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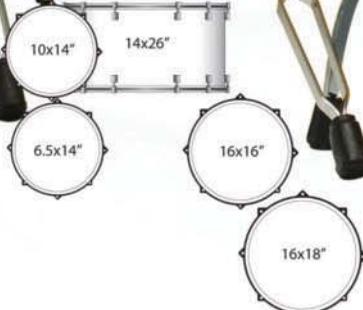
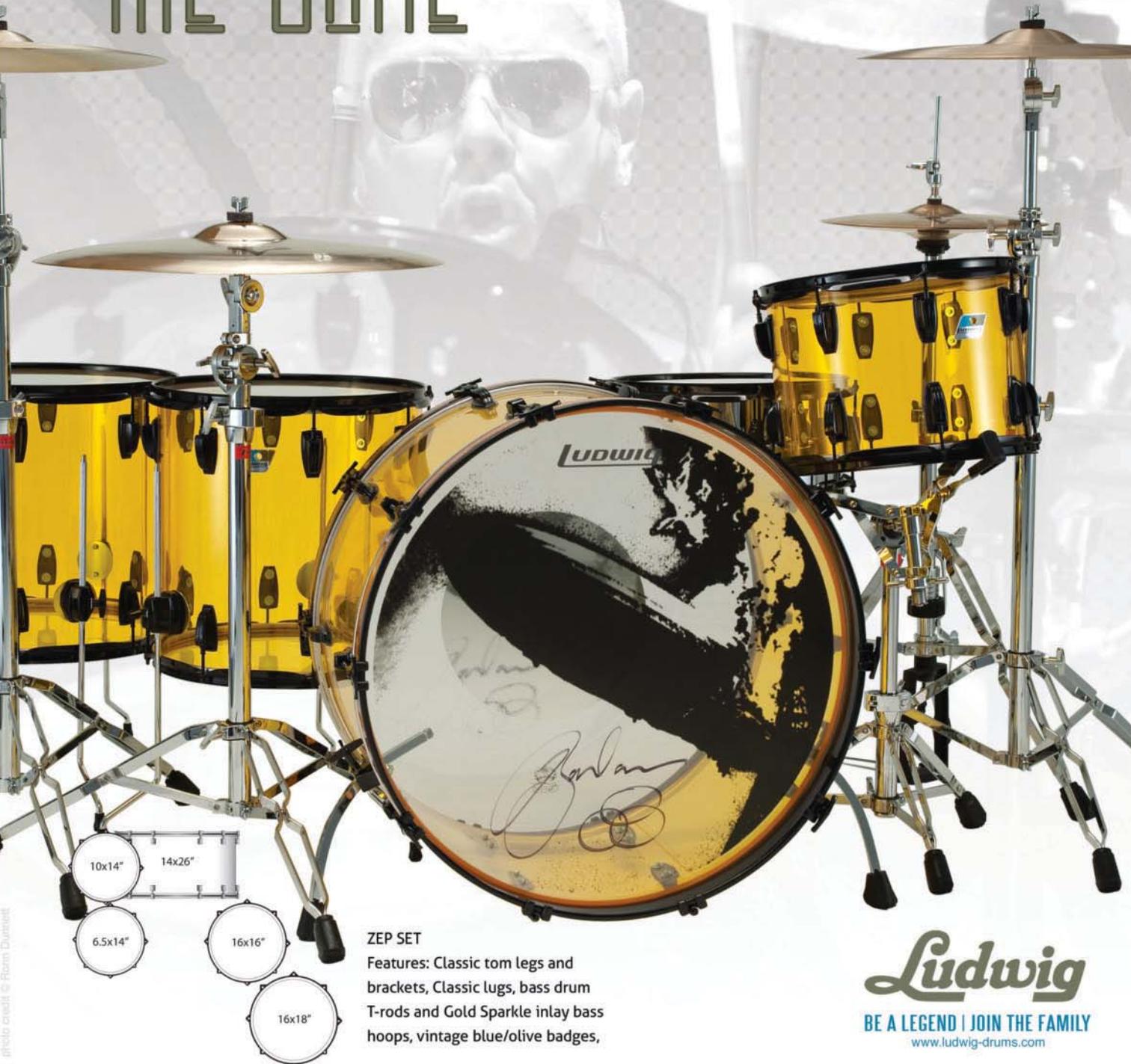
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Currently the drummer for Steely Dan on their 2009 summer tour, Keith has also toured and/ or recorded with Sting, The Blues Brothers, Wayne Krantz, Harry Belafonte, Faith Hill, Diana Ross, Donald Fagen Band, Grover Washington, Jr., Walter Becker, Leni Stern, and Richard Bona to name a few.

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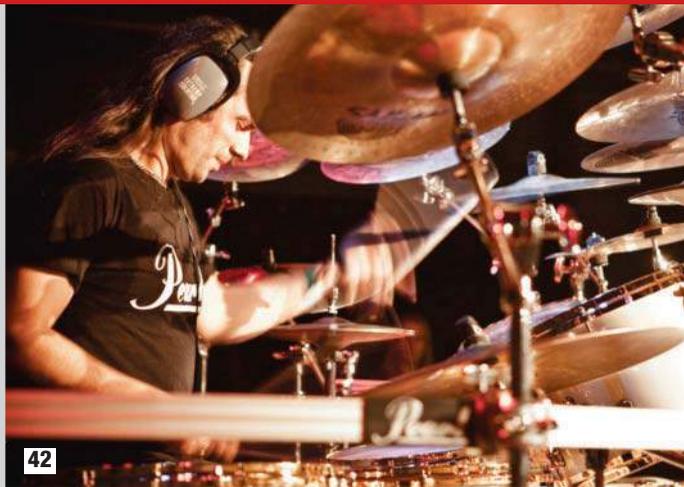
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Dino Perrucci

48



42



Gene Ambo

60

FEATURES

42 NILE'S GEORGE KOLLIAS

In the world of extreme metal, there's speed, and there's *SPEEED!* Renowned for his incredibly fast double bass work—typically breaking the sound barrier, and eardrums, at around 280 bpm—Nile's George Kollias is a quiet man with a brutal pair of feet.

48 STANTON MOORE

Galactic's drummer is happiest working the fertile soil where tradition feeds innovation. The results of the drummer's latest labors—an ambitious multimedia project and a clutch of new recordings—promise to fire our imagination for years to come.

60 FRED HAMMOND'S CALVIN RODGERS

Since childhood, the star gospel drummer has had but one goal: to inspire others with his playing. Today, Calvin Rodgers' powerful, unique, and tasteful drumming can be heard on some of the most influential gospel albums of the past decade.

14 UPDATE

LIVING COLOUR'S **WILL CALHOUN**

DIANA KRALL'S **JEFF HAMILTON**

THE BANGLES' **DEBBI PETERSON**

38 WOODSHED

THE VIRGINS' **KEVIN RICE**

40 IN THE STUDIO MAKING *inFAMOUS*

86 PORTRAITS

FICTION PLANE'S **PETE WILHOIT**

ANTHONY CITRINITE

90 WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...?

THIN LIZZY'S **BRIAN DOWNEY**



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page 105

EDUCATION

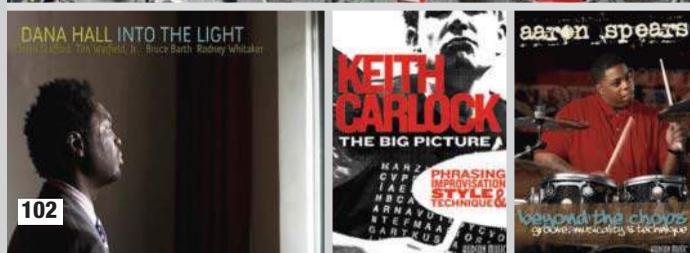
- 74 STYLE & ANALYSIS**
CALVIN RODGERS by Terry Branam
- 78 JAZZ DRUMMER'S WORKSHOP**
A LESSON WITH MAX ROACH
AN EXERCISE FOR DEVELOPING A TRANSPARENT SOUND by David Stanoch
- 80 STRICTLY TECHNIQUE**
CHOPS BUILDERS PART 2: DIDDLES AND ROLLS by Bill Bachman
- 84 THE FUNKY BEAT**
A GROOVE WORKOUT 20 AFROPOP-BASED BEATS by David Garibaldi

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW**
THE WORK OF ART by Adam Budofsky
- 10 READERS' PLATFORM**
- 12 ASK A PRO**
JASON GIANNI
- 18 IT'S QUESTIONABLE**
CONCENTRATION PROBLEMS • RECYCLING BROKEN CYMBALS
- 96 SHOWCASE**
- 100 DRUM MARKET**
- 102 CRITIQUE**
- 108 BACKBEATS**
PASIC 2009
- 112 KIT OF THE MONTH**
LIGHTENING THE LOAD ON THE ROAD

EQUIPMENT

- 22 PRODUCT CLOSE-UP**
• **BRADY** SPOTTED GUM PLY DRUMSET WITH WANDOO AND KOSAKA BLOCK SNARES
• **TAMA** STARPHONIC SNARE DRUMS
• **SOULTONE** GOSPEL SERIES CYMBALS
• **SNARE DRUM OF THE MONTH: STANTON MOORE DRUM COMPANY**
4 1/2x14 SPIRIT OF NEW ORLEANS TITANIUM
- 28 ELECTRONIC REVIEW**
EARTHWORKS DK25 AND DFK1 DRUM MIC SYSTEMS
- 30 NEW AND NOTABLE**
- 32 INSIDE**
PAISTE
- 36 GEARING UP**
• MOUNTAIN'S **CORKY LAING**
• NATASHA BEDINGFIELD'S **CHAUN HORTON**



THE WORK OF ART



MODERN DRUMMER

Volume 34, Number 3

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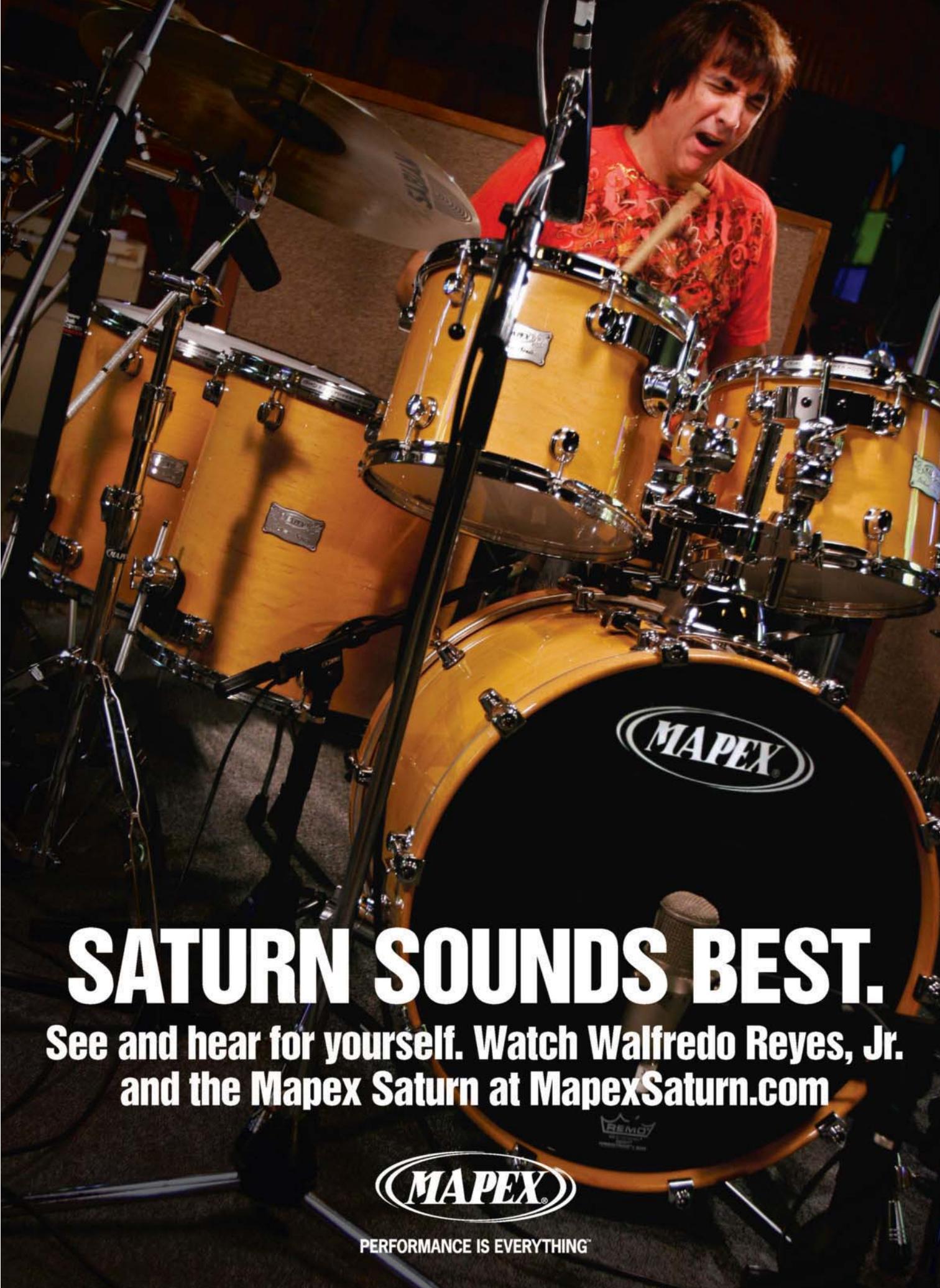
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Last time we met in this space, I climbed proudly on my high horse and suggested that drummers could stand to think a bit less about the craft of drumming and more about the art of it. I've always felt pretty strongly about this. As a child of the punk rock revolution of 1977, it's been ingrained in me that we musicians have to be conscious of not getting too carried away with perfecting our physical abilities and must remind ourselves occasionally that ultimately it's emotions we want to elicit with our music, not just intellectual analysis.

Now, that's the do-it-yourself, damn-the-torpedoes drummer in me talking. The working musician in me, the guy who understands that not all of us can afford to live in a happy vacuum of art for art's sake, and that even the most idiosyncratic drumming requires we know the rules before we break them, *that* guy is always interested in hearing what sorts of things successful career drummers think about on a daily basis, from playing tips to business advice.

With that in mind, we thought it would be instructive to ask many of the players profiled in this month's issue for their feelings and suggestions about making a career playing drums. Drummers Collective instructor Jason Gianni starts the ball rolling in his Ask A Pro segment, sharing some of his hard-earned wisdom on the topic of being a well-rounded player, both in terms of playing and conducting business. Elsewhere, gospel drumming great Calvin Rodgers tells us exactly what he did to become one of the busiest players on the scene, and he offers five specific tips on achieving success in drumming. And cover star Stanton Moore, who clearly has discovered a way to avoid sleeping, *ever*, passes on some invaluable insight about being your own boss, getting help when and where you need it, and fitting into a variety of musical scenarios.

Being considered unique as a drummer, having something fresh to say on our instrument, going for more than the same old same old whenever we sit down to play—these are and always will be vital aspects of being a mature, *important* musician. But there's no reason we can't go for it on a regular basis and still pay at least *some* of the bills while enjoying our passion. It's just a matter of figuring out how to balance those two goals in a way that fits in with the rest of what life demands of us. Hopefully you'll come away from this issue of *MD* feeling a bit more confident that you can make this idea a reality.



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and the Mapex Saturn at MapexSaturn.com



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DECEMBER 2009 MD

Fantastic December issue, gang! This will be a copy to save for years to come, as is my past MD with Max on the cover. Informative issue as a whole; I love the TV article and the editorial by Billy Amendola. Peace to all.

John Gigante, via Facebook

The December issue is terrific. The Different View interview with Paul Shaffer is great. You really pull some valuable drumming tips out of him. And I agree with Paul about Garry Peterson of the Guess Who—"These Eyes" is a great drumming song! I

also enjoyed Gregg Bissonette's Update, in the mag and online. It's awesome to be able to call Gregg my friend and experience the Ringo tour with him!

Rob Shanahan
MD contributing photographer

Many thanks for Bob Girouard's article on me in the December issue. I am proud of my continued association with MD. I'm also very proud of, and feel compelled to mention, my association with Latin Percussion and Evans Drumheads. Both of these companies (as well as Zildjian, Ludwig, and Vic Firth) have played a large part in the Black Crowes' music, both live and in the studio, for many years, and I'm grateful for their continued support and friendship. Looking forward to the next twenty years!

Steve Gorman
The Black Crowes

We were wonderfully surprised that a Ford snare drum made it into the pages of MD's Ultimate Gear Guide in the December issue. The drum pictured in the rock setup is actually called the Lil' Buddy. Carl Palmer's only affiliation with Ford is as a Smart Ass seat artist. Thanks again!

Jay Gaylen
Ford Drums

I really enjoyed your Different View interview with Paul Shaffer in the December MD. Paul is one of the only non-drummers who I truly love to watch play. Much like cover artist Max Weinberg, Paul always looks like he's having the best time. That's something I try to keep in mind while I'm playing.

Also, thank you for the mentions in the Ultimate Gear Guide. We appreciate it very much.

Terry Platt
ddrum division manager

ANVIL'S ROBB REINER

Thank you for including Anvil's Robb Reiner in your October 2009 issue. It's about time! I consider Robb to be a phenomenal drummer. He's technical but not overly so, and he's very tasteful in choosing beats that are appropriate for each song. Listen to Anvil classics such as "Old School" and "Five Knuckle Shuffle," and you'll hear why Robb's playing has influenced so many other metal drummers. Thanks very much for your great magazine and for helping me achieve my goals as a drummer!



William Wolfe

TONY ALLEN

Thanks for the Tony Allen interview in the October 2009 issue. Tony is such a huge inspiration to my drumming!

Jaime Anibal De León, via Facebook

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BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

JASON GIANNI

He put the beat to *SpongeBob*, schooled thousands on the basics of tuning, and helped his prog band take the best-album trophy at the L.A. Music Awards. **A busy all-rounder shares five tips for rounding out your career.**

When you look up the word *profession* in the dictionary, there are some distinctive terms that should immediately grab your attention. Words such as *long and intensive* as well as *academic and progressive achievement* should illustrate some of the vital characteristics of a lengthy career. As musicians, the majority of us have most likely strived to see our face up in

practicing: You must always strive to get better as a player, and as a teacher you have to aim to disseminate the correct information to your students. A good suggestion is to take some lessons with reputable instructors on the specific topic of teaching plans so that you can model your progress after someone who has already been successful in the field. When you gain the reputa-



lights on a big stage, witness our name on the jacket of a platinum-selling recording, or even find our image gracing the cover of this industry-leading drum magazine.

It's quite normal that we all initially feel—naively—that simply being a good drummer will lead us to our final goals. I clearly remember saying to myself as a teenager, *As long as I'm a great player, I'll become famous*. Oh, how wrong I was! Now, through years of experience, I've realized that the shortest distance between two points in this profession is *not necessarily* a straight line. With that in mind, I'd like to share some practical tips for the well-rounded working drummer who's looking to solidify his or her name in the world of music.

TEACH

Perhaps the best (and most obvious) way to get started as a full-time musician is through teaching. And I can't overstate the importance of teaching the correct way. Teaching is no different than

tion of being a great teacher, you can be employed by honorable institutions such as the Berklee College Of Music, Musicians Institute, or Drummers Collective, which will help your name grow within the industry.

WRITE

When I was younger, I never envisioned how taking English classes would positively influence my skills as a working drummer. Years later, however, honing my writing skills paid off in more ways than I ever could have imagined. Becoming a better writer allowed me to pen the text to my history/instructional book, *The Drummer's Bible*, and enabled me to contribute to countless music Web sites, magazines, and newsletters, resulting in terrific exposure in the business.

Much as with teaching, practicing your writing is a virtue. Picking a topic and working on refining your writing skills every day is a great route to improvement. And with the convenience of the Internet, supplying an outline or a full article to a

magazine, or even submitting a single chapter of a book to a prospective publisher, has never been so easy.

TRANSCRIBE

I cannot express strongly enough the importance of practicing and perfecting the art of transcription. There are *so* many possibilities to spread your reputation around the industry as a skilled transcriber. You can submit your work to magazines or be hired by a company that publishes drum books—and, of course, by sharpening your ability to transcribe you'll find an obvious improvement in your teaching skills.

I also advise becoming well schooled with the software program Finale, as it has become an industry standard. Although it's a challenging program to learn, there are many classes and courses offered that will clear up the mysteries of how to use it properly.

LEARN THE ARTS OF ENGINEERING AND PRODUCING

Although many of us strive to become better session players, it's a good idea to get involved behind the board rather than just in the live room. By becoming familiar with both the hardware and software in a studio, you can be hired as an engineer on a session as well as a performer. This greatly enhances your chances of having your name be associated with a popular project. And becoming a producer can add to your reputation in addition to being profitable, as it has in the cases of drummer/producers like Butch Vig and Narada Michael Walden.

SHOW YOUR FACE

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, market yourself. Show your face as much as you can throughout the industry. There are so many players out there, and it's nearly impossible for prominent people at magazines, equipment companies, and studios to remember you after meeting you only once. Make an effort to show up at as many trade shows, like PASIC or NAMM, as you can. Meet as many people as you can possibly meet, and follow up with them. Remember, marketing is not just about "who you know" but how you *get* to know who you know. And always remember that relationships are long term, so make sure to work on developing your connection with people in the industry in order to enhance your reputation for years to come.

Go to moderndrummer.com to learn more about Jason Gianni's diverse career.



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WILL CALHOUN

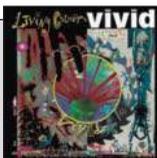
Baggage checked safely at the door, the members of **Living Colour** return to the studio and emerge with a batch of blazing new songs.

Will Calhoun's technically dazzling, musically diverse, and completely unrehearsed performance at the 2008 Modern Drummer Festival gave fans of the Living Colour drummer a chance to witness the vast depth of his amazing talents on acoustic and electronic drums and percussion. After a four-year hiatus, the Grammy-winning band, which took the music industry by storm in the '80s with the breakout hit "Cult Of Personality," is back with *The Chair In The Doorway*, an eclectic collection of new material that rekindles the same pioneering spirit and heavy grooves that helped Living Colour reshape pop music over two decades ago. And, as his captivating MD Fest performance revealed, Will has more surprises up his sleeve than ever before.

When Living Colour broke up around 1995, Calhoun, armed with a camera and a recording device, spent the majority of his downtime traveling the world, studying the origins and meaning of ancestral rhythms and their physical and mental effects on the human spirit. He returned with his

BREAKOUT BEATS

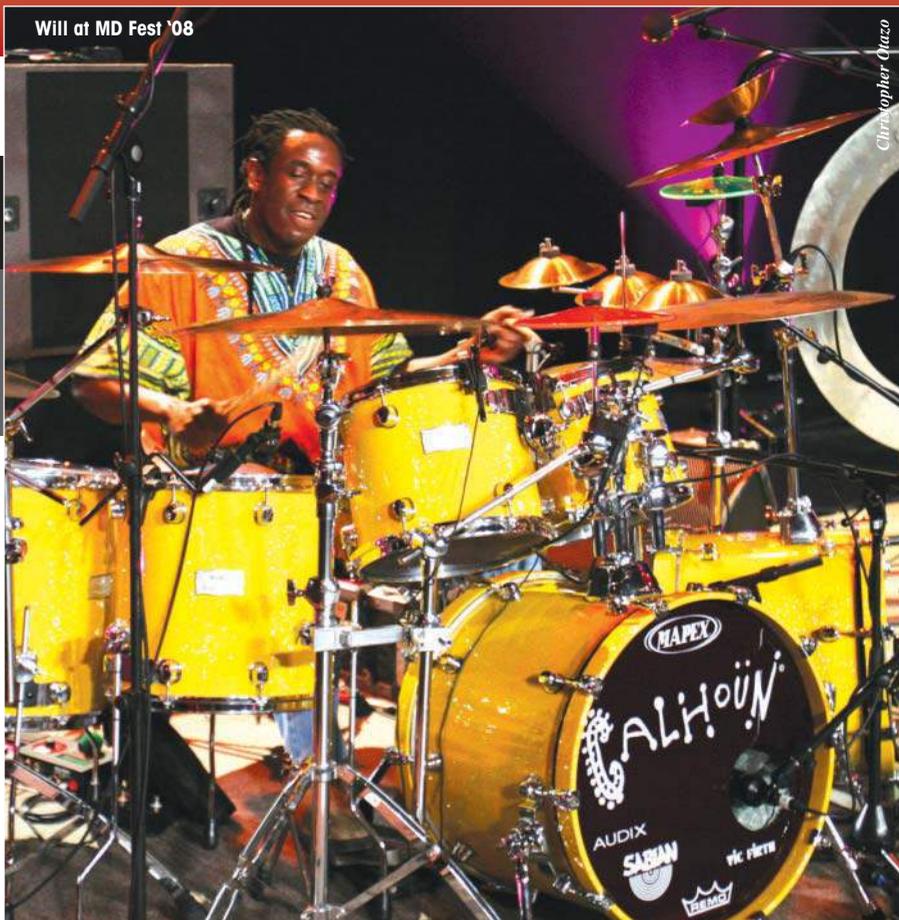
The African-American pop/funk/metal/punk band Living Colour brought musical depth and a sociopolitical consciousness to the '80s pop/metal movement. The group's 1988 debut LP, *Vivid*, exploded on the scene with the help of MTV's heavy rotation of the video for the hit "Cult Of Personality" and an opening spot on the Rolling Stones' Steel Wheels/Urban Jungle tour. Will Calhoun's versatile, powerful, and funky drumming had a thoughtful, creative flair, uncommon in the often rhythmically sterile '80s pop/metal environment. His adventurous Bonham-like groove and opening fill on the Grammy-winning "Personality"—featuring a wicked attention-grabbing, triplet-esque bass drum lick—oozed attitude and alerted drummers that there was a serious new rhythmic voice on the horizon.



own recordings of authentic rhythms and began to connect the dots between those sounds and their evolution into American music. This led to his recent CD/DVD solo project, *Native Lands*, a visual and sonic journey archiving a decade of experiences and discoveries in Africa. Contributing musical artists include Pharoah Sanders, Mos Def, Buster Williams, Stanley Jordan, Kevin Eubanks, Marcus Miller, and Wallace Roney.

"The most revealing part of my journey unveiled to me that various styles of American

Will at MD Fest '08



Christopher Otazo

music don't make much sense and don't really mean anything," Calhoun says. "So I began focusing more on the sounds of the music, instead of the styles. I also wanted to link my research with people who inspired me. Pharoah Sanders was a huge inspiration. I played in his band for five years, and he really allowed me to be myself. He encouraged me to research indigenous rhythms and to learn other instruments and broaden my musical and spiritual horizons. My *Native Lands* project is the culmination of my rhythmic research and wanting to assimilate the great artists that I'd worked with or was inspired by."

Calhoun brought his recordings to a friend, filmmaker Charles Kliment. "When I explained to him how I created the music," Will says, "he insisted that I had to document the information so people would know and understand how I arrived at this place. So the second half of the recording is a DVD documentary featuring my photography, original music, musical background, and amazing experiences over the last ten years."

Calhoun has spent quality time in Mali learning the culture and has been touring recently with the popular Malian artist Oumou Sangare. In a recent visit to the West African nation, Will discovered the unique culture of Dogon drumming, which he will explore in his next project. The drummer actually started his musical research many years ago, but a certain rock group came along and pulled him in another direction.

"Living Colour started as a band of fearless warriors with no musical barriers or boundaries,"

Calhoun says. "Our initial success was a shock to all of us. We expected it to take ten records before people really understood what we were doing. What I like most about all of our recordings is that they're honest and represent exactly what we are and where we're coming from at the time. We're musical ninjas. We love all styles of music, and it spills out into our sound."

Though he's aware that Living Colour's previous album, 2003's *Collideoscope*, was not well received, Calhoun insists it was a record the band *had* to make. "It was like our therapy recording," he suggests, "a strength test to see if we even wanted to stay together, whether there was anything left for us to say. Without that record, we could never have made *The Chair In The Doorway*. Now everything's great. The media loves the new record, the tour is killing, and the fans love the new music."

"Making this record was fun, serious, and focused, with no baggage," Will adds. "We wrote twenty-five songs, which we narrowed down to twelve. I'm very happy with it. What I love about this band is that we don't play music for Grammy awards or cover stories or accolades. What I like most about the new music is [that it reflects] the maturity of the band. Because everyone had time to get away and do their own solo projects, we all came back with more information to share. I'm looking forward to getting started on the next record. This record feels like the appetizer for the next one, because we didn't finish a lot of things that were just starting to come together."

Mike Haid

JEFF HAMILTON

When the young musician tried to pay Philly Joe Jones for a daylong lesson, all the legendary Miles Davis sideman asked for was gas money. Thirty years later, Diana Krall's drummer is *still* reaping the rewards.

It's the summer of 1976, and twenty-two-year-old Jeff Hamilton has a drum lesson to make. Walking down a Philadelphia street, he climbs up the stairs of a handsome brownstone and searches the apartment roster for the name of his instructor: Philly Joe Jones. "I'd been working out of Philly Joe's book, *Brush Artistry*," Hamilton recalls from his studio in San Pedro, California. "But now I was going to study with him for an entire day and see his strokes up close.

"Philly told me to mean everything that I play," Hamilton continues. "He said, 'Challenge the musicians with sticks or brushes. Don't play games, but let them know you're there. And throw them an idea, whether they take it or not. Don't be a doormat and lay down.' I thought I was hip at that age, and I didn't want to go through all the fancy motions he was making with the brushes. Then he told me to bring the brush up and comb my big head of hair. 'Why?' 'Because,' he said, 'you got to be pretty when you play the brushes!'"

That lesson with Jones paid off for Hamilton, and so did listening to drummers such as Shelly Manne, Ed Thigpen, Papa Jo Jones, Mel Lewis, and Jake Hanna. As heard on his latest trio release, *Symbiosis* (his ninth album as a leader; he's also co-led six albums with the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra), Jeff is one of the finest exponents of the supposedly lost art of brush playing. His lightning-quick change-ups between sticks and brushes and his unusual hands-on-drumset technique are incorporated with great musical success into the challenging arrangements of *Symbiosis*. Performing standards and a handful of originals, the Jeff Hamilton Trio sounds like the dozen or more players of a big band streamlined down to a small-band format. All that energy and spice gains greater traction from Hamilton's incredibly fast moves.

"I know where everything is at all times," the drummer explains. "I have a definite left brush and a definite right brush. And it's the same for my right and left sticks. Wherever I put them, I can tell which brush is which by the way I bend the hoop of the brush. I can tell the right stick by the notches it has on it from the rim. I keep the sticks between my legs on the throne or on the floor tom. The brushes go on the bass drum or on the floor tom. They remain that way all night. Sometimes I leave them on the snare drum, but I can get to them really quickly. Often I'll gradually ease into the second brush or stick two bars before making the change. I'll keep one going and slowly add the other."

How did Hamilton develop his super-slick, ultra-fast brush playing? The sound came first, then the attack, the latter achieved from Hamilton's unique

lateral technique. "Brushes and sticks are two completely different implements," Jeff says, "with two completely different approaches. With brushes, first you need to get the circles going and get a smooth sound, and then you add the rudiments. People are often afraid to spend a lot of time with the brushes, but if you line up eight players who have spent time on brushes, you can identify them easily."

Hamilton describes his brush technique as akin to skipping a stone across the snare drum head (in his case, a Remo Fiberskyn played with his signature Regal Tip brushes). It's hard to visualize, but the drummer is also skilled at the art of explanation. "The lateral approach looks like I'm pulling the brush off to the side like a Frisbee toss," he says. "When the brush approaches the head, it's coming from an angle; it's not coming straight over as a stick would. It's coming from the right to the left with that stroke. That's not the standard approach. I get a 'duh' sound instead of a 'dat' sound. It's a longer sound. It's like a stone skipping water across the head. I do use finger technique with the brushes, but with a lateral approach."

This method (pioneered by Stan Kenton/Woody Herman drummer John Von Ohlen) is so pervasive in Hamilton's drumming that it has also influenced his stick technique. "With the lateral, swirlier slashing motion, you let the stick do the work," Jeff says. "You bring it up slightly, but you don't snap it up. The motion comes from the side. It gives you a fatter, warmer sound. You're dropping the middle finger from locking the stick in, so your fulcrum is on the index finger and the thumb, and you have to remove the other fingers to let the stick drop. Don't snap it up, just gradually bring it up, and you'll hear the difference."

Hamilton's "fatter, warmer" sound has made him the drummer of choice with the star vocalists of jazz. From Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett, and Barbra Streisand to modern crooners Michael Bublé, Roberta Gambarini, and John Pizzarelli to his ongoing gig with Diana Krall, Hamilton knows how to make a singer swing. "Maybe it's because I sang a lot as a kid," he says with a laugh. "People thought I should be a singer. I sang in church choir and had the lead in *The Music Man* in high school. So perhaps I'm sensitive to what I would want to hear



Alex Solera

BREAKOUT BEATS

As if his earlier work with Woody Herman, Monty Alexander, the L.A. Four, and Ella Fitzgerald didn't cement his rep, Jeff Hamilton's 1994 outing, *It's Hamilton Time*, exposed his multiple gifts to a wider (and drummer-centric) audience. While all the action was supposedly happening back east, the Los Angeles-based Hamilton revealed super skills on standards ("Caravan," "Relaxin' At Camarillo") and the tribute track "Max." Then as now, Hamilton's brush skills and totally tricked-out sticking technique made more than one mouth drop; you could almost hear the beboppers racing to their practice pads at 2 A.M. in hopes of mastering the Hamilton lateral brush stroke. Good luck!



from the drummer if I was singing. Ella wanted me to give it to her, and I went back to those old records with Gus Johnson, where he played behind her like it was the Basie band. I laid the wood on it, and she winked at me. But not all singers want that. There are no rules; you have to listen."

Listening, challenging, and laying the wood on it are traits also instilled in Hamilton by Philly Joe Jones. How did that cherished lesson in the summer of '76 finally end? "Philly drove me back to New York for my gig that night," Jeff says, "and when I asked him how much I owed him for the lesson, he would only take \$10 in gas money. He dropped me off at the hotel, and I got in my suit, ran down to the club... and was never the same."

Ken Micallef

BLOG INSIGHTS

Quotes pulled from the Blog page at modern drummer.com.

"In order to play extreme metal, you need to have a totally different mindset. You have to be willing to put yourself through hours and hours of mindless repetition, muscle cramps, tendonitis, and blisters. It's a form of drumming that will turn you into your own drill sergeant." —the Amenta's **Robin Stone**

"A question I get a lot is: How do you get a big gig? Even though there's a lot that goes into getting the gig, the challenge lies in *keeping* the gig. It comes down to your level of focus and your commitment to making good decisions on and off stage." —Hilary Duff's **Mike Bennett**



ON TOUR

Vik Foxx with the Veronicas
Jay McMillan with Jack's Mannequin
Ned Brower with Rooney
Steve Stetson with Uncle Kracker
Mike Gomez with Kauze
Jimmy DeGrasso with Alice Cooper
Frank Zummo with thenewno2
Erik Eldenius with LeAnn Rimes
John Wicks with Fitz & the Tantrums

DEBBI PETERSON

Post-comeback album #2 finds the Bangles and their pop-tastic drummer recording new tunes DIY style with alt icon Matthew Sweet.

The Bangles are synonymous with 1980s pop music, scoring seven Top 40 hits off just three albums released between 1984 and 1988. By 1990, the members had grown tired of living only for the band—constant touring, recording, and label pressures—and parted ways. The year 1999 saw them reunite for a studio session to record “Get The Girl” for the soundtrack to *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*.

Enjoying that project and their creative chemistry, the Bangles decided to end their near-ten-year hiatus to do more writing and touring. Without the financial assistance of a label, they pooled tour money in order to record *Doll Revolution*, released in 2003. The band was back to its roots and having a blast.



BREAKOUT BEATS

Debbi Peterson received the perfect pop drumming education before she helped found the Bangles in the early '80s. Though the group's 1984 debut, *All Over The Place*, featured such favorites as “Going Down To Liverpool” and “Hero Takes A Fall,” it was their sophomore release, *Different Light*, that launched them to stardom. Influenced by Karen Carpenter, Ringo Starr, and Charlie Watts, Peterson's playing is an ideal blend of feel and fills. The drummer's smart approach on the hit singles “If She Knew What She Wants,” “Manic Monday,” and “Walk Like An Egyptian” helped send the Bangles to the top of the charts.

Having found the perfect formula—a mix of band and family—the Bangles continue to work, alternating live shows with writing and studio sessions. They recently teamed up with Matthew Sweet, who's producing and playing bass on a new album they're in the midst of recording. Pleased with the comfortable surroundings of Sweet's home studio and the organic nature of the recording process, the band eagerly anticipates the release of the record later this year.

Modern Drummer sat down with Bangles time-keeper Debbi Peterson to talk about how things have been better the second time around.

MD: You no longer have the pressure of having to deliver the perfectly crafted album for a major label. How has this changed your approach?

Debbi: We've been able to spend time with each track and give it its own personality. We're also tracking with just one guitar on a couple of numbers—very White Stripes—so that creates a different vibe.

MD: The band now carries the burden of financing this project, yet you have the creative freedom to do whatever you want. How have you grown and changed as songwriters, with the focus being shifted away from having to deliver “the hit” to a label?

Debbi: It's so much more relaxing not having to play the label game. It's freed us up to try new things and not be afraid to go with our gut feelings.

MD: How has your drumming been impacted by this freedom?

Debbi: Very much so! I'm feeling less constricted and more creative. Plus the atmosphere is more open to experimentation, which I haven't experienced much in the past.

MD: What's the greatest advantage to being indie and DIY?

Debbi: Control, control, control! We've always felt the need to compromise, and in the end we lose a bit of ourselves in the process.

Now, with the grassroots appeal of being indie and DIY, we can do what we want. The only trouble is that we have to push ourselves to get things done.

MD: You all finally have the freedom to balance home and work life. How has having more time away from each other changed the collective creative process?

Debbi: We're a lot more supportive of each other now, since we're all in the family boat. We give each other space if, say, someone isn't available because of family needs. It's okay. Our tours are much shorter, running at most three weeks at a time. We all realize it's important to balance family with work.

MD: How do you strike that balance when you're at home, since you're now running all aspects of your business?

Debbi: It's very challenging. There are days and hours of scheduling and rescheduling, but we know that's part of balancing family and work. It's true for any working parents.



MD: You're using some percussion loops live. Is this something the band has always done, or is it new?

Debbi: We were using loops in the '80s, although I had a hard time drumming along with them live, due to old-fashioned monitor systems. I used click tracks in the studio as well, and I still do.

MD: How have things progressed with the album over the past couple of months?

Debbi: Unfortunately, things aren't progressing as fast as I'd like, for various reasons, but we have several songs nearly completed and have the basic tracks for a couple more. It's a work in progress.

Dena Tauriello

OUT NOW ON CD

Ringo Starr's new album, *Y Not*, which features guest appearances by Paul McCartney, Joss Stone, Ben Harper, Joe Walsh, and Dave Stewart, among others, represents the first time the ex-Beatle produced his own record. “I played the album for my son Zak,” Ringo says, “and he said, ‘Dad, this rocks! You should have been doing this forever.’ That's nice to hear from your boy—especially since he's a really good drummer.”



Dave Lombardo is on Slayer's new studio disc, *World Painted Blood*. According to the drummer, “We worked a lot more collectively on this record. We were more attentive to each other's ideas and willing to try them, which only benefited the album.”

“The recording process of our new album, *War Is The Answer*, was quite a cornucopia of experiences,” says **Jeremy Spencer** of Five Finger Death Punch. “It seemed like we were cursed out of the gate. Every day a computer seemed to blow up. But we managed to plow through and achieve what we wanted: a balance of melody and aggression, a more mature Death Punch record.”

ALSO ON THE SHELVES

ARTIST/ALBUM

Timothy B. Schmit: *Expando*
Atreyu: *Congregation Of The Damned*
Aplanadora: *Ejecución*
Carol Welsman: *I Like Men*
James Weidman: *Three Worlds*
Komeda Project: *Requiem*
Ike Sturm: *JazzMass*
NYNDK: *The Hunting Of The Snark*
Carrie Underwood: *Play On*

DRUMMER

Jim Keltner, Ben Schmit
Brandon Saller
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Nasheet Waits
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jonny quinn | snow patrol

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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 **You Tube**

CONCENTRATION PROBLEMS

I've been playing drums for about four months now, and I'm having serious problems concentrating on learning and practicing. I've been trying to count out loud, as all of my instruction books suggest, but when I do, I lose focus and start messing up. My hands don't follow my count, and I start playing the wrong thing altogether. Then I get mad and give up. Do you have any suggestions on how to strengthen my focus? I find that concentration problems show up in other areas of my life as well.

Bobby

First off, take a deep breath in. Hold it, and then exhale fully. Relax. You're trying way too hard with this whole thing, and it's making you uptight—uptight in your mind *and* your body. Try easy. Perform this simple little relaxation exercise *before* you begin each of your practice sessions.

Now let's continue with an important question. Is there anything else that's drawing your attention in a powerful way when you sit down at your drums? Something that's a consistent theme or problem? A girlfriend? A boyfriend? A conflict with another student, a coworker, or a family member? If that's the case, you'll probably need to deal with that first. Find some resolution before you can clear your mind for a good session with your drums.

Motivation is a huge factor in any learning process. What attracted you to the drums in the first place? Their look? Their sound? Now for the hard question: Does the *reality* of playing drums come close to the *fantasy* that you originally had in your mind? I used to think/fantasize about playing guitar. Once I bought a guitar and started to learn to play, I quickly lost motivation. The reality of actually playing did not match the fantasy I'd held before I bought the instrument. I hated fretting the

strings and contorting my fingers to make a sound. I later admitted to myself that I was in love with the shape and color of my guitar. If I hadn't sold it, it probably would have wound up on the wall, not unlike a poster or a painting. Something nice to look at, but that's about all.

Putting aside the concentration issue for a moment, do you feel motivated—even though you're struggling right now—to play your drums? If the answer is yes, keep at it! If the answer is no, you might want to experiment with another instrument. If you think you'd like to stay in the percussion family, try a hand drum like a djembe or a conga.

Words are very powerful and carry connotations that can influence our moods and actions. Let's look at the word *practice*. When you were very young, you practiced how to eat with a fork and a spoon. Later, you practiced multiplication and division. And you practiced how to throw a football or baseball. But over time the word *practice* can start to become associated with drudgery and work. You begin to see it as a chore rather than as an opportunity to better your skills or just have some fun. So, begin thinking of your time with drumming as *playing* your drums, rather than going in to *practice*

them. Tell yourself, and whoever else is in the room (friends, family, etc.), that you're going in to *play* on your practice pad, snare drum, or full kit.

You mention instructional books, and I just mentioned a practice pad. Learning how to read drum music and having the convenience of playing with sticks on a pad are both important, but make sure you're spending time with real drums and just cutting loose on the kit. If you don't have a drumset and cymbals yet, see about renting some gear or buying a used entry-level kit through your local music store or Craigslist. Alternate your time with the instructional books with playing along to your favorite CDs or MP3s. Allow yourself to enjoy the feel of the smooth sticks in your hands, the sound of the drums and cymbals, the sensation of your

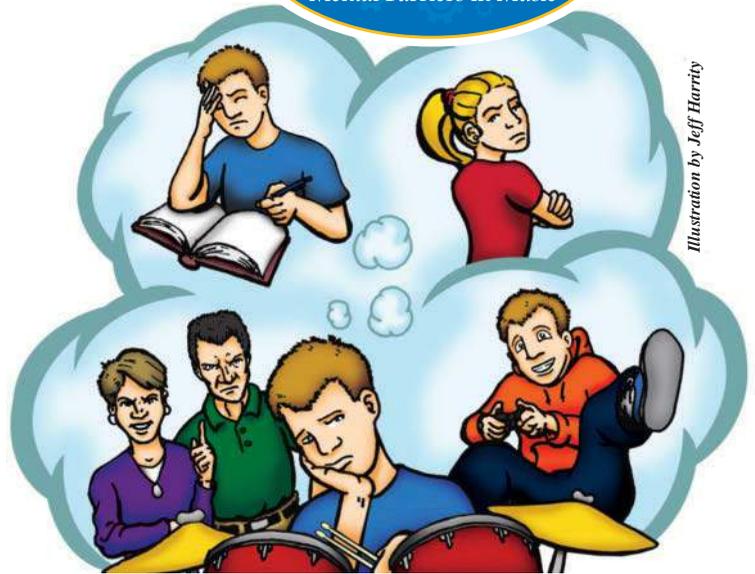
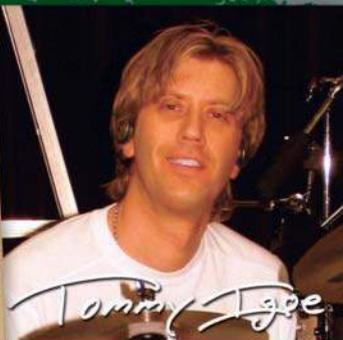
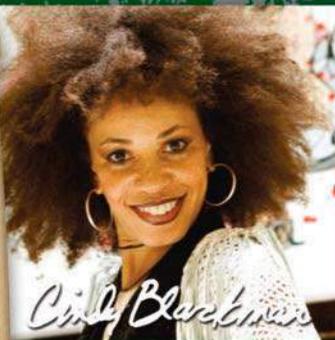


Illustration by Jeff Harty



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RECYCLING BROKEN CYMBALS

foot coming down on the pedal, the beater striking the kick drum head.... Have fun with your drums.

You can build concentration skills in many ways. Buy jigsaw puzzles, and work with them *only* up until they stop being fun and challenging. When you start to feel frustrated, walk away and come back to them later. Or try crosswords or sudokus. Watch episodes of game shows, and answer the questions. Again, perform these activities only until you start to feel frustrated and it stops being fun. Walk away and do something different, but make sure to return to the activity later.

Acquiring any new skill takes time and is a challenge. You mention you've been playing for only four months. Cut yourself some slack! The pros you see live in concert make it look easy, but they've put in *thousands* of hours behind the kit.

You also mention that you get mad and give up. Anger is an emotion that in this case isn't helping you build a drumming skill set. When you start to feel anger or frustration rising within you, stop what you're doing and try something different. If you're already

at your drums, play free-form for a while until the anger passes.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention one last possibility for your problem. I'm sure you've heard of ADD—attention deficit disorder. You say this concentration issue shows up in other parts of your life. If all of my suggestions fail you, it might be worth your time to be evaluated by a qualified health provider—a physician, a psychologist, a social worker—who specializes in ADD. If you're diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, a physician will most likely prescribe a medication that will help you focus.

If your motivation is true and you've cleared out any powerful problems or distractions that are pulling your attention away from your drums, and if you've ruled out ADD, I say stick with it, try easy, and *play*, and your skills *will* come.



Bernie Schallehn has been a drummer and percussionist for over forty-five years. He holds a master's degree in counseling psychology and, while in private practice, held the credentials of a certified clinical mental health counselor and a certified alcohol and substance abuse counselor.



I have many cracked or busted cymbals that I can't bring myself to throw away. From a cymbal manufacturer's standpoint, is it possible to melt cymbals back down and reuse the alloy for new cymbals?

Nathan

We sent your question to Zildjian product communications manager John King. Here's his response: "Zildjian does recycle any of the cymbal alloy that becomes scrap during the initial manufacturing process. This includes excess material that is cut away during the circle-shearing process as well as alloy that's cut during the lathing process. Cymbals that are deemed unacceptable during the testing process can also be considered acceptable scrap. This alloy is clean material that can be re-melted. Cymbals that have been returned for any reason cannot be reintro-

duced into the melting process, for fear of contaminants such as rust, cleaning agents, or other foreign matter that might affect the quality of the alloy. Used and broken cymbals are always cut up and sold as scrap metal.

"As to your broken cymbal collection, you should try stacking various models together to see if you can discover some interesting 'trash' effects that you can add to your setup. [Jon Theodore made use of this short, aggressive sound extensively during his stint with the art-rock band the Mars Volta, as in the photo above.] To avoid expanding your broken cymbal collection further, remember to strike your cymbals with a glancing action. Do not hit them at too severe an angle, and use an appropriate striking velocity for each type of cymbal you own."

HOW TO REACH US

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With the diameter between a 5A and 5B, this is a medium shaft stick with a short taper and a barrel tip. The 16 3/8" length has plenty of reach and "plays big" without being too big to handle. L = 16 3/8", Dia. = .580"



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BRADY

SPOTTED GUM PLY DRUMSET WITH WANDOO AND KOSAKA BLOCK SNARES

by Michael Dawson

Famed drum builder Chris Brady introduced the global drumming community to the rich, dense sounds of hard Australian timber back in 1980, when he carved his first solid “tree trunk” snare out of a single log of jarrah, a species that grows in the southwest corner of the continent. Since then, Brady has explored other ways to turn

his homeland’s indigenous hardwoods into top-shelf drums, including non-cross-laminated, 100 percent horizontal ply shells, as well as the vertical block (stave) shell systems that have come to define “the Brady sound.”

To celebrate his thirtieth year of drum making, Chris has added a new shell type to his catalog—

spotted gum. This ultra-dense Australian timber comes from the eucalyptus family and has an interlocking grain structure, which allows it to be cut into very thin shells without requiring reinforcing rings to retain its shape. While the tone of spotted gum falls in line with the crisp attack and deep timbre of Brady’s trademark jarrah and marri ply drums, these shells have a stronger and punchier sound, one that Chris claims “comes with unprecedented projection in a wood shell, while carrying a solid low tone.”

For review, we were sent a six-piece spotted gum kit (9-ply 16x22 kick, 5-ply 7x10 and 8x12

THE BRADY EFFECT

If you’re unfamiliar with the lively “crack” of Brady drums, check out Aaron Comess’s nimble rudimental intro and bouncy ghost-note groove on the Spin Doctors’ “Two Princes” and Charley Drayton’s explosive rimshot throughout the B-52s’ mega-hit “Love Shack.” Both of those classic pop performances were played on Brady drums. You can also hear Steve Jordan grooving on a wandoo block snare on John Mayer’s *Battle Studies* tour.





Kosaka block snare



Wandoo block snare

rack toms, 7-ply 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, 9-ply 8x14 snare), plus two block-shell snares: a 7x12 "Love Shack" wandoo (the same drum Charley Drayton used with the B-52s) and a 6½x14 condensed bamboo Kosaka, which was made in honor of Brady's friend and the long-time president of Pro-Mark Japan, Tat Kosaka.

All of the toms, which have fairly sharp 45° bearing edges, came with clear Remo Emperor batter heads and clear Ambassadors on the bottom toms. The rack toms have engraved suspension mounts, and the floor toms have traditional legs. The kick has a coated Powerstroke 3 batter and a Fiberskyn resonant. All three snares came with coated CS Ambassador batters, Dunnett throw-offs, 2.3 mm triple-flange steel hoops, and custom-made twenty-strand snare wires.

STRENGTH AND ELEGANCE

Like all Brady drums, spotted gum models are built strong and sturdy, so they'll hold up under the most extreme playing situations. (Even the small chromed-brass lugs were considerably "meatier" than what you find on other kits with low-mass hardware.) These drums have an air of elegance and simplicity that commands respect, likely the result of the extreme care and attention to detail that Brady puts into every piece he builds. (Each stage of the company's manufacturing process, from measuring and drilling the wood to buffing and lacquering the finish, is done by hand.) Everyone who saw the drums, whether it was a fellow musician on the bandstand or friends who came to a show, commented on how much they liked the kit. And that was before I had played a note.

The wavy grain structure of the spotted gum shells is prominent, but the natural satin finish keeps the overall vibe subdued and subtle. Each drum also features a special badge that consists of thirty-one individual wood pieces carved from seventeen different species of timber. It's a very classy touch, and one you won't likely find on any mass-produced drumset.

All of the tension rods feature leather/steel/leather washers, which are said to allow for smooth tuning adjustments while also acting as shock absorbers to minimize detuning. During

our testing, none of the tension rods on the toms backed out, and only after about fifteen minutes of very loud rimshots did the two lugs closest to the impact point require a few turns to bring the drum back up to pitch.

THE PLAYING EXPERIENCE

I checked out the spotted gum drumset on two very different gigs: an acoustic-based club date at a local brewpub where the drums were unmiked, and a loud outdoor festival with a roots-rock, Wallflowers-type band. In both situations, the drums performed above and beyond my expectations.

First off, these are some of the loudest wood-shell drums I've ever played, which allowed me to play lighter and more relaxed than usual, especially at the unmiked club date. During the first set, I even had to muffle the snare and toms with a set of Killer Rings in order to keep them from filling out the room *too* much. Interestingly, this extra volume didn't come at the expense of tone and warmth. Yes, the drums were loud. But they were also very musical, combining a strong bass punch, a rich midrange presence, and a singing resonance that you don't usually hear unless drums are close-miked and pumped through a PA.

The larger toms (12" and 16") had unbelievable low-end response that was deeper and fuller than what I've heard with other kits. I used these two drums at the loud outdoor festival. It took only a couple hits on the toms during soundcheck for the bandleader to look around and say with a smile, "That's the sound!" The smaller toms (10" and 14") were equally impressive, with a wide tuning range and an unbelievably clean tone that would make fusion great Dave Weckl proud. Like the toms, the 22" kick drum had a pre-EQ'ed quality, with a strong and punchy attack plus a big low-end thump that didn't have too much "woof." This drum sounded great with and without muffling and reminded me of what you hear on a lot of modern country recordings.

To my ears, the only low point in Brady's spotted gum kit was the matching 10-lug 8x14 snare. It wasn't a bad-sounding instrument—it

was very sensitive and articulate and had a thick, woody tone with a lot of midrange bite—it just didn't have that same extra-special mojo that oozed from the toms and kick. Plus it had the unenviable task of trying to compete with two *other* Brady snares that were downright ruthless.

KOSAKA AND WANDOO BLOCK SNARES

Brady's block-constructed snares have a unique sound that's noticeably drier and denser than that of traditional ply drums. The 6½x14 Kosaka block is made from condensed bamboo, which, Brady says, has a higher pitch that is "loud and cutting, without being too abrasive." I used this drum at the acoustic club date, and it proved to be a great all-around snare for back-beat-based songs. It sounded best tuned medium tight, where it let out a chunky "crack" with every rimshot. The 10-lug Kosaka sounded particularly satisfying on punchy pocket grooves, like Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" (which we were requested to play at the end of the night). I ended up having to muffle the Kosaka with three pieces of rolled-up tape, not to dampen overtones but to bring down the drum's overall volume. Like the spotted gum, the Kosaka was *loud*.

As much as I loved the spotted gum kick and toms and the Kosaka block snare, the 7x12 wandoo block was the standout, both for me and for several other drummers who got a chance to play it. Despite its diminutive size, this little drum sounded much fuller than I expected, plus it had all the snap, crackle, and pop you'd need to make a track spring to life. The wandoo was also very articulate and sensitive at all dynamics. Even super-soft ghost notes spoke with a strong, full voice that had a lot of shell sound in the tone. This drum also recorded beautifully and didn't require any muffling to keep it focused. After spending a couple weeks with this special drum, I don't think any serious snare collection could be complete without one. For pricing, contact your nearest Brady dealer.

bradydrums.com

TAMA

STARPHONIC SNARE DRUMS

by Anthony Riscica



After three years of research and development, Tama has released its Starphonic series snare drums. Available in four models, these drums offer brand-new features along with some supremely sophisticated sounds. We were given all four snares—maple, bubinga, brass, and aluminum—for review. Let's start with their common components and then take a look at their individual characteristics.

INNOVATIONS FOR ALL

Probably the freshest thing about these drums is the grooved hoop and the "freedom" lug/claw hook. Instead of your standard hoop that has holes built in, Starphonic hoops are made completely solid, with a small lip that runs around the outside. The "freedom" lug and claw then clamp onto this lip, allowing you to remove the hoop without taking the lugs all the way out. A hinge on each of the lugs allows the rod to be pushed away from the shell for hoop removal. The innovation works well for quick changes but has one small flaw. In order to get the hoop off, you must loosen each tension rod almost to the point of coming out completely. So if you twist the key about half a turn too much, the rod will come out of the lug—defeating the purpose of the "freedom" lug altogether. A longer tension rod would help prevent this.

The top of the hoop has a new design as well. Instead of curving out like a normal triple-flange hoop, the grooved hoop bends in. This is said to enhance the natural sound of the drum and offer more sensitivity and control. It's also a lot kinder to drumsticks, especially when you're hitting heavy rimshots.

Other noteworthy features include a rubber gas-

ket in each claw to retain tuning, a ratchet-style snare adjustment that clicks into place to keep the snare tension from slipping, and a linear-drive strainer that prevents the snares from slapping the bottom head when being engaged. These are all very useful attributes.

DRUM BY DRUM

All four Starphonic snares are 6x14. The first drum I took out was the seamless aluminum (\$614.99), which reminded me of my 1960s Ludwig Acrolite in appearance. After playing this model, I was amazed at how close it sounded to the Acrolite—and even better in some respects. The lightweight drum offered an open, resonant sound. I couldn't find a tension that didn't work well on it, or on any of the other Starphonics for that matter. The rimshot sound toward the edge of the drum released a metallic "kang" sound that was delightful rather than frightening. The tone was deep, and the drum produced a nice punch even when cranked up, while still maintaining loads of sensitivity.

Like the aluminum model, the nickel-plated brass Starphonic (\$768.99) had some sweet rimshot tones, but with added volume and a rock 'n' roll sensibility. With the combination of the drums' wide tuning range and snare tension system, you can make these Starphonic snares sound just about any way you want. The rimclick was great, which can be credited to the new hoop design.

Next up was the 8-ply bubinga snare (\$768.99), which is wrapped in a single outer ply of cordia, in an earthy matte finish. Because of its increased shell density, this model provided a massive sound with a full low end. It features a thinner shell (7 mm) than Tama normally makes from this wood. The reduced thickness gives the drum a softer, warmer sound than I had previously experienced with bubinga. Even though bubinga generally doesn't produce the most versatile drums, this one had great range and sensitivity. I especially loved the full, throaty sound I got when I loosened up the tension rods and the snares. And the drum didn't choke at higher tensions, which can sometimes happen with denser woods. This increased resonance is due in part to Tama's ultra-refined bearing edge, where the outer edge makes full contact with the drumhead.

The classy-looking fourth drum is 6 mm/6-ply maple, wrapped in an outer ply of mappa burl (\$768.99). Its timbre was extremely warm, and its soft tone was reminiscent of a lot of vintage wood snares I've played, but with a more open sound. The only thing this drum lacked was volume, but that's not what a maple snare is known for anyway. The sensitivity was superb. I used this model on a jazz gig, and everyone loved it. From brushes to sticks, it came through with a warm, natural wood tone.

With the Starphonic line, Tama has succeeded not only in creating innovative hardware designs but also in producing some of the nicest-sounding snare drums I've ever played. With four shell types, there really is a Starphonic drum for everyone.

tama.com

QUICKER, MORE EFFICIENT HEAD CHANGES

In addition to its innovative hoops and claws, each Starphonic drum also features a detachable butt plate. This allows you to take off the snares without having to mess with the tension of the snare wires. To make things even easier, the bottom hoop has an open frame, which allows you to lift the snares right off the head instead of having to go through a hole in the hoop. These new designs, plus the "freedom" lugs, made changing a snare-side head quicker than usual.



Ian Travis

SOULTONE

GOSPEL SERIES CYMBALS

by Anthony Riscica



With the rising popularity of gospel music and the immense talent that church players have brought to the drumming community, it seems to make perfect sense that instrument manufacturers would start to cater to these amazing musicians and their playing styles. Souldtone is one such company. In conjunction with gospel great Eddie “the Animal” Heyward, Souldtone has developed a line that encompasses the ideal sound for this music. Not only that, but by offering more than thirty models in the Gospel series alone, Souldtone has given drummers a wide palette to ensure that individuality of sound can still be achieved. We were sent six Gospel models to check out: a 21” ride (\$594), 16” (\$415) and 19” (\$522) crashes, an 18” China (\$537), a 12” splash (\$257), and 14” hi-hats (\$515). These cym-

bals, like everything in Souldtone’s catalog, were handmade in Turkey. Let’s see how they sounded.

THE TIMEKEEPERS

The first cymbals I grabbed out of the bag were the 14” hi-hats. Not only did they look super-slick, with a brilliant finish and raw hammered bells, but they performed that way too. The stick articulation was very defined and cutting without being overpowering, even when I played the hats partially open. Many gospel drummers place intricate hi-hat work inside their beats, and these cymbals were made for that. Their medium-heavy weight helped produce a clear sound without a lot of nonsense, a characteristic that seemed to flow through the entire line. The “chick” sound when I used the pedal was crisp and clear as well. These hi-hats

were capable of voicing everything from tight, pin-drop 32nd notes when closed to big, trashy quarter notes when loosened up a bit.

Next, I put up the 21” ride. This cymbal also sat in the medium-heavy range and produced outstanding stick articulation and tone. The hammering on the bow is reminiscent of patterns I’ve seen on older Zildjian Ks, and the sound wasn’t too far off either. The stick sound gave way to a controlled wash that shimmered at first and then subsided into a dark sustain. The slightly oversized hand-hammered bell cut well while maintaining a nice tone. Its sound was deep enough to handle rock-out sections, but it also had a high-pitched quality that fit in great with Latin grooves. Crashing on the edge of the cymbal produced a gongy sound that I didn’t find terribly useful, but it’s there if you need it.

UNDER THE PROPER GUIDANCE

Souldtone’s Gospel line was designed to meet the needs of famed gospel drummer Eddie Heyward. We had a chance to talk to Heyward about what he needed from these cymbals, and he explained, “I play hard and aggressive, so I wanted a cymbal that could handle that. And I was looking for a cymbal that was between a low tonality and a bright, cutting sound.” Given that the drummer has played in church since he was four years old and had his first professional gospel recording session at age eleven, it’s no wonder why Souldtone went to him for input.

ACCENTS AND CRASHES

The 16” and 19” Gospel crashes were similar in appearance to the ride, but with a slightly smaller bell. Their weight is in the medium zone. Like the rest of the line, these crashes were on the loud side but still maintained some sensitivity. And they had a consistent sound that allowed them to pair up nicely. Their overall tone was dark but cut more like a Sabian AAX crash, which proved to be a perfect combo for the models’ intended application.

When struck on the edge with some force, these crashes exploded and then settled right down to a lingering but rich sustain. Just like the ride, the traditional hammering and lathing on the bow and the raw bell worked well to create a sound that had both quality and presence.

The 18" China was a monster—a sweet monster. This effects model offered an ideal mix of volume and tone quality, meaning it projected, but without killing my ears. I didn't have to smack this cymbal to get it to speak, which isn't always the case with Chinas. Whether I used it to punctuate hits or I rode on it over a rock groove, the China fit right in the mix, so I didn't have to hit it differently to keep it from messing up the vibe of the music with a loud, jarring sound.

Last up was the 12" splash, which is also medium weight. It had a sound that was consistent with the rest of the Gospel line, plus a dark trashiness that I liked a lot. It was loud enough to cut through, even when I was trucking along with a full band, partly because of its crisp attack. It also had a decent sustain, which added to its presence. This splash sports the same appearance as the rest of the line, with a dimpled raw bell and a brilliant traditionally hammered bow—a great look.

ALL IN ALL

Having never played a Soultone cymbal before, I didn't know what to expect from the company. I can now tell you that it's focused on quality, consistency, and attention to detail. These models proved to epitomize the sound and sensibility of the phenomenal style of music for which they're named. Hats off to Soultone and Eddie Heyward for producing cymbals that are sure to be heard in many sheds to come.

soultonecymbals.com

SNARE DRUM OF THE MONTH

by David Ciauro



MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

STANTON MOORE DRUM COMPANY

4 1/2" X 14" SPIRIT OF NEW ORLEANS TITANIUM

Funky drummer Stanton Moore and innovative drumsmith Ronn Dunnnett have collaborated to make a snare drum that's ideal for large venues without sacrificing the sensitivity needed to voice Stanton's amazing technique and penchant for buzzing. Moore, of course, is a known Gretsch devotee. But since Gretsch doesn't manufacture or plan to offer any titanium snares, he received the company's blessing to pursue his desires with this drum.

The 4 1/2"x14" polished titanium shell is equipped with traditional brass tube lugs, single-flange hoops, vintage 1920s-inspired claws, a Dunnnett R2 throw-off system with keyless snare wire release, a Dunnnett adjustable hypervent, and Puresound Metrix thirty-strand snare wires. The badge, which is minted in antique pewter finish, is quite special too, as

it's a modified version of the water-meter covers seen in Moore's hometown of New Orleans. The drummer describes the iconic image as paying homage to the city and its people.

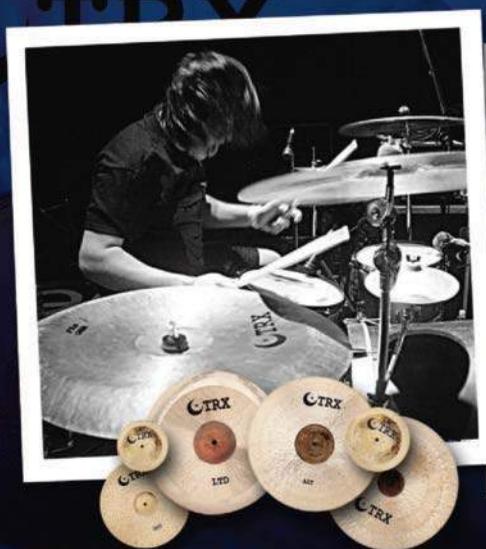
This dual-nature drum, which sells for \$899, articulated the softest intricacies of jazz and the boldest poundings of a marching cadence without missing a beat...literally. Plain and simple, this snare had a swagger. The titanium shell combines the ear-pleasing warmth and tonality of wood with the volume and projection of steel, without the added bulk. The dry tone was nicely counterbalanced by superb snare response, creating a crisp, cracking rimshot and a powerfully rich and saturated backbeat. Fans of ghost notes and buzz rolls rejoice!

stantonmoore.com

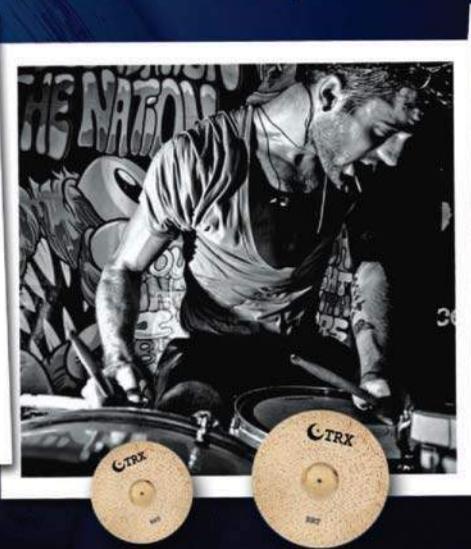


Extreme. Heavy. Insane.

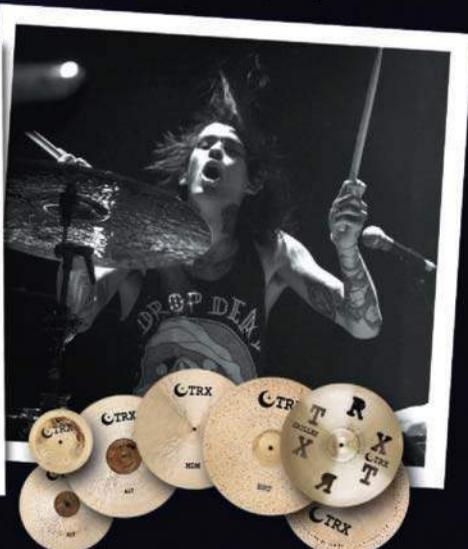
TRX Cymbals and the drummers who play them.



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EARTHWORKS

DK25 AND DFK1 DRUM MIC SYSTEMS

by Michael Dawson



DK25/R

DK25/L

Earthworks microphones have been quietly building a fan base among professional studio engineers and drummers since the early part of the millennium. The first time we crossed paths with these distinctive industrial-looking condensers was during a visit in November 2006 to *Saturday Night Live* drummer Shawn Pelton's home studio. The mics popped up again this past summer when we were sitting in on a recording session at Cyndi Lauper drummer Sammy Merendino's space in Harlem. Other big-name pros, like Steely Dan's Keith Carlock, *The Late Show's* Anton Fig, the Killers' Ronnie Vannucci, and session great Steve Gadd are also waving the Earthworks flag, both on stage and in the studio. Now it's time for us to take a closer look at what makes these microphone systems so special.

Earthworks' systems include three-mic DK25/R and DK25/L packages (overheads plus a kick drum mic), as well as the extensive DFK1 set, which also features DP25/C and DP30/C periscope condensers for close-miking the snare and toms. We were sent one of each system to check out.

DK25 DRUMKIT SYSTEMS

The DK25 miking system is designed especially for drums, and it comes in two versions. The DK25/R (\$2,295) features two TC25 omnidirectional overheads and one SR25 cardioid condenser to be used on the kick drum. The DK25/L (\$2,295) replaces the two TC25s with two SR25s. All of the mics have a frequency response that extends up to 25 kHz. The

SR25s can handle sound pressure levels up to 145 dB, while the TC25s can withstand up to 150 dB.

Both DK25 setups come with an external KickPad (\$135 if bought separately). The KickPad does two things. First, it reduces the input level so the signal coming from the mic doesn't overdrive the preamp, and second, it acts as a built-in equalizer that's designed to deliver a focused, tight kick drum sound by filtering out some of the mid frequencies and adding a slight bump to the lows and highs.

Since it's detachable, the KickPad can be used with any mic to achieve a workable bass drum sound. We tested it with the DK25's SR25, as well as with a Shure Beta 52 and a Shure SM57. In all three instances, the KickPad eliminated a lot of the midrange "woof" that can muddy up a mix, and it brought out more attack and punch. It was particularly impressive on the SM57, where it transformed an otherwise unusable kick sound into one that could work for a drummer looking for an aggressive, clicky tone.

We compared the TC25 omnis with a pair of high-end large-diaphragm condensers that we often use as drum overheads. Both sets were tested in X-Y and spaced-pair configurations, placed roughly one foot above the cymbals. The first thing we noticed about the sound of the TC25s versus our usual mics was that the attack was much crisper and clearer, especially on cymbals. The stick sound had an almost 3-D quality, while the cymbals' resonance was smoother and more realistic. And the snare and toms sounded more natural and livelier. The X-Y position produced the most natural results (similar to what you hear sitting at the kit), while the spaced-pair position brought out even more detail from the cymbals.

For our testing, we tried the SR25 (with KickPad) on the outside of the front bass drum head, aimed at 45° at the center. As expected, this placement didn't allow for a tight, attack-heavy modern-rock kick sound. (To achieve those qualities, you'd need to place the mic inside the drum.) But when used on

HIGH-DEFINITION DETAIL

Earthworks says that what you hear when judging its microphones against others is "like the difference you see when comparing a standard television picture to a high-definition television picture." To achieve this ultra-clear audio experience, the company designed its mics with a few significant upgrades: improved impulse response for faster and more accurate transients (attacks), a shorter diaphragm settling time to prevent quieter sounds from being blurred by earlier loud attacks, an extended frequency response beyond the normal hearing range of 20 kHz to capture a crisper and more realistic image, and improved polar patterns that remain even across all frequencies and at any position within the pattern.

the outside, the SR25 had a warm and “puffy” vibe that’s best suited to classic rock, acoustic jazz, or the open, boomy kick tone Ronnie Vannucci gets with the Killers and Jason McGerr often uses with Death Cab For Cutie. In fact, Vannucci recorded some of the drum tracks for his band’s latest album, *Day & Age*, using the DK25/R system.

While the DK25/R is designed especially for the studio, the more versatile DK25/L is meant for live applications as well as for recording. This system, which comprises three SR25 cardioid mics, is particularly useful in situations where you don’t want too much room or stage sound leaking in, like at loud club gigs or in amateur home studios. In our testing, the DK25/L had noticeably less room ambience than the DK25/R, while retaining much of the clarity and “naturalness” that was heard in the TC25 omnis.

originally designed for use with vocal choirs, but their small mic head and flexible neck also make them ideal for close-miking drums. The RM1 rim mounts for these mics were a little difficult to work with, since the thumbscrew tightens to the bottom of the drum hoop and is positioned very close to the bracket. But once they’re in place, they won’t budge. Getting the mic heads into position was much easier, because the flexible gooseneck allows for a lot of mobility, and the mic body can be moved vertically within the bracket for additional height adjustments.

The DP25/C and DP30/C mics have a very focused cardioid pattern, so very little bleed from other instruments gets into the signal, which can sometimes cause phase cancellation and other audio headaches. This extra isolation was great on the snare, since engineers often battle to keep the hi-hat from bleeding into the snare mic.



DFK1 MULTI-MIC SYSTEM

Although the DK25 three-mic systems work great to capture an overall drum sound on their own, Earthworks’ DFK1 (\$12,000) offers a more extensive setup, with individual mics for each component of the kit. It’s an expensive package, but not unreasonably so, given the number of mics that are included and their stellar results. Included in the DFK1 are two SR25s (for overheads), two SR30s (for kick and hi-hat), four DP30/C Drum Periscope cardioid condensers (for toms), one DP25/C Drum Periscope (for snare), a KickPad, nine LevelPads (to attenuate the signal from the drum mics), and an assortment of widescreens and mic clips.

The DP25/C and DP30/C periscope mics were

The DP30/C mics captured the transients of tom hits very well, almost to the point of being *too* punchy. I found myself removing any muffling and tuning my toms for a more open sound when using these mics; otherwise they sounded a little too “boxy.” The DP25/C snare mic picked up a lot of tone and ring, as well as a strong, crunchy attack.

All of the Earthworks drum mics captured a true representation of how my drums sounded in the room. Of course, this extra realism forced me to spend some more time fine-tuning my kit for a fuller, more resonant sound. But when you’re dealing with hi-def audio, it’s those little details that end up making all the difference.

earthworksaudio.com



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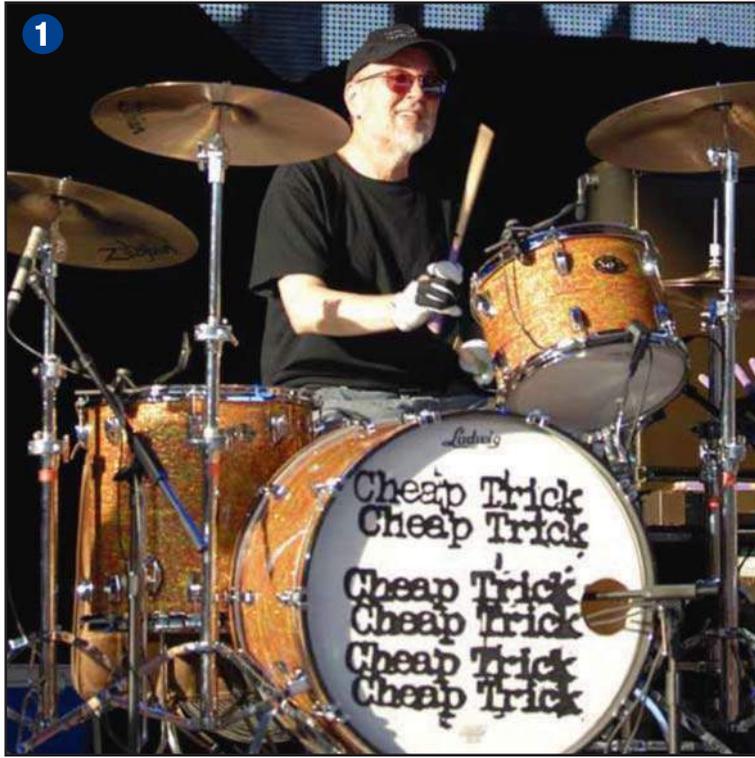


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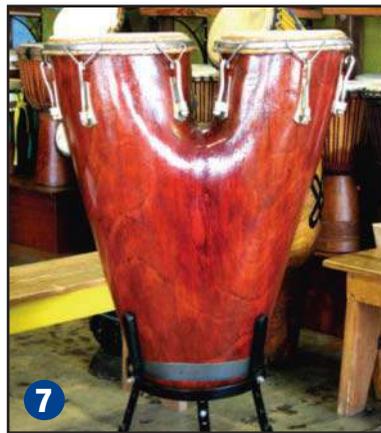
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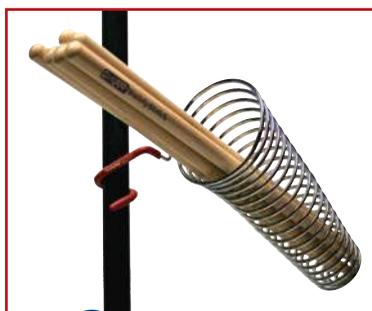
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7



10



13



14

1. This limited edition LUDWIG Legacy Classic kit is a companion shell set to Bun E. Carlos's signature snare drum. The "citrus glass glitter" set features a 14x24 bass drum, a 9x13 rack tom, and a 16x16 floor tom. Each drum comes with Carlos's personal badge and Ludwig's 100th Anniversary badge and is signed and numbered on the inner shell label. Only fifty are being made. List price: \$3,800. ludwig-drums.com

2. Responding to the demand for quality cymbals at all price points, SABIAN has introduced SBR, a new series of brass cymbals designed for entry-level drummers. Produced from a special-formula brass alloy at the company's plant in Canada, the budget-priced SBR is available in a full range of popular sizes and models, in natural finish only. Also available are "sonically matched" pre-packs including the Performance Set (14" hi-hats, 16" crash, 20" ride), the First Pack (13" hi-hats, 16" crash), and the Two Pack (14" hi-hats, 18" crash/ride). sabian.com

3. ZEN TAMBOUR hand drums are built from propane tanks and feature eight notes tuned to one of many pentatonic scales. Finished with one-of-a-kind art, each drum has its own look. exoticvessels.com/zentambour

4. MXL's A-55 Kicker is a heavy-duty dynamic microphone tuned specifically for bass drums and other low-frequency applications, such as bass guitar amps and congas. Made with durable metal construction, this mic captures deep bass and low-end punch and has a clean and clear pickup for fast attacks. Tested for months on the kits of some of the country's top session drummers, the A-55 utilizes a cardioid pickup pattern to pinpoint the best sound, while minimizing bleed from the rest of the drumkit. List price: \$149.95. mxlmics.com

5. CYPAD's Optimizer series 40 mm cymbal washers are now available in 8 mm, 12 mm, and 15 mm heights. The expanded choice of sizes offers increased versatility for all types and brands of hardware and combinations of regular and stacked cymbals. CymPad also has high-density foam washers for hi-hat clutches and bottom cymbal seats, and new Moderator models, including 50 mm, 60 mm, 70 mm, 80 mm, 90 mm, and 100 mm Cympads, can be used to incrementally focus and control cymbal sound. cympad.com

6. RHYTHM TECH has teamed up with Billy Ward to develop the Stickball, a percussive shaker effect that slips on and off any drumstick. The Stickball offers a classic dry shaker sound that minimizes the weight and feel changes of attaching a standard shaker to a drumstick. List price: \$19.95. rhythmtech.com

7. THE2DRUM is a professional hand drum with two heads. One head is 10" and the other 11". The shell is hand carved in Ghana, Africa, and is fitted with American hardware. jimmie@kcbmradio.com

8. Made with native Australian blackwood for its impressive tone and resonance, each snare drum of the FIDOCK Bebop drumset is hand carved, including the sculpted reinforcement rings.

Steam-bent solid blackwood hoops add to the warm sound of these super-thin shells. fidockdrums.com

9. The ALESIS DM10 Pro Kit is based around the completely new DM10 sound module and features the company's RealHead drum pads, SURGE cymbals made of real cymbal alloy, and an ErgoRack mounting system. The DM10 sound module contains drum, cymbal, and percussion sounds built from samples of real drums, including legendary drum brands; a huge arsenal of top producers' go-to snare drums; American, Canadian, Chinese, and Turkish cymbals; and electronic drum machine sounds.

The DM10 is the world's first drum-sound module that enables players to load new sound sets via USB connection. Drummers can also use the DM10 as a trigger-to-MIDI interface for performing with software drum modules such as BFD, Superior Drummer, and Reason. List price: \$1,799. alesis.com

10. MEINL's Generation X series FX Hats are made from FX9 alloy and produce a very sharp and cutting sound. The brilliant finish and laser-engraved tribal design give the hi-hats a stunning look. Suggested retail prices are \$276 for the 8" FX pair and \$314 for the 10" version. meinlcymbals.com

11. GET'M GET'M WEAR high-quality drumstick bags are available in seven styles, including "dark leopard," "white zebra," "Indochine black," "rodeo brown," "Caracas brown," "Stenson black," and "Stenson brown." Retail prices: \$80-\$90. getmgetm.com

12. Handcrafted from premium hardwoods for a rich, full-bodied sound and a sensitive touch, but positioned to be sold at a price point under \$100, TYCOON's Supremo cajon offers quality and economy in an attractive and affordable instrument. The entry-level cajon is designed for beginners and recreational drummers as well as serious players who are looking for a great value. Retail price: \$159. **Also joining Tycoon's popular range of traditional, round-back, and electrified cajons is the new Acrylic cajon, which combines a heavy-gauge, clear acrylic body with a black mahak burl playing surface.** This combination of materials creates a unique look while adding depth and character to the cajon's standard tones. Retail price: \$479. tycoonpercussion.com

13. SWIRLYGIG's lightweight Reflection SwirlyShtick beverage and stick holder is designed to hang on the right side of the drumkit, for more convenient placement. swirlygig.com

14. The ZOOM Q3 handheld camcorder provides high-quality audio in addition to clear video recordings. Coming with two built-in condenser microphones, the Q3 records stereo sound at 24-bit/48 kHz and captures video at 640x480 resolution. The Q3 features a 2.4" 320x240 resolution LCD that shows audio-level meters, battery level, and time elapsed.

The camcorder accepts up to a 32 GB SDHC card, and users can easily upload videos to a computer with an included USB cable. samsontech.com



PAISTE CYMBALS

by Rick Long

From the classic cymbal sounds of rock's golden age to the unique timbres of postmodern music, **Paiste offers an enormous array of choices for drummers working in every conceivable musical genre.**



When drummers talk about cymbals and cymbal manufacturers, the themes of tradition, secret formulas, and family heritage echo throughout the discussion. Paiste, a family-owned cymbal company with over a hundred years in business, is no exception.

To learn the Paiste story, you have to turn the dial on the *Modern Drummer* time machine back to the early 1900s. After twenty years of service in the Russian military, Michail Toomas Paiste, a composer and musician, decided to spend his post-military career operating a music store in St.

Petersburg, Russia. Besides selling musical instruments, the shop included a small instrument manufacturing and repair department.

In those days, there was no such thing as UPS or FedEx. Since there were no local cymbal manufacturers and Turkish and Chinese cymbals were made too far away for shipping to be practical, it is thought that Michail began to make cymbals at the shop in an effort to meet local demand.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 forced Michail to close his shop and move back home to Tallinn, Estonia. In the 1930s, with Michail's son, Michail

M. Paiste, assisting in the family business, the production of cymbals became more of a focus for the company. Besides local sales, early business records show that cymbals were exported throughout Europe and to the Ludwig Drum Company in the United States.

The year 1939 saw the beginning of World War II, and the Paiste family relocated to Poland and later Germany. Michail M. was designated a metal worker and was forced into work that would support the war effort. He eventually convinced the authorities that he could make good-sounding cymbals,



and he was allowed to have small amounts of metal so he could manufacture cymbals for military bands.

The biggest issue in cymbal manufacturing during the early part of the last century was the difficulty in obtaining quality metal. This turned out to reveal the real talent of the Paiste family's cymbal tradition. In order to make the instruments sound their best, innovative shaping and hammering techniques had to be developed to compensate for the deficiencies in the raw materials. Techniques that were honed in those early years are still part of the family tradition at the modern manufacturing facility in Nottwil, Switzerland, where the best alloys for cymbals are now thankfully in plentiful supply.

Why Switzerland? Is it the talent of local artisans? Is it the availability of high-quality metal alloys? While those traits indeed play a part in the creation of Paiste cymbals on a daily basis, Switzerland was chosen because it was a safe, neutral country where the Paistes could sustain a factory for years to come. The family has operated its manufacturing facility there for over half a century without interruption.

In the middle of the twentieth century, many revolutions in music—especially the arrival of rock 'n' roll—were occurring around the globe, leading a new generation of drummers to purchase drumsets and cymbals. Michail's sons Robert and Toomas took the company forward with the introduction of high-quality alloys and new models to meet the growing demand. In the late 1950s, the Formula 602 line was introduced. The Giant Beat series followed in 1967, and the 2002 line came out in

1971. Many of the great drummers of that time started playing Paiste, including Led Zeppelin's John Bonham, who favored the company's cymbals throughout his career.

Moving forward to this century, in 2003 Erik Paiste, Toomas's son, took the reins of the family business after spending time in the company's U.S. division, Paiste America. He now splits his time between Switzerland and the U.S., ensuring that the family tradition of cymbal making is not only preserved but continually moving forward, with innovations like the Dark Energy and Twenty series.

"All drummers, whether they're top artists or home-based enthusiasts, have the right to have the same great cymbals," Erik says. "There's no secret vault here. Every player has access to the same quality sounds. Good instruments inspire the player to get better. As a cymbal maker, it's a wonderful feeling to know that you're helping the artist create good music. It's definitely a symbiotic relationship."

Today Paiste operates two production facilities: the main cymbal plant in Switzerland, and another in Germany that makes gongs and PST (Paiste Sound Technology) cymbals. The primary factory represents the Swiss mindset of quality and loyalty, and many of its employees have worked there for a long time—twenty, thirty, forty, and, in one case, almost fifty years. From the worker who first puts the heat to the bronze disk right on up to the one who hand tests each cymbal the company produces, all of the employees are focused on Paiste's goal of making the best-sounding cymbals possible.

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That focus begins in meetings of the Sound Development Team. After leading R&D himself for many decades, Robert Paiste assembled a group that includes drummers and product specialists who examine new musical styles and come up with sounds that meet drummers' evolving needs. When the team determines a new cymbal sound is required, they manufacture a few cymbals that they believe will produce the sound they're trying to capture. Once the production of a prototype has been fine-tuned, that cymbal is marked as a *klang muster*, meaning "sound master."

The sound master may exist in several forms. For instance, the hammering pattern is key to the sound and shape of a cymbal. A sound master that shows the hammer marks is kept unlathed so that the artisans who do the hammering can use that cymbal to guide their work. The same is done at other levels of production, from lathing to finishing, so that each artisan along the way has an example to refer to at a moment's notice to ensure that the cymbal being created is a true representation of the sound master. Erik points out that much care must be taken with each step of the manufacturing process so that "the cymbals faithfully reproduce the sound master and achieve the consistency and quality that we stand for."

The final step in the process finds each cymbal under the scrutiny of the quality control department, where it's sound tested by human hand and ear against the master. The pitch may not necessarily be the same, but the character must match. If it does not, the cymbal is set aside, cut in half with metal shears, and sold as scrap metal, which is never to be used again for the production of cymbals. There is never a second or blemished model that comes out of the Paiste factory; all of the company's cymbals are first quality.

Critics of the sound-master approach suggest the process doesn't allow for each cymbal to have a unique character, while supporters appreciate the consistency inherent in the philosophy. "We offer around 400 different models at any given time," Erik says. "Drummers who play our cymbals can replace one and know the new one will sound like the one they had originally. If they want another type of sound, we have other models for them to

try, and those cymbals will also be faithfully reproduced if multiple cymbals are needed."

With so many types of cymbals to choose from and more being added all the time, local music stores simply don't have the space to display every Paiste model. The company has addressed this issue with a Web site that includes multiple sound samples of each model, including hits on the bell, body, and edge of the cymbal. Rides and hi-hats include samples where a rhythmic pattern is played on the cymbal. Drummers are encouraged to try out each model online—using good headphones or quality computer speakers—and then order the cymbals they need from a local retailer.

Drummers looking for a vintage Paiste sound are pointed to some of the company's new models, such as the Giant Beat series that originally swept the drumming community in the late 1960s and was recently reissued. (The 24" ride in particular is a force to be reckoned with.) Players seeking a more modern sound will want to try the Signature Dark Energy series, while those with a taste for something more innovative will be led to the Rhythmist Blue Bell cymbal used by Stewart Copeland, which features a striking blue finish and special graphics. The cymbal's look is formulated with Paiste's ColorSound process, which was introduced twenty-five years ago and ensures that the color will not chip off the cymbal.

Those in the market for affordable but consistent cymbals are encouraged to examine the PST models made in Paiste's German plant, where the most high-tech cymbal-manufacturing techniques are used to emulate the traditional hand-manufacturing methods in use at the Swiss facility.

Speaking of the German facility, that's where Paiste gongs are made. Using old-world methods and the traditional nickel-silver alloy, Paiste offers gongs for symphonic use, meditative work—even chakra stimulation. Drumset players looking to enhance their kits might lean toward the Symphonic model, which can be ordered in sizes up to 80" (7 feet), the world's largest gong.

To hear from some of Paiste's leading endorsers, go to modern drummer.com.





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MOUNTAIN'S CORKY LAING

Interview and photos
by Sayre Berman

DRUMS: ddrum Dominion Ash in red burst

- A. 5 1/2x14 snare
- B. 8x10 tom
- C. 8x12 tom
- D. 9x13 tom
- E. 14x16 floor tom
- F. 20x22 bass drum

"Mountain plays in a particularly powerful way," Laing says. "I will beat the crap out of my drums, so they must be able to withstand a beating. With ddrum, I've finally come to a company that can maintain my needs. On the last several tours I've found the drums adapt sonically to the different rooms, and they're extremely effective in terms of projection. They respond if you really play hard. And their sound fits in with my band."

CYMBALS: Sabian

- 1. 14" Hand Hammered Bright hi-hats
- 2. 19" Vault Devastation Chinese (Carmine Appice model)
- 3. 18" AAX Studio crash
- 4. 21" Hand Hammered Vintage ride

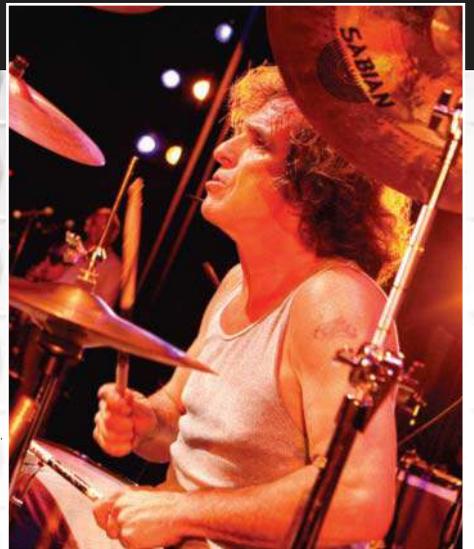
5. 16" HHX Manhattan Jazz crash

"I know there's a subtlety to cymbals, but I'm not a subtle drummer. They just have to sound as good as they possibly can when they're smashed really hard. My preference for a long time now has been Sabian. When I first heard them on record I loved the way they rang; everything was clear, and they cut through without making you bleed. As far as my setup on any given gig, I'll change depending on the venue. Sometimes I like to use a quieter cymbal. Recently I've decreased the sizes of my cymbals as well as their thickness. Sometimes I'll put a closed hi-hat over my cowbell."

STICKS: Hot Sticks 5B in hickory. "They hold up pretty well. Now they have my picture on the stick! I didn't go lighter on the sticks. I went longer for a better reach."

PERCUSSION: "I use the biggest mother cowbell I can find!"

HEADS: Evans. "They're coming up with some



really hi-tech skins that are incredibly responsive. They sound great, they hold the tone, and I think they make a wonderful match with the ddrums."

For more with Corky, go to moderndrummer.com.





Interview by Adam Budofsky • Photos courtesy of Paiste

NATASHA BEDINGFIELD'S CHAUN HORTON

DRUMS: Yamaha Absolute Birch Nouveau

A. 5½x14 Yamaha Maple Custom Absolute snare with wood hoops, 5½x14 Yamaha Sonny Emory beech snare, or 5½x14 **Dunnett** titanium snare (7x13 Yamaha Akira Jimbo model shown)

B. 7x14 snare

C. 7½x10 tom

D. 8x12 tom

E. 14x14 floor tom

F. 16x16 floor tom

G. 18x20 bass drum with Subkick or 18x24 bass drum

"The Absolute Birch Nouveau kit has such a punchy sound; it really cuts through, especially the floor toms," Horton says. "I switch between an 18x20 kick, which I use with a Yamaha Subkick, and an 18x24, which I use when I want a bigger sound. I keep their tones as close as possible. With the 20" I use foam egg crates, and with the 24" I use the Evans EQ Pad touching the back head, which gives me good attack but with resonance from the front head.

"The Akira Jimbo snare you see in the shot was an experiment. Natasha has a hard time with snares; if they're pitched too high it kills her ears. So I was trying to get that 'crack,' but smoothed out with wood hoops. But that didn't have enough body for me. So now I use either the Maple Custom Absolute snare—that's warm, has a nice midrange 'crack,' and cuts, and I only use it for Natasha's stuff—or the Sonny Emory beech model. That drum is the best of both worlds—the warmth of maple and the cut of birch. I would also use the Dunnett

titanium; other than Yamahas, it's one of the best snares I've ever played. It cuts and it's warm, and it's loud but not harsh. On the left of my hi-hat is my 7x14 Yamaha Absolute Birch Nouveau snare; I have it tuned way down, almost like a 14" or 16" floor tom, figuratively speaking, and I put a piece of cardboard on the top head for more of an old, *old-school* sound. I got that idea from Steve Jordan. I see having these different snares as the equivalent of a guitarist having different guitars to choose from. When I record in the studio, I always take all of them."

HEADS: Evans EC2 on tops and bottoms of toms ("The properties of the wood are amplified, and the attack and tone are still there"), Power Center Reverse Dot snare batters ("Very durable"), EMAD 2 on bass drums

CYMBALS: Paiste Twenty series

1. 14" Light hi-hats

2. 13" hi-hats on holder

3. 10" splash

4. 16" Thin crash

5. 17" Thin crash

6. 12" splash

7. 21" Light ride

8. 18" Thin crash

9. 18" prototype Wild crash (like 2002 Wild crash but in Twenty series, with Turkish B20 alloy) or 19" Thin crash

"I love the 14" Twenty Light hats; they're not too heavy, and their wash is buttery smooth. I use the



13" Twenty hats as an auxiliary hi-hat [no cable] with Natasha when there's a tight hi-hat or shaker sound on a loop that I have to emulate. The 13s have a really great, tight 'chick' sound; the goal is to emulate as much from the track as I can so that if Pro Tools goes down, it won't sound or feel as if we lost anything."

HARDWARE: Yamaha stands, throne, and Flying Dragon pedals, including double-chain-drive pedals on the bass drum and on a kick trigger

ELECTRONICS: Roland kick trigger, PD8 pad, and TMC-6 Trigger MIDI Converter; Akai MPC 2000

STICKS: Vater Sessions. "They're a little thicker than a 5A but not bulky, their acorn tips don't kill my heads, and they feel amazing."

DRUMHEAD ART: Woodshed Percussion

DRUM TECH: Jaime Grimm



THE VIRGINS'

KEVIN RICE

ANGELHOUSE STUDIOS

Story by Michael Dawson • Photos by Paul La Raia

“**T**his studio is our laboratory,” says touring/session drummer Kevin Rice, as he walks us up a long stairway to AngelHouse, his second-story Brooklyn apartment-turned-studio, which he runs along with multi-instrumentalist/producer Alex Wong. “This hallway is all reflective surfaces. So we often put a mic at the top of the stairs to capture an aggressive Dave Grohl-type sound.”

Rice also utilizes other unconventional areas of the studio to give his drum tracks a signature flavor. “There are a lot of nooks and crannies to explore,” he says. “We have an old ribbon mic in a corner, which captures reflections from the wall to make the room sound bigger. And there’s a spot in the bathroom that has a lot of low end but is pretty bright sounding. It may seem crazy to put a thousand-dollar mic next to a toilet, but that’s the

great thing about working in the studio—it’s all about the results.”

That “do whatever it takes” mentality runs through every project Rice works on at AngelHouse. “I didn’t go to school for audio,” the drummer explains. “I just know how to make my drums sound good to me in this room. So all I had to do was not screw that up when I started recording them. You can lose some of that magic when you get caught up in all the proper techniques.”

Some of the “improper” techniques that make Kevin’s drum tracks sound unique include miking up a second bass drum that’s placed in front of his main DW kit to capture some rumbling low end. Other studio engineers favor using a Yamaha Subkick for this purpose. “I never had a Subkick,” Rice says. “But I had an extra bass drum, so I use that instead. It’s vibrating sympathetically, which

GEAR BOX



DRUMS: DW Collector’s series (18x22 kick, 12” rack tom, 16” floor tom) and Yamaha Club Custom (birch shells with an inner ply of mahogany) kits, and an 18x20 GMS kick (used as a woofers).

“The birch kit is punchier, and the toms have more focus, while the DW is my all-purpose set,” Rice says. “Between those kits, I can get any kind of sound I need. I put the GMS kick just a bit off center of the main bass drum. There are mics inside both kicks. That gives me individual control over the attack from the main bass drum mic and the low end and tone from the woofers.”

SNARES: Vintage 4x14 Rogers, DW copper (“It sounds similar to brass, but it’s a little more controlled”), 7x14 Noble & Cooley with a solid



maple shell (“It almost sounds like a metal drum because it has so much tone”), 8x14 Pork Pie Little Squealer (maple), 6½x14 WorldMax Black Hawg (brass), Yamaha Anton Fig and Peter Erskine signature drums, Yamaha 3x14 brass piccolo, and Pearl 4x10 Firecracker (“This drum has made it on a lot of recordings where I need to overdub a drum loop or something; it has almost a Roland 808 electronic tone”).

CYMBALS: Paiste Dark Energy ride, Signature crashes, and Giant Beat hi-hats (“Paistes have a controlled sound that doesn’t oversaturate the mics, and they sit in a beautiful spot that’s not too bright or too dark”), plus miscellaneous broken pieces.

“I keep broken cymbals because you never know when they’ll be the perfect sound for a track. I recorded a hard rock song that involved a lot of riding on the crash, and this one broken cymbal worked perfectly. It wasn’t too loud, and it didn’t have too much sustain. I also used a pair of broken 18” crash cymbals as hi-hats on a track where this guy wanted an Elton John, ’70s, muted sound. They had a papery, low, and trashy sound that worked perfectly.”

STICKS: Vic Firth

PERCUSSION: Rhythm Tech



adds a woofer-type sound. The Subkick is awesome, but I'd rather do it this way. It sounds more real to me."

When using the woofer, Rice is mindful of its tuning. "I try to keep it as low as possible but still have some body to it," Kevin says. "The front head is really low—almost rippling. I've found that if it's too tight, you start getting a tone. That can be cool, but you have to pay attention to it. If it's not matching the key of the song, it can ruin an otherwise great take."

As we're taking a tour of some beautiful DW Collector's series drums and Paiste Signature, Dark Energy, and Giant Beat cymbals, Rice is quick to point out two other peculiarities. "See this thing?" he says as he pulls off a homemade baffle that he had attached to his hi-hat stand. "I took a pop filter that's normally used for vocals and taped a piece of packing foam to the back of it. I use this to give me some separation between the snare and hi-hat. I was always getting too much hi-hat in the snare mic, but this works great."

The other unconventional piece of gear is Rice's choice of snare, which—by the looks of the well-worn Remo coated CS batter head—has seen some serious use. "I have about a dozen snares," the drummer explains. "But my favorite is this cheap 6½x14 brass WorldMax. It's a copy of a Ludwig Black Beauty. I use it on almost every session. It always beats out other drums."

For tracks that call for a deeper, Radio King kind of sound, Rice relies on another budget-

NOOKS AND CRANNIES

Part of the magic of the drum sounds Rice gets at AngelHouse comes from placing microphones in unusual places, like in the tiled bathroom, in a corner near the snare rack, and out in the studio's stairway entrance.



priced snare, an 8x14 Pork Pie Little Squealer. "My litmus test for snares is the WorldMax and then the Pork Pie," Kevin says. "If the artist thinks the WorldMax is too bright, then I'll move to the Pork Pie. If they want something livelier and higher pitched than the WorldMax, I'll pick one of the shallower drums or one that has a cleaner, higher register, like my 7x14 Noble & Cooley solid maple or my Yamaha Anton Fig signature drum. For

deeper sounds, I'll choose the Little Squealer or my vintage Rogers, which can go down quite low and has a big muffler inside it."

When asked if he always wanted to turn this space into a studio, Rice says, "This actually started off as my old band the Animators' apartment, as well as our rehearsal studio. We were just four guys living in New York trying to make interesting music. It grew naturally into a recording studio as we bought some crappy mics and mic preamps to record a rehearsal. Then we started working on separating the drums and things like that to make it sound a little bit better each time. Eventually it built to a point where we realized we had a viable space to make professional-sounding recordings."

Ironically, now that AngelHouse has been tweaked to the level of being competitive with bigger and much more expensive New York facilities, Rice is finding himself with less time for sessions than he had originally hoped. "I've been on the road with the Virgins almost nonstop since November of 2008," he says. "So it's been difficult to juggle both sides of my career. But I try to do at least one session every time I'm home. Sometimes that works to my advantage, because people know they need to get me in a certain window of time. I hope to be back to doing a couple sessions a week once I'm off the road for a longer stretch."

To hear some drum tracks Kevin recorded at AngelHouse, check out the Animators' second album, *How We Fight*, the Paper Raincoat's self-titled debut, and the track "Radio" off singer/pianist Vienna Teng's *Inland Territory*. For clips of grooves he recorded during our interview, go to moderndrummer.com.





MAKING *inFAMOUS*

by David Ciauro

How a hot new video game inspired one of the coolest percussion-oriented soundtracks in recent memory

The video-game industry has become a major moneymaking machine and is likely to continue to grow, possibly surpassing the movie and music industries in terms of revenue. (Working drummers, take note.) Companies such as Sony invest a lot of time and funds in creating original



scores for games, using top studio musicians and composers to create musical landscapes that enhance the gaming experience.

Talking with Jonathan Mayer, longtime drummer and music manager at Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc., about the eccentric drum-centered score for the PlayStation 3 exclusive *inFAMOUS*, we were surprised to learn how much emphasis SCEA placed on ensuring that the soundtrack was as interesting and unusual as the

game itself. The scenery in *inFAMOUS* is that of a decimated city, and the composers wanted to match the music to the landscape, which required a cacophonous hybrid of unconventional percussion instruments and electronica.

Enlisting the collaborative efforts of underground electronic musician Amon Tobin, world-renowned composers James Dooley and Mel Wesson, and electric cellist Martin Tillman to score the music and cinematics, Mayer spearheaded the project, while also assuming the role of drummer/percussionist for the sessions. The end result is a creative and imaginative score that's brooding, spacious, and rife with percussive anarchy.

Hearing the soundtrack, it's nearly impossible to decipher exactly what you're listening to, even when you have pictures of the studio setup in front of you. The innovative thinking and unique instrumentation, used in conjunction with the dark, atmospheric electronic score, the mutilations and manipulations of live drum patterns and grooves, and an overall cinematic melancholy, makes for one fascinating experience. We spoke with Mayer for more on how it was all put together.

MD: How did you get the idea of using real-life objects as percussion?

Jonathan: The temporary score provided by Sucker Punch, the game's developer, consisted of tribal-sounding drum loops. We thought that was a good direction, but typical. So looking at the

game's apocalyptic landscape, we thought of using refuse and rubble as our instruments.

MD: How did you achieve that?

Jonathan: Both Amon and Mel have backgrounds in electronic music and an ability to create dark, cinematic atmospheres. It became a very collaborative process, with Amon as the driving force in the studio as the producer.

MD: Since you strayed from conventional percussion instruments, how did you find which objects and sounds worked best, and how did you go about selecting them?

Jonathan: It took a bit of experimentation. Before we started recording, we went out one day with a metronome, a bag of sticks and mallets, and a nice field-recording unit. We spent about twelve hours at a scrap yard where they crush cars, rummaging through junk and hitting things and recording what seemed to fit the mood of the game. Of course, everything we really loved sonically was far too big and unwieldy to ever bring back to the studio.

MD: Anything in particular?

Jonathan: There was an old thirty-foot-long street lamppost that was hollow. We miked the inside of it, and it sounded great when played with xylophone mallets. Amon used our field recording of that all over the soundtrack. We also miked the insides of some cars that were to be scrapped and, using various implements of destruction, smashed the cars to pieces and got some great destructive sounds recorded.

MD: What are some of the objects you brought into the studio?

Jonathan: We used trash cans and lids, terra-



Drummer/music manager Jonathan Mayer and his crew captured the sounds of street lampposts, hammered car innards, and more "conventional" found-sound objects like trash-can lids and flower pots.

cotta pots, buckets, water jugs, and broken glass that we fashioned into scrapers and shakers. We also used an euphonium, a trumpet, a Chinese zither, and some stringed instruments in ways that players of those instruments would consider quite offensive.

MD: How did you configure the gear?

Jonathan: I envisioned a big cage rack, so I drew up my idea and sent it to Gibraltar. They sent me the pieces I needed to build it. Once we put it together, the trial and error of learning how to play our creations began. I played the euphonium with wire brushes, and that became our go-to hi-hat sound. We basically tuned the strings of the cello so they resonated harmoniously, and I beat the poor thing senseless with sticks or a bow. The zither is a huge feature in the score, and I pretty much tortured that too, playing it with sticks and dropping objects on it from various heights.

MD: What real drums and percussion instruments did you use?

Jonathan: We had Octobans, concert toms, bass drums, taiko drums, two drumsets, and a slew of cymbals. Amon was very creative about ways to manipulate and play the drums. He thought of stretching bungee cords across the heads of the concert bass drum, and we essentially made a giant banjo out of it. Plucking the bungee cords made an intense bass sound that provided a bunch of the low hits heard throughout the soundtrack. We also drummed on the bungee cord with sticks for another interesting texture. Amon poured dried beans onto the batter head and the beans rattled, making a giant snare-like sound that we used a lot too.

One of the drumsets I used was a six-piece Pacific kit—10", 12", and 14" toms, 16" floor, 22" kick, and 5x14 snare—and Amon had me strap cymbals to the batter heads, ones that matched the sizes of the toms and snare. It produced a very brash, trashy, explosive sound. I also used my own kit, which is a five-piece Yamaha Maple Custom, for more standard parts.

MD: What type of cymbals did you use?

Jonathan: I've been into handmade cymbals in recent years, like Istanbul and Bosphorus. They worked really well on this project because they're very dark and have weird overtones. We also had a huge array of Zildjian cymbals, which sounded

beautiful—but we weren't really going for a "beautiful" vibe, so we used the handmade cymbals most.

MD: How did you track everything?

Jonathan: Being that I was the only drummer, I would just go from station to station playing various grooves, rhythms, and polyrhythms to a click. An ensemble sound was created via overdubs. Those recordings were then sent to Amon and James to be chopped, shaped, and manipulated to fit their arrangements.

MD: Since you were going for unconventional sounds, did you use odd microphone setups?

Jonathan: Some standard drum mics were used, like an Audix D6 for the kick and Seinheiser 421s for the toms. We also used two stereo-pair DPA omnis and an Earthworks three-piece drum-miking kit. Amon really liked the sound of a stereo pair placed really low over the kit, basically just above my head. It produced a dry, tight recording.

For the trash cans and percussion oddities, we made use of several contact mics. We found that recording trash cans with good mics sounded too much like a trash can. We wanted an artificially dramatic sound, so the contact mics worked best.

We also found that leaving all the mics and contact mics on—no matter what we were recording—picked up some great resonant sounds. That created an awkward resonating chamber that added to the bizarreness of what we were doing.

MD: How long did the scoring take?

Jonathan: Ten months, averaging about eight to ten hours a week of studio time. We ended up with 160 minutes of finished source music, custom written for the game. The game itself can take anywhere from eight to thirty hours to play, depending on how much exploring you do, so we made several remixes and variations on the source material, making things more intense or less intense, for example, and we shipped 400 minutes of music with the game.

Working with the programmers over at Sucker Punch, we developed a system that uses playlists instead of individual music cues, so anytime a player hits a checkpoint in the game, there are several choices the game can make musically. That keeps the player from hearing the same music at the same parts every time he or she plays.

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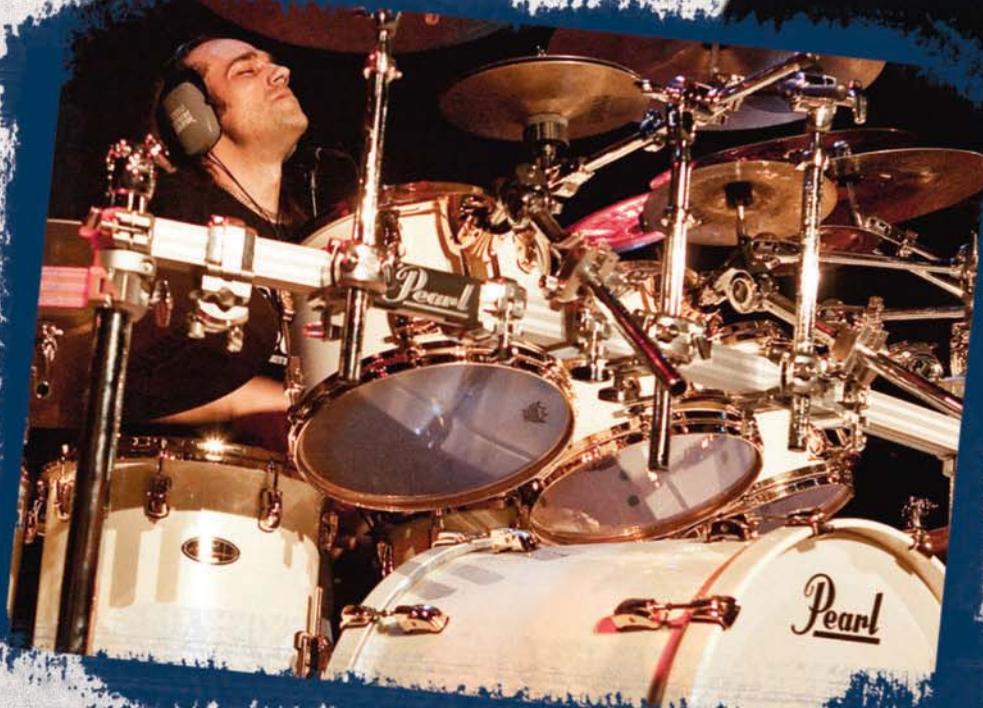
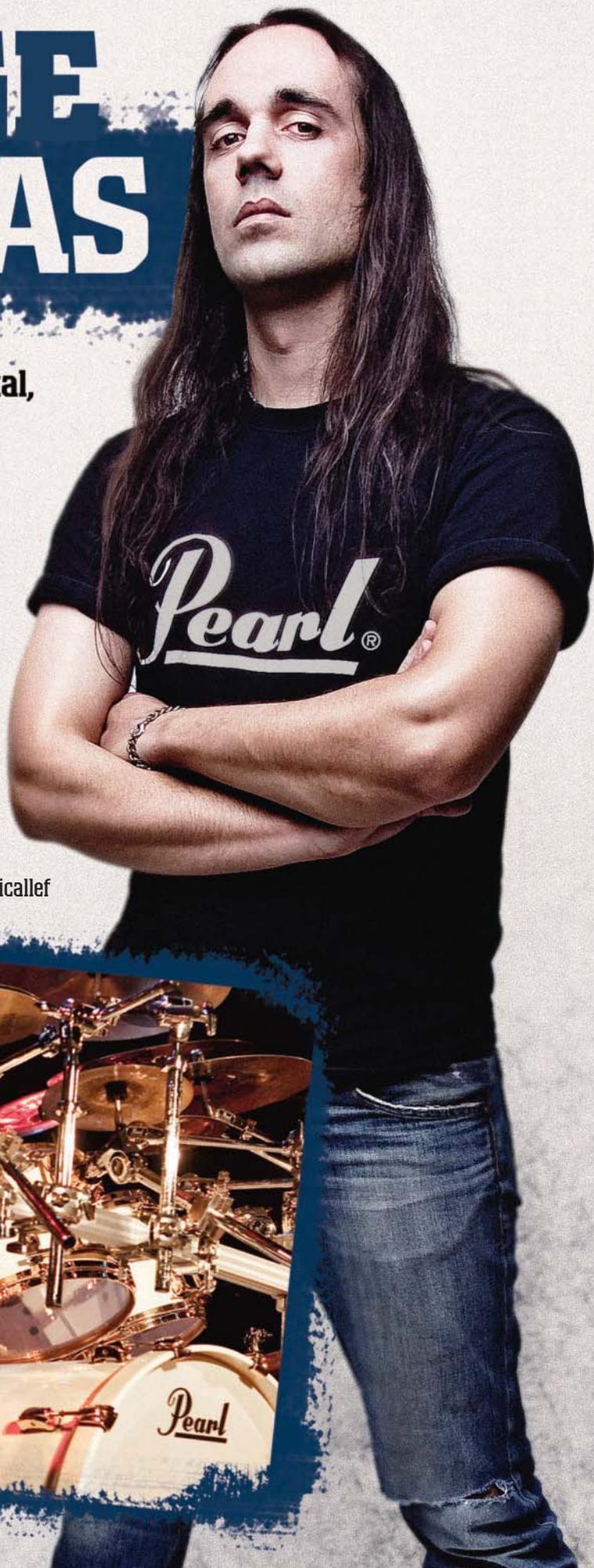
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In the world of extreme metal, there's speed, and there's ***SPEEED!*** Renowned for his incredibly fast double bass work—typically breaking the sound barrier, and eardrums, at around 280 bpm—**Nile's** drummer is a quiet man with a brutal pair of feet.

by Ken Micallef



George Kollias is a true metal believer. He readily admits that he didn't make a dime from drumming before joining Nile in 2004, and his love of his craft practically pours from his pores. The thirty-two-year-old drummer has played with a variety of metal marauders, but it's with Nile that Kollias has come to prominence as a player to watch—with startled eyes and dropping jaws. Witness his stunning work on the band's most recent album, *Those Whom The Gods Detest*.

Intense Metal Drumming, Kollias's debut DVD, details his skills and levelheaded approach. Covering speed and control exercises, licks and phrasing, foot technique, blast beats and bomb blasts, getting around the kit, and coordination exercises, this three-hour workout finds the otherwise quiet Greek drummer wielding a

massively rapacious percussive hammer.

When he's not flying between his Greek hometown and Nile's base in Greenville, South Carolina, Kollias teaches at the Modern School Of Music in Athens, Greece, and he's currently working on his debut recording as a leader. Inspired by such black metal bands as *Marduk* and *Behemoth*, the as-yet-untitled album will feature Kollias on all instruments, including guitar, bass, keyboards, vocals, and drums. And while his legendary speed will be on display, George also brings his kinder, gentler nature to bear in a few Grecian folk songs.

"It will be extreme death metal, but in darker areas," Kollias explains. "I want it to be really crazy on drums but also with a few Greek folk songs with traditional percussion. And there won't be any drum solos. But Derek Roddy has agreed to solo with me on one track."

HIS BRILLIANT CAREER

MD: What, beyond drumming, has helped your career most?

George: Being honest, and loving what I do. And having a great relationship with the band. I have this brotherhood idea for the band. In some bands I've played with I never found it, but Nile has it. Once I'm in a band I am 100 percent. That's a must for any musician; you have to believe in your band and what you're doing.

MD: What do you mean when you say "being honest"?

George: If I don't like a song I will tell you. I don't care who wrote it; I will say it. If I think we're going in a direction I don't believe in, I will say it. I never keep things to myself. It's tough; sometimes the other members don't like it. But I will express my opinion every time.

MD: Before joining Nile, did you network? How did you usually get hired by bands?

George: I had quite a few bands. Usually I would invite people to come check us out. I would invite everybody, take my bike and throw demos at them: "Listen to this band!" I had to talk to many people, and I was very social. I wanted everyone's attention. I handed out CDs to managers and other musicians all the time.

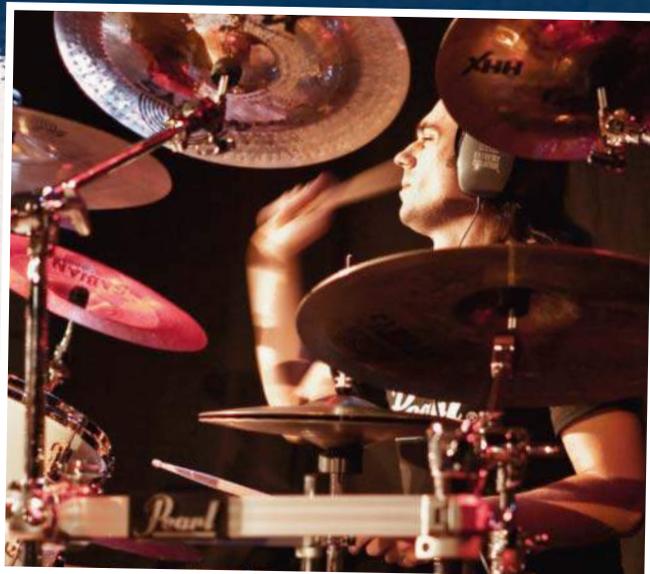
MD: When you were hoping to join a band, how did you get your name out there?

George: I always had a band. In 2002 I was in eleven different bands. I never tried to get in a band; musicians always got in touch with me. That happened with Nile also—they sent me an email. I was the number-one Nile fan.

MD: What role does a good attitude play in success?

George: That's real important. You have to be able to work with people. You play in a band, and there are other members, and you have to be social with them and talk and listen.

Often the bands comment on my drumming, and I always listen. I'm always nice. At the end of the day everybody cares about the song, right? So we're a team. You have to



GEORGE'S SETUP

Kollias plays **PEARL** Masterworks drums in piano black with gold hardware, including 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 and 5x12 snares; 7x8, 8x10, 9x12, 10x13, and 12x14 (on left) toms; 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms; and 18x22 bass drums. /// He plays **SABIAN** cymbals, including 14" AAX Stage Hats, an 8" Chopper, a 7" Signature Max splash, a 20" AAX Metal ride, a 14" HHX Evolution mini Chinese, a 17" AAX-Treme Chinese, a 17" AAX Dark crash, an 8" HH China Kang, a 10" HHX Evolution splash, a 17" AAX Studio crash, 10" AA hi-hats (half open), 12" AA hi-hats (closed), an 18" HHX Power crash, a 22" AAX Metal ride, an 18" HHX Evolution Chinese, a 19" AAX-Treme Chinese, 13" AAX Stage Hats, and an 18" APX O-Zone crash. /// He uses **EVANS** heads, including a Power Center Reverse Dot batter on the 14" snare, a coated G1 batter on the 12" snare, clear G2s on the toms (Hydraulic Glass on the 12x14 tom), and clear EQ2 bass drum batters. /// His percussion includes an 8" Pearl tambourine customized as a foot snare, a **RHYTHM TECH** Ribbon Crasher (on left-side pedal), and 6" and 8" timbales. /// George's **AXIS** pedals include A Longboards on the bass drums, foot snare, and Ribbon Crasher, with maximum spring tension, VDL around the middle, Axis toe risers, and **TAMA** Iron Cobra felt beaters. /// His electronics are **DIRECT SOUND** EX-29 Extreme Isolation headphones and Axis EKIT kick triggers. /// He uses **VIC FIRTH** 5A sticks.

GEORGE KOLLIAS

work as a team.

MD: Whether it's your band or not, how do you negotiate payment?

George: I can't answer this, because I've never been paid outside of Nile. I've recorded many records, more than fifty, but I never got paid. In Greece there is no scene. The bands never get paid. So they ask me how much money I want, and I say I don't care about payment. I just want to play.

MD: But how did you survive?

George: I had a job. The last thing I did was a business with my brother. I've done many things. I never saw music as a job until I joined Nile.

MD: What are your tips for maintaining a successful career?

George: You have to love what you do. Maybe you want girls and want to be in shows and be on magazine covers, but I just wanted to play drums. Success will come on its own. So love what you do. Especially in extreme metal—if you don't love it, it's too tough to do.

MD: How did you get endorsements?

George: I did it all myself. I contacted Vic Firth, for example, and they helped me. I was using their gear anyway. I had offers from some great companies, but I refused all until I got Pearl. I love Pearl drums; that's it. I bought eight Pearl kits. In the beginning, I sent CDs so they knew I was in a good band and touring. But what counts is the reps came to the shows and saw me play live. You have to get these guys to your shows and show them what you've got.

SPEED-FREAK DRUMS

MD: You lead blast beats with the kick drum, not the snare. Was that a conscious choice?

George: It comes from the skank beat, or the punk beat. Or even the polka. It gets faster and faster, and when it becomes the blast beat the kick drum leads. On the bomb blast, the snare is on the downbeat. [See music sidebar.]

MD: But with the blast beat, is playing the bass drum on the downbeat considered unorthodox?

George: This is the traditional one, but there is also the downbeat blast. It's a unison pattern, hands playing 8th notes, but I never do that.

MD: When played by some drummers, the blast beat often sounds like a messy unison rhythm. It's not clear.

George: If you don't play it right, it sounds like it's in unison. Ideally, you want distinct notes. Mostly with local bands, everybody plays 8th notes between the feet to make it easier, and that is so wrong. The blast beat should sound like 16ths between kick and snare. And the kick should lead. Maybe it's too hard to nail.

MD: On your *Intense Metal Drumming* DVD, you play the bomb blast with two bass drums, and you're also alternating hands playing unisons. That takes incredible coordination.

George: The traditional blast beat and bomb blast is what I do. It's what I learned from the fathers like Pete Sandoval of Morbid Angel. There are many variations on the blast beat, but most of them sound boring. I am trying to focus on the traditional stuff, and so is Nile. They like it original.

MD: How did you work the double bass bomb blast up to speed, while also

RECORDINGS

Sickening Horror When Landscapes Bled Backwards /// **Nile** Those Whom The Gods Detest, Ithyphallic, Annihilation Of The Wicked, Treasures From The Catacombs /// **Nightfall** I Am Jesus, Lyssa: Rural Gods And Astonishing Punishments /// **System Shock** Urban Rage /// **Cerebrum** Special Extravaganza

FAVORITES

Slayer Seasons In The Abyss (Dave Lombardo) /// **Sepultura** Arise (Igor Cavalera) /// **Morbid Angel** Altars Of Madness (Pete Sandoval) /// **Death** Human (Sean Reinert), Symbolic (Gene Hoglan), The Sound Of Perseverance (Richard Christy) /// **Burning Inside** The Eve Of The Entities (Richard Christy) /// **Hate Eternal** King Of All Kings (Derek Roddy) /// **Dave Weckl** Master Plan (Dave Weckl) /// **Vinnie Colaiuta** Vinnie Colaiuta (Vinnie Colaiuta)

alternating hands?

George: You've heard people say that you have to start slow and work your way up. I agree with that. You have to start slow and feel it locking. Playing at 120 bpm and then going to 240 is a different world. It's a different motion, so you have to push and push all the time. That's why you don't see drum-



Giovanni Hidalgo / Master Conguera

BLAST BEAT BASICS

TRADITIONAL BLAST



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mers do bomb blasts over 230 bpm or so. It's tough. It takes some work. Most times you just lock it and you go. It's the right hand and the right foot that lead. I can do accents with my left hand, but the right hand is very locked with the right foot.

MD: How long did it take you to get that up to speed?

George: I started pushing the speed in 2001 or 2002. I wanted to play more extreme, and it took me a year. But I had played for thirteen years already; you can't start today and play 240 bpm blast beats in one year. But if you've been drumming for a while and you work hard, maybe you can accomplish it in one year.

MD: On "Sacrifice Unto Sebek" from Nile's *Annihilation Of The Wicked*, your double bass drumming clocks in at 265

bpm. "Papyrus Containing The Spell To Preserve Its Possessor Against Attacks From He Who Is In The Water" from *Ithyphallic* is 270 bpm. And you play at 280 bpm on your DVD. Is it just about doing all the hard and sometimes boring work that is required?

George: What I'm doing now when I practice is just relaxing and playing extremely fast within the context of a backbeat. It gives the muscles some time to breathe. I play along with pop songs. If I play with a Michael Jackson song, it's relaxing and slow. Maybe I'll make it double time. If the song is 120 bpm, I'll play 240 for a few minutes then return to the beat and relax. I call it explosions. You have an explosion, then return to the normal speed. Then you build up your speed while playing music.

INTENSE METAL DRUMMING DELUXE

MD: On your DVD you discuss three approaches to foot placement on the pedal: heel up, full foot, and a technique where you use your ankles to seemingly pulse the pedals. What are you doing with your ankles exactly?

George: Derek Roddy talked about his side-to-side technique in *Modern Drummer*, and this is when I started searching. It's like the Simon Phillips technique where one foot is heel up and the other is heel down. It gives you balance. But some doctors have told me this motion isn't normal, so I don't discuss it often. I don't want people to get damaged, though I have not been injured. I think it is quite dangerous. I advise people not to do it.

MD: That's like telling kids not to smoke.

George: It's not a secret. If you go to my forum, I share everything. It's two strokes per side. While you're moving your heel from side to side, the toes are still playing. That actually gives me two strokes per side. Everybody does it: Virgil Donati, Thomas Lang. But it can be dangerous.

I have seen some well-known drummers explaining it, and they were wrong. That's when I began asking doctors about it. Do a little and it's okay, but do too much and it can hurt you.

MD: I imagine you can't slow down the feet during the blast beat.

George: No, but I studied Moeller technique, and I tried to do it with my feet. If I can play 280 bpm with my hands, my feet will play the same speed. It's coordination; it all goes together. Drummers say they have a good foot or a weak foot. It's not weak. You have to train it to lead. I never did left-foot exercises, though.

MD: Your DVD is well organized and orderly. But not everyone will be able to master the exercises. What makes the difference in attempting the exercises and mastering them?



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George: The speed thing is really easy. Whenever I wanted to raise the tempo, I was like, "Okay, let's try 250." Then I tried for 260. That took me three months, maybe one hour a day. Then I'd work out of *Syncopation* or *The New Breed*, working on other things that I found more interesting. I can't sit with the metronome and play double bass all day. Sometimes I would do some endurance exercises. I would play 200 bpm for ninety minutes. That was so boring, but it did something for my playing, of course. Basically you just push a

little bit more and keep pushing.

SOUND, CONSISTENCY, AND SOUL

MD: What did you drill in your formative years?

George: The first nine years I played with bands, learning everything by ear. Then my teacher, Yannis Stavropoulos, explained swing, groove, books like *The Drummer's Cookbook*, and ideas on how to translate all these beats and make them sound different, playing them with 8th notes or hand to hand or linear.

MD: What gave you difficulty?

George: Getting into jazz and opening my mind. I was a death metal drummer, and I didn't want to play anything else. My teacher opened my mind, and now I can at least play a little jazz and pop music and other dynamics and be more musical.

MD: You're very consistent from drum to drum and from drum to cymbals. How did you develop your consistency and tone?

George: It comes from playing many fast songs. When I move around the set, I always think of it as one motion. So when I play any beat and it's time to move around the set, it's about going into the fill and then going out. There is a particular time to get in and out. It doesn't matter what's going on in between. You have to hold the beat; you have to be on the groove.

MD: Sometimes your bass drum tone is wide open, and other times you hear a triggered sound. How do you tune for the studio with Nile?

George: We use kick triggers; that's the only thing we trigger. And for every track. We mix live kick with the trigger, so actually you get some dynamics too. If I play fast or really slow, you can still hear the kicks. I try to play as hard as I can. It's metal—you have to play hard. But if you play 250 bpm or 280 bpm double bass, it's insane. You need triggers.

MD: What set did you use to record *Those Whom The Gods Detest*?

George: This time I used a Pearl Reference set, one of my favorites ever. It sounds amazing. And I used Evans coated heads for the first time. I wanted more attack and less tone. Well, less *warm* tone. It worked really well.

MD: You're known for your speed, but is that all that matters? How do you convince your clinic audiences that it's not always about speed?

George: I don't! Whenever I have a clinic, people want to see speed. Maybe I have the reputation of being a very fast drummer, and that's cool. I respect that. But it's not about speed, definitely. If you come to my house and see me practice and you listen to the music I listen to, you'll see it's not about speed—it's about the drums. And it's always about groove. Even when you play a 280 bpm blast beat, there is groove there. You just have to be able to listen.

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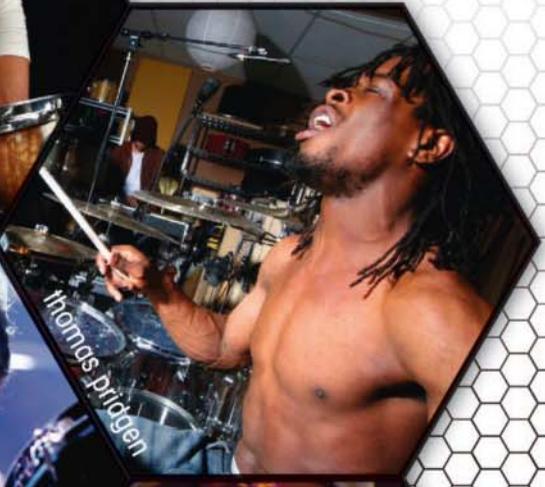




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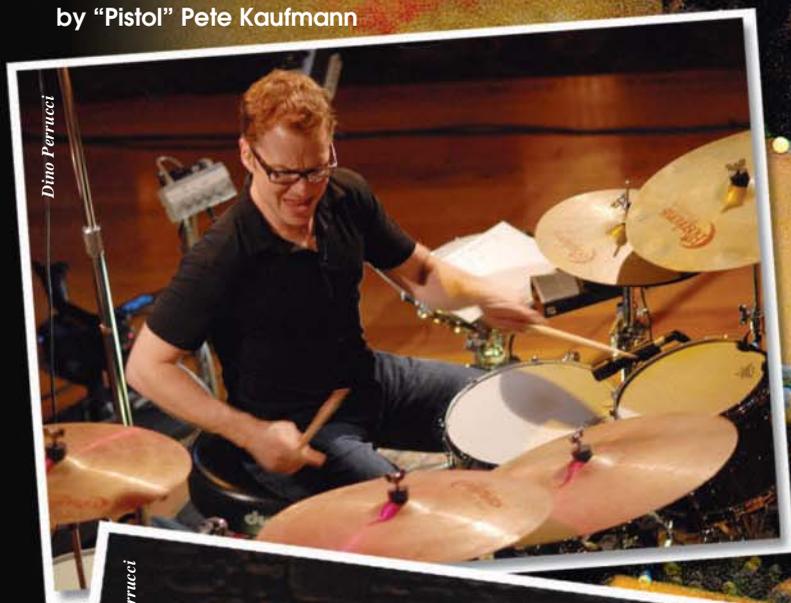
they found **their sound.**



STANTON MOORE

IS HAPPIEST WORKING THE FERTILE SOIL WHERE TRADITION FEEDS INNOVATION. THE RESULTS OF THE DRUMMER'S LATEST LABORS—AN AMBITIOUS MULTIMEDIA PROJECT AND A CLUTCH OF NEW RECORDINGS—PROMISE TO FIRE OUR IMAGINATION FOR YEARS TO COME.

by "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann





“Nah, let’s do it again,” says a tireless Stanton Moore, sitting behind his drumkit at Levon Helm Studios in Woodstock, New York.

A native of New Orleans and an aficionado of his city’s music and culture, Moore is still unsatisfied with his fifth take of the funky Clyde Stubblefield-influenced “Knocker,” which he’s recording for his new DVD/book/CD project on Hudson Music, *Groove Alchemy*.

“Alright,” replies guitarist Will Bernard, while organist Robert Walter nods in agreement. Rob Wallis, co-owner of Hudson Music, leans over and tells me the band has been putting in fifteen-hour days while filming the DVD. James Brown (one of Stanton’s major influences) may have been known as the hardest-working man in show business, but Stanton Moore is likely the hardest-working man in *drum* business.

Moore, a consummate professional, is concerned with only one thing: doing the best job possible. And that goes beyond being one of the funkier drummers around. Dig a little deeper and you’ll understand how Stanton’s love for his craft has driven him to be a very smart businessman as well. The Stanton Moore Drum Company Of New Orleans and the new digital label Moore Music are only the tip of the iceberg. Go to the drummer’s Web site, stantonmoore.com, and you can purchase a gift certificate for his online store, which you can redeem for CDs, DVDs, books, and T-shirts. In the modern age, when a drummer’s business chops are as important as his or her paradiddles, Moore has clearly got all his bases covered.

Fast-forward two months to our follow-up interview, via Skype. Moore is in a hotel in Paris after returning from a meal at a café. Barely five minutes late, he apologizes to me, being the cordial gentleman that he is. I've never had an interview start exactly on time, I tell him. We both laugh, but I know there's nothing funny about Moore's work ethic. It's what has brought him this far in his prolific career, along with his talent and his passion for drums. I ask Stanton how he manages to balance his social life and family life with such a busy schedule. He says with a laugh that his wife became his manager so they could see each other more often.

Since Moore last appeared on the cover of *Modern Drummer*, back in April of 2004, he's been involved in so many projects that we can barely cover them all here—his *Take It To The Street* educational book and DVDs, two solo albums, two Galactic records, a heavy metal LP with Corrosion Of Conformity.... In

2009 alone, he played on records by Diane Birch, Street Sweeper Social Club, Garage A Trois, Alec Ounsworth (from Clap Your Hands Say Yeah), and Anders Osborne (playing and coproducing), and his next solo album will be out in April. When asked how he manages to accomplish so much in so little time, Moore explains, "I just try to follow through on my ideas—even little things like returning phone calls. It all helps keep things moving."

Indeed, if Moore is doing one thing, it's moving—heck, he's *running* with the "torch of groove" that's been passed to him by the great funky drummers of American music. It wouldn't be a stretch to label him a savior of funk drumming, given his work as a disseminator of information about groove forefathers like Clayton Fillyau, Clyde Stubblefield, Melvin Parker, Zigaboo Modeliste, and Jabo Starks. We in the drumming world are very lucky to have Stanton Moore on our side.

MD: So, what are you up to in Paris?

Stanton: I'm doing clinics with Fender, which is the parent company of Gretsch. In a few days I'm doing a drum festival that also features Billy Cobham, Ian Paice, and a bunch of other people.

MD: Speaking of drummers like them—real legends—you've always made it a point to learn from the masters; that's one of the things that makes your style sound authentic. Beyond the fact that you're from New Orleans, you've taken

the time to understand the music.

Stanton: I agree. You know, I mentioned Billy Cobham and Ian Paice just now because I realized the other day that I was in my bedroom shedding to their records before I really started shedding to James Brown and Meters records. Billy Cobham and Ian Paice were doing all these complex things *and* being funky at the same time.

As fifteen-, sixteen-year-old kids growing up in the '80s, my friends and I

were digging back to the records of the '70s, like Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. That's why sometimes people are taken aback when they hear me on stuff like *Street Sweeper Social Club*—which is a record I did with Tom Morello of Audioslave and Rage Against The Machine—or the Corrosion Of Conformity record I did. But if you're studying the masters, I've never really thought you have to be genre specific. Blurring the lines is something I feel very natural



Emphasis On Influences

The Meters all (Zigaboo Modeliste) /// **James Brown** Star Time, Funk Power (various, but especially Jabo Starks and Clyde Stubblefield) /// **Led Zeppelin** all (John Bonham) /// **The Beatles** all (Ringo Starr) /// **The Wild Magnolias** They Call Us Wild (Larry Panna) /// **Eddie Bo** The Hook And Sling (James Black) /// **John Coltrane** all by the classic quartet (Elvin Jones) /// **Black Sabbath** all with Bill Ward /// **Miles Davis** all (various) /// **Jimi Hendrix** all (Mitch Mitchell, Buddy Miles)

Drummers Stanton listens to most for inspiration: Zigaboo Modeliste, Clyde Stubblefield, Jabo Starks, John Bonham, Elvin Jones, Idris Muhammad, James Black, Johnny Vidacovich, Herlin Riley, Shannon Powell, Russell Batiste, Brian Blade, Bill Stewart

doing, and I've worked toward that. Tom Morello saw me playing somewhere, and he just said, "I like the way you play. I want you to play on this session." And because I played to those kinds of records—and played in heavy metal bands before ever playing in a funk band—I had that experience to draw on.

I think it's important that you play every gig that comes your way as you're developing. "No" should not be in your vocabulary. You know, I would literally play a parade on a snare drum—traditional New Orleans brass band music—then get to the end of the parade and someone would drive me to a heavy metal gig. I'd have my white shirt and black pants from the brass band gig, then I'd change into jeans and a T-shirt that I had stashed under my floor tom. What I learned playing snare drum in the streets transferred over to the metal band—I learned how to hit harder but still make it musical and make it groove.

MD: Did [famed New Orleans drummer and educator] Johnny Vidacovich teach you to go for every gig? I remember him saying, "Unless you got a lot of money, Jack, you gotta take every gig you can get!"

Stanton: Yeah, he was very cool. Growing up, I got to study with him a lot. And when it was time to decide on a college, I stayed in New Orleans and went to Loyola because I could study with him and still be around Russell Batiste and all these New Orleans guys. I knew that was what I wanted to do.



Allison Murphy

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DRUMS: Gretsch USA Custom in gray glass glitter

A. 4 1/2x14 Stanton Moore Drum Company titanium snare or 4 1/2x14 Gretsch Stanton Moore signature solid-ply bird's-eye maple snare

B. 5x10 snare

C. 8x12 tom

D. 14x14 floor tom

E. 16x16 floor tom

F. 14x20 bass drum

G. 14x26 bass drum

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1. 15" Fat Hats

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5. 18" Smash crash

ACCESSORIES: Audix mics, XL Specialty cases,

PureSound snare wires, Danmar bass drum beaters, Roland electronics

PERCUSSION: LP 12" pandeiro; cowbells, including ES-7 (on bass drum), ES-6, ES-5, and Black Beauty (in left-foot position); 8" headless tambourine; various shakers

STICKS: Vic Firth Stanton Moore signature model, Heritage brushes, T2 Cartwheel timpani mallets; Regal Tip Handbournes

HEADS: Remo coated Ambassador on tops of snares and 12" tom, coated Emperor on tops of floor toms and pandeiro, clear Ambassador on bottoms of all drums but bass drum, coated Powerstroke 3 bass drum batters, Fiberskyn Gretsch logo front heads

HARDWARE: DW 6000 series stands, two 7000 series snare stands, 5000 snare stand (in main position), 9000 series bass drum pedals, hi-hat stand, and throne

Johnny taught me that anywhere I go, being from New Orleans was going to make anything I did unique. He literally grabbed me by the shirt and said,

"You can go to school here, but when you're done with college, if you're not either on the road or moved outta here, I'm personally gonna come find you and

The Masters Of Funk Speak About Stanton

JOHN "JABO" STARKS (James Brown)

It's a blessing and an honor to be mentioned in Stanton's new DVD. He's quite the young man and one of the finer drummers to come along. I'm proud of Stanton and what he's done. He can teach *and* play what he's talking about.

It's an honor for somebody like me to have Stanton come along and say, "Hey, we appreciate what you did," and then pass it along to the younger drummers of today *and* expand on it. We had no idea how the beats we created were going to impact music; we were just having fun! Not everybody can explain what we did and teach it the way Stanton can. Last time I saw him we talked a lot about pocket. Stanton's drumming fits into the pocket—like a hand fits into a glove. Most drummers don't even know what it means to play in the pocket. I think if Clayton Fillyau was alive today, he would be very, very pleased with what Stanton's doing.



and he knows how to use utilize it. Jabo and I may have created something in our style, but Stanton has created something in *his* style. His teaching and passing it down to the younger generation is very important to the world. Stanton cares about others and knows how to treat and respect others. That's important in whatever field you may be in: to have respect for the next person. He's on top of it.

JOSEPH "ZIGABOO" MODELISTE (The Meters)

To be honest, it's quite flattering that Stanton would talk about me as a major influence. Stanton is a very dear friend of mine, and being from New Orleans, he didn't just pick up my stuff, he picked stuff up from other drummers as well. A lot of drummers in New Orleans just want to play and aren't really interested in teaching. That's what stands out about Stanton; he's taking the time to share his knowledge with people, and that's always a good thing. Stanton maintains the traditional sound, paying tribute to some of the elder New Orleans self-styled drummers, while blending in all the original grooves. He's also very involved in his work, and he's a hustler. That guy doesn't stop!



CLYDE STUBBLEFIELD (James Brown)

Stanton Moore is a great man. I've been listening to a lot of his stuff, and he's fantastic on the drums. Talk about funk—he's funky as can be! He's got his own technique,



STANTON MOORE

kick your ass.” [laughs] But Johnny made a good point, and I started touring before I even finished college. I’d leave school for a couple weeks at a time, which was kind of hairy, since I was trying to finish up my degree—but I did it, and that’s how I developed to where I am now.

MD: You studied business in college. Do you think the combination of that and your music training helped you take your career to this level?

Stanton: Having some business awareness has definitely helped me get to where I am. I don’t think that necessarily having a degree in business is necessary. But I realized early on that, yes, practicing is one very, very important element of being a successful musician, but there’s a heck of a lot more that goes along with it. I operate under the notion that I can always learn more; I can always get better at what I do. Look at Kenny Aronoff; he’s just getting better, he’s more in shape, and he’s even more excited about what he’s working on now than the last project he did. There are other friends of mine



Guitarist Will Bernard and keyboardist Robert Walter join Moore at Levon Helm’s studio to simultaneously record Stanton’s latest trio CD and new instructional DVD, *Groove Alchemy*.

Allison Murphy

that I try to take that cue from as well: It’s not that they’re getting older, they’re getting better.

Now, as far as the business stuff goes, I try to have my eyes and ears open and *listen* to people as they’re talking—really pay attention to what it is that will make me successful. And you don’t need a degree to know this. Just returning phone calls, showing up on time, having a good attitude, and doing what you tell people you’re going to do makes an impact. I see a lot of great players who are not working right now because they might be missing one of these elements. I try to stay on top of things and *follow through*. It makes me have to run around a lot—I’m trying to watch a movie on the computer while I’m returning emails. [laughs] My wife is always, “Let’s relax now.”

MD: Well, you got her on the ship too.

Stanton: Yeah, she just took over as my manager—and she was a successful businessperson before. We met when we were teenagers and reconnected five years ago. She’d moved to L.A., where she was doing very well project-managing big Web sites, but it became very difficult, so we said let’s just join forces. The great thing is she can come on the road with me, so it’s given us more time together.

MD: Speaking of working and following through on ideas, you recently started the Stanton Moore Drum Company Of New Orleans with your new signature titanium snare drum. You’ve said you were inspired to create this by a great-sounding drum that Johnny Vidacovich gave you but that was stolen.

Stanton: I think that drum was a Ludwig Pioneer from the ‘20s. The shell had been painted over in off-white, but it was a really cool drum.

I’ve always searched for a drum that is both crisp and articulate but that can also be slushy and legato. For the backbeat stuff I slam out in the bigger rooms with Galactic I need a drum crisp enough to cut through. But I also need something I can play the New Orleans stuff on—something that can be

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legato and slushy enough but without being too tubby. And I need something that's not like playing on a tabletop when I play the New Orleans stuff or the buzz-roll stuff.

I was trying all kinds of drums at one point, and around then I met drum builder Ronn Dunnett, who told me about the qualities of titanium—how it's warm and crisp at the same time. I said, "That sounds good; have you made one in a 4" depth yet?" He said, "No, but I'll try it." So he made me a 4x14 and brought it to me at a clinic at the Seattle Drum School, and I dug it. We experimented with a 4¹/₂" depth, the thickness of the shell, the depth and width of the snare bed, how big the diameter of the shell is in relation to the head, die-cast hoops.... We had it all ready to go, but Gretsch didn't really want to do titanium at the time. Since I had put all this work into it, I asked if I could release it on my own.



They said, "As long as it doesn't prevent you from putting out a wood drum with us." So when it came time to redesign the drum to be different from "the Gretsch thing," I wanted it to have lighter hoops on it, because it's such a light shell.

I thought it would be cool to tie in something from my past with tradition

and the future, doing things like combining single-flange hoops with tube lugs. Taking a new shell material like titanium and putting traditional hardware on it—combining something traditional with something new—is my whole philosophy, really.

MD: You're very specific about your sound. I remember at the filming of your



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Groove Alchemy DVD, you had around fifteen snare drums lined up for whenever you needed them.

Stanton: The intention was to use three drums in the DVD, including my new wood Gretsch prototype signature drum—which sounds amazing—my titanium drum, and my Craviotto 4½x14 solid-shell bird's-eye maple. Johnny Craviotto was the first guy who hipped me to the 4½" depth. He was like, "I want to make you a drum!" I said, "I would love a drum made by you." So I went by his booth at NAMM and I tried all these different woods. Sometime after that, he sent this drum to me with my name engraved in the hoops and a plaque on the shell, and it was and still is quite possibly the most beautiful drum I've ever seen. That's when I asked Ronn to do the 4½" titanium drum.

At the video shoot I had the Craviotto and some other metal drums for reference, the titanium for the real high-pitched backbeat stuff, and my wood Gretsch bird's-eye maple for the New Orleans second-line stuff. Sometimes I would throw up a 6½x14 Ludwig

Supra-Phonic—there's really nothing else if you want that Bonham sound. All the other drums were there mainly for reference, to make sure I was on point with my assessments.

MD: For the DVD, you were working with guitarist Will Bernard and organist Robert Walter. That's the trio from your album *Emphasis! (On Parenthesis)*.

Stanton: Yeah, that came out of a band called the Frequinox, which was Robert, Will, Donald Harrison on sax, and Robert Mercurio on bass.

A couple years ago I was doing publicity for my signature cymbals, and I had a day off. Jeff Hamilton was going to be at the Memphis Drum Shop, which is only a six-hour drive, so we drove over there. The plan was that Jeff was going to play with his trio and then we would hang out and check out the shop's cymbal room, which was brand new at the time, and Jeff would help me fine-tune everything that needed to happen on the cymbals and get it back to the guys in Turkey. So we're hanging out after the gig, drinking wine, and I was like, "Man, I should start my own trio."

I wanted an organ trio so I could play jazz if I wanted to or rock out if I wanted to. Then Katrina hit and we did the first trio record. We were going to do it at the Galactic studio, but we ended up doing it at Preservation Hall. That became my *III* record. We called it that because three is one of the numbers I often refer to. It's a very musical number. I play phrases in three all the time, and it was my third record and the birth of my trio.

MD: At a point on your new DVD you relate a story about seeing the Meters' Zigaboo Modeliste perform at a clinic and break up his beats between two hands. You said a lot of drummers don't understand that, but when you broke it down and showed it with an alternating-hand 16th-note hi-hat pattern, it was a revelation.

Stanton: A lot of people didn't know that. Dennis Chambers was playing with one hand on the hi-hat, Steve Jordan was playing with one hand... though the next time I saw him, a year or two later, he was playing with two hands. I don't know where he got hip to that, but I saw him go from one hand to two. What's hip

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about it is that it helps you understand how Zig's doing the Stanley Ratcliff beat. I tell the kids that once they've got that beat feeling pretty good, if they then try to play the Meters' "Fire On The Bayou," they can do it immediately because it's very similar.

Now, I've seen people play "Hey Pocky A-Way" in a very interesting way that doesn't have anything to do with the way Zig was doing it. But once you understand Zig's method, it helps streamline everything; you don't need to reinvent or reinterpret the wheel every time you come up with something new on your own. And then you start getting adventurous with it.

MD: You really took the time to make sure the sound was right for each song on *Emphasis!* What did you do on "Over (Compensatin')" to get that old, dusty sound?

Stanton: For one thing, I started off by playing smaller drums. A lot of what Zig was doing on those early records was with an 18" or 20" bass drum. So I played an 18" and a Ludwig Supra-Phonic 400 14", which is the go-to funk snare drum. I tuned it up higher than I

normally would. I listened to recordings and tried to get it in that range. And I used vintage mics, though on that snare we probably used a Shure SM57, which is the go-to mic with the board we were using, a Neve fifty-two-channel. That makes it real organic and warm right off the bat, and then we dirtied it up.

MD: The song "(I Have) Super Strength" almost sounds like you're going for a drum machine kind of sound. Is that a loop?

Stanton: Some of it is loops, and some of it's me playing live. We threw down a bunch of ideas, and I composed it later. Robert's son was running around playing superhero and screaming, "I have super strength!" We thought that was cool, so we tried to reinforce that and make it part of the track.

MD: On "Wissions (Of Vu)" you don't play any fills, other than embellishing with some open hi-hats on 2 and 4.

Stanton: With that tune we improvised to a Wu-Tang tune and, again, composed afterwards.

MD: The drum intro on "Thanks! (Again)" is reminiscent of "Squib Cakes"

by Tower Of Power. Were you thinking of David Garibaldi?

Stanton: It's mostly from Clyde Stubblefield, though Garibaldi listened to a lot of Clyde, so I'm sure that's why you're hearing the similarities.

MD: You're very conscious of passing on the legacy of New Orleans music.

Stanton: It's important. A lot of people don't realize that the drumset was invented in New Orleans. It's a young instrument—only about a hundred years old. It started when a guy had the simple idea to put the bass drum on the floor. Ludwig started mass marketing a bass drum pedal, and then we had this thing we know as a drumset.

One of the things I show in the new DVD is how a five-stroke roll type of march on the snare drum developed into rock 'n' roll. The second-line groove on the snare drum developed into jazz as well. And if you can understand the syncopated New Orleans second-line, it's going to greatly help your ability to play funk.

I dig giving back; I dig talking about the history. When people begin to understand a concept after you explain

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it, you've changed their perspective. People realize that New Orleans is the birthplace of a lot of this stuff, so they want me to talk about it and present that to the people who don't know it yet. Just yesterday at a clinic, there was this kid who was super-psyched because he'd learned some beats off my first DVD—and he was like *eight*. He got up there and showed me how he's playing, which is so cool.

MD: *Groove Alchemy* is very thorough. Did you do a lot of research, like with Jim Payne's book *Give The Drummer Some?*

Stanton: Oh, yeah, that book is brilliant. It was pretty much my guidebook in doing this whole thing. I have a tremendous amount of respect for Jim. I worked through that book when it came out in the early '90s. There was definitely some stuff in there that I couldn't play—like the Clyde Stubblefield three-16th-notes-in-a-row thing. And as I was preparing for my book, I decided to go through it from page one, and I'm a much better player now because of that. I just kept working on it; I went back and re-transcribed all that stuff myself. I used the Amazing Slow Downer pro-

gram and really got meticulous with it. Man, I shed that stuff a *lot*—you can ask my wife! [laughs] "Baby, I've got all this stuff I gotta demonstrate that I can't play yet!"

MD: It was interesting reading about Melvin Parker, who was working as a guidance counselor in some high school when Jim Payne interviewed him. And Clayton Fillyau was just living a very simple life somewhere in Hephzibah, Georgia, before he passed away a few years back. Those guys dipped out of music completely.

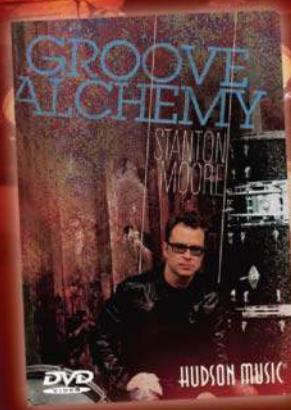
Stanton: It is interesting—and sad in some ways. Even Zigaboo, I think, was not playing drums for a while and was doing other things. I have a friend, a jazz singer from New Orleans who lives in Norway. They take care of her there; she's a sponsored artist, and they make sure she's got everything she needs. She's making a living on her own, but they value her being there. But in the States we don't value our artists—the innovators, the people creating the music that is the fabric of our life and culture. Some of these people get to the point where they can't afford to play

anymore and need to find something else to pay the bills.

You know, if it weren't for Jim's book, I wouldn't have known who to check out when I was coming up. We need people to come out and say, "Hey, man, you need to know about these guys." I mentioned his book many times in my book. With my book I wanted to take a step backwards and forward, so I could understand, for instance, where Clayton Fillyau might have gotten *his* ideas from, show some of the specific things that Jabo picked up from Melvin Parker and how that made a difference. Same with John Bonham and Clyde.

MD: You even demonstrate some beats that James Brown himself came up with.

Stanton: The whole goal was not just to be a historical account but to understand the creative process of these guys. How did they come up with what they did—the specific things John Bonham got from Clyde, what Jabo got from Clayton, blending and coming up with new stuff. It's about understanding the nuances and the creative process and applying that to come up with *new* stuff. That's what it's all about.



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Story by Stephen Styles
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Calvin Rodgers is in the rare position of inarguably being the top practitioner of his craft. Yet being the most influential gospel drummer on the planet was never his focus or goal.

Growing up in a Chicago church, Rodgers was exposed early on to professional musicianship through his father, pianist and songwriter Willie Rodgers. From infancy through adolescence and well into his teenage years, Calvin continuously absorbed new music, ideas, and influences from all corners. Since starting his professional playing career in high school, he has amassed a résumé that's packed with some of the biggest names in R&B, jazz, and gospel, including Ramsey Lewis, Chaka Khan, R. Kelly, Donald Lawrence, John P. Kee, and his current boss, multiplatinum gospel pioneer Fred Hammond.

Modern Drummer caught up with the busy drummer as he was preparing for some last-minute overseas dates with Hammond.

MD: Tell us how you got started playing drums.

Calvin: I started out playing in church. And before I ever even played in church, I would beat on my mom's cookware when I was little. Honestly, I don't remember there ever being a time since I've been on this Earth that I haven't been playing drums. I took lessons for other instruments, and I come from a musical background. I dabbled in guitar for a while, and my dad was a guitar player before he became a well-known piano player. But drums are the instrument that I really gravitated toward and wanted to stick to. So growing up in church, I played drums and also sang in the choir. I even directed the choir for a while, before they let me play the drums.

MD: What styles of music did you listen to?

Calvin: The whole time I was a kid, all the way into my early teenage years, I listened mostly to gospel. I remember my cousin giving me a tape at the end of elementary school, with all this different music on it. It had a couple songs with him playing at a rehearsal, some gospel stuff, and tracks with Dave Weckl, Vinnie Colaiuta, the Yellowjackets, and Al

Di Meola. Man, I listened to that tape every day. I started playing my drums to it and really got into it, and as I got older I just branched out.

My dad was a huge Walter Hawkins fan. I was *floored* listening to Joel Smith. I really grew up on him. As a kid I didn't even need anyone to look after me. I could just be in the house with my dad's record collection, sitting on the floor listening to his gospel records and air-drumming or playing on a pillow, on the couch, or on pots and pans. I'd be listening to Andraé Crouch, and Bill Maxwell was another one of those huge influences early on.

MD: So a lot of those classic gospel drummers were major influences.

Calvin: Yes. All of those guys who played on the Winans and Hawkins stuff and with Andraé Crouch. Dana Davis is another one of the guys who I listened to a lot back then.

MD: Chicago is widely regarded as a breeding ground for great musicians. Who are some players from your hometown who have impacted your playing?

Calvin: There are so many people from Chicago who started out right there in the church and have grown up to do so many great things. Many of them are cats who aren't as well known outside Chicago but are killer players and are responsible for not just my development but a lot of cats from Chi-Town. People like Clyde Davis, Ernie Adams, Terrance Williams, Ray Bady, and Kevin Brunson. I mean, these are the greats.

And there's a saying I heard once: There are the greats who are known, and there are the ones who the greats know. Like Freddie Gruber—he was already great, but people didn't know about him until Dave Weckl started mentioning his name, and then the rest of the world caught up. It's the same way in churches across the country, and especially in Chicago. There are cats who never got major recognition outside their area, but they are amazing musicians. So those guys I named are just a few of the real hometown heroes.

FRED HAMMOND ON CALVIN RODGERS

Calvin's approach to my music was on point from the start. His feel was really fresh, and he knows exactly the right thing to play at just the right moment. He has also mastered dynamics. He plays with the same intensity when we're at a whispering worship as when we're louder and praising hard. Making him my MD was great because in addition to being able to think past his instrument, Calvin was able to see my vision for where I wanted to direct my ministry, and he was able to run with that vision. He has an MD's mindset, but without the attitude.

Before I made Calvin my MD, I was impressed with his ability to hear and adapt to new ideas and implement them right away. He knows his way around the studio and is a great producer. As a leader, he trusts his band. And he trusts knowing what does not need to be played as well as he trusts knowing what needs to be played. In addition to being a great producer and drummer, he's a great MD and bandleader and knows how to run the show.



MD: Speaking of the greats who are known, who are some of the other influential Chicago drummers who impacted your playing?

Calvin: Man, there are so many I can't even name them all. There are people like my bro Rex Hardy, who has been on the road with Mary J. Blige for years. Another is Keith Harris of the Black Eyed Peas. He's responsible for teaching me how to read music in high school.

I'd have to say, though, that the two people who really made the biggest impact on me are Oscar Seaton and Teddy Campbell. Oscar is like the godfather of *all* the Chicago drummers. He really set the bar high. When he was home, he was doing all the sessions and was the first person to show me by example that you could really do this at a professional level and earn a living. I mean, he'd be running from one studio session to another, to another, all in one day, and then he'd have a club gig at

night. He's just the king of versatility, and his groove is *so* deep. Everybody wanted him on their gig. And that was his grind six to seven days a week!

And then there's Teddy. Teddy is my big bro and has really shown me a lot musically and in life. He's been a true mentor and friend. He's another one who's stayed busy all the time. He always plays what's just right. His style is so heavy it's hard to describe. A lot of the music he does now requires him to lay back in the cut more. But Teddy has always been a beast. When he was home and playing for different local artists, his thing was crazy. His playing was clean, precise, funky, in your face, and it was just like: This is what it is—*deal with it!* He opened up my mind to the fact that as a drummer you can truly express yourself and be colorful and still be in the pocket. Definitely my all-time hero.

MD: And then there were the guys on

that tape....

Calvin: Then there were the guys on that tape. Around my first year of high school, I started getting into the Yellowjackets. I became a huge fan of Will Kennedy. I ended up hearing this tune off the *Four Corners* album, and I was blown away. I went and got the whole record, and it changed my life.

MD: At what point did you decide you wanted to make drumming and music your career?

Calvin: You know, the crazy thing is, I never had a plan B for what I wanted to do with my life. From the moment I became aware that one day I'd have to pay my own way, provide for myself, pay my own bills, I knew that this is how I wanted to do it. My dad is a musician, and he worked for quite a while before he was able to leave his day job and just do music full time. Growing up, he used to ask me, "Calvin, what do you plan to do with your life?" I'd tell him, "I want to play

CALVIN'S TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN DRUMMING

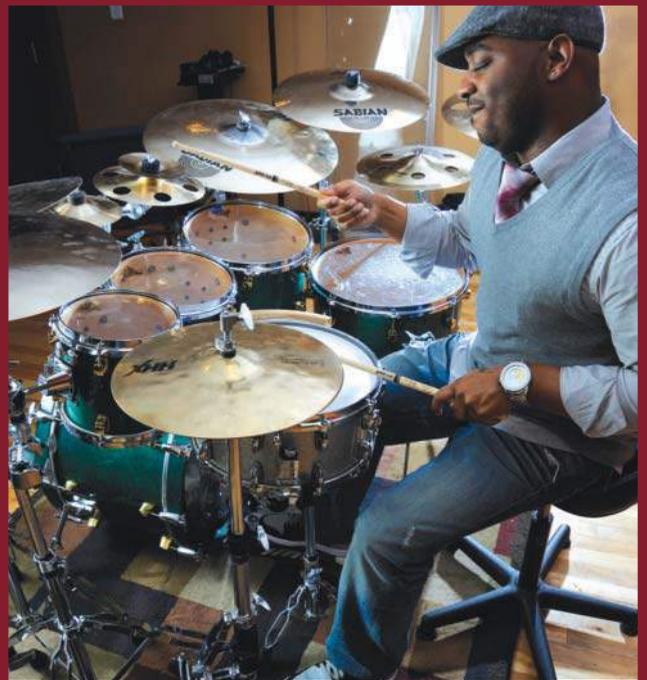
1. PRACTICE. When I was younger, I practiced every single day, for hours. During the summer I played to records, videos, the radio, etc. This was before the Internet craze, so there was no YouTube. There were only instructional videos, and not a lot at the time. Not to mention that \$50 was a lot of money back then. So I did it the old-fashioned way—I got my dad's radio, cassette tapes, and headphones, and I played all day.

2. LISTEN. One thing that has helped me as a working drummer is that I listen to all the players. I become familiar with their parts, and I find ways to bring them out. And I try my best not to play over the guys. Also, I listen to all forms of music. My iTunes library spans from Andraé Crouch to Metallica, Al Green to Steely Dan. They're all references for me. I like to make every part I play sound authentic.

3. BE PATIENT. I was raised to believe that my gift would make room for me. My dad always said that to me. You don't have to rush anything. When the time is right, it'll happen. But when that time comes, make sure you're prepared!

4. PRAY. I believe in seeking God for all things, especially concerning career moves and opportunities. Without question, my career would be nothing without the favor of God. This talent is purely a gift from God. And it is because of *Him* that I am even able to be here right now.

5. INVEST. I've done this since I was a kid. I bought my own first set of cymbals with Christmas money. I asked for money that year, instead of toys and gifts. My dad bought me a drumset but made it my responsibility to maintain it. Before I had any endorsements, I saved money—\$4,000, to be exact—and bought myself a high-end recording kit. I continue to make investments, even today.



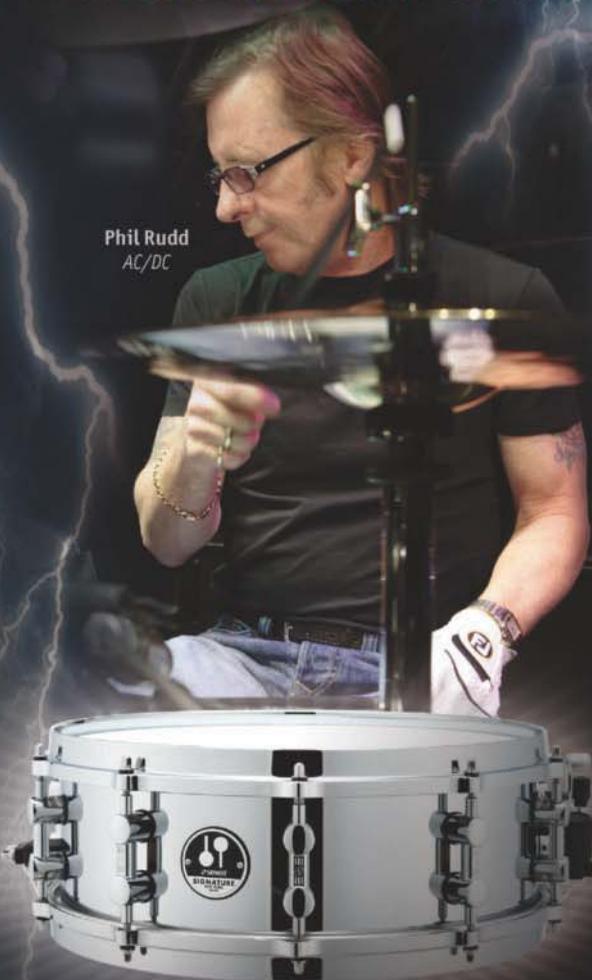
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CALVIN RODGERS

drums." He'd remind me that we didn't know a lot of guys who were able to maintain their lives just by playing drums.

When I was a kid, I was making like \$25 a week. By the time I graduated high school, I think I was up to about

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\$125 a week playing in church. My dad was telling me, "You know, you're not going to be able to take care of anyone, not even yourself, on just \$125 a week." So a few weeks after I graduated high school, my dad pulled some strings and helped me get this job at a marketing firm doing things around the office.

Now, back in high school at Curie [Metro High School For The Creative And Performing Arts], I was involved in this



program called the Jazz Mentors. It was sponsored by the Ravinia Music Festival. The drummer in the program was named Ernie Adams, and he also played with Ramsey Lewis. So a few weeks after I started working at this office, I get a message on the machine from Ernie saying, "Calvin, I'm going to have Ramsey give you a call to cover this gig

for me." And right behind Ernie's message was Ramsey's message. I called back, and they told me the date for the gig and the schedule for rehearsals, and I knew I wouldn't be able to work at the office and also be at rehearsal. So I went and talked to my boss at work about the fact that I had this great opportunity I'd been waiting on. And he gave me this

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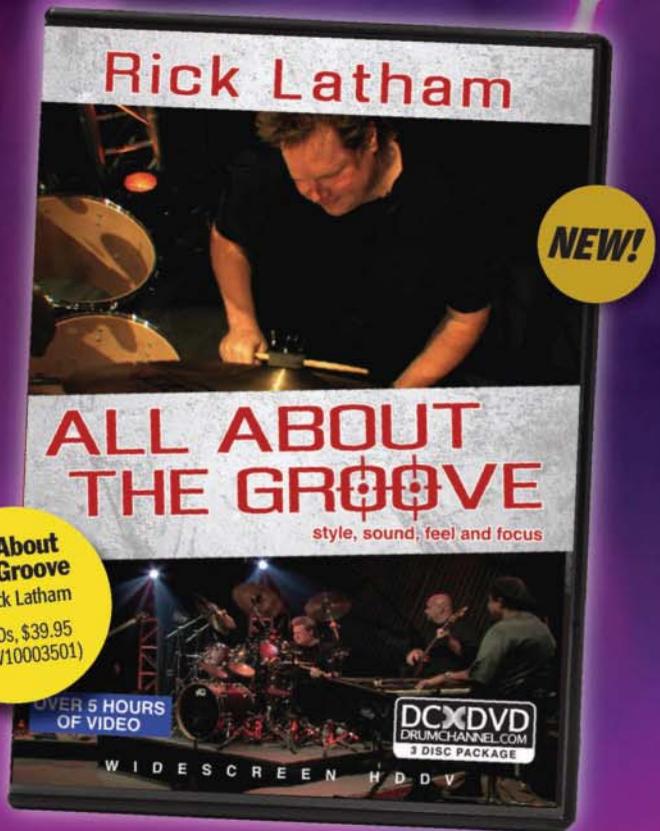
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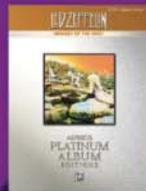
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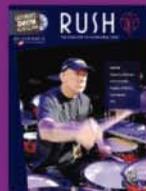
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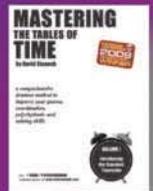
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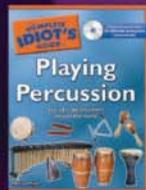
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CALVIN RODGERS

long speech about responsibility and how drums could be a great hobby for me and all that. He said, "I'll give you until the end of the day to decide what you want to do, but I can't give you the day off."

So I worked up to lunch, and I went to his office. I told him, "I hope I haven't ruined this opportunity for someone else who may need a helping hand, but this situation isn't for me. This job isn't my destiny. If I have to make a decision, I have to choose to pursue my passion and my dream." And after I walked out

of there that day, I haven't looked back. I was eighteen years old then. It hasn't been easy, but that's how it happened.

MD: It's funny how people will tell you what box you belong in and try to tell you, "Go get in that box."

Calvin: It is, man, but it's just as important to remember that you have to follow your heart.

MD: And following your heart has led you to be the most in-demand drummer in gospel music today.

Calvin: First off, please let me say that I hardly see it that way. But I'm always

humbled when people make those kinds of statements. It's been nothing except the favor of God that has allowed me to work with so many artists. I love recording—I absolutely love it. And that has been my prayer. Just to be able to record. I enjoy playing different styles of music. But I'm a very emotional player, so I may not appreciate certain forms of music if there's no emotion tied to it. I think that's why I don't do a lot of R&B. But gospel music is my root, not to mention I am a Christian. So the lyrics combined with the music arrangements tend to take me to a totally different place. I believe this is the reason that producers and artists enjoy working with me.

MD: Speaking of artists and producers, who are some of the other artists you've worked with besides Fred Hammond?

Calvin: In gospel I've worked with Israel Houghton, Donald Lawrence, Marvin Sapp, the Clark Sisters, Martha Munizzi, Bishop Paul Morton, George Huff, Mary Mary, Ricky Dillard, and a few more. Outside gospel, I toured with R. Kelly for about two years, and I've recorded and performed with Ramsey Lewis & Urban Knights, Avant, Chaka Khan, and Dave Hollister.

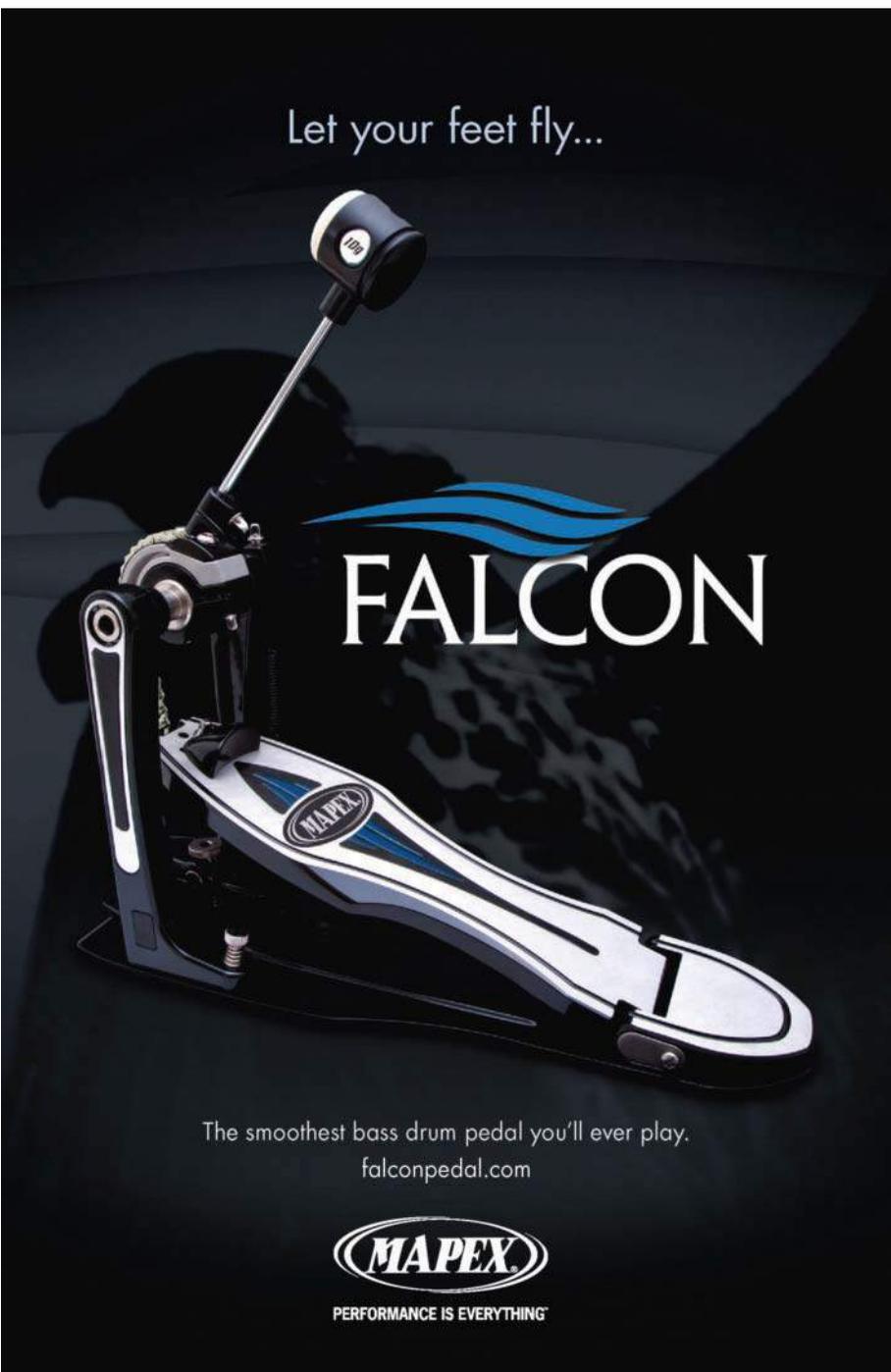
MD: How did you get the gig with Hammond?

Calvin: I met Fred while I was playing with another gospel artist, but then we reconnected while I was on the road with R. Kelly. When we'd bump into each other we would talk about doing something together. Well, at the time he was transitioning his drum chair, and it just happened that he had a band that included guys I had done a lot of session work with in Chicago. So when he asked who they'd feel comfortable with, they all said my name. And he was already aware of me. So he picked up the phone and called me.

MD: Since Marvin McQuitty is well regarded largely due to his work with Fred Hammond, did you have any difficulty in the beginning playing a gig that was associated with another high-profile drummer for so long?

Calvin: Actually, I didn't. I have a huge ton of respect for Marvin McQuitty. He's like a big brother to me. But the

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continued on page 68

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CALVIN RODGERS

transition was a really smooth one. I'm sure it had a lot to do with the fact that I was extremely comfortable with the band. We were all really great friends and worked together quite often. So it was a great fit.

MD: Was there any pressure from within or outside Fred Hammond's circle to play the gig Marvin's way?

Calvin: None at all. Fred encouraged me to find my way in the music. I listened to a couple band rehearsals with Marvin playing—but only to be familiar with material and not so much a part. I have to emphasize again that when I got there I was already a part of the band. That group of players and I had cut a lot of sessions together with different artists. It's one of the best bands I've ever been in. I think every musician should seek that out—seek out players that you have a natural chemistry with, and play with them as much as you can.

MD: How did you come to establish such a strong independent voice within Hammond's music?

Calvin: I've been with Fred for a while now. And for the last four years I've been his musical director. This has done a few things. It's allowed me to find a way to translate my musical ideas and arrangements. I play keyboard just a little bit. I also have a great ear, so it helps to be able to hear right and wrong. And I know some theory, which helps a lot as well.

With me as the musical director and the drummer, it brings a different type of energy. I deal with the energy of the drums first. Then I deal with melody, rhythm, and so on and so forth. So to a degree, the drums drive our band right now. It seems to work. I have a great group of players and a great leader in Fred. We won a Grammy off his project *Free To Worship*. The single that drove that project was a song I arranged with Fred. So like I said, I think we have a great system for now.

MD: How do you manage touring and preparing for sessions with other artists in the midst of playing shows

with Fred Hammond?

Calvin: In the same three-month period that we did the latest Donald Lawrence project, I had three other sessions and touring with Fred. I have a method of preparing for each session. I begin by just listening to the material. I like to learn the tunes and be sure I'm ready for the changes, but I try not to be over-analytical about it. I like to leave room for me to be myself and have a little space for improvisation.

I have a friend, Maurice Fitzgerald, who is kind of the opposite. He spends a lot of time practicing on the front end to prepare. But my process is different. I'll learn the song and then go through the tune in my head over and over again, developing my drum parts. This is what we do, so I believe in having the ability to get the job done. It's like being a pro basketball player. You have to learn the plays and then step out and just execute. I've been known to be like a hard drive. I hear a song once, and I'm able to absorb it and start building my parts right away. At some point I may need to change my approach, but so far this has been working for me.

MD: Often drummers are thought of as being undisciplined or too busy on the kit. What lessons have you learned as a session player that you think other drummers may benefit from?

Calvin: There are a number of things I think are really important. For one, it's important to invest in professional gear. If it takes a while to save up enough, that's okay. But there's no substitute for good high-quality equipment. Also, I think it's important to back off the drums a little bit, especially in recording situations. Here's what I mean. When you go into a pro recording studio, you see all these different preamps, racks and racks of processors, and all these different mics that are really expensive and well made. I work really hard to get my tone on the kit and make my drums sing and sound good, but I don't have a magic tuning process or some secret to my sound. I just let the mics do their job.

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CALVIN RODGERS

If I go around the kit playing 16th or 32nd notes, it'll be cool. But with all those notes going into the microphone, it just goes right by. So instead I might play 8th notes and give the drums a chance to breathe and be heard. Felix Pollard talked to me about that a long time ago. He reminded me: "You have all these mics and monitors and everything around you to help you get heard—let that stuff work for you."

When he shared that with me, it helped me change my thinking. In live situations, I don't have to hit the drums with everything I've got. I've learned that instead of trying to play to the room, I just need to play to the mics.

MD: Please describe the gospel sound. How does a drummer who didn't grow up in gospel church learn that sound and style?

Calvin: That's a hard question. First off, playing gospel music is different from playing any other genre. I think the musicians who are most effective are the ones who have a personal faith in God and Christ. Anyone can play the music, but there comes a point where

the truth will come out in your playing, whether you're really a believer or not. It's not something that can be taught; it has to come from within you.

That said, stylistically gospel has influences from all the other major genres, like jazz, rock, blues, and R&B. It's a mixture of all these different styles, but what makes it gospel is the feeling you put with it and the lyrics. The best way to start would be to listen to some of the classic records by people like Andraé Crouch, the Winans, Milton Brunson, and Walter Hawkins, all the way to current stuff like Fred Hammond, Israel Houghton, and others. Another thing I would suggest is to find a local church that has an emphasis on music and go visit and hang. That's probably the best way. You have to just sit and absorb it, because in church there's so much going on.

They do things in praise and worship service that you don't see in other styles of music. They can take a chorus and loop it ten times or more, just because of what those lyrics say and the fact that it inspires praise. Watching

how people flow with the spirit in worship service and watching the band follow the choir director, the pastor, and the people would be a good way to learn.

MD: Is there a particular drum configuration or tuning that is standard in gospel music?

Calvin: The last several years we've gotten into smaller tom sizes. It used to be common for churches to have larger toms, but that's changed. Most of the time I go for higher-pitched rack toms, with a very low floor tom. I like my rack toms to really sing and then have that big drop to my 16" floor tom. Tuning tends to be in the mid to mid-high range with a real punchy, fat kick drum sound.

MD: How do you manage to maintain a practice regimen with your schedule?

Calvin: It's difficult to maintain a steady practice routine, just because we're on the go so much. But when I can I get together with friends, and we set up our kits and play. We'll trade off with one another and just shed. Also, I work hard on trying to keep my hands real

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CALVIN RODGERS

even. I'll work on the rudiments and study those and try to figure out new ways to apply those rudiments and move them around the kit.

Sometimes I have so much in me that it's difficult just to find time to get on the kit and try to work it out. I never want to be the musician that practices on the gig, but at the same time, I'm not afraid to try things. I enjoy being creative on the drums. I've gotten to a point where I trust myself enough to know how far to go to stretch in a live situation when I want to try something new that I've

never played before.

MD: How long did it take to get to the point in your playing where you're able to trust yourself that way?

Calvin: Man, it took a *long* time. It took a long time of gaining maturity, a lot of listening, and a lot of self-observation. I had to learn how to analyze my playing and know what I'm able to do when I haven't thought about it. I had to learn to be aware of what my hands are capable of doing—know the kind of player I am and understand how far ahead of my hands my thoughts are, or vice versa.

Sometimes my hands get ahead of my thoughts a little bit, and you've got to be conscious of that too.

It took time to learn how to make those choices. And honestly, there are some records from earlier on where I made those mistakes or maybe went reaching for something that I hadn't done before and hadn't really thought it out. Over the years I've studied various drummers, and I've picked up little things here and there. When I'm playing live or recording, it's all about execution. Some call it safe. But I just like to be as accurate as possible.

MD: Avoid making things too complicated.

Calvin: Right. And you know, sometimes I have great ideas behind the drums. But I had to learn the difference between being creative and being complicated. I used to think, and most people tend to think, that creative means complicated. I don't think that way anymore. I don't mind letting creative mean careful placement of a quarter note or an 8th note. I believe in space in music wholeheartedly.

I don't put limits or boundaries on myself for what creativity has to be. It doesn't have to be flooring. I don't believe in taking up *all* of the space. Being creative sometimes means I take something away. It could be taking a note away from the kick drum or maybe adding an extra single 8th note on the hi-hat. It's taking time. It's a process of self-examination that I'm still in. I'll probably always be there. I think great musicians always want to keep growing and self-analyzing. But I'll never stop reaching. Dave and Vinnie keep getting better and better because they never stop reaching.

MD: Do you have any advice for your fans and fellow drummers out there?

Calvin: I always give the same advice—the three Ps: practice, professionalism, and patience. I enjoy being on the road playing drums. But I'm glad I didn't rush it. My dad taught me as a kid to be patient and that when the time was right, the work would come. And that has been true. So I would say to remember those three Ps and never stop reaching.

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STYLE & ANALYSIS

CALVIN RODGERS

by Terry Branam



Gene Ambo

With his blend of old-school pocket and discipline with modern-sounding phrasing and chops, it's no wonder why Calvin Rodgers is the go-to guy for many of the icons of contemporary gospel. Here's a breakdown of what makes this drummer so special.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE GROOVE

Rodgers' tight pocket is at the heart of his style. Whether he's locking up a tightly knit sequence or vibing with the rhythm section, Calvin always makes creative and tasteful choices of where to accent and embellish the beat. Take a look at this three-bar phrase from Israel Houghton's "Better To Believe," off the album *The Power Of One*, where the drummer takes a fairly common boogaloo groove and toggles the accents from bar to bar. (0:24)

MUSIC KEY			
Open	C	R.C.	Snare
HH	HH	Hi	C.C.
T.T.	TT	TT	TT
S.D.	S.D.	S.D.	S.D.
F.T.	F.T.	F.T.	F.T.
B.D.	B.D.	B.D.	B.D.
HH w/ foot	HH w/ foot	HH w/ foot	HH w/ foot
		MB	TT

This example is from the Marvin Sapp tune "Magnify," from the *Thirsty* album. C-Rod gives a nod to the go-go drummers of Washington, D.C., by using some percolating hi-hat accents to fill the gaps between the kick and snare. (0:00)

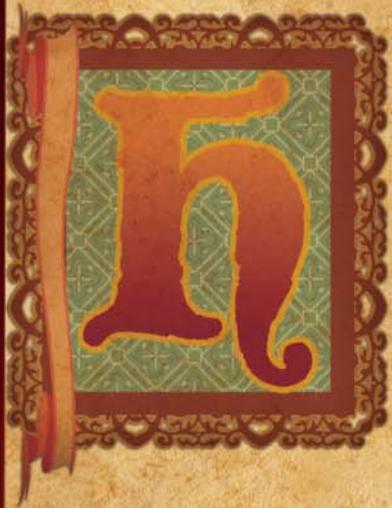
TURN THE BEAT AROUND

Rodgers' mastery of time is especially evident when he takes a step beyond being a traditional timekeeper and plays some slick over-the-barline phrasing. The tempo never strays, and no matter how far left he goes the pocket is always there.

Here's an example of one of Calvin's spikier rhythmic ventures. The passage is taken from a video of the drummer playing VaShawn Mitchell's "Crazy Praise," where Rodgers pulls off a groovy rhythmic illusion. This idea makes the listener feel like the tempo changes, but it never actually does. (3:01)

IT FIGURES

A big part of contemporary gospel music is the way the ensemble sounds while playing syncopated figures or rhythmic hits. Rodgers takes many liberties when setting up these figures, sounding like a modern-day big-band drummer with the way he flawlessly telegraphs the band's movements. A great



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A Lesson With Max Roach

AN EXERCISE FOR DEVELOPING A TRANSPARENT SOUND

by David Stanoch

When I was in college, I had the great privilege of studying with Max Roach, an architect of the bebop style of jazz and one of the most innovative and important drummers in history. Max stands out as one of the few players who created a new drumset vocabulary that is still the standard today.

In our lessons, Max referred to the drumset as the "multiple percussion instrument," pointing out that the kit is a collection of instruments combined to produce one collective voice. In what was easily one of the single most important drum lessons I ever had, Max taught me what he called his exercise for developing a "transparent sound." It teaches you how to control the dynamics between your limbs so that you clearly project a balanced sound

through the band to the audience.

In contemporary backbeat-based music, the bass drum and snare usually dominate the balance of the groove, and the cymbals provide support to weave everything together or to add accents for spice and color. In modern jazz, the ride cymbal and hi-hat are the priority in the balance of sound, and the drums weave around them dynamically, supporting the rhythm with undercurrents of counterpoint (comping), occasional dramatic bursts of color (dropping bombs), or a slightly heavier backbeat groove.

To achieve a transparent sound, you must learn how to shift the dynamic balance between all four limbs, making adjustments to any one or more limbs without affecting the overall dynamic of the others.

THE EXERCISE

First, establish a vamp, or repeated pattern, where you're playing quarter notes with all four limbs, with the right hand on the cymbal, the left hand on the snare, the right foot on the bass drum, and the left foot on the hi-hat (or, as Max called it, "the foot cymbal").

Play the vamp at an overall dynamic level of mezzo piano (moderately soft). Focus on establishing an equally balanced sound among the four tones of the drumset. You'll have to make some adjustments to get everything at the same level. Think harmonically. You're playing a four-voice "chord" of indeterminate pitch. Take the time to find a balanced sound, and groove on it for a bit. Now focus on how it *feels* to produce this balanced sound. This is your starting point, as Max would say.



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Once you have the vamp evenly balanced, choose one of your four limbs and execute a four-bar crescendo (get louder), from mezzo piano (moderately soft) up to fortissimo (very loud). Then decrescendo (get softer) for four bars, until you return to your mezzo piano vamp. The most important factor is to maintain the mezzo piano dynamic balance with your other three limbs while the fourth executes the crescendo and decrescendo. Don't let your limbs surge up or drop down. With patience and repetition, you will learn to control the separation of dynamics in your limbs. I recommend starting the dynamic shifts with the right hand, then the left hand, then the bass drum, and finally the hi-hat foot.

Practice this exercise with a metronome to help deepen your feel. It's common to rush the tempo when crescendoing and to drag the tempo when decrescendoing. Working with a click will help you anticipate and overcome these tendencies. Try starting at around 120 bpm.

Of all the four limbs, the hi-hat foot is typically the hardest to control. This is usually because the space between the hi-hat cymbals is usually only a couple of inches. I remember seeing Max, Buddy Rich, and Tony Williams play live and noticing a large space between their hi-hat cymbals. When I tried mine that way, it felt like my foot was going right through the floor when I tried to bring the cymbals together. But you

might want to experiment with opening your hi-hats a little more than usual.

Nowadays, I regularly use this exercise as a warm-up, especially if I only have time to do a soundcheck before a gig. It always helps me get my mind and body "tuned in" in a musical and meditative way. If you stick with it, you'll find that this process of adjusting your dynamics will become an instinctive reflex, where you're constantly refining your balance for different situations. This single lesson really helped me in my pursuit of a more mature sound, and not a drumming day goes by that I don't say a grateful thank-you to Max Roach for sharing it with me.

Vamp A **B** Repeat 4 times

mp *mp* *ff*

(4) (8)

David Stanoch is a faculty member of the McNally Smith College Of Music. For more information, visit rhythmelodic.com.



Chops Builders

PART 2: DIDDLES AND ROLLS

by Bill Bachman

This month we're going to attack some diddle and roll figures. The exercises cover most of the combinations of diddles and rolls that you'll encounter, and built into the patterns are the following rudiments: drags, ruffs, five-stroke rolls, six-stroke rolls, and seven-stroke rolls. There's no need to think about these rudiments individually as you work through the examples, though. Just find a comfortable flow and make the exercises groove with relaxed hands. Once you have all of these patterns programmed within your rudimental arsenal, you can use whichever one fits your musical whim behind the kit.

Mastery of the double-stroke roll will help with all of these diddle/roll patterns. Use the "alley-oop" wrist/finger combination to play open diddles, and avoid weakly bounced or stiffly stroked-out diddles. There are two-count check patterns preceding each diddle or roll pattern, which set up the hand motions that you should use for the diddles and rolls. With the exception of adding forearm to ease the wrist's workload while playing diddle/roll patterns at fast tempos, the timing, stick heights, stick angles, wrist/finger ratio, velocity, and volume of the strokes should match between the check and the diddle/roll pattern. Focus on a consistent hand motion more than on the individual diddle/roll patterns for the best possible timing and steadiness.

Practice these exercises with a metronome or recorded music so that good timing will become a habit. Avoid playing at a tempo that is too fast to be comfortable. It's important to practice using the correct hand motions and coordination. Feel free to isolate any pattern that is uncomfortable, and be sure to take the repeats, which change the exercises to left-hand lead. Remember that as you get faster you'll need to add the forearms, lower the stick heights, and lighten up your touch. Have fun!

1A

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

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

1B

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

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

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ZOOM

A Groove Workout

20 AFROPOP-BASED BEATS

by David Garibaldi

This groove workout was inspired by Salif Keita's drummer Mokhtar Samba and his killer performance on the track "Sumun" from the *Folon* LP. I've had this album in my collection for at least ten years, but I hadn't listened to it for a while. Recently, during a lesson, I was looking for play-

along music for a student to use. We started listening to this song, and it took us away for the next hour!

The following twenty exercises are what we came up with during that session. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Space here doesn't allow for me to go too much deeper, so I'll leave the fur-

ther exploration up to you.

When you're going through these beats, think of the early James Brown recordings—no fills! Just sit back and play time. This track is perfect for that. You'll inevitably come up with many ideas of your own. It's impossible *not* to be moved by this great music.

PERFORMANCE TIPS

1. All of the exercises can be played on the snare or as rimclicks.

2. The idea is to be able to play consistent time with a consistent sound. Again: *no fills!*

3. Play along with the track, one groove at a time.

4. There's a song arrangement in "Sumun," but disregard it until you're comfortable with all the exercises. Think of the track as a metronome.

5. Each groove is based on Example 1. The addition of ghost notes, bass drum notes, and accents is random. As you play, listen to the flow of the music, and use your ears to fit in. Make adjustments with each variation so that the flow is maintained from start to finish.

6. After you can perform each groove comfortably, play any combination of two, three, or four exercises to create longer phrases.

7. Remember to utilize two sound levels (accented snare notes are to be played 8–12" from the drumhead, unaccented snare notes at 1/2"). This important concept will help make these exercises come alive.

8. For a final challenge, play all the exercises in order, repeating the entire twenty-measure phrase for the length of the track.

BASIC IDEA:

The image displays nine examples of drum exercises, numbered 1 through 9. Each exercise is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The first two measures of each exercise are rests. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, with accents (marked with a triangle) and ghost notes (marked with an 'x' or 'g' in parentheses). The exercises show variations in the placement of these notes across the four beats of the measure.

The image displays ten staves of musical notation for a drum exercise in 4/4 time. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests. Accents (>) are placed above certain notes, and some notes are enclosed in parentheses to indicate they are optional. The exercise progresses from a basic pattern in measure 10 to more complex variations with optional accents and backbeats in measures 15-20.

EXTRA FUN

In Example 20, the accented snare drum notes in parentheses are optional. Start by playing the exercise without the optional accents, and then add them one at a time for additional variations. After that, treat *all* of the accented snare notes as optional, including the backbeats on 2 and 4. This should keep you busy for a while. Enjoy!





Jeremy Gordon

FICTION PLANE'S PETE WILHOIT

After a decade spent plugging away at lessons, sessions, and all manner of gigs, the drummer found himself opening for the Police's reunion tour and placing on *MD's* Readers Poll. **It seems all that hard work has finally paid off.** by Gail Worley

Ask *Saturday Night Live* drummer Shawn Pelton why he thinks one of his former students, Fiction Plane's Pete Wilhoit, made it into the top three Up & Coming drummers in *MD's* 2009 Readers Poll, and he doesn't skip a beat. "Pete plays his ass off!" Pelton says. "At a recent NYC gig, I was blown away by his power and groove and, above all, the heart and soul he put into every note. It was a real inspiration to feel his commitment and presence behind the kit. Pete is a world-class, take-no-prisoners rock drummer who can blow the roof off the place."

is hardly a novice. But the fiery player credits his band's high-profile gig opening for the Police on their 2007–08 reunion tour for bringing his playing to the attention of his peers. "It was quite an honor to be voted onto a list that could literally include tens of thousands of drummers," he says. "I do think the exposure we got from going out with the Police for two years had a lot to do with my being noticed."

Wilhoit lists Tony Williams, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Stewart Copeland among his primary influences. But the drummer admits that Pelton and another of

tant thing. Pushing the more musical jazz side, Shawn might have me concentrate on the 2 and 4, then do a solo and sing the head of a jazz standard while I'm soloing. From Kenny, I have a very physical approach as well, because he's about power, consistency, and the more explosive showmanship side of performing.

"By combining those two approaches," Wilhoit continues, "I developed a wide dynamic range, from very soft grace notes to very loud, bombastic playing. I've tried to use that to my advantage in a live setting to make it exciting and push a lot of the energy off stage. It has taken me a while to learn how to 'play big,' but going on tour with the Police and playing in stadiums definitely helped me learn to do that."

Wilhoit admits that some of his most inspiring lessons were the ones where he and Pelton or Aronoff would just talk and not even touch the drums. "I always tell my students that I can teach you physics, but inspiration goes further than the physical," he says. "The light really clicked on for me when I heard stories of the rock industry and all these amazing things that Shawn and Kenny have done. That's what made me really want to pursue drumming as my career."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Wilhoit plays **Tama** Starclassic Bubinga drums, including a 6½x14 maple snare, a 10x12 rack tom, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and an 18x24 bass drum; **Sabian** cymbals, including 14" HHX Groove Hats, an 18" AAX Dark crash, a 21" HHX Manhattan ride, and a 19" Vault crash; a **Roland** 12" V-Drum pad into a TD-20 brain; a Tama Iron Cobra hi-hat stand and double pedal and Titan cymbal stands; **Evans** G1 or G2 coated tom heads and EQ2 or EQ3 bass drum heads; and **Vic Firth** Extreme 5B sticks.

With a degree in jazz studies and percussion from Indiana University, eleven years with the rock band the Cutters, and countless recording sessions for jazz and rock artists—in addition to his five years touring the globe with Fiction Plane—Wilhoit

his teachers, Kenny Aronoff, have had the biggest impact both on his technique and on his career path. "I try to approach the drums sonically as one instrument," Pete says. "Shawn is very much about attitude and how groove is the most impor-

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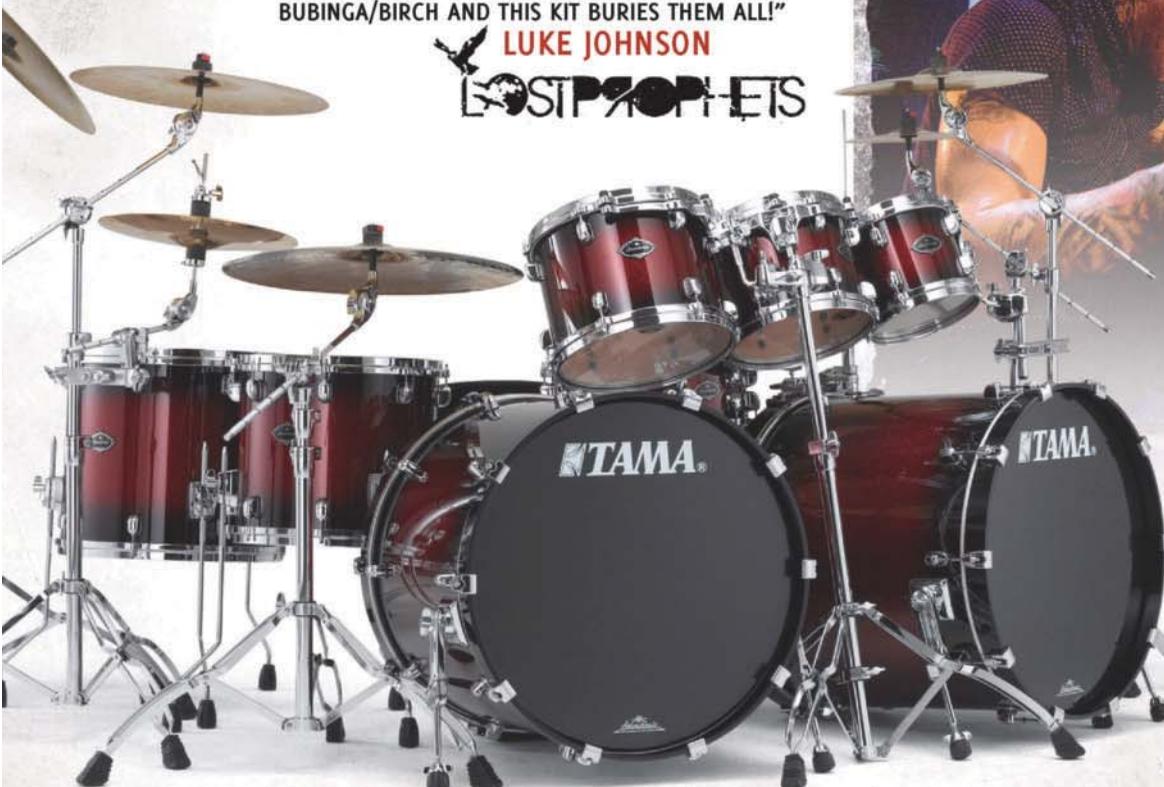
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ANTHONY CITRINITE

Busy is as busy does. A New York cat grows his résumé out of sheer will and a never-ending appetite for new musical situations.

by Tony Maggolino



A lot of drummers would consider a few rehearsals a week and a gig on a Friday or Saturday night a good amount of work. For Anthony "Ant Cee" Citrinite, a good amount of work is rehearsing and gigging six nights a week, as well as holding down an associate director's position Monday through Friday at Drummers Collective in New York City.

Citrinite's eclectic playing schedule includes pop, metal, and everything in between. Most recently he played timpani on stage at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards with pop vocalist Katy Perry and Aerosmith guitar legend Joe Perry. "Out of all the gigs I've played, that one has to be the most memorable," Ant says. "When I was growing up I would watch the MTV awards and think to myself, *Someday I'm going to play there*. Years later, I'm standing on stage at Radio City Music Hall in front of a worldwide audience. Pretty cool, to say the least."

Over the years Citrinite has made it his business to network and play a variety of gigs in different styles. His experiences have ranged from being a full-time member of the NYC punk/metal group Engine Orange to playing with the legendary rock band Boston at the Fiesta Bowl in Tempe, Arizona.

In 2006 Ant's current band the SmashUp toured the U.S. relentlessly from January through December, first with the Deftones on the Taste Of

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Citrinite plays **MRP Custom** drums, including a 5x14 stainless steel snare, 9x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms, and a 20x22 bass drum. He uses **Sabian** cymbals, including 14" HHX Stage Hats; 18", 19", and 20" AAX and Vault crashes; a 22" AAX Metal ride; and an 18" AAX China. His sticks are **Vater** Powerhouse with wood tips, and his heads are by **Evans**.

Chaos tour, then on the Warped Tour with NOFX, and finally with Lamb Of God and Megadeth on the Gigantour. "I really had a chance to learn what the whole touring cycle was like on that run," the drummer says. "Living out of a van for close to a year and running your own tour is a lot of work. Anyone who wants to be out on the road playing gigs needs to have an experience like that. It will definitely help you decide if this is the right career choice for you."

In Los Angeles in 2008, Citrinite was tapped to play percussion with Coheed And Cambria, alongside drummer Chris Pennie, for the live DVD/CD *Neverender*. "This was such an awesome gig for me," Ant says. "I'm a huge fan of Coheed, and Chris is a total monster."

The Coheed gig added another line on Citrinite's résumé, which is already long and continually growing. Ant's current workload is divided between three different bands—the SmashUp, a pop group called L2, and the Gringe, in which he subs for *SNL* drummer Shawn Pelton. One would think that playing in three bands and being the associate director of Drummers Collective would be more than enough work. Not for Ant. "I'm always networking for more gigs," he says. "I like to stay busy all the time. To me, being busy is living."



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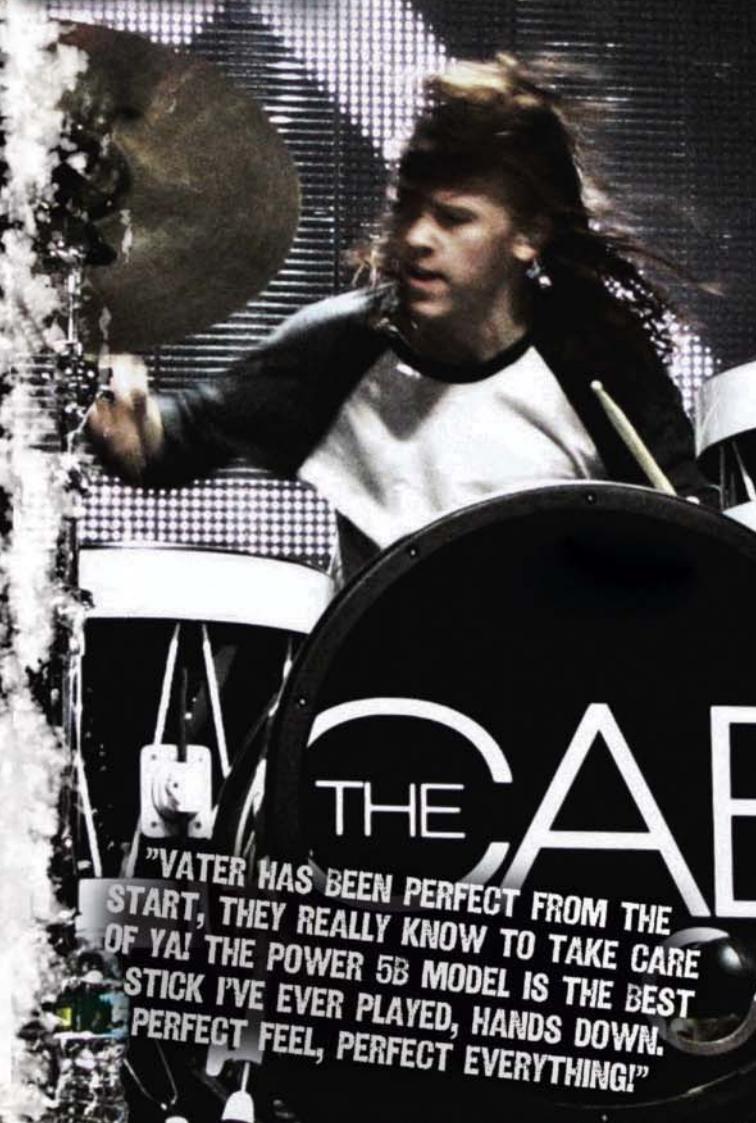
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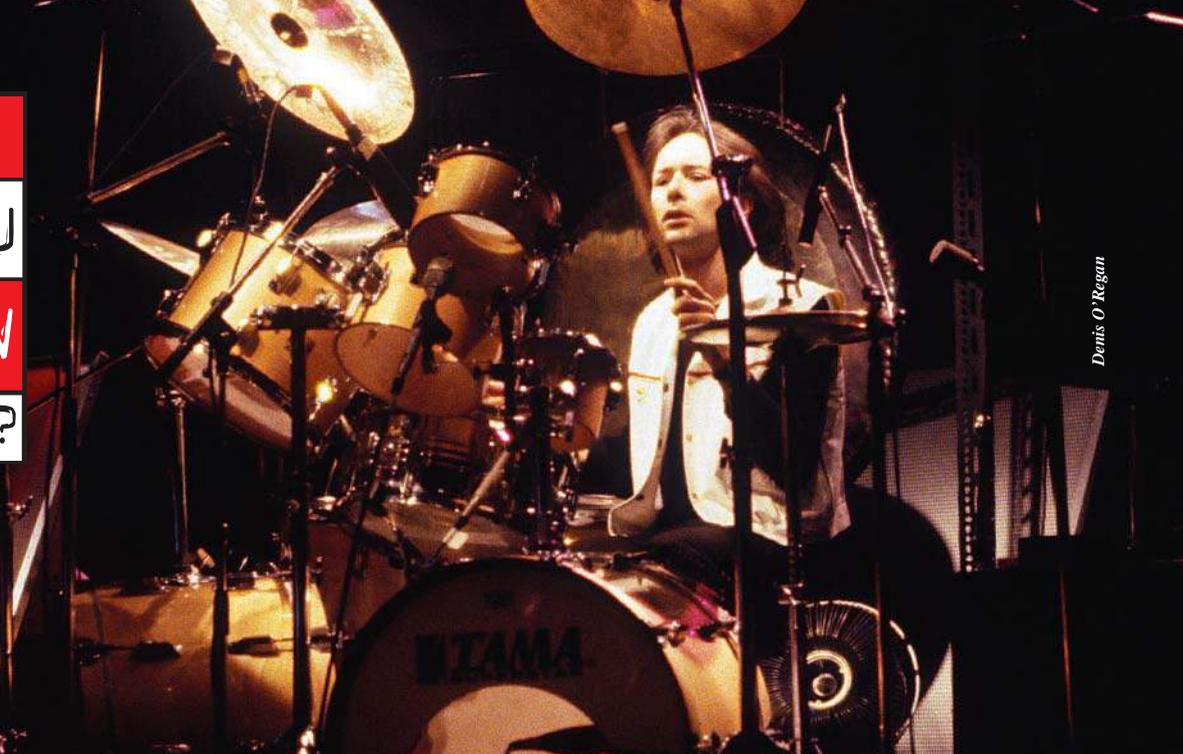


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BRIAN DOWNEY

Thin Lizzy wasn't as big as the Who or Led Zeppelin. But for those who know and love their timeless music—and have experienced the majestic power of the drummer on their many classic albums—few bands could rock as hard.

by Adam Budofsky

Music fans outside of Ireland by and large know Thin Lizzy and the band's drummer, Brian Downey, from their 1976 hit "The Boys Are Back In Town." The song features one of the greatest guitar riffs and some of the most memorable lyrics of the classic rock era. It also boasts Downey's unstoppable up-tempo shuffle groove, which perfectly evokes the wild-eyed abandon of young studs hanging out on a Friday night at their local pub, where "the drink will flow and blood will spill."

It's a shame the band's profile wasn't larger on the left side of the pond—a combination of bad luck and overwork saw to that—because Lizzy was a unique and hugely exciting group, and

in Downey they had a highly skilled drummer with explosive chops, a fine sense of dynamics, and one of the sweetest grooves in heavy rock. The band's sound was part proto-metal, part pub rock, and part heavy soul, a musical amalgam that perfectly reflected the concerns of Lizzy's punk poet laureate, Phil Lynott, who could turn a phrase with the best of them and strike a live pose far better than most. In fact, the group's 1978 double album, *Live And Dangerous*, is widely considered one of the greatest concert documents ever recorded.

Thin Lizzy's initial run ended in the mid-'80s, and Lynott died in 1986. Downey continued to play, however, appearing on several albums by latter-

day Lizzy guitarist Gary Moore. He also went out on the road for a couple of years with a re-formed Thin Lizzy that included the group's onetime guitarists John Sykes and Scott Gorham and bassist Marco Mendoza. In 2005 Brian participated in a concert in Dublin to honor the twentieth anniversary of Lynott's death. He also toured England with Moore and B.B. King and played on Moore's highly regarded *Close As You Get* album in 2007.

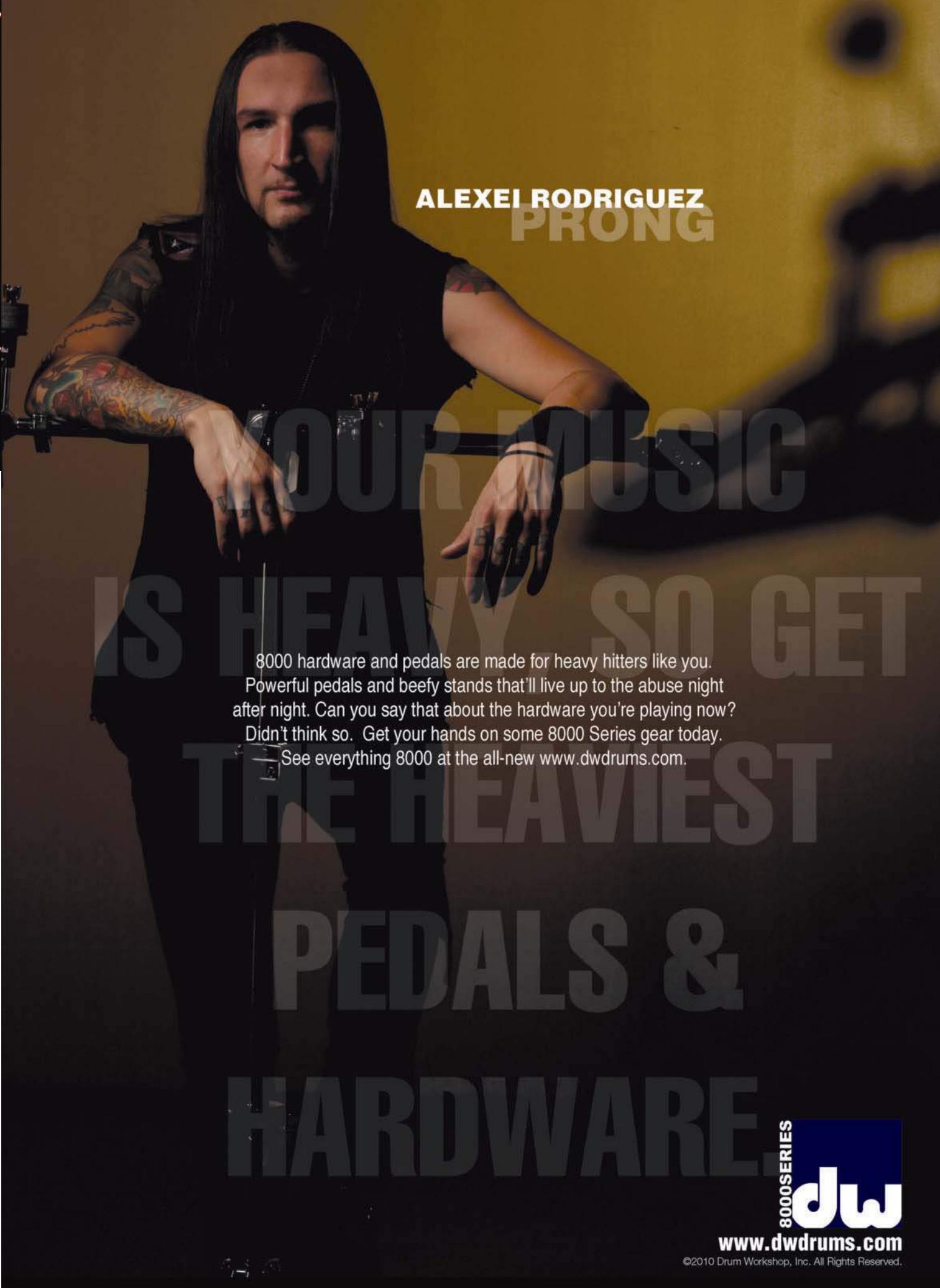
With a spate of classic-period live Lizzy material recently hitting the shelves, including the CD *Still Dangerous: Live At The Tower Theatre Philadelphia 1977* and the DVD *Are You Ready? Greatest Hits Live*, it seemed like as good a time as ever to speak to Downey about his life in rock.

MD: How did Thin Lizzy start up?

Brian: After a couple years of playing in local bands, Phil Lynott, who was in the same school as me, came up to me and said, "I heard you play drums. Our drummer is leaving in a couple weeks to join the army. You should come down and audition." The band was called Black Eagles. We were really popular around the district where we lived.

MD: Your records suggest that all of you were listening to soul music.

Brian: We were. Soul was big here. The pub we used to frequent had a DJ who was just crazy about soul music,

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 looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is standing behind a drum set, with his hands resting on the hardware. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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BRIAN DOWNEY

and he'd play it all night.

MD: Did you get to see any of the soul legends live?

Brian: No, absolutely nobody came to Dublin. The only people who played music were show bands playing country and Irish music.

MD: Did that mean that, as a rock band, you had to go to London?

Brian: That's basically what happened. We were based in Dublin, and we knew this guy who ran a music shop here. He had a friend in London who worked with Decca Records, and he set up a meeting. So this guy, Frank Rogers, came over, saw us playing somewhere, and signed us up on the spot. We were sitting in Dublin one day, and then a couple of months later we were on the ferry to England to play at Decca Studios in West Hampstead, in London. And this is a studio where all our favorite musicians played, like the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton and John Mayall. It took a week to record the album.

MD: Was this your first experience in a proper recording studio?

Brian: No, before Thin Lizzy I played in a band called the Sugar Shack, kind of a blues/soul band, and we recorded a single called "Morning Dew," which was written by a guy called Tim Rose, who also wrote "Hey Joe" for Jimi Hendrix. The B side was "Sunshine Of Your Love" by Cream. It became quite popular in Ireland, got to number sixteen on the Irish charts. None of us had recorded a whole LP, though, so that was a bit of an eye-opener. It was fantastic.

MD: What happened next?

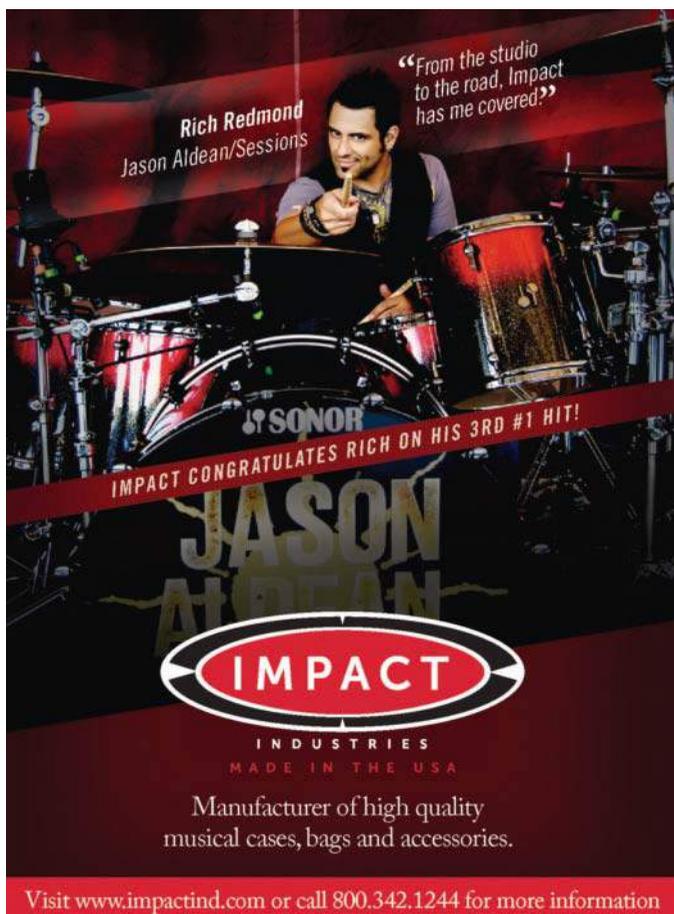
Brian: We decided to take up stakes and move to London about six months later. The record, when it was released, wasn't really a commercial success, although a DJ on Radio Luxembourg called Kid Jensen played it every night for two or three months. Radio Luxembourg was picked up all over Europe, so a lot of people heard us, especially in the U.K. So even though the first album wasn't commercially successful, we began getting requests to do gigs in Europe.

MD: Then it was dues-paying time, right?

Brian: Yeah. We really didn't have much success until we released a single called "Whiskey In The Jar," which is an old Irish traditional tune. We decided to cover this record and sort of rock it up a bit. That went number one here in Ireland and number six in the U.K. Suddenly we weren't a struggling club band anymore. We were appearing on all these TV shows in Germany, Holland, Spain, Luxembourg.... We appeared on *Top Of The Pops* in the U.K., which was a huge chart program, and we were invited to play all these big venues like the National Stadium in Ireland. It was fantastic to play to so many people here in Ireland.

MD: It's interesting because it was a song from your own culture.

Brian: It was, yeah. Unfortunately, there were some people who weren't very open-minded about our version. At some of the places we played, a lot of the audience were folk fans and expected Thin Lizzy to be a folk group. Halfway through the concert you'd have an exodus of people walking out. That actually got us a lot of publicity. And the



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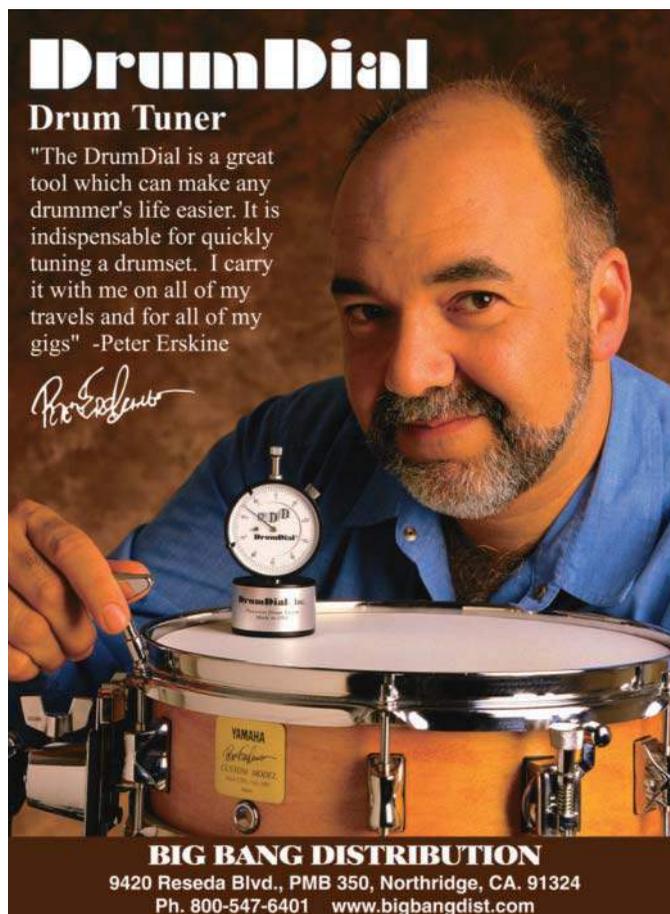
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SOULFUL AND COMPLEX Downey On Record

by Jackie Fuller

Remember that moment—that life-altering experience—that slammed into your mind and body and made you decide, “Yes, I want to make drumming my life’s work”? It courses in your veins and heart, and there’s no turning back. On June 12, 1976, at 3:37 P.M., I first heard Thin Lizzy and Brian Downey, my favorite band and drummer of all time. It was on a pirate U.S. radio station, and the songs were “Jailbreak” and “The Boys Are Back In Town.”

Thin Lizzy was one of the first, if not *the* first, Irish rock bands to achieve international success. Being Irish, this endeared the group to me all the more. Brian Downey’s dad was in fact an Irish pipe band drummer. He also loved and passed on the records of West Coast bluesman Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson and Chicago’s Oscar Brown Jr. to his son Brian.

The younger Downey’s audition for the pre-Lizzy band the Black Eagles was “You Really Got Me” by the Kinks, and the drummer forged a lifelong musical alliance with Phil Lynott, Thin Lizzy’s leader, bassist, and songwriter. The combination of Downey’s rock, jazz, and blues talents and Lynott’s unique strumming and circular bass playing is the core and essence of Thin Lizzy’s sound.

Downey always serves the song, and his impeccable style and feel never waver from the rock-solid steadiness of the tunes themselves. Initiates should immediately check out *Jailbreak* (1976); all of the songs on the album reflect Downey’s dynamic drive and delicacy. I’ve heard many artists play “The Boys Are Back in Town” live and on record. The results always sound stiff. The lilting swing of the song is a result of Downey and Lynott’s shared background, and it’s *very* hard to reproduce. Also on the album are the classic Celtic rockers “Emerald,” in 6/8, and “Cowboy Song,” in 4/4. (Along those lines, don’t miss “Róisín Dubh” from 1979’s *Black Rose*.)

Other tracks that show Downey’s great groove include “Me And The

Boys,” a shuffling up-tempo double bass delight that you can hear on the recent *Still Dangerous* live release. In the middle, Brian burns a fill that raises the hair on your arms, and then he blasts the encore to its explosive end. The title track to 1980’s *Chinatown* is another shuffle with magical, musical fills.

Thin Lizzy was one of the all-time great live bands. Downey’s solos on “Sha La La” (1978’s *Live And Dangerous*—a must in all drummers’ collections) and “Bad Reputation” (1981’s *Killers Live* EP) are rudimentary double bass delights. On “Warrior” from *Live And Dangerous*, check out the complex fills on the outro of the tune.

Downey has a sensitive side as well. “Still In Love With You” (from 1974’s *Night Life* and also on *Live And Dangerous*), a heart-wrenching slow blues-pop ballad with a funk change on the outro, is the exemplification of rock-solid, sensitive playing. (Thirty-one years later, I still cry when I hear the song.) And “Parisienne Walkways,” from the Thin Lizzy box set, *Vagabonds, Kings, Warriors, Angels*, features delicate, sweeping brushwork in a rock ballad.

Jackie Fuller is an award-winning pipe band drummer and a professional drumset artist from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada. He has worked with Alannah Myles, Platinum Blonde, and the Juno Award-winning Andy Curran & Soho 69.



Denis O'Regan

majority of them stayed anyway.

MD: It would be a couple more years until people here in the States would

really know who you were, with “The Boys Are Back In Town.” Did you do any touring here before that record

came out?

Brian: We did a five-week tour with Bachman-Turner Overdrive before “The



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BRIAN DOWNEY

Boys Are Back In Town" came out. That was fantastic because it was the first time I'd ever set foot in America, and it was a place I'd always wanted to see and tour. Some of the venues we played with BTO were massive stadiums, because they were pretty popular. Their song "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet" was a huge hit. Our name began to crop up in magazines. When "The Boys Are Back In Town" got onto the American chart, it was so exciting, like, "Here we go—our band that's struggled to get known for years is a big hit in America!"

MD: You did a great cover of the Bob Seger song "Rosalie."

Brian: We did a tour with Journey and Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band, and we got to know Bob and his band pretty well. They were great players, with a great sound on stage. Phil especially thought "Rosalie" was a fantastic tune to cover, so when we got back to the U.K., the first opportunity we got, we went into the studio and recorded that song.

MD: As you started becoming more popular in the States, the fame and popu-

larity began to wear on the band, right? **Brian:** Yeah, and we had a bit of bad luck. After we did the *Jailbreak* album, which featured "The Boys Are Back In Town" and the title song, which was also a hit, we were on the verge of going on tour with Rainbow when Phil Lynott came down with hepatitis, which meant we couldn't play the tour. So we all had to come back to England, and Phil was quarantined and sent straight off to hospital. Everything was put on hold, and that kind of stopped our momentum. We couldn't do anything for months. I went to visit Phil once, and he had all these notes spread out all over the bed. I go, "Phil, what the hell are you doing?" "I'm writing all these lyrics for the next record." He had his bass and an acoustic guitar beside him in this hospital bed.

When he got out of there he went straight into the rehearsal studio, but I could see that he wasn't 100 percent right. It seemed like he was let out too quickly. But he had the pressure on him to get this record done, and we had to record *Johnny The Fox* with Phil still

not 100 percent. Everybody seemed to like the record when it came out, though, and it was a hit in the U.K. But it didn't do well in America, even though we went out on another tour. Then we had a problem with our guitar player Brian Robertson, who ended up in a fight in a nightclub in London. He split all the tendons in his hand, and we had to draft in a guitar player to finish off that American tour with Queen. **MD:** Around this time you took a break from the band for a couple of months. **Brian:** Yeah, we were going full tilt, touring everywhere, coming off one tour and going straight out on another one. It got to be crazy, and we didn't have much time to assess what was going on. I started becoming very disillusioned and actually got ill. There was another tour booked and we couldn't cancel it, but I had to say to the guys, "I just can't do it." I think the whole band was overworked to the point of exhaustion; I certainly think that's what happened to me. Luckily, the drummer who came in, Mark Nauseef, was quite good; he studied the songs and played them



Photo: Robert Downs Photography

on the tour of Australia and Japan. And when they came back they asked me back in the band, which was a nice gesture. We went straight into the rehearsal studio and recorded the *Black Rose* album with Gary Moore on guitar, which was a big hit in Europe.

MD: You were overworked on the road, but in some ways it paid off; *Live And Dangerous* is revered as one of rock's great live albums.

Brian: What you hear on that record is what Thin Lizzy sounded like. It was just one of those albums that captured the atmosphere and the sound. There was a bit of controversy about it afterwards regarding the fact that there are a couple of overdubs here and there.

But there's absolutely no drum overdubs, I can say that categorically.

MD: Your solo spotlight on "Sha La La" is awesome. And it comes so organically out of the song, which is a little unusual.

Brian: Before soundchecks Phil and I used to jam on a bass riff for maybe a half an hour before the guitar players came out on stage. It was very simple, with kind of a double-time drumbeat

that I used to play just to warm up. In the middle of it he'd say, "Take a drum break here for eight bars," and that's how that particular solo came about. I'd been doing a different improvised solo on Lizzy tours, but the "Sha La La" solo was a continuation of that double-time double bass drum thing I had. I kept the rhythm on the double bass drums, and I just played on the top kit whatever came into my head. Obviously you have to practice a few of the things to get it right, to lead into the solo and get out of it. Some nights it worked better than others, which is obvious on some of the bootlegs that are out. [laughs] But on *Live And Dangerous* everything sort of fell into place nicely.

MD: Besides "Sha La La," what are some of the other songs you get asked about by drummers?

Brian: "Bad Reputation," "The Rocker," "Emerald," "Warriors." Those songs featured the drums a bit more than others. A lot of drummers who ask me about those songs are seventeen, eighteen years old, and it's not always easy to explain how to play them unless I have

a drumkit in front of me. So I tell them, "Come to my next gig maybe an hour beforehand and I'll show you." I just tell them, "Try to filter out other stuff that's going on and hear where the ride cymbal lies, where the bass drum lies, where the hi-hat lies—try to isolate all that stuff, then you might get it."

MD: The song "S&M" is so grooving—busy, but in a good way.

Brian: "S&M" was a great song to play. That's another one that we used to jam on before the guitarists would join us on stage. I just tried to complement the whole funky vibe that was coming off the bass.

MD: Are you aware that on online drumming forums there are a lot of people saying how much you influenced them?

Brian: It's lovely to hear that, because drummers, as you know, are always sort of put in the background and forgotten about. [laughs] I think I sort of got lost in the rush.



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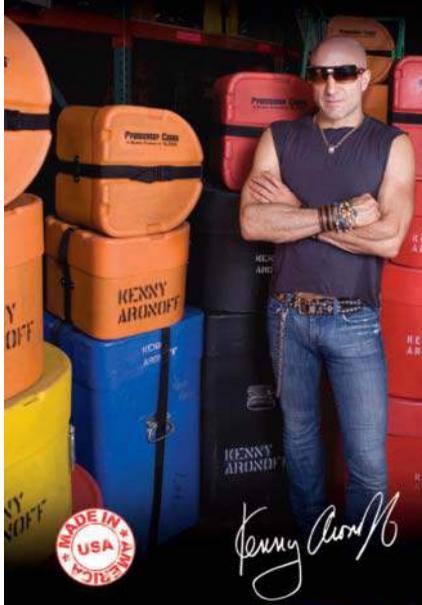
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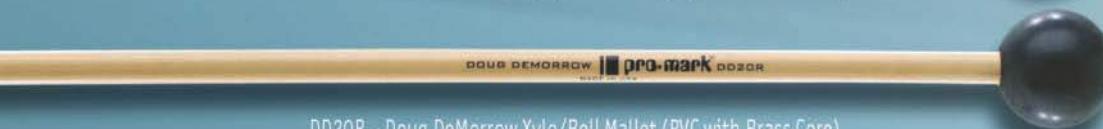
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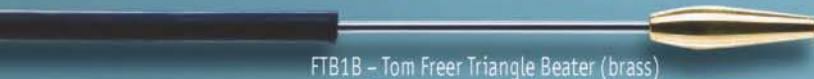
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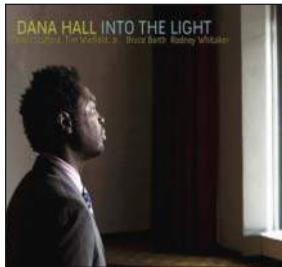


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DANA HALL INTO THE LIGHT

Veteran drummer Dana Hall's debut recording as a leader shows significant skill in creating a mushroom cloud of expansive, prodding, and probing drum explorations. Supported by a stellar Chicago quintet, Hall works galvanic, Tainish full-set rumbles on Herbie Hancock's "I Have A Dream" and a lighter Victor Lewis—worthy approach on "Conversation Song." The forty-year-old drummer has worked with artists as disparate as Malachi Thompson and Patricia Barber, his scalding, smoking drum enunciations seriously potent. Hall's sound is equally deep and trenchant, recalling the past but firmly lodged in the present, just like *Into The Light*. (Origin) **Ken Micallef**



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SAY ANYTHING SAY ANYTHING

Say Anything is a band that's not afraid to speak its mind and make bold statements both lyrically and musically. This self-titled release is a collection of clever arrangements that are anything but typical while remaining widely accessible. Even if you disagree with singer Max Bemis's silver-tongued communiqués, the sing-along choruses are infectious, and the band sneaks in passages and breakdowns that showcase its chops. Drummer **COBY LINDER**'s rhythmic contributions serve the song first, but his technique surfaces on occasion. His slick snare fill coming out of the middle section of "Less Cute" and syncopated fills and seamless transitions in "Mara And Me" are a few standout moments. (RCA/Jive) **David Ciauro**

STAFF FAVES THIS MONTH: ASSOCIATE EDITOR BILLY AMENDOLA



One of my favorite bands (Foreigner), producer/songwriters (Marti Frederiksen), and drummers (**BRIAN TICHY**) come together on the outstanding three-disc collection *Can't*

Slow Down. With the exception of the Mark Ronson-produced remake of "Fool For You Anyway" from Foreigner's self-titled 1977 debut (with **HOMER STEINWEISS** laying down a feel-good Memphis soul groove) and "Too Late" (which former drummer **JASON BONHAM** recorded in 2008 for the *No End In Sight* anthology), the tracks on disc one comprise the band's first new material in more than fifteen years and feature powerhouse drummer Tichy. ("Lonely" is

played by L.A. session drummer **RYAN BROWN**.) Tichy hits hard and knows exactly how to punch the band into overdrive, live and in the studio. Touring once again with Foreigner after having taken time off to play with Billy Idol, the drummer makes a great band even better, proven here on disc three, a DVD containing live concert footage, behind-the-scenes tour clips, and a peek into the studio. By 43:27, Tichy and the band are really warmed up and ready to cut loose on "Juke Box Hero," a song that was part of Foreigner's impressive run of fourteen top-twenty hits. (Disappointingly absent is the extended live version of the tune, where the band segues into Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love" and Tichy takes an old-school solo right out of the John Bonham book.

You can check it out on YouTube, though.)

Disc two contains ten of the band's classic hits, remastered and remixed.



Brian Tichy

Original drummer **DENNIS ELLIOTT**'s parts are more prominent and a clear reminder of the timeless tracks he created. Listen to "Cold As Ice"—I guarantee you'll be air-drumming those famous fills.

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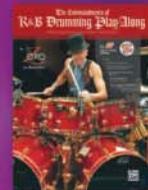
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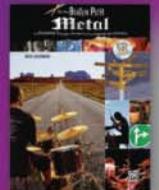
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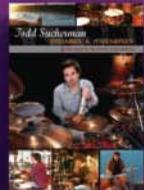
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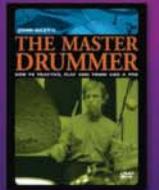
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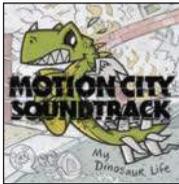
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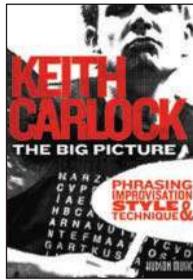
★★★★★

MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK MY DINOSAUR LIFE

MCS's major-label debut, which was produced by Blink-182's Mark Hoppus, showcases how much the band has matured musically since its first release, in 2002.

The members' tight-knit camaraderie and musicianship translates in the arrangements, which effortlessly mix solid, straightforward songwriting with offbeat creativity, matched perfectly by singer Justin Pierre's candid, quirky, intelligent lyrics and hook-laden melodies. Drummer **TONY THAXTON** broke his arm before recording started, forcing the band to rearrange its process and record the drums last. His playing on "Pulp Fiction," "Hysteria," and "The Weekends" especially demonstrate how his drum parts are integral to the songs' grooves and structures, implementing creative flourishes that in no way make the fact that he recorded last feel like the drums were ever an afterthought. (Columbia) **David Ciauro**

MULTIMEDIA



★★★★★

KEITH CARLOCK THE BIG PICTURE

DVD (2) LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED \$39.95

The second disc alone of this outstanding set qualifies the package as a classic. The inspiring, telepathic performances by Carlock, guitarist Wayne Krantz, and bassist Tim Lefebvre, taken together with an invaluable discussion of improvisation, technique, and phrasing, makes for timeless educational material and offers a rare glimpse inside these advanced musical minds. Disc one features an intimate master-class exchange between Carlock and students on some of the above topics, plus influences, musicality, and setup. The drummer also performs and discusses examples from his work with Steely Dan, Rudder, and guitarist Oz Noy. Carlock's loose and flowing technique, unconventional setup, beautiful open-toned drum sound, and highly musical style reflect a true innovator destined to influence future generations of drummers. The package includes an e-book of PDF transcriptions of Carlock's demonstrated exercises. (Hudson) **Mike Haid**

LIGHTING THE FUSE by Mike Haid

ADAM NITTI, DOUG WEBB, BERNHARD LACKNER

On *Liminal*, world-class bassist Adam Nitti keeps the funk-jazz fusion torch ablaze with the help of masterful drumming from **MARCO**



MINNEMANN, MARCUS FINNIE, and DOUG BELOTE. The deep-pocket instrumental material leans toward Chick Corea's Elektric Band and Marcus Miller/David Sanborn-style funk, with a modern edge and brilliant performances. (adamnitti.com)

On the progressive side of fusion, guitar demon Doug Webb recruits Atlanta drumming sensation **SEAN O'ROURKE**



(Sugarland, Mother's Finest) to fire up *Equalibrium*, a burning collection of six-string wizardry. Webb's music borders on the shredding side, with O'Rourke solid and in control, whether he's playing slow and swampy or entering metallic hyperdrive. (cdbaby.com/artist/dougwebb)

Austrian bassist/composer Bernhard Lackner recruits the finest in Nashville drumming talent on the outstanding instrumental release *In Between*. **DERICO**



WATSON, MARCUS FINNIE, DOUG BELOTE, and legendary Weather Report/Genesis drummer **CHESTER THOMPSON** add just the right rhythmic spice to Lackner's melodic masterpieces. And **MARCO MINNEMANN** contributes to the stunning title track. (bernhardlackner.com)

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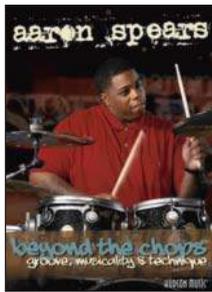
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★★★★★

AARON SPEARS BEYOND THE CHOPS

DVD (2) LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

TO ADVANCED \$39.95

Hudson continues its successful master-class format with this gospel/pop drumming package. Disc one highlights Spears playing various musical styles and answering questions from a small group of students regarding technique, musicality, influences, and the drummer's amazing facility. Groove is the focus, as Spears downplays chops and reminds us that it's all about the music. Disc two features drum guru Jojo Mayer interviewing Spears at and away from the kit. The lighthearted conversation taps into Spears' roots and his thoughts on the current state of pop drumming. Behind the kit, Mayer prods Aaron into dissecting his technique and analyzing what Mayer calls the "fairy dust" that makes Spears one of the most unusual, creative, and naturally gifted groove players on the planet. Special features include slow-motion replays and a printable e-book of transcribed grooves and fills. (Hudson) **Mike Haid**



★★★★★

AFRO-CUBAN BIG BAND PLAY-ALONG (MALLETS)

BY DAVE SAMUELS

AFRO-CUBAN BIG BAND PLAY-ALONG (DRUMSET/PERCUSSION)

BY JOE MCCARTHY

BOOK/CDs LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED

\$19.95 EACH

Two members of the Caribbean Jazz Project present six original charts from their excellent Latin Jazz Grammy-winning album, *Afro Bop Alliance*. An enclosed CD offers full tracks and "minus-one" play-along versions in a big-band setting. Samuels' mallet material features transcribed head arrangements and offers chord scales for guidance on interpretation and open stretches of the chart. McCarthy's drumset book is similar, but with sparser charts. The original core grooves are transcribed along with tips on application and experimentation. Both books work best for those who already have a strong grasp of the style. It's a brief yet welcome practice tool for a band format underrepresented on today's shelves. (Alfred) **Jeff Potter**

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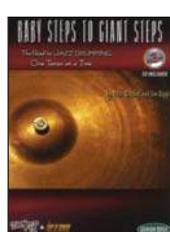
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BABY STEPS TO GIANT STEPS: THE ROAD TO JAZZ DRUMMING, ONE TEMPO AT A TIME

BY PETER RETZLAFF AND JIM RUPP

BOOK/CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

TO ADVANCED \$19.95

This seventy-six-page book combines DrumFun's popular *Turn It Up & Lay It Down, Volume 4* jazz play-along CD with discussions on many essential concepts in jazz drumming, including playing the ride cymbal with a fluid motion, feathering the bass drum, basic comping patterns, brush-strokes, and common solo phrases. It's missing demonstration tracks on the CD (only drum-less mixes are offered), but all in all it's a nice addendum to an already valuable product. (Hudson)

Michael Dawson



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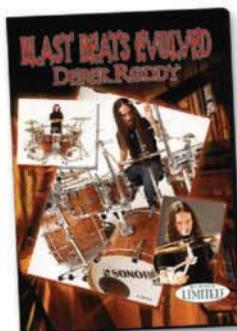
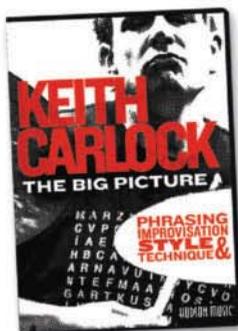
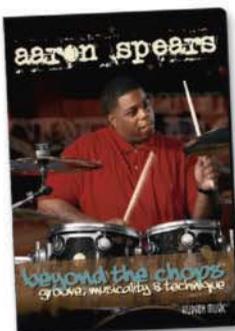
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PASIC 2009

In terms of getting the most drumming for your buck, there are fewer deals better than a trip to the annual Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC). Last November, the event was again held in Indianapolis—not the sexiest city in the world, but certainly one of the easiest to get around (the convention center is only fifteen minutes from the airport) and no doubt one of the friendliest.

The reason to trek to PAS is twofold. First, there's all the glittering new drum gear displayed at dozens of manufacturer booths. Several major companies bowed out of the 2009 show, presumably because the economy has them focusing on the more gear-oriented NAMM show in January. (Our coverage of that event in a couple months will focus on the instruments.) The drumset clinics and master classes, however, are what we go to PAS for—the plethora of drum corps, symphonic, and keyboard percussion presentations is impressive as well—and '09 certainly had its share of highlights. Here's a quick rundown of the drumming performances we crammed into the three-day event.

Maria Martinez's master class

was titled "Rudimental Warm-Ups For Drumset." The Cuban-born, New Orleans-raised drummer, known for acclaimed tutorials such as *Rudimental Warm-Ups*, *Brazilian Coordination For Drumset*, and *Afro-Cuban Coordination For Drumset*, focused on helping drummers make connections between the rudiments and what might be played on a gig. (Her clinic was sponsored by PDP, DW, Paiste, Regal Tip, LP, Protection Racket, and Remo.)

Next we checked out Coheed And Cambria drummer **Chris Pennie**, who played a towering opening solo full of theme and variation, big-time dynamics, and dense note clusters butted up against wide-open sonic spaces. Later Pennie talked a bit about odd times, modulations, and using polyrhythms to move from one idea to another. (His clinic was sponsored by Mapex, Sabian, Vater, and Evans.)

The last major clinic on day one featured ex-Bobby Brown/Lenny Kravitz drummer **Zoro** and Royal Crown Revue's **Daniel Glass**, taking turns playing over famously grooving tracks including "Green Onions," "Lido Shuffle," "Superstition," and "Home At Last." The pair ended their set with an



Akira Jimbo



Jack DeJohnette

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improvised duet. (Their clinic was sponsored by DW, Bosphorus, Sabian, Audix, LP, Evans, Vic Firth, Aquarian, Revolution Drum Accessories, and Alfred.)

Early on day two we checked out popular educator and Army Blues Jazz Ensemble drummer **Steve Fidyk's** master class, "The Transcription Lab." Fidyk gave a practical lesson in analyzing drum parts by employing critical listening and using computer programs like Amazing Slow Downer. (His clinic was sponsored by Ludwig, Vater, DW hardware, Zildjian, Remo, ProLogix, and LP.)

Before lunch we dropped by busy pop and R&B drummer **Felix Pollard's** clinic, which focused on a shortcut approach he calls "the ones and twos of popular music." Pollard explained that the concept grew out of his gig doing the Clay Aiken Jukebox tour, which required him to play ninety songs in a seventy-five-minute set. (His clinic was sponsored by Yamaha, Meinl, Aquarian, and Vater.)

After a quick bite, we headed over to check out **Tobias Ralph** (Defunkt, Screaming Headless Torsos), who came out of the gates roaring with an intense industrial hip-hop/drum 'n' bass-style solo. Ralph then spent some time explaining the advantages of placing broken doubles around the drums. (His clinic was sponsored by Paiste, Sonor, Pro-Mark, Evans, and Drummers Collective.)

The clinic by modern drum fascination **Benny Greb**, whose DVD, *The Language Of Drumming*, has had the drum world swooning since it came out a year ago, was perhaps the most buzzed-about event of PASIC. Greb performed along with a

couple of his own idiosyncratic tracks and played a solo that was at turns soulful, playful, chopsy, dramatic, and even humorous, as he employed pregnant pauses and drew surprising sounds out of his kit by knocking drums together. (Benny's clinic was sponsored by Sonor, Meinl, Remo, Hudson Music, and Pro-Mark.)

The day closed with an SRO performance by Japanese drummer **Akira Jimbo**. The possibilities suggested by Jimbo's highly organized and mapped-out "one-man orchestra" approach are endless, leaving onlookers inspired to take more melodic control of their own music. (His performance was sponsored by Yamaha, Remo, Zildjian, and Vic Firth.)

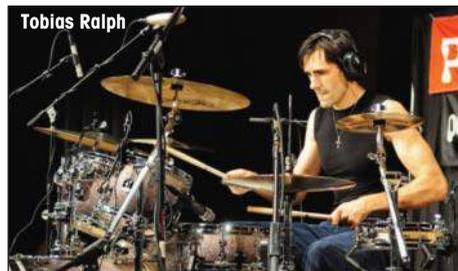
Our day three began with **Joel Stevenett's** clinic, a fresh, entertaining, and unique demonstration of the music he's recorded for many popular video games. Stevenett played his large DW kit with passion, chops, invention, and a surprising amount of subtlety, and he synchronized his parts with action projected on a large screen. (Joel's clinic was sponsored by Zildjian, DW, Vic Firth, Shure, and Remo.)

Next up, the wonderful **Dean Butterworth** gave us a peek into the average workday of a top L.A. session and touring drummer, playing along with tracks he recorded for Good Charlotte, Morrissey, the Used, and Ben Harper. (His clinic was sponsored by Paiste, Tama, Pro-Mark, and Evans.)

With an event as large as PASIC, it's impossible



Joel Stevenett



Tobias Ralph

to see everything, and a few of the performances we would love to have caught included those by jazz legend **Jack DeJohnette**, New York avant-garde drummer/leader **Susie Ibarra**, progressive rock demon **Virgil Donati**, big-band and Broadway drummer/educator **Tommy Igoe**, and fusion expert/Berklee drumset teacher **Sergio Bellotti**. So many drummers, so little time. Well, there's always next year!

For more info, and to read about the 2010 PASIC, go to pas.org.

Story by Adam Budofsky
Photos by Heinz Kronberger



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LIGHTENING THE LOAD ON THE ROAD

This month's entry, from Chris Schaff of Morton, Illinois, is not so much about the drumset as it is about a solution for quick and easy setup. The idea was born when Schaff realized the heaviest part of his kit was the hardware case. "I started thinking of how to reduce weight and noticed that my stand legs took up tons of room in the case," he says. "Also, my ability to position the stands exactly where I wanted them was a problem because of the legs. I thought that if only I could get rid of the legs, I could reduce weight and get a clean and easy setup."

Putting his ideas to work in his woodshop between gigs, Schaff developed and later patented his invention, where a wooden hardware case doubles as a base to which a hi-hat stand, snare stand, and cymbal arms are attached. There are also stoppers for the bass drum spurs. The system, Chris says, is simple and portable, and it offers a streamlined look. Schaff's kit is a Sonor Force Custom from the early '90s, with a 20" kick, 10" and 12" rack toms, and a 14" floor tom. "I've always liked these sizes, since they're just the right volume and feel," the drummer says. "I use a

variety of snares, and most recently I added a DW Super Solid." And all that wood below the kit does more than just anchor the drums. "The plywood base reflects lots of low end, so it makes for a nice punch," Schaff adds.

For more information and to watch a time-lapse video of Chris setting up and tearing down his kit, go to modern drummer.com.



Photo Submission: Digital photos on disk as well as print photos may be sent to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Hi-res digital photos and descriptive text can also be emailed to billya@modern drummer.com. Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message. Photos cannot be returned.



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