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SPECIAL ISSUE: FOCUS ON ELECTRONICS

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February 2011

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CHIODOS

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The Black Eyed Peas' **KEITH HARRIS**

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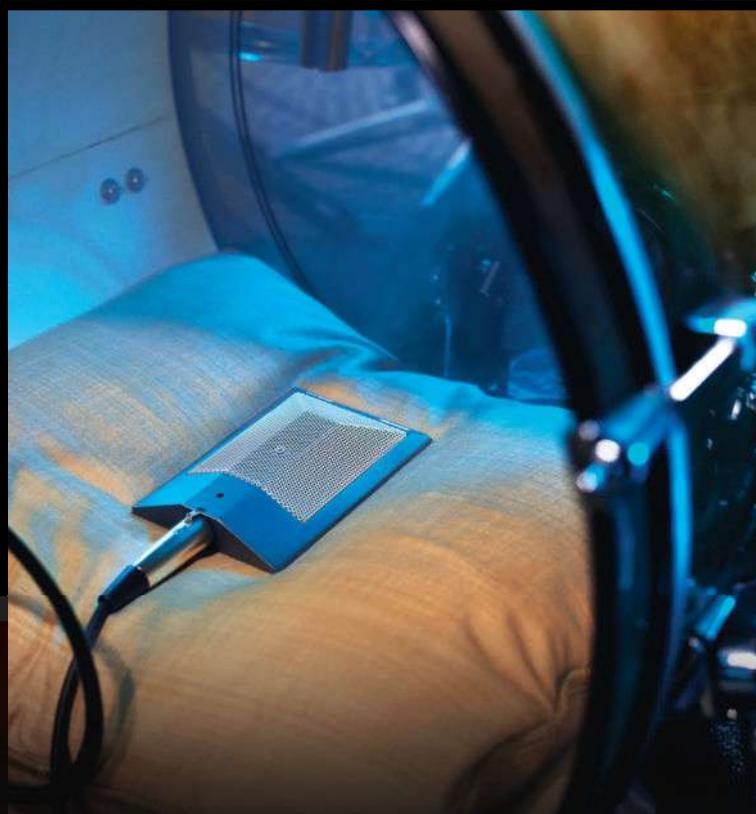


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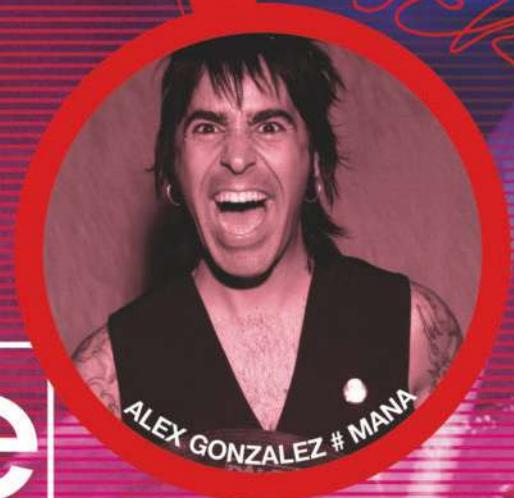
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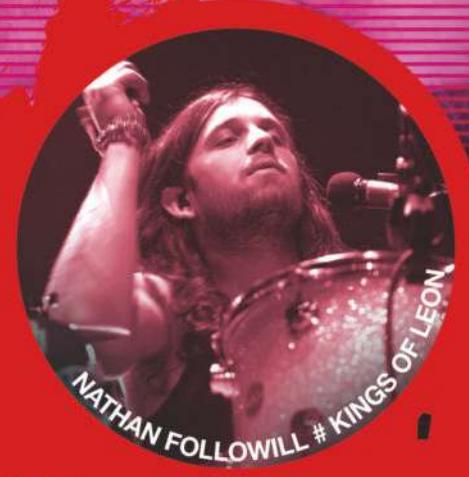
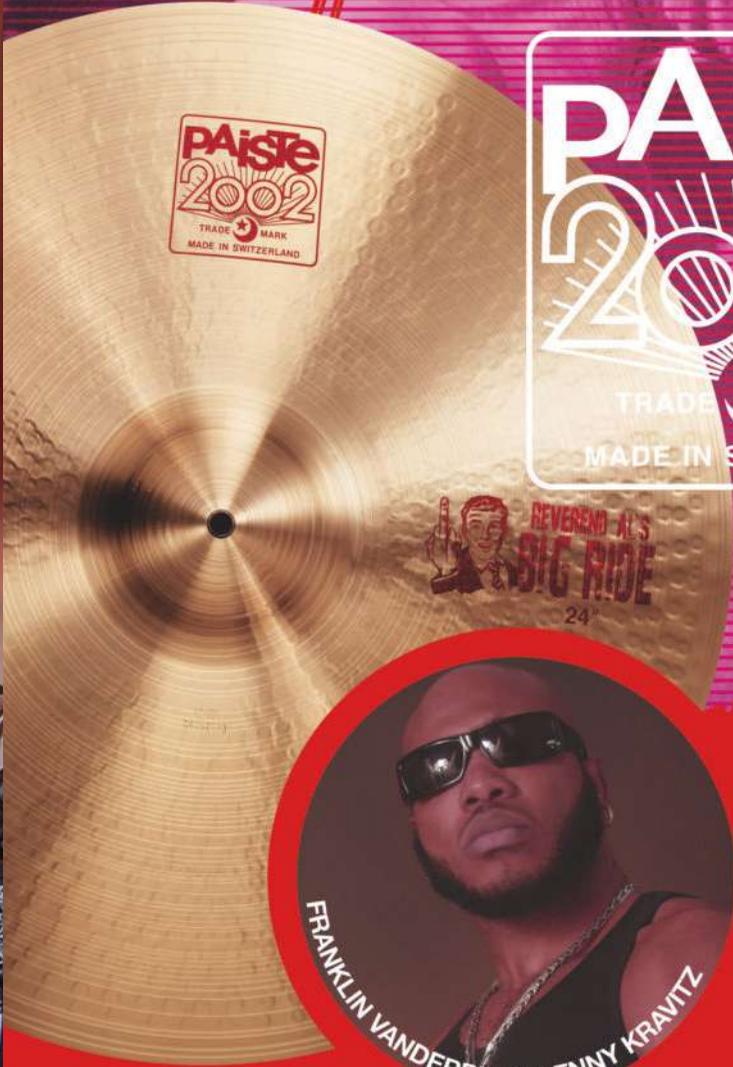
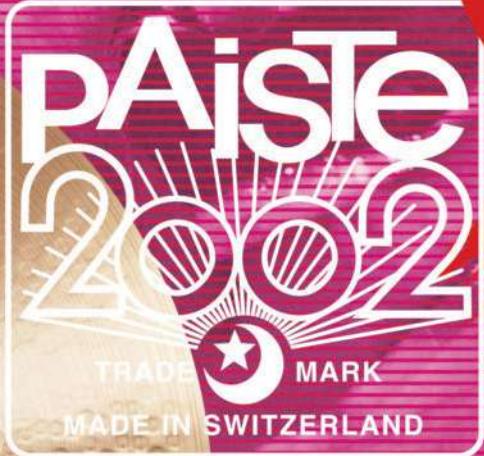
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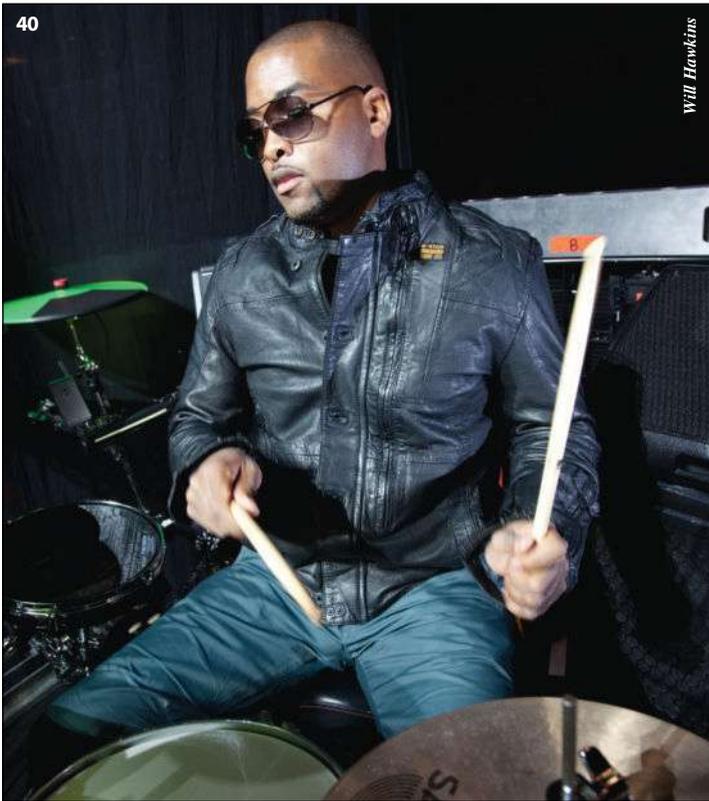
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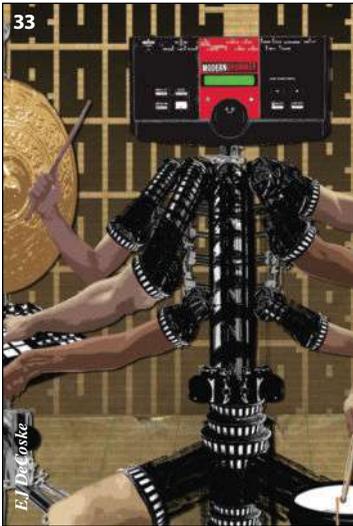
He keeps the party jumping with one of the biggest acts in the world. And when the stage goes dark, he's still lighting up the industry, producing and writing platinum records and winning multiple Grammys.

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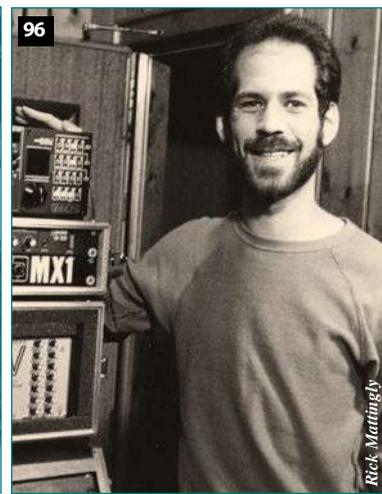
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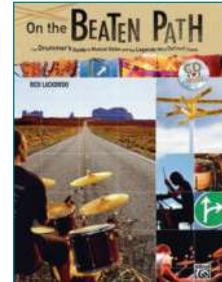
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Plug Me In And Turn Me On!

Welcome to *MD's* electronic-themed issue. Electronics have been a very useful tool in my drumming career and in the work of many of my favorite drummers. Back in the day before drum machines really became popular, I was experimenting with triggers, rhythm boxes, and mixing and matching acoustic and electronic drums. (The shot at right is from a 1981 session.) Fortunately for me, I took a liking to the process, because it freed up time for me to concentrate more on writing and producing. While many drummers were stubborn about the new technology and afraid it would take over their work, I jumped right into the fire. I've been a fan of electronic drums for thirty-five years now, and although it kind of took me out of the loop of playing acoustic drums for a period of time, these days I find myself switching between them—just as a guitarist can switch from acoustic to electric guitar.



In this special jam-packed issue, we enlist the expertise of a number of top players and programmers, who provide heaps of useful tips and information on working with triggers, drum machines, samplers, software, looping devices, and all kinds of electronic drums and percussion.

Cover artist and Grammy-winning producer, songwriter, and drummer Keith Harris of the Black Eyed Peas gives us an inside look at how he went whole-hog electronic on the band's world tour at bandleader Will.i.am's specific request—and how he managed to sneak in some acoustics without ruffling any feathers. Brendan Buckley checks in from touring with Shakira with seriously detailed descriptions of his electroacoustic arsenal. Zach Danziger takes a break from writing and scoring for TV and movies to chat with fellow electro explorer Mark Guiliana. Omar Hakim, Will Calhoun, and KJ Sawka give us invaluable direction on how to "Get Good" at working with electronic drums in the second installment of our new feature series. "Finger drumming" master David Haynes talks about the gear he uses to get monster drum performances out of hand-operated controllers. Multi-instrumentalist Vinnie Zummo gets us closer to making our own killer drum loops. And Donny Gruendler offers helpful advice on playing along to those loops once we've created them.

Personally, I was very excited to take advantage of this issue's theme in order to reconnect with one of my early electronic influences, Jimmy Bralower. In the 1980s, Jimmy was renowned for his programming skills and for mixing electronics with real-feel playing. Records that he contributed to—often made at the famed New York City studio the Power Station—have sold in excess of 250 million copies. *MD* first profiled Jimmy in the January 1985 issue, a feature we travel back in time to revisit here, via our Kit Of The Month column, where he details the equipment he used on hit after hit by artists like Hall & Oates, Madonna, and Steve Winwood. And be sure to check out Jimmy's Gimme 10! feature, where the maestro shares real-world suggestions for effective and artful electronic music production in today's recording environment.

Whether you're a veteran electronics user or you're new to the concept, after absorbing this issue you're sure to be left with a wealth of ideas and information that you'll want to apply to your own drumming. So plug in, learn, and enjoy!

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READERS' PLATFORM



GENE HOGLAN

I want to thank *MD* for putting Gene Hoglan on the cover of the November 2010 issue. His drumming has been a big inspiration and motivation for me for many years—and of course his chops and power go without saying. Plus he's a really nice guy! Take care, and keep delivering the best drum magazine out there.

Espen Høgmo, drummer for Hangface

MD is an awesome magazine! Thank you for putting Gene Hoglan on the November cover—he's a badass drummer. Dethklok!

Thomas Chacon, via Facebook

Gene Hoglan—what a cool dude. Nice interview, *MD*!

Patrice L'Amour, via Facebook

I was more than excited to see Gene Hoglan on the cover of *Modern Drummer*. Gene is very underrated in the drumming community in my opinion. From his work with Dark Angel in the '80s and early '90s to Death (especially the 1993 album *Individual Thought Patterns*) to Fear Factory's latest release, *Mechanize*, this guy has made himself known to be a great drummer, no matter what band he joins. I had the chance to meet Gene after a Fear Factory show, and I was really impressed with how open he was to talk to fans and answer a couple of questions about his instructional DVD, which I got as soon as it came out. Congrats, Gene!

Andrew Hoxter

STEVE JORDAN

Thanks for the great Steve Jordan interview in the October 2010 issue. I've been a huge fan ever since he knocked me out on the Blues Brothers' *Briefcase Full Of Blues* album. His understanding of the drums and of serving the music is a great lesson to us all.

Michael R. Addison

NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN

Thank you for the Narada Michael Walden Update in your November issue. He always shows his grace and humility and total lack of overblown ego. It's nice to see him back on drums with Jeff Beck. It takes me back to *Wired*, *Inner Worlds*, and *Visions Of The Emerald Beyond*—some of the greatest fusion I've ever had the pleasure to learn from!

Eli Snyder

RICHIE HAYWARD

I was crushed when I heard Richie Hayward had passed away. He was my drumming idol, even to the point of adopting his old mustache/goatee look for a while. I had a similar experience to what John Rogers described in the December Readers' Platform. In April of 2002, my late bass-playing wife, Krystal, and I had gone to catch Little Feat at the Lincoln Theatre in Raleigh, North Carolina. We were in the parking lot a few hours before the show when we noticed Feat bass player Kenny Gradney walking by. My wife grabbed her copy of [Jimmy Herring, T Lavitz, Richie Hayward, and Kenny Gradney's] *Endangered Species* and asked him to sign it, and we talked for a few minutes.

We then noticed Richie sitting on the loading dock at the back entrance. We walked up and timidly said hello, asking if he would also sign our CD. He said, "Y'all like this, huh?" We said it was the only thing we'd listened to for two months. He laughed, signed it, and said he'd see us inside. Every time we saw Richie and Kenny throughout the night they smiled, said hi, and even hugged us when close enough.



We had to leave before the second set, and we bumped into Richie walking to the bus. He said it was good to meet us and to be very careful driving home. He hugged Krystal, posed for a photo, and said so long. As we were driving home, Krystal said, "Those are two of the nicest, warmest people I've ever met." Perfectly said!

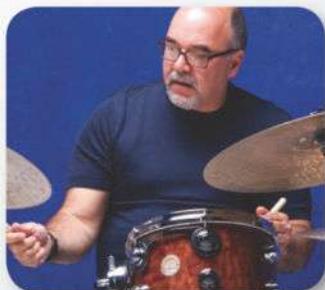
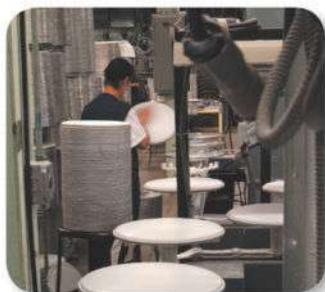
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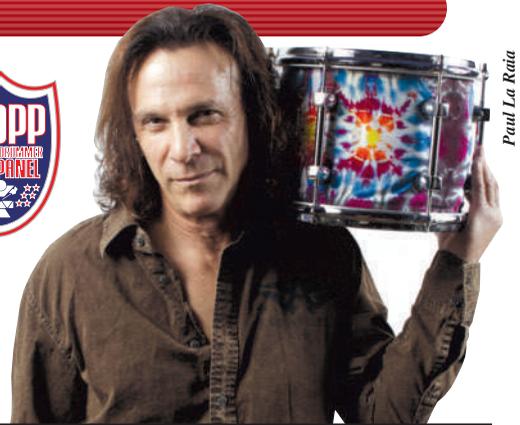
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ROD MORGENSTEIN

Passing Auditions



Paul La Kaia

This month's featured *MD* Pro Panelist, **who's as experienced as it gets when it comes to nailing auditions with top acts**, helps set your head straight before you go to your next big tryout.

■ SCENARIO 1: It's Out Of Your Hands

It's the morning of a big audition. Nervous but excited, you find your mind racing, with songs running through your brain like a high-speed train on full throttle. You're confident, owing to the fact that you've put in countless hours learning the drum parts note for note.

Making sure your stick bag is equipped with the necessary tools of the trade, you race out the door in your Gap jeans and Izod golf-green short-sleeve shirt. Arriving at your destination, you're led down a hall to the audition room and you come face to face with the band members. There they are, with their skintight leather pants, snake-skin boots, dyed jet-black hair, sleeve tattoos, and a jewelry store's worth of rings, necklaces, and bracelets, giving you the once-over, checking you out. Well, odds are, before you even play your first note, you are probably not getting this gig.

REALITY CHECK: Some bands actually live the life 24/7, and you, clearly, are *not one of them*, as evidenced by your Gap/Izod getup. Do not take it personally. Unfortunately, passing the audition is not always just about the drumming. Certain things can be out of your control when it comes to getting gigs. In this case it's all about appearances and presentation—and your height, weight, hair color and style, and other physical features might play a role in the audition outcome.

I'm relating this story because it's one of several scenarios I've experienced in my professional life. I, too, have been on the "Thanks, but no thanks" end of the audition process on more than one occasion.

Do not despair, however, because most auditions, in fact, *are* about the drumming.

The main component to getting a shot at passing the audition is preparedness. Sound like a no-brainer? It is! Do your homework. Learn all you possibly can about the artist and the audition requirements, as much in advance as possible. If it's a recording band, listen to their CDs ad nauseum and check out their videos. If it's a local club band, go see them perform. Do everything you can to get inside their world.

■ SCENARIO 2: What Was I Thinking?

Sure of what the artist is all about, you neglect to do your homework. No, you were never a fan, but hey, you know what to do. So you hit the drums hard and keep it really simple, occasionally leaving the safety of the backbeat to play a basic fill, thinking all the while, *I don't wanna scare these guys off by playing too busy*. And then you never hear back from them. So after the fact you decide to listen to their music, and you're surprised to find that their original drummer plays all over the map, filling in every conceivable open space, like Animal from the Muppets.

REALITY CHECK: Even if an artist falls into a particular genre of music, the drumming approach may not fit exactly into the mold of how most drummers play in that particular style. Listen to the artist's music prior to the audition in order to firmly grasp the vibe and, more specifically, the drumming approach. If it's complex and busy, be prepared to play that way. On the other hand, if you walk into an audition for an AC/DC cover band—or for the *real* AC/DC—do not, I repeat, DO NOT, show them every cool, over-the-barline, polyrhythmic lick you've ever learned. This may impress a convention of drummers, but it will end your AC/DC audition faster than you can say "four against three."

■ SCENARIO 3: Expect The Unexpected

You've done your homework. You've learned a complex song note for note, and now you nail it perfectly at the audition. You're showered with accolades: "Wow, that's exactly how our last drummer played it!" And then a bombshell is dropped: "Now let's see how creative you are. How would *you* play it?" After spending so much time focused on learning the song the way it was recorded, you're suddenly put on the spot, with all eyes in the room upon you. You find yourself in a predicament you hadn't planned on. Your mind goes blank. The singer counts off the song. When it ends, you don't really remember much of what you played. Bummer.

REALITY CHECK: As much as a band may be looking for the new guy to sound just like the old guy, they may also be searching for someone to reenergize the music and the group. Be prepared for potential situations where you need to tap into your creative side. This may involve jamming, or one of the musicians might play a riff and expect you to react on the spot with something cool.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The music business is relatively small. Word travels. Reputations make the rounds, and a good one is worth its weight in gold. Make every effort to be an easygoing-on-time-nonconfrontational-gets-the-job-done-team-playing human being.

And it might seem obvious, but you should practice your drums on a regular basis. An audition can pop up when you least expect it. The last thing you need is to be less than 100 percent when these special opportunities arise.

Finally, remember to enjoy, and to *learn from*, the process. With each audition you will probably learn something new about music and drumming and people and, quite possibly, yourself.



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This year we once again invite you to cast your vote in the world's most important drumming event—the Modern Drummer Readers Poll.

As usual, we're giving you the opportunity to vote for all the drummers who you feel deserve special recognition for their work over the past year or so—as well as for the educational materials that earned a permanent place on your bookshelf.

Longtime voters will notice that this year we're suggesting nominees within each category. The modern music scene is incredibly complex, with drummers, artists, and bands often falling easily into a number of different styles. By providing you with the names of the players and educational products that struck the *MD* editors as being particularly noteworthy over the recent months, we're making it easier than ever for you to vote for your favorite drummers, books, and DVDs in all the appropriate categories. Don't worry—we're still providing for write-in votes, so if you don't see some names that you'd like to have recognized, by all means, type them in!

For a sneak peek at our suggested nominees, see the bottom of this page. Then go to moderndrummer.com and make your votes count!

Voting is open
between January 1
and February 15, 2011.

Vote and enter to win a subscription to *MD* and a 35th-anniversary T-shirt! Providing your name, address, and email automatically makes you eligible for one of three FREE one-year subscriptions to *Modern Drummer* magazine.

MD Readers Poll Categories And Suggested Nominees

Hall Of Fame: Jim Chapin, Richie Hayward, Levon Helm, Bernard Purdie, Ed Thigpen

MVP: Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Grohl, Steve Jordan, Mike Portnoy, Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson

Mainstream Rock: Matt Cameron, Tré Cool, Dave Grohl, Ray Luzier, Phil Rudd

Alternative: Dominic Howard, Glenn Kotche, Jason McGerr, Chris Pennie, Jack White

Pop: Carter Beauford, Teddy Campbell, Keith Carlock, Keith Harris, Steve Jordan

Metal: Chris Adler, Brann Dailor, Gene Hoglan, Joey Jordison, Morgan Rose

Prog: Gavin Harrison, Neil Peart, Marco Minnemann, Mike Portnoy, Aquiles Priester

R&B: Tony Allen, Chris Coleman, Chris Dave, Aaron Spears, Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson

Jazz: Jim Black, Brian Blade, Johnathan Blake, Eric Harland, Antonio Sanchez

Fusion: Ronald Bruner Jr., Billy Cobham, Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Smith, Narada Michael Walden

Studio: Matt Chamberlain, Shannon Forrest, Josh Freese, Brian MacLeod, Shawn Pelton

Country: Trey Gray, Chris McHugh, Rich Redmond, Jim Riley, Ben Sesar

Clinician/Educator: Steve Gadd, Benny Greb, Mike Johnston, Stanton Moore, Jim Riley

Up & Coming: Mike Byrne (Smashing Pumpkins), Areyaj Hale (Halestorm), Ulysses Owens Jr. (Kurt Elling), Billy Rymer (Dillinger Escape Plan), Tanner Wayne (Chiodos)

Percussionist: Lenny Castro, Luis Conte, Zakir Hussain, Bashiri Johnson, Pete Lockett

Educational Book: Liberty DeVitto and Sean J. Kennedy, *Rock Solid: Drums*; David Garibaldi, *Breaking The Code*; Gavin Harrison and Terry Branam, *Rhythmic Designs*; Ari Hoenig, *Intro To Polyrythms*; Stanton Moore, *Groove Alchemy*

Educational DVD: Keith Carlock, *The Big Picture*; Tommy Igoe, *Great Hands For A Lifetime*; Stanton Moore, *Groove Alchemy*; Aquiles Priester, *The Infallible Reason Of My Freak Drumming*; Derek Roddy, *Blast Beats Evolved*

Recorded Performance: Terry Bozzio, *Philly '76* (Frank Zappa); Dave Grohl, *Them Crooked Vultures* (Them Crooked Vultures); Gene Hoglan, *Dethalbum II* (Dethklok); Paul Motian, *Lost In A Dream* (Paul Motian, Chris Potter, Jason Moran); Mike Portnoy, *Nightmare* (Avenged Sevenfold)

Cast your vote for these or your own write-in nominees today at moderndrummer.com.

JUSTIN PEROFF

Broken Social Scene's drummer is happy to share his throne, as long as the results are great.



Norman Wong

Toronto's Broken Social Scene is famous for its swirling, sometimes horn-soaked sound and large, continually changing lineup, which at times has numbered nineteen and has featured the popular indie singers Feist, Evan Cranley of Stars, and Metric's Emily Haines. "A lot can happen if you leave the studio for a day, or even for an afternoon," drummer Justin Peroff says with a chuckle. "So I try to be there as often as possible, because I want to be a part of it all."

On Broken Social Scene's most recent album, *Forgiveness Rock Record*, Peroff got to indulge his interest in electronics via producer John McEntire's drum machine collection, including a vintage '70s Electro-Harmonix Rhythm Machine for the retro-techno foundation of "Highway Slipper Jam." And on a handful of songs Peroff provides

overdubs to beats that were laid down by either McEntire or Broken Social Scene singer-guitarist Kevin Drew. Peroff beefs up what he describes as a "sloppy, nine-pints-in" pattern from Drew on the hooky "Water In Hell" with a snare, a pair of toms, and a kick drum propped up by chairs and angled like a rack tom. The jittery pulses of "Art House Director" and "Ungrateful Little Father" were played by McEntire, with Peroff adding funky kit work during the smoothed-out bridge on the former and some additional hi-hat on the latter.

"Ungrateful Little Father" was John,

bassist Charlie Spearin, and Kevin just having a little jam," Justin says. "They set up a 4-track late one night when nobody else was in the studio and started jamming, and it turned into a song. They said, 'Oh, John got on the kit and played this beat.' I said, 'Cool!' This is the only record where I've shared the drum throne. But I don't mind at all, because I think it sounds *amazing*."

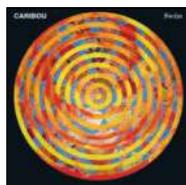
Patrick Berkery

OUT NOW ON CD



SCOTT PHILLIPS On Alter Bridge's *AB III*
For most drummers, being able to play in a hugely popular group like Creed—which has sold 40 million records worldwide and scored loads of number-one singles—would be reward enough. Not for Scott Phillips, who also sits at the throne for Alter Bridge, which recently released its third opus,

AB III. "With Creed I got safer as a player," Phillips says. "I kind of fell into that Top 40 mindset of keeping it really simple for the listener. With Alter Bridge our goal is to explore our instruments more. Our mindset is to not worry about singles or what the label thinks. The Alter Bridge approach has carried over to Creed, and it's made my new Creed experiences so much more enjoyable." Phillips' playing on *AB III* sounds downright energized—and the drummer says he knows why. "We only had two months to record," he explains, "so it became a very spontaneous writing and recording session. Not to say I didn't have an idea of what I was going to play, but there was certainly an element of spontaneity in the studio that enhanced my playing." **Steven Douglas Losey**



DAN SNAITH On Caribou's *Swim*
"I had this idea of making liquid-sounding music," says Caribou's drummer/leader, Dan Snaith, about the electro indie band's latest album, *Swim*. "That gave me a direction to head in right from the start—an aesthetic that would tie the whole thing together." Snaith, whose albums have always featured colorfully psychedelic drum sounds, continues to come up with fresh sonic touches on the new one. "It's always been about being exploratory for me," he says, "finding a patch of sound or sonic territory that I haven't tried before, or an idea that nobody has looked at. It's good to have the sensation that there's no apparent boundary." Though Snaith says much of his previous music has been influenced by experimental German bands like Can and Faust, as well as by early electronic composers such as Morton Subotnick and Karlheinz Stockhausen, for *Swim* he found himself thinking about hardcore dance music productions like Detroit techno and dubstep. "I always have my ears open for lots of different stuff," he says. "Still, I like to make each sound my own as much as possible." **Adam Budofsky**

Also On The Shelves

Andrew Belle *The Ladder* (Dustin Ransom) /// **Peter Erskine, Alan Pasqua, Darek Oles** *The Interlochen Concert* (Peter Erskine) /// **PVT Church** *With No Magic* (Laurence Pike) /// **Kneebody** *You Can Have Your Moment* (Nate Wood) /// **Gigi Drums** *Hippopotamus* (Gigi Drums) /// **Shawn Mullins** *Light You Up* (Gerry Hansen) /// **Murderdolls** *Women And Children Last* (Joey Jordison) /// **Methods Of Mayhem** *A Public Disservice Announcement* (Tommy Lee) /// **Stone Sour** *Audio Secrecy* (Roy Mayorga) /// **Mika Yoshida** *Mikarimba!* (Steve Gadd) /// **Steve Gadd And Friends** *Live At Voce* (Steve Gadd) /// **Molly Hatchet** *Justice* (Shawn Beamer) /// **The Who** *Live At The Isle Of Wight Festival 1970* (Keith Moon) /// **Gerald Albright** *Pushing The Envelope* (Ricky Lawson) /// **Reza Khan** *Painted Diaries* (Graham Hawthorne, Christian Vardeleon) /// **George Brooks Summit** *Spirit And Spice* (Steve Smith, Zakir Hussain, Swapan Chaudhuri, Ceslo Alberti) /// **Orlando Le Fleming** *From Brooklyn With Love: Live At Freddy's* (Antonio Sanchez) /// **Megadeth** *Rust In Peace Live* (Shawn Drover) /// **Street Sweeper Social Club** *The Ghetto Blaster EP* (Eric Gardner) /// **The Devil Wears Prada** *Zombie EP* (Daniel Williams)

ON TOUR

Justin Salinas with the Word Alive /// **Will Carroll** with Death Angel /// **Ryan Shutler** with Lazarus A.D. /// **Todd Sucherman** with Styx /// **Anthony "Tiny" Biuso** with Rhino Bucket





MIND MATTERS **Overcoming Common Mental Barriers In Music**

by Bernie Schallehn

The Drummer As Performer/Entertainer

I've been drumming with a band for the past five months, and the bandleader recently said I wasn't performing enough on stage. When I asked what she meant, she said my drumming was fine but I had no personality on stage. I told her that I was just concentrating, but she said my wooden appearance took away from the band's look. I have two questions: 1. Does a drummer *have* to be a performer/entertainer? 2. Can you help me save my job?

John M.

The answer to your first question depends largely on the context of the gig. That being said, keep one thing in mind: Your audience comes to see you perform just as much as, if not more than, to hear you play. Look at the outrageous ticket prices that big-name artists are getting for their concerts. With the amount you spend to see them on stage, you could buy their entire CD catalog. And why is that? It's because fans want the intimate experience of being in the same room as their favorite artists. There's simply no comparison between hearing music through headphones or on a car stereo versus being a part of the real-life concert experience, where the lights, the sound, and the band's performance come together as one.

Let's further examine a gig's context as being a factor in whether drummers specifically need to be performers/entertainers, using three legendary players as examples: Ringo Starr, Charlie Watts, and Keith Moon.

In their heyday, the Beatles wore matching outfits and haircuts to immediately identify themselves as members of the band. In addition, each Beatle had his own persona. Ringo Starr would smile, flip his mop-top hairdo around while playing fills, and tilt his head to let his long hair flop when hitting a song-ending cymbal crash. Was his showmanship outrageous? Of course not. But Ringo's stage appearance, when combined with his drumming, absolutely constituted showmanship.

Now let's look at Charlie Watts of the Rolling Stones. When Watts plays on his no-frills four-piece kit, his expression is the

quintessential poker face—one that leaves spectators wondering whether he's deep in thought, tranquil, reserved, or perhaps even bored. He really doesn't give much away beyond the occasional grin. Watts, however, is sharing the stage with Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, two individuals who have defined the term *rock star*, so there's little need for Charlie to do anything other than play his kit.

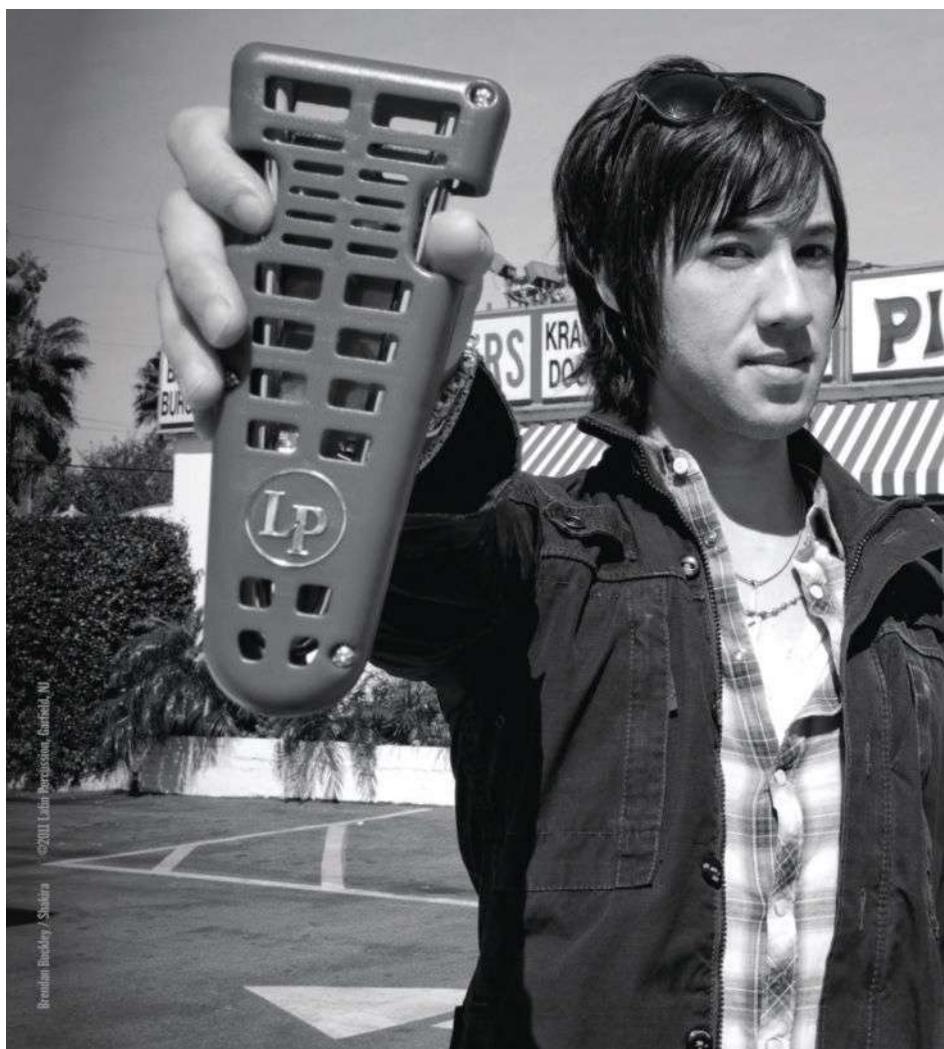
On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Who's Keith Moon had an innocent choirboy look but bashed his drums like a wild man. The Who's live show was a spectacle, and singer Roger Daltrey, guitarist Pete Townshend, and Moon all placed a high priority on showmanship. The band's bassist, John Entwistle, was the lone holdout.

As you can see from these examples, context is key when it comes to whether or not a drummer *has* to be a showman. Your band and your role within it will help you determine the appropriate context.

On to your second question: Can I help you save your job? Yes! Start by asking your bandleader what specifically she wants you to do in terms of increasing your performance quotient. I'm guessing she has an image in mind of what she expects. If she does detail her specific wants, the question you then have to answer is: Am I willing to meet her expectations?

If she's too vague in her descriptions or wants you to invent your own stage persona, here are a few places to start.

1. Facial expressions. For starters, smile! Smile at your bandmates and espe-



Gretsch Round Badge Snare



I have a Gretsch snare drum with a round badge, which was left to me by a friend who passed away. I love the way this drum speaks with my kit, and I was wondering if you could tell me the date it was created, along with its approximate value. I refinished the drum with a gloss black glitter that I mixed, followed by three coats of clear poly-gloss. The model number is 4157, and the serial number is 53629.

Michael L.

"That's a late-1960s, maybe even 1970, Gretsch Name Band snare drum," says drum historian Harry Cangany. "It was made just before the badges were changed over to an octagonal shape. As is, the drum would bring about \$250 to \$300. Since you like how it sounds and it has a sentimental tie to the memory of your friend, I suggest that you keep it as is. There are, however, restorers out there who can make it look like it just left the factory, if that's something that interests you."

cially at the audience. Remember, they've come to the club to be entertained. Show them you're having a good time, and they will mirror your behavior. If the music is heavier, experiment with some more intense expressions. Match what you put on your face with the feel of the song. You can also try moving your head in time to the music. (Often, a performer's facial expressions are an involuntary response to the emotions

evoked by the music. If you're playing with an expressionless look, you may want to spend time reconnecting with the core feelings of the music and allow them to pour out of you while performing.)

2. Flash. For more extreme showmanship, learn to twirl your sticks. Perhaps this routine is a bit overdone, but it still seems to be a crowd pleaser when used in the appropriate context. There are plenty of DVDs, CDs, and

books on the topic.

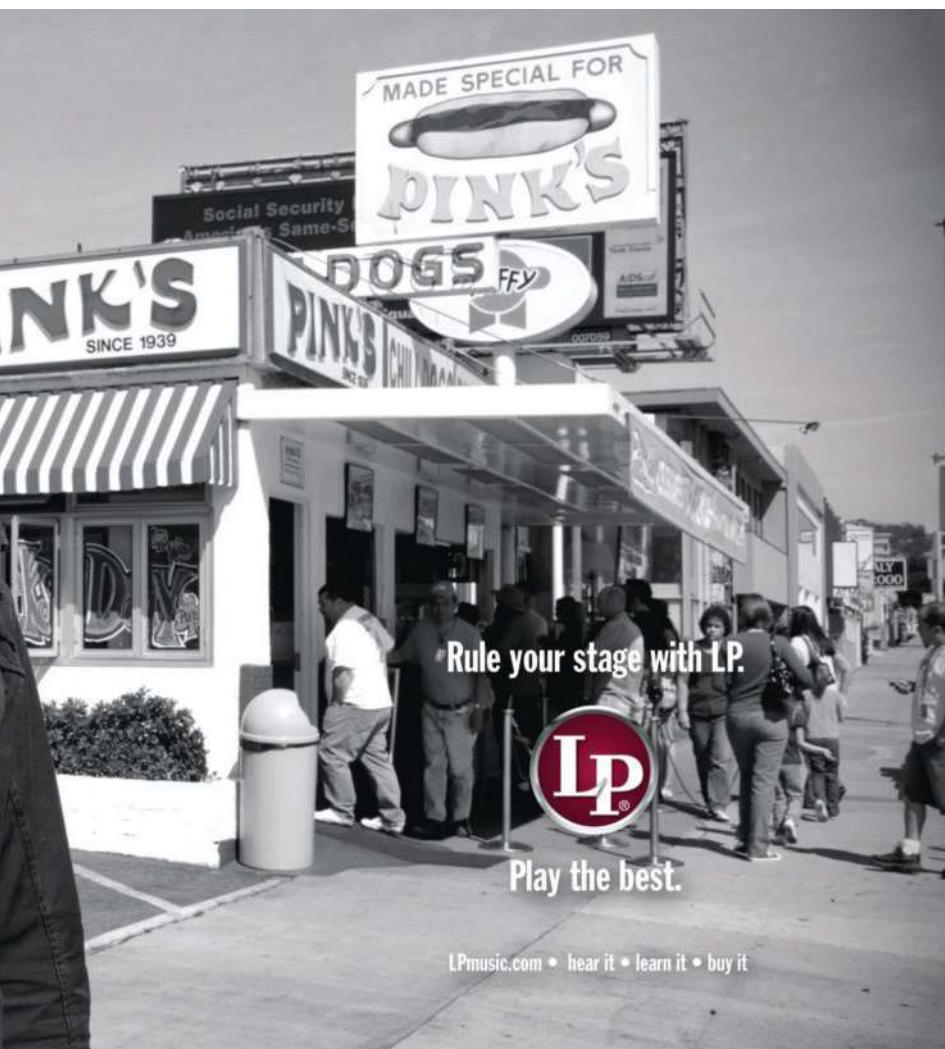
3. Movement. On certain songs, dramatize your movements. For example, if you kick off a song with a flam, raise your arms high over your head and make it look like the most impassioned drum part you've ever performed in your life. I'm not asking you to change your overall technique but rather to create a mixed bag of stage-presence ideas and then pull stuff out when appropriate. Just be sure to use them sparingly, so your moves don't become predictable. The element of surprise can be quite effective.

4. End with a bang. Finish your songs with dramatic flair. If you usually rely on simple cymbal crashes or flams to close out a tune, prep your bandmates that you're going to go for something different. Try long cymbal swells, or play a short solo. The point is to execute something totally unexpected (to the crowd, not to your band).

5. Image. Try changing up what you wear for your performances. A simple black T-shirt always works on stage, but it can be a bit boring if you're trying to boost the visual impact. A slick-looking vest, a collared shirt, or a cool hat can do a lot to bump up your appearance.

There's always the possibility that nothing you do will make your bandleader satisfied with your stage presence. It can be a bummer, but perhaps it's time to move on, which leads to one last option: Don't change anything. I know you want to keep this gig, but at what cost? If you're content with the way you're performing, there are other bands out there that I'm guessing would gladly take you just as you are—no changes required.

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

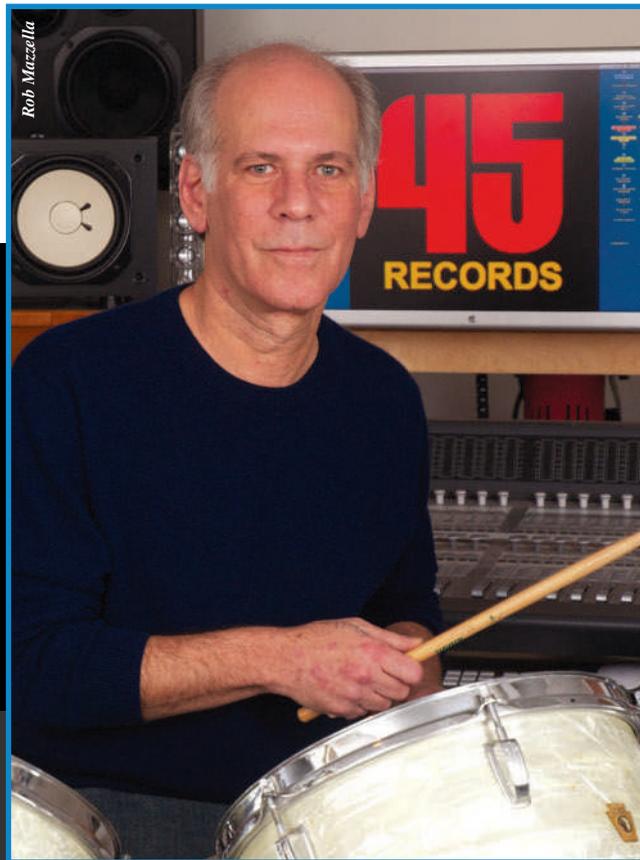


GIMME 10!

PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM
PROS WHO KNOW

JIMMY BRALOWER

Timeless tips from the drummer/programmer who helped usher in entire genres of *drummer-controlled electro hits*, from Hall & Oates and Madonna to Peter Gabriel and Steve Winwood to Britney Spears and R. Kelly.



1 READ THE MANUAL. Not anyone's idea of a good time, but it's important to know your gear before you start working with other people. More good ideas are lost by trying to get inspired moments into equipment you're not familiar with. The idea is to capture the moment, not get bogged down in it.

2 KNOW YOUR LIBRARY. Spend time listening to the sounds in your collection, and know where they're located. It's not about how many sounds you have; it's knowing which ones to use at any given moment and where to find them.

3 PRACTICE. As I see it, the idea of mastering your technique on any instrument is to be able to do anything you hear, feel, read, or are asked to do whenever you want, so that your reactions are directly connected to what's coming out of your instrument. In the case of programming, it's things like knowing how to get your ideas into the machine, making quantizing work for you (or not), understanding how to make things swing, and being able to make your grooves and fills come out of the speakers the way you hear them in your head.

4 LISTEN AND REACT, THEN THINK. If somebody brings you

something to work on, it's important to get up to speed on the effort already put in before you put your own spin on it. Find out as much as you can about what they'd like it to be. It's easier to make something happen spontaneously when you're playing than when you're programming, so don't be afraid to let or make things happen. Analyzing is useful to refine ideas, not to come up with them.

5 KEEP IT SIMPLE. The old axiom "less is more" is an old axiom for a reason. Creating busy grooves is easy—it's just that they don't usually serve songs. What's the *least* number of notes to play to make your groove happen? Find that out, then embellish.

6 DON'T BE AFRAID TO SCREW UP. Every great idea comes in a pile of bad ones. The healthy flow of creativity comes from being fearless. You need to develop your instincts for weeding out the bad ideas as fast as they come in—and for recognizing when you're on to something.

7 SOUNDS SERVE FEEL. Programming beats is the easy part. Making them sound and feel right is the game. A lot of people like to move things off the grid to get "feel." I've found that I can get a laid-back sound by having

a fatter snare sound and not necessarily moving the beat later. Conversely, a higher-pitched snare is going to sound more on top.

8 RACK 'EM AND STACK 'EM. Combining sounds to create new ones has been something I've done ever since I had more than one program or machine to work with. Mixing live and programmed drums can make for some interesting textures. I also like to randomly assign the "wrong" sounds to a groove and see what happens.

9 WHAT WOULDN'T A DRUMMER PLAY? Drummers can be the most dangerous programmers if they overthink what they would've played on their kit. When we visualize things too much, like hi-hat articulations beat by beat, it's trouble. Some things are just easier to physically play in one pass. Don't spend hours thinking about something you normally don't think about.

10 THE KNOB GOES TO THE RIGHT. Know the rules so you can break them. Do whatever you need to do to make it sound the way you want. There is no right and wrong—just results. And have fun. If you're not enjoying what you're doing, you can't expect the listener to do it for you.





KJ SAWKA
(PENDULUM)

DANIEL WILLIAMS
(THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA)

RYAN LEGER
(EVERY TIME I DIE)

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Joel, Cincinnati, OH

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John, Philadelphia, PA

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We tried all the other kits and none looked or sounded half as good as the EPRO. We are thrilled.

Rob, Alexandria, LA

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TAYE

SPOTLIGHT CLASSIC AND SPECIAL EDITION FUSION KITS

by Ben Meyer

Taye has sweetened the pot for budget-minded drummers with a few new additions to the entry-level Spotlight series. It never ceases to amaze me how drastically improved lower-cost drums and hardware have become in the past fifteen years, and this stuff is no exception. I was able to put two Spotlight kits—a standard-size Classic and a compact Special Edition Fusion pack—through their paces in a variety of musical settings, and they came out on top in almost every way.

SHORT IN STATURE, BUT LONG ON CLASS

I unpacked the smaller Special Edition Fusion kit first, and I have to admit that the pieces initially reminded me of the little 4-lug toy drums you often see for sale at pawnshops. This impression lasted only until I set up and tuned the kit and gave the 12" mounted tom a good whack. I couldn't believe how big this drum sounded. I got similarly pleasing results from the other drums in the set, and I found myself not wanting to stop playing them.

I was also skeptical at first of the smooth white Dynatone heads that come stock with Spotlight drums. But they proved to complement the sound of the drums' all-poplar shells quite well. The 18" bass drum came fitted with pre-muffled heads and yielded a surprisingly warm and full tone when heard out in front of the kit, though I couldn't hear those qualities so well while playing it.

The 5x13 Special Edition snare drum was plenty sensitive and gave a nice rimshot crack when tuned to a medium

tension. It also produced usable rimclick sounds. The shallow 10" and 12" toms gave off full tones and sounded more like full-size 10" and 14" toms than their diminutive dimensions would lead you to expect. I did have some trouble getting the 4-lug 8" tom to yield a useful sound, though it did blend well with the other drums once I got it dialed in. All in all, I would be comfortable using these drums in any low- to mid-volume application or for louder jobs where the kit is miked.

The Spotlight Special Edition Fusion kit would be a great choice for drummers looking for portability at a lower price point than Taye's higher-end compact GoKit, without losing much in terms of features and sound. The company also offers a three-piece bag set that fits all of the drums and hardware.

THE CLASSIC FIVE-PIECE

Though I'm generally not fond of "standard" drum sizes, due to their inherent positioning and tuning restrictions, I was impressed with the Spotlight Classic kit's range of tuning flexibility, as well as with some of its design features. I was able to hear these drums played by a friend during a church gig where I was playing bass, and both of us were surprised by how good they sounded, especially considering their ultra-low street price. I really liked the 14x22 bass drum, and the 15x16 floor tom sounded great when tuned low and hit hard. The bass drum had a warm, round sound, even with the stock heads and nothing inside the drum. It reminded me very much of an early-'70s Rogers drum I have in the same size.

The smaller Spotlight Classic toms and the snare drum yielded full, resonant tones that sounded much more "expensive" than I expected. I did need to use Moongels to tame some of the ring. But in my opinion that's a good problem to have.

NOT SO HEAVY METAL HARDWARE

We received Taye's 4000 and 5000 series hardware packages, which are on the more affordable end of the company's options. Each package included a basket-style snare stand, a straight cymbal stand, a boom cymbal stand, a hi-hat stand, and

Spotlight Classic



FAT MAN AND LITTLE BOY

We were sent two kits for this review. **The Spotlight Classic (\$649.99 for a five-piece shell set, \$999.99 with hardware) features standard drum sizes**, including a 14x22 bass drum, a 5 1/2x14 matching snare, 9x12 and 10x13 mounted toms, and a 15x16 floor tom. **The Spotlight Special Edition Fusion Pack (\$649.99 for a five-piece shell set, \$949.99 with hardware) includes a 7x18 bass drum, a 5x13 snare, 5 1/2x8 and 6x10 mounted toms, and a 6 1/2x12 mounted "floor" tom**, and it follows the successful design philosophy of Taye's higher-end GoKit: small, lightweight drums that set up easily, hold steady, and don't sound small at all.

a bass drum pedal.

The 4000 series stands are single braced and very light, while the 5000 series is double braced and of medium weight. All of the stands were functional and solid when holding the Spotlight mounted toms and lighter, smaller cymbals. (Larger, heavier cymbals could cause them to sway or tilt if the tripod is not positioned properly.)

The only drawback I found in the otherwise solid hardware on these kits was that the direct-mount brackets included for the toms noticeably affected the resonance of the drums. The toms would sing when I held them by their mounts with one hand and played them with the other. But they would deaden somewhat when I attached them to the L-arms of the bass drum tom mount. This is not an uncommon issue for toms without suspension mounts, and Taye did try to temper this effect by including thick grommets to isolate each lug and bracket from the shell. But the sound was affected nonetheless.

On the brighter side, the company includes several noteworthy hardware features on these kits that should be pointed out. Simple and smooth snare strainers, a slotted bottom nut on the hi-hat clutch, easily positioned L-arm tom

mounts, simple but stable side-mounting bass drum spurs, innovative two-piece bass drum claws, and adjustable bass drum beaters top the list of player-friendly details that add even more value to these already thoughtful setups.

FINISHING TOUCHES

The finishes on the Spotlight kits that we reviewed are something you'll either love or hate. The "graphic blue" wrap of the Spotlight Classic is subdued, and I found that it ended up looking like a basic dark blue from the audience's perspective. The "graphic red" wrap on the Spotlight Special Edition, on the other hand, really stood out from the stage. Both wraps feature pearl-type patterns, similar to those used on classic drums of the 1960s, though with a modern twist. Spotlight kits are also available in a more universal black wrap that would fit any situation.

tayedrums.com



TRX LTD SERIES HI-HATS AND CRASH-RIDES

MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

by Billy Brennan

The TRX Cymbal Company's LTD ("limited") series was originally introduced in 2008 and features a full line of crash-ride cymbals ranging from 18" to 23", as well as 14" and 15" hi-hats. Company president David Levine says, "The LTD series was developed when we started noticing that many contemporary rock drummers were no longer using their ride cymbals for riding in the traditional sense, but were using them as big crash cymbals to create a steady pulse. Since ride cymbals are generally too heavy and too flat to serve this purpose properly, we adapted the old-school concept of the combination crash-ride cymbal that had been used by jazz drummers."

The LTD series was initially limited to 18" and 20" crash-rides and 14" hi-hats, but TRX has since expanded the line. We were sent 19", 21", and 23" crash-rides and 15" hi-hats to test.

CRASH-RIDES

The first thing that struck me about these LTD crash-rides was their enormous size. The second thing that struck me, after playing them, was that they were *loud*. While the very name *crash-rides* implies

versatility, TRX's LTD models are clearly geared toward the heavy side of the musical spectrum; these bad boys wouldn't rate so well in an intimate jazz setting. But when played in the appropriate situation, the cymbals lived up to their design.

All three of the LTD crash-rides were very responsive—almost overly so—and had long sustain and dense overtones with plenty of wash and ring. Even with light taps on the bow, they seemed to hint that they were just biding time until their full aggression could be unleashed. When I laid into full-on crash assaults on the polished edges, the cymbals erupted into an ear-splitting din.

My favorite part of these LTDs, however, was the unfinished bells. Their sharp ping contrasted with the blanketing wash of the rest of the cymbal, while having a drier sound than what I get from the lathed bells on other models.

Of the three sizes we tested, the 21" LTD was the most versatile. In a true crash-ride sense, it was comfortable providing thick waves of washy volume, but with enough articulation to allow the attack to cut through the overtones. The 19" was similar, though its smaller size led it to

lean more toward being used as a traditional crash. Its higher-pitched roar seemed to slightly overpower its ride capabilities. The big 23" model was the least versatile of the bunch. It had a deader sound that led to a rumbling wobble when crashed and a chunkier, muffled ride tone on

the bell. The face of the cymbal provided a decent ping for riding but built up a strange humming overtone after a few hits. This unique sound was actually pretty cool, but it probably wouldn't be appreciated in musical situations that don't provide enough volume to drown out the quirky tones. The three LTD crash-rides worked well together, as their combined wash created a wall of sound that could stand up in any arena, while patterns played between the different bells added an extra spice to the set.

HI-HATS

The 15" LTD hi-hats were pretty bestial. Firmly closed, they produced a real meaty chick, and when I relaxed my foot on the pedal a bit, the loosely held hats gave off an aggressive metallic bark, reminiscent of the intro to Rammstein's "Bück Dich," off the *Sehnsucht* album. Held wide open, the cymbals had the robustness necessary to hold their own with their crash-ride brothers, with a volatile hiss that could either grab attention on its own or meld seamlessly into the cacophony of an all-out LTD barrage.

CONCLUSION

TRX's additions to the LTD series provide a decent range of sounds with only a few cymbals, and that's the point. At the same time, these models are likely an acquired taste best suited to heavy hitters. The crash-rides we tested are priced from \$375 to \$525, while the 15" hi-hats list for \$550. trxcymbals.com

A TRIO IN ONE

The LTD series uses three types of finishing to enhance the unique sonic properties of the edge, bell, and face of the cymbal. The edges are heavily polished to produce bright, explosive crashes, while the bells are left in their naturally unpolished condition to increase stick articulation. The remaining portion features a more common lathed and hand-hammered surface, in an effort to provide a balancing middle ground.

BIG BANG

MIC HOLDERS

by Michael Dawson

Big Bang's new Mic Holders are designed to make the process of miking your drums quicker and easier, while also streamlining the look of your kit by eliminating the need for additional tripods or clunky mounts. We were sent a complete set, which consists of two of the super-compact MHTT model for toms or snares (\$17.95), an MHC for congas or bongos (\$18.95), an MHHH gooseneck for the hi-hat (\$28.95), and two MHCYM goose-necks for cymbals or snares (\$32.95). All Mic Holders feature chromed steel parts, which blend well visually with the chrome of most manufacturers' hardware.

FIT AND FORM

The MHTT and MHC Holders attach to one of the tension bolts on a drum, and because of their compact size they can remain attached, even when the drums are packed in cases. The MHHH and MHCYM feature a semi-permanent mounting bracket that attaches to a vertical post of a cymbal or snare stand. The gooseneck portion of the Mic Holder connects to the mounting bracket via a large thumbscrew, and it can be removed completely for easy breakdown.

The top portion of each Mic Holder features a rubber shock mount below a threaded screw that connects with a standard mic clip. This flexible shock mount proved to be very effective in keeping the mics isolated from the rattles and sympathetic vibrations that often occur when a mic is connected directly to a drum or



cymbal stand. Just be aware that if you use a heavy microphone (like a large-diaphragm Shure KSM32), you'll have to make additional adjustments to its angle because the shock mount will bend a bit once the mic is attached. Over time, this extra pressure on the shock mount could cause it to tear. (The rubber gasket can be removed.)

The height of the microphone is adjusted on all of the Mic Holders by raising or lowering a telescoping knurled rod. On the MHTT and MHC, the rod is held in place by tightening a single thumbscrew; the MHHH and MHCYM involve a pair of short drum-key-operated screws, which made height adjustments on these models a bit



HIT THE SPOT

The MHCYM proved to be a great option for snare miking. It attaches to the snare stand rather than to the drum itself, so you don't have to remove the mic if you want to swap drums. With very little adjusting, I found that the MHCYM put the mic in a perfect spot, right above the rim.

trickier to execute but wasn't nearly as involved as adjusting a standard microphone boom stand.

SETUP GIVE AND TAKE

Because of their overall compact size and streamlined design, Mic Holders have a limited range for positioning. The curved rods of the goosenecks on the MHHH and MHCYM are of fixed lengths, so there's not



much option for getting a mic closer to or farther away from the target instrument.

Likewise, the MHC and MHTT have a small 1" margin for horizontal positioning, and their vertical range is more limited than some users might desire. For instance, when using the MHTT with a Shure SM57 to mike up my snare, I couldn't get the microphone into my preferred position, which is about 1" to 1½" directly above the rim at about a 30-degree angle. Instead, I had to settle on a steeper angle (60 degrees), with the mic about 1" in from the rim. I also couldn't use the MHTT with my preferred rack tom mic, a Shure Beta 56A. That mic's built-in stand mount caused the capsule to be too far away from the head to be effective. If you use more compact drum mics, though (like those made by Audix and Audio-Technica), you should be able to find a good position with the MHTT.

On cymbals, the MHCYM's biggest limitation was that there's no way to get the microphone directly above the bell. But I was able to move the mic (a Shure KSM32) far enough in from the edge that it didn't capture the "swooshing" sound you can get when miking a crash too close to the edge. For a basic spaced-pair setup, with one mic placed 1' over the left-side crash and a second mic placed 1' over the right-side crash, the two MHCYMs worked fine, especially in live situations. In the studio, however, I would have liked a bit more flexibility, to better deal with phasing and other anomalies that often arise when you're recording drums.

The MHHH hi-hat Mic Holder has a fixed-shape gooseneck that puts the mic in a perfect spot, about 1½" in from the edge of the cymbal, and it allows for plenty of vertical height adjustment. It took less than a minute to get my hi-hat mic exactly where I like it. Likewise, the MHC worked great for miking congas with minimal fuss.

CONCLUSION

When you're deciding whether or not to pick up some of these Mic Holders, first consider the microphones you're planning to use. Some models will work better than others, while some won't be compatible at all. Then think about when and where you'll be using the Mic Holders. If you do a lot of club gigs, run your own sound, and often have to deal with limited stage space, having an entire set of these on your kit could prove beneficial, even if they don't get your mics *exactly* where you would want them. For home studio owners looking to minimize the number of stands used to mike up the drums, the MHCYM on the snare and MHHH on the hi-hat are clear winners. They're stable, flexible, and super-simple to use.
bigbangdist.com

DRUMTUNA

FLIP DIGITAL TUNING GAUGE

by Ian Carroll

Your tuning skills, or lack thereof, can make or break the sound of any drum, whether cheap or high end. For those of us without a full-time tech, it's nice to know that help with this important task can come from other sources. One of the latest tools, Drumtuna's Flip digital tuning gauge, is a sleek-looking device with a cylindrical metal base attached to a circular display. If you're familiar with the DrumDial or Tama's Tension Watch, the Flip is similar, just with the addition of a digital LCD display—offering the choice of a metric or imperial readout—rather than an analog gauge.

APPLYING THE FLIP

Before you use the Flip, it must first be zeroed out by setting it on a hard, flat surface and pressing the "zero" button, which allocates that tension reading to be the zero value. That way, the Flip's tension readings will be based on a consistent zero point. (Readouts are given as negative numbers.)

To tune a drum, place the Flip on a drumhead, ½" from a tension rod. Note the reading, and then move the gauge to a similar spot near a different lug. The goal is to match the numerical reading displayed on the LCD screen at each tension rod.

In my initial tests, I put a fresh head on my snare drum and tensioned it up in even half turns until it reached a point that was close to my normal tuning. Then I sat the Flip on the head next to one rod and attempted to tighten that rod to one of Drumtuna's suggested values. From there, I tried to replicate this reading on the rest of the rods, starting with the one opposite the one I started with. The process proved to be a bit frustrating, as tightening one rod affected the reading on the remaining rods. I was able to get the drumhead tensioned consistently, but it wasn't as quick and easy as I had hoped.

Abandoning the instructions, I tried tuning a different drum without the help of the Flip. The sound was decent. From there, I gauged the head tension at each rod with the Flip, observed the ballpark area of the readings, and then tuned the rods that deviated from the mean reading of all the rods. Using this method it was quite easy to



get a uniform reading across the entire head, and I noticed a positive difference in the resonance of the drum when I played it again after fine-tuning it with the Flip. Repeating this process on even a tiny 8" tom worked quite well.

THE BIG PICTURE

Once I found tension settings that worked best for my tastes (the suggested settings didn't give me very workable sounds), I found that with the Flip I could get a consistent sound much more quickly than normal, even after swapping out the heads. Overall, the Flip, with its sleek yet simple design, proved to be a great *aid* to tuning a drum. You still need to have basic tuning skills in order to best utilize this device. (It's best to start with a drum that's close to being in tune and then use the Flip to make fine adjustments.) But the strength of the gauge is its portability and reliability, making it ideal for drummers on the go who don't always have time to tune their kit prior to a gig, or for studio players who need to be able to dial in a variety of drum sounds quickly and easily during a recording session. The price of the Flip varies, depending on euro-to-dollar conversion rates.

drumtuna.com

GIG BOX ESSENTIAL

The Flip's LCD display isn't backlit, but it proved to produce a clear reading that was easily visible, even in a dark venue. The gauge also comes with a drum key inside a holder on the back of the device and is packaged in a small soft bag, which makes it easy to carry around to gigs or sessions without worrying too much about damaging it. Also included is a guide to typical tensions for different-size drums. With only three buttons (off/on, zero, and inch/mm), the Flip certainly wins points for being intuitive and functional right out of the box.



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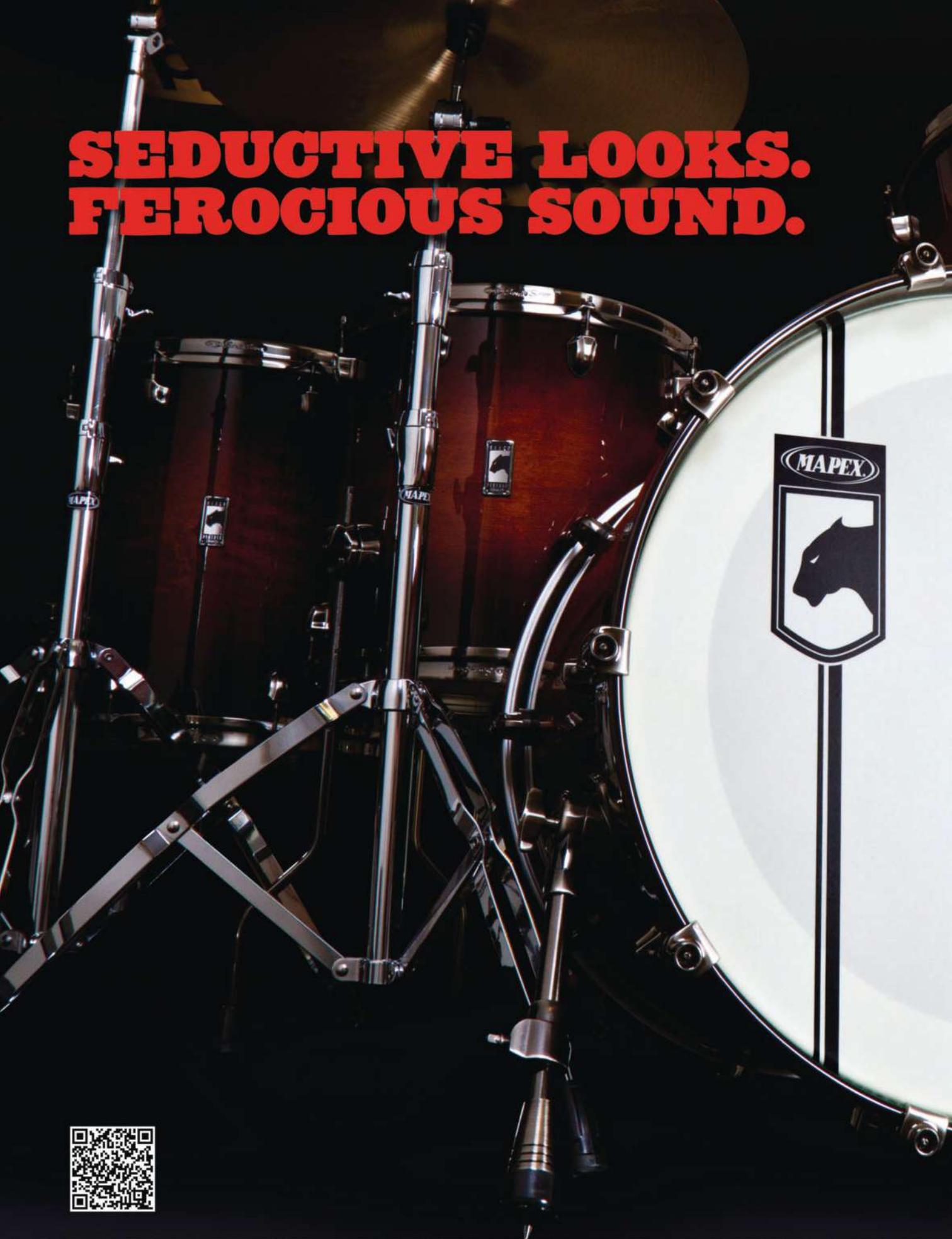
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YAMAHA

DTX950K ELECTRONIC DRUMKIT

by Michael Dawson



Yamaha made some major overhauls to its electronic drums this past year, most notably by replacing the flagship e-kit, the DTXEXTREME III, with the new DTX950K. The core of the DTX950K, the DTX900 sound module, remains intact from the previous version, as do the improved PCY series cymbals. But this new kit features brand-new drum pads, called DTX-PADs, that have a textured-silicone surface that was researched with the help of many Yamaha acoustic drum artists in an effort to provide the most realistic playing experience possible.

RESEARCH FOR REALISM

According to Yamaha electronic drum product specialist Tom Griffin, the objective with the DTX-PAD was “to create a new electronic drum pad that would provide superior feel, playability, and quietness yet allow drummers to express themselves the same way they do on acoustic drums.” To achieve those goals, the company embarked on an extensive research and development period involving many of its top drum artists, including Zach Danziger, Ralph Humphrey, Russ Miller, Gary Novak, Ndugu Chancler, Chaun Horton, and Chris Vrenna.

“Many prototypes were created,” Griffin says, “and part of the testing was simply having different drummers try them out and let us know what they thought. Another part was scientific, measuring bounce and other factors from different pad types as well as from acoustic drums. When we came up with the silicone formula, some drummers were split between liking a tight feel versus a loose feel, so we decided to produce both types of pad. The snare has a tighter feel, and the toms feel a bit looser.”

Yamaha created the different feels of the DTX-PAD by injecting the silicone with tiny air bubbles; depending on how these bubbles are dispersed, the pad has more or less cushion. The playing surface is textured to resemble that of a coated Mylar drumhead, and the casing features shock absorbers that give the pad a floating feeling, similar to what you get from an acoustic drum mounted with a suspension system. The shock absorbers were implemented mainly to reduce crosstalk (sounds triggered by playing other pads), which means the

sensitivity parameter of the pad can be increased for a more dynamic response.

I currently own a Yamaha DTXEXTREME IIS kit, which has the older TP100 series rubber drum pads. Those pads feel okay, but there’s no comparison between them and the new XP silicone models. When you play on rubber pads, you know you’re playing “artificial” drums, and the pads produce a fair amount of stick sound, like what you get from a rubber practice pad. These DTX-PADs are exponentially quieter, with a sturdier presence and a response that feels very close to that of acoustic drums. The difference in firmness between the XP100T toms and the XP120SD snare is minor but noticeable. It’s almost sublimi-

THE NEW EXTREME E-KIT

The DTX950K (\$8,699.99 list, \$5,399 street) is Yamaha’s top-dog electronic drumset. It includes four tom pads (two 10" XP100T rack toms and two 12" XP120T floor toms), a 12" XP120SD snare pad, a 12" KP125W kick, three cymbals (two PCY135 three-zone crashes and one PCY155 three-zone ride), an RHH135 two-zone hi-hat, a full-size Hex rack (the same model used by many Yamaha acoustic drumset artists), an SS662 snare stand, an HS750A hi-hat stand, and the DTX900 sound module, which features 1,115 drum/percussion voices and 211 melodic sounds taken from Yamaha’s revered Motif synthesizers.

nal, but the different feels go a long way in making the DTX950K playing experience as comfortable and familiar as possible.

The KP125W kick pad is a *huge* improvement over my DTX IIS kit's slim KP65. The new model is super-stable, has a soft but solid feel, and responds exactly like an acoustic drum. The three-zone crash and ride cymbal pads also feel pretty close to acoustic cymbals. It was very easy to execute bell/bow patterns on them, and the improved choke function has a less dramatic cutoff that tricked my ears into thinking that my hand was responsible for the rounded decay that occurred as my fingers tightened on the pad.

On my DTX IIS kit, the hi-hat controller involves a stationary cymbal pad with a moving clutch. The RHHH135 on the DTX950K features a moving cymbal and clutch, which make it feel more realistic when you switch from open to closed positions and when you pedal the cymbal with your foot. All of these player-focused modifications added up to a playing experience that required little adjustment in the move from acoustic to electronic drums.

REAL DRUM SAMPLES

The bulk of the drum and cymbal sounds in the DTX900 module are created from multiple samples of Yamaha's high-end acoustic drumkits, including Oak Custom, Birch Custom Absolute, Maple Custom Absolute, Beech Custom Absolute, Recording Custom, Hipgig, and several signature snares. Other manufacturers' drums are included as well, along with a variety of cymbals from Zildjian, Sabian, and Paiste. All of these samples sounded very similar to their sources. As with Yamaha acoustic kits, the kick drums were my personal favorite voices. Several of the preset kits are patterned after classic recorded drum sounds. For example, pre-

set 4 has a gated '80s vibe, a la Phil Collins, and preset 33 is modeled after John Bonham's tones on "Bonzo's Montreux." The module includes a USB flash port, so you can load in your own sounds. Yamaha also currently offers six free downloadable kits on its website. These kits add new samples and require DIMM memory chips (not included) to be installed.

The DTX900 incorporates what the company calls Expanded Articulation, which essentially means that when you play at different dynamic levels, different samples are triggered. And when you play multiple notes at the same dynamic, the module alternates between different samples so that the same sample doesn't play repeatedly. Again, this is a subtle feature, but it does a lot to make the kit sound as close to the real thing as possible. I was particularly impressed with the improved hi-hat sounds in the DTX900, as well as with how well the hi-hat controller reacted to subtle dynamic changes and minor adjustments in pedal tension.

STUDIO AND STUDY

The DTX950K has several features that make it an ideal instrument for the recording or teaching studio. For recording artists, the DTX900 module includes six outputs, which allows you to send individual instruments to separate tracks in a multitrack recorder. It also has MIDI ports for controlling external sound sources, and the USB MIDI out port turns the kit into a high-powered MIDI controller that can play VST software instruments such as BFD2, Superior Drummer 2.0, and Addictive Drums, or, for more experimental options, other non-drum programs. The DTX900 can be used as a remote control to handle start, stop, record, and other functions within Cubase AI audio/MIDI recording software, which is included.

Teachers and students can jam out to eighty-seven internal songs for play-along practice (three demos, forty-four practice songs, and forty pad songs), and each performance can be recorded within the module so you can listen back and evaluate your playing. The Groove Check function is designed to improve timing by displaying how far off your kick, snare, hi-hat, or ride is from the click track, and the Rhythm Gate function lets you know when you've strayed too far from the click, by muting voices that are played out of time. The 1/4" aux in/sampling jack allows you to plug in your iPod or CD player, so you can play along with anything in your music collection.

A HEFTY BUT WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

There's a lot you can do with the DTX950K, including a bunch of things we didn't get into in this review (sampling, effects processing, stacking and alternating sounds, and so on). So even though its price tag may seem well beyond what you'd normally be willing to spend for a drumset, the kit is well worth the investment. You can improve your drumming skills by working with the included practice tools, you can use the set on gigs without feeling as if you're compromising sound quality or playability, and you can explore your creative side by building your own loops and melodic patterns to jam to. Plus, if you're looking to get into the home studio market, you can be up and running in no time by using the DTX950K either to record multiple channels of audio into a multitrack recorder using the included sounds, or to serve as a high-powered MIDI controller to track drums in Cubase using your favorite drum software.

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GET GOOD

by Ken Micallef



Ever since the Moody Blues' Graeme Edge concocted the first electronic drum performance on a "pop" record—"Procession," from 1971's *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*—inventors and musicians alike have searched for the ultimate electronic percussion sound, and not always with an acoustic drumset as their ultimate sonic goal. While most every drummer stakes his or

her first claim on an acoustic kit, there's no denying the mounting encroachment of the electronic interface in all styles of music. Danny Carey, Sean Reinert, Hal Blaine, Bill Bruford, Keith Moon, Nick Mason, Alex Van Halen, Tony Verdera, Bill Rieflin, Akira Jimbo, Mike Portnoy, and many more drummers, both famous and unknown, have pushed electronic drumming to the edge.

Omar Hakim, KJ Sawka, and MD Pro Panelist Will Calhoun are among an ever-widening group of contemporary drummers who are carving their own unique path in electronic music making. Using gear both old and new, challenging other musicians and themselves, this ambitious triumvirate reveals tips, techniques, and perhaps the way forward. At least *their* way forward.

OMAR HAKIM Know Your Weapon

Omar Hakim is a dedicated Roland V-Drums player (including cymbal pads), entirely enamored of the electronic rig's ability to change drum thinking and methodology. A simple Internet search reveals videos of Hakim drawing an incredible array of sounds from his V-Drums, from traversing purely elec-



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Pearl Masterworks drums /// Zildjian cymbals /// Roland TD-20 V-Drums

tronic terrain worthy of Daft Punk to extracting soul-satisfying thuds a la Levon Helm. Throughout, the drummer displays the kind of solo wizardry that makes you forget what kind of surface he's engaging.

"I've been playing the V-Drums since they came out," Hakim says. "I like the tracking and expressiveness of the instrument. They record incredibly well; they really respond. But I don't look to any of these electronic instruments to ever feel like drums, because none of them do. In the past, the ones that got the closest were also the noisiest to play. But I treat it philosophically, as a keyboard player does: When you're playing most synthesizers, they don't feel like an acoustic piano."

Hakim takes advantage of the V-Drums' vast functionality, tweaking the internal drum sounds to create his personalized sets. "Based on something called COSM [Composite Object Sound Modeling], the V-Drums are very different from a sample playback device," he explains. "COSM breaks out each component that makes up, say, a snare drum into a separate electronic object. You have the drumhead, the shell, the snare tensioning, the muting of the drum, and the pitch. Each component is an electronic object that lives in the ROM of the device. Once there's a digital picture of a particular drum, then you can alter the drumhead."

Using Roland's onboard software, Hakim can change the head, the head tension, the mic recording the head (along with

the proximity), the drum's dimensions and material, and many other variables. He can create unheard-of electronic sets recorded in totally bizarre situations, or he can replicate an all-acoustic jazz kit.

"When playing V-Drums in a store [for the first time], you have no idea how deep the thing really goes," Omar says. "It's a drummer's synthesis system. The TD-20 brain houses 600 percussion objects; it also includes an editing platform. Fifty drumsets live in the ROM, with fifty additional user-enabled drumsets. There might be a hundred in the new TD-20X. I've programmed sets that I use on my record. I've tweaked and personalized everything. At a certain point, just like keyboard players, drummers will be able to have a laptop, a Roland system, a sampling system—a hybrid system that does everything in the way a keyboardist has everything on stage."

Hakim has been playing Roland electronic drums since the '90s, but how does a less cash-flush drummer find his place? "I would buy smaller pieces and add a pad to my existing acoustic kit," Omar advises. "Start with the Octapad SPD-30, which gives you percussion and drumset sounds, and add it to your acoustic set. You can get a triggering device MIDI'd to your laptop to fire sounds. There are so many options now, and there's no right or wrong way to use any of this stuff."

"Drummers need to understand what they're trying to accomplish with an electronic kit versus an acoustic kit," he continues. "An electronic kit will never replace an acoustic kit. Get to a place where you're excited about the possibilities of a completely different instrument. One day a kid will freak out the world doing things with electronic drums that we have never thought of."

WILL CALHOUN Drums=Not Drums

"I am not a massive computer freak; I like using analog boxes," Will Calhoun says. "I still like to create my sounds in a tangible way."

Merging acoustic and electronic sounds organically, Calhoun works outside the norm. With bassist Doug Wimbish in Head>>Fake and in solo performance, Will uses electronics as a means to express genre-expanding concepts. He augments



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acoustic drums with both analog and digital gear, but he favors analog pedals for their gritty goodness.

"I'm using stomp and effects boxes to shape the sounds to my liking before I do anything live," Calhoun explains. "I use

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Mapex Saturn drums /// Sabian cymbals /// ddrum 3 and ddrum AT /// Synesthesia Mandala pads /// Korg Wavedrum /// Roland MC-505 Groovebox and SPD-S and SPD-20 pads /// TC Electronic G-System effects/controller /// Crowther Audio Prunes & Custard pedal /// Ableton Live /// Looperlative LP1 stereo looper /// DigiTech JamMan looper/phrase sampler /// Roland drum triggers /// Hart drum triggers /// Pintech cymbals

Ableton Live, but not as much as most. I deal more with analog boxes so I can shape sound in a concrete fashion, then on stage I have more access to knowing how the boxes work. Computers have become more reliable over time. But if a laptop freezes before or during a performance, you're stuck."

Using the Roland SPD-20 and SPD-S, ddrum 3 and ddrum AT, Korg Wavedrum, Synesthesia Mandala pad, DigiTech JamMan, and Boss Loop Station, Calhoun also augments his acoustic rig with whammy, delay, and distortion pedals, tweaking them to handle drum sounds. "This comes from my frustration with the drum market," Will says. "Drummers should have the same access to sounds as guitar players and keyboard players. We should be able to bastardize our drum sounds. I work with classical players and drum 'n' bass guys and incorporate both experiences into my personal concepts."

Calhoun recommends a basic course or research in sound engineering to get your brain up to speed. Educate your mind, and your fingers will follow. "You have to hear the frequency of a source," he says. "You need to know how much room a hi-hat takes up in a sound page. Then take a sound and run an XLR cable from a mic to the effects box. Output that into your speaker, hit the drum, and see what it sounds like. Try it without an acoustic drum. Take a snare sound from a keyboard or a drum machine, and run it through some effects. Start to bastardize the sound. Make it as bad-sounding as possible, then work your way toward something interesting. You don't even have to use any external boxes; any of today's drum machines has built-in processing for you to experiment with on board. My favorite is the Yamaha RM1x.

"Understand the dynamic range between the distorted sound of an electronic/alternative CD and the clean pop digital mix of a Madonna CD," Will continues. "That's how I started—taking a sound and completely bastardizing it. Then add reverb, delay, distortion, flange—anything to make you realize you have a new vocabulary. After you noodle around with a sample, do it with your drumkit. Take a track of you playing drums, and loop it. Run that loop

through those same effects out of whatever you're recording on. Start taking the effects and sounds that are used to affect other types of instruments, and apply them to the drumkit."

So how can the enterprising drummer dip his stick into the electronic waters? "Stop thinking of drums as drums," Calhoun practically demands. "Expand your ears and mind to listen to sound first, not the instruments, tempo, or style—just the sounds you're hearing. Think like a DJ, like an alto saxophonist...think like a producer.

"Step away from the comfortable wood-metal kick-snare sound. Think about creating a new personality. Think about affecting your sound. When you hear your instrument differently, you will play it differently. Educate yourself on how to blend with a keyboard or a turntable. That will help you more than you can imagine.

"If we drummers can become familiar with the digital sonic language," Calhoun concludes, "we'll be able to run a touchdown on every play. When drummers have the proper access to augment our sounds, listeners, fellow musicians, and the industry will benefit."

KJ SAWKA Smashing Electronica

Capturing the drum 'n' bass aesthetic as exemplified in the music of Squarepusher, Amon Tobin, and Plug, KJ Sawka plays some of the rawest drums around. And that's *before* he adds electronics. On acoustic drumset he creates the whirs, delays, effects, and sonic dislocations of electronic music. Adding an arsenal of devices further broadens his



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

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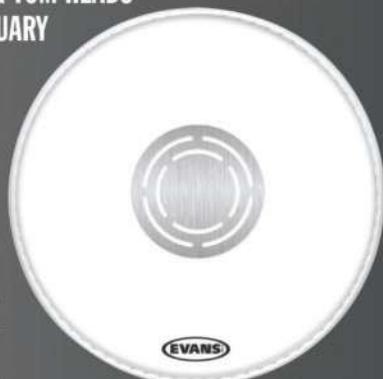


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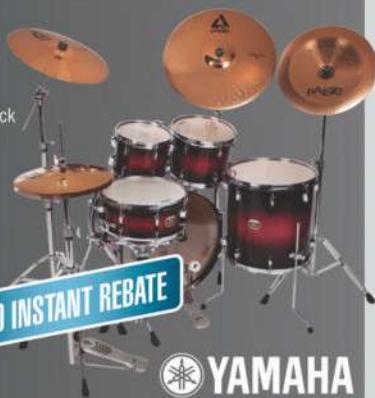
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palette, providing an atmospheric bed for his extremely visceral drumming. “I really try to re-create the drum machine beats of electronic music with an acoustic drumset, simultaneously triggering the actual snare, kick, and hi-hat sounds,” Sawka explains from London. “I try to sound as electronic as possible. I become the machine.”

Employed by Ableton to create the signature Mad Beatz loops and samples package, Sawka sometimes plays his acoustic set with his right hand and manipulates electronics with his left. He kills on acoustic drums, but he’s undoubtedly trigger-happy.

“I make a huge bank of sounds, kicks, and snares,” he explains. “That’s what I’m triggering. Then I mix it up like crazy on the fly. I have the mics on my kick and snare going through my computer. I can reverse-engineer the acoustic sounds live as well. It’s a combination of triggered sounds and beats from my acoustic drumset, which I then put through all kinds of processing.”

How does Sawka go from chopping and loading samples to performance? “First I multitrack my acoustic drums at 80 bpm in five- to ten-minute segments,” he says. “Then I ramp up the bpm, 90 to 110 to 200. So I have an enormous amount of material to chop up in Ableton’s Sampler. I chop all the beats into four-bar segments. I usually record the beats in Pro Tools. Then I take all the files and chop them into Ableton. I’ll listen back and start putting markers at every four bars, finding the best beats. Then I add compression and EQ, getting all the volume levels correct, and I start mixing like an electronic engineer. I bring the kick and snare forward and push the cymbals back, like mixing to a club crowd.”

Side-chain compression is an important element in replicating the brittle, often hallucinogenic atmospheres of contemporary electronic music. “Side-chain compression is where you turn down the threshold and raise the attack time,” Sawka explains. “You put hi-hat or cymbals into the compression chain, so when the kick drum strikes it compresses all the cymbals. So every time the kick drum hits, the cymbals go a little quiet. That makes it sound like the kick drum is being pushed forward, but actually everything else is being pushed underneath it. I do that in Ableton. What’s so great about Ableton is that you can combine effects and create your own compressor sounds. And you can remix a tune in twenty minutes; you can cut and import audio and import any sort of wave form or MP3. It’s very fast.”

In performance, Sawka controls electronics with a push of his finger on a Korg Nano controller or an Akai APC. He can trigger loops, keyboard sequences, drum sounds, even voices and effects.

“The Korg Nano controller is the size of my laptop,” KJ says. “It’s got sliders and buttons and knobs. If I need to change the kick drum sound, I just reach my finger over

and turn the knob to scroll through my stored kick sounds. You can assign anything to the controller. It starts the click, switches keyboard patches—anything.”

Sawka also extends sounds, loops his drumming, even reverses his drumming, all in the moment, all in real time. Is it insane? Yes, it is! “If I want to extend a section using Ableton,” he explains, “I’ll grab loop markers with my knobs on the controller. I’ll insert loop markers on the fly from bar 32 to bar 40. That will create an eight-bar loop. I can do MIDI loops for my kick and snares on the APC40 as well. I have a MIDI loop-enabled button switched on. The green light shows that the loop is playing, while the loops that are ready to record are shown with a red-lighted button. I just hit that red button and it begins recording what I’m playing. I also have MIDI quantize on, so when I hit the red button again it produces a perfect quantized loop. I can tweak it with effects or change the tempo or fade it out with a low-pass filter. It’s endless and insane!

“I approach it like a band or DJ set,” Sawka adds. “I mix the songs together seamlessly. My goal is to smash the crap out of the audience with electronic music.”

Our Contributors



Longtime Living Colour drummer **Will Calhoun** is on a mission to expand the drumming-nation mindset. A Berklee School Of Music graduate, the Grammy-winning drummer/composer has recorded/toured with Jaco Pastorius, Pharoah Sanders, Jack DeJohnette, the Allman Brothers, Wayne Shorter, Run-DMC, and Public Enemy. Calhoun’s solo projects are diverse, from *Housework* and *Drumwave to Head* to *>>Fake*, a duo with bassist Doug Wimbish where sonic exploration is the goal. Calhoun is currently in talks with the National Geographic Channel to bring his genre-busting *Native Lands* project to a wider audience.



Omar Hakim’s consummate skill with funk, jazz, and fusion has made him a star. A graduate of the New York School Of Music And Art, Hakim rose to prominence with the jazz-rock masters Weather Report on the influential albums *Procession*, *Domino Theory*, *Sportin’ Life*, and *This Is This*. He went on to work with Sting, Dire Straits, Miles Davis, Chic, David Bowie, and Madonna. In 2000 Hakim released his second solo CD, *The Groovesmith*, and he’s now working on his third album, *We Are One*. Omar can currently be heard on *The Trio Of Oz* with pianist Rachel Z, and in an adventurous bluegrass trio with Dobro master Jerry Douglas and bassist Viktor Krauss.



Seattle native and current London resident **KJ Sawka** has updated drum ‘n’ bass, breakbeat, trance, and dubstep for twenty-first-century ears. On his releases *Synchronized Decompression*, *Cyclonic Steel*, and *Undefined Connectivity*, as well as his work with the Australian electronic supergroup Pendulum, Sawka consistently surprises, with music that reveals a true renegade soul. Inspired by Amon Tobin, Squarepusher, Dieselboy, and Boards Of Canada, Sawka creates an atmospheric, at times disturbing palette of live drum ‘n’ bass against programmed loops and samples, all while improvising and changing direction at will.





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The Black Eyed Peas' Keith Harris

by Stephen Styles

In today's competitive musical environment, it's imperative to set yourself apart from the crowd with a unique sound and skill set. Keith Harris's highly evolved songwriting, arrangement, sound production, and beat creation abilities make him a perfect fit in the multi-platinum, genre-busting group Black Eyed Peas, a band so far ahead of the pop-music curve that it seems downright incapable of making a wrong move.

BEP have established themselves as one of the most popular groups of the millennium by appealing to a diverse fan base with immediately memorable hooks and a larger-than-life, celebratory live show. Harris's rhythmic command and sonic experimentation complement the visual and vocal prowess of his bandmates at every turn, whether the job at hand is playing a killer hip-hop beat, a four-on-the-floor dance groove, or flashes of chopsy brilliance, all while intelligently and soulfully mixing and matching acoustic and electronic sounds on a massive, ultra-sophisticated hybrid kit. And somehow, despite the Peas' seemingly nonstop workload, Harris has managed to apply his playing, writing, and producing skills—he graduated from Berklee with a degree in production and engineering—to

hit records by a staggering list of other top acts, including Mariah Carey, Chris Brown, Busta Rhymes, Kelis, Mary J. Blige, Ginuwine, Christina Aguilera, John Legend, and Earth, Wind & Fire. His work ethic has been repaid with a global publishing contract, industry awards, and accolades from his peers.

Despite all his achievements, Harris remains grounded. "If none of this ever happened," he insists, "I'd still be playing drums and making music on stage somewhere and at church on Sunday—because first and foremost I love to play. Everything else is secondary. It's not about the money, and it's not about the other rewards."

Harris might not be in it to reap the earthly spoils, but he's surely enjoying a great ride—and preparing for an even bigger step in the journey: Keith and his fiancé, BEP choreographer and dancer Brandee Stephens, were engaged on New Year's Eve 2009, with nuptials scheduled for this spring. In the midst of closing on a new home, traveling the globe with BEP behind the band's latest mega-hit, *The Beginning*, and squeezing recording dates into his hectic schedule, Harris sat down with *Modern Drummer* to talk about his passion for drumming, his approach to production, and his future.



Will Hawkins

MD: First off, congratulations on your Grammy wins for your last album, *The E.N.D.*

Keith: Thank you. I'm excited about the awards and the fact that we were able to perform at the show. The Grammy stage is pretty much the biggest in the music industry, so it was incredible to perform there and to be recognized by all of our peers in the business. Just being nominated is a

Keith: I think like a vocalist when I play. From my training and growing up in church, I always think about what's going on around me. I also think I'm a good guy to play with in a band setting. Instead of thinking drums first, I tend to think of the overall band sound and how I can enhance it without getting in the way.

When I'm playing BEP shows, I have to constantly watch what's going on

not paying attention, I'll miss that moment. He'll be moving, but without those hits on the drums it won't translate to the crowd the same way, and he'll be shooting me that dirty look, like, *Dude, what's up!*

My attention to detail sets me apart too. When you listen to James Brown and all those old-school records, you realize it's not about chopping. It's about making people feel good and



Will Hawkins

dream come true. To actually sit in the audience and hear your work named as the winner...it's huge, and I feel really blessed.

MD: The Black Eyed Peas gig is unique in a number of ways. What traits make you a good fit for the group?

up front. There's no time to be focused on trying to play what I'm feeling; I have to play what's *needed*. For example, when Will.i.am is rapping, he might move his hands in a certain rhythm that he wants to play that matches what he's saying. If I'm

giving the song energy. You can play just 2 and 4 with the right energy and have it rockin'. That's more important to me than how many notes I can hit within one beat.

MD: You've contributed production and writing to records with BEP and

other major artists, which isn't so common for drummers. How did you transition from playing drums to working as a writer and producer?

Keith: It was always one of my goals to be known as a producer in addition to being known as a drummer. In the first five years with BEP, I was able to learn how to make hit records from Will.i.am and the rest of the guys on tour. It started by just being around and hanging out. I made myself available.

One of the things that help us work together so well is that Will can describe pretty much any musical idea and I can usually decipher and execute it quickly. Sometimes what he'll sing will sound a little weird, but that's where all my classical training comes into play. I might take the chords to a song and play them backwards to get the sound we're looking for. People respect the fact that I have the training to get the job done, and they feel comfortable that working with me will give them a good result. When Will needs string or horn arrangements, sometimes he calls me. I'll play the stuff on the keyboard and have someone transcribe it. And being a part of the creative process makes a big difference when we take the songs to the stage.

MD: Speaking of the stage, you've got quite an interesting setup. How has your kit evolved?

Keith: It's funny how this kit came together. My tech and I started building it through trial and error until we came up with what we have now. Because *The E.N.D.* was so dance oriented and all the drum sounds were programmed, I had to take a different approach. For a long time I've been using the ddrum 4 brain, which has some amazing acoustic sounds. For the songs that have electronic sounds, I'd sample them from the record, put them in the brain, and assign them to pads.

On previous tours I had a full acoustic kit, with triggers, pads, and accessories. When we first started preparing to tour for *The E.N.D.*, Will.i.am was like, "I don't want to see any acoustic drums." So it started off all electronics. But as we started adding some of the older songs to the

set, I began to sneak the acoustic drums and cymbals into the kit more and more. It started out with just a snare and two toms. When Will didn't notice or say anything, I told my tech, "Hurry up and let's add a couple more." [laughs] Some of those songs would have been a drag to play on electronic pads, because the feel just isn't the same. It's even better now, because we recently added a small kick drum. My area on stage is really tight, so Tama made me a custom kick drum. It's 12x18 and sounds amazing. I feel like I've got a real drumset now. [laughs]

MD: What differences have you noticed in playing electronic versus acoustic drums?

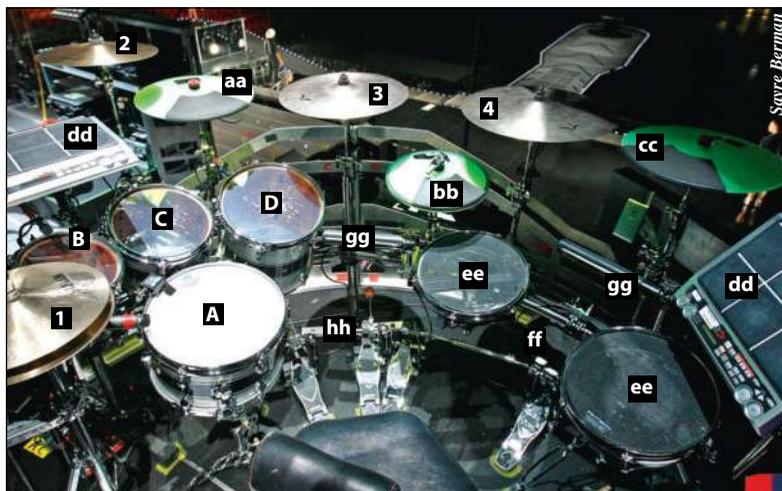
Keith: Dynamics. It's harder to play

dynamics with electronic drums, because every time you hit an electronic drum, it's either loud or soft, but there's no natural change in pitch. When you hit an acoustic drum, it responds to the way you hit it. The harder you hit it, the higher the pitch sounds, and you can feel the drum respond to the way you're playing it. Electronic drums have come a long way, but the feel still doesn't compare.

MD: What kinds of adjustments do you have to make as you switch between the acoustic and electronic drums?

Keith: The biggest thing is just getting accustomed to playing on the different surfaces. A real drumhead has a very different feel from a mesh head.

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Drums: Tama Starclassic Bubinga Elite in "indigo titanium racing stripe" finish

A. 7x13 snare with Pintech Trigger Perfect snare trigger

B. 7x8 tom

C. 7x10 tom

D. 9x12 tom

Not shown: 12x18 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

1. 12" custom hi-hats

2. 12" HHX Legacy splash

3. 16" Vault Artisan crash

4. 18" Vault Artisan crash

Not shown: HHX Legacy crash

Hardware: Tama, including Power Tower rack, Iron Cobra single and double bass drum pedals, Iron Cobra hi-hat stand, and 1st Chair Ergo-Rider throne

Electronics:

aa. 13" Pintech VisuLite cymbal

bb. 13" Pintech VisuLite hi-hats

cc. 16" Pintech VisuLite cymbal

dd. Roland SPD-S

ee. Pintech 12" Concert Cast pad

ff. Pintech 12" Concert Cast kick pad

gg. Pintech DB 12 Dingbat trigger

hh. Pintech K-3 Ergokik trigger

Not shown: ddrum 4 SE module

Mics: Shure Beta 98 (on toms and cymbals), SM57 (two on snare), SM81 (on hi-hats), and SM91 (inside bass drum)

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador snare batter, clear Emperor tom batters and clear Ambassador bottoms, and clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter

Sticks: Pro-Mark 3AL Keith Harris Autograph model

have to hit the head as hard; turn down the threshold and you can just tap it. Once I got the acoustic snare and toms back in the kit, I had to start whaling again like I used to. Another interesting technique challenge came from the fact that I have to stand up to play the Roland SPD pads on a couple of tunes. I have to play bass drum parts with my left hand and hi-hat and snare with my right.

MD: Did it take lots of practice to get all that coordination down comfortably?

Keith: The good thing is that in high school and at Berklee I spent a lot of time working on playing polyrhythms and different coordination exercises. So it was just a matter of getting my body used to doing all that stuff again. It didn't really take long, because my muscle memory was already programmed for it. It was just a matter of dusting it off and using it again.

MD: What kinds of technical challenges have you had with your setup?

Keith: There are little things that pop

up, just as a result of doing a hundred-show tour. A trigger might misfire, or a pad might give out. Things like that just come from normal wear and tear. One funny thing happened when we played the Montreux Jazz Festival. This was early in the tour, before I had any acoustic stuff in the kit. We were on stage and the power died. It wasn't the kit—it was an electrical problem. I was like, "Bet this wouldn't have been a problem if you let me have real drums up here." [laughs]

MD: What's the rehearsal process when the group is getting ready to tour?

Keith: We rehearsed for about two weeks before we started this tour, to work out all the playback stuff and get transitions down. The first few shows were the real rehearsals, because the guys up front don't really come to rehearsal. We just tweaked things from night to night for the first few shows until everything was just right.

MD: How often do you get to stretch out on this current tour?

Keith: I really don't get to stretch much at all now. On earlier tours, we'd be going so hard that by the time I stepped off the stage, my clothes would be *drenched*. But my playing now is much more laid-back because the last two albums are so dance oriented. Most nights I barely even break a sweat. [laughs]

MD: Do you ever miss chopping out on the drums?

Keith: Yes and no. I miss it because it's the ultimate form of expression for us as drummers. It's so much fun to be able to sit on the drums and play everything that comes into your mind and be able to facilitate that. That's the awesome part of playing chops. I look back on my earlier days, and I know that I've proven myself and my ability on the drums. If I need to blaze up, I can blaze up. [laughs] But it's not about "battle drumming" now for me, like it was twenty years ago. The mature drummer in me is cool on that. I can leave it to some of the younger guys and let them inspire me to want to go back and do some of that. I definitely

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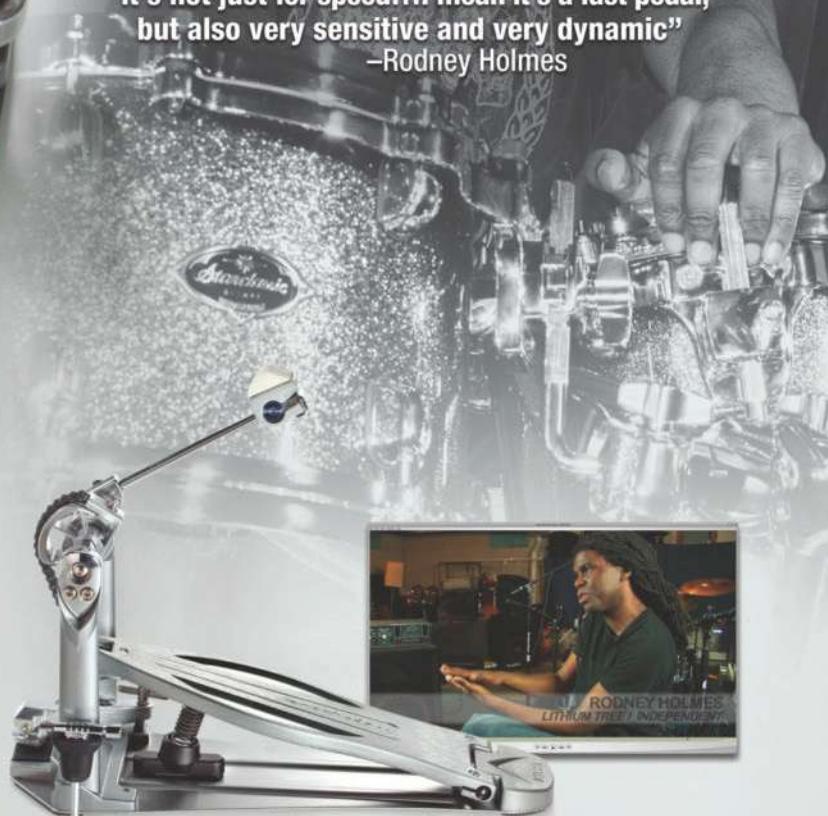
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SCAN FOR INFO

speedcobra

KEITH HARRIS

miss playing the instrument like I used to, but my job these days is first and foremost to make people dance, so that's what I focus on.

MD: Let's talk about your playing experiences before the Black Eyed Peas. How did you build your career from being a gigging drummer to having one of the biggest pop gigs around?

Keith: While I was in Boston, I worked in a cover band called Felix Brown. I was also playing keys at a church. After I moved to New York, I still had both of those gigs while also working as an

engineer at Richard "Younglord" Frierson's studio in Brooklyn. I'd commute to Boston on the weekends, do the Felix Brown hits anywhere we might have been booked in New England, and then head to church for Sunday-morning service. I kept that up for almost three years.

In New York I would get out as much as possible to open-mic events and jam sessions. Through sitting in at a weekly jam session, I ended up being invited to join the house band, which led to meeting Printz Board, the Black

Eyed Peas' musical director. He called me to do a one-off gig at B.B. King's for a group called Star 69, and we stayed in contact. A short time later, Printz called me for the Black Eyed Peas gig.

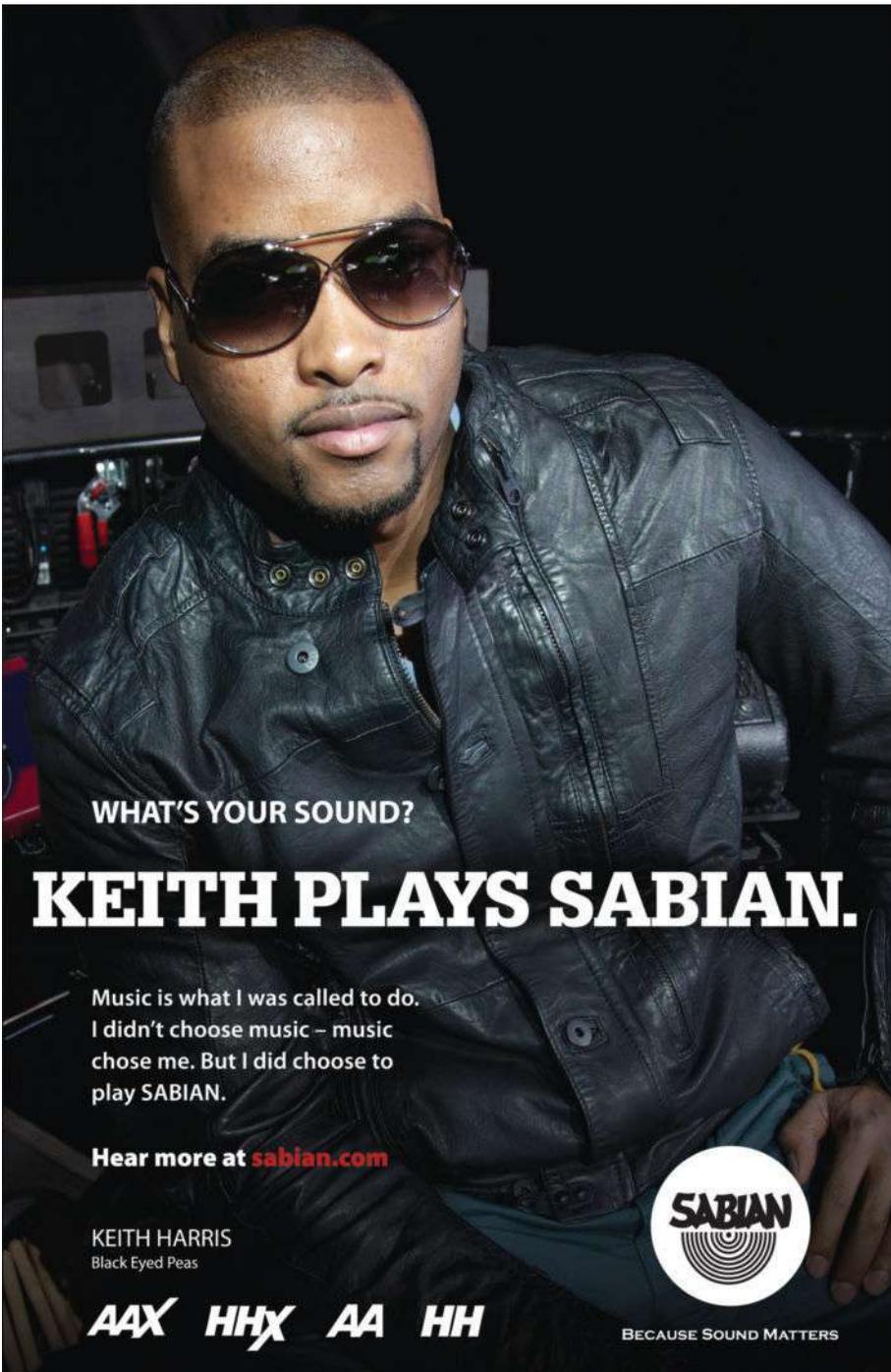
MD: It must have been a grind, going from Brooklyn to Boston every week.

Keith: It definitely was. It got worse because I ended up having to go up on Wednesdays to play for Bible study. But I just did what I had to do. It's like four hours from Brooklyn to Boston, and I did that twice a week for three years and was always on time and didn't call off. I think that's part of the reason why I don't have much patience when people say things like, "It's too far...I can't do it." I can't really relate to that. I think a lot of players are too focused on getting things the easy way, or making music so they can make money. Don't get me wrong, I believe in getting paid. But I honestly don't remember what I was paid for that Star 69 gig. I didn't even ask how much money was being offered. I did the gig because I'm a musician and I'm passionate about my craft. And by doing that gig, I ended up getting this gig with the Peas. I always felt like if I was faithful to my craft and the things I gave my word that I'd do, God would honor that.

A lot of things from that period—driving back and forth on Felix Brown gigs, playing for the church—helped prepare me for this gig. I learned to control my sleep, to function and perform even when I was tired, to deal with being cramped up in small spaces with a group of people, to deal with a lot of different personalities....

MD: What do you think are the most important elements of being a successful drummer?

Keith: You have to be really proficient at your instrument. You have to be able to retain a lot of music and ideas quickly. And you have to be a cool person. I know some killer players whose spirit isn't right. Most band-leaders would rather have a guy that's just decent as a player but has the right attitude than a guy who's a great player but has attitude problems. Even if you have legitimate complaints, try not to show it on the gig. Those kind of things spread like a virus.



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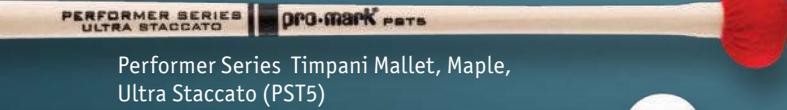
Performer Series Timpani Mallet, Maple, Medium Soft (PST2)



Performer Series Timpani Mallet, Maple,
Medium/General (PST3)



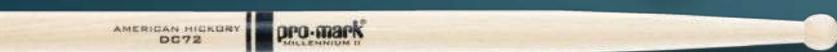
Performer Series Timpani Mallet, Maple,
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Another thing is keeping your appearance together. You have to look the part, which means having a youthful disposition and not being extremely overweight. The music business has become very visual, and that's a part of the job now. It's just the harsh reality.

Drummers need to expand the network of people they know as well. You should be open to getting to know people who know more than you and are better connected or doing bigger things than you are. Don't be intimi-

dated by what someone else is doing. Also, you have to be where the things you want to do are happening. If you want to be a Broadway dancer, you can't live in Ohio. It's okay to start there, but at some point you've got to relocate to New York City. Same thing in the music business.

MD: For drummers who aspire to be session players, do you feel it's better to be a jack of all trades or to focus on having a niche?

Keith: I think it's better to have a

niche. You want to have something in your sound that's unique to you, so when people want that sound, they *have* to come to you to get it. It's important to be very proficient on your instrument and know how to play different styles authentically, because you need to have the facilities to do whatever job you're called for. But depending on the sound that's needed, certain guys with a particular niche will always get called if that's their thing. For example, Questlove is known for having that grooving pocket, so you wouldn't necessarily call him to do a Dennis Chambers type of record. He's not known for getting on the drums to blaze. But when people want that infamous slamming hip-hop groove, they go to him.

MD: With such a hectic touring and producing schedule and all the success you've had, how do you stay centered?

Keith: I'm a big believer in having faith and being true to where I came from. I have so much faith in God and myself, and I think that's what helped me get to where I am. I studied music by going to a performing arts high school and then Berklee, and I worked hard at developing myself and my craft—not for the money, but because I love music. All of the other things, like having a nice house, are secondary to the fact that I love to play drums. Experiencing all of the travel and seeing the world, it humbles me. It keeps me grounded because I know I can't take it for granted. The next guy right down the street could easily come in and take my gig if I'm not on top of what I need to do or I get a big head.

I think back on all the sacrifices my mother and family made to help me pursue my dream. There are *so* many people in my life that contributed to my growth and gave me a boost. I feel like if I'm not successful, I'll be letting them down. All of those things, and constantly thanking God for being able to be here, help me stay centered. I mean, who would have thought when I was in high school that I'd be interviewed for the cover of *Modern Drummer*? It's awesome beyond awesome, and knowing that I can't take it



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KEITH HARRIS

for granted keeps me focused.

My life experience isn't about me. It's about sharing this experience with someone else. I've been all over the world, on and off planes and buses, and we've been kept safe and never had any major incidents or problems. God's been looking out for me, and I thank Him every day.

MD: You're planning to get married. How does your relationship impact your music making? Do you plan to retire from the road?

Keith: It's really cool that my fiancé is a dancer and we work together with BEP, because she understands the industry. And she helps me sometimes creatively. When I'm working on a beat or a new piece of music, if it doesn't make her dance right away, I know it's wack. We actually see each other more when we're out than when we're at home, because I'm always in the studio and she has other projects that she works on when we're not traveling. I definitely want to start a family someday, but I'm cool right now being on

KEITH ON RECORD

AS DRUMMER: **Black Eyed Peas** Monkey Business, The E.N.D. /// **Christina Aguilera** Back To Basics /// **Macy Gray** Big /// **Earth, Wind & Fire** Illumination /// **Ricky Martin** Life

AS PRODUCER: **Black Eyed Peas** The E.N.D. ("Imma Be," "Meet Me Halfway," "Ring-A-Ling") /// **Chrisette Michele** I Am ("Be OK") /// **Jully Black** Revival /// **Michael Jackson** Thriller 25th Anniversary Edition ("The Girl Is Mine," "P.Y.T.") /// **Busta Rhymes** The Big Bang ("I Love My Chick") /// **Fergie** The Dutchess ("All That I Got," "Close To You") /// **Kelis** Kelis Was Here ("Till The Wheels Fall Off") /// **Black Eyed Peas** Monkey Business ("Dum Diddly") /// **Ginuwine** Back II Da Basics ("The Club")

AS WRITER: **Black Eyed Peas** The E.N.D. ("Out Of My Head," "Where Ya Wanna Go"), Monkey Business ("Bend Your Back") /// **Chrisette Michele** I Am ("Let's Rock") /// **Mariah Carey** E=MC² ("Heat") /// **Estelle** Shine ("American Boy") /// **Chris Brown** Exclusive ("Picture Perfect") /// **Nicole Scherzinger** Her Name Is Nicole ("Baby Love") /// **Will.i.am** Songs About Girls ("Impatient," "Fly Girl") /// **Kelis** Kelis Was Here ("Weekend") /// **Mary J. Blige** The Breakthrough ("About You") /// **Fergie** Poseidon soundtrack ("Won't Let You Fall")

the road. I think every musician who has a desire to produce wants to eventually come off the road, but I still really enjoy touring.

MD: With everything you've done as a producer and drummer, do you have more dreams for the future?

Keith: Yes, to become the next Quincy Jones! [laughs] I've been with the Black Eyed Peas for seven years, and I love this gig. We're still going strong. I've

had so many great experiences that if I had to hang up my hat right now, I could look back on this time and be good. But I'm looking forward to growing even more. And I definitely look forward to building more of my credits as a producer. My dream now is to continue touring, build on my production and writing work, and get set up to start a family.



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BRENDAN



Shakira's longtime drummer

is the epitome of the super-contemporary musician: He understands all the intricacies of electronic programming, *and* he has the chops and groove to squeeze the most out of it.

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Rahav

As the drummer for the record-breaking Colombian superstar Shakira since the late '90s, Brendan Buckley possesses an intelligence and a massive groove that shine on all manner of sources. When Shakira shakes her booty to some major cumbia throwdown, Buckley backs her with cajon, doumbek, and Argentine bombo legüero. When she's revisiting the Latin rock that made her famous, Buckley goes au naturel, pounding a big, groovy beat on his DW kit. But it's when la señorita demands it all that Buckley truly raises his game. By incorporating Roland V-Drums and Octapad and various triggers and computer brains into his acoustic kit, Buckley can match the power of any programmer or DJ with a flick of the wrist, igniting a variety of sounds, loops, and effects.

Besides appearing on nearly every Shakira album since 1998's *Dónde Están Los Ladrones?*, Buckley has recorded with DMX, Lauryn Hill, Gloria Estefan, and Julio Iglesias Jr., among many others. Truly a twenty-first-century drummer, Brendan successfully blurs the line between electronic and acoustic sounds and feels, mirroring contemporary music's growing connection to all things electro, virtual, and computer controlled. Here, the drummer details the tools and approaches he uses to bring to life the myriad cutting-edge sounds found on some of the most effective pop music of the modern age.

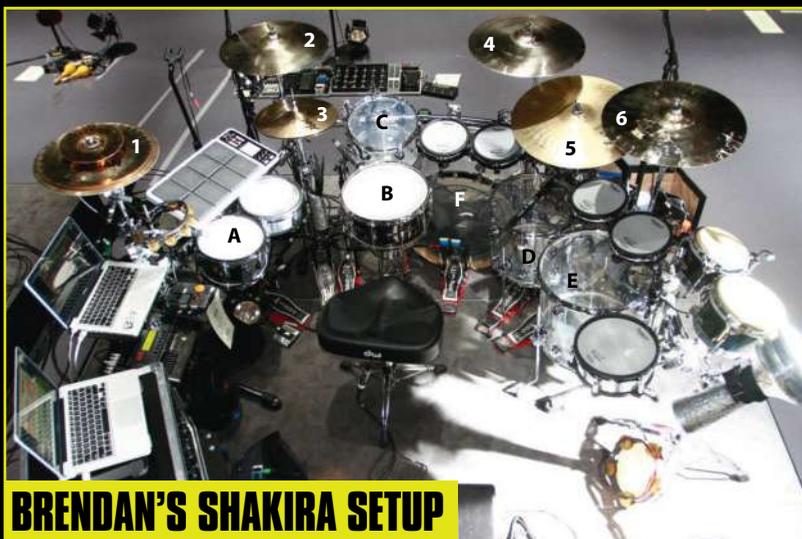
BUCKLEY



MD: Shakira's single "She Wolf" recalls the programmed sounds of Daft Punk or Mouse On Mars. Can you break down the process of sampling the recorded track and applying it to your Roland V-Drums?

Brendan: First, I get the Pro Tools sessions from the recording engineer and isolate all the programmed drum machine parts. With "She Wolf" I started by grabbing the numerous kick drums, sampling them, cutting them up, and naming them: verse bass drum, chorus bass drum.... Then I did the same with the snare drums: pre-chorus snare, bridge snare. I did that with every drum and cymbal so I could keep track of where they go in the song arrangement.

Next, I put them into my software sampler, Battery 3, on my Apple MacBook Pro. When I create kits in my laptop, I like to name them after each song. So for "She Wolf," I sampled each drum part, the kicks, claps, sound effects, and reverse cymbal



BRENDAN'S SHAKIRA SETUP

Drums: DW clear acrylic

A. 6x10 Pacific Blackout snare

B. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Pacific Ace snare

C. 8x12 tom

D. 12x14 floor tom

E. 14x16 floor tom

F. 16x22 bass drum

Hardware: DW Super Rack, 5000 series pedals, and 9000 series stands

Cymbals: Sabian

1. 17" AAX Studio crash, 16" AAX Chinese, and 8" B8 Pro splash (stacked)

2. 18" AA El Sabor crash (brilliant finish)

3. 14" HHX Groove Hats

4. 19" Vault crash (brilliant finish)

5. 21" HHX Raw Bell Dry ride

6. 19" HHX X-Treme crash (brilliant finish)

Buckley often places an 8" HH splash and a 14" El Rayo on his snares for special effects, and he uses a 40" Chinese gong.

Electronics: Roland Octapad SPD-30, TD-20SX V-Drums kit, KD-7 kick trigger, DB-90 metronome, and Edirol R-09 portable digi-

tal recorder; Apple 13" MacBook Pro laptops and Logic Pro 9 software; Native Instruments Battery 3; Digidesign Pro Tools LE 8; Bias Peak LE 6; Furman PL-Plus C power conditioner; MOTU UltraLite-mk3 audio interfaces; Glyph GT 050Q hard drives; Radial SW8 Auto-Switcher; MIDI Solutions channel splitter; Future Sonics in-ear monitors

Sticks: Vic Firth 5AB wood-tip sticks, SGWB Steve Gadd wire brushes, T1 timpani mallets, and TW12 Tala Wands

Percussion: LP Matador bongos, cajon, and mounted brass Cyclops tambourine; Remo 9" doumbek and 9" riq; Argentine bombo legüero

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

Accessories: PureSound snare wires and Speedball beaters

swells, and put them into a one-page drumset on my software sampler and named it "She Wolf Drumset." Then I plugged the laptop into my Roland V-Drums electronic drumset and assigned the sounds to different trigger pads. I put the kick sound on one pedal, the snare on a pad, etc.

From there I started practicing the song with that setup and fine-tuning the dynamics to make sure the levels sounded realistic to my ears. If you're a drummer and you're used to an acoustic kick and snare drum being at a certain volume, you'll want to make the electronic drums sound that way too, so they feel exciting to play live. At that point the band can go from a rock approach to an electronic approach because I have both options available. I have all the sounds pumping out of the PA in the rehearsal room at a high volume, so [the band] doesn't even notice when I'm switching back and forth between acoustic and electronic kits.

MD: In one Shakira video you play an Octapad within your acoustic setup.

RECORDINGS

Volumen Cero I Can See The Brite Spot /// **Fulano De Tal** Individual /// **Michael Miller** I Made You Up /// **Pedestrian** Ghostly Life /// **Beto Cuevas** Miedo Escénico /// **Shakira** Laundry Service, Dónde Están Los Ladrones?, MTV Unplugged, Oral Fixation Tour (DVD), Live And Off The Record (DVD)

FAVORITES

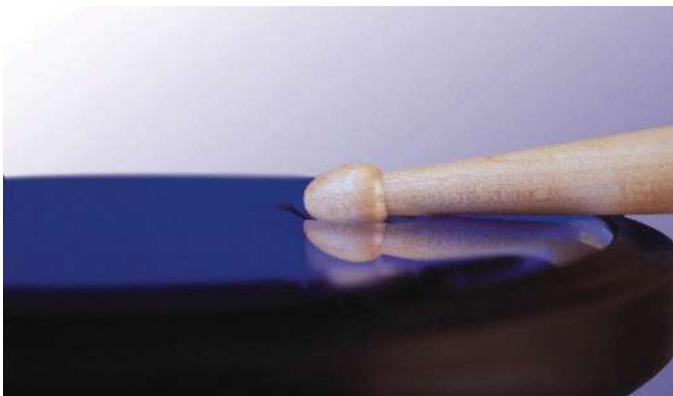
The Cure The Head On The Door (Boris Williams) /// **The Police** Ghost In The Machine (Stewart Copeland) /// **Michael Landau** Live 2000 (Toss Panos) /// **Led Zeppelin** Led Zeppelin II (John Bonham) /// **Pat Metheny** Trio 99-00 (Bill Stewart) /// **Nine Inch Nails** The Fragile (Jerome Dillon, Bill Rieflin) /// **Brian Blade Fellowship** Perceptual (Brian Blade) /// **Tori Amos** Scarlet's Walk (Matt Chamberlain) /// **Chick Corea** Friends (Steve Gadd) /// **Shawn Colvin** A Few Small Repairs (Shawn Pelton)

Brendan: I've integrated small trigger pads throughout my five-piece acoustic drumset. I have two Roland pads next to my rack tom, two above my floor toms, one to the left of my hi-hat. However, there are some songs with multiple snare drum samples, claps, and booms, and if I'm running out of pads I'll use a Roland Octapad just above the mini snare to the left of my hi-hat. That gives me eight more trigger pads within a very small space. If I'm playing a groove and I need to hit a rimclick, a tambourine, a boom, a

slap, and a bunch of different snare samples, they're all there in one spot. The Octapad is a compact way to cover a lot of sounds.

MD: Why do you use V-Drums, as opposed to another e-kit?

Brendan: The Roland KD-140 V-Kick feels great, which is a weird thing to say, but it's true. The thud feels like a real acoustic bass drum. Their electronic hi-hat responds like a real hi-hat, and it gets all those in-between notes. And I really like the libraries inside their sound modules and the



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BRENDAN BUCKLEY

way you can manipulate them. If you select a snare drum, it will ask what type of shell you want, be it wood or metal, what depth, what diameter, what kind of head.... The parameters seem endless.

MD: What software do you use in the MacBook to store and assign samples to the Roland pads?

Brendan: After I get the Pro Tools sessions, I isolate the drum and percussion tracks and import them into Bias Peak, a two-track editing program that allows me to chop up and edit the parts and name them clearly. I put together a folder of all the edited drum sounds and load them into the software sampler, Battery 3. That program has just one page, with a tic-tac-toe design of rectangles. You just drag the drum sounds into the empty boxes. You can click on the screen with your mouse and hear the sounds as if you're playing the rubber pads of a drum machine. Then I plug the laptop into my V-Drums set and assign the individual squares to trigger pads. You just route them.

MD: How do you apply a particular sample to a specific part of the arrangement?

Brendan: When you play the V-Drums, what you're really hearing is all the sounds that are stored in that black box attached to the kit. With my current setup, I'm actually bypassing the library in that box and using my own custom sounds stored in Battery 3 on my laptop.

MD: Is there a virtual mixer in the laptop, or is that where Logic or Pro Tools comes in?

Brendan: The mixer is inside Battery 3. It lets you customize all the sounds. If you think the snare drum is too loud, that's where you would lower the volume or make other adjustments. You can EQ it if there's too much low or high end, or you can add effects, like delays for that reggae rimshot. You can do anything you would do with a regular mixer.

MD: How do you create loops to play live?

Brendan: In the studio, Shakira might want to try a song three different ways—say, an acoustic rock vibe, an electronic programming approach, and unplugged with brushes or bongos. The engineer and I will work up different versions. Maybe I'll record the acoustic drums first, then pull out my laptop, open up Logic Pro, and look for kick samples, snare drums, and percussion sounds that I find interesting. Then I'll program different patterns and add them to the main Pro Tools session. Finally, I'll do a version playing soft brushes and hand percussion. That gives me three different approaches. When Shakira comes back, we play her A, B, and C. I consider it my job to cover all the possibilities regarding drums and percussion.

MD: How do you replicate these loops live?

Brendan: Normally I resample all the sounds I've used, put them into Battery 3, and replay the electronic drum parts. Or, if there are acoustic and electronic drums happening simultaneously, I'll put the loops inside a sequencing program like Digital Performer. I'll make a session, find the correct bpm, line up all the loops, pick a starting point, and push play; the click brings me in, and I start playing

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BRENDAN BUCKLEY

acoustic drums over the loops. As long as I have the click and the loops in my in-ear monitors, I can lock with them.

MD: What do you do if disaster strikes the electronics?

Brendan: My tech and I are pretty nerdy with triple checking, and we have backup plans for everything. On the previous Shakira tour, with an older setup, I remember two shows in a row where the gear quit at the same spot. During the song "La Tortura," everything just froze. Now I basically have two of everything on stage—almost a duplicate setup—and a button that switches between the two setups. If for some reason the A system shuts down, I push a button and it engages the B system. I have a MIDI splitter that comes out of the Octapad and Roland TD-20, which sends a pair of MIDI cables into the MOTU UltraLites, two devices that allow the Roland gear to talk to the two MacBooks.

MD: What's the most difficult electronic

track to play with Shakira?

Brendan: Probably "La Tortura," because of the number of rhythms I have to play. In that song there's so much odd programming that I have to replicate live. The coordination is strange. I had to come up with a way to play where I'm playing the bass drum with my right foot and then playing it with my left hand on a pad, and I'm playing the snare drum with my right hand and then my left hand. That was a challenge, but once I got it, it became fun to play.

Another one is "Intuicion." There are two different bass drum sounds, so my right foot is hitting different pedals on the floor, jumping back and forth. I play these '80s synth tom fills that are far off to my left side, and I switch to the real snare and hi-hats for the choruses. I'm twisting at the waist 180 degrees and doing yoga splits with my legs. [laughs] I tried to simplify it, but that turned out to be the only way to

catch everything.

MD: What advice can you give to drummers just getting started in the world of electronics?

Brendan: If you want to experiment with sounds and triggering, I recommend something affordable, like the Roland SPD-S. It samples and has an internal sound library; it will get you used to the idea of having electronics integrated into your acoustic kit. If you want to get into programming or production, get a laptop, but I don't think you necessarily need that for live performance. You really have to do some serious maintenance to make sure it works properly. So I'd recommend a metronome and a drum machine or a simple sampling device. Roland's HandSonic pad is good too. But you can start with an SPD-S. I still use it when I don't want to bring all my gear. It does so much, and sometimes it's all I need.



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ZACH DANZIGER And MARK GUILIANA

Paul La Raja

Two of the **most knowledgeable and accomplished acoustic drummers around** have immersed themselves in the world of electronics—with revelatory results.

by Michael Dawson

The parallels between the careers of the New York City drummers Zach Danziger and Mark Guiliana are uncanny. Danziger quickly rose to prominence in the mid-'90s, when he was touted as the next big thing after blowing everybody away with his daring Weckl/Vinnie-inspired rhythmic inventions on two hugely influential albums with the modern fusion guitarist Wayne Krantz, *Long To Be Loose* and *2 Drink Minimum*.

About a decade later, Guiliana burst onto the scene as the fresh face in Israeli bassist Avishai Cohen's new band, a drum chair previously owned by modern jazz great Jeff Ballard. Guiliana's recorded output with Cohen—2003's *Lyla*, 2005's *At Home*, 2006's *Continuo*, and 2008's *Gently Disturbed*—showcase not only the drummer's deft improvisational skills in acoustic jazz, but also the ever-expanding aesthetic that would ultimately lead Mark to part ways with Cohen in 2009 so he could pursue other interests that extended beyond the jazz idiom. These new endeavors included gigs with the genre-bending bassist Meshell Ndegeocello, a funky

electro-groove recording with keyboardist Jason Lindner (*Now Vs. Now*), and dates with Guiliana's own improvisational groove project, *Beat Music*.

Danziger took a similar path back when he left Krantz's band and began exploring a new musical genre that was just taking hold in New York City nightclubs in the mid-'90s. "I was in a rut musically," Zach says. "But when my friend [and MD contributor] Ken Micallef gave me a compilation cassette of some drum 'n' bass stuff, I went nuts for it." The drummer eventually put together his own group, *Boomish*, which combined elements of jungle, drum 'n' bass, breakbeat, hip-hop, jazz, and funk with a cheeky sense of humor and a slightly absurd variety-show-style live presentation.

These days Danziger splits his time composing and playing drums for major motion picture soundtracks, like *Alvin And The Chipmunks*, *Ocean's 13*, and *Sex And The City*, while also leaving room for noncommercial, experimental projects such as the collaborative instrumental trio *Bedrock* with keyboardist Uri Caine and bassist Tim Lefebvre. On the group's latest

release, *Plastic Temptation*, Zach pulls double duty: He lays down some inspired live performances on the kit, and he also handled much of the post-production, which involved dropping in layers of synthetic sounds, glitchy loops, and samples. Danziger is currently working on another trio project, *Mister Barrington*, which features Roots bassist Owen Biddle and keyboardist Oli Rockberger.

Over the past couple of years, Danziger and Guiliana have become good friends, often getting together at Danziger's downtown New York studio to shed and share production ideas. They've even played a few gigs together, and Zach is helping to put the finishing touches on Mark's next solo album.

There's a clear mutual respect between the two artists. "When I first started checking out electronic music, it was really intimidating," Guiliana says. "I didn't see a connection between that and actual performing. But when I saw Zach with *Boomish*, that became my bridge to understanding how it could be done."

For Danziger, Guiliana's unique

approach to the drums was equally invigorating. “Several people kept telling me to check Mark out,” he says. “So I went to see him at Rockwood Music Hall, and I was amazed. He played in the way that I like to hear things. If I were to get sick or something and couldn’t make a gig, Mark would be the first guy I would call.”

Because of their shared infatuation with electronic music, we decided to sit down with the two kindred spirits during one of their hangs, to talk about how their experiments with electronica have influenced the way they think about drums and music.

MD: Zach, you’ve explained how checking out drum ‘n’ bass helped bring you out of a musical rut back in the ‘90s. So, Mark, what was it about electronica that drew you in?

Mark: I started playing drums because of MTV and Nirvana, but when I discovered jazz I submerged myself in that. I loved how jazz allowed for so much room to play in the spur of the moment. But when I heard electronica, something about the discipline in that music was very appealing to me. It was almost the antithesis of the freedom in jazz. Now my goal is to bring the discipline of electronic music to every situation I’m in, combined with the improvisational factor. The balance of those two can be very powerful.

MD: When you first got into electronic music, were you interested in learning how to program beats, or was it your goal to replicate it in a live setting?

Zach: It took years before I would let myself even *try* to play this stuff live. To this day, I don’t want that to be my approach. I program stuff because I want it to sound artificial. I want the drums to sound fake, and I want the performance and timing to be unrealistic. Some drummers used jungle and drum ‘n’ bass as an excuse to play fusion licks. But there’s a difference between the guys who have explored this music and understand it and the guys who don’t. Learning to program drums will help you understand the music first.

Mark: When I first saw you play this type of music live, it was deceptively simpler than I thought. You would sit

on a one-bar beat for ten minutes at a time. It’s that commitment to parts that makes the genre unique. It’s more about the consistency of sound and energy than all this drum stuff.

Zach: The stuff I really liked—and thought I could pull off—was known as hard-step drum ‘n’ bass, which always had the kick somewhere around 1 and 3 and the snare on 2 and 4. The snare would be an anvil or something, and the kick would be something ridiculous, but the rhythms weren’t really broken up like they are with Aphex Twin or Squarepusher. That stuff is known as intelligent drum ‘n’ bass. The version that was hitting the dance floors in New York had very straight beats, even though the tempos were at

“There’s a difference between the guys who have explored electronic music and understand it and the guys who don’t. Learning to program drums will help you understand the music first.” —Danziger

160 or 170 bpm. That’s what I enjoyed the most—Ed Rush & Optical, Dillinja, and Adam F. And that’s the stuff I thought I could handle playing live without falling on my face.

MD: How has studying electronica affected your approach to the drumset?

Mark: It helped me to understand the concept of the grid more clearly. It was never my intention to develop a strict quantized feeling in my playing, but if there was a part in a song that could benefit from that type of approach, I was familiar enough with the concept to get close, whether my execution was perfect or not.

MD: How did you figure out how to play the complex beds of rhythm in a drum ‘n’ bass track on the drumset?

Mark: I tried to find the basic underlying groove, where the main kick and snare beats landed. There’s so much information in a Squarepusher tune that it can sound intimidating, but there’s usually something that he’s holding on to that creates a sort of clave that runs throughout. I would play that rhythm along with the record, while taking in all the other information without trying to actually play it.

Zach: One time I was asked to program something for an R&B track that was in

the style of [hip-hop producer] Timbaland. Me and a buddy whipped up something and handed it in with full confidence that we had nailed it. But they didn’t like it at all. To them it was completely wrong. What we didn’t catch from Timbaland’s beats was that, no matter what, there needs to be a snare on 2 and 4. We had programmed this broken-up double-time thing, because that’s what we thought Timbaland’s style was all about, but we totally avoided the backbeat. We didn’t know. I had to go through that process of *thinking* I knew what was going on before I could really figure it out.

There’s a very fine line between authentic and not. It’s not always what or even how you’re playing. So much

of it is the sonics. Many groove legends have made records where your ear interprets it as if it’s not grooving. It could have been something as simple as having too many room mics in the mix, or maybe they were playing on a strange kit that day, but it’s the same basic data. Studying electronic music taught me that you have to think as a producer and not just as a player. Even if you’re playing the right beat, it could sound great or it could sound terrible, all because of these outside factors.

MD: Do you think about sound first, before considering what you’re actually going to play on the drums?

Zach: Always.

Mark: Just the other day we were listening to a track that had a saxophone with way too much reverb on it. There was nothing wrong with what he was playing, but that ‘80s smooth-jazz treatment made the track less enjoyable for me. It was a distraction.

Zach: It can work the other way too. Maybe you’ve been asked to play something that sounds dated, but what you’ve recorded is a little too hip. Throw a little cheesy reverb on it, and all of a sudden it works. [laughs]

Of course, playing the right thing is paramount. But it’s usually the sound

ZACH DANZIGER AND MARK GUILIANA

that keeps drummers, some of whom are really great players, from being 100 percent there.

Mark: Not everyone has access to a bunch of gear to use in different situations, but there's a lot of work you can do with just one instrument. You can make a snare have many different aesthetics, even without changing your tuning. You can place a little cymbal on the drum, or you can cover the head with a towel.

Zach: You can play it with or without a wallet muffling the head. Or you can

tighten or loosen the snare wires. Where you hit on the stick makes a big difference too. Rimshots versus non-rimshots, where you're hitting on the head...

Mark: You can do the same thing with cymbals.

Zach: And once you discover these new sounds, they dictate what you're going to play next. What you're hearing and how the drum feels when you play it causes your brain to make adjustments.

Mark: If you want a very short-sounding backbeat, maybe you'll have to compromise your technique and squeeze the

stick in your hand to create that tighter feeling.

MD: So there's a direct correlation between the technique you choose to use and the sound you want to produce.

Mark: Technique is really important to me, but the sound is even more important. I have my home base, but I'm more than willing to manipulate my technique in order to get a certain sound. For me, the sound defines the technique.

There's always that check in the back of my mind going, *Don't hurt yourself*. But if you really need to make a fist with the stick in your hand so you can hit the ride cymbal a certain way, you have to do it.

Zach: Maybe by doing that you're increasing your chances of developing carpal tunnel syndrome by .4 percent. But all of the drummers I really admire use improper technique once in a while, or even the majority of the time. I don't think Elvin Jones was doing everything correctly, and that's a big part of why we like what he did. Music is about an emotional feeling, so I would sometimes rather my arm be killing me, because that weird, uncomfortable nature in how I'm feeling will translate something to the listener.

Mark: I had a massive realization from talking with [experimental jazz great] Jim Black one day about the Moeller technique. Jim said he didn't know if he really wanted that sound. At the time I had no idea what he was talking about. But what he said stayed with me. I eventually figured out that, yeah, the *way* you play—your technique—creates your sound.

Zach: I want to feel every note, and I want to place every note myself. Sure, I'll use Moeller sometimes inadvertently, but I don't think that's the only way to do it. Sometimes I *want* to hear the struggle that comes from having to do it the hard way. It's a different sound.

Mark: There's a certain advantage to having a bit of ignorance. I'm hyper-aware of my technique, mainly for longevity's sake. But it's those gray areas between the techniques that create uniqueness.

MD: How do you practice these things?

Mark: I try to avoid playing licks at all costs, because when you play a lick,

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you're taking something prepared and inserting it into the present, which pulls you away from the music at the moment. I work on basic, fundamental things, like time, dynamics, and getting around the drums. I don't build phrases on my own and bring them with me to the gig. I'm doing what I can to show up empty so I can truly deal with what's happening in the music.

Zach: But you have to come to the gig with basic vocabulary, so then you can create the sentences in real time.

MD: How do you develop the discretion to know when it's okay to experiment

with your drum sound during the gig?

Mark: A lot of it is context. Is it a gig where you have the freedom to make those kinds of decisions? Assuming it is, making those choices comes down to intention. If I throw a cymbal on a snare, I don't want it to be an accident. Sometimes accidents are cool, like if you miss a cymbal and hit a music stand instead. That can be exciting. But I know what that music stand sounds like without hitting it, because I've done a lot of investigating with sound at home.

I used to take a mental inventory of all the sounds available to me on my kit,

putting them into categories like short and long, so that in the moment I know where to go on the instrument to find the right sounds. It's more about knowing what the music needs and knowing where to go to provide that. But to answer your question, if you're *truly* hearing something, it's always okay to go for it.

Zach: You can only go with your own standard of what you think is appropriate. But you're not going to show up at a McDonald's jingle session, where they might want you to sound like Stewart Copeland, and play totally differently.

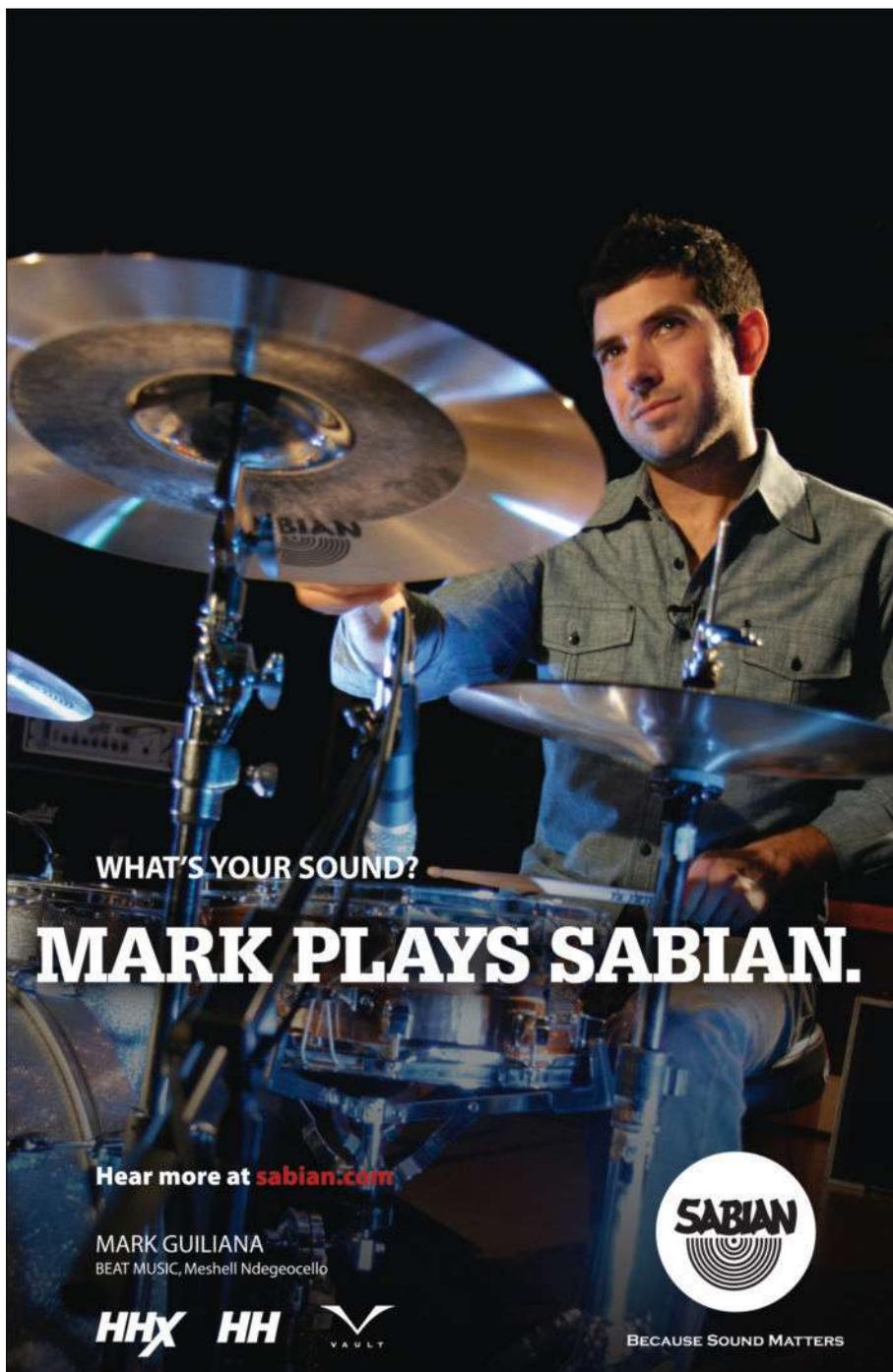
Mark: If I'm going to play my best, I need to be comfortable. So by doing this sort of inventory practice, I feel confident that I know my instrument and the kinds of sounds I'm capable of producing.

Zach: But you also have to deal with the way the drums behave in the room. My studio has such a dead sound that it makes the drums sound slow and tubby. In another room those drums would sound completely different, which would make me play them differently.

A lot of guys ask me how I started playing with that falling-down-the-stairs approach. That started back when I was playing the 55 Bar all the time. That room is brittle sounding to me. The drums don't breathe and they sound staccato, so whenever I played there I would tense up. I would try to go for something and I couldn't make it. So I decided to just play loose and off-kilter so that no one could accuse me of missing it. Let me *really* miss it so that it sounds intentional. That approach became more and more a part of my playing, but it came about because of the sonics of that particular room.

When you find yourself playing in a venue where your kit just doesn't sound like your kit anymore, you can do one of two things. You can impose your will and ignore it, which will most likely end up sounding wrong. Or you can just accept that it's going to be a different kind of evening. It's still going to be good, but you're going to have to make adjustments to your playing, which I think is healthy.

For more on Zach Danziger's latest project, go to misterbarrington.com. For more on Mark Guiliana, go to markguiliana.com.



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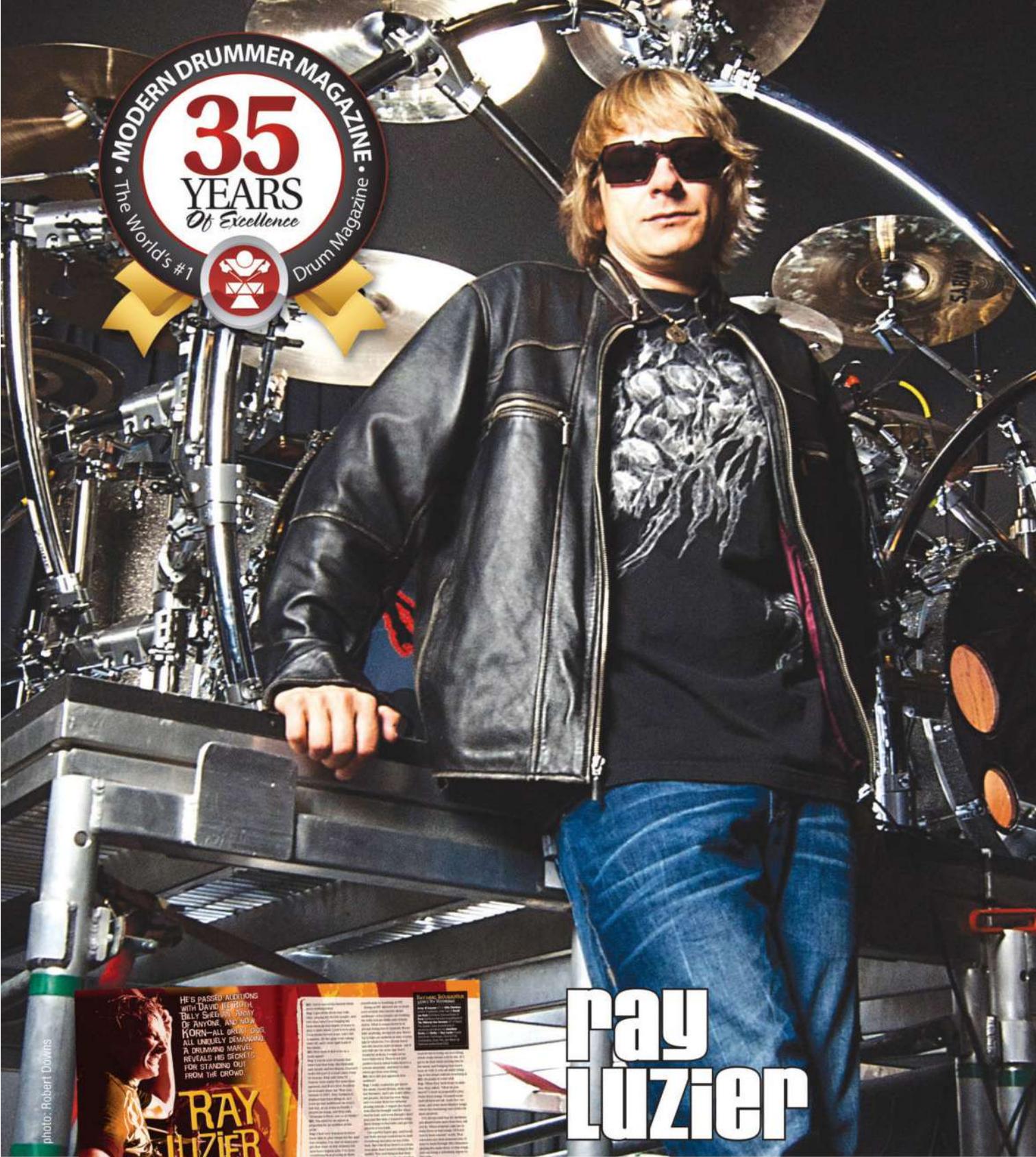
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drummers and see what gear was coming out. These days I’m always on tour, so I love that I can read MD online from anywhere in the world. Keep up the great work. Here’s to another 35 years!”

—Ray Luzier (Korn)

MAKING DRUM LOOPS

An Insider's Perspective by Vinnie Zummo

Whenever I'm asked how I got started in creating loop and sample projects, I'm tempted to spin a story of how inspiration struck on one momentous day. But the truth is a bit less exciting. The indie company that had released my first CD of guitar loops, *Giving Up Da' Funk*, had folded, and I was looking to rerelease the disc. Zero-G was interested, but they preferred that I do a new project from scratch. They asked if I had experience creating drum loops. It was then that I decided I would do a huge drum loop and sample library.

After I hung up the phone, I realized I had no idea how to make a drum loop. But I've played drums as long as I've played guitar, and I've always liked to experiment with sound. So I figured I could come up with *something*. I bought a lot of hip-hop CDs and dove deep into the music. Equipment-wise, I had an MPC60, a cheap sampler, and a few



Tips And Tricks: 1. Record a second bass drum placed in front of your main kick for extra boom. 2. Run your loops through a speaker pointed at a snare for a grittier vibe. 3. Hire an A-list drummer like Shawn Pelton.

synths. With those tools, I created *N.Y.Cutz*.

After that came *N.Y.Cutz 2 Off Da Hook*; *Escape From The Planet Of The Breaks*, featuring Shawn Pelton; *Akoustik Bass Hitz*,

featuring Chip Jackson; *Nu Jointz*; *Kocktail Kollection*; and my latest, *Nu Jointz II Droppin Like Its...* I found I had a knack for putting loops together, and I love the process of creating them, which is why

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I'm writing this article in the first place—to share my personal approach to creating loops in hopes that it will inspire you to try your hand in this ever-growing field.

TECHNIQUES

When I'm creating a sample library, first I like to come up with a concept for the entire collection. Once I have a concept, and sometimes even a title, it all starts to unfold. It usually takes me six months to a year to complete a project.

I'll record some of the drum loops from scratch with an acoustic kit, but I also like to chop up samples so I can create my own hybrid sounds to use for new loops. Then there's the tried-and-true hip-hop method of grabbing snares, kicks, and hi-hats from hit recordings and assembling them into a kit in my MPC2000XL.

I have a passion for making things sound lo-fi. I'm fascinated with how you can degrade a sample to varying degrees to help it fit better within a track. For example, on my *Swinging Guitar Sounds Of Young America* album, I did a tribute to Earth, Wind & Fire called "Ewf." The song was coming along nicely, but I just couldn't get the drum track to pop. The timing was cool, but it just didn't groove. For grins, I pulled a loop from a cheap cassette recording I had made of my friend Tony Verrilli playing drums. The tempo of Tony's beat was in the ballpark of the track I was working on, so I cut it into a loop in my MPC and popped it into the background, and the whole song just came to life. It was the groove and sweat of a real drummer that this track needed. If you don't have one already, I recommend getting a handheld cassette recorder and taping yourself every once in a while. You never know when those down-and-dirty beats may come in handy.

TRICKS

I won't give away *all* of my sampling secrets, but here are a few you might find useful when you start making your own beats.

1. If a drum loop isn't hitting hard enough, instead of reaching for a compressor, try aiming a speaker toward a snare drum, and then feed the drum track into the speaker and record the result. This is a variation on an old studio trick traditionally used for getting stronger snare sounds. Engineers often use a high-quality speaker, but I use a tiny one and run the entire drum track through it. I blend in the snare-recorded loop with the original, and *then* I compress both of them. This gives a high-end edge to the groove that you can't get by just using a compressor.

2. I'll sometimes run a drum track through a speaker that's placed inside a tom or a garbage can and record that, or I'll run the drum loop through a speaker into a huge room where I have a couple of mics placed far away. I'll record that, compress it heavily, and mix it in with the original track. I also like to put the speaker inside an acoustic piano with the pedal held down, or on top of an acoustic guitar. Using natural acoustic treatments like these can go a long way toward giving a loop some mojo.

3. I like to walk around New York looking for new sounds to record and chop up. Once I found a metal railing that sounded cool, so I turned on my Zoom recorder and tapped out a funky groove. When I got home and listened back, the background noise was much louder than the groove, so I ran the recording through a compressor. The groove was now up front, but with the background noise pushing through occasionally. I put this on top of a proper drum loop that I had made, and it sounded wicked.

4. You never know what will make a loop pop. For example, I have a collection of cheapo hi-hats I've picked up at garage sales. They make for unique textures in a groove and can make a loop sound old school.

When New York session drummer Shawn Pelton and I did the tracking for *Escape From The Planet Of The Breaks*, in addition to bringing his sledgehammer money grooves (we did one eleven-hour session that consisted of all first takes!), Shawn experimented freely with the drum sounds. To get some more boom, he put a huge bass drum in front of the one he was playing. On one track I had two guys stand in the room a distance away from the drums and shout "Hey!" on the backbeats. That created a cool overtone on the snare that we wouldn't have gotten from an overdub. For a psychedelic track, we recorded to 2" tape, and I had Shawn overdub a ride cymbal. While he played, I did the old Beatles flange trick by pressing my thumb on the tape reel. That made a great sound, and we blended it with a second cymbal track that I recorded through a Leslie.

The beautiful thing about creating loops is that the sky is the limit. There are no rules, and anything goes.



Vinnie Zummo, a New York City session player, solo artist, TV and film composer, and record producer, is the former guitarist for singer-songwriter Joe Jackson. For more on his sample projects, visit vinniezummo.com.

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Part 10: Double Paradiddle Accent Shifter

by Bill Bachman



The standard double paradiddle has only one accent, on the first beat. We're going to create some musically applicable variations by adding more accents in various places. Not every accent combination will be represented in this article. The ones I've included were chosen because they will quickly manifest themselves in your playing around the drumkit, plus they make for a rich study in accent/tap control.

To play double paradiddles, or any other rudiment or pattern containing accents and taps, you'll need to use the four basic strokes: full, down, up, and tap. First, let's define these strokes. The full stroke is a high stroke that ends high by allowing the stick to rebound back up freely. (Full strokes are also often referred to as free strokes.) The downstroke is a high stroke that ends low. The upstroke is a low stroke that ends high. And the tap stroke is a low stroke that stays low. Tap strokes should be played as low free strokes with a relaxed flow and without squeezing the stick against the palm.

A downstroke or an upstroke should be used when there's a need to play the following stroke at a new stick height. When there's no change in stick height for the following note, a free stroke should be played, at either a full-stroke or a tap-stroke stick height. Your goal should be to play free strokes as often as possible, in order to play as loosely as you can. You should play downstrokes

only when absolutely necessary.

Here's another way of looking at it: Every stroke within an accent/tap pattern will be played smoothly and relaxed, without squeezing the butt end of the stick against the palm. The exception is downstrokes, where we very briefly squeeze the stick's butt end against the palm in order to stop the stick at a lower height. The key is to achieve absolute separation between the downstroke and the following tap by squeezing the stick against the palm and then releasing it quickly. Aside from the downstroke, every other stroke should remain relaxed and flowing, so that the stick resonates within a loose hand.

Let's get started with the standard double paradiddle. We want to make sure that these are played with clear accents on the first beat; otherwise they will have a monotone sound. If the double paradiddles sound dynamically expressive when played on a single drum, then adding the different colors of the drumset will be that much more exciting. The six strokes played in the double paradiddle are down, tap, tap, up, tap, tap, with the last two taps comprising the diddle. Be sure that every stroke other than the initial downstroke is played with relaxed hands and that the sticks flow freely.

Here are three exercises to help you develop the standard double paradiddle.

1

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

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

2

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

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

3

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

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

Now that we've covered the standard double paradiddle, let's check out some double paradiddle accent variations. (Note that over each beat the stroke type is defined, with an F for full stroke, a D for downstroke, a T for tap stroke, or a U for upstroke.) Play the variations very slowly

at first, making sure that each stroke type is played accurately. Check that every full stroke rebounds freely, that every downstroke stops with the stick clearly pointing down toward the drum, and that the taps and upstrokes are played with a relaxed flow within a loose hand.

check pattern

4

D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T D D T U T U D D T U T U D D T U T U D D T U T U
> 6 > 6

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

check:

D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T F T D U T T F T D U T T F T D U T T F T D U T T
> 6 > 6

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

check:

D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T D U T F T T D U T F T T D U T F T T D U T F T T
> 6 > 6

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

check:

D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T T U T D T T T U T D T T T U T D T T T U T D T T T U T D T T
> 6 > 6

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

check:

D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T D T T U T T U T D T T T U T D T T T U T D T T T U T D T T T U T D T T
> 6 > 6

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



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Playing With Drum Loops

Choosing Tones And Tunings

by Donny Gruendler



Many drummers are trained to have metronomic time, solid technique and reading skills, and stylistic diversity. Some of these players, however, overlook two very important concepts: tone and tuning. In today's musical climate, which often involves playing along with prerecorded loops and sequences, it's just as important for drummers to have a good sound and strong tuning skills so they can blend into the mix of the song. A lack of a cohesive sound can cancel out good time and solid technique by giving the impression that you're not quite fitting in.

This article is designed to help you develop your sound by choosing the proper tones and tunings to allow you to blend with a loop. To illustrate these concepts, I'd like to share a personal story, followed by a few tips I've learned over the years.

A LEARNING SESSION

I was on a jingle date a few years ago where I was playing along with a loop rather than a click track. I felt as if my playing was grooving and lining up with this particular loop—until the producer asked, “Can we try it again? I think you can get a little more dialed in with the track on the next pass.”

What? I thought he was crazy! I was *nailing* this groove. I immediately went into the control room to listen to the playback. As it ran, I found that yes, I was playing with the loop, but it wasn't sounding as perfect as I'd thought. The acoustic drum track was completely within the feel, beat placement, and flavor of the loop, so what was it about the track that still felt odd? As I listened more intently, the problem became very clear. I noticed that my backbeat had a longer duration (snare rattle and over-ringing) than the loop's snare sound. Listen to Example 1 on the Education page at moderndrummer.com to hear some of this initial performance.

Notice how my snare has a wide-open tuning and a long decay time, which doesn't blend well with the short duration of the loop's snare sound. If you were to notate the duration of my snare hits below the duration of the loop snare, it would look like the following:

backbeat loop snare duration:

acoustic snare duration:

After discovering this discrepancy, I ran back into the tracking room and muffled my snare with an O-Ring in order to achieve a short and staccato sound. Now both snares were ringing with an 8th-note duration, so they lined up with one another, like this:

backbeat loop snare duration:

corrected acoustic snare duration:

I then asked the producer for another shot at recording with the loop. I played the same way I had in the previous few takes, but the last one was a keeper. This revised recording is also posted on the website (Example 2). Here's what my beat looks like written in standard notation.

$\text{♩} = 100$

TUNING

So what's to be learned from this story? If the snare present in the loop is dry and short but your snare is wide open, giving it a long decay time, the two voices will not blend well. Consequently, the listener—or producer—will perceive that you're not lining up or grooving with the loop. The groove will sound sloppy, even if you're executing it perfectly. So in addition to focusing on playing the appropriate grooves and fills with the correct feel and using proper beat placement (ahead of, behind, or dead on the pulse), you must also concentrate on how the duration of the voices in your drumset match with the various elements within the loop.

COMPLEMENTARY TONES AND FREQUENCIES

You don't always need to play the exact same rhythms that are in the loop. Sometimes it will be your job to come up with something complementary. Listen to Loop 1. Instead of concentrating on the drum pattern, focus on the loop's sound and tone.

What frequencies (pitches) are present in the loop? This particular loop is full of high frequencies, but it lacks low end. Thus it's your job to complement the loop with lower voices on the kit. Rather than playing the hi-hat with your

right hand, try playing the floor tom, to fill up the lower register. This will fatten up the loop, helping the mix to sound larger and fuller. Listen to Example 3 to hear how this sounds.

ONE MORE EXAMPLE

Now listen to Loop 2 and figure out what frequencies are present. This time the loop has tons of low end, but it lacks a lot of high frequencies. Therefore it's wise to select higher voices on the kit, such as hi-hat, cymbals, rims, and a tightly tuned snare drum. You'll be complementing the loop and making the entire groove sound gigantic. Listen to Example 4 to hear the beat I came up with for this loop.



Donny Gruendler is a professional drummer, a faculty member at Musicians Institute in Los Angeles, and the creator of *Seeing Sounds* and *Private Lessons* in Hudson Music's Digital Download series. He has worked with such artists as DJ Logic, John Medeski, and Rhett Frazier Inc. You can contact him at donny@donnygruendler.com.





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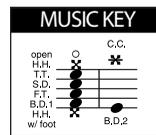


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CHIODOS'S TANNER WAYNE

Illuminaudio by Michael Dawson



MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED



Cameron Smith

Featuring new frontman Brandon Bolmer and powerhouse drummer Tanner Wayne, *Illuminaudio* showcases a more aggressive yet more sophisticated direction for the Michigan-based post-hardcore band Chiodos. Wayne, a San Diego-born drummer who cut his teeth touring with the hardcore groups Underminded and Scary Kids Scaring Kids, reinvigorates Chiodos with pummeling Aaron Gillespie-inspired tom beats, Meshuggah-esque double bass riffs, and a heavy dose of Mars Volta-style rhythmic abandon.

Much of *Illuminaudio* was written prior to Wayne's joining the band, but making the record involved much more than simply copying prearranged parts. "They had written a huge chunk of songs, but we were able to create ten songs on top of what they already had," Tanner says. "The day I flew out to play with them, we started writing immediately."

So was Wayne given free rein to design his own parts for the tracks written after he joined the group? "Sometimes I play with bands and there's *too* much freedom, and I'll end up playing something too crazy," he says. "I like that our guitarist Jason [Hale] is very on point with what he wants, but he isn't a good enough drummer to be able to tell me *exactly* what he wants. So I could spread my wings a bit.

"I've recorded CDs before and been bummed thinking about the other things I could have done," Wayne continues. "For this record I wanted to be as comfortable as possible so I could play as crazy as possible while still being able to hold it together."

Preproduction for *Illuminaudio* was grueling yet very effective for dialing in the parts that would eventually go down on disc. "I'd never done preproduction before, so I wasn't sure what was going to happen," Wayne explains. "We would meet at the studio at eleven in the morning and jam until about midnight. We did that every night for a week. During that time we wrote 'Scaremonger' and

most of 'Caves.' It was a good space to be in because we were writing some of the best stuff for the record. But at the same time, after a week of that, I had to go straight into drum tracking, which made it even more intense."

The songs and arrangements for *Illuminaudio* were sculpted with the help of the famed rock/metal producer Machine (Lamb Of God, Every Time I Die), who put some unexpected demands on the band's new drummer during his three days of recording. "I hit very hard live, so Machine had me play way more reserved in the studio," Wayne says. "But I didn't want to hold back or be distracted too much. So I just calmed down a bit but still went as progressive as I could.

"Machine didn't want the cymbals drowning out anything, so we actually went back and rerecorded every tom hit after I was done tracking drums," Tanner adds. "He had a bunch of pillows set up for me to hit instead of the other drums and cymbals, and there were two toms. I'd never done anything like that, but we did it to get a crisp and clear sound to work with."

To capture a big, bombastic drum tone, Wayne tracked on the same vintage-style Truth setup (14x24 kick, 8x13 rack tom, and 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms) that Aaron Gillespie used to record the last Underoath album and several other projects, plus a heavy bell brass snare and large Sabian crashes ("Nothing was under twenty inches").

Here's a rundown of some of the drumming highlights on *Illuminaudio*.

"CAVES"

After a dramatic build, the album explodes with a massive tribal tom beat. "I came up with that part a couple days before we left for Jersey to record the album," Wayne says. "We were trying to write something heavy, so I started playing this tom beat. Our guitarist came up with a few ideas, but it all came together one day in the studio."

Here's the opening tom pattern. (0:00)

1

$\text{♩} = 165$

This syncopated passage features some tight double kick and hi-hat hits. (1:59)

2

$\text{♩} = 130$

“LOVE IS A CAT FROM HELL”

This track features a lot of pumping double bass, which wasn't something Wayne was accustomed to playing prior to joining Chiodos. “This song was 100 percent done before I joined the band, so I had to play it appropriately while adding my own style,” Tanner says. “I'd never played that much double kick before. But building up that type of endurance is all about practice. It's more about doing it than it is learning *how* to do it.”

Here's the opening tom/double kick pattern (0:03).

3

$\text{♩} = 130$

When the track breaks down into a quasi-Latin feel, Wayne gives the groove a skipping vibe by displacing his hi-hat from the downbeat to the upbeat. (1:44)

4

$\text{♩} = 130$

“MODERN WOLF HAIR”

“This song has my favorite drums on the record, about halfway through,” Tanner says. “I came up with the beat late-night when we were all wired on coffee. Our guitarist followed me exactly, and we were able to really click in.” Here's an excerpt from that middle section, which features shifting snare/cymbal accents and relentless double kick patterns. (2:27)

5

$\text{♩} = 175$

“NOTES IN CONSTELLATIONS”

This mellower track showcases Wayne's ability to spice up more straightforward grooves. The main beat has a cyclical

feel that stems from the juxtaposition of steady offbeat hi-hat hits over a funky kick pattern. (0:07)

6

$\text{♩} = 130$

2nd time only

1st time only

“SCAREMONGER”

“This song has the most freestyle drumming on the album,” Tanner says. “The beginning riff is very Mars Volta-like, and that's one of my favorite bands. I also had to home in on some of Stewart Copeland's hi-hat ideas.”

Here's the choppy riff that kicks in at 0:17.

7

$\text{♩} = 180$

“HIS STORY REPEATS ITSELF”

“This song was mostly written before I joined,” Wayne says. “The intro is very off-timed, so it took a lot of studying for me to figure it out.”

Tanner navigates the intro's sharp guitar stabs with pumping tom fills and snare/cymbal accents. (0:00)

8

$\text{♩} = 145$

“LET US BURN ONE”

“We came up with this song the first day I played with the band,” Wayne recalls. “I remember listening to our demo as we were driving to practice the next day, and everyone was excited about what the future was going to have for us. There's an intense drum part before the breakdown.”

Here's the heavy opening groove, which features some cool open/closed hi-hat figures. (0:06)

9

$\text{♩} = 153$

“HEY ZEUS! THE DUNGEON”

“This song opened a different style of playing for me,” Wayne explains. “Softer and slower playing aren't my strong points, so I liked working out my kinks with this one.”

Here's the polyrhythmic 6/8 groove from the verse. (0:13)

10

$\text{♩} = 73$



DRUMMER2DRUMMER

An Online Network Of Service Providers by Mike Haid

Drum industry vet Spencer Strand has come up with a new way for multitasking players to drum up business—whatever that business happens to be.

When we're in need of a service for our home or office, we can randomly search the Internet or local phone directories hoping to find a friendly, qualified professional. Sometimes we trust recommendations from friends or family members—but personal referrals can lead to disastrous results if the job ends up botched. Spencer Strand, the entrepreneurial drummer behind the highly acclaimed *Turn It Up & Lay It Down* play-along CD series from DrumFun.com, has developed a brainstorm of an idea to help drummers connect on a personal and business level, with a Web-based business he calls Drummer2Drummer. The concept is designed to bring together the drumming community in a way that helps drummers locate, correspond with, and do business with fellow drummers who are also business owners or who work in another career field, such as dentists, doctors, auto mechanics, lawyers, real estate agents, and plumbers.

In building relationships with drum shop owners across the country, Strand discovered that there are thousands of drummers who own private businesses and maintain professional careers outside the world of music. "The D2D concept grew out of my relationship with Long Island Drum Center owner Frank Colonnato," Strand says. "Whenever I needed a plumber or a mechanic, I would call Frank and ask if he could recommend someone. Most of the time he would sug-

gest a drummer that takes lessons, teaches, or hangs out at the shop. Each time I received great service, helped a fellow drummer grow their business, and made a new friend. What I began to find is that this type of drummer-to-drummer referral goes on every day at most drum shops around the country."

Strand has gathered an advisory board made up mostly of drum shop owners from across the nation who have united to help develop Drummer2Drummer.com, which allows drummers to connect on various levels for various reasons, with the common goal of building relationships and drumming up business. It's free to register for an account and to view the site's pages. There's a small annual fee to list your business, for which you'll receive a personal page and a Google map with a business locator on the D2D homepage. This allows interested parties to click on your state and see details of your business, along with a link to your personal D2D page. Other features include a forum, links, classifieds, drumming news, and videos. There's a directory of all business advertisers as well, plus a listing of



Spencer Strand

drum shops across the country.

Strand spent several years doing product development for the percussion accessory manufacturer Rhythm Tech, fine-tuning his business skills. His industry relationships and knowledge of the music business have taken him in many directions. "Everyone has a good idea once in a while," Spencer says. "But not many follow through to develop it. I'm trying to maximize my success with my years of training, experience, and relationships in the drumming industry to make D2D a reality."

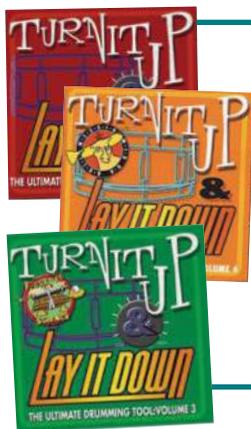
The key to any successful business is building relationships. Strand understands this and is dedicated to making D2D a central hub for drummers to connect and share their skills and their stories. He hopes for the site to become the virtual "drum shop hang" of the future.

If you're a drummer with a business or a professional service and you'd like to join forces with D2D, simply visit Drummer2Drummer.com and get connected with a growing community of fellow players who are expanding their businesses by forming the largest database of drummer-owned companies on the Web.

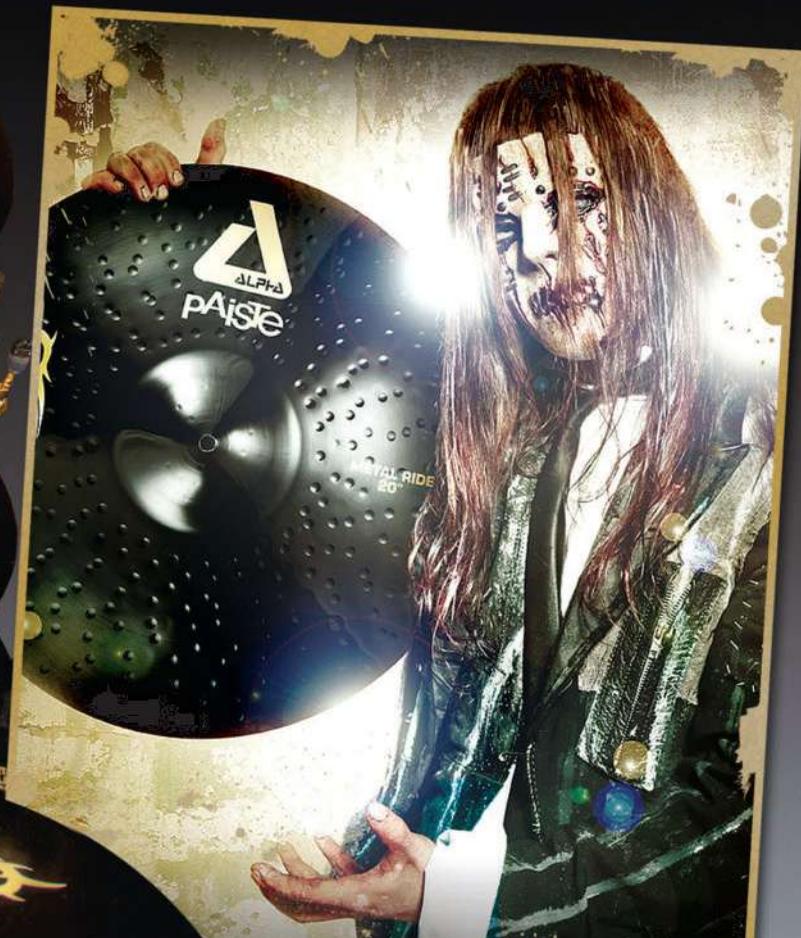


THE BUSINESS OF PRACTICE

Through DrumFun.com, Spencer Strand has released a series of play-along CDs called *Turn It Up & Lay It Down*. The collection covers a number of genres, as well as concepts like odd times and double bass. The most recent volume, *The Test Of Time*, is a four-disc set featuring eighty-five play-along tunes. It helps drummers improve their timekeeping skills via tracks that begin with a full mix of a groove, including the drumbeat, then have the drums drop out, and finally have all the music drop out for a number of bars, challenging drummers to keep the tempo steady until the accompanying instruments come back in on the 1.



WIN A SET OF PAISTE BLACK ALPHA CYMBALS USED AND SIGNED BY JOEY JORDISON



GRAND PRIZE:

**14" Sound Edge hi-hats, 17" Rock crash,
18" Rock crash, 18" Rock China,
and 20" Metal ride.**

(Joey and stands not included.)

**Suggested retail value: \$1,502.
With Joey's stick and ink marks: priceless!**

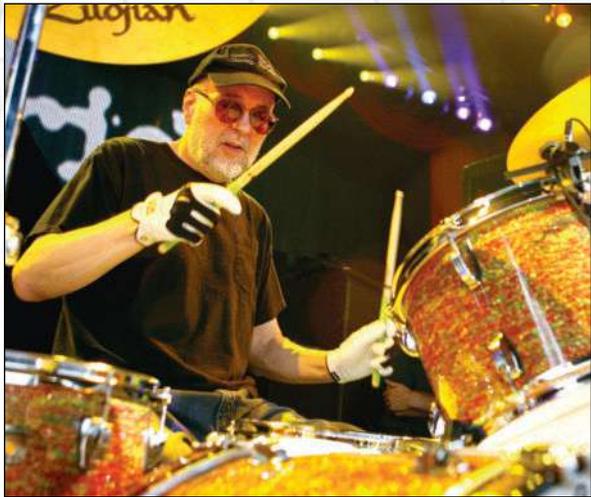
**VISIT MODERNDRUMMER.COM TO ENTER.
WINNERS TO BE CHOSEN AT RANDOM ON FEBRUARY 11, 2011.**

Consumer Disclosure: To enter online, visit www.modrndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Paiste Joey Jordison Contest button (one entry per email address). 2. ODDS OF WINNING DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 3. CONTEST BEGINS DECEMBER 1, 2010, AND ENDS JANUARY 31, 2011. 4. Grand Prize Drawing: Winner will be selected by random drawing on February 11, 2011. Winner will be notified by phone or email on or about February 15, 2011. 5. Employees, and their immediate families, of Modern Drummer, Paiste, and their affiliates are ineligible. 6. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 7. Open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years of age or older. Void in Quebec, Canada; Florida; and where prohibited by law. 8. One prize awarded per household per contest. 9. Grand Prize: One (1) winner will receive a 5-piece set of Joey Jordison autographed Paiste Black Alpha cymbals, including: 20" Metal ride, 18" Rock China, 18" Rock crash, 17" Rock crash, and 14" Sound Edge hi-hats used and autographed by Joey Jordison. Approximate retail value of prize: \$1,500. Approximate retail value of contest: \$1,500. 10. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, 973-239-4140. 11. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Paiste Joey Jordison/Official Rules/Winner's List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

GEARING UP DRUMKIT DETAILS, ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Tinted Windows/Cheap Trick's **BUN E. CARLOS**

Interview and photos by Sayre Berman



Drums: Ludwig Legacy series in "citrus mod broken glass" finish

- A.** 5x14 Bun E. Carlos signature snare
- B.** 9x13 tom
- C.** 16x16 floor tom
- D.** 14x24 bass drum

"I really dig the Legacy 3-ply shells," Carlos says. "The toms sound great tuned high or low. It's one big sweet spot! The two toms and the snare are tuned in fifths, from the floor tom up.

"I love my 8-lug Bun E. model snare. I'm currently using drum number 36. I have number 27 for a spare. I put on PureSound twenty-four-strand brass wires for a little extra wetness.

"I own sixty-plus Ludwig sets and at least 150 snare drums. These are my favorites, hands down."

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1.** 14" New Beat hi-hats (with four sizzles in bottom cymbal)
- 2.** 20" A Medium Thin crash
- 3.** 18" A Medium Thin crash
- 4.** 20" A Medium crash

"These A Zildjians always deliver. Sometimes I put up my K Pre-Aged Dry ride in place of the Medium crash."

Hardware: Ludwig stands, Trick Pro 1-V bass drum pedal

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador snare and tom batters, white medium Ludwig tom bottoms

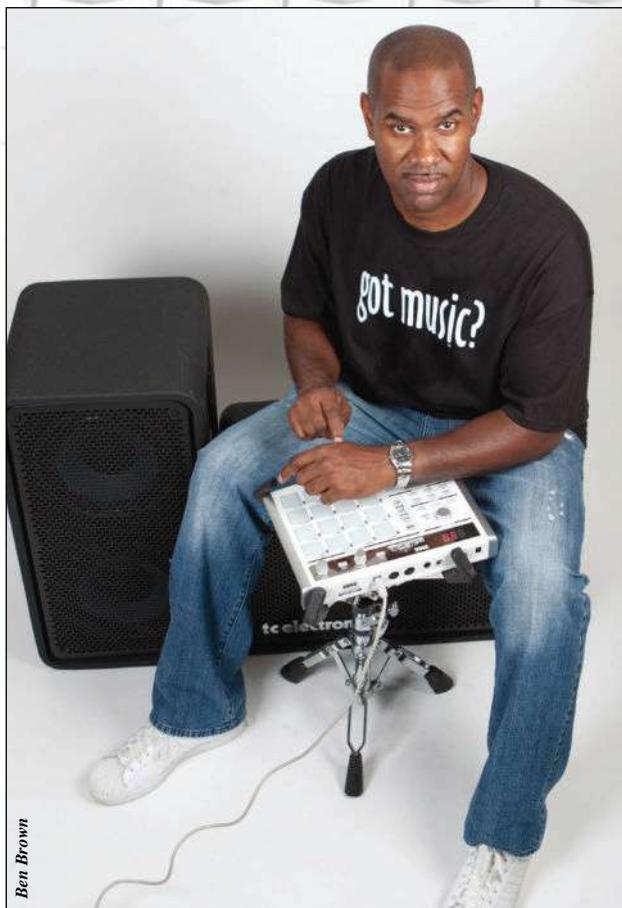
Sticks: Pro-Mark Bun E. Carlos model with Stick Rapp grip tape

"The tape keeps the sticks in my hands. Pro-Mark is selling it—highly recommended by me!"



Arrested Development's DAVID "FINGERS" HAYNES

Interview by Michael Dawson



DIGITAL SETUP

Controller: Korg NanoPad and PadKontrol, Yamaha DTXPRESS II
Speakers: TC Electronic RH450, RS210, and RS212; Mogami cables
Computer: Apple MacBook Pro
Software: Ableton Live, Toontrack Superior Drummer 2.0 and EZdrummer software
Hard drive: Glyph PortaGig (2)
Audio interface: PreSonus FireStudio Mobile

"One of my brothers played drums, and that was what made me interested in playing," says the Atlanta-based drummer and drum machine master. "But he didn't let me play his drums. In '86, my oldest brother gave me a drum machine, a Yamaha RX11. I eventually traded it for an Alesis HR-16 drum machine, and I played that for years before I inspired one of Korg's engineers to develop the NanoPad. Now I use that or the PadKontrol, which has a sixteen-pad layout like an Akai MPC.

"I started off using the drum machine conventionally, programming it and all that. But I got frustrated because I wanted to *play*, so I worked up techniques so that I could play it like a drumset.

"I used the HR-16's built-in sounds for a long time, and in 2002 I started triggering a Yamaha DTXXTREME II sound module. Then in '06 I got a MacBook Pro laptop and started using Toontrack drum software. I love their sounds.

"This setup allows me to do a lot of session work over the Internet. Guys send me MP3s, and I'll record drum tracks for them. They like to use me because they don't have to worry about paying to rent a great drum room for tracking. Plus they can change the sounds if they have the same software. I give them MIDI and audio files, so they can do whatever they want with my tracks. And what's really great is that I can also do these sessions while I'm traveling. I just need my drum machine, a small interface, a Glyph external hard drive, and my computer, and I can make it happen."



ACOUSTIC KIT

Although he's made a name for himself in the digital world, using his fingers to jab out funky grooves and slick solos on drum machines and MIDI controllers, Haynes is also an in-demand acoustic drummer, with credits ranging from the jazz/fusion guitarist Stanley Jordan to the alternative hip-hop group Arrested Development. Here's the conventional setup David uses in these situations.

Drums: Yamaha Absolute Maple

- A. 5x13 snare
- B. 8x10 tom
- C. 10x12 tom
- D. 14x14 floor tom
- E. 16x22 bass drum

At times David uses a 16x16 floor tom as well.

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 13" A Custom Mastersound hi-hats
- 2. 18" A Custom Projection crash
- 3. 17" K Custom Hybrid China
- 4. 20" K Custom Hybrid ride
- 5. 16" K crash
- 6. 17" K Custom Dark crash



DOSH

by Anthony Riscica

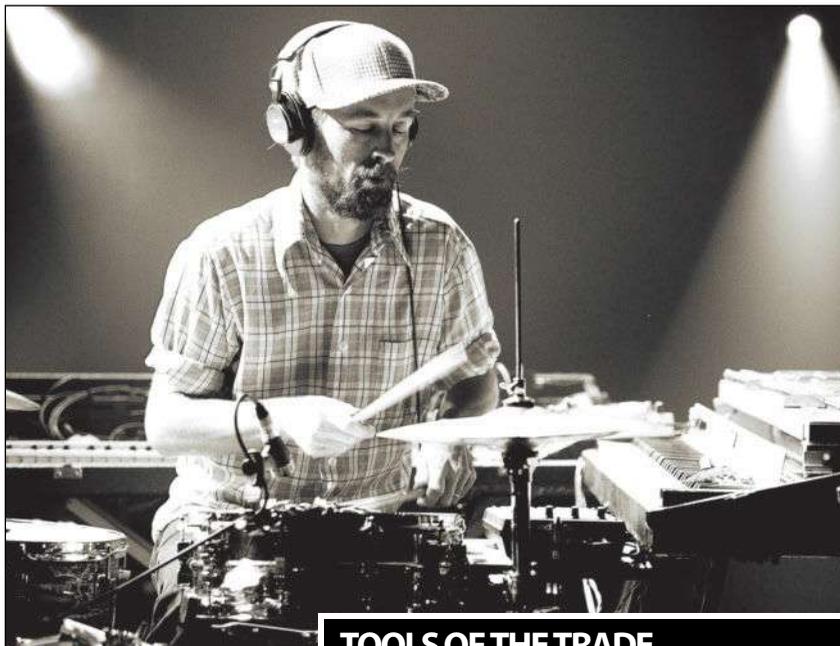
The one-name multi-instrumentalist, who has recorded or performed with the indie faves **Bonnie “Prince” Billy**, **Andrew Bird**, and **Devendra Banhart**, squeezes a lot of music out of a small but powerful assemblage of electronic gear.

Whether Dosh is bouncing back and forth between drums and keys at one of his shows or rummaging through his self-made library of drum breaks, he pushes the limits of what can be done with drums, keys, and a modest array of effects.

You can say that his musical journey started at three years old, when Dosh (full name: Martin Dosh) started harassing his parents for piano lessons. At six he finally got what he wanted, and from that point on he’s seemingly never looked back. At sixteen he moved himself to Massachusetts, where he studied jazz and drums at Simon’s Rock College Of Bard. From there it was a few years of traveling around, watching bands, and immersing himself in music culture. In his mid-twenties Dosh realized that the fun and partying he had been accustomed to needed to cease, so he moved back home to Minneapolis. After some time honing his craft and working incessantly with his newly discovered 4-track recorder, he began touring with Andrew Broder’s Fog and playing full time with the group’s instrumental counterpart, Lateduster.

Since then Dosh has become a one-man band, releasing six solo albums on the Anticon label (plus three on his own Dosh Family Recordings). The latest, *Tommy*, finds him playing everything from pots and pans to a 200-year-old harpsichord, as well as sampling bits of his recorded archives. The instruments in combination with the creative process make for an eclectic blend of sound and feel.

“That’s kind of been the way I’ve done it since I began making music,” Dosh explains. “I started playing drums when I was fifteen, and around twenty-three I started recording on a 4-track, which completely changed my approach to drumming. I was obsessed with that between ‘96 and ‘99—and this was before I had discovered the sampler. So by the time I got my first looping recorder, I had hundreds and hundreds of cassettes of drum breaks that were recorded in different rooms with different microphones. So I just went in and started to pillage all the tapes to find the best four-bar breaks and then loop them.”



Kimeron

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

For his solo performances, Dosh plays a three-piece Ellis drumset (snare, floor tom, bass drum); with Andrew Bird he adds a rack tom and a second floor tom. His cymbals consist of an old 20" Zildjian A used as a ride and a cracked pair of old 15" Paiste 602s used as hi-hats. Electronics include two Boss SP-303 Dr. Samples, an eighty-eight-key Rhodes electric piano, and a Roland Juno 1 synth, which Dosh mostly uses for its cello preset. All instruments are run into a Soundcraft Series 200 mixer and sent in a mono chain through a Boss DD-5 delay pedal, an Electro-Harmonix Big Muff fuzz box, and a Dunlop Rotovibe rotating-speaker effects pedal, and then into two Akai Head Rush loop pedals. With Mike Lewis, Dosh also runs the sax player’s mic into his mixer so he can loop that as well.

Dosh says he employs a similar setup live and in the studio. “I use a small drumset, and I run its mics as well as a Rhodes keyboard into the same mixer. A pedal that I always use is the Boss DD-5, which they don’t make anymore. I think it was replaced by the DD-8. But the DD-5 is really cool because when you run drums through it and you toggle between settings, you sort of overload the feedback. So when you toggle between, let’s say, settings 1, 2, and 3, it creates this kind of glitchy sound. That’s something I’ve been doing forever.”

Tommy’s tracks draw their power from the collage-like approach of their creator. They’re strikingly ambient and rhythmically playful—not traditional “drummer” performances in any sense. So when the album ends with the distinctly drummy finale of “Gare De Lyon,” it comes as a bit of a shock. “A few people have said that the end, with the big drums and crashing cymbals and all that stuff, is this head-scratching moment,” Dosh says. “There’s something about that tune, though. It’s a very old song I wrote that Lateduster used to play. I’ve been playing it with [saxophonist/bassist] Mike Lewis for the

past three or four years. It was really fun to play live, so I decided to rerecord it for the record. I like the way that sort of cathartic ending closes the album.”

Cathartic is a very apt word to describe the song, as the track was inspired—as was the album’s title—by the loss of Dosh’s friend and soundman Tommy Cesario. “That’s sort of the undercurrent of the whole thing,” Dosh explains. “The audio at the end is actually him talking. I searched through a lot of his things while helping to pack up his place, and I wanted some audio of him because he had such a cool voice. That was the only thing we found. I just wanted it to be part of the record.”



DRUMMER 2 DRUMMER



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If you're a drummer with a day job or a side job or a business or have a service to offer, Drummer2Drummer (D2D) is the place to advertise your business and offer your services to the drumming community both locally and worldwide. Our D2D advertising members are drummers who are also dentists, landscapers, graphic artists, carpenters, plumbers, lawyers, accountants, mechanics, etc. (you get it) all drummers willing to hook a fellow drummer up! So, if you have a business or service you'd like to offer your fellow drummers OR if you'd like to hire and support a fellow drummer in business...Drummer2Drummer is for you.

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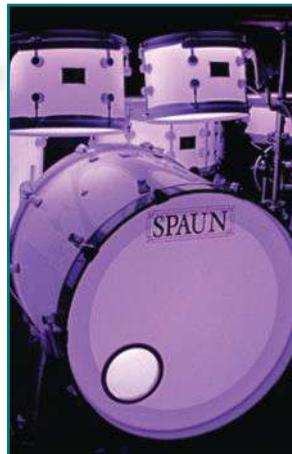
All D2D business listings are HALF PRICE (ONLY \$50 per year) when you mention this ad!



ALESIS DM6 USB Express Drumset

The DM6 USB Express kit has six pads, including a dual-zone snare, two toms, an upright kick, a hi-hat, and a cymbal. The module comes with ten preconfigured kits comprising 108 modern drum, cymbal, and percussion sounds. Five custom setups can also be created. In addition to the DM6's internal sounds, a USB MIDI computer connection enables studio drummers to play with drum-module software. The included metal rack with industry-standard 1½" tubing allows for easy add-ons and expansion. Retail price: \$599.

alesis.com



SPAUN Acrylic LED Lighted Kit

Spaun's Acrylic LED Lighted Kit features a multicolored lighting system that can be operated via remote control. It has a wide range of color options, including seven solid colors and eighteen flashing and strobe effects. The user is able to control the flashing speed as well as the overall brightness of the system.

In addition, Spaun can build the system to be DMX compatible, which allows it to be controlled via any DMX-compatible lighting console or DMX software program. Each kit is built to individual specs, so drummers can choose from any number of customizations.

spaundrums.com

PEARL PERCUSSION

New Yorker Cowbells

New Yorker cowbells were designed to replicate the signature salsa sound of the Big Apple. Three models, the cha-cha high-pitched (\$55), cha-cha low-pitched (\$59), and mambo bell (\$65), were produced in collaboration with the percussion master Marc Quinoñes (Allman Brothers, David Byrne, Spyro Gyra). Quinoñes' own signature Timbal bell (\$67) rounds out the New Yorker series. Each bell features one-piece steel construction and is engineered to be durable and loud enough to cut through large Latin ensembles.

pearldrums.com



BARTLETT MICROPHONES

Omnidirectional Drum Mic

The Bartlett Drum Mic is an affordable miniature condenser microphone designed for the recording and sound reinforcement of a drumkit. Featuring an omnidirectional pickup pattern, it captures snare, toms, and cymbals evenly. (Bartlett recommends using a separate kick drum microphone of the user's choice.)



Requiring only one mixer channel, the Bartlett Drum Mic offers drummers a streamlined setup and a cost-effective alternative to using multiple drum mics. The mic can handle sounds up to 130 dB without distorting and features a flat frequency response from 40 Hz to 20 kHz. The mic comes with a permanently attached 6' XLR cable and requires 12 to 48 volts of phantom power. List price: \$189.

bartlettmics.com

MAPEX Horizon HXB Series Drums

Mapex is releasing a limited number of Horizon six-piece HXB basswood drumsets. Mounted toms are equipped with the company's Isolated Tom Mounting System, which allows the shell to resonate freely. The drums are outfitted with black hardware and are available in a black or burgundy high-gloss finish.

The six-piece configuration includes an 18x22 bass drum; 7x8, 8x10, and 9x12 mounted toms; a 16x16 floor tom; and a 5½"x14 snare. A complete set of Mapex 500 series hardware is included with the kit, as is a set of Mapex cymbals (10" splash, 14" hi-hats, 16" crash, 20" ride). List price: \$1,189.

mapexdrums.com





RHYTHM TRAINER iPhone Drum App

Developed by the Toronto-based drummer and educator Andy Shoniker, the Rhythm Trainer iPhone application is a fully programmable metronome and rhythmic sequencer. It offers a wide range of programmable time signatures and tempos from 30 to 350 beats per minute, and it enables users to develop, save, and edit their rhythms. An exclusive feature is the ability to add accents and/or rests to any subdivision of a given note. The app also lets users create patterns that cannot be played with a traditional metronome.

rhythmtrainerapp.com



SABIAN

Improved B8 Pro Series Cymbals

Sabian Vault artisans are marking twenty years of the affordable B8 Pro series by improving the cymbals' design to include larger hammering marks as well as subtle design changes to the bell. The results are said to provide a richer sound. The new lineup consists of Thin, Medium, and Rock models, all offered in brilliant finish and fully protected by Sabian's two-year warranty.

sabian.com

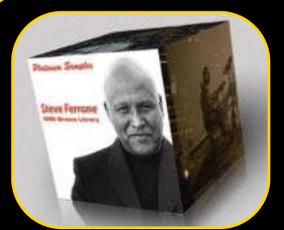


BUMCHUM

Silent Bass Drum Monitoring System

BumChum is a small, portable bass drum monitoring device that allows drummers to adjust and control the feeling of the bottom-end thump without added volume. The unit is built into a specially designed throne top that's coupled with an electronics pack. List price: £1,699 (approximately \$2,471).

thebumchum.co.uk



PLATINUM SAMPLES

Steve Ferrone MIDI

Groove Library

Platinum Samples has released the multi-format Steve Ferrone MIDI Groove Library, featuring more than 660 MIDI files (over 3,200 bars of unquantized grooves) formatted for BFD2, BFD Eco, EZdrummer, EZplayer, Superior Drummer 2.0, Addictive Drums, and Cakewalk Session Drummer, as well as for general MIDI, allowing it to be used with any GM-compatible drum software or hardware.

The Steve Ferrone MIDI Groove Library includes seventeen songs separated into complete song structures (intros, verses, choruses, bridges, etc.), plus nine additional groove variations. The library features patterns in 3/4, 4/4, and 6/8, in straight and swing feels. List price: \$40.

platinumsamples.com



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LEEDY

Shelly Manne Kit In Smokey Pearl Finish

by Harry Cangany

What you're looking at is a 1958 Leedy Shelly Manne signature kit in the almost impossible-to-find sparkling smokey pearl finish. Current owner Vinny Bellisario bought the set from his cousin Fran Annunziata. I have seen this finish only on a Slingerland color sample, never on an actual drum. So needless to say this is one rare specimen.



For a dozen years in the early twentieth century, Leedy was a viable subsidiary of its former rival Slingerland. Leedy lugs, strainers, and butt plates were often hung on Slingerland shells. And the venerable Leedy name, which had been launched in nineteenth-century Indianapolis, went to a factory in Elkhart, Indiana, before being transferred in the mid-1950s to the old Slingerland factory at the corner of Wayne and Belden in Chicago.

Leedy Chicago built great drums, and this particular kit features a 14x22 bass drum, a 9x13 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 5 1/2 x 14 matching snare. The toms and snare are outfitted with Slingerland Stick Saver hoops, plus Leedy's gold oval badge. The shells are made with two plies of mahogany and a center ply of poplar, plus maple reinforcing hoops. Leedys, like Slingerlands,



had unfinished interiors during this era. Shelly Manne snare drums, which often had solid maple shells, were the flagship of the Leedy Chicago line. They feature the long-used Leedy Broadway strainer and extension butt plate, plus a newly designed lug that looks like two beavertails merged into one. There are some 4 1/2"-deep Manne snares out there, and they use three-point Radio King strainers. The floor tom has typical push-button legs, and the bass drum has Radio King-style T-ros and claws, plus Chicago-era 3/4" inlays on the hoops.



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**WHAT
DO YOU
KNOW
ABOUT...?**

Marvin "Bugalu" Smith

He's a true character, with a taste for far-out clothes and flashy stick tricks. But it's his remarkable inventiveness and musicality that made him a favorite of jazz icons like **Sun Ra** and **Archie Shepp**—and that keep him in demand today.

Although jazz drummer Marvin "Bugalu" Smith recorded and toured with two jazz icons, Sun Ra and Archie Shepp, I had never heard of him until two friends of mine, saxophonist David Schnitter and bassist Mark Hagan, told me about driving up to a club in Newburgh, New York, to play with him. A few weeks later, Dave, Mark, and I were slated to play at a club in Nyack, and we needed a drummer. Mark suggested Bugalu, who arrived at the gig with an entourage of students and was decked out in outlandish garb: pointed Chinese straw hat, black Chinese hand fan, black cape, and Zebra-striped jacket. I thought, *I see—this is coming out of his years with Sun Ra.* Later I learned I'd been mistaken; Bugalu was dressing this way early on. We settled down to the business of making music, and I immediately found him a consummate technician *and* an amazing showman, twirling sticks during rhythmic passages, bouncing the sticks off the drumheads and catching them in midair, all with the raw energy and intensity of the streets.

When Bugalu invited me up to the club in Newburgh as a featured artist, I got to witness yet another of his talents. He recorded the gig on a 24-track Tascam

portable studio and did all the mixing and editing at home. The quality of his work was truly remarkable—clear, warm, and robust, the kinds of traits you find in classic analog recordings.

Later, while talking about the method and purpose of his teaching, Bugalu said to me—with urgency and a subtle pain in his raspy voice—"You see, I want to pass on what I do to my boys so they can have it when I'm gone. I can't live forever, and I don't want it to get lost. I'd take a knife and cut it out of me and give it to somebody if I could." Bugalu's sincerity and conviction moved me to the core; I wanted to know more about this man, and I asked him to tell me his story.

Bugalu, one of four children, grew up in Teaneck, New Jersey, the son of a carpenter who built the family house, which featured a practice studio. It appears the drums were a form of self-therapy for Bugalu, who was dyslexic and did poorly in school. "I tried really hard to do the work—summer school, tutors—but I just couldn't get it," he says, "and until sixth grade, I cried and cried... I had the hecklers on me. But after sixth grade I said, 'I'm not gonna cry no more. I'm gonna learn one thing, and when I come back and show you what it is, you all won't be able

to laugh at me no more.'"

Bugalu's practice regimen seemed a bit too obsessive to his older brother, Buster (himself a highly regarded drummer who performed with Arnett Cobb and Sun Ra, among others), who would say, "You're being crazy. You're like a bear. You go in the house and start practicing in January and come out in April."

As a young man, Bugalu toured Italy with saxophonist Tyree Grimm Jr. and eventually settled there, staying for approximately twenty years while making frequent trips back to the States. In Italy he worked with Rocky Roberts, an African-American singer who was a big star there and was responsible for introducing American soul music to Italian audiences, recording and performing songs in Italian. While in Italy, Bugalu became a Buddhist, which plays an important role in his life and thought.

MD: How did you get the name Bugalu?

Bugalu: I was with Tyree in Italy and, at a concert, peered around the curtain and saw so many beautiful women. I went and told Tyree, "Man, there's some fine boogaloo out there," and showed him. He said, "That's a great name for you," and that's been my name ever since.

MD: How long were you with Archie Shepp and Sun Ra?

Bugalu: I was with Shepp from 1982 through 1987 and with Sun Ra from around 1987 to 1992. From '86 to '87 I went back and forth between the two of them.

MD: A noticeable feature in your performances is twirling, bouncing, and catching the drumsticks.

Bugalu: All that came about accidentally one night with Shepp. While I was playing, a stick fell out of my hand, hit the tom-tom, bounced up and hit me in the head, hit the tom-tom, and bounced up again. I was reaching over to get the stick, and it came right back in my hand. Shepp happened to see this and said, "Man, you gotta develop that," so I practiced a system of bouncing, catching, and twirling the sticks.

I had a great time with Archie. He was something else. He would speak real street, you know, but when a woman would come in, he would transform into perfect British. We recorded several records with Kenny Werner on piano and Santi Debriano on bass.

MD: How did Shepp express what he wanted from the drummer?

Bugalu: Actually, Shepp never rehearsed with me. He would just say, "Let's go." I remember on my first night he said, "Play as fast as you can, and I'll come in." Kenny Werner and Santi Debriano knew what was going on, but I didn't. Santi, Kenny, and I liked playing together, and in the studio we talked a bit, but Shepp didn't say much; you had to intuitively know what he wanted. It was the same with Sun Ra—you had to have the right instincts. He would do things like point up, and you would play in the higher register on the cymbal bell. He'd point to the middle and you'd play on the tom-toms; he'd point down and you'd play on the low tom and bass drum. But that's about it.

MD: Can you shed some light on your years with Sun Ra?

Bugalu: My brother, Buster, was playing with Sun Ra, but I got him the gig. Sonny said, "We're gonna train your brother how to play the charts." You see, I was the only drummer that Sun Ra actually took somewhere without having to have a million drummers. Usually he would have several drummers playing different things. He'd get me in that band, and I'd play all of those songs, all the stomps, accents, all the big-band shit, and then you'd have four or five other drummers playing some random shit. But I'm the only drummer

who did it alone. I'm on the DVD *East Berlin And West Berlin*, which presents two sets: The West Berlin performance, with the Sun Ra All Stars, is with Shepp, Philly Joe, and so on, but on the other, in East Berlin, I'm the only drummer.

MD: With Sun Ra, how did you manage by yourself to cover what several drummers did?

Bugalu: First, you needed to be able to do the stomp, bebop, swing, and the free thing. Sometimes I just played one of those things, but sometimes I would actually play time with one hand and play the free thing with the other hand.

MD: Let's talk about your gear. You use a small bass drum.

Bugalu: I use a 16" bass drum, which was originally a floor tom that I modified. It's a 6-ply drum, which I like because it has greater resonance than an 8-ply. My drum has no sinkhole where the manufacturers put their emblem. I closed the hole up, so

"Life is about constant change, and it's beautiful if you can take constant change and maintain constant balance. I made that my system of drumming."

it makes my drum explode faster. My bass drum is tuned to approximately a low G-flat. I have an 18" bass drum with the legs mounted so that it stands like a floor tom, which adds a wonderful dynamic color.

I always use UFIP Italian cymbals. I really like the way they sound. My brother used them first, long before I went to Italy.

MD: Who are your main influences?

Bugalu: First and foremost my brother, Buster. He was bad. Then Elvin, Roy Haynes, all those cats.

MD: How did your brother shape your development?

Bugalu: He was eighteen years older than me, so when I was young he had already played with Eric Dolphy, Oscar Pettiford, Benny Bailey, and so on, and had toured the world. He showed me how to hold the sticks. He held them in a different manner where the hand had more leverage and more control. He showed me the sticking on paradiddles and how to feather the bass drum. I was so small that I wondered how he could play so light with such a big foot. Mainly, though, I learned from just watching him practice.

I remember him playing along with Horace Silver's record "Sister Sadie" every day because he liked what Louis Hayes did on that record. I remember the smile it put on his face, so I did the same thing—for

twenty years. Also, Buster had listening sessions with me and would make me identify a drummer in a bar or two.

MD: What did you learn from listening to Louis Hayes?

Bugalu: From that record I learned the function of the drums—the time, the nuances, and the accents. I learned how to lay down the groove and how to let the left hand dance.

MD: And from Art Blakey?

Bugalu: I took the shuffle—he had the best shuffle in the business. And I copied his solos.

MD: And Elvin Jones?

Bugalu: He sounded different from all the others... more African. He messed me up, so I had to study with him. I took lessons with him at Ippolito's Drum Shop for twenty-five dollars back in the mid-'60s. In the first lesson he taught me paradiddles with accents. In the second lesson he grabbed the sticks and played the ride

cymbal with the butt—incredible power. Elvin had no rules and did the unexpected. When he played a fill, just when you'd expect him to hit the cymbal on the down-beat, he would do something else. Elvin opened me up to a more free approach.

MD: I noticed that on the Archie Shepp recordings the drummer is listed as Marvin Smith, and that on several websites the sessions are attributed to "Smitty" Smith. What's up with that?

Bugalu: Look, I recorded those sessions a long time ago, and I don't need to prove nothin'. Anyone who listens to them would know that's my playing.

MD: How has Buddhism impacted your music?

Bugalu: Through Buddhism I learned that life is about constant change, and it's beautiful if you can take constant change and maintain constant balance. I made that my system of drumming. I'm changing all the time, with each performance, with its different members, the weight of the bandstand.... If you maintain balance, then you're good.

Guitarist/composer **Ron Petrides** teaches at the New School For Jazz And Contemporary Music. He has performed with Walter Bishop Jr., Dizzy Gillespie, Billy Hart, Tony Bennett, and Lena Horne.





MULTIMEDIA

BILLY MARTIN *LIFE ON DRUMS* by Ilya Stemkovsky



"Be in the moment, and take it from there," Billy Martin says during *Life On Drums*, his exceptional drumming film/instructional video. More philosophy and creative performance than nine-stroke-roll tutorial, the DVD gives the viewer a glimpse into Martin's rhythmic concepts and wide-ranging musical interests, from Brazilian grooves to impressionistic mallet pieces to noise-making jams. Save for a run-through of the "Latin Shuffle" beat, the focus here is decidedly not on Medeski Martin & Wood, as "illyB" speaks at length with his first drum teacher, Allen Herman, and features his own students playing mind-bending composed percussion

pieces. A welcome respite from the super-chops technique showcase, *Life On Drums* solidifies Martin's outsider status and reminds us that there's room for all kinds. (Alfred)

BILLY ON "THE LIFE"

In the film you say that "Mistakes are fertile ground." And you reveal that you still rush because you're excited, "and that's just the way it is." What can students learn from this mindset?

In general I think mistakes come from trying something new, something you've never done before. And that requires a possible failure. If you're successful, then you've succeeded in what you set out for without knowing whether you could do it. If you make a "mistake," it's time for you to examine what happened. This is the point where you learn more about yourself, because it requires you to look deeper into yourself—your true self. Often you end up with something better, something you never could have dreamed up.

The section where you play your "string of phrases" has a random but fully realized vibe. How do you get inspired to make this sound focused?

You simply make a sound, a musical gesture. Leave some space and then follow with something else, something complementary—maybe contrasting and conversational. The most important thing is to leave space. This all comes from the master himself, Max Roach. It comes from some of the soloing I've heard him play live and on recordings. It also comes from many West African master drummers.

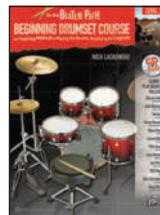
Your association with a well-known group and the green light you enjoy allows what you do to be accepted. How can someone who plays in a variety of bands keep his voice?

I am not accepted just because I'm in a "well known" group. In fact, the more successful you appear to the public, the more people want to knock you down. For anyone to keep his voice or true self, I suggest not striving for success out of insecurity. If you try to do something that no one has done before you, that is sincere to who you are. You don't know if it will be accepted or successful in your lifetime, but you may succeed in finding your own style. *That, to me, is success.*



THE TOTAL BLUES DRUMMER
BY SCOT LITTLE BIHLMAN
BOOK/CD LEVEL: BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE \$19.99

It's hard to imagine a more informative and fun blues drumming book than this one. It's a celebration of the genre, from Memphis to Chicago to Texas. Bihlman starts with stick grip and how to tune drums for blues music, and finishes with advice on hauling a drumkit around. He strives to provide a sense of history as well, discussing some of the masters and classic licks. He gets into details like ghost notes, discusses blues structure, and demonstrates some odd-time blues grooves as well. And the CD is a good play-along for drummers of all styles. Bihlman has a very clear and thoughtful game plan. (Alfred) **Robin Tolleson**



ON THE BEATEN PATH: BEGINNING DRUMSET COURSE, LEVEL 1
BY RICH LACKOWSKI
BOOK/CD LEVEL: BEGINNER \$9.99

Here's an interesting approach to learning how to play drums: starting right off (practically) copping beats that are part of the everyday musical landscape. Lackowski aims to win young hands and hearts with the music that inspired him, compiling a mix of grooves played by the likes of John Bonham, Dave Grohl, and Tré Cool between 1968 and 2001. What better way to learn simple syncopations than playing a song like "Hard To Handle" or "Free Fallin'"? What better way to really grasp 8th and 16th notes than playing "Kashmir" and "Smoke On The Water"? The author follows the beats with a selection of interchangeable drum fills. (Alfred) **Robin Tolleson**



CARMINE APPICE
REALISTIC ROCK FOR KIDS
DVD LEVEL: BEGINNER \$14.99

Rock drumming legend Carmine Appice recruits twelve-year-old drummer Pete Biggiani to host this video and prove that rock drumming is simple to grasp with some basic reading skills. The material is pulled from Appice's recent book of the same name. The production is more Disney than Hudson Music, with candy-colored artwork and flashy video staging. Basics such as counting and reading rhythmic notation, kit setup, and developing simple groove patterns evolve into more complex beats and fills, culminating in soloing concepts. Biggiani keeps solid time with a click, and then allows the viewer to play along as he performs the evolving exercises from the book. The fun begins when the viewer finally gets to play along with rock tracks and to solo (while reading the onscreen charts). Overall, the package is an affordable, educational, and entertaining program for the beginner. (Alfred)

Mike Haid



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KOSA'S INTERNATIONAL PERCUSSION WORKSHOP CELEBRATES ITS 15TH YEAR



Hernandez

The KoSA International Percussion Workshop, Drum Camp, and Festival celebrated its fifteenth anniversary this past July, on the campus of Castleton State College in the small, spectacularly beautiful village of Castleton, Vermont. Says KoSA founder and artistic director **Aldo Mazza**, "We had a great time and a great crowd, and when you get this many unbelievable artists together on one stage, the resulting performances are electrifying and one of a kind."

Besides Mazza, this year's faculty included **Memo Acevedo**, **Marcus Santos**, **Bill Bachman**, **Dom Famularo**, **Paul DeLong**, **John Beck**, **Allan Molnar**, **Liberty DeVitto**, **Jim Royle**, **Kiko Osorio**, **Jeff Salisbury**, **Rick Van Horn**, **Glen Velez**, **Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez**, **Michael Wimberly** (with dancer LaToya Wigfall), and **John Riley**, plus special guests.

For the sixth consecutive year, KoSA awarded full scholarships to its annual event, in the form of an international contest in collaboration with *Modern Drummer*. The prize package included full tuition as well as room and board. The scholarships were awarded to **Arianna Fanning** (U.S.), **Scott Davidson** (U.S.), and **Erik N. Peterson** (Canada). The KoSA scholarships were courtesy of Evans, Mapex, and Zildjian. The event was sponsored in part by Audix, Beatnik, Cooperman, Evans, *Canadian Musician*, *DownBeat*, D'Addario, Dream Cymbals, Black River Music, Dynasty, *Sticks 'N' Skins*, HQ, LP, Ludwig-Musser, Mapex, Mike Balter, *Modern Drummer*, PAS, Pro-Mark, Regal Tip, Sabian, Shure, Drum Channel, Taye, Toca, Vic Firth, Yamaha, and Zildjian.

For more on KoSA, visit kosamusic.com.

MONTREAL DRUM FEST 2010

The eighteenth Montréal Drum Fest was held this past October 23 and 24. After the day-one kickoff of the Canadian Roland V-Drums Contest finalists, taking the stage were Montreal's own

Isaac Dumont and **Elie Bertrand**, followed by **Jeremy Taggart**, **Marko Djordjevic** with Sveti, and **Bobby Sanabria** with the great Latin music of Quarteto Aché. Next up were **Ronald Bruner Jr.** (who destroyed his double pedal in the first few minutes and had to restart his blistering performance) and then **Kirk Covington** with his CPT Kirk trio. The second day started with Yamaha's Rising Star Showcase, followed by Canada's **Simon Langlois** and **Mark McLean**. **Jost Nickel** performed for the first time at a festival outside of his native Germany and rocked the house. **Paul Wertico** and his band



played a free jam, and then **Chris Dave** blew away the crowd with his forward-thinking style. Korn's **Ray Luzier**—just back from Japan—hit the stage *hard*, as did **Marco Minnemann** with the Swiss beatbox hero ZeDe. In a surprise twist, Luzier and Minnemann ended the festival with a high-octane drum battle. Once again it was a wonderful weekend in Montreal.



Text and photos by Heinz Kronberger

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT

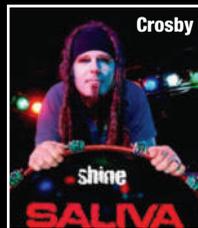
Los Cabos Drumsticks welcomes **Kurt Dahle** (New Pornographers) to its list of artists.

Kenny Aronoff is endorsing Ultrason's HFI-580 headphones.

Paul Crosby (Saliva) has joined the Shine Drums artist roster.



Aronoff



Crosby

New Vater artists include **Big Mike Clemons** (Israel & New Breed), **Lou Vecchio** (Vita Chambers), **Nik Hughes** (Emily Osment), **Dante Roberson** (the Whispers, independent), **Jay Lane** (Primus), **Dan Johnson** (Brian "Head" Welch), **Ryan Gose** (This Century), **Rob Chianelli** (We Are The In Crowd), **Nick Pizzolato** (Moving Mountains), **Jazz Robertson** (Jazz Robertson Trio & Quintet, Yvonne Aubert Trio), **Alberto Vargas** (New Wine/El Rey Jesus), **Travis Rountree** (the Ready Set), **Eric See** (Just Kait), **Caleb Clifton** (Eyes Set To Kill), **Hayden Scott** (the New Regime), **Beau McKee** (Closure In Moscow), **Larone "Skeeter" McMillian** (Jennifer Hudson), **Tyler Minsberg** (the Dangerous Summer), **Skip Erickson** (the Classic Crime), **Jevin Hunter** (Musicians Institute/PIT), **Chris Kamrada** (There For Tomorrow), **Tino Arteaga** (Of Mice & Men), **Luke Swarm** (Cobra Skulls), and the entire staff of the Drum Lab in Sacramento: **Serge Lysak**, **Chris Brawley**, **Christian Midthun**, and **Mai-Tsaro "Stixx" Johnson**.

New Paiste artists include **Anthony Burulcich** (the Bravery), **Bob Siebenberg** (Supertramp), **Jesse Siebenberg** (A Fine Frenzy), **Corey Good** (Modern Day Escape), **Abraham Juarez** (Gabby Villanueva), **Aaron McVeigh** (Foxy Shazam), **James May** (Black Tusk), **Gabriel Ford** (Little Feat), **Brandon Trahan** (Impending Doom), **Paul Allen** (Nashville studio), **Carlos Padron** (Rumberos Del Callejón), **Serge Lysak** (the Drum Lab), **Ken Tondre** (Kevin Fowler), **Andrew Tkaczyk** (For The Fallen Dreams), **Ryan Shutler** (Lazarus A.D.), **Skylar Feigel** (Yeti), **Brock Wettstead** (Dirtfedd), **Austin Schumacher** (Blackbells), **Wayne Peterson** (Grave Maker), **Joey Bumpus** (Brandy, Ciara), **Mel Gaynor** (Simple Minds), **Pontus Engborg** (Glenn Hughes), **Adam Balsam** (the Most Serene Republic), **Steve Ballstadt** (Metro Jesus, Blue Man Group), **Spencer Schoening** (Said The Whale), and **Glenn Milchem** (Blue Rodeo).



LOUIE APPEL

1958–2010

by Billy Ward

Louie Appel passed away suddenly at age fifty-one on October 17, 2010, in Las Vegas, after performing a show with John Eddie. It appears he died peacefully in his sleep.

I first heard about Louie when I found out he was playing with Debbie Gibson when she was all the rage and we were all quite young. At that time, most of us drummers in the New York area were jealous that Louie had such a hot gig. He continued with a long and successful career, playing with a diverse group of artists, including Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes, John Eddie, Ronnie Spector, John Waite, 'N Sync, Phoebe Snow, Al Kooper, Greg Kihn, Robert Gordon, Leslie West, Peter Frampton, Tom Verlaine, and many, many other talented musicians.

It's difficult to describe Louie's playing without discussing his character as a human being. His tall and imposing figure was quickly offset by his gregarious personality and huge heart. At a glance it would appear that Louie was brash, perhaps even a bully, but that was only his size talking. His tough "fuhgetaboutit" New Yorker persona was always in second place, overridden by his loving, sensitive nature.

One thing that could turn Louie away from some unfortunate person, though, was if he sniffed that person out as insecure enough to be a jive-talking fake-feeling name-dropping self-promoter. You did not want to be on Louie's bad side for sure, because his witty mind was so fast that he could lay you out verbally before you knew what hit you.

I always saw him as *so* highly evolved. And he was humble. Louie would ask the same countless drummers that yearned for his gigs if he could have a lesson or a get-together

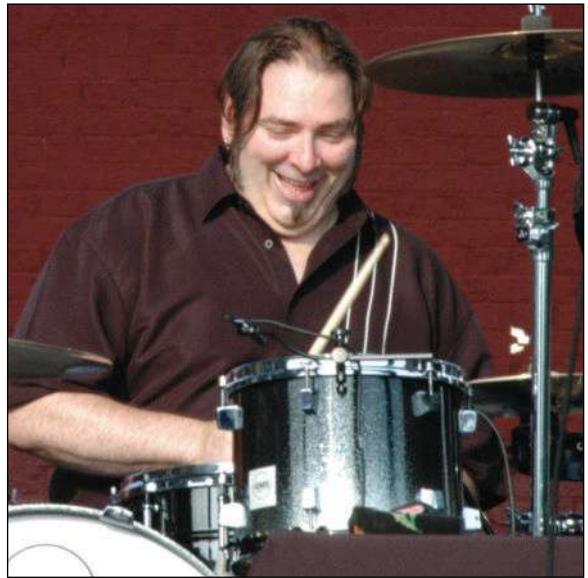
with them. He always had questions about playing, about tuning. He was never political. He would never take anyone else's gig, even if his family needed the work that month. He was what I like to call a true seeker.

When playing the drums, he had a smile that to me always resembled a perfect letter D. The infectious joy coming from him as he played was indisputable.

I yearned to give back to him all that he continued to give to me. When I received a dreaded phone call from my wife's doctor that her life was now raging into the "end game," he was the first to comfort me. There are countless drummers in New York who went to Louie with their drumming (or life) difficulties, and he always lent a compassionate ear.

Some people couldn't get past Louie's "I tell it as I see it" way of speaking. You had to overcome "fear of heights" with him—kind of like *High Anxiety*. Ha! If you could step up to him as an equal, the rewards were boundless.

Louie's directness was all over his drumming style. When the music was rock 'n' roll, you were going to hear pure unadulterated passion. That boy had a lot of Keith Moon in him. Doug Fieger, singer for the Knack, used to call this style of drumming "playing with wild Gypsy abandon." I tend to believe that as we musicians get older, we look for more detail or more shading and subtlety in our playing. Louie was always speaking to me about that. In the last few years, he wanted more sexy grooves in his style.



Rob Maczella

More Keltner and less Moonie.

While Appel played with so many "name" artists, he was still seen by most of us in the New York City community at local clubs. He worked constantly, regardless of the pay or the size of the venue. Like a Buddhist, he maintained his "practice" of playing his instrument, no matter the circumstances. And for such a huge man, Louie could play quite softly. His drumming touch was lovely, ranging from brutal to exquisite.

Dig this: Louie Appel never smoked. He never drank. His only addiction was playing the drums. He loved playing more than most anyone I can think of. Without Louie Appel, there would be no New York City Drum Club. He hounded me to start it up. He knew and loved most every drummer he ever met, embodying the true spirit of drumming friendship. Rich Taninbaum of Rhythm Tech told me about going to see Louie play in a teensy-tiny, crappy New York club. As Rich walked in, Louie, while playing, immediately motioned for him to come up to the bandstand by furiously nodding his head ("Com'ere! Com'ere!"). When Rich approached, Louie handed off one drumstick and got up and left. By doing that hand-off, Rich was receiving the best gift Louie could imagine: getting to play the rest of the band's set.

Thank you, Louie.



Time Machines

This month, for our electronics issue, we go back in time to 1985 with programmer/drummer Jimmy Bralower. His setup in the top photo is listed from the bottom up, since that's the chronological order of when he got the pieces. (The shot, taken at New York City's legendary Power Station studio, also includes some of the facility's outboard gear.) Back then, it was all state-of-the-art equipment—not to mention very expensive. Bralower tells *MD*, "Now they have apps for my iPod for \$1.99 that run circles around the old stuff. It's really amazing where it's gone, but to me it's still all about the music." Let's get the rest of the rundown in Jimmy's words.

1. LINNDRUM. This was my first programmable drum box. It cost about \$3,000 back then. These days you can get a more powerful drum machine in a box of cereal. Roger Linn designed software that was very intuitive for musicians. I used his gear religiously, from the Linn 9000 to the MPC60 to the MPC3000, which I still use today and is the last of the "vintage" drum machines he wrote the software for. The LinnDrum had loud and soft buttons for each drum and a tuning knob for snare and toms only. If you wanted different sounds, you had to go inside the unit and swap chips.

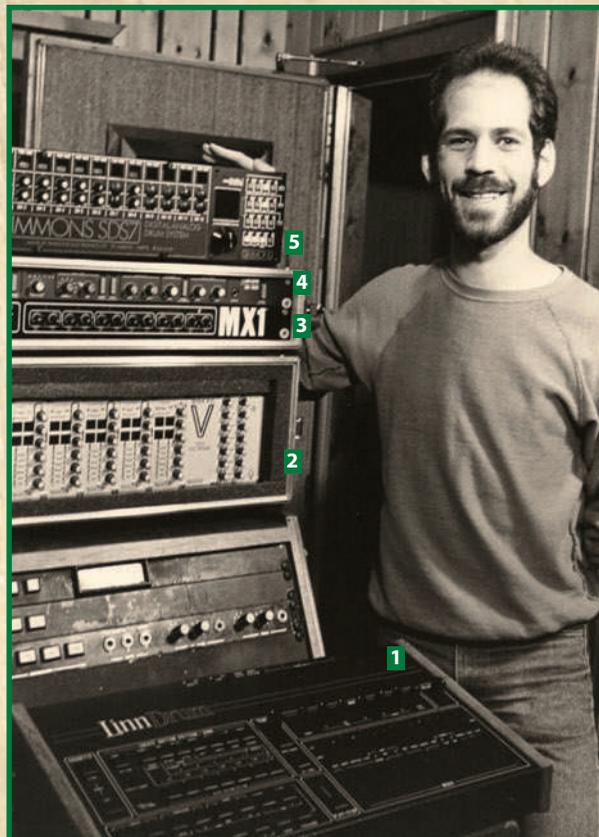
2. SIMMONS SDS-5. The original. It had separate analog synth modules for kick, snare, toms, and hi-hat, plus great white noise and tone bending. The SDS-5 had its own distinct sound, and combining it with the Linn opened up a whole world of possibilities.

SIMMONS SUITCASE KIT. The flight case I had made for my SDS-5 kit—and its stands, pedals, and miles of cable—wouldn't even fit in my car. So much for the compact digital lifestyle. One day when I was in L.A. I was invited to visit the Simmons offices. They were showing me all their new gear, and I noticed a little blue attaché case with the Simmons logo, tucked away in a corner of the warehouse. Inside were seven little Simmons pads, with an XLR output in the back for each one. "Does this thing really work?" I didn't care; I convinced them to let me have it. Turned out that if you didn't hit a pad just right, it might randomly trigger some other sound. Not really a deal breaker—in those days not too many gizmos worked exactly as advertised. And it was a dangerously delicate item: Using drumsticks to bang on a fragile little box filled with soldered wires apparently wasn't such a great idea, and not too many of them were built. But for me it was a truckload of gear replaced by a tiny suitcase. My cartage nightmare was over...for a minute. That little case logged a lot of studio miles with me, until the next big thing came along and made it obsolete.

3. MARC MX-1. The lifesaver of the day. Invented by Vince Gutman at Marc Inc., this box turned an analog signal into trigger pulses, which were required to run the Simmons. I used it to twist up live drum sounds and the sounds from the Linn.

4. BOSS DE-200. My first "sampler." It's a delay unit that had a "trigger and hold" feature where you could capture short low-bit-rate samples—a couple of seconds, tops—which you could trigger off a button on the front panel. I used it on the intro of "Bang A Gong" by the Power Station.

5. SIMMONS SDS-7. The first, or one of the first, digital/analog boxes that added digital sounds to the analog Simmons. Though it was tricky to dial up sounds, it was a big breakthrough at the time. I first used it on "Out Of Touch" by Hall & Oates.



Rick Mattingly



Rick Mattingly

For more with Bralower, go to moderndrummer.com and see the Gimme 10! column on page 18 of this issue.

Photo Submission: Hi-res digital photos, along with descriptive text, may be emailed to billya@moderndrummer.com. Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message.



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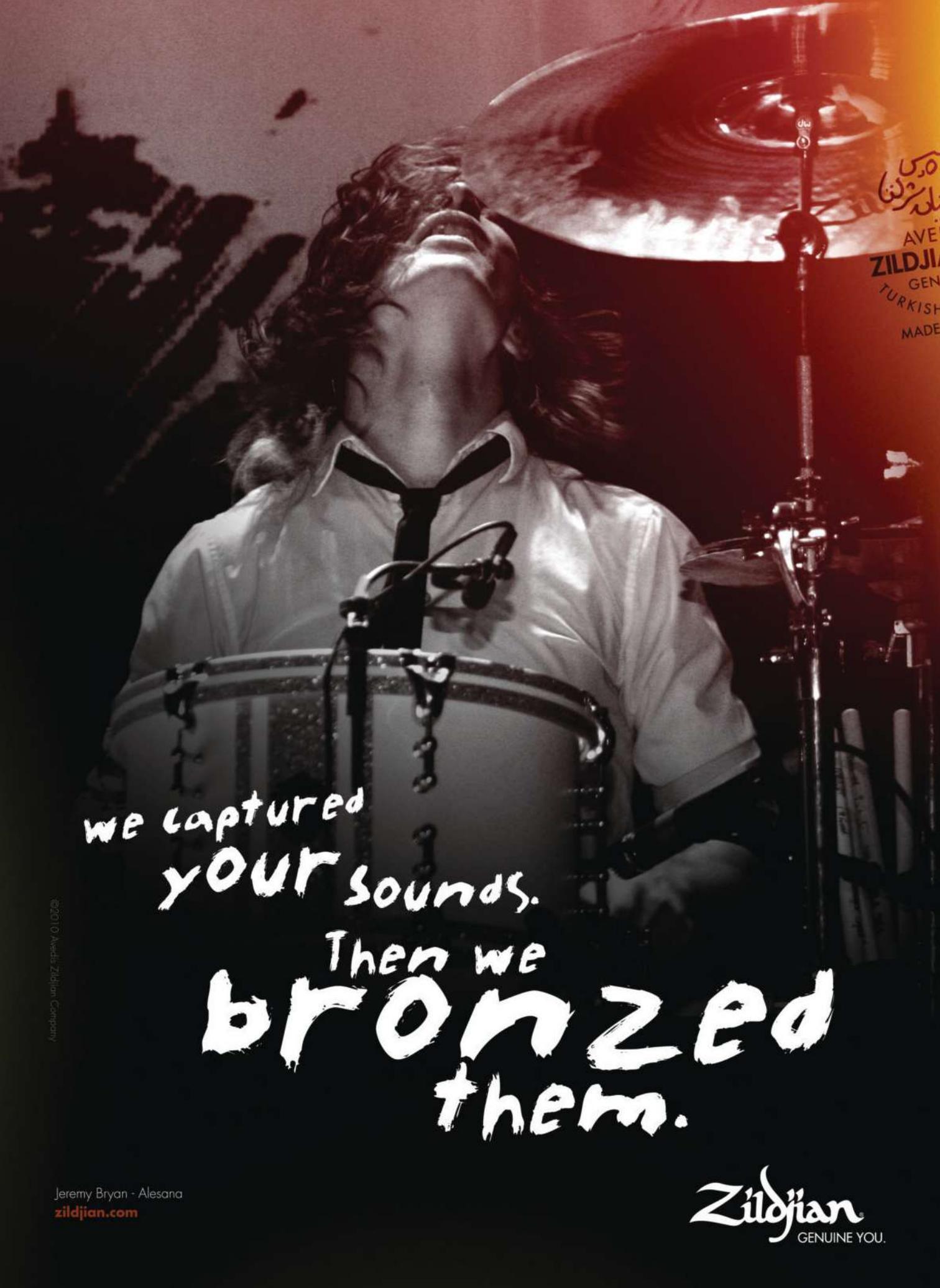


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