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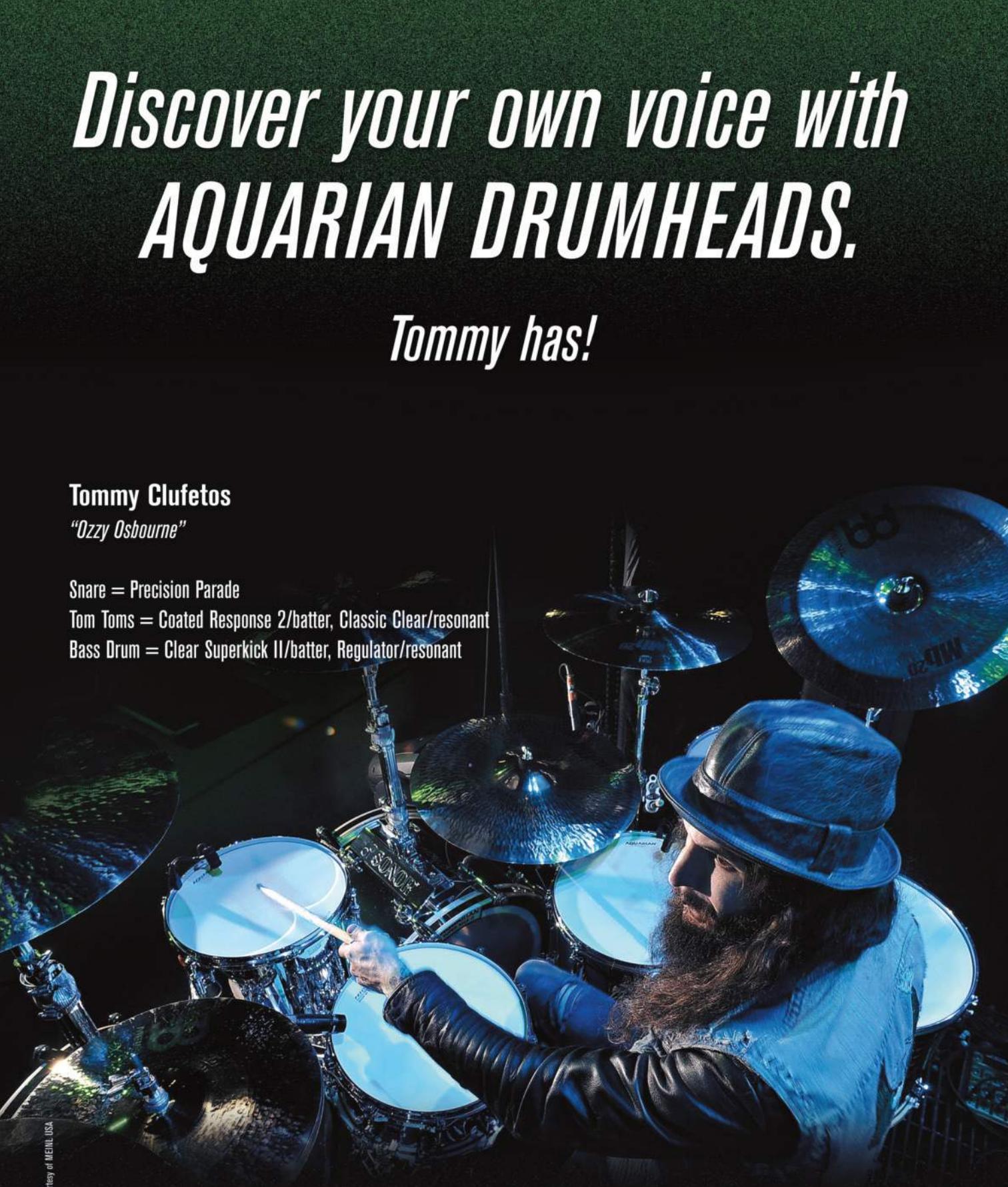
Tommy Clufetos

"Ozzy Osbourne"

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A photograph of Tommy Clufetos, a bearded man wearing a black leather jacket and a black leather hat, playing a drum set. The scene is lit with dramatic blue and black lighting, highlighting the metallic surfaces of the drums and cymbals. The background is dark, making the drum set and the drummer stand out.

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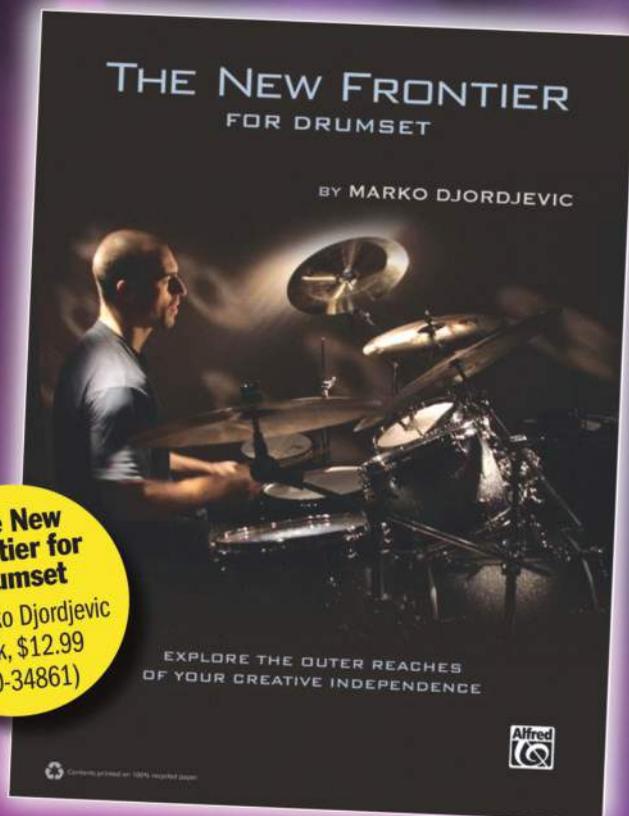
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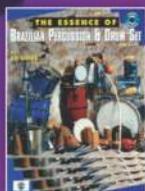
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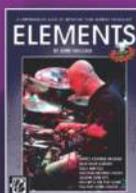
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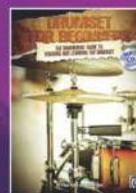
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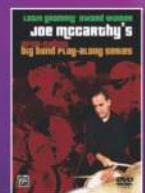
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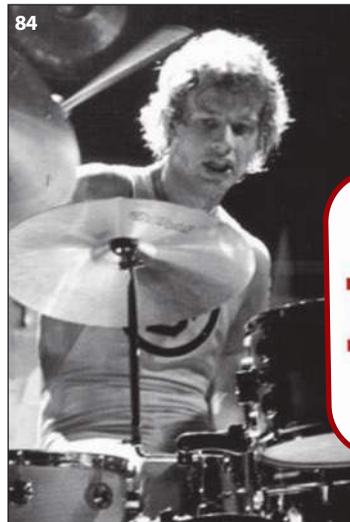
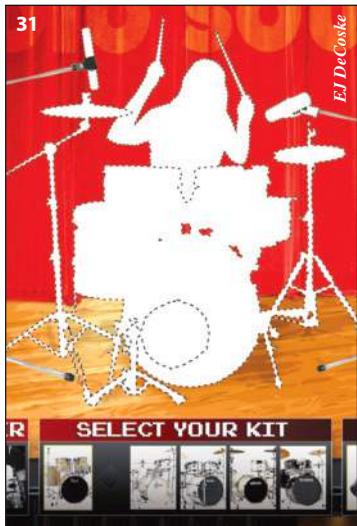
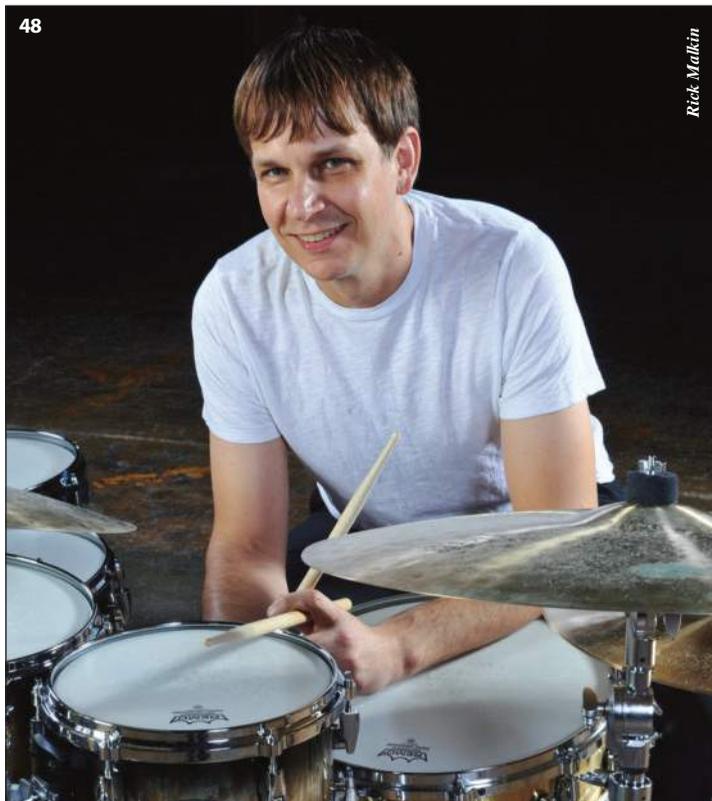


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C O N T E N T S



31 **GET GOOD: STUDIO SOUNDS**

Four of today's most skilled recording drummers, whose tones have graced the work of Gnarl Barkley, Alicia Keys, Robert Plant & Alison Krauss, and Coheed And Cambria, among many others, share their thoughts on getting what you're after.

40 **TONY "THUNDER" SMITH**

Lou Reed's sensitive powerhouse traveled a long and twisting musical path to his current destination. He might not have realized it at the time, but the lessons and skills he learned along the way prepared him perfectly for Reed's relentlessly exploratory rock 'n' roll.

48 **KEITH CARLOCK**

The drummer behind platinum-selling records and SRO tours reveals his secrets on his first-ever DVD, *The Big Picture: Phrasing, Improvisation, Style & Technique*. *Modern Drummer* gets the inside scoop.

12 **UPDATE**

7 Walkers' **BILL KREUTZMANN**
STEWART COPELAND's World Percussion Concerto
 Neon Trees' **ELAINE BRADLEY**

16 **GIMME 10!**

Hot Hot Heat's **PAUL HAWLEY**

82 **PORTRAITS**

The Black Keys' **PATRICK CARNEY**

84 **9 REASONS TO LOVE**

BILL BRUFORD

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

Can's **JAKI LIEBEZEIT**

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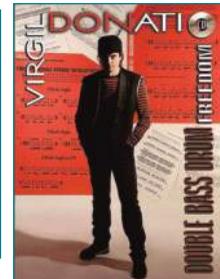
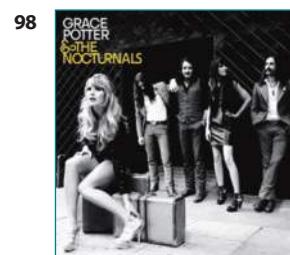
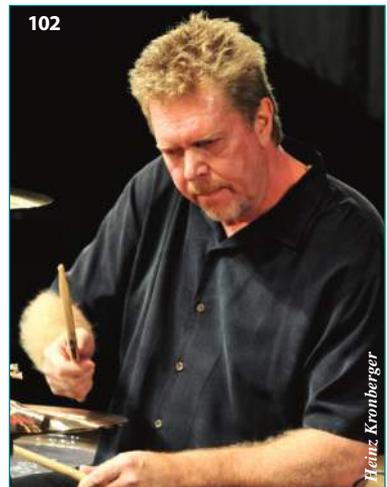
- 28 **In The Studio**
Drum Recording
Valuable Tips From A World-Class Engineer by Jay Messina
- 60 **Style & Analysis**
Keith Carlock by Eric Novod
- 64 **Teachers' Forum**
Starting A Teaching Studio
Essential Tips For Aspiring Educators
by Mike Sorrentino
- 66 **Strictly Technique**
Chops Builders Part 11: Paradiddle-Diddle
by Bill Bachman
- 70 **Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic**
Double Bass Substitute Part 1: 16th Notes
by Mike Johnston
- 72 **The Funky Beat**
Timbafunkified!
Beat Permutation Exercises Based On Cuban-Inspired Funk
by David Garibaldi
- 78 **Shop Talk**
DIY Drum Restoration Part 2: Wet Sanding
by J.R. Frondelli

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 **An Editor's Overview**
Mix And Match by Michael Parillo
- 10 **Readers' Platform**
- 18 **Ask A Pro**
2011 MD Pro Panelist Jason Bittner On Practice
- 20 **It's Questionable**
Sagging Snare Throw-Offs •
The Doctor Is In: Drumming And Pregnancy
- 92 **Showcase**
- 95 **Drum Market**
- 98 **Critique**
- 102 **Backbeats**
PASIC 2010
- 104 **Kit Of The Month**
Sweet Surprise

EQUIPMENT

- 22 **Product Close-Up**
 - **Gretsch** Renown Purewood Beech Drumset
 - **Soultone** Vintage Old School Cymbals
 - **Joyful Noise** Elite Series Snare Drums
 - **Evans** Power Center Tom Heads
- 88 **Gearing Up**
Jay-Z's **Tony Royster Jr.**
Interpol's **Sam Fogarino**
- 90 **New And Notable**



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Mix And Match

It's an exciting time in the world of music. The boundaries between styles are falling away all around us, and music has become a true melting pot, where players can feel free to mix ingredients according to their will and whimsy. Projects of all kinds, from Red Baraat, where New Orleans meets New Delhi, to Dub Trio, where pumped-up metal mixes with chilled-out Jamaican grooves, are crossing cultural and stylistic lines to arrive at fresh takes on tried-and-true sounds. Genre purism is increasingly rare—but that, too, remains on the list of options to explore, as seen with groups such as Royal Crown Revue, which, by adhering to tradition, preserve the music of the past and bring it into the present.

All musicians can benefit from such openness, such worldliness, but as drummers we might be getting an even better deal than most, since drum-set concepts can be applied so freely. Can a jazz drummer sneak in an idea pulled from the world of thrash? You bet. It's important, of course, to consider the context and the execution. A full-on kick-snare blast beat might sound disruptive during a meditative "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise"—but a similar pattern, played, yes, softly, between the bass drum and a tom-tom could lend drama or create and release tension in that same tune. Along those lines, it will serve a heavy drummer well to know how to swing, even if he or she won't be laying down dotted 8th notes on the gig.

Each issue of *Modern Drummer* inherently contains a cross-section of the varied drumming community. I think part of the beauty of receiving a mix of perspectives every month is that we get such a diverse abundance of things to practice and keep us on our toes. Well-roundedness might be the goal, or it might not—but even if we like to stick to a certain corner of the musical map we still need to open up the atlas every now and then and take a look at the landscape in other regions.

So with that in mind, there's a lot for *any* drummer in this issue, coming from some pretty far-flung places. In Ask A Pro, MD Pro Panel member Jason Bittner offers practical advice on practicing that has nothing whatsoever to do with musical style. In "Double Bass Substitute," Mike Johnston offers exercises on keeping the hi-hat ride pattern going while approximating double bass between your kick drum and floor tom. (Personally, I've been having a lot of fun with this, and it's been giving me ideas for fills to bring to my very *un*-double-bass-style rock band. Or for the next time I play "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise.") Can's Jaki Liebezeit talks about the importance of repetition in the idea of groove—in a way that has inspired me to try just letting a pattern cook without stirring the pot too much, something that doesn't necessarily come naturally to me and therefore deserves some attention. (After all, part of musical growth is addressing our deficiencies, right?) And Keith Carlock will light a fire beneath drummers of all stripes with his creative concepts for fills, solos, and accompaniment. Even Carlock's idea of "not thinking so much about patterns anymore" is, all by itself, something for most of us mere mortals to chew on for years.

Finally, the latest installment in our new Get Good series, "Studio Sounds," along with our In The Studio discussion with ace engineer Jay Messina, assumes nothing about the kinds of music you play in helping you capture the perfect drum tone for *you*. All players will benefit from the insightful advice from Messina and this month's well-traveled Get Good experts, Steven Nistor, Steven Wolf, Jay Bellerose, and MD Pro Panelist Chris Pennie. These guys will tell you that the spirit of experimentation counts just as much as knowledge in the recording studio, just like in music.



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PASS YOUR COLLEGE AUDITION

I want to thank *MD* for the "College Bound" feature in the December 2010 issue. As a drummer currently pursuing my BA in jazz studies at Chicago's Elmhurst College, I've experienced many of the trials and tribulations discussed in the article. The only critique I might have is that students should be sure to give emphasis to the mallet percussion and timpani prerequisites that most schools absolutely require. Before my current school, I was attending a community college and had not played any classical percussion instruments. Needless to say, the learning curve was steep. I feel that all drummers should know what's required of them for getting their degree. (The online portion of the college article, which covered this area, was really helpful.) The music-student life has been a rewarding experience, and every day I'm more certain that I've gone down the right path. Thanks for all the excellent work *MD* has done.

Joel Baer

ROCK 'N' ROLL FANTASY CAMP

I'd like to thank *Modern Drummer* and Billy Amendola for their support of Rock 'N' Roll Fantasy Camp. I attended the Philadelphia Camp last October, and it was one of the single greatest experiences I've ever had. I was lucky enough to have Grand Funk rock legend Mark Farner as a counselor, and I was excited and humbled at the same time. The counselors were a great bunch of guys who were available to talk, give classes, and put on a show for everyone. Words on paper can't truly describe the experience that happens at these camps.

Bud Manton

I won a Rock 'N' Roll Fantasy Camp gift certificate at the 2010 Modern Drummer Festival, and I'm so glad I did. I attended the Dallas camp, and the experience was one of the greatest times of my life. Jamming and working hard with my band was simply amazing. The counselors and staff did a fantastic job. My counselor was Mark Hudson, and he was great in every way—I learned things that will help me forever in my music career, and I feel I've become a better musician because of the experience. The drumming master class with Sandy Gennaro was absolutely awesome. I can't thank David Fishof and *MD* enough for this incredible experience. I will definitely be attending future camps!

PJ Corallo

RUDIMENT TAB SYSTEM

I've tried to approach the Rudiment TAB system (January 2011 issue) with an open mind, but I ultimately don't see any benefit to presenting it in your magazine. The article promotes (unintentionally, I hope) the idea that standard notation is somehow ineffective when it comes to the rudiments. On the contrary, standard notation is in fact a beautifully simple and effective way to present the rudiments when notation is necessary. The article also claims that the TAB system fills a missing link between aural presentation and standard notation, but an effective teacher should strive to strengthen that relationship, not claim it as an unbridgeable gap in need of an intermediary. Standard notation is not difficult to learn and is infinitely more useful. This article might give a student the impression that standard notation is difficult to learn. It does take time to master, but doesn't anything worthwhile?

Marshall Richardson

DROPPED BEATS

In the GMS PVS snare drum review in the January 2011 issue, the shell should have been specified as 8-ply maple, not 6-ply. And in the Who's Playing What section of the February issue, we incorrectly listed Matt Halpern as a Pearl endorser. Halpern plays Mapex drums.

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BILL KREUTZMANN

The founding Grateful Dead drummer pens a love letter to New Orleans with his rootsy new band, 7 Walkers.

There's been a lot of Grateful Dead music in the air lately. No fewer than three acts featuring original band members have been truckin' around the country in the past year, roasting the Dead's psychedelic chestnuts over a fresh fire: the Rhythm Devils, led by the tandem timekeepers Bill Kreutzmann and Mickey Hart; Furthur, with bassist Phil Lesh and guitarist/singer Bob Weir; and now Kreutzmann's latest band, 7 Walkers.

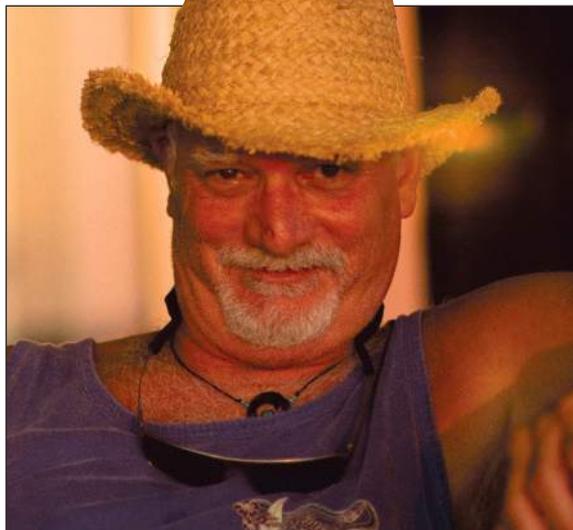
Although 7 Walkers dig into the back catalog of Kreutzmann's old group on stage, the heart of their sets is material from their self-titled debut album, which was released late last year. The songs, with words mostly written by Dead lyricist Robert Hunter, conjure up a swampy, groovy, distinctly American vibe that reaches into the world of the Dead while being something altogether distinct as well.

The recording pays tribute to New Orleans and Louisiana, with warm, cozy lead vocals by the sublimely soulful Shreveport native Papa Mali (aka Malcolm Welbourne), who also produced the album and wrote much of the music. Kreutzmann plays a mixed bag of grooves with his signature tight-but-loose feel, while adding touches like funky syncopation ("Mr. Okra") and Crescent City march beats

("Hey Bo Diddle"). "I've always wanted to play music that had a New Orleans feeling," Bill says. "We realized this is in our blood. My mother was born in New Orleans—that's my connection, my DNA. I lean more into the Mardi Gras Indian style. That's where those marches come from. But I didn't study marches; I just played what felt right to me."

On a song like "Someday You'll See," Kreutzmann gets to ply one of his specialties that goes back to his Grateful Dead years, albeit one he doesn't get enough credit for: holding things together at very slow tempos. "When the bass player plays a note," he explains, "you wait for that note to end and ring out; you don't come in before that. You might even purposely take a little breath before you play that next beat, just to give it a little more space. Then you don't jam anything up."

"That was probably the hardest thing for me to learn," Bill adds. "The fast songs were always easier, and the slow ones were trickier. Just think about it: You're crossing the river, and if the rocks are very far apart you've got to jump



Jack Gardner

a long way. But if the stepping-stones are close, you can make all these little quick steps and be very balanced. In slow songs the quarter notes are a mile apart."

When the Walkers hit the road last year, it was with the New Orleans stalwart George Porter Jr. on bass, replacing Tea Leaf Green's Reed Mathis, who played on most of the recording. (Keyboardist Matt Hubbard rounds out the quartet.) "It's so far out for me to get to play with the cat," Kreutzmann says of Porter. "The great and beautiful Meters groove—he's just a *delight* to play with. I hope he enjoys it as much as I do." The great news: "We're thinking about another album already. We have about eight more of Hunter's songs that Papa's just sitting on." **Michael Parillo**

ELAINE BRADLEY

Neon Trees' drummer gets animalistic on the band's debut album.



Emilie Campbell

"When you see a girl in a band, you can smell that she's the token girl," says Neon Trees' Elaine Bradley. "You think, *She's not good enough. She's just a pretty face.* But when I first played with Neon Trees they knew I was the real deal. I am a perfectionist, so naturally I've surrounded myself with guy musicians, because they were always the ones who played the best. Often girls *think* of themselves as girls, thus limiting their potential as musicians. I never thought of myself as a girl drummer. Never. I just want to be good at what I do."

Bradley proves her mettle on the Trees' first full-length album, *Habits*, which has raced up the *Billboard* charts and seen its single "Animal" sell in platinum digital quantities. Bradley credits her considerable skills not to traditional practice, but to air drumming. "It's the same concept as with sports," she says. "If you mentally practice doing basketball free-throws, for instance, you get better. When you air drum to drummers who know what they're doing, it makes you understand where the feel should be. So when you return to the set, you understand the mechanics and the placement better."

Bradley describes her Provo, Utah, group as "a rock band writing pop songs influenced by punk and soul. That includes having tasteful drums, so I couldn't do a fill just because I felt like it or play a clever beat just because I could. I had to figure out what served the song."

Still, *Habits* is not without its drumming fireworks. "Love and Affection" is my showcase," Bradley says. "At first it was very cymbal heavy and probably too busy. When we examined it, I realized I didn't need to crash the cymbals every time. So I accented the first two beats, then reined it back in with the open hi-hat."

A lover of all things John Bonham—she describes the iTunes bonus song "Farther Down" as "very 'When The Levee Breaks,' a sexy groove"—Bradley enjoys creating elemental patterns that pack a punch. "Bonham can play the simplest beat that technical drummers might scoff at," she says, "but he does it for the song. And he can blow you away with his feel and creativity. Just because you can, that doesn't mean you should. He understood that better than anyone." **Ken Micallef**

STEWART COPELAND

The man who could fill a three-minute Police tune with a hundred great drum ideas tackles a large-scale world-music concerto for the Dallas Symphony.

As the cofounder and drummer for the Police, Stewart Copeland played beats that are recognized by fans all over the world. But Stewart Copeland the opera composer? Believe it or not, he has written three operas and is working on his fourth for the Royal Opera in London. "In my day job as a film composer, I write for orchestra all the time," Copeland says. "Every now and then, when I'm blessed, I get asked to write for a real orchestra—music for music's sake." And that's what this latest commission is all about.

This February, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra is premiering Copeland's *Gamelan*

D'Drum concerto for world percussion, featuring the Dallas-based percussion ensemble D'Drum. The group's members—Ron Snider, John Bryant, Doug Howard, Jamal Mohamed, and Ed Smith—have training in classical, jazz, Middle Eastern, African, and Indian drumming. Two of them, Snider and Howard, also play in the DSO. The collaboration came about when the Dallas Symphony began searching for a composer to write for percussion and orchestra; Copeland accepted the challenge in 2008.

The main instrument featured in this project is the gamelan, a collection of gongs, bells, and drums native to the Indonesian islands of Bali

and Java. But there are also Western instruments like the marimba and vibraphone, as well as a Hungarian cimbalom, a Middle Eastern doumbek, and a transcultural drumkit featuring Ewe barrel drums, a West African caxixi, Turkish cymbals, and an Arabic frame drum. "Some of the notes in the Indonesian scale aren't in our scale," Copeland explains. "But these enterprising Texans had a gamelan made in concert pitch so they could play with an orchestra.

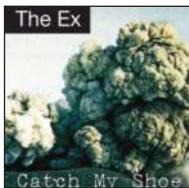
"The piece is in three movements," the composer continues. "The first, 'Klentong,' is a bit of a hybrid. It was written for orchestral percussion, but I retrofitted it as a gamelan piece. The second movement, 'Taksu,' is based on a traditional Javan cycle of the bells." The movement "Lesung" completes the thirty-two-minute piece.

"As a composer, you have to understand the language," Copeland adds. "There's a lot more craft, as opposed to art—but that craft is deeply engrossing." **Lauren Vogel Weiss**



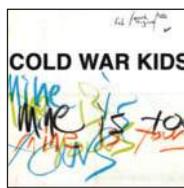
Left to right: Stewart Copeland, Jamal Mohamed, John Bryant, Doug Howard, Ed Smith, and Ron Snider

OUT NOW ON CD



KATHERINA BORNEFELD
Of The Ex On *Catch My Shoe*
"We were really excited to record with engineer Steve Albini at Electrical Audio again," says Katherina Bornefeld, longtime drummer with the iconic post-punk band the Ex. The group recorded two previous albums with Albini, 1998's *Starters Alternators* and 2004's *Turn*, and clearly shares a vision of raw, intense, immediate rock sounds with the famed recording guru. "Because we like the live sound in Studio B so much, we decided to record there another time," Bornefeld continues. "The drums sound especially great there—very alive and fun to play. In just three days we played and recorded all of our ideas. In the beginning we had the idea to play with the recordings and the mixing, but in the end we didn't dare touch this masterpiece! It's often hard to capture the live sound of a band on an album, but this time I think we truly succeeded."

Adam Budofsky



MATT AVEIRO

On Cold War Kids' *Mine Is Yours*

Where some bands feel compelled to make their third album the "weird" one, most things remain the same—pleasingly so—for the alt-rockers Cold War Kids on their third album, *Mine Is Yours*, especially where Matt Aveiro's drums are concerned. He's still creating deep pockets with standard backbeats, tribal tom figures, percussion, and extended pauses, on songs like "Royal Blue" and the title track. His hybrid style of time-keeping is an ever-evolving process. "There will be a sound in my head," Aveiro explains. "For instance, I'll hear a maraca instead of a hi-hat. And those ideas grow within me. It's mostly rehearsing the songs and figuring out how to structure the beat in my head to make it work with the groove of the song." **Patrick Berkery**

ON TOUR

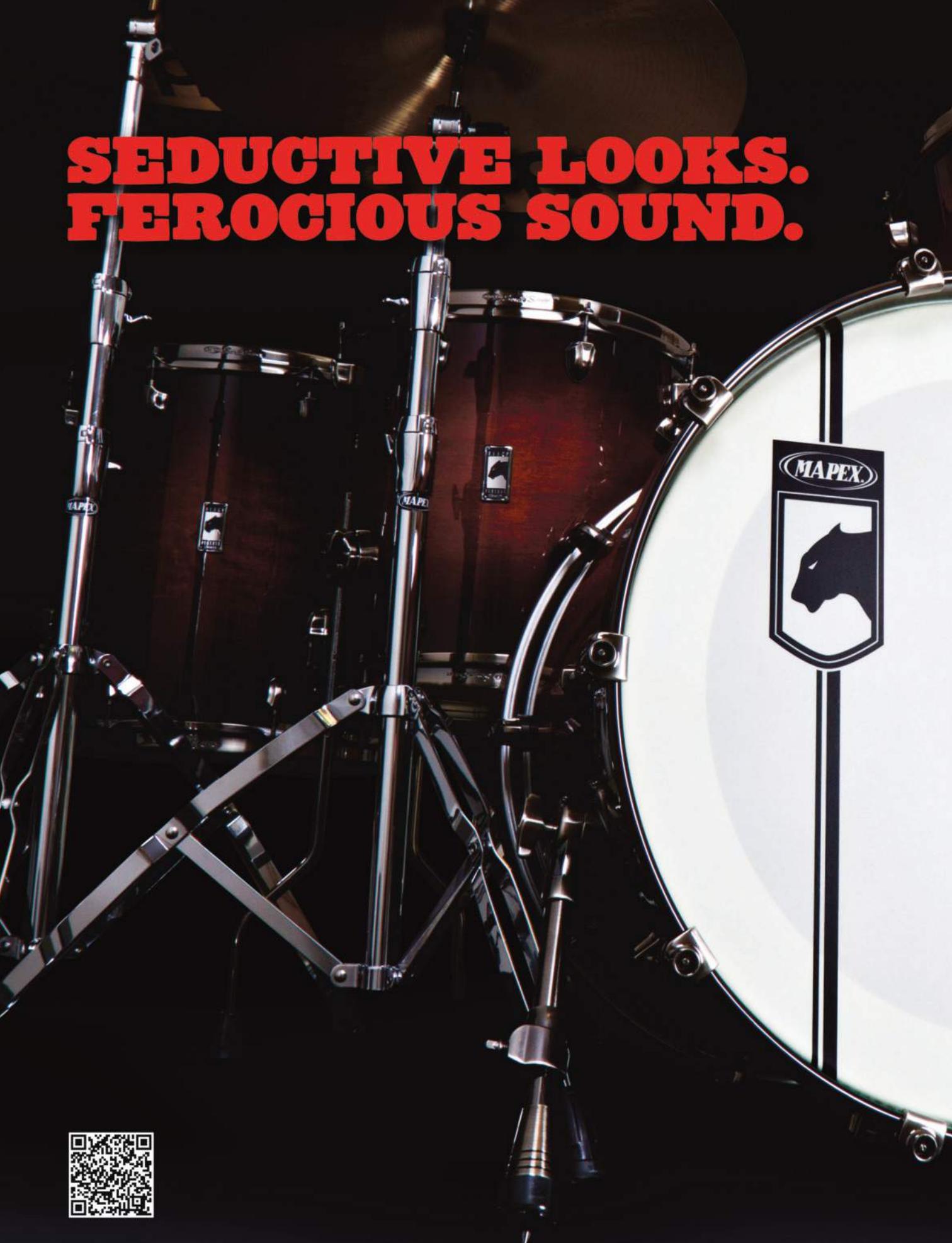
Puppy Mills aka Quinn English with the Gay Blades /// **Brian Rosenworcel** with Guster /// **John Moen** with the Decemberists /// **Michael Pedicone** with My Chemical Romance /// **Stefanie Eulinberg** with Kid Rock /// **Robert Ortiz** with Escape The Fate /// **Angelo Parente** with Motionless In White

Also On The Shelves

Kid Rock Born Free (Chad Smith) /// **Avishai Cohen** Triveni (Nasheet Waits) /// **Circa Survive** Blue Sky Noise (Steve Clifford) /// **Yelena Eckemoff** Cold Sun (Peter Erskine) /// **Jason Lindner** Jason Lindner Gives You Now Vs. Now (Mark Guiliana) /// **Mike Keneally/Marco Minnemann** Evidence Of Humanity (Marco Minnemann) /// **Warpaint** The Fool (Stella Mozgawa) /// **Heaven & Hell** Neon Nights (Vinny Appice) /// **Negroni's Trio** Just Three (Nomar Negroni)



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PAUL HAWLEY

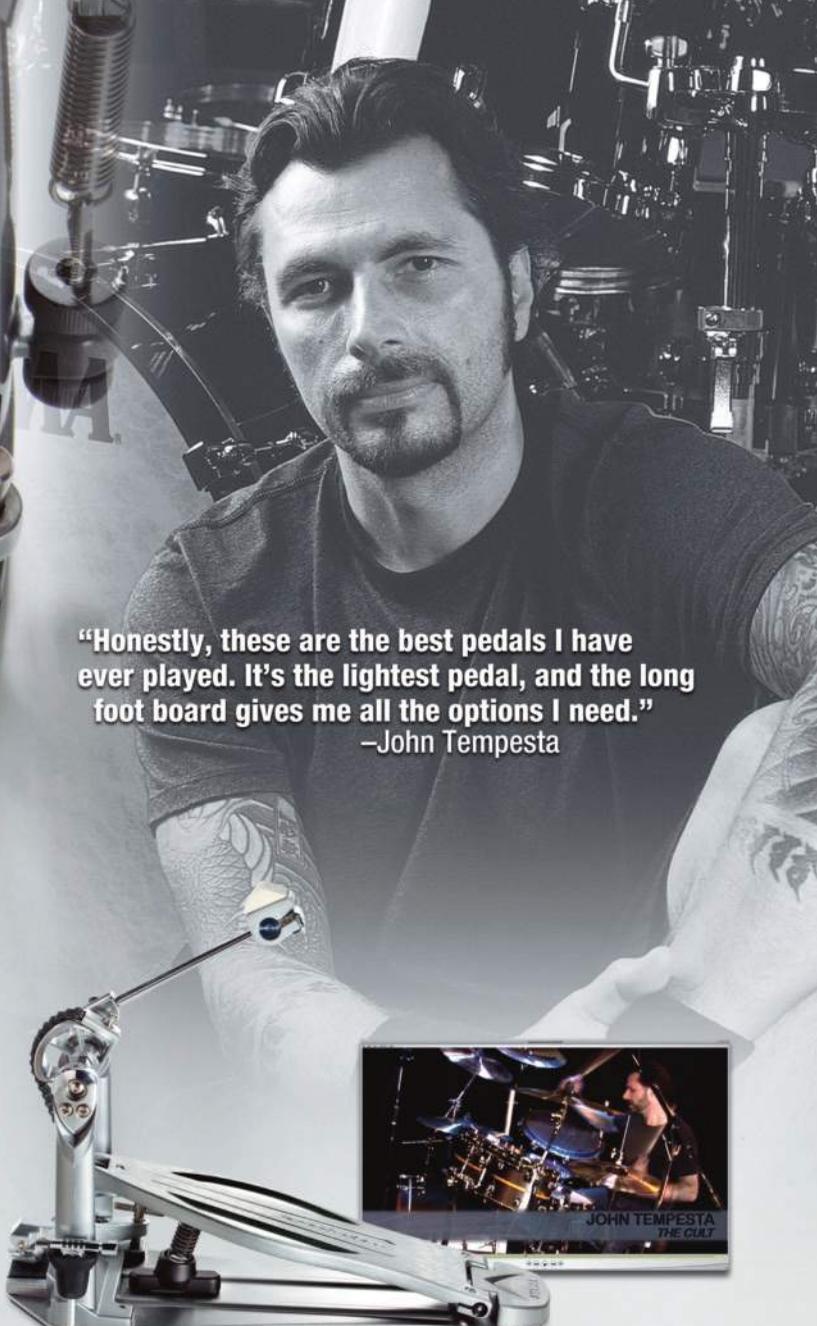


Hot Hot Heat's drummer has spent the past decade touring *hard*, sharing stages with bands like Snow Patrol, Sloan, Bloc Party, and the Foo Fighters. Follow these simple steps, he says, and your next tour won't have to be grueling.

- 1 BRING A BACKUP.** Anything that could end a show if it gave out, like your snare drum or kick pedal, you should have two of.
- 2 DEVISE A STEP-BY-STEP SETUP/BREAKDOWN SYSTEM FOR YOUR GEAR.** It should be foolproof, idiot-proof, and drunk-proof.
- 3 LEARN YOUR SONGS.** Practice them. Play them right.
- 4 RESPECT YOUR AUDIENCE.** They pay hard-earned money to see you. Give them your all, every night.
- 5 CHECK THE LOCAL WEEKLIES FOR GOOD SPOTS TO EAT.** You're on tour here—don't miss out on the good stuff!

- 6 BRING EVERY STITCH OF CLOTHING YOU OWN.** Laundry days are few and far between.
- 7 BRING READING MATERIAL.** There's going to be a *lot* of sitting around.
- 8 SHOW UP ON TIME.** Just because you're in a band, that doesn't make it okay to make people wait.
- 9 NEVER TAKE AN EXIT ON THE HIGHWAY THAT LOOKS QUIET OR DEAD.** If it looks like there's nothing there, there probably isn't. (This goes for regular human life as well as tour life.)
- 10 I ONCE GOT SOME ADVICE FROM A SEASONED DRUMMER: "DON'T BE AN IDIOT."** Every time I'm about to do something, I ask myself, *Would an idiot do this?* If the answer is yes, I definitely do not do that thing.





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-John Tempesta



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SCAN FOR INFO

speedcobra

JASON BITTNER

Practice: It means different things to different individuals. How do we do it? When do we do it? How long do we do it? An MD Pro Panelist shares his thoughts on the age-old issue.

As a professional drummer now for over twelve years, I still take the topic of practice very seriously. And I still struggle with it. Over the course of this article, I'm going to present the ways I practice and the methods I've used to cope with practice issues, good and bad.

What should we practice? That's a question I get asked often by students and other drummers. My usual short answer: whatever is most important to your drumming at the moment. If you're a beginning student, for example, you should be practicing the basic lessons that your teacher is showing you, per-

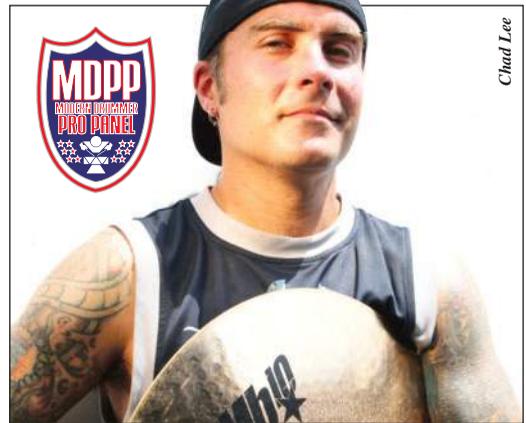
haps along with single- and double-stroke rolls as well.

Now let's say you're taking a sub gig tonight with a funk band, and you have two hours to practice in the morning before the performance. It's probably best to focus on playing along to a mix of James Brown and P-Funk tunes in order to really lock in with the types of feels needed for the gig, rather than practicing blast beats and double bass that can be done the next day.

On the other hand, if you're in a metal

band and you have no double bass endurance, it would be a good idea to work on extended mid-tempo patterns, rather than trying to play out-of-reach tempos for only short periods of time.

What I'm practicing at any moment can change, depending on what's most



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important for me at that time. Six weeks ago my priority was the clinics I had coming up, so I was focused on soloing, multi-pedal patterns, ostinatos, and preparing my clinic material. I wasn't sitting at the kit rehearsing a ninety-minute Shadows Fall set like I had been two months prior.

More recently, I had the pleasure of sitting down for a three-hour lesson with my friend Steve Smith, so I've been spending a good amount of my time working on the stuff he showed me. Also during this past month, I joined an Alice In Chains tribute band with some friends for fun, and because a gig is pending this week, my focus has now turned away from Steve's stuff and toward making sure I'm the best Sean Kinney impersonator I can be on Friday night. On Saturday, when the tribute gig is done, I'll be back to doing exactly what I talked about earlier—working on mid-tempo (170–190 bpm) double kick endurance, because I've noticed that since coming home off tour I've become a little rusty. Strangely enough, the faster tempos (200–220) are actually smoother, but since the slower ones tend to be played for extended periods in Shadows Fall, I always need to keep up on that.

The subject of how long to practice can be a touchy one, but there's really an easy answer: as much as possible, as often as

possible, without negatively impacting the lives of others. Once again, it's about prioritizing. If you're a single dad missing a parent-teacher conference because you're working on your shuffles, that may be a problem. Conversely, if you're a fifteen-year-old kid with all your homework done, there's nothing wrong with spending three hours behind the drums instead of in front of the computer, or even worse, out on the streets up to no good.

How about the issue of quantity versus quality? I always feel much better after a great ninety-minute practice session than after an *all-right* three-hour session. I always go for quality. If you're tired, simply stop. There's no reason to wear yourself down further for tomorrow's "comeback" session.

If, like most of us, you've experienced being in a drumming slump, the best piece of advice I can give is to take a few days or even a week off. Don't let it get you down. Use the time away to recharge your batteries, listen to some new music.... You'll return to the drums fresh and revitalized.

And let's not forget that there's a difference between practicing and playing. Remember when I was talking about the tribute band earlier? I know that when I sat down yesterday, even though I was

"practicing" for the gig, I was really just "playing" along with the iPod. There's a big difference between playing to CDs or your iPod for two hours and going through a varied practice regimen. Here's what I attempt to accomplish every day:

10 minutes: warm-up

20 minutes: working through George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control* book

30 minutes: working through Ted Reed's *Syncopation* book

30 minutes: working through Gary Chester's *The New Breed* book

40 minutes: double bass book/metronome work

Ideally I try to get in two to three hours, five days a week. Sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't, and sometimes it involves band rehearsals instead of individual work. But I still make it a priority to stick to the parameters above.

I thought it would be interesting to let everyone in on a typical clinic-practice session of mine by posting videos at modern drummer.com. You'll see me actually practicing in my drum room, mistakes and all—but that's okay; we make mistakes when we practice. Enjoy.



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LICENSED BY:



Sagging Snare Throw-Offs

As a Slingerland fan and longtime collector, I've noticed a common problem with the Zoomatic snare strainer. Almost every one I've owned develops the tendency to stick a bit when I move the lever from the off to the on position. Sometimes I even have to gently push up on the throw-off from underneath in order to get the lever to engage. I don't over-tighten my snare wires, so I just can't see why this would happen. Do the levers inside the throw-off require some kind of lubrication to work properly?

Doug Byrd

"Ludwig's P85 and Slingerland's Rapid and Zoomatic throw-offs have the tendency to sag over time," says drum historian Harry Cangany. "When heavier-weight parts are working against lighter-weight parts, they can start to give, which is how the sagging occurs. All you can do is keep the internal pieces lubricated to minimize wear and tear. If the throw-off is already sagging, there's not much you can do except look for a replacement strainer that's not affected."



THE DOCTOR IS IN by Asif Khan, M.D.



Drumming And Pregnancy

I'm twenty years old, and I just found out that I'm pregnant. In a few months my band is going to travel for two weeks to play some gigs. Is there anything I should worry about when playing my drumset? Is it okay to rehearse in the meantime?

Michelle

Thanks for writing, Michelle. This is a common dilemma among female drummers, and there are a few important precautions to understand.

Two main concerns should be addressed before drumming for prolonged periods of time (in excess of forty-five continuous minutes). First, drumming should be performed in a temperature-controlled environment. The reason for this is that maintaining proper hydration is important during

pregnancy, so you must pay attention to your body temperature. If you start feeling hot or become dizzy, you should stop drumming immediately and hydrate.

Second, whatever calories you burn while drumming should be replaced in equal amounts. Drumming burns calories, and a low calorie count can adversely affect your baby. Calorie-burning activities increase body temperature, and if your body temperature rises too high, too fast, this can also affect the fetus. Try practicing in shorter sessions, such as fifteen-minute spurts. The same logic applies to other types of exercising while pregnant; it's not specific to drumming.

The important thing is not overdoing it. However, there are certain circumstances that do warrant special atten-

tion. Pregnant women with diabetes, severe obesity, and/or high blood pressure should be counseled on an individual basis before drumming, exercising, or performing other activities that require physical exertion.

You should also be aware of the decibel levels a drumset produces. Extremely loud drumming poses a slight yet possible risk to the developing child's ears. Although not scientifically proven, there have been sporadic cases of hearing damage in infants born to mothers who were exposed to high sound volumes during the latter portion of pregnancy.

Overall, drumming and exercise in general offer minimal risks during pregnancy, and when done in moderation they can have benefits for most pregnant women.

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GRETSCH

RENOWN PUREWOOD BEECH DRUMSET

by J.R. Frondelli

The mere mention of the Gretsch name conjures myriad visual and sonic images, as well as a healthy dose of mystique and plain old respect. Lively tom sounds, big and rich bass drum tones, and uniquely dry snare shades are company hallmarks, along with gleaming chrome Art Deco lugs and die-cast hoops and exquisite wraps and lacquer finishes. Gretsch has a prestigious tradition, one that set the gold standard for jazz drummers the world over.

Nowadays, Gretsch is still synonymous with jazz, but you'll also see these drums used in rock, punk, alternative, fusion, and just about every other musical style. From the in-your-face concert toms of Phil Collins to the arena sound of Charlie Watts to the precise studio tones of session masters like Vinnie Colaiuta and Steve Ferrone, Gretsch drums have staged a major renaissance. Even endorsers of other brands will confidentially confess to being closet Gretsch fans. Such is the allure of the tradition that has charmed drummers since 1883.

THE TECH SPECS

Although it's not a new wood for drum shells, this latest Renown Purewood offering marks the first time Gretsch has used beech. Beech was a staple for Sonor in the '60s and '70s, and Yamaha also utilized it many years later. Harder and edgier sounding than maple models, beech drums have plenty of cut and presence, plus they can deliver a lot of lows. These qualities can be balanced by varying the bearing-edge profile.

Beech sports a wavy open-grain structure, an aesthetic that readily lends itself to lacquer finishes. The limited-production Purewood Beech kit features 7-ply, 7.2 mm shells with natural satin-finish interiors and Gretsch's traditional 30-degree, slightly rounded bearing edges. The kit includes an 18x22, 10-lug bass drum; 8x10 and 9x12 toms that feature the unique Gretsch 5-lug design; 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, which are both 8-lug; and a 6½x14, 10-lug matching snare. The toms and snare are equipped with Gretsch's standard die-cast hoops. The bass drum features matching lacquered beech hoops with die-cast claws, key rods, and spurs.

The toms are fitted with suspension mounts and tom brackets. The floor toms include ½" legs with chambered rubber

feet that help the drum resonate more freely. All tom brackets include memory locks. The bass drum is undrilled, so a tom mount is not included, but tom arms and cymbal-stand clamps are provided. The drums are fitted with Evans heads: clear G2 tom batters and clear G1 bottoms, a coated G1 snare batter and Hazy 300 bottom, and a coated EMAD bass drum batter and ring-control front head. In addition to its adjustable strainer, the snare drum features an adjustable butt, which is handy for centering the snares. The butt and the strainer sport drum-key-operated clamps.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As I pulled the first Purewood Beech drum from its packaging, my eyes were quickly drawn to the absolutely gorgeous dark-cherry stain finish topped with mirror-buffed polyester lacquer. Add the classic Gretsch lug design, the trademark die-cast hoops, and the black and gold Renown stop-sign badge, and you have one classy-looking drum.

Of course, looks aren't everything, so I proceeded with a quick interior inspection of one of the toms, which revealed flawless finish work and level, silky-smooth bearing edges, as well as a beautiful wood grain worthy of a clear interior finish. Then it was time to get down to business and see what these babies could do. First and foremost, I needed to get them in tune, and let me tell you, they tuned very easily. Micro-turns of the key were all I needed to coax the drums into the proper tension.

SOUNDS LIKE...?

With their stock heads, die-cast hoops, and stiff shells, the Purewood Beech toms tended to favor a somewhat narrow medium-to-high tuning range. But within that span the drums were all about "That Great Gretsch Sound," with a modern, cutting-edge twist. Open yet focused, with good pitch definition, moderate sustain, and great projection, they yielded a voice all their own.

Ditto for the snare drum, which pos-

sessed the classic direct and focused Gretsch snare tone plus ear-splitting rimshot capabilities and an excellent rimclick sound. I set the bass drum batter head to a medium tension and cranked the front head tight. The result was a big, round tone, with good thump and attack. The kick was very articulate for an 18"-deep model, even with a solid front head and no internal muffling.

Just to see what else these drums could do, I performed some rudimentary experimentation with external muffling (in the form of Moongel) as well as alternative head combinations. A bit of Moongel quelled some of the ring while maintaining all the guts. Coated heads removed some of the edginess and ring from the toms for a more traditional sound, yet the drums still had a lot of cut. Just for fun I mounted Evans Hydraulic heads on two of the toms, and I found the drums still had presence, but with a punchy, short decay, a la vintage Steve Gadd. I then mounted Evans clear EC2s on the same toms, which shortened the decay slightly, punched up the tone,

ONE-SPECIES SHELLS

Gretsch's Taiwan-made Renown Purewood series derives its moniker from its same-species ply shells, which break from the classic Gretsch maple/gum formula for drums that come out of the company's U.S. factory. Prior to beech, Gretsch also produced Purewood kits with oak, rosewood, bubinga, and walnut. Same-species shells heavily emphasize the resonant characteristics of a particular wood, yielding tonally unique results.

and allowed for a somewhat lower tuning range. This was the sound I liked best. Moral of the story: This kit is not a one-trick pony.

AND IN THE END...

Class comes with a price. The Gretsch USA Custom series is out of the economic reach of many players, but the Renown series provides classic-meets-modern Gretsch sounds and features for those who can't fork over big bucks for a U.S.-made kit. With a manageable list price of \$3,690, the Purewood Beech kit is beautifully made, and it sounds magnificent. There are only forty-five of these kits available in the States, so you'll need to hunt one down.

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SOULTONE

VINTAGE OLD SCHOOL CYMBALS

Review by Michael Dawson • Photo by Rob Mazzella

MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

Within its four main lines (Custom, Custom Brilliant, Vintage, and Extreme), Soultone Cymbals, based in Encino, California, offers a wide range of sounds—from dark and traditional to bright and shimmering—that can cover just about any musical situation. For drummers looking for something a bit more specialized, the company has expanded its catalog to include the crisp and cutting Gospel line, trashy-sounding perforated FXO cymbals, and dark and rich Vintage Old School models, which we have for review this month.

Vintage Old Schools come in just three types: hi-hats, crash/rides, and flat rides. We were sent 13" and 14" hi-hats; 19", 20", 21", and 22" crash/rides; and a 20" flat ride. List prices range from \$499 to \$699, depending on size and category. When asked about the inspiration behind these "new" models, Soultone founder Iki Levy says that they're "based on the classic cymbals of the 1950s and '60s. They offer a

richer, darker signature sound and a new EarthStroke natural finish with deeper lathing to provide a sweeter open tone."

DESPITE THEIR TRASHY APPEARANCE...

Most of the time when I read that a new cymbal is modeled after the classic sounds of the '50s and '60s, I expect to hear something funky, breathy, trashy, and exceedingly dark. Not so with the Vintage Old School series. Quite the contrary, these plates are much thicker (easily within today's "medium" range), and their sounds are surprisingly clean, clear, and controlled. More and more of today's top modern jazz drummers, including Jeff Ballard, Ari Hoenig, and Dan Weiss, are going for silvery and pointed cymbal

sounds, as opposed to the smoky, wobbly vibe that Tony Williams made legendary in the '60s with the Miles Davis Quintet. These Vintage Old Schools fall right in line with this current aesthetic. (Think vintage A, as opposed to vintage K.)

MORE RIDE THAN CRASH

Old School crash/rides had warm and even overtones, and their bells sounded strong, with just enough brightness to make them jump out from the cymbals' wash. The 19" version was the only one that I would consider using as a crash exclusively, but all

TARNISHED TO PERFECTION

Soultone's EarthStroke finishing process involves putting each cymbal through a multi-stage treatment bath in order to give it a heavily weathered patina look. The degree of patina varies from cymbal to cymbal; in our Vintage Old School test group, the most heavily affected pieces were the 20" flat ride and 22" crash/ride. These two cymbals had a very rough, scratchy feel that matched their almost rusty appearance.



four of the crash/rides opened up easily with a little burst of sound when struck on the edge. Their decay was quite short, sort of like what you get when you put a small piece of tape on the underside of a more washy ride. This added a dryness, presumably caused by the thick EarthStroke finish, that helped make fast ride patterns very articulate.

The 19" Old School crash/ride was the most distinctive, while the 22" was the most universal. I liked using these two cymbals as a pair, with the 19" as my alternate ride on the left side of my kit. The 19" had a breathier vibe and was really fun to play with a broken up-tempo approach, a la Joe Chambers on Joe Henderson's "A Shade Of Jade." The 22" had a big, warm sound and a strong, stable feel that allowed the stick to bounce back very easily. I could

really hear the wood clicking off the surface of this big cymbal. The 20" and 21" crash/rides had brighter ping sounds and were washier than the 22". The no-bell profile of the 20" flat ride accentuated the dry and articulate nature of the entire Old School series, and the cymbal's decay was tamped down significantly by the EarthStroke finish. It was fun to dance around on this ride, hitting forceful shoulder crashes intermittently without worrying about the sustain building up too much.

13" AND 14" HI-HATS

While all four Old School crash/rides shared a cohesive crisp, clear, and articulate sound, the 13" and 14" hi-hats were worlds apart from one another. The 14s were great all-around hi-hats with a lower-pitched voice that's often favored for jazz

playing. But because they had a ton of presence when played partially open or when struck with the shoulder of the stick, they could easily slide into just about any musical context.

The 13" Old School hi-hats, on the other hand, were thinner, drier, and noticeably more retro sounding than the 14s. They had that almost toy-like sound you hear on a lot of early jazz, New Orleans Dixieland, and classic Duke Ellington big band records. I had a ton of fun playing quick jump swing patterns on these cymbals. There's also a more modern element to the 13" Old School hi-hats, one that recalls electronica master Jojo Mayer's super-dry and throaty signature set, so they could fit nicely into more contemporary settings as well.

soultonecymbals.com



JOYFUL NOISE

ELITE SERIES SNARE DRUMS

by Michael Dawson

MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

Last year we checked out two of Joyful Noise's snares—the TKO Modern Classic seamless brass and the Legacy flamed birch—and we were knocked out not only by their incredibly musical tones but also by their exquisite and classy design. As we said in that review, which was in the April 2010 issue, Joyful Noise drums are "destined to become classic pieces." Upping the collector factor even further, the company offers the Elite series, which features Modern Classic seamless bronze or brass shells, with the addition of detailed hand-

engraved artwork on the shells and hoops.

The Elite series consists of four models (shown from right to left in the photo above): the black-nickel-plated Winged Elite (\$2,555), which has a feather motif panel engraving; the Scrolled Elite (\$2,705), which has a black-nickel-plated shell with a scrolled feather motif engraving; the Majestic Elite (\$7,000), which has a scrolled feather motif engraving on a 24-karat-gold-plated shell; and the Esprit Elite (\$4,050), which has a scrolled feather motif engraving on

MASTERFUL TOUCH

Inspired by the look and feel of classic American drums, Joyful Noise Elite series snares are beautiful, artfully designed modern instruments featuring seamless spun brass or bronze shells, 2.5 mm solid brass hoops, solid brass Corder tube lugs, 24-karat-gold-plated feather motif badges, vintage-style crimped snare beds, precision bell-flange bearing edges, cast bronze One Touch Classic throw-offs, and one-of-a-kind hand-engraved artwork done by master engraver John Aldridge. These drums are available in 4x14, 5x14, and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 sizes, with a variety of options including gold- or nickel-plated hardware and engraved single- or triple-flange hoops.

a shell plated in pure silver. We received for review a 6 1/2x14 drum in each model. To test the differences, we tuned all four drums to identical tensions at three different batter head settings, using a DrumDial tuning gauge. We used 85 for a medium tuning, 87 for medium tight, and 89 for tight. Each drum proved to have a very distinct voice at each tuning.

WINGED WORKHORSE

If I had to choose one of the four Elite snares to be the go-to drum for a range of musical styles, the bronze-shell Winged Elite would be it. Not only does it have universal visual appeal—the beautiful feather motif panel engraving is less ornamental than the feather scroll on the other drums, and the bright nickel hardware on the black-nickel finish would work well with any drumkit—but it also produced a wide range of usable tones. At a medium tension, this drum threw out a ton of punchy midrange and low-end frequencies, plus vibrant bell-like overtones. With the drum left unmuffled, these overtones could be a bit too much for some players. (One drummer who tested the snare at a gig said the overtones were so prominent that they actually started to cause feedback in the lead singer's microphone!) But all it took was a couple of 2" strips of gaffer's tape to tamp down the ring a bit, bringing the attack and over-ring into a perfect balance of punch and "kang."

At a medium-tight tuning, the Winged Elite had a crisper, more crackling sound, and the overtones became a bit more focused and

even. This was my preferred tuning for this drum, and it reminded me of the great singing snare tone Patrick Keeler gets on the Raconteurs song "Consoler Of The Lonely." A tighter tuning brought out more pop, but the overtones remained strong and sonorous.

SCROLLED AND SUBDUED

Like the Winged Elite, the Scrolled Elite has a black-nickel-plated shell, but this drum is made from seamless brass and has gold-plated hardware and single-flange hoops. If the Winged Elite is the drum to choose for all-purpose playing, the Scrolled Elite is the one to grab when you want a puffier and more vintage-sounding vibe. Despite its single-flange hoops, which usually translate into a more prominent over-ring, the Scrolled Elite was more subdued. The lower mids stood out, and the high end was noticeable but more in the background of the overall tone. A medium tension produced a classic, almost boxy vintage sound, while medium-tight and tight tunings had strong pop and vibrant high-end overtones, reminiscent of the sound I most associate with studio legend Steve Ferrone.

MAJESTIC POWER

The Majestic Elite snare is all bling, with a 24-karat-gold-plated bronze shell and gold-plated hardware. Of the four drums we tested, this one had the liveliest sound, making it ideal for big, bombastic rock drumming styles. As with the Winged Elite, the overtones on the Majestic were very strong. But instead of mak-

ing me feel the need to tamp down the ring with tape to get a more "studio ready" tone, this drum wanted to be left wide open so its increased presence could stand strong in a heavy-rock mix. At all three tunings, the Majestic Elite opened up quickly with a wide and vibrant voice. Medium and medium-tight tensions were where this drum shined the brightest.

THE ESPRIT ASSASSIN

While the Majestic Elite was a dominant, attention-getting snare, the silver-plated brass Esprit Elite with 24-karat-gold-plated hoops and hardware had a transparent and quick tone that I found very appealing, especially when playing tighter, more deliberate grooves. This drum was much more controlled than the others; its overtones added just a touch of high-end sparkle, while the bulk of the sound sat in the pistol-popping middle and upper-middle frequencies.

The Esprit had a naturally higher-pitched sound, and it favored tighter tunings. With the batter head at 89 on the DrumDial, this drum let out a super-quick, dry, and white-noise-like pop that disappeared almost instantly. I loved using it when playing along to classic funk recordings, like Sly & the Family Stone's "Sing A Simple Song." Greg Errico's snare tone on that track is downright deadly, and this snare was a perfect match for those hard-hitting rimshots.

joyfulnoisedrumcompany.com

EVANS

POWER CENTER TOM HEADS

by Willie Rose

Evans' Power Center tom heads come with a single ply of clear 10 mil film for 6" to 12" sizes and a single ply of clear 12 mil film for 13" to 18" sizes. In addition, the heads are equipped with a 3 mil patch on the bottom. The size of the patch scales with the size of the head, getting larger as the head diameter increases. Each patch has eight narrow "stress-relief slots" taken out in a circular pattern. According to Evans, these gaps allow the patch to flex as the head vibrates and also ensure that the thickness of the patch doesn't choke the tone and resonance of the head. We were sent a set of heads for review, and we tested them on

MORE SUSTAIN THAN YOU MIGHT EXPECT

The sustain of Power Center heads isn't as long as that of an average single-ply head, but I was still surprised by how long the sound lasted, given the patch underneath. This can be attributed to the cutouts in the patch, which allow the head to vibrate more freely. I was able to get equal tonal response from each drum at all dynamic levels.



Tama Starclassic Performer Birch and Gretsch Renown Maple toms.

PUNCHY ATTACK

The first thing I noticed after tuning up the heads was how strong and punchy their initial attack was. The stick response was bright, with a thick "slap" followed by a clear, open tone. While the heads generally had the same response on both sets of test toms, I found that they really shined on the Renown kit, bringing out the deep tone of the drums' maple shells. On the birch kit, the strongest quality of the heads was their powerful attack, but the naturally shorter resonance of the shells didn't suffer either.

TUNE 'EM UP

The smaller 10" and 12" rack toms on both kits sounded best with the Power Center heads at a medium tension. After seating the heads and getting the wrinkles out, I didn't have to tighten them much beyond that to get the best tone out of the drums. Tuning the toms tightly choked the sound and didn't allow the patch to do its job of slightly muffling the sustain.

While tuning up the floor tom, however, I discovered that I could crank the head

quite high and still get the low pitch that I prefer. I'm used to keeping my floor tom tuned fairly loose to get that tone, but when the Power Center heads were tuned at lower tensions, the floor toms sounded a little dead. This isn't a downside, though, as the higher tension also made the floor toms more playable while still retaining a powerful presence.

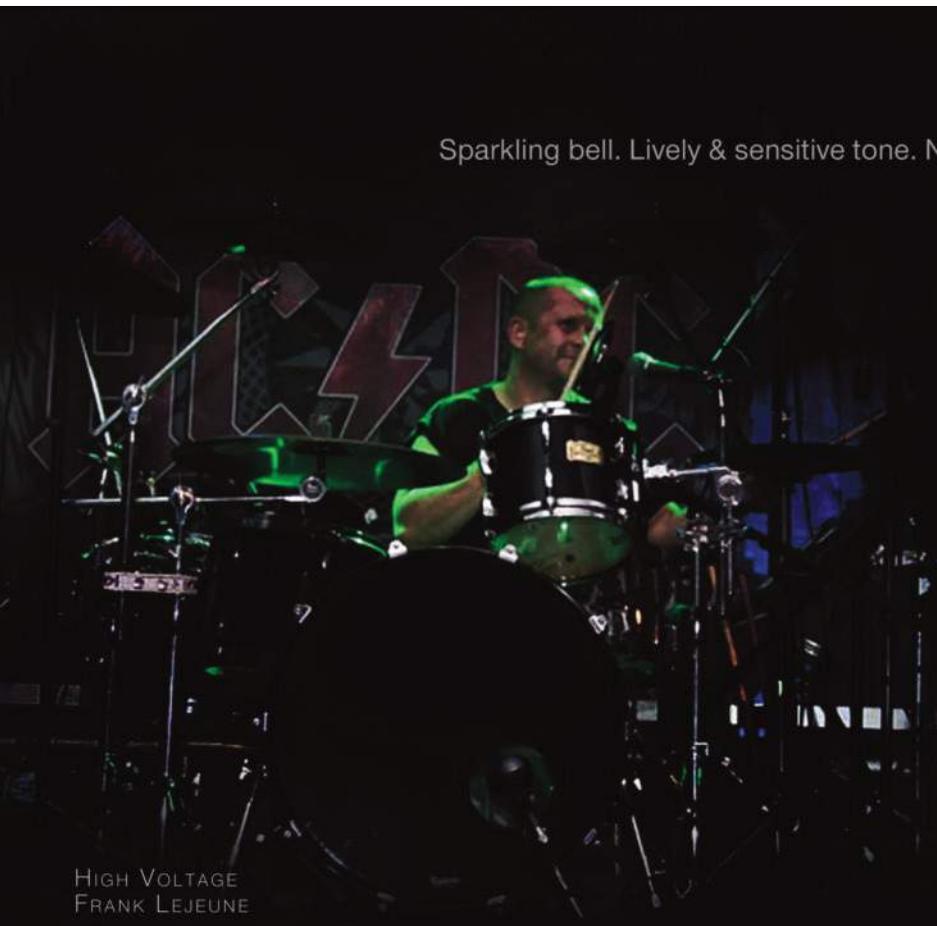
IN THE STUDIO

When I'm recording, I normally opt for coated double-ply heads on the toms. I like a thick, warm sound with a quick attack and not a lot of extra overtones. After putting the Power Center heads on the Tama birch kit, laying down some tracks, and listening to the playback, I was very surprised by how well they held up against my usual choices. Their sound was larger than what I'm used to, but they didn't overpower anything else in the mix. Instead, they offered the two things I look for the most in tom sounds: a discernible attack to cut through the music and a clear tone. When I played a ride pattern on the floor tom, the Power Center head held its weight, providing a punchy attack with a strong low end that helped fill out the overall mix.

DESIGNED FOR DURABILITY AND TONE

I really tried to put these heads through the wringer in terms of durability, logging a few weeks' worth of heavy recording and rehearsing. I'm more than pleased with how well they lasted. The heads held up best in the direct center, displaying no dents or markings over the patch. Strokes played outside the patch were more likely to leave a mark. The thicker floor tom head showed minimal wear, and, as of the end of my testing period, I'm hesitant to change it.

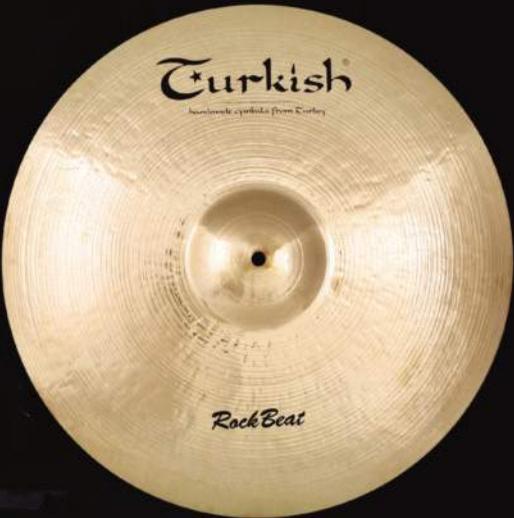
I would highly recommend these Power Center tom heads for any hard-hitting drummer looking to get the added resonance and tone that you'd expect from a single-ply head, along with the increased durability provided by a reinforcement patch. They won't last as long as thicker double-ply heads, but the reward comes in the warm, open sound that the Power Centers provide. List prices range from \$26 for a 6" head to \$48 for an 18" model. evansdrumheads.com



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DRUM RECORDING

Valuable Tips From A World-Class Engineer

by Jay Messina

There are several basic ingredients for recording an ideal drum sound. To begin with, you need a good drummer. (You've got that covered, right?) Then you need good drums in a good-sounding room, with the right mics in the right places. This might sound simplistic, but as long as you have those things taken care of, it's just a matter of making adjustments to suit the sound you're after. Here are some of my thoughts on how to achieve great-sounding drum recordings.

CONSIDER THE SPACE YOU'RE IN

A good place to start is to listen to the sound of the drums in the room. Take a walk around while someone plays the kit, and listen to what it sounds like in different locations. When you find a sweet spot, put at least one mic there. Once, while recording a band in a vacation home, I set the drums right in front of a fireplace and put an omnidirectional condenser mic up inside the chimney, which made for an interesting addition to the sound of the close mics. I ended up using that chimney mic only during a couple of fills, but it produced something special that I hadn't heard before.

TUNE OUT THE OVERTONES

After you have your mics in place (we'll get to some specifics in a bit), the next step is to deal with any tuning issues. I like to solo the toms, one at a time, while the drummer hits the snare. If I hear a tom ringing sympathetically with the snare, I'll have the drummer tune it slightly up or down. Sometimes it's a matter of retuning the snare to minimize this sympathetic ring. If you change the snare tuning, be careful not to adversely affect the other toms. If you can't eliminate enough of these extraneous tones through tuning, you can dampen the drums with a Moongel or a small piece of tape.

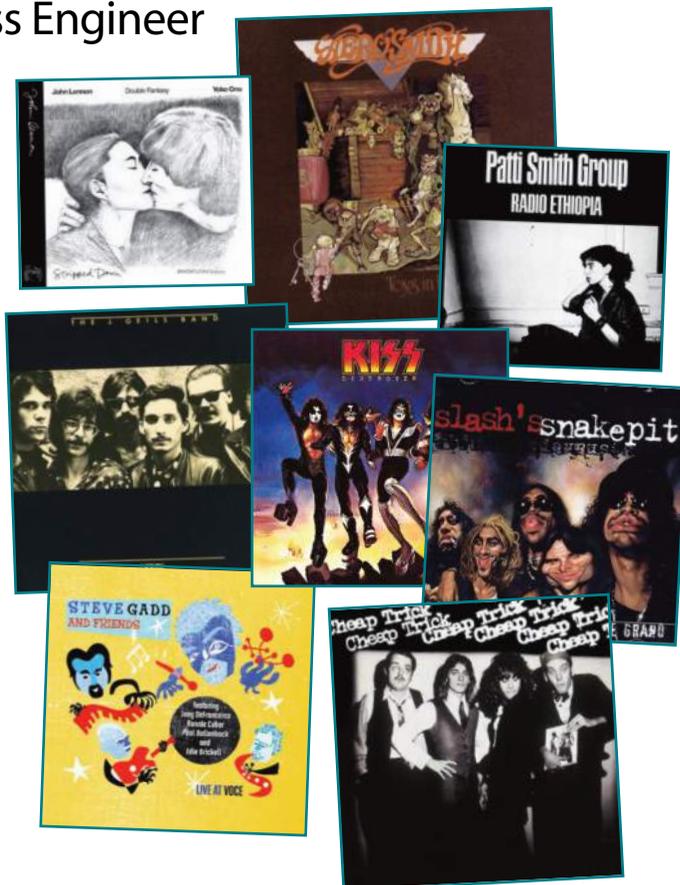
HAVE A SOUND IN MIND

The actual mics you use on your drums aren't as important as having a particular sound in your head that you're trying to achieve. Of course, this doesn't mean you can't discover something during the process that you like even better than what you'd originally conceived. And you can always experiment by adding a new mic to what you've used in the past, just to check it out.

LOCATE THE SPECIAL SPOTS

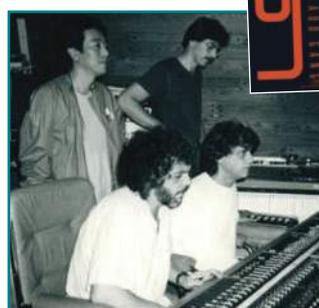
The first things I look for when engineering in someone's project studio are adjacent rooms and spaces that can produce a unique ambience to help give the illusion of size. There's usually a bathroom nearby that can provide some cool natural reverberation. If so, I'll experiment by placing two mics in there. Tiled rooms often provide cool-sounding reflections when you point the mics away from the source (your drums).

You can also create the feeling of a bigger room by delaying the room tracks. Based on the fact that sound travels approximately 1,080 feet per second, you can roughly calculate that one millisecond equals about one foot. So after you've recorded your drums, you can move back your room tracks by twenty



Working With The Masters

Aerosmith's *Draw The Line* was recorded in an abandoned monastery in Armonk, New York, which had an empty chapel that was perfect for the drums. We used four Neumann U 87 room mics, plus a Sennheiser 405 shotgun mic placed high over the drums and pointed at the snare. I used a Universal Audio 1176 compressor on the shotgun mic at a 20:1 ratio, to really squash the signal going to tape. Using just a little of that mic's signal in the mix added a lot of energy and excitement to the tracks.



Producer Kiyoshi Itoh, Steve Gadd, assistant engineer Frank Pekoc, and Messina working on *The Gadd Gang* in 1986.

Working with Steve Gadd is always a treat. When tracking "Duke's Lullaby" for his first Gadd Gang CD, Steve recorded one drum at a time until he got the complete pattern. I used a close mic on the drum he was playing, along with at least two room mics. This combination helped add dimension to the overall sound. For the final mix we muted certain tracks at sixteen- or thirty-two-bar intervals. Steve overdubbed a marching drum pattern over one sixteen-bar section, and he played a solo on his son's drumset during one of the thirty-two-bar sections. The fact that Steve came into the session with a complete vision of the final mix is a tribute to his true genius.

milliseconds and get the illusion of twenty extra feet added to the size of your studio.

I've had great results by recording a talkback mic that was originally placed next to the kit so the drummer could communicate with me while I was in the control room. Sometimes the leakage into this vocal mic adds special life to a recording.

ONCE YOU FIND THE SOUND, COMMIT TO IT

I prefer to record drums with whatever processing (EQ, compression, reverb, etc.) is necessary in order to produce the desired result. In other words, if it sounds good, print it. On some rare occasions you might find that you've added too much processing, but so what! These shortcomings are usually far outweighed by the magic created in the spontaneity of the moment.

SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

Every time I go into a studio to record, it's a fresh experience. That said, here are some standard techniques you might want to try.

Kick drum: I like to place a dynamic mic just inside the hole in the head (not all the way in). If the front head doesn't have a hole, I'll place a ribbon mic a little off center, pretty close to the head. If you use compression, be aware that it's easy to lose some of the desired bottom end in the kick sound when you overcompress it.

Snare: I usually use a mic on the top and bottom of the snare. (The signal from the bottom mic should be flipped out of phase to keep it aligned with the signal from the top mic.) A Shure SM57 is a good choice for both positions. I sometimes add a third mic on top, which I treat with various effects.

Toms: The Sennheiser 421 dynamic mic is always a good choice. This mic captures the meat of the drum tone, as well as plenty of

attack. I sometimes use compression on toms when recording; the amount depends on whatever sounds good at that moment.

Overheads: When monitoring just the overheads, however many there may be, I like the snare to be in the center of the stereo image. I listen for that, along with whether I'm hearing all of the cymbals clearly. Snare leakage in the overheads is important to the overall snare sound. I'm not locked in to any particular mics for overheads, but I generally lean toward large-diaphragm condensers.

Room mics: I love room mics, and I feel they make for a more genuine drum sound. As I mentioned earlier, a generous selection of mics placed around the room is a safe way to start. Compression usually adds some excitement and realism. Just be careful not to use too fast of an attack-and-release setting, or the cymbals will sound as if they're being played in reverse. This happens because the compression is cutting out the attack, leaving mostly the swell of the cymbal after it's been struck.

BE OPEN TO INSPIRATION

Having fun and trusting my instincts are two of the main things that have kept me passionate about recording for all these years. And no matter how many times you think you know how to get the "best" sound, it's always those decisions made in the moment that add the magic touch to the finished product.



Jay Messina has been a top recording engineer and producer for over forty years. His credits include Aerosmith's *Get Your Wings*, *Toys In The Attic*, *Rocks*, and *Draw The Line*; Booker T. & the MGs' *Melting Pot*; Kiss's *Destroyer* and *Dynasty*; Miles Davis's *Star People*; the Gadd Gang's self-titled debut album; and many others. For more, visit jaymessina.com.



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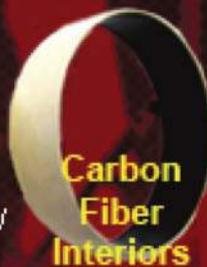
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STUDIO SOUNDS

by Patrick Berkery

EJ DeCoske



SELECT YOUR DRUMMER



SELECT YOUR KIT



SELECT YOUR MICS



Say there's a specific drum sound you're going for in the studio. It could be something that's already on record, like the pristine thud of Mick Fleetwood's tubs on *Rumours*. Or maybe it's a sound you hear in your head—a fusion of a Steve Jordan-style high-pitched snare, a room-shaking kick like John Bonham's, a range of pitch-perfect toms a la Neil Peart, and some big, washy cymbals like Brian Blade's.

To achieve your desired sound, whatever it may be, you research the makes and models of the drums and cymbals used by the players involved, the microphones and mixing consoles employed on the recordings, the types of rooms the drums were tracked in, how the drums were tuned, and what kind of muffling was used on the snare. You try recording with exactly the gear you researched, or as close as you can get. Then you listen to the playback—and it sounds nothing like the drum sound you were after. The engineer fiddles with mic placement, you try retuning, the producer suggests a little more compression, you hit the record button again, and... it's still not making it.

In your quest to get this magical drum sound, you might have overlooked one very

important variable that has nothing to do with the nuts and bolts of gear or tech stuff. The problem might lie with *you*.

"Any engineer who really knows what they're doing will tell you that the most important thing in the signal path is the player," says the versatile session drummer Steven Nistor. "After that it's kind of a tie between the instrument and the room it's being played in."

Yes, how you play the drums in the studio is pretty much square one when it comes to getting a good sound—on any kit, for any style of music, in any type of studio setting. If you're trying to beat the sound into the drum rather than letting the drum do its job and speak naturally, you risk choking and compromising the natural tone. If you're attacking the cymbals like you would at a high-intensity live show, they're probably going to bleed into every mic on the kit and impact every effect on those mics. That's going to make for a hot mess of high-end frequency.

Of course, the kind of drums and cymbals you use on a particular session does matter. You wouldn't want to use an old Ludwig Club Date kit on a metal session, nor would you show up to play on a delicate singer-songwriter's record with a piccolo snare

that's tuned to sound like a gunshot. But what you—or the artist, the producer, or the engineer—perceive to be the right gear for the job is just part of the equation involved in getting a good drum sound in the studio.

To help break down that equation, *MD* spoke with three session aces of varying pedigrees: Nistor, a jazz-trained drummer who has recorded with Danger Mouse, noted engineer Steve Albini, famed producer Daniel Lanois, and many others; Jay Bellerose, whose unique rhythmic rumble—built around a fondness for vintage Slingerland Rolling Bomber kits and a penchant for using maracas and shakers to occupy the role hi-hats usually would—has graced many a T Bone Burnett production; and Steven Wolf, an in-demand pop-rock and R&B drummer, producer, and programmer who often tweaks and embellishes his kit work with programmed parts and samples.

While the gigs and gear might differ for these three players, all of them know what goes into achieving the proper sonics for the job at hand. It takes having the right tools—not necessarily the fanciest or most expensive ones—and the right touch. It takes knowing your role and keeping your ears, eyes, and mind open.

STEVEN WOLF Alicia Keys, Katy Perry

MD: Do you get specific requests from artists and producers in terms of what gear they'd like you to use?

Steven: Some artists and producers are really anal about that, and some really don't care. Alicia Keys is a vintage-gear nut. She has her own studio, and she's constantly picking up vintage kits and snares and cymbals. But most artists I work with aren't that informed about drum sounds. Maybe the producer is hiring me because they saw my name on a certain record and they want that sound. I'll have to explain that on a lot of records now, the mix engineers use SoundReplacer. The kick and snare you're hearing aren't necessarily just my kick and snare. There are samples that certain engineers use on everything.

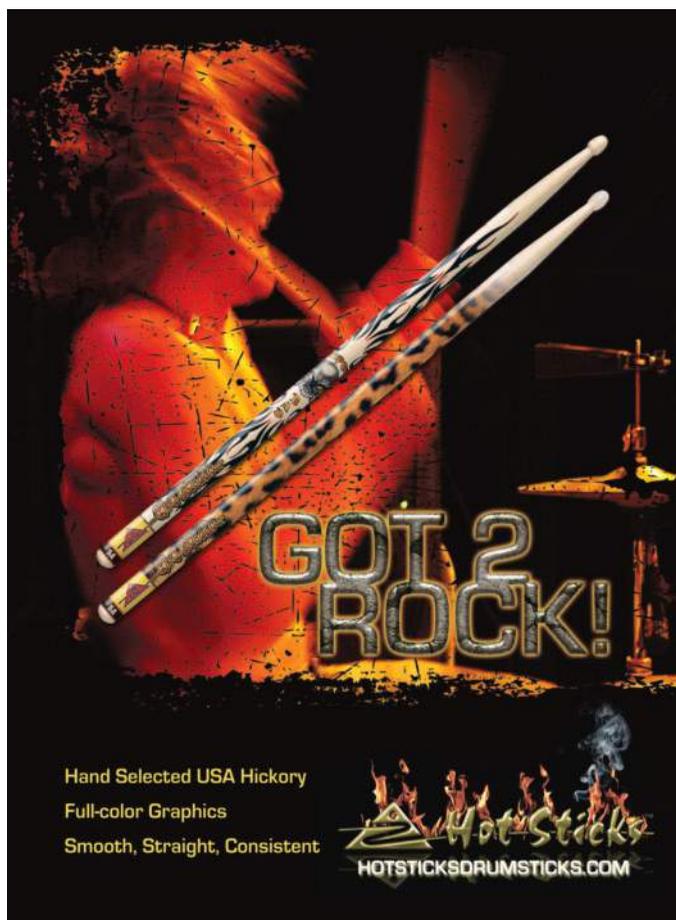
MD: Do you think it's important for a drummer to be well versed in all of those sampling options, like SoundReplacer, along with all the outboard gear that can enhance drum sounds?

Steven: Not necessarily. You're getting hired as a drummer, not a drummer-slash-engineer. I honestly never paid attention to that side of things until I started producing myself.

MD: What about the tech stuff pertaining to the drums in the room, like mics and mic placement?

Steven: It definitely can't hurt. But that's one area where I just let the engineers do what they want. I would say that on your list of what you should be familiar with, mic choices and placement should be below knowing what drums to use and how to get a good sound out of them. Generally, unless it's your own studio, you're not going to have to know that stuff.

MD: You work in a world where your drums are often comped and moved, or sampled. Is it important for a drummer playing on those



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CHRIS PENNIE The Sound, Or A Sound?



Coheed And Cambria's drummer is famously studios and hands-on when it comes to arriving at studio sounds. So, just what is Pennie thinking about when he's faced with today's infinite number of sonic choices?

How important is it to develop your own sound as opposed to exploring different possibilities for different recordings?

I think exploring different possibilities will *lead* you to your sound. Before capturing your playing, you do a lot of exploring and developing your playing style. You have to have a starting point, and that comes with experimenting.



I think the most important thing to remember when you're recording is that ultimately you have to commit to a sound. You could spend forever going over every possible option and wind up nowhere. It's important to have a rough outline to follow and stick to it.

Do you have certain go-to gear and tuning approaches in the studio, or is every new recording a matter of starting from scratch?

I definitely have particular gear and studios that I have gone to for sessions in the past: certain mics, kick drums, snares, compressors, rooms, recording medium—Pro Tools or tape!—consoles, etc. All these choices give me familiarity and a great starting point, because I know they've worked for me before in many different situations.

As I learn more, though, I'm more open to experimenting. I like to try different kits, different snares, cymbals, drum rooms, mics, mic techniques, outboard gear, tunings, head combinations, stick sizes, different tips on the sticks...the list goes on. It's been interesting to check out different gear and see what it sounds like compared to what I'm used to using.

I've really been into how things sound and the infinite ways you can go about capturing them. From experience I know exactly what drums, cymbals, etc., I need to use on particular tracks, and I usually do those tracks first. On the second batch of songs that require some experimenting, I'll keep the basic configuration of the kit that I had with the first batch, but I'll slowly replace and interchange components—for instance, I'll use smaller snares, swap out coated for clear heads, try different-size toms and thinner cymbals—until I feel the vibe is where I want it and it's complementing the song.

It's also very important for me to never compromise my facility around the kit. I always need to feel comfortable and confident while tracking.

For more with Chris Pennie, go to moderndrummer.com.

types of sessions to hit with consistency—same volume, same spot on the drum every time?

Steven: Yeah, consistency is definitely important for anything that's in the pop-rock realm. As someone who's spent plenty of time editing drum takes in front of Pro Tools, it's nice to just have a consistent backbeat and not have every snare hit sound different. If you're making a comp from different takes and you find this great fill, you want it at a volume and dynamic consistent with the rest of the track.

MD: When you're getting your sound together on a session, what are you listening for to make sure it's working with the rest of the ensemble?

Steven: Generally I'll just go for a good sound in the room. Sometimes I'll tune the drums to the key of the song—there aren't that many notes you can do. Usually I'll go for a root or a fifth—something that's going to sit well with everything else, especially if it's a really ringy snare or something where the toms are the main part of the groove. I'll tune them so you don't have a ring that's a constant harmonic clashing with everything else in the track.

STEVEN NISTOR Daniel Lanois, Gnarl's Barkley

MD: Your credits run the gamut from things that are kind of roomy and sparse to records that are more produced. What drums do you use to cover such a broad range of styles?

Steven: DW just made me an amazing Jazz series kit. I tune it like a Gretsch kit—wide open, coated heads top and bottom, ringing for days. I also have a '50s Gretsch kit that I tune way low. Those are the two kits I'll bring with me, and it's basically all covered. For snare drums I have two Ludwigs, both from the '60s—a Supra-Phonic and a 5"-deep Acrolite. You can't go wrong with those. It's like a P-Bass for drums. I'll have the Acrolite tuned medium and slightly open. I'll have the Supra-Phonic way dead, with a towel or wadded-up tape on it, just mush. DW also made me a 5¹/₂x15 Super Solid. It's like a shotgun. It can do anything. That's really my go-to. Between that and the two Ludwigs, I've got it covered. You really *can* get what a producer or artist wants with two snare drums.

MD: What cymbals do you suggest for covering a wide palette?

Steven: Even if I didn't endorse them, I would say Istanbul Agop. They make such an incredible variety of cymbals. I've been into really small cymbals lately. I'm using more 16" and 18" cymbals, and they make you work for it. In the studio with small cymbals you have to know what you're going for and what you're dealing with. If it's a heavy rock song and you're using 16" crashes, you just hit them hard. If you're doing something that's a little more sensitive, like a T Bone Burnett kind of vibe, and you're riding on a 16" crash, you have to have your touch together. And you have to think: If there's a compressor hitting it, how hard is it hitting it? You have to know when that cymbal is just going to be like *whooooosh* in the final mix.

I've definitely learned that the softer you hit cymbals, the

more work you'll get in the long run. And the quieter you play the cymbals, the bigger the drums sound. That's kind of the secret. Having that balance between hitting the cymbal softly and getting a good, solid tone out of the drums will get you work, and people will say, "Wow, you sound really good." Actually, "That kit sounds really good" is usually what they'll say. [laughs]

MD: Are there specific elements of a performer's style that affect the gear and tuning choices you make?

Steven: I'm tempted to say no. I would like to say that it's all about trying to find what's right for the song, and you read a lot about that, but I don't think it's true in an obvious way. What happens is that I'm either at Lanois' place or somewhere else, and I've got a snare sitting up there just because it was the first one that came out of the bag or whatever and we just start jamming. Ninety percent of the time, that's what ends up going to tape. To me it's more about the actual feeling in the room.

Now, there are producers who are very demanding or specific about what kind of sound they want. When I'm in those situations, those decisions have already been made for me. And so it doesn't matter how the guitar affects me emotionally. Whether you agree with it or not, they have the idea of the final picture in their head. At that point I put it in their hands and say, "How about this snare? How about this one?" I'm just as happy to do that too.

MD: Listening to the records you've played on, particularly the stuff with Daniel Lanois, it sounds as though having just

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the right touch on the kit is something you strive for.

Steven: It definitely comes down to touch. If you're hitting the cymbal as loud as you're hitting the snare drum, it's going to sound awful. And the nice thing about touch is that anywhere you go, any kit you sit down behind, it goes with you. You don't have to check it as baggage. It's what you have, and, in the end, it's what you'll be hired for as a professional. All the good guys have it. It's more out of a jazz tradition. But now more rock and pop guys know that, because you see a guy like Matt Chamberlain or Jay Bellerose—those guys know how to hit a drum.

JAY BELLEROSE T Bone Burnett, Plant/Krauss

MD: Typically on a recording session the kit sound is built around the kick, snare, and hi-hat. But your sound often seems as though it's built around the kick and everything else—hand percussion and towels over drums are an integral part of your sound.

Jay: Yeah, that's another way to darken the sound. I'm working with people who let me do that. I love really murky, dark, warm-sounding drums. And an important thing is trusting and knowing the engineer. I'm working with great engineers. Ryan Freeland, who works with Joe Henry, and T Bone's engineer, Mike Piersante—those guys really have my back. I can go as far as I want to go. And if I go too far, they'll tell me if it's not translating. There's a great communication going on with

those guys. That's a huge part of my sound.

MD: Using the Rolling Bomber drums with calfskin heads in the studio, do you have to play them with more sensitivity than you would a newer kit with regular coated heads?

Jay: I have the same kind of touch on all drums. I don't play that hard. Calf heads can be a little more delicate. Maybe I have the tendency to play a little lighter on calf heads. With these drums, the quieter you play them, the better and the bigger they sound. That's another thing that working in the studio with T Bone reinforced for me. He really loves when you play soft. On the Robert Plant/Alison Krauss record [*Raising Sand*] I was playing really light. They encouraged it.

When I would go into the control room to listen back, they'd turn the drums up. Instead of hitting hard and the notes getting more compressed and smaller, it was the opposite. You'd hit softer, and they'd turn the gain up. It'd sound like a million bucks. You really get the true tone and roundness of the instrument. It's all touch with those beautiful old instruments. Violins, mandolins—when you let the mic do the work, that's when the sound is really gonna happen.

MD: Beyond sticks, what do you use to draw such funky sounds out of the drums?

Jay: I use my hands a lot, and I try to do as much as I can in the initial pass with tambourines and shakers. Sometimes I'll play with a stick or tambourine in one hand and I'll use my fingers on a drum with the other hand. I do a lot of that kind of stuff. As far as sticks and brushes go, it just depends on what I'm

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hearing and what's going to support and translate in the track. That could be anything. It could be knitting needles—whatever is going to help pull out the right tone and sit in the track the right way.

MD: What would you suggest to a drummer who wants to capture your sonic essence in the studio?

Jay: I would say there's more to it than just me and my gear. I have a lot of help. I have the right musicians around me, and I'm reacting to that. And I have the right engineers. It's like, "How do we get the Motown sound?" You don't anymore. It doesn't exist. The room is gone, the players are gone, that time is gone. You get it when you listen to it on records. Now, I could give someone a list of what I'm using. But the beauty of it is, if they tried to use all that, it would come out a different way. I'm a piece of the puzzle. There are a lot of other characters involved.

Our Contributors



STEVEN WOLF

Select discography: Alicia Keys, *The Element Of Freedom*; Avril Lavigne, *The Best Damn Thing*; Katy Perry, *One Of The Boys*; Leona Lewis, *Spirit*; Daniel

Merriweather, *Love & War*

Sound advice: "If you know what you're doing tuning-wise, you can cover pretty much anything they're going to ask for with two snare drums. A good 6 1/2 x 14 Supra-Phonic and a piccolo should do it."



JAY BELLEROSE

Select discography: Joe Henry, *Tiny Voices*; T Bone Burnett, *The True False Identity*; Robert Plant & Alison Krauss, *Raising Sand*; Allen Toussaint,

The Bright Mississippi; Ray LaMontagne, *God Willin' & The Creek Don't Rise*

Sound advice: "The hi-hat is no longer a staple in the drumset for me. It's more a color or a special effect. That's one thing I highly encourage people to explore. It actually is a beautiful instrument when it's used that way."



STEVEN NISTOR

Select discography: Danger Mouse/Sparklehorse, *Dark Night Of The Soul*; Daniel Lanois, *Here Is What Is*; Gnarlz Barkley, *The Odd Couple*; Martina Topley

Bird, *The Blue God*; Sparks, *The Seduction Of Ingmar Bergman*

Sound advice: "For a drummer in a band, it's very important to make sure you're happy with the sound. For studio drummers, I say this lovingly, but it's almost none of your business. As a professional, you have to know your place."



CHRIS PENNIE

Select discography: Dillinger Escape Plan, *Dillinger Escape Plan*, *Calculating Infinity*, *Miss Machine*; Coheed And Cambria, *Year Of The Black Rainbow*;

Return To Earth, *Automata*

Sound advice: "A computer that's powerful enough to run a DAW like Cubase or Pro Tools, plus a couple of mics, is all you need to get into the game. You'll start to realize right away that even with the minimal amount of gear you have, there are infinite ways to capture your performance."

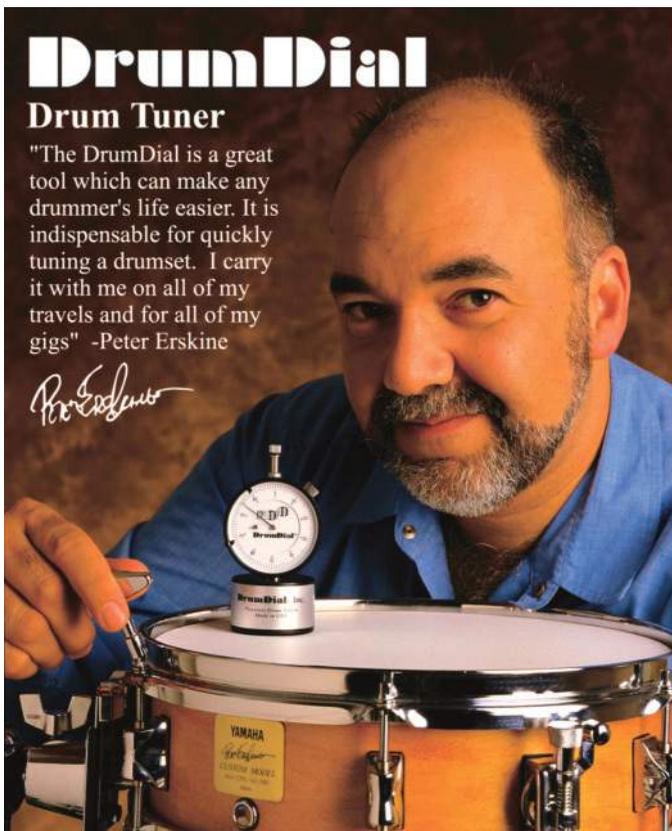


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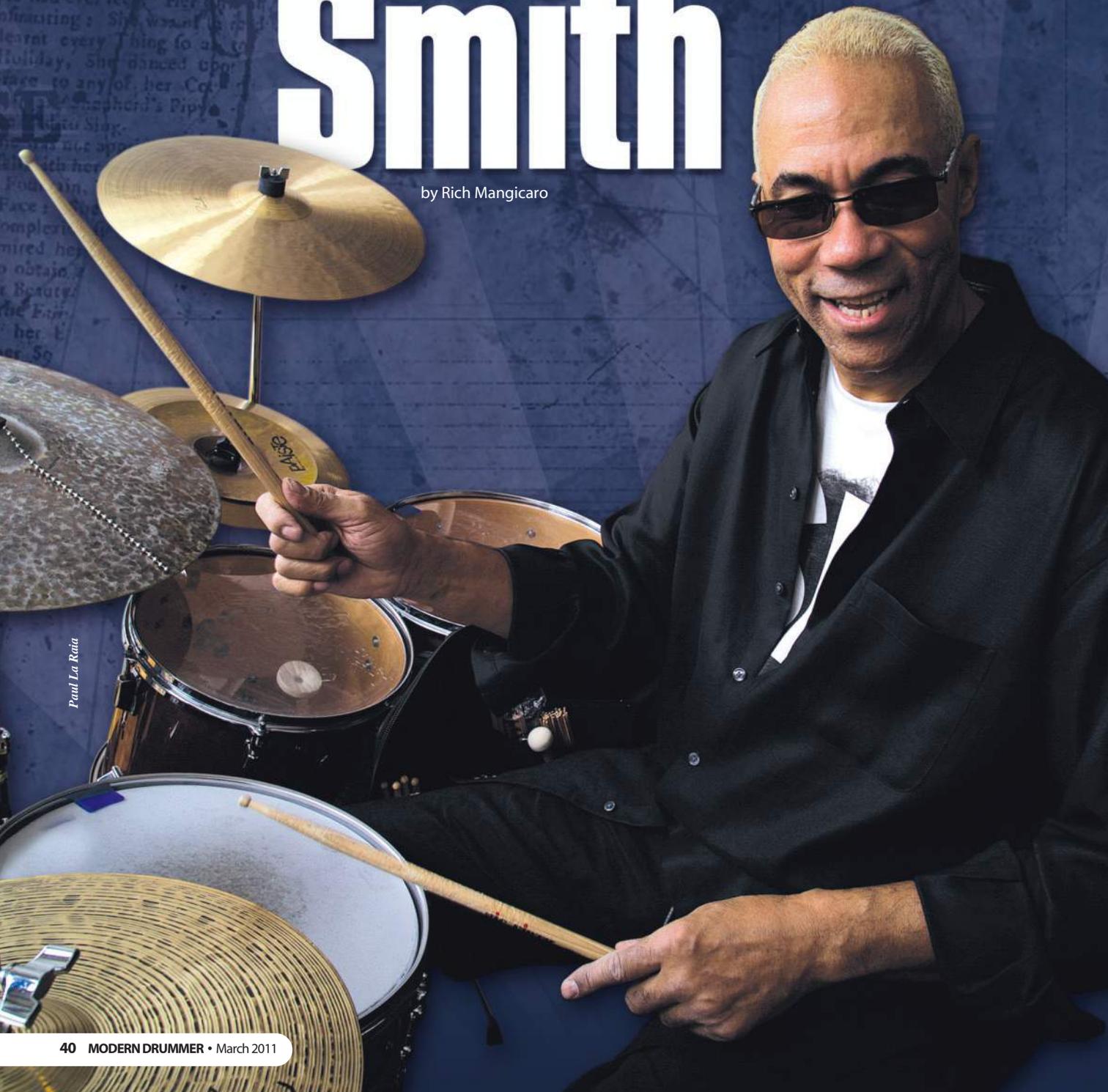
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Tony "Thunder" Smith

by Rich Mangicaro



Paul La Raia

Lou Reed's sensitive powerhouse traveled a long and twisting musical path to his current destination. He might not have realized it at the time, but the lessons and skills he learned along the way prepared him perfectly for Reed's relentlessly exploratory rock 'n' roll.

Tony "Thunder" Smith has held the drum chair with Lou Reed, one of the most important figures in rock 'n' roll history, longer than any other drummer has. Coming of age on northern California's fertile early-'70s multicultural music scene, Smith was a member of the popular Latin crossover bands Azteca, featuring guitarist Neal Schon and percussionists Pete and Sheila Escovedo, and Malo, led by Carlos Santana's brother Jorge. Smith subsequently landed important fusion and R&B gigs with Jan Hammer, David Sanborn, and Stacy Lattisaw, and continued to spread his musical wings with French superstar Serge Gainsbourg and proto-punk singer Nina Hagen.

In the mid-'90s, when Lou Reed began working on his studio album *Set The Twilight Reeling*, Smith heeded an unexpected call to immediately trek to New York from his home base in Boston—

less Reed calls for his studio and performance needs.

MD recently sat down with Tony at a tiny French café in New York City to learn what it's like to consistently be there—head, hands, and heart—for an artist of such conviction and invention.

MD: What was your first meeting with Lou Reed like?

Tony: I got to the studio and Lou had me sit down and play along with a record. Talk about being put on the spot! I played for about two minutes, and then he stopped the record and said, "Now, this is the type of drumming I like." He then asked everybody to leave the studio, so I started walking out. He said, "No, not you!" We went out on the patio and started talking business. That was the beginning of our fifteen-year working relationship.

MD: Playing with Lou is basically a singer-songwriter gig, right?

Tony: Definitely. Lou, like many

also about how singer-songwriters structure songs rhythmically—or, say, when they want more intensity without changing the volume?

Tony: Yeah. You're the engine, and if they go off a bit you're the one who has to hold it together. You must tailor your playing for that artist. And it's got to be interesting. Sonically you make decisions that complement the song and the artist's style. This can include varying from the traditional drumkit, blending various percussion sounds, creating a hybrid setup, or even just playing different parts of the snare drum. Many players don't think about all the different pitches across the snare; there's a whole world to be explored, even within that one area. And it's the same with other parts of the kit, even extending to playing the stands, the rims—they're all sounds that can either fit in with the music or distract from it. They're all choices, and making those choices correctly can keep us working.

MD: Many songwriters gravitate toward certain grooves. How do you keep it fresh and musical?

Tony: You can vary the accents slightly within the grooves, just to give each groove its own thing. Sometimes they're so similar that it's a good idea to record your

"Bassist Fernando Saunders recommended Tony to me during a record we were working on. I was looking for a certain thing, and Tony came in and did it perfectly. Tony is a very sensitive drummer—really smart and stylistically sound. He pays attention to the vocal in the song, and he's got the power and chops to back it up. He's also a great guy, and that doesn't hurt." —**Lou Reed**

as in, "Book the next available train!"—to lend his electronic-drumming expertise to the recording. Fifteen years later, Smith is still the man who the notoriously rest-

singer-songwriters, has his own way of playing time, of phrasing and expressing dynamics. When you learn to follow the singer, it prepares you for anything.

MD: Besides their time sense, is it

playing in rehearsals and keep a copy with you on an iPod for reference, until you have it ingrained in your brain. Once you have it, then you don't need that.

Also, program your tempos on

something like a Rhythm Watch, and keep that next to you on stage to take the guesswork out. Of course, you can have all the tempos programmed and approved by the artist, and then they might change them at the show, depending on the vibe. In those cases you just go with it, but at least you're prepared.

MD: When you first started working with Lou, what were some of the challenges?

Tony: I began working with Lou while recording *Set The Twilight Reeling*. He had built a studio in his house. We were going to record the basic tracks live with the drums recorded via MIDI. The overdubs, vocals, and cymbals were to be done in another

studio. The challenge was to get the Roland TD-7 kit to sound like a live, cutting-edge acoustic kit that didn't lack the sound and feel of a real kit. We accomplished that.

MD: How has your playing changed since working with Lou?

Tony: My playing has become more vocal oriented. A lot of the rhythms for Lou's songs come from his vocal stylings, and these become the groove. Once the band's parts support these vocal stylings by letting them breathe, the songs orchestrate themselves. I've always been a rhythmic player; I feel that my fluidity and melodic side have grown.

MD: What's your favorite aspect of playing his music?

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and 22" Signature Heavy Chinas, a 20" Twenty China, and, stacked, a 10" Dark Energy Mark 1 splash, a 11" Dimensions Power splash, and a 12" Signature splash

Heads: Evans, including Genera Power Center snare batters and Hazy 300 bottoms, Genera G2 tom batters, a clear EQ4 bass drum batter, and an EQ3 front head

Sticks: Vic Firth AS8D

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Tony: There are many, but if I had to pick one, it would be that Lou is always evolving and changing. He's always trying new rhythms and bass lines and changing the chord structures. It's like Lou, with the band, is stripping the song down and then rebuilding it. It's a fun and challenging process.

MD: He's a rock icon, and as a founder of the Velvet Underground he's had far-reaching cultural influence, inspiring important people in fields beyond music, such as art and politics. Consequently you've found yourself in some interesting situations, like meeting the first president of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel.

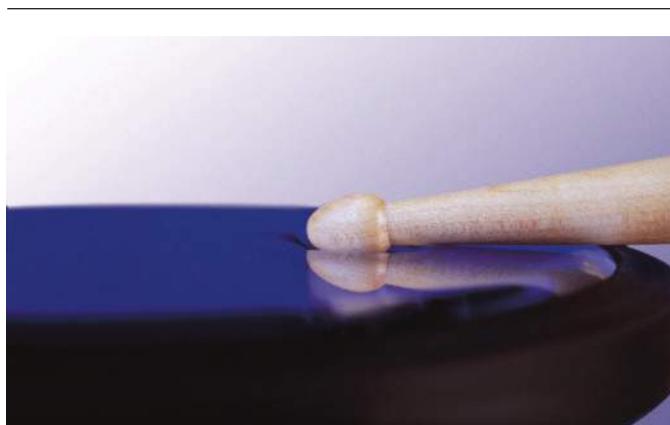
Tony: Lou is a longtime friend of President Havel. He'd been invited to lunch, and he wanted the band to be there. That's when I had the pleasure of meeting the president. He took us on a tour of the presidential palace and then led us to the ballroom. He reaches on the shelf for a remote control. I ask, "Where's the TV?" President Havel says, "No TV—this is a controller for the lights, given to me by the Rolling Stones!"

About a year later, President Havel was to be the honored guest of President Clinton. When Clinton asked him who would be his choice for the entertainment, he requested Lou Reed. Imagine...now I'm in the White House. I got the tour, and after we finished our concert I got a hug from President Clinton. *What?* But really, the most fun is just the camaraderie we all have playing together in this band—that's the real fun, and it's why I got into this business.

MD: In 2004 you joined the staff at the prestigious Berklee School Of Music. In the classes you teach, do you cover different styles, or do you specialize in certain areas?

Tony: All styles, but I focus on certain things like double bass and funk drumming. I also teach a drumset class for non-percussionists. That's a really great class where I help other instrumentalists connect rhythm with melody. With a lot of them, their rhythmic sensibility needs work, so I help them understand how to utilize subdivision and how to break down rhythms to better understand how they line up with the melody.

The thing I noticed teaching these types of classes was that a lot of accepted instruction techniques stop at the 16th note. Why? What about the 32nd note—how do you count that? You know, when you count 16th notes, you count, "1-e-&-a,



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TONY "THUNDER" SMITH

2-e-&-a...." I find that only a small handful of students know how to count 32nd notes. It doesn't matter what language you speak—you've got to be able to count the note's subdivisions. When I've asked my students why their teachers didn't give them this information, they've told me their teachers' teachers didn't give it to them.

MD: So how *would* you count 32nd notes?

Tony: "1-a-did-e-&-a-did-e, 2-a-did-e-&-a-did-e...." It's eight 32nd notes per quarter note. So if you know the mathematics, it eliminates the guesswork. A nine-stroke roll, for example, would be "1-a-did-e-&-a-did-e, 2." It's easier to visualize quickly. If you know this, it becomes much easier to figure out the longer figures, rolls, etc. Knowing this helps musicians play a lot tighter and, rather than trying to *feel* difficult figures, it helps them count them.

MD: Who taught that to you?

Tony: My teacher Sam Ulano. He's one of the masters of all time. He's over ninety now and still teaching. I highly recommend that all the readers check out Sam's website, samulano.com, and learn about him. A lot of what I learned with him has helped me with the odd-time thing, playing rhythms over rhythms, and independence. When I break it down for my students, it's really fun to see the light-bulb go on above their heads. And hopefully it helps them understand how to play difficult figures easier.

MD: Do you find that some of your students come to you for lessons after searching out some recordings you did years ago?

Tony: Man, if it weren't for my students at Berklee, I wouldn't have a lot of those old recordings.

One of my students found a bootleg DVD of a live show I did with John McLaughlin in São Paulo...they're always finding stuff that I don't have copies of. It's great.

MD: Since you started at Berklee, what would you say is the biggest thing that's changed your own playing?

Tony: Patience and trying to leave the ego at the door. It's a lesson for us teachers to know how to keep this in perspective. The students will already know who you are and what you've done—you don't have to sell yourself to them. Rather, you must connect with them and come from a place of exchange rather than of superiority. Yes, you have to be the teacher, but with today's students, many times they're already far ahead of the students of years ago, with so many learning resources at their fingertips. Chances are, you, as a teacher, will also be learning from them, just as long as you're open.

MD: With today's technology, students have so many distractions, from Facebook to texting to tweeting. How do you keep them focused?

Tony: I try to keep them challenged. I may give them something difficult to

RECORDINGS

Jan Hammer Oh, Yeah? /// **Jan Hammer Group** Live In New York
/// **Jeff Beck With The Jan Hammer Group** Live /// **John McLaughlin With The One Truth Band** Electric Dreams /// **Serge Gainsbourg** Live At Casino De Paris, Le Zénith De Gainsbourg /// **Pat DiNizio** Songs And Sounds /// **Lou Reed** Perfect Night: Live In London, Ecstasy, Live At Montreux (DVD), Spanish Fly: Live in Spain (DVD)

INFLUENCES

Miles Davis all (Jimmy Cobb, Tony Williams, Philly Joe Jones, Elvin Jones, Billy Cobham, Jack DeJohnette, Al Foster, etc.) /// **Peter Gabriel** So (Manu Katché, Jerry Marotta) /// **Sting** all (Manu Katché, Vinnie Colaiuta, Omar Hakim, Kenwood Dennard, etc.) /// **Prince** all (Prince, John Blackwell, Sheila E, Michael Bland, etc.) /// **John Coltrane** A Love Supreme (Elvin Jones) /// **Tony Williams Lifetime** The Collection (Tony Williams) /// **Tower Of Power** all (David Garibaldi) /// **Allen Smith Quartet** Cornucopia (Omar Clay) /// **Don Grolnick** Hearts And Numbers (Peter Erskine, Steve Jordan) /// **Fun Lovin' Criminals** Come Find Yourself (Steve-O) /// **Stevie Wonder** Fulfillingness' First Finale (Stevie Wonder) /// **Jimi Hendrix** all (Mitch Mitchell, Buddy Miles) /// **The Rolling Stones** Black And Blue (Charlie Watts) /// **Sly & The Family Stone** Essential (Greg Errico, Andy Newmark) /// **Kirk Franklin** Hero (Shaun Martin, Terry Baker) /// **Mahavishnu Orchestra** The Lost Trident Sessions (Billy Cobham) /// **Michael Jackson** all (Ndugu Chancler, Jonathan Moffett, John "JR" Robinson, Jeff Porcaro, etc.)

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Paul La Raia

work on and they'll go, "No way." Then they'll find themselves working harder to prove to themselves that they can do it. Some of the students, though, come in and are already killin'—but there's always something we need to focus on and refine. That's the fun challenge of being a teacher and the advantage that we have from our professional experience.

MD: Can you give a specific example of a profound experience you had with a student?

Tony: One time I asked a really talented student to play a half-note triplet. He did it fine, so then I asked him to make it funky. He was like, "No way." So I put on James Brown's "The Payback." At first he didn't hear it, but I broke the groove down for him and I could see the lightbulb go on. He then could see how the half-note triplet applied and how that groove could work in other situations. So I had

taken someone with tons of chops and turned him on to a new way of listening. Very exciting. The beauty of simplicity and giving them more confidence in reading—that's what I try to achieve. This type of stuff is the teacher's payoff.

MD: So what's coming up for you?

Tony: More work with Lou, of course. I'm also almost finished with my home studio, and I'll finally get to recording my own material. I've always been the sideman. I'm excited to do my own thing now, to do some singing and get the music down that's been in my head for so many years.

Rich Mangicaro is a freelance writer, musician, producer, and educator who has performed with Glenn Frey, Joe Walsh, Jackson Browne, Michael McDonald, the Tubes, and Billy Idol. For more with Tony Smith, go to modern drummer.com.



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Keith Carlock

The drummer behind platinum-selling records and SRO tours reveals his secrets on his first-ever DVD, *The Big Picture: Phrasing, Improvisation, Style & Technique*. **Modern Drummer** gets the inside scoop.

Story by Ken Micallef • Photos by Rick Malkin





If you've been lucky enough to catch Steely Dan or Donald Fagen or James Taylor or John Mayer or Sting over the past few years, you've no doubt been floored by the man behind the drums: Keith Carlock. Inarguably one of the most soulful drummers on the scene, Carlock brings with him deep-pocket grooves (heard to great effect on Steely Dan's *Everything Must Go* and Donald Fagen's *Morph The Cat*, to name a couple), creative recording solutions, and awesome soloing abilities that have kept him in demand in a wide variety of high-profile situations. But it's two of Keith's more experimental projects—the Wayne Krantz Trio and the quartet Rudder—that showcase the drummer's incredible bag of tricks most supremely.

Krantz's recordings *Greenwich Mean, Your Basic Live* (2003), and *Krantz Carlock Lefebvre* and Rudder's recent *Matorning* find Carlock performing in the kind of rarified improvisational areas that few drummers can imagine, much less occupy. Whether he's playing straight or in odd meters, whether he's kicking a New Orleans second-line cadence, warping a drum 'n' bass or fusion groove beyond recognition, or extrapolating a rhythm so far out into the stratosphere that you could wait till 2020 to find the downbeat, Carlock expands his vision and creates epic new drumming terrain in just about any setting. But unless you can easily journey to New York City or catch one of these bands' frequent European tours, seeing Carlock in these kinds of supercharged environments has been nearly impossible—until now. (As they say, seeing is believing.)

The Big Picture: Phrasing, Improvisation, Style & Technique is a two-DVD set complete with forty-five detailed transcriptions that will challenge your perceptions, inform your studies, and totally blow your mind. Performing on half of the two-disc set with the Krantz Trio (which also includes bassist Tim Lefebvre), Carlock breaks it all down: his elegant use of ghost notes, playing odd phrases over the barline (as in the trio's performance of "Riff" and "Greenwich Mean"), disguising the downbeat, New Orleans-influenced grooves, displacements (again with the trio), improvising, subdivisions, soloing in eight-bar phrases, rudimental applications, finger technique, remarkable full-set fills, and a very open sticking technique. Along the way, the drummer reveals the groove machinery of some of his most heralded recordings and clarifies his concepts up close, personal, and beyond any doubt.

MD caught up with Carlock, who has homes in New York City and Nashville, during a recent Canadian stint with Rudder and on the way to an Asian tour with the Wayne Krantz Trio. Even beyond the open interview form of the DVD, he elaborates on the muse behind his particular brand of magic.



THE BIG PICTURE OF THE BIG PICTURE

MD: What was the concept behind *The Big Picture*?

Keith: My goal was just to show what I'm about up until this point. I didn't want to stress the technical side so much, although that's in there. Technique is important. But I wanted to mainly stick to how I approach the different musical situations I'm in and the concepts behind what I do. And I wanted to show how I make choices and how being able to make those mature choices has been part of what's helped me be successful. That is why we call it *The Big Picture*; it gets down to what's really important.

MD: So instead of offering chops builders, you wanted to show what goes into the creative process?

Keith: Yeah, and how I'm not thinking so much about patterns anymore. I let the music and my muscle memory and choices do their thing. I wanted the DVD to be musical and stay away from so much of the "Here's how you play this kind of groove" approach. At this point I try to use my experiences and confidence to get through whatever

I'm given. So I wanted to explain the importance of phrasing, how I think about improvising within phrases, and how that applies to soloing, the more experimental instrumental stuff, and also more structured types of music. I wanted to [explain] how to find your own voice within any type of situation. Finally, taking those concepts and making them your own: throwing all your influences into a pot and really trying to find out who you are as a player. I hope the DVD gives people some inspiration to experiment and be creative and find their own sound and voice.

STRUCTURES

MD: In the DVD's "New Orleans-Influenced Ideas" section you discuss playing melodically and compositionally. What does that mean to you?

Keith: It means playing as

if you're creating a composition on the spot. When I'm playing a solo, for instance, I feel like it gives the solo a lot more meaning and hopefully more musicality because I'm using a form. And of course I want to use a wide range of dynamics and find different grooves using different sounds within those phrases.

I'm usually playing even eight-bar phrases and feeling those—whether I'm making them obvious or not. That's my framework to work around. When I finish a certain idea and I don't know where else to go, that's where new things happen. I might completely change the tempo, or I might change the sonic portion of what I'm doing. I

might be finishing up something really bombastically, building up to this peak, and then I might go all the way down to nothing and play with my fingers. Whatever I choose



to do in the moment, it's just to add a sonic change or a tempo change. Then I might come back to my original idea after I finish that new section; that gives the listener something repetitive to grab on to.

I want to lay it out like a jazz form, AABA. Or a pop song with a verse, pre-chorus, chorus, then maybe a return to the verse. The second verse might be different, where you play the snare drum instead of a cross-stick to build. Then you might have a bridge into a solo section, a return to the chorus, and out. Those are great ways to approach soloing because you're improvising but you also have a framework and a form, and within that there are endless possibilities.

There's also playing melodies on the toms or between the kick and snare and hi-hat. Different tones on the cymbals can sound like you're in different keys if you think of it that way. Turning the snares off versus having them on as well. Getting harmonics out of the drums, not always hitting them in the same place, using rimshots on the

toms, getting different cymbal sounds, doing whatever you can to be like a composer on the spot.

MD: In the sections "Approach To Soloing" and "8-Bar Phrases," you break down the amazing full-set fill patterns you often play. Can you explain that concept a bit further?

Keith: I hear it as a phrase. Wherever I choose to go with the rolling, flurry-of-sound type of idea, I'm just hearing the constant roll, no matter what part of the kit I'm playing it on. Even where I'm playing the accents. Wherever those accents happen, that's what I'm focusing on; the roll just acts as a surface underneath, a constant sound. The accents can be anything within the framework of what I'm playing. I'm just choosing where I want to hear the accents. As long as you come back on the 1, or whatever beat you need to come back on, you're playing a phrase.

MD: On *The Big Picture* you play Rudder's "Jackass Surcharge," with some very free eight-bar phrase ideas in there. Often in Rudder, and more with Krantz, the front of these phrases can sound kind of straight, but the second half is wild: odd groupings, long ideas, often displaced, and typically way over the barline. Are the odd groupings so ingrained in your mind that you can stretch at will?

Keith: It's in the moment. First of all, I'm reacting to what the other guys are doing, or I'm initiating something myself. And hopefully it's a musical

choice and something that fits and is still grooving. But it can sound displaced as long as the flow is happening. On the DVD, there's a section where I play those types of ideas along with the click, so you can hear the pulse as I'm playing those kinds of phrases. But the concept is just like playing jazz, where the ride cymbal is constant and the other limbs are free to comp with the soloists or rhythm section. I apply that same concept more to 16th-note feels than triplets, and the ride cymbal keeps the flow happening. It's certainly more bottom heavy. It's a way to play grooves that are improvised but also have a flow. You don't have to play a repetitive pattern all the time.

MD: That helps clear things up.

Keith: Over the years, people have thought the Krantz Trio was playing in odd meters or playing metric modulations, so we laid it all out on the DVD for the first time. It appeals to more than drummers too, to give musicians a new way to play instrumental music or guitar-trio music.

MD: In the "Steely Dan Grooves" section, you break down the two-handed hi-hat part and groove for "The Last Mall." The hi-hat pattern really dances and pulls the music along.

Keith: I remember trying different things on the session that weren't jelling right off the bat. I tried putting the shuffle in different places and experimented with different bass

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 - 5. 18" A Custom crash
- Keith will also use other K and A models, depending on the gig.

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Hardware: Yamaha stands, DW9000 bass drum pedal

Sticks: Regal Tip Keith Carlock Performer series and telescopic wire brushes with rubber handle



drum patterns. But when I went to that hi-hat part and got away from playing ghost notes on the snare drum, it cleaned it up. Putting the shuffle on the hi-hat like that and the accent on the third beat of the triplet gave it that dancing, forward-motion feel, and the four-on-the-floor bass drum added contrast to that. And with the snare drum being on 2 and 4 in the main groove, it became cleaner and groovier. [Steely Dan leaders] Donald

[Fagen] and Walter [Becker] liked it, and we got a take they could use.

MD: The breakdown of Steely Dan's "GodWhacker" has even more jump attitude and hi-hat action.

Keith: That was trial and error, listening to the playback, figuring out what worked. Getting opinions from Donald and Walter also shaped it. Once I put the 16ths on the hi-hat and let the bass drum follow the bass guitar—which is all played by Walter on that record—it

really had a lot more life. The hi-hat became a layer that made the track work. It's like a trance.

MD: How do you create the seamless-ness that we hear so often in your hi-hat work?

Keith: I don't think about it too much. I just try to stay relaxed and let the hi-hat dance around the main beats. I'm thinking more of where the foot and the backbeat are, though the hi-hat connects it all together. If I have to move my body to keep the flow happening, that sometimes helps.

MD: It's so revealing to hear you discuss how tempo changes occur within the trio when Krantz gives certain cues. It's as if the band is self-editing in the moment. After you play "Rock," he discusses composed parts versus open parts, and how the composed parts, if not the entire direction of the piece, are sometimes planned.

Keith: A composed part is a composed nugget that we fit into the arrangement. They happen at the top, or it's cued later. Everything we play around that part is improvised but trying to *sound* composed. It acts as a bridge to help us go somewhere else that is improvised.

MD: In the "Warm-Up Exercises" section you discuss your grip, among other things. You choke very far back on the left-hand stick.

Keith: When I choose to choke the stick that far back, I have a way to do it to get the bounce I need. I use a lot of fingers; the stick is not doing so much. I'm not holding it at the balance point as much as when I might be playing lighter or with less backbeat. It's from the twitching of the fingers and where I am on the head that enables enough bounce that I can still control the stick that far back. But the main reason is to get more of a windup for the backbeats. Because I play traditional grip, I had to learn to get a fat backbeat for playing more rock music without getting tight. It helps with the volume and staying loose.

MD: From "Fill Concepts" onward, you break down and orchestrate your fill stickings, you play a double-stroke roll as broken 16th-note phrases on the toms, and you illustrate placing

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accents on different parts of the beat. How do you suggest that someone practice those ideas?

Keith: Start with the most comfortable way to hear the pattern for you. That might be hearing the accents on the beat, just to get the technique part down. You want your doubles to be strong, to sound clean, and to be in time. Start simply, and then, when you have the technique working, you can branch out and try different accents within the phrase and just experiment.

SOUNDS

MD: So much of your drumming is about your use of ghost notes. How did you make them such an integral part of your playing?

Keith: A lot of my playing is more instinctual now, but when I was younger and listening to a lot of the 16th-note funk or soul music I'm a big fan of, I always tried to figure out what I was hearing on the records, like we all do. When you try to figure it out by ear, it becomes part of your muscle memory, and over the years it can morph into other things. I'm not thinking about the patterns as much as I did when I first learned them. [Over time] I added new things to those original patterns that came from my different experiences.

MD: Are you ever in a situation where you can't play a ghost note for fear it will be picked up by the mics?

Keith: I definitely avoid playing ghost notes sometimes. In the studio when you're under the microscope, those choices are really important. I choose where to play a busier part or busier pattern in a groove based on what it sounds like on the playback. Sometimes I'll listen back and realize it's not quite sounding the way I thought it did. Perhaps it would groove or feel better with more space, maybe with just the 2 and 4 on the snare drum, with the chattier stuff left out. It'll feel different; you'll have a lot more space between the notes. If there are already a lot of 16th notes in the music, sometimes it's a nice contrast to *not* play ghost notes.

MD: Where is your grace-note position off the head? You play pretty high off the drum at times.

Keith: My backbeats are usually rimshots, to give it that extra snap. So I do lift higher than some people that play traditional; it's a big whipping motion I use. It can generate a lot of sound, and because of that it gives me a little more leeway with the grace notes. I guess the grace notes are around an inch off the head.

MD: You seem to favor cymbals that have a lot of decay.

Keith: I want cymbals to be as washy and to ring out as

much as possible but also have good stick definition. It's possible to have both. I look at all the cymbals as crashes and all of them as rides, no matter what they really are. I ride and crash on everything. I find cymbals that do both well.

MD: You seem to ride on a spot that's close to the bell.

Keith: That gives me more of that stick definition I'm looking for, so it's not too washy. I'm just controlling what sound I want to hear. Wherever you play on the cymbal, it's going to be a completely different vibe. Every cymbal is different, but it's what I'm hearing at the moment, how I want everything to be balanced. I just make those adjustments as I'm playing.

MD: There's a part on the DVD where you're playing a left-hand brushstroke on the snare with a stick. Is that audible?

Keith: That happened that day, and I can't explain why. I was just going for something, trying to inspire myself in that sterile recording space. Those situations don't lend themselves to the most creative vibe. If you listen closely you can hear a little harmonic tone happening.

MD: Some drummers are bottom up, some are top down. Where do you fall within these definitions?

Keith: I would say I'm a bottom-heavy player. We're talking if the music calls for that. But I also understand the other side of it, from my jazz background and being a fan of that music and learning that touch on the drumset. For the music I play and the way I approach Wayne's music and some of the other

INFLUENCES

Miles Davis Filles De Kilimanjaro (Tony Williams) /// **Ray Charles** The Best Of (various) /// **Sly & The Family Stone** Fresh (Andy Newmark) /// **Steely Dan** The Royal Scam (Bernard Purdie, Rick Marotta) /// **Lee Dorsey** Freedom For The Funk (Zigaboo Modeliste, Clarence Brown, "June" Gardner, James Black) /// **The Meters** Fire On The Bayou (Zigaboo Modeliste) /// **Ivan Neville** Thanks (Charley Drayton, Steve Jordan, George Receli) /// **Rush** Hemispheres (Neil Peart) /// **The Beatles** Rubber Soul (Ringo Starr) /// **The Band** The Best Of (Levon Helm)

RECORDINGS

Donald Fagen Morph The Cat /// **Walter Becker** Circus Money /// **Steely Dan** Everything Must Go /// **Wayne Krantz** Greenwich Mean, Your Basic Live (2003), Krantz Carlock Lefebvre /// **Rudder** Rudder, Matorning /// **Sean Wayland** Pistachio, Pistachio 2 /// **Oz Noy** Oz Live /// **Tal Wilkenfeld** Transformation /// **Adam Klipple & Drive-By Leslie** Blackjack

improvisational stuff, it makes sense to be bottom heavy, but also to have the finesse up top that's associated with more of a top-heavy approach.

MD: Sometimes you play air strokes, where you're not actually striking anything but you still go through the motion. Why do that?

Keith: Sometimes I go for a note but I have a windup behind it. I suppose it's really my own version of the Moeller technique. Though I don't do Moeller exactly right at this point, the concept is the same in that I'm winding up for the stroke. And that gives a little air or this silence behind the note where that upstroke happens and I'm coming down for the note.

The motion is like you're a runner and you get into your stride and set your pace. You're not thinking—your body is just working, you're in a clock-work motion. That's happening in my arms when I'm playing certain repetitive motions and grooves. It allows me to feel that space between the notes and keep it consistent and hopefully feeling good, with a flow happening. I always want to be as loose as possible, and this is one way I've found to accomplish that. Not only am I thinking about the windup, I'm letting the stick bounce back up after the stroke. I have an open-handed technique with the fingers as well; that also applies.

MD: You choke up high on the right hand, and it looks like it's all fingers. Whereas, as we've discussed, you hold the stick all the way back in the left hand.

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THE DRUMMER'S DRUM

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KEITH CARLOCK

Keith: In order to apply certain types of feels to the drumset, I had to figure out a way to get the same rudimental drumming happening that I did in drum corps, but using less of the wrists and more of the fingers. That grip seemed to open up the sound a lot: I got a better sound, and I didn't feel so tense all the time. Playing with just the wrists made it hard to do certain things. I couldn't get a nice flowing ride cymbal pattern happening with that technique. I applied the finger technique to the whole kit, and it really loosened me up and created more of a legato sound than a rigid staccato sound—though I can use wrists or close the hands or use less fingers to get that sound and feel if I need it.

MD: Your trademarks are your looseness, your groove, and your dynamics. You explain on the DVD that you let the drum and cymbal do the work to achieve those things.

Keith: A lot of it is tuning, but it also has to do with technique. That's your sound. I found that the recognition of

letting the stick bounce back after every stroke I play allows me to feel that sensation. It's also allowing me to not tense up after the stroke. I'm relaxing, and the drum or cymbal is able to resonate to its fullest potential because I'm pulling the sound out in a way instead of digging into the drum. I have these high strokes, so it might look like I'm hitting harder than I am. It's more about getting the sound I want. This technique allows me to have a wide dynamic range, because nothing ever changes in the hands—it's the weight behind the stick that gives it the power.

MD: What do you call that technique?

Keith: I don't know. When I first began experimenting with it, I had the palm facing down—more of a German grip. Later, in my right hand, having the thumb on top and turning the hand over, I could get more windup, and the way it floats around my thumb in that fulcrum really gave me a lot of possibilities. So I kept working on it, and the hand just got more open. I think of the left hand in the same way, just holding

it tight enough that the stick doesn't fall out.

SYNTHESIS

MD: When you first joined Wayne Krantz's group, was it liberating right away?

Keith: Right off the bat, Wayne and I had a connection in how we felt time, but it took me a while to learn the way he heard rhythms. Often I think his 1 is in a different place than it is. He hears things backwards sometimes. It took me a while to hear that. Slowly I got more confident in playing over the barline, hiding the 1, stretching out.

MD: Hiding the 1 can open up a lot of possibilities.

Keith: It can create a great effect, make the beat sound backwards or like an odd time or odd phrase, but we're really just disguising it. If it gets stretched way out to oblivion somewhere, I may decide to hit a big 1 to start a new phrase and make sure we're connected. As long as we get back to that rhythmic connection, that's what really matters.



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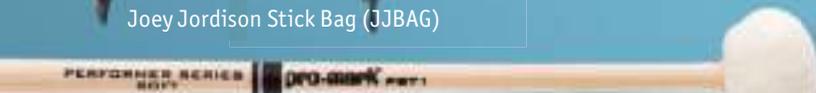


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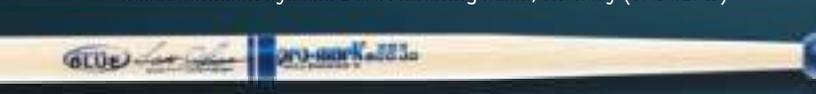
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KEITH CARLOCK

MD: You've recently toured with James Taylor and with John Mayer. What kind of prep do those different gigs require?

Keith: It wasn't that much different prep-wise, though the music is quite different. I always ask for the latest live tape from a show. I make fast charts to learn the material. So I knew what to expect by the time we got into rehearsals. Mayer's music was looser than I thought it would be, playing with his big band of two horn players, two singers, two guitarists, bass, and keys. We'd jam and open things up for solos.

I got an open solo occasionally as the intro to "Waiting On The World To Change," and I'd sometimes play over a vamp at the end of "Half Of My Heart." That was very cool. He let us have our spotlight moment. He didn't copy the record—the songs grew. Every night was a different set. Also, I used different snares for different tunes. I had a big beefy custom Yamaha Kapur shell I had made in Osaka, a brass piccolo, and a high-pitched wood 12" Yamaha Musashi

for other tunes. I got away with more open tuning with John too.

MD: What's next for Keith Carlock?

Keith: I'd love to do a solo recording at some point. As for now, I'm happy keeping my hands in lots of different musical situations. NYC is home base, but having spent some time in Nashville recently, it's been a nice change, playing with some great players on the scene there, doing some sessions occasionally, learning the number system. It's all been fun because it's so different from what I'm used to. Whenever I can get new experiences, I'm inspired by that.

MD: What do you mean by the number system?

Keith: The number system is the Nashville shorthand used for charts in sessions. Only Nashville uses this system, so if you work there, you should know it.

MD: What are the major differences between the New York and Nashville music scenes?

Keith: New York is where everything is happening all at once. People are

pushing the envelope, coming up with new ways to play music. But when it comes to Southern-style blues, bluegrass, and country, Nashville has it and the players who do that really well. Also, Nashville studio sessions are run old-school union, meaning 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., 2 P.M. to 5 P.M., then 6 P.M. to 9 P.M. I've never experienced that anywhere else. Usually I spend hours of the first day just getting sounds! It's a very efficient way to get many tracks done in a day.

It also seems like Nashville is one of the last places left that actually records all the musicians at the same time in a room playing together! It seems to be more about blending in there and not so much standing out as someone who can bring something new or completely different to the music, which New York encourages. It's a trade-off, but both places are valid and so influential to American music. It's been fun to experience the best of both worlds, lifestyle and music, in these great cities.



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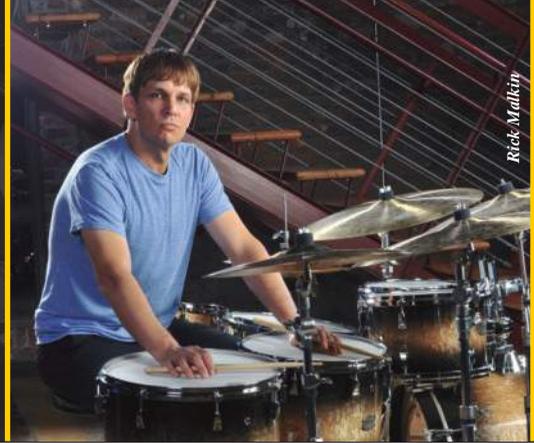
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F.T.	⊘				
B.D.	⊙				
H.H.	⊗	Add'l	Rim	R.S.	
w/ foot		Tom	Click	w/ RH	

Considering Keith Carlock's recent stints with Steely Dan, Sting, James Taylor, and John Mayer, it's needless to say that the drummer's time, technique, groove, and musical choices are second to none. In this article we'll explore the many different sides of the multit talented Carlock, from some of his basic grooves to a few of his more complex improvisations and licks.

Steely Dan, "The Last Mall," *Everything Must Go*

The beginning of this Steely Dan song is about as straightforward as Carlock gets. But about halfway through the tune, Keith transitions into a polyrhythmic version of the original four-on-the-floor groove. (2:13)

Musical notation for Steely Dan's "The Last Mall" showing a polyrhythmic groove with triplets and accents. The notation is in 4/4 time and features a series of eighth notes with accents and triplet markings.

Steely Dan, "GodWhacker," *Everything Must Go*

A Carlock mainstay is revealed here—a single repetitive rhythm (in this case on the hi-hat) enhanced by evolving ghost-note patterns. Keep the ghost notes under control, and make sure not to flam the kick and snare when they're played simultaneously. (0:20)

Musical notation for Steely Dan's "GodWhacker" showing a repetitive hi-hat rhythm with ghost notes. The notation is in 4/4 time and features a series of eighth notes with accents and ghost-note markings.

Walter Becker, "Circus Money," *Circus Money*

This track features Carlock playing a swampy, march-inspired snare groove. Note the layers of accents throughout and the seven-stroke roll to complete the four-bar phrase. Keith intentionally flams some of the unison snare/kick notes. (0:40)

Musical notation for Walter Becker's "Circus Money" showing a swampy snare groove with accents and a seven-stroke roll. The notation is in 4/4 time and features a series of eighth notes with accents and a seven-stroke roll.

Wayne Krantz, "Wet Heat Sweat," *Greenwich Mean*

Carlock has plenty of room to let loose and experiment on guitar master Wayne Krantz's gigs. This is a jam-packed example, complete with a simple linear introduction and ghost-note-dominated hand/foot combinations in measures 5, 7, and 8. Note how Keith's phrases often slide between barlines. (0:00)

Musical notation for Wayne Krantz's "Wet Heat Sweat" showing a jam-packed groove with ghost notes and sliding phrases. The notation is in 4/4 time and features a series of eighth notes with accents and ghost-note markings.

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Oz Noy, "Damn, This Groove!" *Oz Live*

Carlock will very often play simultaneous 8th notes with his ride cymbal and hi-hat foot and then engage in a rhythmic dialogue with his snare drum and bass drum. Watch the accents, the ghost notes, and your overall physical balance on this one. (3:18)

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff starts with a dynamic marking of *ff*. The notation features simultaneous eighth notes on the snare and bass drum lines, with various accents and ghost notes indicated by 'x' and 'o' symbols.

Leni Stern, "When Evening Falls," *When Evening Falls*

Here's a groove in which Carlock alternates between rimclicks and snare drum hits, with a concluding floor tom accent. (0:39)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff includes a dynamic marking of *mf* and a sequence of letters 'R L R L' below the notes, indicating rimclicks and snare hits. The notation shows alternating patterns of rimclicks and snare hits with accents and ghost notes.

Rudder, "Lopez," *Rudder*

These two mid-tempo examples are taken from a track off the debut recording by Carlock's fusion group with bassist Tim Lefebvre, saxophonist Chris Cheek, and keyboardist Henry Hey. Make sure you accent only the bass drum and snare drum quarter-note downbeats and go for a half-straight/half-swung time feel. Carlock applies this approach to many mid-tempo grooves. (1:18, 3:53)

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The notation shows quarter-note downbeats on the snare and bass drum with accents, and ghost notes on the snare and bass drum between downbeats.

Rudder, "Lucky Beard," *Matorning*

In this four-bar phrase in 3/4, keep the ghost notes as quiet as you can and work on maintaining an even volume on the consecutive, unaccented snare drum hits on beat 3 of measures 2 and 3. (0:45)

Two staves of musical notation in 3/4 time. The notation features simultaneous eighth notes on the snare and bass drum lines with various accents and ghost notes.

Three Additional Moves

Because Carlock takes such an improvisational approach, he's less lick oriented than many other drummers. That said, there are a few ideas that he returns to again and again. While these final three concepts will commonly pop up in various settings, Carlock is always slightly altering them to fit different musical contexts.

Keith often plays rimclicks with his left hand while moving his right hand around the snare drum. Sometimes he'll play ringing rimshots, and other times he'll play snare attacks muffled by his left hand.

One staff of musical notation in 4/4 time. Below the notes is a sequence of letters 'R R L L R R L R L' indicating rimclicks and snare hits.

Another common Carlock move involves big buzz strokes played with both hands and supported by a simultaneous bass drum attack and splashing hi-hats.

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The notation shows simultaneous eighth notes on the snare and bass drum lines with accents and ghost notes. A 'press roll' is indicated above the snare line.

Carlock's signature 32nd-note fill idea begins with two attacks on the bass drum followed by two accented single strokes and then two sets of doubles. Keith often changes the pattern by dropping the accents into different parts of the measure.

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 and 6/8 time. The notation shows a 32nd-note fill pattern with accents and ghost notes. Below the notes are sequences of letters 'RLRLLRLL RLRLLRLL RLRLL' and 'RLRLLRLL RLRLLRLL' indicating the drum hits.



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Starting A Teaching Studio

Essential Tips For Aspiring Educators

by Mike Sorrentino

Many articles have been written about making the decision to begin teaching. If you haven't thought long and hard about whether teaching is the right career for you, I encourage you to go through back issues of *Modern Drummer* to find discussions of this subject, and to take a long look at the reality of what teaching entails. It's not an easy career, but it can be a very rewarding one. This article is designed to help answer some of the most important questions you might have when deciding to set up your own teaching business.

Where Do You Go?

The first thing you need to consider when you're looking to start a teaching practice is location. Will you teach at your own studio? At a school? In a store? In students' homes? If you decide to use your own studio, will it be a room in your house, or will you rent space in a local rehearsal studio? These may seem like simple questions, but the answers can present some serious challenges. For example, if you rent space from a store that provides a teaching drumset and then a drumhead breaks, who pays for it?

Wherever you decide to teach, you'll need adequate space, high-speed Internet access, a modest budget for equipment, and a reasonable amount of silence. Don't underestimate that last one. If you've ever tried to teach finger technique on a pad while the student next door is practicing blast beats on a kit, you'll understand how important it can be to have a quiet space.

What Do You Need?

Once you've decided where to teach, what do you put inside the space? I remember taking lessons from the New York-based teacher Al Miller many years ago, and he had two practice-pad kits and two drumsets in his studio. The legendary jazz drummer and educator Alan Dawson had one drumset and a vibraphone. What tools do today's drum teachers need that are different from what they were twenty years ago?

Aside from the obvious teaching tools (drumset, practice pads, music stands), there are some new technological needs for today's drum instructor. First, it's almost a must to have a computer. In my studio I have a Mac G5, which serves several purposes. I use it to play songs, show DVDs, visit websites, reference drummers, and record students. I also use it to communicate with students and their parents via email to schedule lessons, and I do a good bit of marketing on it as well. My setup is fairly elaborate, as I also do

recording sessions in my studio.

Your outfit, however, doesn't need to be as complex. Let's take a look at some other technological needs for establishing the most effective teaching practice.

Playing music. It's important for an effective drum studio to have an extensive music collection, as well as the means for students to listen to and play along with recorded music. In my studio, my computer plays DVDs, CDs, and MP3s, either through my studio monitors or through Vic Firth sound-isolating headphones powered by a separate headphone amp. You can easily accomplish the same thing (minus CDs and DVDs) with an iPod or other MP3 player and a headphone splitter. For lessons on the road, I bring a laptop and a splitter. If you have a high-tech cell phone, you could even store your music collection on it, which would cut down even more on what you need to carry with you. Today the paradigm has shifted to the point where most teachers are using recorded music

"Today the paradigm has shifted to the point where most teachers are using recorded music much more often in lessons, and the students are benefiting as a result."

much more often in lessons, and the students are benefiting as a result.

Video recording. Many teachers have found that there's a tremendous benefit in using video to show a student his or her physical tendencies. The famed educator/clinician Dom Famularo has a very involved setup at his studio where students can play on a pad and watch themselves on a large flat-screen monitor. On the other end of the spectrum, I've heard of some teachers using the video record function on their cell phone to capture and examine short snippets with their students. Both methods are valuable and have yielded great results. Allow your creativity and budget to help you decide the best way to fit this tool into your arsenal.

DVDs, play-alongs, and multi-media. Some of the tried-and-true method books remain essential to most drum teaching programs. For example, I wouldn't teach jazz without Jim Chapin's classic *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*,

and I wouldn't work on a student's hands without George Stone's perennial masterpiece, *Stick Control*. But teachers need to keep up with new material as it becomes available. There are a number of DVDs that are destined to become classics, and you as a teacher should encourage your students to learn from them.

Recording. This is a subject that the Broadway drummer and famed clinician Tommy Igoe has a strong opinion on, and I couldn't agree with him more. To summarize Tommy's thoughts: If you teach, you must record your students. Tommy and I have recording studios that we also teach in, but you don't need to go to those lengths. In fact, for a quick reference, like if I want to show students that they're playing a bass drum pattern incorrectly, I record them on my Zoom H2 digital recorder. It's fast and easy to use, and it's a simple way to let students listen back and correct any mistakes. I've also used the voice-notes recorder on my BlackBerry for

the same thing. Don't let the prohibitive cost of setting up a full-fledged recording rig discourage you from taking advantage of the new lower-priced recording equipment that's available.

The Internet. The Web has completely changed the world. Sites like YouTube have brought everything to your screen, while online forums allow drummers from around the world to come together and exchange ideas and make friends. Of course, some students overuse the Internet to find quick answers to drumming issues when they should be spending more time in the practice room. But the access to information that the Web provides far outweighs the cons of having this powerful tool in your studio.



Mike Sorrentino is the program director of Hudson Music's Teacher Integration Program (TIP), which was established in 2008 to enhance drum instruction by helping teachers incorporate new media and technology into their existing methods. For more on TIP, visit hudsonmusic.com/hudson/tip.



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Part 1: 16th Notes

by Mike Johnston

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I can still remember being ten years old and listening to double bass masters like Louie Bellson, Billy Cobham, and Simon Phillips and marveling at the idea of playing kick patterns with both feet. I begged and pleaded with my father for a double pedal, and finally it was time to take a trip down to our local drum shop. We walked up to the gorgeous display of pedals, and I saw my dad's face drop once he noticed the prices. Then he said the four words that no kid wants to hear when shopping for new drum gear: "I'll make you one."

Needless to say, I decided to take matters into my own hands. I needed to find a suitable way to play the double bass parts I heard on my favorite albums, without using a double pedal. After days, weeks, and months of experimentation, I discovered that by playing the parts between my floor tom and my bass drum I was able to achieve a convincing double bass sound. There was also an added bonus: My left foot was still on the hi-hat pedal, so now I could play complex double bass patterns while also opening and closing my hi-hats.

We'll explore the idea of opening and closing the hi-hats in subsequent articles, but for now let's get used to playing a basic rock beat on closed hi-hats while playing simple 16th-note double bass parts between the floor tom and bass drum.



16th-Note Patterns

Pay close attention to the stickings. When the right hand is on the floor tom, the left hand will be playing the hi-hat.

1

When the floor tom and the snare drum are played at the same time, the hi-hat is omitted.

2

You can choose to finish this groove with your right or left hand on the hi-hat.

3

4

Now we'll break up the 16th-note subdivision a bit.

5

16th-Note Triplets

Let's go through the same process using faster 16th-note triplets. When the floor tom and the snare drum are played at the same time, the hi-hat is omitted.

You can choose to finish this groove with your right or left hand on the hi-hat.

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



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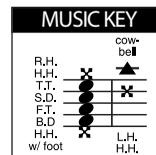
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by David Garibaldi



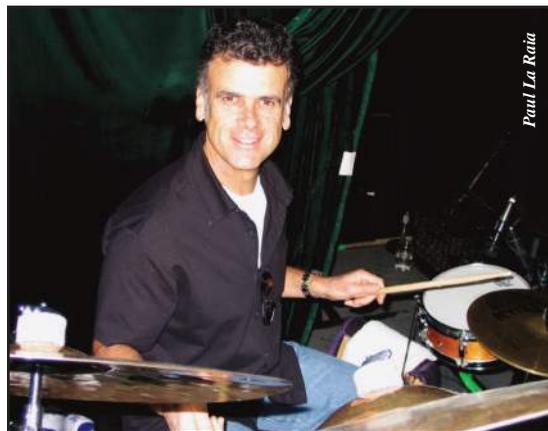
“**T**imbafunkified!” That’s a mouthful. Thanks to the flexibility of the English language, we can invent new words to describe just about anything in very personal terms. This uniquely descriptive word was inspired by a Tower Of Power song called “You Got To Funkifize,” along with one of my instructional books, *TimbaFunk*, a collaborative effort written with Michael Spiro and Jesús Diaz, my two bandmates in Talking Drums.

The word *funkifize* was first coined by Steve “Doc” Kupka in 1971 and is pretty self-explanatory. Talking Drums used the word *timbafunk* to describe our music, which is a mix of the popular Cuban style timba, American funk drumming, and many Afro-Cuban folkloric styles.

The subject of this study is a timbafunkified beat taken from my instructional DVD *Tower Of Groove*. Example 1 shows the basic idea, along with a sticking written underneath. The sticking will become very useful as the exercises start to include permutations.

This groove was originally played along with a percussionist. (Think James Brown meets clave.) As in previous articles, we’ll use two hi-hats, one in the standard position and one on the ride-cymbal side of the kit. This way your hands are in an open position that allows for some interesting movement between drumset voices. The primary hi-hat will be the one by your ride cymbal.

Exercises 1–4 take the basic idea and add some voice substitutions. The bass drum note in parentheses is primarily for the downbeat and can be omitted when the patterns repeat. When the permutations begin, you can omit those notes altogether or include them for a different feel.



1

R L F R L R L F L R L R L F

2

3

4



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Exercises 5–8 substitute half-open hi-hat notes for the snare drum on beat 4. Play these on the hi-hat that's in the standard position. Exercise 5 will then include quarter-note permutations. Watch the stickings and count aloud as you perform each variation. Counting aloud will help you establish a firm sense of where beat 1 is landing in relation to the changing exercises.

5

6

7

8

Exercises 9–12 feature similar permutations to exercises 5–8, with the addition of substituting a floor tom with the right hand on beat 1. This group of beats has the right hand moving between the floor tom and the hi-hat on the ride-cymbal side of the kit. The left hand moves between the other hi-hat and the snare.

9

10

11

12



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THE FUNKY BEAT

When you're first learning the basic sticking of exercise 1, practice very slowly and make sure everything is falling in its proper place (accents, ghost notes, etc.). Then, when you're comfortable, play the groove at any tempo you like, but never faster than your technique allows. Strive for precise execution.

If you have any questions, I can be reached through the Tower Of Power website, towerofpower.com. See you next time. Enjoy!

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



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DIY Drum Restoration

Part 2: Wet Sanding

by J.R. Frondelli

In our first installment of this series (January 2011), we restored a sprayed-over vintage pearl finish by sanding off the paint with an orbital sander, and we subsequently recovered most of the original luster via a wet sanding/buffing process. We covered that final step in an abbreviated fashion in part one, so let's take a more in-depth look at wet sanding, including the mechanics of the process, the available options, and why it's an invaluable technique for drum building and restoration.

First of all, just what is wet sanding? While it takes a bit of time to get the feel of and eventually master the process, its basis is quite simple. It involves sanding a surface with progressively finer grades of abrasives—that have been soaked in water—until the scratches created by the abrasives are almost too small to see with the naked eye. When that point is reached, the surface takes on a soft, lustrous appearance. Once these initial steps are complete, the surface is finished by applying one or more grades of buffing compound, either by hand or by machine, to burnish the edges of the microscopic scratches, creating the trademark high-polish, glossy, wet-looking appearance that you see on lacquer finishes and pearl plastics. It's pretty much the same treatment applied to custom car finishes, and so it's no coincidence that the supplies required for wet sanding a drum are readily available in many auto stores and auto-body supply houses.

Abrasively Speaking

Although the term *sandpaper* is still widely used (*glasspaper* in the U.K.), common sand, or silica—the main

ingredient in glass—is no longer used for abrasive papers, mostly because it's too soft and breaks down very easily. While many types of abrasives are available for different applications, wet sanding employs silicon-carbide abrasives that are bonded to a water-proof backing, the brainchild of the 3M Corporation in the early 1900s.

If you scope out the various offerings at your local hardware store or big-box home center, you'll usually find wet/dry sandpaper in grades of up to 600-grit or 800-grit. Occasionally you'll find some as high as 1,500-grit, which is more than adequate for wet sanding. In commercial finishing, 600-grit is the finest grade used and is often followed by power buffing on a buffing jack, which expedites the process tremendously.

In part one of this series we sanded spray paint off a pearl finish using an orbital sander with moderately fine-grit paper, and then we wet sanded the drum by hand. But if you'd like to use your orbital sander for the wet sanding as well, sanding discs are available up to 2,000-grit. After you gain experience with wet sanding by hand, you can explore this option,

“As you start sanding, the sound you hear will be coarse, and the paper will offer more resistance. As you continue, the sound will become smoother and the surface will feel more velvety under the paper.”

which will make the job much easier. There are also relatively inexpensive orbital polishers designed for auto work that you can use for the final buffing process, or you can get polishing pads for your orbital sander.

Wet sanding can be used in many areas. Do you have a glossy lacquer-finished item, such as a drum, guitar, desk, or car, that has become dull and

lifeless due to minor scratches, normal wear, or weathering? Wet sanding can restore it to its former glory.

Here are some answers to commonly asked questions regarding wet sanding.

How do you know when you've sanded enough?

Wet sanding is mostly about feel and sound. As you start sanding, the sound you hear will be coarse, and the paper will offer more resistance. As you continue, the sound will become smoother and the surface will feel more velvety under the paper. When you reach that point, it's time to proceed to the next finest grit of paper or buffing compound.

How wet should the sandpaper be?

Always start out by soaking your cut sheets in warm water for at least ten minutes. This renders the backing more flexible and supple, which will allow it to better conform to irregularities in the surface. Always use a different bowl of water for each grit of paper. Dip the paper in the water again when it dries and starts to grab

on the surface, and change the water when it becomes clouded with the resulting slurry, which is a combination of surface residue and sloughed-off abrasives.

When you've completed sanding with one grit, use a soft, clean, damp cloth to wipe down the surface and remove the slurry remnants before proceeding. Do not use paper towels!



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SHOP TALK

Paper towels are more abrasive than you'd think, particularly if they're made from recycled paper. Soft, old T-shirt material is best. All it takes is one scratch to ruin your hard work and necessitate starting over with the finest grade of paper that will remove the scratch.

What supplies do I need to get started?

First, you'll need the proper sandpaper. Make sure you purchase paper specifically designated as wet/dry or water-proof. The abrasive side will be dark gray, not tan. Get a few sheets of 600-, 800-, 1,000-, 1,500-, and 2,000-grit paper. I recommend the brands 3M, Gator, and Meguiar's, which are all high quality.

The same goes for buffing compounds, which are abrasives suspended in a paste or liquid. Two brands are used on a commercial level: 3M and Meguiar's. 3M is tougher to find, but Meguiar's products are available in most hardware stores. The products

you'll want are No. 7 Show Car Glaze and No. 9 Swirl Remover. No. 9 is your buffing compound (this one also contains wax), and No. 7 is a pure polish to bring out a high gloss. If you've done your wet sanding correctly, these are all you'll need to bring out the full luster of your drum's original finish.

Meguiar's manufactures many other compounds sporting different abrasive qualities, even ones whose abrasives break down into progressively finer grits, like No. 4. Sometimes this product is all you need to bring back a finish that's dull but unscratched or finely scratched. This would then be followed by No. 9 and No. 7 to yield the highest gloss.

If you wet sand by hand (not mechanically with your orbital machine), you'll want to get a cork or felt sanding block. These soft blocks will cushion the paper and allow it to conform to the curved surface, facilitating more even sanding. It will also save your fingers for really important things—like playing drums!

Where can I purchase the proper supplies?

While all of the supplies listed in this article are available on the Internet, there are a few suppliers that I find to be stellar for these products: Woodworker's Supply (woodworker.com), Grizzly Industrial (grizzly.com), and Stewart-MacDonald (stewmac.com). I strongly recommend that you get catalogs from all three. Although Grizzly caters heavily to the guitar industry and Stewart-MacDonald does so exclusively, keep in mind that guitars and drums share the same finishing methods, and therefore both types of instruments can be restored in the same manner. Good luck!



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



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by Patrick Berkery

The Black Keys' drummer no longer feels the need to hide behind the lo-fi production methods that defined the band's early sound. Today he knows just what he likes—and how to get it.

There was something in the primitive grooves and grime of the Black Keys' 2002 debut album, *The Big Come Up*, that suggested the rustbelt-raw rock-blues-R&B duo was going places. Still, singer-guitarist Dan Auerbach and drummer Patrick Carney took their time leaving behind the Akron, Ohio, basements and warehouses where they'd once recorded. That steady pace served them well as they segued into successful collaborations with Danger Mouse for their 2008 album, *Attack & Release*, and with hip-hop artists like Mos Def, Ludacris, and RZA for the 2009 rap-rock union *Blakroc*.

All that steady progress and experimentation come to fruition on 2010's *Brothers*. The record also marks the arrival of Carney as a first-class yet still wildly primitive rock drummer. Recorded at Alabama's famed Muscle Shoals Sound Studios, *Brothers* is built around Carney's ambient thump and deep pocket. Gritty rock songs like "Next Girl" and "Sinister Kid" showcase the drummer's steady hard-funk hand, while the softer touch on the Keys' cover of Jerry Butler's soul classic "Never Gonna Give You Up" sounds like it could've been laid down by original Muscle Shoals house drummer Roger Hawkins. We asked Carney to discuss the evolution of his playing, his turn-ons and turn-offs in terms of drum sounds, and more.

MD: How did you get started on the drums?

Patrick: I began on guitar. When I was fifteen I got a job washing dishes and ended up saving enough to buy all the equipment that would be required for a band. So I got a \$150 drumset, a bass, and a 4-track recorder. I got all that stuff with the idea that I'd have it in my dad's basement, so if I wanted to start a band, everything was there. I realized that not as many people were interested in playing drums as I thought, so I'd usually end up playing when we were having jam sessions. But I wasn't very good at it at first.

MD: Did you take lessons?

Patrick: I never took lessons. I was self-taught. I watched a lot of my friends who were really good drummers and basically mimicked them.

MD: How do you feel you've grown as a drummer?

Patrick: I still get stuck in different patterns. I think the best thing for me is taking time off from drumming. If I can't play for a month, when I do sit down to play, especially before recording, I end up doing more interesting



stuff than I'd normally do. I don't know if this is a sign of being lazy or whatever, but lately I'm less inclined to try to write a drum part that's inherently "interesting." I'd rather write a drum part that just completely makes sense for the song. I'm getting more and more into really basic drumming, I guess.

"Everlasting Light" [from *Brothers*] is the same drum pattern the entire song. Knowing when to step into it and when to back off—the subtlety within simplicity—that's what I'm really getting into lately. I'm getting into being really boring. [laughs] **MD:** Your earlier records were recorded pretty quickly. *Thickfreakness* was done in fourteen hours. When you're recording like that, how do you have perspective on what's a good drum take?

Patrick: Dan and I pretty much have final say on each other's parts as far as performance goes, so we never have a problem with overdoing it or under-doing it. We could find flaws. Still can.

MD: There's been a noticeable upswing in the fidelity of your records since then. Did it get to a point where you figured you'd gone as far as you could sonically in basements and warehouses, especially with drum sounds?

Patrick: Early on, we had to sound that way out of necessity. All we had was an 8-track reel-to-reel. There was also an element of insecurity in general, and hiding behind that lo-fi sound kind of added a mystique. We realized we could make an interesting record really cheap. But in order to make a really awesome-sounding record...we didn't have enough money. Even on the new record, we recorded it using just three mics on the drums. The mics are just more expen-

sive than the three we used earlier.

MD: The kick drum sound on *Brothers* is so dense and full of tone—it's really locked in with the bass guitar tonally. And the snare drum has such a throaty attack, a real thwack. How involved were you in getting the sounds?

Patrick: [Producer/engineer] Mark Neill did all the tuning of the drums. Live I use a Ludwig kit. For that record we used a '50s Gretsch kit with old Zildjians. We had an SM57 on the snare and floor tom, a Neumann KM 84 as an overheard right in front of my eyeballs, and an old Shure 58S or 56S—an old Elvis-looking mike—about a foot off the kick drum.

MD: Do you have favorite drum sounds that you reference?

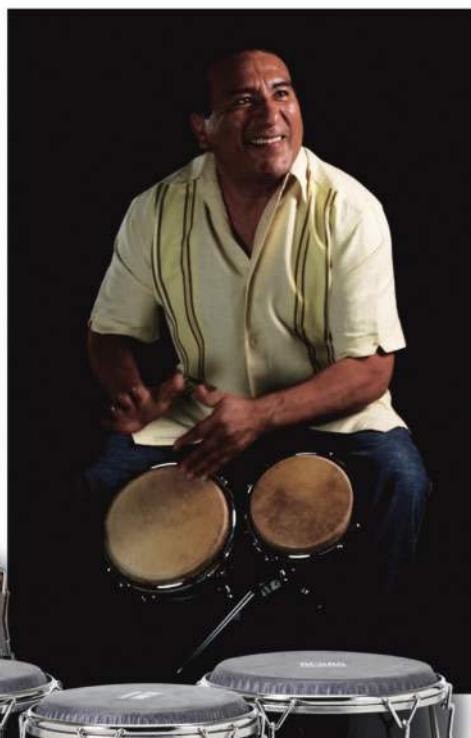
Patrick: My favorites are Motown drum sounds—those thick, mono kick drum sounds, almost toneless, with a really bright snare that's extremely warm sounding. And the cymbals have the same kind of lack of sibilance. That's one thing I hate about modern recording equipment: You're able to record cymbals clearly—you can hear the frequency range from 10k to 20k. To me, that's just an awful sound.

MD: You did most of the engineering on the Black Keys' earlier stuff. Are you cool with another engineer tuning and miking the drums? Do you welcome that different perspective?

Patrick: Yeah, as long as the engineer doesn't automatically put up stereo overheads. We have stereo panning on most of our records, but I won't do stereo drums anymore—I don't like it. But usually I'll trust what they're doing. I didn't used to, but that was just me being an arrogant kid.



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9 Reasons To Love

BILL BRUFORD

by Mike Haid



Had he retired from music making in the mid-'70s after recording prog-rock masterpieces like Yes's *Close To The Edge* and King Crimson's *Red*, BB would still be considered one of the most talked-about drummers of all time. **Fortunately for us, he waited another thirty years to bow out of the biz.**

Bill Bruford's fresh drumming inventions and artistic interpretations of odd-meter rhythms in pop music helped propel Yes into superstardom in the early '70s. Not content with that accomplishment, Bruford, feeling the band had reached its creative apex, decided to move on to the more demanding environs of Robert Fripp's King Crimson. This was the first of many gutsy moves that Bruford would make in his prolific, eclectic, and highly decorated forty-plus-year career. His latest surprise? The drummer retired in 2009, though he continues to run his two record labels, Summerfold and Winterfold, and to speak publicly about music. Around the time Bruford announced his stepping down from the throne, *Bill Bruford: The Autobiography* was released, garnering much praise from the music press. To follow are just a few of the many reasons to love the rhythmically mischievous Mr. Bruford.

DRUMMING INNOVATIONS

Bruford is a master trickster, a musical magician, constantly reinventing himself and his role as drummer/percussionist. A true innovator of polyrhythmic and odd-meter drumming and composition, he has continually been ahead of his time as a rhythmist and composer. Although Bill is a master drumkit technician, his artistic creativity outweighs his technical prowess. For example, rather than taking a predictable approach and employing ever more complicated and gymnastic rhythmic solutions, he's just as likely to place

a backbeat in unusual but highly effective places in the bar, or to hold back that famous snare ding well into the next phrase, creating a constantly shifting tension-and-release effect that keeps the listener engaged and entertained. Never satisfied with the repetition of musical or stylistic concepts within a project, Bruford has consistently searched for equally bold ways to express his ideas. He breaks into a Cheshire cat's grin when he knows he's creating something deceptive to the average ear.

YES

It took Yes, the band Bruford cofounded in 1968 with singer Jon Anderson, bassist Chris Squire, keyboardist Tony Kaye, and guitarist Peter Banks, a few albums to establish its sound, a remarkably colorful amalgam of Beatles-inspired melodies, jazz-influenced rhythmic sophistication, and futuristic soundscapes. But by the band's third release, 1970's *The Yes Album*, Yes was clearly unique in its musical mission and untouchable in terms of sonic ambition. By the time we get to the group's groundbreaking 1971 album, *Fragile*, nary a minute goes by that isn't peppered with creative, challenging, and very tuneful concepts.

Ear-catching rhythmic highlights from *Fragile* include Latin-style percussion layered over playful drumkit improvisation and solid grooves from 3:20 to 4:50 on "Roundabout"; the introductory triplet fill on "South Side Of The Sky" and the amazing triplet inventions

from 4:20 to 4:40; and the first two minutes of "Heart Of The Sunrise," with Bill's creative, powerful fills and exploratory yet musical grooves. The entire "Sunrise" track, in fact, defines Bruford as a rhythmic genius.

Though the nearly absurd micro-editing applied to 1972's *Close To The Edge* was the straw that broke the drummer's back, that album remains a fan favorite—Yes's crowning achievement in the eyes of many. The record, which features three epic-length tracks, features some of Bruford's most effective early drumming moments, including the continually unexpected punctuations strewn throughout the sidelong title track's more intense sections (0:55–2:50, 14:12–17:37).

THE BRUFORD SOUND

As with most drum legends, Bruford has an unmistakable sound. From his earliest efforts in the studio, he established his signature tones with a bright and ringing snare, powerful melodic toms, and a punchy kick. His continually evolving setup became as stylish and unique as his drumming. When he entered King Crimson in the mid-'70s, he began adding acoustic percussion and then Remo Rototoms to his set, eventually incorporating electronics to round out his arsenal. Though he later returned full circle to the acoustic kit, Bruford, in typical fashion, created an unconventional setup that featured a cable hi-hat in the center, with an asymmetrical array of toms on the sides.

MID-'70S KING CRIMSON

You could sense the jazz-rock shift in Bruford's playing when he climbed on board the mysterious King Crimson train for Robert Fripp's more severe and experimental mid-'70s version of the group, which featured the core band of Bruford, Fripp, bassist John Wetton, and violinist David Cross. On 1973's *Larks' Tongues In Aspic*, Bruford takes part in some outrageous double-drumming ESP with his mentor Jamie Muir, notably on part two of the perennially reimagined title track. With Crimson, Bill also began incorporating jazz-rock fusion chops into the art-rock genre, on such classics as "One More Red Nightmare" from 1974's *Red*, with the creative use of China cymbal accents, space, and dynamics.

SOLO CAREER

When Robert Fripp put Crimson on ice later in the '70s, Bruford took advantage of the

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BILL BRUFORD

opportunity to develop his own voice as a composer with a unique twist on progressive fusion. The drummer strengthened his odd-meter assault in a more refined, jazzier slant than Crimson with his solo recordings, which feature such fusion heavyweights as guitar god Allan Holdsworth and bass wiz Jeff Berlin. Many of today's cutting-edge prog and fusion bands still pull from Bruford's late-'70s/early-'80s solo era in compositional style and sound. The recordings *Feels Good To Me* (1978) and *One Of A Kind* (1979) are considered fusion classics.

During this time, Bruford also participated in the short-lived but highly acclaimed prog-fusion crossover project U.K., which featured King Crimson alumnus John Wetton on bass and vocals, ex-Roxy Music member Eddie Jobson on keys and violin, and Bruford's six-stringer of choice, Holdsworth. Bruford and Holdsworth left the project after one recording and a couple of tours.

'80S CRIMSON

When Fripp and Bruford reconvened in the early '80s with a King Crimson lineup that featured bassist Tony Levin and singer/guitarist Adrian Belew, their sound was radically different yet no less intense and boundary pushing than it was in the previous decade. The studio albums *Discipline*, *Beat*, and *Three Of A Perfect Pair* reflect the influence of new wave groups like the Talking Heads as well as the interlocking rhythmic approaches of Indonesian gamelan and West African music, to great effect. This highly productive period found Bruford offering hypnotic linear-style beats and

applying electronic drums in a cleverly orchestral, powerful fashion. (Indeed, many drummers can recall exactly where and when they were first bombarded by the sheer audacity of *Discipline's* fierce drum showcase, "Indiscipline.") One of the first to embrace the new technology, Bruford was a forerunner in his promotion of Simmons drums, which he used for much of that decade and into the '90s to create tom-tom melodies (electronically pitch altered) and non-acoustic sounds.

EARTHWORKS

Hell-bent on proving Brits could play jazz, Bruford focused his post-'80s-Crimson attention on his electric/acoustic jazz project Earthworks, which caught the attention of U.S. critics by applying the drummer's signature odd-meter concepts to a somewhat traditional jazz ensemble. Using the methods that he developed in King Crimson of producing melodic patterns on electronic drum pads, Bruford applied unique, nontraditional textures, layers, and colors to augment the acoustic drumkit, creating a new dimension in modern jazz. Most likely feeling the novelty of electronics beginning to wear thin, Bill returned to the organic sound and feel of the acoustic kit in the later stages of this highly polished and wickedly improvisational ensemble.

CRIMSON DOUBLE TRIO

After another lengthy break from Crimson, Fripp reunited the Bruford/Levin/Belew lineup in the mid-'90s, now augmented with stick

player Trey Gunn and second drummer Pat Mastelotto. Fripp's experiment with the "double trio" format didn't last long, with this lineup releasing just one proper studio album, 1995's *Thrak*. But the results were disarmingly intense and provided Bruford with yet another fascinating opportunity to create new modes of drumming expression. Highlights from *Thrak* include the tribal drum duet "B'Boom," the precise kit orchestrations of the single "Dinosaur," the disorienting rhythmic counterpoint in the instrumental breaks of "Sex Sleep Eat Drink Dream," and the moody, aggressive title track.

RETIREMENT

Bruford has taken the bold step of retiring while in his prime. While the decision has baffled some, perhaps it's not so surprising that Bill has hung up the sticks just when you expect him to create the next new thing to make drummers scratch their heads before they study, dissect, and emulate it. Recently he has conducted a series of lectures in concert with the release of his autobiography, sharing lessons learned and ongoing inspirations with longtime fans who have studied his revolutionary drumming for years, as well as with younger players formulating their own unique paths toward artistic expression. Given Bill's remarkably fertile musical legacy, it would be hard to imagine a better role model for drumming excellence and creativity.



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GEARING UP DRUMKIT DETAILS, ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

Interviews and photos by Sayre Berman

Jay-Z's **TONY ROYSTER JR.**

Drums: DW in black ice finish with black hardware

- A.** 16x22 double-headed VLX gong drum
- B.** 4x13 Collector's series snare
- C.** 7x14 Collector's series snare
- D.** 7x13 Edge snare
- E.** 6x10 tom (SSC shell)
- F.** 6x12 tom (SSC shell)
- G.** 14x16 floor tom (SSC shell)
- H.** 16x23 single-headed VLX gong drum
- I.** 18x24 bass drum (SSC shell)

with 8x24 Woofer

"I'm using a 24" kick with a Woofer to give it more oomph," Royster says. "That combination does a lot for the hip-hop effect we're trying to get. The music we play is basically driven by the snare, kick, and hi-hat, so the bass drum is one of the most important elements of the kit.

"The 22" gong drum has a top and a bottom head to give it that 808 sound. The 23" has a single head to give it a big gong sound. They work great together."

Hardware: DW 9500TB hi-hat stand, 9300 snare stands, 9002 double pedal, and 9000 series tom and cymbal stands

Sticks: Vic Firth Tony Royster Jr. STR model

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1.** 15" HHX Groove Hats
- 2.** 19" HHX X-Treme crash
- 3.** 12" HH splash
- 4.** 18" HHX Evolution O-Zone crash
- 5.** 17" HHX X-Treme Chinese
- 6.** 20" HH Rock ride
- 7.** 20" HHX X-Plosion crash
- 8.** 18" AA Fast Chinese
- 9.** 18" Vault crash

"For this tour I decided to go with big cymbals, because everything we do is just so big and loud. The 15" Groove Hats cut through, and they're big and precise."

Electronics: Various

"I use a Roland SPD-S pad to play sample sounds. I have a ButtKicker shaker and amp for a punchy low-end feel. With that, I feel as well as hear the sound, which I find helps me play better in the pocket. I have the ButtKicker mounted on a Sound Percussion bicycle saddle throne.

"My mics are Sennheiser e904s on the toms, Shure Beta 52As on the gong drums, an AKG D40 on the Woofer, and a Shure Beta 91 inside the main kick drum. All of my snares have Shure SM57s on top and bottom."



Heads: Evans, Woodshed Percussion custom bass drum artwork

"Marco Zambrano, my drum tech, and I tried different heads to see how they would work in big arenas. We agreed on the EQ3 or EMAD bass drum heads; we switch back and forth. On the toms I'm using clear EC2 SSTs on top and G1s on the bottom. Those sound amazing, so we're sticking with them. On the snares I use the ST Dry. They all get the job done."





Interpol's **SAM FOGARINO**

Drums: Ludwig Classic Maple

- A.** 6½x14 100th Anniversary chrome-over-brass snare
- B.** 13x14 tom
- C.** 16x16 floor tom
- D.** 14x26 bass drum

"I've been with Ludwig for a couple of years now," Fogarino says. "I had been playing their first limited-edition stainless steel drumkit. For this tour I wanted some of the classic wood tone that Ludwig is famous for, so I asked them to make me a very simple black Classic Maple drumkit. It really possesses that classic 1960s warm, true drum tone. Our front-of-house man loves them because they're so easy to mike up. They're also easy to tune.

"I'm using an Anniversary edition chrome-over-brass snare that has thick brass hoops, which provide a massive rimshot sound. I'm also using a big 26" kick drum. Once you play with a 26" kick, you can't go back to anything smaller. This drum will just kick right back at you. All my bandmates standing about ten feet in front of me can feel the air being moved."

Hardware: Ludwig 900 series stands, DW 9000 kick pedal, Roc-N-Soc hydraulic throne

Percussion: Rhythm Tech DTS tambourine with nickel jingles, medium Chop Block, and 11" Ribbon Crasher

"I have some Rhythm Tech gear that I'm

very fond of, mainly the drumset tambourine—I can't play without it. I also use their traditional woodblock and these crazy metal crashers. They possess a sort of trashy white-noise handclap sound."

Cymbals: Paiste Twenty series

- 1.** 13" hi-hats
- 2.** 19" crash
- 3.** 22" ride
- 4.** 20" crash
- 5.** 20" Dark Energy Mark II ride (with rivets)
- 6.** UFIP 8" bell

Heads: Remo Black Suede Emperor snare batter and Hazy Diplomat bottom, coated Vintage A tom batters and clear Ambassador bottoms, and Black Suede Emperor bass drum batter

"Remo is making these Vintage A drumheads the same way they made them back in the '50s, when the company first shifted from calfskin to plastic. There's a marked difference between something more modern and these Vintage A heads. The combination of them and the Classic Maple Ludwigs is a dream."

Electronics: Roland PD-8 dual-trigger drum pad and TMC-6 trigger-to-MIDI converter (TMC-6 not shown), Akai MPC1000 (not shown), Digidesign PQ personal monitor mixer

"Mounted on my kick drum is a Roland drum pad, which triggers a simple rim sound to give the rest of the band a tempo reference in their in-ears. It isn't anything that the audience hears—at least I hope not—but it's an interesting way to keep the band in time without having to click my sticks. This way the rest of the band doesn't have to play to a click track, and the audience doesn't hear me guiding the band.

"For example, the song 'Lights' has a very long guitar intro that's joined by the vocal for about a minute before any kind of solid beat kicks in. During that time I'm hearing simple quarter notes fed into my in-ears from the click track. Through that minute or so I'll tap out the quarter notes on the Roland pad, mainly so our guitar player can keep in time with the vocals. If I had to click my sticks during that passage, it would really kill the mood."

Sticks: Vic Firth American Classic 5BN and 5A Silver Bullet

"The Silver Bullet line has aluminum tips, which sound really interesting when I'm doing a lot of cymbal work or playing on tight hi-hats."





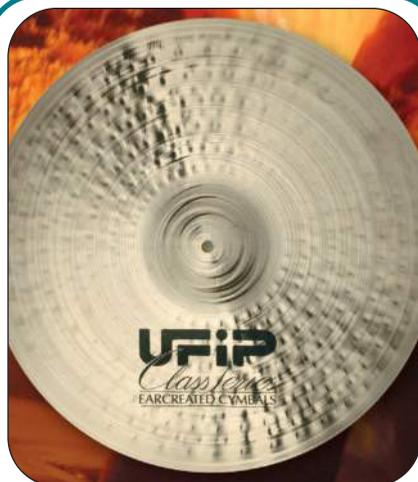
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Performance series drums are available in two tom packs: 8x10, 9x12, 12x14, and 5 1/2x14, and 9x12, 14x16, and 6 1/2x14. Either can be matched with a 16x20, 18x22, or 18x24 bass drum. Available add-ons include 7x8, 8x10, 12x14, and 14x16 toms and 5 1/2x14 and 6 1/2x14 snare drums. List price for a typical five-piece set with a 5 1/2x14 snare, 22" bass drum, and 10", 12", and 14" toms: \$2,999.99.

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Sonor has produced a limited run of custom Beech Infinite drumkits, made with wood harvested from the forest that surrounds the company's factory in Bad Berleburg-Aue, Germany. The shells are handcrafted with Sonor's CLTF (Cross Laminated Tension Free) process, and all lugs are equipped with the TuneSafe system to maximize tuning stability.

Beech Infinite shells feature a new lacquering process that includes hand finishing with a special SoftTouch paint. The result is a unique velvetlike shell surface being offered in piano black and crème lacquer finishes. The shell kit comes with a 20x22 bass drum (no mount), a 6x14 snare, and shallow toms measuring 7x10, 8x12, 12x14, and 14x16.

sonorusa.com



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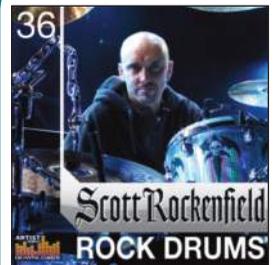
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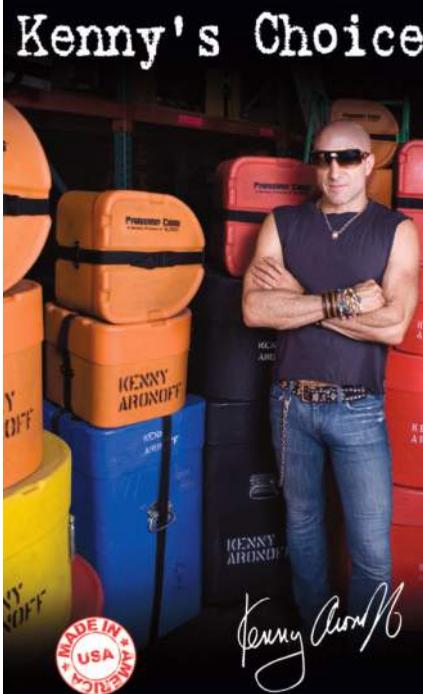
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His approach—marked by a profound loyalty to the twin rhythmic pillars of repetition and variation—stood in stark contrast to what nearly all of his drumming peers were focusing on in progressive rock's heyday. **Today Can's legendary timekeeper is considered a hero to a generation of thinking alternative groovers.**

Jaki Liebezeit

by Ingo Baron

"The first time I heard Jaki Liebezeit's playing with Can," says Wilco drummer Glenn Kotche, "I was hooked. You can tell instantly that there's so much going on just under the surface. His super-solid feel is readily apparent, but the way he uses dynamics and ghosting to enhance the groove is masterful. He also changes things up ever so slightly to perfectly enhance everything else that's happening with the music. Sometimes he'll just add one little beat displacement or loosen his hi-hats for one hit. It's little things like that—which keep things evolving over what might seem like a static beat—that I think a lot of drummers could learn from. I definitely have."



Liebezeit is a true revolutionary, working against the grain of complex, mercurial progressive-rock drumming and formulating his own highly stylized groove-based approach with the German "Krautrock" band Can throughout the 1970s. At the end of that decade, when nearly all of prog rock's most popular acts were unceremoniously washed off the front pages by the twin storms of punk and new wave, Can was one of the very few veteran acts whose credibility remained intact. The group profoundly influenced next-generation art-rock bands from PIL and



Ingo Baron

Tortoise to Stereolab and Radiohead to the Red Hot Chili Peppers and the Flaming Lips, and still gets name-dropped regularly as a prime source of sophisticated, soulful, barrier-pushing ideas. This is largely down to the playful yet trance-inducing approach Liebezeit takes on classic Can albums like *Tago Mago*, *Ege Bamyasi*, and *Future Days*, which feature such highly studied slabs of forward-thinking groovesmanship as "Halleluwah," "Mushroom," "Vitamin C," and "Moonshake."

It wasn't always this way. "I came from jazz and played free jazz for two years," says Liebezeit from his rehearsal studio in Cologne, Germany. "In the mid-'60s I was the first free-jazz drummer in Germany. But I stopped that because, to my mind, I

couldn't develop any further in that genre. In free jazz you just weren't allowed to play anything that was harmonically or rhythmically structured. It's a paradox, but within free jazz there were too many limitations for me! After two years I couldn't stand that anymore. Repetition or doubling something is a basic element in music.

"With Can I was finally allowed to do what I wanted," Liebezeit continues. "Repeating rhythms and grooves over and over again very consciously was a whole new thing at the time—even though this is an old idea: You find repetitive patterns in every culture of the world. In Europe during the '60s this wasn't understood at all. But the truth is simple: Without any repetition there is no groove."

For Liebezeit, repetition need not equate to a lack of creativity; on the contrary, he took it as a challenge to make his beats as interesting as possible so as not to become monotonous. "For every piece I figured out a special rhythm or idea and repeated it all the way through," he says. "Sometimes up to the stars! I consciously didn't vary anything. Not too many people got that idea at the time. Many guys thought, *This is really awful—you simply can't come up with something*. Later, when drum machines and looping became popular, everybody suddenly got it. This is daily business nowadays—though a machine cannot invent a rhythm, that's for sure."

Today Liebezeit follows the same philosophy he constructed more than thirty years ago, albeit perhaps more consciously than he did at first. "Nowadays I love to react to very strict rules that I formulate for myself," he explains. "First, I have to define 'my rhythm': What does it mean if I play in, say, 4/4? Nothing! You can play anything in that time signature. But now I define rules concerning time intervals that build specific bars, and I use different sets of volume levels or different colors of sound. Structure and rhythm stay the same—this is the rule I have to follow—but by changing these other basic elements, I can construct anything.

"I didn't know these rules early on," Jaki continues. "I just had an intuition about it. But I started to really think about rhythms and systems, such as taking a four-beat rhythm but not dividing it into equal parts. Outside Europe, most cultures use an additive system, whereas in Europe you are using a dividing system. And these two systems are not compatible. In Europe and America you constantly think about notes. Then there are, especially in classical music, emphasized and non-emphasized parts, which are defined by the barline. But the problem is, there are no barlines in real life!

"For me, Can was a challenge to create some really new music; we wanted to sound unique. Most rock bands in Germany wanted to sound really English, so in England no one recognized them as German. Can was different. That's why it was successful, especially in England. People hadn't heard anything like that before—really 'un-English.' Can was as relentless and had as contrary an attitude as punk had some years later."

Though Can tracks like "Spoon" represent the early use of drum machines, and

Liebezeit has played in almost exclusively "electronic" musical environments for the past fifteen years, he says he has very little interest in electronic drums. "Today I play totally acoustic drums," he insists. "I don't find e-drums too exciting. By putting a microphone to a drum, it gets sort of 'electronic' immediately. I need a natural relation between the attack and the resulting volume. E-drums are for dance bands!

"But I do like to play to machines," Liebezeit concedes. "That presents a lot of opportunities. With Can we used machines to keep the tempo—especially while using echoes and other effects. We didn't use a click track, though, because that was clearly an unmusical element. Later on we would edit the tapes, and there would be no problems."

A theme that runs through Liebezeit's career is that of invention. "I'm a self-trained musician," Jaki says, "and I still find out things today that you can't read in books or learn in music schools. Most things I found out just by thinking about rhythms and how to execute them. It takes a long time before you can get rid of all your ballast and find 'the real thing.'"

According to Liebezeit, today Can sells as many records as the band did back in the day, and the drummer is still hard at work, perfecting his craft in a duo with the multi-instrumentalist Burnt Friedman. "Electronic music is the main aspect of that project," he explains, "because it mainly focuses on computer-based things and my drumming. But the computer turned into a real instrument for us, which can be played 'live.' With that idea in mind, I needed a very special drumset, which I've been using since the mid-'90s.

"I don't play jazz or rock anymore, so I more or less said goodbye to the traditional

technique. A normal drumset with hi-hat, snare, bass drum, and toms really bores me. I wanted to simplify. Why should I use pedals? If a screw loosens on the hi-hat, most jazzers are completely lost. In rock, take away the cymbals or the snare wires, and the drummer is helpless. That's a pity! So I use a snare drum without any wires and three slightly modified toms. I also use a modified technique that comes from traditional drumming. I seldom use any cymbals; therefore I don't need light or pointed sticks. So I use quite heavy sticks now to get the bass sound out of the drums. Though miking drums is always a problem, this has simplified the process. Basically I like to have just two drums. Everything else is an extension of that. Take a davul from Turkey—it has just two sides. I studied these drums for a long time and tried to translate these things onto my drumset."

Fans of Jaki Liebezeit can still see him play today, though he rarely performs outside Europe. "I still play concerts as they come," he explains, "and I still try to improve my playing. I practice a lot, just like a sportsman. And I still work with my project Drums Off Chaos in Cologne and with some other projects spontaneously."

With all of Can's original members, save for guitarist Michael Karoli, still alive and active, the inevitable question of a band reunion comes up regularly. "We didn't separate from each other musically," Jaki explains, "but rather took different directions. I don't see a necessity to play together again. Besides, our records are still available." One suspects they'll remain that way for quite some time, providing open-minded musicians with food for thought for many years to come.



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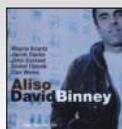
LEST WE FORGET...

Last year had its share of blockbuster drum performances that captured our imaginations and infiltrated our practice routines. Here's a batch of equally awesome collections that you might have missed.



It's been a while since we've heard fusion great **DAVE WECKL** play with as much fire as he does on *Interspirit* by the bassists Anthony Jackson and Yiorgos Fakanas. Weckl and Jackson have a long history, and on this collection they uphold their reputation as one of the tightest rhythm sections in fusion. (Abstract Logix) **Mike Haid**

Epic melodies and textures reminiscent of '70s progressive rock receive a twenty-first-century interpretation on *Fragment* by Parzivals Eye. **HANNES WEIGEND** captures the vibe perfectly. (Red Farm) **Martin Patmos**



On *Aliso*, acclaimed alto saxist David Binney plays with intriguing modernism underpinned by a wealth of jazz history. **DAN WEISS** supports the quintet while unraveling over-the-bar patterns, odd subdivisions, and sudden elastic shifts between straight-8th and swing phrasing. (Criss Cross Jazz) **Jeff Potter**

On Helmet's seventh album, *Seeing Eye Dog*, new drummer **KYLE STEVENSON** supplies the cracking snare, thumping bass drum, and aggressively versatile cymbal work that we've come to expect in support of the group's cuttishly rhythmic guitar stylings. (Work Song) **Billy Brennan**



On *Forgiveness Rock Record*, Broken Social Scene returns with the usual array of guest appearances and collage-like indie-rock instrumentation. **JUSTIN PEROFF** offers minimalist grooves ("Sweetest Kill") and disco socas ("Texico Bitches"). (Arts And Crafts) **Anthony Riscica**

DUDUKA DA FONSECA is exquisite on jazz bassist Rufus Reid's *Out Front*, lending color, creating shape, embracing space, swinging super-hard, and digging deep into every sumptuous bar. (Motéma) **Jeff Potter**



MATT BURR keeps great time with a wonderful feel on the blues-rock tracks that comprise Grace Potter & the Nocturnals' fourth, self-titled studio album, sneaking a 16th-note snare fill in a hair early on "Paris," throwing a little hi-hat giddyup into "Tiny Light," and stepping back to serve the huge melody of "Colors." (Hollywood) **Robin Tolleson**



Incorporating the raucous double-sided dhol drum into his traps, energetic drummer/composer **SUNNY JAIN** creates bhangra madness on *Chaal Baby*, the debut by the popular New York City collective Red Baraat. Jain uniquely blends second-line feels and bhangra rhythms within a marching band format. (Sinj) **Ken Micallef**



STEVE MICHAUD's dense and inventive approach to the odd-time retro-fusion compositions on bassist David Hines' *Inner Duality* gives the once highly regarded genre the adventurous flair and ferocity that made it famous. (spicereckrecords.com) **Mike Haid**



On the Mike Mainieri/Marnix Busstra Quartet's *Twelve Pieces*, **PIETER BAST** sets down an inventive series of rhythmic tapestries on "Lost In Little Spain," deft brushes on "Piece," and subtle funk on "Don't Break Step." (NYC) **Martin Patmos**



The Trey Anastasio Band's *TAB At The Tab*, recorded in February 2010 at Atlanta's Tabernacle, finds **RUSS LAWTON** kicking the Phish guitarist's seven-piece group with grooving authority, holding down patterns for long stretches while making nuanced dynamic adjustments and adding subtle embellishments. Although "Sand" is also a Phish song, Lawton created the funky, swinging beat, and here he digs into it with relish. (treyanastasio.com) **Michael Parillo**

The guitar/bass/drums power trio StOrk is the perfect vehicle for drum wiz **THOMAS LANG's** insane double bass skills. The heavy odd-meter instrumental compositions on the band's self-titled debut allow Lang to unload his deep arsenal of chops. (myspace.com/officialstork) **Mike Haid**



Twenty years ago, Megadeth released the landmark metal album *Rust In Peace*. To celebrate the anniversary, leader Dave Mustaine's current lineup played the full set of songs on stage, along with some other fan favorites. On *Rust In Peace: Live*, **SHAWN DROVER**, the band's drummer since 2004, ably tackles Nick Menza's parts from the original album, creating a graceful yet powerful rhythmic bed for the band. (Shout! Factory) **Martin Patmos**



Big Big Train's *The Underfall Yard* is a neo-prog masterpiece filled with epic musical journeys and stellar performances. Veteran progster **NICK D'VIRGILIO** (Spock's Beard) is the perfect fit for this melodic yet rhythmically challenging collection. (bigbigtrain.com) **Mike Haid**





matt greiner

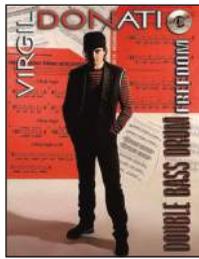


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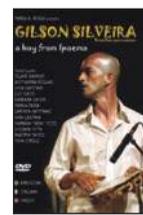
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Percussionist Silveira could enthrall with a tin cup solo. Coaxing abundant energy, nuance, and melody from the simplest of setups, this Brazilian master reminds us that rhythm should be joyful. Seen here in live performances with a variety of ensembles, Silveira utilizes a unique multi-percussion kit, congas, and often a lone pandeiro. Instructional segments include pandeiro skills and Silveira's percussion-kit methods, in which he combines hands and sticks. And for something completely different, enjoy a bathing-suit-ed percussion trio playing cymbals and gongs that are dipped in and out of the rolling waves, creating tonal bends. Wacky? Yes. Musical? Absolutely. *Note: This title is playable only on computers and multi-standard or region code 2 DVD players.* (marioriggio.it) **Jeff Potter**



LED ZEPPELIN PLATINUM ALBUM DRUMSET EDITIONS TRANSCRIPTIONS BY MARC ATKINSON

BOOKS LEVEL: ALL \$19.99 EACH
Scrutinizing and dissecting a drumming legend's performances can often demystify the once sacred. Here, however, the close attention paid to John Bonham's kick drum, stick, and even bare-hand technique on tracks as varied as "Moby Dick," "No Quarter," "Ramble On," "Immigrant Song," and "Achilles Last Stand," serves only to underscore the drummer's towering abilities and influence. Playing along with "Dazed And Confused," "Black Dog," "Four Sticks," "Nobody's Fault But Mine," "The Ocean," and "The Crunge," while being guided by tablature, reveals Bonzo's ease in moving through odd times and forces us to sharpen our own timing. While minor portions of the transcriptions may be open to interpretation, if not heated debate, on the whole these books—each dedicated to one of the band's eight studio albums, plus one for the "leftovers" collection *Coda*—present an unfiltered and fresh perspective on Bonham's timeless efforts and characteristic feel. (Alfred) **Will Romano**

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Pridgen

PASIC 2010

Photos by
Heinz Kronberger

Ah, November, how we love thee. No one stops us from going back for seconds and thirds, whether we're talking turkey or drumming. And even if the food court at the Indianapolis Convention Center, site of the Percussive Arts Society's annual International Convention, doesn't quite reach the gastronomic heights of Mom's home cooking, it ain't half bad. Anyway, drum enthusiasts aren't there for the food—they go for PASIC's reliably wondrous smorgasbord of drumming wisdom and entertainment. This year, once again, no one went home hungry.

As usual, *MD* spent a lot of time in PASIC's large performance rooms, where we caught a number of fabulous presentations. Here's some of what we saw....

Chris Coleman is a remarkable combination of fire and precision. Coming off a late-night (into early-morning) rehearsal, Coleman and his group took some R&B-based tunes into an almost Zappa-like place of playful intensity. In between, Chris's advice was thoughtful and dead-on.

John "JR" Robinson shared words of wisdom gained over thousands of hours spent working at the very top of the L.A. studio game. And when John played along to some of the classic tracks he's recorded over the years, it hit you in the gut, hard. The man's a monster.

Former Breaking Benjamin drummer **Jeremy Hummel**'s clinic included great tips in several areas, including the concept of playing moods as opposed to beats, a topic that we're hoping Hummel will cover in more detail in his regular column in *MD*.

Jason McGerr of Death Cab For Cutie

shared some important real-world advice about extra-drumming topics, like how to work with artists of various technical abilities. He also neatly showed how swapping out items like hi-hats can inspire new grooves.

Matt Wilson, in what had to be the most amusing clinic of the weekend, nonetheless covered some profound territory via his superhero persona, "the Allower." Matt then ended his clinic with a short solo filled with such touch and space, it could make you cry.

Brazilian drummer **Vera Figueiredo** opened some eyes with topics such as applying exercises from *Stick Control* to samba orchestration.

Finally, we were very happy to be able to attend the SRO clinics presented by **Jeff Hamilton**, **Thomas Pridgen**, and **Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez**. At this point Hamilton has to be considered a true master craftsman of the drumset, and every time he sits behind the kit he reminds us how high the bar is in terms of sensitive, swinging playing. Pridgen is something entirely else, spewing out more ideas at a higher dynamic level than...well...anyone else on the planet, we figure. The final clinic of the weekend featured Hernandez, who played two long, twisting, mesmerizing solos and took the time to clarify some advanced rhythmic concepts.

Other drummers who made appearances in clinic and concert settings at PASIC 2010 included **Russ Miller**, **Dom Famularo**, **Stanton Moore**, **Jack DeJohnette**, **David Stanoch**, and **Ignacio Berroa**. For more on the event, go to pas.org.



Coleman



Robinson



Hamilton



Hernandez



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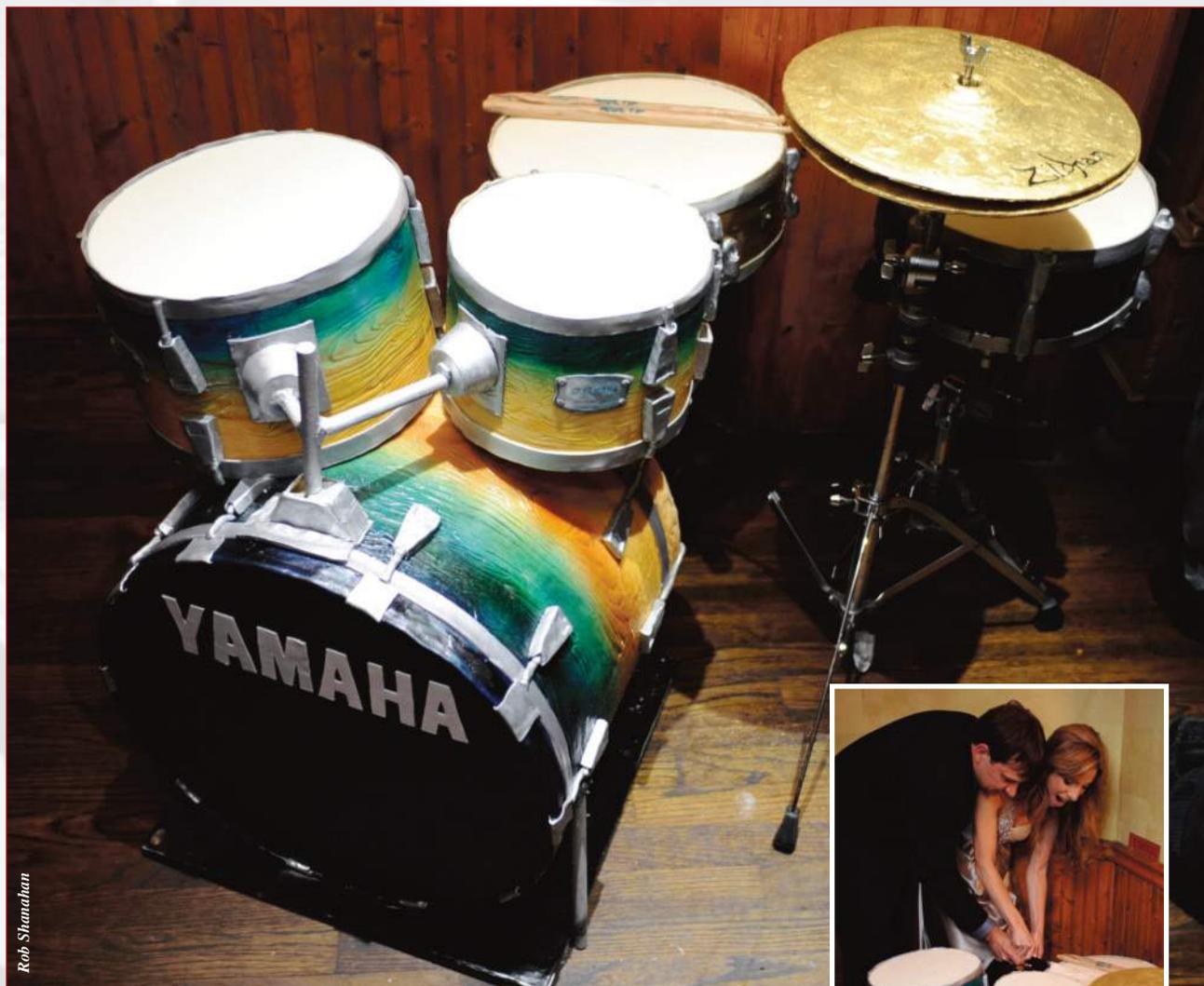
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KIT OF THE MONTH



Sweet Surprise

This tasty kit comes courtesy of our cover artist, Keith Carlock. The drumset cake, which matches the finish of Carlock's main rig (Yamaha PHX sapphire fade), was a wedding gift from the drummer's wife, Lynne. The masterpiece was created by Lauri Ditunno of New York City's Cake Alchemy, who also has a show on WE TV called *Amazing Wedding Cakes*.

"At the time, Keith was on tour with Steely Dan," Ditunno explains, "and Lynne wanted to surprise him with a special wedding cake. She was familiar with my work, so she came in and we discussed making a life-size model of his Yamaha drumset. She put me in contact with Yamaha to get the

drum sizes so I could create the cake to scale. At the wedding we placed the cakes on a drum riser and made signature cookie-dough drumsticks. I created a wood-grain pattern on the fondant and airbrushed the proper colors to match Keith's drumset. I made the Zildjian hi-hat cymbal out of chocolate and handcrafted the toms in fondant. The snares had a more smooth, polished finish, one gold and the other black.

"They're such a great couple," Ditunno continues, "and Keith was totally excited about the cake, which made me happy. I'm a huge fan of many genres of music, so it's always a treat to work with music

and food. And what drummer wouldn't want to eat his drums?"

So, what did the groom think about all this? "I had no idea it was a cake because it looked so real," Carlock says. "The details were amazing! I thought maybe there was a surprise band setting up in the room where we had our after-wedding party. Also, you can see that real hardware was used, which added to the illusion. And, best of all, it was delicious!"

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



NEXT MONTH



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