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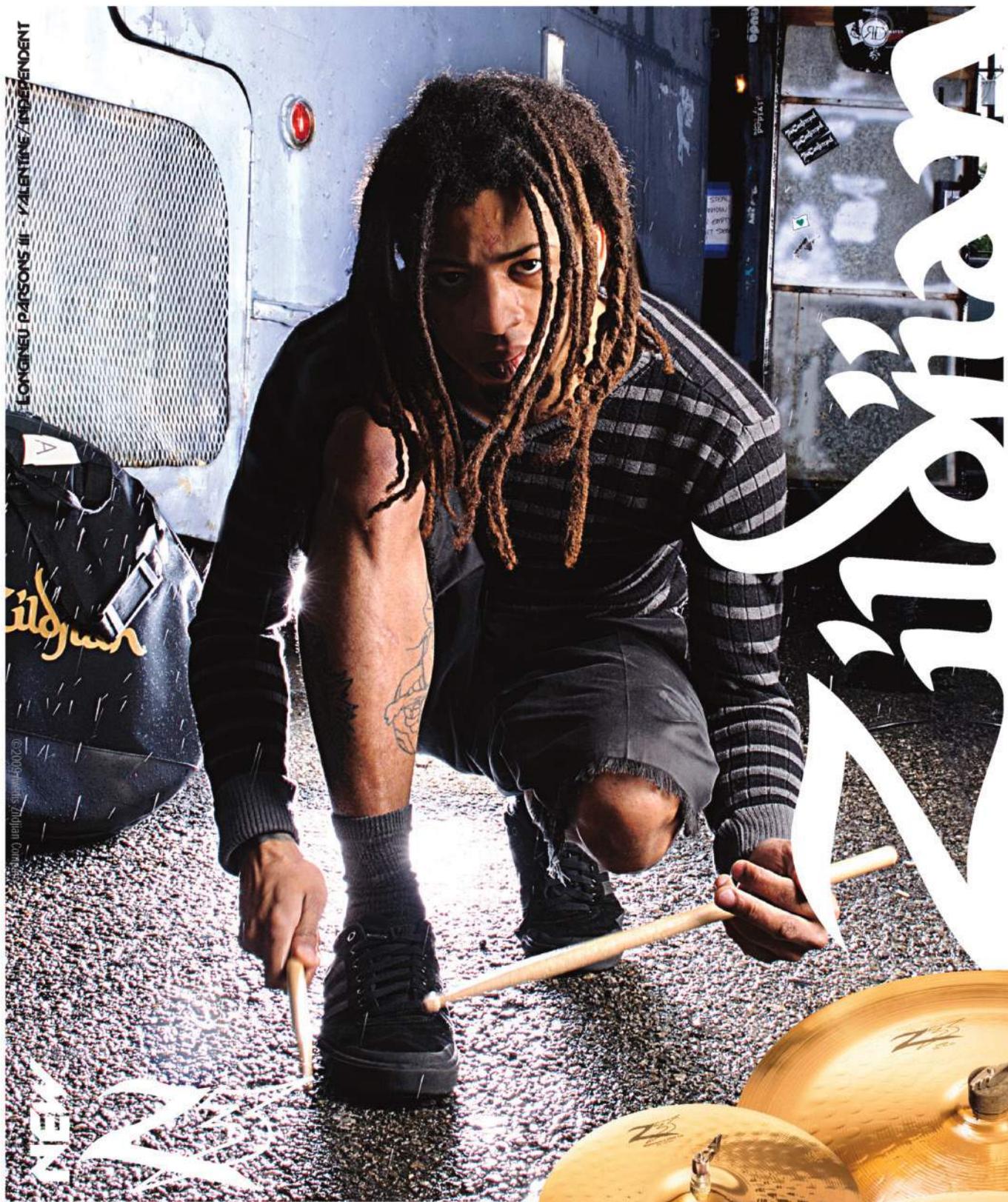
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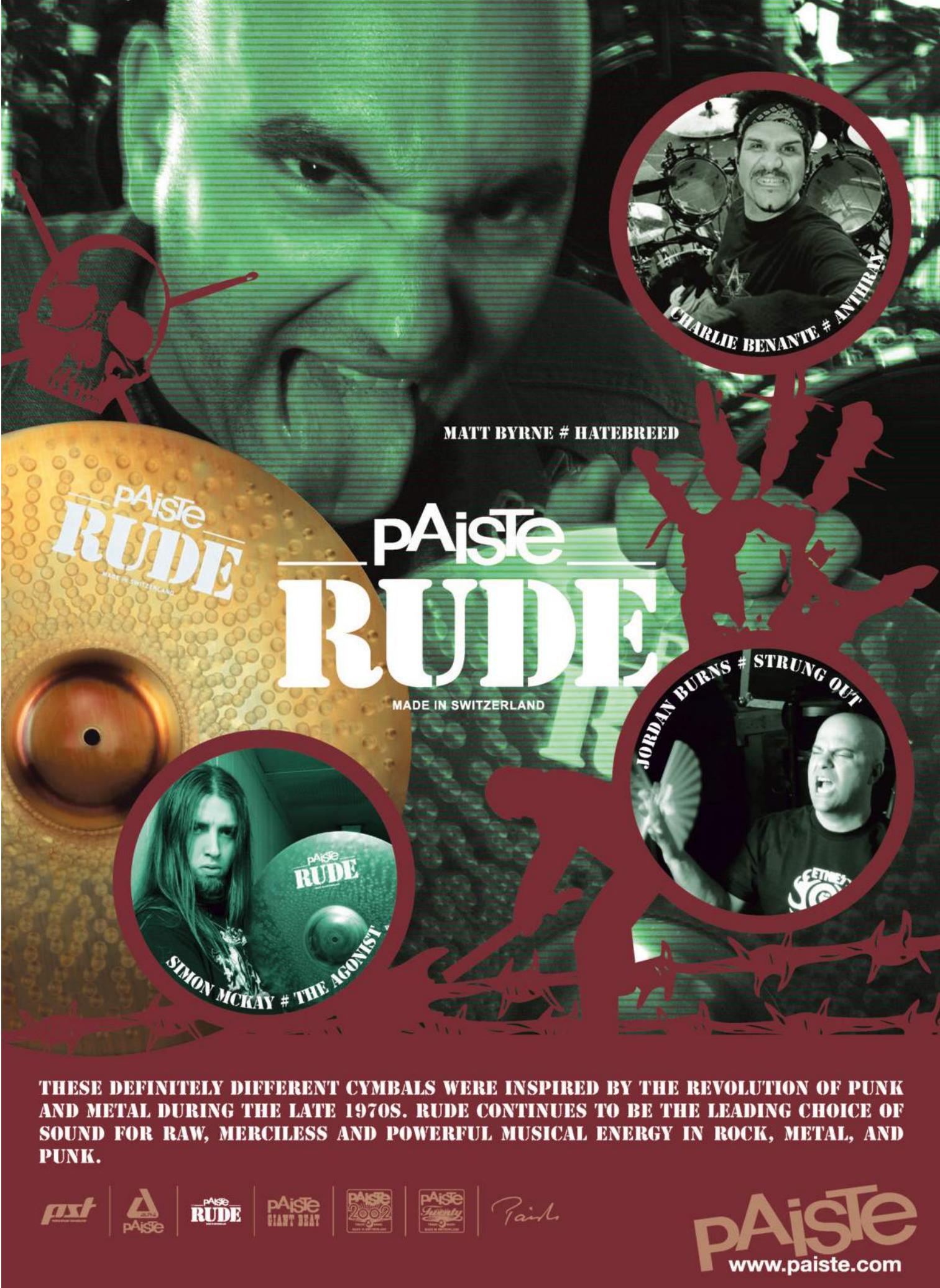
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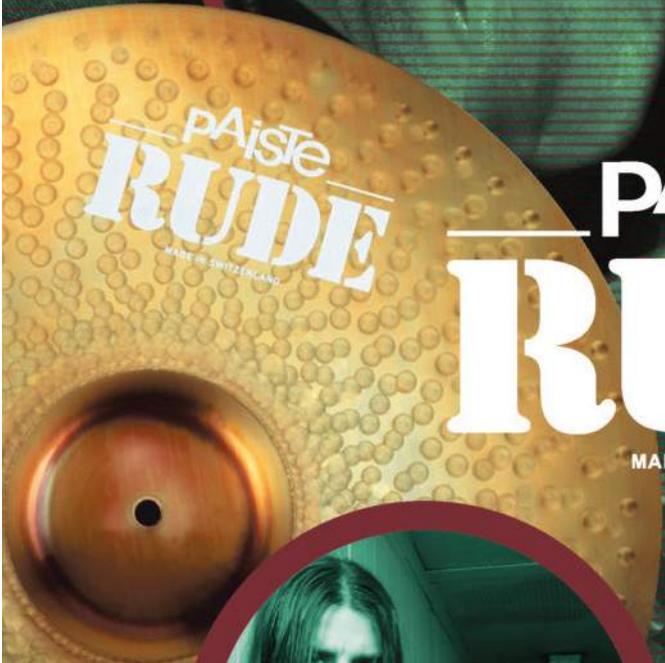
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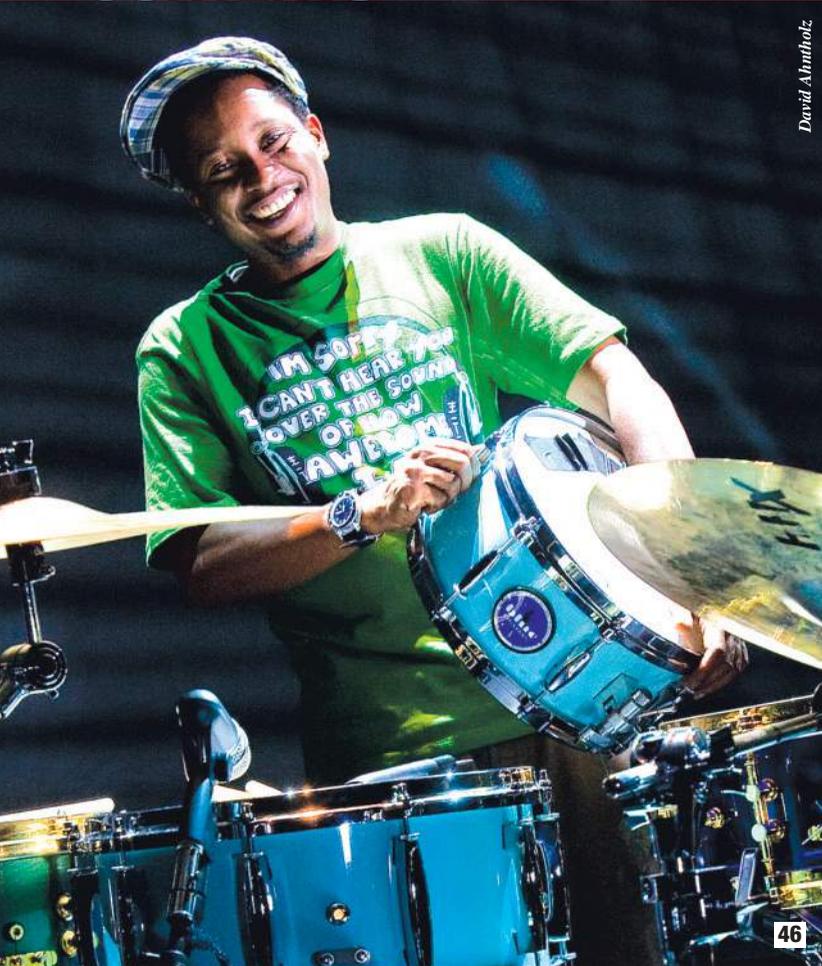
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# DRUMMER TO DRUMMER

If I asked you about your most memorable, most fun moments at the kit, you might recall that certain gig where the band and the crowd meshed as if they were of one collective mind, or that time in the studio where your thoughts receded, you shut out the world, and you could just sit back and play.

At least that's how it goes for me: Most of my prized drumming memories involve performance of some sort. But then I remember that the journey to the stage or studio is often just as rewarding as the arrival. And that's when I think about all those hours of letting it rip in the basement with my drummer buddies. Those secret-trading, beat-sharing, wisecracking, trash-talking, drum-only days of not worrying about locking in with the bassist, not caring about sculpting sound for the microphones, not even remotely thinking about playing for the song.

I've learned a lot in going back and forth with my fellow timekeepers. After all, it's important to have a fresh infusion of ideas to keep your mind on point, and sharing a kit (or, if you're lucky, a couple of kits) with another drummer is a great way to achieve this. It's informative simply to hear a peer play the same beat or lick you just played—because it always sounds different. Maybe your pal plays louder than you, or softer; maybe he or she has a slightly varied concept of beat placement.

And maybe you hear things you'd like to cop and bring to your own playing. Whether you and your friend have similar drumming styles or one of you plays jazz and the other rock, you'll both learn something when you gather around the set.

We have a couple of perspectives on the drum hang in this issue. In our new Drummer To Drummer column, friends and collaborators Jimmy Chamberlin and William Mohler interview each other, trading licks verbally rather than percussively and finding insight into our craft. And in our cover story, Chris Dave, veteran of countless multi-drummer shedding (and shredding) sessions, offers some specifics on how his practice-room gatherings helped push his playing even farther over the top.

Of course, as the well-studied Dave might say, it's vital to have good teachers too, as they can help us focus our influx of influences and information in the most productive and efficient way. Along those lines, these pages contain plenty of expert instruction, including a funky hi-hat tutorial by Jim Payne, a new practice routine from Henrique De Almeida, and chops-building exercises by Bill Bachman. Drummer to drummer indeed!

# MODERN DRUMMER

Volume 34, Number 2

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**MODERN DRUMMER** magazine (ISSN 0194-4533) is published monthly by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.**, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. PERIODICALS MAIL POSTAGE paid at Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2010 by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.** All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

**EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: MODERN DRUMMER Publications**, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Tel: (973) 239-4140. Fax: (973) 239-7139. Email: [mdinfo@moderndrummer.com](mailto:mdinfo@moderndrummer.com).

**MODERN DRUMMER** welcomes manuscripts and photographic material, however, cannot assume responsibility for them. Such items must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** US and Canada \$34.97 per year; \$56.97, two years. Other international \$59.97 per year. Single copies \$5.99.

**SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE:** Modern Drummer, PO Box 274, Oregon, IL 61061-9920. **Change of address:** Allow at least six weeks for a change. Please provide both old and new address. Call (800) 551-3786 or (815) 732-9004.

**MUSIC DEALERS:** Modern Drummer is available for resale at bulk rates. Direct correspondence to Modern Drummer Retail Vision, 2 Maple Street, Suite 6, Middlebury, VT 05753, (800) 381-1288.

**INTERNATIONAL LICENSING REPRESENTATIVE:** Robert Abramson & Associates, Inc., Libby Abramson, President, PO Box 740346, Boynton Beach, FL 33474-0346, [abramson@prodigy.net](mailto:abramson@prodigy.net).

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Modern Drummer, PO Box 274, Oregon, IL 61061-9920.

**Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 41480017** Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: PO Box 875, Stn A, Windsor ON N9A 6P2

**MEMBER:** National Association Of Music Merchants, American Music Conference, Percussive Arts Society, Music Educators National Conference, Percussion Marketing Council, Music Magazine Publishers Association

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## BRANN DAILOR

I really enjoyed the article in the November '09 issue on Brann Dailor of Mastodon. It was a mirror image of my musical upbringing, knowledge, and attitude toward drumming and the music industry as a whole.

For me, the key points Brann touched on were: being a self-taught drummer, which allows a musician to create his or her own technique; not caring about figuring out and counting odd-time signatures but rather focusing on creating the right drum part to make things work; being ultra-prepared for the studio; recording the songs in one live take without the use of much editing; and not allowing technology to take precedent over the art and musicality of the songs. I have always agreed with the old-school concepts of predominantly using analog recording methods and a musician being able to play any recorded song live as well. We are all human; don't "cheat" the natural flow of the music by editing parts. Would Picasso use Wite-Out to fix a brushstroke?

**Rolf Gunnar Hauge**

## RAY LUZIER

Thank you for the article on Ray Luzier in your November '09 issue. He is one of the best and most underrated players out there. I happened to see David Lee Roth at a club in Delaware back in 2004 and was blown away by this unknown drummer. He really



stole the show. Also loved the insight on how to nail an audition.

**Mike**

## KNOW WHAT YOU LIKE, KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T

Wow! I've been reading *Modern Drummer* for twenty-two years, and Adam Budofsky's Editor's Overview in the November 2009 issue was the most articulate and relevant thing ever discussed in an editorial context. "No one makes groundbreaking art by spreading themselves thin." Amazingly simple—but so true. I consider myself one of those well-rounded, money-making types who has managed to make a lot of money in my twenty-year career, but I've recently switched my focus to being the best *me* I could ever be—income be damned! It took me until my forties to figure this out. Please, nobody else make that same mistake. You'll find that all you have to show for it is, well, yes, income—and a lot of gray hair—but perhaps not the respect and fulfillment you were searching for in the beginning.

**Bryon Atterberry**

## NOUVEAU RETRO

I've been catching up on my article reading and just thought I would comment on what a fine job Daniel Glass did with his "Nouveau Retro" series of articles. It's really important that *MD's* younger readers be exposed to the history of the drums (and music) in order to fully understand how today's drumming has developed. Daniel put a nice perspective on all of this and broke it down in a way that makes his articles informative in a historical sense. They can be used as a reference guide for younger drummers entrenched

in today's popular genres if and when they decide to extend their drumming endeavors into blues and jazz. Further, the series lets them know that the styles Daniel describes were the original pop music of the day and are the beginnings from which today's pop music developed. The better today's drummers understand the foundation of what came before them, the better and stronger drummers they will become in their own chosen realms.

**Mat Marucci**

## JEFF "TAIN" WATTS STYLE & ANALYSIS

In Dr. David Glover's otherwise excellent Style & Analysis article on Jeff Watts in the October '09 *MD*, he mentioned Jeff always playing "heavy maple Sonor drums." This is not quite correct. Although Jeff is seen playing his black Hilite Exclusive kit (with maple shells) in the interview spread, the Sonor Phonic kit described in the setup detail (which is used on Jeff's latest CD, *Watts*) has heavy beech shells, and the Sonorlite kit he is also shown playing has birch shells. These may be considered esoteric details, but if someone is trying to replicate or better understand Jeff's sound, I think they're of some importance. Thanks very much!

**William Aceves**

## DROPPED BEAT

The photos of Matt Abts on pages 60 and 61 of the January issue should have been credited to Jay Blakesberg.

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# UPDATE

## SHINEDOWN'S BARRY KERCH

When you rock hard for a living, battle scars are just part of the cost of doing business. A road warrior grits his teeth and gets on with the show.

On a daily basis, Shinedown drummer Barry Kerch fights the effects of a badly broken arm he suffered when he was a kid. And with the band spending 300 days a year on the road, adding to that challenge is staying on top of the injuries that often plague busy drummers—carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, golf elbow... But Kerch refuses to miss a beat in a live situation. "I'm proactive about taking care of myself every day," he says. "There are painful nights, but that's what happens in your thirties. You just have to take better care of yourself. I do things like keeping a loose grip and thinking of the Moeller technique."

Kerch isn't playing for Jewel, either. Shinedown tours with bands like Nickelback, Staind,

and Seether; the group's shows are theatrical, and very physically demanding. "There's a lot more arm movement than is necessary," Kerch admits. "But I make every show." On the road the drummer uses everything at his disposal to stay healthy, including an electric steam machine, physical therapy, and massage. "The only care for overuse is under use," he says. "In Shinedown I don't have that luxury."

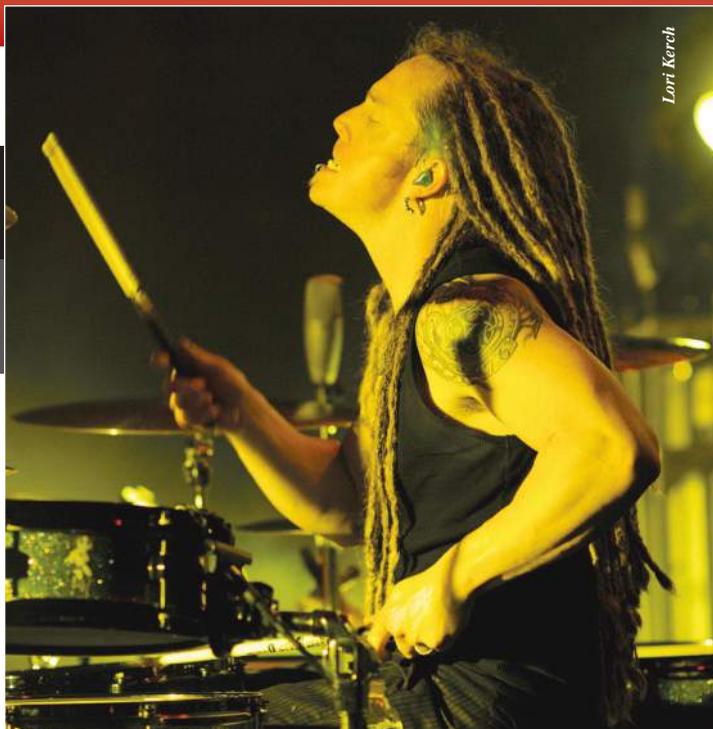
The band's latest album, 2008's *The Sound Of Madness*, which includes three number-one rock singles, also features some special drum moments. The cut "Sound Of Madness" finds Kerch channeling AC/DC's Phil Rudd in glorious fashion. "That song is a rush the entire way through," Barry says. "I'm really holding back, with simple 16th-note fills, and I made sure they were right on the dime. I pushed the chorus a little bit, and during the verse, where there's a snaky guitar riff, I played behind the beat."

On "The Crow & The Butterfly," Kerch

nailed the song's emotions and intensity so well, producer Rob Cavallo was inspired to come out from behind the console, throw his arms out to give the drummer a hug, and say, "That's how you play a song!" As Kerch explains, "We did many takes, but the [version on the album] is the second one. I just knew it was feeling right; my eyes were closed, and I didn't even have to look at the drums."

Kerch has a practice routine that's specifically designed to bring strength and diversity to his playing. "With all that technique in my back pocket," he says, "I'm able to completely play for the songs. A lot of drummers can play different fills. But playing them with the right feel and emphasis is what supports a song."

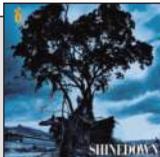
**Steven Douglas Losey**



Lori Kerch

### BREAKOUT BEATS

Shinedown's debut, 2003's *Leave A Whisper*, was a grand statement for the Jacksonville, Florida, band. The disc leaned on melodic Southern rock stylings and featured plenty of apt drumming. The recording of the album's first single, "45," which reached number three on the mainstream rock charts, actually served as Barry Kerch's audition with the band. The drumming on the cut was exactly what the members were looking for, and Kerch ended up with the gig.



### BLOG INSIGHTS

"When developing a drum part, try to make each song unique. I mean, that's the point, right? I like to think that anyone who knows my band's material could tell what song it is, even if all they heard was the drums."

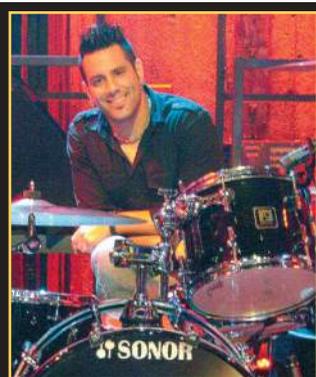
—Final Gravity's **John Chominsky**

"I'm a hard rock drummer and always have been. This was solidified when I received *Kiss Alive II* on my eighth birthday. From the moment I heard the roar of the crowd and the opening chords of 'Detroit Rock City,' it was clear what I needed to do with my life."

—Ten Year Vamp's **Gregory Nash**

Quotes pulled from the Blog page at [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com).

### ON TOUR



**Rich Redmond** with Jason Aldean

**Will Noon** with Straylight Run

**Kenny Aronoff** with John Fogerty

**Derek Ries** with Push Play

**Alex Alexander** with Philip Of Saba

**Jonathan Diener** with the Swellers

**John Blackwell** with Crystal Kay

### OUT NOW ON CD

**Todd Sucherman** produced and played on *Under The Surface*, the new album by his wife, singer Taylor Mills. "It can be a tricky situation producing your wife," Todd says. "There are extra land mines to navigate through, but ultimately the reward is that much greater. Taylor's an amazing singer; with her it's all about the song and the emotion, not about vocal pyrotechnics."

**Xavier Muriel** is on Buckcherry's latest CD, *Live & Loud 2009*. "I'm really proud of the drum sound on this record," X tells *MD*. "Trying to capture that perfect sound live has always been hard, but I think we got damn close. And there are no triggers at all—just great-sounding acoustic drums."

### ALSO ON THE SHELVES

Chil Pill: *Aggressively Humble*  
Jonathon Haffner: *Life On Wednesday*

Kittie: *In The Black*  
Holdsworth Pasqua Haslip Wackerman:  
*Blues For Tony*

Vinnie Moore: *To The Core*  
Say Anything: *S/T*

**Zach Hill**  
**Jochen Rueckert**,  
**Kenny Wollesen**  
**Mercedes Lander**  
**Chad Wackerman**

**Van Romaine**  
**Coby Linder**



# THE PIXIES' DAVID LOVERING

For the pioneering alt-rock timekeeper, YouTube isn't just a means of passing time, **it's a learning tool.**



Some of the more uncomfortable behind-the-curtain moments in the Pixies' 2006 reunion tour documentary, *loudQUIETloud*, were edited for dramatic effect, according to drummer David Lovering. Take the scenes where Lovering—who since the '90s has also been working as a magician ("the Scientific Phenomenalist," as he bills himself)—is struggling to make it through certain songs live.

"The Pixies are a very boring band," Lovering says with a laugh. "A film crew followed us around for all that time, and they had absolutely nothing. Things were embellished in the film to show me having problems playing and this and that. And it made for a dramatic movie. We could have said, 'Change it,' but then there would have been nothing [dramatic] at all. I was the one who reluctantly said, 'Okay, leave it.'"

A story line from the film that was not edited for effect was Lovering's budding love affair with the iPod. Everywhere he went—backstage, on the bus, in the hotel—there was the iPod, as though it was surgically attached to the drummer's ears.

The iPod's buds spent a lot of time in Lovering's ears again as David prepared for the ongoing shows the Pixies launched last fall to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of their breakthrough 1989 album, *Doolittle*, a noise-pop masterpiece that opened doors a crack for Pixies worshipper Kurt Cobain to eventually tear off the hinges with Nirvana. And in addition to relying on the iPod to help him relearn songs he hadn't played in years, like the punk-minded two-step "Weird At My School," Lovering used another marvel of modern technology to get up to speed: YouTube.

"Watching old videos on YouTube is mostly what I used to help me rehearse for this tour," he says. "I listened to everything repeatedly on my iPod. But sometimes listening doesn't help me to actually *know* what I'm playing. It was watching the videos—anything live where I could see what I was doing—that made it easier to remember what I had been playing."

While Lovering admits the "intricacy of fills and the speed" of some of the old songs are beyond his grasp these days (he hadn't touched the drums in years before the Pixies regrouped in 2004), he's reached a comfort level he's quite happy with on many of the tunes through woodshedding and patience—and that YouTube tutelage.

"There's just some stuff I can't do anymore," he explains matter-of-factly. "A song like 'Allison,' there's a lot of fills, and I was watching the video and couldn't get my head around it. Like, *That can't be me; there's no way I pulled that off.* So I just practiced and practiced and practiced and found a way to do it now. It's not as good, probably, as when I was younger—I think age plays a factor. But I'm still pulling off what I can do. And I'm happy there." **Patrick Berkery**

## BREAKOUT BEATS

Get beyond the gated snare drum sound, and there's a lot of rock-solid drumming brilliance to get down with on *Doolittle* (1989), which displays the whisper-to-roar dynamic that's typical of the Pixies. David Lovering plays the kit like a clubber with the mind of a technician on "Tame"—dig the 8th- to 16th-note hi-hat transitions and the stop-on-a-dime ending—and hits the backbeats just right to support the hooks on "Here Comes Your Man."



# NIGHT RANGER'S KELLY KEAGY

Self-preservation motivated him to hone his singing and songwriting chops. **Thirty years on, KK's "business plan" has clearly paid dividends.**

Kelly Keagy has been singing and drumming for Night Ranger since the early '80s. Keagy wrote and sang lead on the band's biggest hit, 1983's "Sister Christian," and his straightforward drumming style and ability to play for the song have kept him working for over thirty years. "Laying down the right foundation with the rhythm section is where the spark comes from in rock music," Keagy says. "The simplicity of my playing really helps, because the songs dictate that."

The drummer's relationship with bassist and co-lead vocalist Jack Blades is a big reason for Night Ranger's longevity. "We collaborate on songwriting and vocal ideas all the time," Keagy says. "Usually the bass player and the drummer are the best guys you can fire. We decided we were going to write and sing all the songs to always have a job."

The band's latest opus, *Hole In The Sun*, finds Keagy playing grooves that often evoke classic Night Ranger while at times echoing modern groups like Seether and Shinedown. "You're Gonna Hear From Me" is a cut that leans heavily on the rudiments while still sounding fresh and alive. "That was a tom and kick drum fill played over a shuffle-type beat," Keagy says. "The intro was a marching cadence that I learned in high school."

Keagy had the opportunity to break out of his norm when Night Ranger was asked to rerecord a few of its classic cuts in an acoustic vein for the disc, which was released in 2008. "On 'Don't Tell Me You Love Me,' I used bongos with mallets, and brushes as well," Kelly says. "It was interesting coming up with new parts for older songs that I've played the same way for so many years. Using different sticks and brushes really enhanced my playing. It was amazing how that helped spark new ideas for me."

Keagy has sung live ever since he can remember, a task that has scared off many drummers. "I have to stay in good shape because it's pretty tough to coordinate singing and playing," he says. "I play fairly hard as well, so I need to exercise and make sure I keep up my lung capacity. I always warm up for the drums and vocals before we play. That's incredibly important."

In conceiving his song-oriented drum parts, Keagy has typically written patterns that play off the vocals rather than align with the bass line. "I always tried to bring in signature parts," he explains, "things I grew up learning from playing in marching bands—rudiments, double-stroke rolls, and paradiddles, just simple things like that."

Night Ranger has managed to stay together for nearly three decades and maintain its relevance along the way, and Keagy has been the drummer for every step, thanks to his stripped-down approach. "I've found that melodic music is all about the vocal melody, and we also had two guitar players coming up with really complicated parts," Kelly says. "My role has always been keeping things simple and strong on the bottom, and that's what I do."

**Steven Douglas Losy**



## BREAKOUT BEATS

While 1982's *Dawn Patrol*, featuring songs like "Don't Tell Me You Love Me" and "Sing Me Away," propelled Night Ranger into the arenas, it was 1983's sophomore album, *Midnight Madness*, that brought the band from openers to headliners. Cuts like the guitar-heavy "(You Can Still) Rock In America" proved Night Ranger to be powerful musicians and hit makers. Add Kelly Keagy's lead vocals and big mounting tom fills on "Sister Christian," a number-five smash written by the drummer, and you've got a recipe for success.



# BOBBY DRAKE

by Patrick Berkery

**He came up through the ranks of the famed Minneapolis rock scene and has been banging it out with celebrated indie rock band the Hold Steady since their 2006 breakthrough, *Boys And Girls In America*. In the process, Bobby Drake has been around the world a few times and has seen and learned some things.**

**1 GIVE THE SINGER SOME.** When I first started playing with these guys I thought, *Craig Finn has got a lot to say—I can't step on his feet*. Last thing the new guy wants is the frontman looking back at him and telling him to be quiet. But it's pretty natural for me to stay out of the way. I'm not trying to reinvent the drums. I just play for the song.

**2 STOW 'EM AWAY.** I have a couple of kits in storage overseas. We just leave our stuff there because it's very expensive to fly gear. And some of the rental gear over there can be a total nightmare. I've had kits with heads that were beat to hell and looked like garbage bags. One time I got stuck with a beat-up Vistalite kit. You'd think it would have been good, but it was trashed. Some of those kits have been played a million times and haven't really been taken care of.

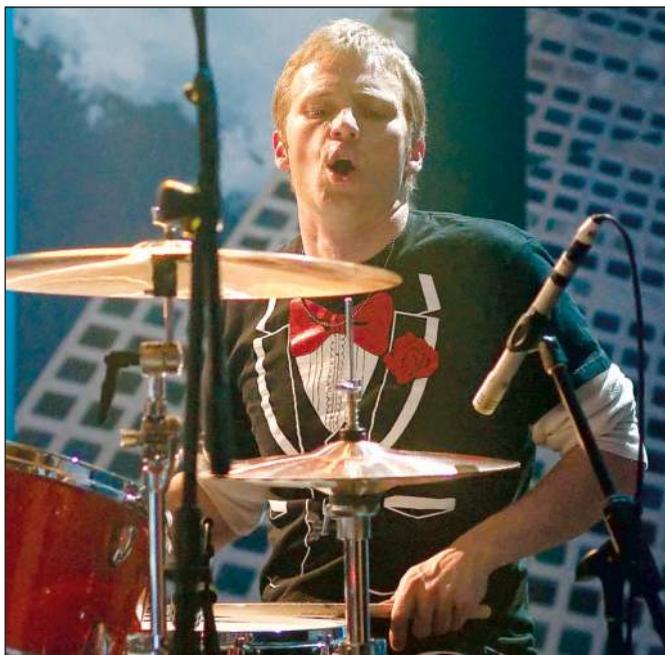
**3 PARTY SEMI-HARD.** I don't party very hard at all on the road. It's different if you're the bass player, but the drummer has to hold it together. I'll have a couple of beers a night and just keep it low-key. And before a gig I'll get away from everybody else and not really meditate but take some deep breaths and clear my head. It was tougher to do when we were playing small clubs. I'd have to go into the kitchen sometimes. But in arenas it's much easier, because the backstages are quite large.

**4 GO FOR THE GOALS.** As a band, we really don't talk about goals amongst ourselves. But I do have personal goals. Like getting a tour bus, that was a goal. I knew we would. And I want to play Madison Square Garden. It's totally doable, and a worthy thing to shoot for. That said, I don't like to get too involved in the business end of things. I don't want to be swayed from focusing on the music and my drumming.

**5 YOU HAVE TO MAKE ENDS MEET.** Up until about a year ago I was still working when we weren't on the road. But now I'm living in one of the most expensive cities in the world, and I'm not working. That's a goal I've met. Some musicians like to reinvent themselves when they have to find work. I was doing a little bit of everything: a little construction, fixing cars, working the door at a bar in Manhattan—and I'm a little guy. It was mostly NYU students, though, a pretty harmless bunch.

**6 REMEMBER YOUR INSPIRATIONS.** One of my favorite shows ever was Jane's Addiction at the Roy Wilkins Auditorium in Minneapolis, during the *Ritual De Lo Habitual* tour. Seeing Stephen Perkins shredding just blew my mind. It was life changing. The way the whole band seemed to communicate was something, and it really seemed to center around his playing. I was very taken with the way he played. It was powerful—tribal and hypnotic. That show still inspires me.

**7 EMBRACE THE CLICK.** I usually record with a click. It was a little intimidating at first, because the microscope you're under is so revealing. But I learned to relax. The click is there to help you. I'll still drag behind the click a bit. But some songs need a little push and pull. So many people say that the click takes away from this or that. I just think of it as another member of the band—one that doesn't mess up or get a per diem.



**8 TECH YOURSELF.** I still don't have a drum tech, and that's fine. Now that we're playing bigger rooms, maybe I should at least be polishing my cymbals. But I don't. And when I change the heads depends on what I'm looking for at that time. Sometimes heads sound a little too bright when they're brand new. After a few shows, they sound really good. I change out the snare head pretty much every show, though.

**9 EVERY BAND SHOULD HAVE A MECHANIC.** On our first bus tour, the bus broke down—it was leaking oil everywhere. So I ran to the Flying J, got the parts we needed, and fixed it, right there on the side of the highway. The whole back end of the bus opens up like a giant cupboard, so you're able to poke around pretty easily. The bus driver was super-stoked. As were my bandmates.

**10 GET OVER YOUR GRUDGES.** We had a little beef with Kings Of Leon. Right when they blew up in England, we opened for them in London, just a one-off show. Their dressing room was on the third floor of this place, and ours was on the second. As we're trying to go down the hallway to get to the stage, one of their roadies says, "You can't go down there." And we're like, "But we're playing!" Earlier at soundcheck there were some issues as well. We were in the room watching them play, and they were talking some stuff. You know, it's harmless. I'm over it. I'm sure they're rad dudes. And it's probably not even them; it could be the tour manager. Who knows? I'm actually a huge fan. I think their new record is awesome.

You can hear Bobby Drake on the Hold Steady's latest live DVD/CD, *A Positive Rage*.



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daniel adair | nickelback

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When you play for a multi-platinum mega group like Nickelback and need the perfect kit for your upcoming stadium tour, there's only one place to go, the DW Custom Shop in California. For this particular tour set up, Daniel went with SSC, or Specialized Shell Configuration. SSC utilizes the latest advancements from the DW Custom Shop including VLT, X and VLX shell technologies. The result is a kit with a full tonal spectrum. A set with enough warmth and clarity for the studio, but all of the guts and volume to project in any sold-out arena.

[www.dwdrums.com](http://www.dwdrums.com)

For more on Daniel's Collector's Series kit and DW Custom Shop Shell Technology, log on to [www.youtube.com/drumworkshopinc](http://www.youtube.com/drumworkshopinc) 





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# LUDWIG

## VISTALITE JASON BONHAM ZEP SET by David Ciauro

**O**n December 10, 2007, Led Zeppelin reunited at London's O2 arena as part of the Ahmet Ertegun Education Fund benefit. News of the highly anticipated reunion caused absolute fan hysteria and a media frenzy. Jason Bonham proudly took the stage in honor of his father, John, paying tribute by debuting a revamped Ludwig Vistalite kit, akin to the amber Vistalites made famous by Bonzo in the classic Zeppelin performance film, *The Song Remains The Same*. The new kit sported some badass upgrades that Bonham and Ludwig were so stoked about that the company decided to offer the setup in a limited run of one hundred. We were lucky enough to get our hands on one before they were all snatched up.

The most obvious modifications Bonham made to the drums are the black powder-coated hardware and the yellow shells. Black and yellow naturally form a vivid combo, but the powder coating adds another dimension of contrast that makes the drums really pop. Although all the hoops and Imperial lugs are black powder-coated, per Jason's request, the swivel nuts and tension rods are black nickel-plated. The front head of the massive 26" kick displays the image of the ill-fated Hindenburg that graces the cover of Led Zeppelin's debut album. Whether intentional or not, to me the depiction of an album cover, rather than John Bonham's symbol of three interlocking circles, represents Led Zeppelin as a whole—and that's befitting considering the event for which the kit was made.

### CHANNELING BONHAM

Thanks to Jeff Ocheltree's *Trust Your Ears* DVD, anyone can discover how John Bonham tuned his drums. But the mystique surrounding Bonzo's sound goes well beyond tuning. It's a unity of his touch, his tuning, and the drums themselves. I'm further grateful to YouTube for allowing me the chance to hear snippets of the reunion show where I could check out how Jason tuned *his* kit. From what I

could gather from the cell-phone audio of those videos, he stayed pretty true to his father's tuning method: toms, floor, and kick tuned higher on the resonant heads than you'd expect, with the batter heads slightly lower to maximize attack, fullness, and projection.

Realizing this might be the only chance I'd ever have to come close to achieving "the Bonham sound," I followed suit, and what an amazing feeling it was. So rarely can you play along to some of your favorite songs and have your drums sound *exactly* like the record.

The 14x26 kick, with no port in the graphic head and just one felt strip on the clear Ludwig Weather Master Silver Dot batter head for added focus, yielded a huge sound with tons of attack and a gut-rumbling punch. Experimenting with different foot placements on the kick pedal, I found I could control an array of sounds and dynamics. This is something you just can't experience when you stuff a kick drum full of pillows.

I kept the toms and floors wide open and thoroughly enjoyed the ample attack that was emphasized by the clear Silver Dot batter heads. For big drums, these were very responsive, which gave me the freedom to express and control a full range of rich tones. Throughout my testing, I found that I was playing significantly lighter than usual but getting twice the volume. Sound burst off the batter heads, especially with the kick. When I played the drums with full force, they still offered as much tone as they did attack. But you don't need to bash them to get a big reaction. In a live setting, this helped me conserve energy.

The 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Supra-Phonic snare was simply amazing. With all due respect to the various other snares I've reviewed, my heart will always belong to the Supra-Phonic. I tuned the snare side very high and made sure to keep the snares from choking so they remained sensitive and responsive enough to articulate every ghost note. The batter head was also fairly taut without feeling choked, and the result was the perfect amount of

depth and an incredible warmth—a timeless sound.

Outfitting the snare with black hardware gives the kit a nice uniform look, and considering only a hundred kits will be made, this snare is sure to be a rare standout among other Supra-Phonics.

### WHOLE LOTTA LOUD

Hands down, this is the loudest kit I've ever played. To support this statement, I offer the following information. My practice studio is fairly soundproof; stand fifteen feet outside it, and a drumset sounds about as loud as the volume of a TV from two rooms away. Before any neighbors, my wife and daughter are the closest victims in proximity, and in the three years I've had this studio, not once have I been told that my drums—or even a 2 A.M. band rehearsal—have awoken either my wife or child. Not only did this kit shake my daughter awake, but my wife could tell what Zeppelin song I was jamming to. And she was on the opposite side of the house, about a hundred feet from the studio in my detached garage.

Grasping the sheer power of the kit, I found I could bring it to only one gig, where my band was in a large room with a massive PA system. That night, the kit stole the show. Miked up, the drums just enveloped the room and drew nothing but compliments from the band, the soundman, and friends in the audience. I spent a lot of time between sets talking to people about the kit, and there was a common theme: awesome look, awesome sound. Throughout the night, after every third song or so, I couldn't help but tear into one of Bonham's famed grooves. Perhaps not the most professional move on my part, but hey, *carpe diem*, right?

### THE LEGACY CONTINUES

John Bonham and the Ludwig name are synonymous. Together they achieved a sound that is still both coveted and elusive. Jason Bonham made this kit his own without messing with the mojo of his father's famed Vistalites, bringing the Bonham-Ludwig legacy into a new era. His personal aesthetic details make for one phenomenal-looking kit that brings the classic Zeppelin sound into a modern age. To make each of these kits even more collectible, the *Led Zeppelin* graphic heads will be signed by Jason personally. List price: \$5,348.

[ludwig-drums.com](http://ludwig-drums.com)

## KEEPING IT REAL

The sizes of Jason Bonham's Vistalites remain true to Ludwig's "Zep Set" configuration: a 14x26 kick, a 10x14 rack tom, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms, and a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Supra-Phonic LM402 snare. The acrylic shells are the standard  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thickness, with reinforced seams, and are outfitted with classic blue/olive badges.





Ian Travis

# CRAVIOTTO

## COPPER DIAMOND SERIES SNARES

by David Ciauro



Johnny Craviotto's drums go hand in hand with expert solid-wood shell craftsmanship, stellar sound and performance, everyday gigging functionality, and striking design. Adrian Kirchler, of the Italy-based AK Drums, is a professional goldsmith and drum enthusiast best known for his expert craftsmanship of metal shells, custom drum engraving, and restoration of antique engraved drums. At the 2004 Amsterdam Drum Show, the two drum gurus met and began to conceptualize a solid nickel-over-brass shell, which would become the first offering in the Craviotto Diamond series. The solid NOB Diamond series snares were released in 2007, in an exclusive limited run of fifty 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 and fifty 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 versions. Not surprisingly, they sold out quickly.

In 2008, Craviotto and Kirchler teamed up again to expand the Diamond line, and last year they unleashed Copper Diamond series snare drums on the world. Just like their predecessors, the drums were limited to only fifty 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 and fifty 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 models, each priced at \$3,250.

### A DIFFERENT VOICE

The Copper Diamond shell's construction is inge-

nious. The bearing edges are soldered back at both ends, which creates an edge that's more than ten times the shell's thickness. (The edge is  $\frac{3}{8}$ " , and the shell is .8 mm.) According to Kirchler, this thicker edge "makes the shell robust and stiff, so the timbre is higher and has more presence in the midrange and high end."

The astonishingly thin copper shells on these drums are currently the slimmest available. "A thin material along with the right stiffness means increased sensitivity," Kirchler explains. Solid shells typically make for denser drums, but the paper-thin design makes these snares relatively lightweight and thus not cumbersome to lug around to gigs, which is Craviotto's aim for all of its drums—to be played.

Both of these snares felt and sounded best in the middle to high-end range; they were in the tonal vicinity of brass shells but sounded a bit more eccentric. Even when I had the drums tuned fairly tightly, the shells had pronounced meatier frequencies and the tone was relatively dry when compared with that of brass. If brass snares are trumpets, copper snares are French horns—less triumphant sounding and darker, with warmer atmospheric tone

colors and more dimension.

Although the copper Craviottos were very playable, their application might be more occasional, or they might appeal more to drummers with sophisticated ears that can discern between the textural and tonal nuances of copper versus those of other metals. They gave off a vibe that would lend itself to moodier music, regardless of the genre.

The tighter I tuned both drums, the more the copper shells' tones cut through. The less tension on the batter head, the more the sound of the head came into play, accentuated by the shells' darker and drier nuances.

### ON THE JOB

I gigged with both snares a few times, and they did not disappoint. As I hinted at earlier, they had a colorful individuality. But the timbre was subtle enough that the drums remained versatile. In fact, some of the gigs I played them on were with Top 40 bands, and I found a tuning just outside their sweet spots that worked quite well. Both drums felt right at home with my vintage kit and were powerful enough to cut through and drive the band without being too brash (a nice plus of the thinness of the copper shells).

### TUNING

It took some time to find each drum's sweet spot, but once I homed in on it, it was obvious. Tuning the top and bottom heads tight to the point of choking and then backing off the tension on both heads until they could breathe led to a round, warm, responsive sound that I simply loved. Overtones were very full in the middle to higher frequencies but decayed pleasantly. Only on one occasion did I need to apply some Moongel to

## MODERN-RUSTIC

**The rustic appearance of Copper Diamond series shells gives the innovative and intricately designed drums an old-world look, but these models also include some modern accents.**

The handcrafted solid-copper shells are equipped with attractive diamond-shaped tube lugs; a newly designed but vintage-inspired Craviotto/AK three-point diamond strainer; beautifully shaped snare beds; a nickel-plated diamond badge; ten-hole, 2.3 mm triple-flange steel hoops; high-carbon snare wires; and a Remo coated Ambassador batter head. The drums come with a letter of authenticity signed by Johnny Craviotto and are backed by Craviotto's five-year limited warranty.

dampen the sound for a particular room. The added depth of the 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>×14 gave the drum a bit more bark and a wider sweet spot, but both models—when tuned in their respective zones—possessed a unique grace.

### THE AGING PROCESS

My only concern with a copper drum was how its appearance would change over time. We've all examined a pocketful of loose change and found pennies that have turned green. I went to the source and asked Kirchler for some insight into the aging of these drums. The natural aging/patina

process of copper is to darken, and what makes these snares one of a kind is that each model will take on its own appearance over time, depending on how much it is handled. As Kirchler says, "Every drum 'lives' with its owner and can tell stories." Before being shipped, each shell is saturated in Italian olive oil, which, according to Kirchler, slows the aging/patina process slightly.

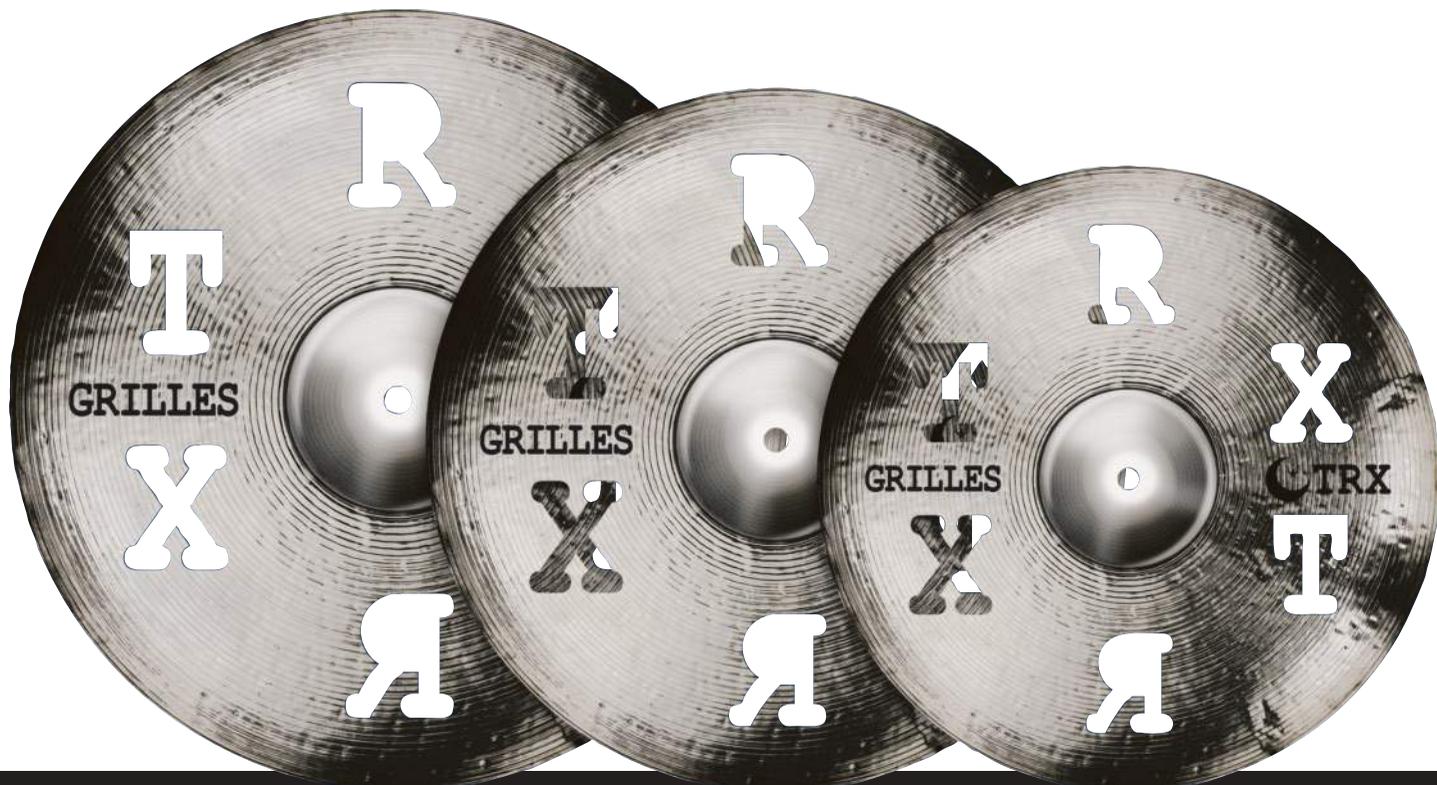
What causes copper to green is exposure to salty liquids or acids such as rain or pollution. So if the drums are cared for properly and kept away from such harmful elements, they should not turn green from handling. Rather, the color should

become deeper and darker.

### CONCLUSION

Designed to offer a different voice within a drummer's snare drum arsenal, the Copper Diamond snares will surely be snatched up quickly (if not already), relegating collectors and aficionados to stalking eBay with fingers crossed, waiting for a chance to pounce. These drums look great, sound great, and—for the time being—remain reasonably attainable for working drummers.

[craviottodrums.com](http://craviottodrums.com)



## TRX

### GRILLES EFFECTS CYMBALS

by Fran Azzarto

One of the latest and most popular trends in effects and China-type cymbals is to cut holes in the metal. Some models have O-ring cutouts, and some combine circular and tube-shaped holes. This is done to give you a new sound to really make an accent stand out without being overwhelmingly noisy. TRX has released its own version of the vented effects cymbal, called Grilles, and these shiny bronze plates will have no trouble catching your eyes and ears.

The company's approach of stamping vents in the cymbals using its brand name is an interesting angle on the concept, and it made us smile when we saw the Grilles. But what really matters is the sound, and these self-promoting discs did what they were designed to do. All three were quick to open up with a slightly trashy tone and had a lengthy but clean-sounding decay. When struck hard, the 20" was loud, dark, and fairly low pitched. This monster would be great when you

want to add a big accent during a huge rock 'n' roll moment. The 18" was a little more controlled and quicker to decay. Not as dark as the 20", it had fewer overtones and a noticeably quicker attack. I liked hitting the 18" in combination with a smaller regular crash to get that extra power needed for accentuating the start of a funky bridge or the end of a towering chorus. The 16" had minimal overtones with a much more contained sound. It was fun, and surprisingly appropriate, to hit this one pretty much whenever I wanted.

TRX has definitely created something interesting here. Although the cymbals lack that rich, full sound you get from a non-perforated crash, they retain some of those lower frequencies while adding more highs and slick, long decays. I found them helpful in breathing new life into the run-of-the-mill fill-ending crash.

[trxcymbals.com](http://trxcymbals.com)

### TRASH IN YOUR CRASH

According to TRX, Grilles "have been developed for drumming situations where drummers need something that's more than a crash but less than a China." There are three sizes of Grilles to smash around: 16" (\$350), 18" (\$400), and 20" (\$450). They all have a brilliant finish and a fairly rough circular lathing to them. But the real standout is on the face of the cymbals, where the individual letters of the company's name, T, R, and X, are cut out of the metal.

# EVANS

## GMAD, 2-PLY ONYX, AND UPDATED EC2 DRUMHEADS

by Michael Dawson



This past year saw the launch of several new Evans products. The thick single-ply GMAD kick drum head was added to complement the positively received 12 mil G-Plus single-ply tom heads. The black-coated 2-ply Onyx is also a thicker-than-standard head, boasting twin plies of 7.5 mil film, rather than the 7 mil used on the company's popular G2 double-ply head. The EC2 with Sound Shaping Technology, however, is not a new head but rather an updated version with a reworked muffling ring that's designed to provide a better balance of attack and tone for each drum size. Here's how the new heads sounded.

### GMAD KICK DRUM BATTER

G-Plus tom heads are made with thick 12 mil plastic film, which helps increase durability, attack, and projection while maintaining the warm and open tone found in a single-ply head. The GMAD kick drum batter is also made with a single 12 mil ply, and it comes with two sizes of interchangeable muffling rings that allow you to experiment with different degrees of resonance.

Regardless of which muffling ring we used, this head had a very defined attack—without being too “clicky”—and a semi-dark tone. Even at a very low tuning (half a turn of the key above finger-tight), the GMAD didn't become too papery sounding and still provided a solid, chesty thump. The extra thickness of the GMAD made the head more resistant to denting than a thinner (10 mil) EMAD, but it also required a harder stroke to bring out a full, punchy sound. If you tend to play with a heavy foot but prefer the added presence and bite of a single-ply batter, this head would be a good choice.

### 2-PLY ONYX

If you currently use a standard-thickness 2-ply

coated head like Evans' G2 but you find it's not quite durable enough for your needs, or if you often end up adding a little muffling to eliminate some of the high-frequency overtones, the Onyx could prove to be the perfect head for you.

These matte-black heads have a micro-clear coating and are slightly thicker (by 1 mil) than standard 2-ply skins. The resulting sound was very rich, with a firm—but not sharp—attack (the term *pillowy* comes to mind), a dark resonance, an even and balanced decay, and a prominent boost in the low-end frequencies. The Onyx was really great on my 14" floor tom, where it transformed that drum's tone from a cute, polite punch to a big, fat, nasty growl. Even though he's not an Evans artist, these heads made me think of Benny Greb's tom sound.

Onyx heads tuned up very quickly and didn't require a lot of fine-tuning in order to produce a clear pitch. They had a slightly muffled timbre that would make them great in just about any situation where you need a deep, dark sound—whether it's in modern rock, commercial pop, fusion, or R&B. These heads also came to life in the studio, sounding huge and harmonious under the microphone, with very little effort.

### EC2 WITH SOUND SHAPING TECHNOLOGY

Evans' pre-muffled EC2s were originally launched in 2006 and were met with a positive response from hard-hitting drummers looking for a head with a lot of attack and punch, plus controlled—but not eliminated—overtones. To my personal taste, the original EC2 was a bit too bright, and it didn't have as wide a tuning range as I would have liked; I had to tune it much higher than I'm used to in order to achieve the right amount of resonance. Other drummers must have felt the same way, as

Evans has reworked the muffling ring that's adhered to the underside of the head, in an effort to produce a more refined and balanced sound.

The updated clear EC2 retains much of what made the original version so popular: a quick and snappy attack with a robust tone that's centered in the mid to low frequencies. When asked what makes the EC2 with Sound Shaping Technology different from the original, Evans senior product manager Michael Robinson explains, “The old EC ring was an appliqué that was mounted on the underside of the head. Even though the width of the rings changed for each head size, they were cut from the same material. Therefore, they all had the same thickness. The new Sound Shaping Technology EC rings have different densities and thicknesses for each size of head. The result is that smaller drums have less damping, while larger drums have more control.”

The EC2 with SST proved to have a wider tuning range and was very easy to settle into an even pitch. All I did to get my 12" tom singing was tune the tension rods about three-quarters of a turn above finger-tight and then fine-tune each lug so that they were all *roughly* the same pitch. These heads were brighter than the Onyx but not as sharp as regular clear 2-ply heads such as G2s.

While the clear EC2 was like a deeper and more centered-sounding G2, the coated one leaned much closer to the fat, thick tone of Evans' oil-filled 2-ply Hydraulic, with just a touch of brightness. Tuned very loosely, the coated EC2 instantly had that dry '70s vibe, similar to the low, round sounds session drummers like Steve Gadd and Jim Keltner were getting by covering their drumheads with a lot of muffling and by tracking in isolation booths that were carpeted from floor to ceiling.

The attack of the coated EC2 heads was strong but much creamier than that of the clear version. At a medium tension, the coated EC2s brought out a lot of shell resonance, but higher tunings got a little too “boingy” to be useful. These heads weren't as versatile as their clear counterparts. But I'd suggest giving them a try if you like the mellow “bump” of Hydraulics but you want a little more edge to the attack.

[evansdrumheads.com](http://evansdrumheads.com)

## CONSISTENT AND EASY

Ask any Evans artist why he or she plays that brand's drumheads, and you'll likely get the same response: They're consistent and easy to tune. Those two qualities, coupled with Evans' desire to continue to create new products for an increasingly wide range of players, are a big part of why the company's logo is showing up on more and more drumkits. This group of new heads proved to live up to—and exceed—what we've come to expect from Evans.



# ISTANBUL MEHMET

## LEGEND AND ORIGIN DARK RIDES, X-RUBBISH CRASH, AND CHINA PANG

by David Ciauro

Istanbul Mehmet sent us a grab-bag assortment of cymbals with little more in common than the company name and the fact that they are recently launched additions to the product line. Staying true to the Istanbul Mehmet credo “Machines don’t have ears,” the four cymbals in this review are handmade and certainly unique...if at times to a fault.

### LEGEND DARK RIDE

Outside of any specific musical application, the 21" Legend Dark ride is quite simply an amazing-sounding instrument. The top of the cymbal has custom dark lathing, while the underbelly is traditionally lathed. This combination perfectly articulated every stroke with “woody” stick definition and a delicate touch. As the model’s name suggests, the overall sound was very dark, and it was impressively controlled. Crashing let out a deep bellow that remained smooth and faded rather quickly.

For the most part, this ride was soft-spoken but oozed charm. I was impressed with the ebb-and-flow dynamics that were under the command of my hand no matter what type of stick I used (heavy or light, nylon or wood tip). The bell is a small target packed with a clear, dark, dry attack that balanced the brooding wash of the body of the cymbal.

This is one of the most responsive rides I’ve encountered in some time, and it made me hyper-aware of my natural dynamics, causing me to focus more on them.

### ORIGIN DARK RIDE

The 22" Mehmet Origin Dark ride has an unlathed, brushed vintage finish that foretells a lot about its sound. Quite raw and unruly, the model truly captured the essence of pre-’60s vintage rides, so much so that its appeal could be limited. The vibe captured by the Origin Dark comes from an era

when cymbals had simpler intentions and didn’t have to cater to hundreds of musical genres. The sound was one-dimensional and will either appeal to you...or not.

Purists will appreciate the candor of this cymbal. Its wobbly frenzy of overtones was low pitched, widespread, and hauntingly dark. These overtones vied for the spotlight despite how light a touch was used. The cymbal’s brazen characteristics are what I respect most, but my ears wouldn’t warm up to the sound.

The small bell was rather piercing and higher pitched than the body of the cymbal, creating a noticeable contrast of tonal textures instead of a blend. Crashing on this ride was unforgiving, and the cymbal took some time to recover and regain clarity and stick definition.

### X-RUBBISH

Changing paces, the 16" X-Rubbish crash is part of the X-Fx collection in the Xperience Series. I wasn’t sure what to make of this cymbal at first. It’s intentionally misshapen and wavelike, similar to what you’d see if you freeze-framed a crash cymbal’s movement just after impact.

An abrasive, rough-to-the-touch surface finish covers the top of the X-Rubbish, except on the bell and the first quarter inch of the edge, which are traditionally lathed, as is the underbelly. The cymbal is rather thin and pliable.

The X-Rubbish certainly has a distinctive appearance, but the sound it generated was not so distinguished, somewhat like that of a fast crash with a subtle trash effect, but not as bright and with slightly less overall tone. It was not unlike a thin crash that’s cracked but still playable.

The cymbal’s shape made it a bit awkward. And its loose form made me feel like I was at risk of damaging it every time I hit it. Ultimately I didn’t dislike what I was hearing from the X-Rubbish, but I got the impression that the model is more a novelty than an innovation.

### CHINA PANG

Last up is the 18" Traditional series China Pang with traditional lathing. This cymbal has a unique design in that the bell is like that of a normal crash, as opposed to the flattop bells commonly seen on Chinas. And the inversion at the edge is minimal. I liked playing this cymbal mounted either normally—like a crash—or inverted.

Mounted regularly, the China Pang performed great as a swooshy ride with a nice shimmer, and it packed a cool understated China accent. Inverted, it produced a controllable yet sharp China sound that was less abrasive than that of a standard China. A solid stick attack was followed by a quick midrange wash that was a nice blend of substance and effect.

[istanbulmehmet.com](http://istanbulmehmet.com)

## A MIXED BAG

**My feelings are certainly as mixed as the cymbal assortment itself,** but I respect the eagerness of Istanbul Mehmet for making models that run the gamut from incredibly offbeat to instantly classic, and I admire the company’s fearlessness in embracing the risks that accompany originality.

# KILLER RINGS

## DRUM MUFFLERS

by Michael Dawson

Drummers have long explored different ways to muffle their drums in an effort to produce warmer and more focused tones, whether it's by covering the heads with tea towels, stuffing shells with cotton balls, or duct-taping tissues near the rim. Some even swear by using no muffling at all and rely on proper tuning and head choice to achieve an even, clean sound.

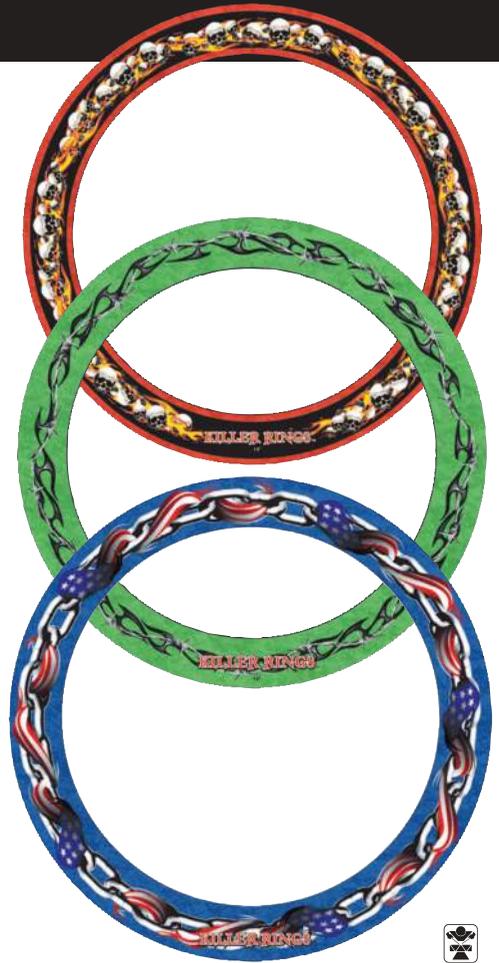
We tested the Killer Rings on a variety of drums with different shell types and drumhead thicknesses. On a set of maple Slingerland toms from the '70s outfitted with coated single-ply batter heads, Killer Rings were the perfect finishing touch for dialing in a deep, punchy sound that still had some tone and resonance. This sonic blend worked great on a session for a tune that was built on a driving, tribal tom groove. We also tried the Killer Rings on a set of acrylic toms that had coated 2-ply heads. We expected the rings to provide too much muffling on these drums, since the heads already had a pre-muffled sound. But the Killer Rings added just the right amount of dampening to focus the tone into a

very clear and distinct "doom."

We used the rings at a gig on a set of rose gum drums as well. Without the rings, the toms and snare were too loud and their attack was a bit too harsh in that particular room. With Killer Rings, the toms immediately sounded fatter, warmer, and much richer, without losing presence. On the snare, the ring had a similar effect, toning down the high frequencies without making the drum sound muffled.

Personally, I didn't care much for the graphics printed on the Killer Rings, so I ended up using them upside down. (The underside is solid white.) But sonically the rings proved to be much more effective at achieving a controlled, focused tone than your run-of-the-mill drumhead O-rings. Killer Rings are available in 10", 12", 13", 14", 15", and 16" sizes. List prices include \$19.98 for a set of 10", 12", 14", and 16" rings; \$29.98 for six 14" models; and \$8.98 for two 15" versions.

[killerrings.com](http://killerrings.com)



### NOT JUST ANY O-RING

**Killer Rings are a variation on a popular muffling technique that involves placing a circular "doughnut" made from drumhead material on top of the batter head.** The difference between these rings and those made by other manufacturers—or homemade ones cut from old heads—is that these employ a specific weight-to-width ratio, which the company calls "Sound Formula," to produce fat, rich tones while retaining projection. Killer Rings come printed with three striking graphics: flames and skulls ("infernal rhythms"), razors and barbed wire ("tribal mayhem"), and chain links and American flags ("American pride").

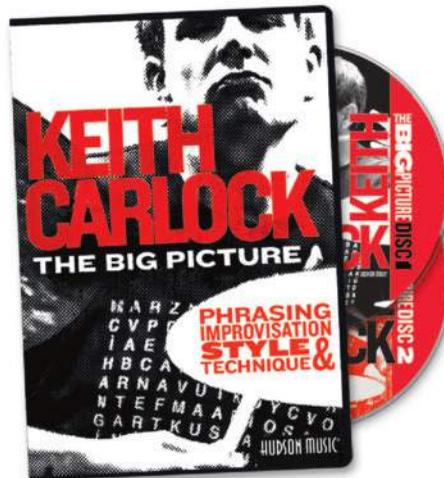
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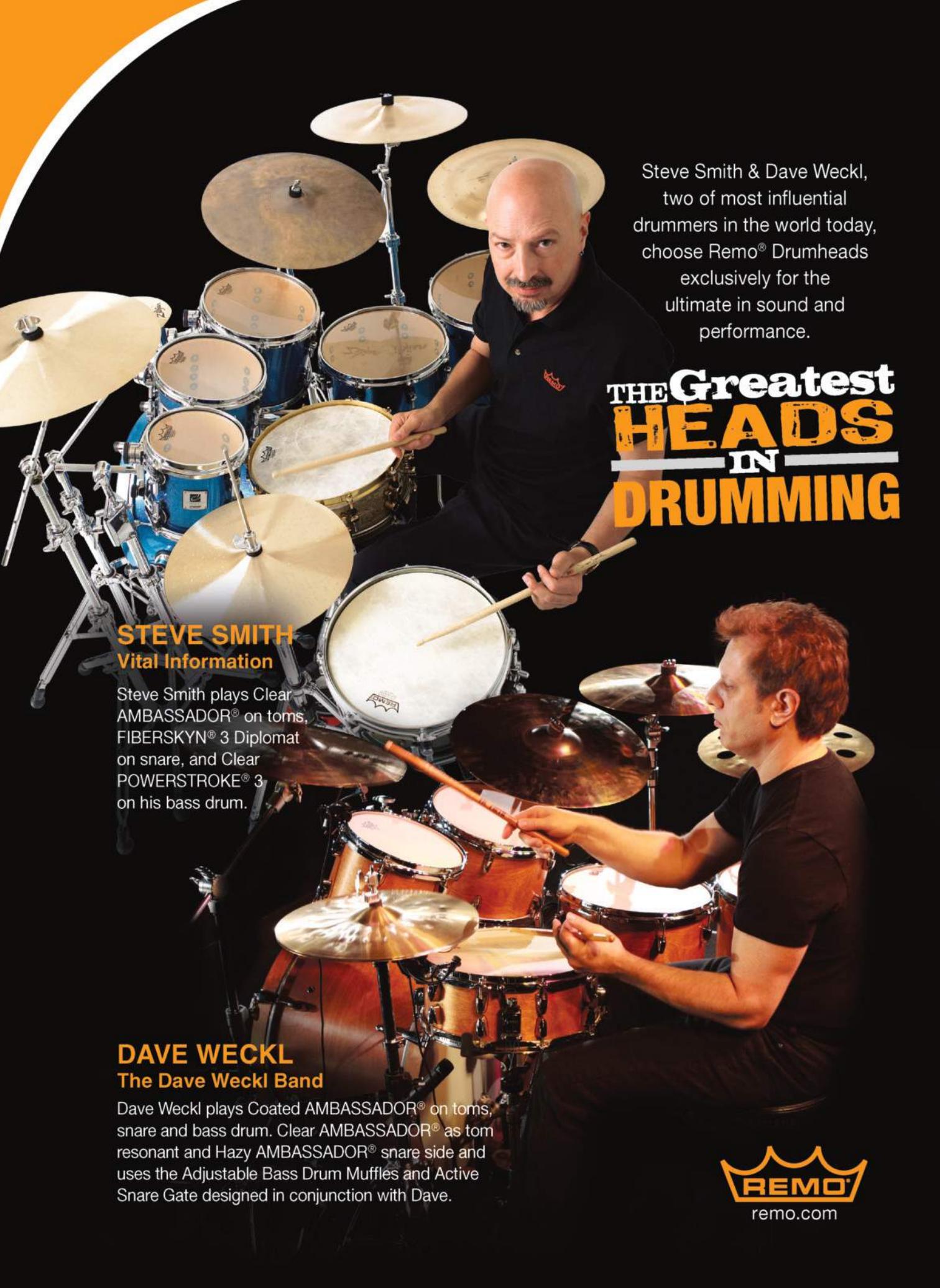


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# ROLAND TD-20SX V-DRUMS KIT by Allan Leibowitz

**R**oland's flagship TD-20 kit has been starting to show its age, especially in the wake of enhancements by the company's major competitors and the advent of various revolutionary hardware and software products that have made the electronic drumming experience more realistic than ever. That's likely why Roland released an expansion card for the TD-20 last year, following the same strategy it had employed successfully with its former top model, the TD-10.

But tweaking the electronic brain was never going to be enough to satisfy the innovation-hungry electronic drumming community. Hence the recent launch of this "new" kit, the TD-20SX. Even before its arrival, the TD-20SX polarized Roland enthusiasts, with some dismissing it as a superficial makeover and others hailing it as a sensible compromise in these tough economic times.

## TD-20X MODULE

The TD-20 brain received an upgrade in 2008 with the release of the TDW-20 expansion card, a self-install piece of hardware that unlocks fifty new kits.

This doubled the brain's array. The card also added 300 new instrument sounds, boosting the sound palette to 900.

In addition to the new sounds, the TDW-20 also enhanced the sound editing capabilities of the module, with the already powerful Composite Object Sound Modeling (COSM) given additional dimensions that enable drummers to edit nuances like the degree of cymbal sizzle, even down to selecting from three types of sizzle sources—beads, rivets, and chains. Roland claims that these enhancements create more than a million editing options, so the choices are almost intimidating. While the editing capabilities are likely well beyond the needs of the average user, they are a boon for third-party tweekers, which produces sound patches that match popular drumkits and various

artist setups.

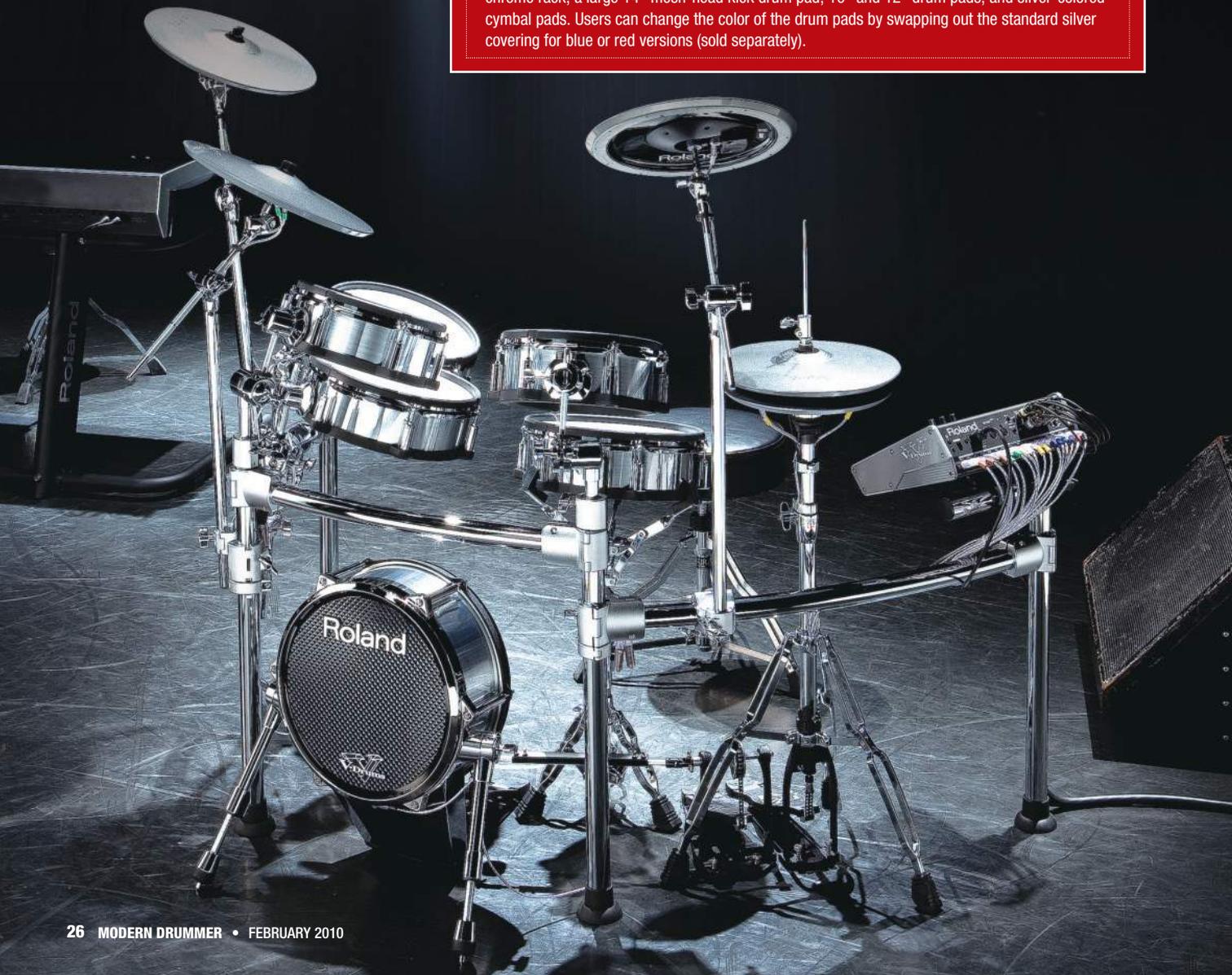
The TD-20X module retains its form and layout but has a new black skin, which makes it look more serious. The telltale signal in the makeover is the removal of the access hatch, which is what allowed the TDW-20 upgrade card to be installed in the earlier version. The card is now hardwired in the module, so no further upgrades are possible.

There is, however, a software upgrade that gives the module a new welcome screen with the TD-20X logo, trigger settings for the new pads, new demo songs, minor tweaks (like the ability to copy fifty kits at once), and a reworked compression system that creates a warmer tone for all the sounds. This 2.51 software is also available to existing TDW-20 users.

## THE FLAGSHIP GETS AN UPGRADE

**The TD-20SX features a reworked module with some new bits and pieces.**

These features, however, are not trivial add-ons; they consist of an all-new heavy-duty MDS-25 chrome rack, a large 14" mesh-head kick drum pad, 10" and 12" drum pads, and silver-colored cymbal pads. Users can change the color of the drum pads by swapping out the standard silver covering for blue or red versions (sold separately).



## NEW RACK

Perhaps the most striking feature of the TD-20SX drumset is the sturdy MDS-25 rack. In the past, it was common for gigging TD-20 users to replace the standard MDS-20 rack with a heavy-duty Gibraltar rack, or at least upgrade the plastic mounting hardware with metal equivalents.

The new chrome rack has four legs and three curved horizontal bars. The rack is not only steady and robust, it's also user-friendly, with telescoping cymbal arms that collapse into the legs. Even the cable, which is threaded inside the rack pipes, has been beefed up; it's sturdier and more elastic, and color-coded plastic labels replace the old sticker tags.

A new ball joint, which made its debut with the TD-9 kit, is fitted on all tom mounts, providing far more flexibility than the old static L-rods.

## NEW TRIGGERS

A weakness of many electronic kits is a puny kick drum pad. The TD-20SX sports an all-new 14" bass trigger mounted on a chunky stand that raises it to an impressive 20" height. The mesh pad has a realistic acoustic-type feel, and the triggering is accurate, without the bounce and double hits sometimes associated with bigger mesh-head kick pads.

The other major change in the TD-20SX is a

range of new 10" and 12" drum pads. For the first time, Roland has removed all mounting hardware from one of the 12" mesh-head pads, which is designated as the PD125-XS snare. The pad sits on a regular snare stand (not supplied) and has two-zone triggering, with separate sounds on the head and the rim. There's positional sensing, which changes the tone depending on where the head is struck (such as near the edge or in the middle). And, of course, the pad has velocity sensing that creates louder sounds the harder you hit. Close your eyes and you'll swear you're playing an acoustic snare, right down to realistic rimclick sounds.

The kit sports four toms—two 10" PD-105X and two 12" PD-125X dual-trigger mesh-head pads—with deeper shells and classier chrome mounting hardware. Perhaps best of all, the shells can easily be made over with replacement color kits, making this the first truly customizable electronic drumkit.

The usual black-rubber cymbal pads have also received a cosmetic makeover, with new silver-colored rubber skins on the 15" CY-15R-SV ride—which features separate edge, bell, and bow sounds—the two 14" CY-14C-SV two-zone crashes, and the VH-12-SV two-piece hi-hats. Under stage lights, the new cymbals looked like the real deal, but they felt and responded pretty much like the triggers they've replaced.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

It was hard to part with the TD-20SX. It's an imposing electronic kit with stunning looks to match a more-than-capable electronic brain, which continues to impress even five years after its initial launch. Sure, it's not a new triggering system, it doesn't allow sampling, and it still uses the aging CF card medium for storage and data transfer. But the expanded TD-20X module is an unbelievably powerful instrument that reproduces realistic sounds and offers some creative sonic effects.

Roland's electronic wizardry is complemented by the fresh look of the pads and rack. And this kit is built to last. There's no doubt the rugged rack will withstand the rigors of gigging, and the replaceable color inserts on the pads should shrug off the inevitable knocks and scratches collected on the road.

Of course, this new kit puts a sting in the pocket, since its list price is about \$1,000 higher than its predecessor's. Ultimately it's up to you to decide if the bigger kick drum, more robust rack, built-in expansion card, and stylish pad facelift are worth the higher price tag of around \$8,000.

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## NEW AND NOTABLE



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**1. MURAT DIRIL** cymbals include three lines: the dark and raw Black Sea series, the all-purpose Renaissance, and the highly polished Renaissance Luminous. Before starting his own company, Diril worked for Istanbul Cymbals, and he helped design and create the Byzance and Mb20 lines for Meinl and the Twenty series for Paiste. All Murat Diril cymbals are handmade from B20 bronze. [muratdirilusa.com](http://muratdirilusa.com)

**2. LOS CABOS's** new Parade model drumstick is 16" in length and .7" in diameter. The stick features a shorter taper and a more rounded barrel-style tip than the company's other models. [loscabosdrumsticks.com](http://loscabosdrumsticks.com)

**3. YAMAHA's** DTX-MULTI 12 percussion pad features twelve electronic trigger pads and a bank of 1,249 sounds. This new split-level multi-pad instrument adapts sound technology from the company's Motif XS synthesizer and DTXXTREME III drum trigger module and can be played with sticks, hands, or fingers. Users can also load in their own digital samples. Computer connectivity includes USB MIDI and USB memory device ports, so that MIDI and user data can easily be exchanged between a computer and the DTX-MULTI 12. The unit is also equipped with a built-in sequencer, preset loops, pro-quality effects, and a five-band EQ.

The new DTX-MULTI 12 has five trigger inputs, plus hi-hat and foot pedal jacks, for expanding the setup. It comes bundled with Cubase AI 5, a special version of Steinberg's digital audio workstation that turns any computer into a recording studio. List price: \$899.99. [yamahadrums.com](http://yamahadrums.com)

**4. The DRUMBELL** makes playing cowbells and blocks convenient and easy for hand drummers. The device, which comes supplied with metal strikers for the mounted percussion, attaches easily to most hand drums and features hand levers located over the rear of the drum, so the center and front of the head remain accessible. [drumbell.com](http://drumbell.com)

**5. TMD** is a boutique custom drum company that uses only the highest-quality parts, such as Keller maple shells, Gauger RIMS, and Trick strainers, as standard components for all of its drums. The company offers custom finishes, sizes, and designs. The snares shown here feature TMD's signature "splatter" finish and custom artwork. [tmdcustomdrums.com](http://tmdcustomdrums.com)

**6. SKB's** 1SKB-CS22 Cymbal Safe is designed to transport cymbals that are already stored in a gig bag. The case is rotationally molded from linear low-density polyethylene (LLDPE) and has molded-in feet for upright positioning and stability. The Cymbal Safe also includes a padded interior for added protection. List price: \$139.99. [skbcases.com/music](http://skbcases.com/music)

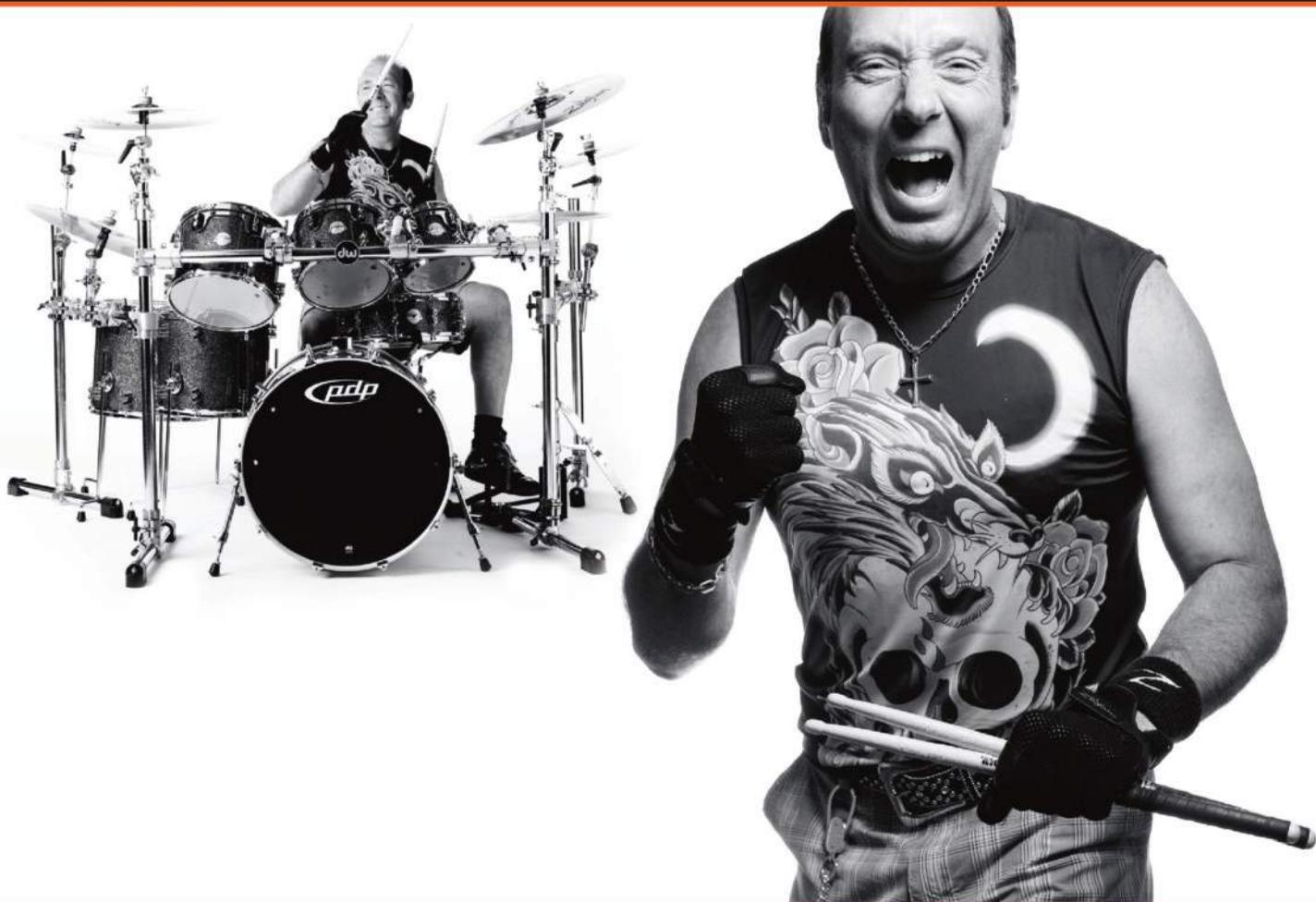
**7. TYCOON PERCUSSION's** Martin Verdok signature series instruments include Easy-Shake and Swing-Shake shakers and Las Vegas studio tambourines. [tycoonpercussion.com](http://tycoonpercussion.com)

**8. DDRUM's** 15" Carmine Appice Shade cymbal has a lamp-shade profile and a unique sound with a China-like attack and a quick decay. "I've been playing the Shade cymbal since the '90s," Appice says. "You can ride on it, crash on it, and even use it for combinations between the bass drum and hands." List price: \$99.99. [ddrum.com](http://ddrum.com)





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## STEELY DAN'S KEITH CARLOCK

### DRUMS: Yamaha Phoenix in turquoise fade finish

- A. 5x14 brass snare
- B. 7x12 Musashi oak snare
- C. 8x10 tom
- D. 9x12 tom
- E. 14x14 floor tom
- F. 16x16 floor tom
- G. 18x22 bass drum

"I used Yamaha Oak Customs and Maple Customs for many years, but I've recently been using their top-of-the-line Phoenix kit," Carlock says. "It has hybrid shells consisting of jatoba, kapur, maple, and ash. It's a unique sound with a lot of overtones, a really nice and consistent ring that I like to hear. I've also been using a second snare drum on tour, a Yamaha Musashi oak model. It's a smaller drum with a higher pitch, and I'll use it for effects or with-in certain grooves."

**HEADS: Remo** white coated Ambassador batter and clear Diplomat snare-side on snares, Powerstroke 3 with Falam Slam pad on bass drum, white coated Ambassador batter and clear Diplomat bottom on toms. "I use coated Ambassadors because I like their sustain."

### CYMBALS: Zildjian

- 1. 14" K hi-hats
  - 2. 18" medium thin K dark crash
  - 3. 20" medium K Constantinople ride
  - 4. 19" A Custom crash
  - 5. 22" medium thin K Constantinople low ride
- "I like big, washy-sounding cymbals; I'm not into the small, splashy, dinky-sounding stuff. I really like the larger Zildjian Ks and As, which I use as crashes and as rides. I just pick cymbals that I think will complement each other and work well for this music."

**ACCESSORIES: Moongel.** "I usually let the drums ring as much as possible, but on the Steely Dan tour I've been muffling the bass drum and using Moongel on the snare. It seems to fit the music, which is more of a '70s studio type of vibe."

**ELECTRONICS: Yamaha ClickStation.** "I'm not really using any electronics on this tour, though I do use the ClickStation to get tempos for the songs. I don't play to a click track, and this works well to help me keep the tempos consistent night after night."



**STICKS: Regal Tip** Keith Carlock Signature Performer series. "What I love about Regal Tip sticks is the lacquer. They put this special ingredient in there that feels really great. It builds up residue so that after you play for a while it doesn't allow the stick to slip."

**HARDWARE: Yamaha** CS865 double-braced boom cymbal stands, SS950 double-braced snare stands, HS850 double-braced three-leg hi-hat stand, TH940B bass drum tom mount with two CL940 arms, DS840 throne with round seat

**DRUM TECH:** Glenn Kaufman



# THE OFFSPRING'S PETE PARADA

**DRUMS:** Tama Starclassic bubinga in custom piano black lacquer with blue sparkle stripe and black nickel hardware

**A.** 6 1/2x13 Metalworks snare

**B.** 9x12 tom

**C.** 7x12 tom

**D.** 14x16 floor tom

**E.** 16x22 bass drum

"Bubinga is a very heavy wood, so these drums weigh a ton," Parada says. "But they sound great. We were doing rehearsals, and Tama brought in several kits—maple, birch, bubinga, hybrids.... When we got to the bubinga kit, everybody said, 'Stop! That's the sound.' We'd been looking for a really big sound to match how the album sounds, and these drums did it to a T.

"I prefer the sound I get from metal snare drums over wood models. I know our sound guy would like to fight me on this, but I think these 13" Metalworks snares work great. They cut through everything, and they sound really big, even for 13-inchers. I use the snare on the left side for effects on certain songs.

"Having a tom on either side of the hi-hat is a little unorthodox, but as soon as I came up with this arrangement it felt like a whole new world of playing ideas opened up for me. The toms are both 12" in diameter and are only 2" apart in depth. We want

them to have some definition between them, though, and Mark Mesner, my drum tech, worked hard to find the perfect interval. Thank you, Mark, for being awesome."

**CYMBALS:** Zildjian

**1.** 13" Mastersound hi-hats

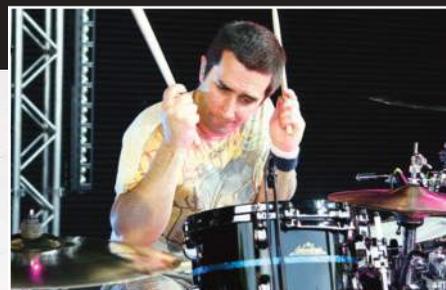
**2.** 19" A Custom medium crash

**3.** 20" A Custom Projection ride

**4.** 19" A Custom Projection crash

"Kirsten Matt at Zildjian worked really hard with us to figure out which cymbals sounded best and would hold up best on tour. I chose the A Customs, which are incredibly durable given how thin they are. We're nine weeks into this tour and—knock on wood—we haven't broken a single one!"

**HARDWARE:** Tama Iron Cobra Power Glide bass drum pedals, Roadpro Cymbal and tom stands, and 1st Chair Ergo Rider Trio throne; Gibraltar Ultra Adjust hi-hat stand. "The most interesting thing about my kit is the hi-hat setup. The whole kit is built around that. My hi-hats are straight out in front of me so that my hands never cross over. I'd been using a cable hi-hat, and we all know how that goes—the cable snaps, the pedal breaks.... They're quite temperamental. But a few years ago, Gibraltar



started making the Ultra Adjust hi-hat stand, and it's perfect for my setup. It uses a double ball-and-socket design. The upper part of the stand can move up and down and from right to left independently of the bottom. So now I can have the hi-hats out in front of me but keep the pedal in the same spot."

**PERCUSSION:** Latin Percussion tambourine and cowbells. "Because I'm a dork and into superheroes, Mark got me little Batman figures, which he attaches to the top of my cowbells just to make me happy."

**HEADS:** Remo

**STICKS:** Vater H-220

**DRUM TECH:** Mark Mesner



## DUB TRIO/MATISYAHU'S **JOE TOMINO**

### DRUMS: Pearl Reference

- A. 5x14 snare
- B. 9x12 tom
- C. 14" Elite timbale
- D. 16x16 floor tom
- E. 18x22 bass drum

"The Pearl Reference snare drum is a firecracker," Tomino says. "I have it tuned pretty high, and it sounds great on reggae and hip-hop. I can also get a little more of a wet sound when I want to, by detuning a few lugs."

### CYMBALS: Sabian

- 1. 14" medium hi-hats
- 2. 18" AAX Stage crash or 19" Saturation crash
- 3. 20" HHX Stage crash
- 4. 22" Vault Liquid ride
- 5. 19" AAX China

"In the last couple years I switched from 16" and 17" crashes to 19" and 20" for shows. The Dub Trio's music has a lot of density but a lot of space too. When I hit a cymbal I want the wash to fill the space. I want it to be an event!"

**STICKS: Vic Firth.** "I've been using Vic Firth sticks for a long time. I love the 5B on the road and the 5A in the studio. For more intimate, subtler gigs I really dig the Ride stick; it has a small tip and is wonderful when I need a really delicate sound. Firth also has this crazy felt-tip stick that gives the cymbals a really interesting sound."

**HEADS: Aquarian, Remo, and Evans.** "I use whatever is needed for any given situation. What I've learned about drumheads is that everything is in the tuning. When I first moved to New York from Cleveland, I would practice in these rented rehearsal studios. The cymbals would be broken; the heads would be old and battered. I had to learn how to pull a sound out of this gear that was all but destroyed! As it turned out, I was learning a great lesson—how to change the sound of these dead kits by tuning them the best I could and then attacking them in a certain way."

**ELECTRONICS: Roland SPD-S pad, Boss SP-303 sampler and RE-20 Space Echo pedal, Shure SM58 and SM57 mics, Behringer Xenyx mixer.**

"I run all my electronics into a mixer, and that's what controls my output—EQ, level, effect sends, etc. Then I run microphones into the effect boxes.

"Certain gigs might call for certain pedals, like reverb, delay, or distortion. With Dub Trio and Matisyahu I mostly use reverb and analog delay, because that's what the reggae sound is all about. Playing the pedals while you're playing the drums, it's sort of like using another limb. I'm into 'effecting' the acoustic drums with electronic sounds, by



putting mics on certain parts of the kit and then applying the effects to those mics. I also like to manipulate and design samples. That way I can create sounds for anything, from pop songs to improvisational music."

**HARDWARE: Pearl stands and Eliminator double bass drum pedal**

**ACCESSORIES: Moongel or tape for muffling**



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# JIMMY CHAMBERLIN & WILLIAM MOHLER



**A**s the original drummer in **Smashing Pumpkins**, Jimmy Chamberlin established himself as a kit-smith with burning chops and the ability to come up with signature drum hooks. In 2000, following the breakup of the Pumpkins, the drummer made his debut as a leader with the Jimmy Chamberlin Complex, in which he was able to express his passion for jazz fusion. William Mohler, who has worked with **Limp Bizkit**, **Kelly Clarkson**, and **Liz Phair**, among others, is Chamberlin's bass-playing bandmate in the Complex. He's also the drummer in the band **War Tapes**. *MD* asked the two gentlemen to interview each other about the musical issues that concern them most.

## WILLIAM ASKS JIMMY

**William:** In whatever band you're recording with—the Pumpkins, Zwan, or the Complex—you leave a bold stamp on the music with signature, hook-driven drum parts. How did you develop this skill, and is it something you think about while writing?

**Jimmy:** First off, thanks for the props! I really try to concentrate on being myself when I play. I know that sounds simple, but I think it takes years of emulating your heroes and practicing to finally arrive at the required amount of

facility to just “be yourself” on an instrument. I think that's where the hooks come in. When you can be yourself, only you can play like you. Things start to sound like a musical version of your personality. How do you think Keith Moon would have acted if you had met him? Buddy Rich? A lot like they sounded on the drums, I'm sure!

The idea is to assimilate the beauty of individuality into a musical context. Through practice we can do this. When writing a drum part I try not to think too much and just let it flow out of me.

Intuition is always right if you can follow it. Sometimes it's obvious, and sometimes you have to put the time in to make something happen. Remember, there are no wrong notes, only poorly chosen ones.

**William:** With the success you've had, it would be very easy to just sit back, but you constantly push yourself. I know you'll practice for two hours before a show and then play a three-hour set! What drives you to want to keep improving, and where does your motivation come from?

**Jimmy:** I'm constantly listening to music. Great music keeps me alive, and it's the impetus for me to keep practicing. Again, I think it's my desire to be myself on my instrument that makes me want to keep moving forward. As I move forward as a human being, the music should reciprocate. Music is my life, and if I stop growing as a player, then everything kind of stops for me.

**William:** With regard to your solo work with the Jimmy Chamberlin Complex, how have your non-drummer idols influenced your playing and songwriting?

“My desire to be myself on my instrument makes me want to keep moving forward. And as I move forward as a human being, the music should reciprocate.” —Jimmy Chamberlin

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**Jimmy:** I look to other musicians for ideas and inspiration as much as I do drummers. A lot can be learned by studying the complex simplicity of Thelonious Monk or the sensitivity of Bill Evans. Anyone can teach us something, and we must be open to and aware of the things that are being presented to us at all times—from the chirping of a bird to the sounds of a house being built. There's rhythm and melody in those sounds.

**William:** You have a sixth sense in terms of arrangement. How important do you think it is for a drummer to understand harmony and chord structure?

**Jimmy:** Knowledge of harmony and melody is key if you want your drum parts to "sing the song." I have always thought that you should be able to know what song you're hearing just by listening to the drum part, and that's what I strive for. The same goes for any instrument.

**William:** Who are some of your non-drumming idols?

**Jimmy:** My non-drumming inspirations are too numerous to list. But the very

top of the list would consist of Thelonious Monk, Duke Ellington, Bill Evans, John Coltrane, Chick Corea, Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, Patsy Cline, Burt Bacharach, Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Joe Zawinul, Jaco Pastorius, Jeff Beck, Dave Holland, Cole Porter, Brian Wilson, Gil Evans, McCoy Tyner, Mose Allison, Oscar Peterson, Lee Morgan.... All of these people had a mastery of their instrument to the point of making their compositions completely personal.

**William:** You've been through an amazing musical journey already—from playing drums in Chicago to joining the Smashing Pumpkins and seeing it grow from a small local band to a worldwide phenomenon, and now you're venturing deeper into your solo music. What's the greatest lesson you've learned through all this, and how does it affect you, your day-to-day life, and having a family?

**Jimmy:** I've learned many things over the years, but I think the strongest lesson, and the one that encompasses everything, is, again: Everything for me

revolves around my instrument. It's been with me longer than anything else in my life. My ability to be a good father, husband, friend, composer, teacher, kite flyer, gardener, pet owner is reflected in my relationship with the drums. When I'm in the groove with work, everything else falls into place for me. I know that sounds simple, but it's true. There's a cosmic relationship between what you put into your music and what life gives you back.

**William:** What advice would you give up-and-coming drummers searching for their own voice?

**Jimmy:** Don't go too far into someone else's trip. Be your own player. You have something inside of you that is special and unlike anything else in this universe. Tap into it. Practice until you can release it. And then unleash it on the world. We'll be listening!

#### **JIMMY ASKS WILLIAM**

**Jimmy:** How does your understanding of pitched instruments come into play behind the kit?

**William:** It comes into play when War



**“I can’t play jazz on the kit, but it’s my main source of inspiration for wanting to be the best I can be.” —William Mohler**

Tapes is writing new songs. Knowing the progression and understanding it, I can figure out where I need to be dynamically and what kind of drum part will accentuate the changes and melody. It also comes in handy when I’m tuning drums.

**Jimmy:** How do your roles as drummer and bass player differ? And how do these differences present themselves in the studio, on stage, or in everyday life?

**William:** As the bassist my main role is to support whatever is happening in that moment. As a drummer it’s my job to lead while supporting. I play off the vocals, and that dictates my intensity level. But I’m always focused on the groove and making sure the time is solid. Getting behind the kit has helped me so much from a production standpoint as well. Drum tuning, parts, feel, and timing are something I have a lot more clarity on now that I’m a drummer.

**Jimmy:** Do your bass idols also influ-

ence your drumming?

**William:** I wouldn’t say they directly influence my drumming, but they do influence my life and how I look at art. Bassists like Scott LaFaro, Jaco Pastorius, and Ron Carter are the reasons why I play music. I can’t play jazz on the kit, but it’s my main source of inspiration for wanting to be the best I can be. Each of the bassists I mentioned has such a distinct voice, and that’s something I definitely would like to achieve as a drummer.

**Jimmy:** How does knowing how to practice the bass help with learning a new instrument, especially one as difficult as the drums?

**William:** Knowing how to practice has helped me a lot. I was in my band for a year before I realized I was a drummer! Through playing and writing songs I would figure out what I needed to practice. If I was hearing a drum part that I couldn’t figure out how to play, I’d get

to rehearsal early every day until I could play the part. I think being dedicated on one instrument easily carries over to other instruments.

**Jimmy:** Now that you’ve become the drummer in a band, what are your feelings on the current publishing splits? Has it changed your views, and if so, how?

**William:** I believe that drummers have always gotten the short end of the stick when it comes to publishing. My personal belief is that if you want to be a “real” band, you should split everything equally. Sometimes a beat can define a song, or a style of drumming can define a band’s sound. I feel this is worth equality in the band. Being a drummer has only reinforced this belief.

**Jimmy:** What is your destination as a drummer?

**William:** Being filled with growth, improvement, and possibly, maybe, with *lots* of practice, writing a few massive drum hooks like you’ve done!



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Bigger toms, ruder cymbals, and a more spacious setup help the **Hatebreed** powerhouse achieve the sound and reach new heights of hardcore/metal glory on the band's punishing latest release.

**S**ince Matt Byrne joined Hatebreed for their 2002 major-label debut, *Perseverance*, he's helped the band define a striking mutant heavy-rock subgenre that comprises elements of hardcore, metal, and punk. Through 2003's *The Rise Of Brutality*, 2006's *Supremacy*, and two albums in 2009—the covers set *For The Lions* and the originals collection *Hatebreed*—Matt has played harder, faster, and stronger with each new release and propelled the group through countless tours and festival performances.

Byrne is a truly relentless player. His consistency behind the kit is remarkable, and he displays jaw-dropping deftness in supporting the histrionics of one of the best frontmen in the hardcore business, lead vocalist Jamey Jasta, and the dazzlingly damaging riffs of guitarists Frank Novinec and Wayne Lozinak and bassist Chris Beattie. We begin our discussion with the drummer by detailing the significant musical changes that mark Hatebreed's latest opus.

**MD:** What's different about your latest album in terms of the drums?

**Matt:** Drumming-wise, I really collaborated with our producer, Zeuss. And even before the drums were set up, we were putting our heads together to figure out the kinds of tones I was going for—basically, the things we would do differently on this album. Like, what are we going to do to have a fresh take on the drumming of Hatebreed?

First off, I used bigger drums than I would normally use. I used bigger toms and a deeper snare drum, because I wanted a bigger, warmer, more wide-open sound. I just think the sound of the drums coming from a lot of metal bands these days seems to be real compressed and real studio-esque, clicky and trigger-y, and all the drum sounds seem to be the same with every band—nothing seems to vary. So I definitely wanted to stay away from that. I wanted to achieve a natural sound,

not something that's too clean or overproduced in the studio.

For cymbals, I used a different China on this album. I used a Paiste RUDE Novo China, which only came out a short time ago, so that was a fresh sound for me. I would typically throw a couple 2002 crashes on past albums, but for this one I went with straight RUDEs. They're really heavy and really dark...and really loud. That's what I was going for—capturing my live sound. They're full volume, very washy, but they're still dark, and that's what I like about them.

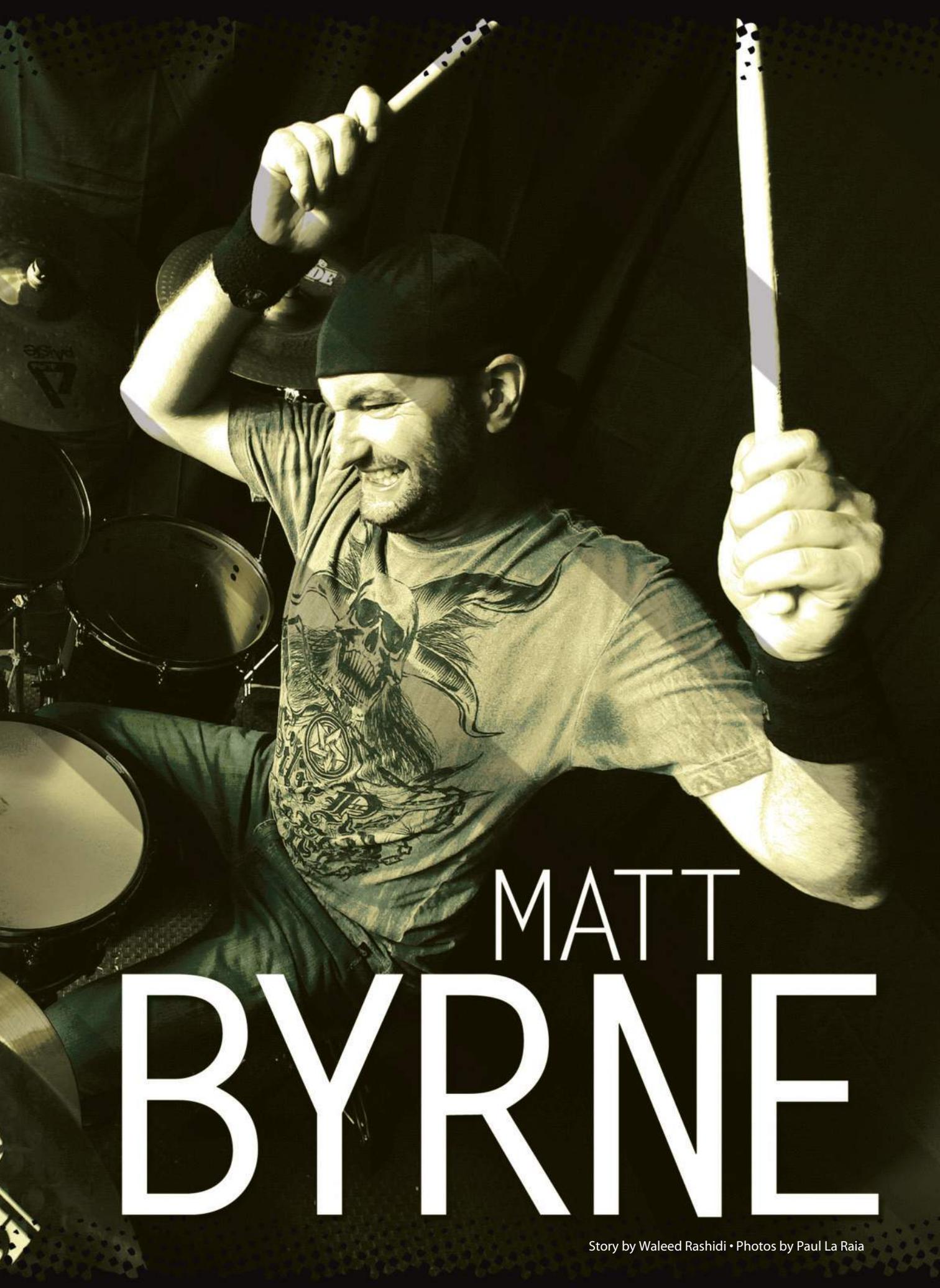
I played a 20" crash/ride that I've been using forever. It reminds me of the Alex Van Halen or Charlie Benante cymbal wash, where you can't even tell where they're hitting the cymbal. It's just that straight wash, and I've always wanted to achieve that. That's why I've been using RUDEs for years now. And I wanted to really hammer it home in

the studio and try to capture what those guys were able to do back in the day.

**MD:** Did you change the positioning of your cymbals or your overall setup in the studio this time around?

**Matt:** Yeah, I set them up a little higher off the toms than I normally do. When I'm playing live, I like things tight and lower, so when you're playing faster music it's easier to get to the stuff, for the quicker fills and whatnot. But for the recording, so everything would have room to breathe, I set it all up, drums and cymbals, a little more spread out. The cymbals were set a little higher so we could try to avoid the bleed into the mics. My rack toms I mounted on stands above the kick drum; typically I mount them on the kick drum. Each drum was on its own.

I'm using a ride cymbal on this album, and previous Hatebreed albums never had a ride. So that's



MATT  
**BYRNE**

Story by Waleed Rashidi • Photos by Paul La Raia

## RECORDINGS

**Hatebreed** Perseverance, The Rise Of Brutality, Supremacy, For The Lions, Hatebreed /// **All Out War** NYC Takeover, Vol. 1 (tracks 1–4)

## FAVORITES

**Slayer** Reign In Blood, Seasons In The Abyss (Dave Lombardo) /// **Tower Of Power** The Very Best Of Tower Of Power: The Warner Years (David Garibaldi) /// **Failure** Fantastic Planet (Kelli Scott) /// **Mastodon** Remission (Brann Dailor) /// **Dark Angel** Leave Scars (Gene Hoglan) /// **Led Zeppelin** Led Zeppelin II (John Bonham) /// **Van Halen** 1984 (Alex Van Halen)

kind of different for us. I used a huge 22" Alpha Metal ride. That thing is super-loud, and we miked it from the bottom to really get the sound projection. I miked the China the same way, for the same purpose.

**MD:** You tried a few snares. What did you eventually land on?

**Matt:** I ended up using a 6x14 Tama Starclassic maple. Pretty standard. Usually I use a 5½x14, so I went a little deeper with this one. I also had a 6½x14 birch bubinga in the studio, and I messed around with that a bit. It sounded great, but there was a little more body to it than I wanted when combined with the rest of the drums. So taking that half inch and using that maple, which definitely has a little more attack, I got the snare sound I always wanted.



**MD:** You mentioned that you changed your tom sizes. What were the sizes of your toms and kicks?

**Matt:** Typically I use an 18x22 kick drum, but I played a 16x22 on this record, because I wanted more attack. I used a birch Starclassic Performer kick drum, and it has that attack from being a shallower drum, but with the warmth that birch projects in the studio. All the toms were birch as well, Performer series. I usually go for a 10"/12"/14"/16" setup. This time I bumped everything up and kind of shifted it all to the left, so I

went 12"/14"/16"/18".

**MD:** That's a decent upgrade.

**Matt:** Yeah, a lot of the previous sizes are still there, but by shifting everything to the left, with the natural way I was playing, the larger drums are more in an area where I hit consistently. These bigger toms are being used more, so now I'm leading a fill of a 12" into a 14", so it just sounds bigger overall.

**MD:** Did you have to change your playing style?

**Matt:** Not really. I was able to get everything in pretty tight to where it didn't

## MATT'S TOURING SETUP

**DRUMS:** Tama Starclassic bubinga in "stardust fade" lacquer

- A.** 6x14 Starclassic maple snare
- B.** 8x10 tom
- C.** 9x12 tom
- D.** 10x14 tom
- E.** 16x16 floor tom
- F.** 16x18 floor tom (not shown)
- G.** 18x22 kick

### CYMBALS: Paiste

- 1.** 15" 2002 Sound Edge hi-hats
- 2.** 18" RUDE Wild crash
- 3.** 19" RUDE Wild crash
- 4.** 20" RUDE crash/ride
- 5.** 22" Alpha Metal ride
- 6.** 20" RUDE Novo China

**HARDWARE:** Tama Road Pro Iron Cobra hi-hat stand, Iron Cobra Power Glide bass drum pedal, Iron Cobra felt beater (with pedal tension a bit tighter than "out of the box")

**HEADS:** Evans coated Power Center Reverse Dot on snare batter, Hazy 300 on snare bottom, clear G2 on tom batters, black resonant on tom bottoms, clear EQ3 on bass drum batter, black bass drum front head

**STICKS:** Vater 5B hickory with wood tip

**ELECTRONICS:** Roland





tommy stinson



dean butterworth



thomas bridgen



phil rudd



dennis chambers



garry carey



glenn kotche

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## MATT BYRNE

look or feel foreign to me. It was pretty comfortable, and the angles were all the same. It wasn't anything that really threw a wrench in the works.

**MD:** How long did you spend tracking?

**Matt:** That's another difference. With past albums, I'd just go and bang out the drum tracks in two or three days. But this time around we really took our time with tracking the songs. We'd do two songs a day, maybe three. And the next day we'd go back over them to see if anything stood out that needed to be changed, and then we moved on. So it

took about a week and a half.

**MD:** What were some of the challenges with this session?

**Matt:** Doing an instrumental track really focuses on what the guitars are doing, and any ear candy is thrown in on top of that. So the drums don't really stand out as far as the playing goes. I really had to lay back and just keep time and let the music breathe. I usually want to find my opportunities to shine a little bit or throw some little things out there, like a roll or a cool pattern, just something crazy to have the drums stand out

a little bit, because the music's so straightforward. But with this one I didn't really worry about things like that. It was: What's the interplay between me and the guitar riff? How should I lock in the kick drums here? Or maybe I let it breathe a little bit here? It was choosing when to lay back in the cut and when to add my two cents as a drummer. I definitely concentrated more on the guitars and made sure the kicks and snares were locked in with the riffs.

**MD:** I've seen you play with a single kick drum and with two kick drums. Which setup did you go for in the studio?

**Matt:** Single kick drum, double pedal.

**MD:** Why that route?

**Matt:** I come from the world of the double pedal. I've always preferred that. I learned to play double bass on it, and I'm just used to it. The two-kick-drums thing is relatively new for me. I started doing it back in '06. I always wanted a double kick kit, but I never got one when I was a kid or when I was coming up, because it was a load of stuff to lug around, and it took up a lot more space. It was easier to start on a double pedal. So I figured, what the hell, now's the opportunity—I'll grab this huge kit and have some fun with it. I go back and forth. Sometimes I'll set up double kick drums live, and other times I'll just use the pedal. It's whatever I'm feeling that night. They have two completely different feels, and I think it's what you're used to, whatever you prefer.

Studio-wise, some engineers don't want to record two kick drums, unless you're triggering or something like that where getting the natural tone of the drums doesn't really matter. But if you're using the natural body of the drums, they'll want one kick drum. It's all personal preference, I think.

**MD:** And what's your take on triggering?

**Matt:** I want to mess around with it because I don't know much about it. Maybe it'll create new opportunities for doing some things. I may stumble upon a certain part that may come easier than without the triggers. But I've never used them before—it's just in the back of my head that I'll start experimenting a little bit here and there. See what that world's all about. There are so many cool things going on in the drumming world.

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## MATT BYRNE

I know a lot of guys hate on triggering, and I did too, in the past. It's like, "That's cheating, and it's not a good sound; it just sounds like you're clapping your hands together," or whatever. I guess there's some truth to that, but the guys who are "cheating" to get the specific tone they're after, they're playing at like 280 beats per minute. There's performance in that, and you've got to give them credit for making their bodies do that and making the pedal do that. And if they weren't triggered, they'd just sound muffled and muddled. I don't

see it as cheating at all—I think they're just using technology to better what they're doing and have it come across a little stronger, you know?

**MD:** Do you write your parts exclusively?

**Matt:** That's yet another difference with this new record. Typically, in the past, I just did what I did. No input from anyone else—I just played the beats, and they came together however I felt the riffs. We might discuss a certain tempo, but the beats were all me. With this one, I listened a lot more to the other members' input on what they were

going for, what they were thinking in a specific song or change. I just approached everything with more of an open mind. Like, for certain riffs, they might've tapped out something on a table between the kick and the snares, and nine times out of ten it was great. I was more open to what other people suggested.

**MD:** Are any other members in the band drummers at all?

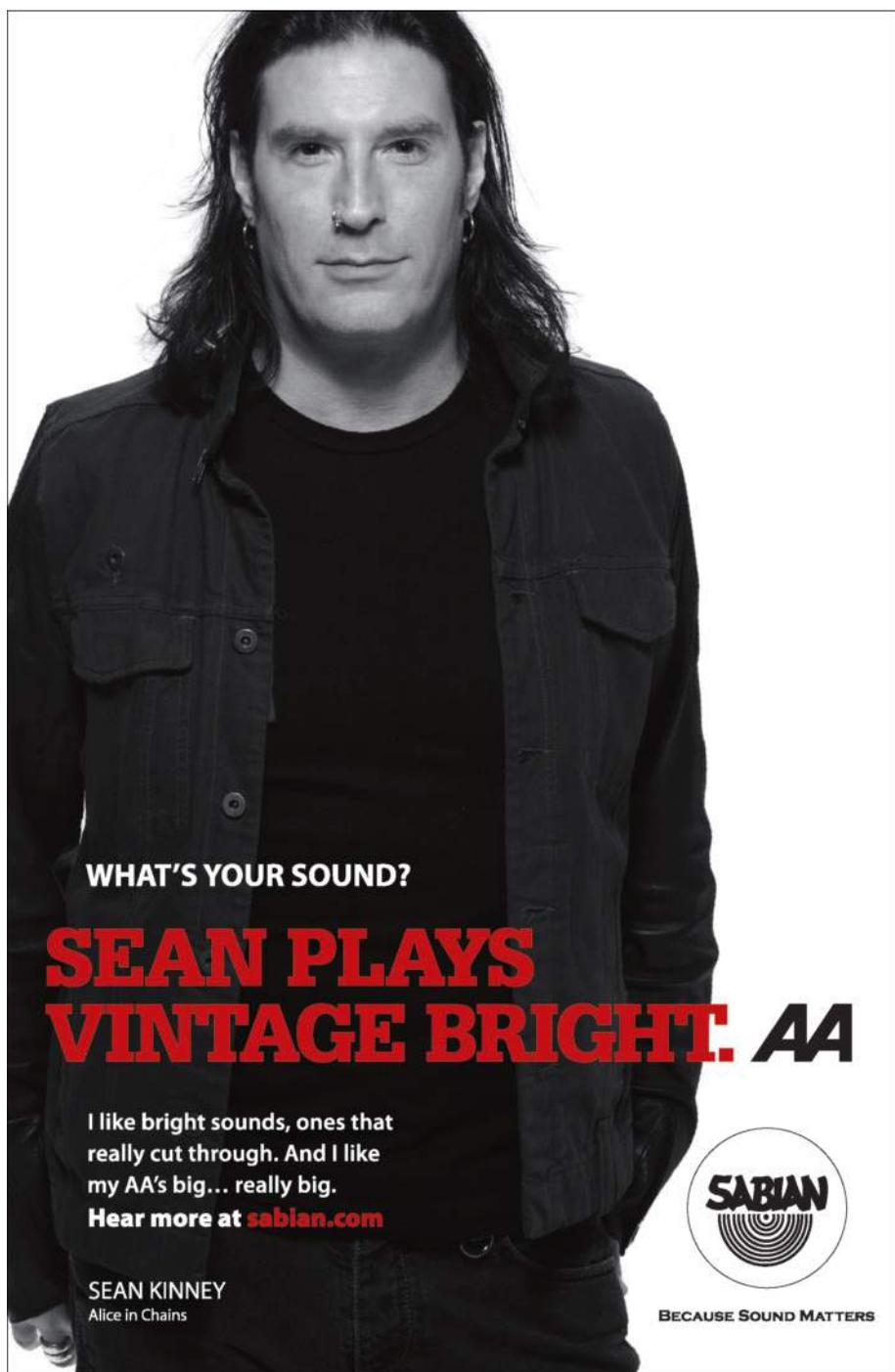
**Matt:** No, not really. I think I'm the only one! [laughs] They never really sit down and tinker. They just don't play drums at all.

**MD:** How do they communicate with you about your drumming?

**Matt:** Outside of tapping things out on a table or maybe humming it, we have specific names, like the "hardcore beat" or the "punk beat." It's like, "Do that punk beat here." There's another one that's a mix between the hardcore beat and the punk beat—it's a little busier on the kick drums, and it's called the "Motorhead beat" because it's still fast and straightforward, but what the kick drums are doing is a little busier. Then there's the straight kick/snare old-school thrash beat; that's the "polka beat." With fills, if there's something super-busy around the toms, like some crazy rolls and stuff, we just call them "Lombardo fills." It's like, "Yeah, just give me some Lombardo right there." That's pretty much it.

**MD:** How do Jamey Jasta's vocals inform or influence your performance?

**Matt:** I've never heard the vocals ahead of time on any of these songs. So I kind of do my thing, and I'm not tooting my horn, but it's cool to sit back and think, *Wow, I played these things pretty spot on without busying up anything that takes away from the vocals.* The vocals seem to flow right over, and where the vocals cut off is where I place my fill, and it all seems to make sense. And it all comes together naturally. I didn't even know what was going on! I didn't know what the vocals would be. It wasn't planned like that. That says something about chemistry right there.



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# CHRIS “DA

In drumming, there are unworldly technicians and deep soul stirrers. There are unique stylists and sonic explorers. And there are studio heavies and wizened road dogs. Then there's Chris Dave, who, between his work with **Maxwell, Kenny Garrett, Robert Glasper, and Erykah Badu**, has proven himself to be all those things—and so much more.

**A**rtistry. Genius. Obsession. Mastery. All of these words, and others, can be used to describe the drumming that Chris “Daddy” Dave displays effortlessly. He is quickly working his way into an elite class of drummers—legends such as Tony, Max, Bonzo, Roy, Elvin, and Vinnie. Like each of these icons, Dave has established himself as not only a consummate artist but also a game changer. With his ability to bounce between different styles, feels, tempos, and time signatures, he has created a voice that stands alone. The need to find new sounds has led him to stretch, bend, and break the rules of convention as applied to the drumkit. One has only to view one of his many videos on YouTube to grasp an idea of what this innovative drummer is working up.

To start, Dave is a living, breathing jazz drumming history book. Although he's best known for his work in other genres, he has earned the respect of such jazz torchbearers as Roy Haynes and Jack DeJohnette, through his collaborations with saxophonist Kenny Garrett and other artists.

Growing up in Texas, a young Chris got his start playing drums in church but soon came to realize that other styles of music spoke to him as well. A pivotal moment in his development arrived when he heard a recording of Miles Davis's “Footprints.” This marked a turning point in the drummer's musical life, as he began a quest for knowledge and mastery of his instrument.

At Houston's famed High School For The Performing And Visual Arts, Dave started as a freshman in the orchestra and the jazz big band program's “B” band. He quickly advanced to the “A” band in his sophomore

year and remained there for the duration of his high school career, propelling the music forward like a seasoned pro and earning placement in Texas's all-state jazz band in all four years of high school. While steadily pushing himself to new levels of technique, Dave was still playing gospel music both in church and on influential recordings such as Kim Burrell's *Try Me Again*. With its highly advanced instrumentation and heavy jazz influence, this album introduced an entirely new sound and concept to gospel music.

Fast-forward to Howard University in Washington, D.C., alma mater to several of this generation's drumming greats, including Cora Coleman-Dunham and Gordon Campbell. A chance meeting with super-producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis landed Dave the drum chair with the group Mint Condition, a gig that propelled him to the front line of R&B drumming, with his playing inspiring the *next* generation of drummers.

Today Dave is as in demand as ever, both as a drummer and a producer. His playing and production credits read like a virtual who's who in popular as well as indie music. Working with jazz icons like Wynton Marsalis, creating blazing tracks for the hit-making producer Dr. Dre, and producing songs on the comeback album of the R&B crooner Maxwell, Dave has reached the level of success that most drummers can only dream about. But for him, that's not the end of the journey. To fully understand what makes this artist unique, you have to witness his genius for yourself. His story is a reminder of what can be accomplished when you combine natural talent with consistent discipline, hard work, and an open mind.

# DDY" DAVE

Story by Stephen Styles  
Photos by David Ahnholz



**MD:** Let's begin with how you got your start playing drums.

**Chris:** I got started playing in church. That has always been an important part of playing drums for me. I started when I was about six years old and still play in church when I can. But I think the real journey came when I discovered jazz.

**MD:** Tell us about that.

**Chris:** Growing up, we had a lot of music in the house. My dad would listen to Miles and Coltrane constantly. My

mom loved to sing and loved good singing, so there was exposure to that. My brother wasn't into drums much, but he loved funk music. He listened to a lot of Parliament, Cameo, and the Ohio Players. It was just different types of music all day.

**MD:** How did being exposed to such diverse music affect your drumming as you developed?

**Chris:** First, it gave me an ear to hear and appreciate all these different styles of playing. It also helped me understand

what it means for music to groove.

**MD:** Is there a particular recording that made a difference in those early years?

**Chris:** Yes. I remember riding in the car with my dad and a recording of Miles Davis came on. The tune was "Footprints," and Tony Williams was on drums. I remember thinking, *How is that drummer doing all that stuff?* I was interested in finding out how to play some of those rhythms like Tony did and still make the music work. That was probably the start for me.

## CHRIS ON RECORD

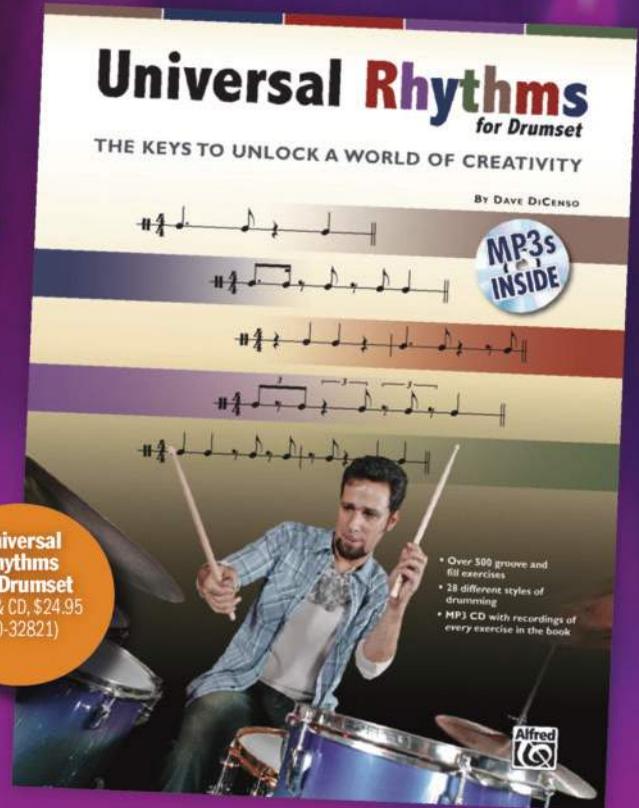
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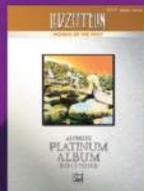
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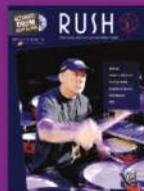
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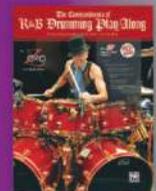
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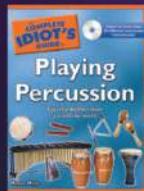
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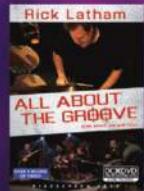
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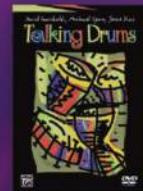
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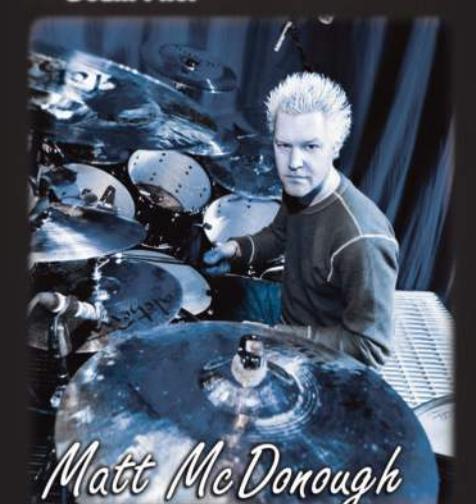
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## CHRIS "DADDY" DAVE

**MD:** Who were your influences in terms of developing your technique?

**Chris:** My first teacher was albums. I started playing with albums when I got my first drumset at the age of five or six. I did that for years. Then I had a middle school teacher, Craig Green in Houston, who was really important in terms of learning technique. He was a mentor and the first person who I saw playing that made me go "Wow!" every day.

I studied with Craig at one school for a year, and when he transferred across town because of the magnet school program, I transferred to that next school just so I could keep studying with him. He was real thorough and made sure we understood the importance of rudiments, sight-reading, four-way coordination, different time signatures, and everything like that.

Through Craig, I met Sebastian Whittaker. Sebastian is one of those guys who never really got the shine he deserves, but everybody who goes through Houston knows who he is. To this day, Sebastian is that dude where if you're on a gig and he walks in, you automatically get a little nervous to play in front of him. He's a guy who could play anything. You can take any rudiment in the book, and he will play it backwards, forward, and with all kinds of variations. He'll take any rudiment and will go from playing it real slow, where it almost sounds like he can't play, to super-fast, and he'll go from a whisper to a roar and back down to a whisper without losing any speed. And he did that using the oversized marching-corps drumsticks. He could go through different drummers and solos, especially stuff from Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, and Philly Joe. He could emulate any legendary drummer's style.

**MD:** What else were you doing in those days?

**Chris:** One thing that was very important was reading and understanding styles. I was interested in learning all the different styles of music and drumming, especially jazz. I spent a lot of time listening to the jazz greats. I would listen to their styles and play along with the albums.

Part of learning how to read and write sheet music was learning how to transcribe. I used to spend hours and hours transcribing different drum parts and solos. That's really how I was able to understand what a lot of drummers were doing. It also taught me placement. I was sitting there with a pen and paper, writing note for note exactly what these guys played. And a lot of my friends would do the same thing. So when we'd get together to play, we could go from one drummer to another.

It would be like, "Give me some Elvin," and somebody would play in the style of Elvin Jones. Then it'd be like, "Play some Philly Joe," and—bam—somebody would kick off some Philly Joe. We did that all the time. While other kids were outside playing basketball or whatever, I'd be working on that stuff. I wanted to understand all those different players and what they brought to the table. Because I knew how to play different people's styles, I would come to the sheds and incorporate a lot of the stuff I'd transcribed into my licks and chops. And shedding that stuff with other players helped me open my mind up to different rhythms. I was doing that and was also in these summer youth jazz workshops. A lot of it was just learning the history and taking it seriously.

**MD:** It seems that a lot of drummers from the church scene and the rock scene don't get into looking back to earlier times and learning from the jazz greats.

**Chris:** Some don't. But for me it was important. I've always been the type that just wanted to know. Knowing the history of the music is the foundation. You can't really build anything that will stand if you don't have a good foundation. So knowing those different players and styles—being able to pick apart what they played and understand it—was necessary. Knowing the rudiments makes that easier.

A lot of guys hear things and think somebody just came up with a cool beat or a cool lick. But in most cases they're playing something that's already been done before. But because cats don't know the history, they think it's new. Or they struggle to under-

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## CHRIS "DADDY" DAVE

stand: "How did he play that?" But if you know your rudiments, it's easier to understand because you can hear something and say, "Okay, he started this rudiment on that beat, and that's what made it sound like that."

**MD:** So from middle school you went on to Houston's High School For The Performing And Visual Arts. Tell us about that experience.

**Chris:** The school was highly competitive. It was a good all-around school because we were pushed to learn the music and perform at a high level. Everything was reading charts and playing compositions. It forces you to be versatile because you aren't allowed to settle. I never wanted to settle either. It was a real good fit.

**MD:** In playing all this different music in school, at what point did you start to try to develop your own sound?

**Chris:** It was probably when I was about fifteen. There were a few records that had a lot to do with it, like Miles Davis's *The Sorcerer* and John Coltrane's *Crescent*. When I started messing around with these records, I think my sound started to come. I spent so much time studying Tony Williams. I didn't know anyone in my group of friends who messed around with Tony Williams like I did.

Also, Slum Village's *Fantastic*. With Slum Village, J. Dilla was always doing these crazy beats. I worked real hard, trying to figure out how to play those J. Dilla beats on the drumkit. As drummers, we can hear most programmed beats and go to work learning them. But Dilla's stuff wasn't quantized. It was loopy and a little bit off. I was able to get that stuff down, and it opened my mind up even more.

**MD:** Playing Dilla beats, you had to have had strong independence. How did you develop that?

**Chris:** I worked with the book *4-Way Coordination* by Marvin Dahlgren. I had my four-way coordination down by the time I finished ninth grade. I'd started it well before I finished middle school. Being in control of that makes a huge difference in the way that I play. All that splitting-the-brain stuff. It opened my thinking up, and I was able to see and hear all these ways to execute different

rhythms and beats. So when I started getting into J. Dilla, it was hard, but I could do it because I had the independence I needed to get those rhythms down and play them comfortably.

**MD:** Let's jump to your moving to Washington, D.C. It seems things really started taking off when you got there.

**Chris:** My time in D.C. was a real good experience. First of all, I had a chance to meet and become friends with a lot of the great musicians and drummers that are on the scene today. I met Dennis Chambers and Jeff "Tain" Watts. Gorden Campbell and I studied at Howard University and used to shed together a lot. And of course I met Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, which led to the Mint Condition gig.

**MD:** What did you learn at Howard that influenced your playing?

**Chris:** Even before I got to Howard, I used to experiment a lot. Once I learned my four-way coordination, I started wanting to learn how to apply it in as many different ways as possible.

I had a friend at Howard named Paul Dudley, whose practice room was right down the hall. He came down one day and started shedding with me, and it just went from there. Paul would hear me play some crazy beat, but he wouldn't stop at playing the beat. He'd have to take my beat and play it three times as fast. Then he'd come up with these crazy ideas about things to play. It wasn't stuff he could play or was even going to *try* to play. He'd just be joking around, like, "It would be crazy if somebody was able to take this beat, mix it with that beat, and still keep the groove in 4/4 while not breaking up the cymbal pattern but using both hands to play these different beats." The stuff he would say as a joke, I'd think about it when he left and start working on it, to see if I could do it. That's the game I played against myself.

I was always searching to find music that had beats I couldn't play—stuff that had multiple drummers, like Fela Kuti. I'd take rhythms that were made by multiple drummers and work on getting them comfortable on the drumset, without leaving anything out.

**MD:** Just creating wild rhythms.

**Chris:** Right. With Paul, we could be on

separate drumsets in the practice room. We'd be trading fours and pretty much playing the same type of groove. But then Paul would break out and start playing some other groove or rhythm to try to throw me off. Or he'd accelerate the beat he was playing, then slow it down, then speed it up. I learned how to completely zone out of the beat I was playing and just focus on what Paul was doing. Once I learned that, it was easy for me to start doing the same things, in the context of being one drummer but playing the amount of notes that it took two drummers to make. You hear that on some of the stuff I play with [pianist] Robert Glasper or with Foley, who used to be the bass player for Miles Davis.

**MD:** Some of your YouTube videos with Glasper and Foley demonstrate playing odd meters and accelerating or decelerating the tempo. How do you make those drum parts work within the context of a tune?

**Chris:** Both of those guys are great musicians. That's a big part of it. Robert has strong timing. When we first started

playing together, I'd play a crazy beat or flip the timing around, and it would throw him off. But he got used to it quickly, and from there it's been easy. A lot of what I play isn't just about accelerating or decelerating rhythms. I can play with the timing because there's always something the other players can hold on to. Say we're playing a tune in five, but then I decide to turn the beat and play in seven. It feels a little weird, but it's cool because we know we'll meet a few bars down, and when we meet up at twelve and come down together on the 1, it's gonna hit hard.

Sometimes Robert will play a song. He'll start with the head of that tune, and [Glasper bass player] Derrick Hodge and I will go into an entirely different tune that has its own meter that's different from the timing Robert is playing in. So we're playing those two songs at the same time, and I'll go back and forth between the two tempos and tunes. That comes from that regimen I had at Howard, of trying not to be thrown off by Paul playing some other

idea against whatever I was playing.

Say Foley and I are playing "Nefertiti" with Robert. Foley might play a Tribe Called Quest tune as if we're in a hip-hop club and the MCs are waiting to rap. So I'm playing this slow tune with Robert swinging, and then I'll meet Foley at the top of his phrase and play the phrase with him. But for the audience, it's not hard to listen to or follow because I'm leaving something in the groove for them to hold on to. All that is tied to those days at Howard with me battling Paul's mind. Going through that experience prepared me for being able to do the odd times and beat displacements and things like that with my trio and different groups.

**MD:** In addition to playing these beat ideas, you're exploring different sounds. Can you talk about the sound you've been going for?

**Chris:** I've been playing with sounds for some years now. Most of the artists I play with have seen me mess around with sounds in the studio. But I just started doing it live the last couple years. I guess it comes from trying to

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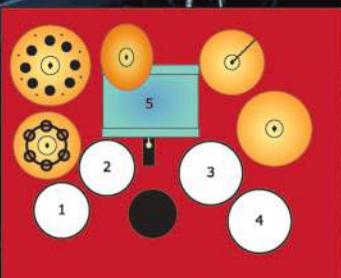
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## CHRIS "DADDY" DAVE

hear things that are different. I've never been one to settle for what something is supposed to sound like.

For example, Sabian might send me a shipment of cymbals. Even though the cymbals sound really good, I might end up sending all of them back. I'll call up and say, "Those were all cool, but do you guys have any broken cymbals laying around?" I did that. I asked my rep, "You got any cymbals that are cracked?" And they were like, "What do you mean?" I'm like, "You know—you hit a cymbal too hard and it cracks down the middle.... Send me some of those." I've been playing with sounds like that for quite a while. One time I was looking for a big cracked cymbal with rivets in it. I took it and set it in my bass drum. So each time I hit my bass drum, it rattles just a little bit.

**MD:** I notice you've taken a different approach with your drums as well.

**Chris:** I got to the point where I was just tired of hearing everything sound the same. I was telling Steve [Badalament, president of Innovation Drums] that I was looking to do some-

thing that's not being done. This was a couple years ago. It seemed like all the licks and chops were sounding the same coming off the toms. I was talking to some friends about it, and one of them dared me to play a gig with no toms. So I took it a step further and said, "I'm going to do a whole tour with no toms."

I went on the road with Erykah Badu with no toms at all. People were telling me there was no way I could do that tour with no toms. Next thing you know, I had two snare drums, a bass drum, one cymbal, and 18" hi-hats. And the one cymbal I had was a cracked 18" crash/ride with rivets. But if you listen to the show, you hear toms and floor toms. That's because I was learning to tune and play at the same time, and I got the snares to sound like different drums while in the song.

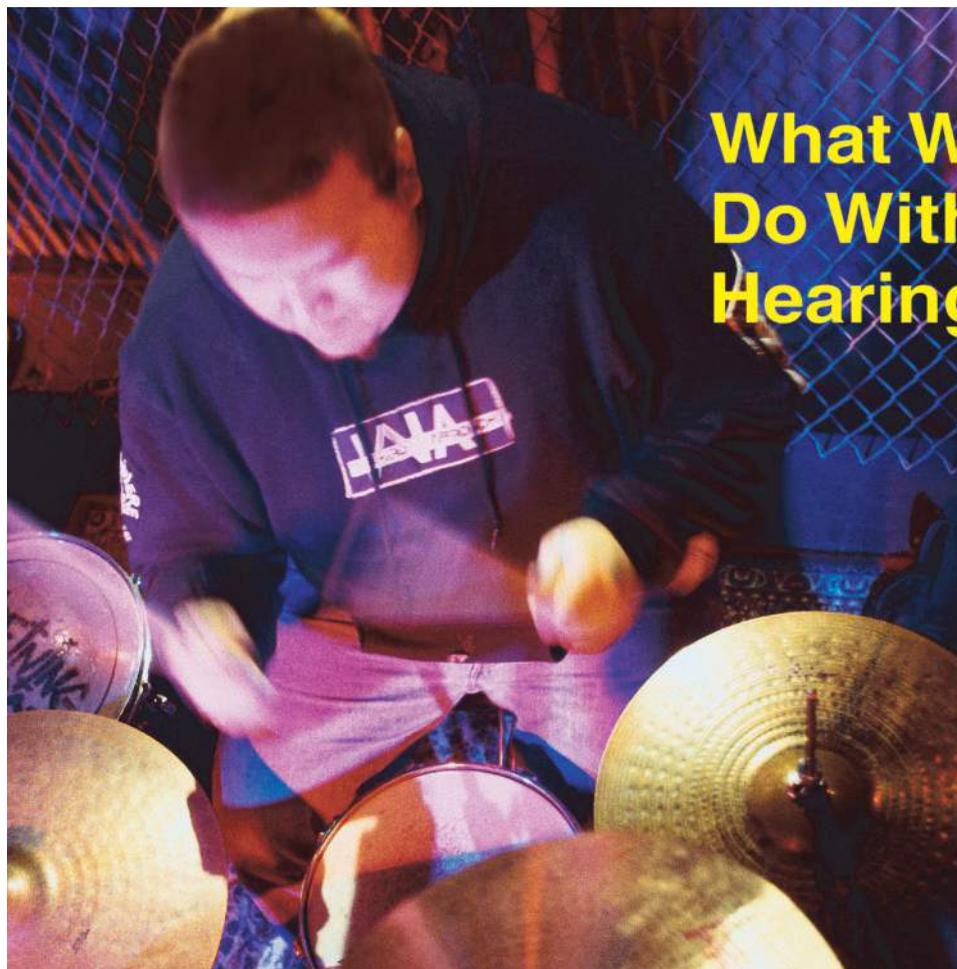
**MD:** Are you still playing this type of alternative drum setup?

**Chris:** My current setup is five snares, a bass drum, and cymbals. No toms. All my drums are custom made by Innovation. My main snare is a 7x13

fiberglass with suction cups under the batter head and 24K gold hardware. It's tuned high and sounds beautiful. That's my all-purpose snare.

To the left of my hi-hat is a 5x14 maple snare. This one only gets used for special sections of tunes. I can go to it for a particular rhythm or phrase, and then I'm back. To my right is a 7x14 maple snare that I tune kind of low. I play it both with the snares on and off. Depending on how I hit it, it can sound like a timbale or like a floor tom. To the right of that drum is another maple snare, either 7x14 or 8x14, depending on the room we're in. Where a rack tom would be, I have a 10x12. This drum gives me a sound I need when I want to play percussion parts.

All my drums have personality. They're kind of like women who have different needs or serve different purposes, and the relationships with all of them are good. But you can't take your round-the-way chick to the governor's ball, you know what I mean? It's like one drum is Big Bertha, but the other one is the quirky, skinny fashion model,



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and another may be that needy chick you don't call much because then she'll be on your case about why you don't spend more time together. The approach you take with each drum is going to be different depending on what you're doing.

For hi-hats I'm using a 19" cracked extra-thin O-Zone on top and on the bottom an 18" prototype crash and a 20" crash/ride. My setup changes all the time, but this is what I'm doing right now.

**MD:** How do you conceive your parts?

**Chris:** A lot of it comes from experimenting. Every time I play a song, I try to play it differently from the time before. From one night to the next, I'm always thinking of ways to make my parts fresh and new. I'm fortunate because the artists who hire me bring me in because they want me. They want my sound, and they give me the freedom to be myself in their music. That doesn't mean I'm soloing all the time. But I get to be myself and don't have to try to sound so much like the recorded parts. With Maxwell, I did the entire album. Taking that music to the stage was an easy transition because I was playing music I'd created.

**MD:** As your sound evolves, it seems you're moving away from a style you used to play, one that many younger drummers are now copping. Are you intentionally changing your approach to get away from your old sound?

**Chris:** Yes and no. I'm definitely changing up my sound. But it has more to do with where I am musically and the fact that I'm always finding new things I can't play. That's what I work on. Back in the day, when I heard cats playing stuff that I'd played at a show or on record, I used to get mad about it. At the time I didn't know how to take it. At first I felt like guys were taking something I'd been working hard on and then copying my sound and trying to pass it off like it was really theirs. Over time my feelings about it have changed. It's cool that I can inspire people. At this point I'm so busy trying to work and keep myself moving forward that I don't think about it anymore.

**MD:** You mentioned that you're hired by artists to be yourself. Would you ever consider playing for a mainstream pop act where the drum parts are more restrictive?

**Chris:** That's a good question. I don't think so, not now. Right now I'm so involved in putting out my own projects that it's not something I'd do. Say I got the call for Beyoncé or somebody like that. I wouldn't really want that gig right now. I feel like I'm in a better position without that type of gig. I have more control over things like what I'm paid, what hotels I stay in, when I work and when I don't. And even more important than that is being out with all of my friends versus being on the road with people that are cool but that I have no history with. There's nothing wrong with that, it's just not the type of situation I'm looking for at this moment.

**MD:** What projects are you working on now?

**Chris:** Well, one is Chris Dave & Friends. It's a lot of different authentic jazz musicians and hip-hop artists performing with a techno/house thing happening underneath. It's a unique concept, but I'm making sure to keep it down to real jazz musicians so that it's not a mockery. The goal is to make an album that all drummers can be proud of but at the same time makes sense to listeners who aren't musicians at all so that they can follow the music and not get lost.

**MD:** Has there been a secret to your success on the instrument and in your career?

**Chris:** No. It's been hard work. I think people just have to work hard. There's so much that goes into being a really good drummer. That's the goal, right, to be a good drummer? Or maybe to be great. There are definitely some things I think cats need to be aware of.

For example, sight-reading is really important. In most situations I can hear a track one time, and because I have a studio in my home with the drums already set up and mics set and everything, I can go right in and nail the track in one take. If there's a figure in the tune that's difficult, I can just write



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## CHRIS "DADDY" DAVE

it out and take it into the room with me and play it right off. But if you can't read or write music, you can't do that.

I still practice a lot. When I say practice, I mean really *practice*. If you come to my house and walk into the room where I'm practicing, you're going to hear me sound like I can't play. That's because I'm working on stuff that I can't do so I can improve. What a lot of guys do is practice a little bit, but the moment they think someone is watching, they turn on the chops and start doing the stuff they think is hot and that they know how to do well. To me, that defeats the purpose.

Also, I think it's important that cats get the right idea about their attitude. Confidence and attitude are two very different things. Confidence means you know you've put more than enough time into your instrument that you're ready to play and do whatever the gig calls for. Attitude is how you present yourself to people. You can be the best drummer around, but if you have a bad attitude people don't want to work with you. You can blaze the gig, but if every time your bandmates look up you're complaining and moaning about something, that's having a bad attitude. Eventually that stuff makes its way into how you play.

**MD:** How so?

**Chris:** If a drummer has a bad attitude, his feeling about the music is going to go down. Then the rest of the band is going to be dragged down, and the crowd won't be hyped about the music that you're playing. So the artist comes out, but the vibe is off. Then the artist doesn't have a good show, and the audience feels like the artist is wack. The artist knows it's the drummer's fault, so he either refuses to pay you or, if nothing else, he makes sure you don't play on the record. So now you're off that gig and you have bad references for having a bad attitude and no humility. Now you can't get on any other gigs, and you don't get called to play on any records.

**MD:** It's good to hear you talk about the importance of humility. It seems to be lost on some of the drummers of this generation.

**Chris:** It's important. For me it came from the way I was raised in my family. But humility isn't just shown in your attitude. It's also shown in the way you approach the kit. Do you have enough respect for the instrument to really learn it? How much time do you put into learning the history of the drums and how drumming got where it is now? All of that matters.

When we play shows with Mos Def or some of these other artists, the goal is not only for you in the audience to go buy the artist's album. Of course we want people to buy the album. But more than that, we want people to leave a concert saying they want to go find *music*. I was always interested in knowing where stuff came from. So if I heard Tain, I wanted to see where he got his thing. So then I check out, say, Elvin Jones, and I want to go study what Elvin studied, and it goes on and on. You have to have enough respect for the music to want to go and do that.

**MD:** What do you think about Web sites such as GospelChops.com and ShowMeThat.com?

**Chris:** There's nothing wrong with them. I just think the people who are putting stuff on there don't realize that if an artist or musical director goes on there, they're seeing all these different drummers who sound the same. Everybody is in their basement learning the same chops and getting the same licks from their favorite player and then flipping it and trying to put it out like it's theirs. It ends up sounding the same, and no producer, artist, or MD is going to hire that. I think when guys start learning that and go back to learning drums and investing in growing as musicians, they'll see the type of opportunity they're looking for.

**MD:** What goals do you have for the future?

**Chris:** Honestly, I just want to continue growing and being the best drummer I can possibly be. That's my goal. I know a lot of people say that, but that's it for me. I want to create a body of work that I can be judged on and remembered for.

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Janak Geethelen

# Univers Zero's DANIEL DENIS

**He works without the aid of repeatable systems or even written notation. Yet the veteran art-rock drummer still manages to lead his distinctive ensemble through unique and demanding musical terrain.**

**O**ne day, when the alternate, secret history of jazz-rock and fusion is written, Daniel Denis and Univers Zero will receive high marks for their inventive material, unique arrangements, and bold musicianship. Fusion but not fusion, Univers Zero continues to draw on a wealth of diverse influences not typically heard in popular music, much less in the shrinking genre known as fusion (or in this case, art rock). A prolific Belgian group with nine albums to its credit, UZ plays music redolent of such iconic '70s acts as Soft Machine and Tony Williams Lifetime as well as the classical composers

Stravinsky and Bartók.

"Univers Zero's music forced me to develop my own language, with unconventional drum patterns," says drummer, composer, and bandleader Daniel Denis via email. "I got ideas from listening to contemporary music and composers such as Penderecki, Varèse, and Charles Ives. My drumming evolved over a long period of time. The atmosphere of the late 1960s, when anything seemed possible, was crucial for my awareness that drums could have a very important role in music. You only have to listen to the drummers of that era to realize what a creative time it was."

**by Ken Micallef**

Often taking an orchestral approach to drumset performance, Denis never plays the expected, never bothers with anything bordering on the common. Often overdubbing his parts to prerecorded accompaniment consisting of oboe, bassoon, and other acoustic instruments, Denis also writes all of Univers Zero's music, though he doesn't read or write standard notation. Indeed, he is that rare musician who has literally created his own genre, his own sound, in both his music and his drumming.

Denis, who's also worked with the prog stalwarts Magma and Art Zoyd, founded Univers Zero in 1974. From the beginning the band was on to something fresh and novel—avant pop meets progressive rock—with jazz- and classical-inspired technique. Most of UZ's albums have been reissued by Cuneiform, including the group's 1977 debut, *1313*.

Joining an original lineup of violin, harmonium, guitar, bassoon, and bass, Denis brought his orchestral drumming

approach to bear, which can be heard in high relief on *1313*'s opening track, "Ronde," which, with its pensive pizzicato violins and obtuse bassoon figures, recalls an alternate version of King Crimson's "21st Century Schizoid Man." To the acoustic intro Denis adds dancing snare drum rolls, which flagellate and collapse inward, followed by a pointed bell-driven beat. The other instruments chirp and chat like caterwauling birds, the drummer adding contrast with agitated hi-hat and snare punctuations, weird pummeling tom accents, and Bill Bruford-ish snare slaps. At times Denis sounds like three drummers at once, hitting temple blocks, oddly tuned unidentified percussion, and orchestral hand cymbals.

Experimental yet grounded in tradition, inventive but consistently listenable and accessible, Daniel Denis and Univers Zero defy easy categorization and provide supreme inspiration in this era of cookie-cutter music.

**MD:** You don't read or write standard notation, yet you've created the very complex music of Univers Zero. Do you write personalized charts for yourself and the other musicians?

**Daniel:** Indeed, I don't write or read music. This may seem surprising for

someone who plays with musicians who do. Maybe there is laziness on my part, but I've always wished to approach music in the same way a folk/traditional musician would and perform in a spontaneous, instinctive manner.

When ideas for compositions began appearing in my head, I taught myself to play keyboards. I used a couple of crappy cassette recorders to overdub myself playing the various parts. I'd record the basic keyboard structure on one, then add the other parts with the other, and so on. Once I'd finished you could barely hear the original track. Still, it kind of worked, and I used that antiquated process for many years, until I was finally able to afford a Tascam four-track tape recorder about ten years later. Once I was satisfied with what I'd recorded, I'd play the tape to the other musicians and indi-

cate which part each would have to play. I also wrote some of the music down in my own self-taught way, which they would then convert to proper scores.

The music I wrote for UZ became more and more precise over time. Of course, some of the parts were later enriched and improved by the group—a good example being the intro to "La Faulx," which got better with every concert.

For many years now I've been using a computer. It's the ideal tool for me. Thanks to the sampled sounds of the various instruments heard in the group, I can immediately get a very

## DANIEL'S SETUP

**DRUMS:** Gretsch 1975 kit in "black nitron" finish: 8x12 tom, 16x16 floor tom, 18x20 gong tom, 16x18 bass drum; Gretsch 5x14 chrome snare; **Sonor** Signature 8x14 wood snare

**CYMBALS:** 1960s-era K **Zildjian**: 14" hi-hats, 20" dark crash, 20" heavy ride, and 22" ride; 26" **Wuhan** China

**HEADS:** **Evans** Genera HD Dry snare batter, coated Genera G2 on toms, coated Ambassador on gong tom, CAD/CAM UNO 58 1000 on bass drum

**HARDWARE:** **DW** bass drum pedal with hard cork beater

**STICKS:** **Vic Firth** 5A sticks and brushes

## RECORDINGS

**Univers Zero** *Heresie*, *Ceux Du Dehors*, *Crawling Wind*, *Uzed*, *Heatwave*, *The Hard Quest*, *Rhythmix*, *Implosion*, *Live*, *Relaps: Archives 1984–1986* /// **Daniel Denis** *Sirius* *And The Ghosts*, *Les Eaux Troubles* /// **Art Zoyd** *Faust*, *Ubique*, *Häxan*

## FAVORITES

**Captain Beefheart** *Trout Mask Replica* (John "Drumbo" French) /// **Miles Davis** *Live-Evil* (Jack DeJohnette, Billy Cobham) /// **Jimi Hendrix Experience** *Are You Experienced*, *Axis: Bold As Love* (Mitch Mitchell) /// **King Crimson** *In The Court Of The Crimson King*, *In The Wake Of Poseidon* (Michael Giles) /// **Magma** *1001 Degrees Centigrade*, *Kohntarkhosz* (Christian Vander) /// **Soft Machine** *Volume Two*, *Third* (Robert Wyatt) /// **Tony Williams** *Lifetime* *Emergency* (Tony Williams)



Fred Lorréant

## DANIEL DENIS

clear idea of how the music will eventually sound. Once I'm pleased with a piece, I send the MIDI file to Michel Berckmans, who turns it into a proper score, which is then forwarded to each musician. The rest of the work is done in rehearsal.

**MD:** No matter what odd meter or groove you're playing, you always sound utterly relaxed. How do you achieve such a natural state while playing complex music? Are there specific exercises you follow for relaxation?

**Daniel:** Rhythmic settings that are a little complex can, with the right amount of work, be felt and performed exactly as would a basic 4/4. You just have to feel the pulse, playing over the metrics, not thinking too much about divisions the same way musicians from Eastern Europe do, for instance.

I can't really explain why I am drawn to odd meters. I was probably fascinated by the apparent chaos they introduced, which isn't so present in the more basic jazz or rock rhythms. In my first group, Arkham, in the early 1970s, we were using quite complex meters. Again, these rhythms only work if you play them with the same rhythmic feel as you'd play traditional music. Whenever the rhythmic structures of a piece become too intellectualized or arithmetic, the music becomes artificial and lifeless.

**MD:** While somewhat conventional backbeats appear on later UZ records, you often play a more orchestral style. Does your snare drum play the lead role in that case? Bass drum and cymbals seem to take a secondary, more complementary role.

**Daniel:** I try to integrate the drums in the same way a percussion set would be used in a classical orchestra. But it's not systematic. It depends on the pieces.

This happens when the piece seems to require certain sounds or tone colors and not necessarily "conventional" drum parts. So I try to find something that fits, basically adapting my part to the music, using only cymbals and bass drum, or only snare drum sometimes. "Conventional" drumming would distort or weigh down the whole thing.

Also, this may seem absurd, but often I have no idea for drum parts when I write a new piece. I never start with a drum part but rather with the other instruments. Even recently, when recording our new CD, *Clivages*, at the last minute I was still trying out various ideas to finalize the drum parts for the piece "Soubresauts."

**MD:** In earlier UZ music, your snare typically seems to maintain the primary rhythm with, again, bass drum and hi-hat providing complementary accents. Can you give a few examples of how the

snare/bass/hi-hat relationship works in your early music? What is your process for creating these unusual patterns?

**Daniel:** My wish is to place and compose my parts based on the music, not the reverse. So I use the various elements of the kit, trying different combinations and retaining those I think best fit the atmospheres or parts of each piece. There is nothing systematic about this. I simply try to find what works best.

In the early days of Magma, Christian Vander liked to use the "military" aspect of the snare drum in his music. This opened some doors for me and pointed to a new way of using the snare drum within the drumkit.

**MD:** You play more standard grooves on later UZ recordings, but typically with unusual accents and phrasing. What dictates where you accent within a particular groove or pattern?

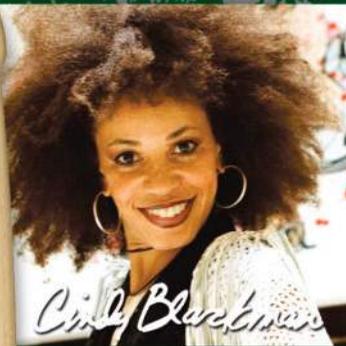
**Daniel:** Once you've found your own kind of language, the difficulty lies in not repeating yourself. You need to continue to search and evolve. Even when you're playing more conventional grooves, it's interesting to apply your own spirit to them. When I listen to a piece I've never heard before and, after only a few bars, I recognize who's playing, I consider it a success. This is what I'm trying to achieve.

**MD:** As drummers we're used to hear-



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ing other drummers playing with electric instruments, but you often play with bassoon, oboe, harmonium.... How does this allow you to play more acoustically and draw different timbres from the drums?

**Daniel:** It isn't easy not to drown out the bassoon, English horn, or clarinet when the music gets really wild in the triple fortes. This is something that you have to keep under control. I believe there is no alternative in Univers Zero to thinking in terms of percussion rather than drums. Again, this depends on each piece.

**MD:** Drummers typically crash a cymbal and bass drum together, but you don't always do that.

**Daniel:** There should be no method, no principles, no systematic approaches in drumming. That's precisely what allows drummers to remain inventive and find their own language. I think the richness of the instrument lies in exploring and exploiting all the possibilities and amalgams of sound it offers. What you must do is conceive intelligent and imaginative parts that fit the music. Adding accents where one least expects them, or devising backwards patterns and unusual divisions—Tony Williams demonstrated this type of thing admirably. Although UZ's music is very precise, I do allow myself to play quite freely on most of these structures, which

produces different, non-set results.

**MD:** How do you record drums?

**Daniel:** I've always overdubbed my drum parts after the other instruments have been recorded, so I could best adapt them. This is a good thing for precision and tightness, but sadly it can affect the spontaneity and energy of the playing. This also requires one to play to a click track, which is a bit constraining and impacts the music. For *Clivages* we decided to perform live together in order to make the music as lively as possible. It was a wise decision.

**MD:** "Docteur Petiot," from *1313*, is a very orchestral track. How did you decide what to accent in your accompaniment in this song?

**Daniel:** This was a very long time ago, thirty-two years, in 1977! What was interesting with this repetitive 7/4 pattern was to find a drum part with a weird and obsessive riff to link the bass and guitar. The use of toms and cymbals is unusual. It's something you can find in Captain Beefheart's music, which has always been an inspiration for me. Nowadays I would probably play differently on this piece.

**MD:** Your solo piece "Falling Rain Dance," from *Live*, is very contemporary sounding. How do you plan a solo? What elements dictate its direction?

**Daniel:** No patterns were planned in advance. I begin playing with no idea

of what I'm going to play. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. If I structure my solo mentally before playing, it always fails. Or it has nothing to do with what I'd intended to play!

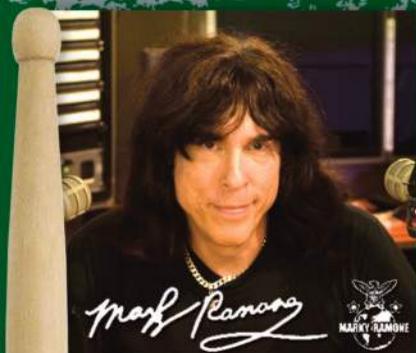
**MD:** Can you break down the amazing pattern in "Ronde"?

**Daniel:** It's difficult for me to analyze this. I simply start with an idea for a weird "binary" dance. The skeleton for this particular piece is mostly based on a left-hand harmonium part. The tempo is interrupted and broken at various points, with rhythms that morph into eleven, nine, and other odd meters, reinforced by dissonant and obsessive chords. The result is the kind of dance that I believe would have been well liked by the yokels from the Middle Ages. The broken, sometimes obsessive structure of the tempo and the use of nonconventional harmonies are meant to underline the pathetic, deceptively festive atmosphere of the piece.

"Ronde" was the first extended composition I began to write for UZ, around 1975, and it was the starting point and gears for the other similar pieces that followed.

**MD:** You often get unusual timbres and resonances from your kit. Can you explain the different ways that you extract sound from the drums?

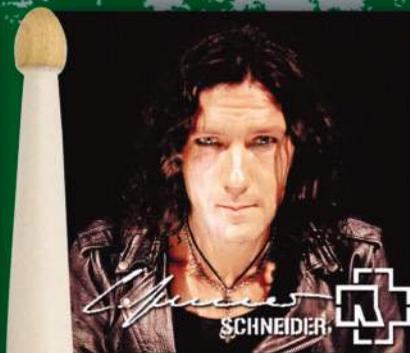
**Daniel:** The way you strike the drums is extremely important. I'd say it



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## DANIEL DENIS

accounts for 80 percent of your sound. I've never been able to determine whether it's the striking that changes the kit's sound, or the instrument itself. The quality of the cymbals you use is also essential. Among the cymbals I own, I use old K Zildjians from the 1960s: heavy ride, hi-hats, and ride. As for the bass drum, I leave a little resonance by using the damper only partially. This way I get a rather "cracking" sound, not too high pitched.

**MD:** How did you originally develop your snare drum technique?

**Daniel:** I am completely self-taught. I never took a single lesson. Around age fifteen, I played to records by Hendrix and Cream, trying to imitate Mitch Mitchell and Ginger Baker. My learning process was very much guided by instinct, and as regards technique, I worked mostly on patterns that I felt were the most important—rolls and independence—to realize the ideas I had in mind.

**MD:** What practice element made the biggest difference in your technique? Did you practice long hours of playing rolls on snare drum?

**Daniel:** Obviously I spent a huge amount of time practicing the instrument, not to develop an amazing technique but to achieve the greatest possible freedom in my playing. The first time I heard Hendrix I was extremely impressed by Mitch Mitchell's playing. I tried to understand his "rolling" playing technique. I really think drummers of this caliber, with that kind of spirit, don't exist anymore. He and Hendrix were a perfect example of absolute fusion between two musicians.

When I met Christian Vander during my brief stint in Magma in 1972, I was able to observe how the suppleness of wrists and ankles was extremely crucial. I worked on that much more after that. However, I never tried to achieve amazing technique. I find it boring. To see and hear a drummer with amazing technique showing off bores me to tears. Only the greatest drummers, like Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, Mitch Mitchell, and Christian Vander, to name a few, understood this and used technique intelligently to serve the music and maximize energy.

I started out as essentially a rock drummer, but I soon found out that if I worked on jazz patterns—without necessarily playing jazz—I could give my drumming more suppleness and musicality.

**MD:** What tips can you give on developing a more orchestral drumming style or approach?

**Daniel:** First and foremost, look at the drumkit as a full-fledged instrument with its own potential for musicality, and not as merely a "rhythm machine." The main elements that one should seek to acquire and balance in order to be a complete musician are imagination, energy, subtlety, and great musicality. Technique, for me, is a secondary concern.

**MD:** Your drumming has evolved since Univers Zero's debut album. What has contributed to your growth?

**Daniel:** Outside influences impact less than they did in the early days. What I did was try to enrich my own playing style according to the evolution of UZ's music. I have always been, and still am, drawn to 1960s/'70s drummers like Tony Williams, who for me remains the greatest of them all.

**MD:** How have you developed the artistic courage to follow your own path for so long? What vision has driven you through the years?

**Daniel:** It's always been arduous and thankless, but despite moments of discouragement, the satisfactions can be enormous. What I find particularly sadening is the sense of isolation and exclusion I find compared with other musical styles that are better accepted by the media. I see UZ's music as accessible to everyone, but sadly it's filtered from all existing media: radio, TV, press—except *MD!*—and concert promoters. This means that, without choosing to be, we remain within a very confined network.

Whenever you create music that is off the beaten track, there is an additional motivation, that of struggling to keep it alive in spite of everything. There is no recipe. A lot of enthusiasm and pleasure can be derived from simply trying to create works of art with sincerity and sharing them with others. Music remains an exceptional means of communication and transmission.

*Thanks to Aymeric Leroy for translation assistance.*





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# Advanced Funk Drumming In Depth

## PART 2: 8 DIFFERENT HI-HAT OPENINGS

by Jim Payne

MUSIC KEY	
open	○
H.H.	⊕
S.D.	●
B.D.	⊙
Ghost Note	⊖

**H**i-hat openings add a lot of spice to funk grooves. The crisp hi-hat bark, as some call it, makes for great accents. To hear creative ways of playing the hi-hat, check out the drumming of Zigaboo Modeliste with the Meters, Harold Brown with War, David Garibaldi with Tower of Power, and Mike Clark with the Headhunters.

One of the most common spots to place an open hi-hat is on the "&," but let's work with some more unusual openings.

### ON THE "A"

Our first beat has a hi-hat opening on the "a" of 1. ("A" is pronounced "ah.") The 16th-note count is written below the staff. The backbeats are accented, and there are softer unaccented ghost notes on the "e" of 1 and the "a" of 2.

Notice that the right hand doesn't play the hi-hat on beat 2. Instead, the left hand plays the snare drum and the left foot closes the hi-hat. Whenever the hi-hat is closed with the foot, you don't have to strike it with the stick as well. The foot "chick" of the hi-hat will cover up the sound of the stick anyway. Plus, not playing the hi-hat with the stick can make the groove flow better because it's easier to play.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

Here's the same concept with a broken hi-hat pattern that's known as the King Kong beat. The King Kong beat works great in funk because when you fill in the missing 16ths with the snare drum, you have a linear pattern with a built-in backbeat on 2.

Adding the bass drum on the "e" of 4 in the second measure turns the rhythm into a two-measure phrase, which makes the groove a little more interesting.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

### SHORT NOTE ON THE 1

In the next beat, the hi-hat is opened on 1 along with a bass drum note. The hi-hat is closed with the foot on the next 16th note, which is the "e" of 1.

Since the left foot is closing the hi-hat on the "e," this beat can take some extra practice. I've always found that two-part coordination, where one hand and one foot are playing together, is easier to execute. For some reason it's often harder to play one limb by itself.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

Here are two warm-up exercises I've found useful for loosening up the hands to play rhythms that have a lot of ghost notes.

In this one, play the hi-hat and snare drum at equal volume.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

This is one of my favorite exercises for developing left-hand ghost notes. It has three rights and three lefts superimposed over one another. Again, play the hi-hat and snare drum at equal volume, but accent the hi-hat on the quarter notes: 1, 2, 3, 4.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

### 8TH-NOTE OPENING ON THE 1

In our next beat, the bass drum plays along with an open hi-hat on 1. The hi-hat is closed along with an accented snare hit on the "&" of 1. The right hand doesn't need to play the hi-hat on the "&" of 1. (That's why that hi-hat note has parentheses around it.) But sometimes it feels better to play the note because it keeps the flow going. Do what feels best to you.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

### LONG NOTE ON THE DOWNBEAT

Here's a groove with a long opening on the downbeat. It's similar to the pattern Mike Clark plays on the tune "Stingers" on his *Actual Proof* CD. Keep the hi-hat open until 2.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

### SHORT/LONG OPENINGS WITH GHOST NOTES UNDERNEATH

Here's a hand exercise that can help you develop a feel for the next hi-hat opening. It consists of 16th notes grouped in threes, with two pairs of double strokes at the end. The second hi-hat note of each group is accented.

This beat has both a short and a long opening. The hi-hat is opened on the "e" of 3 and closed on the "&." It's also opened on 4 in each bar. The two ghost notes on the "&" and "a" of 4 are played while the hi-hat is open. This may take some getting used to.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

### 8TH-NOTE HI-HAT OPENINGS WITH GHOST NOTES

This concept is similar to what we did in the previous beat, but this time the hi-hat is left open only for the duration of an 8th note. Example 10 demonstrates this idea. It's similar to what David Garibaldi plays on the classic Tower Of Power track "Oakland Stroke."

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

### ON THE "E"

Here's a linear beat with a hi-hat opening on the "e" of 1. The left foot closes the hi-hat on the "&" of 1.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

### SUPER-LONG OPENINGS

This beat has a shuffle feel, so any 16th note on an "e" or "a" should be played a little later to make it swing. You can play it with a lot of swing or just a little.

The hi-hat is opened along with a strong bass drum hit on 1. The hi-hat is closed with the left foot on 2 along with the snare hit. The right-hand hi-hat note on 2 is optional, as indicated by the parentheses.

The hi-hat is opened again on the "a" of 3 along with the bass drum note and is closed on 4. Add another bass drum hit on the "&" of 1 in the second measure to make a two-measure phrase.

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

That's it for now. Good luck, and feel free to make up some new grooves of your own using these concepts.



**Jim Payne** has played with Maceo Parker and the J.B. Horns and has produced albums for Medeski Martin & Wood. He teaches in New York City and online, and his new book/DVD, *Advanced Funk Drumming*, was recently released by Modern Drummer Publications. Check out Jim's Web site at [funkydrummer.com](http://funkydrummer.com).

To watch Jim demonstrate the beats in this article, log on to [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com).



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Now practice the phrase while reading the music. Memorize how it *looks* as well as how it sounds. Moving to your drumset, play the phrase on the snare drum—from memory—while keeping a basic ostinato with the feet. Since our phrase is in 3/4, I've chosen a basic quarter-note waltz ostinato (kick, hi-hat, hi-hat). Practice this slowly, and take your time.

2

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

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

After you're comfortable playing the eight-bar phrase over an ostinato, it's time to apply it to the drumset using our geometric "rules" of orchestration.

### GEOMETRIC ORCHESTRATIONS

Play all right-hand accents on the floor tom.

3

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

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

Play all left-hand accents on the rack tom.

4

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

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

Play right-hand accents on the floor tom and left-hand accents on the rack tom.

5

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

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

Play right-hand accents with the bass drum and ride cymbal.

6

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

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

## GEOMETRIC PHRASING

Play left-hand accents with the bass drum and crash cymbal (or with the bass drum and hi-hat).

7

RLRRLRLRLRL RLRRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRL

RLRRLRLRLRL RLRRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRL

Play right-hand accents with the bass drum and ride, and play left-hand accents with the bass drum and crash.

8

RLRRLRLRLRL RLRRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRL

RLRRLRLRLRL RLRRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRL

Play right-hand accents with the bass drum and ride, and play left-hand accents with the rack tom.

9

RLRRLRLRLRL RLRRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRL

RLRRLRLRLRL RLRRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRL

Play left-hand accents with the bass drum and crash, and play right-hand accents with the floor tom.

10

RLRRLRLRLRL RLRRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRL

RLRRLRLRLRL RLRRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRLR LRLRLRLRLRL

Once you've mastered those, practice running straight through Examples 4–11. Then work on incorporating the phrase within a musical context. Trade eight-bar solos with yourself, play them along to music, or try applying them when rehearsing with other musicians. You'll be surprised by how many new ideas you'll discover once you set some simple practice guidelines and parameters.



**Henrique De Almeida** frequently performs with fusion keyboardist Steve Hunt and has played with Jeff Berlin, Larry Coryell, Matthew Garrison, and Baron Brown, among others. Henrique is a clinician for Paiste, Yamaha, Vic Firth, LP, Evans, Carl Fischer, and Earthworks microphones. For more info, visit [henriquedealmeida.com](http://henriquedealmeida.com).



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# THE D.A.D. PROGRAM

Drummer **Pat Gesualdo** found a way to deal with his own unique needs—and created a successful program that can benefit players with a wide variety of physical and cognitive challenges.

by David Ciauro

**D**rumming takes an incredible amount of hand-eye coordination, limb independence, and physical stamina, plus the ability to absorb and comprehend rhythms. It also requires the cognitive ability to have the body execute what the brain tells it to. With that in mind, a program that uses drumming therapeutically to help people with disabilities might seem far-fetched, if not impossible.

Pat Gesualdo, veteran drummer, author, teacher, and clinician, begged to differ. He conquered his own disability through drumming, and through his experiences

as a private instructor and working with the special-needs population, he was inspired to create a revolutionary educational drumming program that could help others with disabilities reach previously unattainable milestones.

Drum Therapy and the D.A.D. (Drums And Disabilities) Program are Gesualdo's contributions to the special-needs population, and they're gaining global attention and acclaim. Pat's determination to bring his curriculum to as many schools, community centers, hospitals, and homes as possible is inspiring, his work is important, and his passion is infectious.

**MD:** What was the impetus for the D.A.D. Program?

**Pat:** The program came out of my personal battle with severe dyslexia. I was diagnosed when I was nine years old, and the disability was so acute that doctors believed I had cerebral palsy. I had to learn to walk on planks to build my coordination, and from fourth grade through ninth, I was in special-education courses.

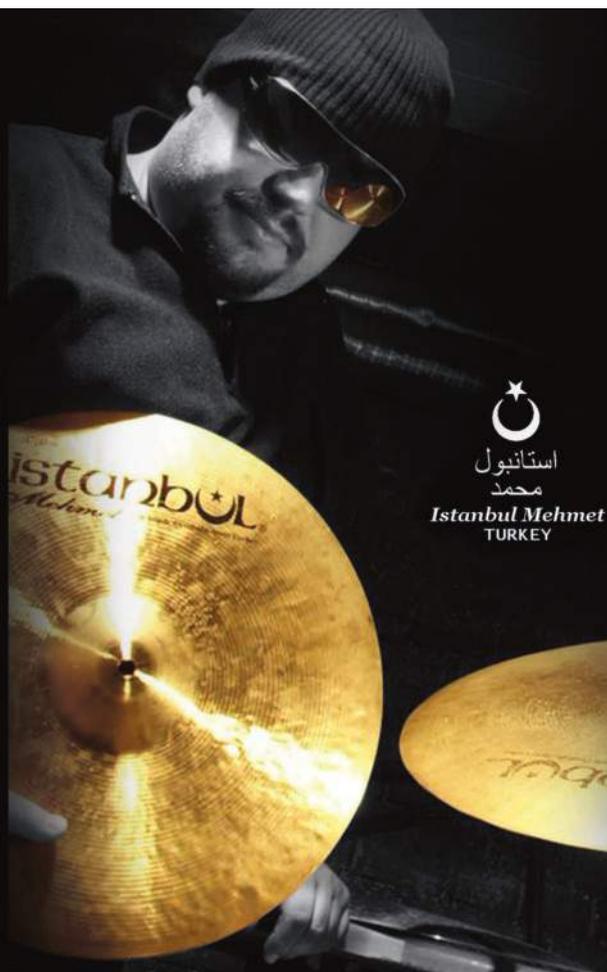
**MD:** When did drumming come into the picture for you?

**Pat:** At the time of my diagnosis, I started taking drum lessons. Growing up, I was always tapping on things, so naturally drums intrigued me. I didn't set out to play drums as a way of coping with or overcoming my dyslexia. It was just something I wanted to do.

**MD:** Did your drum teachers understand how your dyslexia affected you?

**Pat:** No. I had horrible experiences with my drum teachers. I was reversing everything, and they had no idea how to teach me. They didn't have the patience or know-how to teach someone with a disability.

**MD:** How did you respond to that?



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## D.A.D. PROGRAM

**Pat:** From age nine until I graduated from high school, I practiced for four hours a day, every day, religiously. It took me two years to be able to play a single-stroke roll at 90 bpm. That's how long it took to develop my coordination.

**MD:** Did teachers give up on you?

**Pat:** During that time period, between ages nine and seventeen, I went through four different drum teachers. Like I said, they really didn't know how to teach me, and after a while I had to move on. But because of my dedication

and determination, I improved on my own and was playing in local bands by the time I graduated.

**MD:** So by graduation you were no longer dyslexic?

**Pat:** The diligence of my practice routine rewired my brain, and I actually overcame my dyslexia when I was fourteen. I was mainstreamed as of tenth grade and became an honor-roll student.

**MD:** All thanks to drumming?

**Pat:** Yes. Drumming not only helped me

beat dyslexia, it helped me succeed academically, because without the disability being an obstacle, learning became easier. After graduating from high school, I went to college and started a private teaching practice.

**MD:** Did your personal experience lead you to specifically set out to teach students with disabilities?

**Pat:** No. But for whatever reason, most of my students had some form of disability—autism, Asperger's syndrome, dyslexia, Tourette's syndrome, ADD, and ADHD, among others. I noticed that my approach to teaching, based on my own learning experiences, was helping them manage or alleviate certain symptoms of their disabilities. This prompted me to conduct an independent major research study to document and gain some empirical evidence as to why this was. I teamed up with a professor from Rutgers University, and one of the important outcomes of the study was that I found the cerebral cortex, which is responsible for combining sound and thought, was being distracted by the primary auditory cortex, which is responsible for developing conscious sound.

These findings gave me the idea of starting a program based on our research. That's how I pioneered the Drum Therapy genre. It took me two years just to outline the structure, and although the program officially started in 2004, I've essentially been teaching Drum Therapy to my private students with special needs for the past twenty years.

**MD:** So how did the program come to fruition?

**Pat:** In 2004 I was fortunate to have [New York City] Mayor Bloomberg and his administration take an interest in my idea, and they helped me launch the D.A.D. Program as a special-education pilot program. Soon after, a group of celebrities, sports figures, politicians, and major corporations began taking part in the program and helped me reach special-needs children, their parents, and their teachers throughout the world.

**MD:** What obstacles did you hit along the way?

**Pat:** Forming a nonprofit organization

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was a momentous task in and of itself. Being just one person with an idea and turning it into a recognized brand that's supported by major corporate sponsors and embraced by the education and medical communities on a global scale was an exhaustive effort. Even now, with how far the D.A.D. Program has evolved, there's still a lot of work to do to help as many special-needs children and adults as possible.

**MD:** What specifically is the D.A.D. Program?

**Pat:** We are a Federal 501(c)(3) non-profit organization featuring the world's *only* Drum Therapy curriculum. We are certified by the state of New Jersey as an official teacher-training program for teachers and students, which means that teachers and students can gain educational credits by attending our workshops or by becoming certified drum therapists.

**MD:** Who's involved in the D.A.D. Program outside of sponsors?

**Pat:** We train and certify psychologists, occupational therapists, behavioral therapists, physical therapists, special-education instructors, school systems, and drum instructors in Drum Therapy. We currently have providers in twenty-five states, as well as in England, New Zealand, Italy, Bosnia, Slovenia, and South Africa—even in remote villages in Liberia.

**MD:** To whom does the D.A.D. Program cater?

**Pat:** Drum Therapy is for children and adults across the spectrum of special needs. However, each modality specifically focuses on the symptoms of each specific disability.

**MD:** How does one become a drum therapist?

**Pat:** Well, not everyone can or wants to do Drum Therapy. It requires extreme patience, empathy, and the ability to handle working with the low-functioning and high-functioning special-needs populations, which includes people with severe multiple handicaps. When people contact me and express an interest in becoming part of the program, I try to "screen" them, for lack of a better word, to see if they possess the aforementioned

qualities of a drum therapist.

**MD:** How does Drum Therapy differ from music therapy or drum circles?

**Pat:** For starters, drum circles and music therapy are not strictly bound to dealing with the special-needs population. Drum circles are an excellent cathartic outlet for emotional expression, while music therapy focuses its efforts on assessment and evaluation techniques. The pioneering therapy modalities of the D.A.D. Program aim specifically at developing physical functioning and

cognitive restructuring for special-needs children and adults. It is the highest form of drum education substantiated for increasing the quality of life, fine motor skills, coordination, and four-way limb independence. In some cases, Drum Therapy has alleviated certain symptoms of a disability.

**MD:** How does drum therapy differ from typical drum lessons?

**Pat:** First, we identify what disability the student is living with. Then we set up an action plan of how to apply each



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## D.A.D. PROGRAM

of our modalities to that disability. We make sure our therapists are trained not to overlook any minutia that's specifically unique to an individual student. For example, not all students with dyslexia automatically reverse their hand patterns. They might be able to distinguish verbal commands but not written notation. In other words, there are no assumptions made about the characteristics of a disability in general. Although the modalities of Drum Therapy are specific, a time frame in which to successfully execute them

does not apply. Patience is the ultimate virtue of the drum therapist.

**MD:** What can a drum teacher expect when becoming a drum therapist?

**Pat:** You have to have a desire to work with the special-needs population. You have to be incredibly compassionate without letting the severity of one's disability diminish your ability to conduct a session effectively. Much like being a nurse, you will be exposed to very heart-wrenching scenes that you have to put out of focus while concentrating on doing the job to the best of your

ability. There are a lot of tears in this program. The students, the parents, and the therapist will all encounter great moments that would have otherwise been unattainable without Drum Therapy. It also requires a willingness to learn a teaching method that's drastically different from any other form of drum instruction.

**MD:** What are some success stories?

**Pat:** We've helped a sixteen-year-old autistic child sing for the very first time. We've developed coordination and retention with students that had dyslexia and ADD. People have counted in sequential order for the first time, or learned the difference between right and left. Students have even developed four-way independence in the most basic form of moving limbs individually, though obviously not in the same capacity of a Terry Bozzio.

**MD:** Is anyone helping to expand the D.A.D. Program?

**Pat:** I was invited to the White House in 2008 to meet President Bush and to discuss bringing the D.A.D. Program to wounded soldiers. The Obama administration also invited me to take part in official administration events to expand the program.

**MD:** What are you personally doing to expand the program?

**Pat:** I have a new book coming out this summer called *The Art Of Drum Therapy*. It's specifically designed to be an overview of Drum Therapy; it can also be used as a take-home instruction book for mainstream and disabled students.

Beginning this month, **Pat Gesualdo** will be contributing an exclusive monthly Drum Therapy column to [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com), geared toward helping drum instructors teaching special-needs students. He'll also be promoting the column and his book on an upcoming clinic tour. For more information about Gesualdo, Drum Therapy, and the D.A.D. Program, visit [dadprogram.org](http://dadprogram.org), [vater.com](http://vater.com), [zildjian.com](http://zildjian.com), [myspace.com/patgesualdo](http://myspace.com/patgesualdo), and [myspace.com/dadprogram](http://myspace.com/dadprogram).



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A black and white photograph of Alexei Rodriguez, a member of the band Prong. He has long, straight black hair and is wearing a black sleeveless shirt. He has extensive tattoos on both arms and is wearing a black wristband on his left wrist. He is leaning forward, holding a drumstick in his right hand. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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# STEVEN SPENCE

As a teenager, **Black Tide's** drummer wanted to get good, *fast*. Now twenty, he's proven just how much you can accomplish if you put your mind to it.

by Gail Worley

**M**iami metal quartet Black Tide was signed to Interscope Records on the strength of its dynamic live shows and dedicated following. Fans and critics were equally intrigued by the fact that three out of the four members were in high school when the band released its 2008 debut, *Light From Above*.

At age twenty, drummer Steven Spence is the "old guy" in Black Tide, as singer/lead guitarist Gabriel Garcia, rhythm guitarist Austin Diaz, and bassist Zach Sandler are still in their teens. "Everyone knows us as 'Black Tide, the youngsters of metal,'" Spence jokes. "But when people watch us play, they realize, 'Wow, they're playing their instruments, writing their songs, and getting on stage and *doing it*.' Then they become fans, which is awesome."

Bringing in a refreshing wave of nostalgia with a Mötley Crüe-meets-Iron Maiden amalgam, the members of Black Tide, Spence insists, aren't aiming to cause any paradigm shift but are simply making the music that they love. Steven's contagious passion for learning everything he can about his instrument has him devouring instructional DVDs by Thomas Lang, analyzing the chops of Neil Peart and Jojo Mayer, and seeking to incorporate the visual flash of players like Travis Barker and Morgan Rose.

With *Light From Above* selling well for over a

year, this group with a sixteen-year-old lead vocalist has already established a ferocious rep on the festival circuit, appearing at Ozzfest, Download, and the always popular Warped Tour. In fact, it's Black Tide's relentless live presence that helped bring Spence's drumming to the attention of *Modern Drummer* readers, earning him props in the Up & Coming category of our 2009 Readers Poll.

**MD:** Congratulations on making it into the 2009 MD Readers Poll. Why do you think your playing got acknowledged?

**Steven:** It's funny, one of my Paiste guys sent me an email congratulating me, and I was like, *Wait, what?* I was totally blown away because I had no clue that I was even going to be in the running. But I think people appreciate what I've done in the past few years. I'm getting better with every show and just learning who I am as a drummer. It's important to me to put on a show, adding a lot of visual elements. But I don't like to sacrifice any sound quality for what I'm doing visually. I also think my live drumming has an impressive flow, as far as my limb independence.

**MD:** Coming up in a time when metal drumming is very focused on speed and blasting, how did you develop such an old-school approach to the kit?

**Steven:** It has a lot to do with input I got from our producer, Johnny K. He's not a drummer, but he

taught me that it's not about how fast you're playing. It's about the groove and being in the pocket. That was something I struggled with for a little while. It came to a point where I realized that if I wanted to do this, I'd have to dedicate my life to it. Each day I'd go to our rehearsal studio and play with a metronome for ten hours. By doing that, I found where I wanted to be, and with Johnny's advice I really wanted to play for the song.

I know that many drummers like to do crazy stuff, but I don't feel like I did that at all on *Light From Above*. It was maybe a step back for me, because I really do like to add cool and intricate parts that not everyone can figure out quickly. I might bring a bit of that to the next album, but I don't want to take away from the groove at all.

I also want to be more creative when it comes to my kick drum playing. I have a double pedal, but the double pedal work I'll be incorporating into our new stuff will be syncopated rhythms and different grooves that you can nod your head to, not necessarily a barrage of straight 32nd notes.

**MD:** When you're playing live nearly every day, how important is taking time to practice?

**Steven:** Practicing is still very important. I only took a handful of lessons when I started out. Then I went off on my own and made it a point to practice all the time. I was absolutely infatuated with drums, and it came to the point where I would play

**"I realized that if I wanted to do this, I'd have to dedicate my life to it. So each day I'd go to our rehearsal studio and play with a metronome for ten hours."**

all day and the time would fly by.

That's the one thing I don't like about touring. On tour, I'm on stage playing maybe thirty minutes a day. When I'm practicing I get a lot more done, as far as coming up with new things that I can polish and try out live later. As far as improvising, I like to mess around and change up some of the parts or fills, especially in the short solo that I drop into each set. It's fun, and it keeps me interested and excited.

**MD:** Your cymbal setup includes hi-hats on both your left and right. Why do you like that?

**Steven:** Honestly, it's probably more for show than anything. I think it looks cool to alternate and make it look like I'm ambidextrous. I switch over with almost every hit, or sometimes I ride with my right hand and then switch over to my left hand. It's also more comfortable for me to play with my arms open and to have another hi-hat right by the ride, so I'm not crossing over like the hi-hat/snare thing that everyone does.

**MD:** I noticed that you like to sit high. Why is that?

**Steven:** By sitting high, I get the feel of being over the drums, instead of being *in* them. I have enough control, and I feel more comfortable. When I'm over the drums, I can hit harder and be more accurate and precise. But sitting as high as I do has been problematic for me, because my seats don't want to go as high as I want to adjust them. [laughs] I've broken more than a few thrones by maxing out my seat height.

**MD:** What's your monitor situation like? What do you like in your mix?

**Steven:** I play with LiveWires custom-molded in-ear headphones, and they go straight into my click track. In order to hear anything else on stage, I have a couple of wedges pointed at me, just blasting the guys. In my in-ears I like a lot of kick, and if there's keyboards I like a lot of keys. Gabriel plays lead guitar, so I like to hear a lot of that in the mix, and some of his vocals as well. I could play all of the songs by myself—which I did when

we were recording—but I do like to hear some of the vocals to keep on point. Zach, our bass player, usually puts his stack right next to me, so I can hear him even if he's not in the monitors.

**MD:** What are Black Tide's plans for the next album?

**Steven:** It won't sound drastically different—you'll still be able to tell it's us—but as far as the writing and the drum parts, I want to go for more groove. I'm going to be so proud of the drum parts. On our first record, the drums were solid, but it didn't reflect my style. That record was the first time I'd been in the studio, so I didn't really find myself. I want people to know my style and be able to say, "That's Steven Spence" when they hear me. When it comes to music I really want to keep studying and learning from people around me, no matter what point I'm at in life.

# YURI RULEY

by David Ciauro

On MxPx's second collection of covers, the renowned punk band finally gets to interpret the '80s *their way*. Our hero on translating U2, the Clash, the Descendents, and the Ramones.

**Y**uri Zane Ruley has been the driving force behind the Washington state punk trio MxPx for over seventeen years. While still in high school, he joined up with guitarist Tom Wisniewski and singer/bassist Mike Herrera, with whom he shared an affinity for California skate punk and Christianity. They released their debut album, *Pokinatcha*, on Tooth & Nail Records in 1994. Since then, MxPx has put out six more full-length albums, four EPs, three compilations, a live record, and two collections of covers.

*On The Cover*, from 1995, delivers caffeinated renditions of '80s classics such as Bryan Adams' "Summer Of '69" and A-Ha's "Take On Me." Die-hard MxPx fans have spent years begging for a new collection of revved-up, revamped, and rewired songs. Never ones to disappoint their devoted fan base, MxPx answered the call, releasing *On The Cover II*, a diverse collection of all things '80s. Covering everything from one-hit wonders to legendary rock groups to seminal punk bands, the trio delivers a soundtrack that pays homage to some of the artists that influenced them and to the '80s songs they love.

**MD:** MxPx formed in 1992, while you were all still in high school. How long

had you been playing drums prior to getting together with Mike and Tom?

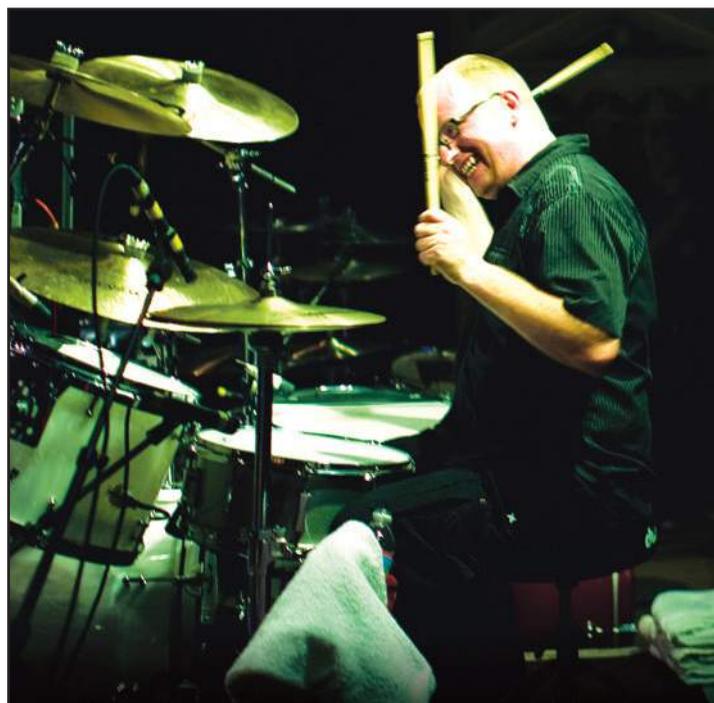
**Yuri:** Not too long. February of 1992 was when I first got a drumset and started taking lessons. The band officially started in July of 1992. I didn't know much at all at our first practice. My playbook wasn't that full.

**MD:** How has your playing progressed over the years?

**Yuri:** I stopped taking lessons after a year, but I was in the high school marching band. That helped my stamina quite a bit. Over the years, probably the biggest thing I've learned is to play relaxed. There's a certain tension built into playing fast music. It's hard to let go of that tension. I really grasped the relaxation concept while recording one of our albums. A producer clued me in to the fact that I don't *have* to kill the drums. However, in a live setting, my adrenaline can take over. I have to get myself into a Zen-like mindset before the show to ensure that I play relaxed.

**MD:** Who are your drumming influences?

**Yuri:** I took cues from drummers in bands that played fast, like Bad Religion and NOFX, because our music was headed in that direction. They were my unofficial teachers. A guy I can't leave out of the picture is Bill Stevenson from



**"I took cues from drummers in bands that played fast, like Bad Religion and NOFX. They were my unofficial teachers."**

the Descendents, All, and Black Flag. He was the first drummer I ever heard on a recording and thought, *That's what I want to sound like.* He's such an interesting and unique player. I really paid attention to what he was doing and tried to incorporate what worked for me.

**MD:** What's the main difference between *On The Cover* and *On The Cover II*?

**Yuri:** With the first record we were still kids and wound up covering a lot of songs we had never heard of, just to appease the label. This time it was on our terms. We primarily picked our favorite songs from the '80s that we could remake in the context of our band.

**MD:** Your fans were the impetus behind making *On The Cover II*. Did they suggest any of the songs that made it onto the record?

**Yuri:** Not directly. We've played certain songs, like the Clash's "Should I Stay Or Should I Go" and the Proclaimers' "500 Miles" live for a while now, so those

songs are technically the fan choices. We also put "Linda Linda" by the Japanese punk band the Blue Hearts on the album as a nod to our fans in Japan.

**MD:** When approaching a cover song from a drumming standpoint, do you consider what the original drummer played, or what will best suit the MxPx version?

**Yuri:** Both. I try to keep the spirit of the original band but make it work within our creative dynamic. For example, in the beginning of the Clash song, I filled some space by playing 8th notes on the rim instead of just playing flams on 2 and 4.

**MD:** You beefed up the bridge on U2's "I Will Follow" in a way that gives the tune an MxPx stamp. How did that come about?

**Yuri:** The bridge on the original is slower, broken down, and spacious. We came up with a heavier riffy part because the vocal is in Mike's upper register, and playing something musically heavy underneath really felt right. It's one of my favorite additions on

the album.

**MD:** How do you go about tracking drums?

**Yuri:** We stumbled on a method a while ago that has worked really well for us. We'll play the songs together to a click, just to get a solid take from the bass, guitar, and vocals. Then they get a break and I can focus on recording my parts and not worry about the guys getting bored or annoyed if it's taking me a bunch of takes to get a keeper. A lot of the time I'll record straight through, but I might punch in if a take is 70 percent good.

**MD:** So you try not to comp your takes?

**Yuri:** There's not really any editing. In the past I used Beat Detective, but it was really labor intensive, and ultimately the difference wasn't that noticeable. We've done so much recording that I've gotten the process down. I retain the songs just enough to record them and then move on. By the time we start rehearsals for a tour, I usually have to consult the record to learn all the parts for real.

**MD:** What's your favorite drumming moment on the album?

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE RULEY'S GEAR ON STAGE AND IN THE STUDIO

**MD:** What did you use to record *On The Cover II*?

**Yuri:** A Slingerland Studio King kit that I own has been a permanent fixture in the studio for the past ten years. It has a 16x22 kick, a 9x12 rack tom, and a 14x16 floor tom. I also have a **Pork Pie** kit, but all of *On The Cover II* was done on the Slingerland.

**MD:** Did you switch out snares for any tracks?

**Yuri:** I have a bunch of snares I'll use, but on most of the songs this time around I played a **Keplinger** 8x14 snare. Gregg Keplinger makes these rolled-steel snare drums that are monstrous! I got this one on consignment at Guitar Center; it belonged to Dave Krusen, Pearl Jam's original drummer. I used a **Shine** 4x14 acrylic snare for a few songs too, and it sounded amazing. I've played other acrylic snares with 6½" or 7" depths, and they were real throaty, which I liked. But I thought if I could make it a little shallower, it would make for a great simple snare sound.

**MD:** What do you play live?

**Yuri:** I play a **Truth** acrylic kit on U.S. tours. It has a real "AC/DC" thuddy rock 'n' roll sound. It's a 20x22 kick, a 10x14 rack, and a 14x16 floor. I use **Meinl** cymbals, **DW** hardware, and **Pro-Mark** 2B hickory sticks both live and in the studio. I recently found that my cymbal flavor of choice is the medium-weight, middle-of-the-road-type thing. I use 14" Byzance Traditional medium hi-hats, 18" and 20" Byzance Traditional medium crashes, and a 22" Byzance Traditional Ping ride.

**MD:** What type of DW pedal are you using, and how do you keep it tensioned?

**Yuri:** It's a 9000. I pretty much play the pedal however it comes set from the factory. I don't really adjust it, so it's probably medium-loose tension.

**Yuri:** Although there's nothing drumming-wise that's special on the cut, my favorite song is the Ramones' "My Brain Is Hanging Upside Down." It's really strong, powerful, and driving. The Descendents' "Suburban Home" had some unusual counting and a fast, extended 16th-note snare fill. I think the take we used for that one was the first one where I thought, *I got it!*

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# LARRY McDONALD

It may have taken him decades to finally release an album as a leader. But the conga master has spent his time well, doing his thing with reggae greats **Bob Marley** and **Peter Tosh**—and unexpected artists like **Soulfly** and **Shemekia Copeland**. by Martin Patmos

There are caves not far from the coast in Jamaica that conga player and percussionist Larry McDonald found himself in some forty years ago. Within these Green Grotto caves, he discovered a pair of stones among the formations that produced musical sounds when struck. Amazingly, pitched slaps and open tones could be produced with the hands on these geologic structures. Fascinated, McDonald promised himself he'd use the stones on an album someday. Now, at age seventy-one, that day has arrived, with the release of the percussionist's debut album as a leader, *Drumquestra*. Through the years McDonald has developed as a world-class musician, working with an array of important reggae artists while also crossing genres to support numerous other performers.

McDonald's long and fruitful career as a conga player began humbly enough. Growing up in Jamaica, where he routinely caught music played on Radio Havana, Larry did not initially intend to be a drummer. Indeed, it wasn't until he was twenty-five that, in the wake of a tragic experience, he was called to the drums. McDonald was forced to confront his life up until that point, and the process of reflection set him on a new path. As part of that process, he says, "I didn't choose the drums... the drums chose me." With no more than a love of bebop, McDonald set out on what would become a long career as one of reggae music's foremost percussionists.

Hand drums, notably congas, were his instruments of choice, "so that nothing came between me and the drum." With no teacher available, McDonald says, "I took the rhythms I heard and transferred them to the congas, without destroying the heart of what I was hearing." As he began playing around the island, he wove those rhythms into the bebop and hotel music of the period, aiming to fit into ensembles unobtrusively. "I learned to play by staying out of everybody's way," McDonald notes.

The percussionist's style and concept took a leap in a new direction during a trip to Nassau, in the Bahamas, where he spent time with the noted congero Big Black. In seeing McDonald play, Big Black suggested he "think of the drums as a piano—chords in the left hand and fancy stuff in the right hand." Such thinking led McDonald to arrange his drums with the larger conga on the left, as opposed to the conventional conga setup, where the larger drum is to the right. This solidified his approach.

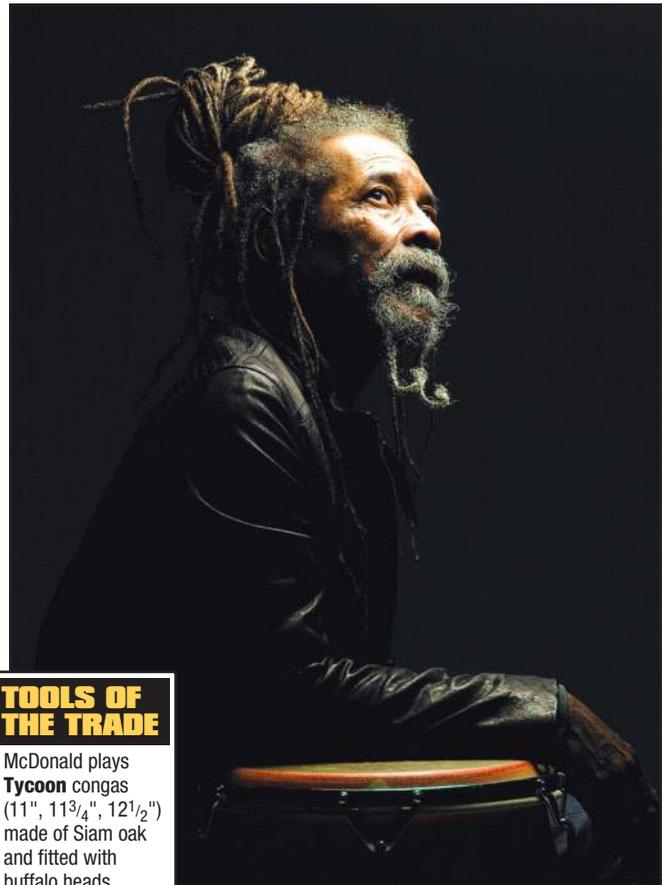
Besides drumming his way into the Jamaican hotel-band circuit, McDonald found himself playing and recording with ska and reggae groups. The conga break on "Funky Kingston" by Toots & The Maytals—that's him! You'll also find the percussionist on early Bob Marley recordings. A move to the U.S. in 1973, however, removed McDonald from that scene, to some extent. "The old-timers

know me, but the younger ones not so much, because there were no album credits back then," he says. As there really was no reggae in the States at that time, McDonald played with whomever he could. It wasn't long before he ended up in Taj Mahal's band, working and touring with the eclectic bluesman from 1974 to 1978. In 1981 he joined jazz poet/proto-rapper Gil Scott-Heron for an extended period that wrapped up only recently. Along the way there was more studio work, with projects as diverse as tenor sax player David Murray's big band, Soulfly's *Primitive* album, and tracks with blues singer Shemekia Copeland. And of course McDonald was still in touch with reggae, being brought in for percussion duties with such major artists as Toots and Peter Tosh.

With all that experience behind him, McDonald was more than ready when he was offered a deal for his own album. As he recalls, his mindset was, "Okay, I'll do it if it's the kind of record I want to do." His response when the label asked what the record would be like: "Well, there's this cave in Jamaica...."

Yet the cave recording, which can be heard during "Mento In 3," is just the beginning. What's truly beautiful is McDonald's concept for *Drumquestra*: an album where the only instruments are drums, mallet percussion, and voices. Listen closely to the opening track, "Head Over Heels." On this reggae song, the upbeat are played on marimba, not guitar, with bass mallets holding down the low end. Such creativity continues throughout the album, moving through a variety of grooves, moods, and feels and resulting in a unique set that looks forward and backward simultaneously.

To realize his vision, McDonald called in exceptional talents and also went out in the field: Besides the caves, a track with a kumina drumming group, which plays in a style handed down relatively unchanged from the days of slavery, is featured on "Backyard Business." Yet the bulk of



## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

McDonald plays **Tycoon** congas (11", 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>", 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" ) made of Siam oak and fitted with buffalo heads.

the album was done in the studio, where eight drummers gathered, including kit players Sly Dunbar and Carl McLeod. McDonald says the group went in with a tempo and a feel in mind, and each piece was done in one take. Some tracks sound very rooted in African drumming, while others build off reggae, island, and dance grooves.

Next came the decision of who to add on top. With his background, McDonald soon had Toots, Dollarman, Bob Andy, and dub poet Mutabaruka lined up for key vocal tracks—with some of them asking to be on the album. Washington, D.C., go-go rapper/singer Shaza also adds his talent to several tunes, while the title song of the album features North Indian rhythm vocalization. But even with such diversity in the vocals, McDonald's overall concept of percussion and voice unifies the project.

We spoke with McDonald the day after he had just heard one of his songs on the air for the first time. He was still wowed from the experience, and his down-to-earth, amicable character showed through. Ever confident that the opportunity to present his ideas would arrive, he found his experience, wisdom, and thoughtfulness coming together in a sincere project. The music here is both fun and deep; *Drumquestra*—it's more than a reggae album, and more than a drumming album.



WHAT  
DO YOU  
KNOW  
ABOUT...?



# RICHIE HAYWARD

Story by Bob Girouard

**Time loves a hero.** Forty years of **Little Feat** recordings and a constant stream of intriguing guest appearances have made Richie Hayward a big favorite among the drummer cognoscenti.

**U**nder *The Radar*, the title of Little Feat's 1998 album, is a phrase that could be used to describe Richie Hayward. His is an understated presence. His drumming is always there with little or no fanfare, which could explain why his greatness and unmatched consistency have long been taken for granted. Incredibly, this workman-like badge is one Hayward has worn proudly for the legendary Little Feat since the band's inception in 1969.

When it all started, Richie was a corn-belt kid from Clear Lake, Iowa, who was influenced by rock 'n' roll pioneer Earl Palmer but also by big-band jazz drummer Sonny Payne. Somewhere in between these two greats, Hayward created his own template. "I started early with Ray Charles," the drummer says. "He had a definite New Orleans influence. That, on top of folks like Bo Diddley, the Wild Magnolias, and the Meters, was a combination that became a very strong influence on my playing. But I don't cop it note for note."

Armed with a dream and very little else, Hayward headed out to Los Angeles in 1966. "All I had was my

drums, the clothes on my back, eighty-five dollars, and a friend who lived on Fink Street in Hollywood," he says. The drummer's first band of note, the Fraternity Of Man, had its 1968 song "Don't Bogart Me" featured in the movie *Easy Rider*, which led to Hayward's meeting singer/songwriter/guitarist Lowell George. A former member of Frank Zappa's Mothers Of Invention, George was beginning to explore various musical avenues of his own. "Lowell was extremely influenced by Frank," Hayward says. "But in my case it was Captain Beefheart. He was the guy, and what he was doing was just surreal."

The addition of keyboardist Bill Payne resulted in the formation of the Factory, which eventually morphed into Little Feat. The Feat's 1971 self-titled debut and 1972 sophomore effort, *Sailin' Shoes*, were critical successes among the musically hip and were especially adored by drummers, who couldn't get enough of Hayward's indelible grooves and the

way he used his kit not only as an anchor but also as another melodic voice in the music.

By the time *Dixie Chicken* hit in 1973, Little Feat was expanding its reach, combining New Orleans-influenced funk with the richness of other American forms such as jazz, blues, folk, and Southern-tinged rock. Like musical compatriots the Grateful Dead and the Allman Brothers Band, Little Feat's musical discoveries were fueled by the freeform interactions occurring on stage. "Jamming is definitely a part of who and what we are," Hayward says. "Varying from the structure of the song allows us to do the same songs and still keep them fresh. It's also in my nature to take chances, and musically I tend to do that."

For a while, it was one timeless record after another. *Feats Don't Fail Me Now* ('74) and *Time Loves A Hero* ('77) were followed by what many view as the band's high point, the live album *Waiting For Columbus* ('78), which, along with the Band's *Last Waltz*, is regarded as one of the finest concert documents of that era. Unfortunately, some roadblocks got in the way. George's erratic behavior led to his receding into the background a bit as Payne and guitarist Paul Barrere began to handle the bulk of the band's songwriting. George broke up the group in

## SELECT RECORDINGS

**Little Feat** Little Feat, *Sailin' Shoes*, *Dixie Chicken*, *Feats Don't Fail Me Now*, *Time Loves A Hero*, *Waiting For Columbus*, *Let It Roll*, *Join The Band* // **John Cale** *Paris 1919* // **Robert Palmer** *Pressure Drop*, *Some People Can Do What They Like* // **Carly Simon** *Another Passenger* // **Robert Plant** *Shaken 'N' Stirred* // **Warren Zevon** *Transverse City* // **Taj Mahal** *Dancing The Blues* // **Buddy Guy** *Heavy Love* // **Jimmy Herring, T Lavitz, Richie Hayward, Kenny Gradney** *Endangered Species* // **Coco Montoya** *Dirty Deal*

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## RICHIE HAYWARD

1979 and died that year of a heart attack at age thirty-four, while on tour in support of his only solo album, *Thanks I'll Eat It Here*.

During this time Hayward's talents were in constant demand, especially in the studio. It seemed that if you were an artist of note, the drummer was (and still is) the guy you wanted to have on your record or live date. "The work I did with Robert Plant is a favorite of mine and was fun to do," Richie says.

"Warren Zevon was very rewarding, and Joan Armatrading was fun—she's a really good musician and highly underrated." Hayward's lengthy résumé also

includes projects with John Cale, Robert Palmer, Kim Carnes, Ry Cooder, Buddy Guy, Taj Mahal, Carly Simon, Stephen Stills, Tom Waits, Bob Seger, John Hiatt, Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan...the list goes on.

In 1988 a reunited and rejuvenated Little Feat came out of the chute smoking with the now-classic *Let It Roll*, which, boosted by its hard-driving title track, went gold. Hayward's funk-laden second-line gumbo grooves mingle with country, blues, south-of-the-border flavors, and even world beat sounds to ignite the record. Richie and the band headed back out on the concert trail, reconnecting with loyal Feat fanatics

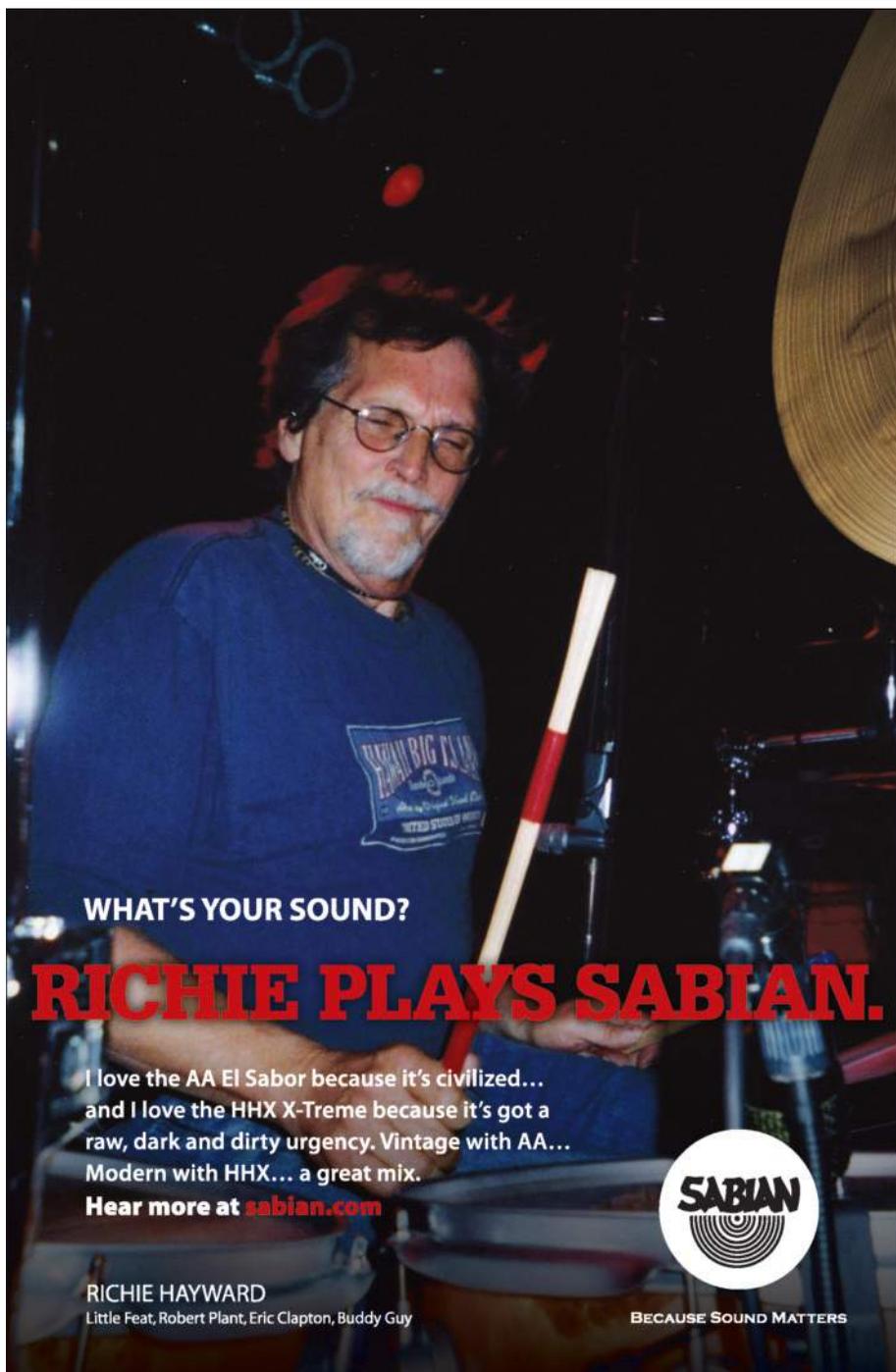
and earning new converts. From there, numerous albums and videos followed, including the most recent, 2008's *Join The Band* LP, on which the Feat redoes some of its classics with a slew of famous guest singers, including Dave Matthews ("Fat Man In The Bath tub"), Emmylou Harris ("Sailin' Shoes"), and Chris Robinson ("Oh Atlanta").

Little Feat, which celebrated its fortieth anniversary last year, remains one of the most revered bands in classic rock. Hayward, along with stalwarts Kenny Gradney, Fred Tackett, Paul Barrere, Sam Clayton, and Bill Payne, continues to tear up the rock 'n' roll highway, in a group that diehard fans equate to a genre unto itself. Without question, the spirit of Lowell George still hovers over the proceedings. "The enormity of his influence on all of us is undeniable," Hayward says. "After he died we lost some Lowell fans that were not necessarily Little Feat fans. In fact," Richie adds with a laugh, "they tended to look like him: overweight, with a beard! But it never inhibited our desire to play music. We knew we still had that magic within ourselves."

When asked about the most important lesson he's learned from his extraordinary career, Hayward pauses, then responds: "If you have a burning desire, you've got to feed the beast. Stay true to yourself, and don't quit." Those words say a truckload about Little Feat, and about the drummer's legacy as well. In parallel terms, Hayward's drumming is the thread sewn throughout, setting a standard that only he can exceed and clearly earning him a well-deserved place among the all-time greats.

*Sadly, at press time Richie Hayward has been diagnosed with liver cancer and has no health insurance to underwrite the cost of treatments. Drummers from all over the world are currently stepping up to organize benefits so Hayward can obtain the financial help he needs to fight the disease. For more information on how you can contribute to his cause, go to [littlefeat.net](http://littlefeat.net).*

*To read more about some of Richie's greatest recordings, and to see what his peers have to say about him, go to [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com).*



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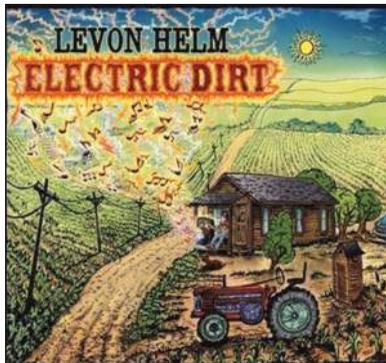
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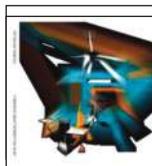
Springing off his 2008 *Dirt Farmer* Grammy win, Levon triumphs with a more expansive and eclectic follow-up. His knowing, weathered vocals hit home with every phrase: the voice of a storyteller. And the characteristic gritty lode of his drumming proves as expressive and solid as ever. On several cuts, there's nary a tom fill nor cymbal crash to be heard, leaving fat weight in the bal-last. A rollicking brass section recalls peaks from the Band's live album *Rock Of Ages*, generating tracks that stand with Helm's finest groove moments. Earthy and joyful, *Electric Dirt's* diverse covers find the common soil in a variety of American roots music. A fertile crop. (Vanguard) **Jeff Potter**



★★★★★

**DETHKLOK THE DETHALBUM II**

The sophomore CD by the semi-fictional death metal band Dethklok, the brainchild of comedian, vocalist, and guitarist Brendon Small, maintains the brutality and silliness of the group's debut. Small's arrangements take more consideration of returning drummer **GENE HOGLAN's** abilities than the previous material did, though; compositionally and rhythmically the songs are more varied, which gives Hoglan the freedom to place more intricate beats. Still, the drums, even when complex, drive each track forward and never overpower the other elements. (Williams Street) **Sean Bertrand**



★★★★★

**JOHN HOLLENBECK LARGE ENSEMBLE ETERNAL INTERLUDE**

Large Ensemble is a quirky but well-chosen name, as it shuns the more predictable implications of the term *big band*. Drummer/composer/arranger Hollenbeck is plenty impressive for his strong, imaginative drumming alone. But it's his pen that launches this unit into rare flights. Mixing jazz, world music, and echoes of Steve Reich, the restless compositions are startling in their shifting and complex rhythmic patterns, otherworldly lyricism, ravishing tonal blankets, and playful joy. There's a wonderful cross-fertilization at work: Hollenbeck writes as he drums and drums as he writes. Thrilling and defiantly original. (Sunnyside) **Jeff Potter**

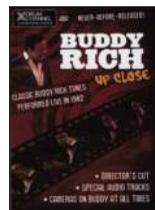


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The dexterity with which heavyweights Dave Holland, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Chris Potter, and **ERIC HARLAND** play together is notable, as this 2007 concert attests. Harland tackles the challenging material head on, weaving in and out of the start/stop heads ("50") while providing a consistently modern commentary of cymbal accents, tom rolls, and side-sticking. (mjfreccords.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

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Whether you're a longtime Buddy fan or you're just discovering his talents, this DVD, which features six killer songs filmed in a club with Rich's big band, is one to check out. The video is edited to really focus on the kit, and there are some great visuals that provide a broad view of Buddy's technique, speed, power, and musicality. Check out his playing on "Birdland" or the solos from "West Side Story," and let his magic dazzle you. Then go to the special features and watch excerpts from the songs slowed down to really grasp what he did. Fun and inspiring, with lots of *wow*. (Drum Channel) **Martin Patmos**

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★★★★★

**PANDEIRO BRASILEIRO BY MARCOS SUZANO**

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The pandeiro is a small tambourine-like frame drum, and the host of this DVD, Marcos Suzano, is an absolute master of the instrument. Presented here is a very thorough series of pandeiro lessons, beginning with strokes and then moving to more involved material built around rhythms. The variety of those rhythms is quite broad, including traditional ones and those adapted to the pandeiro, demonstrating the drum's diversity. In Portuguese with English subtitles, the well-shot video makes things easy to follow and learn. Basically, with this DVD and some practice, you could become pretty competent and creative on the little drum. (Kalango) **Martin Patmos**

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## U.K. S/T, DANGER MONEY, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT

Brimming with tension (musically and personally), this progressive rock supergroup, an unlikely success at the height of late-'70s punk and disco, culled the talents of bassist/lead vocalist John Wetton (King Crimson), drummer **BILL BRUFORD** (Yes, King Crimson), violinist/keyboardist Eddie Jobson (Roxy Music, Frank Zappa, Curved Air), and soon-to-be-legendary jazz-rock guitarist Allan Holdsworth (Soft Machine, Tony Williams). Short-lived but brilliant, this explosive lineup cut only one album, *U.K.*—a doozy of a cross-genre document—before splitting. Bruford exited (taking Holdsworth with him), leaving Wetton and Jobson to recruit another Zappa alumnus, **TERRY BOZZIO**, whose monstrous odd-time patterns shifted the trio into hyperdrive for *Danger Money* and the live *Night After Night*. Thirty years later, Jobson has remastered the three original U.K. albums, giving these powerful and piercing recordings even more oomph. While it's difficult to discern much sonic improvement on the debut (Bruford's angular performances popped even on the initial vinyl pressing), elements of the latter two albums, particularly Bozzio's drums, are bright and cinematic within the expanded aural bandwidth. U.K. was a rare example of a supergroup delivering the goods: high-caliber music that, against all odds, has stood the test of time. (globemusic.com)

## EDDIE JOBSON ON THE U.K. REISSUES

**U.K.'s debut is one of the best examples of 1970s progressive rock, but it was completed under duress.**

There wasn't a lot of compromise with that record on anyone's part. In those early days, fighting for what you wanted in rehearsals and recording in a fairly short period of time yielded good results. Looking back, it was unlikely the band would've lasted too long after that. At least we managed to get through one record.

**There was a U.K. reunion of sorts in the mid-'90s. Who was involved, and what was the result?**

It was Wetton, Bruford, and myself. We thought we would make a record and then Sony or somebody would come along and put it out. But when nobody was even remotely interested, [the recording] transmogrified itself into an Eddie Jobson solo project. At that point I didn't hold back at all in what it was going to be. I brought in the Bulgarian Women's Choir, a Bulgarian bagpiper, and Steve Hackett from Genesis. I even had Bill Bruford playing hip-hop beats. But it was never completed, and I'm fine with not having released it commercially. I definitely grew from the experience.

**You've formed two new bands carrying on the U.K. legacy, UKZ and the U-Z Project, the latter having toured with two drummers, Marco Minnemann and Simon Phillips. How did this double-drumming concept come about?**

It was actually Marco's idea to include two drummers, and he suggested Simon. I hadn't seen Simon in about thirty years. The two of them had apparently discussed working together [prior to the U-Z Project], and when the idea came up, I said let's do it. I've approached quite a few musicians myself regarding the U-Z Project, including a couple of singers, one of them John Wetton, who's expressed a lot of interest. That's really the gist of this band: to create an environment in which world-class players can perform or just step in for one tour or one gig. It's a bit like a jazz band, I suppose, but also a type of tribute band to our own careers and influences in which we can play anything and everything we want, simply because we can.



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# ZILDJIAN ON THE ROAD



2009 Zildjian On Tour program at the Pro Drum Shop in Hollywood. At right: Craigie Zildjian, Jerry Keyawa, Delores Yeager, and Stan Keyawa.



Zildjian had a very busy 2009. Last summer, the Professional Drum Shop in Hollywood hosted one of the company's many drummer hangs, where players came by to check out the new Sound Lab prototypes. This was the sixth installment of the 2009 Zildjian On Tour program.

Zildjian personnel on hand included CEO Craigie Zildjian, VP of new business development Bob DeLorenzo, VP of artist relations and event marketing John DeChristopher, director of R&D Paul Francis, and regional sales managers Steve Tirpak and Mike Brucher. Legendary session drummer Hal Blaine was there to meet the crowd and tell stories while offering his opinions of the new cymbal offerings coming out of the Zildjian factory. Other Zildjian artists in attendance included Jake Hanna, Peter Erskine, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Gorden Campbell, Gerry Brown, Denny Seiwell, Mike White, Ronald Bruner Jr., James Wormworth, Denny Fongheiser, Gil Sharone, Ralph Humphrey, Mike Fasano, Nick Vincent, and

Bernie Dresel.

At the close of the event, Craigie Zildjian presented a special cymbal plaque to Pro Drum owners Stan and Jerry Keyawa and chairman of the board Delores Yeager, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the iconic drum shop.

This past October, Zildjian hosted its eighth annual New York City artist session at Studio Instrument Rentals. (The company also held 2009 artist sessions in London and Los Angeles.) Zildjian artists stopped by to check out the newest cymbal models as well as a larger-than-ever selection of prototype cymbals, many of which will be introduced this year.

The NYC Z hang was hosted by VP of artist relations and event marketing John DeChristopher, VP of marketing Brad Baker, director of R&D Paul Francis, East Coast artist relations manager Sarah Malaney, and artist relations liaison and events coordinator Aaron Jackson.

Zildjian artists at the event included Alex

Alexander, Zach Alford, Cliff Almond, Matty Amendola, Rafael Barata, Warren Benbow, Albert Bouchard, Daryl Burgee, Sterling Campbell, Vince Cherico, Mino Cinelu, Aaron Comess, Rick Considine, Joe Corsello, Bruce Cox, Mickey Curry, Duduka Da Fonseca, Zach Danziger, Clint de Ganon, Dennis Diken, Jay Dittamo, Anton Fig, Joe Franco, Sandy Gennaro, Marcus Gilmore, Ben Gramm, Bob Gullotti, Craig Haynes, Gerald Heyward, George Hooks, Andy Hubbard, Matt Johnson, Victor Jones, Jon Karel, J.T. Lewis, Victor Lewis, Ray Marchica, Carter McLean, Eric McPherson, Richie Morales, Valerie Naranjo, Clarence Penn, Ben Perowsky, Pat Petrillo, Tommy Price, Peter Retzlaff, Luther Rix, Matt Scurfield, Patrick Seacor, Bill Stewart, Gerardo Velez, Brian Viglione, Billy Ward, and Brian Wilson. Also in attendance were friends from *Modern Drummer*, *Music Trades* magazine, Hudson Music, and Drummers Collective.



NYC Z hang

Paul La Raia

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# IN MEMORIAM EDDIE LOCKE

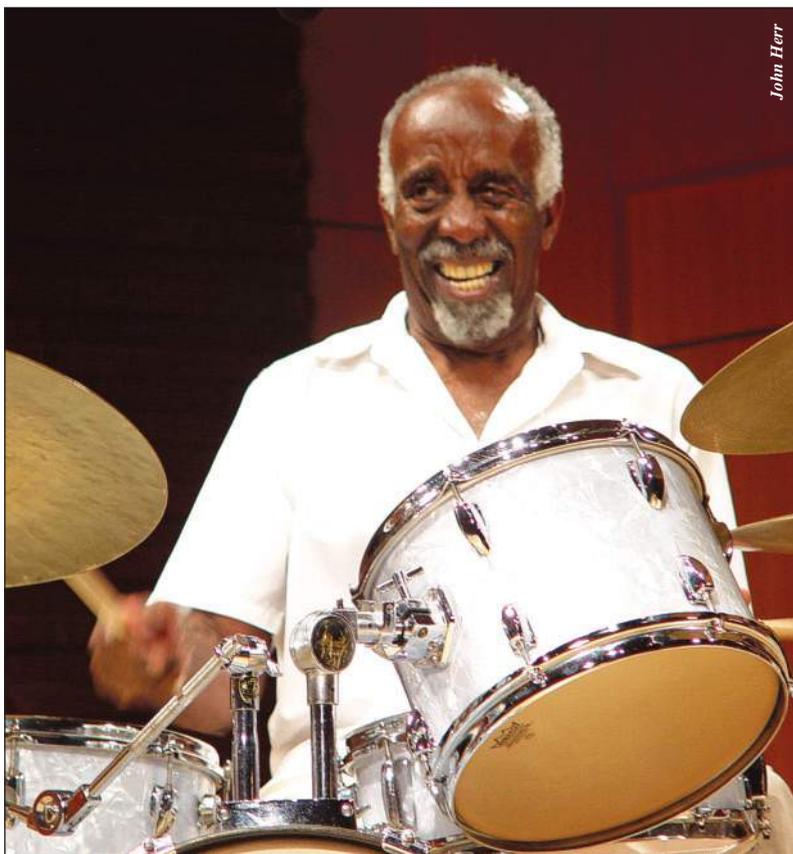
**J**azz drummer Eddie Locke, best known for his work with trumpeter Roy Eldridge and saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, died this past September 7 at age seventy-nine.

Locke was born and raised in Detroit and began playing drums around age seven. In 1952, he and drummer Oliver Jackson formed a dancing and drumming duo called Bop & Locke. They toured around the country and in 1954 settled permanently in New York City, where "Papa" Jo Jones mentored Locke. Locke became the house drummer at the Metropole Cafe in 1958, and that same year he was one of the youngest of fifty-seven prominent New York jazz musicians featured in Art Kane's historic "A Great Day In Harlem" photograph.

He soon began working regularly with Roy Eldridge, appearing on the trumpeter's 1960 album, *Swingin' On The Town*. Locke also played regularly with Coleman Hawkins from the late 1950s until the saxophonist's death in 1969. He appeared on several of Hawkins' albums, including 1963's *Today And Now*. In addition, Locke played and recorded with such artists as Kenny Burrell, Ray Bryant, Duke Ellington, Earl Hines, and Lee Konitz.

In 1970, Locke began drumming in the house band at Jimmy Ryan's jazz club, where he continued to play until the club closed in 1983. Afterward, Locke occasionally led his own bands, including a trio with pianist Roland Hanna, and he frequently toured Europe with jazz bands such as Spanky Davis & The Jimmy Ryan All Stars. Locke also taught music privately and at the High School Of Performing Arts and the Trevor Day School in New York City. He continued teaching and performing into the 2000s.

**Rick Mattingly**



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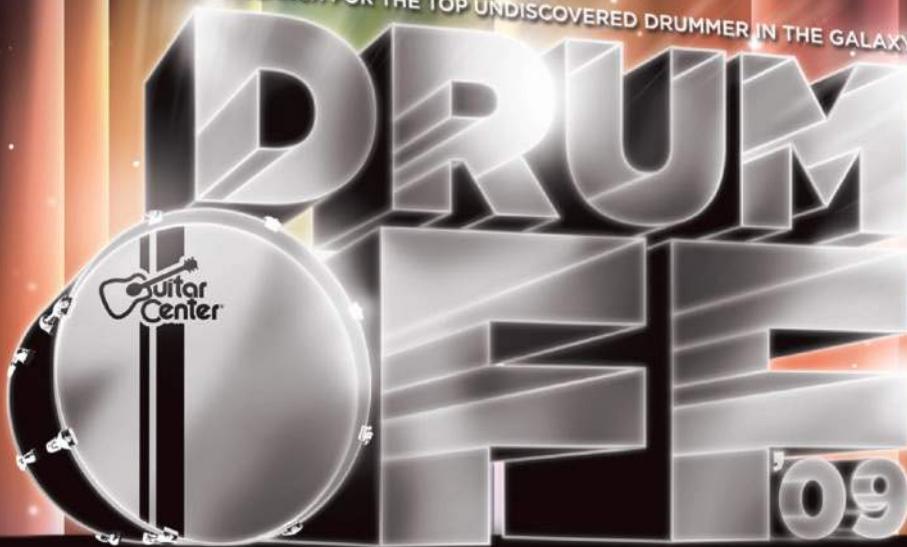
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# SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

**KIT OF THE MONTH**



**T**his month we're taking a slightly different approach and featuring *nine* kits, from Gault Townsend of Lake Charles, Louisiana. It's a drummer's dream!

"The soundproof room built over our separate garage was my wife's idea," Townsend says. "The original plan was to use the space to house my seven-piece Pearl set and a sound system with two Klipsch K horns. The walls would display mementos, posters, albums and 45s of our music of the '60s and '70s, and our five kids' favorites as well. Over the years the number of sets grew, and the room could only hold so many. Other sets are in the house and various other locations."

From left to right the kits in the photo are a Fibes champagne sparkle five-piece, a Slingerland blue sparkle four-piece, a Slingerland blue agate pearl seven-piece, a DW "tobacco fade" seven-piece, a Ludwig black oyster pearl four-piece, a Rogers blue onyx five-piece, a Rogers blue sparkle five-piece, a Ludwig silver sparkle four-piece, and a Slingerland white marine pearl five-piece. "The snare is historically correct on certain sets," Gault says, "with assorted snares on racks."

With so many kits, the Townsends could hold a family drum jam—and even have enough spare setups to invite a couple of guests.



**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 [billy@moderndrummer.com](mailto:billy@moderndrummer.com). Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message. Photos cannot be returned.

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