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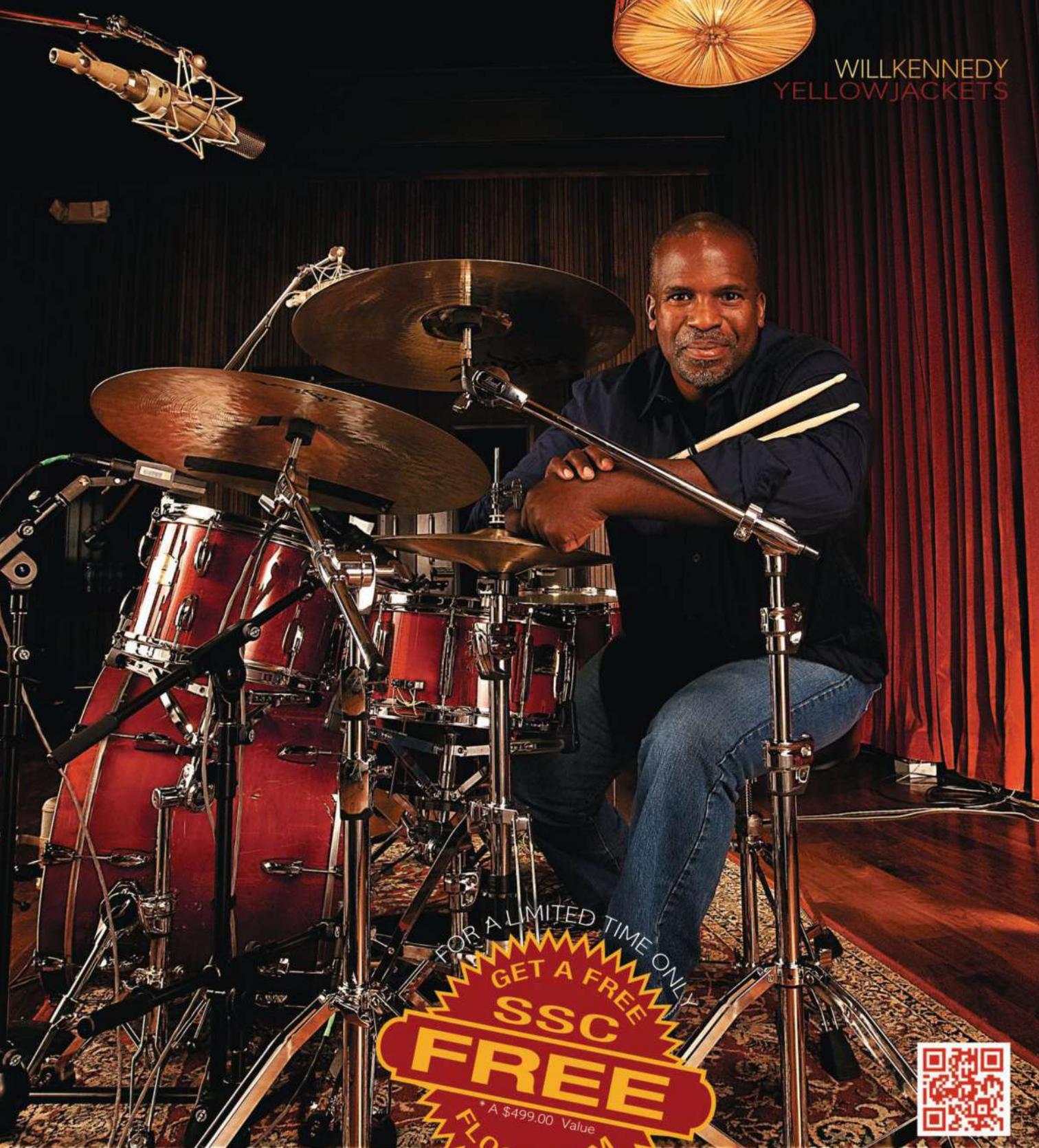
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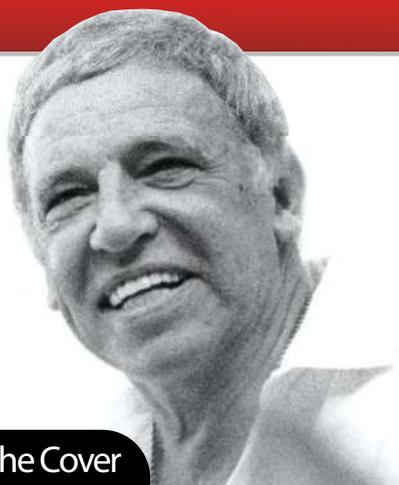
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Buddy

Yeah? Jimi Hendrix is the greatest guitarist who ever lived, and Buddy Rich is the greatest drummer? Cool—got it.

It's funny what sticks with you when you're a kid. I remember overhearing such discussions about the "greatest" around school, always among older, and therefore hipper, students. I didn't yet play music myself, but I loved it, and I was intrigued by kids handing down such pronouncements as if they were facts. Buddy Rich is the greatest drummer. Period.

The interesting thing is that I bought it. Pretty much everyone did. Once I actually saw and heard him play on TV and on albums, it seemed perfectly reasonable to call Buddy the best. (Same with Hendrix.) I didn't know that musical greatness cannot be measured and quantified; I just knew that no other drummer that I could access at the time played with the same fire, guts, and sweat. No other drummer played as fast and furious, and if he or she did, it sure didn't look or *feel* as fast. And no other drummer dared battle Animal.

At the time—circa 1980—Rich still defined what a drummer looked and sounded like, as he had for decades. Drum videos weren't yet commonplace, and it was hard to catch a glimpse of players like John Bonham and Tony Williams. Buddy was more visible, making frequent guest spots on variety shows. In his dancing body and his passionate face, he showed everyone that drumming was the most fun thing in the world. He didn't make you want to quit; he made you want to *start*. It didn't matter that you already had an inkling that you'd never reach his level.

Later, once I began playing, listening to Buddy made me a freak for setups and ensemble figures, something he was so creative with. His short breaks and longer solos were packed with astounding stuff, but I always went nuts over what he played to lead the band back in when he was done, and I flipped over the way he swatted out hits along with the horns. You can hear how his big band approach influenced not just jazz drummers but rock players too. All of us can learn from the way he stayed one step ahead of the band and telegraphed transitions in the music, to the group's and the crowd's delight.

A lot of time has passed since Rich's heyday, and drummers' baseline level of technique has risen, so we can find other players now whose skills would allow them to hang with the master. Still, it's faulty to compare people from different eras—it's like saying Wilt Chamberlain is no LeBron James. Anyway, it's Buddy's total package that makes him endure, not just his way of manhandling a snare drum. It's his intelligence. It's his old-school tough-love vibe. It's his rapier wit, musical and personal. It's his energy. It's his love for drumming, something he seemingly *never* lacked. If his mom, Bess Rich, were here today, I'd ask her if Buddy started working on his single strokes in the womb.

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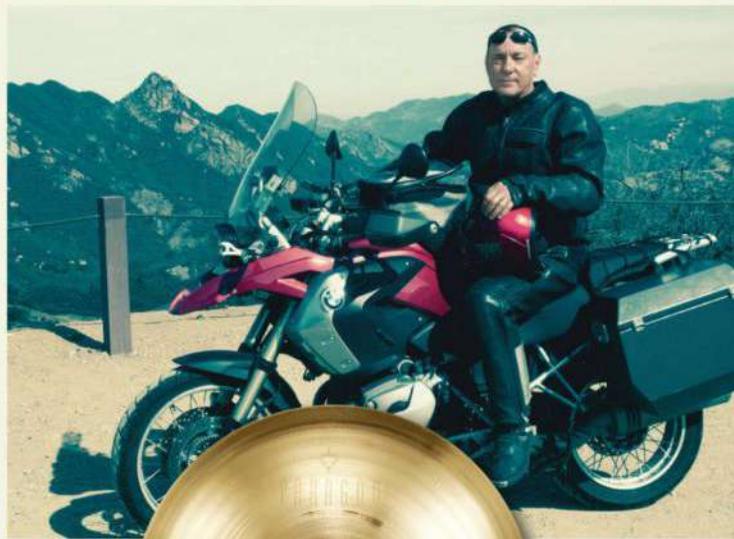
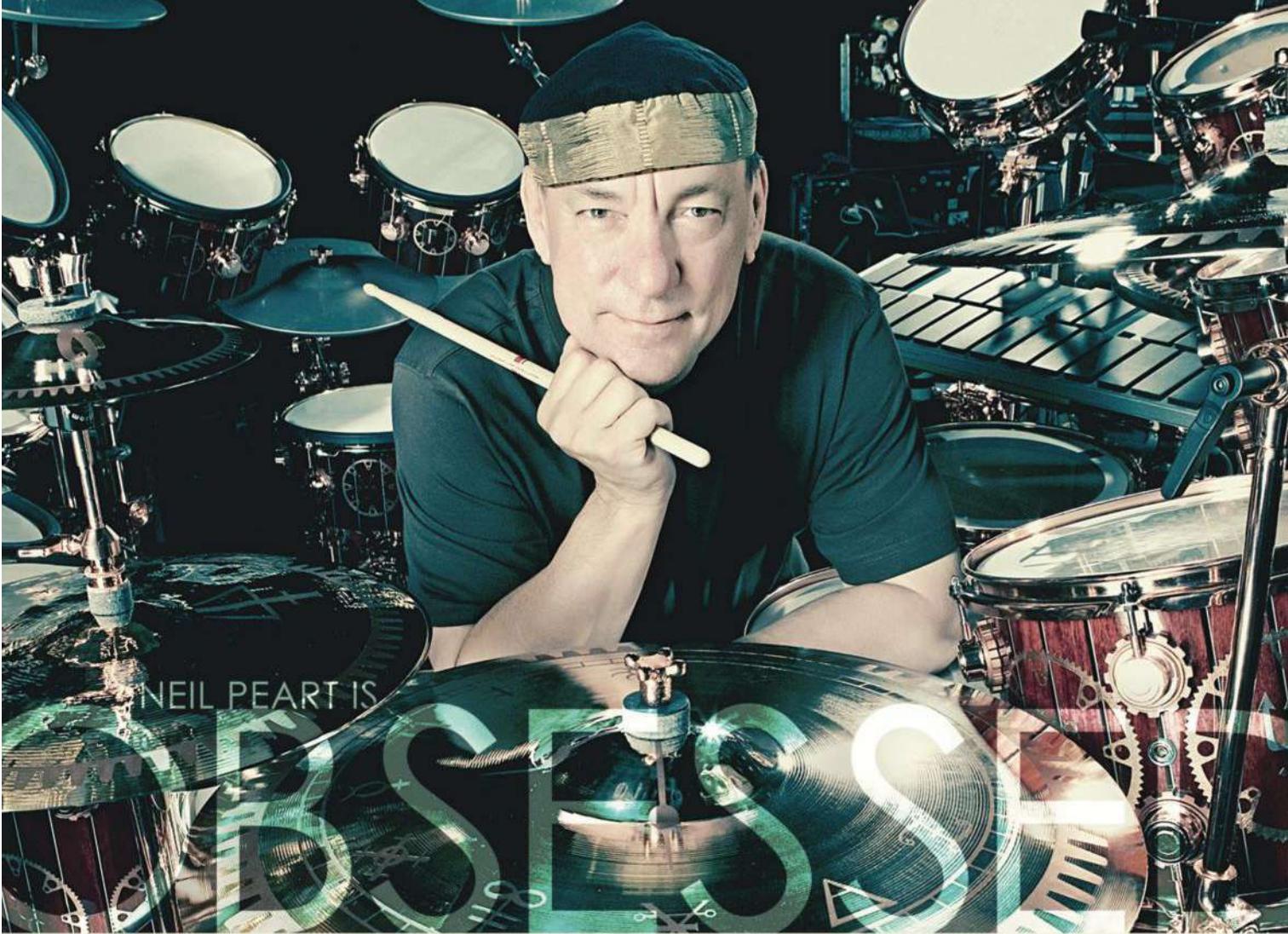
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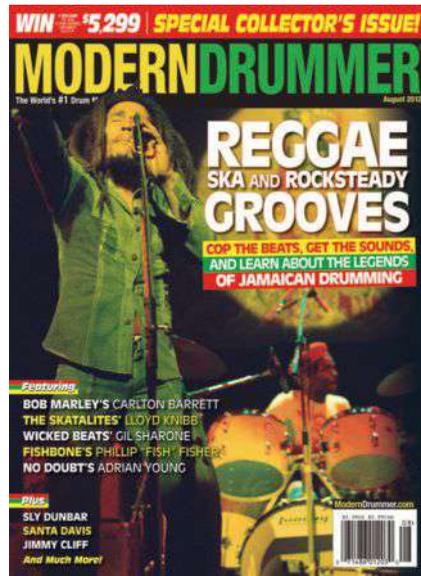
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REGGAE ISSUE

Thank you very much for your August 2012 special edition on reggae drummers! As a reggae drummer, this is exactly what I've been waiting for. You hit it spot on. Over the past ten years, reggae has been one of the fastest-growing genres in the U.S. and worldwide, and it continues to grow in leaps and bounds. There are so many talented reggae drummers in this world, it's not funny. I used to be a dedicated funk/R&B drummer, but I made the switch to reggae a few years ago. I still get to throw in my funk and R&B fills and patterns, but within the context of a much deeper groove and pocket with the bass lines. Please continue to feature top reggae drummers, techniques, and equipment in future editions of *MD*. Keep up the good work!

Gary Hashimoto



Thank you for a fabulous job of covering reggae drummers in your August issue. The theme of the entire issue was well done. As I am forming a reggae band, the information in your publication was very helpful in finding certain styles and bands in this genre. It was also very motivating and inspiring. The drummers you covered were trailblazers and very creative. I'm glad they finally received their overdue attention.

Gregg Martin



COREY MILLER'S TRAVIS BARKER ILLUSTRATION

Love the pen-and-ink cover (September)! Congratulations to the person/team that decided to use a drawing. It is such a refreshing change from the standard photo. My husband has subscribed to *Modern Drummer* since Volume 1, Number 1, and I don't recall seeing a prior cover with anything but a photo. Bravo!

Catherine O'Connell

MIND MATTERS

I live abroad and recently picked up the September issue. I came across Bernie Schallehn's Mind Matters article ("I'm Self-Taught and They're Schooled"), and I have to say it was such a great read. Bernie's words were so positive and so encouraging. If you think about it, he's right—no one is really self-taught per se.

MD is an amazing magazine with awesome writers and interesting articles. Props, guys.

Rajesh Gupta

I just read "I'm Self-Taught and They're Schooled" in the September *MD*. I appreciate the content very much, especially Bernie's closing thoughts: "What matters—for any drummer—is that you consistently deliver the goods in a creative and joyful manner." The question that was asked in the article also rang true for me in some ways. I've been playing in a band where the lead guitarist was degreed in music, and the others were very skilled as well. I did my part to be well prepared for our practice sessions, and overall we worked well together. I later started to become frustrated when many of the covers we were working on had not been carefully listened to by the others before we got together. The lead guitarist thought he knew it all because he was a good player. I think people are just satisfied at different levels, and to be in a particular band you have to decide how serious you need or want to be. For an amateur, how serious does serious need to be?

Grey Chapman

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CHAD SMITH

The Chili Peppers' drummer will never be accused of going through the motions. A live release by the **Bombastic Meatbats** supplies the evidence.



It's a common theme among musicians and their fans these days: the fear that as computers work themselves ever deeper into the creative process, the messy, emotional, blood-and-guts aspects of recording and performing—the intangibles that we humans relate to on the deepest levels—aren't slowly being lost. A handy antidote to the new-reality blues? Red Hot Chili Peppers

drummer Chad Smith's side project the Bombastic Meatbats, who've recently released their third CD, *Live Meat and Potatoes*.

"We're not trying to be perfect," Smith says. "We're just four guys going for it. Sometimes when you go for it you sound like you've thrown the drums down the stairs. And I still get caught by the fill police on occasion. But if you don't take a risk, you'll never get those moments where it's

like, 'Man, that was great. That worked.'"

Though Chad points out that the grooves are similar to those on the band's studio albums, 2009's *Meet the Meatbats* and 2010's *More Meat*, he describes the performances on *Live Meat* as "on steroids" versions. "We're kind of bashing a bit live," he says, "and I like to do that! And if you're in a band, you can't go through the motions. You're

letting yourself down as an artist, and you're letting down the people who are coming to see you. People connect to honesty."

Among the highlights on *Live Meat* are the fourteen-minute closer, "Into the Floyd," on which the band *really* gets to stretch out, and a nod to one of Smith's homies from Detroit, drummer Gunner Ross, called "The Gunboat Is On!" "He'd say to me at the bar, 'Chad, you know that when the Gunboat is on, the Gunboat is on,'" Smith recalls with a chuckle. "I have no idea what he meant. I'd just nod knowingly."

Of course, drummers will immediately take note of the inclusion of Led Zeppelin's "Moby Dick," drummer John Bonham's signature tune. "With a song like that," Chad says, "which is so identifiable with one person, you have to figure out how to make it your own—and how to do it well when it's already so great. John's my favorite drummer, so it's an homage to him. But we do a slower, kind of funkier version of the song. And I'm not going to sit there and do a drum solo over it. I'm not going to play with my hands and all that—you just don't do that. Anyway, I'm basically opening up my tool bag the whole rest of the night!"

Adam Budofsky

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT



Meinl Cymbals has welcomed the world-renowned jazz drummer **Ralph Peterson** to its family of artists.

Jeremy Hummel is now playing Ludwig drums.

John Fred Young (Black Stone Cherry), **Arejay Hale** (Halestorm), **Marco Giovino** (independent, Robert Plant's Band of Joy), **Patty Schemel** (the Cold and Lovely, Hole), **Mike Rizzi** (Sonia Leigh), and **Sean Winchester** (Everclear) have joined the Vater artist family.

Among the drummers that Paiste has recently welcomed to its roster are **Gergo Borlai** (independent), **Pat Lundy** (Funeral

for a Friend), **Jason Heiser** (Charm City Devils), **Sonny Tremblay** (Burn Halo), and **Daru Jones** (Jack White).



New GMS endorsers include **Billy Shaffer** (*Million Dollar Quartet*), **Tom Seguso** (Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes), **Dylan Wissing** (Kanye West, Jay-Z, Drake), **Lee Finkelstein** (Blues Brothers, Funk

Filharmonik), **John D'Angelo** (Lisa Bouchelle, Billy Walton Band), **Marty Kane** (Dot Dot Dot), and **David Cates** (independent).

Ricky Fataar (Bonnie Raitt), **Dan Wilding** (Heaven Shall Burn), **Lux** (Nekromantix), and **Amanda Tieman** (the Heathers) have joined the Ahead artist roster.

OUT NOW



CDS

Between the Buried and Me

The Parallax II: Future Sequence (Blake Richardson) /// **Karriem**

Riggins Alone Together

(Karriem Riggins) /// **Papa Roach** The Connection (Tony Palermo) /// **Nadje Noordhuis** Nadje Noordhuis (Obed Calvaire) /// **Heart** Fanatic (Ben Smith) /// **Converge** All We Love We Leave Behind (Ben Koller) /// **Rez Abbasi** Continuous Beat (Satoshi Takeishi) /// **Shiny Toy Guns** III (Mikey Martin)

BOOKS

Makeup to Breakup: My Life in and out of Kiss by Peter Criss ///

Steel Drums and Steelbands by Angela Smith /// **Drumset Syncopation: Advanced Techniques and Studies for**

Playing Between the Beats by Bruce R. Patzer



CHRISTOPHER GUANLAO

Silversun Pickups' beatsmith talks about the band's new album, loops, and giving the music an edge.



Neck of the Woods, the latest album from the Los Angeles-based alt-rockers Silversun Pickups, is full of hazy guitars, odd-time twists, epic hooks, and creative drumming from Christopher Guanlao, who enjoyed a different approach to recording this time around.

"Before," Guanlao says, "I'd be the first to come in, and we'd get the best take possible and then move on to the next song. For Neck we were doing a lot of the arranging during the recording, where the parts I'd brought in changed with the help of our

producer, Jacknife Lee. I'd throw down a beat for a chorus, then we'd decide on a different sound for the verse and get back to the chorus later. So it was pieced together that way, which was great, because I was with the band throughout the whole recording, instead of being done in the first two weeks."

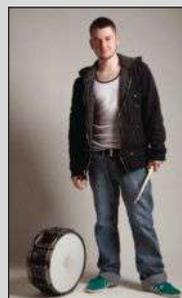
And what about the dirty, trashy drum sounds on the record? "It probably has to do with how the drums are recorded today—less concentration on

tuning or getting the right tone and more on going through filters to manipulate the sound," Guanlao explains. "We might hear a lot more of that in the future, or it might die down a bit if it's overused. But for Silversun's purposes, we needed to add a little grime to the music, an edge."

Guanlao explored some new vistas of his own, employing drum programming for the first time, on tracks like "Busy Bees" and "The Pit." "We wanted to do something different with this album," Christopher says, "and Jacknife helped me feel my way

through the programming overdubs. We were putting it on top of the actual drumming, and soon I was asking myself how I was going to re-create that live. So this will be the first time that I'll use some loops and backing tracks with percussion on stage. I love it. It takes a lot of pressure off your drumming, and you can concentrate on keeping the foundation strong. This gets us tighter, closer to the records, and it's a better show." **Ilya Stemkovsky**

ON TOUR



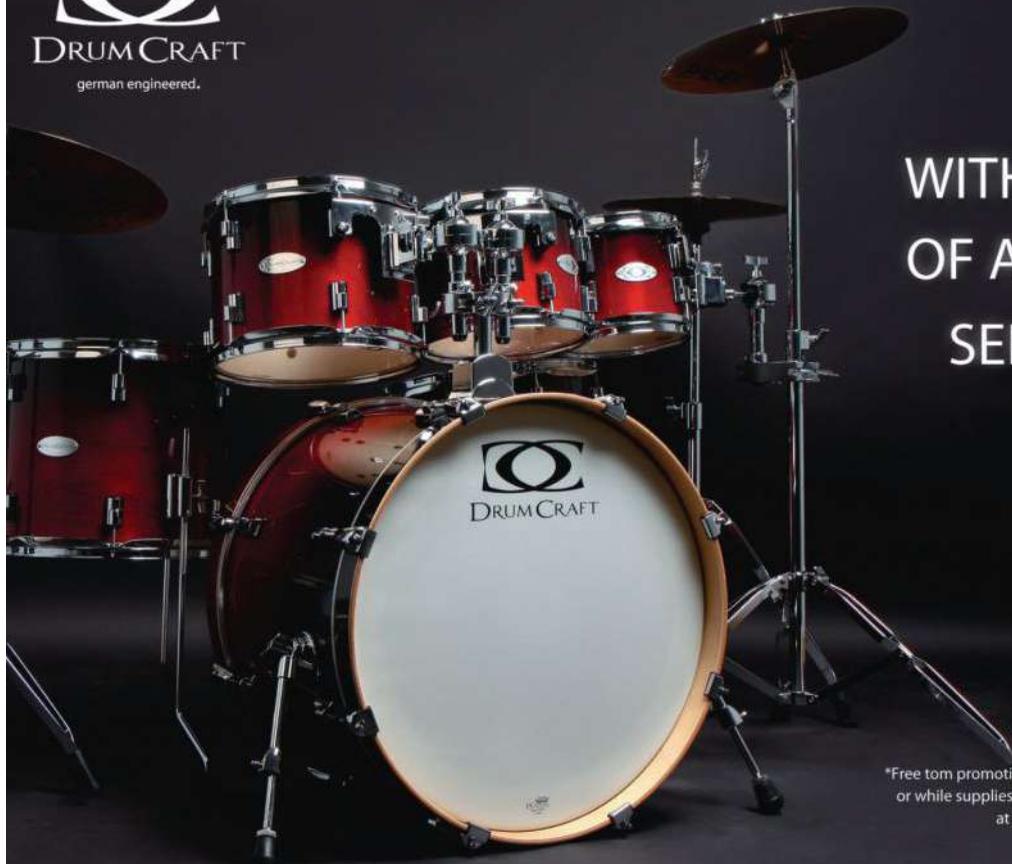
Matt Garstka with Animals as Leaders
/// **Zak Starkey** with the Who
/// **Jeff Sipe** with Jimmy Herring
/// **Mike Byrne** with Smashing Pumpkins
/// **David Rokeach** with Holly Near

Cyrus Bolooki with New Found Glory



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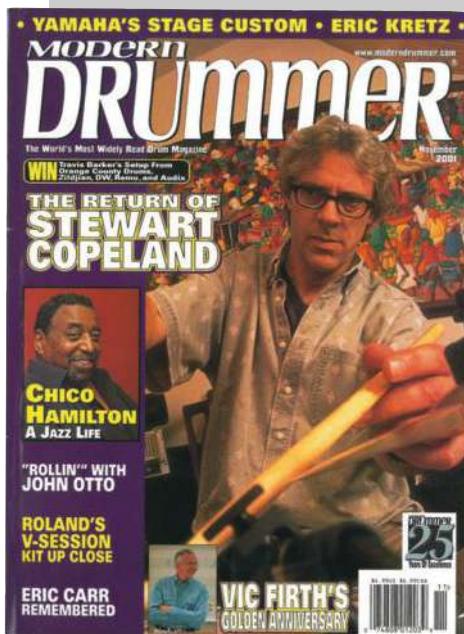
As a guy who kind of prides himself on not getting stuck on any one model or size of drum, I'm surprised at my addiction to and reliance on my first Pearl Masterworks snare. (It's basically a Reference snare, but since they made it in a custom color for me, it's called a Masterworks.) Even though it's a honking twenty plies, it's got two multi-trace snare strainers on it (six preset snare tensions in a flash), so it's awesome on everything from bashing to brushes.



BACK Through the STACK

STEWART COPELAND

In November 2001, the ex-Police drummer surprised *MD* readers by singing the praises of heavy metal bands, Slipknot in particular.



The drums express the visceral, animal, libidinal aspect of one's personality. The baser instincts find most effective expression on the drumset. Rock 'n' roll is basically the mating dance of our species. That's the purpose of music. It's human plumage. That's why kids respond to music more than adults—the raging hormones. The music speaks right to those raging hormones, and there's a channel for them. Heavy metal has to do with young males with more testosterone than body hair. It's a body hair substitute.

I went to see Slipknot recently. Actually, I went to see Sepultura, who asked me to produce a track for them. And I listened to their last album, which is so heavy it's hysterical. They're really good—and heavy. Way heavier than Hendrix, way heavier than Zeppelin.... I was really looking forward to going to Brazil to work with them to make *the*

heaviest album that had ever been made. Unfortunately, schedules conflicted, and it turned out not to be possible.

Anyhow, I went to their show, and they were really good. I was just about to leave when the Sepultura guys said, "You should stay for Slipknot." So I did. And they were *great*. The drummer came out with his red Vistalites and a mask, and he's standing behind the drumset while the rest of the guys are wafting about and doing atmospheric nonsense—and then he jumps on the drums and goes BRDRDRDRDRDRDRDR!!!! An explosion! Then he bounces back off as if he's been electrocuted. And he's just doing this double bass drum thing—BRDRDRDRDRDRDR!!!! AAADDRDRDRDR, BDRDRDR, DRDRDRBDRDRD, BRBRBRBRBR—like that. I was standing there like I had been electrocuted. That got my attention! I copped a whole lot of licks off that kid.

To read the entire Stewart Copeland feature—and all the other great material from the November 2001 issue—go to moderndrummer.com and click on the App Store link.



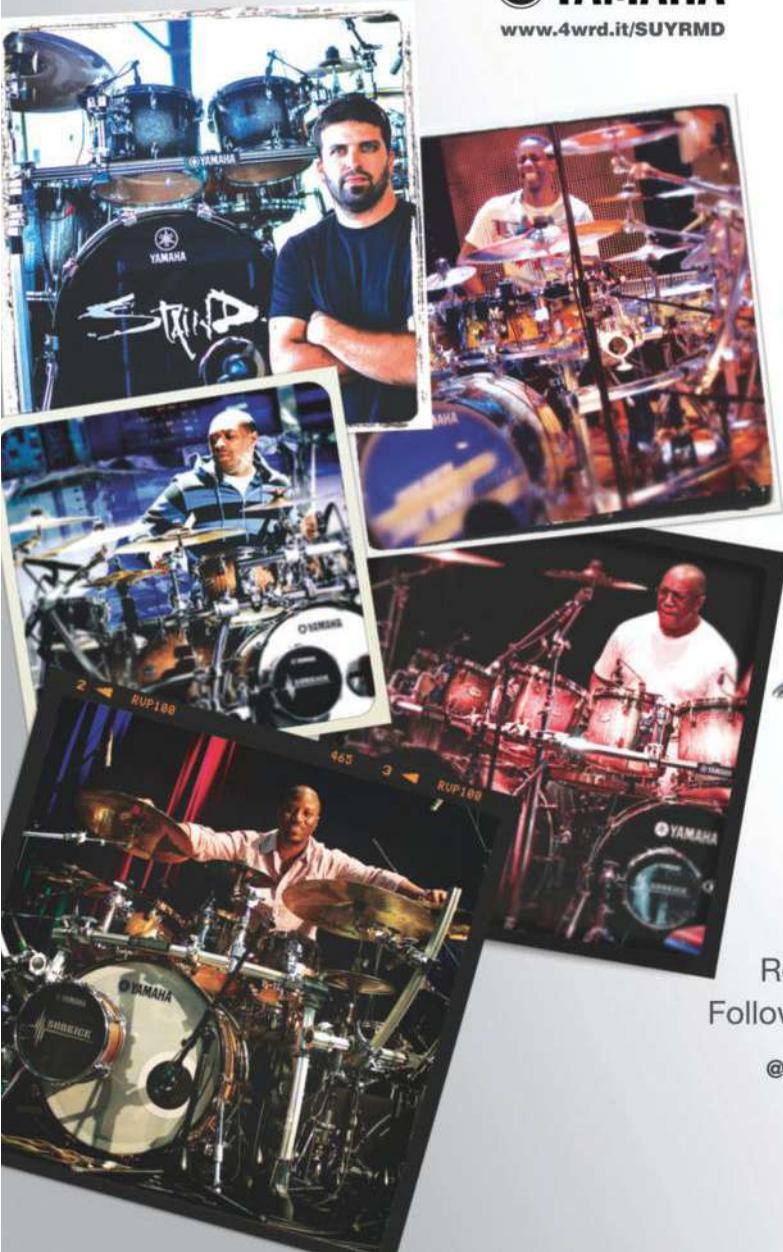
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HEX

50 YEARS LATER, VIC IS STILL ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC.

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Vic Firth



The Doctor Is In by Asif Khan, M.D.

Drumming and A.S.



I've been diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease called ankylosing spondylitis, which causes swelling in my spine, larger joints, and neck. This is a rheumatic disease with no cure, but it is treatable. I'm concerned about how the condition will affect my drumming. I try to play as often as possible, and I practice every day for at least thirty-five to forty-five minutes. How can I take better care of myself? Are there any exercises you can recommend?

Oscar

Ankylosing spondylitis (A.S.) is a chronic inflammatory disease characterized by back pain and spinal stiffness (in X-ray images, the spine resembles bamboo!). The prognosis of the disease depends on the severity. Fortunately, most A.S. patients are mild cases and can lead a relatively trouble-free life. But if the condition is severe, surgery and/or disability are common.

No two cases of A.S. are alike, so treatment must be individualized, often including exercise or physical therapy and medications, and sometimes including surgery. Medications are important during physical therapy and include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen, analgesics like morphine, and a new group of costly medications called anti-TNF alpha agents (ask your doc about them). Of these, NSAIDs are perhaps the most effective in providing relief for up to 70 to 80 percent of A.S. patients and should be the first line of treatment. Steroids have a limited role and are used mainly for joint injections. Surgery is used selectively but may be necessary for those with severe deformities.

An initial evaluation and subsequent training by a physical therapist should be part of your therapeutic regimen. Exercising at home is helpful, but supervised exercise programs, like formal physical therapy, can be of greater benefit.

You can perform a number of exercises to minimize the effects of A.S. and of lower back pain in general. To get started, make sure you can exercise without injuring yourself any further. Is your range of motion severely limited? Are you in pain when you move in any direction? If your back is stiff in the morning, this may be a good time to begin stretching exercises. The most important things to

remember are to maintain excellent posture and to "think tall" (stand, walk, and sit upright at all times).

Here's an exercise to try: Put your back against a wall, and place your heels about 4" from the wall. Your buttocks and shoulders should be as close to the wall as possible—even touching lightly. Don't strain. Hold this position for five seconds, relax, and do it again.

The most effective exercise for maintaining erect posture is what's called prone lying. If possible, lie face down on a firm surface such as the floor or a hard bed. If you're unable to lie flat in this position, place a pillow under your chest and a folded towel under your forehead. This may be a painful position for you, so start slowly (just a minute or two at first). The goal is to be able to hold the position for up to twenty minutes. Warm up—if needed—with light stretching or a warm bath/shower. Your head may be positioned directly downward, resting on the hands, or turned to the left or right. Or you can alternate your head position during the course of exercise.

To minimize the development of deformities of the neck, it's recommended to use a thin pillow for sleeping. Splints, braces, and corsets are generally not advised for spondylitis patients. Because of the increased risk of serious spinal injury from slips and falls, people with A.S. should take care to avoid such mishaps. Vitamin D and calcium supplements can help minimize the effects of osteoporosis. Contact sports and other high-impact activities should be avoided. Drumming isn't considered high impact, unless you're a super-active, physical drummer. Light to moderate drumming could be performed regularly for years. Patient education and support is available from groups such as the Spondylitis Association of America (spondylitis.org).

Dr. Asif Khan is a board-certified internist, specializing in allergy and immunology, with a private practice in northeast Ohio. He also directs the nonprofit organization Passion and Profession (passionandprofession.com), which focuses on career counseling and education. Dr. Khan has been an avid drummer for twenty years and is currently performing with Johnny Hi-Fi (johnnyhi-fi.com).

Drum Cases for Airplanes

I'm searching for the right snare case to use when checking baggage for flying. Do you have any suggestions?

Kenny

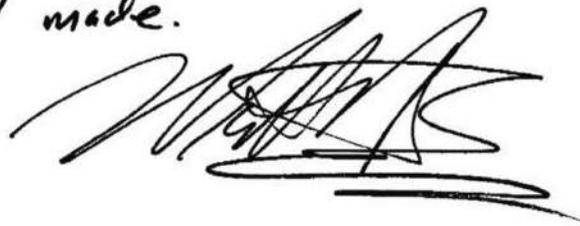
We sent your question to Jeremy Berman, the owner of Q Drums and a professional drum tech. Here's his response: "I tour for a living and have found the best snare cases for airplane travel are SKB hard cases or any type of ABS plastic case with padding. I always feel comfortable checking snares as luggage and have never had any problems. If I have a connecting flight, I'll carry the drum on the plane. Connections are where most luggage gets lost. I never have any problems going through security with a snare or stowing it in an overhead luggage bin."



The first time I saw Meinl was
Vans Warped Tour... the huge
cymbals sounded amazing.

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CANOPUS

Ash Standard Drumset



by Eric Novod



Step into leading New York City jazz clubs like Smalls, Smoke, the Jazz Gallery, Cornelia Street Café, and the Zinc Bar, and you'll find a house kit supplied by the Japanese drum manufacturer Canopus. The small custom company formed in 1977, but it didn't start producing full kits until a decade later. Yet superior quality, construction, sound, and appearance, along with high-profile endorsers led by the jazz great Brian Blade, have propelled Canopus pretty far, pretty fast.

The new Canopus kit for review this month is the Ash Standard, with a 15x20 bass drum, 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, a 13x14 floor tom, and a matching 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 snare. All of the drums, which feature 7-ply ash/poplar shells in a light black satin finish and are outfitted with solid brass lugs, were remarkably lightweight yet sturdy feeling. Their tone was full, deep, resonant, and dynamic. They felt new but sounded old—a winning combination in our book. And while Canopus is not in the business of manufacturing inexpensive products, these Ash drums fall in the more affordable section of the company's catalog. (The five-piece setup reviewed here lists for \$2,700.)

BASS DRUM

The winner among winners here is the 15x20 bass drum. Equipped with a Canopus/Remo Powerstroke 3 batter and a coated single-ply front head with no hole, it sang beautifully wherever it was tuned. (But I felt that its sweetest spot lived in the medium-high tension range.) The drum feathered nicely with a light beater at lower volumes, delivering an expansive tone for its size. Where it surprised was in the power it could unleash when attacked more aggressively. With a standard beater, it served up a great all-around combination of attack and tone. Lower the tension and use a harder beater, and you'll find that the Ash kick can really get the power of a 22" drum, with the tone intact. This is a super-versatile kick drum.

TOMS

The three Ash toms offered a unique playing experience comprising a warm, round, vintage sound that spread quietly at lower and medium volumes and projected pow-

erfully on harder strikes. Fitted with Canopus/Remo Coated Ambassadors on top and bottom, the toms responded with a lot of low-end frequencies, regardless of the tension. It's sensible to keep the toms tuned low to extract their ultimate resonance, and they worked faultlessly in this setting. Taking them to a higher, jazz-type tuning, however, was a revelation, because they retained that undertow of depth beneath their high-pitched attack. With the top and bottom heads tuned close to each other, each of the toms sustained evenly for about four seconds and then decayed rather quickly and smoothly. These drums didn't respond especially well to muffling, but that's simply because dampening messed up their superior tone.

SNARE

The 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Ash Standard snare was a bit less vintage sounding than the rest of the kit, but that's not a bad thing. Its clean, woody "crack" counterbalanced the kick and toms with the addition of some mid and high frequencies. The snare was well defined at softer volumes, making it great for jazz-style comping, and it projected well at louder dynamics (funk!). We felt that this drum sounded best when both heads were tuned medium to medium-high, with the snare tension fairly tight.

WRAP-UP

Canopus seems to have a reputation for making jazz drums in the United States, whereas in Japan its kits cover a wider range of musical styles. While the Ash Standard drumset will certainly fit well into any jazz combo, it's also a great choice for a session player who does work for songwriters, or for a funk/rock/soul drummer who wants a vintage look and feel from a modern instrument. The style, construction, and choice of parts are flawless. The combination of the natural black finish, brass lugs (on everything but the snare, which has chromed versions), and chrome hoops gives the kit a somewhat earthy appearance. They're classic-looking drums with a little contemporary spark, which aligns perfectly with the type of music they're meant to make.

canopusdrums.com

SABIAN

2012 Players' Choice Winners

by David Ciauro



MODERN DRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

Last year Sabian introduced twelve prototype cymbals within its network of existing series and let the public decide which models would make it into production. Top artists like Neil Peart, Terry Bozzio, and Dave Weckl demonstrated the cymbals via online videos, and drummers voted on their favorites. After eight weeks of elimination rounds, four models remained.

Sabian is conducting another contest for 2013, this time offering prototypes at certain locations for people to play before casting their vote. For now, though, let's take a look at the Players' Choice winners for 2012.

20" AAX STADIUM RIDE

For drummers, the adage "the bigger the room, the louder the boom" is a double-edged sword. There's our mischievous side, which loves to hear how loud our kits can sound in a cavernous space, but there's also the rational side that knows musical complications can coincide with playing sizable venues. Projection is crucial, but equally important is having what you're projecting be discernable when it reaches the audience. The 20" AAX Stadium ride (\$265) marries the right ingredients in order to be powerful and defined. Despite the cymbal's medium-heavy weight, a gentle stick

touch kindled a bright, articulate ping. Stick definition remained a focal point as I increased the intensity, while the swell built nicely underneath.

The Stadium ride's raw bell is not over-size but provided a solid target while adding warmth. Its drier wallop might contrast the brightness heard in the body, but it helped to create a more complex overall sound with greater musical applications. Regardless of the style of music you're into, the intention with this cymbal is to have what you play reach all the way back to the nosebleeds.

14" HHX CLICK HATS

Hybrid musical genres are exploding right now, and for drummers it can be tricky to find the right sound to convincingly convey electronic music with acoustic drums. HHX Click Hats (\$429) boast a mercurial attitude without being too intense. They had a static-like sound, akin to being processed with some serious compression, plus a tight, distorted quality that didn't leave a lot of dynamic headroom. They're not ideal hi-hats for snaky, interlocking grooves, but they would provide exemplary accompaniment for energetic,

pulse-pounding rhythms.

The Click Hats did, however, lend themselves to genres beyond the electronic spectrum. Woodshedding to the Ramones catalog and to lo-fi Black Keys-style soul-rock tunes was as fun and satisfying as playing along to techno-rock songs by Phoenix or the Faint. The unique appearance of the Click Hats is an amalgamation of the high-profile shape of the AA series and the hammering found in the HH and HHX series, with partially lathed tops and fully lathed underbellies.

16", 18", AND 20" AAX AERO CRASHES

When I first struck one of the multi-hole Aero crashes, the unabashed shimmer jolted my senses and lanced my preconceptions. Although I was expecting a combination of flash, trash, and crash, the

immediacy of the attack caught me off guard. The crux of the sound rocketed out and dissipated quickly, leaving a metallic afterburn in its wake. The 16" (\$195) served as the best crash/ride of the three, with a succinct decay that bled nicely into the following strike.

The hole pattern of these models did create a noticeable difference in terms of feel and stick responsiveness; Aeros had more flex and give than "normal" cymbals. The 18" (\$225) felt the best in terms of stick response, while the 16" and 20" (\$265) models were more rigid.

Some drummers might embrace the Aero as offering their ideal crash sound, while others could view it as a cool alternative for adding spice and color.

20" HHX ZEN CHINA

The 20" Zen China (\$349) aims to uphold the traditional Chinese sound while

increasing playability by transposing the cup direction. Inverting the cup allows the cymbal to be mounted flat and right side up (instead of the typical upside-down position) and played with more finesse.

This China, with its darker tonality, lent itself nicely to being used as a ride alternative. Additional HHX hammering near the bell flattens out the surface, creating a more spread-out wash. I was able to pull interesting splashes and trashy accents out of the cymbal, rather than simply exploiting the benefits of its inherent trashiness for heavy accents. As a full-on effects piece, the Zen China wasn't as explosive or one-dimensional as other Chinas I've played. Its attack was far less abrasive.

sabian.com

EVANS

Black Chrome Drumheads

by David Ciauro

Evans Black Chrome drumheads are geared toward heavy-handed drummers in progressive rock and metal genres. More specifically, they're designed especially for players who either incorporate a greater amount of toms into their setups or who use smaller sizes to cut through loud mixes but don't want to sacrifice a meaty attack and low end.

It can be difficult to get a consistent sound using the same head model across a range of drums (i.e., having a 10" rack tom sound cohesive with a 16" floor tom), and few drumheads can accurately defy the paradox of being melodic and beefy while also being vibrant and succinct. Black Chrome heads claim to address this, with their enhanced mid to low frequencies. Models are currently available for toms sized 6" to 20". We tested 12", 13", 14", and 16" versions paired with Evans EC Resonant heads.

DARK REFLECTIONS

Staring into a Black Chrome head is reminiscent of gazing into the calm waters of a moonlit lake. This cool, opaque yet reflective aesthetic is achieved by clever use of the 2-ply head construction. A 7 mil, optically clear ply sits atop a 7.5 mil black ply. Not only does this give the heads a dark, shiny appearance, but it also keeps your snare head, sticks, and cymbals free of the smudges that can occur with some other

colored drumheads.

The 2-ply construction of the Black Chrome models increases durability, and over a week of preproduction rehearsals and sessions for a hard-hitting rock demo, the heads maintained a consistent sound and recorded well under some Shure SM57s without any EQ or compression. By weight and appearance alone, you might expect these heads to be reminiscent of Evans' Hydraulic line. But the Black Chromes proved to have a rather bright tonality with a bottom-end boost.

THE ZEN OF BLACK CHROME

With the focus of the heads being the mid to low frequencies, they seemed to have a built-in compressor that amplified the guts of each drum's tone while keeping the sustain tight and rolling off any unwanted overtones. As a result, smaller toms remained full and meaty, while floor toms could rumble with clarity.

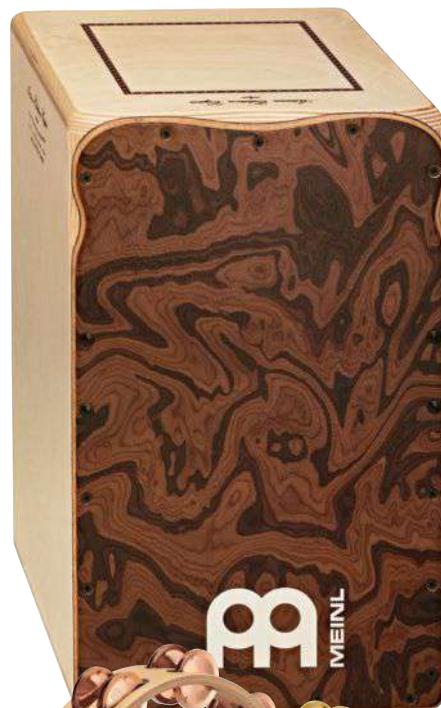
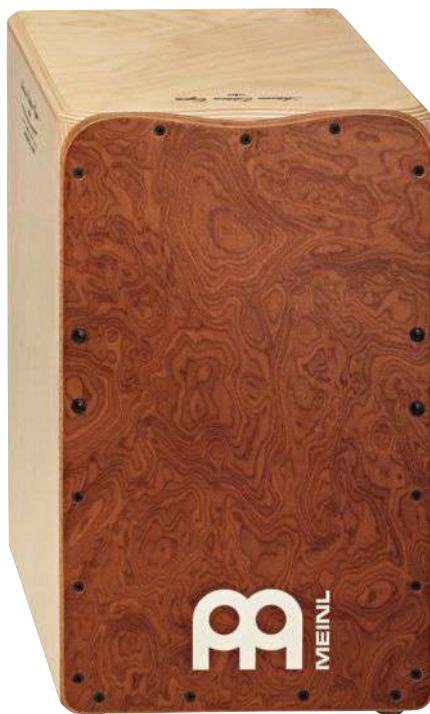
What was surprising was how slack these heads could be and still maintain a solid pitch. In fact, the best sound achieved on our toms was with the heads



loose enough to reveal one or several wrinkles. Leaving wrinkles in the head may seem counterintuitive, but listening instead of rationalizing served us best while tuning the Black Chromes. The bottom line was that the sound perfectly matched the heads' description.

Though Black Chrome models are designed to curb overtones, they breathed enough to pull some warmth from the shells. This created a lively sound with a solid tone that complemented hard-hitting drumming that requires clarity and projection.

evansdrumheads.com



MEINL

Artisan Cajons and Tambourines

by Michael Dawson

Meinl boasts one of the largest collections of cajons of any percussion manufacturer. There's the affordable Headliner series, which currently consists of nine varieties, and then there are various String cajons, String Designers, an Ergo-Shape Pedal cajon, a Bass Pedal model, cajons with snares, versions with electronic pickups, a Subwoofer model, portable and hybrid bongo options, and a new trio of Artisan editions handcrafted in Spain. We were sent all three Artisan cajons (Soleá, Bulería, and Seguiriya) for review, plus two double-row wood-frame Artisan tambourines (one with solid brass jingles and one with solid bronze). All Artisan models are elegantly designed, solidly made, and professional-sounding instruments.

SOLEÁ LINE

The Soleá cajon (\$499) features a solid cedar front plate with a dark brown finish that Meinl calls espresso burst. Ten pre-tuned guitar-style strings run horizontally across the top third of the underside of the front plate. There's a curved 4"-tall piece of wood a few inches inside the sound hole, which is said to compress the bass tone. The body is made of 9-ply birch and has rounded edges all around, with additional concaving where your hands strike the front plate, for extra comfort. Four clear rubber feet are attached to the bottom for

stability and increased tone.

Of the three Artisan cajons, the Soleá had the tightest tone. The bass sound was punchy and distinct, with a short note. Edge slaps and open tones produced a lot of snare sound, but the strings didn't buzz beyond the initial attack. This cajon was all about control, punch, and articulation.

BULERÍA LINE

The Bulería cajon (\$669) comes with a lava-burl front plate and has ten tunable strings running across the underside of the entire front plate in a V shape. It too has a 9-ply birch body and rounded and concave edges. The internal bass-compressing baffle is much larger than the Soleá's, so the overall tone was also tight and controlled, but the strings buzzed a bit more and the bass pitch was a little higher. The wires can be tuned via an easy-to-access screw on the underside of the cajon. An Allen wrench is included.

SEGURIYA LINE

The Seguiriya cajon (\$829) is a bit deeper than the other two Artisan models, and it features larger rubber feet, additional concaving on the side of the front plate, and a nice wood inlay on the top surface. The body is made from 11-ply birch, and the front plate is made from canyon burl. Sixteen tunable metal strings, grouped in fours, run vertically along either side of the

front plate. The Seguiriya cajon doesn't have the internal baffle, so the bass tone was louder, deeper, and more dominant. This model had a bigger, more open, and more expressive sound, and it was my favorite of the three.

ARTISAN TAMBOURINES

Artisan tambourines have maple shells with ergonomic maple handles and two rows of eight jingles made from either bronze or brass. (Single-row versions are also available.) These tambourines have a classic design and sound, and they would make great additions to any studio or touring percussionist's collection. The brass jingles were higher pitched than the bronze, but both tambourines spoke in a loud, clean, and clear voice without a lot of excessive jingle when held at a 45-degree angle and struck with the hand. When I held the tambourines vertically, the jingles rang a bit longer for a more reverberant sustain. These models were very articulate, comfortable, and easy to handle for shaking out 8th- and 16th-note patterns. The bronze-jingle double-row Artisan lists for \$169, the brass for \$152.

meinlpercussion.com

INNOVATIVE PERCUSSION

Bundlz, Sweepz, and Drumset Sticks

by Michael Dawson

Although Innovative Percussion is known primarily for its fine marching and classical mallets and sticks, the company also offers a selection of models geared toward drumset players. We received a handful of these for review, including bamboo and wood Bundlz dowel sticks and various drumsticks.

BUNDLZ AND BUNDLZ LITE

Bundlz models feature a single ring of small dowels fixed around a larger wooden core. This design is said to provide "definition on cymbals and great dynamic range." Bundlz are available in standard wood or bamboo with a regular 5A-diameter grip. Slightly longer and thinner Lite (7A) versions with a smaller core are also offered. All Bundlz have black rubber grips that extend about 9½" up the stick, plus a second 2" band starting 2½" from the top. Bundlz models measure between 16" and 16½".

One of the biggest problems some players have with standard dowel sticks (me included) is that they sound too thin on drums; all you get is the attack of the rods striking the plastic head. Innovative Percussion Bundlz do much to alleviate that problem, because their larger wooden core draws a bigger, more stick-like tone from drums and cymbals while still retaining some clicky attack and a lower volume.

There wasn't much difference between the wood and bamboo Bundlz other than that the bamboos were a touch heavier and had a slightly brighter sound with more attack. The quieter Lite versions had a thinner sound with more click. Regular Bundlz had some rebound, but double strokes with the Lites really needed to be pulled out with the wrist and fingers. The top of each dowel on all Bundlz models is sanded to an angle in order to create a slightly rounded tip.

Regular Bundlz list for \$34, and Lite versions are \$31.

SWEEPZ

Hybrid Sweepz sticks (\$31) are 16½" long and .580" in diameter. They feature a round-ball wood tip on one end and a fanned plastic bundle on the other. This combo stick is fairly balanced, and you can get some serviceable buzz strokes when playing with the wood tips. The fulcrum point is right above the plastic fan, so you'll

have to adjust your grip a bit to accommodate the bristles resting in your palm, but I found it fairly easy to get comfortable with these sticks.

The bristle side offered a strong brush sound, especially when striking the head with a combination of the bristles and the wooden shaft. Ironically, you can't really use Sweepz for traditional sweeping patterns, but they do work great for train beats and other louder brush grooves. These sticks would come in handy for country, alt country, and singer-songwriter drummers who need to switch quickly from a wider/softer texture to regular sticks.

5AL AND 5BL

Innovative Percussion's standard 5A drumstick measures 16⅛" and has a diameter of .565". The 5AL (\$15.25) has the same diameter but is 16½" long. The 5BL (\$15.25) is also 16½" long but has a slightly thicker .595" diameter. Both models are made from white hickory and have a medium taper and an acorn tip. The extra length makes the sticks a great choice for drummers playing larger setups or very big drums that require more reach. They'd also be good for players who prefer to choke up a bit farther, as holding them at their optimal balance point left about 2½" of stick protruding from the back of my hand. The 5AL was a bit more tiring for my playing style and hand size, but both models produced a nice drum and cymbal sound and rebounded quickly off the drumhead. The 5BL was much more comfortable to me, and it brought out a bigger sound from my drums.

3A AND RK

The 16⅛"-long, .580"-diameter 3A drumstick (\$15.25) has a large acorn tip and was my favorite model of the batch. It was perfectly balanced in my hands and produced a wide, full sound. It also offered a unique rebound with a lot of forward motion, and the tip seemed to stick to the playing sur-



face a bit more. If you like to dig into your drums and cymbals, these sticks are perfectly suited to that approach.

The RK stick (\$15.25) is between a 5B and a 2B, measuring 16½" long with a diameter of .620". This model, which has a short taper and a big barrel-shaped tip, produced a huge drum sound and washy ride patterns, and it had a very fast rebound. It would be great for hard-hitting gigs or to keep in your stick bag for backstage warm-ups.

SMOOTH RIDE AND COOL RIDE

The Smooth Ride stick (\$15.25) features a short taper and an extra-small, round tip, which is said to provide extreme clarity on cymbals. It measures 16" long and has a diameter of .530". Combo jazz drummers will appreciate the clean, clear articulation that these sticks offer, especially on thinner cymbals, along with their light, controlled, and pointed drum sounds. The Smooth Ride was almost too thin for my hands but was comfortable and easy to manage, especially when I played primarily with finger strokes.

The Cool Ride model (\$15.25) is a beefier version of the Smooth Ride, measuring 16" long with a diameter of .580". It also has a short taper and a small, round bead, so it was equally articulate. But the extra width gave it a heavier feel and a bigger overall sound. I'd use these sticks when playing with a big band or in other louder situations that require supreme articulation.

innovativepercussion.com





OVERTONE LABS

Tune-bot Drum Tuner by Michael Dawson

For some, if not most, drummers, tuning is an elusive, mysterious thing. And considering that music scholars have long claimed that drums are “non-pitched” instruments that can’t play true musical notes, there’s no wonder that many of us throw our hands up in disgust after spending a few minutes randomly twisting tension rods to disappointing results. That’s probably why so many tuning devices have come and gone over the years. After all, we just want our drums to sound good so we can hurry up and play, right? We’re happy to report that Overtone Labs’ new Tune-bot electronic drum tuner may very well eliminate your tuning stress, while also urging you to explore your drums’ full sonic capacity like never before. At least that’s what it did for us.

WHAT IS IT?

The simplest way to describe the Tune-bot is to compare it with the clip-on chromatic tuners you’ll find for guitars. Like guitar tuners, the Tune-bot displays the exact frequency or musical note of whatever it hears. In this case, it’s showing either the fundamental pitch of your drum when you strike the center of the head, or the overtones you get when striking close to the tension rods.

The clip is notched so that it grabs the drum hoop in a consistent spot, and the unit can be rotated 360 degrees for better viewing and in order to get the mic sensor positioned properly over the drumhead. The Tune-bot is 3 1/2"x2", which is small enough not to take up too much space but large enough to make the device super-easy to work with.

The 1 1/2" LCD display shows the frequency, as well as stored info, a reference pitch (for when using the Filter and Diff modes and when recalling a saved setting), a battery life indicator, and a tuning dial that shows how far sharp or flat the current head tuning is from the target note (when in Difference and Note modes).

The Tune-bot is designed to work with both heads of snares, toms, and bass drums, but we found it best suited for snare batters and tom batters and bottoms. It reads bass drum pitches just fine, but you won’t be able to clip it to most hoops; you’ll have to hold it in your hand as you check the pitch of the heads. It’ll also work on snare-side heads, as long as the tension isn’t overly high. In our testing, super-tight snare-side head tensions didn’t register as easily.

HOW IT WORKS

When you first turn on the Tune-bot, it’s in Absolute mode, which means it’s going to show the exact frequency of whatever it hears. If your drum is relatively in tune, you could just stay in this mode, tap near each tension rod, and make adjustments until the reading is the same around the drumhead.

When you tap at the edge of a drum, you’re hearing mostly overtones rather than the fundamental pitch

you’d get when striking dead center. In fine-tuning at each lug, you want the Tune-bot to register only the lowest overtone. But there’s a chance that the mic will pick up other overtones or the fundamental. To avoid misreadings, Overtone Labs has included a Filter button, which keeps the reading centered close to the target frequency. Simply strike the head near the edge until the Tune-bot captures a proper overtone frequency (it’ll be higher than the reading you get from striking in the center), and then press the Filter button. From there, you can fine-tune the tension rods using that initial overtone as your goal. Then you can save that frequency to recall later by holding down the Drum/Save button.

After you’ve played your perfectly tuned drums for a while, there’s a chance that some of the tension rods will have loosened up a bit. To get the head back in balance, tap near a lug that hasn’t changed pitch, press the Diff (“difference”) button, and check the tension at each rod again. In Diff mode, a digital dial appears that will show whether the pitch is now above or below the target frequency. Make whatever adjustments are necessary to get the dial to stand vertical, and your drum will now be back in perfect tune. (Getting excited yet?)

If you’d rather tune your drums to musical notes (C, C#, D, D#, etc.) or intervals, press the Note button, and the Tune-bot will show which letter the drum is closest to. The Diff and Filter functions work in Note mode just as they do in Pitch mode.

DO YOU NEED IT?

Is drum tuning really as mysterious as many of us think it is? Not really. But does tuning strictly by ear and by feel take considerable experience, time, and patience to get right? You bet! That’s why we feel that you can’t go wrong in getting your hands on a Tune-bot, even if you’re already a skilled tuner.

Personally, I’m always looking for new ways to get my drums sounding best—both heads tuned the same, top tighter, bottom tighter, and so on. But once I find a sweet spot, I’m sometimes hesitant to change anything for fear that I’ll never get the drum to sound that good again. Well, with the Tune-bot, you can save the exact notes/pitches of the heads at that sweet spot and then experiment as much as you want. If you don’t discover any new, useful sounds (I bet you will!), you can always retune the heads back to where they were previously. We also found really cool and musical results by tuning the entire kit precisely to notes of different chord types. And for studio drummers looking to match the pitch of their toms and snares to the keys of the songs being recorded, this thing is indispensable. No more guesswork!

tune-bot.com

VITAL SPECS

Here’s a quick rundown of several key features of the Tune-bot.

- Clips on rim to read drumhead pitch
- Displays pitches as either exact frequencies or musical notes
- Up to nine readings can be stored for each drum selection (including snare top, snare bottom, tom top, tom bottom, bass top, and bass bottom)
- Small LED light triggers each time a note is read
- Requires two AAA batteries (included)
- Helpful tuning tips, charts, and interactive calculator available online
- List price: \$149.95



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GEARING UP

Drumkit Details,
On Stage and Up Close

ZACH HILL

DEATH GRIPS'



Drums: various

- A. 7x14 Keplinger stainless steel snare
- B. 16x16 floor tom
- C. 16x20 bass drum

"With Death Grips, I've been using a three-piece kit, but my normal set would have a 10" tom," Hill says. "This group represents a challenge for me in a lot of different ways, and one of them is minimalism, as far as what I can do with a very stripped-down setup."

"Gregg Keplinger built me this snare in 2005, when I was on tour with a band I used to play in called Hella. I haven't touched a thing on it, other than changing the heads. I have a lot of problems with snare wires. They always get mangled and pop really easily. So a lot of times I'll end up playing with like one [strand] left on the whole chain. It's all based on my mood, the energy, and the feel. I'm not so conscious when it comes to the actual equipment itself—it's more [about] the vibration I get when I strike it."

"I really don't know the origin of this bass drum. I want to say I bought it from a friend, already stripped down. It looks like it has Pacific hardware on it, but that could have just been put on there. But at this point I've

used it so often, and I have so many experiences with it, that it's become more about mojo and feel for me. I'm getting drawn to smaller bass drums, just because of the comfort level, and obviously there's speed involved with that."

Hardware: Tama Iron Cobra bass drum pedal and Speed Cobra backup, Sound Percussion hi-hat stand, custom-made rug

"I would normally use the same hi-hat as my bass drum pedal, which is an Iron Cobra. But I got this Sound Percussion stand because it was on the cheaper side. I have a problem with stripping out the bottom of my hi-hat stands, so I'll often end up using duct tape to get the chain at the bottom of the mechanism to stick to the top so it still functions. But I got sick of doing that, so I got this stand at the last minute."

"I always have to make drum rugs, because I have a lot of trouble with my drums sliding. Usually it's just a piece of carpet that I nail a 2x4 to. I have to be sure to use washers, or else the nail will pull through the carpet and the wood will come right off. On longer tours, I'll use a rubber mat so that

it dries out and doesn't start to smell from all the sweat."

Cymbals: various

- 1. 14" Zildjian K Mastersound hi-hats
 - 2. 21" Zildjian A Custom 20th Anniversary ride
 - 3. 22" Keplinger hand-hammered stainless steel cymbal (stacked on top of assorted broken cymbals)
- "I bought these hats because I like how they feel. Everything for me is based on feel—sometimes even more so than sound. I believe the *player* is what makes something sound a certain way, and not necessarily the equipment. But I switch out hi-hats regularly. Sometimes I'll play two rides on the hi-hat or two splashes."

"A lot of times I like to use a ride as a crash, as long as it's on the thinner side. I used to use thicker cymbals because I thought they would last longer, but I found out it was actually the opposite. A thinner cymbal has more flexibility, so it lasts longer and is a lot more fluid. I play in a way that I think you're not really supposed to—I follow through when I hit. I visualize hitting the ground,

rather than letting the stick bounce back. So I like thin cymbals because it feels like I'm going right through them."

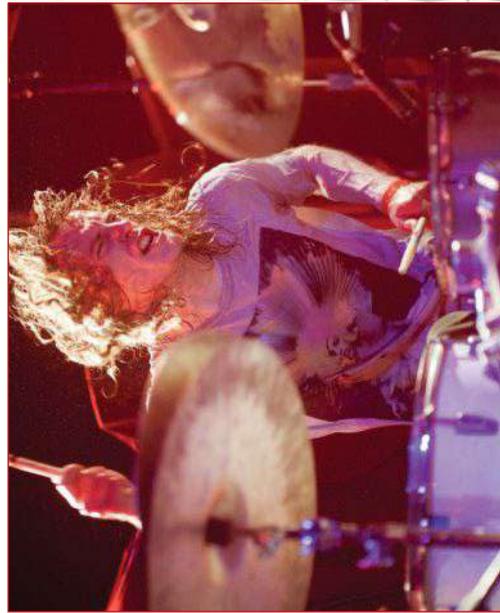
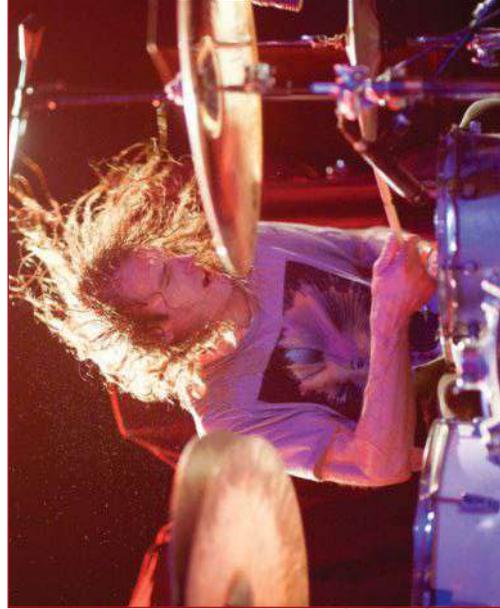
Sticks: Pro-Mark 5B Natural wood-tip

Heads: Remo Emperor X snare batter and Evans EMAD bass drum batter

"As far as tuning goes, I honestly don't have a methodical thing going on—it's all feel. I crank my snare really tight, too tight for a lot of people's tastes. It almost has a marching-drum feel and sound. For the floor tom, sometimes I'll go low with it to simulate double bass patterns."

"I've never changed the head on my floor tom. I like heads when they're worn. Snare and bass heads I'm forced to change, but I get attached to a certain sound that happens from having something on there for so long."

"There's a total relation with all the drums being so close together. I like it when I hit the bass drum and I can hear the snare, cymbals, and tom [ringing]. Some players strive for total separation, but I'm drawn to that hum."



Daniel Freedman

His restless global spirit has informed the music of renowned artists such as Anat Cohen and Angélique Kidjo, along with his own fascinating collectives, which feature kindred spirits like Meshell Ndegeocello, Avishai Cohen, and Omer Avital.

by Jeff Potter

Daniel Freedman becomes most animated when talking about *other* drummers, his influences and inspirations. A reverent sense of wonder settles into his voice, whether he's recalling giants like his former teachers Max Roach and Billy Higgins, lesser-known players, or the multitude of regional musicians he's communed with during his many exotic travels. Now the drummer/percussionist is playing the world's major venues, yet his eternal life-student attitude never flags.

Growing up in New York City, Freedman set his sights on jazz drumming. His hungry curiosity quickly led him to embrace every rhythmic allure that passed his way, especially the riches of world music. Reaching far beyond formal study, he immersed himself in international musical cultures. He undertook trips around the globe, observing and playing with fellow percussionists in North Africa, West Africa, Cuba, Brazil, and beyond. Now, combining his vast worldly vocabulary with his jazz background, Freedman has serendipitously found a fertile niche. His busy career keeps the globe hopping going, demanding a vast scope of grooves with a variety of overlapping bands and projects.

On his second disc as a leader, *Bamako by Bus*, Freedman bears the fruits of these journeys in a sensual excursion featuring a healthy dose of African influences as well as Afro-Cuban, jazz, funk, Brazilian, and a touch of reggae. His core group, with bassist Meshell Ndegeocello, keyboardist Jason Lindner, and trumpeter Avishai Cohen, is supported by outstanding guests including guitarist Lionel Loueke, tenor saxo-

phonist Mark Turner, and percussionist/singers Pedrito Martinez and Abraham Rodriguez.

Freedman also continues his long, successful tenure with reed player Anat Cohen's group. On Cohen's latest release, *Claruscuro*, featuring guests Paquito D'Rivera and Wycliffe Gordon, the drummer also served as coproducer. In addition, Daniel records and tours internationally with the powerhouse Afro-pop star Angélique Kidjo, whose latest live CD and DVD release, *Spirit Rising*, features the highly eclectic guest roster of Branford Marsalis, Christian McBride, Dianne Reeves, Josh Groban, and Vampire Weekend's Ezra Koenig. Also available is a recent digital-only EP, *iTunes Live From SoHo*.

Somehow Freedman also manages to fit in regular tours with his jazz-meets-Middle Eastern-meets-African unit, Third World Love, a collective with bassist Omer Avital, trumpeter Avishai Cohen, and pianist Yonatan Avishai. The quartet recently released its fourth CD, *Songs and Portraits*. Daniel has also recently begun playing with the Brazilian group Forro in the Dark.

Whenever he's back home, Freedman jumps into jazz dates and mixing gigs and plays on recordings such as Avital's recent CD *Suite of the East*. His multi-percussion layers also appear on Sting's *If on a Winter's Night...* "In the meantime, I try to keep learning new things," Freedman says. Recounting the luminaries he's been performing with recently, he adds, "At these gigs I always feel like the luckiest guy in the room: 'Really? I'm here?'"

Yes, Daniel Freedman *is* there, and for very good reason.



Justin Lane

MD: Your newest CD was inspired by one of your music-seeking journeys.

Daniel: Yes, I visited a friend in Bamako, Mali, for about five weeks. That trip really blew my mind. There's just so much music there. It was an experience of music for music's sake.

Music has a different function in their culture and society; whether it's a wedding or ceremony or party, people just *play*. They don't have that sense of looking at a watch, saying, "Okay, rehearsal's over." A rehearsal

Gao, which is the last town before the Sahara begins. They played a one-stringed instrument that they plug into a little radio, using it as an amp. And it sounds like Hendrix, like distorted blues guitar. The accompanying drummer just plays a calabash gourd with rings on his fingers.

We took a trip to find that music. The bus trip itself was epic. I'd never done anything like that—more than twenty-four hours on a bus that hardly ever stops, with people crammed on top of you and ani-

people, you have to eventually start feeling all those rhythms. In a way, it's not different from Elvin Jones: He's heavily triplet-y, but at the same time, *everything* is in there.

Playing with those people every day rubs off. Then, as with other trips, that eventually wears off and I feel I have to recharge my battery.

MD: The Kidjo gig seems like a perfect recharger. You're playing such a wide range of challenging grooves with the



Justin Lane

there might go all night. In the neighborhood you could just walk around and hear drums—some incredible musicians.

I budgeted a djembe lesson or some sort of lesson every day. I got enough djembe together to be able to play supporting parts and gig with an ensemble that played weddings, which was amazing. And then I would get paid at the end, which is awesome. Play and get my five bucks! It felt great. But it was an eye-opening, mind-opening experience on a human level.

MD: When you returned from these trips and played straight-ahead jazz again, did you find that your drumming was enhanced?

Daniel: Yeah, I was playing at Smalls back in New York with Jason Lindner's big band. Everyone was looking at me: "What happened to *you*, man?" My playing opened up a bit. I think I also opened up as a person. Because however you play, you play your experience.

That's why I titled my record *Bamako by Bus*. I wrote that tune about a trip we made to the north of Mali through a town named

"I started playing Haitian and Afro-Cuban ceremonies in Brooklyn, where it's super-important to keep the rhythm going. There's nothing like learning how to play in 6/8 by playing just the bell for eight hours straight. It becomes part of your body."

mals on the roof. You get to the point of, "My God, I can't take this anymore!" But then you realize, "No one else is bitching. Let me just try to relax." That made flying easy for years! When I first got to Mali I thought I couldn't deal with it. But soon I realized it was the most fun I'd ever had.

MD: On your return home, what specifically was it that changed?

Daniel: I think my beat got wider. My sense of time probably got wider.

MD: A "swingier" feel?

Daniel: Rounder, more room in the beat. Because a lot of Malian rhythms are compound rhythms: There's a two against three in half time and double time simultaneously. If you want to play with those

band, in addition to backing a changing roster of star guests, everyone from Youssou N'Dour to Keb' Mo'.

Daniel: Also, just playing with *her* rhythm is incredible. Her former bass player said she was born quantized. She also has an amazing sense of tempo, so if a song is not the exact tempo she needs, she won't want to sing it. And her percussionist, Magatte Sow, is an encyclopedia of Senegalese rhythms.

MD: That's a lot of responsibility, being the new guy. You had to prepare in a whirlwind.

Daniel: Yeah, it was rough. I was on the road, and I got her music for the audition with only a couple of days to learn it all. I

dave turncrantz // russian circles



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DANIEL'S SETUP



Drums: 1965 Ludwig Club Date

A. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 late-'60s Slingerland (pictured), early-'70s Ludwig Acrolite, Pearl brass piccolo, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " hammered Ludwig, or 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " mid-'50s Gretsch blue sparkle snare

B. 12" tom

C. 14" floor tom

D. 20" bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 14" old K hi-hats

2. 22" K Renaissance ride with four rivets

3. 22" prototype with two rivets ("in between a Bill Stewart and a Kenny Washington")

4. 18" K EFX

5. 20" old K

Sticks: Vic Firth mallets and Swinger, 5A, and AH5A sticks; Zildjian John Riley Artist series sticks; Remo brushes

Heads: calf snare batter and Remo Coated Ambassador tom and bass drum batters

Hardware: DW 7000 hi-hat stand and 9000 single pedal

Daniel adds that for Angélique Kidjo and other pop gigs, he uses a setup with two snare drums, 12" and 13" toms, and a 16" floor tom with clear Evans heads, with a Coated Powerstroke 3 on the bass drum. He'll also use a different cymbal setup.

just stayed in my hotel room and made my own charts and had to learn them without actually sitting behind the drums. They sent a CD and didn't tell me what to learn. They just said, "Here it is!" We rehearsed three or four days and then went right from the studio to Europe. It was trial by fire.

MD: The gig was such a different physical challenge from your previous work.

Daniel: I learned a lot from our front-of-the-house engineer, Patrick Murray, who's done big rock tours. He said, "You have to hit the drums hard for me to get the attack I need to mix you right." I wound up changing my setup, switching heads, sticks, and cymbals. The cymbals I tended to use before were thin and pretty—old K's and things that have color. But that stuff doesn't even compute when you play a big show. And of course I had to change the way I hit the drums, the velocity.

If I don't play with that kind of intensity, Angélique will turn in a second: "What!

Where's the energy?" She's cool, though. It's very different from an acoustic situation like Anat's, where the sound you create on the drums is what's happening. With Angélique, it's more about getting a sound that will fit into the mix and be part of a larger electric whole.

I also realized a lot of "inside" things, like that small rolls or colors that I normally use just don't fit in, don't even get *heard*. Instead, everything you play has to have a function, a purpose.

MD: You have plenty of formal conservatory training, but it seems you always had a "seeker" approach, journeying beyond the classroom. Not everyone can follow through with packing up and seeking out music sources around the world.

Daniel: It's also found close to home. I went to Mannes School of Music, and the custodian was a great conga player who was friends with all those great musicians in the Bronx. So I hung with him a lot.

MD: That's New York. I'm sure you didn't anticipate the custodian being a conservatory resource.

Daniel: It was a very fertile time for that kind of music in New York. I also met lots of Israeli musicians who shared their knowledge of Arabic and North African music. So I started getting into Moroccan music, Yemenite music, and I fell in love with classical Arabic music as well. Then I took a couple trips to Israel, then Egypt. It also led to a minor obsession with playing the oud.

And when I lived in the East Village, there were rumberos playing every day in the park. I spent a lot of time playing there, learning how to fit in with others and how the conversation between drums happens.

In the early '90s, there were also lots of opportunities in New York dance classes. A dance studio might have an Afro-Cuban, Haitian, Senegalese, or Malian dance class—you name it. A lot of the drummers and teachers were amazing. So I started going to those. Some of the drummers started taking me to play Haitian and Afro-Cuban ceremonies in Brooklyn. That was amazing, because it involved playing for ritual experiences.

At first I didn't understand most of what was going on. But once you start playing, it's a whole other thing from a gig. You have to play music for people who believe in the spirit world, and it's super-important to keep the rhythm going continually. There's nothing like learning how to play in 6/8 by playing just the bell for eight hours straight. It becomes part of your body. I remember once having an experience while I was playing and having this feeling: "Who's playing the bell? Oh! I'm playing the bell!" It gets inside you that way.

MD: Even though you're making a mark with your mixtures of world influences, you've still cited straight-ahead jazz players as your main influences.

Daniel: There's something about those older jazz guys. They might give a lesson to you and not even play the drums; they may just talk about music and life.

Finding out who *you* are is a big issue. Billy Higgins talked to me about a period when Elvin began to dominate everything and Billy realized, "Man! I don't know *what* to play now." But he told himself, "Well, I just have to be me. I'm not Elvin." To hear *Billy Higgins* say that, it's heavy. If he *had* tried to play like that, we wouldn't have had Billy Higgins.

Another time I remember sitting with him and he talked about Kenny Clarke the whole time. Here I was talking to a master, and he's just talking about *his* master! That's the point: You have to remember that people have given their lives to make the music, to push it ahead for all of us.



BLACK SHEEP.

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Buddy



Rich

UNSTOPPABLE

When Buddy Rich took charge behind the kit, the air crackled.

Buddy aimed to excite, to give audiences their money's worth with precision, sophistication, and world-class quality. Oh, he could be as sensitive on a brush ballad as anyone. But his true trademarks—what people still marvel at today—were his ferociously powerful swing and his mind-boggling solos.

In this special issue commemorating Rich on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his passing, **Jeff Potter** tells the tale of his ascension and eventual unrivaled billing as “the World’s Greatest Drummer.” Next, **Steve Fidyk** analyzes some classic performances. Then **Ken Micallef** chats with *MD* Pro Panelists Antonio Sanchez, Jim Keltner, and Terri Lyne Carrington about Buddy’s ongoing relevance.

Buddy Rich’s story, like his drumming, has many fascinating angles, and it’s one for the ages.

Born to it. It’s an expression too casually used. In rare cases, though, it truly fits. Think Judy Garland, Andre Agassi, Michael Jackson. Think Buddy Rich. The historic early photos of the tiny Buddy wunderkind are showbiz cute and even a tad haunting. There he stands, on stage in a bell-bottom sailor suit and a Buster Brown haircut. His adult-size sticks are poised above an angled snare as he poses, dwarfed behind an ear-high Ludwig bass drum.

Rich’s life was the stage from start to finish, and the drummer was an artist bred in the hardworking, hard-traveling world of vaudeville. Much has been made of the amazing “natural talents” of Rich, who learned by doing, not through formal instruction, and who claims to have rarely practiced. But those who bandy about the “born to it” label must remember that natural talent is a nebulous gift. Having the guts to embrace it, nurture it, and work hard with unyielding tenacity is the only road to greatness; it’s the road that Buddy chose and never took for granted.

In his cover story in the January 1977

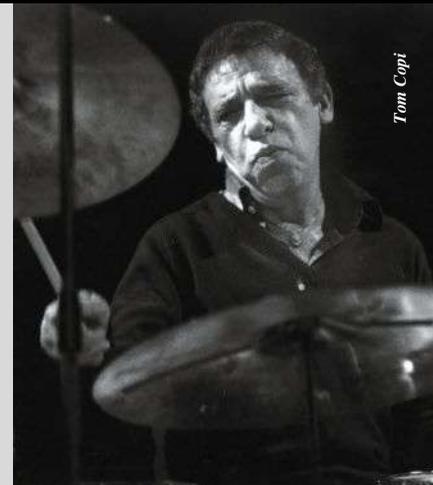
debut issue of *Modern Drummer* magazine, Buddy said, “You only get better by playing. You could sit around in a room, in a basement with a set of drums, all day long, and practice rudiments and try to develop speed. But until you start playing with a band, you can’t learn technique, you can’t learn taste, you can’t learn how to play with a band and for a band.”

As the great painters humbly revered a blank canvas, Rich respected the stage as a sacred place where artists must give their all. Every time he manned the kit, it was with a committed intensity. He performed at a high level of musicianship and technical skill, with a consuming, passionate, even fierce attitude that earned his reputation as one of the greatest—some say *the* greatest—drummers of all time.

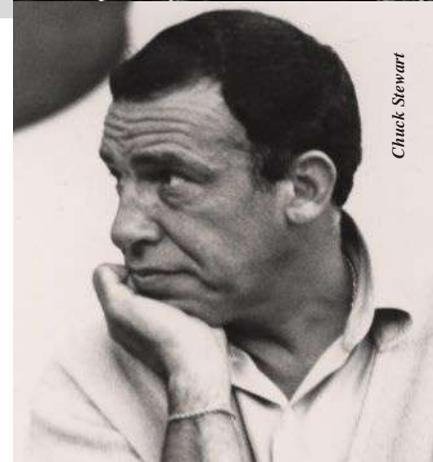
Bernard “Buddy” Rich was born in Brooklyn, New York, on September 30, 1917, to the vaudeville performers Robert and Bess Rich. The couple kept their eyes and ears open for hints of talent in their toddler that could be nurtured for future inclusion in the family act. What followed astonished even the seasoned stage par-



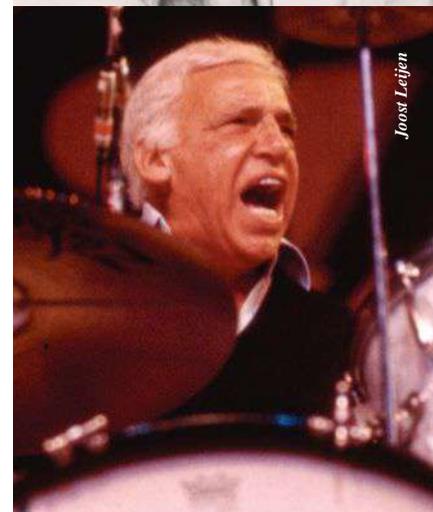
Tom Copi



Tom Copi



Chuck Stewart



Joost Leijen



ents. By one year old, Buddy revealed rhythmic talents, keeping steady beats with silverware and anything at hand, whacking rhythms about the house before he could walk.

By eighteen months, he was centered in a vaudeville spotlight, playing under the billing “Traps, the Drum Wonder.” At four, he was a highly paid professional and appeared singing and dancing on Broadway in *Pinwheel*. By seven he was touring nationally and traveled to Australia for an extended eighteen-month stint.

The itinerant entertainer eventually expanded his solo act, using an orchestra behind his singing, dancing, and drum bits. With little time for schooling or socializing, Buddy once reflected, “My education took place on the road.” His sister Marge put it more bluntly: “He never had a childhood.”

In his teens, Buddy was increasingly exposed to jazz and gravitated to swing music, which offered possibilities beyond the novelty limitations of his touring act. He came to admire the big

band drumming of seminal greats such as Chick Webb, Jo Jones, Dave Tough, and Gene Krupa; with the latter he would eventually maintain a long friendship and share the spotlight of swing-era drum stardom.

The arc of Buddy’s solos took listeners through escalating energy tiers, finally climaxing in a barrage that would show all the drummer fans in the front rows who was boss.

Following a succession of gigs with lesser-known artists, Rich seized an opportunity at age eighteen to flash his jazz chops in a higher-profile setting, swinging behind clarinetist Joe Marsala. The bandleader took the confident up-and-comer aboard a steady 1937 engagement at New York City’s Hickory House. Known for discovering future stars, Marsala hit pay dirt with Buddy and, later, a young Shelly Manne.

Rich’s stock climbed higher in 1938, when the drummer joined trumpeter

Bunny Berigan’s band for six months, while Berigan was basking in the success of his classic hit, “I Can’t Get Started.” Another career advance occurred the following year, when Buddy was enlisted by star clarinetist Artie Shaw, whose big band was touring in the wake of the smash hit “Begin the Beguine.” Buddy can be heard kicking the group on sides such as “Serenade to a Savage” (1939).

Shaw unexpectedly abandoned his prize lineup, and Tommy Dorsey—famous for raiding other bands for their MVPs—swooped in and nabbed Rich. The round-toned trombonist, known as “the Sentimental Gentleman of Swing,” enjoyed a career peak with Buddy at the helm. But things would get even bigger when a self-assured, skinny crooner named Frank Sinatra joined the act. The phenomenal success of the new vocalist brought heightened fame to the band but also increased the load of ballads, miffing the restless drummer. Nevertheless, Sinatra and Rich were roommates and became longtime friends.

By 1941, Buddy had won the top slot in the prestigious *DownBeat* polls. Outside of Dorsey’s dance-oriented format, he got the chance to blow off steam on more jazz-oriented gigs, like his 1942 stint with alto sax great Benny Carter. But when Dorsey added strings to his band that same year, Rich became further disheartened and decided the outfit was no longer the best forum to spotlight his talents. With mounting profes-

sional dissatisfaction compounded by personal relationship problems, he quit dramatically to join the Marines.

Following his discharge in 1944, Buddy rejoined Dorsey for a fat fee. The rejuvenated drummer can be heard floor-tom pounding and kicking up a storm behind his signature white pearl Slingerland Radio King drumset on Dorsey tracks such as “The Minor Goes Muggin’” (1945). But soon he again grew restless, realizing that the only career move that would truly satisfy him and

provide a proper platform for his talents was to lead his own big band. Sinatra, now a superstar, believed in Buddy's grit and in 1946 helped finance his first ensemble.

But times were changing. The big band era was ebbing, and Buddy was swimming against the tide. His fine band featured charts by the top arranger Tadd Dameron and stellar soloists including Al Kohn and Zoot Sims. Yet despite the positive reception, the band was a financial bust. Still, it's an endeavor that the proud Buddy never regretted.

In addition to traveling with his band, Rich played several tours for the legendary Jazz at the Philharmonic series, cutting loose behind a myriad of the era's top stars. He also worked with Charlie Ventura's "Big Four" in 1951, and in 1953 he began a long, intermittent association with star trumpeter Harry James and his big band. Buddy can be heard in high gear on the 1954 live LP *Harry James at the Hollywood Palladium*, firing off a fine solo feature on "Sugar Foot Stomp."

Although Rich is most commonly associated with the big band format, he also cut sides outside of that mold with a host of giants. Taking on bop, he played with the kings, as heard on a collection of 1950 sides by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, *Bird and Diz*—listen to his snapping drive on cuts like "Bloomdido." The drummer also lent a lighter, elegant touch to charming classic tracks by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong on *Ella and Louis* (1956), an album that also included pianist Oscar Peterson. Other standout recordings include Rich's work with Lester Young and Nat Cole, heard on the 1946 cuts collected on *Lester Young Trio*; his spirited swinging partnership with Harry "Sweets" Edison on the 1955 LP *Buddy and Sweets*; and the mega-chops team united on *The Lionel Hampton, Art Tatum, Buddy Rich Trio* (1955), an album that showcased Buddy's crisp brushwork. Rich also occasionally featured his singing talents and even cut three vocal-focused LPs for Verve, best heard on *Buddy Rich Sings Johnny Mercer* (1956).

Between the late '50s and early '60s, Buddy recorded frequent dates as a



sideman and also led his own quintet while continuing with James. But his true calling continued to beckon. Despite the further decline of big bands—most were now nostalgia acts—Buddy left James and once again started his own big band. According to Rich, many of his peers warned him, "You're going to lose everything you have." This time, though, momentum took hold, and from 1966 until his passing in 1987, he led many successful configurations of the Buddy Rich Big Band.

Unbound by the constraints of a "dance" group, Buddy was free to swing at full burn. And he could now put his best foot forward with new arrangements deftly designed to incorporate dazzling centerpiece drum solos.

The new group proved a winner right out of the gate with its classic performance of the exciting and complex "West Side Story Medley" from the LP *Swingin' New Big Band, Live at the Chez* (1966), a ten-minute tour-de-force that featured one of Buddy's breathtaking solos and would become a concert staple. Another signature piece from this period that Buddy owned was the harrowing rocket-tempo "Channel One Suite," from one of his

finest discs, the live *Mercy, Mercy* (1968). Other signature crowd pleasers were "Groovin' Hard," featured on *Keep the Customer Satisfied* (1970), and the chops-buster "Time Check," from *The Roar of '74* (1973).

Further highlight LPs among the big band's sizeable output include *Big Swing Face* (1967), *Buddy Rich in London* (1972), *Big Band Machine* (1975), the boldly named *The Greatest Drummer That Ever Lived With...the Best Band I Ever Had* (1977), and a fine final recording, *Mr. Drums: Live on King Street, San Francisco* (1985).

Always visually dynamic, Rich arched over his kit with a big-toothed beam that was half smile and half snarl. His pointed, explosive, and precise chart interpretations lent full-blooded drama to arrangements. And his commanding injection of swing adrenaline coursed through every player on the bandstand, pushing the ensemble and soloists ever harder, ever more transcendent.

If all that weren't enough, his centerpiece showcase was designed to leave 'em drop-jawed. One of the great soloists, Buddy never noodled around. The arc of his solos took listeners through escalating energy tiers, finally climaxing in a barrage that would show all the drummer fans in the front rows who was boss.





In 1974, Rich briefly diverted from the road and led a septet at his own nightclub, Buddy's Place in New York City, and then resumed with the big band. He continued touring his brand name around the world until a heart attack necessitated a performing hiatus in 1983. Ever unsinkable, Buddy returned to drumming and traveling despite doctors' warnings, but the heart and the beat continued strong, and he eventually resumed a schedule of nine months on the road a year.

Through the '80s, the master appeared with several major orchestras, performing an augmented arrangement of the "West Side Story Medley," including an appearance in London with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. But Rich's seemingly endless energy faltered in 1987, when he was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. Buddy died on April 2, 1987, following surgery, at age sixty-nine.

It's a testament to his art that Rich remains highly influential to drummers today. Even as musical styles continued to change, the phenom inspired several generations. When big bands faded after the '40s, he remained a vital force. In the '60s, as jazz shifted radically and pop music morphed with the dominance of rock, Buddy charged on successfully, and drummers in those newer scenes still looked to him as a standard. Buddy was often unblinkingly critical—even dismissive—of anything he deemed superficial, and plenty of rock drummers caught his ire, spurring comments like "Very few of them can play." Yet despite the questionable carps, drummers from those genres continued to embrace him as an inspiration. Buddy's influential longevity authenticated his values. Never claiming to be at the forefront of innovation or on top of trends, Buddy simply contended rightly that music and musicians of class and quality would endure.

In a final television interview a short time before his death, the indomitable Buddy Rich, who'd grown from the tiny "Traps" to become a true musical giant, beamed excitedly as he spoke of his ongoing rigorous touring schedule. "I am having my childhood now," he said. "I'm having the best time of my life right now."

When soloing, Buddy could easily unleash complex combinations, but his phenomenal technique also allowed him to deliver startling thrills with the "simplest"—yet ultimately most challenging—of stickings, such as basic single-stroke rolls, double strokes, and triplets. In one effective showpiece, Buddy would pause dramatically, initiate a slow alternating left-right, and then gradually close it into a roll at shocking hyper-speed. Smoothing things to a blurring hum, he'd crescendo to high volume, then decrescendo to a whisper without compromising the tightness of the roll. Just when the audience thought they'd been hit with the knockout punch, Buddy would angle the sticks and, yes, the tight roll would be continued on the rim. For the climax, he'd bring it back to full throttle, then drop-kick into a blazing ensemble finale. In the crowd, heads would shake in disbelief.

Brilliant musical prowess certainly took the drummer far, but Rich also enjoyed the rare position of being a star—not just in the limited sense of being a jazz star, but one recognized by the general public. He was able to parlay his extroverted, quick-witted personality into a wider media presence. By the early '40s he had appeared in Hollywood films and was a star *drummer* along with Gene Krupa, but it was his later frequent presence on television that reinforced his household name.

"The World's Greatest Drummer" moniker was good promo for media bites, and Buddy was frequently seen

joking it up on Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show* couch, splitting boards with karate chops, then bounding behind the kit for a knock-'em-dead solo. He also made celebrity rounds on staples such as *The Merv Griffin Show* and *The Mike Douglas Show*, along with cameo pop-ins on sitcoms. And who could resist his famous *Muppet Show* drum battle with Animal?

Buddy's life was a survival success story in the tough, bare-fisted world of show business: Remaining vital for nearly seven decades was a fighter's task. It was no secret that this man of complex personality could often be scrappy, and tales of Rich abrasively chewing out his young musician employees are infamous. Yet Buddy had honed his own professionalism under similarly stern leaders such as Artie Shaw and Tommy Dorsey. While many band alumni found his leadership style excessive, others shrugged it off merely as "Buddy boot camp." Undeniably, the person Rich drove the hardest and demanded the most from was himself.

Singer Mel Tormé, a longtime friend of Buddy's, also experienced the difficult side of the man, but through ups and downs they remained dear friends until the end. In his final days of illness, Rich asked Tormé to write his biography. In his loving tribute, *Traps, the Drum Wonder: The Life of Buddy Rich*, Tormé says in the introduction, "Cantankerous, abrasive, witty, charming, charismatic, sentimental, and loving, he was the stuff that authors' dreams are made of."

Buddy's Best

by Steve Fidyk

Buddy Rich was the first jazz drummer I saw perform live as a kid, and experiencing his intensity in a club at such a young age left a deep impression on me. It's an understatement to say that he was one of a kind. His sound was always supportive, but it also cut through each section of his band like a razor blade. He used big drums—which had a major influence on his sound and projection. His setup included a 14x24 bass drum (with a moleskin patch and a wooden beater), a 9x13 rack tom, two 16x16 floor toms, and a 5x14 snare drum. His Avedis Zildjian cymbals, which included a 20" ride, two 18" crashes, a pair of 14" hi-hats, and a 6" splash, shimmered when he struck them. He preferred wood-tip sticks—slightly heavier than a pair of 7As—and the sensitivity of Remo Coated Diplomat drumheads helped complement his exceptionally wide dynamic range.

Most drummers are in awe of Buddy's technical command in playing drum solos. But if you dig a little deeper into his

style and listen to the way he interprets section and ensemble figures, you'll also hear a supreme, articulate accompanist. Buddy's time feel was right down the middle of the beat. The late Jim Chapin once told me that, in his opinion, Buddy had the most accurate time, from beat to beat, of any drummer he ever heard.

For a taste of Rich's intensity, check out "Come Back to Me" from the Sammy Davis Jr. recording *The Sounds of '66*. For an example of Buddy's hi-hat phrasing and articulation, listen to "Chelsea Bridge" from his own solo album *Mercy, Mercy*. For a sample of his early soloing, pick up the 1940 Tommy Dorsey recording *That Sentimental Gentleman* and listen to the tom and snare drum solos on "Quiet Please."

Excerpts from two of Rich's most famous drum solos are transcribed below. The first one features his trademark single-stroke roll and appears on the track "Love for Sale" from *Big Swing Face*.



This second transcription comes from the beginning of Buddy's legendary solo on "West Side Story Medley," which appears on the album *Swingin' New Big Band, Live at the Chez*. (The complete "West Side Story Medley" drum solo is posted at modern drummer.com.)

The Bar Is Here

Buddy Rich set the bar for technique and dazzle at a level that many observers feel will never be surpassed. MD Pro Panelists Antonio Sanchez, Jim Keltner, and Terri Lyne Carrington remind us why his skills are as important to examine today as they've ever been.

GIVE THIS DRUMMER SOME MORE!

Antonio Sanchez

Pat Metheny's current rhythmic foil received the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship while he was attending Berklee in 1994, so he's well equipped to speak volumes, not only about the master drummer's technique but also about his musical legacy. In fact, here Sanchez tells us he believes that Rich is long overdue for a stylistic reevaluation and greater inclusion academically.

When I first arrived at Berklee, I was really impressed by speed and technique. When I heard Buddy Rich, I couldn't believe somebody could play like he did, and with only a single pedal. And Buddy wasn't the youngest guy when he was playing with all that technique and control. He played that way to the end, which was startling.

When I started getting more into music and not just chops, I realized that Buddy's swing was also ridiculous, and his feel and use of dynamics were remarkable as well. He could play a super-long solo and keep his stamina up forever. And he kept it interesting by playing with such nuance and change of tempos and dynamics and extreme volume shifts; he's a real lesson in musicality, technique, chops, and showmanship. This guy was a regular on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson. Can you imagine a drummer being a regular guest with Jay Leno now?

Buddy Rich is a huge example to follow for any drummer in terms of proficiency and technique. But his legacy goes beyond that. He didn't play only for musicians—he could really dazzle non-musicians, and that's why he was a regular on *The Tonight Show*. Buddy could play drum solos and keep *anybody* entertained. It's amazing when you can cross over like that and connect with a regular audience.

And he could swing. You always think of Buddy as this flamboyant drummer

with huge technique, but listen to him playing with Lester Young. He's playing brushes most of the time, and he's super-swinging. Or with Lionel Hampton, Oscar Peterson, Art Tatum, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, or Herb Ellis. He's swinging his *butt* off. A lot of guys back then had great feel, but they didn't have Buddy's chops.

There are so many drummers today with crazy chops, but I don't think these guys could entertain everybody like Buddy did. Drummers are amazed by chops, but if you asked those guys to play a long drum solo for regular people, most would be lost. Buddy had this combination of technique *and* passion on the drums—he was a force of nature. It's like an incredible athlete: His talent speaks to you even if you don't understand what he's doing. And Buddy wasn't one of those guys who made it look effortless. It *was* effortless for him, but there was so much passion on his face.

Another aspect of Buddy is his big band recording of "West Side Story." The music is very challenging. It's a really long composition, and [composer] Leonard Bernstein himself was impressed by Buddy's interpretation. It's very nuanced, detailed, energetic, and dynamic.

Buddy is really underrated. When you go to music school, people discuss Philly Joe Jones, Papa Jo Jones, Max Roach, Art Blakey, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones...but they don't mention Buddy that much, except for his chops. He's underrated, because when it comes to swing, feel, dynamics, and his actual music, he's *amazing*. He was a leader for such a big part of his career, then people related to him more as a showman. Then the chops and the tantrums, all these things took over. He had a larger-than-life personality, and that may have overshadowed his music and his musical legacy.



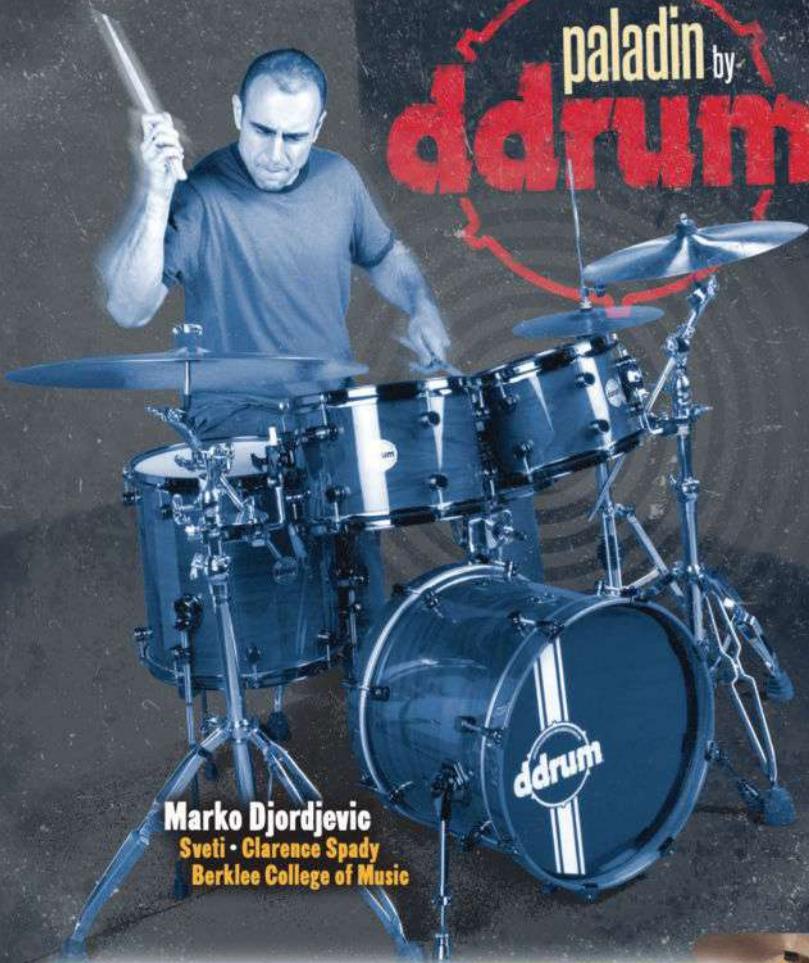
I first saw Buddy Rich play at the Playboy Jazz Festival when I was eleven. I was blown away—he played so fast. I actually didn't care about jazz then. But I was trying to understand his hands and how he was moving. I was really floored by his drumming. It was also special that he was a drummer and the bandleader; that made a huge impression on me.

While I was still living in Mexico I was really into Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Weckl, Dennis Chambers, and Steve Gadd. I got into Buddy through the Buddy Rich Memorial Concerts on VHS. They featured all those guys as well as Gregg Bissonette and Louie Bellson. At the end of the tapes there was footage of Buddy playing. I couldn't believe what this guy could do. The drummers in the concerts were great in terms of technique, but Buddy was in a league of his own.

The weirdest thing about Buddy is the disconnect between his legacy as a drummer and his legacy as a musician. It's a strange phenomenon. Everybody says, "Check out the greats," but they don't mention Buddy that much. That should change. When I do clinics or weeklong workshops, I always talk about Buddy Rich. People have to be aware that he was not just an amazing technician, but he was an amazing *musician*. He has an incredible musical legacy. We're way overdue for a reevaluation of Buddy Rich.

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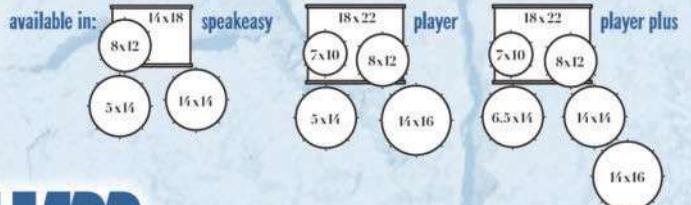
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BUDDY RICH: BEYOND COMPARE *Jim Keltner*

The revered Los Angeles drummer went to unusual lengths to express to Rich what his drumming meant to him. Here Keltner recounts that tale and puts the great one's uniqueness in historical perspective.

I am convinced that Buddy was not normal. He was a savant. There's no other logical, rational way to understand it. I've heard tapes of Buddy at five years old, and he's already playing with that incredibly sophisticated sense of syncopation that a lot of grown men today would love to have. Freddie Gruber, who was Buddy's best friend, played me those tapes. On the first one, Buddy's playing on the floor, on a cabinet, on a chair.... By the time he finally gets to his snare drum solo, your jaw has already dropped. I was crying.

Later, after Freddie's death, his lawyer found another tape, and on that one Buddy's playing everything including a small teacup, which he treats like a cowbell. Very sophisticated rhythmically for anyone, let alone a five-year-old. Then he starts scatting, and you wonder, *How can a little kid be doing this?* He goes on to play "Stars and Stripes Forever" on a snare drum, accompanied by a pit band. It's remarkable.

Buddy will always be relevant for all generations, because everything about him was completely above everyone else. He was the highest-paid sideman of the 1940s, and he was definitely the champion when it came to technique—Buddy



Rob Shanahan courtesy of Praise

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BUDDY RICH

was a technical freak of nature. Papa Jo Jones, Gene Krupa, Dave Tough, and Big Sid Catlett are other beautiful drummers of the swing era, but none of those guys had the hands that Buddy had. Philly Joe Jones famously said, "I don't want to play what Buddy plays, but I want that machine." He told that to Freddie Gruber, who told it to me. That says it all right there.

Once, back in the '70s, I went to see Buddy with a friend, percussionist Emil Richards, at a supper club in Glendale. Buddy played with his band, and it was

astonishingly good, as it always was. After the show Emil said, "Let's go back and see Buddy." We go backstage, and there he is, sitting on a barstool, smoking a cigarette with his pants off, and he's got a towel over his legs. I guess that's how Buddy was most comfortable after a show. He was *soaked*. The man truly gave a hundred percent every night. He never coasted, ever. I never saw Buddy *not* deliver one hundred percent—and I saw him play all the time. I went to Disneyland often, just to see him. It was truly something

to behold. And remember, Buddy didn't have a double pedal; he did it all with one bass drum pedal and his hands. Incredible.

Anyway, there's Buddy in the middle of all these L.A. session guys, sitting above them on this high barstool. They're all looking up at him, like they're worshipping him. Everybody was kind of quiet. I looked at Buddy for a second and had this urge to go over and speak to him. I said, "Buddy, I've seen you many times, and that was the most amazing show I've ever seen. I've never seen you play like that before. It was unbelievable." He's smiling. And then I say, "Can I give you a kiss?" Emil said everybody in the room looked at each other, like, "Oh my God, Buddy is going to deck this guy!" But Buddy said,

"He is still the benchmark by which all are measured, and he's considered by many to be the greatest drummer that ever lived. We've done the memorial concerts since 1988, and there's product and clips on YouTube. After his death, his legacy has taken on a life of its own.

"He set the bar so high that a lot of people are awestruck. Really famous drummers are nervous to play at the memorial concerts. They'll say, 'I'm coming here to play in his name, and I'm really nervous because I want to live up to it.'

"He was so much bigger than most people think. He had so many different personalities and was loving and kind, and he never wanted to be given credit for things he did for other people and the charity work he was involved in. He was a true humanitarian."

—Cathy Rich, Buddy's daughter

"Sure." So I kissed him on the cheek and said, "Man, there is nobody like you in the whole world."

Now, Buddy was very aware of the younger drummers at the time. He always said that Steve Gadd was his favorite. Buddy knew who everybody was. And I think that when he saw that I was sincerely blown away, he took that to heart. So when I kissed him, he didn't flinch. And everybody in the room was relieved that Buddy didn't kill me.

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- Includes 10x8 and 12x9" rack toms and a 14x5.5" snare
- 22x17" Bass drum and a 16x16" floor tom with raven black, honey amber or matte black kits
- 20" Kick drum and 14" floor tom with natural or cranberry red kit

HARDWARE, CYMBALS AND SIDE SNARE SOLD SEPARATELY
COLORS VARY BY LOCATION

(SCB2FS50) (SCB0F50)
LIST: \$1099.99 - \$1180.00

YOUR CHOICE

\$649⁹⁹

SAVE UP TO 44% OFF LIST

FREE

 \$50 GIFT CARD WITH A STAGE CUSTOM KIT PURCHASE (GIFT CARD TO BE USED ON FUTURE PURCHASES)



HIGH-QUALITY YAMAHA SOUNDS ON THE NEW AND COMPACT DTX430K ELECTRONIC KIT

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- Yamaha's high-quality tone generator with realistic acoustic drum, cymbal, and percussion sounds
- High-end oak, maple, beech and birch drums, with velocity-sensitive samples that respond to your playing dynamics
- Play along in different styles, with or without the recorded drum track, solo the bass player, or with the full ensemble

(DTX430K) LIST: \$899.99

\$599⁹⁹

SAVE \$300 OFF LIST

FREE

 \$25 GIFT CARD WITH YOUR DTX430K PURCHASE (GIFT CARD TO BE USED ON FUTURE PURCHASES)



THE YAMAHA DTX540K FEATURES A FULL SET OF TEXTURED CELLULAR SILICONE DRUM PADS

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- 5-Piece electronic kit with DTX500 Tone Generator featuring 449 Voices
- 3-Zone TCS snare, 3 TCS tom pads and 2 three-zone cymbal pads
- 50 Preset drum kits and 20 user kits

KICK PEDAL SOLD SEPARATELY
(DTX540K) LIST: \$2412.00

\$1599⁹⁹

SAVE \$812 OFF LIST

FREE

 \$50 GIFT CARD WITH DTX540K KIT PURCHASE (GIFT CARD TO BE USED ON FUTURE PURCHASES)



CUT THROUGH WITH SHARP ATTACK - THE NEW 14x6.5" STEEL SNARE FROM YAMAHA

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

(SD266A) LIST: \$249.99

\$149⁹⁹

SAVE \$100 OFF LIST



YAMAHA'S INNOVATIVE HEXRACK II TAKES THE NEXT STEP FORWARD

(HXR2LCHII) LIST: \$679.00

\$399⁹⁹

SAVE 41% OFF LIST



HARDWARE ESSENTIALS FROM YAMAHA

\$10 INSTANT REBATE



DESCRIPTION	SALE
SNARE STAND (SS740A)	\$52.99
BOOM CYMBAL STAND (CS755)	\$59.99
BASS DRUM PEDAL (FP7210A)	\$59.99
HI-HAT STAND (HS740A)	\$89.99



Gibraltar
HARDWARE



THE GRETSCH CATALINA MAPLE 6-PIECE KIT IN NEW VIBRANT FINISHES

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- 100% Maple shells
- 22x18" Kick, 10x8 and 12x9" rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16" floor toms and a 14x6" snare
- Guitar Center exclusive satin green or blue burst finish

If you're looking for a versatile set with top-quality sound and features, you need to check out this Gretsch Catalina set. Its maple shells project a warm, round, classic tone you'll fall in love with. The beautiful satin green or blue burst finish is sure to capture everyone's attention.

HARDWARE AND CYMBALS SOLD SEPARATELY
COLORS VARY BY LOCATION
(CMTE8262-5GB) (CMTE8262-5BB) LIST: \$1385.99

NEW

YOUR CHOICE

\$899⁹⁹

SAVE \$486 OFF LIST

FREE



\$100 GIFT CARD WITH CATALINA MAPLE KIT PURCHASE (GIFT CARD TO BE USED ON FUTURE PURCHASES)



GRETSCH ENERGY 5-PIECE STARTER KIT WITH HARDWARE AND SABIAN CYMBALS INCLUDED

- 14x5.5" Snare, 22x18" bass drum, 10x7 and 12x8" rack toms, plus a 16x14" floor tom
- Sabian SBR cymbal pack with hi-hats, crash and ride included
- Kick pedal, and double-braced hardware included
- Non-drilled bass drum for solid, low-end punch

PERCUSSION SOLD SEPARATELY
COLORS VARY BY LOCATION
SELECT STORES

(GEE8256PK)
(GEE8256PKGST)
(GEE8256PKWHT)
LIST: \$1080.00

YOUR CHOICE

\$699⁹⁹

SAVE \$380 OFF LIST



GRETSCH GOLD FLAKE 12x6" SNARE DRUM IN A CUSTOM FINISH

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- 12x6" Mahogany shell projects warmth and tone
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NEW

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- Cable drive system lets you move the cajon positioning
- Special soft beater won't damage the cajon front plate

CAJON SOLD SEPARATELY
(GCP) LIST: \$169.99

NEW

\$99⁹⁹

SAVE \$70 OFF LIST



GIBRALTAR DOUBLE-PEDAL THUNDER FROM THE AVENGER II

\$50 INSTANT REBATE

- Double-chain drive system, adjustable spring tension
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- Easy key access hoop clamp
- Dual surface/self-aligning beater with hardened steel beater shaft

(6611DB) LIST: \$330.00

AFTER \$50 INSTANT REBATE

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SAVE 54% OFF LIST





OCDP 5-PIECE VENICE KITS FEATURING GREAT ORANGE AND GREAT GREEN FINISHES

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- Great Orange kit: 22x20" kick, 10x8 and 12x9" toms, 16x14" floor tom, 14x6" matching snare
- Great Green kit: 20x20" kick, 10x7 and 12x8" toms, 14x12" floor tom, 13x5" matching snare
- Chrome hardware, offset lugs
- Suspension mounts, 12.5mm L-arm attachment clamps

GREAT GREEN



HARDWARE AND CYMBALS SOLD SEPARATELY
SELECT STORES

[OCV5022-ORG] [OCV5020-GRN]
LIST: \$1139.00 - \$1165.00

GREAT GREEN
STARTING AT

\$679⁹⁹

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THE NEWEST AND MOST PRACTICAL, COMPACT SIMMONS KIT EVER

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- 193 Drum sounds, 10 preprogrammed kits and 10 song styles
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- Lightweight and compact makes it ideal for practice

[SDXPRESS] LIST: \$499.99

NEW

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SAVE 60% OFF LIST



AN ALL-IN-ONE 5-PIECE DRUM KIT FROM SOUND PERCUSSION

\$50 INSTANT REBATE

- 22x18" Bass, 10x8 and 12x9" toms, 16x14" floor tom, 14x5" snare
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- Snare stand, hi-hat stand, cymbal stand, bass drum pedal and throne included

[SP5A1NBK] [SP5A1NWR]
LIST: \$599.99

NEW

YOUR CHOICE
AFTER \$50
INSTANT REBATE

\$349⁹⁹

SAVE 41% OFF LIST

WINE RED



PRO FEATURES AND PERFORMANCE - THE SIMMONS SD7PK ELECTRONIC KIT

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- Includes kick pad, 3 tom pads, 2 cymbal pads, 1 hi-hat pad, snare pad with rim detection and hit-hat control pedal
- Over 300 acoustic, electric and percussion sounds; plus 20 factory kits and 30 user kits
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- Aux in, MIDI, USB, headphone out

[SD7PK] LIST: \$1165.99

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SAVE 52% OFF LIST



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KICK PEDAL, THRONE
AND STICKS -
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A 4-PIECE KIT WITH HARDWARE AND CYMBALS INCLUDED

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[SP2BK] [AGTCP1316] LIST: \$694.99

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\$30 INSTANT REBATE

[RRSD5] [RRFD5] LIST: \$199.99

AFTER \$30
INSTANT REBATE

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SAVE 50% OFF LIST



WARM UP BEFORE THE GIG WITH A SOUND PERCUSSION PRACTICE PAD

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

[SP6SSP] LIST: \$34.99

\$20⁹⁹

SAVE 40% OFF LIST





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- Innovative crashes deliver raw, dark and dirty bite
 - AAX, Xs20 or B8 Pro series
- (31600B) LIST: \$168.00
 (21600XB) LIST: \$338.00
 (XS1600P) LIST: \$218.00

B8 PRO 16" OZONE
\$89⁹⁹

SAVE 46% OFF LIST

XS20 16" OZONE
\$129⁹⁹

SAVE 40% OFF LIST

AAX 16" OZONE
\$199⁹⁹

SAVE 39% OFF LIST



FREE

GET A FREE CYMBAL BAG WITH ANY SABIAN O-ZONE CYMBAL PURCHASE REDEEMABLE BY MAIL.



CHECK OUT THE B8 PERFORMANCE SET +16 CYMBAL PREPACK FROM SABIAN – FREE 16" B8 PRO O-ZONE CRASH INCLUDED

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- B8 Performance Set +16 includes a 20" Ride, 16" thin crash, 14" hi-hats and a free B8 Pro 16" O-Zone crash in box
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\$299⁹⁹

SAVE 45% OFF LIST



MOVE TO THE NEXT STAGE WITH THE SABIAN XS20 SUPER SET

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SAVE 40% OFF LIST



FOUR GREAT CYMBALS WITH A FREE 18" CRASH INCLUDED – THE AAXPLOSION PREPACK

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- Includes 14" AAX Stage hi-hats, 16" AAXplosion crash, 21" AAX Stage ride, plus a free 18" AAXplosion crash
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SELECT STORES

(25005XXPGC-NB) LIST: \$1295.00

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SAVE 43% OFF LIST



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(45002-14) LIST: \$381.00

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TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

(45006MF) LIST: \$279.00

NEW

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SAVE 46% OFF LIST



ALWAYS KEEP YOUR CYMBALS SHINING AND WITH A BRIGHT SOUND

(61023N) LIST: \$12.50

\$10⁹⁵

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**A WARM TONED CAJON FROM LP
IN A LIMITED EDITION HOLIDAY WHITE FINISH**

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- Siam Oak front board
- 3 Sets of internal snare wires
- Limited edition white finish
(LP1450-LEX_134711)
LIST: \$259.00

NEW

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**LIGHTWEIGHT AND DURABLE DJEMBES
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TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- Synthetic 7" head
- Fiberglass shell provides extra durability
- Deep bass and intense high tones
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(TFCDJ-7LW) (TFCDJ-7MI)
(TFCDJ-7MO) LIST: \$59.00

NEW

YOUR CHOICE
\$29⁹⁹

SAVE 49% OFF LIST



**TOCA SYNERGY CONGA SET IN CUSTOM FINISH –
INCLUDES HEAVY-DUTY STAND**

\$50 INSTANT REBATE

- Lathed and handcrafted in Thailand by local musicians
- Harvested wood is low-impact to be as environmentally friendly as possible
- 28" Tall, two-ply wood shell construction in an exclusive ebony lacquer finish
- Black powder coated hardware, double-braced stand

(2300TB) LIST: \$385.00

AFTER \$50
INSTANT REBATE

\$199⁹⁹

SAVE 48% OFF LIST



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BONGOS FOR JUST
\$49.99 (2100TB)

**TOCA FREESTYLE ROPE-TUNED DJEMBES
WITH AFRICAN DANCE OR EXOTIC WOOD DESIGN**

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- 12" Carved Street Series or African Dance Freestyle Design
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(TF2DJ-12ADB) (TSSDJ-MCD) LIST: \$124.00 - \$229.00

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STARTING AT
\$73⁹⁹

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TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- Crafted from LP's exclusive plastic formulation
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- Top store exclusive white finish
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LP PERCUSSION AT A SPECIAL PRICE**

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

- LP Cyclops tambourine with versatile tone
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- Includes 10x8 and 12x9" toms, 14x12 and/or 16x14" floor toms, and an 22x18" kick drum, [20" kick and 14" floor tom on natural finish]
- Choose from diamond dust, dark cherry fade, shattered turquoise, red sparkle burst or indigo sparkle finish and GC exclusive raspberry fade, natural lacquer or azure oyster finishes

HARDWARE, CYMBALS AND SNARE SOLD SEPARATELY

COLORS AND CONFIGURATIONS VARY BY LOCATION

(PL42BNS) (PL42S) (PX52LBNS) (PX42BNS) (PL52LXZS) (PL42SBNZ)
(PL40SASMP) (PL42BNSLAO) LIST: \$2307.68 - \$3230.75

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DOUBLE PEDAL WITH ANY
STARCLASSIC PERFORMER
B/B KIT - A \$429 VALUE!
(HP910LSW)



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- 10x8 And 12x9" toms, 16x14" floor tom, 22x18" bass, 14x5.5" snare
- Triple-flanged hoops, streamlined Star-Mount system
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HARDWARE, CYMBALS AND PERCUSSION SOLD SEPARATELY
COLORS AND MODELS VARY BY LOCATION

(VK46M) (VK52K) (VL52K) (VK62S) (VL62S) (VT62S) (VK72S)

LIST: \$812.49 - \$1462.49

4-PIECE STARTING AT

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SAVE UP TO
\$531 OFF LIST

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WITH ANY TAMA
SILVERSTAR KIT
PURCHASE -
A \$39 VALUE!
(KP1)



TAMA'S SOUND LAB PROJECT EMBODIES QUALITY AT A WORKING MUSICIAN'S PRICE

\$50 INSTANT REBATE

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MODELS VARY BY LOCATION

SELECT STORES

(LST1455) (LGM137STA) (LMB1465MMB)
(LGB146NQB) LIST: \$416.65 - \$583.32

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TAMA'S IRON COBRA JUNIOR BASS DRUM PEDALS BRING POWER AND STYLE

NEW AT GUITAR CENTER

- Stylish black finish with red script
- Attractive redesigned footboard with Power Glide Cam design
- Improved base plate and hinge for more control and stability
- Can be outfitted with Cobra Coil (sold separately)

(HP300TWBK) LIST: \$368.00

(HP300BK) LIST: \$148.00

NEW

SINGLE PEDAL

\$74⁹⁹

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DOUBLE PEDAL

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POWER AND STRENGTH FROM THE IRON COBRA LINE

- Cobra Coil accelerates pedal return for effortless playability
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SINGLE PEDAL

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\$199⁹⁹

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Zildjian



FREE SPLASH WHEN YOU BUY ANY A CUSTOM 16" CYMBAL OR LARGER (OR PAIR OF HI-HATS)

Zildjian has been making world-class cymbals for centuries, using ancient metallurgical techniques pioneered by the Turkish masters. This cast cymbal A Custom prepack gives you that legendary sound in a complete setup.

(A20532)

PRICE TOO LOW TO PRINT

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FREE 18" CRASH AND 10" SPLASH INCLUDED WITH THE ZILDJIAN ZHT PRO CYMBAL SET

- Includes 14" hi-hats, 16" medium-thin crash, and 20" medium ride
- Free ZHT 18" fast crash and 10" splash included
- Medium weight
- Bright sounding and melodic

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10" ZILDJIAN ZHT SPLASH INCLUDED



FIVE ESSENTIAL CYMBALS TO HELP YOU BUILD YOUR KIT

\$30 INSTANT REBATE

- Five medium-weight cymbals
- 14" Hi-hats, 16" crash, 20" crash-ride, plus a free 14" crash included

(ZBTC4P-ALT) LIST: \$654.00

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14" ZBT SERIES CRASH CYMBAL INCLUDED IN BOX



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- Superior cast bronze cymbals played by the world's best drummers

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SAVE 43% OFF LIST

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SPECIAL SAVINGS ON REVOLUTIONARY CYMBALS IN A CUSTOM-CONFIGURED PACK

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

(G16AEB52G) LIST: \$1224.00

NEW

\$799⁹⁹

SAVE \$424 OFF LIST



TWO MUST-HAVE ZILDJIAN ZBT CYMBALS FOR ONE LOW PRICE

TOP STORE EXCLUSIVE

(ZBT1016PK) LIST: \$216.00

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INCLUDES 1 PAIR 5A, 1 PAIR 5A ANTIVIBE AND A FREE "PUCK" PRACTICE PAD (SDSP217) LIST: \$47.25

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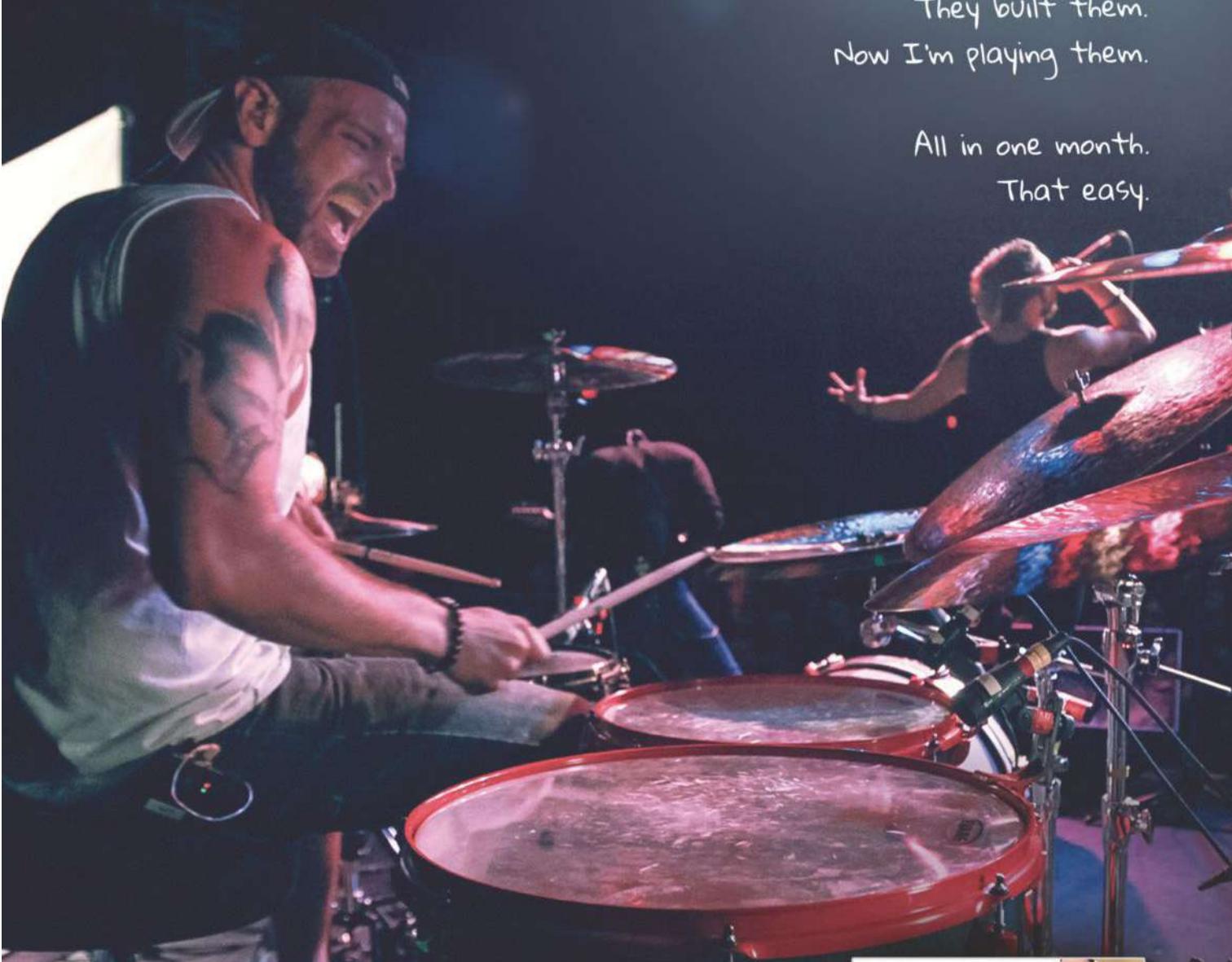




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Terri Lyne Carrington

She's enjoyed a career of superlatives, including a full scholarship to Berklee when she was eleven, last year's Grammy win for her album *The Mosaic Project*, and collaborations with jazz greats from Stan Getz to Esperanza Spalding. But TLC says her greatest career memory is meeting Buddy Rich in 1975—the start of a beautiful friendship.

Knowing Buddy was a life-changing experience for me. He was a very important person in my life, especially in his support of me. "What relevance does Buddy's drumming have today?" is a funny question. In essence we all come from and rest on the shoulders of our predecessors. And Buddy is just that. He's *important*.

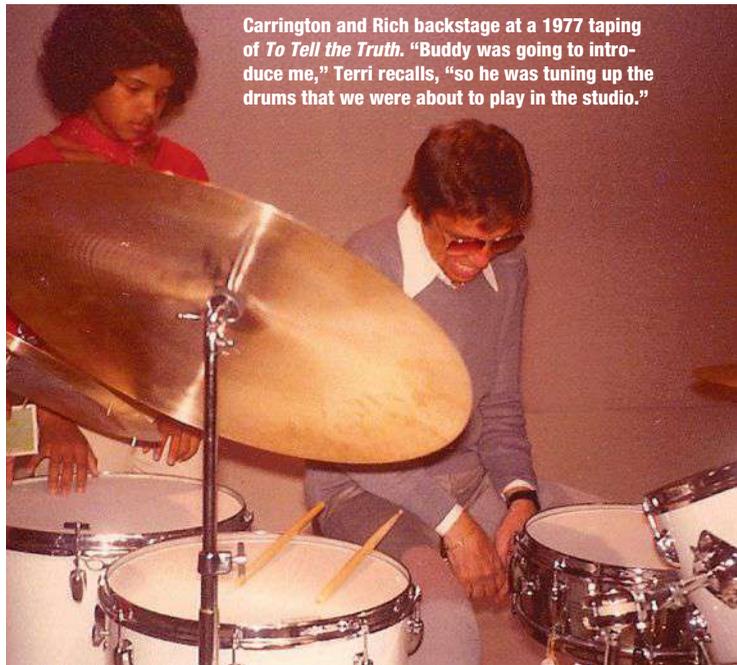
If someone wants to give you a show when they play and impress you with their technique, they have to pay tribute to Buddy Rich. He was the first one to do it at the level that he did it at. There's always an element of what Buddy did that was crowd-pleasing. He gave a good show.

Sometimes people who consider themselves serious drummers, me included, have an aversion to show drumming. The mistake a lot of people make, however, is thinking that Buddy was *only* a show drummer. There was so much more to it than

"What stands out to me is his soloing. A lot of people have great technique, but it's how you put it all together. Buddy's solos were pure composition."

that. That was something he did well and that paid his bills and made him who he was. But he did it with integrity. He wasn't doing tricks like wiping his forehead with a towel with one hand while playing the drums with the other. His style happened to be what people enjoyed watching.

I met Buddy when I was ten years old. Clark Terry brought me to the Wichita Jazz Festival to be a part of his band, and Buddy's band was there too, and I wanted to meet him. Everybody said it wasn't a good time, because he was in a bad mood. Then somebody from Zildjian brought me to meet him—and he *was* in a bad mood. They told Buddy I was playing with Clark Terry, and he said, "Oh yeah? Well, you better not be good!" I said, "Well, who's going to stop me?" Then he said, "Hey, kid, want to play with *my* band?" That was the beginning of a rather intimate relationship.



Carrington and Rich backstage at a 1977 taping of *To Tell the Truth*. "Buddy was going to introduce me," Terri recalls, "so he was tuning up the drums that we were about to play in the studio."

"Everybody still loves and adores Buddy. At the last few [memorial] concerts, young kids knew just as much about him as the older drummers.

"A lot of people I meet tell me they were allowed to stay up late at night to watch Buddy on *The Tonight Show*, and that they would not be playing drums if it weren't for Buddy. One famous drummer told me that Buddy blessed his drumsticks backstage at a concert, and that's why he became famous.

"Buddy was a wonderful husband and father and the kindest, sweetest man I ever knew. I've never dated after he died, because Buddy was a hard act to follow."

—Marie Rich, Buddy's wife



Tom Coppi

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BUDDY RICH

My parents wouldn't let me play with Buddy's band at that festival, because Clark had brought me out there. But not long after that, Buddy came to Massachusetts [Carrington lived in the town of Medford] and had me play with his band. Then he got me my endorsement with Zildjian, which I still have today, thirty-seven years later. Every time he came to Massachusetts, I played in his band. Then he introduced me on the *To Tell the Truth* show. That was pretty cool. But Buddy had a horrible toothache. He said, "This is for you. If it was anybody else, I wouldn't be here."

Buddy's talent was obvious. He was a technical genius. But what made him *super-special* to me was not so much the technique as the compositional aspect of his drumming when he soloed. He was the master at playing drum solos. I'm not talking necessarily about accompanying other people—and I'm not saying he wasn't good at

"His legacy was giving back to people and not putting your playing up on a pedestal. It's doing what you can to help others in the drumming and music community.

"I'm a drummer as well, and just from a fan's point of view, he's my biggest influence, especially because of his work ethic and how he was as a person. He did everything he could to give back to the colleges and universities. He was a virtuoso player, but he was a good man too. He changed many people's lives for the better—people like Neil Peart and Dave Weckl, and so many other iconic drummers."

—Nick Rich, Buddy's grandson

that. But what stands out is his soloing. A lot of people have great technique, but it's how you put it all together. Buddy's solos were pure composition.

Buddy played groups of five and other things that modern fusion and rock and jazz drummers do, very hip stuff. And Buddy was clean and articulate. He taught me that word, *articulation*. When we were on *To Tell the Truth*, the host asked Buddy, "What should we look for in young Terri?" Buddy said, "The ability to keep time, and good articulation." The host said,

"Articulation—what's that?" Buddy said, "So she sounds like she knows what she's doing!" From that moment on I was a stickler for articulation. You want to be clean with your ideas and pull strokes out from the drums with that articulate sound for each stroke. That made a real impact on me.

Antonio Sanchez, Jim Keltner, and Terri Lyne Carrington interviews by Ken Micallef. Cathy, Marie, and Nick Rich interviews by Steven Douglas Losey.



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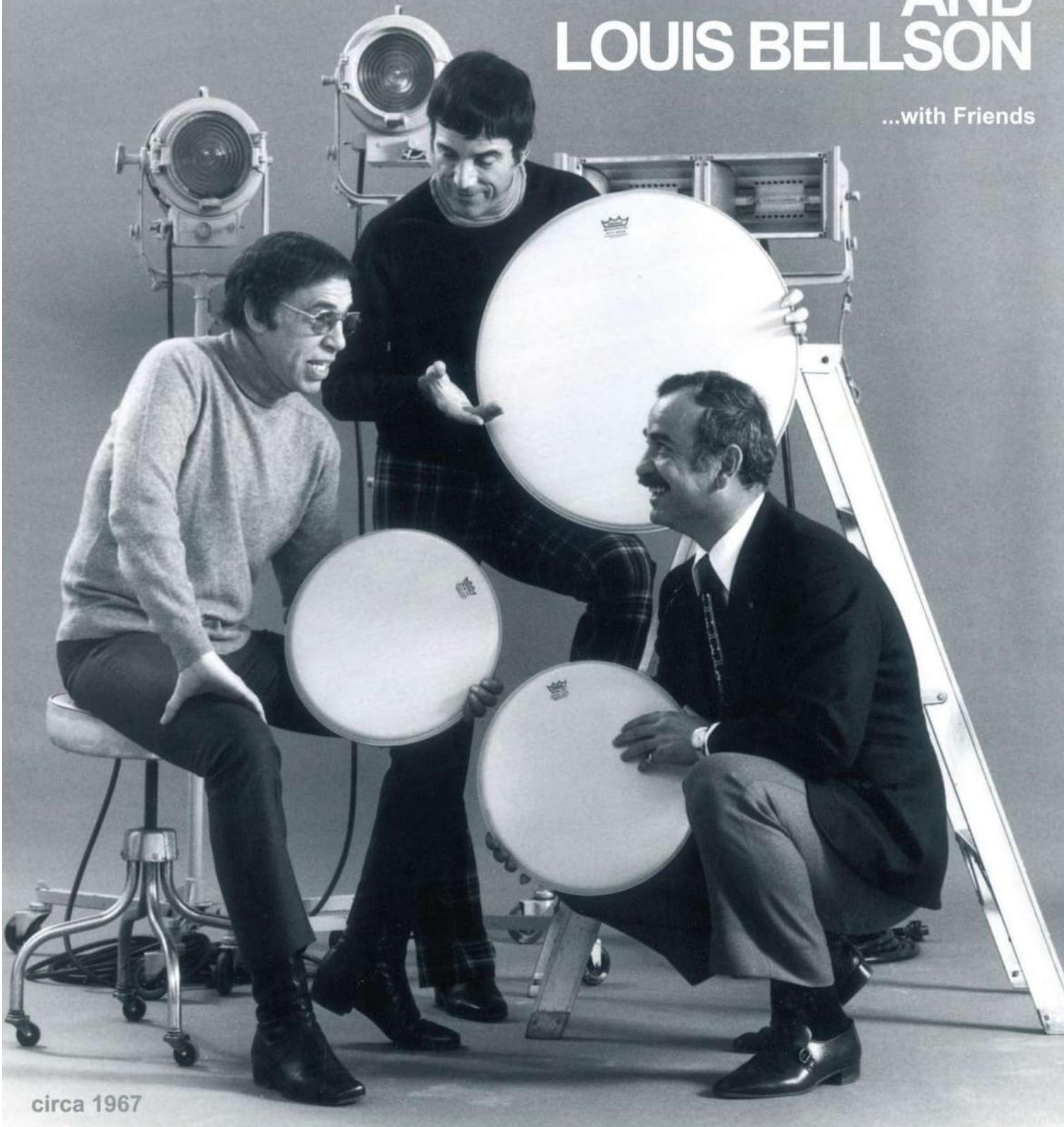
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THE TEDDY CAMPBELL BAND

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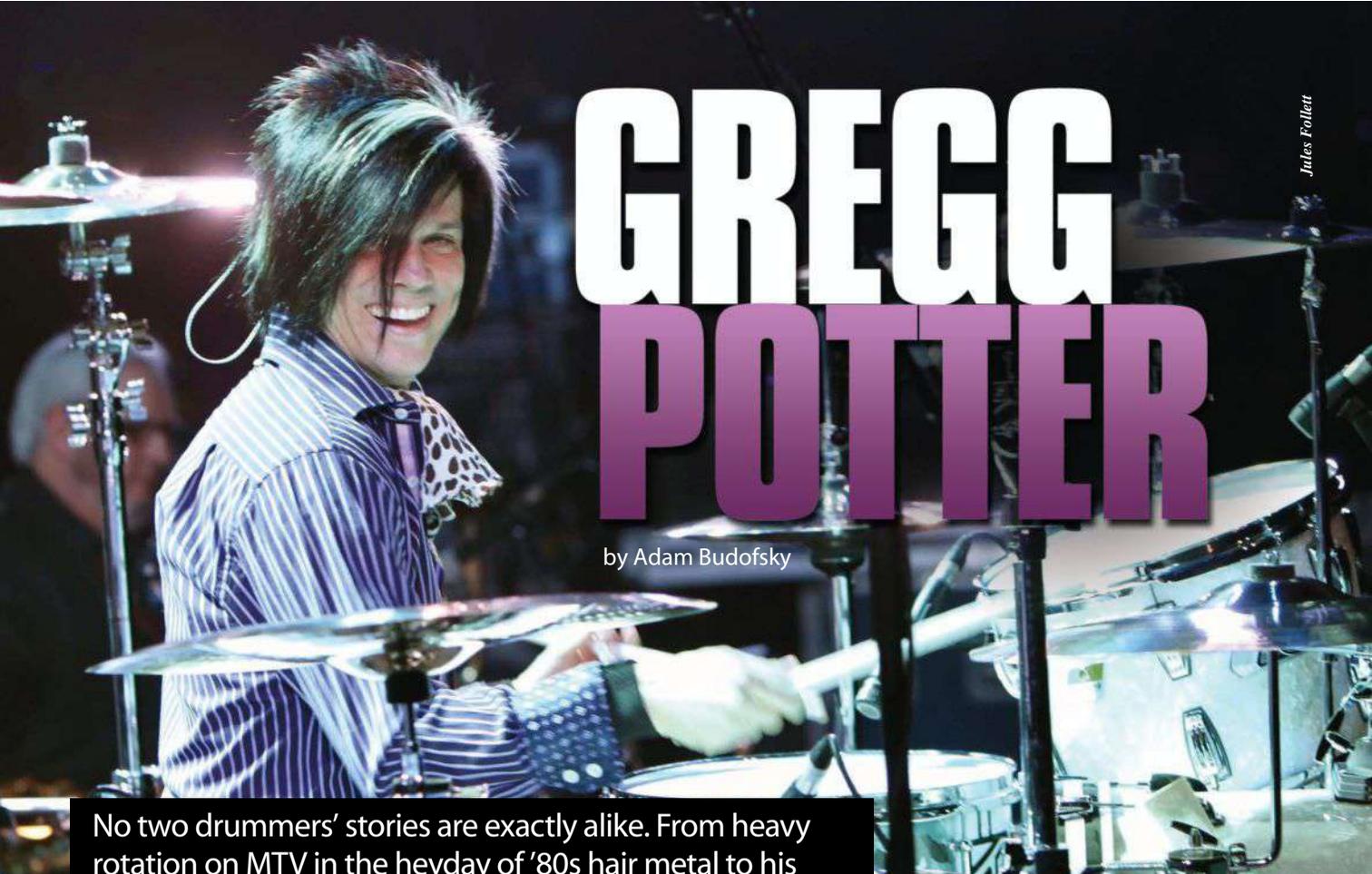
BUDDY RICH AND LOUIS BELLSON

...with Friends



circa 1967





GREGG POTTER

by Adam Budofsky

No two drummers' stories are exactly alike. From heavy rotation on MTV in the heyday of '80s hair metal to his current role as the driver of the **Buddy Rich Band**, it's clear that *very few drummers' career trajectories are like GP's.*

We're going to begin this story with a little white lie.

We interviewed Gregg Potter by phone while he was traveling in the Buddy Rich Band tour bus. Potter and the group were doing a series of dates whose stated purpose was to help keep alive the music of the man who many consider to be the greatest drummer who ever walked the earth....

Actually, if *MD* had hooked up with Gregg a couple days earlier, like we'd originally planned, that statement would be completely accurate. As it was, we weren't able to talk with the journeyman drummer until he returned home to Chicago, where he was taking a break before heading out for more gigs with the group.

But if Gregg Potter knows anything, it's how to kick a band, and how to tell a good story. And an opening scene featuring Potter doing his *Modern Drummer* interview while hurtling down the road at eighty miles an hour in a twenty-ton vehicle with *The Buddy Rich Band* emblazoned on its side—a bus on which, almost thirty years ago, a young Potter, still learning the ropes of the music industry, got to hang with his hero for a quick chat and an autograph—well, that might be worth bending the rules for.

GP, as he often refers to himself, somehow charmingly, is one of drumming's char-

acters. He once, for instance, mailed a life-size stand-up cutout of himself to the *Modern Drummer* offices, which found a home here longer than some past employees did. But on the bandstand, Potter's all business. His energy and focus are simply undeniable. And even among a group of extremely seasoned players, some of whom worked with the band's namesake back in the day, his command is clear.

Now, Gregg is the first to admit that in terms of technique, he's no Buddy. (To be fair, who *is*? In typically self-effacing Potter fashion, he refers to the band's 2012 trek exactly as such, calling it the You're No Buddy tour.) Oh, he doesn't forsake the flash—the man's got skills—but he wisely concentrates on communicating Rich's less talked-about but equally important traits: lighting a raging fire under the soloists, punching the ensemble figures with a velvet fist, and announcing section changes with power and style. And talking to him and to Buddy's daughter, Cathy, the thing they're most interested in sharing with fans young and old is the sheer power of the original Buddy Rich Band, whose uniqueness has been, perhaps understandably, eclipsed by its leader's famous drumming wizardry. And audiences seem to be getting that. Potter is thrilled to report that the band has been

doing very well at its recent shows, with standing ovations and sell-out concerts becoming the norm.

After some requisite silly banter, we got serious with Gregg and asked him about his unique gig, and about the often bumpy road he took to get to this point in his career.

MD: What were your early drumming experiences?

Gregg: Well, I wasn't playing the Ziegfeld Follies on Broadway at three years old. [laughs] But I'm from Chicago, and I had two uncles who played the drums, so I was being put up on a throne by the time I was four or five. By the time I was ten, I was playing gigs with bands. I had an older brother who was already in high school and played bass, and when he'd be trying to put bands together he'd be like, "I've got a brother...." "Isn't he kind of...uh...young?" But I'd play and they'd go, "Yeah, we can deal with that." In high school I played in the school bands, but always with the interest of playing in a group.

MD: You've mostly played with rock groups over the years. Do jazz fans ever give you flack about that?

Gregg: Yeah, I've sometimes found that, when I talk truthfully about my career. I grew up with a brother who was listening to Deep Purple and Black Sabbath and Emerson, Lake & Palmer. But I've always loved big band music and have played it for a long time. I got Buddy's *Roar of '74* album in 1974. I'm

proud of things like winning a Louis Armstrong Jazz Award, as well as the Slingerland Louie Bellson National Drum Contest at Frank's Drum Shop in Chicago, when I was in high school. And it's obvious when you watch me play that I've got jazz in my background. But, for instance, we just read this thing where they said, "With a haircut like that, you wouldn't think it would be conducive to swinging." Really, dude? Does that matter? And Cathy talks about this: Buddy himself would say, "You either know how to play the drums or you don't know how to play the drums." He accepted all types of drummers.

If you watched me back when I was on MTV during the glory days of MTV, those cymbal hits and stuff are more from Buddy than from rock sources. The finesse of Buddy's playing has definitely been in my mind since the beginning. You can always see who's been influenced by whom.

It's interesting—this tour is covering state fairs, with a couple thousand people from all different walks of life, as well as theaters and some hip jazz clubs. Now, the hipsters in the clubs give you that arrogant thing. I mean, I'm putting double bass in "Nutville," and that's sacrilegious to some. But then the audience comes in, including people who are total Buddy fans, and they love it. I'll still hear, "So, who'd you play with? Where do you come from?" And they want you to say, [in a mock hipster voice] "Yeah, man, I dig Coltrane and Miles..." They don't want you to say, "Hey, do you remember when Tommy Aldridge played double bass with the Pat Travers Band—now *that* was interesting." [laughs]

MD: You tell a story about when you met Buddy, for the second time, on his tour bus, and that when you shook his hand you were struck by the complete lack of calluses. What do you chalk that up to?

Gregg: Buddy was playing drums since he was like eighteen months old, and his body probably thought that sticks were *supposed* to be in his hands. I think there was no callusing because there was never a lay-off in his playing. And though there's no lack of power, watch him play—the sticks float in his hands. I'm not saying I have Buddy's technique, but watching him play while I was growing up, I definitely picked up on that.

MD: Does the way you set up your cymbals come from Buddy too?

Gregg: I was a Slingerland endorser, and I would ask them what Buddy asked for. Slingerland made him cymbal stands with no tilters on them. I'd have them set up my bass drum pedals like Buddy's too, where the beater is closer to the bass drum, which is basically a jazz setup. I always had a fascination with Buddy as opposed to Bellson or Krupa—I mean, I loved those guys, but I grew up in that era where Buddy on *Carson*

was the thing.

MD: What are the most important elements of Buddy's playing that, no matter what else happens on a gig, you feel you need to supply?

Gregg: The first thing that's always in my mind is: Don't try to *do* Buddy. You can always have the thought of him in your mind, but remember that you're keeping time for sixteen guys. When you play in a rock band, there are four or five instruments to listen to. When you're playing big band, you've got the sax section, the bones...and they're all doing different layers. So during the entire gig, I have to really listen—in *any* gig you have to, but here you have to do it that much more. On the other hand, if you're driving that big stagecoach, you better hold those reins. You hit that bass drum hard enough that the horns know where the accents are, and that you're there with them. You can't be the wallflower in the background.

The other thing is, be very afraid when you know that snare drum fill in "Love for Sale" is looming. You watch Buddy do it a hundred times, and it's scary each time. And you have to do it, because you know there are people waiting for it.

MD: Do you read charts live?

Gregg: I'll look at the charts at the beginning, but after that it can be a hindrance. I'm not knocking reading—there are sections that you have to count out just to get accents and stuff. But it's probably better when you get off the book and just start playing it with your ears.

MD: Beyond the chops, Buddy had an element of excitement even when he was playing time. Is keeping that intensity just part of the way you always play?

ality would probably have been more attuned to...uh...the *showy* side of things, but my attention to detail saves it.

MD: You had some interesting music-business experiences pretty early on in your career.

Gregg: Right out of high school I landed a gig with a DJ named Steve Dahl, who was famous for blowing up disco records in Comiskey Park and basically coining the phrase *disco sucks*. He had this band called Teenage Radiation and recorded parody songs like "Do You Think I'm Disco?" And we would go on tour on weekends and then play these songs on his morning radio show, *The Breakfast Club*. Then it became a weekly television show, then a daily TV show called *It's Too Early*. I had become a Slingerland endorser, and I remember they made me a bass drum with a working clock built into the head—they'd always pan back to this Slingerland bass drum with a yellow clock in it, like, "Coming up at the top of the morning..." and I'd be playing a drum roll or something.

Then they started filming a bunch of movies in Chicago at that time, and somebody who saw me on TV said, "Hey, Potter, did you ever think about being in the movies?" "Uh...I guess so." And next thing I know, I'm on my first movie audition, with Dan Aykroyd and Al Franken, a thing called *One More Saturday Night*, and I get the part. At this point I'm like, "Hey, this isn't too tough."

So the next thing I do is a movie called *Lucas*. Everyone in that film went on to be major motion picture stars—you've got Corey Haim, Charlie Sheen, Jeremy Piven, Courtney Thorne-Smith, a little girl named Winona Ryder...and Potter.

Potter fronting the BR Band at the 25th Anniversary Buddy Rich Memorial Concert at the London Palladium, which also featured drumming icons Dave Weckl, Gavin Harrison, John Blackwell, Ian Paice, and Ginger Baker.



Gregg horsing around with Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen and Blackbox frontman Damon Ranger after winning an Emmy for their 2009 CBS television performance.

Gregg: This is where I'm going to say that this fit was always sort of looming out there. Because if you had seen me playing at any point in my career...you know, there are guys you meet and go, "That guy would make a good airline pilot. He seems pretty laid back—if the engine was on fire he'd probably not get too riled up." But when you met me, you probably went, "That guy belongs either lighting fireworks on the Fourth of July or playing drums." My person-

Then director John Hughes, who had known me from being on TV, cast me in *Uncle Buck* with John Candy and this new little kid, Macaulay Culkin. This is 1988, and now I'm not with Steve Dahl anymore but with this band Siren, who had just signed a record deal with Mercury/Polygram. But then I get a phone call from Mercury Records, and I'm thinking they're calling to congratulate me on getting the movie role. But they go, "Uh, we're spending a lot of

money on this band, and we're filming a video. We have guys who are living in their cars here in L.A. waiting for opportunities like this. Our production costs are \$300,000 a minute. So either you're in L.A. on this date, or we'll get someone to do the video." I'm thinking, *Really?* And they're bringing up other drummers' names: "You know, we can get so-and-so..." Because it was the real deal. The bass player in Siren [Jon Brant] had just left Cheap Trick to do it. So you get a lesson.

The bottom line was, I knew I was a drummer. And the Siren album, *All Is Forgiven*, did well. We were on MTV and toured. But it lasted four months. And *Uncle Buck* went on to become the highest-grossing comedy of 1989. It even spawned a sitcom. So needless to say, with my decision, John Hughes didn't call me for any more auditions. [laughs]

A side story that's related: Backstage at a Siren gig, Jack Blades from Night Ranger, who are done at this point, comes up to me and says, "I like what you're doing. I'm putting a band together with Tommy Shaw. And don't tell anybody, but we think we're gonna get Ted Nugent in the band." I'm like, "Uh, o-kaaaaaay..." Because, remember, this is 1989. You actually walked the streets air-brushed back then. Nowadays it's cool to say, "I love Nugent! I love Night Ranger!" But in '89, it's unproven territory.

So I say, "Jack, this is my first real big tour; let me at least do this so that I get my sea legs." Instead they hire drummer Michael Cartellone, who was playing with Tommy. And that band goes on to become something called Damn Yankees. So Potter does the ball bobble, and they're eventually like, "Hey, kid, we're going to forge ahead here." Again, another life lesson. When life taps you on the shoulder, don't wait; otherwise you'll be driving in your car and you hear "Coming of Age" on the radio and you're like, "Holy cow..."

And there are tons of stories like that, so when it comes down to this Buddy Rich thing, I think I've pounded the friggin' pavement. [laughs] What I'm saying is that there's so much more if you want to survive in this business than sitting in your basement doing paradiddles. Sure, we can talk about some guys—first band, first record, 10 million sold. But for most of us it's a matter of filing these experiences in your hard drive and pulling them out again when you need them.

If you really want to say, "This is what I make a living doing," you have to understand what's involved. I'm not knocking the fact that there are many, many people who sell insurance during the week and play their hearts out on Friday and Saturday nights. But when Cathy gets asked, "So, who's *this* guy playing drums?"—it's like, don't judge until you know what someone's all about. And this is on any level—a guy asking you for a buck at a train station. You don't know what that guy's gone through. Not that I've quite been *there* [laughs], but you know me—I like to

GREGG'S BUDDY RICH BAND SETUP



Drums: Ludwig Classic Maple in white marine pearl finish, with Buddy Rich's design and dimensions circa 1980. Details include blue-and-olive badge, single-tom mount on bass drum, full-size lugs on all drums, and canister throne.

A. PimpCo U.K. 5x14 custom Buddy Rich snare drum

B. 9x13 tom

C. 16x16 floor tom

D. 16x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian in brilliant finish, all made to Rich's specs, weights, and sizes

1. 14" prototype hi-hats

2. 18" AA Medium crash

3. 18" prototype extra-thin crash

4. 6" prototype splash

5. 20" prototype small-bell ride

6. 18" prototype medium-thin crash

7. 19" AAX X-treme Chinese

Heads: Aquarian custom Buddy Rich signature, including Texture Coated white snare

batter and clear Hi-Performance bottom, Response 2 Texture Coated white tom batters and single-ply Texture Coated white bottoms, and Force I Texture Coated white bass drum batter and video-gloss smooth white front head with custom shield graphics by MaxHeads

Hardware: Gibraltar, including 9609 series brake tilter cymbal stands with Swing Nuts, snare stand, and Liquid Drive hi-hat stand with Quick Release clutch; Tama Iron Cobra Power Glide HP900PSWN double pedal; Trick Pro 1-V Detonator bass drum beaters

Sticks: Vic Firth wood-tip hickory custom "One of a Kind" Buddy Rich model with Gregg Potter signature

Accessories: Drum EARZ DRM-2X Dual Driver Custom Fitted in-ear monitors, Slug Percussion Batter Badges, Humes & Berg custom color Enduro cases

work in broad strokes.

MD: Your point is well taken. The first time we put Dave Grohl on the cover, we actually had a few readers write negative letters because they thought Nirvana was just this band of punks. Some people thought his cover story wasn't deserved. He was just being him, same as you've always been you.

Gregg: Yeah, and when you look at Dave's career... maybe technically the man wasn't Rod Morgenstein, but just that ability to make the right decisions and play that music so well—those are lessons that could fit in any magazine. I mean, not to get too spiritual here, but this stuff is about life. All those clichés—it's been said a million times, but you give your life to this. For me it's been thirty years. I've known Cathy Rich since 1991, when we met at the Buddy Rich Memorial Concert in New York. But it was never like, "You know, you could put *me* in there..." We talked about bad '80s horror films. Much later we got closer and decided to do this band. [Potter and Rich have shared a personal relationship for several years.]

Our relationship is based on more than Buddy's left-hand snare drum technique. After Cathy moved to Chicago, me playing in the Buddy Rich Band came about in our living room as we sat looking at Buddy's drumkit adorning our home. We wanted to do something together to honor Buddy's last wish, which was to keep the band working and keep the music alive. It's not like Cathy went on a nationwide search for the next Buddy Rich Band drummer. This is a family endeavor, which is why audiences not only see me play the drums but also experience Cathy telling Buddy stories, singing, and occasionally selling a tour T-shirt.

That's how life is. We never planned this out, like, "If we cut Potter's hair, put a turtle-neck on him, and give him Buddy's necklace, then it'll be accepted when he plays through 'Groovin' Hard.'" It's more like what you said: "Potter, you're you wherever you go—there's no pretense." Yeah, you're always gonna get a dose of this. [laughs]





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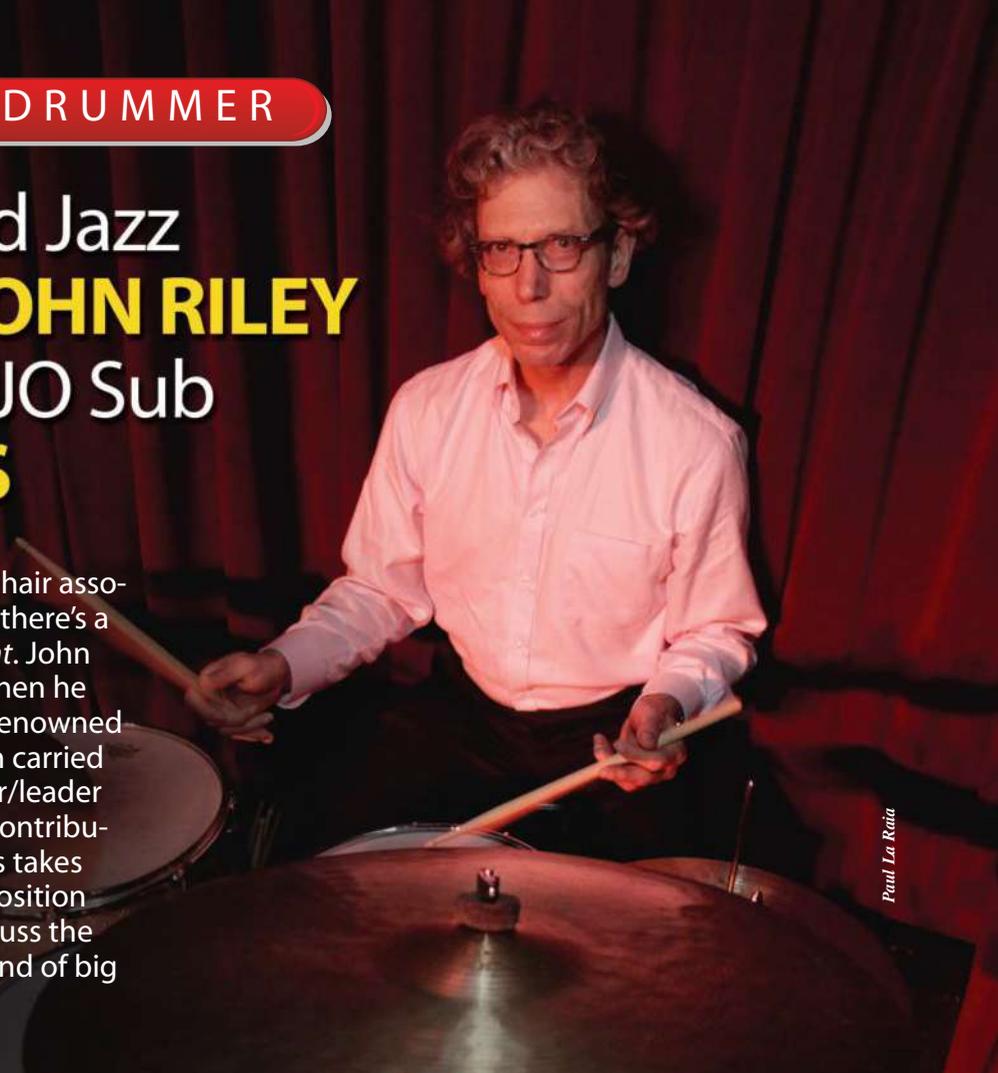
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The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra's **JOHN RILEY** Chats With VJO Sub **PAUL WELLS**

When you take over the drum chair associated with a bona fide legend, there's a huge responsibility to *get it right*. John Riley certainly found this out when he began playing with the world-renowned Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, which carried on the great legacy of drummer/leader Mel Lewis. Here, longtime *MD* contributor and pro drummer Paul Wells takes advantage of his own unique position as Riley's sub on the gig, to discuss the special demands of the VJO—and of big band drumming in general.



Paul La Raia

Just after I graduated high school in 1992, I was introduced to the incredible music of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. I was captivated not only by Lewis's swinging and earthy style but also by the writing of Jones, who always seemed to have one foot planted in jazz history and another leaping into the future.

In the years since, I've obsessively studied Lewis's playing, seeking out every record and every interview I could find. Luckily for us, Mel was extremely well documented. There are hundreds of breathtaking recordings featuring his supportive and subtly burning drumming, from big bands to small groups to pop singers and soundtracks.

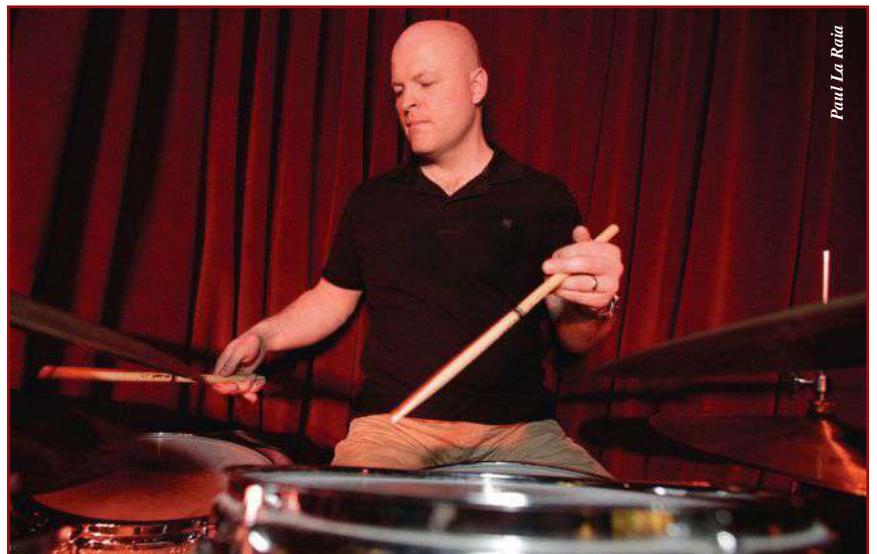
Mel, of course, is best known for the aforementioned collaborative big band, which he and trumpeter/writer/arranger Thad Jones (Elvin's brother, in case you're new!) launched in 1966. The group has been playing on Monday nights at the Village Vanguard in New York City ever since. Jones pioneered an influential style of arranging, and the band featured a free-form, small-group-like approach to solos. The inherent looseness in Lewis's drumming was a perfect backbone for this style of playing, and many former and current members of the band speak of

Mel with almost holy reverence. They describe the magnificently comfortable carpet that he would lay down, which gave the soloists the freedom to go in any direction they wanted.

In 1978 Jones suddenly abandoned the group and moved to Europe. Lewis took on sole leadership, renamed the band the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, and enlisted Bob Brookmeyer, Bob Mintzer, and Jim McNeely to write new, cutting-edge arrangements to

keep things moving forward. After Mel's death in 1990, lead trombonist John Mosca and lead altoist Dick Oatts kept the band working as the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra (VJO). McNeely and Brookmeyer (the latter passed last year) continued to write modern and challenging music, pushing the band ever onward.

When I arrived in the New York City area to attend college, I drove into town on my very first night to see the band and meet



Paul La Raia

John Riley, who had recently taken over the drum chair. I continued to check out the group regularly, and I spent three years at William Paterson University studying with John.

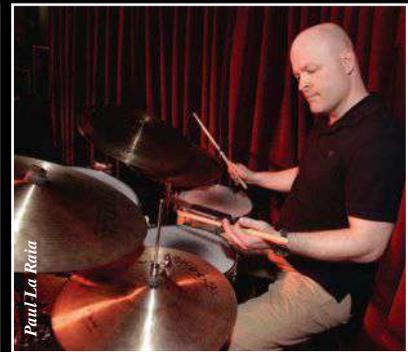
I never dreamed that I could possibly play in this ensemble—I was really just a fan, and I had barely any experience with big bands. But a lucky break in 2006 landed me a steady gig subbing with a fine big band at Richie Cecere's Supper Club in Montclair, New Jersey. I continued to get experience playing with other groups with varying styles and levels of complexity—Tony Giaro's Big Band, the Howard Williams Jazz Orchestra, the Nelson Riddle Orchestra, the Tommy Dorsey Band, and the Rob Stoneback Big Band. I was able to build my confidence to get to the point where I felt comfortable asking Riley about subbing with the VJO. I was initially told to learn a few of the more basic tunes and sit in with the band. If they liked what they heard, I might be asked back to sit in again.

I sat in three times over the course of six months, and I was eventually offered the chance to play a few gigs, subbing for John while he was on tour in Europe. Things seemed to go well, and I've played many more times with the band since. I'm currently sharing the position of drum sub with the fantastic players Andy Watson, Dennis Mackrel, and Tim Horner. I'm honored to be in the company of such heavyweight musicians, and it's without a doubt the most intense musical experience of my life.

When *Modern Drummer* asked me to write a piece based on my experiences as a sub with the VJO, I decided to use it as an opportunity to sit down with John Riley to discuss big band drumming in general and the Vanguard gig specifically. Besides the VJO, John has played with the big bands of Bob Mintzer and Woody Herman, as well as in small groups led by John Scofield, Stan Getz, and Dizzy Gillespie. Most of you will be familiar with his fantastic books *The Art of Bop Drumming* and *Beyond Bop Drumming* and his DVD *The Master Drummer*. I still hope that one day John will release a book or DVD focusing exclusively on big band playing, since he's one of the few true masters of the style. But in the meantime, I'm glad I got to sit down with him and pick his brain. John is famous for his ability to sight-read even the most complicated drum charts and make them sound like music, so I decided to start by asking him how he developed this valuable skill.

John: When I was young, I played along with a "music minus one" record by Jim Chapin called *For Drummers Only*. There were two versions released—one with the LP minus drums, and another that also included charts. I had the first version, so I learned it by ear, and I still remember all the tunes! The first tune was "The Lady Is a Tramp," and it was a pretty hip

VANGUARD DRUMS



The kit shown in the photos is John Riley's and is stored at the Village Vanguard for use on Monday nights, when the VJO performs. The set is a mix of Yamaha drums in silver sparkle lacquer, including a 14x20 Maple Custom Absolute bass drum, a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x14 Maple Custom Absolute snare, an 8x12 Birch Custom Absolute rack tom, and a 14x14 Birch Custom Absolute floor tom.

The Remo heads include Coated Ambassador snare and tom batters, a Snare Side Ambassador snare bottom, Clear Ambassador tom bottoms, and Fiberskyn 3 Powerstroke 3 Diplomats on both sides of the bass drum. The hardware includes Yamaha lightweight stands and a vintage Duplex large felt bass drum beater previously owned by Mel Lewis.

VJO drum subs usually bring their own cymbals and sticks. Riley's cymbals are Zildjians, including 14" K Constantinople hi-hats, a 20" K Constantinople prototype, a 22" K Constantinople Renaissance ride with one rivet, and a 20" A Swish prototype with six rivets. His sticks and brushes are Zildjians, including his signature model stick and Double Stick Mallet. Paul Wells' cymbals are Istanbul Agops, including 14" Mel Lewis hi-hats, a 20" Mel Lewis ride or a 20" 30th Anniversary ride, a 22" Special Edition Jazz ride with two rivets or a 22" 30th Anniversary ride with two rivets, and a 22" prototype Swish with six rivets. He plays Pro-Mark William Kennedy sticks, TB4 brushes, and MT3 mallets.

While interviewing Riley about playing with the VJO, Wells brought up the topic of gear, specifically what Riley looks for in a ride cymbal for big band gigs. Here's what John had to say.

John: I like something lower pitched and not too staccato. I've found that with cymbals, as you move farther away from them, they tend to sound cleaner and higher pitched than if you're right on top of them. People are often surprised when they play one of my cymbals, that they sound "dirtier" right on top of them than they do from the audience. That's because a lot of that dirtiness gets canceled out by the overtones of the other instruments. So I'm trying to think about how it sounds from the audience's perspective, and trying to find a compromise between what's comfortable for me to play and what gets the best sound in the house.

Paul: Mel had somewhat preplanned ideas about which cymbals to use behind each soloist. For example, tenor sax always got the Chinese cymbal, baritone sax got the main ride, and piano got the left-side ride. I've noticed that you're not as specific about your cymbal choices.

John: I'm not quite as deliberate as that, but I am sensitive to the timbre of the cymbal and how it relates to the soloist. Sometimes a cymbal's pitch can fall too much in the middle of a soloist's range, and that can inhibit their projection.

Paul: How about the sound of the drums? You have your own drums at the Vanguard, and they're similar sizes to Mel's, but your sound is pretty different.

John: The pitch of the toms goes up and down depending on what I'm hearing. Right now, they're kind of in the middle. But it can work either way—when you listen to recordings of Mel in the '50s, his drums were sometimes tuned pretty high.

I'm still trying to figure out where I want the snare drum to be. I'm experimenting with the pitch and how staccato or legato I want the sound to be. It always sounds better to me from the front of the house than from on top of it.

Paul: I've struggled a bit, where I've found it sounds better tuned lower when I play with the full ensemble, but I want it tuned tighter when comping behind a soloist.

John: Yeah, we're still working on that!

arrangement. That experience helped me later on when I got to the University of North Texas.

Paul: How so?

John: I was a pretty good snare drummer and a pretty good reader of snare drum music, but I was a completely inexperienced reader of big band charts. My first teacher at North Texas, John Gates, really stressed chart reading from the very beginning. He had some very good methods to help me become a better reader, but they weren't sinking in. After three or four lessons, he decided to try putting a chart in front of me and have me play along with a recording of it. And luckily,

the record he had me play to was Chapin's "Lady Is a Tramp," which I already knew inside out without the chart.

So I played it really well, and he said, "Wow, you've been practicing this week!" I hadn't really been practicing; I just already knew it. But in that moment I had a revelation—I knew what all of the "events" in the tune sounded like, what they felt like to play, and what they did emotionally in the music. I just didn't recognize what they looked like written out. And suddenly I was able to make the connection between what I knew so well by ear and what it looked like on the page. The association became very strong and

very fast—suddenly I could read charts, and everything became clear. That was an important moment for me.

Paul: What's the path from reading something like the Chapin charts to reading a complicated chart with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra?

John: You have to be able to play the instrument well—play good time and get a balanced sound without having to think about it. Then you can commit a certain amount of brain resource to looking at the music and trying to read far enough ahead to see where the band could have problems.

I think the drummer has to be the best reader in the band, because we're like the conductor of an orchestra. If you watch a conductor, when the music is smoothly percolating along, his gestures are pretty small. But at the moment before a big event, his gestures get bigger to help unify the orchestra for that bigger event. So the drummer has to look ahead and see where the music is turning a corner or where something might trip someone up, and set the table so that the weakest man is not revealed. We need to unify the band, and you can't unify if you're following. You have to be thinking ahead about what they're about to do and what they need, so the band can do it effortlessly.

Paul: Besides playing good time, the drummer in a big band is sometimes responsible for playing certain rhythms with the horn section. One of the first things I tried to learn was how to match the phrasing of the horns and orchestrate those figures on the drums. Could you elaborate on that?

John: If you look at the evolution of the big band style, the early bands were playing "stock arrangements"—the original version of songs that maybe weren't actually jazz. The first jazz musicians would take these lead sheets and adjust the interpretation of the rhythms. Classical musicians have a rule about reading rhythm, which is that all notes get full value. For example, if you have a phrase that's two quarter notes and four 8th notes, a classical musician is going to play that literally: Tah, tah, tatatata. But if a jazz musician sees the same rhythm, he's going to play the quarter notes short and the 8th notes long until the last one: Bap. Bap. Doobeedoobap. This phrasing evolved over time, and I would call it a musical convention—it's an agreement between every jazz musician to phrase rhythms this way. To take it a step further, dotted quarter notes and greater get full value.

As a drummer accompanying, you need to know these rules. The general rule for drummers is the short notes don't get a

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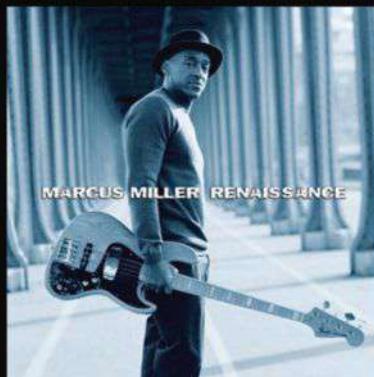
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crash cymbal and dotted quarters or longer get a crash, because those notes are longer and the horns are playing them to full value. There are some exceptions related to tempo, but that's the general idea, and it's based on the conventions that evolved with the earliest dance bands dating back to the 1920s and earlier.

Paul: In those early days of big bands, from the late '20s to the '40s, I've noticed that drummers don't play figures with the band as much as they do now. Sometimes you'll hear drummers playing time on the snare or hi-hat while letting most of the band's written rhythms go by.

John: Bandleaders know that the time is more important than the figures. I imagine they found that if the drummer wasn't a good reader and you gave him a chart with lots of information in it, he would struggle trying to play it, and the time would suffer.

Even Thad Jones, writing for a great drummer and great reader like Mel Lewis, didn't put that much information in the charts. Like the old-timers, he would prefer the drummer focus on playing the time, and as a drummer learned the music, he would figure out which events needed support or the kind of setups we were talking about earlier.

Paul: I think the dance element had a lot to do with it too. Even if drummers were comfortable with playing figures, they felt it

might disrupt the dancers.

John: Absolutely. In the '30s, you start to hear Chick Webb and Gene Krupa play more with the ensemble. Then by the '40s, Buddy Rich really became a master of that and showed us how effective and powerful that kind of playing could be.

Paul: What are your thoughts on the relationship between the drummer and the lead trumpeter?

John: There's a hierarchy in a big band, and there's a hierarchy in each section of the band—the lead player establishes the dynamics and phrasing in each section. Actually, good section players don't follow the lead player; the lead player plays with a consistency of interpretation that the section players can anticipate, so they can always play with him. Then the hierarchy among the sections is that the lead trumpet player sends signals to his section and to the lead trombone, and then the signals go to the trombone section and then out to the lead alto.

Besides keeping good time, the drummer works with the lead trumpet player to control the dynamics and the phrasing of the music. We have to be sensitive to when the lead trumpet player may do something like hold a short note long or lay back on a phrase. The drummer needs to be like a good section player and anticipate when the lead trumpet player might do those

things, so that you can do them together and things sound cohesive.

Paul: You've mentioned that your time at North Texas was when you discovered players like Elvin Jones and Tony Williams. How did that tie into what you were doing with big bands at school?

John: At the time, my perception of big band music was that it was an older genre, and what Elvin and Tony were doing was current. I didn't really have a sense that it was important to have a historical perspective on things. I was drawn to what was the most exciting, current stuff—like any young guy.

But I saw the Ellington band, I saw the Basie band while still in high school, and Woody Herman's band, which was a little more current. The responsibilities of those drummers were a little more "contained" in those bands than what Tony, Elvin, and Jack [DeJohnette] were doing. That added freedom was really attractive to me—and still is. Trying to marry that sense of expressiveness with being a "responsible citizen" has been an ongoing thing.

Paul: There has always been a lot of solo space for the horn players in the VJO. How do you adjust your comping to fit with the extremely diverse styles of the various soloists in the band?

John: It's a little different accompanying soloists in a big band from how it is in a

“Nothing Comes Close”

Richard Jupp

— elbow —



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DRUMMER TO DRUMMER

small group. In a quartet, the primary soloists are going to get to solo on every tune. In a big band, a soloist may only get to play one solo per set, or even one solo per night! I really want that man to feel that he's got the best chance to tell his story without any interference, and with as much support as possible.

With the individual soloists, each has a unique time feel. Some people play really in the middle of the beat, in a way saying, "This is where I want the rhythm section to play." Others play more on top of the beat, others float around the beat, and each one opens the door for a different type of accompaniment. If somebody plays a lot of 8th notes, I'm going to comp less, because everything is covered already. If the phrases are less predictable, I may interject something and listen carefully to see if my interjection has any effect on their playing. If it does, then I know that man is happy to have input and is looking to be fed ideas or to have a dialogue or conversation. If it doesn't, then I look for the next gap and try again. And if there's still no real influence from my input, then I know that he just wants support, and I want to make it as swinging as possible. And I want my comping focused on making the rhythm section feel good.

Paul: If you interject something, what kind of response do you listen for? Are you listening for the soloist to pick up on rhythmic ideas you've played?

John: That's one way. Or if the next phrase is really different from what they'd been doing, that would suggest that they welcome input. You would think that playing with somebody who wants conversational support would be more fun than playing with somebody who just wants you to groove, but that's not necessarily the case. You can really sound like an idiot if you try to play conversationally with someone who doesn't want you to play that way. The sound gets too thick and too busy, their message isn't heard clearly, and what you're doing just sounds self-centered.

Listening to the difference between the ways that the pianists McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea comped, and the different drummers associated with them, opened my ears to the different ways to support a soloist. It wasn't such a conscious thing—it's just natural. Like, if we're talking about drums, we're talking about drums. Then if someone else walks in and mentions the weather, we're going to talk about the weather. So, if somebody plays in a bebop fashion, then I'm going to enhance that approach. Then,

if the next soloist plays more angular, with more tension, I'm going to play another way to enhance that approach. I don't think about it. It's just common sense.

Paul: You seem to have most of the band's book memorized. Do you feel that you perform on a higher level when you're not looking at music?

John: I started putting the music away when I noticed that when I looked at the chart, I tended to approach it in a similar way each time, and that was starting to bug me and bore me. So I put the charts away, and I started to feel like I could play with more freedom, and the music didn't suffer.

Paul: Was it disconcerting to put the book away at first?

John: No, it was due. And the mistakes I made weren't going to be life threatening!

Paul: Do you feel any responsibility to play certain things in the charts similarly to the way Mel played them?

John: I don't feel a responsibility to play certain things the way Mel played them, but I would be an idiot not to! So much of the music was written for him and written around his strengths and the way he approached things. To deny that is going to diminish the music.



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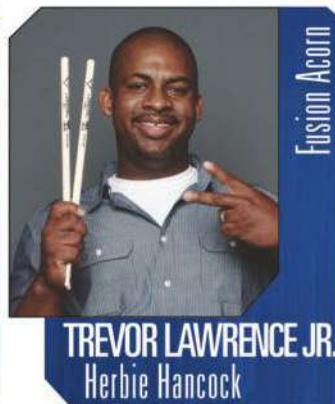
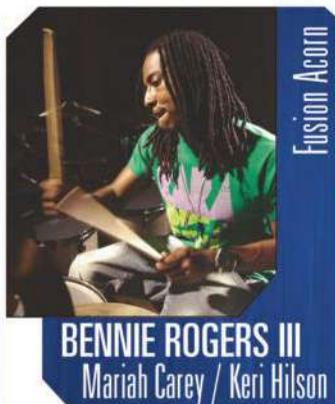
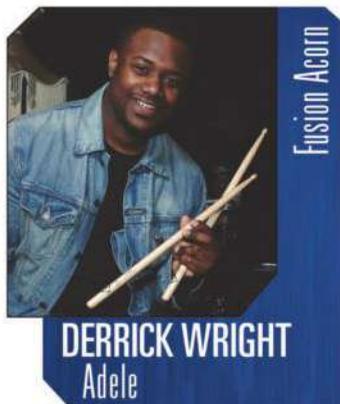
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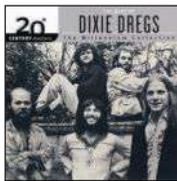
Compilation albums that really pack a punch—plus further must-have tracks.

This month: Southern rock.

by Ilya Stembkovsky

DIXIE DREGS

The Best of Dixie Dregs: 20th Century Masters Millennium Collection



The spotlight may have shone brighter on “serious” fusion groups like Mahavishnu Orchestra and Return to Forever,

but Dixie Dregs were certainly no slouches when it came to instrumental fireworks. Drawing from the Dregs’ late-’70s “early period,” this compilation is a great starting point to discover what a pre-Winger **ROD MORGENSTEIN** sounded like while cooking up a unique Southern fusion stew. Syncopated funk is the name of the game on “Refried Funky Chicken” and the title track from the 1977 debut *Free Fall*, while 1978’s *What If* is represented with some tasty double bass work on the aggressive “Take It Off the Top” and a slick cowbell groove underneath Steve Morse’s ripping guitar solo on “Ice Cakes.” The title track from 1979’s half-studio/half-live *Night of the Living Dregs* features some blazing singles, while “Patchwork” is a country hoedown with Morgenstein’s powerful two-beat feel a charging locomotive.

Amazon.com physical CD (from 2002): \$6.66*
iTunes full album download: \$9.99

EXPAND THE PICTURE: From iTunes, download a chugging rerecording of “Cruise Control,” from 1981’s *Unsung Heroes*, or more from *Night of the Living Dregs* in the form of “Country House Shuffle,” featuring a cool percussion intro and Morgenstein’s head-bobbing dotted-shuffle pattern. Later, check out the drummer’s odd-time mayhem on “Odyssey” (from *What If*) or anything from the 1992 live reunion document *Bring ‘Em Back Alive*.

ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND

A Decade of Hits: 1969-1979



The Allman Brothers Band may just be the kings of Southern rock, and besides the Grateful Dead, no group has had a more famous double-drumming team. **BUTCH TRUCKS** and **JAI JOHANNY JOHANSON**, aka Jaimoe, were at once the backbone for the Bros’ down-home blues and the wings that allowed for their jazz-inflected improvisatory flights. This compilation tries to distill the band’s peak period into digestible bites, highlighting some of the radio-friendly fare (the bouncy Southern rock of “Ramblin’ Man,” from 1973’s *Brothers and Sisters*, along with the double-time “Revival” and the 16th-note hi-hat lilt of “Midnight Rider,” both from 1970’s *Idlewild South*) and some of the more arranged material (the winding twists of “In Memory of Elizabeth Reed,” also from *Idlewild*, or the triplet feel of “Whipping Post,” from the band’s 1969 self-titled debut). But it’s in the live arena where the drummers truly excel: Dig the one-mind shuffle propulsion of “Statesboro Blues” and the burning intensity of “One Way Out,” from 1971’s iconic *At Fillmore East*, to get a taste of how inventive these guys were, even forty years ago.

Amazon.com physical CD (from 1991): \$9.99*
iTunes full album download: \$11.99

EXPAND THE PICTURE: *At Fillmore East* is essential, although there are extremely long tunes that come only with a full album purchase. From iTunes, cherry pick the drum-heavy “Hot Lanta,” the 12/8 slow blues of “Stormy Monday,” or the more rocking shuffling of “Trouble No More” for your fill of the Trucks/Johanson attack.

LITTLE FEAT

The Best of Little Feat



Little Feat also had a Southern-rock bent, but the band was from Los Angeles, and its music was sprinkled with fusion elements that kept

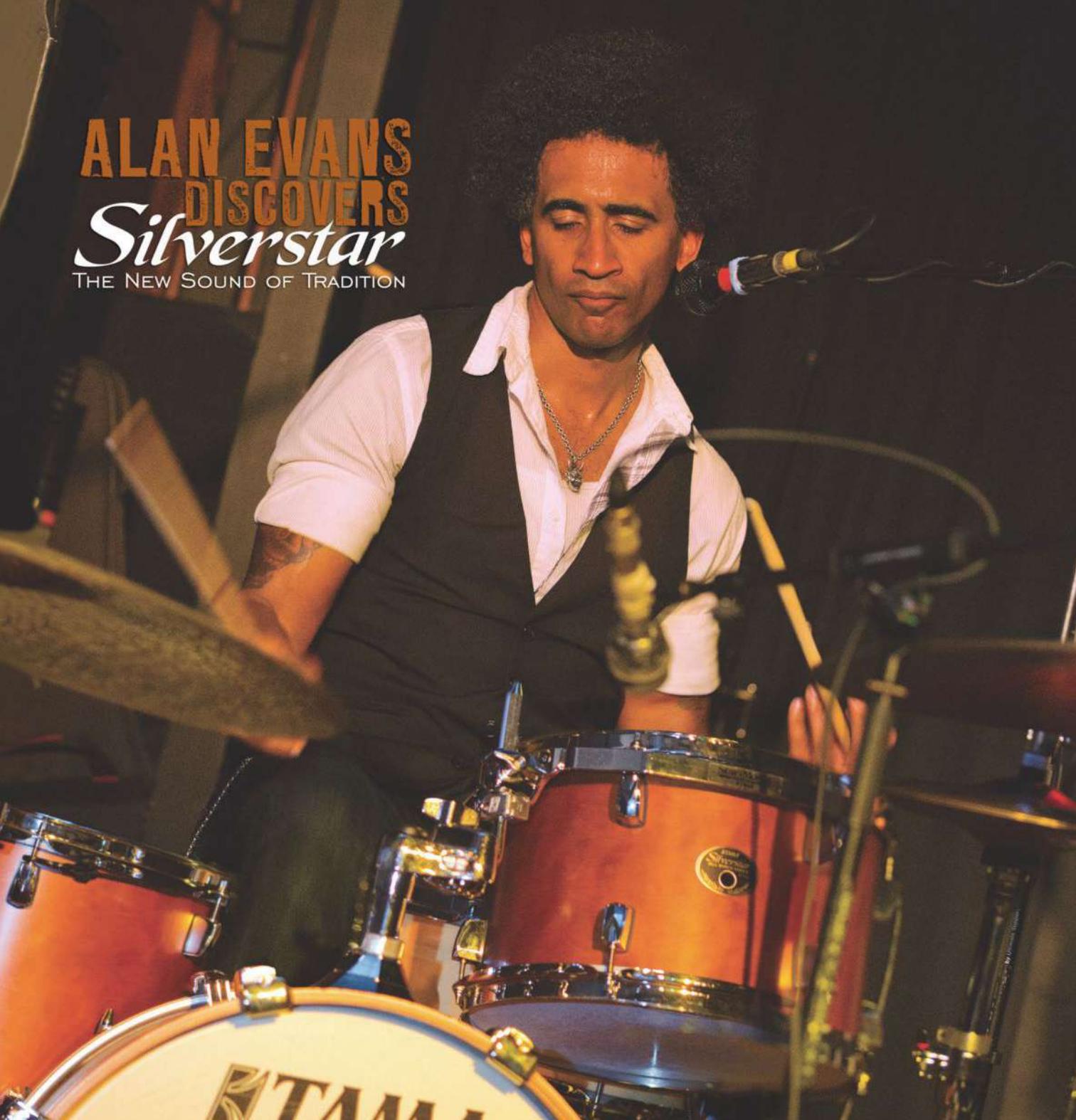
things interesting and kept audiences off guard. This collection features the late, great **RICHIE HAYWARD** in all his grooving glory, as with the heavy backbeats of “Hamburger Midnight” and the smooth country-fied timekeeping of “Willin’,” from 1971’s self-titled debut, and the hip syncopated snare on the title track from 1973’s *Dixie Chicken*. Hayward drops in cymbal offbeats in “Hi Roller” and throughout the tricky arrangement of the title track of 1977’s *Time Loves a Hero*, and he shuffles tough through “Tripe Face Boogie,” from 1972’s *Sailin’ Shoes*. (It’s an interesting study to compare the different approaches to shuffles from Morgenstein, the Allman Brothers duo, and Hayward.) And in the best New Orleans tradition, the hybrid second-line pattern on “Fat Man in the Bathtub,” also from *Dixie Chicken*, is mostly about the space between and around the notes. More recent tracks like “Home Ground,” from 1998’s *Under the Radar*, are included as well, and they show a solid, still-hungry Hayward bringing the funk and the inspiration.

Amazon.com physical CD (from 2009): \$14.99*
iTunes full album download: \$11.99

EXPAND THE PICTURE: Hardcore fans might argue about what’s missing from the best-of collection, but the cure is to download from iTunes any number of killer live cuts from 1978’s excellent *Waiting for Columbus*, including the toe-tapping groovers “Rocket in My Pocket” and “Spanish Moon,” featuring Hayward locking in with the guesting Tower of Power horn section, and “Day or Night,” with the drummer working out on his cymbals and taking a short but sweet solo.



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Emily Burrows

Monica Shelton

STEVE SHELTON

To the self-styled number cruncher with **Confessor** and **Loincloth**, if he's communicating an "unbalanced" feel with his drumming, he's doing something very right.

by Hank Shteamer

For anyone who's grown numb to metal drumming conventions, a first exposure to Steve Shelton can be revelatory, like hearing a familiar language spoken in a whole new dialect. Shelton's twin bass drums lurch and lag, as hand-muted cymbals leap out in the high register and downbeats flip constantly, yielding a heady blend of bafflement and exhilaration. If the parts Shelton constructs for his two main projects—the technical doom outfit Confessor and the hyper-mathy instrumental trio Loincloth—sound chaotic, that's entirely by design. The drummer backs up his ingenuity with a fierce sense of discipline.

Like most innovators, Shelton began as

a devoted mimic. Speaking via phone from his lifelong home of Raleigh, North Carolina, the exceedingly personable forty-five-year-old drummer describes how hearing Rush's *Moving Pictures* on his fourteenth birthday sealed his fate. Shelton obtained his first kit three years later and developed a serious autodidactic streak. "I put down all my other pastimes and put everything into figuring out what all my favorite drummers were doing," he says, citing Neil Peart and Terry Bozzio (the latter specifically on Missing Persons' *Spring Session M*) as formative influences.

Early studies were entirely self-directed, and even though Shelton didn't have a

working knowledge of the rudimentary language, he had a clear idea of what he wanted to accomplish, along with the independence and power to pull it off. A fan of Confessor before he joined in 1987, he'd dream of amping up the rhythmic complexity of the band's classically styled doom metal, heavily informed by Black Sabbath worshippers such as Trouble. "I just knew that if they had a drummer that would play with numbers, it could be really interesting," Steve recalls. "And when I joined, that's exactly what we ended up doing."

Right away Shelton began experimenting with counterintuitive beats. "I had all kinds of freedom to play around with

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Shelton plays a 1986 Tama Superstar deep-shell drumset with 10", 12", 13", and 14" rack toms, a 16" floor tom, and 24" bass drums, plus a Pearl 8x14 free-floating steel-shell snare. His wide variety of cymbals includes Sabians (13" and 14" pairs of AA Regular hi-hats, 16" and 18" Rock crashes, a 22" Rock ride, and 5" and 12" splashes), Wuhans (14" and 20" Chinas), and two ice bells (a 9" Zildjian and a 7" Latin Percussion). His preferred Remo heads are a Coated Emperor snare batter, Clear Pinstripe tom batters and Coated Ambassador bottoms, and Clear Powerstroke 3 bass drum batters (with no front heads). Shelton favors Vic Firth Metal sticks with wood tips.



Monica Shelton

how different rhythms could affect the way a riff feels," he explains. "And every time I did something that made it feel like we lost our balance for a second, everybody loved it." Confessor's songwriting—honed over the course of several demos, recently reissued on the Divebomb Records compilation *Uncontrolled*—followed suit, and by the time of their first full-length, 1991's *Condemned*, Shelton and Co. had perfected their mutant strain of doom metal, which subbed out the style's trademark hypnotic churn for tense anti-grooves, topped by vocalist Scott Jeffreys' piercing wail.

Meanwhile, Shelton devised increasingly unusual methods of constructing beats. He'd refine ideas on paper using his own makeshift notation: long hatch marks for snare and short ones for bass drum, and a little circle for ride cymbal. One of the resulting parts, the unaccompanied intro to *Condemned*'s title track, stands as a high point in Shelton's slim discography. Here he layers a spacious ride pattern over a complex seventy-two-beat rhythmic figure, mixing in double bass triplets to add a strange off-kilter propulsion. As Shelton explains in an instructional feature on Confessor's 2006 DVD, *Live in Norway*, his goal for this section was to make the basic rhythm feel "a lot choppy and more awkward," an overarching directive for his drumming.

Shelton's beat science has found its fullest expression in Loincloth, an instrumental project formed in the early aughts during a lengthy Confessor hiatus. The

band issued one tantalizing demo in 2003 but then fell silent until early 2012, when it reemerged with its debut full-length, *Iron Balls of Steel*, arguably the key Steve Shelton statement. The drummer's drive for painstaking intricacy saturates the album. Unfettered by a vocalist, Shelton, guitarist Tannon Penland, and bassist Cary Rowells (also of Confessor) subject their burly riffs to constant mutation.

Shelton finds no tedium in this obsessive tinkering; for him, it's pure adventure. "A riff can be great in and of itself," he says. "But you can play around with it and show people the seven or eight different ways it can be great by manipulating the rhythmic feel. That's what Loincloth is trying to do." That principle serves as a partial explanation for *Iron Balls*' lengthy gestation period. "We would spend weeks working on what would ultimately turn into a minute's worth of music," Shelton explains. "If you're always looking for that point where you can pull the rug out from underneath the listener, you've got to search around with a microscope."

Timbre is as important as timing in Shelton's world of sound. The contrast between the thudding low end of his deep-shell toms and the chirpy highs of his cymbals assures that his parts slice through the mix with maximum clarity. "It's not uncommon at all for me to be able to loosen the lugs with my fingers," Steve says of the extra-low tom tunings he favors. "That way I can mix my lower tom in with the bass drum in a way that's

really thunderous."

To offset his drum sound, Shelton employs an array of splashes, effects cymbals, and Chinas. "If I'm going to get a different cymbal, I'm going to get one that's very obviously different," he says. "Otherwise it's like nibbling off the same cookie. I'd better have a few cookies around me that are very different."

Even when using traditional crashes, Shelton aims for the most jarring sound he can find, often hand-muting ("I've played my knuckles open countless times doing it") or smacking the cymbals without an accompanying bass drum hit. "I do that a couple times on the Loincloth record," he says. "It makes you feel like, 'Wait, did I just miss something? I haven't landed yet.' I love putting people in that situation."

Hearing Shelton discuss his bold rhythmic concepts, it's clear that a quarter century on from his debut with Confessor, the drummer is as ardent as ever about his mission. "I feel like Loincloth is the perfect band for the way I play drums," Steve says. "If I didn't love the music as much as I have from day one, and if I didn't feel like it was precisely the kind of music that I could really make a difference in, then I doubt very seriously that I would've had the patience to stick with it." One listen to *Iron Balls of Steel* reveals that Shelton's devotion has paid off: In a genre choked with convention, a difference is exactly what this singular drummer has made.





The CRASH Course to Success

Part 5: Hunger by Rich Redmond

This article focuses on the fifth and final portion of my CRASH concept. CRASH is an acronym that stands for “commitment, relationships, attitude, skill, and hunger.” These five global topics can be used by anyone to attract success to his or her life. If you’re a regular reader of this magazine, you’re probably looking for insight into how to improve your drumming and career prospects. These concepts are perfect for helping you achieve those goals. (Find out more at crashcourseforsuccess.com.)

MY STORY

Nashville has been my home for more than ten years now, but when I first arrived in town I was literally hungry. The pursuit of my dream of drumming professionally left me with credit cards nearly maxed out, and all I could afford to eat was ramen noodles and Balance Bars. It was a leaner time, but it was a special time. I was feverishly and enthusiastically working to make my dreams a reality.

After graduating from the University of North Texas with a master’s degree in music education, I moved to the Dallas/Fort Worth area to freelance, save a bit of money, and make plans for my next big move. Was I going to carve out my future in New York, Los Angeles, or Nashville? I was starving to play my instrument at a higher level. I wanted to play on records, hear myself on the radio, make music videos, travel the world on someone else’s dime, and be part of the crazy culture that is the music business.

My bags were packed for sunny Los Angeles when I received a call to audition for a major-label recording artist in Nashville. Two other auditions for

major-label artists followed. Airline tickets, rental cars, and hotel expenses all went on my ever-expanding credit card bill, but I was willing to do whatever it took to get my career to the next level. Bills could always be paid, but it was my time to make something happen. I was *hungry*.

You can minimize the starvation process by saving some money and doing some detailed research and deep thinking about exactly what you want to do and where you want to be. I didn’t research the way Nashville worked. I didn’t even know many people before I moved there. I was operating on pure desire, blind faith in myself, and a burning need to taste success. Even if I was just playing clubs, pickup gigs, honky-tonks, weddings, free demo sessions, and showcases when I got to town, I knew I was doing it in a place where there were endless possibilities for advancement. In Nashville, I could get that “big gig.”

I kept physical hunger from getting the best of me by waiting tables, substitute teaching, and taking every gig that came across my path. It was a very exciting time—one of endless possibilities, massive setbacks, and countless victories. Remember that it’s almost impossible to succeed at anything without failing many times first. Learn from your setbacks, and use them to fuel future success—and don’t forget to celebrate every little victory!

My early years in Nashville were during the era of the pager. A good drummer pal of mine and I used to search for pay phones to return pages from potential employers. It was like Christmas morning every time that thing started buzzing. Most of the time it was just our mothers calling to

check on us, but sometimes the call went something like this: “Hey, Rich. I got your number from John Smith. Are you available to play from 10 to 2:30 on Monday night for \$40 and free beer?” The answer was always yes. Eventually I started getting calls like this: “Paul gave me your number and said you might be available to head to Korea and Japan for a month. We’ll be using backline gear with comfortable accommodations, and meals are provided. Interested?” I said yes before I found out what it paid, even when it ended up being a well-paying job. Patience and persistence were starting to pay off. I’d stayed in the game when things got tough, and now the gig offers were getting better and better.

My father used to tell me that cream always rises. *You* are the cream; you just have to be patient. I played—and continue to play—every gig like it’s the last, and word eventually got around.

BUILD IT UP

It’s never been easy for an artist to break through to the masses. A music superstar I know personally started his career by cutting a record on a shoe-string budget. That record happened to produce a breakthrough single that fought its way up the charts over the course of a year. The artist then hired a close-knit band and hit the road. The band toured in a van at first and then graduated to a secondhand bus. They showered at YMCAs and nibbled on backstage vegetable trays for years. The band opened for every act in the business with smiles on their faces. The artist built a fan base one performance at a time and eventually made the transition to becoming a top-tier headliner. “It” happened for this artist

because of the collective hunger and hard work of the team of people on stage and behind the scenes. *Everyone* was hungry.

STUDY SUCCESS— AND STAY HUNGRY

I make it a point to examine the habits and actions of successful people from many different fields and businesses. I've noticed a common denominator for individuals and companies that achieve a high level of success and notoriety. At a certain point, things can start to become comfortable. People begin to take things for granted. They lose that spark, and the quality of their work starts to decline. Don't let this happen to you!

The individuals and companies that continue to push hard and consistently reinvent themselves, by developing new skill sets or creating new products, are the ones that survive and thrive. I've also noticed that people respect those who never rest on past

accomplishments. When you fan the flames of hunger and keep pushing, you'll be rewarded with new and exciting opportunities. In other words, you get back what you put in.

Musicians that I respect and model myself after are the ones who sound and look like they're literally playing for their supper. No matter what stage their career is in, they *always* play at the top of their game.

I hold dear to my heart the feeling of playing my first blue-sparkle snare and bass drum combo, which I got in 1977. It was magic. When I finally got a five-piece cherry-red pro-level drumset, I was ecstatic. I practiced to records and worked out Bonham-esque hand-and-foot combinations every day after school. I was hungry to get good, play with bands, and improve. Fast-forward many years, and countless hours have been spent in recording studios, rehearsal halls, tour buses, hotels, and backstage areas. These experiences could all run

together, but they don't. I make sure that I drink it in, express gratitude, and stay hungry.

When I think of hunger, I think of inspirational movie characters like Rocky Balboa, the students in the film *Stand and Deliver*, and Tom Hanks in *Cast Away*. To me the word *hunger*, as it relates to pursuing a dream, conjures positive images of someone passionately, purposefully, and relentlessly working to achieve his or her goal. What's your dream, and are you willing to go hungry for it? These are important questions to ask yourself, and they're even more important to answer. You know that cream on top of your favorite coffeehouse latte? That can be you!

Rich Redmond is a Nashville-based touring/recording drummer with the multiplatinum country rocker Jason Aldean. He has also worked with Kelly Clarkson, Bryan Adams, Jewel, Ludacris, Lit, Joe Perry, Miranda Lambert, Steel Magnolia, Thompson Square, Rushlow, and others. For more info, visit richredmond.com.



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Understanding Odd Time Signatures

Part 3: Greater Than Seven by Rick Landwehr

MUSIC KEY

	Ghost note
H.H.	X
S.D.	● (●)
B.D.	●

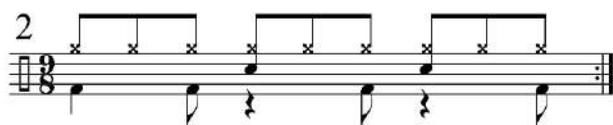
Once you're comfortable with the concepts of subdivisions and note groupings, you're ready to play in any time signature. (For a refresher, refer back to the first two parts of this series, which can be found in the October 2011 and February 2012 issues.) In odd meters greater than seven, things can still be broken down into groups of two and three. The only difference is that as the top number of the time signature gets higher, more combinations of subdivisions become available.

With a time signature of five, we have two possibilities: 2 + 3 and 3 + 2. Seven gives us three options: 2 + 2 + 3, 3 + 2 + 2, and 2 + 3 + 2. When we get to time signatures such as 9/8, 9/4, 11/8, and 11/4, there are more possibilities for subdividing the bar and grouping notes. In this article we'll take a look at the most commonly used subdivisions of nine and eleven time signatures.

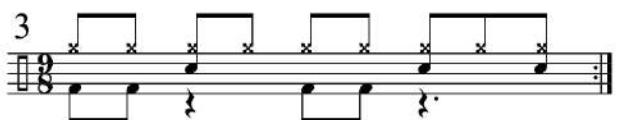
Nine (9/4, 9/8, or 9/16) is a particularly interesting odd time signature because it can be subdivided as three groups of three as well as combinations of two and three. A fairly common version of 9/8 is based on three dotted-quarter-note pulses (three groupings of three eighth notes).



This subdivision of 9/8 lives in a similar world to 6/8 and 12/8. Here's an example of one way to play time using the 3 + 3 + 3 grouping.



9/8 can also be based on a mixed pulse of quarter notes and dotted quarter notes, like what we saw with 5/8 and 7/8 in part two of this series. The most common mixed-pulse subdivision of 9/8 is 2 + 2 + 2 + 3. This approach to 9/8 is often heard in Turkish, Greek, and Bulgarian music, as well as in progressive rock and fusion.

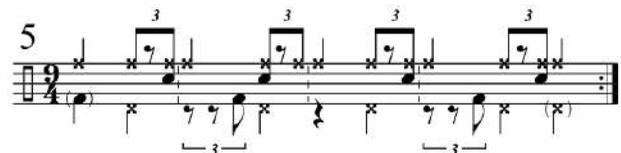


9/4 can be subdivided as 2 + 2 + 2 + 3 as well. Or you can think of it as 4/4 + 5/4.

Here's a rock/funk groove using this approach.



Here's a way to phrase 9/4 as 2 + 2 + 2 + 3 in jazz.



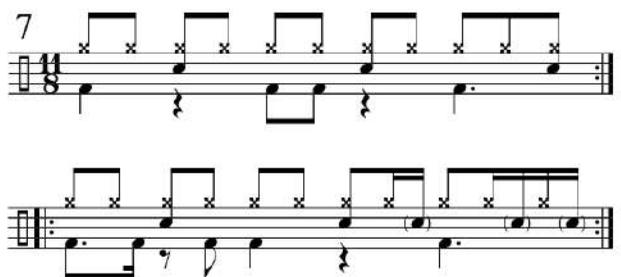
Other less common but equally valid and usable subdivisions of nine are 3 + 2 + 2 + 2, 2 + 2 + 3 + 2, and 2 + 3 + 2 + 2.

11/8 is another odd time signature that can be subdivided in several different ways. The three most commonly seen subdivisions are 3 + 3 + 3 + 2, 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 3, and 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2.

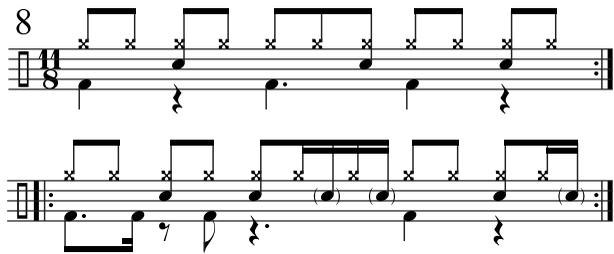
The 3 + 3 + 3 + 2 subdivision of 11/8 essentially feels like a bar of 12/8 with the last 8th note chopped off. This version of 11/8 has found its way into popular music on several occasions, the most famous example being the beginning of "Whipping Post" by the Allman Brothers Band.



The 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 3 subdivision feels like a bar of 4/4 plus a bar of 3/8.



The 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2 subdivision is often found in Bulgarian wedding music. It feels like a bar of 7/8 plus a bar of 2/4.



Grooves and patterns in 11/4, or in any other odd time signature, can be created using the method outlined above. Once the general sense of subdivision is established, you can begin to organize short and familiar rhythmic cells in different ways that work with the music. Experiment, have fun, and make some music!

Rick Landwehr is the author of *Drummer's Guide to Odd Time Signatures*, which is available through Alfred Publishing. For more info, visit ricklandwehr.net.



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Action Figures

Approaches for Big Band Rhythmic Articulation

by Steve Fidyk



MUSIC KEY		C.C.	R.C.
open	○		
H.H.	⊗	*	
T.T.	⊗		*
S.D.	⊗		
F.T.	⊗		
B.D.	⊗		
H.H.	⊗		
w/ foot	⊗		

This month we'll explore ways of approaching and articulating ensemble rhythms. As drummers, we obviously can't perform note lengths with the same exactness as a horn player. We can, however, use the many long and short sounds of the kit to best match the strength and duration of specific notes and phrases.

Below are common articulation markings that are found in horn parts. These symbols, which are often marked above the notes, help signify length, intensity, and emphasis within a phrase.

Staccato (.) and marcato (^) designate a short attack.

Legato (-) implies a long attack.

An accent (>) can be interpreted as long or short, depending on the tempo and style of the composition.

A breath mark (.) is written to signal when the horn players should collectively inhale.

A release mark (-1, -2, -3, -4, etc.) is often penciled in to indicate on which beat within a measure the ensemble's horns will stop their note.

Some arrangers include articulation markings on drum parts, while others do not. As you read any new arrangement, listen to the ensemble and try to match the lengths and releases that the horns use. Doing so will help bring a greater sense of impact and clarity to the phrases you play.

Here's an example of a lead trumpet part illustrating common articulation markings.

The rhythms with articulations are the target points in the line that musicians aim for when reading, and they help create a second level of accent texture. When playing this phrase, I'd resist the urge to accent every written note. I suggest this direction because of the amount of space (rests) that the composer left in the arrangement for the drums to fill up. These spaces are opportunities for you to link what just occurred to what's coming up. (You can hear a demo of me playing this chart at moderndrummer.com and in the digital edition of this issue.)

If the part you're reading doesn't include articulation markings, check out the conductor's score and write in the articulations above each note. In most cases, arrangers won't include breath or release markings on a drum part. For this information, ask one of the lead horn players where he or she is breathing or releasing for a particular phrase.

What follows are three transcriptions that illustrate ways that the master drummers Buddy Rich, Mel Lewis, and Sonny Payne articulated phrases. Listen carefully to the original recordings before you practice the excerpts, and then try to apply each drummer's concept to the phrases you're interpreting.

This ensemble phrase is from "Basically Blues," on the Buddy Rich recording *Swingin' New Big Band, Live at the Chez*. As you listen and read along, pay close attention to how Buddy uses the hi-hat to accompany the band rhythms in unison. He also punctuates the horns' whole-note release on beat 4 with a hit

on the snare drum. This helps create a very crisp and clean effect with no cymbal ring carrying into the next phrase. The notated section begins at 1:17.

Example 1 shows a musical score in 4/4 time. The top staff is a melody with eighth notes and triplets. The bottom staff is a drum part with 'x' marks for snare hits, including triplets and accents (>). The notation is divided into two systems, each with two staves.

“Stompin’ at the Savoy,” which appears on the Stan Kenton recording *Contemporary Concepts*, features Mel Lewis on drums. Lewis was given the nickname “the Tailor” by his colleagues because he could make all of the sections of an arrangement fit together perfectly. This example, which starts at 3:25, illustrates Mel’s style of articulating long and short rhythms, as well as how he often plays rhythms that run counter to the written parts being executed by the ensemble. This approach helps goose the phrases along. It also creates a reference rhythm for the band that they can feel, hear, and understand clearly. And, most important, it swings like crazy! Check it out.

Example 2 shows a musical score in 4/4 time. The top staff is a melody with eighth notes and a triplet. The bottom staff is a drum part with 'x' marks for snare hits, including accents (>) and various rhythmic patterns. The notation is divided into three systems, each with two staves.

“Corner Pocket,” from the classic Count Basie recording *Live at the Sands (Before Frank)*, features the electrifying drumming of Sonny Payne. Payne was known for playing exciting fills and for supporting band rhythms in unison with the ensemble. In this transcription, which occurs at 4:16, he leads the band into each phrase by playing spirited double-time 16th-note and 8th-note-triplet patterns, and he articulates each ensemble rhythm with his crash cymbals and bass drum.

3

The image shows a musical score for a drum set, specifically a transcription of Sonny Payne's drumming on "Corner Pocket". The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of three systems of music. Each system has a top staff for the snare and cymbals and a bottom staff for the bass drum. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including 16th-note runs, 8th-note triplets, and sixteenth-note triplets. There are also dynamic markings like accents (>) and articulation marks like asterisks (*). The first system starts with a measure of rest on the snare, followed by a series of rhythmic patterns. The second system continues with more complex patterns, including a sixteenth-note triplet. The third system concludes with a final rhythmic phrase.

Steve Fidyk has performed with Terell Stafford, Tim Warfield, Dick Oatts, Doc Severinsen, Wayne Bergeron, Phil Wilson, and Maureen McGovern, and he’s a member of the jazz studies faculty at Temple University in Philadelphia. For more info, visit stevefidyk.com.



The advertisement is split into two main sections. On the left, there is a black background with the word "Experience" written in a large, elegant, orange-red script font. Below it, the words "THE RHYTHM OF HEALING." are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Underneath this, there is a block of white text describing the program. On the right, there is a photograph of a young child with dark hair, wearing a striped shirt, sitting and playing a large, yellow and brown drum. An adult man with dark hair and sunglasses is standing behind the child, looking on. The background of the photo is a bright, cloudy sky.

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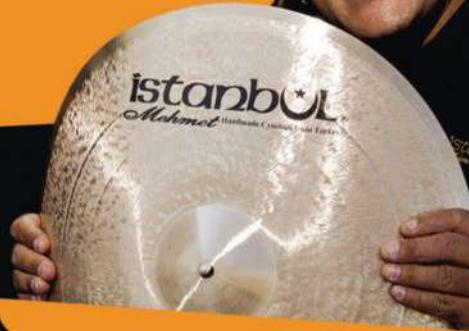
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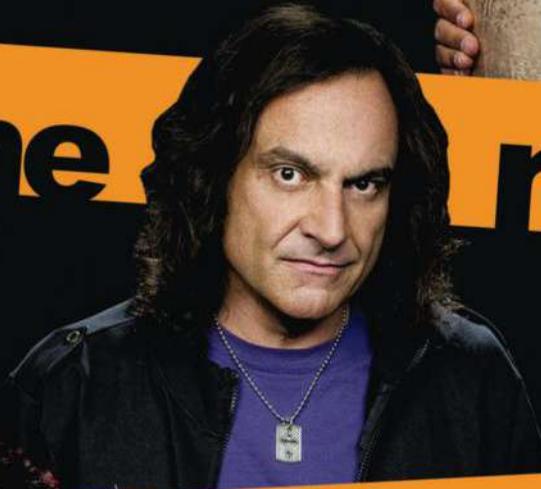
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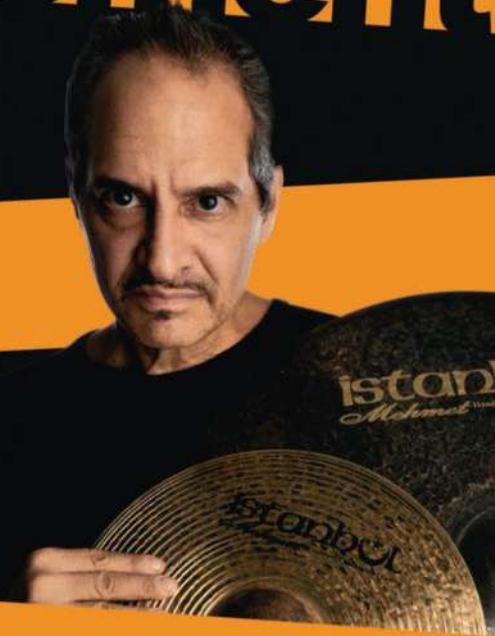
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More Indian Rhythms for Drumset

Counting Backward to the Downbeat by Pete Lockett



MUSIC KEY

H.H.	X
T.T.	•
S.D.	•
F.T.	•
B.D.	•

I was quite far along in my studies of Indian music when I was shown the ideas we're exploring this month. The concept may seem unlikely and surprising at first, but it's actually very logical.

We are used to counting forward (1, 2, 3, 4) when dealing with time signatures. But that approach has a disadvantage: It doesn't allow you to create rhythmic formulas and calculations using the numbers you're already counting. If, on the contrary, you count backward (4, 3, 2, 1), then you're leading toward the destination (the downbeat), and opportunities to create many calculations to arrive at the downbeat become possible.

Backward counting is a method used by some South Indian rhythmic scholars, and it's a framework with which they create endless formulas. Part of the value of this concept is that once you have a formula, it will work in any time signature that's based on the quarter note.

First let's be clear about how we'll be counting. For two bars of quarter notes in 4/4, we'll count down from eight (8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1). Then we'll count "8" again, which is the downbeat of the cycle. We will call these alternative counts "places," as opposed to beats, in order to differentiate between the basic pulse and the backward count.

A normal eight-beat count looks like this:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Counting eight "places" would look like this:

8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

From the seventh place (or the second beat of the bar), there are seven remaining quarter notes (or fourteen 8th notes, or twenty-eight 16ths) until the next downbeat. This will always be true, regardless of the time signature. Therefore, if we're counting backward in 9/4 or 11/4, the formulas we've memorized from the seventh place in 8/4 will work as well. This concept provides a good way to maximize the use of ideas in different time signatures.

Now let's begin constructing phrases from the seventh place (or beat 2) of an eight-count cycle. I've indicated two 8th notes above the staff at the beginning, to show where the phrases start in the bar. I've also indicated the backward counting. These ideas are intended to be used for drum fills, so play a little straight time before and after each example.

Remember that this pattern can be worked into any quarter-note time signature greater than 8/4. Try setting your metronome to click out a quarter-note pulse in 9/4. Play time, count backward from nine, and from the seventh place play four groups of 7/16. Here's that idea notated in 9/4. Again, play a little time before and after the fill.

There are endless ways you could arrange those twenty-eight 16th notes. Let's try 9 + 9 + 5 + 5.

Or try 9 + 5 + 5 + 9.

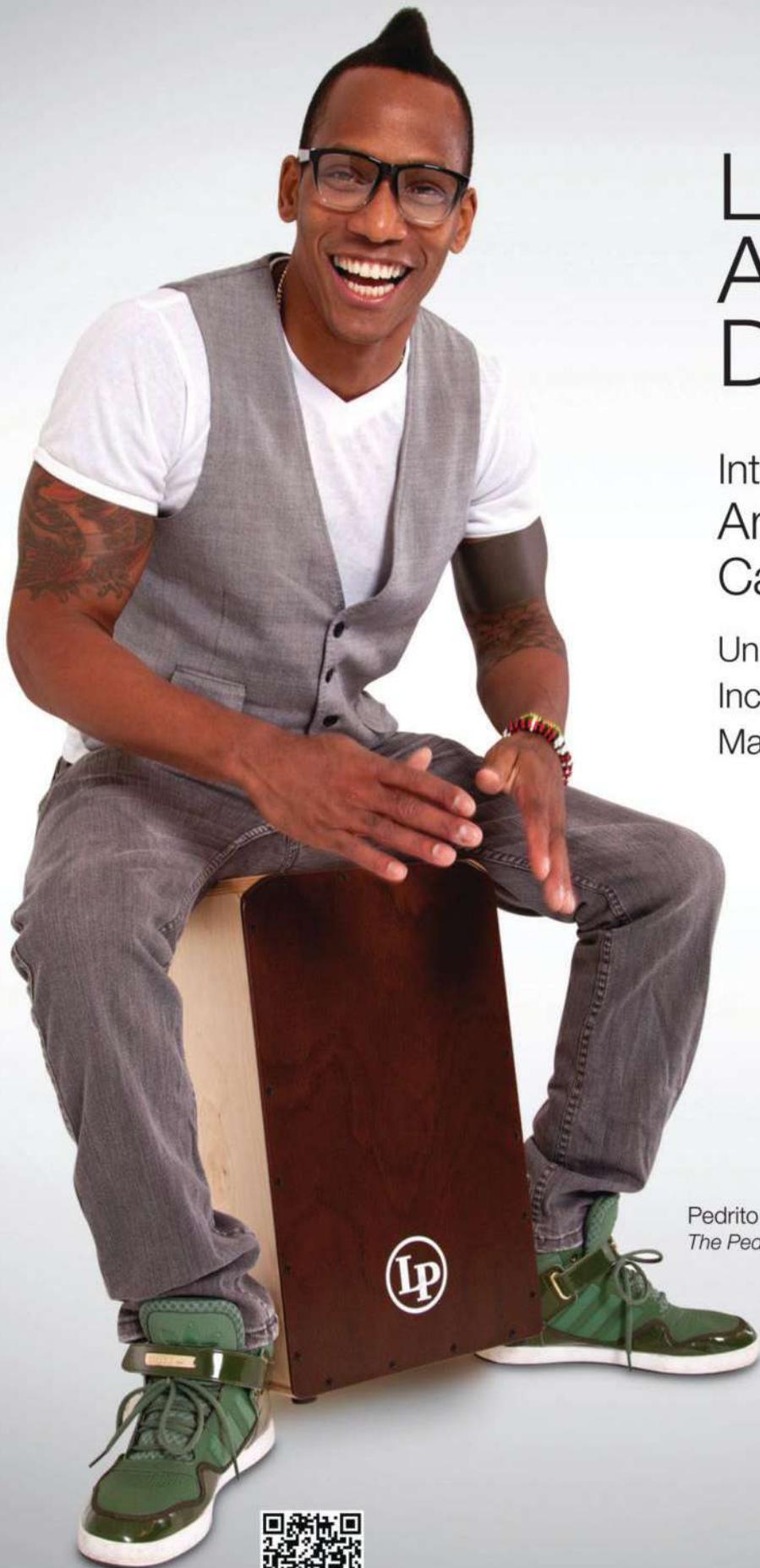
Up to this point, I've notated the frameworks on the snare drum. But they could be orchestrated on the kit any which way. Let's try 5 + 5 + 9 + 9, moving the right hand around the kit.

To conclude, here's a short Indian tihai. (A tihai is a rhythmic cadence that's repeated three times and is calculated to end on the downbeat.)

The real benefit of this backward-counting concept is that it can easily be applied to any time signature. Once you get used to the counting and you have a few patterns memorized, you're good to go. Obviously, calculations from other places in the bar are possible as well. There's a lot more on Indian rhythms in my book *Indian Rhythms for Drumset*, which is available through Hudson Music.

Award-winning percussionist **Pete Lockett** has worked with Björk, Peter Gabriel, Robert Plant, Dido, Bill Bruford, Jeff Beck, the Verve, Primal Scream, and many other artists. He's also arranged and recorded ethnic percussion for five James Bond films and other Hollywood blockbusters. For more info, log on to petelockett.com.





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Alfred's Drum Method Revisited

Twenty-Five Years of Percussion Pedagogy by Dave Black

It's hard to believe that twenty-five years have passed since the release of *Alfred's Drum Method, Book 1*. At the time, my coauthor, Sandy Feldstein, and I were simply trying to write what we hoped would be a comprehensive text that would inspire young drummers to continue studying music. I hope we succeeded on some level.

Over the years, many people have asked why I think the book is still so relevant, and why teachers and students have continued to use it as their first drum method. Aside from a certain amount of luck, and the fact that the timing was right for a new approach, there are a number of factors that I feel made this book different. I'd like to share some of them with you.

DOTTED NOTES

Prior to *Alfred's Drum Method*, many of the manuals on the market didn't teach dotted notes until the end of the book. As a result, there was very little opportunity to reinforce the dotted-note concept in the exercises and solos that followed. Because we introduced dotted notes early on (Lesson 6), we were able to continue reinforcing them throughout the book.



3/4 TIME

Although 3/4 time was used frequently in concert-band literature, many drum books taught 3/4 as if it hardly existed in music. We introduced it in a logical sequence, right after 4/4 and 2/4 time, and were able to utilize it throughout the book.

ROLLS

Unique to our method was the fact that we introduced the seven-stroke roll right after triplets. We felt it provided a logical extension of the rhythmic concepts taught in the triplet lessons, and over the years we've had many teachers tell us it was the most sensible way to approach seven-stroke rolls.





Also of note was the development of sustaining note values on the snare drum, which has the student working on a double-bounce approach first (not multiple bounces), to develop short- and long-measured rolls.



STICKINGS

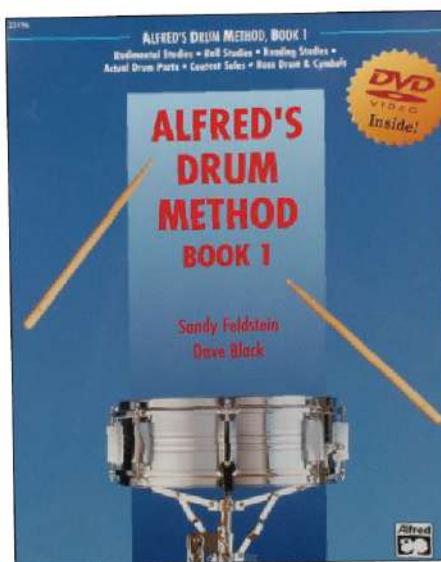
At the time we wrote the method, sticking notation was printed in black. We felt this was a distraction, as students tended to focus on the stickings rather than concentrating on reading note values. As a result, the stickings in *Alfred's Drum Method* were printed in gray.

CONTEST SOLOS

We included twenty-three solos throughout the method and made sure each was able to stand on its own as a complete musical composition suitable for solo and contest purposes. Each solo reinforced the concepts taught in the previous lesson. *Alfred's Drum Method* was also the first book to include the drum parts to famous Sousa marches, so students could see how rudiments, such as the five-stroke roll and flams, were used in actual drum parts.

VHS VIDEOTAPE

I think the most innovative aspect of our drum method was the inclusion of a VHS video that correlated with each page of the book. Our product was one of the first to offer that element. In keeping up with the changing technology, the video was later released on DVD and is now available digitally for the iPad and on SmartMusic (an online program used to help teachers assess their students' performance abilities).



TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER

No matter how worthy a book may be and regardless of which tools are included, it doesn't take the place of a good teacher. In a world of instant gratification, it's easy for young drummers to get distracted and lose sight of what's really important. In order to achieve any kind of success, we all have to start with the basics in order to build a strong foundation, and that's going to be achieved only through focused practice, determination, listening, and patience.

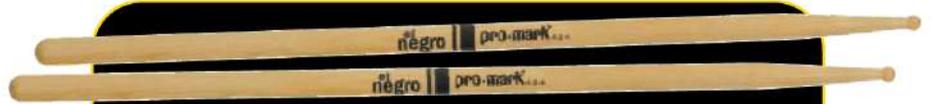
Dave Black is the author or coauthor of more than twenty books, including the best-selling *Alfred's Drum Method*. He currently serves as vice president and editor-in-chief of school and church publications for Alfred Publishing.



NEW *and* NOTABLE

FIDOCK Same-Tree Blackwood Bebop Drumkit

These drums were made using sections from five blackwood trees felled in the Otway Ranges of Australia. The premium-grade compression timber was air-dried for almost two years and then used to make five limited edition same-tree drumsets. The acoustic qualities provided by using timber from the same tree help to create a clear tone and an integrated feel. In addition to the same-tree Bebop kits, a limited series of snare drums, including the company's super-deep Fatboy, is available using the timber. fidockdrums.com



PRO-MARK Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez Signature Drumsticks

The Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez signature stick is 16" long and .500 in diameter, with a smaller wood tip. The model (TX424) retails for \$15.15. promark.com



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Catering to novice and amateur players, Supremo Select Chiseled Orange series drums are constructed of high-quality, sustainable Siam oak and feature Tycoon's new handcrafted textured finish. Available models include 10" and 11" congas with a double stand, 7" and 8½" bongos, 10" and 12" djembes, and a hand-carved cajon with a beech front plate. tycoonpercussion.com

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Three new Rude models have been developed in collaboration with the metal drummer Joey Jordison. The 16", 18", and 20" Rude Wild Chinas are said to cut through loud environments with a raw, metallic sound that's drier and more untamed than that of regular models. A comparatively small and round bell and a deep hammering pattern provide an unconventional and exotic sound effect. paiste.com



ZILDJIAN 3 Hat Packs

Zildjian has launched two new three-cymbal hi-hat box sets featuring models from the company's A and K lines, designed to promote mixing and matching hi-hat pairs. The 14" 3 Hat Pack (\$969) features a pair of A New Beat hi-hats and a 14" K Custom Dark top cymbal. The 15" 3 Hat Pack (\$1,114) features a pair of K Light hi-hats and a 15" New Beat top.
zildjian.com



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Featuring a 1 mm steel shell, 1.5 mm steel hoops, a Remo UX coated batter, and a Remo UX clear bottom, these drums are hammered to make the shell drier sounding while maintaining a solid metallic crack. Sizes include 5x12, 5 1/2x14, and 6 1/2x14 models.
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PROTECTION RACKET Musicians Tool Kit Bag

Protection Racket's Musicians Tool Kit Bag measures 15x12x3 and unzips all the way around for easy access to the main compartment. Its features include six internal zipped pockets; three elasticized holders for pens, drumsticks, and tools; and a central carrying handle.
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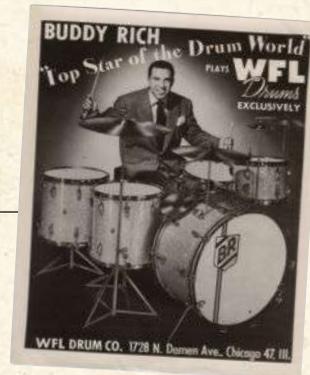
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COLLECTOR'S CORNER



Buddy Rich's Super Classic WFL Drumkit

by Harry Cangany



To showcase its number-one endorser in 1950, the WFL drum company introduced the Buddy Rich Super Classic drumset as its flagship. Our featured set shows a few updated options, including the tom holder, called the Clipper, which was basically a Walberg & Auge rail consolette that used a spade holder inserted into a diamond plate. WFL took back its old name—Ludwig—a few years after Rich played this set and later changed the diamond plate to an L-arm and leg-bracket assembly. Also new were shell-mounted folding spurs and improved cymbal holders.

This kit, which was built at WFL's factory at 1728 N. Damen Avenue in Chicago, had Buddy's signature white marine pearl finish. Although his normal sizes at that time were a 14x24 bass drum, a 9x13 rack tom, and two 16x16 floor toms, it was normal to see catalog images of his Super Classic with a 14x22 bass drum. Ludwig also illustrated a WFL pedal and matching-footboard flat-base hi-hat stand in its ads, but in reality Buddy favored the Walberg & Auge hi-hat, known as the Perfection model, until he switched to Rogers drums. The Perfection hi-hat was a very simple design that dates

back to the 1920s, and most companies stopped selling it as their own proprietary footboard models were developed.

This WFL bass drum had two cymbal mounts. The holder to Rich's right was for his Zildjian ride. Near the rack tom was a second mount that had a longer arm for a splash cymbal. Buddy normally had two floor toms, even though the second one was often used as a substitute table to hold a towel, cigarettes, or whatever else he wanted. WFL didn't illustrate the second tom. In fact, it wasn't until Buddy switched to Slingerland in 1968 that a major company showed two floor toms for a Buddy Rich signature set.

Rich also used a matching canister throne. William F. Ludwig Sr. took credit for inventing this stylish pearl-covered seat, which doubled as a carrying case for hardware. The canister normally had a removable top with two latches and chrome strips around the top and bottom.

Buddy's snare drum of choice was the 900 P, aka the Buddy Rich Model Super Classic. This is an eight-lug drum with the WFL Classic extension strainer. The tall lever on the strainer could be flipped on and off

by hand or by stick, and it was a much more substantial unit than the ones found on snares made by WFL's competitors.

We're showcasing this veteran drumset because it recently resurfaced with quite a backstory. Providence, Rhode Island, had a famous ballroom, the Arcadia, and all the big bands played there. The ballroom was on the top floor of a building that also housed a musical instrument repair shop, Ferri's. The story told to us by Francis Poirier, who now owns these drums, is that when Rich gave notice to Dorsey's manager, Tino Barzi, that he was leaving the band, he owed Barzi some money, so Barzi ordered his drums to be confiscated and sold. The manager of the ballroom, Ray Belaïre, sent his young son Duke to the Dorsey bus to gather what he could and take the items to Ferri's for resale. The proceeds were to pay the debt Buddy owed Barzi. The confiscated instruments included the four you see here, plus some hardware, a throne, and a head bearing the Harry James and Buddy Rich logos. That head was subsequently framed.

Current owner Poirier has sworn statements from Belaïre and Dick McCormack, the lucky drummer who received the kit for his sixteenth birthday in 1953. McCormack drummed with the 1st Armored Division Army Band and with Gordon Lee "Tex" Beneke, and he had his own big band in Providence. He owned the drums for fifty years before deciding to put them on the market.



DANIEL GLASS THE CENTURY PROJECT

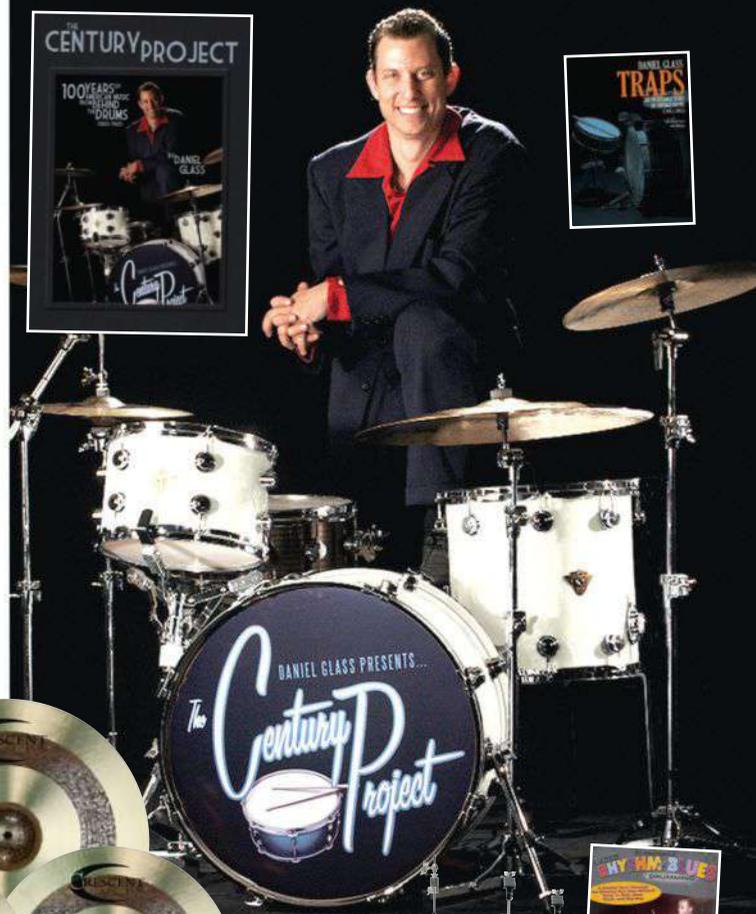
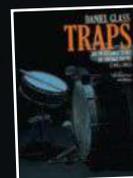
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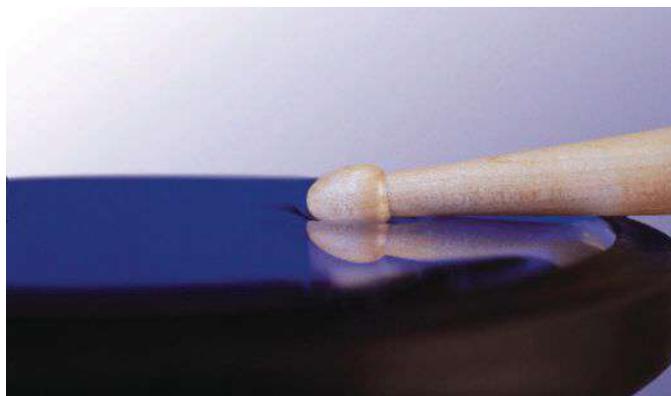
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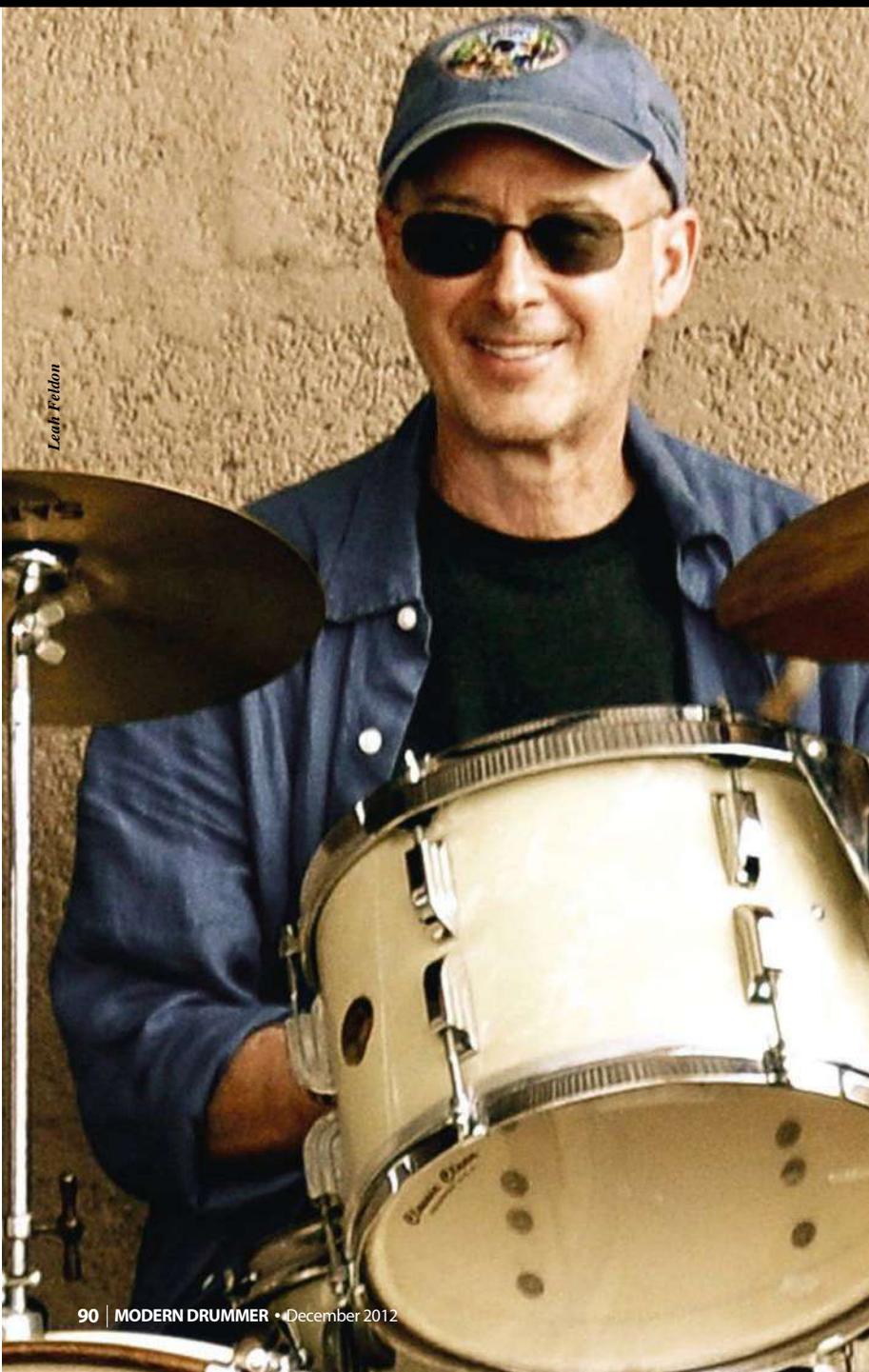
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RICK SHLOSSER

In the golden age of West Coast studio recording, heavyweights like Hal Blaine, Jim Gordon, Jeff Porcaro, Jim Keltner, and Russ Kunkel ruled the roost. But other, less name-checked drummers quietly stacked up remarkable résumés of their own. The man who'd be known to some movers and shakers as "the ballad king" was one such musician.

by Bob Girouard



Leah Feldon

Throughout the 1970s and '80s, the session/touring ace Rick Shlosser's understated yet inventive and expressive playing seemed to be everywhere. Many guys have hits, but Shlosser's were *smashes*: "Endless Love," "Tonight's the Night," "9 to 5," "Déjà Vu," "(It's Gonna Take) A Lotta Love," "Through the Years," and "Queen of Hearts" are just some of the highlights among the nearly one hundred records the drummer has played on.

Shlosser, who was born and raised in Springfield, Massachusetts, began his artistic life as a tap dancer. At age ten, his fascination with rhythm led him to the drums. In time Rick would study with the renowned Joe Sefcik, who also taught Joe Morello. "Early on," Shlosser recalls, "I had no idea where this would lead. It was just the immediacy of the whole drumming experience that gave me pleasure. I was playing to records in my basement and vaguely thought it would be cool to be on one someday."

While studying biochemistry in junior college, Shlosser formed a band that played local dances and clubs. In 1967 he enrolled at Berklee, where, at the time, most students were focusing on jazz stud-

ies. But Rick leaned toward blues, R&B, and rock 'n' roll and immersed himself in the Boston music scene. He began playing with Andy Pratt, who had his own recording studio. There they recorded Pratt's *Records Are Like Life* and the single "Avenging Annie."

"That was my first foray into the national scene," Shlosser says. "From that, I got an offer to go to New York City and join a band called Rig, who'd just signed to Capitol Records."

Rig was managed by the legendary rock impresario Bill Graham, which granted the band access to the most popular venues of the day, including Winterland and the Fillmore East and West. In 1971, Shlosser moved to Marin County in California and joined Lamb, which had gained notoriety as one of the last bands to play the Fillmore. Soon, via a referral from a bass-player friend, he got a call to audition for the Irish soul-rock singer Van Morrison, who'd become a critical and popular favorite on the strength of groundbreaking albums like *Astral Weeks* and *Moondance*.

"Van comes in with a microphone," Shlosser remembers, "lies down on the couch, and says, 'Do you know 'Into the Mystic'?' Then he goes, 'Three...four...'" and we're in. Still flat on the couch, he proceeds to have us run through his entire catalog, doing only about sixteen bars for each song. This went on for three days!

"It was at once weird and a thrill," Shlosser adds. "When we finally hit the studio, I got to play on the *Tupelo Honey* album." After contributing to Morrison's follow-up, *Saint Dominic's Preview*, Shlosser wouldn't work with the singer again until 2008, when he was tapped to play the *Astral Weeks Revisited* tour, including performances at the Hollywood Bowl, Madison Square Garden, and the Royal Albert Hall.

Following a mid-'70s stint playing live with the former Steve Miller Band guitar slinger Boz Scaggs, Shlosser became more recognizable on the competitive West Coast studio scene. Although sessions were dominated by mainstays like Hal Blaine and Jeff Porcaro, Shlosser's affiliation with L.A.'s Cherokee Studios led to a wealth of opportunities. "Although I was known in northern California," the drummer says, "at first I was a nobody in Los Angeles. I needed to get my foot in the door, so I was willing to do demos for free. The upshot was that I'd get random calls, like, 'Hey, Tom Dowd is here with Rod Stewart. Could you come over and cut a few tracks?' My first song with Rod was 'Tonight's the Night,' which went to

number one."

Word got out about the Shlosser groove, and the phone started ringing... and ringing, leading to rare opportunities like playing double drums with Ringo Starr on a Harry Nilsson session. It was a musically fertile time, and one great gig followed another: Nicolette Larson, Dolly Parton, Dionne Warwick, Barbra Streisand, Lionel Richie, Diana Ross, Cher, James Taylor, Linda Ronstadt, Jackson Browne, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Bonnie Raitt—and the list goes on. "At one point," Shlosser says, "it got so crazy, I would go to the studio and not even know who I was going to be playing with. I was turning down almost half of what I was being offered." Regaled as one of the most sensitive players around, Shlosser

became known as "the ballad king" among top session producers like Marvin Hamlisch.

But as the music industry changed, so did the fortunes of many a once-busy player. With the advent of electronic drum programming, the opportunities for session drummers began diminishing. Like so many of his peers, Shlosser was not immune to the digital revolution. But he did better than many. In the early '80s he toured with the pop/country crossover star Juice Newton, whose popular albums *Take Heart* (1979), *Juice* (1981), and *Quiet Lies* (1982) he'd played on. From 1982 to 1986 Shlosser filled the drum chair for the folk-pop legend James Taylor, which he says was a respite from the uncertainty of the times. "I remember looking at



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RIK'S STICKINGS

Rick Shlosser's drumming is marked by clean, exact execution and meticulously played rudiments and fills. His approach is always straightforward, but when called upon he'll rip into the kit, expanding its voicings to full effect. Here we look at five of Shlosser's most notable recordings.



"Jackie Wilson Said" by Van Morrison (1972)

Shlosser's opening burst of staccato snare notes still sounds hip today. The drummer lays into the kit with a classic blues shuffle, swinging and rocking simultaneously. Check out the quick open/closed hi-hat, and listen to how Rick sets up the choruses with tom and snare kicks.

"Avenging Annie" by Andy Pratt (1973)

This song was an early attempt to bring classical and progressive themes to a rock context. Shlosser uses a number of his best tools here, including syncopated 16th notes playing against the melody, descending tom patterns matching the piano line, and some great fills for the final choruses.

"Tonight's the Night" by Rod Stewart (1976)

There's a lot of orchestration in this song, and the simplicity of the drum part provides the perfect underpinning for the strings and brass. Shlosser creates a gliding effect in the groove, which is a cross between a shuffle and a stroll—smooth as silk but never slick.

"9 to 5" by Dolly Parton (1980)

On the title song from the Hollywood film of the same name, Shlosser sets up a fat 4/4 feel with quarters on the bass drum, plus snare and rack tom on 2 and 4. On paper this might sound like a disco beat, but in reality it's got Muscle Shoals written all over it.

"Cardiac Party" by Jack Mack and the Heart Attack (1982)

This infectious cut is reminiscent of the Billy Vera/Huey Lewis West Coast sound that was popular at the time, but it's a bit more funky. Shlosser plays a nice syncopated bass drum against the bass line and hits some neat accents with the horns.

Billboard magazine," Rick recalls, "and I saw that I had four songs in the top ten—and here I was soliciting my local union to borrow money for a house payment."

As the great West Coast recording studios closed down one by one and Pro Tools rigs became the norm, Shlosser decided it was time for a change of scenery. In 2006 he relocated to the small but culturally potent town of San

Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where he still performs regularly and produces recordings in his studio, including work with the bands Oh Whitney and the Depresleys. Shlosser reports that he's busier than ever. "I'm still in the game and happy to be there," he says, modestly adding that he's accomplished more in his career than he ever thought possible. "For me, it's always been about the music, and the people who make it."





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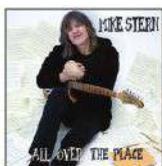
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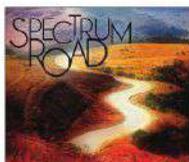
Ken Micallef checks out some recent fusoid activity.



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Mike Stern played scalding guitar with Miles Davis; he's been blasting fuzzed-out lines ever since. For years, Stern's fusion was stuck in the same groove, never mind that Dave Weckl and Dennis Chambers carried his rhythmic ammo. But somewhere around 2005 Stern found inspiration, much of it African, and his music became new. On *All Over the Place*, **Keith Carlock** adds flam funk magic to opener "AJ"; **Weckl** airlifts the joyous "Cameroun," a perfect example of Stern's African influence; and **Kim Thompson** plies boiling straight-ahead on "Out of the Blue." Weckl returns, slapping deep snare accents over 4/4 on "Light," and Carlock closes the set with the daring time-tumbling title track. **Lionel Cordew** covers all the bases, from the whisper-sweet brushwork of "As Far as We Know" to the syncopated funk of "Half Way Home." Finally, Stern's fellow Miles alumnus **Al Foster** lends his always sensitive touch to the lightly swinging "Blues for Al," the up-tempo Latin-to-swinging vehicle "OCD," and the weepy ballad "You Never Told Me." (Heads Up)



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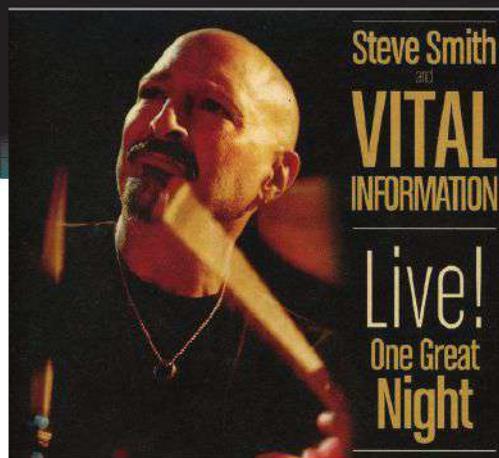
On *Spectrum Road*, **Cindy Blackman** corrals Jack Bruce (bass), **Vernon Reid** (guitar), and **John Medeski** (organ) to revisit Tony Williams' classic albums *Emergency!*, *Turn It Over*, *Ego*, *The Joy of Flying*, and *Believe It*. Blackman, an authority on Tony, surrounds herself with a team that can deliver and expound on his music, and that's only their starting point. *Spectrum Road* revives the spirit of *Emergency!* via blistering drumming, scorching organ and guitar, and rumbling bass lines. Blackman executes killer flam combinations on opener "Vuelta Abajo," roams over her set with ascending/descending single-stroke rolls and flam/crash ennucciations on the atmospheric "Where," smacks a swinging jazz-rock groove on "Vashkar," and adds demon drive to "Allah Be Praised." Far from a tribute band, Spectrum Road raises Tony Williams from the dead and makes him smile. (Palmetto)



PAT METHENY *UNITY BAND*

The first saxophone-led Metheny recording since the now classic 80/81 with Jack DeJohnette. Antonio Sanchez navigates the new one like the seasoned pro he is.

Longtime Pat Metheny drummer **Antonio Sanchez** stretches considerably on the guitarist's latest. *Unity Band* spans the Metheny mindset, demanding much from the muscular Sanchez, whose ambidextrous assault is in full force here. Antonio swings ethereally on opener "New Year," dotting every cymbal with beauty and grace, then drops a propulsive, ice-bell/pang-flavored groove on "Roofdogs." Swing is always the thing with Metheny, and "Leaving Town" enables Sanchez to float and sting. Closer "Breakdealer" pushes the drummer to the max with Latin rhythms, cymbal flurries, a high-speed solo, and shattering dynamics. (Nonesuch)



STEVE SMITH

VITAL INFORMATION LIVE! ONE GREAT NIGHT

Is the former Journey drummer capable of playing even one bum note? A recent live document offers no evidence.

Steve Smith and Vital Information's *Live! One Great Night* is a fantastic drumming primer. This CD/DVD set is a rhythmically free-floating offering, and Smith, as can be seen on the DVD, is so relaxed, so on point, that he's constantly inspiring, whether he's executing full-set forays, flowing straight-ahead swing ("Time Tunnels"), or playing simple funk patterns. "Interwoven Rhythms Synchronous" is a highlight, with Smith establishing a groovy pocket, speak-singing Indian Konnakol phrases over the rhythm, and then doubling the Konnakol with corresponding tom lines. Though Vital Information sometimes sounds dated due to Tom Coster's synth sound choices, Smith remains a joy to watch, listen to, and learn from. (BFM Jazz)



CHRISTIAN SCOTT

CHRISTIAN ATUNDE ADJUAH

Spacious and experimental, the trumpeter's latest recalls such fusion classics as *Bitches Brew*.

Jamire Williams pulls out his entire trick bag on the double CD *Christian Atunde Adjuah*, which provides the drummer with a wide-open improvisational palette. Double-tracking drums on some tunes and playing impressionistically on others, Williams flows between the notes like water, supplying power, great articulation, fresh second-line interpretations ("New New Orleans"), and speed. Dissected broken swing figures fill "Kuro Shinobi," with Williams sounding like a cut-up New Orleans marching drummer. He's equally imaginative swinging on "Who They Wish I Was," riding a fiery fusion groove on "Spy Boy/Flag Boy," and rumbling his kit like a manic shakedown on "Dred Scott." And that's just on the first CD! (Concord Jazz)



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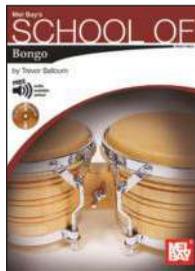
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ESSENTIAL DRUM LESSONS WITH THE GREATS PRODUCED AND COWRITTEN BY JOHN XEPOLEAS

BOOK/CDS (2) LEVEL: ALL \$26.99
 Combining excerpts from two previously published instructional volumes, *Essential Drum Lessons With the Greats* is like getting private lessons from **Dave Weckl** (six-stroke rolls, hand/foot triplets), **Neil Peart** ("Leave

That Thing Alone" breakdown, soloing in 3/4), **Peter Erskine** (sound, feel, subdivisions), **Tim Alexander** (double bass, tom grooves), **Steve Smith** (linear fills), **Gregg Bissonette** (stickings, fills, reggae), **Kenny Aronoff** (double-beat patterns between the hands and feet), and **Mike Portnoy** (odd times). The accompanying CDs feature the artists speaking and playing, so it feels like an audio extraction from an instructional DVD—perfect for when you're away from the kit. (Alfred) **Ilya Stemkovsky**



●●●●●
SCHOOL OF BONGO BY TREVOR SALLOUM
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There are plenty of books out there, including three others by Trevor Salloum, that address the use of bongos in musical styles that commonly include the Afro-Cuban instrument. Unlike its predecessors, though, *School of Bongo* covers the role that bongos can play in rock, reggae, blues, jazz, R&B, and Brazilian bossa nova and samba. The included CD features twenty-seven tracks comprising roughly half of the book's 300-plus exercises. The rest of the examples in the comprehensive, well-organized volume are available for free download from Mel Bay's website, and the recordings demonstrate how the instrument should be tuned and played. *School of Bongo* fills out a growing collection of great books by Salloum, and the \$19.99 price makes it worth every penny. (Mel Bay) **Ben Meyer**



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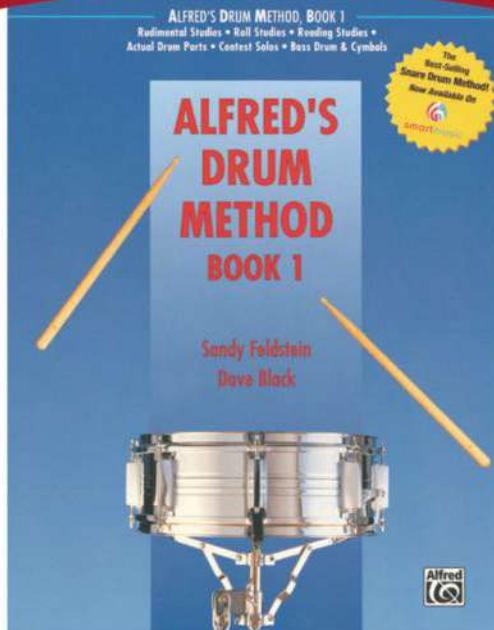
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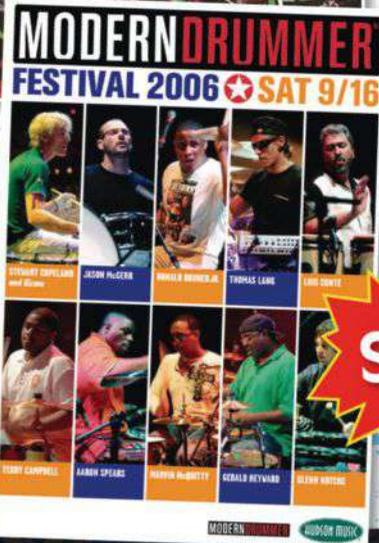
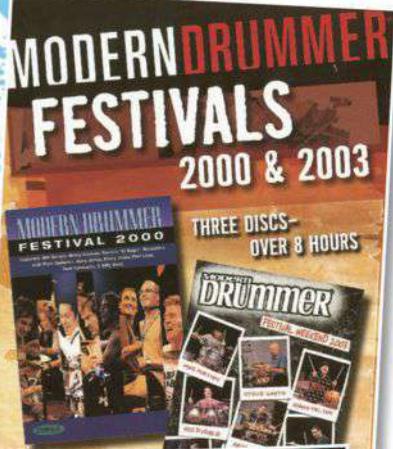
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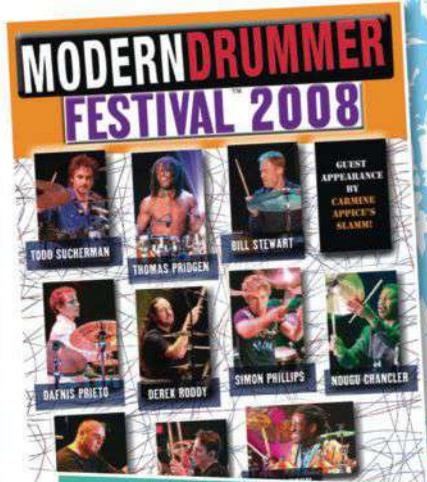
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LA music academy

College of Music

The music industry has seen many changes in recent years, and it shows no signs of settling down. The Los Angeles Music Academy, or LAMA, seeks to address the new reality—but not at the expense of basic musical skills. Story and photos by Mike Haid

Los Angeles Music Academy president Tom Aylesbury was working for a small drum hardware manufacturing company when he met the German drummer, instructor, and entrepreneur Hans-Peter Becker at the 1993 winter NAMM show in Los Angeles. In the early '80s Becker had studied at L.A.'s Percussion Institute of Technology under the guidance of curriculum developers Ralph Humphrey and Joe Porcaro, and in 1987 he started the successful Modern Music School chain in Germany. Now he was interested in opening a school in America. When Humphrey and Porcaro retired from PIT in the fall of 1995, Aylesbury and Becker invited them to develop a new curriculum and help launch the Los Angeles Music Academy College of Music, which opened its doors in the fall of 1996.

LAMA is located in a 1940s-era building near Old Town Pasadena, which was originally occupied by a team of NASA satellite

designers. When the accredited music school launched, its initial departments included guitar, bass, and drums; vocal and music production were added later.

LAMA's drum department, which is among the school's most popular divisions, offers ten practice rooms with drumsets. (Drummers bring their own cymbals and pedals.) Each student gets a minimum of two hours a day to practice—though the rooms are open from 6 A.M. to 1 A.M., and some students spend as much as six hours a day woodshedding. Drummers can also sign up to use any of the larger classrooms after hours.

The LAMA complex houses a performance hall with a full backline and lighting; it seats about 150 and facilitates concerts, clinics, and various classes. The school also has a full 625-square-foot recording studio with three isolation booths, a drum room, a Pro Tools HD/C24 rig, and ten computer stations. And a cou-

ple of computer labs are used for digital recording classes.

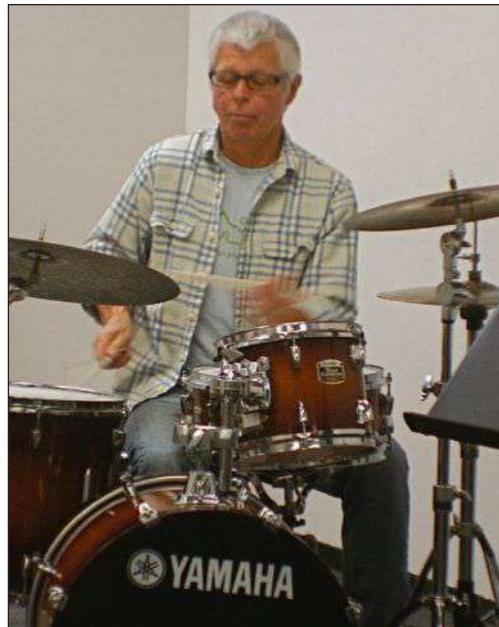
"Our goal is to create artists and teach them to be competitive in the real-world marketplace," says LAMA vice president and drum instructor Mike Packer. "They learn how to use Pro Tools, record themselves, transfer tracks via the Internet, and develop the tools and techniques to play in any live situation."

This push toward artist development comes largely through a series of elective courses. "If you're in a band," Packer explains, "you need to know how to collaborate on writing the music. If you're a solo artist, you need to know how to write and record your own music. We also teach students how to promote and market themselves without spending a lot of money.

"Because we're a vocational school and offer training on a variety of different instruments," Packer goes on, "including vocals and music production, we encourage our students to learn it all and make themselves more valuable. We offer a fifth- and sixth-quarter class called Original Project, for instance, where we put everybody into bands and they have to write



Instructor Dave Beyer works one on one with a student in a LAMA classroom.



Ralph Humphrey plays examples during his Styles & Analysis class.

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LAMA houses a 625-square-foot recording studio.



LAMA students play with professional musicians during a Rhythm Section Performance class.



Students learn harmony and music theory in the keyboard lab.

original music, perform it, and record it. Students leave here with a well-rounded career-development opportunity."

Packer points out that LAMA's website features an exclusive gig board that gives students an in on auditions. "We get a lot of calls from various places for gig opportunities," he says, "and we'll recommend students who we know can cut the gig and who have the right attitude and personality to handle the situation in a professional manner."

"Even though the studio scene has shrunk tremendously in the big cities, we believe there are more opportunities than ever for these young musicians because of the international exposure of the Internet. A student can go home, record a video, load it to the Internet, and have it broadcast around the world the same day. The studio scene isn't dead—it's just different from the way it used to be. We train our students how to record themselves to sound good on a low budget. We educate them to the real-world musical environment, and then we train them for it."

A LAMA DRUM EDUCATION

There are specific requirements to be accepted into LAMA, and all potential students must audition. According to Packer, most students wishing to study at the school are looking to fine-tune their musical talents and to develop their playing career via the built-in network of professionals that LAMA provides.

To receive an occupational AA (associate of arts) degree from the school, students must earn ninety credits and complete six quarters, each containing a minimum of fifteen core credits. Beyond those core credits, students may take additional electives. Semesters include ten weeks of instruction, one week of testing, and two weeks off. Book fees range from \$150 to \$200 per quarter. "We have six computers loaded with the entire school music library,"

Packer explains, "so any song a student needs for class can be downloaded to their MP3 players."

The LAMA drum curriculum includes three types of classes—lecture, drill, and performance. The lectures, which cover topics like motion, balance, rudiments, reading, and listening, are supported by drill classes in each of these areas. Ideally, Ralph Humphrey explains on the LAMA website, when students enroll in performance classes, they become better able to apply the concepts they've learned, not to mention to get to practice their performance skills with pro players.

In Joe Porcaro's core jazz class, students learn comping in 4/4 and 3/4 time, brush technique, soloing, and theoretical permutation techniques. These areas are explored through weekly assignments, and individuals are chosen to perform their assigned work in front of the class. In Porcaro's Jazz Ensemble Workshop, students perform standards and bebop tunes with a bass player and guitar player, and they're critiqued in all areas of their playing, including cymbal time, dynamics, and overall musicality.

According to Packer, the school's teaching staff is its biggest asset. "Our curriculum is unique," he says, "and very thorough. Ralph and Joe wrote a brand-new curriculum for LAMA when they came here. All of our instructors in the drum department are great teachers and working musicians. So

the information the students are getting comes directly from the field.

"In each class, every student plays," Packer adds. "If you don't raise your hand to play, you'll eventually be called on to do it. There's nowhere to hide, and every student is held accountable to develop his or her skills." Packer says that since LAMA's student body is divided roughly in half between foreign and domestic musicians, enrollees develop a broader palette as they share indigenous ethnic music from their respective regions of the globe.

ROOM TO GROW

"We love the fact that LAMA is a small, family environment," Packer says. "There's a cool vibe here that is rare. Our building will facilitate a maximum of 200 students, and we're at about 150 now, so we have a little room to grow. We will always keep the class sizes small [LAMA allows no more than twenty-five students per class], but we may add more classes, if necessary. We're also looking into making a big push into online classes, so people from around the world can study with Ralph, Joe, and everyone else that teaches here. It probably won't be the actual class that you would get if you came here to study—it would be tailored specifically for the online experience."

Packer goes on to say that LAMA is currently in the planning stages to offer a bachelor's degree and video-exchange capabilities between students and teachers. The school has also recently launched LAMA Music, a recorded-music division exclusively for graduates and faculty. "We function as a typical music administration company, representing our catalog and securing placements in TV and film productions," Packer explains. "We have quite a few teachers already in that industry, so it's a natural progression into the area."

LAMA also offers a Summer Camp program and a Drummer's Reality Camp featuring clinics, workshops, instruction, autograph sessions, and a roundtable with the industry's top drummers.



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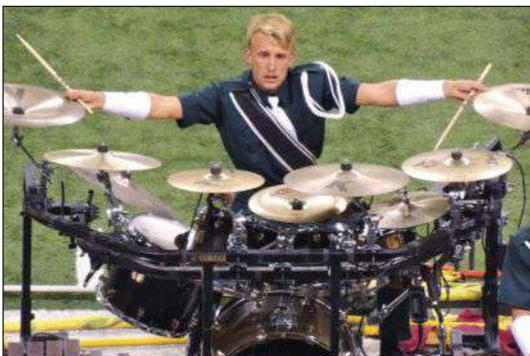
BACKBEATS



The Blue Devils won a record fifteenth World Championship and their twelfth "high drum" award.

2012 DCI WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS

The Carolina Crown placed second with Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man."



Madison Scouts drumset player Michael Todd won Best Individual Multi-Percussion (tied with Best Individual Timpani).

August, Indianapolis, Lucas Oil Stadium...must be time for drum corps in the Circle City! Drum Corps International celebrated its fortieth anniversary this past summer with a special Grand Reunion Party, featuring *Late Show* trumpeter/Cadets alum Al Chez and his band the Brothers of Funk, and alumni representing four decades of marching activity. DCI also inducted five new members into its Hall of Fame, including two drum legends: **Marty Hurley**, known for his work with the Phantom Regiment, and **Scott Johnson**, still involved with his alma-mater Blue Devils.

The **Blue Devils**, from Concord, California, won an unprecedented fifteenth World Championship, plus four "caption awards," including the Fred Sanford Best Percussion Performance. What does Johnson, the Devils' director of percussion, think of his line's twelfth "high drum" trophy? "It's not about the caption awards," Scott replies moments after the scores are announced. "It's about the total package—that's what we strive for. Winning drums is a bonus. And with the Hall of Fame award, it's been an absolutely amazing year." The Devils performed a "Dada-esque" program, "Cabaret Voltaire," with music spanning Charles Mingus to George Gershwin.

The **Carolina Crown**, from Fort Mill, South Carolina, won the silver medal with a show featuring Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man," including a quadraphonic effect from four sets of timpani placed around the field. The **Phantom Regiment**, from Rockford, Illinois, grabbed the bronze with an emotional performance comprising excerpts from Giacomo Puccini's opera *Turandot*. And the **Crossmen**, from San Antonio, Texas, returned to the "Top 12" after a seven-year absence.

Three of the four World Class Individual Awards were won by members of the Blue Devils: **Keelan Tobia** (Best Individual Snare, for the second year in a row), **Chris Drummer** (Best Individual Multi-Tenor), and **Monica England** (Best Individual Keyboard); the fourth category was combined Timpani and Multi-Percussion, with timpanist **Mason Lynass** of the Santa Clara Vanguard and drumset player **Michael Todd** of the Madison Scouts tying for the top honors. Ensemble Awards went to the Blue Devils' percussion duo of Tobia on snare and **Amir Oosman** on tenors and drumset, the **Spirit of Atlanta's** cymbal line, and the bass drum ensemble from the **Cascades** of Seattle.

Text and photos by Lauren Vogel Weiss





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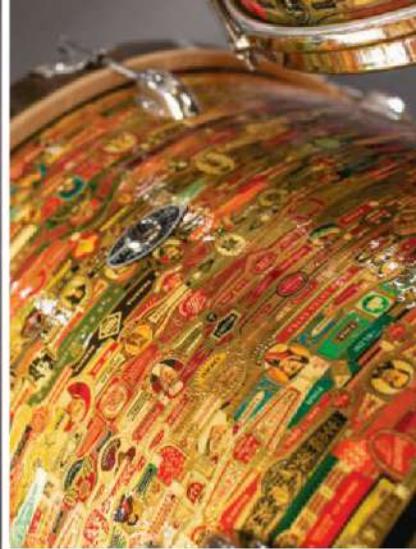
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David Apuzco Photography

Banding Together

Sitting at dinner one night," says Matt Alling of Connecticut Pro Percussion, "my wife suggested I finally put together remnants of one of my other passions and use the twelve years worth of saved cigar bands that I hoped to someday use as a cigar art project. I started by sanding down and patching Slingerland drum shells from the late '60s and early '70s, and I prepped them for the application of the bands that same night." Alling began with the 18" bass drum—actually a converted floor tom—and 12" and 14" toms, and found the 4x14 maple Slingerland snare at a local trade show. "I hated having to strip down a perfectly good drum to finish the project, but the size worked well with the completed kit," he says.

"Approximately 3,000 cigar bands were placed on the shells, one at a time," Alling explains, "using Q-tips to swab industrial glue on the back of each band. Some days the bands were talking to me and

telling me where they should go, and other days not so much. Excess glue was wiped away by hand to create a clean and smooth surface. Once the bands were in place, nine layers of marine urethane were applied in thin coats and wet sanded between each coat after the third one.

"All four drums have hand-tucked calfskin batter heads that I made myself, which give the drums a full, rich, fat, and warm tone. About 165 hours of labor went into the kit, over three and a half months, and I often worked into the wee hours of the morning.

"For the record," Matt adds, "about 70 percent of the bands on the kit are from cigars that I smoked myself."

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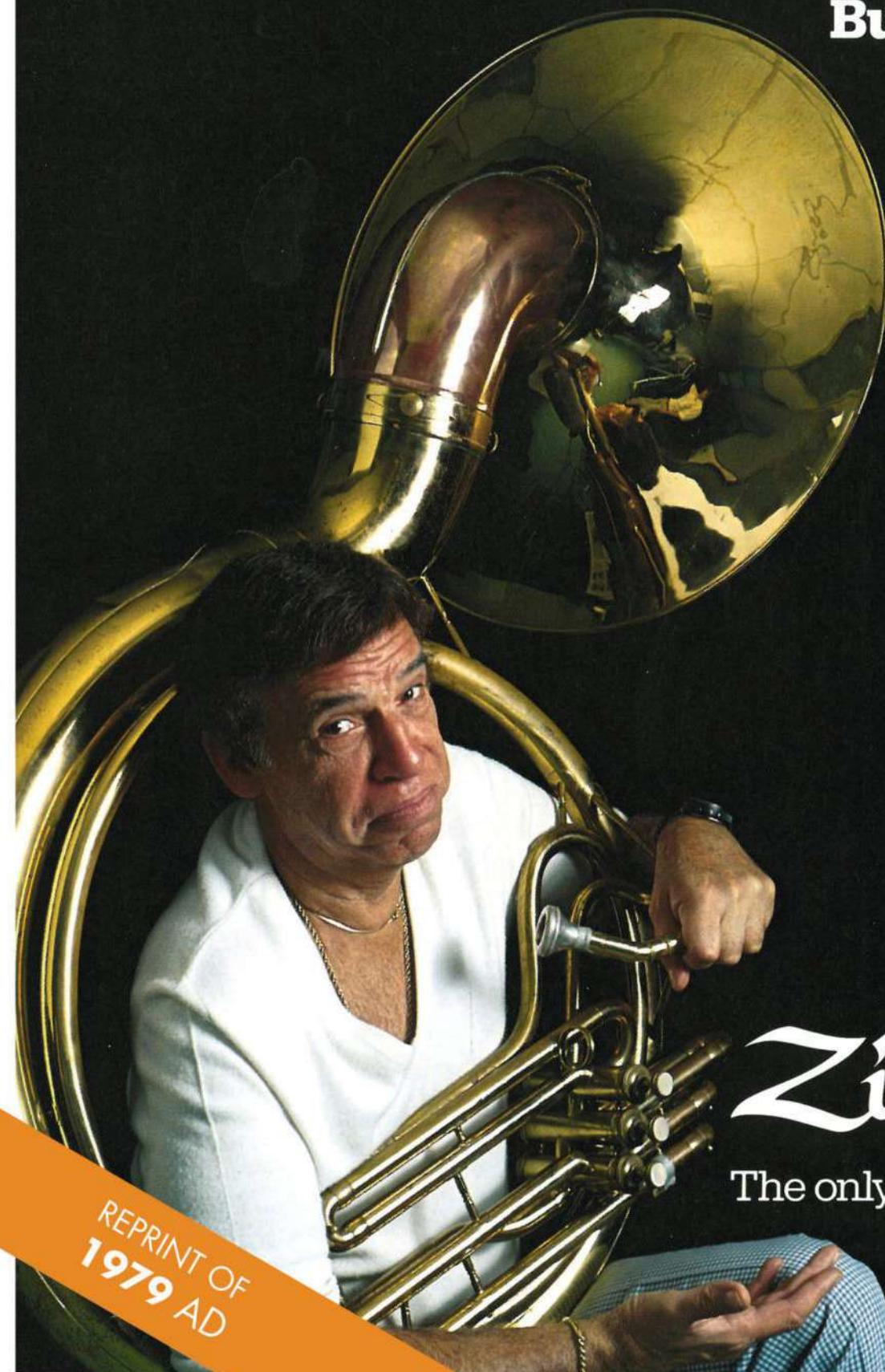
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