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TRIVETT WINGO OF THE SWORD
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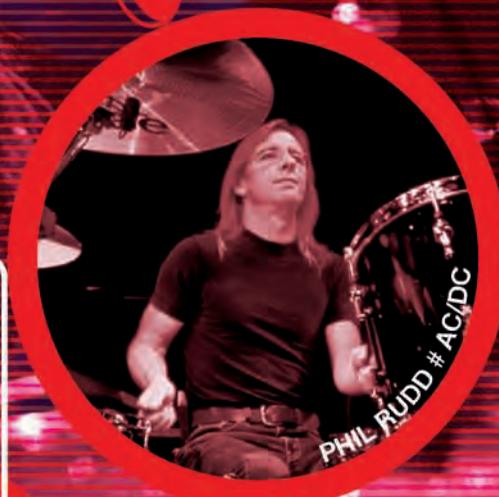
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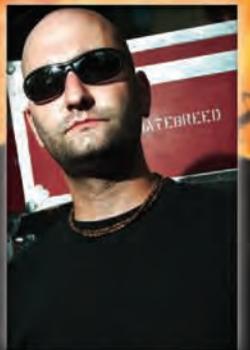
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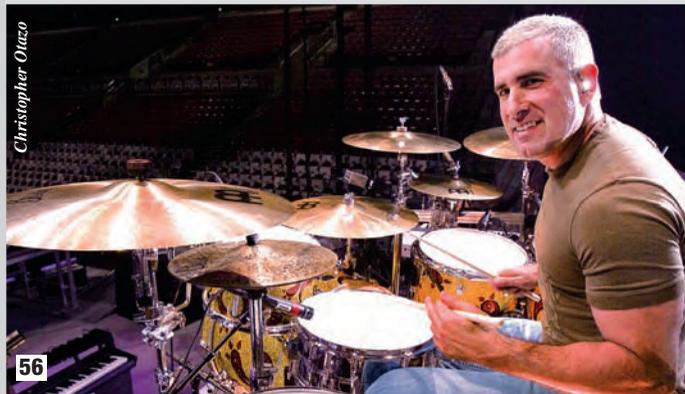
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Zildjian® / Tré Cool Contest

Zildjian and MD are trying to help Tré clean up the studio after the sessions for Green Day's new CD, *21st Century Breakdown*. As part of the "green" effort, Tré would like to get some lucky readers to recycle some of his gear.





(1) Grand Prize

A full replica of Tré's cymbal setup:

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- 6 pairs of Tré Cool signature drumsticks and a pair used on the album
- 1 Tré Cool stick bag

(2) First Prizes

- One 18" K Dark Crash or 18" A Medium Crash used on the album and signed by Tré
- 6 pairs of Tré Cool signature drumsticks and a pair used on the album
- 1 Tré Cool stick bag

(15) Second Prizes

- 6 pairs of Tré Cool signature drumsticks and a pair used on the album
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Consumer Disclosure

1. To enter online, visit www.moderndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Zildjian/Tré Cool Contest button (one entry per email address). 2. ODDS OF WINNING DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 3. CONTEST BEGINS JUNE 1, 2009, AND ENDS JULY 31, 2009. 4. Grand Prize Drawing: Winner will be selected by random drawing on August 17, 2009. Winner will be notified by phone or email on or about August 20, 2009. 5. Employees, and their immediate families, of Modern Drummer and Avedis Zildjian Company and their affiliates are ineligible. 6. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 7. Open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years of age or older. Void in Quebec, Florida, and where prohibited by law. 8. One prize awarded per household per contest. 9. Prizes: **Grand Prize:** One (1) winner will receive a replica set of Tré Cool's Zildjian six-piece set of cymbals, including one used on the album and signed by Tré; six (6) pairs of Tré Cool signature drumsticks and one (1) pair used on the album; and one (1) Tré Cool stick bag. Approximate retail value of Grand Prize: \$3,210. **First Prize:** Two (2) winners will each receive one (1) Zildjian cymbal used on the album and signed by Tré, either an 18" K Dark Crash or 18" A Medium Crash; six (6) pairs of Tré Cool signature drumsticks and one (1) pair used on the album; and a Tré Cool stick bag. Approximate retail value of each First Prize: \$640. **Second Prize:** Fifteen (15) winners will each receive six (6) pairs of Tré Cool signature drumsticks and a pair used on the album, and one (1) Tré Cool stick bag. Approximate retail value of each second prize: \$145. Approximate retail value of contest: \$6,660. 10. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 11. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Zildjian/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.



LET THE MUSIC PLAY!

Happy summer, everyone! To borrow a couple lines from my son's latest single, "Summer's here and life is good...celebrate it."

Celebrate *everything* in life, that's my philosophy. I know it's hard these days for a lot of people, but it *will* get better. And let us as a music community join together and make sure that, in these times of change, we unite to bring music back to where it once was. We've all learned how to use the machines, now let's combine it all and get back to making and playing some real music.

For you younger readers, *Rock Band* is very cool, but try to split your time between playing the game and playing for real—meaning take lessons on an instrument, watch DVDs, play along to CDs and MP3s, and form a band. There's nothing more magical than getting together with friends and creating music, and the music business is in desperate need of the next generation of musicians. There are so many more opportunities available than ever before to get your music recorded and out into the world. You just have to *do it*—by learning how to play your instrument well (remember, it doesn't happen overnight; it takes

years and years), finding other players who are as passionate as you are, and putting a band together.

And to all you "older" musicians like me, maybe *we* should be playing *Rock Band* to remember what it was about the music that inspired us when we first started playing. We should also call up friends and old band-mates that maybe we haven't spoken to in a while and get together and *play*. Take advantage of those machines and send files back and forth—you don't even have to leave your house!

We should all fight to keep music alive and well, and as fans we should have the respect to pay for it. Music is not free—like any product, it costs money to make. And if we play our instrument as best we can, maybe someday we can get radio to feature more new artists. (I see no reason at all why they can't play both the classics *and* new material; it makes no sense to me.) So, in closing, I'm begging you to play with passion and get a band together—or become a multi-instrumentalist—and believe that you'll be part of the next wave of superstars. Don't expect it to happen overnight, but if we start now the future could be very bright!

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

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

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BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

LOUIE BELLSON

Louie was a friend, an inspiration, a teacher, and a beautiful man. I'll always remember the first time I met him, in 1969, on *The Joey Bishop Show*—he was in the orchestra, and I was on with Vanilla Fudge. We were friends ever since. I really loved him! God bless him. He will be missed. And man, he had some great hands! Love and respect...RIP.

Carmine Appice

How ironic that my friend Louie would pass away on the day of love, February 14. We both studied with Roy Knapp in Chicago, and Louie became one of my heroes, with his double bass set and clean drumming. We were all in awe of Louie and will miss him very much. Rest in peace—you'll always be a hero to me and countless others.

Hal Blaine

With the passing of Louie Bellson, drumming has lost a genuine innovator. Drummers around the world have lost a sweet and gentle man who was at once an icon and a comrade. And the Gretsch family has lost a cherished friend. Everyone at Gretsch is proud to have been a part of Louie Bellson's history. We mourn his passing, and our hearts go out to Francine Bellson and the rest of their family.

Fred Gretsch

Louie Bellson was not only one of my drum heroes; he was a very good friend and role model. He was also a good friend of my dad, Bud



Bissonette. My dad passed away last October, and Francine Bellson, Louie's wife, told me the last public event that Louie made it to was my dad's graveside burial and celebration-of-life service. What an honor. I know that my dad and Louie are hanging out in heaven right now! One of the greatest thrills of my life was getting to play a big drum duet with Louie at the very first Buddy Rich Memorial tribute concert, in 1989 on Long Island, NY, at the Westbury Music Fair. God bless you, Louie!

Gregg Bissonette

I'm very saddened by the loss of one of the greatest drummers and human beings I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. Louie was an equally genuine and beautiful person, as he was a musician. He is now with the Lord and is playing better than ever! Thank you, Mr. Bellson, for your time here—it is truly a better place because of people like you.

Russ Miller

TRX REVIEW

I'm writing in regard to the TRX oversized BRT series cymbals review in the May issue. The review contains two statements concerning oversized cymbals made from B20 alloy that I feel need correcting. First, the review states, "TRX ('Turks') Cymbals, a three-year-old newcomer, has stepped up to fill the missing mega-cymbal niche with some unique plus-size offerings in its BRT series." Later, the author says, "In my opinion, TRX is filling some long-ignored gaps in cymbals marketed to heavy hitters." The first statement is not accurate, and the second statement, while an opinion, is not factually based. In 2005, Meinl introduced the Mb20 series, which are designed for heavy hitters. That series, which is made from B20 alloy, includes 15" hi-hats, 20" crashes, and 24" rides. Then in 2008, 21" and 22" crashes as well as 24" rides were added to the Byzance Traditional series. Both Mb20 and Byzance series cymbals are used by some of today's most influential heavy-hitting drummers (Chris Adler of Lamb Of God, Aaron Gillespie of Underoath, Zac Farro of Paramore, and many more). I appreciate any clarification you can give your readers on this matter. Thank you.

Chris Brewer, Meinl USA artist relations manager, U.S. and Canada

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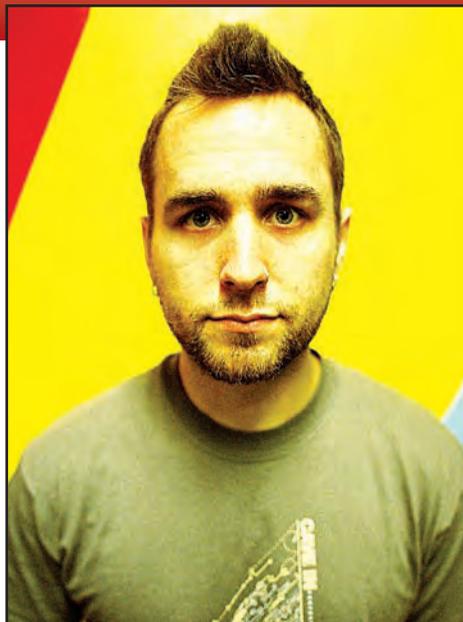


PERFORMANCE IS EVERYTHING™

LARRY HERWEG

Making the most out of very little is the instrumental metal band **Pelican**'s prime directive. So just how does the group's drummer handle the challenge?

by Jeff Perlah



Great heavy metal doesn't require roaring vocals and overindulgent drumming. For evidence, consider the Chicago art-metal band Pelican: There's no singer, and the drummer, Larry Herweg, accompanies the group's sweeping soundscapes and crashing riffs with no-frills beats that favor mood over flash. "Some people will say, 'He plays the same thing over and over,' and it's like I do—but I don't," Herweg says.

"Last Day Of Winter," from 2005's *The Fire In Our Throats Will Beckon The Thaw*, is "a constant climbing of repetition and cymbal swells," the drummer explains. "The song hits a crescendo, and it's a process of stripping the beat down to where I stop using cymbals and turn the snare off, and it ends on a snare-like beat, but it's the same beat from five minutes earlier when I was at

full volume using all the cymbals."

Herweg maintains a similar rhythmic ethos on Pelican's most recent album, 2007's *City Of Echoes*, yet he doesn't always spread his wings the same way, as the band lands shorter, speedier, and more rhythmically diverse songs. The drums on "Bliss In Concrete" were cut in a standard drum room, enabling a huge, epic sound. But on "Spaceship Broken—Parts Needed," Herweg recorded in a "dead room" typically used for guitar, with close mics, resulting in cleaner, dryer tones. "All the mic is picking up is the impact of the drum, and you're not hearing the drum resonate," Herweg says. "Part of me was a little scared to get on a smaller drumkit—a Gretsch—where the kick was a 22" and the toms were a few inches smaller than what I used in the big room."

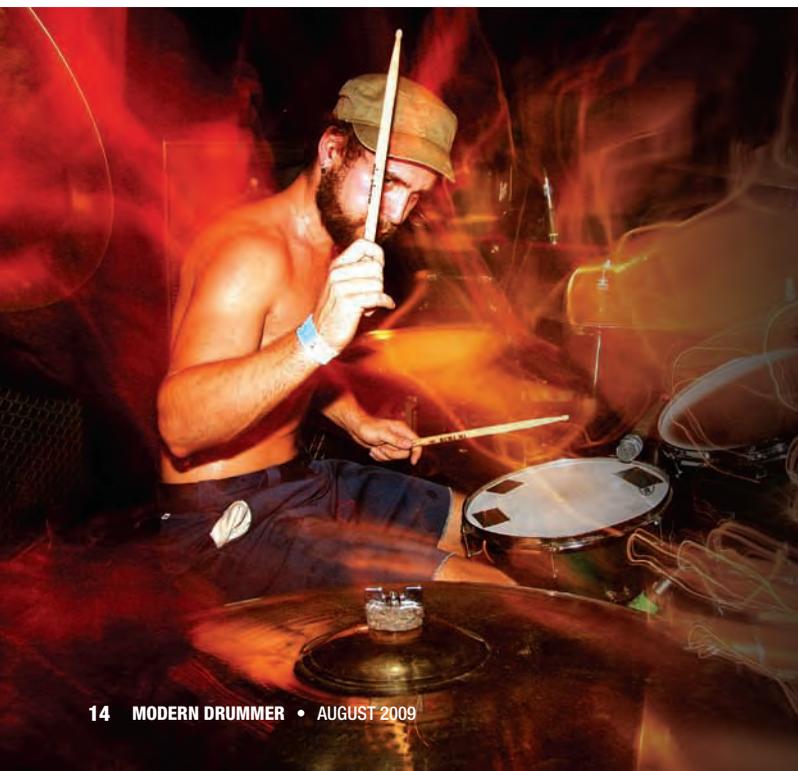
While Pelican has been working on

material for its next full-length release, the band has also recorded other new songs, with new surprises—a three-track EP was out on Southern Lord this spring, and two split EPs came out last year. On a split with Young Widows, Pelican's "In Above Sand" marks Herweg's first tangle with a click track. And for a split with These Arms Are Snakes, each group contributed a song, and both bands played together on the Pelican-written "Gold Diggers." As Herweg says, "It's two drummers and basically eight people on it. There's actually a vocal track in there, which is obviously a new thing for us." But don't worry, Pelican isn't giving up on instrumental metal just yet.

ECHOING NOTES

Herweg on the recording of Pelican's latest opus

I used two different drumkits for *City Of Echoes*. On "Bliss In Concrete," "City Of Echoes," "Dead Between The Walls," and "A Delicate Sense Of Balance" I used a Tama Imperialstar kit, which we tracked in Studio B at [Chicago's] Electrical Audio. It was a 24" kick, 13" and 14" rack toms, and an 18" floor tom, plus a 6 1/2"x14 8-ply maple snare drum by Kent Custom Drums. Along with the Kent snare I used a DW 14" snare, tuned down, for contrast in hits and tones in "A Delicate Sense Of Balance." On "Lost In The Headlights" and "Spaceship Broken—Parts Needed," I used a Gretsch kit: 22" kick, 12" rack, and 14" floor. We tracked the drums for those songs in the "dead room" of Studio B. It gave the recording a super-dry and direct drum sound with close-miked drums and no room sound. The easiest way to compare the two drumkits and two rooms is to listen to the difference in the double bass sections of "Bliss In Concrete" and "Spaceship Broken—Parts Needed." In "Bliss" the drums sound huge and thunderous, while in "Spaceship" they're tighter and cleaner sounding. I used Zildjian cymbals with both kits. For the new EP on Southern Lord, we recorded at Red Room in Seattle with Chris Common. The drums were tracked in one day on a C&C drumkit with a Keplinger snare drum.





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UPDATE



Alex Sotoca

JANE'S ADDICTION'S **STEPHEN PERKINS** BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

This isn't the first time the Los Angeles veteran alternative rock band Jane's Addiction has restarted its musical engine. But talk to decorated drummer Stephen Perkins for a few minutes and you'll discover that his excitement over being a part of the landmark outfit makes it feel like everything's brand new for a group whose roots were planted over two decades ago.

That's because Perkins—who has performed in a host of other notable musical situations between Jane's Addiction activities—simply loves to play. Just a year over forty, the L.A. native has the eagerness of someone half his age, coupled with the wisdom of experience. Still, you can chalk up at least some of Stephen's enthusiasm to his reunion with an old, trusted musical friend.

"It's exciting for me as the drummer to have [original Jane's bass player] Eric Avery back," Perkins says during tour rehearsals. "In a way, it kind of helped me find my drum voice. Eric's bass lines are very repetitive and melodic; he has this inner clock, almost like a drummer, and that gave me a chance to find my sound."

Perkins is no stranger to playing with fantastic bass players. He's performed with Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers) and in the group Banyan with Mike

Watt (Minutemen, FIREHOSE). But reconnecting with Avery puts him on stage with the quartet that launched his career, some eighteen years since the original incarnation's dissolution. It also finds him reviewing his own playing from that era. "Hopefully we're all better players twenty years later," he says. "I wrote some of these songs when I was eighteen, and understanding the choices I made as an eighteen-year-old is interesting. Because it's all about choices—where you put your fills, what you do with your bass drum, how you match up with other instruments. Looking at certain tunes from back then, sometimes I think, *That's a naive drum part*. But that's the drum hook, that's the part we all love. I have to remind myself about those things."

You can watch the drummer dissect some of those famous patterns on the recent DVD *Behind The Player: Stephen Perkins* from Interactive Music Video. On the video Stephen breaks down two Jane's Addiction hits—the tom-intensive "Mountain Song" and the funky single "Been Caught Stealing"—plus the Porno For Pyros hit "Pets."

"If you've got a sense of how to play drums, these beats should come easy to you," Perkins says. "I think it's great to articulate these ideas,

though, especially for younger drummers. I would have died to have a Keith Moon or John Bonham video when I was coming up, talking about 'Who Are You' or 'When The Levee Breaks.' Not that I'm comparing myself to those guys... I just wanted to make it as easy as possible for drummers to understand what I did on our songs."

Listening to early Jane's music, you can hear that Perkins was trying to make his parts as interesting as possible. The band's first two studio albums, 1988's *Nothing's Shocking* and 1990's *Ritual De Lo Habitual*, find the drummer inserting massive tribal tom patterns and funk-laced rhythms into a genre that as a rule employed much more straightforward drumming.

"It was like, Why just use the hi-hats to keep time—let's use a tom-tom," Perkins recalls. "Why only use the bell within a part? Use it in a fill. And I still think that way. I still think that bongos should be in front of me, that I can do things like add a floor tom and a timbale and see what happens. The kookiness I brought to the music, it's about throwing the rule book out the window. It's important to have a homegrown sound. My favorite drummers have their own personality—it's not just about technique—and you can always tell who they are." **Waleed Rashidi**

UPDATE NEWS

Morgan Doctor is on the Cliks' latest, *Dirty King*.



Jack White is playing drums in his latest band, the Dead Weather, whose debut CD, *Horehound*, was released recently.

Chad Smith is on Chickenfoot's self-titled debut. The supergroup also features guitarist Joe Satriani, former Van Halen bassist Michael Anthony, and former VH frontman Sammy Hagar.

Scott Rockenfield is on Queensrÿche's latest, *American Soldier*.

Following the reissue of his *Retaliation* CD comes a brand-new studio album, *Mutiny*, from acclaimed drummer **Aynsley Dunbar**.

MD associate editor **Michael Parillo** and his band, Shark Hat, have a new CD out, *Shark Hat II*. For more on the band, check out sharkhat.net.

Gavin Harrison and 05Ric have a new CD, *Circles*.

Chris McHugh is on Keith Urban's latest, *Defying Gravity*.

Jeff Hamilton is on Diana Krall's *Quiet Nights* CD.

Multi-instrumentalist/drummer **Matty Amendola** has released his second solo CD, *Life Commercials*. For more on Matty, visit myspace.com/mattyamendola.

Joey Shuffield and Fastball are back with a new CD, *Little White Lies*.

Critically acclaimed singer-songwriter and Old 97's frontman Rhett Miller's fourth, self-titled solo record features the Apples In Stereo's **John Dufilho** on drums.

The Smithereens, with **Dennis Diken** on drums, have released *The Smithereens Play Tommy*, a fortieth-anniversary tribute to the landmark album by the Who.

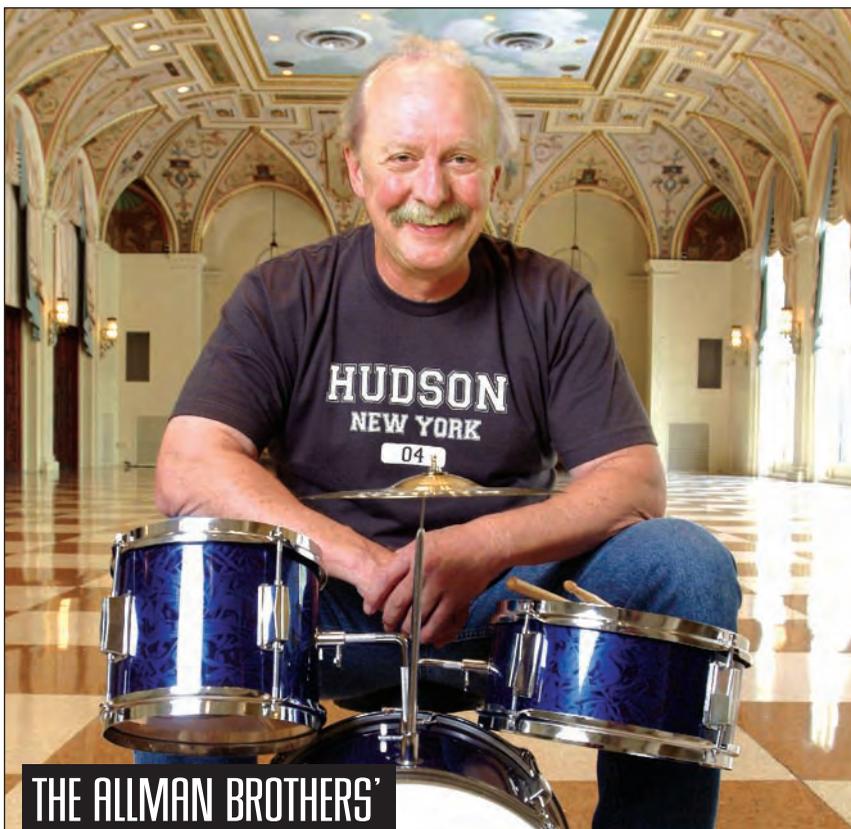
Sam Bey is on the Parlor Mob's debut, *And You Were A Crow*.

Ric Menck is on Matthew Sweet & Susanna Hoffs' second collaboration, *Under The Covers Vol. 2*.

Prince, Cora Coleman-Dunham, and Michael Bland share drumming duties on Prince's new three-CD release, *LotUSFLOW3R, MPLSoUND, and Elixir*.

George Schmitz is touring the U.S. and Europe with the band Stick To Your Guns.

Jimmy DeGrasso is touring the U.S. and Europe with Alice Cooper.



THE ALLMAN BROTHERS'

BUTCH TRUCKS AN ENLIGHTENED ROGUE

“I felt like I was run over by a Mack truck,” says Allman Brothers Band drummer Butch Trucks, recalling his condition after the septet's dizzying fifteen-show run this March at New York City's recently renovated Beacon Theatre. “I'm *still* recovering.”

To commemorate the legendary jam band's fortieth anniversary and to honor founding Brother and iconic slide guitarist Duane Allman (who died in 1971), the band invited a high-caliber roster of musical guests to sit in at the Beacon shows, including Eric Clapton, Boz Scaggs, Sheryl Crow, Taj Mahal, Lenny White, Stanley Clarke, the Dead's Phil Lesh and Bob Weir, Kid Rock, Buddy Guy, ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons, Sonny Landreth, Johnny Winter, Levon Helm, Phish's Trey Anastasio and Page McConnell, and members of Los Lobos.

“We dedicated the shows to Duane,” says Trucks, who grooves nightly on stage, as he's done since the late '60s, along with original drummer Jai Johanny “Jaimoe” Johanson. (Percussionist Marc Quiñones entered the fray in 1991.) “We took it for granted that everybody knew that Duane started all this. Either way, we made damn sure people went away knowing that without Duane, none of this music would have happened.”

The historic Beacon performances coincided with the launch of Trucks' Internet brainchild, Moogis.com, a subscriber-based Web site that streams live (and archived) ABB shows in near-high definition. “We thought that even if you couldn't be at the venue in person, you'd have a front-row seat,” says Trucks, who adds that plans are in the works to expand the site's features. “Moogis.com seems to be a logical step for live performance and music in general.”

The ABB's continuously strong live performances and Trucks' new online endeavor further enhance the legacy of one of the most enduring touring acts in rock history. But Trucks is looking to the future as well. “We just might have another five years in us,” he says. “But who knows, maybe five years from now I'll be saying the same thing!”

Will Romano

DRUM DATES

THIS MONTH'S IMPORTANT EVENTS IN DRUMMING HISTORY

On August 12, 1959, pianist Wynton Kelly, a member of the legendary Miles Davis Quintet between 1959 and 1963, recorded *Kelly Great*, one of his many solo records, with **Philly Joe Jones** on drums.

In August 1972, Mott The Hoople, with **Dale “Buffin” Griffin** on drums, released the hit single “All The Young Dudes,” which was written and produced by David Bowie.

On August 10, 1991, Metallica, with drummer **Lars Ulrich**, embarked on the Monsters Of Rock tour in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Jim Capaldi, Keith Moon, and Ginger Baker were born in August.

Gary Chester, Jeff Porcaro, Lionel Hampton, the Knack's Bruce Gary, and Max Roach all passed away in August.



GIMME 10!

PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM
PROS WHO KNOW

THE SWORD'S TRIVETT WINGO

Climb with us, dear drummer, to a place where the mountains kiss the sky and a metal guru awaits with pearls of drumming wisdom.

by Steven Douglas Losey



Where heavy metal meets mayhem breathes the music of the Sword. Laying down the groove is drummer Trivett Wingo. With bombastic abandon, Wingo guides his Austin-based band through Black Sabbath-like territory, as brooding guitars mix with Rush-style drum tracks to achieve an animalistic intensity. "I've always had a brutal, machinelike delivery," Wingo says. "I've tried to be organic and precise at the same time."

On the Sword's latest opus, *Gods Of The Earth*, Wingo drives the locomotive, chugging along to gloomy metal riffs while laying down some of the year's most intense drumming. "I need to really feel where it's all going," he says. "That way I'm always in the moment, sending and receiving signals."

The band, which toured with Metallica this spring, is earning its stripes by playing arenas and introducing its music to the masses. Through it all Wingo has kept a level head and managed to retain the attitude that's gotten him this far. "I've always tried to instill in myself the essence of the drumming I find inspiring," he reflects. "From that, I've been able to create new things. My style is built on my need to be inspired and to inspire others."

1 HIRE A GOOD ACCOUNTANT OR BUSINESS MANAGER as soon as you get in over your head, but not before.

2 ALWAYS DO WHAT'S RIGHT NO MATTER WHO'S WATCHING. Follow the Eightfold Path.

3 FOR THE BEGINNER THERE ARE MANY OPTIONS; FOR THE EXPERT THERE ARE FEW. Lest ye become as a child, ye shall in no way enter the kingdom of heaven....

4 WHENEVER YOU PLAY YOUR DRUMS, YOU NEED TO KEEP LOOSE LIKE A BOXER WOULD. If you're stiff you can't move. A boxer doesn't enter the ring and go through a preplanned set of motions. He rolls with it. Playing the drums is like boxing. You should be constantly improvising and adapting to the demands of every show and every circumstance. Never play a song the same way twice.

5 REMEMBER TO BE NICE.

6 DON'T GET LOST IN A WORLD OF THOUGHTS. Stay present here and now. Don't think about parts coming up—you can't prepare for them. You must think only about what you're playing *right now*, in the infinitely small place where past and future meet. Play drums like this, live like this.

7 DO AT LEAST THIRTY MINUTES OF AEROBIC EXERCISE AT LEAST EVERY OTHER DAY. This will change your life, and if you happen to be fat it will make it harder for people to criticize you. "Look, I *do* exercise, okay?"

8 BUY ALL FOUR PAIRS OF IRON MAIDEN VANS.

9 THE HARDEST PART ALONG THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT IS to remain as detached from totally rad shit as you are from totally lame shit, or so says the Buddha.

10 DON'T WORRY ABOUT PLAYING THE DRUMS, WORRY ABOUT PLAYING THE SONGS. Contemplate this.

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Christopher Otazo

JOJO MAYER

Ask a simple question...and get a complex answer. At least that's what happened when we nudged rhythm maestro Jojo Mayer to discuss his current listening habits.

by Mark Griffith

We all know about Jojo Mayer's arsenal of chops and his touchstone DVD on hand technique, *Secret Weapons For The Modern Drummer*. But Mayer's daunting technical skills can make us forget that he possesses the utmost sense of musicality and a love of creativity and expression.

The man is part musician, part philosopher. At one point during our conversation he comments on how much more valuable it is to "express your emotions at the drumset than to

play a perfectly executed one-handed roll." With Jojo the answers to even the simplest questions can lead to a deep discussion. So when I approach the New York City-based drummer with the concept of this column—"What music have you been listening to recently, and why?"—I'm unprepared for the outpouring of wisdom that's about to hit me. The interview quickly evolves into more of a peek through Jojo's aesthetic lens than merely a chat about what's on his playlist these days.

LEARNING BY UNLEARNING

"In order to hear the music inside you, you have to be very careful as to what you expose yourself to," Jojo begins. "I used to be like a sponge. I tried to absorb everything. If I heard something I liked, I'd try to make it part of my playing right away. I went through a Billy Cobham phase where I was transcribing all of his solos, and then I discovered Tony Williams. All of a sudden I heard Tony in everything and everyone. Everything became an extension of what I heard from Tony. Because of that, I can completely relate to young drummers today becoming so enamored with a drummer like Joey Jordison.

"But the lesson is that eventually Tony's influence became so strong that I really had to prohibit myself from listen-

ing to him. I discovered that I could grow more musically by *not* assimilating certain things. It took me a long time to get back to hearing music in the same way everybody else hears music. One of my best teachers in recent history has been my ex-girlfriend. From her, I learned to hear music as an ordinary listener. Most musicians spend years analyzing music and practicing concepts, but they're unable to communicate to people who really listen to and love music."

THE ARTISTIC LENS

"I am inspired not only by music," Jojo says. "I draw a great deal of inspiration from movies, books, and art. I am as inspired by the Beatles' *White Album* or *Revolver* as I am by *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Alien*, or *Blade Runner*. There's an English graffiti artist named Banksy, whose art I just stumbled upon, and he's been an extremely strong influence on me lately. I wish I could express on the drums what he expresses in his art. He says more with one piece of graffiti art than many

drummers do in a lifetime. His art is supremely powerful, and I'm trying to get to that.

"I listen to recordings of Bruce Lee talking; he really inspires me. I have many videos of him just being interviewed, and in one interview he says, 'Martial arts is about honestly expressing oneself.... It would be easy to be cocky and put on a great show and blind people with all sorts of fancy or phony movements. But that would be insincere. However, to express oneself honestly and seriously is very difficult.... This, my friend, is very hard to do.' When I heard that, I was so inspired, I wanted to scream. You can exchange pretty much everything he says about martial arts with drumming or music. So there's the answer to your question: What have I been listening to? Bruce Lee!"

For the record, Mayer has also been listening to James Brown drummer Nate Jones a lot. Watching a YouTube clip of Brown on *The Sammy Davis Jr. Show*, Jojo says of the drummer, "He is just so perfect!" The clip is stunningly tight, and

it's clear Jones deserves more attention than he's received as an important sideman to the Godfather Of Soul.

STUMBLING INTO MUSIC

"You can't go out looking for the love of your life," Mayer says. "You have to stumble into her. And that's how I want to find great music. I really love getting turned on to music that I've never heard of. The other day I went to hear a band called the Phenomenal Handclap Band, and they were really cool. When I find something, I do some research to find out if there's more where that came from. That's how I first heard about people like Ari Hoenig, and the band Battles—I just stumbled upon them. One of the great things about New York is that you can go out to a nightclub and hear some radical DJs remixing classic music with new stuff to create something entirely new and fresh. I get that same feeling when I go and listen to some new free jazz or electronic music.

"To me, the most interesting time in jazz was the first thirty years. You had

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JOJO MAYER

Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie—all the music that came before Charlie Parker. One of the most important jobs of an artist is to be a mirror for the zeitgeist. If, at the same time that you're reflecting the times, you can also influence them, then you've really done something and created timeless art. That's what the Beatles, Miles, Kraftwerk, Hendrix, Aphex Twin, the White Stripes, and Louis Armstrong have all done. Meg White can express something at the drums that some guys who have ten thousand times the amount of chops can't express."

MUSIC TO EAT TO

"Many years ago I had some friends over for dinner, and I put on great music that you would cook to, and music to listen to while we were eating. I put on some Stan Getz, Astrud Gilberto, and classic Miles. Then someone asked me to put on some of 'my' music. I suddenly realized that I hadn't made a record that I could eat to. That was a very humbling experience that forced me to make some serious decisions in my career. I began thinking more about music that people enjoy. And suddenly through the discovery of lyrics and songwriting, music

became much bigger. I discovered simplicity. I've become very interested not only in what someone's music is, but also in the motivation behind it. Where did it come from? My role as a drummer is subordinate to my role as a musician, and my role as a musician is subordinate to my role as an artist."

SURRENDER

"When you're sincere and you really care about the music, you're going to be okay," Mayer says. "I recently watched the *Art Of Playing With Brushes* DVD, and it was wonderful. At one point Eddie Locke says, 'You just have to surrender to the music.' That says it all to me! Growing can be a painful process, but learning to surrender can be even harder. But it's the only way to make an authentic contribution to anything.

"I believe that if you walk off stage and you've changed someone's life, you have done your job. That 'someone' doesn't have to be a musician; it can just be someone who loves music. As musicians, we can change lives, and we should aim to do just that. But you don't have to be extremely talented or have great technique to do that. You just have to really want to do it. That desire transcends style or technique. When things are really happening in music, it's weightless, and effortless. That feeling can come from many different things: eating exquisite food, seeing a great film, running a marathon, whatever! That feeling of total absorption is what musicians should be aiming to create in the listener. I have seen that when my band Nerve plays in dance clubs, and there's nothing better. I think Frank Zappa's music did that. He created serious music, with such a wicked sense of humor. I don't care what style you choose to call it.

"The word *style* means nothing to me. There's a lot of good electronic music, and there's a lot of crappy electronic music. The same goes with jazz. But from what I've heard recently, the progressive rock field has become a haven for absolute mediocrity. This field is filled with musicians who have technical ability but are completely uninterested in the depth of music that we've been talking about. Every art form or



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style has its own window of time, and it also has its own tools, but nothing beats a great song. That's timeless!

"You could create a wonderful musical education by listening only to the Beatles and Weather Report. Between Joe Zawinul, Wayne Shorter, Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison, and Ringo—not to mention all the other great musicians that were a part of Weather Report—you have just about everything covered. None of these musicians were ever trying to prove anything. So many progressive bands sound like they're playing to try to prove something, and that's never good. I don't hear a real language there. Similarly, I don't think you could ever learn to play salsa or Afro-Cuban music without learning to speak Spanish first. The same goes for reggae and the Caribbean 'language.' You can burn yourself out with books, but unless you learn how the people *talk*, you just won't get it."

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF CLARITY

"People were breathing down my neck," Mayer continues, "to get me to write a book or do a video on drum 'n' bass, jungle, and electronic music, but I kept saying no. The thrill is in the discovery of something new. That's what I mean about stumbling into music. You aren't going to learn about it from books and videos—you have to go out and discover new things for yourself."

"It was so liberating for me to tap into the breakbeat stuff for myself. When the original hip-hop music came around, it was the real thing. The drum breaks they used were some of the greatest grooves and drum sounds ever. Drum 'n' bass came out of that and the English dub scene. It seemed like such a natural thing for a drummer to investigate, but I didn't invent it. Marque Gilmore and Zach Danziger, both great drummers, were doing similar stuff and experimenting with it, and the Screaming Headless Torsos started to incorporate a little bit of it as well. But I really learned about it by going out to dance clubs."

"I often go back to a quote from Miles' book where he says something like, 'The minute you stop paying attention to what's going on in the streets, you're

over!' That's why I always keep an eye on the dance culture, because that's where a lot of change comes from. You can learn a lot about drumming and the rhythmic language by tuning yourself in to dance. When I was first exposed to the drum 'n' bass thing as a dance craze of the 1990s, DJs were communicating with the people on the dance floor through complex but clear rhythms. But the whole concept didn't match any of my musical vocabulary. So I went back to the clubs and learned. The breaks that those DJs were using—like the 'Amen break' by the Winstons—established a rhythmic clarity that communicated directly to the people on the dance floor. The way that my band Nerve began to perform that stuff is where the need for my technique came from. But I'm starting to move away from the whole drum 'n' bass thing. I don't want to be the drum 'n' bass guy. I've been doing it for a long time. I'm interested in the moment of ignition of a musical approach, and I will be happy to let someone else carry the flame of drum 'n' bass."

"I'm interested in the clarity I discovered through that music. That's what makes drummers like Shawn Pelton, Levon Helm, and Steve Gadd wonderful. Their drumming and rhythmic vocabulary have such a clarity that speaks to everyone. I'm not saying less is more—sometimes less is less and more is more—but clarity is what people can relate to. For every hour people spend listening to Virgil Donati, I think they should spend an hour listening to Paul Motian or the great Paul Lovens. You should be able to appreciate both things."

WHAT WE LEARNED

Okay, let's recap. What is Jojo Mayer listening to? Well, he's stumbling into newly ignited music that communicates in a fresh way and expresses itself seriously. Music that reflects and influences the times we're living in, being played by musicians who are surrendering to the muse and playing with rhythmic clarity. It probably isn't progressive rock, drum 'n' bass, or newer hip-hop, and chances are this music might not yet have a name. But it wouldn't be a bad thing if you could dance to it!

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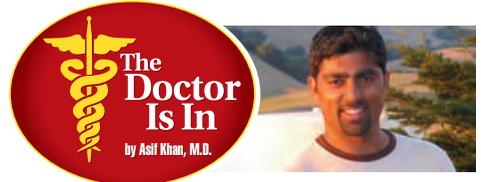
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TINNITUS RELIEF

It's been years, but I finally got around to getting my ears checked, and wouldn't you know it, I have tinnitus. I thought the ringing in my ears would go away if I stopped playing for a while, but it's still there. What can I do about this, and what can I expect in terms of a possible cure?

HW

There are different kinds of tinnitus, which can cause buzzing, ringing, or hissing sounds. An estimated fifty million people in the United States have chronic tinnitus, and it severely interferes with the quality of life in approximately 10 percent of sufferers. To answer your question, the goals of treatment are to lessen the impact of tinnitus and any associated disability rather than to achieve an absolute cure.

First off, you have to make sure tinnitus is indeed the correct diagnosis. Similar symptoms can be found in people with insomnia, depression, vascular abnormalities near the ear, presbycusis (normal age-related hearing loss), outer or middle ear disease, or wax buildup. Certain medications can also cause symptoms similar to tinnitus.

There are a number of tinnitus-specific medical treatments and medications, most of which are not effective. Again, treatment for most patients is to lessen awareness of tinnitus and its impact on quality of life. I recommend tinnitus-retraining therapy (TRT), in which the goal is to reach a point where patients are unaware of their tinnitus unless they specifically and consciously focus on it. A trial of biofeedback or cognitive behavioral therapy may also be helpful as an adjunct to TRT. Masking is another treatment, where one wears a device that resembles a hearing aid and that is designed to produce low-level sounds that can reduce and in some cases eliminate the perception of tinnitus.

I recently had the pleasure of speaking to jazz great Peter Erskine on this subject. (He suffers from tinnitus and moderate hearing loss after an unfortunate recording accident twenty years ago.) Peter visited many doctors and tried alternative therapies. "I went to Hong Kong on the advice of a friend," he told me. "A doctor of alternative Chinese remedies attempted to correct my hearing through a combination of local procedures and a well-rounded diet—removing certain meats and sugars as well as caffeine, for example. After two weeks, I noticed some improvement. But I'm back to my old coffee habit again!" Peter continues to suffer from tinnitus but offers this advice: "When you first hear that ringing in your ears after a show or rehearsal, take it as a warning. Wear hearing protection devices." As you can see from Peter's experience with tinnitus, you're not alone. Just do your best to protect the hearing you have.

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 (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 (johnnyhi-fi.com).

GRETSCH PLAYBOY KIT

I have an original vintage Gretsch round-badge four-piece drumkit. It has a 14x20 bass drum, 8x12 rail-mounted tom, 14x14 floor tom, and 5 1/2x14 aluminum snare drum. The bass drum and toms are finished with a blue sparkle wrap. My father purchased this kit new in 1967. All of the drums are in very good condition, and I still have the original heads. The drums have snare-like lugs mounted in the center of the shell. Could this be a rare kit?
Tony Pence

According to drum historian Harry Cangany, "That exact set is in the 1969 Gretsch catalog. It's called the Playboy. Here's the brief description: 'Ideal for traveling...perfect for club and combo work. The all-new Playboy set lives up to the most demanding specifications.' In the last Gretsch catalog published before this one—which was in 1966—there was no listing of such a set or the aluminum-shell snare. But manufacturers were famous for introducing sets before including them in a catalog, and companies made up flyers to advertise them. Gretsch did have the Renown series, and there's a set in the '66 catalog using a simpler tom mount and without a 14x14. These drums used the same 6-ply shell and finishes, but with center-mounted snare lugs on the toms and bass drums. The Renown was offered as a set—20" bass drum, 12" tom, and 8-lug wood snare. There were no separate listings to buy other toms with center-mounted lugs.

"The Renown and Playboy series likely came about because Ludwig sold a lot of Club Date kits, which utilized the same idea of a center-mounted lug. Slingerland and Rogers followed with versions of their own. All of these drums were basically a less costly version of the companies' pro-level drums.

"A Gretsch 20"/12"/14" setup is highly sought after, as it represents the pinnacle of that classic jazz drum sound for many drummers. Your drums have the same shells and bearing edges as other Gretsch drums, with the only difference being the lug placement. As far as value, you can expect about 60 to 75 percent of the value of a historic Gretsch round-badge Progressive Jazz set, which sells for \$2,500 and up depending on color, condition, and finish. Progressive Jazz sets had either a 4x14 matching wood snare or a 5x14 chrome-over-brass snare. There would be some lessening of value for an aluminum-shell snare."

RACK-MOUNTED DRUM MACHINES

I've been looking for a MIDI-compatible drum machine that'll fit on a 19" rack. I need to be able to play to a click in live situations, since I often play along with loops that are triggered by my keyboard player. I want to have a rack-mounted version so I don't have to lay the drum machine on the floor.

Markus Henry Fellenberg

For all things electronic, we defer to e-drum wizard John Emrich, who says, "Most drum machines are table mounted. So if you have to get one of those, you might consider attaching a tom mount to a flat piece of wood and then affixing the drum machine to the piece of wood. You could then clamp the entire thing to a cymbal stand. Another option is to use a rack-mounted shelf. SKB makes a small rack shelf called the SKB-VS1 (see photo). You could put that on a rack to hold your drum machine. It'll also protect your electronics when you transport them.

"Regardless of what you decide to use, you need to be concerned with time code. If your keyboard player is running sequences, you'll need to lock up your drum machine to his or her rig with time code. If the keyboardist is firing one-shot loops, you'll have to ensure that they're in the correct tempo and that you can hear them. A drum machine running independently will not automatically line up with a loop. If your keyboard player doesn't trigger the loop per-



fectly in time, it won't lock in with your click. To hear the loops and sequences your bandmate is firing, you should consider creating an in-ear monitoring system. I covered a lot of this in my two-part Electronic Insights article, 'Building A Small Stage-Monitoring System,' found in the June and July issues of *MD*."

HOW TO REACH US

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A large advertisement for Musicians Institute. On the left, a man with a beard and short hair is sitting on a drum stool, holding drumsticks. The background is a dark, textured wall with circular patterns. On the right, the Musicians Institute logo is displayed in a white oval with red and black text. Below the logo, the text reads "EDUCATION THAT ROCKS! Your Music Career Starts Here". Further down, it says "Percussion Institute of Technology at MI" and quotes Marco Minnemann: "PIT gives you the education and industry connections you need to make your dream of being a professional drummer a reality. There's no other school like it!!". Below the quote, it identifies Marco Minnemann as an "Independent Artist, Visiting Faculty". At the bottom right, the website "www.mi.edu" and phone number "Call 1.800.255.7529" are listed, along with an invitation to join the next open house and experience MI's world-renowned hands-on education for yourself.



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AARON HARRIS

ISIS doesn't do short and catchy, but that's all well and good for Aaron Harris. The drummer works hard at crafting the perfect performances behind his band's multilevel rock forays, and the results are never less than monumental.

Epic, bold, expansive—these are just a few of the countless adjectives used to describe the Los Angeles-based experimental metal act Isis, and particularly the ceaseless drive of its drummer, Aaron Harris. Five albums into its career, the quintet, originally hailing from Boston, continues to carve new foundations into a landscape that encompasses all things rock, metal, hardcore, and punk. On Isis's latest release, *Wavering Radiant*, guitars are flying in stereo, panned in from all directions, and serene melodic vocals creep up from time to time, tempering the barrage of full-throttle screams found in other spots. Within the span of a minute, a song can shift from cool and collected to urgent and dissonant. Your average hard rock band this is not.

And that's the beauty of Isis. Harris certainly has to stay on his toes behind the intricate, detailed playing of the rest of the ensemble. The Maine-raised drummer's professional recording and touring credentials, which are primarily rooted in the Isis catalog and itinerary, find him maximizing every piece of his decidedly standard kit in anchoring a band that challenges the listener with components not easily comprehended by those accustomed to more pop-oriented music.

Harris is practically forced to connect with his bandmates at all levels, to constantly push the envelope with his inventiveness, and ultimately to find himself in the perennial pursuit of navigating uncharted waters. It's an exciting place to be, and Harris has had the good fortune of calling Isis his full-time career for the past five-plus years.

Of course, getting to such a position takes a special perseverance that you won't find in many musicians. For starters, a lot the band's compositions are heavily jam based. "Everybody seems to write really good middle and ending parts, and we have to work around that and see how we'll start a song or finish it," Aaron says. And that's just where the journey begins. For the drummer, the exploratory process is part of what makes Isis unique. His ability to shuffle rhythms, patterns, and phrases at any given moment ensures he's an incredibly intriguing listen, even when the tracks aren't clocking in at radio-friendly lengths.

"Our songs are pretty long," Harris says. Indeed, the shortest full tune on the Joe Barresi-produced *Wavering Radiant* is over seven minutes. "It's kind of weird. We don't set out to write them that long. It just kind of happens that way. A short song for us is six minutes."





MD: On your latest album, you have songs ranging from around seven to eleven minutes.

Aaron: We don't like to make the album more than fifty minutes to an hour. We'd rather leave people wanting more than thinking it goes on forever.

the song. But I record on the side, and I learned a lot more and bought more gear, and this time, because we have the gear and the capability, we said let's just record everything. It's such a great way, especially with bands like us. A lot of bands could make great use

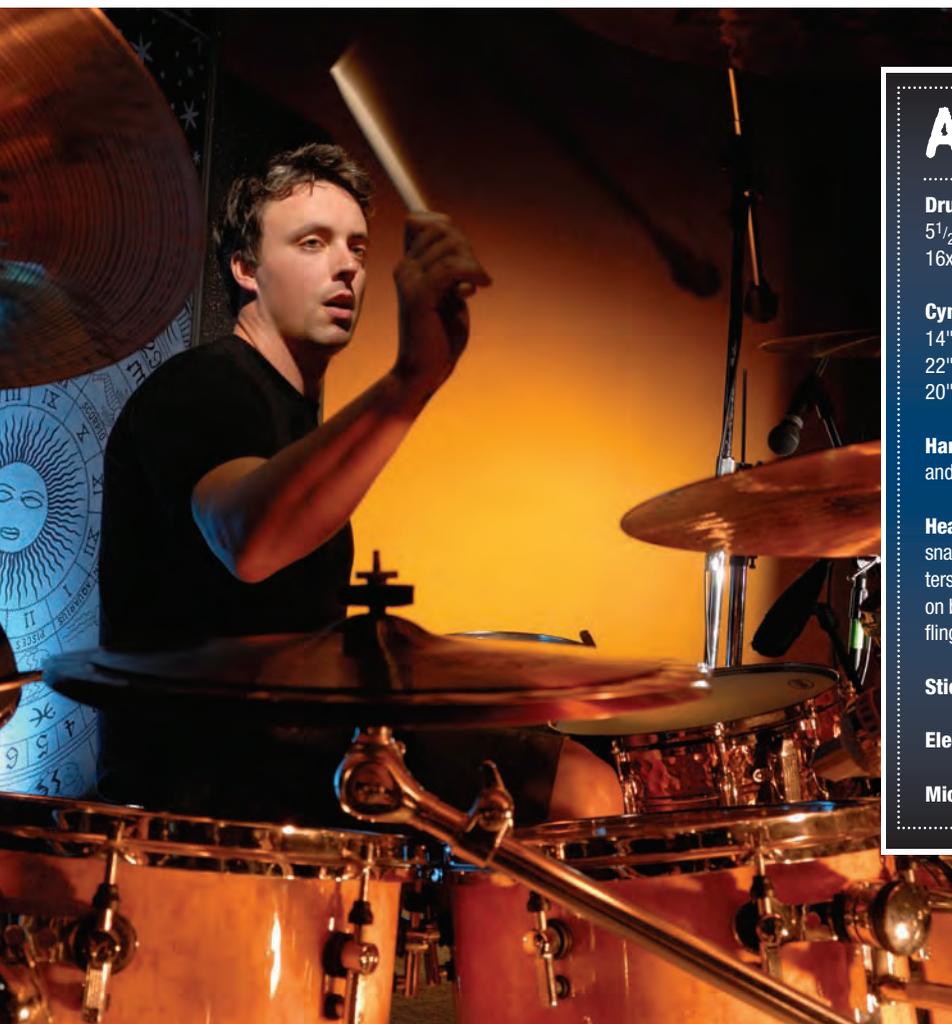
serious, but everyone knows we're there to write, and that's what we're doing. There's not much fooling around. It's like, Let's do it. I guess it just depends on where we're at on the song. There's a lot of stuff for me as a drummer to work off. Sometimes there'll be three guitars

"It makes real sense to put in a groove to ground everything and give people something to shake their heads to."

It's pretty intense music, and it's a lot to take in. Sixty minutes seems long enough. This time around we recorded a lot and did a lot of demoing. We'd multitrack a whole practice and listen

of this. When you're playing at full volume like we do, it's really hard to hear what everyone's doing, and what you're doing. It's nice to sit back and listen to it. I think it's bad to dissect

and a bass, or sometimes it'll be pretty ambient or almost keyboard-sounding guitar stuff. It can make my job a little more difficult than in a typical rock sense. One of our guitar players is really good at writing strange riffs, like in five and seven. And one time he wrote



AARON'S SETUP

Drums: Sonor Designer series in bird's-eye maple
5½x14 bronze snare, 10x10 rack tom, 14x14 floor tom,
16x16 floor tom, 18x22 kick

Cymbals: Paiste
14" Crunch hi-hats, 18" Signature full crash, 19" 2002 crash,
22" 2002 heavy ride, 18" 2002 crash, 14" Triple Raw Smash,
20" Signature China

Hardware: Tama Iron Cobra hi-hat stand, bass drum pedal,
and beater. Pedal tension: soft.

Heads: Evans. Genera HD Dry on snare batter, Resonant on
snare bottom. Snare tuned to D, no muffling. G2 on tom bat-
ters, G1 on tom bottoms; Moongel if needed for muffling. EMAD
on bass drum batter and front head; Evans RGS pad for muf-
fling. "I try to use as little muffling as possible," Aaron says.

Sticks: Vater. Power 5B Nude, Hickory Nude wood tip.

Electronics: Roland SPD-S sampler pad

Mics: Heil PR 20, PR 30, and PR 40

back, and that really opened a lot of doors for us. We were able to pick things apart easier. And it was a lot better for me to go in and really hear what those guys were doing and put in the right punctuations, grooves, and feelings to maximize it.

Before we'd multitrack one version of

things too much, though—you can get into a bad area there. But if you can get a grasp on it, it can be a really good tool.

MD: With such dense, involved material, what's the vibe like when you're writing?

Aaron: It's pretty serious. We look at it as our jobs—it's what we do. It's not *too*

something in seven and a half. It's a pretty drastic difference between the two styles.

MD: Do you feel you're playing the role of the traffic cop in a way, particularly given the heavy rhythmic responsibility you have?

Aaron: I think so. My playing's pretty groove oriented. I think it works really well with the way these guys play. Like you said, there's so much happening in the songs, and it makes real sense to put in a groove to ground everything and give people something

to shake their heads to while there's all this really nice melodic, atmospheric stuff happening.

I studied tabla for six months during the writing of this record, and what I learned really affected me. I learned not so much the rhythms and timing of tabla music. My teacher, Alope Dutta, teaches here in Los Angeles, and what's interesting to me is more of the philosophy and thinking of the rhythms. With his background in Hinduism, it's a much more spiritual approach to drumming.

He made a lot of profound points. He referred to drumming as writing, in a language. When you say, "I love you," you emphasize certain words. "I love you." "I love you." "I love you." There are so many different ways to say it, and each has a different feeling. Little things like that meant so much to me. It's such a great way to think of playing drums and where I was punctuating the beat of what I was playing. I learned a lot from Alope in that way. It gave me a whole new way to think about how I play my drums.

MD: Isis performs very textural and ambient compositions. What is it like to constantly work within such contexts?

Aaron: It can be difficult for me because I'm a pretty athletic person, and sometimes it's hard to just sit back and go easy. I had to do that a lot on earlier records, and I felt I took it as far as I could, or really wanted to, in terms of building straightforward drumbeats into something more grand. I really wanted to do more with my drumming and add a little more complexity and have more fun with it. I try to do what the music calls for, and I think less can be more sometimes. That's a problem that a lot of musicians have—they feel every space needs to be taken up with something. But you just have to listen to what's carrying the song and what's really driving the music or the part. You need to let that speak; you need to be respectful of what's happening. It may



not be appropriate for you to be playing that much, or it may be. I just need to be conscious of what needs to happen.

MD: In developing such a consciousness, how did you work toward achieving the discipline you have now?

Aaron: I guess it's just being more comfortable with my playing and with being a drummer. I'm able to do this full time now, and I have more time to focus on it and think about it. It goes back to what I've learned from Alope. The drumkit is my world, and back there I should be as much in control as I can be and really try to express myself and feel the music and the emotion, and try to translate that. Earlier on, I was all about playing really heavy grooves, hitting really hard, and making things as aggressive as I needed to, and if it wasn't going to be that, I wouldn't play at all.

It's becoming a better, more confident drummer. Even things like having an extra floor tom have me playing more musically and not always playing kick/snare/ride, or kick/snare/hi-hat. Rhythms could be on the tom, snare, or whatever. I've tried to branch out. I tried a lot of things on the last record, and I really grew as a drummer. I felt like I had a lot of technique and more ability to try different things.

MD: Tell me about your philosophy for

RECORDINGS

Isis Wavering Radiant /// Isis In The Absence Of Truth /// Zozobra Bird Of Prey /// Isis Panopticon /// Isis Oceanic /// Isis Celestial

FAVORITES

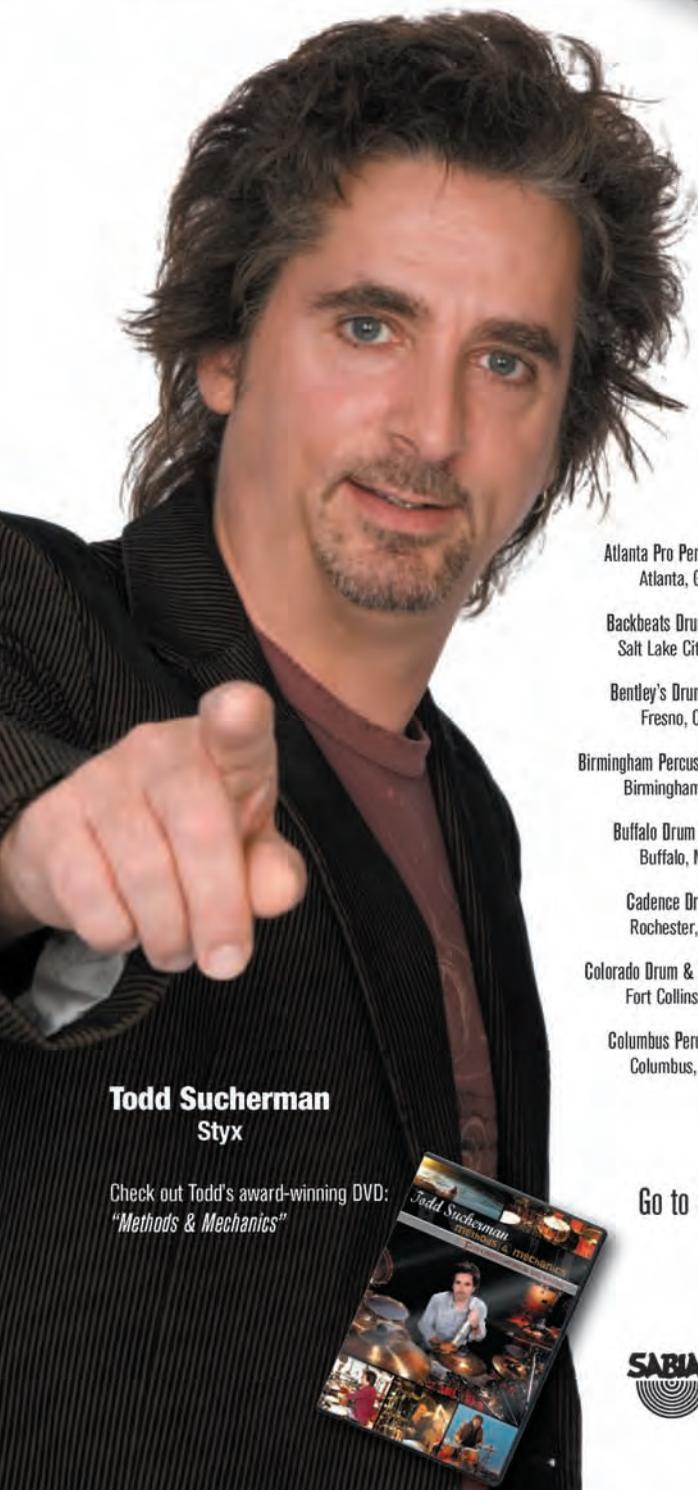
Bill Bruford The Bruford Tapes (Bill Bruford) /// Failure Fantastic Planet (Kelli Scott) /// The Melvins Houdini (Dale Crover) /// Emerson, Lake & Palmer Tarkus (Carl Palmer) /// Led Zeppelin How The West Was Won (John Bonham) /// Tool Aenima (Danny Carey) /// King Crimson Deja Vroom [DVD] (Bill Bruford, Pat Mastelotto) /// Alope Dutta The Window (Alope Dutta)

studio performance.

Aaron: I think it's the same [as live]. One thing we had never done before is that we started with a metronome or click track. I want to stress that we started that way, but then it was turned off. [Producer Joe Barresi] would start by feeding me a click. We paid a lot of attention to the tempo in writing this record, which is something we hadn't really considered before. It's really crazy how much a couple bpm can affect the feeling of the song.

The last two weeks before we hit the studio, we experimented with all kinds of different tempos down in the rehearsal space. Joe would feed me the tempo of whatever song we were tracking. I'd click into it, play about thirty seconds of the song to the click, and then just have him fade it out.

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AARON HARRIS

I think the click is a good thing to get a good tempo and feeling, but I don't think I could play a whole song to just one tempo. I have a good internal clock and am pretty solid as far as tempo goes, but I think it's good that songs breathe and have a little bit of fluctuation.

For the most part, I think I'm pretty much the same drummer, aside from the click thing. And I think live we'll probably do that—set a metronome next to me to get that click going. A lot of times I notice that when I go to shows—and I do this too—bands will play songs way faster than they are on the record, and that can really be bad. It just doesn't have the same effect, you know? I want to be conscious of that.

MD: With a band that has as much movement and intricacy in each song as Isis does, how faithful do you try to be to the album when you're on stage?

Aaron: For the main parts, I try to be pretty close to the record. There's a lot of fills that I'll switch up live. It's inevitable that the songs will have evolved a little bit. Something I've always wanted to do, and as a band we've wanted to do, is just play a whole record's worth of songs live for a year before we record them, because they change a little bit. But we just can't do that.

MD: You seem so at ease playing odd meters. Are there any odd-meter passages or phrases that you're still having

trouble pulling off?

Aaron: It's hard for me to explain. I'm a self-taught drummer, and I don't have any formal training. I just play along to [the parts] until I feel them out in my head. I get the patterns down, and I just play 'em. Sometimes I kind of subdivide it, like if a part is in six, I'll break it down into two threes. But usually I'll kind of jam on the part until I get it locked in my head, and whatever I come up with, that's my foundation for what I do. I can usually tell what time something's in, but I don't consciously figure it out when we're writing. I just kind of come from that behind-the-beat, groove-oriented style of drumming. I'm really comfortable with polyrhythms. It's just something I developed, I guess.

I grew up listening to Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd, and Chad Smith was an influence on me as a teenager. John Stanier from Helmet was a really big influence as well. And then I got turned on to the Melvins and Dale Crover, and then, of course, Nirvana, so Dave Grohl was a big influence. As I matured, I started getting into more prog stuff, like Bill Bruford and Alan White, this whole world that I had never dabbled in. Going on tour with Tool and talking to Danny Carey, he comes from a completely different school of drumming than I do. He turned me on to a lot of really interesting stuff. It was beneficial to me to grow

up with a really rock-oriented style of drumming and later on be exposed to the more complex prog and more out-there drummers. I was able to pick from both and cater my drumming to both styles.

MD: Your band has been described as prog, rock, metal, and hardcore. Let's talk a little more about your drumming roots.

Aaron: When I was young, I was fascinated by my dad's record collection. There's a lot of really crazy stuff in there. I remember seeing the cover of Emerson, Lake & Palmer's *Tarkus* for the first time. That really tripped me out. And *Led Zeppelin IV*, with the guy with the sticks on his back—just looking at the artwork was interesting with all these bands. I was lucky that my dad was into them; he's a drummer too. We always had a drumset in our basement, and I'd listen to all these records.

As I got older I was blown away by bands like Primus, with Tim Alexander. It wasn't a style of drumming that I'd been exposed to. I was like, This is amazing, but I don't know what the hell he's doing. I didn't have a grasp on drumming at all at that point. I could play along to [Red Hot Chili Peppers'] *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*, a couple Nirvana songs, a couple Zeppelin songs, and I just kind of learned that way, playing along to some of my favorite records and playing in cover bands in high school.

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AARON HARRIS

I had friends who were into bands like the Jesus Lizard and the Melvins and all this stuff I had never heard of, and I got lucky. I just met the right people.

MD: Let's talk about gear. You don't seem to be using anything out of the ordinary.

Aaron: I switched up my sizes a lot on the record. On all the other records, I was playing a 22" kick, a 12" rack, and a 16" floor—very standard. I've got a Sonor kit, and I've really stepped it up. I used a Pearl Export for a long time, and I used a Tama Rockstar Custom. But I bought a Sonor Designer series for this record, and it's a whole new ball game for me. It's a 22" kick, a 10" rack, and 14" and 16" floors. I went smaller on the rack and even smaller on the floor toms.

I started listening to this drummer Benny Greb, and I really dug his style, the way he played, and the way his drums sounded. I was like, What sizes does he play? He plays the same setup, so I just toyed with it. He uses coated heads, but I still stick with clear heads. I use all Evans heads, G2s on the toms. I tune the bottom head a little higher than the top; I don't use any specific notes. But the drums all seem to have a pocket where they sound really good. Especially the 10"—it chokes out if you tune it too high. I've been doing a lot more articulate fills, and it's nice to have a 10" that's a little more responsive and the two lower notes down on the floor. You can really make some musical tom patterns that way and do the long roll if you want to and really get into it.

MD: What are some challenges that you're still facing as a drummer?

Aaron: I've never been one to practice very much. I should probably practice more, because I want to keep moving ahead. I love when drummers are doing real fluid double-stroke rolls and are really ambidextrous and have great separation. As I said before, I've always been a very groove-heavy drummer, and the prog world is still new to me. And there are aspects that I'd like to understand. I can't read music and I couldn't tell you what times most of our own songs are in, so I'd like to learn more of the technicalities. A good double-stroke roll is such a beautiful thing. When you hear somebody do a nice, confident double-stroke roll in a song, it's just mind-blowing. There's always more that you could be doing.





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NEW AND NOTABLE

MORE BIG CYMBALS, AN AFFORDABLE DRUM COVERING, AND A WRAP-AROUND MIC STAND ARE JUST A FEW OF THIS MONTH'S COOLEST RELEASES.





1. CADESON's new acrylic drumset has been designed especially for Malaysian jazz/pop/fusion drummer Lewis Pragasam. The shells of this kit are thicker than most acrylic drums on the market, which is claimed to make the drums stronger and offer a fatter sound. The overall tone is said to be articulate and punchy, with a melodic quality at any tuning range. The kit features an 18x20 kick, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 15x16 floor toms, and a 6x14 snare.

cadesonmusic.com



2. MEINL has added two 23" rides to its Byzance Traditional series. These medium and heavy rides offer a cutting bell, a crisp "ping," and an overall dark tone. (\$730)

The 5 1/4"x6 1/2" zebra-print Drum Rug features a rubber bottom side to prevent sliding. (\$130)

meinlycymbals.com, meinlpercussion.com

3. QSTICKS multirods are available in several sizes. The light orange Whisper consists of nineteen thin dowels in a small 7A grip. This stick is said to be slightly stronger sounding than a brush. The yellow model has larger dowels and a 5A grip. The twelve thicker dowels in the red QSticks are arranged in a triangular shape, which creates a fatter sound. The blue and purple models consist of even thicker dowels for louder, more pointed sounds.

qpercussion.com/en

4. VATER's Gospel series sticks were designed under the direction of several prominent gospel/R&B drummers, including Gordon Campbell, Nisan Stewart, and Chris Johnson. This line consists of three models, each measuring 16 1/2". The GS 5A has a comfortable grip size and weight for low- to mid-volume situations, plus a barrel-style tip. The GS Fusion is between a 5A and 5B in grip. For added weight, the GS 5B has a heavier taper than the GS 5A and GS Fusion. (\$13.99)

vater.com

5. BATTLEFIELD DRUMS' Spike series snares are limited to only twenty-six drums in three different sizes (7x14, 6x14, and 6x13). The shells are 10-ply maple and have a variety of wrap finishes, including sparkle, glass glitter, pearl, and oyster options. Each drum features Spike tube lugs, 2.3 mm hoops, and Remo heads. (\$375)

battlefielddrums.com

6. GROVER PRO PERCUSSION's Bronze-Pro hammered triangles are manufactured from 1/2"-diameter bronze alloy rods. Prior to being bent by hand, the solid alloy rods are hammered in a compact, randomized pattern. This process ensures that the inherent fundamental pitch is dampened and that the instrument's intricate and complex harmonic structure is enhanced. The triangle is available in 6" (\$180) and 8" sizes (\$190).

groverpro.com

7. DRUMSOUND Evolution series drums are claimed to be perfectly balanced instruments in which each drum is constructed to produce the best possible sound with respect to the natural characteristics of the shell diameter. The drums are made of Canadian maple. Every edge has its own cut, from the 42° of 8" toms (for attack and sustain) to the 62° of 26" kicks (for low end and volume).

drumsoundna.com

8. TYCOON's new Artist Retro series congas and bongos offer distinctive looks, premium quality, and versatile sound at a midrange price. These uniquely finished drums are reminiscent of the authentic Cuban-style instruments of the 1950s and '60s. The congas are 28" tall and available in 10", 11", 11 3/4", and 12 1/2" sizes with water buffalo heads and black powder-coated hardware. A special 10" and 11" double conga set (complete with a heavy-duty double conga stand) and matching 7" and 8 1/2" bongos are also offered.

tycoonpercussion.com

9. TRX has introduced five new effects cymbals, including three China splashes and two sizes of heavy bells called T-Bells. The China splashes are available in 9" (\$175), 10" (\$200), and 11" (\$225) sizes. They're part of the medium-weight, traditionally lathed MDM general-purpose series. The 7" (\$250) and 9" (\$350) T-Bells are large, extra-heavy bronze bells with a mirrorlike finish; they feature a clear, penetrating tone with a sharp attack and long sustain.

The DRK/BRT hi-hats consist of a DRK bottom and BRT top to produce bright, penetrating closed hi-hat sounds with fuller, more explosive open and half-open sounds. 13", 14", and 15" models are available.

trxcymbals.com

10. XTREME WRAP is an easy-to-install, affordable alternative to custom paint finishes and traditional drum coverings. There are eleven standard Xtreme Wrap finishes (including diamonds, barbed wire, and flames), but almost anything can be created. Xtreme Wrap can be made in any drum size or rack tube length, and it can be used on bass drum heads.

xtremewrap.com,
myspace.com/xtremewrap

11. THECLAMP-IT is a sturdy mic-stand solution for singing drummers. The main unit attaches to the base of any drum seat post via a custom clamp. The user then attaches any mic stand with a telescoping boom and gooseneck to a 24" hexagonal bar. The Clamp-it can also be used with an accessory table, add-on cymbal arms, and percussion. (\$169)

theclampit.com



YAMAHA

BIRCH CUSTOM ABSOLUTE KIT by David Ciauro

My first encounter with birch drums was also my introduction to fusion music. Hearing *Beneath The Mask* by Chick Corea's Elektric Band made me marvel not only at Dave Weckl's slick drumming but also at his amazing drum sound. I eventually discovered that a key component of his tone was the birch shells of his Yamaha Recording Custom kit. Now Yamaha has revamped its birch-shell drums with the Birch Custom Absolutes.

AIR-SEALED SHELLS

The wood used to make Birch Custom Absolute shells is imported from northern Japan. The plies are arranged with zigzagged seams and then hit with evenly distributed air pressure to seal them together. This process is said to enhance the shells' tonal characteristics and durability. Like Recording Customs, the Birch Custom Absolute snare and toms are 6 ply (6 mm), while the kick is 7 ply. The "white grape sparkle" vintage finish is striking and looked great in my '60s-inspired mod-retro rehearsal space. The waterproof resin on the outside of the shells is practically impervious to harmful weather elements, and the shell color is said to reveal richer, deeper hues over time.

LUGS AND MOUNTS

Birch Custom Absolute kits come standard with single-bolt chrome lug casings, but this particular set was outfitted with the redesigned quick-release lugs used on Yamaha's über-high-end PHX series. Cleverly engineered to keep tension rods in perfect alignment, these small lugs comprise two parts: a squared-off "hook" mounted directly to the shell, and a hollow casing that

drastically reduced from the drum to the mount, again resulting in a truer sound. The energy of the stick hitting the drum doesn't leave the shell through the hardware, which enhances the tone and presence.

A BIRCH TO TUNE?

Out of the box, the five-lug 7x8 and six-lug 8x10 toms were near perfect. They had a crisp attack that delivered quick jabs of brightness without any exaggerated overtones. Both toms were easy to tune and sounded best in the mid to high range. When I *really* cranked them, their tone morphed into the realm of the shell-less Rototom.

Tuning was a bit more laborious with the six-lug 9x12 and eight-lug 11x14 toms. After some tweaking, I found the right balance of tone and stick response, but they still felt slightly off when compared with the obvious sweet spots of the smaller toms and the 12x14 floor. The 9x12 didn't have the same zest as the 8" and 10" toms, and the 11x14, depending on how it was tuned, got caught between having the characteristics of a rack tom and a floor tom. When I arranged the 8", 10", and 12" drums up top and used both 14" toms as floors, the 11x14 struggled to fall in line with how the others were tuned. When I set it up as an auxiliary floor to the left of my hi-hat, however, I liked that this drum offered a similar yet not identical tone to the 12x14. In this application, it added a nice texture to the rest of the kit.

The eight-lug 12x14 suspended floor tom had a nice low-pitched smack, while its shallow depth allowed me to tune it wide open without worrying about bothersome overtones. When I played the drum with a band, though,

its small size didn't allow it to be powerful enough to cut through the mix. In fact, the entire kit seemed more soft-spoken than I'd prefer in a rock setting.

I used the ten-lug 18x22 bass drum for a synth-driven electronic song I was tracking, and it translated plenty of pres-

ence and low end while also holding a true tone. Thanks to the ten vents in the shell, the drum didn't sound boxy without a port in the front head. I only needed to place a rolled-up towel against the base of the batter head to achieve a full, punchy, and rich sound with good resonance.

The ten-lug 6x14 snare had a very tight, dry, and focused sound when cranked up, displaying both density and sensitivity. The "crack" wasn't too fleeting, and the qualities of the birch really came through in the overtones. The snare response was sensitive. I preferred this drum tuned on the high side, but it offered a meaty wallop when tuned looser. It also recorded excellently. The dryness of the wood came through nicely, while the sensitivity of the snares helped produce a slickly nuanced sound.



TIGHT, CRISP STUDIO TONES

Birch Custom Absolute drums recorded wonderfully. With zero equalization, they sounded crisp and clean, and their impressive tones were captured almost effortlessly. The toms and snare stayed in tune, thanks in part to their aluminum die-cast hoops. The drums had a tight overall sound, without choking. If you like to *really* crank the tension of your toms and snare, these drums might not breathe enough for you. But, given their naturally crisp character, you probably wouldn't want to tune them quite so high.

latches onto the hook for tuning but can also be removed without pulling out the tension rod completely. This sturdy design cut down on the time needed to change heads, and because the lugs require fewer holes in the shell, they make for a truer sound. Although the hook lugs are a nice addition, they aren't for the cost-conscious buyer. They're a special-order item, and they increase the cost of each drum by roughly \$250.

The toms and floors borrow another component of the PHX series, YESS (Yamaha Enhanced Sustain System) mounts, which come standard with the Absolute series. The mounting system employs the same type of rubber used in Japan to keep boats from bumping against docks. This material is used to prevent metal from touching the shell; vibrations are therefore

NEW YAMAHA HARDWARE

In addition to the Birch Custom Absolute kit, Yamaha sent along its latest kick pedal and hi-hat and cymbal stands. The FP 9500D direct-drive bass drum pedal was very balanced and fluid, thanks to what the company calls "tighter tolerance" and "improved bearings." The double-sided plastic/felt beater has a triangulated shaft so that the beater itself remains aligned with the bass drum head. (\$399.99)

The SS 950 snare stand can be positioned almost 2" lower than most, which will accommodate players who prefer to sit very low or who use very deep snares. I sometimes use an 11x15 marching snare, and with this stand I—for once—didn't have to raise my seat height in order to play

the drum comfortably. The infinite-adjustment ball allows for the snare basket to be positioned precisely how you like it. The basket itself is detachable, and it sits directly over the center tube to absorb the force of the snare hits. (\$299.99)

The HS 1200 series hi-hat stand comes in three versions. I tested the toggle-drive two-leg stand, which had a very nice linear motion. I really liked the retractable spikes on the feet, which can be clicked in and out like an ink pen. (This is also a feature of the SS 950 snare stand.) Three-leg and two-leg direct-pull versions are available as well. (\$499.99)

CS 965 cymbal stands can be used as straight or boom stands, and they have an infinite-adjustment cymbal tilter. These stands were sturdy and well designed—all function and no fluff. (\$239.99)

CONCLUSION

I really enjoyed the sound of the Birch Custom Absolute drums on their own and when recorded in the studio. The kit ended up being a bit too classy for the raw rock style of music I'm used to playing. But it was pristine sounding, clear, focused, and musical. Even when the drums were tuned wide open, they resonated for a relatively short time. These aren't booming rock drums. Their sophisticated tones are much more appropriate for Gavin Harrison-style prog, jazz/funk fusion, contemporary R&B, and Latin jazz.

The MSRP for these "white grape sparkle" birch beauties, equipped with special-order quick-release lugs, is \$11,119.93. Standard Absolute lugs would bring the price down to \$9,409.93.

yamahadrums.com



ZILDJIAN

Z3 SERIES CYMBALS

by David Ciauro



Zildjian recently unveiled Z3, a brand-new cymbal line consisting of twenty-two models. These cymbals are a response to requests from heavy-handed drummers who revere Zildjian's A Customs for their playability during studio work but require the power and projection of Z Customs for touring. The 3 in the Z3 name refers to the three Ps at the heart of the new models: power, projection, and playability. Does the line succeed in finding a balance between these traits? If you already play Z Customs but you yearn for a more musical and playable version, you will not be disappointed.

A FINE BALANCE

Instead of retooling either the A Custom or Z Custom line to create a blend of power, projection, and playability, Zildjian spent the past two years laboring with its proprietary hammering-machine technology in search of the correct symmetrical pattern to balance the three Ps at an optimal level. The result is a cymbal equal in thickness to the Z Custom but with some of the flex of the A Custom. Thickness is essential for volume and durability but often results in stiff cymbals that are unmusical, even bordering on belligerent. If cymbals are too thin, however, they will neither cut through the ear-splitting decibel levels of hard rock and heavy metal nor withstand constant abuse.

Z3 HI-HATS: REGULAR OR EXTRA CRISPY

The Z3 line offers 14" (\$554) and 15" (\$606) regular and Mastersound hi-hats. Both versions consist of medium-weight tops and heavy bottoms. Mastersound bottoms use hammered grooves for a faster and tighter "chick" sound when played with the foot. Both the 14" and 15" Mastersounds were crisper, cleaner, and more articulate than the regular hats. The 14" pair was a bit faster and brighter and had a tad more bite than the 15" hats, but I preferred the added depth, volume, and fullness of the 15" models.

The 14" regular hi-hats were loud, and the

15" regular hi-hats were even louder. Both were more flowing and looser than the Mastersounds, with a deeper "chick" sound and fuller stick articulation. They really screamed when played slightly open.

CRASHES FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL

The sound threshold of cymbals is controlled by the size of the cup, so to obtain maximum protection, the 16" (\$335), 17" (\$369), 18" (\$396), and 19" (\$427) crashes all have an oversize bell. Yet they remained musical. The Z3 line offers two weights of crashes, medium and

rock—the latter for *really* heavy hitters.

Across the board, the Z3 medium crashes were faster and edgier than the rock crashes. The rock crashes had more body with a bit more high end coming through in the overtones. Both of the 16" models were the fastest and brightest of the bunch. As the sizes increased, the quickness of the attack gave way to fuller sustain.

I compared the 16" medium Z3 with a 16" A Custom medium crash. This test presented a window through which I saw that some characteristics of the A Customs were present in the Z3s. The feel was not far off, considering that the Z3 is a thicker cymbal. But what was missing from the Z3 was the warmth and buttery feel of the A Custom.

The 18" and 19" medium crashes were very appealing, since they felt great when hit and had a richer timbre than the 16" and 17" mediums. Their larger sizes allowed them to breathe a bit more and express themselves in colorful bursts.

The rock crashes were slightly more metallic, higher pitched, and sturdier feeling than the

mediums. I brought various sizes of both medium and rock crashes to a gig and found that the rock crashes didn't have the dynamic range needed for a set that bounced from Top 40 to hard rock. The medium Z3 crashes were more appropriate in this particular setting. But overall, these crashes might be overpowering if the rest of the band isn't cranking out a lot of sound.

The 20" medium crash (\$453) proved to be more versatile than I expected, since it worked nicely as a ride during soft to medium-volume sections. Crashing on this big cymbal created a huge wash that dissipated fast enough to retain ride articulation, which would be great in situations where you want to limit your setup to one cymbal. The 20" Z3 medium crash had a slightly larger bell than the 19". A 20" rock version is not offered.

DOMINANT RIDES

Each Z3 ride was very loud, with clear stick definition, a bright "ping," and an articulate bell. The 20" medium-heavy rides had a defined sound and firm feel but were more musical than the rock models (\$453). The 22" medium-heavy and rock rides (\$541) are definitely for very heavy hitters. These hefty cymbals offered high-end bite, a pronounced "ping," and a penetrating bell sound, which could fit perfectly with your playing style if your biggest concern is being heard over your band. They had less-forgiving overtones than the 20" models yet remained more flexible than regular Z Custom rides. For true metal maniacs, there's an extra-heavy 21" Mega-Bell ride, which was downright massive sounding (\$496).

Rounding out the ride lineup is the medium-heavy 19" Thrash ride (\$427). It worked great as a crash/ride, as it had a little venom in its attack. When used as a ride, it offered a very open and raw sound with a lighter feel. This model has a unique hammering pattern that projects in a straight line from the bell. Zildjian claims this helps to accentuate the up-front attack. To my



ears, the cymbal had the right amount of attitude without being noisome.

EXPLOSIVE EFX

The 18" (\$415) and 20" (\$471) Z3 Chinas have thinner weights than the Z3 crashes. These accent cymbals displayed a tempestuous attack that was exciting, bright, lively...and loud. The 12" splash is also thin. It had sonic characteristics similar to a

14" fast crash, plus a huge sound for its size—thanks again to the oversize bell—with just a hint of trashiness.

CONCLUSION

Zildjian's Z3 cymbal line succeeds in offering diverse musical alternatives for heavy hitters. The highlights of the series were the 18"-20" medium crashes, the 15" Mastersound hi-hats, and the 18"

China. The rides and splash didn't speak to my personal taste, but they had a noticeable meshing of qualities from the A and Z Custom lines.

For two years, Zildjian put forth the effort to serve powerhouse drummers with models that possess a lighter feel and a more musical sound without sacrificing sturdiness. I say it was time well spent.

zildjian.com



REVELATION DRUMS

How do you make a drum louder? Give it room to breathe. That's the philosophy behind this ultra-vented snare from Revelation Drums. The 10-ply maple shell is divided into two parts and separated in the middle by about 1" of open air. The classic-looking gunmetal tube lugs are the only things holding the two halves together. The result of this unusual design is that more air moves out of the drum when it's struck, which helps increase the projection and volume.

Besides being loud, the drum had a unique sound. Because the shell is halved, the tone I got from the top head when the snares were disengaged was close to that of a timbale. With the snares on, the drum produced a piercing "kang" sound, especially from rimshots.

Snare response is also affected by the open-shell design. At first I was a little put off by the drum's raspy tone when I hit the center of the head at medium volume. Because a lot of the air leaves the drum before it hits the bottom head, I felt I didn't get



the same initial zip from the snares as I would with a normal "solid" shell. This made the drum sound like the snares were loose, even when they weren't. The rattle effect went away, however, when I played the drum at its intended volume—loud. When struck heavily, the drum rang out nicely and the snares responded quickly without sounding choked.

This particular drum also features a Trick throw-off and gunmetal gray hardware, and it was further cus-

tomized with a wrap finish that happens to be the "F" logo from pop/punk drummer Travis Barker's Famous clothing company.

If extra projection and volume are what you need from a snare, then a drum like this could be your answer. It just *begs* to be on stage, in all its full-voiced glory. (\$675)

revelationdrums.com

PEARL

DJEMBASS AND Q-POPPER SNARE

by Anthony Riscica

With so much of today's music using synthesized drum sounds, it's almost inevitable that drum companies would have to rethink and reinvent some of their products to keep up with current trends. That's what Pearl has done with the Djembass and the Q-Popper snare. These new products are designed not only to replicate the electronic tones used on many contemporary recordings but also to create fresh sounds that were previously unattainable in the acoustic drum market. We had a chance to try these ear-opening inventions, and *boy* was it fun!

DJEMBE TO DJEMBASS

While not an entirely new product, the Djembass is designed to convert a standard djembe into something that sounds reminiscent of the classic Roland 808 drum machine kick. To do this, the company designed legs that clamp to the bottom of the djembe (we were sent one of Pearl's fiberglass djembes to use for the review), allowing the drum to lie horizontally on the floor. There's also a riser for the top of the djembe that allows you to clamp a kick pedal onto the drum.



when I broke out my Audix D6 kick mic. Using a small tabletop boom mic stand, I positioned the D6 about 2" inside the bottom hole of the djembe. I plugged the mic into my PA system

hi-hat stand so we could try out this feature; it created a cool minimalist setup.

Out of the box, the head of the Q-Popper was cranked to a tension similar to that of a timbale. As a result, the drum sounded like a timbale when I played it with the snares off. With the snares on, the Q-Popper produced a tight "crack" that cut like a knife and had bright overtones. Be prepared when you hit a rimshot on this drum, because it startled me a little when I heard and felt it for the first time. The steel shell dished out loads of volume, which is often required for the high energy levels of traditional Latin music.

I also tried the Q-Popper tuned down a little, just to see what else it could do. The result was a Billy Martin-esque snare sound that, in conjunction with the tone of the Djembass, led me into some loose funk grooves. The combination of the two drums was great for achieving an electronic drum 'n' bass sound. And the Q-Popper worked well with the Djembass for Brazilian grooves, as it provided a convincing caixa sound.

TO DIG OR NOT TO DIG

An interesting side effect of playing the Djembass is a heightened awareness of pedal technique. Because the Djembass tone is very similar to the long, round note of a Roland 808 kick, it's important to let the drum ring. So you must allow the beater to bounce off the head, or else you choke the sustain. After playing the drum for a while, I got used to the bounce of the head and started experimenting with a combination of open and closed sounds. This inspired me to try playing some Brazilian surdo patterns, and they seemed about as authentic as I could ever make them sound with my foot.

If you've ever played a djembe, you know it's capable of producing some serious low end, but there's also a prominent high-end "kang." To eliminate these higher tones, Pearl designed a foam pad and cover for the drumhead. The cover attaches to the lugs of the drum with elastic bands, which lets you put it on and take it off with ease. The foam pad can be left in or removed. Without the pad, a bit more of the higher frequencies come through. When you play the drum with a kick pedal while the pad and cover are on, it produces a low-pitched sustained tone.

When I first tried the Djembass, I was amazed by the sound. But I felt I needed more volume in order to be able to use the drum in a live environment. When I played it along with a snare and hi-hat, it was hard to get a balanced kit sound, even when I tapped the snare and hi-hat lightly. That's

and jumped back behind the drums. What a difference! When the drum was miked, I could really hear the deep bass sound. You should keep that in mind if you're going to use the Djembass on a gig.

Q-POPPER SNARE

The Q-Popper snare was designed for Allman Brothers percussionist Marc Quiñones, and it utilizes a lot of the same elements as Pearl's Marc Quiñones signature steel timbales—same shell design, same hoops, same lugs. The difference is that this 12" drum has a bottom head, two-sided lugs, and a 12-strand snare strainer with a small throw-off. The Q-Popper also comes with mounting hardware that allows you to clamp the drum to a cymbal stand rather than support it in a snare basket. Pearl sent along a 1000 series

CONCLUSION

When a drum company expands its sound library, we're often left wondering, *Is this really a necessary addition?* The answer in this case is a resounding yes. Not only were the drums fun to play, but there are many applications for them, both traditional and more creative. Even if you're not in the market for what these models offer, you should still do yourself a favor and go check them out. After all, everybody needs a little ear candy sometimes.

pearldrums.com

Transcending the Ordinary

Ever hear someone described as being "the whole package?" When it comes to drummers, Rodney Holmes is just that. Equally at home playing complex jazz compositions as he is laying down electronica-inspired funk grooves or barn burning twangy rock, Rodney has cut his teeth with some of the world's finest musicians such as Joe Zawinul, the Brecker Brothers, Carlos Santana and more.

TAMA

"I believe in transcending genres and B/B has proven to be great for that. This kit can go in any direction you need."

Rodney Holmes
Rodney Holmes

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B/B



Hear Rodney on his latest release
Twelve Months of October.

TAMA



MEINL

MARATHON DESIGNER SERIES CONGAS

by Mike Ramsey

Meinl Marathon Designer series congas are meant to stand out in a crowd. Their color and design are eye-popping, to say the least. According to Meinl, the graphics on the drums meet the shells using a new appliqué process. To me, the finish felt like it had actually been painted on, which is a testament to its quality.

Our test drums were in the “calypso night” pattern, which features a bright lime-green background with silhouettes of female dancers all around the drums. The design is vibrant, fun, and, yes, sexy. I would also venture to say that this particular finish should be rated PG-13; it’s certainly *not* the design I’d choose when buying congas for a school music program. For a less sensu-

were sent for review were in standard quinto (\$460), conga (\$480), and tumba (\$500) sizes. Each drum is sold with Meinl’s Steely II conga stand included; this is quite a bonus, since most conga stands cost at least fifty bucks.

The drums feature the classic Meinl conga shape, which is a bit different from most in the industry. There’s a distinct bulge near the top and a sharper-than-average taper at the bottom. Each drum has a protective rubber base, a great feature that I wish every conga had, as congas with metal bases often get scratched up within the first few months of gigging.

The drums come with Meinl’s Safe And Sound rims. These rims have a rounded surface, which

consistent and uniform in both appearance and feel. An interesting note about the skins—which seems to run throughout the Meinl line of congas—is that they’re cut so that the rim sits very low on the drum right from the start. On some other congas, the skin and the rim are set fairly high, and the rim gradually lowers as the skin stretches down over the drum during tuning. I appreciated the lower rims on these brand-new congas because the drums had a broken-in feel right out of the box.

HANDS TO HEADS

After cranking up just a bit of tension on the skins with the included L-shaped tuning key, I tried playing the drums. The congas sounded very good when tuned fairly low, offering a warm, round sound. But they didn’t seem to project very much. As my weeklong testing went on, I tightened the skins gradually (even leaving tension on the heads overnight to let the skins set in a bit). As the congas settled into a higher range, the tone brightened up, although the drums still seemed more warm than powerful. This quality would lead me to grab the congas for a recording session or other close-miked situations. But I’d probably use something else if I were heading to an Afro-Caribbean dance class or jam session in the park, where drums have to be able to cut through on their own without the aid of sound reinforcement.

All in all, these are very nice drums that give you the classic Meinl conga sound combined with sharp new graphics, and a conga stand is part of the deal. Put it all together, and the package is hard to beat.

meinlpercussion.com

CONGA SOUND PLATES

Meinl’s Conga Sound Plates are beautifully finished wooden discs that are placed underneath a conga in order to increase the sound projection.

They feature a rich grain pattern and a unique cutout design that allows a drum’s sound to project unencumbered. Do they work? Absolutely. The plates are especially useful when you’re playing on carpet or other sound-deadening surfaces, which can really suck up the sound of a conga, notably palm/bass tones.



al, but no less striking, look, Marathon Designer series congas come with three other options for the appliqué graphics, including beautiful palm trees (“island sunset”), white stars on a blue background (“mega star”), and a sharp retro-style stripe (“vintage racer”).

Meinl Marathon Designer series congas are meant to stand out in a crowd. But there’s much more to these drums than flashy visuals. Let’s check them out.

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

The three Marathon Designer series drums we

does minimal damage to your hand when you accidentally hit the rim while playing. The conga skins are buffalo hide. The heads were incredibly

To hear a selection of the products reviewed this month, go to the Multimedia page at moderndrummer.com.

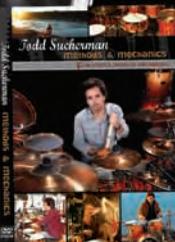


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TRÉ COOL

Twenty years into the game, **GREEN DAY** continues to amaze us with their intensity and ambition. Tré Cool, rock's most notorious self-propelled rhythmic engine, still has no good use for a brake pedal.

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Alex Solca

On the last track of the last day of mastering Green Day's *21st Century Breakdown*, the Oakland trio realizes they just can't let go. Tré Cool, Billie Joe Armstrong, and Mike Dirnt have spent months jockeying between Ocean Way in Hollywood and Studio 880 in Oakland, recording the follow-up to the multimillion-selling *American Idiot*, but now here they are, hunkered down at New York City's Sterling Sound, and the record is finally finished. But Green Day isn't ready to close this chapter of their incredible story.

“After mastering, mixing, and finishing the album of our career, we decided to have a little fun,” Tré Cool recalls from a Soho hotel room. “We drank a bunch of beer and wine and then went into a recording studio in Chelsea and did an all-night session. We played one song all night long. We started recording at 2 A.M. last night, and we finished at 8:30 this morning. I haven’t slept yet. It was hard to let go. We wanted to jam. We’re musicians—we live and breathe it.”

For a drummer once best known for the hundreds of Slingerland kits he ritually trashed, burned, and generally eliminated on tour, *21st Century Breakdown* is a watershed recording. Assisted behind the glass by superstar drummer/producer Butch Vig, Cool turns in the best performance of his career, navigating exhilarating rhythm changes, chugging through epic ballads, blazing over tortuous punk rock tempos, and wailing full-set single-stroke rolls with the speed of a fighter jet. The passion Cool shows as a member of Green Day lights up the grooves of the album with a sure-footed slam, the sound of a man well versed in punk flotsam and jetsam but also a master of the mechanics of creating a certified-platinum rock monster.

Short, stocky, and muscular, Tré Cool looks like the Energizer Bunny on ’roids. His drum tech, Kenny Butler, will tell you how Tré regularly kills bass drum pedals, and how drumheads last only a single night under the Cool thunder. And the drummer’s penchant for destroying kits, usually engaged by diving full-steam into the set, has taken a toll on his body.

Playing with a busted knee during the *Breakdown* sessions, Cool ignored the pain and submitted to the surgeon’s knife (replacing his left knee’s patella with a cadaver’s ligament) only after the final track was burned to hard drive. He plays every note on the album like he means it, almost like his life depends on it.

The members of Green Day are millionaires, but they’re not complacent. While recording *21st Century Breakdown*, they created their own pirate radio station, blasting demos and their favorite songs to unknowing Orange County FM listeners. That kind of obsession is representative of Tré Cool’s drumming mindset: He plays full takes over and over until he gets the right one. He used dozens of snares with an old Gretsch bass drum and Leedy toms to produce a wall-of-doom drum sound. He went to sleep with Dr. Beat to nail tempos. He studied with Cuban drum master José Eladio in Havana to master new rhythms. He recorded dozens of demos to perfect his parts. So the next time you think punk rock is all about guerrilla recording and noise, consider this particular punk rock drummer.

Cool, who has also formed a side project, Foxboro Hot Tubs, with Armstrong and Dirnt, is the proud owner of the first two sets from the resurrected Leedy Drum Company. One of the sparkling white pearl kits will grace the stage of the upcoming Green Day tour. Tré Cool is truly built for drumming, and his drums for speed.



RECORDING 21ST CENTURY BREAKDOWN

MD: You're a powerful drummer; your strength is part of what makes the drums sound so great on Green Day records. Or is it your tuning? Or both?

Tré: It's a balancing act. You have to tune the drums nice and big and correctly. Each drumset has a different range where it likes to lie; you have to find the sweet spot. The 2003 Ludwig kit that I played on most of the last two records—along with some old Leedy toms—sounds like an instrument. The toms' range is pretty wide, but tuning is hard. Even drummers who play really well don't always know how to tune.

There is no plug-in reverb, nothing fake on the drums; it's all the room sound. If we wanted more reverb, we just put the ambient room mics up. We had a name for the room sound we dialed in: happy hour. We did a submix in "happy hour," which was a bunch of room mics that had a sweet tone, then we had all the room mics on their own that we could adjust individually. Then we balanced the two setups.

MD: What is your tuning process?

Tré: I tune the two heads to the same tension in the range of the drum. The drum will tell you where it wants to be. It will have the right amount of attack,

like a teakettle stuffed with washrags and struck with a hot dog. You know who it is!

MD: What is a usual recording day for Green Day?

Tré: We roll into Studio B around one o'clock. We'll do drums, guitar, and bass, make sure it's all locked and rad. And we'll record the album in sequence, just like you hear it on the record. We do so much demoing beforehand, we know exactly what the record is going to be long before we enter the studio. That gives us a feeling of consistency. We did it all at Ocean Way, then took the tracks to Studio 880 in Oakland to add more guitars and all the vocals.

MD: *Modern Drummer* interviewed System Of A Down's John Dolmayan at Ocean Way Studio B.

Tré: Studio B is where Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack and Elvis and the Beach Boys recorded. That place is haunted. If there is such a thing as haunting, I think that people go to a place that is important to them when they die. Ocean Way Studio B is haunted by Sammy Davis and Sinatra, that's the place where they cut their teeth and did a lot of work, and it was an important part of their lives. That is *the* studio; they would dress to the nines when they went in there, get chauffeured in—it was the real deal. The guys who work there now say some freaky stuff happens late-night when they're all alone. The very first day we were recording *American Idiot* we plugged in and were ready to track, then the place caught on fire.

MAKING THE TRACK

MD: Are we hearing mostly live takes on *21st Century Breakdown*?

Tré: I would play live takes, then Butch Vig would comp parts. If he liked one verse better, he would cut and paste it in. But I would always play through the takes. If Butch wanted another take I would give it to him. If there was a moment that I thought I could nail better with a punch-in, I'd do that.

MD: What do you tend to focus on during the take?

Tré: The pocket, the groove, the empty space between the notes. I'm just locking in. I use vocal lines and melodies to

TRÉ COOL EQUIPMENT



Drums: Leedy in white marine pearl

- A.** 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 snare with Canopus throw-off, 42-strand strainer
- B.** 9x13 tom
- C.** 16x16 floor tom
- D.** 16x18 floor tom
- E.** 18x22 bass drum

21st Century Breakdown recording set

Snares: Canopus aluminum, Dunnett titanium, Noble & Cooley composite, 1930s 8"-deep Leedy ("for that gooeey '70s sound," Tré says)

Toms: 1930s Leedy

Bass: 1970s Gretsch 14x24

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1.** 14" K Constantinople hi-hats
- 2.** 19" K Custom Hybrid crash
- 3.** 19" A medium crash
- 4.** 22" A deep ride
- 5.** 21" A sweet ride
- 6.** 20" Sound Effects Oriental Classic China

Sticks: Zildjian Tré Cool signature

Heads: Remo. Coated Emperor X/hazy clear Ambassador on snare, coated Emperor/clear Ambassador on toms, clear Powerstroke 3/smooth white Powerstroke 3 on bass drum.

Tuning is important, and the room you record in is very important.

MD: *21st Century Breakdown* was recorded at Ocean Way in Hollywood, and they have a great live room.

Tré: The [long decay] you hear on the drums is all Studio B at Ocean Way.

it'll open up and throw, it will have the right note. There won't be two different tones, just a single tone on both sides of the drum: the sweet spot. And I don't keep the snare drum tight; I tune it kind of low. One drummer in a very famous band has a snare drum that sounds



TRÉ COOL'S SELECT DISCOGRAPHY

Green Day 21st Century Breakdown, American Idiot, Dookie, Nimrod /// **Foxboro Hot Tubs** Stop Drop And Roll! /// **Iggy Pop** Skull Ring

Tré Cool's Top Ten Album Influences (in order):

NoMeansNo Wrong (John Wright) /// **The Beatles** Help! (Ringo Starr) /// **Devo** Freedom Of Choice (Alan Myers) /// **AC/DC** Back In Black (Phil Rudd) /// **The Who** Quadrophenia (Keith Moon) /// **Led Zeppelin** Led Zeppelin IV (John Bonham) /// **The Ramones** all (Tommy, Richie, and Marky Ramone) /// **Bob Marley & The Wailers** Burnin' (Carlton Barrett) /// **The Clash** The Clash [U.K.] (Tory Crimes) /// **Crimpshrine** Duct Tape Soup (Aaron Cometbus)

create the beat.

Sometimes Billie will say, "Here's the beat." He's a drummer, so he'll play the beat. He's got these songs in his head, and they sound a certain way, and if we don't make it sound like it sounds in his head, he'll go crazy.

I'll always embellish Billie's ideas. Sometimes he'll just start playing a guitar line and I'll jam along. "Know Your Enemy" was like that. Billie had this lick; it was his "test a new amp out" lick. He built a song around that and I added that big flummy intro. We were always going back and forth on that song.

MD: There are songs on the album where you play drum-corps-style snare drum marches and mammoth rolls around the kit. And the arrangements are very grandiose and intricate at times.

Tré: It's just where we are musically. *American Idiot* was the hardest record we had made at that time. The playing on it? That is some heavy shit—some off-time stuff, a lot of different grooves. I'm really good with the punk-pop, 200 bpm, hi-hat-driven, backbeat snare

work—that's really easy for me. But to play something at 60 bpm is a big challenge. It's all about laying that pocket and groove. I'm always learning; I never rest.

MD: How did you learn to play those 60 bpm ballads?

Tré: Just feeling it. I had never played to a click until [1997's] *Nimrod*. Sometimes we'd start with a click and

then remove it. We'd ramp it up, start a song, and at the end be 10 bpm faster. You hear that often on our records. Then I started learning to play with the click: learning to play on top of it, in front of it, or behind it. When we recorded with U2 [for "The Saints Are Coming"], they used a 16th-note shaker for their click track.

MD: Did you like that?

Tré: No. There's no room for space. It's really exact. Larry Mullen is a marching drummer turned rock [star]. He was a sixteen-year-old kid when he started U2. He is really a very rudimentally based drummer. But my click is 8th notes on a cowbell.

MD: Are you consciously laying behind the click on a big ballad like "Last Night On Earth"?

Tré: Sometimes on the ballads I will lay it right in behind the click, depending on the groove. I just follow Billie. He plays it

BUTCH VIG

The Garbage drummer/producer says he was happy to let Tré Cool push the envelope on *21st Century Breakdown*.

"Butch stoked me in many ways," Tré says. "I wondered if it would be fruity to play certain things, but he was like, 'Let's try it!' To us he's not a famous drummer in the studio; he's a totally normal dude. It was a treat." Speaking of Vig's Wisconsin studio, Tré adds, "And he claims Smart Studios smells like sausage and beer!"



"Tré has a handful of snares that he likes to play," Vig says. "Part of the problem was that he hit so hard that either the heads wore down really fast or the drum choked up. So I encouraged him to use different snare drums besides Dookie, his Noble & Cooley that he often uses. We used eight different snares on the record, which I think was novel for him. It surprised him. I asked him to dial it back and not play rimshots on some mid-tempo songs as well; sometimes the snare speaks better if you don't play a rimshot all the time." Vig adds that he used "softer" mics—Royers, a Telefunken Ela M 251, a Neumann M 50—to better capture Cool's hi-hat and cymbal bashing.

"Tré's got incredible chops," Vig says, "and he's smart—he knows how to fit into the sound of the ensemble. He played some things on the record that he was afraid were too wacky, but he also wanted to push the envelope, so I encouraged him to do that. At the end of 'See The Light,' he plays three badass fills. He even plays a double-kick fill there, ramping up by playing a snare fill and a double kick simultaneously. We snuck that one in past Billie Joe!"

down with his guitar, and we do it all live together. Whatever sounds right. We don't get all Steely Dan with it.

And we create click maps. The first part of a song might need to be more dramatic, so we'll put that bit back 2 or 3 bpm. That chorus might be back to the original bpm setting. We use different click maps for different parts of the song, and it's cool because once you've made the click map, then you can feel it. You know what to do when you get to each part.

MD: How do you adjust for different tempos within a song?

Tré: It's about the drama of the song, the performance. I don't get so technical when it comes to recording. Some people get nervous; for me it's just another performance, but the performance everyone is going to hear over and over. You know when a take is the right one; it's the one that kicks your ass. My drums have to kick your ass or it's not right. It has to destroy. And the tempos are set off the vocal lines; you don't want to rush the vocals.

MD: Do you maintain the recorded tempos on tour?

Tré: Live tends to be a bit faster because of the adrenaline and the fact that we don't use clicks. On the *American Idiot* tour I got really good at maintaining tempos. Some of these stadiums are so big, the slap-back used to be impossible. I would hear four snares echoing for each hit. It was nuts. I have never toured with in-ear monitors, but now I'm getting into them. I have such advanced tinnitus that my hearing is shot. I can hear well, but I will never hear silence again. We blow shit up and it's usually right over my head. We use Ultimate Ears in-ear monitors; I get the full mix of the drums, bass, and guitar. Billie is straight up the middle, bass to the left, vocals up the gut. It's almost a mono sound. We're still loud on stage, though.

"LAYING IT DOWN WITH THE LATIN BOYS"

MD: Did you break any new ground on this album?

Tré: I went to Cuba last year and took lessons from José Eladio, who's outside Havana. I took them for two weeks,

every day. Got my head around Cuban rhythms. José gets timbale and conga parts and fuses them together for trapset. So you're playing Mozambique and all these different beats. I've wanted to study Latin rhythms ever since we went to Brazil. I took lessons there at a drum colony to learn samba and the indigenous instruments. They're all difficult to play. Most of my contemporaries don't



take percussion seriously and don't have an idea about Latin music. But it makes you so much better if you understand clave and can lay it down with the Latin boys. That is some serious shit.

MD: How did you apply the Cuban rhythms to Green Day?

Tré: We have a song called "Peacemaker" on *21st Century Breakdown*. The beat in that song is a mixture between an old Green Day punk rock beat and Cuban music. It's 240 bpm—really fast! The L.A. Philharmonic played on it. These guys are badass. They came into Ocean Way looking for the donuts; it's just another session for them. They played on "Restless Heart Syndrome" and "Peacemaker." So they get their music for "Peacemaker" and they start playing it and they're screwing it up. It's really

fast. As soon as we're done with the take, they all start yammering at each other. We got a great sound bite that we put on the record of them trying to figure out how to play their parts!

SLEEPING WITH DR. BEAT

MD: Some of the arrangements on the album are quite complex, with multiple rhythm changes in each song: shuffles,

double-time shuffles, cut time, 3/4.... "Lobotomy" is in 7/4. What is key to navigating those changes and keeping it rock solid?

Tré: Nailing it. I have to be the backbone. I know this record really well, and I can play the whole thing live front to back. I'm getting better at my dynamics. I used to bash as hard as I could all the time. If I wasn't making the drums wince, it wasn't good enough for me. Now I run at 80 percent. That gives me the extra juice when I need it. On the changes I will give 100 percent volume-wise and hit harder. That makes the moment exciting, playing all rimshots on the snare. I use die-cast hoops—stick eaters, I call them. They're straight, not curved.

MD: What's harder to play, a big ballad, a punked-out groove like "Christian's Inferno," or a song with around-the-kit

TRÉ COOL

rolls like "Murder City"?"

Tré: Just laying down the groove is hardest. The hardest song on the album is "The Static Age." I'm coming out of drum rolls backwards, leading rhythms with the snare [on 1], playing 8th notes on the floor tom, then snare/snare/tom, snare/snare/tom, and repeat. Coming to the verse from the chorus, it's really screwed up. It's hard!

MD: What aspect of your drumming has given you the most trouble?

Tré: Tempo. Going too fast on stage.

Listen to the Ramones live—Tommy is guilty of it often [taps fast Ramones beat on his legs]. That sucks the groove out of it, especially if you're playing in a big place. How did I work on it? Billie's hairy eyeballs, man. He will look back at me with this stare that tells me I'm screwing up. [laughs] If I'm hyped up, Billie will put his hand behind his back and slowly lower his hand, signaling me to slow down. And you can't slow right down; you have to ramp down so no one notices. I just think about it

every time. Doing television helps, recording it live and watching it back helps. And I like the click; that helps. When I was doing *Nimrod*, I would check the bpm for the next song we were recording, lock it on a Dr. Beat, and go to sleep to it. That helped a lot.

SPEED, POSTURE, ENDURANCE... AND DESTRUCTION

MD: In your last *MD* cover story you mentioned that you had worked through some painful issues in your drumming.

Tré: I just switched things up. I'm self-taught, and I've been playing since I was eleven. High school was so shitty, I left at sixteen and went to Mendocino College. I was trying to learn how to read music. The big band was totally cutthroat. Everybody wanted that spot. You just had to win your seat. I did a little snare drum stuff, but I was more into playing timpani, orchestral tambourine, cymbals. Tambourine is the unsung weapon in your drumming arsenal. It's so hard to play it right. You can't just let a singer play your tambourine. I play it wearing a golf glove.

MD: You're a very strong guy. Some skinny guys, like Dave Grohl, are very powerful drummers. Do large muscles play a role in your power?

Tré: I am a drummer for life; all my growth and development as an adolescent was as a drummer, so I got these overdeveloped forearms and gigantic calves. I'm built for drumming.

MD: What is key to getting that power, which is a big part of your style?

Tré: Posture and ergonomics. I have great posture. I'm balanced, with half my weight on one butt cheek and half on the other. You should sit up straight and keep your shoulders square. Right now I have a big kit—a China, two floor toms, a big crash/ride—so I have to be able to turn and be flexible. But I maintain great posture. If you're doing something that feels unnatural, then you're doing something wrong. Move your elbow a little bit, move your wrist. Raise it, lower it. Sit differently. Figure it out and get to where you can hit everything on your kit and play it comfortably for two and a half hours at my

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volume and intensity. If I was hurting myself, I wouldn't be around this long. If I was doing something wrong, I would have developed carpal tunnel or something like that.

MD: In addition to power, you're a speed demon. Can you give some tips for developing speed?

Tré: I don't like cheaters, man. I hate watching drummers cheat with speed and use the bounce to control the rebound for speed. You've got to hit it fast and be strong. Everything I do is

deliberate. If you don't have rebound, you'll blow your arms out, but I don't do press rolls to go faster or do the bouncy hi-hat trick, using that rebound to get speed. Some guys put their thumb over the stick and push down. It just doesn't sound right. It's not driving.

MD: So no piston motion using the fingers? How do you work up to speed?

Tré: I don't know. I have always been in punk rock bands. I started playing 250 bpm when I was eleven. That was always in my quiver.

MD: What do you practice now?

Tré: My Cuban stuff, incorporating cowbells, drumset, woodblock with conga, and timbale patterns. I videotaped my lessons with José, so I can go back and look. Cuban rhythms really free up your independence. Once you open these doors in your brain, from playing a simple beat and dotted notes to more independence, it helps everything you do. The more chops you have, the more weapons you have to pull out. Or not. It's like Milton Berle used to say, "You pull yours out, and I'll pull enough of mine out to beat you."

MD: How about endurance?

Tré: Clean living! Really you just have to let the adrenaline take over. You can't be tired. The fans are expecting a show, and you have to kick ass. So you have to get some rest. If I'm not playing a show that night, I'll sleep the whole day. Our sets are pretty long and strenuous, and I get so sore. I try to stretch; that's really important. You gotta stay limber. You have to keep your back in order. It's the same stretches you would do for golf.

I had no ACL in my left knee for this record. It's a ligament that crosses under the patella; the two of them keep your knee from falling apart. Mine broke and ruptured. I was in pain every single day. I hate pain pills, wouldn't do that. I was limping and knew I had to get surgery but waited till after my drum tracking. Now I've got a cadaver's ligament in there. I had knee surgery before *American Idiot* as well.

MD: The result of the drumset trashing you've enjoyed over the years!

Tré: That killed my knees and Slingerland as well. That company went under because of me! True story! I must have smashed 200 Slingerland kits. One of my burned-up Slingerland kits is in Cleveland at the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, next to Keith Moon's set.

MD: What is your pre-show warm-up?

Tré: For this tour I'm using the 125th Anniversary Gretsch jazz kit for my warm-up. I warm up with some bebop stuff backstage. Just sing some bebop heads [sings Thelonious Monk's "Straight No Chaser"] to myself and play. Sometimes our piano player, Jason Freese, will play with me, or Mike will

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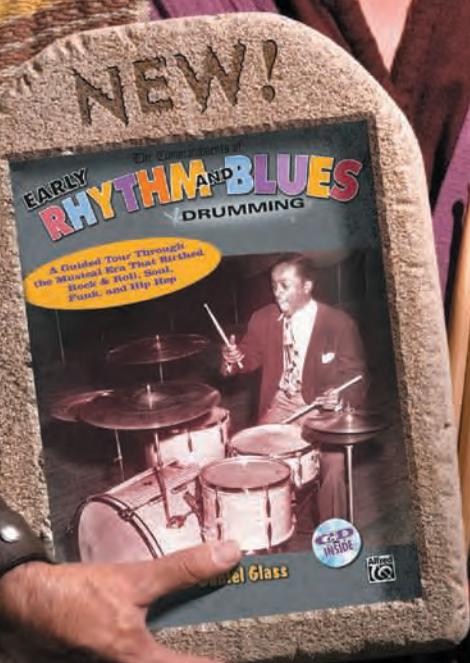
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join in. Then we'll play some '70s-style funk. It's good to exercise those muscles you don't use. We warm up for twenty minutes to an hour. And we do a pretty extensive soundcheck.

REINVENTING LEEDY

MD: Why the switch from Ludwig to the new Leedy drums?

Tré: I was totally happy with Ludwig, and I use them in the studio. I just wanted to have the trifecta: be part of all the great American drum companies

and be on a short list of dudes like Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich and Max Roach who played Slingerland, Leedy, and Gretsch. I was also on DW, but I was smashing drums and they kicked me off. I wanted to buy Leedy and manufacture them back in Elkhart, Indiana, where they used to be. I wanted to dump my money into that and resurrect the company. But Fred Gretsch wasn't letting go. They have a lot of patents that came with their Leedy purchase. I'm just a fan of Leedy. I use Leedy toms on the

record, and I used an 8" Leedy snare as far back as [1995's] *Insomniac*.

MD: What did you design into your Leedy set?

Tré: I wanted the art deco lugs, a white marine pearl finish, the Leedy badge, and that great warmth that they have. What is the difference between one make of car and another? It's the way you feel driving it. Gretsch made the Leedy drums at the Gretsch factory, then sent them to the Professional Drum Shop in Hollywood, where they added die-cast hoops and Gretsch hardware. I have the only two drumsets in the world at this moment. The toms are 6 ply, and the snare and kick are 9 ply. That will be my touring set. I used the Leedy snare live, though I played a Noble & Cooley in the past. But I always pulled it away before killing the kit. I name all my snares, and that Noble & Cooley is the *Dookie* snare. It still has Woodstock mud on it. My other snares are Garbo, Abraham, Chief, Mel Gibson, and Capone. You can see them all on my Facebook page. It's the Tré Cool page with the dog's face.

REINVENTING TRÉ COOL

MD: It's been twelve years and millions of albums sold since your last *MD* cover. What's changed most about your drumming since then?

Tré: Everything. I was a four-piece guy, didn't have a China. I'm a lot more crash/ride-oriented now. I'm stronger, better, and more focused. I have more chops. I've played stadiums. Headlined 'em. Let's go. I've played for millions of people, and when you do that you just get better and better. Creatively, I've got more options, and I've just heard more albums. I've got a record collection now. I've read books on my heroes. I've got your book, *Classic Rock Drummers*. I've got all the rock drumming books. I'm a songwriter/drummer. I'm not a showoff. I play what is right for the song. I fake nothing; no samples—those are my drum sounds on *21st Century Breakdown*. I don't put a bunch of schmutz on it. No candy-ass crap. I've evolved.

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When Matched Won't Work

THE CASE FOR TRADITIONAL GRIP

by Ben Sesar

Matched vs. traditional grip: the never-ending debate. If you've been around enough drummers, you've probably heard these questions tossed around: "Which grip is better?" "Which grip allows me to play with more power?" "Which offers more control?" "Which will give me more speed?" The common answers usually sound pretty diplomatic:

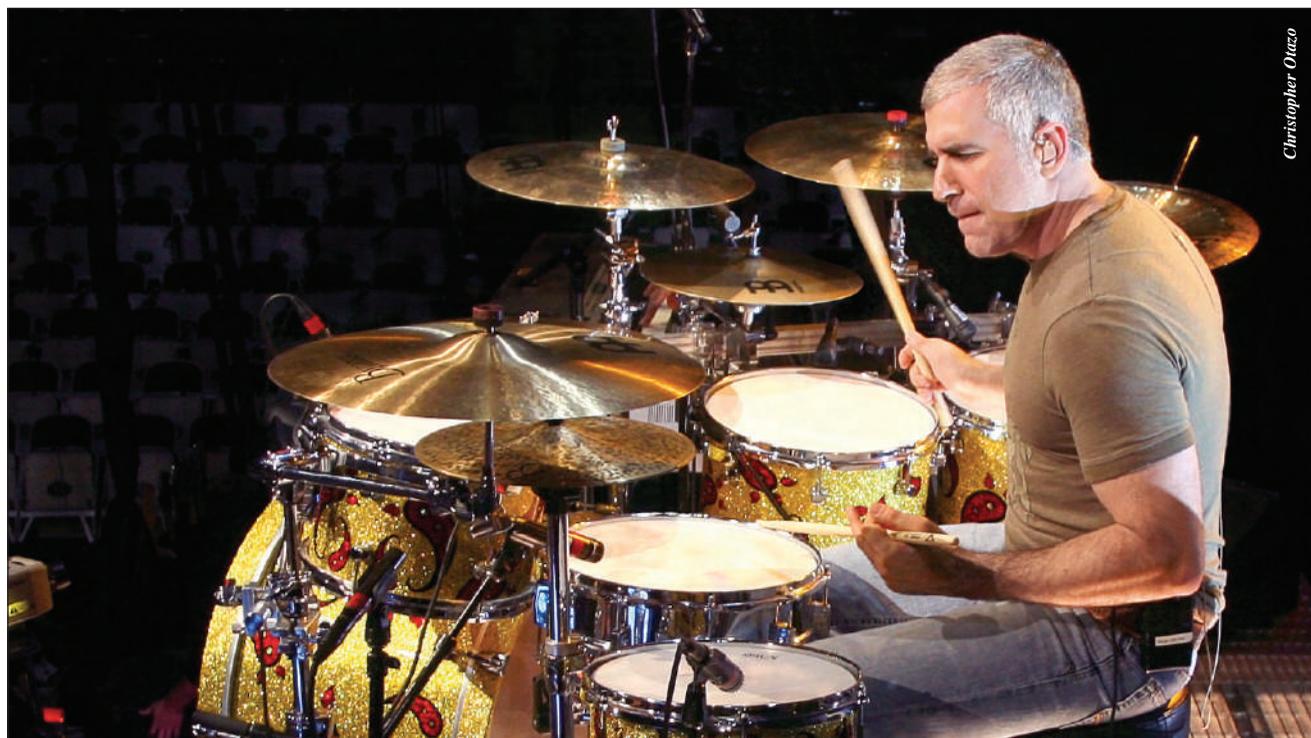
ing making a similar change, you can use my experience as a guide for what to expect with regard to the process and the potential outcome.

WHY THE SWITCH?

I remember the first time I ever turned the stick over to the traditional position. I felt a transformation and a sudden shift in my overall attitude—in a good

and my range of motion. Starting in a resting position, I found that matched grip felt *tight*. With both elbows and arms held close to my body, I felt restricted, almost as if I was wrapped in duct tape. Conversely, traditional grip feels more *open*. My arms take on a rounder posture, like I'm holding a big bowl with my arms and elbows.

I also noticed that when I'm using



Christopher Otazo

"Either grip will work fine," or "Whichever is more comfortable."

But what if the grip you currently use *isn't* comfortable? What if your grip actually inhibits fluid musical expression and overall comfort on the kit? I found this to be the case with matched grip. So a couple years ago I did something drastic—I made the full switch to traditional grip after playing matched for nearly thirty years.

The purpose of this article is to offer a personal and detailed account of how and why I switched. If you're consider-

way. I ignored this feeling, however, because all my favorite rock 'n' roll drummers played matched.

As the years went by and my drumming evolved, I began to notice a slight awkwardness in my overall playing technique; I felt I was getting in my own way. It wasn't until I was a few years into my professional drumming career that the question of grip came into focus and I contemplated making a switch.

I began by analyzing the different effects each grip had on my posture

matched grip, my left hand often smashes into my left leg as I strike the snare drum. The obvious remedy would be to raise the snare, but that inhibits my range of motion. Using traditional grip, I have a wider range. And my hand seems to land *past* my left leg, allowing more freedom for the hand to do its thing.

Timing was another consideration. With matched grip, I felt as if my note attacks landed a little sooner than my brain wanted them to. This made it difficult to create a consistent laid-back

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feel on the snare. With traditional grip, there's something about the mechanics (possibly the turning of the forearm or the snap of the wrist) that allows me to place the snare strokes exactly where I want them. The milliseconds of adjustments I had to make using matched grip are now a thing of the past.

The last reason for my switching to traditional grip was less technical and more emotional. Traditional grip feels kind of majestic to me. I feel I'm in alignment with the vast history of the drumset and the pioneers who established the way that we play it. I assume a different posture, and I play with a different flair. It's simply a better feeling than I had with matched grip.

THE PROCESS

I took on this grip-change challenge during a four-month hiatus from touring with Brad Paisley. I had previously made the mistake of attempting to switch during much shorter breaks.

Since I hadn't taken the time to make a full switch, my left hand couldn't handle the demanding intensity level of our

live shows, and I got discouraged. This time I knew I needed to complete the transition before attempting to use the new grip in the real world.

As I started working on traditional grip, I promised myself that I wouldn't sacrifice any of the power, control, and speed I had developed in all my years of playing matched. In the end, my left-hand traditional grip would have to be equal to or better than it was before. So I analyzed the basic mechanics of *both* grips, and I learned that traditional grip required me to build strength in the muscles used to turn the forearm, while simultaneously developing a new fulcrum (the point where the stick balances in the hand). As a means of checks and balances, I constantly switched back and forth between grips to make sure I wasn't playing better with matched grip. I still do this today, as I'm always fine-tuning how to hold the sticks.

The next step was to develop a powerful backbeat, which involved relearning how to play steady rimshots on the snare. I achieved this by practicing

slow single strokes with the left hand and focusing on power and consistency. Then I'd flip back to matched to analyze the mechanics of the movements using my old grip. I put everything under a microscope.

As the consistency of my slow single strokes improved, I started playing along to music. This allowed me to simulate real-world conditions, as the element of heightened emotions and the demand for power took my strength-training development to a higher level. I was now forced to hit a little harder and a little faster, while feeling the emotional pull of the music.

The real setback occurred when I played fills. Until this point, I was confident in my ability to play complete songs using traditional grip, as long as I didn't have to move my left hand from the snare. To get around the drumset comfortably, I had relearn transitions from the snare to the toms and cymbals. This process forced me to rethink how I positioned my drumset. I play with one rack tom and two floor toms; to make this configuration work with traditional



grip, I moved the snare so that it sits almost completely flat, while the rack tom tilts slightly to the right. The angle of the floor toms didn't change much, but I had to raise their height in order to avoid slamming my left hand into the snare when I moved to the larger toms. I lowered all my crash cymbals to about eye level, including the crash to my left.

After I figured out my setup, I started working to improve random movements from drum to drum. The exercises were simple but time consuming. I played a lot of single-stroke runs up and down the toms, at tempos that allowed me to play at full volume. I also made up exercises based on fills from the music I normally play. I would choose a specific fill, drop out the right hand, and play a looping pattern based on left-hand movement only, again focusing on accuracy, fluidity, and intensity more than speed. Hitting the crash cymbal on the left side evolved naturally into a backhand movement.

During my four-month grip overhaul, I dedicated two to three hours a day to working on those simple exercises. The

technical aspects of the process involved playing things I already knew, only slower and with focused attention to detail. I also took advantage of quiet time throughout the days by working on rudiments and general hand technique—like the Moeller stroke—on a practice pad.

THE OUTCOME

Near the end of my practice time, I went into the studio to finish work on an album. I was feeling very confident by that point, so I thought it would be possible to use my new grip for the session. It was a bold move, since I had been using traditional grip only in a controlled environment, with no pressure. But I decided to go for it, and everything went smoothly. I noticed right away that I was able to land snare attacks with much more accuracy and purpose than I could before. The producer noticed this too. The session also made me realize that I needed to put tape on two spots of my left hand—my inner thumb and the fleshy area between my thumb and index finger.

Both of these spots became raw quickly.

Soon after the session, I started a tour with Brad Paisley. The first gig was a total setback. While my practice sessions had been vigorous, they didn't come close to the intensity needed for live performance. It was a struggle, but I refused to turn the stick around to matched grip. In retrospect, this may have been a musically irresponsible decision, but forging through show after show proved to be the final step in completing my transition.

It's been a couple years since I made the change to traditional grip, and I can honestly say I couldn't be happier with the results. Of course, there's always room for fine-tuning, but my playing is *much* more powerful and fluid. And I no longer feel I'm fighting against myself. This new position has helped me gain greater command over the instrument, which was the overriding reason for making the transformation in the first place.

Ben Sesar tours with Grammy-winning country artist Brad Paisley. Ben was featured in the April '08 issue of *MD*.



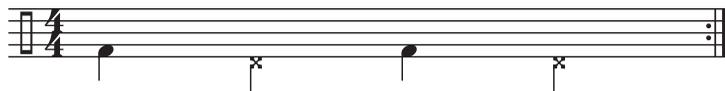
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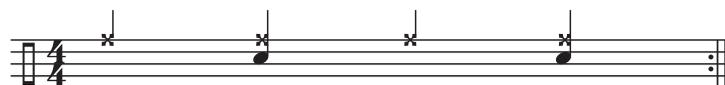
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ADDING THE FEET

Once you've mastered the basic timetable, try adding a simple foot ostinato.

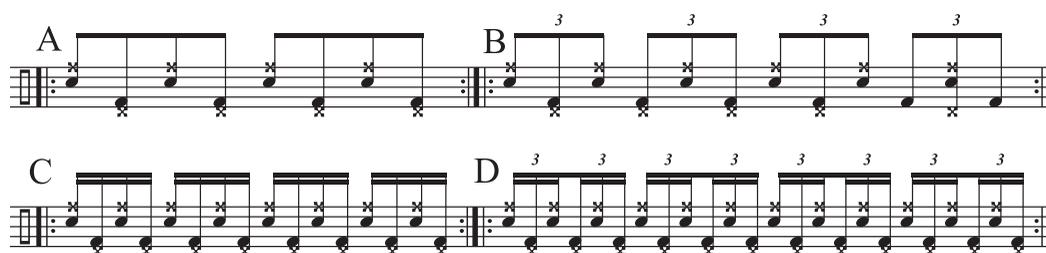


You can also play the timetable with the feet. Here's a simple hand ostinato to use with that variation.



HAND/FOOT COORDINATION BUILDERS

To develop four-way coordination, assign different limbs (or groups of limbs) to the standard timetable. Here's one way, which involves playing the right-hand notes with both hands and the left-hand notes with both feet.



POLYRHYTHMIC SOLO PHRASING

Now let's create some soloing applications on the drumset based on the timetable. The following examples explore phrases that descend around the kit. They also introduce polyrhythmic phrasing as the initial four- or eight-note groupings are superimposed over each subdivision.

The first example is a four-note motif that creates polyrhythms when it's applied to the triplet subdivisions in Examples B, D, and F, respectively.



BASICS

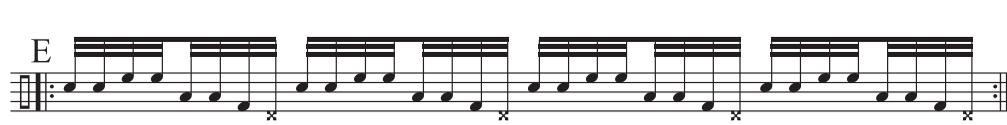
The next example is an eight-note motif that creates polyrhythms when it's applied to the triplet subdivisions in Examples B, D, and F, respectively.

A 
R L R L R L F F

B 
RLRLRLFFRLRL RL L F F RLRLRLFF

C 
RLRLRLFFRLRLRLFF

D 
RLRLRLFFRLRLRL L F F RLRLRLFF

E 
RLRLRL L F F RLRLRL L F F RLRLRL L F F RLRLRL L F F

F 
RLRLRLFFRLRLRL L F F RLRLRL L F F RLRLRL L F F RLRLRL L F F

As you work through these ideas, use a metronome to be sure you're totally locked in. Then play the examples without the metronome in order to internalize the feeling of the subdivisions. Do this at a variety of tempos. Record yourself and study the playback objectively, focusing on your time and feel.

Next time we'll discuss the concept of dynamic control.

David Stanoch has worked with a variety of artists including Bonnie Raitt, Jack McDuff, Butch Vig, Richard Davis, and the Minnesota Orchestra. He's also a faculty member at the McNally Smith College Of Music. Material for this article is adapted from David's award-winning book, *Mastering The Tables Of Time, Vol. 1*, published by Rhythmelic Music. Used with permission. For more information, visit rhythmelic.com.




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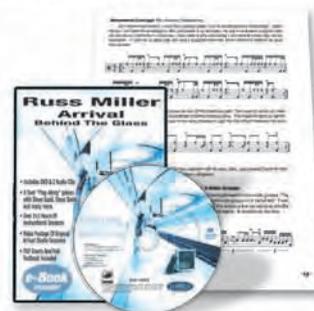
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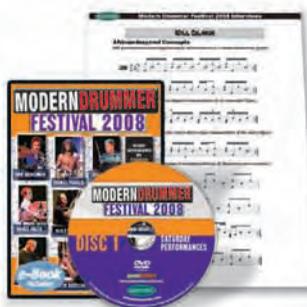
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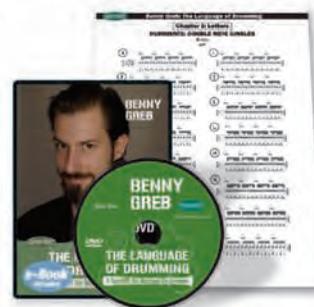
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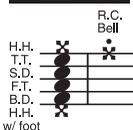


Nouveau Retro

PART 2: EARLY RHYTHM AND BLUES

by Daniel Glass

MUSIC KEY



This series of articles is designed to help today's drummers make connections with the past. Last month we talked about ways to give your modern drumset a "vintage" sound. For the remainder of the series we'll focus on classic genres that helped create the blueprint for how we play today. Although some of these styles may seem a bit obscure, knowing a bit about each of them can connect us more deeply with the history of our craft. Let's begin with one of the most influential styles of the last sixty years—early rhythm and blues.

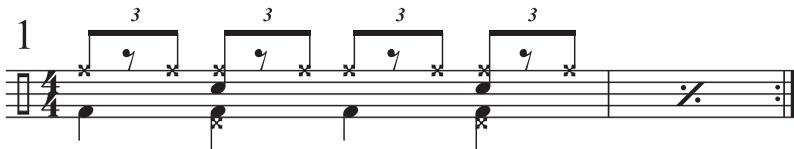
What exactly is early rhythm and blues? Early R&B is an umbrella title for many of the African-American musical styles that were popular in the 1940s and '50s. It encompasses a wide range of genres (jump blues, Chicago blues, and so on) and includes work by many legendary artists, such as Muddy Waters and Ray Charles. It's impossible to cover all the elements of early R&B in a single article. If you're interested in learning more about this important era, much more information is included in *The Commandments Of Early Rhythm And Blues Drumming*, a book I wrote in collaboration with funk master Zoro.

Why is early R&B important to know about? Simply put, this music is an essential part of America's cultural fabric. We hear songs from the early R&B era every day, on oldies stations, in movie soundtracks and TV commercials...even while on hold with customer service. Many of today's most popular musical styles—rock 'n' roll, soul, funk, hip-hop, reggae, techno—can be traced back to the grooves of early R&B. Countless club, wedding, and casual bands also include rhythm and blues standards in their repertoire. So if your goal is to be a working drummer, learning the fundamentals of early R&B will make you that much more employable.

THE ART OF THE SHUFFLE

The main purpose of rhythm and blues has always been the same—to help people forget about their worries by getting them on the dance floor. As such, the bread-and-butter groove of the early R&B drummer is the shuffle. On paper, shuffles look pretty simple. But as any blues veteran can tell you, a basic shuffle can be one of the hardest patterns to nail. Getting those swung 8th notes to bounce just right has caused many drummers to break into a cold sweat faster than a nervous groom on his wedding day. (Those of you who have found yourselves fumbling through shaky versions of "Moonance" or "Sweet Home Chicago" on club dates or wedding gigs know what I'm talking about.)

Here's a basic shuffle that's one of the hallmarks of early R&B.



If you grew up learning shuffles from rock or funk records, keep in mind that the balance of the four limbs in classic R&B is quite different:

The ride cymbal should be the dominant voice. It needs to drive the quarter-note pulse and should be the loudest instrument in the groove.

The hi-hat serves the same purpose that the backbeat does in rock—it's the landing point within the groove. Keep it solid and completely wedged to the ride pattern.

The bass drum should maintain a soft but strong four-on-the-floor pattern ("1, 2, 3, 4"). Imagine hitting someone in the butt with a pillow—that's the feel you're aiming for.

The snare drum should be the quietest element, at least until you learn how to get the pulse to flow solidly



Louis Jordan was the best-selling African-American artist of the 1940s. His jump blues combos were the predecessors to today's rock 'n' roll bands.



When it came to rhythm and blues and early rock 'n' roll, studio ace Earl Palmer was the undisputed heavyweight champ.

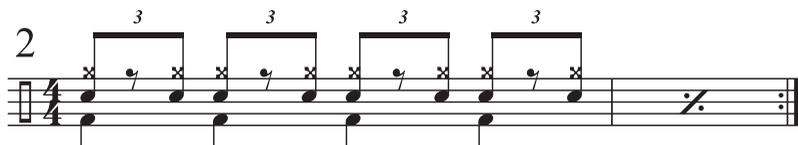
with the other three limbs. Play the snare part as rimclicks or light taps on the head.

Once you begin to master the shuffle, you'll discover that this groove holds an unlimited number of subtle intricacies and variations.

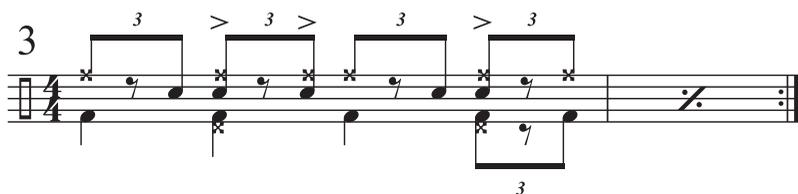
TYPES OF EARLY R&B

The following examples highlight some of the most important styles found in the early R&B era. It's important to note that the labels I've chosen are somewhat arbitrary, because there's a lot of overlap as far as the grooves played within any given style. For instance, a pattern referred to as a Chicago shuffle by one drummer might be called a Texas shuffle by another, or a shuffle that stresses an offbeat feel might be called a back shuffle in some circles but a flat-tire shuffle in others. I developed the categories below after interviewing blues legends, discussing styles with fellow players, and listening to music from different regions of the U.S.

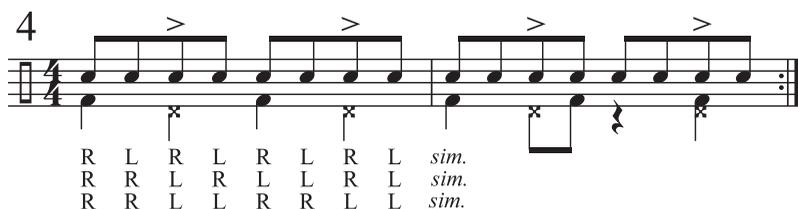
Jump blues. This style was popular in the 1940s and served as the bridge between traditional swing and the heavier sounds that would develop in the '50s. Artists like Louis Jordan transferred the power of the big bands to small combos—which were essentially the predecessors to today's rock bands—and integrated rhythmic elements like boogie-woogie. Although jump shuffles were strong and solid, they didn't contain the heavy backbeat that we associate with rock 'n' roll.



Backbeat shuffles. By the end of the '40s, R&B began incorporating heavier backbeats, as on songs like "Good Rockin' Tonight." This change was revolutionary at the time, but by the mid-'50s backbeats had become a staple of the rock 'n' roll sound. The following groove is typical of an early R&B backbeat shuffle.



New Orleans rhythm and blues. With a rich heritage blending European, African, and Caribbean cultures, it's no surprise that the Crescent City has made deep, lasting contributions to R&B music. One of the elements that New Orleans drummers brought to the R&B sound was the so-called "second line." This funky feel evolved from African-American marching bands and often included rudimental embellishments like flams, rolls, and drags. A great example of how second line was used in early R&B is "I'm Walkin'," a big hit for Fats Domino in 1957. Legendary drummer Earl Palmer played a double-time snare groove set against a syncopated rumba-style bass line, offering a perfect example of how New Orleans R&B musicians blended European and Latin influences to form a brand-new style. Notice the different sticking approaches to the snare pattern.



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12", 13", 14" FC1420NP

16 strand
no/pitch
12", 13", 14", 15" FC1416NP

14"x 16 strand
no/pitch
8+8 Split Wide
FC1416NPW

20 strand
with pitch
12", 13", 14"

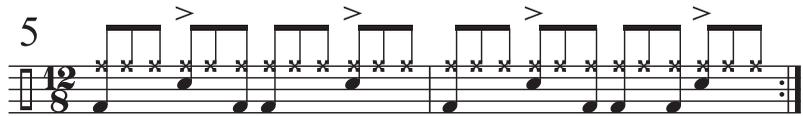
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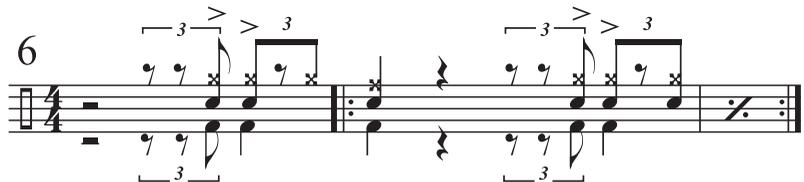
SEE YOUR DEALER FOR DETAILS

12/8 feel. This was another influential groove to emerge during the early rhythm and blues period. Today this pattern can be found in just about any blues setting.



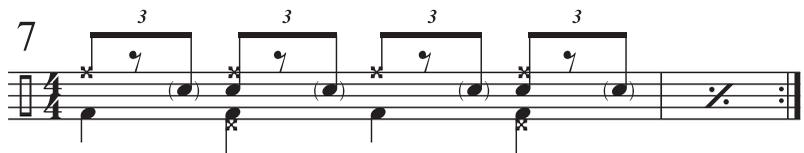
Chicago blues. Early R&B never sounded more down and dirty than it did in Chicago during the 1950s. Artists like Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Howlin' Wolf all came to Chicago from the Deep South, and their approach to the blues differed greatly from the swing-based jump of Louis Jordan or the pop-oriented sounds of Ray Charles. These country bluesmen made their own set of rules, often refusing to follow the standard twelve-bar format. Their concept of the blues was based on a feeling; songs were often improvised on the spot or changed from night to night depending on the artist's mood. This forced Chicago drummers like Fred Below and Francis Clay to come up with grooves that were stark and to the point. Their inventive approach gave the recordings of Chicago labels like Chess and Vee-Jay a unique sense of drama, emotion, and personality.

Check out the following groove from Muddy Waters' 1954 classic "Hoochie Coochie Man." Rather than following a repetitive pattern like a shuffle, this groove mirrors the quirky melodies played by the guitar and harmonica.



Texas shuffles. If the Chicago sound was marked by looseness, Texas R&B tended to be quite the opposite. Lone Star State saxmen like Illinois Jacquet, singers such as Bobby "Blue" Bland, and guitar troubadours like T-Bone Walker brought a sophisticated sensibility to the blues. Their bands often included full horn sections and were characterized by tight, crisp shuffles that kept the music grooving *hard*.

Guitarist Albert Collins' signature song "Frosty" is the ultimate example of a great Texas-style shuffle: lean, mean, and very much on top of the beat. This groove also emphasizes the offbeats (shown as ghost notes). To get an idea of how the pattern should move, think of "La Grange" by ZZ Top (a great modern Texas blues band).



Latin elements. In addition to shuffles, early rhythm and blues bands often incorporated various Latin grooves, which were growing more and more popular in American culture in the '40s and '50s. Elements of mambo, samba, rumba, and Caribbean rhythms appear throughout, often fused with more typical blues elements. Ray Charles' 1959 smash hit "What'd I Say" is such a combination.



Next month we'll dig into classic swing. See you then!

Since 1994, **Daniel Glass** has played drums with the pioneering "retro swing" group Royal Crown Revue. He has also recorded and performed with Bette Midler, Gene Simmons, Mike Ness, Freddy Cole, and many others. Daniel's writings on drum history have appeared in *The Encyclopedia Of Percussion*, *MusicHound Swing: The Essential Album Guide*, and numerous other music and drumming publications. His latest book is *The Commandments Of Early Rhythm And Blues Drumming* (cowritten with Zoro). You can learn more about Daniel's obsession with classic American music at danielglass.com.



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Top 10 Rudiments

PART 5: THE SIX-STROKE ROLL

by Bill Bachman

The six-stroke roll is on our list of the ten key rudiments because it contains unique hand motions that will open doors to many other rudiments. I noted in a previous article that one of the most important benefits of studying the rudiments is developing individual hand motions that can be applied to other areas of drumming beyond a rudimental context. While that concept is true of the six-stroke roll, this particular rudiment is also incredibly useful when voiced around the drumset. This month we'll look at the techniques you'll need to play six-stroke rolls with strict 16th-note interpretation, as well as the slurred variation that morphs into a sextuplet.

The accents in six-stroke rolls are what gives them flavor (be sure to use downstrokes for these). Here's the key to executing relaxed downstrokes: Begin the motion exactly like a full stroke (aka a free or legato stroke), but just after the stick hits the head, partially stifle the stick's natural rebound by squeezing the back of the stick with the fingers.

As you learn the six-stroke roll, I recommend making the downstrokes stop at an angle pointing down toward the drum, in order to maximize the dynamic and stick-height differential between the accents and double strokes, or diddles. Once you master the motion, you can vary the degree of strictness of the downstrokes for different musical applications. Keep in mind that it's important to avoid hitting the accents too hard or with tight strokes that drive through the drumhead. Stay relaxed!

The diddles inside the six-stroke roll should be played low to the drum with a relaxed alley-oop technique. This is where the first stroke is played mainly from the wrist and the second stroke mainly from the fingers. It will look like the hand drops toward the drum on the first stroke of the double, and then your fingers snap out the second stroke by bringing the back of the stick to the palm of the hand. The hand should then lift up for the following accent. If your finger control still needs developing, remember that it's better to play the diddles a bit

weakly and bouncy than to stroke them out entirely with the wrists.

The technique used to play six-stroke rolls slowly is different from the one used to play them fast. The downstroke/upstroke technique for the accents and the alley-oop technique for the diddles won't change, but you'll need to pump your forearms when playing at faster rates. This motion will relieve the building tension in the wrists. When you play six-stroke rolls quickly, it will almost feel like you're playing a continuous double-stroke roll with occasional non-diddled accents. Once you've mastered the six-stroke roll, your hands will be able to hit any accent patterns within a roll.

Practice the following exercises every day with a metronome (or along to your favorite songs). Don't go any faster than you can play comfortably. You should also practice this rudiment using a slow-fast-slow breakdown evenly over one minute, gradually adjusting your technique as the speed changes. Good luck!

1

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

2

R L RR L R L RR L R L RR L R L RR L
L R LL R L R LL R L R LL R L R LL R

R LL RR L R LL RR L R LL RR L R LL RR L
L RR LL R L RR LL R L RR LL R L RR LL R

Roy Haynes

“MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE”

by Dean Johnston



Tom Copt

Jazz legend Roy Haynes’ buoyant time feel and deft brushwork are on full display on this track from pianist Chick Corea’s classic 1968 album, *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*.

As you’re reading along, keep in mind the following:

- 1) All 8th notes are to be played with a swing (triplet) feel, unless an even duplet is notated (as in measure 56).
- 2) When the rhythm of the brush sweep becomes ambiguous, just keep one brush moving on the head while the other taps out the rhythms.
- 3) Pay close attention to the repetitive figures in Haynes’ playing. Often he’ll play a certain figure and repeat it a few measures later, or he’ll follow up the first phrase with a colorful “answer.”

Finally, try to use Roy’s playing as the inspiration for your own brushwork. Listen to all the colors and textures he creates by hitting the drums and cymbals in different ways. The possibilities are endless.

MUSIC KEY

open	○	R.C.	C.C.	Brush RH Taps
H.H.	●	Sweep LH Sweeps		
T.T.	⊗			
S.D.	⊙			
F.T.	⊕			
B.D.	⊖			
H.H.	⊗	Add'l	Tom	B
w/ foot	⊙	H/H foot	splash	

R L R R L R R B R R L L L L R L R R R L R R B R R L L R R R L R L

6 RLRL RLRL RR LR L RL RL RRL RR R BRR BR R B RR BR

11 LRRL LL R BRLL R L R L R R LRR RLLR LR RR RR

16 RL RRLRLR L LRRLRR RLRRRLR R BRRLR RR BR RLR

21 BRRRB R LRRR R RLRRRLRR RLRRLL LLRLRRRLR

26 RR BRR RRL RR RR RLRL RRL R L R RL LR R LR

ROY HAYNES

31 
RR RR R LR R RLL LLR R R R R LR R R B R RL R R B RR L

36 
RR B RR B RR B RR BR R B R RL R B R LL RR R BR LL LL

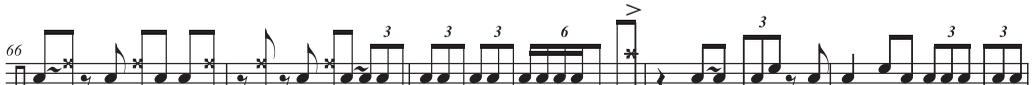
41 
R B R B R R B RR B R R L RR B R R B RR R B R R B R

46 
R B RL B R B R LL R LL R B R LL R R B RR B R RR B RR B

51 
R B RR LR R LL R LL R LR B RR LR R B R RL R B RL LR LR LR LR

56 
RL RL RL RL RL RL R B L RR B R R LR R B R R LR R B R RL B RR LB R

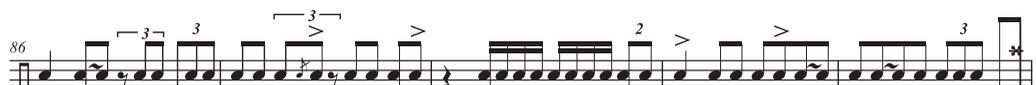
61 
RL LLR L L RR RR RL RL R L RR RR BR L RL R R

66 
L R L RL LR R L RL RR RR RR RL RL R LR LR R B RR LL LL

71 
RR R L R R L LR R L RR B R R B RL B R R B RR B R

76 
R B RR B R B RR B RL B R B R RL B RR LB R RR L RL RR

81 
R RL B LR R RL RR B R RL RR B R R RL R RL R R RL R LL RR

86 
R LR RL LL R RL R RR LR RL RL RL RL RL R B RR LR R LR RR LL RR

91 L R RLR RLL R BRLL LL R BRLLRR R B RRLR R BRR B

96 R R L R R R L RR BRR BR R BRR BR R B RRB R BRLLRLL

101 R L RLL R LRRRLR RLRRRLRR RLRRLL LL R L R L

106 R L RRBR R B RLR R BRLL LL RL L L RL RL RLLR R

111 L L RR L R RLRLRL R L R RLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRL R

116 L R RL RLR R L R L R L R L R L R L R R L R LL

121 R R R R R R R R *ends with cymbal rubato*



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JERRY SHIRLEY

Story by Bob Girouard • Photos by Fin Costello

Steve Marriott didn't intend to invent heavy metal when he founded Humble Pie with Peter Frampton in 1968. **But with major tub-thumper Jerry Shirley in the lineup, it was almost inevitable.**

The hard-rocking, steady-grooving Jerry Shirley is often overlooked during discussions of drumming contemporaries such as Ginger Baker, John Bonham, Mick Fleetwood, and Carl Palmer. Yet for the

past forty years Shirley has been one of rock's best and most consistent players.

Along with his Humble Pie bandmates Steve Marriott, Peter Frampton, and Greg Ridley, Shirley made his mark in 1971 with the seminal album

Performance: Rockin' The Fillmore. That record's phenomenal success set the agenda for arena rock, helped create the template for the massive economics of touring, and established the word *supergroup* within the pop vocabulary. "It's amazing how we kept on," Jerry says today. "Even more than the late-'60s/early-'70s recreational 'intake,' it was adrenaline that kept us going. The short time frame between albums and tours was staggering. It just didn't stop!"

Often credited as being one of the first true heavy metal bands—and sometimes as being *the* first heavy metal band—Humble Pie, like many legendary classic rock groups, had its roots in traditional American blues, R&B, and whiskey-soaked Stax/Volt soul. But the Pie rocked with a harder edge than most of its peers, and with an attention to detail that was unmistakably British. On the flip side, the band could also jam with the best of 'em. "Steve Marriott was *such* a natural blues singer,"

Shirley says, "and along with [bassist] Greg Ridley, they took their influence from American soul and blues singers, whether it be Elvis or Wilson Pickett. You can hear that continue today with bands like the Black Crowes. They took what we took from the Americans, regurgitated it, and it came out very cool. In fact, I thought they were one of the best things to happen in the past fifteen years." The admiration is mutual; Crowes singer Chris Robinson has acknowledged Humble Pie as a major influence.

Studios, we isolated the audience, treating it like a studio album," Jerry says. "But the key to that record was the sound of the room itself. We were doing our own mixes at the time, and Dee told us our initial mixes were terrible, and to go back and remix it because we'd forgotten the audience. We literally left them off the album! Had we not had a manager who was wise enough to speak up, our careers might have been over."

Around that period, Shirley was also actively freelancing in the stu-

the genius he once was. He still, however, had a genius's touch, and the songs we recorded were good. On the album, some of the tracks were recorded live with [Barrett's Pink Floyd replacement] Dave Gilmour on bass, me on drums, [Floyd's] Rick Wright on keyboards, and Syd on guitar and vocals. What a band that would be, huh?"

With the mainstream success of Humble Pie singles like "Hot 'N' Nasty" and "30 Days In The Hole," the band firmly cemented its legacy and, by today's standards, had a

"I've done eighty-six tours of the States... that's enough for anybody. I don't think even Charlie Watts has done that many."

According to Shirley, the Fillmore album's powerful impact on succeeding generations of bands might never have been if it weren't for producer Eddie Kramer and manager Dee Anthony's "rescuing" of the recording. "In the initial mixes at Olympic

dio, and he played a major role on Pink Floyd founder Syd Barrett's second and final solo album, *Barrett*. Says Jerry of recording with the notoriously tortured soul, "It was hard work. I'd be telling a lie if I told you that the Syd I worked with was

great first run between 1968 and 1975. (Benefiting from such acclaim, guitarist Peter Frampton ascended into the rock stratosphere shortly after.) In the mid-'80s Jerry again teamed up with Marriott in the short-lived blues band Packet Of

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JERRY SHIRLEY

Three. Then, in 1983, Pete Way of UFO and "Fast" Eddie Clarke of Motörhead were looking for the right drummer for their new project, Fastway. Enter Shirley, who recalls, "They sought me out. I had heard of the guys but never heard or saw them play. Anyway, we met and talked, and I said as long as it's real and properly thought out, let's give it a go."

Fastway had a can't-miss formula: a fat sound, solid vocals, and good hooks played by guys who knew how to rock. Songs like "All Fired Up" and "Say What You Will," on albums also produced by Eddie Kramer, had a bit of the Humble Pie aura, with modern production techniques added to the equation. According to Jerry, "The good thing about us, apart from the great records,



Shirley in the studio then and now

HOT 'N' NASTY

Jerry Shirley on his classic classic-rock sound

MD: Your style has been labeled heavy, and even metal. Obviously you have a bit of blues in your soul: Chicago, Memphis, Muscle Shoals. Where do you fit?

Jerry: The latter is where I tried to fit. I emulated what I heard and felt: blues, soul, jazz... people like Count Basie's drummer Sonny Payne.

MD: You had, and still have, a big sound. Did you design your kit for the music you played, or to help you be heard over the amplification?

Jerry: Both, but you got it right. When I first came to recognition, our stage setup didn't include many monitor speakers. If you were a drummer back then you had to play loud to be heard. Either smack the shit out of them, get bigger drums, or do both, which is what I did. The original group of guys that did that—Carmine Appice, John Bonham, Corky Laing, and myself—we carried a big sound. I admit part of it was "the look," but we needed to be heard. Of course, now, as technology has improved, I've been able to back down a little size-wise.

MD: Did you record with big drums?

Jerry: Yes. I did have some success, but it's not the easiest to get a good sound in the studio. You had to make the kit do the work, but the key was where you put the mics. Thinking back, I recall having a bit of difficulty with the 26" bass drum. To get a good sound you have to hit a drum dead center, but pedals back then didn't go high enough. I used a Speed King pedal, but I had some custom beaters built, extending the shaft so the beater head would hit properly.

MD: You always got a distinctive sound from your crash cymbals. What was your configuration?

Jerry: It was a 24" ride, two 18" crashes, a 16" and 20" crash, and 15" Sound Edge hi-hats—all Paiste.

Note: In Humble Pie Jerry played a Ludwig Super Classic kit: 26" bass drum, 12x14 rack tom, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms, and a 6 1/2 x 14 Supra-Phonic snare. Today he plays DW drums, including a 16x22 bass drum, a 9x12 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 5 1/2 x 14 snare. His Zildjian cymbals include two 18" crash/rides, a 16" crash, a 22" ride, and 14" hi-hats.



together a new lineup featuring Greg Ridley and guitarists Bobby Tench and Dave Colwell; an album, *Back On Track*, was released in 2002.

The drummer's current affiliation began in 2001 during the organization of the Steve Marriott Tribute Concert in London, where he met Deborah Bonham. "When I started to figure out who was going to be playing at the concert," Jerry says, "one of the first musicians who offered her services was Deborah Bonham. Originally I thought she was John's daughter, not his sister," he adds with a laugh. "But I called her, and we got on wonderfully. She sent me a CD, and her voice was great. It was then I learned her actual relation to John, and I came to find out that Humble Pie was among her and her brother's

favorite bands. Over the years, John and I had met—we shared a drink here and there. Outside of Led Zeppelin he was a private person and was always nice to me. In fact, in 1975 they moved the start time of one of their concerts so they could come and see our farewell show in New Orleans. That night, who was there on stage left looking at me but John Bonham, tipping his hat—and on stage right, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant. I'll take that one to me grandkids!"

The newly released Deborah Bonham Band CD, *Duchess*, rocks, and so does Jerry. His playing is a bit more compact today, but it's still huge sounding and features tasty grooves and fills. Bonham has a soulful voice, reminiscent at times of Janis Joplin and Maggie Bell. The music is both modern and retro—no nonsense, just hard, heavy, in-your-face rock, blues, and soul. Sound familiar? "I think it's a great album, and I was proud to be on it," says Shirley, who recently guested at Rock 'N' Roll Fantasy Camp in London. "I'm also writing my memoirs," he adds, "and there'll be plenty of Humble Pie to go around."

was that it was a very strong live band. We had a well-heelled organization, and at that time our label, CBS, was quite supportive."

In 1989 Shirley ventured beyond the drumkit and onto the airwaves as a classic rock DJ at 98.5 WNCX in Cleveland, a position he held until 1996. "It was a period when rockers were getting hired on radio," he says. "I did special programs, personal appearances, the whole nine yards. I liked living in Cleveland, and the people were very nice to me. The city has a deep rock 'n' roll history, especially with the Hall Of Fame being there. I was in on the ground floor, helping get the museum located there. I ruffled some feathers and got everybody motivated. You know, grassroots stuff, that kind of thing."

Also in '89, Shirley was approached to reform Humble Pie, and with Marriott's blessing he hit the road, with Charlie Huhn (formerly of Ted Nugent's band) replacing the singer. Tragically, the music world lost a giant when Marriott died in a house fire in 1991, during negotiations to tour again with the original Pie. A full decade later, Shirley pulled

together a new lineup featuring Greg Ridley and guitarists Bobby Tench and Dave Colwell; an album, *Back On Track*, was released in 2002.

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THE DECEMBERISTS' **JOHN MOEN**

by Patrick Berkery

How does an indie vet approach the job of tracking a modern-day rock opera? He throws out the rule book, buys himself an Octoban, and gets familiar with his inner Neil Peart.

When he hears a writer refer to his band's latest album, a seventeen-track rock opera called *The Hazards Of Love*, as a woolly mammoth, Decemberists drummer John Moen immediately offers a correction. "It's a woolly mammoth with six tusks!" he counters.

Though the Decemberists, based in Portland, Oregon, and fronted by erudite tunesmith Colin Meloy, have dabbled in epics before (see the multipart movements on 2006's *The Crane Wife*), *The Hazards Of Love* finds the band going where most darlings of the underground fear to tread: back, unironically, to the days of prog rock and the concept album.

A tale of love and murder in a forest is spun, with three different singers—Meloy, plus guest vocalists Becky Stark and the fire-throated Shara Worden—doing the storytelling. Musical themes are established, embellished, and revisited throughout, like on the four-part title track. There are churning Hammond B-3 solos and guitar breaks reminiscent of Deep Purple and Pink Floyd, balanced by contemplative passages that recall English folkies such as Fairport Convention and Pentangle. And, of course, there's an ominous "Prelude."

Moen understands that by delivering this kind of album now, when the number of files swapped and individual tracks downloaded is growing and attention spans are shrinking, the Decemberists are asking a lot of their fans. But if you think digesting the album whole is a monumental task, consider where Moen has been. He had to track drums for this "woolly mammoth with six tusks."

"It was pretty traditional in that we started with drums—sometimes bass and drums—and built tracks from there," Moen explains. "But we had to divide all these songs into subsections and track them that way, so that the real heavy, crazy, louder bits were consistent with each other, even though they didn't appear consecutively. Whenever a section repeated, it had to feel the same as the last time it happened.

"It was like shooting a movie," John continues. "You can't pay for the location indefinitely, so you team up all the things that happen in the scary old house and you shoot all that at once. Then it gets edited later."

Recording an album mostly a section at a time rather than a song at a time presented numerous challenges. There were quality-control duties like making sure segues from song to song flowed

seamlessly, a chore Moen says was made easier by Pro Tools, particularly when cymbal decay or crashes were involved. And there were administrative tasks like remembering what movement or track was being worked on at a given time, which necessitated the band keeping, Moen says, "a crazy chart with instructions like 'Queen's Rebuke I, section two, part B,' and my own little buzzwords to remind me what to do in each song."

The drummer was also confronted with the challenge of what to play on an ambitious song suite being recorded out of sequence, with just Meloy's skeletal demos as a reference point and only a week of preproduction to fine-tune his parts.

"I came to the session with two or three options for every song or movement," Moen says. "It was, 'I can throw a weird slow samba thing at this, or we could just kind of plow through.' And I'd have to be ready for either of them to work. Colin would usually say, 'That's good here, but let's try this there,' so we'd typically arrive at something together.

"We had a plan," John goes on, "but when something cool happened and it was better than what was initially planned, we were open to it. 'The Queen's Rebuke' was like that. I thought it would

be cool not to play continuous time on the hi-hat or ride. So there's only hi-hat on individual hits with the kick and the snare. It opened up a creepy amount of room."

To reproduce the different sounds and styles captured on the record, Moen has expanded his kit on tour. Inspired by the selection of cymbals that producer Tucker Martine (Bill Frisell, Laura Veirs) brought to the *Hazards* sessions, John added what he describes as a "Neil Peart-y" arsenal of cymbals to his usual hi-hat, crash, and ride. "Tucker brought some crazy cymbals that we ended up using, like the Sabian Artisan series," Moen says.

"They look like rides, but they're so thin. They're kind of China-like in their response. It made for some huge crashes on the record that are really odd sounding. Some of them sound like dragon's breath. So I hooked one of those up. And there was a riveted cymbal on a couple of songs, so I went out in the garage and made one of those."

Moen is also employing an Octoban now—purchased on a lark by Decemberists guitarist Chris Funk—playing it with his hands to replicate the various hand percussion sounds used on "Annan Water" and "The Hazards of Love 1." And to recapture the layers of low-end thump and clat-

ter on "The Rake's Song," Moen is relying on a little help from his bandmates, who'll be playing a variety of drums stationed around the stage, ranging from rack toms to "an old 20" mahogany Japanese kick," all outfitted with Evans hydraulic heads.

"I just wanted something that would be easy for our crew to deal with and wouldn't have a lot of over-ring for our sound guy," John says. "So I went in and ordered Evans hydraulics for the toms, and the guy at the drum store says, 'Wow, okay, that's a blast from the past.'"

Not unlike the Decemberists' ambitious *Hazards Of Love*.

THE CONCORD BLUE DEVILS'

SCOTT JOHNSON

How TV, a basketball, and baton-twirling and gun-toting sisters inspired a DCI champ's stick-click trick

by Lauren Vogel Weiss

Scott Johnson, director of percussion for the Concord Blue Devils Drum Corps of Concord, California, is currently in his twenty-seventh year as an instructor with the organization, an impressive feat of longevity in the marching world. The corps has won a record twelve Drum Corps International (DCI) World Championships and ten "high drum" awards, all with Johnson on staff. (He has another drum title under his belt as well, won during his three-year tenure with the Santa Clara Vanguard.)

With so many championship rings, Johnson knows a thing or two about showmanship as well as technique. "The visual aspect is very important to the marching percussion activity," he explains. "People want to see what they hear. The more visual a program is, the more entertaining it is to an audience."

Johnson does dozens of marching percussion clinics each year, covering topics from snare drum tuning to warm-up exercises for drum lines. One of the most crowd-pleasing parts of his presentation is a trick he created during his younger days.

"When I got home from school, I'd watch television for hours," he says with a sheepish grin. "But I would drum on a basketball between my knees. When the commercials came on, I would roll—until the show came back on. One day I figured out this cool 16th-note click thing." He then demonstrates a five-note "stick-click trick" that sounds and looks amazing.

"You start with the left stick in traditional grip," Johnson says. "The stick stays between the fingers, and you throw the bead away from your body so it rotates over your arm. Then it comes back around and goes underneath the arm, and then you catch it again. The stick never leaves those two fingers." Having two older sisters who were baton-twirling champions and a younger sister who was an international rifle champ clearly seems to have had an



effect on the 1977 DCI Snare Champion.

"By holding the right stick so it hits the left one," Scott continues, "you have a 16th-note pattern: diga-diga-dut. And by changing the right hand—eliminating certain notes—you can create patterns. Right now I'm making sure to hit the stick every time: 1-e-&-a-2. But if I want 8th notes instead of 16ths, the left-hand stick is still rotating the same amount, but I've eliminated every other stick sound by not letting it hit the right stick: 1-&-2-&-1. So by process of elimination, you can make up rhythms."

But can you apply a marching trick to the drumset? "Absolutely," Johnson says. "When you watch drumset clips on YouTube, there are plenty of visuals. Yeah, you've got to be able to play the fundamentals, but if you can put a little spice on top of it, people love it. It's entertaining."

The drummer's best advice? "If you're not having fun, you're doing it wrong!" To see Johnson demonstrate his stick-click trick, go to YouTube and search for "Scott Johnson stick click trick."

ANTIBALAS AFROBEAT ORCHESTRA'S

CHRIS VATALARO

Student of Gadd, sideman to Copeland, **keeper of the Afrobeat flame**

"Beaten Metal," the opening cut off Antibalas's latest CD, *Security*, is anything but ordinary. The faint sound of wind chimes hits your ear first, followed by a funky snare groove that's anchored by a beautifully syncopated kick drum. When the beat comes to a dead halt, enter the almost biblical drone of orchestral horns, which collides with metal-on-metal percussion and then segues into a series of keyboard solos before the drums drop out again. Suddenly, the groove returns even more intensely than before, propelling the track into a rhythmic climax. At the kit is Chris Vatalaro, whose tasteful, percolating playing is one of the standouts on the disc.

How did this twentysomething kid from upstate New York get the gig with an internationally popular band known for combining the famous Nigerian funk style Afrobeat with jazz, psychedelic rock, and big-band swing? According to Vatalaro, it was thanks to the Web site Craigslist. "I attended the Eastman School Of Music, where I met my [future] wife," Chris says. "After graduating I headed straight for NYC, then ultimately London, where she's from.

continued on page 82



Story by Bob Girouard
Photos by Lydia Polzer

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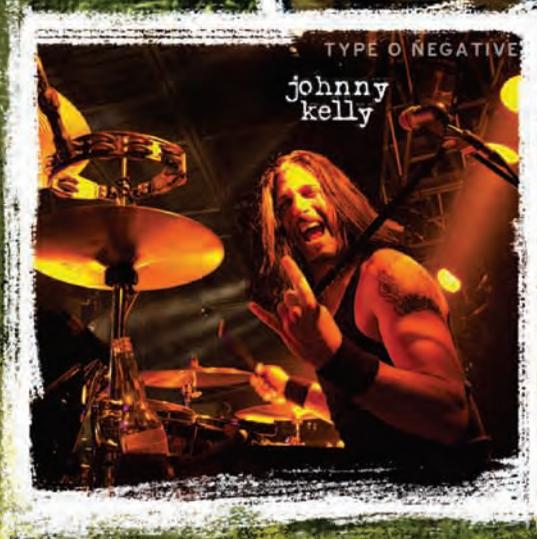
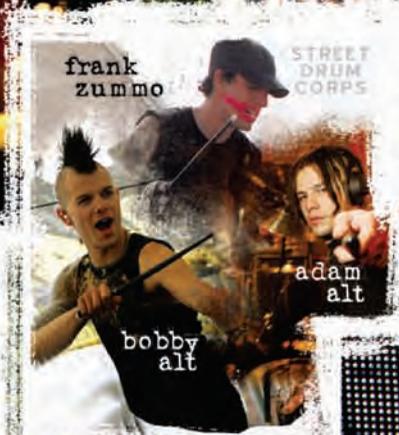
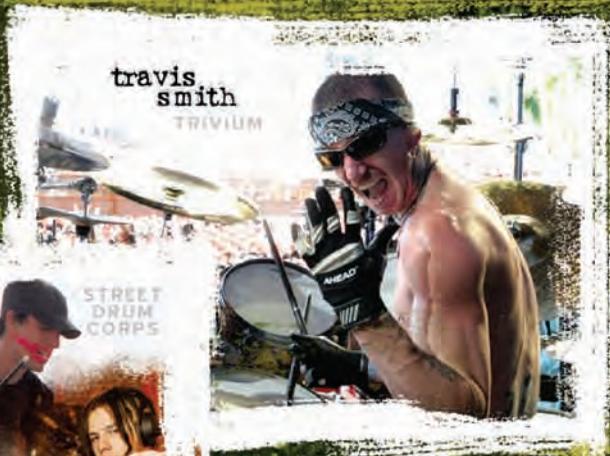
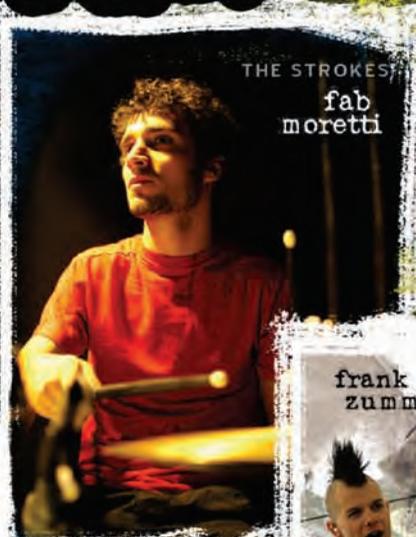
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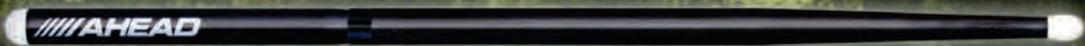


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PORTRAITS

In 2004 I answered a random ad and mentioned I knew a bunch of Fela Kuti and Antibalas songs, to which they said, 'We are Antibalas!' I played my audition with a busted hi-hat, and learned quickly it was very hi-hat-intensive music."

On this side of the pond, Vatalaro is one of the rare few who've studied with drum legend Steve Gadd. He's also accompanied Police great Stewart Copeland. Commenting on both, Vatalaro reflects, "I studied with Steve when I first got to Rochester. He had moved back there to raise his family. He's a gentle yet powerful player who taught me some interesting ways to think about time, strokes, and tuning, plus he has an intuition for grooves that's not easily trans-

lated into lessons. I got to play with Stewart Copeland as part of a symphonic tour and recording he did with the Albany [New York] Symphony. I remember him telling me that the most complex stuff was just f'd-up paradiddles. He hits so hard—and knows how to make simple things dance."

Despite the breakneck pace of playing sessions and gigs in the U.S. and Europe, Vatalaro has still found time to do projects with drummer/producer/engineer John McEntire (Tortoise, Sea And Cake). Chris's current goals: "To make music that I think is cool with people who I think are cool, and hopefully stay afloat in the process."



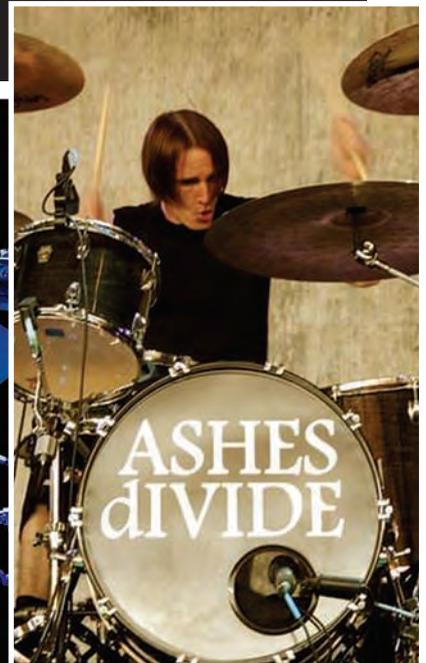
PUSCIFER/ASHES DIVIDE'S JEFF FRIEDL

by Gail Worley

Walking a musical tightrope without a net is all in a day's work with Puscifer, "the weirdest show on Earth."



Patrick Surace



Puscifer, the brainchild of Tool/A Perfect Circle vocalist Maynard James Keenan, is an experimental multimedia rock act that features "atmospheric, groove-oriented music," according to drummer Jeff Friedl. "It can be either simple and soundscape-y or bombastic but deep and groovy," adds Friedl, who also plays in Ashes Divide, with Perfect Circle guitarist Billy Howerdel. "The drum chair is a cross between John Bonham and Questlove—big and open, with a lot of room to breathe."

Friedl has a background that includes Latin, jazz, reggae, and rock drumming, so he appreciates the groove-heavy aspect of his gigs. "If I had the choice between playing many notes and playing very few notes and trying to make something feel really

good," he says, "I'll always prefer to play less."

As part of Keenan's "anything goes" approach to Puscifer, which Friedl calls "the weirdest show on Earth," the group features two different rhythm sections: Friedl and Ashes Divide bassist Matt McJunkins, and Gil and Rani Sharone from Stolen Babies, with the additional talents of Primus drummer Tim Alexander. According to Jeff, the three drummers get along great: "We all know our strengths. We know how to help each other and lift the music in our own way."

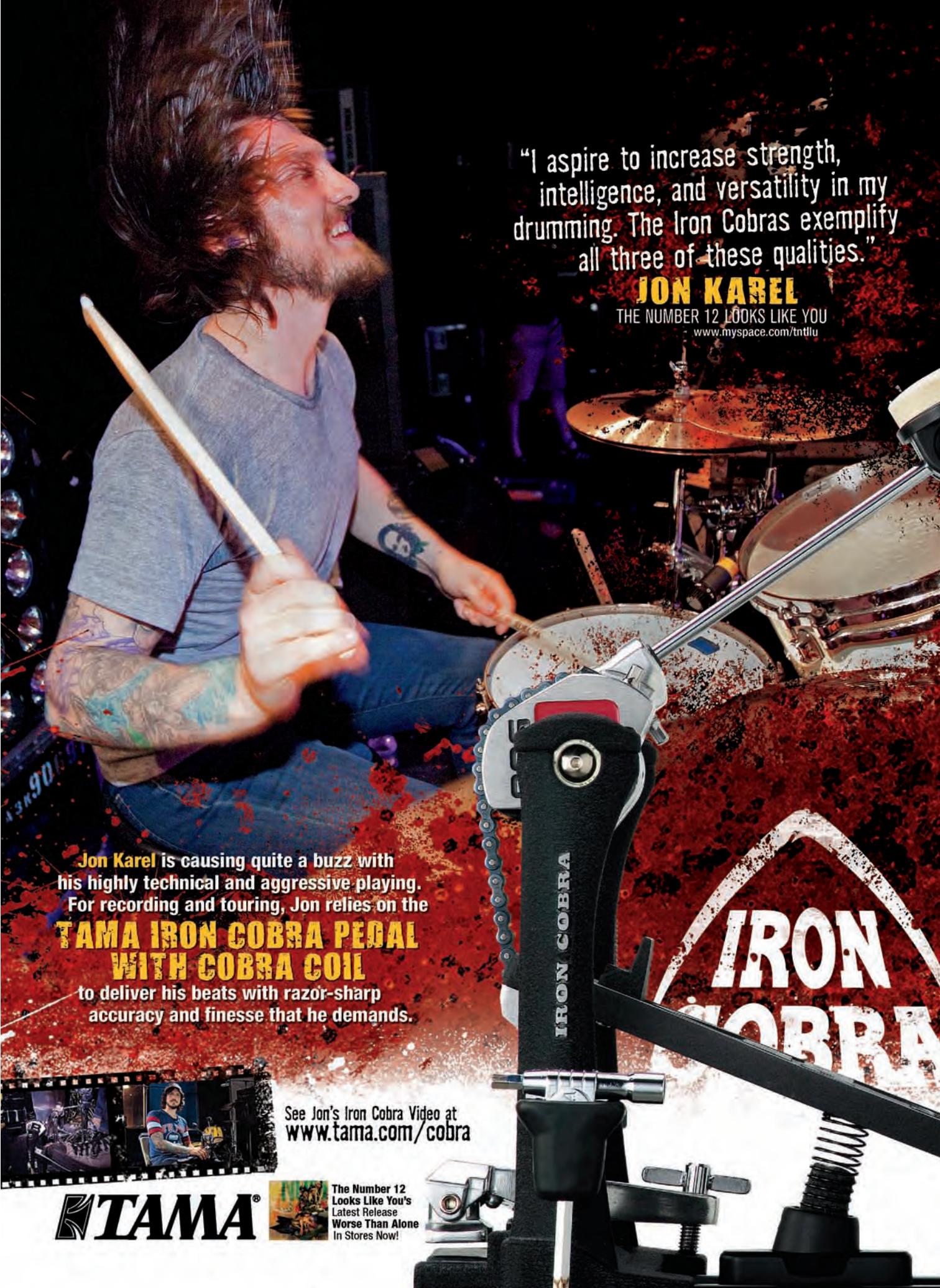
Friedl says that Keenan is "very interested in having his music evolve constantly, so there isn't one definitive version of these songs. Basically he wants us to reference the previously recorded Puscifer material and go from there. During

rehearsals, we had this really interesting dialogue where we were creating different grooves and arrangements."

Friedl describes Puscifer's recent three-night stand in Las Vegas as "a musical-chairs situation. Gil and Rani played one night, with Tim double drumming with Gil on half the songs. The second night, Matt and I played our versions of the songs, and then Tim double drummed with me for half the set. The third night was a mixture of everybody."

Jeff is excited by the new challenges each performance brings. "Maybe that's the jizzer in me," he says. "I grew up playing that stuff, and I love to improvise and get into musical situations where I have no idea how it's going to start or end. That's the fun of the game!"



A photograph of drummer Jon Karel in a studio setting, playing a drum set. He has long hair and a beard, and is wearing a grey t-shirt and blue jeans. He is captured in a dynamic pose, holding a drumstick. The background is dark with some stage lights. The overall aesthetic is gritty and energetic, with a red and black splatter effect overlaid on the right side of the image.

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Secrets Of The **MOTOWN SOUND**

by Drew Schultz





FIFTY YEARS AGO, the phenomenally popular style of soul music known as Motown was born. /// Back then, **URIEL JONES** could kick-start a surefire hit with a couple strokes on a tom, a crack of his snare, and not much else. /// Today, Temptations/Four Tops timekeeper **BENJAMIN CORBETT** keeps the Motown sound alive with dedication and grace.

“I would wonder what my life would’ve been like without Motown. And I never could come up with an answer.”
—Uriel Jones

In January of 1959, Detroit songwriter Berry Gordy founded Motown Records with an \$800 loan from his family. Within a few years, the label was producing hit after hit, crafting the timeless “Motown sound.”

Perhaps the most important contributors to that sound were the Funk Brothers, the select group of musicians that Gordy culled from the Detroit jazz scene to back the most gifted singers and songwriters of the time—and of all time: Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, the Temptations, the Jackson Five, Smokey Robinson & the Miracles, the Supremes, the Four Tops, and Martha Reeves & the Vandellas. Drummers Benny Benjamin, Richard “Pistol” Allen, and Uriel Jones crafted beats that would fill dance floors for decades. Between 1959 and 1972, the Funk Brothers recorded more hits than the Beatles, the Beach Boys, the Rolling Stones, and Elvis Presley combined.

The legacy continues. Reconstituted after the successful documentary *Standing In The Shadows Of Motown*, the Funk Brothers continue to sell out shows. And the Four Tops, one of Motown’s enduring flagship acts, received this year’s Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award after more than fifty years together.

A short time prior to his passing this March, original Funk Brother Uriel Jones, in his last interview, sat down to talk to *MD* about half a century of Motown drumming. We also picked the brain of Benjamin Corbett, who’s held the drum chair in the Four Tops for over twenty-five years. And for yet another angle on the story, we talked to Four Tops keyboardist/musical director George Rountree. Let’s begin with Uriel, who at the time was the sole surviving member of the “big three” Motown drummers.

Drummer Uriel Jones back in the day, with famed Motown bassist James Jamerson

URIEL JONES ARCHITECT OF THE MOTOWN SOUND



MD: You weren't always an R&B drummer. What did you grow up listening to?

Uriel: Oh, it was all jazz: Art Blakey, and especially Elvin Jones, who had a style like no one else. I knew him because he was from Detroit, and he played all over. There was a club called the World's Stage, which Kenny Burrell had. Elvin, Barry Harris...all the top jazz musicians from Detroit used to belong to this club, and they'd have jam sessions.

I used to live in Ecorse, Michigan, and there were a lot of clubs on Michigan Road. I got to be in the house band, and we had jam sessions all the time. Joe Weaver, a rhythm and blues guy, came in one time and asked me if I would play with him. I explained that I was a jazz musician, but he was still willing to go along with me. I caught on to rhythm and blues real quick. There's not that much difference, you know, between R&B and jazz.

MD: How did you get involved with Motown?

Uriel: Dave Hamilton was a blues guitar player who did some sessions at Motown, and I played with him a few times. They chose him to be Stevie Wonder's bandleader, so he picked me up to be the drummer.

MD: A lot of the Funk Brothers were at Motown.

Uriel: Yeah, Joe Hunter, Benny Benjamin, James Jamerson, Eddie Willis, Joe Messina, and Robert White. Pistol was there before I was. I was the last drummer who came. Eventually, after

Benny got sick and passed, I got to do more sessions than any drummer there. Starting in 1965, I was in the studio just about every day—all of [house producer]

Norman Whitfield's stuff, Ashford & Simpson....

MD: Speaking of the writers and producers at Motown, how much input did they have on Funk Brothers tracks?

Uriel: Very little. See, most of the producers, arrangers, and writers were young.

And a lot of them weren't really music educated. So they relied on us a lot. On some of the tunes, you could almost say the musicians did the arrangements. They'd come in the studio with just a lead sheet, and we would create different things from that. And these producers knew our styles of

drum parts?

Uriel: You know all those Motown pickups? Those are Benny Benjamin pickups. He originated those. And they've been sampled more than any drum pickups ever. Those were all Benny, and they all fit in between him and James Jamerson's bass lines.

Another thing that made a big difference in the Motown sound is that all the staff musicians were really jazz musicians. We always said the musicians at Motown took rock 'n' roll, smoothed it out a little bit, and added a jazz flavor. The grooves, they just fit the Motown sound. James Jamerson and Benny Benjamin, their two rhythms together were the foundation of the Motown sound.

But you know, when [late-'60s Motown keyboardist/bandleader] Earl Van Dyke came in, that's when the Motown sound really got to be the strongest. Pistol, he was noted for the shuffle and the 4/4 beat. He was a genius with it. But anytime I say somebody was good at this, or I was good at that...we got all this stuff from Benny.

INDESTRUCTIBLE

GEORGE ROUNTREE has been the keyboardist for the Four Tops since 1978. His group, the Pieces Of the Puzzle, continues to tour with the Tops under his direction. Here the veteran musician offers his unique perspective on Uriel Jones and Benjamin Corbett.



Drew Schultz

Uriel and the Funk Brothers had been playing together for so long, and their experience was so vast, that they just did things effortlessly. He had a style that made you think, *Oh, that's Uriel*. You can listen to a track and hear whether it was Benny Benjamin, Uriel Jones, or Pistol Allen playing on it. I played with Uriel when I was with Eddie Kendricks, for about a year and a half. He was right on the money. See, I'm a stickler for authenticity. There are people in the audience who want to hear this and that played exactly like they've heard it on the recording. Uriel covered that. That's what we liked to say about him: He stuck to his guns and didn't deviate from it. And it was a pocket. He truly made you feel it. When you played live with Uriel, it felt like you were in the studio.

What impressed me about Benjamin Corbett was that he was a thinker. He has taught me a lot, more than he'll ever know. When I got with the Four Tops, if the guitar player did a lick, I did a lick. If the bass player did some kind of lick, I did a lick too. It was answer, answer. When Ben came on the scene, I listened to him a lot. He showed me that the focus should always be on the singers, and not what you can do or how I can out-riff you. The wheel had a lot of spokes. He showed me that you don't have to be wild to play. He played such simple stuff that the little licks he would put in here and there stood out more. And you knew it was him playing them. There's been many a time when we've listened to recordings of ourselves, and he makes it breathe. I've been with him a long time, and he has a unique style all his own.

playing, so they partially wrote on there what they wanted, and they could allow us to use our imaginations on the rest of it.

MD: What did that mean in terms of the

Once I heard Benny play in the studio, I tried to clone myself after him. I think that's why they used me on most of the tunes after Benny left.

MD: There's a great drum sound on all of

those tracks. Do you still tune your drums like that?

Uriel: I try to. But I guess it had a lot to do with the drums that were in there too. Motown never bought a new set of drums, and we never had more than four drums. And when another drummer came down there, they wouldn't allow him to take no drum key and mess with it.

MD: Do you remember the setup?

Uriel: [laughs] Yeah, a bunch of different drums put together. They had a Ludwig drum, a Rogers—they were all mixed up. And they never had but two cymbals, a ride and a crash.

MD: Motown used two drummers on some tracks.

Uriel: There were actually very few times when two drummers played at the same time. A lot of times they would use one drummer and dub a second part in. But there's a few tunes [with two drummers playing at once]. The most popular one we did was [the Temptations'] "Cloud Nine."

MD: What do you feel makes a drummer soulful?

Uriel: A great drummer can just lay back and listen for grooves. You can take a real simple beat, and if you can lock in with the bass player, or the guitar player, or whoever is doing something that you'd like to fit in with, and you feed off one another, you can make a horn player or piano player climb up the wall. And it can build without you even changing the beat, just being steady.

If you listen to Motown drumming, we weren't really busy. We fed off one another with grooves. I was teaching for a while, and all I was teaching was how to get in different grooves and how to lock in and stay in them. Because a drummer who can really stay in a groove and push a musician, he'll work a whole lot more than a drummer who loves to solo all the time. That's why a lot of times I hate to see a drummer as

the leader of a band. Because they stand out more than any other musician there, and they're not supposed to. The drummer, I always figure, is supposed to accompany the other musicians. Most young drummers don't realize that until they get older. They have so much fire in them, you know?

MD: Looking back, what do you remember most from your days at Motown?

Uriel: I've always said I would wonder what my life would've been like without Motown. And I never could come up with an answer. [laughs] The music has been so good to me, and I think it's because when I was beginning, I was in the right place at the right time. And I kept my track record real good. I would always try to be agreeable. I'm still working and doing pretty good because of Motown. What would my life be like without Motown? I haven't been able to answer that yet, because I've been so pleased with it.

BENJAMIN CORBETT KEEPER OF THE CASTLE



MD: Between your time with the Temptations and the Four Tops, you've been keeping this music alive and fresh for the better part of the last three decades. How did it all start?

Ben: My mother worked at a music store, and there was a guy there who I took drum lessons from, starting when I was five. In those days, the early '60s, the American Federation Of Music had two locals in St. Louis—a white local, and a black local. He threw me in with

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SECRETS OF MOTOWN

the black symphony that was part of the Local 197. Mallets and snare drum morphed into drumset later on down the road.

MD: Who influenced you?

Ben: A lot of the books that I used, and guys like Cozy Cole, Ed Thigpen—and Buddy Rich! I got a chance to meet and hang with him on his birthday. It was the day he held a clinic at the music store my mom worked at. I was maybe all of nine years old.

During the clinic, he made a bet that there wasn't but a handful of people in the audience who could play eight quarter notes evenly. And of course, nobody could do it. A light went on then, and I've incorporated that concept into my style ever since.

MD: How did the original Motown tracks dictate what you have to play on stage?

Ben: Well, Cornelius Grant was the arranger at that time. And he was the original guitar player with the Temptations, so he knew what was played. You didn't want to stray too far, but at the same time he allowed you to express it your way, which was kind of neat.

MD: How would you describe Motown drumming?

Ben: Motown was definitely about the feel of the music. It was simple, which made it complex. To this day, that's what a lot of guys miss. You hear four on the snare, but when you sit down and actually start trying to apply that four on the snare with the syncopation of the kick drum against this 8th-note feel, all of a sudden it's not as simple as it sounds. And every song has its own little nuance.

Benny Benjamin was the man. He did things that are just mind-boggling to this day. Right-handed drummers usually start their fills with their right hand, but he started with his left. That's why those fills sounded a little bit different, and that's what makes them so hard to cop. Benny was like the Steve Gadd of his era. He was just so far ahead of everybody as far as feel and subtleness. He'd just sit there, look like he wasn't doing much, and *sound* like he wasn't doing much. But if you're really intently listening, man, he's cooking! It just moves you.

MD: Did you practice a lot of Benny's ideas?

Ben: It's not that I've practiced his licks, but I take it all in with much, much respect. It's osmosis, and it just comes out, as it comes

out, when it comes out. It's a "get out of the way and let it happen" kind of thing.

MD: You eventually switched over to the Tops gig. Listening to those shows, it sounds like two different drummers.

Ben: Well, thanks, that's a compliment. Because it *was* two different groups, and that's exactly what I was going for. The Temptations' music, especially of that era, was more syncopated. The Tops were more melodic, more orchestrated and symphonic, if you will.

MD: How do you feel the drumming has changed?

Ben: Old school was more musical to me. It might have something to do with rap and hip-hop. Very little chordal work is going on. It's mostly rhythmic. Old-school cats, they can play that, but they were also more musical, switching from bop to big band to the Temptations and Tops, or whatever.

MD: How can someone achieve that kind of musicality?

Ben: Listen, listen, listen. Listen to as many old-school cats as you can, and not so much to what they're doing, but *how* they're doing it. I think an emphasis needs to be put more on *why* the drummers of that time did what they did, as opposed to the licks that they did. It's more about what the music is asking for. Sometimes a space doesn't need to be filled up. It'll sound bigger if nothing at all is played, or just one kick note—*boom*—which will be fatter than filling it up with a whole bunch of chops.

MD: What do you suggest to drummers who want to play with soul?

Ben: Look at the Funk Brothers. They did it all. They all worked around town at jazz clubs, with big bands, bop groups—James Jamerson, all of them. That's why they were breaking ground like they were, because they played all styles of music. It wasn't just Motown. So I listen to a little bit of everything, same as I was doing before. When I was listening to Benny Benjamin, I was also listening to Buddy Rich and Louie Bellson. Often you're able to use what you learned from someone later, when it makes sense. It might be a style that's very different. But that concept led you to where you are. It'll serve you well.

Drew Schultz is a drummer and percussionist currently completing his major in performance at NYU. His focus on soul music has led him to perform with Lenny Pickett, the Four Tops, and the Temptations. He can be reached at drewschultzdrums@gmail.com.

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Leedy Strainers

by Harry Cangany

I feel a bond with U.G. Leedy, the orchestral percussionist who began making drums in Indianapolis around 1900. I have walked the halls of his old factory, spent time with his children, gotten to know one of his supervisors, and handled hundreds of his products. His snare drums are works of art, destined to last for centuries. The solid shells are still round, the metal parts are well made, and the brass is thick and strong. But the snare strainers are a common weakness among drums that were made before the time that Conn, which bought the Leedy company in 1929, invested in new engineering.

As a result, a lot of Leedy snare drums have been forever silenced due to broken strainers. Some impatient drummers have drilled holes to mount new strainers or robbed parts or replacement units from other drums. I waited years to find a working Presto or Speedway strainer so I could reassemble a 6x14 solid mahogany Leedy Professional drum.

An Italy-based drummer named Adrian Kirchler, who was once a goldsmith, decided to make his own custom snare drums and hardware. He also does engraving, restores vintage drums, and makes reproduction strainers and T-rods. Adrian is well connected in the worlds of vintage and new drums, so when I found out about his work I wrote him to order a replica Leedy strainer. After discussing the plating options—Adrian can do brass, copper, nickel, and gold, and he can “age” the plating so that it matches the original hardware—we agreed that an aged-nickel Speedway strainer would be closest to the original.

While I waited for my order to be delivered, I found another Leedy snare; this time it was an eighty-year-old



1920s 4x14 Leedy Professional snare with a broken Presto strainer



The same drum with a Leedy Speedway replica strainer made by Adrian Kirchler

4x14 nickel-plated brass Professional. And yes, the strainer was broken. So I decided to use the new Speedway strainer on the 4x14 Leedy Professional, since it's a terrific drum that could be played in just about any situation. (The mahogany drum has more of a “vintage” sound, due to its rounded bearing edges, so it has more limited musical applications.)

Although I didn't find a mint-condition original strainer to get this drum up and running again, I'm sure Ulysses Leedy would approve of the minor “upgrade.” Because of Kirchler's exceptional work, these wonderful drums can be reborn to play another day.

For more info on Adrian Kirchler's work, visit www.ak-drums.de.





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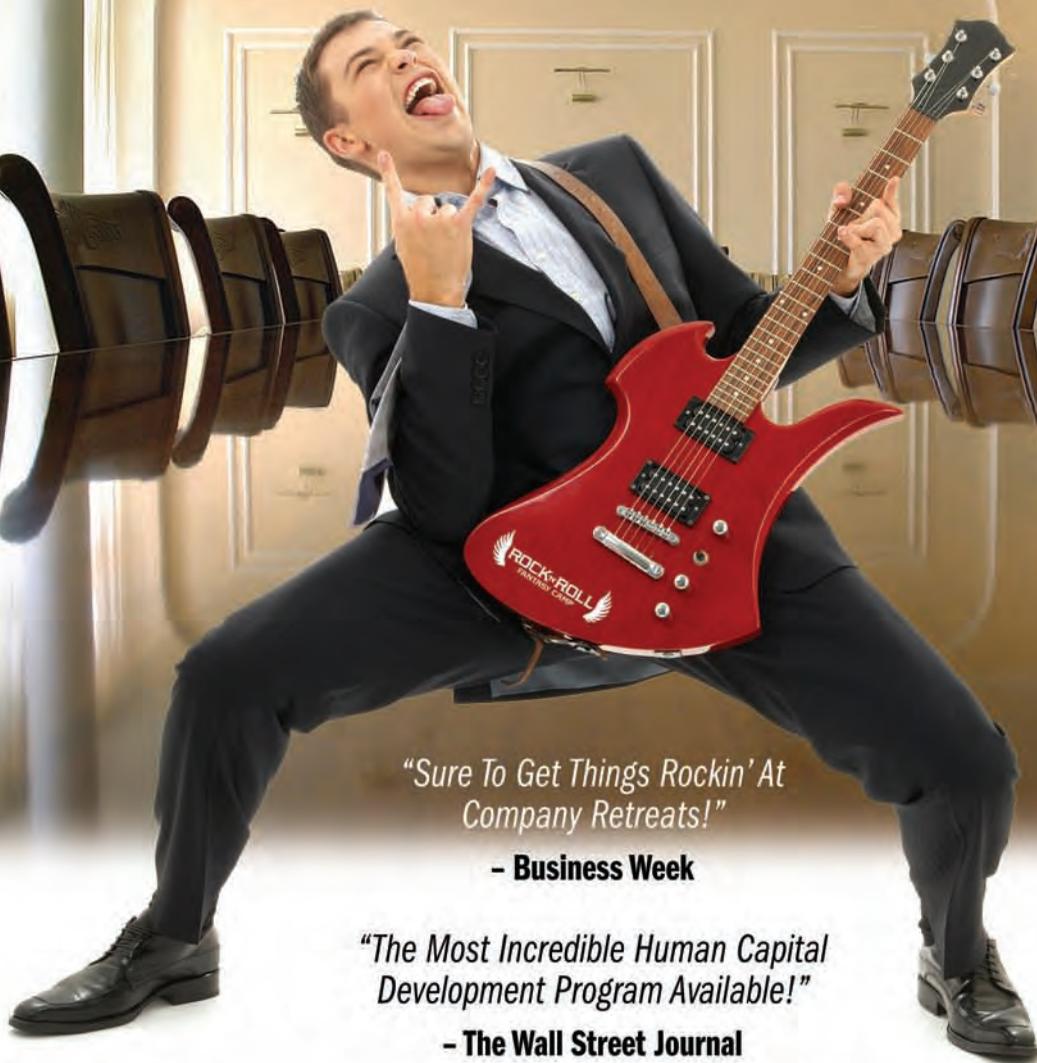
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MISCELLANEOUS

N.A.R.D. Is Back! The National Association of Rudimental Drummers. Approved by Ludwig. www.nard.us.com.

Vintage Corner

FOR SALE

The Ludwig Book! by Rob Cook. Business history and dating guide, 300 pages (64 color), Wm. F. Ludwig II autobiography, books on Rogers, Leedy, Slingerland, calfskin heads, gut snares, and more. Contact Rebeats, tel: (989) 463-4757, Rob@rebeats.com, Web site: www.rebeats.com.

Vintage: Snares, sets, singles, cymbals, hardware, logos, and trades. Look/see, www.drumatix.com.

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RECORDINGS



★★★★★
JOHN McLAUGHLIN/CHICK COREA
 FIVE PEACE BAND LIVE

Who else but drum legend **VINNIE COLAIUTA** could single-handedly push fusion forefathers Corea and McLaughlin to their musical limits and help breathe life into the desperately drowning art of jazz-rock fusion? Instead of rehashing the glory days of Corea's Return To Forever and McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra, these instrumental innovators stretch out with a fresh acoustic/electric approach. Colaiuta takes charge aggressively with mind-boggling technique and musicality, giving bassist Christian McBride and Miles Davis alumni Corea, McLaughlin, and saxman Kenny Garrett the firepower to resurrect the musical genre that Corea and McLaughlin helped create nearly four decades ago. (Concord) **Mike Haid**



★★★★★
OBSCURA COSMOGENESIS

After German progressive thrashers Obscura released their 2006 debut, *Retribution*, guitarist/vocalist Steffen Kummerer got himself a whole new band. Now putting the pedals to the metal is former Necrophagist drummer **HANNES GROSSMANN**, who's scarily adept at breaking his beats into ever-smaller subdivisions until he simply blasts off. "Universe

Momentum," indeed a big bang of a tune, channels the fury of the heavens with a majestic, *Carmina Burana*-plus-crunch vibe. It's a strong showcase for Grossmann, who somehow finds a way to tuck in some nifty tom fills and bell patterns among his dizzying assault of crashes. (Relapse) **Michael Parillo**



★★★★★
RUDDER MATORNING

KEITH CARLOCK, Tim Lefebvre, Henry Hey, and Chris Cheek comprise the great improv-mad space-rock jam band Rudder. Carlock brings out the heavy artillery for *Matorning*, from his second-line robo shuffle in "One Note Mosh" and the slipping, sliding illustrations of "Jackass Surcharge" to the undecipherable stickings of "Lucky Beard." The

drummer is graceful, funky, and ingenious, his booming bass drum kicking meaningful accents while his snare and hi-hat combos draw from Zigaboo Modeliste but with serious Jaki Liebezeit and Bernard Purdie intent. If you've enjoyed Keith's work with Steely Dan and Wayne Krantz, Rudder will only heighten your Carlock complex. (nineteeneight.com) **Ken Micallef**



★★★★★
MORRISSEY YEARS OF REFUSAL

Morrissey is the author of some of the most sensitive, soul-bearing couplets in rock history. But the singer's venomous side is just as sharp, as anyone who's heard classic Smiths tracks like "Meat Is Murder" or "Big Mouth Strikes Again" knows. **MATT WALKER** (Garbage, Filter, Smashing Pumpkins) is the drummer responsible for supporting both aspects of

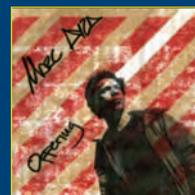
Moz's musical personality these days, and he gets some very nice opportunities to shine here. The tremendous floor tom/crash cymbal barrage during the outro of opening track "Something Is Squeezing My Skull" is a good example of Matt's energy, as is his different but equally effective approach to the rideout of album closer "I'm OK By Myself." In between you'll find lots of other examples of Walker's prowess—and of Morrissey's continuously insightful and cutting songcraft. (Attack) **Adam Budofsky**



★★★★★
FLY SKY & COUNTRY

Though in the past he often hung on by his fingertips as the rhythms flew from his kit, almost out of control but constantly pushing the envelope, **JEFF BALLARD** comes back to earth with his stupendous trio Fly.

Featuring saxophonist Mark Turner and bassist Larry Grenadier, *Sky & Country* reveals the group's remarkable interplay and nearly telepathic communication. All three flies compose, exploring drum 'n' bass ("Super Sister"), virtuosic Latin grooves ("Lady B"), and scorching, otherworldly funk ("Elena Berenjena"). Throughout, Ballard's well of inspiration seems bottomless. (ECM) **Ken Micallef**



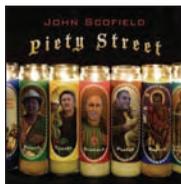
TAKING THE REINS

MASSIMO DeANGELIS, RICARDO MAGALHÃES, MARC AYZA

MASSIMO DeANGELIS's latest solo record, *The Visionary*, is everything we love (and love to hate) about fusion and prog rock, including wild, in-your-face fills executed with impeccable timing. Massimo is a gifted drummer, but his music sometimes suffers from technique-before-composition disease. A curable condition, but potentially harmful if left untreated. (netdotmusic.com)

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Brazilian drummer **RICARDO MAGALHÃES** displays unusual restraint while performing the syncopated swing/African/Latin patterns heard on *Afojazz*. Magalhães's economical musical statements, especially in moments tailor made for outrageous soloing, are both admirable and frustrating. We're impressed by the drummer's rhythmic composure, but next time we'd love to hear him go for broke more often. (ricardofojazz@yahoo.com.br) **Will Romano**

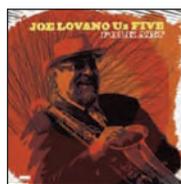
Spanish drummer **MARC AYZA's** *Offering* combines acid jazz, hip-hop, and traditional piano trio styles into a satisfying hybrid. Roger Mas's electric keyboard sets the vibe, and Ayza's effective minimal beats gently lock in with the turntables for that smoky basement atmosphere. Elsewhere, Ayza occasionally lets loose with busier odd-time cymbal work. (freshsoundrecords.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



★★★★★

JOHN SCOFIELD PIETY STREET

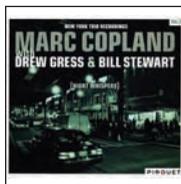
Looking to quench his thirst for the blues while going beyond the standard twelve-bar form, guitarist Scofield found old-time gospel music and drank deep from the well. Sco's coolly funky—and sometimes mischievously secular-sounding—arrangements are played with swagger by a veteran combo that includes two singers and Meters bassman George Porter Jr. Guiding the proceedings with a piously steady thump is **RICKY FATAAR** (Beach Boys, Joe Walsh, Bonnie Raitt), who's especially adept at adding bounce at slower tempos. His behind-the-beat feel and big, dry snare sound are the well-nurtured soil from which Scofield's guitar lines pop up like magnolias. (Emarcy) **Michael Parillo**



★★★★★

JOE LOVANO US FIVE FOLK ART

Using double drumsets in jazz can easily steamroll a band. The challenge becomes not just how well one plays but, more important, how well one listens. On *Folk Art*, risk-taking tenor man Joe Lovano enlists the marvelous **OTIS BROWN III** and **FRANCISCO MELA** to play kit and percussion, with inspired results. The progressive material encourages open playing and rhythmic and harmonic shape shifting, often with a nod to classic Ornette Coleman. The drum duo manages an uncluttered interaction where they nip at each other's heels, spurring on the momentum. Lovano rides their sonic waves with original, probing soloing. A brave, fresh quintet. (Blue Note) **Jeff Potter**



★★★★★

MARC COPLAND NEW YORK TRIO RECORDINGS VOL. 3: NIGHT WHISPERS

Drummer **BILL STEWART**'s singular swing feel and seemingly never-ending deluge of rhythmic commentary is best heard in a trio setting. Pianist Marc Copland's *Night Whispers* has a subdued, late-night New York City vibe throughout—but you'll be kept wide awake by the fabulous group interplay and top-notch drumming. On the title track, Stewart pushes and prods the music, his ride constantly filling holes left by the bass and piano. "So What" finds Stewart chatting away with his signature offbeat hi-hat placement, and his daring snares-off solo over the end vamp of "Space Acres" makes use of those lovely dark-hued cymbals. (pirouetrecords.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

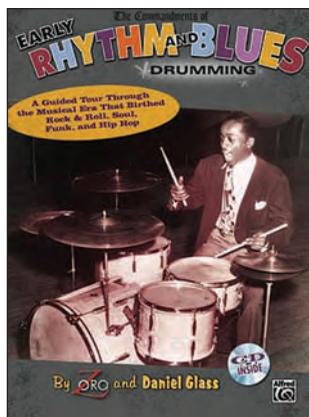


★★★★★

JOSHUA REDMAN COMPASS

Saxophonist Joshua Redman excelled in the sax-bass-drums format on his last album, *Back East*, and he furthers his explorations here by sometimes doubling the bass and drums. The potential for duo, trio, quartet, and quintet interplay is quite interesting, with Redman having drummers **BRIAN BLADE** and **GREG HUTCHINSON** and bassists Larry Grenadier and Reuben Rogers to draw from. On the five tunes where both drummers are present, clear separation allows stylistic comparison even as they intertwine their rhythms. Meanwhile, the tracks with one drummer effectively demonstrate the exciting individual talents of Blade and Hutchinson. Their drumming shares the pursuit of colorful, dynamic, and potentially explosive commentary on Redman's searching ruminations. (Nonesuch) **Martin Patmos**

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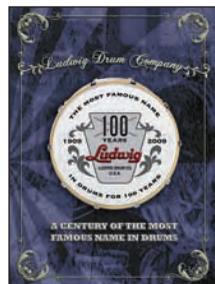


★★★★★

THE COMMANDMENTS OF EARLY RHYTHM AND BLUES DRUMMING BY ZORO AND DANIEL GLASS

BOOK/CD LEVEL: ALL \$24.95

This package is a prequel to Zoro's well-regarded 1998 book, *The Commandments Of R&B Drumming*, which was subtitled *A Comprehensive Guide To Soul, Funk, And Hip-Hop*. The new book, guided by Zoro but with heavy lifting by Daniel Glass, is described as a tour through the musical era that birthed the styles covered in the original text. Just as Zoro's exploration of his subject was explicitly tied to his personal playing experiences with Lenny Kravitz and other modern R&B-influenced artists, so too does this book come directly from its authors' obsessions and pro credits: As the drummer in Royal Crown Revue, one of the more prominent neo-swing/rockabilly bands of the early '90s, Glass has been steeped in these musical waters for years, and he's got the same thirst for knowledge that drove Zoro's publishing success. Given all that, it's not surprising that this book/CD package is similarly well researched, clear in its goals, and enlightening and inspiring in its approach. Glass tackles the subject matter from several angles, including: charts, lists, and even maps that put the history of the music in perspective; interviews with the original players; copious period photos; written and recorded musical examples (with and without drums by Glass himself, and including full band performances); sidebars on related issues such as the various R&B subgenres; and helpful bibliographies, lists, and glossaries. Keep this one on your bottom shelf; you're going to want to return to it again and again. (Alfred) **Adam Budofsky**



★★★★★

LUDWIG DRUM COMPANY: A CENTURY OF THE MOST FAMOUS NAME IN DRUMS

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★★★★★

DRUM TIPS: PRACTICAL IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR DRUM-SET PERFORMANCE BY SAM RUTTENBERG

BOOK LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE \$24.95

Drummer/instructor Sam Rutenberg has compiled a useful source of knowledge here. The book is split into three parts: "Conceptual Tips" (traditional vs. matched grip, playing accents, comping), "Musical Tips" (rock patterns with triplets, fills), and "Technical Tips" (flams and ostinatos). In addition, Rutenberg goes into interpreting jazz charts, striking a bass drum in different ways, and a concept he calls the skeleton (the important notes that less important notes are leading to). All in all, a valuable set of drumset inner workings and applied musical ideas. (honeyrock.net) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

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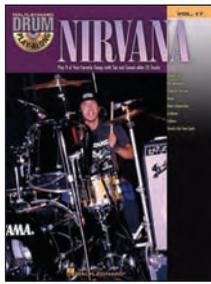
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NIRVANA DRUM PLAY-ALONG
BOOK/CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE \$14.95

Dave Grohl has become one of the most respected drummers on the scene, so who wouldn't want a play-along book filled with eight of his great performances with Nirvana? *Nirvana Drum Play-Along* comprises thirty-nine pages of easy-to-read tablature that will put you in touch with your inner grunge. Each song contains bpm, a drumkit legend, dynamic guides, and lyrics to follow along with. The included CD is a real bonus; each song

is performed impeccably and is tracked twice, first with drums and then without, so you can easily play along. With hits like "All Apologies," "Lithium," and "Smells Like Teen Spirit" included here, this is an ideal place to cop some of the greatest grooves and licks of the '90s. (Hal Leonard) **Fran Azzarto**

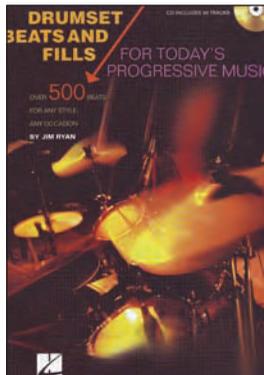


★★★★★

THE ULTIMATE PLAY ALONG FOR JAZZ DRUMMERS BY STEVE DAVIS
BOOK/CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED \$34.95

Drummer Steve Davis (Lynne Arriale Trio) offers a valuable book/CD package for players looking for instructional play-along jazz material. While Davis touches on bebop patterns, brushes, and improving time, the real meat here is the three CDs: two discs of drum-less piano and upright bass standards plus

one containing solo drum tracks of the same tunes. The book lays out not full charts but the form of each piece, along with playing suggestions and listening examples that the changes are based on. Try out your skills on the first two discs, and then compare Davis's advanced takes. (advancemusic.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



★★★★★

DRUMSET BEATS AND FILLS FOR TODAY'S PROGRESSIVE MUSIC:
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 BY JIM RYAN

BOOK/CD LEVEL: ALL \$19.95

This no-frills, no-BS, seventy-four-page book wastes no time on lengthy introductions; it gets right down to business by serving up hundreds of exercises that vary in intensity and complexity. The shuffle, swing, funk, and fusion sections sharpen your timing and hand-foot coordination by exploring concepts such as open hi-hat accents, syncopated 16th-note triplet and 32nd-note feels, and extended fills with alternate sticking. The odd-time-signatures chapter—what instructional book on progressive music would be complete without one?—incorporates an amalgam of tricky meters (such as 7/4, 7/8, 9/8, and 5/4) and challenging patterns, many of which have been introduced in the previous eight chapters. As popular music hybridizes at incredible rates, this streamlined tome will help to accelerate your progress along the ever-subdividing modern-music highway. (Hal Leonard) **Will Romano**



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BERNARD PURDIE JOINS BUCKET GROUP IN NEW JERSEY

On April 1, the Jaguar Bucket Ensemble of New Jersey's East Orange Campus High School received a special treat: a master class by none other than Bernard Purdie. Organized by the Jaguar leader, drummer/educator Pat O'Donnell, the Sabian-sponsored event featured plenty of laughs and spirited rhythms.

After *MD* associate editor Michael Parillo introduced the funk phenomenon to a student ensemble that numbered around forty, Purdie offered a few words on how knowing your craft—and always wearing a smile—will open doors in the music business. He beamed as O'Donnell con-

ducted the kids through several original pieces; in addition to buckets, the instruments included Joia Tubes, bamboo chimes, bass, and piano. The ensemble, which has been featured on ABC News and has performed with the NJ Symphony, flashed nifty stick maneuvers and achieved varied sounds by lifting and dropping their buckets to the floor while they played.

And then it was Purdie time. He listened to a few choruses of O'Donnell's bucket-based tribute, "The Purdie Shuffle," and joined in by playing his percolating signature beat along with the students. The drummer traced a path from African

clave to jazz to blues to R&B and funk and eventually to his two-bar shuffle, which, he said, was meant to mimic the sound of a locomotive. Always the supportive drummer who elevates the sound of those around him, Purdie held down a bouncing, unstoppable groove as junior Al-Shamir Solomon played fiery fills on a second kit. As a nod to Purdie's stint on the throne in the Broadway revival of *Hair*, O'Donnell conducted his group—and its special guest—through a funky finale of "On Broadway."

For more on the Jaguar Bucket Ensemble, email info@bucketmusic.com.



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On Sunday, March 29, KoSA visited Lehman College in the Bronx, New York, with clinicians **Memo Acevedo**, **Victor Rendón**, **Bobby Sanabria**, and **Aldo Mazza**. The event was dedicated to timbale/bongo player Manny Oquendo, who passed away on March 25. Sanabria presented a clinic titled *Clave, The Key: A Rhythmic Journey From Africa To The New World*. He demonstrated how the five-note rhythm of the clave is indeed the key to unlocking the roots of Afro-Cuban music, and he showed its presence in present-day American music. Memo Acevedo and Victor Rendón concentrated their part of the event on developing timbale solos. They began with general concepts and proceeded to a demonstration of one-, two-, and four-bar phrases, complete with audience participation. KoSA founder Aldo Mazza (above right) covered several topics including the history and development of *songo* in Cuba, from its percussion origins to the drumset concepts that developed from it. The event culminated in the eighty-piece Lehman College Concert Band, led by Alan Hollander, performing "Mambo #5," arranged by Rendón and Armando Rodríguez. Former New York Philharmonic percussionist Morris "Arnie" Lang joined the group on timpani.



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UPCOMING EVENTS



Simon Phillips

GROZNJAN 2009 INTERNATIONAL PERCUSSION CAMP

The third annual East-meets-West Groznan International Percussion Summer Camp will be held August 6 through 13 at the Jeunesses Musicales International World Meeting Centre in the fourteenth-century Venetian village of Groznan, Croatia. The picturesque backdrop of this ancient artists' village, overlooking lush, sprawling vineyards and the Adriatic Sea, is as much of an attraction as the world-class instructors who have graced the highly regarded summer camp (including Jojo Mayer, Marco Minnemann, John Riley, Gary Chaffee, Pete Riley, Kim Plainfield, and Nippy Noya).

This year's lineup of international faculty features studio legend **Simon Phillips** (U.K./U.S.), Latin jazz great **Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez** (Cuba/U.S.), global percussion master **Pete Lockett** (U.K.), international percussion veteran **Nana Tsiobe** (Africa), *MD* contributing writer **Mike Haid** (U.S.), and camp director/percussionist **Petar Curic** (Croatia). The weeklong session includes master classes, clinics, concerts, seminars, and roundtable discussions. For more information, visit myspace.com/groznanpercussion.

NOT SO MODERN DRUMMER TO HOST JULY EVENTS

On July 18 and 19, *Not So Modern Drummer* magazine publisher George Lawrence will host two simultaneous events at the Sound Check rehearsal facility in Nashville: the Southern Drum Show and the Snare Drum Olympics. The Southern Drum Show, which is open to the public, will feature exhibits and sales from vintage drum dealers, custom drum builders, parts suppliers, retail shops, and major drum, cymbal, and accessory manufacturers and distributors.

Lawrence, the promoter of the show, is also the owner of George's Drum Shop (Akron, Ohio) and a partner at Famous Drums. He's the drummer for the band Poco and has written several drum instruction books. Details regarding exhibitors, admission, schedules, and the Snare Drum Olympics can be found online at notsomoderndrummer.com; Lawrence can be reached at george@notsomoderndrummer.com.



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Our latest kit comes from solo artist and drum designer Jason Zaroslinski of Queen Creek, Arizona. Jason, who's been playing drums for twenty-seven of his thirty-one years, gives Terry Bozzio and Mike Portnoy a run for their money with his massive Pearl Masters Custom MMX kit in "platinum mist," which has 4-ply maple shells with 2-ply reinforcement rings.

"It's taken me two years to build this amazing work of art that I'm pleased to say is my drumset," Zaroslinski says. The sound possibilities are endless when you add the technology of Roland's TD-20 brain plus two PD-105 mesh V-Pads, three PD-125 mesh V-Pads, and a KD-120 kick drum, all pumping through a Roland TD-700 drum amp. "With this kit," Jason adds, "you have the best of both worlds, acoustic and electronic, and



the design makes it very easy to play—if you can believe that."

To arrange all his gear, Zaroslinski uses three Pearl Icon racks connected as one. His setup includes twenty-four cymbal arms and thirty-four Icon mounts for the drums, hardware, and fun stuff like

Rototoms, tambourines, wind chimes, and Granite Blocks. Jason sums up his mighty arsenal by saying, "Your imagination is your only limitation. Why should your drumkit limit your talent—or your playing?"

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 billya@moderndrummer.com. Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message. Photos cannot be returned.



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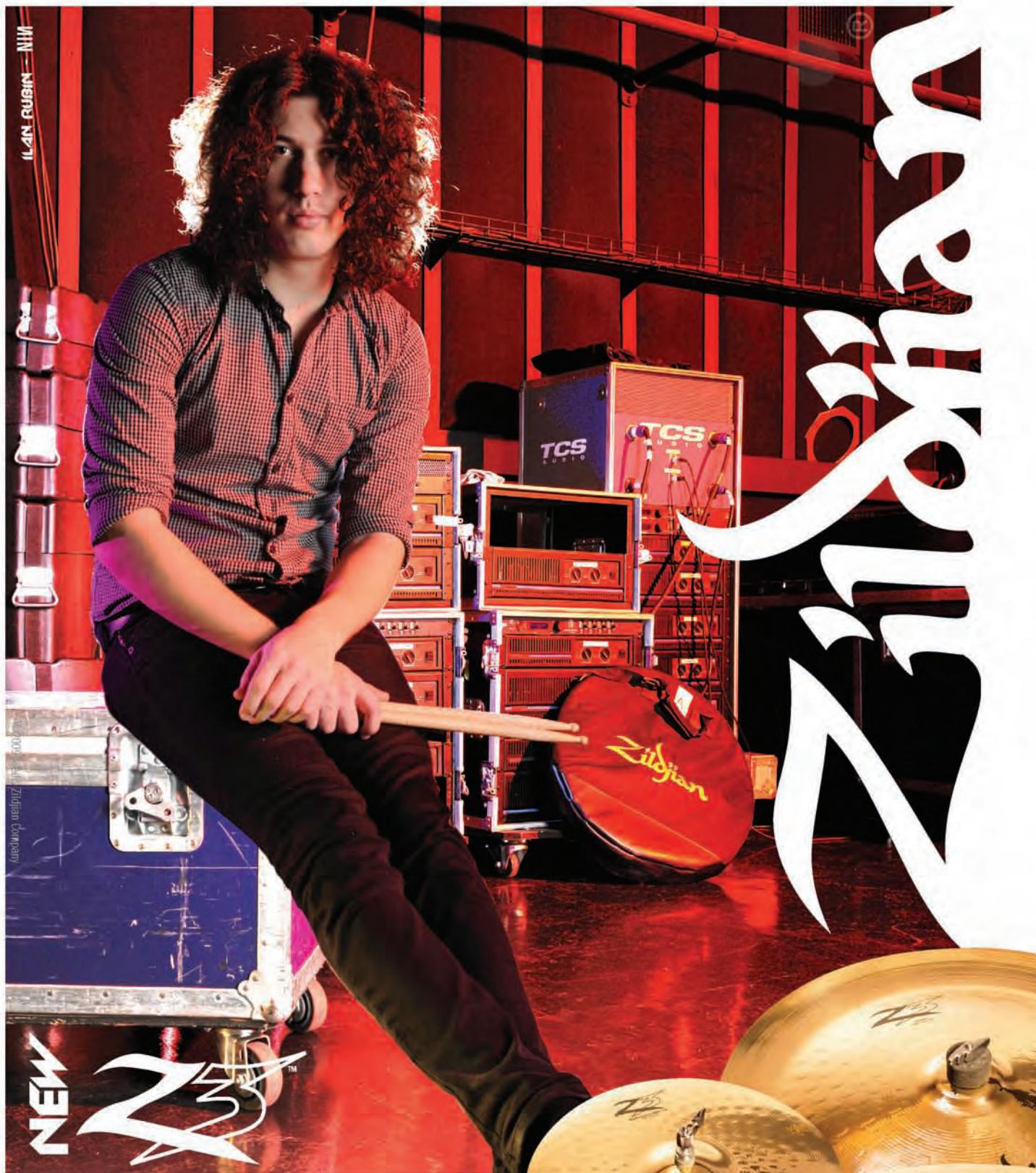
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