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Armand Zildjian (left)
preparing to pour castings.

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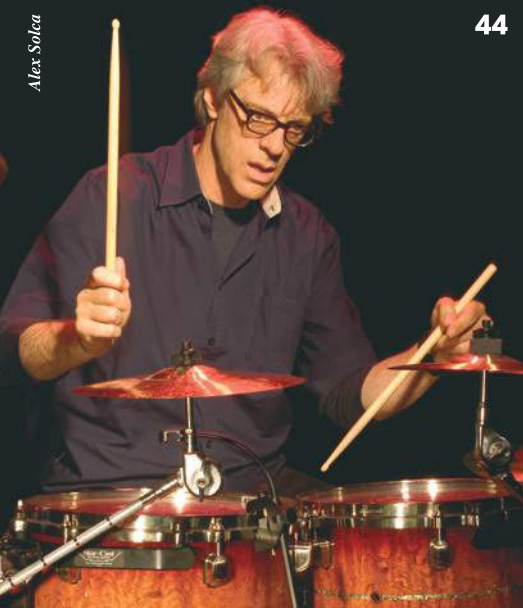
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Alex Solca

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As unusual as his playing techniques and musical philosophies are, in the final analysis, Zach Hill is all about inspiration, invention, and good ol'-fashioned hard work. Meet the different drummer. **by Michael Dawson**

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WIN! WIN! WIN!

Prizes Worth Over

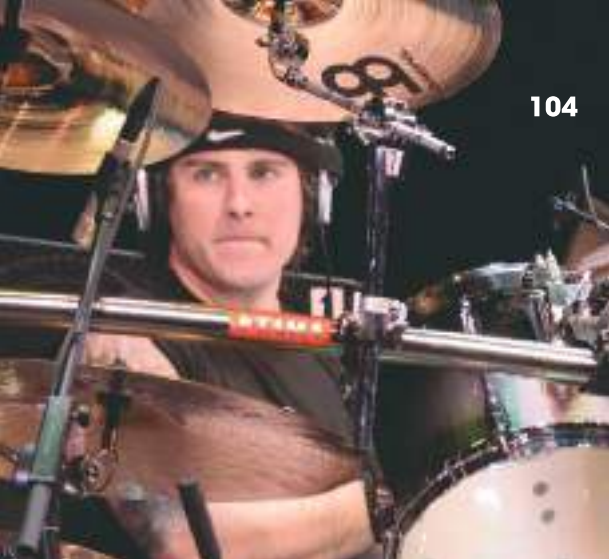
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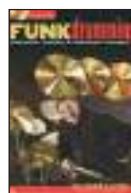


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Koyama Yoshitaka Yamaha Craftsman Profile

Job Title: Shell Buffing Manager Years Experience: 23 years

“The first 3 years of my career I spent as a student, studying with each senior paint manager. This was done so I could be an expert in every step of the painting process. Only after mastering that knowledge could I become the craftsman I am today. For the past 20 years I have been involved with buffing each Yamaha drum that comes out of Sakae Rhythm. It's an art form I am proud to have mastered.”

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To Performance

Yamaha Drum Artist Profile John "JR" Robinson

Who JR Has Worked With: Steve Winwood, Quincy Jones, Michael Jackson, Eric Clapton, Herbie Hancock... just to name a few.

"I have been honored to play the best drums in the world for over 25 years. Playing Yamaha Drums will bring your "A" game to the music and allow you to create art at the highest level. The warmth and full range of the Absolute Birch Nouveau kits are unsurpassed. Take a test drive for yourself."



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(The color Amber Sunburst and outer Birdseye Maple ply is only available in the JR Signature Snare drum)

Studying The Masters



Watching Joe Morello's hands move is a delight. Grace, speed, power, agility—no wonder the man's a drumming legend. And today, at seventy-eight, forty years after his groundbreaking work with The Dave Brubeck Quartet, he is still going strong. Joe continues to teach and perform. He has also continued to *write*.

Joe recently completed the follow-up to his now classic technique book, *Master Studies*. I can see why it's taken him several years to finish it. *Master Studies II* is a killer. The sticking exercises Joe has come up with are inventive, fun, and yes, challenging.

I've actually known Joe for over twenty years, having studied with him for a time when I first started here at *MD*. (I wanted to get my hands together.) Recently Joe and I got together to play through many of the exercises in *Master Studies II*. His touch and technique are still impressive—he even made a practice pad sound good.

In other *MD* book news, we're in the process of upgrading *The New Breed*, the landmark work by famed teacher and '60s studio great Gary Chester. Don't worry, *New Breed* fans, we're not changing it. We're adding a CD.

In 1984, Danny Gottlieb, a master drummer in his own right and a former student of both Joe Morello and Gary Chester, sat down with Gary to do an in-depth interview. Danny recently found a recording of that interview. It was so informative, and it revealed so much about the late, great teacher's innovative concepts that we here at *MD* and the Chester family felt it should be included in a new edition of the book. It truly is amazing to hear Gary offering such helpful playing and career tips.

In yet another addition to our book division, Bobby Rondinelli and Michael Lauren's *The Encyclopedia Of Double Bass Drumming* is receiving an upgrade as well. The top-selling book, which features a very easy to understand approach to double bass, was originally released in 2000. However, Bobby and Michael felt that double bass technique has evolved quite a bit since then, and they wanted to reflect that evolution in their book.

Inspired by drummers like Thomas Lang and Virgil Donati, the authors added several new sections, including a chapter on playing doubles with both feet. Bobby recently played through the exercises for me, ripping through some over-the-top patterns. His method for developing this technique makes sense. The warm-up exercises, beats, and fills that Bobby has come up with sound amazing. And even better, an accompanying CD is also in the works.

Please keep an eye out for all of these exciting additions to our book division. Without question, these masters continue to inspire.

Bill Miller

MODERN DRUMMER

Volume 30 Number 8

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:
Michael Bettine, Robyn Flans, Burt Korall, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Mark Parsons, Mike Haid, Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel Weiss, T. Bruce Wittet.

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TAYLOR HAWKINS

Thanks for your May cover story on Taylor Hawkins, and thanks to Taylor for his candidness about his struggle with stage fright. I took great comfort in learning that I wasn't the only one who felt that way. When pros like Taylor are humble enough to reveal their struggles and shortcomings, the rest of us are encouraged and strengthened. **David Ingraham**

JAMIL BYROM

I read the May *On The Move* article about Jamil Byrom with great joy. It's inspiring to see an up & coming artist give the credit for his playing ability and success to his church music experience. In today's society, church drummers are often regarded as being the ones who can't make it in the "cool" realm of music.

All the best to Jamil as he continues to inspire others with his professionalism and his testimony to his faith. God bless, brother!

Mike Adams

MARK CRANEY TRIBUTE

My father gave me Gino Vanelli's *Brother To Brother* album when I was five. The music was over my head, but I could tell that there was something special about the drummer. I study Mark Craney's performance on that album to this day, along with the video of the *Brother To Brother* tour, on which Mark takes things to another level. His beat and drum solo on the title tune alone make it a landmark performance.

I was hurt by Mark's passing, but I'm happy that I got a chance to meet him before he went home to the Lord. I told him how much I appreciated his gift, and how much that gift helped me to be a better drummer. God bless you, Mark.

John Blackwell Jr.

Several years ago, I emailed a "fan letter" to Mark Craney's Web site. Mark responded that afternoon, and we subsequently developed a pen-pal friendship. As Doane Perry described, Mark was brilliant, friendly, and hysterically funny.

Listening to Mark's playing will strengthen your belief that there is a God. A person just can't play that way, and have that kind of mind, without divine intervention.

Chris Moore

GRETSCH CORRECTION

I just read the May 2006 issue, and it's tops. Please convey my best wishes to Isabel Spagnardi and the whole staff for the fine job you do month in and month out.

One point to correct: In the *Backbeats* section on page 164, a photo caption includes the statement "The Gretsch Company is owned by Kaman." The Gretsch Company is owned by the Gretsch family. We've been making drums by hand since 1883, a record unmatched by any other drum company.

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HELPFUL AUTHORS

As a private drum instructor (and perpetual student), I've purchased several drum instruction books over the past few years. On occasions when I've needed a minor clarification, I've been pleasantly surprised to find that not only were the authors' email addresses readily available, but those authors all responded quickly, answering my questions so that I could move on. My thanks go to Rick Latham (*Advanced Funk Studies*), Rick Gratton (*Rick's Licks*), Ed Thigpen (*The Sound Of Brushes*), and Jeff Salem (*Double Bass Vocabulary*) for taking the time to respond to my inquiries.

Doug Shelton

DRUM TABS

With reference to Ed Breckenfeld's fine analysis of drum tab notation in the May issue, German drummer Martin Degeling has created an excellent shareware "tab to standard music scores converter." It's available at www.drumtabdecoder.de.

E. Skare



MIKE CLARK FUNK GROOVES

Thanks for Mike Clark's great *In The Pocket* column on funk grooves. When I heard *The Return Of The Headhunters* in 1999, I became an instant Mike Clark fan. I was especially intrigued by the song "Tip Toe," on which I could never quite figure out the basic beat placement. Seven years later, I finally found the answer I was looking for—in the May issue of *MD*. I hope to see more of Mr. Clark's lessons in future issues.

John Asperin

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Laminated Drumsticks

When I started playing drums in 1982, a few drumstick companies made drumsticks out of laminated maple. I liked them a lot, since they were always straight and almost always the same weight, and they looked great. They also lasted much longer than regular sticks, since the grain of the wood was always perfectly straight from butt to bead. Is any company still making laminated drumsticks today—even as a special order? If not, why?

Michael Griener

We polled most of the drumstick manufacturers on the market today. We learned that Vater, Regal Tip, Pro-Mark, and Ludwig do not offer laminated models. Ludwig did make laminated sticks up until 1987, when they were discontinued due to low sales and high manufacturing costs. Pro-Mark tried them in the early to mid-'90s, but discontinued them for the same reason. We're told that Pro-Mark is currently experimenting with laminated versions of some of their existing models, but has no immediate plans to introduce them to the market.

Vic Firth offers one laminated model: The Dennis DeLucia signature marching snare stick, which is made of a material

called Sta-Pak. The reason for the laminate version in a marching stick is to have maximum strength to "play through" Kevlar marching heads.

Zildjian's first laminated stick—the original version of the Ian Wallace Artist model—was made from laminated maple. But, like Ludwig and Pro-Mark, Zildjian was forced to change the stick to regular maple due to prohibitive production costs. They now offer the Mike Mangini Artist model and the Heavy Jazz model in laminated *birch*. According to Zildjian, laminated birch is relatively heavy as compared to standard hickory, but is durable and consistent. It also produces a higher pitch on cymbals and cross-sticking, due to its hardness. These models carry a small price premium due to the cost of the material.

Innovative Percussion offers two Chris Lamb Signature concert stick models made from laminated birch. The sticks are said to be very straight and consistent in pitch and weight. Again, the laminated wood makes the sticks expensive (\$30 list).

None of the companies we spoke with can offer special-order sticks made from laminated material.



Hole Cutting Tools & Methods

I'm interested in cutting a hole in the front head of my bass drum. What would you recommend that I use to cut it?

Ari O'Sullivan

There are several aids on the market to help you cut a hole accurately and safely. Aquarian's Port Holes and Remo's DynamOs are reinforced circles of material that adhere to the drumhead. They serve as a guide for cutting (by means of a razor knife or other sharp cutting tool), and they also protect the edge of the cut hole from damage.

Big Bang Distribution sells a hole-cutting tool that's similar in design to a glass cutter. A pin at one end goes into the center of the area you want to cut out. A cutting wheel at the other end cuts through the head as you rotate the tool around the pinpoint. You can adjust the distance between the point and the wheel to cut holes of different sizes.

It's also possible to melt a hole through a drumhead, by heating the edge of an empty can (of the diameter that you seek) on

a stove, then placing the heated edge on the drumhead. If you use this method, take care to protect whatever surface is *under* the drumhead, and also to protect your hands while handling the hot can.

Remo DynamOs



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A Green Gigster

This Gigster snare drum was given to my wife's cousin about twenty-five years ago by a Canadian drummer. I've included a copy of the Gigster catalog. Can you tell me anything about the history of the manufacturer, and about the current value of the drum?

David

McCartney

MD historian Harry Cangany replies, "Gigster was a limited-choice division of Dallas Drums, which were made in England. Your snare drum is probably from the mid-1960s. Dallas also sold the Carlton drum line, which was a more popular brand.

"The strainer on the Gigster snare is reminiscent of the 1920s Leedy two-hole Presto model. Carlton copied Leedy in the 1930s, in the days when drums weren't often exported from the US to Europe. Those designs remained in use for the next several years. It appears as though the original snare-tension knob on your drum has been replaced by a standard flat-head bolt.

"The Dallas, Carlton, and Gigster brands are long gone. Today it's easier to find examples in Canada than in the US, because of the British Commonwealth connection. The Gigster brand is not in any particular demand as a collectible, so your drum probably wouldn't demand more than the price of any used drum from its time period."



Double Pedal Problem

When I play my double pedal on other people's drumkits, I'm able to play fast and even. When I play on my own drum, I'm able to play fast, but both pedals end up hitting at the same time. I have to use a bunch of tension on the pedals to get them to play 32nd notes individually, whereas I don't need to use that much tension to play on other people's bass drums. Does the pedal action depend on how the bass drum is tuned? If so, how should I tune my bass drum to alleviate my problem?

Andrew Hoxter

If the only variable in your equation is the bass drum itself, then it's safe to assume that the tuning of your bass drum is somehow impeding your execution of the double-pedal patterns you want to play. The best solution we can offer is to play the pedals on one of those "other people's" bass drums (on which you can play evenly). Take note of how the drum sounds, and how

it feels to play on. What sort of batter head is on it? How tightly or loosely is that head tensioned? Is there a pillow in the drum? Is there a hole in the front head?

Determine what the characteristics of the "other" bass drum are that allow you to play the way you want. Then do your best to match those characteristics on your own bass drum. That should at least put you in the ballpark. From there, you may need to fine-tune your drum to give you the sound and playing response that you want.

Questions For MD's Drum Experts?

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



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Career Tips From The Donnas'

Torry Castellano

Q You're my favorite drummer and my main inspiration. Every song you play has a distinctive "Torry" sound, and you *really* rock out in concert.

I have several questions for you.

1. What kind of exercises do you think are best for a beginner?
2. What kind of warm-ups do you do?
3. What type of set do you have?
4. Who are some of *your* drumming inspirations?
5. I read that you once said you'd like to learn double bass. Have you had a chance to start that?
6. How do you keep everything fresh in your playing?

Shelley Pryor

A Thanks for writing, Shelley. Your letter really meant a lot. I hope my answers are helpful.

1. The best advice I can give to begin-

ners is just to put in the time. The more you practice—whether it's beats on the kit or stickwork on a practice pad—the stronger you'll get. I like to practice two or three times a day. Just remember to keep it fun, too.

2. I always warm up before I play. After my surgery, I took lessons from Chuck Brown, who's very well known in the San Francisco Bay Area. Chuck taught me a technique that has to do with tension release. I usually do a lot of single-hand work, and then go hand-to-hand—all the while increasing the speed on my metronome. I also work on doubles and triplets.

3. Right now I'm playing on a Pearl Masters Custom four-piece kit, with 6-ply maple shells finished in Champagne Sparkle. The rack tom is a 14", the floor tom is a 16", and the bass drum is a 24".

I usually play a 6½x14 brass SensiTone snare, but I also have a 10-ply MasterWorks snare, with the outer six plies of maple and the inner four plies of birch. It's finished in Gold Sparkle.

4. When I first started out, I wanted to be Lars Ulrich from Metallica. I was also inspired by Dee Plakas from L7, Toby Vail from Bikini Kill, and Tommy Lee.

5. I'm just starting to work on double bass. I think it's awesome!

6. It's funny to think of myself as a "pro," because there's always so much to learn. I just keep pushing myself to try new things. I also think that the other girls in the band help bring out the best in me. Right now we're writing songs for a new record, and when I hear what my bandmates are coming up with, it makes me want to create the absolute best beat for the song.



Courtesy of Pearl

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—Stanton Moore

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Jazz Great

Bill Stewart's Snare Drum



Q I'm a drummer living and working in London, England. I'd like to know about the snare drum you use. I know it's a Ludwig, but I'm wondering whether it's bronze or brass. Any details you can provide would be much appreciated. **Bill Magee**

A The snare drum you're referring to is a Ludwig 6 1/2 x 14 model with a hammered bronze shell and tube lugs. I've had it for the past four years or so. I use that snare because it's a crisp, clear-sounding drum that also has good depth and a nice amount of airy overtones. Thanks for your question.

REPEAT BAR

A Classic Quote
From MD's Past



"I think a student should learn how to hear things for himself. Play it the way you want to, not the way you heard someone else play it. **Jazz legend Elvin Jones, July 2002**

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Rick Allen The Power Of Rhythm

Rick Allen says the great thing about Def Leppard's new album, *Yeah!*, is that the band didn't have to spend time writing new material. Instead, they decided to record a selection of '70s cover songs.

"We were a '70s band," Allen says proudly. "There were mounds of cover songs we wanted to record. But we didn't want to do the obvious ones. The songs on the record are known, but they're not necessarily massive hits."

Rick admits that "Hell Raiser," a tune originally recorded by Sweet, was the most challenging for him, given his physical capabilities. "That one took some time for me to work out," says Allen, who lost his arm in a car accident twenty years ago.

Rick says that recording is a lot easier today than it was back when Def Leppard first started. "It's much easier to map out a song now using whatever technology you can,"

Allen explains. "I can also go back in after the fact and re-punctuate or change something. In a perfect world, it's great to be able to do a take from start to finish. The way that Def Leppard makes records today is very disjointed, which can be the downside of technology. It's not like it used to be."

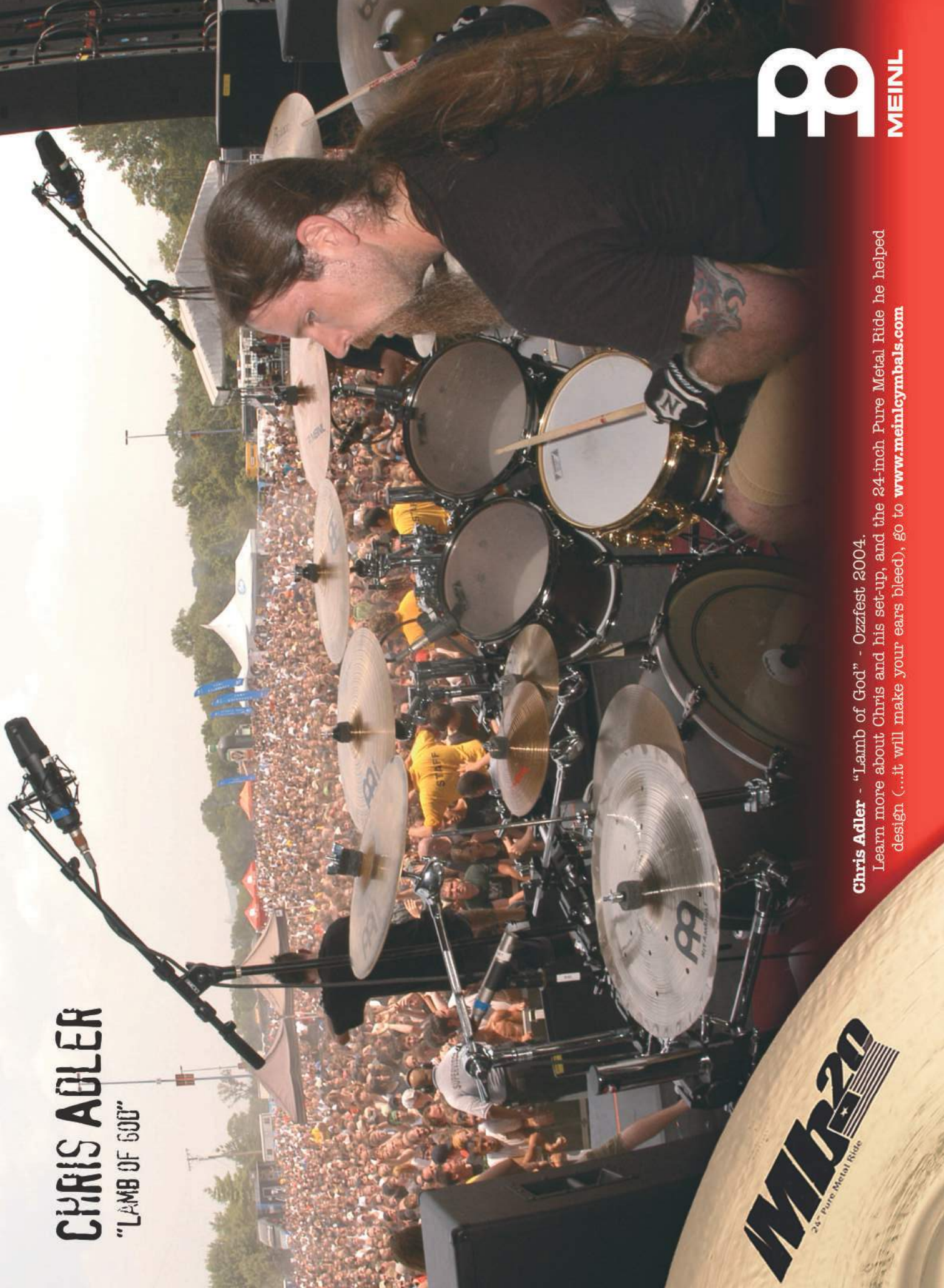
Rick spends a lot of time these days helping the disabled with his Raven Drum Foundation, an organization that provides drum circles for the physically challenged. "It's beautiful because I'm not trying to create master drummers," he says. "I'm trying to give these people the experience of rhythm. Just because somebody is wired differently, it doesn't mean they're different. Rhythm connects with them in *such* a positive way."

Rick and Def Leppard are currently on tour supporting their new release.

Robyn Flans

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Raymond Weber New Orleans Social Club



When Hurricane Katrina hit, New Orleans native Raymond Weber was on tour in Brazil playing drums with Ivan Neville. But his family was home; in fact, his wife was casually cooking a pot of red beans and relaxing when the storm struck. "I called her and said, 'Are you crazy?'" Weber recalls. "I told her to get the kids and head towards Houston."

After his South American tour, like thousands of others Weber retreated to Texas, where he re-joined his family. And while he still had his touring kit, Weber lost half a lifetime's worth of gear. Drums, keyboards, recording equipment, and speakers were ruined by the muddy, black flood waters.

But the displaced drummer quickly found a purpose in his temporary home. As the beat of the New Orleans Social Club, a collective of legendary New Orleans musicians, Weber has helped to create the album *Sing Me Back Home*, which was recorded in Austin just six weeks after the hurricane. Weber had some heavy cats to impress: The Social Club features members of The Meters,

The Neville Brothers, and The Subdudes. But for a drummer of Weber's talent, it wasn't difficult to fit in.

Weber took up drums at age two... "If you can believe that," he says with a Southern chuckle. Apparently his dad and uncles put sticks in his hands at that young age. With a family full of musicians—the Webers always had a family band play at their barbecues—Raymond got serious about drums fast, and was gigging by his early teens.

As the drummer on the Social Club project, Weber got to represent all the great New Orleans drummers he grew up in the shadow of, like Joseph "Ziggy" Modeliste and Fred Staehle. "Any time I do a record or play live, I feel like I have to represent my city's sound," Weber says. "You can hear the New Orleans beat on this album clearly on the Creedence Clearwater Revival cover, 'Fortunate Son.' It's kind of uptown New Orleans, a second-line beat but in a funk-type way. It's all New Orleans."

Jed Gottlieb

The Dresden Dolls' Brian Viglione Elvin Inspired

"Our live show and records go hand in hand," explains Brian Viglione, drummer for the cabaret-rock duo The Dresden Dolls. "Experiencing one without the other is like listening to the soundtrack to a musical without seeing the stage production. You might be able to appreciate the songs, but you won't really understand the whole *context* until you see the interplay between the actors. That's very much what it's like between Amanda [Palmer, pianist and vocalist] and me."

According to Brian, the theatrical aspects of The Dresden Dolls' music further influence the many subtleties in his playing. "There are a lot of Foley noises in our songs, such as a 'bonk' on the head or different percussive implements like jangling or hissing sounds. The imagery in the music also comes from physical comedy, or even having watched *The Muppet Show* growing up. These things give me ideas of how to sonically enhance the emotional content of the song."

Brian's confident performance on the group's sophomore CD, *Yes, Virginia*, was captured by letting the drummer and pianist record together in the studio as they would naturally

perform live. "The idea was to avoid corrupting the music by messing with the formula of how we play, which is being able to see each other's hands," Viglione explains. "On both of our records we played facing each other with just sound-proof glass separating us. That way we could perform the songs with the same visual cues we give each other live, and thus maintain that spontaneity and connection."

Oddly enough, Brian cites Elvin Jones as his biggest drumming influence. "My dad first took me to see Elvin when I was eleven," he recalls, "and that changed my life. From 1999 through 2003, I'd see Elvin every spring when he'd come to the Regatta Bar in Boston. He'd usually play five nights, and I'd attend as many shows as I could. And even when his health was failing, Elvin played with such majesty and control. Listening to him play a ballad was just transcendental; the way he would lay back on the backbeat on the turnaround of a phrase was just so soulful, sexy, and just...wonderful. I've been deeply inspired by Elvin's playing spiritually, musically, and emotionally as far as my work ethic and what I want to work towards in terms of expressing myself on the drums."

Gail Worley



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Matthew Sweet's Ric Menck Drummer, Label Chief, Author

In-demand drummer Ric Menck (Matthew Sweet, Velvet Crush, Liz Phair, Marianne Faithful) faced a quandary during sessions for Sweet and Susanna Hoffs' recently released duets album of '60s covers, *Under The Covers, Vol. 1*: Mimic classic performances like the ragged groove on Neil Young's "Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere" verbatim, or put his own stamp on things?

"I listened to the originals, but quickly discovered that I wasn't good enough or interested enough in duplicating them exactly," admits Menck. "But I would try to play the important bits, the happy accidents and mistakes. One of the best things about those older records is that they did it fast and left that funky stuff on, which I think is awesome."

The release of *Under The Covers* is the first of many projects for Menck in 2006. His initial collaboration with Sweet, the 1991 power-pop classic *Girlfriend*, will be reissued as a deluxe edition, and a new Sweet disc featuring Menck should be out before year's end. Menck is also on The Tyde's new recording, *3's Company*.

Not all of Menck's endeavors involve him bashing on his vintage

Slingerlands. For starters, he's currently helming two record labels. Through Birdsong he'll be releasing an album by California band The Now People, who Menck says have "a total allegiance to soft rock." And Rick's reissues imprint, Reaction, will re-release Television guitarist Richard Lloyd's *Fields Of Fire* album.

The drummer and label impresario can also add another credential to his résumé: author. Menck has been writing a book about The Byrds' country-rock classic *The Notorious Byrd Brothers* for Continuum's 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ series. He admits that finishing the book has been a struggle, and he frets that his editor wants to kill him. But Menck says he relishes uncovering the hazy details and anecdotes.

"I was in a record store once, and this guy started talking about crashing the *Byrd Brothers* sessions when he was seventeen. They had announced on the radio that The Byrds were recording at Columbia Studios, so this guy drove over and talked Gene Clark into letting him in. That kind of stuff is thrilling for me. After I talk to a guy like that, I can come home and write."

Patrick Berkey



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The Advantage's Spencer Seim Video Game Madness

When Spencer Seim was a kid, he spent hours each day riveted in front of the family television, tirelessly playing video games on his Nintendo Entertainment System. Beyond the games' sense of fantasy, action, and adventure, Spencer became obsessed with the complex and quirky electronic tunes sound-tracking each game. "I would tape the songs off the TV and listen to them just as I would music by any of my other favorite bands," he remembers. "I always thought it would be so exciting to hear these songs played by a real band." Today Seim is doing just that, trading in his joystick for drumsticks as drummer for The Advantage, the world's only known Nintendo game theme-song cover band.

Taken from games like Double Dragon II and Castlevania, the sixteen tracks on The Advantage's sophomore release, *Elf-Titled*, sound like you walked into a party where Frank Zappa, Yes, and Oingo Boingo were all performing.

Keep in mind that *Nintendo* songs were originally composed on computers and were never intended for performance by live musicians on regular instruments. Spencer says he and his bandmates enjoy the challenge. "Most of the time I try to play what the drums are doing on the game," he says. "But there were definitely limitations in drum programming at that time. For example, whenever the snare or bass drum hits, there's no hi-hat, so it's really choppy. I

attempt to fill in those gaps, since I've played enough of these games to have a feel for what somebody might have originally programmed."

Seim figures that game music has shaped his entire approach to playing. "Once I started playing drums," he says, "years of hearing these songs meant that writing and playing odd-time signatures didn't seem any weirder than standard drumbeats to me."

According to Spencer, it all comes together at The Advantage's live performances. "This band is all about people's reactions when they hear songs they haven't heard since they were six, sitting on the floor at a friend's house playing these games," he explains. "It's exciting when fans yell out different song names and get really into it—like a big dork party with everybody crammed together, not really caring if they look stupid, because there's a rock band playing, and it's nostalgic and fun." **Gail Worley**



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"Look for the copper-colored end caps"

NEWS

Deen Castronovo is on tour with Journey.

John Marshall can be heard on yet another "new" Soft Machine release, in this case a January, 1975 concert captured for posterity as *Floating World Live*.



Steve Gadd is on Sunlightsquare's *Urban Sessions*.

Ben Perowsky is on *Edom* by guitarist Eyal Maoz, which also features John Medeski.

Tony Lewis is on Paul Shapiro's *It's In The Twilight*.

Brooks Wackerman, Shannon Larkin, and the late **Cozy Powell** all appear on tracks from Glenn Tipton's *Baptism Of Fire*.

Dave Brogan is on Animal Liberation Orchestra's latest CD, *Fly Between Falls*.

John Tempesta has been on tour with The Cult.

Johnny Rabb is doing dates with his new duo, Ten Finger Orchestra & Johnny Rabb.

The Wreckers' debut (featuring Michelle Branch and Jessica Harp), *Stand Still, Look Pretty*, features **Charley Drayton, Rich Pagano, Shannon Forrest, Abe Laboriel Jr.,** and **Shawn Pelton** on drums.

Jason Sutter is doing dates with The Rembrandts on their Greatest Hits tour alongside percussionist **Mark Cervantes**. He'll also be touring with Smashmouth. Between tours Jason will be recording American Hi-Fi's forthcoming CD.

Theo Brown is on Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne's *Let It Loose*.

Sean Paddock is on tour with Kenny Chesney.

Chad Smith is on the new Dixie Chicks LP, *Taking The Long Way*.

Bun E. Carlos is on the new studio album from Cheap Trick, *Rockford*.

Vinnie Colaiuta is on the new Steely Dan tribute, *The Royal Dan*.

Xavier Muriel is on Buckcherry's latest, *Fifteen*.

Bill Bruford, Chad Wackerman, Doudou N'Diaye Rose, and **Luis Conte** are on The World Drummers Ensemble's new dual disc, *A Coat Of Many Colors*.

Congratulations to Jordyn and **Dave Grohl** on the birth of their daughter Violet Maye.



DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Big band great **Don Lamond** was born on 8/18/21, **Jim Capaldi** on 8/2/44, and **Keith Moon** on 8/23/47.

Gary Chester passed away on 8/17/87, **Jeff Porcaro** on 8/5/92, and **Lionel Hampton** on 8/31/02.

Martin Cohen starts **Latin Percussion** (LP) on 8/12/64.

On 8/7/71, at UCLA's Pauley Pavillion, **Aynsley Dunbar** records with Frank Zappa & The Mothers Of Invention for the live record *Just Another Band From LA*.

On 8/28/73, Deep Purple (with **Ian Paice**) receives a gold record for their classic song "Smoke On The Water."

On 8/23/98, Mark Ross opens the **MRP Custom Drum Company**.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Ginger Baker
(Cream): 8/19/39

Anton Fig
(CBS Orchestra): 8/8/52

Jon Farriss
(INXS): 8/10/61

Airto Moreira
(percussion legend): 8/5/41

Billy Ward
(Joan Osborne): 8/24/52

Rich Pagano
(Fab Faux): 8/31/62

Danny Seraphine
(ex-Chicago): 8/28/48

Steve Smith
(Vital Information): 8/21/54

Steve Gorman
(Black Crowes): 8/17/65

Sib Hashian
(ex-Boston): 8/17/49

Jon "Bermuda" Schwartz
(Weird Al Yankovic): 8/18/56

Brian Tichy
(Billy Idol): 8/18/68

Dennis Elliott
(ex-Foreigner): 8/18/50

Gina Schock
(The Go-Go's): 8/31/57

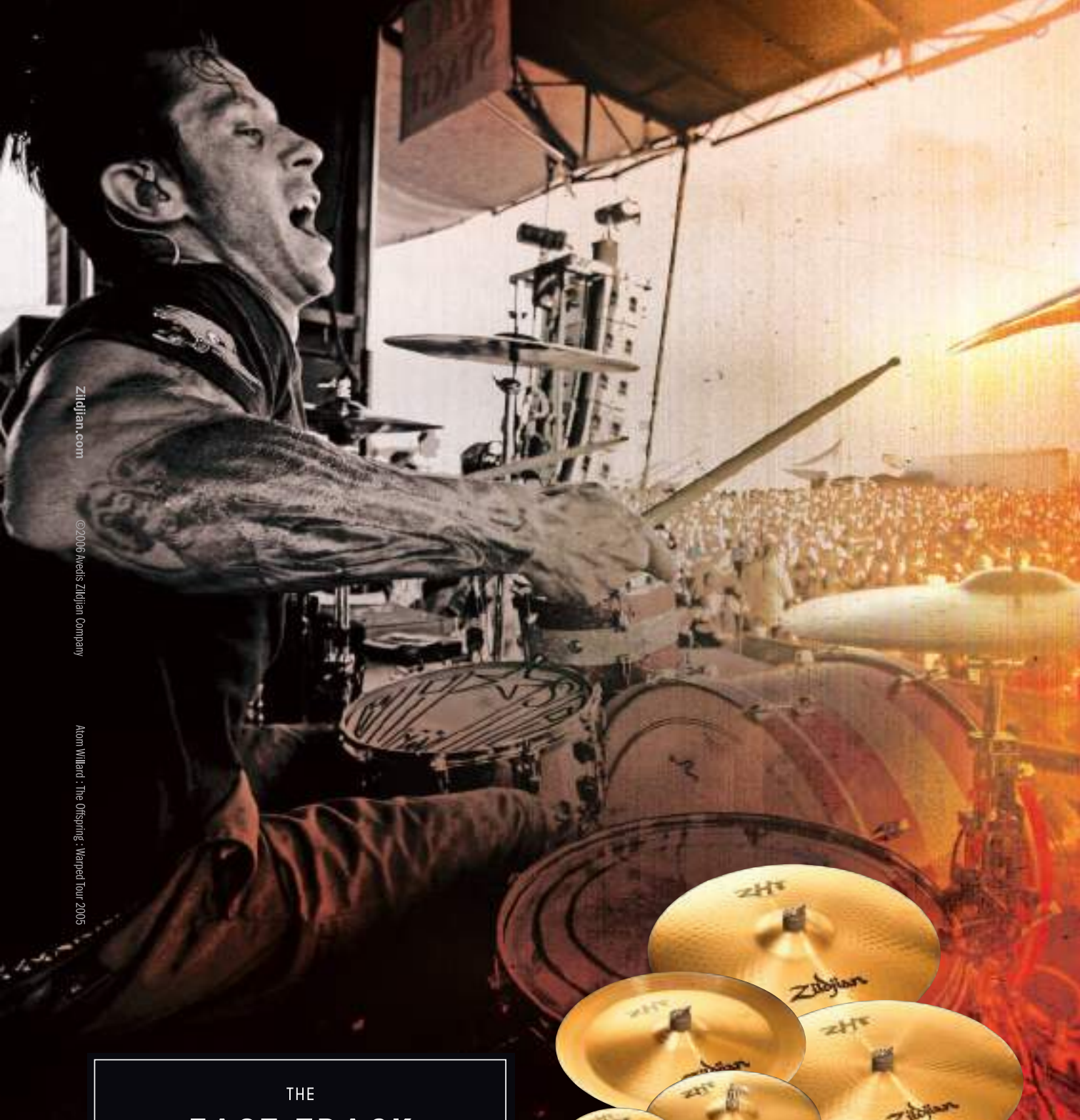
Adrian Young
(No Doubt): 8/26/69

Tommy Aldridge
(double bass great): 8/15/50

Rikki Rockett
(Poison): 8/8/59

Paul Doucette
(Matchbox Twenty): 8/22/72





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Adam Willard - The Offspring - Wepard Tour 2005

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by *Russ Barbone*
photos by *Jim Esposito*

KEY NOTES

- Excellent construction and finish
- Warm, clear sound with excellent projection
- L.I.F.T.S. Suspension system is convenient, but offers questionable isolation
- Bass drum and hi-hat pedal baseplates feature adjustable linkages

Pace drums have been a “comer” on the scene for the past few years. Through aggressive marketing and advertising, coupled with some pretty startling prices, this Taiwanese manufacturer has established itself as a name to consider when contemplating a new drum purchase.

Ah, but does their quality measure up to the hype? To answer that question, we checked out a kit from Peace’s top-of-the-line Paragon series. Let’s see what the buzz is all about.

Construction And Design

All Paragon drums feature 9-ply Canadian rock maple shells, vented at the company’s gold badge. Our review set consisted of a standard shell pack that included a 6½x14 snare drum, an 18x22 bass drum, and 9x10, 10x12, and 12x14 toms with suspension mounts, along with an added 14x16 floor tom with legs. The set featured a visually stunning dark red-to-lighter red sparkle fade finish called Atomic Fireball, which was originally a custom-order color but has just become a standard offering. The front and back bass drum hoops are colored differently to match the fade finish.

The snare drum was fitted with die-cast hoops top and bottom, Remo Ambassador





coated batter and clear snare-side heads, and 42-strand snare wires. The quick and accurate throw-off has a rubber-coated handle for convenience.

The bass drum had a clear Remo PowerStroke 3 batter head and a black Ambassador front head with the Peace logo. The toms were equipped with Remo Pinstripe batters and clear heads on the bottoms.

All of the drums featured Paragon Deus micro-tube lugs, except for the snare drum, which was fitted with full-width tube lugs. The micro-tube lugs are fairly attractive, and they allow lots of the shell to show. But they don't have swivel nuts to receive the tension rods. Extra care must be taken when inserting those rods during head changes, in order to avoid stripping the lugs. Tuning can also be a little tricky, since you must try to maintain a straight shot and not misalign things. (The same is true with the snare drum's full-width lugs.) As long as the user is aware of this situation, it shouldn't be a problem. All tension rods use plastic and metal washers between the rod heads and the drum rims.

The steel suspension bands on the three rack toms are connected to the drums by means of hard black rubber grommets that surround several of the micro-tube lugs themselves, rather than any of the tension rods. Peace calls this their Lug Integrated Floating Tom Suspension (L.I.F.T.S.) system. It makes for very convenient head changing, since the drum and the suspension mounts don't separate when the tension rods are removed. It also eliminates any stress on the tension rods that would affect drum tuning. But it also creates a fairly rigid connection between the suspension bands and the drums, begging the question: Just how much shell isolation are they really achieving?

There was no tom mount on the bass drum. The three suspended toms were designed to be "flown" from individual tom mounts attached to cymbal stands, allowing for multiple setup variations. The added floor tom contributed even more acoustic options.

Hardware

The P28970DC Velocity Nitro-Drive bass drum pedal is sturdy and quick, with a double-chain drive. Although it mimics other chain-drive pedals with side spring tension, it uses sealed ball bearings in both the heel shaft and the pivot point for the hex shaft at the business end. It has a full complement of adjustments, including footboard angle, pedal height, toe

stop, beater angle, and beater height (with memory lock). The pedal also features a double-sided beater with curved rubber and hard felt sides, as well as a footboard with a cool "8 ball in a biker cross" logo. Further, the pedal has a side-adjusting hoop clamp that's rubber coated to eliminate marring of the hoop, plus adjustable spurs to prevent slippage. This was a very playable pedal.

The HS-761 hi-hat stand uses a two-leg bracing system. This makes room for your double bass pedal or outboard hi-hat pedals. The footboard is used as the third leg, giving the stand its stability. There are all the usual adjustments: bottom cymbal tilter, overall spring tension (via a large knurled knob), overall height, and footboard length and height. The footboard uses sealed ball bearings in the heel, and features the previously mentioned logo. The HS-761 comes standard with a quick-release clutch to close the hats when playing double bass drum pedals.

The only issue I had with the bass drum and hi-hat pedals has to do with their "adjustable" baseplates. Those plates are in two sections, which are connected by means of a bolt that passes through your choice of three holes. The bolt is secured with a wing nut. Although this system allows you to tailor the leverage of the footboard, which is a good thing, the design seems a little low-tech, and it certainly doesn't allow for quick changes. Further, the baseplate "halves" on the hi-hat must be disconnected each time you pack up.

From a purely aesthetic point of view, the Peace cymbal stands are fairly massive and industrial-looking, with larger-than-usual tubing diameters. The CS-810 straight cymbal stand features the usual adjustments. The CBSS-810 boom cymbal stand is also fully adjustable, with a knurled shaft on the boom arm that eliminates slippage and rotation under heavy-handed drumming. All cymbal stands feature heavy, double-braced tripods with large rubber feet to stay put.

The single tom mounts that clamp to the cymbal stands are



Suspension bands for the rack toms are attached directly to the micro-tube lugs, rather than to the tension rods.

Quick Looks

HansenFütz Practice Pedal

The HansenFütz is a self-contained practice pedal that's compact and lightweight enough to be thrown in an overnight bag, but strong enough to withstand many hours of abuse. Plus, with the purchase of a few accessories, the pedal can be used to play auxiliary percussion or to trigger electronic sounds.

The HansenFütz isn't going to feel like your favorite bass drum pedal. It reminded me more of the pedals of an arcade racing game. The pedal doesn't react to the subtle movements that many of us use to get an extra boost of speed, and quick double strokes were very difficult to pull off. But keep in mind, it's a *practice* tool. So it shouldn't be too easy, right?

As I worked with the pedal using the included silencer pad, I was impressed by how quietly it operated. But you can remove the

The basic HansenFütz pedal, with optional percussion beater and stand



silencer pad to get an audible click, which is helpful when practicing hand/foot exercises with a snare drum practice pad. Additional impact discs can be purchased (\$12.95 for three) to fine-tune the pedal's volume and feel.

Perhaps the coolest thing about the HansenFütz is that it can easily be converted into an auxiliary pedal for mountable percussion or electronic triggers. By attaching a steel beater (\$9.95) to the front of the footboard, the pedal can strike cowbells, blocks, tambourines, or other instruments. (A percussion stand is available for \$24.95.) And by attaching a relatively inexpensive trigger to the baseplate of the pedal (we were sent a Pintech RS-5, which lists for \$17), you can use the pedal to trigger loops, samples, and sequences stored in a sound

module. I took the pedals and my drum brain to a percussion gig, so I could play kick/snare grooves with my feet while playing djembe, congas, and shakers with my hands.

So, what's the verdict? As a practice pedal, the HansenFütz performed fine; it's quiet, compact, light, and sturdy. And the results you'll see from a few minutes of extra

practice will certainly overshadow the time it takes to get used to the pedal's unique feel. Plus, the fact that it can be adapted for use on gigs makes the HansenFütz something worth checking out. The basic pedal lists for \$44.95.



The HansenFütz can easily be converted to an electronic trigger pedal.



Baseplate length on the hi-hat and bass drum pedal is adjustable by means of a bolt and wing nut. The hi-hat plate must be dismantled for pack-up.

designed and fully adjustable in all directions. However, when I first tried to fit their posts into the tom brackets on the drums, the fit was a little tight, making setup or tom adjustment a frustrating process. After a few set-ups and breakdowns, this situation improved substantially. In one sense, a tight fit might be perceived as a good thing, since it offers less chance for rattling or other unwanted noises down the road.

The Sound

There's just no denying the great sonic footprint of maple drums, and the Paragon maples are no exception. They're warm yet clear, they project, and they're very resonant. The choice of heads contributes well to the overall sound. I guess I needn't have worried about the isolation of the rack toms. These drums really sing!

All shell interiors are expertly made with no joint overlap, then sanded perfectly and left unfinished. This contributes to the drums' warmth and resonant character. The snare drum, in particular, produced the throaty crack that you'd expect from a well-built maple snare, with excellent snare response thanks to the extra-wide snare wires.

Conclusion

Peace has created a high-end set that's priced lower than many comparable models from other manufacturers. Some potential customers may not like the aesthetics of micro-tube lugs, and others may still worry about the possibility of losing some rack-tom resonance to the way the suspension mounts are attached to the micro-lugs. (Hey, you can't please everybody.) But beyond that, the Paragon kit is definitely a good bang for the buck!

THE NUMBERS

Standard shell pack	\$2,714
Includes a 6½x14 snare drum, an 18x22 bass drum, and 9x10, 10x12, and 12x14 toms with suspension mounts.	
14x16 add-on floor tom with legs	\$864
HS-761 hi-hat stand	\$232
CS-810 straight cymbal stand, with tom mount	\$93
CBSS-810 boom cymbal stand, with tom mount	\$114
SS-810 snare stand	\$88
P28970DC bass drum pedal	\$147

Complete review kit as pictured

Paragon sets can be customized through the Paragon Pro Choice program. Customers can stipulate their choice of drum sizes, kit configuration, finish, and hardware. Pricing varies depending on features.

(877) 999-4327, www.peacedrum.com



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Zildjian ZHT Cymbals

Nice Alloy...Nice Sound

by T. Bruce Wittet

KEY NOTES

- Comprehensive line offers cool choices
- Quick response, sibilant over tones, and fat sound
- Well suited to work in all styles

The ZHT line is Zildjian's first attempt at crafting an entire line of cymbals out of B12, an alloy composed of 12% tin and 88% copper. Zildjian orders the raw material from outside suppliers, but they do all the shaping, lathing, and hammering in house.

Though the ZHT line is priced somewhat lower than the flagship A Zildjian line, no shortcuts have been taken. Each cymbal is fully lathed on both sides and extensively hammered. The increased amount of tin in the alloy gives the cymbals an attractive golden appearance.

Sonically speaking, ZHT cymbals compare well to their higher-priced siblings. In fact, such greats as jazz legend Roy Haynes and session ace Dave Mattacks have already raided the ZHT line for, respectively, a flat ride and medium hi-hats. This is an indication that an affordable cymbal line can carry professional appeal. My own testing of the ZHTs in a live setting was definitely a pleasant experience. Let's take a cymbal-by-cymbal look at this new line.

Ride Cymbals

First we go to the workhorse, the 20" medium ride. I liked how it behaved under a substantial stick such as a wood-tip 5A. The ping sound was glassy and well defined, while the wash reared up a little and then kept its distance. In my opinion, this cym-





A 20" flat ride is a pleasant surprise within a sheet-bronze series.



The 18" Rock crash responded well under hard or soft impact, and might also serve as a ride.

bal is pitched perfectly. In quieter music, it's not obtrusive, yet it holds its own. In loud music, it cuts through the guitars without getting lost in the din. At one gig, I used it for a version of the Ray Charles classic "What'd I Say?" Perfect! The bell cut through in the Latin-ish chorus with full-bodied tone, while the body projected confident, airy sticking. I'd use this cymbal over many higher-priced rides I've heard through the years.

It took a good blow to get the 20" medium ride to crash—although "crash" is probably not the best word to describe the ensuing explosion of mids and lows. A young drummer present commented, "That's a fat-sounding cymbal!" Indeed, the ZHTs in general displayed little of that thinness of tone that taints many B8 sheet cymbals.

Whereas the medium ride features a gradual taper from bell to edge, the profile of the 20" Rock ride progresses from a large bell to a short "plateau," and then drops steeply to the edge. This is a thick, heavy cymbal with virtually no crash potential. The porcelain-like ping was direct and cutting. Frankly, I believe that the medium ride cuts just as well—but this one has more attitude.

Evidence that the ZHT line is a serious contender is the inclusion of a 20" flat ride. Thinner than the other rides, it wobbled increasingly as I laid into it, without building significantly in volume. The stick attack produced a sibilant shimmer that was reminiscent of more expensive flat rides from Zildjian and other companies. I could see why Roy Haynes, a devotee of bell-less cymbals, would take to this baby. If you're doing gigs where riding a loud, uncontrollable cymbal can be a painful experience, I recommend the ZHT flat.

The 18" crash ride is a medium-thin cymbal with a slightly higher profile. It was a little bland for my taste, but it did produce a pleasing, gentle ride with a nice "sizzle"—almost as if it were fitted with rivets. Soft crashes elicited more "gong" than crash, but a stronger blow generated a swell that rose up quickly, then died away. The bell was serviceable.

Crashes

I liked the 18" Rock crash very much. I gave it soft and hard blows with a 5B, and the cymbal was with me all the way. It rose quickly to a desirable crash sound in both situations, with the only difference being volume. (And there was plenty of that.) I favored this cymbal as a crash ride over the official-



The 16" EFX cymbal features a special hole pattern to create a trashy sound.

ly designated model, which I found a little high-pitched for its own good.

The 18" Fast crash did what its name suggested: It developed its explosion in no time flat, then got out of the way without intruding on song space. It also displayed a fatness—a nudge in the mid and low frequencies—that helped it stand out on a loud gig. That's a characteristic I encountered from all of the ZHTs: They weren't just good "showroom cymbals," they performed well in real-life situations.

The 16" Fast crash is a gem. With its thin edges, it responded quickly to light or hard blows, firing off tight, almost splashy crashes with plentiful mid frequencies. I appreciate what Zildjian has done here. Rather than go for the easy solution of a wafer-thin cymbal that responds and dies quickly (and *breaks* quickly?), they've gone for



The 10" Mini-Hats could be used as primary hi-hats.

The 18" China proved versatile for crash or ride applications.



a cymbal with enhanced presence that cuts through.

I'd take a pass on the 16" medium thin crash. It was a little of this and a little of that, but overall it paled by comparison to the other 16" ZHTs. The 16" Rock crash, on the other hand, is a robust little number that responded almost as quickly as the Fast crash. Although it's a little heavier and less flexible than the Fast or medium thin crashes, the 16" Rock crash could be an outstanding all-around crash.

The 14" Fast crash didn't do it for me. It was quick to respond, but its positive attributes ended there. Perhaps in an effort to offer durability in a small-diameter cymbal, this model is fairly thick, with very little flex. Whether I hit it quietly or with force, it left a gongy aftertaste.

Question: What do you get when you punch fifteen holes of varying sizes and shapes into a ZHT thin cymbal? Answer: You get a dirty, trashy EFX cymbal. Available in 16" and 18" sizes, these dogs bark quickly. Here's another cymbal that would slip comfortably into any pro setup for use in fusion, rock, and singer-songwriter formats. I found the "trash" component was optimum in the 16" version, and I'd use that cymbal on a live gig or recording without blinking.

Hi-Hats

I thoroughly enjoyed each ZHT hi-hat pairing. The basic 14" models were inscribed simply "Hi-Hat Top" and "Hi-Hat Bottom." The top is a medium cymbal while the bottom is heavy. Together they produced a satisfying mid-range crunch when played with the foot, and they facilitated effective open/closed work with a stick.

The 14" Rock hats are heavier, yet they still reacted quickly and displayed that same crunchy, throaty tone. They just did it with more volume. For many drummers, these could be hats for all seasons.

My favorites on a gig were the 14" Mastersound hi-hats, with their rippled bottoms that allow air to escape. I found them a little thicker—that word again—in tone than the others. These hats made it possible for me to articulate anything that came to mind in the way of stick or footwork. I took them to a loud rockabilly/Brian Setzer type gig, and my intricate stuff projected effortlessly.

The 13" hi-hats are simply higher-pitched versions of their 14" counterparts. They also proved a little quicker in stick response, and they had a shorter duration when "crashed" quickly with the foot pedal.

The 10" Mini-Hats displayed good presence when played with the foot or a stick. You might consider doing your best Billy Ward imitation and trying them as main hi-hats. Otherwise, they're excellent auxiliary hats, as are their 8" siblings. Although the latter weren't my cup of tea, I couldn't deny that they were paired correctly and, despite their diminutive size, were emphatically *not* "thin" sounding.

Chinas And Splashes

The ZHT line includes 16" and 18" China cymbals. Both have slightly cylindrical (as opposed to rounded off) bells and rather wide upturned edges. The 16" China seemed pretty much a one-trick pony: You hit it, it explodes, and it's gone. (I can hear someone saying, "Yes!") On the other hand, it was more diverse in overtones than one of my authentic "made in China" China cymbals.

The 18" China was a shotgun blast. It also proved to be an effective ride, especially when played on the lip. I appreciated this versatility. As is the case with many China cymbals, both ZHTs displayed more diverse overtones when mounted "right side up."

When it came to the ZHT splashes, the 8" had enough heft to speak strongly in a loud rehearsal. The 10" model's full palette of overtones reminded me of a much more expensive splash in my collection. It was thin enough to promote good response, but thick enough that it didn't fall to pieces.

Conclusion

From a sonic standpoint, the ZHT line strikes me as a resounding success. It's a comprehensive series that offers fat sounds and fascinating choices. And while the cymbals are certainly not budget models, they are affordable. I agree with Zildjian that the ZHTs are the best sheet bronze cymbals they've ever made, hands down.

THE NUMBERS

8" Mini-Hats	\$184
10" Mini-Hats	\$220
13" hi-hats	\$242
14" hi-hats, Rock hi-hats, Mastersound hi-hats	\$270
16" Fast crash, medium thin crash, Rock crash	\$178
18" Fast crash, medium thin crash, Rock crash, crash ride	\$202
16" EFX and China	\$178
18" EFX and China	\$202
20" medium ride, flat ride, Rock ride	\$241

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www.peacedrum.com

Trick Pro1-V Bass Drum Pedals

Taking A New Approach

by Rick Van Horn
photos by Stephen Jensen

KEY NOTES

- Outstanding construction
- Infinite adjustability
- Player-position adjustment access



The Pro1-V's beaters can be positioned anywhere on the beater shaft, and angled to always hit flat against the drumhead.

Trick Drums modestly calls their Pro1-V “the world’s most advanced bass drum pedal.” It certainly *looks* the part. Machined on state-of-the-art computerized equipment from aerospace materials, the Pro1-V gives every impression of being an ultra-modern, hi-tech piece of equipment.

Of course, looks aren’t everything. Does the Pro1-V’s performance measure up to its space-age appearance? Let’s find out.

Single, Double, Or Both

We were sent single and double versions of the Pro1-V. However, any Pro1-V single can quickly be converted into the main pedal of a double system, by means of a retrofit assembly that screws into the side of the spring housing. This assembly provides the linkage to the connecting rod, as well as the receiver for the second beater shaft. Meanwhile, any Pro1-V double pedal can instantly be converted into twin singles, because each “slave” pedal has all the features and adjustments of a single pedal (including its own internal spring).

The double pedal’s connecting rod attaches to a female connection on the main pedal, and to a male connection on the secondary pedal. The connecting rod itself is fairly massive, with a large, rotating collet nut (sort of a knurled wheel) that adjusts and locks the length of the rod.

Metal For The Pedal

The baseplate and footboard of the Pro1-V are machined from solid billet aluminum. The $\frac{3}{8}$ "-thick footboard is fracture-tested to 12,000 lbs. per square inch. Instead of a hinge, the footboard uses a press-fit hardened-steel pin to connect to the heel plate.

At $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick, the Pro1-V’s baseplate is substantially thicker than the stamped-steel baseplates on most other pedals. But since it’s made of aluminum, it’s still reasonably lightweight.

Functional Features

The Pro1-V features a direct linkage system. Direct linkage has become popular with speed-oriented drummers, since it maintains the distance between the footboard and the beater mechanism throughout the pedal stroke. (There’s no “play” or “flex” in the linkage, as can happen with chain or strap drives.) The linkage arm has three footboard-connection points to tailor the leverage of the pedal action. Trick calls this the Adjustment Cluster. Each of the three positions is fitted with a ball bearing, through which a steel bolt passes to attach the footboard. It’s a secure and efficient design.

The pedal features an internal compression spring that is absolutely silent. So there’s no spring noise to worry about on recordings. There’s also no spring-connection link or pulley, which are often weak points on traditional pedals. Trick states that compression springs cycle faster and use energy more efficiently than the expansion springs used on other pedals. In addition, the design features a “profiled cam follower,” which helps the pedal to produce less spring-tension build-up as the beater approaches the drumhead. This, in turn, is largely what gives the pedal its smooth, responsive action.

Meet The Beaters

The beater shafts on the pedals are fitted with machined-aluminum heads for strength and light weight. A detachable hard plastic beater face is standard, but other materials are available. Trick also provides stick-on pads made from the soft side of genuine Velcro material



The Pro1-V's Adjustment Cluster lets you tailor the leverage of the footboard.

for a softer beater surface.

The beater heads can be positioned anywhere on the titanium shafts, which is a handy feature if you play bass drums of different diameters. Each shaft can also be adjusted in a traditional manner, where it attaches to the pedal. (This also permits the use of other types of beaters.) Each beater head can be angled so that the beater surface hits flat against the drumhead, no matter how far the pedal is away from the head.

The downside of this system is that it is *possible* for the drumkey-operated bolt that secures the beater head to the shaft to loosen, allowing the head to slip. However, given the excellent machining and fine tolerances of the components, this is unlikely, as long as the bolts are tightened properly and checked periodically.

REALLY User-Friendly

To my mind, the niftiest feature on the Pro1-V is the fact that all of the adjustments (with the exception of the Adjustment Cluster) are easily reachable from the drum stool. This allows you to tweak the pedal without having to get down on your knees. Footboard angle and beater throw can be set while you hold your foot in the position that you want it. Even better, spring tension can be adjusted *while the pedal is being operated*. You can actually feel the tension change as you play, allowing you to literally "dial in" your exact preference.

The Pro1-V's footboard angle and beater throw are independently adjusted by what Trick calls the Split-Cam System. The position of each cam is related to the other by a handy gauge. This visual indication is especially helpful for matching up the primary and slave units on the double pedal (or for deliberately *mis*-matching them, to compensate for different foot technique). It also allows you to fearlessly tweak the pedal for use on a different drum, knowing that you'll be able to return it precisely to the previous setting.

The fact that the Split-Cam system offers 360° adjustability means that the Pro1-V can instantly be converted into a cocktail kit pedal (swinging up) or an electronic trigger pedal (swinging down).

Another feature that offers convenience is the rapid-release

The footboard is connected to the heel plate with a hardened steel pin, rather than a hinge.



Slide-Trac hoop clamp. A strong, lever-operated spring holds the clamp in the "down" position, securing the pedal to the bass drum hoop. You press the lever to *release* the clamp. This design allows you to slide the pedal onto and off of the hoop easily.

The "Slide-Trac" name refers to the fact that the entire clamp assembly can be adjusted forward or back over a distance of a full inch in order to accommodate bass drum hoops of different depths. This feature should also prove handy for clamping onto the brackets of electronic kick pads and practice pads.

Let 'Em Play

Space-age design and user-friendliness are all well and good. But how do the Pro1-V's play?

Just dandy, I reply. As advertised, they are smooth and silent. And they offer a range of playing action that should provide something for every drummer. I was particularly impressed at how similar the feel was between the "slave" and the "primary" pedals on the double pedal version.

I'm partial to a very light action, with a quick downstroke and virtually no stiffness in the spring. I was able to get that action in no time on the Pro1-V. In deference to those who rely on spring tension to facilitate their high-speed double-pedal action, I cranked the springs down tight. I could barely operate the pedals at that setting, but I know of several notable metal drummers who'd get those beaters flyin'.

Conclusion

Whether or not the Pro1-V qualifies as "the world's most advanced pedal," it certainly represents a lot of forward-thinking design and high-tech manufacturing. Built by working drummers for working drummers, it offers an absolutely outstanding combination of playability and practicality. What more can you ask for in a bass drum pedal?

Virtually all important adjustments on the Pro1-V are accessible from the drum throne. The Split-Cam system features a gauge to indicate beater throw and footboard angle adjustments.



THE NUMBERS

Pro1-V single pedal	\$499
Pro1-V double pedal	\$1,199
Pro1-V single-to-double conversion kit	\$699

Includes a second pedal, a drive shaft, a beater, and a beater hub assembly.
 (847) 519-9911, www.trickdrums.com

TreeWorks Chimes And Accessories

High-Tech And High Art

by Chap Ostrander

KEY NOTES

- Individual designs yield individual results
- Highest-quality components

Cost is always a factor when purchasing any piece of musical gear. Sometimes, this leads us to cut corners when it comes to certain items. For example, a set of hanging chimes might be a desirable accessory, but you might not think of it as a major purchase. However, if you've ever purchased a "budget" set of chimes, you probably know how it feels to open your case and find some of the tubes rolling around the bottom because the plastic ties have dried up or broken.

When TreeWorks got into the chime business in 1996, they decided that the component parts of each of their chimes would be of the highest quality. For example, the mantles (the wooden bars that the chimes hang from) are made of sixty- to eighty-year-old black walnut from a managed forest in Tennessee's Highland Rim region. A special steaming process heightens the effect of the wood's natural color. Each mantle is cut, drilled, and then sanded sixteen times before receiving a hand-applied clear oil finish.

You won't find plastic ties on TreeWorks products. Instead, the company developed CordLoc, a composite of fibers that are braided and then hand-tied to every chime bar. The 50 pound-test cords are sealed, and the knots are tucked inside the holes in the mantle. The length of the cord guarantees that the bars won't strike the mantle.

TreeWorks makes their own chime bars, using a proprietary aluminum/titanium alloy that's tempered at 350°F for eight hours. The tempering gives the bars a consistent structure and clarity of sound. The bars are cut, drilled, and beveled so that there is reduced rubbing against the cord. The chime bars are tuned by ear, and then each chime unit is hand-assembled. This is how TreeWorks maintains their standards, taking nothing for granted.

Let's take a look at the results of this dedicated effort.



Tre35 Classic Chime



Tre24db Classic Chime



Tre44 Studio Chime



Trezen ZenTree

Tre35 Classic Chime

The Tre35 is TreeWorks' most popular set of chimes. It features standard-sized bars (.375" in diameter) set in a single row of graduated lengths. This set embodies the traditional sound of hanging chimes, with a pleasing and full sweep.

Tre24db Classic Chime

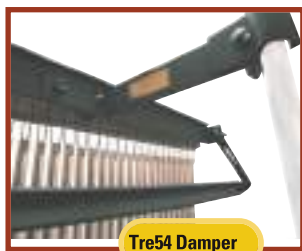
This scaled-down version of TreeWorks' Tre35db (double-row model) has the same basic sweep, but adds a triangle and a finger cymbal as part of the package. This is great for show work, because it puts three great sounds in one easy-to-reach area. The triangle is hand-bent high-carbon steel, and the finger cymbal is sand-cast bronze. Both sound clean and clear. An 8" stainless-steel beater is included.

Tre44 Studio Chime

The Tre44 Studio Chime is a full-length set with smaller-diameter bars (.25" rather than .375"). This makes the sound softer and lighter, but still full and clear. This chime gets its name from the fact that it's most likely to be employed where miking is used, and won't come across as harsh or strident on a recorded track. Frankly, the sound could get lost in an unmiked live performance.

Trezen ZenTree

The normal sound of chimes is a gradual and consistent sweep that usually covers a wide range from high to low (or vice versa). The ZenTree, on the other hand, is made up of seven sets of five bars of equal length, in a double row. The pitch change is very close, and almost creates a seventh chord. The sound is not what you'd expect; it's more like a distinctive but non-specific shimmer.



Tre54 Damper



Tre70db InfiniTree



Tre35xo EchoTree



Tre01 Studio Finger Cymbal Tree

Tre35xo EchoTree

The EchoTree is yet another unique instrument in the TreeWorks line. It uses seven sets of five graduated pitches, with each of the sets sounding slightly lower (or higher, depending on direction) than the one before. It has a mystical sound, almost like the Doppler effect of a passing siren.

Tre70db InfiniTree

The InfiniTree is an imposing instrument that seems to go on forever. Fully assembled, it's four feet long. By employing a central mantle piece that holds two halves together, it gives you the choice of using either half, both halves separately, or the full package as one unit. (The split also allows you to transport the set more easily.)

My wife, Adrienne, and I used the InfiniTree in some local show work. It was a big hit, not just because of its physical size, but also because of the sound quality that it produced. The double row of bars (140 total) gave it lots of spread, and the length allowed us to completely fill large spaces in the score. It's always better to have more to work with, rather than try to stretch the sound.

Tre01 Studio Finger Cymbal Tree

The Tre01 Finger Cymbal Tree consists of seven finger cymbals hung vertically, with a beater built into the mantle. The cymbals are matched up to sound good as a group, so that you get multiple finger cymbal sounds when you run the beater down the side. You can also strike them individually, depending on your mood or the musical part that's called for.

Tre52 Chime Mounting Bracket

The Tre52 mount allows you to securely mount a set of chimes to a section of a stand, and continue to use that stand for whatever you want. A carefully placed hole in the mantle centers the weight

of the chimes for balance and stability. This is another accessory that I would strongly recommend. It works with all TreeWorks products, and with most other types of chimes.

Tre54 Chime Damper

The Tre54 Damper, which incorporates the Tre52 mounting bracket, is designed to provide a solid mount for TreeWorks (and other) chimes, while controlling the amount of freedom that the bars have. You adjust the tension on the damper arm so that you can move it with your hand for selective muting, or leave it fairly tight to completely control the ring. This also keeps the bars from sounding when you don't want them to, such as in a breeze at an outdoor concert, or on a moving stage. The Chime Damper is made of laser-cut steel finished in black powder coat.

Tre51 Hard-Sided Gig Bag

Once you work with TreeWorks chimes, you'll want to protect and care for them. The Tre51 bag is made of half-inch foam with ABS plastic on both sides. There is a large zipper along three of the sides, a molded handle along the top, and two straps inside to secure the mantle. This allows the bars to hang in their regular position during transport. A single bag will accommodate the Tre35, Tre35db, Tre23, Tre23db, Tre44, Tre24db, and Tre24, as well as chimes from other manufacturers. You'll need two bags for the InfiniTree.

Chiming In

TreeWorks chimes are classic examples of the adage "You get what you pay for." Simply put, TreeWorks has all the bases covered in terms of quality, and their products continue to demonstrate that quality every time you take them out on a gig.



Tre51 Chime Bag



Tre52 Chime Mount

THE NUMBERS

Tre35 Classic Chime\$150
Tre24db Classic Chime\$220
Tre44 Studio Chime\$130
Trezen ZenTree\$220
Tre35xo EchoTree\$150
Tre70db InfiniTree\$400
Tre01 Studio Finger Cymbal Tree\$100
Tre52 Chime Mounting Bracket\$32
Tre54 Chime Damper\$60
Tre51 Hard-Sided Gig Bag\$55

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JASON BITTNER



Those renowned death-defying performers, Jason Bittner and the boys of Shadows Fall, are rehearsing the act hard, getting ready to go out to headline the Strhess tour plus do two dates on Sounds from the Underground. So...drum roll, please!...step right up this summer and behold some of the greatest shows on this earth...with Shadows Fall starting July 12, 2006!

Strhess tour

“ We’re looking forward to headlining the Strhess tour, we’re looking forward to playing some new music from our new album, “FALLOUT FROM THE WAR”, and we’re definitely looking forward to seeing the fans again.” — Jason Bittner

To see and hear the full video interview with Jason, visit www.tama.com/jasonbittner



Check out Jason and Shadows Fall on their newest release, *FALLOUT FROM THE WAR*.



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TAMA is proud to be the exclusive drum sponsor of the three hottest tours of Summer 2006...Strhess tour, Ozzfest, & Sounds of the Underground.



“As I gear up for the summer touring, I’m looking forward to getting my new full gloss black Starclassic Performer Birch kit with black chrome shell hardware. It’s going to be this giant Black Masterpiece. It’s going to look awesome. This tour will be the first full tour where I’m using Iron Cobra Rolling Glide bass pedals—after 23 years of using my trusty TAMA Camcos.”



STEWART COPELAND

STARING DOWN THE FUTURE

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Alex Solca

In Stewart Copeland's newly released DVD documentary, *Everyone Stares: The Police Inside Out*, there's a moment when the drummer's trademark over-the-top intensity nearly gets the best of his band. Playing one of their '80s hits at an unnamed outdoor amphitheater somewhere in Europe, the Super 8 camera Copeland used to document the rise and eventual dissolution of The Police catches the drummer in full flight, his arms flailing in one of his classic, displaced reggae bashing grooves. As Copeland aims his pulse like a burning rocket, guitarist Andy Summers steps back from the front of the stage, furrows his brow, and mouths an entreaty ignored by drummers the world over: "Too fast!"

Everyone Stares is full of similar moments of spontaneity, Copeland and his bandmates, Andy Summers and Sting, riding the rock 'n' roll dream from dirty UK punk clubs to American auditoriums to football stadiums in every corner of the globe. Using his Sanyo Super 8 camera, Copeland documented every phase of The Police's million-selling career, filming jet travel, recording sessions, backstage banter, worshipful fans, and, of course, plenty of live performances showing Copeland's amazing drumming, an original blend of stylized reggae and punk rhythms, splash cymbal and Octoban color, and technical virtuosity.



When The Police came to the attention of US rock radio back in 1979, Copeland's elastic off-kilter beat (with bell attack and tom thud surging through), heard to tremendous effect in their first hit, "Roxanne," was a hardcore jolt to the senses. Combining Sting's pop song craft with Copeland's sizzling jugger-naut rhythms and Andy Summers' jazz-flecked guitar, The Police became the biggest-selling band of the '80s through such hits as "Message In A Bottle," "Don't Stand So Close To Me," "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic," and "Every Breath You Take." The Police eventually became as famous for their hits as for their appetite for infighting and anger.

The Police dissolved in the mid-'80s, leaving Sting to become a new age, Tantric-espousing, solo superstar, Summers a guitar hero, and Copeland a successful soundtrack composer. What? That's right. Stewart Copeland eventually played drums with the ill-fated Animal Logic, then Oysterhead (with members of Phish and Primus). But his enduring success came as a composer of soundtracks (*Wall Street*, *Highlander*, *Talk Radio*), operas and ballets (*King Lear*, *Casque Of Amontillado*), and television programs (*The Equalizer*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Babylon 5*).

But with a recent flurry of activity culminating in the release of Copeland's first solo album in many years, the Grammy nominated *Orchestralli* (which includes its own DVD documentary) and his Italian-only supergroup, Gizmo, about to hit the road, *Everyone Stares: The Police Inside Out* arrives with perfect timing and gives the legendary drummer plenty to talk about. Of course, drummers still love Copeland: They voted him into *MD's* Hall Of Fame last year.

Speaking with the fifty-three-year-old Copeland at his Brentwood, California studio about good times past and present, the drummer/composer/father of "fifty kids" is typically erudite and humorous. Preparing for a tour with Gizmo and a Bonnaroo performance with Oysterhead, Copeland discusses drumming technique, his love for "borrowed chest hair" music, the origin of his remarkable style (and how to develop your own), wiffle midgets, and his search for the "magic drum."

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- D. 10x12 rack tom
- E. 15x16 floor tom
- F. 16x18 floor tom
- G. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste Signature

- 1. 13" Dark Crisp hi-hats
- 2. 8" 2002 Bell (custom)
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- 4. 8" splash
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- 9. 18" Fast crash
- 10. 18" Light Flat ride
- 11. 16" Full crash (not shown)

Hardware: all Tama, including Iron Cobra Power Glide twin pedal and Lever Glide

hi-hat stand, 1st Chair Ergo-Rider throne with backrest

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador on snare batter, Ambassador snare-side, clear Emperors on tom batters with clear Ambassadors underneath, PowerStroke 4 on bass drum

Sticks: Vater Stewart Copeland model



THE FILM MAKER

MD: In viewing all this video that you hadn't watched in twenty years, what surprised you most about that drummer in The Police?

Stewart: Well, how cheerful it all was. And how much my two colleagues seemed to be enjoying the whole experience. Even towards the end, they're still goofing off and clowning around for the camera. The camaraderie, which I remember as being most of the time we spent together, has been overshadowed in the years since by all the talk of how we fought all the time—which we did. We indulged in gratuitous emotional violence, partly as a form of recreation. But mostly we spent our time chuckling together.

MD: A couple spots in the DVD seem to mark angry moments, when Summers turns to you and says, "Too fast!" and at the very end where Sting says, "I'm going to blame all my problems on the guy holding this camera."

Stewart: Even there, Sting is sharing a joke with his old buddy. And God bless him, he gave me a great closing line for my film.

MD: The DVD pulls you in and makes you feel like part of the band.

Stewart: That was the whole idea. When you watch the movie, you're the drummer in the band and your name is Stewart. People look you right in the lens and address you by name.

MD: There is no *Synchronicity*-era footage. Was there too much band friction by then?

Stewart: The filming did taper off, mostly because I had every imaginable shot of band life. There came a point when we were in a little jet and we persuaded the pilot to do some barrel rolls. I was trying to shoot it with my camera, but I realized that you couldn't capture that experience. There's nothing to see from the point of view of the lens. I resolved that I would experience the adventure rather than try to capture it. That was a stupid decision!

MD: I noticed all the Police "derangements" running through the soundtrack, Police songs that don't sound like Police songs. Will those be released commercially?

Stewart: The history of those tracks is actually connected with Oysterhead. That band is all about free-flow jams and then cutting those jams up in Pro Tools and

making full tracks out of them. Around that time when I was deeply engaged in all that, somebody suggested, "Why don't you cut up a Police track?" There were times on our live shows where we would go off into improvisations, like in "Roxanne." We would always go out there and it would be different every night. And so I got a stereo mix of a track and carved it up in sort of the same way I had developed with Oysterhead.

I got a really cool version of "Roxanne," and I played it for Andy: "That is really great." At one point I went over to Sting's place, dragged him into my car, and made him listen to the derangements. He said, "Great, great, great." So then I completed seven tracks. I realized that the derangements served the movie better than most of The Police album material. With the derangements, the backing tracks are from live performances and the overdubs are from studio performances.

I have all the big clean Sting vocals with all kinds of different Andy Summers guitars, and the drums are live. The live drums were always better than anything I recorded in the studio. So there's a buzz to the



tracks that comes from the live element. That's why I use these derangement tracks in the film. Sting and Andy will say "no" to them as new Police tracks, but in the context of a film, it's normal that tracks are

messed with and not in their original form. Everyone will love and revere the original classic versions through all of eternity [mockingly], but these soundtrack album songs are a different animal.

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Stewart Copeland

THE DRUMMING LEGEND

MD: Back in the day, you used to rush to the point that it became your trademark of sorts. Is that more under control today?

Stewart: Because of technology, MIDI, metronomes, Pro Tools, and so on, I've been in a world of quantized rhythm as a film composer for the last twenty years. During that time—for about ten years at least—I wasn't playing drums. It was Oysterhead that got me going again. Now I'm going at drumming like a real animal. I polish my drums. I read *Modern Drummer*.

I fiddle with my wiffle midgets. I agonize over repositioning my splash cymbals. And I have much more passion for drums than I ever did before.

MD: So being in that world of MIDI and click tracks has helped your time?

Stewart: I've played to a click a lot more, and I work with clicks all the time. The idea of steady time has been drilled into me and into my subconscious. When I was twenty-four and blasting away with The Police, there was no such thing as constant time, and I did rush every fill. And the cho-

uses were faster, as I certainly could hear when I did the derangements. But no, I don't rush in quite the same way. I have learned how to surge without drastically altering the bpm.

MD: Did your over-the-edge time feel ever drive Andy and Sting nuts?

Stewart: No, it drove earlier bands nuts. In Curved Air, there was this moment when we were in the studio playing back overdubs. "Okay, roll back to the beginning." The beginning was much slower than the ending. They all looked daggers at me and said, "You amateur! What's the matter with you!"

The Police was all about energy, excitement, and uplift, and neither Sting nor Andy ever looked twice at me when, of course, the end of the track was faster than the beginning. But overall, Sting did have a problem with the tempi, which were always too fast even at the beginning of the track. But he never had a problem with them speeding up. In his view, they were too fast to begin with.

MD: You have one of the most identifiable drumming styles in the history of the drumset. How does one develop and create his or her own sound and style?

Stewart: By growing up in a foreign land. I grew up in the Middle East, in Lebanon, which is between Syria and Israel. The local music there is very different from American music. That's what I heard all day, every day. There would be one hour of pop music on Voice Of America, and that was my only exposure to anything other than Arabic music.

I went to the American Community School in Beirut. By the way, Osama Bin Laden went there as well. But I heard American music that American kids brought over, and I played in bands playing American music. But all day, every day, I was surrounded by Arabic music. I was fifteen and in an English boarding school, but deep in my consciousness was this other ethnicity, this other cultural root. When I heard reggae for the first time, it actually connected with my Arab rhythmic sensibility—leaving holes in the beat. That's where it came from for me, at least that's my pet theory.

It is a source of wonder to me that I worked as hard as I did. I drew all my ideas from wherever I drew them. I played what I played without any great thought to being original or anything pompous like that.

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Stewart Copeland

And years later the world decreed that I was different.

MD: So growing up in Beirut, you internalized those rhythms?

Stewart: One thing that Arabic music does feature prominently is the 16th-note interest. In modern electronic music, the 16th note is not very interesting. It is metronomic. That was true even through pre-electronic pop music. People never thought about the hi-hat as providing anything other than steady 16th notes. In jazz, with that distinctive jazz ride rhythm, ting ting ta-ting, there is a lot of emphasis on that. I suppose my enforced listening of Buddy Rich might have had an effect. One factor is that for a long time it hadn't occurred to anyone else other than your humble servant to make use of various 16th-note interests.

MD: Do you mean as far as breaking up the 16th-note patterns on the hi-hat and splash cymbals?

Stewart: Yes, in terms of considering the inflections and doing interesting things with the accents.

MD: Does that extend to the splash ideas and the bell accents?

Stewart: The splash idea came from a toy



The composer hard at work on yet another soundtrack.

cymbal that I whacked and went psssh. And I thought that sound would be useful to have—a very quick-speaking cymbal. It was a toy cymbal, and I remember trying to persuade Paiste to actually make them and they said, “No, we can’t. We can only make them as toys. If we made them as a professional item people would expect

them to last longer than two shows.” Eventually their metallurgists got on it and they figured out how to do it.

MD: Another of your noteworthy contributions to The Police, which was possibly a result of your interest in Arabic music, was the shifting of the downbeat, the rhythmic illusions in songs like “Roxanne,”

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“Bring On The Night,” and “Murder By Numbers.”

Stewart: The joy of the technique of the drop rhythm, the hole in the rhythm, was very much part of Arabic music. That’s why when I heard reggae it kind of reminded me of that trick. Things trigger other things.

MD: Through the years have you ever tired of your style and tried to change it?

Stewart: [laughs] “Do you ever get sick of yourself?” In fact, yes. Most people do, I think. As I get older, I’m over it. I’m not sick of myself anymore. I’m over it. I’m down with it.

MD: After The Police, then Animal Logic and Oysterhead, did you ever want to change your technique to make playing easier in any way?

Stewart: The only consideration I ever give to technique is when I’m warming up for a tour. Every summer I do a tour with Gizmo in Italy, and a month or two before that I start warming up using basic technique: single-stroke rolls, doubles, paradiddles, all that kind of stuff. I’m very disciplined about starting off every day’s exercise with all of that technique stuff. Then when I put some CDs on, jam along, and start having fun, everything works better.

I’ve learned over four decades of playing that the more correct the warm-up is, the

better you’ll play. And it’s really worth applying the discipline. It’s like a sort of Zen, yoga, or something like that. It is deeply engrossing. It’s kind of a meditation to get into those exercises. And then, once the warm-ups are done, the reward comes in how well the hands work.

But what would I want to change? I’m using technique in a slightly different way than you probably intended with your question. As far as *what* I play—style—I never give that any thought at all. I just play what comes up.

MD: When you prepare to tour, how long will you practice each day?

Stewart: About twenty minutes on rudiments. And the rest of the hour or so I spend playing the kit, which doesn’t sound like a lot of practice time. You hear of [violin master] Itzak Pearlman practicing for four hours a day, and maybe I should. But my mind starts to wander after an hour or so. I do a lot of mental air drumming as well away from the kit, and it is my unproven theory [speaking in a mysterious whisper] that mental air drumming improves technique.

MD: How so?

Stewart: Because if you imagine a single-stroke roll, you are imagining it perfectly executed, and I think that goes some way towards allowing you to execute it when

All that
Glitters,
Isn't
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COPELAND'S BEST RECORDINGS



Artist	Album
Stewart Copeland	Orchestra
The Police	“Message In A Bottle” (from <i>Reggatta De Blanc</i>)
The Police	“Can’t Stand Losing You” (from <i>Outlandos D’Amour</i>)
Oysterhead	“Little Faces” (from <i>The Grand Pecking Order</i>)
Stewart Copeland	Rumble Fish
The Police	Outlandos D’Amour
The Police	Reggatta De Blanc
The Police	Zenyatta Mondatta
The Police	Ghost In The Machine
The Police	Synchronicity



HIS FAVORITES

Artist	Album	Drummer
Jimi Hendrix	Are You Experienced	Mitch Mitchell
Cream	Fresh Cream	Ginger Baker
Buddy Rich	Big Swing Face	Buddy Rich
Buddy Rich	New Big Band	Buddy Rich
Led Zeppelin	Led Zeppelin II	John Bonham



Stewart Copeland

you're actually holding a pair of sticks. The reason I have this theory is because, when I was a kid, I would always walk along with a drum pattern going in my head. I would obsess over how to do a drum roll that ended up on this beat or that beat, or remembering a Hendrix track and how Mitch Mitchell carved up a rhythm on it. I was mentally air drumming all the time, but playing my drums very rarely.

It was hard to play my drums in boarding school. But I would find that whenever

I did sit down at my drums, I would have made huge progress in technique and in the things that I wasn't able to play the previous time I sat down. Things I couldn't play before, suddenly I could play. Mental air drumming is helpful.

MD: How have you maintained your stamina and very physical style as you've aged? But then, you don't look any different.

Stewart: Don't look too closely. I am an avid bike rider. I don't do mountain biking, but here in southern California I spend

many happy hours riding the trails first thing in the morning. From your thirtieth to your fiftieth birthday, it's a steady decline. You hit fifty, which is the new thirty, and you realize you can do something about it. I'm out there with my over-fifty buddies who are much stronger than the younger guys. When I have a tour coming up, some kind of instinct rises up from my libido, my id, and says, "Get out there and start working it!" I have to be strong for Oysterhead.

MD: Watching yourself on the Police footage, how would Stewart 2006 advise Stewart 1982?

Stewart: Crack a smile, dude! Nowadays I enjoy drumming so much more than I did then. I can't get the idiot grin off my face when I play. Maybe I was well advised not to crack a smile. I saw myself on the *Synchronicity* DVD and the playing was strong, but I looked so grim. That's because I was in deep concentration. But I certainly do enjoy it, even though I do play in other bands that are incredible in different ways. Sometimes I wonder about that, because how much better can it get than my experience in The Police?

MD: What do you like about your playing then, and what, in retrospect, didn't work so well?

Stewart: I'm feeling like George Bush here. "Have you ever made a mistake?" "Uh, well. No." I haven't thought about what I would improve, because that was then and this is now. I wish we had recorded the albums after the tours rather than before them. From the first show onward the arrangements improved, and I would come up with a much better way of getting from the verse to the chorus. I would come up with better stuff all the time when we were onstage. When we recorded the albums, we would hear the song in the morning and the backing track would be done before lunch. So I suppose there is a freshness and an inspirational quality to them.

All of the drum parts on the last three albums were conceived in about a half hour before recording them. "Murder By Numbers" stands out because the recording is the first run-through of the song. It was after dinner, Andy was playing the chords, Sting had the lyrics, and they worked out the song over the dinner table. I walked over to the drums, which were in the dining room, they went down to the studio, and I started playing and they played the song down.

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Stewart Copeland

MD: Perhaps it's good to not over-think a part?

Stewart: But that is kind of an extreme. That was the first run-through. I don't think I could improve on that performance, but all the other tracks, they sure improved in front of audiences.

THE DRUMSET

MD: How has your set sound evolved from back in the day?

Stewart: Not much. I've got one of those double bass pedal things. I use that a lot more. I went through a period with Curved Air when my first record company—bought drumkit was a huge double bass drum monstrosity. And the two bass drums killed my rhythm for two years, till I finally got rid of the other bass drum. I had to adjust to get my good foot back. I had an aversion to double kicks, until they came up with that pedal.

I saw Joey [Jordison] in Slipknot recently blasting away, and realized there are a lot of possibilities there. So I'm using that pedal more and more. That's the only thing that is new on my kit, the Iron Cobra double pedal.

MD: How did you develop the Tama SE145 Stewart Copeland Signature Power snare drum?

Stewart: It's selling like hotcakes! I keep signing the insides of the drum, and I worked really hard to get it to sound good. I wouldn't let Tama release it until they got it right. It took a lot of work for them.

Here's the story: There is one snare drum that I own on which I recorded all those Police hits. It was a Pearl, but I could never replicate it. I went back and tried to get another one, the same model and everything, but it just didn't sound the same. I only had the one drum, and it always made me nervous, because I was worried that I might lose that magic drum. I figured there must be something wrong with it, it must be slightly warped or have some anomaly that made it sound the way it did.

When Tama suggested doing a signature snare, there was only one way forward: Replicate that drum! So they measured the diameter and all the specs, and it finally came down to metallurgy—the amount of bronze, etc. After many prototypes, Tama finally got one that really was the shit. And they were able to duplicate it. Now I can pull any one of those drums out of a box

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Stewart Copeland

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MD: What else in your kit are you passionate about?

Stewart: The Paiste 18" light flat ride is a really cool cymbal. Every drummer should have one. It doesn't build up at all. No matter what you do it just goes "ting." With normal ride cymbals that have a bell, there's a much wider variety of sound that you can get. But that flat ride is a really useful thing to have right next to your main ride for quiet passages.

MD: Reggae, punk, and apparently Arabic music influenced your drumming in your formative years. What are you listening to now that makes you want to play?

Stewart: Sirius Radio, the Heart Attack channel. They play Lamb Of God, Slayer, Slipknot, and other bands with outrageous names. I don't know why I get such a kick out of it. It is sort of retarded. But when I was twelve, didn't have chest hair, and dreamed of being a man, listening to that kind of music was sort of like having bor-

rowed chest hair. Why do I get a thrill out of that music? Who knows?

THE COMPOSER

MD: You've scored for ballet, opera, soundtracks, and orchestras, and that side of your career has lasted much longer than your time in The Police. How has dealing with a broader palette of sounds as a composer affected your drumming?

Stewart: Oddly, not at all. To me, it's two different guys. For *Orchestra*, I wrote all this fancy schmancy music that I love. As soon as I get on the drums, I just thrash it all. At that point I don't have a great deal of respect for the composer. I'm there to play drums. Fortunately, as the composer, I know the music intimately and deeply, so I have the inside scoop on all of it. But when I'm playing it, I'm just thinking as a drummer.

MD: You mentioned *Orchestra*. How did you settle on the lineup and material?

Stewart: The group involves a percussion ensemble, a small orchestra, and me. There is an Ewi player, too. The recording was nominated for a Grammy in the best rock instrumental category, so it must be rock music. But I think of it as orchestral music

with drums. We cover music that I've written along the way. And people seem to enjoy my music more if I'm playing drums. The music is taken from *The Equalizer*, *Rumble Fish*, and various operas, ballets, and what-have-you that I wrote. A couple of tracks are named after my children.

MD: Listening to the CD, the *Rumble Fish* track has a romantic, even whimsical edge.

Stewart: Well, that scene in the movie from which this piece of music comes is a nostalgic one—a father & son scene.

MD: In general, it is a romantic-sounding album, at least melodically.

Stewart: I'm not sure what you mean by romantic. Gay?

MD: Bittersweet may be a better word.

Stewart: As a composer I love little tunes, bass lines, harmonies, and rhythms and the way they interact. When you're a songwriter, you have a different focus. You're thinking about the subject of the song. But when it's just a composition of notes, melodic interplay and all that gay stuff is what it's all about.

MD: How do you compose?

Stewart: I work on a computer in Digital

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Stewart Copeland pictured with his own 2005 Starclassic Exotix "Volcanic Fire" Limited Edition drum set.

Stewart Copeland

Performer. I use MIDI, which makes it very easy and efficient to work with pictures. Film composing is very technical. You have to be able to bring emotion to a scene, but the way that you do it is very technical. The piece of music starts exactly in one place and ends exactly in the next place. When it changes attitude it changes emotion. Film is very strict. So the computer is good for that environment. I map it out and then bring musicians in to play it.

MD: Has being a drummer helped the regimented way you work with film?

Stewart: Not really, because any musician has to learn how to break up time and understand compound time and so on.

MD: So when you were purely a drummer, the soundtrack composer was in there yearning to break free?

Stewart: Yes. I always had that music going 'round my head. My day job was playing in a rock band.

MD: When people come to you for a soundtrack, what sound do they want?

Stewart: Mostly I get films where it was decided not to have an anonymous score.

Directors who come to me want the music to have a unique voice. That's generally because they want the atmosphere of the film to be different, and the music is a good place to do that. I don't get called to do *Spiderman*, I get the art movies.

THE SEMI-PRO

MD: Is Oysterhead going to record again?

Stewart: We are rehearsing to perform. We improvise our career in the same way we improvise our music. It's pretty free-flow. That's part of the joy of it. Unlike The Police, which became an industry, Oysterhead is very low-maintenance and a lot of fun. Our brief is to come down from the mountain every five years and whip it up. That's what keeps it fresh.

MD: Is Gizmo a world supergroup?

Stewart: It's an Italian supergroup. We are huge in Italy without much of a desire to go beyond that. For one month a year my idea of heaven is to go and play outdoor concerts all over Italy. The Italians are so great, the places are so great—either open piazzas or old amphitheatres—and the food is great. And that keeps it in the context of being a hobby. As soon as I go across the border into boring old Germany, it's a job.

MD: What material do you cover in Gizmo?

Stewart: Various songs I have written, Police tunes, "Mrs. Gredanko," "Does Everyone Stare," and a couple of things we worked up in the band. We have no immediate plans to record. It's like Oysterhead. The minute I start doing this for a living it's not fun anymore. I've got a living, it's film composing. That's what pays my rent and keeps my kids in private school. Playing drums is something I do for the joy of it. As soon as I get professional it loses a little bit of that joy.

MD: But you are still serious enough to sit down and practice.

Stewart: You're darn tooting. The joy is serious. And the more I put into it, the more joy I get from it. The more I try to take out of it, the less joy I get. I am fond of describing myself as a semi-pro.

MD: Are you still in contact with Andy Summers and Sting?

Stewart: I talked to Andy just yesterday.

MD: So will The Police ever reunite?

Stewart: Don't think so, because Sting don't wanna.

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When Sacramento-based monster drummer Zach Hill teamed up with guitarist Spencer Seim in 2001, the plan was to find other like-minded musicians to collaborate with. But that never happened. Instead, the explosive drum/guitar duo began exploring ideas on their own, ultimately becoming the indie noise-rock heroes known as Hella. "After we couldn't find anyone else to work with, we started messing with stuff as a two-piece," Zach explains. "We were basically writing the first record thinking that other people were going to be in the band."

Zach Hill



Story By Michael Dawson
Photos By Alex Solca



Earthship Shreddin' To Hella And Back

**"I play
more
like a
guitarist
or a
horn
player
than
I do a
drummer."**





Well, after five years of relentless touring (including a stint on last fall's System Of A Down/Mars Volta tour) and six studio releases, Hella has finally filled out their line-up. Now the band has mutated into a four-piece, adding the drummer's cousin, Josh Hill, on guitar and longtime friend Carson McWirter on bass. "We're perceiving ourselves as if we're starting over," says Zach. "The record we're making right now is like the first record we ever made."

If you have yet to witness Zach's frantic drumming with Hella or any of his countless other projects, prepare yourself for an overwhelming experience. With super-human chops, a jackhammer right foot, and a penchant for self-destruction, the drummer drives his body and mind, as well as his instrument, to the absolute breaking point.

But there's much more to this hard-hitting drummer than broken sticks and busted knuckles. Hill is a deeply motivated artist who's dedicated his life to reinventing how drumset is played. "I've always been interested in the innovation side of things," says Zach. "I want to make things that never existed before."

It's that intense creative outlook that has led Zach to collabo-

rate with a variety of forward-thinking musicians outside of Hella. Over the past few years, the drummer has taken on projects with artists such as bass icon Les Claypool, Faith No More/Fantomas vocalist Mike Patton, and Wilco guitarist Nels Cline. Zach even spent a good portion of 2005 touring with Deftones front man Chino Moreno's collaborative venture Team Sleep. "I'm very serious about what I do," states Zach. "And by being out there and playing for the right reasons—trying to further the instrument and trying to innovate—people pick up on that and want to collaborate. I'm open to being creative with anyone as long as they're coming from a good place."

To further illustrate the drummer's prolific output, Zach appears on two incredible records that were released earlier this year. One of those, *They Mean Us* from The Ladies, is a prog-pop experiment with eclectic songwriter Rob Crow of west coast indie group Pinback. The other, *Shred Earthship*, is an all-out chops fest with guitarist Mick Barr from experimental punk metal band Orthrelm. Plus, at the time of this interview, Zach was busy recording a new album with the recently expanded incarnation of Hella, while *also* gearing up for an upcoming tour with The Ladies.

MD: You're currently in the studio working on the next Hella record. What direction is the band headed now that you've brought in new members?

Zach: When we got home from touring last year, we knew we had to make this record for Ipecac Records. Since we never want to make the same thing twice, we decided to go for something different and try our original idea of a full band. It's panning out to be exactly what we originally envisioned. This record's a lot more thought-out and song-oriented. If our older records were like jazz records, this new one is going to be more like a Yes album.

MD: Who's writing the music?

Zach: All of us. Each one of us is on top of their craft and is a highly opinionated and strong person. So we're really pushing each other. Ideas have come from drumbeats, bass lines, piano parts, guitars, whatever. It's been an even mix of collaboration, which is extremely important to achieving a great record.

As for my playing, I'm focusing a lot more on my right foot. I want to push myself further, incorporating quadru-

plets and triplets into my beats. I'm trying to apply those figures into patterns at the same speed that I can play doubles.

MD: How are you working on your foot?

Zach: I have certain patterns that I practice over and over that require a lot of endurance. I'll repeat triplets or fours with the foot while playing patterns with my arms.

I'm also using a bigger drum to push myself. I'm recording with a 22", but I've been practicing with a 26". This guy in Los Angeles named Jenkins built that drum for me out of melted-down fiberglass surfboards. It's a lot slower to respond, so I'm busting my butt on that thing. Then when I get back on the 22", it's like a hummingbird.

MD: How much time do you spend in the studio getting drum takes?

Zach: I try to get the drums recorded pretty fast. A lot of the drum tracks are first takes. There have been a couple instances when we've taken the first section of one take and combined it with a section of a later take, but there's not a lot of studio editing. I prefer to get one

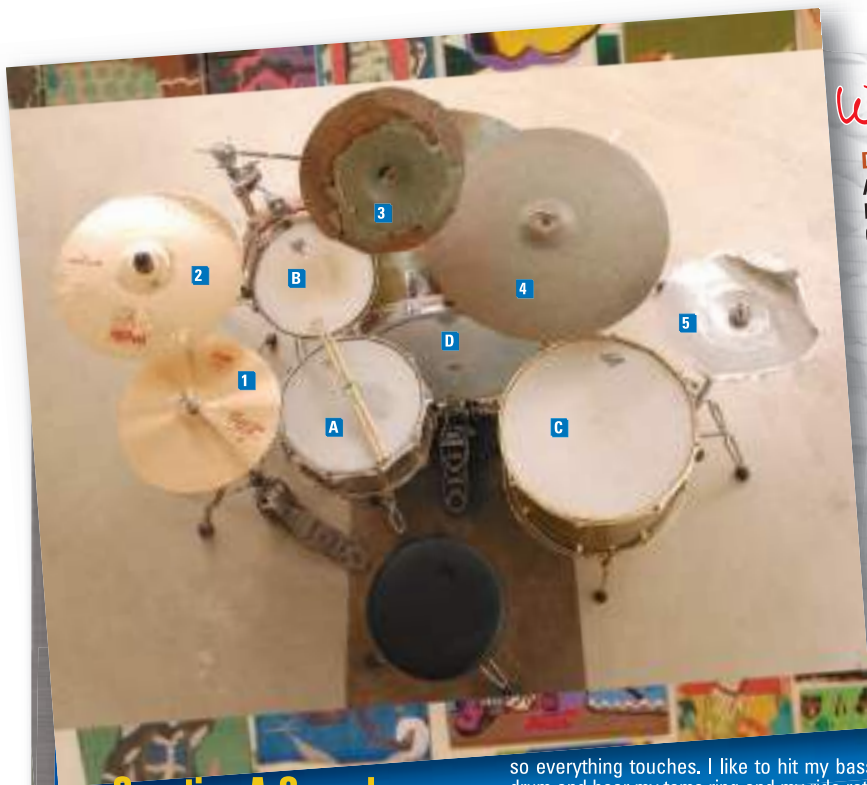
complete drum track.

When I listen to Zeppelin, Hendrix, or The Who, there's always a sense of adventure in the records. There are these little inconsistencies that you wait for every time you listen to them. The art of that is gone nowadays. I'd rather take a small mistake in an exciting, historical performance than try to make it perfect, or make it something that it's not.

MD: What other projects have you worked on recently?

Zach: I'm constantly working with all sorts of people. I've been working with guys like Les Claypool and System Of A Down guitarist Daron Malakian for about two years now, but we haven't put anything out yet. I'm also starting to work with some of the dudes from The Mars Volta. And there's a record out by Goon Moon. That's a group with Chris Goss of Masters Of Reality and Twiggy Ramirez from Marilyn Manson. I also do a lot of work with electronics people like Kid 606, and I recently made a drum record with Matt Cameron and Janet Weiss that we're calling *Drumgasm*.





Creating A Cacophony Zach On His Setup

MD: When you're on the road and using the club's drums, what do you do to the kit to get your sound?

Zach: I tighten the snare as tight as it'll go. Then I'll take the pillows out of the kick drum, and I'll loosen the tom heads. Then I'll set up the kit low to the ground and close together

so everything touches. I like to hit my bass drum and hear my toms ring and my ride rattle. Then when I'm playing these super busy patterns, the entire drumset is creating a solid hum, which adds ambience to what I'm doing.

I also like trashy-sounding things and stuff that resembles everyday sounds. Those sounds bring out a different emotion and create a different atmosphere from a normal kit. I try to orchestrate a whole scenario that's more than just audio. I like the sound of my drumset to spawn some

type of *visual* experience, too.

MD: How consistent are you with your setup?

Zach: I use a standard four-piece setup for live shows. But when I'm at home, I change things all the time. Sometimes I'll practice with only the kick, snare, hi-hat, and one trashed-out cymbal. Then another time I'll throw up as many drums as I can, or I'll play without hi-hats for a couple of weeks, or I'll add some cowbells. I'm focused on being able to do what I do on *any* type of setup. I don't like being limited because of a certain type of drumset.

Weapons Of Choice

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- A. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x14 Keplinger stainless-steel snare
- B. 10x12 Tama Starclassic tom
- C. 16x18 Socko custom floor tom
- D. 25x26 Jenkins fiberglass surfboard bass drum

Cymbals

- 1. 15" Paiste 2002 Sound Edge hi-hats
- 2. 17" Paiste 2002 Wild Crash
- 3. Spinmade (stacked) metal appliance cutouts
- 4. 24" Paiste 2002 ride (with inverted bell)
- 5. Spinmade custom metal cutout cymbal

Hardware: Tama, including an Iron Cobra Power Glide bass drum pedal and hi-hat stand

Heads: Remo coated Emperors on snare and toms, PowerStroke 3 on kick

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MD: How did you organize the music for that one?

Zach: We set up roles that were appropriate to each of our strong points. Janet would lay the foundation and Matt would reinforce that with color. I play more like a guitarist or a horn player than I do a drummer, so that was my position. We also switched roles, but initially the idea was to have one person be the soloist while someone else played the groove.

MD: How do you play the drums like a horn player?

Zach: I've always tried to play the drums in a context that they're not played in very often. I want to play with a voice, as if I'm singing on the drums like a lead player. I try to find a balance of both worlds, where I can hold it down while also singing on the instrument.

MD: Let's talk about some of the other projects you've been involved with. How do you approach the gig with Team

Sleep? It's more structured than some of your other projects.

Zach: In that situation, I think of my role as a display of power and foundation. I'm not as busy, but I color it up, adding vibrancy while playing within the realm of 4/4.

In any situation, I try to find ways to introduce new ideas that cause things to shift and lock in invisible places. A lot of what I hear in my mind is based on that concept. There are many invisible pockets within each bar where I can make rhythms work where they shouldn't or haven't before. I apply that philosophy with Team Sleep, but in a much more groove-oriented atmosphere.

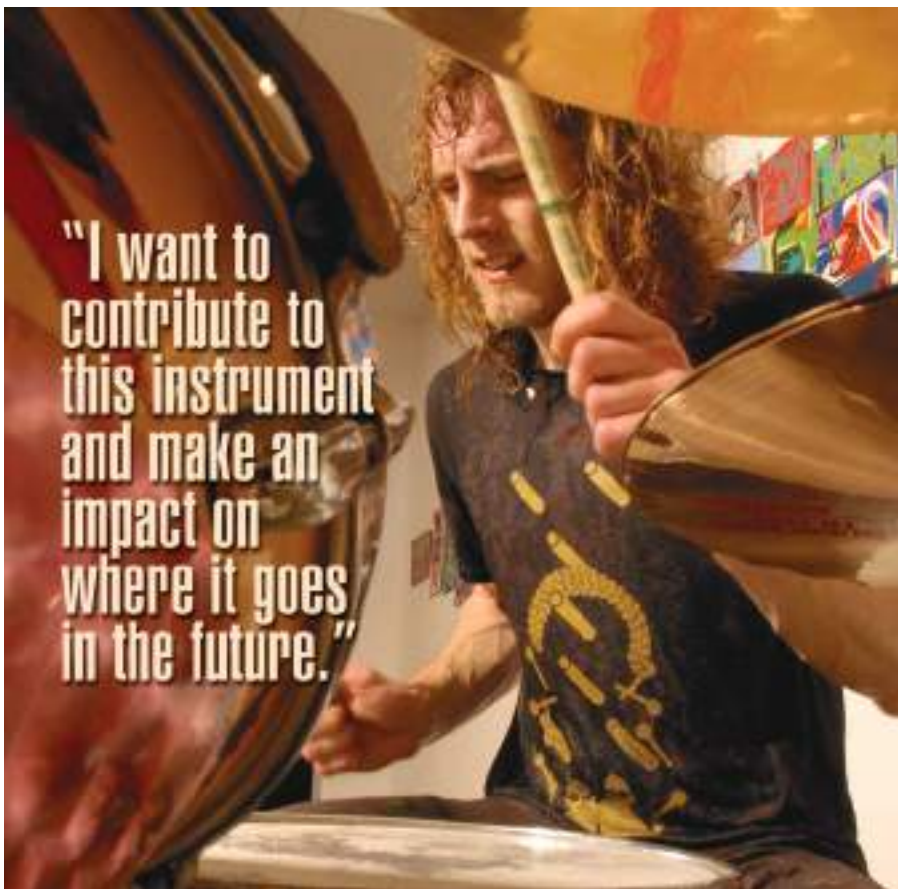
MD: The concept of invisible pockets is pretty intriguing. Can you elaborate on how it works?

Zach: Sure. One thing I do to find the invisible pockets is construct drum parts that simply *won't* work over a given guitar part or bass line if you start on the

same downbeat. But even though theoretically my parts don't fit, there are at least two spots where something lines up. If you can find and emphasize those invisible spaces, you can make it work, even if your ideas have to overlap for two or three cycles. Eventually it's going to come back around and your 1's are going to land at the same place. Sometimes if my beat *does* work on the first time, I'll purposely start on the off-beat to find other possibilities.

MD: When you're forcing an idea on top of something that shouldn't fit, how do you know when it works?

Zach: You can hear how the syncopation fits together. After playing your patterns bar after bar, you'll begin to hear how they're hitting in areas that you never expected. Your first beat could match up on their third or wherever. It might also work out that your hits are landing in the spaces in the other person's playing.



MD: Take us through your process for building a beat around a specific guitar line.

Zach: If it's a reoccurring line or riff, I'll usually double the biggest accents with the right foot. Or I'll try to come up with some type of syncopation with the foot that's based on something within the riff, which may be something in those hidden places. Then I'll use my arms for color.

Or if I come up with a rhythm that accentuates every aspect of that guitar line, I'll experiment by starting my part on the upbeats. Then I'll relearn my part to start on the other person's downbeat.

MD: So you're taking your original pattern, sliding it over to a different beat, and then figuring out how to make it resolve correctly?

Zach: Exactly. I never want to play like anyone else. And I'm reluctant to play any beats that I know have been played before. I want to contribute to this instrument and make an impact on where it goes in the future, so this process for creating beats is one of the things I do to make sure I'm achieving that goal.

MD: You're also in a project with Rob Crow of Pinback called The Ladies. How did that come about?

Zach: Hella has played some shows with Pinback, so Rob and I became friends out of that. We always talked about making music together, so when I was recording my solo disc, *Masculine Drugs*, I sent him some drum tracks to mess around with. I sent him four songs and he finished them in a matter of days, so we talked about doing something more. He had some short ideas that he brought with him when he visited me in Sacramento for two weeks, and we started working on the record at my house.

MD: How did you write the material?

Zach: Rob wanted to put together these short, poppy things and have me mess with them. I came up with these semi-freaked out drumbeats and then started shifting them around. Some of the songs are pretty straightforward. But on the others, I found the weirdest points in the riffs to use as my downbeats.

MD: How did you come up with this concept for constructing beats?

Zach: The genesis of those types of discoveries has been from playing improvisational music. Playing stuff that has no time signature led me to honing in on what you can do *within* time signatures. In free music, any musical idea can be

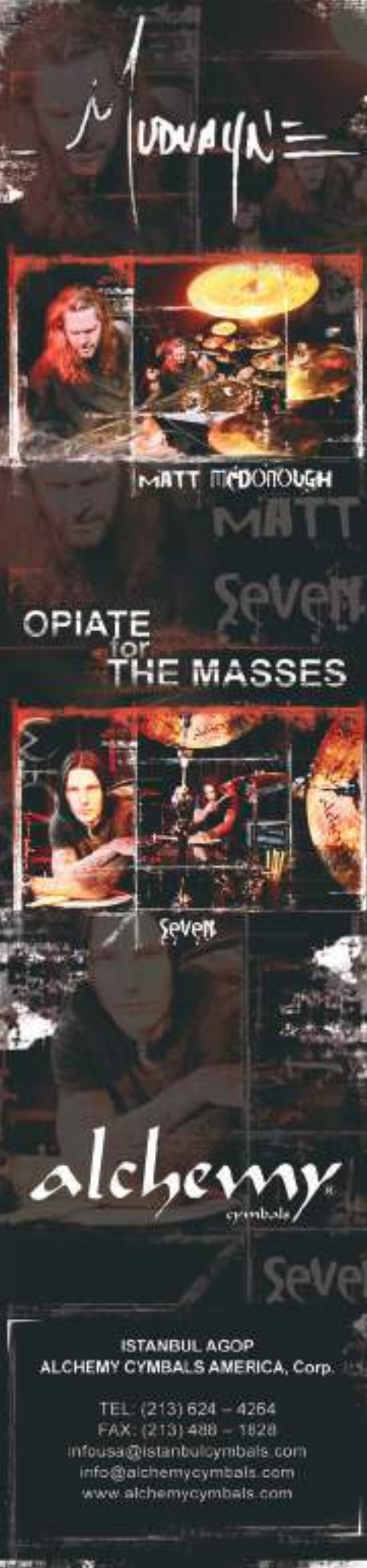
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Zach's Tracks

Recordings	
Artist	Album
Hella	Hold Your Horse Is
Hella	Bitches Ain't Shit But Good People
Hella	Total Bugs Bunny On Wild Bass
Hella	The Devil Isn't Red
Hella	Church Gone Wild
Hella	Concentration Face/Homeboy (CD/DVD)
Zach Hill & Mick Barr	Shred Earthship
The Ladies	They Mean Us
Goon Moon	I Got A Brand New Egg Layin' Machine
Zach Hill & Holy Smokes	Masculine Drugs
Team Sleep	Team Sleep
Nervous Cop	Nervous Cop
Crime In Choir	Crime In Choir

Favorites		
Artist	Album	Drummer
Magma	Udu Wudu	Christian Vander
John Coltrane	Interstellar Space	Rashied Ali
Need New Body	UFO	Chris Powell
Angus MacLise	Brain Damage In Oklahoma City	Angus MacLise
Mahavishnu Orchestra	Birds Of Fire	Billy Cobham
Primus	Frizzle Fry	Tim Alexander
Darkthrone	Transylvania Hunger	Fenriz
The Jimi Hendrix Experience	Axis: Bold As Love	Mitch Mitchell

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played over anything else; there's no right or wrong.

But just because it's free doesn't mean it can't be metered. Free music can also be in 4/4. So if someone is playing in 4/4, it gives someone else the opportunity to be crazy on top of that. From that type of playing, I started discovering that the two parts were landing in crazy places. That was when I started hearing the invisible pockets.

MD: How has playing free music affected your in-time playing?

Zach: Playing free music has made a huge impact on my in-time playing. For example, someone can play a figure over and over and I can play whatever I want—whether it's double speed, completely free, or whatever—and then I can drop right in with no stops. I've trained myself to hear the pulses that are happening between the two parts. Even though they don't go together, I can drop right in because I'm totally aware of what I'm doing *and* what they're doing.

MD: There's a moment on the Hella DVD *Concentration Face* that perfectly illustrates that concept. At one point, you and Spencer are playing two completely contrasting ideas. Then out of nowhere

you go into the song "Women Of The '90s" from *The Devil Isn't Red*.

Zach: Yeah, that's what I'm talking about. At the time of that DVD, we had a balance where songs were half-scripted and half-improvised. In the middle of shows, one of us could start playing an entirely different song over the one we're playing and we'd know exactly where to come in. To us, it makes perfect sense. But other people are like, "What's going on?" Sometimes we completely lose people, but then we'll stop on a dime for our own amusement.

The record I did with Mick Barr, *Shred Earthship*, really illustrates this type of stuff. We did the record in five days, and it's all stream-of-consciousness. It's pure shredding, but it's not nonsense. It's basically the two of us having a conversation. Even though it's completely improvised, you'd never know it.

MD: How did you rehearse for that record?

Zach: For that record, we set up different situations for ourselves. For instance, we'd play as fast and as hard as we could for twenty minutes straight. After two days of that type of intense playing, we

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Zach Hill

wouldn't even look at each other and we'd stop on a dime. It was a crazy musical relationship caught on tape. And drumming-wise, I feel it's an achievement for the instrument.

MD: What other phrasing concepts have you been exploring?

Zach: I also do this thing that I call infinite flammimg. Basically, I'll start flammimg around the drumset in groups of threes or something. I'll repeat that pattern over a consistent guitar part until the parts lock up on the downbeat.

That concept is inspired by South Indian music. South Indian drummers do a lot of infinite rolls that eventually come back on the 1 and lock into a crazy syncopated part. I've been trying to achieve those same types of things on the drumset.

MD: Let's go back to the beginning. When and why did you start playing drums?

Zach: From a young age, I was a music fanatic. But I didn't realize that I could achieve those types of things until a later age. I was about fourteen or fifteen when I started hearing voices in my head telling me to play the drums.

At that time, I was really into Primus, Metallica, and Faith No More. When I heard their music, I felt something inside of me, like dancing. If you take away the drumset, you're basically sitting at a seat doing weird, syncopated motions. That's what I started feeling when I was about fourteen or fifteen.

MD: When did you get your first kit?

Zach: I bought my first drumset with some money I raised with a friend of mine from a garage sale. I told my friend that I could play drums, and he told me that he could play guitar. Neither of us could really play, but we tried anyway.

But even in the beginning I had these ideas in my head to do something different. I eventually dropped out of high school after one year and played drums all the time. I consumed myself in drumming, which is just like how I am now.

MD: What were you practicing during that first year?

Zach: For the first year, I was just trying to get down the basics. But at the same time I was hearing more advanced things in my mind. I loved Tim Alexander's playing with Primus, especially his double

"Republic Of Rough And Ready"

Transcribed by Willie Rose

Since their debut, 2002's *Hold Your Horse Is*, noise-rockers Hella have dominated the underground scene with technically adventurous rock music that's hard to classify. Consisting of a guitarist and a drummer, Hella blazes through tempo and time signature changes effortlessly. At first listen, Zach Hill's drumming sounds spastic and random. But when examined closely, the intricacies within his playing illustrate the depth, intellectualism, and eccentricity of Hella's music.

Zach's playing revolves around his ability to execute extremely fast double and triple strokes on the bass drum. In the 2/4 section at measure 48 of "Republic Of Rough And Ready," double strokes help propel the fill-like groove forward. In the 3/8 section that follows, Zach places doubles at the end of triplets, using the bass drum as a third hand. This third-hand approach is one of the key components of Zach's concept.

Another important aspect of Zach's drumming is his ability to switch between time sig-



natures. Early in this song, he shifts from 6/4 to 5/4 to 4/4 without losing tempo. Similar time signature changes occur at the end of the song, where he moves between 3/4 and 9/8 while maintaining a driving groove. It's an impressive performance.

♩ = 107 ♩ = 134 ♩ = 182

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♩ = 119

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13 4 4 4

16 4 4 4 4

♩ = 193

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23 4 4 4

26 4 4 4

29 4 4 4

32 4 4 4

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Zach Hill

bass patterns. So my whole thing from the beginning was to be able to do that type of double bass stuff with one bass drum. That was my focus. Lots of people had done it, like Buddy Rich and John Bonham, but I wanted to take it to another level.

MD: How long were you practicing?

Zach: All I did after dropping out of high school was practice. I was playing anywhere from two to seven hours a day, which is the same as now. I don't slack off when it comes to practicing. I'm never satisfied with my playing. I'll get excited about certain things I've achieved, but I'm always looking forward.

MD: What did you practice today?

Zach: Right now, I'm working on songs. There's a song on the new Hella record where I'm creating half-time grooves out of blast patterns. Imagine a half-time groove that swings really hard with a blast beat between each snare accent.

MD: Have you ever played along with records?

Zach: No, I've never done that. I just sat in a room and played around with the things that I was hearing in my mind. A lot of my practice involves exploring and deconstructing everything within my knowledge of the instrument. I'll take three difficult beats and swap around the endings and beginnings of each one to create six new beats.

I'll also think up ten wild drumbeats. Then I'll try to go seamlessly between them as fast as I can, weaving different ones in and out of each other at random places. With that type of practice, I'm trying to use my third eye to get psychic with the instrument and really be in control of what I'm doing. It's similar to what happens when you tell your finger to move. You don't think about it; it's just an instinct. That's what I'm trying to do on the drumset.

MD: It sounds like you're very systematic in your approach to practicing. Are you consciously aware of everything that you're doing?

Zach: Yeah, to a certain extent, but sometimes not. I'm aware of certain systems that I have, and I'm aware of certain tendencies that I have—both good and bad. But at the same time, I'm still

The musical notation is presented in a vertical column on the right side of the page. It consists of 16 staves of music, each starting with a measure number in the left margin. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, time signatures, and tempo markings. The first staff (35) is in 6/4 time and features a complex pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents. The second staff (38) is in 3/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with triplets. The third staff (41) is in 4/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with triplets. The fourth staff (44) is in 4/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with triplets and a tempo marking of 141. The fifth staff (48) is in 2/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with sextuplets. The sixth staff (52) is in 2/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with sextuplets. The seventh staff (57) is in 2/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with triplets and accents. The eighth staff (64) is in 2/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with sextuplets. The ninth staff (68) is in 2/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with sextuplets. The tenth staff (73) is in 2/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with triplets and accents. The eleventh staff (80) is in 2/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with sextuplets. The twelfth staff (84) is in 2/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with sextuplets. The thirteenth staff (89) is in 2/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with triplets and accents. The fourteenth staff (97) is in 5/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with accents and a tempo marking of 185. The fifteenth staff is in 4/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with accents and a tempo marking of 164. The sixteenth staff (101) is in 4/4 time and features a pattern of eighth notes with accents and a tempo marking of 185.

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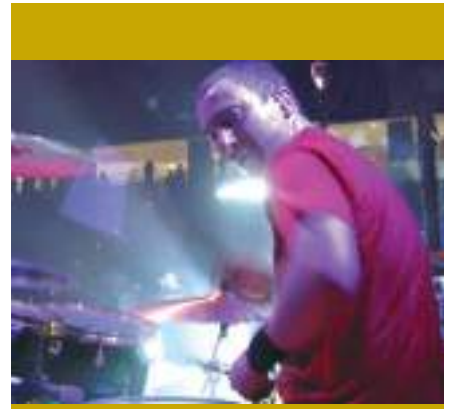
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ABE CUNNINGHAM
Deftones
 American Hickory,
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ZACH HILL
Hella
 American Hickory,
 TXR5B "Natural," Wood-tip



RAY LUZIER
Army of Anyone
 American Hickory, TX5B, Wood-tip

Zach Hill

oblivious to myself. I do that on purpose because I don't want to think too much, and I don't want to be *too* aware of what I'm doing. That's partially why I am where I am, because there's a certain amount of naïveté to what I'm doing. So analyzing things too much could easily affect how I decide to approach something.

MD: As you're practicing, do you break things down, or do you simply let ideas come and go?

Zach: Both. If I make a new discovery, my first instinct is to play it until I can't forget it. Then I'll test that idea with twenty other things that are already within my playing. Every time something new is added, I try to incorporate it seamlessly into my whole list of ideas.

MD: What was the most recent discovery that you took through this process?

Zach: Most recently, I've been trying to design universal patterns in odd meters that will lock together with guitar parts in various time signatures. If I'm playing a beat in nine, I want that beat to revolve

like a carousel around the other guys' parts. By doing that, I'm using the same process that I was talking about before, where I'm shifting my parts and starting in the middle of certain phrases of the song. On first listen, it sounds weird. But after hearing it a few times, you'll start to hear how the parts are hitting certain counter lines.

MD: You also do a lot of complex hand/foot patterns using the floor tom.

Zach: Yeah, that's one of the first things I developed to emulate double bass patterns. I try to come up with syncopations where the hands and feet are filling within one another.

MD: You don't use the various instruments of the drumkit in the traditional way. How do you view the role of each part of the kit?

Zach: The bass drum is the leader in my playing; it's the conductor. The snare reinforces the kick, and the rest of the kit either colors the part, or accentuates the snare and bass drum rhythms, or fills in the gaps.

But as soon as I say that, my mind automatically wants to see what happens if those roles are reversed. Sometimes I'll make the ride and crash the leaders. Or I'll use the high tom as the bass drum and the hi-hat as the snare. Everything's interchangeable.

MD: You're a hard-hitter. Do you do any warm-ups before shows?

Zach: I don't do any stretches, although I probably should. But I do warm up my hands by playing random patterns on pillows or seats for about an hour before the show. Also during that time, I try to focus my mind. I don't like to have anything in my head before I play, so I try to clear my mind completely. I don't want to be aware of my playing abilities, and I definitely don't want to be thinking about my parts. I want to blank myself out so that everything that I am, as a person and as a player, is on an automatic level.

MD: Who are some of your biggest influences?

Zach: Jimi Hendrix is my number-one influence in music. And I really enjoy

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John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman. Cecil Taylor is another big influence. He's one of the purveyors of stream-of-consciousness playing. His piano playing is similar to what I'm trying to achieve on drums, which is pattern-based stream-of-consciousness playing that creates a solid hum with the instrument. I've always aspired to be more of a player in those terms than an average drummer.

MD: Who are your favorite drummers?

Zach: Christian Vander from Magma is my favorite drummer of all time. And like everyone else, I'm a huge fan of John Bonham. When it comes to jazz, I like Rashied Ali and Elvin Jones. And I'm a fan of Angus MacLise, who was the first drummer in the Velvet Underground. He made an incredible record called *Brain Damage In Oklahoma City* where he used hand-made barrel drums and found object drums. It's really intense and inspiring stuff.

As far as heavy groove music, I was really into dub reggae drummers like Style Scott, the guy from the band Creation

Rebel. I like really tough players that hit hard and dig hard, where their entire bodies encompass their hits, and that's how those reggae drummers played.

MD: What influences have you had outside of music?

Zach: I find inspiration from a variety of sources, from trains to wildlife to insects to whatever. I lived by the train tracks for about seven years. I would sit in my backyard and listen to this massive sound that had a pulse, and I wanted my drumming to sound like that.

I applied that concept to some solo performances where I was playing for twenty minutes straight. My goal with those shows was to create a solid hum of sound while shifting between rhythms like the gears on a train.

I also read this book by Derek Bailey called *Improvisation: Its Nature And Practice* that discusses similar ideas. That book helped me shift from the world of writing songs and weird drumbeats to incorporating a more psychic and meta-physical approach to things.

MD: What advice would you give to a young player who's trying to find a unique sound?

Zach: If there were one piece of advice I'd give to young players, it would be to never try to play like someone else. It's great to learn things from people, but it can be dangerous unless you take what you've learned and make it your own. I could learn to play entire Rush records note-for-note, but why would I do that? Neil Peart is Neil Peart. That's not my voice.

MD: What's in the future for you? Where are you headed?

Zach: I want to change the world of my instrument in a large way. I want to get to the highest place with my instrument that I can possibly get and change the instrument for the better. I want to innovate. That's what I set out to do, and that's what I'm going to do, whether anybody's paying attention or not.



To hear Zach in action, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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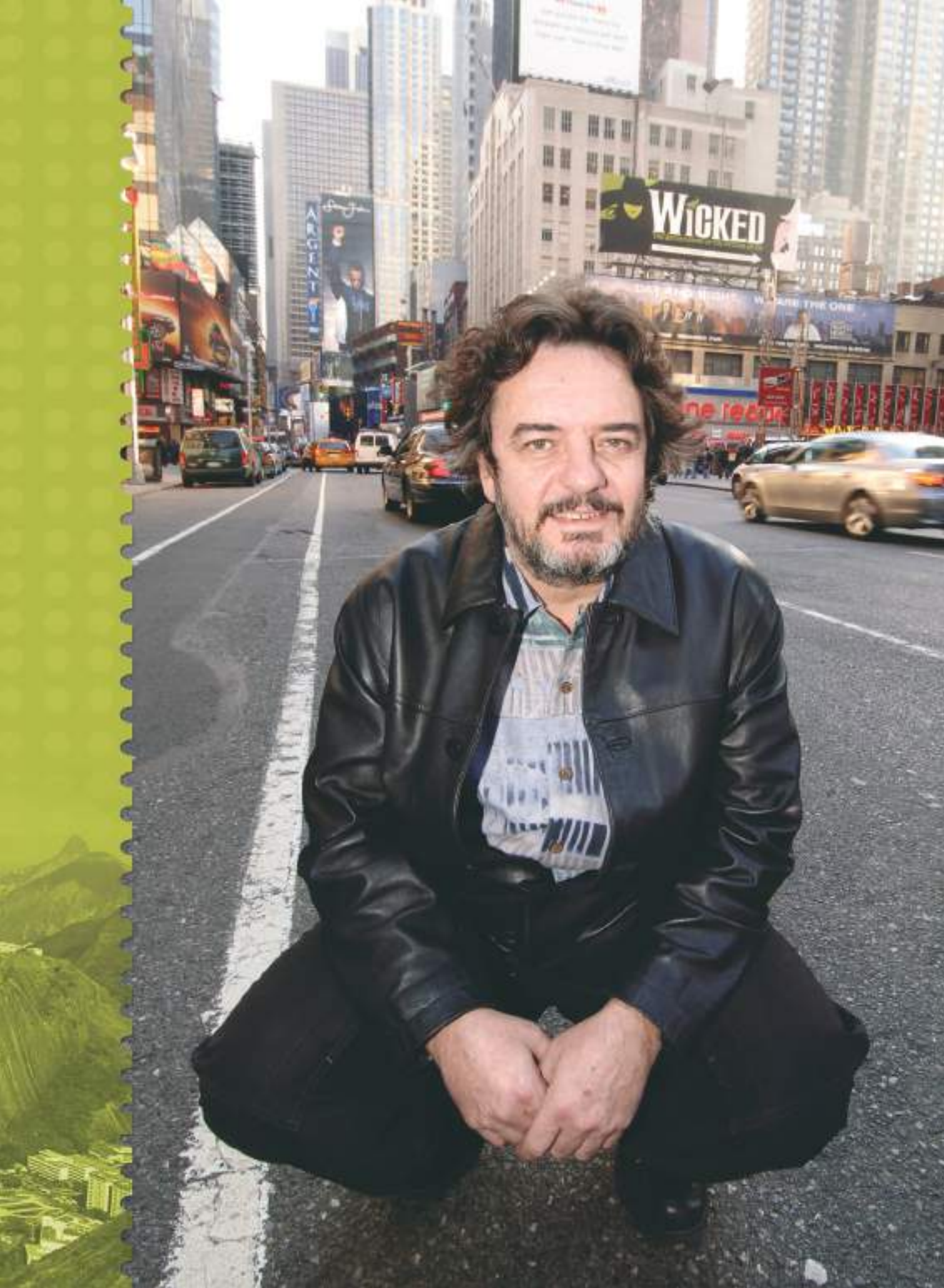
Duduka DA FONSECA

SAMBA JAZZ, FROM
RIO TO MANHATTAN

STORY BY KIN MICALLEF • PHOTOS BY AL PEREIRA

LAST SPRING, ON A FRIGID NIGHT AT THE SWEET RHYTHM JAZZ CLUB IN NEW YORK'S GREENWICH VILLAGE, DUDUKA DA FONSECA BROUGHT 1,000 YEARS OF BRAZILIAN CULTURE TO LIFE ON HIS FIVE-PIECE SONOR DRUMSET. FAR BEYOND THE TYPICAL SAMBA OSTINATO PATTERN POPULARIZED BY SOME AMERICAN DRUMMERS, FONSECA EMBODIED THE PULSE OF A BRAZILIAN SAMBA SCHOOL WITH A FULL-SET REVERIE, A PERCUSSIVE WALL OF SOUND THAT SEEMED TO COME AT YOU FROM ALL ANGLES.

NOT CONTENT TO LET ANY ONE PART OF HIS KIT CARRY THE RHYTHM, FONSECA MELDED SAMBA, AFOXE, BAIÃO, CHORE, AND BOSSA NOVA RHYTHMS AMONG THE VARIOUS DRUMS AND CYMBALS LIKE AN ALCHEMIST BLENDING SILVER AND GOLD. HIS DRUMMING ERUPTED IN COLORFUL WAVES, UNDERPINNING HIS QUINTET'S REPERTOIRE OF ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS AND BRAZILIAN STANDARDS WITH A RUMBLING EFFERVESCENCE.



PLAYING SONGS FROM HIS LATEST ALBUM, *SAMBA JAZZ IN BLACK & WHITE* (ZOH), FONSECA AND HIS BAND OF ANAT COHEN (SAX), HELIO ALVES (PIANO), LEONARDO CIOGLIA (ACOUSTIC BASS), AND VIC JURIS (GUITAR) PERFORMED WITH A FEARLESSNESS, BUT ALWAYS IN SERVICE TO THE MUSIC. THAT SAME TRAIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE INFORMS EVERY NOTE DUDUKA DA FONSECA PLAYS.

THE DRUMMER'S PREVIOUS SOLO ALBUM, *SAMBA JAZZ FANTASIA*, HINTED AT THE BREEZY COMPLEXITY OF HIS CURRENT RELEASE, AS DOES HIS GRAMMY-NOMINATED WORK WITH BRAZILIAN THREE-PIECE TRIO DE PAZ. BUT *SAMBA JAZZ IN BLACK & WHITE* IS SOMETHING NEW, MUSIC THAT DRAWS FROM BOTH BRAZILIAN TRADITION AND AMERICAN JAZZ, BLUE NOTE STYLE.

OPENING TRACK "MESTRE BIMBA" COULD BE A LOST BLUE NOTE FREDDIE HUBBARD TRACK, SO SCALDING IS ITS FUNKY MELODY, HOTHOUSE PERCUSSIVE SOLOS, AND BREAKNECK MONTUNO MIDDLE SECTION. FONSECA PLAYS A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT RHYTHM FOR EVERY TRACK, WITH THE FOCUS ON SAMBA. "JANEIRO" SWIRLS IN BLUESY 3/4 TIME OVER FONSECA'S LIQUID PERCUSSION, "PALHACO" IS AN UPTEMPO SCORCHER À LA COLTRANE'S "IMPRESSIONS," "TERRA DE

ANGARA" ADDS FUNK FLAVOR, AND "O GRANDE AMOR" COMBINES SPOOKY TEXTURAL PERCUSSION WITH STRAIGHT-AHEAD JAZZ.

FONSECA, WHO HAS RECORDED WITH EVERYONE FROM JOHN SCOFIELD TO BRAZILIAN LEGEND ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM, DESCRIBES "SAMBA JAZZ" SIMPLY AS "JAZZ WITH BRAZILIAN ROOTS," THOUGH THIS SELF-EFFACING DEFINITION OBSCURES THE MAGIC IN HIS MUSIC. *SAMBA JAZZ IN BLACK & WHITE* BREATHES DEEPLY OF BRAZILIAN CULTURE, YET IT'S INFORMED BY AMERICAN IMPROVISATION AND SWING. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY FOR DRUMMERS, THE ALBUM CONNECTS THE BRAZILIAN LINEAGE OF WHICH FONSECA IS A GRAND ELEMENT.

HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY SUCH RIO DE JANEIRO DRUMMERS AS EDISON MACHADO, DOM UM ROMAO, AND JOAO PALMA, AND ENJOYING CONTEMPORARY STATUS WITH ROBERTINHO SILVA, FONSECA MESHES THEIR NATIVE STYLES WITH AMERICAN SWING AND '60S INFLECTION. HIS DRUMMING IS ALL JAZZ FIRE MATCHED WITH THE AIRY SOUNDS OF THE RIO DE JANEIRO COASTLINE.

LIKE STROLLING FROM LEBLON TO IPANEMA TO COPACABANA, FONSECA'S DRUMMING (AND ACCOMPANYING

MD: Your samba jazz drumming is very relaxed but also constantly pushing the pulse, which would seem to make the rhythm at odds with itself. How do you do this?

Duduka: I base my drumming in the percussion ensemble, the Brazilian samba school. To analyze this, the bass drum, or the surdo in the samba school, is always right on the downbeat. And if you analyze the sound of the tambourine and the metal repinique, the small hand drum of the samba school, that rhythm is always pushing forward. So you have that tension between the top and the bottom. The tambourine and the repinique are pushing the rhythm forward, the surdo or the bass drum is relaxed, dead center. So when I play drums I try to replicate that feeling.

MD: How does a drummer split him or herself in half?

Duduka: By listening. I never played in samba school. I saw it in Rio but was not that crazy about joining. [Pulling up a nearby foot stool, Duduka plays an alternating 16th-note march pattern with brushes, accentuating the first and last note of each four-note phrase, with the left hand slightly more prominent than the right.] Notice that my left hand is pushing but my right hand is laying back. I try to explain this to non-Brazilian drummers, but they can't always do it.

MD: Why not?

Duduka: The feel of the pattern is

between a triplet and an 8th note and a 16th note. That comes from the snare drums in the samba schools.

MD: The idea of pushing the left hand....

Duduka: It's like the comping guitar in bossa nova. I never thought about it, to tell you the truth, until I went to Drummers Collective, where I taught samba and percussion classes. They asked me, How do you do this or that? I had to understand what I was doing. I recommend that drummers do all the rudiments over the ostinato bass drum to get started. Playing the rudiments with the ostinato bass drum and the hi-hat can help your independence.

BOTTOMS UP!

MD: It's hard to hear the bass drum on your recent albums. Do you play heel down?

Duduka: I play heel down and I don't like the bass drum loud. It doesn't sound good loud. The bass is already covering that rhythm. The bass drum playing da-doom, da-doom, da-doom is like hearing a jazz drummer playing quarter notes loudly on the bass drum all the time. I like Kenny Clarke, who started using the bass drum to play melodic accents in jazz.

MD: You don't care for the pronounced ostinato pattern on the bass drum?

Duduka: No. Would you like someone to knock on your head: da-doom, da-

doom, da-doom? No. That shit prevents you from liking the music. It's too mechanical. It's like water dripping from the ceiling, just terrible.

MD: On songs like "Mestre Bimba" or "Sambetinho," from *Samba Jazz In Black & White*, are you playing the conventional ostinato on the bass drum?

Duduka: In "Mestre Bimba" I'm playing a combination of Brazilian rhythms: afoxe, baião, samba, and a little touch of New Orleans. [He demonstrates a rapid, highly syncopated brush rhythm on the stool.] I created that pattern in the '80s but never had a chance to play it before now. It fit the bass and piano line of the song.

MD: But in general, do you play a different bass drum pattern for every song?

Duduka: In "Mestre Bimba," it's not a repetitive pattern. It changes throughout. On "Janeiro," I'm playing an ostinato with variations. On "Chorinho Pra Ele," I'm playing the ostinato or samba pattern very traditionally. I base that on the sound of the pandeiro; that's the instrument played in traditional choro music. Then on "Vive De Amor," I even play some backbeat and songo. "Terra De Angara" is a samba influenced by the '60s Blue Note jazz sound. In "Sambetinho" I approach the samba very loosely, playing variations with melodic accents on the bass drum. I play that song more loosely than "Janeiro," though

PERCUSSION) IS SPARKLING, ITS PULSE EVER MOVING FORWARD. HIS DARKLY BEAUTIFUL '60S K CYMBALS AND WARM DRUM TONES ARE OFTEN LIFTED BY LUSH BRUSHWORK. YOU CAN STILL HEAR THE MUSIC OF FONSECA'S RIO CHILDHOOD IN SUCH LOCAL CLUBS AS CENTROL CULTURAL CARIOCA, CARIOCA DE GEMA, AND MISTURA FINA—OR YOU CAN LISTEN TO *SAMBA JAZZ IN BLACK & WHITE*.

THE ROOTS OF FONSECA'S STYLE COLLISION ARE DIAGRAMED IN HIS BOOK, *BRAZILIAN RHYTHMS FOR DRUMSET* (CO-WRITTEN WITH BOB WEINER), WHICH DISSECTS THE VARIOUS FORMS OF SAMBA, BOSSA NOVA, BAIÃO, MARACATU, MARCA, AND FREVO BOTH WITH STICKS AND WITH BRUSHES. BUT AS FONSECA IS LARGELY SELF-TAUGHT, HIS VERBAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THESE RHYTHMS ARE MORE PERSONABLE THAN SCIENTIFIC, AND HE WILL GRAB A PAIR OF BRUSHES IN A SECOND TO ILLUSTRATE A BEAT OR RHYTHMIC APPROACH.

IN ADDITION TO JOBIM AND SCOFIELD, DUDUKA HAS PERFORMED AND RECORDED WITH ASTRUD GILBERTO, HERBIE MANN, CLAUDIO RODITI, EDDIE GOMEZ, JOE HENDERSON, GERRY MULLIGAN, TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI, LEE KONITZ, PHIL WOODS, NANA VASCONCELOS, WAYNE SHORTER, AND MANY OTHERS. HIS UPCOMING RELEASE WITH PIANIST HELIO ALVES,

SONGS FROM THE LAST CENTURY, REVEALS EVEN GREATER BRUSHWORK EXPRESSION, WHILE THE LATIN GRAMMY-WINNING DVD *JOBIM SINFONICA* IS A TEXTBOOK LESSON IN BOSSA NOVA STYLE.

DUDUKA DA FONSECA'S MANHATTAN APARTMENT IS COMFORTABLY OUTFITTED. A FRAMED PHOTO OF 1940S-ERA RIO DE JANEIRO HANGS ON A WALL. A GANG OF BRAZILIAN PERCUSSION IS JUMBLED NEAR THE COUCH. A DICTIONARY OF BRAZILIAN MUSICAL TERMS GRABS ONE'S IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, DEFINING NEARLY EVERY SAMBA STYLE: SAMBA A DOIS COROS, SAMBA PATIDO, SAMBA CHULADO, SAMBA CORRIDO, SAMBA DA VERADA, SAMBA DA CHAVE, SAMBA DE EMBOLADA, SAMBA DE INFLUENÇA, SAMBA DE MORRO, SAMBA DE PALMA, SAMBA DO MOTUDO, SAMBA DO NORTE, PARTIDO ALTO, SAMBA RUMBA, SAMBA RIADO, SAMBA FRANCAÇO, SAMBA CUCA.

BUT FONSECA PREFERS PLAYING TO DESCRIBING, AND HIS INFECTIOUS PERSONALITY COMES ALIVE IN HIS LOVE OF FAMILY (WIFE/SINGER MAUCHA ADNET, DAUGHTERS ISABELLA AND ALANA) AND FRIENDS ACROSS THE GLOBE. LIKE BRAZIL ITSELF, DUDUKA DA FONSECA IS IN LOVE WITH LIFE, AND HIS DRUMMING REVEALS THE WARMTH OF HIS HOMETLAND, MYSTERY AND MAGIC INTACT.

they're the same tempo. I can play more freely on a live gig than I do on the album, but I want people to understand the music. You can't go too outside. My next album will be much freer.

MD: Are you playing the bass drum softly so it's more felt than heard?

Duduka: Yes, I want it to be felt. But I *am* playing the bass drum.

MD: If you want the bass drum to be more felt than heard, is there more muffling so the drum doesn't have a definite pitch?

Duduka: I don't like the sound of a dead bass drum. If I tune it like a jazz drummer, when I play ostinato it will mix with the bass and not sound good. And a funk bass drum sounds like a potato. So I want something in between where I can hear a note but there isn't too much ring.

MD: How do you advise drummers to play the bass drum so it's more felt than heard?

Duduka: Just play very softly. Or sometimes you don't even need to play it. This past weekend at Sweet Rhythm my sciatic nerve made it hard for me to play the bass drum in some sambas. So I just played the melodic accents and compensated with the toms. That's more samba jazz style, anyway.

MD: When you play the second note of the samba pattern, do you leave the beater on the bass drum head?

Duduka: No. It comes off immediately

so the drum breathes.

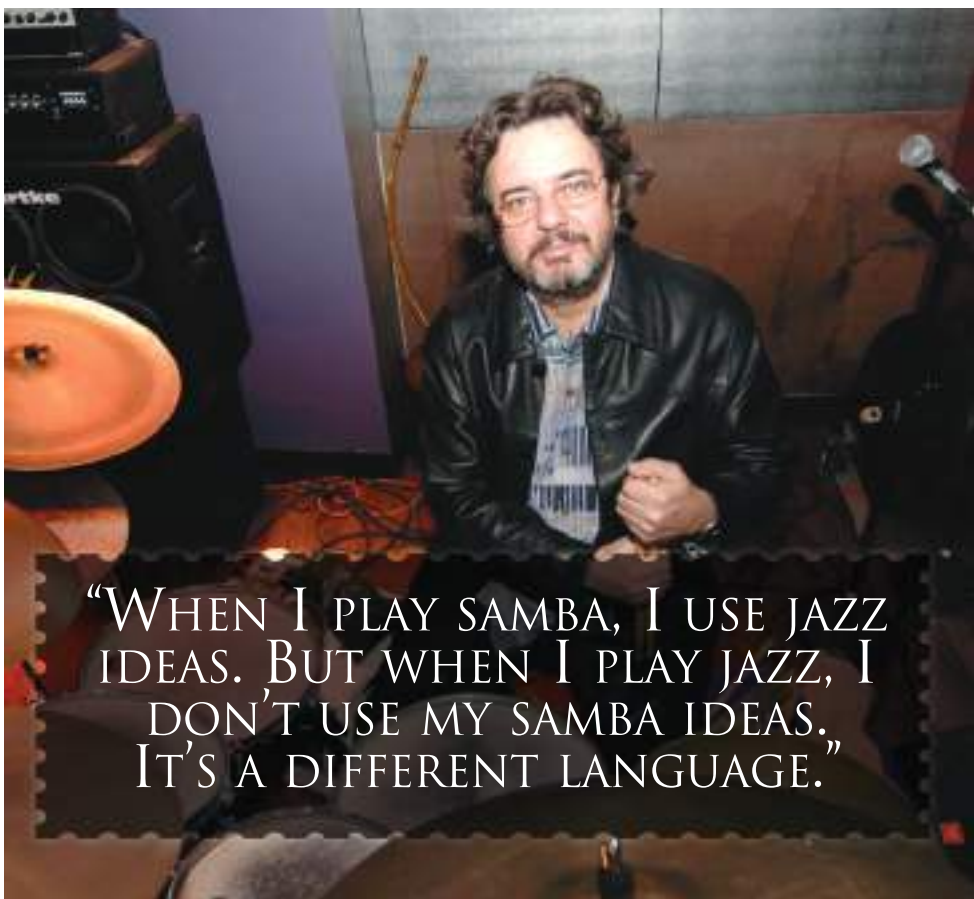
MD: Which note of the bass drum samba pattern gets the accent?

Duduka: When most non-Brazilian drummers play samba, they put the two bass drum notes too close together. This takes out the whole flavor of the rhythm. It's too fast. It should be broader.

The only way that I can explain this is to think of a 6/8 pattern. That will give

you the proper space. And you don't need to necessarily accent the first or second beat. And the left foot on the hi-hat can play on the downbeat, on 2 and 4, or it can play the "&s" and the final 16th note [1-e-&-a] of the beat. There are many hi-hat variations: play the upbeat...four to the bar...you can open on 2 for a splash sound...many things.

MD: Is the double sticking that American



“WHEN I PLAY SAMBA, I USE JAZZ IDEAS. BUT WHEN I PLAY JAZZ, I DON'T USE MY SAMBA IDEAS. IT'S A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE.”



Duduka's Kit

- Drums:** Sonor Delite (maple)
- A. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 Ludwig hammered bronze snare with Canopus Vintage snares (the drum was a gift from Alex Van Halen)
 - B. 9×10 rack tom
 - C. 10×12 rack tom
 - D. 14×14 floor tom
 - E. 16×18 bass drum

- Cymbals:** Zildjian
1. 14" hi-hats ('60s K top/'50s A bottom)
 2. 20" K ride with eight rivets ('60s-era)
 3. 16" K crash ('60s-era)
 4. 20" A ride ('50s-era)
 5. 20" K Constantinople flat ride
 6. 20" A China with rivets ('70s-era)

Percussion: LP Mambo cowbell, berimbau (gift from Nana Vasconcelos), 12" triangle,

Columbian pigs' knuckles, Brazilian 5" metal tambourine, Contemporanea quica, African agogo

Hardware: Sonor stands, Axis bass drum pedal

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador snare batter, Ambassador snare-side, coated Ambassadors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath, Renaissance PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter, Ebony Ambassador on front

Sticks: Vic Firth American Custom SD10 Swinger (wood tips, with tips slightly sanded for mellower, less metallic sound), Vic Firth wire brushes and mallets

drummers often use when playing samba of Brazilian origin, or is it something invented by Steve Gadd?

Duduka: I love Steve Gadd, but he and Peter Erskine play samba using an ostinato in the right hand. There's nothing wrong with that, but I don't prefer it. When Steve Gadd's video came out in the '80s, I had students from Brazil who learned all the licks from his and Dave Weckl's videos. But when I asked them to play samba or baião, they didn't know what to do. The new generation is crazy about videos, and the kids in Brazil thought, "That is the shit to play." They didn't look into their own culture. Now it's coming back. But to answer your question, I do the double sticking sometimes.

MD: When will a tempo change cause you to change your sticking? A basic bossa nova is mid-tempo, but a samba is more than a sped-up bossa nova, isn't it?

Duduka: It's just the way you approach it. You can play a samba in a slow tempo. Bossa nova is a lighter way to play. I play the ostinato on the bass drum in bossa nova, but it's even quieter and lighter than in samba.

MD: What elements must always be pre-

sent in the samba pattern?

Duduka: A full, round sound. It's a balance of different things.

MD: Your drumming has that 8th note, forward motion as a constant, and it's often being transferred from source to source.

Duduka: Yes, and there's a lot of syncopation going on. It's important that drummers understand the relationship between all the drums and percussion in the batucada, the samba percussion section. That can inspire them to play different patterns. Most drummers play ostinato on the cymbal, but I don't do that. I do a lot of variations that are based on the percussion instruments in the batucada, and mixed with jazz. It's a big mess!

HEARING SAMBA STYLE

MD: I've heard that you insist that your students understand the *feel* of the samba before writing out the rhythm.

Duduka: The best way to learn to play Brazilian music is to get the albums and play along with them. Listen to Robertinho Silva, Dom Um Romão, Airto Moriera, Milton Banana, and Edison Machado. And listen to me! [laughs] I am trying to carry on the legacy. Absorb the feeling by play-

ing along with the albums. That's one way to understand. The best way is to go to Brazil. Hear the music live. You can also buy my book! [laughs] I played all day long with the albums that influenced me when I was growing up in Brazil.

MD: What are the basic differences between Brazilian drumming innovators like Edison Machado, Milton Banana, Dom Um Romão, and Joao Palma?

Duduka: When Milton played with Joao Donato, you didn't even hear the bass drum. It was beautiful. But on his own albums, the bass drum was very loud, to sell albums. The first Sergio Mendes & Brasil '66 album had Joao Palma on the drums. He was my neighbor growing up. He played the bass drum on that album very loud as well because they wanted to sell albums. Joao is a fantastic player, but he played a certain way with Sergio Mendes.

Edison Machado began using the bass drum only for melodic accents in the '70s. He started that style of the looser bass drum. That's where I got the idea. Edison was also one of the first drummers to record cymbals with the samba in the studio, after an older guy named Wido Fredo

did it. Dom Um Romao really swung and was more down to earth. Milton Banana could also play loose, like he did on the *Getz/Gilberto* album. But Edison was the one who could play completely loose, like a ballet dancer. He had more of a jazz feel. He was the innovator.

MD: Is authentic samba and bossa nova still popular in Rio?

Duduka: It's more popular than ever. The bossa nova never left Rio. It's more widely played and recorded than ever before. Even *Austin Powers* had bossa nova. And my daughter sang "The Girl From Ipanema" in the movie *Mr. And Mrs. Smith*.

SAMBA JAZZ CLOSE UP

MD: What are the main topics covered in your book *Brazilian Rhythms For Drumset*?

Duduka: Most of the rhythms focus on the samba and its variations. There's also a lot of sticking and orchestration in the book. But the longest chapter is the samba chapter. We cover sambas in odd meters, then bossa nova, and baião.

MD: Where on the cymbal do you play to



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DUDUKA'S SAMBA STYLE...ON RECORD

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TRIO DE PAZ
DUDUKA DA FONSECA
DUDUKA DA FONSECA
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CLAUDIO RODITI
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TOM HARRELL
KENNY BARRON
HELIO ALVES
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ALBUMS

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SAMBA JAZZ IN BLACK & WHITE
SAMBA JAZZ FANTASIA
TRANSITION
SAMBA MANHATTAN STYLE
QUIET
ART OF RHYTHM
CANTA BRASIL
TRIOS
ASTOR & ELIS



with my bass drum I want to represent the sound of the surdo. And my cymbals are a little ahead, replicating the sound of the tambourine and the repinique.

MD: What represents the clave?

Duduka: In Brazilian music we don't have the clave like in Afro-Cuban music.

MD: What is the bossa nova rhythm that is typically played with a cross-stick on snare drum rim?

Duduka: We call that a reference pattern, but it's not clave. That is always present in Cuban music, but in Brazilian music we don't have that. When I play bossa nova, I don't always play that literal pattern. I try to follow the melody. But there are many bossa nova patterns.

MD: You're following the melody with your left hand?

Duduka: Just going along with the melody without trying to impose something. You just want to flow with the melody. It's the same approach as the left hand takes in jazz. Like with Elvin Jones, he was following the soloist and trying to suggest ideas.

MD: If your left hand is thinking melody...

Duduka: The whole drumset is melodic.

get your trademark beautiful sound?

Duduka: I play all over the cymbal. But I like to play on the very edge and move in sometimes. I can also crash on my old K because it's so thin. But I usually play about two to three and a half inches from the edge.

MD: How high off the cymbal do you generally play?

Duduka: It depends. If I am playing 16th notes in a samba, I need to be close. I use a

lot of finger technique to play the repeating 16th notes. I learned by watching people and using my ears.

MD: Is your inner pulse behind the beat or ahead of the beat? Where do you like to place it?

Duduka: As I was saying earlier, if you listen to a percussion ensemble, the big surdo drum is always in the middle of the beat. And the small Brazilian tambourines are always a little bit pushing forward. So

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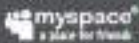
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I'm always thinking about the melody and about the song.

MD: What are you thinking about while you're backing up a soloist?

Duduka: The flow of the music, giving the soloist support, and if I am able to, suggesting some ideas. I'm not trying to impose any direction. It's a team effort. You have to play together and pass the ball. If I want to suggest an idea, I will play a rhythm or a certain fill or pattern. But I'm careful not to be too demonstrative. Some drummers play one way no matter what. If the musicians don't follow them, forget about it. I don't like that.

MD: You play a lot of brushes on *HG2, Songs From The Last Century*. You play with a lot of variation and get a really beautiful sound from the brushes. What is key to that kind of articulation?

Duduka: Brushes are so important to Brazilian music. One drummer whose brushwork really inspired me is Juquinhaha, who worked in the '50s. He recorded the first bossa nova album with Joao Gilberto.

MD: But how did you develop your clarity?

Duduka: By practicing some of the same

sticking that is used in the batucada [samba drum line], and other patterns. For instance, when I play bossa nova with brushes, the left hand is doing 8th notes like a gonza, the shaker—the back and forth motion. And the right hand plays 16th notes, basically, playing all the different accents. I use those rhythms for slow and medium tempos. When I play fast tempos with the brushes, I use different stickings. I usually don't swish.

MD: How do you tune the drums?

Duduka: I tune to hear the drums breathe. I want them to have a velvet sound, and they have to feel right for the stick. I don't have my heads as tight as a jazz player. Jeff Watts and I tune the drums similarly. He doesn't like to tune too high either. But most jazz drummers tune very high. I try to aim for the rich sound of the drums. The bottom heads are a little tighter to get more sustain. And I don't have my snare drum or the snares very tight either.

MD: You've said that when you came to the US in the '70s, you couldn't play the samba with other musicians as loosely as you would have liked.

Duduka: US musicians asked, "Where's

the 1?" They couldn't hear the 1. On my album *Samba Jazz Fantasia*, I play one track that is very loose, a trio track with bassist Eddie Gomez. He understood it. He is perfect to play that way with. But most American jazz musicians back then couldn't hear the 1 in the loose style. They wanted to hear the typical samba bass drum pattern. If I mixed it up, they got confused. So I was asked to play more simply.

MD: How has samba affected your jazz drumming? Is it hard to keep the Brazilian out of the jazz?

Duduka: When I play samba, I use jazz ideas. But when I play jazz, I don't use my samba ideas. It's a different language.

SIMPLICITY, COMPLEXITY, AND ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM

MD: You recorded with Jobim?

Duduka: In 1995 I played on his last album, *Antonio Brasileiro*. We also did a video in Portugal in a mosque, and that performance is finally coming out this year.

MD: In 2002 you also played on a tribute CD and DVD, *Jobim Sinfonico*.

Duduka: That won the Latin Grammy and

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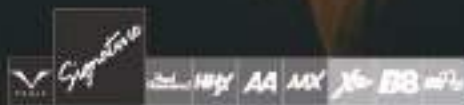
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A circular logo for Sabian's 25th anniversary. It features the number "25" in a large, stylized font. Below the number, the text "Twenty-five years of" is written in a smaller font, and "anniversary" is written in a larger font at the bottom of the circle.

25
Twenty-five years of
anniversary

Duduka Da Fonseca

was nominated for the American Grammy this year. That is the music of Jobim produced by his son and my brother-in-law, Mario Adnet. They both wrote arrangements, as did Claus Ogerman, Deodato, Nelson Riddle, and Dori Caymmi.

MD: What kind of direction did Jobim give you?

Duduka: He didn't say anything. He trusted me, and I played the basic bossa nova. Very simple, the simplest bossa nova. His touch on the piano was like velvet. He caressed the piano. He reminded me of the way Count Basie played the piano: single notes, very simple things, very simple manner.

MD: Did playing with Jobim make you play differently?

Duduka: Yes. He was very sensitive, so you couldn't force anything. You needed to be firm, but not impose anything. You also had to pay a lot of attention, because his subtlety and nuance was very challenging.

Bossa nova is so simple, but being so simple makes it very hard. Sometimes it's easier to play more notes than it is to play simply. A lot of young American musicians know Brazilian musicians like Egberto Gismonti and Hermeto Pascoal, but there is not as much knowledge of bossa nova. Somehow they don't get the subtlety of the rhythm. Even Brazilian

piano players who weren't around at that time don't understand it. It's different when you live through a musical movement, because you learn to play that way.

MD: When you're playing a bossa nova, is the 8th-note hi-hat rhythm a constant element?

Duduka: No, you can do variations. But the subtlety, the delicacy, always has to be there with bossa nova. Forget about the bass drum playing the ostinato; you don't want to hear that. You can even skip the bass drum, or do something really understated. Playing bossa nova is like playing the blues. The blues is so simple, but you can count on one hand the people who can really play it right.

HARVEY, SUCCESS, AND THE FRENCH MAFIA

MD: You recorded double drums with Harvey Mason in the '70s. Who was the artist?

Duduka: That was an LA session in 1976, when Harvey was on top of the game. The artist was a percussionist named Mailto Correia. I showed up with my cymbals in a garbage bag. Harvey came in his gold Mercedes. He played a perfect funk groove and I played a baião groove. I remember Harvey wanted to buy one of my old cymbals because it sounded so wonderful. That was the first recording I did in America. Chuck Rainey and Frank Rosolino were also on the session.

I worked a lot at that time and started making a lot of money. I thought I had made it. Then I didn't work for a year! [laughs] It was all rice and beans. I eventually started working regularly in a night club in New York called Cashasa on 62nd Street, which was owned by the French mafia. We played Brazilian music from 10:00 P.M. to 4:00 in the morning nonstop. I worked there two years illegally without a green card. Back then it was more lenient than it is now. I made a lot of money, but I spent it all on the wrong things.

MD: You return to Brazil regularly. How does that recharge your batteries?

Duduka: I go back as often as I can for work and pleasure. It is very important. Just being there in my homeland, talking with my old friends, eating the food. It's very inspiring to see Brazilian musicians playing traditional music in downtown Rio. It renews my insides.



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Steve Di

Building A Solid Career

One night in London, after sharing the stage with David Crosby and Graham Nash, drummer Steve Di Stanislao found himself face to face with two of his favorite music idols. In the audience that evening were John Paul Jones, bassist for the legendary rock band Led Zeppelin, and David Gilmour, guitarist for the equally legendary group Pink Floyd. Both of the rock music icons sought out Di Stanislao later in the evening to compliment him on his playing.

"I hardly knew what to say when each of them approached me," remarked Di Stanislao, known to his friends as Stevie D. One would think he would be quite comfortable talking with famous musicians, since Stevie D.'s credits include long stints with Paul Anka, David Crosby's CPR band, and Carl Verheyen (the guitarist for Supertramp), as well as touring with Loggins & Messina, producing film music with Matt Reid (former keyboardist for Berlin), and working on solo projects with members of The Black Crowes.

Words would come much easier a few months later when Gilmour contacted Di Stanislao, asking him to play on the support tour for his new solo CD release, *On An Island*. Stevie D. knew just what to say during that conversation: "Yes."

Modern Drummer recently spoke with Di Stanislao, who was once again in London, this time rehearsing for the Gilmour tour.

By Rick Long

Photos By Paul La Raia



Gigs

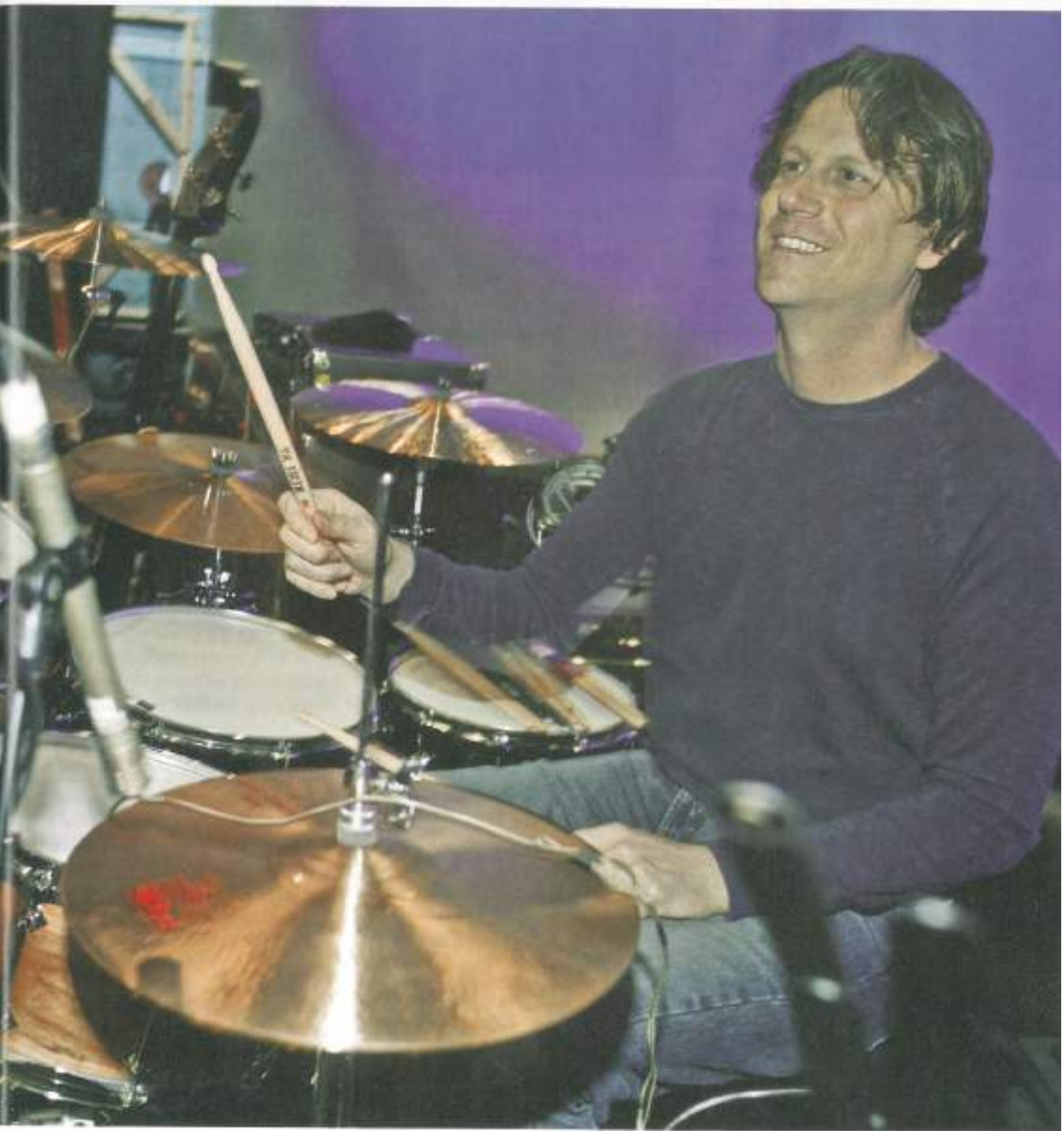
David Gilmour

David Crosby & CPR

Loggins & Messina

Carl Verheyen

Stanislao





MD: How are things going on the gig with David Gilmour?

Steve: I came over to the UK last week and started rehearsals right away. Our first production rehearsal was yesterday, and we start the tour next week. We've been putting in ten-hour days, so no rest for the weary here. Everyone has been very kind, though, and it's coming together nicely.

MD: How did you prepare for this gig?

Steve: The new Gilmour solo record, *On An Island*, was still being mixed when I found out about the gig. I knew that we would be playing most, if not all, of the

tunes in the show, but I didn't get a copy until I arrived in England for rehearsals. I did get a list of about forty possible choices from the Floyd catalog. From that, I put together a playlist in my iPod of the tunes that I thought David would do just to get them into my head. I obviously knew some of the Pink Floyd material from years of being a fan.

Something I like to do to prepare for gigs is make a transcription of the lyrics. If I write out a chart for a tune, I find that I become dependant on that chart and can't seem to get off the page. If I write out the

lyrics and make a few notes in the margins with the characteristic beats or hooks, the signature fills and so forth, then I really find that I learn the form of the song much better. Since I also sing, I listen closely to the lyrics and phrasing of songs anyway, so this method works well for me.

MD: Do you use the lyric sheets on stage?

Steve: It depends on how much rehearsal time I get with the band. In the case of the Gilmour gig, we're only rehearsing two weeks, so that might be a bit quick. Most of the time I try to have the songs down so that by the time the tour starts, I'm just making a note or two on the set list by the title of the tune.

MD: What have been the biggest challenges of this gig so far?

Steve: I'd have to say the challenge has been to play the music in the spirit in which it was recorded. Nick Mason really defined the sound of Pink Floyd. My goal is to honor what he played without trying to imitate him. I want to play the tunes the way they were designed, and there are specific things and specific feels that Nick played that make particular songs work. As a musician, there are things that you want to bring to the party, but you have to honor the original recording, otherwise the song just won't feel right.

MD: Nick Mason has a very open style with a lot of space between the notes.

Steve: That's a good way to put it. I've been clocking the tunes we are doing, and a lot of them are sixty beats per minute. The fastest is eighty-five. The hardest thing to do is play slow. To play slow and make





things feel right is always a challenge, and this is definitely that bag. But it also has a swing to it that Nick gave it. I'm trying to capture the spirit he brought to the music but not imitate him, because I can't do that. I can only be myself and try to capture the original feel.

MD: You've worked for a wide variety of artists in your career, ranging from Paul Anka to David Crosby's CPR band. How do you adapt to the many different playing situations you encounter?

Steve: Basically I just try to come in with an open mind, listen to what's going on around me, and go with the flow. It's much easier when I already know some of the guys in the band. Strangely enough, in most of the gigs I've had over the years, I've known someone in the organization. For example, in CPR [which stands for Crosby, Pevar, and Raymond] I knew James Raymond [the band's keyboardist and David Crosby's son]. He is my best friend, and we've been playing together all our lives. For the Loggins & Messina tour last summer, I knew the bass player, Shem Von Schroeck, whom I'd played with years before. Steve Nieves, who played sax and percussion, was another friend from the southern California club scene.

The gig with David Gilmour is really the first time that I've played in a situation where I didn't know anyone before rehearsals began. They've made me feel very comfortable, though. I was a bit nervous about it, but even the crew has really done so much to make it a comfortable sit-

uation. They are all here for the right reasons, and that's to put on a great show.

MD: How did the tour with Loggins & Messina come about?

Steve: I was on tour with David Crosby & Graham Nash when I got an email that the auditions for Loggins & Messina were coming about. I almost didn't go to the audition because I'd been on this great tour with Crosby & Nash and wasn't necessarily that anxious to get back on the bus. I decided to go for the audition anyway and ended up getting the call. Now I have

“Like in any relationship, you have to develop trust. Find out what the artist needs, check your ego at the door, and go in willing to give them whatever they need from you.”

another great set of friends to work with! We rehearsed for about a month and then went on the road for six months.

MD: Jim Messina has a reputation in the industry for being a perfectionist. Did you have to modify your working style to accommodate this trait?

Steve: I think any great artist is a perfectionist in a way, and I think that every great

artist has their own way of working. What it boils down to is learning how an artist works and adapting to that. I think that's always the case no matter who you're working with. In Jimmy's case, he had a specific way of doing things, and Kenny had a specific way of doing things. That's what makes them who they are, and it's what makes that music what it is. You always have to adapt to your surroundings, and in that way the gig wasn't any different than any other.

MD: Do you ever have time for sightseeing when you are touring?

Steve: Not always, but I did on the Crosby/Nash tour. Those two are seasoned musicians with a long history, so they aren't necessarily trying to get out there and build a fan base like some younger, less experienced bands might be trying to do. On some tours you need to work every night just to make enough money to keep going.

David and Graham want to work, but they want to enjoy life a little bit as well. We would play three nights and then maybe take a few days off in a city and recharge our batteries. We did thirty-five shows, but that was a civilized way to do it. Graham knows so much about history, which made the days off very interesting. He took us to the Vatican while we were in Rome. We had some great times on that tour, on and off the stage.

MD: You've been with the CPR band for ten years. What keeps that job fresh for you?

Steve's Gilmour Tour Kit



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- A. 6 1/2x14 Craviotto cherrywood snare
- B. 8x10 rack tom
- C. 10x12 rack tom
- D. 14x16 floor tom
- E. 6 1/2x14 snare
- F. 8" Remo RotoTom
- G. 10" Remo RotoTom
- H. 18x22 bass drum

Hardware: DW stands, Axis pedals

Cymbals: Paiste

- 1. Foundry Bell (not in photo)
- 2. 14" 2002 hi-hats
- 3. 18" Signature Full crash
- 4. 20" 2002 ride
- 5. 18" Signature Fast crash
- 6. 20" Sound Creation Mellow ride
- 7. 20" Signature crash with rivets

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Sticks: Vic Firth 5B

Steve: Number one is that David loves to play music more than anything else in the world. There are always new tunes being

written, and even if we're doing old ones, we might do them in a new way. David is still growing as a musician, still writing

new material, and singing better than ever. It's a pretty infectious job.

David always says to me, "If you hear a drum part, play it. If you hear a vocal part, sing it." Most artists have a specific thing in mind that they want the drummer to do. It's kind of like a movie director telling the actor or actress what he wants from them for a scene. David always tells me, "At the end of the day, I want you to remember me as the guy that never told you what to play!"

David is very supportive of my career outside CPR as well. He and Graham both sang on the title track of *On An Island*. During that session Gilmour asked them if I could do some tracking and then asked how to get a hold of me. I got a call from Crosby telling me about all of this. Then I got the call from Mr. Gilmour.

MD: Tell us a little about your developmental years.

Steve: I was born in Hartford, Connecticut, but I consider myself a native Californian because my dad moved us there for a job when I was about two years old. When I was six, my older brother was in a parade and my parents took me to see it. I remember the sound of the drum section just pounding my chest. From that moment on I was hooked.

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Stevie D. On Record

Artist	Album
Chris Robinson & The New Earth Mud	At Bonnaroo 2004 (CD/DVD)
CPR	CPR
CPR	Just Like Gravity
CPR	Live At The Wiltern
Loggins & Messina	Live: Sitting In Again At Santa Barbara Bowl
Carl Verheyen	Six
Carl Verheyen	Atlas Overload
Carl Verheyen	Slang Justice
Brett Bixby	A Formative Gaze
Paul Carman	Passion
Paul Carman & ESP	Even Picasso Couldn't Find Her
Frank Marocco	Appassionato
Mooshu Pie Train	Mooshu
Romero	Infinitos Suenos
Romero	Beyond The Wall
James Raymond	Toda a Beliza
John Tesh	One World
Paul Anka	His Best
Kerry Getz	Little Victory

My dad isn't a musician, but there was always great music in the house. When he found out that I had an affinity for the drums, he was very supportive. It's usually the parents that are afraid for a child to pursue a music career. For my parents to be supportive of my goals was very important.

My first drumkit was a toy set called "A Go-Go." It came with a pair of Go-Go boots, so my sister got the boots and I got the drums! I trashed the kit in one day. About a year later, I was given a practice pad and a pair of sticks. I played on that for three years until my dad thought I was serious enough about the drums to buy my first proper drumset, a Ludwig four-piece finished in mother of pearl. It was bought at a pawnshop and picked out by my father, my older brother Tom, and John Ferraro, who happened to be one of the drummers in that marching band I mentioned.

John Ferraro was also my neighbor. He became my mentor and is the reason I play drums today. He was my first teacher, and he started me on Ted Reed's book *Syncopation*. Through the years, he exposed me to so many great bands and drummers: Bonham, Tony Williams, Steve Gadd. John went on to become one of the greatest drummers on the planet.

MD: There's a story about your early years that involves Roy Burns. Can you tell us about that?

Steve: Yes. During junior high, I played in a National Association of Jazz Educators

competition, and one of the judges was Roy Burns. After the competition, my dad asked Roy if he would take me on as a student. Ferraro, at twenty years old, had already gone off to play with Larry Carlton, so he wasn't around anymore. Roy asked my dad if I could read music, and at that time, I really didn't read yet, so Roy told my dad that he didn't want to just take his money. He suggested that my dad find an instructor who could teach me to read music, because that was essential if I wanted to become a working drummer. After

that I could come see him. My dad was very impressed with that, so we found another teacher, Richard Neild from West Coast Drum Center, and I learned to read music. Richard also made me play piano a little bit so I would learn about chord changes.

Fast forward ten years: I was on the road playing with Paul Anka. I saw Roy on a plane one day, introduced myself, and told him that story. He was so impressed with it that he mentioned it in one of his articles in *Modern Drummer*. Now another ten years goes by and I'm an endorser for Roy's company, Aquarian drumheads.

MD: How did you meet James Raymond?

Steve: In high school and junior college, I started getting into jazz. At Orange Coast Junior College, they had a nice big band program. I started off in the "C" band and worked my way up to the "A" band. Louie Bellson held a few master classes there. I eventually went on to Chaffee College because I heard they had a good program there, and that's where I met James. Had I not learned to read, I would never have made it through those big band charts. Rock 'n' roll is great, but it's really nice to get some jazz going too.

MD: What was your first professional job?

Steve: During my college years, I heard that Disneyland was hiring musicians for some different bands that they use in the park, so I went down and auditioned for Stan Freese, Josh Freese's dad. He hired me

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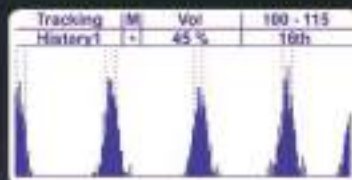
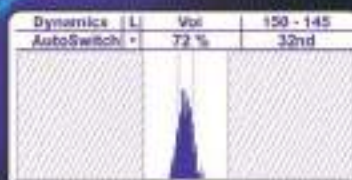
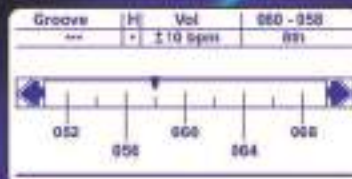
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Steve Di Stanislao

to go to Tokyo Disneyland and play in a Top-40 band for six months. It was a life-changing experience for me. We played five days a week, seven shows a day. It was a lot of fun and I really logged a lot of hours behind the kit.

My next gig was with Maria Conchita Alonzo, a Venezuelan soap opera star turned singer. We played stadiums all over South America. This was my first foreign experience and my first time in front of such large crowds.

I came back to southern California after that and joined a band called Dexter. Mark Mancina, the leader and main songwriter of that band, went on to become successful as a movie soundtrack composer on *The Lion King*, *Twister*, *Speed*, and others. Mark has an amazing work ethic that really pays off for him.

Next, a trombonist I had worked with, Andy Martin, called me to audition for Paul Anka, which I ended up doing for the better part of five years. Paul knows music, understands how to shape a tune, and has incredible ears. Of all the gigs I've ever done, that was the most challenging. You had to play every style of music on that band. It wasn't your typical Vegas show band. You had some of the best players of all time coming through that band.

After the Anka gig, I joined a jazz quartet called ESP with Paul Carman on saxophone, who played with Frank Zappa, and Mark Massey on keyboards. It was a straight-ahead sound, yet reminiscent of the great ECM recordings of Keith Jarrett. The gig helped me learn to explore free time and stretch my improvisational skills. Anything went in that band, and I really got to explore my own voice. We made two records on our own dime and played for about four years together.

MD: On the other side of the musical spectrum, you've worked with Carl Verheyen, former guitarist with Supertramp, and Matt Reid, former keyboardist for Berlin.

Steve: Carl Verheyen was actually John Ferraro's gig. John was writing a lot of different things and was kind enough to point Carl in my direction and say, "Why don't you give Steve a shot?" I subbed on Carl's gig for John, and it felt natural. I played and recorded for him for four or five years.

Matt is a neighbor and good friend of mine. We started writing tunes together that covered everything from vocal stuff to

instrumental drum 'n' bass, even some dreamy-type music. Another friend is an agent for music soundtracks, and she took us on. We call our production team "The Space Heaters."

In 2004 I worked with Chris Robinson, who is from The Black Crowes, on a project called The New Earth Mud. I did some playing with Chris and Marc Ford, also from the Crowes, this past December. That was a total blast because it's a musical environment in which you can just let loose.

MD: Sounds like having more than one project is the key to making a living with music.

Steve: Absolutely. Doing various projects keeps you musically fresh. I just finished producing a second album for a local artist named Romero, and I co-wrote songs on that project. It's Spanish guitar, but we're making it our own. I've worked in the same capacity with another southern California artist named Brett Bixby. The creativity is what I really enjoy.

I like to find objects around the house and just be inventive with what I have. I've played percussion parts on the side of a metal toaster with a pair of Vic Firth Dreadlocks to get a certain vibe to fit a recording. People hear it and can't figure out what the heck it is, but it's very percussive and driving, and it sounds huge. Recently I recorded a brush part playing very lightly on my leg, because it just felt and sounded right for the tune.

MD: What's the most important message you want to give to drummers just starting in this business?

Steve: Like in any relationship that you have with friends or family, you have to develop trust. Find out what the artist needs, check your ego at the door, and go in willing to work to give them whatever they need from you. The artist has to trust you and know that you are going to be there for them. Even after just a few days with David Gilmour, he will now look over at me during a tune in a certain way, and he knows that I am going to take the tune where he wants it to go.

I just feel so fortunate to be able to make my living doing something that I love. It's definitely something much bigger than me and comes from a higher place, so I'm very grateful.

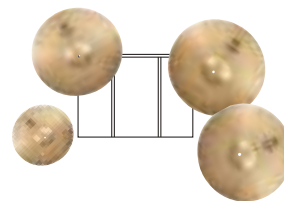


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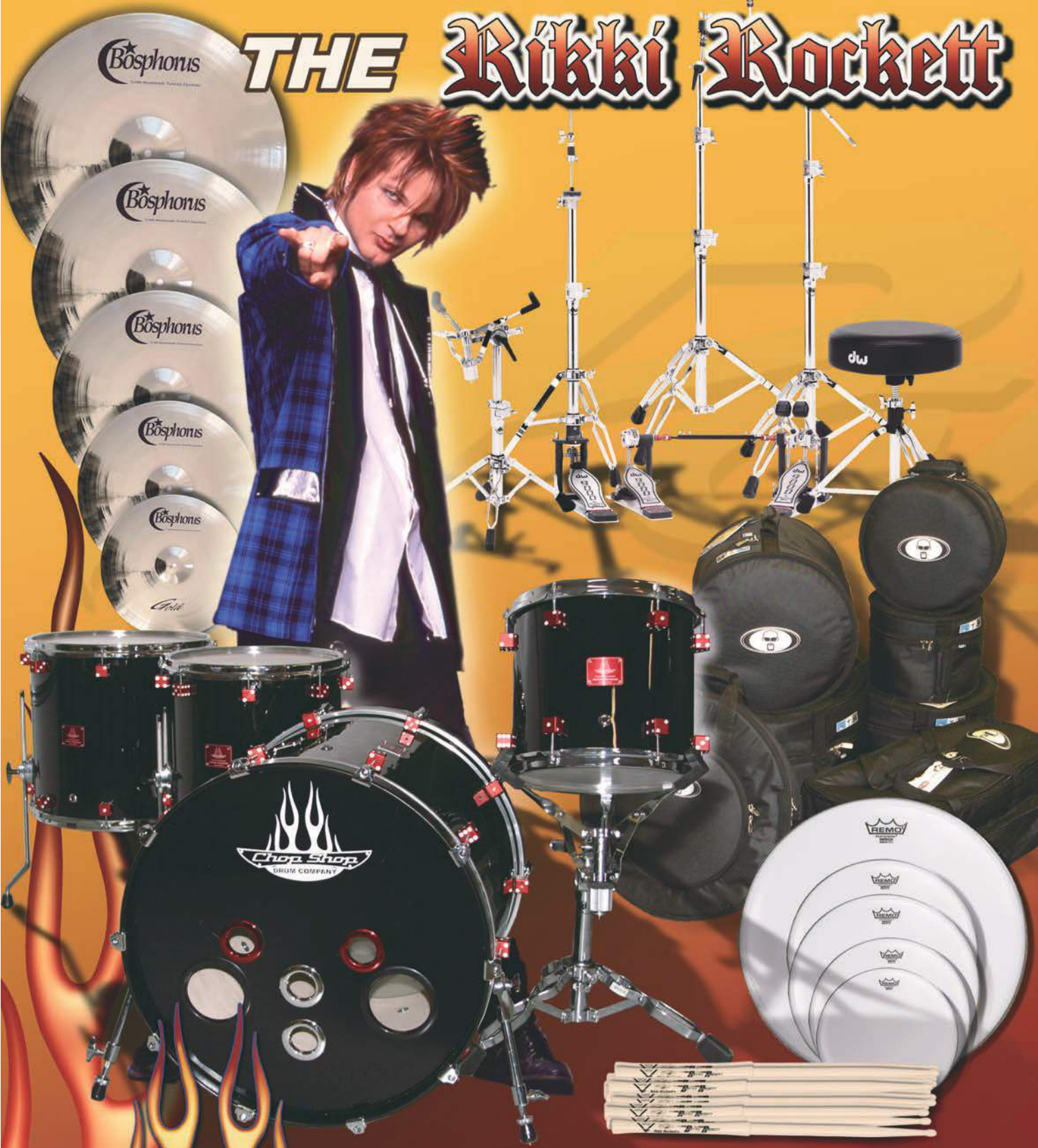
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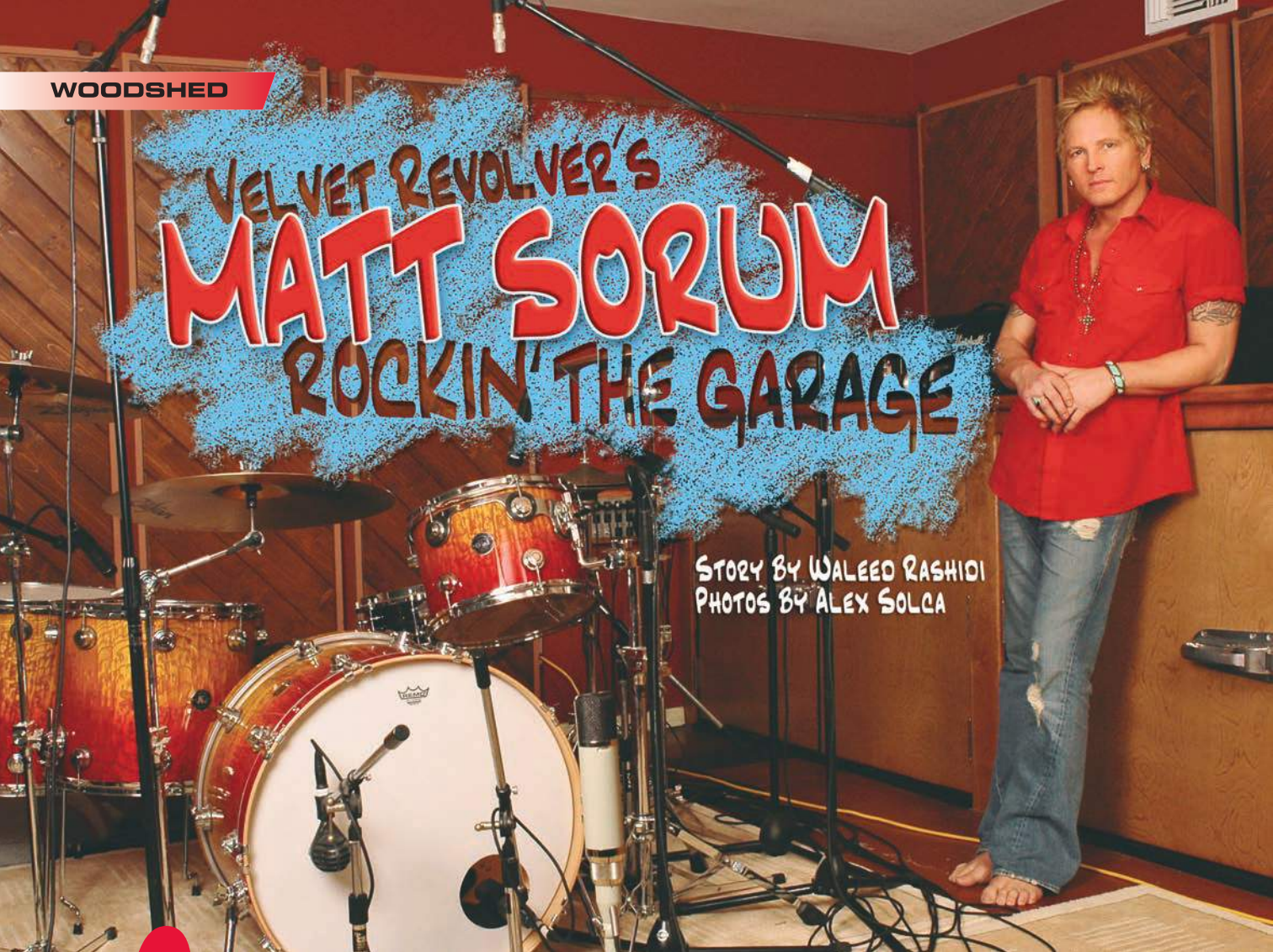
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VELVET REVOLVER'S MATT SORUM ROCKIN' THE GARAGE

STORY BY WALEED RASHIDI
PHOTOS BY ALEX SOLCA



Could Velvet Revolver become the next big “garage band”? Well, if part of the rock act’s next album gets tracked in drummer Matt Sorum’s studio, such a tag might literally become the case.

That’s because Sorum’s 1920s Spanish-style Los Angeles home has a detached four-car garage that doesn’t house any cars—in fact, it’s been completely converted into a fully functional recording studio.

Drac Studios, as Sorum has dubbed his recording spot, is named after the infamous black Lab that accompanied him on the road and in the studio during his Guns N’ Roses years. After Drac’s passing, Sorum dedicated his new studio to his old friend.

Sorum says that when he moved into the home, the backyard garage was pretty dilapidated, but his keen

eye spotted some definite potential in the structure. “I looked at it one day and thought, That’s a pretty good space,” he says.

To give the studio less of a “garage” feel, Sorum re-faced the front of the building, removed the four garage doors, and installed hundreds of pieces of drywall in the interior of the studio to keep his rock well insulated, with minimal leakage.

Considerable money and time was invested in designing, constructing, and finishing a live room that Sorum says is suitable for his needs. “I went with what I had,” he says about building his studio around the existing limitations. “It’s not exactly what I’d want for a drum room, but believe it or not, I’m getting a sound out of there that I’m really pleased with.”

Sorum sat behind his DW kit and

gave us a quick demonstration of that sound, which seemed larger than the tight dimensions would suggest. “It’s still fairly live,” he says from behind the kit, “and the cymbals sound good. It’s got low end, even though the ceiling is low for a drum room. But some of the best Led Zeppelin songs were done in rooms of this size, and I’ve worked in smaller rooms. It’s all relative, you know?”

Sorum also installed the appropriate equipment in the comparatively large control room to capture his drumming to tape—or, in this case, hard disk. The studio’s console is a classic 54-input Trident Series 80, arriving from the Nashville-based studio Treasure Isle, courtesy of Dave Malekpour of Boston’s Professional Audio Design. Sorum also enlisted the services of Bruce Millett of Desk Doctors to re-wire the



Trident to connect to his Pro Tools HD setup.

"Tools is great," says Sorum, "but I don't get into a lot of editing and stuff. I like to use it more as a tape recorder. I don't get into going in there and replacing every drum beat. I'm not that kind of guy."

The Apple Power Mac system is hooked up to a 21" display and a larger plasma screen, which can be used in conjunction with Pro Tools for jobs like film scoring.

"A lot of guys aren't using [the older

analog boards], so they don't have to deal with this," says Matt. "But I love this old analog console. The EQ and all the preamps sound great."

The board is patched into a number of studio-standard outboard effect processors and compressors. Sorum's microphone selection includes an array of Shure models and some recent Telefunken USA reissues, including the traditional 251F.

As for musical gear, Drac Studios is home to a couple of Sorum's kits. A sunburst Drum Workshop four-piece



GEAR BOX

CONSOLE: Trident Series 80E (54 input, with 30 tracks of uptown automation)

MAIN RECORDING DEVICE: Pro Tools HD (16 channels in, 32 channels out, with various plug-ins)

COMPUTER: Apple Power Mac series with 21" display

OUTBOARD EFFECTS: various delays, preamps, and reverbs; Manley, dbx 160, and Urei 1176 compressors

MICS: Shure SM57s and Beta 57s, Telefunken 251F

DRUMS: DW in sunburst finish, including a 24" bass drum, 13" and 14" rack toms, 16" and 18" floor toms, and a 6 1/2"x14" snare. Other snares include a 6 1/2" Black Beauty, a 1963 5x14 Ludwig maple, and a 6 1/2"x14 Ludwig Supraphonic.

CYMBALS: a Zildjian 22" Ping, 15" Rock hi-hats, a 20" Oriental Classic ride, and 18", 19", and 20" A Medium crashes.

set he used with The Cult was miked up at the time of our visit, a '63 Ludwig kit was stacked in the corner of the room, and several desirable snares were on hand, including a 1938 Leedy Broadway Standard with the original finish. Drac Studios is also home to a host of amps and axes.

Sorum, who in addition to playing drums, sings and plays guitar, could probably have put his current studio to good use during the recording of his recent solo album, *Hollywood Zen*, which he co-produced in a much smaller, simpler home studio setup than what he has today.

Some of Sorum's recent recording projects at Drac include songwriting collaborations, scoring films, and, of course, tracking pre-production demos for the next Velvet Revolver album.

So what's left on Sorum's wish list? The drummer says he's aiming to complete a vocal booth in the tracking room, build a producer's desk, and assemble a refreshment area in the back corners of the control room. "Other than that," he states, "I'm ready to roll."



Double Bass Crash Course

Part 1: Building Blocks

by Jason Bittner



Chad Lee

MUSIC KEY

R.C. ✖
S.D. ●
B.D.1 ●
B.D.2 ●

Hi everybody! First of all, I'd like to say that I'm honored once again to be in the pages of *MD*, with this time being my first as a writer (of sorts). When I do drum clinics, one

of the questions I'm constantly asked is, "How did you get your double bass so fast?" Well, my friends, the answer is simple—practice, practice, practice. Of course, *what* you practice is important.

The exercises I'm going to show here are basically the building blocks for double bass endurance. The exercises themselves are not overly challenging. (Well, maybe some of the ride patterns can be tricky.) However, the idea is to be able to play them for extended periods of time and at various tempos. The most important things to remember are to start out slowly, play with a metronome, and have fun.

16th-Note Patterns

The first set of exercises will be played with an 8th-note ride pattern and alternating (RLRL) 16th notes on the bass drums. Here's the bass drum pattern.

1

Here's the bass drum pattern with an 8th-note ride and the snare on 2 and 4.

2

Now move the snare hits to the "&s" of the beat.

3

Here the snare plays on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4.

4

Now try it with the snare on 1 and 3.

5

And here it is with the snare on beat 3 only.

6

Start each of those at a comfortable speed, and play each one over and over. Once you're comfortable with them, gradually increase your tempos. Then mix and match the examples, switching back and forth between different ones without stopping.

Now that you have that down, let's vary the ride pattern. Go back and work through all of the previous examples with the following ride patterns.

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

Triplet Patterns

Now let's get into some basic triplet ideas. The main point here is to clearly delineate the triplet pattern—1-2-3, 1-2-3, or trip-a-let, trip-a-let—from the previous straight 16th-note patterns.

This pattern features 8th-note triplets in the bass drums with a simple ride pattern over the top.

18

Here's a basic triplet pattern, this time featuring 16th-note triplets.

19

In the hard rock/metal drumming styles, the two previous examples are the most prominent triplet beats you'll hear. The following are some common variations.

8th-note triplets with the snare on 1 and 3:

20

8th-note triplets with the snare on 3:

21

8th-note triplets with matching 8th-note triplets played by the right hand:

22

8th-note triplets with the snare on 1 and 3 and the 8th-note triplet hand pattern:

23

8th-note triplets with the snare on 3 and the 8th-note triplet hand pattern:

24

And finally, 16th-note triplets on the bass drums with 8th-note triplets played by the right hand:

25

So there you have it, the building blocks for playing double bass for days on end! Always remember to start slowly, and play with control and evenness.

Next time we'll look at more 16th-note variations and some cool combination patterns. Good luck!

Jason Bittner is the award-winning drummer with Shadows Fall.



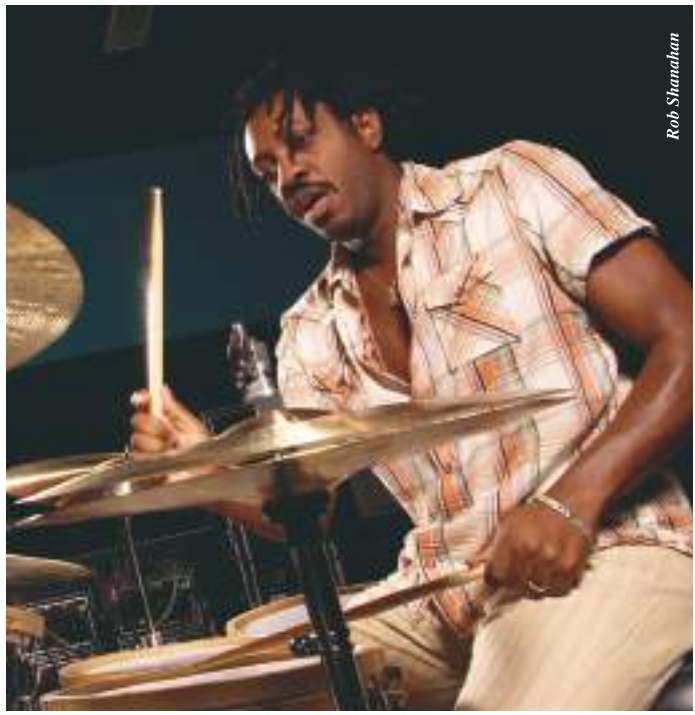
John Mayer Trio's Steve Jordan Try!

by Ed Breckenfeld

MUSIC KEY					
open	○	R.C.	✱	C.C.	✱
H.H.	●				
T.T.	●				
S.D.	●				
F.T.	●				
B.D.	●				
H.H. w/ foot	⊗	Ghost note			

Sporting monster guitar chops and a new blues/rock sound, John Mayer has elevated his status from heartthrob singer/songwriter to serious musical heavyweight with his

eye-opening album *Try!* Joining him for this transformation is the to-die-for rhythm section of bassist Pino Palladino and top session drummer Steve Jordan.



Rob Stunahan

Jordan is in peak form on this live recording, laying down incredible grooves under Mayer's soulful songs. With a loose yet unwavering feel, Steve sets each track deep in the pocket with a mix of funky patterns and straight-ahead beats. Here are some examples.

"Who Did You Think I Was"

Steve's opening fill on the album's first track contains a barely audible six-stroke roll that leads into rimshot accents. From there, Jordan's turned-around groove keeps things moving under Mayer's bluesy guitar riff. (0:21)

1

♩ = 93

R L L R R L R L R LR

"Good Love Is On The Way"

The guitar solo section of this song features a syncopated groove with accented offbeats on the ride cymbal. (2:40)

2

♩ = 91

"Wait Until Tomorrow"

How can you hope to match Mitch Mitchell's drumming magic when covering a Jimi Hendrix classic? Jordan circumvents the challenge by creating one of his most outlandishly funky grooves for Mayer's version of this tune. Check it out: This is one killer beat. (0:09)

3

♩ = 109

"Another Kind Of Green"

Steve swings the feel of this 12/8 track by placing his ghost notes and offbeats as far behind the beat as he can. The splashy 8th notes on the ride are further defined by being doubled with the left foot. (0:07)

4

♩ = 181

“I Got A Woman”

Jordan’s beat for Mayer’s cover of this Ray Charles song is a testament to the effectiveness of ghost notes. With incredible left-hand control, Steve places his rimshots and ghost notes at opposite ends of the dynamic spectrum. This groove is so strong that Mayer has the drummer open the song by himself. (0:09)



“Something’s Missing”

Jordan starts this tune with another unaccompanied groove. The deep pulse of the accented hi-hat pattern, combined with well-placed ghost notes, is what makes this beat feel so good. (0:00)



“Try”

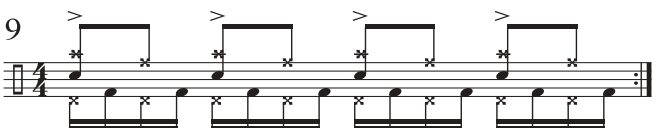
The title track is a lively R&B rave up that closes the album. Steve provides forward momentum with a barking hi-hat part in the verses. (0:51)



Jordan augments his groove with more snare and kick drum offbeats when he changes to the ride cymbal for Mayer’s guitar solo. (2:13)



Finally, Steve goes all-out for the end of the song. His over-driven drumbeat is an energetic and effective show-closer. (4:59)



You can send requests for a future Off The Record to Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.



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Polyrhythms

Applying Them To The Drumset

by Chris Pennie

MUSIC KEY

H.H.	
S.D.	
B.D.	

Polyrhythms are used quite often in many genres of music. They create an unresolved feeling by tricking the listener's perception of the song's meter. The examples in this article will familiarize you with some of these rhythms, while strengthening your rhythmic vocabulary.



Rick Malkin

Before we dive in, let's take a look at what polyrhythms are and how they work. A polyrhythm is the simultaneous sounding of two or more contrasting rhythms in the same timeframe. For example, if you played a rhythm in 3/4 over a rhythm in 4/4, and they resolved at the same place, you'd have a polyrhythm of three-over-four.

Now that we have an understanding of what polyrhythms are, let's look at our first example. Example 1 is a four-over-three polyrhythm between the snare and bass drum, with 8th notes on the hi-hat. While counting the implied 16th notes (1e&a, 2e&a, 3e&a), try tapping the bass drum line with your foot. Then tap the snare drum rhythms with your hands. Beginning on the downbeat, the snare plays every third 16th note, while the bass drum plays every fourth. When you're able to hear and feel those two rhythms together, try adding the hi-hat.

1

By inverting the groupings and the instrumentation, we have a three-over-four polyrhythm. This time, the snare plays every fourth 16th and the kick plays every third. Notice the difference in the feel of this pattern.

1A

Example 1B demonstrates a different way to phrase the polyrhythm. This time you're playing 16th notes between the snare and kick, while the hi-hat outlines the three-note groupings.

1B

You can also apply polyrhythms to rudiments. In Example 1C, we're using the double-stroke roll (RRLL) with accents on every third note. If you put that over quarter notes in the bass drum, you have a four-over-three polyrhythm.

1C

Example 2 is a four-over-five polyrhythm. The same principle is applied here. Count "1e&a, 2e&a, 3e&a, 4e&a, 5e&a" and tap each line individually, then together. The kick drum is playing every fourth 16th note, and the snare is playing every fifth. Add the hi-hat when you're comfortable.

2

By inverting the snare and kick patterns from Example 2, we have the five-over-four polyrhythm that's shown in Example 2A. Now the snare plays every fourth 16th, and the kick plays every fifth.

2A

In Example 2B, we're playing 16th notes between the snare and kick, while the hi-hat is phrased in five. Start off playing the snare and kick by themselves before adding the hi-hat.

2B

Now try applying the four-over-five polyrhythm to double strokes. The polyrhythm is outlined by accenting every fifth note on the snare, while playing quarter notes in the kick drum.

2C

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

Example 3 shows a four-over-seven polyrhythm. Seven-note phrases take longer to resolve, so don't forget to count (1e&a, 2e&a, 3e&a, 4e&a, 5e&a, 6e&a, 7e&a).

3

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a 5 e & a 6 e & a 7 e & a

Now invert the hands and feet to create a seven-over-four polyrhythm.

3A

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a 5 e & a 6 e & a 7 e & a

In Example 3B, the hi-hat plays every seventh note over solid 16ths between the snare and kick.

3B

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a 5 e & a 6 e & a 7 e & a

Finally, here's four-over-seven using double strokes.

3C

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

The examples included in this article are just a few of the infinite ways to arrange polyrhythms. The most important thing with these types of exercises is to be able to hear and feel how the rhythms work off of one another. Once you've internalized them, you'll be able to phrase them any way you want.

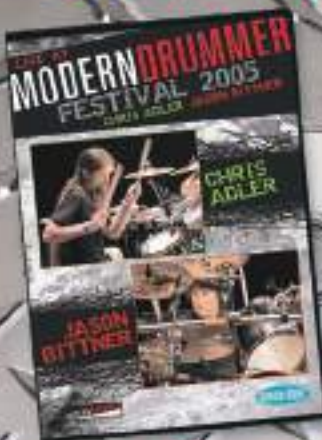
Chris Pennie is the drummer and co-founder of hardcore rock band Dillinger Escape Plan. You can contact him through the band's Web site, www.dillingerescapeplan.com.



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Hi-Hat Control

Your Left Foot, Part 1

by John Riley

MUSIC KEY

- R.C. — x
- S.D. — ●
- B.D. — ●
- H.H. — x
- w/ foot — x

I write with my left hand but throw a ball with my right. Am I right-handed or left-handed? I'm not sure, but I know I can't do many things equally well with either hand. And I kick with my right foot, so I'm certainly not ambidextrous. The brain has a unique way of controlling our limbs, and drummers are always looking for ways to enhance that control.

For most of us, the hierarchy of our limbs goes like this: right hand, left hand, right foot, left foot. Our left foot is our least coordinated limb, so we ask the least from it. As a result, the left foot remains our weakest limb. But with some concentrated work we can bring it up to a level equal to that of our other limbs.

The first step is to simply ask more of the left foot. Engage it every time you play. Say you're practicing rudiments on a pad. Have your left foot tap quarter notes or 8th notes. As the tempo increases, raise your heel while leaving the ball of your foot gently touching the ground and tap the pulse with your heel. You'll feel the rhythm in your entire leg.

Next, go to the kit. Here are a couple of ways to engage the left foot while playing the *Stick Control* book. Play page 5 like this: R = right hand and right foot in unison, L = left hand. Have your left foot play quarter notes. (These examples can be played straight or swung.)

1

2

3

4

5



Next, R = right hand and left hand in unison, L = right foot. Hi-hat plays quarter notes.

6

7

8

9

10

After working on those exercises for a while, your brain will have re-connected with your left foot. It's time to engage the left foot in more varied combinations. For now, as reinforcement, we'll team the left foot with another limb. R = right hand and left foot in unison, L = left hand. Repeated notes are problematic, but don't worry about your sound just yet. It's okay if some of the notes are "splasy." Experiment playing the following phrases heel down and heel up; the tempo, number of repeated notes, and your desired volume will determine which technique is best. Focus on making the timing accurate.

11

12

13



Finally, we'll play the right side against the left side. R = right hand and right foot in unison, L = left hand and left foot in unison.



Please work through this material. Next time we'll begin using the left foot in a more independent and melodic fashion.



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



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Essential Grooves

Part 3: R&B/Hip-Hop

by Tommy Igoe



MUSIC KEY

open H.H.	O	R.C.	C.C.
S.D.	●	⊗	⊙
B.D.	■	⊛	⊚
H.H. w/ foot	⊕	Rim- shot	Ghost note

We've arrived at the third installment of our exploration into the five groove families: R&B/hip-hop. R&B, or rhythm and blues, has changed drastically over the years, which is what

has enabled it to keep an audience and maintain its relevance in modern times. With that in mind, let's take a contemporary hip-hop groove and throw it into a band setting with some mischievous improvisational intentions. (And don't forget to log on to moderndrummer.com to download this month's backing track.)

Here's a fun hip-hop-inspired groove.

1

I'm big on talking about a groove's "connective tissue," the stuff that binds it together. If you understand the construction of a groove and discover what keeps it moving forward, then you'll be in a greater position to do something musically meaningful. Below is a simple rock beat that perfectly illustrates the concept of connective tissue.

2

In that beat, you can see that the 8th notes on the hi-hat are the binding force. They literally hold the groove together. It's also an example of a layered or closed groove where one hand plays the primary subdivisions over the standard downbeat-backbeat relationship on the bass drum and snare.

Now take a look at Example 1 again. Before I tell you where to find the glue in this beat, try to find it yourself. This groove has a more open construction where multiple limbs work together to form the connective tissue. The ride cymbal and hi-hat are working together to form a continuous line of 8th notes. Coordination is an issue with this groove, so take it slow and practice with a metronome until you learn the coordination.

As with all grooves, what counts is *how* you play the notes. To give this groove a hip-hop flair, you should swing it a little bit. The

16ths need to sit back in the pocket to create a rounder feel. That's one of hip-hop's calling cards. You can play this groove straight, too. But to make it funkier, try using a slight swing feel.

For you budding session players out there, in terms of authenticity, Example 1 is too "wet" to use on a hip-hop recording. One thing that most R&B and hip-hop producers insist on is a very dry drum track. So the ride cymbal part would have to go. You can move the right hand to something that doesn't ring so much, or do what I once did on a session and throw some tape on your ride so it barely rings. The artist loved it! Then again, I saw Questlove play his ride cymbal throughout an entire song, and it sounded great. So be open to all possibilities.

Now it's time to try some variations. Here's Variation 1A.

1A

Looks pretty easy, right? Well, looks can be deceiving. This groove uses one of my favorite hi-hat techniques: the open hi-hat on the downbeat. Again, the challenge is in the coordination. The open hi-hat must be a *perfect* 8th note in length—no shorter, no longer. Why? Because the open hat sound is the glue that holds this groove together. Anything shorter or longer than a perfect 8th note will clash with the snare/bass drum interplay going on underneath. It's easy to play this groove badly, so be careful.

Here's Variation 1B.

1B

I recommend that you play Variation 1B at letter "A" of the following chart, because that section of the song is what inspired this groove. As far as the connective tissue goes, we have the left foot playing 8th notes on the hi-hat and the right hand playing upbeats on the ride. Please don't flam them. Unless you intend to play them, flams are groove killers. They create clutter and confuse the ear of the listener. Of course, not flammings is easier said than done. Record yourself and listen back with a critical ear to see if your groove is as accurate as you want it to be.

Finally, here's the chart for the song.

The musical score consists of four staves. The first staff is labeled "SINGING/FUNK" and has a "4" above it. The second staff is labeled "A BRIDGE (REPEAT LTR. A LAST X)" and has "6 MORE" written above it. The third staff is labeled "B (LIKE BEGINNING) PLAY 7" and has "1. 2." and "3. NO/ENS." above it. The fourth staff is labeled "FILL" and has "FINE" at the end.

Of all the charts we've seen so far, this is the most sophisticated. The composer was kind enough to include cues, which are the figures above the staff on the first two lines. You don't have to play all (or any) of them. The composer is letting us decide what to do with them. But since they're written, you may want to incorporate them into your groove. You just have to decide what to do with them. That's the beauty of an underwritten chart—you get to experiment and decide for yourself.

For advanced players, notice that letter A is repeated the last time through the form. I've constructed the arrangement this way so you have some solo space to explore. It'll be obvious when you get to this point in the chart that there's a lot more space, so fill it up a bit and take charge. (Too bad the chart doesn't *tell* you all that stuff, right?)

The fun thing about this chart is that it takes a hip-hop-inspired groove and throws it into a decidedly *un*-hip-hop situation. All music cross-pollinates as different genres borrow from and influence each other. This is one of my favorite tracks, and I hope you have a ball with it.

Next month, we're going to explore the fourth of the five families: jazz.

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. 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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Our Best Behavior

Do's And Don'ts For Success

by Steve DeLuca

As musicians, we deal with people in every aspect of our business. And dealing with people is all about behavior. I'm a father and a teacher, so I have plenty of experience with using the phrase

"Please be on your best behavior" with children. But for this month's article I'd like to take a close look at that phrase in terms of being a professional musician.

How many of you have ever experienced situations like this: You walk into a club and place your cases near where you're going to set up. The manager walks up and emphatically tells you that you can't leave your cases there. Or you walk into a catering hall to play

a wedding, and someone tells you not to touch the cake. (I'm not making this up.)

I used to become angry when I received commands like this. But after years in the business, I realized that they were the result of poor behavior on the part of musicians that these people had previously encountered. In the two scenarios described above, some musicians had left their cases out after setting up, while other musicians had apparently dipped their fingers in the wedding cake.

Sorry, folks, but sometimes we're our own worst enemies.

Making An Impression

Let's take a look at another scenario. A group of wedding musicians is set up and ready to go, so they decide to enjoy the cocktail hour. One of them has brought a Tupperware container along in order to help himself to a complimentary snack for after the gig. I know people who do this. They're usually really nice people, whose view is completely rational: So much of this food is going to be thrown out, why waste it?

But let's look at society's view of the situation. Your average party guest will see this, realize that the person stashing the food is one of the musicians, and then conclude that the musician must be broke and starving, probably due to spending all of his or her money on booze and drugs. To make matters worse, the guest's brother, cousin, or friend paid a lot of money for this shindig—and now one of the musicians is "stealing" the cheese and carrots!

Are these thoughts stereotypical? Absolutely. Are they unfounded? Probably. Did the musician do any-

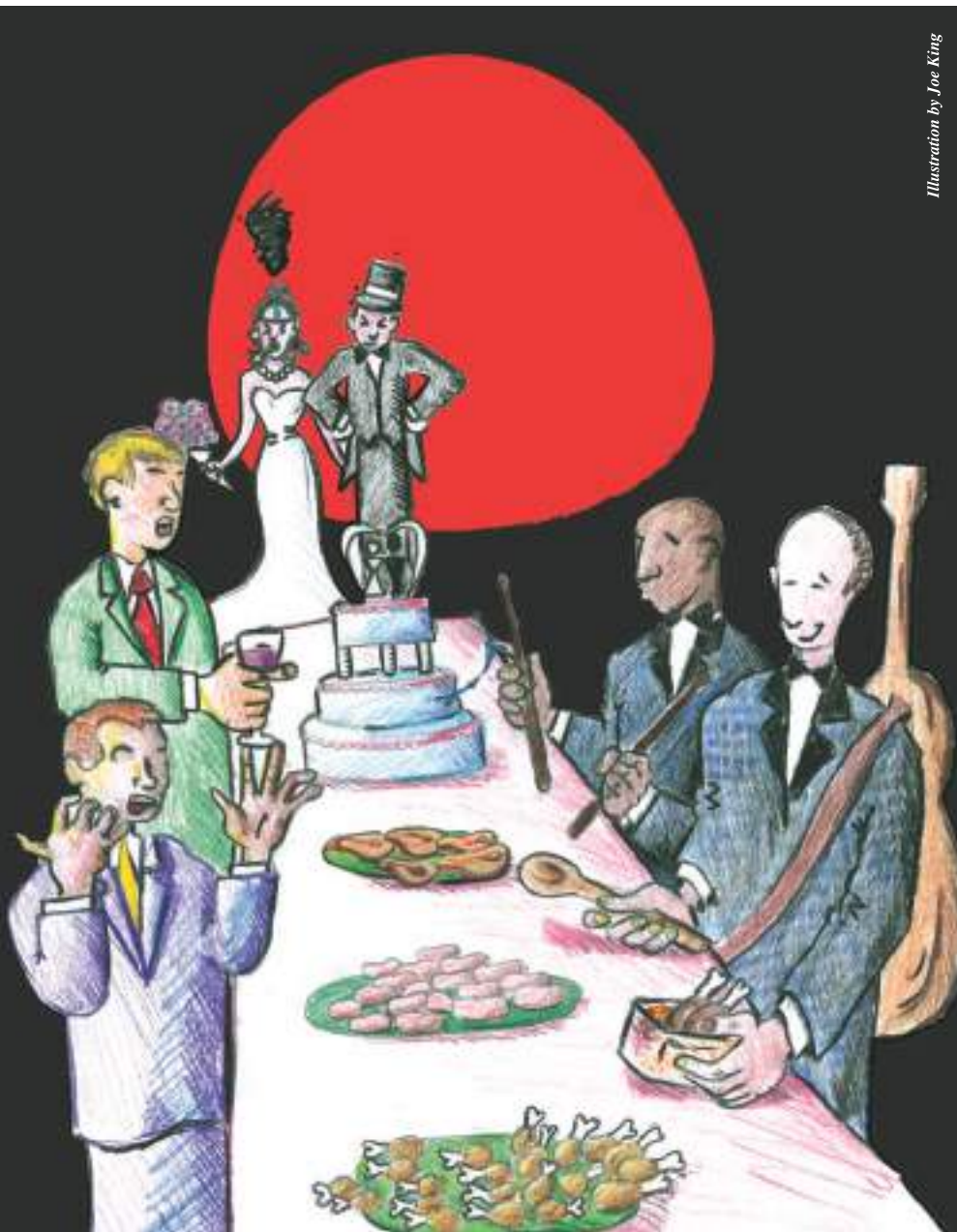


Illustration by Joe King

When we deal with society, there are ground rules already established. Our behavior should follow those models.

thing wrong? Definitely.

A musician engaging in this sort of behavior is not following proper protocol—which, simply put, means “the way things are acceptably done.” In the end, it doesn’t always have to do with right or wrong, but with what society *deems* acceptable.

With this in mind, let’s take a look at another scenario. Suppose you’re a leader on a formal gig, with ladies in gowns and men in tuxes. In walks your guitar player sporting all of his piercings, including several rings in his ears and a lead pipe through his nose. Now, you could say that he is being himself...that we live in a free society...and so forth. But again, you’re faced with the unfortunate reality that society at large will not always view things as open-mindedly. At best they will see someone whose appearance is inappropriate. At worst they may perceive some sort of perverse devil worshipper.

I consider myself fairly open-minded, but when somebody chooses to show up on a formal gig in that fashion, I find it hard to take that person seriously (and I’m an earring endorser). This is not a judgment on fashion or style. I’m merely saying that proper behavior dictates that on a gig of this kind, bodily accoutrements should be left at home.

Working Relations

So far we’ve addressed how to present ourselves to our customers and audience—the “society” that we play for and to. But what about how we deal with each other—our musical “society?” I think the best way to discuss this important topic is to present the following list of do’s and don’ts.

Don’t start off conversations with, “Dude, on my left I’ve got these Octobans, and I have four crashes, and a double pedal, and....” Would you want to hear about a guitar player’s complete effects rig set-up? Most likely not.

On the other hand, maybe you would. In that case, **do** allow the conversation to *evolve* into these topics—and others. When it becomes a mutual sharing of not just equipment stats but also musical philosophies, then an understanding and bonding can take place. In fact, you might want to expand your conversational horizons even farther. As much as we love music, it’s still our job, and sometimes it’s best to talk about something other than work.

Don’t become defensive when given suggestions by other musicians. Keep your mind open. I was once recording a track by my former band, Wooster Sang. The original drum intro incorporated three toms, but I had recently changed over to just a rack tom and a floor tom. I was wondering aloud what I should do. Should I just move the notes I had played on the now-missing second tom over to the first rack tom? No, because I liked the change in sound/tonality. My bass player suggested that I put those notes on the ride cymbal. I thought he was nuts, but I tried it. It not only sounded great, it also became something that people pointed to as an original part.

Do make suggestions yourself. Become part of the overall musical picture. As with the example of the bass player above, musicians who don’t play a particular instrument are not hidebound by its conventions. They might have a surprisingly fresh and inventive idea to share.

Reality check: Some musicians don’t think drummers can contribute in this way. My advice about that is to stay away from them. That attitude is nothing more than a lack of respect, perhaps coupled with some insecurity. You don’t really want to be playing with people like that.

Working With Sound Engineers

This is an area of our business that can be an absolute joy or an absolutely horrif-

ic nightmare. It’s definitely in your best interest to do everything you can to make it a positive experience. Still...

Don’t put up with any negative, jaded, opinionated attitudes. I’m being blunt, but it’s important to be firm when dealing with some sound engineers. I’m by no means suggesting that you have *carte blanche* to walk into a gig or recording session and start giving commands to the sound engineer. I’m telling you to watch out for something I will again illustrate by example.

I was once involved in a recording where the engineer told me that I needed to play rimshots on all my backbeats. When I asked him why, he told me that it was the *only* way backbeats sounded good. First I took a deep breath, and then I attempted to explain to him that a rimshot produced one particular kind of sound, and that *my* way of playing is not to play a rimshot for every backbeat. He didn’t buy it, but I continued to play the way I played, and the recording sounded good (including the backbeats). He did his job, though he had to redefine what that job was.

There is also the dreaded utterance, “Can you put some tape on that?” My answer to that is simply, “No.” There are some exceptions, of course, which we will get to. But I’ve spent a lot of years figuring out my sound. My drums ring because I *want* them to. It’s a sound engineer’s job to capture your acoustic sound and project it through the sound system. This is a subject worthy of a whole other article, but as far as I’m concerned, “Can you put some tape on that?” is the first response of an ineffective sound engineer.

All the above being said, **do** work *with* your sound engineer toward your common goal: good-sounding drums and good-sounding music. A good sound engineer can be helpful in determining where problems are, such as unwanted ring. (“It’s coming from the bottom head,” “It’s more

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of a mid-range ring," and so forth.) Sometimes, due simply to a horrible-sounding room, tape or some other muffling will have to be employed. You do need to be adaptable. In the past few years I've been lucky enough to work with great sound engineers (the "absolute joy" mentioned above) who really know their craft, and who know how to get *my* sound, not some preconceived notion.

A warning to drummers who've only been playing and/or gigging for a couple of years: Maybe you should listen for a few more years before asserting yourself. You need to know what you're talking about if you're going to take a strong position. If you do assert yourself *before* you gain that knowledge, the author waives any responsibility.

Contradictory Positions?

It may seem as though I'm being contradictory in this article. On one hand, I'm telling you to be acquiescent when dealing with catering hall staff, club managers, and gig patrons. Conversely, I'm telling you to stand your ground and be assertive when dealing with other musicians and technicians.

When we deal with society, there are ground rules already established. There is, as I said, protocol—which, right or wrong, is firmly in place in society's mind. Our behavior should follow those models.

When we deal with each other, our attitudes and beliefs create the ground rules. Many of us are knowledgeable professionals. We've put in time and effort to get to a place where we feel confident, not only in our abilities as musicians, but also in our abilities to navigate the tough world that is the music business. When our peers act in an inappropriate manner, we should hold them accountable for it.

Let's strive to make being a musician the honorable thing it is. Let's be proud of our behavior.

Steve DeLuca is a versatile drummer who enjoys a career in New Jersey and New York playing for weddings and corporate events, as well as in popular NYC jazz clubs. He also maintains an active teaching practice.



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Geoff Emerick

The Beatles' Studio Groundbreaker

by Billy Amendola

As the recording engineer on several of The Beatles' greatest works, Geoff Emerick set a new standard for the way albums—and drums in particular—are recorded. Geoff's story is documented in his recently released book, *Here, There And Everywhere: My Life Recording The Music Of The Beatles*.

Geoff started working at Abbey Road Studios in 1962, as a fifteen-year-old disc cutter. He quickly graduated to the position of assistant to Beatle engineer Norman Smith. When Smith moved to EMI Records to become a producer in 1966, Geoff was promoted to engineer, working alongside producer George Martin and the band that was changing the nature of popular music.

Starting with *Revolver*, and progressing through *Sgt. Pepper*, *The Beatles* ("The White Album"), and *Abbey*



A gallery of greats: Beatles albums engineered by Geoff Emerick

Road, Geoff took engineering technology to a new level. He introduced techniques that included close-miking Ringo's drums, as well as removing bottom drumheads and placing the microphones inside the drums. In doing so, he established methods that most engineers still use to record drums today. *Sgt. Pepper* earned Geoff a Grammy for Best-Engineered Record, and is widely regarded as the greatest rock record ever made.

As if his work with The Beatles weren't enough to make him a legendary musical figure, Geoff also engineered or produced

records for Badfinger, America, Robin Trower, The Zombies, Paul McCartney, Gino Vannelli, Art Garfunkel, and Elvis Costello. Yet when *MD* spoke with Geoff, we found him to be a remarkably down-to-earth-gentleman who insists he doesn't quite understand what all the fuss is about; he's happy just to do what he does for a living. Luckily for music fans the world over, he just happens to be great at it.

MD: When we interviewed Ringo in the November '05 *MD*, we asked him about drum mics and positioning for the Beatles recordings. He said that neither he nor George Martin could remember any of that "technical stuff."

Geoff: We never really took notes about how things were done. In the early days, around *Revolver*, we were still on 4-track, so I think it was basically one overhead, a snare mic, a bass drum mic, and a hi-hat mic. Later I started to close-mike the toms, and I'd do a pre-mix—putting four of the mics onto a premix and then onto one fader, because we only had eight inputs on the mixing console.

MD: So you didn't have the choice to mike the drums on top and bottom.

Geoff: No. I think I started to do that for *Abbey Road*. And I think that was the first time we mixed the drums in stereo, because we now had eight tracks to work with.

MD: What made you think of removing the bottom drumheads to put the mics inside the drums?

Geoff: I love drums, and I wanted them to have more



"Ringo had great control of the way his sticks would land on the drums. It was like all his energy would go into those drumsticks."

impact. Prior to that point they were sort of wishy-washy, or the bass drum was in the distance with the snare. It was a matter of figuring out how we could get the sound of the drumkit that we were hearing in the studio onto the record.

MD: Do you recall what mics you were using at that time?

Geoff: I believe I was using ribbon mics made back then by the BBC, and now made by a company called Cole—4038s. I put a 56 condenser under the snare, with a D19 on top. Sometimes I'd take the bottom skins off the toms to give them a bit of air, and put a D19 inside them.

It was important to capture the impact, because sometimes even though drums are loud, they can sound small. Ringo really laid into them—though I don't mean thrashing. He had great control of the way his sticks would land on the drums. It was like all his energy would go into those drumsticks. I remember looking around Ringo's kit after everyone had gone home, and it would be littered with chips of wood from his drumsticks.

MD: Once Ringo's drums were set up for recording, did they stay set up that way?

Geoff: Yes, we never moved them. And he would always lay a soft pack of cigarettes on the snare drum. We tried something else once, and it didn't have the same sound. Sometimes we used tea towels over the toms and snare to get a deader sound.

MD: Whose idea was it to hit the three solo bass drum beats right before the chorus on "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds"?

Geoff: I don't recall whose idea it was, but I believe that's a floor tom, not a bass drum.

MD: I read somewhere that the drums for "Something" were recorded at a fast speed, and then slowed down to give the toms more bottom. True or false?

Geoff: False. They're played naturally. And I'm sure I had the bottom skins off the toms.

Remember, though, that *Abbey Road* was the first record on which we used a transistorized mixing console. I couldn't get the same impact from the snare or the bass drum. Had *Abbey Road* been recorded through a tube desk, the drums would have been a lot punchier on the original rhythm tracks and the overdubs, and it would have been a slightly different-sounding album.

MD: How do you like to record drums nowadays?

Geoff: I'll generally mike the snare on top and bottom, and the toms from the top. But that could depend on who the drummer is. A lot of players don't like to remove the front heads on their bass drums. Instead, they have a hole cut out. You get a tremendous blast of air while you're trying to capture the boom of the drum through that little hole. I still prefer to take the front drumhead off.

MD: Do you prefer to record the drums in the open or isolated?

Geoff: It depends on what we're after. But if you're going to record drums open, you really need a big room for ambience.

The drums are one instrument made up of several components. That's why I hate it when they're spread in a stereo picture. I find it distracting to hear one drum on one side and another on the other...unless you're going for an effect. So I'll wedge them into the middle of the stereo field. I think that gives them more impact.

MD: Do you record the drums dry and add effects later?

Geoff: Yes—unless I want a quick drum

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Geoff Emerick

sound, and then I'll run it mono through the Fairchild. That was basically how we did *Revolver*.

MD: You'll always hear engineers say, "It's the player way more than the instrument." True?

Geoff: Of course. And it's funny that a lot of people still don't understand that. The joke in every studio was, "Can you make my drums sound like John Bonham's?" And the reply was, "Sure. Let's ring him up and see if we can get him down here." [laughs]

MD: What drummers besides Ringo have impressed you?

Geoff: I love Steve Gadd. I worked with him on Paul McCartney's *Pipes Of Peace* and *Tug Of War* and on an Art Garfunkel record. He's brilliant, the best! I also enjoyed working with Willie Leacox from the band America, Reg Isadore with Robin Trower, and Pete Thomas with Elvis Costello. Pete's brilliant as well—and great fun.

MD: Are you a fan of Pro Tools?

Geoff: No, I'm not. I just did a session at Capitol studios in California. We recorded the drums analog, and we wanted to do a quick overdub. So we loaded the track into Pro Tools, and it sounded horrendous—like a completely different drumkit.

There's something weird with the top end in digital recording. Granted, I was born in an analog world. The young kids now have nothing to compare digital sound to. But as soon as you A/B it with analog, you can hear the difference.

Also, some engineers will take a rhythm track in Pro Tools and move this drum or that drum. Maybe the bass drum is not

quite lining up. But all they're doing is taking the human feel out of the record. Fortunately for me, at Capitol we still have analog equipment and guys who know how to use it. It's just a beautiful sound.

MD: Any advice for drummers trying to get a good sound on a budget in a home studio?

Geoff: Don't get too clever with tons of mics, because you get phasing problems. If you put the snare mic out of phase with the overheads, nine out of ten times the bottom end comes back up and the snare sounds a lot fuller.

I did a Mahavishnu record with Narada Michael Walden on drums. We started with the rhythm section and the orchestra in a big studio. After twenty minutes of recording, we realized we needed to isolate the rhythm section. So we took them into one of the very small control rooms. The drums had one overhead, one bass drum mic, and a mic on the hi-hat—and it turned out to be a great-sounding record. That's another good example of how much of the sound is the person playing. It was the same kind of thing when we recorded Paul McCartney's *Band On The Run* in Africa. Sometimes it's a plus to be away from the studio and that studio sound. Sometimes those little rooms can give a recording a special character.

MD: Speaking of *Band On The Run*, how's Paul McCartney as a drummer?

Geoff: I always loved Paul's drumming. He has a great sense of timing. When The Beatles were working on drum parts, it was always Paul working it out with Ringo.

MD: How did it feel to work with The Beatles again on the *Anthology* project,

after so many years?

Geoff: Every Beatles fan knows every nuance of every one of those tracks, so I was a little uncomfortable for the first few weeks. Recording "Free As A Bird" and "Real Love" was a good experience, though. The weird thing was, when we all gathered at Paul's studio to do that, it was as though we'd only walked off the *Abbey Road* session four weeks earlier. Paul suggested that we think of it as though John had just gone off on holiday and left his vocal on a cassette for us, so that's how we dealt with his absence.

MD: Some people might say you were a bit hard on Ringo in your book.

Geoff: Well, it isn't a question of being hard. It's what I honestly remember happening on the sessions.

MD: Was he easy to work with?

Geoff: Yes. But there was never a lot of personal conversation. The Beatles were in the studio, and that was their domain. We were up the stairs in the control room. We couldn't get that close; it was like a "them and us" situation.

For more on the amazing career of Geoff Emerick, check out his book, *Here, There And Everywhere: My Life Recording The Music Of The Beatles* (Gotham Books, co-written with Howard Massey).



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Drum Paradise

Serving LA's Stars

by Mike Haid

The dictionary defines paradise as “A place where there is everything that a particular person needs for his or her interest.” For drummers, this definition certainly fits North Hollywood, California’s Drum Paradise. Long one of the LA area’s premier drum cartage, rental, restoration, and repair facilities, Drum Paradise now also builds and sells custom drums.



These racks display just a sampling of DP’s rental snare drums.

Drum Paradise was co-founded in the 1980s by top drum techs Jeff Chonis and Harry McCarthy. McCarthy sold his share in 1994 and relocated to Nashville, where he owns and operates the Drum Paradise affiliate office. In 2001, Chonis sold his interest in the LA operation to Lee Smith, another experienced LA drum tech and builder who was co-owner of a cartage service next door to DP.

Smith’s expertise in refurbishing and repairing drums strengthened Drum Paradise’s reputation for providing the finest in technical services to studio and touring drummers. Beyond that, his plan was to set DP apart by offering original, custom-crafted drums as rentals to the studios. For the first couple of years, he ran the cartage business and did the majority of the custom drum work himself. When that got to be too much, Smith recruited Chris Heuer.

Chris has been exploring the inner workings of drums for over twenty-six years. “When I was about eleven,” he recalls, “I took an interest in how drums were made and what makes them sound the way they do. I’d find old shells and experiment with different bearing edges to find out what type of sound they produced. It’s been a passion of mine for most of my life.”

“When I hired Chris,” says Lee Smith, “he was already proficient in most areas of custom drum work. After briefly working with me in a few basic areas, Chris was able to take over my job and do it as well as I ever did, if not better. He’s a major asset to the company.”

Lee Smith now focuses on running the business and dealing with his drum tech clients. “My main job,” he says, “is to work with the producer, the engi-

neer, and the artist to help capture the sound that they’re looking for, and to consistently match that sound throughout the session. Beyond the basic nuts and bolts of setting up the drum gear, tuning the kit, and having things placed exactly where the drummer likes it, you need to understand how to communicate with the people you’re working for, in order to gain their trust. That way you can offer advice when they’re unsure about what they’re looking for.”

Service With A Smile

Drum Paradise started as a cartage service, and that’s still a significant part of their business. “Harvey



Veteran drum tech and custom-drum builder Lee Smith owns Drum Paradise.

Mason was our first client,” says foreman/manager Mike Rose, “followed by Kenny Aronoff, JR Robinson, and Luis Conte. Before long, we had a strong clientele of first-call players. We now store gear for virtually every major player in town. Vinnie Colaiuta is currently our number-one client, followed closely by Luis. But we don’t just cater to the big guys. We’re here for everyone at every level. We’re just as dedicated to helping a new drummer who’s doing his or her first session as we are to making sure Vinnie or Ringo have everything they need for a major recording project.”

The quality, convenience, and affordability of digital recording has resulted in a gradual decline in session work over the past few years. First-call drummers who used to go out several times a week now may go out twice a month. Many of them do much of their recording work at home. This has reduced DP’s cartage business. To fill the void, the company offers other services to their clients, including rentals, repairs, refinishing, and rebuilding.

DP stocks a wide variety of vintage and modern rental kits, over 150 snare drums, and a huge selection of cymbals and hardware from all major manufacturers. “We have a ’60s Silver Sparkle Ludwig kit that’s a rental favorite,” says Mike Rose. “Its mahogany shells produce a warm, punchy sound that records well and sounds great live. Keller has come out with 3-ply mahogany shells to try to replicate that old Ludwig sound. Chris Heuer used some of those shells to make 12” and 14” toms to go with the 13” and 16” toms on the silver sparkle kit. We sent that complete kit out for a Vinnie Colaiuta session where they were looking for the old ‘Ringo sound.’ When we listened to the recording, it was amazing how uniform the drums sounded. After that, word spread fast about the kit. Since then, we’ve built bass drums for it, ranging from 20” to 26”.”

Rose adds, “When you rent from DP, you get everything you need to sit down and play, including a drumkit equipped with your choice of heads, cymbals, and hardware, as well as two different snare drums. We have an outstanding lineup of professional drum techs to service our clients, including Nick Amoroso, Paul Hurd, and Jarrett Borba. We also have a strong roster of part-time techs for when things get busy. We pride ourselves on dependable, quality service. That’s what



The Drum Paradise tech staff and some satisfied customers. From left: DP drum tech Paul Hurd, drumming greats Gregg Bissonette and Vinnie Colaiuta, DP owner Lee Smith, and DP drum tech Jarrett Borba. Seated at the kit is DP foreman/manager Mike Rose.



Chris Heuer runs DP’s drum customizing department.

keeps us in business.”

DP works closely with all the major manufacturers to keep up with the most current gear on the market. The DP staff has a wealth of knowledge to share with their clients, allowing them to recommend the most appropriate gear for any given situation.

Lee Smith recalls, “On the last System Of A Down record, the co-producer played me a song and said, ‘This is the snare drum sound I’m looking for.’ It sounded to me like a 5” or 5½” wood drum. After going through about twenty-five wood drums, we found the right one. It ended up being the only drum used on the *Mesmerize* and *Hypnotize* recordings.”

Making ‘Em Special

If DP can’t provide the perfect snare from their existing collection, there’s always the option of their unique, custom-made Hit Maker drums—like the solid-iron “Godzilla” drum, which weighs around 50 lbs. DP also offers smooth and hand-hammered brass snare drums, maple-ply drums, and solid-shell drums made from rare Lake Superior woods.

Lee Smith happily remarks, “Over the past several years, the trend in the studios



Kenny, Vinnie, and Ringo are a few of the drum stars who store their equipment at Drum Paradise.

has swung back to real, organic drum sounds, as opposed to samples or loops. The phrase I’ve heard most often is, ‘Bring me a snare drum with personality.’ Being able to supply the studios with our own high-quality custom drums has helped our business tremendously.”

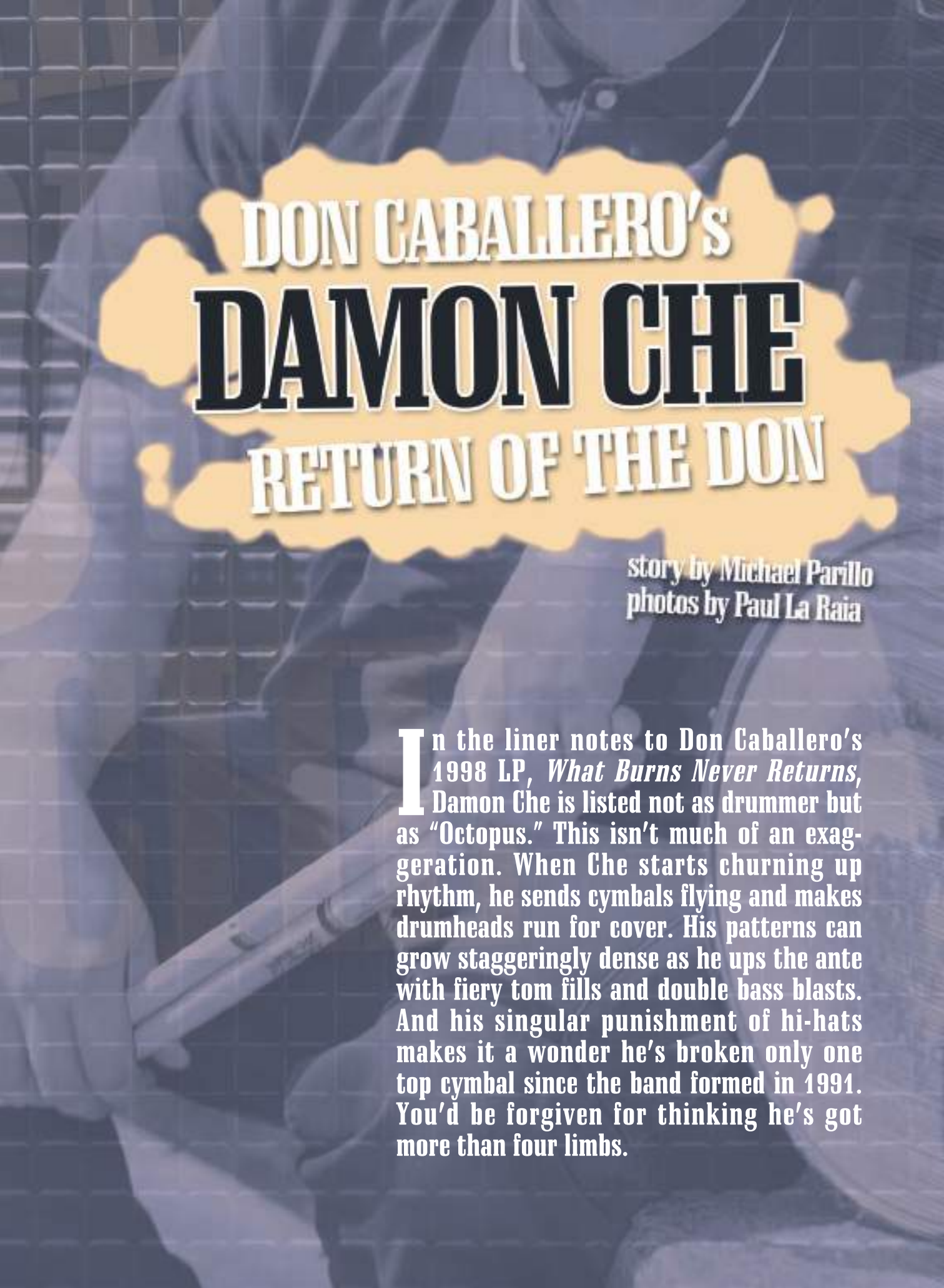
That’s a good thing, because the costs of running a business have escalated greatly over the past few years. It’s a constant challenge to keep the business growing. But Lee Smith knows what it’s like to be a drummer trying to make a living, so he understands the importance of a steady income with benefits. Accordingly, he’s one of the few in his business that offers his employees health insurance.

“I try to keep my employees happy,” Smith says. “They work hard. And most of the time they have no life because of the crazy scheduling and the last-minute requests we get from clients. On the other hand, they get to know and hang out with some of the best drummers in the world. If you’re an aspiring drummer, that can only be a plus for your career.”

For more information on Drum Paradise, go to www.drumparadise-la.com.







DON CABALLERO'S
DAMON CHE
RETURN OF THE DON

story by Michael Parillo
photos by Paul La Raia

In the liner notes to Don Caballero's 1998 LP, *What Burns Never Returns*, Damon Che is listed not as drummer but as "Octopus." This isn't much of an exaggeration. When Che starts churning up rhythm, he sends cymbals flying and makes drumheads run for cover. His patterns can grow staggeringly dense as he ups the ante with fiery tom fills and double bass blasts. And his singular punishment of hi-hats makes it a wonder he's broken only one top cymbal since the band formed in 1991. You'd be forgiven for thinking he's got more than four limbs.

Che is also something of a powder keg, ready to explode at any moment. In an age of Pro Tools perfection, he's utterly unafraid of taking things *way* over the top. As he says when complimented on a wild flam fill at the end of the title track on Don Cab's new *World Class Listening Problem*, "The engineer was thinking it was going too far, but that was the point." There's a freshness and an unpredictability to Che's embellishments, to the extent that it feels like he's making things up on the spot even when they've been worked out beforehand.

Che has been Don Caballero's sole original member for the band's last two releases, including 2000's *American Don*. The Pittsburgh-formed group disbanded temporarily in 2001, and Che made one record with Bellini before reforming Don Cab in 2003 with three brand-new collaborators. In an interesting twist, Che's current bandmates came from a fellow Pittsburgh group, Creta Bourzia, that listed Caballero as a primary influence. Che has also put out three albums as a vocalist/guitarist under the name The Speaking Canaries.

World Class Listening Problem marks both a return to

form and a step forward for Don Caballero, that dear old uncle of heavy indie prog. Fans will be greeted with a friendly punch in the face in the guise of dizzying guitar dissonance, puzzling time signatures, and Che's central progressive pummeling. But the addition of bassist Jason Jouver and guitarists Gene Doyle and Jeff Ellsworth has added some new wrinkles to the group sound, including more true metal crunch but also bright, chiming picking that occasionally parts the clouds of darkness.

Like his drumming, Che himself is sharp and intelligent without being warm and fuzzy. Over the course of a chat, he says many funny things but rarely laughs. (For more evidence of the Che brand of humor, see such track titles as "Let's Face It Pal, You Didn't Need That Eye Surgery" and "A Lot Of People Tell Me I Have A Fake British Accent.")

MD spoke with the drummer, who seems to favor the title percussionist—or, well, octopus—just prior to the release of *World Class Listening Problem* and the subsequent tour. According to Che, "I'm looking forward to the opportunity to blast our little brand of light down into some dingy and dark holes."



MD: How did you get into drumming?

Damon: I'm gonna have to give the credit to the rock band KISS. That got me out of being a sci-fi nerd and into caring about music. Then I got back into being a sci-fi nerd.

I started to gravitate toward percussion, but I didn't get a drumkit until I was like fourteen. I always had difficulty signing up for the school band. They'd say, "No drums. You want to play clarinet?"

MD: Did you study?

Damon: I was in the high school marching band, but I always got lousy grades. The band director could tell I wasn't reading music. I was just looking at the guy next to me and figuring out the part that way. So I got straight C's instead of the A I deserved. But maybe I didn't deserve it, for not learning to read music.

MD: Did marching band give you some technique?

Damon: It made me realize you can't be a wimp, because that sound doesn't carry very far outdoors. You've got to lay it on the line. It's not the same thing as playing in your bedroom.

MD: Who are some of your favorite drummers?

Damon: Stewart Copeland changed it for a lot of people. What was so interesting is that he had to learn to play drums by himself for the longest period of time, and I kind of mirrored that on a certain level. I didn't have a real band to get onstage with till I was about eighteen. And who could ever escape the greatness of Neil Peart? He's the godfather of extended progressive percussion.

Then there were underground guys that never quite broke the surface but were important to me. Mac McNeilly in The Jesus Lizard. Rey Washam in Scratch Acid, which was kind of a predecessor to that group. And Jim Kimball played in Laughing Hyenas and actually ended up in The Jesus Lizard for a round or two near the end. Inescapably great, inspirational percussion. You couldn't miss it if you were tuned in.

MD: Were you always interested in odd times?

Damon: No. Guitar players were more interested in them than I was. But after a while it's no longer a conscious intention. You end up writing something in five or seven just because it comes to you as sounding good.

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Damon Che

MD: Do you contribute to writing Don Caballero material?

Damon: I have a lot more to do with the writing than the average percussionist. But the other musicians have a great deal to do with it as well, of course.

MD: *World Class Listening Problem* is a great title. Does it refer to anything specific?

Damon: Kind of the state of world affairs, I dare say.

MD: As in people have a problem listening?

Damon: Apparently we all do. You would think that by now we would have mastered more of the things that are master-able. Listening might be the key starting point that gets neglected every time.

MD: Did you cut the record live?

Damon: Yeah, but let's be careful when we say live, because there were some overdubs. The record prior to the new one [*American Don*] was chopped up into a hundred million pieces and taped back together. It was a very studio-conscious record. But this one, pretty much once the sticks click you're in the fast lane. That's what's gonna get you to the good take.

MD: I thought I might have heard just a few drum overdubs.

Damon: You are absolutely one hundred percent mistaken. I would never do something like that. That would be my most immortal cardinal sin. That would be really screwing up the greatest recipe I ever invented.

MD: There are moments when the feel is kind of blurred and inexact. Are you just looking for the right energy without needing to be perfect?

Damon: Yeah, we have a lenience toward minor follies. It's kind of like the Olympic ice skater who falls but still gets a medal.

I don't think there were many on the last one—I have to be frank. There were two times where I determined I had made a folly and was asking the engineer if we could do anything to fix it up. He and everyone else in the band would refuse to agree that there was in fact a folly. When I make a mistake, nobody else wants to admit it.

MD: I don't even mean mistakes necessarily....

Damon: You mean it's more organic, not super-processed like a disco drum machine?

MD: Exactly.

Damon: Yeah, we've got the heavy metal in our blood. I don't want to accuse Alex Van Halen of making mistakes, but he had that

kind of raw feel where the fur would just start to fly. Especially live. In the studio you want to get a really great take for a record. But if you check out old Van Halen live bootlegs, he didn't stop on a dime every time. He really started to go haywire in some cases.

MD: Your feel often shifts subtly, like you pass from slightly swinging to more straight.

Damon: I know what you mean. It could be as simple as this: If there's a passage where I'm feeling inspired by a particular brand of a percussionist's work and he was a play-ahead-of-the-beat kind of guy, and then the next passage is inspired by a play-behind-the-beat guy, and the one after that is inspired by a play-right-on-the-beat guy, you might hear that and I'm not actually aware of it.

MD: Did you rehearse this record a lot before you went into the studio?

Damon: Yeah. We always do. You want to be crisp.

MD: I'm unsure about Don Cab's balance between composition and improvisation. Is there some improvisation happening?

Damon: Whenever you have one of those chaotic ends that just kind of peters into something not exactly...manageable [chuckles], at that point it's very improvisational.

MD: But are your parts generally orchestrated beforehand?

Damon: In the central body of most of the songs, yes. I think you can tell when I'm dilly-dallying and goofing off and when I'm committed to a regimen.

MD: It seems like I'm hearing specific guitar lines, but you have a lot of latitude for where you place everything.

Damon: That comes as a result of the instrumental nature, I'd guess. It's part of the business of making it exciting without the pentameter of a lyric. Just give it its own little Herb Alpert/Ventures kind of thing, some bell or whistle at various points to not let anyone get distracted by the fact that there aren't vocals taking place.

MD: Is it true that being an instrumental group was unintentional when the band was forming?

Damon: Yeah. The opportunities just started piling up, and we were like, "We're not a band yet." People were like, "Well, you'd better be," because this and this were on the agenda. We kind of ended up instrumental as a result of that.

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Damon Che

MD: Do you think your song titles are a way of getting a few words in?

Damon: Yeah. It's like having kids and then intentionally giving them the goofiest names you can think of. Maybe you want them to be so special and individual.

MD: Is titling largely your job?

Damon: I'm going to say yes. Some that were not mine have gotten past, and they're quite good. But the majority of them are mine.

MD: You're the only remaining original member of Don Caballero. Has it always more or less been your band?

Damon: I think of it as founder and director. It's definitely the members' band at any given time. It's never just mine. But I have a whole lot to do with managing it and getting it off the ground. I don't know if this is relevant enough to point out, but I've actually been the only founding member since March of 1999. People tend to miss that one because there were so many changes this time that they thought this was really something new, and it is. But technically I've always been the gunslinger.

MD: Do the new guys look to you more

because they were fans of yours?

Damon: That's probably accurate in a sense. But they've definitely matured into full-on colleagues in every way, shape, and form.

MD: Do you think their arrival pushed things in a heavier direction?

Damon: Most likely. It worked out perfectly. I think they did a great job of rounding out the whole spectrum of expression that we had established previously. It's better in a lot of ways than it's ever been, but I wouldn't take anything away from past accomplishments. It's like different seasons of your favorite comedy show—comedians come and go, but there's still a core there.

MD: Let's talk a bit about drumming. Did you start playing double bass early on?

Damon: Yes. I abandoned it for the first two Don Cab records, but then I decided to bring it back.

MD: Do you prefer a double pedal over two basses?

Damon: If I had a huge truck and road crew, I might go to two bass drums. But when you're in a van, space counts.

MD: Do you have a philosophy behind

when you choose to go to double bass in a given piece?

Damon: It's about the possibilities of more textures in the overall rhythm soup. It's a way to put another little kink into something that you wouldn't have been able to do otherwise, to really fill it up. Sounding like more than one percussionist is always something I've been complimented on.

There's a Sonny Sharrock record called *Seize The Rainbow*. It's a pretty good record. Somebody said, "Man, I really like your drumming. It reminds me so much of the drummer on that *Seize The Rainbow* album." And there are *two* drummers on that album. I knew I was on to something when I started hearing things like that.

MD: On all of your recordings, your hi-hats sound fantastic. Is it the same pair throughout?

Damon: I've had the same bottom hi-hat, a Sabian Rock hat, I think they were called, since 1987, but the top one cracked somewhere in the mid-'90s. The top one now is a Zildjian New Beat. It's a little bit lighter than the old one, but it still works out well.

MD: Do you practice much?

Damon: I don't want to get into that Buddy Rich snobbery thing, but there's gotta be other musicians in the room or you're not going to find me much behind a drumkit. Playing all by myself is like, you know, having sex by yourself.

Before we went into the studio, I think there was a week where I went down for about forty minutes and paddled around to make sure I was really on my toes for the session. But it doesn't give me any pleasure to try to make things happen unless I'm with other musicians.

MD: When you're on the road, do you warm up before gigs?

Damon: No. In fact, you have such thick calluses on the grip sections of your fingers by that point in the tour that you're just a machine.

MD: Will you do another album as Speaking Canaries [Che's critically acclaimed side project, in which he plays guitar]?

Damon: We have one almost finished. I don't know if I'm going to call it Speaking Canaries, though.

MD: But you're playing guitar and singing on it?

Damon: Yeah.

MD: Has your guitar playing run parallel to

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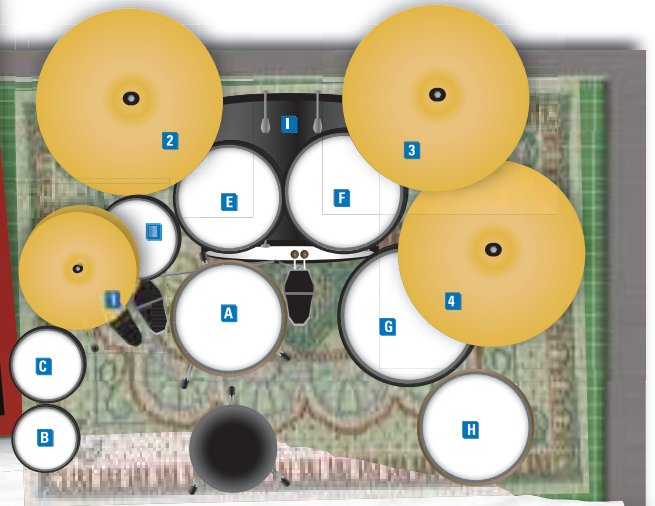
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Damon Che



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your drumming throughout your development?

Damon: No. It is in every sense of the word my second instrument. I have to fight for every ounce of success I get as a guitarist, whereas the drumming does come quite naturally.

MD: Are you working on any other projects?

Damon: I'd like to do an all-analog synthesizer thing. I still haven't heard anybody do it where they actually manage to be in tune with the other musicians. And a stereophon-

ic aspect to it would be nice. Heavy music in general in the last fifteen years got really mono. I don't want to be a retro '80s guy, but it seems like there were more stereosounding things going on with those old Kraftwerk records and the like. It might be nice to revisit something like that just for fun.

MD: Any final thoughts?

Damon: As a percussionist who's in the position where other percussionists are going to read what I say, I would like to emphasize the real potential you have when

you don't end up in a situation where you lost an arm in a horrible accident like Rick Allen from Def Leppard. You should probably do a little bit more to *sound* like you didn't lose an arm in a horrible accident. Because I hear a lot of that. I'm clearly biased, but it is a fun suggestion to make.

MD: I assume that you're not only referring to....

Damon: Complexity? Absolutely not. It can be very stark, very simple, but yet very beautiful. It's not all about complexity.



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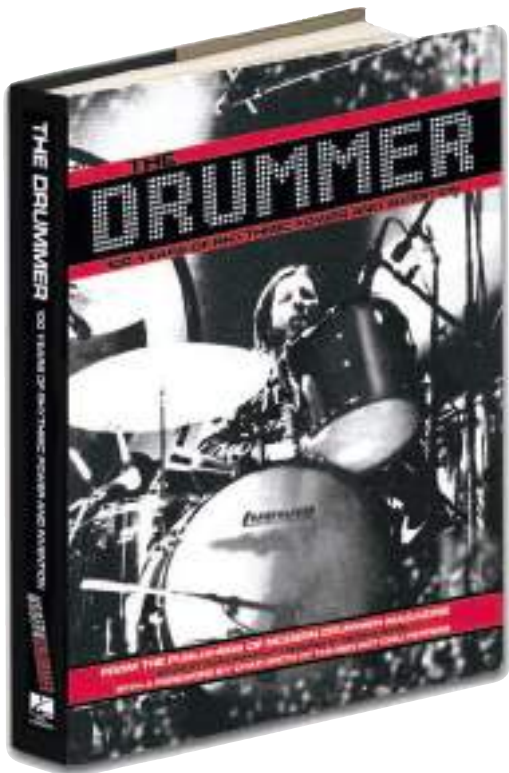
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Filling In At The Last Minute

by Chris Lee

You're sitting at home with no plans for the evening, when suddenly you get a frantic phone call from another musician. His band is playing a gig in two hours, and their regular drummer can't make it. Is there any way you can fill in?

This opportunity can arise for any drummer who has talent and a reputation for being professional. But filling in at the last minute is definitely not for the faint of heart. Playing in front of an audience is stressful enough, but playing unfamiliar material with unfamiliar musicians in front of an audience takes nerves of steel.

In some bands, the drummer is virtually irreplaceable. But if the people calling you are open to having an eleventh-hour substitute, then the gig is probably do-able. Keeping your head and following a few proven strategies can help ensure that all will go well, and that your reputation will be enhanced.

Playing in front of an audience is stressful enough, but playing unfamiliar material with unfamiliar musicians in front of an audience takes nerves of steel.

Know Before You Go

Aside from the obvious "where and when" details, the first thing you need to know is whether you need to bring your own kit or will be using the regular drummer's gear. If it's a one-off gig, you'll likely be using your own. If, however, you're covering a drummer on a steady gig, you may be able to use his or her kit.

In the latter situation, you should still bring whatever you'll need in order to be comfortable and play your best. This might be your own snare drum, cymbals, bass drum pedal, or stool. No drummer is likely to object to your swapping out items like those.

On the other hand, the regular drummer might very *well* object to your coming in and completely repositioning all the drums and cymbals on his or her kit. (Wouldn't you?) If the amount of time prior to your substitution permits it, try to contact the regular drummer to ask about repositioning options. If not, try to deal with the kit as it is. If you absolutely *must* adjust something, after the gig do your best to put the item back to where it was. Leave a note for the regular drummer explaining what you did, so he or she won't return to the gig and encounter nasty surprises.

Check Things Out

If the gig involves sheet music or charts, one quick glance can tell you what the music entails, and whether your sight-reading skills are up to the challenge. If, however, this is the type of gig where everyone plays by ear, you need to find out who in the band is most familiar with how to count off each song. (I'm willing to bet it will be the bass player.) That's the person you'll need to stay in visual contact with throughout the evening. A subtle tapping of the foot or nod of the head from that person can be a valuable time reference when you're playing new material.

I further suggest that this knowledgeable person be the one to actually count off each song (especially if that chore is normally handled by the drummer you're replacing). If the task is assigned to someone who doesn't understand how to count a song in, or has never done it before, then you're asking for trouble.

It's also a good idea to ask for a longer count-off than usual: six beats instead of three, or eight beats instead of four. If you have the luxury of a

soundcheck, ask that the band play a little of each song. Even though this isn't as helpful as a full rehearsal, knowing how each song is supposed to begin is certainly better than nothing.

Right From The Start

On most gigs, the first song sets the tone for the entire evening. Don't panic if things don't go well. Most audiences are accustomed to seeing a band make some minor adjustments after the first song—especially if there's a substitute musician. If there's a problem with the mix or with your setup, voice your concern immediately, make the adjustments, and then move on.

If you get lucky and the first song goes extremely well, don't become overconfident and begin to showboat. After all, that's only one song. There's still plenty of music to be played.

The temptation to showboat can be particularly strong if you've seen and heard this band several times, and you think you know every song in their repertoire by heart. Remember, even if you're familiar with how this band plays, they're not used to *you*. If you begin overplaying, it might distract the other bandmembers, which can lead to them making mistakes. My philosophy is that it's best to err on the side of caution, and to concentrate on merely giving each song what it needs. And if you're

familiar with how the regular drummer plays, try to stick with what the band is accustomed to.

Listen To The Band

There's a good chance that during a break—or even during a song—another bandmember might offer a quick suggestion. If this happens, don't assume that you were doing something incorrectly, and don't get offended. Most likely, that musician is just trying to get the same drum sound that the band is used to hearing. For example, I prefer to play time on a ride cymbal as opposed to my hi-hats. However, I realize that many drummers are exactly the opposite. So I've never been offended if someone asks me to play the hi-hats instead of the ride.

Don't Burn Bridges

When the gig is over, thank the band for the opportunity to play with them, offer to help with the breakdown and load-out, and then graciously make your exit. Leave the other musicians with a positive impression of your musical skills and your overall professionalism. There's a long history of substitute drummers who found high-paying gigs because they proved that they could keep a cool head in an unfamiliar playing situation.

7 STEPS TO SIT-IN SUCCESS

1. If you're not using your own kit, bring what you need to be comfortable: snare, cymbals, pedal, throne, etc.
2. Scan any charts before the gig.
3. Determine who will count off the tunes.
4. Don't panic if things go wrong.
5. Don't showboat if things go well.
6. Be flexible and willing to take suggestions.
7. Be professional and leave a good impression.



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RECORDINGS

Ratings Scale



IGNACIO BERROA CODES

On his long overdue debut as leader, **IGNACIO BERROA** delivers a drumming tour de force. Though he's often praised for being one of the rare authentic masters of Afro-Cuban and straight-ahead jazz styles, Berroa's real brilliance is not about switching hats. It's about the soul of one style richly informing the other. Berroa's strong concept and groove-morphing magic make him a true leader here, shaping all aspects of the music. Having served as sideman to the masters for decades, Berroa's had this beauty of a disc incubating for a long time. The payoff is huge. (Blue Note) **Jeff Potter**



YEAH YEAH YEAHS SHOW YOUR BONES



Since The Yeah Yeah Yeahs emerged from Brooklyn's neo no-wave scene, the buzz has focused on the unique sex appeal and piercing voice of Karen O., trickling down to guitarist Nick Zimmer's hair and their controversial videos. Little has been said of the normal-looking fellow keeping time, **BRIAN CHASE**. Listen beyond the buzz and you'll hear a drummer with a quietly complex style that suits the band's idiosyncratic rhythms and melodies. The songs are more streamlined on this decidedly tamer sophomore album. Chase's playing, however, remains tastefully adventurous, most notably on the 6/4 sludge of "Fancy," where his tom-toms receive a sound pummeling. His swampy, simple groove in "Gold Lion" and the robotic pulse he gives "Phenomena" also make for standout performances. (Interscope) **Patrick Berkery**



COOL MUSIC OUT NOW!

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LOUD

Rob Zombie Educated Horses (Geffen) /// **From First To Last** Heroine (Epitaph) /// **Killing Joke** Hosannas From The Basements Of Hell (Cooking Vinyl) /// **Cinemechanica** The Martial Arts (Hello Sir)

OUT ROCK

Oxbow Love That's Last (Hydra Head) /// **Maps & Atlases** Tree, Swallows, Houses (www.mapsandatlas.net) /// **National Eye** Roomful Of Lions (www.parkthevan.com)

SIGNIFICANT REISSUES



ZZ TOP, SANTANA

ZZ Top's first two albums, *Tres Hombres* and *Fandango* (Warner/Rhino), feature hits like "La Grange" and "Tush" and prove that long before they were MTV icons, the Texas trio was a kick-ass blues band. As always, drummer **FRANK BEARD** is Texas tough and subliminally clever. Three live tracks per album are interesting, but non-essential. More exciting is the bonus disc to *Santana III* (Sony/Legacy), titled *Live At The Fillmore West—July 4, 1971*. Playing at the height of drummer **MICHAEL SHRIEVE**'s reign, the band boils on the still progressive "Incident At Neshabur," the rock hypnosis of Joe Zawinul's "In A Silent Way," and the freak-out street jamming of "Savor." **Ken Micallef**

JOHN COLTRANE LIVE AT THE HALF NOTE/ONE DOWN, ONE UP

★★★★★



This long rumored to exist 1965 recording features one of John Coltrane's most heralded solos in the title track. At 27:40, "One Down, One Up" has a flow that recalls *Live At Birdland*, yet with more control and less bombast, and vastly better sonics. At one point, Coltrane and **ELVIN JONES** dive into a duet for a full fifteen minutes until Elvin's pedal breaks—which doesn't deprive the music, only alters its colors. A must-have recording. (Impulse!) **Ken Micallef**

KERRY POLITZER QUARTET LABYRINTH

★★★★★

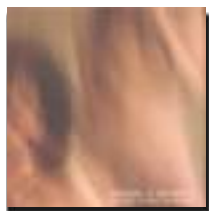


Pianist Kerry Politzer offers a set of elegant modern jazz on *Labyrinth*, showing much promise on ten original compositions. A little Dave Brubeck, a little McCoy Tyner, her material provides a rhythmic challenge for drummer **GEORGE COLLIGAN**, who is up to task. Colligan plays phrases, punctuates well, and has good dynamic control on the tangy blues-infused bossa "Paloma," and he's propulsive and responsive on "Falling Through The Cracks," not just reciting licks. Throughout, Colligan makes musical use of his toms and is very dynamic with cymbals. And the whole band listens well, which helps make this one work. (Polisonic) **Robin Tolleson**

SWEARING AT MOTORISTS

LAST NIGHT BECOMES THIS MORNING

★★★★★



This new set from the drums/guitar duo Swearing At Motorists plays like an indie rock answer to Jackson Browne's highway journal *Running On Empty*. Recorded in venues, subway stops, and studios, it's a collection of acoustic songs showcasing **Dave Doughman's** sleepy voice and skuzzy rockers, on which drummer **JOSEPH SIWINSKI** has ample room to fill around the stingy melodic content. And though the words carry more weight than the music sometimes, Siwinski gets his licks in, especially on "Still Life With Bottle Rockets," where he approximates Keith Moon fills and does a charmingly sloppy Steve Gadd impersonation. (Secretly Canadian) **Patrick Berkey**

JUNIOR BROWN

LIVE AT THE CONTINENTAL CLUB: THE AUSTIN EXPERIENCE

★★★★★



Junior Brown might be best known these days as the narrator of 2005's *Dukes Of Hazzard* movie. But the Austin resident proves he still wields a mighty double-necked lap steel/six-string combo (aka the "guit-steel") with this live effort, tracked in April 2005. Through Brown's country-fried interpretations of Hawaiian, Western swing, Tex-Mex, blues, and surf, drummer **PETE AMARAL** uses the minimum to propel the band—just snare and cymbals, striking the latter only sparingly. Amaral teaches a valuable lesson: Stay within yourself and let the guitar player do his *thang*. (Telarc) **Will Romano**

TAKING BACK SUNDAY LOUDER NOW

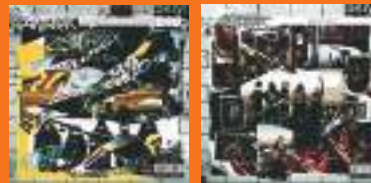
★★★★★



Having gained remarkable success as an indie act, Long Island's Taking Back Sunday is poised to become emo-rock's frontrunners with its major-label debut, *Louder Now*. A superb collection of hard-driving, largely melodic cuts, *Louder Now* features the masterful stick work of **MARK O'CONNELL**, who has never sounded better. O'Connell effortlessly pumps snare rudiments on the intro of "Error Operator" and comes out of the gates hammering infallibly solid phrases on album opener "What's It Feel Like To Be A Ghost?" Featuring an immaculate production courtesy of Eric Valentine, *Louder Now* should be just that: turned up louder. (Wamer Bros.) **Waleed Rashidi**

BRINGING THA NOIZE

ANTHRAX ANTHROLOGY: NO HIT WONDERS (1985-91), ALIVE 2 (2005)



On *No Hit Wonders* (Island), the masters of thrash metal return with thirty remastered classics featuring the relentless drumming of **CHARLIE BENANTE**. The drumming is over-the-top, as Benante devours his double bass drums with blazing intensity and tempos. *Alive 2* (Sanctuary), taken from their 2005 tour, proves the band can still push the thrash envelope, as they perform many of the same classic tracks found on the *Anthology* set, including several cuts from their highly acclaimed 1987 album, *Among The Living*. A DVD companion to *Alive 2* is available, as is a DVD collection of many of the *No Hit Wonders* videos. **Mike Haid**

MY LATEST OBSESSION



THE CHICAGO UNDERGROUND DUO'S CHAD TAYLOR ON THE CLAUDIA QUINTET'S SEMI-FORMAL

Chad Taylor of The Chicago Underground Duo (their latest: *In Praise Of Shadows*) tells *MD* he's recently been digging *Semi-Formal* by The Claudia Quintet, a band led by drummer/composer John Hollenbeck. "I think drummers are some of the better composers out there," Taylor shares, "and John Hollenbeck is one of the best. You could think of *Semi-Formal* as a jazz record, but the group makes its own music. Drum 'n' bass, post-rock...it's all in there, and it's done in an organic way. John composed the music and plays drums, percussion, keyboards...and 'fan.' I wouldn't be able to tell you what that means or what tune he plays fan on. [laughs] I think the only one who could answer that would be John." **Michael Parillo**

MULTI-MEDIA

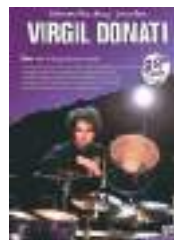
FUNK DRUMMING: INNOVATIVE GROOVES & ADVANCED CONCEPTS BY MIKE CLARK

BOOK/CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED \$19.95



Known as one of the most sampled drummers in hip-hop, and the funky S.O.B. who played on Herbie Hancock's "Actual Proof," Mike Clark boasts a résumé that includes stints with such notable and diverse artists as Tony Bennett, Bootsy Collins, and Albert King. Clark has condensed his varied experience into a 50-page book that gives readers plenty of mutated funk grooves to practice, from Latin, swing, and Elvin Jones-esque triplet feels, to Clark's own idiosyncratic creations with Hancock's Headhunters, and beyond. Many of these grooves are difficult to master, others just downright ugly. But maybe that's the point: When done right, funk is supposed to be dirty. (Hal Leonard) **Will Romano**

VIRGIL DONATI ULTIMATE PLAY-ALONG BOOK/CD LEVEL: ADVANCED \$24.95



Want to play like Virgil Donati? Here's your chance to try. This affordable package features eight brain-draining, nicely transcribed charts from Virgil's *On The Virg* album, as well as some of his group Planet X's recordings. The high-quality play-along CDs offer complete songs with drums, plus several slowed-down versions with and without drums. Certain ultra-complex sections are transcribed separately, slowed down, and looped without drums, so you can gradually, painstakingly learn Virgil's parts. In the book, Virgil offers suggestions, simplified play-along charts, and practice exercises to help in your struggle. May the force be with you! (Alfred) **Mike Haid**



DRUMMING AND ALL THAT JAZZ BY JOEL ROTHMAN

BOOK LEVEL: ALL \$14.95



A man with some 70 books published on drumming, Joel Rothman has devised a logical and fun angle on *Drumming And All That Jazz*, focusing on specific, integral aspects of jazz drumming. Rothman starts with increasingly syncopated snare patterns atop a repetitive ride cymbal pattern. Once through a section, he suggests substituting the hi-hat or bass drum for the snare parts. Then he advises playing four bars of ad-lib jazz time between written solos, to emphasize the getting-in and getting-out parts of it. Rothman follows the same pattern with three-way coordination between cymbal, snare, and bass drum, as well as four-way coordination adding the hi-hat. Elsewhere he shines light on "inside" jazz tricks like playing three against four, fills, cymbal variations with snare as an integral part, and some hip mambo and paila-style beats in 3/4, 5/4, and 7/4. (www.dumontmusic.com) **Robin Tolleason**

TAKING THE REINS

BILLY MARTIN & GRANT CALVIN WESTON LIVE AT HOUSTON HALL 2002

Medeski Martin & Wood drummer Billy Martin releases yet another solo project, this time a lively improvised set of drum and percussion duets with his old friend Grant Calvin Weston, recorded in front of an enthusiastic audience in Philadelphia. The groove's the thing with Martin, and his trademark cowbells, cymbal chokes, and very deep pocket are a nice contrast to the audibly yelping Weston's more manic sensibility. Whether it's slow, laid-back funk or uptempo sambas, the disc has the vibe of two guys jamming down in the basement, the audience lucky to be there. Inspired, heady, urban stuff. (www.amuletrecords.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

BENNY GREB GREBFRUIT

Multi-taskers out there need to check out drummer/vocalist Benny Greb. On *Grebfruit* he delivers a one-man tour de force, arranging complete songs for multi-tracked vocalese parts and drums. Imagine what Stanton Moore would be doing if he sang like Bobby McFerrin. (www.bennygreb.de) **Robin Tolleason**



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From Across The Pond New Gear At The Frankfurt Musikmesse

Every spring, Frankfurt, Germany plays host to the world's music industry at the annual Musikmesse trade fair. This year's event was held March 29 through April 1.

Whereas most American manufacturers debuted their new products at the January NAMM show in Anaheim, California, sev-

eral had some surprises to display at Europe's most important music show. There are also several European manufacturers who only exhibit at Frankfurt. Here's a look at what we found new and interesting at the 2006 Frankfurt Musikmesse.

story and photos by **Dennis Boxem**

AYOTTE now does graphics on their drums. Among the drums displayed at the show was this maple wood-hoop snare drum with airbrushed flames. www.ayottedrums.com



Frankfurt saw the emergence of yet two more Turkish cymbal companies. AGEAN is owned by one of the previous owners of the Masterwork company. AMEDIA is owned by former employees of the Istanbul Mehmet company. Both factories are based in the outskirts of Istanbul. www.ageancymbals.com, www.amediacymbals.com



LUDWIG officially unveiled its titanium Supraphonic snare drum, nicknamed The Chief. It features a special keystone badge with a portrait of Bill Ludwig II. The titanium shell is made by Canadian drum builder Ronn Dunnett. Also fresh from the factory came the first of a limited run of John Bonham stainless-steel drumkits. The kit is an exact copy of the drumset Bonzo used on his last ever show in 1980. Only 100 sets will be made.
www.ludwig-drums.com



BCP is a German boutique brand that's not afraid to try something different. This kit had an imitation snakeskin covering, complete with scales. Apparently, this is one of their more modest finishes.

www.bcp-drums.de



TAYE has also forayed into custom graphics. This black kit covered in skulls was one of the eye-catchers at the booth.

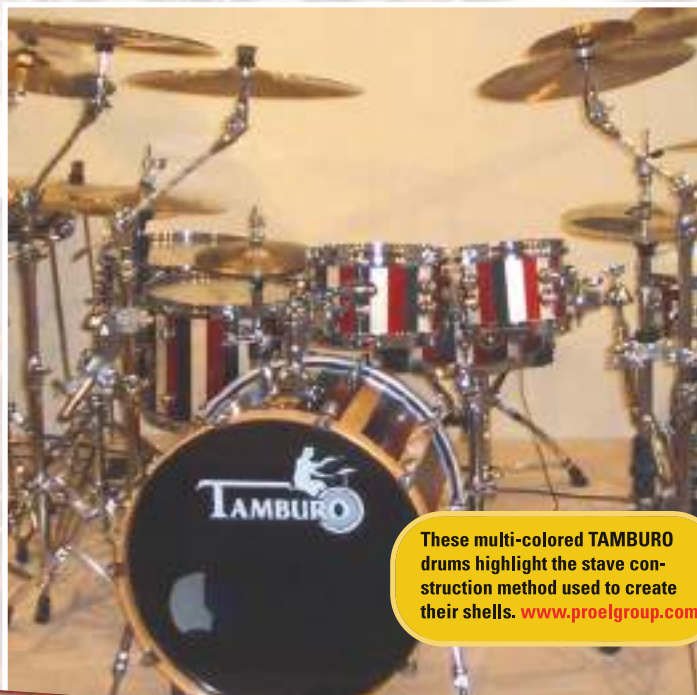
www.tayedrums.com

BLACK PANTHER displayed a metal snare drum with tribal graphics on the shell. The graphics are etched using corrosive acid. www.blackpanthersnares.com





MAPEX is doing a limited-edition run of extreme rock drumsets in their Saturn series. The sets feature 20x24 bass drums, 14" rack toms, 16" and 18" floor toms, and 7x14 snare drums. Two special sparkle finishes are available: the blue shown here, and Root Beer Red. The sparkles aren't finished with a high-gloss lacquer. Instead, they're left bare so as to form a rough matte finish that's still rather classy. www.mapexdrums.com



These multi-colored TAMBURO drums highlight the stave construction method used to create their shells. www.proelgroup.com



War and peace? MEINL now offers cajons in camouflage or flower finish. www.meinlpercussion.com



Brazilian drumbuilders ODERY have taken segment-shell production to a new level with a complete drumkit. All shells and hoops are constructed by gluing together little blocks of wood. Also new is a lower-priced drumkit called Privilege. www.odery.com



PEARL had Chad Smith's new drumkit on display. It's a Masters series kit with a very special illuminated covering. Every drum was rigged to an electronic timing device so the drums would blink on and off independently from each other. www.pearldrums.com



PREMIER has divided its Cabria series into three lines. Cabria PK is the least expensive of the three, and it comes as a set complete with cymbals. Cabria APK and Cabria XPK (shown here) are slightly more expensive, and they offer more sizes, nicer finishes, and better hardware.

www.premier-percussion.com



SCHARTE INNOVATIONS is a German company that has only been in business for a couple of months. They produce some interesting percussion sounds by cutting cheap brass cymbals in five distinctive shapes.

www.scharte-innovation.de



STAGG's design team has come up with a small percussion instrument that combines sound with a little bit of fun. These "helping hands" produce a clapping sound when you wave them about. They're available in different colors. www.staggmusic.com



TAMA introduced the European version of the updated Starclassic Performer. Shell construction differs slightly from the American version. www.tama.com



1968 Slingerland Black Sparkle Kit

by Harry Cangany

Slingerland had some great proprietary drum finishes over the years. In 1968, they retired the finish we feature in this month's article. Although Slingerland called it **Black Sparkle**, it was actually a black plastic wrap with hundreds of purple sparkles.

Our featured kit also boasts the inaugural version of the Set-O-Matic tom mount, which was Slingerland's first modern tom holder with a ball & socket design. For the better part of thirty years, Slingerland had used the Walberg & Auge rail consolette and diamond plate (as did many other companies). But in 1968, with Buddy Rich as their headline endorser, Slingerland introduced the Set-O-Matic. In that year, the bass and tom brackets and the tom arms were made of aluminum. By the next year, they were chrome.

The pictured kit was known as the Modern Jazz Outfit. The set came with a 14x20 bass drum, an 8x12 rack tom,

and a 14x14 floor tom. The snare drum is missing here, but it would have been the 5x14 Gene Krupa Sound King, which was a very popular chrome-over-brass eight- or ten-lug model. The 3-ply shells feature African mahogany inner and outer plies, with poplar in between. The interiors are painted in a tan color. Earlier Slingerlands were unfinished mahogany; the subsequent generation had clearcoat over maple.

One of the regular complaints about 1960s Slingerland drums is their propensity for threads to strip in the spur, tom leg, and cymbal-mount castings. On the floor tom shown here, the wingscrews for the tom leg brackets have been changed from the originals to a more modern version. The legs themselves are a modern bent design.

The set also features a small mystery: It has a double tom holder, all in chrome. As I said earlier, the Set-O-Matic tom holders introduced in 1968 were made of aluminum. Also, there is no drumkit in the 1968 Slingerland catalog that features 12" and 13" rack toms with a 20" bass drum and a 14" floor tom. Of course, the double-tom mount could have been added later—perhaps when someone added a 13" tom. As a matter of fact, I'm not sure if I've ever seen an aluminum Set-O-Matic *double* tom holder. Anyone have one?

I really like the finish on this kit. The color is vibrant. There were other finishes on the market in the '60s with gold or silver sparkles on a black background. Ludwig had Galaxy, and Gretsch had Diamond Sparkle. But only Slingerland had this Black Sparkle that was actually purple. (They later reintroduced the name to describe a different finish.)

I'd value these drums at about \$850. Thanks to Ryan Payne for finding this set and bringing it to my attention.

Harry Cangany is a recognized authority on vintage drums and their history. He is the author of The Great American Drums And The Companies That Made Them, 1920-1969 (Modern Drummer Publications), and he's the owner of The Drum Center Of Indianapolis, a drum shop that specializes in vintage drums.



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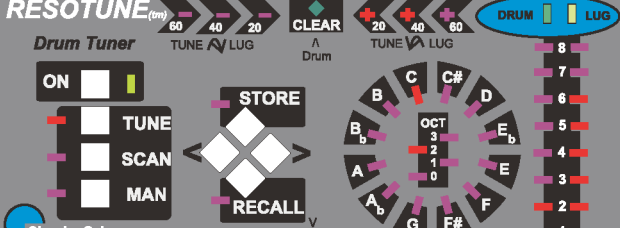
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Liz Holland

Buffalo's Brightest Basher



Twenty-seven-year-old Liz Holland is a classically trained percussionist who's not afraid to break a sweat. Her powerful and technical kit work can be heard on a variety of cutting-edge projects. Last year, Liz toured throughout the nation in support of alt-rockers The Raven Society's 2005 release, *Open Letters To No One*. And keep your eyes open for a new disc and subsequent tour from Momentov, an electronic/experimental duo featuring Liz with The Raven Society's bassist, Veronica Alvarez.

In addition to her drumset accolades, Liz gave the Buffalo-area premier of Nebojsa Zivkovic's cutting-edge marimba solo, "Uneven Souls," in 1999. She was also chosen to lead the quint section of the 1994 World University Games marching band.

Liz maintains a small roster of students, and is frequently sought after for local recordings and orchestral settings.

Hometown: Buffalo, New York

Education: University Of Buffalo

Tools: Liz endorses Pintech electronics and Istanbul Agop cymbals. She also uses Ludwig drums, Zildjian and Wuhan cymbals, Vic Firth sticks, SKB cases, and a Shaloch doumbek.

Influences: Buddy Rich, Danny Carey, Nebojsa Zivkovic

More info: www.girlthatdrums.com

Mike Bennett

On The Fast Track

Mike Bennett is a versatile drummer who's building a reputation as one of LA's finest young drummer/percussionists. This twenty-three-year-old has been recognized by *Downbeat* magazine as a "rising young star," and *Los Angeles Jazz Scene* magazine stated that his "perfectly accented and dynamic drumming makes him a standout."

Mike began playing drums at the age of eight and was playing professionally by fourteen. Some of the drummers and percussionists who've helped him along the way include Dave Weckl, Ron Powell, Jimmy Branly, Dave Tull, Erik Lekrone, Matt Johnson, Russ Miller, and Joe Ferraro.

Mike has performed with a wide range of top artists and producers. A short list includes bassists Max Bennett (LA Express, Steely Dan) and Tony Franklin (The Firm, Blue Murder), percussionists Ron Powell (Madonna, Kenny G) and Luis Conte (James Taylor, Phil Collins), and producers Chris DeStefano (Aaron Carter) and Alex G (N'Sync). Mike was also a featured performer at the 2005 Emmy Awards.

In addition to his work in various clubs and studios throughout Hollywood, Mike can also be



heard on a new drum sample library from the Roland Corporation, and he's an active teacher and clinician.

Hometown: Rancho Cucamonga, California

Education: University Of La Verne

Tools: Mike endorses Taye drums, Sabian cymbals, Pro-Mark drumsticks, Attack drumheads, Axis pedals, Rhythm Tech percussion, S-Hoop rims, and Kotz Tone cajones.

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Jan T. Johannessen

Norwegian Veteran Making Progress

Jan T. Johannessen's band, Magic Pie, recently topped the prog-rock Web site Sea Of Tranquility's online poll for "Album Of The Year" for their 2005 release *Motions Of Desire*. This award put the independent Norwegian group ahead of many major-label rock acts, including Porcupine Tree, Dream Theater, and heavy metal pioneers Deep Purple. The band was also awarded "Prog Artist Of The Year" by the Norwegian magazine *Tarkus*. This past April, Magic Pie brought their award-winning sound to the US, as part of the third annual progressive rock festival *Rites Of Spring*, held in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania.

Having spent thirty-five years behind the kit, Johannessen brings a lifetime of experience to his band's classic-meets-modern rock sound. The veteran drummer even penned the music and lyrics to *Motions Of Desire's* closing track, "Dream Vision." Commenting on his experience in Magic Pie, Jan states, "I've been focusing on getting to a higher level to meet the requirements of our music." He



continues, "I'm not a youngster anymore, but I'm a serious drum addict. And as I see it, music has no age limit."

Hometown: Moss, Norway

Tools: Pearl drums, a Ludwig snare, Asian Sound, Paiste, Sabian, Wuhan, and Zildjian cymbals, Remo drumheads, Vic Firth sticks and headphones, and a Roland TD8-KV electronic drumkit

Influence: Buddy Rich, Ian Paice, Ginger Baker, Terry Bozzio, and Mike Portnoy

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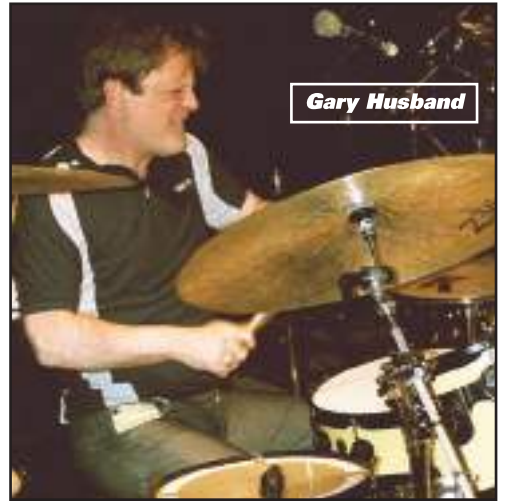
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2006 Cape Breton Drum Festival



Billy Cobham and Hossam Ramzy



Gary Husband

The sixth annual Cape Breton International Drum Fest was held this past April 29–30 in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. A wide variety of drummers and percussionists were welcomed by a large and enthusiastic audience.

Saturday's show opened with Canadian touring and recording drummer **Dale Anne Brendon**. She was followed by Egyptian percussion star **Hossam Ramzy**. After soloing on an Egyptian tabla, Ramzy demonstrated how different Egyptian rhythms could be translated to the drumkit. Next, the Otarion Showcase featured drummers from the Cape Breton region, including **Dustin Brown, Daniel Tweedie, Mark Marshall, and Nathan Petitpas**.

Berklee College professors **Sergio Bellotti** and **Skip Hadden** combined their drumming talents, then spoke about different ways to stretch time. Then Styx's **Todd Sucherman** played to Jerry Goodman and Styx tunes, leading into a blistering solo. Later, Sucherman drew a standing ovation when he closed with the Styx classic "Renegade."

Jazz great **Paul Wertico** explored the full palette of the kit, using brushes, his hands, and sticks. Paul noted that drumming is a case of moving from point A to point B, and that how you get there is simply down to how you feel.

Billy Cobham started with a lengthy and tasty solo. Later, he stressed that music is a communal—not competitive—

language, with all parts functioning together. Cobham then played to tracks before taking questions—one of which came from Hossam Ramzy. This led to the pair playing together, to the delight of the crowd. Following Billy's performance, he was presented with the Cape Breton Festival's Legend Award by festival organizers Bruce and Gloria Jean Aitken.

Sunday started with a "Breakfast With **Bernard Purdie**" masterclass. Purdie was later honored with the Legend Award. Visibly moved, Purdie was, for once, almost at a loss for words.

Sunday's first festival act, **Squid**, featured three drummers and a bagpiper from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Next, Canadian drummer **Paul DeLong** played to a track before launching into an excellent solo. DeLong has worked with a variety of Canadian artists, as well as on theater productions from *Rent* to *Tommy*.

Sunday's Otarion Showcase featured **Brendan Peters, Ron Leadbeater**, and The Heart Beats: **Sara Beth Harrison, Amanda Greaves, Josey Lovett, Rosi Smith, Hannah Buhariwalla, and Amber Buchanan**. Next, festival host **Bruce Aitken** played to the haka, a rhythm from his New Zealand homeland, followed by tunes on which he was joined by Hossam Ramzy and **Lenny Castro**.

Denny Seiwell opened by playing Paul McCartney's "Live And Let Die," as he had done on the original recording over

thirty years ago. Denny joked that he got work in his early days simply because Bernard Purdie was so busy. After playing to movie and TV music that he had recorded, Seiwell finished with McCartney's "Too Many People."

Lenny Castro started on a huge shekere before moving on to other Latin percussion instruments and eventually a drumkit. After talking about albums he had played on over the years, Lenny demonstrated hand-percussion techniques, explained how to avoid hand pain, and discussed how he always challenged himself to improve and be different.

British drum great **Gary Husband** described his influences, going back to Billy Cobham's work in the 1970s. Husband, who is also a pianist, encouraged drummers to take up a second instrument. Gary then performed a dynamic solo dedicated to Cobham.

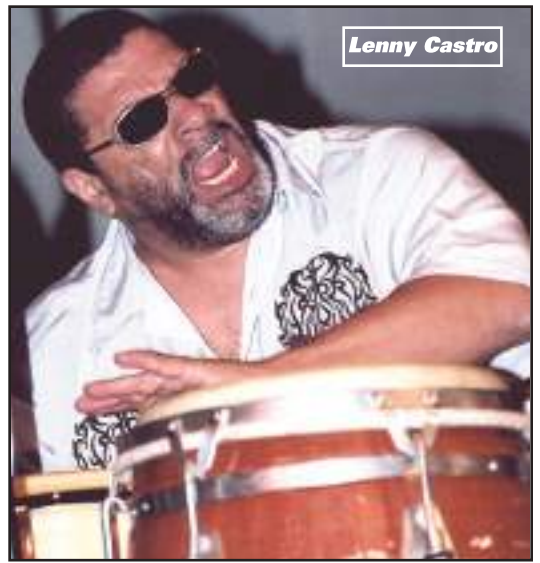
Festival closer **Dom Famularo** told the crowd that he cared less about proficiency than he did about playing from the heart. He also cited the importance of having respect for one's audience. Dom then played a blistering solo that combined soft touches with lightning passages.

The traditional finale brought all of the drummers on stage, playing whatever percussion instruments were available to raise the roof. Not only did they achieve this, they also raised the bar for next

Styx's Todd Sucherman



Lenny Castro



year's event.

Sponsors for the festival included Aquarian, Audix, Drum Workshop, Evans, Gibraltar, Kaman, Latin Percussion,

Mapex, Pearl, Pro-Mark, Remo, Rhythm Tech, Sabian, Shure, Taye, Vater, Vic Firth, XL Specialty Percussion, and Yamaha. To see more exciting photos

from the Cape Breton festival, go to www.modrndrummer.com.

Story and photos by Jim Cornall

2006 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

Brian Blade



Zigaboo Modeliste



The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival 2006, held this past April 28-30 and May 5-7, was particularly significant in the wake of the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina. It's a testament to the resilience of the people of this great city—and to the healing powers of music—that the festival came off

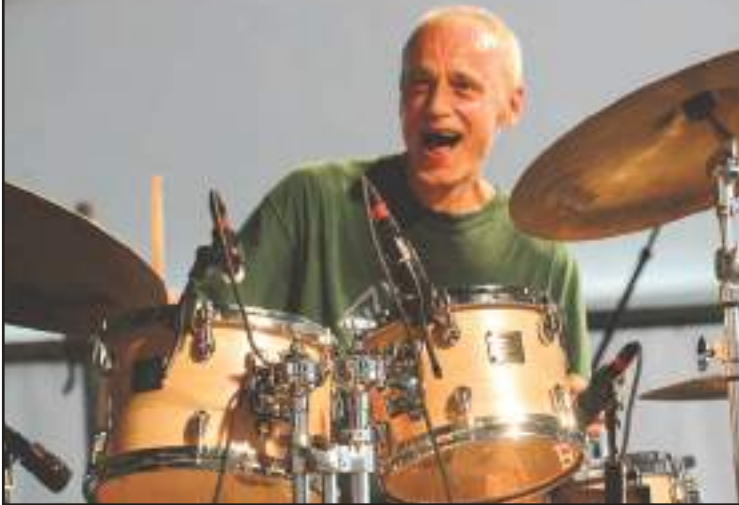
at all. But come off it did, in triumphant fashion.

This year's Jazz Fest featured several international stars, who came to support the city in its efforts to rebuild. Some of the great drummers who accompanied them included **Steve Gadd** with Paul Simon, **Carter Beauford**

with The Dave Matthews Band, **Richie Hayward** with Little Feat, and **Larry Eagle** with Bruce Springsteen's Seeger Sessions band.

The unique magnificence of New Orleans music was represented at the Jazz Fest by incredible drummers like Zigaboo Modeliste with The Meters and

Johnny Vidacovich



Jeffrey "Jellybean" Alexander



Terence Higgins



Shannon Powell



The Krewe Of Zigaboo, **Terence Higgins** with The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, **Bob French** with The Tuxedo Jazz Band, **Shannon Powell** with his own groups and backing up several other bands, **Brian Blade** with Herbie Hancock, **Johnny Vidacovich** with his own trio and with Astral Project, **Stanton Moore** with Galactic and lots of other groups, **Jason Marsalis** with Ellis Marsalis and on vibes with Shannon Powell's group, **Raymond Weber** with Ivan Neville's Dumpsta Funk, **Kendrick Scott** with Terence Blanchard, **Ernie Elly** with various traditional New Orleans jazz

groups, **Jamal Batiste** with Los Hombres Calientes, **Jeffrey "Jellybean" Alexander** with Snooks Eaglin and Papa Grows Funk, **Herman LeBeaux** with Allen Toussaint and Elvis Costello, **Eric Bolivar** with Kirk Joseph's Backyard Groove, **Eddie Christmas** and **Geechie Lionel Batiste** on bass drum and **Benny Jones Jr.** on snare with The Tremé Brass Band.

These drummers—and others too numerous to include in this report—represent a drumming tradition of the highest order, in terms of musicality,

soulfulness, and rhythmic invention. Picking up their records, seeing them live when you get the chance, and most of all, getting down to New Orleans to see them on their own turf, has never been more important than it is right now.

For more photos from this year's historic New Orleans Jazz Fest, go to www.moderndrummer.com.

story by Paul Siegel
photos by Clayton Call

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Italy's Long Night Of The Drums

Rome is Italy's capital; Milan is its main business center. Rome's drummers mainly work on TV shows; Milan's drummers work in recording studios and perform live. But this past April, drummers in both cities participated in the seventh edition of Italy's greatest drum contest: The Long Night Of The Drums. The event is a tribute to revered Milan drum teacher Enrico Lucchini.

Directed by drummer **Paolo Pellegatti**, the contest featured twenty-three top Italian drummers playing famous big band pieces with The Jazz Art Orchestra, led by Carlo Gelmini. The scene was dominated by old lions and promising newcomers. Veteran swinger **Gegé Munari** played at the age of seventy-five. **Tullio De Piscopo** and **Ellade Bandini**, each sixty years old, are still considered the standards for greatness.

Great performances were given by **Percussionisti Della Scala** (the percussion ensemble of the world-famous La Scala

opera) and by the popular drum quintet **La Drummeria**. Honorable mentions go to session ace **Adriano Molinari**, rock veteran **Luca Capitani**, and up-and-comer **Mariano Barba**.

The lineup also featured **Paolo Pellegatti** (Chet Baker, Carl Anderson), **Christian Meyer** of the band Elio e le Storie Tese, **Walter Calloni** of the progressive band PFM, session great **Maxx Furian**, rocker **Mario Riso**, session drummers **Ezio Zaccagnini**, **Cristiano Micalizzi**, **Luca Trolli**, and **Danilo Tasco**, jazz greats **Tony Arco** and **Alessandro Lugli**, **Giovanni Giorgi**, **Emanuele Urso**, pedal innovator **Marco Iannetta**, **Tony Cerqua**, progressive drummer **Maurizio Boco**, and newcomers **Alessandro Deidda** and **Danilo Tasco**. Sponsors included Audix, Pearl, Tama, and UFIP. For more photos, go to www.moderndrummer.com.

Story and photos by Mario Riggio



The drum quintet La Drummeria (from left: Paolo Pellegatti, Ellade Bandini, Walter Calloni, Christian Meyer, and Maxx Furian) combined stellar playing with drumming humor.



Marco Iannetta played on an original drumset that featured multiple pedals striking a collection of ethnic drums.



Jazz veteran Tullio De Piscopo enthusiastically powered the Jazz Art Orchestra.



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Indy Quickies

In an effort to assist musicians in the New Orleans area, **Mapex** teamed up with **Ray Fransen's Drum Center** to donate a new Saturn series drumset to the New Orleans chapter of the Musician's Mutual Protective Union, Local 174-496. Union spokesperson J. Kim Foreman expressed gratitude for the donations made by Mapex and other MI manufacturers, as well as individuals across the country. According to Mr. Foreman, nearly all of the union's backline gear was destroyed, and they are now working to get it replaced.

Ray Fransen, who's drumshop suffered substantial damage, has been busy



From left: Mapex president Joe Vasko, New Orleans musicians union spokesperson J. Kim Foreman, and drumshop owner Ray Fransen

rebuilding his business and assisting a community very much in need. If you would like to donate a new or used instrument to a Gulf Region musician, contact J. Kim Foreman at the Musician's Mutual Protective Union at (504) 947-1700.

Artists currently confirmed for the **2006 Montreal Drum Fest** include The **Roy Haynes Quartet**, **Bill Bruford**, **Clayton Cameron**, **Gavin Harrison** (Porcupine Tree), **Dom Famularo**, **Liberty DeVitto**, **Derico Watson** (Victor Wooten), The **Joey Heredia Trio & Sandy Perez**, **Yvette "Baby Girl" Preyer** (Michael McDonald), **Melena & Band** (from Cuba), and the **Yamaha Rising Star Showcase**. The event will be held this coming November 10-12. More information is available at www.montrealdrumfest.com.

The eleventh **KoSA International Percussion Workshop & Festival** will be held this August 7-13 at Johnson State College in Johnson, Vermont. Classes are designed for participants of all age and experience levels.

This year's KoSA artist/faculty roster includes **Memo Acevedo** (Tito Puente),

Cuban drumming specialist **John Amira**, author **Jim Chapin**, **Clayton Cameron**, **Mario DeCiutiis** (KAT electronics), Brazilian master percussionist **Cassio Duarte**, **Dom Famularo**, **Gary France** (Australian National University), vibraphone master **David Friedman**, **Gordon Gottlieb** (Juilliard School Of Music), conga legend **Giovanni Hidalgo**, **Kalani** (Yanni), **Mark Kelso** (Gino Vanelli), **Marco Lienhard** (Japanese taiko), **Larry Marchese** (Sibelius software), **Aldo Mazza** (Repercussion, KoSA founder/director), **Bill Meligari** (TigerBill.com), **Allan Molnar** (Music & Technology guru), **Valerie Naranjo** (*Saturday Night Live*), R&B legend **Bernard Purdie**, didgeridoo master **Lou Robinson**, **Antonio Sanchez** (Pat Metheny), **Jeff Salisbury** (Johnson State College), **Rick Van Horn** (*Modern Drummer*), **Glen Velez** (Paul Winter Consort), **Michael Wimberly & African Drum & Dance Ensemble**, **Marie Josée Simard** (classical marimba and vibraphone), and **Ed Soph** (jazz and big band). For more information, go to www.kosamusic.com.

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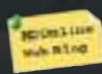
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CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE
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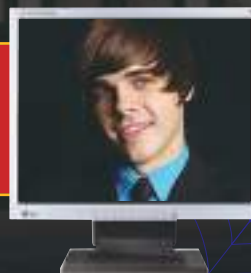
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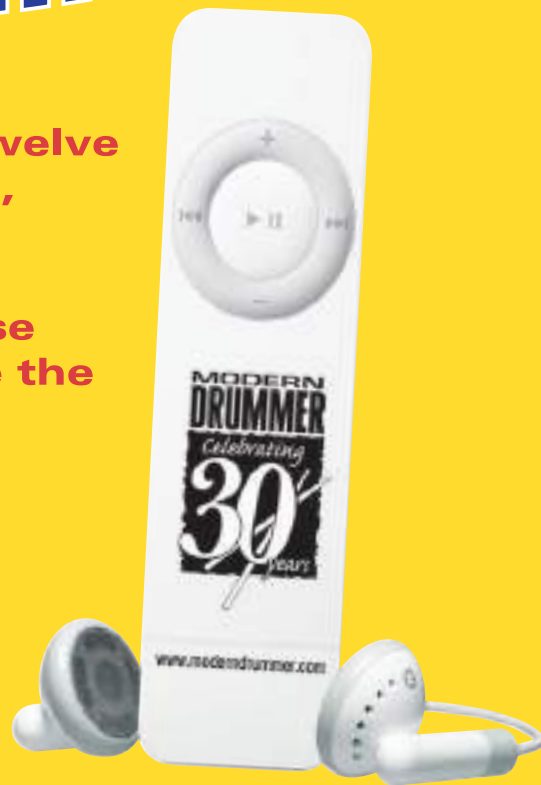
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WANN A Modern Drummer 30th Anniversary iPod Shuffle

To help commemorate MD's 30th anniversary, we're giving away twelve custom-made Apple iPod Shuffles, one per month during 2006.

That's right, **only twelve** of these little beauties exist, and you could be the proud owner of one of them.

The tiny iPod Shuffle can hold up to **120 songs**, offering totally skip-free playback. It fits neatly in the palm of your hand, and looks very cool around your neck. The stylish MD 30th Anniversary logo complements it perfectly.



For the entry form and official rules, visit www.modrdrummer.com and click on the image of the iPod. Complete the required information, and you could be the next winner of this unique prize. It's as simple as that!

Who's Playing What



Now playing Vater drumsticks are **Xavier Muriel** (Buckcherry), **Jon Allen** (Testament), **Kendrick Morris** (Najee), **Marc Dodd** (The Afters), **Kofi Baker** (OHM), **Evan Johns** (Hurt), **Colin Kerz** (Most Precious Blood), **Pinchface** (Buckethead), **Bevan Davies** (The Mercy



Clinic/Comes With The Fall), **Anthony Lee Brock** (Emanuel), **James Meza** (Tiger Army), **Rob Moffitt** (Broke), **Chachi**

Darrin (The AKA's), **Jimmy Sage** (Lee Rocker), **Brian Champ** (Greeley Estates), **Pete Zeldman** (educator, UK), **Brian Kelley** (educator, USA), and **Gregory Boyd** (educator, Denmark).



Emmett "Murph" Murphy (Dinosaur Jr.), **John Wicks** (Money Mark),



Mark Romans (Twelve Hour Mary), **Ira Elliot** (Nada Surf), **Charlie Paxson** (Anastacia), **Ryan Hoyle** (Collective Soul), and **Donny Gruendler** (educator) are new Paiste cymbal artists.

John "JR" Robinson is now a Regal Tip drumstick artist.

The 2005 DCI Division III world champion **Raiders** drum & bugle corps from Wayne, New Jersey are now using



Yamaha marching drums and percussion for their battery and front-line pit ensemble. Meanwhile, **Brian Wolf** (Otep) and **Mike Shapiro** (Sergio Mendes) are new Yamaha drumset artists.



New Vic Firth endorsers include **Josh Eppard** (Coheed And

Cambria), **Matt Brann** (Avril Lavigne), **Darrel Robinson** and **Aaron Draper** (LL Cool J),



(Behemoth), **George Kolios** (Nile), **Brian Young** (Fountains Of Wayne), **Jimmy Clark** (Van Zant), **Mark Jackson** (VNV Nation), **Daff Leopard** (Uncommon Men From Mars), **Dave Lemonds** (Keith Anderson), and **Anthony Burulchic** (The Bravery).



Meinl has added several international drummers to its artist roster, including Germany's **Frederik Ehmke** (Blind Guardian) and Rachel Rep (Farin Urlaub), Jamaica's **Kirk Bennett** (Beres Hammond), France's **Olivier Laffond** (Harcide), South Africa's **Ayanda Sikade**

(Zim Ngqawana), and Switzerland's **Martin Kissling**. In other news, the **Sunrisers** and **Pioneer** drum & bugle corps are now using Meinl percussion.

Eric Gardner (Monsters Are Waiting) and **Nick Amoroso** (Slow Car Crash) are endorsing Dynamicx Snares from Black Swamp Percussion.

Jonathan Moffett (Madonna, Cameo) is now using the RimRiser Cross Stick Performance Enhancer.



New Pro-Mark drummers include **Ryan Hoyle** (Collective Soul), **Warren Oakes** (Against Me!), **Steve**



Kemp (Hard-Fi), **Spencer Smith** (Panic! At the Disco), **Bun E. Carlos** (Cheap Trick), **Jason Krutsky** (Fight Paris), **Joey Oscar** (Micah Stampley), **Andy Mrotek** (The Academy Is...), **Devin Chaulk** (Haste The Day), **Ryan Seaman** (I Am Ghost), **Kevin Sanders** (Cartel), **Eric**



Kane (Strike Anywhere), **Ghastly** (Wednesday 13), **Paul Koehler** (Silverstein), **Tony Miranda** (educator), **Travis Nunn** (Chris Tomlin), and **Trivett Wingo** (The Sword).





Super-Sized Classic

Dallas drummer Don Landry's Gretsch drums were all purchased new between 1976 and 1978. In those days, most clubs didn't mike drumsets. To compete with the amps, Dan bought big drums: 14x28 kicks, 8x12, 9x13, 10x14, and 12x15 rack toms, and 16x18 and 18x18 floor toms—all in black pearl wrap. The snare is a Gretsch 5x14 eight-lug chrome-over-brass model.

The hardware is a mix of Gretsch, Ludwig, Tama, Pearl, Yamaha, and Gibraltar stands, clamps, and booms. The Tama hi-hat is a contemporary legless model, which Dan says is much easier to reach than the fixed-tripod models from

back in the day. But the kick pedals are vintage Rogers SwivOmatics. "At the time," says Dan, "nothing else could get close to the center of the batter heads of those big bass drums."

Cymbals include 14" Rock hats, a 12" splash, 16" and 18" Rock crashes, a 20" crash/ride, a 20" swish with rivets, and a 22" ride, all A Zildjians. There's also a 16" Wuhan China, a 23³/₄" LP RanCan China, and a 20" UFIP TamPang gong hung overhead.

The photos don't do justice to the sheer immensity of the drums, since all of the gear is equally scaled up. In an attempt to communicate that "hugeness," Don

included a picture of his current four-piece working kit (which usually includes a 22" kick) with the two 28" drums. "The 12" tom looks tiny tucked between the big wheels," Don comments, "kind of a 'Louie Bellson on steroids' look."

When Don set up the big kit for this photo shoot, virtually every onlooker said, "I've never seen anything like that!" "After I heard that about twenty times," says Don, "I started thinking that I might literally own a one-of-a-kind set. I mean, somebody might have assembled a double bass kit with 28" bass drums in the '70s. But a Gretsch kit?"

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides or high-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted.
 2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
 3. Only show drums, no people.
 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds.
 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.
- Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.



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