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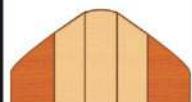
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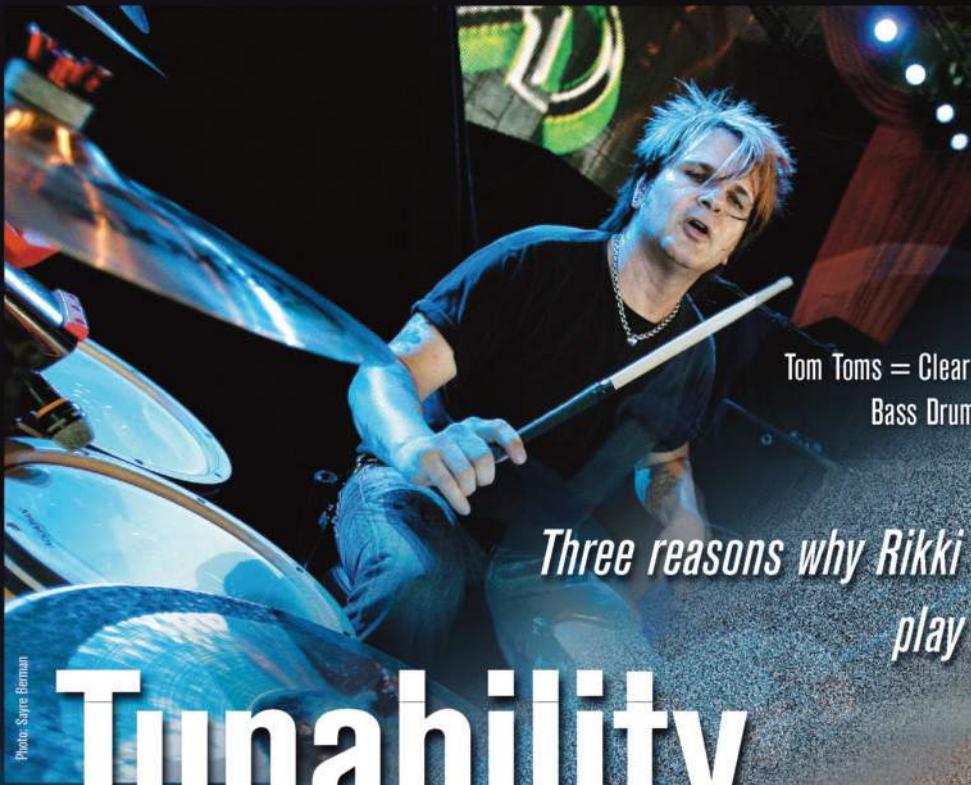
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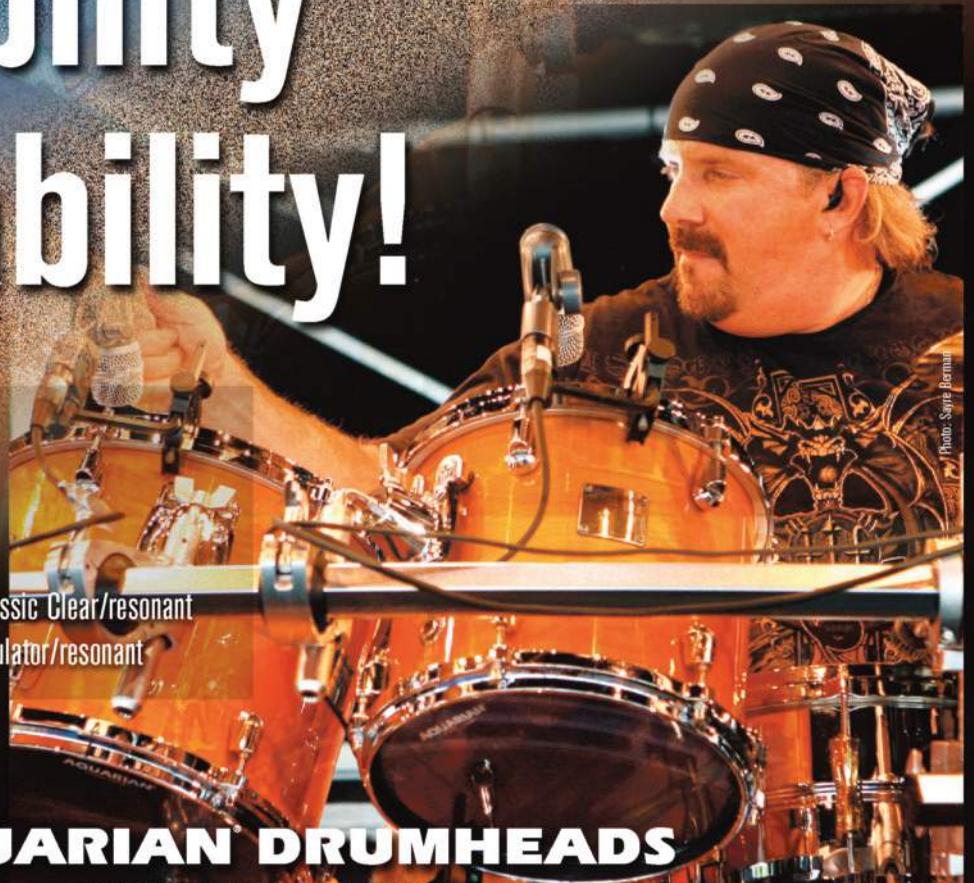
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C O N T E N T S



Rob Mazzella

46

26 CHAD SZELIGA

He knew early on that being mediocre wasn't acceptable. Steadfastly schooling himself on all things percussive, he took aim at fame, landed a gig with the multi-platinum band Breaking Benjamin, and became the kind of drummer other drummers aspire to be.

34 JEFF DAVIS

When the conversation turns to modern gospel drumming, his name is the first to be mentioned, and always with deep respect. Ladies and gentlemen, the groove is here.

40 CHRISTOPH SCHNEIDER

Today, German industrial rockers Rammstein sell out stadiums across Europe and beyond. But the drummer recognized by millions simply as Doom had to rebel against the classical preferences of his musician parents and roam far from home to find his true musical self.

STEVE JORDAN

46

He has masterful command of the music he plays—and the way it sounds coming out of the speakers. But even master musicians confront hurdles every day. Here, the always cutting-edge, always honest compadre of Eric Clapton, John Mayer, Keith Richards, and Neil Young schools us on achieving drumming greatness in the real world.



Paul La Reina

26



Rob Mazzella

34

16 UPDATE

Jucifer's **EDGAR LIVENGOOD**
Cypress Hill's **ERIC BOBO**

76 PORTRAITS

Peter Bjorn And John's **JOHN ERIKSSON**
The Breeders' **JOSE MEDELES**



Mathias Matthies

40



76

80 A DIFFERENT VIEW

Posies/R.E.M./Big Star Vet **KEN STRINGFELLOW**

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page 73

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EDUCATION

- 58 **Style And Analysis**
Steve Jordan by Eric Novod
- 62 **Concepts**
What's Your Sound?
7 Tips For Developing A Unique Voice On The Drumset
by Marko Djordjevic
- 64 **Strictly Technique**
Chops Builders, Part 7: Single Five
by Bill Bachman
- 68 **Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic**
Linear Fills, Part 2: 16th-Note Triplets
by Mike Johnston
- 70 **Jazz Drummer's Workshop**
Pulse And Meter, Part 3: Modulations And Polyrythms
by Elliot Humberto Kavee

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 **An Editor's Overview**
What Else Do You Play? by Michael Parillo
- 11 **Readers' Platform**
- 12 **Ask A Pro**
Jazz Master **Jeff Hamilton** Swing Bass Drum
- 14 **It's Questionable**
Slingerland Student Snare • Mind Matters: You're Fired!
- 86 **Showcase**
- 89 **Drum Market**
- 90 **Critique**
- 92 **Backbeats**
Memphis Drum Shop's Cymbal Summit 2010 •
Cape Breton's Year Of The Legends Celebration •
20th Anniversary Chicago Drum Show
- 96 **Kit Of The Month**
Like A Kit Out Of Hell

EQUIPMENT

- 18 **Product Close-Up**
 - **Fidock** Blackwood Bebop Kit And FatBoy Snares
 - **Bosphorus** Oracle Series Cymbals
 - **Taye** StudioMaple, StudioBirch, And Original Series Snares
 - **Los Cabos Drumsticks**
White Hickory, Red Hickory, And Maple Models**Snare Drum Of The Month:**
Dixon 24-Ply Bubinga
- 24 **Electronic Review**
Cascade X-15 And Fat Head II Microphones
by Mark Parsons
- 74 **Gearing Up**
Roger Daltrey's **Scott Devours**
Strung Out's **Jordan Burns**
- 84 **New And Notable**



18



12

Alex Solca

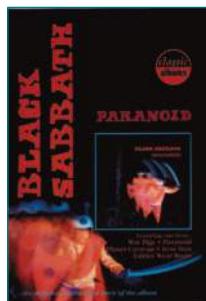


84

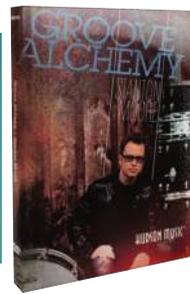
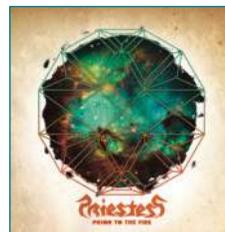


92

Fotos By Follats



90



What Else Do You Play?



I have to confess a pet peeve. It's the phrase "more than just a drummer." Since when is being *just* a drummer not enough? Does Mike Mangini have to be a great cook too? Or Terry Bozzio—"Amazing player, sure, but you *gotta* see him do the backstroke!"

Of course, I know what people mean when they use those dreaded words, and in fact I support their sentiments. They're not talking about cooking or swimming; they're talking about having additional musical skills beyond drumming. And that is indeed a beautiful and valuable thing. This issue's cover interview with the wizardly Steve Jordan, who discusses how playing bass gave him a fresh perspective on the drums, got me thinking about the topic some more. I was struck by Jordan's simple yet profound message, one that pops up regularly in these pages: Playing another instrument can only help your drumming.

Me, I take a drum-centric view of all this. Yes, I have fantasies of being a great songwriter, and I would love to melt faces on stage with a ripping guitar solo...but in reality all I truly want is to keep improving on the kit and to keep honing my connection with the instrument and the people I'm playing with. My goal is to be *just* a really good drummer. But there's no reason why you can't be everything you want to be in music—you can write great songs, program killer beats, and play the devil out of as many instruments as you can get your hands, feet, and lips on, as long as you apply yourself to all of it. Then, of course, you'll surely find some non-musical activity that helps your music making by offering a sense of perspective. (It might even be cooking!)

I gauge this stuff by comparing my guitar playing with my drumming. I picked up both instruments around age thirteen. Drums were what I begged my parents for and eventually got, and a nylon-string guitar was just sitting in the attic, from one of my sisters' brief musical dalliances. So there you go—one instrument was an object of desire, the other an object of convenience. Over the years I've spent way more time with the drums, and I've lagged far behind as a guitarist and bassist. (As Mark Zonder said in our December 2009 Ask A Pro, "It's not the years you play, it's the hours.") But I'll never stop plucking. And I'll tell you, during those "let's switch" moments with other players, it's insightful, as Jordan suggests, and just plain fun to do things like bend a screaming guitar note as my buddy hits a crash, or to lock in with the kick drum—on *bass*. Knowing how the other half lives can help you better figure out how to live your own life.

Probably my most concrete example of using the guitar as a drumming tool is my experience with odd time signatures. When I was learning how to count and feel fives, sevens, and the like, I sometimes found myself becoming confused by trying to execute multilayered full-body beats—I might be able to play a linear seven, but I had trouble pulling off a rich four-limb pattern complete with dynamic shadings. Luckily, I found that picking out a repetitive seven on the guitar using mostly my right hand (with my fretting hand in a fixed position) became a simpler way to feel, hear, and internalize the meter. Once those physical and intellectual doors were open, they stayed open when I returned to the drums, and I could finally start having my way with odd times, without needing to stick to, say, just one or two ways to mark a pattern in seven.

In the end, my pet peeve is largely a semantic one. But then again, the way you say something can be just as important as what you're saying. So let's use the piano, the sax, the cello, the MPC3000 to help us be more than a drummer. Or let's not. Here at *MD*, it's perfectly groovy to be just a drummer.

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DAVID STANOCH

As a faithful subscriber, I always enjoy your magazine each month, and it seems you are constantly in pursuit of improvement. I wanted to make note of and give extra praise to the articles by David Stanoch. They are articulate, inspiring, and engaging, and I find them to be very beneficial. I hope you will continue to feature his writing in future issues. Keep up the good work!

Kyle Swenson

REASONS TO LOVE PHIL RUDD

Thank you for the Phil Rudd story in the May 2010 issue. I remember hearing "Back In Black" and "Highway To Hell" on the radio as a seventh-grader in 1981, and his power and groove completely changed my thinking about music. To this day, when I put on an AC/DC song it instantly makes me feel better than I did previously, no matter what mood I was in. I love the amount of space Phil puts into the groove, really letting the music breathe. Any other kind of drummer would ruin AC/DC's timeless rock 'n' roll. I truly believe Phil is the Al Jackson Jr. of rock, and I've been telling people that for years. It's funny that the writer, "Pistol" Pete Kaufmann, mentioned that in the article!

Mark Swartley

PAUL WERTICO GIMME 10!

Paul Wertico's Gimme 10! article in the June 2010 issue should be cut out and taped up in every drummer's practice space. Never before in *MD* have I read such Zen-like words of wisdom. Drummers should take seriously number six, "Don't blame your equipment." Paul is right; the sound is in the drummer, *not* the gear.

Matt Deibert

EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Bravo to Adam Budofsky for sticking to his guns with the "stage dad" in the July issue. Don't want to burst the guy's bubble, but there are many ten-, eleven-, and twelve-year-olds that can play certain Zep drum tracks—albeit nowhere near what John Bonham played. Take "Kashmir," for example. I saw Mike Mangini play to that track in a clinic. Now, *that* is *MD* material. As a drumset educator, I'm just a little perturbed when I know a parent is living vicariously through his or her kids. You see it in sports as well. So yes, let's let "Bonzo Jr." join his first band and perhaps record a CD before his dad has him finishing ahead of Vinnie Colaiuta in the next Readers Poll.

Marco D. White
CEO, Planet Drum Fun

I want to add my support to Adam Budofsky for the position he took in the July 2010 Editor's Overview, "He Just Hasn't Earned It Yet, Dude." Many success stories have come about when someone in the music business has spotted a real talent on YouTube and made that person a star. That's part of what Web sites are in existence to provide.

Modern Drummer is for readers who want to get detailed insight into how successful artists hone their craft as well as how their career path evolves. Thanks for your high standards.

Roy King

MICKY WALLER

Thank you so much for the What Do You Know About...? profile of Mickey Waller in the July issue. Some time ago I mentioned Mickey to the late Bill Miller as a possible subject for an unsung drummer piece. I recall a critic way back in the day—whose name I can't remember—saying that Mickey deconstructed the laws of physics with his fill after the first verse on Rod Stewart's song "Every Picture Tells a Story." I couldn't have said it better myself. Also, thanks for the recent profile on yet *another* great unsung drummer, Bobby Ramirez! Keep up the good work, and my best to the staff at *Modern Drummer*.

Dale Turner

QSTICKS

Thanks for the QSticks review in the May issue. There are a few errors and a lack of information on important issues. You mentioned that QSticks are "specifically designed for playing at lower volumes." But I'm missing the conclusion that you can also play very loud without breaking the rods. I started making QSticks out of frustration with the durability and sound of other brands. Our tests show that QSticks' durability is three times longer than our competitors'. There are three finish options: colored, natural, and neon. QSticks are handmade. You can only get the triangular grip with QSticks red. The rounded tips not only protect drumheads and enhance bounce; they are also designed to produce a better sound on cymbals and toms. QSticks are now available in France and Austria as well and cost approximately \$30. Thank you.

Luuk Kranenburg
CEO, QPercussion

DROPPED BEAT

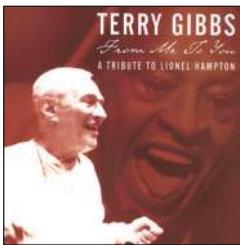
The Paiste snare drum mentioned in Sammy Merendino's Woodshed article from the June 2010 issue was listed incorrectly. The correct name of the snare is Spirit Of 2002.

Jazz Master

JEFF HAMILTON

SWING BASS DRUM

I've enjoyed your playing for years. My question regards playing the bass drum. On the Terry Gibbs CD



From Me To You: A Tribute To Lionel Hampton, you play some very fast tempos. Were you playing your bass drum on all four beats? What about in your work with the great Ray Brown and now with Diana Krall? Do you always play your bass drum on straight-ahead swing songs? Also, what kind of beater do you use?

Thank you for your great contributions to jazz.
Joe Buerger

The answer you're about to get from me will get you fired! Seriously, I *do* play all four beats on the bass drum, until I reach my limit where the tempo becomes uncomfortable. When I studied with [big-band great] John von Ohlen in the '70s, he suggested switching to beats 1 and 3 at faster tempos. This still provides support from the bottom of the instrument. The secret is that most—if not all—of the musicians I play with don't know I'm doing it. You should never hear the four



Alex Salera

beats on the bass drum, but rather you should *feel* them. Your bass drum playing should move seamlessly from soft time-keeping to louder accents and then back to timekeeping. Oh, and I use a Danmar felt beater. Thanks for realizing the importance of the bottom end of the instrument.



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I recently became the owner of a vintage Slingerland student snare drum kit in amazing condition. It includes a very clean 5x14, 8-lug drum. What model is this, and what is its approximate value? Doug B.

"That's the 55K Drum Kit, which includes a 5x14 aluminum-shell snare, a case, a chrome flush-base stand, a practice pad, and drumsticks," says drum historian Harry Cangany. "These kits also came with a music stand and an instruction book. In 1971, the entire package listed for \$115.

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You're Fired!

by Bernie Schallehn

After I played in a band for ten months, the bandleader said to me before a recent rehearsal, "Sorry, it's just not working out. I have to ask you to leave." Then she asked me to pack up my gear. I feel really bad. I loved playing music with them, and I'm having a tough time getting over this.

Any suggestions?

Justin B.

That's harsh. You're pissed, you're sad, you're hurt. A bandleader can phrase it however he or she wants, but the bottom line is always the same: "We don't want you."

It's important for you to express some of your initial feelings in meaningful but nondestructive ways. No wall punching or drinking yourself stupid and then going out and looking for a fight. If you want to punch something, beat up your pillow. Scream obscenities into it. Do push-ups until your arms feel like they're going to fall off. Play your drums—hard! All these behaviors are cathartic. Eventually the emotion of anger should subside. Physical activities will help you work the anger out of your system.

Sadness and hurt begin to creep in. Behind closed doors, shed some tears if you feel them beginning to flow. It's okay. Just let go. If the tears don't come, allow yourself to feel the sadness and hurt. Don't deny their presence.

Lastly, maybe talk with a good friend or one of your parents. Stay away from anyone who's preachy or would suggest an act of revenge. Choose someone who will just sit and listen to what you're feeling inside. Mental health professionals are also available. Do what feels right to you.

Now let's begin dealing with your loss—the loss of your band. There are five stages most people will work through, usually, but not always, in this order.

STAGE 1: DENIAL

Man, you were blindsided, weren't you? It sounds like you never saw this coming. (Or did you?)

It's perfectly normal to deny anything happened to you. You might feel stunned or numb. But remind yourself that it's over. There's no going back. Unfortunately, there are no concrete, tangible reminders—like a cemetery headstone—to show you that your relationship with this band is dead. So, again, keep telling yourself that this is your reality.

STAGE 2: BARGAINING

In the bargaining stage, you may attempt to make deals, usually with God or the bandleader. "Please, God, I'll quit smoking if you can get me back in the band." Or, "Please,

God, I'll go to church every Sunday for a year if you can just get me back in my old band." The hallmark of the bargaining phase is the word *please*.

Sometimes a drummer who's been involuntarily separated from his or her band will ask/bargain/beg the bandleader to be reinstated. I did this only once in my career. After I had a huge argument with a bandleader, he fired me. I apologized the next day, but his mind was made up. He repeated that my services were no longer needed. Ask to return if you feel compelled, and take responsibility for your part in why you were canned (if you do own a part). But never grovel.

If you want to try to get back in, it might be helpful if—over the phone—you ask your former bandleader what she meant by "It's just not working out." Maybe she'll remain vague, or maybe she'll go into specifics. If she does choose to explain her reasoning, be prepared for more ego bruising. What she tells you might hurt.

People are often vague with others for a number of reasons. Here are two that may fit your situation:

1. To protect you from further hurt. If she had said, "You suck as a drummer and we made a mistake hiring you," that could have provoked a mammoth emotional reaction from you.

2. To avoid drama. In being vague, your boss lessened a possible explosive reaction from you. You know yourself. Would you have gone off like a bottle rocket if she had said your drumming was lousy? Even though you had a ten-month run with them, she—or they, if it was a group decision—rejected you.

It's time to be totally honest with yourself. As I hinted above, maybe you knew this was coming but denied it. Your "sins" could include being chronically late for practice, using illicit substances, not being prepared, rushing or dragging tempos, playing the "wrong" feel.... There are a million and one reasons why. But if you denied or blew these things off, start fixing them now so you can avoid this pattern with your next band.

STAGE 3: SADNESS/DEPRESSION

We've already covered this above. However, many times when you think you've found closure with a particular emotion, it comes back like a thief in the night. Just keep expressing the emotions the best way you know how. Your goal is to reach a point where this painful experience becomes a memory without strong feelings.

STAGE 4: ANGER

After being fired, you may ask yourself, *Why*

me? Well, you may know the reason, if it involved repeated unacceptable behaviors, or you may never know why this happened to you. If you feel as though your drumming was spot-on and you got along well with the band members, always showed up prepared, put on a good show, and so on, it may forever be a mystery why you were asked to leave. Some questions in life remain unanswered or are unanswerable.

Don't necessarily make your firing self-referential. By this, I mean don't assume it was your drumming that got you ousted. I've heard of excellent drummers getting bounced from their bands for the most ridiculous, nonsensical reasons. Humans don't always act in a logical fashion, and we as artists are often a wee bit wacky.

Also, always avoid any acts of revenge or retribution. You might fantasize about slashing your bandleader's tires, or punching her boyfriend in the face, or writing her phone number on the men's room wall. Getting back at someone usually feels good for about two minutes, and then you start to feel remorse. I understand that you got a raw deal, but two wrongs truly don't make a right. Plus, you might wind up with a lawsuit or a stint in the hoosegow.

STAGE 5: ACCEPTANCE

This is not to be misinterpreted as "Yippee, I was fired!" Acceptance is more of a quiet acknowledgement that this very unpleasant episode in your drumming career occurred, and you've now moved past it.

In closing, if you had a hint that certain behaviors would eventually get you sacked, fix them. But if this event was truly a sucker punch, work the steps as outlined above, and eventually you'll get to the point where the incident is simply a memory without strong feelings.

Should you be unable to phase out feelings of sadness, depression, or anger—or should you have thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else because of this experience—please seek professional help. But I have a hunch that in time you'll be fine and will soon be performing with a new band. Always go where you're wanted. Good luck!



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





Shannon Carr

EDGAR LIVENGOOD

For **Jucifer**, the road seemingly goes on forever. But the musical scenery is ever changing.

Heavy-hitting powerhouse Edgar Livengood of the Georgia-based duo Jucifer spends the majority of his time on the road—and prefers it that way. “As a drummer, I think playing all the time is crucial,” Livengood says. “And not just rehearsing, but playing for an audience. It’s like the difference between a soldier using his weapon with targets and being thrown into battle, where anything can happen. On tour you find reserves you didn’t know you had, and you learn to improvise.”

While most musicians would complain about being away from their loved ones while on the road, it’s quite the opposite for Livengood: His wife, Amber Valentine, is also the band’s vocalist and lead guitarist. The busy couple, whose current tour runs right up to Christmas, recently returned from Europe in support of their latest album, *Throned In Blood*, which was released on their newly formed label, Nomadic Fortress.

Throned In Blood follows Jucifer’s 2008

release, *L’Autrichienne*, which Livengood played bass on as well, and longtime fans will immediately pick up on the fact that the new album is significantly heavier than the band’s earlier work. According to Edgar, “A large part of the difference between our older albums and *Throned In Blood* is that this is the first one where we stuck with the kind of songs we play live. The older records all had some more straight-ahead rock and pop songs, with just hints of the metal influence that’s been much more apparent in our sets. *L’Autrichienne* was a very long album, with a lot of layered production and pretty much every song being in a different genre. We loved making that record, but it left us in the mood to do something short and raw. We wanted to make a record we’d be psyched to play live.”

Throned In Blood also introduces Livengood’s double pedal playing. “I picked up the double pedal between recording our last album and this new one,” the drummer says. “I had messed with it before, but it

always felt unnecessary to me. I could blast fast with one foot, and the double pedal was almost like a crutch I didn’t need. But I got the urge to try it again, and this time it stopped seeming like a crutch and started appealing to me as a tool I could expand my beats with. I’m really enjoying being creative with it.”

Double pedal or not, Livengood believes in the importance of playing musically. “I pay attention to the riffs and vocal lines,” he says, “and I create my parts around them, not over them. I read the lyrics so I know what the song is about, and I use a fill or crash to accent words I think are important.

“Playing any instrument, but especially drums, requires restraint,” Livengood concludes. “Just because you *can* do something doesn’t mean you should. Phrasing, dynamics, and space are integral to making a song work.”

“Pistol” Pete Kaufmann

ON TOUR

Ned Brower with Rooney /// **Pat Kirch** with the Maine
/// **Joe Beck** with the Spill Canvas /// **Aaron McVeigh**
with Foxy Shazam /// **Chris Knight** with LeAnn Rimes /// **Rickie**
Mazzotta with mewithoutYou /// **Chris Smith** with AM Taxi /// **Chad**
Butler with Switchfoot /// **Jotan Afanador** with Aventura /// **Michael**
Cartellone with Lynyrd Skynyrd /// **“Pistol” Pete Kaufmann** with
Amandla /// **Jason Morris** with Crash Kings



Modern Drummer would like to wish drummer/educator **Sam Ulano** a very happy ninetieth birthday. Ulano recently released the CD *Still Swinging At 90*, as well as a DVD, *I Love What I Do*. For more info, go to samulano.com.

ON THE SHELVES

James Moody 4B (Lewis Nash) /// **Lamb Of God** Hourglass (Chris Adler) /// **Contact** Five On One (Billy Hart) /// **Jeff Berlin** High Standards (Danny Gottlieb) /// **The Stanley Clarke Band** The Stanley Clarke Band (Ronald Bruner Jr.) /// **Eric Krasno** Reminisce (Adam Deitch, Alan Evans) /// **We Are Scientists** Barbara (Andy Burrows) /// **Chief** Modern Rituals (Michael Fujikawa) /// **Justin Rutledge** The Early Widows (Gary Craig, Blake Manning) /// **Jimmie Vaughan** Plays Blues, Ballads & Favorites (George Rains) /// **Mats/Morgan Band** The Music Or The Money... (Morgan Ågren) /// **Filter** The Trouble With Angels (Mika Fineo) /// **Stick Men** Soup (Pat Mastelotto)

ERIC BOBO

The main man in **Cypress Hill's** mix tosses in some new spices.

Art Blakey was a regular house guest, as was Dizzy Gillespie. Later, Earth, Wind & Fire and the Brothers Johnson came by too. "It was incredible," Eric Bobo says of growing up with his father, Latin jazz percussionist Willie Bobo. "The best thing for me was to be a sponge."

Bobo's 2008 solo release, *Meeting Of The Minds*, is a remarkable gathering of rappers, turntablists, guitarists, singers, bassists, keyboardists, and Latin, soul, jazz, indie rock, and hip-hop sounds, with lots of tasty percussion. "My father taught me to open my ears and understand the different genres, and to think of ways to add my sound," Eric says. "So it was a given that I would do an album like *Meeting Of The Minds*."

One of the tracks on the record, "Bobo Meets Rhettmatic," inspired the percussionist to start a project with DJ Rhettmatic. "It's live turntablism and live percussion," Bobo explains. "We're going from Latin sounds to hip-hop to breakbeats to some house kind of stuff. It's different, it's organic, it makes you want to dance. I look at the turntables as an instrument. It has to do with rhythms and syncopations and improv—all those things wrapped into one." A free down-

load of the track is available at bobomeetsrhettmatic.com.

While touring with the Beastie Boys, Bobo met the rap group Cypress Hill, which he's worked with regularly since joining its Soul Assassins tour in 1993.

Cypress Hill's new CD, *Rise Up*, was six years in the making. "We wanted to make a more aggressive album, songs that would really lend themselves to the live show," says Bobo, who plays LP Patato model congas, Tito Puente model timbales, and Generation III bongos, plus Zildjian cymbals and a Remo djembe. "The djembe has the 808 sound," Eric says. "It's not triggered, it's just the natural sound of the djembe." For re-creating some of *Rise Up's* electronic sounds, he's using a Roland SPD-S sampling pad. "It's always been more of an organic thing for me, but adding the electronics makes it a little something extra. You're going to hear a real big sound coming from me."

One of *Rise Up's* first singles is "Armada Latina," a fusion of hip-hop, salsa, and soul featuring a sample of Crosby, Stills & Nash's



BREAKOUT BEATS

Never underestimate the importance of playing those wedding gigs. Eric Bobo's participation in the 1991 wedding of Beastie Boy guitarist/rapper Ad-Rock and actress Lone Skye was pivotal in his career. "That's where my whole thing kind of turned around," Bobo says. "I got into the world of hip-hop and that more mainstream thing. The Beastie Boys were having percussionist problems. They had only seen me play drums and didn't know I also played percussion." Bobo would go on to record the Beasties albums *Ill Communication* (1994)—on which he gets lead billing on the cut "Bobo On The Corner"—and *Hello Nasty* (1998), before focusing on his work with Cypress Hill.



"Suite: Judy Blue Eyes." (Stephen Stills appears in the video.) "That song is different from anything that Cypress has ever done," Bobo says, "but it just seems to fit in our scheme of things. It all comes full circle, my background being Latin jazz and salsa music. To be able to give it that flavor is great."

Robin Tolleson



“A drummer who has V-Drums® is one step ahead of the drummer who doesn't.”

— Gregg Bissonette

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A complete drumming experience that is responsive, inspiring, and visually stunning.

FIDOCK

BLACKWOOD BEBOP KIT AND FATBOY SNARES

Review by Michael Dawson • Photos by Stephen Wood

We first became aware of the Australian-based Fidock Drums back in 2008, when we reviewed its stave-shell, wood-hoop Tasmanian blackwood and bubinga snares. Those drums had a unique sound: open and tuneful, yet warm and focused. When we heard Fidock was now making full drumkits, as well as some oddly sized snares, we jumped at the chance to check them out. For this month's review, we got our hands on a gorgeous blackwood bebop kit and a pair of super-deep 9x13 FatBoy snares. Let's start with the kit.

BLACKWOOD BOP

Fidock's bebop kit (\$6,000, including suspension mounts) is made from Australian blackwood, which is renowned for its natural resonance and tonal quality. The shells are constructed with the same staving methods used on the snare drums, and the reinforcement hoops are sculpted into the shell rather than built from a separate piece of wood and then glued to the interior shell wall. The kit includes an 8-lug 14x18 bass drum, a 6-lug 8x12 rack tom, and an 8-lug 14x14 floor tom. All of the drums come with mini-tube lugs and

matching wood hoops, which are made from a single piece of timber that's cut into two semicircles and then joined together. These simply designed drums feature a mild satin finish and have very little hardware connected to the shell. Fidock's minimalist approach is used, as company director Stephan Fidock explains, "to minimize interference with the acoustic properties of the grain." These drums are also extremely lightweight, which is great for gigging pros who have to schlep their gear into and out of clubs every night.





We were fortunate to have the blackwood kit hand delivered by New York jazz/rock drummer Harvey Sorgen, who gave us a quick demonstration. The first thing I noticed as he started tearing around the kit in a freeform DeJohnette-inspired solo was how open, warm, and cutting the drums sounded, but without the metallic ring and high-pitched “ping” you often get with other drums when they’re tuned high.

I attribute much of this to the wood hoops, which gave off a bullwhip-like crack when Sorgen played rimshots on the toms, as well as to the traditional stave-style shells and minimal lugs and hardware.

The drums also had a deep, earthy voice that gave them a strong tribal quality. They still sounded more like a drumset than like congas or kpanlogo drums, but they had a natural and organic vibe that I haven’t heard in any other kit. They didn’t necessarily sound *better* than other drums—in fact, some players might miss the crystal-clear tone of more modern-style models—but there was something more “drummy” about this kit that you won’t find anywhere else.

When I finally sat down to give the set a whirl, it took me a minute to get used to the drums’ immediate and woody response. They had a very open sound, even when hit with a light touch. Yet I felt that in order to get the shells to *really* start talking, I had to dig in a bit more than usual. Once I got a handle on how the drums wanted to be hit, I found they were a lot of fun to play, especially for Blakey-style tom solos.

FATBOY SNARES

Fidock’s super-deep yet skinny 9x13 FatBoy snares are unusually sized in an effort to supply thick and beefy low-end punch without sacrificing stick response or snare sensitivity. On most average-size snares, such as Don Henley–type tones are achievable only by detun-



ing the heads to the point where they have very little rebound. That wasn’t the case with the FatBoys. Even at a medium tension, they gave off a chesty punch, with the addition of a crisp attack and sizzling snare response.

These 8-lug FatBoys have very thin shells (5–6 mm), which are staved from hand-selected blackwood or myrtle timber. Like the bebop kit, the reinforcement hoops are built into the shell. These re-rings are sized differently in order to maximize tone and snare response; the top ring is cut thinner for more sensitivity, while the bottom one is thicker for a punchier

TONAL TIMBERS

All Fidock drums are hand carved from native Australian timber, which company director Stephan Fidock selects while venturing around the country looking for the most musical wood he can find. As Fidock explains on the company Web site, “We look for density and consistency of grain and listen for tone and resonance. Our aim is to retain the tonal qualities we first heard in the timber throughout the construction and finishing process.”

attack. Like all Fidock snares, FatBoys come with miniature lugs, Trick throw-offs, Evans heads, Canopus “wet” twenty-strand snare wires, and matching wood hoops. Double 45-degree round-over edges are used for additional warmth, attack, and overtone control.

We were sent two FatBoys to review: a shiny French-polished Tasmanian myrtle drum (priced on application) and a natural golden-brown version built from blackwood (\$1,350). Both models were remarkably well-constructed, extremely lightweight, and surprisingly easy to work with. I had no problem fitting them in my snare stand. But there is an obvious limit to how low they can be positioned, depending on your particular stand. The thick wood hoops add about 1” to the overall diameter. Because these are 13” drums, there was plenty of extra room in my snare basket. Had they been 14”, though, it might have been a tight squeeze.

Playing the FatBoys was a lot of fun. The myrtle drum was slightly brighter and louder than the blackwood. But both snares exhibited similar open, earthy tones, and they blended very well with the bebop kit. When tuned medium to high, the FatBoys were crisp, sensitive, and sonorous, with a nice blend of midrange overtones and chunky attack. Jazz drummers will love these drums because they can be tuned tight for clarity and still retain a solid, thick tone. The wood hoops also added extra “knock” to rimshots and rimclicks.



Where the FatBoys really shined, however, was at lower tunings. Before I had a chance to play either of these drums, I received a suggestion from Stephan Fidock: “Tune it low and put your wallet on it.” Wow! If you’re a fan of that pillowy Al Jackson sound, these are drums to check out. They sounded deep and thumpy yet spoke with a clear and articulate—not tubby—voice. The extra-deep sound wasn’t a special effect that I had to force out of them but rather was a natural tone that these drums were designed to produce. Session players, take note.

fidockdrums.com

BOSPHORUS

ORACLE SERIES CYMBALS

MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

by Anthony Riscica

With the new Oracle series, Bosphorus sets out to encapsulate the fire and intensity of modern jazz with raw, aggressive cymbals that speak with volume and clarity. The complete Oracle line, which was designed with the help of neo-bop drummer Ralph Peterson Jr., consists of a set of 14" hi-hats, 20" and 22" rides, and 16" and 18" crashes. Here's how they stacked up.

HI-HATS

The first cymbals I put up were the 14" hi-hats (\$685). The bottom cymbal has a 1 cm hole drilled toward the middle of the bow, which cuts down on the air resistance caused by smacking the two cymbals together. The result was a louder, more articulate "chick" produced by stepping on the pedal. The stick sound was also well defined, with a trebly sizzle. I used the Oracles on a few live jazz recordings and was thrilled with the sound when I listened back, as the hats needed little EQ to clean them up. The fact that each cymbal is made to have a short decay added to the pair's clarity and presence. I also used the hi-hats in some rehearsals for a power-pop band, and they held their ground in that setting as well. They offered just enough volume and clarity to cut through the group's synth bass and distorted guitars.

RIDES

The 20" (\$595) and 22" (\$695) Oracle rides have large bells that were a pleasure to play. The bells gave off a round sound that had enough high end to cut through. The stick sound on the bow was definitely dry but not without some character. Even though these cymbals had minimal decay, the wash built up pretty easily

when I played closer to the edge, especially on the 22". Even then, however, the stick sound could still be heard over the swell, meaning the rides sounded great when struck pretty much anywhere.

Of the two models, I preferred the 20", and I used it on the same live recordings as the hi-hats. When I listened back to the takes, I found the mics had picked up even more of a sweet sound from the ride than I'd heard from behind the drums. Its dark overtones created a beautiful bed of sound to play on but never got in the way, even when I crashed on the edge of the cymbal. Both rides had a complex yet contained tone that would be ideal for basically any style where sheer volume is not the objective.

CRASHES

Like the rides, the 16" (\$510) and 18" (\$540) Oracle crashes are thin, so they

produced mostly dark overtones. The light weight of the cymbals also allowed the sound to open up fully with very little force from the

stick. That characteristic is very important to me when using a crash in a jazz setting. I love having a cymbal that I can manipulate easily for maximum expression, and these two crashes definitely fit the bill.

Due to its minimal decay, the 18" Oracle could also be used as a ride, but it was a bit hard to get any meaningful sound out of its smaller bell. The overall volume of both crashes would be appropriate in a wide range of settings, as I was able to make them scream pretty loud with my 5A sticks. These two cymbals would be great if you're looking for crashes designed specifically for jazz, which are not always easy to find.

CONCLUSION

I know we've been given a great product to review when I don't want to give it back to the company. That was the case with the Oracle series from Bosphorus. For drummers who play any form of jazz, these cymbals are worth a long look and listen. In my opinion the gems of the line were the hi-hats and the 20" ride—I just couldn't stop playing them!

bosphoruscymbals.com



MINIMAL DECAY

Oracle series cymbals were designed to have a dry sound with a short decay, while still maintaining a rich set of overtones. To achieve that, Bosphorus hand forges the cymbals using wide, shallow lathing. This unique pattern not only enhances the sound but also accentuates the raw beauty of the bronze.

TAYE

STUDIOMAPLE, STUDIOBIRCH, AND ORIGINAL SERIES SNARES

by Anthony Riscica

Taye is one of those companies that take enormous pride in the craftsmanship of their products by making everything in-house. From the shells to the drumheads themselves, not a single piece of a Taye drum is outsourced. Recently the company took that mentality of quality control and created a few new snares to add to its Studio and Original series. We were sent two 7x13s, one from the StudioBirch line and one from the StudioMaple line, and a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 birch drum from the high-end Original series. Here's the rundown.

A LITTLE EXTRA DEPTH

The two 7x13 drums come with identical hardware setups, from rims to strainer. The throw-offs are super-smooth, but they need to be dropped a full 180 degrees in order for the snares to disengage completely. This threw me off a little when I started playing the drums, because I couldn't figure out why the snare was still buzzing when I released the lever. Then I pushed the lever all the way down and—poof!—no snare sound. This isn't a big deal, but it took some getting used to.

The hardware on these drums is where the similarities end. The 7-ply StudioBirch snare has a thickness of 7 mm, while the 10-ply StudioMaple drum is 7.5 mm. Both snares cracked with plenty of R&B flavor when cranked up. The birch drum cut a little more, while the maple model had a bit more warmth to its tone. Choosing between the two would really come down to the drum's application and whether you want more volume or more richness of tone.

These models' 7" depth allows for more versatility than you would normally find in 13" snares. The drums sounded sweet when cranked up popcorn style but also had great range and produced useful sounds at a medium tension or even a bit looser. The lower tuning really brought out the character of the wood; at that tension and with the snares set more loosely, the drums gave off some of the fattest sounds I've ever heard from a 13".

AVATAR BLUE ORIGINAL

Next up was the Taye Original 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 snare in striking "avatar blue." This drum was an all-around beauty, from the black nickel-plated lugs to the 10-ply premium birch shell and 4-ply North American maple sound rings (known to most as reinforcement hoops). Add to that a pair of 10-lug die-cast hoops, and you have a snare that sounds as fat as you'd ever want.

Out of the box the drum was tuned pretty loose, but I gave it a whack anyway just to see how it responded. It offered a rich thud, even with the snares at a slack tension. It wasn't my ideal sound, but I could imagine tuning the drum this way in the studio to give a song an unmistakable character. Next I tuned up the batter head to a medium-loose tension, which is where I liked it best. The drum responded wonderfully, with an ultra-round tone that would kill in most rock settings, especially on big ballads. The die-cast hoops gave off a beautiful rimclick sound, and they also helped dry up the overtones so that no dampening was necessary.

The Original birch drum was also no slouch when the head was cranked. Tuned way up, it had tons of volume and projection, while still maintaining its sensitivity for quieter strokes. The die-cast hoops again helped by controlling the sound and producing a rimshot that felt like it would blow the roof off my studio. The supreme quality of this drum does come at a much heavier price than the Studio models (\$2,335). But when you consider its details and workhorse-type versatility, the Original snare could be well worth the investment.

tayedrums.com



FINISHED FOR IMPACT

The **7x13 StudioMaple snare (\$419)** is finished in a beautiful "java burst," which has a rich coffee tone. The wrap on the **7x13 StudioBirch snare (\$359)** is a brilliant turquoise sparkle. This striking finish caught the eye of everyone who saw it in my studio. Given their competitive prices, gorgeous looks, and exceptional sound quality, these very versatile 13" drums are well worth checking out.



LOS CABOS DRUMSTICKS

WHITE HICKORY, RED HICKORY, AND MAPLE MODELS

by Billy Brennan

Los Cabos Drumsticks celebrated its five-year anniversary this past May. The former furniture company is based in New Brunswick, Canada, and has been gaining steam in the drumming community with the support of Canadian—and now increasingly international—retailers. Los Cabos offers sticks in maple, white hickory, and red hickory. The company sent us a slew of models to check out, but I decided to focus on three standard sizes (5B Intense hickory, 5B red hickory, and 2B maple) in order to get the best idea of how the three wood types looked, felt, and played. All three pairs were tested on the same rubber practice pad and cymbals (14" hi-hats, 19" crash, 20" ride).

WHITE HICKORY

Thanks to its unique combination of strength and hardness, hickory is the most commonly used wood for drumsticks. The Los Cabos 5B Intense model, which is $\frac{1}{2}$ " longer than a regular 5B, is a hefty stick best suited for the louder end of the musical spectrum. The stick felt balanced and responded well on the practice pad. Its acorn-shaped tip and medium taper and weight created a wide range of tones on the cymbals, whether it was solid ticks and splashes on the hi-hats, roaring waves on the crash, or clear pings, vibrant washes, or full-bodied bell attacks on the ride. These would be great all-purpose sticks for rock, pop, or other moderate to loud applications. Retail price: \$9.90.

RED HICKORY

Red hickory is taken from an area closer to the heart of the tree, where the wood is not only darker in color but also a bit denser. Drumsticks made of red hickory are stronger and more durable than those made of white hickory, while still retaining some flexibility. Los Cabos is the first company to manufacture sticks from this variant.

Due to the wood's extra-dense grain, the 5B red hickory model was the heaviest stick of the three we tested. This extra weight may take getting used to for some, but I found that the sticks felt great. They were as responsive and balanced as the white hickory version, while offering even



sharper cymbal sounds. With the 5B red hickory, the hats chugged like a locomotive, the crash erupted with a larger sound, and the ride had more cut. This model would be perfect for rock, hard rock, electric blues, and more. Retail price: \$9.90.

MAPLE

Maple is a strong and dense—yet surprisingly light—hardwood. As such, maple drumsticks are best suited for drummers who play quieter music or for those who want to use a large stick without the extra weight. The 2B maple model was substantially lighter than either hickory variant, despite having a thicker barrel. Once again, these sticks felt very comfortable in my hand and performed well on the pad, offering excellent rebound due to their lighter weight and thinner taper.

The 2B maple sticks brought out a more mellow sound from the cymbals. The hi-hat sounded a bit more laid back with a less aggressive attack, the crash wasn't as brazen, and the ride was subtler. That said, this model still packed a punch when it needed to, creating loud yet not-

so-sharp crescendos and accents on the cymbals. The 2B maple would be a good choice for anyone who prefers the feel of a larger stick but plays with softer dynamics. Heavy hitters should probably stay with hickory, given that wood's greater durability. List price: \$8.50.

OVERALL

My personal favorite stick of the bunch was the 5B red hickory. I prefer bigger, heavier sticks, and the unique coloration of this pair was very eye-catching. But all of the models were well made, sounded and performed great, and had a smooth and comfortable feel. If Los Cabos sticks are available in your area, be sure to visit your local dealer and check out what the company has to offer.

loscabosdrumsticks.com

A COMPLETE LINEUP

In addition to the basic 5B and 2B models we put to the test in this review, Los Cabos offers an exhaustive—but not exhausting—line of sticks in each of its three wood types.

According to Los Cabos president Larry Guay, "Our product line is based on practicality. We strive to keep our line as simple as possible while meeting the demands of our players." For louder situations, there's the Rock stick, which is big and beefy and has an oval tip. On the lighter side of the spectrum, there's the short, thin 7A (also with an acorn tip) and the slightly longer and thicker Jazz (barrel tip) and 8A (round tip) models.



DIXON

24-PLY BUBINGA

by David Ciauro

MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED



Bubinga wood is all the rage because it pretty much hits every peak and valley in the tonal spectrum. Dixon ignored the "less is more" cliché and added ply after ply of 100 percent bubinga until the result was the 24-ply beast you see here.

The sound of this 5 1/2"x14 snare was universal. The drum had a wide tuning range where lows, mids, and highs were always clearly present, resulting in a full sound with plenty of power and projection. The sturdiness of the die-cast hoops—along with the shell's density—helped rimshots crack like a whip, while the warmth of the bubinga sang in the overtones. When I moved my strokes from the edge to the center of the drum, there was a very smooth transition from an open to a focused sound. Snare response was equally impressive, remaining sensitive for loose buzzing but also staying tight and dry for more articulate playing.

I tuned the batter head loose for a full, fat bottom-end sound with midrange over-

tones and high-end crack. At medium-tension tunings, the drum sounded clean and studio ready. There was an excellent blend of tone and warmth, with just enough overtones, the right high-end bite and low-end meatiness, and sensitive snare response. The snare also *felt* great at this tuning. A cranked batter head produced a dry, snappy sound with a fierce, cracking high end, along with some body to thicken up the tone. An interesting design element of this model is the lack of a snare bed



carving. Surprisingly, this maximized the sensitivity. List price: \$729.
dixondrums.net



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CASCADE

X-15 AND FAT HEAD II MICROPHONES

by Mark Parsons

Ribbon microphones have made a big resurgence over the past few years, largely due to their warm, vintage sound, which comes from how they naturally round off transients (attacks). For this review, we're looking at two ribbon models from Cascade that have strong drum-set applications.

DETAILS

The X-15 (\$399) is a large, cylindrical stereo mic, and the Fat Head II (\$219, or \$399 for a stereo pair) is a lollipop-shaped transducer. Even though they look totally different, these mics are actually very similar in terms of sonic properties. The main distinction—other than the obvious differences in size and shape—is that the X-15 contains two elements fixed at 90 degrees relative to each other, while the Fat Head II contains a single ribbon element. (The X-15 comes with a five-pin cable and a small breakout box, which you then connect to your mixer with a pair of standard mic cables.)

IN USE

We started with the X-15 centered over the drumkit. It's not super-obvious exactly where the center of the X/Y pattern is (the manual says it's aligned with the "e" in the Cascade logo), so I attached a little sticker to the end of the mic, which helped show the way and sped up the setup. When the mic was positioned like this, the sound had a definite vintage vibe to it: warm and rounded, with the high end starting to roll off after about 8 kHz. The toms were big and rumbly, and the cymbals were very natural sounding but without as much sparkle as you'd typically get from a condenser. This mic took EQ very well, so it was easy to dial in some additional high frequencies without the sound getting harsh or spitty.

ROOMY REALISM

As is typical with ribbon mics, the elements in the X-15 and Fat Head II are set in a bidirectional figure-eight pattern. This means the mics pick up sound from the front and the rear, with a null point at the sides. This attribute makes ribbons well suited to overall drum applications, as they give you more room tone than a typical cardioid microphone would.



I mounted the Fat Head II pair on the included stereo bar and placed them next to the X-15 for comparison. The bottom line is that the sonic differences between the mics were likely due to variations in placement more than anything else. The Fat Heads IIs were in more of a closely spaced ORTF configuration than a true X/Y. They might sound a hair more natural under extreme EQ settings, but the difference would be pretty negligible.

Next, I went for an all-ribbon sound by placing a Fat Head II on the bass drum and leaving the X-15 as an overhead. (Note: I put the Fat Head a foot or two in front of the kick and not directly in line with the port, as blasts of wind can kill ribbon mics.) This yielded a big, fat kick sound to go with the vintage overhead tone, plus a lot of bloom in the lower frequencies. With a little EQ, the Fat Head II could almost produce an electronic 808-type bass drum sound.

Then I spaced the Fat Head II pair widely across the kit in a Glyn Johns-style configuration (one mic positioned overhead and above the snare and the other the same distance from the snare but located above and behind the floor tom and pointed at the snare). This setup offered more stereo spread than when I used the X-15 for overheads, and the sound was just as cool.

CONCLUSION

The bottom line is that for \$399 you can get either the X-15 stereo mic or a pair of Fat Head IIs. If you're looking for quick and easy stereo recording with no possibility of phase issues, go for the X-15. If you want more placement options at the cost of some convenience, grab the Fat Head IIs. Both models have that anti-hype ribbon-mic vibe and are a true bargain at their price. They also sound great with guitar amps, acoustic guitar, and piano.

cascademicrophones.com





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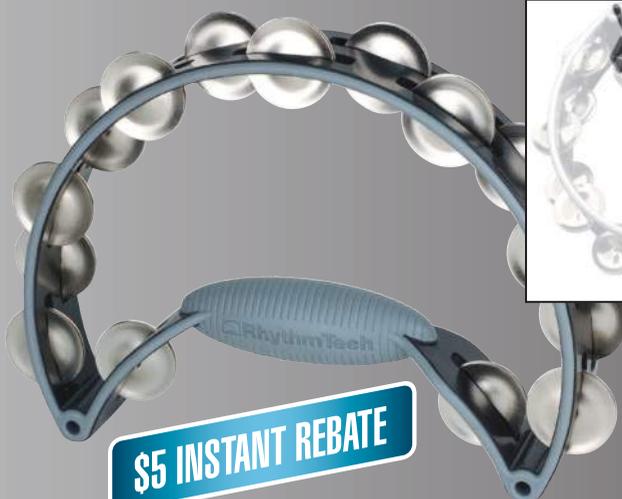
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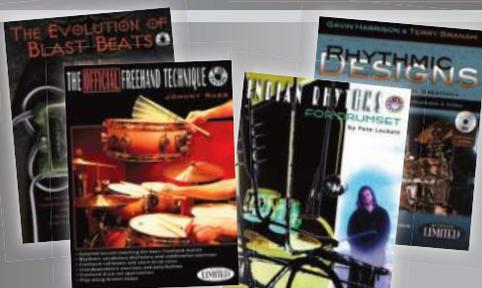
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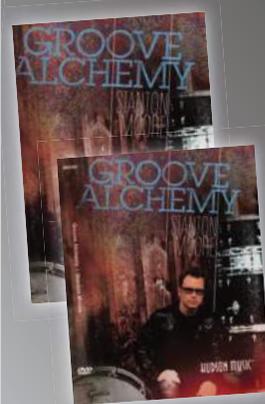
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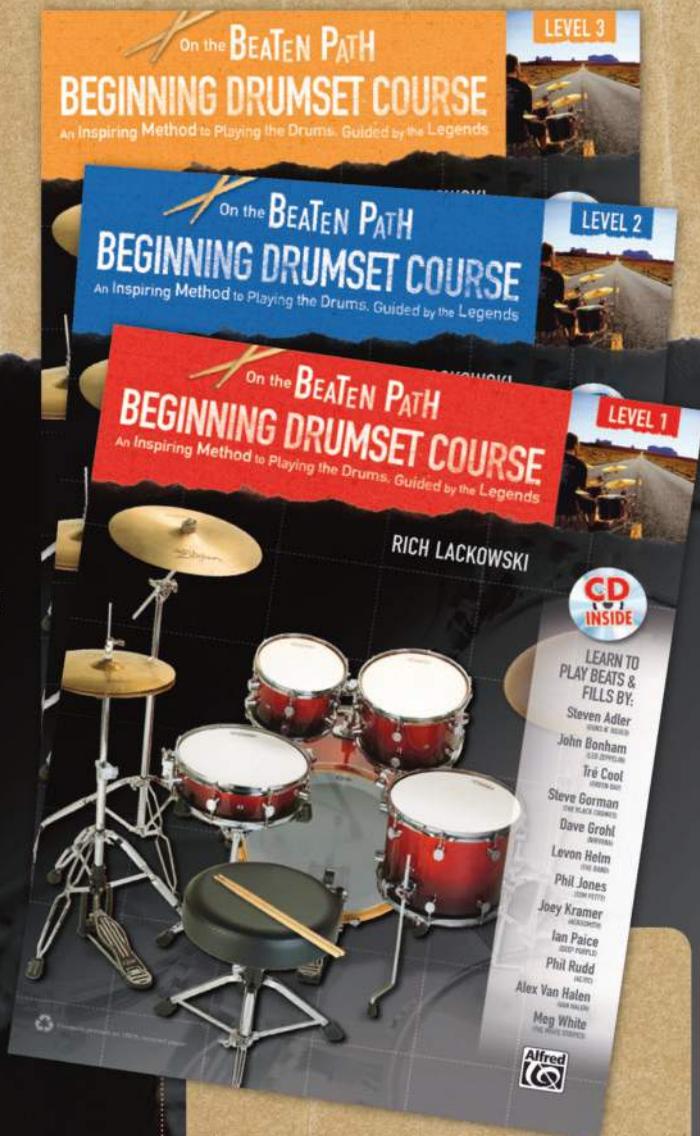
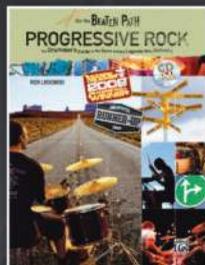
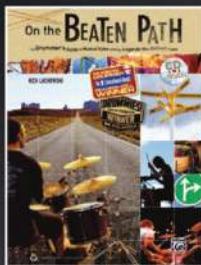
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CHAD SZELIGA

knew early on that being mediocre wasn't acceptable. Steadfastly schooling himself on all things percussive, he took aim at fame, landed a gig with the multi-platinum band **Breaking Benjamin**, and became the kind of drummer other drummers aspire to be.

Story by Steven Douglas Losey • Photos by Paul La Raia

Chad Szeliga has played for the heavy rock band Breaking Benjamin since 2005, joining up in time to record the platinum-selling *Phobia* album. Since he was a kid, Szeliga has practiced until his muscles burn, employing odd regimens and self-taught techniques. In the process he has not only overcome the challenges of attention deficit disorder but gone well past them, establishing himself as a unique practitioner of his craft and becoming one of the most respected cats on today's scene. *MD* sat down with the spirited and dedicated drummer to talk about the making of Breaking Benjamin's fourth album, *Dear Agony*, and to find out what's at the heart of Chad's unerring control, power, and musicality.



MD: How has attention deficit disorder related to your drumming?

Chad: I believe the majority of musicians have ADD. We have such an artsy brain that we get bored very quickly. We're all perfectionists in our craft because we're creating art. Some people get depressed with it, and others are happy with it. My doctor told me that the drumming I do without taking medication is only 40 or 50 percent of where I could be, but when I take the meds it actually helps me to play 70 to 80 percent better.

MD: Before you were diagnosed, how did the condition affect you?

Chad: My brain tends to work really fast. I can pick up complicated things much easier than simple things. It's almost like *Rain Man*, where you can't function doing simple things but you can tell how many matches are in a matchbook. In the past, bands that I played for would have to show me a beat they had in mind. My brain could not function to pick up the simple part they wanted. They would look back at me and say, "You can play Rush, but you can't play this simple part?" Back then I didn't know why. Until I was diagnosed that really bothered me.

MD: You never considered it a negative, though?

Chad: It's just that your brain needs to slow down a bit. I can't play rudiments for an hour and then switch to grooves for an hour and then do something else. I get bored with that; I don't have the organization for that. When I take meds I don't get bored with rudiments. I'll practice for an hour until I get it down. I can play it slow, medium, or fast and be in control.

Without the medication I tend to want to play faster. It really is ADD: "all-day drummer." You want to drum, but when you're on the medicine you can get more in an hour than you could in six hours otherwise. Early on I always thought that being a slow learner

was a curse, but I came to find out it's actually a blessing. It helped me slow things down as a teacher. I was able to break things down for my students at a pace they could understand.

MD: How did you get the gig with Breaking Benjamin?

Chad: I was working in a factory, and Chad Brandolini from Vater called and said Breaking Benjamin was looking for a drummer. He needed some kind of demo tape by that night. I had to learn the songs in minutes so I could film myself and get it to him. I played right through several songs without stopping the camera. I wanted to show them I wasn't stopping the tape but was just going with the flow, so I played it like it was a show, one song to another. I got a phone call saying they really liked my playing and wanted me to be one of the first drummers to audition.

MD: Have you always been so passionate about the drums?

Chad: I started drumming very young, at two or three years old, basically with pots and pans. My grandfather was a trombone player, and he toured with all the greats, like Buddy Rich. He was the band director and was teaching drum corps at Bowling Green University in Ohio. At an early age I got to watch my grandfather teaching drummers. We would go out on the field when I was five or six, and I would watch them backsticking. They would let me play their snares.

MD: Your grandfather was a major influence?

Chad: Yes. He had a garden, and he would fill up buckets with green beans. I remember dumping them out after seeing the drum corps guys, and I would play the bucket with two spatulas. My parents and my grandfather realized early on that I had a drive for the drums. My grandfather bought me my first snare drum and taught me rudiments. He imbedded in my head that rudiments are the bible for drummers.

MD: How did you pursue drumming



CHAD'S SETUP

Drums: DW in "regal to royal fade" finish

- A.** 6x10 auxiliary snare
- B.** 11x14 VLT floor tom with 3-ply inner rings
- C.** 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x13 Edge snare
- D.** 5x10 Short Stack tom
- E.** 5x8 Short Stack tom
- F.** 6x12 Short Stack tom
- G.** 11x14 X floor tom with 3-ply inner rings
- H.** 12x16 VLX floor tom with 3-ply inner rings
- I.** 18x20 VLX bass drum with 3-ply inner rings
- J.** 8x20 Woofer

Hardware: DW, including 9000 double bass drum pedal, 9500 hi-hat stand, 9702 multi-stand, 9300 snare stand, 9303 small-basket snare stand, 9120M Workhorse throne, and 9000 rack system

Heads: Remo coated Emperor-X main-snare batter and clear Ambassador bottom, coated Emperor auxiliary-snare batter and clear Ambassador bottom, Emperor tom batters and clear Ambassador bottoms, and clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter and Ebony Powerstroke 3 front head

Microphones: Shure Beta 52, Beta 57, Beta 91, Beta 98, KSM32, and KSM137

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1.** 12" A Custom Mastersound hi-hats
- 2.** 13" A Custom Mastersound hi-hats
- 3.** 19" K China
- 4.** 8" ZXT Trashformer splash
- 5.** 6" A Custom splash
- 6.** 15" A Custom ReZo crash
- 7.** 17" A Custom Projection crash with 6" Zil-Bel on top
- 8.** 8" A Custom splash
- 9.** 12" Oriental China Trash
- 10.** 20" A Brilliant Earth ride
- 11.** 16" Oriental China Trash with K Hybrid splash on top
- 12.** 18" Classic China
- 13.** 19" A Custom ReZo crash
- 14.** 19" K Custom Hybrid China

Sticks: Vic Firth American Classic F1

Cases: Protection Racket drum and cymbal cases and drum mat

Percussion: LP medium-pitch Jam Block

Accessories: Samson Zoom Q3 video camera for recording shows and rehearsals, Extreme Isolation EX-29 and EX-25 headphones, Remetee wardrobe, Liquid Lightning Energy Drink

early on?

Chad: I would walk around the house and make music with what I had—buckets, pots and pans, whatever. Once I got into playing the snare, I would try to make it sound like more than one drum. I would work on my

hand technique and try to pull out more sounds from that snare. I didn't get an entire drumkit right away, but I really learned how to play the snare; it wasn't just playing a beat and throwing in a bunch of fills.

When I was twelve a lightbulb really went off for me, and I decided that being a drummer was what I was meant to do. From then until now I started practicing eight hours a day. I started to develop my own routines and methods that were considered

CHAD'S FAVORITE RECORDINGS

Karnivool Sound Awake (Steve Judd) /// **Shinedown** The Sound Of Madness (Barry Kerch) /// **Steely Dan** Alive In America (Dennis Chambers, Peter Erskine) /// **The Police** Synchronicity (Stewart Copeland) /// **Deftones** Diamond Eyes (Abe Cunningham) /// **Sevendust** Cold Day Memory (Morgan Rose) /// **Tony Williams** Wilderness (Tony Williams)

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Will Calhoun - LIVING COLOUR / Jason Rullo - SYMPHONY X
Matt Greiner - AUGUST BURNS RED / Anthony "Tiny" Biuso - T.S.O.L.
Vinnie Paul - HELLYEAH / Shawn Drover - MEGADETH
Scott Travis - JUDAS PRIEST / Mike Terrana - MIKE TERRANA
Flo Mounier - CRYPTOPSY / George Kollias - NILE
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unusual, really trying to understand that drumming is more than just hitting something. I worked on all these different ways to pull out as many sounds as possible.

MD: What were some of your techniques?

Chad: I would turn off the lights and let my hands go and see what happened. At first I would hit rims and all that, but the reason I developed the concept was because I wanted to reach a point where I didn't have to even look at my drums. I wanted to go by feel and completely understand my surroundings. When I began to really understand the whole concept of playing in the dark, guess what happened when I turned on the lights? It was like second nature to me. When the lights were off I could hear things that I couldn't hear with the lights on, basically because of the level of concentration in the dark. That helped to take my drumming to a completely different level.

MD: You developed your strength based on the Moeller technique?

Chad: I used to practice on pillows because I didn't want to cheat with rebounding the stick; I had no concept of the Moeller technique at that time. I would be hard on myself to pull that second stroke out, and pillows helped me do that. Then I started using water.

I used to practice underwater, and a lot of people thought I was crazy. I would watch Bruce Lee videos when I was younger; I was amazed by how fast the guy was. I would watch him practice his movements underwater, and I knew it could translate to my drumming. I would submerge my hands in the bathtub, the sink, or a pool. I used to do a roll, going right, left, right, left. I'd start slowly and get faster and faster. It's really hard at first. I would feel my forearms start to burn, and my fingers would get quite pruned.

Once I mastered that, I would start moving my wrists and, after that, my fingers. That eventually led me to almost moving my wrist under the water like a fishtail. I came to realize it was kind of an inverted Moeller technique without the stick. When I pulled my hands out of the water, they had become so fast that I actually had to

teach my brain to slow them down.

It was a cool concept that I developed on my own, just by being intrigued by the art of drumming—I wanted to be faster and better. There's always a method to my madness in the ways I approach drumming. I thank God every day for giving me the blessings to do what I do.

MD: But then you took that even further.

Chad: Yes. In an effort to be very precise with my sticking at lower and higher volumes, I would practice on top of the water. Picture moving your hands really fast on top of the water without causing a splash. That's what I would do. I would do single and double strokes, paradiddles, you name it; any rudiment I could do, I would practice like that. I would do it as fast as I could at lower volumes without splashing water with the drumsticks. I used to go to the public pool, and good-looking female lifeguards would laugh at this boy treading water with his hands. They would say, "What's wrong with this kid?"

MD: That took real dedication.

Chad: If you love drumming that much, it's more than just pounding the drums. It's about really understanding your instrument. Even though we go boom, cack, boom, cack, there are drummers out there who know how to make a beautiful melody. In order to do that, you need to understand what drums really do and how they make sounds.

MD: Musicality is an important part of being a drummer.

Chad: Absolutely. With my playing I try to go out of the box. I admire guys like Stewart Copeland, Tony Williams, Carter Beauford, Danny Carey, Tommy Lee, and Daniel Adair. They don't sound like a typical drummer because they're very musical. They don't just hit things for a living. They add something to a band's catalog by playing very musical hooks and beats. All of them are easily identified by their sound.

MD: Do you think being known as having your own sound is the ultimate compliment?

Chad: One time on tour I was hanging

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out with Jon Wysocki from Staind. I was talking about the fact that if I played for Staind they wouldn't be the same band, just because Jon adds something with his style that makes it right. Maybe it's the way he hits his drums, or maybe it's the way he tunes his snare. When you hear Chad Sexton from 311 hit his snare, you know it's him. You know Alex Van Halen when you hear the tom fills or his ride, or Stewart Copeland on the hi-hat. I want to be a drummer who is needed, whose sound is identified, that when people hear it they know that's Chad Szeliga playing.

MD: How can drummers develop their own vibe?

Chad: It's important to emulate those types of drummers at first, but you also want to get out of that box, to avoid being a clone of them. You want to borrow from them, switch it around, and turn it into *your* licks to create your own identity.

MD: How do you want other drummers to perceive you?

Chad: I want to inspire cats to go practice, to not look at it as punishment but as paying your dues. It's amazing to walk off stage with people saying you're a great drummer. Practicing scales and rudiments at slow tempos may not seem gratifying, but it's like watching *The Karate Kid*. Daniel was angry when he was waxing on and waxing off. He eventually realized that what Miyagi taught him wasn't to punish him but to help those fighting moves become embedded in him.

That's what rudiments do, and that's what practice does. I'm always hoping that my words help people want to become better drummers immediately. I guess I've been blessed with the ability to give pep talks, because I love teaching and inspiring drummers and talking to them in a language they can understand.

MD: What comes to mind about the recording of *Dear Agony*?

Chad: It was a challenging record. I give [frontman] Ben Burnley a lot of credit because he wrote a lot of the

drumbeats on Pro Tools. He had a strong vision, and when your lead singer comes to you and says, "This is what I want," it becomes a challenge immediately because good drummers write beats. That's what we do. It's the concept of creating something out of nothing. It's like building a house: You have land, you frame it, and eventually you move furniture in and see it from the ground up. That's how I am. I like to hear the riff and play a drumbeat. Sometimes the beat I come up with may even change the riff a little bit. That's watching it from the ground up, building this beautiful piece of music.

MD: But you really didn't get to do that on this record?

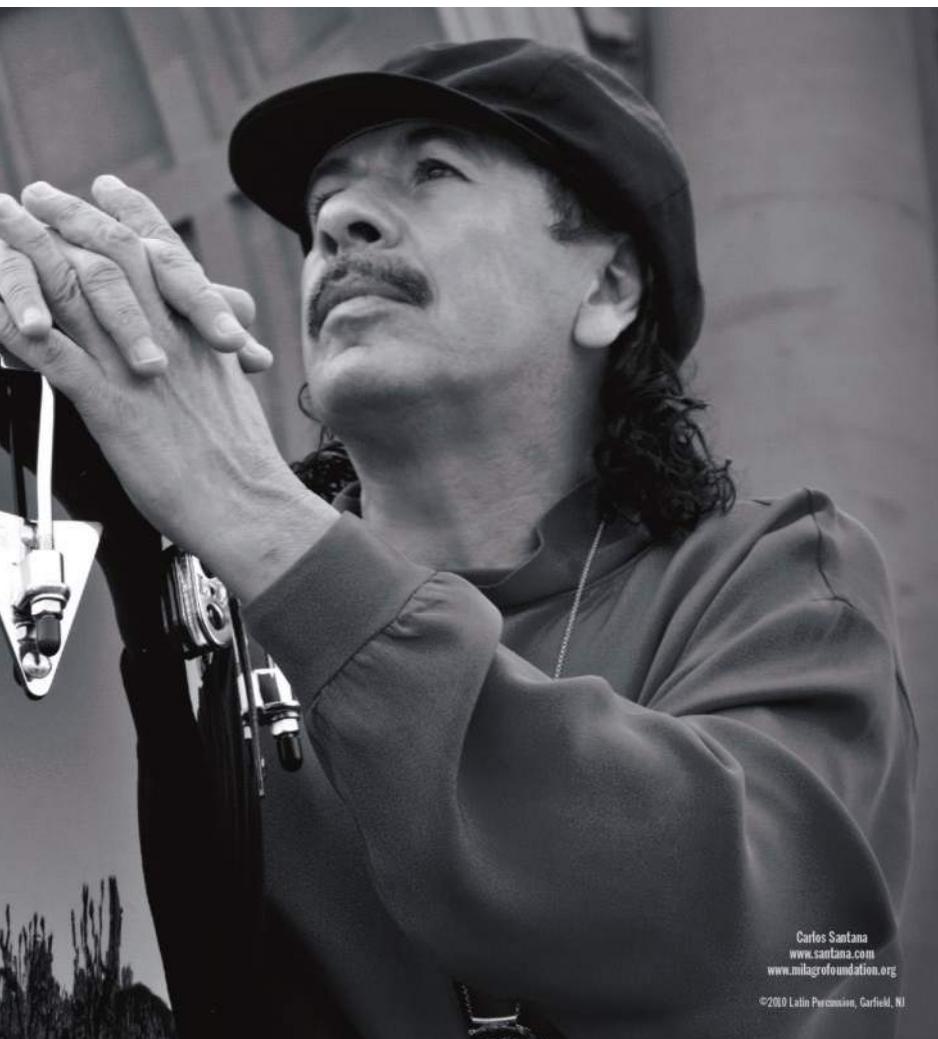
Chad: Ben wrote a lot of the ideas because he wrote the record. When he presented it to me I realized my job as a drummer is to play those beats. I'm a hired gun; I listen to my boss and try to see his vision. I tried to enhance his vision with my playing while retaining certain vibes. Ben would say that he dug the fills I was playing or the way I played my hi-hat. So no matter what, my personality and vibe are always there. Truthfully, I brought back a bit of shuffle because I like to be a groove guy. I come from jazz and funk, and I try to bring that to a rock groove. It has to have a swing, a cool bounce to it.

MD: "I Will Not Bow" has a cool vibe.

Chad: At the bridge there's a bell that gives it a "ding, ding." Ben put it in such a spot that it became a really cool hook—it just made sense to put those dings right there. Sometimes the simplistic things are better hooks than going all out with crazy fills.

On the record I utilized more maturity. I let the music play without overplaying at all. On the bridge we were having a hard time coming up with something really cool. I went back to records that I dig. I was listening to "Black Hole Sun" by Soundgarden, and it has a bell and a tom that go back and forth. For some reason that really inspired me. I felt it and didn't think about it. It came from my soul, and I ended up being really happy with that vibe.

MD: "Anthem Of The Angels" shows finesse.



Carlos Santana
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Chad: It's an emotional song, and that's what I tried to imply with the drumming. When I create a drum track I want it to tell a story, to take someone to different places. If you put a small flame under your skin it will burn you. If you put a big flame under your skin it will also burn you. The intensity of the flame doesn't matter; you'll still get burned. Whether I'm playing quiet or playing at a higher level, it should burn you. If it's my splash work, my finesse on a hi-hat, or my riding on a crash, it should burn you. I've been blessed with finesse.

MD: "What Lies Beneath" exhibits that too.

Chad: There are a lot of slow parts, and I didn't want to take away from the musicality of the song, especially the vocals. It's in 6/8 and has the same feel as "Dance With The Devil" on *Phobia*, so I wanted to stay away from that. I ended up doing more splash work going into the verses and the pre-chorus. I tried to keep it subtle so when the chorus hit it would be explosive. What I love about it is that it was a collaboration between Ben, me, and our producer, David Bendeth. We drummers seem to always say, "This is how it should be." Drummers need to get that out of their mind, because everyone thinks a different way. Singers and producers tend to see the bigger picture.

MD: What have you learned as the drummer in Breaking Benjamin?

Chad: One thing I've learned is to play hooks. "In The Air Tonight" is a perfect example of Phil Collins doing that, or Barry Kerch of Shinedown playing that simple fill on the bridge of "Second Chance"—it's so powerful. As a drummer we want a non-drummer to be able to come to a show and play our riffs note for note.

It's funny, because I played much more simply than I did on *Phobia*, but *Dear Agony* is our best record, so we must have done something right. On almost every song there are drum parts that people will remember. It's important for drummers to really understand what their role is in a band or in any situation.

MD: What's an example of one of your drum hooks?

Chad: *Phobia* was my first record with Breaking Benjamin, and I definitely had to up the ante because Jeremy Hummel was before me, and he's an amazing drummer. I felt I had to carry the torch and add to it at the same time. I listened to a lot of his stuff, because he wrote great drum hooks. "Diary Of Jane" was our first single, and I remember being totally into *Sevendust* and feeling the kind of ideas that Morgan Rose lays down. It was that funk kind of groove, made heavier. And I've always been infatuated with

splashes. I look to guys like Stewart Copeland and Manu Katché. In the very beginning of the song I used syncopated hi-hats and leaned on the splash work of those two guys combined. Syncopating the very beginning makes it mysterious, and from there I added splashes until the heavy parts came in. When I played that, people called me up who didn't even know I was in Breaking Benjamin and asked if I played on the record. It was a compliment. Because of the finesse I brought to the intro of the song, people knew it was Chad Szeliga.

MD: What about the hook?

Chad: Going into the verse I go from a rack tom to a snare to two splashes and the bell of the ride and come back to the groove. That's always been a great drum hook in my eyes. I call that being a thief in the night; it's like coming in to rob somebody but not getting caught and sneaking away. I did that justice, without overplaying. I got my point across that this is my statement to accent the vocals and the melody and to come back to the verse while laying down a simple foundation. It's never about how fast or how hard I can play but what I can create for a song.

To read what some of Szeliga's peers have to say about his drumming, go to modern drummer.com.



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Jeff Davis

When the conversation turns to **modern gospel drumming**, his name is the first to be mentioned, and always with deep respect. Ladies and gentlemen, **the groove is here.**

Story by Stephen Styles • Photos by Rob Mazzella

Jeff “Lo” Davis is one of gospel music’s most recorded drummers, maintaining first-call status for live and studio sessions since the 1980s. His album credits include the debut recordings of some of the genre’s biggest stars, including Kirk Franklin, Vickie Winans, Richard Smallwood, and Hezekiah Walker. As one of the first drummers to cross over from gospel to hip-hop and R&B, Davis is the pioneer of a playing style that has made its way around the world in pop and other forms. His influence is far reaching, and his tasteful, solid, innovative drumming can be heard in the playing of many of today’s most well-known drummers. *MD* recently spoke with Davis about gospel drumming’s past and future, and his role in both.

MD: You’re one of the most recorded drummers in the history of gospel music. How did you achieve this status?

Jeff: I believe that God was guiding my career and always blessed me to be in the right place at the right time. I started out playing in my church in Jersey City after watching the deacon play for years. As I got older, I began playing for different church choirs and singing groups in my area. I wasn’t allowed to

ing choirs and groups such as the New Jersey Mass Choir [which sang on the Foreigner hit “I Want To Know What Love Is”] and a group called Paradise. We traveled the East Coast and the Midwest. It seemed like the more I played and got around, the more people heard me and wanted me in their band or on their record. It was a tremendous blessing, and I give all the credit to God.

music. Steve Gadd was a major influence. I listened to different local drummers that I grew up with. There were certain things that everybody on that scene used to do on the kit, and I definitely took part in that and was influenced by it to a certain degree. I loved Motown, the old-school funk drummers like James Brown’s drummers, Diamond from the Ohio Players, and George Brown from Kool & the Gang. I was influenced by singers, especially Al Jarreau, and by people who played other instruments. I studied different methods of playing time, like playing the pulse versus playing on the beat. I listened to how people would color the music and picked up things here and there that I was able to make into my own sound.

MD: When did you get your first big break?

Jeff: I was playing with Paradise, and we did a concert with Richard Smallwood. At the time Richard was playing piano, and he had a bass player

“WE HAVE TO STOP PLAYING ‘SOUNDS LIKE’ WHEN IT COMES TO DIFFERENT STYLES AND DO THE HOMEWORK TO REALLY KNOW WHAT THE DRUMS ARE SUPPOSED TO SOUND LIKE.”

do anything musical outside of the church when I was growing up, so I was constantly looking for opportunities to play in the setting my mother approved of. While I was still in high school, I started playing with a couple of travel-

MD: Who were some of your musical influences?

Jeff: I listened to a lot of jazz and played along with different jazz records. When Jaco Pastorius came out I started getting heavily into that

and a drummer. There were only three of them, but they sounded like a much larger group. I was very impressed. So a couple weeks later I got a call: “Hello, Jeff, this is Richard Smallwood...” And I’m like, “Man, get outta here. Who is

JEFF DAVIS

this?" I thought one of my friends was playing a prank on me. Ultimately I was convinced that it was Richard for real. The current drummer wasn't able to do some dates, and they wanted me to fill in. That was the mid-1980s, and I've been working with Richard ever since. By working with Richard, I was able to meet many of the other artists and producers that I went on to work with, including Vanessa Bell Armstrong, the Winans, John P. Kee, Tramaine Hawkins, Walter Hawkins, Shirley Caesar, and Thomas Whitfield. I ended up playing with all of those people extensively because of Richard.

MD: What separated you from the other drummers who were coming up at the time?

Jeff: I worked hard to have my own sound. Some guys sounded sloppy when they played. A lot of guys could play a big roll on the toms—we used to call them tiger rolls—and most of the time they wouldn't come out on the 1, or they'd get lost in the middle of it. I never wanted to sound like that. I listened to what the guys around me were playing and practiced avoiding things I didn't like. And I was constantly looking for opportunity. People would call me to ask if I could play for their group or on their record—for instance, I did a lot of uncredited recordings for Savoy Records—and I never said no.

MD: With younger drummers there's often a lot of energy and a desire to blaze away. How did you learn not to overdo it?

Jeff: Before I started traveling with different groups, I was playing for special programs and events at several churches. A lot of traditional Baptist churches didn't have drums back then, so people would be nervous that it was going to be too loud. I never wanted people to look at me and go, "Shhh!" So I focused on being more of an accompanist than a distraction. And instead of people complaining, they'd talk about what a good job I'd done and invite me back. Those things stayed with me. In church, there's always going to be the hype crowd in the corner by the band going, "Who!" every time someone plays a cool lick or something. That stuff is cool for people who are looking for it, but it usually takes away from the music.

MD: You've played on some very important gospel records. What was the secret



JEFF'S SETUP

Drums: GMS custom oak kit from 1999

A. GMS 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 custom PVS snare, GMS 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 13 Jeff "Lo" Davis signature gospel snare (shown in photos), GMS 5 x 15 custom snare with double throw-offs, Brady 6 x 14 jarrah stave snare with die-cast hoops, or Brady 5 x 12 wandoos snare

B. 8 x 10 tom

C. 9 x 12 tom

D. 14 x 16 floor tom

E. 17 x 22 bass drum

F. 13 x 14 floor tom

Cymbals: Sabian

1. 14" Sizzle hi-hats

2. 20" Fast crash (or 18" or 19" HHX Evolution crash) with 8" HH splash on top

3. 11" AAX X-Pllosion splash

4. 17" HHX Evolution crash with 12" AAX O-Zone splash on top

5. 21" Vault Crossover ride

6. 20" Paragon Diamondback Chinese with jingles with 18" APX O-Zone crash on top (the "Paul Cellucci stack")

7. 16" Artisan Vault crash

Sticks: Vic Firth Jeff Davis signature

For recording Davis will generally use a 7 x 8 tom, 13" HH Fusion hi-hats, 16" and 18" HHX Evolution crashes, a 21" HH Raw Bell ride, and 7", 8", and 10" Evolution splashes.



to being able to adapt your playing to so many different artists and musical styles?

Jeff: There was no secret to my playing. I just tried to do what the music called for. I have a saying: "God on 2 and 4. He is the rhythm of life." When I hear music that I'm going to record, I start by stripping everything down to just 2 and 4. Once I hear the other parts of the song and the vocals, I can build around what's being said lyrically or maybe play off something on the bass, guitar, or keys. If there are certain things that are established as having to be in there, I'll stay true to that. But I always think about the music in terms of what it needs to carry it over to the next level. That's why listening to a lot of different music is helpful. I'll hear a track, and it might trigger a thought about another tune where a particular feel or pattern worked, and then I'll apply that to the drum part.

MD: On "King Of Glory" with James Hall, your feel and your intro and ending fills became the standard for gospel drummers across the country. Did you know you were setting up a new style of drumming at the time?

Jeff: I was just doing what felt good, so for most of the tune I focused on grooving. The lead-in on the intro and the lick at the end were just the extra stamps on it. I wasn't trying to change the game. That sound was already evolving in and around New York. I just put it out there for the rest of the country to hear about.

MD: On Richard Smallwood's "Anthem Of Praise," you introduced toms to gospel in a way that hadn't been done before. That song helped change the direction of the genre. How did you come up with those parts?

Jeff: It goes back to "What does this need?" In some of my time off the road, I worked in some of the playhouses on Broadway, where I had to play timpani and auxiliary percussion, and I had my toms tuned to line up with the piano or other instruments at certain parts of the show. I brought that approach to "Anthem Of Praise" because it was such a big-sounding song, and it called for that.

MD: Please talk about pocket, chops,

and musicality. How does a drummer develop each one and do it right?

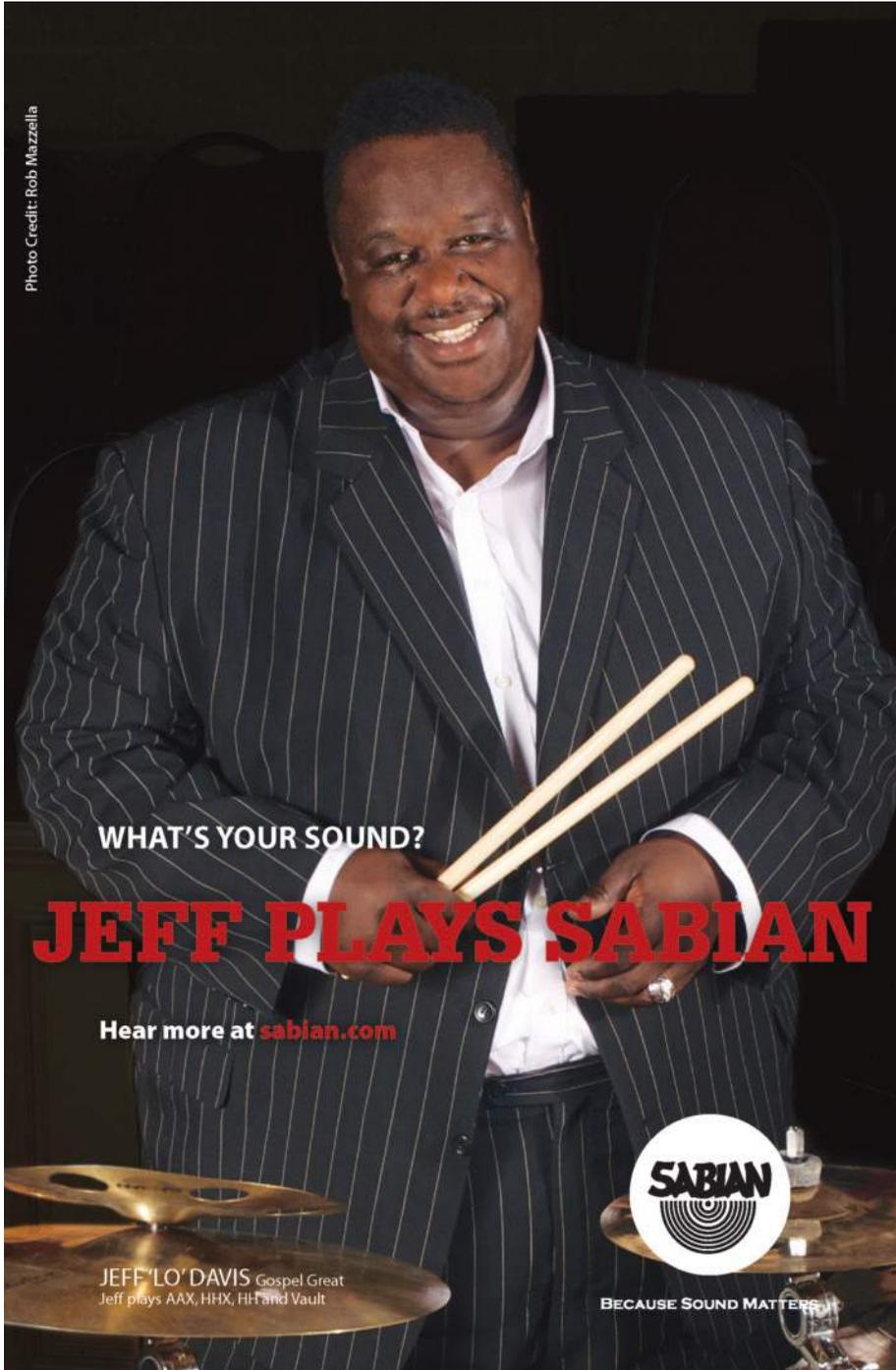
Jeff: Being in the pocket starts with being able to keep good time and knowing how to make the music groove. A real groove happens when the drummer doesn't need to stick his head out. Building your time is essential. Players have to be conscious of whether they rush the beat when they're excited or drop the tempo if they aren't. Working with a metronome will help with that. The pocket is the comfort zone, and as the drummer it's our job to keep that together for all the other people

on the stage.

Chops are like language. If you want to speak properly, you have to know the rudiments. They're the words you use to put sentences together and make statements. Speaking properly on the drums means not forcing something into a space where it's not needed.

Musicality is about giving the song what it needs. You have to ask yourself if what you're saying in a song is worth saying. When you go to play something, ask yourself, *Why do I want to play this?* If the answer isn't a good one, don't play it. It's cool to push

Photo Credit: Rob Mazzella



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the bar, but never past the vocal or the melody.

MD: How have the changes in the music industry affected the potential to have a long-term career and earn a living playing only gospel?

Jeff: I admit it would be hard. There aren't as many artists working consistently at that level as there used to be. For cats with the right commitment and skills, though, there's still room.

First off, gospel drummers can't look to the church for their main income. Many churches pay their bands, but

you have to look at it more like a stipend for your assistance to the ministry rather than a salary.

Second, you must know various styles. We have to stop playing "sounds like" when it comes to different styles and do the homework to *really* know what the drums are supposed to sound like—for instance, if you're playing a rock feel, a blues feel, swing, and so on. You need to know the difference between salsa, samba, Afro-Cuban.... We have to learn to authenticate these different styles. In terms of choosing

professional situations as a Christian, you have to know what gig you can and can't do, because some gigs aren't for everybody. And you have to be available to audition.

MD: How have you achieved such longevity and relevance?

Jeff: Gospel music is supposed to tell the good news of Jesus Christ. Every song we play should push people closer to God. The success I've had is due to verticality. When I play, I send my efforts up to God and ask Him to bless what I do and let it bless the people who hear it. In terms of staying relevant, I love to hear what's happening in music that's cutting edge. I constantly listen to other genres besides gospel and get a lot of inspiration there. I think longevity is divinely ordained. Our part in that is to have a mindset of determination. Your mind, your mouth, and your actions must all say the same thing.

MD: What suggestions do you have for players looking to learn more about gospel music?

Jeff: I'd say come in with a clear head and be respectful to the music. Gospel music is influenced by a lot of different styles. There's blues, rock, R&B, and other styles that are all part of the sound, but gospel isn't a mutt. It's an authentic style that is unique to those of us who grew up in this tradition.

MD: What plans do you have for the future?

Jeff: I'm still playing with Richard Smallwood and working in the studio. I'm working with Gon Bops on the new gospel tambourine. I have a music project I'm working on called J-Band. It's made up of some of my good friends that also play in the gospel industry. The first album is going to feature straight-ahead arrangements of some of my favorite gospel hymns. There are several other things I'm working on too, so be on the lookout. I truly believe the best is yet to come.



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CHRISTOPH

Today, German industrial rockers **Rammstein** sell out stadiums across Europe and beyond. But the drummer recognized by millions simply as Doom had to rebel against the classical preferences of his musician parents and roam far from home to find his true musical self.

It's London, it's Thursday, and Christoph Schneider is ready to talk. Tuesday he flew in from Berlin, and Wednesday he spent in a photo shoot with some top U.K. drummers. But this morning, with coffee and a smile, he's toying with where this interview might go. "Rammstein is well known, but its members are a secret," Schneider says with a chuckle—but in a sense he's right. With chart-topping albums and tours attracting fans of the weird and wonderful, Rammstein riffs with sardonic humor, bone-crushing power, an intelligence that piques the senses, and explosive blasts of flame-throwing pyro that will melt your face at fifty yards. But the enormity of the band's industrial-strength presentation can make you forget there are real flesh-and-blood musicians behind the show.

Though the Beatles opened up the musical globe like nothing before them, politically landlocked East Germany was hardly the place for rock bands; they simply did not fit the Communist manifesto. But in 1993, not long after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Rammstein blasted out of its home region and established a fan base that multiplies with every new album—including the latest, 2009's *Liebe Ist Für Alle Da*—and a shock-and-awe live show.

From Communist suppression to rock 'n' roll glory. How does it feel to get from there to here? "It was never easy," Schneider says. "My parents both come from musical professions. My mother was a music teacher, my father an opera director. I grew up with classical music and these kinds of things. It was interesting and exciting, but when I became twelve or thirteen I longed to listen to different music, like rock. But that was a problem; to my parents that was just noise. There was always the case for me to be a classical musician, but I'm not a classical guy, so I did my own thing. They let me do it, though they didn't support me. I have always been between those two worlds. One was classical and educated, the other was outlaw rock 'n' roll. I knew only that I wanted to be a drummer. To make it right for them I enrolled in a music school."

The young Christoph found academia a bit more challenging than he'd imagined. "I took the school entry test twice. My father was a professor at that school, teaching vocals, so I thought he would help me pass the test. But he didn't. I failed both times! There were things I did okay, like snare drumming, but you had to sing and play some piano and have a general musical



knowledge. I just couldn't deliver, so I failed. It was a big shock for me, as it was the first time I didn't achieve a goal. My parents said I wasn't musical and I should do something different. But that was the start of my career. I did everything by myself. I took lessons, developed my playing, and joined many bands."

So what was the scene like for a young rock drummer in East Germany before the wall came down? "Berlin had an interesting punk scene that was revolting against the state," Schneider says. "I joined this, and it was one of my greatest experiences. Playing in two or three bands every weekend, I made a good salary and could live a week on that.

"It was *great* until the wall came down," Schneider adds, laughing. "Then it was over. Famous bands from all over the world came in, and everybody was more interested in them

SCHNEIDER

by Wayne Blanchard



CHRISTOPH'S SETUP

Drums: Sonor SQ2 Maple with medium-thickness shells in "red tribal" finish (with black chrome shell hardware and tom holders), including a 5x12 auxiliary snare, a 13x14 tom, 15x16 and 17x18 floor toms, two 19x24 bass drums, and a 15x20 gong drum. Schneider's main snare is a Sonor 6x14 Bell Brass.

Cymbals: Sabian, including 14" AAX X-Celerator hi-hats, an 18" HHX X-Plosion crash, an 18" HHX O-Zone crash, an 18" APX O-Zone crash, a 12" HHX Evolution splash stacked with a 10" HH China Kang, a 20" AAX X-Plosion crash, a 12" HHX Evolution splash, 10" Prototype Vault Fierce hi-hats, a 22" HH Power Bell ride, 14" AAX X-Celerator hi-hats, a 20" HHX X-Plosion crash, an 18" HHX X-Treme crash, a 19" AAX X-Plosion crash, a 20" HHX China, a 19" HHX X-Treme crash stacked with an 18" HHX China, and a 19" HHX X-Plosion crash

Heads: Remo, including a coated Ambassador 12" snare batter and Hazy Ambassador bottom, a coated Controlled Sound 14" snare batter and Hazy Ambassador bottom, Smooth White Emperor tom batters and clear Ambassador bottoms, clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batters and Ebony Powerstroke 3 front heads, and a clear Powerstroke 3 gong drum batter

Hardware: Gibraltar rack system, with kit set up on custom-made Drumplates (4x3 meters)

Sticks: Vic Firth Christoph Schneider signature model

than the local scene. We continued, but it was over for us. So I started a new project with some guys from the punk scene in the north of Germany. That was the singer, guitar player, and bass player from what is now Rammstein. We wanted to sound very different. But in the three years after 1990, I was totally confused. I didn't know what was next, and I was insecure because American and British bands coming to Berlin were much better than us. We'd never seen people play like that; they were so professional. But we stuck together until Rammstein was formed. This new band was something serious.

"We had to decide to stay punk or get

funky. We tried many styles but sounded horrible. Having a style was important because we wanted to create something unique that would sound German. Today that makes Rammstein sound special and is possibly why we are so successful."

But getting a grip on the bigger picture wasn't all done from a hometown perspective. "In 1993," Schneider says, "our punk band, Feeling B, which had a great reputation in East Germany, went to America for eight weeks. Everything was strange and confusing, but it was so much fun. We bought an old car and went to clubs and said, 'Hey, can we play here?' And they said, 'Yes, for fifty bucks and some beer.' We played the old French

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Quarter during Mardi Gras and people liked our attitude, so we did a little tour of the Southern states, doing all the open-mic events we could find.”

Though Schneider was thrilled to be in America, living behind the Iron Curtain had him and his bandmates fearing the worst. “If you know America only from the movies,” he says, “you think it’s a criminal country with gangsters who will steal your money or kill you. Those first days in New Orleans... A lot of people hang out on the streets, and you don’t know what they’re up to. We did not feel safe. We wore old clothes and tried to look dangerous, just so nobody would bother us. The same in New York. I had a fear it would be the most dangerous place in the world. We had an apartment in Brooklyn and were so excited on our first night that we took the subway to go to some clubs in Manhattan. When we came up from the underground, it was a scene I will never forget. There was snow three meters high, and it looked so scary. There were trash bins with fire in them and people standing around. It was like a movie! And then I realized America is like that; you just need a camera because it looks like the movies. We ended up seeing some bands, and we were happy.

“We saw many musicians on this lower level,” Christoph continues, “and they were so professional. Even if they played to only three people, they played

like they were in a stadium—they gave everything. That made me want to become more professional. The guys got the same attitude, which is why we take Rammstein so seriously.”

Today Schneider’s ambitions include playing meaty drum parts, but not at the expense of musicality. “I think a good drummer can support the song but still put in something that’s interesting for other drummers,” Christoph says. “Many bands play an incredible number of notes. It can be impressive, but often it’s not successful because nobody can listen to it except some young freaks who want to shake their heads. Only experienced musicians understand the discipline of doing not too little and not too much.”

For Schneider, the first drummer who attained the perfect balance of chops and song smarts was Deep Purple’s Ian Paice. “‘Smoke On The Water’ still excites me,” Christoph says. “Then AC/DC were my absolute heroes because they are simple and easy to copy—though soon you find they are *not* so easy to copy. I lost a little interest with ’80s metal and bands like Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, and the Scorpions because of their Spandex tights and high voices. It got a little ridiculous, so I found metal was not cool anymore and took a break by listening to more pop music.”

Schneider recently became similarly critical of his own playing, and during

some time off from Rammstein he began to feel his style was, he says, “a little old...like ’90s rock. That got me listening to other drummers and practicing. I wanted to develop my playing.

“But I listen too much to Thomas Lang,” Schneider adds with a chuckle. “His playing confuses me. I listen to a lot of metal as well. I practice double bass playing and working that more into Rammstein’s music. And I work on my left hand, my weaker hand. I never thought this would be so difficult, especially dead [ghost] notes. They help me keep the time and feel steady. Making everything work has so much to do with self-esteem. Americans don’t seem to have that problem. Do they ever say, ‘I can’t do that’? No. This has to do with how you feel inside.”

So does Schneider consider himself a confident player? “Yes,” he replies. “I may not be perfect, but what is perfect? Perfection means dead. If I lose a stick or something, nobody really hears it. I don’t feel bad. I can play. But for insecure drummers this can be a problem, especially if you know there is another drummer watching. Chad Smith watched our whole show, and I was very careful that day. If you play the Modern Drummer Festival and want to create a good impression with all those drummers sitting there, then you must feel good about yourself. For me, I’m avoiding this and may never

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CHRISTOPH SCHNEIDER

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Still, with the release of *Liebe Ist Für Alle Da*, the members of Rammstein are collectively and individually feeling pretty good about themselves. “The album was a bloody thing to do,” Schneider says, “but we have good lyrics and fresh sounds. We sound harder again. It took two years to get everything together, but everybody is happy with it. I work to better myself and the band. It’s not just about technique. You must be effective.

“Of course, there are some very good

technicians who are also very good drummers. Thomas Lang can do everything almost perfectly, which is also a kind of groove. Project after project he does this. How? ‘Just do it’? This is easily said, but... Did you know that on some of his sessions he played Rammstein grooves—my rhythms! My band doesn’t want me to play so much as a drummer, but the drummer always wants to play more.”

If Schneider could be in another band, he says it would be Depeche

Mode. “But I could have fun in a very ordinary rock band,” he insists, “because rock is the first music I listened to. I really like Clutch. Their music is very riff oriented, so you don’t have to think about it. This I could imagine playing.”

So is Christoph thinking with Rammstein, or is he just playing? “It was my target to just play,” he says, “but that changed. Now I play like a machine, and they expect me to play like that, with a click track. It’s great, but it’s also why I would love to do a side project.”

Schneider doesn’t have that side project just yet, but he does have a fresh setup to spark his creativity. “It’s all new,” he says. “I’m a very powerful player, and for two years I was interested in upgrading my sound, so I changed to Sonor and Sabian. I liked what I was already playing, but I needed to hear something different. This is because I was changing. Sonors are the best drums I have ever played. The drums have extraordinary quality—nobody does it like that anymore. And that was the initial point to change. I then tried other cymbal brands; I went deep into their worlds. Sabian had the most interesting sounds—very different, and emotional.

“The gear I play I must like...I must love. But it must also fit the music. It’s really more about the feeling. The right gear and fundamental technique are important, but never forget you are a musician, and you should inspire the band.”

Schneider seems genuinely happy these days, with his career, his playing, and his sound. “I can tell you, life is good,” he says. “I am very grateful. In the early days I didn’t know how it would go, but I made the right decisions. There are many good musicians, but there is more to success than just being good. Sometimes you have to know when to stay and when to go. You must have good timing, because that’s what life is really all about—good timing.”

All fees associated with this feature have been donated to the Richie Hayward Benefit Fund, to assist the ailing Little Feat drummer with his medical expenses. To learn how you can donate, go to littlefeat.net.



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He has masterful command of the music he plays—and the way it sounds coming out of the speakers. But even master musicians confront hurdles every day. Here, the always cutting-edge, always honest compadre of **Eric Clapton, John Mayer, Keith Richards,** and **Neil Young** schools us on achieving drumming greatness in the real world.

If there are two things to take from studying Steve Jordan's thirty-plus-year career, it's that groove is timeless and everybody wants a piece of it. Just pick any track from the drummer/producer's extensive list of credits, and you'll invariably hear a passionate artist on a relentless pursuit to serve the music and make people move.

Even as a young twenty-year-old, Jordan delivered the message with some slick Harvey Mason-style funk on Patti Austin's 1977 release, *Havana Candy*, which Steve points out as "the first time I sounded good on record." Then, in 1978, Jordan and a pair of charismatic *Saturday Night Live* cast members helped revitalize R&B and blues with juiced-up jump shuffles on the Blues Brothers' *Briefcase Full Of Blues*.

The 1980s saw Jordan stretching boundaries on hard-hitting fusion records with the Brecker Brothers (*Detente*) and John Scofield (*Electric Outlet*), while simultaneously fulfilling lifelong dreams to play with many of his rock 'n' roll and R&B heroes, including the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards (*Talk Is Cheap*) and guitar god Chuck Berry (*Hail! Hail! Rock 'N' Roll*). Then there's the wildly eccentric record Steve made with hard-nosed songwriter Neil Young (*Landing On Water*), on which the drummer supplemented traditional drum and cymbal tones with white noise

samples, digital tom samples, and melodic Octabon riffs. Jordan was also the original drummer in the live studio band for *Late Night With David Letterman*, in which he streamed deadly beats into the homes of millions of Americans each night while backing countless superstar guest performers, including the legendary Godfather Of Soul, James Brown.

Foreshadowing where his career would ultimately go, Jordan jump-started the '90s by applying his groove-is-king approach to the producer's chair, working first on alt-rock band Soul Asylum's *And The Horse They Rode In On*. He then cowrote, produced, and performed on Richards' second solo effort, *Main Offender*, and blues/R&B great Robert Cray's Memphis-soul-inspired masterpiece *Take Your Shoes Off*. All the while, Jordan kept busy as a hired gun, most notably bringing a more pocket-heavy edge to instrumental records by saxophonist David Sanborn (*Upfront*) and Robben Ford (*Tiger Walk*).

This past decade, Jordan's first-call status was elevated further after Steve put his trademark funky touch on huge hits by pop stars like Sheryl Crow ("Steve McQueen"), Alicia Keys ("If I Ain't Got You"), and John Mayer (*Heavier Things*). Jordan went on to even greater success with Mayer, first as the driving force behind the singer/guitarist's live power-trio record, *Try!*, and

later as the producer/drummer on Mayer's 2006 multi-platinum-selling studio release, *Continuum*, and 2009 follow-up, *Battle Studies*. Jordan also managed to squeeze in a few top-notch session recordings, including blues-rock legends J.J. Cale and Eric Clapton's *Road To Escondido* and hard bop saxophonist Sonny Rollins' *Sonny, Please*, and he released one of the most entertaining and informative instructional DVDs of all time, *The Groove Is Here*.

Then there's the Verbs, the indie-rock band Jordan formed with his wife, Meegan Voss, who've put out two incredible, raw-yet-catchy pop/rock/punk albums, 2008's *And Now... The Verbs* and 2009's *Trip*. (The band is currently finishing up its third record, *Cover Story*.) Not to mention that Steve has been the go-to musical director for many high-profile television and film productions, including Martin Scorsese's tribute to the blues, *Lightning In A Bottle*, and the 2008 film *Cadillac Records*, which features spot-on replications of early rock 'n' roll hits from the heyday of Chess Records. Most recently, Jordan's genius musical instincts and savvy production skills were called on when Steve organized a star-studded cast of performers at the 2010 World Cup opening ceremony in South Africa, which included artists like Alicia Keys, Black Eyed Peas, Shakira, John Legend, Angélique Kidjo, and BLK JKS.



Antoine Sarfuentes

Modern Drummer has kept close tabs on Jordan's evolution from the super-cool cat on late-night TV with the crazy-high Paistes to soul-drumming torch-bearer to where he sits now—as one of the most sought-after drummer/producers in the world. This being his fifth appearance on the cover of *MD*, we decided to forgo traditional drum speak and sit down with the master at one of his favorite spots, Germano Studios in the NoHo neighborhood of Manhattan, so we could dig into more conceptual ideas about music, sound, and the all-important groove factor. Since Steve produced and engineered much of the Verbs' *Trip* from his home studio, Knotek, we thought we'd begin our journey by picking his brain to find out how he was able to capture such cool drum tones.

MD: What's the secret to that gritty drum sound you got on *Trip*?

Steve: The first person to take me under their wing as an engineer was the late Charlie Conrad. He had a beautiful studio in West Orange, New Jersey, called House Of Music. He was the guy that showed me how to get a drum sound and what mics to use. And the late, great Don Smith was also very instrumental in me wanting to throw myself into recording.

I fell in love with the studio when I was around while Stevie Wonder recorded part of *Songs In The Key Of Life* and *Secret Life Of Plants*. I knew this was what I was going to be doing.

Half of engineering is just trying different things. If it comes out great, then all of a sudden you're responsible for some "new" sound. But you were just

going for something and trying to figure out how to get it. Don was that type of engineer. He didn't want you to ask too many technical questions. He just wanted you to listen. So I don't look at the meters as much as I should when I'm recording. I just try to figure out how to get the sound I'm looking for.

MD: When you take on a project, what's the first thing you consider?

Steve: When someone asks me to produce their record, I talk to them about what they want. Your job as a producer is to make the artist happy, not to have the artist be a vehicle for you to make the record you want to make. But every recording I work on is different. When I started working with Los Lonely Boys, I realized their albums didn't reflect how good they were as a band. Their records sold well, and they sing great. But when I saw them live, I realized they could also really play. I thought maybe they're inhibited by the studio and not given enough freedom. Some bands aren't studio bands, so they can feel nervous when they go to record.

MD: How do you get them to open up?

Steve: Years ago, producers started doing this thing where they would record an entire band playing but were only interested in getting a good drum track. Then they would replace everything else. In my opinion, that's the most absurd thing you could do to a band. Unfortunately, it became the thing to do, and everybody started making records that way. Of all the great recordings that I love, *none* of them were done like that. So I like to start by recording everybody in the band at the same time. Then if it's not working, I start deducting. But I want a great performance. If you want something cookie-cutter, there are a lot of formulas for that. And there are some things that have to sound mechanical. Or you may only have X amount of time



Rob Marzella

STEVE'S SUPER-SIMPLE SETUP

Although Jordan's drumkit often changes from gig to gig, or even from track to track in the studio, the streamlined setup shown here includes part of what Steve used on tour with the Verbs in 2009. It includes a custom 16x20 Yamaha kick drum in orange oyster finish, a 6½x13 Yamaha Steve Jordan signature snare, a pair of 17" Paiste Signature series Thin crashes (used as hi-hats), a 22" Paiste Signature series ride (with rivets), and Vic Firth SJOR Steve Jordan signature sticks.

to make the record, and you have to do it another way. But I like to capture performances.

MD: Do you work without clicks most of the time?

Steve: Not necessarily. Sometimes I play along as if I were the click. When I worked with Soul Asylum and Los Lonely Boys, I would play cowbell or shakers in a booth to keep time with them, so we had something that would keep going through the breaks and all that.

MD: How do you develop an inner sense of time so you can do that comfortably?

Steve: It's taken a long time. A lot of my early recording experience was doing jingles, where everything was done to a click. Prior to that, I was playing to a metronome all the time while practicing concert snare drum pieces and stuff like that. But when I started recording jingles, everything was done to a metronome, and there wasn't much time to get it right. It was a very meticulous, time-sensitive scene. They always had the metronome programmed in, and

sometimes the tempo would change in different sections. So you had to really concentrate the whole way through.

The crazy thing I learned from doing jingles was that when you played so well with the metronome, it would disappear. That's terrifying at first because you think you're screwing up the take. But when you're really nailing it, you won't hear the click. Most people freak out and get off it right away. But when you realize what's happening, you can learn to stay on it.

MD: Do you still go for that?

Steve: None of my favorite recordings were done with a click, so the verse often feels one way and the chorus shifts gears. To me, that's the real stuff. If you're going to play with a click, you have to know how to manipulate your playing around the click.

MD: How do you do that?

Steve: There's a lot of life between beat 1 and beat 2. So you have to figure out how and where you want to shift. For instance, in the last couple of bars going into a chorus you have to figure out how to turn that corner to take it to the next thing. That only comes with

experience.

MD: When did you feel comfortable enough to get rid of the click and know it would be okay?

Steve: As a producer, I won't use a click if that's not something I'm looking for in the best performance. If the song needs it, then we'll use it. The only rule is that I want the best performance. When I'm producing, I can make those calls. But when I'm hired as a drummer, I have to do what the producer wants.

Sometimes I'm hired to do the drums when the track is almost finished, or I'm replacing another drummer's track or a drum machine. If you're replacing something, you have to find out what else is going to be replaced so you know what you should be listening to. If the bass is going to be replaced, then take it out of the mix. You don't want to be playing to something that's not going to be there in the end. If the entire track is going to be replaced, you need to find a part to use as a guide, which could be the piano or a dummy string track. I'll keep those in because they're usually long tones and



Rob Mazzeola

not time-sensitive. They'll give you some music to play to without dictating the time. But my advice is to remove anything that's not going to be on the final track that could affect how you're keeping time.

MD: Speaking of time and feel, you've said in the past that you don't think you can groove if you can't dance.

Steve: That might be overstating it a bit. But I think being able to move to the music in some sense will definitely help other people feel like they can move too. If you're a rigid person, I don't

think you can swing or make other people swing. Swinging is not based on technique. It's based on a feeling—period. I would take a drummer who has no technique any day of the week over a more efficient drummer, if he swings better.

MD: Swing is a very ambiguous concept. What is it that makes something feel good?

Steve: It's an emotional thing. It's like how some people have favorite authors because they like their style of writing. It's the same with musicians. The way

John Lee Hooker plays guitar... He may only play in one key, but he's laying it down and it's a feeling you cannot deny.

MD: What would you recommend to someone who may be a bit more rigid if he or she wants to get some of this swagger?

Steve: I was talking to [studio legend] Jim Keltner a couple days ago, and he said something very interesting. He said you have to be very confident when you play the drums. When you're trying to be a humble person, that's not something you necessarily want to cop to. But he's absolutely right. If you're going to play the drums, you have to be very confident.

Even to this day, when I'm not feeling completely confident, I get freaked out. I've psyched myself out during a Clapton tour a couple times, as well as a few times with John Mayer, where I wasn't feeling it or I was a little nervous. I started thinking, *Boy, if I miss a beat this whole thing is coming down.* If you start to think about the fact that there are fifty thousand people out there and Eric Clapton is playing some of the baddest stuff you've ever heard, and *then* you start thinking about what you're playing, it'll be a disaster. You have to go with your feelings. Every time I get to that point when I'm starting to psych myself out, I start praying to God, "Just get me through this. Get me back to that feeling." It'll eventually start to feel good, I'll get my confidence back, and I can start rockin' again.

But I don't like the word *swagger*. It may be appropriate, but it seems egotistical. There's a difference between a destructive and a constructive ego. If you go around thinking you're better than everybody, you'll crash and burn in a second. But constructive ego is about understanding that you have to work hard to get to a certain point where you feel confident enough to execute.

MD: You need to *know* you can do it.

Steve: You need to be able to say, "I can do it." You don't want to get in a plane with a pilot that doesn't know if he can fly the plane. You want him to say, "Yes, I can fly this plane. And I can *land* it." That's constructive ego.

Keltner also told me this story about

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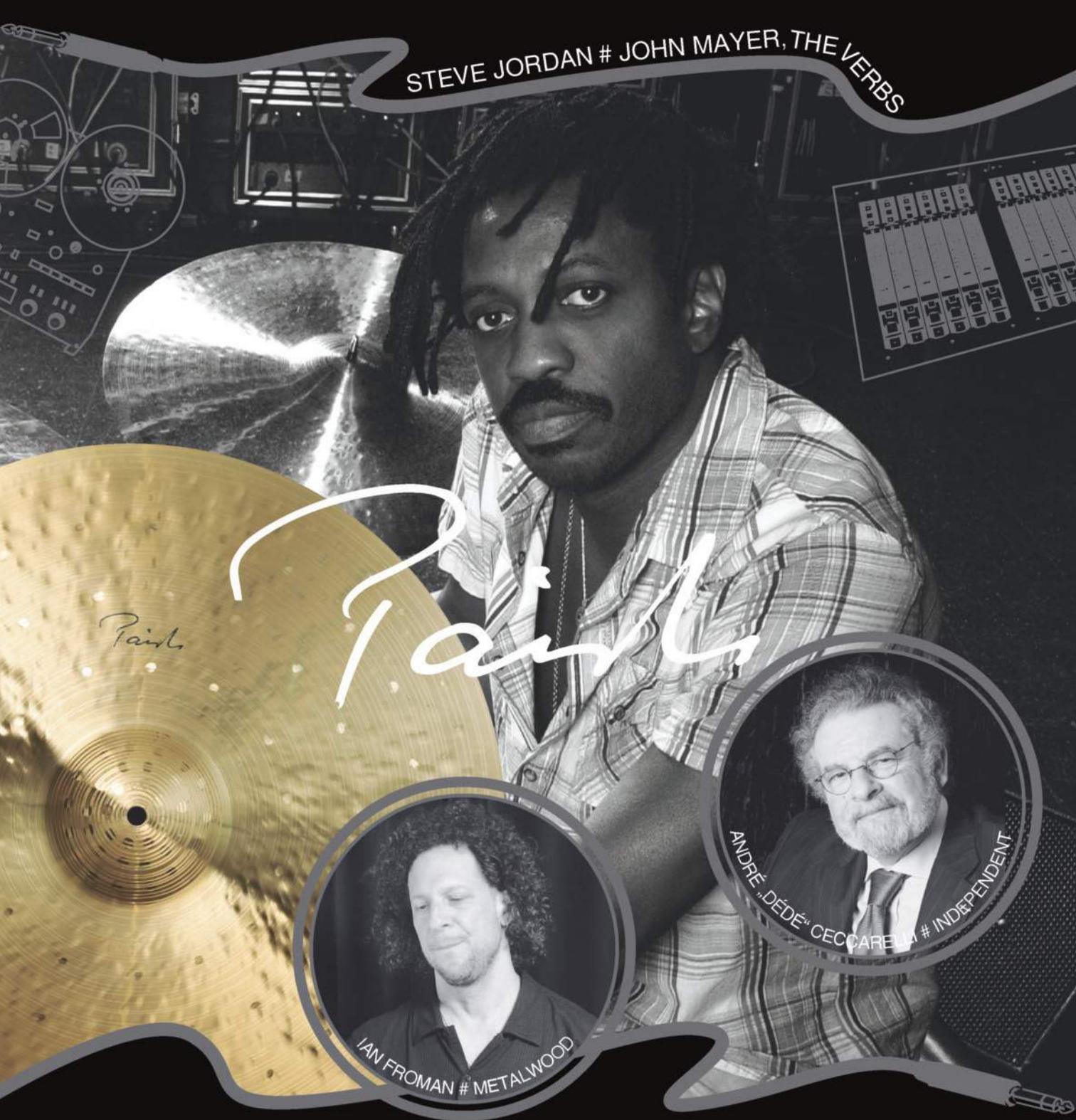
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how he witnessed Al Jackson come into the studio to play on the Bill Withers tune "Ain't No Sunshine." He said Al walked in, sat down at some rental drums they had set up in the studio, and without putting a key to a drum, he laid down the track. And the rest is history. He was like, "I'm here. Let's go." *That's confidence.*

MD: So when you start to doubt yourself, it's because you're thinking too much.

Steve: You're overthinking. You need to get back to the soul of the music. When you're thinking about stuff, you're not being a conduit for things to happen. You can't overintellectualize something that's based on feelings.

MD: You talk a lot about sound. Is it more important to use gear that sounds good, or should you be able to get your sound on anything?

Steve: When you first start playing as a professional, you're searching for "your sound" and all that. But when you grow up, you realize it's about finding the sound for the song. You don't want to

force *your* sound on top.

MD: That's destructive ego.

Steve: Exactly! But it's a process that everybody goes through. Everybody starts out by imitating others. Early on in my career, I tried to tweak my drums to emulate whatever sounds were popular, whether it was using a piece of tape to muffle them, trying a new head, or whatever else people were doing at the time. There was a point where I got so heavily into Steve Gadd and Harvey Mason that I could sound *exactly* like either one of them.

MD: You sound a lot like Harvey on Patti Austin's *Havana Candy*.

Steve: Definitely. I played on that record because Steve and Harvey were booked, and they recommended me to do the gig. Both of them were very supportive, and I ended up subbing for both of them at certain points.

I actually got the gig with the *Saturday Night Live* band after playing double drums with Gadd for a couple shows with the John Tropea band. Steve Gadd and Rick Marotta play together on

the album *Tropea*. When they booked a couple gigs at the Bottom Line in New York to play that music, Rick couldn't make it. So they called me. I was so nervous at the rehearsal that I couldn't play. Everybody was thinking it was going to be a disaster, but Steve had confidence in me. When we got to the gig, I set up my drums, which were my own version of Steve's Pearl fiberglass kit, and people were murmuring in the audience because Rick wasn't there. I knew I had to be supernatural, so my adrenaline was pumping. When we got to the drum solo, I was so locked in with Steve that we played the same stuff for about twelve bars. It was ridiculous. The horn section in the Tropea band was the main horn section on *SNL*, so that's how I ended up on the show.

Then the thing with Harvey got so crazy that Tommy LiPuma hired me to do all the rehearsals in New York with the George Benson band before they went to Los Angeles to record with Harvey, because they knew I could sound exactly like him. I had studied



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the way he played on Herbie Hancock's "Chameleon" and on the Brecker Brothers' "Skunk Funk," so I knew what Harvey would do.

MD: When did you finally get away from emulating others?

Steve: I put all that aside when I started writing songs and playing other instruments. I also tore a ligament in my right knee when I was on the Letterman show, which caused me to revamp my style to be a bit simpler. But it was really when I started playing bass that it all began to make sense. I learned what a bass player would like to hear from a drummer, and I started to think of the music first. It's not about what beat you're going to play on the drums, but what the song is telling you to play. It's a long process to get to that point, but you have to go through it.

MD: So I should be writing songs in order to find my sound.

Steve: Absolutely. Even if they're not ever going to be recorded or played by anybody. [Legendary bassist] Jaco Pastorius said to me, "Steve, if you write a song every day, they don't all have to be good. Just keep writing."

MD: The odds of success are that much better.

Steve: Right. But more importantly, you're getting the feeling of writing and composing, so now you know what it takes to put a song together. Then when somebody brings a song to a rehearsal, you won't be thinking, *Oh, geez, here's another one*. Instead of putting down somebody else's music, try writing your own stuff.

MD: How does that translate into choosing drum tones?

Steve: Once you start writing, you'll know what the song wants. For instance, you're not going to use big, aggressive drums on a sensitive ballad. You might play the same beat, but you'll want to mute the drums more or use a smaller drum—or maybe even a cardboard box—to get the right vibe.

A lot of people say they can identify me from my snare drum sound. That's always funny to me, because I never use the same snare drum twice on a record. So what does that mean? Maybe it's the way I *hit* the drum that they can identify with. I know when I

hear Al Jackson or Benny Benjamin play. It's their touch and feel more than their actual sound.

MD: So the sound you're after should dictate what technique you use, rather than learning to hit a drum a certain way and having that determine your sound.

Steve: There are some people who are anti-rudiments. But I'm glad I studied them, just for agility's sake. I'm not the king of rudiments, by any means. I am happy that I developed those skills so I could be versatile, but they shouldn't

rule how you play.

I go back and forth from traditional to matched grip all the time in order to find what feels good and what will give me the sound I'm looking for. Some funkier things feel better to me when I'm using traditional grip, while matched grip gives me a more gut-bucket sound. That's the sound I went for on the song "Perfectly Lonely" from John Mayer's *Battle Studies* album. It's based on what Al Jackson played on "Soul Man." Al was just devastating on that track. When I finally realized what

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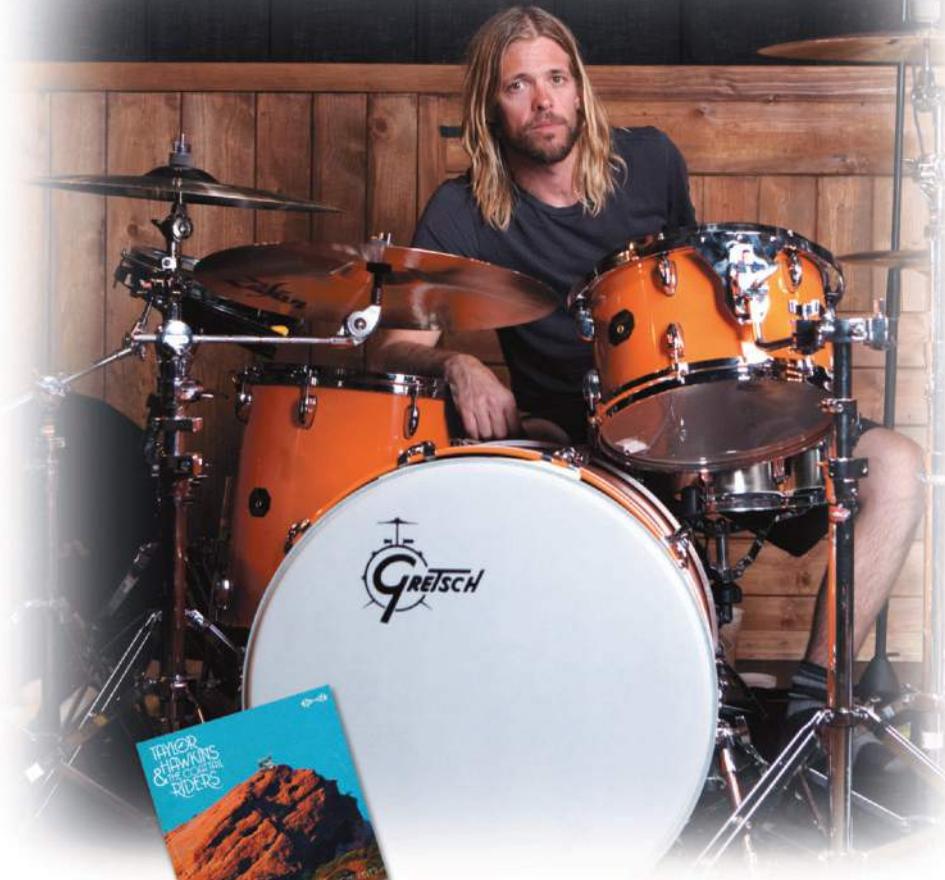
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STEVE JORDAN

he was playing, I felt like a complete idiot listening back to how I played that song with the Blues Brothers.

MD: Your right-hand technique seems based on Jackson's sound too. You don't do a lot of shank/tip strokes on the hi-hat. You use more of the shoulder of the stick.

Steve: Especially when I'm playing these 17" cymbals, I want that meatier vibe. My favorite hi-hat sounds come from Ringo, Greg Errico, Al Jackson, and Benny Benjamin. Plus I love the way Levon Helm played the entire kit. He's one big bucket of music.

MD: What about the bass drum foot? I notice you usually play doubles with the heel down.

Steve: I don't play doubles with the heel up very often. But for strong single-note offbeat things, the heel is almost always up. It depends on how my leg is feeling and what type of sound I want to get out of the bass drum, whether I'm letting the beater bounce off or pushing it into the head.

MD: You don't play many drum fills

anymore. Has that been conscious?

Steve: Absolutely. That approach also stems from Al Jackson, but now it just comes naturally. I don't mark sections like, "Here we go—we're going to the chorus." Or, "Here we go—we're going to the bridge." That is just so boring to me. It's natural for producers or writers to ask, "Can you hit me a crash there?" If it needs something, I'll do it. But when I'm playing now, I hear how the finished song is going to sound on the record. So if by the time we put everything on it I feel like it needs a crash, then I'll do it. If it doesn't, then I won't, because it'll be even *more* effective if I don't play that crash.

You can hear a similar thing in the way Benny Benjamin played on those great Motown records. The fills he invented are more like a part of the beat than they are fills. They're so sparse but so effective. It's *music*. Al Jackson was the same way. On those Al Green records, he'd play "bap, BOOM," and that was the fill.

MD: This goes back to the idea of confi-

dence, in that you need to be confident to *not* play a big drum fill.

Steve: Right! Think about when you first started playing and how difficult it was to play a steady beat. Wasn't it the most difficult thing ever?

MD: Yeah, you were lucky to be able to play it for four bars without messing up.

Steve: Exactly! Then, when you got to the end of those four bars, you couldn't wait to play a fill. That's why people play so much stuff, because they can't play a steady beat. But when you get into playing a steady groove and you can hypnotize somebody with that beat, that's the bomb. And it takes confidence to know you can do that and not care what anybody says. People might think you don't play fills because you can't, but you have to do away with all that. They'll *feel* it when it's good.

For Jordan's thoughts on some of his favorite drummers, log on to modern drummer.com.



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Steve Jordan

Text by Eric Novod • Photos by Rob Mazzella

MUSIC KEY	
open	C.C. R.C. Bell
H.H.	T.T. *
T.T.	S.D. *
S.D.	B.D. *
B.D.	H.H. *
H.H.	Rim Click F.T. Rim
w/foot	

Steve Jordan's drum tracks always deliver a nod to the soul/R&B masterworks, while maintaining a modernist touch that's 100 percent Jordan. Steve's steadfast dedication to serving the song has made him one of the most in-demand drummer/producers of the last three decades. Let's take a look at some of the tracks Jordan has recorded throughout his career.

Blues Brothers, "Hey Bartender," *Briefcase Full Of Blues* (1978)

Even though Jordan isn't completely satisfied with the way he approached the drum parts during his time with the Blues Brothers, the high-energy music of the gig allowed him plenty of room to let loose. Check out this energetic four-on-the-floor shuffle with both hands playing broken triplets. (0:39)

Musical notation for the drum part of "Hey Bartender." It features a 4/4 time signature with a shuffle feel. The notation shows a consistent pattern of broken triplets on the snare and bass drum, with accents and dynamic markings like *f*.

Brecker Brothers, "Squish," *Detente* (1980)

This classic 16th- and 32nd-note hi-hat groove is a highlight of Jordan's early-'80s fusion playing. His bold choice to leave space on beats 1 and 3 works amazingly well, especially since the open hi-hats from the previous 16th notes lock in with the busy bass/keyboard groove. (0:23)

Musical notation for the drum part of "Squish." It features a 4/4 time signature with a hi-hat groove consisting of 16th and 32nd notes. There are accents and dynamic markings like *f*.

This B-section groove is a sure nod to Jordan's early mentor Steve Gadd. Notice how Jordan accents the "e" and "a" in the first two beats and then accents the "&" in beats 3 and 4—a prime example of rapid tension and release. (1:13)



Musical notation labeled 2B, showing a drum pattern with accents and dynamic markings like *f*.

John Scofield, "Best Western," *Electric Outlet* (1984)

This tune is a master class in beat development and drum/bass lockup. The first three measures conclude an A section, with rimclicks and bass drum notes that match the bass guitar part. In measures 4 and 5, the next section begins. Here, Jordan moves to the snare drum and adds to his hi-hat pattern but keeps the kick drum locked in with the bass guitar to create a seamless transition. (0:55)

Musical notation labeled 3A, showing a drum pattern with accents and dynamic markings like *mf*.

Musical notation showing a drum pattern with accents and dynamic markings like *mf*.

The rudimental, offbeat snare work in the middle of the track displays Jordan at his most complex. Note how his hi-hat foot remains steady throughout. Also check out how he chooses to surround the downbeat of measure 2 with bass drum notes placed on and off the beat, creating a funky skipping effect. (2:30)

Musical notation labeled 3B, showing a drum pattern with accents and dynamic markings like *mf*, including a 5-stroke roll.

Musical notation showing a drum pattern with accents and dynamic markings like *mf*, including a 5-stroke roll.

Chuck Berry, “Little Queenie,”
***Hail! Hail! Rock ‘N’ Roll* (1987)**

This classic concert, now available on CD and DVD, features Jordan re-creating bread-and-butter R&B grooves with a band co-led by Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards. The rimclick pattern here is one of Jordan’s go-to beats. Steve follows it with his fill of all fills: three-note groupings jumping from the snare to the toms, finalized by a single snare drum attack. (0:50)

Musical notation for the drum part of "Little Queenie" by Chuck Berry. It shows a 4/4 time signature with a dynamic marking of *f*. The notation includes a rimclick pattern with accents and a fill of three-note groupings jumping between snare and tom drums, ending with a single snare drum attack.

Keith Richards, “999,” *Main Offender* (1992)

Jordan’s playing on *Main Offender* and *Talk Is Cheap*—the drummer’s collaborations with Richards’ solo band, the X-Pensive Winos—is some of his best. Check out this powerhouse groove, which is enhanced by snare drum ghost notes introduced the second time around. (0:00)

Musical notation for the drum part of "999" by Keith Richards. It shows a 4/4 time signature with a dynamic marking of *ff*. The notation features a powerful groove with accents and ghost notes on the snare drum.

Robert Cray, “It’s All Gone,”
***Take Your Shoes Off* (1999)**

Jordan’s work on Richards’ solo records and on this Robert Cray album launched his production career into full swing. “It’s All Gone” highlights many of Steve’s trademarks—great snare drum sound, R&B authenticity, and a less-is-more mentality. When Jordan reenters in measure 6, after a super-relaxed floor tom fill, note how he moves to a four-on-the-floor groove for just one bar (measure 8), to create a large-scale tension-and-release moment near the tune’s conclusion. (4:41)

Musical notation for the drum part of "It's All Gone" by Robert Cray. It shows a 4/4 time signature with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The notation includes a super-relaxed floor tom fill, a transition to a four-on-the-floor groove in measure 8, and various accents and ghost notes.

Alicia Keys, “If I Ain’t Got You,”
***The Diary Of Alicia Keys* (2003)**

While the verse groove to this Alicia Keys hit is simple, there’s nothing simple about the ingenious way Jordan develops it. Measures 1 and 2 mark the end of the verse, featuring a rimclick groove with a single bass drum note in the middle of the second bar that foreshadows what’s to come. In the pre-chorus, bass drum triplets become the dominant pattern. Note how Jordan saves the option to add more hi-hat until measure 6.

Throughout the chorus (measures 7–10), Jordan moves to the ride cymbal and maintains the bass drum triplet patterns, but now he incorporates his hi-hat foot in a major off-beat role—alternating between playing just the final note of the triplet (beats 1, 2, and 4 of measure 7) and the second and third notes of the triplet (beat 3 of measure 7). (0:36)

Musical notation for the drum part of "If I Ain't Got You" by Alicia Keys. It shows a 4/4 time signature with a dynamic marking of *f*. The notation is divided into sections: Verse (measures 1-2), Pre-chorus (measures 3-6), and Chorus (measures 7-10). It features rimclick grooves, bass drum triplets, and hi-hat patterns.

John Scofield, “Busted,” *That’s What I Say: John Scofield Plays The Music Of Ray Charles* (2005)

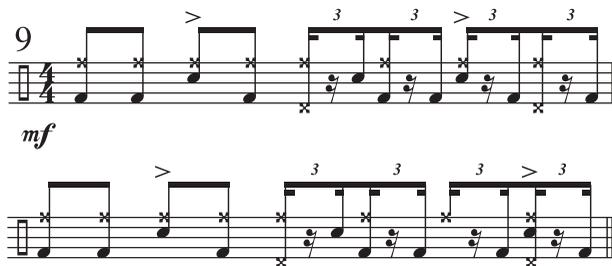
Twenty years after their fusion recordings, Jordan and Scofield reunite to pay tribute to Ray Charles. On this tune Steve plays a syncopated beat in which the hi-hat foot covers a vital role. Notice how the kick and snare remain in steady downbeat/upbeat roles, while the hi-hat foot creates a two-over-three polyrhythm. Also note the tricky bass drum pattern in measure 4. All 16th notes are swung. (0:00)

Musical notation for the drum part of "Busted" by John Scofield. It shows a 6/8 time signature with a dynamic marking of *f*. The notation features a syncopated beat with a two-over-three polyrhythm on the hi-hat and a tricky bass drum pattern.

John Mayer, “Waiting On The World To Change,”
***Continuum* (2007)**

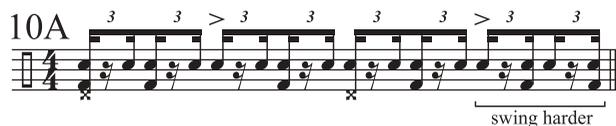
This song was a major hit, solidifying a longstanding relationship between Mayer and drummer/producer Jordan.

Note how Steve plays a basic 8th-note groove on the first two beats of each measure to lock up with the tune's melody and then moves to 16th-note triplets in the second half of the bar. (0:00)



John Mayer, "Belief," *Continuum* (2006)

Jordan is having fun with different feels throughout this track, beginning with a straight/swung 16th-note-triplet groove that occasionally swings a little bit harder on the fourth beat. Later in the tune (1:49), Jordan straightens it out completely with a smooth 16th-note hi-hat groove featuring tension-raising offbeat bass drum doubles and snare drum accents without the otherwise constant hi-hat. (0:14)



The Verbs, "Work It Out," *Trip* (2009)

The Verbs are an indie garage-rock project Jordan co-leads with his wife, singer-songwriter Meegan Voss. The music is raw and edgy yet sophisticated and catchy. On this track Steve lays down one of his quintessential big-beat grooves, featuring chopping hi-hats and a syncopated pattern between the snare and kick that's oozing with attitude. (0:05)



John Mayer, "Edge Of Desire," *Battle Studies* (2009)

On this 12/8 ballad from Mayer's latest release, Jordan cranks up the room mics to accentuate the open sound of his big, ringing drums. Check out how he leaves space at the beginning of the measure and then creates an ebb and flow in the second half of the bar with subtle snare/kick interactions. (0:00)



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What's Your Sound?

7 Tips For Developing A Unique Voice On The Drumset

by Marko Djordjevic

All of us are different from one another in many ways, so it seems to be a given that we will sound unique when playing the drumset, much in the way our speaking voice sounds different from everyone else's. But even though the sound of our voice gives us a measure of distinction, it's ultimately the things we say and how we say them that truly distinguish us from one another. The way I see it, music is a creative process that offers the opportunity to contribute something new and unique to the world.

Imitation is a huge part of growing up as a player. We inform our craft by attempting to faithfully re-create the music we like and are inspired by. Each of us is influenced by more people than we can consciously remember, but parts of our musical personality can clearly be traced to one influence or another. Music perpetuates itself through the ages, with each new generation stealing ideas from previous ones and then passing ideas on to the generations that follow.

If it all started and ended with imitation and re-creation, all music would sound the same. Thankfully, music is continually transformed on its way through time by the way it's *interpreted* by each person playing it. In fact, the most prominent performers of completely written out and specifically arranged classical pieces are recognized primarily for their unique ways of interpreting the same exact music. That's what keeps the music fresh, generation after generation.

On an instrument like the drumset, which always involves improvisation on some level, the opportunity to come up with a recognizable voice is practically built in. But how do you go about developing that voice? Here are a few tips from my experiences.



Paul La Roca

1. Acknowledge that you are capable of making a unique musical contribution.

I remember a time when all I wanted was to sound like Dave Weckl, and I was not alone! Just about everyone from my generation went through a Weckl period. But does the world really need a Dave Weckl clone, or a clone of anyone for that matter? A good friend pointed this out to me and led me to dig deeper within myself to find out what I had inside, instead of spending my life trying to play someone else's stuff. This was one of the defining moments of my musical journey.

2. Consider why you decided to play the drums in the first place.

For whatever reason, you had the desire to become a drummer. Zero in on those notions and feelings, and let them guide you.

3. Take a creative approach to transcription.

Transcribing is a process where you do your best to understand and then play, as closely as possible, something you hear someone else do. But that's only half the

game. The creative part involves taking apart those licks, grooves, and patterns and altering things such as stickings, sound sources, rhythms, accents, and articulation so that the phrase no longer sounds like the one you started with. The more you do this, the less you will find yourself playing exact quotes from other drummers.

4. Practice tripping yourself up.

Start by playing a time feel or a flow of solo-oriented ideas. As you play, attempt to execute new phrases you hear in your head, and stay away from the stock things you already know. At first you may be at a loss as to what to play, or you may have difficulty instantly executing something you're hearing. When you make a mistake, stop and work on what caused you trouble. This process adds new musical words to your vocabulary. The more you try to trip yourself up, the better you become at executing your new ideas on the spot.

5. Work on your sound.

This involves picking the drums, cymbals, sticks, and heads that will produce the right sounds for you. It also involves experi-

menting with tuning to find sounds that suit the way you play and the way you hear your instrument, by itself and in an ensemble context. Also try adding unorthodox elements to your kit or using implements other than drumsticks, brushes, rods, and mallets. I've played with chopsticks on many occasions, and the sound is very interesting and unusual.

6. Listen actively and attentively to as much music as possible. The more music you are inspired by and the more influences you have to draw from, the lower the risk of ending up sounding like someone else.

7. Write original compositions. I believe composing music is one of the most creative endeavors a human being is capable of. It's a wonderful way to broaden your awareness of some aspects of music that may get bypassed if you're always the performer and not the creator of the material you play. Developing a sense of composition will inevitably affect the way you play your instrument. The best improvisers often refer to their art as

composing on the spot, or spontaneous composition. So if you're at a loss for how to start composing, take a few minutes to improvise on your drums—or better yet, on another instrument, like piano or guitar.

Keep in mind that developing a unique voice on any instrument requires serious discipline and dedication. And it's not always an easy endeavor. There are countless stories about how visionary and uncompromising artists like Eric Dolphy, Elvin Jones, John Coltrane, Thelonious

Monk, and Ornette Coleman had to overcome many obstacles along the way. But the ultimate reward is the feeling you get when you're engaged creatively with whatever you choose to do, every day of your life.

Marko Djordjevic, who was born in Belgrade, Serbia, has performed with Aaron Goldberg, Matt Garrison, Eric Lewis, Jonah Smith, and many others. He is the bandleader of Sveti and is on the faculty at the Collective in New York City. Djordjevic's DVD, *Where I Come From*, is available through Alfred Publishing. For more info, visit myspace.com/svetimarko.



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

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

4

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

5

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

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

6

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

R R R R R R R L R L R L R L R L R R R R R R R L R L R L R L R L R
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7

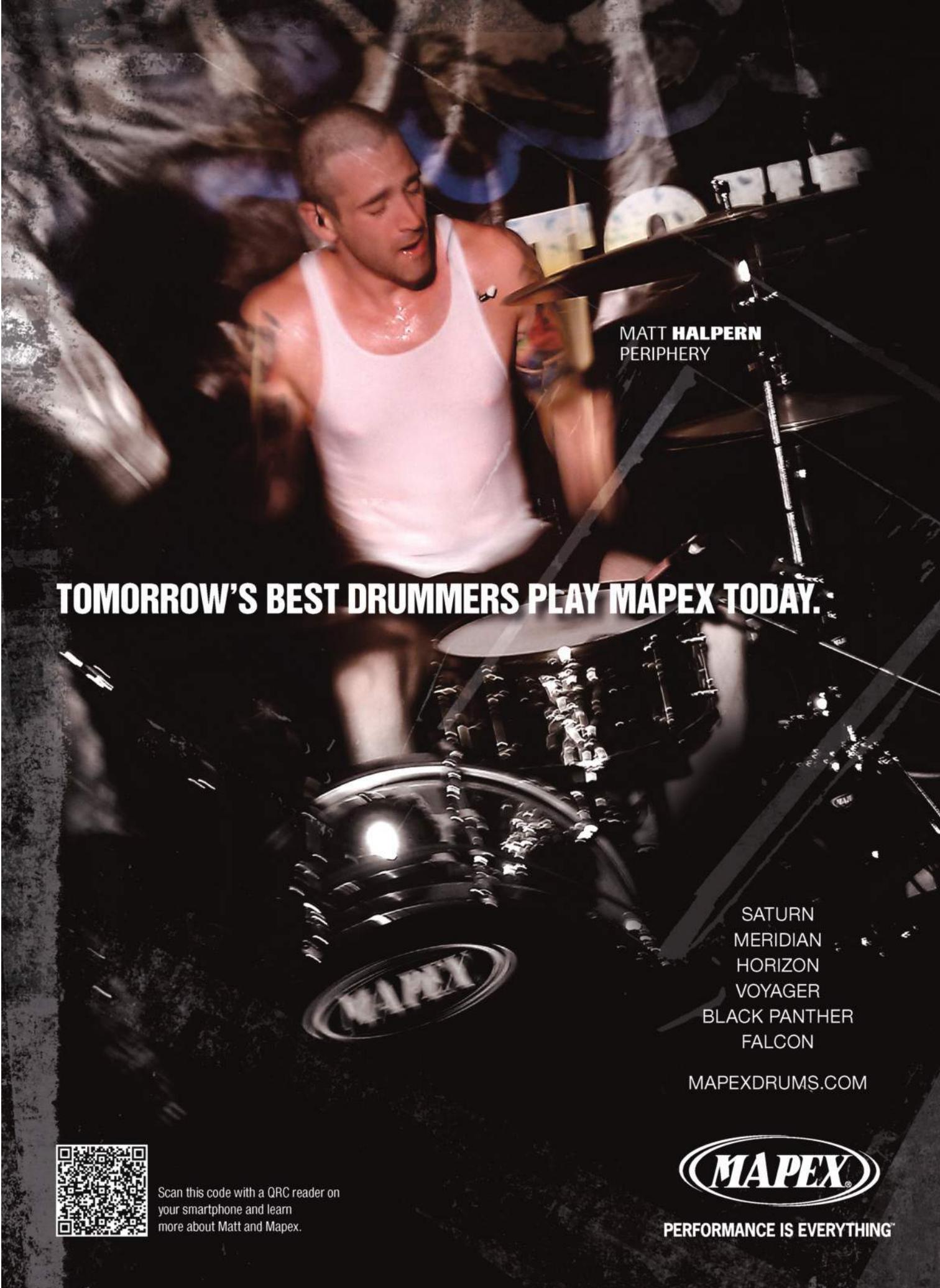
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Bill Bachman is an international drum clinician and a freelance drumset player in Nashville. For more information, visit billbachman.net.





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Linear Fills

Part 2: 16th-Note Triplets

by Mike Johnston



Taking a simple linear pattern between the snare and kick and then expanding it around the kit has been a staple of my drumming approach for years. It has also become one of the most requested topics when I do clinics. The great thing about linear patterns—in which no two limbs play at the same time—is that they're tangible. We can all do them, and if we give our body enough time to develop muscle memory, we can all learn to execute those patterns at lightning-fast speeds and with a range of dynamics.

This month we will be taking the concepts we learned in last month's article and applying them to a new subdivision. Instead of using 16th notes, we'll be using 16th-note triplets, which are also known as sextuplets. Sixteenth-note triplets have a six-to-one speed relationship with the quarter note. This means there will be six hits for every quarter-note pulse. When it comes to counting 16th-note triplets, everyone seems to have his or her own special way. I tend to count them like this: 1 & a 1 & a, 2 & a 2 & a,

3 & a 3 & a, 4 & a 4 & a. You're welcome to come up with your own consistent way of counting sextuplets, as long as you keep the syllables short.

Just like last month, we'll start by playing a linear pattern between the snare and kick. Then we'll add simple changes, such as movement and dynamics, to vary the sound of the pattern. The better you master the original pattern, the easier the remaining steps will be.



PATTERN 1

First, play the linear pattern between the snare and kick.

1

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

Now move your right hand to the hi-hat. The pattern doesn't change, but the sound does.

2

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

Next, bring in some accents. This step is crucial for creating the proper texture and feel.

3

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

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This time, move the right hand to the floor tom to bring in a new sound. Keep the dynamics the same as they were in Example 3.

4

RLRL RLRL RL RL RLRL

Now alternate your right hand between the floor tom and the first tom. This final step will help you figure out how to play linear patterns anywhere on your drumset.

5

RLRL RLRL RL RL RLRL

PATTERN 2

Here's a second linear pattern to explore. Begin by playing it between the snare and kick.

6

RL RLRL RL RL RLRL RL

Now move your right hand to the hi-hat.

7

RL RLRL RL RL RLRL RL

Here's what it looks like with accents.

8

RL RLRL RL RL RLRL RL

Now move the right hand to the floor tom to bring in a new sound. Keep the dynamics the same as they were in Example 8.

9

RL RLRL RL RL RLRL RL

Finally, alternate your right hand between the floor tom and the first tom. Once you have that down, work on playing the pattern anywhere on your drumset.

10

RL RLRL RL RL RLRL RL

To check out a video of me demonstrating these patterns, log on to **modern drummer.com**.

Mike Johnston teaches out of the mikeslessons.com facility in Sacramento, California, where he offers live online drum lessons and international drum camps.



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Pulse And Meter

Part 3: Modulations And Polyrhythms

by Elliot Humberto Kavee

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Last month we worked on modulating pulses while maintaining the feel of a given meter. We did this by breaking down rhythms into a series of long and short notes that define the structure of the meter. (For instance, a meter of seven can be phrased as 2-2-2-1, or long-long-long-short.) Then we substituted larger groupings for the long and short notes of those rhythms (threes for twos and twos for ones, or fives for twos and threes for ones). This opened up a world of possibilities for stretching common rhythms into seemingly irrational combinations that still convey the basic structure of the original pattern. This time we'll look at some other ideas, including modulations and polyrhythms.

FLOATING PULSE

Let's start with some subtle pulse modulations made up of different combinations of long and short notes that can be phrased so they convey the same meter. Here are three that work well together (L = long, S = short):

LLS
LSSLS
LSSSSS

If you use twos for the long notes and ones for the short notes, you have three different patterns in seven.

LLS is 2-2-2-1.



LSSLS is 2-1-1-2-1.



LSSSSS is 2-1-1-1-1-1.



If you substitute threes for the twos and twos for the ones, you get patterns in three different meters that still sound like they're in seven.

LLS is 3-3-3-2 (eleven pulses).



Paul La Roia

LSSLS is 3-2-2-3-2 (twelve pulses).



LSSSSS is 3-2-2-2-2-2 (thirteen pulses).



Once you can hear Examples 4-6 as being derived from seven, practice alternating between them, maintaining the feel of the original meter as the pulse shifts between eleven, twelve, and thirteen. When you float between the three variations, the pulse should adjust slightly (speed up or slow down) so that the length of the measures stays consistent. Use the two/one versions of the rhythms as a guide to help you keep the feel of the bars in seven. Try this with other two/one rhythms that add up to the same pulse per bar. You can also substitute larger groupings, like fives for the twos and threes for the ones, to create even denser patterns.

THE FAMILIAR BECOMES STRANGE

Now let's work with the twelve-beat rhythm from Example 5 (LSSLS), which feels like it's in seven.



Now play four long notes (threes) against it.





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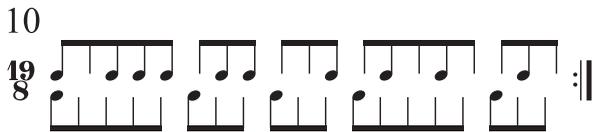
Strange, huh? Even though we added four evenly spaced beats underneath, the rhythm still doesn't *feel* even. That's because you're hearing the threes as a cross-rhythm against the original 3-2-2-3-2, which is felt in a meter of seven, even though it's technically in twelve. If you flip the perspective so that you hear the threes as the primary rhythm, then it will sound like a common 12/8 rhythm.



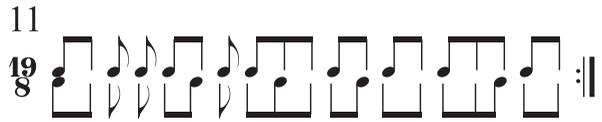
Once you have both perspectives under control, practice flipping between the two to create a mental modulation from seven to four (12/8) and from four (12/8) to seven.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Now let's combine ideas to create a more complex arrangement of the LSSLS rhythm. Keeping the 8th note steady, play 2-1-1-2-1 and then 3-2-2-3-2 over a bar of 19/8 phrased as 5-3-3-5-3 (which is also a version of LSSLS). This creates the feeling that the seven meter is changing speeds on top, even though the pulse remains the same. The three rhythms fit perfectly together because the two/one and three/two versions add up to a total of nineteen pulses, which is the same as the 5-3-3-5-3 pattern played underneath.



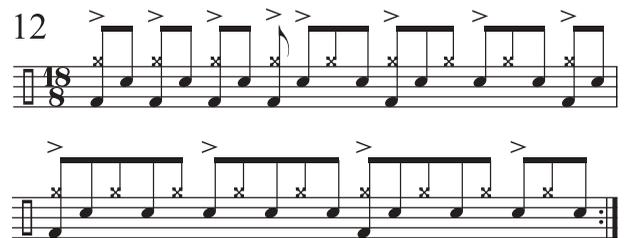
Now flip it so that you're playing the five/three version as a cross-rhythm over the two/one, three/two pattern.



Try this process with other long/short rhythms, playing two/one and three/two versions of the same long/short combination over a five/three version, and then flip it.

ORCHESTRATION ON THE DRUMSET

Now let's start transferring these ideas to the drumset. One way to do that is to play alternating 8th notes, with the right hand on the hi-hat or ride and the left hand on the snare. Play accents on the bass drum and snare to outline the long and short notes of the meter. Play all of the unaccented in-between notes as soft ghost strokes. Here's how to phrase LLS on the kit using three different meters (2-2-2-1, 3-3-3-2, and 5-5-5-3). If you string the three patterns in a row, you end up with a two-bar phrase in 18/8.



Well, that's it! With what we've covered in these three "Pulse And Meter" articles, you should have plenty of tools to calculate and create your own pulse/meter relationships that will take you well beyond what we've demonstrated here. Good luck!

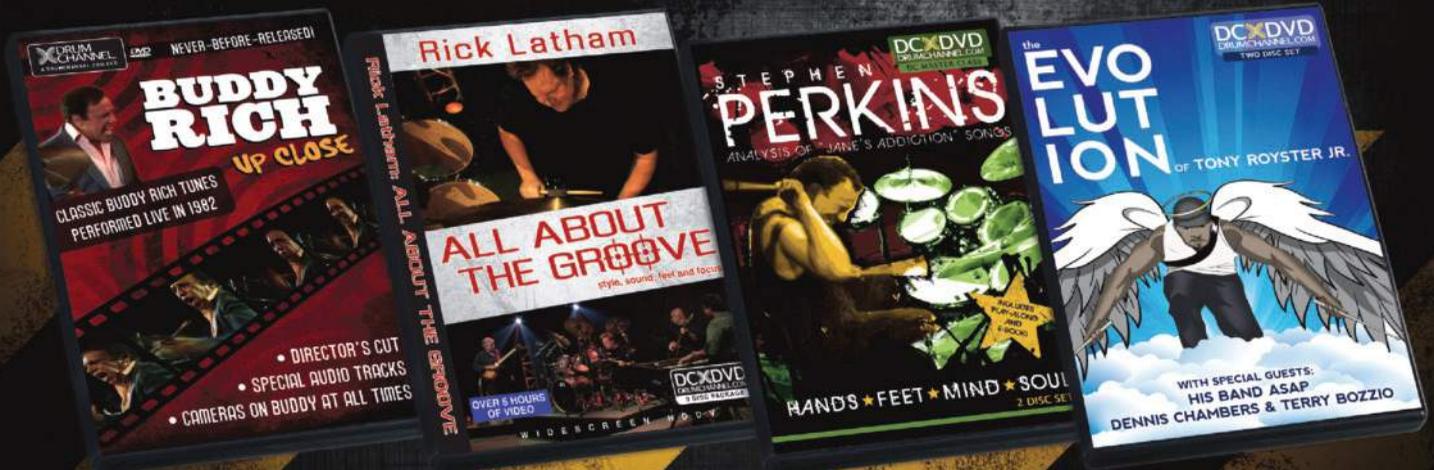
New York-based drummer **Elliot Humberto Kavee** has played on more than fifty acclaimed recordings, including Henry Threadgill's current release with his band Zoodid, *This Brings Us To, Vol. I*, and the upcoming *This Brings Us To, Vol. II*. He was recently featured in the May 2010 issue of *MD*. For more info, visit elliothumbertokavee.com.



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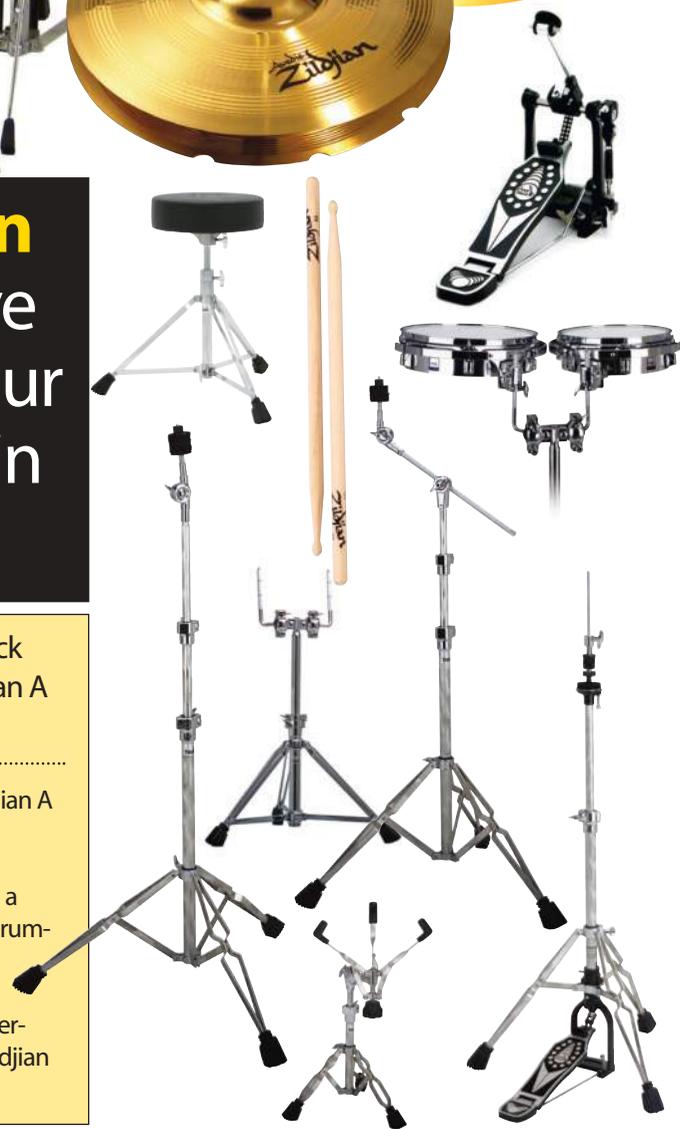




Taye Drums and Zildjian Cymbals and Sticks have teamed up to offer you four fantastic prize packages in this month's giveaway!

- GRAND PRIZE:** Taye StudioMaple four-piece drumkit in black oyster wrap with hardware, pedal, throne, and a set of Zildjian A Custom Rezo cymbals. **Valued at over \$4,000!**

- First Prize:** Taye Hpack Z Holographic Swirl hardware set and a 14" Zildjian A Custom EFX cymbal. **Valued at over \$950!**
- Second Prize:** Taye 3x10 and 3x12 wood timbales in chrome wrap with a dual ball adjustable tom mount and a six-pack of Zildjian 5A wood-tip drumsticks. **Valued at over \$400!**
- Third Prize:** Taye TS792 heavy-duty, low-center-of-gravity tom stand, perfect for suspended snare drums or larger rack toms, and a six-pack of Zildjian 5A wood-tip drumsticks.



Consumer Disclosure: 1. To enter visit www.modrndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Taye/Zildjian Contest button (one entry per email address). 2. ODDS OF WINNING DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 3. CONTEST BEGINS AUGUST 1, 2010, AND ENDS SEPTEMBER 30, 2010. 4. Grand Prize Drawing: Winner will be selected by random drawing on October 12, 2010. Winner will be notified by phone or email on or about October 16, 2010. 5. Employees, and their immediate families, of Modern Drummer, Taye, Zildjian, 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 a Taye StudioMaple four-piece drumset (8x12 rack tom, 14x14 floor tom, 14x18 bass drum, and 5x14 snare drum) in black oyster wrap with hardware, pedal, and throne, and a set of Zildjian A Custom Rezo cymbals (14" hi-hats, 16" crash, and 21" ride). Approximate retail value of prize: \$4,150. **First Prize:** One (1) winner will receive a Taye Hpack Z Holographic Swirl hardware pack that includes: one (1) medium-weight double-braced cymbal stand, one (1) boom stand, one (1) hi-hat stand, one (1) snare stand with ball tilter adjustment, and one (1) double chain bass drum pedal on a radius rod; and one (1) Zildjian 14" A Custom EFX cymbal. Approximate retail value of prize: \$958. **Second Prize:** One (1) winner will receive Taye wood timbales (3x10 and 3x12) on suspension rings with chrome wrap and dual ball adjust tom mount and a six-pack of Zildjian 5A wood-tip drumsticks. Approximate retail value of prize: \$440. **Third Prize:** One (1) winner will receive a heavy-duty tom stand that features a dual ball adjust tom mount on a throne base and a six-pack of Zildjian 5A wood-tip drumsticks. Approximate retail value of prize: \$280. Approximate retail value of contest: \$5,828. 10. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 11. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Taye-Zildjian/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

GEARING UP

Drumkit Details, On Stage And Up Close

Roger Daltrey's **SCOTT DEVOURS**

Interview and photos by Sayre Berman

Drums: Ludwig vintage blue Vistalite

A. 6x14 Tama Starclassic hammered bronze snare

B. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Ludwig Black Beauty snare

C. 24x6 custom acrylic tube tom

D. 8x12 tom

E. 7x10 tom

F. 10x14 tom

G. 16x18 floor tom

H. 14x24 bass drum

"On the theater tour I did with Roger, I was using Rototoms to split the difference between [single-headed] concert toms and melodic double-headed toms," Devours explains. "Keith Moon, like many drummers in the '70s, tended to play concert toms. For me, the Rototoms worked for the smaller venues. But for the sound to translate with enough power into larger arena venues, I decided to pull the Rototoms and go with the vintage Vistalite toms. They're concert-tom depth, similar to Keith Moon's approach, but with bottom heads. With that shell, you get a little more of a punch and a little more depth in the bottom end, and it's easier for the front-of-house engineer to give you power, rather than trying to simulate power with the Rototoms.

"I've introduced a third tom over the kick drum, so they go from 12" to 10" to 14". That's really just a mental challenge for me. The sounds go from medium to high to low, which took some getting used to. But when you go down a long fill, like in classic Who songs 'The Real Me,'



'Who Are You,' 'Won't Get Fooled Again,' or 'Baba O'Riley,' it makes it interesting to come up with fills that sound different because you've moved your drums around. Switching things up will make you think differently. Think differently, play differently, feel differently...and drop more sticks!

"I went with the vintage Vistalite kit for this tour because I love the look of it and also because the drums are very easy to mike up, particularly in big venues, and they sound consistent. I wouldn't call them dead-sounding drums, but they are very direct and don't have a lot of overtones. So it's not difficult to milk a powerful, consistent tone out of them. I also have new 5½x14 Black Beauty and 6½x14 Black Magic snares, which are incredible. I have some vintage Black Beauties, but I think the new ones sound much better. They have a sweet spot that's unlike any other drum's."

Cymbals: Paiste

1. 14" 2002 Sound Edge hi-hats
2. 19" Signature Full crash
3. 20" Reflections Heavy Full crash
4. 24" 2002 ride
5. 22" 2002 crash

"I went with larger but thinner cymbals on this tour, just so the white noise isn't too overbearing for everybody. The early Who music had a lot of wash from the cymbals and not a lot of definition. So I wanted that, but I didn't want it to be overwhelming."

Heads: Remo coated Emperor snare batters and clear Diplomat bottoms, CS Black Dot tom batters and clear Ambassador bottoms, and clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter and clear Ambassador front head

"The CS Black Dot heads sound the best with the Vistalites. It's very much a Bonham thing—he used Black Dots on his amber Vistalites. They just sound superior to me, and they last forever."

Hardware: Tama Iron Cobra hi-hat stand and single bass drum pedal, DW 5000 boom cymbal stands, DW 5000 double tom stands, Gauger RIMS mounts with DW tom clamps, Tama Roadpro snare stands and throne, vintage flat-base DW cymbal stand (to mount cowbell and fan), Tama straight cymbal stand (to mount tambourine, metronome, and tray)

Sticks: Pro-Mark TX412W (Liberty DeVitto model), TX5BW, and 5B sticks, all hickory, plus various brushes, multirods, and mallets



Strung Out's **JORDAN BURNS**

Interview by David Ciauro • Photos by Brandon Mizar

Drums: Mapex Orion series in "crystal krush" finish

- A. 6½x14 Black Panther snare
- B. 8x10 tom
- C. 9x12 tom
- D. 10x13 tom
- E. 16x16 floor tom
- F. 18x22 bass drum

"I started playing Mapex about eleven years ago, when they were a smaller startup company," Burns says. "We have a great relationship, and they've always been unbelievably supportive. You always want to play drums that sound awesome and that you believe in. I recorded our latest album on this kit, and the drums sound amazing."

Cymbals: Paiste

1. 14" Wild Rude hi-hats
2. 18" Wild Rude crash
3. 19" Wild Rude crash
4. 20" Wild Rude crash
5. 22" 2002 Power ride
6. 20" Rude China

"I grew up playing Paiste. Right now I'm loving the Wild Rude crashes. They're perfect for the really fast, loud, heavy music we play. They have an aggressive sound and are incredibly durable. The 22" 2002 Power ride has always been a signature part of my sound. I do a lot of riding, and it has an intense ping that really cuts through. I've pretty much used it on every recording I've ever done."

Heads: Remo Black Suede Emperor X snare batter and Black Suede bottom, Black Suede Emperor tom batters and Black Suede Ambassador bottoms, and Black Suede Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter and black Ambassador front head



"I'd been using clear Emperors quite exclusively, but when I got this 'crystal krush' kit, I liked the idea of black heads against the silver sparkle. Remo hooked me up with some Black Suedes, and they've been sounding pretty rockin'. The Emperor X on my snare gives me plenty of attack, crack, and snap. They're very durable as well, so they've passed the test!"

Hardware: Mapex H950A three-leg double-braced hi-hat stand, S950A snare stand with universal ball socket tilter, and C950A and B950A double-braced cymbal stands with universal ball socket tilters; DW 5000 double bass drum pedal

"With the universal ball sockets on the Mapex stands, I have 100 percent control of how I can position the cymbals. I like the drag and weight of the DW 5000 pedal, and I pretty much use them stock out of the box."

Sticks: Pro-Mark 2B with nylon tips, Cadence Academy metal warm-up sticks
"I've been using these sticks forever. I use nylon tips because of how they sound on the ride—great definition that enhances the ping. The Cadence Academy sticks are great for warming up and exercising, like a baseball player swinging two bats before he steps up to the plate."

Accessories: Pro-Mark Stick Rapp, Protecator cases, Danmar beaters and bass drum impact pads

"I love the extra attack that the Danmar pads provide, and I really like the skull-and-crossbones beaters."



JOHN ERIKSSON

You think the sounds of classical percussion and indie rock are worlds apart? Peter Bjorn And John's inquisitive drummer begs to differ.

by Anthony Riscica

It's a Monday night in New York City, and Peter Bjorn And John are minutes away from taking the stage to play to a packed-in Webster Hall audience. Drummer John Eriksson greets me, and as we walk upstairs toward his dressing room I'm immediately taken in by his jovial nature. Though most of us caught wind of the Swedish indie-pop group only after the success of its whistle 2006 hit, "Young Folks," PB&J are on their tenth-

anniversary tour and have honed their stage show to seamless,

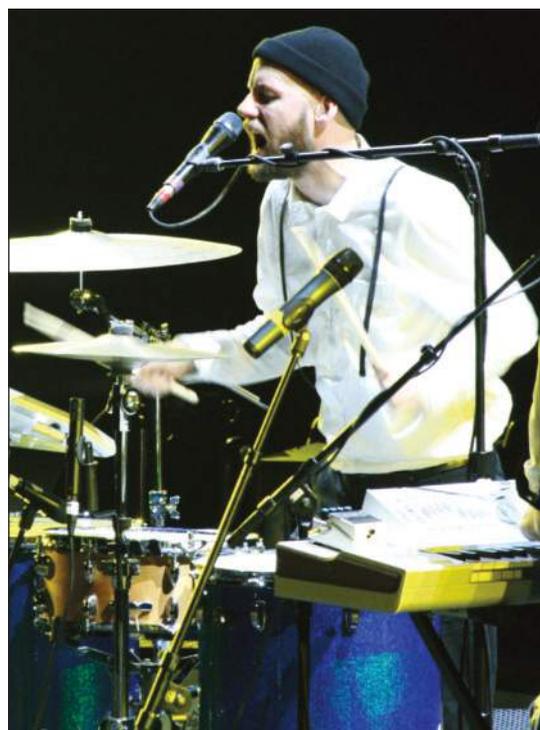
rapid-fire presentation. Eriksson leaves me to go prepare for the show, and when he reemerges on stage, not only have his clothes changed, but so has his demeanor. Focused yet loose, John and his bandmates tear into the first part of

their set, and I'm left in awe as the drummer, who's playing standing up, dances around from sampling pads to drums to cymbals and back again, setting an exciting and intriguing pattern for the set.

Though early videos of the group show Eriksson playing seated, the sample-heavy nature of the band's work recently prompted a change. "I wanted to come up with a way to combine the

"Sometimes a matchbox sounds better than a snare drum. On another song we might record four different snare drums."

regular drumset and a lot of sampled sounds," John explains. "I'm using two Roland SPD-S pads, and I thought it was important to have them placed so that the audience could see where the sound was coming from. I sing lead on some



songs too, and I just thought it would look better if I was standing up. I've also been playing a lot in percussion ensembles for the past ten years, so I was used to playing standing up."

Eriksson doesn't record the group's records—the latest being 2009's *Living*



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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Eriksson plays Ludwig drums. When he's touring in the States, he uses a Classic maple set in a blue sparkle wrap; in Europe he uses a silver sparkle kit from the '60s in a similar setup. Specific drums include a 16x20 bass drum with a coated Ambassador batter head. ("I play it tuned quite low, dampened inside with a lot of towels, and with the cheapest possible new kick drum pedal fitted with a medium-size, medium-soft beater.") He uses two 16x16 floor toms. ("The one on the right has a Remo clear Emperor on top and no bottom head, and it's super-dampened with lots of tape. The left

one has a coated Ambassador, is tuned really low, and sounds almost like a timpani.") His snare drums, which he will swap out depending on the venue, include a vintage 5x14 Ludwig Supra-Phonic and a "super-cheap" wood Tama model. Both are fitted with coated Emperor batter heads. John's cymbals include 14" vintage Zildjian Dark hi-hats, a 22" crash/ride ("preferably thin, quite dark, and quite dry"), and a 20" crash/ride (also thin, dark, and dry). His electronics include two Roland SPD-S sampling pads.

Thing—standing up, but he does suggest that by thinking like a contemporary classical percussionist he's inspired to choose unusual sounds in the studio. "I take a lot of time to find the best possible sound that suits each specific song," he says. "Sometimes a matchbox sounds better than a snare drum. On another song we might record four different snare drums and create a new sound out of that."

Eriksson's interest in esoteric tones runs deeper than your average PB&J fan might realize. He's involved in a number of unusual projects outside of the group, including the remix-oriented collective Hortlax Cobra and the experimental ambient duo tuktuk, and he's long been heavily involved in non-rock musical situations. "I've been playing classical percussion since I was seven years old," the drummer says. "I heard a percussion ensemble at a music school in the north of Sweden when I was six, and after that I wanted to learn all the instruments that I saw on stage. Luckily my parents talked to some of the students, and I started to take private lessons."

"I have always practiced both classical percussion and drumset," Eriksson goes on. "In high school I practiced marimba, vibes, multi-percussion, and snare drum for like ten hours a day, and then from midnight to three in the morning I practiced drumset."

During and after his studies at the Royal College Of Music in Stockholm, Eriksson worked in the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra for four years, focusing on marimba. "I explored that instrument as much as I think is possible," he says. "Then I got offered a job in a full-time percussion ensemble in Stockholm called Kroumata. That had been my dream since I was a kid, so it was very amazing—and very scary. The first year I had to learn all the new pieces by Xenakis, Cage, etc. But after a couple of years I learned to relax and enjoy it."

Around this time Eriksson met Peter Morén and Bjorn Yttling. After realizing they were all fans of the "great melodies, strange drum patterns, and complicated chord progressions" on the album *Better Can't Make Your Life Better* by the American indie band Lilys, the trio decided to try their hand at similar sounds. "Fortunately our band didn't break through until later," Eriksson says, "because in Kroumata we did a lot of tours and many gigs as percussion

ensemble soloists with symphony orchestras. I loved playing in a classical ensemble, and I'm so glad I had the opportunity to play all that music and meet people like Steve Reich and other amazing composers from all over the world."

For more with Eriksson, including secrets to how he gets many of the unusual sounds he uses with Peter Bjorn And John, go to moderndrummer.com.



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"I'm challenging myself to come up with something different. It's nice to try something and see what sticks—especially in the heat of battle."

JOSE MEDELES

Whether pounding out rock grooves with **the Breeders**, staging solo mega-percussion performances, or running his unique one-room drum shop, the busy all-rounder is always working, and always learning.

by Patrick Berkery

Jose Medeles knows that parting can be such sweet sorrow, whether it's leaving the family behind to go on the road or letting go of cherished vintage gear. When Medeles and fellow drummer Scott McPherson (Beck, She & Him) opened Revival Drum Shop in Portland, Oregon, last year, they loaded the store with many of the vintage and exotic drums, cymbals, and percussion curios Medeles had accumulated during trips around the globe with the Breeders, Donavon Frankenreiter, and others. Jose knew entering the retail game meant having to part with prized possessions. But it didn't make the process easier.

"It's extremely difficult to unload my own stuff," Medeles says with a laugh. "A customer once asked me if there was anything I really liked. I had picked up a beautiful ride cymbal in Israel—an old 22" A from the '50s. So I took out that ride and put it on a kit for him. It sounded great, and he said, 'Okay, I'll take this.' I paused and said, 'Do you mind if I play it one more time before you take it?'"

But don't cry for Jose. He still has plenty of his funky finds. Some of them adorn Revival's walls, like a spinning chime from São Paulo. Others can be found on the ragtag kit—in all its dented-cymbal, coiled-spring-as-percussion glory—that plays a starring role in the 2008 documentary *Meaning And Rhetoric*, which chronicles Medeles's preparations for a solo performance.

The drummer's treasures also feature prominently on three percussion-only solo albums comprising pieces that range from meditative atmospherics built around vibes and incidental white noise to serious-as-a-heart-attack drum-set solos. Medeles prefers not to categorize his solo work, but he'll do so if asked nicely. "If I had to call it anything," he reflects, "I'd say experimental—but just for the sake of having to. To me, it's soundscapes...I keep that idea in my head."

While some of these drum pieces feature jarring transitions and others are fairly static, upon listening it's difficult to

get a handle on how much of the music is improvised and how much is composed. "When I'm putting these pieces together," Medeles explains, "I have an outline.

Then I'll improvise part of it when it feels correct. I'll hold my breath and see what happens. It's just feel. It's more of a subconscious thing."

Jose says he takes a similar approach to his solo gigs, during which he performs on a modified kit. "Each performance is a little different," he says. "During a recent show, I focused on micro-sounds—really quiet triggered and amplified sound sources. It's always evolving. I'm challenging myself to come up with something different. It's nice to try something and see what sticks—especially in the heat of battle."

Medeles has studied and played with Stephen Hodges, who's known for his funky, creaky-sounding percussive accompaniment with Tom Waits. Jose readily admits being influenced by Hodges' kitchen-sink approach. "I'm a huge Tom Waits and Stephen Hodges fan," he says. "I played in a drum troupe of his called Stephen Hodges Big Drum. That was really something."

And even though Medeles's solo work is more likely to be labeled art than rock, the drummer is equally at home supporting more rootsy music, as he does with the Adolescents' Steve Soto. Medeles played on the singer/guitarist's solo record and toured with him, supporting the L.A. punk legends X. "Steve's stuff is very Americana, different from where I'm coming from," Jose says. "And every night I was surrounded by guys like James Achor, an amazing guitar player, and Veikko Lepisto, the stunning upright bass player, who were both with Royal Crown Revue. I'm making music with all these great people, and I'm learning all the time."

Singer-songwriter Donavon Frankenreiter provided yet another unique experience for the drummer. "I wasn't familiar with his music at first," Medeles says. "But I listened to his first album and found it really cool. I hadn't done anything like that before in a live situation, that kind of laid-back Curtis Mayfield thing. I ended up touring with him for two years."

Given Medeles's drumming schedule, you might wonder who's minding the store when he's out of town. "We hired Neal Morgan, who plays with Joanna Newsom, to cover when Scott and I are out," Jose says. "Joe Plummer from Modest Mouse even offered to help out. Plus Scott picks it up when I get tired, and vice versa—because it is a lot of work; it's not just hanging out all day, playing drums and listening to rad music. And, knock on wood, we're open seven days a week, and we haven't been closed one day since we opened. I'm proud of that."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Medeles uses a Leedy 14x28 bass drum from the 1930s, a Slingerland 7x14 Radio King snare drum from the '40s, a Ludwig 12x15 marching drum from the '40s that has been converted to a floor tom, a 22" Zildjian A cymbal from the '50s, a 22" Istanbul Agop ride, and 15" Zildjian A hi-hats from the '50s.



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KEN STRINGFELLOW

When you've worn as many musical hats as the Posies/R.E.M./Big Star vet has, you invariably learn the secrets of top-notch drumming—and how to say “Go to the ride cymbal!” in Spanish.

by Patrick Berkery

Ken Stringfellow is a musical multitasker whose drive to create has found him in nearly every situation imaginable. He's performed in front of tens of thousands of people with R.E.M., with whom he spent a decade in a multi-instrumentalist role. He co-leads the longstanding alt-pop group the Posies. Prior to leader Alex Chilton's recent death, he was a member of the power-pop cult band Big Star. And he regularly produces rookie acts that contact him via his Web site. *Modern*



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Drummer caught up with Stringfellow following a South American tour with the Disciplines, which found him being backed by local pickup bands.

MD: Of all the situations you've been in, touring South America using pickup bands had to be among the most difficult. Given the language barrier, how did you communicate what you needed to the drummers?

Ken: The level of English varied wildly. The drummer I used in Chile didn't speak any English at all, and my Spanish is very limited. We managed to communicate the important stuff. I'd use my fist behind my back to give the drummer the kick drum pattern in case he forgot it. The biggest thing I was telling every drummer down there was to slow down. Disciplines songs don't rock more when they speed up—they rock less.

MD: Claus Heiberg-Larsen of the Disciplines, who wasn't part of the South American tour, isn't very well known outside of Norway, but he's a very tasteful player.

Ken: He's awesome, so dependable. He plays with an incredible dynamic that just seems like he's rocking; it's really intense and crazy, yet you can walk up to the drumset and have a conversation with him, and he can hear you over his playing. He's not playing really loud at all, so the drums sing in a really nice way.

MD: You produce and record a lot of upstart acts. Is it challenging working with relatively inexperienced drummers?

Ken: The drummers will have different levels of skill. The biggest challenge is teaching them how to make what they're doing sound like it just happened right at this moment in the studio and we're capturing one of these never-going-to-happen-again takes. Sometimes you have to induce those moments or even chart them out. Over the years, I've picked up a few "drum moments" I can show to a drummer and say, "This will sound really rocking and spontaneous, and we're going to plan it out completely." I've done these little tricks on many, many records. Certain fills just always work. They're like sweet chord changes, and they never sound cliché.

MD: During your tenure with R.E.M., the band had two drummers with radically different styles, Joey Waronker and Bill Rieflin. Did you have to adapt your playing to each of them?

Ken: Definitely. A key to understanding R.E.M. is that in most of the Bill Berry years, the kick and the bass never really played together. The kick drum was just there to fill the space [bassist] Mike Mills was leaving. But when it was my turn to play bass, I had to find the kick and meld with it. And I liked the fact that I had to retool my bass grooves to go from Joey to Bill.

It's kind of hard to compare the two because different things were asked of each of them. Bill does some amazing stuff with his sampler, and he's kind of everywhere at once. He played on my solo album *Soft Commands*, and the stuff he played is beautiful, very swing-y. But you can't really swing with R.E.M. Some of their stuff is from that new-wave land.

I felt like Joey had truly independent hands, more than anyone else I'd ever seen. His approach to making a drum part had no regard of where a drummer's hands would normally go and what they'd normally do. He deconstructed in a wonderful way. Joey was filling in spaces in these weird songs, many of which didn't have drums on them originally.

MD: Another great, albeit underrated, drummer you play with is Jody Stephens in Big Star.

Ken: Oh, dude...he has longer fills than Neil Peart! He hits really hard but really accurately. He just propels the music. And he's an amazing person. We had to follow Alex [Chilton] to some strange territory. Like he'd say, "I've just written this score for a classical piece, but I've done it for two guitars, bass, and drums, and it's got a baroque feel." And Jody, God bless him, is like, "Okay, I'm there." I've seen lesser people chicken out on something like that because they need much more instruction.

MD: And Brian Young, who played on the Posies' *Amazing Disgrace*?

Ken: Brian Young astounded me. We were mixing with Keith Cleversley and he said, "I hate these drum sounds. Let's replace them." So we re-tracked—and this is pre-Pro Tools—to some kind of external hard disk multitrack that operated like a two-inch machine. Brian rerecorded "Please Return It," which had no click and a couple of gnarly big fills that last a long time, over the existing drums and nailed it in one take. Perfect replacement of every drum part, perfectly in time.



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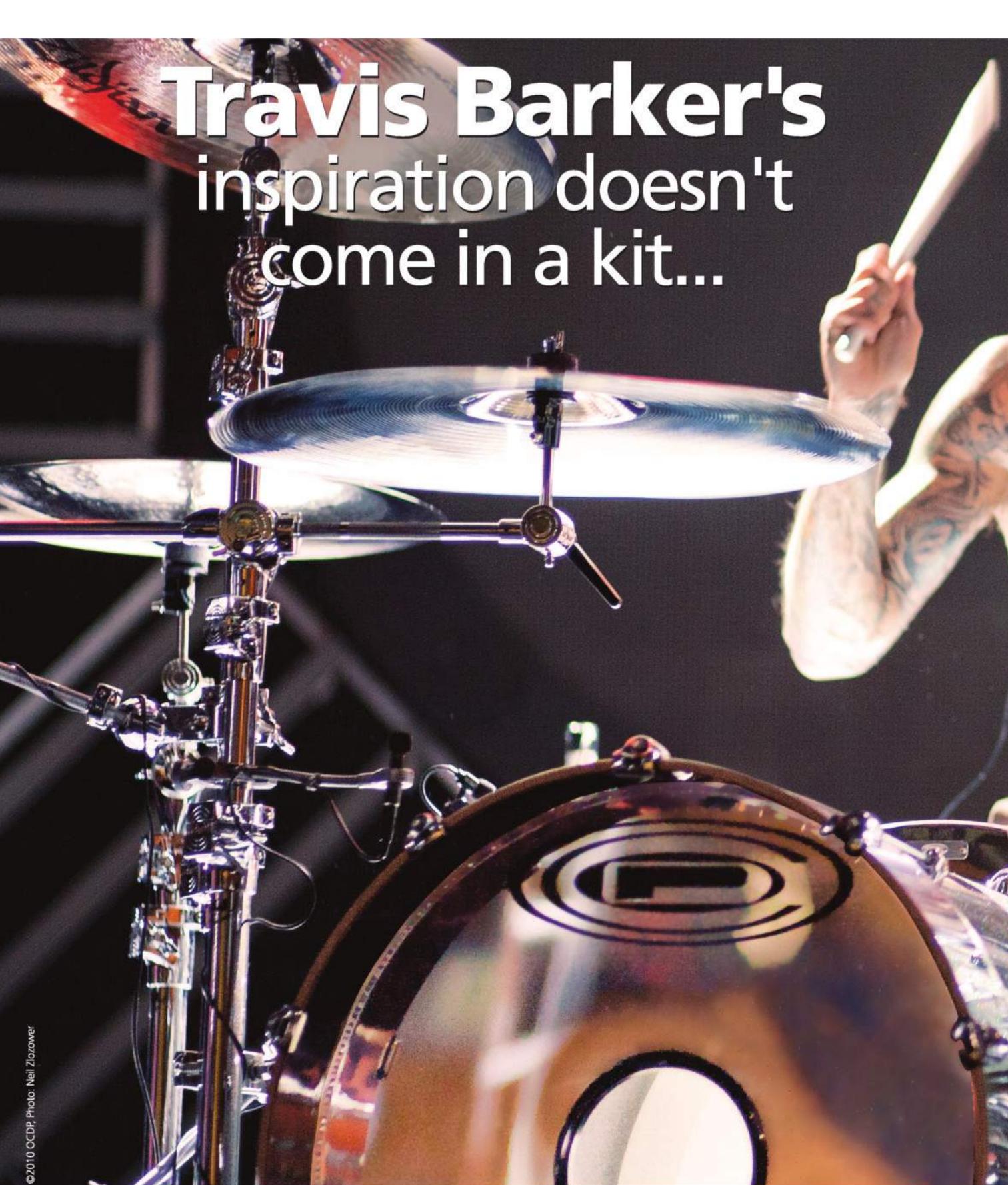


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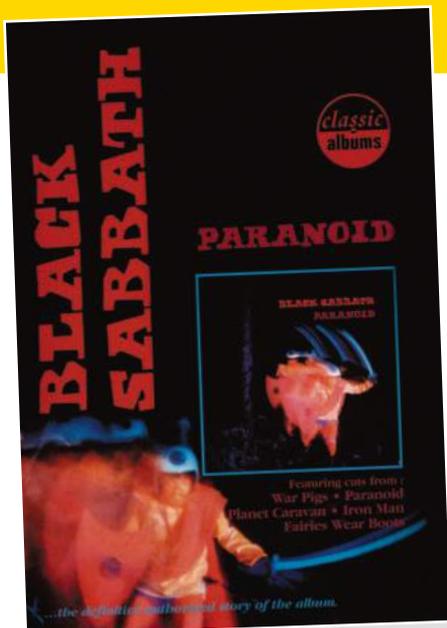


BLACK SABBATH *PARANOID* by Mike Haid

Two twelve-hour studio sessions. That's all it took to kick-start a musical movement that continues to inspire millions today. A new documentary tells the dark tale.

Black Sabbath is considered by many to be the architects of heavy metal. The *Classic Albums* DVD focusing on the band's 1970 sophomore release, *Paranoid*, celebrates forty years of dominance in metal lore. Unheard of by today's standards, Sabbath had only two days to record and two more to mix the LP, which features such genre staples as "War Pigs," "Paranoid," and "Iron Man." The band developed a unique songwriting process that

included, on the one hand, all of the members following guitarist Tony Iommi's lumbering riffs in unison, and on the other, abrupt tempo changes and lengthy instrumental passages. Through commentary from former managers, music industry celebs, legendary metal engineer Tom Allom, and the band (including singer Ozzy Osbourne), plus musical demonstrations by drummer **BILL WARD**, Iommi, and bassist Geezer Butler, this doc reveals fascinating facts about the making of *Paranoid*, plus insightful details about the cultural backdrop of the album, which famously dealt with the heavy issues of the day. Another spot-on chapter in the *Classic Albums* series. (Eagle Rock)



Bill Ward on *Paranoid*

On the DVD you describe Sabbath as "swing with power." Can you elaborate on that from a drumming perspective?

As a child I was highly influenced by the swing music of the '30s and '40s—Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Woody Herman... You can hear swing time on several tracks from *Paranoid*, but with a lot of power behind it.

You mention Gene Krupa as your main drumming influence. How did his style inform your playing?

He's the man! I found his style was reachable for me. I was attracted to the way he was always pushing the bottom end to bring more power to the horn kicks of the big band. He would kick those with his bass drum and toms, where most other drummers were only doing that with the snare and cymbals. I used his technique—along with the bass guitar—to reinforce the low end and give the rhythm section of Sabbath a heavier sound. I was also a big Buddy Rich fan. I used his Slingerland replica kit that came out in 1970, which was the exact kit he was using at the time.

Engineer/producer Tom Allom mentions that the band was well rehearsed before the *Paranoid* sessions, with most tracks needing only a couple takes.

We were touring constantly and becoming more focused and aggressive. We had already been playing most of the material from *Paranoid*, so we were ready when we hit the studio. I've always been more of a reactionary drummer as opposed to a solid timekeeper. It was the energy and honesty in the music that made it happen. When I react to the music, I'm not sure what will happen. When we sat down to write "Iron Man" I didn't think about what I would play. As Tony played the chords, I reacted with what felt like the most natural thing to play. I would have completely ruined "Iron Man" had I put a simple backbeat behind it. I needed to create huge sounds and musical orchestrations.



PRIESTESS *PRIOR TO THE FIRE*

A blend of classic heavy metal and desert rock runs through Priestess's new release. Full of driving riffs, the album heads for the finish line with a little weaving here and there. **VINCE NUDO** mans the drums with enthusiasm. On songs such as "Lady Killer" and "Sideways Attack," he provides the punch to move into top gear. Yet he also shows himself capable of finesse on "It Baffles The Mind," playing the tricky beat and active arrangement beautifully. Priestess succeeds with old-school metal riffs, catchy melodies, and a slight hint of prog. (Tee Pee)

Sean Bertrand



PUDDLE OF MUDD *VOLUME 4: SONGS IN THE KEY OF LOVE & HATE*

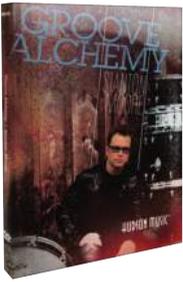
The ten tracks that make up *Volume 4* don't stray too far from the sound that put Puddle Of Mudd on the map. But even if frontman Wes Scantlin and guitarist Paul Phillips are following a formula, you certainly can't argue that they've stopped cranking out the hooks. *Volume 4* marks **RYAN YERDON**'s first time on record with the band since he joined up for 2007's tour in support of *Famous*, and his drumming is super-solid throughout. Although Puddle Of Mudd's sound continues to hark back to the neo-grunge vibe the band brought to the table with its 2001 debut, *Come Clean*, there will always be an audience ready to get off on straightforward tunes about sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. (Geffen) **David Ciauro**



OK GO *OF THE BLUE COLOUR OF THE SKY*

On its third studio release, OK Go pulls from everything from Prince to Pink Floyd to get the point across. There's even a little Bob Marley in there, as the single "This Too Shall Pass" borrows liberally from the Wailers classic "Put It On." Beneath it all, drummer **DAN KONOPKA** stirs up trouble with big, sometimes roomy, sometimes distorted drum sounds and innovative grooves. Whether it's the flowing pattern on "WTF?" that almost makes you forget you're in 5/4 or the simple kick/snare beat on "I Want You So Bad I Can't Breathe," the drums are there to serve the songs. (Capitol) **Anthony Riscica**

MULTIMEDIA



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STANTON MOORE GROOVE ALCHEMY
DVD/BOOK/MP3 DISC LEVEL: ALL DVD \$29.99,
BOOK/DISC \$24.99

The DVD of the well-structured, in-depth multimedia package from New Orleans drumming great Stanton Moore reveals a concise chronological history of the rhythmic foundations and evolution of funky drumming, beginning with James Brown and his drummers (mainly Clyde Stubblefield and Jabo Starks) and moving through Zigaboo Modeliste, David Garibaldi, Mike Clark, and beyond. Moore explains how playing "in the cracks" between straight and swing feels changes everything about a groove. He performs authentic examples of many innovative funk, shuffle, and backbeat patterns and then applies his own Crescent City take on various combinations, incorporating them into stellar performances with his trio. Moore's playing has grease, tension, and dynamics and breathes with life. Artsy camera angles and strategic backlighting create a visually interesting and relaxed nightclub atmosphere in rock legend Levon Helm's studio, while helpful slow-motion features allow for deeper visual/audio dissection.

Sold separately, the 152-page book is a highly recommended companion to the video, featuring detailed transcriptions of the DVD performances, play-along drum charts, and educational insight from Stanton. Every written example in the book is also featured on the accompanying MP3 disc (600-plus audio clips), performed by Moore. A CD containing the songs from the educational package is available as well.

The entire *Groove Alchemy* set should prove to be an essential study for drummers interested in maximum groove potential. (Hudson) **Mike Haid**

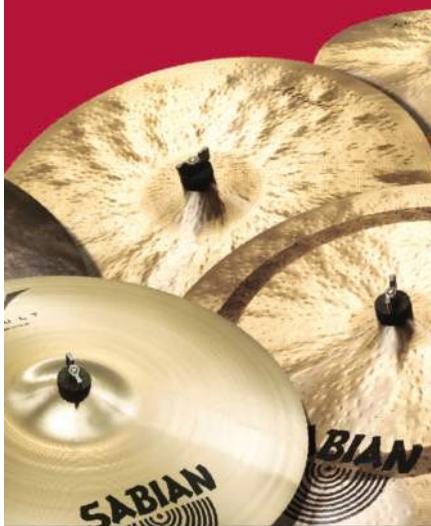


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DRUMMER'S GUIDE TO ODD TIME SIGNATURES
BY RICK LANDWEHR
BOOK/CD LEVEL: ALL \$19.99

In this odd-time primer, Landwehr explains pulse, subdivisions, and note groupings in rock, funk, blues, jazz, and Latin music, using basic to complex drumset patterns and fills in five, seven, nine, and eleven. The accompanying CD contains drums-only examples from the ninety-five-page book. Without being accompanied by illustrative full-band recordings or the visual aid of a DVD, this material would probably be conveyed most effectively with the guidance of a professional instructor well versed in the application of complex patterns in a group context. Using a device that can slow down the audio examples would also assist in the comprehension of the corresponding notation. Overall, though, this is a good head-start program for odd-meter drumset concepts. (Alfred) **Mike Haid**



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MEMPHIS DRUM SHOP'S CYMBAL SUMMIT 2010

This past May 7 and 8, Memphis Drum Shop held a one-of-a-kind event called Cymbal Summit 2010. It was the first time in drum industry history that a large-scale conference was held solely in celebration of the cymbal. The Cymbal Summit included educational presentations, artist performances, and opportunities for drummers at all skill levels to discuss with manufacturers and fellow players the history and art of making, selecting, and playing cymbals.

Seven cymbal companies were represented: Bosphorus, Hammerax, Istanbul Agop, Meinl, Paiste, Sabian, and Zildjian. The list of artists in attendance reads like an all-star roster: Alex Acuña, Ndugu Chancler, Jack DeJohnette, Peter Erskine, Jeff Hamilton, Thomas Lang, Jojo Mayer, Nicko McBrain, John Riley, Ron Tutt, and Lenny White.

"It was great to have the different manufacturers congregate to show their wares and share their philosophies, buttressed by an impressive roster from each company," Erskine says. "I heard a *lot* of great sounds and music during those two glorious days."

Day one opened with the unveiling of an exclusive Avedis Zildjian Co. historical timeline. Only two of these displays exist in the world—one at Zildjian's factory in Massachusetts and the other in Memphis.

Paiste provided the first presentation of the event, where the company's Ed Clift and Tim Shahady spoke against a backdrop of brilliant metallic shimmer given off by the colossal amount of cymbals they displayed. Next, Istanbul Agop's Scott Liken brought up famed jazz/fusion drummer Lenny White for demonstrations. Then John Stannard from Hammerax dazzled the audience with unique, new-sounding models. Closing the day was Sabian. Sharing their story in a roundtable format, the company's Andy Zildjian, Nort Hargrove, Greg Zeller, and Mark Love spoke with legendary drummers Jojo Mayer and Jack DeJohnette.

Topping off that fabulous first day was a most memorable evening. Spectacular performances by Mayer, John Riley, Thomas Lang, the Tony Thomas Trio featuring Tom Lonardo, and Ndugu Chancler left the crowd in awe.

Day two's presentations began with Meinl's Gabe Harris discussing the company's cymbal offerings and featuring Thomas Lang for demonstrations. "Preparing for the event," Lang says, "I learned a lot more about the cymbals I actually use. It was truly an eye-opening experience. Then I got to spend two entire days playing, comparing, choosing, and celebrating this wonderful instrument. For the first time I felt the cymbal got the attention it really deserves."

Mike Vosbein of Bosphorus and jazz great Jeff Hamilton gave the audience an in-depth look at their product and their cymbal-making process. Capping the event's presentations were Zildjian's Paul Francis and Leon Chiappini. The duo peppered their discussions with one amazing historical anecdote after another, keeping the crowd on the edge of their seats.

The event's electrifying finale featured a performance by the Jeff Hamilton Trio and was capped off by Peter Erskine and Alex Acuña playing Weather Report tunes and taking the audience to an even greater high.

During the Cymbal Summit, artists contributed to Memphis Drum Shop's MyCymbal.com. At this e-commerce site created exclusively for cymbals, drummers and percussionists can listen to every model currently in stock at the shop. After listening to a cymbal, customers can buy it—not one *like* it, but the actual piece they hear online. Cymbal Summit artists recorded some of their favorite models, to help potential customers, anywhere in the world, find that sought-after sound.

"I wish I had an opportunity when I was younger to own a cymbal that some of my heroes demoed for me," Mayer says. "This concept could kick doors wide open for new paradigms for relationships between customers, manufacturers, and dealers. MyCymbal.com is brilliant!"

Story by Joseph Elliot

Photos by Fotos By Folletts



Ndugu Chancler



John Riley



Jojo Mayer



Thomas Lang

8TH ANNUAL NOT SO MODERN DRUMMER VINTAGE AND CUSTOM DRUM SHOW

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SNARE DRUM OLYMPICS

NOT SO MODERN DRUMMER
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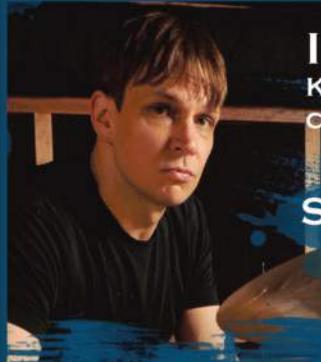
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CAPE BRETON'S YEAR OF THE LEGENDS CELEBRATION

The tenth annual Cape Breton International Drum Festival—this time dubbed the Year Of The Legends—was held this past May 22 and 23 in Nova Scotia. Paul Wertico, longtime drummer for the Pat Metheny Group and a seven-time Grammy winner, received a lifetime achievement award “for his major contributions to the world of drumming and education.” Says the drummer, “I am truly honored and grateful that my work has been recognized as significant by my peers in the field.”



Featured artists at the event included Liberty DeVitto, Danny Seraphine, Roxy Petrucci, Dom Famularo, Carmine Appice, Michael Shrieve, Chad Wackerman, Denny Seiwell, Bernard Purdie, Billy Ward, Bill Cobham, Pete Lockett, Troy Luccketta, and Alan White. “This year’s Cape Breton Festival was as good as a drum festival could be,” second-time performer DeVitto says. “A full three days of workshops and performances by the world’s top drummers. We drummers live in a unique community that shares ideas and stories. It’s a thrill for me to be hanging with drummers I listened to on records who are now my friends!”

“Ten years of hard work, selfless dedication, financial woes, fun, laughter, tears, tantrums, and triumphs,” says festival founder Bruce Aitken. “There were so many amazing things going on all weekend. When I first started all those years ago, it was never my intention that I would be remembered for much—and that’s fine with me—but as the festival grew and I got a little more comfortable with it, things started to develop. I believe we’ve made an important mark on drumming and changed the lives of many. To the artists, drum companies, drum magazines, and my staff and volunteers, I thank you all for trusting in me. My wife, Gloria Jean, and I will forever be in your debt.”

Photo by Fotos By Folletts

20TH ANNIVERSARY CHICAGO DRUM SHOW

The 20th Anniversary Chicago Drum Show was held this past May 15 and 16 at the Kane County Fairgrounds in St. Charles, Illinois, to an impressive turnout. “Our visitor count went from 1,029 to 1,228, and our exhibitor count went from 89 to 105, filling 137 booth spaces,” show organizer Rob Cook reports.

The clinician roster included Bun E. Carlos, Denny Seiwell, Hannah Ford, Gregg Potter, and Danny Seraphine. Joe Morello had been scheduled as a featured clinician but had to withdraw days before the event because of back problems. Billy Ward filled in for Morello and opened his clinic with an amazing version of Joe’s signature tune, “Take Five.” Midway through Ward’s clinic, DW founder Don Lombardi brought a cell phone to the stage; Morello was on the line to send his regards to attendees.

Nashville’s Bart Elliott brought his Drummer Café to life at the event by setting up an actual café with a stage, lights, and AV support.

Diners listened in as Elliott interviewed exhibitors, clinicians, and other drum industry personalities. Each day when the show closed, an outdoor drum circle was held, in affiliation with Scott Swimmer’s “rhythm-driven charity,” drumSTRONG.

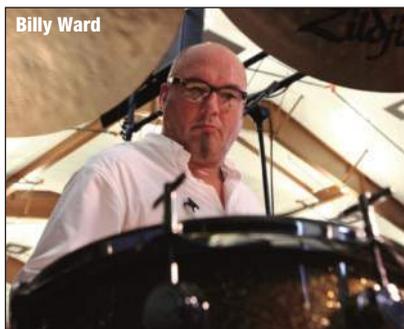
Drum Foundry sponsored two master classes on drum building, focusing on bearing edges and wrapping. Don Lombardi conducted a multimedia presentation, discussing various drumming styles and how they influenced him. And Gretsch president Fred Gretsch, assisted by KMC/Gretsch’s John Palmer, offered his own multimedia presentation, “Historic Highlights Of Gretsch Drums.”

Johnny Craviotto ratcheted up excitement for the show’s raffle by donating an entire Craviotto outfit, complete with a hybrid snare drum with an engraved commemorative plate. Winning the kit, along with Gibraltar hardware, was exhibitor Jim Krutz of Nebraska. Other raffle prizes included drums from Ludwig, Gretsch, Tempus, DW, Drum

Foundry, Famous Drums, Trick, and ThunderEcho and cymbals from Diril and Supernaturals. Additional raffle prizes, giveaways, and clinician sponsor support were provided by Auralex, DW, Evans, Vic Firth, George’s Drum Shop, Gibraltar, Gretsch, Hansenfutz, Ludwig, Maxheads, *Not So Modern Drummer*, Power Wrist Builders, Prentice, Remo, Pro-Mark, Sabian, Shure, Skins-N-Tins, *Sticks N’ Skins*, Toca, Vater, Xcel, and Zildjian.

Though this year’s Chicago Drum Show was undoubtedly a success, it carried with it a bittersweet aspect. “It was very difficult for many of us when we learned of the sudden and tragic death of longtime show participant Terry Breese [of Huber & Breese Music in Fraser, Michigan] just seven days before the show,” Rob Cook says. “I dedicated the anniversary Chicago show to Terry and his family. He was a dear friend and a trusted confidante, and he was really missed.”

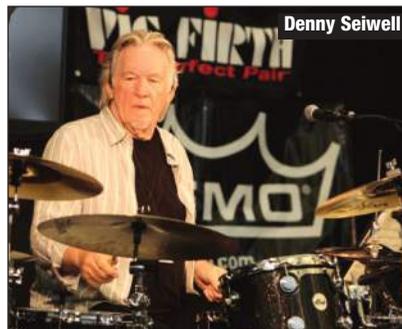
Photos by Fotos By Folletts



Billy Ward

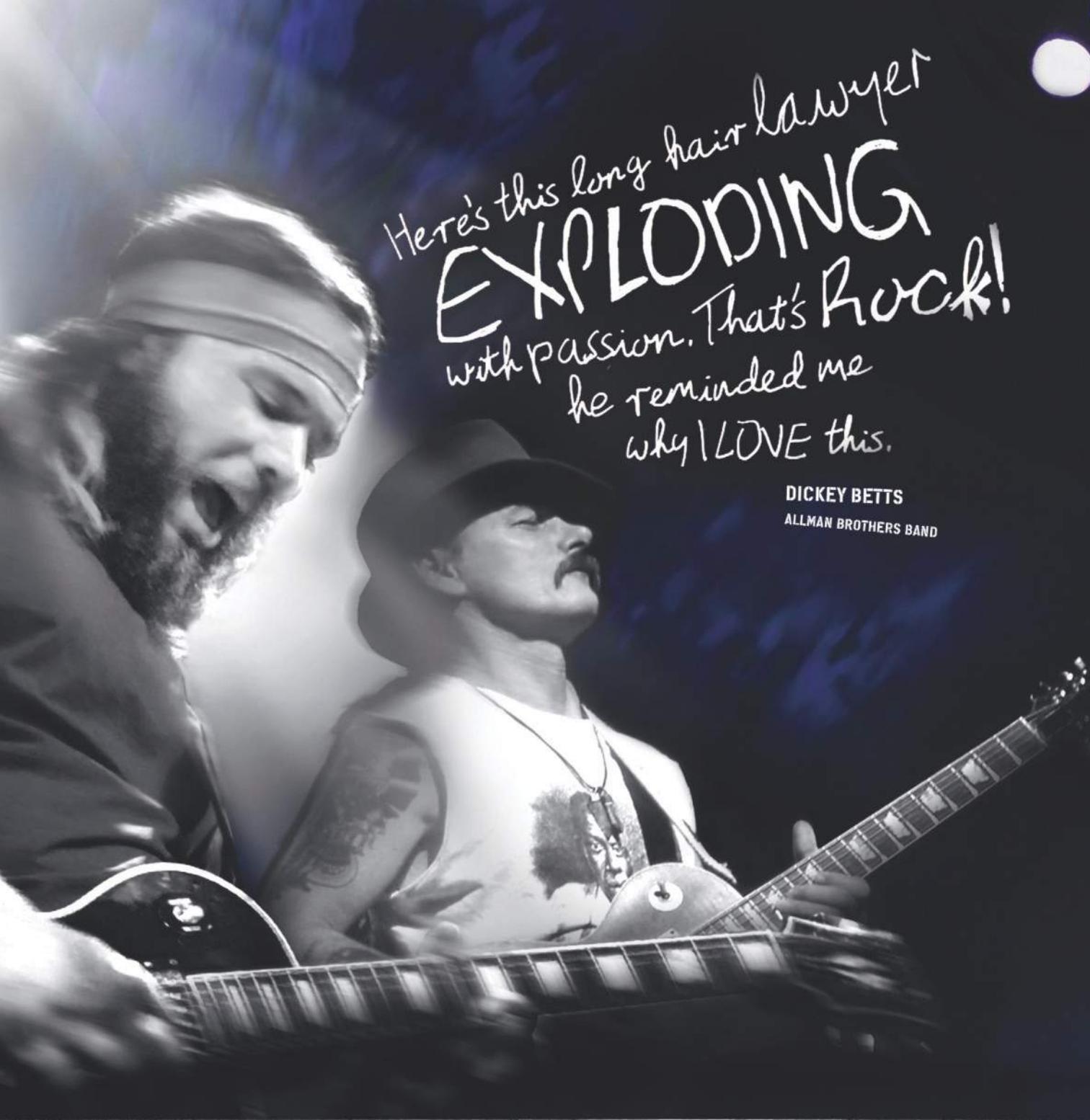


Danny Seraphine



Denny Seiwell





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Like A Kit Out Of Hell

This ghoulish setup comes from Delbert "Del" Westcott, who's been drumming for twenty-five years and currently plays in the rock bands Systematic Chaos and Dramatica in the Tampa area. "I love Halloween," Westcott says, "and I always dress up the house with tombstones, coffins, mechanized caskets—the whole bit—and use lights and fog machines to create one of the most talked-about houses in the neighborhood. So, I thought, why not do it with a drumset!

"I started with some skulls and tombstones, and off it went. I even glued a Styrofoam headstone to a bass drum head to add to the effect. For the final touches, I threw some gating on a Pearl Icon rack, along with draped chains and skull cymbal toppers, and then I staged it all inside the garage with lights and fog."

As Westcott was putting the kit together, he figured, "Let's really go wild and do a wrap." So, with help from his brother and Todd Rockenfield from RockenWraps, Del says, "We turned a 1995 sequoia red Pearl SPX kit into a scary kit using Neil Peart's thirtieth anniversary idea of a black background with floating objects. Todd was able to take the skulls from the tombstone and turn them into an X-ray image for the drumset's background design, and then we created the floating images using pictures of things like a coffin, a pumpkin I carved years ago for Halloween, some of the skulls on the rack, and a gargoyle and bat from the tombstones.

"I hope everyone enjoys the 'Deloween' kit, as Todd likes to call it, as much as I do," Westcott says. "I always wanted a kit that Rob Zombie, Alice Cooper, and Ozzy would be proud of!"



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