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January 2011

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**DAUGHTRY**  
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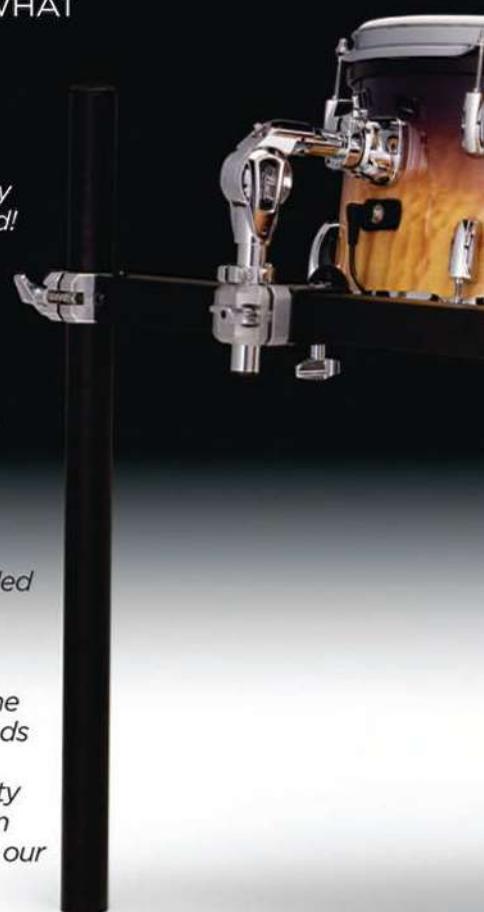
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36 **JOEY JORDISON**

Slipknot's ever-active drummer—who's recently added new Murderdolls and Rob Zombie projects to his already significant workload—puts down the mask and gets us closer to understanding his unusual methods and motivations.

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He's played with the best. And he believes you can too—but only if you have the guts to meet your true inner self.

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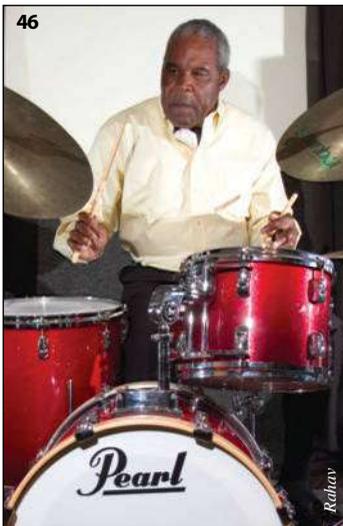
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Playing drums well in most forms of music comes down to this: The song is king—learn what it wants from you, and you'll be the kind of drummer everyone wants to play with. This month we pick the brains of five drummers who've made a career out of giving the song exactly what it needs.



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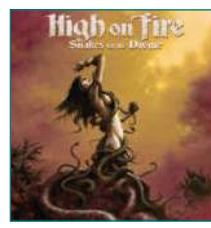
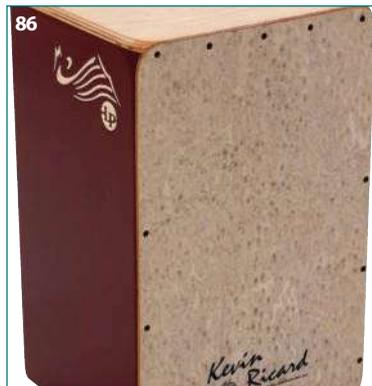
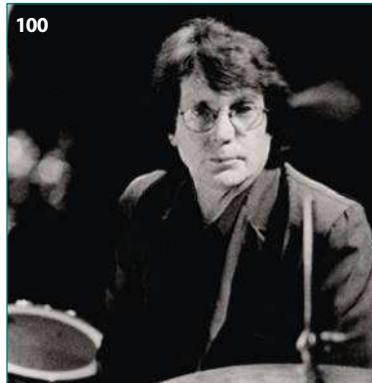
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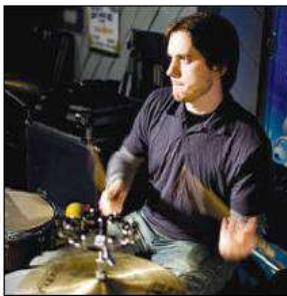
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# Where Are We Now?

Two thousand eleven marks the thirty-fifth year of publication for *Modern Drummer* magazine. Can you believe that? It's pretty amazing how a pet project of founder Ron Spagnardi, originally conceived to bring a sense of community and belongingness to drummers in the New York metro area, has evolved into a globally reaching brand that shares all types of musical stories, historical information, and professional advice through a monthly magazine, a rich library of method books (many of them written by Ron himself), an annual drum festival, and a slew of new twenty-first-century digital initiatives.



As crazy as some of us around the office may sometimes feel having to deal with the nonstop task of creating, maintaining, and updating all that's involved in the modern *Modern Drummer* world, all of us pinch ourselves on occasion to make sure that this basement-built fantasy is in fact a reality. And we're honored to be able to continue to spread the great universal word of drumming to all of you each month.

Unfortunately, I never had a chance to meet Ron; I was brought on board shortly after his passing. If I did, I'm not sure I'd even know what to say. To a kid from Nowheresville, *Modern Drummer* was my only connection to the "real" world of professional drumming. And it was a big reason why I was able to stay one step ahead of many of my peers while figuring out how to get on with this crazy instrument.

To those of you who have been with us since the beginning, we are humbled by your steadfast dedication, especially in a day and age where online forums, YouTube, and editorial-poaching websites have done much to try to tear you away. For those of you who've just joined us, welcome to the family! As a longtime reader of *Modern Drummer* myself (dating back to the September 1991 issue, with Kenny Aronoff on the cover), I can honestly say that there's no better way to keep yourself inspired to improve than to pore over the pages of the mag each month, gobbling up as much info as you can.

I personally found this issue to be especially rich with wisdom, particularly in the passionate and cut-to-the-bone truths that radiate from the interviews with three seemingly disparate figures: metal god Joey Jordison, R&B/gospel heavyweight Chris Coleman, and jazz guru Michael Carvin. Even if you're not yet a fan of these guys, there's a wealth of knowledge to be gleaned from their stories that *will* help make you a better drummer.

To commemorate our thirty-fifth anniversary, I'd like to close with a short excerpt from Ron's opening editorial from the inaugural issue of *Modern Drummer* in January 1977. This is what we do our darndest to uphold each and every day:

If you're a drum student, an aspiring pro, a teacher, a professional player, or just a plain old drum enthusiast from eight to eighty, *Modern Drummer* is meant for you.

We're basically for the drummer who's interested in growing as a musician and in search of a source from which he [or she] might draw some intelligent conclusions. We hope to be that source by staying abreast of the latest in styles, artists, and equipment; by keeping the pages of *Modern Drummer* as relevant to the needs of today's drummer as possible; and by keeping our fingers firmly placed on the pulse of our fast-growing, ever-changing industry.

We think this issue contains some very meaty reading for drummers, and we hope you'll find it entertaining and informative. Enjoy.

*Mike Dawson*

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**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:** Michael Bettine, John Emrich, Mike Haid, Dr. Asif Khan, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Mark Parsons, Bernie Schallehn, Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel Weiss, T. Bruce Wittet.

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**STEVE JORDAN**

I was very happy to see that Steve Jordan made it to the cover of *MD*'s October 2010 issue. I learned a lot about Jordan as I read through this article. I was shocked when he said he doesn't use a click track very often for his recordings—they sound so tight! Steve's YouTube videos have showed me a lot about grooving. He's a great groove drummer and pretty much all-around amazing at any style. I'm glad he's being noticed for being a simple drummer. Simple drumming is definitely the way to go. I wouldn't mind seeing a few more articles on Steve Jordan.

**Rob Ketchum**

Regarding my interview from the October issue, I just want to say that it came out very well, and I really appreciate it. However, I made a huge oversight. The great engineer Niko Bolas helped me put my studio, Knotek, together. We first worked together on Neil Young's *Landing On Water*. I also want to mention my drum/guitar tech, Artie Smith. Artie and I have worked together for decades on just about everything and anything worthwhile. Thanks.

**Steve Jordan**



**CAPE BRETON FESTIVAL: YEAR OF THE LEGENDS**

I was happy to see a mention in *MD*'s October Backbeats of the Cape Breton Festival. The lineup was truly legendary! I could not believe I was sharing the stage with so many of my drumming heroes. The highlight for me was playing in front of Jerry Mercer of April Wine. Mr. Mercer was sitting in the front row during my performance—which I dedicated to him. What an awesome experience! However, for me the best part of the whole event was the way Bruce and Gloria Jean Aitken once again created an atmosphere of family and friendship for all who participated in and attended this incredible festival. I am so grateful to have performed two years in a row, and I hope to participate/attend for many years to come!

**Moe Hashie, drummer/educator**

The 2010 Cape Breton Year Of The Legends Festival was as good as any drum event could be. It was a full three days of workshops and performances by some of the world's top drummers. For me it was a chance to show what I've done and share it with an audience full of drummers and music lovers.

We as drummers live in a unique community that shares ideas and stories. It's a

thrill for me to be hanging with drummers I've listened to on records, many of whom are now my friends. At the festival I did a duet with former Chicago drummer Danny Seraphine. At one point I played to a song I recorded with Billy Joel, and then Danny played to a tune he recorded with Chicago. After his performance I told the audience that when I was younger I always tried to do one of his fills in that song. Now, after seeing him play it, I said, "Oh, that's how he does it!"

I'm amazed by the fact that Bruce and Gloria Jean Aitken have put this event together to bring all this knowledge of drums and music to an audience of drummers at all levels, with the hope of taking them to the next level. This was my second year, and if I'm asked to do the CB Festival again, you know I will. Cheers!

**Liberty DeVitto**

Although I was most definitely surprised, thrilled, and honored to be mentioned in the October 2010 issue of *Modern Drummer* as having received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the tenth annual Cape Breton International Drum Festival, I feel I have to add the fact that I wasn't the only recipient. Danny Seraphine and Steve Smith were also given the award, and Alan White, Carmine Appice, Roxy Petrucci, Jerry Mercer, and Virgil Donati were given the Legends Award. These amazing players, as well as other legendary drummers on the bill, made the 2010 festival a truly memorable one, not only for its level of talent but also for the wonderful camaraderie.

I'd also like to thank *MD* reader Matt Deibert for taking the time to comment on my Gimme 10! I'm happy that he found my advice to have some value, and I hope others did as well.

**Paul Wertico**

**LOS CABOS DRUMSTICKS**

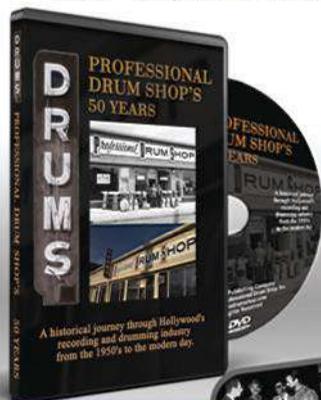
Thank you so much for fitting us into your magazine. That was a very nice article in your October Product Close-Up, and it should go a long way toward opening the eyes, ears, and hands of many drummers. There is, however, an error in the story that is not the fault of anyone. I was recently made aware of an increase in our MSRP that didn't make it to our desks in time. The MSRP is \$13.50 for all wood-tip sticks and \$14 for nylon tips. Thank you very much once again—we're forever grateful for your support.

**Matt Carter, Los Cabos Drumsticks**  
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**DROPPED BEAT**

In the feature on Daru Jones in the November issue of *MD*, the manufacturer of his sticks should have read SilverFox.

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# ALLISON MILLER

## Living Healthy As A Touring Musician



**The MD Pro Panelist decided it was time to stop letting the rigors of the road get the best of her. We asked Alli for some pointers.**

I've been touring for fifteen years, and in all honesty I'm *still* trying to figure out the key to maintaining a healthy lifestyle on the road. It's tricky because the human body is not accustomed to moving great distances in short amounts of time. I do know that to have any longevity as a touring musician, you have to stay healthy.

There is also this grandiose fantasy about the magnificent party life of a touring musician. Well, I'm here to tell you that this endless road party is a myth. It's just not sustainable. I don't know anyone who has maintained a career as a touring musician while still partying every night. Those who try burn out, and the music suffers.

I spent years touring unhealthily before I decided to get my act together. Finally, one day I thought to myself, *Alli, how can you possibly stay grounded on a moving bus? How can you have some kind of stability if you're in a new city every day? How can you stay focused and healthy with so many temptations?* Here's what I've come up with. Keep in mind that, as I said before, I'm still trying to work out some things—I haven't found "the solution." But I *have* figured out what works for me at this point in my life, and I think some of it can help you too.

I like to divide my wellness into two categories: physical well-being and mental well-being. These categories are connected. For example, regular exercise keeps

me in good physical condition, but it also releases endorphins that help my mental well-being. And since exercise helps keep my drumming in tip-top condition, I feel good about my performances, which in turn helps my mental state.

I prefer running because it produces quick results and gives me the opportunity to check out some of the cities we visit. There is nothing more depressing than only seeing the bus, stage, and dressing room all day and night. Sometimes I break up my running with elliptical or stationary bike work at the hotel gym. I have friends who are super into doing yoga on the road, which I've tried—but I'm just too impatient. Ha!

I also make sure to get lots of rest. I cannot stress this enough. Sleep as much as possible! Whenever I'm irritable or lethargic, it's usually because I didn't get enough sleep.

I also watch what and how much I consume. Moderation is the key. I know which foods don't sit well with me, and I try to stay away from them. I try not to overeat or over-drink. (This is difficult for me, because like most musicians I don't do moderation very well.) I also try not to do much late-night eating. I'm *not* always successful. Sometimes I just can't refuse that greasy, delicious after-show food.

Like tonight I had way too much late-night pizza. Oops. Progress, not perfection, right?

Another key to physical and mental wellness is developing a routine musical warm-up before shows. I like to play along with MP3s or practice my favorite rudimental exercise, Alan Dawson's Rudimental Ritual. I play it with heavy sticks or brushes on a pillow, always with a metronome. (The Frozen Ape metronome cell phone app is great for traveling.) The Ritual is amazing and totally loosens up my forearms. Warming up also serves as a kind of meditation before each show, helping me focus and calm myself while getting the blood flowing. I stretch my forearms and shoulders before shows as well.

Now, there are a couple of things I want to mention that mainly focus on mental wellness. First, always listen to what your mind needs. By this I mean take some time to yourself if you need space from your "road family." I've developed a method of zoning out with my laptop. I could be in the middle of a swirling tornado with uprooted houses flying around my head, and I would still be focused on whatever mind-numbing interests I have flashing across my laptop screen. (I do have an *uncanny* knack for zoning out.) Also, sometimes I just go off and do my own thing. I'm constantly listening to how I feel. If I need to go for a walk by myself, then I go for a walk by myself. Taking this alone time allows me to be more congenial with my road family while we're living together on the bus.

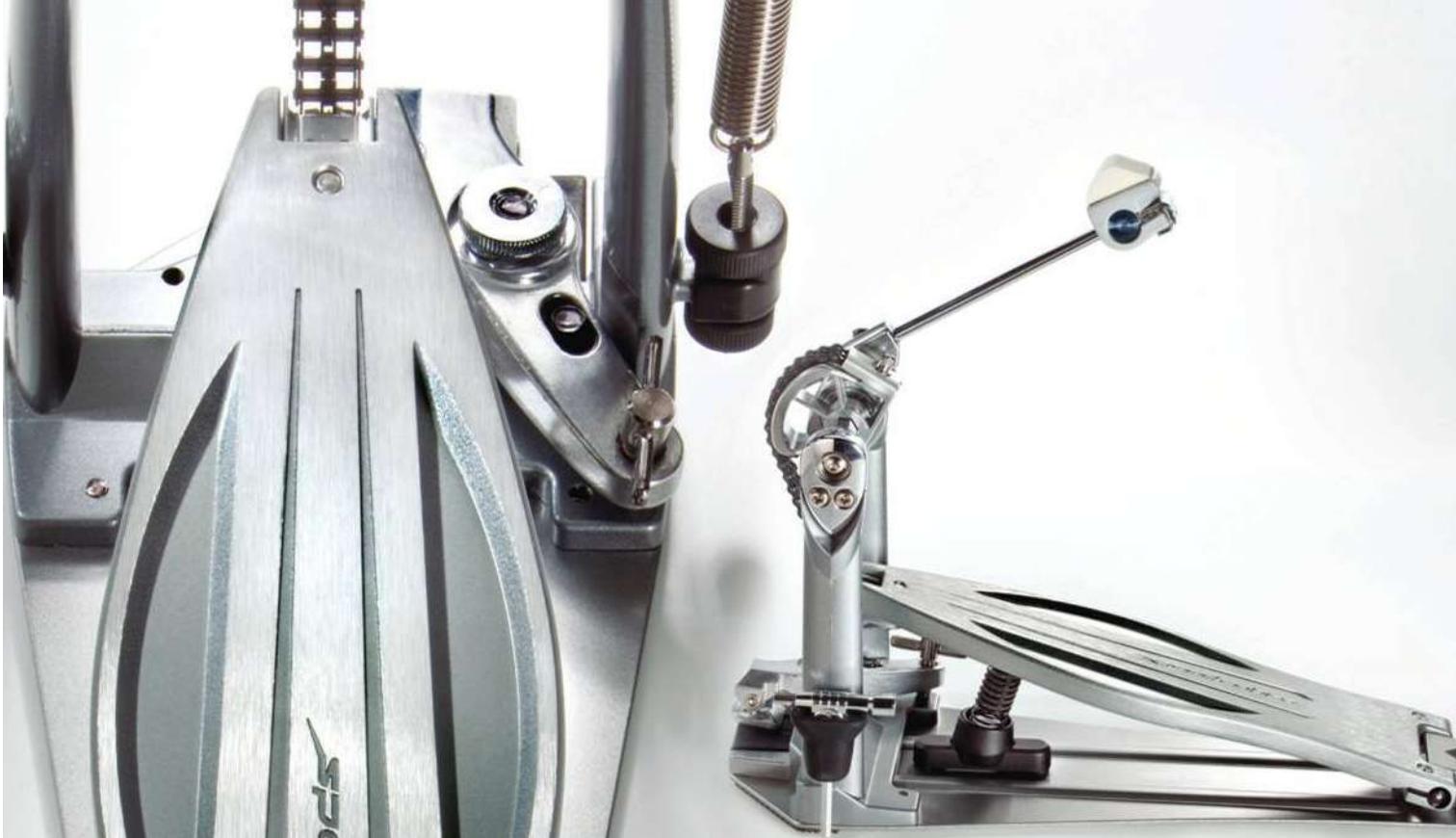
Last but not least, visit friends while traveling. I love seeing my friends all over the country. I like to be a visitor of their day-to-day lives. It's like jumping onto the screen of a new sitcom every day, and it helps to mix things up on the road.

I hope I've given you some helpful advice for healthy touring. I'm on the road about eight months out of the year, and I still seem to have my sanity and am pretty damn happy. I do what I love for a living. I'm constantly reminded how amazing this is, and I feel my healthy lifestyle enables me to do it—and will continue to for a long time. Cheers to that! And happy drumming to all.



Paul La Raia





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# PATRICK WILSON

Weezer's multitasker is all about making adjustments and looking at the big picture.

"Our live show is the bomb," says Patrick Wilson of Weezer, which has been conducting short but potent mini tours behind its latest chunk of pop-rock gold, *Hurley*. "I'm so pleased with our performances. They've become super-fun...they feel important to me, actually."



For the past year and a half, Wilson's primary live role as a guitarist with Weezer means he's ceded the drum throne to Josh Freese for most of the band's set. "I love playing with Josh every night," Wilson says. "And when I do play the drums live, having him there kind of kicks me in the ass."

The ultimate team player, Wilson is even open to sharing drum time on *Hurley* with singer Rivers Cuomo. ("Pretty much any time you hear a four-on-the-floor kick drum, that's him playing.") It's not like Patrick has anything to worry about, after all—his stamp is easily detected on cuts like "Unspoken," where his joyous, active slamming makes the song's second half one of the more emotionally satisfying moments on the album.

And truth be told, Wilson's self-worth isn't completely tied to Weezer. His own band, the Special Goodness, has been a creative outlet for the past decade, allowing him to fully express himself as a songwriter, singer, and multi-instrumentalist.

Wilson isn't beyond admitting when he's gotten in too deep in terms of ruling his own destiny, however. "I have a Logic setup at home, and I have a bunch of good outboard effects," he says. "But it's extraordinarily taxing to put every hat on. That's why on my next record I'm going to work with other people. If you're doing something that's rock based, you should really have someone else recording you—unless you're extremely disciplined, which I am not. It's just really hard when you have all these competing agendas within yourself."

# NATE MORTON

Digging some old-school recording methods during a window in Cher's Vegas run

During a recent break from backing Cher at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Nate Morton recorded with the Australian singer-songwriter Pete Murray in Studio B at Sunset Sound Recording Studios in Hollywood, for a forthcoming album.

"Playing with bassist Sasha Krivtsov is always a treat," Morton says, "because his pocket is so fat, it makes me sound like I'm always dead on. It was also my first time working with producer Tom Rothrock [James Blunt, Elliott Smith, Badly Drawn Boy, Beck]. Tom was most concerned with what my initial instinct would be for parts, so at first he just wanted me to play whatever ideas came to mind and not worry about missing transitions.

"He also asked me to do an entire pass without a single fill or crash," Morton continues. "He explained that, rather than playing fills every sixteen bars in a perfunctory way, it's important to start with nothing, in order to find out where the song is actually asking for a fill or crash. Tom might also request that I adjust the velocity of the snare up 10 percent but bring down the cymbal velocity 20 percent. For any aspiring session drummer, I highly recommend working on the ability to adjust your internal dynamic levels within the kit.

"Everyone was in the same room," Nate adds enthusiastically, "contributing to a vibe and an energy to match the mood of Pete's songs. Pete is an outstanding songwriter, and I was honored to be a part of this special recording."



## OUT NOW ON CD

### DAVE KING On The Bad Plus's *Never Stop*

To mark the trio's tenth anniversary, the Bad Plus has issued its first all-originals album, *Never Stop*, which follows 2008's all-covers LP, *For All I Care*. Both sets were recorded at Pachyderm, in Cannon Falls, Minnesota, with engineer Brent Sigmeth. "The only difference," drummer Dave King says, "was this time we played the big-room dynamics a little more. If the drums are isolated, you're free to explore really heavy dynamic swings. But when I'm in the room with the piano, it really makes you pull your intensity from things other than volume. It's like, how do you bring heavy intent without burying that piano? Or, when we do bury each other, is it for a musical reason? We tried to nail that within just the touch itself, like we do live, instead of using mixing to portray it." You might be intrigued to know that King's lush jazz tones are coaxed from an acrylic Ellis kit. "They're doing something very special with acrylic drums," Dave says, "though they make all types. On record I always use my Ellis drums, and I prefer the acrylic ones over the wood ones, believe it or not. There's something about a bebop-size drumkit in acrylic—I just love that."



## Also On The Shelves

**Ray LaMontagne & The Pariah Dogs** God Willin' & The Creek Don't Rise (Jay Bellerose) /// **Quarterfly** Do You Believe (Brian Stuart) /// **Brandon Flowers** Flamingo (Darren Beckett, Victor Indrizzo, Ronnie Vannucci) /// **Linkin Park** A Thousand Suns (Rob Bourdon) /// **Robert Plant** Band Of Joy (Marco Giovino) /// **Richard Barone** Glow (Dennis Diken, Tommy Goss, Glen Fitten, Richard Kerris) /// **Rory Gallagher** The Beat Club Sessions (Wilgar Campbell) /// **Antonio Sanchez** Live In New York At Jazz Standard (Antonio Sanchez)

## ON TOUR

**Jon Jester** with the Dance Party /// **Joe Nunez** with Soulfly /// **Michael Cartellone** with Lynyrd Skynyrd /// **Scott Plouf** with Built To Spill /// **Matt Sherrod** with Crowded House /// **Matt Flynn** with Maroon 5



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# Rogers MemriLoc Drumset

**I have a question regarding an old Rogers drumkit that belongs to my future father-in-law. Can you tell me if it's a high-end kit or an entry-level one? I don't know much about the history of Rogers drums, so any information you could pass along would be great.**  
Bryan

"That's a California-era Rogers MemriLoc drumset from the 1970s," says drum historian Harry Cangany. "MemriLoc kits incorporated round 1"-diameter tom arms rather than the hexagonal rods used on the earlier Swiv-O-Matic tom mounts. This was a high-end kit, and collectors often seek out Rogers drums. But the most sought-after Rogers are older Ohio-made and early California-made kits with Swiv-O-Matic tom mounts. MemriLocs were good-sounding drums. From the photo, it looks as though the color of this particular kit is what Rogers called New England white."



## THE DOCTOR IS IN

by Asif Khan, M.D.



# Shortness Of Breath

**I've been playing drums for many years, and I'm also a smoker. Over the past year I've been coughing a lot and getting very short of breath while practicing. I'm sure this is due to the effects of smoking, but it's very difficult for me to quit, and I'm not a fan of going to the doctor. Do you have any suggestions?**  
Tom Z.

Shortness of breath is one of the numerous insidious side effects of smoking. Unfortunately for some smokers, by the time this becomes a symptom, significant lung damage may have already been done.

To date, cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of death and disability in the United States. Cardiovascular diseases, heart attacks, strokes, and lung disorders such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are all direct results of smoking. This is broad subject matter, but since COPD seems to be most

relevant to your question, it will be the focus of my attention. This response, however, is neither diagnostic of your condition nor ruling out other potential illnesses, such as cancer and heart disease.

COPD is a blanket term that includes conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema. It's characterized by airflow limitation that's *not* fully reversible. Certain medicines, however, can help treat the aforementioned conditions if caught early enough.

Patients with COPD usually show up at my office for three reasons: 1. They have few symptomatic complaints yet lead an extremely sedentary lifestyle. 2. They describe chronic respiratory problems such as coughing and shortness of breath. 3. They are wheezing badly.

Most patients with COPD, like you, have a history of smoking. But you don't *have* to be smoker to have COPD. Your doctor will typically perform a pulmonary function test, used to objectively assess

the percentage of airflow into and out of your lungs, if he or she discovers you are wheezing during a routine physical examination. If the results are significant enough, your doctor may also order a CT scan of the lungs to view the extent of the damage.

In your case, treatment of COPD would obviously include smoking cessation and might also include a powerful steroid inhaler and/or an oral steroid such as prednisone.

Any change in a person's breathing pattern—for smokers and nonsmokers alike—can be a sinister warning sign. I recommend that you immediately schedule a check-up with your doctor. For nonsmokers complaining of shortness of breath, increasing daily exercise, decreasing excess weight, and improving diet are all recommended ways to help prevent COPD.



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# GIMME 10!

PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM  
PROS WHO KNOW

# ERIN TATE

**Minus The Bear's** drummer has synthesized his many diverse influences into a winning sound, heard most recently on the band's top-ten indie/alternative album *Omni*. Be open-minded, he tells us, but be yourself too.

**1 REHEARSE TO RAP MUSIC.** It has a built-in click—it totally helps if you're focusing on being solid.

**2 SOME PEOPLE ARE NATURALS, SOME PEOPLE ARE NOT.** If you're not, you can still become a great drummer. You're just going to need to practice more.

**3 WHEN ON TOUR, TRY TO GET ENOUGH SLEEP.** It sounds stupid, but getting enough rest is going to make you, and everyone around you, happier.

**4 DRINK ENOUGH WATER AND TRY NOT TO DRINK TOO MUCH BEER BEFORE YOU GO ON STAGE.** Once again, it sounds stupid, but it's hard to put on your best performance when you're dehydrated.

**5 KEEP YOUR DRUMMING DIVERSE.** Don't get stuck playing only what you know. Keep yourself on your toes and try out other genres of music.

**6 BE A PROFESSIONAL.** Use your own gear, and make sure your equipment is well maintained. Nobody wants a drummer who doesn't own a drumkit.

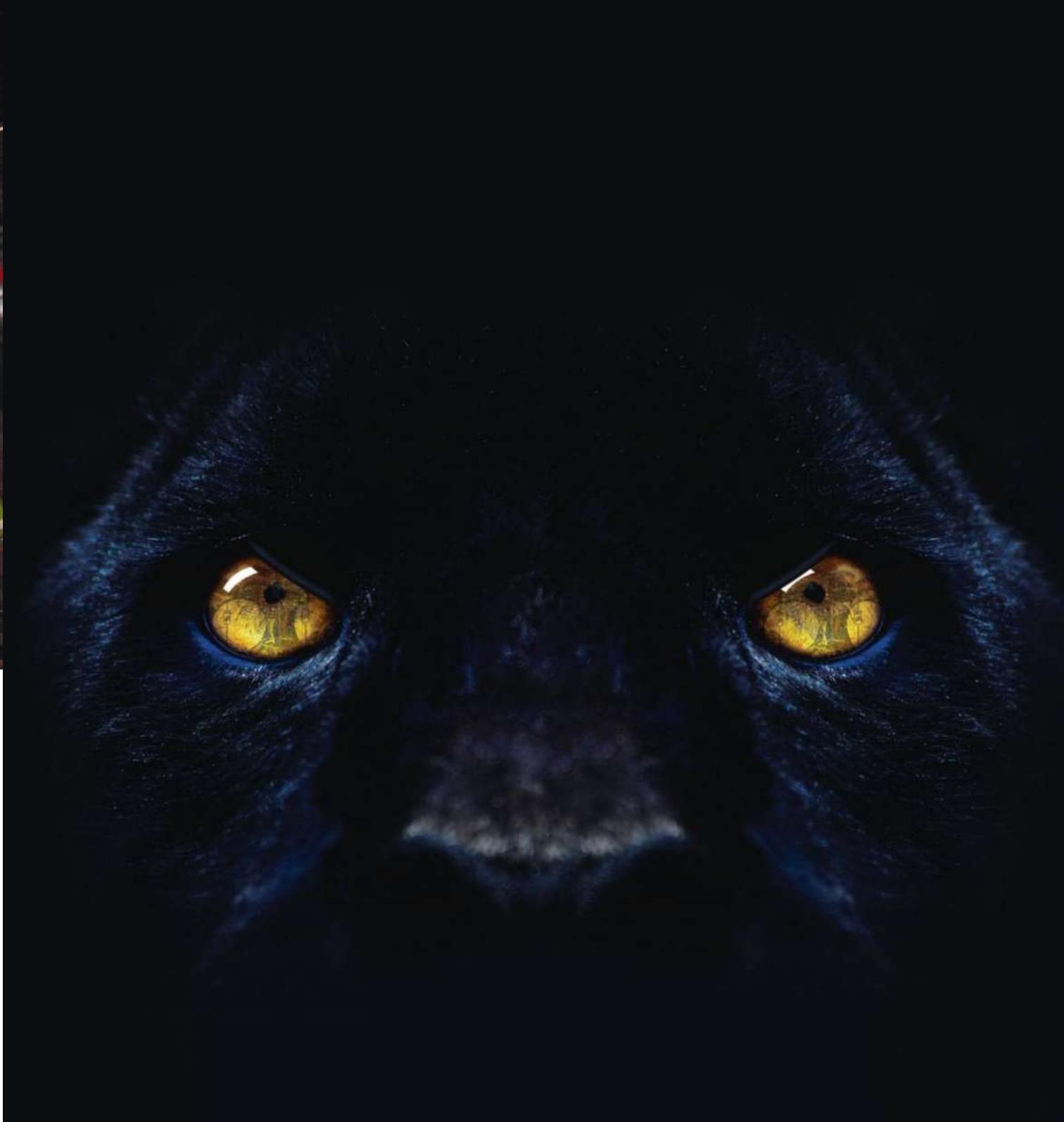
**7 LISTEN TO LOTS OF DR. DRE.**

**8 TAKE DRUM LESSONS WHEN YOU'RE STARTING OUT; THEY WILL HELP YOU GET THE BASICS DOWN.** They aren't as essential as some would like you to believe, but taking them early on will definitely help you later in your career. I'm self-taught, but if there was one thing I could do over, this would be it.

**9 FIND YOUR BRANDS AND STICK WITH THEM.** Figure out what sticks, heads, and cymbals you like, and then try to keep it consistent. It will help with your overall sound.

**10 ALWAYS KEEP TRYING TO INVENT YOUR OWN STYLE.**





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# SABIAN

## PARAGON BRILLIANT AND VAULT ARTISAN CYMBALS

by J.R. Frondelli

**MODERNDRUMMER**  
DIGITALLY ENHANCED



**W**ebster's dictionary defines the word *paragon* as "a model of excellence or perfection." Neil Peart's picture could be placed next to that definition. Peart is unquestionably one of the most accomplished drummers of our time, a model of excellence in his own right. Therefore it's fitting that his signature cymbals are named Paragon.

Peart worked closely with Sabian product development manager Mark Love, fine-tuning and tweaking each Paragon model to his exacting standards. Only then did the Rush drummer allow his signature to grace each cymbal in the series. The original versions premiered in 2004, in a standard lathed finish. The line has expanded to include brilliant versions, for drummers who desire a little more sonic and visual focus. Peart is one of those players and has converted to the Paragon Brilliant series in its entirety.

### STAND AND BE COUNTED

If you're looking to outfit your kit with an entire Paragon Brilliant setup, you're likely going to need some extra cymbal stands.

The series is composed of a 22" ride (\$583); 16" (\$356), 18" (\$420), and 20" (\$494) crashes; 8" (\$185) and 10" (\$218) splashes; 13" (\$538) and 14" (\$591) hi-hats; 19" (\$449) and 20" (\$494) Chinas; and a 20" Diamondback China (\$494) with four jingles and four sizzle rivets. The cymbals retain the pad-printed gold logo from the original series, as well as Peart's signature inside each bell. While Sabian could have utilized laser etching for the logos, the company says the heat generated by that process disturbs the cymbals' tempering.

### SOUNDS LIKE...?

The medium-thin Paragon Brilliant crashes opened up quickly with a cutting, commanding tone, yet they possessed silvery overtones and a medium decay time. Hitting multiple crashes in succession sounded like individual hits rather than a wall of noise. These attack/decay characteristics remained consistent throughout the size range, resulting in cymbals that sounded identical except for pitch. The 18" and 20" models would make great

crash/rides for lighter-hitting players.

The 13" and 14" hi-hats were excellent. The 14s had more roar, while the 13s offered more sizzle. Although both pairs were very versatile, the 14s were decidedly louder and more commanding. If I had to pick a pair for all-around playing, it would be the 13s, but neither size sounded clangy, nasal, or thin, despite the cymbals' slightly heavier weight.

Ride cymbals for rock can be a tough choice. Some are too pingy, others are too washy, and the bells can be a bit spiky. There's only one ride cymbal in the Paragon series, a portly (more than eight pounds!) 22" whose sonic characteristics fell squarely in the middle. For medium to loud playing, this cymbal possessed just the right amount of ping, overtones, sparkle, and focus, and the bell sounded meaty and blended with the music rather than cutting through like a stiletto. Despite this cymbal's weight, it was very musical and would be equally at home in big band and rock settings. It had minimal crash qualities, but hey, that's just not its gig. This is a dyed-in-the-wool *ride* cymbal.

## PARAGON BRILLIANCE

The tonality of the Paragon series is bright, cutting, and big—yet controlled. The addition of the brilliant finish quiets the high frequencies a bit while focusing the tone, and the incorporation of hammered bells cuts some sustain. Even though the line is considered to be sonically modern, the models are not unlike good, heavier vintage cymbals. There's definitely versatility going on here.



SABIAN

### MAKE SOME NOISE!

There are plenty of good effects cymbals in this series, with two splashes and three Chinas. The splashes, which sport slightly larger bells, possessed the same characteristics as the crashes, complementing them perfectly. With their crystalline sound and quick decay, these beautiful instruments would fit into just about any cymbal setup.

Three China cymbals might sound redundant on paper, but these Paragon Brilliances are way different from each other. I've never played more than one China at a time, but these could change my mind. The 19" had a unique wide-flange profile with exaggerated hammering. It was nice and trashy sounding with a quick decay when played upside down. This is strictly an accent cymbal that's not really meant for proper riding. Conversely, the 20" is a more traditional China that had good body and spread when played upside down yet offered that classic China ride sound in the right-side-up position, with a crash sound straight out of Charlie Watts' bag.

The 20" Diamondback China possessed a distinctive sizzle/rattle quality and shortened decay due to its combination of sizzle rivets and jingles, which not only add noise but shorten the decay as well. Played upside down as an accent cymbal, the Diamondback sounded very sneezy. Right side up, it functioned well as an up-tempo ride, which could work in a small jazz setting during horn solos to give the band a bed of sound support.

### VAULT ARTISAN CRASHES

Each of Sabian's Vault Artisan crashes comes with its own velvet-lined Cordura cymbal pouch, and included with each is a card signed by the craftsman. Like fine champagne, these cymbals are produced lovingly and aged carefully in limited quantities, and it shows. A 22" Artisan ride takes about 3,000 hammer marks to shape its rich, complex sound.

We received eight Vault Artisan crashes for review: 16" (\$585), 17" (\$636), 18" (\$686), 19" (\$748), and 20" (\$799) models

in regular finish, and 16", 18", and 20" versions in brilliant finish (at no additional cost). They are all thin in weight and sport heavy hand hammering with large, unlathed bells and a fairly flat bow profile. A large bell maximizes overtones, while a flatter bow yields a lower pitch. This translates to crashes that absolutely roared when struck, with silvery overtones, rich undertones, and a pitch range that would blend with all types of music.

The exaggerated hand hammering used on these Artisan crashes introduces a smoky flavor as well as a shorter decay; these cymbals didn't ring too long. They produced wonderful tones with even the lightest stroke of the stick, brush, rod, or hand, and the sound they made when rolled with mallets was majestic. As with the Paragon Brilliances, these cymbals sounded identical to each other except for the graduation of pitch. The brilliant-finish Artisans had an ever so slightly more focused sound as compared with their regular-finish counterparts. Though these cymbals might appeal primarily to traditional jazz and acoustic music players, they can speak myriad musical languages. I used them for jazz, pop, rock, and big band, and they cut it in each style with ease.

All of the cymbals in this review are truly fine musical instruments that I feel are destined to become collectibles.

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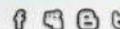


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# CRAVIOTTO

## CLASSIC SERIES RED BIRCH KIT

by David Ciauro

**S**taring at this Craviotto solid-shell red birch kit awoke the dormant hepcat in me. I'm mostly a "rock dude," so when I try to play jazz, bebop, or New Orleans second line, it's quickly apparent that it would be best to let sleeping hepcats lie. For review purposes, though, it was fun to explore this more freeform side of my musical self while checking out some of the most coveted drums on the market. Here's how it all went down.

### AN AROMA OF DISTINCTION

The natural-finish red birch shells used for these drums were aesthetically magnificent. Through a clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum head I was able to view their true beauty from the inside, but something about the idea of a clear batter head on a jazz-minded 14x20 kick didn't jibe well with me. Normally I approach reviews from the angle that how a product is submitted is how it should be reviewed, leaving my personal tastes and customizations at bay. This time, however, I granted my ego a small victory by swapping out the clear Powerstroke for a Fiberskyn. As I removed the head, the wafting aroma of red birch was damn near intoxicating. The lush wood scent bragged of quality craftsmanship and the sophistication of an antique armoire. This was going to be *fun*.

### CRANK 'EM UP!

I tuned the ensemble three ways: low, medium, and high, and I kept the heads wide open and unmuffled. Of the three tunings, the high-pitched option best mirrored the sound I imagined for this kit. By cranking the resonant heads on the toms and kick and keeping the batter heads a quarter to a half turn looser, I found the drums were openly expressive and full of presence. With the kick, I was able to back off the tuning to a medium tension and still get a tone that blended well with the toms while adding a bit more punch. With the kit tuned this way, I spent an hour repeatedly butchering Joe Morello's "Take Five" solo and loved every minute of it!

### RED BIRCH PRICE BUMP

The four-piece red birch Classic series shell pack we reviewed consisted of a **14x20 bass drum (\$4,650)**, an **8x12 rack tom (\$1,625)**, a **14x14 floor tom (\$1,925)**, and a **matching 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 snare (\$2,050)**. Red birch is regarded by Craviotto as an exotic wood, and so these shells bump up the cost from that of the standard maple shells usually used for the company's Classic kits.



Side note: I eventually returned to the stock clear Powerstroke batter. The sound achieved with the clear head had more slap in the attack and less warmth than with the Fiberskyn. It was, perhaps, a more universal sound—but it was definitely "de-jazzed."

Playing dynamically on these drums was done with ease. They had a wealthy range of voices and timbres. The responsiveness was quite sensitive too. I never felt as though my stroke had to coerce the drums. I heard what I played; there was always an equal reaction. Medium and low tunings were far from terrible but lacked some of the pep that the high tuning exuded. The extraordinary tones in this high tuning had wonderful clarity, warmth, and focus that truly captured the spirit of the shells. The looser I tuned the drums, the more "ordinary" they sounded.

### REVERSE LOGIC

Tuning the 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 snare was confusing at first, because I typically tune an entire kit using the same basic method in order to achieve what I believe to be the most cohesive sound. The snare sound that I found best complemented the rest of the red birch kit, however, was with a tight batter head and a medium-loose snare side, with the snares set fairly loose. This provided top-end pop with a warm, full tone and

sensitive snare response. Craviotto's custom high-carbon snare wires sizzled against the slack snare-side head, making the drum feel great to play while producing an open tone that matched nicely with the rest of the kit.

### THE DEETS

Like all Craviotto Classic series kits, the red birch set comes equipped with Gauger RIMS suspension tom mounts; matching bass drum hoops; diamond wood inlays; a Trick throw-off for the snare; heavy-gauge 2.3 mm triple-flange steel counterhoops; chrome-plated Craviotto "diamond" emblems on universal brackets, memory locks, bass drum spurs, claw hooks, and floor tom legs; custom high-carbon snare wires; Remo coated Ambassador batter and clear resonant heads on the snare and toms; and a Remo Powerstroke Fiberskyn bass drum resonant head and clear Powerstroke 3 batter.

### CONCLUSION

This is a great-sounding kit for jazzier situations, especially when tuned higher, with an abundance of warm, crisp tonal qualities. In a live setting, the components have a radiant presence that offers a great dynamic range. I did feel that the drums lost a bit of radiance at lower tunings. They never sounded bad, but for the price tag, a kit that's not spectacular in several tunings may turn off some potential buyers.

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

# LATIN PERCUSSION

## HANDHELD INSTRUMENTS

by Fran Azzarto

**W**e drummers love our toys, and LP has released a bunch of new ones to play around with. We received for review the company's One Handed Triangle, the multipurpose Percusso, an 8" Micro Snare, the Jim Greiner Pro Shekere, and the Multi-Stem Gajate Bracket.

### ONE HANDED TRIANGLE (OHT)

When I think of playing a triangle, I recall my days in the percussion section of an orchestra, counting hundreds of measures and then making a few precisely placed taps with one hand while holding the instrument with the other. Not anymore! LP's One Handed Triangle (\$49) opens up a new world of musical applications. Imagine, say, playing congas or shaker with your right hand and triangle with your left.

Playing the One Handed Triangle is fairly simple and straightforward. You simply hold a piece of vented plastic that fits very comfortably in your hand. (The vents help the sound project.) Inside the plastic cover/handle is a V-shaped metal rod. A metal ball sits on a track inside the instrument, so when you shake the OHT back and forth, the ball strikes the sides of the V-shaped rod to produce a loud and clear triangle sound. There are also two cutaways in the plastic, which allow you to muffle the triangle before or after it's been struck by the metal ball. This made the OHT great for Brazilian-style open/closed 16th-note triangle patterns.



### PERCUSSO

The LP Percusso (\$69) is half tambourine and half woodblock. Located on top of a hefty, comfortable rubber handle is an oddly shaped tambourine with eighteen removable jingles; you can make the jingle sound a bit thinner by simply sliding off as many of these as you desire.

In the center of the tambourine is a piece of plastic that's struck with a small metal hammer. The hammer is put in motion by flicking a lever. Press down on the lever with your thumb, and you have an instant woodblock sound that's similar to what



you'd get from a small Jam Block. This combination of tambourine and woodblock sounds—both playable with one hand—turned me into an instant one-man percussion section, especially when I used the One Handed Triangle in the other hand.

### JIM GREINER PRO SHEKERE

The Jim Greiner Pro Shekere (\$175) is a high-tech version of a traditional West African beaded gourd shaker. According to LP, "It's designed to offer the traditional sound and feel of the relatively fragile gourd-based shekere, but with the durability of contemporary materials." Everything about the design of this instrument is modern (fiberglass gourd, plastic beads, and so on), but the objective for percussionist/educator Greiner was to achieve the real feel and sound of a natural-gourd shekere. The light weight and small size of the fiberglass gourd made the Greiner shekere easy to play, even when compared with many natural-gourd models, and the sound was as close as could be to that of a natural gourd. The bass tone was very usable, and the shaker sound was full and sharp.



### MULTI-STEM GAJATE BRACKET

The Multi-Stem Gajate Bracket (\$150) allows you to mount up to three percussion instruments on one bracket. The ease with which the instruments can be changed is what this new model is all about. All you have to do is lift up the mounting bracket and rotate it until the tube fits back into the adjacent notch. Once it's in place, there's no unwanted movement in the bracket. I have used the original Gajate Bracket, which has one stem, for many percussion gigs, and now with the ability to alternate between, for instance, a wood block and two cowbells, I'll be able to find some fun new sounds to explore while I'm playing cajon. [lpmusic.com](http://lpmusic.com)



### MICRO SNARE

**The 8" Micro Snare (\$170) is the big brother to LP's original 6" version. It's a 5-lug, single-head metal drum with a 3 1/2"-deep shell.** What makes this drum unique is that its small size allows for placement around the kit or percussion setup in spots where most full-size snares won't fit. The Micro Snare is so lightweight and compact that I could even mount it on my hi-hat stand.

The drum features fourteen wire strands—arranged in a fan-type pattern—that are attached to a quick-release lever. The sound of the Micro Snare with the snares engaged was crisp and fairly full bodied, while the sound without the snares was similar to that of a small timbale.



# GMS PVS SNARES

by Michael Dawson

MODERNDRUMMER  
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

In 2009, GMS Drums introduced Revolution series snares, which are built using an innovative process of spraying the inside and/or outside of a maple shell with a thin layer of bronze, brass, copper, steel, or nickel. Those drums proved to be extremely versatile, offering a solid and rich wood snare sound with the addition of the brighter, reflective overtones associated with metal. (For our complete review of the Revolution series, check out the June '09 issue.)

## THIS YEAR'S MODEL

GMS's most recently introduced snare line is called PVS, which stands for Perimeter Venting System. Like other GMS wood snares, these drums start with a premium 6-ply maple shell with maple reinforcement rings. What makes them unique is that rather than employing standard air vent holes in the side of the shell, PVS drums have .195" holes drilled vertically into the bearing edge, between each lug. Each of these holes connects at a 90-degree angle with another hole drilled in the side of the shell. GMS claims that this venting system allows the air column to travel as far down as possible before escaping through the holes. The resulting sound is said to have increased sensitivity and response, plus more volume and focus. We were sent two PVS snares to check out, a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x14" (list price: \$980 for a wrap or satin finish and \$1,080 for high-gloss lacquer) and a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x13" (\$970/\$1,070). Both proved to live up to their intentions.

## A PERFECT PAIR

When compared with other snares in my collection, the PVS drums were noticeably more sensitive. Their snares responded to every stroke with a clear, crisp snap, regardless of how loud or soft I hit the drum or where I played on the head. I don't get that same reaction from my other drums unless I loosen the wires, but that often causes softer hits to lose clarity. With the PVS, I could



keep the snares tighter for a more articulate sound without the tone becoming boxy or choked.

Both PVS drums sounded most comfortable tuned in the medium to high range. The 14" model was an ideal all-around snare. It was neither too bright nor too dark, and it could handle a range of playing styles, from heavy rimshots to delicate brush sweeps. If you often play unmiked, this drum's increased presence could provide extra projection, while studio drummers would really like its balanced overall tone.

The 13" PVS was a bit more specialized. But if you like a tight, spanky snare sound, you won't find one funkier than this.

Around the same time that we received these drums for review, I spent a day with groove master Steve Jordan to take some photos for our October 2010 cover story. During the shoot, I had a chance to watch Steve up close as he played some wicked beats on his minimal kit, which included his



tightly tuned 13" signature snare. He hits the snare consistently off-center, usually by an inch or so, and he often digs the stick into the head when smacking rimshots. It's a classic sound, and one I've always wished I could replicate.

So with those sounds and images in mind, I went back to the 13" PVS to see if I could create something similar. It really didn't take much effort to get the PVS to sound very close to what I heard Steve play. I just tightened the batter head a bit more than usual and aimed for that sweet spot just south of center. I didn't even feel I had to dig into the PVS as much as Steve had on his signature snare in order to get a strong crack. This snare is a funk drummer's dream.

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

## PREMIXED PRESENCE

While I couldn't detect an obvious volume boost with the PVS drums, I did notice a more explosive attack and an overall increased presence, which adds up to what GMS describes as being a "compressed type of sound." Both drums had a very balanced tone, with an even blend of sharp stick attack, high-end head ring, warm shell resonance, and bright snare sizzle. No single element overpowered the others.

# REGAL TIP

## X-SERIES, EXTREME METAL, AND PERFORMER SERIES STICKS

by Billy Brennan



Since revolutionizing the drumstick industry in 1958 with the invention of the nylon-tip stick, Joe Calato and Regal Tip have been major players in the drumming community. The Niagara Falls-based company sent us a box full of sticks for our playing pleasure. Among the models were several selections from the company's X-Series, new EX sticks geared specifically toward extreme metal drummers, and a handful of sticks from the Performer line.

### X-SERIES

The 5AX and 5BX sticks are comparable to standard 5A and 5B models but with an added  $\frac{1}{4}$ " in length (tallying in at  $16\frac{1}{4}$ " ) for a boost in power. The sticks were well balanced and responsive, and they moved smoothly around the kit. They feature

acorn tips in wood or nylon and produced a nice solid sound on cymbals, with variation depending on the tip choice—the nylon tips offered sharper cut and projection, while the wood tips were mellower. I personally preferred the 5BX pair because the extra girth afforded me slightly better control. But both models were versatile and provided a good baseline for the more specialized styles of the other sticks Regal Tip sent our way.

### EXTREME METAL

Regal Tip recently added three models to its X-Series—Speed EX, Grind EX, and Death EX—to satisfy the needs of the extreme drumming community. These sticks feature the company's patented E-Tip, which is designed to provide the durability of nylon while emulating the

sound of wood. The sticks also have heavier necks with less taper, in order to withstand the beatings delivered by heavy hitters. Jay Medynski, Regal Tip's artist relations manager, says, "The Extreme Metal models are designed to help players achieve maximum bpm and technical accuracy without sacrificing the long-lasting durability that Regal Tip has been known for throughout its fifty-year history."

The Speed EX sticks are the smallest of the group (.525x16). They're thinner and shorter than the 5AX but denser and heavier. Their thick necks also make them more top heavy, affording more power and a quick rebound, but the weight shift could take getting used to with drummers accustomed to a more evenly balanced stick. This model stood up to slamming

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**REGAL TIP**  
by Calato

www.regaltip.com

rimshots and wood-splintering edge-of-cymbal washes, while delivering a predictably aggressive attack. The Grind EX (.580x16) and Death EX (.600x16) versions performed similarly to the Speed model, but I felt that the larger sizes had better weight distribution, leading to a better feel on the kit and cymbals.

These EX sticks were also my first exposure to Regal Tip's E-Tip technology. I was confused when I initially saw the oddly segmented nylon tips, but I was curious to hear the results. The tips seemed to hold up similarly to nylon ones—achieving one of the company's goals—but they didn't quite reach the sound of wood tips. Instead, the E-Tips produced an unusual middle ground between the sounds of the two standard tips. They weren't as sharp and bright as nylon, and they weren't as warm and full as wood.

### PERFORMER SERIES

Regal Tip sent us a wide range of selections from the Performer series, including Keith Carlock's sticks, Curt Bisquera's Groovers, Taku Hirano's percussion sticks, Tommy Clufetos's 313s, and Alex Van Halen's signature model. There could hardly be a more eclectic collection of sounds, styles, and goals than this bunch.

Keith Carlock's sticks (.555x16) are nearly identical to Regal Tip's standard 8A model, but they're lighter and have a slightly modified barrel tip—smaller and rounded just a tad. The tip retained the cymbal articulation of a traditional barrel tip but threw in a bit more sharpness. This model would be ideal for any jazz or light pop/rock setting but probably wouldn't satisfy many hard hitters and power seekers.

Curt Bisquera named his sticks Groovers because, as he explains, "They have such a nice feel that any drummer can pick up a pair and groove." These sticks (.580x16) were fairly all-purpose, with a diameter in the comfortable middle ground between a 5A and 5B and an oval tip capable of creating a large spectrum of sounds. They were able to hold down a solid kick-snare-hats groove, and they were smooth around the kit and versatile on the cymbals.

Tommy Clufetos's 313 model was clearly designed for raw power, sheer volume, and exceptional durability. This hefty, thick stick (.630x16.25) has a beefed-up acorn-style tip for enhanced cymbal definition and all-around drumming aggression. Even though I often use big sticks, these beasts took some getting used to, occasionally becoming unwieldy during crossover sticking patterns.

The Alex Van Halen sticks were stunning in their own right. They're the longest sticks I've ever seen—a mind-boggling 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"—but they had a comfortable diameter and were surprisingly lightweight. Similar to the

## MULTIPURPOSE PERCUSSION STICKS

**Taku Hirano's unique Performer series sticks are designed for percussion implementation more than for drumset, but they can open up interesting possibilities regardless.**

They have a round tip and a thick neck with almost no taper, which produced a really bright cymbal sound while offering extra durability for heavy crashing and rimshots. The sticks also feature a multifaceted grip—rubber for the main portion, with a nylon cap at the bottom and a metal stud in the butt end. The rubber grip prevented slippage while also taking the place of felt mallets for convincing cymbal washes when the sticks were played in reverse. The nylon cap yielded yet another striking surface for varied sounds, and the metal stud could be used for cymbal scrapes.



Tommy Clufetos model, these are meant for heavy hitters, with a length that provides more than enough reach for even the biggest arena-rock kit. The accompanying front-heaviness delivered serious power, while sacrificing some fluidity around the kit. One high point, in my opinion, was this model's status as the sole unacquainted stick on the testing field. I didn't have slippage issues with any of the other sticks, but I preferred the feel of natural wood to the somewhat greasy feel lacquer can have when my hands start to sweat.

### CONCLUSION

Whatever your style, size preference, and other personal quirks and interests, there's sure to be a stick here that you'd find appealing. Regal Tip continues aiming for innovation while at the same time keeping sight of the practical side of things. These models range in price from \$14.50 to \$32.

regaltip.com



# SHURE

## SM27 MICROPHONES

by Butch Jones

Shure's new SM27 is a low-noise, large-diaphragm, side-address cardioid microphone with extended frequency response, a three-position low-frequency filter switch, a 15 dB pad, and three separate mesh layers that act as an internal pop filter. While not a dedicated drum mic, this model can handle a variety of drumming applications, most notably as overheads. We tested the SM27 as an overhead as well as in a variety of non-drum situations, to see how versatile it can be for those of you home studio owners who may do the occasional guitar, vocal, or keyboard overdub.

### OUT OF THE BOX

The SM27 comes in a soft zippered case with a foam insert, to keep the mic safe when not in use, and includes a mount clip. The first thing I wanted to do was check out the proximity effect, or how much the bass reacted as I got closer to and farther away from the mic. I also wanted to determine how good the side-address pickup pattern was. After plugging the SM27 into my Avalon VT-7375P mic pre—patching into my Digi002 interface—and getting under the headphones, I spoke into the mic at various distances. I found the proximity effect to be as noticeable with the SM27 as with a lot of the higher-end condensers I use in the studio. The bass response had a smooth increase without distortion or overload as I moved in closer. The three-position low-frequency filter switch worked great when I was looking to roll off low-end rumble or room tone.

### DRUMS FIRST

To test the SM27 on drums, I used a pair as overheads in an X-Y configuration (cap-

sules placed close to one another at about a 90-degree angle, with the left mic pointing to the right side of the kit and the right mic pointing to the left). The stereo imaging was great, and the captured drum and cymbal tones had a warmer quality that almost sounded as if they were recorded with ribbon mics. With just a little cut in the 300 Hz range, the kit sounded mighty nice, even with only these two microphones.

### OTHER APPLICATIONS

I took an SM27 to the studio and cut some vocals with a buddy of mine who's an incredible Bobby McFerrin-type singer with a wide range. The SM27's response curve is flat overall, with about a 4 to 6 db boost around 6 or 7 kHz and another bump around 10 to 12 kHz. This particular singer likes to move in and out on the mic to get different low-end tones from his voice, and the SM27 handled this admirably. It also brought out some nice top-end sheen in his voice, which he doesn't have naturally.

Next up was acoustic guitar. I placed one mic about 6" below the sound hole, facing up at around a 45-degree angle, and the second mic was positioned about 2' above the guitar, angling in from midway up the fretboard toward the sound hole. This setup produced a clean, warm tone, and when the guitarist made subtle moves with the instrument, the stereo imaging took on a light auto-panning effect.

When I tried a pair of SM27s on a Hammond B3 organ with a Leslie speaker, I was pleasantly surprised by how discrete the sound was between the horn and lower speaker of the Leslie. The stereo spread was great, and the sound was warmer than the RE20/AGK 451 setup I normally use on the B3.

For my last test, I wanted to see if using an SM27 on an electric guitar amp would



make me give up my old SM57 for this purpose. After recording some rhythm and lead guitar parts with the mics placed next to each other, I still prefer to use the 57 as the close mic. When I moved the SM27 back about a foot from the speaker grill, though, it added some nice body to the sound of the two mics together.

### AND SO...

After trying these different setups, I would highly recommend the SM27 to anyone looking for a great-sounding but reasonably priced condenser mic that can handle a lot of drum and non-drum applications, both live and in the studio. List price: \$374. [shure.com](http://shure.com)



### BUILT-IN BAFFLING

**While holding the SM27 in my hand and talking into it, I slowly turned it in order to hear how much rejection it got from the side.** The mic's rejection was impressive. I can see why this model is being well received in live sound applications, since it's one of the few condenser microphones out there that won't pick up too much instrument bleed from other sources. This increased rejection would also make the SM27 a good choice for tom miking if you're partial to using large-diaphragm condensers for that application.

# Chris COLEMAN

**“Whoa—did you hear that?”** It’s been a common exclamation wherever and whenever Chris Coleman plays the drums, whether it’s at a Chaka Khan or New Kids On The Block concert, at one of his highly regarded clinics, or at an impromptu shred session at a music convention.

Story by Stephen Styles • Photos by Alex Solca

**F**rom blazing his way to the championship in the national Guitar Center Drum-Off to driving the groove for artists like Chaka Khan and Israel Houghton, Chris Coleman has taken “having fun and playing loose” to a whole new level. Weaving through complex stickings, killer fills, and odd figures with the ease of a hot knife cutting through butter, Coleman often leaves experienced players—not to mention average listeners—scratching their heads and laughing in disbelief at his technique and musicality. But based on the calls he’s been getting to play for top artists and to teach at major drum events, it’s plain to see that for Chris, making music is no laughing matter—it’s serious business.

The product of a musical family—he lists his uncle Ritchie as his earliest drumming influence, and his dad and other uncles were musicians as well—Coleman grew up surrounded by the sounds of Motown, Tower Of Power, Average White Band, Andraé Crouch, the Winans, the Hawkins Family, and Earth, Wind & Fire. Drummers on the national gospel scene, including Joel Smith, Dana Davis, Myron Bell, Jeff “Lo” Davis, Ladell Abrams, Teddy Campbell, Nathaniel Townsley, and Gerald Heyward, were big inspirations, as were players from Chris’s home state of Michigan, like Ellis Burns, Henry Robinson, Marvin McQuitty, Mark Bryant, Derico Watson, Steve and Keith Trigg, Daryl Jones, Mario “Skeeter” Winans, David Modock, Aaron Lewis, and “Booney” Dottery.

Early involvement in concert and jazz band and “all day, every day” practice routines served the young drummer well, and a chance exposure to a promo CD featuring groundbreaking players like Steve Smith, Dave Weckl, and Tony Williams opened his mind to a whole new world of rhythmic possibilities. Perhaps even more important was Coleman’s participation in an annual weeklong workshop in his hometown featuring gospel legend Edwin Hawkins, where Chris once took advantage of a drum stool temporarily left empty by his hero Joel Smith.

“Edwin was ready to start the band up again,” Coleman recalls, “but Joel wasn’t back yet. Edwin knew I could play drums, so he told me to jump on the kit until Joel got back.” Next thing Coleman knew, he was leading the band, with Smith on bass. The next year, Hawkins allowed the budding drummer to play for the entire workshop and the closing concert. “He told my parents afterwards, ‘Your son can really play the drums—just get that boy a metronome!’”

Soon the teenager was playing lots of gigs and taking college-level piano lessons. Eventually he attended Drummers Collective in New York City (“Sight-reading helped me structure the madness and the bliss of my playing”), and after a period of ministry work he moved to Georgia to study bass guitar at the Atlanta Institute Of Music, where he later taught drums.

Entering the 2001 Guitar Center Drum-Off simply to quiet his friends’ cajoling, Coleman found himself the winner, and soon he



landed his first major gig, with the gospel artist Israel Houghton and New Breed. A move to L.A. and onto Chaka Khan's drum throne further spread his rep, and to his résumé Chris added names like Christina Aguilera, Babyface, Patti LaBelle, Randy Brecker, and New Kids On The Block. Alongside his playing credits, Coleman continued to dedicate time to education, conducting clinics and releasing the DVD *Playing With Precision And Power*. Last year he performed at the Modern Drummer Festival amid rehearsal/recording sessions with Prince. Though the results of that intense period have yet to be released, given the buzz among drummers regarding the pairing, it would be hard to imagine that even the Purple One would sit on those tapes for too long. We begin our chat with Coleman by asking how that musical experiment came to pass.

**Chris:** I'm good friends with Tal Wilkenfeld, a fellow graduate of the Collective who plays bass. She works with Prince and brought me in on a new project he'd been working on. We did some studio work and have completed ten or eleven songs. I'm happy I got a chance to connect with him. He's constantly creating great music and has another album that's out right now. I'm not sure what's going to happen with that project at the moment. But it's great to have recorded with him, because



**CHRIS'S TOURING SETUP**

**Drums:** Sonor X-Ray acrylic  
**A.** 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ ×14 snare  
**B.** 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ ×12 snare  
**C.** 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 snare  
**D.** 7×8 tom  
**E.** 7×10 tom  
**F.** 7×12 tom  
**G.** 13×14 floor tom  
**H.** 15×16 floor tom  
**I.** 19×22 bass drum

**Hardware:** Sonor, including Giant Step hi-hat and bass drum pedals; Roc-N-Soc Lunar series throne

**Heads:** Evans coated G2 main-snare batter, Onyx 2-ply side-snare batters, and Hazy 300 bottoms; clear G2 tom batters and EC Resonant bottoms; and EQ4 bass drum batter

**Cymbals:** Meinl Byzance series  
**1.** 13" Traditional Medium hi-hats  
**2.** 18" Traditional China  
**3.** 16" Brilliant Medium Thin crash  
**4.** 17" Traditional Medium Thin crash  
**5.** 10" Traditional splash  
**6.** 10" Dark splash  
**7.** 20" Dark ride  
**8.** 18" Brilliant Medium Thin crash  
**9.** 19" Brilliant Medium Thin crash  
**10.** 16" Brilliant China

**Sticks:** Vic Firth 3A

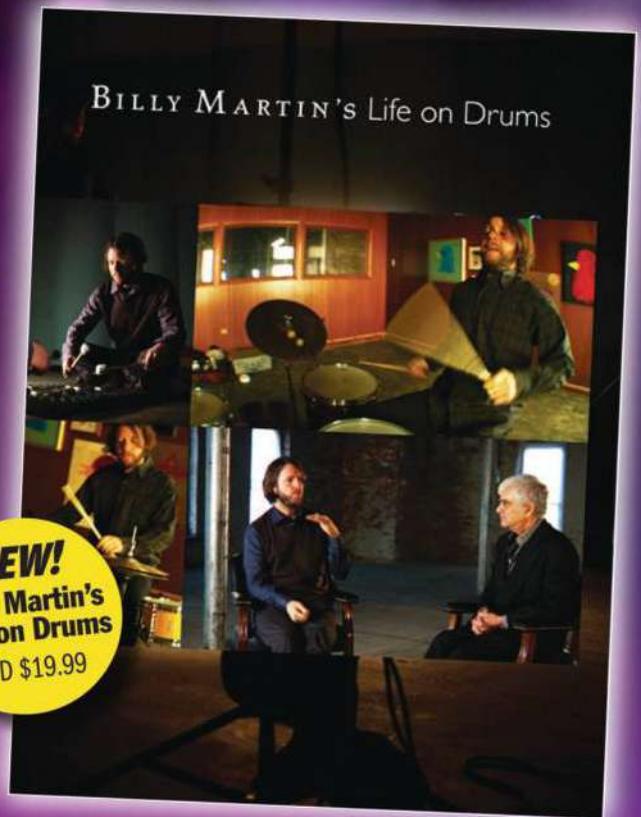
**Percussion:** Meinl cowbells

**Electronics:** Roland SPD-S



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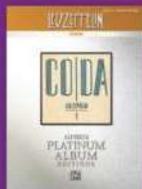
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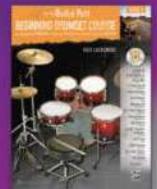
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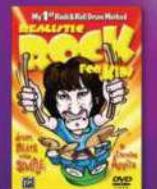
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## CHRIS COLEMAN

he's such an awesome artist. We'll see what happens next.

**MD:** Do you recommend that drummers take any and every gig they're offered?

**Chris:** It's hard for me to say, "Just take any ol' gig that comes your way," because I don't know each person's situation. But if someone offers you a gig and you can do it, I say do it, even if it's not the best pay or the coolest music. In my opinion, no gig is absolutely corny. [laughs] If it's rock, rock out. If it's gutbucket blues, get in there and grind the blues.

I think people should focus on principles instead of methods. What I mean is, there's no one method for guaranteed success. But principles always produce results. If you adopt the principles of being on time, being prepared, having a good attitude, and giving 100 percent every time you swing the sticks, you'll eventually get the kind of success you desire.

There's a Bible story in Matthew 25:21 where a hard-working guy is told, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities." Being diligent and faithful on the small gig will lead to bigger, better gigs.

**MD:** What does it take to move successfully from one musical situation to another?

**Chris:** One, drummers should transition their thinking from just being drummers to being musicians. You have to be easily adaptable to all genres of music. That means listening to and striving to play them authentically. Two, you have to

## RECORDINGS

**Chaka Khan** Funk This /// **Freddy Rodriguez** Light In The Darkness Live /// **Israel & New Breed** Live From Another Level (CD/DVD) /// **Jeff Sparks** Havin' Fun /// **Leah Lee** OutPouring Live /// **Michael Gungor** Battle Cry /// **New Birth Total Praise Choir** Spirit & Truth /// **Patti LaBelle** Miss Patti's Christmas /// **Mary Alessi** More, When Women Worship /// **Sasha Allen** "One Of Us," "Let's Fly Away"

## INFLUENCES

**Earth, Wind & Fire** Gratitude (Fred White, Maurice White, Ralph Johnson) /// **James Brown** Best Of (Clyde Stubblefield, Jabo Starks, others) /// **Vinnie Colaiuta** Vinnie Colaiuta (Vinnie Colaiuta) /// **Victor Bailey, Dennis Chambers, Mitch Forman, Chuck Loeb, Bill Evans** Petite Blonde (Dennis Chambers) /// **Marvin Winans** Introducing Perfected Praise (Mario "Skeeter" Winans)

be quick on your feet and able to follow directions well. You have to develop thick skin and not take things personally. A lot of times it's about reading a situation and adjusting yourself to fit whatever that situation is without losing yourself. For example, playing a gig like Chaka Khan is very different from playing for New Kids On The Block. You have to have the same high level of professionalism for both. Each gig is huge, and you have to take it seriously and be prepared. But because these genres are so vastly different, the drumming requirements are endless.

**MD:** What are the differences in what's required to play an R&B show versus a pop show?

**Chris:** In both situations you have to be able to make the music feel good, you have to be professional, and you have to be very prepared. But the level of detail on a pop show is much more demanding. When I was rehearsing for the New Kids tour, I was exposed to a whole new level of thinking, preparation, and detail.

**MD:** How so?

**Chris:** First of all, just working with Rob Lewis was a big deal for me. As an MD and arranger, Rob is responsible for the big picture, and he focuses on all the little details in order to get the big picture tight. On a gig like that, everything you play matters. People come to the show to see their favorite artists from their youth. Fans have fallen in love with the original versions of that music, and they expect you to deliver the tunes the way they remember them. You have to duplicate the drum sounds from the album as much as possible. That means having the right electronics, choosing the right-size drums, everything. The feel of the ride pattern can't have any extra notes in it. If it's supposed to be straight 8th notes, you don't add an extra 16th. It's a lot of precise detail. I know most drummers assume they can handle it, but trust me, it's far more demanding than you would think.

One of the things I had to learn was how to play along with the albums to the point that you literally couldn't tell the difference between my drums and the drum parts on the record. You also get exposure to performing on TV and all the challenges that go with last-minute adjustments. The artist may need to change something right before you go on stage for a TV show, and there's no time to rehearse or chart it out. You've got tech people, producers, cameramen, and the hosts running around backstage, stressing out, and you have two minutes and thirty seconds to do the tune and get out of the way. You get one shot to step up, and there's no

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## CHRIS COLEMAN

room for excuses about why you didn't nail your part. You have to be perfect the first time. It's a lot of pressure. But you take a deep breath, relax as much as possible, and don't psych yourself out, and it usually works out.

**MD:** Was there ever a point where you felt you needed to stand up for a particular fill or drum part?

**Chris:** In rehearsal early on I didn't fully understand why certain changes were necessary. But again, it's all about being able to take direction. You have to know how to get quiet and trust the people who've been doing this longer than you. I'm blessed to be able to reach out to Aaron Spears and Lil' John Roberts, and when I was first on the gig and had questions, I was able to connect with them.

Rob, Ethan Farmer, Michael "Fish" Herring, and the others on that gig were accustomed to working with my friend and big brother Brian Fraser-Moore, who now plays for Madonna. They had developed a flow with him over time as a unit, and it took me a while to adjust to their way of doing things. It seems simple when you're on the outside listening to this type of music, but it's really not. That experience taught me so much about being a better musician and also what it takes to put a show together at that level. There's still so much more to learn, but it was a real growth experience.

**MD:** Part of playing high-profile gigs is

the endorsement deals. How do you navigate endorsements and choosing gear?

**Chris:** In my opinion musicians should endorse products they really love. It's important to be realistic about what level you're at in your career before trying to push for endorsements or "free gear." Some years ago, I told a rep straight up, "I don't have the résumé to request product support yet, but I do want to start a relationship." Endorsements aren't just about what you can get from a company—they're also about what you as a musician are bringing to the table. The question becomes, "What can you offer a company's culture and future that should make them want to roll with you?"

I look at my companies like my family. I treat them with respect and try to show them that they can trust me. Over time, you develop friendships with your reps and colleagues. It's important to be sincere with them. For example, I called my Meinel rep, Chris Brewer, and asked for a set of 15" hi-hats I wanted to try out. They came and I really liked them, but it wasn't the right sound for what I was doing musically. I knew I couldn't use them, so I shipped them back. You'd never take advantage of your personal relatives, so don't take advantage of your companies of interest.

**MD:** Can you offer tips for working with a new artist or producer in the studio?

**Chris:** I think it's good to check out a person's past projects to get a sense of what sounds they're into and what their production style is like. Next, you have to understand that drums don't always sound the same on tape as they sound to your ears. For example, when I was recording the medley on Chaka Khan's *Funk This* record, I thought the drums the producer selected sounded terrible, until I heard them in the playback. Also, you have to be mindful of an artist's or a producer's total costs, because they usually have a fixed budget. You need to be able to get in and out without wasting time. You should know how to play with a click, how to tune, and how to make quick adjustments to your playing to give the producer what they want.

**MD:** Do you have any suggestions for drummers trying to get their name out there? Should they send out demos and press kits?

**Chris:** There's nothing wrong with sending out press kits and demos, but like I said before, one of the best things you can do is find a gig and keep it. Even if it seems pointless, take the gig and always give 100 percent. People notice that. Keeping a positive attitude is very important. Also, go out and audition. I auditioned for a really high-profile gig that I didn't get, but it put me in front of people who make decisions about bands and records. Auditioning will help raise your

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visibility, introduce you to your colleagues, and give you knowledge and insight on things you need to work on.

**MD:** What are your plans for the future?

**Chris:** I'm working on my own original music project and another DVD. I'm also planning to return to school for piano, bass, and production classes. I have a host of clinics and seminars planned. My goal is to play with more artists and just keep pushing forward.

**MD:** Speaking of clinics and seminars, you taught a master class at the 2010 Modern Drummer Festival.

**Chris:** First off, it was a huge honor to even be there. At one point I literally pinched myself just to make sure I wasn't dreaming. I love to play, and I also love to teach, and it was a great opportunity to do both. The audience was really receptive. All the other cats that were there are people I respect and admire.

**MD:** At the MD Fest you offered some insight on playing with a metronome.

**Chris:** The click is like a trainer in the gym: You'll either love him or hate him. If you learn to love the trainer, you'll get the most benefit, even if he's kicking your butt in the gym every day. The metronome is the same way. It'll take a while before you start seeing results, but the payoff is worth it.

You can play ahead of, on, or behind

the click. Whichever way you choose, you have to count with it to make sure you know where you are in relationship to the beat. First you have to learn to play *on* it. "Burying" the click—playing so on top of it that you can't really hear the metronome—is the best way to play on it.

Playing behind the click is when you feel the pulse of the click leading you and kind of pulling you along. Most music is recorded either with drums right on top of the click or a little behind it.

Playing ahead of the click is probably the most challenging, at least for me. It's the reverse of being behind; instead of letting the beat lead you, you have to lead the beat a little bit. You'll hear the click fall just a hair behind the beat you're playing. A good song to practice playing ahead to is Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean." That drum part is dead on, and the rest of the song is built around that groove. My suggestion is to play along with that song and try to get ahead of the original groove without losing the tune or getting off the beat. Make sure to pay attention to how the music feels against the drum part you're playing.

**MD:** Also at the Festival, you gave a demonstration of something you called targeted practice.

**Chris:** Targeted practice is about being

creative around a rhythmic/musical theme. Unfortunately we don't really have enough space to get into it here, but hopefully readers will check out the 2010 MD Fest DVD, where I get into targeted practice and several other topics. And everyone is welcome to hit me up on Twitter or YouTube if they have any questions after seeing the DVD. My Twitter address is [twitter.com/\\_crc\\_](https://twitter.com/_crc_). My YouTube page is [youtube.com/crc7](https://youtube.com/crc7).

**MD:** Any final words?

**Chris:** First off, I need to say thank you to everyone I mentioned in this article, and to those whose names *Modern Drummer* probably wouldn't let me mention because of limited space. [laughs] Thank you to all my fellow drummers out there who are reading this and who reach out to me over various media and at shows. I really appreciate everybody's interest.

To all of the readers, let me say this: Through diligence, perseverance, and focus, all things are possible. Always remember that music is all about the moment. Just get in the moment and have fun, and good things will happen!



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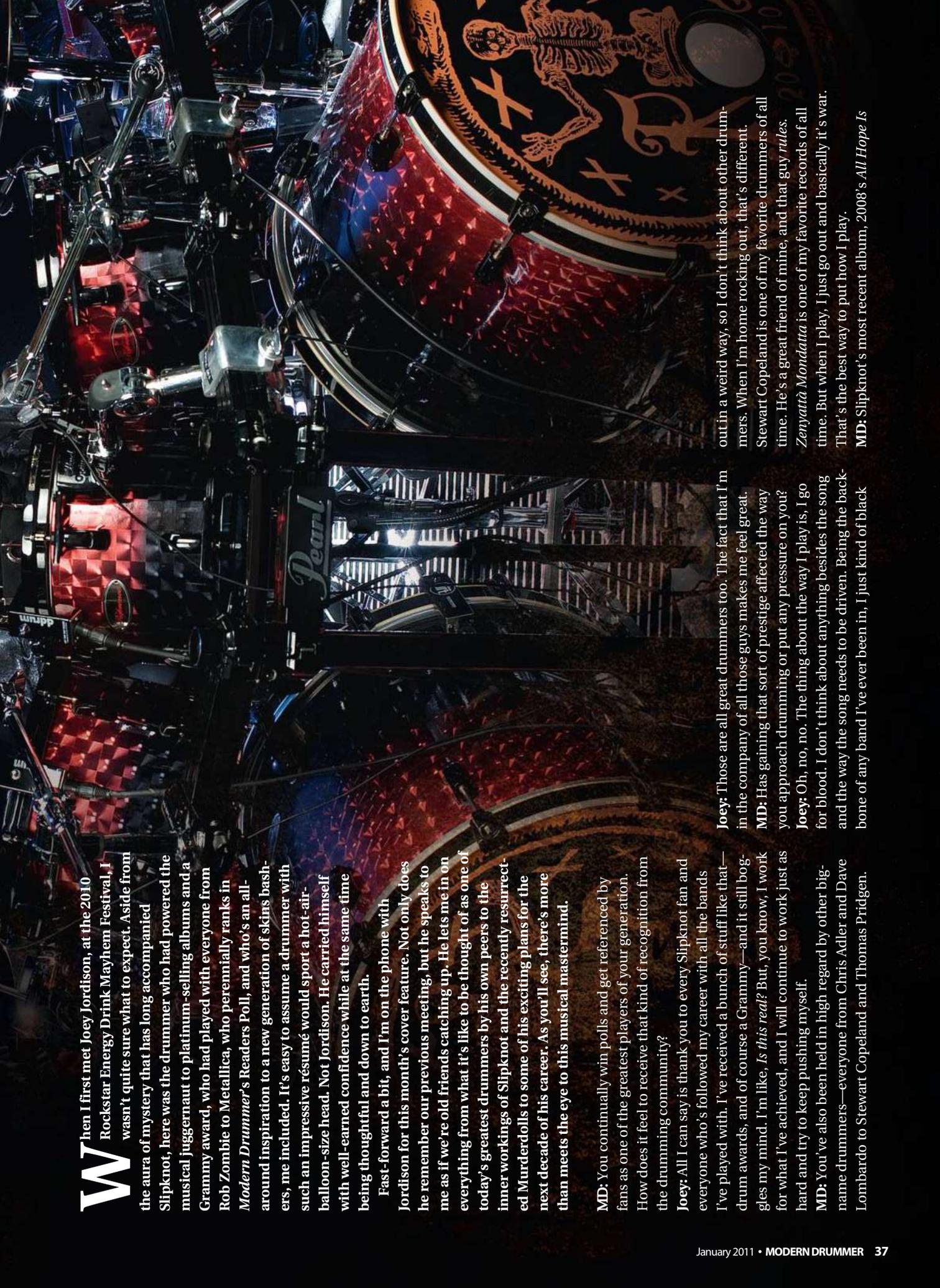
Joey

# JURISON

Slipknot's ever-active drummer—  
who's recently added new  
Murderdolls and Rob Zombie  
projects to his already significant  
workload —**puts down the mask  
and gets us closer to under-  
standing his unusual methods  
and motivations.**

Story by Billy Brennan  
Photos by Alex Solca





**W**hen I first met Joey Jordison, at the 2010 Rockstar Energy Drink Mayhem Festival, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. Aside from the aura of mystery that has long accompanied Slipknot, here was the drummer who had powered the musical juggernaut to platinum-selling albums and a Grammy award, who had played with everyone from Rob Zombie to Metallica, who perennially ranks in *Modern Drummer's* Readers Poll, and who's an all-around inspiration to a new generation of skins basters, me included. It's easy to assume a drummer with such an impressive résumé would sport a hot-air-balloon-size head. Not Jordison. He carried himself with well-earned confidence while at the same time being thoughtful and down to earth.

Fast-forward a bit, and I'm on the phone with Jordison for this month's cover feature. Not only does he remember our previous meeting, but he speaks to me as if we're old friends catching up. He lets me in on everything from what it's like to be thought of as one of today's greatest drummers by his own peers to the inner workings of Slipknot and the recently resurrected Murderdolls to some of his exciting plans for the next decade of his career. As you'll see, there's more than meets the eye to this musical mastermind.

**MD:** You continually win polls and get referenced by fans as one of the greatest players of your generation. How does it feel to receive that kind of recognition from the drumming community?

**Joey:** All I can say is thank you to every Slipknot fan and everyone who's followed my career with all the bands I've played with. I've received a bunch of stuff like that—drum awards, and of course a Grammy—and it still boggles my mind. I'm like, *Is this real?* But, you know, I work for what I've achieved, and I will continue to work just as hard and try to keep pushing myself.

**MD:** You've also been held in high regard by other big-name drummers—everyone from Chris Adler and Dave Lombardo to Stewart Copeland and Thomas Pridgen.

**Joey:** Those are all great drummers too. The fact that I'm in the company of all those guys makes me feel great.

**MD:** Has gaining that sort of prestige affected the way you approach drumming or put any pressure on you?

**Joey:** Oh, no, no. The thing about the way I play is, I go for blood. I don't think about anything besides the song and the way the song needs to be driven. Being the backbone of any band I've ever been in, I just kind of black

out in a weird way, so I don't think about other drummers. When I'm home rocking out, that's different.

Stewart Copeland is one of my favorite drummers of all time. He's a great friend of mine, and that guy *rules*. *Zenyatta Mondatta* is one of my favorite records of all time. But when I play, I just go out and basically it's war. That's the best way to put how I play.

**MD:** Slipknot's most recent album, 2008's *All Hope Is*



*Gone*, encapsulates everything the band had done on the previous three records but explores new territory as well. What was the collective mindset going into making that album?

**Joey:** When I came home from touring with Korn in 2007, [Slipknot bassist] Paul Gray and I sat down just like we always did and started hashing out riffs. Just like when I play live, in the studio it's not like I sit there and think, *Oh, I need to do this...* or *This needs to be a concept...* or anything like that. We just let emotion flow. Someone will come up with a riff, and we start jamming together until it feels like something we *have* to get out, like it needs to be an *exorcism*. That's the biggest thing about Slipknot: Everything we've ever done is about stuff we've gone through in the past and getting it out. Because, man, I still have like eighteen *years'* worth of venom to release.

**MD:** How about writing the drum parts?

**Joey:** When I write a riff, I never have to think about what the drums are going to do; I already know. The way I write riffs, they're very rhythmic, so I never worry about the drums at all. We have a bunch of weird ways of writing in Slipknot. Like, Jim [Root, guitarist] and I wrote "Sulfur" in his kitchen. [laughs] I took my V-Drums over there, and we wrote that whole song; we



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# DUALITY: JOEY AT HOME

We've all seen images of Joey Jordison perched behind his mammoth kit—sticks, hair, and sweat flying—and heard the passionate product of his studio dedication. But what is this jack of all trades like behind the scenes at home? Here Jordison opens up about his loves outside of music—and you might be surprised by some of them.

**MD:** What do you do when you're not on tour or working on an album? Are you chugging away at more riffs?

**Joey:** Yup, that's basically all I do. Other than that, I love just laying in my bed or hanging with Mokie, my cat. It's just me and Mokie, and I pretty much live in the middle of nowhere. Otherwise I see my sisters and my mother and my dad, and that's just about it.

**MD:** At home do you play drums or guitar more?

**Joey:** I play guitar. I really don't play drums at all. I mean, I have my V-Drums and one of my [acoustic] kits set up. I usually practice for like forty-five minutes, but I'll have a guitar in my hand pretty much all day, even if I'm not inspired to write a song. That's how a song is born. A lot of the Slipknot songs that you've heard are actually inspired by a dream I have. I'll wake up and just grab a guitar and watch TV. I'll be a little groggy and then a riff will come out, like, instantly. Then I'll sit there and play it for two hours, until I know it will not leave my mind.

**MD:** Is there any music that you listen to in order to get pumped up before a show?

**Joey:** Pretty much all I listen to is classic rock. I don't listen to any metal before I go on. The heaviest thing that me and Zombie would listen to was "All American Man" by Kiss. That's one of our warm-up songs. Other than that, we listen to a lot of Rod Stewart, Faces, Alice Cooper.... It just gets us in a good mood to go. I don't like listening to a lot of heavy shit before I have to play heavy shit. [laughs]

**MD:** What kind of music would you listen to in order to unwind or when you're chilling out at home?

**Joey:** Man, that's difficult...probably Fleetwood Mac.

**MD:** Mick Fleetwood has a really unorthodox approach and a unique voice on the drums; is he one of your influences?

**Joey:** Absolutely. Fleetwood Mac is one of my favorite bands of all time. Keith Moon is my favorite drummer, but getting to Mick Fleetwood? He's one of the *strangest* drummers, completely different from anyone else. So is Keith Moon, so is John Bonham, and those are all my heroes.

I do love the stuff that I grew up on, though. I'm more of a black metal fan than anything else besides classic rock.

**MD:** What are your favorite movies?

**Joey:** That's hard. I'd probably say *The Jerk*. [In Steve Martin voice] "I need this." [laughs] And *NEKRomantik*, which is a German film. *NEKRomantik 1* and *2*, actually. Of course, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. *The Empire Strikes Back*. *Nosferatu*. *Mad Max*. *Blue Velvet*—that's one of my favorite movies of all time, probably even more than the ones I already mentioned. *Reservoir Dogs*. *Hellraiser 2*. *A Nightmare On Elm Street*. *Creature From The Black Lagoon*. *Taxi Driver*. *Scarface*—everyone picks that [laughs], but it does rule.

**MD:** Have you ever seen *Big Trouble In Little China*?

**Joey:** You want me to quote the whole movie, or what? [laughs]

**MD:** So many people haven't even heard of that movie.

**Joey:** *Big Trouble In Little China*? Lo Pan? Jack Burton? Porkchop Express? I know the whole thing. That movie kicks ass, dude. [laughs]

**MD:** Any favorite books?

**Joey:** *True Norwegian Black Metal* [by photographer Peter Beste], *Lords Of Chaos* [by Michael Moynihan and Didrik Söderlind]. I like *American Psycho* by Bret Easton Ellis—not the movie, but the book; well, the movie rules too. And *The Iowa Road Guide To Haunted Locations* [by Chad Lewis and Terry Fisk], which I visit all the time. That's what I do in my spare time usually.

**MD:** Godzilla or King Kong?

**Joey:** Oh my God, that's hard... I'm taking Godzilla. King Kong's cool, but he's a monkey, and we don't need that.

**MD:** Clint Eastwood or John Wayne?

**Joey:** Clint Eastwood is by far more badass, but I'm from Iowa and John Wayne's from Iowa, so I have to take him. [laughs]

demoed it. It just depends.

**MD:** I really like the break at the end of "Sulfur," especially the latter part.

**Joey:** The end riff? Dude, that thing *rules*. That riff is the same type of feel as at the end of "(sic)" [from Slipknot's self-titled album]. Like, it physically pisses me off. Seriously, when I hit that riff at the very end...it's one of the most powerful riffs metal's ever had. It's the same as the end of "Disasterpiece" [from *Iowa*]. That's what Slipknot does. I mean, when we write a song, it's for real. It's not a f\*\*king joke.

**MD:** You know you have something great in metal when you have that feeling of aggression when you're playing it *and* when you're listening to it.

**Joey:** Yeah, we won't finish a song until we look each other in the eye and no one's lying. If not all nine of us feel it, then it won't exist. It doesn't matter who starts the song or who wrote the riff—when all of us get together, it needs to be complete destruction at all times.

**MD:** Another standout track is "Gehenna." It's different from anything else on the record—and kind of different from anything Slipknot had done before.

**Joey:** "Gehenna" is one of my favorite Slipknot songs. Paul wrote most of it. I have a couple riffs in it, but it doesn't matter.... [Singer] Corey Taylor's lyrics, everything on that song is just amazing. It's one of the most haunting Slipknot songs, totally nightmarish. It's not an easy song to listen to if you're not prepared for it. [laughs]

**MD:** The drum parts are unusual too. It's really sparse in the verses, it has those clicks, and then on the "&" of 4 of every other measure, it's got those jarring snare hits.

**Joey:** Yeah, totally. You hit the nail on the head. The drums on "Gehenna" are unique, and that comes from listening to many different drummers and learning from many different people. And I think that's why my drumming hits home a little bit more than maybe

some other artists'. I'm not about speed all the time. I'm already known for that, but a track like "Gehenna" shows why I don't consider Slipknot to be just a metal band. I mean, don't get me wrong, we play metal, but all the other elements in our music are what make Slipknot unique.

**MD:** On *All Hope Is Gone*, Clown [percussionist Shawn Crahan] branches out and plays some traditional drumset. "Til We Die," on the special edition of the album, was the only song to make the cut.

**Joey:** Yeah, I didn't make it to the first day [of recording] because I had family stuff going on. They went in and just jammed, and Shawn is a great drummer—a lot different from me, but a *great* drummer. They had the stem of "Til We Die" and were recording it, and I was like, "I won't interrupt. He can have that. I don't need to interject on that at all." It was cool that Shawn had his spot on "Til We Die."

**MD:** Some drummers in that situation

## JOEY JORDISON

would get territorial or defensive.

**Joey:** Not me. I know my spot, I know exactly what I'm doing, and I know who I am.

**MD:** You write a lot of Slipknot songs on guitar. What songs on *All Hope Is Gone* did you play a major part in writing?

**Joey:** Man, I hate saying "I," because it's not about me. I don't look at Slipknot as about me, you know? But to be completely honest, because I won't lie, a good majority of our songs have started with my guitar riffs, then I'd work them out with Paul. The first song I wrote for the record was "Psychosocial," and the second was "Vendetta."

**MD:** "Psychosocial" is pretty much as straightforward as you can get, yet it's brutally heavy, with that pounding backbeat accentuated by the keg hits. How do you know when to unleash and when to just sit back and hammer it home like that?

**Joey:** Well, it depends on the riff. I don't look at drumming like you need to be the hardest and the fastest or anything like that. You need to concentrate on the riff and get right into the meat of what the riff is. On "Psychosocial," for

instance, when I recorded that track, I was just *bashing* the drums. They had to actually back down the track. [laughs] It was probably the loudest track I recorded. Mix-wise, if you listen to it closely, it sounds a little different from some of the other songs when I'm playing super-fast double bass and stuff.

"Psychosocial" was the first riff I wrote for *All Hope Is Gone*. When I was writing that song and got to the main riff, dude, I was like, "This is gonna rule—this record is gonna go straight to number one." And it did.

**MD:** The first full song on *All Hope Is Gone* is "Gematria (The Killing Name)." That's an old-school, aggressive, primal Slipknot song. It has all these different parts that enable you to get a lot of your trademark drumming in—everything from very fast double bass to a lot of tom rolls and some more open beats as well.

**Joey:** "Gematria" is one of my favorite Slipknot songs. The intro drum part...it's kind of a weird story. I was just warming up, just playing [sings the intro beat], and then Paul and I got into the opening riffs of one of our old thrash

bands from a *long* time ago. The rest of the song is different, but it was like, "Oh, man, should we resurrect this riff?" That riff is just crazy. It doesn't really make any sense. It's like the most metal version of introverted jazz, but it's *crushing*.  
**MD:** You've said you always start writing on guitar, but that sounds like a song that might have gotten a head start with the drums.

**Joey:** No, I always start with guitar. "Wait And Bleed" [from *Slipknot*], "Duality" [Vol. 3: *The Subliminal Verses*], "Left Behind" [*Iowa*]...all those songs started with guitar. But like I said, I always know what the drums are going to do anyway.

**MD:** You've recently put out the first Murderdolls album in eight years, *Women And Children Last*. Besides the fact that you primarily play guitar live, how does Joey Jordison of the Murderdolls differ from Joey Jordison of Slipknot?

**Joey:** Not much at all. I mean, it's two completely different styles, obviously, but you're seeing the same person that you see when you see me with Slipknot. I have the same intensity. I don't have

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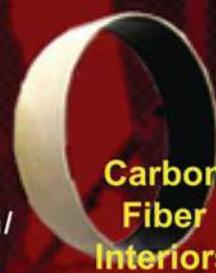
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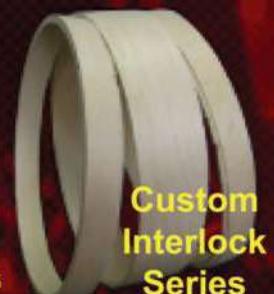


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## JOEY JORDISON

intentions of trying to be different or anything like that. The Murderdolls are just as much a part of my soul as Slipknot is.

It took me a while to resurrect the Murderdolls because I've been so busy with so many different bands. But with all the bands I've been in, if I don't believe in it, I won't play it. The Murderdolls are a big part of my life, though eventually I have to get back to writing another Slipknot record—I already have a lot of songs.

**MD:** Do you approach Murderdolls riffs differently from Slipknot riffs?

**Joey:** No, it's just a different side of me that's always been in my soul. The first record, *Beyond The Valley Of The Murderdolls*, was cool, and I like it a lot, but it's nothing at all like this new one. The first record was more of a blueprint. It worked and it was great and everything, but those are all demos that we did. Roadrunner Records wanted to put it out, and we were like, "Great." Corey wanted to go out and do Stone Sour, so basically we said, "Let's just put this thing out and go party our asses off!"

And that's pretty much what we did. [laughs] Weirdly enough, it worked.

We're taking this album a *lot* more seriously than the first one. This one I consider to be the first Murderdolls record because it's the first time [singer] Wednesday and I sat down and actually wrote songs together. These are all brand-new songs. There's nothing rehashed from my old band the Rejects and nothing from his old band Frankenstein Drag Queens From Planet 13, which is what the first Murderdolls record is. This is really the first genuine Murderdolls record, and dude, I'm so excited about it. It rules, and everyone who has heard it is just like, "What the hell did you guys do?" I'm like, "We just sat down and rocked."

It was cool. The first song we recorded was "Homicide Drive," and the drumming you hear on it is the original take. Wednesday didn't know where to go after the second chorus, but I already knew where it was going. When I was done with the take I was like, "Man, maybe I should do an edit.... Nah, I'm gonna keep it the way it is," because it

reminds me of the good feeling of the Murderdolls getting back together.

**MD:** "Pieces Of You" has a great riff and a tension/release vibe, and it's very catchy—it has those old-school pop handclaps.

**Joey:** That song started out as kind of a joke. But for big Murderdolls fans it might be one of their favorites. It's so catchy that we might actually have to make a video for it. [laughs] We call the handclaps "the Beach Boys part." We still have to have that joke element—that'll never leave.

**MD:** When we spoke at the Mayhem Festival, you said that your guitar style is completely different from your drumming style. How would you compare them?

**Joey:** My drumming style is what it is—very aggressive and very intense. My guitar playing is a little more on the fun side. That's kind of why I did the Murderdolls in the first place. Playing live with the Murderdolls is kind of the same as with Slipknot. Like I said, it's like going to war—we just have a more lively, fun element, like, "Let's bring the

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## JOEY JORDISON

fun back to rock 'n' roll."

**MD:** How different is it playing in front of the crowd on guitar instead of from behind the drumkit?

**Joey:** I don't like to compare the two too much because they're different bands, but my mentality and my heart and soul are completely in the same place whether I'm playing guitar or drums. Though on the drumkit I have to concentrate a lot more. [laughs] I have to be pretty on point. The Murderdolls are a little more dangerous, more sloppy—like the Sex Pistols 2010.

**MD:** How do you approach production?

**Joey:** I'm the first one there and the last one to leave, always—because I care too

much about what I do. I have a different technique from most people too—different EQ equations. And I concentrate on the drums *completely* first. I don't care about scratch tracks or anything like that. I EQ it and produce it according to what the band should sound like, so I make sure the drums sound perfect. I'll worry about the cymbals later.

Then, once I get the guitars right, the bass and vocals are easy. When I get into mastering...that's always a bitch. That process, I hate. [laughs] Because I have everything perfect, and then people can mess it up—not intentionally, of course. It just takes me a while to make sure it's

perfect. I listen to the music in my two cars, in my living room, on a little clock radio, on my downstairs system, and through a PA, because I want to make sure that everything sounds right.

The first song Ross Robinson and I mixed on the first Slipknot record was "Purity." We probably did that song forty-five times. That's how long it took to get the sound of the first album. And even though that record is raw as hell, it *rules*. I'm really proud of that. I mean, I love all our records, but there's something about the sound of that one. It's punk rock in a way. We were *so* hungry. It took me a while, man, but we got it.

**MD:** You were also one of the team captains for Roadrunner United, a project where you wrote the songs, played on them, chose the other musicians, and produced. Having experienced being in charge of the entire process, have you considered doing your own solo project?  
**Joey:** I have. There are a lot of songs I've written that don't fit in the Murderdolls world or the Slipknot world at all. And there are a lot of people that I would like to work with. I'll get to that point when I get there.

**MD:** Besides recording a solo album, do you have other goals going into the next decade of your career?

**Joey:** I want to learn to play the violin—no joke. Because it seems very difficult, and I've never played a stringed instrument besides guitar. In the future, when I get a break, I really want to sit down with a teacher and learn how to play. My [non-Slipknot/ Murderdolls] solo stuff is not necessarily that heavy, and at one point I thought, *Man, if I could study the violin, this could really be good.*

And my sister, who's an *amazing* singer—she sings on my Puscifer remix of "Drunk With Power"—she'd probably sing on it too. But that stuff is *way* different from anything I've ever done, and I think it would freak out a lot of people. But I don't think Slipknot or Murderdolls fans would think it's that weird—I mean, it's gonna be weird, but it wouldn't be weird that I'm doing it.

**MD:** So hopefully in the future we'll get a solo Joey Jordison album with some violin.

**Joey:** Oh, it's *gonna* happen. I promise you.

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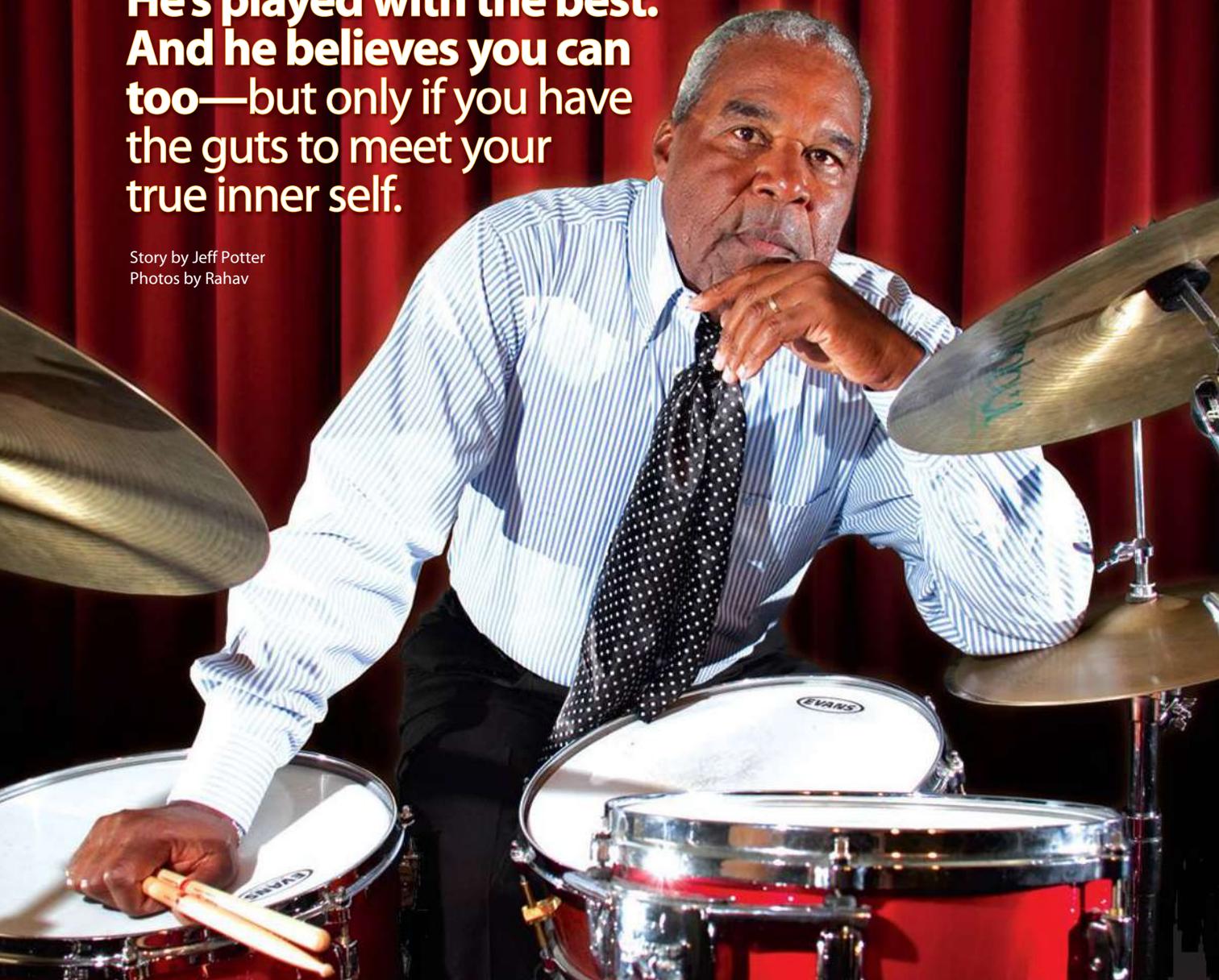
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# Michael Carvin

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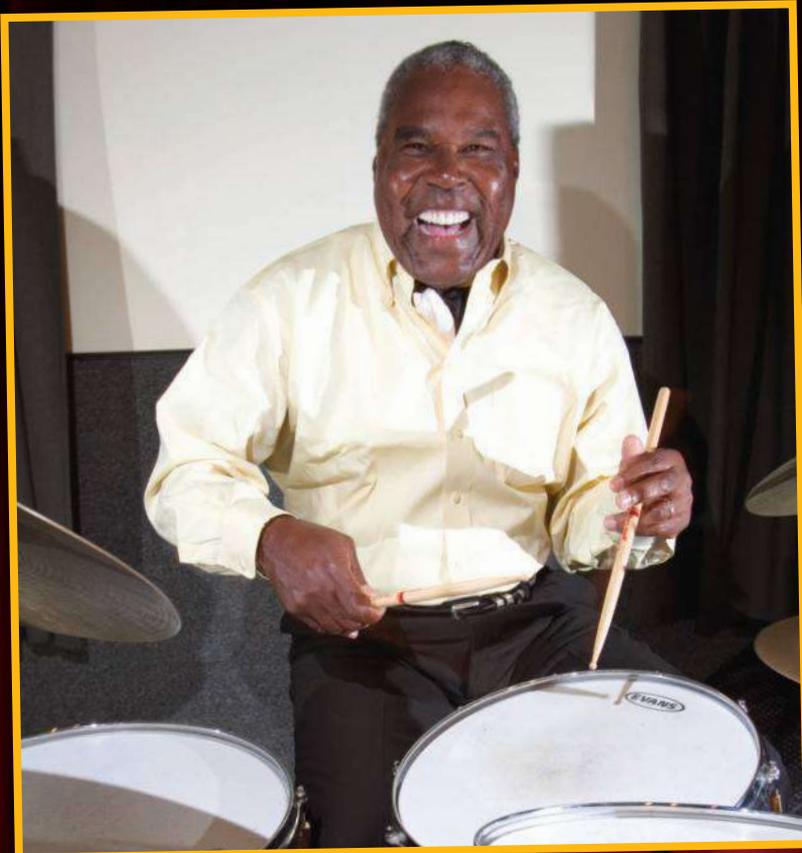
Story by Jeff Potter  
Photos by Rahav



Should you step into Michael Carvin's drum studio for a lesson, be prepared to stand on your own two feet. There's heat in this kitchen. Carvin does not ask that you arrive as a technique savant. He does not ask that you hike the Himalayas to receive his wisdom. But if he accepts a student, he does ask one thing. "I want

law, Michael approaches each of his students in such a way as to help them find who they are. He is truly one of the great minds of our times."

But when things *do* get hairy in that studio, beware. Carvin has witnessed "grown men" scramble for the exit in tears. From the moment a student enters, the teacher scrutinizes any



them to know what they want," he says, allowing a long pause. "I can't teach you how to play drums. But I'll introduce you to yourself. And once I introduce you to yourself, you can make all your dreams come true."

For those who survive the heat, the results are undeniable, as proven by the long roster of Carvin alumni who are now notables in the jazz world, many of them praising their mentor with devotional zeal. One such star student is MD Pro Panel member Allison Miller. "Michael Carvin is a force!" she says. "He changed my whole philosophy behind the kit." And Eric McPherson's take: "For me, Michael's influence transcended art. His influence was greatest on my life as a whole. While most teachers impose their personal approach on students as

chinks in confidence. "I say, 'Play something that you like,'" Michael explains, "And he'll say, 'What do you want to hear?' I'll say, 'What did I just tell you?' He *automatically* shuts down! Because it's that first sign of discipline. I didn't be his 'friend.' I shut him down. And I do it on purpose. Now he's beginning to...lose...it. I'm not trying to be his buddy or be a 'nice guy.' A 'nice guy' is a con man.

"Then I say to him, 'What is your dream in life?' His mind is frozen now, and I tell him, 'Every dream I've had in my life has come true.' And that's the truth. This is America, man. At this point he doesn't know what's happening to him. But that's the same thing that happens when a guy counts a tempo off. You have to make a *decision*, right or wrong."

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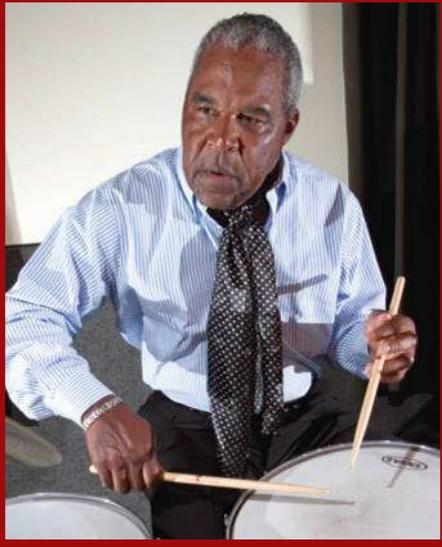
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## RECORDINGS

**Michael Carvin** Lost And Found Project 2065, Marsalis Music Honors Series, Each One Teach One, Revelation, Between Me And You, First Time, Drum Concerto At Dawn /// **Jackie McLean & Michael Carvin** Antiquity /// **Michael Carvin & Andrew Cyrille** Weights And Measures

## FAVORITES

**Cannonball Adderley** Nancy Wilson/Cannonball Adderley (Louis Hayes) /// **Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers** A Night In Tunisia (Art Blakey) /// **Les McCann & Eddie Harris** Swiss Movement (Donald Dean) /// **Oliver Nelson** The Blues And The Abstract Truth (Roy Haynes) /// **Horace Silver** The Tokyo Blues (Joe Harris, credited as John Harris Jr.) /// **Jimmy Smith** Back At The Chicken Shack (Donald Bailey) /// **Jimmy Smith** Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf? (uncredited, but most likely Donald Bailey) /// **Albert Collins** Frostbite (Casey Jones) /// **Koko Taylor** The Earthshaker (Vince Chappelle) /// **Johnny Copeland** Texas Twister (Candy McDonald, Julian Vaughan, Jimmy Wormworth)

If Carvin hadn't been nurtured in music, he surely would have succeeded as a motivational speaker. His animated verbal discourses are Muhammad Ali meets Tony Robbins meets boot-camp drill sergeant. "Teachers come to teach, not to hold hands," he says. "I tell my students, 'I would rather you *hate* me and be successful than love me and be a failure.' Through discipline comes

freedom. I believe in that, man."

Discipline has rewarded Carvin with a playing style of precision chops fueled by spontaneity and a bold, earthy sound. Outspoken and provocative, Michael speaks with sudden shifts between severity and sentimentality, elation and gravity. He cuts a strong presence, as an impassioned man who's forged his own path through great self-determination. And he'd love to help you do it too.

The master's colorful sermons of rhythm are peppered with memorable

catchphrases and pearls of wisdom.

One saying in particular stands as his defining motto. "Each one, teach one" is something I've always believed in," Carvin says. "In the African tradition we have storytellers. There's a man in the tribe that passes on knowledge. And there's always one young man that the master recognizes will be the next storyteller. He will take that young man and teach him everything that he knows about the history of the tribe. That's 'Each one, teach one.' As a drum teacher, I am a 'master.' If I have

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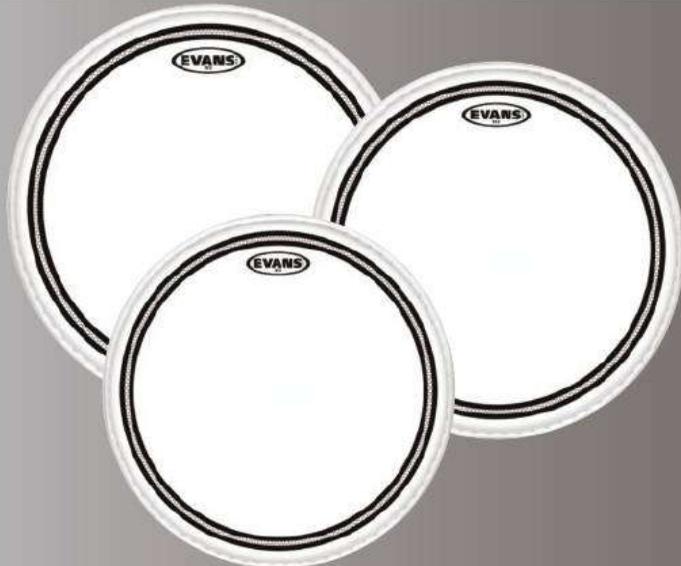
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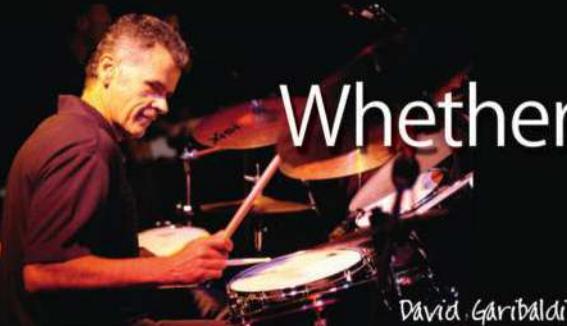
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## MICHAEL CARVIN

accepted a student, I tell him, 'Every time you walk through that door, you're telling me one thing: "Carvin, I'm putting my fate in your hands."' And by you trusting me to put the fate of your music career in my hands, it is my *duty* and honor to teach you everything I know."

### THE JOURNEY

Since the 1960s, Carvin has covered a sweeping arc of styles, which has led to recognition among a long list of jazz heavies and a productive career as a leader. Also a tireless crusader championing the drumkit as a total melodic instrument, he has explored solo performances in addition to his ensemble work, as captured on 1996's *Drum Concerto At Dawn*.

As his passion for teaching evolved, Carvin bloomed into one of New York City's most revered drum gurus. He dismisses the label *jazz*, but he's earned that right. To those who insist on defining a "swing" feel, Carvin responds, "I don't see 'rock' or 'jazz.' It's a beat! Check it out—it's a *beat*."

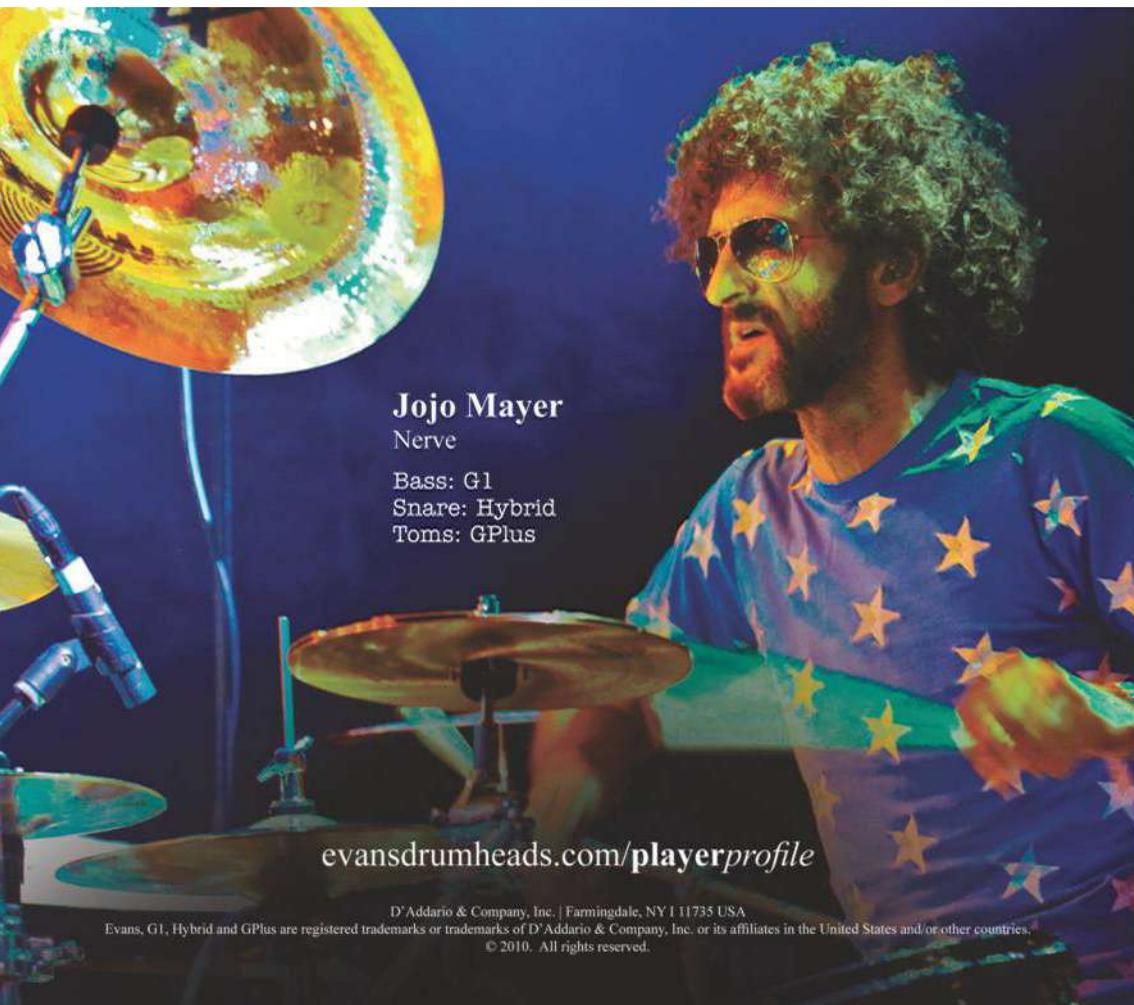
The man becomes breathless while discussing the sprawling family of rhythm, whether it be bands, track stars, the Russian Ballet, Times Square bucket players, John Philip Sousa, or double-Dutch rope jumpers.

"The beat" has been Carvin's guiding star ever since his father taught him drums, starting when Michael was five. He still thrills about his drum-captain days in high school: "We marched with 110 bodies that I moved up and down the football field, taking the command of their left and right feet *from me*. That's power!"

Coming of age in Houston, Carvin learned to lay down mean Texas blues shuffles with local bands. In 1963, the go-getter stepped up to a successful decade in L.A.'s recording and TV studios, interrupted by a '65-'67 tour of duty in Vietnam. A stretch on the Motown staff in '68 and '69 further strengthened his musical muscle. "What I really learned there was sophistication," Carvin says. "Also, how long can you play that same tempo? That's the discipline. I used

to tell myself, 'I'm going to play the sweetest backbeat that anybody ever heard.' I also had to put something else into it [points to his heart], because I could already play 8th notes and backbeat at eight years old. But to really *feel* it... I always had fast hands, but I learned other things at Motown. I sat and *sat* in that pocket."

Remembering those grooving sessions, Carvin recalls a subliminal presence in the Motown tracks: a person stomping quarter notes from the corner of the studio. Responding to a suggestion that it provided a "felt click track," Carvin shrugs. "To me it's just a guy stomping on floorboards." That response harks back to his youth. As a boy, Carvin asked his dad for a metronome. "But," he says with a laugh, "my father said, 'Why do you think I bought you a bass drum?' Then my father explained, 'If you're practicing to a metronome as a drummer, you're listening to another drummer to keep time for you, so you will never learn the *responsibility* of keeping time.' Once you build a man's confidence, he



**Jojo Mayer**

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can rule the rest of the music. If you break his confidence, he will surrender to everything.”

Perpetuating that philosophy in his teaching today, Carvin neither utilizes nor endorses the tool. “There’s nothing wrong with *this* metronome,” he says, pointing to his heart. “Great drummers are responsible to the music. There’s a thin line. Of course you can’t have bad time where a tempo starts here and ends like a fighter jet taking off. But none of us keep *perfect* time. I don’t keep perfect time—not playing with human beings. There’s emotion there. Play...the...music.”

Despite the drummer’s success in Los Angeles, a passion for jazz beckoned. Growing restless, Carvin said so long to security as well as the limiting anonymity of studio work. He hunkered down in San Francisco for a hiatus of shedding (“I was working on Michael Carvin”) and built connections. With a growing rep, he made the move to New York and was quickly ushered around the jazz world’s inner circle. Freddie Hubbard snapped up the fledgling, after which Carvin did an

inspirational stint with alto sax great Jackie McLean. The new drummer in town eventually amassed a heavy résumé, over the years gigging and recording with such luminaries as Dizzy Gillespie, Bobby Hutcherson, Hank Jones, Hampton Hawes, Illinois Jacquet, Pharoah Sanders, McCoy Tyner, Ben Webster, Dexter Gordon, Jimmy Smith, Gerry Mulligan, Cecil Taylor, Alice Coltrane, James Moody, Hugh Masekela, Hamiet Bluiett, Larry Young, Pat Martino, Terumasa Hino, and Abbey Lincoln, among others.

McLean’s gig offered Carvin a rare creative soul-mate partnership. “I didn’t get a glimpse of Michael Carvin until I joined Jackie,” the drummer says. “I didn’t have a clue. Jackie immediately let me have freedom. He was the only leader I worked with that would move aside to the edge of the bandstand when he finished his solo. He came out of that jazz family that would allow the young guys to emerge: ‘Who are you? Don’t look at me—who are you? Let the world know it!’”

Following a robust gigging schedule and McLean’s *New York Calling* LP,

Carvin prodded the saxist to chance a risky leap. The result, *Antiquity* (1975), was a bold and haunting sax/drums duet that marked a creative dividing line in McLean’s career. “I played very ahead of the beat,” Carvin says, “and I have a broad sound. Jackie had a razor-sharp sound, and he plays ahead of the beat. So I knew we’d have a blend, because he could cut through my thickness. After that, Jackie never made just another bebop record.” When the time finally came to move on from McLean’s band, Carvin made a heartfelt prophetic promise to his comrade: “Jackie, one day I’m going to send you a drummer with my spirit.”

“My second musical marriage was with Pharoah Sanders,” Carvin says. “What I got from Pharoah was the ability to travel through music *spiritually*.” Recalling his third “marriage,” Carvin speaks in a hushed voice. “That was John Birks Gillespie, aka Dizzy. He really showed me that less is more. John taught me my *innovative* skills. He loved drummers. He was the ‘Each one, teach one’ of his tribe—the tribe of bebop.” Carvin recalls the exact date

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when, walking back from a gig, Dizzy turned to him and said, "You are one of the only drummers in my band since Kenny Clarke that I feel can play anything that I can think of."

Among the hundreds of recordings Carvin has graced, *Marsalis Music Honors Michael Carvin* is a 2006 release he led that holds a special place in his heart. The album features his arrangements of "the songs that made me fall in love with jazz." Yet, when asked to recall which career performances remain his most memorable, Carvin quickly responds, "None of 'em. That was then; this is now. I haven't played my best performance yet. Even *Lost And Found Project 2065* just came out, but it's *finished*."

That recent release, Carvin's twelfth as a leader, features a piano-less trio in a one-take, free-form outing powered by intense sonic waves from Carvin's kit. The title refers to the artist's ongoing journey. "I've just started playing the way I was playing between the ages of five and thirteen," Michael says, "because that's what I lost. What I found from thirteen to sixty-five was how to be a great drummer, to be able to work as a sideman, to be able to read, play the book, make money, and pay the bills. Now that I'm financially free, I'm beginning to feel my five-year-old music that I never finished, that I cut off at thirteen to become a *professional drummer*."

### METHODS OF THE MASTER

Just as Carvin sees the beat as a unifying thread between musical styles and cultures, education is also an endless blood-filled artery. "I'm not teaching any of these students," he says. "This is my father. My father *loved* me. I am his child. He was my drum teacher. He didn't teach me [in order] to pay his light bills...he taught me because he loved me. You see the difference? I don't teach to pay my bills. I taught Eric McPherson since he was eleven years old. I taught him for free, got him through high school, even bought clothes for him and everything...." Carvin breaks off, and his eyes are suddenly wet. He pauses and grabs a

handkerchief.

When Carvin coaxes students to let their inner drummer emerge, his methods can be surprisingly *laissez-faire*. "Everybody has different fingerprints," he says. "What does that tell me? I'm special. Now, the way I teach my young great drummers: *I don't play at a lesson*. I never played in a drum lesson. If I had a teacher that I paid who played in a lesson, I'd beat his brains out. I'm paying *him* to get better? Come on, man! Even playing to demonstrate is just mimicking! That's like you're raisin' a *dog*! A human being has his own ability to think, with his own voice. All I have to do with young great drummers is get them to really understand that they're *already* somebody and they already have a sound."

Carvin seeks to stir the imagination as well as the hands. After asking students to play a ride beat, he'll nudge them further. "I tell them this: 'What makes you laugh? Think of something

funny that just cracks you up. Now play that same cymbal beat and have that thought of fun.' It will change. Because now they're not approaching it as a lesson or a serious thing or a chore."

The increasing elusiveness of that rare state of mind allowing for openness, inner awareness, and childlike imagination is a frequent theme for Carvin. The scourge of junk food, junk media, and the mental clutter caused by the constant bombardment of technology is a recurring topic as well. "When you didn't have everything that you do today," he says, "there were times when you were bored. And those were the days when you *dreamed*. You had time to be bored, and that's when you came to yourself. That's why you play the drums different. That's why you *think* different. You had a chance to meet yourself."

But in addition to spiritual, philosophical, and mental elements, Carvin preaches a healthy dose of bedrock fun-



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damentals and time-honored hard work. “Do you remember how painful it was to learn how to tie your shoes? A person could wake you up right now at four in the morning, and you could tie your shoes in the dark. Why? Because your parents had you sit there until you got it right. They knew it was something you would have to be able to do. That’s how I teach. If you can tie your shoes, you can conquer the world.”

One “shoe tying” fundamental this teacher insists on is mastery of the rudiments. “The twenty-six rudiments are the same as the twenty-six letters of the alphabet to a writer,” Carvin says. “Without them, you couldn’t write a sentence. If a drummer doesn’t have some working knowledge of the twenty-six rudiments, there’s nothing I can teach him.”

#### **IN THE BEGINNING IS SILENCE, AND DESIRE**

When presenting solo drum performances, Carvin is keenly aware of the

challenges in holding an audience’s attention. He’s exacting in his choice of lights and dress to create a special moment, to tell a story. Before the first note is played, he sustains a long meditative silence. “I have to take the drum part away from the audience and put focus on the human spirit,” he explains, “and the first sound from the drums has to be on such a pianissimo level that it forces them to listen to me. I find most drummers play with this attitude: *Listen to me!* But I play drums with the attitude: I don’t want you to listen to me—I want you to listen to yourself. If I take my dynamic underneath what they were anticipating, I got the ear, man. And once I get the ear, I will slowly take them on my journey. See, little by little makes big. Big by big makes failure.

“The reason why Michael Carvin students are successful in the workplace,” he continues, “is because they usually spend four to five years with me. As they continue to study with me,

I keep asking that same question until they answer it: ‘What is the burning desire in your heart? What drives you?’ Once they answer it, that will make them successful. When my students step on the bandstand as a sideman, it’s not the bandleader or the guys in the band that will drive them to their greatness. It’s the inner desire, the burning in their heart to be a great *person*. You see, a drumset is only an instrument. But a *person* is a human being. So the person has to be great, and *then* the music can be great. Before a student leaves me, we pick a group that they say they want to join, and I show them how to get that gig. And I have not missed in thirty-seven years. I tell my students, ‘You *will* pay me back, but not in money. The way you will pay me back is when you see “yourself” come in—you teach ‘em.’ Each one, teach one.”

At a very young sixty-six, Carvin continues his active teaching schedule, practices, performs, lives his music and music philosophies, produces records, and makes time to rise in the wee hours for beloved rounds of golf. In 2006, his comrade Jackie McLean passed. For the previous fifteen years, McLean had been performing with an outstanding drummer he found via Carvin’s recommendation. His name is Eric McPherson.

Luckily, Carvin’s restless heels are now being followed by a documentary film team. The crew can’t truly capture it all, though. Ideally, to be Carvin’s proper storyteller, the cameras would have to follow many students, over many years, through many generations, playing “a beat” all over the globe and eventually finding fledglings of their own. Each one, teach one.

*Learn more about Carvin’s projects and recordings at [michaelcarvin.com](http://michaelcarvin.com). Michael welcomes communication with drummers through [teachone@michaelcarvin.com](mailto:teachone@michaelcarvin.com).*

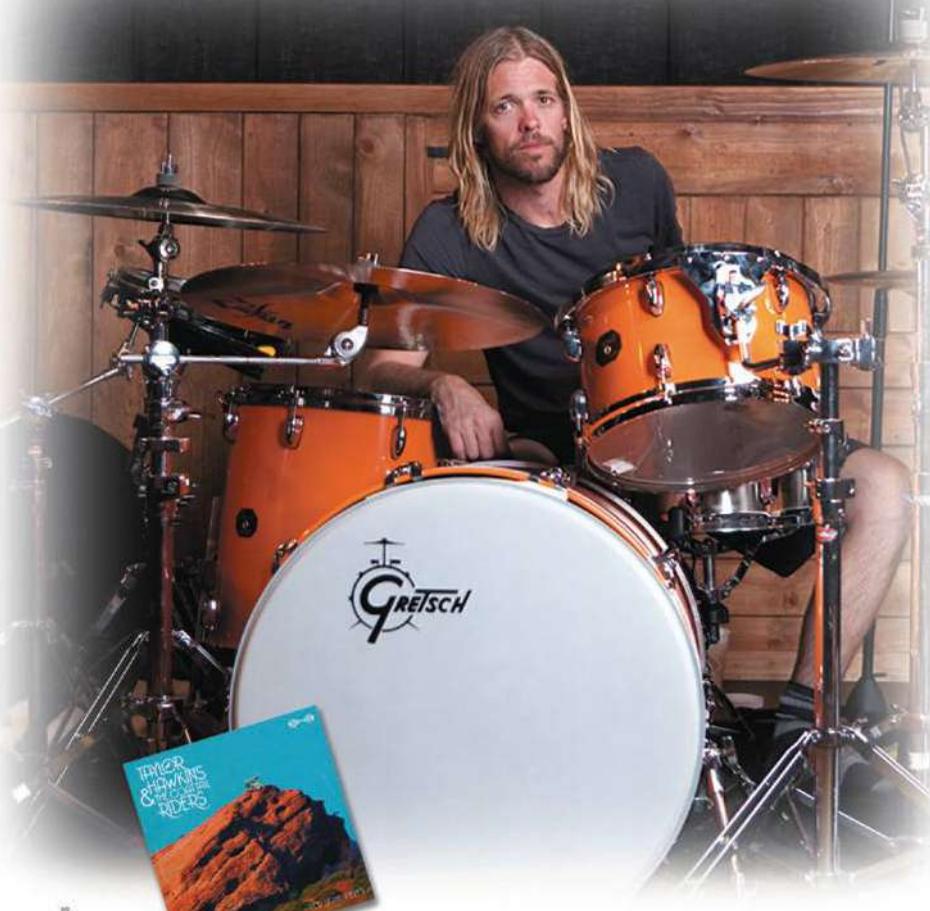


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# PLAYING FOR THE SONG

Get Good

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**2:42** SOPHISTICATED SENSIBILITY **2:42** **MOVING GROOVES** **2:42** **TECHNICAL** Support The Song AT ALL COSTS **2:42** **GRIP-SWITCH** Powerful **2:42** **Philosophies** **ACTIVE LISTENER** Rigid to fluid

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“Play for the song, man.” Every drummer has heard those words at some point. While some might struggle to grasp just what they mean, or to articulate what’s required on a particular track, everyone knows what playing for the song sounds like when they hear it.

Think simple, solid, timeless drum parts, like those on “Honky Tonk Women,” “Give It Away,” “Let’s Stay Together,” and “Land Of 1,000 Dances.” The latter is a dance-floor classic with a groove so perfect it prompts session legend James Gadson to comment, “If you don’t know how to Pony or do whatever dance Wilson Pickett’s singing about, that beat will have you up there trying to do it.”

As the above examples illustrate, playing for the song doesn’t necessarily require Neil Peart’s chops, Dave Lombardo’s velocity, or Carter Beauford’s polyrhythmic prowess—which is not to say that just any clubber can

hammer out a basic 4/4 groove and claim to be playing for the song. The concept requires the drummer to supply a sturdy, supportive foundation, to embrace space and give a song’s melody and hook room to breathe, to know when to push and when to pull back. It requires finesse, dynamics, and the ability to play with and play off other musicians. And it can take years of practice, failure, and success and a wholesale change in philosophy to truly understand what it is to play for the song.

To help explain this subtle art, we sought the insight of five drummers who collectively possess a staggering amount of experience in playing for the song: Daughtry’s Robin Diaz, Mike Malinin of the Goo Goo Dolls, Maroon 5’s Matt Flynn, Ned Brower of Rooney, and the aforementioned James Gadson. This handful of seasoned drummers has played for all sorts of songs. Gadson laid down the instantly recognizable rimclick/

kick/hi-hat groove to Bill Withers’ “Use Me” and the four-on-the-floor pulse to countless disco hits. Turn on your local rock radio station and you’ll probably hear one of Diaz’s big beats blasting behind a Theory Of A Deadman or Hinder song. Slide over to the Top 40 station and you’re sure to encounter Flynn’s smooth touch on a dance-y Maroon 5 track like “Misery” or Malinin’s economical approach to pacing one of the Goos’ many hits. And flip on an alternative or AAA station and you’ll hear Brower giving Rooney’s hook-heavy guitar pop a swift kick that’s totally complementary to the band’s melodic sense.

While these drummers’ styles differ, there is a common denominator in their approach: Above all else, they’re playing to serve the song. Their words are wise, and the experience, knowledge, and opinions they share are invaluable. Process it all, and then put it to use the next time you’re asked to play for the song.

## GETTING PHILOSOPHICAL

Ask a hundred different drummers for their philosophy on playing for the song, and you're likely to receive a hundred different answers.

Unsurprisingly, we got five unique perspectives from our five experts.

Mike Malinin's outlook calls to mind the old baseball adage about how if you don't notice the umpire, that means he's doing a good job. "For the most part, drummers are there to support the song, not to be seen—and not even really to be heard, in a sense," Malinin says. "I've always taken it as a compliment when other musicians tell me they don't even notice I'm there. It doesn't mean my parts are boring. It means everything I'm doing is probably complementing the song."

Robin Diaz feels playing for the song isn't just about what you play, but also how you play it. "You have to play with confidence," he says. "The song *has* to have that. It comes through the speakers. Whenever the song and the click starts, if there's any kind of shakiness from the get-go, [producers and musicians] will know right away. You have to lead the song, and they have to *feel* that you're leading the song."

Ned Brower's philosophy centers on knowing your role in the band. "My style is pretty simple and straightforward, so I can serve our songs well," he explains. "I'm in a band that has a really good lead guitar player and keyboard player. So the rhythm section is more like a Fleetwood Mac or Heartbreakers arrangement: We keep it pretty solid and let the lead instruments and the vocals take over. When I listen to music, I listen to the drums, but I'm much more fascinated by the words and melody, which are the essence of the song. As a drummer I've always tried to play around that."

Matt Flynn sees playing for the song as a concept that differs from band to band, but for Maroon 5 he says the objective "is basically to play really simply. That's what I love. I hate it when a drum fill takes me out of a song, when something sticks out like a sore thumb. It's got to flow. Your job as the drummer is to set up everybody else and set up everything in the song. That's *really* important."

As for James Gadson's philosophy, it's probably just what you'd expect from the drummer who brought the funk to "Use Me." "I don't do a lot of technical things," Gadson says. "My thing is groove and feel. You have to make the song come alive. The younger people would say [the musicians] are vibing together when we're all playing for the song. Everybody's feeling one another. And if you're playing live, the audience feels that. If you're recording, it's apparent in the studio. A lot of times you can be technically right and it works. But on a lot of the great classic records that we like, the drumming is not that technical. It's simply supporting the song."

## THE TAPE DOESN'T LIE

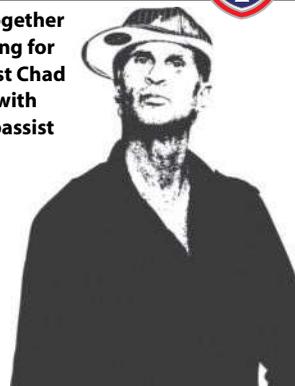
So now that you've absorbed different perspectives on what playing for the song means, you probably want to sit down at your drums and put that knowledge to use. But how will you know when it's working? The musicians, producers, and/or engineers you're collaborating with will surely have opinions. But in order to truly wrap your head around the concept of playing for the song, you need to listen to yourself playing to hear what it is that you are—and, just as important, *aren't*—doing. This is an exercise that can be beneficial for newbies and seasoned pros alike.

"From way back, when I've been in bands, we'd record *every* rehearsal and jam," Flynn says. "And I'd go back and listen. Back then I was into more of the Jane's Addiction heavy groove stuff. And I started realizing that the parts where I played straight—boom-bap, boom-boom-bap—were typically the best parts. That's where the *song* really came out. That changed my whole philosophy, from overplaying to playing for the song."

## CHAD SMITH ARRIVING AT THAT MAGIC TAKE



**A**s we were putting together this feature on playing for the song, MD Pro Panelist Chad Smith was in the studio with singer Anthony Kiedis, bassist Flea, and guitarist Josh Klinghoffer, recording the next Red Hot Chili Peppers album. We thought it was a good time to ask Chad to riff on the process of presenting a song in its best light.



**TRUST YOUR GUT FOR THE GROOVE.** I try not to think too much. Eighty percent of the time, the first thing I come up with ends up being the thing, which is pretty cool, because it's pure—it taps into what got you excited in the first place when you were jamming on ideas.

**FIND YOUR PARTS IN THE VOCALS.** As you arrange the song, you want to come up with something that inspires the singer, something he can work with. The way Anthony sings is very rhythmic. Even if he doesn't have the words yet, he's a good scatter, and his dynamics and rhythm—and how he changes them during the verses or the chorus—will affect what I play. Sometimes I'll mimic it, sometimes I'll support it, sometimes I'll downplay it, sometimes I'll ignore it.

**LISTEN TO AN OBJECTIVE OPINION.** After we've got the songs basically written, we'll do preproduction with Rick Rubin. He's objective and detached, not married to the song emotionally. We trust him, which is important. He really focuses us on what works within a song format, which is good because we tend to meander and do things a little too long, which is what musicians do. And there are a lot of people who listen to music out there who aren't musicians. [laughs] It really helps me that he thinks like that.

**DON'T IMPRESS YOURSELF WITH EXTRA TOUCHES.** I try to produce myself a little. I don't need to do fancy stuff to impress myself. It might be cool, but if it doesn't add to the song.... I used to butt heads with Rick about that, thinking he was sometimes taking the personality out of the track. But he'd be, "No, it's still *you*. It's your feel, it's your chemistry with the group. That's so important; don't discount that." Our essence doesn't get lost, and Rick is very careful about that. He doesn't try to homogenize it. It's more of an arrangement thing, making it so it's something the listener will enjoy.

**GO FOR THE MAGIC.** Live is one thing. With a recording, it's there *forever*. It has to have some magic in it. You might actually play it "better" at other times, but the keeper has to have something really special about it for you to say, "That's the one we want on our record, that's the one we want to be proud to play for our kids." And...uh...sometimes that can mess with you. [laughs] I'm in the process of that now. There's a universe of ways that people connect at any given moment. And when the magic comes, you have to bottle it, which is kinda hard. But when it does happen, you're like, "Man, we're so lucky we got it!"

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## GET GOOD: PLAYING FOR THE SONG

“When I record, even if it’s just a simple fill or shift of a groove, I’ll listen back to make sure it’s working with the song before I decide whether to stick with it,” Malinin says. “That’s a key thing: So many drummers *don’t* listen back. I’ll hear songs all the time—obviously it sticks out to drummers more—when I’ll just start laughing because the drum part is so tacky. You go, ‘What was the drummer thinking?’”

### LISTEN TO PHIL RUDD AND STAN LYNCH

You want to learn how to melt faces and blow minds on the kit? Listen to players like Joey Jordison and Thomas Pridgen. You want to learn how to serve the song with an unobtrusive style that’s simple yet sophisticated? Several of the drummers we spoke with suggest studying the work of AC/DC’s Phil Rudd and former Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers drummer Stan Lynch (with honorable mentions to Jim Keltner, Al Jackson, Bun E. Carlos, Ringo Starr, and Dave Grohl,

among others).

Our experts look to these timekeepers with good reason. Rudd’s pocket is among the deepest in all of hard rock, whether he’s playing a hyper boogie (“Whole Lotta Rosie”), a slow blues (“The Jack”), or a sexy mid-tempo groove (“Back In Black”). And Lynch’s work with Petty is Playing For The Song 101. Think of the slinky pulse of “Breakdown,” the classy fills that usher in the choruses of songs like “The Waiting” and “Here Comes My Girl,” and the swamp-funk groove of “Mary Jane’s Last Dance.”

“Phil Rudd and Stan Lynch are big guys for me,” Malinin says. “Those are two of the kings of playing for the song. When I was eleven, twelve years old and first heard ‘Back In Black’ and ‘Highway To Hell,’ I didn’t get it. I didn’t get why this guy was playing so simple. I was super into Yes and Rush at the time, and I was like, ‘This is heavy metal—why isn’t this guy rocking out?’ Of course, years later I realized he was one of the greatest rock

drummers of all time. And he was playing for the song.”

“Stan Lynch is about the best there is at playing for the song,” Brower adds. “Everything about the way his parts lock in with the bass and rhythm guitar and how his fills are so classic...his playing has been a *big* influence on me.”

### THE STUDIO VS. THE STAGE

Say you played some busy lick on a recording that ended up working as a great transition between a bridge and a chorus. But you go to play the same part live and the change just falls apart. Or you laid down a track at what feels like the absolute perfect tempo, but when you go to play it at a show, the song feels like it’s dragging. Welcome to the reality that what works well in the studio doesn’t always work live. In some cases you need to make alterations for the stage, to better serve the song and the performer.

“If I were to do some 32nd-note roll in a big room, you wouldn’t hear it,”

# CHAD SZELIGA

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## GET GOOD: PLAYING FOR THE SONG

Flynn says. "What's effective in the venues we play are loud flams and basic things that accent what's going on. I hammer the 2 and the 4 on the snare and use the cymbals for accents, crashes. That works for our songs. Live, the busy stuff works with very few bands."

"For the artist [on stage], it's show time," Gadson explains. "There are certain rhythm patterns you might've played in the studio that you have to keep. But most of the time, especially with an R&B thing, you might play it a little faster live. They're doing a show. And rehearsing for a live show can be difficult when what you played on the record—or what someone else played—doesn't work for a song live. So you have to rethink things."

### KEEP IT SIMPLE

If you haven't already noticed, keeping it simple is a cardinal rule when it comes to playing for the song. That doesn't mean you can't get your licks in. But if you insist on trying to crowd-bar fancy parts into songs and you're

continually stepping all over the hooks, you might have a hard time finding work.

"Hit hard, hit direct," Diaz says. "Make sure the intro is up, bring the verses down dynamically, and in the choruses bring it back up. That will keep you working. It doesn't have to

be rocket science."

When all else fails, there's always that boom-bap, boom-boom-bap beat. "In the right hands, there just isn't a better beat than that," Flynn says. "Remember, your main job is to make it swing. And played correctly, that's what that beat does."

### Our Contributors



Since 1994, **Mike Malinin** has been the drummer in the Goo Goo Dolls, a group that has scored seventeen top-ten singles and sold nearly 9 million albums in the United States alone. The band's latest recording, *Something For The Rest Of Us*, was released this past August. Malinin appeared on the cover of *Modern Drummer* in August 2002.



**Matt Flynn** began playing live with Maroon 5 in 2004, when a shoulder injury forced drummer Ryan Dusick off the road. He officially joined the band during the recording of its second album, *It Won't Be Soon Before Long*, released in 2007. Maroon 5's third full-length, *Hands All Over*, was released this past September. Flynn played previously with the B-52s and Gavin DeGraw.



**Ned Brower** is a founding member of the pop-rock band Rooney, which has released three full-length albums and one EP since 2003. In addition to his

work with Rooney, Brower performs around Los Angeles with other acts, and he recently self-released his first solo album, *Great To Say Hello*, which is available at [nedbrower.com](http://nedbrower.com).



**Robin Diaz** is an in-demand session and live drummer who has played with Theory Of A Deadman, Kelly Clarkson, Avril Lavigne, Hinder, Kiss, Nickelback's Chad Kroeger, Chris Cornell, O.A.R., and others over the last decade. He began playing with Daughtry midway through the band's most recent U.S. tour.



**James Gadson** is a veteran session drummer who has recorded with Paul McCartney, Barbra Streisand, Marvin Gaye, Beck, and many others. His drumming can be heard on Peaches & Herb's "Reunited," the Jackson 5's "Dancing Machine," and Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive." He has played recently with Jamie Lidell and Amos Lee.



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# ESPERANZA SPALDING

To make her own music deeper, the much talked-about bassist/vocalist/composer deeply analyzes drumming and makes some heavy discoveries. Here, she shares what she's found and gives critical insight into the playing of virtuosos like Horacio Hernandez, Terri Lyne Carrington, and Francisco Mela.

by Jeff Potter

Sandra Lee

**E**speranza Spalding's impressive acoustic bass chops and effortless honey-and-smoke vocals have wowed purists and crossover audiences alike—not to mention bandleaders like Michel Camilo, Pat Metheny, and Charlie Haden. Spalding's breakout disc, *Esperanza*, melded straight-ahead jazz, R&B, funk, Brazilian, Afro-Cuban, and pop elements. Her challenging new release, *Chamber Music Society*, is something of a departure, showcasing a core quartet augmented by a string trio. The music requires a versatile drummer, and indeed Spalding has employed the best. *MD* caught up with her via Skype during a stop in Portugal on her hectic touring schedule, to discuss her relationship with drums and drummers.

**MD:** Musicians depend on and want something special from their drummers. Three categories of musicians are notably demanding in this area: bandleaders, bass players, and vocalists. You're all three. What is it that those three "selves" need and demand from a drummer?

**Esperanza:** Acting as a bandleader, we're playing my compositions, so I have a clear idea of what I want for the arc of each song and for the overall arc of the show. The main thing I'm looking for is people who are able to think like arrangers when they're playing a piece and also when

they're playing a set, allowing each song to have its own life and its own identity. I expect drummers to be free enough when they're playing and listening to go with what the song is commanding.

A lot of drummers tend to have all their stuff that they've worked out and want to use, but it's really tricky to learn how to contextualize all the stuff that you know and *edit* it for the sake of the arc of the song—knowing what to use when. For instance, being able to let the song, for the sake of the balance of the set, *not* get really rocking...keeping things at a simmer, playing with dynamics and intensity. That's a conversation I've had with all of my musicians, but especially drummers, because they command so much space, particularly intensity-wise. If a drummer starts playing at a certain level and he or she isn't sensitive to where anybody else is, then we all *have* to go there.

As a vocalist, my needs are similar: The drummer needs to keep the intensity and momentum but still stay sensitive to the vocalist, to understand the singer's limits in terms of intensity and volume. A singer may do something to create tension or intensity in a song, but that doesn't mean it's a volume thing. A lot of drummers—because their instrument has a huge dynamic range—forget that other people have a volume limit. Understanding how to control that scale between silence and the loudest a

singer can get, and to be able to flow in and out of the vocals without suddenly overpowering them, is important.

It's a really terrible feeling when you want to create an arc and the drummer keeps going beyond you and you can't go with them. It's not just about "playing soft." My favorite drummers are those who can keep momentum and intensity and understand the dynamic range of a vocalist.

Most of these things are particularly issues of younger drummers, because the repertoire they've been dealing with is heavily focused on drums. On a lot of recordings, you can hear the drums bashing but still hear the vocalist. And I think a lot of people don't get that that doesn't translate to live settings.

As a bassist, what I'm looking for and what I love is when a drummer leaves enough space to establish something together. It's not sonic space but just their *focus*: remaining open to evolving together instead of just "driving a bus" and deciding to go somewhere—that's the worst. You've got to leave enough space so you can engage in a dialogue with that bass line.

There's a lot of busy music that impresses us. Using lots of notes to establish a groove can seem appealing. But if you listen to Bob Marley, you hear how it's so sparse and every piece fits in that counterpoint perfectly. You need every beat that's happening from the bass and drums collectively to

make that pocket, allowing space for togetherness.

**MD:** You've started working on drums yourself, and you've said it has improved your bass playing. How so?

**Esperanza:** I'm just curious about the sound and how it relates to the momentum of the sticks and the sound of different types of strokes and patterns. I had my drummer show me some basic ways of using your full arm to make the sound. That percussive effect is something I would like to emulate on the bass, just in terms of where the point of a note is and the momentum in a note and a groove.

So I'll transcribe snare patterns, for instance, just to improve my walking feel. I want to be able to know what that ride pattern or snare pattern feels like physically, what the bounce and momentum are in creating that sound. Once I understand what it's like to play with sticks, then I'll try to understand how to translate it to the way I'm fingering or plucking or how the notes are ringing, how the attack is—to be able to control it if I want to create a feel.

I feel the difference right away when I've been transcribing Elvin Jones—maybe taking a ride pattern—and trying to emulate that *shape*. Everybody draws from Elvin for the straight-ahead stuff. That makes me lock up with drummers much better. I'm making spaces between the notes that they're playing.

**MD:** *Esperanza* was such a success that you

could have played it safe and repeated yourself. But *Chamber Music Society* is a real shift with a different sound. On drums, Terri Lyne Carrington does a tremendous job with the issues you spoke of before: playing great dynamics and really creating an arc in those complex arrangements.

**Esperanza:** Terri writes and arranges, so she's thinking about the tunes holistically; she's not thinking of a "drum part." That's really important for all instrumentalists—to analyze arrangements or compositions, or to be writers and experiment with bringing songs to fruition, experiencing that process of listening to all the elements and how they balance, and controlling that to get the most out of it.

Terri does that on a really advanced level. She's a master on her instrument, so she can control and contribute to a rhythm, a groove, without playing very much. She doesn't need to play a lot to give the same effect. With *Chamber Music*, I needed somebody who would play each element of the kit as its own line in the music. She listens to all the lines in the composition as a whole and really orchestrates the kit, all the while grooving her ass off.

**MD:** On tour, you need a drummer who can cover a wide scope from the last two records.

**Esperanza:** On this interim tour, Dana Hawkins is on drums. He's an incredible drummer. I needed someone who could get into my philosophy of songs and quickly learn

my tunes. He's also an amazing bass player, so when I give him something to learn, he understands the workings of the song.

**MD:** You've worked with one of the most creative "new" drummers around, Francisco Mela, both with your own band and with Joe Lovano's group.

**Esperanza:** It's profound what he can do on the kit. He's coming out of a totally different perspective. He's translating so many ideas into drums—from singing to dancing to chanting—and you *feel* it. He's free to "dance," he's not chained to the kit, to rudiments or licks—he's a very liberated drummer. He's *with* you, and he's *free* with you.

**MD:** You've also worked often with another great drummer from Cuba, Horacio Hernandez.

**Esperanza:** Horacio is a musician who wants to figure out what *your* music needs. It's incredible. I went to his house for rehearsals for the last record. He had checked out all the charts, listened to all the demos, and he was trying to figure out what needed to be in there, asking all the questions, experimenting until he felt like he found the right thing. It's not like, "Here's what I do, and it's bad, so I'm just gonna lay it into the song." I was amazed by how incredibly generous he was. His focus was figuring out what my songs needed. And he's the king! I should have been trying to figure out what *he* heard. He's free and able to do that for the songs yet still sound like *him*. That's the beauty of a drummer like that.



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# STEVE SMITH

*Raga Bop Trio* by Michael Dawson

**M**odern Drummer Hall Of Famer Steve Smith's latest album, *Raga Bop Trio*, on the Abstract Logix label, is the culmination of the rock/jazz/fusion drummer's decade-long experiments melding South Indian classical music with Western drumset sensibilities.

"I first got into Indian music in 2001, when I was hired to play drums on a tour that was organized by a tabla player named Sandip Burman," Smith says. "The music was very complex, but about halfway through the tour I started to realize that most of the tunes were in one time signature all the way through, even though the individual phrases sounded like they were in odd times. I started to see a lot of logic and beauty in the organization of Indian rhythm."

After a few years of study, which included a weeklong crash course on South Indian vocal percussion (Konnakol) and rhythm theory with the Indian drummer Karuna Moorthy, whom Smith met while teaching a drum camp in Germany in 2002, a chance encounter between kindred spirits ultimately led to the formation of the group heard on *Raga Bop Trio*. "I played a gig in San Francisco with Larry Coryell that had George Brooks on saxophone and Kai Eckhardt on bass," Steve explains. "George and Kai were both deeply into Indian music, and afterwards George asked us to join a band he was starting with tabla master Zakir Hussain called Summit. We made an album that came out in 2004, and we toured quite a bit for a couple of years."

"Prasanna, who's an accomplished South Indian guitarist, heard that I was a Western drummer using Indian rhythms, so he called me to play some gigs," Smith continues. "We played in a traditional setting, which is just a drummer and a melodic instrument, but Prasanna plays an electric guitar, which is very modern. So I was playing with George and Prasanna independently, and eventually the idea emerged to try something together. In 2009 we scheduled three days of rehearsal/jamming at my house in Oregon, and in those days we came up with all the material on the record."

"I've been incorporating Indian rhythms into the music of my fusion

band Vital Information. But *Raga Bop Trio* takes it a step further because we're using more traditional Indian raga and we're blending Western harmony with Indian melodies. All of us are stretching our boundaries to find a common meeting ground."

What follows are Smith's thoughts on playing jazz/Indian fusion in a bass-less trio, as well as some track-by-track insight.

## RAGA BOP DRUMKIT

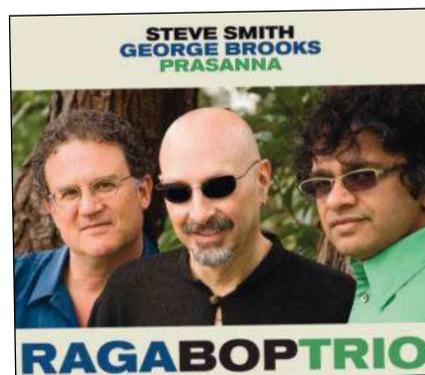
The kit I used on the album is a Sonor SQ2. It's the same kit I used at the 2006 Modern Drummer Festival with Jazz Legacy. It has a 20x20 bass drum with two Remo Powerstroke 3 heads and no muffling. Without a bass player, we wanted a big, open sound from the bass drum. The rack toms are 7x8, 9x10, and 11x12. The floor toms are 14x14 and 16x16. I used a Jeff Ocheltree 5 1/2x14 TreeBronze snare as the main drum, with a 5x12 Sonor acrylic on the side.

The head combination is based on Tony Williams' setup, with clear CS black dots on the tops and bottoms of the toms. It's a fantastic sound. I don't have the drums tuned very high on the record, but I've been tuning a little higher for live shows. You can tune these heads up higher and get a nice melodic tone that still has a lot of depth and punch.

On the first track, the main ride is a Zildjian K Custom Dry Complex II. That cymbal doesn't have much sustain, so you can really bash on it and it has a very percussive attack. On most of the album, I used a Hi Bell Dry ride. My other cymbals were a 19" Armand "Beautiful Baby" ride, 14" Armand hi-hats, 18" A Custom ReZo and 18" K Custom Hybrid crashes, and 9" K Custom Hybrid and 8" A splashes.

## PLAYING WITHOUT A BASS PLAYER

The first thing I noticed about playing without a bass player was that I had to incorporate the toms more than I normally would. When you're comping behind a soloist on the ride cymbal, snare, bass drum, and hi-hat, everything but the bass drum has a lot of high end. In this group, I have to move my left hand around the toms. I'm also playing more fills and



incorporating the toms into grooves to fill out the low-end space. I can play more actively with this trio than I normally do, and it doesn't get in the way. In fact, it helps give the music momentum.

There are some songs where I play exclusively on the toms and the snare with the snares off. That's related to Indian drumming. There are no cymbals in traditional Indian music. They play tom-like sounds using high-pitched/low-pitched variations, so I'm applying that concept to the drumset.

## "TUG OF WAR"

To orchestrate the syncopated melody of this song, I use a combination of a modern jazz drumming approach—where I'm playing rhythms between the bass drum, snare, and ride cymbal—and a more Indian-influenced approach where I'm using the snare and toms to approximate the shape of the melody in a high/low interpretation. I don't play the melody the same way every time, but I use the same concept of incorporating the toms and snare to match the melodic shapes that George and Prasanna are playing.

Prasanna taught this piece to us one phrase at a time, and I wrote my own chart so I could understand the phrasing of the rhythms. But I memorized it because I want to be as fluent with the phrasing as possible.

## "MISS OMA"

I start this song by playing a calypso-type groove with brushes, and then I transition to sticks. I position the sticks so they're easy to pick up, and then I switch one hand at a time. I may have one stick on a music stand to the left of me, and the right stick will be on the floor tom. That way I can drop the brushes and pick up the sticks while keeping the rhythm as smooth as possible. You have to practice that move and put the sticks in a convenient place to be picked up.

This tune also has quite a bit of toms worked in to fill out the sound.

### “LOVE AND HUNGER”

In this song, which uses an open ECM-style jazz approach, a lot of the focus of the rhythm is the ride cymbal, with accompaniment supplied by the rest of the kit. In a piece of music like this, I like to play spatially and keep to myself, allowing the other instruments to do what they do without trying to interact verbatim with what they're doing. Each of us is functioning independently within the tune. We're listening to each other, but each of us has a role. So I'm playing and responding, but very subtly. I'm creating a drum part that will stand on its own as an interesting piece of music. It's accompaniment, yet it's drum-set composition at the same time.

It takes a long time to develop the perspective and confidence to be able to play this way. Some people may think it's self-centered to play like that. But it's not; it's contributing an equal third to the composition. My role models for that type of playing are Jack DeJohnette and Jon Christensen, who I listened to a lot in the '70s on great ECM records like Eberhard Weber's *Yellow Fields*, Ralph Towner's *Solstice*, and John Abercrombie's *Timeless*. Tony Williams also played like this in the '60s on some of the albums he made as a sideman with Herbie Hancock and others.

### “IRONICALLY”

There are two ways you can hear this groove. Prasanna is playing four over five, and my drum part is built from that. I think of it in 4/4, with each beat divided into quintuplets. Then I apply a rock groove to that, with the bass drum on beats 1 and 3 and the snare on 2 and 4. I'm aware that it's in 5/4, and I can feel that pulse. But I've been working with quintuplets for years, so it was easier for me to hear this tune in 4/4. The song does change from 5/4 to 4/4, however, so I have to keep aware of the pulse of the underlying quarter note.

My solo takes on the structure of a fairly traditional Indian drum solo, where there's an improvised part followed by a composition. I played a very traditional South Indian korvai in 5/4 to end my solo. Korvai is a South Indian compositional technique that's sort of like a bridge in Western music, which is a section that occurs only once in a tune. After we recorded the tune, I went back and doubled the korvai with Konnakol. Live, I play the rhythms while reciting the Konnakol at the same time.

### “GARUDA”

I tried a lot of different ways of interpreting this tune. What I found worked best was to play it as if I were a drum loop. The repetitive beat gives some structure to the

rhythm, because the melody and the guitar parts change a lot. Fundamentally, the tune is in 4/4, although the phrasing suggests a lot of other rhythms.

During the guitar solo, I use a Tala Wand in the right hand and a brush in the left.

### “THE GEOMETRY OF RAP”

I've learned a lot of Konnakol compositions by transcribing recordings, or they were taught to me by various Indian musicians. A lot of these compositions have been around for a very long time. I fine-tuned and altered them to make them my own. My choice of syllables and the way I present them is my own interpretation.

The first and last compositions are a reduction, where each phrase is the same as the one before it, but with a beat chopped from the beginning. Then I play a tihai, which is a phrase that's repeated three times.

The second-to-last composition is the most difficult one. Zakir Hussain taught me the framework, which is: 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, then a 16th note and a 16th-note rest. That's repeated three times in a row. I phrase the groupings using different patterns usually played on kanjira, which is a South Indian frame drum. Those interpretations make the composition sound more complex, rather than simply stating the groupings.

I play a very straight groove behind the Konnakol, but between each composition I play a motivic pattern that gives it shape.

### “MOONLANDING”

This song has a six feel, with a trancelike mood set up by the guitar. There's a collective improvisation in the middle where I mainly play on the toms. We end that section with a unison korvai. During the improvisation we're suggesting the unison figures of the korvai. That unifies everyone's approach and gives cohesion to the composition.

### “DUBAI DANCE”

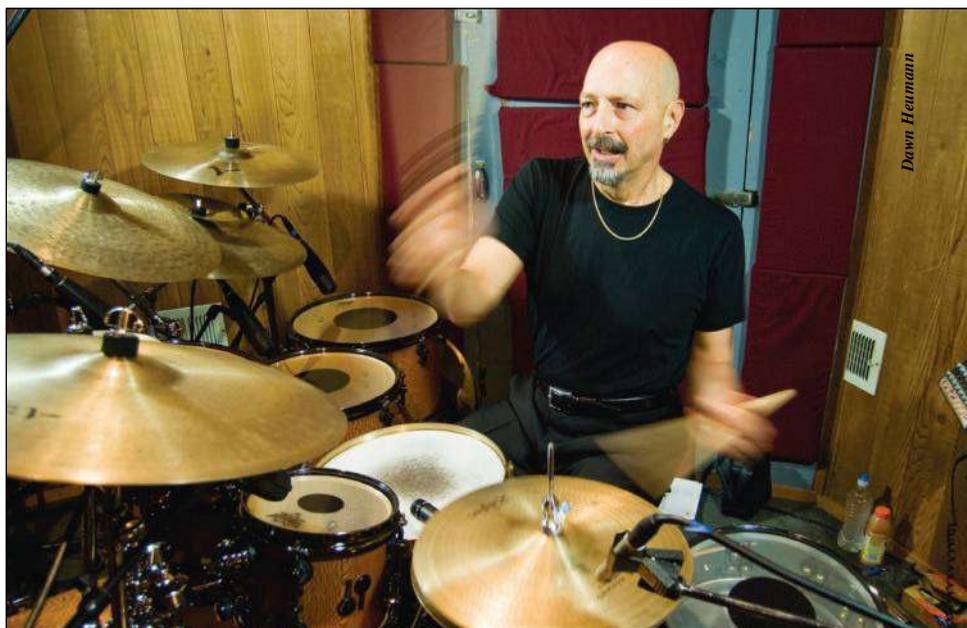
This is an up-tempo fusion burner. The melody and guitar parts in the head are very tightly scripted. I had to take what George had written for himself and Prasanna and figure out how to orchestrate that to support what they're doing. I'm using a fusion-type orchestration where it's snare drum, bass drum, and ride cymbal patterns that incorporate the rhythm and shape of the melody. My solo at the end is over rhythmic hits.

### “KATYAYINI”

This is a duet, and it's an example of a traditional Carnatic [South Indian] drum and melodic instrument approach. I'm emulating a South Indian drum. I'm playing my toms and snare, with the snares turned off, and I'm using mallets. The bass drum and hi-hat pattern is inverted doubles, so that the right foot is playing a samba rhythm while the left foot fills in the middle two 16th notes. The left foot moves back and forth between the hi-hat and double bass drum pedal. On top of that, I'm playing a rolling melodic pattern between the toms and snare. The entire pattern creates a droning feel, and it implies a common rhythm in South Indian music.

In most Indian music, the melody starts on beat 1. So when you play a tihai, it has to resolve to beat 1. That's one of the rules of traditional South Indian music: Wherever the melody starts, that's where the tihai has to resolve. In this song, the melody starts on the “&” of 2, so all of the tihais have to resolve on the “&” of 2. It was difficult to switch gears in order to do that, and it really highlights the rhythmic sophistication and detail in Carnatic music.

For more info, go to [ragaboptrio.com](http://ragaboptrio.com).



# Make It Flow!

## Part 1: Left- And Right-Hand Movement Around The Drumset

by Matt Patuto

One of the most demanding skills for drummers is the ability to play with a solid, steady pulse. The challenge is compounded when you move from drum to drum during fills. This article is designed to address the problem through a series of melodic exercises built from a steady flow of 16th notes.

Use alternating sticking for all of the exercises, and follow the exercise procedure outlined below. Doing so will improve your focus and help you maintain a steady pulse in whatever rhythms you play. Remember: Count it, sing it, play it.

### PRACTICE PROCEDURE

1. Set your metronome to click quarter notes.
2. Play quarter notes on the bass drum and lock in with the metronome for a few measures.
3. Count 16th notes (1 e & a, 2 e & a...) for a few measures.
4. Sing the rhythm of the exercise you're working on, matching the melodic contour of the pattern.
5. Play the exercise on the drums.

### RIGHT-HAND MOVEMENT

In this first section, the right hand will move around the toms, creating an 8th-note melody. Start by playing a steady flow of 16ths on the snare drum, and then move the right hand to the toms. Return to the steady flow on the snare between each example. As you're playing the exercises, listen to the melodic line you're creating on the drums.

Exercise 1: A musical staff in 2/4 time showing a steady flow of 16th notes on the snare drum, followed by a melodic line on the toms. The notation is divided into two measures, each with a repeat sign.

Exercise 3: A musical staff in 2/4 time showing a steady flow of 16th notes on the snare drum, followed by a melodic line on the toms. The notation is divided into two measures, each with a repeat sign.

### LEFT-HAND MOVEMENT

In the next examples, the left hand will move on the "e" and "a." Learn the patterns as they're written, and then move the left hand to a different drum from what is written. Use the same practice procedure as before: Count it, sing it, play it.

Exercise 1: A musical staff in 2/4 time showing a steady flow of 16th notes on the snare drum, followed by a melodic line on the toms. The notation is divided into two measures, each with a repeat sign.

Exercise 3: A musical staff in 2/4 time showing a steady flow of 16th notes on the snare drum, followed by a melodic line on the toms. The notation is divided into two measures, each with a repeat sign.

### TWO-HAND MOVEMENT

Now that you're comfortable moving the right and left hand separately, it's time to move both of them. Remember to sing the melodies first and then play them on the drums.

**IN CONTEXT**

When you feel comfortable with the exercises, it's time to apply what you've learned to a complete musical phrase. Play a groove for three and a half bars, and then insert one of the exercises as a fill.

Here's one possibility.

In part two we will incorporate the bass drum into the flow.



**Matt Patuto** is the author of *Drum Set Systems*, a member of the Vic Firth Education Team, and a clinician for Vic Firth and Alternate Mode. For more information, visit [mattpatuto.com](http://mattpatuto.com).



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# Jazz Independence

## Advanced Coordination Patterns Based On Paradiddles

by Murray Houllif

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- B.D. — ●
- H.H. — X
- w/ foot

Here's a fun and challenging routine that uses the single paradiddle and its inversions to build independence between the hands and feet.

1

A. R L R R L R R L L  
 B. R L L L R R L R L L  
 C. R R L R L L R L L  
 D. R L R L L L R L R L

To begin, practice the following paradiddle-based 8th-note sticking patterns with the right and left hand.

2

A. R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L L L R L L L L L  
 B. R L L R L R R L L L L R L L R L L L L R L L L L  
 C. R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L L R L L R L L L L  
 D. R L R L L L R L R L L L L R L L R L L R L L L R L

Now practice those stickings as 8th-note triplets.

Once you've internalized those, play the right-hand strokes on the bass drum. Left-hand strokes are played on the snare. Then play the basic swing ride cymbal pattern and add the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4.

Here's how that looks when the paradiddles are played as 8th notes. All 8th notes are played with a swing feel.

3

A. [Musical notation for A]

B. [Musical notation for B]

Here's how it looks with the paradiddles played as 8th-note triplets. Once you've mastered these exercises, try moving the left hand around the kit to make the patterns sound more melodic.

4

A. [Musical notation for A]

B. [Musical notation for B]

C. [Musical notation for C]

D. [Musical notation for D]



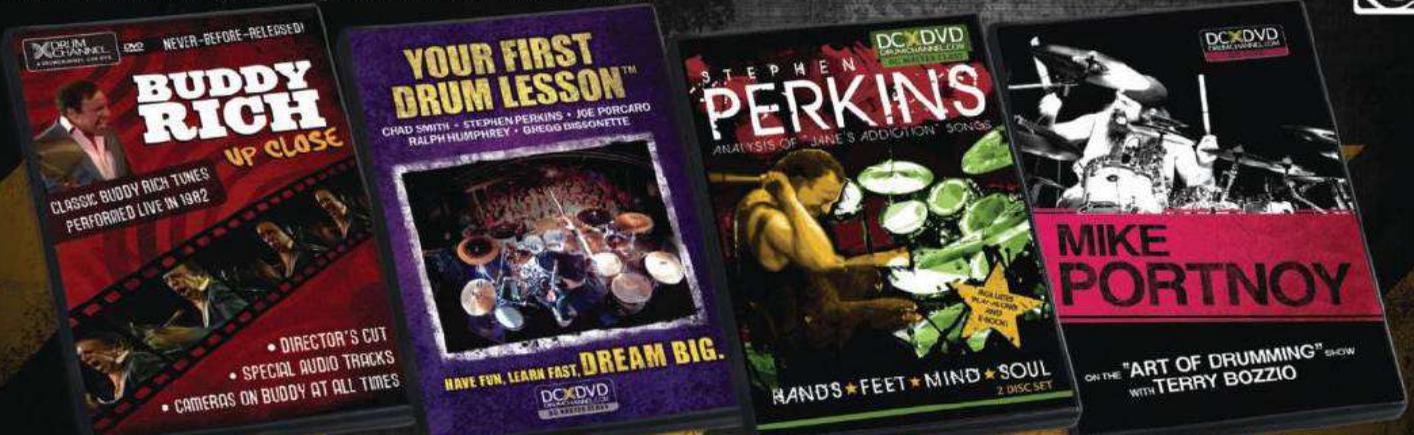
Murray Houllif is the author of more than 200 percussion publications and a two-time winner of the Percussive Arts Society's composition contest.



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# The Rudiment TAB System

## Part 2: Rolls

by Pat Petrillo

Welcome to the second installment of our Rudiment TAB system series, which is based on some of the material included in my book/DVD, *Hands, Grooves & Fills*. (Part one appeared in the April 2010 issue.)

Since it's been a few months since we started working with this system, let's review it briefly. The Rudiment TAB system is something I devised that focuses on memorizing the rudiments by assigning a symbol, or TAB, to each one. This helps you associate how each rudiment *sounds* with how it is played, rather than how it looks when written in standard notation. The TAB system allows you to put rudiments into combinations more quickly and efficiently. In the first installment, we focused on the diddle family. This time we'll go over the roll family.

Many students learn rolls by counting how many strokes or bounces are in each one. (The five-stroke roll is five notes, the eleven-stroke roll is eleven notes, and so on.) This method, however, doesn't allow you to hear the melody, or flow, of the roll, as you end up being too focused on counting the notes. Each roll has its own sound and duration, and that's what we'll focus on in order to memorize the rolls. The goal is to memorize how long each roll lasts, along with how it sounds—as a piece of music rather than a mathematical equation.

There's also a difference in the way a roll is written on some rudiment sheets and the way it is commonly played. When I was in drum corps, we called certain rolls tap rolls, as they are performed starting with a single tap. The others, non-tap rolls, *end* with a tap, as they are often written. The exceptions are the five- and seven-stroke rolls. They can be played either way, as I will demonstrate below.

Now let's distinguish tap rolls from non-tap rolls.

The five-stroke roll can either begin or end with a tap. Here's what it looks like ending with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
5-Stroke Roll		>> 5,5, R L

Here's what it looks like starting with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
Tap 5 Stroke Roll		>> 5,5 R L

Although six-, seven-, and nine-stroke rolls all last for one beat, they sound very different and have taps occurring in different places.

The six-stroke roll begins *and* ends with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
6-Stroke Roll		>>>> 6, 6, R L R L

The seven-stroke roll can begin or end with a tap. Here's what it looks like ending with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
7-Stroke Roll		>> 7,7, R R

Here's what the seven-stroke roll looks like when it starts with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
Tap-7 Stroke Roll		>> 7,7, R R

The nine-stroke roll almost always ends with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
9-Stroke Roll		>> 9,9, R L

By playing a 16th-note tap before the beat, you can create a "tap nine."

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
Tap 9-Stroke Roll		> 9, L

The eleven-stroke roll is an enigma; most drummers don't know how long it is, what it actually sounds like, or how it is executed. Although it's written on many rudiment sheets as ending with a tap, the eleven-stroke roll is most commonly played as a tap roll.

### HINTS FOR MEMORIZING ROLL LENGTHS

The five-stroke roll is half a beat long. Six-, seven-, and nine-stroke rolls are one beat long. Eleven- and thirteen-stroke rolls are one and a half beats long. Fifteen- and seventeen-stroke rolls are two beats long.

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Here's the eleven-stroke roll beginning with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
11-Stroke Roll		$\begin{matrix} > > \\ 11, 11, \\ R & R \end{matrix}$

The thirteen-stroke roll always ends with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
13-Stroke Roll		$\begin{matrix} > > \\ 13, 13, \\ R & L \end{matrix}$

Fifteen- and seventeen-stroke rolls are very straightforward, and they are always performed the same way. The fifteen-stroke roll always begins with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
15-Stroke Roll		$\begin{matrix} > \\ 15, \\ R \end{matrix}$

The seventeen-stroke roll always *ends* with a tap.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
17-Stroke Roll		$\begin{matrix} > \\ 17, \\ R \end{matrix}$

### IN APPLICATION

Now let's put these rolls into combinations using the TAB system. Again, the goal is to be able to perform roll passages off the top of your head from memory. The following examples are designed to help your memorization skills and sharpen your ears to hear how the various rolls sound in a musical context.

The first example uses five- and nine-stroke rolls. Notice that the lead hand alternates on the repeat. And remember that everything is played to an 8th-note pulse. So the first nine-stroke roll begins on beat 2, and the second nine-stroke roll begins on the "&" of 3.

$$\begin{matrix} > > > \\ [:5, 9, 9, :] \\ R & L & R \\ L & R & L \end{matrix}$$

Now let's play a seventeen-stroke roll and a nine-stroke roll in succession. Remember, the seventeen is two beats long, and the nine will begin on the "&" of 3.

$$\begin{matrix} > > \\ [:17, 9, :] \\ R & L \end{matrix}$$

This time, play a thirteen-stroke roll into five-stroke rolls. Remember that the thirteen-stroke roll is one and a half

beats long, and the five-stroke roll starts on beat 3.

$$\begin{matrix} > > > \\ [:13, 5, 5, :] \\ R & L & R \\ L & R & L \end{matrix}$$

Next let's try some tap rolls, beginning with seven- and fifteen-stroke rolls. The seven is one beat long, and the fifteen is two beats long.

$$\begin{matrix} > > > \\ [:7, 7, 15, :] \\ R & R & R \end{matrix}$$

Now it's time to put a few tap rolls together. Do you remember how long each roll is? Remember that the tap rolls flow into each other, creating a smooth rhythmic phrase.

$$\begin{matrix} > > > > \\ [:5, 5, 11, 7, :] \\ R & L & R & R \end{matrix}$$

Finally, we'll look at a four-bar excerpt from a solo titled "On A Roll," which combines a few different roll types. Here's the breakdown of how it goes:

Measure 1: The tap seven flows directly into a five-stroke roll. The thirteen-stroke roll starts on beat 3.

Measure 2: Alternating five-stroke rolls.

Measure 3: The seventeen-stroke roll leads into a five-stroke roll followed by a six-stroke roll beginning on the "&" of 4.

Measure 4: The tap five starts on the "&" of 1 and flows into a nine-stroke roll ending on beat 4.

Remember to maintain an even 8th-note pulse throughout.

$$\begin{matrix} > > > > > > > > > > > > > > \\ [7, 5, 13, | 5, 5, 5, 5 | 17, 5, 6, | 5 5 9:] \\ R & R & L & R & L & R & L & R & L & R & L & R & L & R \end{matrix}$$

### IN SUMMARY

Once it's internalized, the Rudiment TAB system will prove to be a tremendously useful way to memorize rudiments. Memorization, after all, is a necessary skill for any musician to develop in order to achieve a level of performance that goes beyond the written page. In music, you can't play what you can't hear, and music is *not* what is written on the page—it's what's played from the mind, body, and heart.

In the next installment we'll play diddles and rolls in various combinations.



**Pat Petrillo** is a full-time faculty member at Drummers Collective in New York City and a popular clinician. He has played with Gloria Gaynor, Patti LaBelle, and Glen Burtnik and has performed numerous Broadway shows. His multimedia instructional package, *Hands, Grooves & Fills*, is available through Hal Leonard/Hudson Music. For more, visit [patpetrillo.com](http://patpetrillo.com).



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# DIY Drum Restoration

## Part 1: Reversing The Amateur Facelift

Story by J.R. Frondelli • Photos by Penny Frondelli

**D**uring my years as a drum repair/restoration professional, I've come face to face with some of the most horrific offenses committed to perfectly good drums. Some of these instruments have been modified and abused beyond the point of return, while others can be revived to their original luster with a little restoration know-how.

This article and subsequent installments in its series will illuminate some of the most common problems I've had to deal with, while outlining the methods I've found most successful for bringing near-dead drums back to life. Some of the methods will require more advanced skills and tooling, which I will outline and explain as thoroughly as possible. Most of the procedures, however, can be handled easily by anyone with minimal manual skills.

This month we'll be reversing some amateur cosmetic surgery performed on a vintage Ludwig black diamond pearl drumset.

### PATIENT INFORMATION

**Family name:** Ludwig

**Date of birth:** November 5, 1966 (discovered via a date stamped on the inside of the shell)

**Stature:** 16x16 floor tom

**Build:** 3-ply maple/poplar/mahogany shell

**Complexion:** Black diamond pearl (ascertained by gently scraping away what appeared to be black paint—see photo 1—on an area hidden under a tom mount)

### SPRAY-PAINT MAKEOVER

This particular floor tom was the victim of a spray-paint makeover, allegedly perpetrated by its original owner in the 1980s in an effort to improve his or her stage image. Fortunately, the damage appears to be primarily superficial, so the drum



should be able to be returned to its near-original appearance, accompanied by little to no scarring.

### THE MOTIVE

The '80s was an era when decorative drum wraps were frowned upon. Solid colors, particularly black, were in vogue. With total disregard for future collectibles, many drummers painted right over fine vintage drums with spray paint. Most drummers removed the hardware first, but some painted over chrome hoops, tension rods, lugs, and badges. Painted hardware is easily stripped by soaking it in solvent. The shells themselves, though, require much gentler treatment.

### DIAGNOSTICS

In order to understand the extent of the damage as well as the best method of revival, we need to know a little chemistry. Most vintage wraps were composed of a solvent-based plastic called cellulose nitrate, a compound made by dissolving cotton in nitric acid, which is



then suspended in a solvent vehicle that renders it moldable. After that, the compound is formed into a block from which sheets are sliced.

The problem with these types of cellulose nitrate finishes is that similar solvents are used in spray paints, so anything used to strip spray paint, including seemingly innocuous citrus strippers, will also attack the wrap.

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Therefore we will need to strip the paint mechanically, via sanding. Aged cellulose nitrate wraps are thin and delicate and must be treated with extreme care throughout this process. If the wrap were to come in contact with any type of solvent, we would risk irreversible damage.

### THE NECESSARY INSTRUMENTS

There's no mystery to paint removal; it requires dry sanding, wet sanding, and polishing. The only special tool you need is an orbital sander, which is readily available at most hardware stores. You need not spend more than \$50. Mine is a Ryobi with a built-in dust-collection bag. This tool has seen many hours of tough service, and it has saved me a *ton* of time and elbow grease. Besides the application described here, an orbital sander is also invaluable for finishing prep, interior sanding, bearing edge contouring, and snare bed work.

Orbital sanders use sanding discs, of which there are two types: PSA (pressure-sensitive adhesive) and H&L (hook and loop). Get a sander that uses H&L discs. Adhesive-backed discs are like flypaper, so they pick up everything in a dusty environment. Most inexpensive sanders come with a PSA-style pad, but an inexpensive H&L adaptor will almost surely be available for whatever model you use.

For paint removal, you'll need 320-grit sanding discs; 400-grit, 600-grit, and 1,500-grit wet/dry sandpaper for wet sanding; and two products for buffing and polishing, Turtle Wax Color Back Finish Restorer and Meguiar's No. 7 Show Car Glaze, both of which are available in auto supply stores. You should also protect your lungs and eyes and get dust masks and a pair of inexpensive wraparound safety glasses.

### IN THE OPERATING ROOM

The first step in our restoration is to remove all hardware plus the badge and vent eyelet from the drum. If the vent eyelets are crimped to the shell, they are usually removed easily by cutting the crimp with small diagonal cutters (photo 2) and then pushing it out

from the inside. In this case I used a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " Xcelite nut driver to push out the eyelet (photo 3).

If the eyelet is holding the badge on, the badge will generally come off with it. If the badge is stuck to the shell, you can use an inexpensive plastic putty knife to get under one edge and ease it off a little at a time. Just be careful not to bend the badge too much. If you do distort the shape of the badge, it's usually bent back into form easily. If you want to reuse the eyelet, you can clean up its cut edge with a file.

Once the drum is stripped of its hardware, prepare your worktable with a piece of scrap carpet (to rest the drum shell on), and load your orbital sander with a 320-grit sanding disc. (Don't forget the mask and glasses!) Start up the sander and apply the edge of the disc to the shell, using it like a pencil eraser in short back-and-forth motions to "erase" the paint from the shell (photo 4). Start at the edge and work your way down. Go slowly, but keep the sander moving. You don't want to sand down too deep, or you'll scar the thin and delicate finish underneath. If you detect a slight camphor smell while sanding, don't worry. That's a sure sign that the finish is made of cellulose nitrate, and it's a normal reaction to sanding.

When you get to the other edge, start a new section. Once all of the paint is removed, dust off the drum with a clean, soft paintbrush and evaluate your progress. If paint spots remain, go back over them, but don't worry too much about any paint remaining in the depressions in the pearl finish made by the lugs. You won't be able to see them once the hardware is back on the drum.

Once all of the paint has been removed, it's time to begin wet sanding by hand. This process removes the marks left by the orbital sander and produces the smooth, flat finish necessary for polishing to a nice luster. Cut your sandpaper into 3x3 squares, and place them in a bowl of warm water to soften and wet the backing. (Change the water for each grit count.)

Begin by sanding the entire pearl

finish with 400-grit sandpaper, keeping the paper wet and rinsing the resulting slurry by dipping the paper in the water. Don't let the paper dry out, or it will stick to the pearl. Sand evenly, moving the paper in straight lines. After the 400-grit sanding, wipe the pearl with a damp rag, and repeat the process with 600-grit paper and then the 1,500-grit version. Again, wipe the pearl clean with a damp rag after each step, and check for swirls or sanding marks. Try to leave as few as possible.

When you're satisfied that the sanding is complete and you have a completely flat surface, apply the Color Back Finish Restorer according to the directions, followed by Meguiar's No. 7, and finish by buffing with a soft cloth. If all goes well, you will be able to bring back most of the luster to the pearl. Just be aware that, due to "crazing" (micro-cracks caused by the solvents in the spray paint), you may not be able to restore the drum's luster one hundred percent. But there's an unwritten edict among drum restorers called the three-foot rule: If you can't see problems from three feet away, neither can anyone else.

### THE ORIGINAL BEAUTY

After sanding, wet sanding, and buffing your drum, it's best to stand back, appreciate your hard work, and bask in the afterglow of restoring life and beauty to a fine vintage drum (photo 5). You've earned it.

The wet-sanding and polishing techniques described here are invaluable for restoring most drum finishes, and they can be employed to bring back shine to pearl wraps, lacquer finishes, and even acrylic shells. As a matter of fact, you can also use your orbital sander to wet sand and buff the finish, utilizing superfine-grit wet/dry sanding discs and buffing pads made specifically for your machine. In the next installment, we'll dig deeper into these techniques.



**J.R. Frondelli** is the owner of Frondelli USA Drums, which specializes in repairing, reworking, and restoring vintage drums, as well as building new vintage-style drums. For more info, visit [frondelli.com](http://frondelli.com).

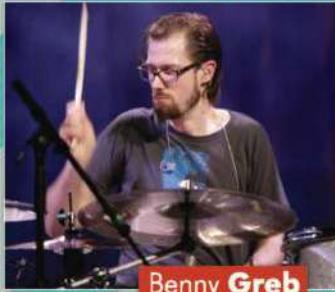


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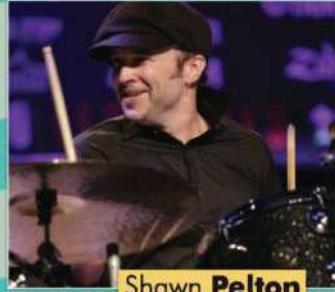
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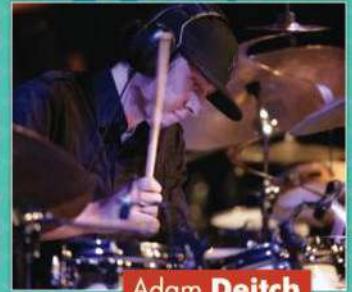
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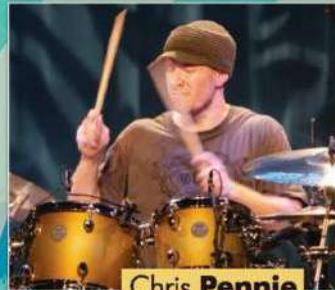
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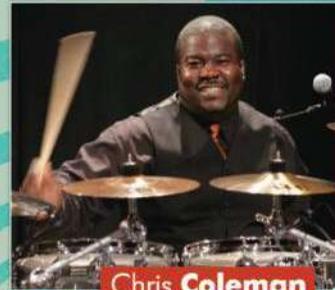
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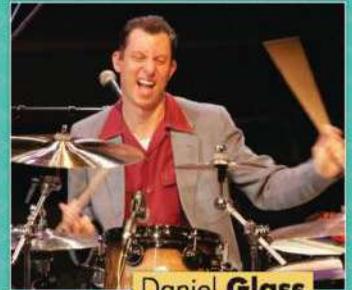
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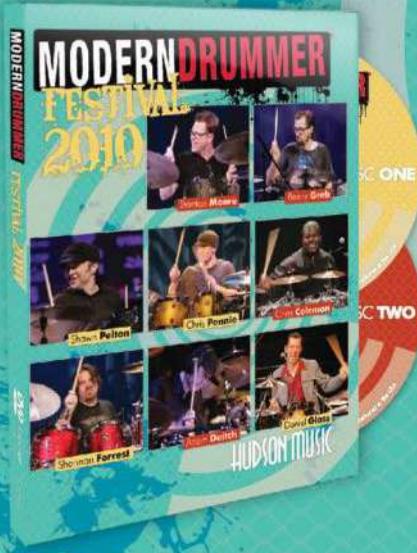
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# GEARING UP DRUMKIT DETAILS, ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Interviews by Michael Dawson • Photos by Paul La Raia

## Touring/Session Great JOEY WARONKER

### NORAH JONES KIT

**Drums:** C&C with luan mahogany shells

- A. 16x18 floor tom
- B. 14x22 bass drum
- C. 5x14 Pearl chrome-over-brass Jupiter snare (early '70s)
- D. 9x13 tom
- E. 12x15 marching snare (vintage) with floor tom legs
- F. 16x16 floor tom

"Bill Cardwell at C&C made this kit for me out of cheap luan mahogany shells,"

Waronker says, "which is what Tama used for their drums in the '60s. The finish is something that Bill got from Italy. It was originally used on accordions. It's thinner than most drum wraps, so the drums resonate more."

**Cymbals:** Istanbul Agop

- 1. Turpentine can
- 2. 22" Special Edition Jazz ride with rivets
- 3. 22" 30th Anniversary ride
- 4. 20" 30th Anniversary ride
- 5. 14" 30th Anniversary hi-hats
- 6. 15" 30th Anniversary hi-hat top
- 7. Keplinger stainless steel effects cymbal

"Norah's not really into cymbals, so everything I use with her is very dark and is used more for accents. The Keplinger is very rattly and fast sounding."

"The turpentine can is made from the same metal as what's used for thunder sheets. It's very loud, and I've been using them for years. I started collecting the cans when I found out they weren't being made anymore. There's one particular song on Norah's record [*The Fall*] that has that type of sound, so I brought it out for the tour. I like to build kits that cater specifically to the set list. It's an old trapkit mentality, where I'm covering percussion and multiple drumkit sounds. I want the drums to work in a unique way that gives the show some dynamics and differences."

"That's why I have two snares. The main snare is tuned kind of deep, but a lot of Norah's records have a really deep, rattly snare, so I use the marching drum for that."

"The toms are tuned low and are muffled with medium-thin cloth that I took from a hand-dryer roller, like what used to be used in a lot of public restrooms. I fold the cloth and rest it on the head. Then it's taped to the rim, so it kind of moves when I play."

"The marching drum is muffled with pieces of felt covered in packing tape. Stan [Keyawa] at Pro Drum Shop in L.A. set that drum up for me. The bass drum is dampened



with a Danmar external muffler, and there's a little padding inside."

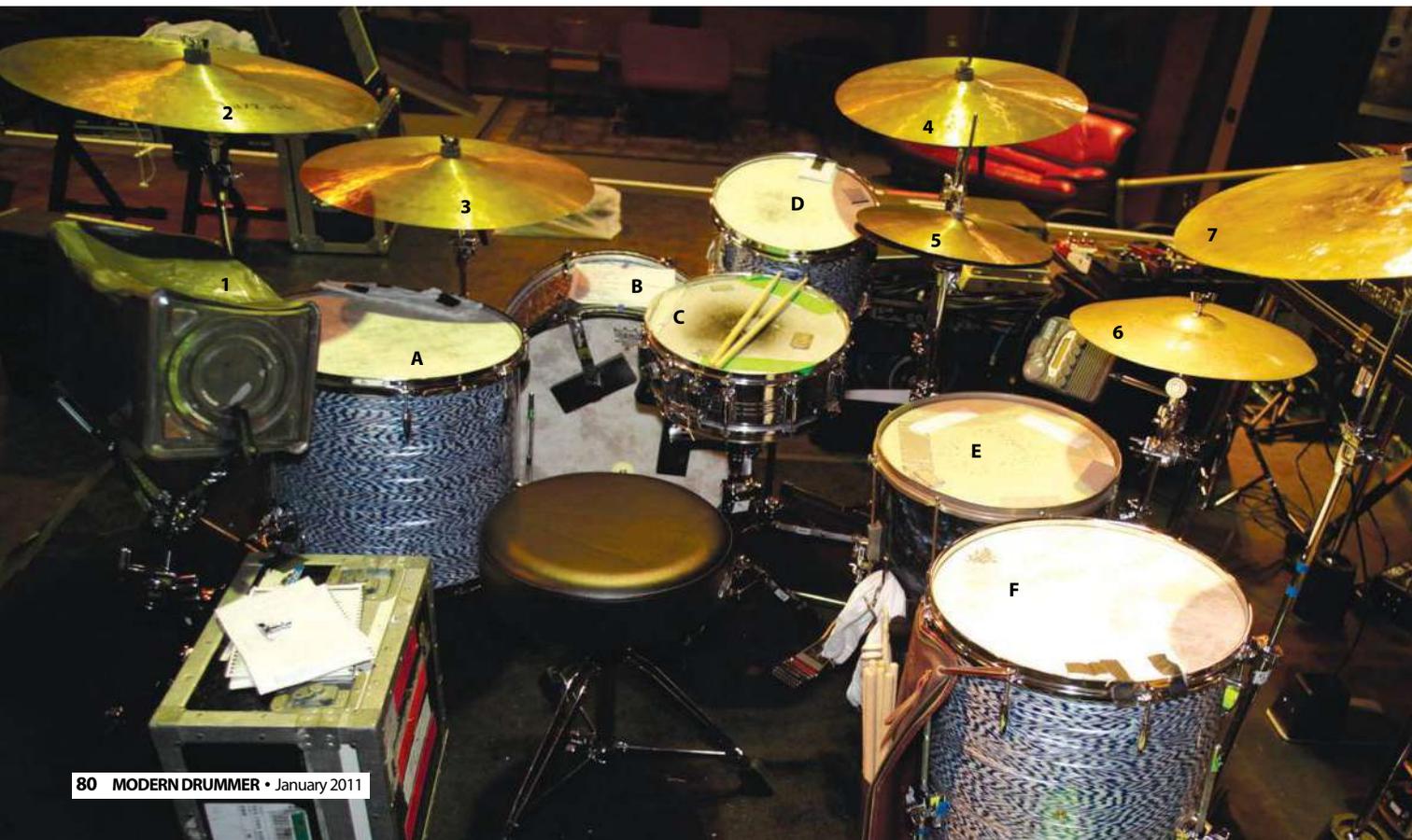
**Percussion:** Old Ludwig and custom Keplinger tambourines

"I put the Ludwig tambourine on the snare with the snares off, and I hit the metal bracket that's meant to connect to the hi-hat. I put the Keplinger right on top of the hi-hat. It fits right around the bell."

**Electronics:** Tama Rhythm Watch

"Norah likes the security of having agreed-upon tempos, so I'll show her the tempo by rocking a little bit. But we don't play to the metronome."

**Hardware:** DW, including a 9000 series kick drum pedal and 6000 series flat-base stands



## ATOMS FOR PEACE KIT

**Drums:** Japanese conical prototype kit from the '60s

- A.** Floor tom with 16" batter and 14" bottom head
- B.** Bass drum with 22" batter and 18" front head
- C.** 9x13 tom
- D.** 6x12 Pork Pie snare
- E.** Bass drum with 18" batter and 22" front head
- F.** 5x10 Pork Pie snare
- G.** 10" Toca Jingle snare

"I found this kit on eBay. I think they were made by Pearl, but they have no name. Bill helped me get the kit in shape, and then Ross at Drum Doctors helped me design the setup."

"The whole idea with this kit was to be able to reinterpret electronic music in a live situation. I wanted short, blippy sounds, and I needed bass drums that were similar sounding but different. So I turned one of the bass drums around so that on the ride-side drum I'm playing on the smaller side. That way, if a song has two different bass drum sounds, I can do the quicker subdivisions with my left foot and the bigger main hits with my right."

"I use three different snares. The 12" is tuned deep and thuddy. The 10" is tuned high for a snappy and aggressive sound. The Jingle snare is tuned very low and rattly, sort of like the marching drum on Norah's kit."

"The right-side rack tom has no bottom head, and it's tuned low for a rich, thuddy sound. The second tom is a little higher, and it has the bottom head on it for a more 'normal' tom sound. The dampening on the toms may seem extreme, but they actually sound very full. In live situations with good front-of-house systems, I feel like the thuddier, the better, and I



tune for a shorter decay. That way there's less room for feedback, and you won't need to use as much gating."

**Cymbals:** Istanbul Agop, Keplinger custom

- 1.** Keplinger sheet metal/timbale effects instrument
- 2.** 22" Keplinger sheet metal ride
- 3.** 15" Istanbul Agop Sultan crash
- 4.** 13" Istanbul Agop Turk hi-hats

"When I originally got together with Gregg Keplinger, I envisioned creating a snare drum with a sheet metal head. What he created was a piece of sheet metal that's spring-mounted on a timbale-type drum [cymbal 1]."

"For this kit I needed very dry, quick cymbals. The Turk hi-hats are pretty dry naturally, but they needed to be taped to deaden them even more."

**Percussion:** Toca Static Whip, Pete Engelhart Reco Reco, Japanese metal balls, wooden cajon

"The cajon is treated with a piece of cloth. I hit it on the side for a clicky, sidestick-on-steroids sound. Then when I hit it on the towel, it almost sounds like an African drum."

"The metal balls [above the floor tom] are connected to metal posts, and they rattle together. I hit those in one song for a quick-delay effect."

**Electronics:** Simmons SDS-5

"I use the Simmons pads to trigger hissy effects, blippy toms, and a bass drum with a long decay."

**Sticks:** Regal Tip Joey Waronker Performer series

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## MATTHEW "WOODY" WOODLEY

### Drums: C&C

- A. 6 1/2x14 WorldMax brass snare with die-cast top hoop and triple-flange bottom hoop
- B. 9x13 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 14x24 bass drum

"I've been into vintage tones for the past few years, and I have an old Gretsch kit that I use in the studio," Woody explains. "I thought I would never go back. But then I discovered C&C, and they're the best of both worlds. They use new materials but are cut using older methods. I fig-

ure that my heroes from back in the day were using brand-new drums, so it should be good for me too. I will never part with my Gretsch kit; I love it. But I wanted something with a little more muscle.

"I love the size of this C&C kick drum. The big diameter and shallow depth give a nice mix of punch and boom. It has a lot of low end, so I can tune it up. The batter head is tuned a bit higher than most, and the resonant head is tuned low. Front-of-house engineers always rave about how nice it sounds through the PA. We don't

have a bass player in this band, so it helps to have a lot of bottom end in my sound.

"For positioning, I like to have everything flat and low, almost like it's a vibraphone or piano, to keep my movements smaller."

**Heads:** Remo coated Ambassador or coated CS snare batter, coated Emperor tom batters and clear Ambassador bottoms, and clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter and Fiberskyn front head

"I tune the snare resonant head fairly high and the batter head about a third below

that. For a fatter sound, I'll do the opposite: resonant low and top higher. Basically I avoid having both heads tuned to the same note, because I like a drier sound.

"In general, my toms are tuned lower. I want them to be big and beefy but still with a good amount of resonance. In the studio, I'll dampen the hell out of them or detune a lug to get that Levon Helm-style thud, just for variety's sake. But live, I go for even tension on top and bottom, pitched close to the natural tone of the drum."

### Cymbals: Istanbul Agop

- 1. 14" Traditional Heavy hi-hats
- 2. 19" Traditional Dark crash
- 3. 22" Azure ride
- 4. 20 1/2" 25th Anniversary ride (used mainly as a crash)

"I like washy rides with complex overtones. It's been a challenge finding one that has that wash but also has enough stick sound to cut through the volume. The Azure ride has a little less hammering, so it's a bit cleaner sounding and somewhat less trashy. It works great in rock settings, but for some of the quieter music I play with other people I would use something more complex sounding."



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# JOHNATHAN BLAKE

The popular drummer, who's been a go-to guy for jazz luminaries like Tom Harrell, Russell Malone, and Kenny Barron, lets the big picture dictate the small details.

by Martin Patmos

Johnathan Blake thinks big. That's the impression we got in talking with him following an absolutely smokin' performance with the ever-inventive jazz guitarist Russell Malone at New York City's Jazz Standard. Just how Blake thinks big becomes apparent when he starts discussing song form, melody, structure, how his drumming fits into the context of a group, and even his setup. Yet the thoughtful and intense momentum he generates behind the kit, combined with his ready smile and gentle, cheery personality, has helped him become an in-demand jazz drummer. As Malone says after the set, "Johnathan is playing with everybody; everybody wants to play with him. That's the mark of a great musician."

Blake grew up in Philadelphia, the son of the world-class jazz violinist John Blake Jr. Always interested in rhythm, Johnathan started taking drum lessons in elementary school, and by twelve he'd gotten into jazz and was playing in youth ensembles around Philly. Following high school, he attended William Paterson University's jazz program and soon found himself playing professionally, with a long run in the drum chair behind the Mingus Big Band. He followed up at Rutgers with a master's degree focusing on composition. Currently a member of not only Malone's working group but trumpeter Tom Harrell's and pianist Kenny Barron's as well, Blake has also been playing out with his own band, which recorded an album last April.

Malone and Harrell, along with musicians such as saxophonists Donny McCaslin, Oliver Lake, and Jaleel Shaw, have strong, identifiable approaches to



jazz. Malone builds from his roots, while McCaslin's angular *Recommended Tools* presents the challenges of a sax trio and Harrell's inventive compositions create their own atmosphere. Yet Blake has been an ideal fit with each of these collaborators. His secret is to know and play the composition—"to navigate the band," he says, while complementing and not overpowering it.

Indeed, during his Jazz Standard performance with Malone, Blake follows the form, outlining the melody with sticks or brushes. Sitting over his set of Yamahas, his mix of Spizzichino and Zildjian cymbals humming away, Blake's rapid-fire sticking flows beneath the band.

In discussing his work with Harrell, Blake says, "Tom's tunes play themselves." When considering a tune like "Prana," from the album *Prana Dance*, which builds on sections

in 9/4 and 5/4, he sings the underlying pattern over which everything else lies. "When I approach playing," Blake says, "I think of the big number so it doesn't sound like a pattern." This can be heard as well on tunes such as "Study In Sound" and "Obsession," from Harrell's latest, *Roman Nights*. Such a method helps create an even flow under Harrell's trumpet, although this philosophy applies to Blake's straight-ahead playing as well, as heard on "Storm Approaching."

The seeming effortlessness of Blake's drumming belies the range of what Johnathan is capable of executing, as song form, melody, and structure are tied in with everything he plays. Coming up, practicing out of *The Real Book*, he says, "helped me decipher phrasing and forms. It then became easier to decipher original material, to see the shape of the song and then flow naturally." And so Johnathan Blake thinks big "to have freedom. To see the whole picture, like a big circle, to feel the song as a whole shape. It helps to free up the music."

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

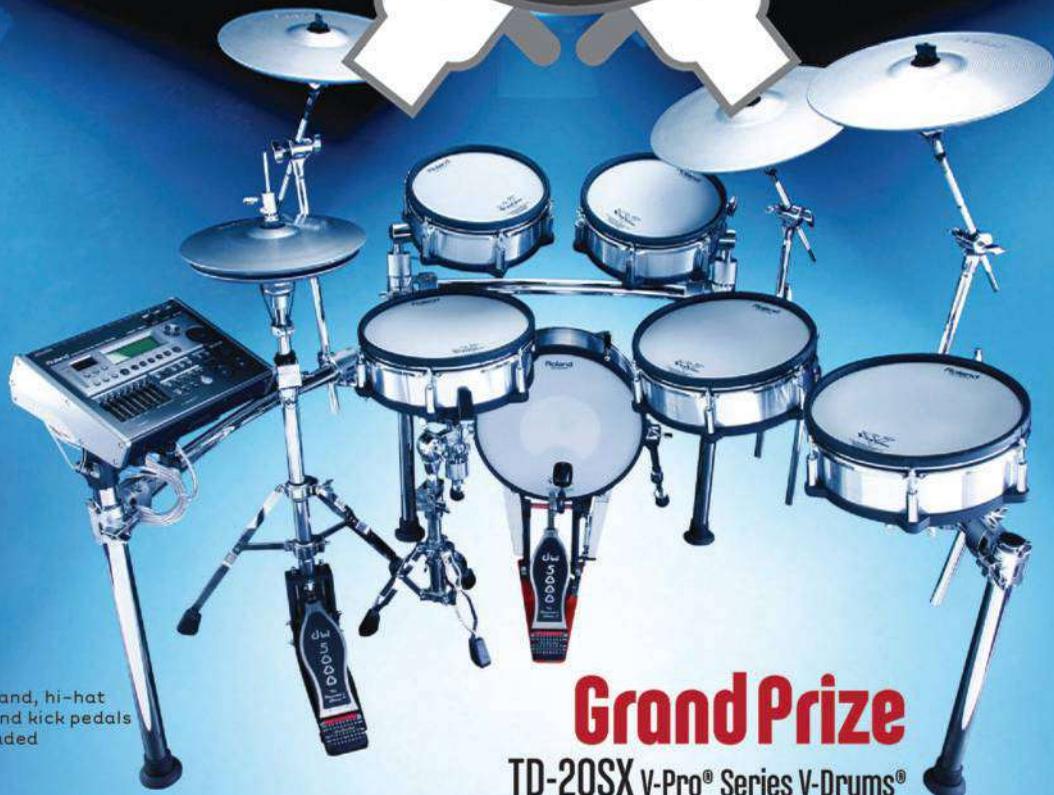
Blake plays Yamaha Absolute Maple drums, including an 8x12 rack tom, a 14x14 floor tom, a 14x18 bass drum, and a 5 1/2 x 14 snare. His cymbals include 21" and 22" Spizzichino rides, a 20" Zildjian ride with rivets, 14" Zildjian Constantinople hi-hats, and a Hammerax Boomywang. The cymbals, toms, and snare are all set largely at the same playing level. Blake, who sits high above the kit, feels this gives him particular control over the instrument.



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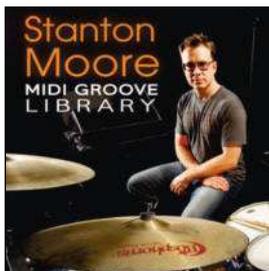
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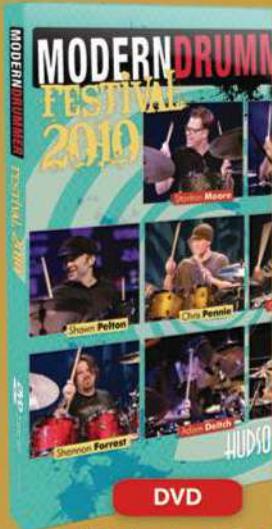
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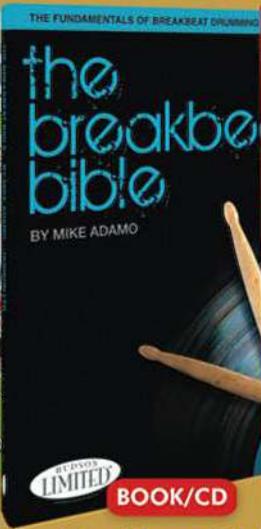
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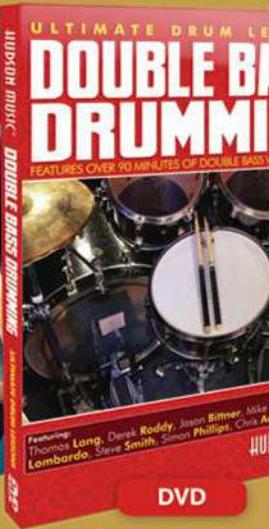
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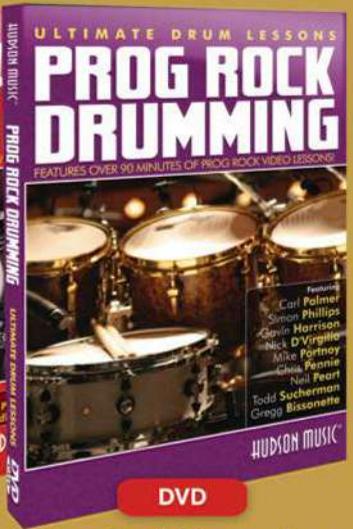
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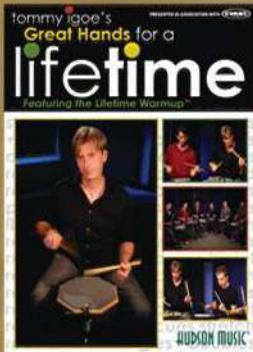


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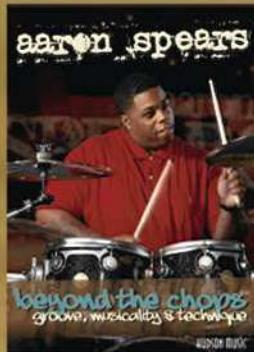


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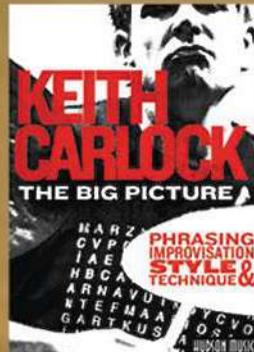
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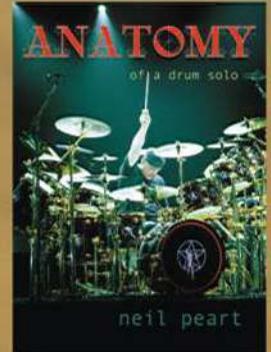
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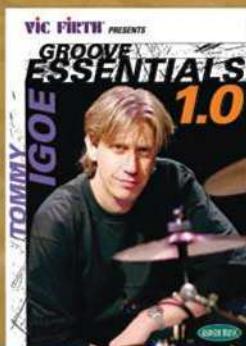


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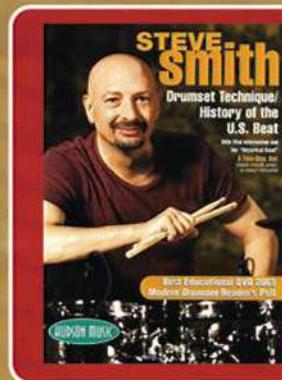
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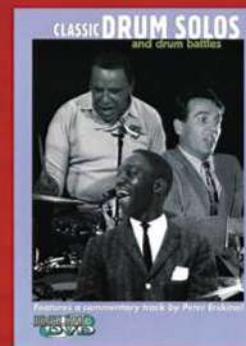
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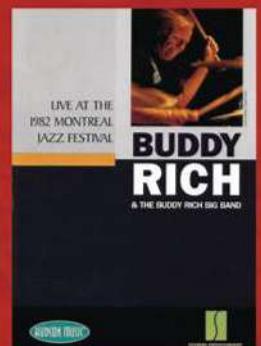
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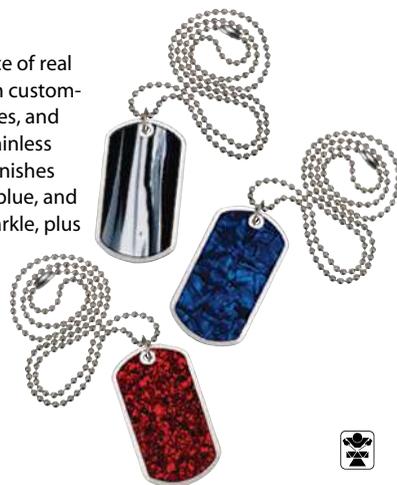
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# JOHN WEATHERS

To connoisseurs of daring first-wave progressive rock, **Gentle Giant** was as awe inspiring, in its own way, as ELP, Genesis, and Yes. **And so was its implacable, improbable drummer.**

by Will Romano

**J**ohn Weathers is one of the unsung drumming heroes of the 1970s' progressive rock era. Weathers' ability to maintain a steady pulse as a dense musical matrix unfolded around him helped ground the complex compositions recorded and performed by one of prog's most original acts, Gentle Giant.

While Gentle Giant has always been closely identified with austere forms such as European liturgical, Renaissance, medieval, and classical music, much of the band's approach revolved around rhythm in all forms, from intricate counterpoint melodies to odd-tempo finger snaps to edited-together bits of sound effects such as the coordinated mass of shattered glass creating cyclical patterns during the introduction of "The Runaway," from 1973's *In A Glass House*.

Weathers' deftly executed patterns cut through the compositional complexity found on stellar efforts such as *The Power And The Glory*, *Free Hand*, *In'terview*, and the live *Playing The Fool*, which have recently been remastered and reissued in both CD and digital formats on the band's own Alucard record label. "I was a soul and R&B drummer," says Weathers, sixty-three, from his home in Wales. "I've always

tried to get down to the root of the song. If you phrase every little thing that crops up in the music, it ends up a mishmash."

About a decade ago Weathers was shocked to discover he was losing some of his motor skills and could no longer play the bass drum. "I was diagnosed with spinocerebellar ataxia, Greek for 'walking as if you were drunk' or something like that," he shares. "One day I went to take a bath and realized that one leg felt the warm water and the other didn't. It felt cold. That's when I knew something was wrong."

While Weathers admits he isn't the drummer he once was, don't count him out. In recent years he has performed with his onetime band Wild Turkey and was spotted on stage pounding out rhythms on a Roland HandSonic HPD-15 electronic hand-percussion pad in 2005 at a Gentle Giant fan convention in Quebec, along with former Giant alums Gary Green (guitar) and Kerry Minnear (keyboards/percussion).

"The Gentle Giant convention was the first time I came across the Roland pads, and I actually borrowed them for the performance," Weathers says. "It may not be a complete kit, and I'm only punching out beats, but don't forget that drummers are pugilists. They're

fighters. They may not fight with other people, but they certainly take the kit on stage and beat the hell out of it."

It's been this same type of scrappy determination that's defined Weathers' playing style, career, and life. Born in Carmarthen, Wales, and seduced by the seditious and seductive beats of early rock 'n' roll and British skiffle, John was inspired to pick up "knitting needles and play the back of wooden chairs at age thirteen," until he received his first drumkit a year later. "Then I got in with a bad bunch of kids, 'borrowing' cars," he says. "Not long after that, when I was fifteen, I ran away from home and went to live with relatives in Liverpool."

Not content to surrender himself to the thug life, Weathers devoted his time to drumming, having fallen in with various musicians in Liverpool, until the prodigal percussionist returned to Carmarthen and reached his first major career plateau. "I had turned pro by sixteen," he recalls, "and later turned up in a band, Eyes Of Blue, that won the *Melody Maker* Beat Competition in 1966, which led to us getting a record contract with Decca." Weathers' stint with Eyes Of Blue, a group that moved from soul to classically influenced psychedelia, was a great foundation for his later work with Giant, which had transformed itself in a similar way from an R&B/pop act—called Simon Dupree And The Big Sound—to prog pioneers.

Through contact he made with Gentle Giant's Phil, Derek, and Ray Shulman, Weathers, then a member of

the Grease Band with bassist Alan Spenner and guitarist/vocalist Henry McCullough, joined Giant on a temporary basis for a 1972 American tour. He was filling in for injured drummer Malcolm Mortimore, who'd broken bones in his pelvis, arms, and legs in a motorcycle accident. Where Mortimore took a jazzier's approach to Gentle Giant's compositions, Weathers dug into the music, plying his groove-based talents, a byproduct of his years on Liverpool's R&B and Merseybeat circuit, and was soon asked to replace Mortimore permanently. "I tried to phrase what I thought was important and necessary for each song, so the listener wouldn't lose the tune," John says. "That was one of the reasons I got the job."

Weathers not only created a foundation for musical exploration but also began stretching himself as a musician, especially on stage. Gentle Giant's dazzling live performances were legendary, due in part to each band member's ability to play more than one instrument. Indeed, Weathers would often finesse the vibes or strum a guitar, demonstrating the depth of technical competency within the group's ranks. "Switching instruments established what we were about, but it was also fun," he says. "We always wanted people in the audience to enjoy the show as much as we were enjoying it."

Studio records, and in particular 1973's *Octopus*—Weathers' first "Giant" step—provided glimpses of the band's uncanny versatility and ingenuity. "The song 'River' had three of us playing percussion—me, keyboardist Kerry Minnear, who had a degree in percussion, and Gary Green, who started off as a drummer," Weathers says. "It also features strange sounds that I made through a little trick I'd learned. What I'd do is plug a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " plastic hose into the breather hole of the drum shell, usually a 13" tom, and force air through it. By blowing into the tube, I created this sonic yo-yo effect—the pitch of the drum went up and down while I played double-stroke rolls."

Achieving the proper results in the studio was hard work. Weathers remembers some of the early sessions

as both stressful and taxing. "When Ray Shulman came with 'The Boys In The Band' from *Octopus*, I nearly died," he recalls. "I said, 'What do you expect me to do?' He said, 'Play it.' I said, 'Come back in three weeks!'"

"One of the problems recording Gentle Giant was the intricate nature of their arrangements," says producer Martin Rushent, who worked closely with the band as a recording engineer for the *Octopus* record. "Musically it fit

*Piece*, most of the songs were recorded in one take," Weathers says. "We really rehearsed that material, but it came out a bit slick, I think."

Time has been kind to the latter-day Gentle Giant recordings, but in the late '70s the band was out of step with the mainstream. Even some diehard fans thought the group had reached its creative peak years earlier. Ultimately, by 1980, Giant had called it quits. Various members pursued other interests.

## WEATHERS ON RECORD

Among the highlights of John Weathers' recorded output with Gentle Giant are the 1972 album *Octopus*—his first with the band—and 1975's *Free Hand*. On *Octopus*'s instrumental track, "The Boys In The Band," he beats out unison patterns in a rare moment of chest-thumping prog, matching the band's intricate melodies. On the album closer, "River," he engages in a brief but riveting rhythmic convo with guitarist/percussionist Gary Green and keyboardist/multi-instrumentalist Kerry Minnear. (It's on this track that Weathers blows through a plastic tube to achieve ascending drum notes.) On *Free Hand*, in addition to powering the driving, syncopated rhythms of "Just The Same" and "Time To Kill," Weathers demonstrates his keen listening skills by taking cues from the knotty piano and electric guitar leads of the title song and expertly shuffling through the genre-hopping "Mobile."

To read about more great John Weathers performances, go to [modern drummer.com](http://modern drummer.com).



together very well on paper. But unless you recorded the drums correctly, it sounded like a mess, because of all the tracks that would be overdubbed. Redoing the drum tracks midway through the recording process would have been a nightmare. Because of this, John needed to be a precise. He was."

Throughout the '70s, Gentle Giant secured a cult following with its uncompromising artistic direction and muso-friendly shows, in large part thanks to Weathers' talents. It's also been said that the drummer helped to hold the band together when Phil Shulman, a major creative force, decided to leave in the early '70s. But seemingly endless touring and the nature of the record business began taking their toll. Pressured by its label to write hit singles, and growing tired of watching its prog compatriots achieve commercial success, Gentle Giant condensed and tampered with its approach for releases such as 1977's *The Missing Piece*, 1978's *Giant For A Day!*, and 1980's new wave-ish *Civilian*. "I remember with *The Missing*

Singer/saxophonist Derek Shulman, for instance, became a record industry bigwig, instrumental in signing acts like Nickelback, Pantera, Cinderella, Dream Theater, and Bon Jovi. Weathers kept busy in the '80s and '90s by joining the re-formed Welsh band Man and performing on various recording sessions and for Welsh TV.

Though the new millennium has brought new challenges, Weathers has learned some valuable lessons: "I've accepted my physical condition," he says. "It is what it is. One of my most prized possessions, a classic mid-1960s champagne pink sparkle Ludwig Superclassic kit I acquired as a member of Eyes Of Blue, has seen better days and lies in cases on the second floor of my house. I've gotten a lot of mileage out of those drums. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't beat them into submission. They never really broke down. I'm planning on giving them to Kerry Minnear's son, who's a drummer. It's something I want to do. Plus it'd be great to see someone else give it a try."





## RATINGS SCALE

Classic



Excellent



Good



Fair



Poor



## ENCORE by Billy Brennan

### CLUTCH FROM BEALE STREET TO OBLIVION

The Maryland-based groove rockers Clutch have reissued their 2007 DRT Entertainment offering, *From Beale Street To Oblivion*, on the band's Weathermaker label, in an expanded double-CD format. The second disc includes nine songs recorded live, five at BBC Studios in London and four at the Hi-Fi Bar in Melbourne, Australia. The covers of Cream's "Politician" and Howlin' Wolf's "You Gonna Wreck My Life" are among the real gems here—drummer **JEAN-PAUL GASTER's** subtle yet riveting playing is the key in linking Clutch's rock energy to an honest blues feel. Gaster's drumming crackles with excitement on every track, in fact, delivering a supremely confident groove that never flags.



The *Beale Street* reissue also includes expanded artwork and the video for the album's blues-rock hit "Electric Worry." Clutch is following up *Beale Street* by rereleasing its other DRT records, *Robot Hive/Exodus* (2005) and *Blast Tyrant* (2004), in dual-disc and vinyl formats.

### JEAN-PAUL GASTER TALKS ABOUT THE CLUTCH REISSUES

#### Why did you choose to reissue *Beale Street*, *Robot Hive/Exodus*, and *Blast Tyrant*?

Around the time that we signed with DRT, a lot of record labels were doing "50/50" deals, which on paper sounds like a really good deal. The problem is, the record label actually has to pay. [laughs] We fulfilled our contract with DRT and pretty much immediately started a lawsuit. Which is kind of a drag, because it's, you know, the opposite of the stuff that I like to do. In the end, after two years and a lot of money—a lot of stress—we ended up getting those records back. So now we've put 'em out on our own label, Weathermaker.

#### Do you have plans to reissue any of the earlier albums?

No, all those records belong to major labels. The '90s were a really tough time for us, because even though we had a loyal fan base, I think it was frustrating for the labels not to be able to "take it to the next level," like they used to say all the time. But we didn't start the band with the intention of selling out stadiums or having gold records on the wall. That's not anything that was interesting to us—and it's still not, really. But that went against the grain of where the major labels were at the time. It's great to not have to deal with that anymore.

#### What was the thought behind choosing the cover tracks for the *Beale Street* reissue?

Those are bands that we listen to on the bus. We don't listen to a lot of "heavy" stuff, I guess you'd call it. I listen to King Bee and Elvin Jones, Steely Dan. So for us to do "Politician" felt pretty natural. Cream is a real influence for us. And then Howlin' Wolf is Howlin' Wolf, man. That's such a great tune, and his songs have so much energy.

For more with Jean-Paul Gaster, go to [moderndrummer.com](http://moderndrummer.com).



### HIGH ON FIRE SNAKES FOR THE DIVINE

On every track of the stoner-metal icons' fifth studio album, drummer **DES KENSEL** rips with explosive power and the raw vintage-metal chops that have earned him great respect from a host of today's top metal drummers. He and producer Greg Fidelman capture a fat, gnarly drum sound to complement the songs and create an aggressive vibe that makes you feel as if you're at a High On Fire show. A few tracks might extend a minute or two longer than needed, but then again it's called stoner metal for a reason. (E1) **David Ciauro**

### SOMETHING LIKE A PHENOMENON

**MENOMENA's** name might have been inspired by the Muppets, but the group's fourth album, *Mines*, covers some serious ground—in microscopic musical detail.



The Portland, Oregon, band Menomena sounds like a less murky TV On The Radio...or a more demented Supertramp...or maybe a not-so-world-ish Vampire Weekend—which is to say they really just sound like themselves: literate, inquisitive, dynamic popsters with a good sense of melody and an almost orchestral approach to rock arrangements that would make Brian Wilson take notice. Drummer **DANNY SEIM** has referenced the emotional turmoil and perfectionist attitude that fed into the making of this album, and it's all there in the tracks. Every song here is speckled with cool sonic and musical details, allowing each to stand on its own but always bolstering the lyrical mood with sensitivity—or bombast, as the case might be. And Seim never takes the easy way out. You can hear that he's always searching for hidden accents to flesh out. Or he's thinking of unique ways to phrase rhythmic clichés—this is still pop, after all, and we all have to work with the same tools. But Seim and his bandmates manage to make it all sound fresh.

(Barsuk) **Adam Budofsky**



### RYAN KEBERLE HEAVY DREAMING

You can almost hear drummer **ERIC DOOB** thinking his way

through trombonist Ryan Keberle's tunes on *Heavy Dreaming*, a heavily composed, straight-ahead acoustic date featuring a "double quartet" of small jazz group plus added horns. Doob, a member of Paquito D'Rivera's band, performs beautifully here, supporting the soloists with well-placed press rolls, dramatic flams, extremely subtle ghosting, and a highly developed sense of swing. Check out how he rides the rims on "Heavy Dreaming, Part 2" and later engages Keberle in a striking call-and-response dialogue with bass drum jabs. Smooth, polished, and armed with great-sounding cymbals, Doob is a player to watch. ([ryankeberle.com](http://ryankeberle.com)) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

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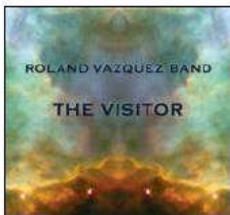
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### ROLAND VAZQUEZ BAND *THE VISITOR*

Throughout his career, Vazquez has balanced his role as drummer and composer. Now his increasingly strong writing has led to *The Visitor*, on which he stands at center stage as composer/arranger/conductor, entrusting his drum seat to **IGNACIO BERROA**. Culling compositions previously performed in smaller formats, Vazquez reveals the full glory of these works with his superb nineteen-piece ensemble. Berroa smoothly grooves the sophisticated Afro-Latin jazz excursions, steering the lengthy pieces through unfolding arcs of tension and release. Brilliant in their layers and shadings, the arrangements make the group a "little orchestra" as much as a big band. A new peak for Vazquez.

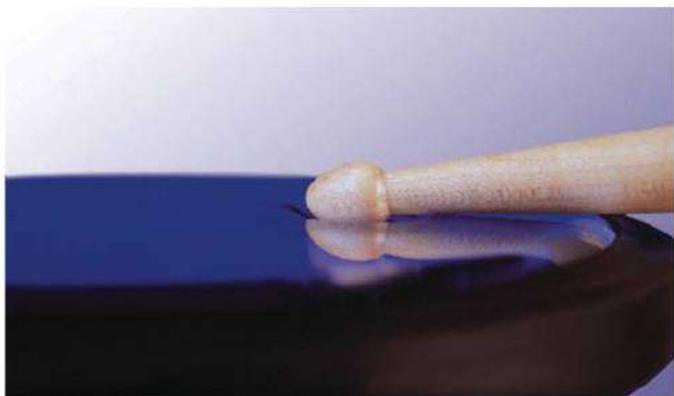
(rolandvazquez.com) **Jeff Potter**



### THE SADIES *DARKER CIRCLES*

Roots rockers the Sadies have a sure pedigree: They've backed members of Canada's underrated Blue Rodeo, and they're Neko Case's live band of choice. *Darker Circles* confirms their dark majesty and intimate sonic vision. Propelled by drummer

**MIKE BELITSKY**'s able and occasionally hyper sticking, the Sadies recall a futuristic Byrds on the reverb-laden "Another Day Again" and "Postcards," summon the legendary psychedelic jam band Quicksilver Messenger Service on "Whispering Circles," and generally sound retro but never derivative. Memorable, often twangy songs benefit from Belitsky's elastic, sure-footed drumming. He's closest to D.J. Fontana or Jim Keltner, supplying sparkling energy and bright cymbal work in constantly flowing, supple support. (Yep Roc) **Ken Micallef**



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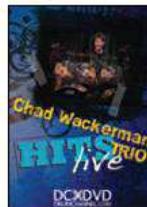
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## MULTIMEDIA



### CHAD WACKERMAN TRIO *HITS LIVE*

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$17.99

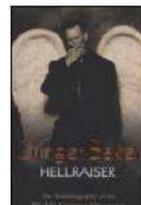


### THE DRUMMERS OF FRANK ZAPPA

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$17.99

Fans of Chad Wackerman's powerful and intuitive drumming should be aware of these new DrumChannel.com releases. *Hits Live* has the intimate feeling of good friends (Wackerman, guitarist Mike Miller, and bassist Doug Lunn) jamming in a very well-lit, soundproof, and close-miked living room. Wackerman carefully explains his thinking behind each composition, along with what drove him to play what he played. And he makes executing the beautifully crafted and well-rooted fusion grooves look fun.

Chad doesn't get much face time on *The Drummers Of Frank Zappa*. Host Terry Bozzio seems intent on mining Zappa's earlier days and steers the conversation toward Ruth Underwood, Ralph Humphrey, and Chester Thompson. Wackerman grins as he recalls Zappa once explaining to him why 4/4 is the most *unnatural* time signature. The drum jams don't add much—I'd rather have seen video footage of these cats playing with Zappa or demonstrating and explaining some of his most challenging tunes. As it is, not even a photo of Frank. And no Vinnie! **Robin Tolleson**



### HELLRAISER: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST DRUMMER BY GINGER BAKER WITH GINETTE BAKER BOOK LEVEL: ALL \$14.95

If you thought Peter "Ginger" Baker was just the drummer for Cream, watch out. After dodging Nazi bombs as a child, Baker was a key player on the seminal British jazz 'n' blues scene, a star of the '60s blues 'n' rock boom, then a Gene Krupa-meets-Indiana Jones-like adventurist living life on the edge. The Graham Bond Organisation, Cream, Blind Faith, Air Force, and other musical sorties converge with enough sex, drugs, rally racing, polo playing, and management adventures for a Hollywood movie. But while fortune(s) came and went, Baker remained true to himself, and despite his reputation as an acerbic, arrogant bastard (yes, he has his detractors), he comes across as genuine, albeit bitter, and never shy to stand his ground. Names abound, from Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce, and Gary Moore to John McLaughlin, Tony Williams, Charlie Watts, Jimi Hendrix, and Ginger's hero, Phil Seaman. But this is Baker's book, and all the more for it. (John Blake) **Wayne Blanchard**



### ESSENTIAL JAZZ PERCUSSION: DRUMMING IN THE STYLE OF MODERN JAZZ MASTERS BY MICHAEL GREEN AND DANNY GOTTLIEB

BOOK/CD

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED \$17.99

Green and Gottlieb offer helpful jazz coaching with an emphasis on musicality. Arguing that standard book exercises are too often mechanical, the authors instead present one- and two-bar drumset phrases, intended to be played as musical statements. Ultimately students will think less about "sticking" and more about phrasing and sound. Smart choice. Examples are culled from the stylings of Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and Jack DeJohnette. The book's first half highlights comping figures from these artists, while the second half draws from their solos. Included is an MP3 disc containing demonstrations of all the examples, plus bonus solos. A worthy, plentiful volume. (Mel Bay) **Jeff Potter**



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# RICHIE HAYWARD

FEBRUARY 6, 1946–AUGUST 12, 2010



Richie Hayward was born in Clear Lake, Iowa. His interest in drumming began at age six, when he saw the legendary Sonny Payne performing with the Count Basie Orchestra. Other than having six months of formal lessons, Hayward was a self-taught player whose influences ranged from the R&B and soul great Ray Charles to the super-funky New Orleans-based band the Meters.

In 1966 Richie ventured to California, where it's been said that he answered an alternative newspaper ad that read "Drummer Wanted... Must Be Freaky." He played in various configurations, obtaining his first measure of success with the Fraternity Of Man. The band's 1968 song "Don't Bogart Me," featured in the hit movie *Easy Rider*, led to an affiliation with singer-guitarist Lowell George and the subsequent formulation of the Factory, which in February of 1967 was featured on the hit television sitcom *F Troop* as a Beatles-style band called the Bedbugs.

Hayward's merging with George, plus Roy Estrada on bass and Bill Payne on keyboards, began what was to be a forty-year tenure with the band Little Feat. Initially featured on a 1971 Warner Brothers sampler LP under the name Non-Dairy Creamer, the group's innovative blend of Southern-style rock, funk, blues, jazz,

## ALL THAT YOU DREAM

Little Feat's drummer never once failed to engage the imagination of his fans, making the unexpected seem natural but keeping the groove paramount. *MD* asked those closest to Richie Hayward to help explain his magic.

### LEVON HELM The Band

What can you say about Richie Hayward? He's just one of those fantastic drummers with a great ear and a great love and sense of music...and chops—"Mr. Chops." There wasn't anything that he couldn't do.

I always admired him, like I admired Little Feat. That's one of the bands, and always was. There are no better musicians than those who've played in Little Feat. And personally, since I've been able to know them over the last fifteen to twenty years, I've learned that their character is just as outstanding as their musicianship.

When people think of Richie, they're going to think about what a great band he helped to build. We don't have a better band than Little Feat. When you look at Little Feat's music, it's not just three chords. Their music has a lot of sophistication. It's not just regulation stuff. They have a lot of heart. It's rock 'n' roll.

### GEORGE RECELI Bob Dylan

Respected by many musicians and loved by so many fans, he laid it down for five decades and helped cut a path for drummers to be proud of.

My most memorable time with Richie came during the 2004 Bob Dylan tour, when he came out with us. The situation unfolded like this: After a minor injury to my left hand, I suggested that someone else take over. Bob said, "Let's get someone to double up, and that will take some pressure off your hand." In the '90s, Richie and I had double drummed on one occasion at the House Of Blues in New Orleans.

We both smiled all night. Even though we'd been longtime friends, we'd never performed together before.

Richie had a diverse musical background. Besides Little Feat, he made contributions to the music of such artists as Buddy Guy, Barbra Streisand, Warren Zevon, and Robert Plant, plus so many more. He was a natural choice for this situation, given that Bob's music is so diverse. I remember reading an article that said, "The drum collaboration of Receli and Hayward is sure to make some memorable moments." You have no idea! Most of the moments had nothing to do with music. Just sharing stories and experiences was a thrill.

The sheer gravity of what Richie left behind is much more than most musicians could hope to be blessed to achieve. He influenced so many in our tribe—and remains influential. He did it with great style and individuality. Then there was his energy on stage. I always said that he played every song like it was the last song he would ever play. Richie had a fearless nature—he took chances!

Rest in a peaceful groove, Richie. Big love.

### JIM KELTNER

George Harrison, John Lennon, Ry Cooder

The first time I heard Richie play was on Ry Cooder's debut album. I loved his musical conception right away. When most people think of Richie they think of his funky New Orleans side, and it's true that he loved the Wild Tchoupitoulas a lot. That was one of our favorite topics

country, soul, gospel, and Cajun music created a sound unlike any other in contemporary music at the time. The band members' virtuosity was commonly highlighted within the instrumental interplay between verses and choruses, representing an early template that jam bands employ to this day.

Between 1972 and 1979 Hayward came to prominence as one of rock's most innovative drummers. The hallmark of his style was the blending of traditional drumbeats and polyrhythmic interludes with New Orleans-style jazz-funk-blues-country-Cajun and Afro-Caribbean rhythms. This was a trademark—exclusively Richie's—throughout his career.

"My style has grown with the band," Hayward said of Little Feat in his October 1995 *Modern Drummer* cover story. "It started out heavily influenced by blues, rock 'n' roll, and jazz. Then it got more specific as I got into other kinds of American folk music and other roots music. I discovered New Orleans along the way, and that made a *big* difference—it loosened me up. But my playing is just a combination of all the styles I ever heard. I picked up a little of this and that and mishmashed it all together."

Hayward's refined creativity graced more than twenty Little Feat albums

and made Richie immensely popular as a studio sideman. Supporting artists as diverse as Eric Clapton, Ry Cooder, James Cotton, the Doobie Brothers, Bob Dylan, Peter Frampton, Buddy Guy, Arlo Guthrie, Robert Palmer, Joan Armatrading, Robert Plant, Bob Seger, Carly Simon, John Hiatt, Jonny Lang, Warren Zevon, Coco Montoya, and Warren Haynes, Hayward was always a first call for the finest musicians in popular music.

In August 2008 Richie married Shauna Drayson, a native of Canada who turned out to be not only the love but also the light of his life. Almost a year later, the drummer was diagnosed with liver cancer. Because of the complexities of the disease and the overwhelming amount of money needed to fund proper treatment, the decision was made to leave his longtime Topanga Canyon, California, home and relocate to his wife's hometown of Courtenay, British Columbia, to obtain assistance. The worldwide music community responded, with fellow drummers taking the lead. Many benefits were held in 2009 and 2010, notably one in Canada and two in the U.S., raising thousands of dollars to assist Richie in his fight. While awaiting a liver transplant, he suffered an irre-



versible setback, and complications from pneumonia took him on August 12, 2010, at age sixty-four.

Fittingly, this past July 11, at a concert on Vancouver Island, Richie had the chance to sit in with his Little Feat bandmates. Word was out, with many fans wondering whether he'd have enough strength to play. Any doubters didn't know Richie Hayward—the sound of a drum and the sound of his soul were one and the same. On the Little Feat classics "Spanish Moon," "Skin It Back," and "Fat Man In The Bathtub," Hayward tore into second-line grooves and funk beats, slashing at his cymbals heavier than ever, kicking and driving that band like he did his whole life, reinforcing to his mates and to the 8,000 people in attendance that Richie Hayward was one of a kind. There will never be another one like him. **Bob Girouard**

of conversation when we got together. But one of his strongest suits, I believe, was his melodic sense. Melodic drumming probably means different things to different people—to me it's the thing about a drummer's playing that holds my interest most, whether he or she is hitting hard or softly. I think we've heard that in Richie's playing throughout his whole career.

After I got to know him as a friend, I began to realize that even though he was a mellow, sweet-natured kind of guy, he also had a crazy streak. He loved motorcycles, and somehow he wound up being one of the very few people to ever find themselves in a full body cast *twice* in a lifetime. Richie lived dangerously, and that's exactly the way he played.

## SHAUNA DRAYSON HAYWARD

On Aug 12, 2010, Richie Hayward, the love of my life, passed away in my arms. Our time together here on "God's golf ball," as he would say, was far too short. I would like to extend the warmest and deepest thank-you possible to the drumming and music community. Your love and support this past year gave us great light. To Levon, to George, and to Jim, you left such beautiful color on Richie's life. He idolized you all and loved you like brothers. You are his heroes. You filled his life with heart and friendship, the gifts that he carried with him right to the end. He is forever with you. Thank you, *Modern Drummer* and Bobby Girouard, for sharing Richie, through your words, with the rest of the world. Hold tight the love.

## WAYNE BLANCHARD

Former Sabian Senior Marketing Manager

I've never been one for musical heroes, but Richie Hayward was one. I love his drumming, and I loved the guy. He was so real—smart, witty, humble. Though Richie was quiet, even shy, his wry humor suggested much more than he would ever reveal. He was a different drummer, with syncopated grooves and "where's he at?" fills on Little Feat tunes like "Day At The Dog Races," "Hi Roller," and "Mojo Haiku," epitomizing his "creative groover" concept. Watching him play was a real *So that's how he does it* experience. He wanted to work with Jeff Beck, though the closest he got was separate sessions for Buddy Guy's "Mustang Sally." In the end, knowing that Richie was so very happy in life with his new wife, Shauna, who put so much into ensuring his well-being, should offer solace to all. She was *his* hero.

*Like many musicians, Richie Hayward did not have proper health care, making his final struggles that much more difficult. Sweet Relief Musicians Fund is an organization dedicated to providing financial assistance to career musicians struggling to make ends meet while facing illness, disability, or age-related problems. For more information and to make donations, go to [sweetrelief.org](http://sweetrelief.org).*



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# Blue Jay In A Blender

**F**rom southpaw Carmine Strollo comes this mixture of new looks, vintage cymbal sounds, and creative toys, which the forum members at Harmony Central have come to know as the “blue jay in a blender” kit.

The drumset is an extended PDP CX maple Fusion series ensemble in arctic blue wrap, a model that’s no longer in production. Strollo includes a 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 14 WorldMax brass side snare for more crack and power.

“The sizzle up top comes from a variety of vintage cymbals that I used when I played as a full-time show-band drummer in the ‘80s,” Carmine says. Models include an original ‘60s set of 14” Zildjian New Beat hi-hats, a 12” Saluda China Blast splash, a first-generation 16” Sabian Bright crash, a first-generation 18” Sabian Heavy crash, an 18” Zildjian Impulse crash, a 20” Zildjian Mini Cup ride, and a 20”

Zildjian High China Boy Platinum for that eye-opening, ear-splitting white-noise smash. “I just added a 22” Sabian AAX ride to the mix for more of a washy jazz ride effect,” the drummer explains, “complementing the hard ping of the Mini Cup.”

To round out the rig, Strollo uses a bunch of new and old toys, highlighted by a fire-alarm bell from 1946, which is mounted on the bass drum hoop.

“The kit looks smashing under the lights,” the proud owner says, adding that the bass drum head design comes by

way of his eldest granddaughter, who helped get Strollo started down the drumming road again after a long hiatus. If you’d like to see and hear the kit in action, look for carminemw on YouTube and Vimeo.



**Photo Submission:** Hi-res digital photos, along with descriptive text, may be emailed to [billya@moderndrummer.com](mailto:billya@moderndrummer.com). Show “Kit Of The Month” in the subject line of the message.



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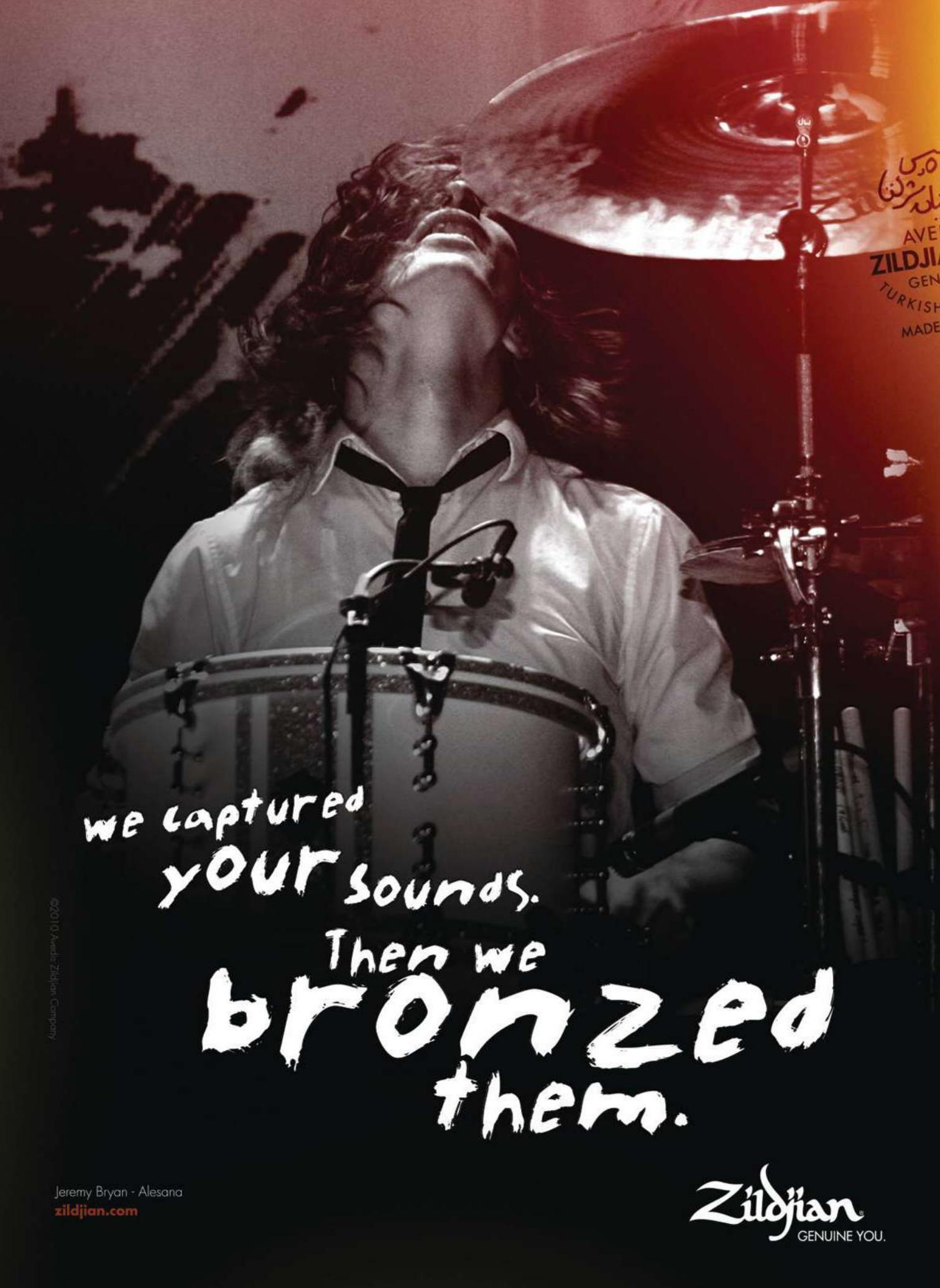
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