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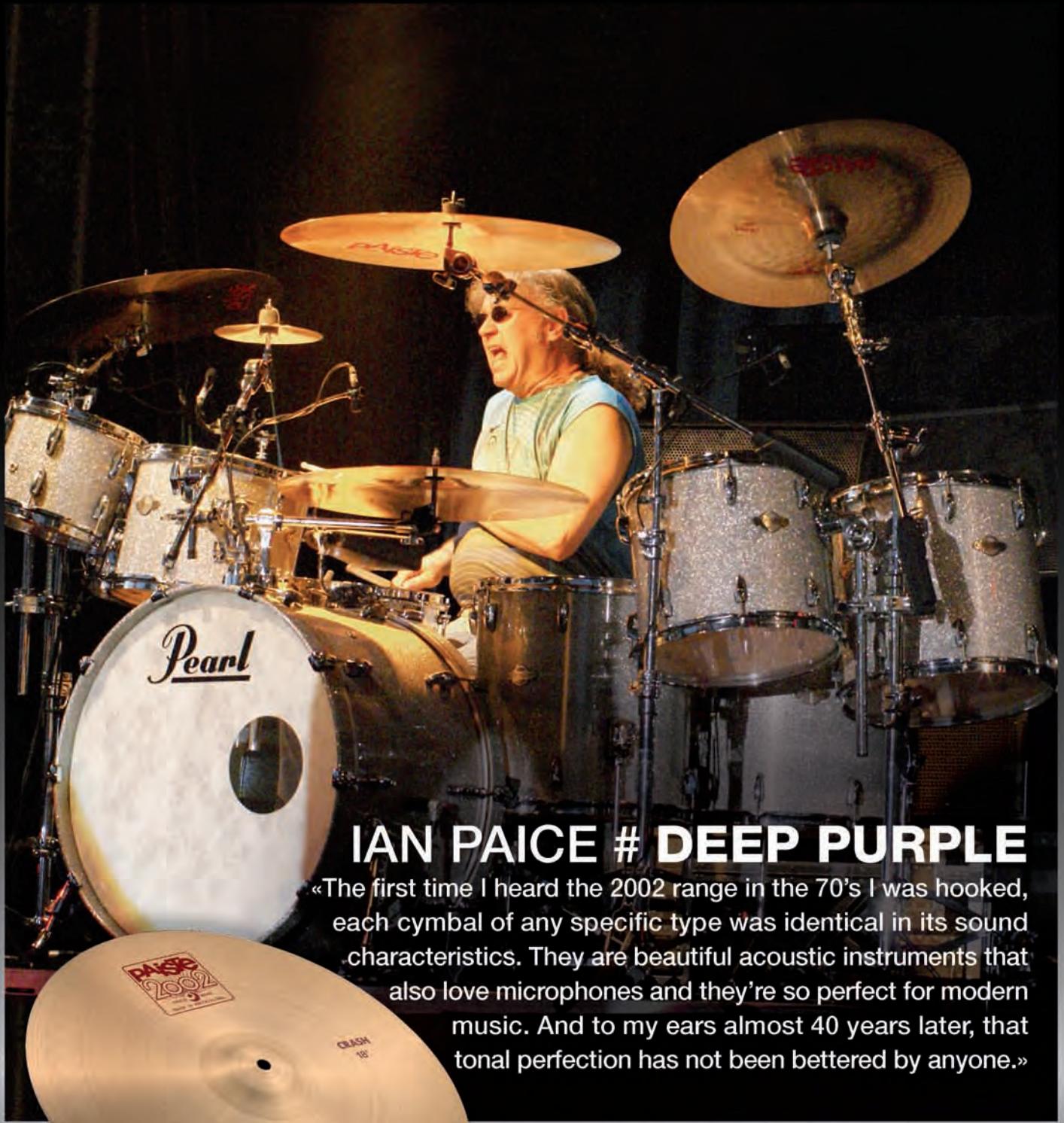
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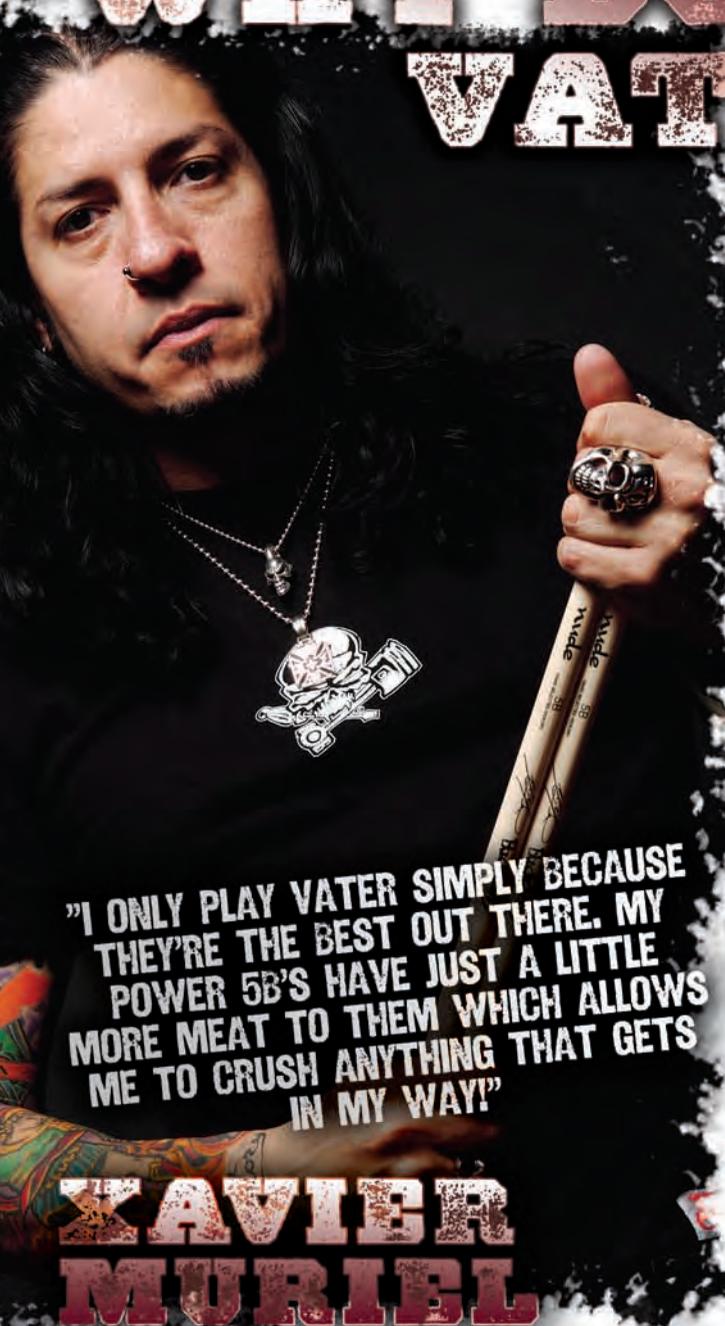
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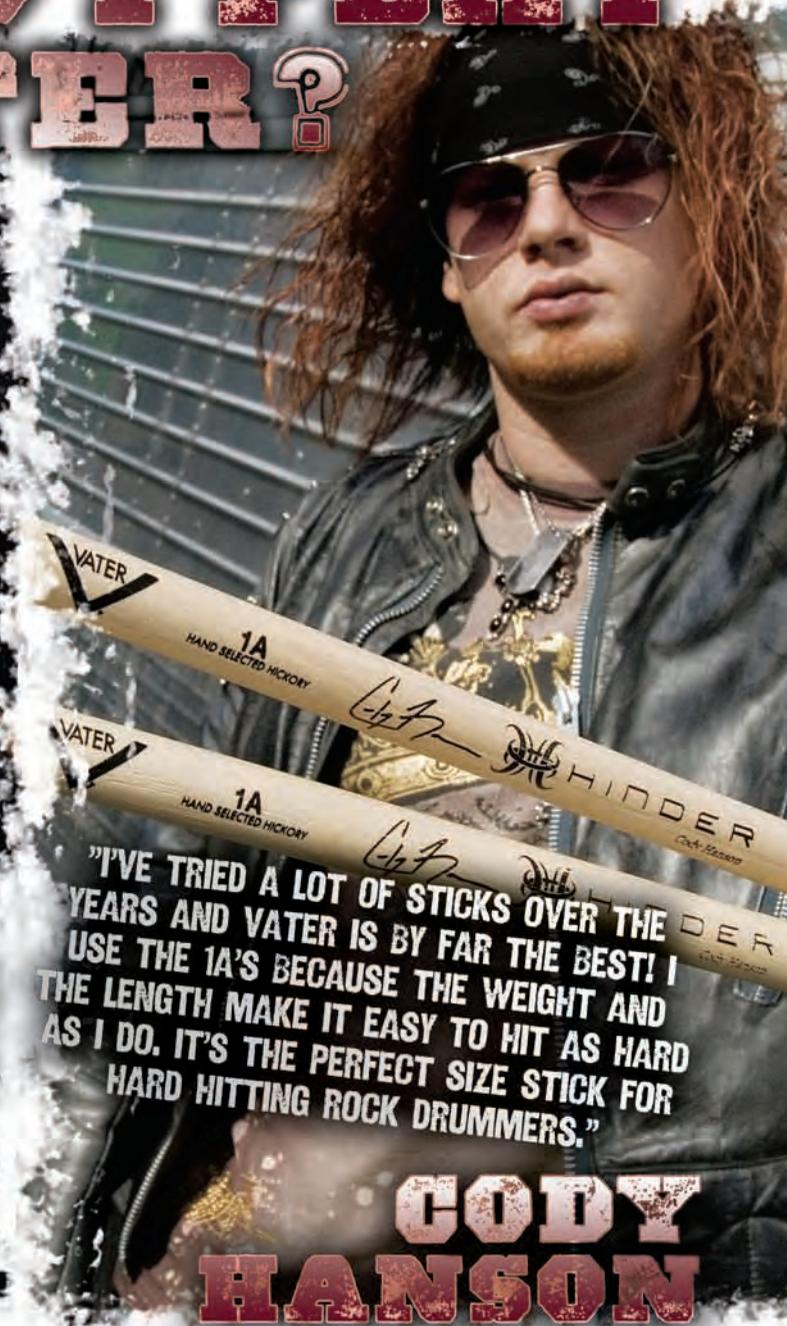
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FEATURES

48 Nickelback's **Daniel Adair**

Nickelback's brilliant drummer—a genuine “drummer's drummer,” many would insist—opens up about simplifying his approach, and reaping the rewards.

64 Victor Wooten's **Derico Watson**

Being the drummer of choice for bass virtuoso Victor Wooten says much about Derico Watson's sterling rep. But backing Wooten plus fellow bass gods Stanley Clarke and Marcus Miller on tour—that's huge.

78 Garaj Mahal's **Alan Hertz**

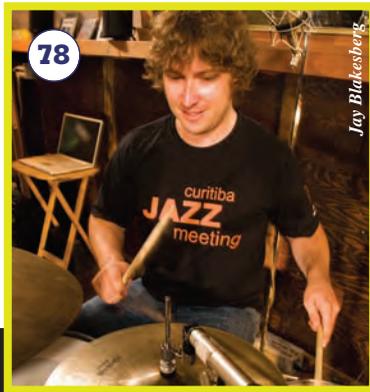
Perhaps the most sophisticated group on today's jam-band circuit, Garaj Mahal throws at drummer Alan Hertz dense Indian rhythms, Head Hunter–like grooves, and the oddest of odd times and groupings. Hertz handles it all with calm authority.

114 In The Heights' **Andres Patrick Forero**

In The Heights is the kind of show that makes folks realize how incredibly demanding a Broadway drumming gig can be. Authenticity, energy, and drama? It's all in a day's work for monster drummer Andres Patrick Forero.



Ash Newell



18 Update

Calexico's **John Convertino**
 Founding Beatle **Pete Best**
 Steve Lukather's **Eric Valentine**
 Leader **Steve Reid**
PLUS NEWS



Rick Malkin

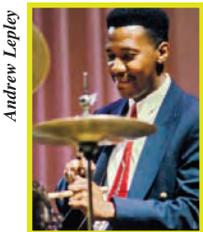
106 In Memoriam **Buddy Harman**

The father of country drumming is gone, leaving empty the most significant drum stool in country music history. The king is gone, but he'll never be forgotten.



124 A Different View **Dave Douglas**

"Getting back to the music and just making it feel good is what it's all about," according to esteemed trumpeter/composer Dave Douglas. To that end, he's hired the cream of the crop of modern drum masters.



88 Impressions **Kenny Washington On...**

This month Kenny Washington puts on the blindfold...and proceeds to give a master class on jazz drumming history.

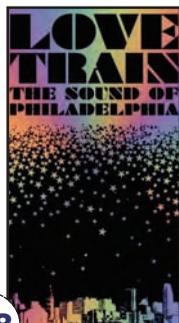
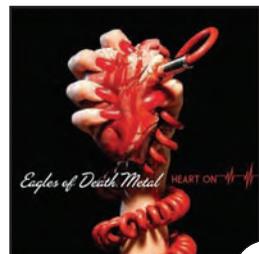
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page 76



38



128



EDUCATION

- 92 Off The Record**
Deep Purple's Ian Paice: Machine Head by Ed Breckenfeld
- 94 Strictly Technique**
Double-Edged Rhythms: Using Flam Rudiments To Spice Up Your Grooves by Terry Branam
- 96 Jazz Drummers' Workshop**
Upbeat Hi-Hat Shuffles: Creating Forward Motion With The Left Foot by Ted Warren
- 98 Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic**
The Essence Of Groove: 5 Critical Ways To Improve by Oscar Seaton Jr.
- 100 Basics**
How To Be A More Musical Drummer: Tips To Keep In Mind For Playing With A Band by Jeremy Hummel
- 104 Concepts**
Changing Gears: Absorbing Different Styles—And Making Them Work Together by Bob D'Amico

DEPARTMENTS

- 10 An Editor's Overview**
Focus, Get Control, And Own That Beat by Adam Budofsky
- 12 Readers' Platform**
- 14 Ask A Pro**
Haste The Days's Devin Chaulk On Smooth Transitions • Tortoise/The Sea And Cake's John McEntire On Cross-Stick Sounds And Techniques
- 24 It's Questionable**
"Proper" Conga Tuning • Vinnie's Ride Cymbal • Shouldering The Burden
- 128 Critique**
- 132 Showcase**
- 136 Drum Market**
Including Vintage Corner
- 138 Backbeats**
Drum Fantasy Camp • Prog Power USA IX • and more
- 144 Kit Of The Month**
The Cocktail Twins



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EQUIPMENT

- 28 Product Close-Up**
 - Ludwig Centennial Series Kit And Black Magic Snares
 - Paiste Signature Crystal Thin And Reflector Series Cymbals
 - Universal Percussion Super And Standard Cannon Toms
 - Pork Pie 7x13 Brass Patina Snare Drum
 - Bosphorus Rikki Rockett Rides
 - Sleishman Twin Pedal
- 38 New And Notable**
Just Introduced!
- 42 Electronic Review**
MD Product Shootout! Drummer Headphones
- 122 Collectors' Corner**
The Magnificent Fake:
Piecing Together The Perfect Rogers Replica by Harry Cangany



28



Page 25



FOR THOSE SERIOUS ABOUT THEIR MUSIC

- gerry brown
- jimmy chamberlin
- teddy campbell
- keith carlock
- wolfgang haffner
- manu katché
- russ kunkel
- paul leim
- russ miller
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Focus, Get Control, And Own That Beat



I played a gig recently that required some fairly basic drumming, but that actually presented one of the biggest musical challenges I've ever had to face.

My friend Marty has a Johnny Cash cover band whose regular drummer had to pull out a week before a gig, and I was asked to fill in. We'd be playing maybe three dozen tunes, and there wouldn't be time for a rehearsal. Between my trusty Johnny Cash box set and iTunes, I was able to put together a disc of nearly all the material, so at least I'd get to hear the songs a couple of times. But since it was already a busy week for me, I never found the time to jot down any notes before the show. This was really going to be flying by the seat of my pants!

Fortunately, there aren't that many odd breaks in Johnny Cash songs; many of his tunes have no breaks at all. And I used to be in a band with Marty—he plays bass and sings—so I figured that if I kept my eyes glued on him, our already-established connection would help me get through the night.

Now, I'm all about repetitive music, whether it's The Velvet Underground, avant-garde rock groups like Can and Neu!, or more modern bands like Sigur Ros and Mogwai. To me, *real* chops are the ones you don't notice every eight or sixteen bars, but that nonetheless add to the subtlety and power of the groove. So my directive to myself going into this gig was, Pick a part, stick with it, own it, and insert very few fills. This is actually my mantra with my own original psychedelic band, and it's an attitude that's served me well for years.

Even with all of that logical, "tasteful" thinking, however, on the gig I found it took remarkable concentration to focus squarely on the groove without adding some sort of drum commentary during transitions and whatnot. Seems that no matter how much you might preach about this stuff—and we've all read the "less is more" commandment in *MD* dozens of times—there's something within us drummers that makes us want to always *add* something. I guess it's an understandable urge; most of us get into drumming in the first place because it's the only instrument that you can enjoy physically *attacking* to get a sound. I don't know about you, but I kinda feel sorry for guitarists and keyboard players: Those instruments are so darned delicate. How do you get off playing them all the time?

Anyway, the gig ended up going great, although it took a lot of effort on my part not to drop the ball. I suppose the moral is, Go for the groove, but don't beat yourself up if you sometimes find yourself hitting things just to hear and feel yourself play. That, and be happy the drums found you. There's no greater pleasure than playing them well.

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Michael Bettine, John Emrich, Ken Flans, Dr. Asif Khan, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Mark Parsons, Mike Haid, Robin Tollerson, Lauren Vogel Weiss, T. Bruce Witte.

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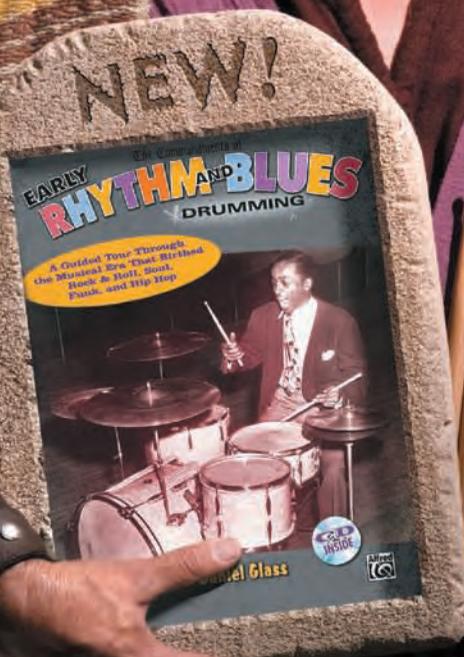
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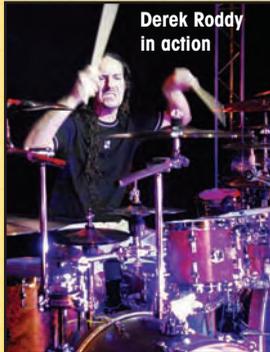


Mitch Mitchell R.I.P.

As we went to press, we were saddened to learn of Jimi Hendrix Experience drummer Mitch Mitchell's passing. *MD* will present a full report on the drummer's historic career in our April issue.



Jim Marshall



Derek Roddy in action

Modern Drummer Festival Weekend

I'd like to commend the staff and crew who put on a great festival this year. Things went delightfully smooth. I was particularly impressed by the performance of Derek Roddy. Having not known too much about him prior, I found him to be not only a phenomenal musician, but great with the crowd as well. Historically, the "metal guys" sometimes get a bad rap. However, I think it's safe to say that Derek, Chris Adler, and Jason Bittner are some of the most articulate speakers the festival has ever seen.

Jeremy Hummel

Neck And Back Relief

I'm a drummer who suffers from two past whiplashes. For four months my head went numb and I spent thousands of dollars on a chiropractor and other doctors to deal with it. The numbness is gone but my neck is a major issue for me all the time. Of course, it's had a big impact on my drumming. (I also work at a computer all day, which is relevant to my problems.)

Two months ago, while looking for resources on Pilates, I found something called *The Miracle Ball Method* at my local Barnes & Noble bookstore. It's a small book accompanied by two air-filled rubber balls, something like miniature theraballs. The whole idea is to focus on relaxing tense muscles and realigning the spine and joints. I haven't been back to the chiropractor since I started using this method. On my drums, I'm now able to achieve better posture during play and practice. If I'm going to spend a lot of time woodshedding at the set, I will spend about fifteen minutes on the balls before playing. It makes a great difference for my spinal and neck weaknesses, let alone creating a real sense of relaxation. Given the issues of my neck and age, this product has made a huge difference in my life generally.

Michael Munk

Martin Valihora

I was very pleased to see an article on Martin Valihora (November 2008). He has been one of my favorite drummers for quite some time, and I'm glad to see he's gaining more recognition. There was one error in the article, however: "Ue Wo Muite Aruko" on Hiromi's latest album is not an original. It's a Japanese pop song. The only original on the latest album is "XYG."

Patrick Csak

New Triplet Syllables

I enjoyed Jim Riley's article on setting up big band figures (October 2008). However, I would like to encourage *Modern Drummer* to avoid using the syllables "&" and "ah" for counting triplets. Because these syllables are normally associated with 16th notes, using them for triplets can create confusion with young drummers (and the rest of us, too). That's why there has been a trend toward using "trip" and "let" instead (as in "1-trip-let, 2-trip-let"). *Modern Drummer* is extremely influential. You could easily help to perpetuate the use of "trip" and "let" as the norm, which would be a really great thing.

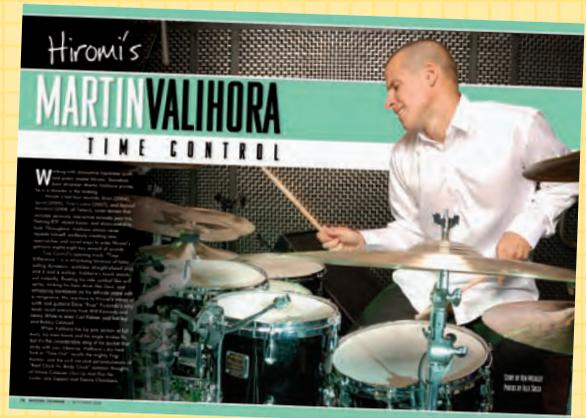
Matt Ritter



More Praise For Todd

Thanks for the wonderful—and long overdue—interview with Todd Sucherman in the October issue. We had Todd here [Georgia] for a clinic a little over a year ago. Aside from his amazing playing, he was one of the nicest clinicians we have ever hosted in our area. He stayed until every head had been patted, and every autograph signed. Each young player left feeling like they had a new best friend. All clinicians should model his approach. He is a true professional.

Chris Moore,
PAS Georgia chapter president



DROPPED BEAT

In the November issue's *Playlist* with Jack DeJohnette, the Handsonic HPD-15 electronic percussion instrument is described as a Korg product. It's actually made by Roland.

The Web site for the Slapstik drumstick review in the November issue was incorrect. The correct address is www.theslapstik.com.



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HASTE THE DAY's

Devin Chaulk

On Smooth Transitions

Dear Devin:

I really admire your playing. Your double bass chops are astounding, and the whole band moves so smoothly from one crazy song section to the next. Do you have any tips or practice suggestions to work on changing between different tempos and feels with precision?

Morley Fulton

Thanks for the kind words and a great question, Morley. This is a multi-faceted answer, so get comfortable. First things first: As drummers, it's important that we are comfortable and effective in our role as the band's living and breathing metronome. We hear this all the time as drummers, but there's a reason for that. It's foundational. It's imperative. It is not optional! Having consistent meter, and the ability to control the changing of your meter, will enhance transitions. It will allow the band (through you) to drastically alter the mood of your songs from one section to the next. This is why it is so important to be the backbone of the rhythm section in your band. Okay, I'll quit preaching now. Just keep this in mind as we discuss the other elements of this question.

All right, let's imagine Haste The Day is writing a new song. Some sections are in common time, one is in cut time, and there's a breakdown in a tempo all its own. How can we put all these pieces together as a band to make a cohesive song? And, what can I do as a drummer to help make each transition serve the section we're moving out of and the section we're breaking into?

In many ways, this is a team effort. But there's a lot I can do as a drummer to get the desired "feel" I want. I have to decide whether or not I want the listener to expect the next section of the song, or be surprised by it when it hits out of nowhere. Do I want my transitional drum roll to match the feel of the section I'm in, or the section I'm going into? These are the types of questions you have to ask yourself.

Don't be afraid to experiment with each transition. Don't be afraid to try something new. I can't tell you how many times the guys in HTD (including myself) have had a good laugh at ideas that I've had. And don't scorn the input of your band mates. Incorporate. Sometimes the best ideas for drums come from the non-drummers in the band. Learn to accept criticism with grace.

All that being said, once you've experimented with different rolls and tempo changes, get everybody on the same page.

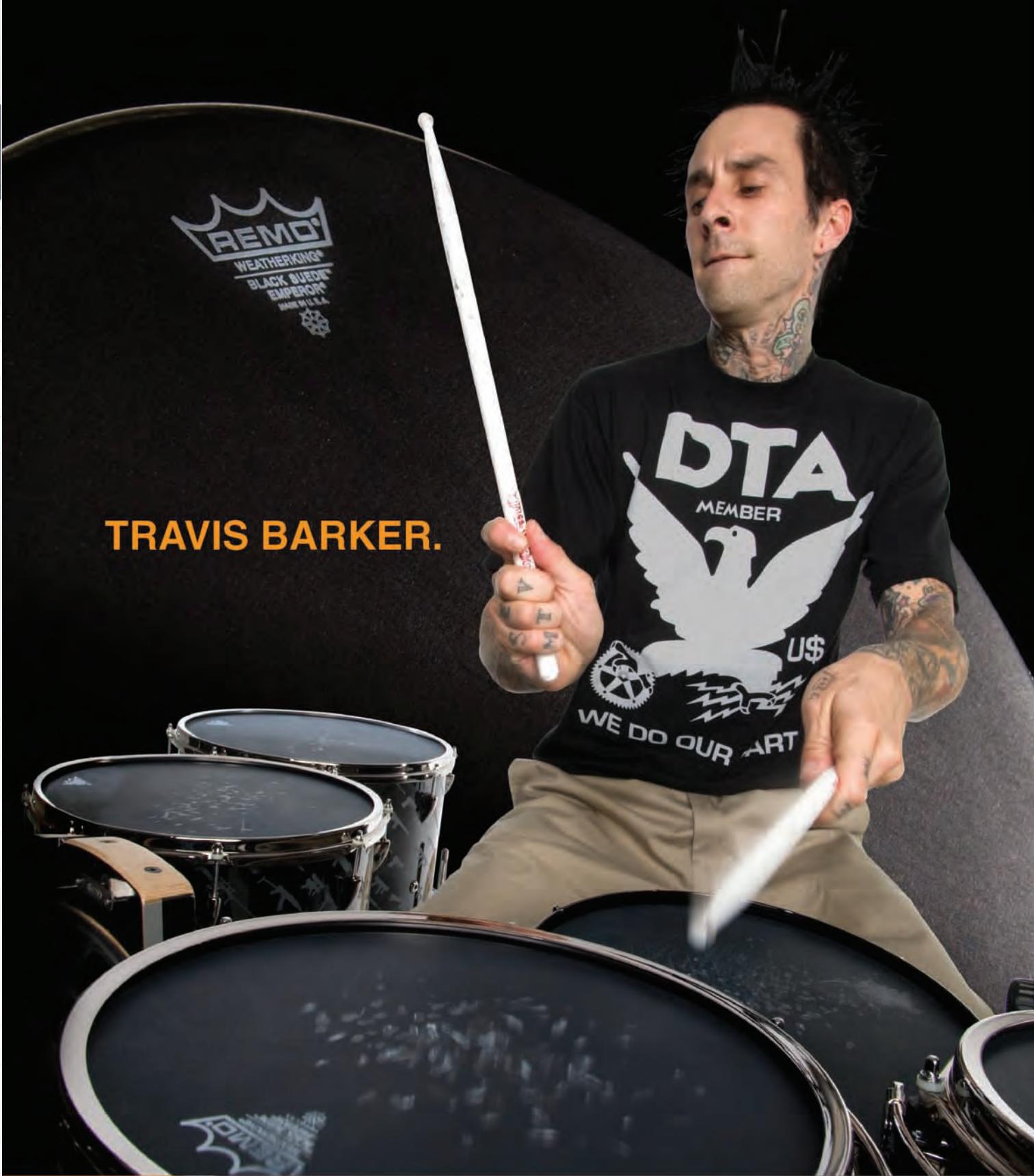


Decide on the transition that best serves the song, and make any adjustments to the guitars and bass that might be necessary to make the transition as clean and cohesive as possible. Then practice the transition together as a band, paying careful attention to where all the pieces are fitting. If there's a tempo change, this will be the most challenging thing. But with some concentration and chemistry, you'll be flowing as one unit in no time.

As a drummer, on your own time, play the transitions over and over, concentrating especially on tempo changes (if applicable) and making certain that your meter is consistent each time you play it. This will make it much easier to tighten up when you're joined by your band mates. They need you to be consistent. This is why meter is important even in the little things like transitions. And remember, drum rolls are like seasoning. They're there to enhance their surroundings, not define them. So make sure that when you sit back and reflect on the song, your drumming doesn't stick out like a sore thumb.

Lastly, have fun. Being creative and making music with your friends can be a very rewarding experience. I know it has been for me!

If you have any more questions, drum related or otherwise, you can reach me at askthedeivin@gmail.com.



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TORTOISE/THE SEA AND CAKE'S

John McEntire

On Cross-Stick Sounds And Techniques

John, one of the things I've been trying to work on is my cross-stick technique. You seem to have a real nice grasp of that. Do you have any suggestions for improving my consistency of sound? Also, have you found that any particular types of drums, rims, or sticks are ideal for a nice sound?

Aaron McNeil

Hi, Aaron. Thanks for the kind words. Regarding cross-stick technique, I've found it to be a matter of trial and error more than anything else. It seems that every drum has its own sweet spot, where you will get the tightest crack from the rim blending with the most desirable fundamental tone of the drum. So I will typically start with the stick on the head about 2" to 4" away from the rim, and play around with the exact position on the head plus the angle of the stick and where it's striking the rim.

Also be aware of how your hand is holding the stick, as this too can effect the overall timbre; in general, I would say that a looser grip will produce a more open, pleasing tone.

I don't think that particulars in terms of drums, sticks, etc. are very critical. As long as the drum is tuned reasonably well, you should be able to get an excellent sound with the little bit of experimentation described above. The one thing I might mention, though, is the use of wood hoops, which I have found to yield great results in certain musical situations, as they produce a drier timbre that also tends to be louder. So if that's something that sounds like it might help your particular situation, I would recommend giving them a try.



Robert Loerzel

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CALEXICO'S
John CONVERTINO
 Finding The Sweet Spot

Calexico drummer John Convertino has always been more a mood-setter than a traditional timekeeper. And his band's sixth album, *Carried To Dust*, offers plenty of examples of the drummer's tone and dynamic-based trap work.

Convertino sets up the joyous choruses of "Victor Jara's Hands" with a slowly building six-bar buzz roll rather than a foursquare fill. And throughout the album, accents are often delivered via Convertino's brushes smacking the sweet spot of the snare instead of a crash cymbal.

In many ways, the drummer's approach is dictated by the shadowy fusion of spaghetti western, Spanish-rooted styles, surf rock, and noir-ish jazz Convertino makes with Calexico's singer-guitarist Joey Burns and a rotating cast of players. But the seed for Convertino's style was originally planted while he was a member of Giant Sand in the early '90s.

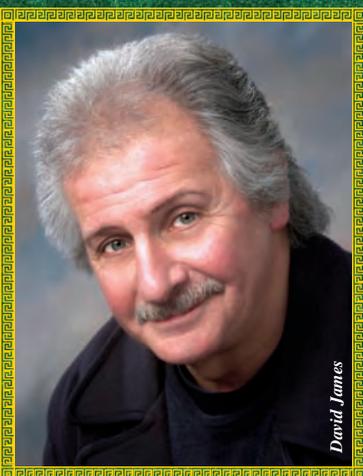
"A lot of our songs had that acoustic-to-electric dynamic to them," Convertino explains. "I remember recording basic rock beats to these songs, with the hi-hats sloshing away. And it would just drive me nuts when we would listen to playbacks. The cymbals were so in the way, there was hardly any space for overdubs."

Calexico's method of basic tracking leaves plenty of room to layer the horns, vocals, percussion, and grainy guitar squalls typical to their songs. Normally it's just Convertino playing with doctored brushes (a trick involving a rubber band, which he learned from country and rock vet Don Heffington) while Burns strums a nylon-string guitar, a configuration Convertino says is the essence of their sound.

"Joey on the nylon-string guitar is the root of many of these songs. And playing brushes along with that just feels more intimate, more closely connected to the sound of Joey's guitar."

And onstage, Convertino doesn't sacrifice that intimacy for volume. With few exceptions, it's brushes all the way. "I've tried playing with sticks, and it doesn't work," Convertino says with an exasperated laugh. "It's like a mindset. Really loud songs that I played with brushes in the studio, I've tried using sticks with live—but it doesn't have the swing or the feel that the brushes have."

Patrick Berkery



David James

Pete BEST

The Original Beatle Grooves On New Solo Album

Pete Best, the original drummer for The Beatles, has returned to performing in recent years. He's also just released his first-ever CD as a leader, *Haymans Green*, which will definitely remind you that he was once a Beatle. Best's music and drumming is full of true Liverpoolian flavor from forty years ago. Also, the title of the album refers to the Liverpool street where The Casbah Club was located, the famous nightspot where The Beatles began.

In The Pete Best Band, both live and on the group's new record, Pete shares drum duties with his brother, Roag. "On the album, Roag and I did the same thing we do on stage," Pete explains. "We don't double up and play similar patterns. One of us plays percussion while the other plays time and all the fills. We love creating a great wall of sound. In the studio, on certain songs he'd play the main rhythm and I'd do the percussion, and on others he'd take the percussion and I'd do the rhythm. We shared the honors, so to speak."

Pete was eager to make sure his specific ideas for drum sounds were captured on any given tune. "On a lot of it," he admits, "we worked very hard to capture my sound—that big bass drum sound with

STEVE LUKATHER'S

Eric VALENTINE

Firing It Up With Luke

Eric Valentine has always enjoyed performing with different people, so going from Patti LaBelle to former Toto six-stringer Steve Lukather wasn't really a challenge for him, it was just another gig. "When I was growing up," Valentine says, "I listened to a lot of different kinds of music. I would watch videos and *really* listen. When I study material I try to respect it for what it is."

These days it's not unusual to catch Valentine one weekend playing with Joe Albright and the next with Kirk Whalum. After watching and being inspired by fellow drummer Chris Dave, Eric made the decision to adjust his course, abandoning the goal of attaining a psychology degree for a career in music. "I saw Chris play at a jazz festival," Eric says, "and after hearing him, I was so moved that I decided I *really* wanted to do this."

Since moving to Los Angeles from DC three years ago, Valentine's career has taken off. He's performed with Mindi Abair, Stevie Wonder, Erykah Badu, Dionne Warwick, Jonathan Butler, and Warren Hill. It was while working with Hill that Eric met keyboard great Steve Weingart. "Steve was putting the band together for Luke," Eric recalls, "and as we were having a conversation about music, the Luke gig came up. He said, 'I want you to be on it. There's no audition, so come in ready.' Everyone came prepared, so when we got together, we knocked it out."

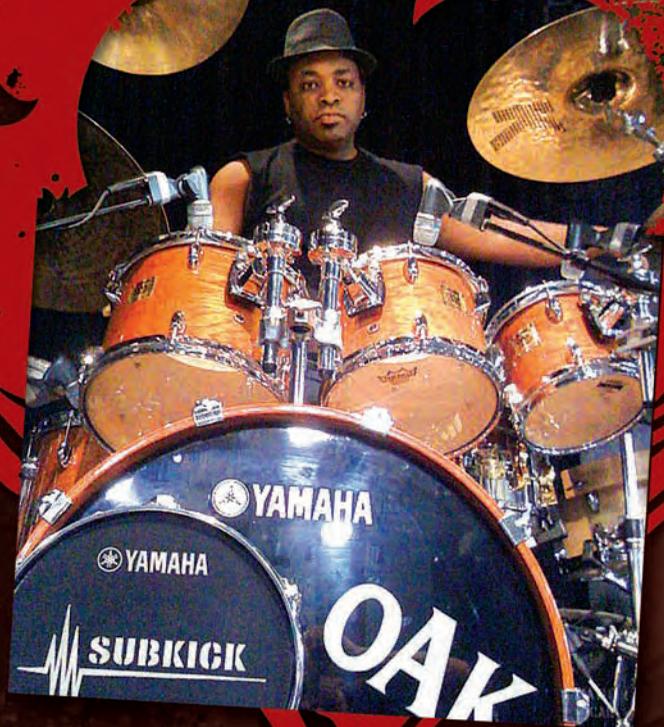
One of the finest singer/songwriter/guitarists in the business, Lukather knows about playing with great drummers, having performed and recorded with the cream of the crop. Watching and listening to Eric play—particularly with Lukather—you can clearly hear the mix of his influences, especially Dennis Chambers and Simon Phillips. "I was very into Dennis and Simon," Eric confirms, "along with Jeff Porcaro, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, 'JR' Robinson, Michael White, Gregg Bissonette, Ricky Lawson, Tony Williams, Omar Hakim, Narada Michael Walden, Aaron Spears, Teddy Campbell, Gerald Heyward, Gerry Brown, Chad Smith, John

the heavy downbeat—and I think we succeeded. The song I probably had the most fun with was 'Around And Around.' It's a skip-py little number that swings along in a nice groove. I like 'Broken' because of the drum pattern as well, which has a slight Latin feel

"We worked very hard to capture my sound—that big bass drum sound with the heavy downbeat—and I think we succeeded."

to it. And 'Grey River' was a favorite because we were trying to emulate the rhythm of the river, that flow, so I was trying to get that wash on the drums to come in and out."

Best is an inspiration on travelling through disappointment and heartache. After joining The Beatles in 1960 and helping them achieve notoriety in England, he was famously fired two years later in manager Brian Epstein's office. Since that fateful day, none of The Beatles have ever spoken to him. Pete was forced to watch from the sidelines as the group became the most successful musical sensation in history. And yet, speaking with him



Bonham, and, of course, Billy Cobham."

At a recent sold-out Luke gig at B.B. King's in New York City, not only did Eric impress the audience with his drumming talent—including an inspired extended solo—his vocal harmonizing was spot-on. "Actually, that was a requirement for the gig," Eric explains. "I usually tell an artist I don't sing, because I just like to concentrate on playing. But for this gig we *had* to do it."

In between tours, Valentine recently found the time to record and release a solo CD, *Eric Valentine's Jazz Impression*. Besides drums, Eric also plays bass and keyboards on the recording. He says of the disk, "It's more about me showing the producer side of myself."

For more on this very hot up & comer, visit his Web site, www.ericvalentine.net, or www.myspace.com/ericvalentine01.

Billy Amendola

today, there's not a note of bitterness in his voice. "I gave up wondering and worrying about that many, many years ago, because different things have taken over in my life that are more important than dwelling on what could have been. I

think if I had dwelled on it, I would have ended up cynical and twisted, but I'm not.

"People still say, 'If you meet up with Paul and Ringo, you'll be able to find out what happened forty years ago.' But that's the last thing on my mind. We're all mature, we've all grown up, we've all got family, we've all got *grandchildren*...we've all lived our lives. Let's talk about the good things and what's happening *now*. What happened forty years ago isn't going to change."

For more on The Pete Best Band, check out www.petebest.com.
Robyn Flans

Steve REID

Flow Master

"A lot of drummers use drums that don't sound like drums."

Steve Reid has performed and recorded with more artists than most drummers have shed sticks. From James Brown and Miles Davis to Jackie McLean, Four Tet, Fela Ransome Kuti, Chaka Khan, and the Barnam & Bailey Circus, Reid is a hypno-groove master. He does it again on *Daxaar*, the new album by his Steve Reid Ensemble. Recorded in Senegal with African musicians, *Daxaar* finds Reid laying down intense voodoo drumming based in Yoruban religious music. A former Black Panther, Reid's music—and his commentary—speaks for itself.

"A lot of drummers use drums that don't sound like drums," Reid believes. "For thirty years drums have been manufactured more for recording than for drum sound. They put mufflers in the heads, which cut down on the actual drum sound. Guys never hear an open drum with a ring, or learn how to control that ring to their advantage."

Playing a hybrid set of 1950s-era drums and cymbals, Reid often holds the groove for an entire song's length without drum fills,

crashes, or even a simple roll. "I got that from playing behind James Brown," Reid explains. "There it was imperative that you hold the groove. I set up a trance, like hypnosis. So even when I'm not doing it, you think I'm doing it. That's what I learned from the old timers like Jo Jones and Chick Webb. A lot of drummers have great technique, but that can make the rhythm sound unnerving. I try to bypass the thinking process and play as relaxed as possible so that more things are possible."

Often using his left-hand stick to play ride cymbal and floor tom simultaneously, the left-handed Reid is also a master of flow. "I'm always approaching the cymbal in an 'upward' way. You never glance or hit a cymbal. You should be dancing on top, like walking on water. The cymbal will speak if it's open. I try to get the stick up off the cymbal as quickly as possible and let it ring. Then it feeds off its own energy."

Ken Micallef

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UPDATE NEWS

Kenny Aronoff is on The Heligoats' new EP, *The End Of All Purpose*.

The new *Jazz Icons Series 3* DVDs feature performances by Sonny Rollins (**Alan Dawson**, **Albert "Tootie" Heath**), Cannonball Adderley (**Louis Hayes**), Bill Evans (**Larry Bunker**, **Eliot Zigmund**, Alan Dawson, **Marty Morrell**), Rahsaan Roland Kirk (**Daniel Humair**, **Alex Riel**), Nina Simone (**Bobby Hamilton**, **Buck Clark**), Lionel Hampton (**Wilbert Hogan**), and Oscar Peterson (**Ed Thigpen**). The performances were taken from European television masters and feature a truly wonderful mix of bona fide drumming legends and intriguing cult figures.

Zach Hill is on Marnie Stern's *This Is It...*

Daniel Freedman is on trumpeter Avishai Cohen's *Flood*, which is part two of the *Big Rain* trilogy.

J.D. Blair is touring with Celtic fiddler Natalie MacMaster. He'll be recording with her soon. J.D. is also on Yo-Yo Ma's new Christmas CD. And he's on The New Millennium Jazz Project featuring Kirk Whalum. Finally, J.D. will hit the road with bassist Victor Wooten in March '09, touring as a duo.

Trilok Gurtu and **Andrés Coayo** are on *Gracias*, the new disc by Buena Vista Social Club singer Omara Portuondo.

Rilo Kiley drummer **Jason Boesel** plays drums on Rachael Yamagata's sophomore studio album, *Teeth Sinking Into Heart*. Also appearing are **Jay Bellerose**, **Jon O'Reilly**, **Chris Gibaldi**, **Sean O'Keefe**, and **Than Luu**.

Adam Jarvis is on Misery Index's *Traitors*.

Nasheet Waits is on *The Turning Gate* by The New Jazz Composers Octet.

Bill Stewart appears on Bill Carothers' *Home Row*.

John Riley is on Todd Coolman's *Perfect Strangers*.

DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Chick Webb was born on 2/10/09. **Baby Dodds** passed away on 2/14/59. **Karen Carpenter** on 2/4/83. **Tony Williams** on 2/23/97. The Doobie Brothers' **Keith Knudsen** on 2/8/05, and percussion great **Ray Barretto** on 2/17/06.

2/18/69: Miles Davis records *In A Silent Way*, with Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Joe Zawinul, John McLaughlin, and **Tony Williams**.

2/8/75: R&B/funk band The Ohio Players (with **Jimmy "Diamond" Williams** on drums) have the number-one single, "Fire," from their number-one album of the same name.

2/4/07: Prince (with **Cora Coleman Dunham** on drums) performs in the pouring rain at the Superbowl XLI halftime show at Dolphin Stadium in Florida.



Tony Williams

Dennis Diken is on The Smithereens' *B-Sides The Beatles*, the follow-up to the band's first Beatles tribute, *Meet The Smithereens*, in which they recreated the Fab Four's debut album. Guest drummer **Andy White** reprises his performance on the early Beatles hit "P.S. I Love You."

John Dittrich has been on the road with Restless Heart, celebrating their twenty-fifth anniversary. (The band still features all of its original members.)

Dorian Crozier is on singer Jon McLaughlin's latest, *OK Now*.



Alex Soleda

Stephen Anderson and his band Shachah recently signed a deal with Cross Movement Records. Their latest album, *On The Move*, is in stores now.

David "Hawk" Lopez is on Crown Of Thorns' latest, *Faith*.

Steve Holley is on Joan Osborne's latest, *Little Wild One*, while **Aaron Comess** is playing select live dates. Steve is also recording Ian Hunter's new one.

Rich Redmond is on the road with country music star Jason Aldean.

Rick Jordan is touring with R&B singer Maxwell.

Matchbox Twenty's **Paul Doucette** released his first solo release, *Milk The Bee*, under the moniker The Break And Repair Method. **Ryan MacMillan** is on the CD and tour.

Dr. Fink, former keyboardist of Prince & The Revolution, is back with his project Man On Earth. The new CD is titled *The Time Spent Wondering*. The album contains many guests and features drummer **David Garcia**, among others.

Check out former Joe Jackson guitarist Vinnie Zumbo's CD *Swinging Guitar Sounds Of Young America*. The album features drummers **Shawn Pelton**, **Terry Silverlight**, **Billy Stuart**, and **Gary Burke**, with **Bashiri Johnson** on percussion. Vinnie even gets behind the kit on a few tracks, including a tribute to Ringo Starr.

The 2003 *Modern Drummer* undiscovered winner, **Lou Santiago Jr.**, is offering 99-cent video drum lessons on his Web site. Visit www.lousantiagojr.com for more details.

Steve Gadd and **Luis Conte** are on James Taylor's latest, *Covers*.

Keith Zebroski is on the road with country star Miranda Lambert.

Congratulations to **Jason McGerr** and his wife, Kerensa, on the birth of their son, Silas Foster.

Happy Birthday!

Hal Blaine (session great): 2/5/29
Mick Avory (The Kinks): 2/15/44
Harvey Mason (session giant): 2/22/47
Nigel Olsson (Elton John): 2/10/49
Jerry Shirley (Humble Pie): 2/4/52
Manny Elias (Tears For Fears/Julian Lennon): 2/21/53
Vinnie Colaiuta (drum legend): 2/5/56
Jerry Marotta (studio): 2/6/57
Simon Phillips (ex-Toto): 2/6/57
Taylor Hawkins (Foo Fighters): 2/10/68
Pat Wilson (Weezer): 2/1/69
Teddy Campbell (*American Idol*/sessions): 2/24/75



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Shouldering The Burden

I've been having pains in both my arms and shoulders for the past year. I was finally diagnosed with Thoracic Outlet Syndrome about two months ago. It's especially difficult for me to deal with this because I'm allergic to ibuprofen. Do you know any workout exercises, health tips, or other medications that I could try to help alleviate the pain?

Alex Lugwa

Thankfully we have your diagnosis, so let's start there. Briefly, the thoracic outlet is made up of three openings between your neck and your armpit, and carries very important nerves (the brachial plexus, which provides sensation and movement to your neck, arms, and hands), as well as arteries and veins. Certain medical conditions can result in the narrowing of these openings, causing pain, aches, tingling, and weakness. This can occur from a birth defect, development of fibrous bands, extra cervical ribs, and anomalous muscles. Repetitive trauma to the nerves and blood vessels (like drumming) can also irritate the openings of these structures and cause symptoms.

You mentioned that you're allergic to ibuprofen. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is a safe alternative. Aspirin is effective but can cause a similar reaction as ibuprofen, so be careful. There are narcotic pain medications, but most can become addictive. Interestingly, anti-depressants such as Doxepin can also be helpful if these symptoms have been occurring for a long time.

For most patients, conservative treatment is recommended. Stress avoidance, job site modification, and work simplification are recommended to avoid sustained contraction and repetitive or overhead (high cymbal placement, heavy sticks) work that exacerbate symptoms.

To decrease muscle pain, try strengthening and stretching exercise programs and work on using good posture. Here are a few examples: 1) trapezius and rhomboid strengthening (shoulder shrugs and rolling your shoulders); 2) shoulder mobilization (hand circles and standing corner pushups); and 3) postural exercises (neck and lower back spine extension). These exercises aid in stabilizing and opening the thoracic outlet at the shoulder. You can start drumming again once you're symptom-free. If these steps fail, you should revisit your doctor.



Dr. Asif Khan is a board-certified internist, specializing in allergy and immunology, with a private practice in northeast Ohio. He also directs the nonprofit organization Passion And Profession (www.passionandprofession.com), which focuses on career counseling and education. Dr. Khan has been an avid drummer for twenty years and is currently performing with Johnny Hi-Fi (www.johnnyhi-fi.com).

"Proper" Conga Tuning

Can you please tell me the correct way to tune a conga, quinto, and tumba? Are there specific notes that they're supposed to be tuned to?

Len Golubski

Like drumset drums, most congas have a limited effective tuning range, and there's generally one specific tuning that sounds the best. This will vary from drum to drum, and from size to size. If you have high-quality drums, there could be multiple sweet spots. You just have to experiment to find the place(s) where your drums really sing.

Start with your largest drum (tumba) tuned as low as it can go, and then gradually bring up the tension (going from one lug to the next in a circular pattern) until you find a spot that sounds good to your ear. Then move on to the other two drums. Once all three drums are at their lowest "optimal" tuning, you should be able to make small adjustments to the tuning of each conga to find pleasing, consonant intervals from drum to drum. Most congueros prefer intervals of a 3rd, a perfect 4th, or a perfect 5th between their drums.

For more cut and crispness, pitch the drums higher while maintaining the same basic intervals. For deeper, earthier tones, explore the bottom of your drums' tuning ranges. It all depends on what you want to hear.

For more traditional applications, some players tune the tumba to the note G and the conga to C. Then they pitch the quinto a bit above that, somewhere between a D and an F. That tuning will give you a classic conga setup.

Vinnie's Ride Cymbal

I recently purchased a 22" Zildjian K sizzle ride cymbal. I noticed that Vinnie Colaiuta's name and the number K-004 were engraved into the cymbal under the Zildjian stamp. I'm hoping you can give me some history on this cymbal.

Rick Crisostomo



According to Zildjian product communications manager John King, "The cymbal in your possession is one of four that were made in April of 2000 for Vinnie. They were designed to duplicate one of his favorite 22" Pre-Aged K rides (with rivets) that had developed a crack. We will often address requests from our artists to create new cymbals that will apply to a specific project. But in this case, we were simply replicating a special cymbal that Vinnie had grown fond of. You were lucky enough to secure one of the additional cymbals that were sent for his review."

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Centennial Series Kit And Black Magic Snares

Few musical instrument companies last for ten years, let alone a hundred. That's why it's so astounding that 2009 marks the centennial of the Ludwig Drum Company. To commemorate this auspicious occasion, Ludwig is releasing their Centennial Series, a kit designed with pro specs "to answer the demands of the touring drummer." I spent a few weeks with one of the sets to find out what they're all about. Here's the deal.

The Basics

Our review kit is finished in a green sparkle lacquer that's definitely both green and sparkled. Depending on the setting you're in, the bright, shiny appearance could be a bit much, although I'm sure they'd have tremendous presence on stage at a large venue. The series is also available in three other finishes if green sparkle isn't your thing.

Each Centennial drum is equipped with Ludwig's Classic Micro-Lug. I thought these new lugs looked great. As the name suggests they have the same shape as the company's original Classic lug, only smaller. I really liked the claws on the bass drum as well. They fit flush around the curve of the

hoop and have a recessed area for the top of the key rod to sit in—very sleek.

Centennial Series drums also come with special 100th-anniversary badges. They're a bit busy-looking for my taste, but you might find them appealing.

The Sound Of Centennial

The first thing I noticed out of the box was the kick. At 20x20, it's not a size I'm accustomed to, and in the past "square" drums haven't performed particularly well for me. So I wasn't sure what to expect. First, I tuned the heads to a medium-low tension and played the drum wide open (no muffling). While the sound wasn't "bad," I did have a hard time imagining what setting it would be appropriate for. While it had a sort of jazzy tone, it was a little too deep to be used in that style, and yet it didn't have enough impact to really rock.



Ludwig 5x14, 7x13, And 6½x14 Black Magic Snares

With their snares being played on more recordings from the past forty years than any other brand's, Ludwig seems to have mastered the craft of snare making. To continue that lineage, they've released the Black Magic line. These snares are offered in three sizes and feature the same black nickel-over-brass shell design as their big brother, the Black Beauty, but with added features such as die-cast hoops, tube lugs, and a reduced retail price.

The first model I tried was the 5x14. Because of its shallower depth, this model has a bit more snare response than the other two, but it lacks the powerful "thud" of the deeper drums. It's still quite a versatile snare, providing a loud crack from rimshots and enough finesse to sit in well with a jazz combo. The resonant shell, die-cast hoops, and 10-lug design also allow for a wide range of tunings. This was true for all three sizes, although a medium-high tension seemed to bring out the best sound in each.

Next up was the 8-lug 7x13 model, whose dimensions result in a funkier sound. When left unmuffled, the decay had a life of its own—in a good way. The tube lugs seem to free up this drum's naturally resonant quality. Whether the drum was tuned up or down, I heard the same fundamental "kang" coming from the metal shell. When I needed a little less ring, I dampened the top

head, which unveiled a round thud hiding in the tone—a rarity for most 13" drums. Another detail that separates this 13" drum from many others is its credible rimclick sound, thanks to the die-cast rim.

Last to be tested was the 6½x14. The first thing I did with this drum was smack a fat rimshot, which produced a powerful "crack" and a thick thud. That combination of sounds makes this an ideal drum for today's rock 'n' roll styles. Of the three Black Magics, this is the one that would stay on my snare stand the longest. I had to muffle the drum a bit, though, because it can be a bit overwhelming if left completely open. To test its sensitivity, I tapped lightly on the middle of the drum while adjusting the snare tension from loose to tight, and there weren't any dead spots. I loved this drum for its one-two punch of clarity and thickness; it was a lot of fun to play.

I really like what Ludwig has done here by taking their classic Black Beauty design and making it more apt for the modern working drummer. As far as all-around snares go, these drums rock. So if you're in need of a real workhorse-style snare, then the Black Magics should be on your list of drums to check out. With a starting list price of \$489.99, you'll get a great drum at an even greater price.

www.ludwig-drums.com



Next, I took off the front head and threw in two bed sheets. I then replaced the front head with an Ambassador that had a 6" hole cut in it. With the rumpled sheets resting against each head, the drum had a more focused attack and a contained "thud" that I could feel in my chest.

When I used this kick (with the same heads and muffling) for an outdoor gig—which involved miking with an Audix D6 in the drum and running the signal through the subs of the PA—after the first tune the bass player turned to me with a smile and said he loved its sound. For the R&B/dance music we were playing, the drum fit in perfectly. If you mostly play rock, you'd probably want to go with one of the other shell packs with a bigger kick, to give you a lower-pitched and more open sound.

The 6½x13 Centennial snare sounded good, and it was definitely "funky." Like most 13" snares I've played, it lacks the versatility to perform in a heavy rock setting, and cross-sticks are hard to play. I had to leave this drum at home for my outdoor gig, because we play some reggae and this snare's cross-stick wouldn't have cut. If you're playing some straight funk or hip-hop, however, this snare would work great. When cranked up, it has that "popcorn" sound that really cuts. And depending on how you dampen it, you can go from a nice "pang" sound to a tight crack. I

thought it sounded great almost every way I tried it, with the exception of deep hard rock-style tunings.

The toms also fit the bill. Both rack toms had nice range and tone. Their sizes allowed a wide variety of tuning, and the 6-ply maple shells added to their versatility. The sound I finally settled on—using the clear Ambassador heads that were supplied with the set—was a medium-low tuning with just a little bit of dampening. The attack was clear, and the body of the sound was round and full, even when I tuned them higher. The toms responded well at all volumes, making them work for everything from jazz to hard rock, depending on how you set them up.

The floor toms were along the same lines as the rack toms. The shallower depth of these drums made tuning them a breeze but didn't prohibit them from having a big sound. They sounded "okay" when tuned up, but again I found that a lower tuning was where these drums performed their best. Even at a low tuning, they still had some tone, especially the 14". Minimal dampening was required.

Ludwig gives you a choice on the tightening hardware for the floor tom legs. The set we reviewed came with both key-rod and wingnut options. I prefer wingnuts because you don't have to grab a drum key to make quick adjustments to the legs.



THE CENTENNIAL SET COMES IN FOUR PRE-CONFIGURED CORE SHELL PACKS.

The set we received was the smallest of the bunch (dimensionally), with a 20x20 kick, 13x14 and 13x16 floor toms, an 8x12 rack tom, and a 6 1/2x13 snare. The other shell packs offer 22" or 24" bass drums, also with a 20" depth. Ludwig also sent a 7 1/2x10 add-on tom, which can be purchased separately.

The Sum-Up

For the drummers that Ludwig is targeting with these drums (working/touring players), they did a fantastic job. The quality and sound of these drums, along with a \$1,400 starting retail price, seems like the ideal choice for "mobile" drummers. Let's face it, when you're carting your drums from gig to gig, they're bound to get a little beat up. At least with these drums you won't have the guilt of scratching your \$3,000-\$5,000 custom set. And you won't have to sacrifice much of the sound, either. Thanks, Ludwig, for thinking about us working drummers, and congrats on your 100th anniversary.

THE NUMBERS

- LRC20G Centennial four-piece shell pack with 20" kick: **\$1,459.99**
- LRC7510TG Centennial 7 1/2x10 tom: **\$284.99**
- LRC1314FG Centennial 13x14 floor tom: **\$355.99**

- LW0713 7x13" Black Magic snare: **\$499.99**
 - LW5514 5x14 Black Magic snare: **\$489.99**
 - LW6514 6 1/2x14 Black Magic snare: **\$524.99**
- www.ludwig-drums.com



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Signature Crystal Thin And Reflector Series Cymbals

Paiste has expanded the broad palette of their well-established Signature series. The two new lines examined here lie at opposite ends of the dynamic spectrum and offer drummers some versatile new choices. New models include additions to the Reflector series and the Crystal Thin models, which were born out of the Sound Creation Mellow crashes of the 1970s and feature a unique flattened bell. Let's begin with these.

14" Crystal Hats

Crystal Hats, which are currently offered only in a 14" diameter, are reminiscent of hi-hats from the 1960s, mostly due to the fact that the top cymbal is very thin and light while the bottom cymbal is much heavier. This matching of light and heavy cymbals helps give the Crystal Hats a modern sound with the feel and character of a vintage instrument.

Like many '60s hi-hats I've played, the Crystals have a usable but very light foot "chick" sound and a soft playing feel. These cymbals would be right at home in any low-volume application. They have an interesting sizzle, even when played completely closed. These hats also respond well when played with multi-rod and bundle sticks. Don't expect them to project on their own in loud situations, but they will work great for quiet coffee-house gigs and other situations in which character and complexity are more important than volume.

16", 18", And 20" Crystal Thin Crashes

The Crystal Thin crashes are similar to the Crystal hats in that



they offer a bright, sizzling sound with a relatively quick decay. They are also pretty quiet, again reminding me of thinner vintage cymbals. I used all three of these models on a low-volume steel drum-quartet gig, and I was impressed with how easily they "opened up," yielding full but quiet crash sounds. The 16" model was a bit wispy and performed more like a large splash cymbal than a medium-sized crash. I feel that this model would serve particularly well as an orchestral suspended cymbal.

The 18" and 20" crashes have the same basic quality as the 16", with a much fuller sound. I used the 20" Crystal Thin crash as a crash/ride and was generally pleased with its performance, as it offered a useable amount of stick definition and a controlled wash.

All of the Crystal Thin crashes lack any real useable bell sounds, due to their flattened shape. Though this design undoubtedly contributes to their unique timbre and extreme sen-



sitivity, it doesn't provide enough playing area to produce consistent sounds when struck directly. I experimented with piggy-backing splashes on top of the Crystal Thins with a felt placed between the cymbals. The flat bells helped make the smaller cymbals more stable during play.

Of all of the Crystal Thin crashes, I could see the 20" fitting best with a mixed cymbal setup, as it offers a full and shimmering medium-volume crash, great low-volume response, and some crash/ride potential.

14" Reflector Heavy Full Hi-Hats

I must admit that I was apprehensive of the entire Reflector Heavy Full line prior to playing them, as my experience with "Heavy" or "Brilliant" cymbals has usually been less than positive in the past. I was pleasantly surprised to find that all of the cymbals in this line are bright, responsive, and very clean sounding, without much of the "gonginess" that is sometimes present in thicker-bowed cymbals.

The Reflector Heavy Full hi-hats were the jewel of all of the instruments in this review, as they shined in every situation I put them in. I brought a selection of both the Crystal Thins and the Heavy Full cymbals for my drummer to use on a gig where I was playing steel drums, and he stated several times how much he enjoyed the Heavy Full hi-hats. He was impressed by how much control and nuance they delivered in spite their "heavy duty" designation.

Besides a strong foot "chick" and a surprisingly dark open sound, these hats also produced fully controllable foot sizzles and a tight, funky closed stick sound. I could see them performing really well in a variety of modern situations, including amplified or acoustic rock and funk.

Reflector Heavy Full Crashes

Paiste describes the Reflector Heavy Full Crash line as having "the flexibility of a thinner crash and the sturdiness of a heavy crash." I found this to be an accurate description. I used the entire line, including the massive 22" Heavy Full crash, on a loud modern-rock gig and was very pleased with them. I play sloshy open hi-hats, ride on large crashes, and bash my ride cymbal with the shoulder of my sticks with this band, and the Heavy Full crashes were right at home; they took every bit of

what I could give them.

The 20" and 22" crashes were a bit difficult to get to open up and produce a full crash sound.

Though I play pretty hard, I suspect that it would take a much more heavy-handed player with a significantly more substantial stick than my preferred 5A to really get these monsters to perform to their potential.

The 22" crash was a satis-

factory crash/ride, as it responded particularly well to aggressive playing with the shoulder of the stick. The 16", 17", 18", and 19" models were all very clean-sounding and sonically matched with each other. The 17" and 18" crashes worked best for most typical rock situations, and the 19" is great for creating a roaring crash/ride sound.

All of the Heavy Full models had useable and very musical bells, and they reminded me of the bell sounds Paiste endorser Danny Carey used extensively on Tool's second album, *Undertow*.

Reflector Splashes And Cool Bell

Both the 8" and 10" Reflector splashes are designed to provide a quick, shimmering attack of color. They do just that, without any odd overtones that often accompany the "splash" of some other tiny accent cymbals. These splashes blend well with their larger Reflector siblings, and they made me feel like Stewart Copeland every time I played them.

The 8" Cool Bell was somewhat of an oddity, and would be best suited for classical music, percussion ensemble, or contemporary music applications. When I used the Cool Bell in a rehearsal with my modern rock band, I got the "evil eye" as my singer turned and looked at me with furrowed brow. It produces a bright, metallic sound that rings forever. But if you consider yourself a "forward thinker," this unusual sound could be of interest to you.

Reflector Bell Rides

The 20" and 22" Reflector Bell Rides lived up to their name with cutting, throaty bell sounds, as well as great stick "ping" and a nicely controlled wash. They complemented the other models of the Heavy Full line very well while displaying distinct differences from the crashes of the same size. Both Bell Rides responded well to crashing with the shoulder of the stick, while resisting building up to an uncontrollable wash.

The 20" model proved to be a great substitute for my usual medium ride, which I use in a variety of musical situations. The 22" Bell Ride is clearly designed as a heavy rock cymbal—as is evidenced by the prominent Power Slave logo of Iron Maiden's Nicko McBrain—and it definitely shines in that role. Yet the 22" produces a much darker and more musical tone than I expected from a cymbal of this size and weight.

In The End

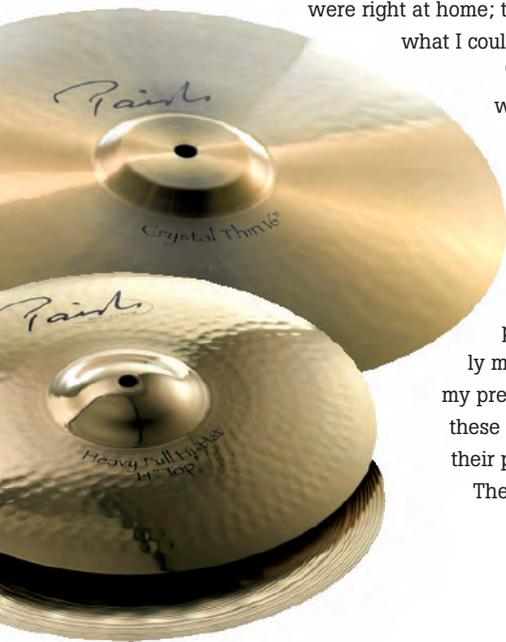
These new offerings from Paiste are great additions to the already far-reaching scope of the company's Signature line. The Reflectors fill an underserved niche with musically versatile medium crashes and heavy cymbals that can stand up to the punishment of modern music. The Crystal Thin models explore the other end of the decibel meter, offering some refreshingly delicate sounds.

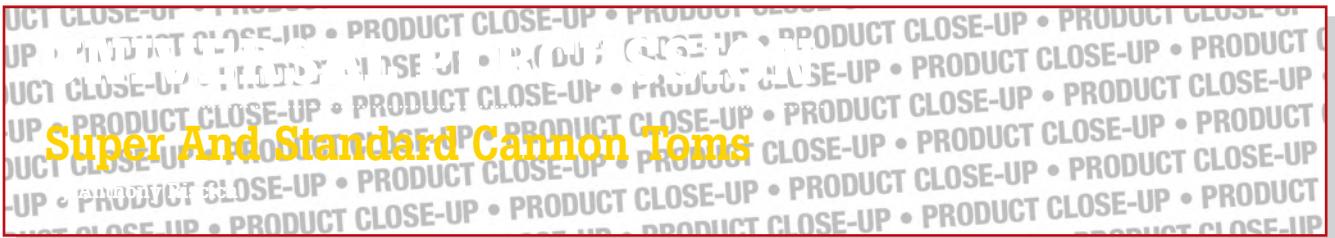
THE NUMBERS

Signature Reflector prices range from \$238 for the 8" splash to \$664 for the 22" Bell Ride. The 14" Heavy Full hi-hats list for \$656.

Crystal Thin crashes range from \$414 for the 16" to \$564 for the 20". The 14" hi-hats are \$656, and the Cool Bell is \$238.

www.paiste.com





Super And Standard Cannon Toms



Super Cannon Toms

I remember the first time I saw “tubular” toms on a famous drummer’s kit. It was Stewart Copeland with The Police, and that was more than twenty years ago. Now the originators of these unique-sounding drums have brought the product back to life.

First developed in 1977 by Universal Percussion, Cannon Toms were what launched the Cannon brand of percussion instruments and accessories that most of us know today. I had the chance to try out a full set of eight Super Cannons and their more affordable counterparts the Standard Cannons.

Composition Of A Cannon

These drums are all 8" in diameter, as opposed to the 6" diameter common in other tube drums. This extra width is a great advantage, especially when you’re trying to fly over to them really quickly from somewhere else on your kit. (Bigger targets!) The size also gives a little more depth to the sound.

All of the drums came with standard lugs, 2.3-mm steel hoops, and Attack 1-ply medium drumheads. The 1-ply heads seem to be the ideal choice, as I never had the urge to swap them out for a different sound or feel.

The Super Cannons feature an 8-ply maple shell and “hand-crafted” bearing edges that on close inspection were practically flawless. The Standard Cannons are made of birch and have a slightly less-than-perfect edge and construction. Both models are sold in predetermined pairs of sizes and come with the same lightweight, double-braced dual-tom stand.

The Sound Of A Cannon

On first strike, these drums reminded me of marching toms, due to their smaller diameter, open-ended construction, and “melodic” application. The shallower toms have a resonant timbale-like sound, while the deeper drums create more of a thud with less sustain.



Standard Cannon Toms



Tuning the drums was a breeze. But when I set up all eight drums from either line at the same time, I needed to dial in a large variance in head tension to get eight distinctly different pitches. This is due to the fact that all of the drums are of the same diameter; different shell depths don't really change a drum's pitch that much. The different depths do, however, lend themselves to a better overall sound at certain pitches.

I was pleased with the sound from both the Super and Standard models, but could definitely hear the difference in quality between the maple handcrafted drums and the more economic birch models. The maple drums had a wider tuning range from drum to drum, a fuller attack, and a slightly warmer tone.

Application

I slipped into a hip-hop/go-go zone when toying around with these drums. Although they'll work in other genres too, I found that funkier styles suited them best. I miked them up from the bottom (as you should with most open-ended instruments) and got some cool sounds. The attack was very "in your face," and the tone was distinct. The deeper drums create more of a thud sound, which can be altered depending on the mic

placement. The only downfall was that I needed to use a lot of extra mics to record the entire set. The Super Canons had more of that old-school hip-hop tom sound, which lent itself to swung grooves with running triplet fills.

I also found that because of their almost timbale-like sound (especially on the shallower drums), these tube toms could work in reggae or Latin styles, a la Bob Marley drummer Carlton Barrett or Stewart Copeland. They might also be the answer for Latin percussionists who need a compact setup.

Summing Them Up

With four sets of paired depths (4"/6", 8"/10", 12"/14", and 16"/18"), Cannon makes it easy for you to add as much "tube" to your setup as you want. So if you're looking for a different tom sound that can work in any situation—go-go, Latin, electronic, marching, and anywhere in between—you should definitely check out these Cannons.

THE NUMBERS

List prices for the **Super Cannon pairs** range from **\$475 to \$675**, while the **Standard Cannons** are **less than half the price** but aren't available in the 14", 16", or 18" sizes.
www.universalpercussion.com



PORK PIE 7x13 BRASS PATINA



HOW'S IT SOUND?

This is a loud, dry, and dark sounding brass snare drum. When I first played it, the batter head and the snare tension were both cranked, and the drum sounded a lot like a marching snare (not the table-top "tick" common in most modern drum corps, but the slightly thicker and more resonant sound that was popular before Kevlar heads came in vogue). At a lower tension (around medium-tight), the drum sounded more "classical," with impressive sensitivity and a complex, crisp snare sound that was close to that of a drum with cable wires. (Pork Pie's brass snare wires and hand-done patina finish likely contribute somewhat to this model's rich timbre.) I can see high school percussionists getting away with using this drum for some symphonic work.

On drumset, the 7x13 Patina sounds best tuned tight to bring out the most

WHAT'S IT COST? \$700

"pop." Because of its depth, any tuning had a certain amount of fullness to the overall tone, and I didn't feel like the drum lost power or punch when I really cranked it down. I also liked the way this drum responded to using a lot of muffling, such as a 3" square of cloth taped to the outer third of the head. On other snares, this much padding can cause the drum to sound dead and muted. But on this one, it only accentuated the drum's naturally dark voice by cutting out all of the high, brassy overtones. Very low tunings (with the same judicious amount of muffling) were pretty fat and thumpy, while medium tunings sounded decent. But for this one, tight is right.

www.porkpiedrums.com



Rikki Rockett Rides



Poison drummer Rikki Rockett and Bosphorus cymbals might not seem like a match made in heaven, but if Bosphorus is looking to boost its image beyond that of a traditional jazzy cymbal maker, then these 20" and 22" ride cymbals are a step in the right direction. Let's start with their appearance and manufacturing.

The Rockett Rides sport the combination lathed/unlathed finish on top that's found in other Bosphorus models. The huge bell is raw and unlathed, as is a 2" area close to (but not on) the edge. The very edge (1/2") and middle (6") of the cymbal are lathed, giving it a cool look for those interested in visual appeal. The bottom of the rides is almost completely raw except for a 2" lathed area around the edge. The entire cymbal is hand hammered, giving it those classic Bosphorus dimples. The looks alone on this cymbal are sure to start a few conversations at your next gig.

Loud, Pingy, And Warm

I couldn't resist trying the Rikki Rockett ride with some Vater signature Rikki Rockett Bottle Rocket sticks, as well as with a pair of standard 5Bs. Overall, both sticks yielded similar results, although the larger tip on the Rockett stick added a bit more girth to the attack. The 20" ride sounded close to how I thought it would—like a rock ride. It's a heavy cymbal, which gives it a lot of attack with a full ping sound, even when struck close to the edge. The wash was controlled and never got in the way. The bell

sound definitely cut through the mix in the guitar-driven rock setting I used it in. The extra-large bell was also an easy target for either tip or shank strokes. Overall, the 20" is your typical rock 'n' roll ride with a bit more warmth than your average heavy cymbal.

I loved the 22" Rockett Ride for its intended application. The ping with the tip of the stick was fat and sweet-sounding, yet it cut like a warm knife through butter. The wash was well contained on this larger model. The bell sound on the 22" was also more flavorful than its 20" counterpart, while still cutting through in a hard-rock setting. I honestly really enjoyed playing this cymbal and would recommend it if you're looking for a big, thick ride that's much more than just a hunk of heavy metal.

Bigger Is Better

If you're looking for a more "grown up" rock ride, or one with a bit more complexity than most cymbals labeled as "heavy" or "rock," then I'd go for the 22" Rockett ride. The 20" isn't bad either, but if given the choice I'd definitely throw the 22" in my bag, albeit a much *heavier* bag. Overall, Bosphorus has done a great job of creating a heavier yet still sophisticated sound.

THE NUMBERS

20" Rockett Ride: \$575

22" Rockett Ride: \$625

www.bosphoruscymbals.com



Twin Pedal

In 1972, double bass drum pedals were not nearly as popular as they are today. That explains why when Don Sleishman developed his innovative design for double pedals over thirty-five years ago, it didn't quite catch on. Now that double pedals are part of many setups, the unique Sleishman pedal is ready for a second chance. Let's check it out.

Symmetrical Design

The Sleishman pedal is made symmetrically, which allows for the action and feel on both sides to be exactly the same. The design uses extended footplates that directly control the beater, rather than extension arms that are used on most double pedals (which almost never feel exactly the same as the main side of the pedal).

The Sleishman's design also allows you and your snare drum to sit squarely behind the bass drum. This not only provides the same feel as having two bass drums, but also makes the symmetrical setup made popular by studio great/famed teacher Gary Chester and others much easier to accomplish.

The pedal attaches to the bass drum using a unique design that doesn't grab the bass drum hoop in the usual way. Rather, the drum sits on top of a small baseplate, and two metal strips sandwich the hoop from the front and back. This allows you to slide the pedal closer to or further from the drum while still keeping it firmly attached. This, combined with the pedal's adjustable throw, creates a freedom in feel that I've never experienced before.

Making The Adjustment

The solid-plate/direct-drive action of the pedal makes a difference to the feel as well. While it took some getting used to, this pedal didn't feel nearly as strange as the first time I played a "conventional" double pedal. The only problem I had with the design was that it didn't allow for enough spread between the pedals. As a moderately tall person (6' 1"), my legs were just a bit too close together. There's only about 2" to 3" of distance to play with between the pedals.

Another slight problem I had with the Sleishman's design was that it made it difficult to get my rack toms in a comfortable position after the hi-hat was placed in a good spot next to the left pedal. I had to



Sleishman's unique base plate allows easy forward and back positioning.

move the toms over to the right a significant amount so that the first tom didn't collide with the hi-hat cymbals. This could just be the way I position my kit, but if you end up using the Sleishman, be prepared to have to modify your setup a bit.

Conclusion

Overall, the Sleishman pedal has the potential to become a popular alternative to a standard double pedal. If you only use your double pedal to spice things up here and there, it might not be worth going through all the setup adjustments. But if double bass is your thing and you like the feel of sitting perfectly square behind your kit, you should spend some time with the Sleishman pedal. It might just rock your world.



The Twin's adjustable throw and sliding baseplate combine for a great feel. But you'll want to experiment with the pedal spread to make sure it's flexible enough for you.



THE NUMBERS

Sleishman Twin Pedal
(with case): \$839
www.bigbangdist.com

To hear some of these products, go to the multi-media page at modern drummer.com

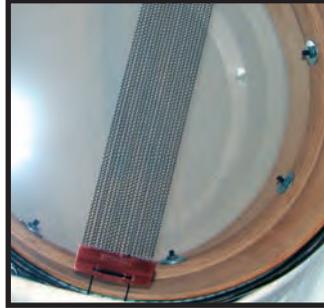


JUST INTRODUCED!

Creative custom companies, new cases, and interesting accessories are the things to check out this month.



5



6



1) REVELATION DRUMS is a fully custom company offering top-of-the-line quality at an affordable price. All types of stained or lacquered finishes, wraps, and custom graphics are available. Drums can be made from exotic and standard woods and veneers, metals, acrylic, and carbon-fiber shells. Construction options include reinforcement rings, custom vents, split drums, and hybrid shells.

revelationdrums.com

2) FORD DRUMS' extra-thick The Phat One has been added to the company's extensive line of drum thrones. The seat is made of authentic Swedish memory foam and is nearly twice as thick as existing models. Designed for larger-framed drummers, The Phat One is available with a round or moto-style seat, with over forty color combinations and four stitching styles (Channel, Diamond, large Kustom Diamond, and Thong) to choose from. The Phat One seat top can be ordered alone, or as part of a complete package (top, base, and case). Coordinated seat backs are an optional upgrade. Retail price for the complete setup is \$499; the seat top alone lists for \$325.

forddrums.com

3) PROTECTION RACKET's Universal Compact hardware case is a slim alternative to bulky, heavy-duty bag. This 42" case is designed for drummers who only use a small number of stands. It comes with two internal straps to keep the contents from moving around, a fully adjustable shoulder strap, an abrasive-resistant base, and a two-piece self-gripping ergo handle.

protectionracket.com

4) PRO-MARK's new Wunderlich and Diversity series keyboard mallets—five for marimba and four for vibraphone—were designed with Jim Wunderlich, DCI drum corps Concord Blue Devils' front ensemble instructor. Each of the marimba mallets features a synthetic core and birch handle (\$44.95 per pair), while the vibraphone models feature rubber-like synthetic cores and rattan handles (\$54.95 per pair).

The Diversity keyboard mallet series consists of eight mallet models, four for marimba and four for xylophone. The marimba versions (DV1–DV4) feature latex-wrapped synthetic heads with a nylon/wool blend yarn wrapping and a birch shaft (retail price: \$44.95 per pair). The DV5R–DV8R xylophone mallets feature mushroom-shaped cord-wrapped heads on rattan shafts (retail price: \$54.95 per pair).

pro-mark.com

5) ORGANIC CUSTOM DRUMS' "floating" snare drums feature a unique, patent-pending dual-shell design that's claimed to allow the drum to resonate to its full potential, uninhibited by hardware, holes, and other factors that can limit sonic qualities. Each handcrafted drum features two individual shells and a central ring made of 32-ply maple. All hardware is attached to the central ring, allowing the shells to "float" within the structure of the drum. This dual-shell floating design opens up opportunities to mix and match different shell types for unique sounds.

organicdrums.biz

6) REUNION BLUES has expanded their prestige leather line to include a natural fabric Designer Series. These new bags are hand-crafted with a fine canvas weave, and they come in rich colors including Royal Navy, Earth, and Nutmeg shades. Bags are available for drumsticks and cymbals, and are trimmed with full-grain chestnut brown leather.

reunionblues.com

7) SILVERFOX DRUMSTICKS' new CM model (which is named after the stick's designer, Italian drummer Cristiano Micalizzi) was created specifically for funk/fusion drumming. The CM measures 16" long with a diameter of .585". The round ball tip measures .410" in diameter. A short taper gives added bulk in the neck area, which creates fast rebound and a well-balanced center of gravity. Like all SilverFox drumsticks, the CM is strengthened with the company's exclusive Duracrylx finish.

beststick.com

8) PLANET WAVES' Custom Pro Cable Line and Modular Snake System allows drummers who use multiple mics to keep their cables neat and organized. The Custom Pro Line is available with mono and stereo instrument and XLR male-to-female and XLR to 1/4" microphone cables (retail price: \$34.99–\$64.99). The Modular Snake System features easily interchangeable DB25 core cables and breakouts for flexible wiring options. DB25 Core cable is available in three lengths—5', 10', and 25'. Users can mix and match core cables and breakouts for any snake configuration, thus saving money by expanding cabling options and reducing the number of snakes needed to complete various connections (retail price: \$59.99–\$159.99).

planetwaves.com

9) The PEACE D-Hole is an adhesive-backed cutting template for resonant bass drum heads. At 5" in diameter and available in black or silver, the D-Hole offers a practical and clean-looking solution for drummers who need to mike their bass drums internally.

peacedrum.com

10) PERCUSSION PLUS's 9x10 PPTOM add-on tom comes with a tom arm and a mounting bracket. Five finishes are available, including black, brushed blue, brushed red, steel grey, and wine red. Retail price is \$69.95.

11) The affordable yet durable 40x14x12 1/2 hardware bag comes with wheels for easy maneuvering, plus a side accessory compartment and an additional storage compartment. The water-resistant exterior and reinforced plastic bottom helps protect the bag while rolling. The bag holds six or seven pieces of hardware. List price: \$119.95.

musiccorp.com



7



8



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10

11



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*Chris Adler
Lamb of God*

S Small	M Medium <small>Medium weight and diameter</small> 5A	L Large	XL Extra Large	XXL Double Extra Large
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MD Product Shootout!

DRUMMER HEADPHONES

One of the most important—yet generally overlooked—pieces of gear for a drummer to own is a nice set of headphones. Whether you use them when practicing to a metronome, playing along to your favorite CDs, recording tracks for your band's next record, or jamming out on a set of electronic drums, it's crucial to have a set that not only offers great sound quality, but also provides a decent amount of isolation so you don't have to crank the volume too loud. You also want something that feels comfortable on your head, especially after several hours of use. What follows is a comparative look at a handful of drummer headphones that'll help you find just the right pair to suit your needs.



GK MUSIC ULTRAPHONES

THE ORIGINAL
DRUMMER'S
HEADPHONES

Steve Miller Band drummer Gordy Knutson's company, GK Music, has been building hearing-protection stereo headphones designed specifically for musicians since 1995. Combining a 29 dB-reducing, shooting range-style earmuff with a set of Sony 7506 professional studio monitor headphones, these cans offer a respectable listening experience (they sound a little flat when compared to some of the others) coupled with a lot of acoustic isolation, which allows even the hardest-hitting drummers to be able to listen to their headphone mix at a safe level. These aren't the most comfortable (they squeeze around your ears pretty tightly) or inconspicuous (you'll look like a runway air-traffic controller when you wear them), but they offer some of the best hearing protection you can find. They also come with a zippered carrying case.

Notable UltraPhone users:

Shawn Pelton, Steve Smith, Andres Forero.

Price: \$229.95 • www.gk-music.com



STUDIO
DRUMMER'S
CHOICE

DIRECT SOUND EXTREME ISOLATION EX-29

Like the UltraPhone, Extreme Isolation headphones were designed by a drummer who wanted to achieve the most isolation possible. Also sporting 29 dB of sound reduction and around-the-ear isolation, these professional-grade headphones are quickly becoming a favorite among many top touring and studio drummers. The basic design of the Extreme Isolations is sleeker than the UltraPhones—they have a flatter profile with slightly rectangular earcups—and they fold up nicely for easy transport. The EX-29s have an even but warm sound (they aren't as clean and ultra-realistic as some of the others we reviewed), and they block out a lot of outside noise, which allows you to keep your monitor levels much lower than you'd expect.

Notable EX-29 users:

Jim Riley, Nir Z, Shawn Drover, Daniel Erlandsson.

Price: \$169 • www.extremehdphones.com



RICH AND REALISTIC SOUND

ULTRASONICS HFI-580

The HFI-580s are the most impressive-sounding of our review group. Utilizing the company's trademarked S-Logic Plus surround sound and ULE metal-shielding technology, these headphones offer an incredible, hyper-realistic listening experience. The bass response is very tight and punchy, while the high frequencies sparkle and sheen with crystal clarity. For home-studio owners, these headphones would work great for mixing, as they expose every detail in your recordings. The HFI-580s also fold up easily and are very comfortable to wear. We especially enjoyed how their earcups don't press the ears into the head; rather, they fully encircle them. Sound reduction wasn't as extreme as it was with the UltraPhones or EX-29s, but there's plenty of isolation (up to 40%) to protect your hearing while you play. These are for discerning ears.

Price: \$199 • www.ultrasonics.com



AFFORDABLE AND EFFECTIVE

VIC FIRTH SH1

Vic Firth's SH1s are a great, cost-effective alternative to the others in this shootout. While the SH1s were the least hi-fi sounding of our review group, these shooting range-style headphones provide 24 dB of sound reduction, which proved to be more than enough to prevent hearing damage during loud practice sessions. The coiled cord can become a little bothersome if you have to stretch it to reach your headphone amp or CD/MP3 player. And you might not like the way these muffs push your ears tightly against the side of your head. But if you're strapped for cash and you've had to rely on your iPod earbuds for click/playalong practice, a pair of these would be a big improvement.

Notable SH1 user: Rod Morgenstein.

Price: \$101 • www.vicfirth.com



IDEAL FOR E-DRUMMERS

YAMAHA RH10MS

Yamaha's RH10MS headphones are like the Ultrasonics HFI-580's little brother, in that they're a little smaller and not quite as pristine sounding. But they're still super comfortable and solidly built, and the sound quality is *very* good. In fact, these cans feature Ultrasonics' S-Logic surround-sound technology (not the higher-end S-Logic Plus found in the HFI-580s). Isolation-wise, these are a little less effective than the others. But the earcups completely surround the ears without squeezing them too much. And they create a nice seal around the ears, which will prevent your click track or monitor mix from bleeding into overhead mics when recording. Because of their smaller size and lighter weight, these headphones would be great for extended use, like when you're practicing for hours on a set of electronic drums or refining a drum mix on your laptop. They also fold up very nicely and come with an embroidered velour pouch.

Price: \$159.99 • www.yamaha.com

METROPHONES-LCD

ADDED VALUE!

Metrophones are the only sound-isolating drummer headphones that we tested that come with a built-in metronome. The 42–210 bpm click track has its own on/off switch, volume control knob, and 2.5-mm output jack. The tempo of the metronome is adjusted by pressing a switch outward (faster) or inward (slower), while an LCD display inside one of the earpieces shows the actual tempo. The earcups are liquid-filled, which helps create a tight fit around the ears for 29 dB of sound reduction. The included 9' stereo cable is removable/replaceable, which is a good thing since the Metrophones are the only set that we checked out that didn't feature both 1/4" and 1/8" connectors on the end of the cable. You'll need an adaptor or a separate cable if you want to plug these phones into your iPod or portable CD player. The Metrophones are also the heaviest and least stylish of the group, with a bare metal headband and large-seamed plastic earcups. The sound quality is also a bit lower than that of some of the others. But the added bonus of a metronome makes these a worthwhile "two for one" purchase.

Notable Metrophones users:

Paul Leim, Kenny Aronoff, Eddie Bayers, Daniel Adair, Travis Barker.

Price: \$162.95 • www.bigbangdist.com

ISOLATION
AND A
CLICK



GREAT SOUND
AND EXTRA
COMFORT

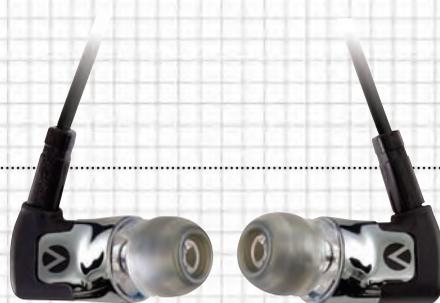
M-AUDIO STUDIOPHILE Q 40

These headphones were the most "all-around" of our test group, meaning that they not only performed well for drumming purposes, but they also worked great for general music listening, video gaming, and basic studio mixing. They're very comfortable and sleek looking, and they sound very good, with a realistic, balanced, and dynamic frequency response. (Think analog warmth vs. digital precision.) They may be a little bass-heavy for some users, but we found that that extra low-end "bump" came in handy when recording live drums in the studio—it made kick drums sound *huge*. The earcups on these headphones aren't as wide or deep as they are on some of the other models, which puts them in a position between the tight-fitting Ultraphones and Vic Firths and the over-the-ear seal of the Extreme Isolations and the Metrophones. Drummers who are everyday headphone users will dig these.

Price: \$179.95 • www.m-audio.com

GO INCOGNITO

If you play with a click track or sequences on stage and don't want to look like Mickey Mouse, or you don't like the restrictive feel of headphones, then you should consider getting a pair of in-ear monitors. In-ears are a bit more expensive than comparable-quality headphones, and it'll take you a while to get used to how they feel in your ears. But the sound of some models is very good, and the isolation is similar to what you'd get while wearing earplugs. A few brands/models we recommend are: **M-AUDIO IE-40 (\$499.95)** or their more affordable **IE-20 XB (\$249.95)**, **FUTURE SONICS' Atrios (\$199)**, and **SHURE's SCL4 (\$299)** and **SCL5 (\$479)**.



M-Audio IE-40



M-Audio IE-20 XB



Shure SCL5



Shure SCL4



Future
Sonics'
Atrios



HEADS ABOVE THE REST

When it comes to electronic drums, nothing feels like Roland V-Drums®.

Tension the patented multi-layer mesh heads for superior acoustic feel. Elevate your sound with the intuitive power of unique icon-based V-Editing. Take the mesh head test for yourself and experience the V-Drums Advantage. You'll see why V-Drums resonate with drummers from around the world.



Not just the world's first electronic marching instrument, the new RMP-12 is a great add-on for any electronic or acoustic set with its mesh head, explosive new sounds, and unique Rhythm Coach® functions.

The world's finest electronic drums and percussion...PERIOD.



For use under one or more of U.S. Pat.
Nos. 6,121,538, 6,271,458,
6,756,535 and 8,921,857.
U.S. Patent Pending

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AAX

O-Zone Crash 18"/46 cm

SABIAN




KENNY LIVINGSTON
Sugarcult

• RAY LUZIER
Korn

• DANIEL ADAIR
Nickelback

• XAVIER MURIEL
Buckcherry

• ROY MAYORGA
Stone Sour

AAX IS MODERN BRIGHT.

with 'Dynamic Focus'



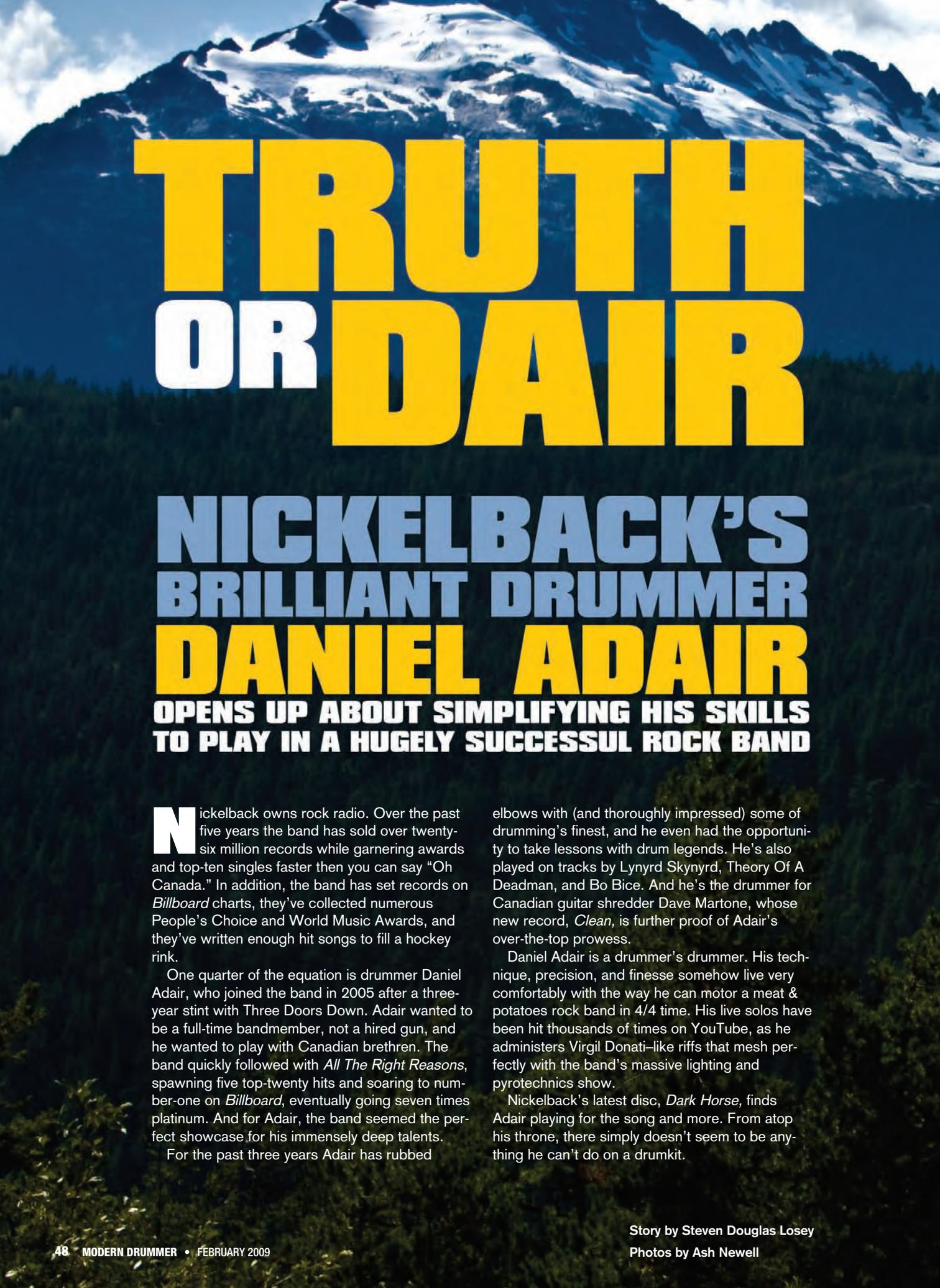
The 'Dynamic Focus' design of AAX delivers the ultimate modern bright sound.

With its 'Dynamic Focus' design ensuring total response accuracy and modern bright, shimmering sounds at all volume levels, AAX gives you control in any style of music. Touch it... thrash it. Only AAX delivers such consistently crisp, clear responses. In addition to Studio, Stage and Metal models, innovative designs including the multi-holed O-Zone Crash, X-Celerator Hats, Raw Bell Dry Ride and X-Plosion Crash are killer choices for any set-up.



Hear more at sabian.com

BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS



TRUTH OR DAIR

NICKELBACK'S BRILLIANT DRUMMER DANIEL ADAIR OPENS UP ABOUT SIMPLIFYING HIS SKILLS TO PLAY IN A HUGE SUCCESSFUL ROCK BAND

Nickelback owns rock radio. Over the past five years the band has sold over twenty-six million records while garnering awards and top-ten singles faster than you can say "Oh Canada." In addition, the band has set records on *Billboard* charts, they've collected numerous People's Choice and World Music Awards, and they've written enough hit songs to fill a hockey rink.

One quarter of the equation is drummer Daniel Adair, who joined the band in 2005 after a three-year stint with Three Doors Down. Adair wanted to be a full-time bandmember, not a hired gun, and he wanted to play with Canadian brethren. The band quickly followed with *All The Right Reasons*, spawning five top-twenty hits and soaring to number-one on *Billboard*, eventually going seven times platinum. And for Adair, the band seemed the perfect showcase for his immensely deep talents.

For the past three years Adair has rubbed

elbows with (and thoroughly impressed) some of drumming's finest, and he even had the opportunity to take lessons with drum legends. He's also played on tracks by Lynyrd Skynyrd, Theory Of A Deadman, and Bo Diddley. And he's the drummer for Canadian guitar shredder Dave Martone, whose new record, *Clean*, is further proof of Adair's over-the-top prowess.

Daniel Adair is a drummer's drummer. His technique, precision, and finesse somehow live very comfortably with the way he can motor a meat & potatoes rock band in 4/4 time. His live solos have been hit thousands of times on YouTube, as he administers Virgil Donati-like riffs that mesh perfectly with the band's massive lighting and pyrotechnics show.

Nickelback's latest disc, *Dark Horse*, finds Adair playing for the song and more. From atop his throne, there simply doesn't seem to be anything he can't do on a drumkit.



MD: You're becoming known as a drummer with serious technical skills. How do you lay back in Nickelback?

Daniel: There's a pride as an artist to play all the chops I've worked on, and then there's the fact that drummers and bass players are accompaniment musicians, so we have to follow the lead from the rest of the band. If I'm playing in Martone, and Dave is playing 64th notes as fast as possible, then I have to keep up with him. But if I'm playing a tune in Nickelback that's 8th-note or quarter-note driven, then I really have to follow that lead and try not to step on anyone's toes. In NB, when we're singing a song about heartbreak or a girl not calling you back, I really don't want to break out the Swiss triplets across the kit.

MD: You add a lot of chops live, though.

Daniel: I'll do the Daniel Adair translation of a lot of the riffs I hear. Chad [Kroeger] is a big Metallica and Megadeth fan, so he'll throw in a lot of rhythmic stuff. If I feel like things weren't caught in the studio, then I'll try to catch it live.

Our sound guy came up to me once and mentioned my double kick drum, so I immediately said, "I know I

MD: Describe how you developed your approach.

Daniel: My approach to music is a culmination of my musical influences and experiences. I usually approach a musical situation with a yin & yang frame of mind: What's the best method and tools to complement the music and work in tandem with it? I usually ask how can I make this exciting for myself and for the listeners, and create something I'm proud of. Basically, can I sneak in some slick patterns and chops that won't step on any toes?

I grew up listening to Dennis Chambers, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, and others. Making the commitment to pursue a career in music, specifically commercial music, will quickly educate you in the fact that while people are amazed by chops and hold you in high regard for them, they typically don't want you to play anything of the sort in their songs. Finding a balance is incredibly important.

I'm lucky that I have the same yin/yang in my career. I can lay it down with Nickelback, and then I get to stretch my legs and release my pent-up drummer frustrations with Martone.

“TRUTHFULLY, ONCE YOU PLAY AN ARENA, YOU NEVER WANT TO PLAY A CLUB AGAIN!”

probably play too much of that.” He said, “No, play it more.” He told me that when it comes through 60,000 watts, it shakes the whole building and it sounds wicked. I never try to overkill it, but I use it effectively in the right areas, like when we're at the apex of a song, an ending, a certain pitch moment, or when I want to feel cooler than I really am. [laughs]

MD: Isn't that a Tommy Aldridge line?

Daniel: Yeah, in his instructional video he has about twenty crash cymbals and he says, “I don't really use that many, but people think I'm cool that I have this many.”

MD: I know you get to shred nightly with NB during your solo.

Daniel: That is the thing I love and hate at the same time. I have the solo pre-written because of the lights and the pyro, and I use ideas that really get the crowd excited. When I'm constructing solos, I'm usually relaxed in the privacy of my home, so I create these parts that in a live situation tend to sound much harder than they are. It definitely allows me to keep my chops up and constantly gives me something to work towards.

The solo really helps me to be more inspired in Nickelback. It allows me to practice all of my stick strokes and double kick rolls. At the end of the solo I go into this fast double kick pattern, which is one of my favorite things to do.

MD: How do you best bring your fusion and progressive influence into a band like Nickelback?

Daniel: On *All The Right Reasons* I had a chance to open up the album with some Donati-ish double kick work, which kind of made the statement of, “I'm the new drummer!” There were some other moments on the album where I snuck in a couple of other not-so-typical rock fills. The new album is pretty basic, but I do get a lot of room to improvise live. The guys don't mind it at all, and I really enjoy the fact that the song gets to be a bit of a canvas for me to put my own paint on.

On “Because Of You,” I add quite a bit of double kick work that wasn't on the album, and in the breakdown section I get to pull off some Gary Chaffee linear patterns. We created an outro in “Someday” that's in 5/8, and every night I play some different ideas in that section. It takes people by surprise, because all of a sudden it goes from a pop/rock single to an instrumental fusion odyssey, with the moody lights and all. I try not to stray too far, though, because people like to hear the parts they know, so I keep to key components. Just like when I go see Rush, I love air drumming to the exact fills that Neil Peart played on the album.

MD: Do you feel restrained in Nickelback musically?

Daniel: Sometimes it is challenging to play such basic grooves. In my head I'm always hearing so many layers of rhythms, different possibilities, and phrases. I get



pretty trapped in my head sometimes and have a difficult time hearing the big picture. When I reflect back on a studio session, sometimes it seems that what I'm playing is way too simple, but as the layers of instruments and vocals are piled on top and then it's mixed and mastered by the pros, I hear the end result. At that point, I understand what we're after and what my part in it is. It's a continual lesson that in this musical genre the drums must be a rock solid foundation.

It's a domino effect: If I'm filling all the available space and frequencies, that leaves less room for the other voices and creates a cluttered vibe. It'd be like fram-

ing a house: If your structure isn't right from the start, the guy who has to install the doors will be trying to hang it in a door frame that isn't square or level. He'd have to do some ugly patching up and it would be a mess.

MD: Talk about what you bring to the table visually.

Daniel: While I'm certainly not as animated as someone like Tommy Lee, I try to get into it live as much as sitting behind a drumkit permits. Essentially it's the antithesis of what we're taught and what we practice, the economy of motion while moving less and saving energy. Having a perfect mid-height Moeller stroke at six

inches and never lifting your arms up and keeping your upper body perfectly still isn't very exciting for 17,000 fans while explosions are going off around you. I often wish to have a gig where I can hit lighter, move my cymbals closer, get more technical, and really utilize all that stuff, but this is an entirely different thing. I try to keep moving as much as I can, keeping time with my head, over-emphasizing shots, doing stick twirls and underhanded cymbal hits—all that fun stuff. The only thing that really restricts my movements is that I sing on 80% of the songs.

MD: Nickelback is a physical gig. What's your warm-up routine?

ADAIR'S KIT



Drums: Drum Workshop VLT/X series Exotic in rich red fade over African Chechan

- A.** 6x14 Edge snare (also 5x12 Edge auxiliary snare positioned to left of hi-hat, not in photos)
- B.** 8x10 VLT tom
- C.** 9x12 VLT tom
- D.** 14x16 X floor tom
- E.** 14x18 X floor tom
- F.** 18x23 X bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1.** 14" HHX Groove hi-hats
- 2.** 18" HHXplosion crash
- 3.** 10" Evolution splash
- 4.** 21" HHX Groove ride (or 22" prototype ride)
- 5.** 18" AAXplosion crash
- 6.** 13" AAX Studio hi-hats
- 7.** 19" Paragon Chinese
- 8.** 18" HHX O-Zone crash (not in photos)

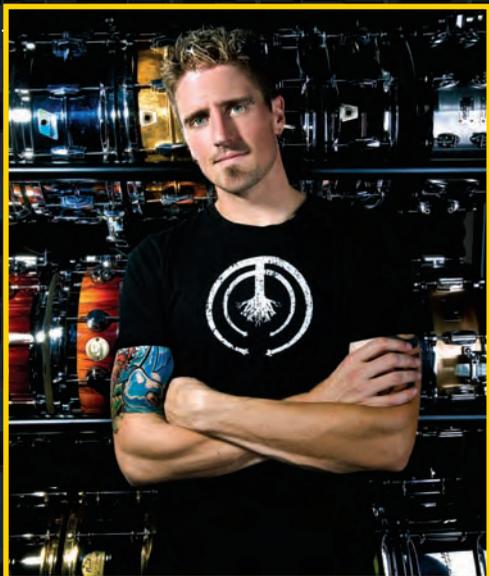
Hardware: Drum Workshop—5500TD hi-hat stand, 5002TD3 double pedal with stock two-way

beaters and medium pedal tension, rack system

Heads: Remo CS Coated Black Dot on snare batter, Ambassador snare-side. (Snare tuning: tight bottom, medium top, no dampening.) Clear Emperors (although coated in photos) on tom batters, clear Ambassadors on tom bottoms. (Tom tuning: low to medium, no dampening.) Clear Powerstroke 3 on bass drum batter, Ebony Powerstroke 3 on front. (Bass drum tuning: very loose, large pillow inside drum.)

Sticks: Regal Tip Daniel Adair signature model (hickory with wood tip)

Microphones: Shure—Beta 57 above main snare, Beta 56 below main snare, Beta 56 above auxiliary snare, SM98 on toms, Beta 52 and Beta 91 on kick drum, KSM 32 on overheads, and KSM 32 on hi-hats and ride.



ON DANIEL'S RECENT SWITCH

MD: You recently switched over to DW drums. Why the change?

Daniel: In between album cycles this year I had a chance to work with some great artists in the studio. On three of the sessions the producers asked me to use DW drums because they knew what they wanted for the drum sounds. Well, when I started using the drums, I was blown away. I knew DW drums were good, but these drums were *great*. I couldn't believe their resonance and warmth. They just sang true and were easy to tune. I knew right away that I had to investigate further.

I called up DW's Scott Garrison, and we had a chat. He answered all of my questions, but he never tried to persuade me. He told me to try a kit and let it do the talking, which was brilliant. If you're going to make a move like that, you have to do it because you love the product and *not* for the prospect of receiving free gear; I've never approached it like that. I've always believed that when you choose to play something, you should really love it.

I flew down to the DW factory and had the honor of meeting [vice president and chief drum designer] John Good and getting a tour of the facility. I was really impressed with their quality control, the cleanliness, and most importantly, the innovation.

I would say that Sabian cymbals and DW drums are at the top of their fields for pushing the envelope and always trying new things. Hearing the pitch difference in the DW VLT and X series shells really sold me. My VLT 10" tom sounds as low as a 12" tom from another brand.

Daniel: About three weeks before a tour, I try to practice the set at home at least four or five times a week on top of two hours of developmental routines. Playing live with NB and practicing is two different animals for me. When I play the set at home like I would live, that's the end of my practice for the day, because I'll be soaked in sweat and my head-banging muscles will hurt. I also practice all my vocal harmonies. Chad likes the fact that I can sing high, so every album has more and more super high parts for me to sing. In a way, I've created a monster with that.

When we're on the road, I try to get forty-five minutes on the pad, and then about an hour on a drumkit backstage before the show. I usually do simple stuff and straight double kick to warm up the legs. I usually throw in some of the more difficult components from my solo to get cozy with them again for the day.

MD: How do you stay fit when you're off the road?

Daniel: I usually keep busy in the studio with other bands or with my other project, Martone. That usually keeps the rust off. I used to practice more during the week. But the older you get, life starts to happen more and more, and it really takes a commitment to keep up a practice routine when you have things coming at you from all directions. I also keep up a weightlifting routine and run a couple of times a week, and recently I've started hot yoga. I never realized how tight drumming can make your joints. After a couple of classes of hot yoga I could feel the difference.

MD: How do you practice on the road?

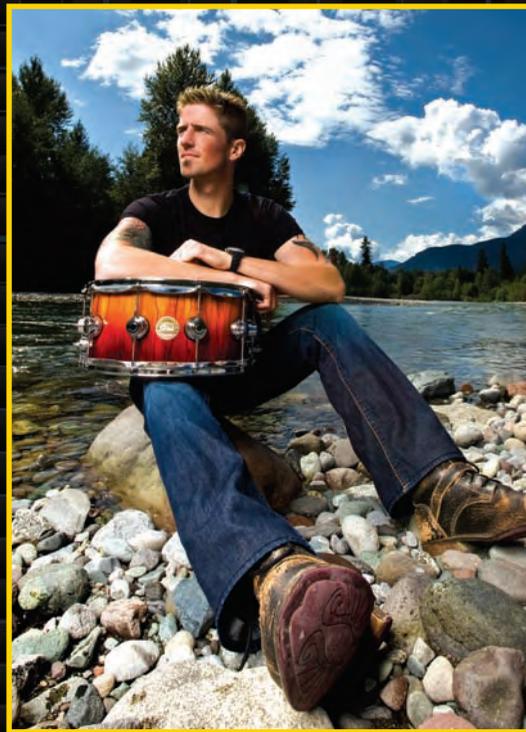
Daniel: I'm fortunate enough to have a drum room every day with a drumkit that has the same specs as my stage kit. That's a luxury I don't take for granted. There are some drummers on the crew as well, and I know they get the urge to bust out some beats, so I let anybody use it. I also have a practice pad and sticks on me at all times, and I'll usually get in some good pad time in the hotel on days off.

MD: How does being an arena drummer differ from playing the clubs?

Daniel: Truthfully, once you play an arena, you never want to play a club again! I used to think that I had to keep fills simple because anything fast or technical in an arena setting would get lost in the sheer size of the room. But I don't think that's the case anymore. A great modern PA and a professional sound crew make a huge difference, and it really translates every detail well. Especially with many of these new hockey arenas, they are also acoustically treated because they use the room for more than just sports.

PROPS FROM HIS PEERS

The ultimate compliment is being recognized by your peers as a genuine badass. In drumming circles, Daniel Adair's name is brought up *often*. What resounds with most is that he's a monster talent who can maneuver between heavy rock and fusion with ease. He's also considered one heck of a nice guy. Here, six of rock 'n' roll's hottest drummers chime in on what Daniel brings to the table and why he's so respected in the drum community.



RYAN YERDON // PUDDLE OF MUDD

The first time I heard Daniel play was backstage in Toronto. He was playing a funk beat that was mixed with metal, like Will Calhoun (Living Colour) on steroids. I was blown away and couldn't stop listening. Daniel is precise, consistent, and fluid. He's a monster drummer, period.

JON WYSOCKI // STAINED

What sets Daniel apart from most is that he works his unique style of playing into his band. He doesn't overplay, although he has the ability to do so. He makes the songs better by playing a great groove with fills that are strategically placed. He brings a certain drive to the music as well, and he has the amazing natural ability and skills to play grooves that work for the song at hand. He knows when to place the right chops to each song in a very tasteful manner.

BARRY KERCH // SHINEDOWN

When it comes to the collective drum table, Daniel not only brings a sense of groove, but his own style. He's able to play for the song, which is a very underrated talent in the drumming community. Just watch his solo during a Nickelback live show, or listen to his recordings with Martone—the man has chops but knows when to lay back and hit the pocket. He's not only universal, but unique unto himself. Daniel plays like Daniel.

When you look at great drummers in history, they all had a unique feel amongst themselves. That's the nature of drumming and why drum machines have not taken over. Daniel has this, and that alone makes him stand out. He easily incorporates other styles and grooves into his playing while completely staying true to who he is.

RAY LUZIER // KORN

I love Daniel's style; he has such a great, powerful sound. He's got more chops than a steakhouse, and he knows where to use them; he really plays for the tune as well.

Being in such a big, successful band as Nickelback, you really have to know what you're doing and how to drive that sound, and Daniel certainly does. That opening fill on the last Nickelback CD pretty much says, "Hi, I'm Daniel and I know what the hell I'm doing. And now I'm gonna groove my ass off!"

AARON MONTGOMERY // TRAPT

Daniel's playing is top notch. He comes with the knowledge, spirit, and skills that push the boundaries of what is musically plausible in mainstream music. When you watch him live you can identify what sets him apart from the very first four measures he plays.

CHAD SZELIGA // BREAKING BENJAMIN

Daniel brings versatility, finesse, and great showmanship to rock drumming. He can also sing and play drums at the same time. He inspires musicians like me to always appreciate music, and to play from your soul.

Daniel has an understanding of playing fusion and a multitude of other styles of music, and he knows how to blend them into a rock groove, whether it's by utilizing double bass or just furious chops. He's also very knowledgeable of understanding what to play and what *not* to play as a musician. And he's a very humble and gracious individual.

What do your
DREAMS
SOUND like?



www.dreamcymbals.com

DANIEL ADAIR

It takes a bit to adjust to arena playing, getting accustomed to pyro, fire, massive lighting systems, and even the video situation. I still end up getting busted. I'll be making a dumb face to my drum tech, like crossing my eyes, and that's exactly when the video crew switches to me and all of a sudden my face is on the massive JumboTron.

MD: What's the coolest thing you've learned from other drummers while touring?

Daniel: I've had a chance to tour with some great drummers, and if there's the opportunity, I'll try to swap ideas with them. Aaron Montgomery from Trapt is a fantastic player; he showed me some great rock fills, including the inverted-doubles fill he pulls off in the re-intro of their song "Stand Up." He's so relaxed when he plays, even while he's hitting hard. Chad Szeliga from Breaking Benjamin is a chops factory. Just listening to him fool around on his electronic kit backstage inspired me to practice more. Kevin Soffera [touring drummer who played with Seether and Breaking Benjamin] is one of my favorite drummers. He inspired me to really think about how to phrase differently and displace regular fills to create a new idea.

Being around drummers who are still as excited about drumming as the day they started is inspirational. It's infectious and makes me want to practice more, and it helps bring that childlike joy about drums back. Inspiration is the hardest thing to find when you're on the road and the routine has set in.

MD: How has your style evolved over the years?

Daniel: I think I've gained certain things, like really knowing what works live and what doesn't. Six or seven years ago, I was playing a lot of fusion things and writing my own odd time signatures. I could play in 13/8 with my eyes closed. I was listening to Virgil Donati stuff, like 21/8, and practicing soloing over it. I feel like I've lost a little bit of that, while my backbeat, groove, and pulse have gotten a lot stronger.

I recently took a lesson with Dom Famularo, Virgil Donati, and my teacher back home, John Fisher. I just learned how to really clobber the drums without hurting myself. I always knew I could play so much better if I didn't hit so hard live. I could hit all my fills and play all of that

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DANIEL ADAIR

finesse stuff, but the Nickelback gig calls for more of a caveman attitude. I still throw in finesse, but if the sound guy isn't seeing the snare meter touch into the red zone, then it doesn't work.

There's an energy that's given to the crowd when you're up there giving a 110%. There's something captured other than just the audio—it's some kind of X factor. Being able to hit hard and have the stamina while still retaining the ability to come out of caveman mode when I hit my solo is quite a mix. There's a lot of dynamics going on.

MD: Can you offer some reflections about taking lessons with Virgil Donati and Dom Famularo?

Daniel: Once you're a touring musician and have a bit of a name for yourself, it's easy to get somebody's number or email and simply shoot them a line. I guess it's because we're all peers and we all have the common bond of drumming for a liv-



ing. Drummers are also special that way. We like to share stories and licks and talk about fulcrums.

I had a chance to study with Famularo when we were playing in Connecticut. It was a quick lesson, and I hope I get a

chance to go back for more. He reinforced the importance of the free stroke concept to me. Once it starts to become comfortable, it makes a world of difference, especially if you're an aggressive player. Things really changed for my technique

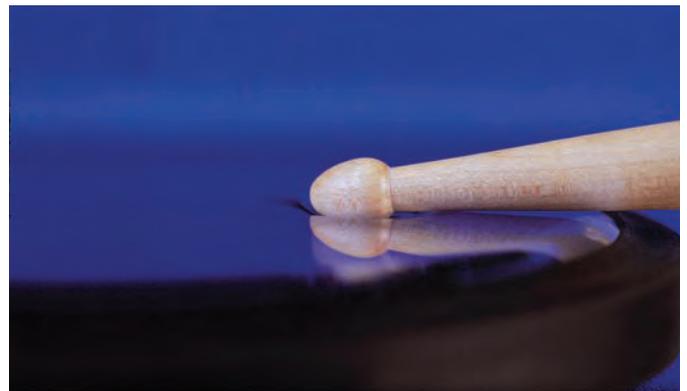
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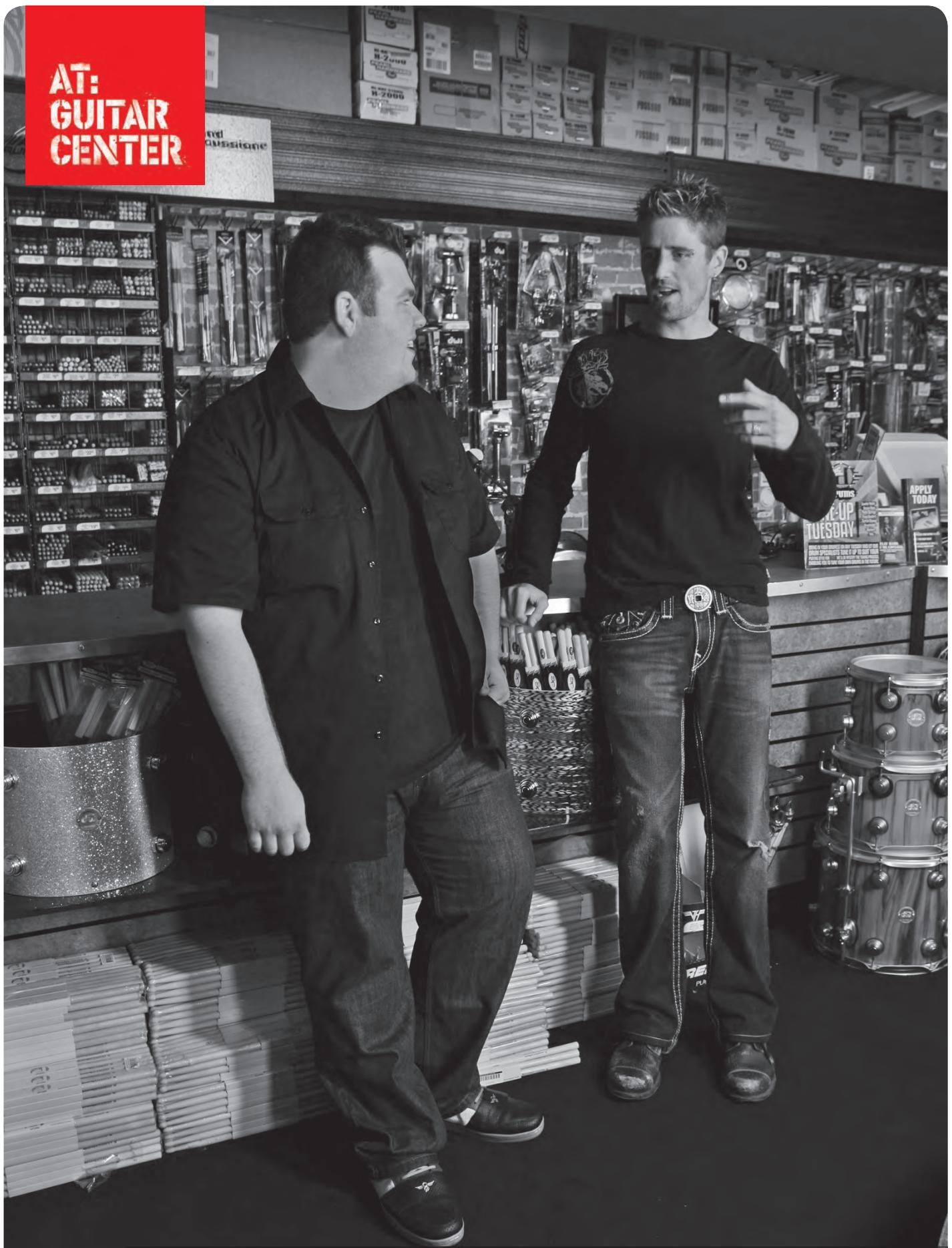
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August 23, 2008, 3:15 p.m. Guitar Center Sales Associate Blake Ehoff and Nickelback's Daniel Adair share insights on studio vs. live kits, kick mics, Motown grooves and great cymbal sounds.



DANIEL ON RECORD

ARTIST

Nickelback
Martone
Martone
Jet Black Stare
Faber Drive
Bo Bice

ALBUM

Dark Horse (2008)
Clean (2008)
Live In Your Face (2008) (DVD)
In This Life (2008)
Seven Second Surgery (2007)
The Real Thing (2006)
(track: "You're Everything To Me")
When The Aliens Come (2006)
All The Right Reasons (2005)
Gasoline (2005)
Live In Houston (2005) (DVD)
17 Days (2005)
Another 700 Miles (2004)
A Demon's Dream (2002)
Zone (1999)



when I first saw a cyber lesson online with Dom and Jim Chapin. Jim talks about holding the stick in the back of your hand if you're a loud player. I've learned to fulcrum with my pinky/ring finger and palm when I need to. While it's not a grip for intricate playing, it's invaluable if you're playing at loud volumes for long periods of time. I see many players squeeze the stick

with their thumb and index finger and proceed to smash the kit while holding on for dear life. It doesn't take a genius to see that tendinitis will eventually set in.

MD: Let's switch gears and talk about working with producer Mutt Lange on the new record.

Daniel: When we were doing my drum tracks, he was fasting and he hadn't eaten

for seven days. He was full of energy. He could hear everything. He knew I could play all the parts, and I felt very complimented when he would talk about my playing. He said, "You could play circles around a lot of drummers I've worked with," which was really nice. Mutt just wants to go for feel; we weren't going for anything technical on the record. With the *All The Right Reasons* record we did some double kick and some other tricky cool stuff, but this record didn't call for that.

MD: How did you approach it then?

Daniel: Mutt has an assistant who used to play with The Eurhythmics, a guy named Olle Romo. He's a computer ninja, and he's also a drummer. As they're writing, Olle is sitting there programming drum part ideas, so by the time I'd heard the tunes there were drum tracks that were already programmed by a drummer. The guys then became used to hearing certain things, so when we tracked the drums I didn't want to stray too far from those parts. I just took a step back and approached this record like a session drummer, because Mutt had a very clear idea of what he wanted.

MD: It sounds as if it might not have been a very satisfying session.

Daniel: I wouldn't say that, because I threw in a lot of my own fills, since Mutt is into "one upping" what's already there. A couple of times I would say, "That sounds a little bit cheesy. A real drummer wouldn't really play that." Things like coming down on a tom roll as you're hitting crashes. Mutt would say, "I've been listening to a sequencer for years and I'm not really used to what a real drummer can do."

Mutt's vision for drums is that he really wants people to feel the backbeat and the pulse. That's why he likes crashes on 2 and 4 along with the snare. He also tends to go to the four-on-the-floor beat because he likes the bass drum to be nonstop.

MD: Sounds like *Back In Black* revisited.

Daniel: Exactly. Chad's actually quite a good drummer, and he'll often sit down at a kit and play the songs from *Back In Black*.

MD: Let's talk about your contributions to the new Martone disc, *Clean*.

Daniel: That's my big musical outlet. Dave and I have always had this musical connection. We've always played too many notes on top of the beat because we're both so full of energy. We like to create

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DANIEL ADAIR

music that's very challenging to play but interesting. He's trying to create a sound that hasn't been done before. I realize that's difficult to do, but he's coming close. He might not sell as many records as Nickelback, but he's doing what he loves to do.

MD: What's your role there?

Daniel: We write three or four tunes at a time in between my touring spurts with Nickelback. My playing changes each time, because I'll do a couple of tunes and then three or four months later I'll do a couple more, and in between I'll listen to different

artists like Benny Greb, or Meshuggah, or whatever. I might tend to be a little foot heavy, for instance, if I've been listening to more Vinnie Colaiuta and Dennis Chambers in one period, or a little hand heavy depending on whatever else I'm listening to.

MD: I notice you covered Dave Weckl's "Hard Wired."

Daniel: I started out as a drummer listening to Neil Peart and Lars Ulrich. That's what I was drawing from when I was thirteen. Then I went to the North Delta Public Library and signed out a copy of the *Hard*

Wired CD. I heard this cat and couldn't believe the finesse that was obtainable on the drumset. That really changed things for me. When Dave [Martone] and I started to get a lot of guest stars on this new album, I thought it would be a fitting tune for Dave to cover. We made it guitar heavy, and we brought in guitarist Greg Howe, who is my hero. He did the solo on it.

MD: How did you attack the cut?

Daniel: That was the most challenging song on the record to play. I'm more of a rock player, and that has all the jazz/fusion pushes—trying to lose the 1 as much as possible, but keeping the groove there. There's a thirty-two-bar drum solo section over certain hits. There's a lot of stuff going on there.

MD: The "Goodie Squiggee Song" is a crazy ride.

Daniel: It's Dave Martone's version of *simple*—that's why he calls the record *Clean*. It's an uptempo groove with some double kick going on where I'm matching Dave's riffs. I do some metric modulation as well, where I'm playing in four, accenting 8th notes and quarter notes, and then I start following the pulse of a triplet. It's like three over four. Then in the middle bridge solo section we metric-modulate into this whole different thing. It's all in time.

MD: "Turn On The Heater" has a nice feel.

Daniel: That's one of my favorite tracks. There's nothing death-defying technically, but it has such a nice pocket. I had the freedom to squeeze in some whacky fills, too, and I took that liberty. We had bassist Ric Fierabracci [Chick Corea, Dave Weckl] guest star on this track, and he played beautifully; his solo is one of my favorite moments on the record.

I love the way that Dave and I work together; it's a true band kind of approach. He'll write the tune to a drum loop and email it to me, and then I'll spend a couple of weeks playing through it, coming up with my parts. I try to pick up on all of his nuances, so you'll hear me match accents he plays in his solos and so on. Then I'll try to be creative and put some interesting fills and phrasing in the tune. After we record the drums, Dave then re-writes some of his guitar parts to match the drums. How often will a songwriter do that? It's very satisfying to have that kind of input and be in a band where anything goes.



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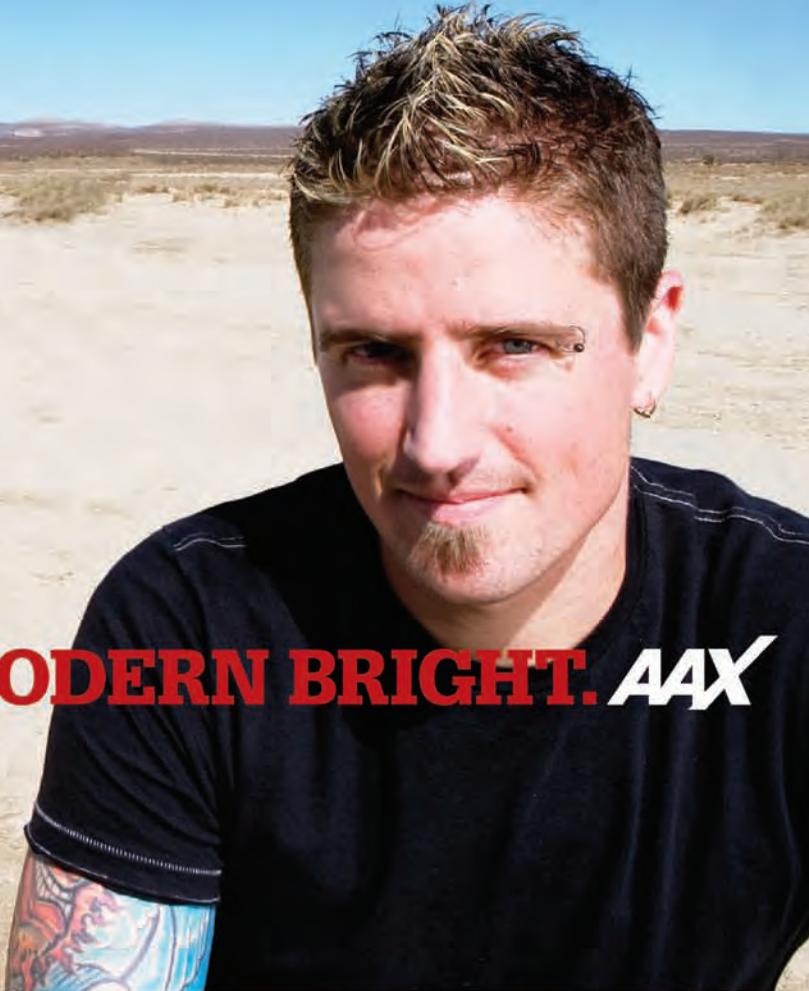
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Pocket, Chops, & Soul

DERICO WATSON

Laying Down A Thunderous Groove With Victor Wooten And S.M.V.

by Sriram Gopal

For the past five years, Michigan native Derico Watson has held one of the most coveted chairs a drummer could imagine, touring regularly with pioneering bassist Victor Wooten. A modest high school instructor prior to his big break, the thirty-three-year-old drummer's sudden increase in exposure is proof positive that "luck" is simply the intersection of preparation and opportunity.

And the preparation has paid off, with 2008 proving to be a most fruitful year. Wooten's most recent release, *Palmystery*, features Watson on several tracks, and this past summer saw three generations of bass playing legends—Wooten, Stanley Clarke, and Marcus Miller—team up as S.M.V. to record *Thunder*. Derico is featured on two tracks and was tapped for the international supporting tour.

Watson's blazing solos and lighting-fast tom-tom flurries are impressive, but don't make the mistake of characterizing his playing as a non-stop chops display. Rather, it's his locomotive groove that propels the music to new heights and gets heads bobbing. His personality has as much to do with his success as his prodigious talent. Ever thoughtful and humble, Watson always serves the music and the artist with whom he's playing. As a sign of his generosity, the drummer woke up at the crack of dawn to conduct this interview from his hotel room in Osaka, Japan, where S.M.V. was about to perform. "Everybody has an ego," he told *MD*. "Mine is under control because I know it's not about me."

While this might be the first time you've heard about this drum star-in-waiting, we're quite sure it won't be the last.

Testifyin'

MD: How did you get started playing drums?

Derico: Like most urban or black kids, I grew up playing in church, but even then, I always knew that I wanted to be a drummer. The first time I remember getting

the upper classmen saw something in me and wanted me to learn as much as I could. So I learned all the rudiments, how to read, some skills on mallets.... They made sure that I was into everything that had to do with the percussion family. That was my formal training—hanging out with

your developing years?

Derico: Some of the notables were cats like Joe Smith, Mike Williams from Commissioned, and Dana Davis, who played with The Winans. Those are the guys I was getting into back then. Once I was a little older, like twelve or thirteen



Marco Soecati

behind a drumset was when I was seven or eight years old.

MD: Did you have any formal training outside of school?

Derico: I grew up playing in the school program. I wasn't always confident in what I was doing, so I was one of those guys who would always question myself. At first I thought I didn't have to know how to read, because I had this natural gift at playing drums. The band director and

other drummers and upper classmen, learning as much as I could about percussion.

I also watched so many drum DVDs—back then it was videos—like the Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, and the Buddy Rich videos that were out. I would fall asleep watching that stuff. So things were implanted in me back then that helped me get to where I am today.

MD: Who were your inspirations during

years old, I got introduced to Dave Weckl and cats like Art Blakey and Elvin Jones.

The person who made me realize that I wanted to play drums not only as a hobby but as what I wanted to do for a living, had to be Louie Bellson. This was about 1991 or '92. I remember going to a Bands Of America camp in Indianapolis. I was in the marching band at school, and Louie was the guest artist with this university band that was performing. He came on

and had his double bass kit and his Roto-Toms, and *man* that was the coolest thing I'd ever seen. My eyes were glued to him while he took his solo, and I *knew* that I wanted to do that in my life.

MD: Let's talk about your Gospel playing, using Ken Reynolds' 2005 live release, *Great Things*, as an example. First, what's your approach when playing with a large ensemble?

Derico: My goal when I play Gospel is to be the most solid yet sensitive thing on stage. I try to give the music room to breathe and make sure the singer feels comfortable, getting underneath them by making sure the music is groovin', without so many licks and things, and making sure everything I do is in a musical setting. My attitude is always, "Let the music dictate what I'm going to play."

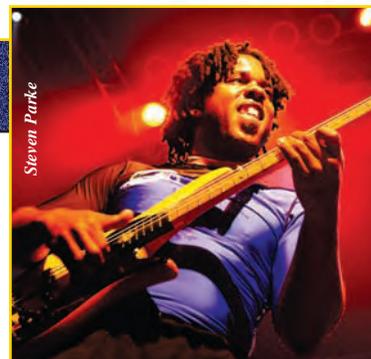
Here's the other thing: I didn't come up using the approach that we see a lot of the Gospel drummers using now. Right now, with some drummers, it's like it's all about the drums. But it's *not* just about the

VICTOR WOOTEN ON DERICO

"Derico is one of the most musical drummers that I know," says the superstar bass man. "He practically has perfect time and perfect pitch. That's a rare quality for anyone, but being a drummer, it allows him to approach music from a melodic and chordal position as well as from the rhythmic side of things.

"One of Derico's best qualities is that he's able to take direction and criticism very well. That is *very* rare in musicians. When I first played with him many years ago, he had so much unbelievable ability that he often overplayed. So I talked to him after a concert and he was very receptive. Derico is about making the music better. That may not sound like much, but actually it's a *huge* quality to have.

"Most of us are about making ourselves look good and boosting our careers, and it can be heard in our playing. Like Derico, if we focus on making the music better, the rest will fall into place. Also, the advanced techniques that you see Derico using on the drums today are just a taste of what he can actually do. Remember, I knew him before he started holding back."



drums, especially when you're playing at church. Back then, it was about the drums being in a supporting role and making sure the music was solid. Then, if you had some extra space, you could fill in those areas.

MD: How do you handle all of the ensem-

ble figures while maintaining the groove?

Derico: The main thing with that is going into rehearsals and really listening to the producer. When we started with Ken Reynolds, there were no horns. We would just come up with the different parts, and the guy who was arranging the horns,

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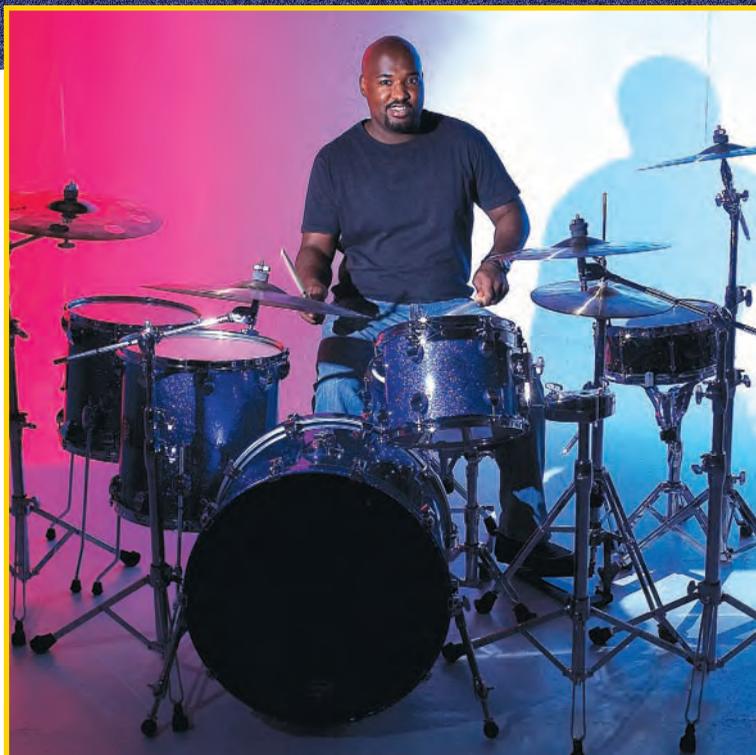
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Steven Parke



when we came up with hits and things like that, would just put them in there. Some of those parts I literally created.
MD: So what's your approach when things are written out?

Derico: It depends on what part of the

tune we're in. If we're going into a bridge, I might just do a set-up fill. If we're going into the vamp or a special band lick, I might play something busy. I'm more of a fill player, but I realize that when I'm doing sessions and there are clicks

involved, that requires you to hold back. Just make sure the music gets what it needs. Sometimes it doesn't need much.

MD: What insights can you give to those of us who didn't grow up going to a church with a Gospel choir, but want to develop

FAMILY VALUE





similar skills?

Derico: I would start by going back at least twenty-five or thirty years and check out some of the early pioneers. I would start with some Winans, Commissioned, maybe some James Cleveland, and I would listen to what they were doing. That was my upbringing.

Again, with what's going on now, drummers have come along and really revolutionized what's been going on in Gospel music. The first is Gerald Heyward. There are records he did with Hezekiah Walker, like *O Lord We Praise You* and *I'll Make It*. Those were a couple of groundbreaking records where the drumming really started to take off and do more. Then there was a guy named Kenny Phelps. He played with the Indiana State Mass Choir, and you heard him start to play a little bit more.

But when you think about it, these were guys who were influenced by people like Steve Gadd. He was one of Gerald Heyward's influences, and Kenny Phelps was influenced by Dave Weckl. I guess my point is that it's still all music. It depends on how you want to interpret it.

There are no different chords for Gospel than for R&B, it's just where the message is coming from.

Victor Wooten And S.M.V.

MD: How did you first encounter Victor Wooten?

Derico: I met Victor in 2000. I was working at Mona Shores High School in Muskegon, Michigan, and the band director had this great jazz band. He was thinking of having a guest artist come in to play with his kids, and he came to me and asked me who I thought he should get. I told him it would be cool to see if we could get Victor to come in. At the time, Victor was doing some really cool things as a bass player, revolutionizing the bass, so to speak. We got in touch with Victor, and he was into coming.

The only catch was that the band director wanted him to play with this teacher named Derico—me. Victor tells this story and goes, "I was thinking, 'Aww, man, this is going to be a disaster.'" But Victor came in, we rehearsed for thirty or forty-five minutes, and it just clicked. The second half of the show was just Victor on bass and myself on drums. Still, it's one of the most magical and musical nights I've had in my life.

Here's a great thing that happened the third time I played with Victor: I was really overplaying. I was playing too many licks that night....

MD: Were you showing off?

Derico: No, I was just excited. I was still trying to make sure that Victor Wooten *remembered* Derico Watson. That night, Victor sat me down, and I remember this like it was this morning. He didn't scold me, he didn't belittle me, he said, "Man, I think you're one of the greatest drummers ever. I think you're great. I think you have a great groove. I think you can play things I've never seen anybody else play. But I think sometimes, you play too much. You've got to give your audience some place to go."

Think of it like having a conversation. If you and I talked at the same time, the audience would go, "What the heck is going on up there?" He told me if I learned some space and learned how to play less when it was needed, then I'd be one of the greats. That changed my life that night.

MD: So how did you go about reassessing your playing?

Derico: The main thing was that I just concentrated on playing less. I listened more to groove drummers. I got more into Steve Gadd. I got more into Steve Jordan. Just play what the music needs. That's why I'm able to play Gospel. That's why I'm able to play with Victor Wooten or straight-ahead gigs in Nashville. I love playing straight-ahead, but when I do that, I try to get into that style and not sound like a guy who grew up playing Gospel who's now *trying* to play straight-ahead.

It's not about me, it's about the music. It's good to know tricks. It's good to know

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licks. But you have to know how to use them. After you establish that strong foundation and you take a drum solo or play some licks, then everybody goes crazy.

I've been watching old videos and DVDs of Steve Jordan. He was crazy and could play all of those licks. But what I respect about a person like Steve is that he *really* figured it out. He figured out that these

doing the same thing on the bass. Now I'm playing with somebody who's playing all the licks that I know how to play. So what happens is, if Victor plays something like [sings fast 16th-note run], that triggers something in the drummer. That will make me do the same thing, but that's like us talking at the same time.

I try to get out of his way and let him play

DERICO ON DISC

ARTIST

S.M.V.
Victor Wooten
Bernhard Lackner
Chris West
Ken Reynolds
Chris Spitters

ALBUM

Thunder
Palmystry
Those Days
Jazzmanic
Great Things
Beyond The Shore



drums are so powerful, and I can play all of this stuff, but it's just as powerful and even more powerful if I just lay in the pocket and serve the music. He's like our generation's Al Jackson. Steve plays really simple beats, but they're so strong and have so much feeling that you forget about all the other stuff.

MD: So back to playing with Victor: What's it like interacting with him?

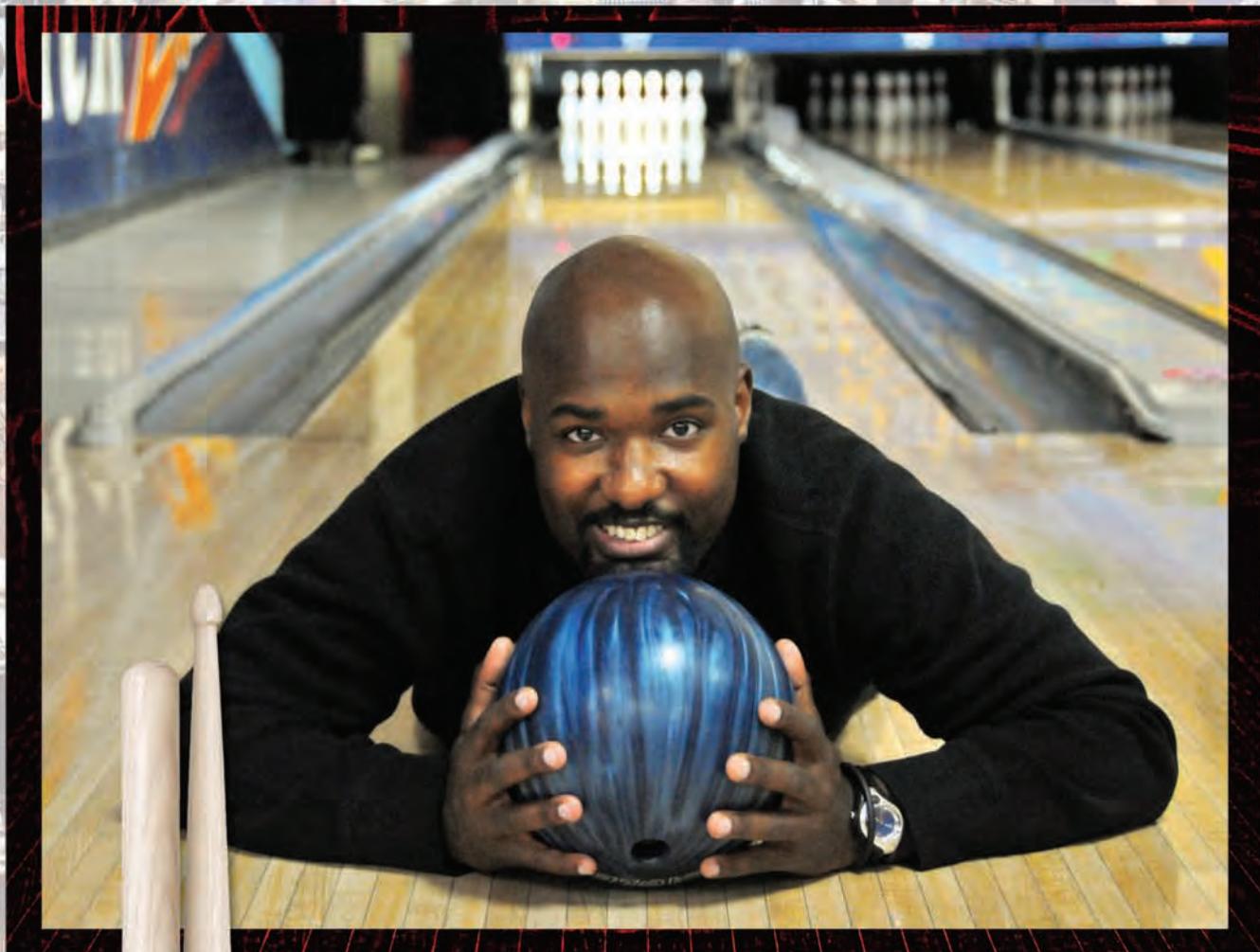
Derico: The biggest thing I had to realize is that Victor is one of the most percussive bass players in the industry. Victor grew up studying drum licks. When his brother was playing to Billy Cobham records, he was

everything he wants to play. I play less so that he can play more. When we do get to those moments when we play that lick together, it makes it that much greater. I try to create a spider web. That web is so strong, he feels like he can just fall back into it. And I realize that Victor is the type of artist who's going to give me my time to play.

We know about all the pyrotechnics and all the licks that he can do. But I've still never heard a more killin' pocket and groove than what he has. And on this S.M.V. tour, Marcus Miller's groove is immaculate. So I'm

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playing with Victor Wooten, who has the immaculate groove stage right, and then with Marcus Miller...this groove is just coming at me from all angles. That needs a drummer who understands how to get out of the way. Don't step on the bass player's toes. Play with him, not against him.

MD: How did the S.M.V. gig come about?

Derico: The first thing that happened was that Victor was talking about this project. He wanted to record a couple of tracks and get them sounding so good that when he presented them to Stanley and Marcus, they'd go, "Wow! These tracks are already done. We don't need to add any drums to them."

Derico Watson. Dennis said, "That's easy. Derico Watson is your choice." Of course, Victor and Victor's manager were in my corner. Stanley said, "Fine." Two or three weeks later, Marcus got back with Victor and the management and said, "Let's go with Derico. He's the guy."

MD: Let's talk about the live experience. How do you navigate through three bassists?

Derico: Here again, I just try to create a great pocket. It's the hardest job on stage. I have to play with three bass players and they all like different things. I know what Victor likes. The main thing he likes is a drummer who knows how to support



Steven Franke

Victor and I engineered the session. You should've seen us, man, it was funny. Victor is looking at me, going, "Hey, does this mic look good?" And I'm like, "Uh, I guess?" So we're sitting there, trying to come up with these drum sounds, and man, we got it. We got a killin' drum sound and Victor laid his bass parts. Victor said to me, "Derico, I want you to play so solid on these tracks that when these guys hear it, they'll say, 'The drum tracks are done, right?'" That's how I ended up on the record [2008's *Thunder*].

The first person they wanted on tour was Dennis Chambers. Dennis would've been a great choice, because he would've brought all the drummers out. Long story short, Dennis said, "I can't do it because it's conflicting with Santana dates." He then asked who was going to play, and the guys said, We've got this drummer,

the music, play the pocket, and stay out of his way. Stanley is different. He came from the fusion days, so he likes a drummer to be more interactive. On stage, he'll come and stand right in the middle of my ride cymbal and bass drum, and we'll have a little conversation. Also the biggest thing he said to me was, "Phrasing, phrasing, phrasing." He likes end-of-the-barline stuff and letting him know when the next section is coming.

Marcus likes that interaction too. He likes toms, and he likes the drummer to really fill it up. But with three bass players and a bass drum, something's going to get canceled out. Guess what? It's not going to be one of those three bassists, so I just pick my spots.

It's been a great learning experience. These are three of the greatest bass players of all time, and I get to play with them.

I got their records and knew what they were looking for. I knew I had to have some Ron Bruner elements, some Poogie Bell elements, and some J.D. Blair elements.

[Bruner works with Clarke, Bell with Miller, Blair with Wooten.] I had to make sure I gave all three of them what they needed. That was simply support, staying out of their way, plus playing licks and fills to set up the next phrase.

My ego operates at five percent. Man, I get to play drums for a living and get to tour all over the world. The marquis says, "S.M.V.," so I knew that before I even came out here. I just have to be a team player. I can take criticism. If I'm not doing what they want, just let me know.

MD: So what are some things you've learned from this tour?

Derico: The first thing is to forget about what the artist told you yesterday. What you heard yesterday may not be what they want today. Play whatever they want you to play *right there*. The other thing is, just know your instrument. Be comfortable on your instrument to the point where you can give them what they want. You have to be the jack-of-all-trades out here.

Derico's Session Work

MD: So what initially took you to Nashville?

Derico: The biggest thing was that I needed a change from Muskegon. I was in Nashville four to six times per year, so I decided to give it a try. I wasn't touring with Victor's band at the time, but I was getting one-offs because J.D. Blair was touring with Shania Twain. I got there in July 2002, and my first big tour was with Victor in 2003.

MD: What's the session scene like in Nashville?

Derico: Session-wise, most of the things I do are independent, though all of them have been fun. As drummers, the thing we have to remember is that a session or project is still somebody's baby. It's their concept, their feeling, their money that they've been saving up all this time. So I try to treat everybody the same.

But the studio scene in Nashville has changed a lot. You can do a record in your basement. If your friend has a living room that records drums well, all you have to do is pay him \$50 and set up a drummer in his living room. Now, and I'm almost set up to do this, you can set up your own home studio for \$2,000. People can send you tracks

and you can just track like that at your house.

MD: So what kind of homework do you do in preparation for a session?

Derico: I'm thankful I have the type of memory that, when I hear something, I pretty much have it. When I listen to music, I don't get on my drums and practice beats. I listen and make sure I internalize the music. More than knowing the beats and licks, I want to know the music and where the chart is going. During a recording session, while the producer is playing the tune for me, the last thing I want is to be in the drum booth going to town because "I know what's going on." You *don't* know what's going on yet. You haven't even heard the tune! Go into the control room and create a railroad track on the chart so you'll know what's going on. Listen to every little nuance. That's how you get first and second takes.

Adding The Sauce...

MD: Let's talk technique for a bit, starting with your ridiculously fast single bass drum technique.

Derico: The foot technique first came when I heard Gerald Heyward playing with Hezekiah Walker in the '80s. I couldn't believe that was one foot. My attitude now is that I want to play as much as I can play with one foot. I want people to hear it and say, "That has to be a double pedal." But the biggest reason I don't use a double pedal is that I don't like the space between the pedals, the snare drum, and the hi-hat.

Technique-wise, I just practiced the rudiments incorporating my right foot. I would play paradiddles, but instead of playing the left hand, I'd play the bass drum as the left hand. The same thing for drags and all of those other patterns. I would replace my right hand with my right foot too.

MD: Do you play heel-up or heel-down?

Derico: Most of the time I play heel-up. But the biggest thing I try to do is that whenever I'm not playing my bass drum, I keep my foot as relaxed as possible. So I try not to keep my heel up at all times. I'll play a passage and then put my leg in a rest position until it's time to play again.

MD: And what about your hands? You seem to favor a thumbs-up, French-style grip.

Derico: Yes, employing French grip gets a lot of great use out of my fingers. I developed a lot of these techniques when I was coming up in the marching and concert

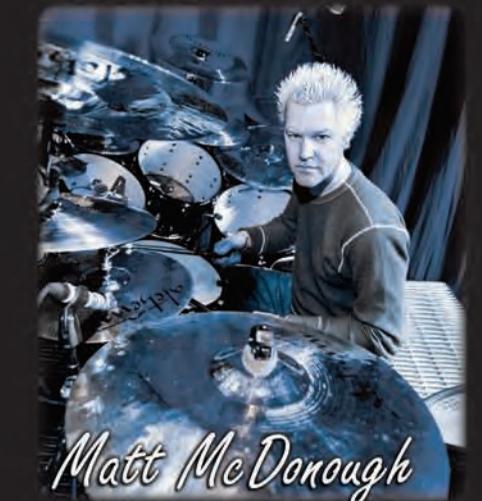
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DERICO WATSON

bands. Again, I just worked on the rudiments. And now when I pick up a pair of drumsticks, it's like my limbs and my fingers are going, "Oh, we're playing drums," and it's right there.

All I did was work on the rudiments. I really want to stress that. Whatever you want to play, it's all about the rudiments. Here's the other thing: Drumming can be broken down into three categories: singles, doubles, and flams. Everything you want to play is based on one, two, or all three of those things. A paradiddle is a combination of singles and doubles. All you have to do is figure out how to tie them together. If you're going to play a paradiddle, play a paradiddle. Now you start to create licks and things by maybe putting your right hand on the floor tom and your left hand on the snare drum, and maybe supplementing some of the notes with the bass drum.

MD: How do you see the relationship between the hi-hat and the backbeat?

Derico: My hi-hat technique comes from, obviously, the rudiments, but also from Mike Williams, who played with Commissioned. It's usually just double strokes, sometimes paradiddles and drags. I call that the sauce. The bass drum and snare drum are my meat & potatoes, and I put the sauce on top. The biggest thing is staying relaxed and letting my fingers and limbs do the work.

As far as the backbeat, the biggest thing is consistency. I'm not perfect, obviously, but I do my best to make it as solid as possible. When I do snare drum rolls and things like that, I just try to make sure that it's very clean. I want people to hear me and go, "Man, this guy's solid." I can play licks and things, but who can't play licks? There are more people who can play licks, in my opinion, than there are people who can play a solid pocket.

MD: It's the backbeat that gets you the checks.

Derico: Exactly! I just try to make sure I'm solid, especially when I'm playing with all these bass players. There's one tune where all three of them are just slapping for a minute straight. That's not the time for me to go in and put all my crazy bass drum things in. That's a time for me to get out of the way and just play 1, or 1 and 3. My job is to keep it funky.

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••• GARAJ MAHAL'S •••
ALAN HERTZ
**RE-CREATING THE
DRIVER'S SEAT**

Story by Robin Tolleson • Photos by Jay Blakesberg

It was Alan Hertz' invitation that brought together Fareed Haque, Kai Eckhardt, and Eric Levy in San Francisco in the spring of 2000. The drummer, who had been playing with guitarist Steve Kimock in the band KVHW, must have known something, because the group that would soon become Garaj Mahal was a natural for both the jam band and jazz festival scene.

Garaj Mahal's hearty funk grooves propel otherworldly melodies and provide room to stretch for players who really know how—while the band always keeps one eye on the dance floor. And in the process of Garaj Mahal distinguishing itself from a crowded pack of jam-banders, Alan Hertz has developed into a true powerhouse on drums.

It's not just the chops per se, although Hertz certainly is not lacking there. It's more the fluency in different musical languages that allows him to flat out slam, whether his sticks take him to Eastern Europe with bluesy fusion guitarist Scott Henderson, or to Hollywood to record a modern rock album with American Drag.

It's great fun to hear Hertz tackle the

traditional Indian rhythms that bassist Eckhardt throws at him in Garaj Mahal, as well as the contrapuntal lines of guitarist Haque. Hertz gets all funky up on Garaj Mahal's latest release, *Woot* (Owl Studios), proving that he's also quite conversational in the greasy groove of *Headhunters*-era Herbie Hancock.

Significantly, Hertz mixed and co-produced *Woot*. The drummer clearly knows the language of the recording studio, effectively coloring the rhythm section with bells and hides, and drawing exactly the right sounds out of the kit when the red light is on.

Hertz, thirty-four, was born in Idaho and moved to Southern California when he was a boy. He's spent time back and forth between San Francisco and LA ever since. When *MD* caught up with the drummer—not an easy task given the current demand for Garaj Mahal and the amount of globe-trotting required on his new gig with Henderson—he was back in Marin County, California's Shabby Road Studios, which he runs with Garaj Mahal keyboardist Levy.



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Alan: This is my second job, making records and getting sounds. I've been involved a little in the production of all of the CDs Garaj Mahal has made. On *Woot*, Arnie at The Plant traded us time, and we got a real good

The cowbells pop in and out, and it's like, "Oh yeah, I've heard that part before."

We hung a bunch of room ambience mics, but I decided to tighten up the overall sound, put in less room ambience, and just

ings of five turn into four against five, or five against four. And you go four-dot-dot-five.

MD: Have you studied Indian rhythms and how they can be applied to the drumkit?

Alan: Kind of. I've been into the rhythms

"A gig should be more of a Buddhist thing: 'Okay, off we go.' It's really hard when it's not, where afterwards you're still thinking about what happened or bumming out on it. It's not really worth it."

deal on recording there. Then I mixed it, just kind of minimalistically. It's a fusion record, so I wasn't trying to overproduce the music. With this kind of music, it's better if you can just hear everybody, and hear the information that's going on.

MD: It's the best-sounding Garaj Mahal

make it kind of dry and informative. So you can hear all the little syncopated ideas and stuff we're playing.

MD: I enjoyed your re-working of "Semos" on this record. I remember trying to figure it out when I heard it on your live CD a few years ago.

that are like the big odd shapes, like the shapes where it feels like four but it has a hiccup somewhere. It still has a good rhythmic feel and still has some danceability, but there's also something new about it. I've studied some Indian stuff, mostly with Kai and the other guys in the band, when we would travel in the van.

Kai played with John McLaughlin and Trilok Gurtu, so he learned a lot of the syllabic language. He shows us that stuff in the van all the time. We've been running with it for eight years now, so we're all feeling it. We can sing the syllables back and forth at each other and come up with music that way too.

MD: It's important to be able to sing it.

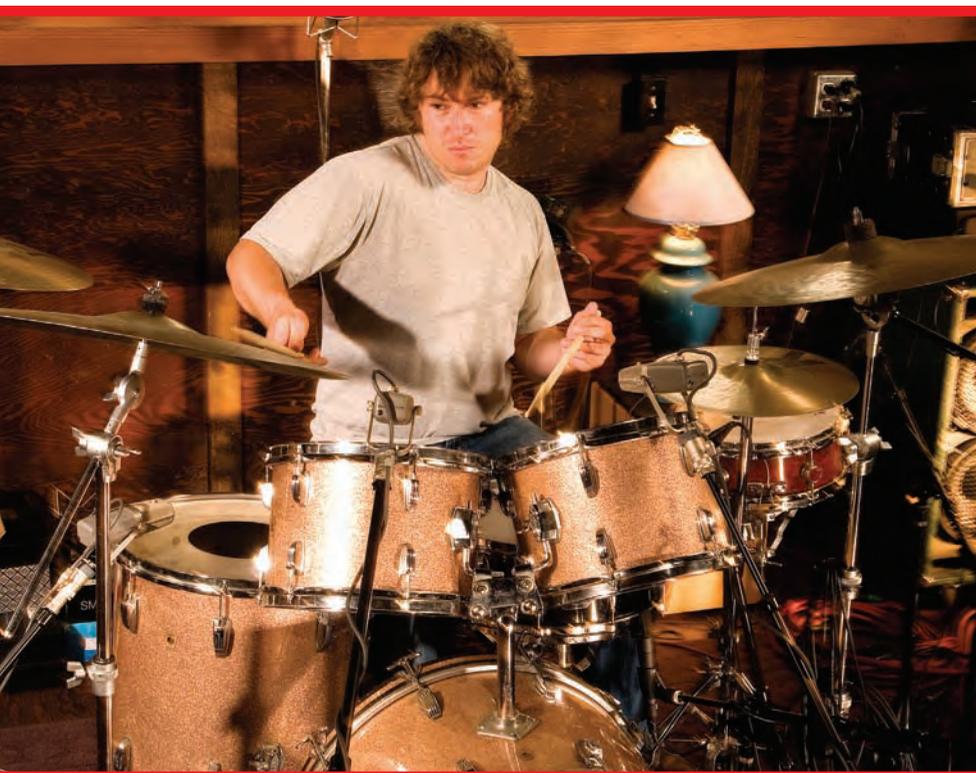
Alan: Exactly, yes. Like our song "Poodle Factory"—"poodle-poodle-factory poodle-poodle-factory poodle-factory poodle-factory"—it's just seven-seven-five-five. But if you play a groove through it, it's just a big six. So there's the odd groupings going around the bigger shape. The quarter note is here, and you go—"one two three four FIVE six seven, one two THREE four five six seven, one two THREE four five, one two THREE four five, ONE. The pulse just kind of goes through there in a big six.

MD: And so the track "Seven Cows Jumping Over The Moon" would be like a big seven?

Alan: Uh-huh, one-two-three-four-five-six-seven. But then the rhythm is ta-ka-di-me-ta-ka-ta-da, ta-ka-ta-ta-ka-ta-ta, ta-ta-ganam-ta-ta, ta-ka-di-me-ta, ta-ka-ta-ta, ta-ka-ta. So it goes down, like a cow's tail. The rhythms in that tune go down, as the melody of the tune goes down, from seven, six, five, four, three, two, one. The melody is actually the polyrhythm on that tune. Then the B section does kind of a dotted thing over the seven, which is cool.

MD: Speaking of your tune "Hotel," I love the snare sound under the trombone solo.

Alan: That's a little 5x12 Night Owl maple piccolo snare drum, and I think what you're also hearing is a lot of this transpar-



record yet, and it still has a live feel.

Alan: We all played live in the same room—the guitar amp was in the closet, and Kai went direct into the board—and we cut everything live. Very few edits, maybe a rhythm guitar part or a synth lead here or there—but it's pretty raw. I overdubbed some percussion and flew some cowbells in here and there, too.

On the "Hotel" track I went cowbell-happy, kind of like the Herbie/Headhunters stuff where the cowbells are a part of the groove. I set up these six tracks of bells, banged on them, and then chopped a loop out of it, so it became a part of the music.

Alan: "Semos," with the four-against-five, is one of my favorite tracks of ours. When we recorded it for *Live Volume One*, Zakir Hussain came in and improvised. He didn't know any of the music—he just walked in and played like that over that track. That's just like telepathy. He just goes, "Oh yeah, they're playing the fours against the fives...take *this*..." Zakir's amazing.

Fareed is playing in 5/4, like one-two-three-four-da da, so that's the five. And if you line up 16th notes in groupings of five against that, it actually turns into 4/4. So using the Indian syllables, ta-ti-ki-da-tum ta-ti-ki-da-tum ta-ti-ki-da-tum, the group-

Alan's Kits Of Choice

ent compressor called a Distresser, which I added in the mix. Fast release compression kind of brings out the overtones and the “boings” in the drum, the little “toings” that go off. If it holds on a long time it kind of chokes drums, but a fast release on the compressor will give you a little bit of thrash and twang, especially if you hit it a little bit.

MD: There's also a lot to the stroke.

Alan: Yeah, there's that too. I was hitting mostly rimshots, trying to get the thing to sound kind of timbale-ish. When I'm recording it, I just listen to the timbres and stuff, try different heads and microphones, and I think about the effects later. Now, if you're hitting the drums softly you can get away with better microphones. But if you're hitting the drums hard you better keep the good ones away. If you hit the drums really hard, a lot of microphones go ouch, especially right up on a snare drum. That's why you use dynamic mics on drums.

MD: Whose snare sounds have you liked over the years?

Alan: A lot of the snare sounds of the '70s. Harvey Mason's snare on the Herbie Hancock *Head Hunters* record was cool, and Steve Gadd's snare drum was really cool. Gadd probably got me into those types of sounds, those deader Zero Ring-y kind of tones.

Eric Levy and I just made a record, and those were the sounds I went for. I actually took the heads off the bottoms of the drums, put the mics up underneath them, and got real dead with it. Went really '70s with it, played in a little closet—and that record sounds killer, man. Made it on a laptop and it sounds great. It's called *Eric Levy's Love Lounge*, and we're almost done with it. We also played on a rock record recently with a band called American Drag. We've been making demos and recordings, Eric and I, doing other peoples' projects and producing projects. I think we're a pretty good team up here now.

MD: Any other snares come to mind?

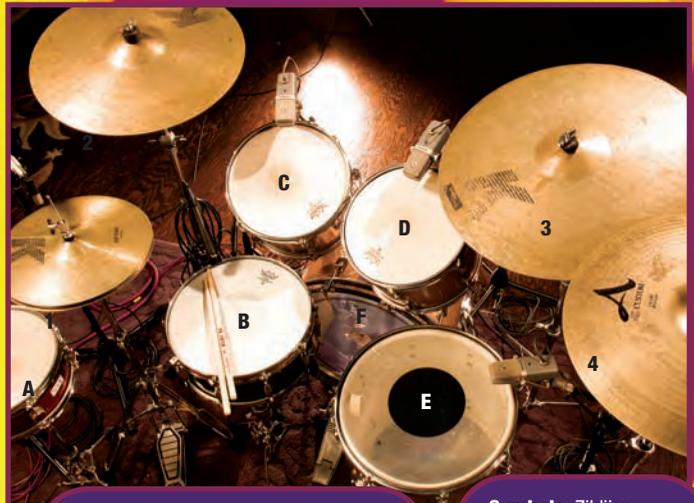
Alan: Zigaboo Modeliste from The Meters—there's something about the distortion and the way he hits it. *That's* a snare sound. When I was in LA, I shared a studio with Will Kennedy, and he's got a unique touch as far as how his backbeat sounds. Mike Clark's backbeat sounds unique, as does Steve Jordan's—playing those little snare drums and stuff. He's smokin'.

MD: You've developed a great vocabulary on the drums. Where did that start?

Alan: My dad got me a snare drum and ride cymbal when I was two years old, and I've played drums a lot ever since then. I was always playing gigs with my dad. I got a job at a music store when I was sixteen, and they had me tuning the drums because they liked the way I did it. I also cleaned the floors and did all that stuff. I met this guy named Tom Hayashi there, who hipped me to guys like Jack DeJohnette and Vinnie Colaiuta. I was already into Gadd. And when I was in high school, I watched all those videotapes—Gadd, Bozzio, Weckl, the Buddy Rich tapes. Those were really good for me. I got to see those guys do their thing.

Then when I moved to LA, as I mentioned, I shared a rehearsal room with Will Kennedy. Will listened to me and said, “Man, I've got to teach you how to de-chop.” So he taught me about phrasing better, playing more musically. Then I started getting some gigs, started playing more music. I'm thirty-four now, so that's about thirty years of drumming.

MD: Have you studied with anyone?



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“I play an assortment of drums and cymbals,” adds Alan, who says he has no endorsements. “although when I tour Europe with Scott Henderson I play Yamaha Maple Customs in natural maple oil finish.”

KIT 2:

Gretsch Broadcaster in Black Oil finish

- A. 5 1/2x14 wood snare
- B. 8x12 tom
- C. 14x14 floor tom
- D. 14x18 bass drum





when I'm using traditional grip. So I switch back and forth a lot. Over the years I did a lot of ruthless practicing, doubles and singles and combinations and fives, a lot of repetition. If you want to get to a certain level, it's all about repetition and being relaxed and knowing when to stop and stretch, because it's kind of like building muscles and working out. There is an athleticism to it—you kind of have to go for those things that make you sweat a little bit. Or else you need to learn how to relax so much that you don't have to use all that energy.

But watch Billy Cobham with Mahavishnu. He's using energy, he's putting some stuff out there. [laughs] Steve Gadd puts it out there. The people who put their energy out and aren't scared to express it—that's the kind of drumming I like. Elvin Jones, Tony Williams—those kind of guys, on-the-edge cats. When you watch Tony and he's just playing so much killer stuff, even if sometimes he doesn't quite get it, it doesn't matter because he's going for something new all the time.

MD: "Jamie's Jam" features some high-energy drumming.

Alan: "Jamie's Jam" was a last-minute

Alan: Tom Hayashi taught me a little bit out of Ted Reed's *Syncopation* book, just to get me to start reading rhythms. Reading rhythms was the only real study that I did for the drums. I'm mostly self-taught otherwise. But I learned how to read, and later on I learned how to write melodies and some minimal chordal things on the piano, and I started writing more music. Drums are a good place to write music from. They have music coming out of them, ringing sympathetically.

MD: You developed some great hands. How did that happen?

Alan: I used to arrange all the pillows in the bedroom into a pillow drumset. I did that a lot, and there's no rebound there so you build other muscles. And then when I was checking out Will, I noticed his finger technique and started incorporating that.

MD: You play traditional and matched grip.

Alan: It depends. Playing jazz feels strange to me when I'm using matched grip, while playing backbeat stuff feels strange to me



recording session that Moog put together. There are a couple of grooves in there—it all breaks down and gets linear, and then there's a hippy-happy fast samba-ish kind of thing. Bluegrass fusion. Fareed writes these songs that are melodic challenges, and they have little counter rhythms, counterpoint. It's broken up. We always have to rehearse the counterpoint. One thing will be going this way and the other thing will be going that way. It's a cool thing. He has a contrapuntal way of writing. He'll just start ostinatos and then write counterpoint to them, which is kind of cool.

MD: You sounded good soloing over some of those ostinatos on *Woot*.

Alan: I didn't like what I played that much—didn't like the way it felt. Actually, I liked what I played on "Pundit-Ji," because it's an ostinato in 9/8, and I played some cool ideas. I think I played some quintuplets against the nine, and I remember thinking that was a good idea. I don't personally like my solo on "Hotel," but everybody egged me on to keep it. They like it and think it has a good vibe—but it's my private hell. [laughs] No, no, it's all good. I played it, I better accept it. I think I got lucky with



Hertz at the helm of Shabby Road Studios

what we kept on "Pundit-Ji."

MD: Are you generally tough on yourself with your drumming?

Alan: No. A good gig is one that starts and finishes. And then it usually should be done—unless something's really unmusical and you have to talk to somebody about it. But it should be more of a Buddhist thing, where you're like, "Okay, off we go." It's really hard when it's not like that, when you're in a musical relationship where after the gig you're still thinking about what happened musically a lot or bumming out on it. It's not really worth it.

MD: Speaking of "Pundit-Ji," how is that

one counted?

Alan: It's just a big three, with a bar of two right there before the little lick. It's mostly just a three thing, but the drum solo part is over 1-2-1-2-1-2-1-2-3. No, actually it goes, ta-ka-di-me ta-ta-ga-nam-ta [3x], so it's a grouping of 4/4 and 5/4, to make a little cycle of 9/16. But what I do is make it feel like three, because if you're going ta-ka-di-me ta-ta-ga-nam-ta, you can go ta-ki-ta ta-ki-ta ta-ki-ta. It's the same as going ta-ka-di-me ta-ta-ga-nam-ta. So I can make it feel more like 3/4, even though it's in 9/8. I can play bigger shapes. It's like, "Wow, how is he so free inside the nine?"

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ALAN HERTZ

It's because I'm feeling it in three.

MD: So "Corner Peace" would be 1-2 1-2 1-2-3?

Alan: It's a thing in seven—ta-ka-ta-ka-ta-ki-ta—but it has a kind of African feel where you put the kick drum. It has good syncopation to it. There's a bar of two in that one too, so the circle finishes with a bar of nine before it flips around. Then the bridge is in eleven—ta-ka-di-me-ta-ki-ta-ta-ka-di-me. It's eleven, but it kind of just feels like four or something.

MD: The tune "Uptown Tippitinas" is a nice change of pace on *Woot*, something very greasy and funky.

Alan: And it was really swampy and groovy before I added some percussion. People were thinking it was too slow, but when we added the syncopation on top, it started to work. The percussion really helped to move that thing along, because

it was pretty opiated.

MD: You were laying back on the groove?

Alan: Yeah, but that's to a click. It's funny.

MD: It can be cool to play stuff that messes around with time.

Alan: That's the quantum particle of time—that's the unknown part. You can write it out, but how do you write out samba? Do you write it ta-ka-ta-ka ta-ka-ta-ka? You can't do it because it swings culturally, not mathematically.

MD: The tune "Ishmael & Isaac" is culturally all over the map, with some nearly unplayable musical sections to boot.

Alan: Yeah, that was a hard one to learn, actually. We were on the road, and Eric stayed up all night under the headphones with this little sequencing keyboard. He played us that tune the next day and we were like, "Oh, *no*, we have to *learn* that



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Also check out some of the Scott Henderson clips on YouTube.

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ALAN HERTZ

one. That one has a ton of ta-ka-di-mes, ta-ta-ga-nam-kos, and Starbucks coffee runs. That has a lot of stuff. It's kind of like the Mahavishnu Orchestra meets a bar mitzvah. [laughs]

MD: Do you teach when you're not on the road?

Alan: No, I'm not a great teacher. I don't have as much patience as I would like to give the kids. It's just not my thing. I'd rather produce a singer-songwriter and make some cool music collectively than show somebody how to play a really cool drum chop.

This month there was a fusion session that I recorded in our studio. This seventeen-year-old R&B singer came in, which was fun. And I've been playing a lot of drum loops for a project this week. All kinds of stuff. Sometimes I play drums, sometimes I don't.

MD: Do you still practice?

Alan: Every day. I'll just sit down and play some licks, and then walk outside and have a cigarette. But I have my drums set up all the time, and I'm always recording and practicing, all the time, all day, every day. It's a good stress release. You go out during the day and everyone honks at you and tells you you're not good, and then you come back and you beat the crud out of some drums. It's good. I've always had a better attitude when I was playing drums than when I wasn't.

I'm not practicing any Chuck Brown or *Syncopation*. I'm not practicing any *thing*, I'm just basically playing a lot, playing stuff. I've kind of embraced what I know how to play...and it's funny, if you play for twenty minutes, something new is going to come out that you never played before, and then that's a new thing. You'll start to tap into something new, and then you've got a new chop. But you gotta play and empty your head for a while, and then the stuff comes out. It takes a little bit of time. I prefer that way because then it's burned into your stuff, it's not out of a book.

MD: That reminds me of Kenny Werner's book, *Effortless Mastery*—practicing what you know, and having other things naturally happen from that.

Alan: Yeah, guys that have voices do that. Steve Gadd has a voice, and it's not like he's playing new stuff all the time. He's playing his stuff, and you're like, "That's Steve Gadd and that's cool." Or Elvin Jones, he always played that same stuff when he was swinging. It's not like he was breaking new ground all the time, he was just embracing what he knew how to play and just getting down with it, you know? That's cool stuff.

I've been practicing singles between my

right foot and my hands. That makes you feel really uncoordinated. I'll try to get it where I can alternate it. I'm not there yet. That's a good one. There's only a couple people that can do that really well. Steve Smith kills that stuff. I played a drum duet with Steve once, and he played what I played with my hands back with his feet. I was like, Cool, right on. Thank you. He's a nice guy.

MD: What do you spend more time practicing, hands or feet?

Alan: I don't play a double pedal, but I do a lot of doubles with my foot. I practice playing doubles between my hands and feet a lot. When I was a kid I practiced until I could do that. And then I was like, "Well, that sounds kind of stupid," so then I put the odd groupings in it and played three and then two with the feet. I think that sounds hipper, playing quintuplets instead of just sounding like some death-metal guy.

MD: Were you well prepared for the Scott Henderson gig, or did he throw you any stuff you weren't ready for?

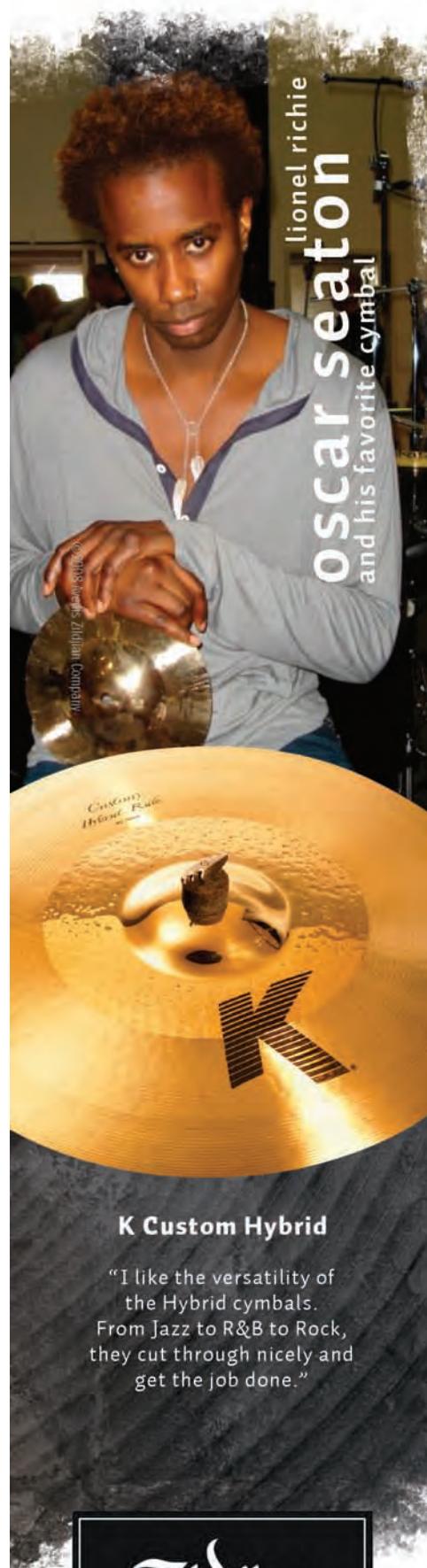
Alan: You know what, he called me last-second and said, "I need a drummer next week." He sent me a couple CDs, and I transcribed them on the plane flying to Costa Rica to do the first gig. We had no rehearsals or anything. We just showed up and played. It was a really great gig, the only thing is I wrote out one of the tunes backwards. So he counted off one-two-three and the song was like completely backwards. That was the only funny thing that happened on that tour, but it was hilarious.

Scott and I have built a good friendship. I've gone all over the place with him the last couple of years—Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico City, Brazil, Germany, Austria....

MD: It's a little different musically being in a trio situation.

Alan: Scott is a killer player, and John Humphrey, who plays bass with him—they met in Jean-Luc Ponty's band, and they sound great together. I came in there and they already had their material, so we're working on new stuff—we want to do a record too. That's a killer group.

There's some YouTube stuff out there, one really good one called "Scott Henderson Solo Drums," if you type that in. There must have been a lot of girls in the audience, because I was actually playing pretty decently. [laughs] It's been a good two years with Scott, going all over the world, and laying in the studio space. Everything's been good for me—yeah, I've been pretty blessed.



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Jazz Drummer/Historian

Kenny Washington On...

by Mark Griffith

For *Impressions*, we sit down with the world's top drummers and play them deep drumming cuts. Then we put them on the spot and ask them to guess who's playing drums—and to offer their unique insights into the music. This month we corner the great drummer/historian Kenny Washington.

There is no drummer alive today who knows more about the history of jazz than Kenny Washington. In fact, Kenny instantly recognized everything we played for him. Here are his comments on some classic jazz records of the swing and bebop eras.

Papa Jo Jones

Count Basie, "The World Is Mad Pt. 2," 1940

The way that Papa Jo brings the band back in after the break is great. The Kansas City tradition of playing was a little lighter than others, and Basie's rhythm section had that lighter feeling with a really strong beat.

Papa Jo Jones is the original bebop drummer, and he had such a great way of placing the time right smack-dab in the middle of the beat. He is always associated with the hi-hat, but he began to put the time on the ride cymbal as well. On Basie's "Tickle Toe" Jo played the ride behind Lester Young's solos. Jo also dropped bombs between his bass drum and his left hand long before the bebop drummers did.



Andrew Lepley

Shadow Wilson

Jimmy Mundy, "All Aboard," 1940

Elvin Jones used to go to the Five Spot and check out Shadow Wilson playing with Monk. Shadow had a really wide cymbal beat, and his timekeeping was unmistakable. But he also had amazing chops. Some of the best Shadow Wilson was the stuff he played with Illinois Jacquet; that was his favorite band. He could play in a big band or a small group. He had chops, great time—everything.

Sid Catlett

Benny Goodman, "Don't Be That Way," 1941

Sid had a big sound. But as big as his sound was, his beat always felt light. This tune is a good example of that. We are so used to hearing Krupa playing with this band. As great as Gene was—and this is no put down—he could tend to get a little heavy. Neither approach was better or worse, they were just different concepts of swinging.

If you listen to the recently released Town Hall Concert recording of Bird and Diz, Sid sits in on "Hot House" on Max Roach's drums. You can hear that Sid plays much lighter than Max, and the beat feels lighter.

O'Neil Spencer

O'Neil Spencer Trio,

"Baby Won't You Please Come Home," 1938

That must be O'Neil Spencer playing drums. He had his own sound with the brushes. He had "hidden chops," meaning that he has more chops than you think, because he isn't always using them.

When O'Neil played with The John Kirby Sextet, you could hear him playing with a stick in one hand and a brush in the

other, which hadn't been done much at that point. No one ever talks about O'Neil Spencer!

Ray McKinley

Will Bradley, "Hallelujah," 1940

Ray McKinley is another great drummer that *no one* talks about. There are some Glenn Miller broadcast recordings where Ray is playing his butt off. When I first began working as a jazz DJ, a radio station asked me to do a show called *The Big Band Dance Party*. At first I was really bummed; I thought that I would have to play music that I thought I didn't like. But because I wanted to start working in radio, I devoted myself to finding music that I liked by those bands.

I thought that I hated The Glenn Miller band. But I took home some recordings and listened. To my surprise, I learned that Glenn's group could sound like a totally different band on every tune that they played, and I really liked some of it.

Philly Joe Jones

Joe Morris, "Weasle Walk," 1948

This was a big hit record in the late '40s. Lots of jazz musicians did rhythm & blues gigs. After Louis Jordan's popularity, a lot of bands started to crop up that were doing this type of thing. If you wanted to work as a musician, you played it. You might have been able to sneak in a little bebop, but there were tons of bands like this out there working constantly. This is knockdown drag-out R&B! As you can hear from this cut, Philly Joe



Jones knew a whole lot about playing the backbeat on 2 and 4. Philly Joe took the best from all of the drummers that came before him: Klook [Kenny Clarke], Sid, Max, and Art Blakey, and made it his own. He had "scholarly chops," but he also had the "standing on the corner of 125th St." kind of chops.

Elvin Jones

Thad Jones, "The Zec," 1948

Elvin Jones is one of the most misunderstood drummers ever. He clocked a lot of hours practicing the Wilcoxin books, getting his rudimental thing together, playing brushes, and studying with classical percussionists. But people are too busy listening to Elvin Jones with John Coltrane, and they forget that Elvin was a master ensemble drummer. Elvin could play some greasy 2 and 4, and a killing shuffle, but people only listen to him playing in that "Coltrane bag."

Kenny Clarke

Miles Davis, "Blue n' Boogie," 1954

That's Klook! Mr. Cymbal Beat. He and Percy Heath really hook up strong on this record. It doesn't get much better than this. The first thing that I ask all of my students is if they have Miles Davis's *Walkin'*. There was nothing better than Klook's cymbal beat. Louis Hayes and I would sit at his house for hours listening to this record. Klook was also a master of the brushes. There's a record he did with Hank Jones where he plays all of the different combinations of a brush in one hand and a stick in the other.

Roy Haynes

Miles Davis,
"Morpheus," 1951

Like Klook, Roy is essentially a swing drummer. I consider the stuff that he played with Luis Russell to be required listening. Most young drummers know him from Chick Corea's *Now He Sings Now He Sobs*, but to only know that record is to not understand the full extent of Roy Haynes. The stuff he played with Sarah Vaughan, Prez [Lester Young], and Coltrane is all required listening. Roy was the only drummer who could have made Chick's record such a special recording. If you put Philly Joe, Max, Mickey Roker, or



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IMPRESSIONS

even Tony Williams on that date, it wouldn't have been a contemporary masterpiece. Roy isn't bashing, he is really burning hot on a low flame. The way that he gets under the soloists and takes them on a magic carpet ride is amazing.

Clarence Johnson

Ben Webster And Harry "Sweets" Edison, "Kitty," 1962

Clarence Johnson isn't a fancy drummer, but he could rock the house. In New York City back then, there was a bunch of guys like this: Bill English, Walter Perkins, Dave Bailey, and Arthur Edgehill and Al Harewood, who are both still around today. You get these guys in a pocket groove, and the joint would be rockin'! These are drummers that play for the people and would always make the music feel good.

Grady Tate

Wild Bill Davis, "Flying Home," 1959

I've never heard Grady Tate play like that. He and Wild Bill sound like a steamroller! Grady Tate is an important part of a tradition of drummers that you could call for any type of gig or record date. Before Grady there was Osie Johnson and Alvin Stoller. These are truly *professional* musicians.

Art Blakey

"Free For All," 1964

That's Blakey really stretching himself to play in a different style from what he was comfortable with. You can tell that he had checked out some of the younger drummers that were around in 1964 and was being influenced by them. For me, the magic of Blakey was the fact that he was a great ensemble drummer. Art came from the big band era, so he always had a great sense of ensemble playing. He knew what was supposed to happen to make a piece sound its best. He knew everything that there was to know about each tune that he played. After he played a tune once or twice, he had developed a vision for that tune. He wasn't a reader, but his ears were so good he could hear "wet paint dry."

Jimmy Cobb

Bobby Timmons, "Tom Thumb," 1966

The thing about Jimmy Cobb is that no one knows how good of a soloist he really is. He never gets a good chance to stretch out on any records. But if you give him the chance to solo, he'll wipe you out. He has an instantly recognizable cymbal beat. He gets a certain sound because of how he holds his arm and wrist; it has a real weight and a point to it because he's using his arm more.

Louis Hayes

Cedar Walton, "Cheryl," 1973

Lou Hayes used to sit and practice with Tony Williams constantly, and Tony used to follow Lou around. Lou had Tony practicing the ride cymbal pattern on a pad really slowly. That helps you build the stamina to play fast. Lou is not given enough credit for his ability to play up tempos. He was the new Mr. Cymbal Beat after Kenny Clarke. Lou's right hand is really strong.

Nobody played tempos faster than Max. But what Max did was play fast with his right hand and left foot, while he played in half time with his left hand and right foot. He would always give you the "1," so there was no chance of getting lost. But Lou started

playing long lines between his left hand and his right foot. That helped smooth out the fast time. I've learned a lot from Louis Hayes. He's a colossal influence on me.

James Black

Nat Adderley, "New Arrival," 1962

James Black sounds like Ed Blackwell with more chops. Like Ed, he didn't play the cymbals much and used mallets a lot. Brian Blade reminds me of James Black. When Brian was playing with Josh Redman, he had that same kind of spirit, and the same get-up-and-go in his beat.

Joe Chambers

Wayne Shorter, "ETC.," 1965

Joe Chambers has a great touch on the instrument and a recognizable sound. He is both very traditional and very free and new. He is holding this whole thing together, showing you that you don't have to go "hog wild" to play freely. Simple, but not so simple.

Lawrence Marable

"Minor Meeting," 1956

Lawrence Marable is the West Coast Philly Joe Jones, and he is one of my favorites. The best record to hear him on is a Victor Feldman date called *Stop The World I Want To Get Off*.

Larry Bunker

Bill Evans, "Swedish Pastry," 1963

Larry Bunker's a great drummer who's on countless recordings. He had a lot of snap in his beat and could sound like Mel Lewis. His drums are tuned in the same kind of way, and he had a similar cymbal sound.

Lex Humphries

Donald Byrd, "Fuego," 1959

Lex Humphries is another one of my favorite drummers. Lex had great independence, and he played really interesting and creative lines between his left hand and right foot. He also had a great and very surging cymbal beat—especially at faster tempos—and a unique, cool crush-roll thing that he would start off of the beat. He would also play triplets between his left hand and right foot while playing the ride cymbal. There are so many great drummers out there who people don't know much about but who have contributed so much to the tradition.

Jake Hanna

Woody Herman

"Don't Get Around Much Anymore," 1962

Jake Hanna had everything covered. He's a great big band drummer. That was a good period for Woody; Jake Hanna was *swinging*. I've never heard that one before, but that was nice.



Mark Griffith is a New York based drummer, writer, and music historian. His recording *Drumatic* is a tribute to the great drummer composers. Mark recently wrote the books that accompany Hudson Music's DVD packages: *The Art Of Playing With Brushes*, and *Steve Smith: Drum Legacy*.





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H.H.	○	ghost	✱	Addl
w/foot	○	note	✱	T.T.

This month's *Off The Record* takes a look back at one of the most important heavy rock releases of the early '70s: Deep Purple's *Machine Head*. As young *Rock*

Band gamers discover the timeless power of this influential album, the great drumming of Ian Paice is winning over a new generation of fans. For veteran music lovers, Paice's impeccable grooves and finesse-laden fills still excite as you listen through these tracks. Below are some of Ian's standout moments on *Machine Head*.



Sayre Berman

"Highway Star"

One of the all-time road anthems, this long song winds its way through several verses and instrumental solos separated by Ian's remarkably fluent fills. The two-bar drum break at the end of the track's second chorus demonstrates how dynamic accent work can add to a straight 16th-note rhythm. (1:52)

1

$\text{♩} = 175$

"Pictures Of Home"

This shuffle tune starts with a blazing triplet-based drum solo. Notice how Paice builds his accent pattern on the snare as the solo progresses, while the left-handed drummer's right-foot hi-hat chugs along. (0:00)

3

$\text{♩} = 150$

"Maybe I'm A Leo"

Here's a terrific drum sequence coming out of Jon Lord's electric piano solo, as Paice dances around the song's guitar riff using just about every type of rhythm that he can muster. Key elements include the triplet fill that turns into a roll in the first bar, the over-the-bar fill bridging the second and third measures, and the fills that start each of the last two measures. Between the licks, a strong sense of swing propels Ian's groove. (2:53)

2

$\text{♩} = 87$

Musical notation for the opening fill of "Never Before". It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff shows a sequence of eighth-note triplets with accents (>) and slurs. The bottom staff shows a bass drum pattern with 'x' marks and a hi-hat pattern with 'o' marks.

"Never Before"

Here's the opening fill and funky half-time groove from the beginning of this rocker. Paice's feel here is both buttery smooth and rock solid. (0:00)

Musical notation for the groove of "Never Before". It consists of four staves in 4/4 time. The top staff shows a bass line with eighth notes and accents. The bottom three staves show a complex drum pattern with 'x' marks for snare and 'o' marks for hi-hat.

Later in the track's up-tempo section, Ian pulls out this galloping bass drum pattern to help bring Ritchie Blackmore's guitar solo to a climax. (2:39)

Musical notation for the galloping bass drum pattern. It consists of one staff in 4/4 time showing a bass line with quarter notes and accents.

"Smoke On The Water"

Now we come to the album's iconic single. Though it contains one of rock's most recognizable guitar riffs, this song would be incomplete without Paice's accompanying 16th-note hi-hat groove. Here's the end of the intro where Ian adds an 8th-note kick drum pattern heading into the verse. The best way to handle the accents in the second-measure drum fill is to play the triplets with this sticking: RRL (for right-handed players) or LLR (for left-handers like Paice). The double stroke sets up the accent on the third note of each triplet. (0:47)

Musical notation for the end of the intro of "Smoke On The Water". It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff shows a bass line with eighth notes and accents. The bottom staff shows a drum pattern with 'x' marks for snare and 'o' marks for hi-hat, including triplet markings.

Paice's lead-in fill to the first chorus contains more of the same double-stroked triplets in the first two beats of the measure. The

ending triplet is a classic single-stroke move. (1:21)

Musical notation for the ending triplet of "Smoke On The Water". It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff shows a bass line with eighth notes and accents. The bottom staff shows a drum pattern with 'x' marks for snare and 'o' marks for hi-hat, including triplet markings.

As he comes to the end of the song, Paice elevates the energy by adding snare drum and open hi-hat accents to his 16th-note beat. (5:15)

Musical notation for the 16th-note beat of "Smoke On The Water". It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff shows a bass line with eighth notes and accents. The bottom staff shows a drum pattern with 'x' marks for snare and 'o' marks for hi-hat, including triplet markings.

"Lazy"

After an extended solo keyboard intro, this tune becomes a fast blues shuffle with Ian laying down a flowing bedrock groove. (2:25)

Musical notation for the groove of "Lazy". It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff shows a bass line with eighth notes and accents. The bottom staff shows a drum pattern with 'x' marks for snare and 'o' marks for hi-hat, including triplet markings.

"Space Truckin'"

Paice's driving quarter-note snare drum is as important to this song as his 16th-note hi-hat pattern is to "Smoke On The Water." Here are the first eight bars of his groove, complete with inspiring fills that fit neatly into the spaces in Blackmore's memorable guitar riff. (0:15)

Musical notation for the groove of "Space Truckin'". It consists of four staves in 4/4 time. The top staff shows a bass line with eighth notes and accents. The bottom three staves show a complex drum pattern with 'x' marks for snare and 'o' marks for hi-hat, including triplet markings.



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



Double-Edged Rhythms

Using Flam Rudiments To Spice Up Your Grooves

by Terry Branam

MUSIC KEY

H.H.	×	×
S.D.	•	•
B.D.	•	•
H.H.	•	•
w/ foot		

The flam is an essential rudiment that has evolved into a very large family of variations that continues to expand. Flams are extremely versatile; every genre of music incorporates them. This article will show you some ways to take your rudiments beyond the practice pad and apply them to the drumset.



An interesting thing that I discovered many years ago was the opposing rhythms contained in the simple flam tap.

1

I R R r L L I R R r L L

If you play the two hands on different surfaces, the right hand plays this:

2

I R R L R r L L R L

The left hand plays this:

3

R L I R R L R r L L

If you "flatten" the flams (play both notes at the same time), flam taps can work well in a groove context, especially if you put one hand on a cymbal and one hand on the snare.

4

R L I R R L R r L L

A creative way to use the flat flam tap is in conjunction with paradiddle inversions. Take note of the opposing rhythms of each hand.

5

R L I R R L R r L L

6

R r L L R L I R R L

7

I R R L R r L L R L

8

R L R r L L R L I R

Here are the same figures orchestrated for a funk feel. Pay attention to the accents, and play the unaccented notes very softly.

9

R L I R R L R r L L

10

I R R L R r L L R L

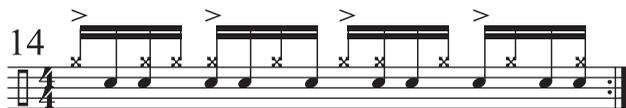
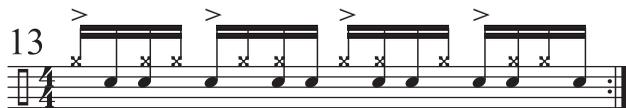
11

R L I R R L R r L L

12

R L I R R L R r L L

These one-beat patterns work great when you combine them. Here are a few of my favorites:



Now let's add some funky bass drum rhythms. Try these with all of the previous flam-tap variations.



Adding a flam tap to a double paradiddle can thicken up a typical Afro-Cuban 6/8 rhythm. Here's the basic sticking, following by a way to play the rudiment on the drumset.

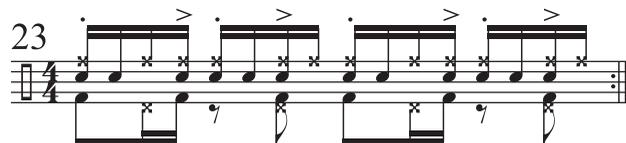
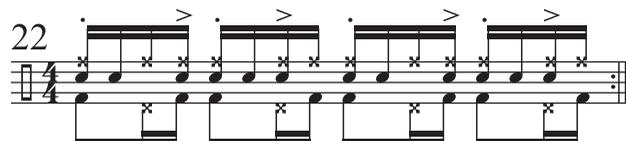


You can also orchestrate a pataflafa/inverted flam-tap combination for a samba or baião groove. Here's the basic sticking of this advanced hybrid rudiment.



I R L R r L I R L r L R

Now move the right hand to the ride cymbal. Play the accents on the bell to add some texture.



For an advanced independence exercise, I recommend using a reading text such as Ted Reed's *Syncopation* or Gary Chester's *The New Breed* for more bass drum variations. For an even greater challenge, play quarters or 8th notes with the hi-hat foot. As always, experiment and search for patterns that fit your style.



Terry Branam is a freelance drummer, private teacher, and clinician in the Chicago area. He can be contacted at terrybranam@gmail.com.



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3d

Once you've mastered the previous examples, start incorporating splashed hi-hat notes with the foot. Here are three possibilities:

4

4a

4b

I hope these exercises have opened up your ears to some new ways to spice up your shuffle-based grooves with your left foot. Have fun, and remember to always play for the music.



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The Essence Of Groove

5 Critical Ways To Improve

by Oscar Seaton Jr.

In order to be able to groove, you need to have great time—they work hand in hand. This month I want to talk a little about great time and share some key pointers on how to develop it—not good time, but *great* time.



Great time is important to have with any genre of music you play. *Everything* in life revolves around time—the way we walk, how we eat our food, the way the sun rises and sets, and, of course, even our hearts beat in rhythm. Our job as drummers is critical in music, and job number-one is having great time.

Playing To A Metronome Or Drum Machine

First of all, the only way to have perfect time is to play with something that is *in* perfect time. Therefore, you should always practice to a metronome or drum machine. Remember, whatever tempo you practice to, make sure you start off slowly and gradually increase the tempo as you go along. When you're playing along to a click and stop hearing it (meaning you're so accurate that you're "burying" the click's sound), you'll be well on your way to having great time.

Of course, there are many very good metronomes and drum machines on the market, in all price ranges. A good metronome to own, and one that I recommend, is a product called Metrophones, which is a combination headphone/metronome. I started practicing with Metrophones about ten years ago, and using them really helped my groove and time quite a bit.

Listening

As you develop your groove abilities, let your ears be your guide. Hear different types of grooves. Don't be afraid to buy CDs or download tunes of great groove players from all styles.

Listen to how a groove is laid down on record, specifically the space between the hi-hat, snare drum, and bass drum. You'll start

hearing how different groove players approach the concept. When you really get your groove together, you'll start hearing what's grooving and what's not. You'll start to recognize your favorite groove players—and you *will* become one.

Remember, everything you hear doesn't groove, and the more you work on developing your listening skills (and sensitivities), the sooner you'll hear the difference between other people's drumming and your own.

Even Playing

Playing "even" is essential in your quest to have a great groove. Your playing has to be balanced and even at all times. The biggest problem I hear with most drummers is that their playing isn't even.

When you practice, again, start slowly with your metronome and try to get the hi-hat, snare, and bass drum as even and as consistent-sounding as possible. One thing I recommend working on is focusing on one limb at a time. Start with your bass drum first, then add the snare drum, and then the hi-hat. (This is much more difficult to do correctly than it sounds.) Also, try not to add any drum fills. Learn to stay focused on the groove, first and foremost.

Space

Another key element to having great groove is controlling the space between notes. As I mentioned, your heart beats in rhythm, and there's space in between those beats. Without the space, the heart won't beat on time. I compare my groove playing to

the way a heart beats. Listen to your heart—it's crazy how it sounds!

Speaking of space, never fill up the groove, because then it's probably *not* grooving. Remember, space is your friend. (Jazz legend Miles Davis would say, "What's the funkier thing about a groove? It's the space!" Many times space is all he would play.)

When you practice, keep it simple and *really* focus on the space between the notes as much as on the notes. You'll find at first that this takes even more concentration.

Recording Yourself

Whenever you practice, always record yourself. That's the only way you'll truly know how things sound and how even they are. Frankly, I bet you'll be surprised when you listen back to most things you play. Sometimes you'll play a certain groove and think it's happening, but in actuality it sounds uneven. That's why you have to record yourself to really know what your groove sounds like.

When I was younger, I used to record myself all the time. This improved my development on the drums by leaps and bounds. I found that stuff I thought sounded good really didn't make it at all in the harsh realities of the playback.

I believe that recording yourself is something you should continue to do, no matter how advanced you are as a player. Always listen back to everything you play. A lot of technically strong drummers sound unbalanced because they haven't taken the time to really listen to how they sound. I urge you to put this time into your practice routine.

What Do You Want To Become?

Finally, always visualize what you want to become. Visualize yourself being a great groove player. I even used to visualize myself playing with the pro artists I work with today. I would imagine myself up on stage, grooving hard, thinking I was one of the best groove players in the world. (I'm not saying I am, but I'm trying damn hard to be!) See yourself doing what it is you want to be doing.

Okay, let's get to work. Good luck!

Oscar Seaton Jr. is an acknowledged groove master. He has toured or recorded with Lionel Richie, Grover Washington Jr., Phil Upchurch, Don Grusin, Dave Grusin, Boz Scaggs, George Benson, Lee Ritenour, David Sanborn, and Queen Latifah, as well as with his own project, 13 Curves. In case you missed it, Seaton was featured in the December 2008 issue of *MD*.



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How To Be A More Musical Drummer

Tips To Keep In Mind For Playing With A Band

by Jeremy Hummel

We've heard it many times before, how important it is to be musical when playing drums, or any instrument for that matter. What really gives us drummers an opportunity to do this is the fact that we can manually control our dynamic levels. But what does it really mean—this term “musical”? Let's examine some techniques and ideas to help understand this better.

Playing Under The Music

In its purest form, music is an expressive conversation—not only among bandmates, but also with the audience. A good conversation is one that allows space for all to be heard at his or her appropriate times. Being musical is about selecting the right words or “textures” within the conversation. It's also about when to lay low and listen—or to rise and embellish what another is trying to say.

For example, do you know what it means to play “under” the music? Let's use a number scale of one to ten (with ten being the loudest) to better illustrate this. Suppose the band is on eight; are you comfortable playing on six? To use a visual aide, imagine that you're in the ocean. The band's dynamic level is at sea level. You would be playing just underwater. Another idea is to think of “tucking yourself inside the music.”

In one of the bands I perform with, there's a bass player who is so solid that I sometimes enjoy playing just under

him dynamically. He's usually playing only half notes or 8th notes, but because the *tone* and *timing* are impeccably strong, I don't feel as though I have to “control the time” as much. It allows me to do anything I want. I can play above, below, paint around the beat, etc.

Which Color Sounds Good Here?

When you're playing with others, strive to get musical sounds or textures pertaining to the context of the music. For example, if you're in the verse section of a tune and want to do some hi-hat work à la Stewart Copeland, Dennis Chambers, or

Carter Beauford, it's usually best to use the tip of the stick on top of the cymbals, rather than the shoulder on the edge of the cymbal. While neither is right or wrong, the former is generally more pleasing to the ear and, technically speaking, provides a better bounce.

If required, can you “feather” the bass drum rather than accent every hit? The idea here is to be “felt” rather than “heard.”

Try sometimes to play a kick-snare-hat beat with one of those elements on a lesser volume than the other two. For example, play the bass drum and hi-hat normally and the snare softer. It's not easy to do!

Can you play a crash cymbal without bashing it? Crashes have many uses other than acting as an exclamation point. There are swells, swipes across the edge, etc.

Are the fills there to make musical transitions and be complementary to the song? Or are they there because we need to throw in the hippest thing we've been working on? Hmm.

But...My Band Plays Loud!

I know that some of you are out there thinking, “Yeah, this sounds great for the jazz and soft rock guys, but I play in a heavy rock band. How does this apply to me?” Even though you might play mostly at high volumes, musical also means “plays

Can you play a crash cymbal without bashing it? And are the fills you play there to make musical transitions and be complementary to the song?

well with others.” For example, do you get a sense that your bandmates are locked in and grooving? Are they enjoying the music? Remember, much of how good the music *feels* is dependent on the drummer.

I sometimes like to do what I call “checks and balances,” where I'll look around at each member of the band for positive signs. It could be something as simple as a head bobbing in time, letting you know he's feeling it; or an ear-to-ear smile (though for some reason it seems to have become uncool to smile onstage—I'm not sure why).

Here's a big one—if you're in a band that utilizes the guitar

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solo, make the solo a real event for the guitarist. Sometimes it seems as though musicians use the guitar solo as an opportunity for *everybody* to solo. Drummers will sometimes play extra fills and cymbal crashes simply because there are no vocals. By giving your bandmates and, most importantly, the song some space to shine, the band not only sounds better, they'll consider you their favorite drummer to play with!

In many of the great rock guitar solos, the most the drummer does is accent or embellish here and there. A good example of this would be "Sweet Child O' Mine" by Guns 'N Roses. Steven Adler simply played a nice pocket groove while accenting with the band.

Busy Vs. Simplistic

If you're playing fairly simple or straight-ahead beats, there's a multitude of ways to make things interesting. One of my favorite songs to play along with is Steve Jordan on John Mayer's "Vultures" (which can be found on his discs *Continuum* and *Try!*). Within this one song, techniques such as playing under the music can be experimented with, as Steve certainly does. Additionally, there's much to be learned by noticing where he accents the hi-hat, and in realizing that there are barely any fills.

Another one to check out is Brad Wilk on Audioslave's "Like A Stone." Notice how the groove is simultaneously driving *and* lulling. This is mainly due to the hip accents on the hi-hat.

For the busier players, I recommend sinking your teeth into Jose Pasillas of Incubus or Rush's Neil Peart (to name two). These guys have always been creative and busy, yet I never felt they got in the way of the music.



In The End...

There is a thought I like to keep in mind and often share with students: "It's best to *complement* the music, rather than *compliment* it." I'm not suggesting technical proficiency doesn't have its place. But it's to be musical to know when to use it.

Jeremy Hummel was an original member of Breaking Benjamin. He helped that group achieve platinum status with their second release, *We Are Not Alone*. He has since turned his efforts to session work and drum instruction in Pennsylvania. Jeremy can be reached at his Web site, www.jeremyhummel.com.



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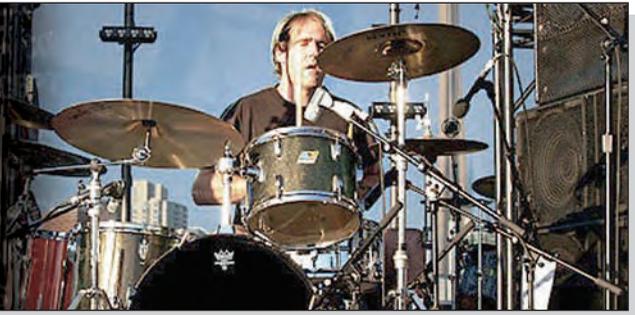
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MODERNDRUMMER

Changing Gears

Absorbing Different Styles—And Making Them Work Together

by Bob D'Amico



Much like Frank Zappa, Fiery Furnaces leader Matt Friedberger calls on the band to navigate through rapid-fire tempo, style, dynamic, and meter changes during our ever-changing live sets and recording sessions. Although I don't believe Matt has in fact listened to much Zappa, I compare the two approaches only because both bandleaders were able to employ these changes in a musical and soulful way. Of course a certain amount of technique is necessary for the musicians to perform in this way, but the feel and soul that goes into those notes and rhythms is equally (if not *more*) important. Swinging in 9/8 against the piano in 4/4 while the guitar is playing "free" is a meaningless trick unless you can see the heads bobbing in the audience.

Stocking The Cupboard

In order to play different styles you must, of course, have listened to and absorbed all different styles of music. Reggae, bebop, and Italian folk music all swing, but in a completely different way. How are these styles different—or similar? What's the common thread?

Before attempting to master playing these styles, it's smart to spend the time sitting on your couch in front of the stereo or walking down the street with your iPod on, really *listening* to these musicians, feeling what they are putting across, and identifying how it makes you feel. When a certain song or feel is absorbed into your brain by way of pure listening enjoyment, you'll have that memory to rely on for the rest of your life. Those memories will become valuable tools when trying to play songs in that particular style.

When I listen back to the new Fiery Furnaces live album, *Remember*, I hear many instances when some of those memories/influences/thefts are coming out in my drum parts. On a song called "Wayward Granddaughter," for instance, I think there are eight different drum parts, and I certainly hear The Meters, Devo, Led Zeppelin, and The Ventures all coming out at different times.

Telling Stories

Music, when at its best, is telling a story—just like every other form of art. Whether it's traditional or abstract, great music tells a tale. Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, Philip Glass's *Koyanasquatsi*, and Slayer's *Reign In Blood* all tell their own individual stories. These musical stories are told with lyrics,

melodies, rhythms, and sound effects (a la Brian Eno). And by addressing part or all of these musical components, no matter how abstract or obscure, you can keep your drumming in the story no matter what "left turn" the song takes. There's always something to grasp onto, which you can keep in the back of your mind and express through your playing, hinting at the musical tale being told. Be creative, and work with what you have.

There's a version of a song called "My Dog Was Lost But Now

5 WAYS TO HIGHLIGHT A MUSICAL THEME



1. LYRICS If you play in a band with a vocalist, use some or all of the lyrics as a starting point towards creating your drum part. It can be the actual words and their meaning, or the timing and diction of the vocalist.



2. MELODY A chorus in a Beatles song is as "melodic" as you can get in a rock band, but a good melody is not always that overt. Even a little three-note ascending passage can stick in your head and create a counter-rhythmic thought. How the melody ascends or descends at any moment in a song can cause your brain and four limbs to respond in their own melodic way.



3. EMOTION How does the song feel? You can assess the emotion of the story or song by listening to the chord progression, the lyrics, or the time signature. Happy song = on top of the beat, and sad song = behind the beat? Not necessarily, but the tonality and timing will guide you.



4. IMPROVISATION/COMMUNICATION If you're in a band where there's room for improvisation, then it's all about feeding off the other musicians—backing up soloists in a way that shows you're listening to what they're saying. Hopefully what you play behind them makes the solo even better.

If you're not in an improvisational situation, you can still subtly communicate with the other band members, even within the context of a simple rock beat, by accenting a certain way or matching your band mates dynamically.



5. RHYTHM Try to get a general idea of where a song is going rhythmically, and see how your brain responds. Sometimes it might feel just right to simply match what's going on with the other instruments, and lock it in exactly. And sometimes it will spark an idea to *counter* what's happening, such as creating a polyrhythm—or even playing in another time signature—and figuring out how to resolve it when certain changes take place.

He's Found" on *Remember* that contains a funny example of working with the simple and the obvious. For the singing parts of the verses, I just thought of a dog with big, floppy paws walking around in the most awkward of ways. In between the singing, Matt asked us to randomly

bridge is great, but it doesn't always have to be that way, and no approach is better than any other.

There's a song on *Remember* called "Clear Signal From Cairo" that has a lot of changes, but hopefully they all work in a cohesive way. The lyrics and the

Swinging in 9/8 against the piano in 4/4 while the guitar is playing "free" is a meaningless trick unless you can see the heads bobbing in the audience.

improvise together. For that part I always thought of a dog chasing its own tail and acting crazy for a few seconds. Obviously the song's lyrics have nothing to do with this, and are a metaphor for something else. But on tour I thought it was fun to work off of the word "dog" and see what came out each night.

Common Threads And Ingredients

In jazz, the great drummers can be heard hinting at the melody while the soloist is doing his thing. They're taking pieces of the melody or the "head" and interpreting (or re-interpreting) those themes constantly, keeping us all in the song or story. This way of thinking can and should also be used when coming up with drum parts in a rock band scenario, especially if things are moving around stylistically. Going from a salsa rhythm to a punk rock blast beat doesn't have to be a nonsensical change—if you can find a way to show how they're both related in the context of that particular song.

Really good chefs can design a menu that might seem disjointed and totally random, but after tasting the food you realize that it all works together in the subtlest of ways. For example, there might be a hint of basil in each dish, even if it's not obviously apparent in the overall taste. Music can be the same way. The concept certainly applies to a lot of classical and jazz, but nowadays it seems to be scoffed at when it comes to rock music. Verse/chorus/verse/chorus/

melodies are elegant, and that's how I tried to make the drums sound from change to change—reserved and laid back, slightly behind the beat, with a little subconscious anger thrown in there. Foreshadowing, character tangents, and shocking endings happen in books and movies all of the time, so there's no reason they can't happen in rock music, right?

Many people come up to me after shows and ask how difficult and disconcerting it must be to have to learn a million different parts for each tour, and change everything up each time around. But I don't see it that way. Sure, it's a memory challenge, and there are some versions of songs that I become attached to. But being in this musical situation consistently keeps me on my toes technically and creatively.

We all love to watch our favorite movies or read our favorite books over and over again, but isn't it much more exciting to stumble upon or create something brand-new? As long as you stay creative and keep it all organic and alive, the music will follow and make the gear changes smooth—and maybe even fun.

Bob D'Amico has played with the avant jazz group Piltown Man and the punk rock group The Jason Loewenstein Band. Currently he's recording and touring with The Fiery Furnaces; he's recently appeared on their last two releases, *Widow City* and the double live album *Remember*. Based out of New York City, D'Amico is currently accepting students and can be contacted at thebigfoist@gmail.com or www.myspace.com/bobdamicodrums.

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BUDDY HARMAN

by Robyn Flans

Nearly twenty thousand recordings are graced by the immaculate drumming of Nashville legend Buddy Harman. The man with perfect time and sublime taste recently passed, but his timeless performances will be studied, and loved, forever.

It is a task of serious importance when one is asked to write a tribute to someone who has passed away, a person with a family, children who love him, friends who adore him, colleagues who respect him... a life that is well lived, a human being so very missed. And when that person is someone of Buddy Harman's stature—someone who changed the face of music, who introduced an entire sound to an important scene—it's that much more of a challenge, that much more of an honor.

This is what Buddy told me in April, 2004: "Eventually a guy decided to use me on a country date back in the '50s. He said, 'Just bring a snare drum and brushes. We don't need a whole set.' Up to then, they had been using what they called a dead-string guitar sound. They'd place paper in between the strings of a rhythm guitar so it didn't have any tone, but it made a slapping sound when they

ran across the strings with a pick. When I started playing snare drum on sessions, it was a much better rhythm sound and much stronger. They weren't used to it, but they got used to it pretty quickly. It caught on."

Harman grew up in Nashville and was influenced by his parents, who both played in a band. As a teenager, working at a movie theater, he managed to buy a set of Slingerland drums and put together a high school band. With Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich as his two primary influences, Buddy enlisted in the Navy, playing at each base. Upon his release, he enrolled in the Roy Knapp School of Percussion in Chicago for three years. He returned to Nashville in 1952, and became the city's first "country" drummer—very gradually. Even when he took the job at the Grand Ole Opry in 1959, they put him behind a curtain because drums were to be "heard" (and not very







much) but definitely not seen. Buddy was there for two years and then got so busy in the studios, he had to give it up. He returned in the late '80s and worked the Opry until 2000.

Buddy worked with so many legendary artists—many of whom crossed over from country to the pop charts—that there's no one who hasn't been touched by his magic. Who hasn't heard Elvis Presley, Roy Orbison, Patsy Cline, the Everly Brothers, Johnny Cash, Brenda Lee, Roger Miller, Ray Price, Ray Stevens, Andy Williams, Perry Como, Chet Atkins, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Kenny Rogers, Waylon Jennings, Patti Page, Ronnie Milsap, or Simon & Garfunkel? Having had the privilege of interviewing Buddy twice—once in 1981 and again in 2002, I'm going to let him tell his own story.

On Patsy Cline And Cutting "Crazy"

"It was at producer Owen Bradley's studio. Back in those days, everything you heard on the record—strings, horns, voices—was recorded in the studio at the same time, not like these days, when things are done in pieces and overdubs. He had a lot of those things arranged. He had an arranger in there conducting. We'd run it down and rehearse it, and if there was something he heard that he didn't want to do, he'd change it. A lot of it was written out. They didn't write out the drum part, though. They just had chord charts, string and horn parts—things like that. They always left the drums up to me to play whatever I felt would fit. I always appreci-

ated their confidence in me.

"A lot of things I recorded through the years, I thought, 'Wow! This is too much. This is great!' 'Crazy' was one of those moments. What a great song, and what a great singer. We had such a great group, we didn't have to do a lot of takes on anything. Back then, they didn't have sixty-four or a hundred thirty-two tracks or whatever they have today, and they couldn't punch in like they can now. In the early days, if somebody missed it, everybody had to go back in and do it again. So we were very careful. Once we had the feel—which is what they were most interested in—that was the take. Sometimes they'd keep a track with a small mistake if the feel was there."

On The Everly Brothers

"I just used brushes on a snare drum for 'Bye Bye Love' and 'Wake Up Little Susie.' Those were the first songs I did with them. I remember how fascinated I was with how close their harmonies were and what good-looking kids they were. Chet Atkins was producing them, and I had a lot to learn back in those days.

"They played the guitar and sang the tune, and we all listened and then started running it down with what we thought would fit. There wasn't a big band on that session, just a few pieces. The bass fiddle was on one side of the mic and the snare drum was on the other.

"I've been all over the world, and people always ask me about the drums on 'Cathy's Clown.' They ask me whose idea it was and how I thought of it. The answer is, I just tried stuff that I thought would be different, and the producers left it on

there. That was a little four-stroke ruff on the second and fourth beats. I changed the whole beat in the chorus, and then I went back to the original part on the verses. It just felt like it needed something different. They must have liked it, because they didn't change it. The Everlys had a habit of wanting to change this and that, but they left that alone."

On Elvis

"I was very much in awe. I'd heard about him and knew he was quite a charismatic person. To be honest, at first I was kind of scared to say anything to him. But he was super nice to me the whole time I worked with him.

"The first thing I did was called 'Stuck On You' when he first went with RCA after leaving Sun Records. They'd put a demo on, we would listen to it, and then Elvis would decide if he wanted to do the song or not. Everyone would get ideas from the demo, and then we'd start running it down.

"We didn't have arrangements on his sessions. Elvis was pretty much content to let it go like the demo, or close to it. The demos were pretty good, though. They weren't just a guitar and voice. There would be a full band on them, so it was fairly easy to do his stuff. We could add or take away things, and usually nobody ever said anything. Elvis sang his songs and let us do our thing. He loved a lot of drum work, though. Whenever I'd play a hot lick, he'd look over and grin."

Roy Orbison And "Pretty Woman"

"That was a killer. We had about five guitar players playing the same lick, the



Buddy was a vital Nashville presence well into the new millennium.

Rick Malkin

There are followers and then there's us



sax was playing the same lick, everybody was playing that lick.

"Every time I did a session with Roy, he would bring his guitar in front of the drum booth, play something, and say, 'What will go with this?' On 'Pretty Woman,' he did the same thing. He started stroking the guitar in 4/4 and asked what would go with that. I said, 'You've got it right there, those straight quarters, right there.' I added the 8th notes on the cymbal, and it all worked

together perfectly. Roy always trusted what I thought would fit. I really appreciated that."

Johnny Horton And "The Battle Of New Orleans"

"That was a lot of fun. John Horton was a great little artist, but bless his heart, he got killed in a car wreck. We were all torn up about that. But I remember recording that tune. It was a Columbia session with Don Law producing, and Harold Bradley did the banjo



BUDDY'S BUDDIES

Famous friends weigh in on the genius of Nashville drumming legend Buddy Harman.

Jim Keltner

"When I came into this thing called recording, I couldn't believe the magic of it and how amazing it was, with the people who had come before me, like Hal Blaine and Earl Palmer. I knew a lot of their work because they were local here. Then I discovered Purdie and started to make a point of finding out who the great drummers were, and it became really important to me to find out who played on these records.

"At the time, I didn't have a great appreciation of country music, probably because I come from Tulsa, Oklahoma. My dad was a Benny Goodman kind of guy, the big band stuff and R&B stuff. But my mom loved country music, and she had Hank Williams and Patsy Cline on the radio all the time—and I didn't appreciate it.

"Sometimes it takes years to go back and appreciate your roots. When I did, of course, like everybody else, I fell in love with those records, and then the studio drummer curiosity kicked in and I started to find out about this guy and that. And it seemed like Buddy Harman was the only drummer mentioned for a long time. So then it was, 'Okay, he's the Hal and Earl of Nashville.' When I found that out, I started paying attention, and it floored me that he played on so many different kinds of country records. 'Pretty Woman' was as pop as any record could possibly be, with as great and seductive of a beat as you could imagine, and his sound and his feel are the thing that we all copy today.

"Who knows why certain drummers have a certain feel or get a certain sound? That's

the blessing of this whole thing. It's not about anyone having to compete with anyone else. Everyone is unique. It comes down to how your hands are built, how your nerves work, everything. Knowing that helps to know you can exist in a world of Vinnie Colaiutas, who are from another planet and continue to amaze me. To know that is to listen to a record that Buddy has played on and just marvel—listen to how that feels. It's a really beautiful thing to celebrate the uniqueness of the individual."

Phil Everly

"Buddy was the mainstay. You couldn't have been more important than being the drummer in rock 'n' roll and country music. Buddy was just about as unique and wonderful of a person to work with as you could possibly imagine. You always sound kind of cliché-ish talking about somebody who is so nice and so talented, and you wind up saying all these good things and people say, 'Aw, he's being kind.' But the truth of it was, he was an extraordinary musician and extraordinary contributor.

"The drum pattern on 'Cathy's Clown' is one of the most famous. When all the musicians were playing in the old session days, everybody was contributing something. We'd be standing next to Buddy, and he'd do this and he'd do that and we'd grunt or do something with our body language or say something. He'd hit on something, and when he did, it was magic. We would light up and he had it. It would be in minutes, just spontaneously, within minutes he could offer a hundred different variables. He did 'Wake Up Little Suzy,' he did all of the hits.



Keith Richards and Buddy.



Ann-Margret and Buddy.



Buddy with Willie Nelson.

part. It was different. I liked doing something a little bit out of the ordinary.

"Johnny's stuff was kind of military-sounding. He said something to me about it being a march thing, so that's what I did. Several drummers have told me through the years that it was that track that made them want to start playing drums."

Johnny Cash And "Ring Of Fire"

"I believe we had arrangements on that one, because there were horns. We did a sort of Mexican-type beat on that. There were two horns doing the melody while Johnny sang, and again, it was something different for that time."

"In my memory he was aces, and will always be so and I have all fond memories of him."

Paul Leim

"He was an impeccable timekeeper. He was nothing real fancy, just unbelievable feel. Some of those guys like Buddy and Gene Crissman—nothing fancy, but when they laid it down, it just sounded like a hit record. The little hi-hat nuances and the feel. The shuffle on all the Ray Price songs—that Ray Price 4/4 country shuffle—it's undeniable Buddy, he invented that. 'Stand By Your Man,' by Tammy Wynette.... Like Hal Blaine in Los Angeles, Buddy was the mark to reach in Nashville. He had an unbelievable run: 18,000 recording sessions."

Producer Fred Foster

"The first time I came to Nashville to record was in August of 1958. We recorded three songs with Billy Grammer, and Buddy was the drummer. One of the three cuts was 'Gotta Travel On,' which was a million seller, and Buddy played this unique beat—he just slipped into it somehow, I don't know. I had told Chet Atkins, who was playing the lead guitar, 'I want kind of a Bo Diddley feel, but not a Bo Diddley feel exactly, can you do that?' And he said, 'How about this?' And then Buddy said, 'And how about this?' and he just fell in. 'Gotta Travel On' was a huge hit, but it also produced a dance craze called the shag, so Buddy was the creator of the shag.

"Through everything, Buddy was a human metronome. He was etched in stone. He was the rock of Gibraltar. You couldn't move Buddy. If there was a mistake, you could better well believe it wasn't Buddy.

"He was on so many great productions of mine. He was on the first of the Tijuana Brass albums, *Mexico*. He did all the Orbison songs, from 'Only The Lonely' to 'Pretty Woman.' On 'Pretty Woman,' when Roy brought it down to me, it sort of had the same feel as 'Only The Lonely.' I thought it was such a great-feeling song, but I said, 'I don't know about this, why don't we try a different beat on this.' He said, 'What do you have in mind?' I said, 'A hard-driving 4/4.' The drummer in his road band had been wanting him to use him in a session and Roy said, 'I know you don't want to go away from Buddy, but can we have two drummers on this?' His drummer in the band was named Paul Garrison, so Paul and I had a little discussion and I understood he wanted to play more. I said, 'I want you to play those hard four's and Buddy will double you, but when it comes to the color and fills in the middle, Buddy will do that.' And that's what we did. Every time it comes back to that, it's the two of them.

"Buddy was creative beyond belief. 'Running Scared' [Roy Orbison] was not a true bolero, but it had that feel, because a strict bolero is written in 3/4 time and this was played in 4/4 time. It was the way he managed to make it come out so exciting.... What can I say, it was Buddy. And he had the greatest sense of humor ever. You know what he would do for a laugh? He would sit down at the piano and pretend to be like Errol Garner. He would hit the most discordant chord you ever heard, right in tempo,

Ray Price And The Creation Of The Buddy Harman Shuffle

"There were shuffle beats before with dance beats, but it was a whole different feel. We made a country shuffle out of it, laying a good, heavy 2 and 4 backbeat in the middle of all of that. It changed the whole beat around.

"I don't remember which session it was, but it was with Ray Price. The piano player was doing a shuffle thing and the bass player was playing a 4/4, so I just laid a backbeat right in the middle of all of it, with a heavy stick. At first I was doing a brush/stick beat—the brush doing the shuffle and the stick doing the backbeat—and it

fit so well. The producer said, 'Don't change a thing. We've got a beat.' You'd be surprised how many drummers can't feel that beat, though. Some drummers want to play straight 8ths against it. They don't get that dotted feel. And they don't play the same accent in the pattern. You have to accent it a certain way with the keyboard, bass, and drums.

"I would suggest listening to Ray Price records. Pig Robbins, the piano player, was a great shuffler. When you'd get him on there with Bob Moore on bass...well, that was a great rhythm section."

just like everything was grooving and he would look up and smile like, 'Oh, man, have I got it going.' We would get a big kick out of that. He could play every style, from big band to rock 'n' roll to rhythm & blues, country, Latin, jazz—everything, and never was there more of a steady beat.

"He was the foundation of the whole Music City scene. 'Candy Man' [Orbison] is another story. The demo we had on 'Candy Man' was so busy you couldn't really get to the meat of it. I said, 'We need to lay back in that blues beat, sort of like Jimmy Reed.' So we started it and I said, 'Buddy, the drums are too bright,' and he said, 'Yeah, okay, I can fix that.' He turned the snares off, then he got out his wallet and taped it to the head of the snare and that was it.

"I used to tease Buddy a lot because he was left-handed and it looked really weird. When something wasn't coming out, I'd say, 'What do you expect, Buddy, you're playing backwards.' He'd just look at me. He was a champion and a dear friend. We will miss him."

Eddie Bayers Jr.

"He was the greatest inspiration to me, and I know to many others. His talent crossed all genres, which was remarkable, from 'Crazy' by Patsy Cline to Roy Orbison's 'Pretty Woman.' I have several of his jazz and big band CDs as well, which he performed so well on. He set an exemplary standard."

Vince Gill

"A great drummer makes things feel great, first and foremost. That was the knack Buddy had. That shuffle is what made Ray Price's music so great. So much of that music was spent on sawdust dance floors all over the country, especially where I'm from—Oklahoma—and those Texas dance halls and ballrooms. That was how you loved the music: You hit the dance floor. My favorite thing about country music is the shuffles, so there was the guy who put it on the map. It's no different than Bill Monroe's mandolin defining bluegrass music. Buddy was the first guy.

"I knew Buddy from going to the Opry. We had an amazing camaraderie. I remember saying at his funeral: 'There are some people you love to see 'em comin'.' He was just one of those guys I loved to see comin' down the hall, and you can't say that about everybody. And I could tell he was glad to see me comin'. Every time I did the Opry, I wanted to do a shuffle with Buddy playin'. 'What're you going to do tonight?' 'Buddy's back there, we're going to do a shuffle.' Just that honky tonk, great shuffle feel. Not anybody could play it like he did. Everybody can play the same notes, but some people make it feel different, and that's what he did. If you look at the legacy of what he played on, you gotta just sit back and laugh. And to think, at the Opry, they didn't even want drums. He played behind a curtain for a while.

"When he was sick, he asked me to sing at his funeral, and I said of course. It worked out where I had a day off while I was on tour, so I flew down and was proud to be able to honor my old pal."



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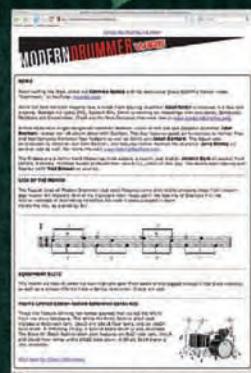


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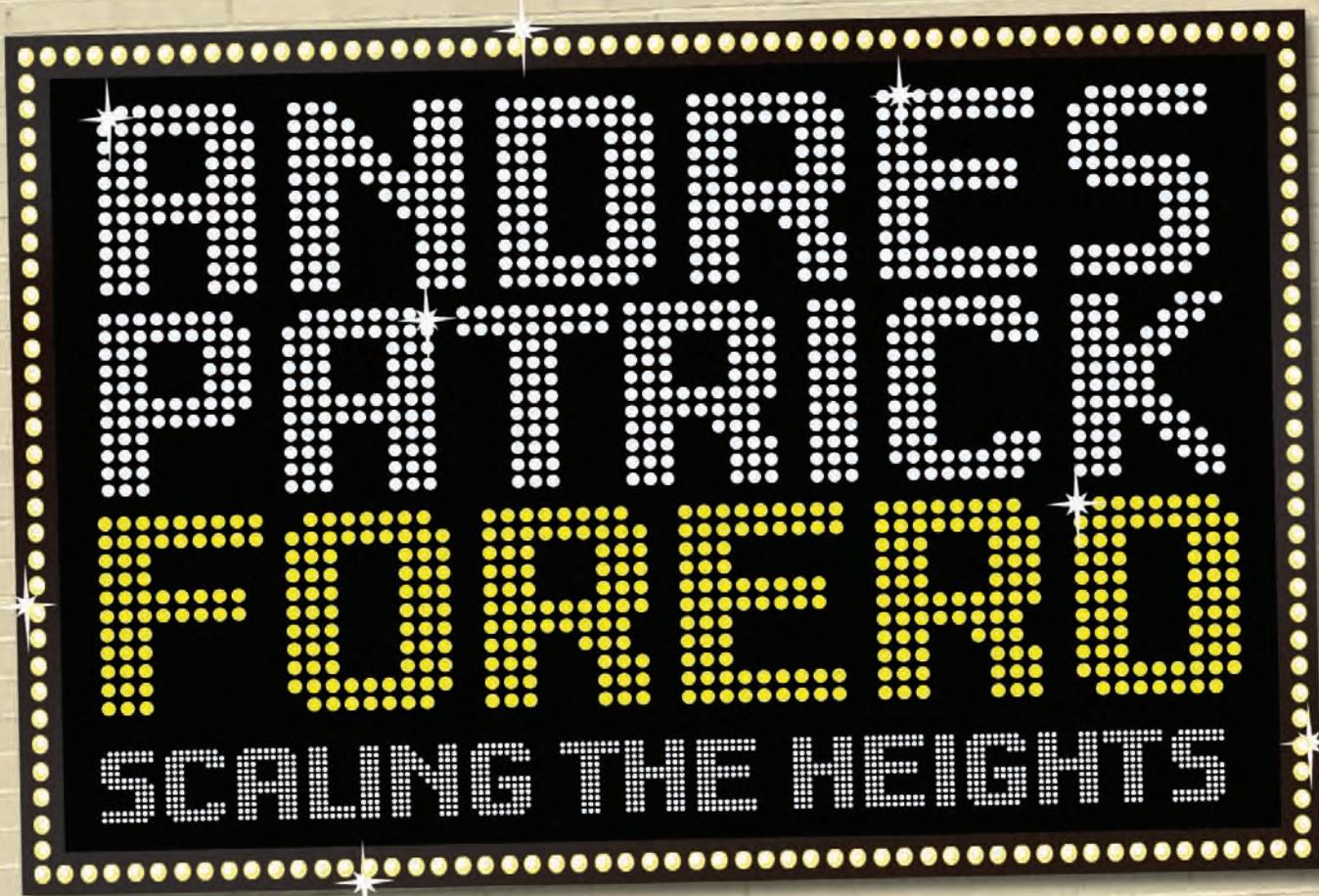
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Story by Joe Bergamini • Photos by Christopher Otazo

In the early spring of 2007, I was recommended by a mutual friend as a potential sub for a new off-Broadway show called *In The Heights*.

Taking the normal first step in the process of subbing, I went to see the show to “watch the book” (as we say in New York) and meet the drummer, Andres Patrick Forero. When I walked out of the theater two hours later, I felt like I had been hit by a tidal wave.

It’s no secret that today’s Broadway scene requires an incredibly high level of professional skill from drummers; I expected that. But watching Andres for the first time reminded me of the first time I saw Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez perform (at a *Modern Drummer* festival). The level of virtuosity was that high.

Andres Forero combines an innate knowledge of Latin tradition with cutting-edge concepts employed by the new generation of Latin players. His playing explodes in a *dazzling* array of colors. Andres grooves hard on salsa tunes, rapping out

cascara on custom-mounted metal guiros on either side of his kit. He juggles sticks and shakers like a magician, putting one down and picking up the other, detailing the top of the groove with various textures. All four limbs dance around the kit, improvising freely and playfully around the Latin rhythms. His improvisations make it obvious that he *owns* this music: As the energy level of the band rises, the tumbao of his bass drum gives way to timba-inspired patterns coupled with snare drum ghost notes and left-foot hi-hat patterns that have as much to do with Phil Collins and Neil Peart as they do with Tito Puente.

And that’s just his Latin playing. Every other style that Forero plays (and *In The Heights* contains just about all of them) sounds equally authentic. Hear him play a rock groove, and you would think that backbeat playing was his specialty. And playing in a jazz context, or working on one of his classical compositions, it’s the same: Andres Forero is truly something special.

IN THE
HEIGHTS
A New Musical

**RICHARD
RODGERS**

**BEST MUSICAL
TONY AWARD**



In *The Heights* is the perfect vehicle for Andres Patrick Forero. The show, conceived and written by Lin Manuel Miranda, is about the lives and loves of the colorful characters in his native neighborhood of Washington Heights, in upper Manhattan, New York City. *Heights* features possibly the most diverse array of musical styles ever squeezed into one show.

After witnessing the incredible display of Andres' drumming prowess for the first time, I was shocked to find out that not too long ago, after years honing his craft, it appeared that he might never play again, after being involved in a serious car accident that left him with debilitating injuries and nerve damage. He was on the way home from, of all places, the 2005 Modern Drummer Festival.

Andres' memory was affected by head trauma, and he could not grip a drumstick in his hand. Faced with months of painstaking therapy, his future looked uncertain. But with the help of his dear wife, Lisa, he fought his way back and gradually regained his abilities, just in time to audition for—and get—the gig with

the off-Broadway run of *In The Heights*.

The show went on to win the 2008 Tony Award for Best Musical, with Andres as a central member of the band. Although he continues to battle the effects of his injuries, none of this is discernible to anyone watching him play, and his small frame contains a positive spirit too powerful to be defeated. It's been said that one must travel through the darkest valley to appreciate standing on the highest mountain. Anyone who knows Andres could tell you that he is living proof of this.

Andres Patrick Forero was born in Rochester, New York and started showing an aptitude for music at age three. Starting with guitar and piano, he later moved to drums. His initial influences were as diverse as Glenn Gould, The Commodores, and music from his native Colombia. A few years later, exposure to Neil Peart, John Bonham, Steve Gadd, Max Roach, and Jeff Porcaro (among many others) inspired him as a drummer.

I recently sat down with Andres at the Marriott Marquis on Broadway to find out more about this fascinating future drum star.



MD: How did you get involved with the show?

Andres: *In the Heights* started for me about five years ago. They were still shopping the show around. The beginning version of the show had me playing

a snare drum mounted on the left, a remote hi-hat, and a bucket for one of Lin's raps that was in the show at that point. After that, about two years ago, I got a call to audition for the off-Broadway version.

Andres: Alex and [co-orchestrator] Bill Sherman put together a simple skeleton of the music for the off-Broadway production. The band had a lot to do with filling in the important parts of different songs, because in Latin music most of it has to

"I HAD SUFFERED A VERY SERIOUS CAR ACCIDENT ON MY WAY HOME FROM A MODERN DRUMMER FESTIVAL. I DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER I WOULD EVER BE ABLE TO PLAY AGAIN."

drumset, but I had two congas in the middle where the snare drum would be. I had a bass drum all the way off to the right with a double pedal, a ride cymbal,

MD: As far as the drum parts, with Alex Lacamoire's orchestrations, how much involvement did you have in creating your parts?

do with feel. I'm particularly proud of the book because a lot of what we did in the off-Broadway production was actually transcribed and made it into the

ANDRES' "HEIGHTS" KIT



Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom/Birch Custom Nouveau in Apple Sparkle Fade/Black Sparkle

Percussion: Latin Percussion

- A.** 8" Club Jordan snare (Philippine mahogany shell)
- B.** 12x12 Rio Brazilian Aluminum Repinique
- C.** 8" and 10" Remo RotoToms
- D.** 5x13 Dave Weckl snare (maple shell)
- E.** 7x8 mounted tom
- F.** 7 1/2x10 mounted tom
- G.** 8x12 mounted tom
- H.** 15" timbale
- I.** 14" timbale
- J.** 16x16 floor tom (with Yamaha SubKick)
- K.** 18x22 bass drum (with Yamaha SubKick)
- L.** 14x18 bass drum (not shown in photo)

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1.** 13" Manhattan Jazz hi-hats
- 2.** 10" HHX Evolution splash
- 3.** 17" HHX Evolution Effeks crash
- 4.** 16" HHX Manhattan Jazz crash
- 5.** 7" HH Evolution splashes (used as mini hi-hat)
- 6.** 20" HH brilliant finish flat ride
- 7.** 22" Jack DeJohnette Encore ride
- 8.** 16" AA Evolution crash

Auxiliary Percussion: LP and Rhythm Tech, mounted salsa bell, salsa cha-cha bell, piccolo jam block, jam block medium pitch, jam block medium mounted on Gajate bracket, salsa cha-cha bell mounted on Gajate bracket, LP Merengue guiros with LP guiro brush (left side and right side of kit), LP fiber maracas, LP Shake It, LP percussion claw, Rhythm Tech MGT mountable gig trays, Rhythm Tech Trigger Triangle with trigger mount

Hardware: Yamaha, including an HS 1100 hi-hat stand, two FP 9415 bass drum pedals (for mounted floor percussion, medium tension, rubber beater), two DFP 9315 bass drum pedals (heavy tension for bass drums with standard beater on all)

Heads: Evans EC on 13" snare batter (tuned medium high), G1 coated on 8" snare batter (tuned very high), snare-side resonant Glass 500 for both. All tom batters are EC2 coated, tom resonants are G1 clear. (All toms tuned

with tension that allows the drum to breathe and have an even tonal quality with no muffling of any kind.) EQ4 on the 18x22 bass drum batter and EQ2 Black resonant, coated EMAD on the 14x18 batter and EQ2 resonant. Bass drums have no muffling.

Sticks: Vic Firth Mike Terrana, SD4 (maple wood tip), HD4 (hickory wood and nylon tip), Tony Royster Jr., and Steve Gadd models.

Brushes: Steve Gadd SGWB jazz brush, Steve Smith Tala Wand

Mallets: Tom Gauger TG 25, T1, WMM maraca mallet, KDC8 Circle mallet

Electronics: Roland SPD-S

Microphones: Yamaha SubKick, various others, Ultraphone headphones, Sensaphonic custom-made in-ear monitors

Miscellaneous: Reunion Blues bags and cases

ALEX LACAMOIRE

Orchestrator, Musical Director, And Conductor

MD: How did you go about writing the drum parts for *In The Heights*?

Alex: What really helped me was a book for salsa written by Rebeca Mauleon called *The Salsa Guidebook*, where she goes into detail and explains what each instrument does in a salsa band—like what the bongos do, what a martillo is, or what a 3-2 cascara is. In terms of how I notate or go about writing a drum part for a Latin tune, for the drummer it's mostly cascara stuff if it's a salsa groove. Bill Sherman and I decided early on that we wanted three guys because that's the traditional Latin setup. You have one guy playing bongos and cowbell, another guy playing congas, and then another guy playing stick stuff. Andres just had a glorified timbale setup, really. It was definitely inspired by Changuito.

We try not to get too specific with the writing, because you just give these guys slashes and let them do what they do, and that's what's been great about Andres. Not only can he play what's written, he can go beyond the page because his ears and musicality are so good.

MD: What qualities do you like in a drummer?

Alex: Feel is very important to me, and time is non-negotiable. I love drummers who keep things exciting. I don't want to hear the same thing every night. I love the fact that Andres will play a different fill in a different section, but when fills need to be specific, he'll do that.

MD: What requirements are necessary to play drums for *In The Heights*?

Alex: You have to be very musical. You need good ears. You have to be meticulous. You have to know how to follow conducting. You have to know how to read music. You have to know how to play Latin. You have to know how to play rock. You have to know how to play theater. It's a very demanding gig.

But above all I think it takes just being an excellent musician and having musicality so ingrained that you don't have to think about it. What you do have to think about is the grunt work: the shedding, the recording, and practicing, and the transcribing. It requires a lot of hard work and preparation. Also, you need to have feel, you have to be punctual, and you need to take care of business.

MD: Any tips for drummers who want to get involved in Broadway?

Alex: You have to play your ass off. You have to nail it right the first time, and if you don't, you have to show the potential to nail it. You have to put in the work, and you have to sound like the guy you're trying to cover. That's for subbing, obviously, but I say for subbing because that's how you land a gig these days.



Broadway book. Our involvement in this continued through the Broadway run, until the show was "frozen." That's the point where you can't change the music anymore; it's finished.

When I got called in to audition, I received three different songs from Alex, and one of them didn't have any music, so I guessed that was going to be a centerpiece of the audition. We had to create our own part for it. When it was time to rehearse, Alex and Bill did a great job of getting us parts and music. There were things that didn't have an order. We'd get a chart and think it was maybe number five in the first act, but it would end up being number four or six.

MD: How did you get into the circle that led to the call to audition?

Andres: I knew Bill Sherman from my early association with the show. Bill recommended me to Alex, who was selecting

the band. Bill, Chris Jackson, and a couple of the other cast members and I go back about five years. We're the senior members after Lin. Alex was already very established in Broadway; he was an important figure as a musical director and orchestrator. I hadn't really been involved in the Broadway scene.

The audition process was pretty rough for me. I'd suffered a very serious car accident and had been laid up for quite a while. Physically I was in really bad shape. I sustained very serious injuries from my head all the way down to my knees. So there were a lot of things that I didn't know whether I would ever be able to do again. Certainly playing was one of them.

Just before my accident I had been given a signature stick from Vic Firth, and I had received my first box of sticks. After the accident, the box just sat there on the

floor, and I would look at it, honestly not knowing if I would ever play again. I was so depressed, I didn't know if I was going to get through it. At that point I met my wife, Lisa. When you fall in love, your spirit just sort of awakens. She made me realize that I could do it, and then I started to make progress, feeling better and healthier. It was at that point that I got the phone call from the production office asking if I wanted to audition. I was ecstatic.

The problem was, at the time I was having a lot of neurological issues, and my muscle memory was suffering quite a bit. I couldn't hold a drumstick for too long. I hadn't played the drums since the accident. I called my doctors and asked if they thought I could make it happen. They said, "We don't know. Only you are going to know, and you're going to have to try it."

I brought duct tape to the audition, because I had been taping the sticks to my hands to keep them from falling out. When I got there I saw Alex, Bill, and percussionist Doug Hinrichs. I was so nervous. They had some electronics there, and I had never worked with electronics before. So I set up, and I looked at the duct tape and thought, "I'm going to do this without the stupid tape," because it is so embarrassing to put on, and so painful to rip off. So anyway, we played the first song, and by the grace of God, I didn't drop my sticks.

MD: Obviously there's a ton of Latin music in the show. Would you say the material is traditional, or is it your own special version?

Andres: For me the whole show is a journey. I feel like it's a flight through different parts of the world, which is one of the things I prepared hard for. The Latin music is specific to its homeland, so if I'm playing an Afro-Cuban groove on the drumset, that groove has to be authentic. The show bases itself on the drums and percussion—the drums are the most exposed book in the show, I think. So the Afro-Cuban stuff, the Brazilian stuff, the reggaeton, and all the backbeat stuff—whether it feels like rock, funk, fusion, or R&B—needs to feel authentic. There are times when you might just be playing clave, but you have to *know* how to play the clave. So from the simplest things to the most complex, I believe that you really have to study these rhythms and be versatile and fluid in the language.

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FROM THE PERCUSSION SEAT

In The Heights' Doug Hinrichs And Wilson Torres

Doug Hinrichs has been with *In The Heights* since its off-Broadway run. He attended Berklee College of Music, where he met musical director Alex Lacamoire, and had previously subbed on *Tarzan*, *The Lion King*, and *Brooklyn*. An incredibly diverse percussionist, Doug has played almost every style of music imaginable, and his experience paid off for *In The Heights*. "I've got a very diverse book. On the salsa tunes I'm the bongocero, and I get to play congas on some of the funkier stuff. I also have some legit parts, like vibraphone and timpani.

"For me," Hinrichs continues, "the biggest challenge is precision. I want to bring some character to the part, but it still has to be spot-on. I can't take it out to the point where it's not recognizable. You have to play the book, but you don't want to sound like a machine. It's a mixture of precision and playing from the soul at the same time."

Doug has some great advice for young drummers looking to build a career and work in New York: "Believe in yourself, and in addition to working on your virtuosity and chops, work on playing the simplest things as well as you can. Nothing in my book is technically difficult, but to play it really right and inspire these people to dance is the challenge. Playing a tumbao is not difficult, but you've got to give it some soul."

Doug has a solo CD titled *Q&A*, a Web site (www.doughinrichs.com), and a product concept in development with LP.

Born and raised in Washington Heights, Wilson Torres joined *In The Heights* at the start of the Broadway run. His previous experience includes *The Lion King*, *Wicked*, *White Christmas*, and performances with the San Francisco Symphony, the New Jersey Symphony, and others. Although he is classically trained (at the Juilliard and Manhattan schools), his hand drumming background comes from his Dominican descent and exposure to Latin music at an early age. "I started playing hand drums and Latin percussion when I was about two," he tells us.

Asked about his book for *In The Heights*, Wilson says, "It's very hand drum heavy. You need to have a lot of knowledge of Latin hand drumming, as well as sensitivity, which comes from the classical training. Spending a lot of time with the tradition is important."

What's difficult for him about the show? "Being in rehearsal, when everything was so new, they would say, 'Oh, can you add a woodblock in your left hand, and do that for eight bars while the shaker is still going?' You wind up having to do eight things at once. And you have no time to shed this. It has to be done right on the spot."



MD: What would you say is the most challenging thing about doing a Broadway show?

Andres: Well, aside from doing eight shows a week, I'm still deal-

ing with a very uphill battle from the car accident. So I battle that every single day, and it's hard because, as you know, the show is very physical.

MD: This gig is much more visceral than most Broadway shows for a drummer.

Andres: *In The Heights* is probably the most emotional thing I have ever done in my life. Every song is bleeding emotion from the people on stage. It directly affects what I'm doing in the pit. Every night the people on stage are giving us 100% of their emotion, and I feed off that. When Lin is doing his rap at the end, I don't know that I have ever reached an emotional plateau like I do with him, and we do it eight times a week. So that's one of the most gratifying things about the show, that it is so emotional.

MD: I was wondering how you came up with some of the unique aspects of your setup, especially the idea for mounting the guiro and playing cascara on it.

Andres: Creating the setup was a labor of love. Actually, my wife helped me. She would patiently hold things for me and I would be like, "Oh, I have to put this over here." During the off-Broadway run, we had a Roland SPD-20 right in the center of the kit. I had to simulate the electronics and play the drumset at the same time, which was a bear. Now some of that stuff is on tracks, and we play to a click.

I had to be able to simulate the traditional cascara, and I just couldn't get my hand over to the floor tom fast enough. I also needed something on the left as well. So I got two LP Merengue guiros and a bunch of Yamaha clamps. I took the clamps and jammed them into the guiros, and then I stuck some towels in them to dampen them. It was exactly the sound I needed.

MD: How much freedom do you have from night to night? Can you

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do a little improvising?

Andres: This show is a brand-new wave of Broadway shows, but it still pays respect to the tradition of the shows that preceded it. This is definitely reflected in the orchestrations. The beginning of the show has some very strict things I have to play. Actually, from beginning to end there are strict guidelines. But Alex gives me a pretty wide rope to hang myself with. [laughs] I think that's one of the things that sets the show part. It's tremendous having the amount of freedom that we do, and it makes it fun to play every night.

I think the show encompasses all of the greatest components of life: all the emotionally incredible and mysterious things that we have presented to us; the relationships we have with our families and friends; love that we have of music, movement, and rhythm; and the possibilities of what could be. Since my accident, my perspective on life has changed completely. Every day is a blessing for me. Every day to me is like the last, you just never know.

MD: I'm sure a lot of drummers would like to know what it takes to sub for you.

Andres: The requirements are very basic. It's important to be on time and to be responsible. You have to put a lot of trust in yourself, and learn the book the way that it was written. There are a lot of styles that have to be addressed. It's not just a question of mimicking. I think there are a lot of pretenders out there, a lot of folks who are copying and mimicking. But with this show, you have to take the rhythms that you hear and fit them to the source. You need to ask yourself, "Where does this come from? What would sound good here?" Also, you have to have good time, and you have to be able to follow the conductor. Alex is really precise. Alex's hands tell a thousand stories in movement for me. You know, the show has hip-hop, reggaeton, Latin, R&B, rock—it's got everything.

MD: What other projects do you have happening besides the show?

Andres: I'm working with Luis Bonilla and his group Trombonilla, and with William Cepeda & African Jazz. I've worked with these

guys for a long time, and I have a whole lot of stuff coming up with them. They just released three albums that I did with William, including *Live At The Montreux Jazz Festival*. Another one has some of my original music on it with The International Quintet. Luis's album *Terminal Clarity* also came out recently.

I'm also the house drummer for a new version of *The Electric Company*, the kid's show that they are resurrecting from the '70s. We're in pre-production, and we've recorded about ten episodes. Bill Sherman and Chris Jackson are writing incredible music for it, and PBS is turning it into a great show. I'm also putting together music for my first solo album.

MD: Who have you been listening to lately?

Andres: I love Steve Jordan, Teddy Campbell, Antonio Sanchez, Bill Stewart, Dave Weckl, Morgan Rose, Mark Walker, and Justin Volpe. These guys keep me inspired every day.

And speaking of inspiration, my wife is like my angel. Without her I would not be doing any of this, so everything that I do is dedicated to her. We recently opened a flower shop.

MD: So you're an entrepreneur as well as a drummer?

Andres: [laughs] Yeah, know where to put your money. And I also want to mention my mom, and my whole family. They've all been so supportive, and without them I wouldn't be here.



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Those of us who love vintage drums worry about fakes. There are some “replicas” out there that are very good. But I hate to see original parts taken from drums to be “parted out.” Of course, some drums are too far gone to be rebuilt and become parts drums. It’s the other ones that worry me—the still good and useful ones that just get killed.

And now I’ve done it.

For years I’ve looked for a Rogers Dyna-Sonic in a finish that was available in the drawn-brass era and into the earliest time frame of the sturdier beavertail lugs. That finish was Mardi Gras—a black wrap with confetti-like squares of red, green, blue, silver, and yellow. It was in the ‘62 catalog, but not the ‘64. And yet I believe it survived into early 1964. A Dyna-Sonic is the rarest of the Rogers wood-shell snare drums, and I believe that a Dyna-Sonic in the Mardi Gras finish is the rarest of its kind.

My friend Kirk Higgins is a true blue Rogers lover, and he sent me a few pieces of an elusive Mardi Gras set. I did not want to have a replica. I wanted to have a “one off” created. So I asked another friend, Ryan Payne, to make a 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ” solid-maple shell. (There were no 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ” Dyna-Sonics ever made, and cer-

tainly none had solid shells.) I also asked for an interior stain of fruitwood, just as Rogers used.

To put together my “new” Mardi Gras, we decided to remove the parts from a metal Dyna-Sonic, though nothing was done that could not be undone and returned to the donor snare.

Next came the badge. Luckily, I didn’t have to worry about removing and reusing a badge. A few years ago, I was given a few unused DS badges from the Cleveland era by Dan Skut, the nephew of the late Henry Grossman, who was the former president of Grossman Music, owner of Rogers Drums. The badges have serial numbers in the 3,500 range. (So much for anyone who thinks that badges were always used in order!)

Ryan applied the vintage wrap. Because it came from a bass drum, there are two noticeable seams, but we had to work with what we had. And the results speak for themselves. One seam is hidden by the strainer and other by the buttplate.

The Dyna-Sonic, with its eighteen-strand wires resting in the proprietary frame, was the showpiece snare for Rogers for over twenty years. I really wanted to see what one in Mardi Gras would have looked like. I already knew the sound.

I don’t recommend making replicas, unless the original drums can be returned to glory. But it was fun to watch the creation of this magnificent fake. And now you know it’s a fake, too.



And on the 8th day...

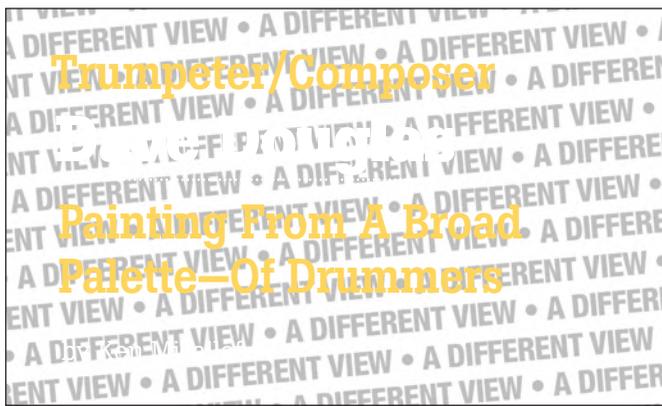


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Speaking with trumpeter/composer Dave Douglas about the many drummers he has employed for his various and diverse groups, one gets the impression that he thinks well beyond drummers as simple rhythmic catalysts. Douglas speaks of a musician's sound like a chef describing ingredients in a gourmet meal.

Midway through our conversation (Joey Baron in the mix), Douglas's insights prompt me to realize that unlike brass, reed, or string players, whose instruments typically produce a single tone, we all too often think of the drumset as a collection of instruments, not one that produces a single tone. But that purity of line is just as important in achieving a unique sound on the kit.

With that in mind, Douglas seems to hire drummers for their *total* sound, not just what they produce rhythmically. He's inspired by the collective tone produced by a particular drummer's choice of drums, heads, and cymbals, and the singular tonal palette that combination of sources will create. Even when forming a drummer-less group (Douglas's Magic Circle), he's thinking about the effect the drummer's *absence* will have on his music.

"Someone like Brian Blade has spent years honing his sound

"What you need to communicate to a drummer is the feeling you're looking for—the emotional content. After that, you have to leave it in the drummer's hands."

and presence," Douglas says. "I am sure he's still working on it and that it's a big part of what he thinks about. Gene Lake and Clarence Penn are also particular about the instruments they play and how they sound. Gene will often bring his whole kit to gigs where he doesn't really need to, and then sets it up and tweaks it for an hour to get the sound he wants.

"A drummer like that can see what kind of dynamic needs to happen," Douglas continues. "And on a deeper level, he understands that the kind of instruments he uses can cover up or not cover up the other instruments. Like Joey Baron...he was the first guy I heard with that super low, tuned-down bass drum. I asked him when the group Masada started why he did that,



Laura Tenenbaum

and he said it was because he felt like if the bass drum was higher it would conflict with the acoustic bass. Elvin Jones had his bass drum tuned really high, probably for the same reason.

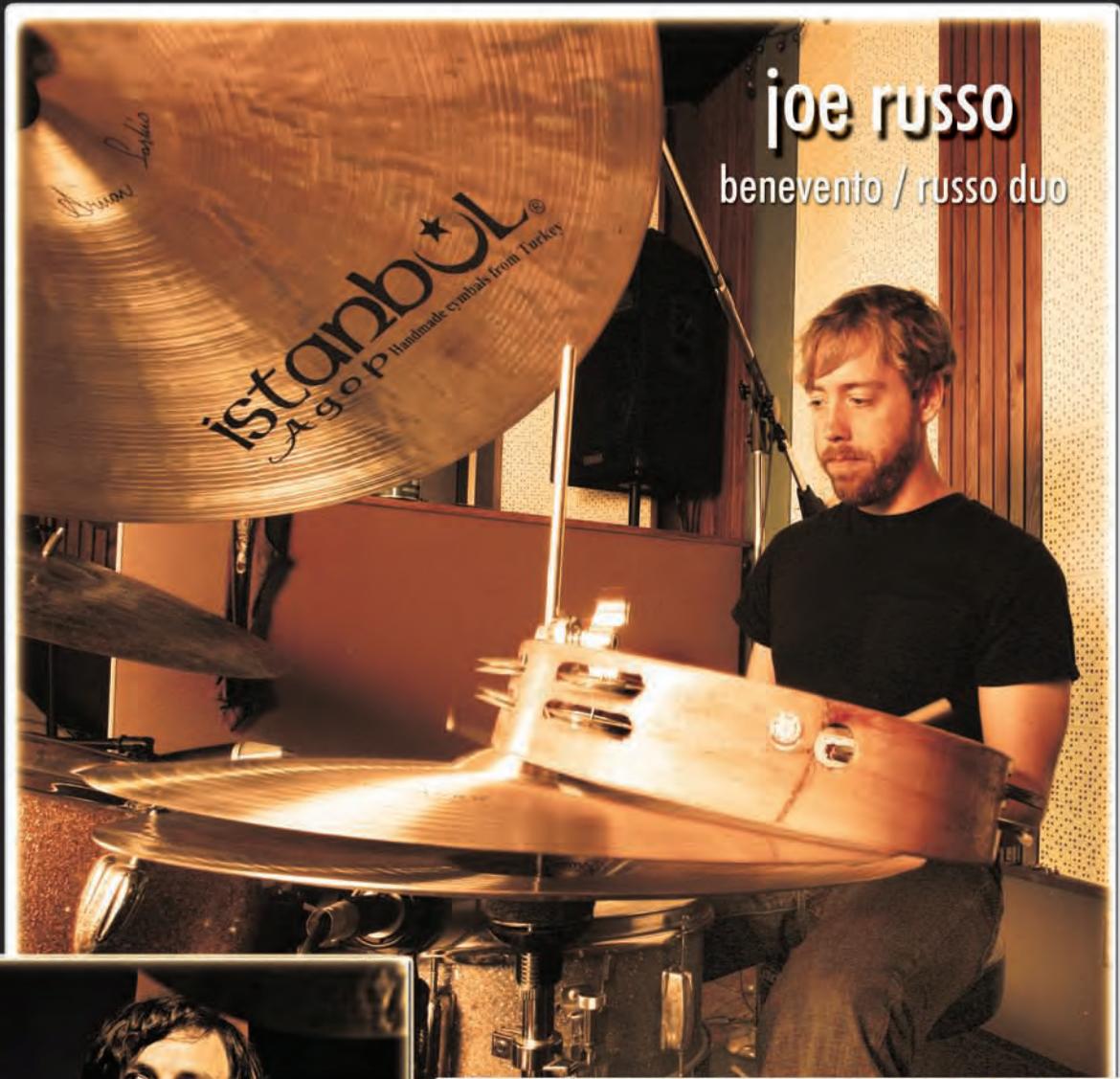
"Joey also taped up his cymbals," Douglas says. "He was trying to not have all the high frequencies ringing all the time so as not to mess with the trumpet or acoustic bass. He liberated that space for the other musicians. Those types of drummers, the great ones, are trying to get into the composer's head and give them what they want."

On *Moonshine*, a quintet recording with drummer Gene Lake, Douglas explores that weird space between modern electronica and gritty hard bop. The drumming on it is as likely to be time-stretched, multi-layered, and affected as performed *au naturel*. And Douglas regularly dreams up unusual confrontation/combinations in sound and style, from the avant-garde Tiny Bell Trio (a self-described "jazz-Balkan-improv group"), to tributes to trad jazz players (*Soul On Soul*), to the pop fetish that surfaced on *The Infinite* and the darker electronic casts of his Keystone band.

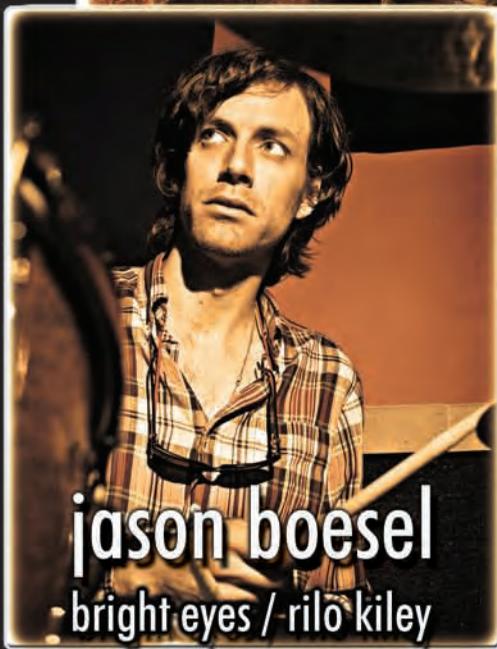
Douglas, who is currently working on a large-scale piece,

Letter To America, set to debut at Germany's Jazz Baltica Festival with the NDR Big Band and Joe Lovano, says his demands on a drummer are relatively simple. "What you need to communicate to a drummer is the *feeling* you're looking for," he insists, "not necessarily the time feel. It's the emotional content and the level of density and what kinds of rhythm you want to happen. After that, you have to leave it in the drummer's hands. It's such a personal and physical instrument.

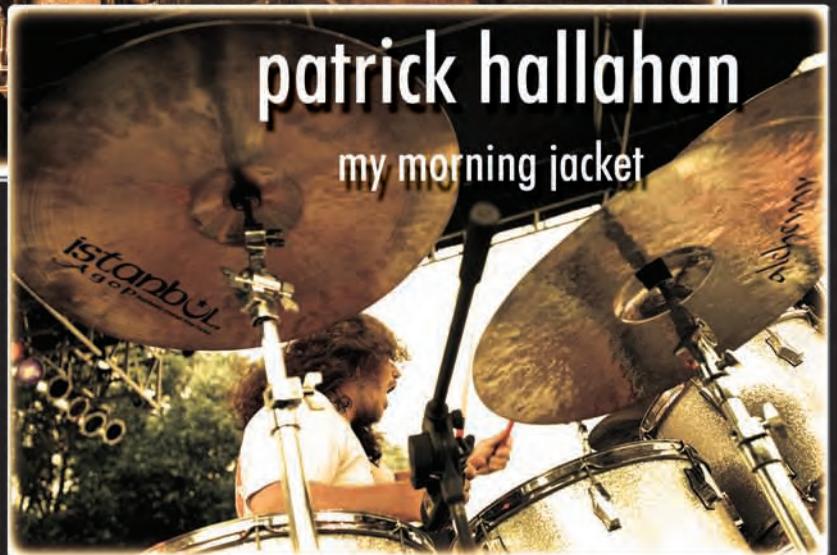
"Drummers have to practice so much," Douglas adds, "but they have to be careful, because they can lose sight of the big picture—the music. The great drummers go beyond technique to find their way to the music. We all have stories about



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DAVE DOUGLAS

hearing that great drummer who has no chops but whose feel is so great. Getting back to the music and just making it feel good is what it's all about."

Here are Dave's thoughts on just a few of the greats he has worked with.

Han Bennink

I wouldn't call him to do certain things, not because I'm so brilliant, but because I know he wouldn't be happy in certain situations. He is someone with a profound sense of music making, and he has strong opinions about stuff. Han might not want to do something more through-composed or more defined. He really has a revolutionary opinion about the freedom of musicians in music. When you present music that is supposed to be the same way every time, you'll get a rebellion from Han.

I do a festival in Italy every summer, and the first time I went I played a duo with Han. It was in this idyllic meadow on top of a mountain. Behind us was a wooden fence and behind that a sheer cliff. We were playing, and Han started hitting rocks and the fence, and then he worked his way down to the end of the fence and went off into the woods. You could hear him in the woods! I stopped playing. Everybody was looking into the woods to see what he was going to do next. All of a sudden, he stopped. He had the audience completely by the neck. They were wondering, "Did he fall off the cliff?" Then you hear him in the distance, "I'm done, Dave!"

Jim Black

(On Douglas's *Tiny Bell Trio*, *Constellations*, and *Songs For Wandering Souls* discs)

Tiny Bell Trio would never have worked without Jim's sound. Part of developing that group was all of us playing with as little equipment as we could. Jim's kit was really small when we first started playing. It was about him being able to support a band with no bass player and take up that space without having a rack of equipment. He just had a snare, bass drum, and one cymbal and hi-hat. That's where the sound of that band developed from. That group had its own unique vibe that very much came out of Jim's conception. We made a few records and we did what we'd set out to do.

Eric Harland

Eric is great. He is so deep in the rhythm

that he's everywhere at all times. You could just be *talking* about a rhythm and he understands what you mean while thinking about five other levels at the same time.

He's always developing some far corner of the polyrhythmic continuum.

Susie Ibarra (*El Trilogy*)

Susie is another drummer with a unique sound. I wrote a concerto for improvising trio and orchestra and had her play it. She brought these Kumintang bells. She has a strong sense of what the music should sound like.

Gene Lake (*Keystone*, *Moonshine*)

Gene has a really particular sound that works with the Keystone band, which features electric/acoustic bass and electric keyboards. I felt that the way he has his kit tuned, it's more attuned to that type of sound. It has to do with blend.

I try to bring the music to Gene that he'll sound good playing and that will challenge and excite him. He comes out of the fusion sound. But he's also put in years with Steve Coleman and his dad, Oliver Lake, and with Henry Threadgill, which is pretty wide-ranging stuff.

Gene's ears are wide open. We groove really hard in Keystone, and Gene can groove as hard as anyone I've ever heard. He's outrageous on *Moonshine*. He's tag-teaming with DJ Olive, going between mechanized beats and his incredible Gene Lake stuff.

Clarence Penn

(*Infinite*, *Strange Liberation*, *Meaning And Mystery*, *Live At The Jazz Standard*)

Clarence has been in my quintet for many years. If I had a gig and he wasn't available, I wouldn't do the gig. This big band project we've been doing is special, and it's the first time I've called him to do something that wasn't necessarily the quintet.

Regarding Clarence's sound, the word that first comes to mind is delicate. But I don't think that someone listening from the outside would think that. The way that he functions within the quintet... Clarence is such a pro and so much at the service of the music, and he brings an infinite number of little sounds within the kit. He has one plastic wood block, a triangle, two or three hand percussion things, and a pandeiro. It's like you're playing with a drummer who comes

out of Tony Williams and Lewis Nash, and then all of a sudden he explodes with alternative percussion. That is so surprising and helpful in finding new spaces and opening your ears.

In the quintet, the music is very flexible. I'm looking for something that's loose. We go into zones that are free, but we're still playing within a form. A lot of drummers will insist on a certain level, but Clarence will take into account what everyone is playing, and if the downbeat is moving around, that's totally cool with him. He's willing and able to create within that space.

Ben Perowsky

(*Magic Triangle*, *Leap Of Faith*)

Ben was close with Gene Lake in high school, and they went through the fusion thing together. But Ben has this other side. Compared to someone like Joey Baron, well, you can't compare them. Joey's sound is unique. But Ben tends to have a bigger kit and he tends toward more prominent cymbal work.

Michael Sarin

(*Five*, *Convergence*, *Witness*)

Michael is from Seattle and has been in New York for years. He has an explosive dynamic range. The thing I found working with Mike is that he is so rhythmically precise. If you listen to the first record we made, we covered some Webern and Ellington, and Michael is very subtle, but his sense of where to place the smallest tick is really amazing. He plays in Ben Allison's groups now, and he tours with the clarinetist David Krakauer.

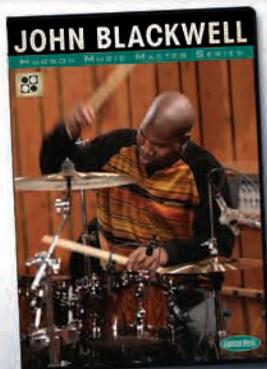
Tyshawn Sorey

Tyshawn is one of these unpredictable drummers. He has so much stuff up his sleeve that you never know what's coming. That's pretty amazing. You have to see him live to have it make sense. He's one of the most fully educated musicians I know. He was over for rehearsal while I was working on a classical piece. I played it to him on the computer, and he sat down on the piano and played the first twelve bars pretty much correctly. He only heard it once and played it—an amazing mind and an amazing musician. Most importantly, he's not afraid to take chances.

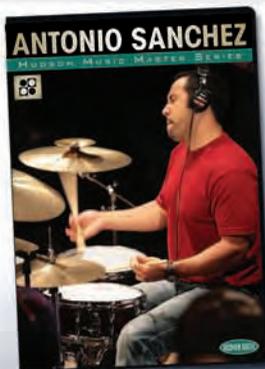


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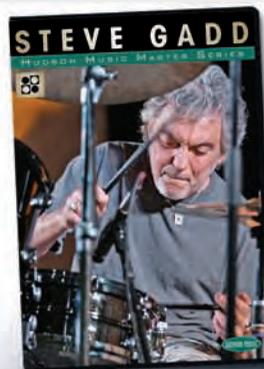
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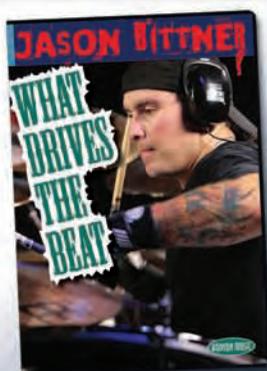
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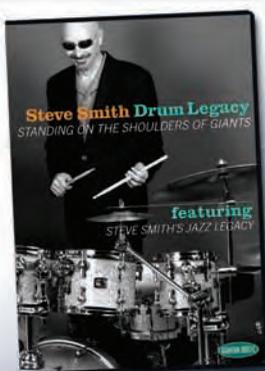
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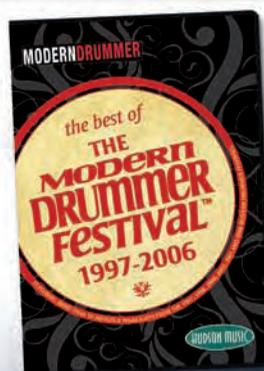
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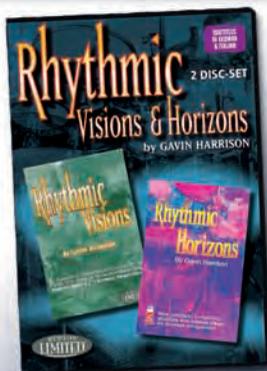
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JOEL HARRISON
THE WHEEL

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In a forum that's failed so many others, composer/guitarist Harrison successfully unites modern classical chamber strings with "jazz" instrumentalists in a fiercely original, category-defying six-piece suite. The sound is organic, layered, and complex, with exciting rhythms, and the

writing demands rounded, inter-disciplined performers. Drummer **DAN WEISS**, who recently cocked ears with his drumset performances of tabla solos, excels in lubricating the rapidly shifting meters. (Innova) **Jeff Potter**



JACOB GARCHIK **ROMANCE**

★★★★★

For the past few years, **DAN WEISS** has cut his considerable teeth with New York adventurers like Dave Binney and Rudresh Mahanthappa, combining a multi-timbral approach with a clear, stinging vision on the drumset. Weiss's drumming in trombonist Garchik's free quartet exposes his warm, resonant tuning and

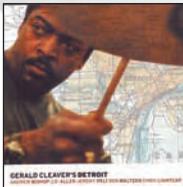
quick-witted drum thoughts. Continually reacting, creating spiraling lines that dart and play, Weiss simultaneously extracts melody and rhythm. (Yestereve) **Ken Micallef**



MODEY LEMON **SEASON OF SWEETS**

★★★★★

Fresh, modern psychedelic garage rock with plenty of hooks and no use for self-censoring, Modley Lemon's third disc features drummer **PAUL QUATTRONE**'s busy but specific drum parts simultaneously grounding and tweaking a selection of hugely enjoyable songs. This is manly, riffy stuff, but it never gets boring, and Quattrone's ever-creative and ceaselessly forward-leaning pounding is a big reason. (Birdman) **Adam Budofsky**



GERALD CLEAVER'S **DETROIT**

★★★★★

It's only fitting that the historic, abandoned Michigan Central Station (MCS) graces the back cover of drummer/composer **GERALD CLEAVER**'s *Detroit*, a record that fuses frail post-bop optimism and avant-garde exploratory introspection. The hissing rush of Cleaver's gutsy ride patterns and slushy hi-hats recall an august musical tradition while rhythmically embodying the urban grit MCS represents. (www.freshsoundrecords.com)

Will Romano

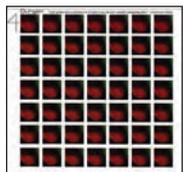


BIOMUSIQUE **THE 10,000 STEPS**

★★★★★

Multi-percussionist/instrumentalist **GREG ELLIS** (*Iron Man*) generally employs an economy of sustained percussive tones here, which commingle with **Lisbeth Scott**'s (*The Passion Of The Christ*) crystalline vocal swells. That isn't to say Ellis skirts all-out beat-fest. For songs "The Tender Green" and "Empty Spaces," he effectively augments complex patterns with a chorus of hissing and clucking rhythmic swatches, proving that soothing music doesn't have to be sedate. (Kosmic Music)

Will Romano



DUNGEN **4**

★★★★★

Dungen leader **Gustav Ejstes** has a remarkable ability to re-create fuzzy, proggy '60s freakbeat—and sell it to a generation of twenty-something indie kids unfamiliar with the source material. Fortunately, the tunes generally trump the cool production, and the band always nails the right mood. Drummer **JOHAN HOLMEGARD** certainly loves his sizzle cymbals, and has a pliable, easy, sympathetic sound and feel. Any of you jaded older cats out there, listen up; some of these young'uns really *do* get it. (Kemado) **Adam Budofsky**

ENCORE

by Michael Parillo



LOVE TRAIN:
THE SOUND OF
PHILADELPHIA

The Philadelphia International label distinguished itself from Stax's Southern thump and Motown's hit-making machinations with an emphasis on craft. The productions of label heads Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, along with those of Thom Bell, took a big-picture approach. The sound, songs, arrangements, musicianship—it all mattered. House drummer **EARL YOUNG**'s drumming was an important component of that picture, as this four-CD box set proves. Young played silky ballads with subtle syncopations that never disturbed the slow-jam dynamic. And by pretty much inventing that disco groove, Young kept Philly International's Love Train of hits chugging along through the '70s. (Sony Legacy)

MD Talks To Earl Young

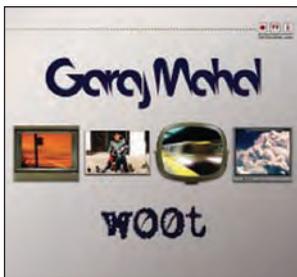
You're viewed as one of the originators of the four-on-the-floor disco beat. How did you fall into that groove? I liked the straight-four Motown feel. So I would just take the quarter notes on the bass drum, hit 2 and 4 on the snare, and play 8th notes on the sock. The sock cymbal really determines how that groove rolls.

"For The Love of Money" is like a disco beat turned backwards, with the snare on 1 and 3.

That came from us just jamming. The O'Jays heard that groove and said, "Turn the tape on." They basically took the jam we recorded and put words to it—made it a song.

You played tasteful, syncopated parts on ballads like "La La Means I Love You." Were those arranged?

Yeah, that was a Thom Bell production. The difference between Gamble & Huff and Thom Bell is that Thom would write out every note. You might be out six bars and come in with 8th notes on a cymbal for four bars—but you played it just like that. And you couldn't punch in. If you made a mistake you had to repeat the whole thing.



GARAJ MAHAL WOOT

★★★★★

If this isn't the finest Garaj Mahal CD to date, it is certainly drummer **ALAN HERTZ'** best showing—in fact, he steals the show. Beginning with a remake of the five-over-four madness of “Semos” from their 2002 *Live Volume 1* CD, GM borrows heavily from Herbie Hancock's 1970s Headhunters material and the complex rhythmic groupings of Southern India. There aren't many bands that like odd time signatures more than this one—making for a demanding drum chair—and Hertz lights it up on every track. His snare tone under the trombone solo on “Hotel” is pure Purdie. His ability to think Carnatically and play soulfully on “Corner Peace” is inspiring. His linear breakaway on “Jamie's Jam” is breathtaking. And the drummer's swampy groove on “Uptown Tippitinas” is so fittingly funky. (www.owlstudios.com)

Robin Tolleson

SENSES FAIL

LIFE IS NOT A WAITING ROOM

★★★★★

Album number three from Jersey-based melodic hardcore rockers Senses Fail sheds new light on a well-traveled road. There's lots of double kicking from drummer **DAN TRAPP** throughout this release, though it's largely transparent and never overwhelms the structure of the song. “Lungs Like Gallows” sports a driving, solid performance, and there's a terrific swagger in “Family Tradition,” with just the right amount of push-and-pull. But Trapp, for the most part, plays straight, supportive patterns on songs like “Four Walls,” even offering a Larry Mullen Jr.-esque groove on “Hair Of The Dog.” The excellent production values of the album don't hurt, with awesome, expansive sonics furthering Trapp's already powerful playing. (Vagrant) **Waleed Rashidi**

AHMAD JAMAL IT'S MAGIC

★★★★★

The great jazz pianist's trademarks thrive: distinctive harmonies, left-hand riffs, and a booming sound that could blow the lid off a grand. Drummer **IDRIS MUHAMMAD** is an ideal complement, grooving aggressively while stirring up a sweaty whirlwind. Add star percussionist **MANOLO BADRENA's** extra pepper with bassist **James Cammack's** fat grounding, and you've got thrills. It's “Magic” but no illusion. (Dreyfus Jazz) **Jeff Potter**

THE HAUNTED VERSUS

★★★★★

On their sixth album, The Haunted once again prove themselves as an important metal band that continues to develop a signature sound. Throughout *Versus*, drummer **PER MOLLER JENSEN's** playing is filled with conviction, displaying a feel that is grounded while keeping a velocity that moves things forward. His parts refreshingly play off the guitar riffs, making use of space and resorting to double kicks only when it furthers the song. (Century Media) **Martin Patmos**

DAVID SANBORN HERE AND GONE

★★★★★

Who else but **STEVE GADD** could grace *Here And Gone*, the all-star '60s soul/blues record from alto saxophonist David Sanborn? Laced amid guest turns from **Eric Clapton** and **Joss Stone**, Gadd's laid-back brushes, train-chugging swing, and authentic behind-the-beat shuffles are just the sort of thing that would have made Ray Charles proud. (Decca) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

CABO VERDE SHADE BROWN

★★★★★

Cabo Verde's six-track CD *Shade Brown* beautifully mixes romantic Mediterranean-infused acoustic jazz, European gypsy music, Latin jazz-rock, and Flamenco. *Modern Drummer* contributor **ROBIN TOLLESON** (drums and percussion), **JUAN BENAVIDES** (hand claps, cajón, and percussion), and **BILLY SEAWELL** (tabla) play lively, Latin- and Afro-Latin-based patterns with precision, propelling these exotic hybrid tracks. (www.myspace.com/quebrao) **Will Romano**

FRANCISCO MELA CIRIO

★★★★★

Bounding forward, Mela's second disc as leader captures five fearless musicians spontaneously—and playfully—deep in “the zone.” The Cuban-born leader's first disc confirmed his heavy buzz as an “arrived” drummer. In this live set of originals from New York's Blue Note nightclub, Mela stretches further, showcasing his keen, overflowing improvisational mind. Whether delivering great-feeling fluid grooves, caressing tricky odd-time interplay, or breathing “free,” his expressive kit work is captivating. Aided by heavy notables **Jason Moran** (pno), **Lionel Loueke** (gtr), **Larry Grenadier** (bs), and **Mark Turner** (tn sx), Mela's poised to become an important drum voice. (Half Note) **Jeff Potter**

THE NUTTREE QUARTET STANDARDS

★★★★★

Drummer **ADAM NUSSBAUM** and guitarist **John Abercrombie** have enjoyed an ongoing musical relationship for years, and their rapport shows on *Standards*, a super-group blowing date with **Jerry**

Bergonzi (sax) and **Gary Versace** (organ). Nussbaum's playing underneath the guitar solo on the swinging “Eronel” in particular defines a mature drummer at work: keeping great time with smooth brushes, beautifully switching to sticks, and interjecting his statements while not intruding. (www.kindof-bluerrecords.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

BOB MINTZER BIG BAND SWING OUT

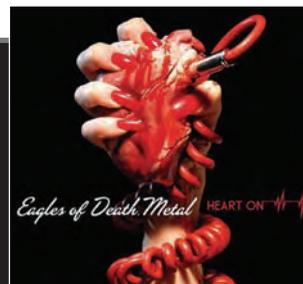
★★★★★

A new recording by The Bob Mintzer Big Band is usually cause to celebrate for swing aficionados. Drummer **JOHN RILEY** is certainly no stranger to the subject, having played with everyone from Woody Herman to the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. *Swing Out* provides Riley with the opportunity to do what he does best: navigate a chart with nuance and style, lay down some light linear funk, and, naturally, swing, swing, swing while supplying a myriad of cool ride patterns. A master class of big band drumming. (www.mcjazz.org) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

EAGLES OF DEATH METAL HEART ON

★★★★★

JOSH HOMME, multi-instrumentalist/leader of the perennially über-cool Queens Of The Stone Age and the equally stalked Eagles Of Death Metal, is one talented dude. Solid as a rock, and *always* thinking about the song, Josh has done more to validate the tambourine and China cymbal than just about anyone else in modern rock, taking simple devices and somehow creating a voice for himself with them. *Heart On* is a typically sleazy, succulent affair, every song featuring some clever rhythmic hiccup or tonal tweak. Pop drumming for grown-up rockers. (Downtown) **Adam Budofsky**



DAVID JONES COLOURS OF THE DRUM

★★★★★

This triple-disk solo acoustic drum effort (which includes “soothing soundscapes” and “energizing drumscape” CDs and a behind-the-scenes DVD) offers a slightly schizophrenic study in texture, tone, and time. Tracks such as “Ancient Dance” and “Just Three Notes” (though not in 3/4) are reminiscent of “The Drum Also Waltzes” (and highlight Jones' impressive technique), while “Japanese Garden” and “Kalimba Dreaming” are fully formed, meditative pieces. Jones packs a lot into these disks, including enough cool lick ideas to keep you busy for a year. There are issues with the track titles. (Some pieces labeled “ambient” aren't.) Still, there's no denying, this is a gutsy release. (www.davidjonesdrums.com.au) **Will Romano**

STEVE ALLEE TRIO DRAGONFLY

★★★★★

If you've really got something to say, there's no need to shout. Allee's jazz piano trio radiates confidence, grace, and shared phrasing in one effortless voice. Drummer **TIM HORNER's** super-fine touch lends spark, breath, and compositional design beside **Bill Moring's** elegant bass. Great tunes, satisfying swing, and a rich, heartfelt sound. (www.owlstudios.com) **Jeff Potter**

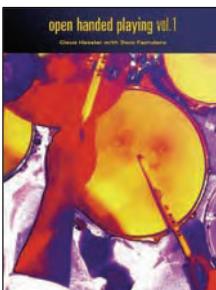
MULTI-MEDIA

DOUBLE PEDAL METAL BY STEVE KILGALLON

BOOK/CD INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED \$24.95



This book is easy to understand and provides a great double bass workout, featuring realistic, modern-day double bass metal grooves that gradually evolve into more difficult patterns (including a smoking 7/8 groove). The accompanying *Turn It Up & Lay It Down* CD offers well-mixed, driving metal tracks that are inspiring to play along with and that are accompanied by excellent charts. And Kilgallon offers up cool groove variations, fill ideas, and “Tricking It Out” patterns. This book will have your head bangin’ and your calves burnin’. (Hudson Music) **Mike Haid**



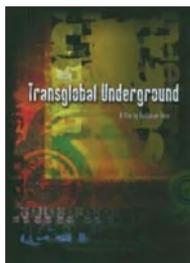
OPEN HANDED PLAYING, VOL. 1 BY CLAUSS HESSLER, WITH DOM FAMULARO

BOOK LEVEL: ALL \$17.95



More than simply covering the obvious approach of playing a groove riding with the left hand, *Open Handed Playing, Vol. 1* really digs into the usefulness of such an approach. It begins by setting up a series of exercises that develop the left hand's ride feel, and works to illustrate the possibilities of open-handed grooves. The book then goes into voicing alternatives, an approach that's relatively easy for the right-y to adapt to and that opens a lot of creative doors. Getting comfortable with left-hand lead can be a chal-

lenge—but it's one that's worth undertaking. (Wizdom Media, distributed by Alfred) **Martin Patmos**



TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$21.98



A powerful, joyous musical fusion that emerged from the London dance scene in the 1990s, Transglobal Underground is the subject of a fine film by Guillaume Dero. Drummer **HAMID MAN TU** is one of the three original producers behind the collective, which mixes African, Arabic, Caribbean, Eastern European, and Indian tonalities, Western funk, and London electronica. The film, shot in London and at the 2007 Les Escales de Saint-Nazaire festival in France, shows that Man Tu knows

what to do behind a kit (as does dhol player **GURJIT SIHRA**). These are some towering grooves. (www.lahuit.com) **Robin Tolleson**

THE FUNK BROTHERS LIVE IN ORLANDO

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$14.98



They've put on plenty of miles, but Motown Records' one-time house band The Funk Brothers are still steady. Drummer **URIEL JONES** (and guest **KENNETH "SPIDER WEBB" RICE**'s) infectious straight-8th and slightly swung feels catapulted The Brothers (now a trio) from Berry Gordy's best-kept secret to R&B stardom. (Percussionist **TRENITA WOMACK** also appears.) (Eagle Rock) **Will Romano**

MASTERING THE TABLES OF TIME, VOLUME I: INTRODUCING THE STANDARD TIMETABLE

BY DAVID STANOCH

BOOK/WEB-ACCESSIBLE VIDEOS LEVEL: ALL \$24.95



This book explores the rhythmic nuances of subdividing beats into half-, double-, and triple-time feels at a variety of tempos. The main objective is to maintain accuracy and consistency while scaling up the standard beat-grouping ladder (a.k.a. "timetable") from quarter notes through 32nds (and back down in descending order). The text is a bit dense and demanding in spots, particularly as it relates to rudiments and polyrhythms. But companion videos accessed through Stanoch's site provide motivation and clarification. Dive in; you'll find that these exercises will help build upon and improve your independence, creativity, timekeeping skills, and musical phrasing. (www.rhythmelodic.com) **Will Romano**

INSIDE THE BIG BAND DRUM CHART BY STEVE FIDYK

BOOK/CD/DVD LEVEL: ALL \$29.95



The sophisticated, technical, and wide-ranging concepts presented here are not necessarily difficult to master. It's just that Fidyk tosses a lot at the beginner drummer—everything from reading exercises and tips for improvising “set up” fills for musical continuity, to photos and snippets of interviews with Jo Jones, Gene Krupa, Ray McKinley, Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, and Butch Miles. While Fidyk's practical advice and live performances (as seen on the accompanying DVD) have intrinsic educational value, this material could have had more potency if packaged as an instructional video bundled with an exercise booklet. Still, the pluses outweigh the minuses. (Mel Bay) **Will Romano**

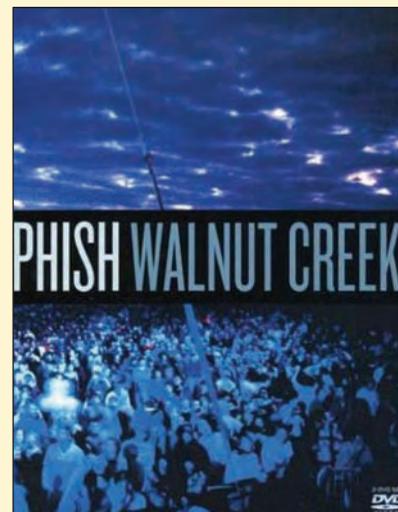
PHISH WALNUT CREEK: LIVE AT WALNUT CREEK AMPHITHEATRE, RALEIGH, NC, JULY 22, 1997

(DVD) LEVEL: ALL \$19.98



By the summer of 1997, well-oiled touring juggernaut Phish was enjoying a boundless creative license and an ever-growing and devoted audience hungry for whatever the Vermont-based improvisational quartet was serving. *Walnut Creek* is a no-frills look back at that menu, including drummer **JON FISHMAN**'s unique ability to compose inventive parts around different styles (“Taste,” “Stash”) and the influx of funk-based jamming the group was experimenting with (the slick hi-hat and tom fills in “Mike’s Song”). A serviceable 5.1 mix and long camera shots help you feel Fishman—a consummate, soft-hitting finesse player—listening, building tension, and even soloing in “Vultures.” (www.jemprecords.com)

Ilya Stemkovsky



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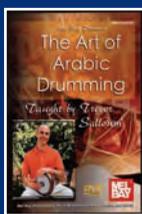
WORLD PERCUSSION (BONGO, DJEMBE, DARBUKA) WITH NAN MERCADOR

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$24.98 EACH



Three new *World Percussion* DVDs have recently come out on Mel Bay by way of Ventilador Music (Barcelona). Master drummer Nan Mercador is joined by a keyboardist and bass player (*Bongo*), a twelve-stringed guitarist (*Darbuka*), and drum ensemble (*Djembe*), and there is an extensive menu for each of these DVDs,

which allows you to understand every rhythm represented. Mr. Mercador sets up a sequencer, sings each rhythm, then plays each drum with ease. The *Djembe* disc focuses on warm-ups, tuning, sounds, and exercises, and covers a lot of African and other world rhythms. The *Bongo* disc recognizes the martillo (original Cuban bongo rhythm) and cowbell, and covers rhythms such as bomba, merengue, Afro, and bambé. The *Darbuka* disc focuses on Arabic sources with the karachi, masmudi kabir, barwali, and maqsoum, and also includes a nice 7/4 rhythm from Greece, the kalamatiano. This is all very inspiring material. (Mel Bay)



THE ART OF ARABIC DRUMMING FEATURING TREVOR SALLOUM

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$19.95



In this down-to-earth production, renowned educator Trevor Salloum covers the history of the doumbek (also known as darbuka, derbeki, or Arabic tabla) and the mechanics of tuning it, as well as hand position and proper playing posture. Valuable finger, hand, and arm strengthening exercises are also shown, and many rhythms are defined by source and notation. And don't miss the amazing riq (ancient tambourine) solo by legendary percussionist **MICHEL MERHEJ BAKLOUIC**. (Mel Bay)

FIRST LESSONS: DJEMBE / SKIN IT...TUNE IT...PLAY IT BY PAULO MATTIOLI

BOOK/CD/DVD LEVEL: ALL

\$ 14.95 (First Lessons), \$19.95 (Skin It...)



Paulo Mattioli has released a book/CD/DVD package focusing on the djembe. He's also reissued an earlier DVD on the subject, making for a wide-ranging educational package for those interested in this popular hand drum. On *First Lessons: Djembe*, Mattioli hosts an ensemble (made up of six "Paulo Mattiolis") performing several djembe rhythms. Each drum part is singled out on the DVD and can be easily followed in the accompanying book. Special attention is paid to achieving maximum sound with minimal strain. Meanwhile, Mattioli's *Skin It...Tune It...Play It* DVD takes you through the process of head replacement, tuning, and maintenance of the djembe. It's a spiritual guide to the mechanics of this drum, setting up a very positive approach to music making. (Mel Bay)

BEYOND THE "SECRET HAND" (A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR HAND DRUMMERS)

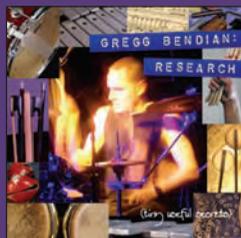
BY HECTOR "POCHO" NECIOSUP/JOSÉ ROSA

BOOK/CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE \$19.95



Hector "Pocho" Neciosup is a third-generation Peruvian percussionist and a nephew of the influential master drummer Alex Acuña (Weather Report). Neciosup has teamed up with the gifted Puerto Rican drummer José Rosa to produce *Beyond The Secret Hand*, an excellent guide for hand drummers. Coordination and independence are highlighted, as are strengthening and control exercises. Using the clave as a guide, many rhythms such as guaguango, mozambique, merengue, bomba, plena, and songo are notated, and some are played on the accompanying CD. This book is practical for stick drummers as well! (Centerstream/Hal Leonard)

And Furthermore...



GREGG BENDIAN RESEARCH (TINY USEFUL SECRETS)

The ear-stinging vibraphone tones, call-and-response rhythmic rattling, and elephantine roars that **GREGG BENDIAN** (Mahavishnu Project, The Musical Box) summons on *Research (Tiny Useful Secrets)* accomplish his expressed mission of elevating the drummer to a veritable one-man orchestra. The depth of

these textured compositions (which are inspired by, among others, Zakir Hussain, Edgard Varèse, and Max Roach reveals itself upon repeated listens. (www.greggbendian.com) **Will Romano**

MIKE REED'S PEOPLE, PLACES & THINGS PROLIFERATION

MIKE REED'S LOOSE ASSEMBLY THE SPEED OF CHANGE

A progressive force in Chicago's jazz music scene, drummer/composer/festival producer **MIKE REED** offers two new discs. *Speed* showcases his quartet navigating modern interpretations of music by key Chicagoan jazzmen from 1954 to 1960, while *Proliferation* offers a quintet more "open" in palette via inclusion of vibes and cello. A gutsy player, Reed finds grit and beauty through probing, unfolding improv. (482 Music) **Jeff Potter**

DREW GRESS THE IRRATIONAL NUMBERS

Drummer **TOM RAINEY** works his ride cymbal but *good* on this quasi-free, quasi-composed David Torn-produced jazz effort. Rainey's hyper(inter)active

style, fusing jazz with hints of drum 'n' bass, exudes rhythmic intricacy on micro and macro scales, matching the textural and sonic complexity (sometimes beat-for-note) of "Blackbird Backtalk," "The Heavenly Hell," and "Neopolitan." (Premonition) **Will Romano**

ICY DEMONS MIAMI ICE

Frosty twinges of old-style electronica may make *Miami Ice* feel chilly around the edges, but catchy songwriting gives it a molten heart. With a dry sound and groovy bounce, **CHRIS POWELL**, a.k.a. **POW POW**, channels Tony Allen on the syncopated beat to "1850" and summons Maxwell Smart with the aptly named "Spywatchers." The net result is an intriguing lesson in playing cutting-edge electro-pop with brains and soul. (Obey Your Brain) **Michael Parillo**

RUSS NOLAN & THE KENNY WERNER TRIO WITH YOU IN MIND

Drummer **ARI HOENIG** and sax man Nolan merely scratch at this music's emotional core, yet they manage to create subtle tension in the process. In the tenor sax standard "Naima," Nolan translates Trane's deep moans into sweet talk as Hoenig flirts with various tempos (even playing temporary backbeats) before settling into more sensitive, sympathetic patterns. This is playful jazz that never gets away from the musicians. (www.russnolan.com) **Will Romano**

GREG HOWE SOUNDPROOF

Fusion guitar master Howe focuses on the funk on this fiery instrumental release. Drummer **GIANLUCA PALMIERI**'s impressive groove, feel, and improvisation recall Dennis Chambers' previous knockout performances with Howe. Watch out for this rising drum star. (Tone Center) **Mike Haid**



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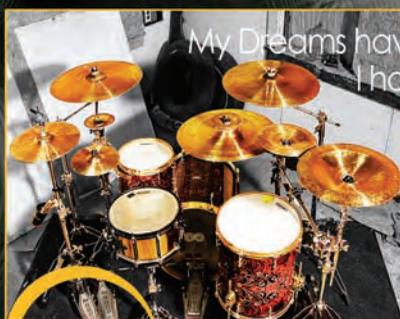
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- Grant McFarland,
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Tony Royster Jr.

Drum Fantasy Camp 2008

330 drummers, including 80 full-time campers, attended the second-annual Drum Fantasy Camp August 23–27 at the Hyatt hotel in Cleveland, Ohio. Campers came from all over the United States, as well as ten countries, including Mexico, Canada, Aruba, Brazil, England, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Greece, and Japan. Staff instructors included **Steve Smith, Dave Weckl, Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez, Tony Royster Jr., Jamey Haddad, Ganesh Kumar, and Dave Brewer.**

The camp started at noon on Saturday with an opening clinic that featured Steve, Dave, Horacio, Tony, and Jamey on the same stage. Jamey started the clinic by playing several Middle Eastern percussion instruments and demonstrating how he creates electronic loops. The rest of the instructors then joined in to create a completely improvised piece. After the performance, the instructors came to the front of the stage, sat down, and engaged in a roundtable discussion about drumming and music. The instructors then performed a closing piece, highlighted by Tony Royster Jr.’s creative and explosive playing. The clinic/discussion was followed by concerts by Steve Smith and Dave Weckl.

The camp on Saturday included small classes with each instructor. Each night also featured jam sessions where attendees could sit in with members of Steve Smith’s band Vital Information.

Information about 2009’s Drum Fantasy camp can be found at www.drumfantasycamp.com.



Horacio Hernandez

Dave Weckl



Ganesh Kumar

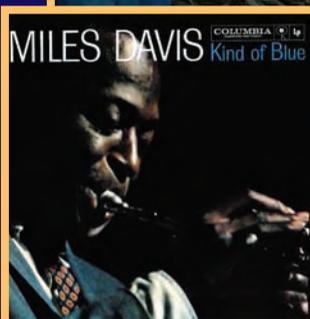


Steve Smith



Miles Davis Alum Celebrate 50th Anniversary Of Kind Of Blue

Miles Davis Properties and Columbia/Legacy recently celebrated the R.I.A.A. certification four-time platinum of landmark jazz album *Kind Of Blue* and the release of the 50th Anniversary Collector's Edition with a cocktail party at the Beekman Hotel Penthouse in New York City. In attendance were Davis alum **Jimmy Cobb**, **Lenny White**, and **Vince Wilburn**, as well as drummer/producer **Charley Drayton**. The event also paid a special tribute to **Cobb**, the last surviving member from the *Kind Of Blue* sessions, with the presentation of a custom-made snare drum by Innovation Drums.



Those celebrating the 50th anniversary of jazz's biggest-selling record included (from left): Charley Drayton, Cheryl Davis (daughter of Miles Davis), Steve Badalament (Innovation Drum Company), Jimmy Cobb, and Vince Wilburn, Jr. (nephew of Miles Davis).

ProgPower USA IX

This past September 25–27, ProgPower USA continued its tradition as America's top progressive metal festival with another sold-out festival in Atlanta, Georgia. ProgPower is the only festival of its kind in America to feature top prog-metal bands from around the world. The music typically combines the melodic aspects of old-school prog rock (Yes, King Crimson, Genesis, Rush) with a cutting-edge metal (Dream Theater, Queensryche, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden). Throughout the event, driving and thunderous double bass, mind-bending odd-meters, and lengthy epic compositions are standard fare. Thursday's pre-show concert kicked off the long weekend of blistering metal with the Hellish Rock World Tour, featuring Helloween (**Dani Löble**), Gamma Ray (**Dan Zimmermann**), and Manticora (**Mads Volf**).

Friday's international lineup included Italian bands Pathosray (**Ivan Moni Bidin**) and Elvenking (**Zender**), Swedes Andromeda (**Thomas Lejon**), German rockers Iron Savior (**Thomas Nack**), Poland's Riverside (**Piotr Kozieradzki**), and Amorphis (**Jan Rechberger**) from Finland.

Saturday's festivities highlighted the talents of Swedish bands Saint Deamon (**Ronny Milianowicz**) and Mustasch (**Mats Hansson**), Frenchmen Spheric Universe Experience (**Christophe Briand**), and American bands Rob Rock (**Tracy Shell**), Jon Oliva's Pain (**Christopher Kinder**), and festival headliners Iced Earth (**Brent Smedley**).

For more info, visit www.progpowersusa.com.

story and photos by Mike Haid



Ronny Milianowicz



Ivan Moni Bidin



Jan Rechberger



Thomas Lejon

Modern Drummer Day At Musician's Woodshed

This past November 1, an intimate crowd gathered in the back room of Musician's Woodshed in Westlake, California for "Modern Drummer Day," an event celebrating Woodshed owner Robyn Flans' thirty-year affiliation with *Modern Drummer* magazine. Former *Tonight Show* drummer **Ed Shaughnessy** stopped by to talk about his years with Johnny Carson and told great stories about playing with Jimi Hendrix and Duke Ellington. Shaughnessy is one of the teachers at Musician's Woodshed, which is a combination teaching facility, rehearsal space, and Pro-Tools recording studio. Original Chicago drummer **Danny Seraphine** also showed up to congratulate Flans, reminding the long-time *MD* writer that he had been the subject of her very first *Modern Drummer* cover story in 1978. Danny also talked about his role in fusing jazz and rock with Chicago. More events featuring a who's who of celebrity musicians are in the works at Musician's Woodshed. For additional info, go to www.myspace.com/musicianswoodshed.

Lynn K. Cossey



Two Modern Drummer Day attendees were awarded free subscriptions to *Modern Drummer* magazine. Pictured here with *MD* writer Robyn Flans and founding Chicago drummer Danny Seraphine are winners Jeremy Scott (left) and Mike Colao (right).

YouTube

CLIPS OF THE MONTH

by John E. Citrone



1. "Frank Zappa - Father O'Blivion (3) - Stockholm"

Frank Zappa's 1973 lineup was one of his best, featuring über-percussionist Ruth Underwood and drummer extraordinaire Ralph Humphrey. Humphrey's mid-song solo is a wonderful mix of traditional concepts and a modern approach, ideas that would later fully blossom when he traded licks with drummer Chester Thompson in 1974.

2. "Herbie Hancock Future 2 Future Rockit Live"

Terri Lynn Carrington lays it down solid for this fusion-esque rendering of a song that was originally built around synths and drum machines. Don't look for flashy fills or time change-ups. Carrington keeps it simple, effortlessly grooving the living heck out of this number.

3. "Synchronized DNA (Akira Jimbo & Hiroyuki Noritake)"

This aptly titled piece features Jimbo and Noritake demonstrating otherworldly precision in an unbelievably tight duet. Opening with alternating choked crashes, the two drummers then trade licks over a Latin-funk groove before breaking down (at around 1:20) into an increasingly complex syncopated patterns.

4. "Marco Minnemann 'The Jack Hammer'"

Decked out in an orange space suit, drum wiz Marco Minnemann joins guitarist Paul Gilbert (Racer X) for a killer heavy-rock instrumental jam based in 7/8. Minnemann's solo isn't his most complex, but it's super-musical and thematically solid.

5. "John Zorn / Masada - Beeroth"

Call this a drum solo with a song built around it. Here is the ebullient Joey Baron giving his tiny Sonor kit a righteous butt kicking. Snare's off, Baron develops a gorgeous, melodic piece, using the rims, cymbal bells, and muted toms in curious ways.

6. "Karen Carpenter Drum Solo - 1976 First Television Special"

After some cheese-ball banter with her brother, followed by an equally goofy exchange with John Denver in a quick marching band sketch, Karen Carpenter busts into a colorful drum solo where she bounces between drum stations, including a set of Ludwig Vistalites.



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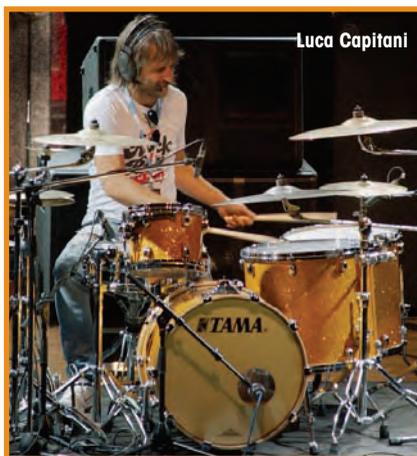
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Long Night Of The Drums

The 9th edition of "The Long Night Of The Drums" took place near Milan, Italy on September 28th. This concert was a memorial to teacher **Enrico Lucchini**. In addition to the evening performances, this year's event featured seven hours of drum showcases during the afternoon. The showcases were fifteen minutes each, and twenty-three drummers played. A thousand audience members enjoyed a performance by the bass and drum duo Groovydo, with **Sergio Pescara** on drums. Young lions **Federico Paulovich** and **Riccardo Lombardo** played a double-drumming session that was powerful, fast, and based on intricate odd times. Excellent performances were also given by bluesman **Massimo Serra**, jungle specialist **Andrea Beccaro**, progressive **Luca Capitani** and jazzist **Gaetano Fasano**.

After the showcases, notable Italian drummers took the stage to play with a supporting jazz band. Veteran **Tullio De Piscopo** dedicated his performance, which included the classic drum piece "Conversation," to Max Roach. **Roberto Gatto** interpreted some '70s progressive-rock classics in a jazz style. The drum quintet "La Drummeria" (Bandini, Meyer, Furian, Calloni, Pellegatti) entertained the audience with its tricks. **Sergio Fanton**, the event's manager, played some classics by The Police. A total of total drummers, including Berklee instructor **Sergio Bellotti**, participated to the show.

story and photos by **Mario A. Riggio**



Luca Capitani



Sergio Pescara



Sergio Bellotti



Roberto Gatto

In Memoriam Tony Reedus

Influential jazz drummer Tony Reedus died this past November 16 of a pulmonary embolism. He was forty-nine. Reedus had just arrived back in the US after performing in Bologna, Italy with keyboardist Mike LeDonne. After complaining of stomach problems during the flight, he collapsed at John F. Kennedy International Airport and was rushed to New York's Jamaica Hospital Medical Center. He passed away while en route to the hospital.

Reedus was known for consistently lighting a fire under musicians of every stripe. "Tony was not only a great drummer who played with exceptional depth of feeling that was very danceable," recalls esteemed jazz drummer Lewis Nash, "he was also very funny. He could have you cracking up in no time. Many musicians loved his feel and ride cymbal playing."

Reedus was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and began playing the drums when he was fourteen. Within seven years he was performing with trumpet great Woody Shaw, recording Shaw's albums *United*, *Lotus Flower*, *Night Music*, *Time Is Right*, and *Master Of The Art*. Reedus also recorded three albums as a leader, *The Far Side* (1988, Jazz City), *Incognito* (Enja, 1989), and *Minor Thang* (Criss Cross, 1996).

Reedus was in heavy demand as a session and touring drummer as well. His discography contains titles by trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, vibraphonist Milt Jackson, saxophonists Benny Golson and Kenny Garrett, pianists James Williams and Harold Mabern, and even a recording (*Waltzin' With Flo*) with Berklee instructor Alan



Andrew Lepley

Dawson, playing drums to the leader's vibraphone. In all, Reedus recorded over one hundred albums.

Though already enjoying a successful drumming career, Reedus (who departed Memphis State University to join Woody's Shaw's band) returned to college to earn a B.A. in music from Rutgers University—New Brunswick in 2005.

Tony Reedus's survivors include his wife Jenise Grice-Reedus, daughter Cameron, and brothers Chris and Keith, both of Memphis.

Regarding his massive swing beat, Reedus told the *Newark Star-Ledger*, "It's a heavy feeling that makes people want to pat their feet, sway back and forth. When people come to see you play, they want to escape, they want to feel good. Music is a celebration of life that comes from the heart."

Ken Micallef

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For more on Ty's various creative endeavors, visit www.tyrogers.ca.



Photo Submission: Digital photos on disk as well as print photos may be sent to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Hi-res digital photos and descriptive text can also be emailed to miked@modern drummer.com. Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message. Photos cannot be returned.



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