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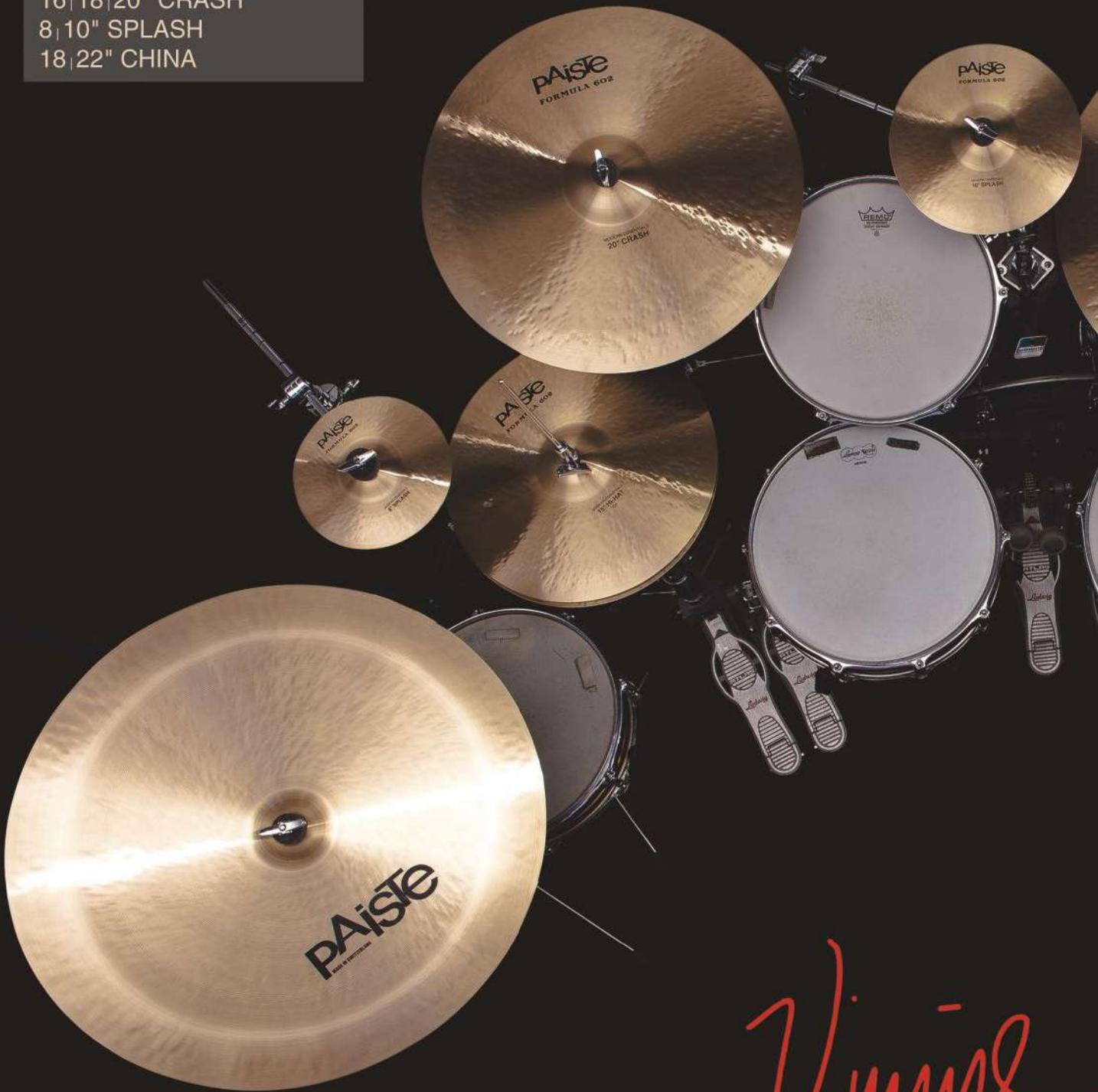


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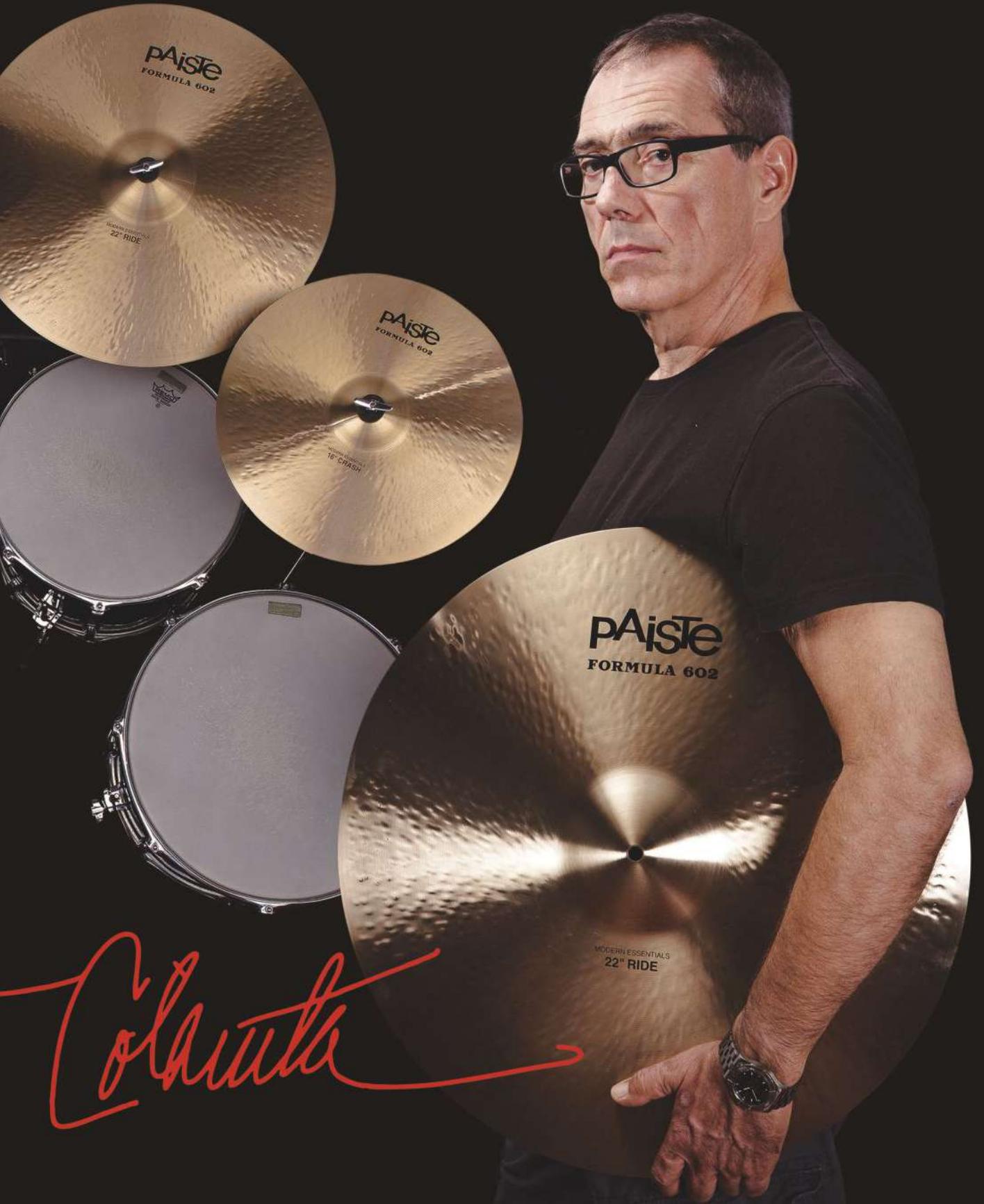
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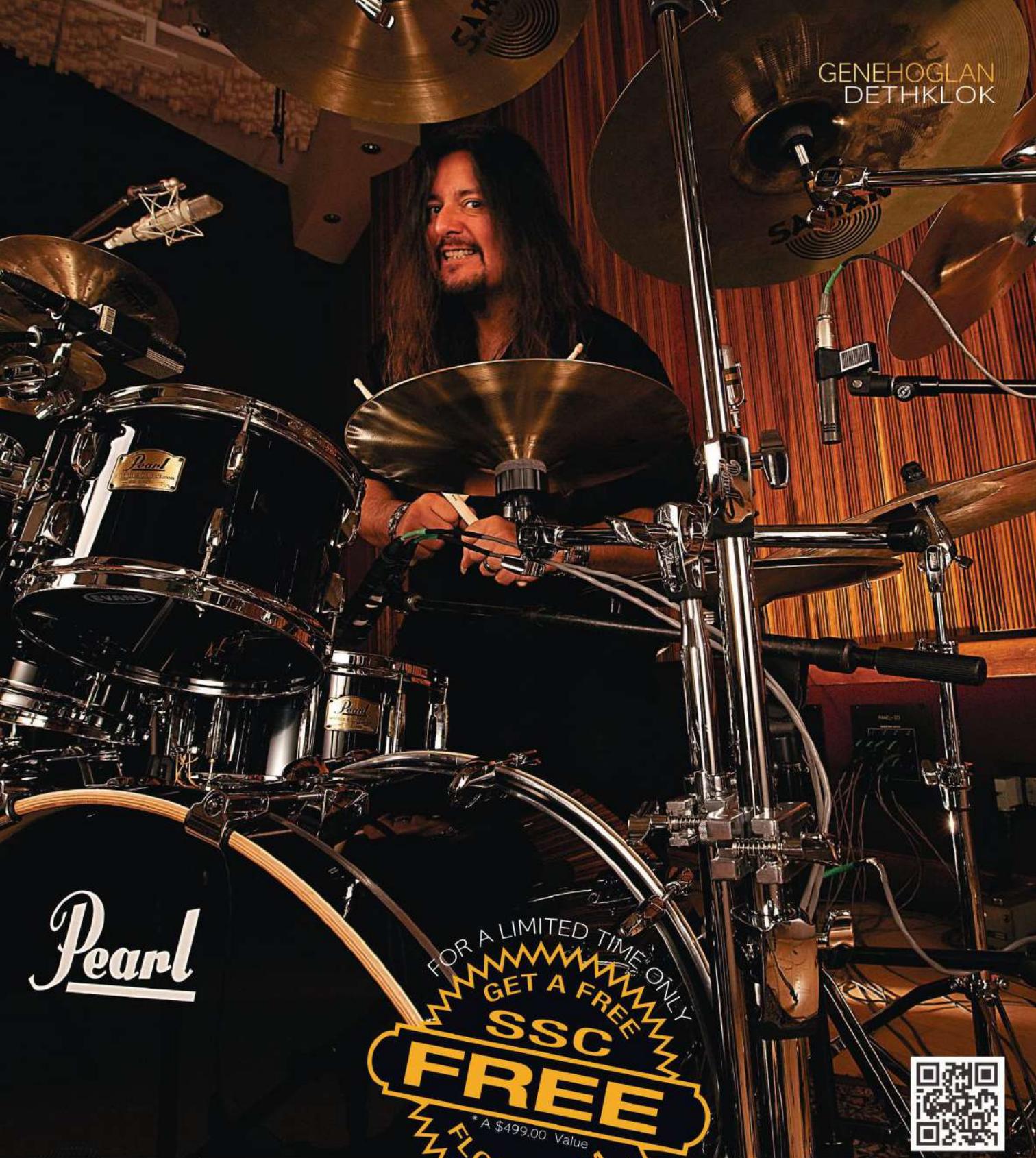
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Sick and Inspired

Anyone who's been going long enough will tell you that they have a love/hate relationship with winter NAMM, the annual music-products-industry convention held each January in Anaheim, California.

Two weeks after returning home from this year's event, I'm still suffering from NAMMfluenza. That's the latest catch-all term for whatever bug you inevitably pick up when talking to dozens upon dozens of people who have to get right on top of you, like Judge Reinhold's close-talking character from *Seinfeld*, just to make themselves heard over the roar of a thousand drums and guitars being simultaneously tortured. But even in my current cranky *because I'm still sick and this New York winter has gone on PLENTY long, thank you very much* mood, certain NAMM episodes remain in my mind and bring me a smile.

This entire scenario happens to me every year, actually, and it's always the recalling of conversations with drummers at NAMM that shakes me from my whiny state. By "drummers," I don't necessarily mean the famous faces that come by the *MD* booth to say hey—though that's obviously a pretty rad aspect of working at NAMM. No, what I'm talking about here is all the behind-the-scenes industry folks and would-be rock stars you meet—the drum department manager from St. Louis, the manufacturer's rep who flew out from the East Coast, the drummer in the band from Japan who picked up and moved to L.A. with stars in her eyes and *Stick Control* in her backpack. It's utterly amazing how much these folks have in common—and how each of their paths in life is unique.

Everyone knows that being a musician is not a nine-to-five job, but few outside of our world understand just *how* not nine-to-five it is. Our retailer from St. Louis—he's got a wife, a six-year-old, and a newborn at home, works his butt off at the shop for ten hours, six days a week, and plays in a Billy Joel cover band every Saturday night, just to make ends meet. (He doesn't really like Billy Joel's music, but a gig's a gig.)

The company rep—he spent the '90s on the road teching for a famous metal drummer, nine long years unsuccessfully trying to get his invention for a new kind of bass drum pedal to market, and the past eighteen months traveling the West Coast, helping to launch a new cymbal line.

And our drummer from Japan—her father still plays sambas in large Tokyo hotels and has never completely given up his dream of touring American concert halls, while her mother worries that her only daughter isn't getting enough sleep or regular meals as she takes courses at an L.A. music school during the day and does gigs in seedy neighborhoods at night, 5,000 miles from home, all in the hopes of living out her dad's dream.

Of course, what all these people have in common is their love of the drums, their need to support themselves or their families, and their decision that those two desires are inseparable. This is heavy stuff, made all the more intense by a music industry—heck, a music culture—that seems to be in a permanent state of change. But soldier on they must.

And, perhaps, soldier on *you* must.

Maybe every once in a while we should remember to raise a symbolic glass to the working drummer. So here's to them, and here's to you. We're all in this together, after all, and we can all use the encouragement.

Now pass me that box of tissues, please.



Jim Esposito

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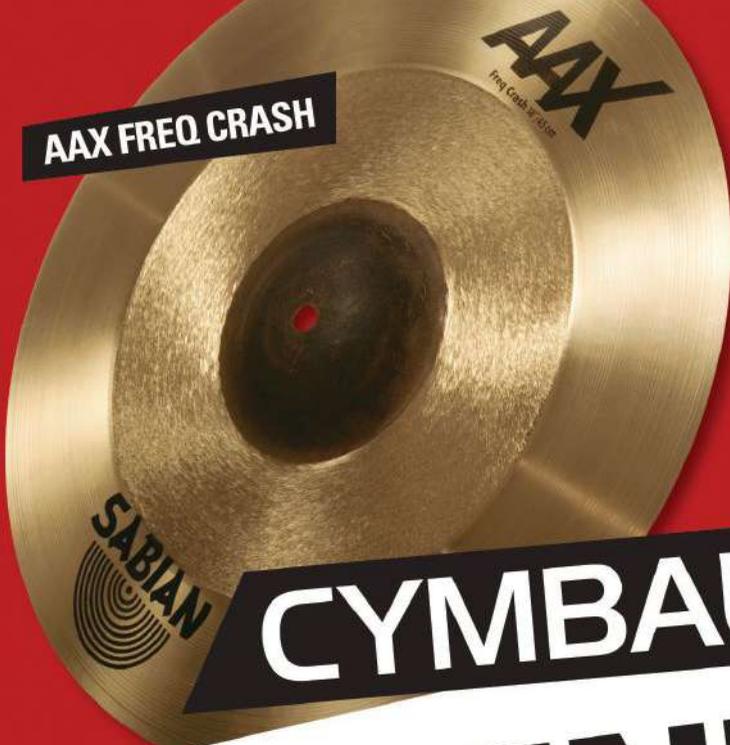
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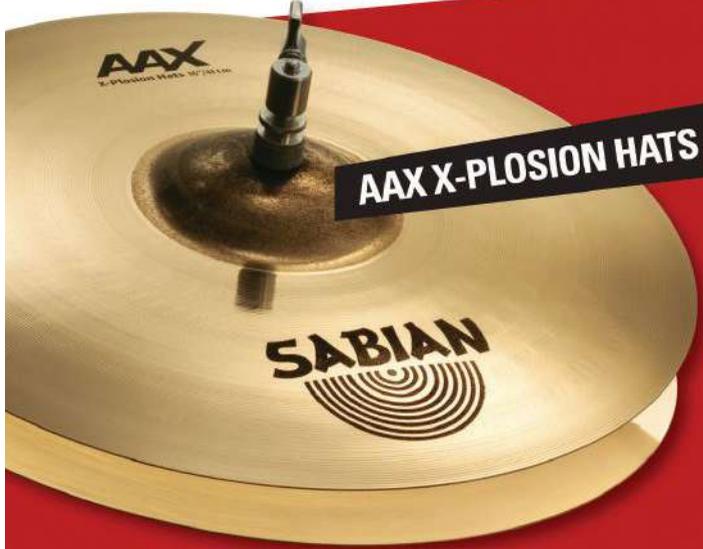
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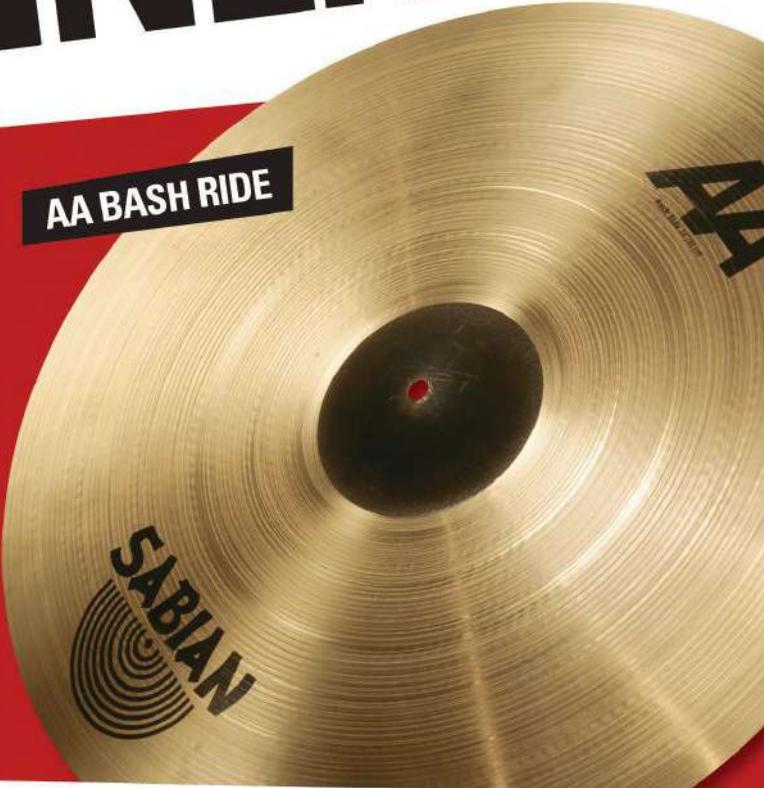
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CHRIS ADLER

I just want to express how much I enjoyed reading your interview with Chris Adler (March 2013). I always find him informative and down to earth. His honesty about his skill level when meeting others who are more schooled is refreshing and I find makes him a more accessible person. The fact that he's always assessing his abilities and pushing himself into new areas is a good lesson for any drummer. I feel he's a great role model.

Nick Nocera

ANOTHER FILL-IN TIP

In "How to Prepare for a Subbing Gig on Short Notice" (March), left off the list of tips is my number one: Know the intros. Once a song is under way it gets much easier. My cheat sheet has every intro noted by who starts (like the guitarist), how many measures before the drums come in, whether everyone comes in

together, etc. It eliminates pre-song apprehension and having to memorize all the starts with a set list you're not wholly familiar with. It makes for a much more relaxed show.

Dan Lucas

LUDWIG USA

What a great article by Michael Dawson on the Ludwig factory in Monroe, North Carolina (Spotlight, March 2013). Not only did he provide insight into the company history, his spotlight on the great people that work there, with photos, really hit home. I got to meet the Ludwig folks at NAMM this year and was treated like family, so their motto "Join the Family" rings true. I have played Ludwigs my entire life, and I'm very proud to be having my new custom Legacy Exotic kit built by the same folks you featured in the article and made in the USA.

Mark Markowitz

DROPPED BEATS

- In March's Electronic Review, the list price for the Roland TD-30KV kit should have been \$8,999.
- In the Russ Lawton Portrait in the same issue, the photograph on page 82 was taken by Brian Jenkins.

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PAUL DOUCETTE

Matchbox Twenty's utility man may be on again/off again when it comes to the drums. Either way, the charts love him.

Matchbox Twenty's pop career began with a bang in 1996, with debut album *Yourself or Someone Like You* reaching multiplatinum status. The group's second release, 2000's *Mad Season*, proved to fans and critics that success was no fluke, but after 2002's *More Than You Think You Are*, the band members took a break from touring and recording to work on solo projects. Drummer and multi-instrumentalist Paul Doucette, for one, went on to write music for films and record *Milk the Bee*, the debut album by his solo project, the Break and Repair Method.

In 2007 Matchbox Twenty regrouped to record seven new tunes for the greatest-hits package *Exile on Mainstream*, on which Doucette, who's also a principal songwriter with the band, sang and played rhythm guitar. This left the drumming duties to the Push Stars' Ryan MacMillan, who continued in the timekeeping role as the group spent most of 2008 on the road, with Doucette playing guitar and keys on stage.

Following another break, in 2010 the group gathered in Nashville to begin writing and recording its fourth and latest album, *North*, which was produced by long-time associate Matt Serletic and finds Doucette back on drums. *North* was released in September of 2012 and made its debut at number one on the *Billboard* Top 200 charts.

"During the recording, we had three kits set up at all times," Doucette says. "There was a combo of various drums in the big

room, my early-'60s Ludwig kit in a smaller room, and a super-tight Premier kit in the vocal booth. We would play live to work out each song, and once we had the basic vibe, the guys would leave and I would play to the best take. Often I would [do a pass] on each kit and then we would mix the sounds throughout track."

The album's first single, "She's So Mean," features a great little drum fill in the choruses that acts as one of the hooks. "I always base my parts on the vocal," Doucette explains. "In fact, most of the time I'm recording I'm *only* listening to the vocal."

So what was it like for Paul to be back in the drum chair after a few years off? "Playing drums always feels especially natural with [guitarist] Kyle [Cook], [bassist] Brian [Yale], and [singer] Rob [Thomas]," he says. "And I still play a bit when I'm working on music for other people, so my chops were somewhat still there. I did set aside a week before we went into the studio to shed, though."

Matchbox Twenty ended 2012 doing promo tours for *North* and is back out on the road this year. Once again Doucette can be found at the front of the stage, this time leaving the drum duties to the multitalented American Hi-Fi producer/singer/songwriter/guitarist Stacy Jones. "Stacy is a monster player with great feel and timing," Paul says. "He plays like I wish I did."

Billy Amendola

NEWS



The factory as instrument. Paiste has released a unique factory-tour video featuring drummer Pauli "the PSM" Stanley-McKenzie of Gorillaz Sound System. Check it out in the Recent Videos section of moderndrummer.com.

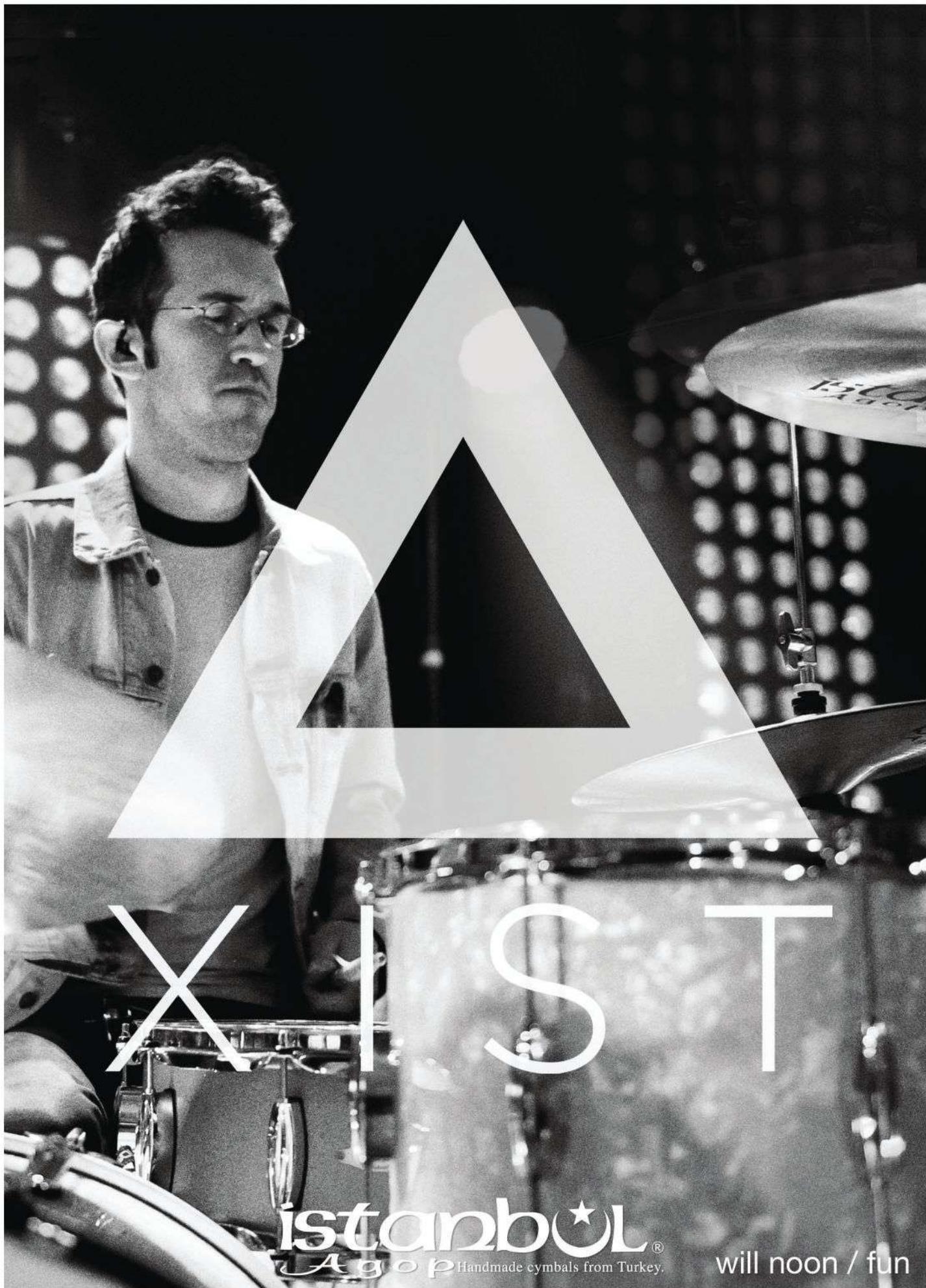
Sharing what they have in common.

Matt Halpern, Mike Johnston, and J.P. Bouvet are participating in the Common Thread Clinic Tour. Shows confirmed as of press time include April 18 at Drums Etc. in Lancaster, PA; April 19 at Laboratory Music in Philadelphia; April 20 at Russo Music in Asbury Park, NJ; April 22 at Sam Ash in Manhattan; and April 23 at Alto Music in Middletown, NY.

Purdie on the air. For thirty years, DJ and drummer Barry Farrar has been the host of *Percussive Profiles*, a weekly radio show dedicated to the greats of jazz drumming. The show is broadcast on KSDS Jazz 88.3 FM in San Diego and streams on jazz88.org. Among the drummers who have appeared on the program are Max Roach, Art Blakey, Roy Haynes, Louis Hayes, Jimmy Cobb, Lenny White, T.S. Monk, Mike Clark, Herlin Riley, Steve Smith, Willie Jones III, Bobby Thomas, Alphonse Mouzon, Babatunde Lea, Akira Tana, Han Bennink, Matt Wilson, Cindy Blackman, and Clayton Cameron. The most recent interview to go live is with Bernard Purdie.

ON TOUR

Metal Alliance Tour featuring Anthrax (Charlie Benante), **High on Fire** (Des Kensel), **Exodus** (Tom Hunting), **Municipal Waste** (Dave Witte), and **Holy Grail** (Tyler Meahl) /// **Rian Dawson** with All Time Low /// **George Kollias** with Nile /// **Ben Gordon** with Parkway Drive /// **Mike Cox** with Coal Chamber /// **Jon Larsen** with Volbeat /// **Steve Gorman** with the Black Crowes /// **Marc "Meggers" Eggers** with the Casualties /// **Mike McKee** with Delta Rae /// **Vicky Marques** with Mariza



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(Steve Jordan) /// **The Replacements Songs for Slim** (Peter Anderson) /// **Authority Zero The Tipping Point** (Sean Sellers) /// **Empty Mansions Snakes/Vultures/Sulfate** (Sam Fogarino) /// **Sevendust Black Out the Sun** (Morgan Rose) /// **Black Pus All My Relations** (Brian Chippendale)

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT

Hayden Scott (Awolnation), **Jake Massucco** (Four Year Strong), **Dan Trapp** (Senses Fail), **Giancarlo de Trizio** (*Book of Mormon* tour), **Daniel Williams** (the Devil Wears Prada), **Darius Woodley** (50 Cent, Cher Lloyd), **Richard Wouters** (Civil Twilight), **Will Noon** (Fun), **Dave Raun** (Lagwagon, Me First and the Gimme Gimmes), **Tim Yeung** (Morbid Angel), and **Stix Zadina** (Steel Panther) are playing Remo heads.

Brian Frasier-Moore is playing Pearl drums.

On tour, **Gotye** has been using a wide selection of Earthworks mics on his drumset and percussion.

Russ Miller is playing Mapex drums.

Victor DeLorenzo (Violent Femmes) is playing Ludwig percussion.

CLAUDE COLEMAN JR.

Now that **Ween**, the band he put most of his energies into for the past two decades, is kaput, CCJ finds that he's busier than ever. Go figure.



In 2012, Claude Coleman Jr. and his bandmates in Ween were shocked and perplexed to find out via an interview on *rollingstone.com* that their lead singer, Aaron Freeman (aka Gene Ween), had decided to quit the group he cofounded in order to pursue a solo career. Coleman's response? "No worries."

CCJ, as he's known to friends, has been keeping himself busy with half a dozen musical projects, including playing bass with and producing the forthcoming album by the Asbury Park punk rock band TV Tramps, who recently opened for original Dead Kennedys singer Jello Biafra's group. "[Playing with a number of diverse artists] is the only way I can satisfy my desire to play different styles of music," the born-and-bred New Jerseyan explains.

Right after Ween dissolved, Coleman hit the road with experimental jazz/rock keyboardist Marco

Benevento, playing a short tour that ended at the Telluride Jazz Festival. Immediately after the gig, Coleman was on a plane to L.A. to rehearse with Eagles of Death Metal, filling in for his buddy Joey Castillo (former Queens of the Stone Age drummer) on a three-week tour of South Africa and Europe.

"The Eagles is a really fun gig," a reenergized Coleman says. "We're all really good friends and have known each other for a long time. And on top of that, bassist Brian O'Connor is also a carpenter." Oh, did we forget to mention that when he's not on tour Coleman holds down a job doing finish carpentry? "That's why we make a good rhythm section," Claude explains. "We know how to build from the bottom up. We're craftsmen in more ways than one." *MD* isn't sure what type of hammers CCJ prefers, but we can tell you that his tools of choice when he's behind the drumkit include Vater sticks, Crescent cymbals, Remo heads, and Røde mics.

Coleman admits that it's hard to find time these days to work on his *true* labor of love, Amandla, for which he not only sings and plays nearly every instrument but also produces and engineers. "I really would like to focus more on Amandla and tour like crazy when the new record is done," the ambitious jack-of-all-trades says. Yet he's not complaining. "My life is swinging a hammer all day, going straight to gigs, and repeating, day after day. But it's a *good* life."

"Pistol" Pete Kaufmann



BENJAMIN COWAN

P-Funk's latest addition behind the kit has already lived a lifetime in the funk tradition.

Benjamin Cowan has been manning the throne for George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic for only the last couple of years, but his origins with the band run considerably deeper. "I've always been there," he says. "I was born into it—held by [legendary P-Funk bassist] Bootsy Collins as a baby. I've been backstage just about my whole life."

Being the son of longtime P-Funk trumpet player Bennie Cowan, the drummer (aka Benzal or Benjamin Baltimore) was ripe to have some heady experiences at a very early age, not the least of which came when he took the stage for a song at Woodstock 99. "George let me get up there and do it," Cowan says today, still marveling at the occasion. "It was the biggest moment of my life, at age fifteen. I stood up, looked out, and saw 100,000 people out there, and I thought, *If I hold my sticks real tight and just make it through this song....* And I made it through!"

Since then Cowan has busied himself with acquiring the tools necessary to play a demanding set featuring extended periods of deep-pocket grooves punctuated by explosive fills and solos. To broaden

his skill set, he turned to the Drum Fantasy Camp with Dave Weckl. "I'm definitely thankful for the teachings I got from Weckl and all those guys," Cowan says. "They showed me ways to do stuff that I want to do without using as much energy—but still having the same intensity. That week changed my whole drumming life."

Cowan also points to the mentorship of funk and jazz drumming legend (and P-Funk alumnus) Dennis Chambers as a source of continuous inspiration. "He's been in my life for a long time," Benjamin says, "and he's helped me mentally. He told me, 'Don't try to play what I played; try to play something *better* than what I played.'"

Today Cowan has live stints in Europe, Japan, and Australia under his belt and is looking forward to more touring. "It's kind of like a family," he says of P-Funk, "where everybody knows every note, so you gotta watch yourself. You're always going for that perfect night where there's not one mistake. I'm *supremely* humbled by this gig."

Cowan uses Sonor drums, Zildjian cymbals, Evans heads, and Vic Firth sticks.

Mark Pry



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BACK *Through the* STACK

Manu Katché

In the December 1987 issue of *MD*, the recent recruit to Peter Gabriel's band talked about how deeply he was moved by the physicality of Sting's drummer at the time, Omar Hakim, whom Katché had watched carefully at the Amnesty International Conspiracy of Hope concerts.

Manu: It looks so striking when Omar plays, since he's very tall and he's got very high cymbals. When he hits, he has a dancer's moves.

MD: Apparently you responded positively to the visual as well as the musical aspects of his drumming. That's important to you personally?

Manu: It's very important. What your body shows is very revealing. It's a representation of you. I'm not speaking about muscles or sexuality. Whether you're a musician, a singer, or just someone trying to get a job, you make a first impression with your body. If you're not attractive—not sexually, but just in terms of graceful movements and posture—it can turn

other people off. And that's too bad, because there might be deep feelings and a lot to give beneath the surface.

MD: What might a drummer do on stage that would be a bad thing visually?

Manu: It's bad if you're not *into* your drums. Like, you're a person, and you're at your drums, but you're not a *part* of them. You're just...a human, and drums. Whether it's primitive African drums or electronics like Simmons, if you're really a part of them, moving with the toms and cymbals, becoming one with them, it's a beautiful thing to see, like a ballet.

Many things about the way I'm playing now are influenced by my beginnings in per-



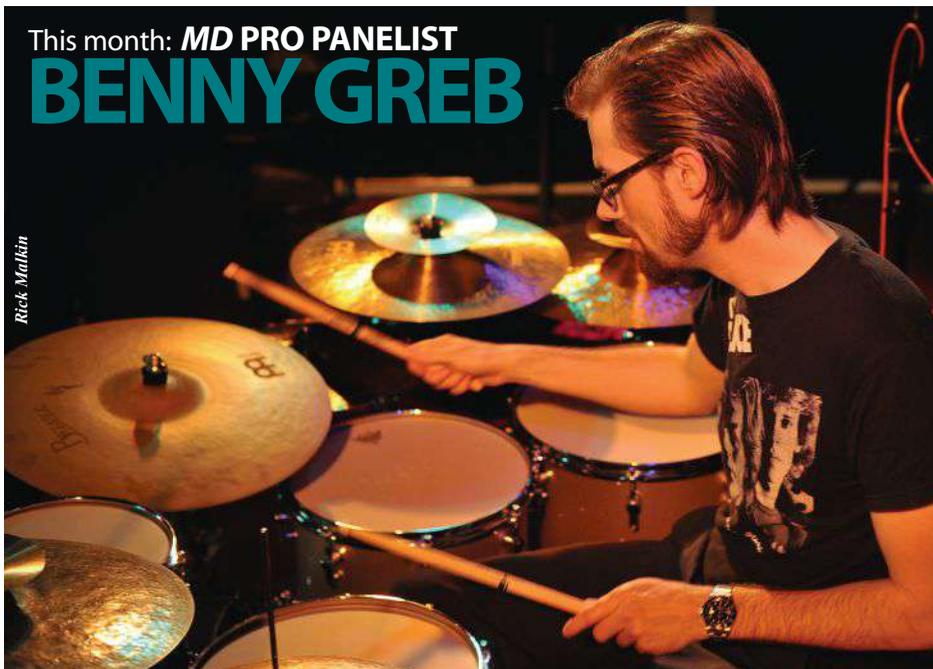
cussion and piano. And even when I was in school for classical music, I was thinking always of dancing, instead of really concentrating on counting the bars or reading the notes. I spoke to my teacher about it and he said, "That's very good; you're the first one to tell me that you can feel classical music by moving your body."

To read the entire Manu Katché feature—and all the other great material from the December 1987 issue—go to moderndrummer.com and click on the App Store link.

Must-Have Gear

Equipment the Pros Won't Leave Home Without

This month: **MD PRO PANELIST**
BENNY GREB



Rick Malkin

What I mostly end up taking is the usual cymbals/snare/pedal combo, in descending order of importance. I'm not usually super-picky about the pedal, but I do find my snare and ride very important. If I had to pick only one of those, though, it would be my ride. Drums can be tuned and customized, even when you have to use instruments that are not yours and that you're maybe not happy with. I can bring my own snare drum head, for instance, which for me always means a Remo Coated Ambassador. It's lightweight, fits in every suitcase, and can be a lifesaver. On tour I've had rental kits with a snare head that looked like a three-dimensional card of the German Alps.

But with a cymbal, you need it to be the way you want it. So I would take my 20" Meinl Sand ride. It's very versatile and an important part of my setup, not only sound-wise but also feel-wise. I can trust it dynamically, sonically, and in the way it allows room for the other sounds and frequencies of the kit and the band. It has a great ride sound and also crashes very nicely—I can do whatever I want with it. It sits so perfectly in the mix, it's transparent, and it has character. I don't want to play without it.



Do you know those times
when you're so in tune with
someone where he or she
finishes your sentence,
and you have to smile because
it just flows?

That's how I feel about
my cymbals

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Benny Greb

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

by John Erreich



TRIGGER PLACEMENT AND MODULE SETTINGS

I recently put together a jungle-style kit to record loops in my studio. The bass drum is a converted floor tom. I put Pintech triggers on the kick and rack tom and a Roland trigger on the snare so I could blend sounds from an old Alesis D4 module with the acoustic drum sounds. (I also hooked up an old Roland Octapad to the D4, via MIDI, so I could play additional patches.) The snare trigger seems to work fine, but the bass drum and tom are getting a lot of double triggers. Do I not have the triggers attached correctly? And which parameters in the module should I adjust first to get the best response? Mike

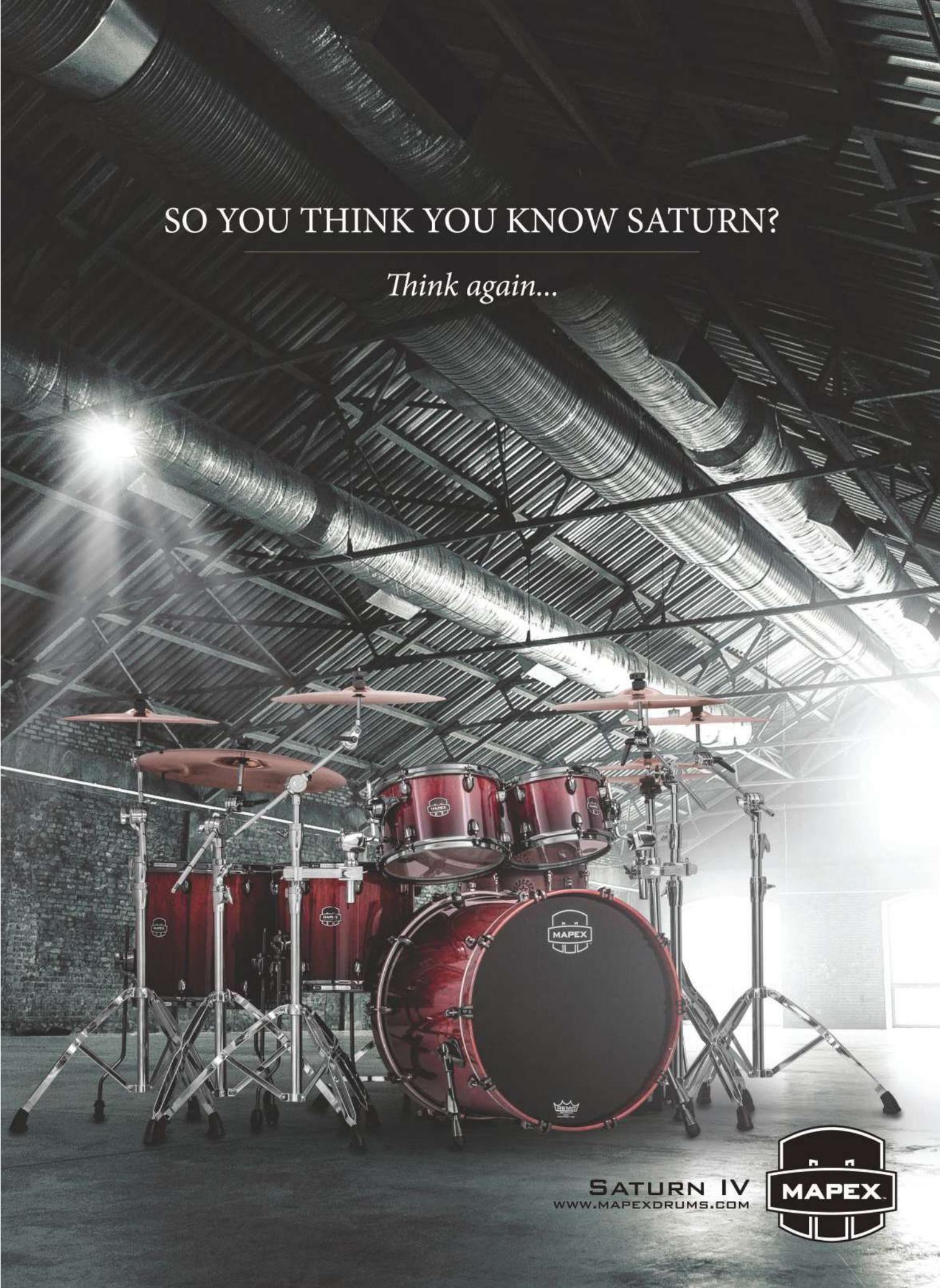
The Alesis D4 is one of the cool little boxes that came along at just the right time (early '90s). It was inexpensive, sounded decent, and allowed drummers an effective way to add triggers and pads to their kit. One thing to point out is that while the D4 triggers well, it doesn't get a full velocity response by today's standards. It should work fine in your application, though.

Let's start with the kick. You're using a smaller size of drum, and you're hitting it with a bass drum pedal, which creates a lot of force. Placed where you have it, the trigger is going to move



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A Roland RT-10S on the snare

forward and backward a few times on each strike of the head, which can lead to double triggering. I suggest moving the trigger to the outside shell area, right next to the top lug and just below the collar of the head. (Place it like you did on the 10" tom.) The shell will give you enough vibration to generate a trigger signal, without all the extra physical movement. Another option is to use the Roland RT-10S trigger, which you have on the snare, on the bass drum. Or you can purchase the version designed for toms, the RT-10T. Roland's design isolates the trigger element against the head and controls the amount of back and forth on the trigger itself. (You won't be able to use the RT-10K kick drum trigger on a converted floor tom, because it's meant to be clamped to thicker bass drum hoops.)

Now let's look at the trigger parameters on the D4. Keep in mind that each input is single zone, which means one trigger per input. You won't get separate signals for triggering sounds from the head and the rim unless you use splitter cables. (The RT-10S is designed to trigger separate sounds via the head and rim, while the Pintechs will fire only one.)

Gain is the first parameter to adjust. You want a decent signal, but not too strong, or else you'll end up reducing dynamic control over softer hits.

The second parameter that you'll address is Noise, which sets the overall noise floor. (Other modules call this the threshold.) Any signal that comes into the D4 at a level that's below the noise floor will be ignored. Raising this setting will help with double triggering. Make small adjustments so that you don't set it too high and miss low-to-medium dynamics.

Xtalk is a very useful parameter. Not only can it help to eliminate the false triggering that occurs when you hit an instrument next to the one with the trigger, but the right Xtalk setting can also help get rid of double triggers.

Decay is a very important setting for your bass drum. Think of this parameter as a gate that opens to allow signals to generate trigger events. The setting relates to the amount of time that's required before a second signal can trigger an event. Once you have the noise floor and gain set correctly, adjust the decay amount to get rid of the super-fast double triggers. Again, dial it up slowly until the double hits are gone, but don't set it so high that the module ignores whatever faster rhythms you might play.

Finally, this is a great opportunity to take a look at your pedal technique. Make sure that when you're playing, you're not accidentally hitting the head twice with the beater. This happens a lot, but we usually don't hear it with acoustic drums. When you add a trigger, you will hear it every time. Hope this helps!



John Emrich is an expert in the field of electronic percussion. He has produced sample libraries on FXpansion's BFD2 and Eco platforms and has produced products for *Modern Drummer*, Platinum Samples, Cymbal Masters, Mapex, Alesis, Pearl, WaveMachine Labs, Native Instruments, Yamaha, and Zildjian. For more info, visit johnemrich.com.

HOW TO REACH US ig@moderndrummer.com



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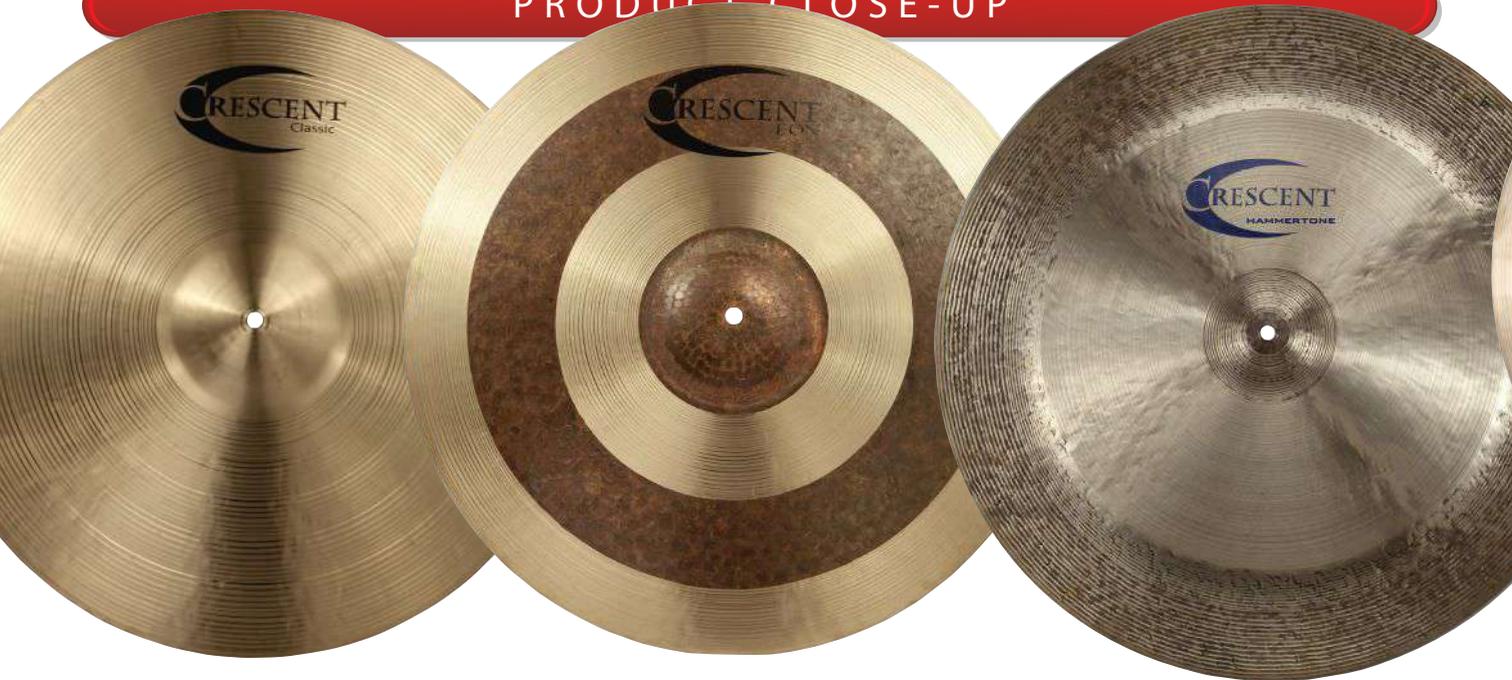


RASHID WILLIAMS
JOHN LEGEND



SPEED FREAK.





CRESCENT CYMBALS

An Assorted Selection

by Michael Dawson



Crescent is a new brand created by Cymbal Masters, a company comprising the well-known drummers Jeff Hamilton and Stanton Moore and industry veterans Michael Vosbein and Bill Norman. Prior to creating Crescent in 2012, Cymbal Masters was the exclusive U.S. distributor and brand manager for Bosphorus. That's why many of the cymbals you see here look familiar; Cymbal Masters reworked the models it helped design for Bosphorus as part of the new Crescent catalog, with all pieces hand-made in Turkey using a proprietary B20 bronze alloy.

According to Vosbein, Crescent cymbals, "combine dark, complex resonance with lightning-quick responsiveness. We refer to this as our DNA—Dynamic Nuanced Approach—which is an essential element in every cymbal we make." MD was sent a wide array of models to check out, including Classic and Eon series crashes; a Primal series ride; Vintage and Vanguard crashes and rides; and rides, hi-hats, and effects cymbals from the Hammertone and Stanton Moore series.

CLASSIC, EON, AND PRIMAL SERIES

All Classic, Eon, and Primal models start off as the same basic cymbal—medium to paper-thin in weight, with a prominent,

round bell and average profile. What distinguishes each series is the lathing. Classics are fully lathed, Eons are partially lathed on top and fully lathed on the bottom, and Primals are lathed only a tiny bit around the top edge. These differences create varying degrees of dryness between the series: Classics are the most open and washy, Eons have a little less wash and more stick definition, and Primals are the driest and most articulate cymbals in the entire Crescent catalog.

The 17" Classic crash we were sent sounded clean, warm, and breathy. It was neither trashy nor glassy—just a solid all-around cymbal with a nice, soft feel and quick response. It didn't open up quite as much as I had hoped, but it blended seamlessly with my favorite B20 crashes from other brands, whether hit with sticks, brushes, or mallets.

The 16" Eon crash is paper-thin, so it had a faster response and more high-end sheen than the Classic. This was the glassiest-sounding Turkish-made crash I've ever played, and it opened up instantly, even with the light flick of a finger. I liked using this crash for playing quick accents and hyper-speed electronica ride patterns on a scaled-down jungle kit.

The unlathed 22" Primal ride is the heaviest model we reviewed, and it was

also my favorite of the entire batch. The stick sound was dry, dark, and articulate; the crash was dark and deep with a moderate decay, making the cymbal better for push accents within ride patterns than for big, open accents; and the bell sounded sweet and clear. I'd use this cymbal in a wide variety of settings, from intense funk and fusion to more delicate jazz or rock and pop. It was like blending the thick, chunky ping of Dennis Chambers' ride with the dry, throaty sound of Jack DeJohnette's cymbals—a winning combination in my book.

VANGUARD AND VINTAGE SERIES

The Vanguard and Vintage lines comprise thinner cymbals that also start off as essentially the same design, but the Vanguards are fully lathed and the Vintages are unlathed. The Vanguards are washier; the Vintages are drier and darker. For these two series, Vosbein says, "We're looking for rich, low fundamental tones under a vowel-like stick attack with a soft, buttery feel." The bells are smaller than on the other series, to prevent the bell sound from being overpowering.

I'd go to the Vanguard line when I want subtler and more refined sounds. These cymbals (we were sent 18" and 21" crash/rides) had a very warm and even wash



with a clean stick attack and a touch of sizzle in the sustain. They really excelled at lower dynamics.

The Vintage series served better in more modern jazz styles where you want a moodier tone with a controlled wash

lot of white noise to the tone but also shortened the sustain to be closer to that of a China. It's a fun cymbal with a lot of personality, but not one you'd want to smack every four bars.

The Hammertones have a steeper



*With such discerning artists as Jeff Hamilton and Stanton Moore at the helm, it's no surprise that **Crescent is offering some of the most refined and musical cymbals around.***

and more pointed attack. We checked out 19" and 22" models and found them to be a lot of fun to play. You could really dig into the cymbals without them washing out, and they articulated fast, broken ride patterns very well. And, because they're so thin, they also had the extra nuance you'd need to be expressive at softer volumes.

HAMMERTONE AND STANTON MOORE SERIES

Jeff Hamilton's Hammertones and Stanton Moore's signature line are carry-overs from the original models Cymbal Masters designed for Bosphorus. Moore's Fat Hats and Wide ride proved to be the most all-purpose of the cymbals we reviewed. They're fully lathed on top and partially lathed on the bottom, and they're a bit heavier than the other models, so they could cut through at higher volumes while retaining a high level of musicality. I wouldn't be afraid to take either of these on an intimate jazz session or a more intense funk/rock gig—they're designed to do it all.

The Trash crash, on the other hand, is a nasty and gnarly specialty cymbal. It has seven huge indentations around the circumference, which not only added a

profile and wider lathing than the Vanguards, but they offered a similarly warm, balanced, and sophisticated tone. The 22" Hammertone China comes with two rivets, so it was a bit unwieldy as a crash. But it would work great as a funky alternate ride with a big band, organ trio, or blues group. The 20" ride had a classic jazz tonality, and the 14" hi-hats provided an effortless foot "chick." All in all, these are some super-sweet cymbals.

crescentcymbals.com



REMO

Versa Drums

by Miguel Monroy

Hand drums have played an essential role in the lives of countless people throughout history. In West Africa, the djembe facilitates a time of dance, community, and peace. Even the very origin of the name *djembe* promotes this purpose, as it comes from the saying “Anke djé, anke bé,” which means “everyone gather together in peace.” In Cuba, congas and bongos are played on the streets by people as they socialize, pass time, and simply enjoy life. We continue to see this use of hand drums as a form of expression, communication, and community throughout the rich history of the Americas, the Far East, India, and Europe.

As one of the world’s leading manufacturers of percussion instruments, Remo has made a significant investment in understanding and promoting not only the social benefits of drumming but the health benefits as well. Remo’s HealthRhythms initiative has published research on how playing music impacts the immune system, employee burnout and turnover rates, student dropout numbers, and much more. With this initiative now woven into the core of the company, it makes sense that Remo



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INTERCHANGEABLE HEADS

All three pieces feature Remo’s “Taper-Fit Drum Coupling,” which allows an easy, self-sealing fit with the pre-tuned drumheads (\$59) and the optional NSL—“not so loud”—head (\$79). The pre-tuned heads come in three versions: TF 10 (10 mil), TF 15 (15 mil), and TF 20 (20 mil). Although each drum has a different body and thus different sonic characteristics, they all have the same rim diameter and bearing edge, which allows the drumheads to be used interchangeably within the entire series. All

called Acousticon, which is made of recycled wood fibers. Although each drum had its own unique sonic characteristics, all three shared a deep, low resonance as a result of the shell material and the pre-tuned heads.

THE SOUNDS

Of the three drums, I enjoyed playing the Versa djembe the most. The TF 10 head is recommended for this model, and I found that it offered the most versatility of the bunch. I was able to capture the low, deep tones I wanted from the center of the head, while maintaining great articulation at the edge, regardless of how fast I was playing.

I played the timbau with the TF 15 head, as recommended by Remo. This drum had a slightly

lower tone than the djembe, which I also really enjoyed. The timbau was able to deliver rich clarity and articulation between the center and edge of the head, but when I played very fast patterns I noticed a slight degradation in clarity.

The Versa tubano is the biggest drum of the three, and I played it with the TF 20 head. It featured a very low and deep tone, almost like a bass drum. This would be the perfect drum for leading a group of players with a slow, thick groove for a long period of time. The center and edge still offered low and high sounds, but with the least amount of distinction between the two.

If you’re in a situation that calls for the use of different types of hand drums and you value the efficient use of space for storage and transport, the Versa Drum series is highly recommended.

remo.com

Interchangeable heads, musical tones, and a stackable design make Versa Drums ideal for hand-drumming enthusiasts on the go.

would “develop products designed to encourage and enhance the use of drumming in recreational music making, education, medicine, and social settings,” as stated in a press release about the new line of Versa Drums.

THE ROUNDUP

We received a full set of Versa Drums for review, including a djembe (\$239), timbau (\$189 to \$220, depending on the color), and tubano (\$189). These drums can be purchased individually or in a sample pack (\$585) that includes all three. The first feature I noticed was the drums’ incredibly efficient nesting capabilities. All three models fit together for a total width of 13” and a height of about 33”. For music therapists, drum circle facilitators, store managers, and others, this portability and smart use of space could be a huge help.

I had to do to install each head was simply press down on the edge of the head with my palms (using a little body weight) until it was snug against the rim of the drum. I removed the head in seconds by inserting the included metal key into one of the drilled holes located about 1” below the head. Given that the heads could be installed and removed so easily, I was curious to see if they maintained their snug fit during long periods of heavy use. I was happy to discover that they never moved.

One very nice feature of the pre-tuned heads is that they also maintained their tone and resonance when removed from the drums. This allowed me to play each head like a frame drum. I also found myself putting the heads on snare stands and playing them almost like a set of congas or bongos. The shells for the drums are constructed with Remo’s proprietary material



DYNAMICX

Snare Drums

by Nick Amoroso

For many of you, *Modern Drummer* was the first magazine you bought when you became interested in drums and drumming. That's certainly the case for me. I have issues dating back to when I was seven, and as I look through a few, I'm reminded that the early 1980s was a very different time when it came to "boutique" drums. You didn't see a lot of them in the pages of *MD* back then.

With that in mind, here's something to think about: Before the age of the large drum company—I'm talking about the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries here—many different manufacturers built small quantities of high-quality instruments. We call that "boutique" now, but keep in mind that the word really means small shop, and a boutique company is usually run by one person who busts his or her tail to build great instruments with unique sounds. You can see *many* such pieces in these pages.

(And don't get me wrong—larger companies make quality stuff, but I believe that the better small builders do much to help keep the big companies on their toes.)

Dynamicx drums are designed by Black Swamp Percussion and Drum Foundry president Eric Sooy. The first snare we checked out is the V-tanium model, which features a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 titanium shell with an extremely slim veneer of zebrawood. The entire shell is very thin, having a total thickness of about .065". Right out of the box, I was taken by how visually stunning this drum is, with an elegant yet industrial look. It has 4.5 mm straight hoops (which are optional), and the tension-rod "ears" are attached by machine screws. The Arch lugs and RCK throw-off are original items made by Sooy, who also equips every drum with his own snare wires. The lugs are beautiful, as is the throw-off, which did its job perfectly.

Obviously, none of the visual stuff really

matters if the drum doesn't sound good. I've had a great deal of experience with titanium drums, and they are often described as having the warmth of wood and the cut of metal. I couldn't agree more, and this drum didn't fail to impress. For starters, its tuning range was vast. Tuned down, it had an underlying fatness that made playing with Blasticks an absolute joy. The drum also sang beautifully at medium tension, which is where it stayed for most of the test period. It had a wonderful, almost woody "honk" and responded well to every ghost note. Even at high tunings, the drum never lost its

this drum has an MSRP of \$1,159. The straight hoops add about \$100 to the street price.

The second drum in this review, a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 Exotic Veneer in "drape walnut," quickly became my pick of the two. The veneer is gorgeous, and it's laid over a maple shell that has slightly rounded, vintage-style bearing edges. This model is equipped with the same lugs and throw-off as the V-tanium but features hoops made of segmented ash.

There's one word that sums up the Exotic Veneer drum perfectly: *thick*. At every tuning it had a full, meaty tone that commanded

The Dynamicx V-tanium wood-veneer titanium snare provides the pop, while the Exotic Veneer maple drum with ash hoops offers a thicker, meatier tone—a pairing of utmost versatility.

fat tone, plus it offered a pre-compressed "bark." This is another snare that recalls the popping tone heard on the Wallflowers' hit "One Headlight."

One thing to bear in mind, if you choose to order a drum with the straight hoops, is that the tops of the tension rods sit above the top of the hoop because of the way the hoops and tension-rod ears are connected. Over the course of playing the drum on a three-hour gig, I found that the elevated rods tended to get in the way when I played train beats and rimclicks and when I used brushes. And the drum required some repositioning on the snare stand in order to get the tops of the tension rods out of the way when I played rimshots. Of course, this model can be ordered with your choice of hoops, plus you might have more stick control than I do. Still, I had to pay a bit more attention than usual to how the drum was positioned. Equipped with 2.3 mm hoops,

attention. The ash hoops were beautiful and allowed for rimshots that were clean and full sounding. The rimclick was sweet and present, and the snare response was sensitive all across the head, at every tension. The drum sounded wonderful when played with sticks, brushes, multirods, and even my hands. Eric Sooy is currently making segment hoops in maple, ash, bubinga, and walnut. If you play a lot of rimshots, like I do, you might want hoops made from a denser wood than ash, as the batter-side hoop quickly became marred by my merciless pounding. This drum, with 2.3 mm hoops, has an MSRP of \$729. The optional segment hoops add about \$150 to the street price.

If you're shopping for a snare that's versatile enough to replace two or three drums that you're already using, you should definitely take a look at these guys.

dynamicxdrums.com



MCD PERCUSSION

Optimal Sound Series Drumset

by Michael Dawson



MCD Percussion is a custom company in Philadelphia that specializes in constructing high-end solid- and ply-shell drums from many types of domestic and exotic woods. We were sent a unique setup from the company's flagship OSS (Optimal Sound Series) line, which comprises drums made from different wood species in order to best match each shell's natural timbre with its given size. The thickness of the shells also increases along with the diameter, so that larger drums have thicker shells for more power and low end, while smaller toms and snares are thinner to provide a more open voice. The bearing-edge profile differs for each drum as well. The results are a high-performance drumkit that combines strong, pure modern tones with classic solid-shell warmth and tonality.

THE OSS CONCEPT

MCD builder Michael Mastropietro began making drums in the late '90s. Over the years he has experimented with all types of wood, eventually discovering that certain species sound better than others, depending on the size and type of drum being made. With that realization in mind, MCD decided to create the OSS series, which

allows customers to not only order drums in whatever size and finish they want but also to match the type of sound they'd like to hear from their snare, kick, and toms by combining shells of different wood types. Do you want more snap and high end from your rack toms, along with super-deep and punchy floor toms? MCD will use its expertise in the type of tone each wood produces to get it for you.

custom finish like that on our review kit would have an additional charge.)

OSS customers can choose whatever shell sizes, hardware, finish, and heads they'd like. (Other wood types include bubinga, beech, Honduran mahogany, curly hickory, sapele, zebrawood, wenge, rosewood, and cocobolo, among many others.) Our kit had suspension mounts on the rack toms, standard legs on the floor toms, and

Combining classic solid-shell technology with the innovative approach of timbre-matching wood types and shell thicknesses for peak performance, MCD's OSS drumset offers the perfect blend of precise, modern tones and vintage warmth and musicality.

The OSS kit we tested featured 7x8 (\$843) and 7x10 (\$786) canary rack toms, an 8x12 myrtle rack tom (\$786), 14x14 and 15x16 black walnut floor toms (\$1,053 each), an 18x22 solid maple bass drum (\$1,922), and a 7x14 catalpa snare (\$806). Each drum is hand-painted in a stunning black-to-orange-sparkle fade with gold-sparkle stripes. (The prices shown are for a basic burst, sparkle, or metallic paint job. A

basic retractable bass drum spurs. The 8" rack tom had a Remo Clear Ambassador batter and resonant, the larger drums had Clear Emperor batters and Clear Ambassador resonants, and the bass drum came with an Evans EMAD batter and a solid EQ1 front head. The snare was equipped with a standard Remo Coated Ambassador batter and a Hazy Ambassador bottom.

IN USE

I very rarely use more than a basic four-piece kit these days, so it was a lot of fun to set up all five MCD toms and have a go at them. Not only were they incredibly easy to tune, but they also had an impressively wide tuning range. Most of the 8" toms I've played sound good at only one spot, which is often close to the lowest possible pitch. The 8" MCD tom, however, could go a bit higher without choking, and it maintained a nice, full sustain. Moving between the 8" and 10" drums sounded very smooth and melodic.

The 12" myrtle tom had a bigger and fatter sound than I expected, but it blended seamlessly with the 8" and 10". The 12" myrtle also proved to be a perfect bridge between the more open, snappier sound of the 8" and 10" drums and the super-deep, punchy sound of the black walnut

14" and 16" floor toms. After doing a side-by-side comparison with standard ply maple drums, the MCD 14" had about as much low end as the ply 16", plus more punch. If you like strong, smacking floor tom tones with a ton of depth, you really can't beat what these solid black walnut drums have to offer.

The 18x22 MCD kick also delivered a huge, deep tone. It wasn't as focused and direct as the black walnut floor toms; it had a more open and resonant sound. But there was plenty of low-end oomph and a tight, clean attack, so the drum sounded great acoustically as well as under microphones. I personally would have chosen a different set of heads for this model. The EMAD is good for getting a punchy "modern" kick sound with minimal effort, but it can also be a bit one-dimensional and overly cliky. I would have preferred a

warmer-sounding head, like a Remo Renaissance Powerstroke 3, in order to shift the balance of head-to-shell tones so that the solid maple wood could be more apparent. But that's just my personal choice—and one that MCD would be glad to oblige.

The 14" catalpa snare was also a great all-around drum, providing crystal-clear snare response and a strong, dense crack at all tunings. If you've never played a solid-shell drum, I suggest you do yourself a favor and check one out. Even though builders have been steam-bending shells for over a century, there's nothing dated or old-fashioned about the solid-shell drums being made today. And when you factor in the incredibly modern and musical sounds MCD has created with the OSS kit, you may never want to go back to plywood again.

mcdpercussion.com

ELLIS ISLAND

Drum Accessories

by Michael Dawson

Ellis Island is an independent brand of accessories produced by the skillful craftsmen at Canopus. Ellis's motto is "Designed to be different," but the products aren't different just for the sake thereof. Rather, they're practical, effective items meant to help drummers pull the best possible sound and performance out of their gear. Included for review are Vintage and Back Beat snare wires, Bolt Tight leather tension-rod washers, Red Lock lug locks, and Speed Star bass drum pedal bearings.

VINTAGE AND BACK BEAT WIRES

Ellis Island wires are preferred by many top drummers and builders, including Chris Brady (Brady Drums), Bill Stewart, Brian Blade, Gregg Bissonette, Tris Imboden, Carmine Appice, and Zoro. There are two basic models—Vintage and Back Beat—and each is available with chrome-plated or unfinished ends.

Vintage wires are designed to replicate the snares included on drums from the 1960s, and they feature crimped .5 mm end plates and twenty loosely wound strands. We put a set of these wires on an old WFL mahogany snare, and it proved to be a perfect match. We went with the DR option (without plating), because the untreated brass end plates matched the oxidized and slightly rusty hardware on this drum better than those on the shiny NP chrome-plated version. Once installed, the Vintage wires proved to be very responsive and articulate, and they had a warm, smooth sound that was neither harsh nor overly bright. It was very easy to play

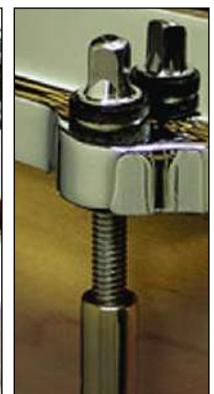
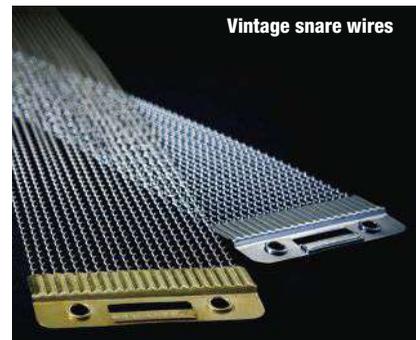
seamless buzz rolls using these snares.

Back Beat models have thicker end plates (1 mm), and the wires are tightly coiled for a louder and more cutting sound. Twenty- and forty-two-strand options are available. The twenty-strand version comes with or without chrome plating; the forty-two-strand model is available only with plating. We put a plated twenty-strand set of Back Beats on an old acrylic snare to see if it would sound too aggressive on a drum that naturally has a ton of attack and not a lot of low end. While the Back Beat did deliver a bolder, crisper attack, it was still very musical and pleasing to the ear, and the buzz was short. There was a noticeable bump in high-end presence with these wires, which helped increase the clarity and snap. It was another winning combination.

To test the forty-two-strand Back Beat wire set, we put it on a cheap 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 luan snare. This drum has a tendency to sound very boxy with regular wires, so we were hoping that the Back Beat would make it more responsive without adding too much buzz. It did the trick. Obviously, you're not going to get a super-quick, tight sound when using double-wide snares. (Under normal tension, the wires took about a quarter of a second to settle back down.) But the forty-two-strand Back Beat did wonders to breathe new life into this previously dull-sounding drum.

BOLT TIGHT AND RED LOCK TENSION AIDS

Bolt Tight leather tension-rod washers offer a simple solution for drummers who struggle with their snare drums detuning over time.



Red Lock

Bolt Tight

Simply sandwich the metal washers on your tension rods between two Bolt Tights and tune as you normally do. The leather provides enough cushioning and friction to prevent the rods from backing out. For the best results, you should use these on all of the batter-side tension rods. In our testing, the Bolt Tight washers were a big help in preventing detuning in all but the heaviest of playing situations, and they had a secondary benefit of attenuating some of the high metallic overtones you hear from some drums.

For extremely hard-hitting players, Ellis Island offers another product, Red Lock, which is a hexagonally shaped plastic nut that you thread on top of the lug casing below the tension rod closest to the spot where you hit rimshots. When you tighten the Red Lock against the casing, the rod is held in place to prevent detuning.

I used a Red Lock nut and Bolt Tight washers on one tension rod of my snare for a gig where I knew I would be playing full-on rimshots for forty-five minutes straight. At the end of the set, I checked the rods and discovered that the one with the Red Lock and Bolt Tights hadn't budged, while the adjacent rod, which had only the stock metal washer, had backed out almost all the way.

The next day I added Bolt Tight washers to the remaining batter-side tension rods on that drum, and the tuning has remained consistent ever since.

SPEED STAR BEARINGS

Speed Star bearings offer a simple way to squeeze a little extra life out of your favorite bass drum pedal. Simply replace the original spring-connector piece with the Speed Star, and you're all set. Your pedal will definitely feel a touch smoother than it did before, and the beater will accelerate faster. It's not a night-and-day difference, but you will notice the improvement.

The benefits of the Speed Star were most apparent when we tried the product on a worn-out DW5000 from the '90s. This pedal had become clunky and unstable from years of abuse, but the Speed Star did much to bring its performance closer to where it was when I originally bought it. With the bearings installed, I'd even consider using this old DW as my primary pedal, whereas before it was relegated to being an emergency backup only. We also noticed smoother action on a Tama Iron Cobra and a Gibraltar 9611. Speed Star bearings can be used on most Yamaha and Pearl pedals as well.

If you're not completely happy with the



performance of your bass drum pedal, consider upgrading with a Speed Star bearing. You might be surprised by how much more you can get out of what you already have. canopusdrums.com



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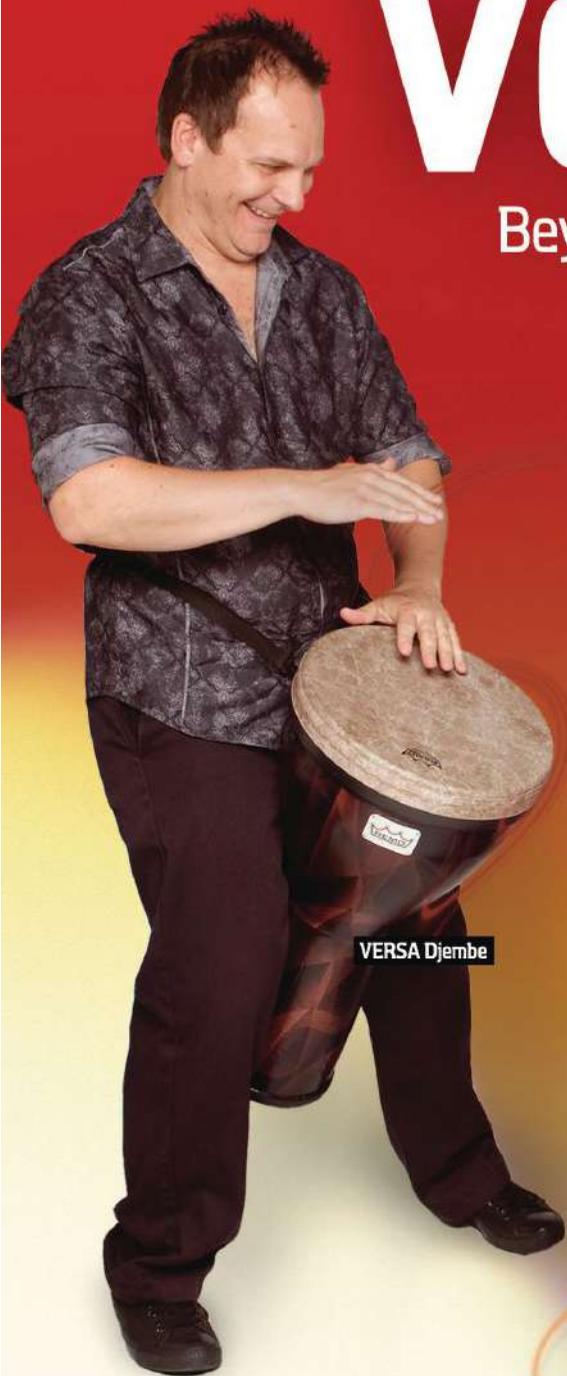
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GEARING UP | DRUMKIT DETAILS, ON STAGE AND UP CLOSE

MUTEMATH'S DARREN KING

Interview by John Martinez
Photos by Alex Solca

Drums: late-'60s Rogers

- A. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 Pearl snare
 - B. 9 x 13 tom (black diamond finish)
 - C. 9 x 13 tom used as floor tom (blue onyx finish)
 - D. 16 x 22 bass drum (black diamond finish)
 - E. 10 x 14 Remo marching snare
- Not shown:** 8 x 15 WFL snare

"I actually got this kit for free," King says. "We played on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* and re-created our backwards music video for 'Typical.' We had a \$500 budget to buy some drums. Guitar Center in L.A. had mistakenly listed this kit online for \$500, which was for the kick and two toms. They meant to sell it at a higher price, but since they listed it at that price they had to sell it to me for that."

"I have two 13" toms, one that I tune higher and one that I tune lower. Neither of them has bottom heads. I have the rest of the blue onyx kit as well, but I'm only using the tom at the moment."

"I take the marching drum out to the front and play it. Sometimes I'll sit on top of the organ or Fender Rhodes and play a solo with that drum."

"My inspiration for using a small kit started with Gene Krupa. I read a quote by him in *Modern Drummer* where, when asked why he didn't play a bigger setup, he said because he hadn't mastered the five-piece kit. I don't feel that I've done everything I can with this drumset. I like the idea of people seeing an older, ratty drumset on stage and not expecting me to do a lot with it. I don't have some big kit with all kinds of drums and crazy stuff, but I hope to impress them just as much as a drummer who has all those toys."

Electronics: Roland SPD-S sample pad

Cymbals: Turkish

- 1. 14" Classic hi-hats
 - 2. 21" Classic Sweet ride
- King's cymbal stand doesn't have a wing nut, so the Classic Sweet ride can be removed and played in hand and around the stage. In the studio Darren also uses a 22" Vintage Soul ride with rivets.

Hardware: Tama Iron Cobra hi-hat stand and bass drum pedal and 1st Chair throne; DW snare and cymbal stands

According to stage manager/drum tech Nate Lampa, all of King's hardware is treated as a percussive instrument, from the road case to the stands to the Vater stick holder.

Microphones: Shure Beta 56A on snare and toms, Beta 52A on bass drums and marching drum, Beta 91A inside bass drum, SM57 on auxiliary snare, and KSM137 on cymbals

The mics are fastened securely to the drums, so any drum can be moved and played anywhere on stage. Headphones are duct taped around King's head before every performance.

Heads: Remo Coated Emperor snare and tom batters and Coated Ambassador front bass drum head; Aquarian Super-Kick II bass drum batters

"I go for a dead sound; I don't like a lot of ringing. So I'll tape little pieces of a broken head, sometimes with drumstick sleeves under that, to the top of the snare. I tune the toms relatively low, and I always use 2-ply heads; otherwise I tear through them. I tune differently live than I do for recordings. For recording, I'll muffle even further sometimes. But live, I



find the need to allow some tone to ring through, or else it can sound too clicky.

"I tune my kick drum tighter than most people do. I noticed a lot of people tune it a little wrinkly, but I like it pretty tight. Sometimes I'll muffle it with a pillow, but lately I haven't, because the Super-Kick II has enough on its own. Until recently I never used a front head on the kick, but I like the sound, and it looks better too."

Sticks: various sticks and mallets

"I use cheap Sound Percussion sticks. They last me just as long as others. I've been an endorser before, but I go through so many sticks that I used up the entire endorsement before I could get more. I peel through them pretty fast."

Auxiliary Drum Station:

AA. 5x14 Slingerland snare

BB. 14" Turkish Jazz hi-hats

CC. 16x20 Slingerland single-headed bass drum in blue onyx finish (played with mallets by King's bandmates)

"The Slingerland snare is covered in tape and cranked as tight as possible to provide a vastly different sound, so that when we play together, the drums take up different frequencies."



MINIMAL MIKING TECHNIQUES

One-, Two-, and Three-Mic Setups for a More Natural Sound

by Mark Parsons



Whether you use the term “minimal,” “organic,” “old school,” or “vintage,” there’s definitely a renewed interest in capturing that drumset-in-a-room vibe that was employed on pretty much any recording prior to the late 1960s, when close miking became the norm. Early Motown music, bebop, classic rock, and more recent productions by the Black Keys and the White Stripes all feature a sonic landscape containing the raw power of the drumset considered as a single instrument existing in a real space. In this article we’re going to take a look at a few different ways to capture that sound with a simple setup involving one, two, or three microphones.

THE BASICS

There are no hard-and-fast rules when it comes to recording, other than if it sounds right for the song, it *is* right. So take the following information as a good starting point and adapt from there. The key is to experiment.

Microphones. Cool drum sounds have been captured with practically every mic ever made, so there’s no need to stress if you don’t have a locker full of vintage German models. Large condensers, small condensers, dynamics, and ribbons are all capable of capturing musical, organic drum tones. Of course, it would take a book to describe every available microphone, so we limited ourselves to using three similar large-diaphragm condensers during our demos (samples are posted at moderndrummer.com), due to their ability to capture a full range of tones in a fairly linear fashion.

Pattern. If your mics have a choice of polar patterns, you’ll want to experiment. Switching from a directional cardioid to a 360-degree omni pattern, for example, will obviously allow a lot more of the room—as well as other instruments, if applicable—to enter into the equation. Likewise, using a ribbon mic will not only add the rounded top and warm bottom that these models are known for but will also capture ambience from the rear, due to the microphone’s figure-eight pattern.

Room. The space your drums are in will make a bigger difference in a minimal-miking session than in a typical close-miking situation. Bigger is usually better, especially concerning ceiling height. Higher ceilings give the drums some room to breathe before the sound reflects back down. (Ceiling reflections can create a boxy sound.)

Reflective floors and absorbent ceilings are usually better than the other way around (carpet below and drywall above, for instance). You also want the drums to be at different distances from major reflective surfaces. For instance, the back wall could be 3’ behind your throne and the ceiling 7’ above your cymbals, with one side wall 9’ to your left, another side wall 12’ to your right, and the far wall 20’ in front of you. That will usually work better than being in the middle of a cube when it comes to getting smooth, natural-sounding reverberation.

Drums. Think of the kit as one instrument. During a typical close-miked session, it doesn’t matter so much if your snare is five times louder than your floor tom. You tune and prep each drum for its

optimum tone (instead of for volume), and then you simply bring up the quieter parts in the mix until a proper balance is achieved. When you use minimal miking, you must be sure to achieve a proper balance as you play, because there isn’t much you can do during the mix to significantly alter any one piece (with the exception of the bass drum in some instances). Tune your kit so that everything sounds in balance when you play in the room.

Playing. How you strike the drums is more important than which drums you use. Listen to your kit while you play, either in the room or on playback. Are you bashing your cymbals to the point where the toms are too low by comparison? Are your dark-sounding vintage hi-hats getting lost next to the slamming rimshots on your wide-open metal snare? You *can* move the mics around to compensate slightly for some balance issues. But in reality, if it isn’t balanced when you play it, it likely won’t be balanced in the final product.

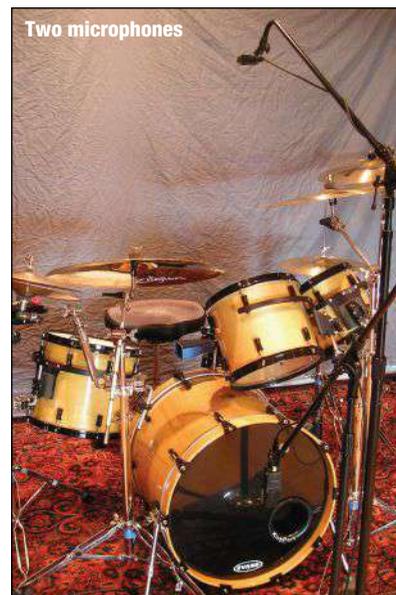
ONE MIC

When you use a single microphone to record the entire kit (either by necessity or artistic choice), placement will be determined by the amount of “air” you want to hear around the kit and what else is going on during the tracking session. The farther from the kit you place the mic, the more ambience (room sound) you’ll get. But if other instruments are also playing, the more bleed you’ll get too.

Another decision is whether to favor the bass drum or some other part of the kit. Snares, toms, and cymbals tend to radiate upward, while the kick radiates outward. Therefore, the best kick sound is typically captured in front of the bass drum, while the best overall sound is usually gotten from above the kit. But you can still achieve both with some compromise.

For capturing the entire kit with a single mic, we chose a fairly neutral, full-range condenser because it can pick up the extremely wide frequency range of the drumset. (If all you have is a basic dynamic vocal mic, go with it and make it work. Many records have been made with cheaper mics.)

You can usually get a good overall one-mic balance if you go for a



symmetrical placement where the microphone is the same distance in front of the bass drum as it is off the ground. We ended up with the mic 5' high and 5' in front of the resonant head of the kick, angled down a little (30 degrees) and pointed toward the snare.

A little compression can smooth things out in terms of levels, and it'll bring up the room ambience a bit while adding some "smack" to the attack. Carving out the lower mids with EQ will help you keep your kit from sounding boxy.

TWO MICS

If you have two microphones, try using one for the bass drum and one as an overhead. This won't give you a stereo image of the kit, but it will provide a cleaner overall sound. It'll also open up your processing options, as you can treat the two mics with different EQ and compression. And in the mix you'll have some control over the level of the kick relative to the rest of the kit, which can be a big benefit.

We used the same mic on the kick that we originally had in front of the kit, only we moved it to about 12" from the front head and 16" off the ground. We then placed a similar second mic over the center of the kit, 36" above the snare. (Experiment here, as varying this distance will raise or lower the ambience of the final drum sound.) The resulting sound was a little tighter than the one-mic track, due to the closer proximity of the mics to the kit.

THREE MICS: COINCIDENT PAIR AND BASS DRUM

A coincident pair (X/Y) configuration has the capsules of two overhead mics placed as close together as possible and at a 90-degree angle. This provides a stereo image, but since the mics are right next to one another, there's no arrival-time difference, which mitigates phase problems. The downside is that a coincident pair has a limited stereo spread.

The two capsules are typically pointed toward the left and right sides of the kit. We ran a pair at the same height as the mono overhead (36" above the snare) and panned them hard left and right. We left the kick mic as it was in the two-mic setup.

The X/Y arrangement results in a realistic, but not dramatic, stereo image, similar to listening to a drumset from several feet in front. This technique works especially well for jazz and acoustic music where you want a realistic but not hyped representation of the drumset.

THREE MICS: SPACED PAIR AND BASS DRUM

Also known as the A/B configuration, the spaced pair is a common arrangement of overhead drum mics. The microphones are spread evenly above the drumset at equal heights, pointing straight down. Spacing between the mics is typically in the range of 24" to 48" (we went with around 36"), and the height can vary. We ended up going slightly higher than before, approximately 42" above the snare.

The spaced-pair arrangement has been used on most studio drum tracks from the past thirty to forty years. The big difference with our setup is that the overheads are responsible for capturing the entire kit (minus the bass drum), as opposed to augmenting close mics. This position gives you a broader, more definite stereo spread than X/Y, resulting in a wider left-to-right image, due to subtle arrival-time differences between capsules—on the order of a few milliseconds. This difference is what helps your ears locate specific instruments within the sound field.

THREE MICS: ISOSCELES PAIR AND BASS DRUM

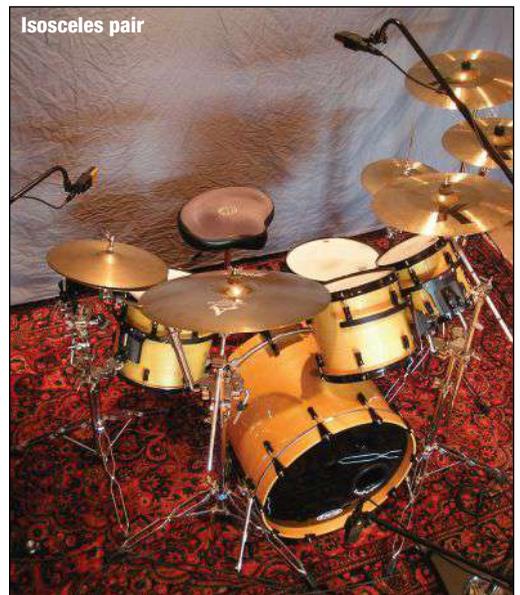
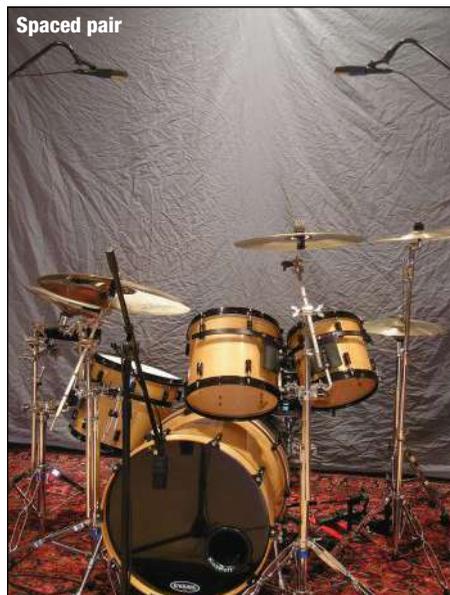
This setup is a little different but definitely worth a try, especially if you're looking to catch an old-school, hard-hitting rock 'n' roll sound. Popularized by the noted engineer/producer Glyn Johns (Rolling Stones, the Who, Led Zeppelin), this arrangement is called isosceles because the two overheads form an isosceles triangle with the snare. (Note: Johns frequently ran a snare mic as well.)

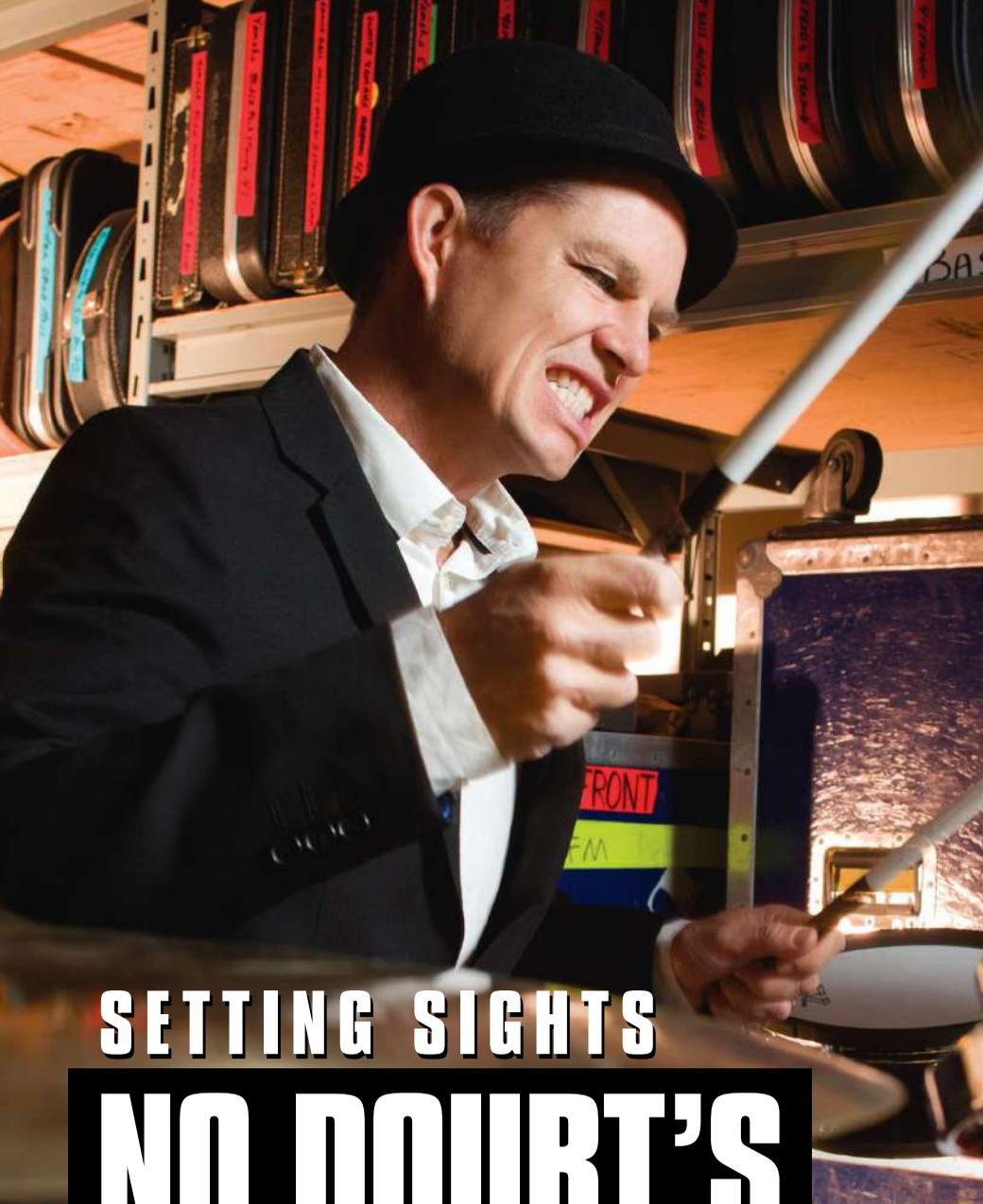
The secret to the configuration is in the location of the two isosceles mics. One mic is located directly above the snare. (A time-honored tradition is to use the spacing of two standard-size drumsticks—32".) The second microphone is located a little above, beyond, and behind the floor tom. Using a tape measure, place this mic the same distance from the center of the snare as the overhead mic. The mic should point across the top of the floor tom toward the snare and smaller toms, which ensures that the snare sound will reach both mics at the exact same time, resulting in a strong, well-defined, and in-phase snare tone. This configuration allows the mics to capture the toms better than in other typical overhead arrangements, and you end up with one mic near the ride and the other near the hi-hats, which provides good cymbal separation.

In the mix, the isosceles mics are panned hard left (the overhead) and hard right (the mic above and beyond the floor tom). The resulting sound has strong stereo separation, with clearly localized cymbals, a beefy snare tone, and toms that sweep dramatically from left to right. Although it's not as popular as the more conventional overhead arrangements that we discussed previously, this configuration has quite a bit to offer.

CONCLUSION

Not only is it much more convenient to track drums using only one, two, or three mics, but there's also an intangible benefit to a sound that strikes the listener as being "real." These minimal, organic recording arrangements bring more of the drummer's natural sound to the tracks. To a certain degree, what you play is what you get. As long as you're happy with how you play, it's hard to beat that!





SETTING SIGHTS

NO DOUBT'S

ADRIAN YOUNG

Behind the larger-than-life drumming persona of Adrian Young you'll find many of the same qualities shared by the rest of us humble timekeepers. It takes a certain amount of mojo to play sold-out arenas wearing only a Mohawk and a pair of underwear. But it also takes hundreds of hours in the garage practicing to be able to really sell every song to huge audiences the world over. After a No Doubt rehearsal for a six-night stand at L.A.'s Gibson Theatre, Young took the time to chat with us about his development, his growing relationship with electronics and programming, and the myriad projects he finds himself involved with during his band's downtime.

Story by Stephen Bidwell • Photos by Alex Solca

MD: When you joined No Doubt in 1989, you were still fairly new to the drums. What was your practice regimen at the time?

Adrian: I'd only been playing drums for a year and a half when I joined the band. Everyone else was already a pretty good musician; my passion and energy went a long way, but obviously my chops were not up to speed. Basically we built out a corner of the garage with carpet and I practiced for hours and hours every day, to CDs and to a metronome. I didn't really take much in the way of formal lessons at that point, but after we recorded *Tragic Kingdom* I took a class at Fullerton Junior College so I could learn how to read a little bit and play rudiments properly. I was playing with passion, but I was kind of a hack.

MD: Would you say that surrounding yourself with players who were more advanced was a big driver for your own development?

Adrian: It was huge. I had no choice. It propelled me to really dig deep and put in a lot of extra time to advance my playing.

MD: Did you pursue any lessons after the class at Fullerton?

Adrian: I've probably taken fewer than five private lessons ever. The last person I worked with in person was Gil Sharone, but that was only one day. He was showing me his approach to some of the ska and reggae stuff. It was good because he had a fresh impression. He's a

great player, so that was really helpful. I did have a lot of VHS tapes in the late 1990s that I would kind of refer to. I checked out the Chad Smith and Will Kennedy videos a lot.

MD: If you find time to practice these days, just for yourself, what do you work on?

Adrian: I try to take on projects, whether it's going into the studio with someone or maybe as a fill-in for a live date. Doing that forces me to think outside of my instincts at times. I think adapting to another

band's style just helps me improve.

MD: How does playing with other bands take you out of your comfort zone?

Adrian: There's a certain comfort level from playing with No Doubt for twenty-five years that creates a pocket, instinct, and feel that is unique to itself. There have been times where adapting to another band's style and feel didn't come instantly. For example, I played with Bow Wow Wow for a few years, and the Burundi beat that runs through most of their songs is not only different from anything that I've ever played, it's a unique way to play drums for songs that have been such a huge part of popular culture.

In a different instance, when I subbed for Matt Flynn in Maroon 5 in 2010, I got the call while on the West Coast, and the first show was the following night in Rochester, New York. I had to learn the band's whole set, most of which I was unfamiliar with, on a red-eye flight.

I feel that the goal when filling in is to make it as easy on the band as possible and to play the drum parts as similar as you can to the way they're used to hearing them. In this situation, the added fire drill created an environment where I was happy to make it through one song at a time. In the end, I felt very good about the way it worked out. I enjoyed playing with the band and took away many positives from the experience.

MD: What are some other projects you've found yourself involved with?

Adrian: Besides playing in golf tournaments, I've played some with my brother's band, Mo Bigsley. They're a metal band from Orange County. I played on Scott Weiland's record [*Happy in Galoshes*] and on Unwritten Law's record [*Here's to the Mourning*]. I also played with the Vandals some.

MD: Those are big shoes to fill.

Adrian: I think I played with them for the first time in 1998, and every few years when Josh Freese or Brooks Wackerman isn't available, they'll call me and I'm like, "I haven't played that fast since the last time I played with you!" [laughs] It's not something I do that often, so I kind of have to build myself up to it. But I love doing it, because we're really good friends and I just

have a good time playing with that band.

MD: Looking back on No Doubt's evolution up to your latest album, *Push and Shove*, you've incorporated a lot more electronics and programming. How do you go about integrating those elements?

Adrian: On *Push and Shove* I played more electronic drums than I had in the past.



We did a lot of blending of electronic and acoustic drums, and on some songs I played electronic drums for a verse and then came in with the acoustic kit on the chorus. There was way more editing on our current record than ever before. A lot of us were making up our parts in the studio, whereas in the old days we'd work on the songs for a long time before we'd go in the studio.

MD: Has that presented any live setup and playing challenges?

Adrian: Yeah. Getting ready for these upcoming shows, there was a lot of back and forth on what we could put on the [backing] track, what things are important for the song, and what I could play physically. I have a Yamaha pad that triggers a couple of the sounds from the record, and if I feel any of the electronic parts are essential, we put them on a track.

MD: So you don't feel that you've taken a backseat to programming and loops?

Adrian: It's definitely become part of my life, at least for No Doubt. It's not my cup of tea, really, but I think it makes sense for the songs that I'm using it for.

MD: Does working with these elements make the record-making process any less engaging for you?

Adrian: I would say that there were times when it was less engaging, and part of that is because with this record we wrote mostly in the studio. There's a lot of back and forth between programming and playing live kit. Does the programming sound good? Does the kit sound good? Maybe the programming is cool but I don't like the sounds, so

should I record the programmed parts myself? So there were a lot of different versions of each song to get it right, while it used to be a simpler process.

MD: There are quite a few snare sounds on the new record. Was finding the right ones a challenge?

Adrian: I wouldn't say it was a challenge. To me, snare drums are like candy. There are so many flavors to choose from! There's a ballad on the new record called "Undone," where I used my own personal WWII-era Radio King. It's the only song I used that snare on, but it was appropriate and I really enjoyed playing it. On the track "Looking Hot," I used a Black Beauty on most of it, but on the turnaround section I used my original Orange County 7x12 snare and added drum machine on top of it. It was just a huge blend of different stuff going on.

MD: You're quite a golfer; have you ever found an analogy between working on your golf game and working on drumming concepts?

Adrian: Yeah, both seem to go better when I slow down. [laughs] If I had a fault with both of them that I could work on, I'd say I need to practice everything *slower*.



KENDRICK SCOTT

Be Like Water

It doesn't take long to realize just how much detailed analysis this blazing leader and sideman applies to his art. And that might be exactly why, when the time comes to create in the moment, he's so free to surrender to his muse and just...react.

Ken Micallef digs deep into the methods and mindset of one of jazz drumming's leading lights. Photos by Paul La Raia.



Like a handful of drummers currently populating what is still referred to as the jazz scene, thirty-two-year-old Kendrick Scott is well trained, possesses a wide knowledge of many styles, and carries the deep fervor, skills, and inspiration to move the music forward. His third album, *Conviction*, is a seamless journey through various emotional and even spiritual states of the musical mind. Accompanied for the second time by his group Oracle—now including saxophonist/bass clarinetist John Ellis, guitarist Mike Moreno, pianist Taylor Eigsti, and bassist Joe Sanders—Scott flows and explodes, pirouettes and stings with extreme sensitivity and creativity.

The music of *Conviction* swells and

surges with moody intensity, the band coursing through ethereal funk, straight-ahead jazz, vocal R&B, droning ambient washes, and wailing

Kenny Washington, or navigating a Bruce Lee sample (“Styles tend to separate man...but you need to be shapeless—be water, my friend”).

*“Before joining Terence Blanchard’s band I was always using references. If I played swing, I was thinking Billy Higgins. Or Philly Joe Jones. Or Zutty Singleton. **That can be your downfall.**”*

Coltrane-like crescendos. Throughout, the drumming is empathetic and in the moment, whether Scott is kicking his large secondary bass drum, striking a mini Chinese gong, twisting tom sounds with spacey '70s-style Pro Tools effects, masterfully sweeping brushes around a snare drum à la

A veteran drummer who has recorded and/or toured with Herbie Hancock, Dianne Reeves, Kurt Elling, and John Scofield and who currently works with Gretchen Parlato and Terence Blanchard (where he replaced his good friend and mentor Eric Harland), Scott honed his chops in drum corps throughout grade school, attended Houston’s prestigious High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, then headed to the Berklee School of Music. Coming out of school, he had not one but two gigs, with Joe Sample and the Crusaders and with Blanchard’s group.

Scott treats his drumming and music—released on his World Culture Music label via Concord—as a spiritual quest, a journey that defines his existence. He writes advice to himself on his drumsticks. He recites a personal prayer before every performance. He always wears a tie. He never got his driver’s license while in high school because he was too busy practicing. (He remains without a license today.) And when he performs, his great power and technique are harnessed and delivered through an almost Zen-like approach. Liquid, flowing, shapeless—like water.

MD: You have a vision as a musician, and it comes across on your records. Your drumming flows; it seems almost effortless. Are you beyond technical concerns? You always play in the moment.

Kendrick: As I get older I start to realize that the more I can be in the moment without preconceived emotions about anything, the better I can handle situations, and my true, honest



KENDRICK'S SETUP

Drums: Yamaha Phoenix in ash amber gloss

- A.** 6 1/2x14 Lang-Gladstone/Dunnett Custom snare (titanium shell made by Ronn Dunnett and the rest by Morris “Arnie” Lang) or 6 1/2x14 Craviotto snare (solid walnut/maple/walnut shell)
- B.** 8x12 tom
- C.** 13x14 floor tom
- D.** 14x16 floor tom
- E.** 14x18 bass drum
- F.** 16x22 bass drum

Heads: Remo Coated Ambassador snare batter and Snare Side bottom (no collar), coated Ambassador tom batters and Renaissance Diplomat bottoms, Coated Ambassador

18" bass drum batter and Powerstroke 4 Yamaha-logo front head, and Clear Powerstroke 3 22" bass drum batter and Powerstroke 4 Yamaha-logo front head

Cymbals:

- 1.** 15" Zildjian K hi-hats from the '50s (with rivets)
- 2.** 21" Spizzichino ride
- 3.** 22" Zildjian Bounce ride (with rivets)
- 4.** 21" Zildjian Bounce ride (prototype)
- 5.** 10" Zildjian Ascending gong

Sticks: Vater Swing model (nylon tip), Super Jazz model, retractable wire brushes, T7 mallets, and Poly Flex brushes

self will come out. One of the things that helps me with that is to recite a prayer, the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi. And I write that on my sticks: "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace." I start with the prayer, and when I see that on my sticks it gives me perspective into what drumming and life are all about.

As a musician you are playing an instrument, but you should *be* the instrument. So the more I can quiet my mind, the more I can get into the head-space of being the instrument, rather than just playing it. The mind is weird. It's always telling you things like, *Oh, the guys are here—somebody is watching*, or *Oh, I just made a mistake*.

It was interesting to play with Herbie Hancock. After our first show I was apologizing for my mistakes and he said, "Man, I didn't hear it as a mistake, just as another opportunity for you to do something." I try to think along those lines. If you're too involved with something in the past or trying to engage the future, then you're not in the moment. That prayer helps me stay in the moment. Then it's all about a



INFLUENCES

Clifford Brown and Max Roach Clifford Brown and Max Roach (Max Roach) /// **Fela Kuti** Fela's London Scene (Tony Allen) /// **John Coltrane** A Love Supreme (Elvin Jones) /// **Bill Withers** Still Bill (James Gadson) /// **Billy Cobham** Total Eclipse (Billy Cobham) /// **Miles Davis** Live at the Plugged Nickel (Tony Williams) /// **A Tribe Called Quest** Beats, Rhymes and Life /// **Ravel** Daphnis & Chloe: Pavane for a Dead Princess /// **Roy Haynes** We Three (Roy Haynes) /// **James Brown** Make It Funky: The Big Payback (various)



RECORDINGS

Kendrick Scott Oracle Conviction, The Source /// **Kendrick Scott** Reverence /// **Mike Moreno** Between the Lines /// **Gretchen Parlato** The Lost and Found, In a Dream /// **Terence Blanchard** Flow, A Tale of God's Will /// **Kurt Elling** 1619 Broadway: The Brill Building Project

higher calling when you're playing music and when you're living your life.

MD: So when you're having a bad night, how do you overcome that?

Kendrick: It's really hard. I've not mastered it. But as I sit down to play music, I'm getting better at taming the voices, so to speak. One pixie on this shoulder says, "You suck," and the other says, "You're doing all right." They're always going, but I try not to listen to either of them and just try to get deeper and

deeper within the music. The other things, they will figure themselves out. Even on a bad technique day I hope to express something that people will enjoy.

MD: You number your sticks as well?

Kendrick: Yes, I match sticks by weight and by pitch. We spend so much money and time as jazz musicians trying to find the right ride cymbal. If I'm playing one stick and it sounds one way and another stick sounds another

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KENDRICK SCOTT



way, it doesn't ease my spirit. It creates dysfunction in my brain.

I'm used to hearing a certain sound in my cymbals. I use higher-pitched sticks; nylon tips help that. I play thin and dark cymbals, and the nylon tips give me the top, that singing sound on top of the cymbal. And it can also give you the wash, though I try not to get too much of a wispy cymbal. I like really dark and rich-sounding cymbals, not thin and wispy, not too thick or brittle.

I'm always trying to figure out how my sticks relate to the instrument. I try not to choke the sticks, and I try to use the pitch of the sticks when I'm playing. I'm hearing the sound of the stick all the time. If you're choking the energy of the stick, you're not transferring it into the instrument. That's a part of numbering the sticks. Having them be the same and of a certain weight and pitch helps me to better get to that end.

MD: Do nylon-tip sticks give you more uniformity of sound?

Kendrick: It's weird, I think the sound is pretty uniform. I've just come to love it. I started with Vater Manhattan 7As when I was a kid. One day I went in the store—I was playing wood tips then, but then in the store I got some nylon tips without knowing it. I loved them. And I came to find out one of my favorite drummers, Kenny Washington, has been playing nylon all of his life. I was really touched by that. The clarity in Kenny's cymbals is always there. For my cymbal sound it's perfect.

MD: You often speak of the concept of give and take.

Kendrick: I apply that to the entire instrument. I might spend a whole day with the snare drum, just to see how many sounds I can get from the one instrument: center, edge, cross-stick, dead stroke. I go through all of them, and every time I find new sounds. Those are all a give and a take.

Stravinsky said the human ear is



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KENDRICK SCOTT

used to similarities more than it is differences. As jazz drummers we play so much different stuff, the core of what we do should be similar, and then the extra things we do will become bigger. That's give and take, like playing a groove really solidly, then changing where you play it. That can bring out so much. There's always an ebb and flow in how you're

gives me the type of rebound I want. When I use parallel surfaces I can transfer the energy throughout the drums and cymbals to where the stick can bounce off the instrument. I teach students to take the stick and touch the instrument and bring the hand back right away. When you do that, it sounds like a tape player in reverse.



playing, from playing the drums to programming a set of music.

MD: You seem to use minimal motion when you play, but you have a ton of energy. You don't flail, but you play very dynamically.

Kendrick: In playing in the DCI drum corps, I learned that the snare drummers were always composed and they always held a certain position with their hands. While they were holding that position, there were benefits to stick height and sound. It's easier to get a sound by dropping the stick than moving your whole arm into the drum. So my dynamic range can go from a small tap to a huge motion using Moeller or that type of approach.

My setup is based on that economy of motion. Most of my drums are flat; that

You don't hear the drum—you hear the backwards sound. That changes your dynamic range.

I always think of unaccented notes as an inch above the head; those are just drops. I think of my technique as needle and thread. I want my drumming to be powerful but transparent. All the masters, like Jack DeJohnette, Connie Kay, Roy Haynes—they all have that. I want my sound to penetrate, but my technique is the thread, loose and malleable. It holds everything together.

MD: Your records are in the tradition, but you're also moving the music forward. When did Connie Kay meet Dennis Chambers in your drumming, as you've described your style?

Kendrick: When I joined Terence Blanchard's band. Before that I was

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VH1AW



Power 5A Wood

KEITH ZEBROSKI
Miranda Lambert / Pistol Annies

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always using references. If I played swing, I was thinking Billy Higgins. Or Philly Joe Jones. Or Zutty Singleton. That can be your downfall.

With Terence, I replaced Eric Harland, who I knew from high school. I grew up emulating Eric. I looked up to him like a big brother, so I thought I knew what worked when joining Terence Blanchard's group. But when I played Eric's stuff none of it worked, because the spirit wasn't right. Terence allowed me some time to work through it. He said, "Don't listen to any more records for the gig. Listen to the music."

I had to practice: rudiments, conception, and the creative aspect of discovery. It all has a trickle-down effect. Your references are the base of the pyramid, then you move up to the people you're playing with, then to the song you're playing, and at the top of that is the imagination. That is the peak of any art form.

MD: Do your solos always reference the form, or do you also solo free?

Kendrick: I try to base solos off cells within the tune. It might be a melodic phrase, and I will use that. I might invert it, turn it upside down, slow it down, use it as a bass motion.

Terence uses this compositional technique called "If I could tell you, I would." The most obvious way to use it is to listen to Beethoven's 5th Symphony, which is really only four notes. If I can base a whole symphony of work on the drumset off four notes, if I can only think of that, I don't have to worry about pulling things out of the hat. All the music is intrinsically in one idea. That really resonated with

me. So I try to play cells like that inside of tunes. I might take a soloist line that somebody played. And I can use my imagination to inform all of it. It can be endless. I want to use cells inside the tune to create layers and phrases.

MD: Why do you always wear a tie?

Kendrick: The masters were always sharp, from Gene Krupa to Roy Haynes. I consider that when I think about music. I don't want my music to be perfection, but I want an intrinsic thing that says, "I care about not only my music but how I present and carry myself." You have to present yourself a certain way. All of my idols do that.

MD: What is the meter in your song "Mantra"?

Kendrick: It's in 5/4. With odd meters, I always try to feel them in four. I think that's key to playing any odd meter. If you're playing 4/4, you think every beat. It's easy for us to feel half time. And if we're playing in three we usually hear the dotted 8th note. So I play and think of that over 4/4.

I take the same approach with all odd meters. [Sings various odd meters while tapping 4/4 pulse.] I'm not a math wiz, but I practiced all those partials. I show my students how to play 5/2 with the left foot and 5/8 with the hands. But I'm always thinking in four. It might come from listening to tabla. And I always practice with the metronome on 1 and 3. I want to feel the pulse that I am supposed to springboard from. With music, it's not always what you play—it's what you hear.

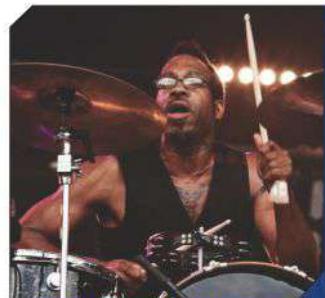
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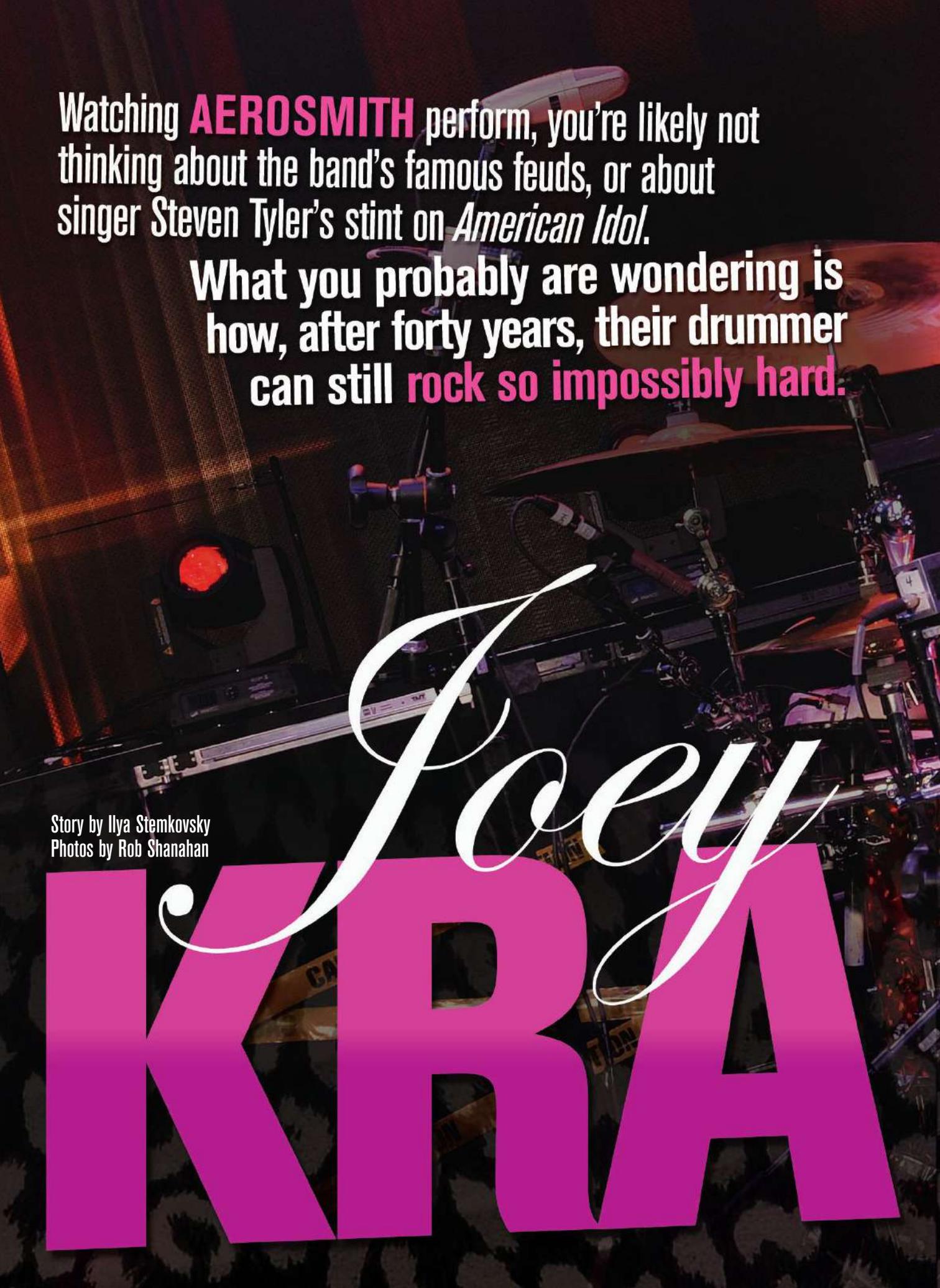
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Watching **AEROSMITH** perform, you're likely not thinking about the band's famous feuds, or about singer Steven Tyler's stint on *American Idol*.

What you probably are wondering is how, after forty years, their drummer can still **rock so impossibly hard.**

Story by Ilya Stemkovsky
Photos by Rob Shanahan

Joey KRA

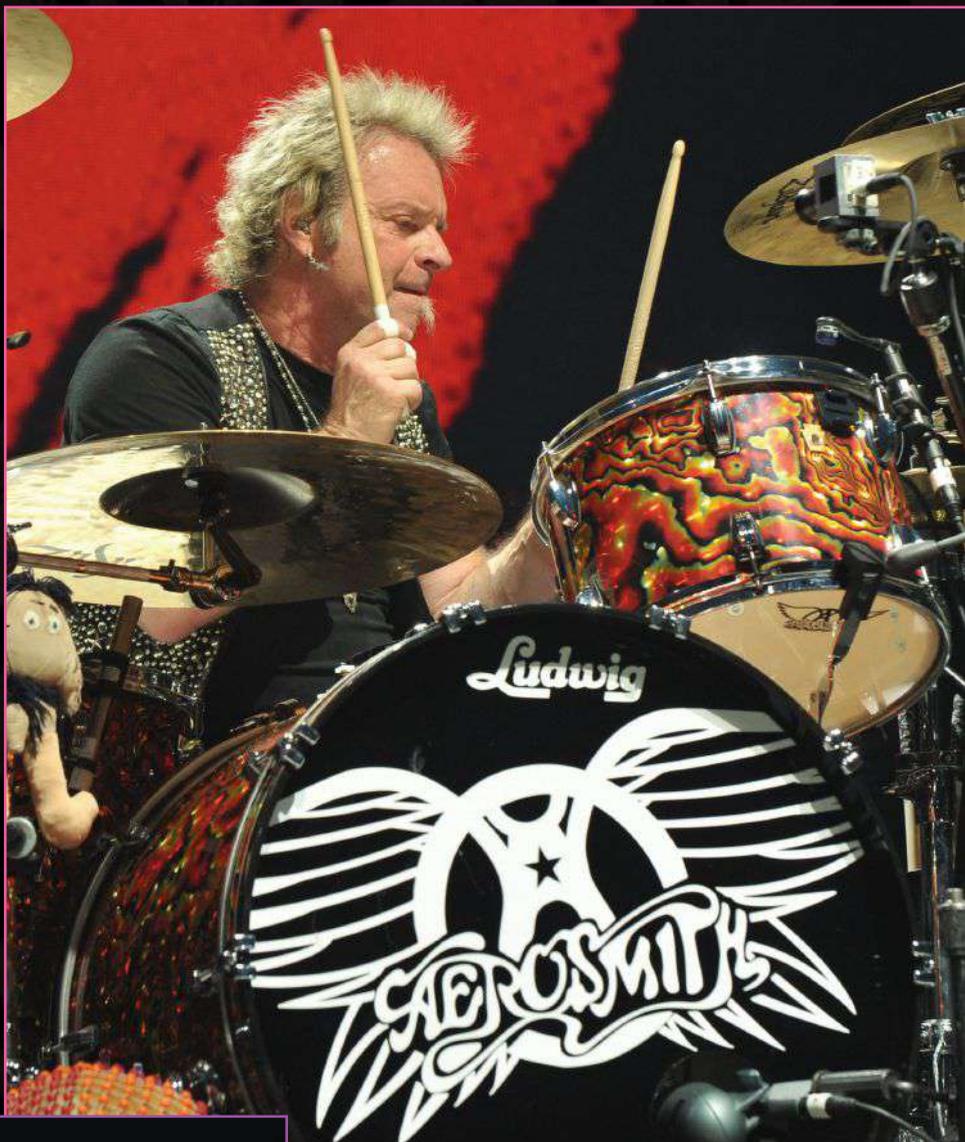


MMER

It might be a cliché to call the drummer the engine of a band, but no description is more apt for Aerosmith's hard-charging locomotive, Joey Kramer. The 'Smith train keeps a-rollin' because the man still delivers the goods like a youthful firebrand, demonstrating the kind of pure rock joy and stamina that drummers young and old can truly be inspired by.

Kramer and his bandmates have been doing the hard work of rocking for *forty-two* years. And despite the fact that their career has seen its share of creative and commercial troughs, the bad boys from Boston have shown no sign of slowing down, recently releasing their fifteenth studio album, *Music From Another Dimension!*, and touring the world behind it to ecstatic response.

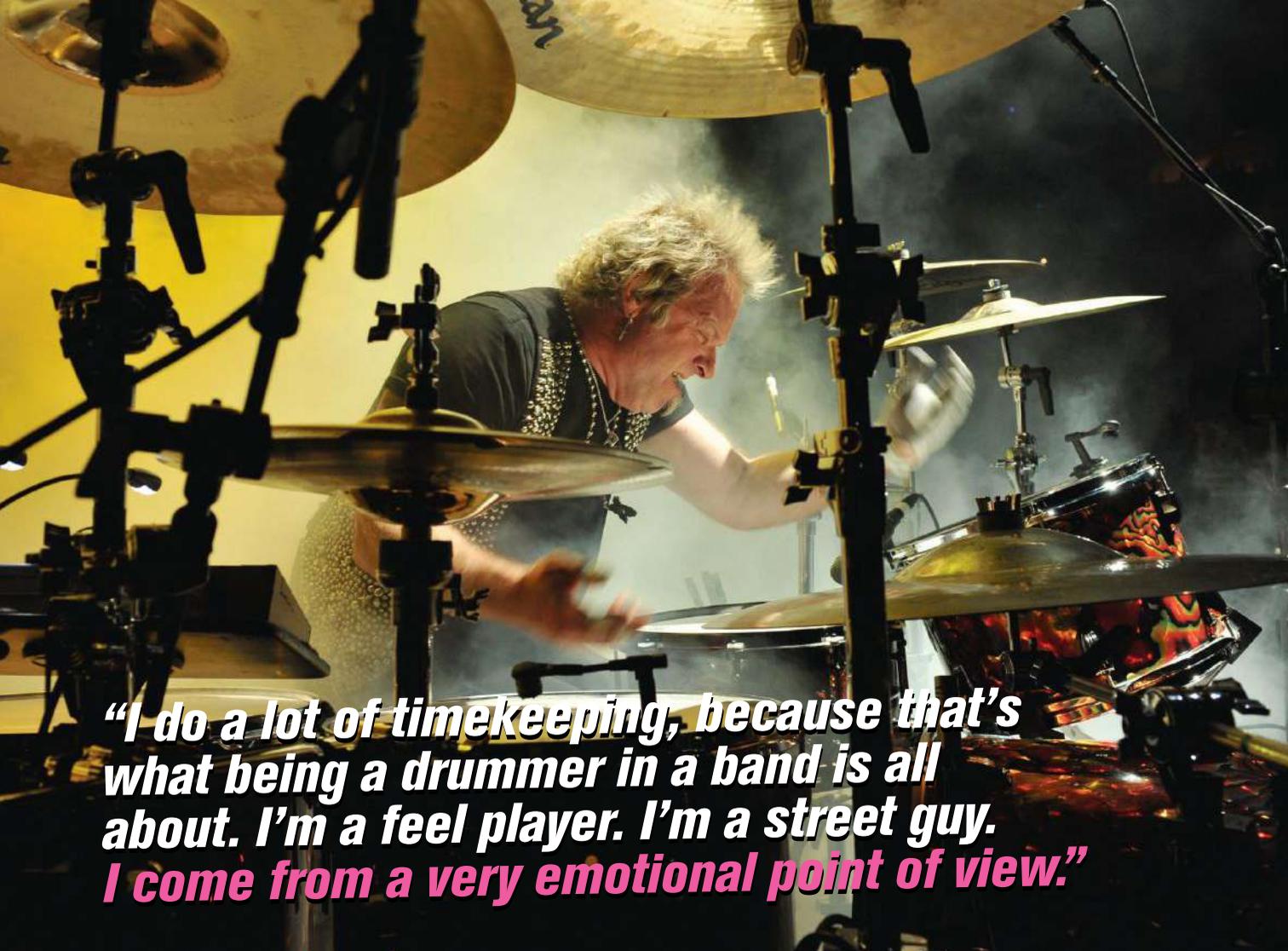
You'll find all the classic Aerosmith elements on the recording—nasty guitar riffs and searing leads from Joe Perry and Brad Whitford, rump-shaking command of the low end from bassist Tom Hamilton, ageless vocal acrobatics from Steven Tyler, and, of course, the powerful groove of a physically and emotionally rejuvenated Kramer. "For some reason, the band is playing the same way that we did in the 1970s, when we first started," Joey says. "It's a joy to go on stage every night, and I have such a good time because everybody's playing so well."



Kramer recounts his tales of woe—and his rock 'n' roll triumphs—in a very personal 2009 autobiography, *Hit Hard: A Story of Hitting Rock Bottom at the Top*. "I wrote about everything that happened to me up until that point in my life," the drummer says, "including what went on in the band, my drug addiction, alcoholism, depression and anxiety, how my father's death affected me.... I wrote about it very openly and honestly." Through it all, somehow, Kramer's playing has remained on the right path, and we can learn much by analyzing his forceful style.

There's a reason for Aerosmith's ubiquity on classic-rock radio. There's a reason why so many School of Rock programs include the group's material. There's a reason why, on any given weekend, a local cover band is doing its best to nail "Sweet Emotion" or "Walk This Way." Is it just Aerosmith's dogged will and longevity? Is it Tyler's recent high-profile exposure on reality TV? Or is it that the quintet has the not-so-secret weapon that all iconic rock bands need—a powerful engine?

MD sat down with the rocking railroad engineer to discuss the key to his staying power, and to that of his notorious band.



“I do a lot of timekeeping, because that’s what being a drummer in a band is all about. I’m a feel player. I’m a street guy. I come from a very emotional point of view.”

MD: It’s hard to believe you’ve been at this for forty-two years.

Joey: I’ve been in this band my entire adult life. I joined when I was nineteen years old. I’ve been doing nothing else, and when you’re doing something that long, it’s got its ups and downs, like any personal relationship. But we’re probably more appreciative of what we have now than we’ve ever been. I’m just enjoying the ride; you never know what’s going to happen.

MD: You recently played in front of the apartment where the band lived together in the early ’70s. What was that experience like?

Joey: We returned to 1325 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, which is where the band was born and lived for the first couple of years. Steven [Tyler] and I shared the smallest of the four bedrooms in the back. We never played inside the apartment; we just stored our gear up and down the hallways between gigs. To go back to see the building and play was a thrill and pretty cathartic for me. We played in the street

MAKE THOSE DRUMS CRY FOR MERCY **Jack Douglas on Joey Kramer**

Jack Douglas has engineered and produced Aerosmith recordings since the ’70s, including the albums *Get Your Wings*, *Toys in the Attic*, *Rocks*, *Draw the Line*, *Rock in a Hard Place*, and *Honkin’ on Bobo*. He’s even been called the sixth member of Aerosmith, due to his close relationship with the band. “No one hits harder than Joey,” Douglas says. “No one. He seems set on beating his snare to death. His bass thuds a low cry for mercy every time he kicks it, and his cymbals seem ready to explode like panes of glass as he strikes. His toms have a look, like, *I hope we’re not used in this song*, and at the end of a take they look sad and beat. And he does all this damage with the preciseness of a Swiss watch and the subtlety of a B-17 bomber. There is no other drummer on earth that makes me jump and makes my eyes blink when I’m within fifty feet of him. God bless Ludwig—they can make a snare that stands up to his punishment night after night.”

Douglas continues, “Joey is *such* an integral part of the power of Aerosmith. There isn’t a drummer who could take his place and have the band still sound anything like itself. Songs are written with his character in mind, as in, ‘This is going to be great when Joey gets his hands on it!’ While recording *Music From Another Dimension!*, Joey was always ready to go the extra mile. Move the drums three times in a day? No problem—if it’s going to be cool, he’s into it. No attitude and no grief, just a smile and a great sense of humor. And he always comes to the sessions in great shape. He gets a good workout in because he knows it takes stamina to work as hard as he does.

“Let me put it this way: We all agree that Joey is the guy you want next to you in a foxhole—as long as he doesn’t bring his sticks.” **Billy Amendola**



JESSE KRAMER

Double duty is double the fun for Joey's son, Jesse.

and drew 35,000 people.

MD: Aerosmith's latest, *Music From Another Dimension!*, features your first songwriting credits since 1987's *Permanent Vacation*.

What made you start writing again?

Joey: I've been writing all along, but in this band, with five personalities, only the strong survive. You have at minimum the main songwriters, who are Steven and Joe Perry. And if Steven takes a liking to something I've written and decides to work on it, that's the main touch, because he writes the lyrics.

At first we were going to use stuff for the record that we had in the can, but we didn't want to rest on our laurels. It was our first record in eleven years, so we wanted new stuff. Some of my credits come from a group effort. Tom Hamilton, Brad Whitford, [coproducer] Marti Frederiksen, Steven, and I were at Marti's studio, and we came up with ideas together, which is not something we normally do. The song I wrote with Marti, "Closer," I've had in my hip pocket for a while. For whatever reason it just didn't happen before. Finally Steven put some new lyrics to it and breathed life into it, and there it is on the record.

MD: The new songs are to the point and generally pretty short. Most of the production was done by Jack Douglas, who worked with you in the '70s. Was that his influence?

Joey: You come full circle. We wanted to do something along the lines of [1975's] *Toys in the Attic* or [1976's] *Rocks*, when we were at the beginning of our prime. That thing comes naturally to us. The record is new material with the same old Aerosmith energy from the old days. By virtue of having Jack produce, it brought a lot of those things to the table. One of the most important things was the fun factor. He knows how to get the best work out of us, but he also knows how to have fun, and when you're having fun doing something it usually comes out pretty good.

MD: Has anything changed in your recording process? Were you using click tracks?

Joey: It's a mix of click and free playing. Jack is a purveyor of ideas. If you come up with something off the wall, he's the first one to try it. And like those previous records, everyone was in the studio playing live. It wasn't about getting the drums done and then piecing it together afterwards. We were in the room, playing like a band. That's why the record sounds like Aerosmith, because that's what it is. And I don't do a whole lot of playing—I do a lot of timekeeping, because that's what being a drummer in a band is all about.



MD: As if adding live percussion to classic Aerosmith tunes isn't enough, you're also your dad's drum tech. How does that work?

Jesse: It's got its moments. My plate is full as far as what I'm doing during the actual show. I get there and I set up Joey's kit and the percussion rig. Joey and I have always had a great relationship, so as far as working and the father/son thing—those two things went hand in hand and it was really smooth from day one. It works to our benefit. Joey gets the upper hand in some situations, but sometimes I'll suggest things to him—it works both ways.

MD: You've grown up with this famous dad, and now you're on stage playing with the band, directly involved.

Jesse: Growing up, seeing them play my whole life, I've always loved and respected their music, and it was the blueprint of how I approached everything from musical decisions to business decisions, though the majority of the music I made wasn't rock 'n' roll—it was a lot of hip-hop, soul, R&B, jazz, and funk. I got into hip-hop through graffiti when I was in boarding school. J Dilla changed my life. So playing-wise I came from a different place when I started playing percussion with Aerosmith.

It sounds like it could be easy, but... Like Steven Tyler or Joe Perry would say, "You play drums—just hop on there and play percussion!" [laughs]

MD: What if you're playing percussion and a cymbal stand falls over? Is there a third guy to take care of that?

Jesse: No! [laughs] That's why my plate is full. I'm playing, but all eyes are on Joey.

MD: What kinds of parts are you writing for the tunes that didn't originally have percussion on them?

Jesse: Less is more with Aerosmith in terms of percussion. A sprinkle here and a sprinkle there is really all it needs to give it something special. I don't need to overdo it. They never had it, and I'm imagining what's it's like for someone in the crowd who's been seeing them for forty years, so I want to do it justice. In terms of the parts I'm writing, I'm trying to use my intuition as a musician and producer and just feel it. I had the opportunity to tech for the incredible percussionist Pablo Batista, and he dropped some knowledge on me in terms of what I should do. I was hesitant to do it, because I'm really a drummer.

I'd say I'm playing percussion on about 60 percent of the show. There's a bit of pressure on me because the band trusts me to play on what I feel like playing on, but some songs don't need it. Steven Tyler really pushed for me to do the percussion, and his choice would be to have me up there for the whole show.

MD: What are some of the highlights each night?

Jesse: When Joey goes into his solo, he does this Clyde Stubblefield type of groove and I jam along with him on the congas, just locking something in the pocket. Something as simple as that can really get the crowd going. "Lover Alot" and "Sweet Emotion" are high points. I also like "Combination" [from *Rocks*]. I lay down some timbales and play my rig, which, along with congas, timbales, shakers, and tambourines, includes the 12", 13", and 16" toms from a set of Vistalites.

MD: You played on a couple tunes on the new record as well.

Jesse: I cowrote "Lover Alot" and play on "We All Fall Down." I was in the studio setting up and getting sounds, because I know how to hit the drums with the same velocity as Joey. So I played through the track a few times before Joey came in. They let me take a crack at it, and the final version has me on the second verse, when the drums kick in, and Joey on the choruses and bridge. That's the band paying me respect in the highest form possible.

MD: What's on the horizon?

Jesse: I was in a band for a long time called Destruments. And I've been focusing on my art career, painting and doing commissions. I collect a lot of vinyl and I create and produce beats. That's most of what I do every day. My art and music are created under the name SeasOverSeas. I'll have a new record dropping soon. I have so many outlets—graffiti, hip-hop, acrylic canvas painting, skateboarding. If I didn't have those, my drumming wouldn't be what it is.

Jesse Kramer's setup includes vintage Ludwig Vistalite toms; LP timbales, congas, and percussion; custom-made shakers; and Zildjian DIP Z4A sticks.

Making a song feel the way it's supposed to feel. I'm a feel player. I'm a street guy. I have no formal education as far as what I do. I come from a very emotional point of view.

MD: "LUV XX" has a cool chorus with no downbeat crash, just a rolling tom pattern. Your idea?

Joey: A lot of times Steven and I will work on stuff together. He used to be a drummer, and I've learned an awful lot from him over the years. He's a very musical guy, but he's very drum oriented. It'll usually end up what I want it to be, but we'll try a lot of different things before it comes back to what I was initially playing, because you have to be a chameleon, you have to be open to everyone's ideas. If you're not open-minded, it kills the prospect of what a band is all about. I can also suggest a rhythm guitar part I hear in my head to Joe or Brad. That's just how we work. And like Steven always says, if you don't have a good drum track to begin with, you can just pack it in.

MD: The chorus in "Beautiful" is a half-time power-ballad thing.

Joey: At the beginning that chorus was just a big open feel, with no time. It wasn't too difficult to come up with the rhythm part, though, because it just seemed like that was supposed to happen there.

MD: "Out Go the Lights" and "Legendary Child" are classic Aerosmith riff rockers with loud, heavy drums. Those tracks could have been on *Rocks*.

Joey: That's stuff I've come up with that I've used time and time again. That's just what Joey does.

MD: "Street Jesus" has a propulsive snare pattern. Is that the first thing that comes to mind when you initially hear the guitar riff?

Joey: I don't think I've ever played something like that. It just drives the song home.

MD: "Lover Alot" has the trademark Joey Kramer "lean into the ride bell" 8th-note attack. How does it always manage to sound like only you?

Joey: I don't know. People sometimes ask me how I do stuff, but I have no idea, because I just do it. My feet do it

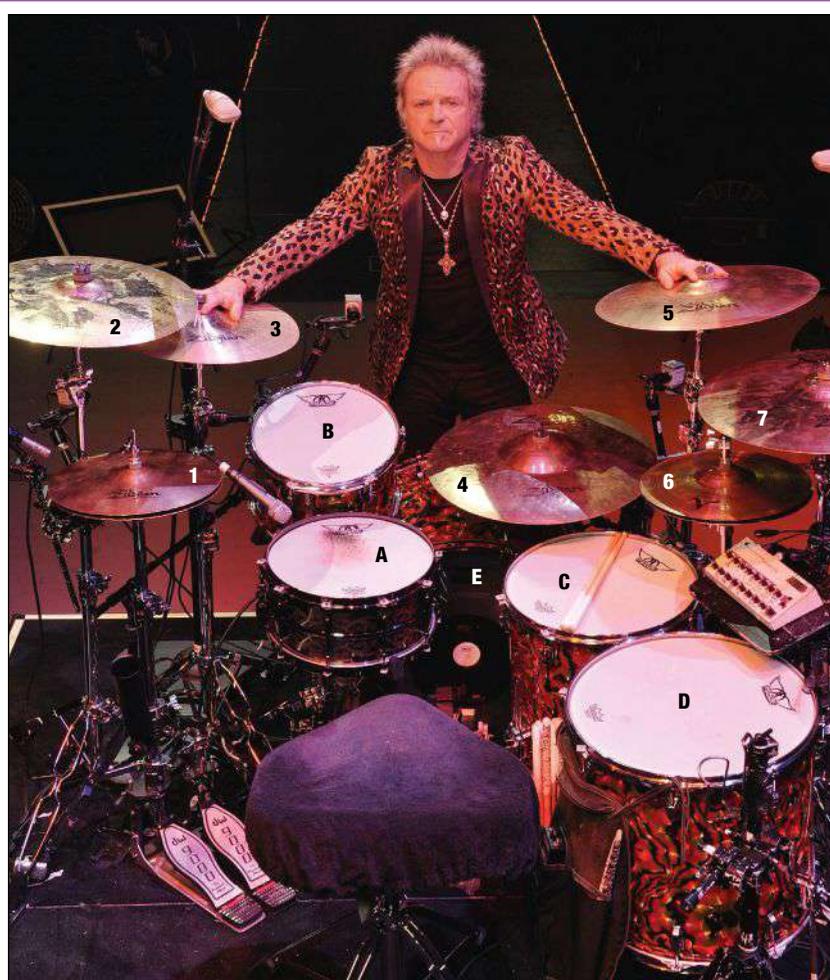
and my hands do it. I don't take notice of it, and it just comes out the way that it does. I don't try to analyze stuff—I just let it be what it is.

MD: In the live setting, what are you experiencing behind the kit after so many years? Any challenges?

Joey: I don't really feel any different now than I did twenty-five years ago. I have a strict physical routine that I do. I work out and try to eat and sleep

right. I take care of myself, and that's the key, because most drummers who do anything near what I do are half my age. I enjoy my playing a whole lot more now than before. I'm a lot more forgiving to myself—I'm a lot freer and more accepting. I've changed as a person over the last six or so years, and it's really reflected in my playing.

MD: Is it a purely emotional thing? Or is it also physical, like the equipment



JOEY'S SETUP

Drums: Ludwig Legacy Classic in custom red/gold finish

- A.** 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 14 Joey Kramer Signature series snare
- B.** 9 x 13 tom
- C.** 16 x 16 floor tom
- D.** 16 x 18 floor tom
- E.** 18 x 24 bass drum

Sticks: Zildjian DIP Z4A

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

Hardware: DW Airlift throne and 9000 series bass drum pedal, hi-hat stand, and straight cymbal stands

Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1.** 14" A Mastersound hi-hats
- 2.** 19" A Custom crash
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is different or the sound on stage is better? Can you point to something specific?

Joey: That's a really good question. I've never really asked that question of myself. I think it's all within me. Everybody is sober now. We're aware that all eyes are upon us because of who we are and what we're doing and how old we are. I don't think there's a band out there that does what we do, really. I'm just grateful for what we have and what I have. I'm proud that we can still be making music and bringing as much joy to people as we do.

MD: How do you keep yourself from being bored with songs you've played every night for decades? Do you think about it being a kid's first Aerosmith concert?

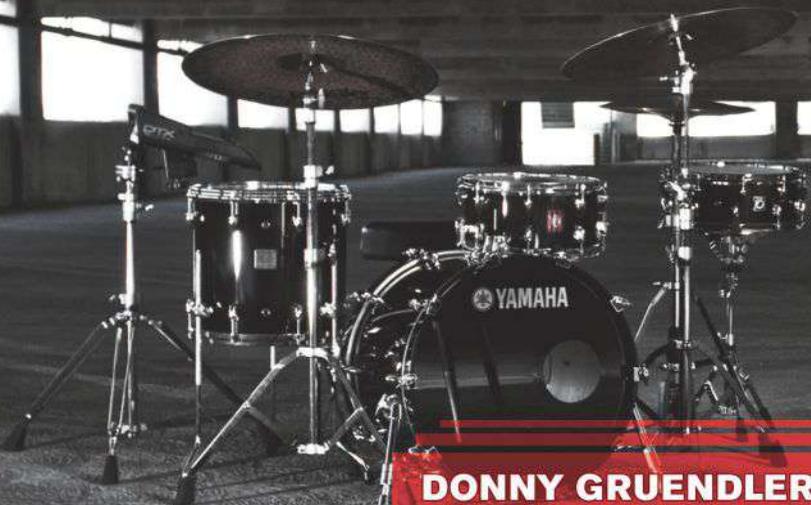


Joey: I always want to give a hundred percent. I try to keep it fresh on my own. It's definitely a challenge, but you have to come up with different stuff to play here and there without

getting so far away from the song that it's unrecognizable. You're playing for everybody else, but you have to play for yourself as well. My tech on stage is also my son, Jesse. [See sidebar on



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page 50.] He's an accomplished drummer himself, so he's always watching me, checking out what I'm doing. He's learned a lot from me, I'm sure, but he's also playing percussion live with us on several songs, so we have a lot of fun together. With the percussion and teching, he's pulling double duty.

MD: In terms of keeping things fresh, do you find that you're restricted on up-tempo tunes but you can really work out on slower groovers like "Last Child"?

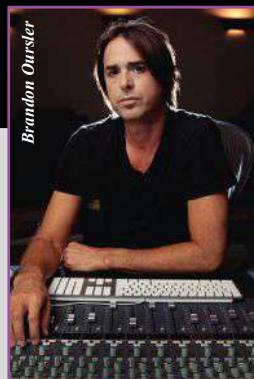
Joey: I think it's the opposite of what you just said. In "Last Child" you've got to pin it down and make that pocket *stink*. You can't be playing too much. And I've always found it easier to play fast than to play slow. If you're getting bored or tired playing these songs, there's something wrong.

MD: Do you ever get looks from the other guys on stage when you're improvising something?

Joey: Only if it doesn't come in on time! [laughs] Everybody is really con-

AS SOLID AS EVER Marti Frederiksen on Joey Kramer

Marti Frederiksen has worked with Aerosmith since the mid-'90s, producing the band's 2001 album, *Just Push Play*. He's also cowritten several of the group's hit songs over the years. "It's always the same working with Joey," Frederiksen tells *MD*. "It's always great! Every time I go into the studio with him, we go in alone and knock it out. Joey loves to focus and really get the right drum parts to make the song. Joey Kramer is undeniably as solid as ever on the drums." **Billy Amendola**



scious of the groove, because that's what we're about. The consistency of playing—especially the drums—can't stop. If it does, it's no good. So whatever you're doing has to be within the context of what's happening to begin with. You can't make the song trip; it's got to keep walking.

MD: How is it hooking up with Tom Hamilton after all this time?

Joey: Tom and I make mistakes together. I don't think it gets tighter

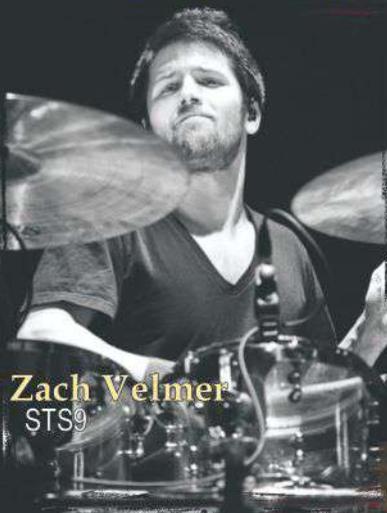
than that.

MD: In terms of the identity of your playing style, I think of you as the shuffle king. The shuffles on "Same Old Song and Dance" [from 1974's *Get Your Wings*], "Big Ten Inch Record" [1977's *Draw the Line*], "Rock in a Hard Place" [1982's *Rock in a Hard Place*]*—all different, all slamming.*

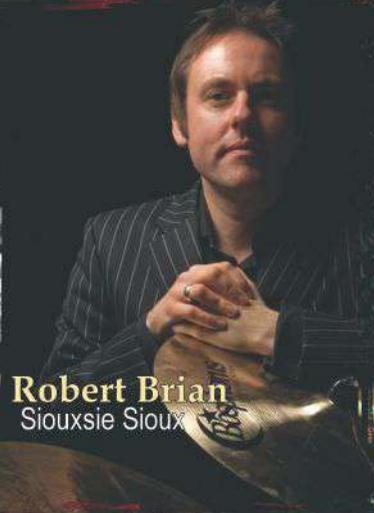
Joey: One of my favorites is "Stop Messin' Around," from [2004's

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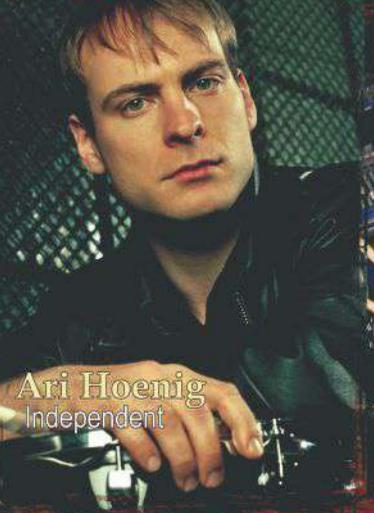
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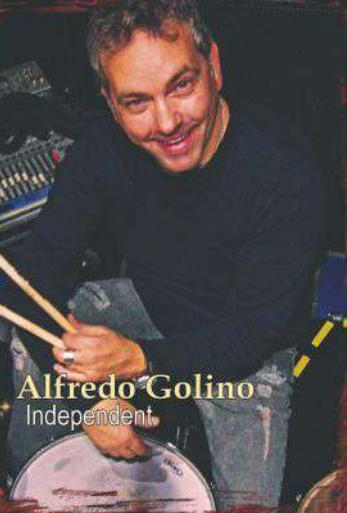
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JOEY KRAMER

Honkin' on Bobo. I don't know if people think of me that way, but as far as I see it, it's one of those things a good drummer needs to be capable of. There are at least a dozen ways to play a shuffle, and you have to be sensitive to whatever way fits the song.

MD: What would you say are your most famous drum parts, and who were some of your inspirations coming up?

Joey: The end of "Sweet Emotion" [*Toys in the Attic*]. Maybe "Nobody's Fault" [*Rocks*], which was inspired by John Bonham. That's what I was listening to at the time. I don't know a drummer who's not inspired by the guy. He changed the face of drumming single-handedly. I'm not sure anyone's come along and done the same thing in quite the same way that he did. "The Crunge" is probably my favorite, and "The Wanton Song." But a lot of guys have inspired me. Mitch Mitchell, Clive Bunker from the original Jethro Tull. A big one for me was Dino Danelli from the Young Rascals. And Clyde Stubblefield from James Brown's band.

MD: The *Live! Bootleg* album has an early-'70s performance of JB's "Mother Popcorn." You're very funky on that.

Joey: My roots are heavily implanted in rhythm and blues. James Brown was a big influence on me. Years ago I played in a band called Unique 4. At one time they were called Chubby & the Turnpikes, and later they became Tavares. There were five guys out front singing, and I played in the backup band. They taught me a lot of stuff and took me to the Sugar Shack in Boston and the Apollo in New York to see James Brown.

They'd always say, "Watch the drummer," because the drummer would accentuate the choreography of the singers. That's where I got turned on to that feeling that I realized I really liked, which was Brown and Tower of Power and Earth, Wind & Fire. And when I met Joe Perry and Tom Hamilton and these guys, they were all coming from the Stones and Zeppelin. That, together with what I was already listening to, is pretty much what I'm all about. That's really what I bring into the mix.

MD: Lots of different flavors there.

SKB Corporation Orange, CA. www.skbcases.com/music

Joey: Everybody has different roots. Tom loves the Byrds and the Beatles, and Steven loves the Beach Boys and the Beatles and the Yardbirds. Joe was listening to Ten Years After and Jeff Beck, and Brad was into Jimi Hendrix. It's a combination of all that stuff that makes up what the band sounds like. And forty years down the line, I don't think any of us is comfortable being mentioned in the same kind of company as the bands that influenced us. When people talk about us in the same way they talk about the Stones or Led Zeppelin or the Who, I feel like I don't relate to that.

I think that's part of the reason why we still have the ability to do what we do—we still see ourselves as what we were back then, and we try to hold true to that form. When we go up on stage, no matter what kind of drama is going on in our lives, it all pretty much gets forgotten when we do what we do. The one common denominator is that we all love to play, and that's responsible for us being the way that we are.

MD: That's a humble way to look at it, but you've been creating classic music for a *long* time. Otherwise, you would have gone away after *Night in the Ruts* or something in the middle



period there.

Joey: I know! This band is just as much a miracle to me as it is to anybody else! That's why I try to make myself available to fans and to people who are respectful and can carry on a conversation without being affected by who I am. That's fun, and it's one of the ways that I've changed over the

past six years. I owe that to my wife, Linda. She's really helped me open up as a player and as a person. She made me realize that the fans love me and I should be grateful for this. She turned me on to communicating through social media, and I've gotten a lot of positive response from it.

MD: In terms of your heroes and their

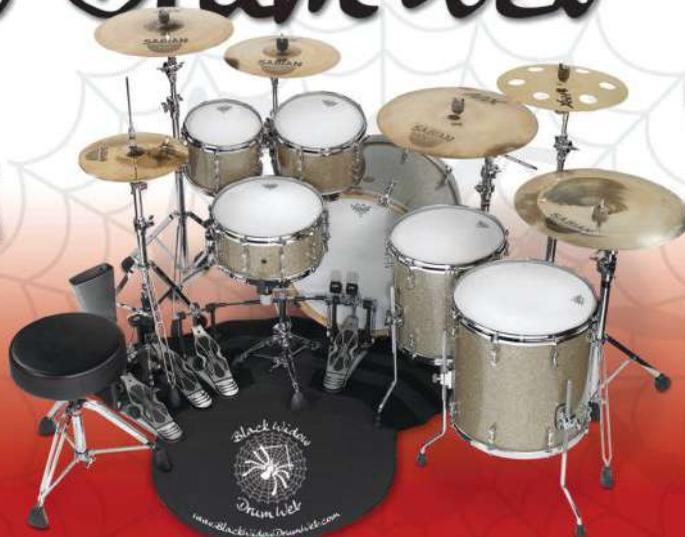
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JOEY KRAMER

influence on you, how has it changed over time? Do they sound different to you now? I know that as a drummer, I always think that if I get better, the gap between my abilities and my heroes' playing will close, but it's the opposite—the more I learn, the deeper they seem.

Joey: What I love most about it is that it hasn't changed. All the guys who I identified with—Clyde Stubblefield, Clive Bunker, Dino Danelli—it was about how it *felt*. And it feels the same way to me now as it did back then. I can maybe understand it a little better now, but it still feels the same. If it doesn't feel good, it doesn't matter. You can be playing the most complex, technically difficult figure in the world, but if you can't make it feel good and it doesn't groove and it doesn't stink, it's useless.

The one guy I know that has the ability to play the kind of stuff that I like to hear a drummer play, and who also



makes it feel really good, is Dennis Chambers. He and I are pretty good buddies. You can put Dennis behind a jazz band, or a salsa band, or a soul band—he's comfortable anywhere. One of my favorite bands ever is Tower of Power, and there are clips on YouTube of Dennis playing with them. As much as I love David Garibaldi and how he plays with TOP bassist Rocco Prestia, Dennis did a different thing. Garibaldi is very busy and it gets a bit consuming, while Dennis is little more open. I watch guys like that and I think: It's really interesting that these guys are playing the same instrument I play! [laughs]

MD: You've also gone back to Ludwig drums after a long tenure with DW.

Joey: Yeah, a couple of years ago I got hipped to Ludwig's Legacy Classics, and they're manufacturing those drums the same way they did in the late '60s and early '70s, which is when I was with Ludwig for a long time. And that was a time when anybody who was anybody was with them—Ringo, Bonham.... If you were a drummer and anybody knew your name, you played Ludwig drums. I recently bought a Ludwig kit and was so impressed that I went back with them.

MD: Let's talk about your book.

Joey: It's an interesting story. I worked on it for four years



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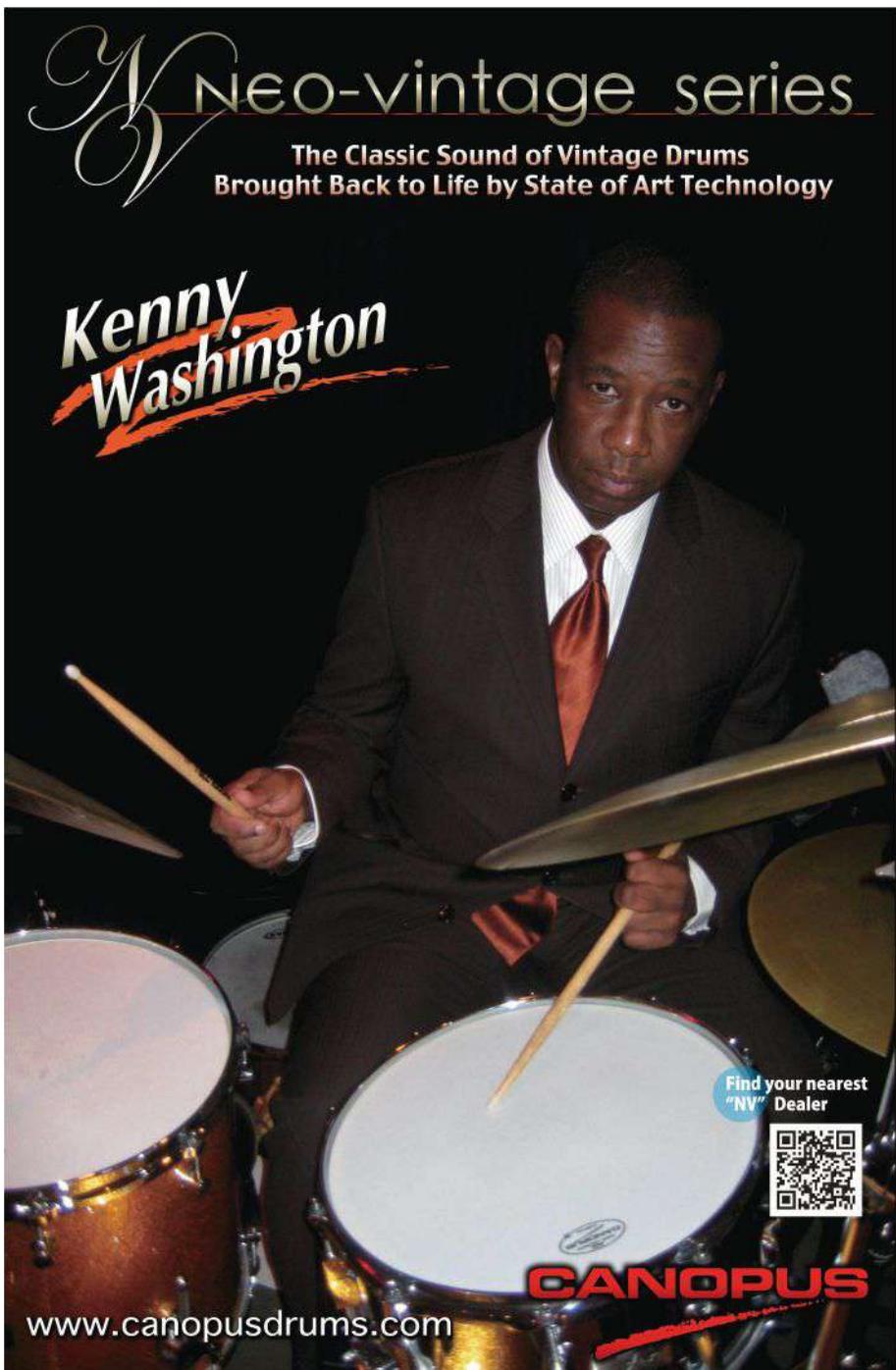
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JOEY KRAMER

with my good friend Keith Garde. Unfortunately for me, the book was released the day after Michael Jackson passed in 2009, and it got lost in that media shuffle. But it keeps coming back to me. People are always coming up and mentioning it. The main thing I wanted to do was help out other people, because I knew there were a lot of people suffering from depression and other things I went through. The thread that runs through the book is the confusion between love and abuse. All of us fight with that now and again in our lives.

Now people say, "Wow, your book saved my life." There's really no shelf life for a book, so it's still out and about. People are bugging me to write another one, which I'm beginning to think about doing. The book is what it is, and it's the real deal. If it helps as many people as I've been made aware of, well, then my mission is accomplished.

MD: It's a different kind of thing having people come up to you to discuss that as opposed to drums and music.

Joey: I'm out there doing what I do. If it helps somebody out, that's great. I enjoy the rapport with the fans now. I'm just grateful for what I've been able to do for the last forty years. I'm grateful that I've been sober for the last twenty-five years. I have gratitude for what I've been able to do in life, what I can do and what I will do, and I'm taking advantage of it now.

I even have a new line of coffee called Rockin' & Roastin'. I've always been a coffee connoisseur. When I get to the gig in the afternoon, I have a couple of cups of real strong coffee, and it keeps me going until I hit the stage, at which point my body goes into that mode that my brain is so familiar with. It's unfortunate that you have to get older before you appreciate so much of what you have, but that's the way it goes.

MD: So, in all seriousness, what's the more famous part in "Walk This Way"—the guitar riff or the drum part?

Joey: I think you know the answer to that! [laughs]



Jonathan Moffett

Rick Latham

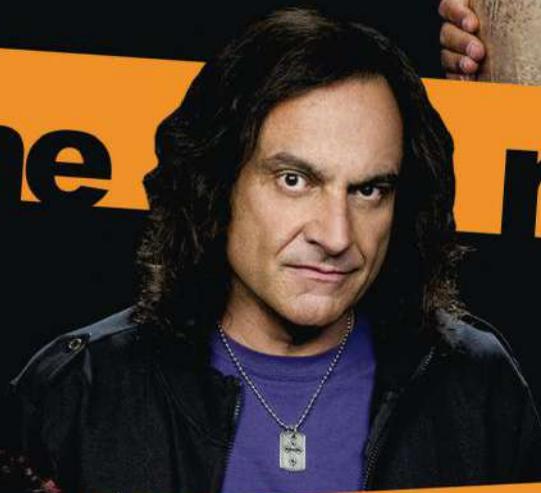
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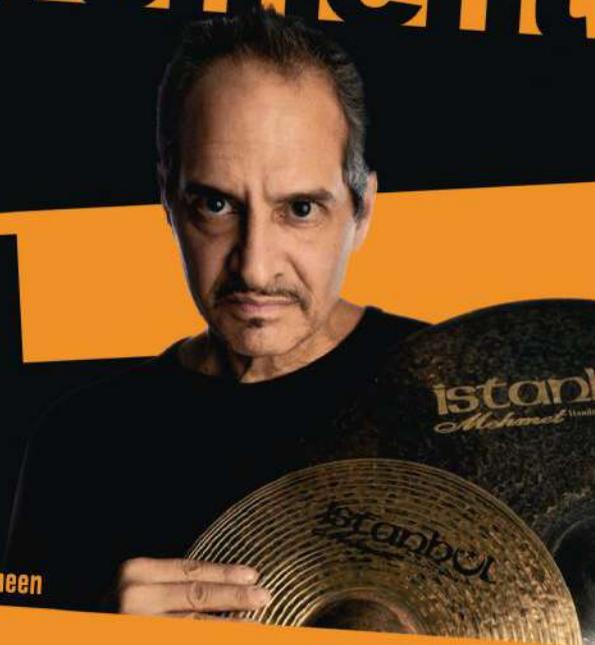


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FIND SUCCESS WITH A HOME-BASED DRUMMING CAREER

by Jeremy Hummel

In 2004 I received a life-changing phone call. Due to no fault of my own, I was removed from a platinum-selling band that I helped to build from the ground up. What I didn't realize at the time was that in many ways this was a blessing in disguise. The turn of events started a new home-based career and ultimately allowed me to be the happiest I have ever been. In this article I will share my story of how I developed a career from home, offer some tips on how you could do the same, and examine the pros and cons of being self-employed.

TEACHING

The first thing I decided to do was return to teaching. People handle things differently, so I suppose I could have been dumb-

teaching again. I had flyers printed and posted them at the schools and stores I contacted. And I turned my full-size basement into a teaching studio. The most important element was creating an environment where drummers would want to learn. This is something I continue to work on.

WHO ARE YOU? I REALLY WANT TO KNOW!

It's important to understand that when you work from home, you're your own business. In most cases you are also your own boss. You may even consider yourself a "brand." So what steps must be taken to sell your brand? Check out *The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs* by Carmine Gallo. This book has helped me keep my materials simple and

If you don't have many close relationships or responsibilities, life on the road might be just the ticket. But if you like the comforts of home and need financial stability, working from home could be the answer.

founded and felt as though I was taking a step backward, but that wasn't the case. Before making records and touring, I'd taught privately and really enjoyed it.

Step one was calling all of the private teachers I knew in the area to ask how things were going for them. Did they have full rosters? Perhaps they had some students on a waiting list and could send them my way to get the ball rolling. I also reached out to the local schools and music stores to make them aware that I was

effective, especially with advertising and presenting drum clinics.

One of the key points in getting your name out there, for any reason, is asking: Why should they care? In other words, what are your strengths? What do you have to offer that others don't? If you're making a flyer for teaching, let people know why they should study with you. There are business cards everywhere that say "Drum Lessons: Beginner to Advanced," with only a phone number. That is way too general.



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HOME-BASED DRUMMING

When I first made flyers, I listed a few selling points. For example, I could offer inside advice on what it takes to be a true professional musician. I had firsthand experience in going from the garage to playing arenas.

But you've got to evaluate your advertising materials now and again to stay current. In 2012 I was looking to increase the number of students I had at Dale's Drum Shop (in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania) on Saturdays. I also wanted to address the fact that some parents or potential students had asked staff members at Dale's why a lesson with me cost more than one with the other instructors. I understood that it was not enough for the shop employees to mention a popular band I had been with—especially for parents who may not have been familiar with the band, or who didn't even care.

So I had some new postcard-style business cards drawn up as I continued to build my résumé, and they included better selling points on why someone might want to study with me. I have the same list available

on my website, in the event that someone finds me through the Internet.

DIVERSIFY (BANDS, SESSIONS, WRITING)

When you work from home and are self-employed, you might find it necessary to have several different entities contributing to your income. I always have a few logs burning in the fire. This not only helps me pay the bills more efficiently but also provides a nice balance in keeping me satisfied on multiple levels.

Teaching has become my primary source of income. If I only gave lessons, however, the part of me that craves live performance and interacting with musicians would be neglected. I have two performing groups, Into the Spin and EVE. I'm the musical director for Into the Spin LLC, and I run the corporation as well. Both groups rehearse at my home. When time allows, I still do recording sessions and drum clinics and write articles for *Modern Drummer*.

CASE STUDY: MATT HALPERN

I began working from home out of necessity. I needed to make a living and be able to play in my band, Periphery.

In terms of recording other people's projects from home, I recently signed on as a Yamaha electronic kit artist, because I wanted to be able to record without having a full-scale studio. Using an electronic kit, I'm able to sell my time as a studio musician, recording beats, songs, whatever it may be, from home. You can record right into your laptop and get great sounds from the software out there.

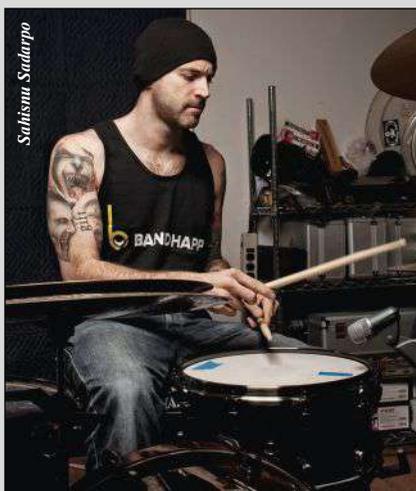
In terms of my educational activities, I had a fan base that was all over the world, and I was teaching as I was touring from city to city. But when I would come home from tour, I'd be limited to this small group of students in my area. It just wasn't enough. So I started teaching online via video chat, and I found that it was a great way to make ends meet and also to really build that fan-base relationship further, which was win-win for everybody. The fans were getting this great experience, and they were learning. The band was attracting more dedicated fans. And I was able to supplement my income a lot better when I was home.

I had a lot of friends who wanted to do this as well and who asked for help with it. So I started booking lessons for them and basically became like a music-lesson booking agent. [Managing the increasing workload] became a bit cumbersome, though, so instead of using Facebook and Skype and email and PayPal, we set up Bandhappy.com as a centralized location for video chat, scheduling, and e-commerce. It kept growing, so it's worked out.

And the gear required for this is really minimal. I teach all of my online lessons through my laptop. I have a MacBook Pro with a built-in webcam and microphone, and that's it. You need a good Internet connection, but besides that, if you have those minimum requirements, you can really do well.

A setup like this really makes the world a lot smaller. Today, for instance, I have two students in the U.K., one in Malaysia, and one in Florida. That's all through Bandhappy.

Interview by Robin Tolleason



Sahisnu Sankarpo

A vertical advertisement for Pro-Mark drumsticks. At the top, a black and white photo of Jonathan Haas, a man with glasses, smiling and holding two drumsticks. Below the photo, the text reads 'JONATHAN HAAS' in large white letters, with 'OAK JH4' in even larger white letters. Underneath that, it says 'AUTOGRAPH SERIES'. At the bottom, two red Pro-Mark JH4 OAK drumsticks are shown vertically. The Pro-Mark logo is at the bottom left of the ad. The background is dark with some circular patterns, possibly from a drum set.

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CASE STUDY: PAT MASTELOTTO

Working from home, you get to be with family. You can dash out to do a quick errand, run to the gym, mow the yard, sweep the pool, pick up the kids, hang out with your wife, and pretty much be on your own daily schedule. You can't do any of that while you're touring.

I was always into recording, from Wollensak tape decks to ADATs. Along the way I picked up some nice Neumann, AKG, and Earthworks mics and API, Neve, and Daking preamps. You don't need all that, though. When I started making records in my house in the late '80s/early '90s, we had an eight-track Foxtex, a couple of Radio Shack PZMs, one Shure SM57, and a little Mackie mixer, which was a big help. And I live with a lifetime's collection of drums, cymbals, and percussive paraphernalia.

I've also had gobs of experience recording with some of the world's greatest engineers and producers, in legendary studios. I learned a lot, but the real turning point for my home studio was a thing called eSession. That was started in about 2002 by Gina Fant-Saez (Blue World Music Studios, Austin, Texas), who lived near me. She had an idea, a way for individuals to find and contact any musician they wanted to work with, and she designed a method for players from all over the globe to do sessions together. She fine-tuned it into what she called eSession.

Say you're sitting in Taiwan and you want to use Steve Gadd and Guy Pratt on your record—*bam!*—you'd have the connections through eSession. You'd be able to work with them from the comfort of your own home studio. It was a game changer when she bought me Pro Tools and got me working a lot online. I already had good Pro Tools chops, since I'd engineered so many of my projects. But a studio rig like a Pro Tools HD system was priced beyond my means. So Gina set me up, then used me as her guinea pig and let me work off my debt that way. By the time she got eSession up and running, though, social networks like MySpace and Facebook were giving the world other ways to track down their favorite players. She was just a little late.

These days you can record stuff pretty cheap; you can do it on a laptop, and in terms of setting up for recording drums at home, it's all about the computer, right? Hit records are made from GarageBand loops. But if you want to record your own drumkit performance, you can get Pro Tools or Logic or Ableton Live, plus an analog-to-digital interface like the one that I use on the road, the MOTU UltraLite—all, I'm guessing, for under \$1,000. That will give you a pretty darned good studio on your laptop.

You must have a good server connection. I use Dropbox or YouSendIt to trade files. That's how most of the stuff goes back and forth these days. And you need a way to be reachable, to email, and to interact—even if you're just working with band buddies in different states or continents. It starts with that.

I do find that most band buddies and songwriters can't easily work with our multitrack drums spread out over ten or fifteen tracks. So I usually mix things down to a stereo mix, called a stem. Usually I do the drumkit as one stem and the e-drums as a separate stereo stem, and then maybe more stems if there's a lot of beatbox, percussion, or overdubs that might be in question—the stuff that I think they may want to mute or adjust. But sometimes I mix it all down to stereo.

My mixes can vary drastically, since I can toss in samples and burn in effects with AudioSuite [plug-ins] and do all the glitch editing myself. So when I send a stereo mix, it's pretty true to the way I hear the drums in my head (that day), and there are plenty of records where they've used my stem as the final mix.

Interview by Robin Tolleson



Pat and his granddaughter Dune confer on a final mix.

Alyce Carter

Interestingly, one day I was listening to Colin Cowherd on ESPN's *The Herd*. His insights are always thought-provoking, whether I agree with him or not. This particular morning he commented that those who are super-successful have no balance in their lives. He said that people always stress "balance, balance, balance" to be happy. Yet, in his view, wealthy business executives, top football coaches, star athletes, and so on tend to eat, sleep, and drink one specific thing.

While I can see some logic in Cowherd's statement, I think that success ultimately depends on how hard someone works. For example, I feel that just because I spend time practicing and I enjoy performing, that doesn't make me any less of a teacher. In fact, it's quite the contrary. There are things I learn in practice and performance that I often carry into lessons. In many instances I've developed something through my own practice that I stop and transcribe because my students could find it useful.

PROS AND CONS

When I first started writing this article, I thought it might be helpful to have columns listing advantages and disadvantages of life on the road versus working from home. But I realized that those qualities are only relative to a person's situation. If someone does not have many close relationships or responsibilities, life on the road might be just the ticket. On the other hand, if you like the comforts of your own bed and bathroom, settling down with your family, and the potential for better financial stability, working from home could be the answer. Road life can be difficult depending on your amenities (including transportation and lodging) and your financial situation.

If you think that a career working from home might be right for you, here are some things to consider.

Be self-motivated. You are responsible and accountable for your successes (and failures). You've got to have passion for what you're doing. Otherwise there won't be any initiative to get things done. Many people find working from home enticing because no one is telling you what to do or how to do it. But that can also be the hardest part. You must be resourceful and creative.

Persevere. There will be periods when it's very challenging, and you may need to go back to the drawing board. Whenever I'm in a situation where one of my entities is not succeeding, I ask myself, *Am I doing everything possible? Have I left no stone unturned?* If I answer honestly, I find there is usually more that I could do.

During my first few years of working from home, my wife and I had a toddler and a newborn, which occupied much of our time. Because my wife had a job with good bene-

Funk Drumming Training Camp

Part 1: Paradiddles and 16th-Note Subdivisions by Mike Adamo

MUSIC KEY

H.H.	x
S.D.	(●)
B.D.	●
	Ghost note

Having a tight, solid, good-feeling groove has always been important in drumming. In many cases, bandleaders, singers, and other musicians value a drummer with a solid groove and a good feel more than

someone with a lot of chops. We set up the foundation for the music, so we must develop the ability to create a sturdy groove for our bandmates to play over, with a feel that makes everyone comfortable.

A great way to develop your groove is to practice things that take you outside your comfort zone and expand the boundaries of your playing. Try working on ideas that are more complex than what you'll play on the gig. This will make the grooves you play in performance as easy and natural as breathing.

The exercises in this first article are designed to help you break the habit of always playing locked-in hi-hat and snare rhythms. The goal is to get comfortable with more complex, morphing funk grooves. These exercises will also help you develop bass drum precision, which will tighten up your overall feel.

Paradiddle exercises 1–4 focus on running the hands through the different inversions of the paradiddle. Phrasing paradiddles between the hi-hat and snare is a great systematic way to get comfortable with increasingly complex hand patterns.

Bass drum patterns A–H are to be played in conjunction with the paradiddle exercises. Focus on one paradiddle inversion at a time, and apply patterns A–H on the bass drum. Practice each paradiddle and bass drum combo twenty times before moving on to the next bass drum pattern.

For example, paradiddle 1 combined with bass drum pattern A looks like this:

Paradiddle 2 combined with bass drum pattern A looks like this:

Practice these exercises with a metronome or with your favorite recorded music. For a looser, more laid-back feel, I like to play to anything by the Meters, with the fantastic Joseph “Zigaboo” Modeliste on drums. For a tighter, more angular feel, I like to use James Brown tunes with the great Clyde Stubblefield on drums. You can also practice these exercises in conjunction with the Click Track Loops tracks included in my book, *The Breakbeat Bible*.

Additionally, practice each beat at a variety of tempos (40–180 bpm). Practicing in the upper tempo range will strengthen your chops, but be sure to start slowly and gradually work your way up. Practicing these beats slowly will give you more control and will help you develop your internal clock. It’s also a good idea to add quarter notes, steady 8th notes, and off-beat 8th notes (“&”) with the left foot on the hi-hat to boost the

coordination value of the exercises.

Don't forget to pay attention to the accents and ghost notes on the hi-hat and snare. These will add a lot of depth and feel to the grooves, while increasing your dynamic awareness.

In order to attain deeper levels of relaxation, focus on your breathing while you practice, and work on syncing your breath with your playing. For example, when grooving at a moderate tempo, like 95 bpm, I like to breathe in for two measures, hold for two measures, and then exhale for two measures. Do whatever's comfortable, which will vary depending on the tempo. Focusing on this while you practice will help you become more aware of your breathing during gigs. I've found that focused breathing allows me to attain greater levels of relaxation and a deeper groove.

Once you feel comfortable with all the basic combinations, move on to the following bonus bass drum patterns. These require a little more balance and coordination. Practice them in the same manner as before.

I **J**

K **L**

For an even greater bass drum workout, try the following patterns. Practice them in the same manner as before.

M **N**

O **P**

Q

If you work these exercises into your practice routine for a few weeks, you'll really start to notice a difference. Even if you're just playing a basic "boom, bap" hip-hop groove, your heightened awareness of 16th-note subdivisions, increased coordination, and deeper relaxation will make an impact on your playing. You—and your bandmates—will feel the improvement. Have fun, and stay funky!



Mike Adamo is the author of the critically acclaimed instructional book *The Breakbeat Bible* (Hudson Music). For more info, visit mikeadamo.com and thebreakbeatbible.com.



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Grooving With Fives

A Progressive Approach to Phrasing Quintuplets on the Drumkit, Part 2

by Mike McPhee

MUSIC KEY

H.H.	Aux
S.D.	H.H.
B.D.	Ghost note

In this article we'll discuss different ways of combining some of the exercises learned in part one, and we'll play them in 3/4 and 5/4 time. Then we'll move into more advanced phrasing exercises that incorporate different sound sources.

To get going, let's play two of the 3/4 examples from the last installment, back to back. I recommend playing these new phrases slowly until you're able to execute them perfectly many times in a row.

Here are two ways to build three-bar phrases out of the two 3/4 examples we used previously. Once you master these three-measure phrases, work through all the other possible combinations and then practice randomly changing the order while making sure you always know where you are in the three-measure form.

The next step would be to combine the two original patterns to form longer phrases, like five measures of 3/4. Here's just one possibility.

Now let's create some quintuplet patterns in 5/4. Here are two examples. Work with these the same way you did with the 3/4 exercises.

Here are those patterns arranged into three- and five-measure phrases. Make sure to experiment and come up with your own combinations. You could also combine different three- and five-measure examples to create a unique-sounding eight-measure phrase.

9

In Example 10, we're phrasing one of the 2/4 quintuplet patterns from part one in two measures of 3/4. In this over-the-barline groove, the snare accent shifts from beat 2 of the first measure to beats 1 and 3 of the second measure. I strongly recommend that you count as you practice this, so that you can keep track of the downbeat of each 3/4 measure. Start slowly too.

10

The next step is to orchestrate the right hand onto multiple sound sources. I like to use two hi-hats. In Examples 11 and 12, which are in 3/4, the hi-hat hits are phrased in groups of three.

11

In Examples 13 and 14, which are in 5/4, the hi-hat hits are phrased in groups of five.

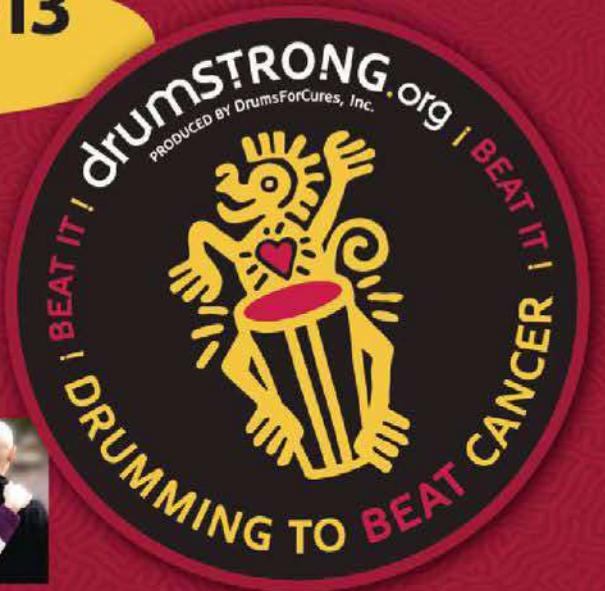
12

13

14

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Part 2: Xaxado by Uka Gameiro

MUSIC KEY

H.H.	X	
S.D.	○	X
B.D.	○	X

Ghost note
Rim click

The xaxado is a lively folk dance associated with baião rhythms, which also originated in the Pernambuco region of Brazil in the 1920s. The instruments normally used to accompany baião were incorporated into the xaxado and include accordion, triangle, and zabumba (bass drum).

Baião and xaxado rhythms sound similar, so you have to be careful to distinguish them. The xaxado consists of two muted tones and one open tone on the zabumba. (In baião, the pattern goes muted, open, muted.)



In these next two examples, play the zabumba rhythms (the bottom notes) on the bass drum. Try to apply the muted and open tones with your foot, and play the upper notes as rimclicks on the snare.



Here is a beat that implies the xaxado feel. The left hand is switching between rimclicks and regular hits on the snare.



Now add some ghost notes on the snare and 16th notes on the hi-hat.



Here are two more beats that contain typical zabumba patterns on the bass drum.



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Uka Gameiro was born in Recife, Brazil. He's the author of the upcoming book *Brazilian Pernambuco Rhythms: Implied Beats*. For more info, visit ukagameiro.com.





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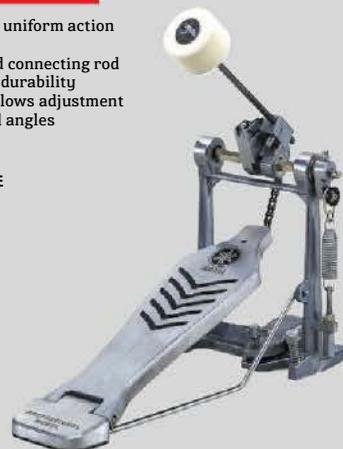
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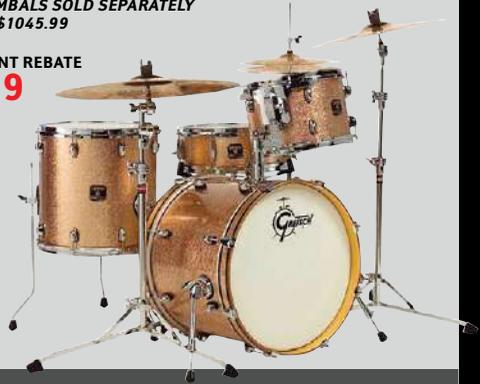
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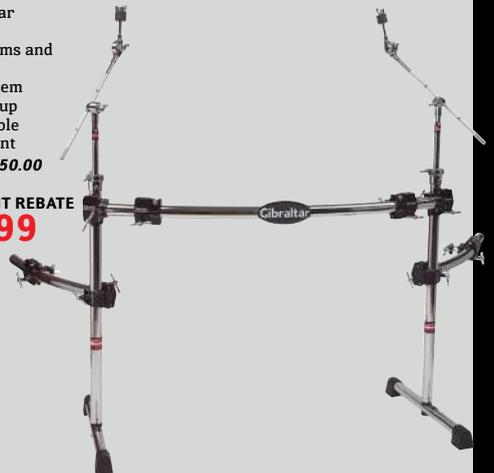
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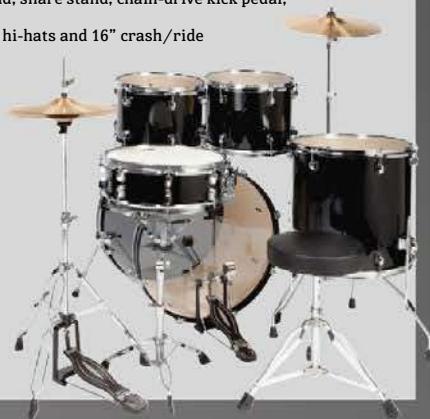
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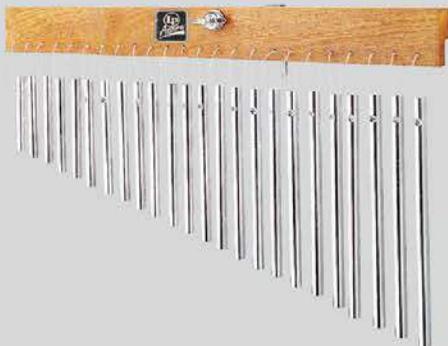
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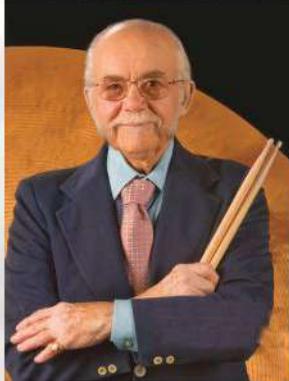
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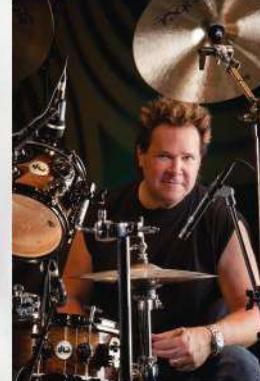
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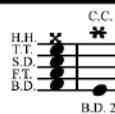
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Live Drum Soloing

Getting Started by Paul Wandtke

MUSIC KEY



In this article we'll give some insight into how to conceive, construct, and execute a drum solo in a live rock context. For those who've never performed a solo, it can be a very scary idea. But when you're starting out it's

often best to just go for it—at least in the practice room. By letting go of any fears and playing freely, you're being creative in the moment, and these are often the times when the most interesting ideas spring out.

Once you're comfortable playing free-form in the practice room, it's time to start conceiving ways to build a solo with more intention. Here's one way to go about it.

The Beginning Stage

The first step is to come up with as many licks and themes as you can, so you can then pick and choose the best ones for your solo. Once you have a number of ideas at your disposal, pick out your favorite. I often start with the simplest concept and then build it into a complete solo.

Here's a basic rhythm to start with—alternating 16th notes.



To create a theme, add some accents. I've decided to make a two-bar phrase.



Now let's combine the first two examples to make a four-bar phrase.



To make the phrase a bit more musical, we'll add some dynamics.



f

Now let's make an eight-bar phrase by orchestrating the accents on the toms and crashes before entering with a groove that's based on the same accent pattern.



mp



f



Building Your Solo

It's important to think musically when developing a solo. The more natural and logical the solo, the more it will connect with your audience. Every new theme you introduce should make sense with the previous theme, and nothing should feel mechanical or out of place. Drum soloing is like writing a song—you want to tell a story. The audience is listening, so tell them what's on your mind.

Set a Vibe

It doesn't really matter what theme you choose; it's all in *how* you play it. The next time you sit behind your kit to work on soloing, think about the message and vibe that you want to convey. If you want to let your audience know you're a serious player, then reflect that persona. The same goes for letting them know when you're having a good time—smile!

Throw Yourself a Curveball

Sometimes it helps to rearrange your kit so that you're forced to come up with fresh ideas. The slightest change to your setup can be really inspiring. You'll also become more versatile by being able to play on different kits. Try changing your setup

every other week, and see how much fun you have. I usually switch something every other show. Although my bandmates think I'm crazy for doing this, I enjoy the added challenge of having to play my kit a little differently.

Call and Response

Need help making longer phrases in your solo? Try doing call-and-response exercises to generate more ideas. Make sure that each response complements the call in a musical way, even if it's a completely different idea. After a while, you'll be able to create longer phrases.

Know Your Audience

When you solo in an actual performance, your audience will let you know if they like what you're playing. Crowd participation can affect what you play, especially during sections when you're improvising. Listen to the way the crowd is reacting. If you hear nothing but crickets, move on, unless that's the response you want in that particular section. You may also want to extend certain sections if the crowd is cheering you on.

Performance Review

After you've played your solo, make mental notes on what worked and what didn't. If you're going to be performing with the same band often, chances are you'll be playing in front of similar types of audiences that will like the same kinds of ideas.

It also helps to record your performances and practices, via audio or video, so that you can review what you played and keep track of your favorite ideas. It's beneficial to transcribe your ideas, as you will gain a better conceptual view of your solo by seeing it written in musical notation.

Outside Inspiration

If you find yourself lacking the inspiration to come up with something new, try writing a solo that's based on a melody from one of your favorite songs. Or check out some of your favorite drummers to hear what they do during their solos. You could even listen to the sounds of the world around you (cars, nature, TV, and so on). When you pay attention to what's going on in the background, some interesting rhythms start to appear.

For the middle section of my solo, I'll often replicate the sounds of a Harley Davidson, using quick single strokes, sextuplets, and 16th notes on the kick drum. I stumbled across this idea when I heard a Harley idling near my rehearsal spot in Chicago.

There are many ways to perform a drum solo. What will determine your arrangements is ultimately up to you. Be creative, have fun, and start with what you already know and what's already around you. Happy drumming!



Paul Wandtke has toured with the alt-rock band Kill Hannah and has drummed in showcase acts for Carnival Cruise Lines. For more, visit paulwandtke.com.



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STUDY UP!

You can learn a lot just by listening to drummers talk about their own educational backgrounds. This month *MD* asks two Pro Panelists about their unique paths of instruction, the teachers who've been the most influential on them, and their personal philosophies of study.

Rich Redmond

My philosophy is that you can be creative once you get your rudiments, reading, and coordination *down*. They're a springboard for your creativity.

Growing up in Milford, Connecticut, my first teacher was Jack Burgi. He taught me how to hold the sticks and got me started on reading. We worked on the Gladstone pad and later added the bass drum and a little crash cymbal.

When I ended up in El Paso, Texas, I studied with Byron Mutnick and Ricky Malachi. They took me up a notch with coordination, styles, and especially listening skills, and they turned me on to drummers to broaden my musical palette. I also stud-



Paul Griffin

"Denton taught me how to stretch and play outside the box. Nashville taught me how to play for the song."

I enrolled at North Texas State, and everyone knows the reputation of the teachers *there*. I studied with Ed Soph, Henry Okstel, Ron Fink, and Robert Schietroma. Ed Soph, in particular, helped me refine my touch and articulation. I had learned jazz coming through the back door, because at heart I'm an overeducated rock drummer. So I had the tendency to be heavy-handed, and he really rode me on my jazz combo chops, lightening my touch and focusing on the ride cymbal.

But my best teacher was the university itself, along with the town of Denton, Texas, because it was such a living, breathing organism. You learn from that *environment*. There were jam sessions going on twenty-four hours a day. Ninety-eight percent of your education comes from that creative community.

When I moved to Nashville, that city became my teacher because I had to learn a whole new musical language—sink or swim. Where Denton taught me how to stretch and play outside the box, Nashville taught me how to play for the song.

A teacher is there to provide insight and experience. But the student must receive it with an open mind and an open heart and then take that to the practice room and, ultimately, to the bandstand. The number-one thing is for you to have a solid work ethic and follow through.

It can be a fine line, but a teacher can also become your friend. Hopefully they're mentoring you not just on drums, but in all areas of life.

Steve Smith

Bill Flanagan, a great local Boston teacher, got me started in 1963, when I was nine years old. I studied with him until I graduated high school in '72. He gave me an excellent foundation in reading, rudiments, swing coordination, jazz concepts, odd times, and snare drum technique.

At Berklee, between 1972 and '75, Gary Chaffee was transformative for me. He had radical ideas and introduced me to odd groupings, alternate stickings, and unique ways of moving around the kit.

Alan Dawson was a master drumset teacher. In 1973 and '74 we focused on independence, song form, stick control, syncopation, and improvising. During that time I also spent one week at a Stan Kenton Band Camp studying with Peter Erskine, and that too was a transformative experience.

Even though Peter and I are the same age (we were both eighteen at the time), he was years ahead of me in development and an exceptional teacher.

Fred Gruber, who I studied with between 1990 and 2000, was the ultimate teacher in fine-tuning all the technical components of drumset playing, along with being grounded in the underlying swing pulse and an organic approach.

Pete Magadini also was a great teacher, and in the late '80s I learned volumes from him about polyrhythms.

In 2002 Karuna Moorthy, an excellent teacher and *tavil* player from South India, introduced me to Indian rhythms and South Indian rhythm theory and philosophy.

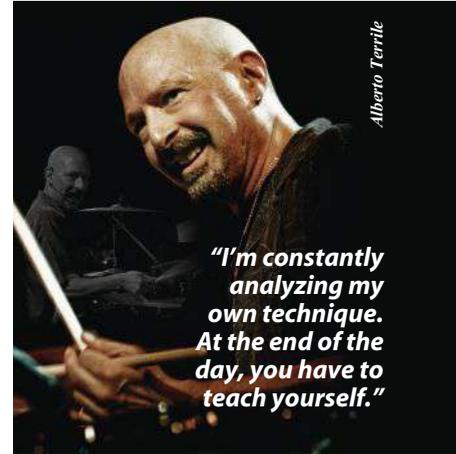
Since 2003, I've continued studies with Zakir Hussain, the greatest living *tabla* player and, in my opinion, the greatest living drummer on the planet. Studying and playing with Zakir is pure rhythmic PhD and beyond.

My basic education philosophy is twofold. One, it's advantageous to study with good teachers, simply put. On the other side, I'm constantly analyzing and reanalyzing my own technique and observations of my own playing and other drummers' playing in order to improve the ability to *teach myself*. At the end of the day, you have to teach yourself.

But along the way, you need expert advice and feedback about how you're doing. By saying I teach myself, I am *not* advocating never taking lessons. But you have to teach yourself through your own knowledge and powers of observation. The challenge is, how deeply can you analyze what you do?

In one case, I did seek out a teacher. Because he was looking for me! Peter Erskine called and said, "Do you know Freddie Gruber? Well, he's *looking for you!*" Freddie had seen my video and said, "This drummer's got a lot of potential, but he's getting in his own way. I can help." When I finally met him, we went up to my hotel room and within five minutes he had given me my first lesson. Right away I could see that he knew what he was talking about. It was about the balance point of the sticks. It helped me *immediately*.

The more I study and play, the more I'm able to teach myself. But you have to know the difference; you have to have many perspectives to make choices. As Freddie said, "If you don't know the difference, what's the difference?"



Alberto Terrile

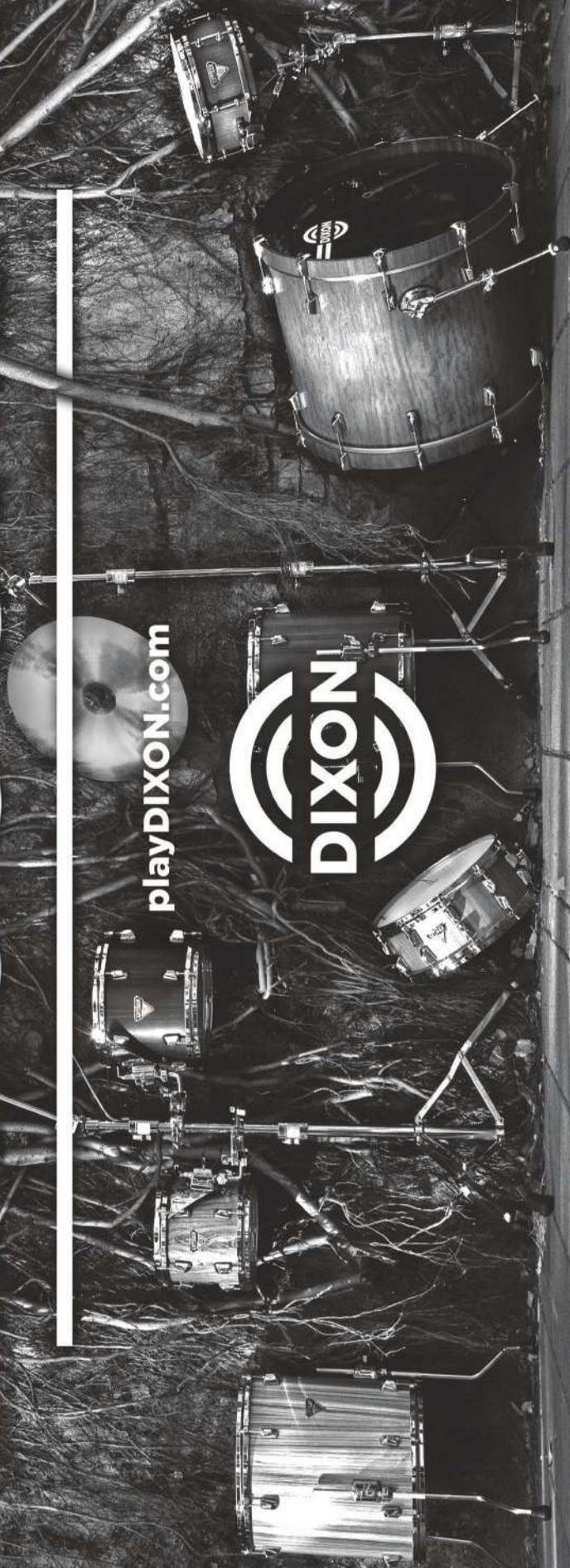
"I'm constantly analyzing my own technique. At the end of the day, you have to teach yourself."

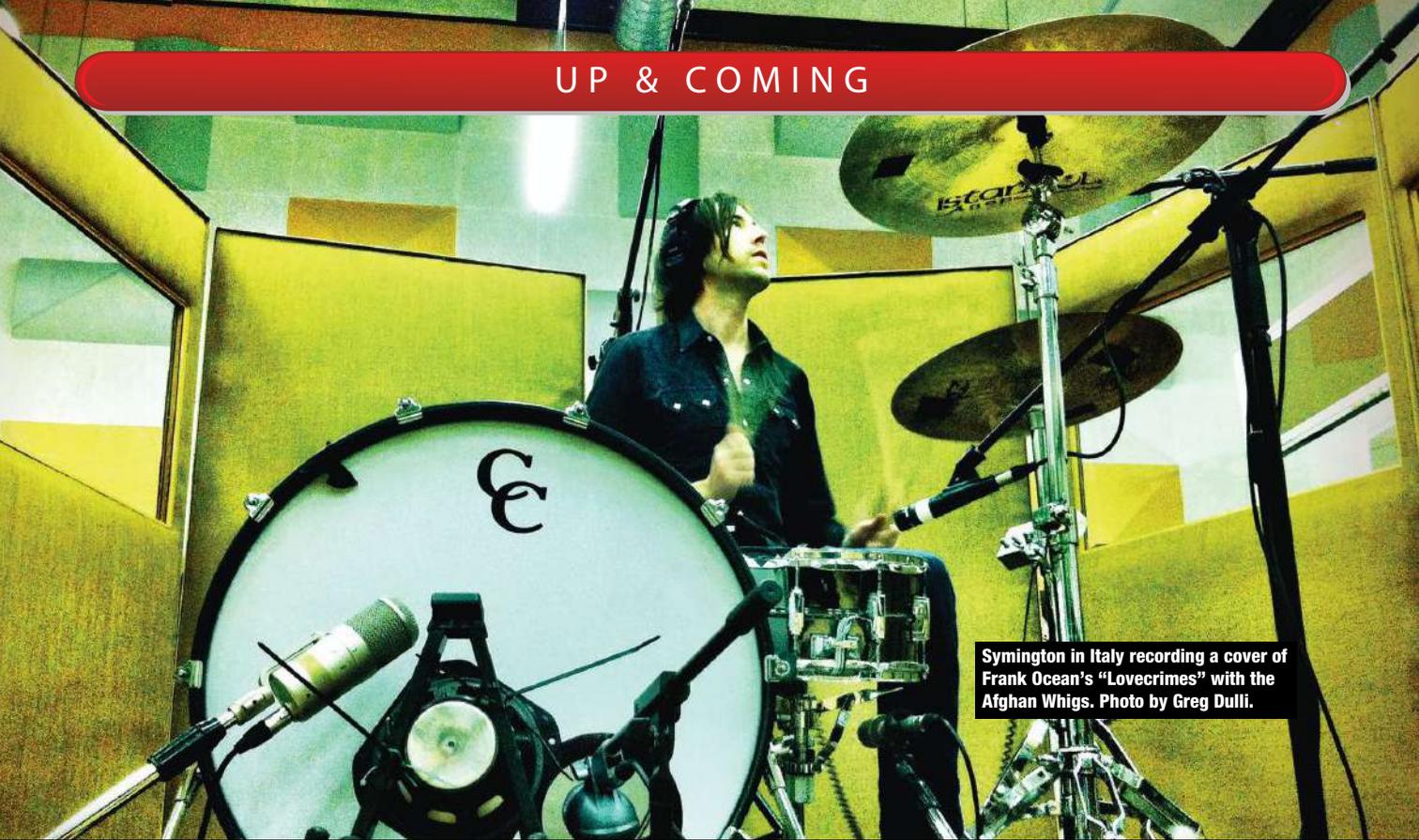




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Symington in Italy recording a cover of Frank Ocean's "Lovecrimes" with the Afghan Whigs. Photo by Greg Dulli.

CULLY SYMINGTON

by Will Romano

The natural-born thriller's curious, powerful beats have made him a favorite among indie-rock royalty.

Any proper search for truth or wisdom is fostered by a healthy appetite for good, in-depth information, a burning need to ask all the right questions, and the perseverance to experience a personal breakthrough. Austin-based drummer Cully Symington, who's performed with the Afghan Whigs, Okkervil River, Cursive, and Shearwater, among other respected members of the indie-rock community, is indeed wise beyond his years. A hard-hitting style has helped Symington gain much momentum and attention within the

stretch out and even be uncomfortable. It's fun to go to the practice room and work on certain aspects of my playing."

Although it's difficult to define Symington's work as a whole, perusing the totality and the microscopic details of his recorded output, we're struck by the ability to present the familiar with the adventurous and arrive at an elusive third element—a fearless combination of the two.

Case in point: Symington's idiosyncratic hybrid of Afro-Latin, ska, and punk on Zookeeper's "Mama Jean," which swings

musician's individual voice was more highly valued than it generally is today. Whether it's the blend of stick speed and heavy stomping on Zykos's "What You Know" or the bouncy but pity-inspiring backbeat of Okkervil River's "It Is So Nice to Get Stoned" (from the *Golden Opportunities 2* release), the drummer adds vivid color to any song without washing out its main melody. In some cases, he sharpens and enriches the sonic images by laying cymbals, keys, or even loose pieces of metal on the skins. "Everything's percussion," Symington says. "I try to have a small setup but get the most out of it."

"Cully is a powerful rock drummer, but there's a surprising amount of subtlety in his playing," says Jonathan Meiburg, frontman of the Sub Pop–signed art-pop/rock/folk act Shearwater. "He's such a slight-framed guy, but he generates these tremendous sounds out of the drums. It's like, 'How are you doing that?'"

"Swing is integral to my songs, and Cully is a rare example of a power drummer who has swing," Afghan Whigs frontman Greg Dulli says. "He has great meter, hits 'em really hard, and figures out a part very easily. As a human being and as a musician, Cully is as good as they come."

"Everything's percussion. I try to have a small setup but get the most out of it."

music community over the past several years, and the drummer's increasingly dynamic career demonstrates a wide artistic range, a thirst for knowledge, a confidence within various band settings, and a willingness to serve the song in any way possible.

"I try to spread out as much as I can and do as many different projects as possible," Symington says. "I like to play with a bunch of different bands, because it's good to

but also kind of rocks. "We had tried to play that song live on numerous occasions, and I never settled on anything," Cully says. "We recorded it at [frontman Chris Simpson's] house, and that was the first time I ever played the groove like that. We just started playing, and that's what turned up."

There's something vintage about Symington's instinctual approach that harks back to a pre-digital era, when a

The twenty-eight-year-old's skill and distinctive style seem to have always walked hand in hand with his inquisitiveness and work ethic. When he was just nine years old, Symington began taking lessons with educator and fellow Austinite Stephen Belans, a guru with whom he still keeps contact.

"Cully has a lot of talent," Belans says. "But all the talent he's amassed over the years is the result of hard work. He wasn't one of those kids who could play anything effortlessly right out of the gate. It took sheer determination to accomplish what he wanted to accomplish."

After working out his teenage aggressions on a Tama Rockstar kit, Symington looked to expand his horizons and sent an inquiry to jazz great "Rakalam" Bob Moses, with whom he'd study in the summer of 2003 in Boston. "I don't know very many kids coming out of high school who want to seek out a mentor, especially one that might be out of reach," Belans says. "Cully tried to make contact with a few guys. He sent letters off to Jack DeJohnette and Bob Moses, and he ended up working with Bob for a while. Cully was always on a quest to be as good as he could be."

"Bob Moses has been a huge influence on the way I approach the instrument," Symington says. "His book, *Drum Wisdom*, taught me how to practice. Moses really drove home the fact that playing drums is about playing music. The idea is to sing a melody with a particular resolution point in mind—for example, the 2 of the second bar of music—and then play a groove with it. You play the figure until it feels natural, and then you slowly begin to expand your vocabulary by setting up that pattern. It's a very unscientific way of practicing, but it's helpful in finding your own style."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Symington plays a C&C Custom kit featuring a 14x24 bass drum, a 10x14 rack tom, and 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms (sometimes one or the other), with a 6 1/2x14 Ludwig Black Beauty snare. He uses 17" hi-hats (usually a Zildjian K on top and Z Custom underneath), a 22" Istanbul Agop crash, and either a 24" Paiste Giant Beat or Istanbul Agop Xist ride. Cully employs a variety of Remo heads, including Coated Emperor tom batters and Coated Ambassador bottoms and Powerstroke bass drum batters. His sticks of choice are wood-tip Vater 5Bs.

KEEPING SHARP

When Symington is off the road, he uses Ted Reed's *Progressive Steps to Syncopation for the Modern Drummer*, Gary Chester's *The New Breed*, and John Ramsay's *The Drummer's Complete Vocabulary as Taught by Alan Dawson* as staples of his practice sessions.



In time Symington has become nearly indispensable in the writing and recording processes of many of the projects he's undertaken. "We were both on a session, double drumming, for Okkervil River's record *I Am Very Far*," Belans recalls of the highly orchestral atmosphere surrounding the making of the album. "I'll be honest—it was a long day, and for one song, around take fifteen or sixteen, I'm thinking about dinner. But Cully never lost it. There was never a moment when the light was on that he wasn't in the moment."

Tim Kasher, guitarist and vocalist of the Nebraska-based emo/art rock band Cursive, says that Symington contributed heavily to the band's 2012 concept album, *I Am Gemini*, a "psychodrama" diving into issues of multiple personality disorder. "Cully was really open to getting meticulous with arrangements," Kasher says. "He really wanted to deconstruct [the music], lay it out, and put it back together in a fresh, new way. On one song, 'The Sun and Moon,' the verse is in 5/4, but Cully plays in 4/4. You'll notice that at points in the song the snare alternates hitting on and off the 1. It took us a minute to get our heads around that."

"I had never recorded an album like that," says Symington, who estimates that he played more than 150 shows with Cursive prior to tracking *I Am Gemini*. "I actually used a lot of the same fills in many of those songs, because there was a common theme to the record."

Recording or performing with Cursive one day, the Afghan Whigs the next day, psychedelic roots rockers Okkervil River the next—sometimes quite literally—would be enough to challenge the most focused of minds. Symington explains that he maintains rhythmic balance largely by feel. "Ninety-nine percent of the time I don't write out the drum parts," he says. "I've always had a good memory when it comes to songs."

Symington is adept at leaving his imprint on a track while meeting the needs of producers and songwriters. This was never more evident than during the recording of Shearwater's 2012 effort,

Animal Joy. When the band's longtime drummer/percussionist, Thor Harris, was on the road with the reunited seminal cult band Swans, Symington and Jonathan Meiburg banged out demos and drum tracks in less than a week. Harris would rejoin Shearwater later in the production process, helping to create some unexpected rhythmic moments. The two drummers' tracks commingle in songs such as the driving, gut-wrenching "You As You Were" and the epic, near-Asiatic "Insolence."

"On 'Insolence' Cully did this weird thing where he was hitting the snare with brushes that looked like they were designed by a Neanderthal," Meiburg recalls. "We had a huge amount of compression on the snare, and that's why you get that rattling sound [makes fluttering noise]. When we were playing back [the drum performances] to hear which one worked best, we accidentally left both of them on. The decay on the reverb worked such that Thor's part and Cully's locked together. Thor was playing where Cully wasn't, and vice versa. I remember being knocked out by that. We ended up using Cully's very dry, upfront, strange rattling sound and, for the choruses, Thor's groove. I think Danny [Reisch, producer] overdubbed a ride cymbal toward the end. So you have this kind of six-armed-drummer invention, but it doesn't sound like it."

Throughout the process of making *Animal Joy*, Meiburg remained open to many influences, mirroring Symington's musical journey. The Frankenstein-esque tracks demonstrate how well Symington's drumming slips into modern recording settings, and how vital a presence the drummer has become to Meiburg's experimental production environment. Still, it all comes down to the song. "A lot of times I'll never go back and listen to music I've recorded," Cully says. "There are performances I'm proud of, but for me it's more about amazing tunes. I think it's cool if, at the end of the day, I can say, 'I'm glad I got a chance to play on that song.'"



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ROLAND Portable V-Drums

The TD-4KP V-Drums kit is a portable and compact electronic drumset that includes a kick pad, a snare pad, three tom pads, three cymbal pads (crash, ride, and hi-hat), and an FD-8 hi-hat controller pedal. The 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " snare and tom pads feature a cushioned rubber surface that's said to provide a sensitive, accurate response and natural playing feel. The integrated stand folds up for transport and storage.

The included TD-4 percussion sound module delivers drum and percussion sounds that can be edited and also includes ambience effects and Coach and Quick Rec/Quick Play functions. An optional CB-TDP carrying case includes a shoulder strap and detachable pouches for the FD-8 and a bass drum pedal, plus pockets for a kick beater, drumsticks, and other accessories. An optional PDX-6/8 is also available for a mesh-head feel and dual-triggering capability.

rolandus.com



PDP Birch Snare Drums

Available in 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ×14 sizes, these all-birch drums feature a flat-black lacquer finish and a 2-ply shell that's said to offer a round, throaty tone in high and low tunings alike. The limited edition snares come standard with Concept series dual-turret lugs, a MAG throw-off system with a three-position butt plate, True Tone snare wires, and True Pitch tension rods. List price: \$363.99.

dwdrums.com



PEARL Horacio Hernandez Cowbells

Horacio Hernandez Signature series cowbells are finished in plated copper and feature a two-face design that offers the option of striking the bell directly facing in or on the side. The two-position bracket mounts on a $\frac{3}{8}$ " post and swivels to ensure that wing nuts don't get in the way when stacking multiple bells and accessories on one post. The cowbells attach using Pearl's MUH-20 snare accessory mount, MUH-10T tenor accessory mount, or PCS-11 bass drum accessory mount. List prices range from \$53 to \$72.

pearldrum.com



RON VAUGHN Split-Ring Soft and Triple Row Recording Tambourines

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ronvaughn.net



REGAL TIP Daniel Adair B-52 and Session Drumsticks

Nickelback's Daniel Adair's B-52 drumsticks emphasize extra length and feature a heavy taper with an acorn tip. The stick measures 16¹/₄ x .590.

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regaltip.com



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Supernova's Single Aperture and Double Aperture models can be constructed with different woods, ply shells, and stave choices. The apertures formed in the drums create a quick air release that provides volume and a dark, woody tone.

supernovadrums.com



BIG BANG DrumDial Digital Drum Tuner

The digital DrumDial tuner is said to achieve consistent, precise, numeric tuning of any drum by measuring the tension of the head. The unit comes with a hard-shell carrying case, a drum key, a tuning guide, and a one-year warranty.

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bigbangdist.com



MEINL Dumbek and "Make Your Own" Cajon and Bongo Cajon Kits

Meinl's 17¹/₈ x 8¹/₂ dumbek is constructed of solid fiberglass with a gold finish and a crosshatched shell texture. The drum is said to produce a resonant and clear sound.

The new Make Your Own cajon and bongo cajon kits include all of the parts needed, along with an instruction manual and a list of the tools necessary for assembly. The finish can be customized by adding oil, lacquer, wax, or paint, bringing a personal design to the instruments.

meinpercussion.com



DIXSON Bass Drum Lift

Dixson's poly-filled nylon bass drum lift has black hook-and-loop fasteners attached to the pedal plate and a Bumpon roll pad positioned where the drum rests on the lift. The bottom is made of a nonskid vinyl material and includes hook-and-loop fasteners to prevent movement on carpet. An additional pad is included for small drums. The bass drum lift is made in the USA and lists for \$39.90.

bassdrumlift.com



COWPADDY Electronic Drum Triggers

Cowpaddy electronic drum triggers are made of rubber-coated polyethylene foam and are said to have excellent bounce and response. The 35 mm piezo sensor element located in the 2 1/4"-thick foam allows the trigger to be hit on either side. The Cowpaddy is 6x3 3/4", the Dual Cowpaddy is 6x8, and the Cowpaddy Cowabongo is 6x13. Cowpaddys fit on any rod or arm up to 1/2" in diameter. The input connection is a 1/4" jack, and a stereo Y cable is included with the Dual and Cowabongo models.

thecowpaddy.wix.com/products



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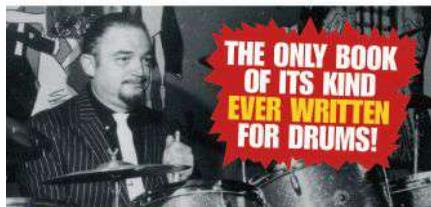
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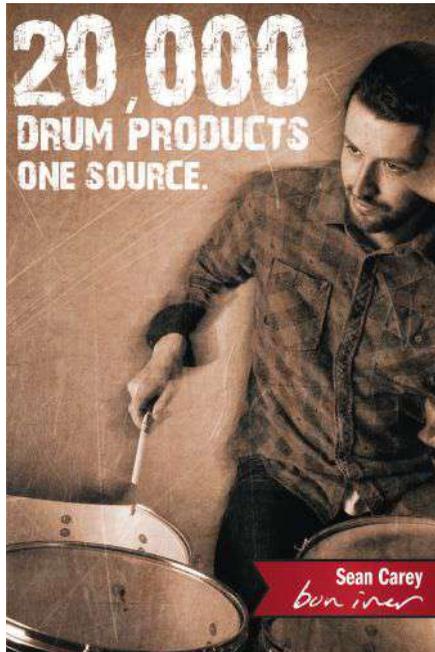
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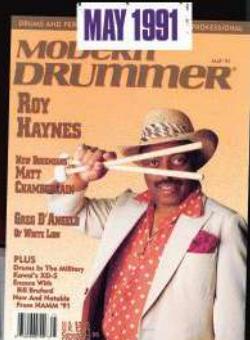
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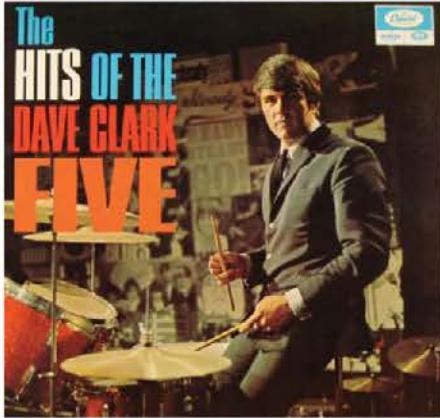
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COLLECTOR'S CORNER



Rogers Dave Clark Five Replica Kit by Harry Cangany

I'm a big fan of vintage Rogers drums, and I was at the right age to watch the British Invasion from its onset in February of 1964. After the Beatles, the second great band to fly west from Heathrow to New York City to appear on *The Ed Sullivan Show* was a quintet that specialized in what was known as the Tottenham Sound. Led by its drummer, the band was known as the Dave Clark Five, or the DC5.

Clark sat behind a five-piece red-sparkle set, while most of his contemporaries played only four drums. When I saw him on television, I noticed a couple of interesting things right away. First, I could see a logo that started with an R, but I couldn't read the name. I also couldn't see the tom arms, but the toms looked backward—Clark played with a 13" tom on the left and a 12" drum on the right.

We've since learned that Clark's set was made by Ajax in the U.K., using Ajax shells and Rogers hardware. That outfit also featured fragile drawn-brass lugs. Later, Clark played sets with sturdier beavertail lugs. He had two single Swiv-O-Matic holders mounted near the back bass drum hoop, so the tom arms were hidden from front view.

Clark sat high behind the kit, which also featured a 20" bass drum, a 16" floor tom, and a matching 5x14 Powertone snare. He used two Rogers swan-leg cymbal stands and a matching hi-hat stand.

Having just restored a red-sparkle Premier kit to look like Keith Moon's classic setup with the Who, I decided to tackle a DC5 replica. In the two Rogers catalogs that came out closest to 1964, there were sets with two mounted toms, but neither was exactly like Dave's. One of the kits, from the 1964 catalog, used a hex rod that held a three-part Swiv-O unit for the toms, and the other, in the 1967 catalog, introduced the Dave Clark Londoner 5, which had a sturdy double-tom holder. There are plenty of Londoner 5s out there. I didn't want to re-create either of those two drumsets.

I needed an original Rogers red-sparkle bass drum drilled for two Swiv-Os. This option was not advertised, but you can't always trust what was printed in the catalogs. I had all the other drums, from the Cleveland time period (before April 1966), in the right sizes and in the correct glitter/sparkle finish. This is where the Drum Farm comes into the picture. Owner Bobby

Chiasson just happened to have the exact bass drum that I needed.

The next thing I had to do was to go see my pals at Andresen Signs in Indianapolis, with a picture of the original logo bass drum head so they could re-create it. They nailed it.

Clark used long tom arms and tilted his drums considerably. The single tom arms are much sturdier than the first tom-holder system that Rogers used, called the Top Hat. I often wonder whether Clark chose the two separate tom holders after seeing how the 1964 double-tom system shook and bounced, or whether he just experimented with what Rogers offered. In any case, Rogers' holders were years ahead of those made by competitors.

The completed replica kit is 100 percent original, except for the heads, and it sounds and looks wonderful. The Tottenham lads were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame a few years back, and together they released a lot of great songs, gave many classic performances, and created lasting memories for their fans. The replica set here is a little bit of a tribute to that great band.



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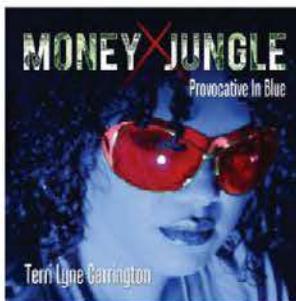


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TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON

MONEY JUNGLE: PROVOCATIVE IN BLUE

The fiftieth anniversary of *Money Jungle*, the album Duke Ellington recorded with drummer Max Roach and bassist Charles Mingus, brings a worthy tribute from Terri Lyne Carrington. It's an ambitious work—the original has an edge and a musical rawness, as well as sophistication

and social commentary. Carrington captures Max's flow on the hard-swinging opening track and the gentle "Fleurette Africain" (featuring trumpeter Clark Terry), while elsewhere she updates the groove. "Backward Country Boy Blues," released on the 1987 reissue of the original album, morphs to acoustic funk, alternating 6/4 and 4/4, with Lizz Wright vocalizing and pianist Gerald Clayton riffing. "Wig Wise" becomes crisp Latin funk with dynamic shifts, adding Nir Felder's country-and-Eastern guitar. "A Little Max" takes a jazz salsa trip with helping hands from percussionist **Arturo Stable**, and on the slow blues "Switch Blade" Carrington bounds from one side of the beat to the other with amazing control. (Concord) **Robin Tolleson**

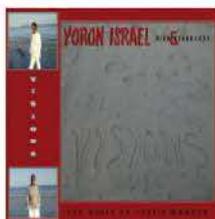


MANU KATCHÉ

MANU KATCHÉ Few drummers play with more taste and conviction than Manu Katché. Setting up the groove on opener "Running After Years," the drummer, famous for his work with Peter Gabriel and Sting, among others, uses distinct and strong tones. Next up, he kicks off "Bliss" with ringing toms, matching

the sparse melody played on organ and sax. And with a current of beats and electronic beds, skins, and choice splashes, "Walking by Your Side" is as busy as Katché ever gets. When Tore Brunborg's sax solo starts, Katché switches to a flowing drum 'n' bass groove (with no bassist)—a remarkably well-executed counterpoint.

Throughout, Manu never seems hurried, whether he's playing expansive melodies on "Slowing the Tides" or perfectly catching all the horn kicks on the swinging "Short Ride." And whether he's laying down slick acoustic funk under Nils Petter Molvaer's processed horns on "Beats & Bounce" or going for it over the vamp of "Loose," his primary allegiance is always to his compositions and to the music. (ECM) **Robin Tolleson**



YORON ISRAEL & HIGH STANDARDS

VISIONS: THE MUSIC OF STEVIE WONDER

With Yoron Israel, you're guaranteed exemplary taste and deep swing, no matter what the groove. Here the drummer leads a superb unit, including saxophonist Lance Bryant, pianist Laszlo Gardony, and bassist

Ron Mahdi, through a set of Stevie Wonder tunes. The quartet manages to subtly imprint a personal stamp. While expanding the jazz harmonies, the players wisely avoid meddling with the essential glorious tunefulness of Wonder's handiwork. Retrofitting pop songs with alternate meters can become gimmicky, but Israel's breezy use of 3/4 on "Creepin'" seems natural, and the unlikely application of 7/4 on "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" gives the extensively covered standard a surprisingly fluid and effective freshness. Whether lathering his lush, gorgeous brushwork on a beautiful rendition of "All in Love Is Fair" or stretching out with an aggressive chops-laden solo played over piano accompaniment on "Contusion," Israel is a classy interpreter. (Ronja Music Company) **Jeff Potter**



DREW SCHULTZ

BACK TO CLASS

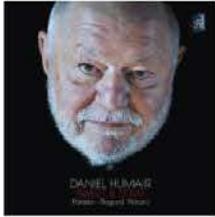
Back to Class is a modern lesson in old-school soul and funk, drawing from the textbooks of Motown, Tower of Power, Stax, and the church of the holy ghost stroke. The churning, bubbling funk of "Told You So" has the mark of Garibaldi, as does

the instrumental "Slouch Potato," featuring Drew Schultz's quartet, the Funk Machine. In addition to composing all of the material, Schultz plays it just right, pumping quarter notes on the chorus of "Try," leaning into a soul shuffle on "Long Gone Love," and nailing a tight rimclick on the Gil Scott-Heron-like "Welcome Home Heartache." Bassist James Jamerson Jr. lights up "Jamo" (think Herbie Hancock's "Hang Up Your Hang Ups") along with guitarist Dennis Coffey and saxophonist Lenny Pickett. Finally, Schultz's interviews with the legendary Funk Brothers sound like scripture—blessed are those who can lay it down. (Pax Productions) **Robin Tolleson**



HANDS ON'SEMBLE

CINCO SOBRE TRÊS—FÜNF ÜBER DREI Some percussion groups might err on the side of the clinical, technical, or avant-garde, but the Hands On'Semble makes sure that everything grooves. The group's new album features world percussionist **Pete Lockett** and mridangam master **Poovalur Sriji** as guests, a recipe guaranteed to bring rhythmic deliciousness. "Half Past Kandam" features Lockett's classical Indian revelry alongside On'Semble stalwarts **Randy Gloss**, **Andrew Grieschow**, and **Austin Wrinkle**, with the melody sometimes in the bells, other times in the drums. Lockett's "Super Moon" is fun in 10/8 with electric bass for fuel, and Sriji's "Sweet 17" features playful call and response in 17/8. Drawing from numerous drumming traditions, the ensemble builds a rousing groove in 22/8 on Gloss's "Peeling the Onion" and then deconstructs, extends, and elaborates. "X-Mas in Goa" begins as a soulful pandeiro solo, with berimbau adding low-end support. It's fascinating and exhilarating to hear such great players work this fusion out. (handsonsemble.com) **Robin Tolleson**



DANIEL HUMAIR
SWEET & SOUR

Just for fun, make yourself get up and dance to this music. *Sweet & Sour* is free jazz at its most cinematic and human. Daniel Humair's breathtaking playing ranges from brushstrokes, gentle nudging, and long tones on "Ground Zero" to the full-on staccato-ish drumkit chaos on "Care 4," leapfrogging the beat with Vincent Peirani's swinging accordion before Emile Parisien's sax dislodges the time. Peirani's biting 6/8 "7A3" is all about incredible group dynamics. "T2T3" captures some truly ominous emissions—there's forward movement but not strict time. Humair and bassist Jérôme REGARD can play the lights out of a traditional bebop groove like "Debsh" but more often decline to lock in as usually expected. They keep in close contact, but it's more about knowing which road the other is taking, leaning and jabbing and implying. (Laborie) **Robin Tolleson**

OTHER RECENT DRUMMER-LEDS TO CHECK OUT



Gary Umberto Scapellati *Cosmic Ritual* /// **Jaе Sinnett** *Still Standing* /// **Darryn Farrugia** *Seeds* /// **Mahlis-Panos Project** *Protoleia* /// **Scott McLemore** *Remote Location* /// **Sean Noonan** *A Gambler's Hand* /// **Curtis Nowosad** *The Skeptic & the Cynic* /// **Will Guthrie** *Sticks, Stones & Breaking Bones* /// **McCormick Percussion Group** *Concerti for Piano With Percussion Orchestra* /// **Pete Escovedo** *Live From Stern Grove Festival* /// **Barry Romberg's Random Access** *Crab People* /// **Claudio Scolari** *Synthesis* /// **Neil Tufano** *Pastime* /// **Leo Ciesa** *Coat of Arms* /// **Tim Solook** *Comfortable Blues* /// **Jerry Leake** *Prominence* /// **Brian Kelley Trio** *Ready*

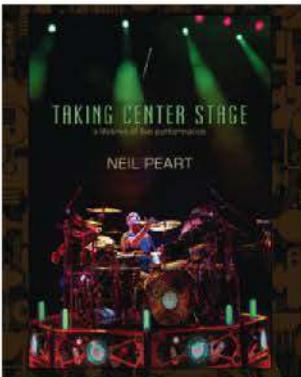


BILLY MARTIN'S WICKED KNEE *HEELS OVER HEAD*

Wicked Knee channels the spirit of New Orleans through the experimentation of New York's "downtown" scene in a rollicking, skewed hipster funhouse of street beats, jazz, and funk. *Spontaneity* is Martin's mantra. There are winning originals, and you've gotta love a band that covers both King Oliver and the White Stripes. Trumpeter Steven Bernstein and trombonist Curtis Fowlkes gleefully twist their tones, while Marcus Rojas once again comes across as the world's funkier tuba toter. Martin coaxes a nouveau-N'awlins multi-timbre groove from every corner of the skins, and there's no boundary between beat and fill, just a juicy, danceable wave. The track that lingers longest is Martin's own "Muffaletta," starting with an irresistible street beat that builds on a brass riff. It loops in your head, resulting in all-day high stepping. (Amulet) **Jeff Potter**

MULTIMEDIA

RATINGS SCALE

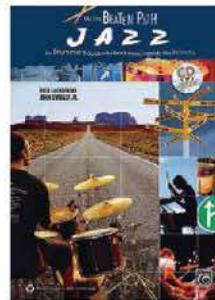


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NEIL PEART: TAKING CENTER STAGE—A LIFETIME OF LIVE PERFORMANCE
BY JOE BERGAMINI

BOOK LEVEL: ALL \$29.99
It's obvious that drummer/author/educator Joe Bergamini has a healthy obsession with Neil Peart's drumming. Once Bergamini completed his dream-come-true project, coproducing the *Taking Center Stage* DVD (during which he worked closely with Peart), it was the logical

next step to create a book to chronicle the making of the DVD and to dig deeper into the material on the three-disc set.

Bergamini gives a thoughtful chronological overview of the ever-evolving Rush tours and recordings, including info on each drumset used (with Peart's own comments about his gear from the tour programs), kit diagrams, analysis of each drum track featured in the book, painstakingly accurate transcriptions, and countless photos. The 208-page tome is educational, entertaining, and informative, and it creatively complements the DVD set. It's a must-have package for fans of the legendary Rush drummer, offering a revealing glimpse of Peart's progressive playground. (Hudson Music) **Mike Haid**



●●●●●
ON THE BEATEN PATH: JAZZ
BY RICH LACKOWSKI AND JOHN O'REILLY JR.
BOOK/DVD LEVEL: BEGINNER TO ADVANCED \$19.99

On the Beaten Path: Jazz provides a stylistic overview by breaking down signature licks and grooves from a dozen great players. Authors Lackowski and O'Reilly begin with some enticing

three-against-four patterns and an intricate tom/rim beat from Bill Stewart, then spotlight Jeff Hamilton's ride cymbal work and examine Jack DeJohnette's broken 8th-note feel and over-the-bar swing on Keith Jarrett's "The Masquerade Is Over." Looking further back, the authors discuss Tony Williams' groundbreaking playing with Miles Davis and attempt to explain how Elvin Jones made his triplet-based patterns swing so hard. They also diagram Philly Joe Jones' brushwork (helpful) and his beautiful eight-bar intro to "Locomotion," unravel Max Roach's comping on "Ko-Ko," Art Blakey's press rolls, Joe Morello's odd-meter playing ("Blue Rondo à la Turk" and "Take Five"), Gene Krupa's fiery solo on "Bernie's Tune," and Papa Jo Jones' tuning tricks on "Cubano Chant." Thoughtful and insightful, though admittedly incomplete on its own, this book should open some doors as well as inspire drummers to dig deeper. (Alfred) **Robin Tolleson**



Beware of Mr. Baker

Madman or genius? A new documentary paints a vivid picture of **Cream's** Ginger Baker while making a persuasive argument in both directions.

It's not entirely clear what possessed the former model, boxer, and music video director Jay Bulger to fly to South Africa and begin shooting a documentary by moving in with Ginger Baker, one of the most cantankerous figures in all of music history. And why would Baker even agree to such a thing? After all, a story about his tumultuous life would require him to be forthcoming about drumming, drugs, ex-bandmates, ex-wives, triumphs, and tragedies—to actually *behave*. Intentions aside, the final product, *Beware of Mr. Baker*, released by Snag Films in early 2013 and the winner of a Grand Jury Award at the 2012 South by Southwest Film Festival, is by turns revealing, informative, hilarious, and a bit sad. It paints Baker as a world-class musician and illuminates how his influence as an unrivaled drummer has reached across genres and eras. And fear not: Throughout the film, as throughout his career, Ginger Baker most certainly does *not* behave. "I can't imagine what [Baker's playing] would sound like if he wasn't who he is," Bulger tells *Modern Drummer*.

Baker has been the subject of much analysis since he appeared on the 1960s English R&B scene with Alexis Korner and

tells *MD* that "money" was most likely the factor behind Baker's changing his focus from jazz to rock. African music was important too, as you can hear in the tom patterns on Cream classics such as "Sunshine of Your Love" and "White Room." After Cream's breakup, Baker traveled to Nigeria, immersing himself in the culture and collaborating with the king of Afrobeat, Fela Kuti, long before Paul Simon exposed the masses to "world" music.

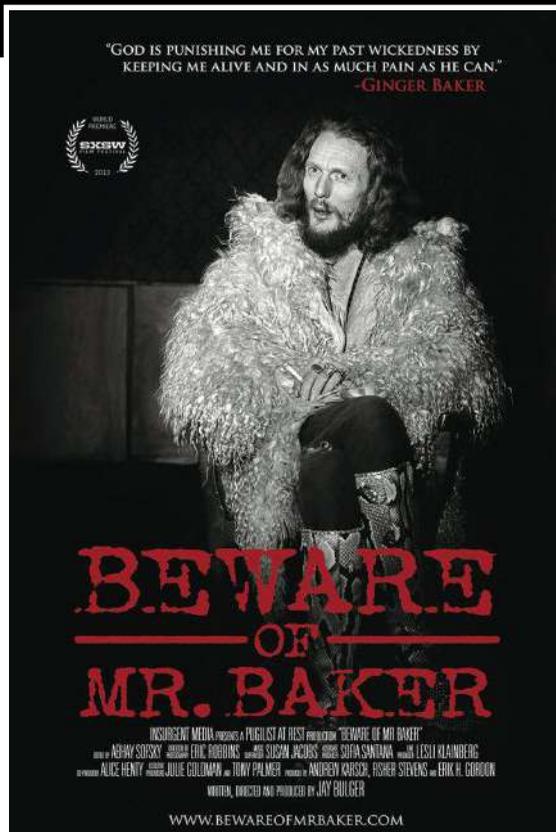
But labels don't apply here. "I don't put music in boxes," Ginger says in the movie. "Especially my music." Indeed, he has always bristled when Cream is mentioned as originators of heavy metal.

Beware includes sound bites from fellow drumming stars, including Neil Peart, Nick Mason, Simon Kirke, Bill Ward, and Chad Smith, who credit Baker with everything from performing the first rock drum solo to being the very reason they began playing. Praise is universal, as is the acknowledgment that Baker is a difficult chap. "This is the price you pay for musical perfection,"

Public Image Ltd's Johnny Lydon says.

The film's gold-mine footage includes Baker with Cream, Blind Faith, and Fela, plus fascinating clips of the short-lived Ginger Baker's Air Force, drum battles with Art Blakey, and later projects *Masters of Reality* and *DJQ20*, all of which illustrate the drummer's expressiveness far better than his heated outbursts do. (*Beware's* infamous opening scene

shows Baker angrily confronting Bulger about interviewing bandmates he "fled" from, then smacking the director in the face with his cane, breaking his nose.) Bulger uses stylish, impressionistic animation where no early-years footage exists, and there are clips of Baker duetting



with his son, Kofi, an accomplished drummer himself.

Drugs and financial issues are covered as well, though perhaps most depressing are shots of Ginger's kit set up in a room at his present-day home, dusty from neglect. A concerned Bulger asks Baker if he might have to go back to playing the drums again. Baker's brazen response: "Why are we talking about this shit?"

"Ginger has always played to pay the bills," Bulger tells *MD*, "but he's never compromised. He's not going to do one of those rock fantasy camps." Perhaps it's just not important to him to keep playing, or maybe years of substance abuse and intense interpersonal relationships have finally taken their toll. "What's the payoff in being compulsive?" Eric Clapton says in the movie. "I can't make a diagnosis for Ginger. Rarefied situations have allowed me to see certain sides of him. But do I know Ginger? I didn't take the effort or the risk to become a part of his life for any length of time. I've always pulled back when it started to get scary or threatening or difficult."

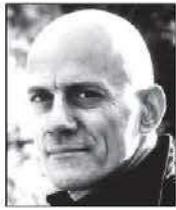
But play his drums again Baker does, and the film concludes triumphantly with recent clips of him on stage with a band in front of a packed house, the audience knowing they're seeing one of the greats. Baker, on the north side of seventy, seems happy to be there and sounds fresh and inspired, unwilling to let go of the music just yet. When you consider the events that unfold in *Beware of Mr. Baker*, you find it's an unexpected miracle indeed. **Ilya Stemkovsky**



Graham Bond. In *Beware*, Ginger says, "It's a gift from God. You either have it or you haven't. I've got it." Asked exactly what *it* is, Baker responds, "Time." Though he eventually struck gold with Cream, Baker nonetheless regarded himself as a jazz drummer. (Max Roach was an early favorite.) Bulger

IN MEMORIAM

SPIRIT'S ED CASSIDY



In the late 1960s, the generation gap was so wide that the Who was singing "I hope I die before I get old" and activists were warning "Don't trust anyone over thirty." That's just one

reason why the jazz-influenced psychedelic rock band Spirit stood out when it debuted in 1967: The group was made up of four Baby Boomers plus Ed Cassidy, a drummer decades older than his bandmates.

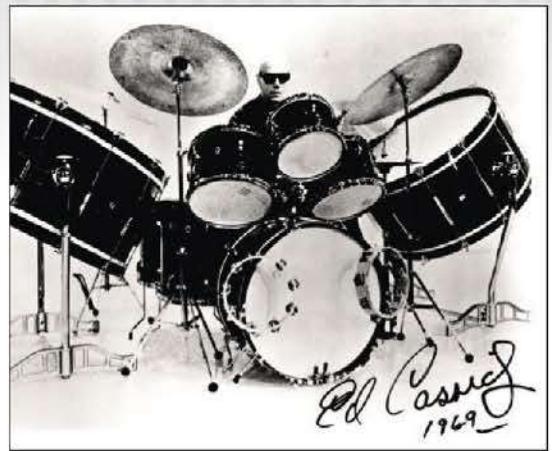
Cassidy, who passed away on December 6, 2012, at age eighty-nine, was born in 1923 in Illinois. After serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he worked within many styles of music, from a stint with the San Francisco Opera to gigs with jazz greats like Chet Baker. In the '60s he started playing rock 'n' roll, and in 1964 he formed the band Rising Sons with Taj Mahal and Ry Cooder.

In 1965 Cassidy began gigging with his fourteen-year-old guitar-prodigy stepson, Randy California (née Randy Wolfe), and by 1967 the pair had formed Spirit. Cassidy was

forty-four at the time—ancient in the counterculture rock world. He turned that into a positive, though, and used his twenty years of experience in the music industry (something no other rock musician at the time could claim) to show his much younger bandmates the ropes.

In a *New York Times* interview after Cassidy's death, Bob Irwin, who helped reissue Spirit's catalog on Sundazed Records, said early sessions with the band were "kind of like a jazz history lesson," with Cassidy at the helm. "Ed always encouraged them to color outside the box, to take chances on stage, to play to the best of and beyond their abilities," Irwin added.

Cassidy clearly had a flair for marketing, realizing in the '60s that a good gimmick could help an average band stand out among the crowd. With his trademark shaved head—he was nicknamed "Mr. Skin"—Ed dressed all in black and set up his huge drums in an unusual configuration, with an oversize bass drum angled at both



sides of his kit. He also played up his relationship with his stepson, naming Spirit's 1968 album *The Family That Plays Together*.

By 1971 Cassidy and California were the only remaining original members of the band. They continued performing as Spirit with various sidemen (even after Cassidy divorced California's mother, Bernice Pearl). But when California tragically drowned in 1997, Spirit was officially over. After that, Cassidy dabbled in acting, including a minor role in the soap opera *General Hospital*, but he was always most proud of his drumming accomplishments. As he boasted to this magazine in an unpublished 1996 interview, "There's *nobody* else playing rock drums at age seventy-three." From drumming to image making, Ed Cassidy was an original.

Philip Varriale



Photo: Marlene Foss

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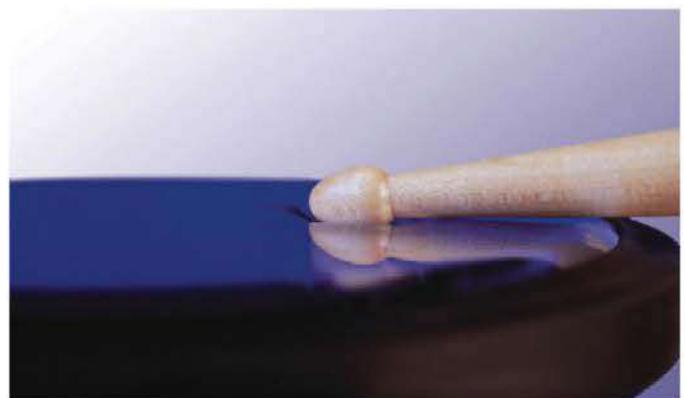
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TAKING OUT THE TRASH

"My backyard percussion ensemble started with a garbage can," says Richard Mastry of St. Petersburg, Florida. "I then mounted a 22" bass drum head and some legs. I added two smaller bucket drums, with 14" and 16" heads, and hardware. Inside these three drums are LED lights operated via foot switches.

"The next addition was an old washtub I had been using as a bass fiddle. I came across a bunch of galvanized conduit and

found that the pipes could be tuned by cutting each a different length. I made a frame to mount the pipes, and the lid of the garbage can became a gong after the handle was removed. The base from a parakeet stand is multifunctional, sounding like a cowbell when hit straight on and like a boxing-ring bell when hit from the side.

"The real prize is a 28" spinner some poor driver lost on the side of the road. Mounted on a piece of pipe, it rotates on its bearings

like the Wheel of Fortune, with an unmuted, ringing tone. When hit with a mallet, it peals a wonderful clang. I can't reach the old Oldsmobile hubcap mounted nine feet above, but it looks cool as the headpiece.

"All this, along with a couple of pot tops from the Garage Sale Store, makes up a very fun percussion ensemble that's used by all at my regular jams, held monthly to the surprising delight of my neighbors."

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