One day, I'm going to play with this guy." In fact, Ronald was the first musician who I ever waited for. He's still a little crazy, but he's a very versatile drummer.

I think that a lot of the drummers who are going to appear in the future are going to be true fusion musicians. They'll be listening to Dr. Dre, while also listening to Miles Davis. And they'll play in the church. Ronald is that kind of guy.

MD: When did you ask him to play with you?

Stanley: It was a little over a year ago. I was thinking about using different drummers, and I had a couple guys come by the house. But they didn't have the craziness that I like. A lot of the drummers I grew up playing with were a little crazy, like Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, and those types. I never really cared for conservative drummers.

I found Ronald through Gerry Brown, who gave me his number.

Gerry told me, "He's still young, he's still young." But that was okay, so I had him come by the house. He came by all frisky and pumped up. But when we sat down to play, he took care of business. He has a good sense of structure. He definitely understands polyrhythms too. And he can swing. And he's funky. So he was perfect.

MD: How does he compare to the other drummers you've worked with in the past?

Stanley: He reminds me of a lot of other great drummers. When Gerry Brown was young, he was wild and had a lot of technique. Rayford Griffin was like that too. And even though Tony Williams was very structured on the outside, his mind was madness.

Ronald reminds me of those guys. He has the tradition of the great drummers who have tremendous technique and are able to paint something musically. There are a lot of guys who have as much technique as Ronald, but they don't know how to paint a proper picture. Ronald's very fortunate that he's able to do that.



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Ronald Bruner Jr.

he'd let me check his drums. I would get on the drums and play all of Vinnie's licks back to him, and he'd be like, "Great. I know you can do me. Let me hear you do you." He was more of a conceptualist too.

I've had an opportunity to sit down with some heavies, man. And they each imparted

knowledge. So that's my goal, too: to give to the next cats coming—because they're coming. If it wasn't for Vinnie, Dennis, Will, Stephen, and other cats that opened the door for me, I don't know where I'd be, because I came up broke, you know? We didn't have much. We came up pretty

tough. And when Steve Perkins would give me a cool DW drumset to play on a gig, it meant a lot.

MD: So you played along with a lot of records. What else were you doing during your six-hour practice sessions?

Ronald: My regimen goes like this: The first hour and a half, I practice grooves. I'll put on a hip-hop record and try to figure out how to play what I hear on the record. I don't solo over it. I just try to attach myself to the groove. Then I shed for about four hours on all the stuff in my head. I just go dumb for about four hours.

Now I'm getting heavy into reading. So I get out my Ted Reed *Syncopation* book and practice those big band figures for about an hour.

MD: Are there any other books you're working out of?

Ronald: I'm still getting my reading together. A friend of mine just gave me Tommy Igoe's *Groove Essentials*. I'm getting into books like those, where I have to read the separation between the bass drum and snare. That stuff is tough. I can play charts with hits, but when it comes to reading specific drumset patterns, that's a whole other monster to me. So I'm getting into that pretty heavily right now.

MD: You didn't learn to read coming up?

Ronald: No. Coming up I was only interested in playing jazz and jazz-fusion. My father really wanted me to get everything together, but I wanted to play the latest Dennis Chambers lick. I wasn't even thinking about reading. But I'm getting into it now. It's very important for our generation to pick that up. It adds to our value.

Playing With Ronald Dean Pleasants Of Suicidal Tendencies/Infectious Grooves

MD: When did you first see Ronald play the drums?

Dean: I first saw Ronald play when I went to hear this band Polyester Players. They had two drummers that night, and Ronald was one of them. He just blew me away. I've played with Brooks Wackerman, Stephen Perkins, and Josh Freese. But this young kid was as good as them, or even better.

Then a few days later, our drummer quit. I immediately thought of this kid I had just seen, so I went back to the club and asked him if he'd ever played punk rock before. He said, "No, but I can do it."

So we set up something at the studio to see if it would work. He went in there and just beat those things up. We were like, "Whoa! This is the guy."

MD: What was it about his playing that caught your attention?

Dean: He would play these straight grooves, then go into this crazy riff and come right back out. He was doing all of this off-time stuff. But it seemed so easy for him—almost like he was bored.

MD: What did he do that made you real-

ize he was the guy for the band?
Dean: It was his ability to improvise on the spot. And he had this raw aggression, like an uncut diamond in the rough. He was so raw and crazy that it was exciting.

MD: Has Ronald had any impact on the direction of the band?

Dean: Yeah. My first experience as a member of Infectious Grooves was with Stephen Perkins. And then when I got into Suicidal, I was playing with Josh Freese, then Brooks Wackerman. Each time we'd get a new drummer, that drummer was better than the one before him. So, to have Ronald come in and be better than all of those other guys says it all. He's helped make writing easier. And we can do things based around the drums that we've never done before.

Plus, he's bringing in a whole hip-hop and jazz thing that's really cool. He's very flavorful, and sometimes he's very explosive, like a tornado. •



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MD: Your hands are super quick. Do you have any specific exercises you use for getting around the drums?

Ronald: I used to work a lot with rudiments. When I was studying with Will, he had me shedding flam taps. And my father always taught me to take whatever rudiment I was playing and move it around the set. So I'd play them on the ride cymbal bell, or the crash, or even split them between the hi-hat and the second rack tom. I try to take everything I'm working on and play it around the kit. That's just how my head works.

Will also taught me to always have a handicap on the drumset. Every time you set up the kit, set up something different. For instance, put the ride cymbal a little bit further away, so you have to do something different every time you play it. That type of practice helped to prepare me for the gig with Kenny Garrett. He plays all over the world, and I rarely get to use my own drums. The drums that are provided at these places aren't always what's listed on the rider. So I'm always playing different kits.

MD: How'd you learn to swing?

Ronald: I learned to swing from studying with Billy Higgins. I was one of his last students. When I was in high school, I used to go to his club, World Stage, and sit in. Billy took me under his wing and put me in his drum choir, which was made up of about seven drummers.

If it weren't for Billy, I wouldn't know as much about drum sounds. There's a big difference between how you sound on jazz drums and how you sound on a fusion kit, in terms of response and color. Billy was a stickler about that. I would come to drum choir with my twenty-piece kit, and he'd be like, "You'd sound better playing all that crazy stuff with a 12" on top, a 14" on the floor, and an 18" on the bottom." I didn't get it. But when I started playing jazz gigs on those types of drums, it caused me to play in a different way. His theory on understanding the role of the different sounds of the kit was life-changing for me.

MD: Getting back to your gigs, after Suicidal Tendencies, you went with Marcus Miller?

Ronald: I did the same thing to Marcus. Kenny Garrett was like, "Man, go talk to Marcus." So I went up to him and was like, "Let me play, let me play." Then two years

ago, he let me play with him at the NAMM show. From there, we became really good friends, and he let me play on his last record.

MD: What did you learn from playing with him?

Ronald: Marcus was always on me about my groove. Whatever I played, it had to be in the groove. As long as I understood that and made good musical decisions, I could do whatever I wanted.

A lot of the people I've played with have allowed me to really be myself, including Marcus. He's like, "If you're going to be wild, be musically wild. Just make sure it lands on 1, and make sure it fits." From there, I learned to just be musical. And I learned that if we're playing funk, play the pocket. Don't play jazz or try to throw in some punk rock stuff. I had to learn to separate and respect the different types of music.

MD: How did you figure out how to play in the pocket?

Ronald: I got into Buddy Miles with Jimi Hendrix and Band Of Gypsies. That was my first pocket experience. When I listened to Mitch Mitchell with Hendrix, I was like, "Man, this doesn't feel right." So my dad said, "Oh yeah? Well, listen to this." And he played me the tune "Who Knows." I lost my mind! I didn't come up listening to funk. I was listening to everybody playing drum licks. But then I started practicing to that Hendrix stuff. I wanted my drumming to feel like Buddy Miles. I wanted my pocket to have that much space. From there, I got into Tony! Toni! Tone!'s "Lay Your Head On My Pillow." Then I got into Yogi Horton with Luther Vandross and Questlove with The Roots.

MD: Which gig came after Marcus Miller?

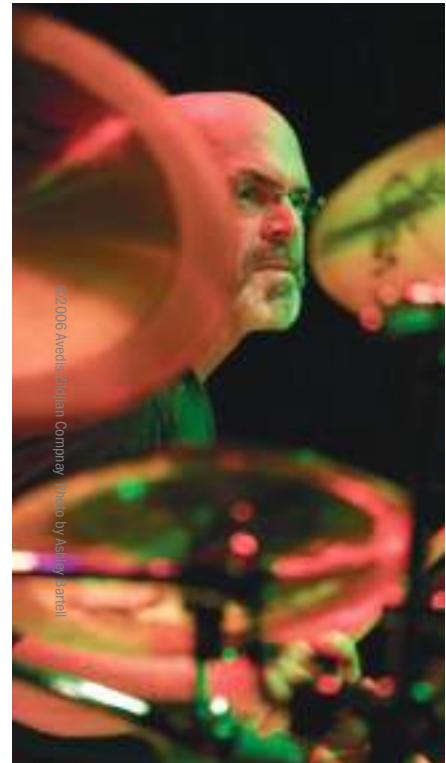
Ronald: From Marcus, the gigs with Raphael Sadiq and Lee Ritenour came at about the same time. Raphael is an R&B singer who was with Tony! Toni! Tone!. He came out with a solo record called *Instant Vintage*. I toured with him during that time. After that came the gig with Ritenour.

MD: What was that gig all about?

Ronald: The same thing: Be myself as musically as possible. I was playing *crazy* on that gig.

MD: He didn't have any specific directions?

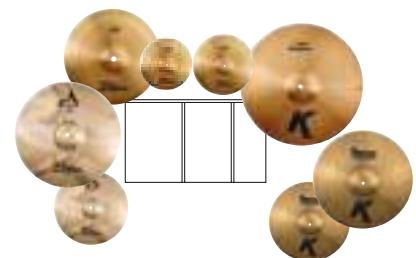
Ronald: No. Just play the pocket and play



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Ronald Bruner Jr.

musically. A lot of people hire me to be me. They like the intensity and the energy. They want me to just go for it.

MD: And now you're playing with Stanley Clarke?

Ronald: Yeah, now I'm with Stanley. But I'm still playing with Kenny Garrett and Suicidal Tendencies. I've got to keep my accounts open.

I also have to keep a very diplomatic and non-egotistical attitude. I used to be *really* cocky until I got checked by some great drummers. There are so many cats out there who are playing great drums that it's all about having a voice now and understanding who you are as a musician. If you get that together, you'll keep working.

If you think about it, there really isn't anything new being played these days. In fact, I thought I had come up with a lick that was the sweetest lick on earth. Then I found out from watching a DVD that Billy Cobham played that same lick by *accident* in 1972! That humbled me. It made me realize that we're all extensions of what we've heard. We're all playing the same stuff. It's just a matter of how you phrase it.

If you want to get really crazy, Papa Jo Jones was playing with two floor toms and

crossing over back in the early '60s. We're crossing over in R&B, and we think it's sweet. But it was done in 1963!

MD: What's your next gig?

Ronald: I'm going out with the Stanley Clark/George Duke Band. That's the newest thing, playing with George and hanging out with those cats and getting all that information. It's just incredible.

MD: Let's go through your biggest influences, starting with #1.

Ronald: Tony Williams! The greatest.

MD: What is it that attracted you to him?

Ronald: What attracted me to him was his sheer intensity. I used to hate him! I didn't understand anything he was doing. But when I heard Miles Davis's *Filles De Kilimanjaro*, I understood. He was such an intense conceptual person.

MD: What did you take from his drumming?

Ronald: I took as much from Tony as I possibly could. And I'm *still* taking from him. There's so much stuff in his playing. I took a lot of his phrasing, placement, and intensity, and put it in my pocket. He wasn't joking, man. Intense.

MD: #2?

Ronald: Vinnie Colaiuta.

MD: What about him attracted you?

Ronald: Man, that dude's crazy! I took the craziness from him. He would put his neck out there, and land on 1. So I said I'm going to put my neck out there and land on 1, too. His adventurousness got to me. But he's also very methodical. He wants to be able to place his thoughts in music very accurately. And he's a great chameleon. He can play anything. I love the fact that he just jumps out there. He's adventurous.

MD: #3?

Ronald: Dennis Chambers/Billy Cobham.

MD: Why do you group them together?

Ronald: Because Dennis comes from Billy. His speed, intensity, and ferociousness... he's an apple from Billy's tree.

MD: What did you get from their drumming?

Ronald: Speed and accuracy. And I enjoy their sounds and their energy. I have a DVD of Billy playing with Mahavishnu Orchestra, and it's *so* intense. I like that. I'm a very energetic drummer, and I like to take chances. I get that from these guys. And technically, Dennis and Billy just fly around the kit. So I figure I can fly too. I'm going to fly with them.

MD: #4?

Ronald: Chris Dave. That boy is special.

MD: What is it about his playing that you like?

Ronald: He's another adventurous cat, and he has his own voice and concept. I enjoy hearing that over music.

MD: What have you taken from him?

Ronald: Definitely his speed. And the nonchalant "I'm doing me" vibe. He has an attitude when he's playing that's like, "Hey, I'm just playing." And people respond to that.

MD: Who would round out your Top-5?

Ronald: Jeff "Tain" Watts. That boy rumbles! He sounds like a ball rolling down some steps. [laughs] I took a lot of the swing from him. He swings *hard*. He created a whole new sound for swing drumming in our generation, and a lot of us are trying to play like him.

MD: So what are *you* bringing to the table?

Ronald: Energy! Energy and the sheer love for what I'm doing. People see that. And I bring the spiritual aspect. I come with my whole heart open to learning. I'm trying to let people know that our generation is coming, so let's play some music!

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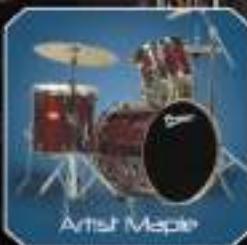
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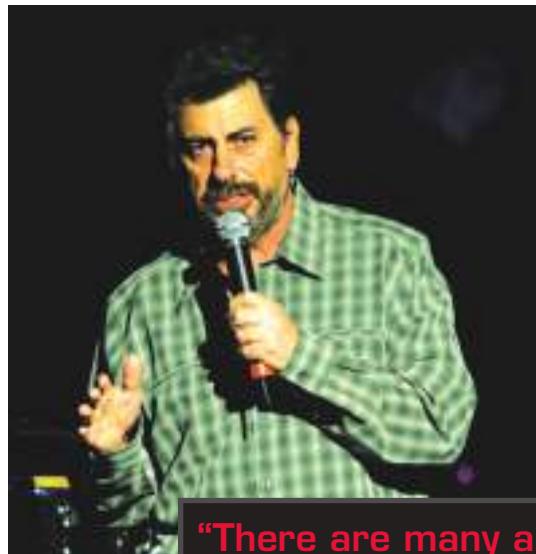
Groove Is In The Heart

A Discussion With Yamaha's 2006 Groove All Stars

Story by Billy Amendola

Photos by Rob Shanahan

Trying to understand or describe the nature of "groove" can be a complex undertaking. But one thing is certain: You get a great feeling from playing and listening to a good groove.



"There are many approaches to a groove. Pick one. If it works, you'll know it!" Rick Marotta

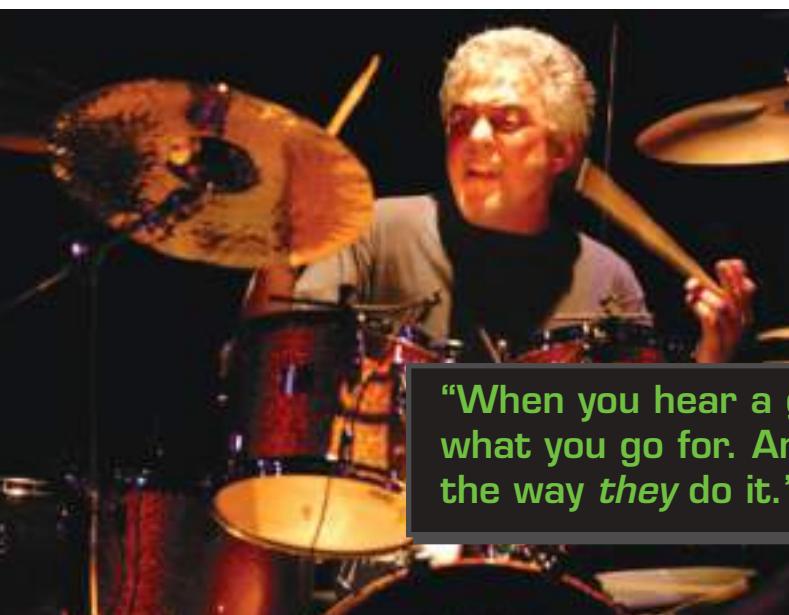
That feeling—and the drumming that creates it—is the motivating force behind Yamaha's Groove All Stars event. Six years ago, Yamaha drum guru Takashi "Hagi" Hagiwara (who retired in 2004 after thirty-five years with the company) got together with Yamaha artist relations manager Joe Testa and session great Rick Marotta.

They discussed the idea of a concert that would feature drummers performing with a killer band and great singers—*without* any flashy, chops-laden drum solos. The less-is-more approach would be the main element of the gig. Not surprisingly, they settled on "Groove Night" as the name of the event.

Every year since then (with the exception of a break in 2005), Yamaha has presented its Groove Night on the Saturday of the NAMM musical instrument trade show, which is held every January in California. Previous Groove Nights were held at Studio Instrument Rentals (SIR) in Hollywood, and at the Galaxy Theatre in Santa Ana. Due to its growing popularity, the 2006 show was moved to the beautiful Cerritos Center For The Performing Arts, in the LA suburb of Cerritos. And since the show would feature more stellar drummers and bandmembers than ever before, the name was officially changed to "Groove All Stars."

And stars there were. The lineup of drummers performing at the sold-out show began with host and co-producer **Rick Marotta**, who has recorded and toured with James Taylor, Jackson Brown, Carly Simon, Steely Dan, and Paul Simon, to name a few. Following Rick came a bevy of great Yamaha drumset artists, including **Tommy Aldridge** (Whitesnake, Ozzy Osborne), **Zach Alford** (Gwen Stefani, Bruce Springsteen), **Michael Bland** (Prince, Soul Asylum), **Bobby Blotzer** (RATT), **Tom Brechtlein** (Chick Corea, Robben Ford), **Gerry Brown** (Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross), **Matt Cameron** (Pearl Jam, Soundgarden), **Keith Carlock** (Steely Dan, Sting), **Ndugu Chancler** (Miles Davis, Michael Jackson), **Peter Erskine** (Diana Krall, Steps Ahead), **Steve Gadd** (Paul Simon, Eric Clapton), **Jerry Marotta** (Peter Gabriel, Indigo Girls), **Marvin McQuitty** (Fred Hammond, Israel), **Russ Miller** (Bobby Caldwell, Jennifer Love Hewitt), **Andy Newmark** (Sly & The Family Stone, John Lennon), **Chris Parker** (Brecker Brothers, Bob Dylan), **John "JR" Robinson** (Rufus & Chaka Kahn, Steve Winwood), **Oscar Seaton** (George Benson, Boz Scaggs), **Ian Wallace** (King Crimson, Don Henley), **Dave Weckl** (The Dave Weckl Band),

"When you hear a groove, you love it, and that's what you go for. And everyone has to go for it the way *they* do it." Steve Gadd



"Groove is what makes people happy, it's what makes them dance." Gerry Brown

Mike Stern), and newcomer **Josh Dion**. Playing percussion was the legendary **Ralph MacDonald**.

MD had the opportunity to visit with some of the Groove All Stars drummers backstage. We asked them what the concept of groove meant to them, and how they approach a groove in their playing. Here's what they had to say.

Groovers On Groove

"There are many aspects of musical drumming," says JR Robinson. "The most important aspect is groove. Ever since I was a little boy I knew that was to become my focus. Simply put, I live and breathe groove."

So do most successful drummers. But each has his or her own definition of what that means. For example, Ian Wallace says, "A groove is a rhythmic feeling coming from a drummer's view. And it's deceptive. It takes years and years of drumming to be able to play a good groove. A good groove is finding joy in simplicity."

Rick Marotta comments, "I think of a groove as playing what feels good, whether it's with a band or on my own. There's something tangible yet difficult to define about a groove, but you know when you play it or when you hear it. I've also learned that there are many approaches to a groove. Pick one. If it works, you'll know it!"

Gerry Brown explains, "Groove is what makes people happy, it's what makes them dance. It drives the band, and it makes the band happy. It's therefore very important for a drummer to ride that groove. I want my groove to be deep. I want it to be like the lint in the pocket of my pants...way down past the change. I want it *that* deep."

Says Oscar Seaton, "I found out early how important it was to play a pocket. People understand pocket because it's a beat—it's a heartbeat. We can all play a



bunch of notes, and sometimes that feels great too. But when you play a groove, that's a different story. A lot of young players don't understand that concept yet. They have to understand that grooving is the only way to survive in this business. Playing a lot of notes comes and goes, but pocket stays forever."

How To Find A Groove

Okay, so now we know how important it is to groove, and to have a "deep pocket."

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"I make sure that the part I play gives each person in the rhythm section enough space to play their part." **Ndugu Chancler**

But how is this accomplished? Ndugu Chancler explains his approach, saying, "I try to lock in with the rhythm section. I make sure that the part I play gives each person in the section enough space for *their* part."

Michael Bland also stresses the importance of space. "A groove depends on time and space," he says. "It's really determined by the space in between the notes. I listen for that space, and that's how I govern the next point of impact. In my mind, I head for 'straight on.' I don't consciously drag or rush. But if I'm playing with a bass player who rushes, I'm liable to ride the time on the backside. The way I play music is from the outside in. I absorb my sur-

roundings, and then find my part."

Chris Parker takes a natural approach. "To me," he explains, "groove is a basic thing, like walking. You set a pace, and you become aware of your breathing and where your steps are falling. The consistency of your pace and your breathing helps when you sit down at the drums. It's a very physically demanding instrument, and you have to have your respiration right. Otherwise you could be holding your breath during a fill, where ideally you want to breathe so it's all flowing, linear, and relaxed.

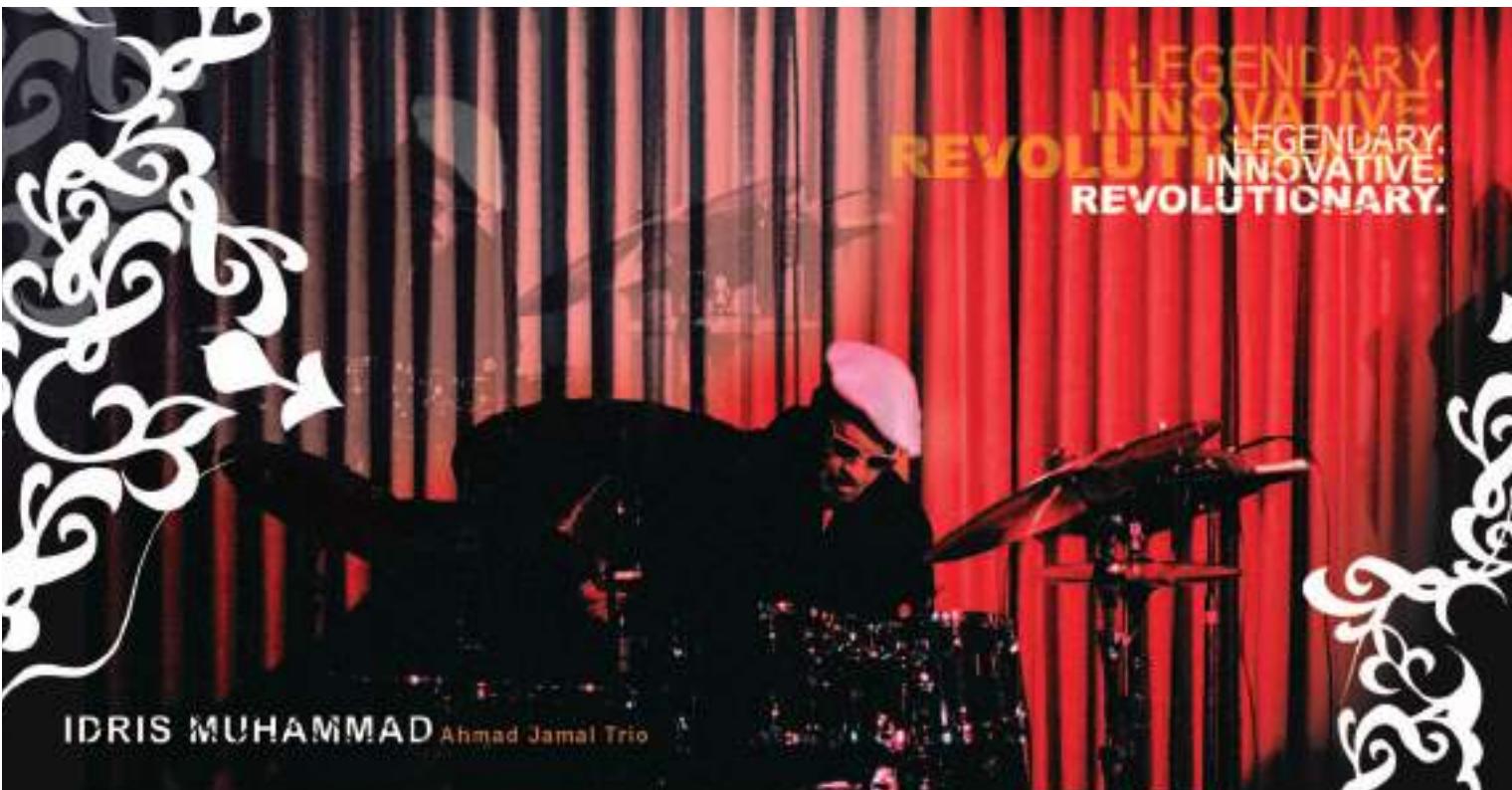
"To approach a groove *musically*," Chris continues, "I focus on finding the center of the song—melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically. Where's the exact beat, and what am I going to do to it to make it groove? I can goose it here or there, anticipating or offsetting. I never play ahead, unless someone says they want it to feel

nervous. They may say, 'Push it, push it,' and I know that that means to give it a little more fire on the burner. That's an attitude adjustment; it doesn't really change the time feel. What always feels the best to me is to play a little bit behind the center. That always feels natural—which isn't surprising, since I grew up listening to guys like Al Jackson, Roger Hawkins, Ben Riley, and Art Blakey."

For Those About To Rock

It's easy to think of "groove music" in terms of the classic R&B and swinging jazz played by the drummers Chris Parker mentioned earlier. But *any* music can and should groove, as evidenced by comments from the rockers among the Groove All Stars. For example, Bobby Blotzer says, "I learned about groove a long time ago, when I was growing up and listening to Motown music. I took the feeling from that music and shifted it into what my love was—playing hard, heavy, kick-ass rock."

Rock showman Tommy Aldridge adds,



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"Whenever I hear a drummer with a massive pocket, it's because he is playing in perfect time. To me, groove comes from precision."

Matt Cameron takes a slightly different position, saying, "I think groove is about moving the music in the way that it naturally wants to go. Playing with the ultra-tight Groove All Stars band forced me to really *listen* to a lot of different elements that I'm not used to hearing, since I normally play in a guitar band. It's fun to play off those elements, and it helps to accentuate the groove that much more."

"But music is about living in the moment," Matt continues, "and sometimes that doesn't mean perfect time. In a guitar band, there's some wiggle room with the meter and the groove, because sometimes with all the distortion I can't really get a clearly defined rhythm. But I think I've always tried to make that kind of music groove—even though there may not be a coherent thing to latch on to."

The Variables

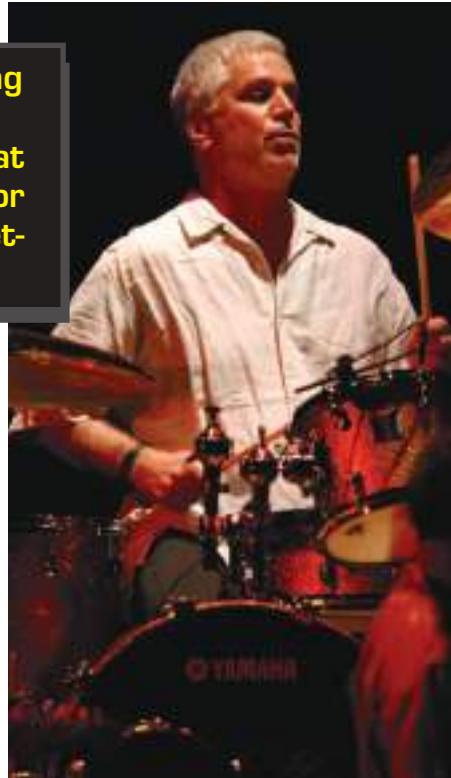
Zach Alford points out that musical style can affect how a groove is created. "Grooves can be very song-specific. If it's a rock-type thing, you might want to push it a little bit. If it's an old-time shuffle in a rock vein, then it has to drive. But if it's a blues-rock thing, then maybe it has to lay back a bit. I always try to put the groove where I naturally

"Groove means establishing a feeling, with impeccable time. It's about getting that one thing going for three or four minutes, and never letting up." Andy Newmark

feel it. That's usually what's going to make it sound the best."

Keith Carlock adds, "Music that grooves feels good, grabs your attention, and makes you want to dance. And I think that happens when the music has a consistent looseness or tightness, whatever the groove might be based on. That's why I started playing drums: I wanted to find out what that was all about. And I'm still finding out. It's a constant process, because there are so many different types of grooves, and so many ways that you can place the notes. Experimenting with different ways to play the same type of patterns and rhythms is great fun."

"The value of each note should be laid back," Keith continues, "to where it's consistent, though not necessarily perfect. I don't think 'ahead' or 'behind,' I just place things according to the song and the way the band hears it. If they're listening to me, then maybe I'll dictate more. But it's not



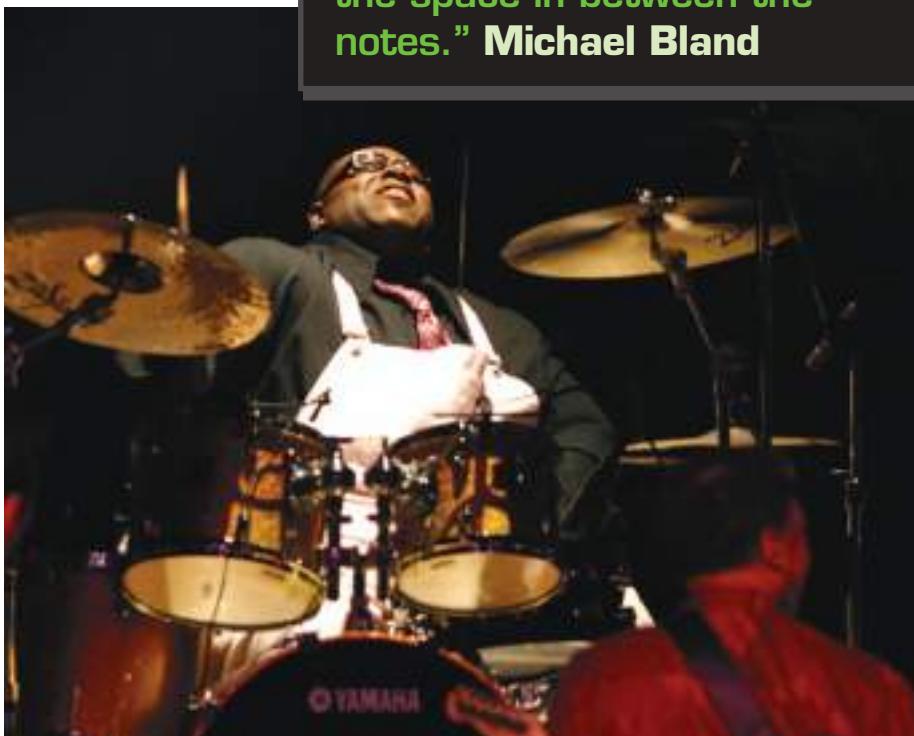
just about the drums. You all listen together to the band's sound, like listening to a CD. It's the whole mix of the music together that makes it happen."

Bring In The Closers

Two of the great groove drummers of all time close out our examination of groove. Steve Gadd comments, "The groove is what inspires me to play drums and makes me want to keep on playing. When you hear a groove, you love it, and that's what you go for. And everyone has to go for it the way *they* do it. If you can feel it, at least you have something to strive for. You can tell when people are grooving. It speaks for itself."

Andy Newmark wraps things up, saying, "Groove means establishing a feeling, with impeccable time. It's about getting that one thing going for three or four minutes, and *never* letting up. I respond to the song and to the music all around me, and I try to fit inside it. I'm never thinking, 'Play behind' or 'Play ahead.' I just think of melding inside. My philosophy is, 'Don't play the drums, play the music.'"

For more information on Yamaha's Groove All Stars, visit www.yamahadrums.com. For more on Rick Marotta, visit MD's *Caught In The Web* interview at www.moderndrummer.com.



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Chick Corea

Talking Drums With The Keyboard Legend

by Ken Micallef

How many piano players do you know who are also great drummers? Include Chick Corea in that very short list. Though never recorded commercially, Corea's drumming has been praised by some of the best drummers in the biz. And that's no surprise when you hear his equally percussive acoustic and electric piano and synth work, on albums that are some of the most revered in jazz history.

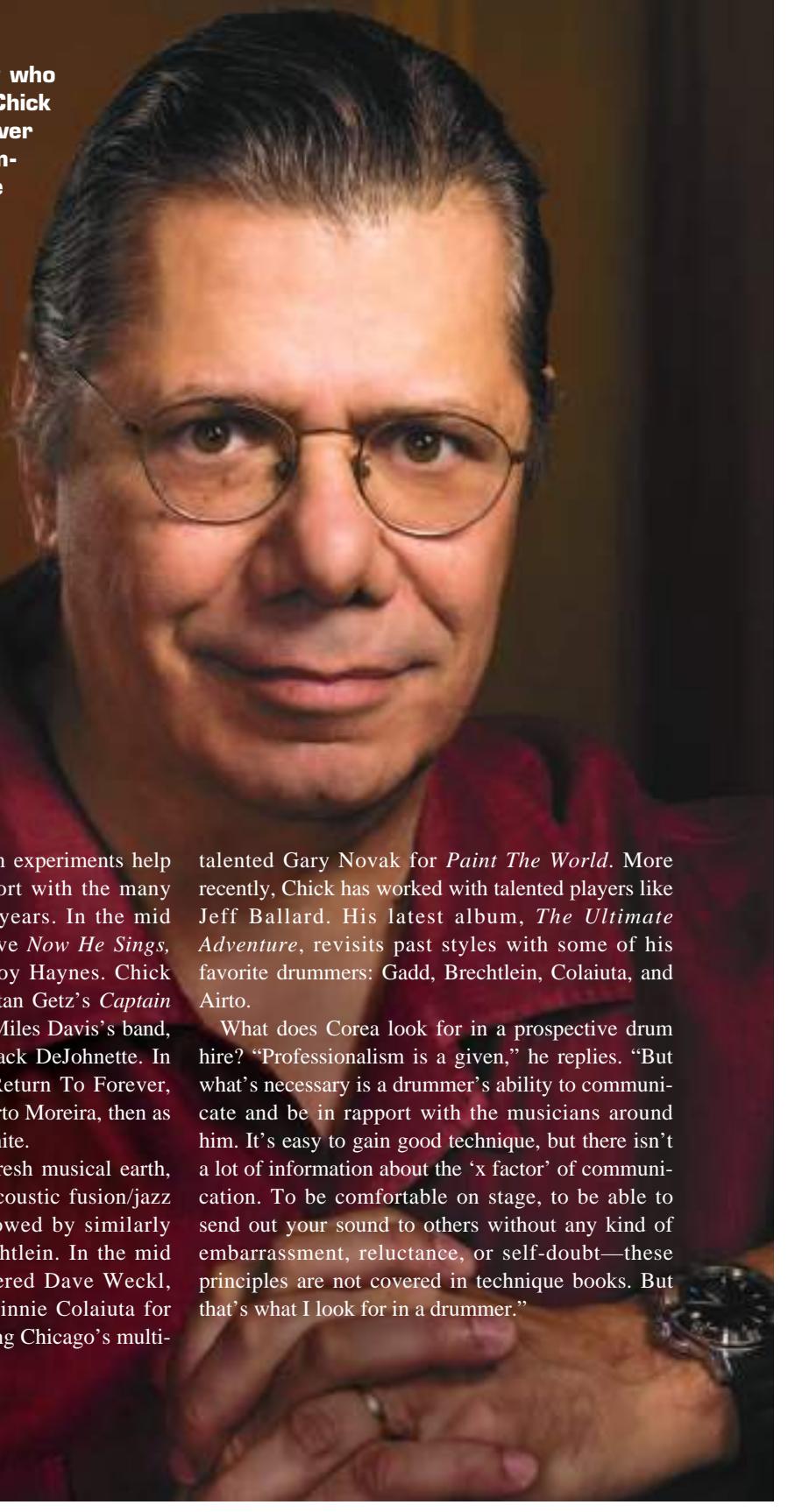
"I play the drums all the time," Corea says from a Midtown Manhattan hotel. "I'm experimenting with rim drums now. They're made with skin and are tunable. I like to have hand drums around my piano. I pick them up and play them for inspiration. And I continue to experiment at home on the kit, too."

Perhaps Chick's ongoing drum experiments help explain his choice of and rapport with the many drummers he's used over the years. In the mid 1960s, he recorded the explosive *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* with the great Roy Haynes. Chick played with Tony Williams in Stan Getz's *Captain Marvel*-era group, as well as in Miles Davis's band, where he also performed with Jack DeJohnette. In the early '70s, Chick founded Return To Forever, first as an acoustic group with Airto Moreira, then as a fusion ensemble with Lenny White.

Corea continued to overturn fresh musical earth, recording a series of brilliant acoustic fusion/jazz records with Steve Gadd, followed by similarly themed albums with Tom Brechtlein. In the mid '80s, Chick practically discovered Dave Weckl, before recording briefly with Vinnie Colaiuta for *Live In Tokyo* and eventually hiring Chicago's multi-

talented Gary Novak for *Paint The World*. More recently, Chick has worked with talented players like Jeff Ballard. His latest album, *The Ultimate Adventure*, revisits past styles with some of his favorite drummers: Gadd, Brechtlein, Colaiuta, and Airto.

What does Corea look for in a prospective drum hire? "Professionalism is a given," he replies. "But what's necessary is a drummer's ability to communicate and be in rapport with the musicians around him. It's easy to gain good technique, but there isn't a lot of information about the 'x factor' of communication. To be comfortable on stage, to be able to send out your sound to others without any kind of embarrassment, reluctance, or self-doubt—these principles are not covered in technique books. But that's what I look for in a drummer."



Tom Brechtlein

Tap Step (1978), Secret Agent (1978), Touchstone (1982)

Tommy is an incredibly responsive player. When we play together, he picks up the vibe of the other musicians immediately and complements them *so* well. His rhythms are sparkling and moving all the time. He's just a very creative and contributive group member to play with.

When we're working on music, Tommy is always trying to find out what the composer wants or what the music is trying to do, and he does everything he can to make it work that way. He's not stuck to a drum sound either. He'll try different things. He'll play with a lighter cymbal or a heavier cymbal, or bigger or smaller drums, in order to get the sound that's needed. Tommy has to be the most flexible drummer I've worked with, as far as his musical approaches and drumkit sounds.

Vinnie Colaiuta

Live In Tokyo (1992)

Vinnie has a complete artistic-ness about the way he makes his drums sound. He has a beautiful tone, and the way he matches his cymbals and touches the drums is a wonderful sonic thing. On the track "Queen Tedmur" [from *The Ultimate Adventure*], he set up his complete kit, but the demands of the song were quite delicate. If you listen to his playing, you can see how the delicacy of the way he used the snare drum, the way he touched the cymbals, and the way he made splashes on the cymbals are quite unusual. It was the perfect, poetic touch. He's like a master painter. *Live In Tokyo* was totally different. That was live and we were jamming. It was about the energy.

Steve Gadd

The Leprechaun (1975), My Spanish Heart (1976), Friends (1978), Mad Hatter (1978), Three Quartets (1981)

Steve brings a depth of music and groove to the drums that goes beyond drumming. He has a sense of music that enhances the rhythm. Before he even picks up a stick, we always spend time listening and talking. He doesn't start playing right away. Steve gets a concept going first: We'll talk, he'll listen, he'll look at the

score, and he'll have me play it again. He'll ask me about a part, and he'll get into it until he really understands and formulates a concept. Then, when he's got it, he sits down and creates this magical enhancement to what he's just heard.

Steve and I work together a lot of different ways. Sometime it's a jam, which might end up being one take. And some-

times it's a real studied thing that we take apart and try different versions of.

Steve's playing on *Leprechaun* is just spectacular. That's why we mixed the drums so loud on that one! *Mad Hatter* is also great. *Friends* is wonderful too. Steve loves to have a particular sound on his kit that he's developed, which is part of his signature.

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MAPEX

Roy Haynes

*Now He Sings, Now He Sobs
(1968), Trio Music (1981),
Rendezvous In New York (2003)*

Roy Haynes has been an inspiration to me since way before I played with him. Our hookup on *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs* was a revelation, because here was a man who had played music with Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane playing my music with a completely fresh, new approach. He's always a surprise to play with. And his taste in how he interprets anything that we do is completely unique. And look, he's in his eighties now and playing like a young man. Amazing.

Those sessions for *Now He Sings* were recorded over two days. We had nine hours in the studio. We did maybe two takes of a couple of songs, but most of them were done in one.

Roy was my first choice for that record. At that time I was working with the Stan Getz quartet. It was the first time I played with Roy when he was working with Steve Swallow on bass. But I was also making music with Miroslav Vitous at that time, and I thought the mix between his wide-open style and Roy's real poppy, bebop style would be interesting—and it was. They really worked well together, coming from two different angles.

Airto Moreira

*Return To Forever (1972),
Light As A Feather (1973)*

Airto's beat, touch, and way with a cymbal makes me get into a very special way of playing. He makes different sounds on the drums than he does with percussion, but it's the same player. When he plays percussion, he tends to spice the music more or enhance things. When he gets on the drumkit, he just plays a different role. He has a totally unique style of drumming. In the acoustic *Return To Forever*, Airto added accents, and [bassist] Stanley Clarke laid down the beat.

Gary Novak

*Paint The World (1993),
Time Warp (1995)*

Gary does everything. He can play any kind of beat. That's what we did with that

album, *Paint The World*. We played all sorts of rhythms, and Gary was adept at all of them—very inspiring.

Dave Weckl
Elektric Band (1986),
Light Years (1987),
Eye Of The Beholder (1988),
Akoustic Band (1989),
Inside Out (1990),
Beneath The Mask (1991),
Alive (1991), To The Stars (2004)

Dave has more than one great skill. He's a magnificent drummer, but I don't think he's fully acknowledged as an artist—a fine composer and arranger. He's kept his vision of the music that he loves, he put his own band together, and he continues to make tremendous music with his group against some pretty wild odds. Trying to take a band like that on the road and keep it going is hard, but he does it. I sat in with his quartet recently and it was wonderful.

Dave as a drummer has mastered the whole thing. He communicates his messages very well. His tuning of the drums, his balance, and how he goes into the electronics of miking and sound reproduction is impressive. He takes responsibility for all of that. He's very artistic at mixing his own records as well.

Lenny White
Hymn Of The Seventh Galaxy (1973), Where Have I Known You Before (1974), No Mystery (1975), Romantic Warrior (1976)

Stanley recommended Lenny, and when he came and played with us, he was just full of life and energy. I like that he approached the music not as a rock drummer. He could play a backbeat when required to, but he also had a loose swinging style that seeped all the way through his rock playing. Lenny has a way of playing a backbeat that I think no one else has, and I really love that—very beboppy and jazzy.

Lenny had carte blanche with us. I would sometimes want a stop to happen here or there, but he mainly created all of the drum parts. Of the albums, I think *Romantic Warrior* brought the group to a

point of balance. And Stanley, Lenny, and Al Di Meola each wrote a composition for that record, so everyone's creative input was at its height. I like *Hymn Of The Seventh Galaxy* as well.

Tony Williams
Water Babies (Miles Davis, 1968), Captain Marvel (Stan Getz, 1972)

I first played with Tony when he was in Boston. We were both Bostonians and worked together a little bit there playing some jam sessions. But he quickly disappeared to New York, working with Jackie McLean and then Miles Davis.

When I joined Miles in '68, Tony was there for the first six months. We played together before Jack DeJohnette took over the drumming chair. Tony was a magnificent musician. His drumming was always a study in arrangement. Where he started, where he stopped, when he played just a tick on the cymbal, or when he played something completely bombastic, is a study in how you orchestrate and arrange percussion for music. He was the first

drummer I knew who ever took the concept of a jazz kit out that far.

And let's not forget Tony's complete technical mastery—his hands and snare drum technique were amazing. Did you ever see when he would play concerts and he would warm up by playing single-stroke rolls around the drums? The engineer would be getting sounds on the PA, and Tony would accommodate him by starting with a real slow single-stroke roll that would gradually accelerate to this incredible speed, and then he would play them all over the toms. Tony loved single strokes.

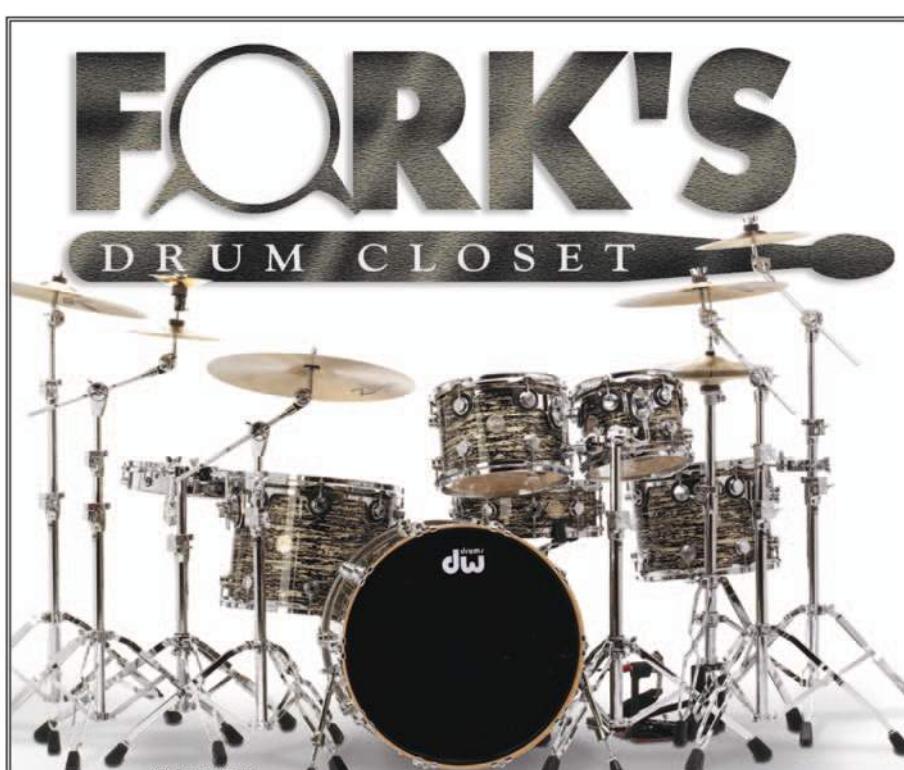
Tony's command of the kit and of drumming were unbelievable. A lot of drummers can command their instruments, but his ultimate strength was his musical sense.



To hear some of the tracks mentioned in this month's A Different View, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.



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Simon Phillips' New Pad Uprooting & Upgrading

story and photos by Mike Haid

Following Simon Phillips' collaboration with monster technician Virgil Donati—when he recorded Virgil's drum tracks for the Planet X CD *Moon Babies* in his home studio in Sherman Oaks, California—the legendary British drummer decided that the separate concerns of work and living are not meant to share the same space.

Simon's home studio wasn't your typical garage or basement conversion. He literally used his entire house, including bedroom, kitchen, dining room, and living room. "When you're single, you can get away with that," Simon says today. "But once you start living with someone, there's more of a responsibility to share the living space. In this business, as much as I try to keep things Monday-through-Friday, it doesn't always work that way. It also became difficult having musicians in the house all the time."

Mixing Toto's *Live In Amsterdam* DVD further suggested that Phillips' home/work space scenario was becoming too limiting. It was time to move the studio and drums out of the house.

After a couple of years spent searching for just the right spot, in 2005 Simon discovered a small studio in Sherman Oaks that was being leased by Sheila E. Sheila was moving out and looking for someone to move right in. It was a scary change for Simon, because he had now become the owner/manager of Phantom Recordings, a commercial studio with monthly expenses. He also spent lots of time and money upgrading the studio to his liking, including a newly designed 400-square-foot control room.

Ironically, Simon didn't play drums on the first session that he recorded in the 700-square-foot main room. Rather, he engineered while Gregg Bissonette played kit. Fortunately, Phillips' recent work with Toto has helped keep his studio in business. Once the rest of the band had seen and heard what Simon had done to upgrade the space, they decided to write and record their new album there, with Simon engineering and playing drums. This kept the studio booked during its first year of business.



Simon has done session drumming since 1971, and he's worked from the other side of the glass since 1983. Since then he's developed a successful second career as engineer and producer. According to Simon, "There have been certain years between 1983 and now when I have done more engineering than drumming. The problem is that when I get involved in mixing, I don't touch the drums for months at a time." Though Simon says he still struggles with his double duties, he asserts he would never give up playing drums. "I love it too much."

Phillips recorded the latest Toto record with a brown Tama Starclassic kit, but he retired it after acquiring a Starclassic Bubinga set. The Bubinga kit features bass drum-mounted toms, floor-standing cymbal stands, and floor toms with legs. On his previous setup, everything was mounted on a rack. "These are essentially the same drum sizes and configuration that I used back in 1983," he explains. "But I was really getting tired of the rack. It's nice to have complete isolation of the cymbals and floor toms again, and it just feels so much better."

Phillips says he doesn't collect drums or keep extra kits around, though he does keep a good selection of snare drums for recording. These include a 1971 Ludwig Supraphonic 400—his first snare and the one he used with his father's band; a Ludwig 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Supraphonic 402, which he bought in 1974 and has used on



many recordings; a 1949 Slingerland snare; and a 1939 Leedy—the "Space Boogie" drum he bought from Paul Jamieson in 1979, which he's recently refurbished with all original Leedy parts.

Simon also owns several Tama prototype snare drums, including his signature series snare, which he's used on most of his recent recordings. He also uses a variety of Zildjian A Custom and K cymbals. (For more straight-ahead jazz and small-group recordings, Simon plays Zildjian Constantinoples.) All his hardware is Tama, and Pro-Mark has recently created a 25th-anniversary signature drumstick, celebrating their quarter-century relationship.

So, when Simon uses his studio as his woodshed rather than for recording, what does he work on? "I wish that I was a bit more disciplined

about practicing," Simon confesses. "But my busy schedule usually keeps me from doing so until I'm literally forced to learn something. I've never been a studious player, meaning I don't work on a lot of technical things. I usually warm up before I play a gig, but I actually enjoy going out cold and having to jump right in. I think that keeps your ideas fresh. When you've been playing as long as I have, you don't worry so much about the technical things, you just go out and focus on the music."

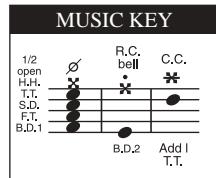
Phillips says he enjoys having his home finally returned to a private living space. When it comes to woodshedding there today, Simon gladly admits that he only keeps one pair of sticks and a couple of practice pads lying around the house.



Avenged Sevenfold's The Rev

City Of Evil

by Ed Breckenfeld



Times are good for Avenged Sevenfold. A prime spot on the Warped Tour and plenty of radio airplay has led to national exposure and big sales for the metal band's major-label debut.

Underscoring this Southern California quintet's mixture of heavy guitar harmonies and intricate arrangements is a crackling rhythm section, featuring James "The Rev" Sullivan on drums.

The Rev's grooves are solid and upfront on *City Of Evil*, and fans of hardcore drumming will enjoy the drummer's rapid-fire single strokes and double-kick combinations. Here are a few highlights.

"Beast And The Harlot"

The Rev gets a featured spot on the disc's first track with the following four-bar drum solo. He blasts through two- and four-note tradeoffs with a nice sense of phrasing and plenty of speed to burn. (3:32)

"Burn It Down"

This song begins with a percussive guitar riff that The Rev matches on his snare drum while using double kicks to fill in the holes in the rhythm. In the second four measures, he builds tension



Adam Leota

by changing to continuous 16th notes in his bass drums. (0:00)

"Blinded In Chains"

"Blinded In Chains" also opens with a staccato guitar/drum riff. Once again, The Rev adds nonstop kick drums in the second four bars before catapulting into a driving quarter-note groove. (0:00)

After a furious cut-time section with a double lead guitar solo, the song finally settles into a verse. During this section, The Rev plays a few more double bass notes to keep things moving along. (1:00)

4

When the band returns to the intro riff, The Rev has another brief solo spot. This one showcases an intricate and impressive double bass figure in the third and fourth measures. (2:50)

5

"Bat Country"

This hit single features a double-time groove (shown in the first measure below). The Rev ramps up the intensity at the end of the verse by playing 16ths between snare and bass drum (measure 2). He then adds his left foot, turning the rhythm into 16th-note triplets (measure 3). Finally, the phrase climaxes with double kick triplets that help ease the transition into the chorus's slower tempo. (0:32)

6

"Trashed And Scattered"

Here's a slow, heavy groove from an interlude that occurs near the end of "Trashed And Scattered." This section gives The Rev a chance to have fun with an old-school metal double kick part. (4:23)

7

8

"M.I.A."

The tempo jumps back up for the album's last song. This track features a galloping beat under a quarter-note bell pattern. Double bass figures like this add plenty of drive to the music without the clutter of continuous 16th notes. (4:41)

8

You can send requests for a future Off The Record to Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.



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Part 2: Funk

by **Tommy Igoe**

MUSIC KEY
H.H.
X
S.D.
● X
B.D.
●
Rim-shot

Last month, we began our six-part series on essential grooves with a deceptively simple 16th-note rock groove. Of course, I know you downloaded the track at www.moderndrummer.com to play along with, right? And you worked out both groove variations and then made up some of your own? Good! For this month's installment, let's explore the second of our five groove families—funk.

After observing the playing of many of my students, I've learned that the word "funk" often translates into "busy." Busy drumming isn't automatically wrong. In fact, funk music can be quite complicated. But it's important to realize that funk can just as easily involve very simple drumming that leaves room for the other instruments to funk up the groove. For example, here's the funkiest groove on the planet.

It doesn't look like much, does it? But when it's put in the hands of a true funk master, like Clyde Stubblefield, Steve Gadd, or Dennis Chambers, this groove becomes something much more than the notes you see on the page. It becomes a platform for bassists, keyboardists, and guitarists to do *their* busy funk thing.

"But," I hear you contesting, "I hear those guys play really busy on a lot of recordings, and it's *super* funky." That's true. Like any other musical genre, funk doesn't live in a vacuum. Good music changes constantly and features different layers of busy and simple patterns from all the instruments in the rhythm section. That's what makes it interesting. Can you imagine how boring funk would be if there was only one beat and only one way to play it?

The thing to observe closely is the *application* of the groove. Ask yourself: Is it the right time to be busy? Or is it the right time to play something simple to leave room for your funky bandmates? What does this song need from *me*? If you ask yourself these questions, you'll be on your way to sounding like a pro.

Let's take a look at a funky groove that's somewhere between simple and busy.

One of the things drummers love about many funk grooves is the syncopation (the shifting of accents) within the pattern. Example 2 uses a common technique called "displaced backbeat." The backbeat in contemporary music is on beats 2 and 4, but here we've displaced the backbeat on beat 2 by moving it one 16th note earlier to the "ah" of beat 1. This displaced backbeat does two very interesting things: It forces the groove out of balance, and it opens up the second half of the bar for numerous rhythmic variations.

Both of those things are easier to hear than describe with words, so get on your drumset and play four bars of Example 1 and then four bars of Example 2. Example 2 sounds like it has a bit of a stutter, doesn't it? This funky pattern became the backbone for most of the grooves in the Broadway musical *The Lion King*. *The Lion King* isn't a funk show, but this groove worked great on many of the songs that had an Afro-pop flavor.

Now let's have a little fun with some variations. Here's variation 2A.

Look closely at the construction of this groove. There are no backbeats, and there's a giant hole in the second half of the first measure. When you listen to the song, you'll hear how the guitar part inspired this particular groove. Give this variation a try, and see if you like it. If it's too syncopated for your taste, put some backbeats into the groove. And, of course, experiment with your own variations.

Here's variation 2B.

This is an example of a groove "spice." You wouldn't use this as the main groove for the song; it's too busy. However, playing something like this once in a while can be very effective. Obviously, there's a lot going on here, with busy hi-hat work

and intricate snare interplay. To help you with this variation, remember two words: Light and tight. If you play too hard or too loud, you'll suffocate the groove and take the life out of it.

Also, if your rhythms are sloppy, or if you don't have the technique and coordination required to pull off this groove, just leave it for another day. Work on your fundamentals some more, and then come back to it. With patience and focus, you'll be fine.

Here's the chart for the song.



Like last month's example, this chart tells you very little. That's what makes it a "professional" chart. As the drummer, you're expected to know what groove to play and when to fill, so you don't see those types of things notated very often in professional charts. All charts are different because all arrangers and composers are different. Someone may write out a specific groove once in a while, but be prepared to answer your own questions. Don't worry if you can't play through the chart perfectly right now. It gets easier as you gain more experience.

This song is simply a vehicle to help you sit in the pocket for three minutes, which is a task that shouldn't be taken lightly.

To play a groove that's clear, balanced, consistent, and musically appropriate is an art. As always, record yourself as you're playing to hear any inconsistencies in your groove. You can't accurately judge your performance in real time, so you must record yourself and listen back to hear what's really going on.

Here's an important question: When the click stops at letter A, are you still in control of your time? Be careful not to become dependent on click tracks. Most bandmembers are counting on

you to be the click, so you have to play confidently without a click as well as with it.

You're going to have a great time playing and experimenting with this groove. Next month, we'll rip apart an R&B/hip-hop groove. Then we'll throw it onto a track that's a little improvisational, so you'll have an opportunity to really dig in and get creative. Groove on!

Tommy Igoe is the creator of the "Groove Essentials" series of products published by Hudson Music. He is currently serving as the drummer and assistant conductor of the Broadway musical The Lion King. He has also performed with Art Garfunkel, Stanley Jordan, Leni Stern, New York Voices, Dave Grusin, Patti Austin, Blood Sweat & Tears, and many others. This article is excerpted from Tommy's book Groove Essentials: The Play-Along, which is available through Hal Leonard. Used with permission.



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A Musical Application Of Quintuplets

Part 3: Making Them Groove

by Ari Hoenig



Claudine Declercq

MUSIC KEY

open	H.H.	
S.D.		
B.D.	H.H. w/ foot	

In Parts 1 and 2 of this series, we were working with quarter-note quintuplets in a jazz context. This month, rather than spacing five notes evenly across an entire

measure, we're going to divide each quarter-note pulse into 16th-note quintuplets to create some challenging and funky grooves.

I recommend alternating between four bars of the quintuplet examples and two or four bars of a basic 8th-note groove. Practicing in this way will put the quintuplets in a more musical context.

Here's a basic 8th-note groove you can use.

1

Now try alternating between Example 1 and the following quintuplet ideas. Start slowly at first. Then increase the tempo when you get the hang of the sticking pattern. I've found that these figures feel the best when played between 44 and 70 beats per minute.

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Here are some examples that incorporate the open hi-hat.

9

10

11

12

Finally, here are some fun linear ideas.

13

5 > 5 5 > 5

14

5 > 5 5 > 5

15

5 > 5 5 > 5

16

5 > 5 5 > 5 >

17

5 > 5 5 > 5

Ari Hoenig is a top New York jazz drummer. He currently works with Kenny Werner, Wayne Krantz, Jean-Michel Pilc, Chris Potter, and Kurt Rosenwinkel. Ari also leads his own band on Monday nights at New York City jazz club Smalls.



To hear Ari demonstrate the examples
in this article, go to
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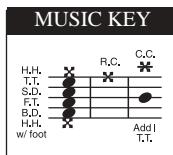


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Paul Motian

"Liza"

transcribed by Daniel P. Raimi



After twenty years of pushing creative boundaries with musicians such as Keith Jarrett, Paul Bley, Albert Ayler, and Charlie Haden, in 1989 Paul Motian decided to return to the American song-form tradition. On his three-

volume *On Broadway* series—currently being re-issued by Winter And Winter Records—Motian explores tunes by George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Oscar Hammerstein, and other composing giants. (Paul's newest disc, *Garden Of Eden*, is out now. More info can be found at www.ecmrecords.com.)

A highlight of the *On Broadway* series is the drummer's solo on "Liza," from Vol. 1. Of particular interest is the way Motian displays several different ways to approach a drum solo. After the quartet (which includes saxophonist Joe Lovano, guitarist Bill Frisell, and bassist Charlie Haden) runs through the melody at a breakneck tempo of 288 bpm, Motian—who's often noted as a master of subtlety and expression—throws himself into an ecstatic, rumbling solo.

In the first few measures, Motian develops short one- and two-measure phrases of 8th-note figures that focus on the snare drum and toms. This gives the beginning of the solo a broken feel, as if the drummer is pushing and pulling the tempo.

In measure 17, Motian plays a series of rolls on the toms, coupled with a ragged-sounding open hi-hat. By stamping on the hi-hat and letting it ring, the drummer makes this section feel like it's coming apart at the seams. Motian continues with this hi-hat technique until measure 33, when he marks the top of a new chorus with a strong hit on beat 1.

As his second chorus begins, Motian turns his attention to a long triplet pattern. Then in measure 38, he returns to rolls on the toms over an unsteady hi-hat. The drummer plays with the listener's sense of time in measure 39 by slightly speeding up the tempo.



T. Bruce Witter

After distorting the sense of time, Motian returns to mark the song's form in measure 49, which is the beginning of the tune's "B" section. In the next few measures, Paul plays a few sparse hits on different parts of the set, creating a sense of space and relief after the chaos of the previous sections. He gradually builds to the end of the solo with a series of broken 8th-note patterns that propel Joe Lovano into his solo.

$\text{♩} = 288$

0:33

5

The sheet music consists of ten staves of musical notation for a solo instrument, likely a woodwind. The notation includes various note heads (solid black, open circles, crosses) and stems. Several performance markings are present: grace notes indicated by small vertical strokes with asterisks (*), slurs, dynamic markings (> and >>), and articulation marks (circles with crosses). Measure numbers are provided at the beginning of each staff: 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, Second Chorus, 33, 37, 41, and 45. Measure 33 is labeled "Second Chorus". Measure 33 features a series of sixteenth-note patterns with "3" above them, indicating triplets. Measures 37 through 45 show a continuation of the rhythmic pattern with varying dynamics and articulations.

Paul Motian

49

53

57

61



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Fresher Fills

Creating Magic Moments In Music

by Jeremy Hummel

In my March '06 MD article, I discussed approaches to conceiving drum parts, with the emphasis being on different ways to come up with a groove that complements the song. Another subject that comes up frequently among my students and other drummers is how to play fresher fills.



Grooves and fills are two different entities. Grooves occur for an extended period of time in the song. In fact, a groove is the basic feel that the tune is based on. Fills, on the other hand, are moments—blasts of energy, exclamation points, or perhaps a few subtle hits to set up a new section. Where grooves are the sentences, fills are the punctuation.

Searching For Something New

Drummers are always looking to play some new fills rather than the same old thing. I've talked to many people who feel that their fills are stagnant, lacking excitement or originality. This frequently occurs because we often play what we know rather than risk "messing up" or not sounding good immediately.

I believe that lack of originality is the result of one of two factors. Either our musical library doesn't have enough information, or there is *too much thinking*

Playing the same fill all the time is like going to your favorite Italian restaurant and only ever ordering spaghetti.

involved. I've done experiments with my students on this matter, and I've noticed a common theme.

Here's the scenario: I'll ask the student to play a basic groove for four or eight bars, with a fill at the end of the section (as one would play to transition from a verse to a chorus). In most cases, what happens is that while the student is playing the verse groove,

the thought process begins: "What am I going to play for the fill?" As soon as that thought becomes a factor, nine times out of ten the student will play something he or she has already performed hundreds of times.

Ya Gotta Let Go

When in doubt or pressed, we usually go with what we know. Familiarity can be a comforting feeling. But drumming and music are like life: If you want some excitement, you sometimes have to allow yourself to let go and be in the moment. Playing the same fill all the time is like going to your favorite Italian restaurant and only ever ordering the spaghetti. If you want a fresh, unique experience, you need to be willing to try something different on the menu.

I realize that spontaneity may not come easily to everyone. If it did, we'd never have the problem of coming up with new things. For many people, it's simply a matter of getting started in a new direction. Hopefully, this article will help you with this.

Getting Started

To begin with, start somewhere different. I think we all have a favorite place to go at the beginning of our fills. In rock music, it tends to be the snare drum. Try kicking things off on one of the toms or the hi-hat. Or perhaps start the fill with a bass drum hit and a cymbal crash. We usually just think of crashes coming at the end of phrases, but they can be used anywhere—if it's done tastefully. A good reference for putting crashes at different spots is Josh Freese on either of his recordings with A Perfect Circle, or on Chris Cornell's *Euphoria Morning*.

Next, how about using some different stickings? For example, if you're used to doing all single strokes around the kit, try doing double strokes—or a combination of the two.

Another concept that could really help to change things up is to simply place accents at different spots. It's very common to accent on the "1" or on the quarter notes. Instead, try coming into the fill with a subtle or softer double stroke on the snare, and then putting the emphasis on the "&" or the "2." A great way to help with this is to revisit your rudiments and incorporate accent displacement, starting with single, double, and triple paradiddles. The options are endless.

Rudimentally Speaking

I love showing students who are just starting out how rudiments can be applied to the drumkit. They usually have a look of amazement, because this is stuff they don't teach in most schools. For example, the next time you're at your kit, try doing a single paradiddle (RLRR LRLL) by putting the ride cymbal and bass drum together for each "R" and using your snare for each "L." Start off slow, but once you speed it up and get it going fluidly, it sounds really cool. Want a tribal feel? Put your hands on the toms instead of the ride and snare. This is something you can do with the whole drumkit. Experiment with different tones. Challenge yourself by adding accents, changing hand and feet placements, and so forth.

Variety Is The Spice

Some other options you can employ within your fills are syncopation, call & response (repeating your hand pattern with your feet), and melodic variety. (Instead of always descending on the fill, try starting with the lower pitches and moving your way up.) In addition, use *all* of your gear. We don't spend all that money on accessories like blocks, bells, and mounted tambourines just to hit each of them once a week.

How about playing a fill for longer than you are accustomed to doing? I tried this a few years ago at the behest of a producer, and it definitely forced me into trying some new things. I had become used to the standard practice of playing a fill over two beats (half a bar of four). I was surprised to discover what filling over two extra beats could spawn.

Check Yourself Out

Okay, now that you hopefully have some different approaches, put some of these ideas to use and record yourself playing freely. Before or after you've done your practice exercises, let go of your inhibitions and your habitual tendencies. Play from your heart and *not* from your head. This should actually be part of your practice regimen.

The key to this experiment is to play without a net. Express yourself! If what you are doing is premeditated, it's probably going to be the same ol' thing. If you let go, I think you'll be surprised when you listen back. Even if you only hear one thing that is new or exciting, that is an accomplishment. Perhaps you can take that fill and use it again, or tweak it until you love it. Maybe it's just a matter of shifting a floor tom hit or changing the placement of a cymbal crash or two.

Remember, drum icons such as Keith Moon, John Bonham, and Tony Williams often played by the seat of their pants. How about Stewart Copeland on those early Police records? Do you think he was analyzing what was coming next? Or Bonham on Zeppelin's

How The West Was Won live recordings? Sometimes it bordered on a train wreck, but most of the time, it was spectacular. (And let's be honest: Even when it *was* a train wreck, did we really care?)

Do Your Homework

Finally, I can't stress enough the importance of having a strong library of musical ideas to draw from. Those ideas and concepts can then be expanded on by your imagination. If you've been listening to mostly the same style of music lately, it's always a good idea to step outside that box.

When I need some inspiration for a different approach, I listen to music that is *not* in the genre I'm working on. For example, if I'm working on a rock project, I may get out my Dave Weckl or Dennis Chambers CDs. If I'm involved in a funk situation, I might put on some jazz with Bill Stewart.

I hope some of these ideas will assist you in your creative endeavors. Part of the fun of creating is hearing something come to life. Whether it's conceiving drum parts or trying new fills, there are no boundaries. It's not about right and wrong, it's about what comes from your heart. Have fun!

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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Back Safety

It's Every Drummer's Responsibility

by Michael Bafuma, RN

Let's face facts: Playing drums puts extraordinary amounts of physical stress on our bodies. Playing a three- to four-hour gig rivals any

workout we could get in a gym. But how often do we consider the strain we put on our bodies before we play our first note?

Whether you're on a multi-city tour or playing on your local club scene, every night there is the challenge of getting your drums to the gig. Not every drummer is blessed with his or her own personal drum tech or roadie to transport, set up, and tear down the gear. Therefore, the responsibility to do all of these things falls on the individual.

Consider "weekend warrior" drummers who usually work a forty-hour week at a day job, and then play out two to three nights weekly. Transporting gear from the parking lot to the stage, setting up, playing the gig, tearing down, moving the equipment back to a vehicle, loading up, and being ready to go to work on Monday morning is exhausting. As both a registered nurse and a weekend warrior drummer myself, I know that permanent damage can be done to one's back by this repetitive straining, if proper preventive measures are not used.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which is the government agency responsible for maintaining workplace safety, has identified back injuries as the most common work-related injury.

OSHA has also identified "Cumulative Trauma Disorders" (CTDs) as the leading cause of back pain. CTDs occur when muscle tension, repetitive motion and overuse, and incorrect posture are present in an activity. As drummers, we repeatedly risk CTDs by lifting and carrying drum and hardware cases, PA speakers, and so forth. If not done correctly, these activities could result in career-ending injury.

A Backwards Look

The human spine is made up of many smaller bones called vertebrae. These bones are spaced apart from each other by intervertebral disks made of a fibrous, cartilage-like substance. The range of movement of each individual vertebra/disk segment is very small. However, when many segments move together, it allows us to touch our toes, or bend from side to side.

Under normal circumstances, the vertebrae and disks are arranged such that the spine forms an "S" shape. The curves that make up the "S" are there to maintain proper posture, and to keep our head centered over the rest of our body. The "S" curve struc-

ture also provides the maximum amount of support with the minimum amount of muscle use. The muscles and ligaments in our backs are there for stabilization and support. They are *not* designed to handle the stress of lifting a heavy load. (Larger muscles, like those in our legs, should do that job.) The bottom line is that frequent heavy lifting using poor technique could result in damage to the spine and the surrounding muscles.

Solutions

There are two major ways to help prevent back injuries and to maintain a healthy back. The first is by using proper lifting and carrying techniques. The second is by strengthening and stretching the supporting muscles of your back with daily exercises. Employing these two methods can help you in two ways: It can minimize damage done by the repetitive lifting and carrying of your gear, and it can reduce the risk of future back injury.

Here are some tips adapted from guide-



lines presented by OSHA and the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons for promoting back safety in the workplace.

1. Before starting to move your gear, *plan ahead*. Get to the gig early so you don't have to set up in a rush. You won't be paying attention to your back-safety mechanics if you arrive late to a gig.

2. Once you arrive at the gig, walk the route from your vehicle to the spot where you will be setting up. Is the path clear? Are there any cords, boxes, trash cans, or other objects in your way that you can trip over? Make sure you have no obstacles in your path.

3. Determine whether you'll have to go up any steps, or open any doors. You won't want to discover one of these obstacles when you're carrying a heavy piece of equipment.

Once you've chosen your route, it's time to properly pick up and move your stuff. Here are a few tips for that job.

1. When picking something up, first stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. This provides a better base of support. Bend at the knees, *not* at the waist. Bending at the knees, and looking straight ahead while lifting, maintains your original posture—the "S" curve of your back—just like when you are standing. Bending at the knees also flexes the large muscles of the legs and uses their strength to lift the load. Bending at the waist *without* bending the knees straightens the "S" curve considerably and puts too much stress on the back's muscles and ligaments.

2. It is as important to maintain proper posture while carrying as it is while lifting. Therefore, keep the load as close to your body as the size and bulkiness of the gear will allow. This continues to use the large muscles to support the load. Extending your arms in front of you while carrying something changes your center of gravity and puts additional stress on the back muscles. Most importantly, while carrying, *do not twist* your body at the waist to change direction. Move your body as a single unit, maintaining proper posture throughout.

3. When it comes time to set down your load, simply follow the steps you took to pick it up. Set your feet shoulder-width apart to increase your base of support, and bend at the knees, maintaining the "S" curve in your back. Set down the load,

then stand up straight again and go get another piece of your kit. (By the way, if you can use wheeled cases, hand trucks, or rolling carts to reduce your transportation workload, by all means do so.)

Setups And Breakdowns

Remember to maintain proper posture and alignment of your spine ("S" curve) while setting up your kit and additional gear. Avoid bending at the waist to assemble cymbal and mic' stands, install pedals,

and so forth. Rather, bend at the knees, or bring the task to eye level by sitting on the floor. The same mechanical principles apply to tearing down the kit at the end of the night.

Whether you're a touring drummer with a drum tech to set up for you, or a weekend warrior like me, you still have to protect your back. It could make the difference between a prosperous, satisfying drumming career and one that is ended prematurely.

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Health & Science

Build Yourself Up

In addition to using proper techniques to lift and carry your heavy equipment, you can use simple exercises to help strengthen your back and supporting muscles. These exercises can help reduce the risk of developing a CTD. Even so, you should always check with your physician before starting any type of exercise program.

The first two exercises help by stretching the muscles of your back.

1. Knee-to-chest lower back stretches.

Lie down on your back with your knees bent. Raise one knee at a time to your chest by pulling it up with your hands, and hold it for five seconds. Lower your leg to the floor, and raise the other knee. Repeat ten times for each leg.

2. Trunk rotation torso stretches.

Lie on your back, with your feet flat and your knees bent. Bring both knees to your right, and hold for five seconds. Return to center. Then bring both knees to your left, and hold for five seconds. Return

to center. Repeat ten times.

The following exercises are designed to help strengthen your back.

1. Half sit-ups. Lie down on your back with your knees bent. Put your arms on your chest. Raise your torso 6" to 8" off the floor. Make sure your head stays in line with your shoulders, looking straight ahead. Hold for five seconds, then relax. Repeat ten times.

2. Bridge. Lie on your back with your feet flat, arms by your sides. Lift your bottom off the floor, making sure that your hips stay even as they come up. Hold for five seconds, then return to the floor. Repeat ten times.

3. Leg lifts. Lie face-down on the floor with your head resting on your folded arms. Keeping your knee straight, lift your right leg up 6" off the floor. Hold for five seconds, then return to your starting position. Relax for a moment, then repeat the exercise with your left leg. Repeat ten times for each leg.



Knee-to-chest
lower back stretch



Trunk rotation
torso stretch



Half sit-up



Bridge



Leg lifts

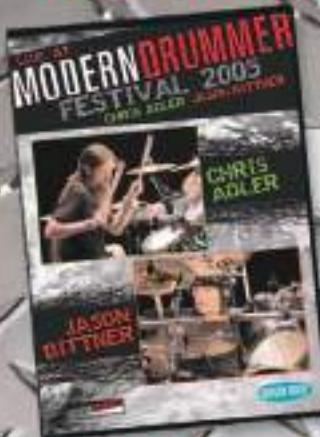
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Sleater-Kinney/Quasi's Janet Weiss

Drummer Janet Weiss is best known for her work with Corin Tucker and Carrie Brownstein in the aggressive all-girl band Sleater-Kinney. But she's also very proud of the latest recording by her *other* band, Quasi. Well, it's not really a band—it's a duo—in which the drummer partners with keyboardist/guitarist (and former husband) Sam Coomes.

Weiss, who's been drumming and recording with both bands now for ten years, really shines on Quasi's latest, *When The Going Gets Dark*. "We went out there on this one," Weiss says. "We were focusing on our strengths, and our biggest strength is that we can read each other's minds in a weird way."

When The Going Gets Dark is the duo's seventh record together. "Sam and I have been playing for well over ten years," Janet explains. "And we've been friends for a long time. I think we're both interested in having music

be a unique experience that's not really easy to duplicate, even on a record. I mean, I could never play some of the songs exactly like that again. It's a once-in-a-lifetime deal."

Janet says that the improvisational nature of Quasi really shines on stage. "We just go for it live. That's the joy and the luxury of being in a two-piece band. You have less chaos to deal with when you're improvising."

Since joining Sleater in 1997 for their well-received *Dig Me Out*, which was a year after she recorded the first Quasi record, *Early Recording*, Janet has somehow continued to juggle both bands. "All the parties involved are very understanding," she says. "And I'm the most gung-ho anyway, always wanting to play. But there was a point in '99 where it was a little tricky to do both bands. It worked out. But with back-to-back tours, it felt like I'd been on the road for an entire year."

BY BILLY AMENDOLA



PHOTOS BY JOHN CLARK

MD: Let's go back to the beginning. What attracted you to the drums?

Janet: Actually, the drums found me. I didn't find them. I've played guitar since I was sixteen. But when I was in college, I asked a friend of mine, Rich Ferguson, if he could give me a drum lesson. He played stand-up drums in a band called Blue Movie. So he came over and brought the classic book, *Stick Control*, and a pad. I got myself a pair of sticks, and he showed me how to read the notation.

Over the next couple of days, I worked on the book with my metronome, and two days later these girls asked me if I wanted to be the drummer in their band. They said, "We heard you're taking drum lessons and we want to know if you want to join our band and go on tour in two weeks." I was like, "Uh, well...." I'd never played a kit in my life. But I told them to give me four days to see if I could do it. So I got a copy of their record, borrowed a drumkit, and sat in

my room and tried to figure it out.

MD: How old were you?

Janet: I was twenty-two. So I said yes, went on this tour, and basically learned how to play in front of people. It was pretty embarrassing. I didn't even know how to set up my drums! It was trial by fire. I was basically just trying to imitate what I had seen other drummers do.

MD: Hopefully you had a sense of musicality from playing guitar.

Janet: I guess so. I think I have a good ear. I was born with that. And I was a music fanatic, so I'd been to a lot of shows and listened to a lot of music.

MD: Who were some of your early influences?

Janet: George Hurley from The Minutemen. Live, he was the first drummer I noticed. And I was always into Mitch Mitchell with Jimi Hendrix. Once I started playing the drums, I was like, "That's who I want to play like. That's what I want to do."

Another friend that I owe a lot to is

Chuck Profit. He was in a band called Green On Red back in the old days. He's a singer/songwriter/guitar virtuoso. In the four days that I was trying to figure out if I would go on that tour, not ever having played drums, he gave me a pep talk and said, "You only need one beat. That's all you need to go on tour. You just need one beat, so concentrate." And I was like, "Okay, I can learn one beat. That's doable."

MD: And there's no better experience than actually playing.

Janet: That's true. Someone can be *too* good for the music. I think that, first and foremost for me, it's the music. It's not how good my double-stroke roll is. It's how well you support and play the music.

MD: What was your practice routine like early on?

Janet: In the beginning, my practice was just band practice. I had to practice as much as I could with others just to be able to learn how to play. And then, after

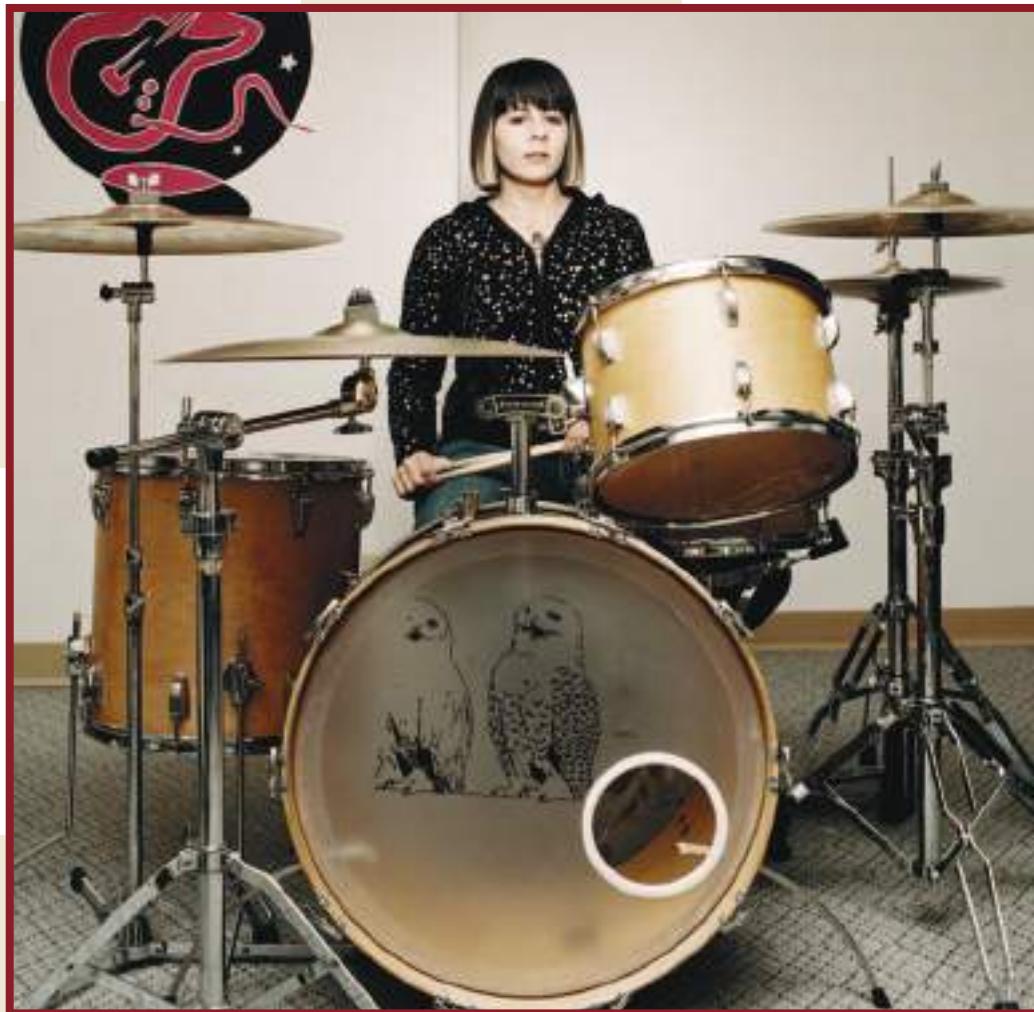
I played longer and longer, I would start practicing by myself. Even in the past couple of years, I've practiced more by myself than I did when I was younger.

MD: What do you work on?

Janet: Lately I've been working on integrating the kick drum into my fills. But I don't have any sort of set routine. I'll just sit down and think, What song am I having trouble with? What does it need from me on the drums? What do I need to practice to integrate that? I've also spent a fair amount of time trying to get my left hand as strong as my right.

MD: Do you play matched grip or traditional?

Janet: I play matched. When Sleater-Kinney toured with Pearl Jam, Matt Cameron was awesome to watch. He can switch grips, going from one to the other. He's def-



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initely one of my heroes. I loved Soundgarden so much, and Matt had his own sound with the band. That's kind of what I'm striving for, that when someone hears me play they know it's me. The drummer from Hella, Zach Hill, is like that as well. Actually Zach, Matt, and I made a drum record. We set up three drumkits in a small studio here in Portland and we just improvised.

MD: That sounds very interesting.

Janet: We have to release that. We came up with a fifty-minute piece. [laughs] It's not for the weak of heart. But it's pretty cool to listen to, especially with headphones.

Another drummer I've really been enjoying lately is The Mars Volta's Jon Theodore. He's a monster! And he's also someone who doesn't play the same thing two nights in a row. That's what makes their live show so good.

Sleater-Kinney went on the Big Day Out

tour with The Mars Volta, The White Stripes, and The Stooges. Jon would let me sit right behind him so I could watch what he does. It was very inspiring.

MD: There's no better drum lesson than that.

Janet: I told him that. I was like, "I'm taking a drum lesson from you every day!" Plus it's not like sitting down and having someone tell you what to do.

MD: And then it's your interpretation of what he does, not just copying, which is a good thing.

Janet: Right. No two drummers play the same way. They just can't, no matter how hard they try. No one can play Charlie Watts like Charlie Watts. The spaces between the notes are always going to be slightly different. That, to me, is what's so great about music and drums. Your legacy on the earth, doing something unique, is why we're here. And that's part of my religion. I get so bummed out when people try

A large advertisement for Alchemy Cymbals. At the top, the word "UDWALYN" is written vertically. Below it is a photo of Matt McDonough, a man with long red hair, playing drums. To his right is another photo of Matt Kinney, a man with long dark hair, also playing drums. The background features a dark, moody image of a drummer. The text "MATT McDONOUGH" and "MATT Kinney" is overlaid on the photos. Below the photos, the words "OPIATE for THE MASSES" are written in a stylized font. Further down, there are more photos of drummers and the word "Seven" repeated. At the bottom, the word "alchemy" is written in a large, flowing script, followed by "cymbals". At the very bottom, the text "ISTANBUL AGOP" and "ALCHEMY CYMBALS AMERICA, Corp." is printed, along with contact information: "TEL: (213) 624-4284", "FAX: (213) 488-1828", "infousa@istanbulcymbals.com", "info@alchemycymbals.com", and "www.alchemycymbals.com".

Janet Weiss

to be so much alike with their music, trying to get their music on the radio, and being acceptable to major labels....

MD: Making records is about marketing.

Janet: It bums me out. I don't want my music to be on commercials, I don't want it to be soft enough to sell something. I think that's kind of dangerous. And it's not very artistic. To me, I'd feel like the corporations won. I just hate that.

Do you remember when it wasn't like that? When did commercialism become

you prefer to record your tracks?

Janet: It depends on the song. I definitely like to try different room mic's and experiment with sound, but I always like there to be close mic's as well, just in case. I've recorded a couple of records myself, and it can be frustrating if you put all your eggs in one basket. I just think you never know what you need in the mix until the other instruments are recorded.

With Sleater-Kinney, I record in a live band situation. But with Quasi, it's not usu-

esque, open sound. Were they set up out in the open?

Janet: Yes, they were. We tracked at a studio here in Portland called Audible Alchemy, and it has an amazingly live room, one of the most fun rooms I've ever played in. The problem was that we tracked the piano at the same time. It was on the other side of the room, and the engineers thought that they had enough separation, but it turned out they didn't. Unfortunately, they didn't realize this until we got to the mix stage. We couldn't retrack that stuff again. Those were the takes we wanted on the record.

So I asked [producer] Dave Fridmann if he would mix it, and he just totally saved the tracks. He gave it that huge Bonham-sound and just blew everything out. He's a magician.

MD: He's worked with Weezer and Flaming Lips, right?

Janet: Yes. And he produced the last Sleater-Kinney record, *The Woods*. He's a drum guy for sure. He starts with the drums and builds from there. A lot of engineers or producers want to tone the drums down, but Dave likes to bring them to the forefront.

MD: Flipping around on the Web, I read someone's description of you as "a modern day Keith Moon, with a superb sense of time and taste." Would you agree or disagree with that?

Janet: Oh come on, I could never agree

"Music is definitely my religion, and I guess John Bonham would be my Jesus Christ. That's kind of embarrassing to say, but it's true."

acceptable with independent musicians? Sure, you've got to eat, and I understand that. I understand you've got to make a living. But it's just a drag that it's gone so far.

I heard a Clash song in a commercial today; I almost wanted to kill myself, because that was my favorite band in high school. Joe Strummer was my moral hero. But I'm sure those guys are out of money. It just becomes too hard. I've got a mortgage, too. It's definitely stressful. Luckily I have a band that can still play live and make money.

MD: Getting back to the drums, how do

ally all live. There's usually just one other instrument to play to, and I'm not sure what's going to be recorded on top of that, so I try to get as many mic's up as possible.

I don't like playing to a click track. I can do it, but it makes me worse. I play a lot of fills, and a click makes me feel too locked in. Being locked in is not how I want to be perceived. I want to be the opposite, I want to project an image of something that has freedom, has life to it, and is breathing. On this Quasi record, most of it is live with piano.

MD: The drums have this big, Bonham-

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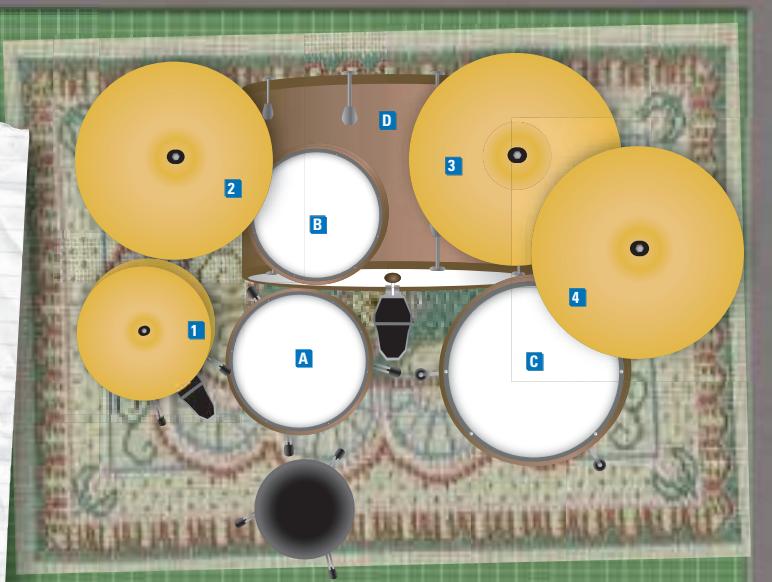
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Janet Weiss



with that. [laughs]

MD: Are you a fan of Keith's?

Janet: Oh yeah, totally. That's a great compliment! I can't even think of myself like that. There's nobody who can touch Moon, or Bonham for that matter. The parts that Keith came up with were just phenomenal, musical, non-direct, and beautiful. They totally stand on their own. And they make the music better. It's really inspiring. And Bonham made *every* song sound perfect. I'm a disciple for sure. I'm not a religious person, but that's about the

closest I get. Music is definitely my religion, and I guess John Bonham would be my Jesus Christ. That's kind of embarrassing to say, but it's true.

MD: Any other influences?

Janet: I dig classic rock. I listen to tons of Stones, Kinks, and Beatles, just like everybody else. I think the drummers in those groups just did it right and in their own way.

MD: Has playing guitar helped make your drumming more musical?

Janet: I think so. I have a melodic brain.

When we're writing songs, I hear guitar ideas as well as drumming ideas. I bug the other people in the band, "Try this, try that." I try not to boss Sam around too much because he doesn't like it. But every now and then.... [laughs]

It's a delicate thing when you create with people. Sometimes I can be a little steamroller. I just get excited. You have to be careful. But you also want to contribute and make a positive impact on the band you're working with. I've seen so many drummers be replaced in bands, and I didn't want to be one of those drummers that could be replaced by somebody right off the street. I wanted to make it hard for anybody to fire me. [laughs] I guess it's worked out. I haven't been fired yet.

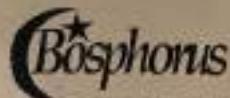
MD: Let's run down some of the tracks on the Quasi record, starting with "The Rhino."

Janet: When I said there were tracks I'd never duplicate, *that's* the track I

was thinking about. I don't think I'll ever play that song the same way again. That's *exactly* how I wanted to play it, and I even listen to it now and I'm like, What did I do to make it turn out so good? But that's basically just me, balls-to-the-wall the entire song. It's pretty aggressive, and I'm just trying to turn up the heat on that one.

MD: Is that one take from beginning to end?

Janet: Yes. And that was probably the second take we did. It just clicked. It's funny, but I only had three hours of sleep before



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Artist	Song	Album
Quasi	"The Rhino"	When The Going Gets Dark
Sleater-Kinney	"Let's Call It Love"	The Woods (Bonus DVD)
Quasi	"Sunshine Sounds"	Hot Shit
Sleater-Kinney	"One Beat"	One Beat

Faves

Artist	Album	Drummer
Led Zeppelin	Zeppelin IV	John Bonham
Soft Machine	Soft Machine	Robert Wyatt
Unwound	Leaves Turn Inside You	Sara Lund
The Who	Live At Leeds	Keith Moon

we recorded that tune. I was exhausted. I don't know how I managed to do it. I remember loading in for that session thinking, I'm so tired. How am I going to do this?

I try to practice a lot more before doing a recording, so I don't have to think when I'm playing. For that track, I just tried to

lose myself and not think at all. That's why we had someone else engineer the record, as opposed to doing it ourselves. When we do that, it's hard to run back and forth between the tape machine and the drumkit and keep your focus.

MD: How about "I Don't Know You Anymore"?

Janet: We tracked that one with guitar and drums, and I had never really practiced it. It's a song Sam had floating around. I just sort of made up the drum part on the spot. That track to me probably has the most boring drums on it. We kind of put the basics down, and then Sam overdubbed on top of it. To me, it's the least interesting. If we start playing it live, I'll have more ideas for it.

MD: How about "Poverty Sucks"? It's kind of Zeppelin-ish.

Janet: That's the oldest song on the record. It's almost like a segue between the last record and this new one. I didn't actually realize it was so Zeppelin-y until I heard it recorded. When we play it live, it's a lot thinner. And because we tracked with the guitar, the drums ended up sounding better because there was no piano bleed to deal with. It was easier to crank up the drums a little bit more to get that wide sound.

MD: How about "Death Culture Blues"?

Janet: That's the boogie rock number and our tribute to Aerosmith. I got my cowbell out for that one. I love the cowbell! [laughs]



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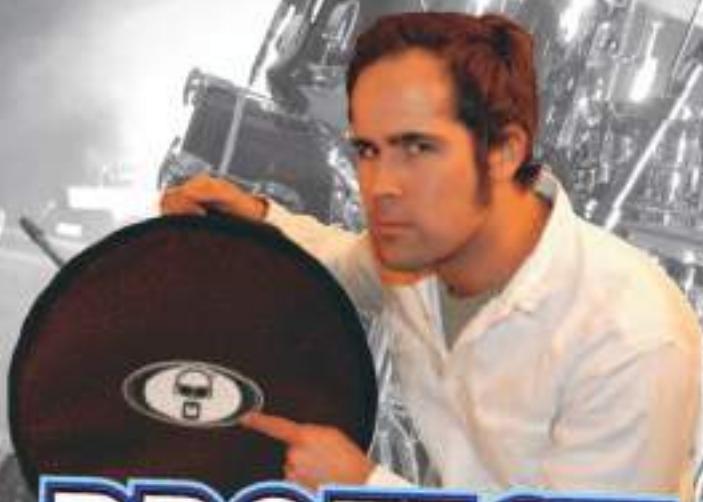
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Janet Weiss

MD: Do you use the same kit live that you use in the studio?

Janet: I do. I tend to get attached to one kit. Most of my kits are early-'70s Ludwigs. The Ludwigs are open, but not too modern and boomy sounding. They're airy, but punchy too.

MD: I have a fourteen-year-old female student who wanted me to ask you, being a girl drummer, do you ever feel singled out because of your gender?

Janet: That's a good question. I don't think about it all the time, obviously. I'm just who I am. I would never want to focus on the fact that I'm different from everyone else. Although being different is a good thing.

I guess I feel a certain empowerment being a female drummer. People expect me to not know what I'm doing, or they expect me to not know about the music that came before me. And for some reason, people think that women can't be rock heroes. But I want to be a rock hero. Just like somebody who listens to Jimmy Page wants to be Jimmy Page, I want to be that and I don't want anything to get in my way. And

being a girl isn't going to get in my way. Except that, of course, I have breasts, and they get in the way of my playing sometimes. [laughs]

I think that the community I came out of, the indie rock scene of the '90s, had a lot more girl drummers, and they were accepted. As women musicians, we really have nothing to lose. Half the battle is just getting up there and allowing people to see what we do.

MD: Any final advice for girls or guys?

Janet: You've got to learn how to say you're sorry, or you won't last in a band. [laughs] That's my advice. Learn to say you're sorry, even when you don't mean it. Don't compromise; just learn how to say you're sorry.

When people get their feelings hurt, that's all it really takes sometimes for big problems to develop. And a lot of bands suffer because people get their feelings hurt. You've got to work together—though there's not much room for compromise in rock music. You've got to go for it and make your mark any way you can.



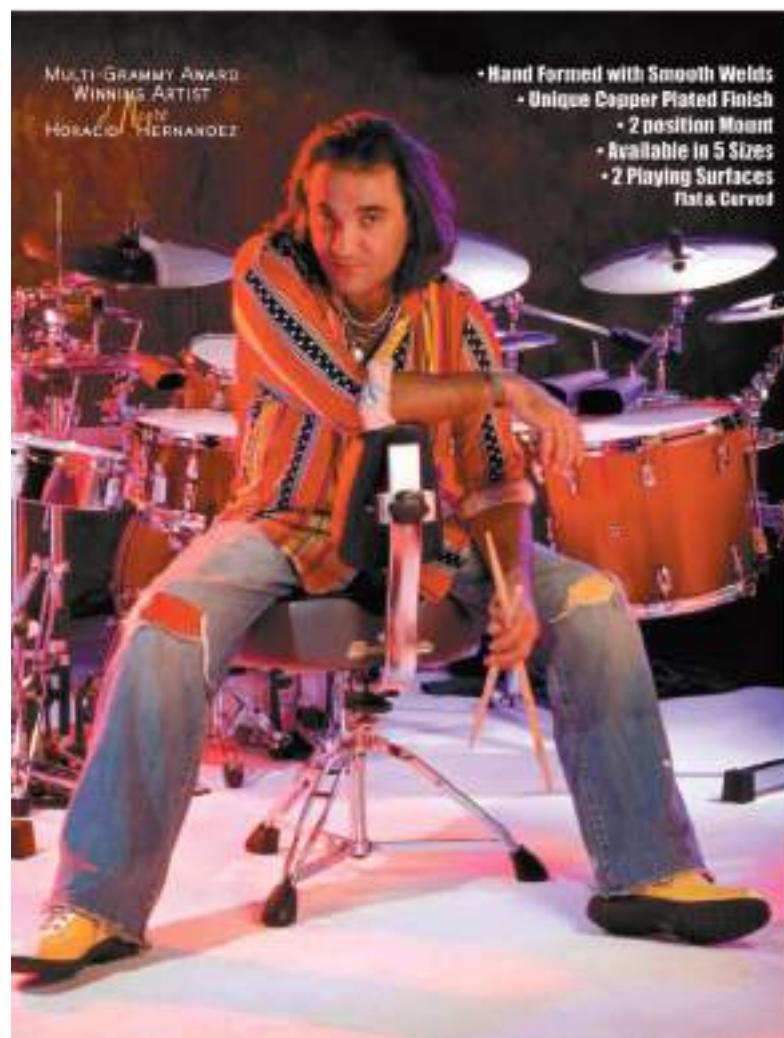
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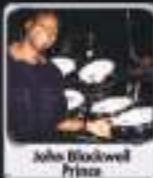
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★★★★☆	Poor



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For his third solo album, *Mobile*, Wilco rhythm magician **Glenn Kotche** has assembled seven thought-provoking percussion pieces and an original adaptation of minimalist composer Steve Reich's "Clapping Music." While each track is as compelling as the next, the true gem of the album is Kotche's "Monkey Chant For Solo Drum Kit." Within this piece, Glenn retells an epic Hindu tale by assigning each character to different voices on his unique electro-acoustic drumkit. (Nonesuch)

Kotche is also the catalyst behind Loose Fur's sophomore release, *Born Again In The USA*. Here Glenn and bandmates **Jeff Tweedy** (Wilco) and **Jim O'Rourke** (Sonic Youth) jam out on a collection of quirky tunes that range from the bouncy rock vibe of "Ruling Class" to the offbeat grooves of "Apostolic." (Drag City) And in case you haven't already, check out Glenn's impassioned playing on Wilco's live double album, *Kicking Television, Live In Chicago*. This one has "Album Of The Year" written all over it. (Nonesuch) **Michael Dawson**



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The East West Blast Test is just that—an experiment conducted across two latitudinal poles. In this case, New Jersey-based drummer **DAVE WITTE** (Discordance Axis, Burnt By The Sun) tracked an assortment of brief, spastic drum compositions and shipped 'em to California, where multi-instrumentalist **Chris Dodge** was forced to work around the often schizophrenic patterns and rhythms. It's quite an impressive feat. Crammed with plenty of punk-based phrasing, accelerated snare rolls, and even some funky blues ("Lithe"), Witte's kit flexibility perfectly complements Dodge's odd, playful melodies. This sophomore effort's test results are once again quite positive. (ipac) **Waleed Rashidi**

SATOKO FUJII FOUR LIVE IN JAPAN 2004

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Satoko Fujii's long-standing group oscillates between subtle/aggressive free playing and odd-time grooves built organically from the ground up. NYC-based drummer **JIM BLACK** (Tim Berne, Dave Douglas) offers his usual dynamic mastery and formidable extended technique all over the thirty-six-minute "Illusion Suite," wildly juggling sticks, brushes, and strange rattlesnake-like percussion. He solos with a unique clarity—riding rims, choking crashes, and stick-scraping his ride for some rich harmonic overtones. Elsewhere, Black shows some seriously quick chops, but never at the expense of musicality, and always drawing a gorgeous, colorful tone from his dry, high-pitched toms and dark, smoky cymbals. (NatSat) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

EXTREME BEATS

By Michael Parillo

SEVERE TORTURE, EARTH, BORIS

Frenetic, punishing, and made nice and weird by sub-guttural vocals, the latest from Holland's Severe Torture, *Fall Of The Despised*, never stays put for very long. **SETH VAN DE LOO**'s cut-and-paste drumming suggests an incurable case of ADD, as wild single strokes flit from the snare to the basses, then around the toms and back again. (Earache)

The first album in nine years from Washington State's Earth is, in a word, *creepy*. Breaking from the group's former wall of overdriven guitars, *Hex; Or Printing In The Infernal Method* deals in cleaner, twangier tones, like it's the soundtrack to a slasher film set on the prairie. **ADRIENNE DAVIES** accompanies the slow, droning guitars with a crisp, carefully measured attack. At times, she even swings. (Southern Lord)

Raw, white-noisy, and distorted beyond all reasonable levels, Boris's *Pink* is unsettling in its own right. The Japanese trio actually owes Earth (not to mention The Melvins) a debt of gratitude for its slugger offerings, though it roams the mid-tempo range too. **ATSUO**, sitting at a small set of huge drums, is more about punk pounding than thrash bashing, and gives *Pink* spit-in-your-face attitude to burn. (Southern Lord)



OF FURTHER INTEREST

LKN POSTULATE 1

A tumbling, churning, emotional journey of an alt-pop album, featuring full-kit slamming. A cool thing to note: This is all the work of one **Lauren Kathryn Newman**. It's rare indeed when a multi-instrumentalist shows big personality on the drums—usually the term "serviceable" is plenty complimentary—but you'll want to listen to this bombastic sound over and over. (www.greydayrecords.com)

Adam Budofsky



MARCO MINNEMANN CONTRAIRE DE LA CHANSON

This is thirty-six tracks (two CDs) of abstract punk-pop/prog/fusion with insane, off-the-hook drumming and bizarre yet interesting instrumentals, plus male/female vocal arrangements typical of **Marco Minnemann**'s Zappa-like musical sense of humor. Marco continues as one of today's most forward-thinking drummers, best exemplified with his "music to speech" compositions. (www.marcominnemann.com)

Mike Haid

CHICK COREA & TOUCHSTONE RHUMBA FLAMENCO

Corea is rediscovering and revisiting his love for Latin Flamenco music on this live two-CD collection. Though generally understated, **Tom Brechtein** is effective and involved when the complex Latin rhythms dominate the music, especially while interweaving with percussionist **Rubem Dantas**. (www.chickcorea.com) **Mike Haid**

TERA MELOS TERA MELOS

From complex guitar riffs to textural passages, free playing to tightly arranged odd-time patterns, Tera Melos play raw instrumental music with a punk-like intensity. **Vince Rogers** drums with a frenetic style that propels the music along, alternately supporting, outlining, and contrasting the guitar lines with tight hi-hats and fast snare work. A unique and interesting band in the indie realm. (www.springmanrecords.com) **Martin Patmos**

DEEP PURPLE LIVE IN CALIFORNIA 74

Hold onto your hat for this one; the energy and precision these metal pioneers exhibit on this DVD proves that, during classic rock's heyday, Deep Purple were unmatched among their peers when it came to pure rock 'n' roll *burn*. Lefty **Ian Paice** is simply monstrous here. (Eagle Vision) **Adam Budofsky**



HIROMI SPIRAL

★★★★★



Hiromi is an intense, provocative pianist who continues to focus and refine her talents on *Spiral*. Drummer **MARTIN VALIHORA** is in the fore of dynamic activity throughout the album, building "Open Door" to a fever pitch, and matching the pianist's sensitive finger-work on the Monk-ish "Love And Laughter." The suite "Music For Three-Piece Orchestra" is a telling title: At their best, the musicians are coloring their own jazz parts from a classical- and rock-inspired palette, and the results are passionately played. At worst there are too many notes: Bassist **Tony Grey** should think quality, not quantity, and even Hiromi's delicate use of dynamics and minimalist thinking goes out the window on the electric material, which comes off sounding cliché. (Telarc) **Robin Tolleson**

EAST WEST BLAST TEST

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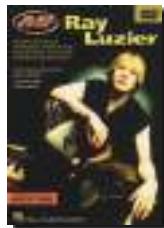
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This is a well-produced instructional from LA rock drummer Ray Luzier (David Lee Roth/Army Of Anyone/Billy Sheehan), particularly for drummers interested in developing practical rudimental hand techniques, a strong double bass drumming vocabulary, challenging independence, and lots of cool fills and grooves. Luzier offers many useful exercises for the hands and feet, and excellent camera angles catch all of the important aspects. The package includes a helpful companion booklet featuring many of the DVD exercises. Luzier is pleasant, articulate, and to the point in his commentary. Inspiring solo and progressive/fusion-oriented group performances with **Billy Sheehan** (bass) and **Toshi Hiketa** (guitar) round out this impressive and affordable package. (Hal Leonard) **Mike Haid**

ANDRE CECCARELLI TRIO AVENUE DES DIABLES BLUES

A legend of French drumming, **ANDRE CECCARELLI** is an energetic sixty-three-year-old who plays straight-ahead jazz with the kind of precision, purpose, and innovation that would shut down most drummers half his age. This is an all-standards outing performed with a blowtorch approach, featuring organist **Joey DeFrancesco** and guitarist **Bireli Lagrene**, who play with a kinetic ferociousness. *Avenue Des Diables Blues* is a jazz album for purists, deconstructionists, and anyone looking for a hot night of triple-decker fun. (Dreyfus) **Ken Micallef**

WILL CALHOUN NATIVE LANDS

Co-produced by **Mos Def**, *Native Lands* travels a million miles in **WILL CALHOUN**'s sonic drumming journey. Featuring heavyweights like **Pharoah Sanders** and **NANA VASCONCELOS** as well as chattering electronic loops, hand drums, and percussion, the album features the drummer in fifteen genre-smashing compositions. "Afro Blue" is given a proper hard bop reading, "Pyramids" is white noise-spewing 22nd-century funk, Miles Davis's "Nefertiti" scurries over alien loops, and "Umoja" combines bubbling hand percussion with a calm presentation. (Half Note) **Ken Micallef**

DUDUKA DA FONSECA SAMBA JAZZ IN BLACK & WHITE

Leading a classy, vibrant quintet, drummer **DUDUKA DA FONSECA** continues to burn his brand as one of the important purveyors of samba meets straight-ahead jazz. Duduka's wondrous touch and feel mixes a wealth of Brazilian rhythms with a swinging ease at home with modern acoustic jazz sonorities. Rhythmically infectious and bursting with big heart. (Zoho) **Jeff Potter**

JERRY KALAF JUST LIKE OLD TIMES www.jerrykalaf.com

PAUL MOTIAN GARDEN OF EDEN (ECM)

BILLY MARTIN SOLO LIVE, TONIC 2002 www.amuletreCORDS.com

TAKING THE REINS



JAZZ COMBO DRUMMING

BY DANNY GOTTLIEB

DVD LEVEL: BEGINNER \$24.95

Star drummer Gottlieb offers up basic concepts of jazz playing for drummers already possessing beginning kit coordination. There's little here in technique training or specifics. But those seeking a gateway to jazz will benefit from Gottlieb's "fireside chats" on time-keeping, rhythm section locking, and swing feels in duple and triple meters. Performances with a smooth, swinging quartet illuminate the lessons. Although low-key and limited in scope, Gottlieb's DVD does steer students towards the substance that really matters. (Mel Bay) **Jeff Potter**



RUSH CHEMISTRY: THE DEFINITIVE BIOGRAPHY

BY JON COLLINS

BOOK LEVEL: ALL \$29.95



The premise—and promise—of Collins' book is to uncover what has made Rush tick for decades: the *chemistry* between drummer **NEIL PEART**, guitarist **Alex Lifeson**, and bassist/vocalist **Geddy Lee**. Collins has a crisp writing style, which keeps the action moving along. But the book doesn't seem to dig deep enough into the private lives of each member of the Canadian trio. This comes as no surprise. Rush has always been tight-lipped about personal matters. *Chemistry*, then, seems to work best as an extensive band CV, taking us through the details of some excruciating tours and recording sessions. (It also motivates us to dig up our old Rush records.) Given the nature of the band, the question is, Can a truly definitive Rush bio ever be written by an outsider? (Helter Skelter) **Will Romano**

LED ZEPPELIN: THE STORY OF A BAND AND THEIR MUSIC, 1968-1980

BY KEITH SHADWICK

BOOK LEVEL: ALL \$29.95



This book is jammed with interviews, concert and tour information, and details of the making of each Zeppelin recording, with large black & white photos on every other page. Thankfully, foolish antics aren't the focus in this in-depth assessment of one of rock's greatest groups. Zeppelin set the path for many to follow, and this book is all about their musical journey. There are sufficient words about and from our hero **JOHN BONHAM** on every topic, from his first joining the band, to his influences, to making film *The Song Remains The Same*. This book is filled with insightful and historical details, making it a must read for any serious Zeppelin fan. (Backbeat) **Billy Amendola**



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DW Waterfall Bubinga Limited Private Reserve Finish And Bamboo Snare



Veneers from an 800-year-old Waterfall Bubinga log are the latest addition to DW's Private Reserve series of Exotics finishes. The Waterfall Bubinga is finished in glossy natural lacquer and may be ordered with any of DW's available sizes, shell configurations, and drum hardware colors. Prices will vary depending on exact finish and configuration.

Also new from DW is a bamboo snare drum that features horizontal-stave construction. Bamboo is said to provide a bright, high-end crack with plenty of body, offering a middle ground between metal shells and the warmth of a maple or birch shell. The 4x14 and 5½x14 drums feature Delta ball-bearing throw-offs, True-Tone snare wires, and DW heads by Remo USA. List price is \$1,025 for either size. (805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com



Swiss Confections

Paiste Signature, New Signature, And Traditionals Models

Paiste has been busy lately, adding new models to three of its professional lines. In the Signature series, the new 21" Dark Full ride is said to offer a dark, earthy, and meaty tonality, with the full, rich Signature series character.

The New Signature category now includes 14" Light Dark Hats Mark I. They're said to be "warm, dark, silvery hi-hat cymbals with a distinct jazz vibe."

Paiste's Traditionals Medium Light hi-hats in 13", 14", and 15" sizes have been enhanced in sound and function. They're recommended for traditional swing, jazz, and blues applications.

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Gretsch Custom Walnut Be-Bop Kit

Gretsch now offers its first 100% American-made walnut Be-Bop shell pack. The drums feature highly figured veneer and an enhanced low end, and are finished in a high-gloss nitro cellulose lacquer. Shell packs are available with (\$6,150) or without (\$5,975) a rail-mount tom holder.

(860) 509-8888, www.gretschdrums.com



Rise To The Occasion

Gibraltar Hydraulic Moto Style Throne And Foundation Tripod

Gibraltar's Hydraulic Moto Style throne features a 17" plush Cordura motorcycle-style seat, as well as hydraulic height adjustment that ranges from 19" to 26". A double-braced tripod provides stability, while Gibraltar's Super Foot stand feet offer added contact with any type of surface. List price is \$219.99.

Gibraltar's Foundation Tripod lets drummers simplify their setups by mounting their entire kit off one or two stands. The stand offers a platform mount for dual L-rods, along with a clamp for an additional cymbal arm. Stability is provided by the heavy-duty 15" tripod, while height adjustment ranges from 18" to 32". List price is \$155.79.

(860) 509-8888, www.gibraltarhardware.com



Ride 'Em Down And Thai 'Em Up

Regal Tip Ride And Grip Thai Sticks

Regal Tip's Ride stick has a round tip to produce a clean, defined sound on cymbals. It features a diameter of .565", a length of 16", and a slightly long, narrow taper designed to provide excellent rebound and faster play. A slightly heavier Crash model is also available.

The Thai Stick now features a vacu-formed handle for added grip comfort. The grip extends past the rimshot area to increase the stick's playing life.

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From The Islands And Beyond

Tama Limited-Edition Hawaiian Thunder Exotix

And Neo-Retro Starclassic Performer Kits

Tama's limited-edition Starclassic Exotix offering for 2006 is a seven-piece Hawaiian Thunder set. Its drums have an outer ply of rare Hawaiian koa wood, eight inner plies of African bubinga, and a center inlay of genuine abalone shell. The kit includes Accel-sized floor toms (12x14 and 14x16) with legs, as well as the all-new Star-Cast mounting system in Brushed Black Nickel finish (to match that on the drums).

Only 120 kits will be available worldwide, with just 35 kits slated for the USA. In addition, 300 Hawaiian Thunder individual snare drums will be offered, with only 50 being available for the USA. List price for the kit, with hardware, is \$8,599.99. The individual snare drum lists for \$779.99.



Also new from Tama is a Starclassic Performer Birch Neo-Retro kit, with a 16x26 bass drum, a 10x13 rack tom, and a 16x16 floor tom. The no-snare configuration allows drummers to use an existing favorite or purchase an optional snare drum with the kit. Only 30 kits will be available worldwide, in red sparkle finish, at a list price (drums only) of \$2,099.99. The set is pictured with Tama's optional HP5WN hardware kit.

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

A Little Something For Everyone

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And Joey Castillo Drumkit Pack

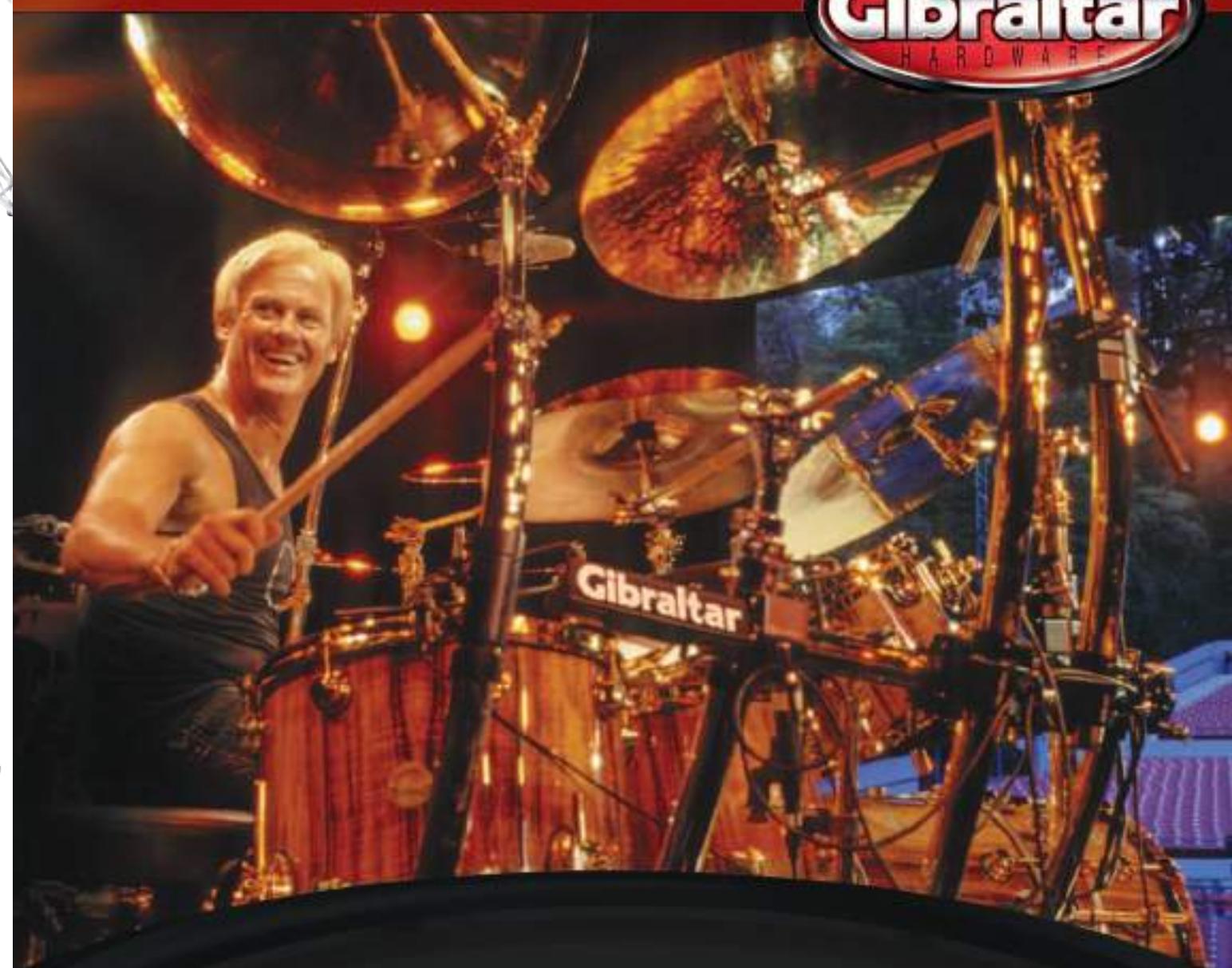
LP's Aspire Timbale kit includes 13" and 14" rugged metal shells said to provide "a wide-open head sound and a paila shell sound that would please any Cuban purist." To this is added a heavy-duty tilting stand with a sturdy cowbell mounting bracket, as well as a black Aspire cowbell. The timbales can be tuned with a drumkey, making them easy to incorporate into a drumset. The package lists for \$269.

For rock drummers who want to add percussion to their setups, LP offers the Joey Castillo Drum Kit Pack, designed in collaboration with the Queens Of The Stone Age drummer. It includes a Jam Block, a Cyclops mountable tambourine, and an LP236C Mount All Bracket to secure everything to any rod or stand

between $\frac{3}{8}$ " and $1\frac{1}{8}$ " in diameter. Also included is Queens Of The Stone Age's hit single, "Little Sister." List price is \$89. (973) 478-6903, www.lpmusic.com



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Pearl has a new lineup of Reference Alloy snare drums in 3-mm cast steel or 3-mm brass, with a choice of 5x14 or 6½x14 sizes. They're said to be the result of the intensive acoustic research associated with the Reference name. Also new are two 8-ply Rosewood snares from Pearl's Philharmonic Series.

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Yamaha's Marching Mutes are foam pads designed to let marching percussion instruments be played at low volumes. Snare and Tenor Drum Mutes are easy to place and remove with a single finger divot, while the Bass Drum Mutes are held in place by a simple hook-&-loop fastener attachment.

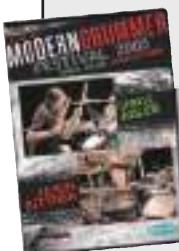
Snare Mutes are available in 13" and 14" sizes, Bass Mute pairs come in even-number sizes from 14" to 32", and Tenor Mute sets come in small (6", 8", 10", 12", and 13") or large (6", 10", 12", 13", and 14") versions. Prices range from \$12.95 to \$79.95.

(714) 522-9011, www.yamaha.com/band



The Reference Shelf

Chris Adler & Jason Bittner Live At Modern Drummer Festival 2005 (DVD) (Hudson Music)



This DVD features the full-length Modern Drummer Festival performances of two of today's most exciting drummers, along with in-depth interviews and extensive educational content. The 155-minute disc also includes demonstrations and discussions of Chris and Jason's performance techniques and practice routines—

providing almost thirty minutes of added performance and educational footage not included on the original Modern Drummer Festival 2005 DVD.

Included in the bonus chapters is Chris Adler's "On The Road" segment, in which Lamb Of God's drummer discusses his drum and cymbal setup, as well as his daily routine while on tour, tips for warming up, and what it's like to be on the road. Also included is Jason Bittner's "In Clinic" segment, with exclusive footage of the Shadows Fall drummer at a clinic in Ibbenbüren, Germany. In addition, there's an eighteen-minute lesson that includes audio and video of Jason's studio performance of "The Light That Blinds," complete with an explanation of his drum part in that song. List price is \$29.95.

(888) 796-2992, www.hudsonmusic.com, www.halleonard.com

Pure Energy (DVD)

by Tony Royster Jr. (Drum Workshop)

The follow-up to Tony Royster's first instructional video is a performance-driven DVD that highlights Royster's skill as a soloist, as well as performances with hip-hop drummer and producer Nisan Stewart and Royster's band, Inside Out. Royster weaves his way through several musical genres and breaks down his playing and practicing technique. The DVD is recorded in high-definition and 5.1 surround sound. List price is \$39.95.
(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com



Turn It Up & Lay It Down Volumes 4 & 5 (CDs)

by Spencer Strand (Rhythm Tech)

Following the success of the first three volumes of this rhythm-section-minus-drums, play-along CD series, volumes 4 and 5 have been developed to



help drummers expand their knowledge and technique in contemporary jazz and metal styles.

Volume 4, Baby Steps To Giant Steps: The Road To Fast Bop features a jazz quartet (minus drums) playing eleven tracks that take players from medium swing at 100 bpm all the way up to a burning version of "Giant Steps" at 310 bpm. *Volume 5, Double Pedal Heavy Metal* has heavy bass and guitar riffs written specifically for double bass drummers. List price for each CD is \$19.95.
(914) 636-6900, www.rhythmttech.com

Sabian 25th Anniversary DVD



In celebration of their 25th anniversary, Sabian is including a free DVD in all of the company's 2006 B8 performance sets. It can also be viewed and downloaded at the company's Web site. The DVD highlights leading Sabian artists and showcases how twenty-five years of Sabian innovation has influenced their playing and shaped their sound. The twenty-two-minute DVD features Daniel Adair (Nickelback), Robby Ameen (Jack Bruce, El Negro & Robby Band), John Blackwell (Prince), Terreon Gully (Christian McBride Band), Tomas Haake (Meshuggah), Keith Harris (Black Eyed Peas), Mike Portnoy (Dream Theater), Jeff "Tain" Watts (Branford Marsalis), and Dave Weckl (Dave Weckl Band).
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STRONG DRUMS specializes in hand-crafted stave snare drums. Drum builder Andy Armstrong uses a process in which pieces of wood run vertically for the length of the drum, thus minimizing the amount of glue required to create a shell. According to Armstrong, this provides superior projection, tone, and body.

www.strongdrums.com

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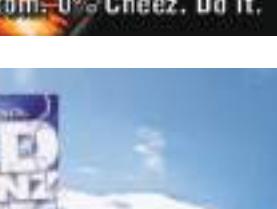
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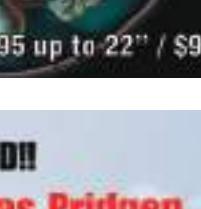
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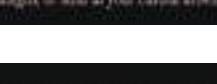





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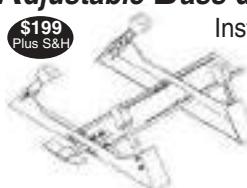


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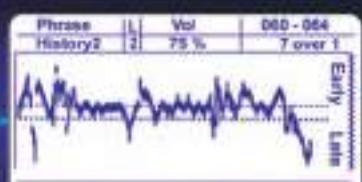
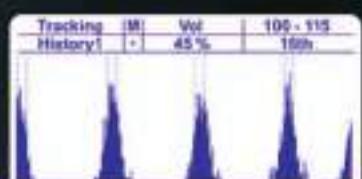
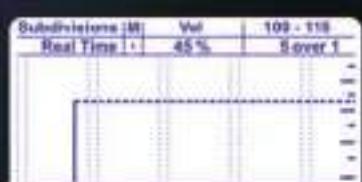
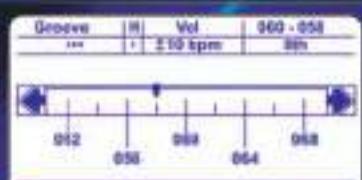
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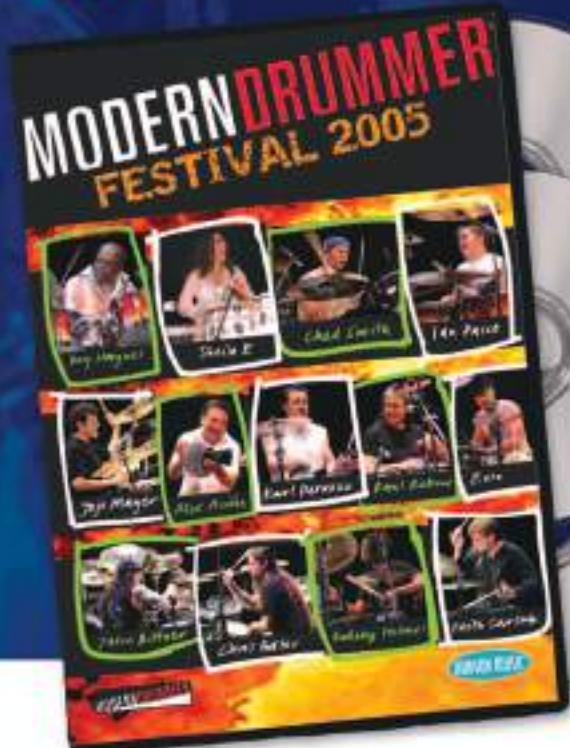


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Congo Square Project Aids Katrina Victims

Jazz greats Jimmy Cobb and Clayton Cameron are taking part in the *Congo Square Drum Circle* effort to help the music scene of New Orleans get back on its feet. The benefit double CD, produced by drummer Fabian Jolivet, has begun recording at Mad Dog studios in Los Angeles. Other drummers who have already contributed their talents include Clem Burke (Blondie), Michael Tempo (Bo Diddley), Cougar Estrada (Los Lobos), Don Heffington (Bob Dylan), Simon Kirke (Bad Company), Stephen Hodges (Tom Waits), Chuck E. Weiss (Willie Dixon), Santa Davis (Peter Tosh), John Boudreaux (Dr. John), and James Gadson (session great). DJ Bonbrake (X) and Ruben Estrada (Estrada Bros.) have contributed vibes solos.

All of the musicians involved are donating their time. In addition, 100% of the sales and publishing profit from the CD will go to help Crescent City musicians in need. For more information, email Fabian Jolivet at fjolivet@mac.com.



Aquarian Expands

Aquarian Drumheads has recently completed a total factory renovation, including new state-of-the-art equipment and newly redecorated and redesigned offices.

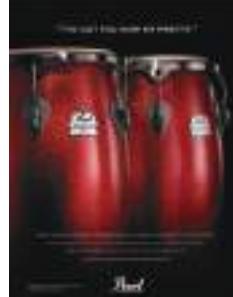
According to owner Roy Burns, "The new offices are a much more efficient use of the space and allow us to add more personnel as needed to match our continued growth. The reorganization of the factory gives us a larger area for R&D. A number of new products are already in the planning stages."

Partner Ron Marquez says, "The new high-tech machinery will increase our production capability by approximately 43% within a matter of weeks."



Pearl Ad Director Wins Addy Award

Pearl advertising director Jeff Ragland has been awarded an Addy for Best Full Page Ad In A Consumer Magazine. The ad was for Pearl's Primero congas. The Addy Awards are held annually by the National Federation Of Advertising to recognize excellence in the advertising field.



SOUNDS OF SUMMER '06

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For locations and registration information,
contact your local Yamaha Percussion dealer
or log on to www.yamahasoundsofsummer.com.



YAMAHA

In Memoriam

Don Alias

Drummer/percussionist Don Alias died this past March 28, at the age of 67. Alias studied medicine at the Gannon College in Erie, Pennsylvania and the Carnegie Institute for Biochemistry in Boston. But he switched to music after meeting and playing with Tony Williams, Chick Corea, and conguero Bill Fitch in Boston. His first professional engagement was with Dizzy Gillespie's big band in 1957.

Alias learned most of his craft on the streets of New York, by associating with other percussionists who studied Afro-Cuban drumming. After leaving Gillespie, Don joined Nina Simone (playing drumset), eventually becoming her musical director. In that band was bassist Gene Perla, with whom Don later co-led the group Stone Alliance. That group included players like Kenny Kirkland and Jan Hammer, and they released four albums: *Stone Alliance*, *Marcio Montarroyos*, *Con Amigos*, and *Heads Up*.

Alias was the percussionist (and drummer on "Miles Runs The Voodoo Down") on the classic Miles Davis recording *Bitches Brew*, after which he toured with Miles for a year. He went on to play drumset with Blood, Sweat & Tears and Mongo Santamaria, as well as percussion with Joni Mitchell, Jaco Pastorius, and Sting. Alias appears on albums by David Sanborn, Chick Corea, The Brecker Brothers, Herbie Hancock, George Benson, James Taylor, Al Jarreau, Quincy Jones, Chick Corea, Roberta Flack, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette, John Scofield, Marianne Faithfull, and Elvin Jones, among many others.



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Indy Quickies

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast last summer, drummer **T.K. Lively** of the band Wet Willie lost his Yamaha drumset—along with everything else in his Ocean Springs, Mississippi home. Bandmate Jack Hall reached out to **Yamaha** and **Ken Stanton Music** in Atlanta. Stanton and Yamaha district manager John Messerschmidt gave Lively a new Stage Custom Advantage set, which lets him—in the words of the band's hit song—"keep on smilin'."



Meinl's second Drum Festival will take place on September 9 at the Meinl facilities in Gutenstetten, Germany. Performers will include Thomas Lang, Peter Wrba, Benny Greb, Jason Bittner (Shadows Fall), and Rodney Holmes (Steve Kimock Band), along with the band Rivo Drei, featuring drumming Felix Lehrmann. Each artist will also host an educational workshop. In addition, Meinl's production facility will be fully up and running for guided tours. For more information, go to www.meinlcymbals.com.

Mountain Rythym Drums will sponsor a drum-making camp August 11–13. Participants will have the opportunity to completely customize and finish their own Mountain Rythym drum, while learning how to maintain it, tune it, and play it. The price of the camp includes all materials, instruction, accommodations, meals, and use of the facilities. For more information go to www.tanglefootlodge.com/calendar.htm or www.mountainrythym.com.



Dinah Gretsch with Gretsch endorsers Slim Jim Phantom, Steve Ferrone, Denny Seiwell, and Bill Rieflin at the Kaman Mardi Gras party.

Kaman's Percussion Team and nearly a hundred Gretsch, Gibraltar, and Toca artists celebrated Mardi Gras and a great year of music during Kaman's third artist appreciation party, held recently at Center Staging in Burbank, California. Sheila E, Vinnie Colaiuta, Cindy Blackman, Steve Ferrone, Bill Rieflin, Thomas Lang, Luis Conte, Terry Santiel, Teddy Campbell, Jonathan Moffett, Ricky Lawson, and David Lauser were just a few of the artists that stopped by to join in the fun.

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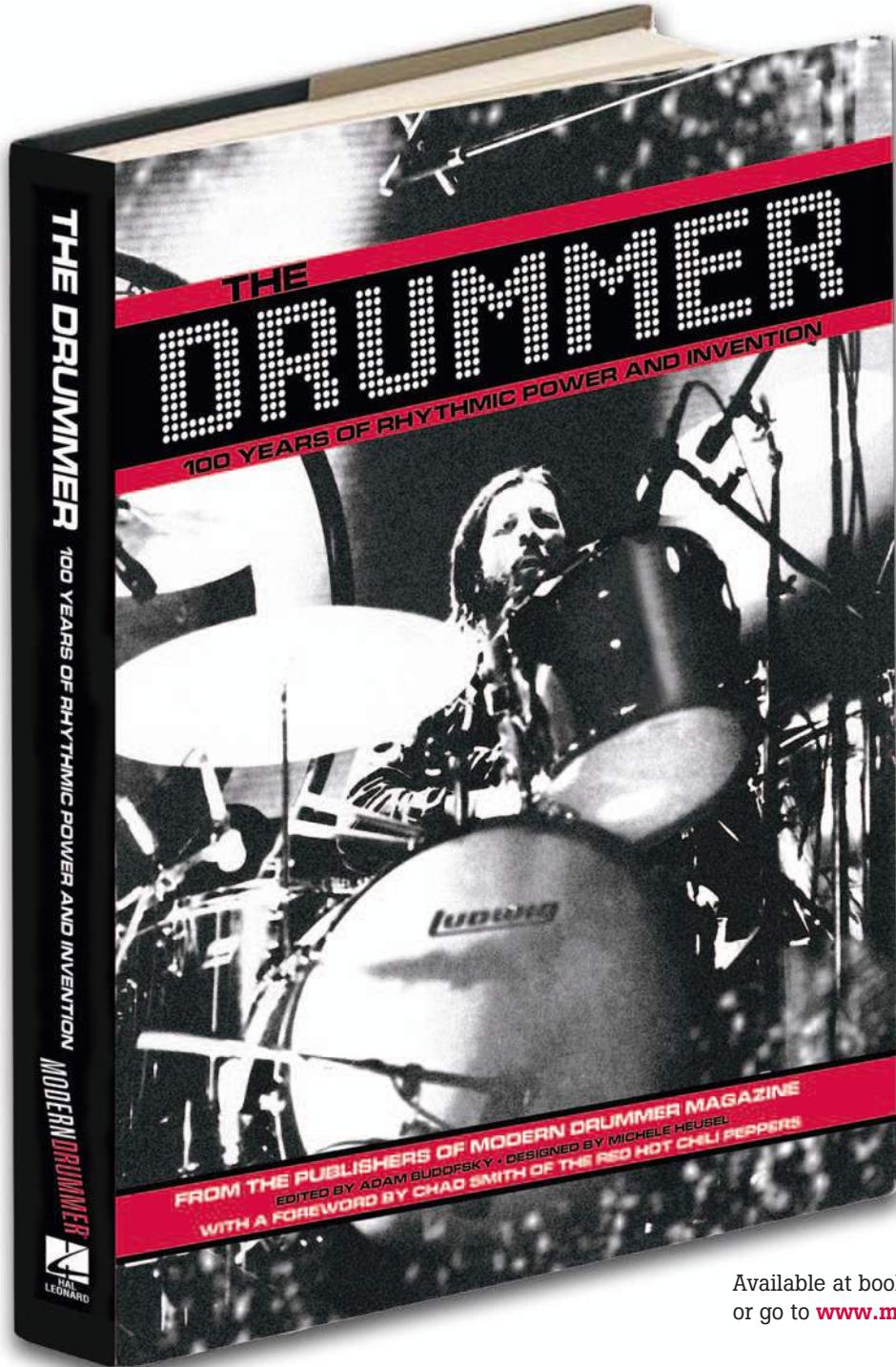
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Available at bookstores and drumshops nationwide,
or go to www.moderndrummer.com.



Studio drumming great **Earl Palmer** recently donated a white pearl Rogers drumkit—which he used on many classic recording dates in New Orleans—to the **Louisiana State Museum**. The kit is now on view in the museum's Baton Rouge facility as part of a mock-up of the legendary J&M Recording Studio, operated by Cosimo Matassa. The cymbals on the kit were donated to the museum by Zildjian.

The third edition of the **Mendoza International Drum Fest** will be held July 28–29 in Mendoza, Argentina. Drummers scheduled to perform include, from the States, Paul Wertico, Rick Latham, Antonio Sanchez (Pat Metheny), Argentinians Carlos Riganti, Jorge Araujo, and Fernando Martinez, and young Australian talent Daniel Lutnick, with more to be added. Go to www.mendozadrumfest.com.ar for more information.

Pro-Mark teamed with NAMM, TheMusicEdge.com, and the WFD to conduct a "Fastest Hands" competition at the recent Musikmesse in Frankfurt,



Pro-Mark endorser Simon Phillips (left), with WFD competition winner Thomas Sporrer, at the Frankfurt Musikmesse.

Germany. "B.J.," a Pro-Mark endorser who has just finished five years traveling the world with Cirque du Soleil, served as the judge. Winners received prizes of sticks, denim shirts, and other accessory items.

In other Pro-Mark news, the company will soon send two lucky individuals on an all-expenses-paid trip to see Simon Phillips and Toto in concert. The trip includes round-trip air fare for two to the city in which the concert will be held, two nights of luxurious hotel accommodations, hotel transportation to and from the destination airport, transportation to and from the concert venue, free VIP concert tickets, and backstage passes to meet Simon and the other band members. The concert location will be a surprise, but the most likely location will be somewhere in Europe.

Simon Phillips has been a Pro-Mark endorser for twenty-five years, and this contest celebrates that special relationship. Those wishing to enter may do so by purchasing any qualifying Pro-Mark product through July 15, and mailing in the UPC label. Full details can be found at www.promark.com/simon.

The Rhythmic Arts Project (TRAP) will hold their Fourth Annual Summer Benefit on Sunday, June 4 at Girls, Inc., 5315 Foothill Road in Carpinteria, California. Tickets are a suggested \$10 donation and will be available at the door. The event will be filmed by Jennifer Reinish (Tidepool Pictures) for a TRAP documentary and will include world-class music by musicians and special guests who support TRAP, including C.G. Ryche & The Bubulubu Heads (C.G. Ryche, Munyungo Jackson, Jorge Bermudez, Russ Miller, and Steve Fisher), Daniel de los Reyes & Friends (including Ron Powell, Walfredo Reyes Jr., and a surprise guest), Perla Batalla (with David Garfield on keys and Jimmy Haslip on bass), Flip Diggity (Eddie Tuduri, Jimmy Calire, Chris Pinnick, and Buddy Sklar), Latin jazz drummer extraordinaire Walfredo Reyes Sr., and select TRAP Gifted Artist musicians.

Performers will sign a drumhead for a silent auction item. A live and silent auction will also include a Pearl drumset, Sabian cymbals, a Craviotto Snare drum, and many items donated by members of the community. For more information visit www.traponline.com.

The first **Northwest Percussion Project** was held at Pullman High School in Pullman, Washington this past March 11. Over 130 participants traveled from as far away as Seattle to take part in the event. The Project is a hands-on percussion experience for students from fifth grade through high school, music teachers, and anyone else interested in learning about the fundamentals of percussion.

The event was organized by artist/educator Quentin DeWitt and sponsored in part by Pearl, Adams, Sabian, Aquarian, Vic Firth, DrumDial, and Keeney Bros. Music Centers. For more information, visit www.NorthwestPercussionProject.com/npp.htm.





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Who's Playing What



Pearl has added **Yonrico Scott** (Derek Trucks Band) to its artist roster.

Now playing DW drums and hardware are **Shaw Fitcher** (Peter Frampton), **Donald Guillaume** (Fugees/Wyclef Jean), **Gordon Marshall** (Moody Blues), **Robert Perkins** (Michael Bublé), and **Bradley Webb** (Ko). Meanwhile **Joshua Eppard** (Coheed & Cambria), **Mark Allen** (Finch), **Brandon Wakeham** (If Hope Dies), and **Andrew Hurley** (Fall Out Boy) are using DW pedals and hardware.

New Vater artists include **Kim**



Thompson (Mike Stern), **Scott Ellis** (She Wants Revenge), **Meg White** (White Stripes), **Tony Escapa** (Ricky Martin), **Pedro Martinez, Lusito Quintero, Steve Miller** (Just Surrender), **Dwight Smith** (Engelbert Humperdink), **Anthony**

Citrinite (The Smashup), **Joe Beck** (The Spill Canvas), **Terry Wesley** (Mint Condition), **David Brady** (educator), **Jim Payne** (educator), **Joe Babiak** (Kill Hannah), and **Dennis Johnson** (band director, Wetumpka High School).

Leon Mobley (Ben Harper) and **Sandy Perez** (independent) are using Gon Bops percussion and DW percussion hardware.



New Paiste cymbal artists include **Meg White** (The White Stripes), **Dale Crover** (The Melvins), **Cafe De Silva** (Steve Winwood Band), **Carlomagno Araya** (Ruben Blades Band), **Richie Barshay** (Herbie Hancock), **Julien Blais** (Megan McCauley), **Pam**



Bluestein (Exit), **Jason Boessel** (Rilo Kiley, Bright Eyes), **Jesse Caraballo** (Mark Anthony), and **Elóy Casagrande** (2005 Modern Drummer under-18 Undiscovered Drummer winner).

Mark Chadwick Hagedorn (Gizmachi), **Derek Bloom** (From First To Last), and **Brian Flenniken** (Mad Caddies) are playing Pacific drums.

Matt Lechevalier (My Ruin) is a new Meinl cymbal artist.



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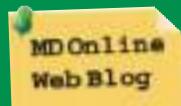
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Basement Beauty

Mitch Yurkiw created his distinctive drums in his basement in Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada. "I'd been experimenting with making snare shells since tenth-grade wood-shop class," says Mitch, "but nothing was worthy. In the summer of 2005, between college and university, I decided to try again."

Mitch used Baltic birch plywood to create his kit's shells and wood hoops. The lugs and tom mounts were machined from aluminum and then spray-painted. Pearl pedals and stands, as well as Sabian cymbals, complete the setup.

"I had a Roland V-10 kit," Mitch says, "so I decided to design the new drumkit so

that it could be mounted using the Roland rack and hardware. It saved me some money, but it does prevent the two kits from ever being set up at the same time."

That may not pose a problem for Mitch any time soon. "I finished the kit just ten days shy of moving to St. Johns, Newfoundland," he explains. "I now live in an apartment, which inhibits me from even tapping my feet while air drumming. Still, I'm proud of the the kit. It's a one-of-a-kind creation that will be passed down to my grandchildren."

Mitch would enjoy any feedback at mitchellyurkiw@hotmail.com.



PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

- 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.
- You may send more than one view of the kit.
- Only show drums, no people.
- Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds.
- 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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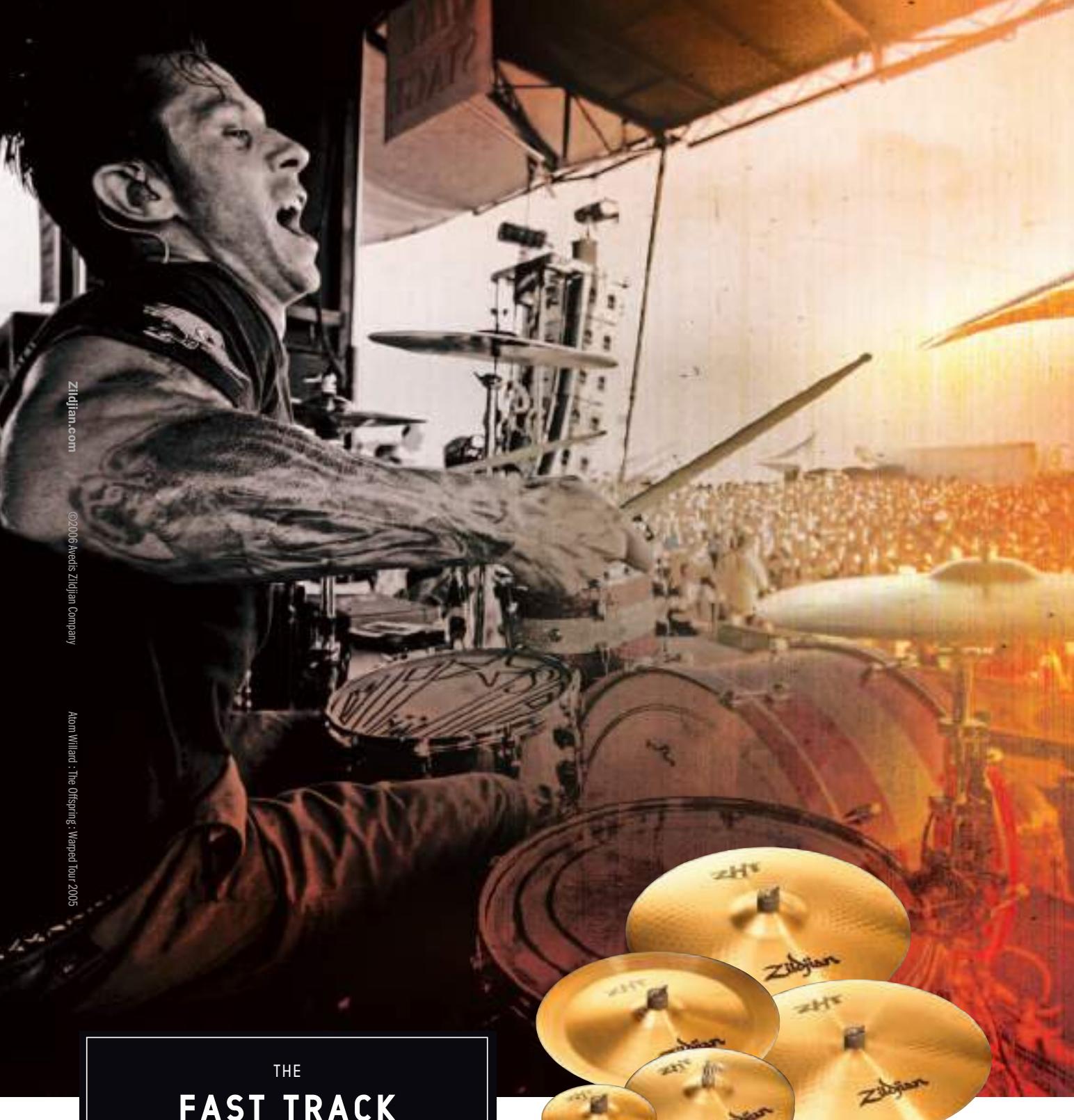
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