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Most people know him as one of Howard Stern's sidekicks. But he's also among the greatest metal drummers of our time—and one of the most relentless woodshedders a drumset has ever seen.

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IT'S PERSONAL

I've always had pretty diverse musical tastes. I give a lot of credit to my three older sisters, who weaned me on a varied rock 'n' roll diet before I was able to form real likes and dislikes of my own and, later, branch out beyond rock. *Modern Drummer* gets props too: I started reading *MD* almost as soon as I began playing drums, at age thirteen, and the magazine's broad stylistic coverage reinforced the idea that all forms of music are not only valid but vital.

In one issue in the mid-'80s I might read first about what Kenny Aronoff was up to with John Cougar Mellencamp. (Remember the "Cougar" part?) Then I'd flip the pages and learn about Doane Perry's early days with Jethro Tull. I'd read a story on Adam Nussbaum and glean a few things about surviving in the jazz world, I'd check out what legendary Nashville studio drummer Larrie Londin had to say about this ever more popular gadget called the drum machine, and I'd flip to the back pages and find out what albums other top drummers listened to for inspiration. Taken together, all of this info shouted out that no one genre is superior to another.

But surely there's something about the drummers featured in *MD* that sets them apart from the rest of us? Well, I think that even more than ability, it's personality. Musical personality. Great drummers sound like *themselves*. You can go back through every single back issue, and I bet in at least half of them you'll find someone saying that when it's Tony Williams playing, you can hear it in one note. Williams is far from alone here. Elvin Jones, Phil Collins, Alex Van

Halen, Joey Baron, Stewart Copeland, Tony Allen, Charlie Watts—they're all instantly identifiable. Even the great chameleons of the studio scene, people who can shape their sound to serve a wide variety of artists—the Aronoffs, the Colaiutas—are hired to bring some of their own mojo to sessions.

In several spots this issue delves into what it is that makes each player unique, including some clues and advice on how to bring out our true musical personality. In our Concepts article, "It's All In The Touch," Ben Sesar of Brad Paisley's band discusses the idea that the sound comes from the drummer more than from the drum. In *A Different View*, bassist/producer Bill Laswell contrasts "free" players with "beat" players but suggests that you'll get the desired result in the studio as long as you keep creativity the focus and you let the music breathe. (You'll find more with Laswell on the topic of drummers with personality at moderndrummer.com.) And if you take Paul Wertico's Gimme 10! words to heart, you'll sound even more like *you* than you realized you could, and that's true whether you play blues, fusion, or grindcore.

MD's format has evolved over the years, but the diversity remains. And every year more drummers hop into the touring van. It's the ones who have the most to say and the most interesting ways to say it—the players with personality and charisma, not necessarily speed or chops or snazzy gear—who will appear in these pages, to offer information and inspiration to anyone holding a pair of sticks, whether in the basement, in the classroom, or on the big stage.

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ED THIGPEN 1930–2010

I am deeply saddened to hear of the passing of my friend and teacher Ed Thigpen. I had the pleasure and honor of spending a lot of time with him over the years. Ed drastically affected me as a drummer but more as a musician and a professional. He was quiet, polite, and, above all, full of class. I started my love of brushes with him but was more profoundly affected by his approach to playing music. Anyone who touches this instrument should research and listen to his constant demonstration of how *music* is played on the drumset. Ed represented what is seemingly a disappearing art—the art of playing music—in its highest form.

Polite articulation, musical selflessness, artistic humility, finesse, delicate roars of mastery, and, most of all, classy musical choices made Ed a legend of this instrument. His work in Oscar Peterson's catalog alone is enough for him to be considered one of the greats, but he performed in many other great musical settings as well. I encourage everyone to spend time with Ed through these recordings, and I thank him for the time we spent one on one. You will be missed, Ed.

Russ Miller (session great)

BRADY DRUMS

Almost two decades ago, parties involved with Brady in the U.S. at the time and others active in the studio industry informed us that a Brady 7x12 Wandoo Block snare drum was used for the B-52s' "Love Shack" recording session. This had always been our understanding. We have recently learned that this information is inaccurate. We apologize to Charley Drayton for this unintended attribution.

**Kelly Brady
Brady Drums**

WILBY FLETCHER, 1954–2009

My friend Wilby Fletcher, who played with McCoy Tyner, Grover Washington Jr., Michel Petrucciani, Roy Ayers, Harry Belafonte, and Gato Barbieri, among others, died on October 15, 2009, three days before his fifty-fifth birthday. I had the privilege of studying with Wilby in the late '80s, when he was living in Syracuse, New York. At that time he didn't have students because he was much too busy to teach. It was only after I followed him around to local gigs for months and wore him out that he finally agreed to take me on as a student.

The time Wilby spent with me made a huge impact on my life and my musical career. He made me feel good about my playing and had genuine concern for my progress. He could be blunt and honest but always in a constructive fashion, to help motivate and build confidence. He taught me the importance of listening. He had a command of the instrument that was captivating, and his groove was infectious. He was a source of positive energy and an uplifting spirit on and off the stage. The invest-

ment he made in my life produced great dividends. I'm so saddened by his passing, but I feel blessed to have known him as a teacher and friend back in my formative years of 1989 and 1990. Condolences to the entire Fletcher family and their friends.

David Northrup (Travis Tritt)

BRIAN DOWNEY

Thank you for the fine story in the March issue on the great Thin Lizzy's Brian Downey. I am a longtime fan of Brian's drumming and always wanted to know more about him, and I'm pleased that he seems to be a very humble man. I recall hearing "Cowboy Song" for the first time on the radio as I was speeding across the Arizona desert to attend a rodeo. I was hooked and later absolutely astounded to discover that a black Irishman, Phil Lynott, and his old Dublin schoolmate Brian Downey cowrote what's arguably the finest rock tune ever written about the American West. Over three decades later, that song is now my ringtone! Brian's drumming had a huge influence on my playing, and today my students are immediately hooked when I have them listen to Thin Lizzy and Brian's beautifully tight rolls, superb double bass work, and creative grooves. Believe me, Brian, you have not been forgotten, and if you're ever in Santa Barbara, please come by the store, as the entire staff would be thrilled to meet you!

Mark Cavanaugh

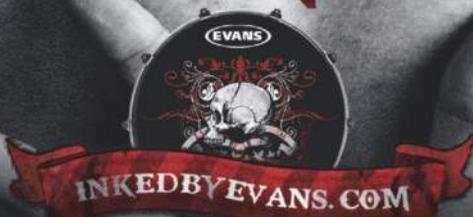
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Danny Clinch



As a total gadget freak, I'm going crazy trying to identify the little electronic device that Max and Jay Weinberg have under their ride cymbal. You can see it clearly in the photos from their feature in the December 2009 issue of *Modern Drummer*, as well as in the Zildjian ad on the back cover. It looks like some kind of monitor.

Joe Bertram

According to Jay, "My dad and I use the same electronics. We use a lyric monitor, as well as a [video] monitor that's always focused on Bruce. I like the lyric monitor because with the amount of songs we have, it's good to know where we are in the set—or even in the song! Not very often, but for about a second during a few songs, I'll check the [video] monitor, especially if I can't see Bruce. It's very important to see his cues in order to deliver what he wants. His body language often dictates the groove. Hope this helps!"



Danny Clinch



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This month we catch up with the **2010 MD Fest** performers to find out what they've been up to—and what you can expect from them at the show.

by Mike Haid

DANIEL GLASS ROYAL CROWN REVUE

Drummer/educator/music historian Daniel Glass is an entrepreneurial wiz with a clear vision for the future. Besides his gig with the retro-swing heavyweights Royal Crown Revue, he's also a first-call L.A. session drummer for '20s to '40s-era music. Along with the award-winning instructional book *The Commandments Of Early Rhythm And Blues Drumming*, which Glass wrote with popular drummer/educator Zoro, the duo has prepared an instructional poster for Vic Firth called "We Want The Funk," tracing the history of R&B drumming from 1940 to 1980.



(You can order the poster at vicfirth.com.)

"My goal," Glass explains, "is to create my own niche in the industry and to develop an educational catalog for drummers. I'm touring the world with RCR but also doing a lot of clinics. In my recent clinics I dissect seven decades of drumming history, from the 1890s to the Beatles."

Daniel says that during his MD Festival master class he'll discuss how the evolution of the drumset has gone hand in hand with the evolution of pop music. "I want to give drummers a clear perspective on the importance of swing and shuffle grooves," he explains, "and help them become more employable in today's market."

CHRIS COLEMAN PRINCE

This 2001 Guitar Center National Drum Competition champion will bring his award-winning gospel drumming expertise to the MD Festival. Coleman has worked with a plethora of world-class artists, including Chaka Khan, Rachelle Ferrell, En Vogue, Pussycat Dolls, Babyface, Christina Aguilera, Patti LaBelle, Randy Brecker, New Kids On The Block, Wayne Brady, Sean Kingston, Phoebe Snow, All-4-One, and Ron Brown. But Coleman's

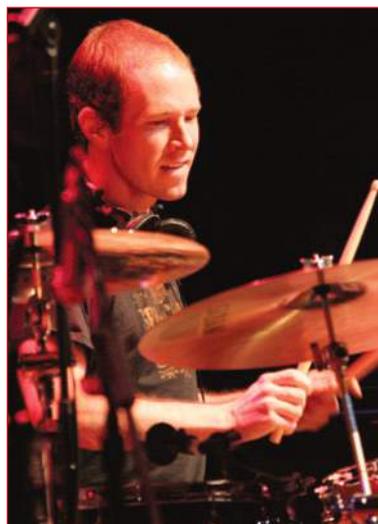


most recent gig finds the drummer kicking a power trio with one of pop music's all-time megastars, Prince. "The 'P' situation is still in the baby stages," Chris says. "I'm just flowing with him right now." Coleman describes the trio as rock oriented, "like Jimi Hendrix's Band Of Gypsies, but more funky."

At his MD Fest master class, Coleman, who has been teaching privately at the Collective in New York City, will discuss the framework and purpose of his DVD *Playing With Precision & Power*, share his vast musical experiences, and explore the many facets of becoming a professional player.

CHRIS PENNIE COHEED AND CAMBRIA

Progressive mathcore monster Chris Pennie, who will be opening the big stage at the MD Festival, is pumped about the new prog/punk/metal Coheed And Cambria release, *Year Of The Black Rainbow*.



"We really had a blast making this record with producers Joe Barresi and Atticus Ross," Pennie says.

Besides preparing for the MD Fest, Pennie has been conducting clinics, teaching, and working on a host of projects. The New Jersey-based band Return To Earth, featuring Chris on drums, will be dropping its self-produced album *Automata* this August. Recently Pennie formed a production company called Fight Mannequins, in which he is writing music for film and other media. And he's been working on a project called Lion Tamer, which will be putting out a studio record that, according to the drummer, "is sure to be completely crazy and over the top. It involves cowriter [and former Dillinger Escape Plan guitarist] James Love, as well as some other great players."

Pennie says he will perform along with tracks from these various projects at the MD Fest and will pull out some surprises as well.

SHAWN PELTON SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE



Shawn Pelton has held the drum chair in the *Saturday Night Live* house band for the past eighteen years. The stylish drummer, easily recognizable on camera by his newsboy cap, sideburns, and rock star apparel, is equally identifiable by his thick, in-the-pocket groove, which has just as much swagger and attitude as his wardrobe. Pelton, who has worked outside of *SNL* with Shawn Colvin, Sheryl Crow, Bruce Springsteen, and Billy Joel, among many others, spends a lot of time in his home studio, where he recently recorded tracks for the 2010 film *The Bounty Hunter* and TV spots including music for *30 Rock*. Pelton also recently recorded songs for Five For Fighting, Rosanne Cash, and Matisyahu.

At the MD Festival Shawn will perform with his band House Of Diablo, which he describes as "organic and rooted in its approach, but still trying to look to the future by applying modern technology within acoustic traditions."

ADAM DEITCH BREAK SCIENCE

New Yorker Adam Deitch is a hot commodity these days as a drummer, producer, and writer. Besides recording with various projects on his Royal Family label, including tracks with the soul/funk/rock singer Nigel Hall, he's been writing, playing, and producing for the New Orleans-based band Dr. Claw, featuring Ian Neville and Nick Daniels from the Neville Brothers, gigging with George Porter Jr. and Leo Nocentelli of the Meters, and recording with husband-and-wife guitar greats Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi. The drummer has a new trio featuring Louis Cato on bass—who's also "one the baddest drummers on earth," according to Adam—and Yuki Hirano (Bilal) on keys. And he's been in the studio with Wyclef Jean and with French soul artists Les Nubians, and teaching students privately at the New School in New York City. Amazingly, despite all this activity, Deitch considers his top priority recording the new record by Break Science, in which, he says, he's "blending electronic music with much-needed raw, acoustic-sounding drums."

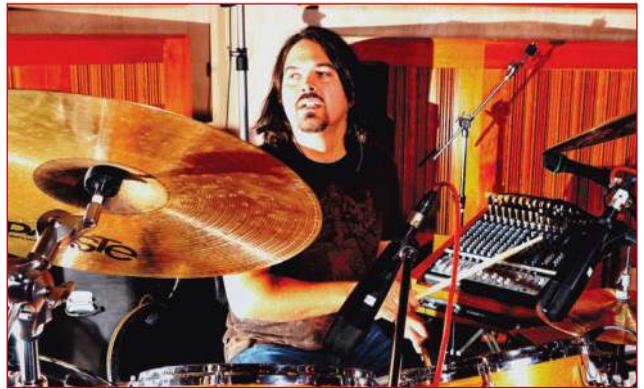
For the MD Festival, Deitch explains, "I'll analyze various forms of pocket playing, highlighting styles and drummers influential on my playing, starting with West African drumming—Olatunji, Tony Allen—Jamaican reggae styles, calypso drumming, and then a brief history of New Orleans drumming—marching, Zigaboo Modeliste, James Black, Russell Batiste.... I'll expose virtually unknown funk drummers I consider my secret weapons, including Gaylord Birch, Fred White, and Sandy McKee. The James Brown drummers will also be a focus. Then I'll move on to more modern stuff such as D.C. go-go music and forms of hip-hop from different areas of the U.S., Afrika Bambaataa and the electro beats, jungle—creating virtual echoes—two-step, grime, and dub-step styles.

"I want drummers to get a feel for each style in a new way through this 'pocket analysis,'" Adam continues. "I'll also be imparting knowledge I've acquired working with various artists including John Scofield, Average White Band, Lettuce, Wyclef Jean and the Fugees, Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings, GZA, and Meshell Ndegeocello."

Deitch will be joined on stage by his Break Science bandmate Borahm Lee for a brief performance. Finally, the drummer plans to discuss his career as a songwriter and producer, in order to "create a legion of drummer/producer/writer/arrangers! Being a drummer gives us a leg up on the competition, without a doubt."



SHANNON FORREST NASHVILLE STUDIO ACE



Nashville session ace Shannon Forrest has been flying under the radar of the drumming community, quietly becoming one of the most sought-after hit-making drummers on the new country scene. Forrest, who has led the league in drumming on top-ten hits in Nashville for seven years running, recently recorded with Ronnie Dunn (Brooks & Dunn), Darius Rucker, pop artist Rob Blackledge, and the band Virgin Millionaires. "My current endeavor is to try to make more pop, rock, and R&B records," Shannon says. "I've been fortunate to make a lot of country records, but I haven't had the opportunity to really express my own voice on the drums."

At the MD Fest, look for Forrest to demonstrate his groove playing and to cover what is required in the studio. "I'll discuss my approach to developing time and groove, getting drum sounds, and some engineering, producing, and home studio concepts as well," Shannon says. "I'll also be playing along with some tracks, from bluegrass to modern rock."

STANTON MOORE GALACTIC

New Orleans drumming guru Stanton Moore is currently touring with Galactic in support of the band's new release, *Ya-Ka-May*, an amalgam of traditional and modern New Orleans styles featuring Crescent City icons Allen Toussaint, Irma Thomas, and the Rebirth Brass Band, among others. Legendary Meters, Wild Tchoupitoulas, and Neville Brothers singer and percussionist Cyril Neville is the band's special guest for most of the tour. "We're headed to Japan and Australia later this year," Moore says. "We'll be touring all the way up to the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, which will be a crazy party as always."

At Jazz Fest, which runs from April 23 through May 2, Moore will play with his own trio, as well as with Galactic, Garage A Trois, and singer Anders Osborne, whose latest album, *American Patchwork*, Stanton coproduced. Immediately following that, Moore's trio, along with Osborne, will tour the West Coast and then head to New Jersey to close the Modern Drummer Festival. "We'll play tunes from my new *Groove Alchemy* DVD/book and CD," Stanton says. "I'll spend time demonstrating some of the many grooves from *Groove Alchemy* as well."



BENNY GREB INTERNATIONAL DRUM STAR

The look on Benny Greb's face on the cover of his masterful instructional DVD, *The Language Of Drumming*, reflects the mischievous thought processes of one of the most creative and entertaining drummers on the international scene. The German mastermind's unique system for musical expression has taken the drumming community by storm, and Greb plans to further express his concepts at the 2010 MD Fest.

"Basically I will just try to do what I do, the best I can... without being too nervous," Benny says. "I feel very honored to play at the Modern Drummer Festival. It's really the Oscars of drumming, and it's normally seen as impossible for Europeans to be invited. So there's no pressure on me at all!"

Greb has been working with a jazz trio featuring Turkish keyboard great Sabri Tulug Tirpan, playing regular club gigs in his hometown of Hamburg with his fusion band 3erGezimmeR, and touring with the German pop/rock singer Stoppok. "I'm also working on some future music projects that are top secret," Benny adds. "And I'm working with Meinl on a new signature cymbal idea that will be released very soon."



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MYSTERIOUS SLINGERLAND KIT

I just bought an old Slingerland kit, and I can't find any accurate information on the date or model of the drums. Any insight you can provide would be much appreciated.

Terry Miller

According to drum historian Harry Cangany, "It's a beautiful four-piece Slingerland set in black diamond pearl with Sound King lugs and black and gold Chicago badges. By 1961, the badges read 'Niles, Illinois.' Sound King lugs were introduced in 1955 and were used until Slingerland production stopped in 2008. These lugs had the same drill holes as their predecessors, the beavertail. (Check to see if there is any indentation in the plastic that may show a lug change.) The snare drum has non-Slingerland hoops on top and bottom. Although it has a three-point strainer, as used on Radio King snare drums that had solid maple shells, this drum is probably a 3-ply, since there are no extension bridges on either side.

The bass drum has a Ludwig cymbal mount and a Ludwig rail consolette. A Slingerland consolette had two mounting holes, while Ludwig's had four. The cymbal arm and hoop-mounted spurs are the Economo model by Slingerland.

The floor tom has the correct push-button leg brackets and straight hoops. The rack tom has a Slingerland Radio King hoop on top. These hoops were used at the beginning of the Sound King era. The parts, except as noted, look to be Slingerland. If my suspicions are correct, you have a late-'50s set that should bring \$1,300 to \$1,400. If the snare has a solid maple shell, then you may be approaching \$1,600 to \$1,700 for the complete kit."



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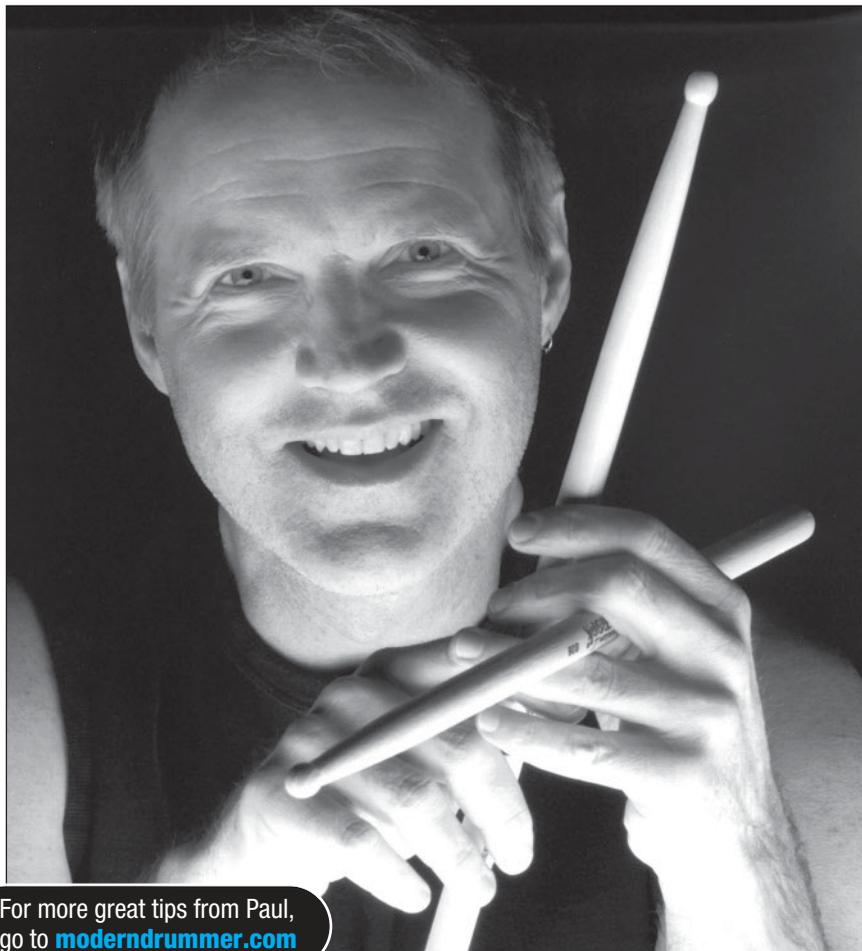
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1 THINK OF VOLUME IN TERMS OF PITCH. The harder you hit something, the more the pitch goes up. So if you try to visualize dynamics not only as loud and soft but also as higher and lower pitch-wise, you can actually make your playing not just more dynamic but also more melodic.

2 STICKING IS PHRASING. When I was younger, the idea of learning all the rudiments seemed like an antiquated form of needless torture. But one of the big differences between any two drummers is the stickings they use. A typical rock drummer might use more single strokes, whereas a typical jazz drummer might use a lot of double strokes or combination strokes. The more variety in the stickings that you can play, the more options you have to make any rhythm or pattern your own, as well as to change the way that rhythm or pattern sounds and flows.

3 LEARN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, NOT ONLY ABOUT DIFFERENT MUSIC AND PERIODS OF MUSIC BUT ALSO ABOUT THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS THAT INFLUENCED THE CREATION OF THAT MUSIC. Music doesn't exist in a vacuum. Just like a lot of art in general, it often reflects the times in which it was created. By learning not only the musical styles of any period but also how that period's conditions in the world influenced those styles, you'll give your playing much more context. Your drumming will be more emotionally connected, rather than just technically based.

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4 USE EVERY TYPE OF STROKE IMAGINABLE IN ORDER TO CREATE YOUR OWN SOUNDS

AND INTERPRETATIONS. There are so many ways to strike a surface, and each one creates a different sound and emits a different emotion. Drummers are often taught to play straight down and lift the sound out of the instrument. That works great if that's the sound you want to project. But utilizing other techniques and approaches, such as a dead stroke, a side stroke, a varying angle of your stroke, a tight grip, a loose grip, French grip, German grip, American grip, how many fingers you use to hold the stick and how tight your fulcrum is, how far up you hold the stick, where you place your fulcrum on the stick, and where on the surface your stroke is placed... they all have a different sound and can give you *your* personal sound through the choices you make, as opposed to what other players choose to do.

5 THINK OF YOUR RHYTHMS AS YOUR SPEECH PATTERNS INSTEAD OF JUST MATHEMATICAL SUBDIVISIONS.

Going from musical point A to musical point B, whether it's using whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, etc., or even using larger groupings of time such as two, four, eight, or sixteen measures—it all can be subdivided either mathematically or organically. Mathematic subdivisions sound precise and “proper” and are more easily transcribable, but the space between any two musical points can also be more emotional and human sounding by imitating your speech pattern. After all, isn't playing music just another form of communication? Try “talking” through your drumming as opposed to trying to play like a machine. Obviously this almost always depends on the demands of the music, but when you walk and talk at the same time, isn't your speech pattern independent of your walking pace? Try applying the same type of “independent” personal speech to your drumming—if it fits musically, of course.

6 DON'T BLAME YOUR EQUIPMENT.

Although it's always wonderful to play on first-rate instruments, the truth is that the sound is in your head, heart, and hands.



7 ALWAYS PLAY THE TRUTH! In other words, be true to *your* vision, no matter what others may say. Each of us is unique, and sometimes it's easy to fall into the habit of seeking approval from others and imitating what's already popular. That's normal, if the goal is to be open-minded about criticism and to grow and learn as a musician, but there are other times when you just have to follow your own muse and become “a different drummer.” Often, when you stop worrying about what other people think of you and you focus on what *you* honestly think about yourself and what you want to accomplish with your music, that's when good things start to happen.

8 LISTEN TO YOURSELF THROUGH THE MUSIC AND INSIDE THE MUSIC, NOT ON TOP OF IT. Playing music in a band is a communal experience. If you take all of the responsibility for timekeeping and creativity upon yourself, it can often be a lonely and exhausting experience. But if you try to blend in with the other musicians rather than play in spite of them, many wonderful and liberating things can occur. After all, the overall sound of the band includes you *and* the other musicians, so rather than playing “on top of” the music, try listening to yourself “inside” the music. Of course, trust is a big factor in doing that, so before you can comfortably

and successfully relinquish your primary responsibilities as a drummer, you must first trust the other musicians. But once you can, and do, making music becomes a lot easier and a lot more fun. It's like the old saying goes: No man is an island.

9 FORGIVE, AND EVEN RELISH, YOUR IDIOSYNCRASIES. Your style is based on a number of factors, including what you can and can't do, what you know and don't know, how you're wired (speed, reaction time, memory, problem-solving ability, sense of time and pitch, physical mass, and so on), and how well you can make sense out of what you hear in order to compose a part that works for the music. Try to figure out who *you* really are when you get behind the drums, and make your uniqueness a positive attribute...warts and all!

10 ENJOY THE PROCESS OF GETTING THERE. In a society based on quick fixes and instant gratification it's sometimes hard to remember that life is a journey. So is being a musician. True musical artists never really reach the finish line, because they're constantly growing and changing, both as artists and as human beings. That's one of the many beautiful things about being a musician. Learning is a lifelong process.



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SONOR

PHIL RUDD SIGNATURE KIT AND DANNY CAREY SNARE

by David Ciauro

Sonor has recently begun adding signature instruments to its catalog. The models we have for review this month include an 8x14 bronze snare built for Tool drummer Danny Carey and a signature snare drum and special edition signature kit made for AC/DC's Phil Rudd. Let's check them out.

PHIL RUDD SIGNATURE DRUMKIT

Based on the configurations Rudd used for AC/DC's *Stiff Upper Lip* and *Black Ice* world tours, the drummer's five-piece signature kit brings back the power-tom depths favored by '80s rock drummers. Deep toms have waned in popularity in recent years, and we're now accustomed to seeing rock kits comprising shallow piccolo toms. Rudd's rig is a refreshing throwback to the "size matters" days of hard-hitting, unapologetically decadent arena rock.

Finished in classic black wrap with chrome hardware, this kit has a sleek, sophisticated appearance, even if the intimidating tom sizes suggest the drums are also looking to pick a fight. The pieces sounded great together, creating a uniform bottom-end attack that was fat and slappy. Although the kit was easy to tune and proved to be versatile in its tuning range, the best sounds we got were at the lower end of the spectrum, with minimal intervals between the toms and the kick.

The toms are 13x13, 18x16, and 18x18, and they won't require muffling if you prefer an all-out open sound. With some external muffling, the attack was more focused. I found this especially useful when I tuned the top heads just above wrinkling. The attack remained aggressive, instead of becoming thuddy or boxy, and the tone was always clear and present. The 18x18 floor tom came pretty close to emulating a bass drum; it was fun to create double bass illusions by playing alternating 16ths between that tom and the kick.

The 18x22 bass drum was a bit too boomy without muffling. Some internal dampening did the trick, helping to achieve the controlled resonance and thunderous thump you want when laying down simple, straightforward beats. In terms of Rudd's bedrock grooves, it's important for the kick to have ample resonance to occupy the space between beats 1 and 3, but it's also crucial to control the ring so that each note has clear definition and punch. This drum made that happen.

The basswood shells of the Rudd signature kit are constructed in a cross-laminated fashion to keep them free of tension. The rack tom is equipped with Sonor's vibration-free T.A.R. (Total Acoustic Resonance) mounting system. Each drum is equipped with eight TuneSafe tuning lugs with fine-tooth threads, which help keep the toms in tune even when the batter heads are slack. The bass drum comes without a tom mount, the spurs have memory locks, and the black front head

bears Rudd's signature and "AC/DC" in white. Lastly, each kit comes with a 200 series double-braced hardware package, which includes a single tom stand, a hi-hat stand, a snare drum stand, two mini boom stands, and a single kick pedal. List price: \$1,659.

PHIL RUDD SIGNATURE SNARE

An integral part of AC/DC's thick sound is Phil Rudd's wrecking-ball backbeat. Sonor has been Rudd's preferred drum company throughout the drummer's career, and together they've designed a snare that converges the trinity of Rudd's sonic needs: fatness, punch, and edge.

I half expected this drum to be exceptionally deep, and I was surprised to discover it was only 5x14. Built like a bulldog—short and stocky—it has some weight to it, and it barks as well as it bites. A chrome-over-brass 1.2 mm shell outfitted with chrome die-cast Artist series hoops and ten Delite series double lugs supply the bulk. While the hoops certainly accentuated the drum's crack and boosted its power and projection, the shell provided the depth when tuned at a medium tension. When I increased the tension, the depth of the tone rounded out to a more focused attack, making it multidimensional and therefore relevant beyond the realm of bulldozing rock. The snare beds are cut fairly shallow, so I kept the twenty steel snares tensioned moderately to maintain sensitivity and tone. Sonor again uses black plastic resin for the throw-off and butt plate, to enhance the look and structural durability.

In a live setting, the Rudd snare performed well and cut through without overpowering the mix. For a signature "rock" snare, it proved itself to be versatile across myriad playing styles. Rimclicks were also excellent—for those occasions when raucous rockers are coerced into playing sweetly. List price: \$659.

DANNY CAREY SIGNATURE SNARE

Danny Carey is one of the most revered drummers in modern metal and heavy progressive genres. His tremendously physical approach is complemented by his wonderful sense of dynamics, awe-



inspiring technique, and unique concept of rhythm. So when Carey and Sonor came together to make a signature snare, it had to harness all the varied energies the drummer puts into his playing.

Making a drum that could respond properly to the force of Carey's attack and that could amplify it accordingly required using a material that was made to translate power in a musical manner. That material is bronze, and this drum's 1 mm seamed shell resonates generously and is fantastically loud. But it wouldn't be a Sonor drum if it couldn't also hold some seriously diverse tonal options. I tuned it every which way and was always pleased with the tone. I was particularly impressed with how an 8x14 snare, when cranked

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK...

In addition to playing through some AC/DC classics while testing Phil Rudd's signature drums, I explored my MP3 player and had a blast jamming to tunes off the Foo Fighters' *The Colour And The Shape*, as well as to some Big Business, Clutch, and Danzig tracks. I also tried a few power ballads, such as Mötley Crüe's "Without You," from the *Dr. Feelgood* album. Playing slow, spaced-out tom fills sounded great on this kit, thanks to the fullness and resonance of the toms. If these types of tracks reflect your playing styles, you'll enjoy this set.



up, could dry out just enough to take on some wood-like qualities. The snare bed is shallow, so the tone was more prominent than the snap or buzz coming from the twenty-strand snare wires. Soft grace notes didn't translate through the drum's depth and got somewhat lost in the live mix, so I went for more straightforward power grooves.

This drum was very crisp, open, and full. It features 2.3 mm Power Hoops, ten chrome Artist series lugs surrounding laser-engraved talisman symbols, and Carey's laser-engraved signature around the air vent. The throw-off and butt plate are made of black plastic resin, which enhances the drum's modern look and structural durability. List price: \$1,099.

CONCLUSIONS

Danny Carey's signature snare has a great look, excellent power, diverse tonal variety, and nonabrasive overtones. It's better suited to more direct players, rather than to those who favor tons of slick, subtle, nuance-laden grooves. Along the same lines, Phil Rudd's signature snare and kit aren't trying to be something they're not. But even though they were designed to fit the needs of one of the most specific rock drummers around, these models should appeal to a huge range of rock drummers, young and old, beginner and professional. And with such affordable list prices, Rudd's snare and kit are excellent values, offering more than the fair share of boom for your bucks.

sonor.com



MEINL M-SERIES CYMBALS

by Fran Azzarto



When it comes to cymbals, a lot of drummers would agree that handmade is the way to go. Isn't everything better when it has that human touch? Well, Meinl has set out to change all that with the new M-Series models. This line is made in the company's German factory and uses B20 bronze alloy, which is a mixture of copper and tin. But that's not what makes the M-Series unique. It's *how* these instruments are made that truly sets them apart. According to Meinl, M-Series cymbals are created using "high-tech computerized manufacturing standards." That statement may not sound as romantic as "handmade," but the results speak for themselves—these shiny plates sing!

The M-Series is currently available in limited sizes: 14" hi-hats (\$600), 16" (\$390) and 18" (\$460) crashes, and 20" (\$540) and 22" (\$660) rides. Each cymbal has a clean semi-brilliant finish with a spun/hammered look. When I set them up around my kit, the audience could easily take notice of these guys from the back of the room. But sound is what really matters, and all of these cymbals were warm and controlled, with a nice dark side to them.

RIDES FIRST

Both M-Series rides are medium in weight and have fairly standard-size bells. The 20" was the rocker of the two. It had a solid and quick high-pitched attack that allowed for fast single-stroke rolls to be heard without being lost in overtones and wash. The smooth, controlled ride sound they emitted would likely record very well. And when put up against a couple of loud Fender Twin amps,

WARM AND VERSATILE

Meinl's M-Series is a very musical bunch, with lots of warmth and a decent amount of power. I wouldn't put these to use in heavy-rock situations, but for most indie, pop, rock, or R&B, this fresh, handsome family of cymbals will fit right in.

the 20" held its own. The bell was loud, clear, and fun to play, especially on upbeats during funk tunes.

The 22" sounded big, dark, and mellow. Quick patterns got a little lost, and the bell sound was not as clear as that of the 20". But the cymbal's warmth made slower songs sound richer and more dramatic.

CLEAN CRASHES

The crashes in the M-Series sounded clean and warm. The 16" and 18" were lower in pitch when compared with Zildjian A models of similar size, which made for some nice, deep accent punches. There weren't a lot of messy overtones, and the two crashes spoke very quickly and had a slick decay. The bell on the 18" sounded big and low and proved to be very usable. Both crashes had a fairly dark wash, which might get lost if you play in extremely loud situations. But on most rock and pop tunes the cymbals would make any accent stand out.

FUNKY, CRUNCHY HI-HATS

I found the funkier sounds in the M-Series family came from the 14" hi-hats. The heavy weight of the bottom cymbal, which is pitched almost a third higher than the top, gives this pair a very fat, dark sound. There were no ear-piercing pitches when I rode on the hats in an open position. When they were closed, I heard a big, deep stick attack. These aren't super-clean Stewart Copeland/Police-style hi-hats. They're a bit sloshier and darker, more like Ringo's.

COMPUTERIZED MUSICALITY

Computers can do some pretty amazing things, but who would have thought they'd be able to produce musical-sounding cymbals? The benefit of having a computer involved in the manufacturing process likely helps with the uniformity and consistency of each cymbal, as all M-Series models have the exact same look and feel. But it's the line's rich and warm tones that foreshadow even better things to come.

meinlcymbals.com

GEORGE WAY AERO, HOLLYWOOD, AND STUDIO SNARES

by David Ciauro

The George Way Drum Company originally came into existence in 1962, but Way himself began carving out his place in drum history well before then. The legendary drummer/inventor/businessman now lives on through the vision of modern drumsmith Ronn Dunnett, who continues to churn out exceptional wood and metal snare drums under Way's name. Given the models' timeless design, classic sounds, and modern know-how, it's hard to discern whether these are vintage drums made with modern flair or modern drums made with vintage flair. The three snares on review are the Aero, the Hollywood, and the Studio, all of which are 8-lug models with a very streamlined design.

THE AERO

The lightweight 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 Aero features an ultra-thin seamless spun aluminum shell with a matte anodized finish. At a lower tuning, this drum produced a deep, fat classic-rock sound while retaining its responsiveness. Some higher-pitched overtones were prominent. But after I swapped out the single-ply head with a twin-ply version, the overtones were quite controlled. At a medium tension, the tone held very much the same characteristics as it did at the lower tuning, but with noticeably more crack and more penetrating rimshots. A higher tension brought out the tonal characteristics of the medium tuning, but in a more excited state. The pitch didn't get piercing so much as the attack became very focused. The crack turned into a *pop*, and there was a bit more snap from the snares. This tuning would be ideal for big-band settings, but the Aero was not at all limited in its potential applications. Completing the design are triple-flange hoops and AAA chrome plating (which nicely contrasts the matte aluminum shell) on all metal parts.

NICE THROW

The 845 throw-off on these snares features separate components. The actual throw-off is on one side of the drum, while the snare-tension adjustment dial is on the other. The result is an understated yet balanced aesthetic, and the dial locks into place with each quarter turn, keeping the snare tension consistent during play.

THE HOLLYWOOD

The Hollywood's shell is made of extra-heavy brass and has a chrome finish. Like the Aero, triple-flange hoops and AAA chrome plating on all metal parts finish off the drum's sleek look. The mass of the brass made for a really fat wallop at a lower tuning, which is the sound often heard propelling bands that rely on solid pocket drumming. At a medium tension, the tone was robust and meaty with presence and attack, which defines a classic and universal snare sound. Tuning the drum even higher brought out the crispness of the snares, combined with a firm tonality and a well-defined attack that still retained depth.

THE STUDIO

The wood-shell Studio comes in a selection of pearl and lacquer finishes. The drum has a 4-ply electronically bonded reinforced shell, triple-flange hoops, and AAA chrome plating on all metal parts. It sounded awesome no matter how I tuned it, and it possessed the same positive qualities as the Aero and Hollywood models, only with the unmistakable warmth and tonality of wood. The textural changes when I played off-center or close to the rim boasted a myriad of voices, making this a very expressive drum.

CONCLUSION

Each of the three George Way snares we reviewed is available in 5x14 and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 sizes. The Aero lists for \$795, the Hollywood for \$825, and the Studio for \$659. If a vintage or classic snare drum sound is what you're after but you favor the advantages of owning a new drum that incorporates high-quality modern design elements, check out these sophisticated modern/vintage models. They have it all, and then some.

waydrums.com



LATIN PERCUSSION

RIO BRAZILIAN PERCUSSION LINE

by Michael Dawson



There's nothing quite like the funky lilt and relentless drive of Brazilian samba batucada, which is akin to a modern-day drum line with African drumming influences. The infectious beats that make up samba are an amalgamation of patterns played on a variety of drums and percussion

instruments. The bass parts are thumped out on large surdos, while meaty midrange rhythms chug along via the caixa (snare drum) and pandeiro (tambourine). The cutting high-end figures of samba are hammered out on the tambourim (small jingle-less tambourine) and the leader of the group, the

repinique (high-pitched tom). We were sent a sampling of each drum in LP's new Rio line to test out, so let's see and hear how close they come to encapsulating the celebratory spirit of Carnival.

THE REAL THING

While you could use any number of drumset and percussion instruments to replicate the sounds of samba batucada, in order to capture the true flavors of this distinct music you need drums designed especially for the task. LP's Rio line features such instruments, ones designed to look and sound identical to what's used in Brazilian street festivals, with some modern twists.

WOOD AND ALUMINUM SURDOS

Surdos are traditionally slung around the neck and held to the side, much like the way a colonial drummer carried a snare drum. LP's Rio surdos come with three legs, like a floor tom, which allows the drums to be played from a stationary position. There are four models available: 22x18 aluminum (\$399), 22x18 wood (\$419), 22x20 aluminum (\$419), and 22x20 wood (\$439). All of the drums feature ten single-tension lugs, which adjust the

tuning of both heads from the top tuning rod. The rims are round and curved inward, so you can hit the drum comfortably with your bare hands.

We tested the 22" surdos, and both of them had that recognizable Brazilian "bump," which is like a cross between an open jazz bass drum and a concert timpano. I liked playing the wood version at a lower tuning to get a deeper sound, while the aluminum surdo sounded better at a medium tension, where it produced a round, 808-type tone with a long sustain. You can play these drums with drumsticks or timpani mallets, but in order to really draw out the lower tones, you should consider using LP's Rio surdo beater (\$30).

REPINIQUE AND CAIXA

Like the surdos, LP's 12x10 and 12x12 repiniques (\$175 and \$205, respectively) and 7x12 caixa (\$145) feature single-tension lugs and rounded rims. All three drums have aluminum shells, which keep them very lightweight. The 12" repinique has eight lugs, and the 10" repinique and the caixa have six.

Because they're used to lead the samba ensemble with rhythmic cues, repiniques have a high, cutting sound that's similar to that of a timbale but with a fuller yet sharper voice. I set up both LP repiniques to the left side of my hi-hat and had a lot of fun using them to interject crackling rimshots and ringing off-center accents into my grooves. My preference was for the 10" version, since it had a more cutting sound. If you're interested in adding these instruments to your drumset, be aware that they're too deep to be positioned low and flat like a snare drum. Your best bet is to place them higher and at a 45-degree angle, as some players do with deep-shell Octobans.

The 12" caixa sounded a lot like the repiniques: sharp and cutting with strong ringing overtones. The difference is that the caixa comes with an adjustable snare throw-off and twelve strands of snare wires. With the snares engaged, I had a blast playing 16th-note street-beat patterns full of loose buzz strokes and syncopated accents. I wasn't able to get the snares tight enough to produce a short "chip" sound, and they rattled like crazy between hits. But I didn't mind the extra noise. It actually helped channel that multiple-drummer mindset as I used it to play samba adaptations on the drumset.

WOOD TAMBOURIM AND PANDEIRO

The Rio tambourim (\$63) has a small 6" head and a shallow 1³/₄" wood shell. The thin black plastic head is tensioned by way of ten hook-type lugs, which are grouped in pairs around the circumference of the drum. The tuning hooks are held in place with hex-shaped nuts, so you need a special tuning key to adjust the tension. (Don't lose that key!) The inside of the shell has a smooth finish, which makes the drum very comfortable to hold in your hand while playing. A traditional tambourim stick features bundles of nylon or wood tines, and LP offers a version for \$8.50. I didn't have a tambourim striker, so I experimented with sticks, multi-rods, and Pro-Mark's fly-swatter-like Smaxx. Played with sticks, the Rio tambourim sounded a lot like a tightly tuned bongo. But when I used rods or Smaxx, I was able to easily reproduce an authentic tambourim flavor—which sounds like it has been processed with a quick slapback echo. This is a fun

little instrument that would be good for percussion overdubs when you want to add a bit of high-end rhythmic spice.

The 10" wood-shell Rio pandeiro (\$109) was my favorite of all the instruments included in this review. Like the tambourim, this drum features a thin black head, hex-bolt tension hooks, and a smooth 1³/₄" shell. There are six sets of pandeiro jingles placed around the drum; their sound is crisper, shorter, and darker than what you get from a standard tambourine, which makes the pandeiro ideal for quick 16th-note patterns. I loved the way this drum sounded when tuned very low. When I played the pandeiro with my hands, this tuning allowed for low, thumping thumb strokes, as well

as short, crisp slaps. You can also use the fingers of your holding hand to press up on the head to create pitch bends. On the drumset, the Rio pandeiro worked great as an alternative tom sound. Stick strikes in the center of the drum had a punchy, floor-tom-type effect, while dead strokes (pressing the stick into the head) offered a shorter snare-like voice.

I highly recommend these instruments. There are a ton of sounds to be explored. Just check out some of the ways that New Orleans drummer Stanton Moore and legendary teacher and jazzer Gary Chaffee are putting the drums to use. Very inspiring stuff.

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AUDIX

FP5 AND FP7 DRUM MIC PACKS

by Mark Parsons

Sometimes drum microphone packs are simply a group of existing products packaged with a case, which can be a cool way to get several decent mics at a good price. But other times the packs are rebranded inexpensive transducers that are typically decent for the money and will do until you can afford something better. I usually recommend that you find solid individual models that will give you the results you want for the long term and that you buy only as many as you can afford, adding more along the way.

Audix has totally redesigned its Fusion series drum microphones, which are available singly and in packs. These aren't bundles of existing top-line mics (which are also available in packs); they're entirely new models. They were designed by the same wizard who came up with the company's popular D6, i-5, and SCX25A, with component manufacturing handled overseas and assembly and testing done back here.

LOOKS FAMILIAR

Audix's revamped Fusion series consists of four basic models, available in a few different package configurations. The f6 (\$239) is a kick mic, the f2 (\$129) is for toms, and the f5 (\$129) is meant for snare. Each of these mics is roughly the same size and shape as Audix's successful D6, D2, and i-5 models (for kick, toms, and snare, respectively). The Fusion f6, f2, and f5 are dynamic mics with hypercardioid patterns (which provide good isolation). The mic bodies are cast zinc alloy with steel wire mesh for the grill caps. The finish is an attractive black coating, and the construction certainly seems rugged enough.

IN USE

We started our testing of the new Fusion series with the f6 kick mic. As it shares the same clip design as its older sibling, the D6, it was a simple matter to swap in the f6, since I already had a D6 positioned in my bass drum. Before we did that, we recorded a few bars of kick with the D6 as a reference. We then replaced the D6 with the f6 and did some more tracking.

During playback, first I heard the familiar full tone of the D6, and in the few seconds of silence between that and the f6, I thought, *Here comes the moment of truth*. The f6 ended up producing a very cool kick sound. It was still in the "pre-equalized, concert-ready" neighborhood of the D6, but it had a bit more midrange punch, and the fundamental resonance was at a slightly higher frequency. It still had beef on the bottom and plenty of beater attack on top, but it also had a little in-your-face attitude, in a good way. It was universal enough to work in just about any genre, but this mic would be most appropriate in more aggressive idioms such as hard rock, metal, punk, and indie rock. (By the way,



Audix also sent along its \$45 Stand-KD kick mic stand, which is a small but stable boom that proved to be perfect for positioning a heavy mic inside a kick drum without toppling.)

Off to a great start, we fired up the f2s on the toms. Again, we were rewarded with a punchy, full sound, which is nothing like the weird band-pass-limited sound you sometimes get with budget drum pack mics. Similar to the relationship between the f6 and the D6, the f2 was reminiscent of the D2 but was a tad leaner in the mid-bass, with a less noticeable 125 Hz boost, and had a hair more stick attack in the upper mids.

The f5 proved to be a very good all-around dynamic workhorse, similar to the company's pro-model i-5. The f5 did a great job of reproducing a snare drum, occupying sonic territory somewhere between that of the i-5 and the popular Shure SM57. (It was a little leaner than the i-5 and a little bigger and smoother than the SM57.)

The f9 small condenser is physically similar to Audix's SCX1, but it's designed more like the ADX51, being pre-polarized. I didn't have the SCX1 or ADX51 in the studio during the review period, so I compared the model with several other small condensers, including ones from Germany, Japan, and the U.S. The f9 was the least expensive of the bunch, yet it acquitted itself very well. It was more linear than I might have expected, exhibiting a broad, smooth response that was very pleasing, without any harsh dips or bumps in the response. It rolled off a little on the bottom below 100 Hz (as most small condensers do), but by no means would you call it thin. And it was very smooth throughout

the midrange (from 200 Hz up to 5 or 6 kHz), with a small peak above that.

The f9 definitely kept up with its more expensive competition, yielding a clear and faithful sound when used as an overhead and as a spot mic on the hi-hats. I'd characterize its sound as relatively transparent and realistic, without imparting a ton of character on its own. Those might not be exciting adjectives, but for a microphone that will inevitably be called on to reproduce a wide variety of instrumental sources, it's a very good thing indeed.

PACKAGE WRAP-UP

My feeling that these redesigned Fusion models would make killer rock mics, mainly due to the somewhat aggressive flavor of the dynamic versions, was confirmed when I learned that Audix beta-tested these rugged little guys on the stages of the Warped Tour last summer. If nothing else, Audix's revamped Fusion series makes a good case that the experience and creativity of the designer, along with the skill and care of the assembly personnel, are more important than the exact geographic location of where the individual components are manufactured. Without advance knowledge of the very low price of these mics, you'd be hard pressed to differentiate them, quality-wise, from some of the mainstays that have been used for years. So if you're looking to mike up your kit without spending too much cash, give the new Fusion mics an audition. And listen with your ears, not your wallet. You might be pleasantly surprised.

audixusa.com

FUSION PREPACKS

The FP5 package (\$559) consists of an f6, an f5, and three f2s. Add to that a pair of the very latest Fusion model, the f9 (\$189), which is a small-diaphragm pre-polarized cardioid condenser designed for overheads and hi-hats, and you get the FP7 package (\$749). Also available is the FP4 pack—an f6, an f5, and two f2s. The various Fusion mic packs come with an aluminum case that has cutouts for several mics and extra room for clips and cables.





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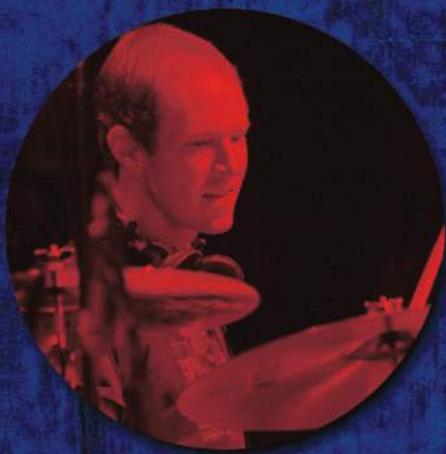
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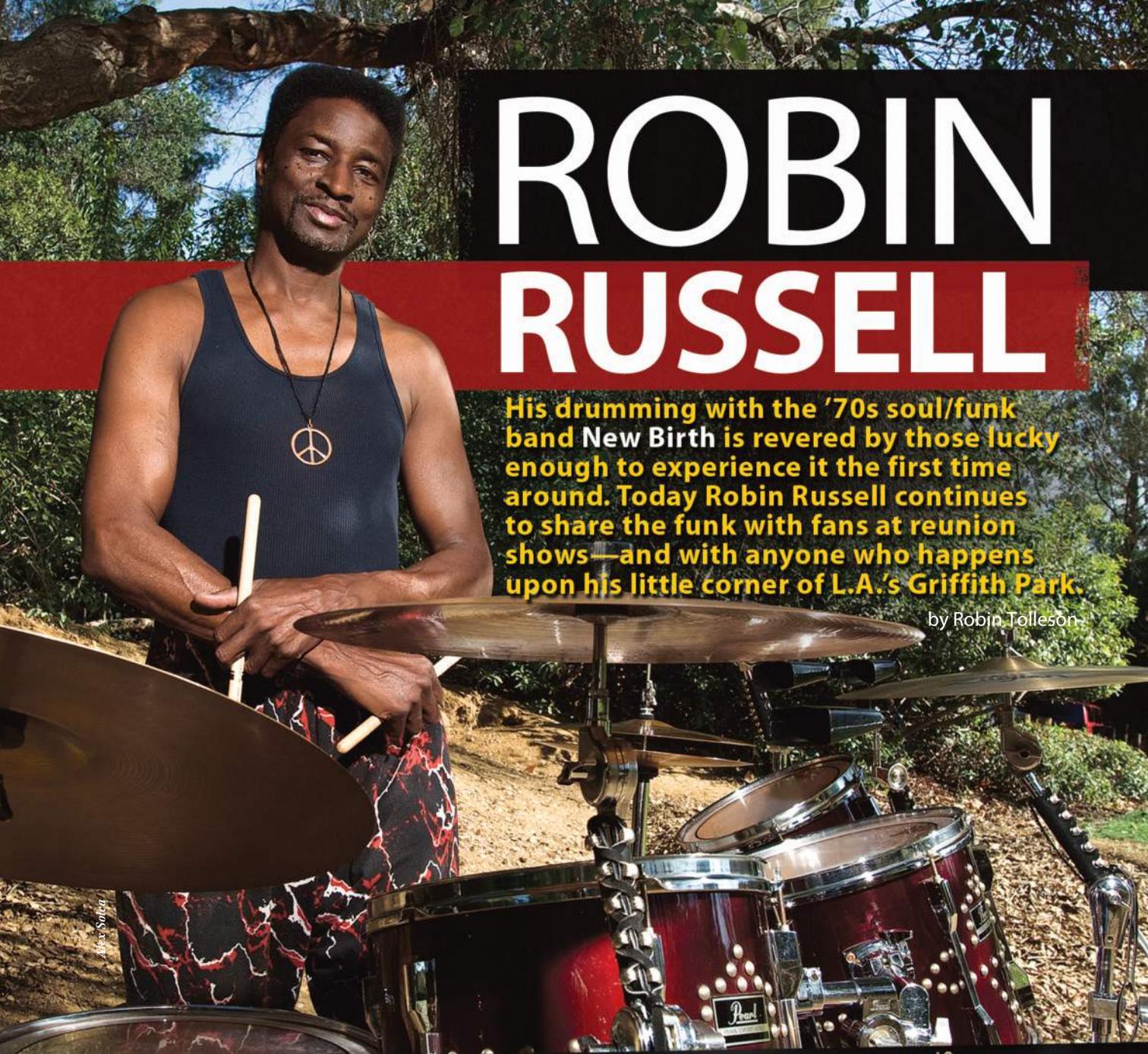
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ROBIN RUSSELL

His drumming with the '70s soul/funk band New Birth is revered by those lucky enough to experience it the first time around. Today Robin Russell continues to share the funk with fans at reunion shows—and with anyone who happens upon his little corner of L.A.'s Griffith Park.

by Robin Tolleson



Alex Sotoca



Alex Sotoca

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One of the great soul/funk bands of the '70s, *New Birth* had it going on in multiple ways—top-notch lead vocals, blistering rhythm section, great visual style, and slick grooves that worked on the dance floor but also caught the attention of fellow musicians. Because the group wasn't part of one of the big "soul factories" like Motown or Philly International, its name might not always bring immediate recognition. But the unique ensemble—a combination of previously existing bands whose membership reached seventeen at one time—left a lasting impression on those who came in contact with its music.

Among the listeners who took notice was actor/singer Jamie Foxx, who sampled *New Birth's* version of "Wildflower" for his 2005 hit "Unpredictable." As for the group's longtime drummer, Robin Russell, two generations of Blackwell timekeepers will attest to his percussive skills. John Blackwell Jr., of Prince and Justin Timberlake fame, calls Russell "one of the greatest funk drummers of our time" and adds, "My father [John Blackwell Sr., who played with the Drifters, the Spinners, and Mary Wells] played *New Birth* records all the time for me, from the time I was three. I would always say, 'Who is that drummer? Man, he's bad.' Robin always played in the pocket but was still able to express himself in a technical way without getting in the way of the music. If you don't know about Robin, check out songs like 'Wildflower,' 'Been Such A Long Time,' and 'You Are What I'm All About,' just to name a few. Much respect to Robin."

Russell and his two brothers grew up in Los Angeles, and there was always jazz and blues playing in their house. "It was common to come home from school to my mother cooking and listening to Miles Davis or Cannonball Adderley—just good music," Robin says.

After switching from sax to drums in twelfth grade, Russell began paying more attention to drummers and listening to the greats of the day. "I loved music as a whole," he says. "But once I switched, I really started listening to Elvin Jones and Art Blakey. When I

ROBIN'S GEAR

Russell's current "Griffith Park setup" consists of a six-piece **Pearl** Export kit played with a double pedal, **Zildjian** cymbals, **Remo** Pinstripe snare and tom heads, **Evans** EMAD bass drum heads, and **Vic Firth** sticks. His "back in the day" rig was an eight-piece double bass **Gretsch** kit with Zildjian cymbals and Remo heads.



wanted to hear rock I listened to Ginger Baker, Bonzo, and Mitch Mitchell. One minute jazz, the next rock, the next some blues, the next it's funk. I grew up with a very open ear, and that gives you more food for thought. Then you can kind of cross things over. You can play something that's in a funk bag, but depending on how it's structured you might be able to throw in some jazz licks here and there, or vice versa. If you can mix things up, it gives you more tools to work with."

The drummer's training on sax proved beneficial as well. "Along with rhythm, I understood melody and structure from playing the horn, so that gave me a little edge," Russell explains. "People tell me from time to time, 'When you play drums, you sound like a horn player.' Really? Okay. I could see it, because I do like to play melodically."

When he was nineteen, Russell was playing clubs and parties around Los Angeles. "I was still in my developing stage, still studying, just really learning. Practicing like mad." At a gig he heard that Johnny "Guitar" Watson was looking for a drummer. He took his drums to Watson's house and felt at ease with the blues and funk musician's sense of rhythm and sense of humor. "It was just like magic—instant click," Russell says. "We played for a few hours, just going at it, and I was thrilled. He was a genius, and I learned so much from him. A lot of people don't know what a good keyboard player he was. He picked guitar because he likes to be out front. The funniest guy, and I wouldn't trade the experiences I had with him for anything."

While playing with Watson, Russell was also able to study music and drums at L.A. City College. "Up to that point I was basically self-taught," he says. "I would put records on and play with them, just listen to people and play

what I heard. But during that year I learned the rudiments and started applying them to the kit. One of the big guys on campus came into my practice room one day when I was working on paradiddles. He suggested I break up the paradiddle between the snare and tom. So I worked at it. And before I knew it, I was like, 'That's what I've been hearing Mitch Mitchell doing!' That was such a breakthrough. Johnny was already happy with my playing, but once I started applying the rudiments, he just went nuts."

A short stint with Little Richard led Russell to Louisville, Kentucky, where, in 1963, he joined up with the Nite-Liters, helping that group forge hits like "K-Jee" and "Afro Strut." "I always wanted to make that band as exciting as Chicago, give it that same kind of pulse," the drummer says. "So on some of the tunes my approach is to hit all the accents with the horns—play leading into the accent, hit the accent, and then lead away from the accent."

In 1972 the group reorganized under the direction of producer Harvey Fuqua and became *New Birth*. The gig demanded that Russell reach back to Motown-esque grooves, tight disco/funk and soul, and occasional psychedelic fusion chops. "We were in New York after we cut 'Got To Get A Knutt,'" Russell recalls. "One of the engineers heard some of it, and he said, 'Oh, yeah—is that Billy Cobham on drums?' That kind of blew me away, because I never thought I sounded like him. Maybe some of the fills made him feel that way. That was a big compliment."

On the tune "Comin' From All Ends" Russell crafts a pumping disco/funk beat with an opening and closing hi-hat. "Diamond, the drummer from the Ohio Players, and I were real good friends back then," Robin says. "One night after

a gig we were talking, and Diamond told me he heard this drummer playing a song and opening and closing his hi-hat all the way through. That sounded kind of interesting, and I kept that thought. Shortly after that, we were in the studio working on 'Comin' From All Ends,' and this light went on in my head, saying, 'Try that lick.' I put a couple 16th notes in before I open it, like 'ch-ch-chee, ch-ch-chee.' When disco hit a few years later, I was saying, 'I've been playing that beat for years.' That song is just absolute funk."

New Birth went through many lineup

changes over the years, but a version of the band featuring Russell, lead vocalist Leslie Wilson, and Wilson's brother, background singer Melvin Wilson, began working together in 1994. "That's the nucleus of the group," Russell says, "and we still go out and gig. When I began playing with New Birth again, it was like, 'Hey, this is fun.' And it's still fun now. It's just amazing to strike up tunes like 'Wildflower,' 'I Can Understand It,' 'Been Such A Long Time,' 'Got To Get A Knutt,' 'Dream Merchant,' or 'It's Impossible'—those are the ones that are on every show. After all these years I see people

still loving them. They hear the first two notes and they're up and roaring. That's a good feeling."

When he's not on the road, Russell can be heard playing in L.A.'s Griffith Park—his "haven"—at least once a week. He has made a habit of getting to the park before it opens and setting up in an area where his parents took him as a child. "I remember the hippies running around," he says, "people up on the stage playing, and as a kid I thought that looked like so much fun."

In the '70s Russell would set up near the merry-go-round in the park, but about ten years ago he found a quieter space, a piece of flat ground under an oak tree that's away from the crowds. "The park opens at five, so I started going at five. That is so magical. When I can get there and play as the sun is coming up, to be a part of the sunrise and get the energy right from the sun, it just blossoms into something.

"I can sit there for hours during the week with nobody around. That's when I get lost in my drums. I always felt like drums were made to be played outdoors. I'll turn on a tape recorder and capture what I'm doing, then I'll go home later and study it, see what I came up with."

A DVD of Russell performing in the park, *Griffith Park Drum Sessions, Vol. 1*, is available at the drummer's Web site. (Search Google for "drummer Robin Russell.") And Russell's self-produced CD, *Drum Beats: The Griffith Park Series, Vol. 1*, was recorded in the studio as, Robin says, "a documentation of one morning out there on the drums. That CD is a product of being up under that tree. It's become a ritual. The rangers know me now, people come back year after year to the picnic area near there. I let the kids play the drums if they're careful, and first thing I know they're bringing me a plate of hot food right off the grill. It's turned into a real fun experience.

"The more you play, the more you come up with," Russell continues. "Let yourself go. That's why I love to just sit down and play. Whatever's cooking on the inside, just let it cook. At the end of the day people will come up and say, 'Thank you for your music.' That really makes me feel good."

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RICHARD CHRISTY

Most people know him as one of Howard Stern's sidekicks. But he's also among the **greatest metal drummers of our time**—and one of the most relentless woodshedders **a drumset has ever seen.**

Story by Tony Maggolino • Photos by Paul La Raia

It's 4 A.M. Most drummers are either fast asleep or just getting home from a gig. Not Richard Christy. It's just the beginning of his day.

After leaving the house in Queens, New York, Christy is off to midtown Manhattan to work as a writer and on-air personality on *The Howard Stern Show* for eight-plus hours. He then continues his day by practicing for a few hours at Drummers Collective or rehearsing songs from his new album, *Charred Walls Of The Damned*, at Sweatshop Studios in Brooklyn.

For Howard Stern fans, Christy is known as a gross-out artist and the creator of some of the funniest prank phone calls ever heard. To metal drummers, he's an iconic presence for creating some of the most revered music in history with bands like Death, Control Denied, and Iced Earth. *MD* recently sat down for a long talk with the drummer about his unique career.



THE SOUND OF PERSEVERANCE RICHARD'S DISCOGRAPHY

Acheron Anti-God, Anti-Christ (1996) // **Death** The Sound Of Perseverance (1998), Live In Eindhoven (2001), Live In L.A. (Death & Raw) (2001) // **Control Denied** The Fragile Art Of Existence (1999) // **Burning Inside** The Eve Of The Entities (2000), Apparition (2001) // **Iced Earth** The Horror Show (2001), Tribute To The Gods (2002), The Glorious Burden (2004) // **Leash Law** Dogface (2004) // **Charred Walls Of The Damned** Charred Walls Of The Damned (2010)

MD: How did you first start playing the drums?

Richard: I grew up on a farm outside Fort Scott, Kansas. I really didn't have much to do at all. In 1984 I heard "Hot For Teacher" by Van Halen for the first time, and I was totally blown away. That year, when I started the fifth grade, the school I was going to began offering band class. I played the snare drum, the bass drum, and the xylophone for the first eight to ten months. My first kit was a three-piece Gretsch that my parents purchased from a junk dealer in Arcadia, Kansas—a snare, a kick, and a floor tom. Every day I would go home after school and play along to Quiet Riot, Iron Maiden, Twisted Sister, Van Halen, and other metal bands that were popular at the time.

MD: When did you start playing in a band?

Richard: I played in the school band until I was about thirteen. A buddy of mine who lived about a half mile down

the road, Paul Brewer, played guitar, so we started jamming together. I would take my drumset over to his house, and we would set up in his hog barn. All the hogs would go crazy whenever we would rip into "Seek And Destroy" by Metallica. It was hilarious. My drumset would have dirt and hog crap all over it whenever I would bring it home. My first exposure to playing in a band was very humble.

From there I moved on to playing in a cover band called Syzygy. We would play in bars in the Fort Scott area. I used to have to sneak into them because I was only fifteen or sixteen at the time. We would play Metallica, Iron Maiden, AC/DC, Megadeth, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Van Halen—stuff like that.

MD: Other than playing in the school band and the cover band, did you have any formal training?

Richard: Yes, I did. I also went to band camp. [laughs] Seriously. People make fun of it today, but band camp actually taught me a lot. Every summer I would go to Fort Scott Community College for about a week. It really helped me learn how to play in a band setting. It also helped

me learn how to read music and charts, and perfecting rudiments came along as well.

My parents were very supportive. They bought me the Terry Bozzio *Solo Drums* video for my twelfth birthday. It was way beyond my comprehension at the time. Actually, most of it is *still* way beyond my comprehension. But I learned a lot from that video, and there's stuff that I use to this day that has helped me out with my independence. The book *Stick Control* by George Lawrence Stone also had a huge impact on my playing, and I still go back to it whenever I practice.

MD: When did you decide to get out of the Fort Scott area?

Richard: When I turned eighteen, after I graduated from high school, I got an opportunity to play with a band I was a huge fan of called Public Assassin, based out of Springfield, Missouri. This

RICHARD'S SETUP

Christy plays a **Pearl** Reference series kit, with **Sabian** cymbals, an **Axis** Longboard double pedal, **Vater** sticks, and **Aquarian** heads. To see photos of his many kits over the years, along with a list of his favorite metal albums, go to moderndrummer.com.

was one of the hardest choices I had to make. They called me the night before I was supposed to start college on a music scholarship at Fort Scott Community College. I decided right then that playing drums in a band is what I wanted to do, and I made the move to Springfield.

I'm glad I made that decision; I learned a lot in that band. We booked our own tours and traveled around in a van from city to city. It was my first taste of what a real touring band was all about. After about three years of playing in Springfield, the band wanted to move on to a bigger scene. The death metal scene in Florida was huge at the time, so we moved to Orlando. It was a real exciting time for me because most of the bands I loved, like Death, Malevolent Creation, Morbid Angel, and Obituary, were popular in that scene, and we were getting gigs with some of these bands. I also knew that Chuck Schuldiner, the singer and founder of the band Death, lived in Orlando, and it was a dream of mine to play in Death.

MD: How did you end up joining that band?

Richard: I met Chuck in a bookstore one day, and he was a real nice guy. Over the next few months I started running into him at shows and parties and making a connection with him. I found out through some friends of mine in a band called Wicked Ways that Chuck was looking for a new drummer. They knew him well and recommended me to him. A few days later I auditioned, and I got the gig.

MD: A lot of metal drummers consider the Death album you played on, *The Sound Of Perseverance*, as iconic. What was the songwriting process like for that album?

Richard: We rehearsed for almost a year before we went into the studio. Chuck was real open to ideas. He would let me open up and play some real crazy parts. If everything fit, it would end up in the song. We would rehearse for three to four hours at a time. A lot of the time it would be just the two of us. Chuck liked to write songs around the drum parts I would write. He would match his riffs to the parts I had worked out. It was real exciting for me, working so close together like that.

MD: Did you set out to write in different

time signatures when you were putting the album together?

Richard: No, nothing was really planned. Chuck would come in with riffs, and we would just feel it out. Sometimes there would be a straight 4/4 guitar riff that I would have an idea to put a different time signature under, to change it up a little, and he would love that. We were both fans of a band called Watchtower, and we would listen to them together. They would just blow our minds with these weird time signatures. I think a lot of their influence came out in *The Sound Of Perseverance*.

Chuck was more about the songs sounding good rather than going as crazy as we could. We became real focused on writing solid songs, but we also liked to challenge ourselves as much as possible.

MD: Which songs on *The Sound Of Perseverance* were your favorites to play?

Richard: "To Forgive Is To Suffer," "Scavenger Of Human Sorrow," "Spirit Crusher," and "Flesh And The Power It Holds" all have some really intense drum parts. In "To Forgive Is To Suffer," there

was a lot of heavy double bass, and throughout the whole song the drums are just full blast. At the end there was this huge drum fill that Chuck would riff along to. It was absolutely insane and came together so well.

"Spirit Crusher" really stood out. There was a bass and drum duo part that was almost impossible to play. I remember live I was always terrified of playing that solo. It was such a complex odd-time part that I knew I could not drop a stick. If I did, there was no way I was coming back in. A few times in rehearsal I dropped a stick, and I couldn't recover.

MD: You also played with Schuldiner in the band Control Denied. Was the writing process different from the way it was in Death?

Richard: It was pretty much the same, though we didn't rehearse as much before we recorded the first album, *The Fragile Art Of Existence*. There were some amazing drum parts on that album, but I didn't have the time to fine-tune everything like I did on *The Sound Of Perseverance*. On the second Control Denied album, which will be coming out



Joey Castillo / Queens of the Stone Age

this year, the drums were recorded in December of 2000, and Chuck recorded his guitar parts right after. We went back to fine-tuning, and it was about a year and a half of rehearsing before we went into the studio. That album is close to what *The Sound Of Perseverance* sounds like. There are a ton of parts that you just shake your head to because they are so odd.

MD: Did playing and writing with Chuck change the way you played?

Richard: Yes, it did. To this day I love writing the drum parts first and writing everything else afterward. I did that a lot when writing with Chuck. In fact, my new album, *Charred Walls Of The Damned*, was basically written that way. Writing and working with Chuck had a great influence on me as a drummer. He was a great musician and a great friend. [Schuldiner, who is often referred to as the godfather of death metal, passed away on December 13, 2001, from a form of brain cancer.]

MD: While you were playing in Death and Control Denied, you also played in Burning Inside and Iced Earth. What was

that like?

Richard: It kept me consistently busy. I pretty much spent the whole time I lived in Florida working, playing, and rehearsing, right up through 2004. My schedule during the week was working eight hours a day as an electrician, then I would come home and exercise for about an hour, practice on my kit for about two hours by myself, practice with the band for two or three hours, then go to sleep, wake up, and do it all over again. It was pretty much a set schedule for eight years.

I was very good about practicing every day. If I didn't practice at least one and a half to two hours a day, I would feel awful. So I kind of forced myself into a pretty rigorous practice schedule. Looking back on it, I'm really proud of the fact that I could be so disciplined to practice that much every day.

MD: How did you end up moving to New York City with such a busy schedule?

Richard: That was another huge decision for me. I was on tour with Iced Earth, and I got an offer to audition for *The Howard Stern Show*. I had to make

a decision to either stay in Iced Earth or audition for the show, which I had been a huge fan of for years. I didn't even know if I would get the job—it was just a chance to audition. I was pretty caught up over it because I loved playing in Iced Earth. We had played some huge shows, and I recorded three albums with them. I had to think long and hard over leaving the band for the audition, but I knew that if I didn't go and audition, I wouldn't be able to live with the "What if?" thing for the rest of my life. So I made the decision to go try out for the show, and I ended up getting the job.

MD: So you went from being a full-time drummer to writing comedy. Did you miss playing the drums?

Richard: Well, I didn't stop playing totally. I would spend time practicing at Drummers Collective during the week, after I would get out of work. I would also spend hours at a time practicing at Sweatshop Studios in Brooklyn on the weekends. I would practice as much as I could, just to keep my chops up.

I've had some opportunities to play on stage as well over the last six years. I got to jam live with Shadows Fall back in 2004. I played a Mötley Crüe song with them. I was standing behind Jason Bittner on stage, and he just handed me the sticks and said, "Here, finish the song." That kind of brought back that great feeling of being on stage.

I also played a solo with Mike Portnoy at a Dream Theater show, and that was amazing as well. So every once in a while I would get to do these guest jamming spots, which would keep it going for me. I always knew I wanted to come back to playing again, and that's what led to my current band, Charred Walls Of The Damned.

MD: How did that project come together?

Richard: I always loved writing music, and I had started playing guitar. I wrote a lot of music over the last six years, so I decided it was time to put it on an album and get a band together. I wrote the drum parts, guitar parts, and all of the lyrics and took all of it into the studio with a good friend of mine, Jason Suecof, who's a guitarist. He's also a very well-known producer, and he produced the *Charred Walls* album as well. I basically handed him all of the songs and said, "If you have any ideas and



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RICHARD CHRISTY

want to rearrange anything, go for it."

He's an amazing guitar player, so he took a lot of my riffs and rearranged them. He shortened some stuff and added a lot of technical parts that weren't there. I would say I actually wrote about 70 percent of the album. The other guys in the band, Tim Owens on vocals and Steve DiGiorgio on bass, also contributed a lot. Tim was in Iced Earth with me and is a great singer, and Steve and I played in Control Denied. They are both amazing musicians, so I knew they would be a perfect fit.

MD: How did you record the drums for the album?

Richard: Before I went into the studio in Florida, I set up a click track for every song and left just the guitar parts on the click. I basically rehearsed to my guitar parts and the click for months. By the time I got to the studio I knew the songs like the back of my hand, and everything went really smoothly. I had a lot of time before I went in to get everything the way I wanted it.

MD: Was your approach to recording this album different in any way?

Richard: Yes, since I was concerned not only with the drums but with everything as a whole. I wanted to make sure every part was perfect.

MD: With your busy schedule on *The Howard Stern Show*, are you going to be able to take the band on the road?

Richard: Well, all of us are really busy with our own schedules. That's one of the things I had to consider when I put this band together. I really can't take off a ton of time from the show each year to go on the road. Jason is the same way; he's booked solid with producing for eight to nine months a year. Tim has other gigs that he's busy with, and so does Steve. We plan on sorting out some time and playing some shows, but we probably won't be touring for months on end. We'll definitely make some things happen, and the shows will be very special when they do happen. I can say that I'm pretty excited to get back out on stage.

MD: What was the reaction from everyone on the show to your drumming career?

Richard: At first they didn't know much about what my career was all about in the past, but they gave me the opportunity to show them. Howard has been really supportive and has played Death and Iced

Earth on the show. He recently played Charred Walls Of The Damned and was very complimentary about my playing and the album. Two years ago Howard TV did a documentary on my drumming career, and it was really cool that he was interested enough to do that. That really inspired me. He isn't really into the music, but he has been extremely supportive, and that's a very cool thing.

MD: After all the years of playing fast, heavy music, do you have a practice routine you stick to?

Richard: I still practice to *Stick Control*. That's my drumming bible. I think every drummer should own that book. I've had it since I was fourteen, and I still can't get completely through it. I like to practice to the exercises in the book with my feet, with ankle weights and a metronome. I'll start out at 150 bpm and go for a minute. Then I'll change to my hands at 150 bpm for a minute. Then I'll raise it to 160 for both, and then 170, and so on, for about twenty minutes.

I work on a lot of independence exercises as well. A lot of that comes from *Stick Control*. I'll work on playing a triplet pattern with my feet and a different pattern with my hands at the same time. And I like to practice to a lot of Latin music, to change things up.

I can also say that the exercises featured in *Modern Drummer* help me out and have been a great study tool over the years. Sometimes I'll work for an hour with only one side of my body, and then I'll switch. Doing this has helped me strengthen both sides of my body and has helped my blast beats. There are a lot of different practice routines that have helped me improve and kept me sharp.

MD: Any words of inspiration for drummers looking to advance their playing?

Richard: *Practice*. Practice as much as you possibly can. You need to get to a point where practicing is part of your daily routine. Be open to every style of music and to trying different things on the drums. Don't limit yourself to just one style. Take in as much as possible, and expand your vocabulary. Also, learn how to read music. Reading is a key element to moving forward with your playing and becoming successful. That's pretty much it. It's pretty simple if you can get all of that down.



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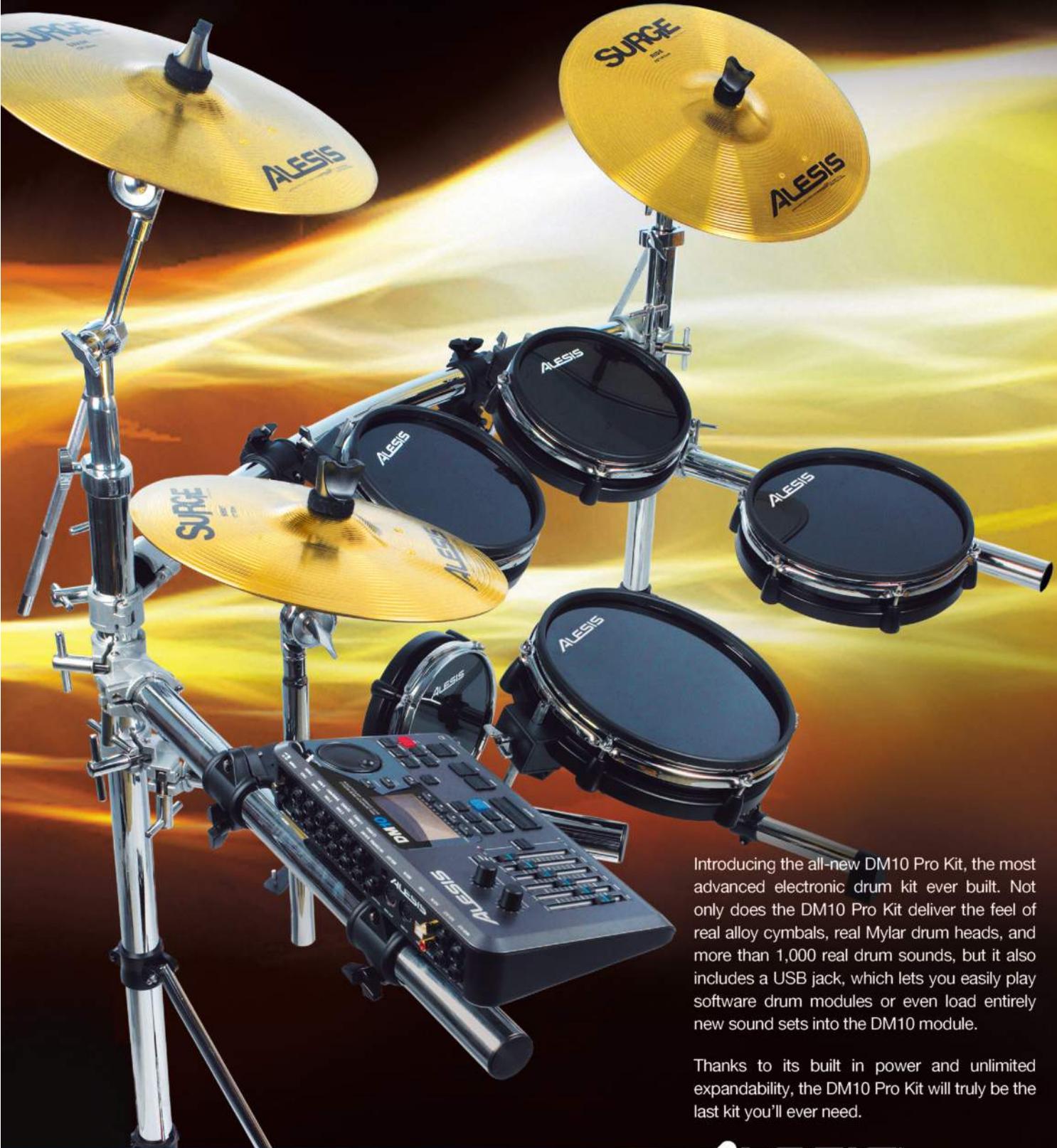
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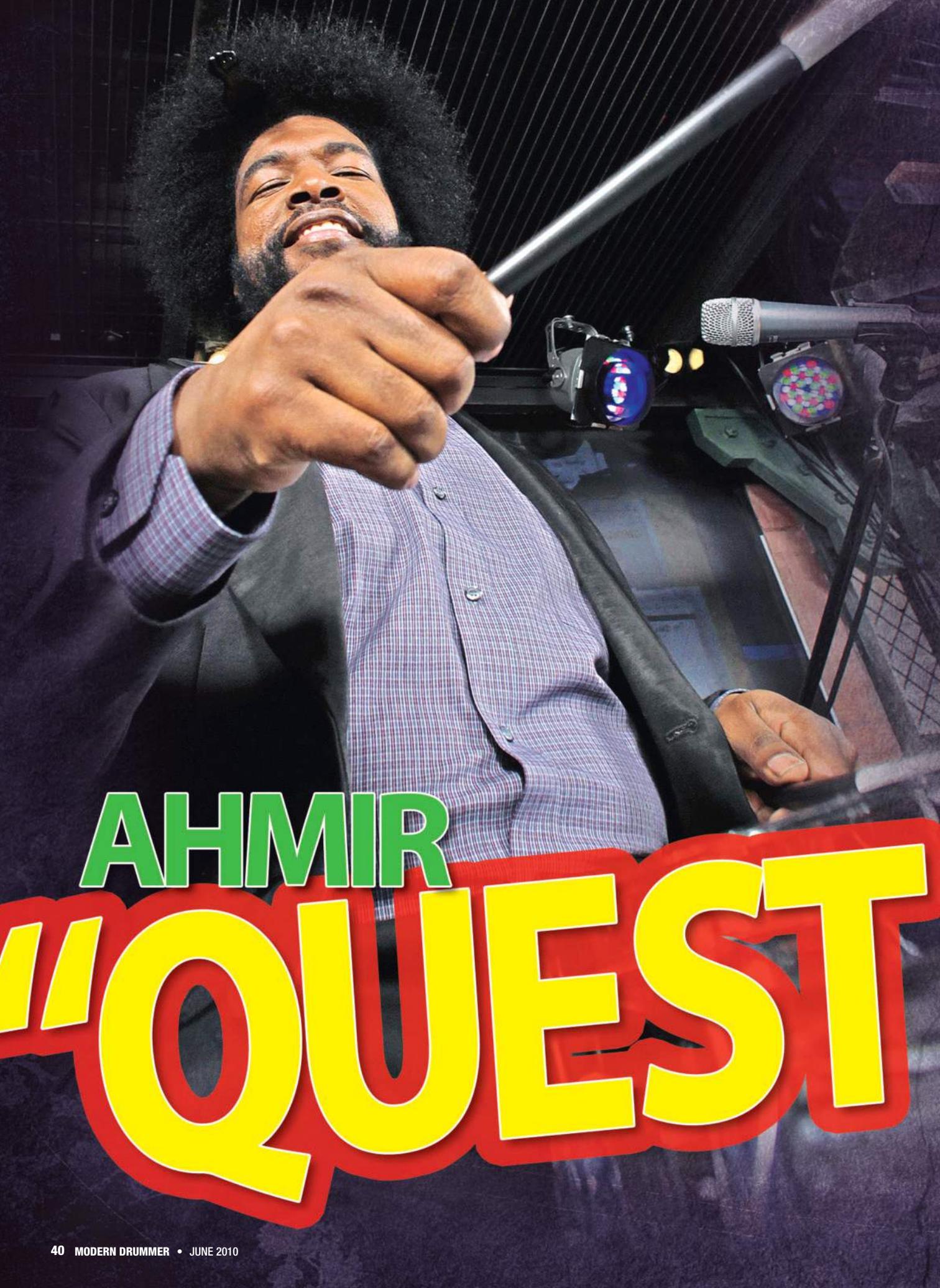
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"QUEST

Their time on **Fallon** has left **the Roots** pumped and playing stronger than ever. Quest and Co. harnessed that energy, booked studio time, and produced the **"live" R&B album of their dreams.**

Beyond his formidable presence as a stone-solid drummer, engineer, and producer, Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson is one of the great contemporary historians of R&B. Rapping by phone with *Modern Drummer* while traveling cross country (sleeper car, Amtrak) to the West Coast, Questlove speaks about subjects vast and diverse: the potential death of R&B, miking for impact, killing your idols, knowing your history, warm-ups and stick regimens, what every drummer needs to succeed, and how *he* gets over.

The Roots' upcoming (and long-delayed) album, *How I Got Over*, arrives in the wake of their high-status ID as one of the most recognizable groups on the planet, thanks to their nightly performance as the house band on NBC's *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon*. As the Roots kick the nightly theme song, the camera passes quickly over Questlove, Black Thought (MC), Kamal (keyboards), F. Knuckles (percussion), Captain Kirk Douglas (guitar), Tuba Gooding Jr. (sousaphone), and Owen Biddle (bass),

as they dump a two-ton truck of nasty groove on a global audience. The Roots extract wicked beats and humorous commentary throughout the show, and this enviable gig has raised the band's performance bar considerably, most evident in the diversity of tracks on *How I Got Over*, which, for the first time since 1993's *Organix*, is largely a live (non-programmed) recording.

Along with recent projects including drumming for, recording, and/or producing John Legend, Sara Bareilles, Al Green, and Corinne Bailey Rae, Thompson is busy loading his Facebook, YouTube, and Swift.fm pages with serious content. Befitting a scholar of the music, Quest's YouTube channel goes into detail regarding beat placement and creation, sample sorcery and re-creation, and other hip drum business. The pages also include an amazing clip of a ridiculously fleet-footed James Brown performing "There Was A Time" with the original *Late Night With David Letterman* band, with Steve Jordan on drums. And check Swift.fm for some of the most potent beats ever.

"My drumming goes through stylistic phases," Thompson says, regarding some of his own most potent beats ever. "In the beginning of the Roots, I was between Steve Ferrone, who was my idol, and 90 percent 'What would A Tribe Called Quest do?' Then it was about figuring out all the breakbeats they used. With our second, third, fourth, and fifth albums, the chip on my shoulder became bigger. The hip-hop police were really critical; they always wanted to see our license, so my drum style became colder. I wanted to sound like a machine. Once we achieved our success with *Things Fall Apart*, the next two records reflected my true style. I couldn't help but sound like me on *The Roots Come Alive*; I couldn't hide behind engineering trickery. And *Phrenology* was a middle finger; we did everything we were not supposed to do. With *How I Got Over*, we recorded together. I'm less concerned with my rap license now. That art form barely exists anymore except in our heads. Anyway, hip-hop is not allowed to shed tears. I'll never stop my mission of trying not to sound like an old record."

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THOMPSON

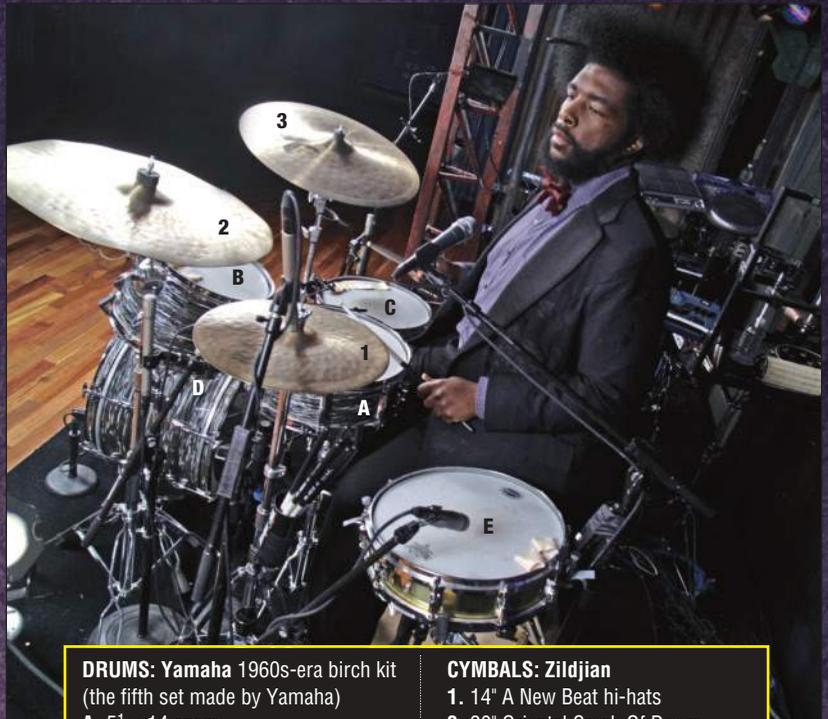
MD: The Roots have been on *Late Night* for more than a year now. How has it changed your drumming?

Ahmir: If you watch the sandwiches—the music that falls in between the commercial and the next segment—at first the intros were much longer. We had the NBC staff to prove something to, then there was the studio audience, and then, of course, the 21 million people watching on television. Jimmy Fallon was on fire about us, but there was some minor skepticism as to whether we had enough range to even handle such a gig. “Okay, these guys play rap music, but can they do everything else?” We were overeager to prove our range. There are so many ways that this has made us better musicians. It had the potential to be a punch line when we got the word out that we were taking the gig. The bloggers had their sledgehammers ready. However, I believe this was a blessing in disguise.

MD: Did the Roots woodshed hard for the gig?

Ahmir: We did maybe seven rehearsals total before we joined *Fallon*. Our first gig ever as the Roots was just going to

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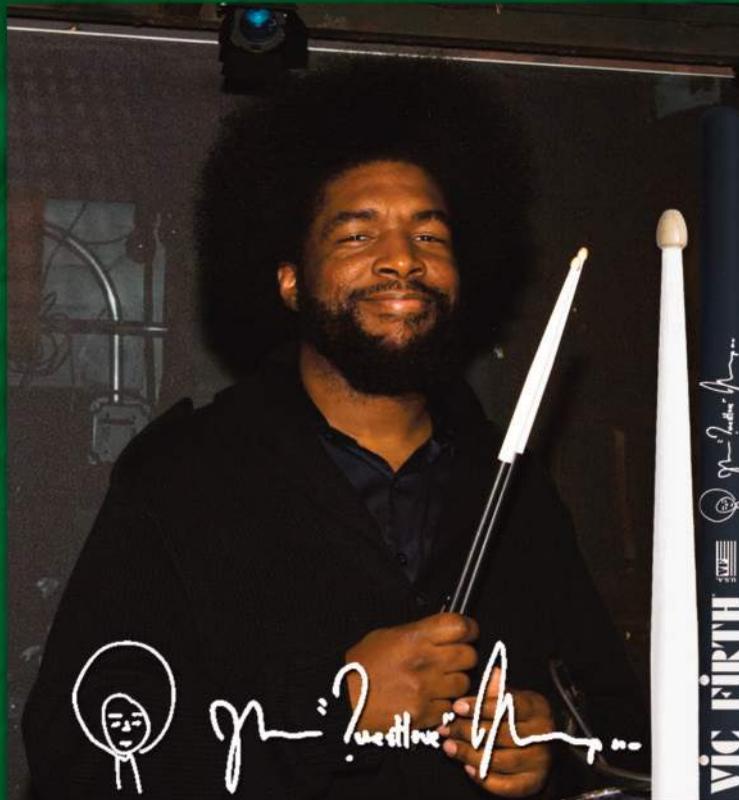
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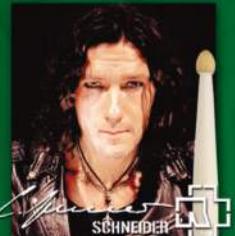


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South Street in Philly to jam. We'd play for five hours. We started to blur the lines between rehearsal, preparation, and performance. It was one big, giant ball for us. Once we got established I would consider a gig in Knoxville, Tennessee, or Columbus, Ohio, the rehearsal. The actual show would be in Los Angeles.

MD: So is the band rehearsing more now?

Ahmir: From our first day on the job we've pretty much rehearsed every day like clockwork. That's what we do—eleven in the morning till two in the afternoon, every day since January 27, 2009.

MD: What impact has that had on your drumming?

Ahmir: Dude. I do think things happen for a reason, and I am not one of those black drummers or gospel drummers, like on GospelChops.com, where you can see what the deal is—it's just

fills and rolls, and rolls and fills. This introduction to the two-hour jam sessions that we did every week at [NYC's] Highline Ballroom, where we made it up on stage—that made me realize we'd been operating at 40 percent. And that is true of me as a drummer as well. It's one thing to solo; it's another to invent something on the spot, as we did every week at the Highline. We didn't know what was going to happen.

We jammed with [guitarist] Tom Morello and [tenor saxophonist] David Murray one night. They were battling each other—it was the power of watching Ornette Coleman going up against Public Enemy circa 1987. Murray is a virtuoso. I asked David how many hours a day he practices. He said "Man, I'm getting rusty." Of all the figures in the jazz world, he's like that Devo box set—he's one of the "pioneers who got scalped." No one wanted to go on after David Murray. Only Tom Morello was brave enough to challenge him.

MD: So does Murray practice a lot?

Ahmir: He said, "In my old age, I practice maybe seven hours a day." I used to do that as a kid, but after I turned eighteen, went to college, started the Roots, and began socializing, I wasn't practicing five to six hours the way I was between twelve and eighteen. But David Murray taught me that you are never beyond

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the point of practice, even if you do get to some iconic status. He put all his eggs in the basket of music. Once I began talking to other people, I found out that Trey Anastasio said Phish broke up because they didn't get to practice much anymore. In their unstoppable phase they were practicing all the time. They practiced in the dark so they could feel each other out.

MD: Can you offer tips for playing in the moment on stage?

Ahmir: Pacing is probably the most important thing. It's especially important when you are a unit that doesn't have a cavalcade of hits. When I play with Jay-Z, every song is a major event. But when you're playing with an artist that isn't singles-based, then remixing a song that would normally be filler on your album to be more powerful in concert is important. Also, doing new arrangements of songs to give them life works well—though that can also backfire on you. We debuted our newest single on the *Fallon* show before fans had it. I was so amped up, but once the fans got the actual single there was a major difference. The *Fallon* version is more James Brown, and the studio version is more Steely Dan. So heads were scratching.

MD: What was the recording approach for *How I Got Over*? Are we hearing mostly live drums? Or is it loops or triggers?

Ahmir: This is what die-hard fans have been telling us to do, a return to form. It's the first time since *Organix* that we all played the music in front of each other at the same time. That shouldn't be a foreign idea, but because we are such sticklers for perfection it's really hard to track everything at the same time. It gives you mixing problems, bleed-through, etc. But because of all the major practicing we've been doing, there's an energy now in our performance that we didn't have before. We tried the regular way, layering everything, but that choked the life out of it. Then when we played together, the magic was back. Probably the most noticeable difference is that I didn't use a click track on the record. We recorded together as a band for 90 percent of the record.

MD: Why did you record all live drums this time?

Ahmir: Once we played together for two months and I saw the energy of our performances and the camaraderie that resulted from all our practice, I thought, *Let's take that energy and put it on wax.* The regular way would be to write some songs, make a full-scale demo, then—whammo—direct the guys to play the parts and then record the parts. But there's a synergy when we all play together. It's night and day.

MD: What was the genesis of "Now Or Never"?

Ahmir: We started that song [in 2008] when I was still on a high coming off the Al Green project. It sounded soulful. Stylistically, "Walk Alone" was inspired by an episode of *Soul Train*, where Barry White's entire sixty-three-piece orchestra did an arrangement of a song where the drummer was only playing hi-hat and kick drum. I was emulating that. For another song, "Sometimes," we were paying homage to Isaac Hayes.

MD: What percentage of the drumming on contemporary R&B records is programmed versus live?

Ahmir: On the radio? [laughs] Yeah, right.

MD: A recent broadcast of *Live From Abbey Road* featured Rexsell Hardy Jr. killing it on drums with Mary J. Blige. But the same track on her record is entirely programmed.

Ahmir: The spiritual element of R&B has absolutely been lost. A lot of classic R&B was derivative of the church. Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, James Brown... you can't remove the spiritual element from the music. You run into a problem when you try to record yesterday's music on today's technology. There's a sonic quality that is absolutely missing. Hip-hop made a brilliant exposé of this via sampling. A lot of people say sampling is just taking someone else's composition, but really it's the feeling. People are trying to have a feeling that they can't get anymore.

MD: So all drumming in contemporary R&B is programmed.

Ahmir: Yes, because that is cost efficient. You're dealing with diminishing returns—technical and spiritual and

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financial diminished returns. People wonder why music is bankrupt. This is why: It costs too much to make. People wonder why some artists use a little freaky keyboard beat and are successful. Who is there to teach them Handel's *Messiah*? Who is there to teach them John Coltrane's "My Favorite Things"? We can only point fingers so much at how bad the state of music has gotten. That's why I'm always trying to teach people at DJ gigs. A lot of my Facebooking, blogging, and Twittering has to do with the history of music.

MD: Your snare drum sound is one of your trademarks.

Ahmir: It's my tuning. Also, I am just as much an engineer as a musician. Sometimes there is a certain pop I can get from a piccolo, or I might tune a 5" drum a certain way. And it's how you apply tape to the snare to get rid of the ring. On my YouTube page [search for "goolquest"] is a clip called "Philip Michael Thomas," where I make a beat using the elements of Philip Michael Thomas's *Living The Book Of My Life* record. You can see me flipping a sample, then re-creating the sample in the drum room. There are a lot of my drum videos on there.

MD: What does an R&B drummer need now to be successful?

Ahmir: I'm not part of the status quo. It's risky to follow me, because I've somehow managed to make a path playing simple. Some people say I'm not great 'cause they think I play the same beat over and over again. I can do the gospel-chops thing. However, I know a million of those gospel drummers who can't play a straight break to save their life.

Listen to your history—that is very important. I name drummers to younger cats, assuming they know them. I'll mention Tony Williams' *Emergency* or *Ego*, or Tower Of Power's "Squib Cakes," or even Clyde Stubblefield and John "Jabo" Starks, and a lot them are like, "Huh?" That's scary.

And it's important that cats become more involved in how they're heard. The biggest misconception is that what a drummer plays matters most. Perception is reality. You have guys

who don't know the first thing about microphone technique or engineering.

MD: How can they learn?

Ahmir: I had the experience of having my own group, but most drummers should know which microphones are best and which mics don't work. In the studio, if a cat comes to you and he wants his shit to sound like the Four Tops' "Sugar Pie Honey Bunch," you should instantly know that you need a Royer ribbon mic to give your drums that crisp sound. You should know that a Shure SM57 is better live than in the studio. You need to know what kind of sound your microphone gives you.

MD: What mic do you use on your bass drum?

Ahmir: A Yamaha Subkick. It has a microphone that acts as its own trigger, so when you hit the kick it complements it and gives you a warm Roland 808 sound.

Another thing the modern R&B drummer needs is discipline. Check your ego at the door. Don't overplay and do fills when it's not necessary. And you have to really come up with a new style of playing. Pretty much every R&B drummer today is derivative of go-go music, post-Timbaland drumming, or drum 'n' bass. A lot of records from the '80s are all about Dennis Chambers' style of drumming. That's where it comes from. He has that shuffle/go-go thing down that we haven't let go of for twenty years. It's taken the funk out of it. People have to define and dissect what soul means.

MD: Do you mean Chambers from Funkadelic to Scofield?

Ahmir: People started on Chambers' style of playing in 1980 or '81. And they haven't let go. It's like the matrix—it's unavoidable. We need a new pulse, a new funk, a new rhythm. A lot of the answers come from knowing the history. You've got to listen to the records and study the history and emulate it. And always be on time. I can use that advice myself!

For Questlove's comments on some of his own best recordings, go to modern drummer.com.



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It's All In The Touch

DEVELOPING YOUR SOUND FROM WITHIN

by Ben Sesar



I've never met a drummer who didn't like to talk about gear. I definitely consider myself a gearhead. In light of this year's NAMM show and its coverage by *Modern Drummer*, I'd like to talk about gear from a different perspective.

During the early years of my professional career, I thought a lot about drum equipment and how it impacted the music I was making. In those days, I flew to a lot of shows. And for each one, a local backline company provided a drumset for me to use. Every night I had the opportunity to play a different set of drums, in varying degrees of quality and construction. In time I started to realize that for my purposes the brand of drums was of little or no consequence to the band's overall sound. The thrust behind my sound was within me all along. I can honestly say that while I love my high-end gear, I consider it a luxury in terms of what's necessary for me to make music. Ultimately, I carry my drumming and my sound with me wherever I go. And so do you!

SETTING THE TONE

The drum being an acoustic instrument, much of its tone is the result of the player's touch. It's been my experience that no two people playing the same instrument produce the exact same sound; this is credited to the fact that we all differ in the way we *intend* for a drum to sound. Experienced players know exactly how to extract the desired sound from the instrument. They've developed a sense of who they are and what they want to say as artists, and their sound is a direct reflection of their attack on the instrument. The point is, your *true sound* relates back to you—the player—more so than to the instrument you choose to play.

In all fairness, it can be argued that it's the resonance of the physical components of the drum (heads, shell, and hardware) that has the greatest impact on the overall sound. And to the casual observer, this would ring true. But as you increase your awareness of what's really going on, you'll find it's the touch, fueled by the passion of the player, that sets these physical elements into

motion. It's simple cause and effect, and it's evidenced by the wide variety of adjectives we use to describe different sounds a drum can make, partially by touch: "punchy," "round," "warm," "fat," and so on.

In order to have a better understanding of how tone is drawn from a drum, consider the difference in the way the tone is produced by a non-acoustic instrument such as an electric guitar. While the path of sound does start with the initial touch on the instrument, from there it goes through magnetic pickups, then often through various effects pedals, and finally through amplification. An electric guitar relies heavily on out-board gear in order to achieve its full potential. Conversely, drums don't require external means in order to sweeten their natural sound. Even under a microphone, a drum is meant to speak on its own, needing little help in the way of processing.

THE GEAR?

I've hesitated to offer credit to the actual instrument for having much to do with



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your overall sound. The point was to establish the foundation for this discussion. Now let's look at the aspects in which our gear *does* contribute.

There are a lot of companies out there making fine instruments for both professionals and amateurs. Aside from aesthetics like lugs and finishes, how else do you distinguish the products made by these companies? In a blind test and with all things being equal, do you really think you can identify a specific brand's drum based solely on its sonic properties?

The fact is, almost all high-end drums are going to sound great, whether you're recording them or playing them live. So what qualities actually set apart one brand from the next? In order to accurately answer this question, you must experience the instrument from the standpoint of the player, not just the casual listener. Other than the fundamental note, when you strike a drum it gives back something in the form of response and feel. Each drum will respond to touch in a way that is distinct from any other drum. It's very important to be aware of this kind of nuance. For example, some drums have a big, powerful sound but feel rigid in the attack, like the drum is somehow repelling you. Other drums seem to give when you strike them—they have a softer response, and you can lay into them with ease. There are drums that are extremely sensitive to touch, so they

produce a full tone with very little effort. Others require the sound to be drawn out with a heavier hand.

It's these characteristics that I directly equate with the resurgence of vintage gear. Players who desire the older gear do so not only because the drums sound unique but also because that sound is paired with an equally distinctive feel. According to die-hard collectors, it's this feel that most new drums lack.

TOUCH VERSUS TONE

So why is the response of a drum so important to the overall sound? Again, it relates back to your initial touch on the instrument. Think of it as a reward for your effort. It takes *work* to hit a drum. The response of a drum determines how hard that work will be. If the drum has a pleasant response, then the payoff should be a pleasant sound. The easier the drum is to play, the more inspired you will be, and an inspired player will naturally tend to draw a nicer tone.

The opposite is also true. How do you think you'll play if the drum sounds or feels bad? Have you ever had your sound artificially fed back to you via monitor mix? Those of you who record in the studio or play live using in-ear monitors can relate, I'm sure. When someone or something else is in charge of your sound, playing can quickly turn into hard work if the sound you're hearing isn't what you intended. It's

taken me years to strike a balance under these circumstances. Over that time I've learned that you have to adjust quickly *and* gracefully.

THE FINAL WORD

I hope that as you view all the great new products by the various manufacturers presented in this month's issue, you consider some of the finer points about how these products might perform based on your individual needs. If you're shopping for new drum equipment, take the time to test out many different options. Be sure to notice not only how the drums look but also how they respond to your particular touch. One time, when I was in the market for a new drumset, instead of playing all the different kits side by side, I grabbed one 12" tom and carried it with me as I compared it with all the other 12" toms from various brands. Once the tuning was matched, I had an immediate and accurate comparison of how the same drums made by various brands felt and sounded.

Whether you're shopping for a new kit or you're just browsing to see what's out there, strive to develop a clear vision of what a drum should sound and feel like to you. The rest is in your hands.

Ben Sesar plays with Grammy-winning artist Brad Paisley.



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program that I have put myself through to improve my own funk playing. It's a groove boot camp that will vastly increase your knowledge of classic grooves - and more importantly, will also ignite your creativity and make you a funkier and more creative drummer."

Stanton Moore



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ODD-NOTE GROUPINGS FOR REAL-WORLD APPLICATIONS

by Doug Tann

MUSIC KEY	
R.C.	✕
S.D.	●
B.D.	●
H.H.	✕
w/ foot	

This article consists of a handful of ways to explore simple five- and seven-note groupings in grooves and fills.

Let's start off simply with a five-note grouping using 8th notes. This pattern resolves after five measures. The hi-hat foot, used here to keep time, is key to getting the phrase to sit in the pocket, so make sure you're not flammng that foot against the other limbs. Try playing the pattern as left-right-left-kick-kick, right-left-right-kick-kick.

1

Here's a way to phrase the five-note pattern using unisons with the hands.

2

The same five-note grouping can be played in 12/8 for swing and shuffle feels.

3

Here's an example of one way to phrase the fives with the snare and kick under a swing ride pattern.

4

You can apply the same concepts to seven-note groupings. Here's a basic grouping of seven between the hands and feet. Stick this phrase using alternating strokes, leading with either hand. Then try sticking it as a five-stroke roll followed by two bass drum notes: left-left-right-right-left-kick-kick, right-right-left-left-right-kick-kick.

5

Here's a way to play sevens between the hands and feet using unison strokes between the ride and kick.

6

Exercise 6 consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a series of eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' above it, representing the ride drum. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a series of eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' below it, representing the kick drum. The two staves are perfectly in phase, creating a unison effect.

Now outline the seven on the ride, while playing a funk/rock groove with the other limbs.

7

Exercise 7 consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a funk/rock groove consisting of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a similar groove. The ride drum part is a sequence of seven eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' above it, following the groove.

Here's where the sevens fall when played in 12/8. Start by playing the phrase using alternating strokes. Then try a single accent followed by double strokes (right-left-left-right-right-left-left).

8

Exercise 8 consists of two staves of music in 12/8 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a series of eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' above it, representing the ride drum. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a series of eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' below it, representing the kick drum. The two staves are in phase, creating a unison effect.

Finally, here's an example of one way to phrase the sevens with the snare and kick under a swing ride pattern.

9

Exercise 9 consists of two staves of music in 12/8 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a series of eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' above it, representing the ride drum. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a series of eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' below it, representing the snare and kick drums. The two staves are in phase, creating a unison effect.



Doug Tann has performed with Stanley Clarke, Regina Carter, and Ashford & Simpson, as well as with the St. Louis Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic, and the Winnipeg Symphony. He is the author of four books, including *The Forgotten Foot*. Doug can be reached at dougann@yahoo.com.



Polyrhythms

PART 6: SUPERIMPOSED SHUFFLES by Rod Morgenstein

This month we'll take some common shuffle patterns and play them as superimposed four-against-three polyrhythmic grooves.

Here are the four shuffle grooves we'll be dealing with. Examples C and D have a half-time feel.

Example 1 applies the shuffle hi-hat pattern from Example A to a four-against-three polyrhythm, where every 8th-note triplet or 8th-note-triplet rest from Example A is converted to an 8th note.

1 2 + 3 + 4 1 + 2 + 3 4 + 1 + 2 3 + 4 +

Example 2 completes the superimposed shuffle by adding the bass drum and snare patterns from Example A. Make sure to count out loud in order to fully grasp how the shuffle groove feels when superimposed as a four-against-three pattern.

Example 3 applies Example B as a four-against-three polyrhythmic groove.

It's very important to transition back and forth smoothly and seamlessly between a straight groove and the superimposed polyrhythmic shuffle. Example 4 is a five-measure phrase consisting of a two-measure beat followed by the three-measure superimposed shuffle from Example 3.

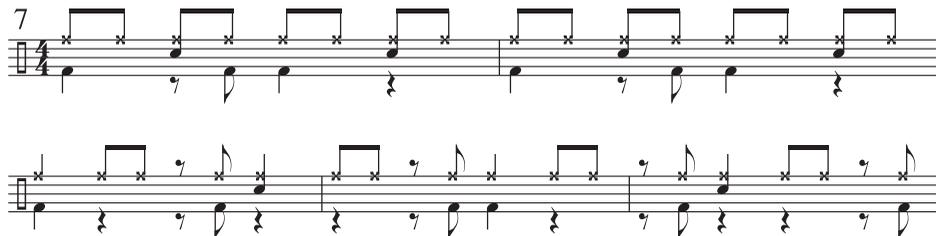
Example 5 completes the superimposed half-time shuffle with the addition of the bass drum and snare patterns from Example C.

1 2 + 3 + 4 1 + 2 + 3 4 + 1 + 2 3 + 4 +

Example 6 adds the bass drum pattern from Example D.



Example 7 is a five-measure phrase consisting of a two-measure beat followed by the three-measure superimposed half-time shuffle.



Example 8 converts the quarter-note/8th-note superimposed shuffle pattern in Example 4 to 8th notes and 16th notes. The snare notes are accented to emphasize the feel of the superimposed shuffle.



Example 9 follows the same process by converting the superimposed half-time shuffle from Example 6 to 8th notes and 16th notes. Once you're comfortable playing these exercises, try playing a two-measure 8th-note groove followed by the superimposed shuffles.



Examples 10 and 11 superimpose the hand patterns of the shuffle and half-time shuffle over a continuous double bass 16th-note onslaught. When you practice these grooves, precede them with two measures of a 16th-note double bass beat, with the ride or hi-hat playing a quarter-note or 8th-note pattern and the snare hitting on the backbeats.



Although these four-against-three grooves take three measures to play through, it's important to be able to play them for an even number of measures as well. So practice each of the previous examples in musical phrases of two-, four-, and eight-bar lengths. Drum on!



Rod Morgenstein is a founding member of the groundbreaking fusion band Dixie Dregs. He was also a member of the progressive Steve Morse Band, and he continues to play with the pop/metal band Winger. In addition, Rod has performed with the Rudess/Morgenstein Project, Jazz Is Dead, Platypus, and the Jelly Jam. He is currently a professor of percussion at Berklee College Of Music.



Gadson's Groove, Part 2

"LET A WOMAN BE A WOMAN, LET A MAN BE A MAN"

by David Garibaldi



In 2005, I wrote an article on the playing of the great R&B drummer James Gadson. The piece contained a transcription of the song "My Sisters And My Brothers," which originally appeared on the Dyke & the Blazers LP *Dyke's Greatest Hits: We Got More Soul* and was released years later on a now out-of-print compilation CD called *So Sharp!*

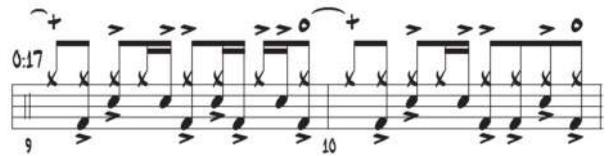
Gadson's work with Dyke & the Blazers, along with the work of the drummers of James Brown, was a big part of my schooling during Tower Of Power's early years. These drummers' playing helped shape the way I approached the instrument. *Dyke's Greatest Hits*, in particular, is a gold mine of great drumming. This LP—which, according to Gadson, was considered "experimental" music—also features Earth, Wind & Fire guitarist Al McKay.

In this article we're looking at Gadson's performance on "Let A Woman Be A Woman, Let A Man Be A Man." Every time I listen to the track I'm amazed by how sophisticated the drumming is. When Gadson made these recordings with Dyke, very few drummers could play like that. James was inventing a language that all of us still use today.

If you're interested in Gadson's playing, look up his discography. It's an amazing body of work. There's also a chapter on James in Jim Payne's tremendous book *The Great Drummers of R&B, Funk & Soul*.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

There's a lot of looseness within the structure of what Gadson played, meaning there's some improvisation. The basic rhythmic theme of the tune is found in measures 9 and 10.

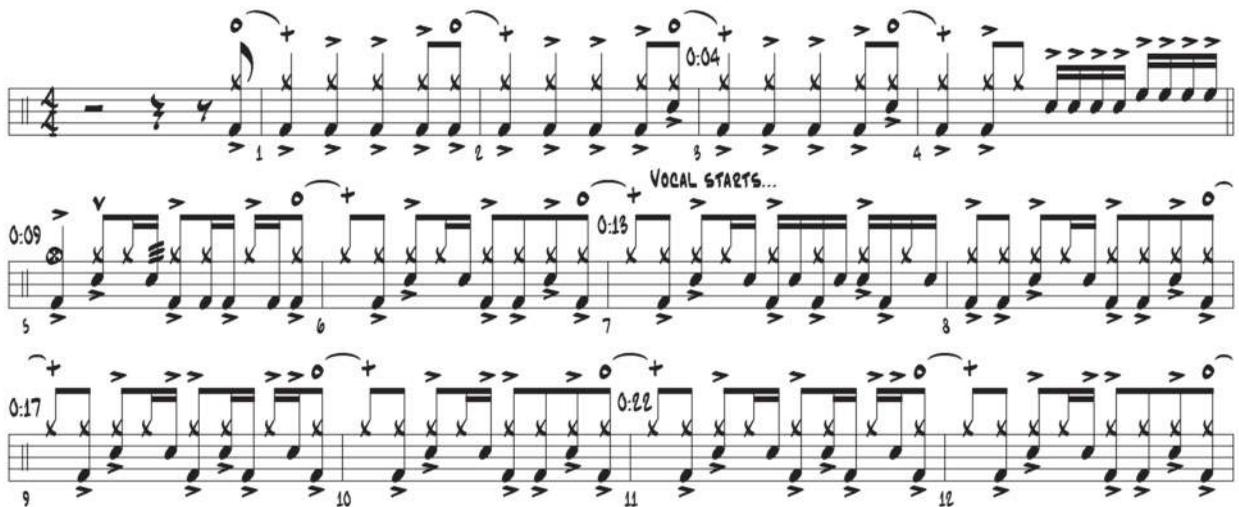


Transcribing can be an intimidating task, but it gives tremendous insight into the mind of the player being studied. At the time of this recording, May 10, 1969, there were few drummers playing this way, which makes it even more significant.

For those of you who like to transcribe, check out the powerful software called the Amazing Slow Downer (ronimusic.com), which allows MP3s to be slowed down without changing the pitch. Also, the EQ can be adjusted to enhance certain frequencies that make drums easier to hear on old recordings. Slowing the track down and changing the EQ settings allowed me to hear a lot of detail that's missing when the track is played at normal speed with flat EQ.

For fans of Dyke & the Blazers, there's now a great compilation CD available called *Dyke & The Blazers, We Got More Soul: The Ultimate Broadway Funk*. This collection contains thirty-three tracks along with liner notes listing session dates and players—you gotta have this!

Even though I spent several hours going through the recording, I may have missed some things. If you have questions, comments, or corrections, I can be reached through the Web site towerofpower.com. Enjoy!



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THE FUNKY BEAT

0:26
13

0:30
14

0:34
17

0:39
18

0:43
21

0:47
22

0:52
25

0:56
26

1:00
29

1:04
30

(NOT SURE ABOUT THIS NOTE...!!!)

1:09
33

1:17
37

1:22
38

1:26
41

1:30
42

UNACCENTED SO

1:35
45

1:39
46

DRUMS & VOCAL

1:43
49

1:48
50

1:51
51

1:54
52



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THE FUNKY BEAT

The image shows a musical score for a drum part titled "THE FUNKY BEAT". The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It consists of six lines of music, each starting with a measure number and a time signature. The time signatures are 1:52, 2:00, 2:09, 2:17, 2:26, and 2:34. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and quarter notes, with many notes marked with an 'x' to indicate specific drum sounds. There are also some notes with a '+' sign above them. The score includes a "FADE STARTS" instruction with a dashed line under the 2:26 time signature. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the 2:39 time signature.

David Garibaldi is the drummer in the award-winning funk band Tower Of Power. 

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GEARING UP DRUMKIT DETAILS— ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

SHAKIRA'S BRENDAN BUCKLEY

Brendan Buckley started playing the drums when he was about fourteen years old. He remembers his drum teacher Tommy Igoe telling him to bring three things to his first lesson: a spiral notebook, the Jim Chapin book *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*, and a Boss DR-550 drum machine. Igoe also introduced Buckley to MIDI technology and the drumKAT MIDI controller. So, years later, when Shakira and her musical director, Tim Mitchell, asked the drummer to devise an electronic kit for their shows and recordings, Buckley was up to the task.

"Tim and I threw ideas around regarding the approach to Shakira's new material," Brendan says. "We wanted to construct an electronic setup that didn't look like an ordinary drumset but looked a bit more like a keyboard or DJ rig—something where I could sit or stand to play. It would be equipped with a laptop, a drumKAT, and an MPC. There would also be room to add acoustic drums when necessary."

"There are a few similarities and plenty of differences between electronic and acoustic drumming," Buckley continues. "I prefer acoustic drums to sound live, with ghost notes, fills, snare buzz—a bit of fuzz and grease. I like the electronic stuff to sound a bit more mechanical and machinelike—punchy and robotic. Also, I tend to manipulate the sounds differently. I like to mess with acoustic drums by detuning or cranking heads, adding a lot of dampening, or stacking things on top. I alter electronic drums by running them through effects such as delays, filters, and distortions."

So what brought about the idea for such an elaborate electronic/acoustic setup? "When Shakira decided that she wanted to go in a more electronic direction, she asked me to bring these elements into the show," Buckley says. "When we first tried some of her 'dancier' songs with traditional acoustic drums, she wasn't 100 percent convinced. But when I sampled some of the sounds from her records and used them with my electronic kit, she instantly connected with the music. The issue wasn't about the beats; it was about the actual *sound* of the kick, snare, etc. I have to give credit to Steve Sidelnyk [Madonna, Seal, Massive Attack] for being my guru in this department."

"So now I get a copy of all of Shakira's recording sessions from her producers. Then I isolate and sample each individual component. I load those samples into Native Instruments' Battery 3 on my laptop and label each sound. Once that's done, I assign each sound to a trigger pad. I create a different configuration for each song in our set. So whenever I call up a new song, everything is mapped differently. What had been a snare may now be a metal pipe sound, or a kick drum sound may now be a reverse cymbal swell. I have sixteen triggers for my hands and three for my feet. I have to memorize what sound is on each one, for about twenty songs. Luckily I haven't blanked out on stage yet. Okay, maybe once or twice." [laughs]



DRUMS: DW Classics

- A. 5x14 stainless steel snare
- B. 9x13 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 14x22 bass drum
- E. 5x14 aluminum snare
- F. Remo 24x20 surdo
- G. Remo 24x22 surdo

CYMBALS: Sabian

- 1. 14" HHX Groove Hats
- 2. 17" AAX Studio crash
- 3. 18" AAX El Sabor crash
- 4. 21" HHX Raw Bell Dry ride

HARDWARE: DW stands, 5002

Accelerator double pedal, and custom rack designed by Ray Woodbury (RK Diversified) and Brendan Buckley and fabricated by Erik Eastland (All Access Staging & Productions)

STICKS: Vic Firth 5AB wood-tip

drumsticks, Steve Gadd brushes, T1 timpani mallets, TW12 Tala Wands
HEADS: Remo coated Ambassador batters, clear Ambassador resonant heads, Renaissance Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter

ELECTRONICS:

- aa. Apple 13" MacBook Pro
- bb. Roland PD-125 trigger V-Pad
- cc. Roland PD-8 trigger pad (3)
- dd. Alternate Mode drumKAT 3.8
- ee. Roland KD-7 kick trigger (2)
- ff. Akai MPD24
- gg. Alternate Mode poleKAT

Not shown: **Apogee** Duet interface, **M-Audio** Midisport, M-Audio Oxygen 8 MIDI keyboard, Alternate Mode hatKAT trigger pedal, **Future Sonics** in-ear monitors, **LP** various instruments





AVRIL LAVIGNE/GAVIN DEGRAW/REGINA SPEKTOR'S RODNEY HOWARD

DRUMS: Pearl Masters in red glass finish

- A. 7x12 soprano snare
- B. 6 1/2x14 maple snare
- C. 8x12 birch tom
- D. 9x13 birch tom
- E. 16x16 birch floor tom
- F. 18x24 maple bass drum

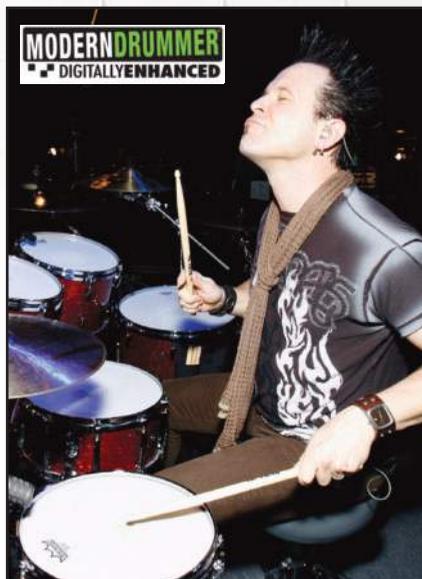
"I'm not a one-size-fits-all kind of guy," Howard says. "So my gear tends to change a lot depending on the artist or band I'm working with. For example, my Avril kit is tuned for cut, power, and clarity. By contrast, the kit I play with Gavin uses a combination of woods to get a warm, round kick and a fat snare sound, while the birch toms have more bite. I often put a circular cutout of a 14" head on top of the snare and then detune the drum so it gives a fat, low, and funky Al Jackson-type sound."

HARDWARE: Pearl 2000 series, Demon Drive pedals with B100DB beaters

STICKS: Vic Firth 5B wood, Steve Gadd brushes, Rute 202, SD12 Swizzle sticks

PERCUSSION: Pearl Hex Ganza hand shaker, 6" Factory Metal Hi-Hat Jangler, 8" Factory Metal Celtic Bell

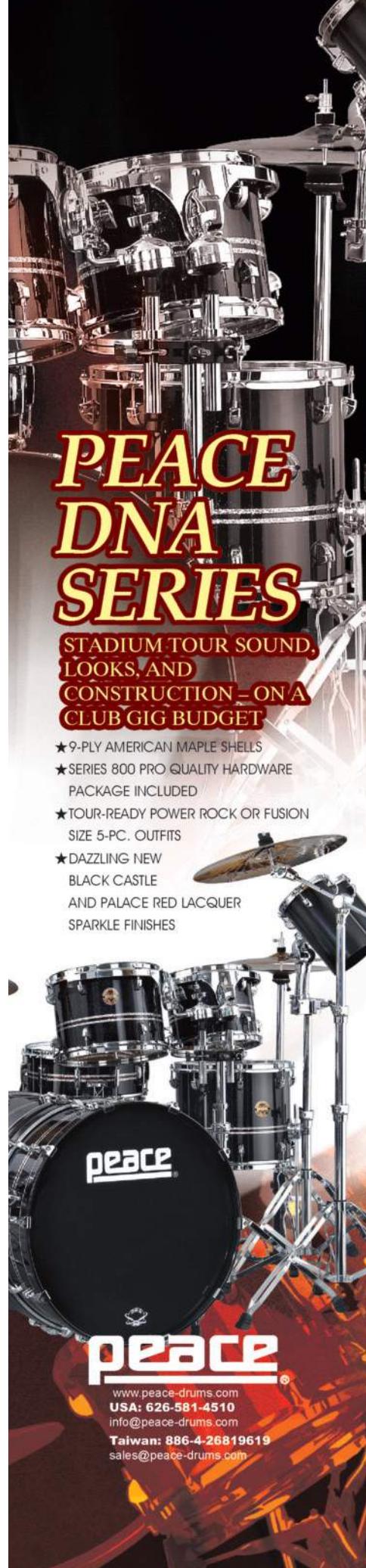
ELECTRONICS: Sensaphonics 3D in-ear system, Clark Synthesis Tactile Transducer (rumble seat)
"The 3D in-ear system features microphones in the ear molds that amplify the natural surrounding acoustic sound of the drums. That allows you to dial in your preferred ratio of acoustic versus miked sound."



CYMBALS: Sabian

- 1. 16" Artisan hi-hats
- 2. 18" Artisan crash
- 3. 24" prototype ride
- 4. 20" HHX O-Zone ride
- 5. 22" AA China
- 6. 12" Chopper on secondary snare (not shown)

"My second crash is a 20" HHX O-Zone ride, which is a lot darker and funkier than what I would normally use on pop gigs. My secret weapon is the Chopper, which I often lay on the soprano snare. I usually play that in conjunction with a shaker."



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BILL LASWELL

by Will Romano

It's ridiculous. That's your reaction when you consider the volume and diversity of recording projects that bassist/producer/remix engineer Bill Laswell has realized over a career that spans thirty-plus years. Name just about any genre, and Laswell has played or produced in it. Mention any major drummer of the last forty years, and Laswell has shared a stage, studio, or rhythm section with him or her.

Laswell grew up in Michigan and in the late 1970s migrated to the Big Apple, where he quickly made a name for himself in the downtown avant-garde scene, performing with the Zu Band, which morphed into the post-funk/post-punk/post-*everything* group Material. Since then, Laswell has recorded with, produced, or remixed a disparate collection of artists from Iggy Pop to John Zorn to Mick Jagger to Miles Davis, but it was Herbie Hancock's 1983 album, *Future Shock*, that boasted the Grammy-winning instrumental R&B hit "Rockit" and shot the ace bassist to first-call producer status.

In the wake of the Hancock success, when it appeared as though Laswell was poised for superstardom, Bill refused to be boxed and labeled and instead investigated a multitude of sonic possibilities with artists as far ranging as Gil Scott-Heron, Last Exit, Public Image Ltd., Peter Gabriel, and Motörhead, while exploring a diversity of rhythmic feels with a virtual who's who of drumming, including Ginger Baker, Jack DeJohnette, Sly Dunbar, Lenny White, Rashied Ali, Bryan "Brain" Mantia, Hamid Drake, Manu Katché, Elvin Jones, Karsh Kale, Anton Fier, Fred Maher, Cindy Blackman, Dave Lombardo, Zigaboo Modeliste, Tony Thompson, David Van Tieghem, Trilok Gurtu, and Tony Williams, the last of whom garners special praise from Laswell. "There was never anybody like him in the drumming world," Bill says. "He's an anomaly."



Laswell remains innovative, if not somewhat elusive, as his latest band project, Method Of Defiance, bears out. Featuring Parliament/Funkadelic/Talking Heads keyboardist Bernie Worrell, trumpet player Toshinori Kondo (who appears on *Future Shock* and on Laswell's 2001 disc *Points Of Order*), drummer Guy Licata, and vocalist/electronics man Dr. Israel, MOD seamlessly weaves through funk, art rock, experimental jazz, dub, drum 'n' bass, electronica, and R&B on the live CD/DVD package *Nihon*. True to form, Laswell can't be pinned down, even within—especially within—the context of this new band.

"The project keeps progressing," the bassist says. "DJ Krush, from Japan, is now in the band, as is another vocalist, Hawkman, from Jamaica. So things keep changing. I want to try different things with different guests and continue to add and subtract musicians.

That's what this band is all about."

We caught up with Laswell in his New York City apartment, where we discussed drums and drumming, his long and varied career, and the music industry in general.

MD: As a producer, what traits do you look for in a drummer?

Bill: The drummers who catch my attention now are the ones who are more interested in creating a sound, creating an interaction with other musicians. Guy Licata is a new drummer who you'll hear a lot more of. I work a lot with Hamid Drake, who understands how to incorporate time but can also play free jazz, which is very unusual. A lot of time players can't play creatively, and a lot of free players can't cope with the time aspect. It's good to work with drummers who I consider well-rounded musicians.

MD: What makes a good drummer?

Bill: I've done a lot of different things,

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so the function of a drummer seems to change depending on the project. If you come into a situation where you're interested in maintaining a certain feel, then you don't necessarily look for an improvising drummer. Or if you have an improvisational situation where time is irrelevant, you don't necessarily want to get someone who plays beats. The interesting thing is when you take a rhythm player and put him in a free situation. I also might try to do the opposite: Someone who is known as a free player could be put in a more restrictive situation just to see what happens. By doing this, you create hybrids of both approaches.

MD: Describe that a bit.

Bill: I've played with some drummers who are erratically original, have set their own standard, their own level, if you will. They're considered the greatest drummers in the world. Then there are others who are more interested in playing with you and making music work. Some might be able to do both. But you get different approaches from different generations. Younger drummers tend to listen more, in my opinion. Established drummers who have a signature sound and technique tend to be a bit more concerned with their own presentation.

MD: Would you say Guy Licata is an example of someone listening to the music?

Bill: Yeah. He's a good example of a younger drummer who's very conscious of trying to build music. His vibe has more to do with having been influenced by electronics, programmed music, turntablists, computer music, drum 'n' bass, early jün-

gle and dub stuff, techno, and even disco. He's conscious of those styles, and he's incorporated them into his approach.

MD: Do you ever want to change a drummer's style or approach?

Bill: Well, there's never a need to change anything unless you're absolutely sure you have a problem. You shouldn't be in a hurry to change things. What's been played might not necessarily be perfectly in time, or in tune, or in sync with what the record company wants and expects, but there's something undeniable about the feel. If you let that breathe, without trying to kill it, you might have something.

The last ten or fifteen years, the life has been squashed out of things. Instead of giving [music] a chance to breathe and develop, everything gets scrutinized and timed. These days, because of digital technology, if you record a track, someone will say, "It doesn't look right." Whereas in the past you'd say, "I don't know how I feel about it. Let's keep playing."

MD: What drummers influenced you earlier on?

Bill: Stu Martin, an American drummer, for one. He worked with John Surman and played with Duke Ellington. He was kind of a mentor in the beginning, because he had done so many things. Phillip Wilson, a free jazz drummer from St. Louis, was a mentor too, because he had been involved in bands I knew, like the Butterfield Blues Band and the Art Ensemble Of Chicago. He had also played with Hendrix and was older and more experienced. Ronald Shannon Jackson [Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor] was another who had a very individual approach. Playing with someone is one thing; following and chasing him is another. But you can do both and make it sound good. And I can't forget Anton Fier [Golden Palominos], who was coming more from rock or a progressive or alternative thing.

MD: How did you acclimate yourself to non-Western meters, especially the rhythmic patterns found in Indian music?

Bill: There are a lot of time signatures in that stuff, but a lot of straight time can be played through them. Like West African music, you get a lot of 6/8 time signatures. In North African music there's a lot of stuff in five and seven. But with most of the Indian music that I've worked with, I've been able to play 4/4 through it. However, there are weird cycles—cycles that are so long, the musicians don't count them out themselves. They have prompters to do it for them. You don't want to sit there and count a hundred beats.

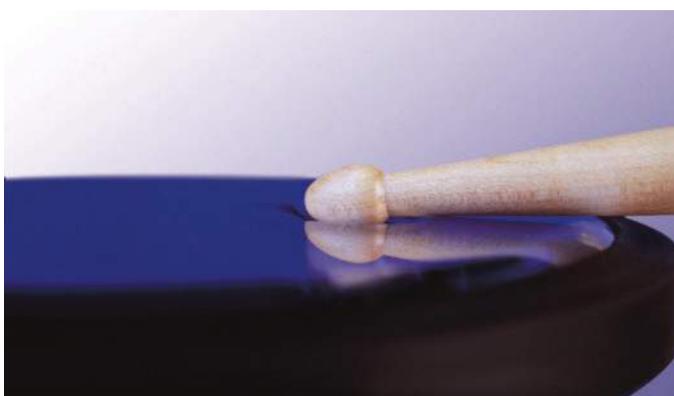
MD: Prompters?

Bill: Someone who signals when the rhythmic cycle is changing. Even with the great musicians you'll see that.

MD: To bring this full circle, it seems like your latest project, Method Of Defiance, combines a lot of the musical elements you've touched on throughout your career.

Bill: It does. But there's never a point where it gets stale or I say I want to change something. It just keeps evolving. That's why it's been so fun to work with this band.

To read more with Laswell on working with drumming greats like Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, and Ginger Baker, go to moderndrummer.com.



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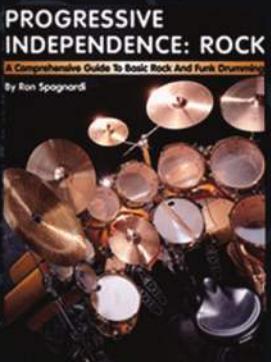
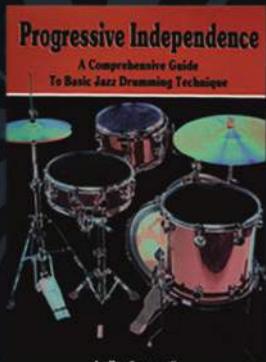
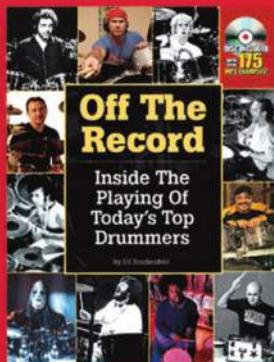
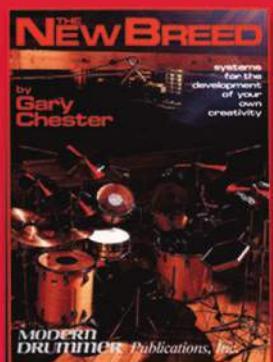
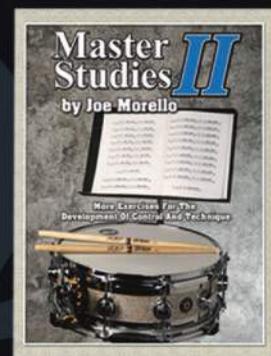
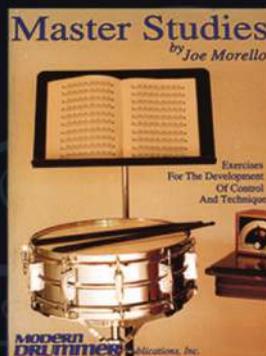
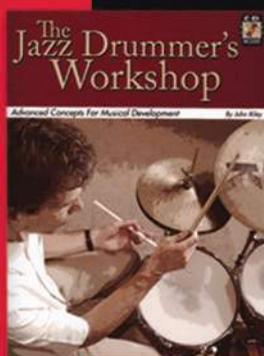
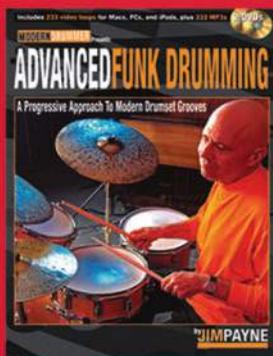
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SINCE 1977

CYNDI LAUPER'S

SAMMY MERENDINO

BeatsMeNYC

Story by Michael Dawson • Photos by Paul La Raia

When I pull up to the front gate of longtime New York City session drummer/producer/programmer Sammy Merendino's beautiful four-story 1892 townhouse, which is nestled in a surprisingly quiet and low-key section of West Harlem, I can't help but wonder if I'm at the right address. *Could there actually be a drum studio in there?* One of Merendino's neighbors—who is tending to some flowers when I climb out of my car—must notice my confused look, as she shouts down from her stoop, "You here for Sammy? This is the place."

Once inside, I'm struck by how classy the house looks and feels. Everything from the rich hardwood flooring to the soft natural lighting to the vintage decor seems to pay homage to the home's high-society nineteenth-century origins. Well, everything

except the four-piece Sonor drumkit, the paper-thin prototype Paiste cymbals, and the dozen or so microphones occupying what was originally a formal sitting room for houseguests.

I ask Sammy—who's spent the past nine years playing and recording with pop icon Cyndi Lauper and has a track record that includes everyone from R&B legends Cameo (*Word Up!*) to songwriting greats Hall & Oates (*Ooh Yeah!*) and Billy Joel (*Storm Front*) to guitar god Pat Metheny (*Secret Story*)—if he had always intended to turn a portion of his home into a studio. "Yeah, that was part of the beauty of it," he says. "I've had studios my whole life. And I had a studio downtown on 13th Street for a while. But I decided I wanted to have something set up at home, because I could see the trend of having to work this way. So when my wife

and I found this house, I knew I wanted to have a studio here.

"It's morphed over the years," the drummer continues. "Originally the studio was in one of the downstairs rooms, which is the control room now. But I wanted the drums to sound a little bigger. Luckily my wife is cool and was like, 'Why don't you put your drums in there?'" So now I have the front room set up as my live room."

Because his drums and his control room are separated by a flight of stairs, Merendino keeps his basic setup consistent in order to streamline the recording process. "When I track by myself, I'll record a little bit and then run downstairs to listen

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CYMBALS: Various Paiste models

STICKS: Vic Firth

HEADS: Evans

PERCUSSION: LP congas, Sonor timbales

ELECTRONICS: Roland TD20X drumkit, Roland SPD-S, Akai MPC3000, Korg Wavedrum, Digidesign Pro Tools HD 3, Apple Macintosh G5 computer, Otari MTR-90 II tape machine

MICROPHONES:

Kick: AKG D30, Shure SM7, Heil PR 40
Snare: Neumann KM84, Shure SM57, ADK S7C
Toms: Sennheiser 421, Gefell M71
Hi-hat: Audio-Technica AT4041
Overheads: ADK CS 251, Coles 4038, AKG C12
Rooms: Coles 4038

MIC PREAMPS: API 512C (10), 550A (8), 550B (2), ADK AP-1 (2)

COMPRESSORS: Chandler EMI (parallel bus), API 525 (snare), DBX 160 (kick), JBL 7110 (room)





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to it," he explains. "Then I'll tweak things. I also have a remote setup with a keyboard and a monitor that I use to control Pro Tools from behind my drumset. That way I can just go upstairs and play. I leave the mics set, so I don't have to change things each time."

In addition to being hired to play drums or program beats on different tracks, Sammy also uses BeatsMeNYC for production work. "I produce a lot, and I end up playing drums on most of those projects, unless the band has a good drummer," he says. "Or sometimes I'll hire someone else if I want a different sound." Merendino took an interest in production as a way to diversify his career and to get more involved in the creative side of record making. "When I would go in to do sessions, I'd bring in some new sounds that would have a lot to do with the overall sound of the album. I wanted to have a little more control so I could explore more of my own ideas. I also wanted to do things outside of being a drummer."

So, does having a studio play a role in landing production gigs? "Yeah, it's hard to produce without one now," Merendino says. "I ended up work-



ing with Cyndi because I had a studio. She called a friend of mine to record a track for a *Rugrats* movie. But he was busy, so he told her to call me. So Cyndi came in, and we hit it off right away. Later that night, she asked me to play on her new record. After we finished the *Rugrats* thing, she called me to play a Girls With Guitars show in California. After I did that, she asked me to do a two-week tour. All of this came from having the studio. It's like an instant network."

In closing, I ask Sammy to give us a quick list of three things drummers need to get a studio up and running. "I'm a huge Pro Tools fan," he says. "You're basically getting a studio in a box for

almost nothing. So I'd say buy a Pro Tools Digi 003, because it has mic pre's built into it. Then get the best mics you can afford, even if they're just Shure SM57s. And make sure you have some good-sounding drums. Then just start recording. Once you get going, you'll find it's like creating your own destiny, where you're *making* opportunities happen. A lot of people sit back and wait for the phone to ring. But when you have your own studio, you have to hustle to get work, which I think is very important these days. It keeps you hungry."



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AREJAY HALE

Halestorm's drummer jumped on the rock 'n' roll highway early in life. But he and his band did it the right way—taking their time, honing their sound, and then crafting a burning debut album. Story and photo by Sayre Berman

Ever notice how really hard work always seems to go hand in hand with lucky breaks? That's the Halestorm story: relentless touring, courting radio support, developing a fan base, and then one day it happens—that proverbial lucky break.

It became apparent at a fairly early age that Lzzy Hale, now lead singer of Halestorm, had an incredible vocal range. She's "the Michael Phelps of voice," kid brother Arejay says, quoting one of Lzzy's vocal doctors. Arejay himself was something of a drumming prodigy. When they were young, the sibling duo would jam together in the basement of their suburban Pennsylvania home. Encouraged by their parents, both of whom were products of the classic rock era, Lzzy and Arejay honed their decidedly retro sound.

Halestorm's self-titled debut CD, a collaborative effort with the Grammy-nominated music producer Howard Benson, is the culmination of two years of preproduction work and a paring-down process of more than four hundred potential songs to eleven attitude-driven power-pop tracks. The theme of female empowerment runs through the CD, and Lzzy's strong vocals, reminiscent of Ann Wilson of Heart and Pat Benatar, are indeed accentuated by the musicality of the band.

Halestorm is currently on the road, opening for Theory Of A Deadman across America. And this spring the band is heading overseas for the first time to perform in several European locales. *MD* experienced the Halestorm show at the Buzz Bake Sale concert in Florida back in December and talked with Arejay earlier this year.

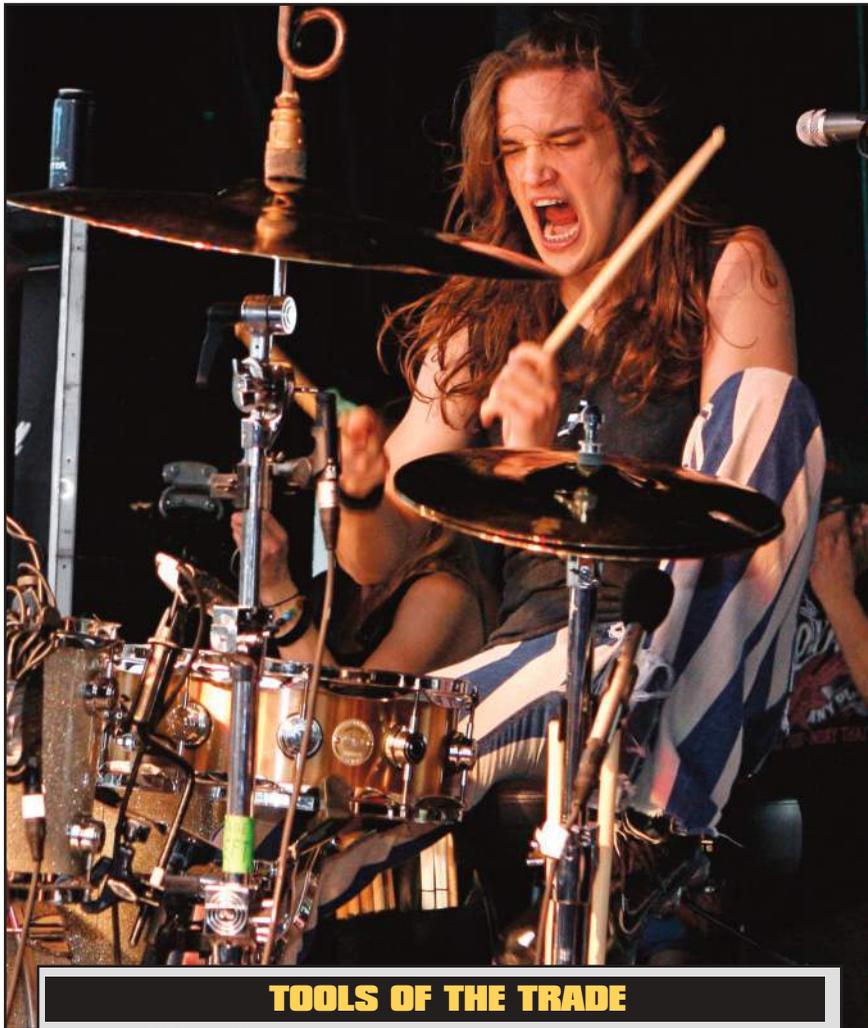
MD: How did your interest in music begin? Who were your early influences?

Arejay: My sister and I started at a very young age. Our parents had a lot to do with that. I started playing the pots and pans when I was about two. When I was about five, Lzzy and I started jamming together. Lzzy has this amazing voice. She was born to sing!

My dad got me into classic rock. He had been a bass player in several bands when he was young... that was during the psychedelic era. I don't know how he survived the '70s, but that's another story. [laughs] I grew up listening to all the greats—Ginger Baker, Keith Moon, John Bonham. All these drummers did so much more than merely provide backbeat rhythms—they *shaped* the sound of their bands.

MD: How did you and Lzzy make the transition from jamming in your basement to touring?

Arejay: We started getting serious about our little band when I was about seven years old, and that's



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Hale plays **DW** Maple Custom drums, including a 5x14 bronze snare, a 10x13 rack tom, 14x16 and 14x18 floor toms, and a 20x24 kick; **Zildjian** A Custom cymbals, including a 22" ride, two 20" crashes, and 14" Mastersound hi-hats; clear **Remo** Emperor heads on the toms, a Remo Powerstroke 3 on the bass drum, and an **Evans** ST Dry snare batter and Hazy 300 snare bottom. He uses **Pro-Mark** 5B sticks; an **LP** Bell Diablo cowbell; DW hardware, including 9000 series stands and a 5000 series single bass drum pedal; a **Tama** Iron Cobra cowbell pedal; an LP cowbell foot pedal attachment; and a DW Air Lift throne.

when I started taking drum lessons. We started playing around our local area in Pennsylvania. Our parents started booking us when I was nine and Lzzy was thirteen. Lzzy played keyboards and sang lead, my dad played bass, and I was on drums and sang backup vocals. We'd play coffeehouses, churches, charity functions; we'd play for free ice cream at the nearby Friendly's. Our first real show was a talent contest at the Schuylkill County Fair in 1997. We took third place. That's when Lzzy and I

realized we wanted to do this forever. That desire hasn't changed at all. We still have the same intensity.

MD: How did your relationship with Atlantic Records come about?

Arejay: We got signed in 2005. It was pretty much a case of pure luck. We were playing at Don Hill's in the SoHo section of Manhattan. The owner knew somebody who knew somebody who brought out an A&R guy from Atlantic Records. Things took off

after that. Atlantic put us right out on tour in front of these great bands—Seether, Trapt, Shinedown. Doing it that way was the best thing for us. It was kind of like band boot camp. We were playing just about every single night and learning the rules of the road from these veteran bands.

MD: You were signed in 2005, but your debut CD came out in April of last year.

Arejay: We'd recorded a live EP demo and toured on that. We'd sell it for \$5 at the shows. I think touring with these other bands made us become really tight. Because we went out on tour immediately, rather than going the more traditional route of doing an album first, we had to learn how to play better together. I firmly believe that if we had gone into the studio back in 2005, it just wouldn't

have been nearly as good. After being signed, we took it slowly. Because we toured so extensively, we built a solid fan base and developed staying power.

MD: Describe your songwriting process.

Arejay: My concept in approaching a drum fill or developing a groove is to complement my singer's voice as much as I can. My goal with writing is to emphasize how good Lzzy's voice is. I also want to leave space for the other instrument parts.

When I'm writing a song on drums, I'll think of a guitar riff or melody that can go over it. Then I'll pick up a guitar and figure it out. I think it makes sense to start a song rhythmically from the drums and then add color to it with the melody. Lzzy doesn't think rhythmically, she thinks melodically.

So what invariably happens is that I start busting out rhythms and she'll say, "Whoa, that's cool... I can sing over that!" And we start working on a song.

MD: Can we expect any surprises in your live show?

Arejay: We're definitely taking the show up a notch. We've always been a "live" band, and we have always challenged ourselves to put on a bigger and better live show. We're going to improve our drum circle—everyone plays drums in Halestorm—and that will be great. We're going to change up the set a bit too and possibly do a different intro. It'll be fun. Get out there and check us out—let us know what you think!

LEE BARRATT

by Ken Micallef

Gallows' self-taught savant likes his punk rock wild but his tempos precise.

Raw and ready, the U.K. quartet Gallows is returning punk rock to its mean, messy, and occasionally grandiose roots. Twenty-five-year-old drummer Lee Barratt brings mucho power to Gallows' *Grey Britain*, which runs a gamut of styles, recalling Rancid, the Smiths, even the British composer Edward Elgar. "Back in the day I used to drum along to Metallica, Limp Bizkit, Machine Head, and Korn," Barratt says. "I studied the basics, making sure I could do my double-stroke rolls and paradiddles. And my teacher gave me a big book of different rock, Latin, and swing beats. I never settled on one type of music."

A self-taught drummer, Barratt grew up in Watford, England (the birthplace of Elton John and George Michael), and insists his unschooled status helped him become the musician he is today. "It made my drumming a lot freer," he says. "If I'd been to drum tech school and taught by a proper teacher, I could have ended up trying to emulate his style rather than adopting my own. By listening to so many different drummers, I picked up licks and ideas from other people. My drumming would have been a lot more regimented if I'd have been in school rather than being self-taught."

Barratt's pre-Gallows résumé is huge; Lee played in a dozen bands between school, solo projects, and support acts. But Gallows became his meal ticket, and the band has assailed the U.K. charts. Having grown up in Watford, Barratt is also a fan of Elton John's original drummer, Nigel Olsson. "He's a proper showman," Lee says. "He doesn't play anything amazing, but he does his part very well, and he makes it look good."

In addition to *Grey Britain's* punk pummeling—all recorded without a click track, to keep it old school—the album finds Barratt kicking a mean double bass pedal occasionally. How does the drummer maintain his technique? "What I learned with my hands, I tried to do with my feet," he says. "I don't do a lot of doubles between my feet; I play



mostly singles. I just try to build up my leg strength and stamina. I play along to Metallica records, since there's a lot of double kick on their older records."

And *Grey Britain's* click-free tracking made Barratt take a new approach. "It made me change my style because I've always recorded to a click," Lee says. "We recorded to tape, and I couldn't keep doing takes while I was messing up. Everything had to be perfect, every take. It was more of a challenge. I had to know everything I was playing was as heavy and tight as possible. Live, bands tend to speed up or slow down. I wanted it to sound like we were playing to a click but with an organic drum sound and feel, as if it were live."

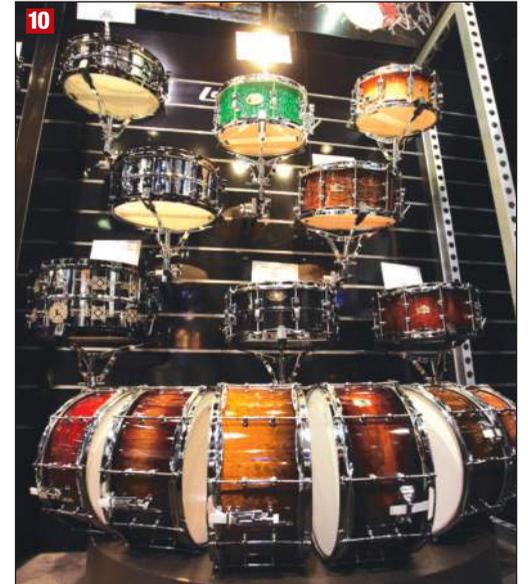
TOOLS OF THE TRADE

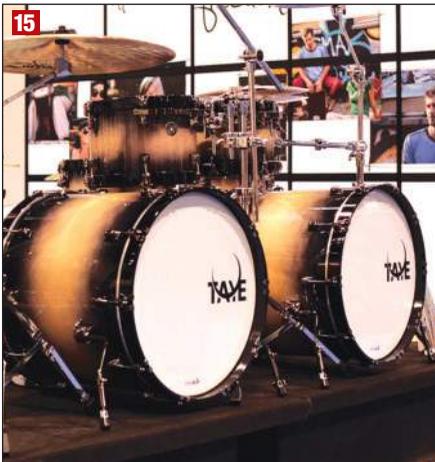
Barratt plays **Mapex** Orion drums, including a 9x12 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, an 18x24 bass drum, and a 5x14 Black Panther snare. His **Zildjian** cymbals include an 18" A Custom Medium crash, 13" A Custom hi-hats, an 18" K Medium Thin crash, an 18" K Thin crash, a 21" A Custom Projection ride, a 12" Z Custom splash, and a 16" Oriental China Trash. His **Evans** heads consist of an ST Dry on the snare, EC2s on the toms, and a clear EQ2 on the bass drum.



NEW AND NOTABLE

At the beginning of each year, manufacturers from around the world come together in Anaheim, California, to show off their latest products at the winter NAMM show. **Our NAMM 2010 Product Report features a rundown of some of the coolest drum-related items that you should check out.**





DRUMS

1. SONOR

Featured products from Sonor included Derek Roddy's striped Delite kit.
sonor.com

2. GRETSCH

Gretsch now offers snares with hybrid metal/wood hoops. Also of note is a new copper sparkle finish for the company's popular Catalina Club Jazz kit.
gretschdrums.com

3. TAMA

Tama's Superstar kit is now available with 100 percent birch shells.
tama.com

4. FORD

Ford now offers snares with granite-like Corian shells.
forddrums.com

5. MAPEX

Here's the 7x12 Fastback snare, one of fourteen new Black Panther models.
mapexdrums.com

6. LONGO

Longo's custom snares, including a limited run made with purpleheart, are one-of-a-kind instruments featuring handcrafted steam-bent shells.
longodrums.com

7. DUNNETT

This jazz-size Dunnett kit features maple/gum shells and is finished in an antique vanilla lacquer. The paisley pattern on the matching steel snare is from the Trussart collection, a series created along with James Trussart Custom Guitars.
dunnett.com

8. GMS

GMS introduced new PVS snares, which feature vent holes around the perimeter of the bearing edges and near the lugs.
gmsdrums.com

9. TRICK

For its twentieth anniversary, Trick has created a range of hand-painted pinstriped aluminum snares.
trickdrums.com

10. LUDWIG

Ludwig introduced several new snares, including steel-shell Black Magics and a huge 8x14 stainless steel Jim Riley signature drum.
ludwig-drums.com

11. DRUM WORKSHOP

Here's a vintage-looking DW Classics series kit in natural hard satin finish, plus a close-up of the company's new lever-controlled snare tension butt plate.
dwdrums.com

12. YAMAHA

The new Rock Tour drumset offers an aggressive sound and professional features at an affordable price.
yamaha.com/drums

13. PEARL

Pearl now offers this earthy finish for its Vision series kits.
pearldrums.com

14. CRAVIOTTO

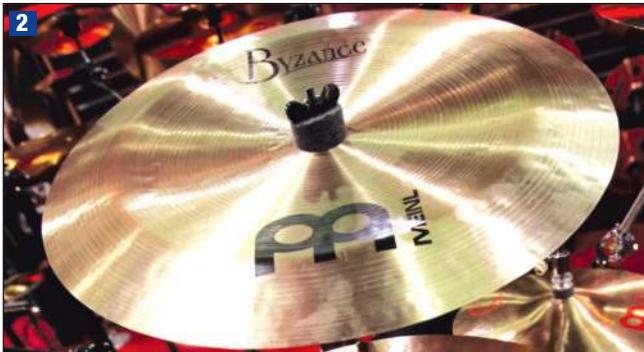
Craviotto's diverse line of high-end snares caught everyone's attention, as did this Classic series Birdseye Maple kit.
craviottodrums.com

15. TAYE

Taye now offers glossy wood hoops for snares and toms in its high-end Original line.
tayedrums.com

16. WHITNEY

Unusual-looking Penguin series drums are made with an internal suspension system and feature a Quickstand mounting system designed to minimize setup time and the kit's footprint.
whitneydrums.com



CYMBALS

1. BOSPHORUS

Bosphorus's new Oracle cymbals were designed along with jazz great Ralph Peterson Jr.

bosporuscymbals.com

2. MEINL

Meinl amended its Byzance line with a few individual pieces, like Extra Dry and Flat Bell Chinas, and introduced an entirely new all-German-made B20 line—the M-Series.

meinlcymbals.com

3. ZILDJIAN

Jazz rides, like Kenny Washington's Bounce, the Overhammer, and a new K Light Flat, were hot-ticket items from Zildjian, as were a range of new effects cymbals, like these K and A Custom EFX crashes.

zildjian.com

4. SABIAN

Sabian expanded its Vault Artisan selection with several new cymbals, like the 21" 3-Point ride, which was designed in collaboration with jazz legend Jack DeJohnette.

sabian.com

5. DREAM

Chinese-made Dream cymbals added the rustic-looking Dark Matter series to the company's existing lines, which include Bliss, Contact, Energy, and Vintage Bliss varieties.

dreamcymbals.com

6. PAISTE

The Alpha Brilliant line was a main draw at Paiste's booth, but the 24" 2002 Reverend Al's Big Ride (Alex Van Halen signature) was what caught our attention.

paiste.com

7. TURKISH

This Dark Hammer ride from Turkish has a cool-looking striped surface.

turkishcymbals.com

8. SOULTONE

Soultone introduced its green-patina-finish Vintage Old School and FXO special effects cymbals. The company is also offering custom logo imprints to all customers.

soultonecymbals.com

9. MATT NOLAN CUSTOM CYMBALS

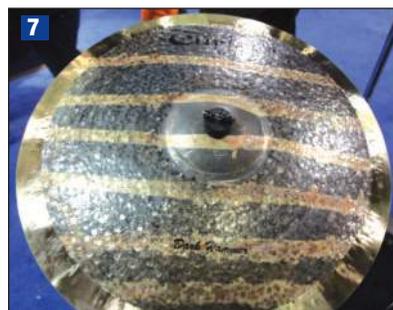
British sculptor Matt Nolan makes hand-forged bronze and stainless steel cymbals.

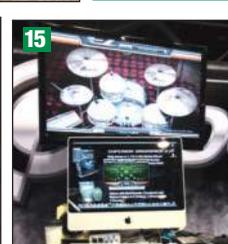
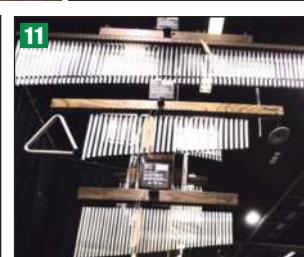
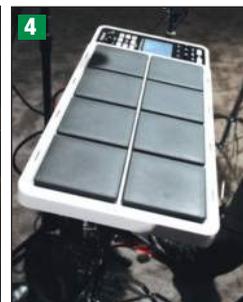
mattnolancustomcymbals.com

10. ISTANBUL AGOP

To celebrate its thirtieth anniversary, Istanbul Agop created these logo-free commemorative cymbals.

istanbulcymbals.com





HARDWARE/ACCESSORIES/ELECTRONICS

1. PEARL

Pearl's e-Pro Live electronic set, which consists of 6-ply wood shells, silicon Tru-Trac drumheads, and brass cymbal pads, is designed to look and feel more like acoustic drums than most electronic drumkits.

pearldrums.com

2. VATER

Vater introduced a handful of new models, including the lightweight 52nd St. Jazz, the 5A-size Hitmaker, and the powerful DSK. Bamboo Splashsticks are also new for 2010.

vater.com

3. YAMAHA

The DTX950K is a big-time addition to the high-end electronic drum market. The DTX950K module allows for sampling, and the drum pads feature textured silicon heads for a more realistic feel.

yamaha.com/drums

4. ROLAND

The new Octapad SPD-30 features eight pads and comes with 670 internal drum, percussion, and synth sounds. It also has a built-in loop function and effects processing that allow players to create multilayered electronic loops in real time.

rolandus.com

5. REMO

Tattoo Skyns feature designs from celebrity tattoo artist Corey Miller. Remo also released the Ambassador X head, which is made from thicker 12 mil film.

remo.com

6. FX EXPANSION

BFD drum software is now available in a smaller performer-friendly version, called Nano.

fxpansion.com

7. KELLY SHU

This microphone suspension system allows for a mic to be mounted internally or externally on a kick drum of any size.

kellyshu.com

8. EVANS

Inked By Evans provides drummers with several options for customizing front bass drum head logos.

inkedbyevans.com

9. KICKPORT

The KickPort bass drum accessory was all the rage at last year's show. This year, a model for cajons caught everyone's eye.

kickport.com

10. MAPEX

The smooth and powerful Falcon is making a big run in the professional pedal market. Its smaller footboard allows for more compact double-pedal setups.

mapexdrums.com

11. TREWORKS

TreeWorks continues to come up with new variations of handcrafted chimes, triangles, and finger cymbals.

treeworkschimes.com

12. ALESIS

New electronic percussion items from Alesis include the top-of-the-line DM10 Pro (shown), mid-level DM10 Studio, and budget-minded DM6 drumkits.

alesis.com

13. AXIS

The new A21 Laser pedals are designed for an even faster and more powerful response. The DR-A21 is Derek Roddy's signature edition of the same pedal and features built-in EKIT triggers.

axispercussion.com

14. BIG BANG

These mic holders are designed to clamp to all types of drum hardware, including tom suspension brackets.

bigbangdist.com

15. TOONTRACK

The drum software program Superior Drummer 2.0 has been expanded with the Jazz SDX library.

toontrack.com

16. VIC FIRTH

New Vic Firth signature models include ones for Cindy Blackman, Tommy Igoe, Marky Ramone, Aaron Spears, and Questlove.

vicfirth.com

17. PRO-MARK

Pro-Mark added new Autograph models for Billy Ward, Thomas Pridgen, Ray Luzier, and Pete Lockett.

promark.com



PERCUSSION

1. TYCOON

Tycoon introduced several unique shaker and tambourine variations in the Martin Verdonk Las Vegas signature line, while also displaying the high-quality congas, bongos, and traditional rope-tensioned djembes that are staples of the company's catalog. tycoonpercussion.com

2. GON BOPS

Alex Acuña's Special Edition congas feature an ebony stain lacquer and synthetic Ebony heads made by Remo. gonbops.com

3. PEARL

New Elite congas and bongos with gold-plated hardware, EZ Tune djembes, and various Brazilian instruments in yellow/green finish were just a few highlights from Pearl's percussion division. pearldrums.com

4. LATIN PERCUSSION

LP had an assortment of cool new percussion accessories, like the One-Handed Triangle; the Percusso, which combines tambourine and woodblock sounds in one instrument; and a top-tuning conga. lpmusic.com

5. RHYTHM TECH

The Jingle-R and the Stickball are part of Rhythm Tech's new Stick Mounted Percussion line. rhythmtech.com

6. MEINL

The Taku Hirano signature Hand-Bale features a recessed rim so that the drum can be played with the hands. meinlpercussion.com

7. TOCA

The 14" Freestyle fifth-anniversary djembe has a synthetic shell with glass inlays. tocapercussion.com



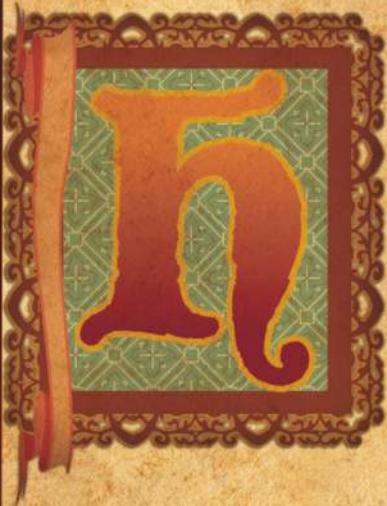
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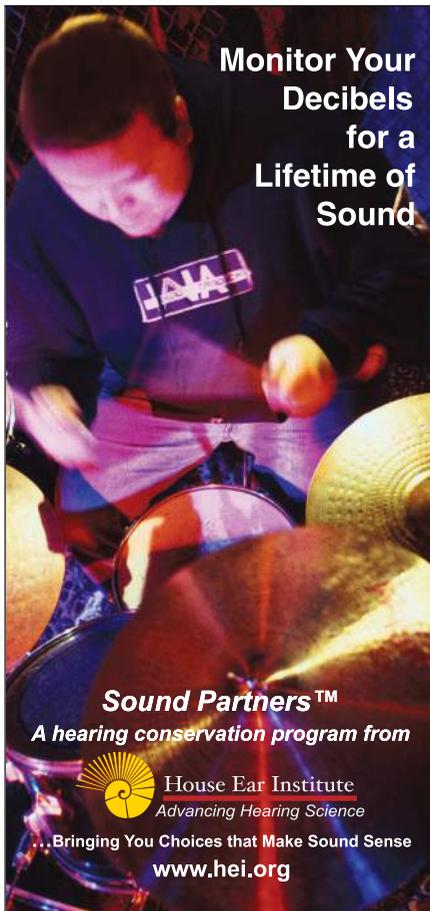


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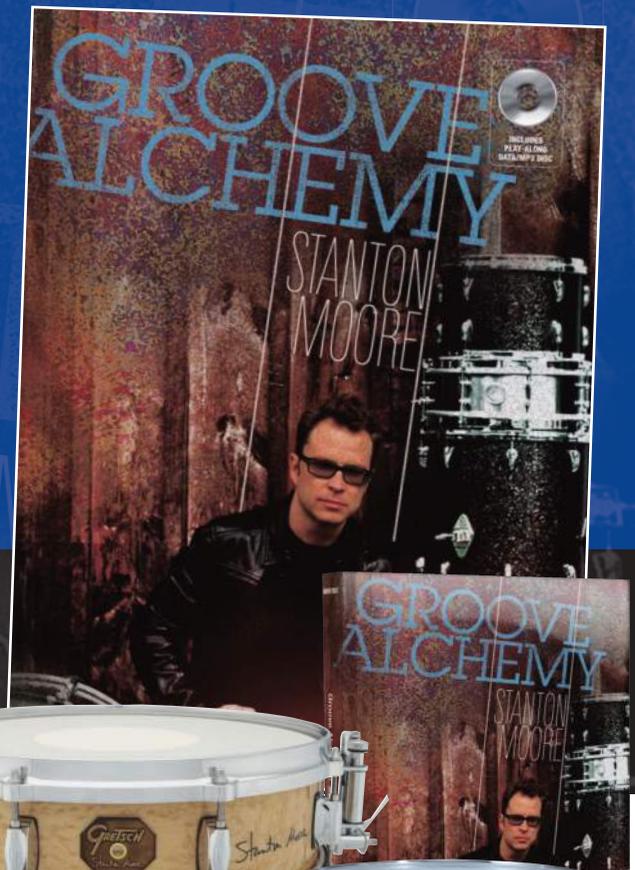
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GROOVE ALCHEMY GIVEAWAY

To celebrate the release of Stanton Moore's *Groove Alchemy*, Moore and *Modern Drummer* are teaming up to offer Stanton's signature products in one incredible giveaway.

In April 2010, Moore released *Groove Alchemy*, a multimedia project that includes an instructional book, a DVD (Hudson Music), and a twelve-track CD (Telarc). All three facets of the project are designed to explore Stanton's approach to funk drumming, starting with examining the work of pioneers like Jabo Starks, Clyde Stubblefield, and Zigaboo Modeliste. Recorded at Levon Helm's studio in Woodstock, New York, this project is the follow-up to Stanton's widely acclaimed *Take It To The Street!* DVD and book, which focus specifically on New Orleans drumming styles.



GRAND PRIZE

- **Gretsch** Stanton Moore Signature 4 1/2x14 solid bird's-eye maple snare drum with **PureSound** Custom 16-strand snare wires and **DW** snare stand
- **Stanton Moore Drum Co.** Spirit Of New Orleans 4 1/2x14 titanium snare with **PureSound** Custom 20-strand snare wires and **DW** snare stand
- **Bosphorus** cymbals, including: 22" Wide Ride, 20" Trash Crash, 20" Pang Thang, 18" Smash Crash, and a pair of 14" Fat Hats
- **Audix** D6, i-5, and two (2) Micro-D microphones
- **LP** 12" Pandeiro, ES-7 Salsa Downtown Timbale Cowbell, and **CP** Tambourine
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- Stanton's **Remo** head setup, including 12", 14", and 16" Coated Ambassador tom top heads and Clear Ambassador tom bottom heads, 14" Coated Ambassador and Vintage Ambassador snare heads, and 20" and 26" Coated Powerstroke 3 bass drum heads
- Extra **Remo** snare heads: two (2) each coated and snare-side 14" Ambassador
- *Groove Alchemy, Emphasis! (On Parenthesis)*, and *Stanton Moore III* CDs from **Telarc**
- *Groove Alchemy* DVD and book from **Hudson Music**



FIRST PRIZE

- **Gretsch** 5x14 chrome over brass snare drum with **PureSound** Custom 20-strand snare wires and **DW** snare stand
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SECOND PRIZE

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- *Groove Alchemy* DVD and book from **Hudson Music**

THIRD PRIZE

- *Groove Alchemy* DVD and book from **Hudson Music**

Consumer Disclosure
 1. To enter, visit www.moderndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Stanton Moore Signature Contest button (one entry per email address). 2. ODDS OF WINNING DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 3. CONTEST BEGINS APRIL 1, 2010, AND ENDS MAY 31, 2010. 4. Grand Prize Drawing: Winner will be selected by random drawing on June 10, 2010. Winner will be notified by phone or email on or about June 14, 2010. 5. Employees, and their immediate families, of Modern Drummer, Gretsch, Dunnett, Drum Workshop, Bosphorus, Vic Firth, Remo, PureSound, Audix, Latin Percussion, Telarc, Hudson Music, and their affiliates are ineligible. 6. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 7. Open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years of age or older. Void in Quebec, Canada; Florida; and where prohibited by law. 8. One prize awarded per household per contest. 9. Prizes: **Grand Prize:** One (1) winner will receive products as described above. The approximate retail value of the prize is: \$8,450. **First Prize:** One (1) winner will receive products as described above. The approximate retail value of the prize is: \$1,850. **Second Prize:** One (1) winner will receive products as described above. The approximate retail value of the prize is: \$108. **Third Prize:** One (1) winner will receive products as described above. The approximate retail value of the prize is: \$55. 10. Approximate retail value of contest: \$10,460. 11. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 12. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer/Stanton Moore/Official Rules, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

WHAT
DO YOU
KNOW
ABOUT...?



Daniel Peables

MAUREEN "MOE" TUCKER

Rock bands don't come any more influential than the Velvet Underground. VU's idiosyncratic drummer recalls the nature of the group's endlessly echoing musical messages.

by Brett Callwood

Maureen "Moe" Tucker is the ultimate paradox. She was a member of one of the most influential bands in history, and her playing has directly affected the sound of thousands of rock drummers. Yet she'd be hard-pressed to name more than a couple of those players, and she seems to spend absolutely no time thinking about any of the things drummers commonly obsess over, like buying fancy new equipment or perfecting advanced technique.

As a part of the Velvet Underground in the mid to late '60s, Tucker helped create the style of music that is commonly referred to as punk rock, playing on countless songs born from New York City's seedy underbelly. Yet she grew up in decidedly un-exotic Long Island, New York, and seemed unconcerned with attracting attention to herself, musically or otherwise. This, despite finding fame as an elemental part of one of the most notoriously drama-filled bohemian scenes of the twentieth century. It's also hard not to be charmed by the fact that, when *Modern Drummer* calls to interview her, Maureen has just finished helping her grandson with a Cub Scouts project.

No, a drum geek she is not. Maureen Tucker *is*, however, a musician with a unique, instantly recognizable style that is absolutely intrinsic to the Velvet Underground's sound. On "Heroin," for example, from VU's 1967 debut, *The Velvet Underground & Nico*, it's no accident that Moe speeds up and slows down her drumming, keeping the song at a deliberately inconsistent tempo, joltingly symbolizing the subject matter. Elsewhere on the album, Tucker's spare, funereal beat on

"Venus In Furs" is the perfect example of setting a mood with percussion, her snare-on-all-fours pattern on "I'm Waiting For The Man" is a simple but hugely effective approach that very few drummers would have the gumption to conceive, and her tribal shuffle on "Run Run Run" is pure, raw blues. Rarely has a drummer said so much with so little.

The Velvet Underground was formed in New York City in 1965 by singer-songwriter Lou Reed, bassist and violist John Cale, and guitarist Sterling Morrison. Tucker replaced the original Velvets percussionist, Angus MacLise, after being introduced to Morrison by her older brother Jim.

After establishing a reputation on the city's underground art scene, the band hooked up with internationally renowned artist Andy Warhol, who brought in German singer Nico to sing on a few songs. The result, *The Velvet Underground & Nico*, is among the most important albums ever recorded, telegraphing the art-punk strain of alternative rock by ten years and continuing to inspire nascent rockers to this day. Back in the day, however, VU sold very few records—they were too "out" for most people's tastes, even in the "anything goes" hippie era—and following their fourth album,

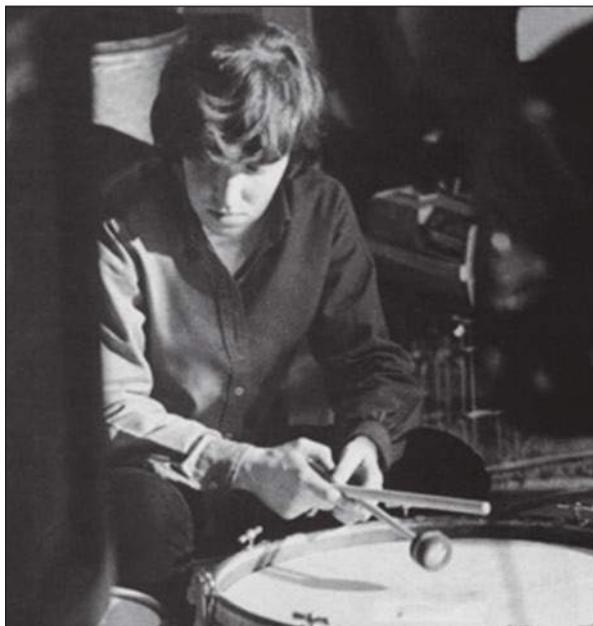
Loaded, principal songwriter Lou Reed quit the group, which officially dissolved a couple years later.

Though the Tucker/Reed/Cale/Morrison lineup re-formed in 1992 and toured in 1993, Morrison passed away soon after, effectively bringing the band's story to an end. The three surviving members did play together one last time, in 1995, when the band was inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, performing the new song "Last Night I Said Goodbye To My Friend."

Tucker isn't the most flamboyant or outgoing drummer in rock, but, like the Velvets, she's one of the more sincere. When we chat, she carefully considers every answer she gives, leaving the impression that she's as passionate about the music she put her name to as she ever was.

It was a love of the British Invasion bands that first encouraged Tucker to pick up a pair of drumsticks. "I was into the Stones and the Beatles," Moe says. "I loved them both, and listening wasn't enough, so I got a snare drum so I could play along to the records. I used to do that for hours. I didn't take any lessons because I wasn't intending to do anything with it. It was totally just for fun."

History had other plans for Tucker, however, and when MacLise left the Velvet Underground, Moe took over in her own inimitable style and



soon found herself recording what would eventually be considered one of the cornerstones of rock music. "That debut album is my favorite," Tucker says today. "It was the most exciting. I'd never made a record before, so it was a lot of fun. I look back on my time with the band very fondly. We had some good times. Lou was fine to work with—great fun. We're still friends today."

One of Tucker's trademarks is the fact that she would often play standing up. "Actually, at first I was playing sitting on a chair with the bass drum on its side on the floor," Moe clarifies. "A friend of ours said he could make a stand for it so that I wouldn't be crouched on the floor. I was trying to sound...not really African, but I wasn't using a hi-hat, a cymbal, or any of the conventional drums. Standing, I could reach better across the bass drum to hit something else. A friend of mine made

an aluminum drum stand."

After the breakup of the original Velvets, Tucker released a string of critically lauded solo albums. And though a number of important musicians have sung her praises or worked directly with her—including members of Sonic Youth, Half Japanese, and the Violent Femmes—she struggles to reference modern artists that she thinks have been influenced by her former band. "I'll often get told by a band that they were heavily influenced by the Velvet Underground, so I'll listen, but I won't be able to hear anything in there," Tucker says. "I saw the White Stripes on TV three years ago. I caught the last minute of them performing a song, and I remember stopping and thinking it was cool. But that's the only time I've ever heard them."

Tucker has been keeping a low profile, music-wise, for the last decade. "I'd love to go out and

play live again," she says, "but I always booked tours myself for my group, and it's such a horrifying chore. If someone knocked on the door and told me to hop in the van because they had a tour booked, I'd jump in."

In closing, we ask Moe if she believes her drumming opened up the minds of the world to the idea that feel is more important than technique. Her response is characteristically brief but still perfectly eloquent. "It allows people who have the sense to understand that to realize it," she explains. "The way I played was perfect for the Velvets, but there are not many other groups that it would have worked for. Put me in the Who, and it would have been all wrong."

Makes you think, though, doesn't it?



KNOW THESE TOO...



ANGUS MACLISE

Angus MacLise was Maureen Tucker's predecessor in the Velvet Under-

ground. A busy member of the New York underground art scene of the '60s and a true bohemian, MacLise reportedly quit the band before its first paying gig, *because* it was a paying gig. Despite his disdain for convention, however, MacLise did produce a number of recordings in the vein of minimalist composers such as La Monte Young, with whom he and original VU bass/viola player John Cale worked. (In addition to several reissues of MacLise's own recordings, a number of works from Young's ensemble, the Theater Of Eternal Music, are available as part of the *Inside The Dream Syndicate* series on the Table Of Elements label.) Over his lifetime, MacLise, who died in 1979, also did significant work in the areas of poetry, calligraphy, publishing, film, and the occult.



BILLY YULE

Due to Moe Tucker's sabbatical from the Velvet Underground when she was pregnant with her

first child in 1970, Billy Yule, brother of the Velvets bassist Doug Yule, played on the band's last proper studio album, *Loaded*, and on its record *Live At Max's Kansas City*, recorded during a month-long residency at the famed NYC club Max's Kansas City. Yule's brief life in rock is recounted in his amusing and enlightening interview at modern drummer.com.

Lee Barratt

Main Shot Photograph: Jerome Marcus www.jeromemarcus.com

RECORDINGS



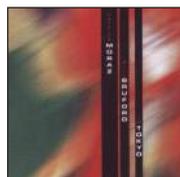
★★★★★
FRANK ZAPPA PHILLY '76
 Any archival live release of Frank Zappa's '70s groups is cause for celebration for all musicians, but especially for those eager to study the maestro's idiosyncratic drummers. **TERRY BOZZIO** was FZ's first truly fearless skinsman, and his wild green-light assault can be heard on bar-blurring tornado rolls during a twenty-minute "Black Napkins." His monster grooves and outrageous flams also kick "City Of Tiny Lights" into high gear. Bozzio's mastery of rhythmically challenging through-composed fare ("The Purple Lagoon") and his unhinged, wide-open hi-hat dirge underneath various solos ("Advance Romance") create a nervy excitement, reminding us that you truly can't do that on stage anymore. (zappa.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



★★★★★
MARCUS STRICKLAND TRIO IDIOSYNCRASIES
 Tenor saxophonist Marcus Strickland and company make the most of their minimal instrumentation on this fine jazz outing. With twin brother **E.J. STRICKLAND** on drums and Ben Williams' throbbing bass pushing things to new heights, the album is filled with intelligent adventure and texture. Besides Marcus's strong lead playing, check out E.J.'s syncopated backing and textured solo on the opening cut and his clean yet modern brushes on "She's Alive." What really makes this album cook, though, is how the drummer locks up with Williams, creating active rhythmic interplay while feeding the bottom end. (Strick Muzik) **Martin Patmos**



★★★★★
BARONESS BLUE RECORD
 From the moment the galloping riff of "The Sweetest Curse" kicks in, drummer **ALLEN BLICKLE** takes the reins and makes the groove swing. His open drum sounds, in league with his thick, dark, washy cymbals, perfectly complement the epic atmosphere of *Blue Record*, providing the massive foundation needed to bring together conquering guitar lines and vocal melodies that go from roaring growls to soaring howls. This diverse album is an amalgamation of various rock elements, touching on sounds that are reminiscent of Mastodon, Clutch, and Thin Lizzy, to name a few, all delivered through sonorous compositions and a wall of fuzz box distortion, which adds to its classic-rock tinge. Blicke focuses on letting the parts groove and breathe, but he gets around the kit quite well at the right moments. (Relapse) **David Ciauro**



★★★★★
PATRICK MORAZ & BILL BRUFORD IN TOKYO
 In *Tokyo* captures a 1985 live set by acoustic/electronic drummer Bill Bruford and erstwhile Yes/Refugee keyboardist Patrick Moraz. Bruford and Moraz converse rhythmically and sonically in genres ranging from jazz to European art music, playing material from the duo's *Music For Piano And Drums* and *Flags* recordings, as well as from Moraz's solo albums, including the demanding Max Roach solo drum piece in 3/4 "The Drum Also Waltzes." Throughout, the musicians negotiate the schism between technology and tradition, a skill that's long been a Bruford job description. (Winterfold)

On 2009's *Skin And Wire*, where the drummer and his band Piano Circus play the music of composer Colin Riley, Bruford's playing has very little to do with electricity, despite the music's reliance on programming and sound processing. His textural performances, especially on the riveting "Kit And Caboodle" and "Achilles' Feel," are simply hair-raising. Spanning twenty-five years, these releases underscore Bruford's continuing taste for musical diversity and experimentation. (Summerfold) **Will Romano**

JAZZ SHORT TAKES

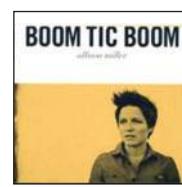
by Ilya Stemkovsky



RATKO ZJACA, LUIS BONILLA, RAVE TESAR TRIO, MIKE DIRUBBO, JÜRGEN FRIEDRICH
 The inimitable **STEVE GADD** graces guitarist Ratko Zjaca's *Continental Talk*—still kicking butt on swinging numbers and displaying smooth, supportive brushwork. (In + Out)
 Trombonist Luis Bonilla's *I Talking Now* allows **JOHN RILEY** to stretch in a rare small-group setting. The title track contains some blazing-fast ride work and shifts gears to a mid-tempo, side-stick funk workout. (Planet Arts)
 Drummer **BILL TESAR**'s light touch and impressive, buoyant solos are all over *You Decide*, a piano trio recording led by Tesar's brother, Rave. (Tesar Music)
 One of late drummer **TONY REEDUS**'s last dates, saxophonist/leader Mike DiRubbo's *Repercussion* is a fitting farewell to Reedus's conversant, swinging style. (Posi-Tone)
 Jürgen Friedrich's *Pollock* leaves ample room for **TONY MORENO** to color in the space with nice cymbal work and a learned Euro-jazz sensibility. (Pirouet)

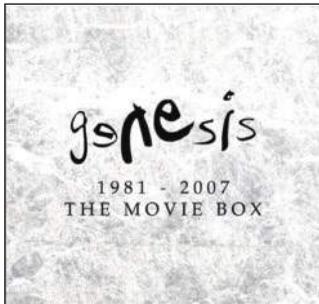


★★★★★
FAHIR ATAKOGLU FACES & PLACES
 Few drummers play funk, fusion, and assorted Latin styles as convincingly as **HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ** does with ease on Turkish keyboardist Fahir Atakoglu's *Faces & Places*. Hernandez churns a nasty samba on "Rio Da Noite," and his displaced snare pattern on "NY-Retrospective" is pure Brecker Brothers. (Trumpeter Randy Brecker guests.) Atakoglu's arrangements have a decidedly Middle Eastern flavor, and the all-star rhythm section of bassist John Patitucci and El Negro provides the perfect foil here. Odd times ("Seven"), tricky ghosting ("Rhythm Of Corners"), subtle brushes ("Your Face"), and propulsive fills ("High Street") make you ask what El Negro can't do. (farandhere.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



★★★★★
ALLISON MILLER BOOM TIC BOOM
 When she's not supporting songwriters like Brandi Carlile, Ani DiFranco, and Erin McKeown, drummer Allison Miller struts and swings her way through abstract originals and standards with fervor, as on her second album as a leader, *Boom Tic Boom*. "Intermission" finds Miller, pianist Myra Melford, and bassist Todd Sickafoose navigating the 11/8 turns as one, the drummer jabbing her ride with sly offbeats and working her snare through the barlines during a tension-filled solo. Miller dons her avant hat for a freer touch on "Be Melting Snow," and her unaccompanied second-line groove on "CFS" is convincing enough to make the head bob. Engaging stuff. (foxbavenrecords.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

PERFORMANCE DVD



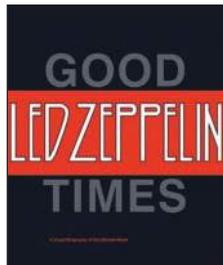
★★★★★
GENESIS THE MOVIE BOX
 1981–2007

Following several comprehensive studio and live Genesis collections, *The Movie Box 1981–2007* gathers concert videos documenting the post–Peter Gabriel arena superstardom years of the progressive rock titans. The treat here is the first-time-on-DVD release of *Three Sides Live* and *The Mama Tour*, early-'80s performances showcasing how truly fierce a double-drumming tandem **PHIL COLLINS** and **CHESTER THOMPSON** were. The 5.1 mixes are revelatory, highlighting Thompson's nuanced tom flourishes and underappreciated pocket. Also, youngsters can finally see what their dad keeps telling them about Collins: His pure polyrhythmic fire on *The Mama Tour*'s "In The Cage" medley and his syncopated snare jabbing during "Abacab" from the 1987 Wembley Stadium *Invisible Touch* tour performance are outright killer. And before slagging the '90s incarnation as muzak makers who "can't dance," check out the call-and-response trading on "The Drum Thing" from 1992's *The Way We Walk Live*, an example of what happens after fifteen years of two drummers breathing as one. (Rhino) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



★★★★★
MARK ZONDER
2 CAMERAS, 5 DRUMS
AND 13 TRACKS
 DVD LEVEL: ALL \$10
 Unlike a more traditional instructional video, 2

Cameras, 5 Drums And 13 Tracks, by former Fates Warning/current Slavior drummer Mark Zonder, doesn't attempt to go beyond presenting audio and video of several songs and ideas that our host interprets during his clinics. The idea is to present a viable educational experience at a low price point, and the attempt is successful. With no more than one camera aimed at his bass drum and another at his hands, Zonder moves through many genres over the DVD's forty-five minutes, including Latin and rock, building grooves and showing hip ways to play diverse styles while making them your own. Also included are unreleased Slavior cuts and the four-page brochure that Zonder uses at his clinics. (markzonder.com) **Steven Douglas Losey**



★★★★★
LED ZEPPELIN: GOOD TIMES, BAD TIMES
 BY JERRY PROCHNICKY AND RALPH HULETT
 BOOK LEVEL: ALL \$35

Zeppelin fans, you may not have seen all there is to see of your favorite group after all. Whether you learn much from the text of *Good Times, Bad Times* depends on how much you've already read about the legendary quartet. But no matter, really—this is a photo book, and it follows through on its "visual biography" subtitle with an abundance of images, many previously unreleased, from every phase of the Zeppelin saga, including 2007's London reunion show. There are extraordinary live shots of John Bonham, including one from 1969 where he's obscured by fog as Page and Plant square off in front of his drum riser. (How *did* that lightweight hardware hold up under the Bonzo fury?) And there are vivid offstage photos as well, which help us get to know a mystery man about whom there are precious few personal details. We see him wearing an "I wish I could bite somebody" Snoopy shirt in 1970, futzing with chopsticks in Japan in 1971, and playing acoustic guitar with a wide grin on Mick Jagger's estate in 1972. It's a worthy complement to some of rock's most inspired music. (Abrams) **Michael Parillo**



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NYC WINTER JAZZFEST

Greenwich Village, New York City,
January 8 and 9, 2010

Text by Ilya Stemkovsky • Photos by Paul La Raia

The 2010 NYC Winter Jazzfest was held over two bitterly cold days in January at five West Village venues. The festival featured exciting performances from top artists including Nicholas Payton, Dr. Lonnie Smith, and Jason Moran, and the list of supporting drummers featured veteran luminaries as well as the hottest up-and-comers on today's jazz scene. If you were lucky enough to get into the sold-out event and catch some of these players, you witnessed truly spectacular drumming in a wide array of styles—from free playing to deep grooves to classic swing.



Matt Wilson pushes, licks, and seals the envelope with his quartet at Kenny's Castaways.

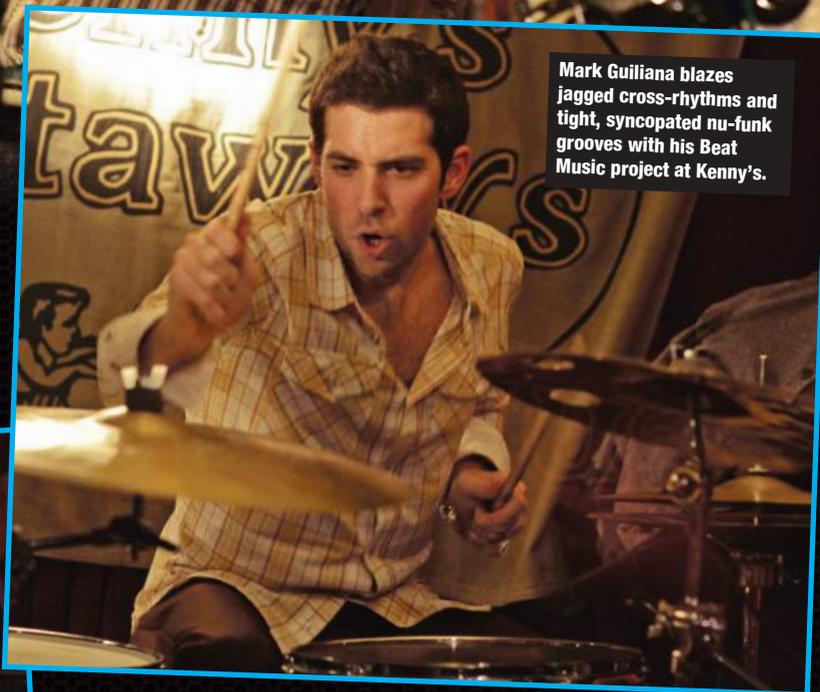
John Hollenbeck's sticks glide beneath, between, and behind the Claudia Quintet's modern arrangements at the Bitter End.



Bobby Previte leads his New Bump Quartet through avant backbeats, sly shuffles, and cool vibraphone workouts at Kenny's.



Mark Guiliana blazes jagged cross-rhythms and tight, syncopated nu-funk grooves with his Beat Music project at Kenny's.



Rudy Royston goes from a whisper to a scream with huge crescendos during his set with Todd Sickafoose's Tiny Resisters at the Bitter End.



Keith Carlock's four-way independence and butt-shaking bass drum bombs rock the Bitter End.



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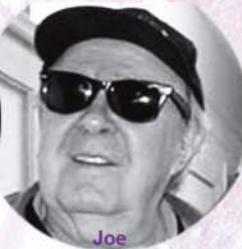
BUN E CARLOS

Ludwig, Zildjian, Pro-Mark, Shure

Jazz Legend

JOE MORELLO

DW, Sabian, SkinsNTins, Pro-Mark



Joe

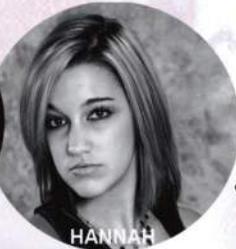


Denny

Paul McCartney, Studio

DENNY SEIWELL

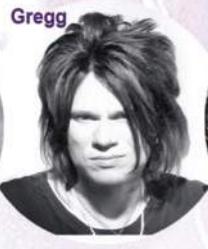
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Gregg

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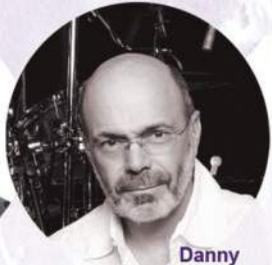
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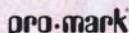
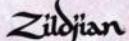
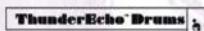
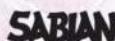
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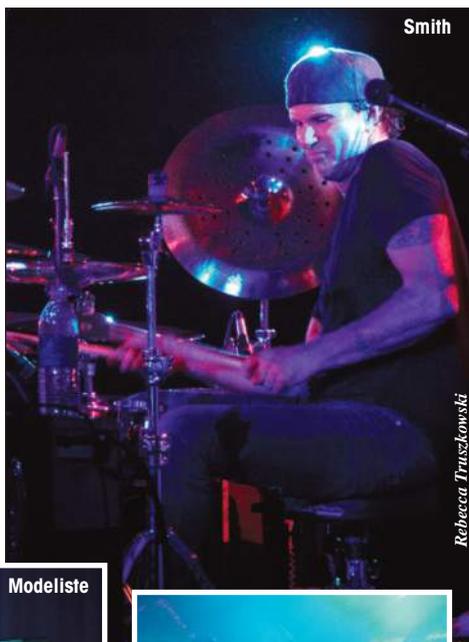
Ferrone

SABIAN LIVE AT 2010 WINTER NAMM

Always an after-show favorite at the NAMM convention—the annual new-gear extravaganza in Anaheim, California—the Sabian Live party was held this past January 15 at the Park Ballroom at the Sheraton Park Hotel. The house was packed with Sabian artists and other musicians, special guests, and industry folks ready to rock and groove. The show was broadcast live on DrumChannel.com.

Dom Famularo and Mike Portnoy cohosted the star-studded show, which opened with a performance by Little Kids Rock (LKR), followed by a presentation by LKR founder and executive director David Wish recognizing Sabian's **Robert Zildjian**, **Chad Smith**, and **Liberty DeVitto** for their donation of time and musical instruments to the music program.

Next up were Smith's Bombastic Meatbats, followed by **Terry Bozzio** with **Pat Mastelotto**, bassist Tony Levin, and guitarist David Torn. The night closed with a spirited performance by **Steve Ferrone's** Master Volume All-Stars, with a special appearance by the Meters' **Zigaboo Modeliste** and Prince's **Cora Coleman-Dunham** on the Meters classic "Hey Pocky A-Way."



Smith

Rebecca Truszkowski



Modeliste



Bozzio

Rebecca Truszkowski

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Haid



Hernandez and Lockett

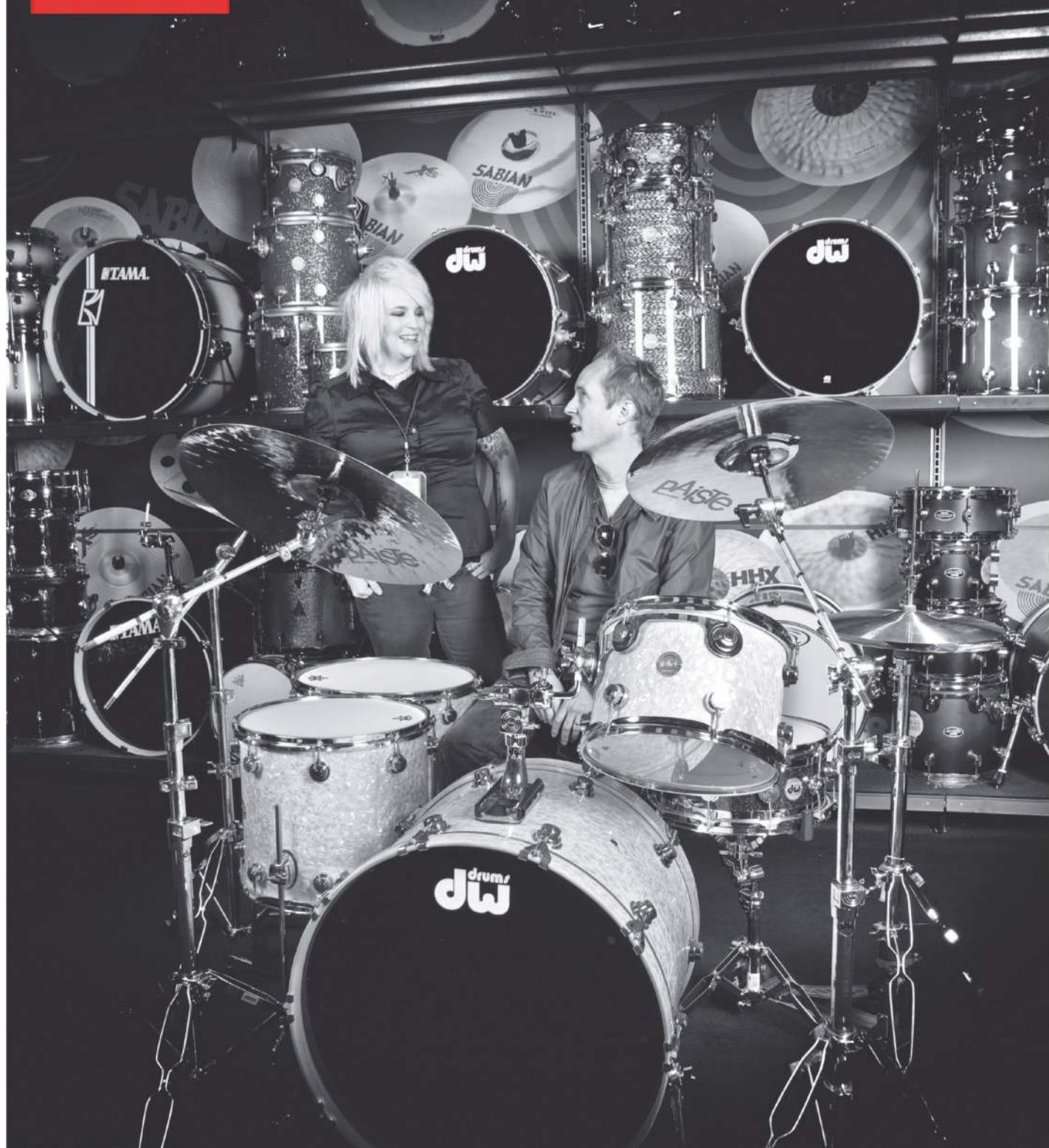
The third annual East Meets West Groznan International Percussion Summer Camp was held last August 6 through 13 at the Jeunesses Musicales International World Meeting Centre in the fourteenth-century Venetian village of Groznan, Croatia. The weeklong camp included master classes, clinics, concerts, seminars, and roundtable discussions. The lineup of international all-star instructors featured drumming legend **Bill Bruford**, Latin jazz great **Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez**, British multi-percussion master **Pete Lockett**, *MD* contributing writer/independent artist **Mike Haid**, and camp director/percussionist **Petar Curic**.

Campers of all ages displayed a high level of talent and enthusiasm for learning. The camp finale was a concert under the stars for the villagers, featuring El Negro's Percussion Ensemble followed by a trio drumset performance by Hernandez, Haid, and Curic. The finale's highlight was a historic first-time collaboration by Hernandez and Lockett; this unforgettable multicultural improv duet brought the camp to a climatic close.

Two talented campers, **Bensy Chord** and **Jan Ivelic**, were awarded scholarships to Drummers Collective in NYC; other camp sponsors included MegaMuzika, Euro-Unit, *Modern Drummer*, Sabian, Zildjian, Remo, Evans, Pro-Mark, and Pearl. For more info on the Groznan camp, go to myspace.com/groznanpercussion.

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Haugen



Jarzombek



Grillo

PROGPOWER USA X

ProgPower USA celebrated its tenth anniversary as America's top progressive metal festival this past September 11 and 12 at Center Stage in downtown Atlanta. The music typically combines the melodic aspects of old-school prog rock (Yes, King Crimson, Genesis, Kansas) with a cutting metal edge (Dream Theater, Queensrÿche, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden). Longtime promoter Glenn Harveston has a keen ear for showcasing new and unique acts from the international underground progressive metal scene.

The high caliber of drumming at the festival remains consistently impressive. On average, fifteen bands share a house kit for the entire event—a massive PDP double bass set mounted on a PDP Super Rack with DW hardware, Sabian cymbals, Evans heads, and Shure mics; all of the aforementioned companies are longtime festival sponsors.

A pre-show concert the night before the main event kicked off the blistering weekend of prog-metal with a powerful lineup that included Primal

Fear with **Randy Black** on drums, Enchant with **Sean Flanagan**, Suspÿre with **Gabe Marshall**, and Future's End with **John Allen**.

The fest's day-one lineup included the USA's Cage with **Norm Leggio**, Brazil's MindFlow with **Rafael Pensado**, Sweden's Diablo Swing Orchestra with **Andreas Halvardsson** (who has since left the band), Sweden's Sabaton with **Daniel Mullback**, Denmark's Royal Hunt with **Allan Sørensen**, and the USA's Crimson Glory with **Dana Burnell**.

Day two highlighted the talents of Norway's Circus Maximus with **Truls Haugen**, Israel's Orphaned Land with **Matan Shmuely**, Norway's Pagan's Mind with **Stian Kristoffersen**, Germany's Brainstorm with **Dieter Bernert**, and the festival headliners, the USA's Fates Warning with **Bobby Jarzombek**. Kamelot drummer **Casey Grillo** also held an afternoon drum clinic in the venue's upper loft. For more information, visit progpowerusa.com.

Story and photos by Mike Haid

IN MEMORIAM

JAKE HANNA

by Rick Mattingly

Jazz drummer Jake Hanna, best known for his playing with Woody Herman (and for his keen sense of humor), died this past February 12 in Los Angeles at age seventy-eight, of complications from a bone marrow disease.

In addition to being highly regarded for his strong sense of swing, Hanna was admired for playing with taste. "No one is born with taste," he told *Modern Drummer* in 1982. "You have to develop it. Good taste is better than bad taste, but bad taste is better than no taste. Taste is developed through listening and thinking. It's just another word for common sense. Taste means fitting the music. If drumming is mathematics, taste is mostly subtraction rather than addition."

John Edwin Hanna was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, on April 4, 1931, and began playing professionally at age thirteen, at a time when many older drummers were in the service due to World War II. He played while he was in the air force, from 1950 to 1953, after which he studied at the Berklee College Of Music.

"I was looking for the key that would unlock a lot of the music that's around, and I found it," he told *MD*. "It's all in how you generate time. Never mind the licks. Get that cymbal beat going. Just practice time every day. Practice it with the right hand and with the left hand. Practice time as fast as the metronome will go, and then double it."

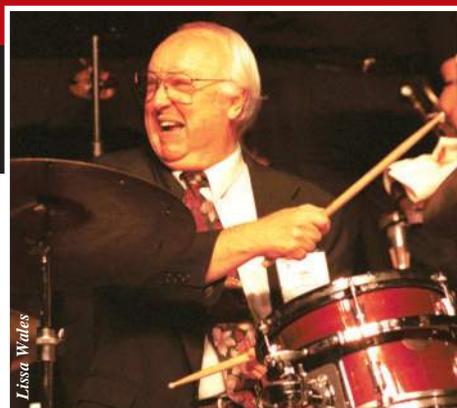
Hanna worked with Buddy Morrow in 1956, with Toshiko Akiyoshi at New York's Hickory House during summer engagements between 1956 and 1959, with Woody Herman in late 1957 and early 1958, and then with Maynard Ferguson, before becoming the house drummer at the club Storyville in Boston, where he found his personal direction. "I got stuck in bebop for a long time," Jake explained. "I'm a melody lover; even though the [bebop] songs were

based on standards, I'd rather hear the melody. Right in the middle of my bop playing I became the house drummer at Storyville with Buck Clayton and Bud Freeman, and I never had a better time in my whole life. I made the decision that even if I starved, I was going to stick with swing music."

Hanna played with Marian McPartland from 1959 to 1961, followed by gigs with Bobby Hackett, Duke Ellington, Harry James, and Herb Pomeroy. He worked again with Herman from 1962 to '64, which he cited as the highlight of their collaboration. "The Herman band I joined in '62 was a fresh band," the drummer said. "I was very lucky to be in on the ground floor. We had Bill Chase on lead trumpet, Phil Wilson on trombone, Sal Nestico on tenor, Nat Pierce on piano, and Chuck Andrus on bass. Just like a good baseball team, we had strength up the middle. That band could play good medium tempos, good slow tempos, and excellent ultra-fast tempos. We could play faster and with more accuracy than Oscar Peterson's trio."

Ed Soph, who played with Herman in the late 1960s, was one of many who were impressed by Hanna's command of brisk tempos. "Jake's playing on Woody's 'Caledonia' is the benchmark tempo of big-band drumming," Soph says. "Like Kenny Clarke, Jake did more with one 18" ride than most of us can do with an entire kit. And, like Dave Tough, Jake could elevate the band with both his time and his wit."

After leaving Herman, Hanna played briefly with Max Kaminsky and in 1965 became the drummer for Merv Griffin's TV show. During a break from the show in 1967 he toured with Herman, and then in 1970 he moved to Los Angeles with the Griffin show, continuing as the house drummer until 1975. He was a founding member of Supersax, which won a Grammy in 1972 for the recording *Supersax Plays*



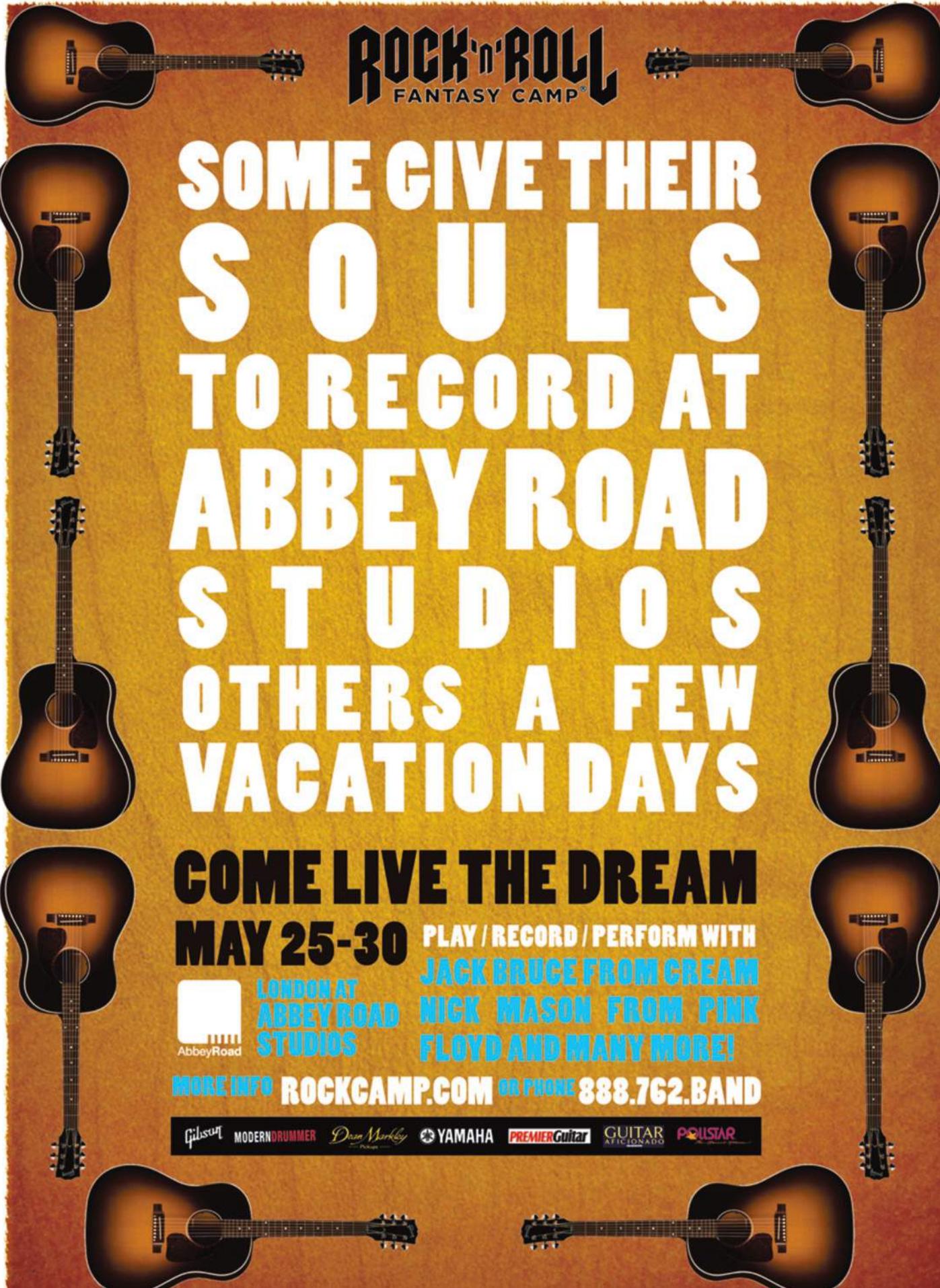
Lissa Wales

Bird. During another break from the Griffin show, Hanna toured the USSR with Oscar Peterson. He also played with Herb Ellis, Bing Crosby, and Rosemary Clooney and formed a group with trombonist Carl Fontana. In 1976 he participated in Herman's 40th Anniversary Concert, and he did occasional performances with Herman in small-group settings between 1984 and 1986.

In 1980 Hanna recorded with Count Basie in a studio band dubbed the Kansas City Seven. During the 1980s he toured with such musicians as Peanut Hucko, Yank Lawson, and Dick Wellstood. From the mid-'70s into the '90s Jake recorded extensively as the house drummer for Concord Records, working with Al Cohn, Harry Edison, Tal Farlow, Barney Kessel, Red Norvo, and Joe Pass, among others.

Hanna became a father figure to many younger jazz drummers, especially those who followed him into the Herman band. "Jake was a friend since 1973, when I first came to Los Angeles with Chuck Mangione," says Joe LaBarbera. "Jake invited me to his house and cooked dinner for me, and then we listened to Philly Joe Jones records. After that, we always stayed in touch. I can honestly say that I learned Woody's book in advance by listening to the records Jake made with him, so my first night with the Herman band was a breeze. Jake was always quick-witted, honest, and swinging, and I will miss him."





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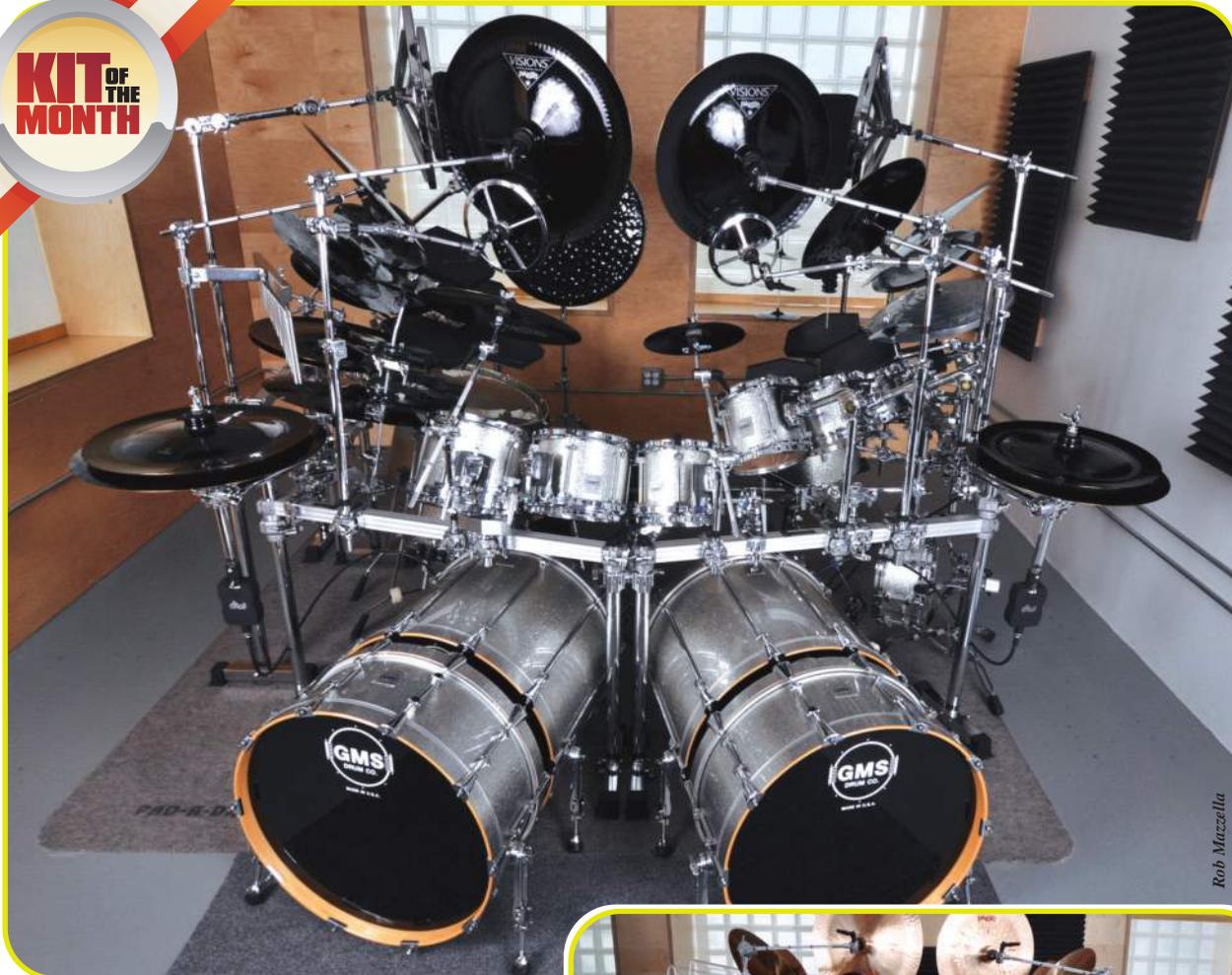
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Rob Mazzella

SEEING DOUBLE

This high-powered two-kit arsenal—consisting of GMS drums, Paiste cymbals, Pearl racks, and DW hardware—belongs to Victor Salazar of Chicago. The drummer, who's the general manager and event coordinator at the Drum Pad in Palatine, Illinois, uses the huge silver-sparkle kit with his prog band, Big Electric. The setup consists of sixteen maple Grand Master series drums (including bass drum subwoofers, timbale, and gong bass), fifty cymbals, eight pedals, eleven electronic pads (painted by GMS to match the kit's finish), six Remo Spoxe, five cowbells, a gong, and an eight-sided rack. Victor says his primary snare is a one-of-a-kind 5½x13 Paiste Spirit Of 2002 in black nickel finish.

The "small" kit is used for Salazar's side project, the Chinese Professionals. It's an acrylic Special Edition series set consisting of thirteen drums (including four G Tubes, two piccolo toms, and a gong bass), fifty-three cymbals, seven pedals, a gong used as a ride, a two-sided rack, and *nine* hi-hats.

"I took measurements off the big kit when constructing the smaller one," says Salazar, who's a stickler for details and wants both kits to feel identical. "If you sit behind either kit with your eyes closed and just play the core elements, you can't tell which kit it is."

Right about now you're probably thinking, *Wow, I wouldn't want to be his roadie.* But Salazar makes setup and breakdown very convenient. "Thanks to several hundred memory locks and some carefully labeled rugs," Victor says, "I'm able to set up either kit perfectly and precisely for each and every gig."



Rob Mazzella



Rob Mazzella

Photo Submission: Hi-res digital photos on disk, along with descriptive text, may be emailed to billya@modern drummer.com (show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message) or sent to Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288.



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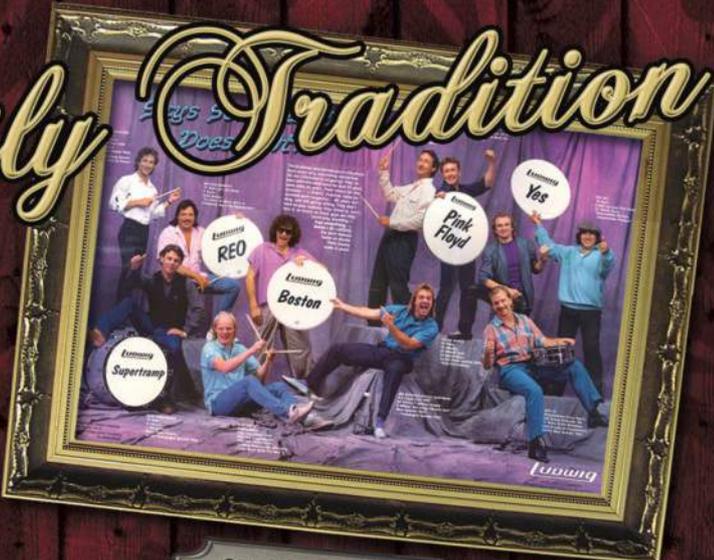
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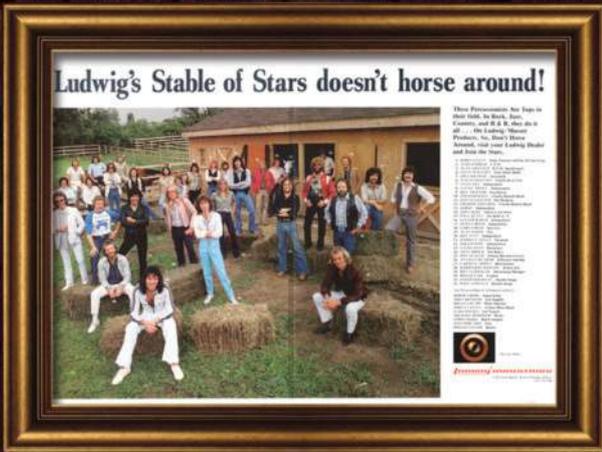
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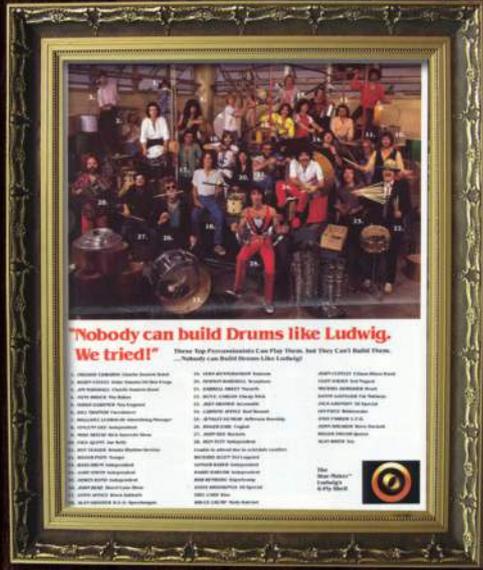
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