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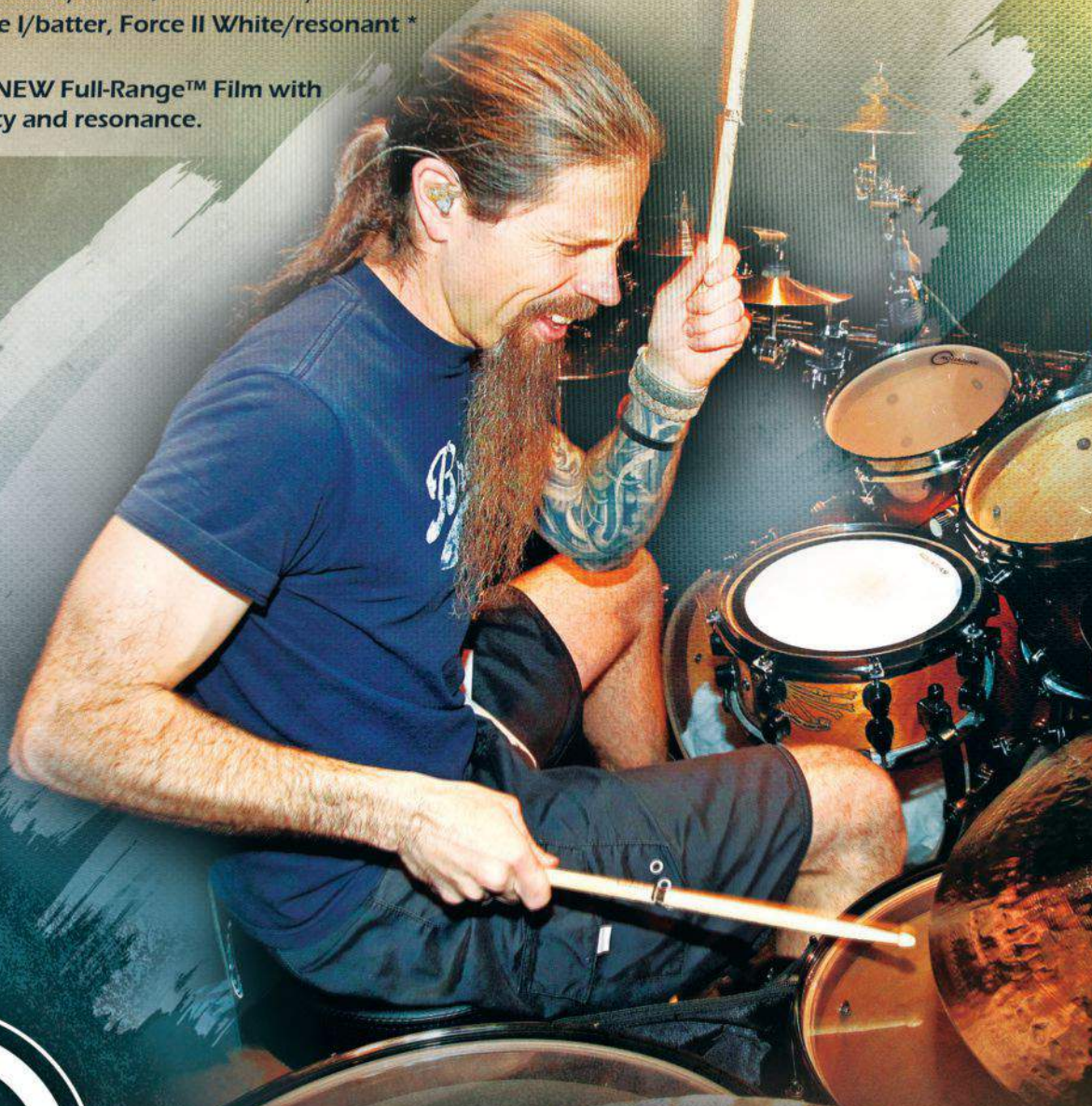


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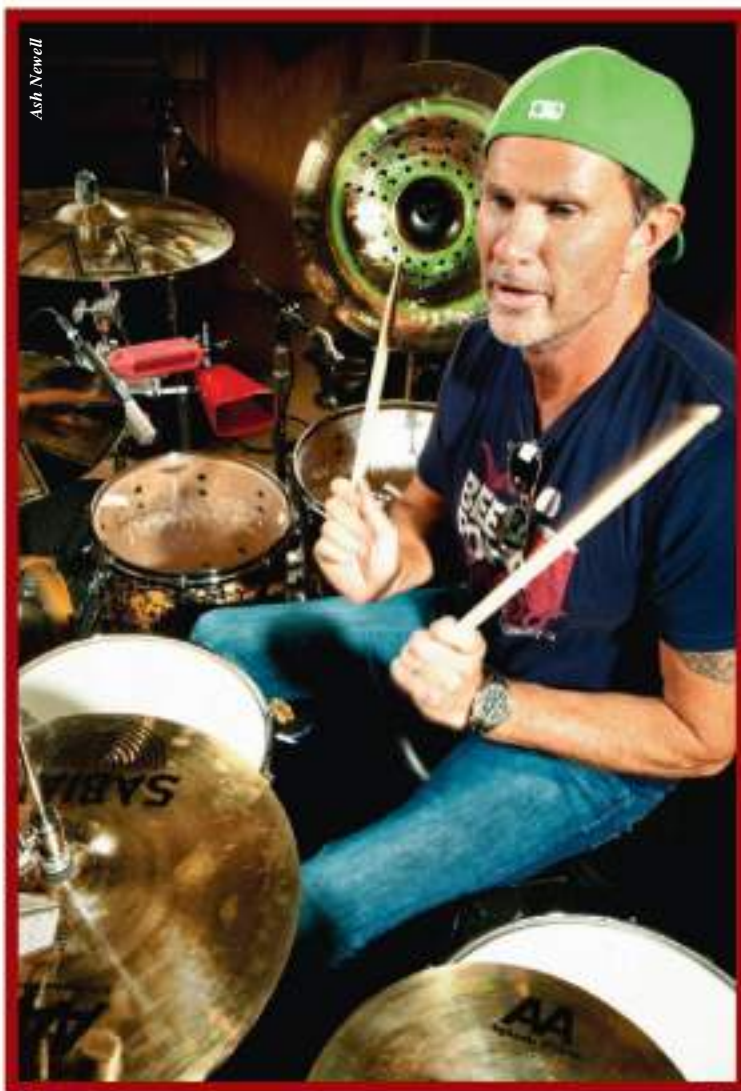
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Ash Newell



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CHAD SMITH

Nearly thirty years after embarking on his life's journey as a professional drummer, the bombastic one is at the top of his game, getting busy with the Chili Peppers, Chickenfoot, Kid Rock, and his beloved Meatbats.

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2011 MD FESTIVAL REPORT

This past May 21, the hub of the drumming community was the Memorial Auditorium and Fox Theatre at New Jersey's Montclair State University, the site of the twenty-first Modern Drummer Festival.

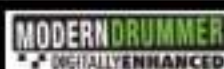
Paul La Roca



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CHRIS CORSANO

Between tone and technique, the remarkably "out" accomplice to Thurston Moore, Nels Cline, Björk, Paul Flaherty, and Jim O'Rourke carves a supernatural percussive path.



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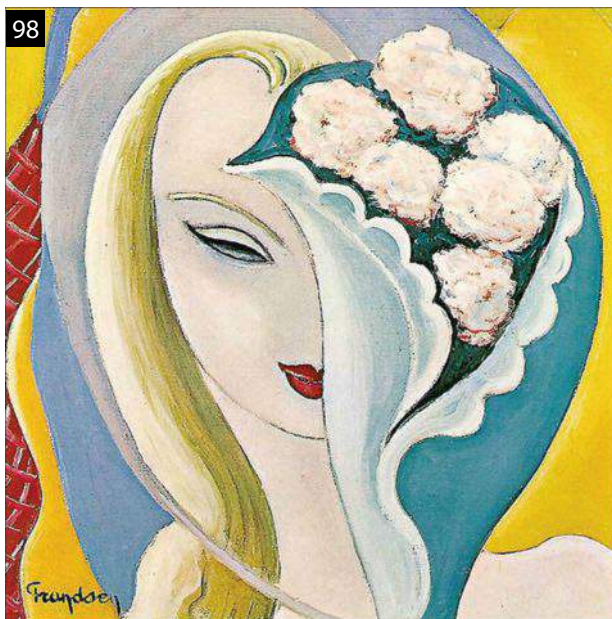
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One for the Books

This past May, another diverse group of world-class drummers and eager drumming fans gathered at Montclair State University, to commemorate the twenty-first Modern Drummer Festival. This was my fifth Festival as part of the production staff, and like all years prior, the event was a joy to be a part of. From the rousing opening master class by Rascal Flatts drummer Jim Riley to the final standing ovation for master Cuban drummer Horacio Hernandez and his jazz/world/fusion group the New World Order, the day was filled with inspiring words, entertaining music, and a strong sense of drummer camaraderie among the performers, audience members, staff, and sponsors.

While I spent most of the day of the show running around like a madman making sure door prizes were in the proper order and that our special guests were on the mark when it came time to come out and say a few words and help draw winning tickets, I made sure to soak up as much of the good vibes as I could. From Friday morning's load-in to Saturday night's load-out, it was a weekend full of highlights, and I feel honored to have been a part of it.

I'll never forget having the rare opportunity to soundcheck John Riley's beautiful Yamaha drums in the master class theater, driving first-time MD Fest performer Gil Sharone over to *MD* contributor David Ciauro's studio late Friday night so he could blow off steam with a couple hours of woodshedding, and getting to hang with Jeff Watts, who's one of my all-time favorite drummers. (I hate to break it to you, folks, but there's no secret weapon concealed in Tain's stick bag—just a few pairs of well-worn 5A Vic Firth drumsticks.) It was also amazing to witness how something as seemingly simple as a laid-back one-drop groove (Gil Sharone) or an artfully played tambourine shake (Taku Hirano) could hold everyone at the edge of their seat as much as some of the day's more intense drumming acrobatics.

For those of you who were able to make it out to the show, we hope you had a great time and also walked away with some new licks and concepts to explore when you got back to your drumkit. (If you were one of the dozens of people who walked away with a prize package supplied by our sponsors, congrats!) For those of you who couldn't attend, or for those who can't wait to relive the experience, we've put together a special MD Fest recap in this issue. Plus we've posted additional photos at moderndrummer.com.

On behalf of all of us at *Modern Drummer*, I want to extend special thanks to everyone who attended MD Fest 2011, including first-time and returning attendees; special door-prize-drawing guests Billy Ward, Pat Petrillo, Corky Laing, Antonio Sanchez, and Sam Ulano; and our colleagues at Ahead, Amedia, Alfred, Cymbal Doctor, Drummers Collective, Cymbag, DW, Evans, Gator, Gibraltar, Gretsch, House Ear Institute, Hudson Music, Istanbul Mehmet, KickPort, KoSA, LP, Lento Percussion, Ludwig, Mapex, Meinl, Paiste, Pearl, Pro-Mark, Remo, Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp, Sabian, Sam Ash Music, Shure, Sonor, *Sticks 'n' Skins*, Tycoon, Ultimate Drum Camp, Universal Percussion, Urban Boards, Vater, Vic Firth, Yamaha, Zildjian, and Zims. It's because of the support of friends like you that the Modern Drummer Festival continues to be the world's most prestigious drum event.



Mike Dawson

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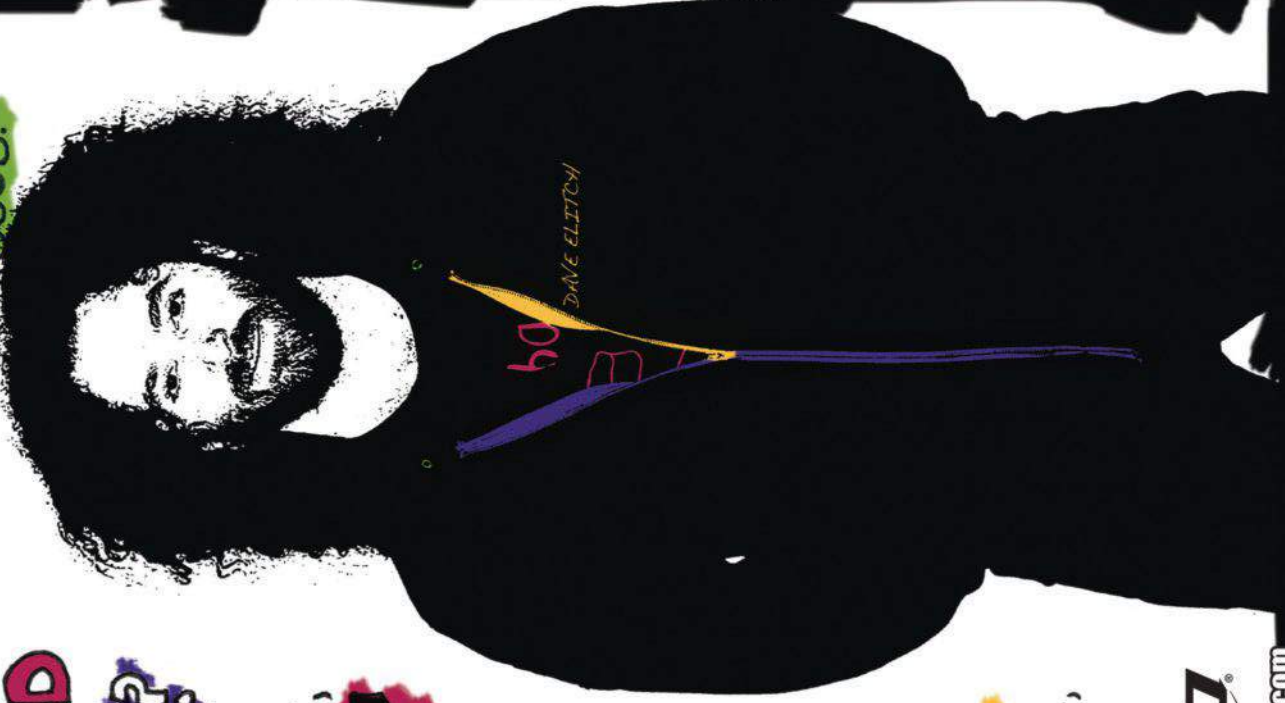
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MD Festival 2011

I was lucky enough to win two free tickets to this year's MD Fest (I also attended in 2006), and I wanted to say what a great time I had. The second ticket was given to a former student of mine who spent a year at Berklee until the finances warranted going back to community college for a year to do liberal arts. He ran into teacher Kim Plainfield and also met Amir Ziv, two of his idols. The facility was beautiful, the staff was very helpful, and the lineup was awesome. Even the food stand was very reasonable. I've been to other music festivals where they gouge you with \$4 water, etc., which wasn't the case here.

Me, I was able to have a short conversation with Rod Morgenstein. At forty-four years old, I found myself having that same excitement as when I first saw Rush and Neil Peart in 1985! I also went home with about \$100 of MD swag—which winning the tickets really allowed me to do. Thanks!

Al Miele

Josh Freese

Thank you for interviewing Josh Freese in the June 2011 issue. I like that you listed the kit configurations for the different gigs he plays, and I really like the picture you put on the cover.

Anorve Torres, via Facebook

Tulsa Time

I can't thank you enough for your May 2011 article on the Tulsa drumming scene and for bringing some much-deserved attention to the great drummers of Tulsa. I grew up in Tulsa, and it will always be home to me, but when I started playing drums as a teenager I was especially proud when I found out how many amazing drummers were from there. I was a fan of Dave Teegarden's drumming even before I was a drummer. As a young kid I wore out Bob Seger's *Stranger in Town* album. In 2005, I had the opportunity to record with a friend and was blown away when he told me we would be recording at Dave's studio. I walked in and instantly became nervous and a little star struck. I can say that Dave is an incredibly warm, open, and generous person, always ready with a handshake and a smile. He put me right at ease, and I'll always be grateful for the experience of working with him.

James Ellisor

Roger Humphries

Many thanks to MD for the Roger Humphries interview in the May issue. In my opinion, Roger is one of the all-time great jazz drummers, not only of Pittsburgh but of our nation. Thank you for helping to expose him to a wider audience, as he is certainly deserving of greater recognition.

Lenny Santoro

Joe Morello

Thank you for your moving tribute to the great Joe Morello in the July issue. I was privileged to meet and travel with Joe and the Dave Brubeck Quartet in Holland in 1967, when I was a star-struck teenager. I will never forget Joe's kindness to me—he trusted me to set up his drums twice—and to the many Dutch drummers who followed his every move. His musical elegance influenced me profoundly, and for years I even emulated his choice of sticks and cymbals. The splash cymbal he gave me still hangs on my wall. These reminiscences and more appear in my book *The Human Drummer*. Rest in peace, Joe.

Hal Howland

In 1963, as a fifteen-year-old self-taught drummer who idolized Joe Morello, I went to the University of Oklahoma to see the Brubeck Quartet in concert. At the end, I asked Joe to autograph my program, which he did. He then asked me to help him take down his drums, because he had trouble seeing. He said, "I can only see big things, like cars and trees." He was so cool, and I was honored to help him break down his set. He gave me his brushes. What a guy! In 1970, I was drafted, and the drummer who replaced me in my band was Brubeck's son. I was on leave and sat in for him on a gig. His drums were well-worn Ludwig silver sparkles, which I'm sure were handed down by Joe. I'm honored not only to have met Joe and help him, but also to have played his drums. Thanks for the great tribute.

Rex

Readers Poll Clarification

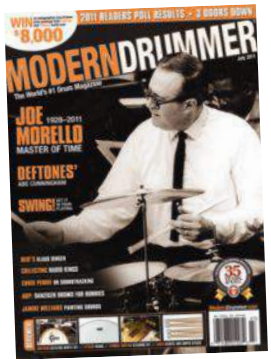
In our Readers Poll congratulatory ad in the July issue, we mistakenly listed Matt Chamberlain as a Zildjian artist, and on behalf of Zildjian I would like to apologize to Matt and all parties concerned for the error. I would also like to personally congratulate Matt for placing second in the studio drummer category.

John DeChristopher,
Vice President, Artist Relations &
Event Marketing Worldwide,
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Dropped Beat

In the July 2011 Update, the photo of Al Foster should have been credited to John Rogers.

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Ron Spagnardi: A Personal Retrospective by Roy Burns

Many people know about Ron Spagnardi. How he started as a very young drummer and became a working professional. How he became a well-known teacher and ran a music store. How he had a vision, a dream for a drummer's magazine, and how he made his vision a reality in *Modern Drummer*. This is all documented.

I have been involved with *Modern Drummer* since April of 1977. I was doing a clinic in Ridgewood, New Jersey. After the clinic a young man asked me if I had time to do an interview for a new magazine called *Modern Drummer*. I said sure. I remember thinking after the interview, *What a great idea: a magazine for drummers*. I was interested and impressed.

The interview was for the second issue of *Modern Drummer*, and I was on the cover.

When I was a teenager I was looking desperately for information on drumming. In Emporia, Kansas, little was available. I got so frustrated that I took piano lessons for a time because there were no real drum teachers in my hometown. Years later, here I was, doing an interview for this new drum magazine. I had no idea that *Modern Drummer* would grow to have such an influence on drums and drumming, or that I would be involved in such a way as to impact my own career.

The idea to do some writing for *Modern Drummer* had been on my mind for some time after I had appeared in the magazine. An inspiration was my son Steve, who played guitar and sang very well. One day he was practicing his guitar in the garage, where my drums were set up. I said to my wife, "I'm going to play a song with my son." I entered the garage and said, "Let's play something together." Steve played some blues and I played a shuffle. It was a great feeling, father and son playing together. When I returned to the house I said to my wife, "The only person that Steve has played with who's older than him is me—and I'm his father!"

Early in my career I was always the youngest guy in the band. If the older guys liked you, they'd help you. For example, "Play the backbeat on the last chorus," etc. It occurred to me that when rock music became popular, the groups were for the most part made up of players around the same age. The "information chain" from the older musicians to young ones had been broken.

Two days later I called Ron and told him I thought I had an idea for a column. I explained my experience with my son and some of my observations. Ron was very receptive, and together we developed the

theme for a column. We decided that the article should be directed toward young drummers. It would let them know that all musicians have to work through problems, that they weren't alone in their attempts to improve.

One thing I learned about Ron immediately was that he was very open-minded. He was willing to listen, and he gave you his full attention. He didn't rush you or interrupt you or cut you short. He listened with genuine patience and with real understanding.

Ron suggested the title Concepts. From those few conversations, the Concepts column took on a life of its own. Suddenly I had to come up with an article every month. If I had any questions, Ron was always available with some carefully considered advice. And he was always right.

Ron's enthusiasm for Concepts was a real inspiration for me. I realized that Ron had the ability to inspire others to do better. People responded to him because he had a quiet warmth that was apparent in his



personality. He motivated people without pressuring them.

The culmination of our association came when Ron called me about an idea for the 1997 Modern Drummer Festival called the Percussion Originators Ensemble. The group was to include Don Lombardi (Drum Workshop), Herbie Brochstein (Pro-Mark), Vic Firth (Vic Firth Inc.), me (Aquarian), and Ron. Ron wanted the young drummers to know that the people behind these companies were drummers.

Ron, with the aid of some others at MD, had put together a rather ambitious format involving tempo changes, different styles, and a tricky paradiddle ending (his favorite



The Percussion Originators at the 1997 Modern Drummer Festival

part). I had done a number of duets with several fine drummers, including five or six with Louie Bellson, a wonderful player and a pleasure to work with, and I felt that the proposed format for the Percussion Originators' performance was too complicated. First, we were going to have only one rehearsal. Second, when you get on

stage it's not always easy to hear the other musicians—plus the bright lights can be a distraction. So I suggested a much simpler format that would still give each drummer a chance to express himself. Also, I suggested that, rather than Ron's paradiddles, we all play triplets as an ending. As always, Ron listened to my suggestions carefully, and then he said, "Okay, we'll use your format."

That was Ron. Ever generous and giving to others. Never seeking credit for himself, he chose instead to call attention to the Percussion Originators Ensemble.

Ron and I talked after our performance. I had never seen him so happy. Soon after, he sent me the following letter.

Roy:

The Percussion Originators Ensemble was certainly a highlight for me, and, apparently, quite a highlight for the audience. I seem to remember we got a standing ovation!!!

Thanks so much for agreeing to do it, and for your help. I clearly recall your suggestion to simplify what we were originally going to play. You were right, and I'm glad I listened to you.

Regardless, it was a blast. Thanks for being a part of that memorable occasion.

*Best regards,
Ron*

Some time later, he wrote me this note:

Hey Roy:

Just got your note this morning. Thanks so much.

Yes, we sure have been friends for a helluva long time.

Funny thing, just the other day I was watching the video of our performance at the Festival. What a trip!!! Gotta tell ya, we really pulled it off, even if we couldn't put in those single, double, and triple paradiddle things I wanted to try. If I remember correctly, you and I played them pretty well on a chair just before we went on stage!!

*Regards,
Ron*

The last time I saw Ron was at the 1997 Modern Drummer Festival. It was my last public performance. I'm glad it was with Ron.

I miss him.

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JOEY DANDENEAU

Theory of a Deadman's tub thumper is all about staying positive and moving forward.

In the three years since Joey Dandeneau joined Theory of a Deadman, his time feel has deepened palpably, taking his studio performances to another level. "By laying off my drums, I actually sound louder," says Dandeneau, who can be heard on the band's brand-new album, *The Truth Is...* "I've changed some technique as well. I used to bury my stick in my snare, but now I lift off and get a different tone. In the studio it really translated well."

The changes can also be heard on stage.

"I pride myself on my pocket playing," Dandeneau says. "For Theory of a Deadman it's all about meter, pocket, and groove all the way through the show."

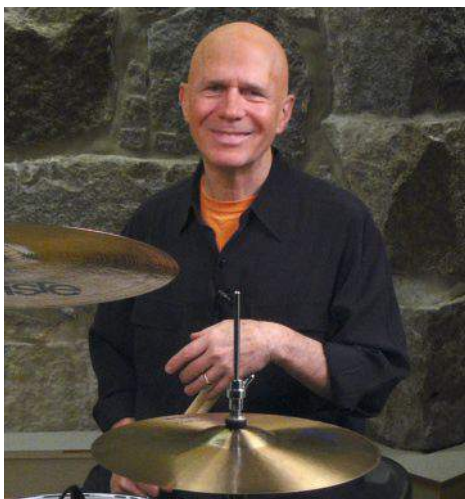
In addition to not hitting as hard, Dandeneau fine-tuned his kit, making it look, sound, and feel more open. "I lowered my floor toms," he explains, "and that really increased my speed. I also raised my rack tom, so I'm able to dive into it from my snare. I lowered my cymbals a little as well. All those changes have allowed me to swing

through the whole kit. My arms aren't sore now, and my technique is better."

Dandeneau's desire to improve extends to his personal life. "Thinking positively during the day is a big thing for me," Joey says. "I talk to good people and use certain music to maintain a particular headspace when I perform. Before I go on stage I spend a few minutes thinking about the pocket drummers that I grew up listening to. That brings me to that place where I can relax in my groove." **Steven Douglas Losey**

JIM PAYNE

Via a Berklee online course, the funk guru continues his dedication to passing on the knowledge.



Funk: Is it an attitude or a style? Considering the question, the respected teacher, author, producer, and performer Jim Payne answers, "Funk is an attitude in that it champions a personal take on rhythm. Funk is part in your face, part flying in the air. Ultimately it's about playing with confidence: This is fat, this is strong—and I'm playing it!"

Payne, who has made it his life's work to document the great masters of funk, soul, and R&B, recently completed the multimedia package *Advanced Funk Drumming*, which expands on the ideas presented in his classic tutorial *Funk Drumming*. Focusing on the essence of funk while offering new challenges, *Advanced Funk Drumming* ties a series of written lessons to more than 200 included video clips. As Payne notes, "Watching somebody play—there's no substitute for it, and that was the concept for this."

Payne's latest endeavor, an online course for the Berklee College of Music, builds on these ideas in a new way. Here, a thoughtful and challenging series of lessons is crafted from videos, transcriptions, song examples,

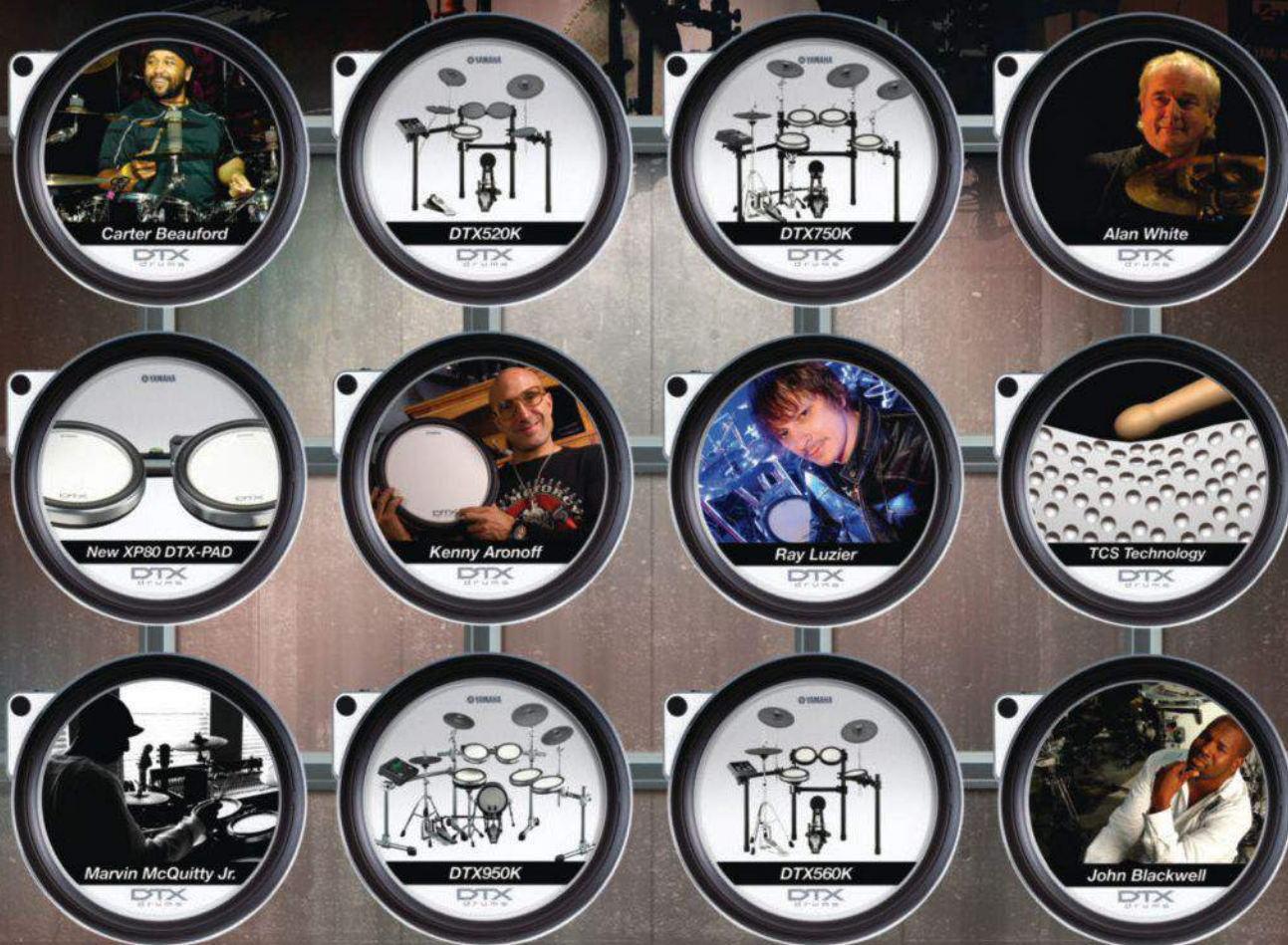
and play-along tracks, augmented by discussion and video chat. The format allows drummers far and wide to study the intricacies of funk and R&B from the roots up.

Beyond academia, Payne performs as often as he can. The Jim Payne Band's latest album, *Yes!*, highlights the drummer's laid-back drive in an organ-trio format, while a recent CD with the improv quartet Moon Pool demonstrates Payne's skills at listening in the moment. "The organ trio is more structured and funky," Jim says. "It's all about groove. With Moon Pool there are no set songs or structure. We allow the music to happen—it's a whole interpersonal thing."

Payne insists that while funk is less popular than it was during its '70s heyday, it has become necessary knowledge for any serious musician. "You have to be able to play funk," he says, pointing out that the genre's basic elements live on in modern jazz, rock and jam-band music, and sample-based styles. "The groove is still happening. It may be broken up or reinterpreted, but it's still there."

Martin Patmos

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TONY TEDESCO

The jazz vet is speaking volumes without words in the John Pizzarelli Quartet.

"You can hear it, you can feel it. When it's clicking, you know when it's right." Tony Tedesco is talking about the seamless simpatico among the bandmates in the John Pizzarelli Quartet. But he could just as well be referring to his earliest connection with the swinging singer/guitarist.

"Even before I was playing with John," Tedesco recalls, "when I just talked to him, I knew that I would be able to fit. We were on the same path." That path has stretched into a long-term tenure. On stage, the quartet behaves like old buddies having a ball—which makes perfect sense, since that's what they are.

Tedesco serves up a smooth, uncluttered, irresistible swing that's the ideal cushion for the band's straight-ahead interpretations of the Great American Songbook. Discussing his sensitive, lighter touch, the drummer, who teaches at Hofstra University, says, "If you have a clean sound, it's going to cut. You don't have to do it through volume. I can push a big band the same way."

An added challenge and thrill for Tedesco is the band's diverse formats. In addition to



Roger H. Sassaki

the quartet dates, the members traverse the globe as guest artists with symphony orchestras and also expand to a sixteen-piece big band. Recent appearances have included shows in China, Taiwan, Brazil, and Indonesia. "I really enjoy playing for singers,"

Tony says. "You have to know what not to play. I love the little things—just playing time and knowing that it's feeling good. When you're connecting with the audience and they feel that, everybody's happy."

Jeff Potter



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PATRICK BERKERY

An indie journeyman takes on the Danielson challenge.

Joining an established band is never an easy thing. But if you're Patrick Berkery, you've done your homework. When Berkery got the call to record and tour with Daniel Smith's quirky indie-pop group, Danielson, his approach was tried and true.

"I only know one way to play," Patrick says, "and that's to serve the song. I focus on drum parts that are supportive and don't clutter things too much. Daniel's songs are hooky, but he'll throw in a measure of three or nine, so you can't just fall back on convention. I brought what I do, learned what they do, and put them together."

On Danielson's newest album, *Best of Gloucester County*, Berkery brings his love of Zeppelin and the Stones to bear on bizarre, eclectic songs that find him riding rims, playing meter-less press rolls, swimming a sea of complex arrange-

ments, and generally rocking out.

Before Danielson, Berkery, who's also an *MD* contributing writer, played with indie faves the Pernice Brothers and the Photon Band. He was also a longtime member of the beloved Philadelphia guitar-pop group the Bigger Lovers, who disbanded in 2006 but returned this year to play some shows and reissue their 2001 album, *How I Learned to Stop Worrying*. They've also recently completed the production on their *Little Giant* EP, whose basic tracks were recorded back in 2005.

Was rejoining the band like riding a bike for Berkery? "Playing certain things I used to do with ease isn't as simple anymore," he says. "You feel them coming back, but you haven't been playing them every night like before. It's humbling, though—it makes you work for it."

Ilya Stemkovsky



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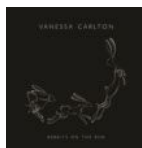
UPDATE

OUT NOW

NEWS

ON TOUR

PATRICK HALLAHAN on Vanessa Carlton's *Rabbits on the Run*



Timing was everything in the case of the unexpected collaboration between My Morning Jacket drummer Patrick Hallahan and pop princess

Vanessa Carlton. "Vanessa reached out to me after attending a My Morning Jacket concert," Hallahan explains. "The band had just decided to take a break, and I was really interested in using that time period to play with different people."

Carlton and Hallahan corresponded via email over several months before meeting in person at the singer's place in New York. "Over a couple of martinis," Hallahan says, "she explained to me what were then her dreams of a project, which later became the mission statement of the album. She had just parted ways with her record label and producers who took control of her arrangements and limited her involvement, and she wanted something she could mold as it materialized."

"Even though Vanessa didn't know how things would pan out," Hallahan continues, "she had a clear vision of how the project was to be assembled: Write a batch of demos from the heart, put together a band/sounding board for ideas, find a producer who would collaborate rather than dictate, record basic tracks live to tape, and finance the record herself. I found her integrity and bravery very moving, and I signed on that night."

Upon hearing Carlton's early demos, Hallahan quickly understood that the two musicians play with a similar dynamic, and

the duo was subsequently able to come up with parts at a rapid pace. "Both of us are students of how to utilize not only the crescendo but also the beautiful space that exists as it decays," Hallahan says. "So her melodies and changes made a great deal of sense to me, and the parts I wrote were very much a reaction to where she was melodically as well as rhythmically."

"Working on this project was an amazing adventure. From start to finish, it was a perfect balance of mystery and familiarity, direction and collaboration, unnerve and refreshment, work and play. I'd do it all over again tomorrow." **Adam Budofsky**

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Taking Back Sunday (Mark O'Connell) /// **Lou Volpe** Hear and Now (Buddy

Williams) /// **Tab Benoit** Medicine (Brady Blade) /// **Fair to Midland** Arrows & Anchors (Brett Stowers) /// **Nilson Matta & Roni Ben-Hur** Mojave (Victor Lewis, Café) /// **BB&C** The Veil (Jim Black) /// **NY Jazz Initiative** Mad About Thad (Eric McPherson) /// **Black Label Society** The Song Remains Not the Same (Will Hunt) /// **Seether** Holding Onto Strings Better Left to Fray (John Humphrey) /// **Steve Khan** Parting Shot (Dennis Chambers, Manolo Badrena, Marc Quiñones, Bobby Allende) /// **The London Souls** The London Souls (Chris St. Hilaire) /// **Simple Plan** Get Your Heart On! (Chuck Comeau) /// **Crossfade** We All Bleed (Will Hunt) /// **I Set My Friends on Fire** Astral Rejection (Chris Lent)

OUT NOW

NEWS

ON TOUR



Jack DeJohnette was recently named a recipient of the 2012 Jazz Masters Award from the National Endowment for the Arts. He will receive a one-time award of \$25,000 and be honored at an awards ceremony and concert produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center at Frederick P. Rose Hall in New York City.



The winners of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's fourth annual Modern Snare Drum Competition, sponsored by Pearl, are Nick Taylor of Indiana University (Division I, age nineteen to twenty-five, at left in picture) and Nick Sakakeeny of Oberlin High School (Division II, age eighteen and younger).

OUT NOW

NEWS

ON TOUR



Mika Fineo with Filter /// **Tobias Ralph** and **Pat Mastelotto** with the Two of a Perfect Trio tour featuring the Adrian Belew Power Trio and Stick Men /// **Brant Bjork** with Kyuss /// **Trevor Stafford** with Adelitas Way /// **Scott Travis** with Judas Priest /// **Bryan Hitt** with REO Speedwagon /// **Mark Castillo** with Crossfade /// **Richie Gajate Garcia** with Diana Ross /// **Aaron Comess** with Spin Doctors /// **Dan Haggis** with the Wombats /// **John Cowsill** with the Beach Boys /// **Travis Barker** with Blink-182 /// **Matt Flynn** with Maroon 5 /// **Scott Underwood** with Train /// **Longineu Parsons III** with Yellowcard



DANIEL GLASS

Have you ever been called for a plum gig or tour, but with little or no time to prepare with the band? **MD Pro Panelist Daniel Glass has been there**, and he has some suggestions to help you do your best under extreme circumstances.

Earlier this year I received a call from guitarist Brian Setzer asking me to play some gigs with his big band. As excited as I was by this opportunity, I found that it included one (very big) catch: There would be no rehearsals. I'd have to step into the gig cold. To complicate matters further, I soon discovered that Brian prefers his rhythm section to be "off book," which meant memorizing the entire ninety-minute big band show.

As you might imagine, taking on this challenge involved a massive amount of preparation. As I began to tackle the pile of material before me, it was imperative that I come up with a plan that would get me to my goal in the most expeditious way possible. The following tips will help you streamline your own plan of attack when stepping into a new and potentially career-changing situation.

BEFORE YOU START

You'll want to arm yourself with as much information as possible about every aspect of the gig. The more you know, the less the chance of any surprises—and believe me, you don't want surprises.

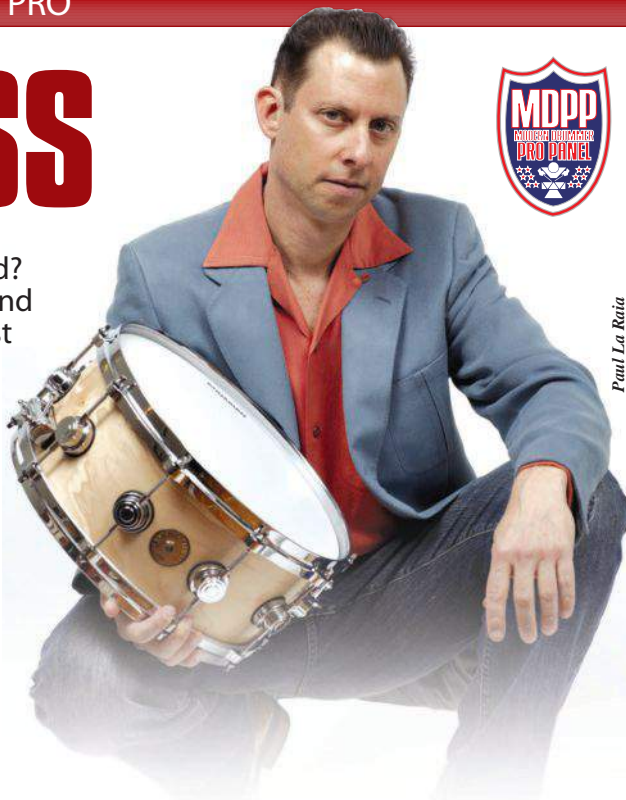
Familiarize yourself with the repertoire (duh!). In my case, I was given a live DVD from a 2010 festival gig to learn. But I also

took it upon myself to seek out older recordings by the big band, original versions of the Stray Cats material...anything that would offer an extra clue as to how Brian and the group operated.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. If you're subbing for or replacing the existing drummer—assuming everyone's on good terms—have a conversation with him or her and learn what will be expected of you. Talk to other band members as well. Find out who

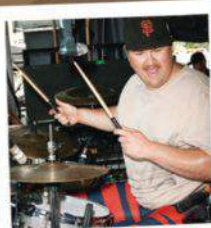


Paul La Roca



A GENERATION AHEAD

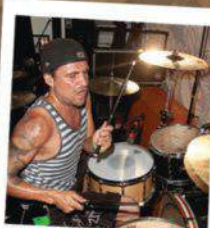
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counts off the tunes, whether the live tempos differ from the studio tracks, whether the feels tend to be pushed or laid back, etc.

Think ahead. Introduce yourself to the management, road manager, soundman, and anyone else on the team. Check in regarding practicalities like rehearsals, load-in, monitors, and the like. Clarify the pay situation (if there is one) well before the performance. Although this may seem like an obvious point, too many musicians let “the money thing” slide and then run into conflicts after the fact.

THE PRACTICE ROOM

Once you’ve gathered your info and materials, it’s time to enter the shed. Here are some pointers that will allow you to focus on your job with laser-like precision.

Identify the primary grooves. Brian Setzer’s music can be divided into two basic feels: a heavy shuffle and a straight-8th-note early-rock vibe. Once I identified these building blocks, I tackled them in a variety of ways. First, I played along with the DVD so I could really understand how each groove moved and how it sat in the context of the band. I also isolated each of these feels and set it to a click track, focusing on the proper balance of the limbs and the clarity of the sound.

Other ways to use the click. In addition to working on the grooves, I used a metronome to practice specific details of the gig, including variations in the shuffle, specific big band figures, and tricky fills that needed to be negotiated without altering the basic time feel. When using a click in this manner, I like to set the tempos much slower than the track itself. Doing so creates more space between notes, and although it can be maddening at first, it will help you establish real clarity in your note placement, locking everything in when you bring it back up to tempo.

Charts. There are two ways to assimilate information: visual and auditory. If you can utilize both when learning music, it will speed up the process. I was given charts for most of the Setzer material, which I then marked up with my own notes and guidelines. At first I looked at the charts while practicing with the DVD. Once I took the charts away, I could still access the visual picture they provided, speeding up the memorization process. If you can’t read or write music, create a cheat sheet for each song, a basic road map that blocks out the number of bars for each section (verse, chorus, solo, etc).

Record your practice. Both audio and video recordings are tremendously instructive tools in showing you what the rest of the world sees. Seeing and hearing

yourself will allow you to adjust and improve at a quicker pace.

Don’t be afraid to make adjustments.

You may have to do things differently to get the music to feel right. In my case, the intensity and speed of Setzer’s shuffle style forced me to use matched grip, even though I’d spent the previous fifteen years playing traditional!

GO DEEP, GO LONG

Remember, there will be many distractions at the actual gig or audition that you’re preparing for, so don’t be satisfied with learning only the basic mechanics. There’s a difference between getting your

limbs to work together in certain patterns and being able to perform music on the spot. Practice until the material is locked in your muscle memory, so much so that you could lay down that groove in the middle of a freeway or in an alligator-infested swamp.

Remember, you can’t lose by preparing. Even if you don’t get the gig or things work out differently from the way you expected, working toward a specific goal in such an intensive manner will make you a better musician. And it will raise the bar as far as what you expect from yourself every time you prepare for an opportunity in the future.

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GIMME 10! ROY MAYORGA of Stone Sour

Interview by Steven Douglas Losey



Ash Newell



1 PLAY EVERY SHOW LIKE IT'S YOUR LAST. We only get one life, so make every moment count and give all you've got.

2 TUNE TO THE ROOM. I'm a huge fan of wide-open tunings. I tune a bit higher live than I do in the studio. I play bigger shells, so the drum resonates more and really fills the bigger rooms. With each venue you might have to tension up or down a little to find that nice sweet spot of resonance, and if you do, your front-of-house engineer will love you.

3 GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE. Always push and challenge yourself, and never hold back.

4 EAT WELL, AND TAKE YOUR VITAMINS. I always eat a hearty breakfast and lunch and follow up with a nice dose of vitamins. I use GNC Performance & Vitality packs, which really sustain me for the shows. I always take those after I eat, when all the coffee is out of my system, because caffeine kills the nutrients. I also live by the old saying that the first meal of the day is very important.

5 DRINK LOTS OF FLUIDS. Water, water, water throughout the day is crucial. During the show I like to have a couple of bottles of water and a big bottle of Gatorade to keep the electrolytes going. Sometimes in the middle of the day I'll drink a little Pedialyte for extra hydration.

6 WATCH WHAT YOU'RE EATING BEFORE A PERFORMANCE. If you're going to eat dinner, make sure it's two or three hours before the show, and try to eat something light like sushi, chicken Caesar salad, or any pasta dish, which has carbs. I ate a little too close to showtime once and paid the price. I stared down in amazement

at the very colorful aftermath on a snare drum—not a pretty sight. I wasn't entertained, but the audience was.

7 BE OPEN TO IDEAS. Check the ego at the door. Always keep an open mind, and try every idea thrown at you. Even if you think it won't work, you never know when you might stumble across a great accident.

8 STRETCH AND WARM UP BEFORE THE SHOW. I like to hit the practice pad for a good fifteen minutes, going through exercises or just playing to music on my iPod. I follow that up with some stretching. When I was younger I never stretched and just jumped on the kit, but honestly, no matter what age you are, you have to loosen up your muscles and joints before playing, or else it's going to hurt.

9 DON'T THINK—FEEL! Always play with your heart and gut instinct, not with your mind. Feel the music.

10 BE EXCELLENT TO EACH OTHER. Keep your feet grounded, stay humble, and respect everyone around you. So many times I've witnessed other musicians acting in a horrible manner, and I sit and wonder, *How does this person have a career?* Eventually the rock-star attitude will get you nowhere, and in the end you will be alone. My tech is someone who's here to make sure my gear is right and I have a smooth show, my bandmates are brothers, and my fans are people who recognize and admire what we do—without them we are nothing.

Roy Mayorga suffered a mild stroke just after speaking to MD for this piece. He is expected to make a full recovery. Modern Drummer sends him our best wishes.



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MIXERS AND MONITORS

Our band just bought a thirty-two-channel board to replace the sixteen-channel version we had been using. I want to use the old board at the drums, for my own personal monitor mix. How do I hook up both boards? Do I plug the drum board into an aux send on the main board? If so, where do I plug my in-ears into the drum board to hear the mix?

Richie McKnight

We sent your question to electronics guru and *MD* contributor John Emrich. Here's his response: "Hi, Richie. I covered much of this topic in part two of my 'Building a Small Stage-Monitoring System' series, in the July '09 issue of *Modern Drummer*. Basically what you want to do is plug your mics and a

stereo feed from the main board into individual channels of the sixteen-channel board. If your monitor board has four busses, route just the drum mics to busses 1 and 2 and send their outputs into a pair of channel inputs on the main thirty-two-channel board.

"Your in-ear monitors could go into the phones jack, but I don't recommend it. Instead, you should get a hardwired pack, like Shure's P4. It's not very expensive and has a built-in limiter, which is very important. With a limiter engaged, if someone were to unplug a cord while the system was on, the audio pop would not get through to your ears. People have been seriously injured when using in-ears without limiters. You want to protect yourself."



THE DOCTOR IS IN

by Asif Khan, M.D.



EAR INFECTIONS

I've experienced ear infections many times over the past year. This has really affected my playing, and my ears actually hurt when I play. I've been to a doctor and the antibiotics work for a while, but then the infection comes back. Do you have any suggestions?

F. Sajid

For a musician, a recurring ear infection, also known as chronic suppurative otitis media (CSOM), can range from being a nuisance to a devastating problem. Doctors usually define a CSOM as an infection lasting anywhere from three weeks to six months. Ear infections in drummers can be much more profound than in others, simply based on the physical nature of playing the drumset.

The most important result of chronic ear infections, for a musician in particular, is permanent hearing loss. The degree of hearing loss is related to the location and the amount of the tympanic membrane (eardrum) that's involved, as well as the duration of the infection, so a prompt diagnosis is crucial. Other complications can include a perforated eardrum, an infection

spreading to bone (called mastoiditis), and even nerve paralysis of the face (facial nerve palsy). Most chronic ear infections occur as the result of ear canal dysfunction. I will focus on the most common sign, a draining ear, called otorrhea, usually occurring without a fever.

Recurrent ear infection usually occurs in kids. If it's happening in anyone over the age of twelve, we have to look for a relatively obvious cause. For drummers, this could mean your earplugs. Wearing earplugs is very important for any drummer, but it's also important to use a clean set to prevent infection. There have been sporadic instances of earplugs (usually the custom-molded ones made from medical-grade silicone or latex) causing an allergic reaction within the ear canal. Those cases require topical steroids to treat the reaction. Smoking or poor nutrition can also leave you susceptible to chronic ear infections as an adult.

Most recurrent ear infections are caused by common bacteria found just about everywhere. So you take some antibiotics and it goes away, right? Yes and no. One fairly effective treatment is called an aural toilet—not the most pleasant name, but it's a supplement to antibiotic therapy. Your doctor can provide a list of various solutions

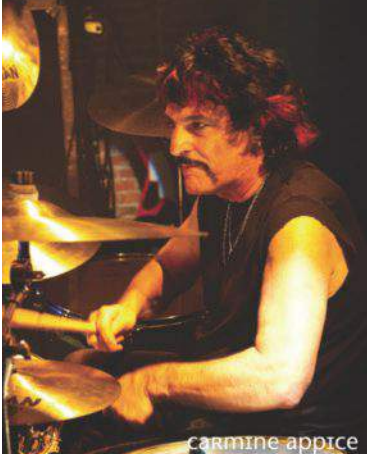
that are used to flush out the affected ear. These solutions should be warmed to near body temperature (98 degrees Fahrenheit) in order to prevent vertigo. A rubber bulb is used to administer the solution and to remove it through suction. Aural irrigation is typically performed two to three times daily until the discharge disappears. For uncomplicated otorrhea, this treatment is commonly used in conjunction with topical antibiotics. Antibiotics can be administered in the form of drops applied directly in the ear canal. Some doctors may prescribe a topical steroid as well, depending on what they see going on inside your ear.

If two weeks of topical antibiotic treatment doesn't work, oral antibiotics are often prescribed. Surgery is reserved for very complicated cases, most commonly involving bone infections.

The goals for the treatment of CSOM are to stop otorrhea, heal the tympanic membrane, eradicate the current infection, and prevent complications and recurrence. Sounds like a lot to tackle, but for a musician the ears are everything. I highly recommend visiting a doctor to treat this problem—sooner rather than later.

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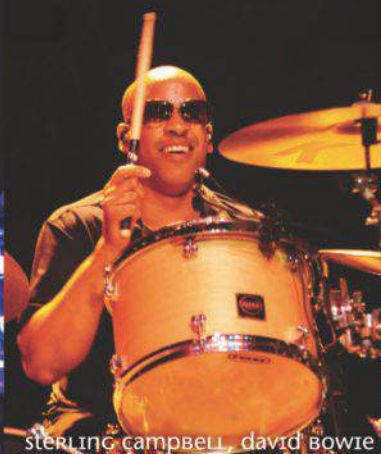




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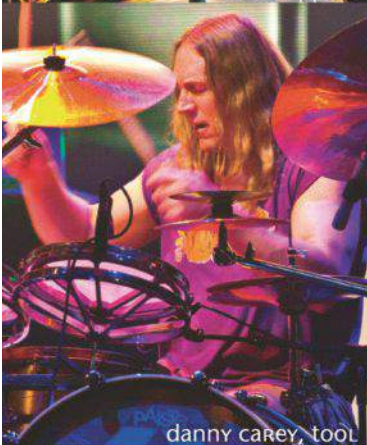
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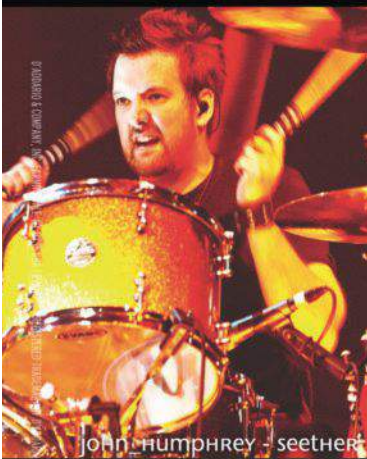


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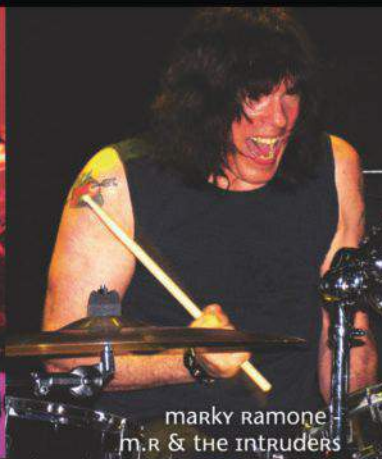
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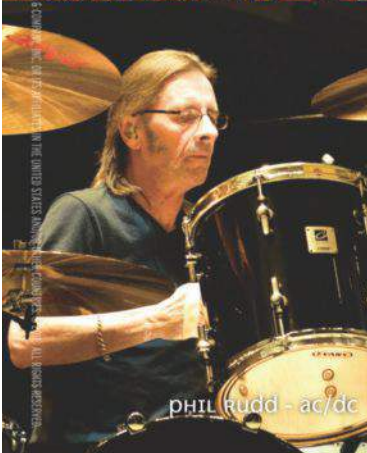
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john miceli - meatloaf



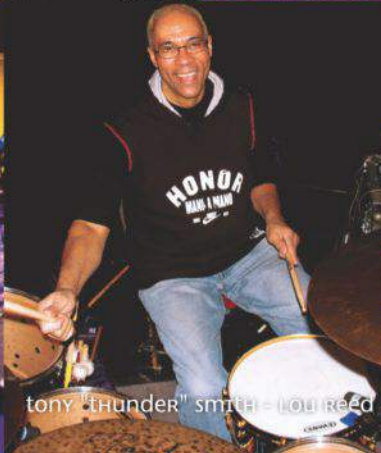
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GEARING UP Drumkit Details, On Stage and Up Close

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MIKE MALININ

Interview and photos by Sayre Berman

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B. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 snare

C. 8 x 12 tom

D. 9 x 13 tom

E. 16 x 16 floor tom

F. 16 x 18 Tama Imperialstar floor tom in ocean blue mist

G. 16 x 22 bass drum

"I put a blue sparkle wrap on this kit because the natural finishes get pretty beat up on the road," Malinin says. "The wrap doesn't really show the wear. The drums are aging really well too. The wood has dried out a little, and the sound is a bit warmer. I think they'll become good vintage drums."

"The matching Starclassic snare was custom made for me with ten lugs rather than the standard eight. I prefer a 10-lug drum because I can get better ring out of the rimshots. It doesn't sound quite as dead."

"The Imperialstar floor tom is really just for one song, 'Notbroken.' On the record I play toms and timpani. I'm trying to get that same big sound without having to bring timpani, so I'm hitting this floor tom."

"The white-silk-wrap snare drum is for 'As I Am.' On the record I play that song with brushes on the first two verses. When we play live the brushes don't really come out well, so I switched to sticks. But that didn't do it either. I decided I'd get a really dead snare drum and go for a completely different effect. I have a Pinstripe head on it, and then I throw my wallet on top so there's no ring to it."

Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 14" K Mastersound hi-hats

2. 17" K Custom Dark crash

3. 18" K Custom Dark crash

4. 21" A Medium ride

5. 20" K Custom Dry ride (with rivets)

"My ride cymbal is a 21" regular Medium that Zildjian made for me. They had stopped making these because they didn't sell very well, which is a shame because this cymbal has always been a favorite of mine."

Heads: Remo Coated CS batter on main snare, Pinstripe batter on auxiliary snare, Clear Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, and Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter

"Those are kind of standard heads. I've tried a lot of head combinations, but my drum tech, Sam Osland, and I decided that we like this combination the best. I think I'll stick with it for a while."

Sticks: Pro-Mark 5B Pro-Grip hickory with wood tips

Hardware: Tama, including Iron Cobra Flexi Glide bass drum pedal; Road Pro hi-hat, cymbal, and tom stands; and 1st Chair Ergo-Rider Trio throne

"I'm using a strap pedal, not a chain. I've been told that chain pedals are faster, but I haven't really noticed that. I feel more comfortable playing the strap pedal; it seems more natural to me."



PEARL

Reference Pure Series Drumset

by David Ciauro

Pearl has taken its top-of-the-line Reference series a step further into the realm of shell alchemy with the introduction of the Reference Pure line. Although they're built using the same ply combinations of maple, birch, and African mahogany found in the Reference series, Reference Pure drums are unique in that each ply is a mere .9 mm thick. This results in a lower-mass shell designed to resonate more freely and to provide fuller tones. The primary maple plies are accompanied by either birch or African mahogany inner plies, and specific bearing edge profiles help detail the tonality, depending on the size of the drum.

PURE INTENTIONS

Pearl stocks Reference Pure toms with the popular combination of Remo Clear Emperor batter heads and Clear Ambassador resonants. The bass drum comes with a Clear Powerstroke 3 batter and a White Powerstroke resonant.

My first impression was that the drum tones were all very sympathetic, and the pieces tuned up with ear-pleasing ease. I first set the rack toms—8x10 (6-ply shell with two inner birch plies, four outer maple plies, and 45-degree rounded bearing edges) and 9x12 (6-ply all-maple shell with 45-degree rounded bearing edges)—with both heads at a medium tension, and then I detuned the batter heads by roughly a quarter turn. For the 16x16 floor tom (8-ply shell with six inner mahogany plies, two outer maple plies, and 180-degree fully rounded bearing edges), I tuned the batter head as low as possible without wrinkling and the resonant head at medium tension. All the tones were bright, clear, and focused, with a wet attack, a controlled decay, and an abundance of presence.

The heads you choose to use on a kit like this will undoubtedly shape how the shells respond. The shells act more as a transparent mouthpiece for the characteristics of the heads, rather than a dense core that siphons energy from the head and consumes tone. In other words, the kit is lively and accommodating through various tuning ranges and sonic textures.

The 18x22 bass drum (8-ply shell with six inner mahogany plies, two outer maple plies, and 180-degree fully rounded bearing edges) had enormous punch and a surprisingly contained resonance, considering that the drum was tested wide open with no port. Both heads were tuned fairly slack, with the resonant head slightly tighter, and there was no boxiness or tennis-ball “boing” to be heard.

The matching snare drum was a treasure. This 5x14 model (6-ply shell with two inner birch plies, four outer maple plies, and standard 45-degree bearing edges) had some serious snap, crackle, and pop. Its tuning range was fairly wide, but the drum sounded best on the tighter side. I wasn't a huge fan of the stock coated/clear batter head. It lacked some warmth that a Coated Ambassador or Emperor could have provided, and the nuance of slicker stickings lacked dynamic impact. Pearl's SR-1000 Glide-Lock strainer has a push-button locking system to keep the snares from turning off, and the butt plate adjusts the snare tension via a notched knob to keep the snares from loosening.

Overall, the Reference Pure kit sounded very balanced. The kick's boom didn't overpower the toms or snare, which is a testament to the function of the thinner low-mass hybrid shell construction.

WHAT'S YOUR (P)REFERENCE?

Sonically, I didn't find anything negative to report about these drums, but I found the hardware (despite being low mass) to be bulbous and bulky, which didn't complement the kit's overall low-mass concept.

The STL Bridge lugs with swivel function are said to make minimal shell contact, yet three screws support each lug. The 10", 12", and 16" toms have twelve lugs each, meaning there are thirty-six

screws in each shell for the lugs alone. This seems counterintuitive when the goal is to minimize shell contact.

Although Pearl's OptiMounts attach to the tension bolts instead of the shell in order to improve resonance, they take up a lot of real estate because they run the entire length of the shell. The 10-lug bass drum has twist-operated retractable spurs for drift support, but these also seemed to be oversize. I suppose the weighty appearance is meant to suggest durability, but for some it might be overkill or a distraction from the drum's elegance.

The toms and snare are outfitted with Fat Tone 1.6 mm hoops, which contribute to the “head sound” of these drums. The hoops enhanced the attack and made for gnarly rimshots and cutting rimclicks on the snare. The hoops' stout appearance yet low-mass construction is said to allow for the tuning range of a triple-flange hoop but with the durability of a die-cast version.

CONCLUSION

The drum market is currently saturated with complex shell configurations, cutting-edge designs, and space-age hardware—all of which are wonderfully cool, but to the player the most basic of questions speaks loudest: How do the drums *sound*? High-end kits can either be enhanced by the engineering feats that go into them, or they can act as diversions from the fact that the drums don't sound as “expensive” as they should. Fortunately, the Reference Pure line has the bark and the bite to back up the research that went into its design. The thinner shells serve as excellent vessels for drummers to outfit with their favorite heads and really shape the tone to their liking, which is ultimately what good drums should do. List price: \$4,995. pearldrum.com

THE HIGH-END TEST

In theory, high-end kits should sound good with zero muffling and no porthole in the bass drum head. If tone-control heads and external dampening are needed to tame overtones out of the box, then the kit fails my personal high-end test, and any cool hardware designs and scientifically engineered shell constructions are null and void at that point. So, how did these boys sound? Killer!



PAISTE

Formula 602 Series Cymbals

by J.R. Frondelli



Among the most highly revered and legendary cymbal lines of all time, Paiste's Formula 602 series debuted in 1959 and was adopted over the years by many legendary drummers, including Joe Morello, Art Blakey, Charlie Watts, Jeff Porcaro, Paul Motian, Bill Bruford, John Densmore, Don Henley, and Ian Paice. Noted for their trademark controlled, pure, and silvery tones, Formula 602 models represent the pinnacle of modern Swiss cymbal manufacturing.

HOW THEY'RE MADE

Unlike the Turkish method, where the factory processes the cymbal all the way from melting the base metals to pouring the casting and then rolling, cupping, hammering, and lathing—all to ensure that each cymbal has its own individual voice—the Swiss method omits the foundry duties and concentrates on precision manufacturing. Paiste's craftsmen take pre-cut alloy discs, made to the company's stringent specifications by an outside foundry, and create each cymbal with intentional repeatability. This ensures that should a cymbal become cracked or stolen, the replacement will sound almost exactly like the original. One method isn't necessarily better than the other—they're just different. The net result is that Swiss cymbals exhibit clean overtones and sil-

very highs, while Turkish cymbals have more midrange cut and undertones.

602 HISTORY

In its heyday, the 602 series was expansive, with myriad weights, sizes, and applications (concert, marching, drumset), plus two spin-off lines: the '60s Special Sound seven-cymbal set (from which Paiste's legendary Flat ride was spawned) and the '70s Sound Creation series, featuring models such as the Bell ride, Dark ride, and Short crash.

The advent of amplified and electronic music called for louder, more cutting cymbals. Paiste answered with the Giant Beat series in 1967, which was subsequently adopted by rock legends John Bonham and Carmine Appice. Born of the higher-copper-content B8 alloy, Giant Beat cymbals were designed to cut through guitar amps with ease.

Paiste continued to up the ante with the launch of the eminently successful 2002 series in 1971, followed by the unlathed, loud, and raw sounds of the RUDE series in

1980. In 1989, the flagship Paiste Signature line was introduced, utilizing a new patented phosphor-bronze alloy that ultimately led to the 1994 demise of the original jazz-oriented 602 series.

Recently, drummers looking for classic and vintage tones (including studio greats JR Robinson and Jim Keltner) have rekindled the market for the 602 sound, and Paiste responded by reissuing the Formula 602 line at this year's winter NAMM show. Current 602 models include 14" Sound Edge hi-hats, 16" and 18" Thin crashes, a 20" Medium ride, and a 20" Flat ride. Let's take a look at each one.

SOUND EDGE HI-HATS

Paiste's Sound Edge hi-hats have been the source of much folklore since John Bonham picked up on them in the '70s, but the company introduced the model in 1967. These were the first "problem solver" cymbals. Their design negates the need for fiddling with the bottom cymbal tilter to eliminate the air lock found with traditional hats, but their

THE 602 ALLOY

Unlike the B8 alloy (92 percent copper, 8 percent tin) cymbals that Paiste is more traditionally noted for, Formula 602 models are made from the more common "bell bronze" B20 alloy (80 percent copper, 20 percent tin), which is most often found in Turkish-style cymbals.

design also imparts a unique sound. The rippled edge stiffens the bottom cymbal and renders a more focused and magnetic open/closed sound.

When played loudly, the 602 Sound Edge hi-hats (\$788) possessed an open sound that was washy and throaty, with a silvery top end, yet they were never overpowering. At lower dynamics, they were extremely sensitive. Open/closed “barks” were quick and tight with an underlying richness, and the pedal chick was focused and pointed.

CRASHES

The 16" (\$496) and 18" (\$594) Thin crashes are sensitive cymbals that worked wonders as a pair. The 16" was breathy and quick, whereas the 18" had more sustain. Their pitch spread was great, and each responded well to mallet and edge rolls with a majestic crescendo of clean tone. The sound emanating from these crashes was silvery and round. They never got too loud, making

them ideal for gigs where cymbal volume is a concern. The 18" also doubled nicely as a light ride. It never had that hollow ride sound that plagues many thin crash cymbals when struck on the bow.

20" MEDIUM RIDE

The 20" 602 Medium ride (\$678) had the sound I hear in my head—focused, crystalline attack with a balanced mix of controlled sparkle and undertones, plus a middle-of-the-road bell tone and crashability without sounding gongy. If someone asked me what a 20" medium ride cymbal should sound like, I would say, “This cymbal right here.”

20" FLAT RIDE

The Formula 602 Flat ride—the first of its kind—was originally developed in conjunction with Joe Morello. This is still the gold standard by which all other flat rides are judged. The principle of the flat ride is simple: Remove the bell, which reflects over-

tones back into the cymbal bow, and the buildup of overtones is eliminated.

Like the original, the reissued 602 Flat ride (\$678) had a pure, silvery, shimmering, and controlled crystalline tone—fragile and beautiful sounding. I wanted to play this cymbal all by itself so that no other sound could disrupt its scrupulously clean tone. It doesn't get any prettier than this.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Within the context of a drumkit, the Formula 602s' pure, clean sounds practically demand that your drums are tuned as finely as possible. When played in size order, these cymbals have a near-chordal pitch spread between the hi-hats, crashes, and ride, with the Flat ride offering its own otherworldly voice, one that's distinctive yet blends well at the same time. In a word, they just sound *right*.

paiste.com

PORK PIE

7x14 Cherry/Bubinga Snare Drum

by Michael Dawson

Pork Pie rep John Martinez describes the sound of this beautiful 7x14, 8-ply cherry/bubinga hybrid-shell snare as having “the warmth of cherry and the crack of bubinga...with a dash of paprika.” All kidding aside, there really is something about this drum that goes beyond simply flavor-mixing four outer plies of cherry with four inner plies of bubinga and hoping to come up with some new sonic recipe.

The shell's natural tendency toward a balance of warm tones and a cracking attack can be quickly and easily morphed, depending on how you set up the drum. Tuned medium-low (85 on a DrumDial) with loose snare tension, this model smacked and punched when hit hard, which was perfect for power ballads on a modern rock gig. Yet the drum could also be gently coaxed into a more rootsy Americana vibe, especially with the batter head muffled with a few strips of gaffer's tape and the snares taut. With the batter head tuned tight (89 on a DrumDial) and left wide open, the drum got super-funky, throwing out backbeats with tons of pop and crack yet retain-



ing plenty of warmth and body to keep the tone from thinning out. For a Meters/Galactic-style recording session, this was the perfect snare sound.

The drum's 3 mil triple-flange rims are strong and sturdy, and they helped focus the overtones. This snare felt great to play at

all dynamics and head tensions. The extra-long tension rods did prove to detune under repeated rimshots, so if you tend to go full-on all the time, some Lug Locks might be necessary. But feel free to give it all you've got—it can take it. List price: \$810. porkpiedrums.com

TYCOON

Vertex Series Cajons

by Mark Parsons



Like most percussion manufacturers, Tycoon offers cajons. But it doesn't have just one or two models; its catalog boasts approximately *forty* different versions. One advantage for the company is that it has its own factory in Thailand, so new designs and prototypes can be created very quickly. Tycoon also works with thirteen species of wood, allowing for sonic and visual differences between otherwise similar models. This month we're going to explore some of these differences within the new Vertex series.

MODELS AND FEATURES

There are three models in the Vertex series—the TKVX-G (American red oak body with American white ash front plate), the TKVX-Z (American white ash body with zebrano front plate), and the TKVX-S (bubinga body with makah burl front plate). Apart from the materials themselves, the cajons were identical in construction. We were sent one of each for review.

Although the tapered shape of the front panel is a little different from the usual rectangle, the front-plate attachment design is very familiar—the bottom and lower sides are screwed firmly into the body of the drum, but the top edge is fastened in a way that allows you to back off the screws to vary the amount of wood-on-wood slap at the upper corners. Each Vertex cajon has eight small bells attached to the center support strut to add a slight amount of jingle, and a hook-and-loop strip is installed across the inside of the front plate to help control unwanted snare buzz.

Each Vertex model has eight snare strings (four per side) against the front panel for a more pronounced snare effect. Snare tension is adjustable via a provided Allen wrench. The most "normal looking" Vertex cajon is the oak/ash model. Its red-oak body has a light stain that brings out the open grain in the oak, while the ash front plate has a light blond tone with less-apparent grain. (When I hear "ash" I think of wood baseball bats, and that's about the color of the ash in these cajons.)

The ash/zebrano model has that same smooth blond color, but the front panel features striking vertical stripes of light, medium, and dark brown. The bubinga/makah drum attracts the most attention with its appearance. The dark-reddish tint of the bubinga body contrasts well with the exotic burl grain pattern on the makah



TKVX-G

TKVX-Z



TKVX-S

front. (You'll pay a slight premium for the more exotic wood. The oak and ash models list for \$379, while the bubinga lists for \$399.)

The construction quality on all three Vertex cajons was very good. The edges were smooth and even, and the drums had a thin finish protecting the wood. (The oak and ash models are satin finished, and the bubinga is semigloss.) Each cajon features large rubber feet to keep the instrument in place without marking up the floor.

IN USE

Tycoon has been successful in its quest to create a series of cajons with the best traits of the company's standard and oversize models. The bass response of all three Vertex cajons was full, and the top end was very "snarey." (I mean that in the best possible way.) All of the models offered a crisp response with good articulation, owing to the eight snare wires instead of the more common four. Even the bass notes had an undercurrent of snare sound to them. There was also plenty of tonal variance between bass tones and slaps, to differentiate between the kick and snare voices in a typical cajon rhythm.

The fundamental pitch of the bass and slap notes of each cajon was a little different. Oak/ash was the lowest, bubinga/makah was in the middle, and ash/zebrano had the highest pitch. The oak/ash model was slightly less aggressive than the others—a little warmer on the bottom and a little smoother on top—yet it still had a very good snare response. The bubinga/makah cajon had a bit more bite, with a nice woody midrange overtone. The ash/zebrano version was similar to the bubinga/makah drum, only a tad higher in pitch, with slightly more snare articulation.

If I were forced to choose on sonics alone, my personal tastes would lead me to the ash/zebrano model. However, you'd be hard pressed to tell the difference between these cajons when playing them on stage with a band or on a studio recording. So if one of them lights your fire aesthetically, go for it.

The bottom line is that Tycoon is on to something with the Vertex series. The company's efforts in experimenting with different shapes and wood species have paid off in some well-built, nice-looking, and great-sounding instruments.

tycoonpercussion.com

THE VERTEX CONCEPT

Tycoon makes two basic sizes of cajons—the standard 29 Series is 29 cm (approximately 11½") in width, and the larger 35 Series is 35 cm (approximately 14"). The Vertex line combines the two sizes, measuring 35 cm across the bottom and tapering to 29 cm at the top, in order to try to capture the deeper bass tones of the 35 Series while retaining the sharp slap of the 29 Series.

DRUMCRAFT

Series 8 Fusion Drumset

by David Ciauro



DrumCraft is a German-based drum company that incorporates a Bauhaus-inspired spin on German industrial design into the visual aspects of its drums. As such, the lugs have taken on a cylindrical form that homes in on the geometric shape of a drum shell, creating a homogenous, modernized art-deco drum. DrumCraft describes the design as “Less is more—simplicity is a main principle of nature.”

SERIES 8 FUSION KIT

The drumset sent for review is a Series 8 Fusion kit. The line is available with either North American hard rock maple or Siberian birch shells. This particular kit is maple in electric black finish, with a 7-ply 18x20 bass drum; 6-ply 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms and 12x14 floor tom; and an 8-ply matching 5x14 snare. All of the drums come with Remo USA heads. Three relatively small boxes housed the entire five-piece kit,

including a full hardware package consisting of a snare stand, a hi-hat stand, a bass drum pedal, two cymbal stands (one straight, one boom), and two tom mounts with clamps, to be suspended from the cymbal stands.

CLEVER DESIGN (WITH MORE THAN JUST FUNCTION IN MIND)

The electric black finish is very sleek looking, but what's more impressive is that the finish is done with eco-friendly water-based varnishes. The cylindrical lugs and hardware have a satin chrome finish, which looks great with the black shells, and the tension rods on the snare are made of stainless steel with brass receiver nuts, to maintain smooth tuning no matter how tightly they're tensioned. The bass drum doesn't house the tom mounts; the tone is maximized because there are no drill holes.

GERMAN ENGINEERING AT AFFORDABLE PRICES

German engineering is world renowned, especially in the automobile industry, and DrumCraft aspires to introduce its own take on German-engineered drums to the world.

The drums are designed (with computer-aided design, or CAD, programs), prototyped, test run, and safety checked at DrumCraft's facility in Germany and then produced at the company's manufacturing plant in China.



ABE LABORIEL JR.
SIGNATURE SERIES SAL
Long and thick giving Abe the power he needs. Gradual taper delivers great rebound and feel.



STANTON MOORE
SIGNATURE SERIES SSM
A slightly elongated tear drop tip that creates a great cymbal sound. Perfect for Stanton's infectious grooves.

Do you have the right stick
in **YOUR** hands?



JOEY HEREDIA
SIGNATURE SERIES SJH
Unique tip shape produces a range of sound depending on the angle from which it is played. Smooth, blended taper for Joey's high powered and super soft dynamics.

VIC FIRTH **VF**
LEADING THE WORLD
ONE PAIR AT A TIME

Clever nylon lug inserts protect the wood hoops, and the bass drum claws are all die-cast.

The bearing edges of these drums are designed to, as DrumCraft claims, "kick-start the attack while still allowing the head to stimulate shell resonance." The main edge is 45 degrees with a 45-degree outside counter-cut, so the head rests on a smooth tip. The toms are equipped with sturdy Zero Gravity mounts and hinged memory locks, which were easy to work with and maintained a cohesive sense of design with the rest of the kit.

GETTING THE SOUND

Once tuned up, the drums had a brisk tonal quality with a short decay and a focused attack, but they got some warmth from the middle frequencies. The kick had a good amount of punch and a decent low end, but the decay was mostly midrange. The toms were pretty easy to tune at the tighter and looser ends of the spectrum, but they might require a bit more time if you're a fan of a balanced medium-tension tom sound. This being a fusion kit, I aimed for either a punchy gospel vibe or an open, natural jazzy sound, and the drums responded well in both cases.

To achieve the gospel vibe, I tuned the batter heads on the toms and bass drum fairly loose for a slappy attack, with a slightly tighter bottom head to provide the tone. The tone was wet, with a fast attack and quick decay—great for fast tom fills à la Aaron Spears. The tighter jazz tuning sent me into my best attempt at a Keith Carlock groove, with a lively, tight bass drum that provided a firm punch and toms that were in the more melodic realm.

The kick drum got a little boxy with the heads at medium tension. The toms are small and shallow enough that I didn't find it necessary to use muffling of any kind. With looser head tensions I added a blanket inside the kick drum, just barely touching both heads so that the slack of the head was muffled to emphasize the punch. At tighter tunings I kept the kick wide open, and I liked the bounce off the batter head.

The matching snare had a snappy quality, although there were a few dead spots in terms of bounce and articulation. The tone was also a bit flat toward the edges. Tighter tensions definitely brought out the best qualities the drum had to offer. The snare comes equipped with the impressive Nickel Drumworks pure polycarbonate throw-off, as well as 2.5 mm Projection hoops.

IMPRESSIVE HARDWARE PACKAGE

The Series 8 hardware was definitely on par with the kit in terms of design. The bass drum pedal has a sturdy footboard and a smooth double-chain drive on a patented cam. The footboard height is adjustable, as is the beater angle, so I was able to get the action to accommodate my personal pedal tastes quite easily.

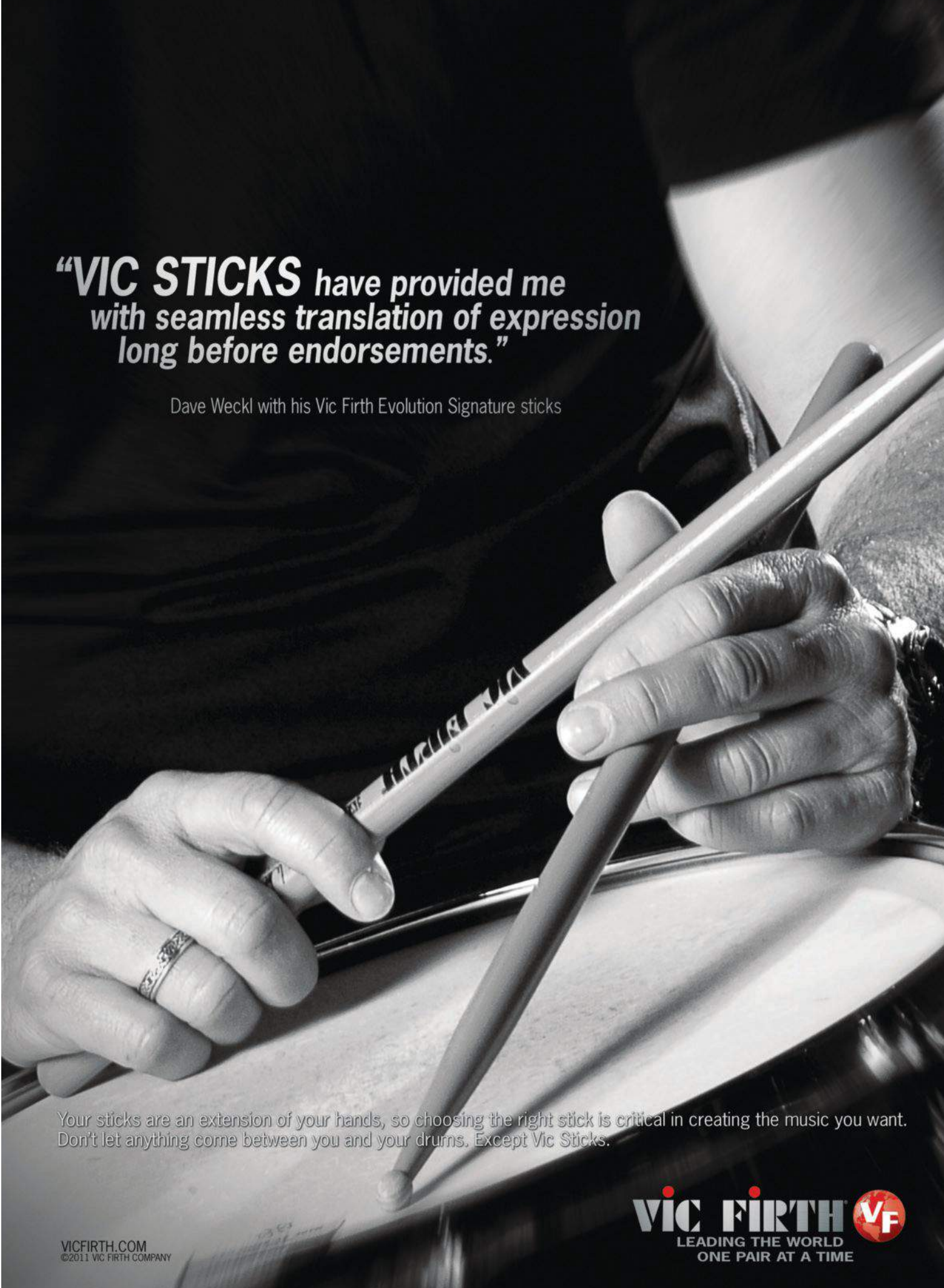
The double-braced swivel-tripod hi-hat stand has nearly infinitely adjustable spring tension and controlled direct pull. The cymbal stands are double braced with infinitely adjustable tilters and very wide tube diameters, making them sturdy no matter what size cymbals you use. The boom arm retracts, allowing you to convert the stand to a straight version.

The snare stand holds 10" to 15" drums, an impressive span made possible by a unique adjustable fulcrum at the end of each brace. The basket adjusts via a ball mechanism, which allows for any playing position to be achieved. The toms are mounted using straight multi-clamps with universal diameter adjustments.

CONCLUSION

The Series 8 Fusion kit performed quite well on opposite ends of the tuning spectrum but was a little lackluster in the middle ground. The kit possesses a refreshingly different look, with the Bauhaus-inspired lugs, and the hardware is very sturdy and well designed. Series 8 represents DrumCraft's high-end drums and hardware, but the company also makes a Series 6 and Series 4. It will be interesting to follow DrumCraft over the next few years to see what kind of name the company can make for itself here in the States. List price: \$2,129.03. drumcraft.com



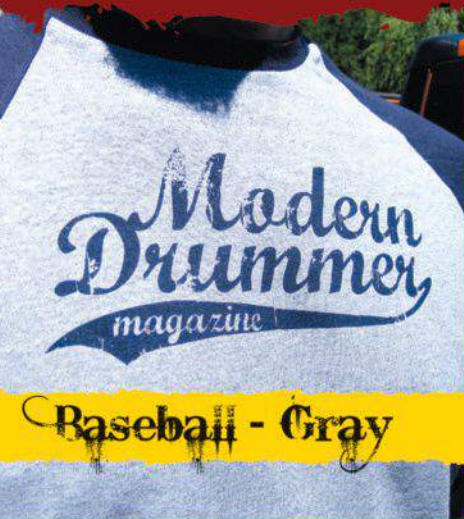


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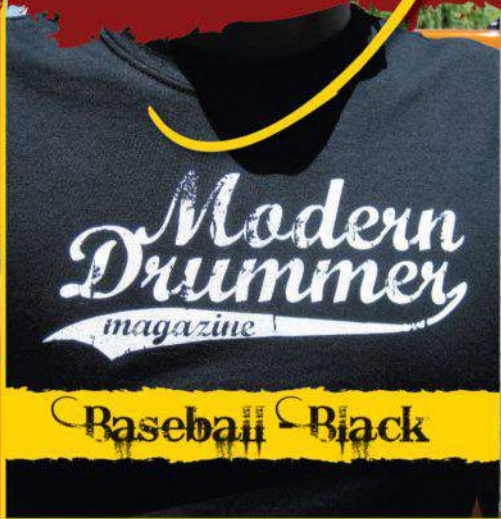
Dave Weckl with his Vic Firth Evolution Signature sticks

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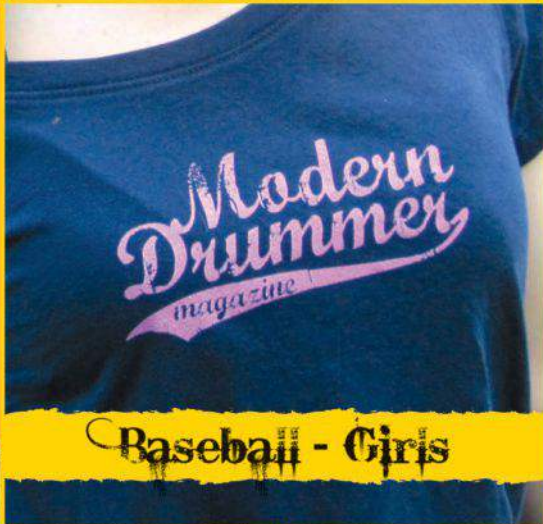
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Baseball - Girls



Drumset

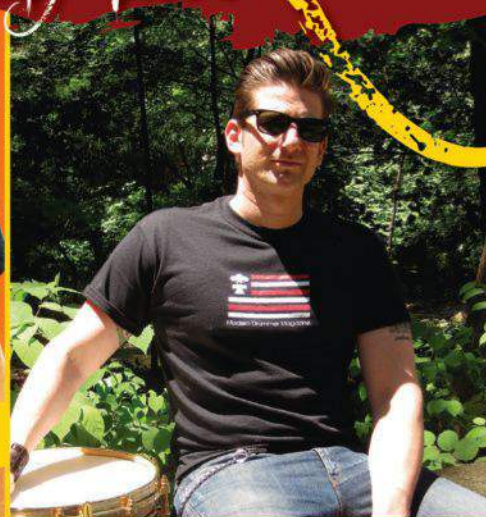


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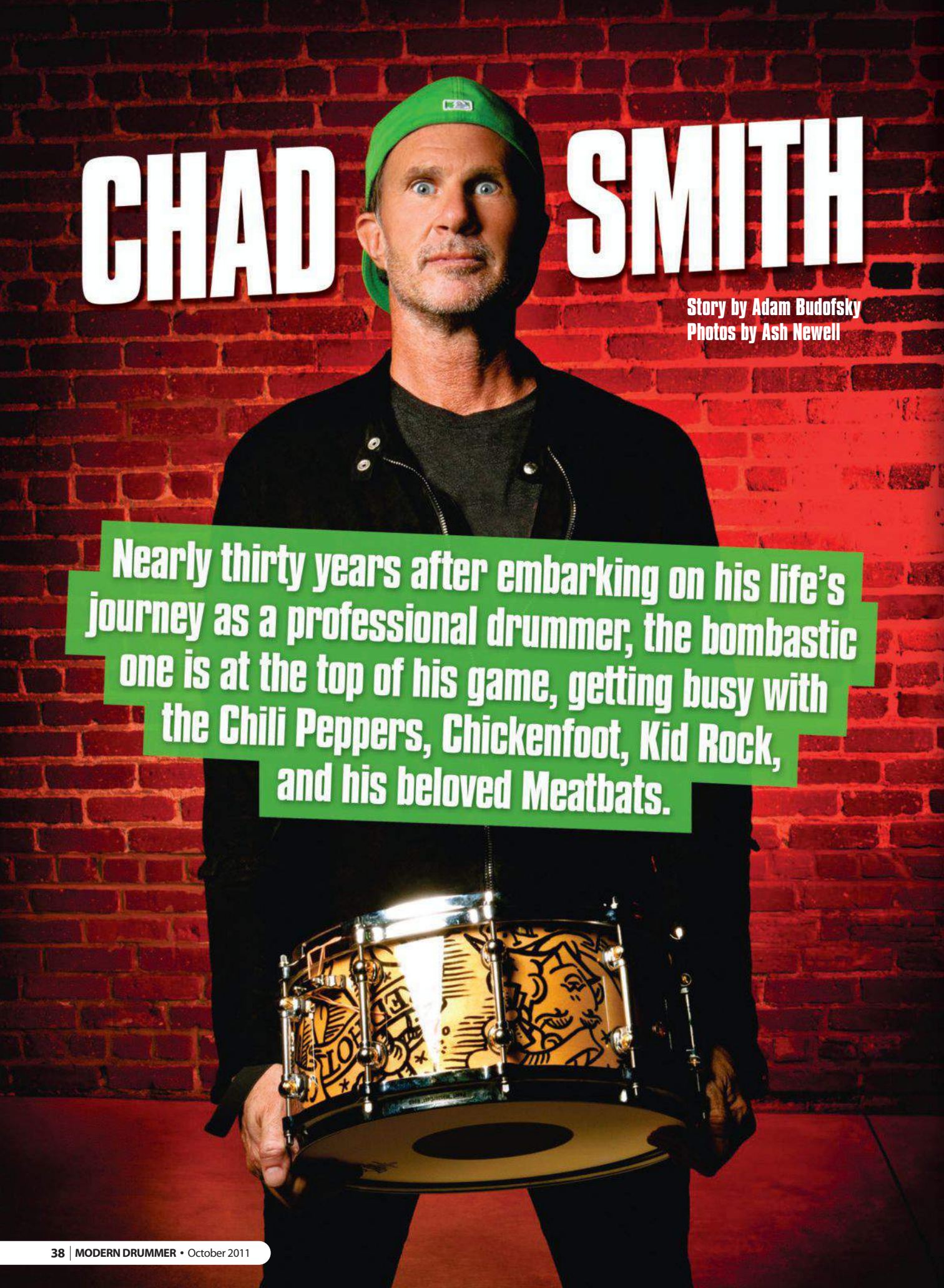
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CHAD SMITH

A full-page photograph of Chad Smith, a man with a green beanie and a black jacket, holding a yellow and black patterned snare drum. He is standing in front of a red brick wall. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

Story by Adam Budofsky
Photos by Ash Newell

Nearly thirty years after embarking on his life's journey as a professional drummer, the bombastic one is at the top of his game, getting busy with the Chili Peppers, Chickenfoot, Kid Rock, and his beloved Meatbats.

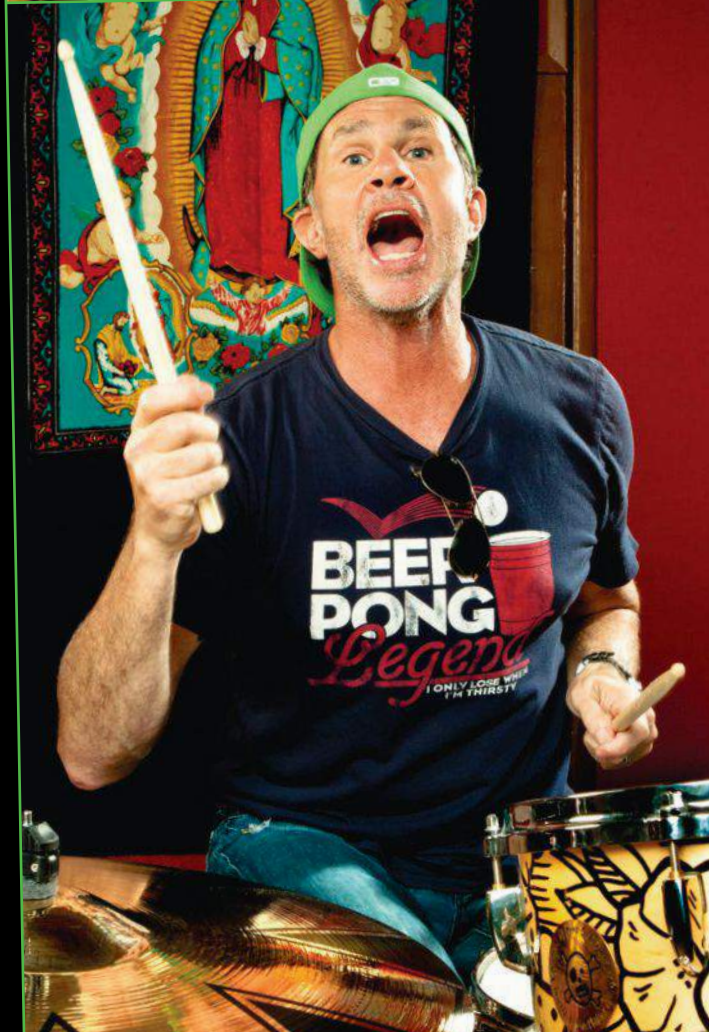
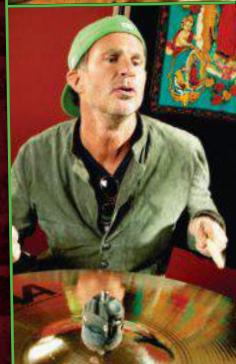
When you do the math, it's almost shocking to realize that Chad Smith's searing live performances and deceptively nuanced recordings with the Red Hot Chili Peppers have been influencing drummers for an entire generation. "Chad spawned a whole breed of 'deliberate' drumming," is how Michael Miley of L.A.'s supreme soul-rock band Rival Sons puts it. "Drumming with intent, as if your life depends on it. He's embedded his feel in all of our minds."

Equally remarkable is the scope of Smith's influence. "One of my favorite grooves of all time is from the song 'Blood Sugar Sex Magik,'" says future-groove monster Mark Guilliana, a favorite among jazz heavyweights. "It's simple and supportive yet very recognizable. I think this groove epitomizes Chad's playing—confident and creative, with a great feel that always serves the music. But I think Chad's most profound influence on the drum community is simply that he has made people want to play the drums. That was certainly the case for me. He was one of the first guys I saw play and thought, *I want to do THAT*. Chad was my first drum hero, and every time I've seen him play, I've been reminded why I started playing drums in the first place."

While his punch-in-the-gut grooves might still be the first thing people think of when his name is mentioned, at least two other equally important aspects of Smith's playing have emerged of late: his ace studio-cat qualifications, and, on the other side of the spectrum, his bona fide shredding abilities.

Smith's intelligent approach to songcraft has always been evident on Chili Peppers productions, perhaps most clearly on the band's kaleidoscopic new album, *I'm With You*. But the drummer's appearance on recent recordings by the Dixie Chicks, Brandi Carlile, and Kid Rock prove that Smith can listen and support on the level of rock and pop's great session players, in the mold of his heroes Hal Blaine and Earl Palmer. For the most part leaving the slinky syncopations on the shelf, in these more conventional environments Chad provides a foundation that's solid and familiar but never cold or predictable.

Meanwhile, a pair of albums each by former Deep Purple singer/bassist Glenn Hughes, hard-rock supergroup Chickenfoot (featuring guitar god Joe Satriani and Van Halen exes Sammy Hagar and Michael Anthony), and instrumental jazz-rock quartet the Bombastic Meatbats have given Smith a chance to "appropriately overplay" in ways that would be unimaginable and, frankly, *not*





Pearl

appropriate on a Chili Peppers record.

"Here's the thing about Chad," says Foo Fighters drummer Taylor Hawkins. "What he plays in the studio—what you hear on record—is always pure and pristine, delivered by a serious marksman. It's when he's unleashed live, in front of an audience, that the beast takes over. He's a serious and fearless player who goes for anything. Reckless abandon takes on a whole new meaning when Chad sits down at the drums."

Yet despite the profound control he displays on sophisticated pop records, and as much as the music on recent Rock-with-a-capital-R releases allows Smith to get in touch with his inner teenager—the kid who spent countless hours playing along with Black Sabbath, Kiss, and Bad Company records—the Chili Peppers are still where

his heart, soul, and creative drive reside.

The last time *MD* spoke with Smith, it was at his L.A. home, where he had us over to hear tracks from the as-yet-unreleased Chili Peppers album *Stadium Arcadium*. The occasion now is the release of *I'm With You*.

The album's songs, which feature the band's new full-time guitarist, Josh Klinghoffer, along with founding members Flea (bass) and Anthony Kiedis (vocals), are practically bursting with influences previously unheard on the group's records. This is bold new Chili Peppers music—adventurous, intense, immaculately crafted, and ingeniously pieced together. Across the board, Chad Smith is giving his all—and once again he comes out the other side a better drummer.

MD: When did you start working on the new music, and where did some of these new influences come from?

Chad: We started in October of 2009 and wrote songs for almost a year. There was a break when Flea went on tour with Thom Yorke and when Flea and Josh went to Lagos, Nigeria, with Damon Albarn from Blur. They went for a week and played with the local musicians. I think it was a really good bonding experience for them, and they came back with some ideas that turned into songs.

MD: “Ethiopia” is in seven.

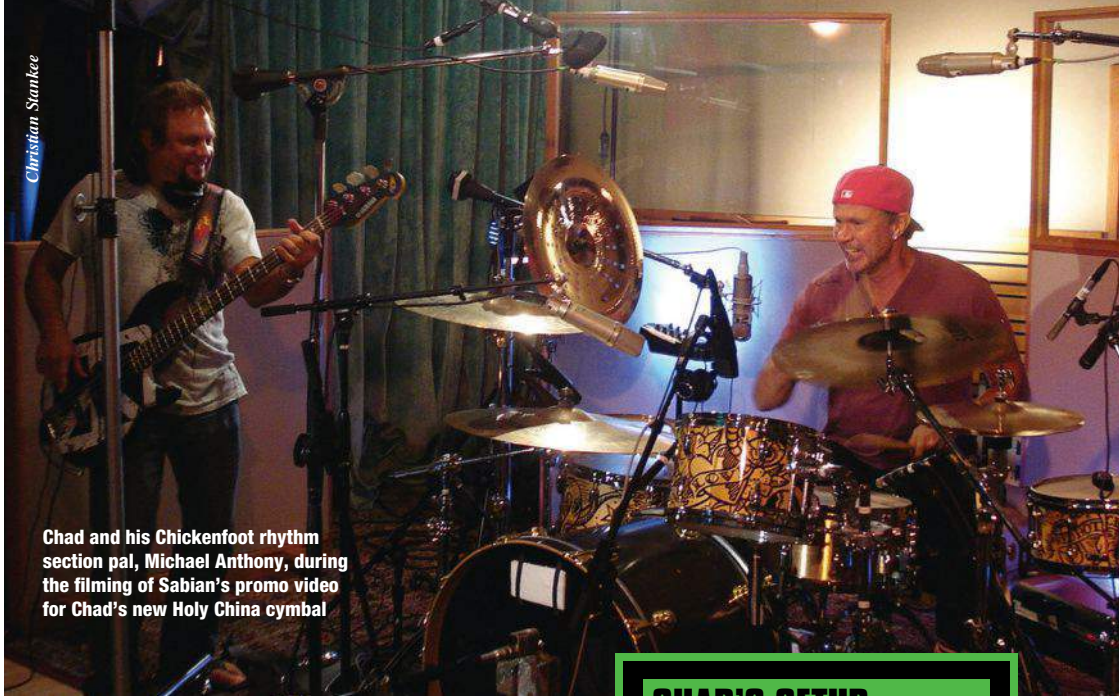
Chad: Yeah, though the chorus is in four. It’s not like we’re all of a sudden playing African music, but it is different for us. I wanted to make it feel...you know how an odd-time Soundgarden song doesn’t sound too proggy? Joshua Redman played sax on the outro too.

MD: With every new album of yours, the textures become more interesting.

Chad: We try. You gotta keep changing; can’t keep on making the same record over and over. It’s still the same guys—well, mostly. But it’s got to be real, it’s got to be honest.

MD: How were the drums miked for this album?

Chad: [Engineer] Greg Fidelman had thirty-two mics on the drumset—room mics, two sets of overheads, close mics,



Chad and his Chickenfoot rhythm section pal, Michael Anthony, during the filming of Sabian's promo video for Chad's new Holy China cymbal

mics that are like four feet away from the kit.... You're only really listening to about eight mics at a time, but it's covered sonically. [Producer] Rick Rubin likes the sound to be real present—very little room. That's always a fight, but you have to trust people, and we have the best guys.

They'll be like, "As soon as we turn up the overheads a little bit, it gets harsh and washy." You think, *It's easy—just turn the volume up and it'll be good*, but it's not that simple. For each song, in little ways, there has to be an adjustment because of the way the drums fit into the rest of the track. When there's a lot going on, you have to tighten up the drums so they poke through. The tape doesn't lie.

MD: Does gear choice come into play here?

Chad: Yes. Lots of times with the Chili Peppers, we had three different snares

with different tonal colors, and I'd pick what I thought would work the best for a particular track: This song is faster or it's got a quicker delay, so I'll use the higher-pitched snare. Or this one is slower, so I'll use a bigger, meatier one. But then we'll listen back and decide another snare might fit in the track better. That happened with the Kid Rock album. My snare drum is usually a higher, crackier sound. The first day we were playing, the track was sounding good, but Bob [Kid

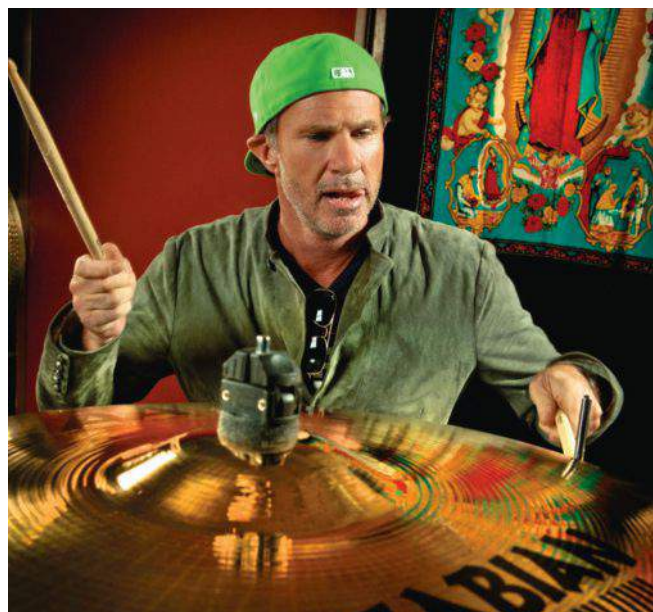
CHAD'S SETUP

This story's photos feature Smith's Dutch Tattoo kit. On tour Chad will be playing a limited edition Pearl "etched glass" acrylic kit with RHCP logos on all the drums, including a 6½x14 Free Floating snare, an 18x24 bass drum, an 8x12 tom, and 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms. His Sabian cymbals include a 10" AA splash, 14" AAX X-Celerator hi-hats, a 19" AA Medium crash, a 22" AA Rock ride, a 20" AA Rock crash, a 21" Vault Holy China mounted vertically (a 19" Holy China with the Meatbats and Chickenfoot), and a 21" AAX-Treme Chinese with rivets, mounted horizontally. His sticks are signature Vater Funk Blasters, and his Remo heads include a Coated Controlled Sound Black Dot snare batter and Clear Emperor bottom, Clear Emperor tom batters and Clear Ambassador bottoms, and a clear Powerstroke 4 or Powersonic bass drum batter with a custom graphic front head.

Rock] comes in and says, "Hmm, the snare's too high. I don't really like that sound."

So they had this other drum—big, deep, wood, tuned way down, tape all over it, like that '70s *duh* sound. So we put that up: "Yeah, that's the sound!" And it made sense. Bob's going for that Southern rock, Bob Seger thing. But it was so weird to be playing that soup bowl, where I'm used to that *bing!* sound and ghost notes. You just have to adapt to it.

MD: Do you have a basic way that you



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CHAD SMITH

dampen the drums?

Chad: There are so many variables, but in general I use very little tape, and it's usually on the floor toms, which tend to ring more, and sometimes not in a good way. Sometimes it can be good, but other times you can't tell where the drums are in the mix—it muddies it up. One time when we were recording the new Chili Peppers album, I was saying, "I want it to sound like *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*." Whenever that record comes on, I'm like, "The drums, I love it!" [Chad air-drums/sings the opening to "Give It Away."] But there's nothing else on that track but bass, vocals, and guitar. Sonically there was room for that drum sound; the territory wasn't taken up.

For this record I was like, "I want the drums to sound more like that—when it's appropriate." It's funny, because Rick loves Led Zeppelin and John Bonham. No one can get that sound now, and it wouldn't sound right with our music anyway, but something kind of in between this [taps on the table] and *ba-boom!* would be cool. And Josh, being a drummer, he'd say to Greg or to Rick, "You were there when we were recording it. You see what Chad is doing to the drums, how he's playing. The guy's six-three and he's beating the shit out of the drums. It should sound like that, not *dit...dat*." And I'm like, "Yeah, what he said! The new guy, yeah—I like this kid!" [laughs]

But there is something to that. We're a rock band, and we're trying to replicate what it sounds like when we're playing together. When we're mixing, they're probably like, "Okay, here comes Chad with his thing..." I should probably wear a T-shirt that says, "Sounds great, drums can be louder, more room sound." [laughs] But drummers shouldn't be afraid to make their voices heard. Just because you're not the songwriter or producer or engineer, at the end of the day, nobody knows what went into the record. All they hear is the end result. It's not "Rick Rubin & the

Chili Peppers," it's not "Greg Fidelman featuring the Chili Peppers," it's the Red Hot Chili Peppers. So whatever people are going to hear, they're going to think that's what we wanted it to sound like.

It's your responsibility. It's not about being a prima donna or being difficult—it's your right and responsibility. You're never going to be completely happy, but it's up to you to make it the best you can.

MD: Though this is Josh's first album with the group, he's toured with you before. Will you be bringing in another musician on the next tour to sort of take his old role?

Chad: We might bring a utility guy. There's a Brazilian percussionist in New York named Mauro Refosco, who tracked about half of the new songs with us. He played with Flea in Thom Yorke's band Atoms for Peace. One of the things he has is this tree of high-pitched Brazilian drums, four on each side. He made the thing himself, and it's got levers connected to these kind of like plastic Blastick things. It's the coolest sound. Tracking with him was fun, so he might be playing with us live. **MD:** You're playing some fresh-sounding things on *I'm With You*—Badfinger-ish piano ballads, Pink Floyd-like spacey sections, a soca-type groove. One constant is your hi-hat foot, which almost seems to have a mind of its own. How conscious are you of your hi-hat foot while you're playing?

Chad: I don't really think about it. My left foot is always moving around. Of course sometimes I'm consciously keeping it closed or opening it at certain times, but when I'm just playing, it moves a lot. It sounds human.

MD: Listening to the new tracks, it's obvious that a lot of thought went into the arrangements. You all seem to get progressively better at identifying what's unique about each song and highlighting those aspects. **Chad:** Well, hopefully it's about growing and improving. There was a point where the Chili Peppers were kind of a good groove and a rap, and



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hopefully it went somewhere. *Mother's Milk* and *Blood Sugar* were twenty years ago. Not that we don't want to do certain things like we used to, but we want to do other things as well. We try to get enough things in there without alienating the listener. It's gotta have a good melody and all the other things that make a good song. But we want to make it interesting for the listener and put things in there that you'll pick up on.

A lot of it's Arrangement 101 stuff. Something is introduced in the second verse, like a shaker or a background vocal, to keep the listener engaged and make things more exciting—those types of things you hopefully get a little better at. We're definitely more conscious of how to make a song grow and change through its course. Like at the beginning of "Goodbye Hooray," I'm playing along with Flea and catching the accents, but I'm not playing too much yet—you have to *build* it to make it exciting. By the last chorus, I didn't know that Josh was going to be going [sings squealing guitar sounds], but I knew this was the time to go for it with some fills.

MD: The thing that is always obvious, despite how the songs are built up and overdubbed, is that you guys are a *band*. You get to play.

Chad: And that's very rewarding. It has to be done right, but the nature of this group is that there's interaction, and I'm proud of the way that we do have a sound, no matter what types of things we do. We have a "thing"—it's a performance.

MD: The collaborative nature of the band might be one reason why you've sustained several changes in the lead guitar spot over the years.

Chad: Yeah, and I find that a non-drummer's suggestions will often spark my ideas. Flea, for example,

Humble Pie's JERRY SHIRLEY on CHAD SMITH

I was blessed to grow up surrounded by a group of drummers who taught their generation how to rock. There was Keith Moon, Kenney Jones, Mitch Mitchell, and John Bonham, to name but a few of the truly great rock 'n' roll drummers of the '60s and '70s. We pretty much all agreed that John Bonham was the best; he was our Buddy Rich. He also stood out for another reason: He was the only one amongst us who was tall. Have you ever stood next to Chad Smith? The guy is huge! And in my opinion, Chad, like John, is the best of his generation—and that's saying something, 'cos there are some great drummers out there today. Plus, you try and play along with Flea! The guy's a maniac—wonderful stuff. In my book, Chad's the best.

knows that my immediate go-to thing is hi-hat/kick/snare. Not all the time, but unless it sounds like it should be more tribal, I start out with a traditional rock beat. I try to come up with something cool, but that's my go-to thing. And sometimes we'll be jamming and he'll be like, "Try something like this on the toms." [sings something complex and crazed] I'm not going to try to exactly replicate how he sang it. Instead I try to do my own version of it. So it's still my thing, but I wouldn't have thought of that initial idea. And lots of times it ends up being really cool and different.

Being open to ideas is very important because it challenges you, and you can grow from that. The song is king. We all have the same goal. You never know—that weird tom thing might inspire Josh to play something else on guitar, which makes the rhythm change and makes Anthony's vocal cadence change. It could have this domino effect, all because someone suggested a tom part. And that's the

beauty and fun of the creative process. It doesn't always work, but you have to be open.

MD: As much as the Chili Peppers are your baby, your playing with the Meatbats and Chickenfoot somehow seems almost more in line with your personality. You really get your ya-yas out in a very *rock* way in those situations.

Chad: I think you're right. Chickenfoot is like that music I grew up with, that classic rock, Deep Purple, jammy thing. I don't write with them for six months or a year, and I don't go on tour for eighteen months with those guys. We get together for a short amount of time and have this energy spurt, and it's really fun. But it's a different thing. I get my inner Paice on—not my inner peace, my inner Paice, if you will. [laughs] It's like I'm fourteen, and I'm playing with Sammy Hagar from Montrose and Mike Anthony and Joe Satriani.

But I think that if I was doing that all the time...it's not that it's limiting, but



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there's this certain thing that we do really well. In the Chili Peppers, one of the reasons I think we've been able to stay relevant and have a long career is that we're not afraid to try anything, and whatever it is that we're trying to do, as long as it's a good song, it sounds like us. And we're not trying to *not* sound like us; we're just taking what's given to us by the musical gods and working on it to make it good. And that's something I'm very proud of. It's always a new thing. We don't write on

the road; we write the music that reflects where we're at as people and as players in the band, at that time, and people are getting a snapshot of that.

When we were doing our *Greatest Hits* record in 2003, Warner Brothers wanted a couple extra songs. So we went in to write a couple during the next break on the tour we were on at the time, and we recorded like sixteen songs. They weren't all great, but twelve of them were probably good.

So we put the *Greatest Hits* album out and toured a little bit more, and then we were going to come back and write some more songs, and I was like, "Let's just write another ten, take maybe seven out of that, add it to the others we'd previously done, and we'll have a record."

I remember John Frusciante was like, "Hmm...that was like nine months ago; I'm not really doing the arpeggiated thing anymore. I'm playing differently, I'm listening to different stuff, so I'm going to write different music." So there's an album that we did that I don't know if anyone's ever going to hear. But we're pretty true to that idea of recording what we're into at the time. And that's what's exciting to me—showing up at practice and wondering, *What's going to happen today?*

MD: You're involved in three distinct bands, with some strong personalities.

Chad: Yeah, in Chickenfoot Sammy's real vocal, like, "This is the greatest song ever!" [laughs] Joe's sense of humor is more subtle, and Mike's probably the most easygoing. I'm the off-the-wall guy, and they embrace that energy.

In the Chili Peppers I'm not really like that. It's more about being the real solid foundation, the heart, the engine, very reliable. I'm going to come up with something solid and it's going to make the guys feel good, be the right tempo for Anthony to sing over. I really want to be supportive, though even after all these years, sometimes that leads to me not speaking out, whereas in other situations I might. You've got Flea, who's this really strong musical personality coming in with all of these ideas, and Anthony has lots of ideas about what he likes. And Josh is starting to come into his own in the group. At first he was a little timid, understandably. I feel like I'm kind of the connection between everybody. It's just a different dynamic. I'm not a different person, but you read situations differently.

MD: What you play is very different in those situations as well.

Chad: Yeah, sonically, in terms of parts... The only thing that's probably the same is my feel. But the music is



Photo: Melanie Ross

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different, the sound is different, and obviously the musicians play differently. The Chili Peppers are tighter, more part oriented, and maybe that comes from playing together so long and having a very part-conscious producer.

MD: What about the Meatbats?

Chad: That's a free-for-all. [laughs] It's a band with a sense of humor, and we play instrumental music that's kooky. I think instrumental music gets pigeonholed as serious, only for musicians—this muso, shreddy, noodly, look-at-me thing. The Meatbats songs have strong structures and verses and choruses, and there's no singing, so I get to stretch out a little. We're not competing with the Lady Gagas of the world. We're in a very niche market. But it's music that we really like.

MD: Watching the Meatbats at the last winter NAMM show and at the Iridium in NYC recently, what struck me was that it's a perfect live band. Did you have something specific in mind when you started the group?

Chad: There were no specific ideas—there aren't a lot of thought-out ideas to most of what I do. [laughs] But we do enjoy playing with each other, and obviously I wouldn't be doing it if it wasn't really fun. And I get to really...overplay.

MD: Which seems appropriate—you appropriately overplay.

Chad: Right! In instrumental rock, yes, you are allowed to appropriately overplay. There's a lot of room for improvising within the structures of the songs, everyone's a good listener, and there's dynamics. We want people to have a good time. I don't go out and see a ton of instrumental music, but when I do, a lot of the time it sounds kind of self-indulgent. It can be a serious, clap-between-the-solos thing, but we're not that. So I think sometimes people are taken aback by our, uh...

MD: Your bawdiness?

Chad: Yeah—and then I have a microphone, and that's not good. [laughs]

MD: Well, they should know what they're getting. It's called Chad Smith's Bombastic Meatbats, after all.

Chad: That's the thing, right from the name on down.

MD: About the improv aspect, what's your approach? When those moments

come up when there's an opportunity to...

Chad: ...to go for it?

MD: Yeah. How planned out is that? How far ahead are you thinking?

Do you have a bag of tricks that you pull from?

Chad: If I do *any* of those things, I'm screwed. [laughs] Thinking, me, on the gig? Bad. Plan stuff out? Not really a good idea. And you know, I think I sort of tried to do that when we filmed a show at the Iridium, and it ended up sounding...planned out. It wasn't good. In any musical situation, certainly with the Bats, if I'm thinking, *Here comes that section*, I'm not in the moment anymore when your pure self comes through.

Regarding a bag of tricks, I don't have one. If I do, it's very small, and it doesn't have much in it!

MD: How about communication on stage?

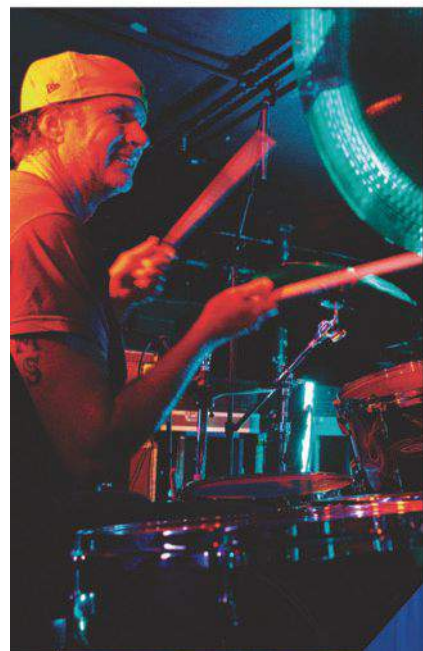
Chad: We have signposts, cues for each other. Like, I do this thing that sets up that other thing, or I'm going to play something and then we'll do it in unison.

Peter Erskine once wrote that when you're having a musical conversation with someone, you don't repeat what they say, like, "Hey, that was really good," "Hey, that was really good." It should be more like, "Hey, that was really good." "Oh, thanks a lot." "Sure, hey, maybe try this." "Oh, I hear what you're saying." For a long time I thought what was cool was repeating what a musician just played, like, "Look how clever I am, what a good listener I am. Look how fast I got *on* that."

MD: Repetition is the first thing you think of.

Chad: Exactly. It takes more of an evolved musical palette to respond in a unique way that doesn't sound random. And maybe that's where the bag of tricks comes in—having things that I can do technically to express myself. When I do clinics and master classes, I say that you should get your hands and rudiments together so that when you play, you have a way to express yourself through your feet and hands. I can't do *everything* I want to do in the moment—I'm not good enough. But I

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CHAD SMITH

can do *this*, and I can say what I want to say pretty well.

MD: There's so much smiling on stage with the Meatbats.

Chad: For a jazz gig, I guess there is. [laughs]

MD: That's a big thing, though.

Chad: It is, it is! First of all, you've got to enjoy the people you're working with. And when you're having a good musical conversation, there's humor, there's quiet parts, introspective parts. For me that's kind of a normal extension of your feelings. And we're doing it in front of a crowd. I mean, I can be kind of a hambone at times, but that's not a put-on. It's me—for better or worse!

MD: You've said that the Meatbats are not *your* band, despite your name being in front.

Chad: The record label was like, "You're in a popular group—if you don't mind, it wouldn't be a bad idea to put your name on it." And the other guys were okay with it, and I was like, "Well, uh, okay, I guess." I don't know how I ended up on the mic. I suppose I'm a little bit of a stronger per-

sonality than the other guys when it comes to talking. In Chickenfoot, Sam and I go back and forth. Joe doesn't talk, and that's just him—the glasses and bald head and science fiction thing, a very thoughtful musician. Mike talks a little bit, but you can never understand what he's saying, his voice is so high. [laughs] But Sam needed a foil, and that's the way our personalities are in the group. That's how we were together when we first met in Mexico—we're friends.

MD: Chickenfoot's got a brand-new second album coming out, but because of the Chili Peppers tour starting up, you're not going on the road with them, right?

Chad: Yeah, they'll have to get somebody else to do it. It's always been, like, I'm in this other band—the housekeepers, as I like to call them. [laughs]

MD: With all these groups being active, it's been great for your drumming. You're playing a lot, especially with the Meatbats and Chickenfoot.

Chad: Yeah, playing a lot—and often. Appropriately overplaying...yeah, I like that!



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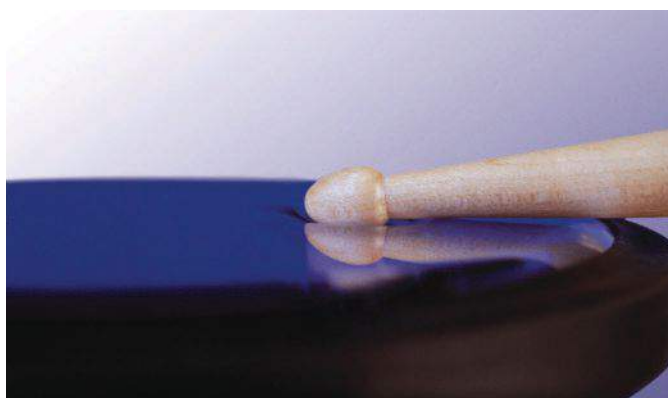
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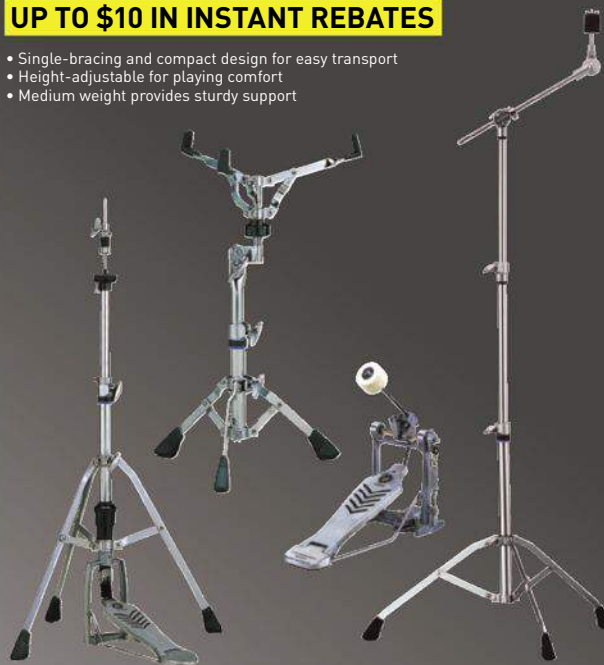
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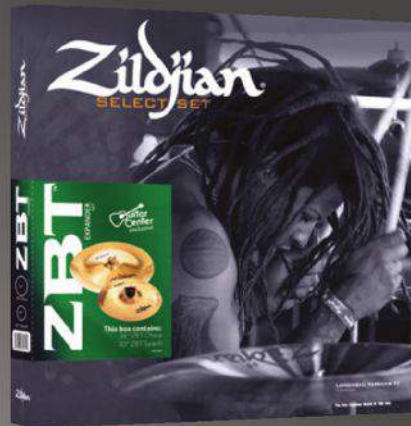
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2011

MODERN DRUMMER FESTIVAL®

Story by Michael Parillo • Photos by Rahav

This past May 21, the hub of the drumming community was the Memorial Auditorium and Fox Theatre at New Jersey's Montclair State University, the site of the twenty-first Modern Drummer Festival. With such a diverse roster of players, just about the only redundancy was the fact that both master-class instructors were named Riley.

Indeed, the seven featured drummers collectively proved just how different high-level playing can be. A close look at the action found many of the guys employing similar rudimental patterns and hand/foot combos—after all, we share the same building blocks as we construct our individual drumming temples—but to drastically different effect.

Mother Nature saved her own percussive pitter-patter until later in the day, tossing just a few raindrops on the campus long after Tycoon's outdoor drum circle had concluded. For a spontaneous gathering of hand drummers, the circle was a well-oiled machine, with clear conducting and a big unified beat.

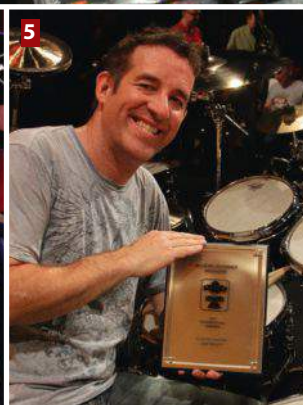
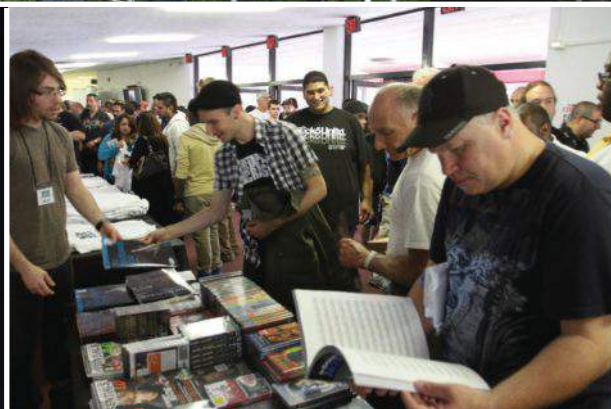
Indoors, meanwhile, on a day dedicated to the memory of the recently passed Joe Morello and Louie Appel, drumming wisdom and deep musicality were being dispensed in equal measure. Between performances, thousands of dollars' worth of door prizes were awarded to lucky audience members, and drummers of all stripes mingled, horsed around, and vowed not to quit but to work that much harder to digest and learn from what they'd just witnessed.





SCENES FROM MD FEST 2011

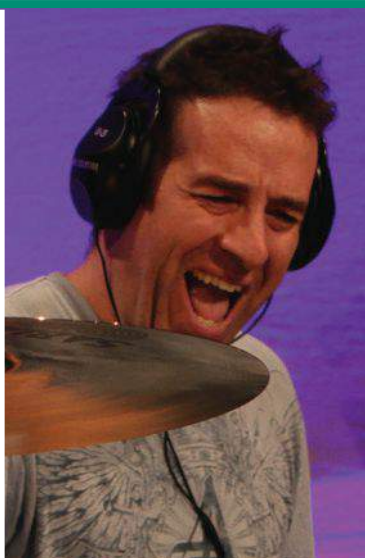
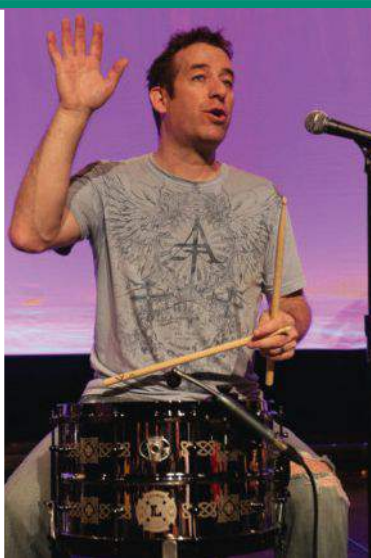
1. Erica Mita, the lucky winner of a Sonor Jungle kit.
2. The Tycoon drum circle.
3. *MD* publisher Isabel Spagnardi welcomes the crowd.
4. Taku Hirano.
5. Jim Riley receives his award for topping the country category in the 2011 *MD* Readers Poll.
6. Legendary drummer/educator Sam Ulano regales the audience during intermission.





Jim Riley

The master-class segment of the Festival got off to a slamming start courtesy of Jim Riley, who played along with an instrumental that he'd written specifically for the occasion, running through a range of styles from rock to swing. The Rascal Flatts bandleader had a very supportive message for an audience that seemed to span pretty much all ages: "We can't all be the best drummer in the world," he said, "but we can be the best drummer that we can be." Riley then sat at his Ludwig signature snare to discuss hand technique. Playing rudiments and talking about stick heights, he explained that "accents give your playing contour, dimension." Jim moved back to the kit to apply some of the concepts that he'd displayed on the snare, and he played along with a track from his recent educational book/CD package, *Song Charting Made Easy*. Throughout, Riley stressed the idea of what he calls smart drumming: "boiling things down to what's most important and playing that."





John Riley

The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra's John Riley kicked off his highly stimulating master class with a quote from the Irish poet Yeats: "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." Riley, who's also a busy instructor, listed the four qualities of a great musician—technique, groove, creativity, and musicianship—and added a fifth: inspiration. After he talked about studying with Joe Morello, whose very name drew applause from the crowd, Riley explained how he's inspired by hearing patterns that can be viewed from more than one perspective, comparing that experience to looking at fool-the-eye paintings by M.C. Escher. On his iPod he played "System" by Brotherly, a track where the time signature and the location of the first beat can be heard in several ways. "I love that feeling of confusion," Riley said. "It makes me feel lots of different possibilities." With a beautiful touch and tone, John went on to demonstrate examples, from a handout he'd prepared, that toyed with time in sly ways. Stoking the fire, Riley reminded the audience that for the pros playing the Festival, tons of effort have gone into what now looks easy. "There is hope," John said, "if you're inspired to put the work in."

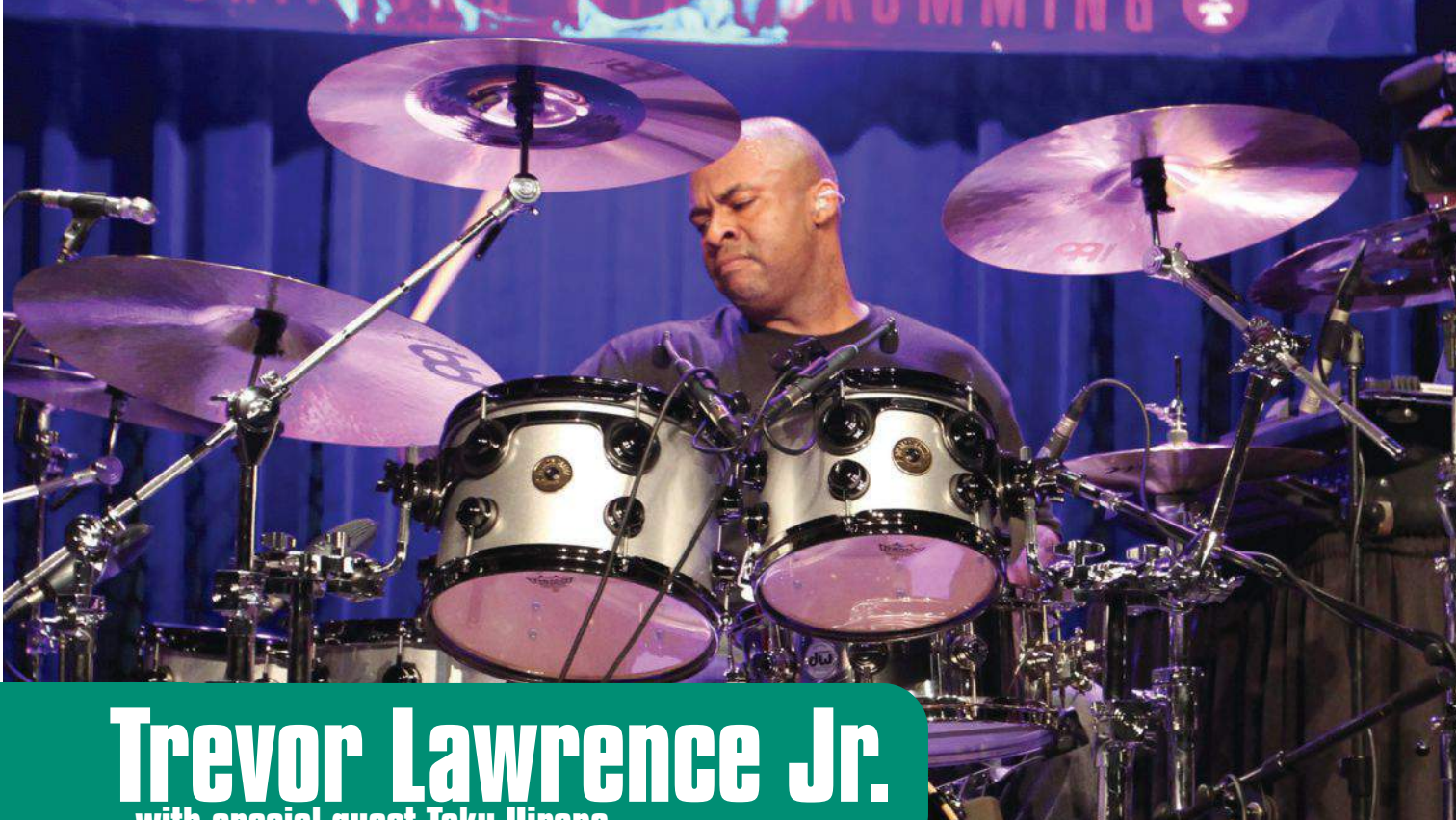




Gil Sharone

Somehow combining swagger and humility, Gil Sharone took a commanding hold of the main stage. Sitting at a rich-sounding DW kit, the Stolen Babies/session drummer displayed stunning power and articulation across a number of styles, including fusion, reggae, and metal. Indeed, the importance of diversity was one of Sharone's main themes. ("I'm not *one* kind of drummer," he said. "Every style of music can help you. Expand your vocabulary; expand your mind.") After playing Jamaican grooves drawn from his *Wicked Beats* DVD, he noted how a reggae-inspired pattern can function effectively within any other musical genre. Stressing the importance of having solid technique—which he proved with every note he played—Gil urged drummers to take it slow at first. "With the correct form and motion," he explained, "the speed will come." He showed how much texture ghost notes can add to a beat, by playing a pattern with and without them. "I'm a ghost-note fanatic," he said. "My left hand eats ghost notes for breakfast."

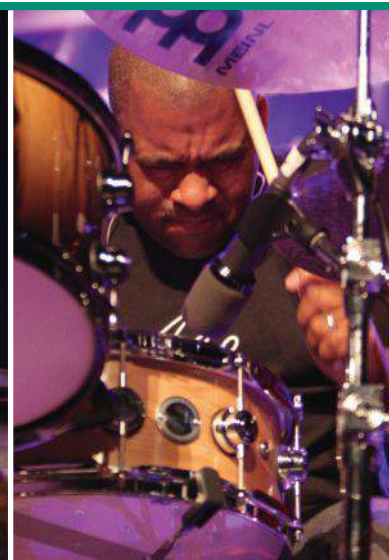
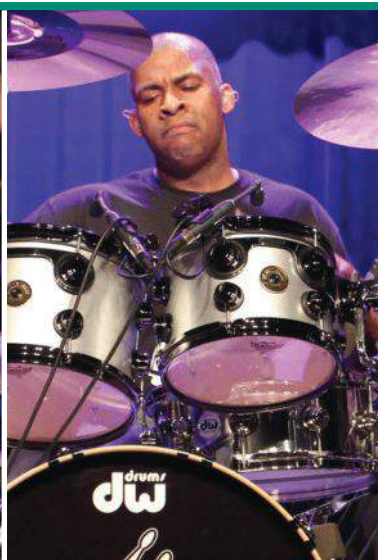




Trevor Lawrence Jr.

with special guest Taku Hirano

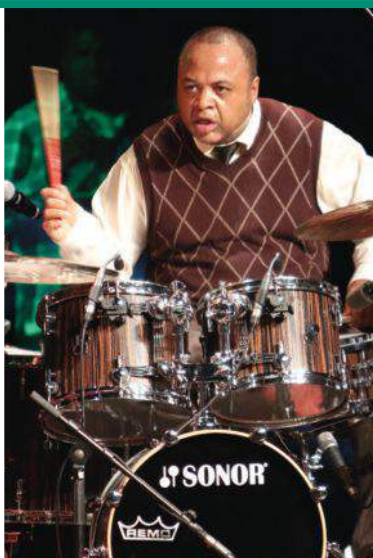
Fresh off a tour with Herbie Hancock, Trevor Lawrence Jr. began his Festival set by playing an airy, dynamic solo on a small jazz kit. He then brought out ace percussionist Taku Hirano and moved to a larger six-piece rig. After the duo grooved along with backing tracks, Lawrence, who's part of Dr. Dre's production team, played a hip-hop medley over music that he'd performed and produced himself, animated by thick snare flams and syncopated fills. Hirano began the next piece with an improv that displayed masterful tambourine technique, and soon he and Lawrence morphed into Billy Cobham's "Stratus." With his head down in concentration, Lawrence played a furious barline-blurring solo over the tune's B section. Finishing up with a fun and informative audience Q&A, Lawrence, like Gil Sharone and Jim Riley before him, stressed the importance of versatility. "I do as many smooth jazz records as I do hip-hop records," he said. In discussing his production work, he suggested that drummers should embrace and not run from technology. Then, when asked why artists still hire drummers rather than use programming exclusively, Trevor said, "There are certain things you're never going to be able to duplicate." To much applause, he added, "Human error is what creates the pocket."





Jeff “Tain” Watts

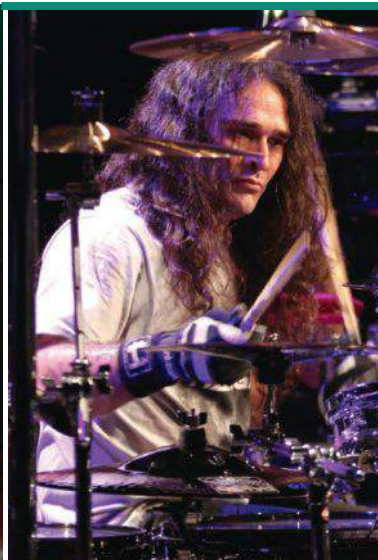
Merging dead-serious ability with a whimsical sense of playfulness, Jeff Watts showed why he is unquestionably one of the greatest jazz drummers working today. With Marcus Strickland on sax, David Kikoski on piano, and Yunior Terry on bass, Tain also showed his strength as a composer, playing a perfectly paced set of his own tunes that touched on a spectrum of tempos and feels. He really threw his body into the music, swooping down on his kit, dancing around his cymbals, and switching frequently between traditional and matched grip. His grins and laughter in reaction to his mates' sharp musical prodding endeared him to the crowd even further. When playing over vamps, Watts broke up the time in seemingly every conceivable way yet never came close to disrupting the flow; even his wildest moments—and there were plenty—remained clear and accessible. His rowdy solo in “Vodville” (“It’s about drinking vodka,” Jeff said of the tune, and his solo seemed to consciously personify a bit of wooziness) downshifted gorgeously into the intro of a ballad written for a friend. Watts saved a little something for the closing number: He broke into a straight up-tempo ride beat that was almost shockingly delicious in its elemental beauty. Yup, he’s the master!





Aquiles Priester

Brazilian drummer Aquiles Priester hauled out the kind of monster kit that draws cheers all by itself, a kit that took *hours* to set up the day before. Priester didn't come to mess around—his performance comprised one intense play-along track after another, including songs by his prog-metal bands Hangar and Freakykeys. Every note was played with fierce intent, within imaginative orchestrations that reflected a clever musical mind. Just when you thought a beat was about as dense as it could get, you'd find Priester adding yet another layer of rhythm the next time around. Clarity is obviously a big part of the drummer's aesthetic, and Priester sets his toms almost flat to help him hit rimshots. (Backstage, we asked, "So, you hit rimshots on the toms some of the time?" Aquiles' reply: "Every time.") His cymbal arsenal consisted of heavy, dark-sounding models that barked, clanged, pinged, and hissed their way into the show-goers' hearts. As Priester finished his high-intensity workout, he jumped up on his throne, tossed his sticks, and yelled, "You rule!" to the roaring crowd.





Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez

and the New World Order

Horacio Hernandez and the debut of his band the New World Order provided a fittingly steamy close to a hot day of drumming fireworks. The international ensemble, which included a flamenco dancer and four singers, featured members from Cuba, Argentina, Spain, Turkey, India, Canada, and the U.S., playing a sophisticated, appropriately worldly mix that hit on fusion, Latin jazz, and *Bitches Brew*-style space-funk. The Spanish vocalist Buika reached ecstatic levels of intensity at the front of the stage, pushed by Hernandez, Pedrito Martinez on congas, and the rest of the band. El Negro provided spirited accompaniment while intermittently seizing the spotlight with fluid bursts of high-octane improvisation. Thanking the



crowd for its support, he paid tribute to late *Modern Drummer* founder Ron Spagnardi and acknowledged *MD*'s role in the ascent of his career. Hernandez went so far as to say that his *MD* Readers Poll wins in the world music category were what spurred him to form the New World Order. As another wonderful *Modern Drummer*

Festival drew to a close, Hernandez showed that he had one last trick up his sleeve: His finale was a thrilling duel with flamenco dancer Benjamin Santiago Molina (“El Moreno”) that built to a froth until the whole band was laughing and the audience shot up out of its seats.





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CHRIS CORSANO

Between tone and technique, the remarkably "out" accomplice to **Thurston Moore, Nels Cline, Björk, Paul Flaherty, and Jim O'Rourke** carves a supernatural percussive path.

Story by Will Romano
Photos by Paul La Raia



Over the last fifteen years, Chris Corsano has been a prodigious and prolific musician, performing with a stellar list of artists including the underground supergroup Rangda, Wilco's Nels Cline, Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore, pop eccentric Björk, free-jazz saxophonist Paul Flaherty, Sunburned Hand of the Man, pedal steel guitarist Heather Leigh Murray, trumpeter Greg Kelley, guitarist Bill Nace, Texas roots-rock mystery man Jandek, Japanese-banjo (shamisen) player Michael Flower of Vibracathedral Orchestra, multi-instrumentalist/producer Jim O'Rourke, and saxophonists Paul Dunmall, Akira Sakata, Tony Bevan, and Antoine Chessex.

"Corsano is the greatest," says drummer Pete Nolan of Magik Markers, who first met Corsano over a decade ago in Hartford, Connecticut. "It's like he heard [free music pioneer] Sunny Murray when he was three years old and became the free drummer that he's been ever since."

"It was very difficult for me to think about performing with another drum-

mer after working with Charlie [Gocher] for twenty-seven years," says Rangda's Richard Bishop of his band-mate in the groundbreaking experimental rock band Sun City Girls, who died in 2007. "I knew that if I was going to work with any other drummer after Charlie, Chris would be the only one who I believed I would be comfortable with right away. I see a lot

tremendous wash of clanging white noise, manipulate looped feedback that provides the bedrock for percussive excursions, or surprise with arresting noises emanating from homemade instruments.

Peppered with free-jazz abandon and the hint of rock grooves, Corsano's playing is an idiosyncratic combination of creative and traditional drumming

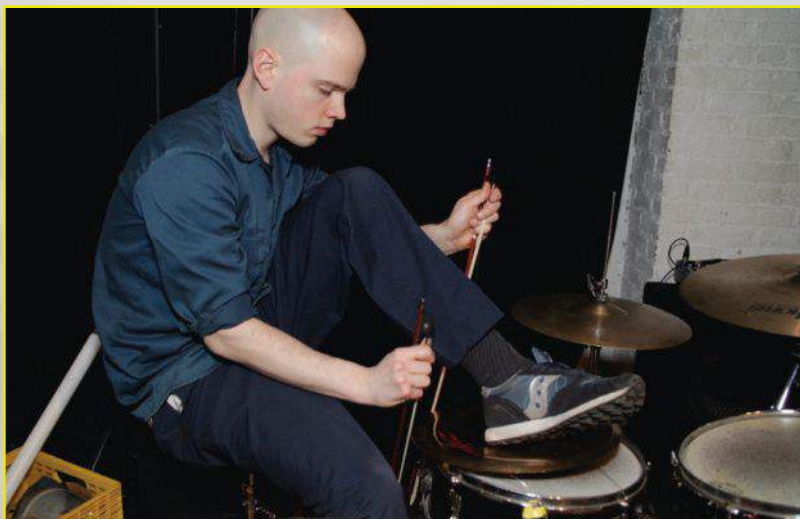
"Freight elevators are inspiring to me. If a band sounded like that, I'd buy their records for sure."

of similarities in approach and control over the instrument. Chris is capable of doing anything on the kit, just like Charlie was."

As "out" as he is encouraged to be in his collaborative projects, Corsano creates solo performances that provide an even wider range of expression. At any given moment he might drag mallets across drumheads to achieve a warbling, whooshing sound, kick and step on upside-down cymbals to produce a

techniques, from advanced limb independence to eye-popping, unnaturally quick one-handed rolls. Corsano's lightning-speed ride cymbal work is equally inspiring, and the drummer cites the lyrical playing of jazzers Billy Higgins, Charles Moffett, and Ed Blackwell—Ornette Coleman collaborators all—as influences. "I'm not a good, you know, 'sit down and play a beat' kind of drummer," Corsano suggests.

That statement can be debated, but





when Corsano plays in a free music setting with Paul Flaherty, Bill Nace, and Greg Kelley, for instance, the mission *does* seem to be to raise as much holy hell as humanly possible.

Similarly, with Michael Flower, Chris offers layered ostinatos and pitched percussive hits, conjuring a fog of noise—a transformative rhythmic drone that speaks to listeners on a cellular level even as it complements Flower’s heady approach. The collaboration can be heard on the duo’s recent indie release, *You’ll Never Work in This Town Again*.

“There’s a whole world of sound,” Corsano says. “Freight elevators are inspiring to me. If a band sounded like that, I’d buy their records for sure.”

“It’s Chris’s intensity and all-out pursuit of outlandish release that drives me to challenge my own concepts of what’s possible,” Flaherty says. “Chris plays at blinding speeds at times, and I love hearing the explosions when we approach sound barriers.”

Corsano began his drumming life innocently enough, by watching his older brother play drums. When he was thirteen he started hitting the skins himself, only to discover that woodshedding wasn’t for him. “My mom wanted me to play piano,” Chris recalls, “and I tried drum lessons for a few months, but I just didn’t have the discipline to continue.”

Corsano was bitten by the classic-rock bug as a teenager in New Jersey, and indeed the drummer’s booming sound recalls that of Ginger Baker and Mitch Mitchell. Corsano

eventually found his way to the avant-rock and punk scenes, set off on an exploratory musical journey after hearing the Velvet Underground’s Maureen “Moe” Tucker’s minimalist approach, Ikue Mori’s anything-goes style with DNA, and the Minutemen’s seminal rhythm section of bassist Mike Watt and drummer George Hurley.

“It didn’t matter how good the drummer was,” Corsano says. “It was about how the drummer related to the *band*. Punk can really discourage people from learning the technical side of things. It’s a reverse snobbery, which I am totally guilty of. But maybe I had enough classic-rock drum geek in me that I got into certain techniques. The question then became: How do you refurbish them for your own purposes?”

In his late teens Corsano enrolled at Hampshire College, developed a love of improv, and joined the band 13 Gauge, which also featured guitarist/bassist Aaron Mullan, later of Tall Firs. The drummer also began releasing limited-run CD-Rs via his own label, Hot Cars Warp, some of which are available at cor-sano.com.

While making his way through the underground circuit, Corsano called many places home, including New York City and the U.K. Settling in Massachusetts, he became a loyal follower of the Connecticut-based Flaherty and saxophonist/multi-instrumentalist Daniel Carter. The artistic abandon and populist punk aesthetic of the New England free music scene appealed to Corsano. “Paul and Daniel showed me that I could be more

CHRIS’S SETUP

Drums:

- A. 5x14 vintage Premier snare
- B. 8x12 mid-’60s Ludwig tom
- C. 14x15 floor tom (unknown maker)
- D. 14x20 mid-’60s Ludwig bass drum

Cymbals:

- 1. 14" Zildjian crash cymbals used as hi-hats
- 2. 19" Bosphorus Master series ride (1,400 grams)
- 3. 21" A Zildjian ride (1,920 grams)

Sticks: Pro-Mark 7A wood- and nylon-tip sticks, telescoping brushes, mallets, and FPR10 soft rubber mallets

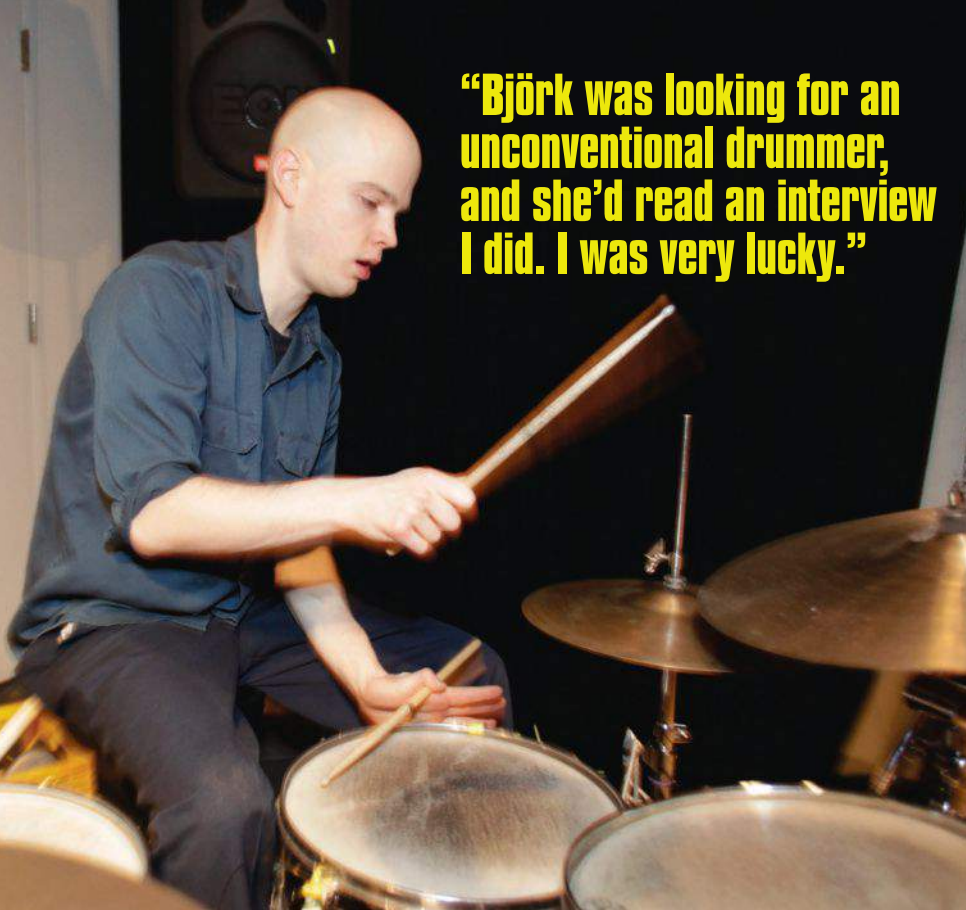
Hardware: Axis A series bass drum pedal, Yamaha hi-hat stand, ride/rack tom stand (unknown maker), Slingerland ride cymbal stand

Miscellaneous: In addition to the “neckless banjo” described later in this article, Corsano will place cymbals on the surface of his drums, including a 14" Zildjian China Trash, a 10" opera gong (ascending), and two 12" chau gongs (unknown makers). He also employs pot lids, sax mouthpieces, funnels, and assorted metal bowls. In addition, he uses a bass amp featuring a Trace Elliot head and a Fender cabinet with a 12" speaker, as well as contact mics for amplifying strings, a melodica, metal bowls, etc.

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"Björk was looking for an unconventional drummer, and she'd read an interview I did. I was very lucky."

ferocious than anything I was listening to at the time," Chris says.

Flaherty recalls his initial musical interactions with Corsano: "Chris invited me to jam at his tiny one-room rented house in Amherst, Massachusetts. I thought his music was impressively insane. He seemed to be trying to *kill* me. I suggested we record what became *The Hated Music*. He suggested we do some gigs. Chris surprised me by being able to find a lot of opportunities for us in the New York City and New England areas."

"Paul never gave me the impression, 'I'm showing you the ropes, kid,'" Corsano says. "It was always, 'I set up recordings. You set up shows.'"

Most artists on the free music scene don't let the lack of premium paying gigs get in the way of innovative interaction. Corsano is no exception. "I once saw Chris play with Paul Flaherty under a big freeway overpass by the Connecticut River in Hartford," Pete Nolan says. "He had his drums set up in the middle of nowhere. Nobody was around. I felt like I was intruding on some kind of avant-garde hobo scene. It was like they figured out how to take the sound of Coltrane's *Interstellar Space* record even further out. I mean, these cats blew infinite tones."

Corsano began nurturing an instinct to repurpose household objects, often chasing sounds, not beats. "Gongs were expensive," he says. "I was working in a record store at the time, and I didn't have much money to get what I wanted. I remember I

went to a garage sale and bought a candleabra. When I hit these candleholders they produced a chord. They had this crazy, near-gamelan thing happening, which I was just discovering at that time."

Not satisfied with treasures discovered at rummage sales, Corsano fashioned his own instruments, including his so-called neckless banjo and an unusual saxophone-type contraption whose piercing honks shatter the atmosphere like a thousand car horns.

"With the banjo concept," Chris explains, "I'm bowing a violin string stretched across the surface of the snare, which produces two separate pitches that pulsate in a heartbeat-like pattern. The sax mouthpiece thing resonates the chamber of the snare. Currently, the mouthpiece is a C-melody sax mouthpiece and neck, and the bottom of the neck is fitted into a two-inch rubber piece that's part of a hose-and-showerhead apparatus. That rubber piece sits inside the small end of a plastic funnel. To create sound I keep the funnel flush with the surface of the drumhead, so the friction of the air passing through the drum/funnel creates a tone. Or I lift part of the funnel off the head, so the note vibrates the skin of the drum."

Though he cites Wilco's Glenn Kotche and the New York-based experimental drummer Sean Meehan as inspirations, Corsano is quick to point out that he's not interested in mimicking anyone else's style. "For me," he says, "playing drums is about, 'What kind of weird

sounds can I create?'"

In the last several years, Corsano has been making a name for himself as a solo performance artist. The drummer's indie releases and solo CD-Rs, including 2006's *The Young Cricketer* (track titles for which are based on a 1964 how-to book of the same name by L.R. Benaud), 2006's *Blood Pressure* (featuring only vocals and a thrift-store duophonic keyboard), 2009's *Another Dull Dawn*, and 2010's *High and Dry* (credited to the Chris Corsano Band), illuminate the ability to simultaneously disturb the listener and evoke euphoric emotions.

It was Corsano's extensive and passionate work in experimental music that caught the attention of the Icelandic pop star Björk, who hired Chris for her 2007 album, *Volta*. "She was looking for an unconventional drummer, and she'd read an interview I did," Chris says. "I was very lucky."

Corsano was not used to what he calls "a structured environment," but, ironically, his experience with the free music scene was the best preparation he could have had for Björk's 2007-08 world tour. "I was playing before more people than I'd played for in my life," he says. "I think the free music scene helped me get over the stage fright I most definitely would have had. The great thing about playing with Paul Flaherty is that you show up and maybe there would be nobody in the audience—or there would be a hostile audience. It's like you're in your own little army."

The challenges of experimenting within a pop setting forced Corsano to see and hear things from a different perspective. "I would work on certain ideas in the rehearsal room," he says, "but then they wouldn't translate to the stage, especially if we were playing an outdoor arena. I'd think, *I should really come up with a different part*, but if I'm too free, that messes up the other musicians. It was a real eye opener."

Generally, though, uncertainty is something Corsano's musical partners thrive on. "I expect to be continually surprised by Chris as we play more often in the future," Rangda's Richard Bishop says. "That's the kind of drummer I want to work with—one who can hold things together if that's desired, but one who can just as easily make everything fall apart when necessary."

"Sometimes you don't know what's coming the next second," Corsano explains. "Your body has to just make a decision of what to do. It's almost supernatural. Sometimes you can't help but step back and think, *What a weird thing you're doing.*"





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TONY WILLIAMS The Game-Changer

You could transcribe until your hands triple-cramp, but it wouldn't tell the story. One of the most influential, inspiring, and spontaneous forces in jazz, Tony Williams remains a classic example of artistly transcending technical analysis.

Other Miles Davis drummers had soared to dizzying heights before him, but Williams arrived like a young, brash fighter pilot, swooping bandmates into his commanding slipstream for a white-knuckle ride. Hearing him play, stunned audiences understood that what had come before suddenly seemed outdated. While most of Davis's fans were elated, some disapproved, preferring the more traditionally supportive drummers of previous rhythm sections. But Tony's statement was clear: The drummer was now undeniably up front, contributing to the group on a level equal to that of any other member.

Tony Williams was born in Chicago in 1945 and grew up in Boston, where he studied with drumming guru Alan Dawson and made a splash with local notables by the age of fifteen. When he arrived in New York City in 1962—and was quickly snatched up by Miles Davis—Tony had already worked with heavyweights such as Jackie McLean and Sam Rivers. His tenure with Miles produced one of the most influential strings of LPs in jazz history, beginning with 1963's *Seven Steps to Heaven* and ending with 1969's *In a Silent Way*. The 1964 live set *Four & More* is one of the most frequently cited records on MD interviewees' lists of influences.

Immediately upon his debut with Davis, Williams astonished listeners with his fast, precise, and intense ride beat, unleashing a driving, ever-varying continuum rather than "patterns." His independent limbs exploded and coaxed, commenting on the others' solos and suggesting ideas. As he implied related tempos and danced around the pulse, Tony played with a time feel that remained amazingly insistent, even within broken-up phrases. Reveling in breakneck tempos, he often hovered on the upper edge of the pulse, lending the music a feverish urgency that created new parameters for the meaning of swing. To up the ante, Williams introduced his trademark of playing fast all-fours on the hi-hat, making the feel even edgier and further liberating his other limbs.

The way Williams shaped the band's arc beneath the soloists created elegant compositions in themselves. Shunning clichés, he complemented the phrases swirling around him with in-the-moment mini orchestrations. He could conjure an unexpected tempest and then just as suddenly fade to a whisper, lay out completely, and slyly slip back in to lift the band higher.

With the advent of Miles' "second great quintet," featuring pianist Herbie Hancock, saxophonist Wayne Shorter, and bassist Ron Carter (the first included John Coltrane on sax, Red Garland on piano, Paul Chambers on bass, and Philly Joe Jones on drums), Tony sparked the band to increas-

ingly progressive interplay on LPs such as *ESP*, *Miles Smiles*, *Sorcerer*, *Nefertiti*, and *Filles de Kilimanjaro*. No shrinking violet when it came to criticizing musicians, Davis repeatedly praised Williams in his autobiography, citing Tony as one of the finest drummers he'd ever shared the stage with and lauding him for lighting a fire under the bands' "old" butts.

During the same period, Williams contributed to other classics, including Hancock's *Empyrean Isles* and *Maiden Voyage*. In a more unconventional setting, the eighteen-year-old prodigy made history with Eric Dolphy's avant-garde watershed release, *Out to Lunch!* The drummer's uncanny, always surprising approach to accompaniment sets the tone for the date's wonderfully playful, zanily askew sense of counterpoint interaction. "Tony Williams doesn't play time," Dolphy states in the liner notes, "he plays pulse."



As Davis gravitated toward rock and funk, Williams did the same, forming the Tony Williams Lifetime, a trio featuring guitarist John McLaughlin and organist Larry Young. ("That was one of the best schools I could ever have gone through, in terms of playing with a drummer," McLaughlin told *MD* in his July 2008 *Different View*. "You had to open your mind when you played with Tony.") Later members included bassist Jack Bruce and guitarist Allan Holdsworth. Despite disappointing commercial success, the Lifetime LPs, especially the group's 1969 debut, *Emergency!*,

marked the gateway to jazz-rock fusion. Tony's aggressive barrages merged jazz chops and improvisation skills with the raw, fearless, electric spirit of rock. The disc remains a hair-raising, edge-of-the-cliff listen to this day.

In the late '70s, Williams reunited with Davis alumni for several successful tours and recordings under the V.S.O.P. moniker. He also recorded fine discs with luminaries such as Sonny Rollins, McCoy Tyner, Hank Jones's Great Jazz Trio, and his old friend Herbie Hancock, and in 1981 he graced the debut album by a young Wynton Marsalis.

From the mid-'80s through the mid-'90s, Tony spearheaded an outstanding acoustic quintet with a gritty hard-bop heart, featuring pianist Mulgrew Miller and trumpeter Wallace Roney. This time out, the drummer applied his thicker, harder-hitting sound, prodding the front line to rise above the sonic wave with visceral results, as heard on *Tokyo Live*. Manning his station behind his big, bold yellow Gretsch kit, Tony once proclaimed to a Village Vanguard audience, "Thank you for coming out to hear power music for power people!" In contrast, his later swinging piano trio featuring Miller and bassist Ira Coleman occasionally revealed his more sensitive side.

Always striving to grow, Williams studied composition and orchestration, first at the University of California at Berkeley and later at Juilliard. Defying expecta-

"Tony Williams had the technique of a jazz drumming master and the sound and groove of a rock legend," says Living Colour drummer/*MD* Pro Panelist Will Calhoun. **"He was the best rhythmic mediator, combining these styles in an intelligent, extremely skillful manner."**

To read Will's personal reminiscences about Tony Williams, go to modern drummer.com.

tions, he applied these skills to the ambitious 1996 release *Wilderness*, a large-scale work joining a thirty-piece orchestra with a jazz quintet.

Tragically, Tony Williams' life was cut short abruptly in 1997 by a heart attack following minor surgery. Tony was fifty-one. If there's any consolation, it might be that the brilliant early starter accomplished more than most could dream of doing in a full century. The current of Tony's immeasurable impact continues to flow through the channels of modern drumming.

Jeff Potter



Easy Drum Charts

A Quick Method for Getting Your Head Off the Page and Into the Music

by Mark Schulman

Many pro drummers I know have created their own simple and quick way of charting music. We choose to do this in the interest of saving time and being able to keep our energy focused on the audience, rather than burying our head in a chart. I use my own system, both in the studio and when playing live, which allows me to hear an average pop song for the first time, chart it out in fifteen minutes, and then play it correctly right away. Quite often I've recorded ten to twelve drum tracks in a day, never having heard the music before. Here's how I do it.

Listening Through

I listen through the song once to get a feel for the phrase lengths (how many bars are in each section) and the overall style. I listen to see if the phrases have even or odd numbers of bars. I listen for stops, specific rhythmic figures, tempo shifts, dynamics, and style changes. Once I have a general idea of how the song flows, I go back to the beginning to start writing my chart.

The Descriptor

I may write a short description of the song at the top left corner of the page, just a few words to remind me to play a certain style or groove. This reminder works wonders, especially if I'm charting out a set of new material to be performed live, or I'm at a tour rehearsal or an audition. (Yes, I got the gig with Stevie Nicks and with Cher while having my charts with me on the drum riser during the audition.)

Charting It Out

Let's chart out one of the songs from my DVD, *A Day in the Recording Studio*, called "Jane the Stripper." It's a funny little love song about a poor boy who falls in love with a working girl. Jared Engelmier wrote and performed the song. I played drums on it and produced the track in my studio.

I use letters to mark the different sections of the song, and I circle them. I use "I" to mark the intro, "A" to mark the verse, "B" to mark the pre-chorus, "CH" to mark the chorus, and "Solo" to mark—anyone's guess?—solos!

In "Jane the Stripper," the first "I" section has no drums, so I write "Tacet," which means "do not play." When the intro repeats, I write out the rhythm because it's the basic groove of the song. I usually follow each section letter with a number that tells me how many bars are in that section. This allows me to just count bars without having to keep my eyes on the chart, which frees me up to play the music and, in the

case of live performance, to pay attention to the audience and the other band members on stage. I need to look back at the chart only at the end of the sec-

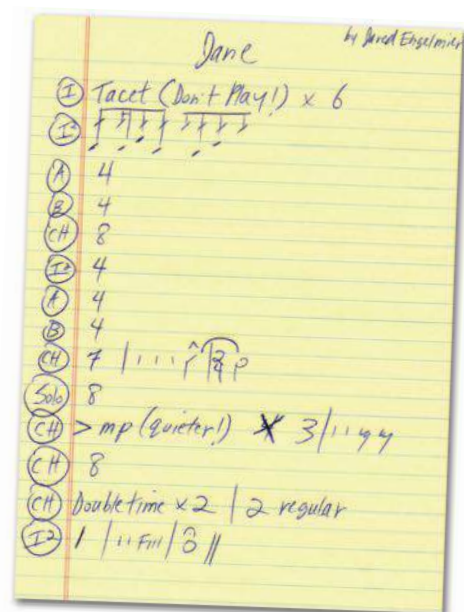
tion, to see what's coming up. In the case of "Jane the Stripper," I left out the number at the end of the second "I" because it's an even four bars and I will instinctively go to the next section when I hear the phrase coming to an end.

In the "A" section I'll be playing the same groove as before, so all that's written is "4," which means four bars of the same. That also applies to the "B" section. When I see "CH" coming up, I instinctively bring the dynamics up a notch, as the chorus is usually the loudest section of the song. In this case the groove doesn't change. Bringing up the dynamics in a pop song usually means that the kick and snare stay at the level of the verse and pre-chorus, but I may either go to the ride cymbal or open the hi-hat a bit to suggest a bigger sound.

This song goes along very predictably until the end of the second chorus, where there's a 2/4 measure with no playing. I easily notate this with a stop on beat 4 of bar 8, tied to a half note in bar 9. Then the solo section begins. Since I've opted to play closed hi-hat during the verses, open hi-hat during the choruses, and the crash cymbal during the second intro, it's time to go to the ride for the solo. It's a musical choice.

The next section is a chorus in a lower key signature, so I determine that this should involve a drop in dynamics, as signified by the decrescendo symbol (>). I also write "quieter!" just to make sure that in the heat of playing I notice the change. As you can see on my chart, I made a mistake in the number of bars for this quiet chorus. I crossed out the "4" and wrote "3" because I realized there's a two-beat tacet at the end of the fourth bar, which I notated with two quarter-note rests.

It's smooth sailing for the next chorus. I wrote "Double time x 2" for the repeated chorus (often called a double chorus), because Jared suggested that we go into double time to rock out this last section. Rather than stay in double time until the end of that chorus, I opt to return to the regular groove for the last two bars. You might make a different decision, but





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there is no wrong or right, just opinions. These musical interpretations are up for discussion with the producer, the artist, your bandmates, your girlfriend, your boyfriend, or anyone else whose opinion you feel would help your playing of the song. Incidentally, my wife, Lisa, still doesn't agree with the double-time choice, and she lets me know this every time she hears the song. In this case, the artist won. (Sorry, baby!)

The end of the song is simply one bar of groove, then half a bar of the same groove (marked by two slashes, one for each beat), a two-beat fill, and finally a fermata (hold) played as a cymbal crash.

"Jane the Stripper" is a relatively simple song, and its difficulty level represents most of the pop tracks I get hired to play. With this shorthand charting system, I can play the music rather than bury my head in the chart. I hope this method helps you too. An MP3 of the track is posted on the Education page at modernndrummer.com.

For more insight into my approach to recording drums, check out *A Day in the Recording Studio*, which is available through Hudson Music. There's a trailer posted on my website, markschulman.net.



Mark Schulman has drummed for numerous rock and pop artists, including Pink, Sheryl Crow, Foreigner, Stevie Nicks, Destiny's Child, Billy Idol, and Cher.

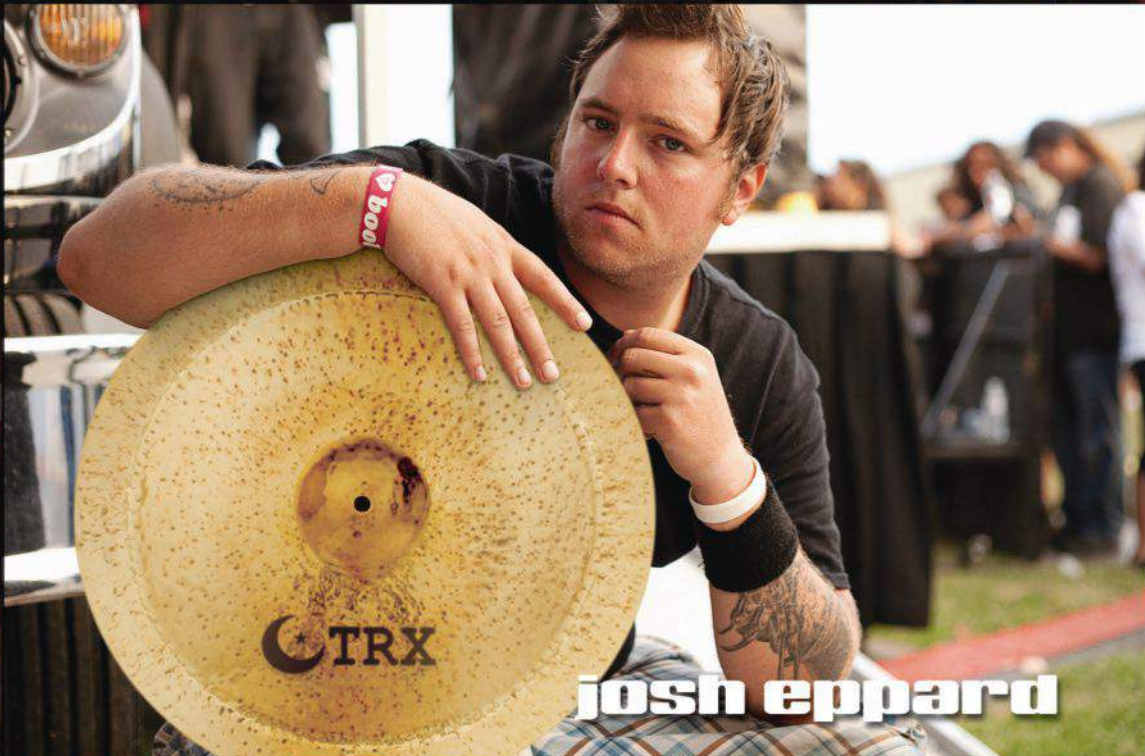


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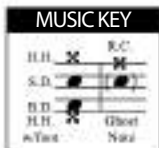
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Understanding Odd Time Signatures

Part 1: Breaking It Down

by Rick Landwehr



Odd time signatures, or time signatures with an odd number of beats to the bar, are often considered difficult, advanced, or complex. This is not the case at all. Players who are adept at playing odd time signatures have simply found a way to understand them and have spent enough practice and listening time to become comfortable with them. Most drummers who have passed the beginner stage of development are comfortable playing, and possibly improvising, in 4/4 time. Many of us have this same level of comfort playing in 6/8, 12/8, and 3/4. (The latter is the most common odd time signature.) These are the time signatures most commonly found in rock, jazz, funk, and other Western musical styles. If you can play these meters, you can play, with some practice and patience, *any* time signature, since the basic components are the same.

Pulse, Subdivisions, and Groupings

To begin breaking down odd time signatures, let's take a look at the concepts of pulse, subdivisions, and note groupings. Pulse, as it pertains to these lessons, is the big beat in a measure that gets subdivided into smaller parts.

In 4/4, the pulse is usually felt as quarter notes.



In 6/8 and 12/8, the pulse is usually felt as dotted quarter notes.



Subdivisions and note groupings go hand in hand. A measure of 4/4 can be subdivided into four quarter notes. Each quarter note can then be subdivided into different note groupings, such as four groups of two 8th notes or four groups of three 8th-note triplets.



A measure of 3/4 subdivides into three quarter notes, which can be further subdivided and grouped in a similar way as the previous examples.



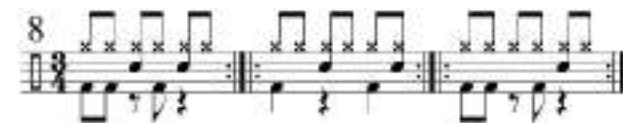
A measure of 6/8 subdivides into two dotted quarter notes or two groupings of three 8th notes. A single dotted quarter note (half a bar of 6/8) equals one bar of 3/8.



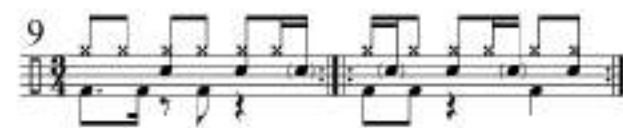
3/4 Time Feels

The remainder of this article will examine some basic time-playing ideas in 3/4 and 6/8. The more comfortable you are playing in 3/4, the easier it will be to play in 5/4 and 7/4, since those time signatures can be conceptualized as containing at least one grouping of three quarter notes, which is equivalent to one measure of 3/4.

Let's start with some simple 3/4 examples that could be applied in a rock or funk context.



Here are some 3/4 examples that include a little more activity in the snare and bass drum parts.



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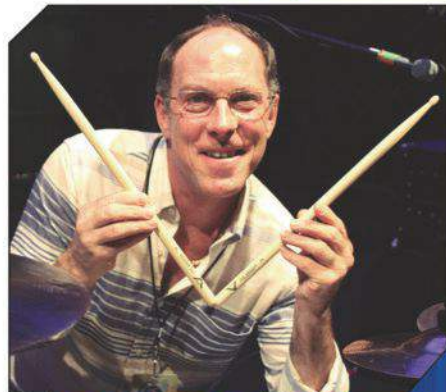


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5A Wood

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There's not necessarily a "correct" way to play jazz time in 3/4, but the following examples contain some of the most common ride cymbal and hi-hat patterns for this time signature. The parentheses around the hi-hat notes mean those notes are optional.



To further develop your vocabulary in 3/4, you can take some of your favorite 4/4 grooves and play only the first three beats of the bar. You can also write out or improvise your own patterns while counting and feeling the three-beat cycle.

6/8 Patterns

The more comfortable you are playing in 6/8, the easier it will be to play in time signatures such as 5/8, 7/8, 9/8, and 11/8. Those odd-time meters can be thought of as having a mixed pulse where each bar contains at least one dotted-quarter-note pulse and one quarter-note pulse. Here are some time-playing examples in 6/8.

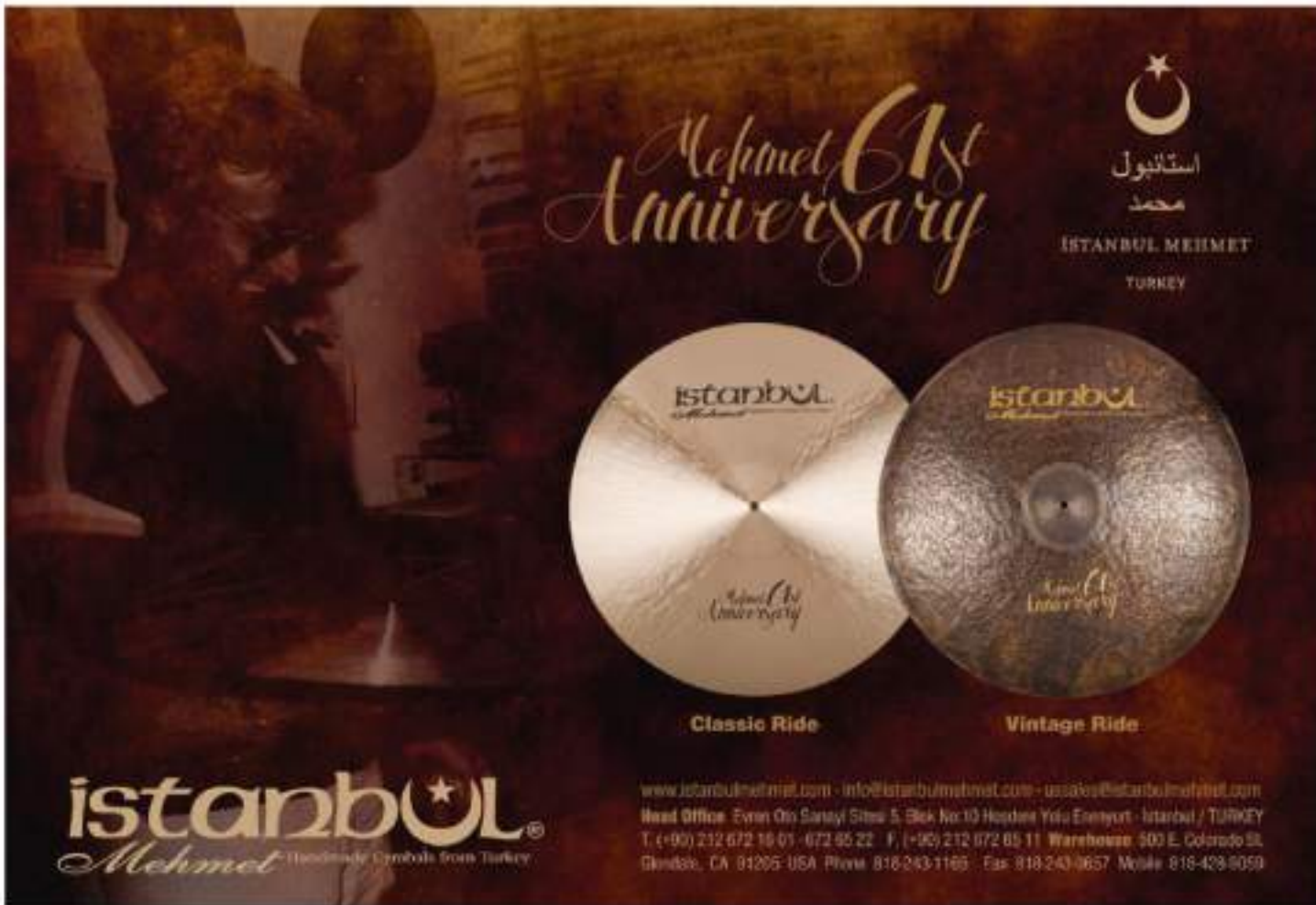


In part two of this series, we'll take patterns from this article and plug them into time-playing examples in 5/4, 7/4, 5/8, and 7/8.




Rick Landwehr is a Boston-based private instructor, a studio musician, and the drummer for the progressive jazz/rock band Tamandua. His recent book, *Drummer's Guide to Odd Time Signatures*, is available through Alfred Publishing. Rick endorses Vic Firth, Paiste, Evans, and PureSound. For more info, visit ricklandwehr.net.







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Part 14: Two-Hand Coordination, 8th-Note Ride

by Bill Bachman

This month we're going to look at coordination exercises where the two hands play fourteen basic 8th- and 16th-note patterns in duple meter, with different techniques and motions utilized in each hand. Playing these types of patterns is commonly referred to as employing independence, but it's really more a matter of coordination, or "coordinative interdependence."

The right hand (the hand that you most often use on the hi-hat and ride cymbal) will play 8th notes with accents on the downbeats, using a Moeller "whip and flop" motion, while the opposite hand will play the fourteen basic rhythms using free strokes initiated from the wrist. This may seem simple at first, but flowing and staying completely relaxed with each hand using a different technique is easier said than done. The key is to coordinate the hands so that each is seemingly unaware of what the other is doing—yet the two are playing together perfectly. Mastering these fourteen two-hand combinations will leave you with a better groove, stronger time, and an increased vocabulary.

The Lead Hand

First let's look at the lead hand. Rather than playing straight 8th notes at a perfectly uniform volume level, put an accent on the downbeats in order to groove harder. To make this accent/tap pattern flow as naturally as possible, apply the Moeller whip-and-flop technique in place of the usual wrist-oriented downstroke/upstroke combination. The accents will be whipped from the forearm while the wrist stays relaxed, allowing the hand and stick to flow loosely. The taps will be played as Moeller upstrokes, where the stick happens to tap the drum or cymbal as the forearm lifts and the hand drops. In order to maximize the flow, do not stop the stick after the accent, but instead let the accent stroke flop somewhat so that its energy flows into the following tap. You should feel as if you're playing quarter notes with your forearm while your hand flops and a little rebound stroke drops in on the upbeats.

The Fill-In Hand

Now let's look at the fill-in hand (the one that often plays the snare drum on the drumset). This hand will play the fourteen rhythms provided, using the free-stroke tech-

nique. The free stroke is the easiest and best-sounding way to play consecutive notes at a uniform volume level (notes with no accent/tap variation). Free strokes are relaxed "dribbles" of the stick played with the wrist and fingers. The key is to play a relaxed stroke with good velocity and then let the stick rebound back up to where it started. If you find yourself needing to pick up the stick in order to return to the up position, that means either that tension in your hand is preventing the stick from rebounding freely or the last stroke in the series isn't being played into the drum with enough velocity that it can rebound back up on its own.

So, what are these fourteen patterns? They're all of the combinations of 8th and 16th notes possible within a quarter note. They're common patterns, so they'll likely sound familiar. But the trick is to coordinate these patterns with the opposite hand's flowing ostinato. If the lead hand's Moeller whip-and-flop motion is at all affected by the fill-in hand's part, then the comfortable flow, timing, and groove will be lost. If the fill-in hand's rhythms are inaccurate, if they flam with the lead hand, or if they're played tightly, then, once again, musical feel will be sacrificed. You want to be able to execute all of these patterns while watching each hand play its part comfortably and perfectly along with the opposite hand.

Be sure to practice the following two-hand coordination patterns with a metronome or play them along with your favorite tunes, and do not go any faster than you can play comfortably. Play each pattern for at least five minutes, making sure that there are no flams between the hands before speeding up to the next tempo. For part of the practice session, I recommend splitting up the hands on different playing surfaces so that you can analyze and perfect each hand's motion. When it comes time to play the patterns on the drumkit, try placing the lead hand on the ride cymbal, with the accents played on the bell and the taps on the bow. This application will make it easy to determine whether or not the coordination is working. Finally, make sure you also switch the hands so that the opposite hand is leading. Whether you think it's practical or not, learning to lead with either hand will make you a better player when you go back to leading with your usual hand. Good luck!

1

RH: 4/4

LH:

Exercise 1, Right Hand (RH) notation in 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notation features a series of eighth-note patterns with accents (>) and repeat signs. The subsequent staves continue these patterns, with some using a common time signature (C) and others returning to 4/4. The patterns involve various rhythmic groupings and rests.

Exercise 1, Left Hand (LH) notation in 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notation features a series of eighth-note patterns with accents (>) and repeat signs. The subsequent staves continue these patterns, with some using a common time signature (C) and others returning to 4/4. The patterns involve various rhythmic groupings and rests.

For an additional challenge, try moving the accent in the lead hand to the upbeats.

2

RH: 4/4

LH:

Exercise 2, Right Hand (RH) notation in 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notation features a series of eighth-note patterns with accents (>) and repeat signs. The subsequent staves continue these patterns, with some using a common time signature (C) and others returning to 4/4. The patterns involve various rhythmic groupings and rests.

Exercise 2, Left Hand (LH) notation in 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notation features a series of eighth-note patterns with accents (>) and repeat signs. The subsequent staves continue these patterns, with some using a common time signature (C) and others returning to 4/4. The patterns involve various rhythmic groupings and rests.



Bill Bachman is an international drum clinician and a freelance drumset player in Nashville. For more information, including how to sign up for online lessons through Skype, visit billbachman.net.





Brush Workshop

Part 1: Circular Motions

by Florian Alexandru-Zorn

I've been working for a long time on the art of playing with brushes. This came about mainly because I was in ensembles where I needed to play very quietly. What I discovered was that there were often situations when I wanted to try a new groove with brushes, but I had to think about which motions to use. That, of course, is not a form of musical freedom.

Not only can brushes be used to play softly, but they also open up a new range of tones and sounds. To get a better handle on these possibilities, I transcribed tons of tunes, analyzing the styles of brush masters like Philly Joe Jones, Elvin Jones, and Ed Thigpen, as well as modern artists like Jojo Mayer, Clayton Cameron, and Jeff Hamilton.

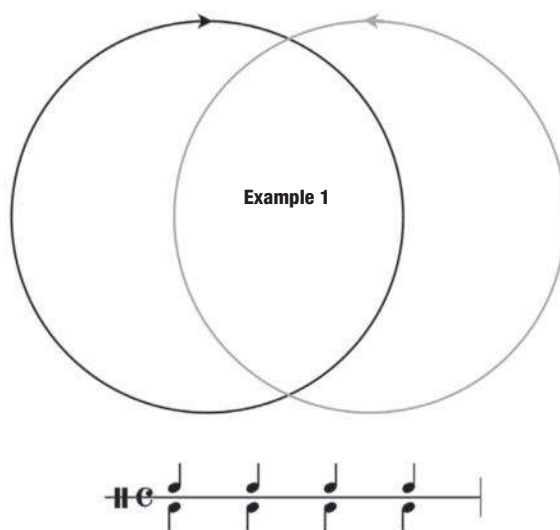
As I studied the masters, my collection of brush patterns began to grow, but Michael Kuttner, my professor at the University of Mannheim in Germany, urged me to develop a concept where I could play everything I did with sticks equally well with brushes.

From this point on, I had a new goal: I wanted to play with brushes and think not in terms of patterns but in a more musical way, transferring all the note values, rudiments, and stickings I already knew with drumsticks over to my brush playing. In this series of articles, we will explore some of these concepts in an effort to inspire you to begin assembling your own ideas for brush playing.

It's important to get a feel for the brush itself. Since brushes have flexible wires, some stick techniques, including rebound strokes, can't be applied perfectly to brush playing. With sticks, you normally use a vertical movement. With brushes, horizontal movement can also be implemented. You can play with brushes in matched or traditional grip, as each has its own unique advantages.

Basic Patterns

Example 1 is a common quarter-note brush figure that can be used in jazz, Latin music, or even hip-hop. The diagram describes a circular motion in both hands. The right-hand motion is notated in gray, and the left hand is in black.

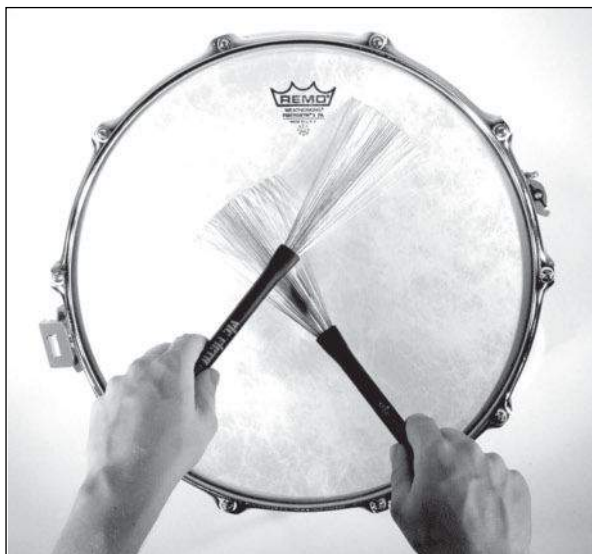


If the circular movements are executed on the snare, the hands overlap at the twelve o'clock and six o'clock meeting points of the two circles. To avoid this overlap, one hand has to lead slightly ahead of the other.

Here's the starting position if the right hand leads.



Here's the starting position if the left hand leads.



Adding Accents

There are several possibilities for creating accents during the sweeping motion. First off, you can press the brushes into the drumhead. The ring and pinkie fingers pull the handle of the brush into the palm, which creates a larger contact area for the fan. This results in a thick, lush sound.

Pressure



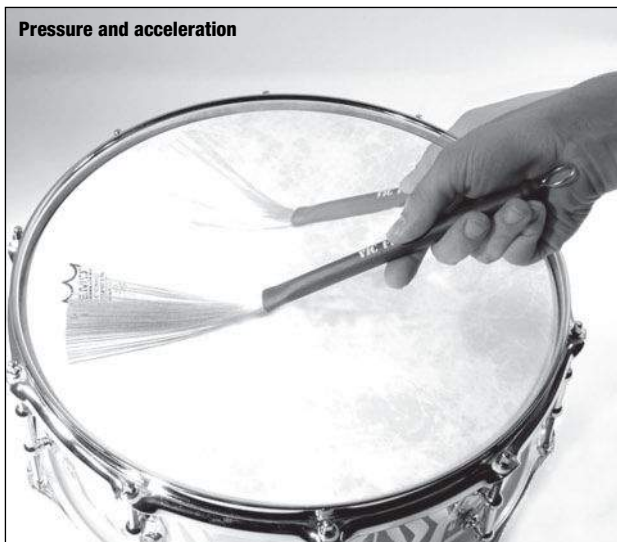
You can also accelerate the brushes to create an accent. The sweep speeds up 2" to 5" prior to the intended point of emphasis. The resulting sound is very precise.

Acceleration



The combination of pressure and acceleration produces the sharpest and loudest accent and has a more staccato (shorter) sound.

Pressure and acceleration

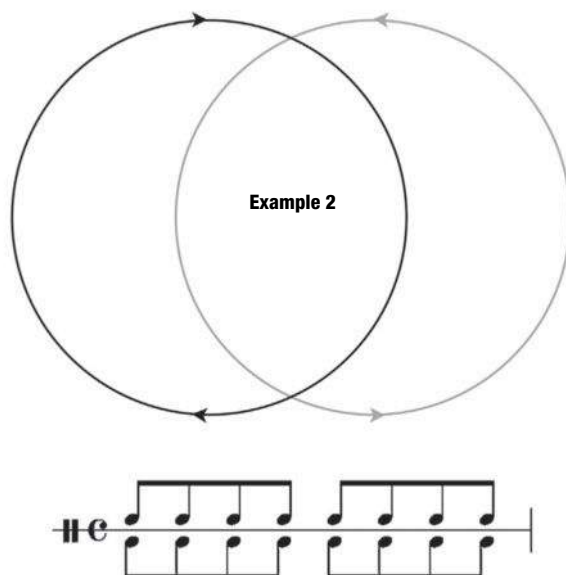


Quarter-Note Accents

To play quarter-note accents, implement one of the three techniques at the twelve o'clock or six o'clock position (not both). You can also combine the different accent types to create unique-sounding grooves. For example, you could play the accents on beats 1 and 3 using acceleration, while beats 2 and 4 could be accented using pressure and acceleration. Once you have that down, add some of your own hi-hat and bass drum figures. Using just the simple quarter-note circular sweep, the three accent motions, and various foot patterns, you can come up with an endless variety of pop/hip-hop grooves.

8th-Note Accents

The next step is to play 8th-note accents within the same quarter-note circular motion. To do that, play pressure accents at the twelve o'clock and six o'clock positions.



You should practice the 8th-note accent pattern with straight and shuffle feels to get the most out of it. Once you're able to play a steady stream of 8th-note pressure accents, try playing 8th notes using acceleration accents. If you have any reading texts nearby, like Ted Reed's *Syncopation* or Gary Chester's *The New Breed*, try reading some of the exercises by interpreting the rhythms with pressure and acceleration accents.

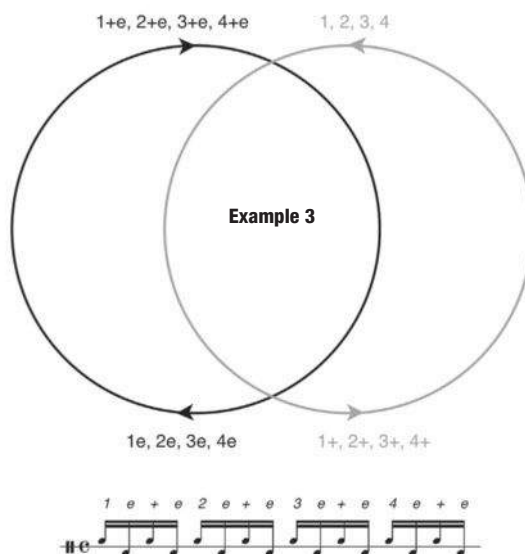
Eighth-note accent patterns work great for bossa nova, pop, and many other grooves.

16th Notes

To play 16th-note patterns, stagger the hands in the previous 8th-note example so that they're no longer playing in unison but instead one hand starts its circle a 16th note after the other (Example 3). This alternating 16th-note motion is perfect for creating grooves in every kind of samba/Latin and funk feel, and it can also be used in certain jazz/swing situations.

A video containing a demonstration of each of the exercises in this article is included in the *Modern Drummer* Digital Edition, and it's viewable on the Education page at moderndrummer.com.

See you next time!



Florian Alexandru-Zorn is an international drum clinician and freelance drumset player in Germany. He is the author of the acclaimed book *The Complete Guide to Playing Brushes* (Alfred Publishing). For more information, including how to sign up for online Skype lessons, log on to brushplaying.com.



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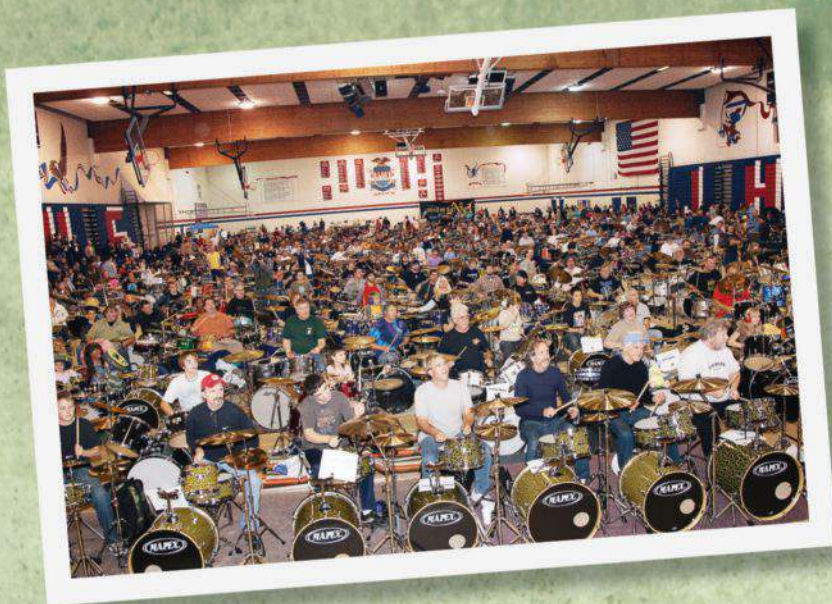


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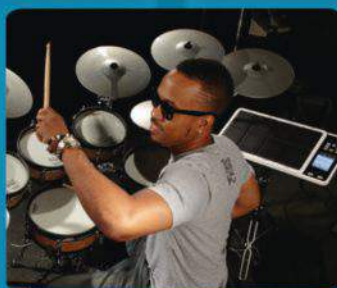
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Gene Krupa's Original Radio King Kit

Up Close With the Smithsonian's Recent Acquisition

Story by Harry Cangany
Photos by Hugh Talman

Nestled in a climate-controlled room at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., sits a seventy-five-year-old set of Slingerland Radio King drums that could very well be the original kit that launched the careers and hobbies of thousands of drummers. If the museum's claims prove to be correct, this is the kit that big band legend Gene Krupa played while he was with the groundbreaking Benny Goodman Orchestra.

BACKGROUND

These drums were used by Krupa in 1937 and early 1938. The bass drum may go back to 1936. Krupa, who was called "America's Ace Drummer Man," was easily the most visible and acclaimed drummer

of the time. His popularity helped create the modern drumset, and, in turn, he helped Slingerland sell thousands of kits, for which he was paid a royalty.

Krupa pushed the Benny Goodman Orchestra, as well as the clarinetist/leader's smaller ensembles, with unrelenting chops and personality. Goodman sold a lot of records, appeared on the radio, and toured the country when big band music ruled the scene. To get an idea of the appeal of this band and Krupa's drumming, check out the 1937 movie *Hollywood Hotel*, or search for a YouTube clip of the Goodman group playing "Sing, Sing, Sing." That tune showcased Krupa's keen showmanship and masterful use of a 16x16 floor tom. His tom-tom effects were revolutionary and captivating. The

dancers stopped to watch, and the nation stopped to listen.

In early 1938, Krupa was asked to leave Goodman's band. Everybody felt that Goodman was jealous of the drummer's popularity with fans. For a replacement, Goodman brought in Davey Tough. Tough was Krupa's polar opposite. He disdained publicity and shunned the spotlight, content to sit in the back and keep a solid beat on his own set of Radio Kings.

KRUPA'S KIT GOES PUBLIC

After being released from Goodman's employment, Krupa went on to the next challenge: fronting his own orchestra. That project called for a new Slingerland drumset, so the Goodman-era drums went into retirement, eventually landing





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Diego, California, on February 29, 2011, a Chad Smith-autographed SABIAN 21" Holy China cymbal, and a one-year subscription to Modern Drummer magazine. The prize includes round-trip airfare, two night hotel accommodations, meals and transportation. Approximate retail value of prize: \$3,317. **Second Prize:** One (1) winner will receive a Chad Smith-autographed SABIAN 19" Holy China cymbal, a (1) one-year subscription to Modern Drummer magazine. Approximate retail value of prize: \$478. Approximate retail value of contest: \$3,795.00. 11. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 12. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/SABIAN/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

in the possession of Donald Hay of Maryland, who held on to them for decades. After Hay passed away in 2009, his family decided to donate the drums to the Smithsonian.

Imagine the challenge for the museum to try to vet the authenticity of these Radio Kings. The set includes a 14x26 tube-lug bass drum, two 9x13 toms, a 16x16 floor tom, a 6½x14 Radio King snare, an Epic hi-hat (not the model in the “Sing, Sing, Sing” clip), an Epic bass drum pedal, two Gene Krupa-model floor cymbal stands, a hoop-mount ratchet tom holder, two cymbal-holder hoop clamps with fixed cymbal rims, and a Marvel snare stand. The cymbal

arms, snare stand, and cymbal stands were painted silver, which hides flaws and tarnishing. Were these really Krupa’s drums or just one of the thousands of copies that were made in the wake of Gene’s popularity? The kit in question is finished in Krupa’s signature white marine pearl, but so were many other Slingerland drums from that era.

FORENSIC ANALYSIS

The front bass drum head of this kit has the Krupa shield and larger “BG” letters (for Benny Goodman). Slingerland-brand calf-skin heads are on every drum.

The tube-lug 14x26 bass drum is from

an earlier date than the other drums in the kit. Krupa was pictured in 1936 with an all-tube-lug set, except for the snare. No one knows where the other drums ended up, but this is very likely that 1936 bass drum.

The bass drum hoops, with Giant Spurs, show a lot of wear and tear. Back in the ‘30s, Slingerland put toms on hoop-mounted ratchet clamps. The T- rods are the oldest version Slingerland made, with ball ends and the letter S stamped in the middle of each T.

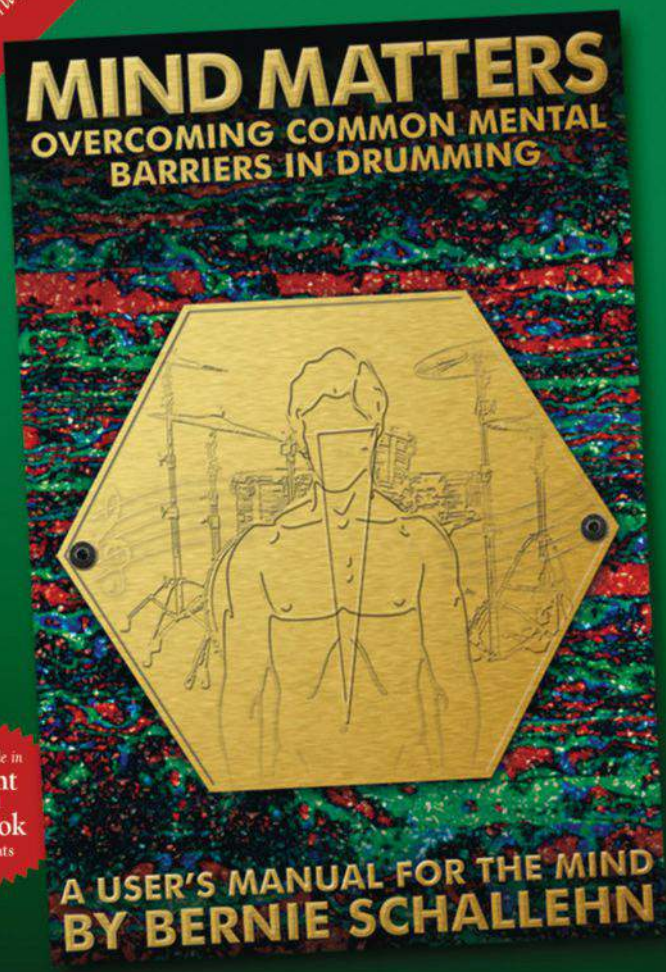
The first 9x13 rack tom has Streamline lugs. The 16x16 floor tom has Streamline lugs and a Shur-Grip cradle. (Floor tom legs and brackets hadn’t been invented yet.) The interesting thing about the floor tom is that all of the Streamline lugs are snare lugs, showing lug nuts on the top. Mark Cooper, of Cooper’s Vintage Drums, reports that he’s seen this before and believes that the earliest Radio King toms used the first separate-tension lugs Slingerland had—center-mounted snare lugs—until the company made lugs with no top holes.

The 6½x14 Radio King snare is almost entirely intact. The original three-point

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Single-Tension Second Tom



The second 9x13 drum in this kit (right) was most likely from the set Krupa used with Benny Goodman's smaller groups. It has center-mounted lugs and T-handles. It's mounted using a China tom holder, which consists of a long arm that goes into a circular bracket on the drum. You can see that type of mount on the two toms pictured with Krupa in a still from *Hollywood Hotel*.

strainer was replaced at some point with a newer chrome-plated Rapid strainer, and there are extra holes in the shell.

THE OFFICIAL STORY

The backstory for the donation of this Krupa kit is that the drums were left at a Baltimore music store, Fred Walker Instrument Company, sometime after Krupa and Goodman split in early 1938. Krupa picked up a new set there, presumably shipped by Slingerland. Normally, endorser drums were returned to the factory for refurbishment, sale, or destruction, but in this case the store

was allowed to keep them.

The shop sold the drums to Donald Hay with a proviso: He had to agree not to "make money" using them. According to published reports, Hay's children say their dad played a different kit on gigs and kept Krupa's drums at home in the basement—near the radio.

Many yellowed Radio King drums have passed through my hands over the years, but when I saw this bass drum, with its long tube lugs, and then checked YouTube and also reviewed a still photo featured in my book *The Great American Drums*, I was fairly sure this was the real thing. I spoke with my friend Michael Berkowitz, who heads the Gene Krupa Orchestra, and he agreed: "That's Gene's bass drum; that's the real logo head."

Speculation about this set on the Internet is already at a fever pitch. A story I read on a blog suggests the bass drum was Krupa's but the other items weren't. The blogger claims that Hay was at the music store when Krupa brought in his bass drum to swap it for a new one, and that Krupa didn't get a new set from Slingerland until much later. If that story were true, it would mean that Slingerland sent its number-one endorser only a bass drum and Krupa kept his toms and snare. White marine pearl yellows over time, and light speeds up the process, so a new bass drum would be whiter than the other drums on the kit. Would the company want that to be how its drums appeared in Krupa's new orchestra? It's possible, but owner H.H. Slingerland was an astute businessman, so you can expect that he wanted his top artist to be seen at a good-looking set of Radio Kings. Of course, no one is around to help clear up the mystery. Subsequent Krupa singles and sets had either special cloud badges or rectangular brass plates with the drummer's name engraved in them.

IN GOOD HANDS

The Krupa kit is currently stored in cases in a special room at the Smithsonian, alongside Buddy Rich's restored Radio King drums and Zildjian cymbals, Ray Charles' electric piano, Eddie Van Halen's guitar, and treasures from other famous players, including the last drumset from the late Ray McKinley. Someday Krupa's drums will be placed on public display.

Many thanks to our hosts at the National Museum of American History—John Hasse, curator of American music, and Ken Kimery, executive producer of the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra—for allowing us to take a look at these very special instruments.



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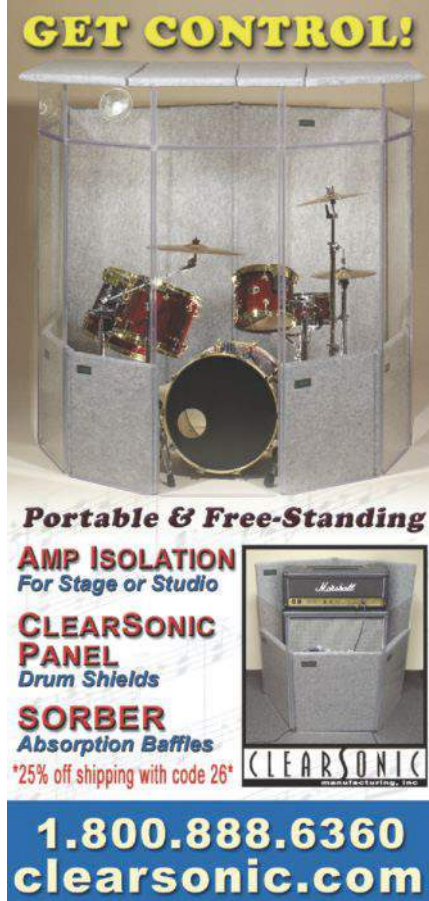
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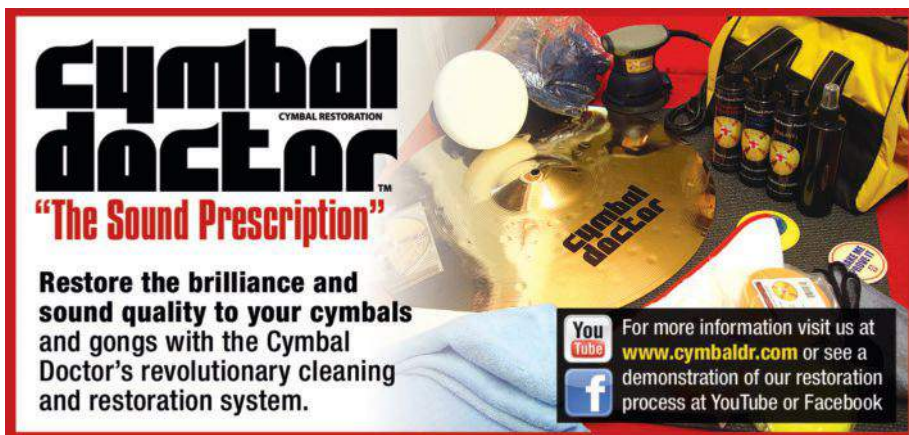
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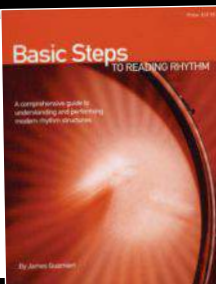
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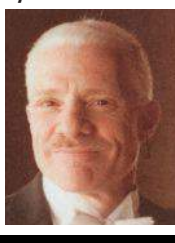
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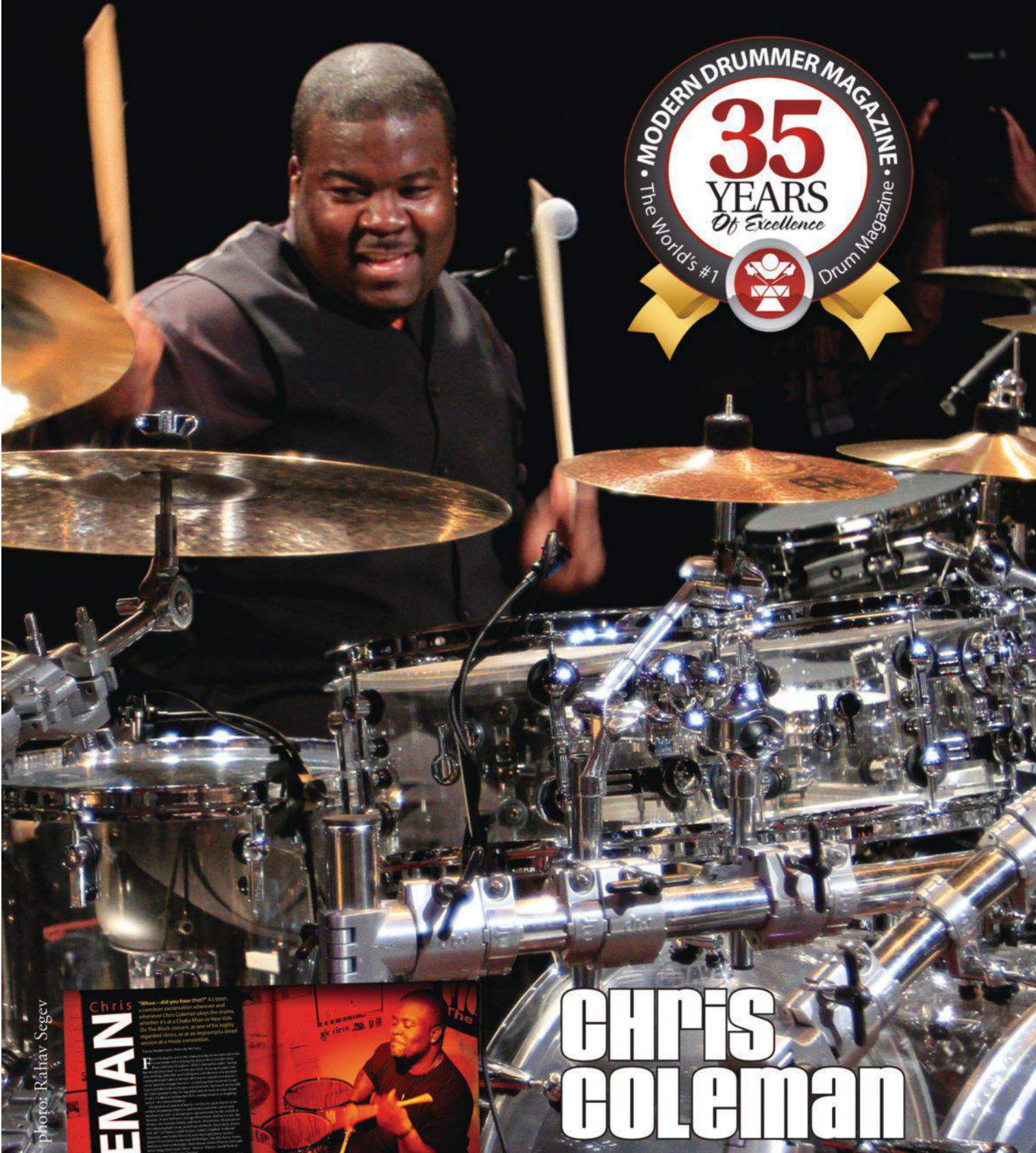
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"I can remember sitting on the floor all night with a new issue of Modern Drummer, reading about my favorite drummers—and ones I didn't know of—as well as new gear. It was, and still is, SO inspirational. Thanks, MD!"

—Chris Coleman (NKOTB, Chaka Khan)

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GREG ERRICO

The golden groove behind funk innovator **Sly Stone** is an important link in the evolution of several strains of American popular music.

by Mike Haid



While the Godfather of Soul, James Brown, pulled his groundbreaking rhythmic concepts from a large and constantly shifting stable of funky, jazz-influenced drummers, funk-rock innovator Sly Stone made the majority of his hugely important musical advances with the help of one powerhouse groove machine, Greg Errico. Errico's driving beats propelled Sly & the Family Stone to the very top of the pop charts in the late '60s and early '70s. Cuts like "Everyday People," "Hot Fun in the Summertime," and "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)" hypnotize each new generation of funk fans.

Errico's parts on "Sing a Simple Song" and "You Can Make It If You Try" are among the most sampled drum tracks in pop music.

The San Francisco-based Family Stone, which grabbed headlines as the first multiracial, mixed-gender pop band, utilized several lead singers in its distinctive approach to funk, R&B, rock, blues, jazz, and soul grooves—a bold new sound for American pop radio. Sly Stone was instrumental in breaking down racial barriers in the late '60s with his positive messages of acceptance, self-expression, and self-awareness. And Sly's band, featuring the unshakable rhythm section of

Errico and bassist Larry Graham, was a vital ingredient in the singer's hugely influential live act. Indeed, the group's high-energy performance at Woodstock in 1969 was among the historic festival's most galvanizing.

In 1966, a young Errico was playing with his first full-time band, Freddie & the Stone Souls, featuring guitarist Freddie Stone (born Frederick Stewart). In December of that year, Freddie announced at band rehearsal that the group was going to try something new with his brother, Sly (born Sylvester Stewart), who was a popular radio personality in the Bay Area at the time. Renamed Sly & the Family Stone, the group quickly scored a series of hit singles and albums and kicked open the doors to a whole new world of musical possibilities.

Errico, a self-taught drummer, credits his father's eclectic record collection for sculpting his own open-minded musical approach. "I would listen to everything from big band jazz to soul and Latin music," Greg says. "There were no real rock drummers to listen to because this was pre-Beatles, so I



would practice to jazz records by Buddy Rich and Dave Brubeck and soul records by Ray Charles, James Brown, Wilson Pickett, and Otis Redding.”

Errico particularly admired Buddy Rich, whose ability to play with passion, chops, and attitude wasn’t hampered by his inability to read music. “I had friends who were great drummers,” Errico recalls, “very studious and hitting the books, and it really pissed them off that they were practicing the rudiments while I was getting all the gigs.” The drummer is adamant that delving deeply into studying technique would have held him back from “the free-thinking, innocent approach that I was feeling.”

Errico adds that “Sly was a drummer at heart, and he had a wonderful concept of time and rhythm. He encouraged me to play free, open, and aggressive.” So aggressive, in fact, that Errico nailed the hardware of his Ludwig/Zildjian setup to the floor to keep it from sliding away from him during performances.

A natural lefty, Errico found early on that he was uncomfortable setting up “backwards” and permanently switched to a traditional right-handed setup. Though his animated drumming style—which included switching back and forth between matched and traditional grip—featured exaggerated movements, Errico notes that the entire Stone band possessed refined recording abilities. “Sly had great producing chops,” Greg says, “and the songs would morph and grow in the studio.

“We would first cut the rhythm tracks, then the horns and vocals. After all the tracks were recorded, they would erase the original drum tracks and I would play along to the rest of the band, which added a whole new vibe to the song. There were no click tracks then, and the feel and the arrangement would often change as horn parts and vocals were added. So by the time a song was finished, it was totally different from when we originally cut the rhythm tracks with drums, bass, guitar, and Hammond B3.”

Errico left Sly & the Family Stone in 1971. Sly’s behavior had become increasingly erratic due to substance abuse, and for the drummer it simply “stopped being fun.” Errico bought a Harley, put away the drums, and took

Funky Kit

During his years with Sly & the Family Stone, Errico played Zildjian cymbals and a Ludwig set featuring a 22” bass drum, a 13” rack tom, a 16” floor tom, and a 5½x14 metal-shell snare fitted with Remo Weatherking heads. He liked his snare tuned tightly and his bass drum loose and fat, with no internal muffling. His toms were tuned wide open. Greg’s bass drum pedal was the popular Ludwig Speed King.

time to clear his head. He resurfaced in 1973 to tour with the famed fusion group Weather Report, whose leader, Joe Zawinul, once said, “Errico played [our tune] ‘Boogie Woogie Waltz’ better than anybody.” Greg subsequently toured with David Bowie, Peter Dinklage, the Jerry Garcia Band, and Santana and participated in the historic final concert at Bill Graham’s Winterland, featuring the Grateful Dead.

Today, Errico—who’s still an active player and produces recordings for the Bay Area record company Unity Music—can rightfully consider himself among the founding fathers of American funk drumming.



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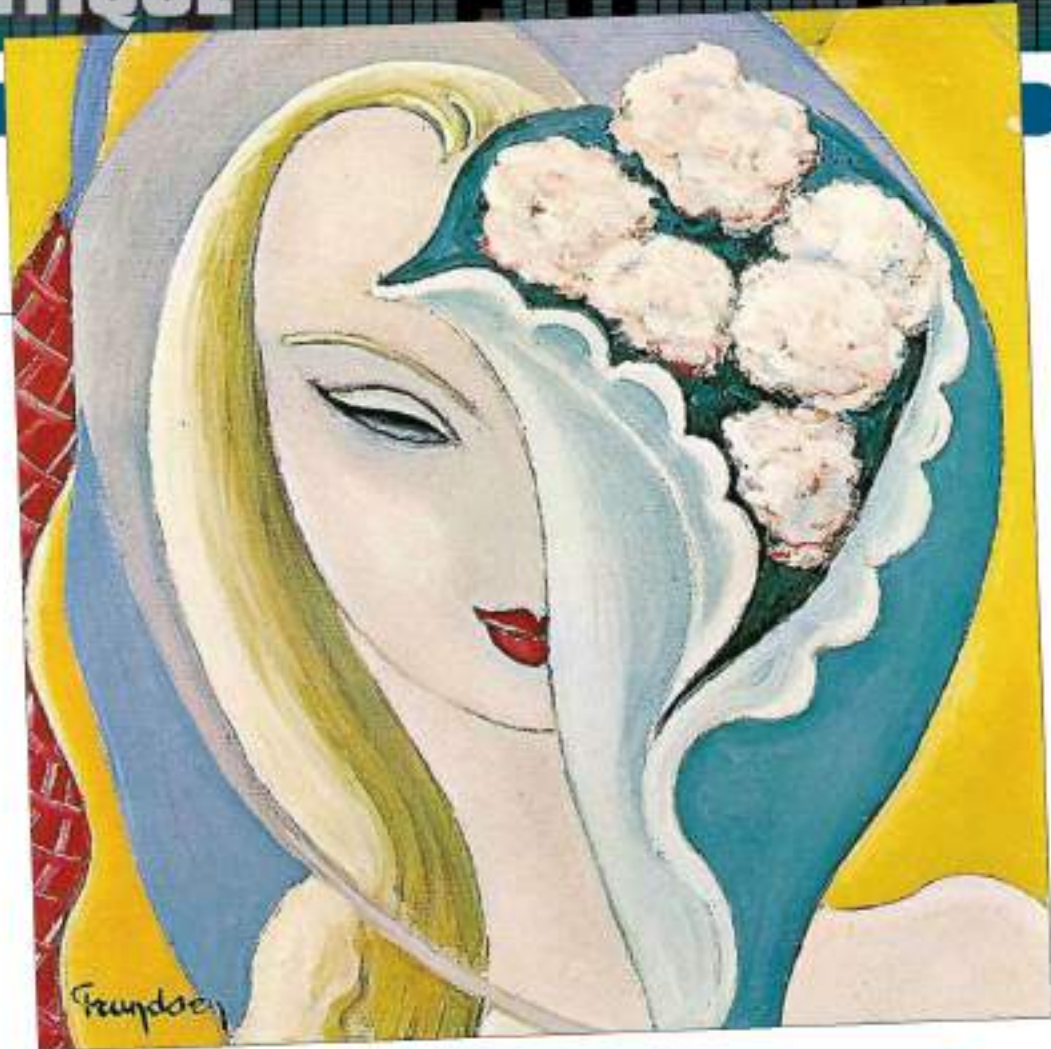
LAYLA AND OTHER ASSORTED LOVE SONGS

A new reissue of Eric Clapton's tortured 1970 classic offers **unearthed performances by studio legend Jim Gordon**—whose own demons pushed him into insanity. MD's Ken Micallef speaks with Dominos organist/vocalist Bobby Whitlock about Gordon's memorable drumming.

Jim Gordon drives this 1970 masterpiece *hard*, whether he's reversing the beat on "Bell Bottom Blues," creating signature tom fills on "Keep On Growing," or simply kicking his tremendous forward-motion groove. (Perhaps not so surprisingly, Gordon is also one of the most sampled drummers in hip-hop.) The Deluxe Edition of the reissued *Layla* includes a second CD of music from the Dominos' doomed second album, plus live cuts and material performed on *The Johnny Cash Show*. A Super Deluxe Edition features a vinyl version of the original album, a 5.1 surround sound audio DVD, outtakes, and a number of collectible items.



Eric Kellner



BOBBY WHITLOCK ON LAYLA

How many takes did Gordon require?

Everything Jim did was the first or second take. He knew what he wanted to play. And when he played fills, each tom was tuned to a note on the piano. When he got the big kit for our second album, he had a total of twelve drums, all tuned to the piano. It was like he was playing a giant musical kit.

Can you describe Gordon's groove?

Jim had everything going at once. Even when he didn't have percussion going, you'd get the feel of everything from his groove. He knew where to place the nuances of sound, and that would give the music a lift. Jim was prepared for anything. I never questioned Jim Gordon.

What went wrong?

Jim was so self-consumed at the end that he didn't realize what was happening around him. It got pretty strange. But it wasn't Jim's fault. The drugs and alcohol exacerbated a situation with Jim that no one was aware of. Jim just wasn't cut out to do all the drugs that he did.

Check out Whitlock's new book, *A Rock 'n' Roll Autobiography*.

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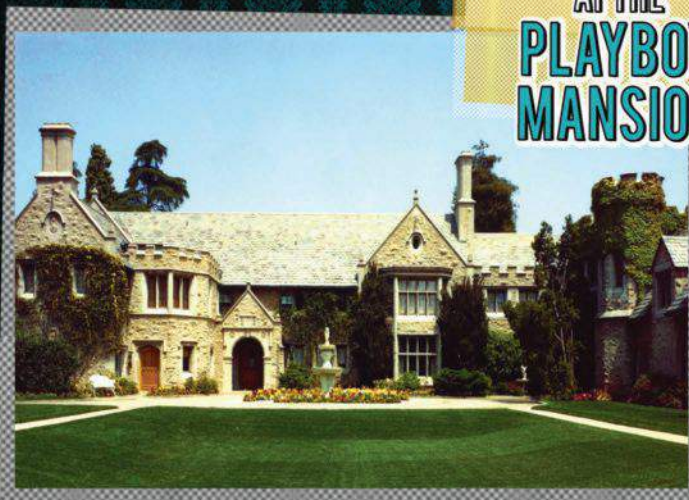
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THE NEW FRONTIER FOR DRUMSET BY MARKO DJORDJEVIC

BOOK LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED
\$12.99

Serbian drummer/clinician Marko Djordjevic delivers a fascinating guide to understanding and applying subdivisions within drumset improvisation. His method involves several intricate steps, each connected to certain parts of the kit (kick, snare, hats) and different subdivisions (from 8th notes through septuplets and beyond). Once readers have internalized the patterns, they are encouraged to move on to the more advanced material by distributing their hand strokes across the entire drumset. Along the way, Djordjevic touches on linear playing, odd times, and phrasing over the barline. Certainly not for the beginner, *The New Frontier* addresses the often sought-after need to expand our rhythmic vocabulary in challenging but tangible ways. Taking what's here and building on it should be a satisfying first step. (Alfred) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



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REALISTIC DRUM FILLS: REPLACEMENTS BY CARMINE APPICE

BOOK/CD LEVEL: ALL \$15.99

Rock legend Carmine Appice continues his award-winning *Realistic* instructional series with this seventy-five-page guide to creating more interesting drum fills by developing hand/foot combinations. Famous for this technique, Appice starts with basic 8th-note sticking patterns and then replaces certain strokes with bass drum notes. The process can help add interesting colors and energy to bland fill ideas. The book progresses into triplet and 16th-note patterns that grow more complex and include accents within the patterns. Hudson Music senior drum editor Joe Bergamini is Appice's "replacement" on the accompanying CD, providing various audio examples of the written exercises. (Hudson Music/Hal Leonard)

Mike Haid



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DRUM DISCIPLINE PARTS 1 & 2 WITH DAVE "BEDROCK" BEDROSIAN

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$11.99

There's nothing flashy about *Drum Discipline*. Most of it is simply Dave Bedrosian and a snare drum. But if you really want to get your chops together, this DVD could be a great help. Bedrosian is in no hurry; he gives the rudiments that he discusses their due, explaining, demonstrating, and really laying into each. He begins with variations of singles and doubles, gets into some fun with flams and diddles, whales on a double drag tap, and inverts rudiments for rare groupings like the flammed mill. (Centerstream) **Robin Tolleson**



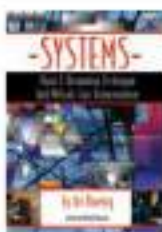
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THE SNARE DRUMMER'S TOOLBOX BY CHRIS CROCKARELL & CHRIS BROOKS

BOOK/DVD LEVEL: BEGINNER \$15

You play drumset...but how are your snare drum basics? This educational and entertaining eighty-page method book covers it all in ten comprehensive lessons, from explanations of how to hold the sticks and read music to hundreds of exercises, twenty solos, and eleven duets. Crock and Brooks know their stuff and share it via clever "Eye-Q" reviews and play-along tracks recorded by a real rhythm section. But the best way to use this book is to teach with it. Beginners will relate to the variety of material and the easy-to-

follow presentation. The DVD includes performances (dig the hats!), a "Stick Clix" metronome, "Groove Trax" (great to practice different styles), and a section covering accessory percussion featuring Dr. Julie Hill. Check out free samples at snaredrummerstoolbox.com. (Row-Loff) **Andrea Byrd**



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SYSTEMS, BOOK 1: DRUMMING TECHNIQUE AND MELODIC JAZZ INDEPENDENCE BY ARI HOENIG

BOOK LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED \$15.99

NYC drummer Ari Hoenig's new book focuses on coordination systems and different melodic variations to expand your independence and overall musicality. The material isn't a breeze—even the flam warm-ups require facility and concentration—and Hoenig pays special consideration to the placement and emphasis of the second note of the triplet. The melody lines can be played on different parts of the kit, which means you can practice the exercises with endless variations. By the time you arrive at "Play the melody on the snare, while alternating quarter-note triplets between the bass drum and hi-hat," you'll know your work is cut out for you. Much-needed example MP3s are downloadable at arihoenig.com. (Alfred) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



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JAZZ DRUMMING DEMYSTIFIED: FROM MECHANICS TO TOTAL MUSICALITY, A COMPLETE GUIDE WITH RALPH PETERSON

DVD LEVEL: ALL \$39.95

"Demystifying" jazz seems like a tall order. But Ralph Peterson largely succeeds here because his playing is clear and concise and because he makes esoteric subjects like "Concept vs. Instinct" and "The Art of Listening" tangible for players of all levels. Several excellent camera angles (including one directly overhead) shed light on Peterson's cymbal work, and the live quartet performances reveal that the drummer is never short on melodic ideas. Equally impressive is his take on orchestrating parts, and as swinger and teacher Peterson understandably encourages all drummers to learn jazz heads. Popped in your computer, the DVD contains drum-less play-along tracks and PDF transcriptions. (jazzheaven.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



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ON THE BEATEN PATH: BEGINNING DRUMSET COURSE, LEVEL 2 AND LEVEL 3 BY RICH LACKOWSKI

BOOKS LEVEL: BEGINNER \$14.99

This series makes it fun to learn to play, using pieces of inspirational drumming performances to build a rhythmic foundation. It's all based on styles—licks are put into context right away, and students are expected to pick up and implement concepts quickly. *Level 2* expands on the basic rock grooves of the first book in the series by examining classic work by jazz greats Blakey, Cobb, Rich, and Roach, funkster Steve Jordan, and rockers Chris Layton and Mitch Mitchell. *Level 3* involves more syncopation, focusing on funk masters Harvey Mason, Zigaboo Modeliste, and Jabbo Starks, rockers Neil Peart and Lars Ulrich, and jam master Jon Fishman, as well as Latin beats and an intro to reggae's one-drop groove. Throughout the CD Lackowski nails the beats and hits the dynamics accurately. (Alfred) **Robin Tolleson**

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WHO'S PLAYING WHAT

New artists on the Vic Firth roster include **Carter Beauford** (Dave Matthews Band), **Pete Lockett** (multi-percussionist), **Ash Soan** (U.K. studio), **Russ Miller** (L.A. studio), **Chad Szeliga** (Breaking Benjamin), **Travis Nunn** (Chris Tomlin), **Sean Paddock** (Kenny Chesney), **Kirk Covington** (Cpt. Kirk), **Aaron Comess** (Spin Doctors), **Vito Rezza** (Five After Four), **Al Webster** (Jeff Healey), **Audie Desbrow** (Great White), **Bernie Dresel** (Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band), **Brian Pruitt** (Nashville studio), **Steve Hass** (Manhattan Transfer), **EJ Strickland** (Ravi Coltrane Quartet), **Justin Brown** (Ambrose Akinmusire), **Mark Brzezicki** (Big Country), **Mark Slutsky** (Hugo), **Oli Rubow** (De Phazz), and **Zach Danziger** (independent).

Now playing Zildjian cymbals are **Nathan Followill** (Kings of Leon), **Jason Bittner** (Shadows Fall), **Scott Underwood** (Train), **Rashid Williams** (John Legend), **Jared Champion** (Cage the Elephant), **Alex Shelnutt** (A Day to Remember), **Elaine Bradley** (Neon Trees), **Brad Corrigan** (Dispatch), **Adam Young** (Owl City), **Richie Barshay** (Esperanza Spalding), **Iajhi Hampden** (Macy Gray), **Shawn "Clown" Crahan** (Slipknot), **Neal Smith** (Berklee College of Music), **Thor "Doddi" Thorvaldsson** (Jónsi, Tina Dico), and **Pete Robertson** (the Vaccines).

New Zildjian drumstick artists include **Danny Seraphine** (CTA) and **Ron Stewart** (Johnny A.).

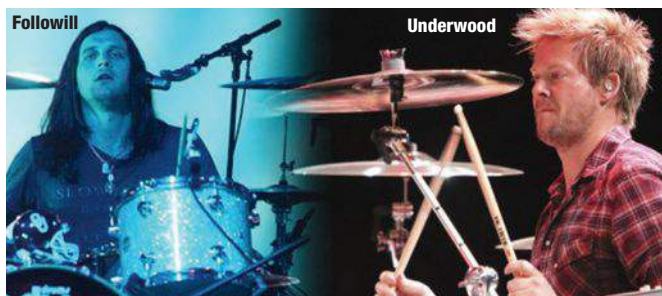
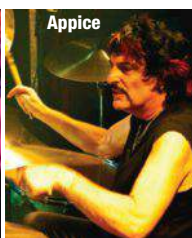
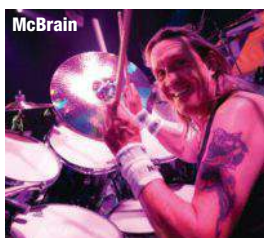
Chris Pennie (Coheed and Cambria) and **Chad Szeliga** (Breaking Benjamin) have joined LP's artist roster.

Drummer/educator **Mike Johnston** is playing Meinl cymbals.

Tommy Lee (Mötley Crüe) has rejoined Pearl's artist roster, using a custom-built e-Pro Live electronic/acoustic kit. **Daniel Kashuck** (Seven Day Sonnet) has also joined the Pearl family.

Now endorsing the KickPort bass drum sound enhancer are **Tino Arteaga** (Of Mice & Men), **Tom Brechtlein** (Kenny Loggins), **Ismael Cancel** (Calle 13), **Rex Hardy** (*American Idol*), **Trevor Lawrence Jr.** (Dr. Dre, Herbie Hancock), **Billy Mason** (Tim McGraw), **Johnny Rabb** (independent), and **Chad Szeliga** (Breaking Benjamin).

Alex Acuña (independent), **Danny Seraphine** (CTA), **Daniel Glass** (Royal Crown Revue),



Alex McKenzie (the Aggrolites), **Thomas Pridgen** (independent), and **Street Drum Corps** are using Ahead Armor drum bags.

Billdidit Inc., creator of the Coady Clutch, has added **Flo Mounier** (Cryptopsy), **Jimmy DeGrasso** (F5), **Roxy Petrucci** (Vixen), **Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez** (independent), and **Scott Pellegrin** (independent) to its artist roster.

Rich Redmond (Jason Aldean, Thompson Square) and percussion great **Orestes Vilato** have joined the Gon Bops family of artists.

Powell Randolph (sessions/educator) is playing Dream cymbals.

John "JR" Robinson is endorsing BumChum.

Premier has announced a licensing deal in association with **Nicko McBrain** and Iron Maiden.

John Blackwell (Prince, Justin Timberlake) is using the Yamaha DTX MULTI-12 and 10" DTX pad along with his Tama acoustic kit. DTX product marketing specialist Tom Griffin worked with Blackwell's drum tech, Mark Bennett, to configure John's rig for Prince's recent tour.

Los Cabos Drumsticks welcomes **Adam Doige** (Freedom of Death), **Andrew "Jonsie" Jones** (Ghost of a Hero), **Travis Thune** (Hemoptysis), **Andy Perfect** (independent), **Michel Bruyere** (Buffy Sainte-Marie), **Kyle Lecourt** (Shotgun Cure), **Cristiano Andreatta** (40 Sons), and **Alex Micklewright** (Era Untold) to its artist roster.

Evans has announced the signings of **Paul Koehler** (Silverstein), **Kim Thompson** (Beyoncé), **Jeremy Hummel** (independent), **Carmin Appice** (Vanilla Fudge, Cactus), and

Vinny Appice (Heaven & Hell, Dio). Vater endorsers now include **Chris Fehn** (Slipknot), **Christian Coma** (Black Veil Brides), **David Lovering** (the Pixies), **Shannon Leto** (Thirty Seconds to Mars), **Jake Massucco** (Four Year Strong), **Nate Onstott** (Mikeschair), **Richie Barshay** (Esperanza Spalding), **Mike Phillips** (Janelle Monáe), **Adam Coldhouse** (Gold Motel), **Andy Reilly** (Celtic Woman tour), **Andrew Oliver** (I See Stars), **Mike Kennedy** (the Wonder Years), **Marc St. Sauveur** (Fang Island), **Jamie Perkins** (the Pretty Reckless), **Jon Epcar** (Carney, *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*), **Jen Lowe** (independent), **Mike Ambrose** (Set Your Goals), **James Ulrich** (Runner Runner), **Evan Stone** (Translucent Ham Sandwich Band), **Jesse Wood** (the Naked and Famous), **Steven Adler** (Adler's Appetite), **Steven Kopacz** (Go Radio), **Rob Perkins** (Michael Bublé), **Grant McFarland** (This or the Apocalypse), **Dennis Wilson** (Every Avenue), **Rob Hammersmith** (Skid Row), and **Mitch Moulton** (Bucky Covington).

New artists on the C&C Custom Drums roster include **TJ Schwarz** (Surfer Blood), **Christopher Bear** (Grizzly Bear), **Joel Calvin** (Oh No Oh My), **Nick Petree** (Beirut), **Jason Jamison** (Tenth Avenue North), and **Jake Goss** (Jars of Clay).

Natal Drums has signed **Brian Tichy** (Whitesnake), **Charlie Morgan** (Elton John, Orleans), **Swiss Chris** (John Legend, Gloria Gaynor), and **Tom Roady** (session percussionist).

Gavin Harrison (Porcupine Tree) is endorsing Tama's Speed Cobra bass drum pedals and Cobra Clutch hi-hat attachment. **Sean Reinert** (Cynic), **Navene Koperweis** (Animals as Leaders), **Yesod Williams** (Pepper), and **Mike Kaabe** (Emmure) are endorsing Tama drums and hardware.



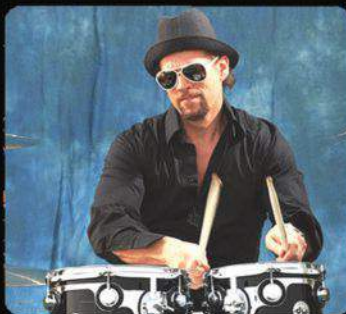
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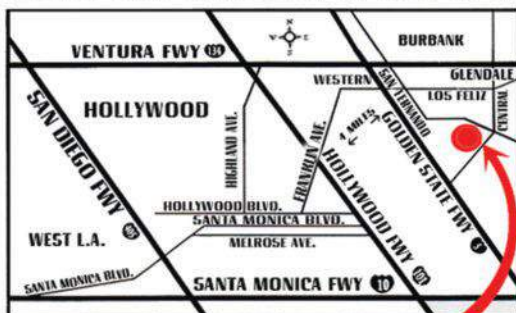
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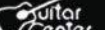
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REGAL TIP





**KIT
OF
THE
MONTH**



TOP HAT & CANE

This month's new yet old-looking kit comes from vintage-drum devotee Johnny Foster of Ohio. The set combines Ludwig's "Top Hat" wrap from the early '40s with Slingerland-style beavertail lugs. (The exception is an additional snare that has tube lugs.) Nods to Rogers include the Swiv-O-Matic tom holder as well as the matching ride cymbal holder, the latter of which is a tribute to Foster's favorite drummer, Buddy Rich.

Dennis Stauffer of the North Carolina-based Stauffer Percussion was ready for the task of realizing a dream kit that incorporates traits from various vintage brands. "The workmanship is unbelievable," Foster says of Stauffer's drums, which have 1-ply steam-bent shells. "Dennis created a classy new round badge to complement the quality in the building of the set. This kit is the first to bear the badge."

Jazz/blues drummer Foster, who's gigged on and off with the tribute band Beatles Forever and won the 1990 Twin Cities Best Drummer Contest, adds, "The 'Top Hat & Cane' set is my one and only kit right now, and I'll be recording and doing shows with it very soon. It's probably the sweetest-looking and sweetest-sounding set I've ever seen, and I've seen tons of drums in my life!"



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



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